

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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PLEASE NOTE

National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nominations are considered **drafts** until listed by the Keeper of the National Register (Keeper). Nominations can be changed at the State Historical Resources Commission meeting based on comments received by, but not limited to:

- Local governments;
- Owners;
- State Historic Preservation Officer;
- Office of Historic Preservation Staff;
- State Historical Resources Commission; and
- General public.

National Register nominations may also be changed by the Keeper prior to listing. Nominations needing substantive changes may require recirculation to all interested parties for additional review and comment.

California Register of Historical Resources nominations are considered **drafts** until approved for listing or formally determined eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission. Nominations can be changed at the State Historical Resources Commission meeting based on comments received by, but not limited to:

- Local governments;
- Owners;
- State Historic Preservation Officer;
- Office of Historic Preservation Staff;
- State Historical Resources Commission; and
- General public.

California Points of Historical Interest nominations are considered **drafts** until approved for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission and the Director of California State Parks. Nominations can be changed at the State Historical Resources Commission meeting based on comments received by, but not limited to:

- Local governments;
- Owners;
- State Historic Preservation Officer;
- Office of Historic Preservation Staff;
- State Historical Resources Commission;
- General public.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Norton, John, House

Other names/site number _____

2. Location

Street & Number 820 Burleigh Drive Not for Publication N/A

City or Town Pasadena Vicinity N/A

State California Code CA County Los Angeles Code 039

Zip Code 91105

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

entered in the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register _____
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register _____

removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____ _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
Contributing Noncontributing

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

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

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing
MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

roof Asphalt

walls Stucco, wood, glass, plastic

walls _____

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 7 Continuation Sheets.

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.
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.
- C
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Architecture

N/A

Period of Significance

Cultural Affiliation

1955

N/A

Significant Dates

Architect/Builder

1955

Buff, Straub and Hensman

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 8 Continuation Sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Please see Section 9 Continuation Sheets. See MPS Form.

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 #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: City of Pasadena Planning Department

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 0.28

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	391801	3		
2			4		

 See continuation sheet.Verbal Boundary Description
See continuation sheet.Boundary Justification
See continuation sheet.**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title	<u>Barbara Lamprecht, Architectural Historian</u>	
Organization	<u>Jones & Stokes</u>	Date <u>April 4, 2008</u>
Street & Number	<u>811 W. 7th Street, Suite 800</u>	Telephone <u>213-627-5376</u>
City or Town	<u>Los Angeles</u>	State <u>CA</u> Zip Code <u>90027</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Photographs

Representative photographs of the property.

Property Owner

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

Name	<u>Thomas & Augusta Parrington</u>	
Organization		Telephone <u>(626) 799-0042</u>
Street & Number	<u>820 Burleigh Drive</u>	
City or Town	<u>Pasadena</u>	State <u>CA</u> Zip Code <u>91105</u>

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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Norton House
Los Angeles County, California*

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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Description

Summary Paragraph

The Norton House is identified by Assessor Parcel Number 5716-003-009. The property is located within the legal San Rafael Heights Tract #80.28 more or less AC COM at most north corner of lot 78 TH 25/01' west 135.58 feet TH south 51/00'20" east 81.09 Feet TH north 38/59'40" E 125 feet to the northeast line of SD lot TH northwest there on 114.16 FT of legal lot 78. This is the parcel historically associated with the property. The property is located within the corporate limits of the City of Pasadena, California; specifically, within that portion of the city west of the Arroyo Seco. 820 Burleigh Drive is located at the southeast corner of Burleigh Drive and Laguna Road in Pasadena, California. A carport is highly visible from Burleigh Drive; the main house is depressed below street grade with its primary entrance facing west toward Burleigh Drive.

The Norton House is one of Buff, Straub and Hensman masterworks, distinguished by a mature, sensual sophistication and an elegance calibrated not with fancy but humble materials, including Formica that is still in use on kitchen countertops and rough concrete block, seen in the fireplace. The wood-and-glass one-story house was nominated because it reveals yet another way the architects resolved the issues of a unique and difficult site. It is distinguished from other Buff, Straub and Hensman houses of the period because the one-level house is a deceptively simple rectangle parallel to Burleigh Road with a few bump-out volumes cantilevered from the main box. Here, extensive terracing, stepping stones and broad staircases animate the relationship between house and slope, instead of the house stepping down the hill in articulated volumes as in other Buff, Straub and Hensman designs, or in houses that are pinwheel in plan. The result is a superbly composed house that nestles in mature and copious trees and plantings, virtually below road grade at the intersection of two small, quiet roads in southwest Pasadena.

Description

The house is unusual in the Buff, Straub and Hensman canon in following a 10' (rather than their more oft-used 6' or 8' module) structural rafter/beam span; however, custom dimensions frequently occur, seen in the French doors on the east end of the house, leading from the living room to the terrace, which are 35" x 7'0 each; the doors themselves appear to be centered but are not, as are other transparent/opaque relationships throughout the house. The house features extensive wood terracing, steps, landings and balconies around the house and leading up to street level and down to the garden below. The original paint color, an orange-red, is applied to much exterior trim and certainly serves to unify the composition so it reads as one piece. Just as importantly, the color of the trim, dancing through the composition, ties it to the colors of flowers abundant around the house, while the more neutral earth tones applied to the majority of the wood work, lightly anchors the house to the trees and the earth.

