

HAROLD THIEDERMAN RESIDENCE
205 Lake Drive, Kensington, CA, 94708
HISTORIC RESOURCES EVALUATION (HRE)

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Intro

The subject of this historic resource evaluation (HRE) is a single parcel of land (APN: 570-231-018) with an associated dwelling, primarily consisting of the personal residence of architect Harold L. Thiederman, along with a range of attached additions. The bulk of this effort is focused on the Thiederman-designed addition of the residence, originally completed in 1949, and later expanded in 1964. Thiederman made two subsequent additions in the 1980s to the overall footprint.

What follows is a study assessing the architectural and historical significance of the Harold Thiederman Residence, located at 205 Lake Drive, Kensington, CA, 94708. It was prepared at the request of Ms. Aya Sugano, current owner of the property. The parcel of land that this single-family residence occupies is bordered by Lake Drive and Ye Olde School Path and faces the Tilden Natural Area on the northwest side. The 1964 remodel and expansion of this single-family residence was designed by architect Harold Thiederman, based in San Francisco, and was completed in 1953. Thomas Church was the landscape architect of the grounds of the campus.

In understanding the potential eligibility of both the individual buildings and the overall complex to fall into the California Register of Historic Resources, this document outlines recommendations for consideration to deal with the existing structure as the necessity to rehabilitate the property for safe occupation is currently in the works. This report deals with both the historical import of the architect of the Harold Thiederman Residence and the design specifics of this project as it relates to his career for the purpose of understanding which portion of the existing residence to preserve as part of the historical heritage of the structure.

It is recognized that Thiederman had a significant role in the development of a design language defining the post-war architectural heritage in the San Francisco Bay Area and his historical importance is amply documented in peer-reviewed literature. What is in question is the extent of his overall architectural vision as it pertains to the original dwelling, the actual expansion Thiederman designed, documented, and permitted, and the other two portions he designed, but did not submit for permit, and for which there are no original drawings and/or records. It is argued that the cumulative result of the existing condition of the residence is comprehensively a unified design by the same architect, therefore falling into criteria 2 and 3 as defined in the guidelines of the California Register of Historic Resources.

In this report an argument is crafted maintaining that both the architecture and the architect meet the eligibility criteria for their designation as a landmark. In fact, it is acknowledged that substantive portions of the original 1949 building, of the 1964 and 1980s additions by Harold Thiederman together with specific garden elements maintain to this day coherent architectural traits comprehensively eligible for designation. The last addition to the house- an unpermitted observatory above roof level, it is argued instead, does not meet the eligibility criteria and can be treated as a non-essential structure to the architectural legacy of Contra Costa County and California at large.

The purpose of this evaluation effort is to specifically determine if the Thiederman Residence does or does not qualify as historic resources per the California Register of Historical Resources (CR) criteria and with respect to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This evaluation effort is based on:

- Multiple site visits to survey and record the residence and its setting;
- Research visits to the Environmental Design Library at the University of California, Berkeley;

Archival research of the Avery Architectural Index, Art Index, AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, and Access Newspaper digital archives;
 Site visits to the Alumni House at UC Berkeley, Kaiser Clinic in Oakland, and two private residences, the De Golyer Residence of 1955 and the Jenkins House of 1956 both in Piedmont designed by the Mayhew and Thiederman practice;
 Research visits to the former West Coast Editor of Architectural Record Elizabeth Kendall Thompson's archive concerning Clarence Mayhew;
 Consultation of the Oral History of architects Vernon DeMars, Joseph Esherick, and William Wurster.

It is of note that the papers of neither Harold Thiederman nor those of Clarence Mayhew are in any public or private institutions. At the time of writing this report, those collections are nowhere to be found.

Evaluation Summary

As detailed herein, the 1964 remodeling and addition, the 1980 addition by Thiederman and selective hardscape elements of the garden area as well as the entry gate at street level meet a range of applicable historic resource criteria, so it qualifies as a historic resource under the CR's historical resource inventory. No subsequent additions to those mentioned above qualify.

The history of the Thiederman Residence and its grounds is of no identifiable historic importance for the purpose of this evaluation.

