

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Eames House

Other Name/Site Number: Case Study House #8

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 203 N Chautauqua Boulevard

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Pacific Palisades

Vicinity: N/A

State: California County: Los Angeles Code: 037

Zip Code: 90272

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Private: x
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Building(s): x
District:
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing: 2
Noncontributing:
buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: None

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 2

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is: _____

- ___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 3

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Domestic

Sub: Single dwelling

Current: Domestic

Sub: Single dwelling

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Modern Movement

Materials:

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Glass, stucco, wood, asbestos, metal, synthetics

Roof: Asphalt

Other: Metal (steel frame)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance

Location

The Eames House is located in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles, California. The property is composed of a residence and studio situated on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The residence and studio occupy level ground at the base of a steep slope along the western edge of the property.

The community of Pacific Palisades sits on the high bluffs along the Pacific Coast between the cities of Santa Monica and Malibu. Atop the bluffs, flat plateaus, or *mesas*, are defined by canyons that run inland from the shoreline cliffs. The broad Santa Monica Canyon divides Pacific Palisades from the City of Santa Monica. The subject property occupies a lower yet distinct plateau on the northern edge of Santa Monica Canyon, overlooking the ocean immediately to the south. The mouth of the canyon is located on marine shales, as described by UCLA geologist Dr. Richard F. Logan:

The ever threatening cliff that overhangs the Coast Highway at Chautauqua . . . is composed entirely of slightly consolidated alluvium; the other three sides all involve marine shales, which become extremely heavy in wet years through absorption of rain water, and simultaneously become greasy, thus lubricating a potential massive earth movement. The major part of Pacific Palisades is free of all danger from slides, but the canyon borders and sea-cliff edge present some serious stabilization problems.¹

The Eames House is located within a cluster of four single family residences, all designed as part of the Case Study House program.² The property is not visible from the street, and is accessed via a private drive that leads from Chautauqua Boulevard. A sign indicating the addresses 201 and 203 Chautauqua is posted at the drive's entrance.

The asphalt paved drive leads first to the property at 201 Chautauqua (The Entenza House, Case Study House #9), and terminates at the Eames property. To the north, the drive is edged by a serpentine brick wall with weeping mortar. The wall is part of Richard Neutra's landscape design for the property at 219 Chautauqua (The Bailey House, Case Study House #20). The drive's southern edge is lined with a wood fence, and is shaded by mature trees that overhang it.

The Eames House occupies an irregularly-shaped 1.4-acre site. The site is predominately flat with a steep upward slope at its western edge. The house is situated parallel to the slope and is oriented toward a grassy area to the east known as "the meadow." The property is densely landscaped, creating a sense of private enclosure and separating it from its neighbors. An earthen mound, or *berm*, is situated at the far edge of the property. It features a metal fence obscured by mature shrubs, providing a visual screen from the adjacent Entenza House. Eucalyptus trees planted along the eastern elevations of the house provide added privacy and shade. A wood plank pathway leads from the drive and runs along the full extent of the house's eastern facade.

¹Dr. Richard F. Logan, "Pacific Palisades, the Natural Setting," *Pacific Palisades, Where the Mountains Meet the Sea*, ed. Betty Lou Young. (Pacific Palisades, CA: Pacific Palisades Historical Society Press, 1983), 2.

²Other houses within this cluster include Case Study House #18 (199 Chautauqua Boulevard); Case Study #9 (201 Chautauqua Boulevard); and Case Study House #20 (219 Chautauqua Boulevard).

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 5

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Design and Construction

The Eames House is composed of two distinct volumes, a living component (or residence) and a working component (or studio). The two volumes are arranged in a linear configuration and separated by an open court. Both volumes are rectangular in plan with horizontal massing, and are situated along the western edge of the property. The residence is 1,500 square feet, with the studio containing an additional 1,000 square feet.

The Eames House is modular in its design, composed of 20' x 7' 4" bays that rise to a height of 17 feet. Each bay is defined by a steel frame consisting of two rows of 4-inch H-columns set 20 feet apart, with a 12-inch open-web joist forming the top member. On the rear (west) elevation, the vertical member of each frame is partially embedded in an 8-foot high poured concrete retaining wall at the base of the slope that forms the lower part of the west elevation in both components. Steel decking running perpendicular to the frames forms the underside of the flat roof. The roof is a gravel surfaced, built-up assembly.³

The 20-foot wide dimension of the frames define the width of both the residence and studio. The residence consists of eight bays, and the studio is five bays wide. The open court that separates the two structures is the equivalent of four bays in width. The exposed steel frames are painted black, which visually delineates each bay and the shared structural rhythm of the two components. Diagonal cross-bracing, composed of metal cables visible on the exterior, provides structural stability for the frames.

Each bay is in-filled with one of several materials, including panels of plaster, plywood, asbestos, glass, and "pylon" (a translucent laminate similar to fiberglass).⁴ Some bays contain one type of infill material, such as a single plaster panel. Other bays are divided into multiple smaller panels of uniform dimension, with up to twelve in the lower story (two rows of six), and as many as fourteen in the upper story (two rows of seven). Like the frames, the steel sashes and sub-dividers are also painted black, creating a horizontal grid pattern. Plaster panels are painted black, white, beige, red, or blue.

The main entrance to the residence is located on the primary (east) façade. The hinged door is off-set right of center in elevation and consists of five translucent glazed panels that echo the size and appearance of the panels that flank the door to the right and directly above. Two small panels located above and spanning the entire width of the entry bay frame are highlighted in gold. A rotating black-glazed ceramic bell, attributed to Mexican potter, Maria Martinez, flanks the main entrance to the right.

The inner portion of the two rectangular volumes (i.e. the northern portion of the residence, and southern portion of the studio), are each divided into an upper and lower story, with additional open-web joists at a height of 8 feet. The outer portions (i.e. the southern portion of the residence, and northern portion of the studio), are open to form double-height interior spaces. A deep overhang and the rear wall extend beyond the south façade of the residence, creating another outdoor space.⁵

Windows include both fixed and operable awning casements divided into two horizontal lights. Windows and doors are glazed with a combination of transparent and translucent glass. Wire-reinforced glass is used in some bays of the studio. The north, east, and south elevations of both the residence and studio contain large areas of

³According to staff at the Eames Foundation, gravel surface tar paper covers one-half inch insulation on the roof of both components.

⁴James Steele, *Eames House, Charles and Ray Eames* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1994), 10.

⁵"Case Study House for 1949: The Steel Frame," *Arts & Architecture* (March 1949), 30-31.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 6

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

glazed panels, forming glass walls. The northern and southern elevations of both the residence and studio feature sliding glass doors. Awning casements occur on the rear (west) elevations where there are upper story interior spaces (bedrooms and bathrooms in the residence, and an office in the studio). Double-height spaces (the living room in the residence, and the main work space in the studio) have solid rear (west) walls.

There are two outdoor patios. One functions as an open court or outdoor room between the residence and studio. The other is situated beneath the overhang at the southern end of the residence. Continuation of the metal roof deck and the rear wood paneled wall from interior to exterior creates both spatial and material continuity between exterior and interior. Both outdoor spaces feature brick, wood, and marble paving configured in a grid pattern, and are landscaped with planted and potted vegetation.

Interior Plan

The interior of the residence features an open plan, with one space flowing easily into the next. As noted above, the northern portion of the residence is divided into two stories. The lower story contains the utilitarian spaces (kitchen and dining areas), with private spaces (bedrooms and baths) above in the upper story or loft. The loft overlooks the double-height living space in the southern portion of the residence.

Upon entering the residence through the main door on the eastern facade, a spiral staircase leading to the loft is directly ahead. The staircase is constructed of steel tread brackets; each welded to a short section of metal pipe or sleeve that are threaded together by a central metal post. Plywood treads are bolted to the brackets and the risers are open. The skylight located directly above the stairway filters natural light down the rectangular opening to the lower level. To the right of the entrance, a dining area along the front of the residence leads to the kitchen, which can be closed off by a folding partition. The kitchen features original enameled metal cabinets with stainless steel and marble countertops. The dining and kitchen areas open onto the court to the north. Behind the kitchen, a narrow utility room separated by a corrugated fiberglass panel runs along the rear elevation.

To the left of the main entrance, a short single-story hallway with built-in storage cabinets, opens onto the double-height volume of the living room, which occupies the entire southern portion of the residence. This is the most photographed and celebrated space in the Eames House. The floor is finished with white linoleum tile, and the ceiling is exposed metal roof decking. The solid rear wall is finished with vertical wood paneling. An upper and lower row of beige pleated curtains cover the expansive double-height windows. The general openness of the living room is countered by a more intimate seating area set into a single-height alcove located under the outer edge of the loft. The seating area features a built-in L-shaped sofa and a wood shelf and upper storage cabinets. The floor in this area is carpeted.

The upper floor contains two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a dressing alcove. The two bedrooms occupy the loft overlooking the living room and can be closed off with three sliding canvas-covered wood partitions. A similar sliding partition separates the two bedrooms. Original goose-neck light fixtures are mounted on the walls in the bedroom areas, two in the larger bedroom, and one in the smaller bedroom.

A bathroom opens off of the rear bedroom and features an original sink, toilet, and shower stall. The dressing alcove, located at the rear of the loft, leads to a second, larger bathroom. This bathroom contains a bathtub and features black and white linoleum floor tiles laid out in a checkerboard pattern. A narrow hallway with built-in cabinetry occupies the center of the loft at the top of the staircase. Additional light comes into the upper story via the skylight above the staircase. The upper story flooring is linoleum tile throughout, with square wood

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 7

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

panels finishing the interior walls. Upstairs windows feature horizontal sliding shades composed of fiberglass panels in wood frames.

