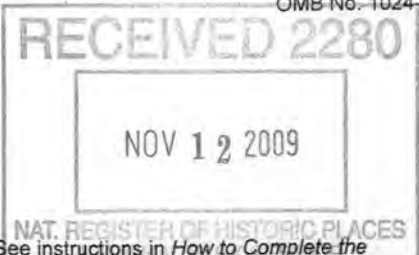


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

09800176



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 Gill, Merwyn C., House

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

2. Location

street & number 1385 El Mirador Drive  not for publication N/A

city or town Pasadena  vicinity N/A

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 91103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

William Jordan 9 NOV 2009  
Signature of certifying official Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 12/23/09

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> total

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

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a 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 Plastic/tempered Masonite panels. asphalt, polyurethane foam, fiberglass

walls Glass, stucco, fiberglass, plastic, wood

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.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
*MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

### Description

#### Summary Paragraph

The Gill, Merwyn C. House is identified as Assessor Parcel Number 5705-010-009, located at legal tract number 14495 of lot 8. 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. The property is located at 1385 El Mirador Drive in Pasadena, California, on the north side of El Mirador Drive, between Wellington Avenue and Rutherford Drive. The lot is a flag lot with a narrow portion extending north from El Mirador Drive to the main portion of the lot, which is located behind (north of) properties with direct frontage on El Mirador Drive.

The M.C. Gill house is a 2,600-square-foot, post-and-beam, flat-roofed, one-story house on a gently sloping “flag” lot located on the hills in the Linda Vista area of west Pasadena. The house is marked by strong, bold horizontal lines, many experimental materials, subtle change in elevation, and volumes that project from the larger enclosure as either exterior or interior rooms. This house reflects masterful work, a close collaboration with a sophisticated, technologically innovative client for over half a century, and incorporates highly custom work, rich and/or avante materials, and a setting whose tropical and extensive landscaping has gained national renown. As with most Buff, Straub, & Hensman designs, the house both feels embedded in nature while taking advantage of sweeping views of the mountains, using glass for view walls and translucent or opaque walls elsewhere. The house has had some interior alterations and minor exterior changes, all joint collaborations between architects and client, which do not affect the home’s integrity. It continues to convey its historical significance.

#### Description

The sense of procession and the realization of landscape as a critical interstitial element in unifying building and setting is illustrated here to an unprecedented degree in the firm’s work thus far. The long driveway, almost an easily missed from the street, approaches the house on a broad curve that becomes tangent to the long protected walkway on the west side of the house. This leads south to the garden area defining the public entrance, where one turns 90 degrees to the east to reach the front door, sheltered by a broad roof overhang.

The house features strong directional circulation paths for the public route into the house, beginning with the long walkway aligned with the west side of the carport. The east side of this broad path has plastic panels (now altered, see below). Shielding the house, they are set between wood posts, setting up a sense of rhythm for the visitor by introducing the 8’ module used throughout the design. The canopy above is walnut planking that is separated by a short gap from the panel wall, providing daylight on both sides. This path, which defines the west edge of the outdoor rooms noted above, makes a right turn to a slightly narrower path that leads into the house and that is defined by a smaller module, introducing a more domestic scale into this house, notable in feeling much larger than it is. Several smaller unconditioned spaces provide immediate intimacy with nature in the bedrooms, all oriented to preserve privacy.

The house is arranged as a T, with the living room and master suite contained in the stroke and the rest of the spaces, including the carport, in the stem. This stem is not arranged in a rigid linear way but as a series of interlocking volumes of “positive” and “negative” spaces, some of which are conditioned, “habitable” space. Others, unconditioned and exterior, are used for landscaping, terraces and patios that serve to simultaneously separate and connect the conditioned interior spaces. These volumes step out or in as outdoor “rooms.”

A rectangular family pool oriented north-south terminates the plan on the south.

A modernized Japanese influence is very evident here. For example, the south elevation features five bays of eight feet. Four bays are glass floor-to-ceiling opening to a balcony with a simple wood fence that is sheltered by the roof of the same depth as the balcony. A fifth and centered bay, a two-story wall of white-painted stucco steps out to the line of the roof/balcony, and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
*MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

Section 7 Page 6

serves to divide the elevation and balconies into two equal and identical parts. This small volume's east wall is opaque and acts as a small landscaped garden visually and physically available to the galley master bathroom immediately adjacent to the north. East of this volume's wall lies the balcony to the living room. The staircase acts to unify the composition, giving this elevation a taut yet calm effect. The fifth bay is also distinguished from the others in that in front of it, a series of wide steps leading from the east-most balcony, slightly deeper than that on the west, to the pool area and family space tucked into the hillside below the top stoke of the "T" that defines living room and master suite. The line of the balcony is further strengthened by the wide wood fascia band at the floor line, below the simple wooden fence. Overall, the elevation is reminiscent of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Katsura Imperial Villa.