The architecture of Thiederman Residence is a historically worthy piece in the three of the four expansions. Its architectural expression is a fusion of regional and oriental influences treated in reciprocity with the surrounding landscape. It belongs to a particular phase of Northern California Modernism where emphasis on the respect of natural materials and the porosity of the built form to its surrounding natural environments were first principles generative of a powerful architectural tradition. Furthermore, its architect is directly associated with Clarence Mayhew, one of the most consequential protagonists of what will be later defined as the Bay Region Style, a later questioned umbrella term encompassing a collective of architects operating in direct opposition to the Modern architecture directly transplanted from Europe. Given the associate role that Thiederman had in Mayhew's practice for over two decades, it is highly likely that he designed himself many of the residences given also the fifteen-year age difference between Mayhew and Thiederman.

Further, as noted, the fourth and last expansion of the house concerns the construction of an observatory built in the late 1980s, does not qualify as historic resources, as it meets none of the historical criteria.

Thus, this evaluation effort concludes that the original 1949 residence, its 1964 and 1980s remodeling and expansion by Hal Thiederman, selected items of hardscape in the garden areas, and the entry gate leading to the property comprises the historic resource.

Author's Professional Qualifications

PIERLUIGI SERRAINO , Ph.D., FAIA

Pierluigi is a California registered architect and author of architectural history books and peer-reviewed articles on Mid-Century modern architecture in the United States, with a particular focus on California, and on architectural photography. His books have been published by Phaidon, Taschen, Monacelli Press, Routledge, John Wiley & Sons, and Birkhäuser, among others. Some of

his books are *Modernism Rediscovered* (Taschen, 2000), *Eero Saarinen* (Taschen, 2005), *The Creative Architect* (Monacelli Press, 2016), *Ezra Stoller: A Photographic History of Modern American Architecture* (Phaidon, 2019) and *The Modern Garden: The Outdoor Architecture of Midcentury America* (Phaidon, 2019). He has written articles for *Perspecta*, *The Architectural Review*, *Architectural Record*, *Architectural Design*, *Architecture + Urbanism (A+U)*, *Journal of Architectural Education*, and *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, among other magazines and academic journals. He holds multiple professional and research degrees in architecture and architectural history from the University of Rome "La Sapienza", Southern California Institute of Architecture, and the University of California Los Angeles. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of California Berkeley in Design Theories and Methods. Using mainly qualitative research methods, all his writings are based on primary research, targeting untapped resources rarely accessed in the subjects he has published on.

Some of his writings have been assigned as mandatory readings in institutions of higher learning in the United States and Europe, have been used in legal cases concerning landmarking buildings of the Mid-Century vintage, referenced in preservation efforts, and leveraged in the real estate sector to establish value of Mid-Century inventory. Serraino has lectured in museums, universities, and symposia, among them Columbia University, the New School, and the Center of Architecture, all these in New York, Princeton University, the Graham Foundation in Chicago, the Seattle Art Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and the Monterey Design Conference.

Architect

HAROLD L. THIEDERMAN'S BIO (1922-2010).

Born in Boise, Idaho, on April 2, 1922, he received his education in his home state. In World War II, Thiederman served as a captain in the Air Corps in New Guinea and Okinawa for four years. After the war, he moved to the Bay Area to enroll in the architecture program at the University of California Berkeley graduating cum laude in 1948 with a bachelor's degree. There, he continued his studies earning a master's degree in 1949, winning the Silver Medal for general excellence. For his student outstanding performance Thiederman won the first-place award of the East Bay chapter of the American Institute of Architects in June 1949.¹

In Healdsburg, California, Harold "Hal" Thiederman married on December 6, 1947, Elivia Rose Martinelli, a fellow UC Berkeley, and settled in Berkeley. Elivia, a Healdsburg native, studied at the University of California Berkeley and graduated in 1947. She also studied art at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. Elivia became involved in the East Bay artistic and architectural scene. She was frequently helping in the home tours organized by the East Bay chapter of Women's Architectural League, an auxiliary group of the American Institute of Architects active from 1941 to the 1980s nationwide. Her engagement confirmed that the Thiedermans were in contact with the most creative designers of the San Francisco Bay Area throughout their lives.

Thiederman earned his California architectural license (C 1393) on September 21, 1951, and let it expire on April 30, 2005. Despite the family involvement with the AIA affairs, Thiederman was not a member of the American Institute of Architects and therefore no records are available on him from that organization. From 1962 till the rest of their lives, the couple lived at 205 Lake Drive Kensington Ca 94708, Contra Costa County.

¹ *Oakland Tribune*, Volume 150, Number 166, 15 June 1949, p. 11.

