

Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space Historical Commission Meeting

RivCoParks Headquarters

4600 Crestmore Manor Riverside, CA 92509



Park District Headquarters 4600 Crestmore Road Jurupa Valley, CA 9250 951/255-9513

Thursday, November 16, 2023, 1:30 p.m. **A G E N D A**

HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING - 1:30 PM

- 1.0 Call to Order
- 2.0 Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
- 3.0 Roll Call
- 4.0 Approval of Minutes Action
 Job Code: 2023-08
 Approval of Minutes of September 21, 2023
- 5.0 Special Recognition Informational –None

6.0 Public Comments Related to Historical Commission

A three-minute limitation will apply to each member of the public who wishes to address the Commission on a matter not on the agenda. No member of the public is allowed to "share" his/her three minutes with any other member of the public. (Usually, any items received under this heading are referred to staff for further study, research, completion and/or future Commission action.) Any person wishing to address the Commission on any matter, whether or not it appears on this agenda, is requested to complete a **Request to Speak form** available from the Recording Secretary. The completed form is to be submitted to the Secretary prior to an individual being heard. Whenever possible, lengthy testimony should be presented to the Commission in writing and only pertinent points presented orally.

- 7.0 Old Business –None
- 8.0 New Business
 - 8.1 Landmark Nomination HC-2023-003 Action Job Code: 2023-09

Proposal by Andrew Voterro to consider a Riverside County Landmark for the structure John Lautner's Windsong located at 48700 Twin Pines Road Banning, CA 92220 (APN 529-060-004) in District 5. The Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District recommends that the Historical Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors



If you require reasonable accommodations for this meeting, call Park District Headquarters at 951-255-9513 at least 72 hours before the meeting.

determine that this proposal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Rule) as this proposal will not have a significant effect on the environment.

9.0 Commissioners Report –Informational

Opportunity for the members of the Historical Commission to share events or information from their districts.

10.0 Historic Preservation Officer Updates – Informational

10.1 Gilman Ranch Grant Update

HPO will provide a brief update on the status of the Gilman Ranch grant.

10.2 Riverside County Historic Preservation Guidance Documents and Historical Commission Bylaws

HPO to discuss goals to update Historical Commission bylaws, the progress of the Riverside County Historical Landmarks Criteria & Procedures and the Riverside County Historical Landmark Nomination Form

11.0 Tentative Future Agena Items

Opportunity for the members of the Historical Commission to request future agenda items.

12.0 Next Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. City of Lake Elsinore Cultural Center, 183 N. Main Street Lake Elsinore 92530.

13.0 Adjournment





951/255-9513

Park District Headquarters 4600 Crestmore Road Jurupa Valley, CA 92509

Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space Historical Commission Meeting Thursday, September 21, 2023, 1:30 p.m.



Riverside City Hall, 5th Floor 3900 Main Street Riverside, CA 92501

MINUTES

HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

- 1.0 Call to Order
 - The meeting was called to order at 1:33pm.
- **2.0 Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Williamson.
- 3.0 Roll Call Commissioners Present: Newton (1), Falcone (1), Williamson (2), Hohenadl (2), Martland (3), Lech (5), and Jarrell Johnson (MAL); Commissioners Absent: Deutsch (3); Staff Present: Adame and Lawlor.
- 4.0 Approval of Minutes Action

Job Code: 2023-06

August 10, 2023, approved (M/S/C Johnson/Williamson)

- 5.0 Special Recognition Informational
 - **5.1** Welcome New Commissioners

Joyce Ann Hohenadl, Appointed to District 2

Supervisor Karen Spiegel reappointed Joyce Hohenadl to the Historical Commission on August 29, 2023.

Deborah L. Newton, Appointed to District 1

Supervisor Kevin Jeffries appointed Deborah L. Newton to the Historical Commission on August 29, 2023.

- 6.0 Public Comments Related to Historical Commission None
- 7.0 Old Business
 - 7.1 Landmark Nomination HC-2023-001 (Continued Item From 8/10/2023) Action Job Code: 2023-04

Commissioners approved the recommendation by staff to move this item forward to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors for final approval. (*M/S/C Falcone/Martland*)

7.2 Landmark Nomination HC-2023-002 (Continued Item From 8/10/2023) – Action Job Code: 2023-05



If you require reasonable accommodations for this meeting, call Park District Headquarters at 951-255-9513 at least 72 hours before the meeting.

Commissioners approved the recommendation by staff to continue this item until the January 18, 2024 meeting. (M/S/C Johnson/Hohenadl)

8.0 New Business

8.1 New Calendar – Action

Job Code: 2023-07

Commissioners approved the 2024 meeting calendar. (M/S/C Johnson/Williamson)

9.0 Tentative Future Agenda Items

- 9.1 Brown Act
- 9.2 Historical Commission Bylaws

10.0 Historic Preservation Officer Updates – Informational

10.1 Future Workshop

HPO Lawlor proposed a future workshop meeting focused on the Brown Act and existing bylaws.

10.2 Riverside County Historic Preservation Guidance Documents and Historical Commission Bylaws

HPO Lawlor discussed goals to update Historical Commission bylaws.

10.3 Historical Commission Website

HPO Lawlor discussed recent changes to website and proposed updates.

11.0 Commissioners Report – Informational

Commissioners shared upcoming events and projects in their respective districts.

12.0 Next Meeting –November 16, 2023, 1:30 p.m. at Parks Headquarters; Riverfront Room – 4600 Crestmore Rd, Jurupa Valley, CA 92509 (Date and/or location subject to change).

13.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:28pm in memory of Commissioner Ruth Atkins.

Bridget Lawlor, Historic Preservation Officer Secretary to the Historical Commission





Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District

Kyla Brown, Parks Director / General Manager

HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING

DATE: November 16, 2023 AGENDA ITEM NO.: 8.1

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	HC-2023-003
Request	To consider a Landmark Designation request to designate the John Lautner's Windsong House as a County Historic Landmark.
Applicant	Andrew Vottero
Nomination Location	Ward 5 Situated on the Northwest side of Twin Pines Road in Banning. Search result 48700 Twin Pines Rd, Banning, California, 92220 Add to Map Notes ▼
Historic District	Not Applicable
Historic Designation	RIV-083 (Subject to vote)
Staff	Dr. Bridget Lawlor, Historic Preservation Officer 951-529-2361 blawlor@rivco.org



RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Historical Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

- DETERMINE that Landmark Application HC-2023-003 for the designation of the John Lautner's Windsong House as a Riverside County Landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Rule) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), as the proposal will have no significant effect on the environment, identifies the structure as a cultural resource, and preserves the historic character of a cultural resource; and
- 2. **APPROVE** Historic Landmark Application HC-2023-003 based on the facts of findings, and designate John Lautner's Windsong House as a Riverside County Historic Landmark.

BACKGROUND

John Lautner's Windsong House

Windsong, a stunning architectural mountain residence perched high above the Banning Pass along the route to Idyllwild, California, came into existence in the late 1960s through the vision of Marco Wolff Jr., a renowned designer hailing from Los Angeles. His ambition was to craft an entirely eco-conscious retreat, a sanctuary for all seasons, far removed from the hustle and bustle of mainstream Los Angeles life, yet conveniently close to make it an integral part of his weekly routine.

In pursuit of this extraordinary fusion of physical and spiritual haven, he meticulously selected the ideal person for the task and a location after months of careful consideration. That person was John Lautner, FAIA, celebrated as a master of organic architecture and regarded by many as America's preeminent living architect. With a year of painstaking effort, infused with the dedication and unwavering attention to detail that epitomized the Lautner legacy, this property presents an unparalleled lifestyle and an opportunity for spiritual rejuvenation and uninterrupted creative focus.

John Lautner Jr., FAIA

John Edward Lautner Jr., FAIA, born in Marquette, Michigan in 1911, graduated from Northern Michigan University in 1933 and joined Frank Lloyd Wright's inaugural class of Taliesin Fellows. In 1937, he relocated to Los Angeles to oversee Wright's projects, including the Oboler and Sturges houses. In 1940, Lautner constructed his first Los Angeles residence for himself and his wife.

Lautner went on to create some of the 20th century's most iconic architectural marvels, primarily residential homes. Fewer than 100 of his structures remain, each boasting unique designs influenced significantly by their specific locations, rendering them exceedingly rare, invaluable, and irreplaceable.

Predominantly situated in Southern California, Lautner's designs masterfully embraced the indooroutdoor connection, taking advantage of the region's mild climate. His work stands as a cornerstone of American Midcentury Modern Architecture, with his houses achieving iconic status in California, epitomizing a distinct vision of mid-century California living, harmonizing age-specific design with timeless ideals.

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In Riverside County, aside from Windsong, four other Lautner homes grace the landscape:

- 1. The Desert Hot Springs Motel (1947)
- 2. The Pearlman Cabin in Idyllwild (1957)
- 3. The Elrod House in Palm Springs (1968)
- 4. The Bob Hope House in Palm Springs (1979)

Midcentury Modern Architecture

In Southern California during the early 1960s, American Midcentury Modern Architecture reached a zenith that was particularly captivating. This region became a hotbed for the Midcentury Modern movement, as the climate and topography perfectly suited the open, indoor-outdoor lifestyle promoted by this architectural style. Prominent architects like John Lautner, Richard Neutra, and Charles and Ray Eames continued to leave an indelible mark on the landscape, crafting some of the most iconic examples of Midcentury Modern design.

Southern California's unique blend of natural beauty and cultural innovation provided an ideal canvas for architectural experimentation. Sleek, horizontal lines, large glass expanses, and the use of natural materials like wood and stone were hallmarks of this style. The Case Study House Program, which ran from the late 1940s into the 1960s, produced some of the era's most celebrated and experimental designs, embodying the spirit of innovation and functionality that defined Midcentury Modern Architecture. These architectural treasures from the early 1960s continue to captivate and inspire, representing a time when design, nature, and technology converged to create an enduring legacy of modernist aesthetics.

ANALYSIS

The applicant has provided a statement of significance, photographs documenting the architecture and building setting, and copies of primary and secondary sources as summarized below (Exhibit 2).

