

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

 **DRAFT**

 **DRAFT**

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Auerbacher Home

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 121 Sierra Vista Dr

city or town Redlands

state CA code \_\_\_\_\_ county San Bernardino code 071 zip code 92373

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for
<input type="checkbox"/>	publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:  
\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:  
\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

NA

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement, International Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete  
walls: Wood, stucco, glass  
roof: Modified bitumen  
other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Auerbacher Home was designed and constructed by architect Richard Neutra who was commissioned by Frederick and Mary Jane Auerbacher in 1951 to create a home that fit with the terrain and showcased the spectacular vistas north of the property in Redlands, California. The Auerbachers paid \$50,000 for the land and the building. The 2,300 square foot, post and beam single story rectangular building is sited in a northwest by southeast alignment on the south side of a steep lot, below the level of the street. It is approached from the street with a walkway that extends at a 90 degree angle from the house to the carport. The exterior is sheathed in 1 1/4 inch tongue-and-groove redwood siding, some stucco, and large expanses of glass, the latter primarily on the northeast side of the house. The structure has a flat roof. The interior is structured with the large general living area in the center of the rectangle, with the bedroom wing situated southeast and a private living space, including kitchen and solarium, located at the northwest side of the center. Interior materials include a mixture of birch paneling, tongue-and-groove redwood siding, and stone. The massing of the house is defined by the steeply sloping terrain and by the organization of the spaces within. The south elevation of the house, facing the slope up to the street, is largely closed, with a strip of clerestory windows the length of the main corridor and into the bedrooms beyond. The north elevation is quite open, with floor-to-ceiling glass in many locations, exposing the interior to the view of the rose garden, the Redlands Country Club beyond, and the San Bernardino Mountains in the background. Lines between "interior" and "exterior" are blurred along the north elevation of the house, promoting an open-air, outdoor lifestyle. The house, inside and out, is in excellent condition, and has had not significant alterations except for the installation of a roof-top HVAC unit and ductwork.

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### Narrative Description

#### Site:

The street, Sierra Vista Drive, is a narrow, twisty paved road which curves around the rugged hills on the south side of Redlands. The road was constructed after the Auerbacher's bought the lot. The road was later extended to allow for additional single-family residences, nestled into the hillside, and are the only structures on the street. The Auerbacher lot extends north from the street, downhill approximately 200 feet to the edge of the Redlands Country Club, and the house sits on the south edge of the lot, just below street level.

The house is situated lengthwise northwest by southeast approximately 110 feet by 23 feet. The southwest elevation of the house, except for the attached carport, is solid wall with clerestory windows along the length, and is mostly shrouded by the mature foliage from a view from the street. The northeast elevation of the house is mostly floor-to-ceiling glass windows, incorporating every element of the environment into the view from the interior of the house: rose garden, immediate landscaping, Redlands Country Club, and the San Bernardino Valley and Mountains beyond. The remainder of the lot is landscaped in a seemingly random design, mimicking but not exactly copying native vegetation. Natural-surface footpath switchbacks down and up the property.

The neighbor house on the northwest is largely obscured from view by landscaping. No other neighbor houses are visible.

