

**RESPONSE AND REBUTTAL
TO COMMENTS BY
CIRCA: HISTORIC PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT
AND BILL BERNSTEIN, AIA
ON AN EVALUATION OF THE CONNELL HOUSE
PEBBLE BEACH, CALIFORNIA
RECORDED BY ANTHONY KIRK, PH.D.
15 OCTOBER 2010**

Prepared for

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2010 I prepared a Phase One Historic Assessment of the Connell house, Pebble Beach, California, for the property owner, Massy Mehdipour, in which I concluded that the house, designed by the renowned American architect Richard Neutra, appeared to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources at the local level under Criterion 3, as an important example of modernist architecture, specifically the American International style. The assessment was submitted to Monterey County as part of a Coastal Development Permit application that sought to demolish the Connell house and build a new, larger residence, some 15,000 square feet in size. Ms. Mehdipour, through an attorney, subsequently retained an architectural historian and cultural resource specialist to review my assessment. The consultant, Sheila McElroy, proprietor of Circa: Historic Property Development, drafted a letter devoted almost exclusively to her own thoughts on the Connell house, with but two references to my work. In July 2011 Ms. McElroy's letter was submitted to the Monterey County Resource Management Agency – Planning Department, along with a letter by an architect employed by Ms. Mehdipour, Bill Bernstein, offering his opinions on the Connell house and my assessment. Following a public hearing by the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board, in which the members voted unanimously in support of my finding of significance, Ms. McElroy prepared a second, much longer review of my Phase One Historic Assessment.

All three letters are critical of my evaluation, though, paradoxically, Ms. McElroy, in her initial letter, takes the position that the property *is* in fact significant—for its association with Neutra—and that it retains integrity. All of the letters, which are characterized to an astounding extent by erroneous and misleading statements, fail in their review of my work to identify either significant errors of fact or flaws in reasoning or to provide any new evidence or a meaningful argument that challenges my contentions. Indeed, neither Ms. McElroy nor Mr. Bernstein actually claim that the Connell house is not a significant expression of the American International style, much less attempt to support such a supposition. Even in her second letter, in which she raises much dust over the course of more than four pages, the closest Ms. McElroy comes to taking a position on whether or not the Connell house is an important example of a particular style of architecture is in the ultimate paragraph, where she concludes—in a curious challenge to a claim entirely absent from my evaluation—that the property “does not exemplify the Second Bay Area Tradition.”

Although none of the letters develops an argument that challenges my contentions, much less refutes them, they have presented me with the opportunity to revisit the matter and to prepare a new, fuller, and more carefully written evaluation of the Connell house. The process has confirmed me in my original finding, that the property appears eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources as an important example of the American International style. It has, in addition, led me to believe that the Connell house also appears eligible for the California Register as a significant expression of the architectural genius of Richard Neutra (though I do not pursue the matter in this report).

QUALIFICATIONS

I hold a Ph.D. in American History from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and have served as a consultant specializing in cultural, environmental, and architectural history for two decades. I have worked for the National Park Service, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the City of Marina, the City of Sunnyvale, the California Historical Society, Pacific Gas & Electric, and E. & J. Gallo Winery. I was appointed to the City of Santa Cruz Historic Preservation Commission in 1994 and served until 1998, chairing the commission for the final two years of my term. I meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards in history and in architectural history. For the past four years I have been a consultant to Stanford University, engaged in surveying, researching, and evaluating the significance of cultural resources on university lands.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2010 I was contacted by Maureen Wruck, of Maureen Wruck Planning Consultants, LLC, who represents Massy Mehdipour, the owner of the single-family residence at 1178 Signal Hill Road. Ms. Wruck informed me that Ms. Mehdipour wished to demolish the house—designed by Richard J. Neutra and known as the Connell house, after its original owners, Arthur and Kathleen Connell—in order to construct a new single-family residence, and she requested that I prepare a Phase One Historic Assessment of the property, pursuant to the local California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements of Monterey County.

I subsequently entered into an agreement with Ms. Mehdipour to conduct a site survey, research the history of property, and evaluate it for significance and integrity under the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and the Monterey County Local Official Register of Historic Resources. I surveyed the property on 5 October 2010 and ten days later completed the Phase One Historic Assessment, in which I stated that the Connell house appeared to be significant under Criterion 3 of the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), as an important example of the American International style. I sent a copy of the report, prepared on California Department of Parks and Recreation 523A and 523B forms (DPR), to Ms. Mehdipour and to Ms. Wruck, who submitted it to the Monterey County Management Agency – Planning Department as part of a Coastal Development Permit application to demolish the Connell house and construct a new residence, roughly 15,000 square feet in size.

On 5 July 2011, Bill Bernstein, AIA, architect of record for the proposed replacement house, designed by Legorreta + Legorreta Arquitectos, wrote a letter to Margaret E. “Meg” Clovis, Monterey County Cultural Affairs Manager, articulating a critical view of the architectural significance of the Connell house. Mr. Bernstein's letter accompanied a submittal that included my report and a letter from Sheila McElroy, proprietor of Circa: Historic Property Development, to John S. Bridges, legal counsel to Ms. Mehdipour. Ms. McElroy's letter, dated two months earlier, 7 April 2011, comprised a very brief review of my assessment, along with her own thoughts on the

significance of the property and recommendations for mitigation should a demolition permit be issued, including the curious notion of “storing character defining features [of the house] for possible future use/or study.”

On 4 August 2011, in the course of its regular monthly meeting, the Monterey County Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB), held a public hearing on Ms. Mehdipour’s request for a Coastal Administrative Permit to demolish the Connell House. Following testimony from Ms. Mehdipour’s two representatives, Mr. Bernstein and Mr. Bridges, Dale Ellis, of the law firm Lombardo & Gilles, speaking on behalf of a neighboring property owner, addressed the issue of the significance of the house, as did several members of the Monterey Bay chapter of the American Institute of Architects, all of whom voiced support for its preservation. Upon the close of public comment, the HRRB considered the matter and, reaching accord, voted unanimously in favor of a motion by Kent Seavey that the property appears to be significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the CRHR.

On 14 October 2011, two months after the August meeting of the HRRB, Ms. McElroy drafted a second letter to Mr. Bridges, in which she discussed at length my evaluation of the Connell house and the HRRB finding of 4 August, both of which she asserted were flawed. Subsequently, Dale Ellis contacted me and asked if I would be willing to defend my work and address the issues raised by Ms. McElroy and Mr. Bernstein.

RESPONSE AND REBUTTAL

OVERVIEW: PEER REVIEW

Scholarship is almost invariably improved through the process of peer review. In academe it subjects manuscripts to criticism that potentially exposes a variety of weaknesses, such as errors of fact or a poorly supported or entirely faulty line of reasoning, or brings to light the existence of critical evidence unknown to the author at the time of composition. Individually or collectively, these defects may lead the reviewer to a conclusion somewhat different or even contrary to that of the original author, who in turn may be disposed to amend his work or possibly embrace a new viewpoint, contributing to the advance of knowledge.