Architectural Description

At the top of a small hill, in a valley surrounded by mountains, Lautner sited Windsong to blend in as a little dome atop the hill. The structure is a square cabin with a parallelogram carport off the southwest corner. The four main beams are perfectly oriented to the cardinal directions. A single-level structure built on a slab foundation; the roof of the cabin is low with approximately a 3% grade. The exterior of the cabin is composed primarily of original hemlock planking, with some walls built out of concrete cinderblock—since stuccoed over. The site is incredibly windy, high above the Banning Pass, and Lautner studied the concrete and stone walls to bear the bring of the winds, leaving the northeast side of the cabin for huge glass windows to frame the view. One of the most significant design elements of Windsong is the deep eaves that surround the house on all sides, featuring finely mitered redwood and wood composite strips original to the house. Although the eaves were historically uninterrupted, owners in the 1990s built a small entryway on the northeast side. Glass windows frame uninterrupted views to the north, east, and southeast.

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Inside, the great room includes an open flow kitchen in its original location, a fireplace of Bouquet Canyon stone, an original built-in stone and glass coffee table, and a ceiling of lapped cedar and original structural beams. A dining area has been setup in the north part of the room. The original bathroom was remodeled in the 90s but is in the original location in the northwest corner of the house, with a laundry room and closet off the back in an area originally used for storage. One of the original sleeping areas is now a guest bedroom, and Marco Wolff's piano nook is now used as an office/lounge area. This part of the house features tongue-and-groove ceilings, which are original.

The back of the house is excavated approximately three feet below the main cabin footprint. Originally the carport, this area has been partially converted into the master bedroom and an additional bathroom and fireplace added under the original tongue-and-groove ceilings. Outdoors, on the northeast side of the building, Lautner built a sunken stone terrace in front of the main entrance, to both shelter it from the strong winds and to avoid interfering with the view from the cabin. The land is still nearly completely unspoiled, with views of the wilderness of Black Mountain, Cabazon Peak, the Banning Pass, and San Gorgonio Mountain.

Statement of Significance

John Lautner's Windson is historically significant because it is an excellent example of American Midcentury Modern Architecture in the region. The house is also significant because it was designed by famed architect, John Lautner.

John Lautner's Windsong retains a high degree of integrity required for Landmark designation.

HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION EVALUATION

Per the Riverside County Landmarks Criteria and Procedures, "historic resource" means: "an object, building, structure, site, monument, landmark, area, or place that is significant in terms of architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, archaeological, military, or cultural history." Pursuant to the applicable historic resource eligibility criteria, John Lautner's Windsong is eligible for designation under Criterion B.2.2 and B.2.3 based on the following facts:

FINDING: Criterion B.2.2: Is associated with the lives of persons important to the history of

Riverside County or its communities.

FACTS: Windsong is associated with the famed architect, John Lautner. Lautner is considered

one of the most important architects of the twentieth century.

FINDING: Criterion B.2.3: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, Riverside

County region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important

creative individual or possesses high artistic value.

FACTS: John Lautner's Windsong is characteristic of the American Midcentury Modern

architectural style. It remains in its original location with an unspoiled landscape.

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PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A public hearing notice was posted to the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District website and posted outside the meeting site 72 hours prior to the meeting per the Brown Act.

EXHIBITS LIST

- 1. Aerial/Location Map
- 2. Historic Designation Application
- 3. Current Photos

Prepared by: Bridget Lawlor, Historic Preservation Officer

Reviewed by: Gaby Adame, Bureau Chief of Planning, Development, and Interpretation

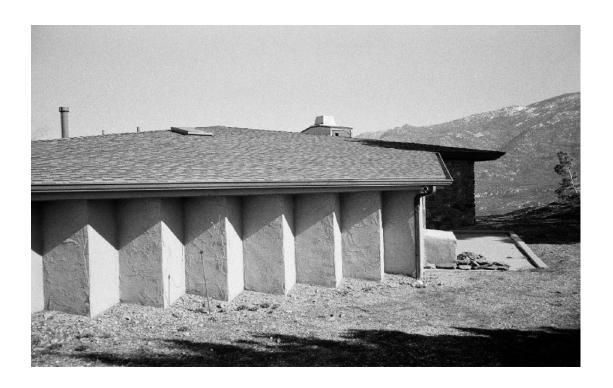
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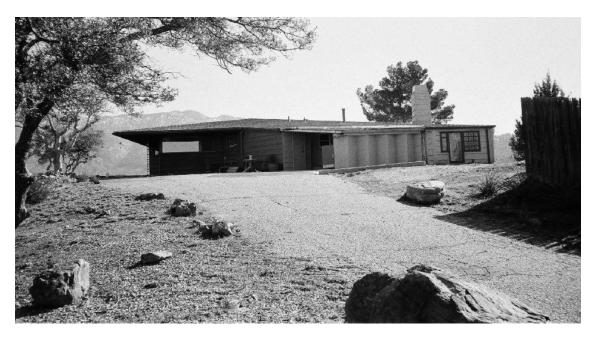
Exhibit 1 Aerial/Location Map



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Exhibit 3 Current Photos





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Exhibit 3 (Continued)





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Landmark Designation: John Lautner's Windsong

Historical Commission Agenda Item: 8.1 November 16, 2023













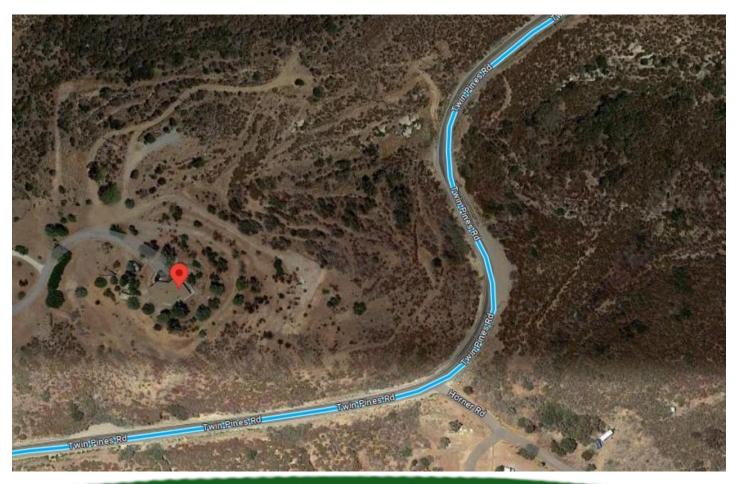


Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District

Camping Trails Nature Centers Ecological Reserves Historic Sites

Aerial Photo/Location





John Lautner's Windsong



John Lautner's Windsong











Recommendation



Staff recommends that the Historical Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1. DETERMINE that Landmark Application HC-2023-003 for the designation of John Lautner's Windsong as a Riverside County Landmark is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Rule) and 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment), as the proposal will have no significant effect on the environment, identifies the structure as a cultural resource, and preserves the historic character of a cultural resource; and
- APPROVE Historic Landmark Application HC-2023-003 based on the facts of findings and designate John Lautner's Windsong as a Riverside County Historic Landmark.

Riverside County Historical Commission Historic Landmark Nomination Form



John Lautner's Windsong 48700 Twin Pines Road Banning, California 92220 1. SITE NAME:

Common: Windsong

Historic: Mountain Cabin for Mr. Marco Wolff Jr.

2. LOCATION:

48700 Twin Pines Road,

Banning, California 92220

- 3. LEGAL OWNER:
 - (a) Andrew Thomas Vottero
 - (b) 48700 Twin Pines Road, Banning, CA 92220
 - (c) 413-330-3712
 - (d) Letter of Consent Enclosed: **YES**
- 4. PRESENT USE: Private Residence
- 5. ORIGINAL USE: **Private Residence**
- 6. OTHER PAST USES: **None**
- 7. YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION: <u>1966-1968</u>
 - (a) Builder: **Unknown**
 - (b) Architect: John Lautner, FAIA
- 8. CLASSIFICATION:
 - (a) Category: **Building**
 - (b) Ownership: **Private**
 - (c) Status: Occupied
 - (d) Accessibility: Yes; restricted
 - (e) Condition: **Fair**
- 9. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Midcentury Modern / Organic Architecture
- 10. IF ALTERED, PLEASE DESCRIBE: Several and extensive, but all reversible. Covered entryway added; interior soffits removed; wall between sleeping area and main room added; collapsible and hidden sliding wall removed; bathroom remodeled; exterior wall covering an entrance nook added. Original carport partially converted into master bedroom in line with architect's original plans, but not done well. Second bathroom added. Original fireplace chimney covered over; second fireplace added in master bedroom. All alterations are ultimately reversible; several others have already been removed including added wrap-around decking around the house, a lean-to storage area; and a garage built off the original house foot print much later.
- 11. LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: Private Residence
 - (a) Frontage: 320'
 - (b) Depth: <u>322' 372'</u>
 - (c) Approximate Acreage: 2.5 acres
- 12. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF SITE/STRUCTURE: Fair
- 13. PRIMARY STRUCTURE MATERIALS: Stone, wood, concrete, glass
- 14. RELATED FEATURES OR OUTBUILDINGS: <u>Original sunken stone terrance designed</u> <u>by Lautner</u>; <u>additional storage shed on property built much later and to be eventually removed.</u>

Windsong: Marco Wolff Jr.'s Mountain Cabin, by John Lautner FAIA

In 1964, concert pianist and noted interior decorator Marco Wolff Jr. purchased three parcels of raw land in a rural part of Banning on Twin Pines Road, high above the valley floor and under the hulk of Black Mountain. On the most elevated parcel, on top of a tiny hill, Mr. Wolff built his mountain cabin.

The land is rural, unspoiled, and a beautiful example of the unique environment of California chaparral, sitting high in the Banning Pass above Cabazon and the desert below. The land itself is nearly worthy of landmark status, but it was Mr. Wolff's choice of architect that sets this property apart from the rest.

The following is excerpted from a short history on the property that was found in the Lautner Archives at The Getty Museum, which succinctly states the concept behind the deceptively simple design.