The studio building also features an open plan. As in the residence, a portion of the studio is divided into two stories, with an upper loft overlooking a double-height space. Here, the southern portion of the studio has two levels. The ground level contains a kitchen along the east elevation, with a powder room and hallway beyond. An enclosed room situated to the rear is used for storage. The kitchen looks onto the open court to the south. The loft contains a single work space and overlooks a double-height studio area to the north. The upper story is accessed via an open steel staircase with wood treads, open risers, and simple pipe handrails. The floors are wood parquet on the first story with linoleum tile upstairs. The ceiling is exposed metal roof decking. Additional fiberglass horizontal sliding shades cover the multiple windows throughout.

Material Integrity

The Eames House retains an extraordinarily high degree of material integrity, and ably conveys its association with the Case Study House program and with Charles and Ray Eames. In all seven aspects of integrity, the property is remarkably intact and true to its historic design. The house itself is situated in its original location on the property. Its setting is generally unchanged from its original appearance with the exception of the maturation of foliage. All major elements of the original landscape design are extant, including the grassy ground cover, stands of eucalyptus trees, constructed berm, and pedestrian and vehicular pathways. All of these features contribute to the setting of the Eames House.

The integrity of the residence and studio buildings themselves is exceptionally high. The workmanship and materials are intact. The house has been well-maintained with little need for substantial repairs or replacements. The interior spaces appear much as they did when the Eameses lived and worked in them. The furnishings, objects, and decoration in the house are seen today just as they were in the many photographs through which the owners exhaustively interpreted and documented the property during their years of residence.

Few historic properties have maintained the integrity of feeling and association evident at the Eames House. This is largely due to the dedicated and ongoing stewardship of the family that originally designed and built it. The association of the property with Charles and Ray Eames, with the Case Study House program, and with its own role in Modern domestic architecture in the United States is very strong.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: x Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ___

NHL Criteria: 1, 2, 4

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing cultural values
5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

NHL Exceptions: 8

Areas of Significance: Architecture
Art
Invention

Period(s) of Significance: 1949 - 1988

Significant Dates: 1949, 1978, 1988

Significant Person(s): Eames, Charles
Eames, Ray

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Eames, Charles and Ray (revised as-built)
Eames, Charles and Saarinen, Eero (original design)

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
Z. Modern

Modern Architecture Theme Study (draft)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 9

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary

The Eames House is eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion #1 for its association with the Case Study House program and the Modern architecture movement in the United States; under Criterion #2 for its association with influential designers Charles and Ray Eames; and under Criterion #4 as an exceptionally important work of postwar Modern residential design and construction.

The Eames House, Case Study House #8, is the most recognizable and most widely published of all the residences completed within the Case Study House program. The program was unique in the nation for its concerted efforts to introduce Modern domestic architecture to the broader public in the period after World War II. The Eames House best represents the goals and ideals of the Case Study House program.

The Eames House is the property most closely associated with nationally-significant designers Charles and Ray Eames. The property served as their private residence and working studio throughout their prolific careers as furniture designers, filmmakers, photographers, exhibition designers, and graphic artists. Charles and Ray occupied the house from the completion of its construction in 1949 until their deaths in 1978 and 1988, respectively.

The Eames House is one of the few architectural works attributed to Charles Eames, and embodies many of the distinguishing characteristics and ideals of postwar Modernism in the United States. Since the time of its construction, the Eames House has been regarded as one of the most significant experiments in American domestic architecture.

The period of significance for the Eames House coincides with the residency of its designers, extending from 1949 until 1988.

John Entenza and Arts & Architecture Magazine

The lineage of *Arts & Architecture* magazine dates back to 1911 and a publication entitled *Pacific Builder*. Later renamed *California Arts & Architecture*, the magazine was regional in its focus. Not considered culturally or artistically progressive, the magazine emphasized traditional arts, interior design, domestic architecture, and gardening.

In 1938, John Entenza purchased *California Arts & Architecture*. Though he did not have a background in publishing, Entenza had long cultivated an interest in architecture.⁶ Two years later, he would become the magazine's editor and shift its focus from regional art to internationally-recognized movements in modernist art and architecture. To communicate this new direction, Entenza commissioned graphic artists Herbert Matter and Alvin Lustig to redesign the magazine's graphics, and format. The newly revamped *California Arts & Architecture* debuted in February of 1942, with the word "California" graphically de-emphasized on the cover and later dropped entirely in 1944.

⁶The previous year, Entenza had commissioned Los Angeles architect Harwell Hamilton Harris to design his private residence.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 10

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Entenza used a significant family inheritance to purchase and sustain the magazine. He was born in 1903 in Michigan to a “Scottish oil heiress and a Spanish attorney involved in migrant workers’ issues.”⁷ Because the magazine was not financially dependent upon advertising revenues, Entenza was able to be highly selective in his choice of advertisers. According to architectural historian Esther McCoy, Entenza would accept only those he considered to be complementary to the magazine’s progressive editorial content. His carefully chosen editorial board contained some of the most active and knowledgeable people in Southern California’s art and architecture communities. Entenza’s tenure at *Arts & Architecture* lasted until 1962, when he moved from Los Angeles to Chicago to direct the Graham Foundation, furthering his interest and influence in American architectural circles. Esther McCoy states that “[n]o single event raised the level of taste in Los Angeles as did the magazine; certainly nothing could have put the city on the international scene as quickly.”⁸

At the time Entenza bought the magazine, many talented architects were producing experimental designs in Los Angeles. Architects Frank Lloyd Wright, Lloyd Wright, R. M. Schindler, Richard Neutra, and J. R. Davidson had been practicing in Los Angeles since the 1920s. Harwell Hamilton Harris, Gregory Ain, and Raphael Soriano arrived in the city during the 1930s. The presence of these architects and their combined body of work comprised a recognizable modernist architectural movement in Southern California. However, opportunities to introduce their work to a larger audience through publication was limited.

McCoy describes how a 1939 publication of local residential architecture released by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects did include modernist architects (Schindler, Neutra, and Harris), but placed their work at the back of the book behind residences designed in the favored revival and eclectic styles. With the editorial changes at *Arts & Architecture* in the 1940s, Entenza provided a regional forum with national distribution that modernist architects in Los Angeles had previously lacked.

The content of the magazine under the editorial leadership of John Entenza included reviews and features on a wide range of artistic fields, including painting, sculpture, graphic art, art theory, photography, film, ceramics, architecture, landscape architecture, furniture design, structural engineering, prefabrication, and industrial design. While the architectural projects highlighted were mostly by Southern California architects, the publication also featured works in Chicago, Florida, Australia, and Mexico. The magazine also reported on art and architecture exhibitions at museums nationwide. Nationally known contributors to the magazine included Alvin Lustig, Sidney Janus, George Nelson, Peter Yates, Alfred Auerbach, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Edward Steichen, Bernard Rudofsky, Dore Ashton, and Charles Eames.

More than a magazine of architecture and the visual arts, the magazine also included highly-regarded criticism of contemporary music, housing, urban issues, social and political issues, and technology. Author Elizabeth A. T. Smith noted that the magazine resisted “differentiat[ing] between high and low art forms” but instead demonstrated its belief that “[c]ritical emphasis on principals of form, structure, and color as content of universal significance pervaded treatment of all the arts, obviating hierarchical distinctions between functional and nonfunctional object-making.”⁹ Smith further concluded from an analysis of the magazine’s stated goals and consistent content that “the urge to push forward in the creative, social, and political arenas...was *Arts &*

⁷Goldstein, Barbara, *Arts & Architecture, the Entenza Years* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: the MIT Press, 1990), 8.

⁸Esther McCoy, “Arts & Architecture Case Study Houses,” *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, ed. Elizabeth A. T. Smith (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 16.

⁹Elizabeth A. T. Smith, “Arts & Architecture and the Los Angeles Vanguard,” *Blueprints for Modern Living, History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, ed. Elizabeth A. T. Smith (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 53.

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Architecture's overriding objective. In fulfilling this objective, it became the leading periodical of its kind in America, and arguably in the world, during its heyday."¹⁰

The Case Study House Program

The Case Study House program was a product of the many concerns about housing and architecture voiced in the magazine, a discussion that began well before the 1945 announcement of the program. In particular, *Arts & Architecture* sponsored a domestic architecture competition in 1943 called "Designs for Postwar Living." This competition was conceived to document the general direction in which domestic architecture was heading, as well as to generate new ideas about the future of housing after the war. The competition was held during a period in which private housing construction had essentially ceased due to the nation's involvement in World War II. However, it was already apparent that the demand for housing following the war would be profound.

When the top designs were announced in the magazine's August 1943 issue, the nationwide response to the competition was emphasized by superimposing the names and home cities of the winners over a map of the United States. Winning entries originated in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Boston, and Washington, D.C. The magazine also indicated a future interest in similar experiments: "It is our hope that we will soon be able to announce a series of such competitions."¹¹

Rather than continuing with a series of competitions, however, Entenza settled upon a more concentrated program of commissioning houses by a select group of architects. In January 1945, *Arts & Architecture* published a two-page feature about the Case Study House program. The parameters of the program were outlined, and the selection of architects was announced. According to the original announcement of the program:

Because most opinion, both profound and light-headed, in terms of post war housing is nothing but speculation in the form of talk and reams of paper, it occurs to us that it might be a good idea to get down to cases and at least make a beginning in the gathering of that mass of material that must eventually result in what we know as "house -- post war."

We are, within the limits of uncontrollable facts, proposing to begin immediately the study, planning, and actual specifications of a special living problem in the Southern California area. Eight nationally known architects, chosen not only for their obvious talents, but for their ability to evaluate realistically housing in terms of need have been commissioned to take a plot of God's green earth and create "good" living conditions for eight American families.

Briefly, then, we will begin on the problem as posed to the architect, with the analysis of land in relation to work, schools, neighborhood conditions and individual family need. Each house will be designed within a specified budget, subject, of course, to the dictates of price fluctuation.