The process of peer review is also of great importance in the realm of cultural resource evaluation, where the fate of historic properties and millions of dollars of property values may rest on the findings of a historian or an architectural historian. This is particularly true in local CEQA surveys, such as a Phase One Historic Assessment, for the reason that, unlike a nomination undertaken at the request of a property owner, a CEQA review is not infrequently subject to constraints of time and, even more so, of cost. It was, in fact, a series of complaints relating to the expense associated with the necessity of obtaining a cultural resource evaluation of a property more than fifty years old when applying for a development permit for a project that could potentially have an adverse affect on the property that in July 2007 led the Monterey County Management Agency – Planning Department to

revise its Phase One requirements. As of that date, consultants were no longer required to prepare an assessment on DPR forms if a resource was found not to be significant, but were instead instructed to submit a letter “stating why the property is not historic,” a simpler and less costly task.

Peer review of a cultural resource evaluation is sometimes conducted at the request of a government agency, such as a county or municipal planning department, and on other occasions at the request of a property owner. The latter reviews, generally occasioned by a CEQA survey that has found the property to be historically significant, are usually critical of the evaluation and, to my experience, often rightfully so. Given that the property owner’s consultant typically does not suffer from a close constraint, if any, on time and costs, there is great potential for the review to exhibit more extensive research, thoughtful, incisive analysis, and clear, careful writing than the evaluation itself. As a consequence, the issue of whether or not a property is historically significant is subject to a fuller examination, especially if the original evaluator avails himself of the opportunity to reply to the peer review.

THREE CRITICAL REVIEWS: INTRODUCTION

The letter by Bill Bernstein to Meg Clovis, the Monterey County Cultural Affairs Manager, dated 5 July 2011, does not actually constitute a peer review. Mr. Bernstein does not meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in either history or architectural history, and, more important, he has no understanding of the process or metrics associated with a professional evaluation of a property for significance and integrity under the criteria of the CRHR. He uses the occasion of addressing Ms. Clovis as an opportunity to range far afield on topics that are entirely irrelevant to the matter at hand. He invokes the specter of the property owner suffering considerable economic hardship should the HRRB vote in favor of accepting my report and later vigorously promotes the principal architect of the proposed replacement project, Ricardo Legorreta (recently deceased), discussing in detail his achievements and fame. Despite the generally self-serving character of the letter, it is worthwhile considering his thoughts on the significance and integrity of the Connell house, if only as an opportunity to articulate clearly the process and parameters employed in an evaluation of these qualities.

The two letters written by Sheila McElroy, both addressed to Ms. Mehdipour’s attorney, John S. Bridges, of the law firm Fenton & Keller, and dated, respectively, 7 April 2011 and 14 October 2011, are also not true peer reviews. Neither of them is characterized by an accurate representation of my DPR or any approximation of the critical thinking inherent in a useful review, although the author *does* meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in architectural history. The first letter can be considered only as a curiosity in that it devotes but a single sentence to my evaluation before proceeding to a discussion of a finding of significance that I did *not* make, that the Connell house meets the criteria of the CRHR because it is an important example of Richard Neutra’s work. The second letter, which is much longer, also proceeds to a singular extent from a misreading or misunderstanding of my DPR and, in addition to containing misleading assertions

and numerous errors of fact, arrives at a conclusion that has no bearing whatsoever on the issues under consideration.

These flaws notwithstanding, the two letters of Ms. McElroy, like the musings of Mr. Bernstein, require a response. It is my intention to consider the three letters in the following section, discussing the major points raised in them and offering rebuttals when necessary. None of the letters, it should be emphasized, addresses in a meaningful way the findings enunciated in my Phase One Historic Assessment, that the Connell house is significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the CRHR because it “embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International, or Contemporary, style,” and that “the house retains its historic integrity.”

LETTER ONE: SHEILA McELROY TO JOHN BRIDGES, 7 APRIL 2011

Before proceeding to an examination of Ms. McElroy’s review of my Phase One Historic Assessment in her first letter to Mr. Bridges, it is necessary to provide the proper context for her remarks, and my rebuttal, by quoting in full both the applicable criterion of the CRHR and my assertion in the DPR of how the Connell house appears to meet this criterion.

Under Criterion 3 of the CRHR a property is eligible for listing if “it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.” At the outset of the Significance statement in the DPR 523B form, I reference the initial part of this criterion, stating that “The Connell house at 1170 Signal Hill Road appears to be significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) for its architecture, which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International, or Contemporary, style,” and then go on to say that it “reflects, as well, the design approach associated with the forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition.” In the penultimate paragraph of the Significance statement, having previously established in broad outline the history of modern architecture in Pebble Beach, I conclude by saying that “within this context, the Connell house is significant as an important and relatively early example of modern architecture in Pebble Beach by a leading American architect.”

Ms. McElroy begins her review of my evaluation by stating that “the historic Significance section of the DPR concludes, with numerous caveats, that the residence, which was constructed between [*sic*] 1957-58[,] ‘appears’ to be significant at the local level and is ‘. . . an important and relatively early example of modern architecture in Pebble Beach by a leading American architect.’” Despite the allegation that my conclusion is marked by “numerous caveats,” there is not a single qualification regarding the importance of the Connell house in the entire DPR. The locution that presumably led Ms. McElroy to make this false statement is my use of the word “appears.” Despite its seeming ambiguity, the phrase “appears to be significant” is regularly used in CEQA reviews. Many evaluators, it is true, prefer to say that a resource “is significant” or, conversely, “is not significant,” or, if they choose instead to use the word “eligible,” state that a resource “is eligible for listing”

or “is not eligible for listing,” as opposed to “appears to be eligible for listing” or “does not appear to be eligible for listing.”

To my mind, however, it is both misleading and presumptuous to say “is” rather than “appears to be,” since only the California State Historical Resources Commission can formally determine if a property is eligible for the CRHR. As to which locution is preferable, it is relevant that the California Historical Resource Status Codes, promulgated by the California State Office of Historic Preservation, employ the following phrasing for properties with alphanumeric codes beginning, respectively, with a 3 or a 4: “Appears eligible for National Register (NR) or California Register (CR) through Survey Evaluation,” and “Appears eligible for National Register (NR) or California Register (CR) through other evaluation.”



Regardless of which locution the evaluator prefers, what is more important by far is the evaluator’s statement asserting why a resource appears to be, or appears not to be, eligible for listing in a register of historical resources, together with the evidence marshaled in support of the contention. In discussing my finding of significance, Ms. McElroy starts out by conflating and clumsily redacting the two sentences in the DPR 523B form that enunciate how the Connell house meets Criterion 3 of the CRHR, the first in the opening paragraph, the second two pages later in the penultimate paragraph. In the process she omits much critical wording and consequently gives a false impression of what I say. She then proceeds to discuss what she takes to be my finding, that the house is significant because it is the work of a master, Richard Neutra. As such, her letter to Mr. Bridges has no bearing on the proposition asserted at the outset of the Significance statement of my DPR, which, to reiterate, is that the Connell house “appears to be significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) for its architecture, which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International, or Contemporary, style.”