See Continuation Sheet, Section 7, p 1

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1952

**Significant Dates**

1952

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

**Cultural Affiliation**

NA

**Architect/Builder**

Neutra, Richard

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

1952 is the date of construction.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Auerbacher Home meets National Register criterion C because it exhibits the distinct characteristics of a mid-century modern home. Its long, low forms, flat roof with deep eaves, organic massing, minimal use of ornamentation, asymmetrical design, and expansive use of glass make the house a notable example of the style. The Auerbacher home also represents the work of Master Architect Richard Neutra and represents a distinct phase of his career. The melding of interior and exterior environments, the use of mitered windows, the emphasis on function, the incorporation of his signature "spider leg" load-bearing support wall, and the meticulous attention to detail are constant features of Neutra's work, while the introduction of warm, natural materials throughout the home provides evidence of his shift from a "machine" aesthetic.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Auerbacher Home meets National Register criterion C because it exhibits the distinct characteristics of a mid-century modern home. One of several excellent Mid-Century Modern houses built in Redlands in the 1950s and 60s, the Auerbacher Home is the only one designed and built by renowned architect Richard Neutra, who was a family friend to the Auerbachers. Frederick and Mary Jane Auerbacher commissioned Neutra in 1951 to design their residence in Redlands, along with a mountain retreat in the San Bernardino Mountains. They wanted to hire a prominent architect, and briefly considered Frank Lloyd Wright, but decided on Mr. Neutra in part because they were acquainted with him through Mr. Auerbacher's mother.

In McAlester's A Field Guide to American Houses, a description of American houses since 1940, labeling them as American Contemporary or American International, captures the essence of the Auerbacher Home. "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."

Purely and simply, the Auerbacher home displays these characteristics, and is a stellar example of the Mid-century Modern home. The post and beam construction allows for a continuous, open flow throughout the house, and simplifies the space, while the expanse of floor-to-ceiling windows on the north elevation opens the inside to the outside, and helps to meld the house into the site.

The Auerbacher Home reflects the defining characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style, including the flat roof, metal-casement windows flush with exterior wall, smooth, unornamented wall surfaces with no decorated detailing at doors or windows and the asymmetrical façade. Interior walls appear to float, interior and exterior spaces are blurred, walls cantilever past each other. In the master bedroom, the windows wrap around the building corners, and along the north exterior wall of the living space, the floor-to-ceiling plate glass windows open the entire space to the outdoors. The house epitomizes the International style's primary purpose: functionalism, with the building serving its inhabitant. If ornamentation did not serve the inhabitants, discard it; indeed, Neutra did just that.

See Continuation Sheet, Section 8, p 1

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Building Permits, Building and Safety Division, City of Redlands

Department of Parks and Recreation Form 523L - Recorded by Eric R. Shamp, AIA, 03.30.03

French, Christine Madrid, "Introduction," The Forum Journal, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Summer, 2010.

Interview with Mrs. Mary Jane Auerbacher, 03.30.03, with Eric Shamp, at 121 Sierra Vista Drive, Redlands CA.

Interview with Mrs. Mary Jane Auerbacher, 07.22.11, with Sherli Leonard, at 121 Sierra Vista Drive, Redlands CA.

Lamprecht, Barbara Mac, Richard Neutra - Complete Works, TASCHEN America, New York, 2000.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee, A Field Guide to American Houses.

Schwartz, Penny, "Neutra Magic," Inland Empire Magazine, Riverside CA, September 2004.

Terry, Sara, "Modern Again: California revives its love affair with Modernism and the sleek American home," Christian Science Monitor, August, 2001.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>11</u>	<u>486107</u>	<u>3764535</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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2                             
 Zone Easting Northing

4                             
 Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)  
 APN: 176-171-26-0000

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)**  
 The boundary encompasses the parcel the Auerbacher Home is located on.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Sherli Leonard  
 organization Redlands Conservancy date August 9, 2011  
 street & number 31534 Highview Drive telephone (909) 389-7810  
 city or town Redlands state CA zip code 92373  
 e-mail sleonard@keyway.net

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
 Redlands  
 A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See Continuation Sheets

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mary Jane Auerbacher  
street & number 121 Sierra Vista Drive telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Redlands state CA zip code 92373

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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**DESCRIPTION CONT.**

**Exterior:**

Exterior materials consist of 1 1/4" tongue-and-groove stained redwood sheathing on walls, garden walls, and eaves; white stucco on walls; textured glass in southwest-facing clerestory windows; clear plate glass on other windows; aluminum casement window frames; steel floor-to-ceiling window frames and sliding doors; and painted steel and wood structural elements. The flat roof is not visible but is a built-up (or modified bitumen) roof.

