

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Max and Helen Rosenbaum House
OWNER: Glen Rosenbaum
APPLICANT: Same as Owner
LOCATION: 5219 South Braeswood Blvd – Meyerland

AGENDA ITEM: B
HPO FILE NO.: 16L314
DATE ACCEPTED: Dec-17-2015
HAHC HEARING: Jan-28-2016

SITE INFORMATION

Lot 10, Block 24, Meyerland Section 8 R/P I, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The site includes a historic, one-story, brick single-family residence built in 1964; a two-story rear addition completed in 2014 is clearly distinguished from the historic portion of the house.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Max and Helen Rosenbaum House at 5219 South Braeswood Boulevard was built in 1964 in the Meyerland subdivision of southwest Houston. Max and Helen Rosenbaum were European immigrants who fled the atrocities of the Nazis, and built a family-owned clothing business in Houston. Their Contemporary-style ranch house was designed by architect Arthur D. Steinberg, AIA, who designed several other distinguished modern houses in Meyerland.

Both Max and Helen Rosenbaum were highly interested in modern design and desired a home that would suit their tastes. Their white brick mid-century modern house incorporates Asian attributes expressed in the roof and garden designs. The overall plan reflects the influences of Frank Lloyd Wright, who conceptualized the modern ranch house stressing horizontal shapes and Eastern forms. The house was sympathetically renovated in 2014 by the architectural firm of Stern and Bucek.

Meyerland was established in 1955, and became a beacon for Houston's Jewish families. The Rosenbaums were among the many Jewish families that moved to Meyerland from the Riverside Terrace enclave southeast of downtown Houston. This mass influx to Meyerland, accompanied by the positive reputation of the neighborhood, encouraged the establishment of synagogues and Jewish community organizations, which are still evident today.

Brays Bayou, flanked by tree-lined boulevards on its north and south sides, provided a scenic refuge from the development of the city. The boulevards were ideal sites for architects to design commissioned homes, with the majority of the architect-designed homes, such as the Rosenbaum House, located south of Brays Bayou.

The Max and Helen Rosenbaum House at 5219 South Braeswood Boulevard is significant as the work of architect Arthur D. Steinberg, AIA, as well as for its modern design, as a reminder of the city's development, and for its association with the Rosenbaum family and the Jewish community in Meyerland. The Rosenbaum House meets Criteria 1, 3, 4, and 6 for Landmark designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE*Max and Helen Rosenbaum*

Max Rosenbaum (1910-1972) was born in eastern Germany and moved with his family to Berlin at a young age. In the German capital, he worked as a sales representative for a wholesale distributor of clothing items before emigrating to the United States in 1937 as the Nazis consolidated power. Rosenbaum moved to Houston and continued working as a sales representative for a wholesale clothing distributor until 1938 when he founded his own business, Wayside Department Store, a clothing store near the intersection of Wayside Drive and Harrisburg Boulevard in the East End. Rosenbaum's brother joined the business after World War II and opened a second store in Galena Park. Max Rosenbaum relocated his branch of the store to Federal Road in 1951.

The Rosenbaum family has had a presence in the Houston area since the 1850s, when Max Rosenbaum's great-uncle Joseph Dannenbaum (1837-1893) emigrated from Germany to Texas. One of Dannenbaum's sons, Judge Henry J. Dannenbaum (1871-1940), was a prominent lawyer and civic leader who served as president of the Houston School Board, as Judge of the 61st District Court of Harris County and, later, as one of the early national leaders of the U.S. Zionist movement.

Helen Rosenbaum (1924-2011) was a Holocaust survivor born in Katowice, Poland. She was captured by the German Army on the second day of the Blitzkrieg and forced to work as a seamstress in a labor camp. After managing to escape, she spent the rest of World War II hiding in the German countryside. She spent the final months of the war working on a farm within 50 miles of Berlin and heard the bombing raids that signaled the Allied approach. When the war ended, she and her brother Henry immigrated to New York City. In 1947, she met and married Max Rosenbaum and moved to Houston, where she helped in the store and maintained the family home. After her husband died in 1972, Helen took over the store and operated it successfully until she retired and closed the business in 1987.

In 1948, the Rosenbaums hired Alvin "AJ" Lenart (1912-2003), a self-taught carpenter and contractor, to build their house in Riverside Terrace, a predominantly Jewish enclave along Brays Bayou in southeast Houston. In the mid-1950s, the Rosenbaums again hired Lenart to remodel the house; architect Arthur D. Steinberg was brought in to plan the project. The Rosenbaums were impressed with Steinberg's work, so they commissioned him to design their new home in Meyerland in 1963 and hired Lenart to construct the house. Both Max and Helen Rosenbaum were highly interested in modern design and desired a home that would suit their tastes.