Early in his career, his professional focus was residential design. By 1959 he was an associate architect of noted architect Clarence Mayhew (1906–1994). Mayhew was one of the leading residential architects from the late 1930s, whose 1937 Manor House in Monte Vista, Orinda, was a widely published landmark project representative of the structural connection between architecture and site distinctive of the Northern California sensibility. Mayhew was also the designers of the primary house of David and Lucille Packard in the Los Altos Hills. Mayhew was one of the main writers of the catalog linked to the *Domestic Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Region* show held at the San Francisco Museum of Art from September 16–November 6, 1949. Thiederman in all likely absorbed the ideas and principles feeding that groundbreaking venue. Together with Mayhew, Thiederman is credited for the design of a single-family residence in Piedmont featuring the landscape design of Geraldine Knight Scott, appearing in the highly respected architectural journal *Progressive Architecture*, in a pivotal issue devoted to architecture and landscape.² That same house was also covered in the Sunday Section of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.³

During Thiederman's tenure in the office, Mayhew expanded over time his practice to encompass restaurants, universities and health care buildings. As an associate architect, Thiederman was involved in the design and construction of Alumni Hall at UC Berkeley, as well as the Kaiser Clinics in Napa, Walnut Creek, and Redwood City. Renowned architectural photographer Morley Baer photographed all these projects. These smaller projects share a quasi-domestic architectural quality that in the surviving example such as in the facility on Jackson St and 19th St currently occupied by the apartment building management and brokerage firm "Bay Apartment Advisors". In Seattle, the firm designed the Manning's "Taj Mahal" in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood in the early 1960s producing one of the most iconic examples of Googie architecture in the area. By 1965, Thiederman's authority in health care design was recognized in governmental publications as well.⁴

In 1969, from associate Thiederman became founder of a new company with Mayhew offering architectural design services.⁵ Mayhew-Thiederman Inc., was the name of the practice with offices located on the 6th floor at 121 2nd St, in San Francisco. In 1979 the Mayhew-Thiederman enterprise was still operating with exclusive focus on health care architecture. The Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Hayward and its later addition, and the Kaiser Medical Center in Terra Linda, are among the most notable projects.

He died on July 4, 2010 following a long illness.

Property and Building History and Description

THIEDERMAN RESIDENCE

The house was a remodel of an existing residence. It is virtually intact since the first sale of after the passing of the earliest owners occurred in 2022. While being a remodel, its architectural expression is typical of the Mid-Century modern period of the area. Its design is very disciplined and highly regulated by the geometric module of the plan visible in the spacing of the exterior windows. Except for the observatory added in the 1980s on the top floor, the building envelope has remained original. Its plan organization is functionally clear. Public areas on the top floor; sleeping quarters on the lower floor. This footprint is rectangular (approximately 1 to 3 ratio) with

² *Progressive Architecture*, MAY 1960, page 180.

³ *San Francisco Chronicle*. Sunday Section. August 16. 1959, p. 121.

⁴ *Medical care for the Aged: Executive hearings before the Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives*. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1965, p. 180.

⁵ *Daily Review*. November 12, 1969, page 18.

an attached short wing perpendicular to the bar and only at the lower level. Abundant natural light makes most spaces pleasant for day-to-day living. The outdoor decking is mostly intact, with some need of repair where dry rot is visible and overall refinishing. In essence this residence is a pavilion open to the landscape, partially screened from the public way due to the change in levels of the existing topography. The roof line is a very strong datum partially compromised by the later addition of the observatory.

The original home built in 1949 was a two-bedroom house on two levels. While the name of the architect is unknown, the pictures Thiederman took prior to remodeling his newly acquired home exhibit architectural features consistent with the modern language of architecture blossoming in the post-war years. The architecture shares similarities with the mid-career residential works of William Wurster. The east facing window wall toward the park showed the 4-foot module structuring the floor plans. An exterior staircase with open risers provided access to the level 2 deck. Horizontal exterior siding throughout gave a plain character to the residence. On the west side where the entry is located, there was an elaborate system made of thin wooden elements to drain the water from the roof provides the backdrop for the garden on the upper level. That feature is still existing and works as originally intended.