The entrance is on the southwest side of the house, and is all but obscured by a long hedgerow and a carport, approximately 35 feet from the edge of the street. From the street, the blacktop driveway ends in the attached carport. A path of flagstone steps leads to the main door from the blacktop pullout at the street, adjacent to the carport. A wall between the carport and the house is sheathed on both sides by 1 1/4" tongue and groove redwood, as is the exterior wall surrounding the door. In the space west of this wall is the play yard, approximately 20' x 30', paved in red brick. The door is a standard-sized door veneered in birch paneling. The remainder of the southwest elevation is solid wall, sheathed in tongue and groove redwood, topped by the clerestory windows. The south-facing clerestory windows direct sunlight, intense in both summer and winter, downward into the rooms.

The southeast elevation is largely solid wall, with expansive windows in the extreme southeast corner of the structure.

The northeast elevation is mostly floor-to-ceiling windows, exposing most of the interior space to cool light. A patio, paved with 30" x 14" concrete pavers set in redwood frames, projects away from the solarium, kitchen, and living room spaces for a space approximately 50' x 15'. Situated on the patio, next to the living room windows/doors, a 6' diameter round, low wooden table, designed by Neutra, mimics a similar table on the interior. Mrs. Auerbacher said her children regularly used the table for "performances." Tongue and groove redwood sheathes the four-foot-wide closed overhang, laid northwest by southeast, and is an extension of the interior ceiling, providing the illusion of one continuous indoor/outdoor space.

The northwest elevation, like the southeast, is a solid wall.

**Interior:**

The floor plan of the 2,300 square foot house is bisected longitudinally by a northwest-southeast structural spine, and spaces are organized laterally along the spine in terms of function. The southeast end of the spine serves as the bedroom wing, with three small bedrooms positioned north of the spine and one bath and the master bedroom with bath providing the terminus of the spine. Throughout most of the space, the ceiling height is 9 feet.

Upon entering through the front door on the southwest elevation you are immediately in a large open central living area which extends the width of the building, on either side of the spine. Along the southwest wall of this space, the open area provides the space for Mrs. Auerbacher's music recitals. On the southeast wall of this room is the large fireplace, with ashlar-cut stone over the top half, and stainless steel cabinets on the lower half of the wall on either side of the fireplace. Birch cabinets top the counter over the stainless steel cabinets. At the top of the fireplace wall, two mirrors, approximately 4' x 1', fill in the space between the ceiling and the cabinets, mirroring the tongue and groove redwood ceiling sheathing, providing the illusion of a continuous ceiling from the living space into the bedroom wing.

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Typical of Neutra's work, the massive fireplace wall of stone is situated in the living room at right angles with the exterior north wall. In her book Richard Neutra - the Complete Works, Barbara Mac Lamprecht wrote, "Fireplaces are positioned at right angles to the glass so 'nature is always at the periphery of one's eye'." (p 52) In this case, the eye picks up the vast openness of the space north of the house.

The northeast living room wall projects 2 feet out from the bedroom wing exterior wall, and a mitered window on the north side of the fireplace reveals the continuous tongue and groove redwood sheathing of the overhang flowing to and beyond the extreme southeast end of the house. This feature brings more southern light into the living room space. The northeast wall is floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding doors which open to the patio. The upper half of the living space northwest wall is mirrored, as is the half southwest wall of the dining area, thus reflecting the outside landscaping.

So integral is the outside world to the interior of the house, that Neutra added the low mirror at the back of the dining room, parallel to the window system, which reflects the landscaping outside. This enables every guest in the dining room to be part of the outside space and view the mountains beyond.

The living space is carpeted in tight-weave white carpet (non-original), and the walls are a combination of birch veneer plywood, tongue and groove redwood cladding, and a small amount of white drywall. Two metal 4" diameter poles, set at the ends of half walls, support the spine. They are painted to resemble wood.

