

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 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.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Frankel, Morris S. and Nadine E., House DRAFT

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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

## 2. Location

Street & number: 2146 Westridge Road

City or town: Los Angeles State: California County: Los Angeles

Not For Publication:  Vicinity: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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

   A    B    C    D

_____ <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	

In my opinion, the property <u>  </u> meets <u>  </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ <b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	_____ <b>Date</b>
_____ <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span>	

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#### 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco, glass, wood, stone

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Morris S. and Nadine E. Frankel House is a one-story, 3,062 square-foot building that occupies an irregularly shaped, flat parcel of 15,159 square feet in a hillside residential neighborhood. The house was built in 1961 and has had no alterations or additions. The Y-shaped, steel and wood-framed construction is Mid-Century Modern in style. It is composed of a 12' high volume containing the public spaces and an 8' high volume containing the private spaces. The property has a semi-circular driveway and porte-cochere with entry and exit on Westridge Road. The main pedestrian entry is located on the main (west) façade. The house has had no alterations since its construction and retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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#### Narrative Description

##### *Setting*

The house at 2146 Westridge Road occupies an irregularly-shaped parcel along a residential street in Tract 18997 in a developed part of the Santa Monica Mountains above Mandeville Canyon. Tract 18997 was subdivided in 1957 as part of a 56-parcel custom-home tract. The terraced hillside lots were laid out in a staggered manner, twisting and turning to maximize

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privacy and provide city and/or ocean views. Tract 18997 was originally developed as a group of one-story single-family houses with Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs) with building restrictions in place to prevent incursions into view corridors.<sup>1</sup> Since the expiration of the tract's CC&Rs during the 1990s, homes in the neighborhood have increasingly been redeveloped as larger, multi-storied houses.<sup>2</sup>

To the north of Tract 18997, are several tracts of tract homes developed 1960s and 1970s. To the west and north are a series of fire roads and hiking trails. To the west is Sullivan Canyon. At its northernmost terminus on San Vicente Mountain, Westridge Road becomes the Westridge Trail Head with a fire road that leads to LA-96C, a decommissioned Nike Missile Control site once part of the Cold War Civil Air Defense system.<sup>3</sup>

### *Overview*

The one-story, Y-shaped house at 2146 Westridge Road nearly fills the parcel to its perimeters. Vehicular access to the garage is via a semi-circular asphalt driveway with both entrances located on Westridge Road. The plan uses the 15-degree angle and the hexagon as guiding principles in design. The house, designed for a childless couple with an emphasis on entertaining, is organized around a large, hexagonal TV room/bar/living-room space where the 15-degree angle is prominently displayed. The bedroom wing and garage volume reflect more orthogonal geometries in plan, yet the themes of hexagon and triangle are evident in roof and interior detailing. The steel post-and-beam construction enables an open plan.

The house is organized into two zones: the public zone and the private zone. The public zone consists of the TV room/bar/living room, guest bathroom and powder room, kitchen, and dining rooms. The private zone consists of a primary suite and a smaller, guest bedroom. Every room, except the guest bedroom, has floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors to exterior patios.

The design of the house is dynamic in section: the TV room/living room spaces have 12' ceilings, with the living room located two steps down from the TV room. A lower ceiling height (8') in the entry hall and bedroom hallways, creates a sense of compression and expansion as one moves from room to room.

### *Main (West) Façade*

The west façade is asymmetrical in design and constructed in the post-and-beam Mid-Century Modern style. Generously setback from the sidewalk, it is clad primarily in stone and features a large, wide, low-pitched, side-gabled composition and rock roof that also functions as a porte cochere over the semi-circular driveway. A wooden, exposed-beam, opening punctuates the roof

<sup>1</sup> CC&Rs also commonly restricted sales to non-white buyers.

<sup>2</sup> These large, redeveloped houses, are often more than 10,000 square feet, built to the boundaries of the building envelope, and two and three stories in height. Colloquially, these houses are often referred to as McMansions.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, "San Vicente Mountain was one of sixteen Los Angeles area Nike-Ajax supersonic anti-aircraft missile launch sites. During the Cold War, Nike sites were located in defensive rings surrounding key urban and industrial areas throughout the United States. This site contained ground-based radar and computer systems designed to detect and track hostile aircraft, and to guide the anti-aircraft missiles that would be launched from nearby Sepulveda Basin to their targets."

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at the southern end of the façade. A large stone wall with chimney rises above the apex of the gable roofline at the south end of the main façade. At the north end of the main façade, the large, wide, low-pitched gabled roof has clearstory windows. The wooden eaves feature integrated sheet-metal roof gutters that culminate in an open-triangle detail.

A wooden, exposed-beam, opening also punctuates the roof at the main entry. The double-height main entry is recessed at the inside corner of this façade, above two terrazzo steps, with a vertical wood-clad wall and a planter to the north of the large single panel wooden door and a stone wall to the south. The large single-panel wooden door is flanked by sidelights with a wooden panel rising above the door to the roofline. The entry features simple, wooden, door and window surrounds. The three-car garage features one double-width garage door and one single-width garage door with vertical wood cladding.

#### *South Elevation*

The south elevation features a one-and-a-half height (12' 3") volume with a gabled roof. Wood-clad steel, post-and-beam construction enables four, large, fixed-pane, floor-to-ceiling, double-high windows (no trim), with the two windows mitered at the center. This part of the south elevation is visible from the public right of way.

#### *Southeast/South Patio Elevation*

The southeast/south patio elevation features a series of four 12' high aluminum sliding glass doors and seven fixed-paned windows with no trim, punctuated by relatively small stucco-clad wall surfaces. At the inside corner of this elevation, two of the fixed-pane windows have a mitered joint. The large wide, low-pitched, side-gabled roof has a large wooden, exposed-beam opening that punctuates the western part of the roof eave and is supported by two round steel posts. At the eastern end of this elevation, a small vertical wood-clad volume with two vertical wood-clad doors functions as a pool cabana.

#### *North Elevation*

The north elevation is primarily stucco clad with no fenestration. The exception to this is at the northwest end of this elevation where there are two large, aluminum sliding glass doors, a large fixed-paned window, a series of three, grouped fixed-paned windows with wooden sill, and a jalousie window over a stucco-clad wall.

#### *Landscaping*

The property also features a number of landscape elements integral to the overall design. The house is oriented around a six-sided pool, with triangular concrete block planters with wooden benches, a triangular concrete patio, and geometrically shaped in-ground planters. A small concrete patio with mature landscaping, on the north side of the house, is accessed via sliding doors in the kitchen and dining rooms.