The Thiedermans bought the small house in 1962 and significantly expanded and remodeled its frame in 1964. The couple met in architecture school, and they jointly worked on the gardens and interiors. Elivia Thiederman was an artist working with tapestries and all the rooms in the house were hung with her distinctive yarn tapestries inspired by African art and religious themes. The couple designed the Japanese garden that surrounded their home. As the remodel and expansion of their house was in the works, the couple was exposed to various residential designs through their social circles heavily influenced by Japanese architecture. In all likelihood the experiencing of Japanese inspired spaces, of which the 1959 Ewer Residence in Berkeley by Robert Klemmedson, was an oriental influence widely shared in the architects' community of the period.

The 1964 intervention originated numerous changes. Harold Thiederman increased the length of the house by three 4-foot modules toward the south and created a deep deck on the upper level directly in front of the living room. He cut a portion of the roof and raised it to create a lantern, extending the beams with distinct terminations he picked up in the extension of the beam supporting the deck, and in the trellis, he added to the front area. On the entry side, Thiederman created an outdoor space with a square penetration in the roof overhang enabling a tree to grow through it. The 4-foot module of the house is readable in the outdoor extension of the wood framing with two infill panels turned into pivot doors acting as light exterior dividers between the entry path from the street level and the deck area in front of the living room. Additionally, he expanded the upper floor half bath encroaching in the clearance of the deck area. It is at this stage that several landscape ideas matured to further reinforce a newly crafted Japanese character to the house, a stylistic quality the 1949 original cell did not have. Large round pavers on the gardens at the upper and lower levels, with a matching tube railing gave a three-dimensional flavor to the garden.

A later expansion loosely dated around the early 1980s per the family members' memory, concern the addition of a bedroom wing and full bathroom laid out perpendicular to the body of the main house toward the east side. The accessible roof above was directly aligned to face the dining room area. At present a sliding door separates this bedroom from the office area directly adjacent to it. There are no drawings available on this third expansion of the house, designed and built without submitting a permit.

The fourth and last expansion of the house concerns the construction of an observatory built in the late 1980s on top of the existing roof level. Thiederman became interested in astronomy later in his life and despite remaining an amateur of the field, he did invest time and resources in building this structure that currently houses a rather heavy telescope. There are no drawings available on this fourth expansion of the house, designed and built without submitting a permit.

There is a set of original blueprints. A site plan is missing, and the title block reveals only the architect's name. Neither the name of a structural engineer or a landscape architect are visible. Specifications are stapled to the drawing sheets and appear to be complete. There are no civil engineering drawings, nor a plot plan is available. Most of the casework appears original with built in bookshelves and walk in closets. The most powerful space is the living room under the skylight. An underdeveloped space of great promise is the void containing the spiral stairs connecting the top floor to the sleeping quarters. Currently this area is dark and uncelebrated. It also the only space within the interior where the full height of the house can be perceived and experienced.

From the public way, the entry experience is highly scripted. In that zone of the overall site, a very clear landscape design at first sight original is present. Even in its current state, it is a powerful visual anchor from the street and the house interiors (kitchen). In comparison, the landscape at the lower level is significantly underdeveloped. Missing is an overall concept of how the outdoors related to the house. There is an unclear definition of both roles and functions of hardscape and planting. A cornerstone of the architectural appeal of the Mid-Century residential heritage is its strong connection between the house and the landscape, which is in essence outdoor architecture. The gardens have a spatial character that in this section of the overall site is missing from this property.

Evaluation

The subject property has not previously been evaluated for historic resource eligibility. In order to address the requirements of CEQA specific to historic resources, the current effort has been requested and is intended to provide such historic resource evaluation. The following addresses the subject property and building using the California Register (CR).

California Register

To be eligible for listing on the CR, a resource must be historically significant at the local, state, or national level, under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. *It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;*

In its historic context, the Thiederman Residence constitutes an event of no historic importance. It does not meet CR criterion 1.

2. *It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;*

The persons directly associated with the Thiederman Residence are Harold "Hal" Thiederman and his wife Elivia Rose Martinelli. Harold was a pillar of the Clarence Mayhew practice and the residential portfolio of that office during the Thiederman's tenure share remarkable similarities in the oriental and more specifically Japanese architectural characters of those residences. He was consequential for the growth of the practice that went from a primarily single-family home practice to a mid-size office capable of handling large scale health care projects mostly for the

Kaiser organization. Elivia was a creative artist specializing in tapestry design and exhibiting her works in locale galleries. She was a cultured socialite championing design causes and campaigning for the broader dissemination of design literacy across her generation.