The furniture in the living space was designed by Neutra to match the built-in furniture, and he also chose the colors for draperies and furniture. Six small chairs, with bent birch legs and upholstered back and seat connected by a single bent piece of birch, and two upholstered easy chairs with birch features and low backs surround the 18-inch-high, six-foot diameter walnut table in front of the fireplace. The table was designed to be tipped on an edge and rolled out of the room into a closet at the end of the hallway to make room for music recitals. Mrs. Auerbacher reported that Neutra's secretary came to the house and drew the radius of the coffee table on wrapping paper. She also said Neutra often came to the visit to check if the furniture was in the right place.

Throughout the living space, the metal treatment is subdued compared to the amount of stone and wood elements, seeming to soften the feel of the space. The duplication of materials inside and outside connects the house to the landscape. Lamprecht describes this room as serene, yet attuned to every possible need for Mrs. Auerbacher's sheet music and instrument storage. Also in the living room is Mr. Auerbacher's "instrument," a built-in phonograph system, disguised as a piece of the cabinet system. All the cabinetry in the house is of birch paneling, a smooth, tightly-grained light wood which has its own glassy look

With the clerestory windows on the southwest wall, the small window next to the fireplace, the floor-to-ceiling windows on the northeast, and the windows from the kitchen and solarium, sunlight filters into the living space at all times of the day.

At the northwest end of the spine, the solarium, approximately 14' x 20', incorporates the patio between the carport and the house with floor-to-ceiling windows on the southwest wall. By closing the sliding glass door between the kitchen and the solarium and opening the sliding glass doors into the patio, the solarium becomes an outdoor room, once again blurring the boundary between the natural and built environments.

The floor-to-ceiling fixed windows on the northeast side are topped by a one-foot space between the windows and the ceiling. This space is filled with sliding windows which, when opened, allow air to flow through the room in a convection system to utilize passive cooling techniques.

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The southwest/northwest corner of the room is filled with built-in cabinets which originally stored the Auerbacher children's toys and supplies.

The solarium's northeast wall projects two feet from the northeast exterior wall of the living space, and a window fills the space, mimicking the window next to the fireplace and allowing a view the entire length of the house. This feature brings southeast light into the solarium and permits the continuous flow of the tongue and groove redwood sheathing on the overhang.

Between the living space and the solarium, the kitchen is situated to permit Mrs. Auerbacher to stand at the sink and watch the children playing in the solarium and the patio. The birch paneled wall on the southeast side has a window into the dining room which opens the view from the kitchen to the far end of the house. The ceiling in the kitchen is lower than in the rest of the house, proportional to the space of the narrow room. The counter is covered with the original six-inch square white ceramic tiles.

In the bedroom wing, three 8' x 12' bedrooms are situated north from the spine, and all have one wall paneled in birch, one in tongue and groove redwood like the ceiling, and one half-wall with a window on the northeast side.

At the southeast end of the spine, the master bedroom connects the inside to the outside by a configuration of mitered windows in the southeast corner, leading the eye out into the leafy landscaping and a quiet corner pool. The northeast wall line extends approximately six-feet beyond the southeast wall, ending in a signature "spider leg" load-bearing support pole. With the overhang sheathed in the same tongue and groove redwood, the configuration gives the sense of a continuous flow and floating space. The small mirror on the lower half of the northeast wall, connected to the southeast window, brings in yet more southeast light and reflects the landscaping, today a veritable forest.

**Alterations:**

The house has benefited from the fact that it is still occupied by the original owner. It is in near perfect, original condition, closely resembling (apart from the vegetation) photos taken of it in the 1950s, just after construction. Since construction, the landscape has grown considerably, masking the house from the road, and obstructing the formerly clear view of the golf course below.