Although Ms. McElroy makes no mention of the matter, this contention was in fact poorly worded, suggesting as it does that the terms American International and Contemporary are at least roughly synonymous. The former style is, in fact, one of two subtypes of the latter style, as will be discussed in detail in the Evaluation for Significance section of this report. In the Architectural Style field of the DPR 523B I *do* identify the house simply as American International, and, strictly speaking, it is not incorrect to identify the Connell house as an example of either the International or the Contemporary style. But to avoid the possibly misleading or confusing the general reader, I should not have made mention of the latter style in the opening sentence.



If the letter to Mr. Bridges is not a meaningful review of my work, it is nonetheless worth considering for Ms. McElroy’s own views of the Connell house. As is readily evident, Ms. McElroy is of the opinion that the property *is* significant under

Criterion 3 of the CRHR because, to quote the relevant section of the criterion, it “represents the work of a master.” On four occasions she states that the house is significant, though she hedges her opinion with, to use her own phrase, “numerous caveats.” In the second paragraph, after mentioning several relatively minor alterations to the house, she observes that “these factors combine to reduce [the] significance accorded this residence” and then goes on to say that “while technically of some significance for its association to Neutra, the building is only marginally so.” Two paragraphs later, she writes, “In conclusion, the residence at 1170 Signal Hill Road is a Richard Neutra design of marginal significance,” and in the next sentence she makes yet another reference to the subject, calling attention to “the relatively low degree of significance of the Connell house.”

Although Ms. McElroy does not present any evidence in support of her contention, she inarguably places herself in good company in taking the view that the house is significant as an expression of the design sensibility of a master architect. Thomas S. Hines, University of California, Los Angeles, professor of history and architecture emeritus and author of the magisterial *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), is outspoken in his defense of the house, writing in an e-mail to the Monterey County staff planner Delinda Robinson, “I consider it an important work that needs protection, support, and appreciation.” He is equally outspoken regarding the assertion that it is a minor example of Richard Neutra’s design work, stating, “I STRONGLY disagree with the opinion of Sheila McElroy that the Connell house is of ‘marginal significance.’”¹

Irrespective of where, precisely, the Connell house falls in the great architect’s oeuvre, it is ultimately by Ms. McElroy’s own characterization, significant. The quality of “significance” is either present or not present in a cultural resource. With regard to eligibility for listing in the CRHR, no distinction is made between a property that has been evaluated and found to be of marginal significance and one that has been evaluated and been found to be of supreme significance. To make a common analogy, significance is like pregnancy, an essential state that either exists or does not exist, everyday locutions such as “barely pregnant” or “extremely pregnant” notwithstanding. National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, which serves as a reference for the CRHR, succinctly states in relation to step three of the sequence of five essential steps used in evaluating a cultural resource, “Determine whether the property is significant under the National Register Criteria,” with no mention of parsing the level of significance. Nor is there mention of the matter elsewhere in Bulletin 15.² Ms. McElroy also shades her opinion as to whether the Connell house maintains integrity—a finding that is made only after a property has been evaluated and determined to be significant—with a dismissive reference to its “compromised integrity.” The integrity of the house has indeed been affected by changes in fenestration and construction of a small addition, as I point out in my DPR, but, like

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1. Thomas S. Hines, e-mail message to Delinda Robinson, 16 November 2011.
 2. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin 15, rev. ed. ([Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office], 1991), 3.

“significance,” the quality of “integrity” is either present or not present. As Bulletin 15 puts it: “Historic Properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not.”³ As such, her equivocations notwithstanding, Ms. McElroy has taken the position that the house is eligible for the CRHR, though for a different reason than I put forth in my DPR.

Ms. McElroy concludes her letter to Mr. Bridges with a discussion of potential mitigations “if demolition [of the Connell house] were allowed.” The proposed “mitigations,” four in number, range widely in character, from the official-sounding, “Photo documentation [of the property] using Historical American Building Survey (HABS) standards,” to the near incomprehensible, “Include character defining features and photo documentation in public display within context of Pebble Beach development history.” Although Ms. McElroy states that these proposals “should be considered by the decision maker to be adequate under CEQA,” they in fact would have no mitigating effect on a project that included demolition should Monterey County determine that the Connell house is a historical resource. If, however, the lead agency should take the position that the property does not appear to be a historical resource—despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary—there would be nothing to mitigate, since, under CEQA, demolition would not have a significant effect on the environment. As such, if this sad scenario should come to pass, the value of the proposed “mitigations” would lie largely in the realm of public relations. But regardless of which way the process plays out, the proposed mitigations are gratuitous, with no proper place in a letter that is ostensibly a peer review.

LETTER TWO: BILL BERNSTEIN TO MEG CLOVIS, 5 JULY 2011

Mr. Bernstein, like Ms. McElroy, misunderstands why, in my opinion, the Connell house appears eligible for listing in the CRHR. Presumably taking his cue from her review rather than from a reading of my evaluation, he allows that the property is possessed of “architectural merit” because, as he regrettably phrases it in a bizarre aspersion, “of Mr. Neutra’s notoriety.” In the course of his letter, Mr. Bernstein raises various issues, of which only two, the matter of significance and the matter of integrity, speak to the eligibility of the property for listing in the CRHR.

I consider both these issues in a later section, Evaluation for Significance and Integrity, where I explain why the Connell house is important and why it maintains historic integrity, following the line of reasoning laid out in my original Phase One Historic Assessment of 15 October 2010, while refining and expanding upon it to make the case for eligibility clearer and, I trust, more compelling. Nonetheless, it is relevant to comment briefly on a couple of the remarks made by Mr. Bernstein in his letter.

He begins his “analysis and opinion” by stating, not a little confusingly, “When I first visited the house at 1170 Signal Hill Road I thought it was an interesting piece of mid-century architecture, but mostly devoid of any interesting architectural elements.” He then goes on to say that “most people feel the house is uninspiring,

3. Ibid., 44.

dull and of no architectural merit.” With all due respect to Mr. Bernstein, “a 30 year licensed Architect in the State of California,” an evaluation for significance does not proceed from vague musings on the existence of what one takes to be “interesting architectural elements,” but from a thoughtful, considered inquiry into why, or why not, a resource appears to be significant within a defined historic context. It approaches the risible to take the position that popular opinion—how “most people feel” about the Connell house—might actually form substantial grounds for advocating either its preservation or its demolition.

Second, in addressing the issue of historic integrity, Mr. Bernstein, despite his long years as an architect, makes the common error of conflating integrity (the presence or absence of original physical features) and condition (the current state of such elements as foundation, walls, and roof). As to the two observations that pertain directly to integrity, his assertion that, according to my report, “the window system is not original,” is untrue and a blatant distortion of what I actually wrote. Equally troubling, if not more so, is his characterization of a small 1993 addition to the house as “inappropriate and awkward.” On 22 September 2010, having contracted with Massy Mehdipour, I spoke with him by telephone about the property prior to conducting a survey of the house, and in response to my query about its construction history, he informed me he was unaware of any additions and alterations, either to the interior or to the exterior.