Arthur D. Steinberg, AIA

Arthur D. Steinberg, AIA (1930-2002) was a graduate of Tulane University in New Orleans. In 1957, he established Arthur D. Steinberg and Associates, AIA, in Houston. In addition to the Rosenbaum House, Steinberg designed other distinguished Contemporary-style homes in Meyerland, including:

- Finger House, 4919 Heatherglenn Drive (1959),
- Schnur House, 5135 Glenmeadow Drive (1962)
- Proler House, 5106 Contour Place (1965)
- Steinberg House, 5107 Contour Place (1965)
- Dow House, 5202 Contour Place (1965)

Steinberg also designed the unusual Bellfort Square Office Building, 6711 Bellfort Street, which according to Stephen Fox is faced with green aggregate panels and gold anodized aluminum mullions below a unique curved penthouse. The firm evolved into Steinberg Design Collaborative, LLP, specializing in multi-family housing. By the time of Arthur Steinberg's death, his firm had completed more than 3,000 projects with over 700,000 units across the country.

Meyerland

The Meyer family came to Houston soon after the Civil War and during the 1890s Joseph F. Meyer gradually acquired 6,000 acres of land southwest of town. In the 1950s, Joseph's son George decided to develop a subdivision of single-family homes on 1,200 acres of the family's rice fields. In 1955, Vice President Richard Nixon cut the ribbon opening the development as well as the Parade of Homes in the 5100 block of Jackwood Street.

Meyerland's development began as suburban planned communities were appearing throughout the country. Each section of the subdivision was assigned a number and given a set of deed restrictions. Brays Bayou provided a picturesque location, and the scenic value of the wide streets flanking the tree-lined waterway offered ideal sites for architects to design commissioned homes along North and South Braeswood boulevards, with the majority of the architect-designed homes located south of Brays Bayou.

In its early years, Meyerland became a beacon for Jewish families. When the subdivision was developed, many of the most desirable neighborhoods in central Houston still had restrictions excluding Jewish residents. These restrictions provided an additional enticement for the relocation to the suburbs. Max and Helen Rosenbaum were among the many families that moved to Meyerland from the Riverside Terrace enclave southeast of downtown Houston. This mass influx to Meyerland, accompanied by the positive reputation of the neighborhood, encouraged the establishment of synagogues and Jewish community organizations, which are still evident today.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

The Rosenbaum House is a single-family, Contemporary-style ranch house completed in 1964 in the Meyerland subdivision of southwestern Houston. It is located at 5219 South Braeswood Boulevard, a four-lane street divided by a wide, tree-lined median. Braeswood Boulevard runs alongside Brays Bayou, which supports flora and fauna, providing a scenic refuge from the development of the city. North Braeswood Boulevard is on the opposite side of the bayou and is almost identical in scope to its southern counterpart. The 5200 blocks of both North and South Braeswood boulevards are comprised entirely of single-family residential structures, many of which date from the middle of the 20th century. As a result, the Rosenbaum House remains within its original context.

The mid-century modern house incorporates Asian attributes expressed in the roof and garden designs. The overall plan reflects the influences of Frank Lloyd Wright, who conceptualized the modern ranch house stressing horizontal shapes and Eastern forms.

The off-center main entrance on the north (main) facade of the home faces South Braeswood Boulevard. The original portions of the house are built of white bricks, short and wide in shape. There is a semi-circular driveway in front of the house that is bisected by a flat-roofed porte-cochere, which is held up by two large rectangular columns of the same brick. The porte-cochere divides the front façade

asymmetrically into three main bays, with the entry underneath the porte-cochere in the middle bay. An eyebrow dormer with a vertically bisected window is aligned directly above the porte-cochere and entry.

The entryway contains double wooden doors and is deeply inset within symmetrical paneled walls, each with a full-height window. Two short steps of white terrazzo lead to the entry platform, which is flanked by decorative stone beds next to the walls on either side of the doors. The double entry doors were replaced in a 2014 remodeling, but were finished to replicate the original design. Narrow full-height windows are on each side of the doorway.

The eastern bay of the front façade is the larger of the two bays flanking the entrance. It includes four full-height windows of differing widths and asymmetrical spacing. A masonry screen of geometric design projects toward the street at a slight angle from the corner of the house.

The western bay of the front façade features a full-height window as well as an identical masonry screen. Although the screens are not depicted in the original architectural drawings, they are original to the house.

Alterations

Renovations to the home were completed in 2014 by the architectural firm of Stern and Bucek. The roof was altered during the project, but the asphalt built-up roof with white marble ballast replicates the original. The roof includes two gables on the east side and one on the west. Each gable has an extended decorative false beam that matches the fasciae. The two gables are flush on the southern slope of the roof, while the northern slope of the outer gable creates a secondary roofline over the easternmost portion of the structure. The southern slope of the main roofline covers the back of the home and features a cut-out.

The remodeling also included a two-story addition perpendicular to the historic house. The addition is clearly distinguished, yet compatible with the original design and aesthetic. The addition is also visible from the front of the house, rising one story above the original height of the building and behind the main roofline on the western bay of the main façade. The wood-sided addition is clearly distinguished from the brick cladding of the original house. There are no windows on the north façade of the addition and its roofline mimics that of the eyebrow dormer above the porte-cochere. An exterior brick chimney rises on the western side of the addition.