The only exterior alterations to the house consist of the addition of a rooftop air conditioner in 1977 with associated exposed ductwork. Ductwork was installed above the roof as there is no attic or plenum space to conceal it. In 1958, a roofing permit was issued to install a built-up (or modified bitumen) roof. It is not known whether this was an alteration.

The interior has remained unaltered, except for the replacement of the carpeting and kitchen flooring.

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Section number 8 Page 1**Narrative Cont.**

The Auerbachers had three main functions: the home would provide plenty of supervisable play area for their three children; it must supply ample light, fresh air, and views toward San Gorgonio Peak and the San Bernardino Mountain range to the north; and it must have ample space for socializing and for Mrs. Auerbacher's music recitals.

Neutra designed the large living space to be flexible, with the music space along the solid southwest wall so the "audience," with their backs to the vistas, would focus their attention on the performers. For socializing, the attention shifted toward the northeast floor-to-ceiling glass walls, which opened to the patio beyond.

The bedroom wing, small and private, covers only one-third of the floor space, while the living spaces, including the living room, dining room, kitchen, solarium, and patios, cover two-thirds, focusing the bulk of the house on the functions of the Auerbacher family.

The Auerbacher property is situated along the south boundary of the historic Redlands Country Club, a particularly desirable and moderately remote location which provides privacy while allowing the openness needed to incorporate the views. Lying low on the highest part of the property and tucked into the north-facing hill slope, the house serves as an extraordinary example of the best qualities of the modern design. It works with the configuration of the land, creating a synergistic relationship between man and nature.

The asymmetrical exterior design, with entrance set off-center in the southeast elevation and the north patio set off-center, contributes to an open, informal and unpretentious atmosphere.

By incorporating passive heating and cooling systems, such as the high sliding windows in the solarium and the south-light-diffusing clerestory windows on the southwest wall of the spine, Neutra accomplished what today's "green" architects work toward. While the Auerbachers later added a refrigerated air conditioning system, Neutra's design still functions in the manner envisioned. LEED architect Eric Shamp describes the Mid-Century Modern homes as requiring the owners to accept different parameters of comfort in order to take in the surrounding environment.

Throughout the house, surfaces slide past each other from inside to outside, and the furniture, with cantilevered forms, seems to float, a sense enhanced by mirrored surfaces. The sense of not being constrained by walls, such as is accomplished with the mitered windows in the master bedroom and living room, is difficult to pull off, says Shamp. "But it is worth the effort. It blurs the space between inside and outside."

Richard Neutra

The Auerbacher Home also meets National Register criterion C because it represents the work of Master Architect Richard Neutra. Neutra was born in Vienna, Austria in 1892 in the midst of a cultural upheaval that produced such artists and scholars as musician Arnold Schönberg, painter Gustav Klimt, and psychologist Sigmund Freud. Neutra's interest in architecture stemmed from an interest in the "consequences of a lethal physical environment" and by his fascination with the public works of Vienna's leading architect, Otto Wagner. In 1911, he entered the Technical University to study architecture. His education was interrupted in 1914 when he enlisted as an officer to serve in the Balkans in World War I.

Upon continuing his education, Neutra became friends with fellow Austrian architect Adolf Loos. He spent time drafting for him during the day and drinking with him in the evenings. From Loos, Neutra learned to appreciate the stripping of ornamentation and the lasting qualities of anonymous craftsmanship. In her book Richard Neutra

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- Complete Works, Barbara Mac Lamprecht describes Neutra's work as "deceptively, apparently, neutral, like a blank canvas, except that his 'canvas' has been carefully primed as a backdrop for human endeavor."

Loos also influenced Rudolph Schindler, another of Neutra's Viennese contemporaries. Neutra first met Schindler, who was five years older, at the Technical University. Upon graduation, Schindler moved to Chicago, eventually working for Frank Lloyd Wright. Neutra stayed in Europe through World War I, eventually moving to the United States in the mid 1920s. Neutra spent his first few years in the United States working for Wright, and later moved to Los Angeles, where he met up again with Schindler. In the late 1920s both Neutra and Schindler received commissions from Philip and Leah Lovell, which garnered each of them reputations as rising stars in residential Southern California design.