Beginning with the February issue of the magazine and for eight months or longer thereafter, each house will make its appearance with the comments of the architect -- his reasons for his solution and his choice of specific materials to be used. All this predicated on the basis of a house that he knows can be built when restrictions are lifted or as soon as practicable thereafter.

¹⁰Ibid, 163.

¹¹Goldstein, 19.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 12

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Architects will be responsible to no one but the magazine, which . . . will pose as “client”. It is to be clearly understood that every consideration will be given to new materials and new techniques in house construction. And we must repeat again that these materials will be selected on a purely merit basis by the architects themselves . . . No attempt will be made to use a material merely because it is new or tricky. On the other hand, neither will there be any hesitation in discarding old materials and techniques if their only value is that they have been generally regarded as “safe”.

All eight houses will be opened to the public for a period of from six to eight weeks, and thereafter an attempt will be made to secure and report upon tenancy studies to see how successfully the job has been done. Each house will be completely furnished . . . to the architects’ specifications or under his supervision.

. . . We hope (this program) will be understood and accepted as a sincere attempt not merely to preview, but to assist in giving some direction to the creative thinking on housing being done by good architects and good manufacturers whose joint objective is good housing.¹²

The primary goal of the Case Study House program was to provide an opportunity for innovative architects to imagine, design, and construct the ideal home for a postwar American family. Within this framework, the program outlined several specific objectives: experimentation with new materials, whether newly available or not typically used in residential construction; application of mass-production techniques to the process of home-building; creation of a unique design with prefabricated, standardized, and off-the-shelf parts; and promotion of the ideals of Modernism, including simplicity of form, integration of indoor and outdoor living spaces, and the avoidance of reference to historical styles.

Coming from an ideological rather than an aesthetic viewpoint, the program’s announcement made no specific comment on style, and did not elaborate on the particular characteristics of the “old materials” referred to as objectionable, nor to any particular aspects of pre-war housing that had become obsolete. Rather than campaigning directly against familiar, traditional houses, the program sought to provide a positive alternative in the hope that with exposure to Modern houses, people would be seduced not only by their beauty but by their practicality, affordability, and livability as well.

Despite the absence of overt stylistic dogma in the announcement, the aesthetic biases of the program were clear. The first publication of the Entenza House betrayed this feeling when the house’s just-erected steel frame was pictured with a caption stating that “as is often the case it has in this state an aesthetic quality one would like to preserve.”¹³ Historian Reyner Banham in 1971 recognized the character of the Case Study Houses as a stylistic movement by stating that “(t)he program, the magazine, Entenza, and a handful of architects really made it appear that Los Angeles was about to contribute to the world not merely odd works of architectural genius but a whole consistent style.”¹⁴

Modernists practicing in the United States saw that there was a great deal at stake in getting their message out to the general public. The success or failure of the Modernist design philosophy depended to a great extent on whether the American public felt that a Modern house could meet their actual or perceived needs. Architectural historian Thomas Hines suggests there was a need to “evangelize” in the cause of spreading the acceptance of Modernism:

¹²“Announcement: the Case Study House Program,” *Arts & Architecture*. (January 1945), 54-55.

¹³“Case Study House No. 9 Under Construction,” *Arts & Architecture*. (January 1949), 32.

¹⁴Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971; New York: Pelican Books, 1973), 225.

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 13

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Much of the point of Entenza's crusade was to provide a cluster of models for a postwar housing market that, *if not guided, was certain to explode with potentially damaging and insidious architectural effects*. Simple, sensitive, minimalist, prototypical, prefabricated, housing was clearly to be the ideal instrument for meeting the needs of thousands upon thousands of families in the new postwar boom [emphasis added].¹⁵

Opening the residences to the public was an important part of the Case Study House concept. The opportunity to see the houses in their pristine state was offered to all readers of the magazine and publicized in the *Los Angeles Times*. At a time when the population of Los Angeles was just approaching two million, nearly 370,000 people would visit the houses in the first three years of the program.¹⁶

John Entenza and his editorial board at *Arts & Architecture* selected a number of architects to participate in the Case Study House program. Alongside the announcement of the program in his magazine, Entenza revealed the first seven architects to accept commissions in cooperation with the program: J. R. Davidson, Sumner Spaulding, Richard J. Neutra, William Wilson Wurster, Ralph Rapson, Eero Saarinen, and Charles Eames.¹⁷

The Case Study House program spanned a considerable period of time and generated a significant body of work that was actually constructed for the habitation of families. Over the course of eighteen years, the program produced designs for some 34 houses, 23 of which were completed during Entenza's tenure with the magazine.

The program continued under the editorship of David Travers until 1967. Since that time, the Case Study houses have sustained international interest for nearly a half-century.

The Case Study houses enjoyed a revival of scholarly and popular attention beginning in 1989 when the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles mounted a major exhibition analyzing and showcasing the Case Study House program. Architectural historians Dolores Hayden, Reyner Banham, and Thomas Hines were among those who contributed essays to the exhibition catalogue. This catalogue was the first publication since Esther McCoy's 1962 book *Modern California Houses* to publish all of the houses and information about the program together in a single volume, as well as the first book ever to provide substantial scholarly and critical analysis of the program.¹⁸

Experimental and Demonstration Houses

While the Case Study House program was among the most significant American experiments in Modern residential architecture, it was part of a tradition of experimental and demonstration houses in both America and Europe dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. Helen Searing's essay in the catalogue for the 1989 exhibition "Blueprints for Modern Living" is useful in placing the Case Study House program within this broader context.

¹⁵Thomas Hines, Case Study Trouvé: Sources and Precedents: Southern California 1920-1942, *Blueprints for Modern Living, History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, ed. Elizabeth A. T. Smith (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 84.

¹⁶The population of the City of Los Angeles was slightly less than two million in 1950.

¹⁷By the end of the program, additional architects to participate in the program included Thornton M. Abell; Buff, Straub & Hensman (Conrad Buff III, Calvin C. Straub, Donald C. Hensman); A. Quincy Jones; Frederick E. Emmons; Don R. Knorr; Killingsworth, Brady and Smith (Edward Killingsworth, Jules Brady, and Waugh Smith); Pierre Koenig; Kemper Nomland; Kemper Nomland, Jr.; Raphael Soriano; Whitney R. Smith; Spaulding and Rex (Sumner Spaulding and John Rex); Rodney Walker; Wurster and Bernardi (William W. Wurster and Theodore C. Bernardi); and Craig Ellwood.

¹⁸A second edition of McCoy's 1962 book, retitled *Case Study Houses, 1945-1962*, was published in 1977.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 14

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

According to Searing, the tradition of demonstration houses was a product of two influences. First, the great expositions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often included the exhibition of demonstration housing. Second, popular and professional periodicals devoted to housing and design often featured demonstration houses and published pattern books; both were a means of introducing the designs to a wide audience.

The first appearance of an ideal home at an exposition was a series of cottages built for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. The first time that Modernist houses were included in an American world's fair was the 1933 Century of Progress Exhibition in Chicago. At the 1939 New York World's Fair's "Town of Tomorrow," demonstration houses were constructed on site. This was the most common method of proposing architectural ideas at an exhibition, since the practice made the homes easily accessible within a controlled environment. That same year, at San Francisco's Golden Gate International Exposition, houses were built in the surrounding region: "Their permanence and their displacement from the exhibition fairground to dispersed residential sites prefigured two key aspects of *Arts & Architecture's* program."¹⁹

Searing argues that the most relevant precedent of the Case Study House program was the many European programs of experimental housing. Built examples of these projects abounded in Europe:

(A)s constructed manifestos of the various radical artistic and political movements that sprouted during the interwar period these demonstration houses were taken very seriously. The most influential of these movements advocated an abstract machine aesthetic and rejected traditional architectural solutions, just as *Arts & Architecture* would after the Second World War.²⁰

Most of these European projects were sponsored by schools, "werkbands," city governments, or private initiative. These included the Weimar Bauhaus's Haus am Horn (1923), the Wiessenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (1927), and Le Corbusier's Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau in Paris (1925). In the United States, discussion of building activity based on theoretical solutions to housing crises was mainly concentrated in the popular press, such as general circulation magazines.

In his essay "The Search for the Postwar House," Thomas Hines notes that although many other programs existed, few, if any, were focused on a real break with traditional housing styles and construction methods. Hines characterizes the approach taken in typical American demonstration houses, using as an example the "Postwar House" of 1946, built in Los Angeles by the Fritz B. Burns Research Division:

For most Americans, modern living was likely to be defined in an additive way -- in the purchase of new appliances, in the remodeling of an old house, in gradual additions . . . [this] was all that was available to most people immediately after the war. While the Case Study architects were concerned with creating a new technology of the house, most people simply wanted to add technology to the house. The house as a single, convincing aesthetic statement is something few Americans have ever been able to afford [as opposed to] the house as a bundle of features that offer an array of comforts.²¹

¹⁹Searing, 109.

²⁰Ibid, 109.

²¹*Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*, ed. Elizabeth A. T. Smith (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989), 173.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 15

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

According to the authors of the catalogue for the *Blueprints for Modern Living* exhibition, the Case Study House program was unique in its ability to bring Modern design, manufacturing, and habitation to an American audience. No other American architectural competition, program, or exhibition was comparable to those seen in Europe in the period between the two world wars.

The Pacific Palisades Site

On February 15, 1945, John Entenza purchased five acres of land along the California coast in the northern Los Angeles County community of Pacific Palisades. This new tract would become the land upon which Entenza would develop the nucleus of the Case Study House program.

The area now occupied by the community of Pacific Palisades was first inhabited by Native Americans, who settled in the seaside canyons. In 1839, the governor of California at Monterey granted the 6,656-acre tract of low hills, broad mesas, and wooded canyons to Francisco Marquez and Ysidro Reyes, who established Rancho Boca de Santa Monica.