"Windsong,' an architectural mountain property high above the Banning Pass on the road to Idyllwild, California, was commissioned in the late Nineteen Sixties by Mr. Marco Wolff Jr., the well known Los Angeles designer. It was his purpose to innovate for himself a totally environmental retreat home for all seasons completely remote from the pressures and mainstream of Los Angeles life yet close enough to remain an integral part of weekly living. To create such a physical and spiritual haven, he chose the one man he felt could relate to both the concept and the physical site which was selected after many months of search. It was John Lautner F.A.I.A., a master of organic architecture and considered by many as America's greatest living architect. Over a year in the making and thought out with the dedication and meticulous attention to detail that has become the Lautner trademark, the property offers a singular lifestyle and opportunity for spiritual renewal and creative concentration." (Crane 2)

John Edward Lautner Jr., FAIA, was born in 1911 in Marquette, Michigan. After graduating in 1933 from Northern Michigan University and began working for Frank Lloyd Wright in the first class of Taliesin Fellows. In 1937, Lautner moved to Los Angeles to oversee work for Wright on the Oboler and Sturges houses. His first house in Los Angeles was built in 1940, for himself and his wife.

John Lautner would go on to design and build some of the most significant pieces of architecture of the 20th century. Nearly all of his designs were private residential homes, with less than 100 structures still standing. Although there are certain motifs and design trademarks that appear in many of his designs, they were all original and unique. The exact site was the most significant

influencing factor in each of his designs. This makes each and every single one of his remaining designs beyond rare - they are endangered, priceless, and irreplaceable.

Nearly all of John Lautner's designs are located in Southern California, and his focus on the interplay between indoors and outdoors took full advantage of the mild climate here. He has become one of the most important examples of American midcentury modern architecture, and his houses have become California Icons in and of themselves. His architecture represents a unique dream - the California Dream - of the last mid-century, unique combinations of age-specific design and timeless ideals.

With less than 100 or so Lautner homes still in existence, Riverside County is lucky enough to count six other Lautner homes besides Windsong.

The Desert Hot Springs Motel (1947), the Payne Remodel (San Dimas, 1953), the Pearlman Cabin (Idyllwild, 1957), the Elrod House (Palm Springs, 1968), the Tolstoy House (Rancho Cucamonga, 1974) and the Bob Hope House (Palm Springs, 1979) are the only other examples of Lautner architecture in Riverside County.

Windsong falls neatly in the middle of these homes, age-wise. The history of its construction is as follows.

In 1961, Wolff hired Lautner to build him a home in the hills of West Hollywood, at 8530 Hedges Place. Wolff asked Lautner for his version of his old boss' famous home, Fallingwater. The resulting home, the Wolff House, was declared a Los Angeles Historic Monument in 2006. Wolff purchased the land in Banning in 1964, and building commenced immediately, finishing around 1966 with further design plans carried out around 1968. There are some similarities between the Wolff House in Los Angeles and Windsong, notably the use and mix of materials, and the zig-zag wall design, as well as the low-grade sloped roof.

But perhaps even more than the Wolff House in LA, Windsong is a superb example of Lautner's skill and talent in situating his designs to their surroundings. The landscape is as much the star as the architecture - Lautner's skill as an architect was in his ability to make both of them better for the other. Windsong sits subtly at the top of a small hill in a valley surrounded by mountains, almost invisible from the main road. Nature is theater here, and Windsong sets up the stage.

In 1975, Wolff put Windsong on the market for the first time. It was sold to a Los Angeles-based artist named Martin Leonard Green, who worked in a variety of mediums. He kept a studio nearby to Windsong, although not on property, and much of his work was inspired by the San Jacinto mountains. Martin loved the house and took great care in his stewardship, making minimal changes and even completing some of the un-realized elements of Lautner's design plans.

Like Wolff before him, Green was also a gay man. Sometime in the late 80s, like so many of his peers at the time, Green contracted HIV and eventually AIDS. He had become friendly with a neighbor down the road, who nursed Green as he lay dying in the house. Eventually Green was briefly placed into hospice care in Santa Monica, California, before passing away in 1991. His caring neighbor down the road was named executor of his will, and Windsong was sold for the second time to a local couple in 1992.

By this time, Windsong had fallen off the public radar. Despite the excellence - and rarity - of Lautner's designs, many of his houses had been forgotten, altered beyond recognition, or destroyed. The couple who bought Windsong in 1992 had no idea it was a Lautner home before they purchased it, but when they did, they received an old copy of a set of plans bearing Lautner's signatures.

They then contacted the Lautner Foundation to report their findings. The foundation did not believe that anything had been actually built, but when the building resurfaced they realized that there was in fact a Lautner built in Banning.

The original copies of the plans are located in the Lautner Archive which is housed at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Windsong has in the past been referred to as a "remodel" that Lautner did, because the plans for the house say "Alterations to Mr. Marco Wolff's Country Home." However, it seems that an earlier set of plans for the house have simply not been located yet. The original client confirmed that Lautner had been the only architect to ever work on the house, and there were no existing structures on the land when Marco Wolff purchased it. His application for a building permit in 1964 is the first one. The plans for the house are dated 1966 and 1968, and include several layouts and detailed building notes.

Despite finding the plans and certifying the authenticity, the 1992 owners of Windsong undertook a brutal series of renovations and changes to the house, including removing the interior soffits, changing the floor plan, covering over the original chimney design, putting decking over the sunken stone terrace, and poorly converting the carport into a master bedroom. Ironically, this was one of the plans Lautner himself had drawn for the house, but they did the work themselves, and poorly.

Despite its past hardships, Windsong remains a beautiful example of John Lautner's mid-mid-century modern organic architecture, in tune and in celebration with its surroundings. It's ideal placement in the chaparral of Black Mountain, Cabazon Peak, and the Banning Pass make it not only a celebration of Lautner and nature, but also Southern California, Riverside County, and Banning.

My long-term plan for Windsong is to restore it to its original concept and plan, including carrying out the unbuilt/unrealized plans Lautner had made for the house. It is my intent to bring out the very best in Windsong, and to one day apply to certify Windsong as a National Historic Landmark alongside Lautner's other surviving masterpieces.

16. <u>ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION</u>

Windsong is a small Mid-Century Modern mountain cabin designed to blend in and celebrate the natural surroundings in the practice and spirit of Organic Architecture.

At the top of a small hill, in a valley surrounded by mountains, Lautner sited Windsong to blend in as a little dome atop the hill. It is essentially a square cabin with a parallelogram carport off the southwest corner. The four main beams are perfectly oriented to the cardinal directions. A single-level structure built on a slab foundation, the roof of the cabin is low with approximately a 3% grade. The exterior of the cabin is composed primarily of original hemlock planking, with some walls built of Bouquet Canyon stone, and the zig-zag wall encompassing the original carport built out of concrete cinderblock, since stuccoed over. The site is incredibly windy, high above the Banning Pass, and Lautner situated the concrete and stone walls to bear the brunt of the winds, leaving the north east side of the cabin for huge glass windows to frame the view. One of the most significant design elements of Windsong is the deep eaves that surround the house on all sides, featuring finely mitered redwood and wood composite strips original to the house. Although the eaves were historically uninterrupted, owners in the 1990's built a small entryway on the northeast side. Glass windows frame uninterrupted views to the north, east, and southeast.

Inside, the great room includes an open flow kitchen in its original location, a fireplace of Bouquet Canyon stone, an original built-in stone and glass coffee table, and a ceiling of lapped cedar and original structural beams. A dining area has been set up in the north part of the room. The original bathroom was remodeled in the 90s but is in its original location in the northwest corner of the house, with a laundry room and closet off the back in an area originally used for storage. One of the original sleeping areas is now a guest bedroom, and Marco Wolff's piano nook is now used as an office/lounge area. This part of the house features tongue-and-groove ceilings, which are original.

The back of the house is excavated approximately three feet below the main cabin footprint. Originally the carport, this area has been partially converted to the master bedroom and an additional bathroom and fireplace added under the original tongue-and-groove ceilings. Outdoors, on the northeast side of the building, Lautner built a sunken stone terrace in front of the main entrance, to both shelter it from the strong winds and to avoid interfering with the view from the cabin. The land is still nearly completely unspoiled, with views of the wilderness of Black Mountain, Cabazon Peak, the Banning Pass, and San Gorgonio Mountain.

In researching the house, I was also able to find some historic architectural descriptions of the house and property, which I found incredibly descriptive and illustrative. I include them here, including a lengthy account written by original Lautner client and builder/first owner of Windsong, Marco Wolff Jr.

"A two-bedroom architectural home of wood, stone, concrete and glass designed by John Lautner FAIA...The home features a magnificent living, dining, music room with a cathedral

beam ceiling to a center pole, a walk-in fireplace of Bouquet Canyon stone, two sleeping areas and a breathtaking 360-degree view of Mt. San Gorgonio and the Banning Pass at the condor level of 4,000 feet. The silence overwhelms. Mr. Lautner ingeniously recessed the entire structure into the dome of a small hill dominating the acreage on the side of Black Mountain so that it recedes and blends almost entirely into the land and natural flora. Indeed from the by-road no structure or suggestion of one is ascertainable. Thus the land remains essentially primordial and unspoiled. To this end even the utilities from the power pole to the home have been placed underground." (Crane 1).

"Idyllic seclusion, incredible privacy, unhampered views, a fortress against the ever changing pressures of weather patterns - these were the goals in seeking and finding a mountain environment which would be the antithesis of urban living.

A fairly remote area was finally located with a superb view of Mt. San Gorgonio and the Banning Pass at the 4000 foot level in the shadow of Black Mountain, adjacent to Mt. San Jacinto. This is transitional desert or "chaparral country," as it is called, where are found a plentiful spectrum of wild life...red fox, lynx, deer, multitudes of squirrel, scrub-jays, vireos, buteo-hawks, gross beaks.

How to realize an environment completely indigenous and organic to an atmosphere of tranquility which embraced such a rich variety of mother nature's creations? With John Lautner's genius...an "open plan" house was designed with exposure to <u>all</u> views, yet with a sense of 'shelter,' insulation from the elements, materials blending with the site — all suggesting ecological appropriateness, minimum upkeep and a high sense of security from the encroachments of both society and weather.