Although Neutra is internationally known, the majority of his work is in the Los Angeles area. In the Redlands area, he built three projects: the Auerbacher main resident, the Auerbacher mountain home in Luring Pine, and a medical office on North Waterman in San Bernardino.

Lamprecht cited the outstanding quality of Richard Neutra's buildings as usually being considered in "terms of architectural form-making, as superb in composition, as elegant in style." Yet, she says, "His endless curiosity about his fellow human . . . was his life's work." She quotes Neutra as saying, "[The architect] cannot arbitrarily indulge in self-expression but rather is a learned doctor who must understand Homo sapiens thoroughly - before commencing treatment." (p 42) To get at what his clients, his fellow humans, needed in the way of a home, he would interrogate them, and insist that husbands and wives separately submit essays answering specific questions. Such was his interest in what humans wanted in the way of a home.

Clearly, the Auerbacher Home reflects Neutra's emphasis on function as he centered the house on the large and open living spaces for the family's social and musical needs. In the design phase, the Auerbachers met regularly with Neutra to plan for their three requirements. Mr. Auerbacher traveled several times to Neutra's Los Angeles office to clarify their needs so the building could best serve them. As Mrs. Auerbacher was pregnant at the time, Neutra sent his secretary to interview her about her needs and desires for the house.

Neutra's meticulous sense of composition and detail are evident throughout the Auerbacher house. A corner of the master bedroom features two panes of glass, butt-glazed at a right angle, one pane transitioning to a mirror below waist height that reflects the image of a small outdoor fish pond into the room. Bedroom walls stop just short of the ceiling, allowing the same redwood siding that sheathes the exterior of the house to run continuously on the ceiling for the length of the house. A mirror is placed next to the built-in dining table to allow all guests seated at the table to enjoy the view of San Gorgonio Peak. At one point during construction, Neutra is said to have demanded that a mason rebuild the fireplace because he laid the stones too symmetrically.

Neutra designed a unique structural feature, the "spider-leg" load-bearing support pole, and incorporated it into the Auerbacher home at the northeast/southeast corner, in the master bedroom. Both exterior walls in this corner join together in the mitered window, but the beam for the northeast wall continues six feet beyond the corner to a single support pole. This "spider-leg" supported the eaves, and opened up the inside to the outside.

The design of this residence marks a shift in Neutra's style. His projects designed prior to 1951 exhibit a "machine" aesthetic that tended towards antiseptic surfaces and manufactured materials. On occasions when a natural material such as exposed wood was unavoidable (for example, a timber column), Neutra would have it painted silver to give it a metallic, machined look. The Auerbacher house is a decided change in this design approach. Here, Neutra has tempered his previously cold aesthetic with warm stained redwood sheathing, light birch paneling, and exposed wooden structural members actually painted a wood-like brown. In one location in the living room, Neutra went so far as painting the tubular steel columns brown to match the wood, a significant

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reversal from his style of just a year before. This deft combination of organic and sleek modern was the beginning of the most successful phase of Neutra's career.

Another significant component of the house, the terrace on the northeast side, also illustrates a key feature of Neutra's work. Lamprecht says the nucleus of Neutra's houses rests with the terrace "so the division between inside and outside is but a thin pane of glass . . . so nothing can interfere with the potent and primal relationship" between human and nature. (p 52) The Auerbacher house incorporates an excellent example of the terrace, now enveloped by the landscaping, tying to the interior, via the wall of glass doors, to the land and space beyond. This is one of Neutra's classic transitions between the site and the building.