The original and extant materials of the house contribute to its significance as character defining feature. Of primary importance are plastics of various compositions and ages, found in the roof, in skylights, interior and exterior wall panels. The roof/ceiling panel is Gill factory-made 4x8 panels, 2 1/2" thick. There are three types of panels, or "sandwiches." Two are used for opaque roofing: a core of either honeycomb paper or polyurethane foam is sandwiched between 1/4" walnut for the ceiling and a layer of fiberglass on the exterior. The honeycomb paper sandwiches are used for overhangs and the carport because they are cheaper and have less insulating value. The third type of sandwich is used for skylights, which Gill has added throughout the house over time. This is composed of translucent or clear fiberglass and clear fiberglass at the ceiling plane level, giving a soft, glareless light; the grid and geometry of the 4" Masonite divisions add to the Oriental feeling throughout the house. Other materials and chemical composition are deployed depending on load and function, including polyester resins, fiberglass laminates, polyurethane and paper and balsa wood laminates. Special glu-lam beams were built up out of 2x4s at the Gill factory in El Monte under the supervision of architect and client and faced with walnut. All these materials and technologies were produced in Mr. Gill's factory in El Monte (the firm designed a handsome corporate headquarters there in 1973 with trademark glass and interior landscaping). A custom brick, a rich dark red, is used for indoor and outdoor walls in a running brick pattern; the typical exposed wood beams, joists and rafters of wood are seen throughout the house. These are treated with a clay-colored stain to blend in with the earth tones of the house. Other character-defining features found here include horizontal runs of soffit lighting in the kitchen and living room, suspended wood frames with translucent plastic panels, and a built-in sofa in the living room.

### Alterations

All of the alterations were done in collaboration with client and architects, including recent changes under Dennis Smith, current principal/president of the firm. No spatial layouts or the existing footprint were altered. The most noticeable changes are the enclosure and renovation of a secondary landscaped area that was part of the original master bath in the mid 1990s and the replacement of the screens on the porch off the dining room with solid glass with no alteration of window openings. Most of the other changes addressed replacing original (and then avant-garde) materials with even more state-of-the-art materials, such as replacing the original translucent panels in the original path to the house with custom blue patterned glass and replacing opaque ceilings with the skylight "sandwich" units to gain more light. The panels in the free-standing screen at the entrance have been replaced with stained art glass designed by Hester Gill, who was also responsible for the landscaping. The kitchen countertop was replaced by petrified wood, and secondary bathrooms were also renovated.

These changes, done in collaboration between architect and client, a practice and way of working which never changed, reflect minor adaptations to new conditions. The most important change was to the master bathroom and the alteration of its relationship to the outdoors. However, none of these changes affect the integrity of the house, including location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling, and association, and the house readily conveys its historical significance.

**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
- C 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 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)

Architecture

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Period of Significance

1964

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Dates

1964

Architect/Builder

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. Please see the 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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

Section 8 Page 7

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

### Statement of Significance

The Gill House is one of Buff, Straub and Hensman's masterworks.

This large, well-appointed house is distinctive within the firm's canon for two reasons. First, the unusually intense, productive, and friendly collaboration between architect and client led to the architectural integration of state-of-the-art plastics that the client developed as a result of technologies he invented and/or refined for the World War II effort, with the firm's more typical (and far more low-tech) palette of natural materials such as wood, brick and stone.

This house is one of the firm's masterworks. It is distinctive within the firm's canon because it demonstrates the successful integration of complex state-of-the-art commercial and industrial products and materials into the firm's standard palette of wood, glass and stucco joined with simple connections. Additionally, these new materials, such as daylighting roof panels, were used not just once in the construction of the house, but were sometimes replaced when a new material invented by Mr. Gill was deemed to be possibly more robust for a particular application. These subtle changes were made in close collaboration with the architects, first with Conrad Buff, later with Don Hensman and today with Dennis Smith. This collaboration of more than half a century represents an on-going attitude of continued optimism; a casual, "let's-see-what-happens" approach; and the high value both client and architect placed on experimentation. These three qualities are associated not just with mid-century Modernism but especially with the postwar USC/Pasadena "School of Architecture" that fostered collaboration and experimentation.