Pacific Palisades was founded on this land in 1922 by Reverend Charles H. Scott as a site for the local Summer Assemblies of the Chautauqua Movement. The Chautauqua Movement grew out of the idea of a summer school for Sunday school teachers of the Methodist Church in the 1870s. It was soon discovered that there was a wider audience for broader offerings in many areas of education and culture. "The early Chautauqua Institution provided a broad range of educational and cultural offerings, from musical performances to lectures and instruction on every conceivable topic."²² The Pacific Palisades assembly took place over a six week period, drawing people from throughout the Southwest.²³ The community's historical roots in the Chautauqua Summer Assemblies is still evident. Marquez Avenue, named after the family who co-owned the original Spanish land grant, was renamed Chautauqua Boulevard in 1928.²⁴

Following the regional trend of the 1920s, residents of Pacific Palisades increasingly turned their attention to real estate promotion and business development. The Olmstead Brothers' firm, who designed a number of subdivisions and town plans throughout Southern California in the teens and 1920s, was commissioned to develop a city plan for Pacific Palisades. The first business block of the emerging commercial area along Beverly (later an extension of Sunset) Boulevard was completed in 1924. Simple wood-frame houses designed in the Southern California vernacular, with rectangular plans, small porches, and wood siding, were also widely constructed during this period.

Los Angeles County tax assessor records, available beginning in 1902, show that the land comprising the Entenza tract was subdivided along the northern bend of Chautauqua Boulevard (then Terrace Drive) into small lots as a part of the larger Santa Monica Heights subdivision. By 1931, after having had numerous other owners, Tract #9473, Block 6, Lots 6 and 7, had been purchased by humorist Will Rogers. This is the extent of the property that was sold to John Entenza in 1945. Entenza divided the property into two large lots (#1 and #2) and four smaller lots (#3 through #6), establishing Tract #13251. The Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering

²²Martha Vale, *Colorado Chautauqua National Historic Landmark Nomination*, (National Historic Landmark files, National Park Service, Washington, DC), 2005.

²³Betty Lou Young, *Pacific Palisades, Where the Mountains Meet the Sea*, ed. Betty Lou Young (Pacific Palisades, CA: Pacific Palisades Historical Society Press, 1983), 22.

²⁴Marquez Road ran throughout the Palisades. During the 1920s, sections of it were divided off, renamed, and improved. This was the same period when the town of Pacific Palisades was founded and most of the area was subdivided. These activities occasioned the widespread reorganization of the street pattern and the grading of new streets.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 16

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

approved the new tract on October 26, 1945. Between January 20 and 23, 1947, John Entenza sold off most of the lots in the tract to individual owners, retaining ownership of the two largest lots, #1 and #2, which would become the sites of the Eames and Entenza houses, respectively.²⁵

The location of the Eames House on a hillside lot along Los Angeles' urban periphery is typical of the Case Study houses. The majority of the Case Study houses were situated in foothills and canyons on the edges of the city. Communities such as Pasadena, La Cañada, and Altadena to the east, and West Los Angeles, Brentwood, and Pacific Palisades to the west, are all home to Case Study houses.

The foothills surrounding Los Angeles offer a sense of seclusion and remoteness, despite being immediately adjacent to some of the city's most populated centers. Varied topography, lush greenery, mild microclimates, and eclectic architecture are a dramatic contrast to the sometimes monotonous grid of the basin. Historian Reyner Banham, in his classic work on the cityscape of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles: the Architecture of Four Ecologies*, described the "ecology" of the foothills:

That is what the foothill ecology is really all about: narrow, tortuous residential roads serving precipitous house-plots that often back up directly on unimproved wilderness even now [1972]; an air of deeply buried privacy even in relatively broad valley-bottoms in Stone Canyon or Mandeville Canyon . . . [T]his is a landscape that seems to cry out for affluent suburban residences, and to flourish when so employed.²⁶

By the end of World War II, the foothills were already established as the preferred geography for avant-garde and Modernist architecture in Los Angeles. Esther McCoy suggests the popularity of the hills dates back to the building boom of the 1920s, when lots deemed "unbuildable" by most developers could be purchased for a fraction of the average per-acre price.

Modernism in Los Angeles

The earliest houses by many of the twentieth century's most pioneering architects, some of whom would participate in the Case Study House program, were constructed in the hills above Los Angeles. Frank Lloyd Wright, Richard J. Neutra, Rudolph M. Schindler, Gregory Ain, J. R. Davidson, Raphael Soriano, Craig Ellwood, Pierre Koenig, and Ray Kappe all designed homes in the city's hills and canyons. Indeed, the association of Modernist architecture with certain Los Angeles foothill and canyon neighborhoods remains firm today. Within this physical and social context, the location of the Eames House within Entenza's original Case Study House tract was consistent with the tradition of such houses in the Los Angeles area, and indeed became an important part of that tradition.

The west side of Los Angeles generally, and Pacific Palisades in particular, was the home of several noted artists and intellectuals who had fled the political climate of Germany under National Socialist rule. Proximity to the University of California at Los Angeles was a likely factor in the west side's popularity among this group, as was the availability of land and the mild climate. Composer Igor Stravinsky, novelist Thomas Mann,

²⁵New lot owners included Clarence J. and Mildred A. Harasta (Lot 3), M. B. Scott (Lot 4), Stuart G. and Lucia F. Bailey (Lot 5), and Roy and Bonnie Huggins (Lot 6). Mr. and Mrs. Harasta's names appear on the building permit for Rodney Walker's Case Study House #18. Dr. and Mrs. Bailey would soon become participants in the Case Study House program. Mr. and Mrs. Huggins did not become involved with the program, and Lot 6 was not developed within the program.

²⁶Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971; New York: Pelican Books, 1973), 99-100.

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 17

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

and composer Arnold Schoenberg were among the European emigrants who commissioned Modernists residences in the hills west of Los Angeles.

Entenza and the Eameses

Like so many creative people who came to Southern California from the 1920s to the 1950s, Charles and Ray Eames were drawn to Los Angeles because of its perceived sense of artistic freedom. While a rich cultural milieu was formed by these immigrations, few people cite its presence as the reason they came. Los Angeles, in particular, seemed to have few restrictions and no established cultural orthodoxy, which Professor Pat Kirkham suggests, offered the Eameses “a conducive climate in which their talents flourished.”²⁷ Charles and Ray moved to Los Angeles in July of 1941. Ray was originally from California. Charles had visited in 1940 while working on designs for a studio in Hollywood, a trip that had “made him aware of the possibilities available in Los Angeles.”²⁸

Soon after moving to Los Angeles, the Eameses became close friends and collaborators of John Entenza, who would be “primarily responsible for the Eames’ quick assimilation into their adopted city.”²⁹ Entenza helped them find their first apartment, in the Neutra-designed Strathmore Building in Westwood. The Eameses also became involved in Entenza’s magazine, both inside and out. Charles became a contributing writer and editorial associate. Ray designed twenty-four of the magazine’s covers between 1942 and 1944.

Charles also served as a juror for the “Designs for Postwar Living” competition sponsored by Entenza in 1943. The competition centered on the design of small, modern, worker-family housing, and in many ways prefigured the Case Study House program. The entire July 1944 issue of *Arts & Architecture* was dedicated to the competition’s results and to the topic of prefabricated housing. An article entitled “What is a House?,” co-authored by Entenza and Charles Eames, was included in the issue. Anticipating the intense demand for housing following the war, the pair considered the adaptation of war related industrial materials and mass-production techniques for the manufacture of houses:

It has been estimated that one million five hundred thousand houses each year for a period of two years will be needed to relieve the urgent housing problem of this country alone . . . The enormity of such a need cannot be even partially satisfied by building techniques as we have known and used them in the past. Large scale industry would seem to be the only logical means by which we can achieve an enterprise of such proportion.³⁰

Eames and Entenza took a decidedly comprehensive approach to the problem of house design. They recognized that the application of new production techniques would require a fundamental rethinking of the house itself. The article addressed not only processes of manufacture, but also the parts of a house, materials, prefabricated standardized components, and, ultimately, an examination of how people live: “The architect of the prefabricated house must be the student of human behavior, the scientist, the economist, and the industrial designer.”³¹ This inclusive approach to design would become evident again in Charles and Ray’s plans for their own home a few years later.

²⁷Pat Kirkham, *Charles and Ray Eames, Designers of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1995), 53.

²⁸Steele, 7.

²⁹Ibid, 7.

³⁰Goldstein, 34.

³¹“What is a House?” *Arts & Architecture* (July 1944) in Goldstein, 43.

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 18

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Case Studies #8 and #9

Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen were among the first eight architects invited to participate in Entenza's Case Study House program. Charles's association with Saarinen dated back to his attendance at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. Charles had been a protégé of the academy's director, Eliel Saarinen, who had offered him a scholarship to the school in 1938. The following year, Saarinen made him an instructor in the Intermediate School of Design, and in 1940 the head of the Department of Industrial Design. During this period, Charles developed a friendship with Eliel Saarinen's son, Eero. The two shared common ideas about modernist solutions to architectural and design issues:

(I)t was largely through Eero that Charles became a full-fledged modernist, determined to research every aspect of a project and to use the techniques of mass production to improve the human environment for the population at large.³²

Charles and Eero collaborated on three projects while at Cranbrook. The most significant and best known of these was the 1940 competition "Organic Design in Home Furnishings," sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The pair won all categories of this competition with their upholstered, molded plywood chairs, molded plywood tables, and horizontal storage units elevated on benches. The techniques used in manufacturing these designs would inform Charles' furniture designs for the next decade.³³

The collaboration between Charles and Eero culminated in the design of two Case Study Houses, #8 for the Eameses and #9 for John Entenza, which were planned relative to one another on adjacent sites in Pacific Palisades. The site plans for the two houses were first presented in a single drawing by Charles and Eero. This sketch depicts the original design for the Eames House, known as the "the Bridge House." In this design, the house is a single-story steel frame and glass rectangle, with the studio component placed in at an angle forming a disconnected acute L-shape in plan. The living component is sited perpendicular to the steep hillside on the west edge of the property, and partially cantilevered out over the downward slope of the meadow. The walls along the south elevation are paneled with glass, taking full advantage of the ocean view and retaining the privacy of the adjacent Entenza House.