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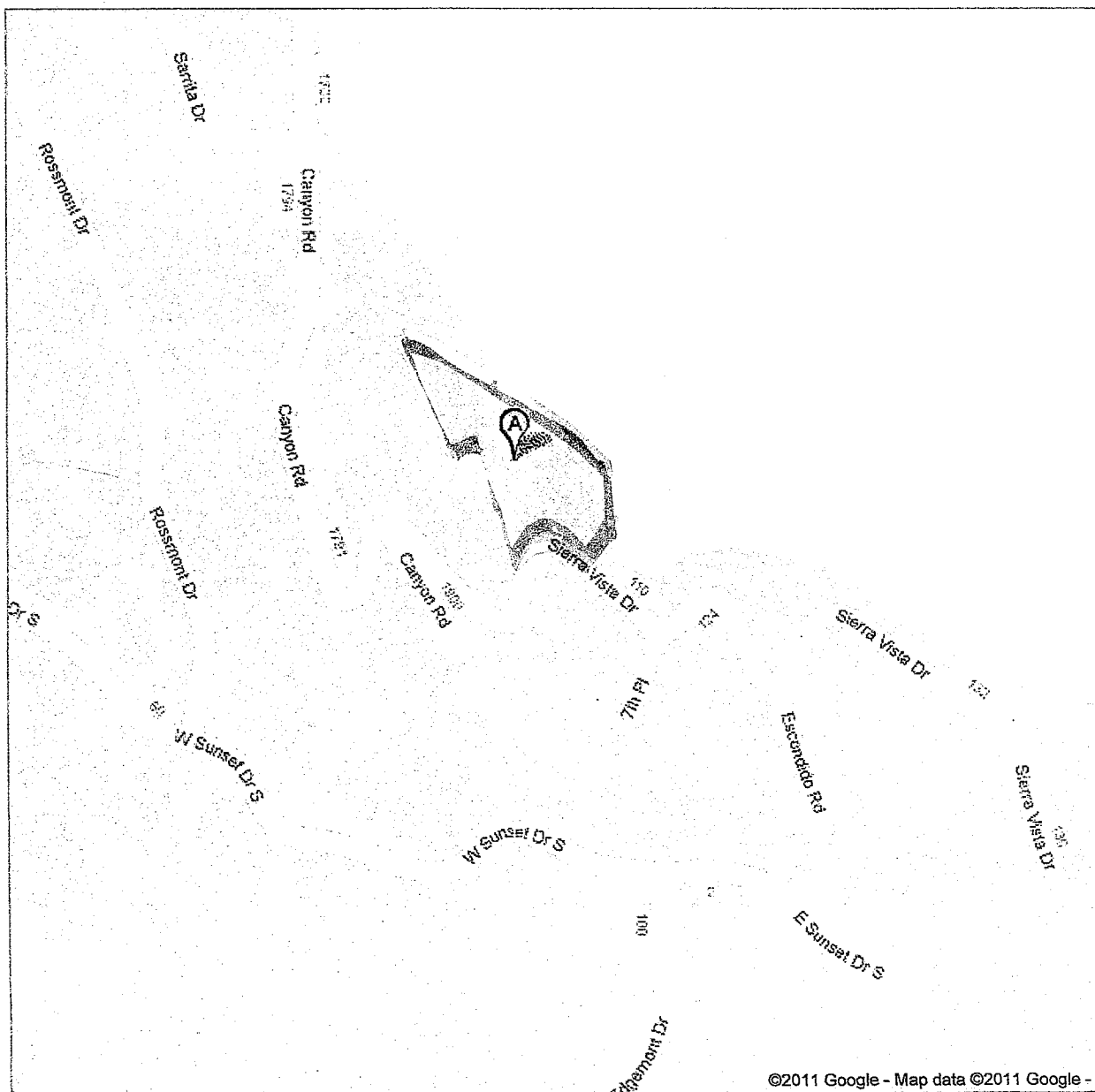
County and State

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DESCRIPTION

121 Sierra Vista Drive, Redlands, San Bernardino County, CA



9/16" = 200 ft.