Exterior character-defining features include:

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- One-story, Y-shaped plan using the 15 degree angle and hexagon as the guiding geometries
- Few orthogonal details in plan
- One-and-half story height
- Wide, low-pitched overhanging eaves with exposed-beam
- Stone cladding
- Stucco cladding
- Vertical wood siding
- 12' custom aluminum slighting glass doors and fixed windows leading to patios and exterior spaces
- Jalousie windows in study, guest bedroom, primary bedroom, and kitchen
- Exposed post-and-beam overhangs
- Integrated gutters within triangular eave detailing
- Triangular, concrete block planters
- Hexagonal pool
- Geometrically shaped in-ground planters

Interior character-defining features include:

- Open plan
- Terrazzo floors
- Terrazzo fireplace hearth and living room ledge
- Terrazzo shower/tub in primary bathroom
- Interior soffits with triangle wood detailing and up-lighting
- Built-in wooden bar
- Walnut wooden paneling and cabinetry in TV room, bar, living room, and study
- Partial height stereo/media cabinet dividing wall in TV room
- Partial height interior wall between dining room and kitchen with fixed-paned transom
- Built-in stereo speakers throughout the house
- Walnut kitchen cabinetry with floating countertop and cabinet
- Built-in cabinetry in primary closets and dressing areas

### Alterations

Through the study of building permits, historic building plans, aerial photographs, and other ephemera, a chronology of alterations to 2146 Westridge Road is as follows:

1959 Original building permit (Permit #LA 23841)  
1961 Certificate of Occupancy  
1976 Alteration permit: Reroof (Permit #20652)  
c. 2000 Reroof

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## **Integrity**

*Location:* The house remains in its original location, therefore, retains integrity of location.

*Design:* Based on the original building plans, the property has had no major alterations and therefore, retains integrity of design.

*Setting:* The house continues to sit on an irregularly shaped parcel in Tract 18997 and be surrounded by simple-family houses. Since the expiration of the development's Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions, two- and three-story homes exceeding 5,000 square feet have been built on the terraced parcels directly north and south of the house. The house to the south blocks the city and ocean view. Therefore, integrity of setting has been somewhat compromised.

*Materials:* The property retains all of its original materials from its 1959-1961 construction. Toilets in bathrooms have been upgraded over the years, and overall, the house retains integrity of materials.

*Workmanship:* The house is constructed of wood siding, large aluminum sliding glass doors, and flush mounted windows. Where repairs or modifications have been made, the work has been conducted in accordance with professional standards. Therefore, the property retains integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* Although the city and ocean views have been compromised, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship make visiting the house like stepping back in time. Therefore, the property retains integrity of feeling.

*Association:* The house is significant for its Mid-Century Modern architecture in the postwar period and conveys this significance.

In summary, the house at 2146 Westridge Road retains sufficient historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey its historic significance. The loss of its view corridors, while regrettable, do not significantly impact the overall quality of architectural design. The property meets the registration requirements for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



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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.

### 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 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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

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**Period of Significance**

1961

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**Significant Dates**

N/A

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Rochlin & Baran

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Morris S. and Nadine E. Frankel House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Modern Movement, a rare and extremely intact example of a Mid-Century Modern house by architects Rochlin & Baran. The 1961 period of significance is based upon the Certificate of Occupancy issued in 1961 when construction was complete.

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

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

#### *Early Development History: Brentwood*

In earliest times, the land was inhabited by indigenous people known as the Chumash and the Gabrielino-Tongva. With the arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors, it came under Spanish rule. In 1822, Mexico assumed jurisdiction, and in 1828, the house's parcel was among the 30,000 acres that was granted to Don Francisco Sepulveda as "Rancho San Vicente y Santa Monica."<sup>4</sup>

The impetus for the initial development of Brentwood was the establishment of the Pacific Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteers. Opening its doors in 1888 on land donated by Arcadia Bandini Baker, Senator John P. Jones, and the owners of the Wolfskill tract, the Old Soldiers' Home was located immediately east of the area that became Brentwood.

In 1905, Robert Gillis, who by that time controlled the Rancho lands through his association with the Santa Monica Land and Water Company, began to subdivide Westgate, so named because it was located adjacent to the west gate of the Soldiers' Home. The name "Brentwood" first appears in 1906, when the Western Pacific Development Company bought 350 acres from the Santa Monica Land and Water Company and announced development of an exclusive tract to be known as Brentwood Park.<sup>5</sup>

The Brentwood community was annexed to the City of Los Angeles on June 14, 1916 as part of the Westgate annexation. Residential development of Brentwood, mostly in the flatlands, continued in the years prior to World War II. As construction of single-family homes accelerated to meet demand in the post-World War II years, builders ventured further up the canyons north of Sunset Boulevard—including Mandeville Canyon.

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<sup>4</sup> "History of Mandeville Canyon," Mandeville Canyon Association, [www.mandevillecanyonassociation.com/history.html](http://www.mandevillecanyonassociation.com/history.html) (accessed October 3, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Historic Resources Group, *City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources Survey LA: Brentwood-Pacific Palisades Community Plan Area*, November 2013, 13.

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*Post-WWII Suburban Residential Development in Los Angeles*

During the period after World War II, the United States faced an acute housing shortage. Ten million returning service men from the Pacific and European theaters were ready to settle down and start families.<sup>6</sup> This national housing shortage was felt even more acutely in Southern California where a Depression Era housing shortage, driven by the Dust Bowl Migration, and a defense industry job boom, driven by wartime production, outpaced building production for almost a decade.<sup>7</sup> After the war, the situation was compounded by the presence of returning GIs. Demand for housing in Southern California was also fueled by the presence of FHA-backed mortgages, Veterans Administration loans, a burgeoning aviation and aerospace industry, and a national media that frequently presented the California lifestyle as an idealized model for the future. *Life* magazine's feature, "The California Way of Life" in the October 22, 1945 issue exemplifies this trend.

During the 1950s, Los Angeles area inspired its own versions of Levittown, with large-scale suburban developments of single-family homes in suburban locations often tied to the aviation industry and new manufacturing plants.<sup>8</sup> Housing tracts for middle-class wage earners sprang up in such areas as Westchester, Panorama City, Crenshaw, and Northridge. By 1956, the San Fernando Valley accounted for 83% of the growth of the City of Los Angeles in the previous three years—a time when the city grew at a rate of 4,801 people (6.6%) per month.<sup>9</sup> By 1961, the Valley had a population larger than Washington DC, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Boston, Dallas, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans.<sup>10</sup>

Demand for housing in Southern California remained strong in the late 1950s and 1960s, and the availability of flat land was diminishing. In a 1961 keynote speech for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, architect Robert Alexander outlined projections of how "260,000 people would be added over the next 40 years... requiring 2,400 new dwelling units per week" equating to "one house per minute."<sup>11</sup> In response, developers began to look to the previously undeveloped hills in and around Los Angeles for their new tracts. In 1964, estimates of county land available for urbanization quantified this dilemma; 20% were level, 21% were "hilly," and 59% were mountains.<sup>12</sup>

Changes in area zoning, city grading requirements, and new techniques in contouring developed by the Janss Corporation led to hillside developments in Baldwin Hills, Hollywood, Pacific Palisades, Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Reseda, Granada Hills, and many other locations throughout Southern California. Hillside developments were consistently marketed for their close-in locations, views, and superior air quality in a city that had become synonymous with the term "smog." Given the higher costs associated with grading, hillside developments necessitated

<sup>6</sup> Greg Hise, *Magnetic Los Angeles* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 52.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>9</sup> "Greatest Growth Seen in San Fernando," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1956, 20.

<sup>10</sup> Ray Kovitz, "Homeowners vs. Industry," *Los Angeles Times*, January 29, 1961, GBA2.