LETTER THREE: SHEILA McELROY TO JOHN BRIDGES, 14 OCTOBER 2011

Ms. McElroy’s second letter to Mr. Bridges was written following the unanimous vote of the Monterey County HRRB on 4 August 2011 in favor of the motion that the Connell house appears to be significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the CRHR. Near the outset of her letter, Ms. McElroy states emphatically, “It is this HRRB approved motion that this response addresses.” But in point of fact her letter also comprises another review of my Phase One Historic Assessment. She is more critical of the DPR in this second round, beginning her discussion of the Significance statement with the assertion—contrary to the fact of the matter—that it “never substantiates, explains or defends how the subject property meets the CR Criterion 3, except to say that it does so.” (emphasis in original) Following a couple of paragraphs in which she freely misconstrues much of the factual information and the entire line of reasoning presented in my assessment, she closes her review with the astonishing conclusion that the HRRB vote “cannot be substantiated” because “the residence at 1170 Signal Hill Road does not exemplify the Second Bay Area Tradition.”

Given that neither I, in my DPR, or the HRRB, in its discussion or in its vote, claimed that the Connell house exemplifies the Second Bay Area Tradition, the underlying thinking of this conclusion is unfathomable. More puzzling still is why Ms. McElroy would devote more than four pages to a wandering critique of a my evaluation and the HRRB vote, having previously taken the position, in her letter of 7 April 2011 to the property owner’s attorney, John Bridges, that the house meets Criterion 3 of the CRHR because it is the work of a master, Richard Neutra. Under

CEQA, as Ms. McElroy should know, it makes no difference if a property is eligible for listing under one section of Criterion 3 rather than another section of Criterion 3 anymore than if the property is found to meet Criterion 1 or Criterion 2 or Criterion 4 rather than Criterion 3.

To this conundrum, two explanations present themselves: (1) Mr. Bridges, having come as late as Ms. McElroy to an understanding of some of the singular curiosities of her initial letter, enjoined her to take another crack at what the HRRB readily took to be the essential finding of my assessment but which she, even after a considered review, did not; and (2) Ms. McElroy lacks a grasp of some of the most elementary vocabulary of her profession—the meaning of the words “significance” and “integrity”—and did not comprehend anymore than did Mr. Bridges that, however vaguely and obliquely, she had, in her first letter, taken the position that the Connell house meets Criterion 3 of the CRHR. If the first explanation is correct, then the letter of 14 October 2011 is what it appears to be, mere obfuscation; if the second explanation is accurate as well, there is little to be said in support of Ms. McElroy’s credibility as a cultural resource consultant.

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Ms. McElroy begins her second letter with a discussion of what she describes as “the Staff report dated July 27, 2011 addressed to the Historic Resources Review Board.” The document to which she refers is, in fact, not a staff report and was not written by Meg Clovis, who staffs the HRRB. It is instead, as it is clearly marked at the top of the first page, a Memorandum, and it was prepared by Delinda Robinson, a senior planner in the Monterey County Resource Management Agency – Planning Department, who is identified as the author at the outset of the document, in the “From” line. The purpose of the Memorandum, which it should be said includes a useful précis of the Significance statement of my DPR, was to assist the HRRB in understanding that Criterion 3 of the CRHR consists of three distinct requirements, or parts, under which a property may potentially be significant, and that my evaluation addressed the first part while Ms. McElroy’s review of my evaluation addressed the second part.

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Following this wobbly introduction, Ms. McElroy proceeds on a quasi-scholarly inquiry, complete with synonymies and footnotes, into the meaning and import of the word “local” and the phrase “second phase of the Bay Area Tradition,” both of which appear in the Significance statement of my DPR. The specific language of the assessment, to repeat, runs as follows: “The Connell house at 1170 Signal Hill Road appears to be significant at the *local* level under Criterion 3 of the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) for its architecture, which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International, or Contemporary, style and reflects, as well, the design approach associated with the forward-looking *second phase of the Bay Area Tradition*.” (emphasis added) The sentence was employed, with some alterations, at the 4 August 2011 HRRB meeting, when, to quote from the minutes, “Kent Seavey made a motion that the Richard Neutra residence in question

does appear to be significant at the local level under Criterion 3 of the California Register of Historical Resources for, among other aspects, its architecture which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International or Contemporary style and reflects the design approach associated with the forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition.” It is the HRRB motion—which, as will be discussed later, shifted the emphasis and consequently the precise meaning of what I had sought to convey—that Ms. McElroy parses in her letter. And ultimately to no good effect, for despite her effort to get a firm grip on “local” and “second phase of the Bay Area Tradition,” she badly bungles both, confusing rather than clarifying the matter in each case.

With regard to my (and the HRRB’s) use of the word “local,” it pertains to the process of evaluation, in which a cultural resource is determined to be significant within a historic context at one of three levels: national, state, or local. As Bulletin 15 puts it in relation to the latter, “A local historic context represents an aspect of the history of a town, city, county, cultural area, or region, or any portions thereof.”⁴ In the Significance statement of my DPR, I recount in brief compass the history of modern architecture within the general geographic area of the Monterey Peninsula and then focus on the development of modernism within the confines of Pebble Beach. Having established a pattern of events in which to evaluate the property, I go on to assert, in what I take to be clear English prose, “Within this context, the Connell house is significant as an important and relatively early example of modern architecture *in Pebble Beach* by a leading American architect.” (emphasis added)

The memorandum prepared by Delinda Robinson for the HRRB quotes this sentence in part, including the restrictive wording “in Pebble Beach,” which she precedes with an establishing phrase, “Kirk finds that within the context of the Pebble Beach architecture,” and which she then follows with a third reference to the specific geographical construct, “region (Pebble Beach).” In the course of the HRRB meeting, the significance of the Connell house was discussed within the context of Pebble Beach architecture, notably by Sally Anne Smith, AIA, during public comment, and by Kent Seavey, prior to making a motion.

Yet for all this, Ms. McElroy writes to Mr. Bridges that “for purposes of research and communication for this Response Report [i.e., her letter] Circa determined that it [was] necessary to define the term ‘local.’” After some head-scratching, including reference to “the far-reaching limits of the Monterey Bay Area and Monterey County,” she declares that “*local* is considered in this report to be the community of Pebble Beach *and the Monterey Peninsula*.” (first emphasis in original; second emphasis added) Given that the locality had clearly been previously defined in my DPR and associated documents as Pebble Beach and that geographically this community lies entirely within the boundaries of the Monterey Peninsula, the point of Ms. McElroy’s exercise in semantics is as elusive as it is confusing.

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4. Ibid., 9.

In her letter, Ms. McElroy presents herself as perplexed by my use of the phrase “second phase of the Bay Area Tradition,” and in this she has my sympathy. Among the many puzzling vagaries of terminology employed by architectural historians, the design sensibility often referred to as the “Bay Area Tradition” is possibly subject to more variations than any other architectural phenomenon. The space that Ms. McElroy devotes to discussing the subject and her flurry of pseudo-scholarship, including a clutch of footnotes with no page numbers, is unwarranted, however, in that it is irrelevant to what is at the heart of the matter: whether or not the Connell house embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International style. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile addressing the subject, particularly in elucidating what, in my evaluation of the Connell house, I refer to as “the forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition.”