The basis of the 'open plan' was a modified square, the greater quadrant oriented toward the main view (almost directly east) with views to the north-east and south-east. This left the back quadrants of the 'square' available for bedrooms and central bath...all nestled under a broad sweet of eaves six feet deep. These 'eye brows' not only reached out toward the view at a sharply defined angle, but then plunged back into the living areas at the same level for several feet, then upwards towards the ascending roof structure to the apex of the wood ceiling system. This allowed the double-paned insulating glass to intercept the eave-plane without any molding or trim, giving the illusion of no windows at all! Quite a peaceful unity with the outside panorama, yet full insulation from temperature which vary from 22 degrees during high winter to the 94 degrees sometimes experienced during the heat of summer. It was also essential to allow as much open space near the main corner windows as possible where the dining and conversation table and chairs would be positioned, to provide adequate storage, yet not burden this space with cumbersome 'built-ins.' Consequently, a continuous recessed and roofed cabinetry was cantilevered outside — under and contiguous with the main-view windows — thus giving a full twenty feet of abundant storage, yet flush with the view-window wall (ideal for Hi-Fi equipment

and speakers, dishes, games, typewriter, etc). At the end of each solid double-paned view window are openable Pella center pivoting windows, also glazed with insulating glass and 'wired' into the main security system. Flanking these main windows are 'black out' draperies on electrically controlled traverse rods mounted up within the eave or soffit plane to give complete privacy when needed. Facing this main area to the south of the main corner windows is a huge masonry fire-place of Bouquet Canyon stone capped by a stone triangle which deflects both the wind-driven rain and heavy snows when they do occur.

To the south of the fireplace, Mr. Lautner located the library or study area. This is adjacent to a twelve foot bank of windows on the south south-west view side fronting on Black Mountain, one solid pane being June feet long by three feet high from the eave downwards. As the perimeter of walls turns westerly, they evolve into bouquet canyon stone, both inside and outside and about 12 inches thick, to buttress against seasonal high winds and heavy rains. These walls angle outward toward the west, creating a spacious niche for a grand piano. In this area, the wood plank horizontal seating at the exterior walls continues 'through' the panoramic glass giving another illusion of the 'outside being inside.' Also, at this point, there is a door to the utility storage, heather and laundry room which is hidden flush in the wood paneling. This area also accommodates the heating and air conditioning units, a 1250 watt gasoline powered electrical generator with automatic switch-over system, water heater, and a large 10 post bin for coal and storage.

The first bedroom is open to this wing of the study-music area yet planned so that when retiring, a recessed sliding wall (completely hidden) will partition off the light from the adjacent music room. Then at right angles to this extended wall, a collapsible Pella wood door extends to meet and engage this sliding wall allowing complete privacy from the 'open plan' of the adjoining room.

One of the major unifying architectural details of the design is the broad, flat eave-soffit system that starts at the bottom edge of the outside room facia and continues uninterrupted around the house on the outside as well as around the interior of the house regardless of the various defined areas within. This gives a visual effect of a deep, meticulously grooved and mitered wood frame, perfectly symmetrical, surrounding one's view no matter which area one is in...living, study, music, bedrooms. The bathroom, which connects the two sleeping areas, is large and complete with many custom features, including 'make-up' lighting fixtures, and an antique stained glass window (which during the day is illuminated from natural light and during the night from automatic recessed light). There is also a three by five foot fully tiled stall shower and a 3' by 4' dressing niche with a built-in give drawer 'high boy.' Hot water comes directly from a 50 gallon gas hot water heater in the adjacent utility room. A remote variable speed exhaust fan is flush mounted above the shower area to give extraordinary air exchange for this area.

North of the living-dining area is the front door. Beyond this the kitchen which has been quipped with all up-to-date appliances...JEN-AIR char grill, radar oven, continuous cleaning range, frost free refrigerator and freezer. A heavy duty exhaust fan is located in the cabinetry above and

hidden from view by the filly detailed geometry of dark stained wood. This relates to the huge supporting posts holding up the structural timbers of the roof frame, between which descent the lapped cedar boards which form the ceiling in all areas (including the kitchen). These ceiling planks disappear down behind the soffit perimeter providing a deep shadow line behind which are hidden ducts for the heating and air-conditioning. An entire corner of the kitchen is solid glass with the incredible view of the Banning Pass and Mt. San Gorgonio.

Continuing around 'full circle' is the second bedroom area, partition able from the adjacent areas by a Pella collapsible wood wall. Also at this point is a small back hall to the back door (with automatic closer) or car-port entrance. The sunken car port area is excavated approximately three feet below the Southern and Western grade contours of the hill and retained by a staggered concrete block wall upon which rests the structural timbers supporting the car-port roof structure. The orientation of this area (large) was chosen to allow a comfortable and protected access to the house during bad weather. Around the corner on the outside of the retaining walls (and recessed in the hill to eliminate the sound) is the air conditioning compressor as well as the burglar alarm system. Just below the front entrance on the main view side is a protected, excavated stone patio with a native 'scrub oak' growing from the center. 100 feet down the driveway, there is a completely fenced area enclosing a buried 1200 gallon water tank and a covered underground sump pit housing a pressure pump system which was the original water supply. This is a 'back-up' system for use in case of emergency. The main water line has a 'Tee' to supply the two adjacent parcels of land at a point roughly near the fork of access roads out to the building sites already graded.

A total of three Coulter pines, a red oak, a mulberry, and four Arizona cypress trees stud the gentle slopes adjacent to the graveled areas which enhance the perspective of ever changing views. The entire retreat property was designed to enhance a feeling of spiritual self sufficiency and communion with nature. From conception to the setting of the final stone, this was Mr. Lautner's objective and it was admirably attained."

—Marco Wolff Jr., San Jacinto, 1975

17. <u>REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:</u>

"Wind Song: An Architectural Mountain Retreat Home, Designed by John Lautner, F.A.I.A." Bob Crane & Associates. Crane Realtors. 7656 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90046 213-874-3311. 1975.

"John Edward Lautner Jr., FAIA (1911-1994)." https://usmodernist.org/lautner.htm. US Modernist. 2023.

Lautner Archive at The Getty Museum, Los Angeles. John Lautner Papers, 1929-2002. Series 1: Project records: Box 30: Wolff (Marco) House (Hollywood, 1961). Flatfile 597**-598**, Roll 116**, Box 73: Wolff (Marco) Mountain Cabin (Idyllwild, 1975).

Campbell-Lange, Barbara-Ann. "John Lautner." Köln, Taschen, 1999.

Escher, Frank. "John Lautner, Architect." New York, Princeton University Press, 1994.

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Olsberg, Nicolas, Jean-Louis Cohen, Nicholas Olsberg, and Frank Escher. "Between Earth and Heaven: The Architecture of John Lautner." New York, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008.

Other Documentation:

Windsong Blueprints located in the Lautner Archive at The Getty Museum, Los Angeles John Lautner Papers, 1929-2002.

Series 1. Project records.

Wolff (Marco) House (Hollywood, 1961)

Box 30

Wolff (Marco) Mountain Cabin (Idyllwild, 1975)

Flatfile 597**-598**, Roll 116**, Box 73

Original building permit, original owner's deed, second owner's deed, current deed

- 18. THREATS TO THE SITE: Wildfire
- 19. PHOTOGRAPHS ENCLOSED: YES
- 20. FORM PREPARED BY: Andrew Thomas Vottero, Present Owner
 - (a) 48700 Twin Pines Road, Banning, CA 92220
 - (b) <u>413-330-3712</u>
- 21. ORGANIZATION: N/A

SIGNATURE:

Anth-V

Property Owner Letter of Consent

To the Riverside County Historical Commission:

I am lucky enough to be the seventh owner and current steward of Windsong. Before fortuitously stumbling on the listing for this property, I had never been in Banning or even Idyllwild, despite having driven by countless times on the way to the desert from Los Angeles.

Living here is a dream so big and improbable I never even thought to dream it. For years, John Lautner has been my favorite architect. I have been fortunate enough to spend time in many of his buildings, through my work in fashion. There are so few of his homes left, and they command such attention (and correspondingly high prices) that I never thought I would be able to live in one of his homes. Indeed, I wasn't even sure home ownership would be possible for me at all - I work as a freelance creative, and it always seemed out of reach.

From the very first time I saw a picture of Windsong, something in me felt called. When I visited the house and land for the first time, I was beyond stunned. I somehow gathered my finances and had pretty much the exact minimum I needed. I took a deep breath, made an offer, and only a few weeks after learning about the existence of this house, I used a new key to open the door for the very first time. The whole thing felt very meant to be.

Despite its stunning location and genius design, Windsong never had the attention or care that it deserved. The siting and design of the house are excellent examples of Lautner's skill and talent, and the plans in his archive of the house show that he carried the design further on paper than in reality - some elements of Windsong's design remain unbuilt, even to this day.

Wolff and Lautner both quickly moved on to the next project - another commission Wolff made of Lautner for a much larger house in Idyllwild, which was ultimately not built. Wolff then sold Windsong around seven years after finishing work on it. The second owner, Martin Green, actually carried out some of Lautner's design plans - most notably, a custom built-in coffee table of stone and glass - a motif Lautner used in many homes.

The house had never really been on anyone's radar, the Lautner Foundation included. The project was considered unbuilt, until new owners discovered plans bearing Lautner's name when they bought the house in 1992. After alerting the foundation to Windsong's existence, these same owners undertook a serious of violent and brutal remodels which robbed Windsong of much of its intended spirit - although that spirit still persists.

This house deserves to be brought back to its former glory, and at the same time forward to its greatest and best self. Thought it will likely take me years and years, I am determined to give Windsong the attention and care that it should have always had. It is my dream to rebuild the elements that have been destroyed, to realize for the first time unbuilt designs Lautner had wanted to include here, and to complete the vision that Lautner and Wolff had for Windsong as a place of "freedom and direct communion with nature on all sides...[a place of] peace, tranquility, and singular lifestyle and opportunity for spiritual renewal and creative concentration."

I hope to one day certify Windsong as a Landmark, and leave it as part of Lautner's legacy in Southern California to inspire and delight future generations.

Sincerely

Andrew Thomas Vottero

Tuesday, July 11th, 2023 Windsong, Banning, California



John Lautner's Windsong

<u>Additional Materials:</u>

Historical Photographs, Current Photographs, Original Blueprints from The Lautner Foundation Archive at The Getty Museum, Building Permits, Property Deeds

Historical Photographs

The following photos were obtained from an "owner's binder," that has been passed down from owner to owner over the years, for sure dating back to Martin Green and likely also to original owner Marco Wolff Jr. Copies of the plans were found in this binder as well.