As a couple they supported each other in their endeavors and jointly worked on the interior and the gardens of their home. Their collaboration resulted in the coherent synthesis of a residential environment merging eastern and western influences in the floors plan, furnishing, and interior décor.

Consequently, Thiederman Residence has direct and intimate associations to persons important to history, so meets CR Criterion 2.

3. 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;

The Thiederman Residence, inclusive of related additions and alterations except for the fourth phase, embodies design and construction distinction in terms of its type, period, region, and methods. The architecture shows evident design intention beyond utility. It has a range of architectural design characteristics – the expression of its modular structure, the exterior pivoting panels, the beam extension with singular termination, an emphasis on horizontality, and its glazed exteriors under continuous low-lying eaves – these qualities amount to distinction relative to its mid-20th century design period and, in particular, relative to the characteristic work of its architect.

Thus, Thiederman Residence is representative of the work of the post-war California period and it is eligible for the CR under CR Criterion 3.

4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation;

Beyond the information presented herein, the subject property do not appear to have the potential to yield any additionally important historic information (prehistory is outside the scope of this historical effort). Thus, relative to the subject of this evaluation – potential historic resources – the Thiederman Residence does not meet CR Criterion 4.

Evaluation of Historic Integrity

The following requisitely addresses the extent to which the identified historic resource, the Thiederman Residence and its associated landscapes, retains its historic integrity. Integrity as defined by the National Register and taken into consideration under both NR and CR evaluations. Under both the NR and CR, a resource must be found to be significant based on one or more criterion and be found to retain its integrity based on a set of seven aspects with which to measure the extent to which the identified historic significance is conveyed in the present, as follows:

Location – Intact, as Thiederman Residence stands on its original site.

Design – The design of Thiederman Residence is mostly intact, largely so for the original 1949 residential cell and the 1964 and 1980 expansion. However, the disciplined character of the horizontal roof line has been substantially disrupted by the erection of an unpermitted observatory raising above the building envelope. Numerous elemental changes have been made

ranging from the front door, the door to the lower garden, the addition of acoustical tiles on the ceiling of both floors, covering the existing wooden soffit, the extensive painting of wood, and numerous additional miscellaneous items, have diminished the design integrity of the existing artifact.

Setting and Feeling – While the original 1949 building and the 1964 addition remain, the original setting has been changed with the third perpendicular 1980 expansion as the purity of the pavilion immersed in the landscape was somewhat lost with the resulting L-shape plan. The original 1949 building stood nearly alone in its setting. Since the 1964 elongation of the residence occurred, the only portion of the original site and building that are somewhat intact is at its southern end. Thus, setting and feeling are not intact.

Materials and Workmanship – As under the aspect of design, the materials and associated workmanship of the Thiederman Residence are mostly intact, largely so at its southern end. However, again, the northern end and the roof plane have been substantially changed. Consequently, materials and workmanship are largely intact yet partially lost.

Association – The important, identified associations are to the Thiedermans and Clarence Mayview. As the 1948 residence, two subsequent expansions and associated landscapes are largely extant and remained in use until very recently, these associations are intact.

In sum, the historic integrity of the identified historic resource – its ability to convey its significance in the present – is under several aspects lost (setting and feeling) or partially so (design, materials and workmanship). Yet, these losses are focused at the northern end of the Thiederman Residence, whereas the integrity of design, materials, workmanship and association are substantially intact in the southern end of the house, and in several associated designed site areas, landscapes and gardens.

In conclusion, as the historic integrity is substantially intact and focused at the southern end and the range of associated landscapes, based on this overall analysis, the identifiable historic resource consists of:

The original 1949 house;

The 1964 expansion designed by Thiederman;

The 1980 expansion designed by Thiederman;

The outdoor wooden elements, and the hardscape of the landscape the Thiedermans as a couple designed;

Conclusion

In sum:

The obvious and unequivocal historic resource is the intact original, Thiederman-designed residence plus selected hardscape elements of the landscapes directly associated with the residence. This important interrelationship consequently elevates the importance of entry path connecting the house to the street level. Whereas privately held entry path do not necessarily have historic resource potential, this internal lane is a fine and intact example of period design directly related to the original Thiederman-designed structure.

In conclusion, the original intact residence, two additions, and the hardscape elements of its landscape are clearly identifiable, definitively cohesive and directly associated with the architect: Harold Thiederman.