Though not of critical importance, it should be said at the outset that Ms. McElroy’s discussion of the Bay Area Tradition, and even more so of what she calls the Second Bay Area Tradition, is inaccurate and misleading, with absolutely no sense of the complexity of the matter apart from a recognition of the proliferation of synonymous terminology, including Bay Area Style, Bay Region style, and Bay Tradition of San Francisco, as well as a shorthand version, Bay Region, to choose examples culled from my own reading. Ms. McElroy begins her discussion by stating, “The phrase Bay Area Tradition was not clearly defined at the time of its emergence but came into being at the end of the 1940s when architectural critic Lewis Mumford invented the term ‘Bay Area Style’ and applied it to works displayed at an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art.” Contrary to the implication that the locution “Bay Area Tradition” arose simultaneously with a particular approach to architectural design and then lay undefined until “the end of the 1940s,” the appearance of that term not only followed the first florescence of this splendid cultural phenomenon by some three-quarters of a century, but also postdated by long years Mumford’s characterization of a specific building type as the Bay Region Style. Moreover, Mumford did not, as Ms. McElroy further implies, coin the term in response to the groundbreaking 1949 exhibition of photographs at the San Francisco Museum of Art, “Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region.” He first used the designation two years before in an article that attracted much attention, though it was decades earlier, in the late 1920s, that he had first become aware of what by 1949 he was more disposed to call the Bay Area school, as the great cultural critic makes plainly evident in an essay that appears in the exhibition catalogue and that Ms. McElroy cites (inaccurately) as one of her sources.⁵

While these and other errors make Ms. McElroy’s discussion less than trustworthy, the fatal flaw of it all is that she predicates it on the astounding supposition—as false as it is ludicrous—that the term Second Bay Area Tradition is synonymous with Bay Region Style, Bay Area Style, Bay Region, and Bay Region Modern. Or as she puts it, “For consistency in this response report the term ‘Second Bay Area

5. Lewis Mumford, “The Architecture of the Bay Region,” in San Francisco Museum of Art, *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1949), unpaginated.

Tradition' is used as it was applied interchangeably with those terms listed above by different writers over the years."

In discussing the Bay Area Tradition it is important to observe at the outset that it is an allusive rather than a precise architectural term, one that brings to mind a certain sensibility more than a list of specific character-defining features. With regard to my use of the phrase "second phase of the Bay Area Tradition," which Ms. McElroy, in an effort to elucidate, hopelessly obscures, I turn to a source that she herself cites, the introductory essay by David Gebhard in *Bay Area Houses*, a work of great importance to an understanding of fin de siècle and twentieth-century architecture in central California.⁶ Dr. Gebhard breaks the long history of the Bay Area Tradition, whose beginnings he dates to the 1890s, into "three expressive phases." The second of these phases he further divides into four "aspects," ranging widely in style and imagery, from the whimsical "Hansel and Gretel" Tudor Revival cottages of the 1920s to the post-and-beam modernist houses of the postwar years.⁷ It was the latter design mode that I sought to evoke in my DPR with the phrase "forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition." In retrospect, it would have been clearer if I had written, "the forward-looking aspect of the second phase of the Bay Area Tradition," though I am of a mind that anyone familiar with the history of the Bay Area Tradition would have caught the drift of what I was saying.

My thinking on the matter was formed by a review of a number of works, of which *Bay Area Houses* was the most important, particularly Sally Woodbridge's chapter, "From the Large-Small House to the Large-Large House." In it she discusses numerous California residences built between the late 1930s and the early 1960s, all of which to varying extents incorporate essential concepts of modern design. At the outset of her essay she examines the close relationship between modernism and the second phase of the Bay Area Tradition and later notes in regard to the residences showcased at the 1949 San Francisco Museum of Art exhibition that "the boxy and planar compositions of the Americanized International Style with horizontal bands of windows and/or glass walls predominated."⁸ As is evident from her treatment of the subject, though, the houses of the Bay Area Tradition are distinguished from European expressions, as well as eastern American expressions, of the International

6. Sally Woodbridge, ed., *Bay Area Houses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

7. David Gebhard, "Introduction: The Bay Area Tradition," in *ibid.*, 9-10. Parenthetically, he dates the beginning of the third phase to the early 1960s, when architects began to introduce "vertical spatial complexity," creating a design mode that came to be known, by among other names, as the "cut-out box."

8. Page 170. In passing, I should like to address an issue that troubled Ms. McElroy enough for her to raise it in a footnote: how a residence constructed in Pebble Beach could be associated with the Bay Area Tradition, when, as she observes, "Monterey County is not included in the definition of the Bay Area." Needless to say, the Bay Area Tradition is associated with architects who, with few exceptions, maintained offices in the Bay Area, chiefly San Francisco and Berkeley. When opportunity arose to design houses farther afield, they welcomed the commissions. Had Ms. McElroy taken the time to thoroughly review one of her own sources, the exceedingly slender San Francisco Museum of Art catalogue *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region*, she would have learned that of the fifty-two houses chosen for the exhibition by the selection jury, an even dozen, or more than 20 percent, were located outside the Bay Region counties, including four in Monterey County, and others as distant as Three Rivers and Tahoe City.

style by their informality, extensive use of wood—invariably redwood—and comfortable, natural relation with their setting.



Richard Neutra, as I relate in my DPR, designed a couple of single-family residence in San Francisco that were clad with wood siding, beginning in 1935 with the clapboarded Largent house on Twin Peaks. He followed it two years later with the award-winning redwood Darling house on the lower slope of Mt. Sutro, which as his biographer writes, “fit just as comfortably into the Bay Area tradition of the twentieth century, with its straightforward massing of laconic, boxy, and deliberately ‘regional’ forms.” The architect subsequently designed several redwood cottages on the San Francisco Peninsula and a redwood cabin in Berkeley, as well as a “relaxed, redwood villa” in 1939 for William and Alice Davey on the Monterey Peninsula that made clear reference to the Bay Area Tradition.⁹

The Connell house, by contrast, is not a typical expression of the Bay Area Tradition. But neither is it representative of the high International style, which the Viennese-born and -trained Neutra introduced to southern California in 1929 with his much celebrated masterpiece, the Lovell house. It is instead, as I state in my DPR, an expression of the American International style, an architectural design mode that has some common characteristics with the second phase of the Bay Area Tradition. To what extent the overall design and individual elements of the Connell house can be traced to the American International, the Bay Area Tradition, or Richard Neutra’s own exquisite architectural vision is beyond the scope of this response and rebuttal, lying instead within the realm of academic discourse. Nonetheless, it seems no great stretch to say, as I do in my evaluation, that the Connell house “reflects . . . the design approach associated with the forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition.” This is especially true in the way the house springs seamlessly from the sandy soil of Signal Hill, embodying what David Gebhard calls one of the characteristics of Bay Area Tradition houses, which “seem to be related to their respective ‘place’ in the landscape.” It is also relevant to note with regard to the interplay between Neutra and the Bay Area Tradition that, as Sally Woodbridge observes in discussing what she identifies as “a major contribution of the Bay Area to the Modern Movement,” the integration of architecture and landscaping, “This idea of masking parts of the house with planting was also prevalent in South California, particularly in the work of Richard Neutra.”¹⁰



To return to the issue with which I opened my response to Ms. McElroy’s second letter—her assertion that my DPR does not make a case for the significance of the Connell house under Criterion 3 of the CRHR—it is evident that she either did not understand my evaluation or that she was unable to provide a reasoned argument in

9. Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*, 4th ed. (New York: Rizzoli, 2005), 160.