The attitude of the inventor/owner, M.C. Gill,<sup>1</sup> is casual with regard to those post-war plastics in the sense that he was never adverse to changing things as new products devised by his firm became available and were deemed superior or worthy of investigation. This attitude where materials were not deified or considered as too precious to tamper with (a very Modernist approach based on an experimental attitude to materials and methods) coexisted easily with a respect and love for fine natural materials and their inherent worth and beauty. Gill, or "M.C." as he is usually called, loved tinkering on the house, as Buff did as well: in a way, this was a very malleable "machine for living," to paraphrase Le Corbusier. (Though 97 years old, this USC grad '37 still goes to work at his firm, now world renowned for its innovations in plastics used in the aerospace and airline industries.)

Finally, the house also demonstrates the attention to integrating the building and the experience of architecture into the site so characteristic of the work of Buff, Straub, & Hensman. Conrad Buff's insistence on this commanding but very private 1.4 acre site, which contains its own prospect as well as a small ravine (rather than other nearby, larger sites), illustrate the architect's perennial concern for the "genius loci" of a specific setting for a specific client.

The Gill House exemplifies a seamless integration between the woodsy, easy, disarmingly apparent informality of the Buff, Straub, & Hensman tradition and the application of precise, state-of-the-art materials that today might be termed "technology transfer." The house demonstrates an exceptionally quality of design, is the work of a master architect, retains its integrity, and conveys its historical significance.

### Significance—Conclusion

#### Criterion C- Eligible

As demonstrated above, the Gill House, a single-family house designed by master architects Buff, Straub and Hensman meets the registration requirements as outlined in the MPS. It has retained to a high degree the respective required aspects of integrity, seen in its retention of character-defining features. 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 Context Statement.<sup>2</sup> It is an

<sup>1</sup> Interview with M.C. Gill, 13 February 2008.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
*MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

outstanding example of the integration of high-tech materials developed as a response to World War II into a palette of materials more characteristic of Arts and Crafts architecture but in an architectural form and expression unique to Mid-Century Modernism as realized in Southern California, Los Angeles, and Pasadena. It is significant as demonstrating innovation in residential Modernism within the MPS period of significance, 1964. 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 1948 – 1968.

### **Criterion Consideration G- Eligible**

As demonstrated above, the Gill House is of exceptional importance in the work of Buff, Straub & Hensman for three reasons: high quality of design, application of innovative materials, and as an example of the firm's versatility with design. The house exemplifies an exceptionally high quality of design, distilling the firm's values toward site and setting and their philosophy of residential architecture into this residence. It embodies the "can do" post-World War II attitude by both client and architect in two ways: the first an industrialist applying state-of-the-art wartime materials for peacetime use; and, the other, Conrad Buff and his colleagues, war veterans who sought challenges through innovation in architecture. The desire of the client to include the products of his work into his residence presented a challenge to the architects, who were ultimately able to develop a means to use this material in the design. The use of plastics in roofing and wall panels for the Gill House represented a breakthrough for the firm by altering their typical design practices to incorporate specific requests by the client. This versatility would prove beneficial later in the firm's career when changes to the building code resulting from seismic and energy concerns required modernist architects to drastically change the form and structure of building designs. The Gill House is an early example of the firm's ability to adapt to new and changing requirements

For these reasons, the residence meets Criterion Consideration G.

**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property 1.14

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	391331	3781133	3	
2			4		

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

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

**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	Merwyn C. Gill, Gill Family		
Organization		Telephone	(62) 796-2825
Street & Number	1385 El Mirador Drive		
City or Town	Pasadena	State	CA Zip Code 91103

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.



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

Section 9, Page 9  
10

## Bibliographic References

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

Gill, M.C. Interview. February 13, 2008.

*Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*. 1969. "A View to Tomorrow." March 23. 35.

Masonry Industry. "A Decorous Addition to Office Building." 1975. December. 10, 11.

## Verbal Boundary Description

Assessor Parcel Number: 5705-010-009

## Verbal Boundary Justification

This is the parcel historically associated with the property

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

Section Additional Page 10  
Documentation

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

### Photographs

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: looking southeast, northwest corner  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_512GlenCourt1.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

Section Additional Page 11  
Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: northwest elevation, view southeast.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive2.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
*MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail, Looking East along South elevation  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive3.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
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Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail, Looking Southeast, Northwest corner  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive4.tiff