<sup>11</sup> "Growth in Southland Outlined by Architect," *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1961, 12.

<sup>12</sup> "What Will Happen to Our Hills," *Los Angeles Times*, November 15, 1964, C28.

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higher prices, and amenities such as underground utilities. These developments attracted upper-middle and upper-class homebuyers. As noted in the *Los Angeles Times*, “It is the fullest flowering of the housing tract. But instead of appealing to young GI families, as did the first tracts after World War II, [a hillside tract] appeals to ‘young, affluent Californians.’”<sup>13</sup> Examples of such developments included Baldwin Hills Estates, Trousdale Estates, Mount Olympus, Rancho Nob Hill, Sunset Hills, Beverly Glen Park, and The Summits. The property at 2146 Westridge Road is in one such postwar hillside development (**Figure 3**).

#### *The California Botanic Gardens and Development of Westridge Riviera*

In 1926, the Santa Monica Mountain Park Company sold the greater Mandeville Canyon area to the Garden Foundation (a.k.a. The Garden Land Company). The new holding company’s intent was to create a botanical garden, the California Botanic Gardens, with hundreds of specimen plans and trees from around the world. Over 1,200 species were eventually planted.<sup>14</sup> The California Botanic Gardens was bordered by Sullivan Canyon to the west and Kenter Canyon to the east.<sup>15</sup>

The Garden Land Company built homes adjacent to the botanical gardens. The plan was curtailed by the Great Depression and a flood in 1938, which created so much damage that the Garden Land Company was inactive until the early 1950s. In 1954, Garden Land Company subdivided a tract in Mandeville Canyon for 300 homes and followed that with the 1957 “Westridge Riviera” development of approximately one hundred lots in the western hills above the canyon—Tract #18997 and Tract #22304.

Garden Land Company’s reactivation is associated with the selection of James E. Hilliard in September of 1954 as Vice President. Hilliard, a former journalist and pro golfer, entered the real estate business upon returning from service in WWII and became General Manager of Palisades Builders, a successful home builder/developer in that area.<sup>16</sup> Hilliard employed the winning combination of lot sales with the building of speculative homes to both his Mandeville Canyon and Westridge Riviera developments.

A 1958 ad for the “Preview of Westridge Riviera” indicates the tract was marketed for its view lots, favorable climate (“no smog, above the beach fog”), and its underground improvements/utilities.<sup>17</sup> A savvy promoter, Hilliard tapped into the public’s interest in the launch of Sputnik and subsequent space race by developing a showcase house known as “The Space Hut” at nearby 2050 Westridge Road.

<sup>13</sup> “New and News,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1968, A14.

<sup>14</sup> Jan Loomis, *Brentwood*, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008, 65.

<sup>15</sup> Based on a 1929 map of the greater Brentwood area from the Santa Monica Land and Water Company Archives, featured in *Brentwood*.

<sup>16</sup> “Firms Select New Official,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 26, 1954, E4.

<sup>17</sup> “Display Ad 97,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1958, F1.

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So successful was The Space Hut, that by April 1959, Westridge Riviera's ads touted the subdivision as "A New View in 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension Living."<sup>18</sup> By the following year, ads exclusively featured graphics of couples in modern homes with floor-to-ceiling glass evocative of the work of iconic photographer Julius Shulman.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the spec built by Hilliard through Garden Land Company, Westridge Riviera is the location for several custom Mid-Century Modern houses by noteworthy architects including Richard Dorman (2168 Westridge Road, 1964, extant), Ray Kappe (1839 Westridge Road, extant), and Harry Gesner (13400 Chalon Road, 1961, extant).<sup>20</sup>

The tract's Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions reveal that Hilliard established an "art jury" for the approval of all building plans and future alterations.<sup>21</sup>

### *Mid-Century Modern Architecture*<sup>22</sup>

The house at 2146 Westridge Road is designed in the Mid-Century Modern Style. Mid-century Modern is a term used to describe the post-World War II iteration of the International Style in both residential and commercial design. The International Style was characterized by geometric forms, smooth wall surfaces, and an absence of exterior decoration. Mid-Century Modern represents the adaptation of these elements to the local climate and topography, as well as to the postwar need for efficiently-built, moderately-priced homes. In Southern California, this often meant the use of wood post-and-beam construction. Mid-century Modernism is often characterized by a clear expression of structure and materials, large expanses of glass and open interior plans.

The roots of the style can be traced to early Modernists like Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, whose local work inspired "second generation" Modern architects like Gregory Ain, Craig Ellwood, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Pierre Koenig, Raphael Soriano, and many more.<sup>23</sup> These postwar architects developed an indigenous Modernism that was born from the International Style and matured into a fundamentally regional style, fostered in part by *Art + Architecture* magazine's pivotal Case Study House Program (1945-1966). The program embodied the goal of using modern architecture and new technology to reinvent the house and redefine living. The style gained popularity because of its use of standardized, prefabricated materials that permitted quick and economical construction. The predominant architectural style in the postwar years, the style is represented in almost every property type, from single-family residences to commercial buildings, to gas stations.

<sup>18</sup> "Display Ad 96," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1959, H33.

<sup>19</sup> "Display Ad 121," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1960, G5.

<sup>20</sup> Los Angeles Conservancy, "The Sixties Turn 50," Los Angeles Conservancy, April 2009, 2-7.

<sup>21</sup> "Conditions, Covenants and Restrictions," recorded October 28, 1957 in Los Angeles County, California, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Adapted from Historic Resources Group, *City of Santa Monica, Draft Historic Context Statement*, January 31, 2017, 342.

<sup>23</sup> Esther McCoy, *The Second Generation* (Salt Lake City, UT: Gibbs M Smith, Inc., 1984), 1.

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Mid-Century Modern architecture was promoted in the trade press, featured extensively in shelter magazines,<sup>24</sup> and heavily touted in the *Los Angeles Times* by critics such as Esther McCoy and Art Seidenbaum. The style remained popular from shortly after WWII through 1970.

Character-defining features include:

- One- or two-story configuration
- Horizontal massing
- Simple geometric forms
- Expressed post-and-beam construction, in wood or steel
- Flat roof or low-pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and cantilevered canopies
- Unadorned wall surfaces
- Wood, plaster, brick, or stone used as exterior wall panels or accent materials
- Flush-mounted metal frame fixed windows and sliding doors, and clerestory windows
- Exterior staircases, decks, patios, and balconies
- Little or no exterior decorative detailing
- Expressionistic/Organic subtype: sculptural forms and geometric shapes, including butterfly, A-frame, folded plate, or barrel-vaulted roofs

Character defining features of the Mid-Century Modern Style include simple geometric volumes, horizontal massing, direct expression of the structural system (through steel or wood post-and-beam), flat roof, unornamented wall surfaces, and floor-to-ceiling glass windows with flush-mounted metal frames. The establishment of a standard module or unit of design is also common for the Mid-Century Modern Style and Post-and-Beam subtype. The use of steel posts (vs. load bearing walls) for structural support of post-and-beam style houses enables an open-plan; interior spaces are often integrated with one-another as well as integrated with exterior patio spaces and gardens.