10. Gebhard, “Introduction,” and Woodbridge, “From the Large-Small House to the Large-Large House,” both in *Bay Area Houses*, 8, 172.

opposition to my contention. She begins her discussion of the HRRB motion on 4 October 2011 by stating that it is “a direct quote from the Significance section of the Kirk report” and then goes on for slightly more than a page to draw attention to what she considers inconsistencies and inaccuracies in this section of the DPR.

Despite her contention that the motion is “a direct quote,” a close comparison of it with the wording in my assessment shows this to be untrue, as I earlier indicated (see the paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 10 for a comparison of the two). My thesis was, and is, that the Connell house is significant because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International style. I thought at the time I composed the evaluation, as I still do, that the house “reflects, as well, the design approach associated with the forward-looking second phase of the Bay Area Tradition,” but whether it does or not is extraneous to the issue of why I think the property is significant. The HRRB motion closely followed my statement but did not include the words “as well” after “reflects,” thus appearing to give equal weight to the influence of the Bay Area Tradition as a reason for its architectural importance. In reiterating my thesis, on the final page of the DPR, I state that “the Connell house is significant as an important and relatively early example of modern architecture in Pebble Beach by a leading American architect.” While I think the matter is clearly enough expressed in the course of the evaluation, I should, in retrospect, have restricted my opening statement on the significance of the property to the proposition that the Connell house is an important example of the American International style.

What follows in Ms. McElroy’s discussion of my DPR is nothing more than windy piffle and a distortion of what I wrote. She takes some pains to mount an argument that my discussion of the history of modernist architecture on the Monterey Peninsula provides a context that is “directly in contrast” to my assertion (which she quotes) that “the Connell house is significant as an important and *relatively early* example of modern architecture in Pebble Beach.” (my emphasis) She makes much of the fact that I mention other architects who designed modernist houses in that community “throughout the mid-century,” as if this somehow precluded the possibility of Richard Neutra’s design being considered relatively early. The term mid-century (or midcentury) expands and contracts as used by various writers, with Alan Hess, for instance, in his fine book on neglected modernist architects of California, *Forgotten Modern*, using the term for the period 1940 to 1970. This would put the Connell house slightly before the midpoint of the span of years between the first modernist Pebble Beach residence that I have identified and the close of the period, or “relatively early.”¹¹

As I acknowledge in my DPR, however, the history of modernism in this quarter of the Monterey Peninsula is imperfectly known and awaits its author. In the course of time, as research progresses, it may turn out that the Connell house is not a “relatively early” design. Whether it is or not is beside the point, for while of interest to the historian, it is immaterial to an evaluation of the significance of the

11. Alan Hess, *Forgotten Modern: California Houses 1940-1970* (Gibbs Smith: Salt Lake City, 2007), 8 and passim. The Buckner house in Pebble Beach, designed by Jon Konigshofer, was completed in late 1947 or early 1948.

property. The sentence that Ms. McElroy pounces upon was, admittedly, poorly cast, suggesting as it does, that the date of Neutra's design is relevant to the significance of the property. In hindsight, I should have not used the phrase "and relatively early" but simply written that "the Connell house is an important example of modern architecture in Pebble Beach."

Finally, despite Ms. McElroy's allegation that my evaluation "never substantiates, explains or defends how the subject property [i.e., the Connell house] meets the CR Criterion 3, except to say that it does so," (emphasis in original), I do in fact provide a reasonably complete description of its character-defining features, which, to anyone familiar with the American International, provides persuasive evidence of my claim for significance. That the DPR makes an adequate argument is attested by the unanimous vote of the HRRB on the afternoon of 4 August 2011.

EVALUATION FOR SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

OVERVIEW

As earlier stated, CEQA reviews of properties are not infrequently subject to constraints of time and cost, limiting, if not prohibiting, the opportunity for as full and thoughtful an assessment of a property as an evaluator might wish. In their letters, both Ms. McElroy and Mr. Bernstein are critical of my Phase One Historic Assessment of the Connell house, but neither identifies meaningful errors of fact or introduces new information that undercuts my argument for the significance and integrity of the property. They also fail to show that the reasoning underlying my findings is faulty. In spite of the ineffectiveness of their attempts to discredit my evaluation, their niggling has provided me a welcome opportunity to revisit the matter and to spend more time thinking about the Connell house and preparing what I trust will be viewed as a clearer and more compelling argument that the property is significant under Criterion 3 of the CRHR and that it retains historic integrity.

I attempt in this revised evaluation to closely follow the text of my original DPR, departing from it only in order to emend passages that are poorly phrased or are open to interpretations other than those intended at the time of writing, and also to correct errors of fact and introduce new material or expand upon old material in a manner that will allow me to strengthen the case I made in October 2010. I did not at that time take the position that the Connell house is significant under the second requirement of Criterion 3, "represents the work of a master." Through subsequent reading and reflection, I have come around to this point of view, but I will, nonetheless, make no attempt in this report to show that the house expresses a particular phase of his career and appears to be eligible for the CRHR at the state level under this section of Criterion 3.

DESCRIPTION

The single-family residence at 1170 Signal Hill Road is a 4,124-square-foot one- and two-story American International-style house with an integral three-car garage that was constructed in 1957-58 and enlarged with a small addition at the southwest corner of the upper level in 1993 (figures 1-4). Designed by the eminent southern California architect Richard J. Neutra for Arthur and Kathleen Connell, the house is set into a steep slope on the west side of Signal Hill Road. The upper level is U-shaped in plan, organized around a central courtyard, or patio, that is enclosed on the east side by a tall wooden fence; the lower level, situated below the base of the U, is rectangular in plan. The house rests partly on a concrete slab foundation and partly on a concrete perimeter foundation. Although the exterior walls are clad chiefly with a soft grayish-green color-coat stucco, other, contrasting materials add texture and visual interest. Narrow v-groove tongue-and-groove siding, painted a flat gray, forms the cladding on most of the south side, including the three swing-up overhead garage doors; and Masonite panels, also painted a flat gray, are set below two ribbons of windows, one wrapping the northeast corner of the lower floor, the other running along the east side of the upper floor, facing the courtyard. The flat slab roof is characterized by wide eave overhangs and a broad fascia and is finished with tar-and-gravel. At the northwest corner of both levels, a roof beam extends several feet into space. Fenestration consists chiefly of windows in long bands—comprising various combinations of large fixed windows and small aluminum-sash windows, both casement and double-hung—and floor-to-ceiling glass walls. On the upper floor, a window wall runs along much of the west side and wraps the north corner, flooding the living and dining rooms with light and providing wonderful sweeping views of the coastline and the Pacific Ocean. The window wall is composed of six sections on the west side, each characterized by a large sheet of plate glass, below which, separated by a heavy glazing bar, is a long horizontal fixed light and a small jalousie that can be opened for cross ventilation. A shorter glass wall, with large fixed sheets separated by louvered windows, runs along the north side of the patio and wraps around the east end of the wing.