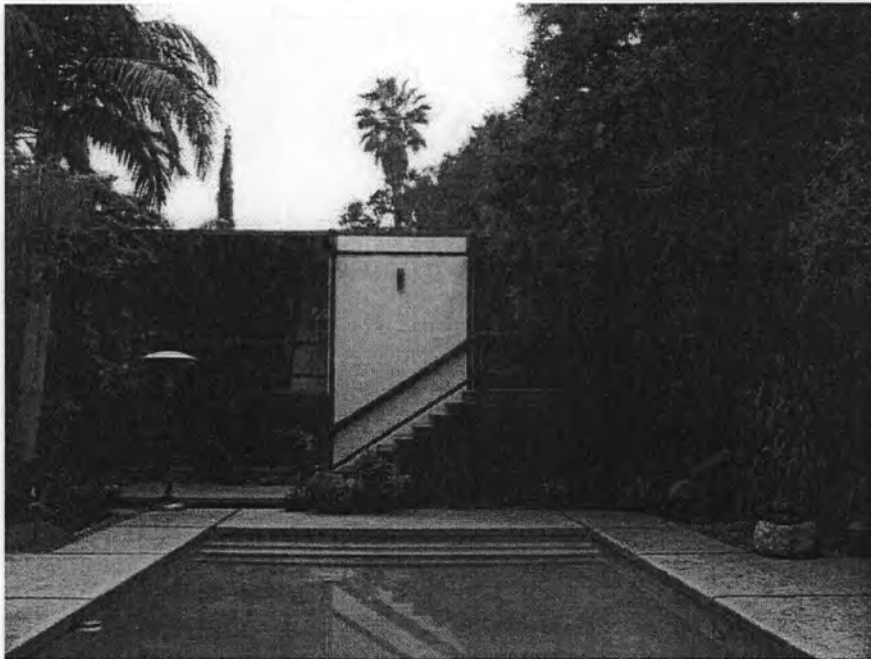
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
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Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: northeast elevation, view southwest.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive6.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
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Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail of brickwork and plants.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive7.tiff





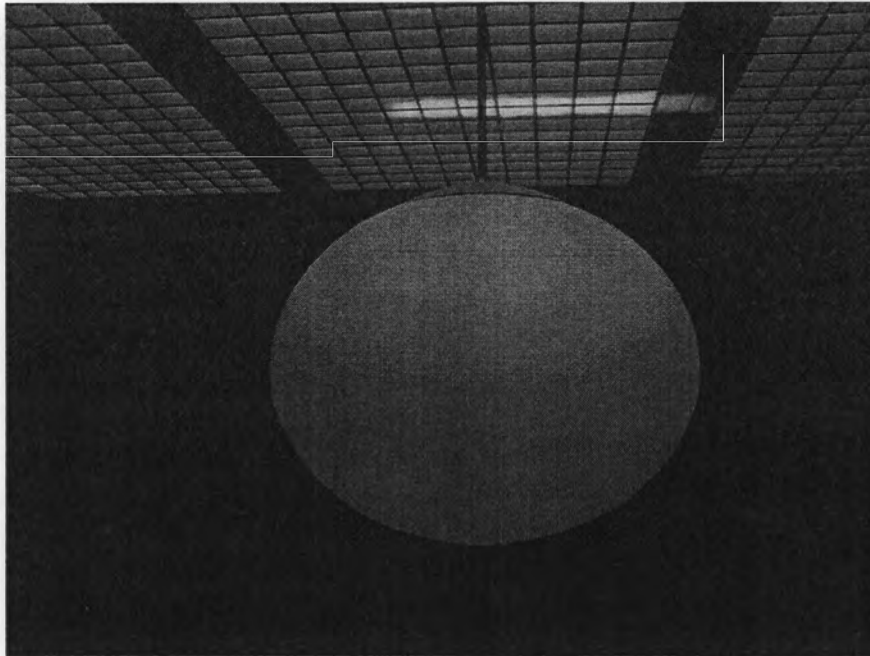
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California  
MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

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Documentation

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Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail, interior light fixture.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive8.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

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Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Interior detail  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive9.tiff



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California  
MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

Section      Additional      Page      19  
    Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail, light fixture.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive10.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

Section      Additional      Page      20  
Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: detail of exterior elements, view northwest.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive11.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