Charles's 1947 visit to a Mies van der Rohe exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art is generally considered the motivation behind the complete redesign of the house. A conceptual sketch for a linear, elevated steel and glass house on display at the exhibition was remarkably similar to the design Eames and Saarinen had developed with engineer Edgardo Contini. Many critics have argued that Eames changed the design in order to avoid appearing derivative of Mies. Yet, in his monograph on the Eames House, architect and author James Steele expresses reservations that this sufficiently explains the major changes made to the design. Perhaps more important than the catalyst was the house's realignment that, according to Ray Eames, reflected their experience and use of the site during the two years elapsing between publication of the original design and the delivery of materials to the site. Ray reminisced that during the period, "they had fallen in love with the meadow."³⁴

Upon his return from New York in 1947, Charles Eames completely redesigned the house, even though the building parts had already been fabricated and delivered to the site. The Eameses and *Arts & Architecture*

³²Kirkham, 49.

³³Steele, 7.

³⁴Eames Demetrios, *An Eames Primer* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2001), 136.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 19

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

magazine contended that the house was reconsidered in order to better utilize the already purchased materials, thereby emphasizing the concept of a kit-of-parts from which a variety of possible designs could be constructed.

The Entenza House was built as originally designed and despite the rethinking of the Eames House, the two adjacent Case Study houses still had much in common. *Architectural Forum* described them as “technological twins but architectural opposites.”³⁵ The two houses share the same structural system of a steel frame and open web joists, though they were enclosed by different materials. Distinguishing the Eames House from its neighbor, the structural elements of Case Study House #8 are exposed on the interior and the exterior, making apparent the exceptionally thin steel frame and rhythm of the bays.

The two houses were highly influential in the Case Study House program. They were the first to employ a steel frame, a design element that would be used in all but one of the Case Study houses built in the 1950s. In fact, the use of steel would ultimately come to represent the program’s architectural style and level of experimentation. While the Eames and Entenza Houses were not the first to be completed, they were the first to be published.

John Entenza lived in Case Study House #9 for only six years, and by 1955 the Eameses and Entenza were on poor terms: “The friendship deteriorated in the early 1950s after the Plyformed Wood Company, a joint business venture to produce molded plywood splints and airplane components for the war effort, ended in a law suit.”³⁶ The Entenza House subsequently underwent so many alterations that “in later years Ray Eames could hardly bear to let anyone so much as catch a glimpse of it, let alone consider looking inside, so different was it from the original design.”³⁷

Design of the Eames House

Over a two-year period beginning in 1947, Charles and Ray Eames completely redesigned their house. In August 1948, they purchased the one and one-half acre lot from John Entenza. The new design for Case Study House #8 was unveiled in the May 1949 issue of *Arts & Architecture*. The residential component was swung around ninety degrees to align with the studio component with both structures now parallel to the slope.

The configuration of the two components significantly altered the house’s relationship to the site, and ultimately the design of the house itself. It was now oriented toward the meadow, with oblique views of the Pacific Ocean. Siting the house behind an extant row of eucalyptus necessitated digging into the hillside. While the previous design had the house elevated above the land, the new design “literally fus[ed] half the house to the land” with the retaining wall running along the full length of both components.³⁸ Dirt excavated for the retaining wall was used to create the berm at the eastern edge of the property, which was then planted with hedges to obscure the adjacent Entenza House, now in the direct sight lines from the Eames House. The already manufactured steel frame intended for the bridge structure would now be used to construct a second story.

³⁵Quoted in Smith, *Blueprints*, 53.

³⁶Goldstein, 12.

³⁷Kirkham, 126.

³⁸Steele, 9.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 20

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The appearance of the site is generally unchanged from the late 1940s. The Eames House is screened by a line of mature eucalyptus trees that run parallel to the main facade of the residence and studio. These trees were present on the site when it was acquired, and photographs show the steel frame of the house being erected in the space between the newly poured retaining wall and the extant trees. From the line of trees, the property slopes gently downward to a grassy meadow which has been left in its “natural” state. All of these landscape features contribute to the overall setting of the Eames House. Looking at the property today, the decision to reposition the house seems fortuitous. Steele’s assessment of the relationship between the two buildings and the landscape succinctly captures the foresight in the redesign:

The change from having the house dominate the site to letting the site dictate the house’s location resulted in a solution that now appears so natural and inevitable that it is difficult to imagine any other location.”³⁹

Fundamentally, the Eames House is two steel framed rectangular boxes, connected by an open court. Taken together, the two components comprise 2,500 square feet of space, and each is composed of bay modules measuring 7’4” wide. Charles saw the many benefits of a modular system, including symmetry, inherent strength, the absence of waste, and the speed of construction.

Constructed of prefabricated parts, five men erected the structural shell in sixteen hours. The steel frame itself is deliberately thin to give the impression of uninterrupted space from the interior to the exterior. Cross-bracing composed of metal cable provides additional stability. The aesthetic effect of the structural system is a feeling of “lightness, elegance, minimalism, and rectilinear geometric form.”⁴⁰

Although the Eames House was first recognized for its innovative use of prefabricated industrial parts, some have since argued that “its great novelty lay in its insistent modesty, its detailing, and its colorful façade.”⁴¹ Charles and Ray composed various schemes for the color, transparency, and placement of the wall panels. The ultimate configuration was meticulously calculated to a desired effect, allowing light into certain spaces at particular times of the day. The colors of the solid panels on the exterior correspond to the functions taking place behind them on the interior.⁴² Enclosing the steel frame with panels of varying sizes and materials serves to “emphasize rather than disguise” the underlying structure. Architectural historian Pat Kirkham has characterized the aesthetic impact of the frame and panel configuration as a “Mondrian-style composition in a Los Angeles meadow.”⁴³

The arrangement of interior spaces in the residence and studio are also designed for a certain effect. In the northern portion of the residence, the kitchen and utility areas open onto the central court. This configuration mirrors the arrangement of the service core and darkroom in the studio component directly opposite.⁴⁴ The double-height, glass-paneled interior spaces occupy the outermost portions of each component, creating alternating positive and negative spaces.⁴⁵ The smaller interior spaces, such as upstairs bedrooms and bathrooms, feature well-placed glazed panels that provide light without compromising privacy.

³⁹Kirkham, 114.

⁴⁰Ibid, 115.

⁴¹Kirkham, 103.

⁴²Steele, 10-11.

⁴³Kirkham, 115.

⁴⁴The enclosed room in the lower story of the studio was originally a darkroom, but is currently being used for storage.

⁴⁵Steele, 11.

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 21

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The design of the house emphasizes space, light, and flexibility. The interior finishes are surprisingly simple and utilitarian. Large open spaces do not prescribe certain uses, but are effectively multipurpose rooms. Even the sleeping quarters in the upstairs portion of the residential component employ sliding partitions for maximum flexibility.

It is clear that the house was designed for people who combined work and play and every aspect of their daily lives. In Charles and Ray's own words, the Eames House was designed for "a married couple both occupied professionally with mechanical experiment and graphic presentation."⁴⁶ In this way, the Eames House is perhaps uniquely suited to its residents, what architect and author James Steele refers to as the "basic paradox of the Eames House." The popular appeal of the Eames House is directly related to its ability to serve its occupants, and yet this is also the very reason that the design could not be replicated to satisfy the housing needs of the average American family after the war.⁴⁷ The Eames House is arguably the most skillfully-executed solution to the questions posed by the Case Study House program, particularly how to adapt industrial materials and standardized parts to domestic architecture. However, its design was so innovative that it remained a prototype whose significance transcends the program. Perhaps John Entenza best captured the essence of this transcendence when he explained that the Eames House "represented an attempt to state an idea rather than a fixed architectural pattern."⁴⁸

Influence of the Eames House

The influence of the Eames House is manifold. It begins with its place among the body of work produced by the Case Study House program. Case Study Houses # 8 and #9 were the first to employ the steel frame. The steel frame house would ultimately become the hallmark of the program, used to great effect by Craig Ellwood and Pierre Koenig in their Case Study houses in the 1950s. The Eames House is considered to be the house that best "fulfills the intention of the programme in that it uses prefabricated, standardized parts, and industrial, rather than telluric materials."⁴⁹

In 1971, historian Reyner Banham wrote that while the Eames House had become famous for many reasons, "the most crucial factor is external to Eames's qualities as a designer: it was the publication of the house . . . in John Entenza's Los Angeles-based magazine, *Arts & Architecture*."⁵⁰ The Eames House is without question the best-known of the Case Study houses. It was from the time of its completion, and continues to be, published and studied worldwide. A recent search of the *Avery Index to Periodicals* lists over 240 articles about the Case Study House program and its houses, and the Eameses themselves, from 1945 to the present. Of these, nearly sixty percent were published somewhere other than *Arts & Architecture* magazine, and primarily about the Eames House.

Since *Arts & Architecture* ceased publication in 1967, the Eames House has continued to be the subject of publications throughout the world. It is the Eameses' only widely-known architectural work and was celebrated in Europe as proof that the International style could be successfully adapted to residential architecture: "Their home became internationally known as a warm and 'human' solution to standardized prefabricated domestic building."⁵¹ Today, the Eames House remains what one historian has deemed "the most celebrated house in the

⁴⁶Kirkham, 110.

⁴⁷Steele, 19.

⁴⁸John Entenza, *Arts and Architecture*. (December 1949), 27.

⁴⁹Ibid, 10.

⁵⁰Banham, 223.

⁵¹Kirkham, 1.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 22

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

program.”⁵²

Charles and Ray

While the Eames House is inextricably linked to the Case Study House program, its nationwide influence and international exposure is directly associated with Charles and Ray, both as professionals and as people. Their popular appeal as a handsome married couple, combined with their increasing status in the design, academic, and business communities, would serve to make the Eameses the perfect ambassadors for American modernism.

