



City of Santa Barbara
Planning Division

Memorandum

MEETING DATE: August 4, 2021

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC)

FROM: Nicole Hernandez, City Urban Historian

SUBJECT: **Staff Evaluation of proposed alterations**

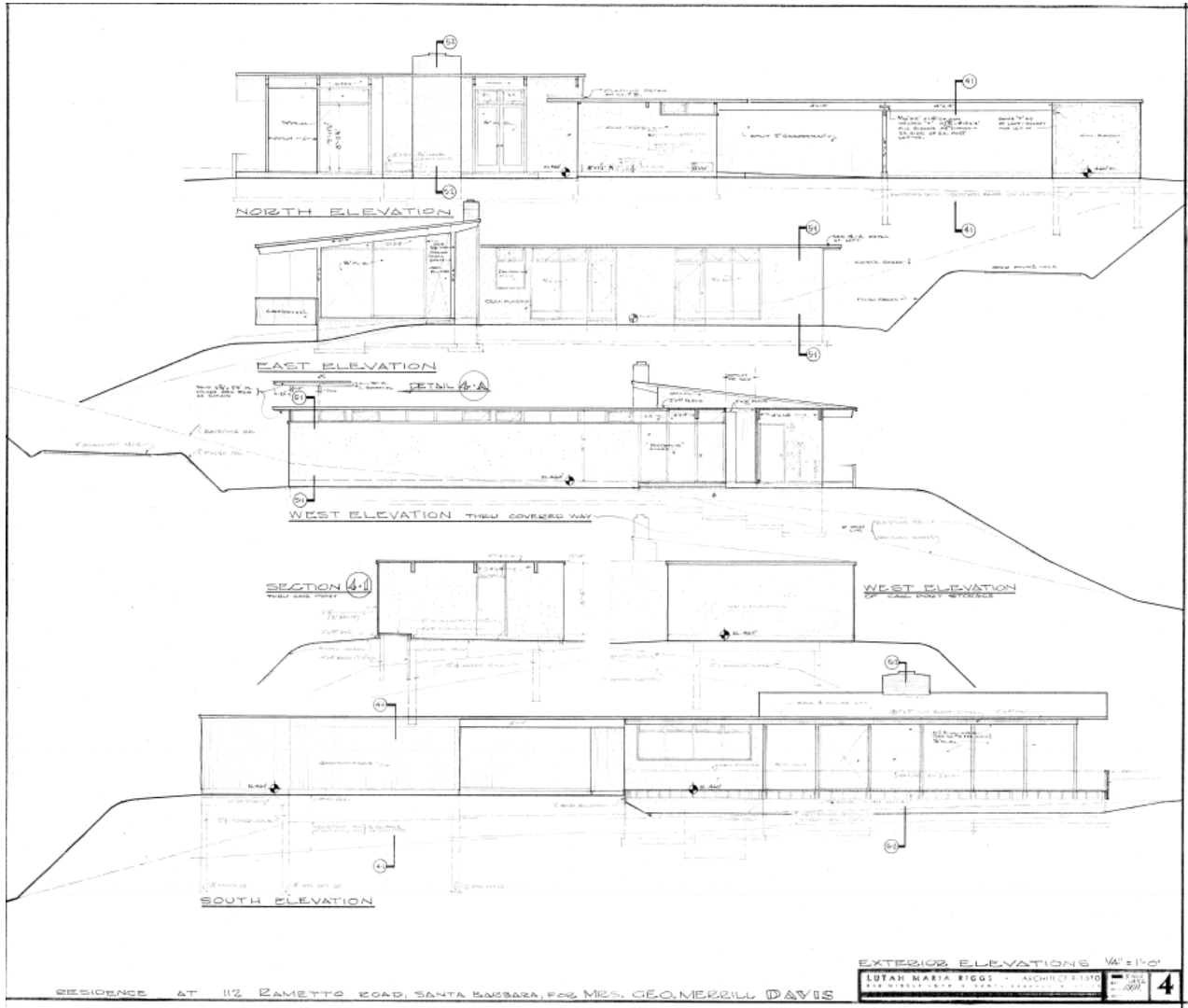
ADDRESS: **125 Rametto Road, designed by Lulah Maria Riggs in 1955**

PROJECT: Proposal to remodel the landscaping to comply with High Fire Hazard Area standards, construct a new driveway gate and pedestrian gate with pilasters, construct a new deck and horizontal railing and fire pit at the rear of the residence, and install new outdoor lighting.

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 was prepared in 2009 for a different project that was approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission.



Below: Original drawings of elevations by Lulah Maria Riggs



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 landscape and deck alterations require minimal change to distinctive features, so that it will still be able to convey its 1955 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 most visible alteration will be changing the railing from vertical members to horizontal members. The existing railing is very simple and not a character defining feature. Lulah Maria Riggs drew a even simpler railing in her 1955 drawings. The landscape changes will not remove any of the 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 Mid-Century Modernist California Style emphasized the prominence of “pure” geometric forms, often contrasting disparate elements in order to contribute to a holistic modernist aesthetic. This house, like other homes of this tradition maximize outdoor features—such as patios, terraces, balconies, and gardens—while maintaining a certain degree of privacy and formality. The project is preserving and retaining the following distinctive materials, features, and finishes:



- *Roof: The home features very low-pitched roofing—the east and west wings feature flat roofs, while the living room area features a taller shed roof.*
- *Wall Materials: The walls are plain gray stucco, mimicking the thick white plaster of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style while retaining a modernist twist.*
- *Outdoor Space: In keeping with the Modernist California Style, the home practically extends into the outdoors, making good use of its natural surroundings. The south elevation features a long wraparound balcony, which offers expansive views of the Pacific Ocean, the adjacent Country Club, and the rest of Montecito. The balcony is fenced in with an iron railing, and is complimented by a series of floor-to-ceiling windows and glass doors. The overhanging eaves provide some shade from the sun. The other notable outdoor feature at 125 Rametto Road is the pool area. The pool sits within a spectacular private patio area, which is enclosed on all sides by different wings of the house, and a number of interior rooms provide direct access to this area through large glass doors.*
- *Eaves: The home features some dramatically overhanging eaves, which are supported by brackets made of long, thick-cut slabs of wood. In other parts of the home, the eaves overhang significantly less, so the brackets in these segments are far smaller and less decorative.*
- *Windows: The fenestration tends to be composed of large, single-pane glass with thin, wood trim returns. The windows are often paired with similarly finished transoms. The home features windows on all of its sides, offering an impressive amount of sunlight at any time of day and inviting the outside indoors.*
- *Doors: The doors are made of large, single-pane, floor-to-ceiling glass, and are spaced thoughtfully throughout the house in order to maximize access to the outdoor features. The front entrance is nestled in the corner between two of the wings, and it features a pair of floor-to-ceiling glass doors, topped by matching transoms and surrounded by a thin wood trim.*

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 new railing around the deck and balcony, although horizontal rather than vertical are compatible with the mid-century modern design of the house. The new pedestrian and vehicle gates are separated from the house enough that they will not impact the house and the landscaping is compatible with the house as it will not be obscuring or detracting from the mid-century modern design. The new railing is slightly differentiated to distinguish it from the original railing but still be in the mid-century modern vocabulary.

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 new deck and railing, gates and landscaping were removed, the essential form and integrity of the building and the environment would be unimpaired.

ARCHITECTURAL 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 1955 Mid-Century Modern house which will remain in-tact 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.