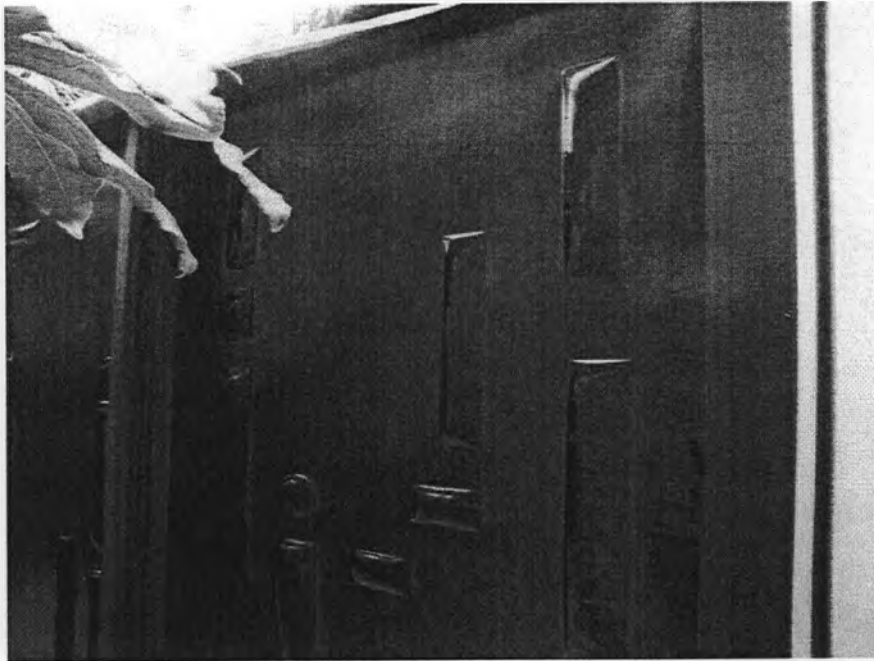
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

Section      Additional      Page    21  
Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: Detail of exterior elements.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive12.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

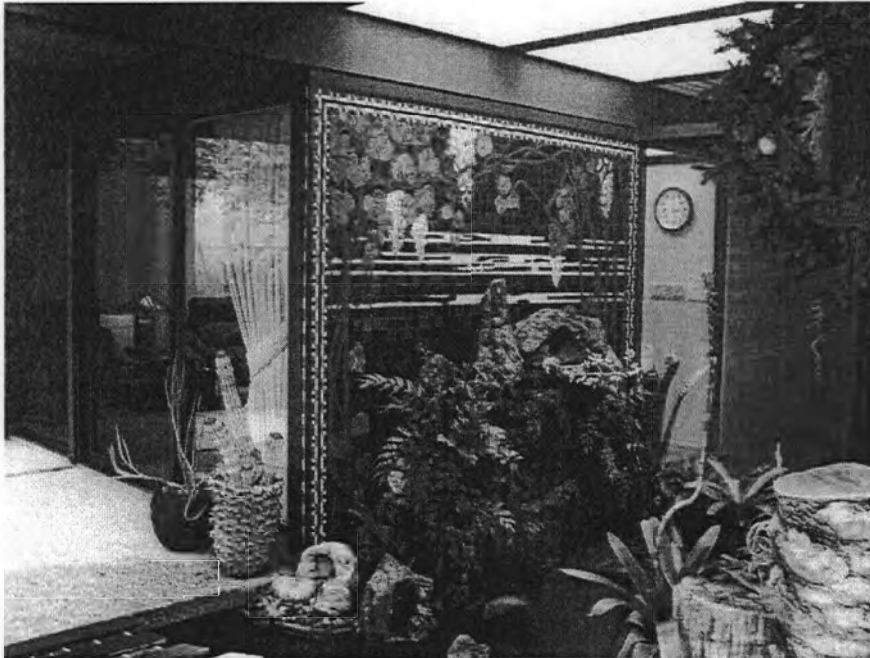
## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

Section      Additional      Page      22  
Documentation      \_\_\_\_\_

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

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: detail of garden surrounded by water and patio.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive13.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House  
Los Angeles County, California*

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

Section Additional Page 23  
Documentation

Gill House – Pasadena  
Los Angeles County, California  
Barbara Lamprecht, Jones & Stokes  
March 24, 2008  
Negative: Jones & Stokes  
View: interior detail of living space in relation to exterior patio and surroundings.  
CA\_LosAngelesCounty\_1385ElMiradorDrive14.tiff



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

*Gill, Merwyn C., House*  
*Los Angeles County, California*  
*MPS: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past—City of Pasadena*

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Additional \_\_\_\_\_ Page 24  
Documentation