Charles Ormand Eames was born in 1907 in St. Louis, Missouri. He first became interested in photography as a teenager, but received a scholarship at Washington University to study architecture. He began his studies there in 1925 but left in his second year. Working as a draftsman at the firm of Trueblood & Graf during the summers, he gained early practical experience in an architectural office. In 1930, he opened his own firm with a partner, Charles Gray. They were later joined by a third partner, Walter Pauley, however, the firm was forced to close the office after only four years due to the economic depression.

Shortly thereafter, Charles Eames established the firm of Eames and Walsh. His 1936 design for St. Mary's Catholic Church in Arkansas was published in *Architectural Forum* and caught the attention of Eliel Saarinen, who offered Eames a fellowship at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Michigan. Charles arrived at the Academy in 1938. Within two years, he had joined the faculty and had become head of the Academy's Department of Industrial Design. It was during his tenure at the Academy that Charles met Ray.

Bernice Alexandra “Ray” Kaiser was born in Sacramento, California, in 1912. After graduating high school in 1931, she moved with her mother to New York. In New York, she studied painting with Hans Hoffman, an abstract artist who had emigrated from Germany. He taught at the New York's Art Students League, and later founded a school with several of his students, including Ray.

Ray began her studies at Cranbrook Academy in 1940 and excelled in the areas of sculpture, graphic design, fabric design, and painting. It was during what is considered to be the institution's “vintage period,” when numerous influential designers were members of the faculty and the student body, that Ray met Charles.⁵³ The two married in 1941 and moved to Los Angeles shortly thereafter, where they would both play integral roles in the advancement of the Modern movement.

According to design historian and Eames biographer Pat Kirkham, Charles and Ray Eames “occupy a central position in the history of postwar American designs and are considered by many to be among the most, if not *the* most, important American designers of the twentieth century.”⁵⁴ The Eameses produced an array of books, films, and exhibitions during their long and prolific careers that Kirkham believes “changed the way people thought about objects, largely by presenting them in new ways and by encouraging different ways of perceiving, grouping, and displaying them.”⁵⁵ More than designers, Charles and Ray Eames were communicators and educators, always looking for inventive ways to share their ideas with broader audiences.

⁵²Goldstein, 9-10.

⁵³Faculty and students at the Cranbrook Academy during this period included Eliel Saarinen, Eero Saarinen, Harry Weese, Florence Schust (later Knoll), Benjamin Baldwin, Harry Bertioia, and Don Albinson. Kirkham, 46-47.

⁵⁴Kirkham, 1.

⁵⁵Ibid, 143.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 23

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

While Charles always referred to himself as an architect, he and his wife are perhaps best known for their innovative furniture designs of the 1940s and 1950s. Charles began designing furniture in collaboration with Eero Saarinen, but a contemporary assessment of his furniture designs suggest that it was “with Ray that Charles produced some of the most visually interesting and technologically adventurous furniture of the mid twentieth century.”⁵⁶ The Eameses sought to apply mass-production techniques perfected during the war to the manufacture of furniture.

As early as 1946, Eames furniture designs were recognized for their innovation. That year the Museum of Modern Art in New York hosted an exhibition entitled *New Furniture Designed by Charles Eames*. In the September 1946 issue of *Arts & Architecture*, Eliot Noyes, the first director of design at IBM venerate the aesthetic and technological inventiveness of Charles Eames’ furniture designs. The following quote captures his unabashed enthusiasm and praise:

There is no need to qualify the statement. Charles Eames has designed and produced the most important group of furniture ever developed in this country. His achievement is a compound of aesthetic brilliance and technical inventiveness. He has not only produced the finest chairs of modern design, but through borrowing, improvising, and inventing techniques, he has for the first time exploited the possibilities of mass production methods for the manufacture of furniture.⁵⁷

Noyes also highlighted Charles’s highly practical design philosophy, which included developing designs that could be manufactured economically, sold cheaply, and that were as useful as possible, without attempts to cater to an “assumed public taste.” In other words, if it is well designed, the public will want it.⁵⁸ This approach would become a mainstay of Charles and Ray’s work.

The 1946 Museum of Modern Art exhibit marked the beginning of the Eames partnership with the Herman Miller Furniture Company, the only company to manufacture Eames furniture designs. Miller and Eames shared a commitment to an honest approach to design. Donald Albrecht, director and curator of the Eames Exhibition at the Library of Congress more than fifty years later suggests: “They created what they found interesting, followed their instincts, and believed their good ideas would ultimately find a market.”⁵⁹ Among the most ubiquitous of these furniture designs are the Eames chairs, including the molded plywood chair (1946), the fiberglass chair (1950), and the lounge chair and ottoman (1956). By the 1950s, Eames furniture designs had become ubiquitous in offices throughout the nation. These pieces have since become “classics of mid-century modernism” and continue to be manufactured by Herman Miller to this day.⁶⁰

The Eameses’ design acuity was complimented by a savvy business sense. Their clientele ranged from the Federal government, for whom they designed and manufactured molded plywood leg splints during World War II, to some of the largest and most successful corporations in the nation. General Motors, Westinghouse, Boeing, and Polaroid all commissioned the Eameses to work for them, usually in developing tools for educating the general public about the usefulness of products. In what Albrecht describes as a “rare era of shared objectives,” the Eameses were able to partner with governmental and business organizations that not only

⁵⁶Ibid, 356.

⁵⁷Eliot Noyes, “Charles Eames,” *Arts & Architecture* (September 1946), in Goldstein, 66.

⁵⁸Goldstein, 66.

⁵⁹Donald Albrecht, “Design Is a Method of Action,” *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997), 23.

⁶⁰Kirkham, 1.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 24

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

admired their vision of a modernized postwar America, but as Albrecht further indicates, also possessed the “political, financial, and technological capabilities to realize their vision.”⁶¹ These partnerships proved mutually beneficial, and increasingly exposed a broader sector of the public to the Eameses and their work.

Beginning in the 1950s, Charles and Ray Eames directed their energy toward mass communication, through innovative exhibitions, installations, publications, and films. Their books, multi-screen slide shows, films, and interactive museum exhibitions covered a wide range of subjects. These works were cast to help people understand and engage the everyday world both nearby and afar. Their “India Report” (1958), commissioned by the Indian government; *Glimpses of the USA* (1959), a multi-screen film; the *Mathematica: A World of Numbers and Beyond* exhibit (1961); and “The World of Franklin and Jefferson” (1976), a traveling exhibition commissioned by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, are among their most complex, ambitious, and best known mass communication projects.⁶² The impact of these projects could be far reaching, as illustrated in the following excerpt:

The Eameses’ “India Report” . . . contained recommendations for industrializing and making mass-produced goods without losing the qualities of the country’s traditional handicrafts. Among the Eameses’ recommendations was the establishment of a government-supported design institute which would foster India’s development as the country underwent revolutionary changes and would help small industries produce consumer goods. As a result of the Eameses report, the National Institute of Design was established in 1961 in Ahmedabad, the institution for industrial design, education, and training in the developing world.⁶³

Charles and Ray Eames brought the same focus and aim to their smaller works as well. Two of their short films, *Toccata for Toy Trains* (1957) and *Tops* (1969), further reflect the Eameses’ belief in the value and educational role of ordinary objects. In the two films, Charles and Ray used their personal collection of toys gathered in their world travels to create a visual experience of the principles of design and thus an accessible understanding.

During this same period, the Eameses started to receive commissions from corporations to develop films and exhibitions that would introduce new technologies to the general public. In the 1970s, the Eameses produced a number of films for Polaroid, marketing the idea of instant cameras. However, the most enduring and lucrative of these corporate partnerships was with International Business Machines (IBM). The Eameses began working with IBM in 1958. Over the next two decades, Charles and Ray produced some fifty exhibitions, books, and films designed to “demystify concepts of science and mathematics and familiarize the public with computers.”⁶⁴ With the financial support of IBM, the Eameses’ presentations became more complex, including multi-screen slide shows and films designed to “engage the visitor’s interest.”⁶⁵ The 1960 *Mathematica* exhibition was funded by IBM for the California Museum of Science and Industry’s opening of a new wing. The Eameses also designed the 22-screen *Think* for the IBM pavilion at the 1964 New York World’s Fair.

Perhaps the work that best illustrates the Eameses’ ability to make science interesting and accessible is *Powers of Ten: A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effect of Adding Another Zero*, first produced in 1968. The film begins with an overhead shot of a man lying in a park; then, as described by architectural historian, Pat Kirkham:

⁶¹Albrecht, 13.

⁶²Steele, 24. Library of Congress, “The Work of Charles & Ray Eames, Exhibition,” [http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/eames/culture.html (September 22, 2005)]

⁶³Library of Congress, “The Work of Charles & Ray Eames, Exhibition.”

⁶⁴Ibid, 15.