The photographs are all undated, although they were likely taken after construction in 1968, and around the time of the first sale, 1975.













































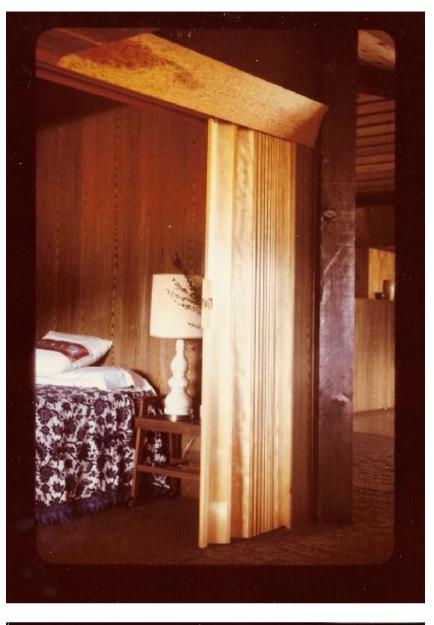


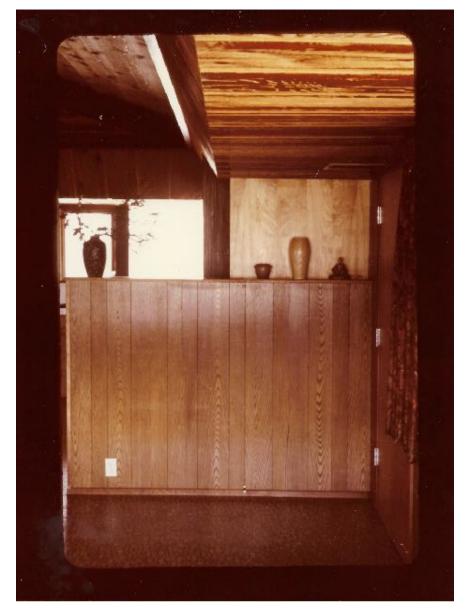




















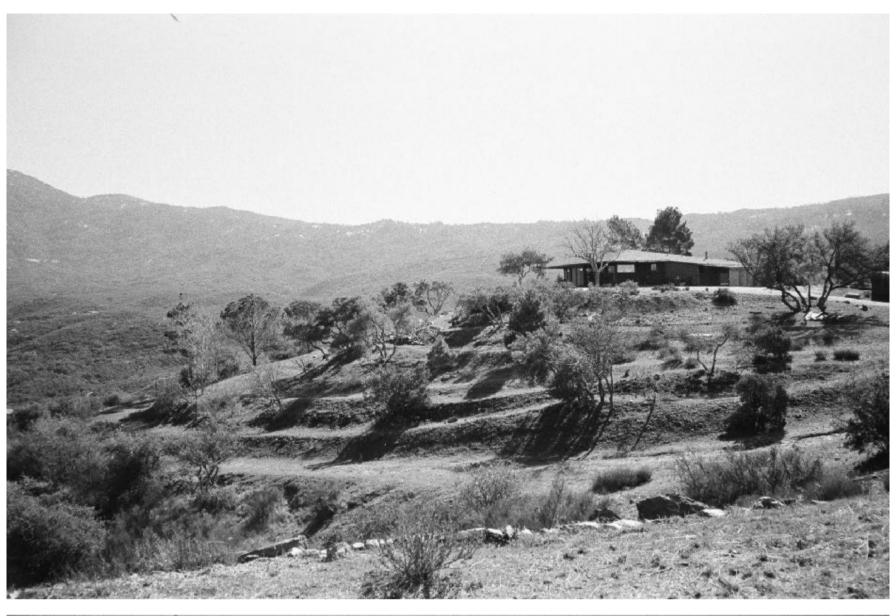


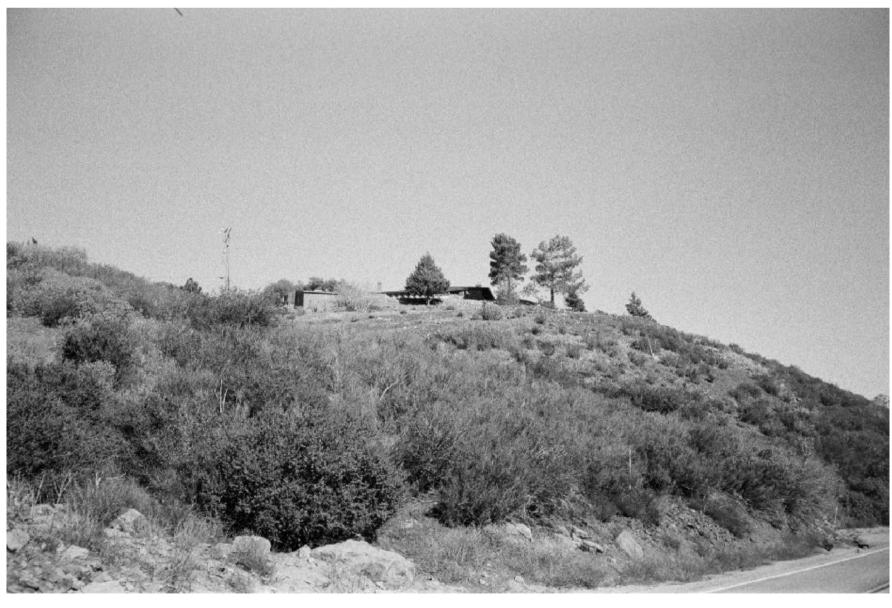
Contemporary Photographs

2023



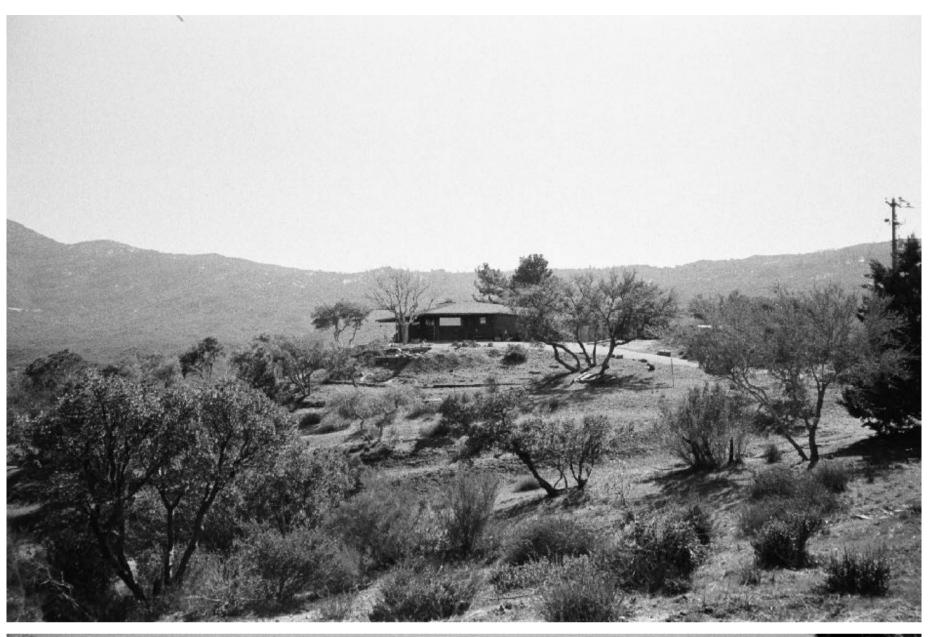




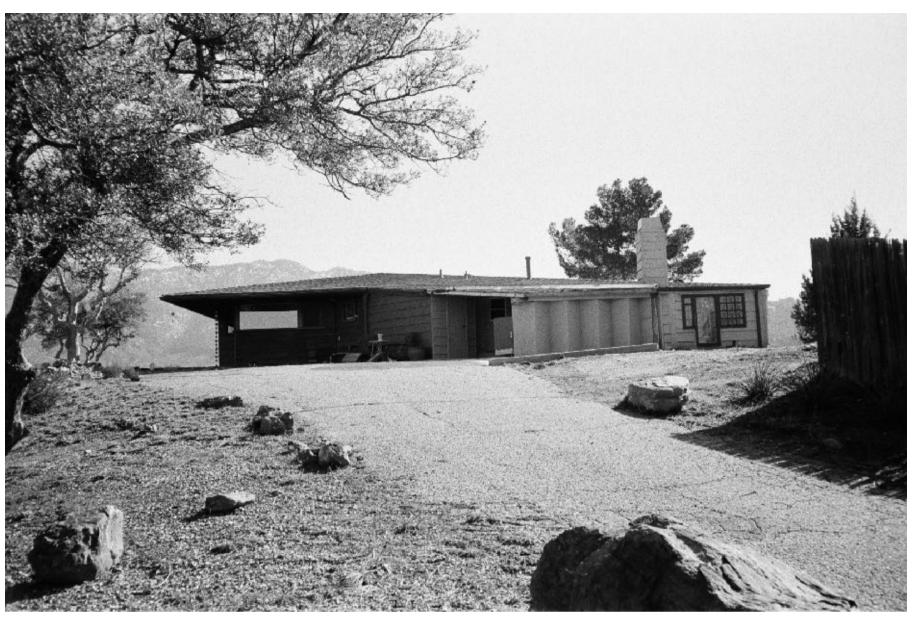


