#### *Rochlin & Baran, AIA*

The architectural firm of Rochlin & Baran, AIA was formed in 1952 by Fred Rochlin, AIA and Ephraim Baran, AIA. The partnership quickly developed a specialization in healthcare-related buildings including hospitals, medical office buildings, labs, and clinics. A review of the *Los Angeles Times* between 1956 and 1993 reveals more than 120 such projects, with forty-six medical facilities designed prior to 1960.<sup>25</sup> Focused in Southern California, the practice designed projects all over the country, and even internationally. For years, the firm was consulting architect to the health care system of Israel.

Fred Rochlin, AIA (1923-2002) was born in Nogales, Arizona. He served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II. He earned his B.Arch from the University of California,

<sup>24</sup> "Shelter magazine" was the common term used to describe a group of periodicals with editorial content focused on interior design, home furnishings, gardening, and homemaking in the advertising and publishing industries.

<sup>25</sup> "Design Work of Architects Seen At Conference," *Los Angeles Times*, May 29, 1960, K9.

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Berkeley in 1949. After graduation and a short apprenticeship in the offices of Lloyd Wright and Charles Eames, he formed a partnership with fellow Berkeley alumnus, Ephraim Baran.

Ephraim Baran (1921-2017) was born in Sacramento, California as the son of Ukrainian immigrants. Baran and his family moved to Boyle Heights. His study of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley was interrupted by his Army service from 1942 to 1947. During his time in the service, he headed up the intelligence library and trained as a fighter pilot. In 1948, he married his wife, Annette, and returned to Berkeley to complete his B.Arch. After graduation in 1951, he worked in the offices of Morris D. Verger, AIA; Ulrich Plaut, AIA; and Beals, Bidwell, Mackey, AIA.

Ephraim Baran knew Morris S. Frankel from designing his dentistry office in Santa Monica during the late 1950s. Baran was the partner in charge of the design of the Morris S. and Nadine Frankel House. Baran only designed three single-family houses during his lifetime and all of them in 1959: a home for himself (816 N. Hanley Road, extant), the Frankel House, and a speculative house at 2147 Westridge Road (extant, extensively altered) developed jointly by Baran and Frankel. During a 2009 visit to 2146 Westridge Road, Baran expressed his lack of enthusiasm for residential projects as “too personal.” He also discussed how the work of Frank Lloyd Wright influenced the geometric design of his own home and the Frankel House.<sup>26</sup>

Further research suggests that Baran was referencing Frank Lloyd Wright’s hexagonal Usonian designs. John Sergent, in his book, *Frank Lloyd Wright’s Usonian Houses*, divides Wright’s Usonian plans into five categories: Polliwog, Diagonal, In-line, Hexagonal, and Raised. Sergent uses a hexagonal grid to explain the dramatic use of uncommon angles in Wright’s Sidney Bazett House (1940, extant), National Register-listed Carl Wall House (1941, extant, #94000620) and Sundt House Project (1941, unrealized). In these plans, Wright employs the 120-degree angle of a hexagon to define the relationship between the public and private wings of the homes, as a unit for wall placement, scored flooring, bathroom fixtures, and furniture design. One of Wright’s final projects, the George and Millie Ablin House (1960, extant) in Bakersfield, California is another late Usonian design predicated on the equilateral triangle and the hexagon. Ablin House even boasts a triangular shaped pool.

Baran appears to have been working on the Frankel House and his own house concurrently. The plan for the 1959 house Baran designed for his wife and three children, as published in the *Los Angeles Times*, was based on the 15-degree grid and the elongated hexagon (**Figure 7**). Both houses have strongly expressed post-and-beam construction and dramatic rooflines. Baran House is primarily clad in wood.

The plan for the Frankel House is also based on an elongated hexagon and a 15-degree grid shape (**Figure 8**). The focus of the house, the hexagonal swimming pool, is congruent with the plan of the house and it is this 15-degree grid shape that drives the floor plan, wall placement—both interior and exterior—as well as the low-pitched gable of the roofline.

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<sup>26</sup> Interview of Ephraim Baran by the author, 2009.



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The work of Rochlin & Baran was featured in the architectural trade magazines such as *Arts + Architecture*, *Architectural Record*, and *Modern Hospital*. The firm won American Institute of Architecture awards for the Marysville Medical Clinic (1969), the Solar Vacuum Telescope and Observatory in New Mexico (1969), and the Louis Factor Health Sciences Building at UCLA (1981). In 1983, on the firm's thirtieth anniversary, Mayor Tom Bradley commended Rochlin & Baran "...for their contributions to the medical profession, the development of hospital facilities, and general public areas."<sup>27</sup>

In 1978, Joseph A. Balbona, AIA (b. 1938) joined the firm, eventually rising to partnership and the renaming of the firm as Rochlin, Baran & Balbona, Inc. The firm continues as RBB Architects, Inc. specializing in healthcare facilities and has completed 15,000 projects globally.<sup>28</sup> Fred Rochlin retired from practice in 1986. He went on to become a monologist, artist, and writer. Ephraim Baran retired in 1992 and founded the Architectural Office Visit program that brought high school seniors to tour architecture firms and buildings to inspire an interest in architecture.<sup>29</sup>

The house was featured as an exemplar of modern residential architecture from the 1960s on the Los Angeles Conservancy tour, *The Sixties Turn 50* in 2010. It was also featured on the Society of Architectural Historians/ Southern California Chapter's 1999 home tour, *Reflections on Water: Cool Pools Along Sunset Boulevard*.

#### *Dr. Morris S. and Nadine E. Frankel*

The Frankel House was commissioned by Dr. Morris S. Frankel (1914-1990) and Nadine E. Frankel (1922-2010). Morris' parents were Austrian born and came to Los Angeles as émigrés during the 1920s. Dr. Frankel graduated from the University of Southern California (USC) with a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree in the spring of 1940. His career pursuits were interrupted by World War II, and he served as an Army dentist in Texas. During his time in Texas, he met several oilmen that sparked an interest into gas and oil exploration as a hobby.

In 1970, Frankel established Argo Petroleum Corporation.<sup>30</sup> Company holdings were primarily in California. By 1971, it was in the top twenty-five of the 900 oil companies operating in California.<sup>31</sup> By 1981, the company had a value of more than \$125 million with offices in Ventura, California and Midland, Texas in addition to Los Angeles.<sup>32</sup> By 1982, *California Business* magazine named Argo Petroleum one of the 100 fastest growing companies in California.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> "Architectural Firm Commended," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16, 1983, I21.

<sup>28</sup> RBB Architects, Inc., <https://rbbinc.com/about-us/> (accessed June 13, 2024).

<sup>29</sup> "Architects Office Visits Program," *LA Architect*, November-December 1996, 14.

<sup>30</sup> "From Teeth to Oil," *Lansing State Journal*, April 6, 1981, 20.

<sup>31</sup> "Dentist Prefers Drilling Oil Wells to Teeth," *The Pottstown Mercury*, November 18, 1971, 24.

<sup>32</sup> "From Teeth to Oil," *Lansing State Journal*, April 6, 1981, 20.

<sup>33</sup> "Argo Petroleum Corp. Moves to Santa Monica," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1982, 27.