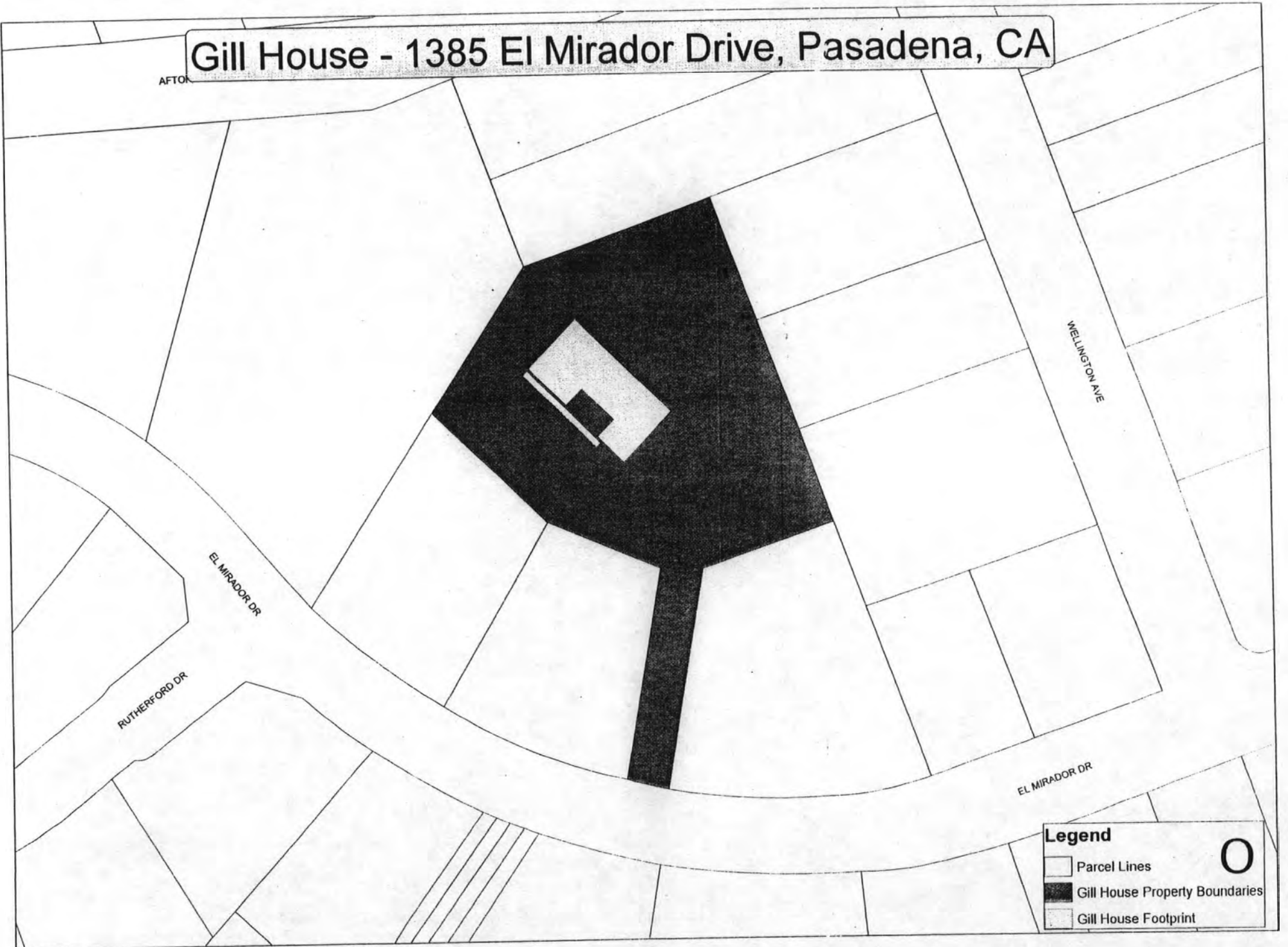
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RECEIVED  
SOUTH WORTH  
SECTION  
GILSON FIBER



# Gill House - 1385 El Mirador Drive, Pasadena, CA

AFTON



## Legend

- Parcel Lines
  - Gill House Property Boundaries
  - Gill House Footprint
- O

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Gill, Merwyn C., House

MULTIPLE NAME: Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles

DATE RECEIVED: 11/12/09 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/26/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 09000176

DETAILED EVALUATION:

     ACCEPT           RETURN           REJECT      \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**The Meryn C. Gill House meets National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The work of the respected and influential local architectural firm of Buff, Straub and Hensman, the 1964 Gill House is a fine local example of regional Modernist design. The building represented a unique collaboration between architect and owner that led to the introduction of considerable modern (plastic) materials into a well-crafted design reflective of the firm's widely admired regional Modernism design aesthetic. The house, among the firm's masterworks, represents Buff, Straub and Hensman's exceptional contributions to the development of a unique regional modernism in the Pasadena community. The nomination meets the Registration Requirements of the MPS.**

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept Criterion C

REVIEWER Paul Lusignea DISCIPLINE A Historical

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 12/23/09

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y

## MERWYN C. GILL HOUSE

Los Angeles County, CA

### National Register of Historic Places - Return Comments:

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The current nomination is being returned for substantive revisions. The basic documentation appears to outline a property worthy of listing in the National Register. Approval will likely be completed upon correction of the items noted below and resubmission of the required materials to the National Park Service.