As detailed above, the Thiederman Residence and its directly associated landscapes, located at 205 Lake Drive, Kensington, 94708, meet CR criteria 2 and 3, so is eligible for listing on the CR.

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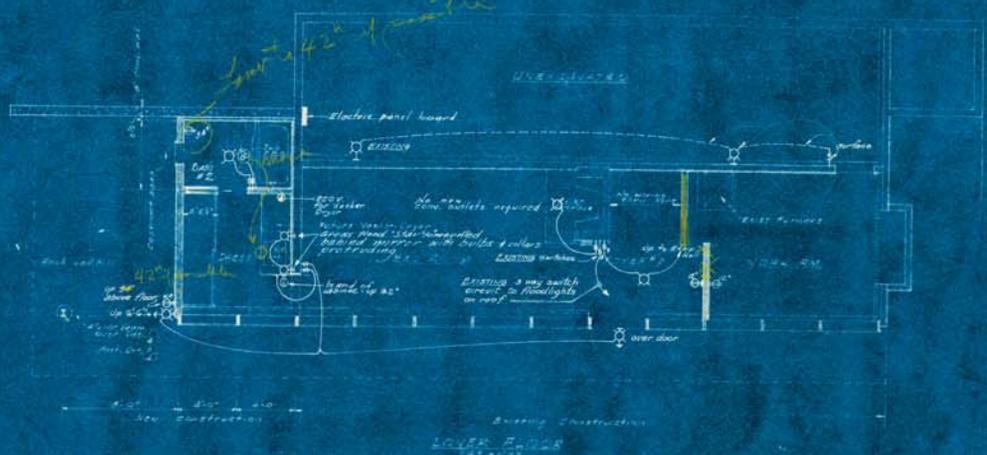
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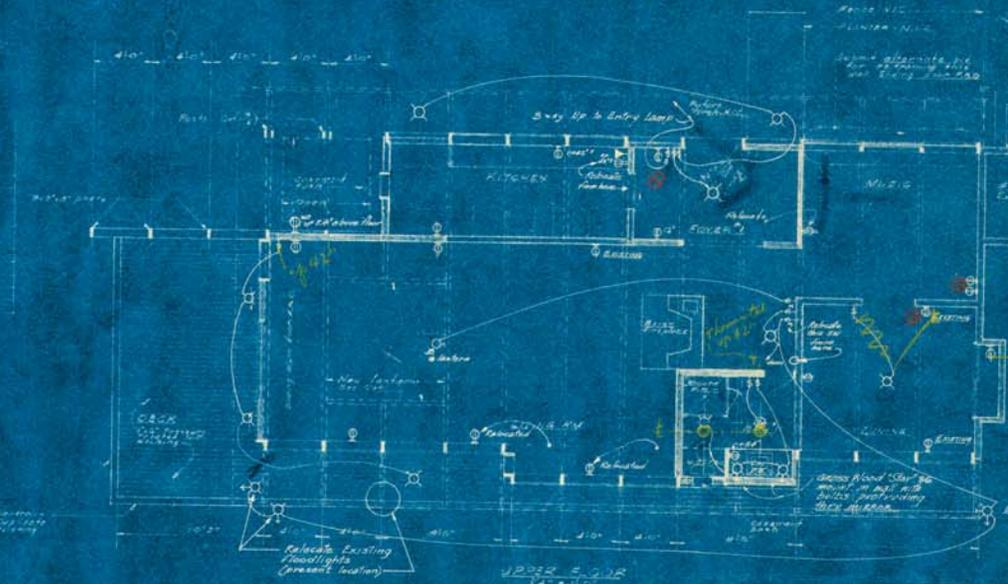
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LOWER FLOOR
1-2-70