The home remains in the Rosenbaum family. Since completion of the renovations, the Rosenbaum House was recognized with Preservation Houston's Good Brick Award and the Houston Mod Preservation Award, was on the Rice Design Alliance 2014 Spring Architecture Tour, was featured in the January 29, 2015 New York Times, has been the subject of programs for Preservation Houston and the Houston Seminar, and in April 2016 will be the subject of a program for the Museum of Fine Arts Houston Design Council.

The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by the Historic Preservation Department, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

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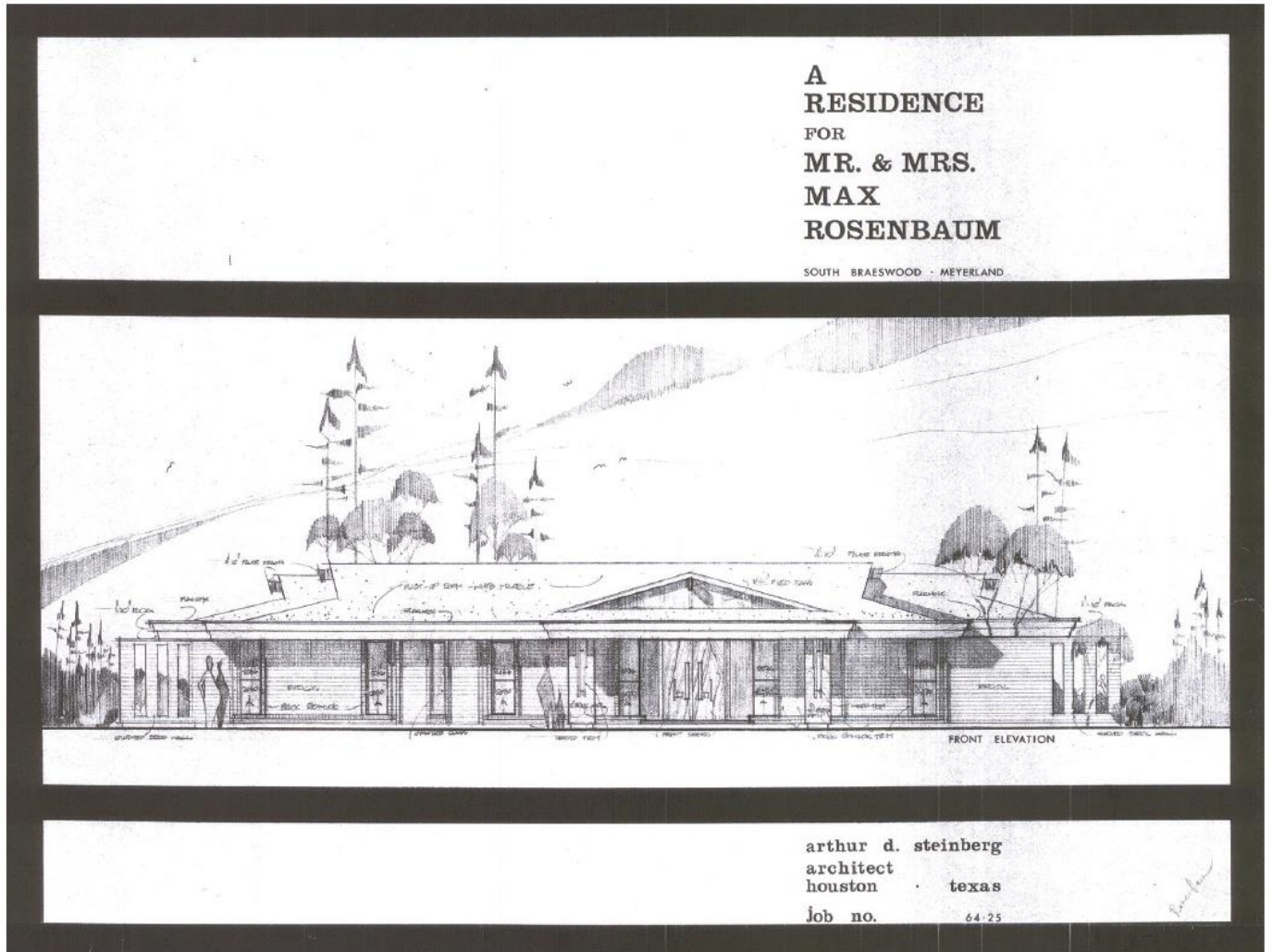
**EXHIBIT A
CURRENT PHOTO**

**MAX AND HELEN ROSENBAUM HOUSE
5219 SOUTH BRAESWOOD BOULEVARD**



Max & Helen Rosenbaum House. Arthur D. Steinberg, architect (1963-1964).
5219 South Braeswood Boulevard, Houston, Harris County, Texas 77096.
North façade looking southwest. Photo by Hester + Hardaway (2014).

EXHIBIT B
ARCHITECT'S RENDERING 1964
MAX AND HELEN ROSENBAUM HOUSE
5219 SOUTH BRAESWOOD BOULEVARD



Max & Helen Rosenbaum House.
Architect's rendering (1964). Courtesy of Glen Rosenbaum.

EXHIBIT C SITE MAP

MAX AND HELEN ROSENBAUM HOUSE
5219 SOUTH BRAESWOOD BOULEVARD