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In 1979, Frankel became president and chairman of the California Independent Producers Association. He also became a chief spokesperson against 1980's Proposition 11 that taxed oil companies to fund public transportation. Frankel even appeared on the *Mike Douglas Show* in this capacity. By 1987, Argo defaulted on a multi-million dollar loan and the company was forced into bankruptcy. The company was acquired by National Fuel Gas Co. in 1987. Morris S. Frankel lived in the house until his death in 1990. Nadine E. Frankel lived in the house until 1997, when it was purchased by the current owner, Sian Winship.

#### *Comparative Analysis*

Frankel House was one of only three single-family houses designed by Ephraim Baran of Rochlin & Baran. A review of historic building permits for 816 N. Hanley Road and 2147 Westridge Road reveals both buildings have been altered. Frankel House is the only Ephraim Baran-designed house that has not been altered. Moreover, the only other Baran-Frankel, architect-client collaboration was the commercial dental office at 1244 7<sup>th</sup> Street in Santa Monica (altered).

#### *Conclusion*

The Morris S. and Nadine E. Frankel House at 2146 Westridge Road is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a rare and extremely intact example of Mid-Century Modern architecture by Rochlin & Baran.

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Name of Property

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**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: Private collection of the owner

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 3S; 3CS; 5S3 SurveyLA 2013

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.0739744      Longitude: -118.5035186

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Tract 18897, Lot 17. Also known as Assessor's ID No: 4492 010 024 23 000.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary coincides with the legal description of the property as it appears in the records of the Los Angeles County Assessor.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sian Winship  
organization: Preservation Consultant/ Homeowner  
street & number: 2146 Westridge Road  
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90049  
e-mail: [sianwinship@gmail.com](mailto:sianwinship@gmail.com)  
telephone: (310) 560-6436  
date: November 2024; Revised January 2025

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## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Frankel, Morris S. and Nadine E., House  
City or Vicinity: Los Angeles  
County: Los Angeles  
State: California  
Photographer: Sian Winship  
Date Photographed: August 29, 2024 and September 18, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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- 1 of 10 Context view, looking southeast
- 2 of 10 West façade, looking east
- 3 of 10 South elevation, looking north
- 4 of 10 Entry, looking east
- 5 of 10 Entry, looking south
- 6 of 10 TV room, looking west
- 7 of 10 Interior, study looking west
- 8 of 10 Entry, hall, dining room, looking northwest
- 9 of 10 Primary bedroom, looking northeast
- 10 of 10 Kitchen, looking west

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

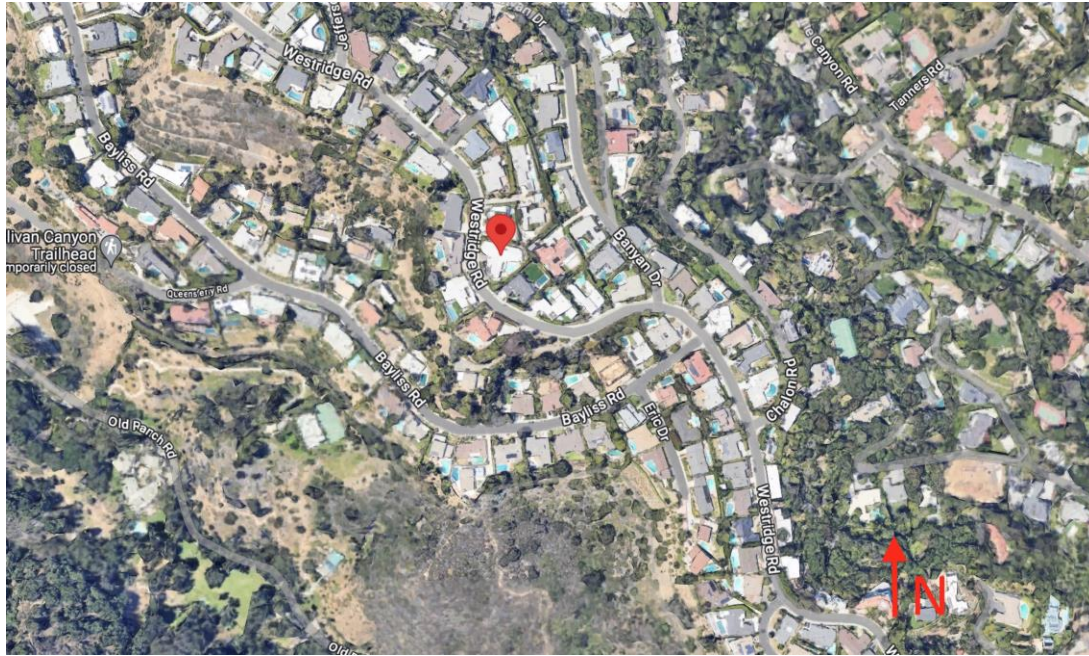
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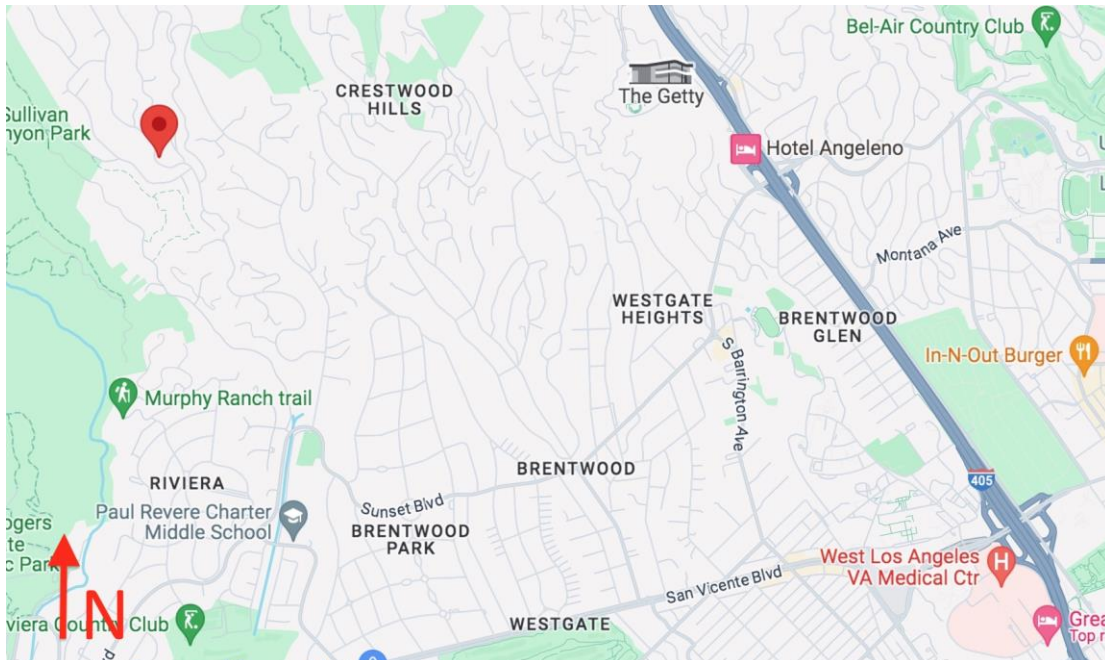
### Location Map