#### Description

The verbal description of the property was difficult to visualize without a basic floor plan of the property. If a basic plan is available for inclusion in this, or any subsequent Pasadena MPS nomination, it would strengthen the documentation.

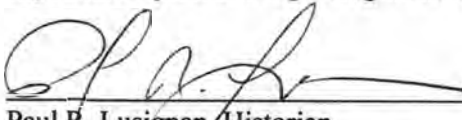
#### Significance

Criterion Consideration G. The current nomination provides a less than convincing justification for this 1964 property. Factors cited, such as a "can-do" attitude and the popular appeal of the firm's work, seem less than *exceptional* in nature, as justification for a less than fifty year property. It does seem as if two areas of potential significance might better serve to set off the unique significance of this property within the context of Buff, Straub and Hensman's work; the innovative use of modern materials in collaboration with a progressive businessman, and the quality of the design in comparison to other Buff et. al. works, as determined by objective evaluators. The nomination talks about the unique partnership and use of materials, but never really states why this represents a significant element of Modernism or post-war construction. (Was the dynamic use of plastics in the house precedent setting for later Buff, Straub & Hensman works, either in using plastics or other modern materials? Did it at all influence other Pasadena/USC school/regional designers? Or was it emblematic of the post-war enthusiasm for new and innovative materials, marking a breakthrough for the firm in altering their theories or practice of design?)

In general, if a property is less than fifty years old (or the period of significance is entirely in the less-than-50 period) the nomination must explicitly cite how the resource is of exceptional significance within its given historic or architectural context. When that context is well defined and makes a very clear and reasoned justification for its period of significance (as in a MPS cover) then the requirements for the individual less-than-50 resources are much less arduous and demanding. In such cases the justification for exceptional significance is tempered based on information already provided in the developed context.

Unfortunately, the *Pasadena Recent Past* MPS contains one key shortcoming/omission--it fails to provide a direct, detailed defense for cutting off the context time period at 1968. No where in the MPS is there a specific, well-reasoned statement justifying the selected end date for the significance. And little is any acknowledgement that this period exists within the less-than-50 era. Later changes to building codes are briefly noted as altering some design options, but most of this occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. If the context period were solidly justified in the MPS cover documentation, then reliance on that period within the individual nominations would be easier and straightforward. Without such an explicit justification it falls to each nomination to provide solid justification for the period(s) selected and the exceptional nature of that particular resource. Mere reference to the cover document is insufficient.

If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at the number or e-mail listed below.



Paul R. Lusignan, Historian  
(for) Keeper of the National Register  
(202) 354-2229; [Paul\\_lusignan@nps.gov](mailto:Paul_lusignan@nps.gov)

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**MERWYN C. GILL HOUSE**  
**Los Angeles County, CA**  
**National Register of Historic Places - Return Comments:**