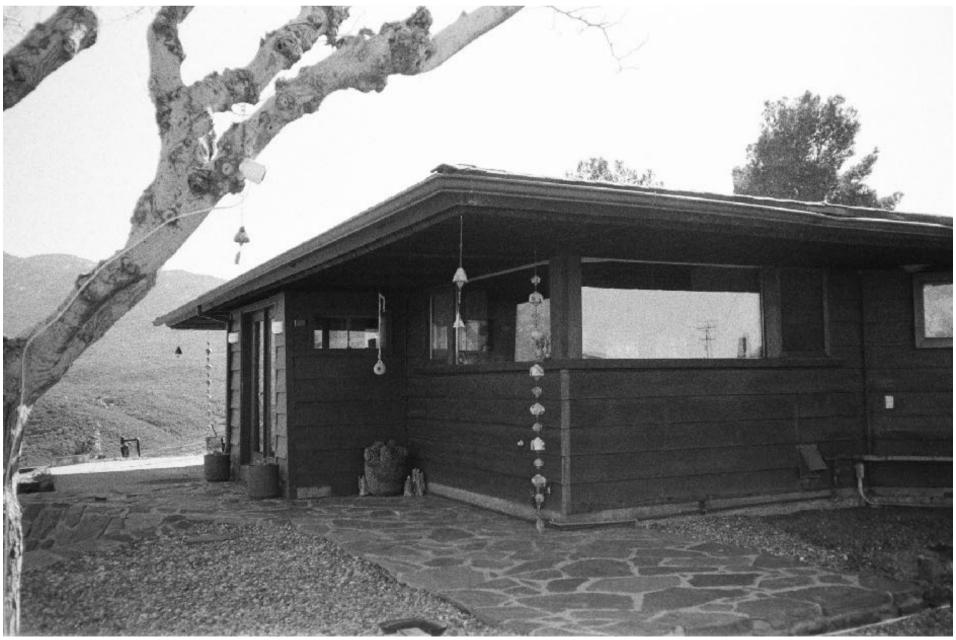














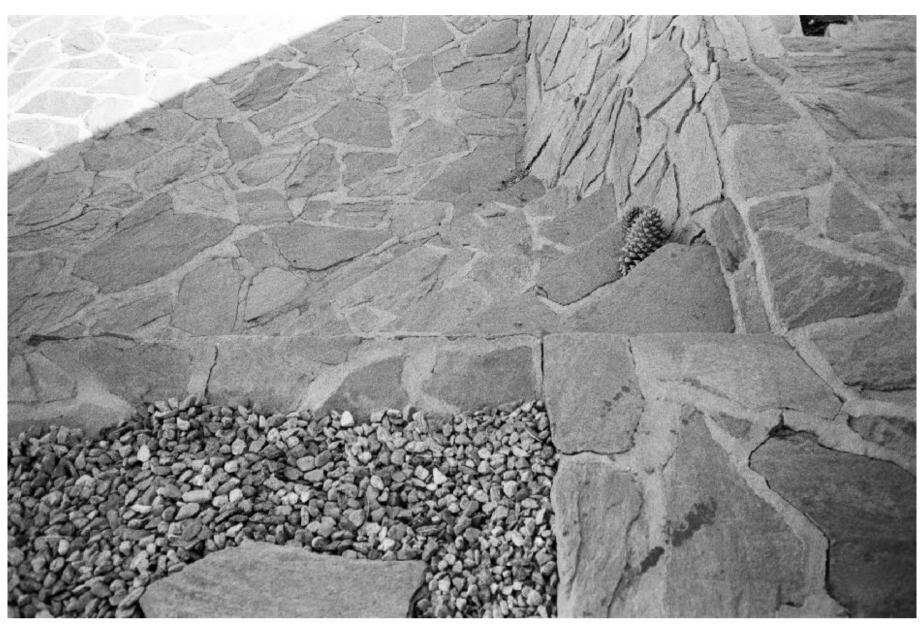


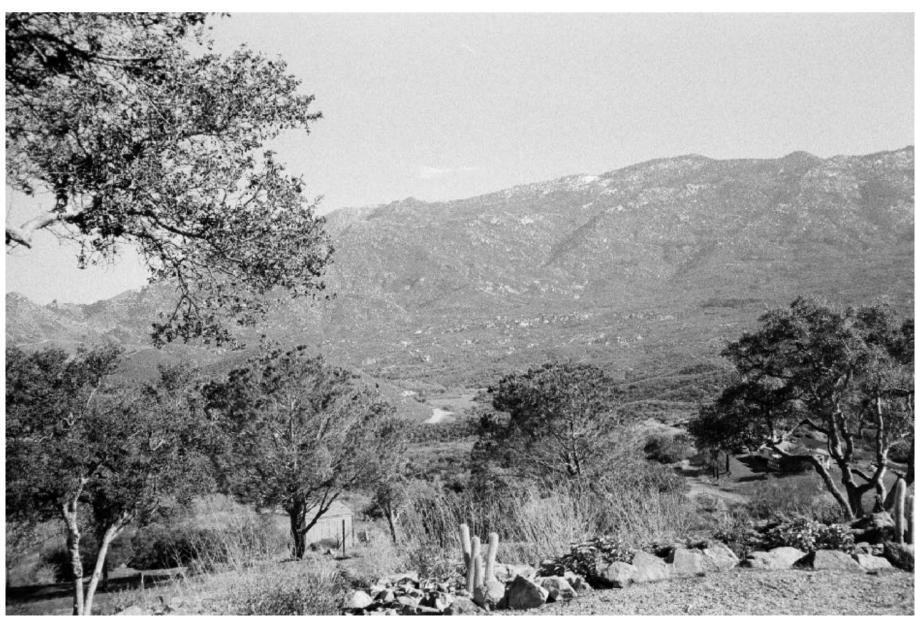






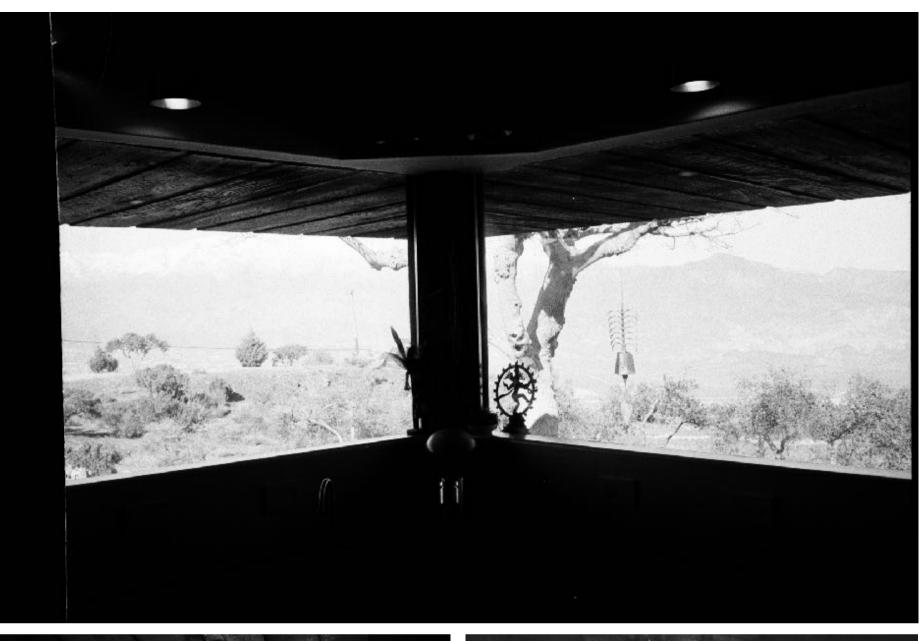
























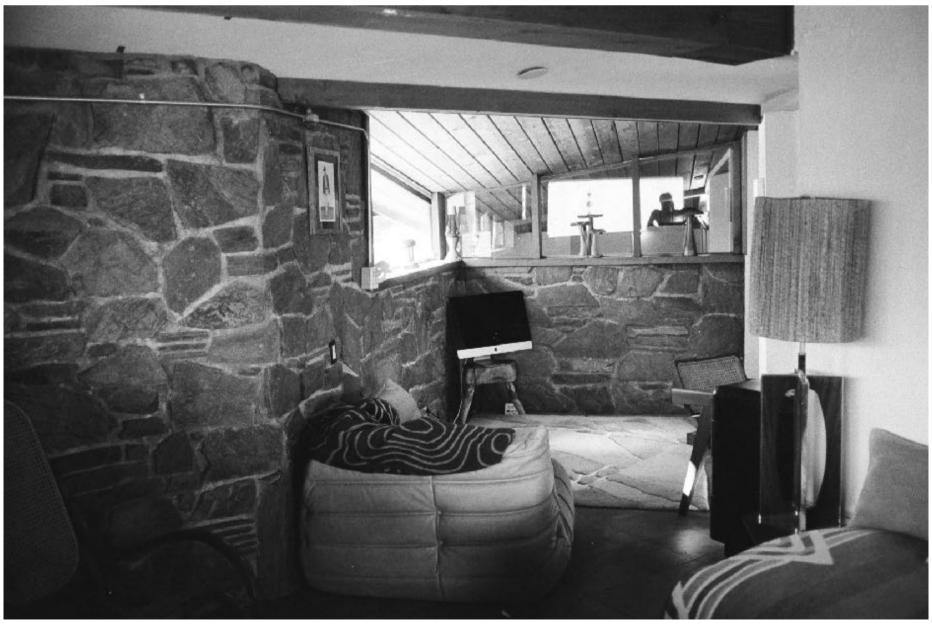
















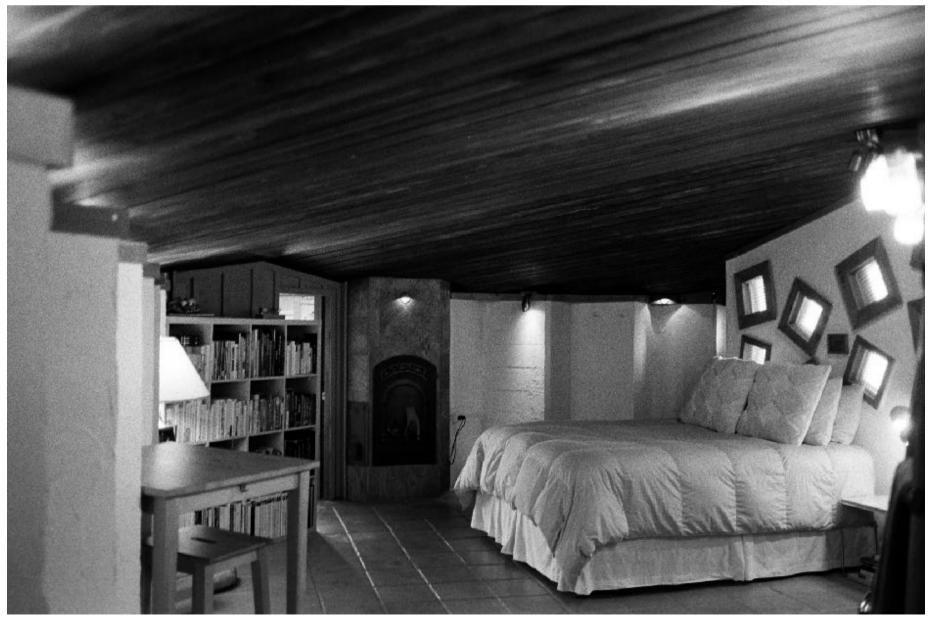














Other Documentation

Windsong Blueprints located in the Lautner Archive at The Getty Museum, Los Angeles

John Lautner Papers, 1929-2002.
Series 1. Project records.