Latitude: 34.0739744

Longitude: -118.5035186



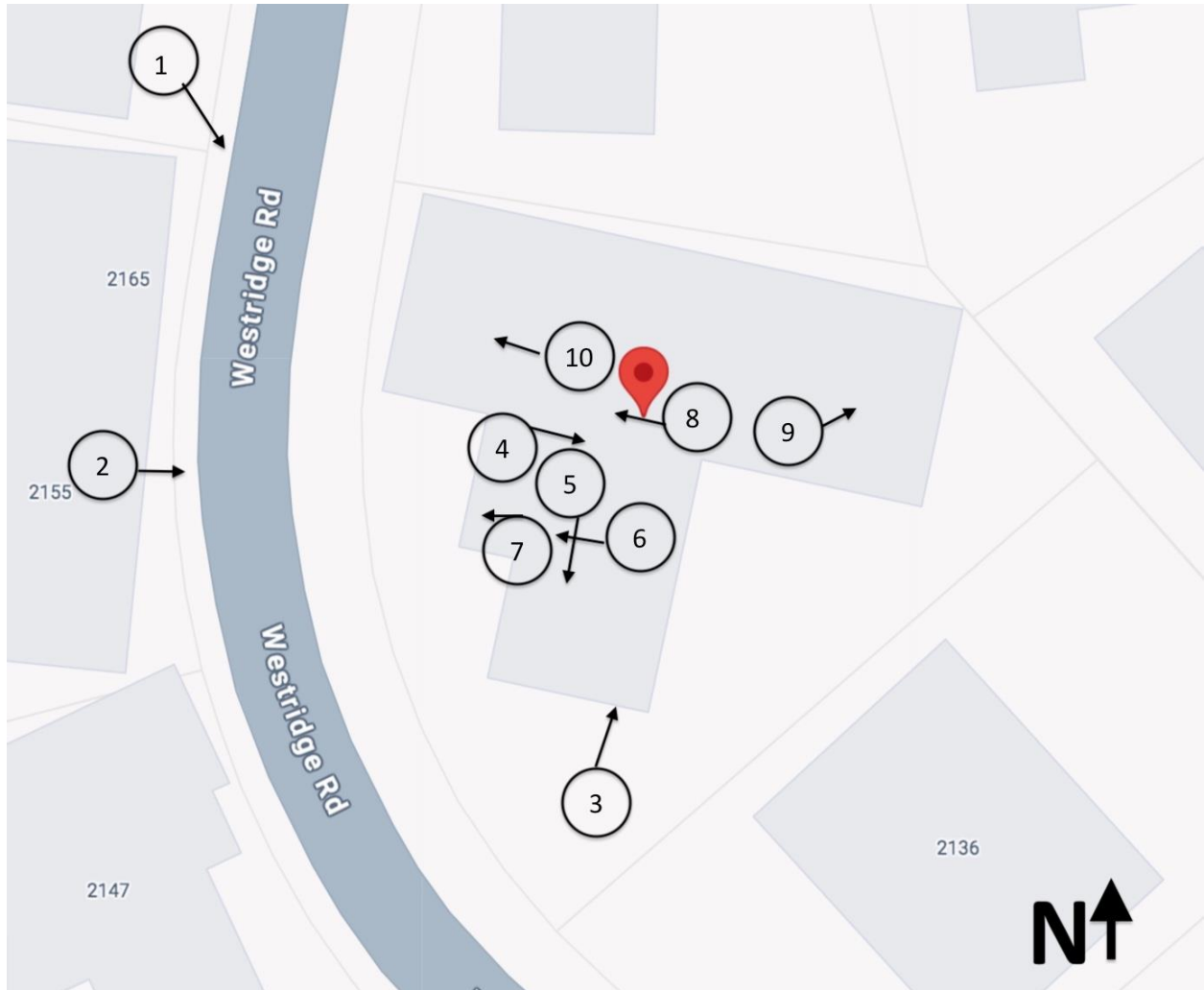
### Vicinity Map



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**Sketch Map/Photo Key**

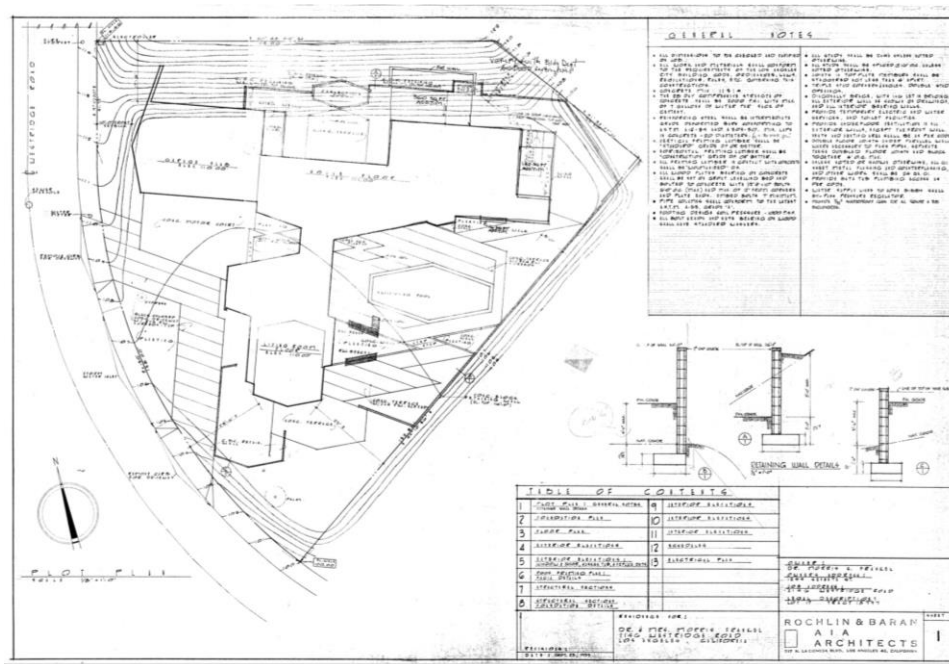




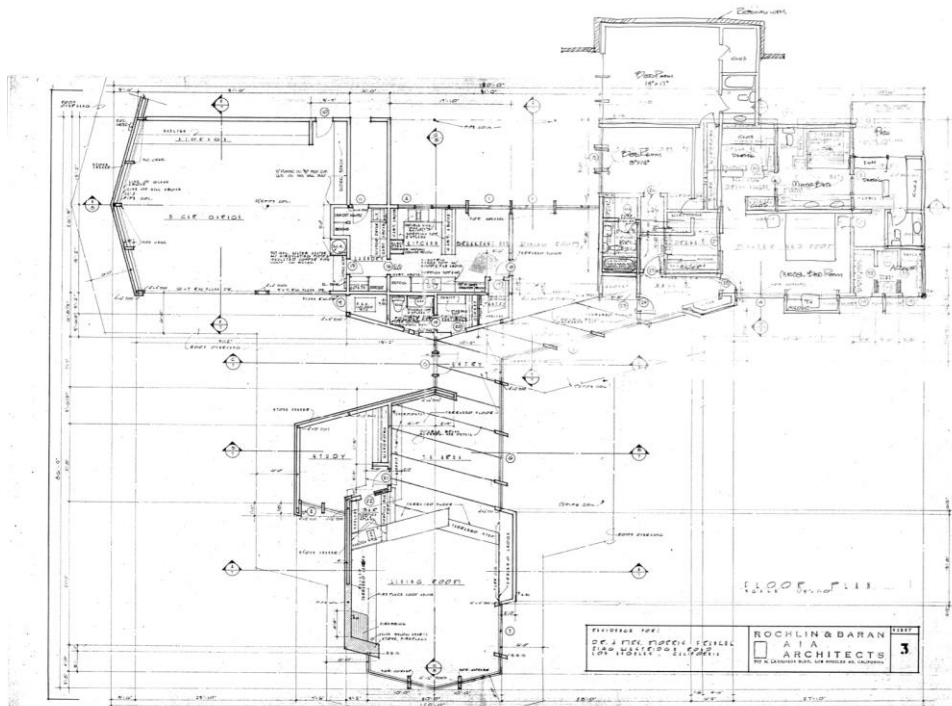
Frankel, Morris S. and Nadine E., House  
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**Figure 1** Frankel House plot plan by Rochlin & Baran. Source: Private collection.