The main entrance to the house is on the north side, at the end of a concrete walk reached by a short flight of stairs descending from Signal Hill Road. A tall double door, flanked by a large panel that, like the door, is faced with plywood mahogany veneer stained a deep, rich brown, opens to a half-floor landing illuminated by a band of clerestory windows that wraps around to the west side, where it is shielded from the direct sun by wooden louvers. The entry porch is enclosed by a railing and covered by a dramatic projection of the roof slab. A secondary entrance, with an exposed-aggregate concrete floor and a flush door, is located on the south side, at the end of the asphalt driveway, adjacent to the garage doors. On the west side of the lower floor, sliding-glass doors open from two of the three bedrooms to a small concrete patio. Above, a cantilevered balcony, shaded by the deep roof overhang, wraps around to a large roof deck on the north side, which, accessed by a sliding-glass door that is integral with the second-story window wall, forms an extension of the living room. On the south side of the north wing, at the head of the broad staircase leading from the half-floor entry hall, a sliding-glass door opens to a

glazed-tile terrace extending along the west side of the courtyard, which faces an ornamental garden enclosed on the east side by a wooden fence.

As originally constructed, the upper level was characterized at the southwest corner by a small service yard, enclosed on the east and north by the house itself, the walls meeting at a reentrant corner, and on the west by a wing wall extending south from the west side of the main building envelope. In 1992 a Carmel architect, Edward M. Hicks, designed a 220-square-foot “studio addition” that, constructed the following year, enclosed the space while extending the building about four and a half feet beyond the garage wall and somewhat over a foot beyond the wing wall. In the course of the work the broad roof overhang above the garage was extended along the entire south side and the secondary entry door to the house, by the reentrant corner, was moved from the north side of the yard to the east side of the addition.

It may have been about this time that some of the windows in the house were replaced, and in all likelihood others were replaced at a later date. In contrast to the present fenestration on the west side of the lower level (figure 2), the plans, drawn in July and August of 1947, show a long ribbon of glass composed of two sliding doors and seven fixed windows, three of them floor to ceiling and all of them flanked by a jalousie. Although the overall size of the current window openings remains essentially the same as when the house was completed, all of the original glass, with the possible exception of two fixed-sash windows, has been removed. Three of the louvered windows have been replaced by casement and double-hung aluminum-sash windows, while the openings of the others are now integral with the large picture windows. It is possible, moreover, that both of the sliding-glass doors have been replaced, but the matter is not entirely clear. On the upper level of the west side, the fixed windows composing the glass walls are set in aluminum channels that are not original to the fenestration; and, to the south of them, all the casement combinations windows are replacements, quite likely dating to the 1990s. The original plans show a wall extending from the northeast corner of the garage wing to several feet beyond the southeast corner of the opposing wing, but it is unclear if it was actually built

The house, which appears to be in poor to fair condition, is set back moderately, and below street grade, from Signal Hill Road, a short, winding exurban street that extends south from 17 Mile Drive. The sandy, scrubby grounds, which suffer from a lack of maintenance, are characterized by a scattering of Monterey cypress and patches of ice plant.

EVALUATION FOR SIGNIFICANCE

The Connell house, at 1170 Signal Hill Road, appears to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) at the local level under Criterion 3 for its architecture, which embodies the distinctive characteristics of the American International style.

The Viennese architect Richard Joseph Neutra arrived in Los Angeles in 1925 and established his reputation four years later with the completion of the Lovell house. A stunning expression of the International style, set high in the Hollywood Hills, it was the first entirely steel-frame residence constructed in the United States. Seven years later in the catalogue to the landmark 1932 “Modern Architecture” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, Neutra was hailed as “the leading modern architect of the West Coast.”¹² Although chiefly associated with southern California, he began working in the San Francisco Bay Area as early as 1935, building a clapboard house on Twin Peaks. Two years later he designed the boxy two-story redwood-clad Darling house on Woodland Avenue in San Francisco, which artfully adapted the minimalist architectural aesthetic that had arisen in Europe in the 1920s to regional conditions, placing it within the woodsy anti-urban Bay Area Tradition.

Although the history of modern architecture in Pebble Beach and adjoining communities on and about the Monterey Peninsula has yet to be written, the broad outline can be traced with some confidence. In 1933 William Wurster designed a Carmel house for E. C. Converse that was a simplified, abstract, and somewhat idiosyncratic interpretation of the then popular Colonial Revival, for which he received an Honor Award from the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Far removed from the hard-edge International style brought to California by Neutra and his countryman Rudolph Schindler, it nonetheless embodied a new architectural sensibility, a “gentle modernism,” to use the evocative phrase of David Gebhard.¹³ Other expressions of this design outlook arose in Carmel prior to World War II, including the Sand and Sea complex, comprising five houses and a garage with a studio above, at the corner of San Antonio Avenue and 4th Street. Designed by Jon Konigshofer, the development was a handsome example of “everyday modernism,” an artful mediation between the stark rationalism of the International style and the regional conditions and concerns that animated the work of not only Konigshofer but of other designers associated with the Bay Area Tradition who worked in and about the Monterey Peninsula, including Henry Hill, Gardner Dailey, Clarence Tantau, and Harwell Hamilton Harris. Within this context, it should be noted that Neutra himself produced an elegantly handsome redwood-clad house for William and Alice Davey in 1939 on Jacks Peak, outside Monterey, that was sensitively integrated into the surrounding landscape of grassland and Monterey pines.

In contrast to Carmel and Monterey, modernism seems not to have made an appearance in Pebble Beach until some years after the war, although the lack of a comprehensive local architectural history, together with the difficulty of viewing many of the community’s residences from public thoroughfares, makes a definitive

12. Alfred H. Barr, Foreword to *Modern Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1932), quoted in Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 129.

13. David Gebhard, “William Wurster and His California Contemporaries: The Idea of Regionalism and Soft Modernism,” in Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 169.

assertion on this point impossible.¹⁴ In 1940 Frank Lloyd Wright designed a spacious house for John Nesbitt on 17 Mile Drive, but it was never constructed. Seven or eight years later Jon Konigsberger created a striking residence for the Robert Buckner family in Pebble Beach, which was one of fifty-three houses featured in the 1949 San Francisco Museum of Art exhibition, “Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region.” Three years later Konigsberger built a house for Macdonald and Margaret Booze on Signal Hill Road, and throughout the mid-century other architects associated with modernism, such as Gardner Dailey, Walter Burde, Will Shaw, Henry Hill, and Charles Moore, also worked in Pebble Beach.