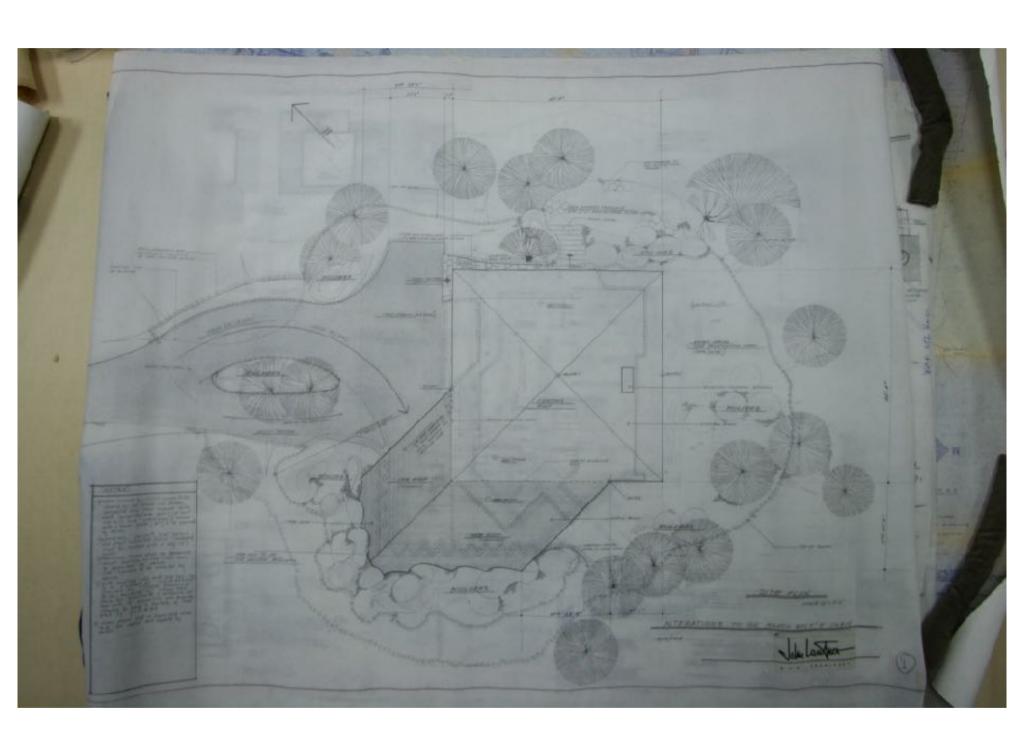
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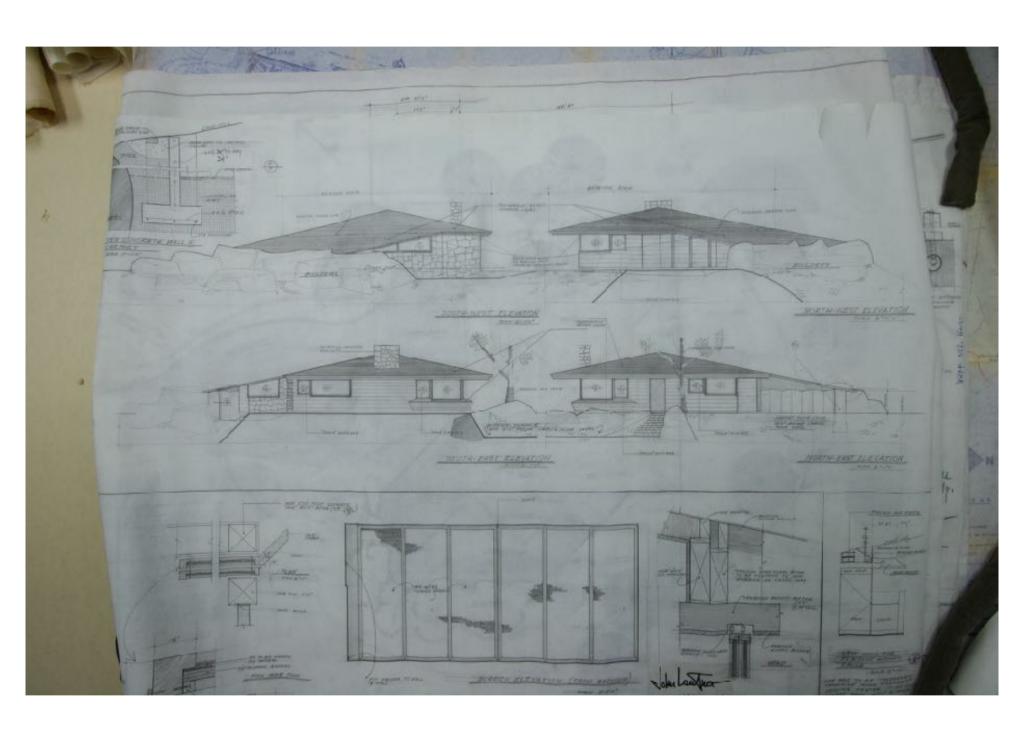
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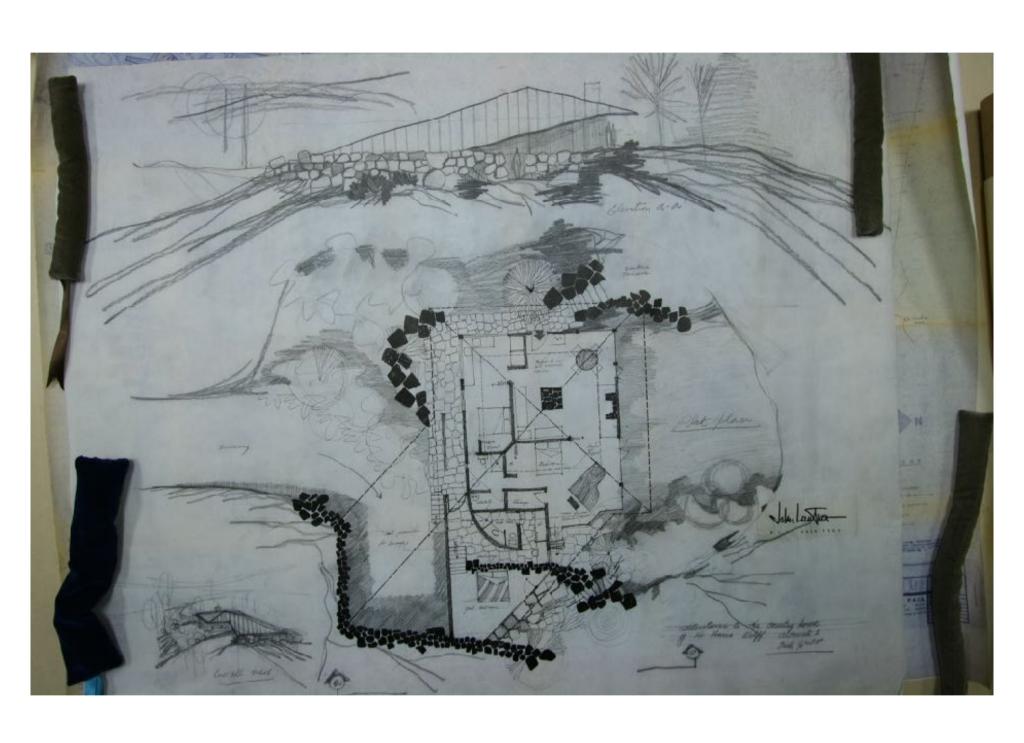
Wolff (Marco) Mountain Cabin (Idyllwild, 1975)