⁶⁵Kirkham, 266.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 25

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Using a continuous zoom, the film takes the viewer out from the Earth to the farthest known point in space and then back to the nucleus of a carbon atom while chronometers on a split screen register distance traveled at the rate of one power of ten every ten seconds.⁶⁶

Powers of Ten has been used widely in schools and science museums as an educational tool, and it is yet another example of the sheer scope of the Eameses' careers. Donald Albrecht succinctly captured the breadth of their work with the assessment that "Charles and Ray Eames started by designing a simple molded-plywood chair, and they ended by tackling the challenge of explaining the nature of the universe."⁶⁷

These highly effective tools for learning also greatly increased the public's awareness of Charles and Ray Eames, both nationally and globally. The seven-screen film, *Glimpses of the U.S.A.* had been designed to present a positive portrayal of American life at the 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow. Kirkham has characterized the showing of the film as "the first cultural exchange between the two countries since the Bolshevik Revolution."⁶⁸ *The World of Franklin and Jefferson*, celebrating the American Bicentennial, produced a book, three films, and an exhibition that traveled internationally. Because of such projects, Charles and Ray became well known not only throughout the United States, but in Western Europe, Japan, and India.⁶⁹

In all, Charles and Ray produced eighty short films, plus dozens of books, museum exhibitions, and education tools of all kinds. All of these projects served to spread their enthusiasm for a modern future beyond the realm of designers and academics, and into the mainstream. The Eameses were at the forefront of the postwar Modernist movement in the United States, and did more than any other individuals to bring American modernism to the rest of the world. Their furniture, toys, buildings, films, exhibitions, and books were all aimed at improving the lives of average people. Donald Albrecht, director of the 2001 Eames Exhibit at the Library of Congress, has argued that "Charles Eames (1907-78) and Ray Eames (1912-88) gave shape to America's twentieth century; their projects "elevated the Eameses to the status of U.S. ambassadors overseas and cultural interpreters of the meaning of America at home."⁷⁰

Eames-Associated Sites

The Eames House is the single property most closely associated with Charles and Ray Eames. Not only is it one of the few architectural works designed by Charles Eames, but the property served as the couple's private residence and design studio throughout their prolific careers. Only a handful of other properties bear an association with the Eameses. A unit in the Strathmore Apartments in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles was the couple's first home upon arriving in California in 1941. Designed by Richard Neutra in 1937, it was where the Eameses lived until 1949, when they moved into their newly completed home in Pacific Palisades. An industrial building at 901 Washington Boulevard in Venice, California, is where the Eameses and their staff did the majority of their productive/production work after 1943. This building was converted for use as the offices of architect Frank Israel in the 1980s, which has affected the integrity of the building in its association with the Eameses.

⁶⁶Ibid, 353.

⁶⁷Albrecht, 41.

⁶⁸Ibid, 32.

⁶⁹Kirkham, 356.

⁷⁰Albrecht, 15; and {<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/eames> (September 22, 2005)}

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 26

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Charles Eames executed several commissions in the architectural partnerships to which he belonged in the 1930s. While these commissions are considered a significant part of his development as a designer, none of these buildings has a comparable capacity to demonstrate Charles' later thought and activity in architecture, furniture design, film, photography, or exhibition design. In addition, these buildings do not reflect any contribution of his wife and collaborator, Ray, whom he did not meet until 1940.

The Herman Miller Furniture Showroom in West Hollywood, California, is the only commercial building and one of only three buildings in California designed by Charles Eames (along with Case Study House #8, and Case Study House #9 with Eero Saarinen). Charles designed the showroom in 1949, at the same time he was working on his own house. He designed a private residence for director Billy Wilder in 1951, but it was never built. The Wilder house was Eames' last building design before dedicating himself to other interests and pursuits.

The Eames House as a Home

Charles is regarded as one of the most innovative and influential of American designers, and the Eames House is one of his few experiments with architecture. In addition to its significance as an important work of Modern architecture, the Eames House is significant as the private residence and studio of husband and wife, Charles and Ray Eames. It is the only building that Charles designed for himself, and it is the work that most completely represents his close collaboration with his wife and partner, Ray.

Outwardly it may have appeared that Charles was the sole mastermind behind the Eames designs. Ray was shy in public, while Charles was affable. Still, Ray was always by Charles' side, taking great pride in her husband's public success and recognition, while Charles was often made uncomfortable by the use of the word "genius" to describe him. Privately their collaboration is said to have been one of mutual respect: "Ray was always the first to give Charles credit, and vice versa."⁷¹

While Charles is the architect of record for the Eames House, at least one of Ray's study sketches of the house survives and it is reasonable to speculate on the integral role Ray played in its design.⁷² Kirkham offers the following assessment:

It is inconceivable that a woman with such strong opinions on design and aesthetics as Ray, who was used to talking through every design issue with her husband and had collaborated with him for several years through all the experimental and production stages of their plywood products, would not play a significant part in the design of her own home.⁷³

⁷¹Kirkham, 377.

⁷²Demetrios, 136-137.

⁷³Ibid, 110.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 27

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

As a trained architect, Charles possessed expertise in the structural and engineering aspects of the design of the Eames House. However, the influence of abstract painting on the house is obvious, and Ray is often credited with the graphic design approach to the primary façade. Like nearly all of their work after 1940, the Eames House is most accurately considered a joint-effort of both Charles and Ray: “They cooperated throughout their life together on everything the Eames Office produced – the Eames House is the culmination of that partnership.”⁷⁴

Much of the Eames House’s popularity was derived not from its historical significance in Modern architecture, but as the private residence of a thoroughly modern couple in which, as noted by Kirkham, “Ray did not remain at home and Charles in the office.”⁷⁵ In fact, the very configuration of their house, with both a living and a working component situated side by side, suggested that the two of them engaged equally in work and play, and did so together. At the same time, however, they did not make any “radical breaks from the dominant codes of masculinity and femininity.”⁷⁶ As a married couple, the Eameses were very recognizable to average American families. The handsome husband and his capable yet devoted wife constantly appeared in photographs together, and always smiling.

As Charles and Ray’s popular appeal grew, so did America’s interest in their domestic life. Articles about the Eames House appeared not only in respected architectural journals, but also in the pages of lifestyle magazines, such as *Life* and *Vogue*.⁷⁷ Filled with their personal belongings, the house appealed to those who otherwise considered Modernism cold and impersonal. In this way, the house became yet another tool for promoting the Eameses’ version of the modern lifestyle: “Their marriage was one of creative talents and traditional domesticity. Their house exemplified the era’s hearth-and-home focus.”⁷⁸

The Eames House itself functioned as a showroom for Charles and Ray’s vast personal collections and domestic life. As early as their 1955 film *House After Five Years of Living*, Charles and Ray portrayed the house not as a stoic work of architecture, but as a private home that is “reflective of their personal style as a couple.”⁷⁹ Images in the film include close-ups of personal artifacts as well as the eucalyptus trees reflected in the glass, both considered to be part of the house itself. The film illustrates the Eameses’ comprehensive approach to domestic design that considers not only the building, but all of the objects and activities contained within it.

By late 1950s, Charles and Ray’s house contained a sizable collection of furniture (much of it of their own design), as well as rugs, blankets, lanterns, statuary, plants, toys, dolls, pillows, candlesticks, masks, and all measure of decorative items.⁸⁰ As the collections grew, the role of the house as a “light unselfconscious enclosure, a minimum of architecture, provid[ing] a flexible frame for multiple interior arrangements” became more apparent.⁸¹ The Eameses characterized their home as a “shock absorber,” designed to contain and protect the ever-changing lifestyle within it.⁸² For Charles and Ray, the Eames House was not an object, but a space for living in and in it they put their life on display for all to see.

⁷⁴Steele, 25.

⁷⁵Kirkham, 375.

⁷⁶Ibid, 375.

⁷⁷The Eames House appeared in the April 15, 1954 issue of *Vogue* magazine, as well as in the June 15, 1954 issue of *Life* magazine. Colomina, 146-147.

⁷⁸Albrecht, 17.

⁷⁹Steele, 12.

⁸⁰Kirkham, 187-188.

⁸¹Colomina, 146.

⁸²Ibid, 132.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 28

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Charles and Ray Eames resided in the house from its completion until each of their deaths. Their collections, including artworks, books, furniture, and other artifacts, remain in the house today, arranged almost exactly as they were during their lifetimes. Members of the Eames family continue to be involved in the house and have demonstrated extraordinary stewardship over it. The studio component currently functions as the office of the Eames Foundation, which owns the property. The Foundation is operated by Charles' daughter, Lucia Eames Demetrios, and her son, Eames Demetrios. In this way, the Eames House continues to serve as the primary physical legacy of the Eames family.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 29

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Albrecht, Donald. "Design Is a Method of Action." *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997.

"Announcement: The Case Study House Program." *Arts & Architecture*, January 1945. p. 54-55.

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971; New York: Pelican Books, 1973.

"Case Study House for 1949: The Steel Frame." *Arts & Architecture*, March 1949. p. 30-31.

"Case Study House for 1949: The Plan." *Arts & Architecture*, May 1949. p. 38-39.

"Case Study House #20, Richard Neutra, Architect." *Arts & Architecture*, December 1948. p. 32-41.

"Case Study House [#8]: A House Designed and Built for the Magazine *Arts & Architecture*." *Arts & Architecture*, July 1950. p. 26-39.

"Case Study House, Rodney Walker, Designer." *Arts & Architecture*, February 1948. p. 39-43.

"Case Study Houses." *Arts & Architecture*, March 1948. p. 39-41.

Colomina, Beatriz. "Reflections on the Eames House." *The Work of Charles and Ray Eames: A Legacy of Invention*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1997.

Demetrios, Eames. *An Eames Primer*. New York: Universe Publishing, 2001.

Goldstein, Barbara, ed. *Arts & Architecture, the Entenza Years*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: the MIT Press, 1990.

Hines, Thomas. *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Kirkham, Pat. *Charles and Ray Eames, Designers of the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1995.

Los Angeles County Tax Assessor's Archives, map books.

Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety, Historical Building Permits.

McCoy, Esther. *Case Study Houses 1945 - 1962*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977.

McCoy, Esther. *The Second Generation*. Layton, UT: Peregrine Smith Books, 1984.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 30

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Neuhart, John, Marilyn Neuhart, and Ray Eames. *Eames Design: the Work of the Office of Charles and Ray Eames*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989.

Pacific Palisades, Where the Mountains Meet the Sea, ed. Betty Lou Young. Pacific Palisades, CA: Pacific Palisades Historical Society Press, 1983.

Smith, Elizabeth A. T., ed. *Blueprints for Modern Living: History and Legacy of the Case Study Houses*. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art; and Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1989.

Steele, James. *Eames House, Charles and Ray Eames*. London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1995.