**Figure 2** Frankel House floor plan by Rochlin & Baran. Source: Private collection.



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Figure 3 Frankel House elevations by Rochlin & Baran. Source: Private collection.

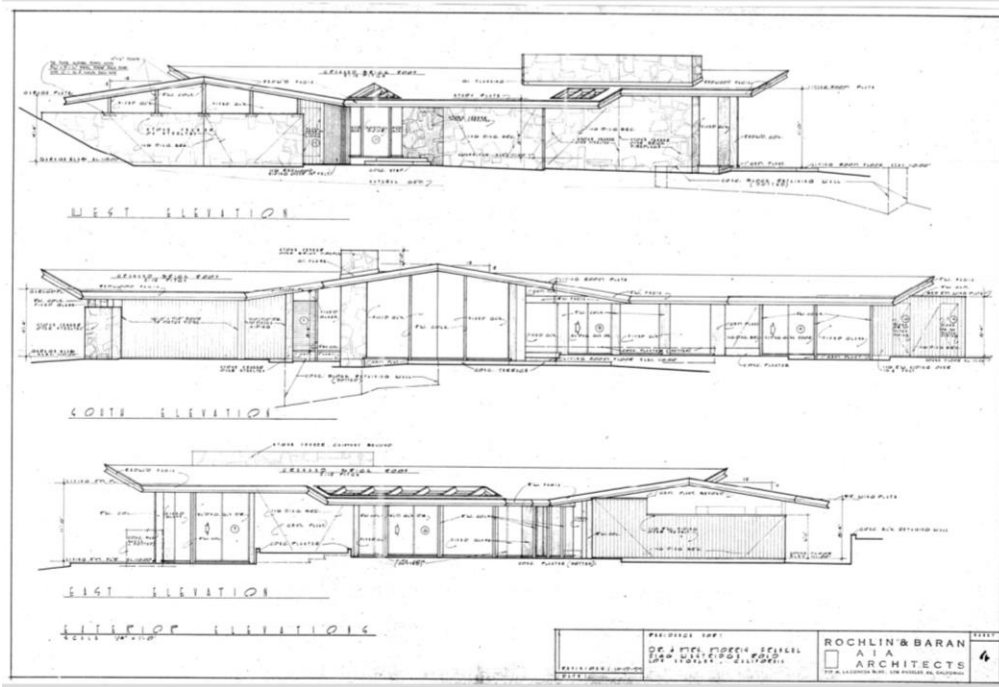
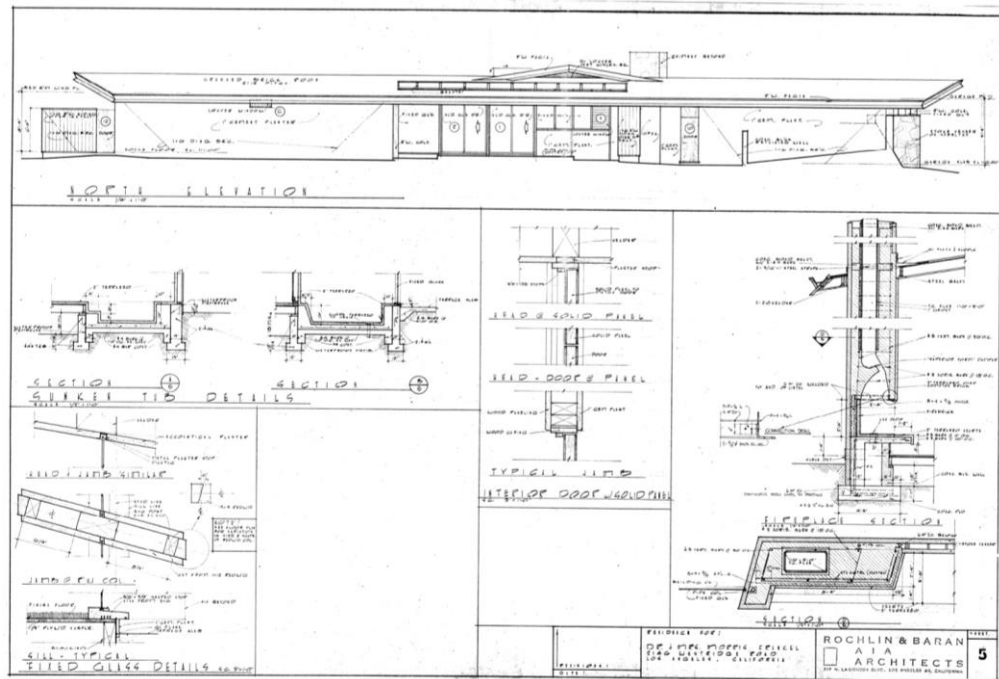


Figure 4 Frankel House elevation and details by Rochlin & Baran. Source: Private collection.