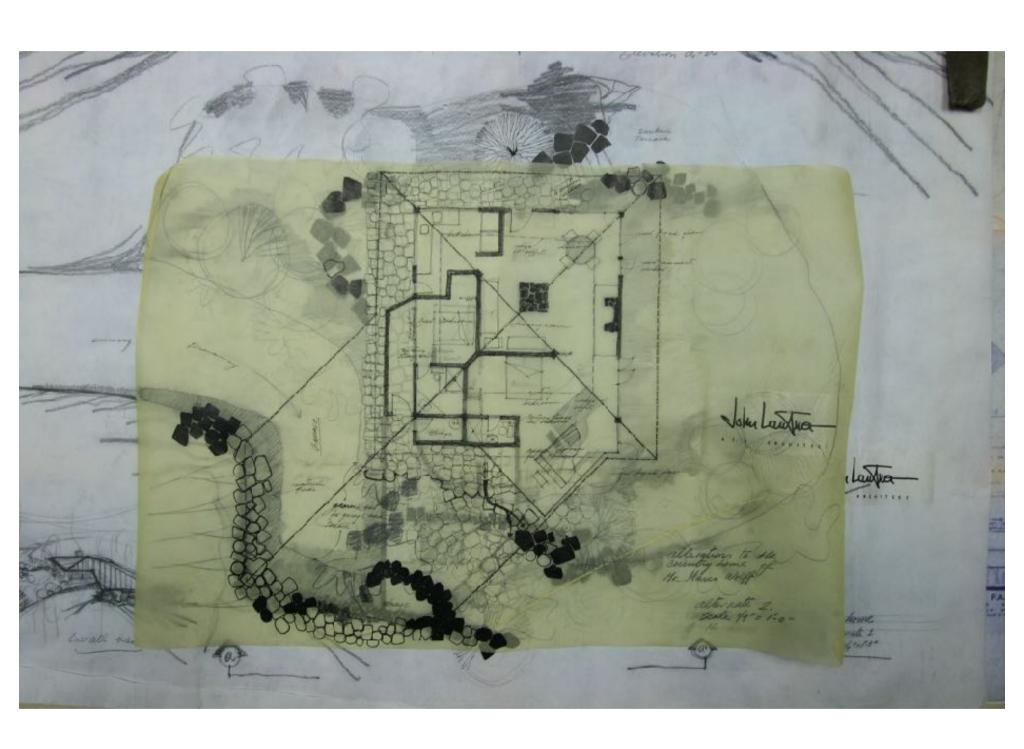
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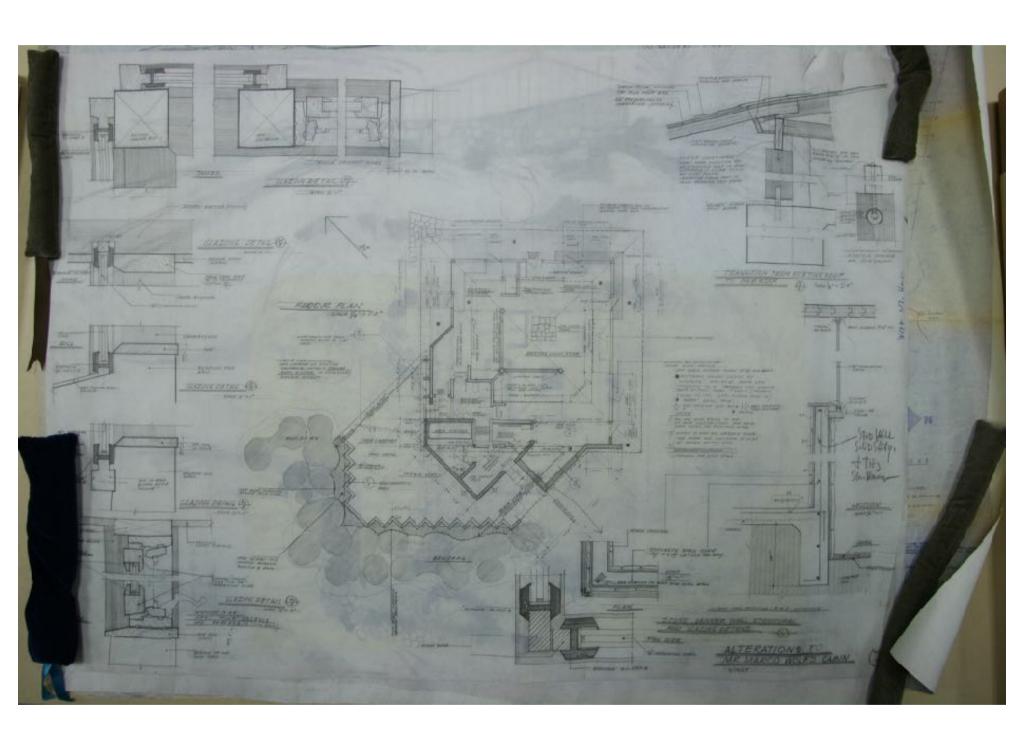
Original building permit, original owner's deed, second owner's deed, current deed.





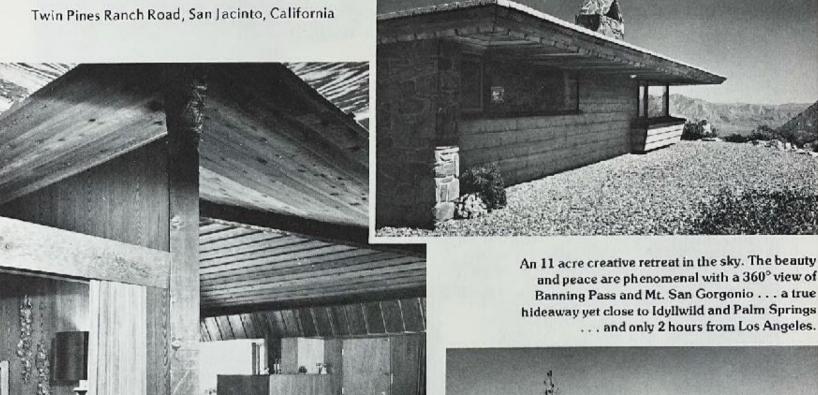






"Wind Song" by JOHN LAUTNER, F.A.I.A.

An Architectural Mountain Estate Property



The open floor plan has exposure to all views yet provides a sense of shelter and insulation from the elements.

Materials blend with the site, suggesting both security and great ecological appropriateness . . . a Lautner hallmark.



The home nestles into the dome of its hill so that from the main road no hint of a structure is visible. There is also a large buried underground cistern for emergency water storage, an auxiliary 1500 watt gas electrical generator and a large recessed room for coal, food layup and supplies.



7656 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles (213) 874-3311 Cathedral ceilings to center pole, openness and elbowroom augment the feeling of freedom and direct communion with nature on all sides. The acoustics are superb.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Bedrooms 2

Kitchen Tappan self-cleaning range, Amana radar range,

stainless steel sinks, frost free refrigerator

and freezer.

Roof Asbestos concrete tile
Floors Wall to wall carpeting
Heat Forced air and central

air conditioning

Garage Carports Sewer Cesspool

Lot Size 11 Acres (3 lots) Age Late 1960's

Taxes \$1,036

Directions From Banning, 7 miles on road to Idyllwild, left on

Twin Pines Ranch Road.

Key Location Crane Office

A magnificent architectural mountain retreat home of wood, stone, concrete and glass by JOHN LAUTNER, F.A.I.A. in a secluded and private estate setting near Idyllwild, California. The home features a vaulted living, dining and music room, a breathtaking 360° view of Mt. San Gorgonio and Banning Pass at the 4,000 foot level and a walk-in fireplace of Bouquet Canyon stone and stained glass. It also offers peace, tranquility and singular lifestyle and opportunity for spiritual renewal and creative concentration.

\$135,000

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RECORDING REQUESTED BY

Services of America NTASA

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Marco Wolff Jr.

8530 Hedges Place
Los Angeles 69, California

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Space Above this Line For Recorder's Use

Space Above this Line For Recorder's Use

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AFFIX LR.S. \$ 3.30 IN THIS SPACE

Grant Deed

THIS FORM FURNISHED BY TITLE INSURANCE AND TRUST COMPANY

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,

PHILIP J. BAHOOT and DOROTHY M. BAHOOT, busband and wife

hereby GRANT(S) to

MARCO WOLFF JR, a single man

the following described real property in the county of Riverside

, state of California:

Lot 12 Records of Survey, as per plat recorded in Book 31 of Maps, pages 72, 73 and 74 of Records of Survey, Riverside.county Records.

SUBJECT TO:

Any covenants, conditions, restrictions, reservations, rights, rights of way and easements of record.

Dated: January 29, 1764	i kilf Bahook
STATE OF CALIFORNIA	Whilly M Bahot
(OUNT) OF Riverside	/
On January 29, 1964 before me, the under-	
appeared Philip J. Bahoot	51
, known to me	
to be the person. whose name 18 subscribed to the with	
instrument and asknowledged that he executed the same &	-an 3
WITNESS ms hand and official stal.	· .
(Seal)	.
Signature Lund Disd.	
Muth L. Bird)	Title Order No. 376869
Name (Typed or Printed)	Title Order No. 276 Sec
Notary Public in and for said County and State	920 020
If executed by a Corporation the Corporation Form of	Factor No
Arthoritedementation white man July 12 1066	

213518	MR. MARTIN L. GREEN 48700 Twin Pine Ranch Road Banning, Ca. 92220	RECEIVED FOR RECORD OCT 10 1978 AT 9:00 OCLOCK A.M. MITGO TIME INSURANCE CO. Book 1978, Page 213518 Necodad in Official Encoder of Riverida Courty, California OLEVEYORS Konument Fund
Nome Street Address City & Stoke	Same as above	SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE
475100-7	The undersigned grantor(s) declare(s): Documentary transfer tax is \$ 143.00 xx) computed on full value of property conveye () computed on full value less value of liens a xx) Unincorporated area: () City of FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt MARCO WOLFF, JR., a single management of the following described real property in the unincountry of Riverside That portion of the north had read property in the read property of	of which is hereby acknowledged,
•	signed, a Notary Public in and for said State, person Marco Wolfe, Jr.	known to me to the within sted the same. My Commission Expires October 14, 1978

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS AS DIRECTED ABOVE

RECORDING REQUESTED BY:

CALIFORNIA TITLE COMPANY

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO AND MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO:

ANDREW T. VOTTERO 48700 TWIN PINES ROAD BANNING, CA 92220

DOC # 2021-0224229

04/09/2021 03:05 PM Fees: \$27.00

Page 1 of 2

Recorded in Official Records

County of Riverside

Peter Aldana

Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder

This document was electronically submitted to the County of Riverside for recording Receipted by: TERESA #134

THIS SPACE FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY:

TRA: 055-033

Title Order No.: 410-2160847-64 **GRANT DEED** Escrow No.: 060-008804-MB

THE UNDERSIGNED GRANTOR(S) DECLARE(S)

DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX is \$825.00

[X] computed on full value of property conveyed, or

computed on full value less value of liens or encumbrances remaining at time of sale.

[X] Unincorporated area [] City of

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged.

Gerald Bertram Cargman and Donna Loren-Cargman, Husband and Wife as Joint Tenants

hereby GRANT(s) to:

Andrew T. Vottero, a Single Man

the real property in the County of Riverside, State of California, described as:

That portion of the North half of Section 31, Township 3 South, Range 2 East, San Bernardino Base and Meridian, in the County of Riverside, State of California, according to the official plat thereof, shown as Parcel 12, of Records of Survey entitled a part of the North 112 of Section 31, Township 3 South, Range 2 East, San Bernardino Base and Meridian, as per map recorded in Book 31, Pages 72, 73 and 74 of Records of Survey, in the office of the County Recorder of said County.

Also Known as: 48700 Twin Pines Road, Unincorporated area of Banning, CA 92220

AP#: 529-060-004

DATED February 22, 2021

SIGNATURE ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF.

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS TO PARTY SHOWN BELOW; IF NO PARTY SHOWN, MAIL AS DIRECTED ABOVE:

SIGNATURE

Gerald Bertram Cargman
Donna Loren-Cargman
A notary public or other officer completing this certificate verifies only the identity of the individual who signed the document to which this certificate is attached, and not the truthfulness, accuracy, or validity of that document.
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
on MARCH 10th, 2021, Before me, Ashley Mae Callow, a Notary Public personally appeared Gerald Bertram Cargman and Donna Loren - Cargman
who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed

who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature

ASHLEY MAE CALLOW
Notary Public - California
Riverside County
Commission # 2215048
My Comm. Expires Sep 21, 2021

(This area for official notarial seal)