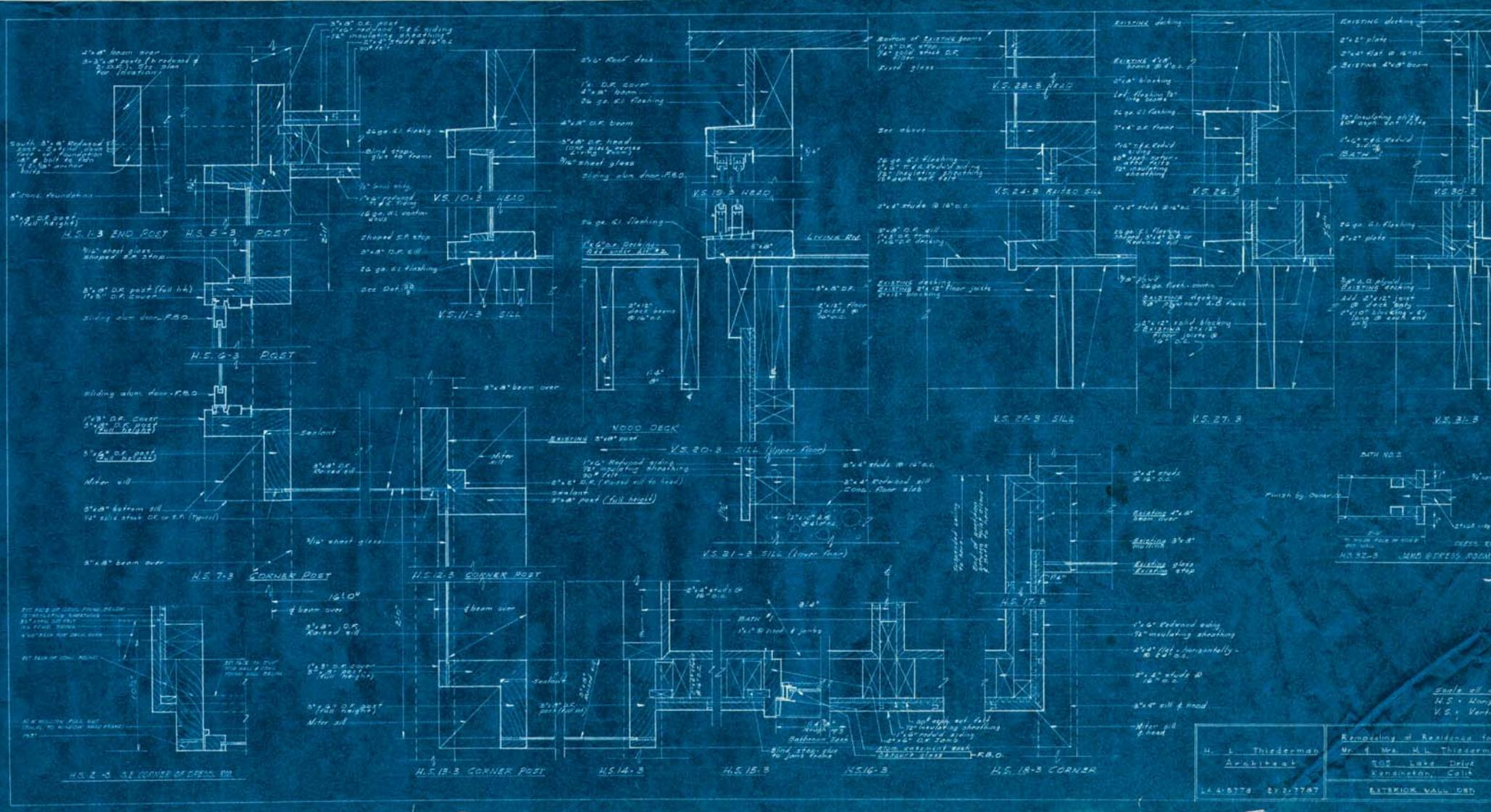


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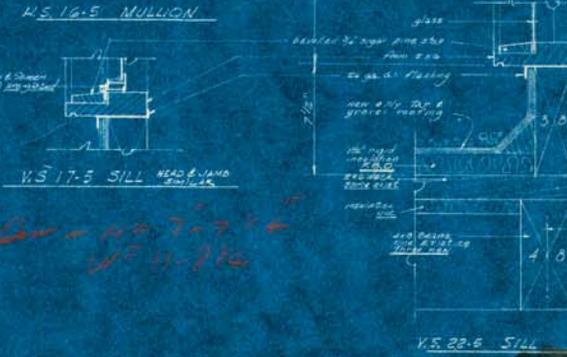
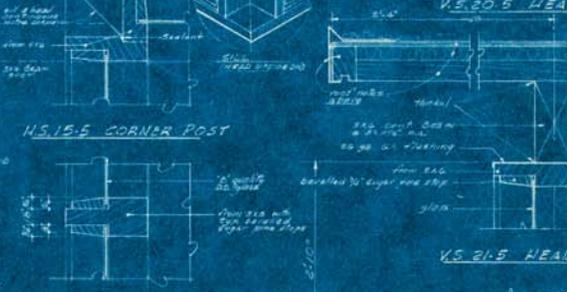
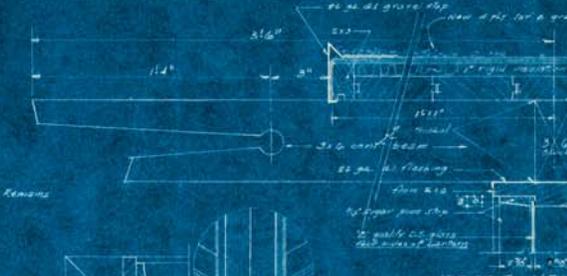
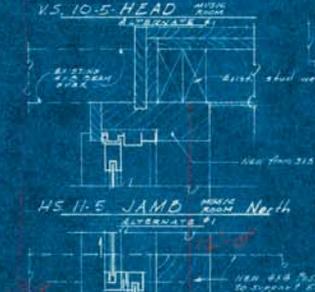
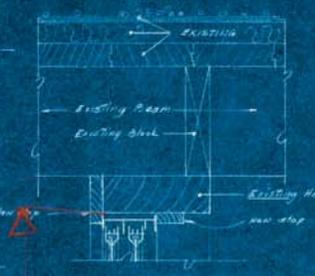
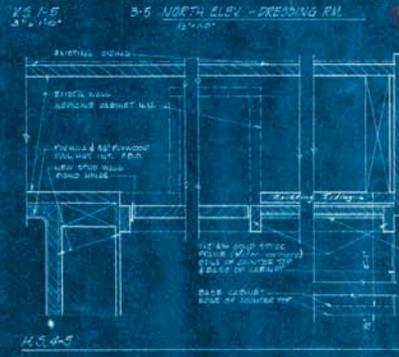
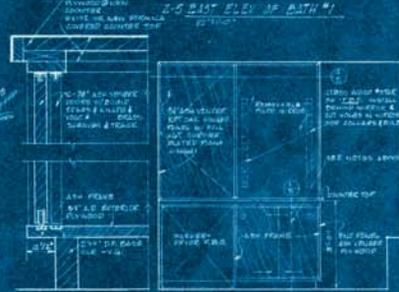
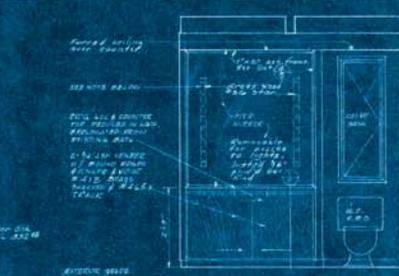
- NOTES:
- 1. ALL FIXTURES TO BE INSTALLED BY CONTRACTOR
 - 2. ALL FIXTURES ARE F.D.O.
 - 3. ALL SWITCHES TO BE INSTALLED BY CONTRACTOR
 - 4. ALL SWITCHES TO BE INSTALLED BY CONTRACTOR
 - 5. Light fixture
 - 6. Floodlight with aerial
 - 7. Convenience outlet with aerial
 - 8. All switches to be installed by contractor
 - 9. Floodlight with aerial
 - 10. Convenience outlet with aerial

H. J. Thompson
Architect

Remonding Residence, Inc.
No. 4 Ave. N.E. Shawarmen
E.O.S. - L.A.S. - B.A.S.
K.S. - L.A.S. - B.A.S.
ELECTRICAL PLANS



Remodeling of Residence for
 Mr. & Mrs. W.L. Thiederman
 102 Lake Drive
 Kensington, Calif.
 L.A. 4-8378 Cr. 2-7787
 EXTERIOR WALL DET.



The data used in this Plot Plan are available in Report LA 4-5776 dated Sept. 18, 1953. Prepared by the City of Los Angeles, Division of Planning & Research, Civil Engineer & Surveyor.

PLOT PLAN
 LA 4-5776
 Portion of Lots 15 & 20, Block 5
 Beverly Hills Addition, Kensington,
 Santa Monica County

H. Thierdeman Architect LA 4-5776 EXT. 7787	Remodeling of Residence for Mr. & Mrs. H. L. Thierdeman 208 Lake Drive Kensington, Calif.
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