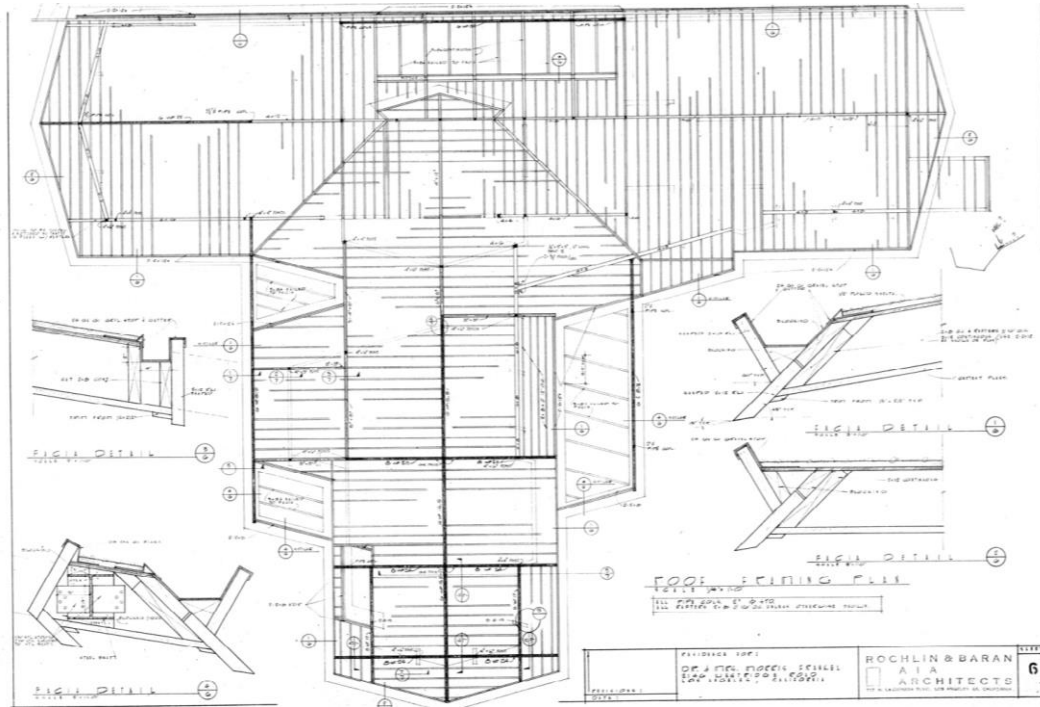




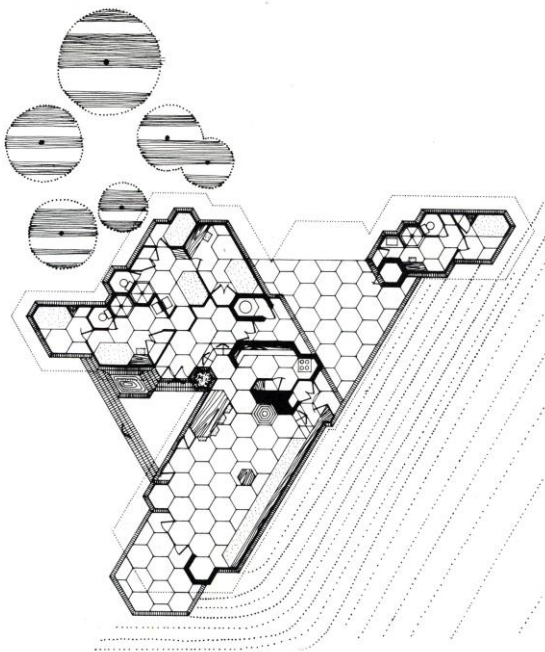
Frankel, Morris S. and Nadine E., House  
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**Figure 5** Frankel House roof plan by Rochlin & Baran. Source: Private collection.



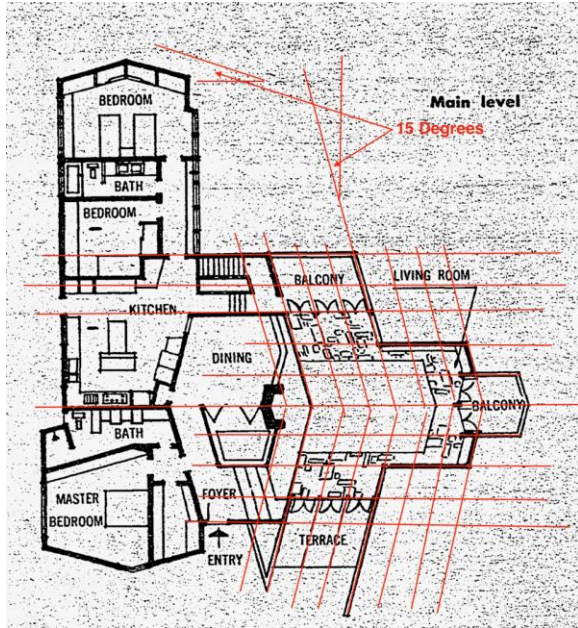
**Figure 6** Plan of a hexagonal Usonian, the Sidney Bazett House (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1940)  
Source: *Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian House*, 61.



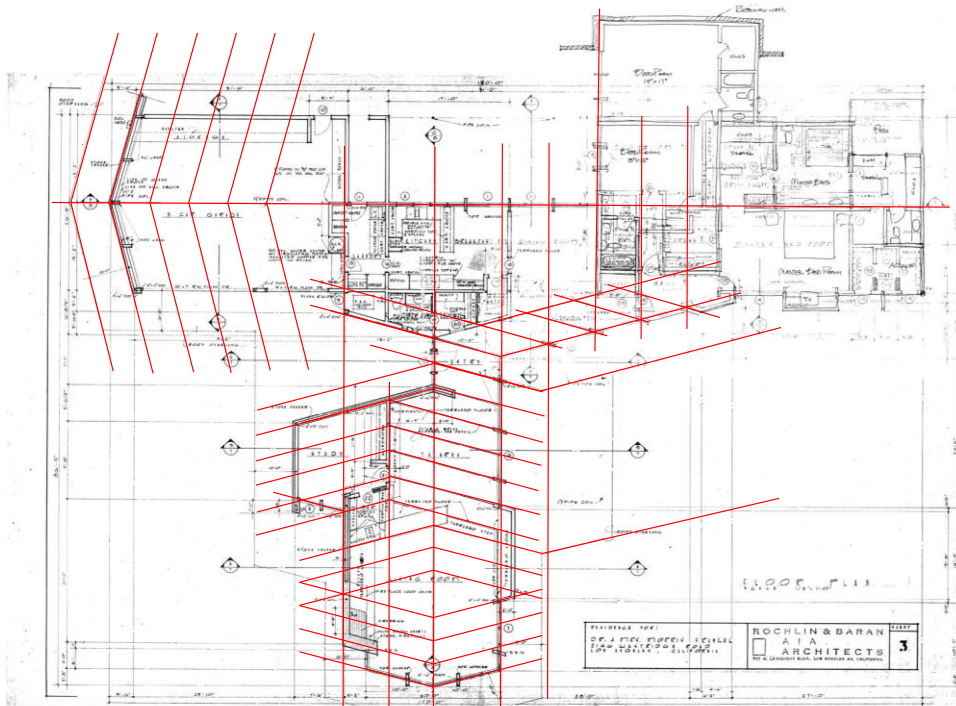
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**Figure 7** Geometric Study of Baran House (Ephraim Baran, AIA, 1959) Floor Plan. Fifteen degree angle reflected in floor plan, wall placement, etc.



**Figure 8** Geometric Study of Frankel House (Ephraim Baran, AIA, 1961) Floor Plan. Fifteen degree angle reflected in floor plan, wall placement, etc.



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**Figure 9** Dr. Morris S. and Nadine Frankel. Source: Private collection of the author.





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**Photo 1** Context view, looking southeast



**Photo 2** West façade, looking east



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**Photo 3** South elevation, looking north



**Photo 4** Entry, looking east





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**Photo 5** Entry, looking south



**Photo 6** TV room, looking west



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**Photo 7** Interior, study looking west



**Photo 8** Entry, hall, dining room, looking northwest





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**Photo 9** Primary bedroom, looking northeast



**Photo 10** Kitchen, looking west