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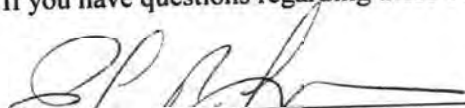
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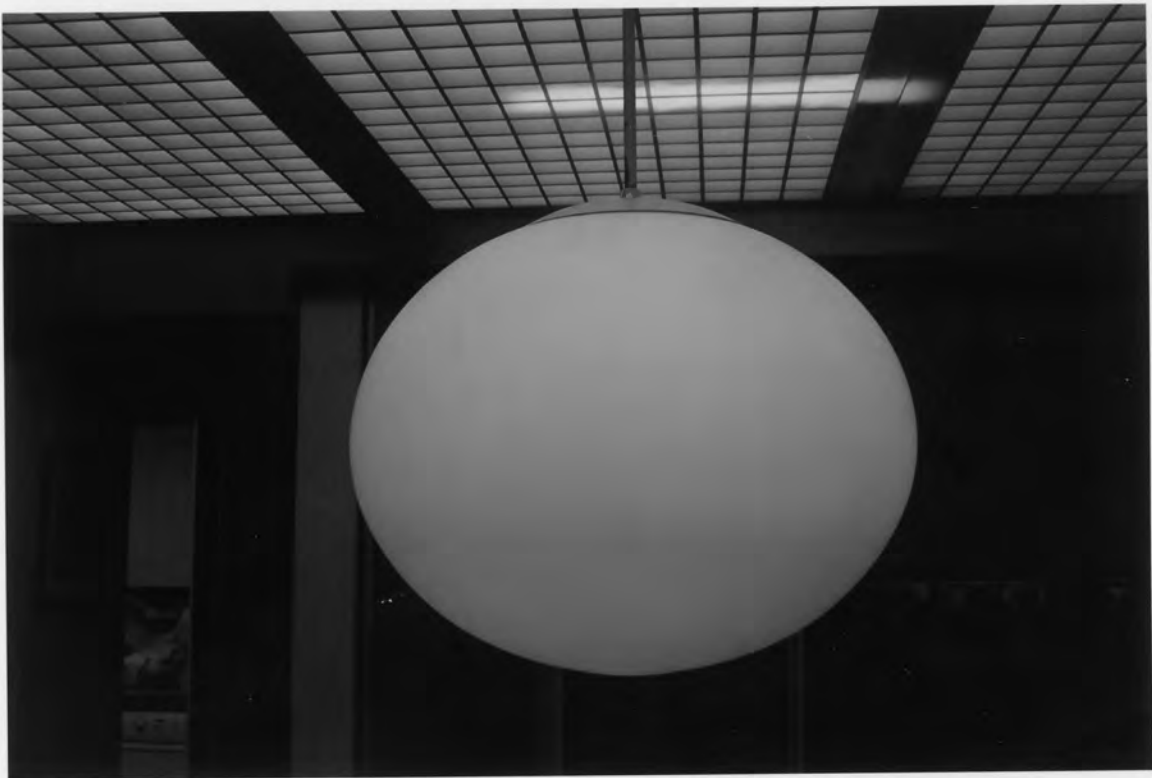
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(for) Keeper of the National Register  
(202) 354-2229; [Paul\\_lusignan@nps.gov](mailto:Paul_lusignan@nps.gov)

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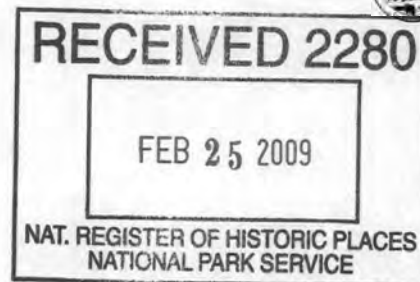


Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64501037

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

P.O. BOX 942896  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001  
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824  
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov



February 23, 2009

Ms. Jan Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPS**  
**Frank House**  
**Gill House**  
**Mello House**  
**Norton House**  
**Pike House**  
**Poppy Peak Historic District**

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Enclosed please find the **Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPS** nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The MPS includes the MPDF and six associated properties. These properties are located in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, California. On November 7, 2008 the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPDF and six associated properties eligible for the National Register under Criterion C at the local level of significance. The Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPS is nominated by the City of Pasadena.

You will note that the Staff Report for this nomination makes reference to the Pegfair Estates Historic District. The California State Historical Resources Commission voted to not approve the Pegfair Estates Historic District nomination and it is not being forwarded at this time.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Jay Correia of my staff at 916-653-9054.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Enclosures

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

P.O. BOX 942896  
SACRAMENTO, CA 94296-0001  
(916) 653-6624 Fax: (916) 653-9824  
calshpo@ohp.parks.ca.gov



November 10, 2009

Ms. Jan Matthews, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005



Subject: **Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPS  
Gill House  
Poppy Peak Historic District**

Dear Ms. Matthews: *Jan*

Enclosed please find the resubmitted **Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPS**/nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This re-submission includes the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) and two associated properties, both of which are also resubmissions. The properties are located in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, California. On November 7, 2008 the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the Cultural Resources of the Recent Past, City of Pasadena MPDF and the above-listed properties eligible for the National Register under Criterion C at the local level of significance. The City of Pasadena is the applicant.

On April 10, 2009 you returned the Gill House nomination for substantive revisions, and the Poppy Peak Historic District nomination for technical and substantive revisions. In your comments for both nominations you discussed the fact that the MPDF contained a limited defense for cutting off the historic context at 1968. Per your recommendation, the applicant has re-submitted the MPS with a much improved justification for ending the context in 1968. Both nominations have also been revised per you comments.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Jay Correia of my staff at 916-653-9054 or [jcorr@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jcorr@parks.ca.gov)

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Enclosures