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 (Specify Repository):

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 1.4 acres

UTM References:

Zone	Easting	Northing
11	359758	3766051

Verbal Boundary Description:

The subject property is comprised of Tract #13251, Lot 1 (Assessor Parcel Number 4411-028-001). The property is bounded by Chautauqua Boulevard on the southeast; the lot line of the property at 205 Chautauqua Boulevard (Tract #13251, Lot 2) on the east/northeast; Corona del Mar on the northwest; and the lot lines of 14841 W Pacific Coast Highway (Tract #9473, block 6, lot 5) and 14861 W Pacific Coast Highway (Tract #6753, block 6, lot 4) on the west/southwest. The site measures approximately 1.4 acres (60,794.7 square feet).

Property boundaries are indicated on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the original house and studio that were constructed on the property purchased by Charles and Ray Eames from John Entenza in August 1948 and that maintain historic integrity.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 32

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Historic Resources Group. (Christy Johnson McAvoy, Managing Principal; Jennifer Minasian Trotxou, Architectural Historian; Kari Michele Fowler, Preservation Planner).

Address: 1728 Whitley Avenue, Hollywood CA 90028

Telephone: (323) 469-2349

Date: May 2005

Edited by: Elaine Jackson-Retondo
National Park Service
Pacific West Regional Office, Oakland
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, California 94607

Telephone: (510) 817-1428

Edited by: Carolyn Pitts and Patty Henry
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Survey
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (215) 597-8875 and (202) 354-2216

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS SURVEY
January 24, 2007

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

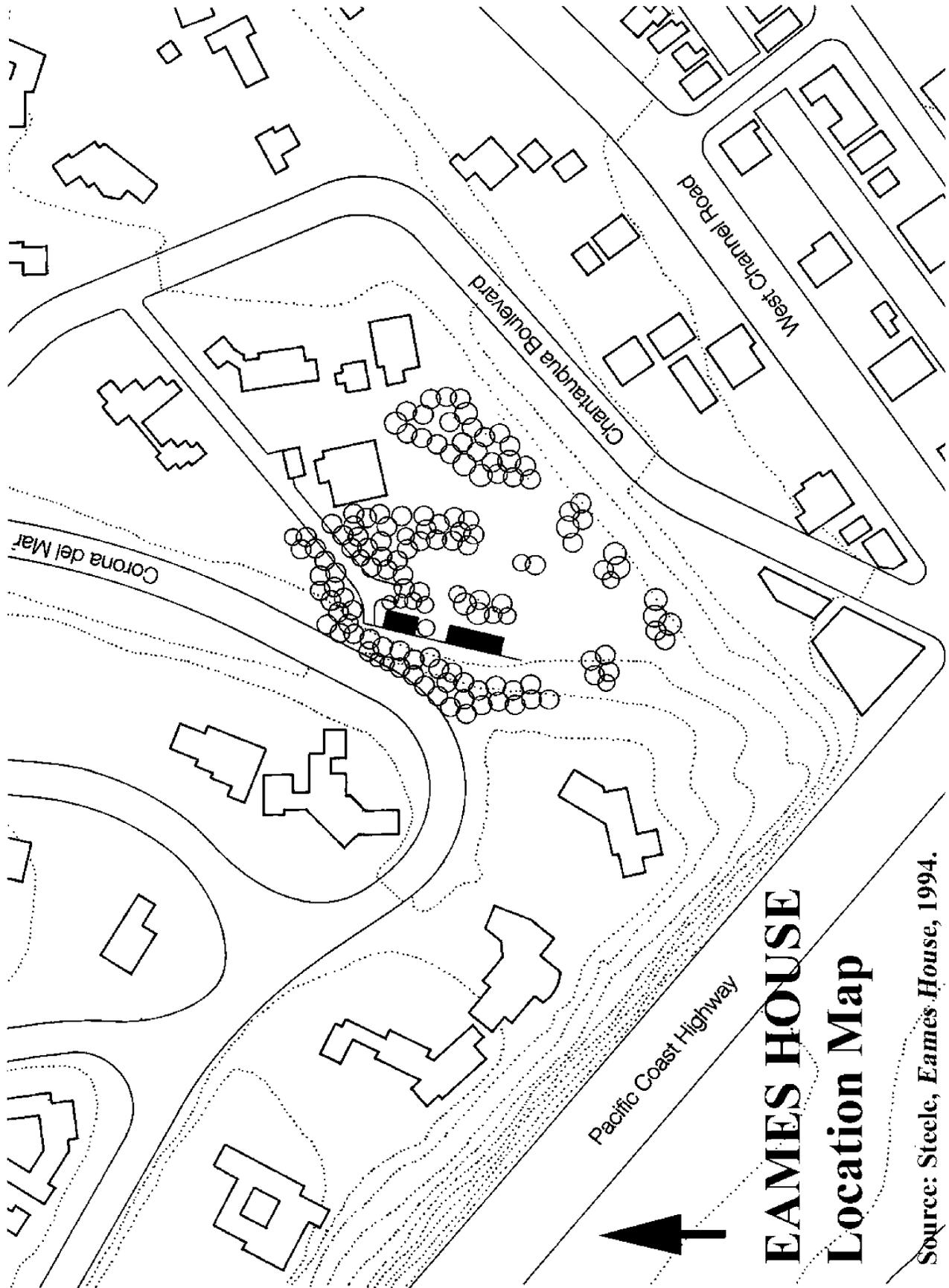
OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 33

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



Source: Steele, *Eames House*, 1994.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

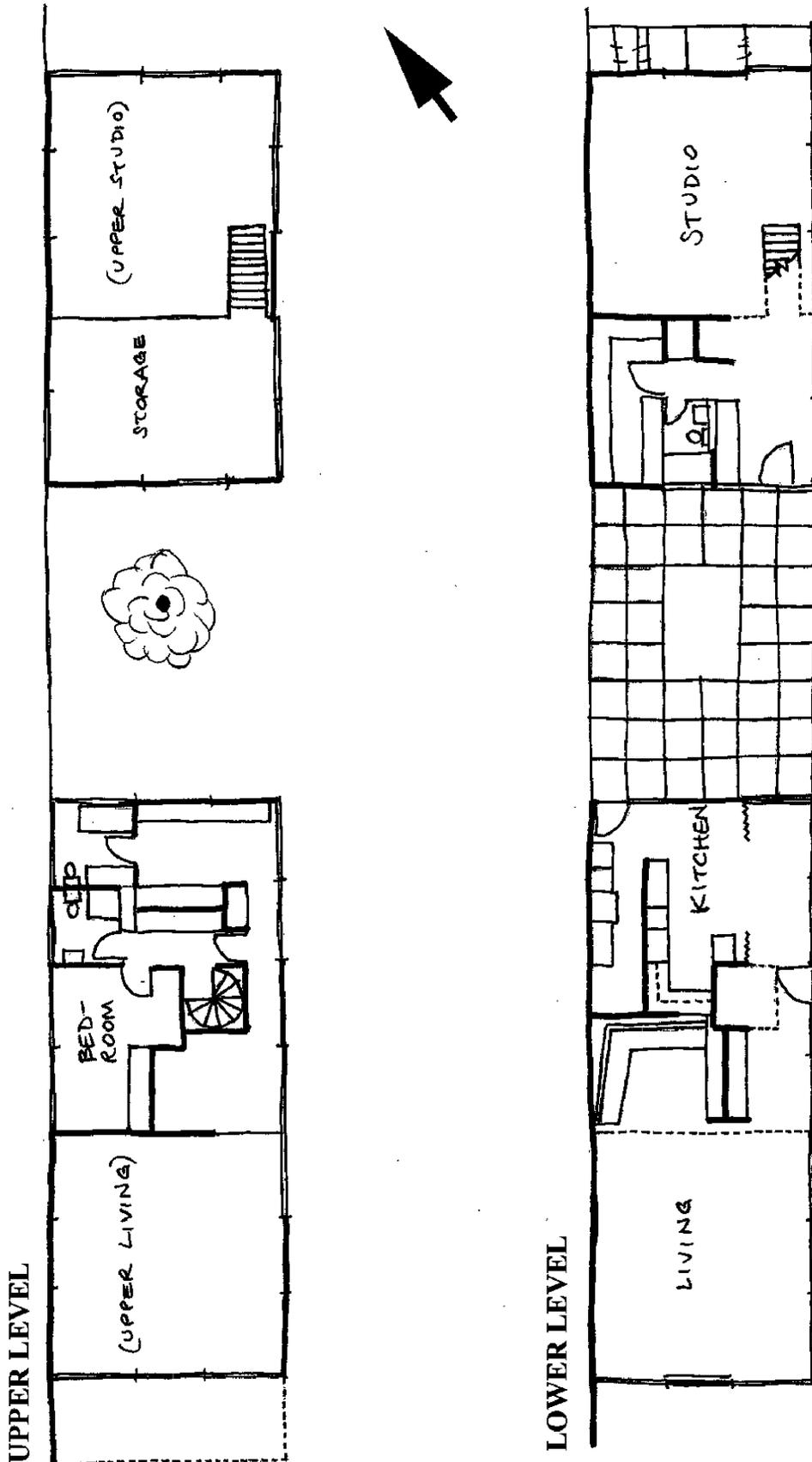
OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 35

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



EAMES HOUSE Floor Plan

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

Page 37

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

List of Black and White Photographs, continued.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>View</u>
------------	--------------------	-------------

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

EAMES HOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 38

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

List of Color Slides

<u>No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>View</u>
#1	Studio, north façade	SE
#2	Studio, east façade	W
#3	Residence, north and east facades	SW
#4	Residence, east façade	W
#5	Residence, north façade and central court	SW
#6	Residence, south façade and south court	NW
#7	Residence, living room	S
#8	Residence, seating alcove and entry	N
#9	Residence, entry and stairs	S
#10	Residence, kitchen	NW
#11	Residence, loft bedroom	SW
#12	Studio, main workspace and stairs	S