



**City of Santa Barbara**  
Planning Division

**Memorandum**

**MEETING DATE:** March 3, 2021

**TO:** Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC)

**FROM:** Nicole Hernandez, City Urban Historian

**SUBJECT:** **Staff Evaluation of proposed alterations**

**ADDRESS:** **222 East Constance Avenue, designed by Richard Neutra in 1959**

**PROJECT:** Proposal to add the following:

- Add a one-story, 22'8" addition to the rear elevation, not visible from the public right of way. Addition to include floating roof over beams to outrigger posts to create light feeling typical of Neutra designs and sliding glass doors to rear patio to match existing.
- Convert a small portion at the back of the garage into living space [32 sq ft]
- New flat roofs on rear in transition to the addition.



This memo prepared by the Architectural Historian evaluates the proposed project on the historic resource by determining if the project follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The purpose of this staff evaluation is to assist the Historic Landmarks Commission, in the review of a project when no Phase 2 Historic Structures/Sites Report (HSSR) has been prepared and in order to guide applicants and Commissioners appropriately towards avoiding or lessening project impacts. A Historic Structures/Sites Report phase 1 and 2 were prepared in 1994 for a different two-story addition that was approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission but never constructed. The same owners still own the house and are now proposing a one story addition.

**Compliance With the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

*The property will still be used as a residence and the proposed addition and alterations require minimal change to distinctive features, so that it will still be able to convey its 1959 appearance so that the project meets Standard 1.*

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

*The project meets Standard 2 as the rear elevation on which the addition will be located does not embody any character defining features. The addition will add a wall to the courtyard that further accentuate the full glass sliding doors to the courtyard designed by Neutra. There will be no removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property.*

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

*No conjectural features are proposed for the building.*

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

*No changes to the house have acquired significance in their own right.*

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

*The project is preserving and retaining the following distinctive materials, features, and finishes:*

- *The distinctive front elevation will remain and retain all the original features designed by Neutra.*
- *The distinctive large glass sliding doors of the living room into the rear courtyard will be retained.*

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

*Not applicable to this project.*

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

*All work proposed will be use the gentlest means possible to ensure no damage to historic materials.*



8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

*This Standard is not applicable.*

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

*The project meets Standard 9 as the addition is on the least visible elevation and will not impact the integrity of the public streetscape. The applicant researched Neutra projects to design the project in the spirit of a Neutra design to be compatible to the original Neutra rear courtyard character defining features. The addition will include floating roof over beams to outrigger posts to create light feeling. Sliding doors to rear patio to match existing on the rear to be compatible with the Neutra design. The one story design will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion and massing to protect the historic integrity of the Neutra design, yet will be slightly differentiated to distinguish it from the original house with larger posts, that the thin round posts of the original house, to support the higher ceilings of the addition yet they will still be in the Neutra vocabulary.*



9 (E) RESIDENCE - LOOKING WEST FROM (E) COURTYARD



7 (E) RESIDENCE - LOOKING NORTH FROM (E) COURTYARD

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*If the addition were removed, the essential form and integrity of the building and the environment would be unimpaired.*

**ARCHITCTURAL HISTORIAN SUMMARY COMMENTS.** No Historic Structures/Sites Report is necessary at this time as the proposed alterations do not have a negative impact on the 1959 Mid-Century Modern house which will remain in-tact on the streetscape and the minor alterations meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The project may therefore qualify for a categorical exemption with a less than significant impact to the resource, if the HLC consent reviewer agrees with the above evaluation and conclusions. Should the project significantly change, a Historic Structures Report may be required.