The strict application of the module in this long, narrow "box" results in a series of solids and voids: for example, the east-most module is open to nature and defines part of a broad deck leading to very broad stairs that connect the house to the lushly landscaped area below. The front door, situated under a covered porch, is located in the middle of the house, so that one turns to public space (the living room) on the east or to private space (the bedrooms) on the west. The concrete block fireplace (whose hearth faces east, in the west end of the living room) acts as the primary spatial divider here, and low-cost plywood and Formica shelves attached to the north side of the fireplace are convenient places for keys, knickknacks, etc. The living room itself contains a long, low, built-in sofa with storage below and open bookcase shelving above. A long skylight above the sofa and cleverly placed windows and storage provide different kinds of light throughout the day. Kitchens and bedrooms in the 2,000 sq. ft. house are small but capacious with storage.

Elements that can be read as modernized or traditional Japanese elements abound. These include the stair and rail detailing, the use of horizontal banding at the tops of doors and windows that again unify the interior of the house in the use of a consistent interior band. Plastic panels inset into wood panels (like an updated shogi screen) are used as translucent privacy panels which border and contain a landscaping plot beyond the all-glass wall (the north wall) of the bathroom. This three-room linear space is comprised of a "barbell" of two rooms, each containing a vanity and toilet, flank the inset shower and bathtub. These three rooms are connected with doors and all share the full-height glass wall, located closest to the road above. Thus, the updated

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“shogi” screen creates transitions between indoors and outdoors, landscape and interior, as well as conferring privacy for those in the extant and original bathroom. The bathroom and the house were first published by *Sunset* magazine in 1956, and the bathroom continued to be featured prominently in *Sunset* publications thereafter.

This house features several clever spatial and storage strategies, seen in the living room, where a large section of the north living room wall features an orthogonally organized “painting” of sliding, lightly stained wood panels whose simple “handles” of long pieces of wood (exactly like an identical detail found in some early Schindler and Neutra designs), create an ornamental field but in fact serve as a large storage area.

Alterations

In 1983, using the 10’ span and identical detailing, Buff, Straub and Hensman designed a small addition: the firm added one span wide to the master bedroom at the west end of the house. The new area of the master suite, which includes a small bathroom on the north, adjacent to the existing bathroom, also extends north, aligned with the existing footprint, and to the south on the rear facade. The alteration is seamless and completely in character with the house, does not compromise the integrity of the house, and the property continues to readily convey its historical significance. The owner later replaced the deteriorated translucent fiberglass panels in the exterior garden wall north of the bedroom described above with translucent plastic, an alteration that exemplifies the desired approach outlined in the Registration Requirements because it preserves the quality of the materials and its aesthetic and functional task of providing translucency in this very private space, permitting light while protecting privacy (which in any case is afforded by the steep hill in front of this north side of the house). The step stone path to the front entry walk was moved from the west to the east, but its materials and layout are also in character with the rustic setting and design intent and do not compromise the integrity of the house in any way.

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Statement of Significance

The lot was sold to the Nortons by William Carr, the prominent local developer (see the Poppy Peak nomination); the Buffs and Nortons were personal friends of Conrad Buff. It was part of an older Pasadena estate whose brick walkways can still be seen at the base of the property; local mythology is that the paths led to a “party house” discreetly separated from the main estate by the Arroyo.¹

The Norton House is an excellent example of a different type of approach used by Buff, Straub and Hensman, here to beautiful effect. Because the hill was steep but short, and because the lot was long but tight (parallel to Burleigh Road), the architects’ unique response to the site (an important tenet in Modernism, in the USC/Pasadena School, and in Buff, Straub and Hensman’s work particularly) was to not have the house unfold against the slope. Instead, extensive terracing, stepping stones and very broad staircases animate the relationship between house and slope, a very different solution compared to other contemporary houses such as the Wirick, Frank and Thompson houses. The Norton House thus demonstrates the firm’s flexibility in responding creatively to the program and site. Like so much of their work, its alterations reflect the continuity of collaboration between architect and client over decades. The Norton House, 1955, retains an outstanding degree of integrity, is of exceptionally high quality of design, displays the character-defining features outlined for post-and-beam construction and architecture in the Registration Requirements, and is a single-family house constructed in the period of significance, 1948 – 1968.

Significance—Conclusion

Argument under Criterion C- Eligible

As demonstrated above, this work by Buff, Straub and Hensman meets the registration requirements as outlined in the MPS. It has retained the respective required aspects of integrity. It is an excellent example of the firm’s body of work, as well as embodying the larger architectural concerns and expressions of Pasadena’s “Recent Past” as described in the Multiple Property Submission (MPS), Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena. It is significant as embodying architectural innovation in residential Modernism within the MPS period of significance, 1948-1968. Therefore, it is eligible to qualify for listing under Criterion C, Architecture and Design, at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1955.

¹ Interview with August Parrington, current owner (the Parringtons purchased the house from the Nortons), March 24, 2008.

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*Norton House
Los Angeles County, California*

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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Bibliographic References

Buff, Straub and Hensman Archives. Office of Buff, Smith and Hensman, 1450 W. Colorado Blvd. Pasadena 91105.

Interview, Augusta Parrington, March 25, 2008.

DRAFT

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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Photographs

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: west elevation, view southeast.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive1.tiff



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Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: west elevation, view southwest.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive2.tiff



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Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: north elevation and patio, view northwest.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive3.tiff



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Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: west elevation, view southeast.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive4.tiff



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Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Detail of exterior stairs and porch.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive5.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: east elevation, view northwest.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive6.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: east elevation, view west.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive7.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Detail of exterior walkway.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive8.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of concrete block fireplace.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive9.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of hall.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive10.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of wall.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive11.tiff



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Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of concrete block wall.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive12.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of kitchen.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive13.tiff



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MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena

Norton House – Pasadena
Los Angeles County, California
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes
March 24, 2008
Negative: Jones & Stokes
View: Interior detail of floor.
CA_LosAngelesCounty_820BurleighDrive14.tiff