Within the context of the development of modern architecture in Pebble Beach, the Connell house is significant as an important example of the American International style. In evaluating the property, it should be noted at the outset that, unlike Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and other earlier architectural styles, the American International is not characterized by a lengthy list of specific attributes but, rather, by a relatively few broad features. Virginia and Lee McAlester, in their standard reference work, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, identify it as one of two subtypes of the Contemporary style, a taxonomy based on whether the roof is flat or gabled. “The flat-roofed subtype,” the McAlesters write “is a derivation of the earlier International Style and houses of this subtype are sometimes referred to as American International. They resemble the International in having flat roofs and no decorative detailing, but lack the stark white stucco wall surfaces, which are usually replaced by various combinations of wood, brick or stone. Landscaping and integration into the landscape are also stressed, unlike the pristine white International house that was meant to be set upon the landscape as a piece of sculpture.” Cyril M. Harris, professor emeritus of architecture, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, Columbia University, makes much the same distinction between the subtypes in his *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, helpfully adding that the American International “may have a balcony with an overhanging sunscreen, roof decks, and a patio that may serve as an extension of the living area.”¹⁵

14. The relatively late appearance of modernist architecture in Pebble Beach can be traced to the building restrictions Del Monte Properties Company introduced into its real estate deeds in the 1920s. The restrictions, as the company took pains to explain to prospective purchasers, were intended to create communities “harmonious within themselves” and to “prevent the erection of undesirable and unharmonious buildings that would depreciate those of their neighbors.” The type of architecture Del Monte Properties thought “best suited” to the area was that “founded on the traditions” brought to California “by the first Spanish settlers. It has the general characteristics of the architecture of those countries along the north shores of the Mediterranean from Gibraltar [*sic*] to the Dardanelles, where the climate and topography are so similar to ours.” Although the restrictions were relaxed as the Depression wore on, as late as 1940 *Fortune* magazine reported that, in submitting architectural plans for approval, “it will be better, no matter what the size of your purse, if you plan a Spanish-Colonial (Monterey) type of house.” Del Monte Properties Company, Bulletin, 1 December 1927, Pebble Beach Company Archives; “Del Monte,” *Fortune* 21 (January 1940): 106.

15. Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 482; Cyril M. Harris, *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998), 74.

Although Harris and the McAlesters discuss the Contemporary style within the context of modernism, most architectural historians do not use the term Contemporary style and seem reluctant as well to speak of the American International, usually preferring to discuss it as a manifestation of a European design idiom domesticated on American shores. The broader architectural classification of modern, or modernist, embraces too wide a range of design modes to be useful in evaluating a property for significance under the criteria of the CRHR, and while the term mid-century modernism, as it is used by Alan Hess and other scholars, appears appropriate, it, too, lacks a strict set of characteristics. As such, it is best to evaluate the Connell house using Harris and the McAlesters as guides, while supplementing them with reference to the underlying design philosophy of modern architecture.



Employing this framework, it is readily apparent that the Connell house is architecturally significant, exemplifying both the rational design approach associated with modern architecture generally and those features associated with the American International specifically. The interior is sharply divided into the private and the public, with bedrooms arranged along a hallway on the lower level and an open floor plan above, the living room and dining room flowing into one another, as is typical of modernist residential architecture. In addition to the thoughtful functionalism of the floor plan, the house is distinguished by its complex massing and crisp geometry. It possesses all the character-defining features associated with the American International, including a range of contrasting exterior materials—wood, stucco, tempered Masonite—a long, covered cantilevered balcony, a roof deck, and a courtyard with a glazed-tile terrace and an ornamental garden that gracefully connects the interior with exterior. The house reflects the vision of the Bauhaus, but the industrial imagery of the European aesthetic is relieved and softened by the varied textures, the color palette (which appears to be original), the broad expanses of glass, and the extreme sensitivity with which it is set in the landscape. The main entrance on the north side provides a particularly splendid entry, though it seems not unlikely that most visitors would have preferred to make use of the large parking area in front of the garage and, consequently, entered the house from the back rather than descending the two flights of steps descending from the street. Apart from creating a suitable design for the particular needs of the Connell family, Neutra's grand concern was organizing the house to take advantage of the stunningly beautiful meeting of land and water below, and in this regard he succeeded admirably, with every room save one commanding a stunning view of land and sea from Cypress Point northward. Lying long and low on the earth, open to light and nature, the Connell house exhibits the elements associated with Neutra's residential architecture of the 1950s, including post-and-beam construction, cantilevered roof slabs and projecting beams, ribbon windows and glass walls, and what his biographer Thomas Hines identifies as the most essential character of his work, "the interpenetration of inner and outer space."¹⁶

16. Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 14.

EVALUATION FOR INTEGRITY

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, it must not only meet one of the four criteria for significance, it must retain integrity, which, as defined by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), “is the authenticity of a historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance.” Integrity comprises seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. As National Park Service Bulletin 15 notes, a property either retains integrity or it does not, and “to retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.” Ultimately, for historical resources to be eligible for the CRHR, they must, as the OHP puts it, “retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance.”¹⁷

The Connell house has been subject to a number of alterations since its completion in 1958, which comprises the period of significance. In 1993 a small addition, measuring 220 square feet, was erected at the southwest corner of the house. Possibly about this time, and most likely no more than a half dozen years before or after, various alteration were made to the fenestration. Although both the addition and the alterations affected the original character of the property, the house retains integrity.

The Connell house is in its original location, and available evidence suggests that the setting is much the same as it was in the late 1950s, when the building site and surrounding land was characterized by sand and scrubby ground cover. The addition—tucked away on a secondary elevation and not readily seen from the public thoroughfare—changed the design of the house but only minimally, eliminating a small semi-enclosed yard while increasing the size of the upper floor by just slightly more than 8 percent. The work left all of the original exterior walls intact, as well as the doorway leading from the yard into the house. The addition was artfully designed not to obscure any character-defining features, and it is both compatible with the original structure and—by virtue of the distinct fenestration and the darker tonality of the stucco—clearly differentiated. While the addition is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, the alterations to the original window system on the west side of the house are not. This work, probably carried out over the course of two or more projects, retained the size, shape and pattern of the window openings but eliminated the jalousies while introducing casements and double-hung windows, and increasing the size of some of the fixed windows. Nonetheless, the design of the Connell house remains intact in its overall conception and in all but a relatively few details. With the exception of some of the windows, the original materials are present, and the original workmanship is evident. The house, viewed from the street or from the slope below, projects the

17. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register of Historical Resources: The Listing Process*, Technical Assistance Series 5 (Sacramento: California Office of Historic Preservation, n.d.), unpaginated; National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria*, 44.

same feeling of striking modernity as when the Connell family took possession of it fifty-four years ago.

CONCLUSION

The Connell house is unequivocally an important example of the American International style, perfectly illustrating this design aesthetic within the context of the development of modern architecture in Pebble Beach.¹⁸ Despite a small addition and various alterations to some of the fenestration, it retains historic integrity. In my opinion, the Connell house is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources at the local level under Criterion 3.

18. According to Bulletin 15, it is not necessary to evaluate a property in relation to other similar properties if the property “clearly possesses the defined characteristics required to be strongly representative of the context.” National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 9.



Figure 1. Looking southwest at north side, 5 October 2010.



Figure 2. Looking southeast at north and west sides, 5 October 2010.



Figure 3. Looking northeast at west and south sides, 5 October 2010.



Figure 4. Looking northwest at east and south sides of courtyard. 5 October 2010.