

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 3206 Melemele Place

City or town: Honolulu State: Hawaii County: Honolulu

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national x statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A x B x C D

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

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District

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Site

Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern

Mid-Century Style

Hawaii Regional

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

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

Foundation: Concrete Slab & Post Footings

Walls: Hollow Cement Block (Hollostone) and Post & Beam construction with vertical  
Tongue and Groove Redwood, Single-Wall Construction

Roof: Flat, Built up composition

Other: Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood (wood panels & siding)

### Narrative Description

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

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### Summary Paragraph

The Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence is a 1952 single-story, L-shaped mid-century modern home designed and constructed by master architect Alfred Preis, to create a modern style home that fit with the terrain and showcased spectacular vistas of Manoa Valley and its backing crown of mountains. The home is located at the base of Melemele Place, an architecturally significant street in the Woodlawn neighborhood. The 1,370 square foot post-and-beam residence sits on a gently sloping 16,555 square foot lot, featuring two bedrooms, 1½ bathrooms, a kitchen, covered open-air lanai, and a living room with floor-to-ceiling windows that exemplify Preis' philosophy of seamless indoor-outdoor integration. The property retains exceptional integrity with all original character-defining features intact, including the distinctive butterfly roof, striated "scratch wood" paneling, built-in furnishings, and passive climate control systems. The residence is surrounded by mature tropical landscaping enhanced by Richard C. Tongg's 1956 design, and sits among other noteworthy Preis-designed homes on this architecturally significant street, including three National Register-listed properties: the Bushnell, King, and Preis residences.

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## SETTING

The Stevenson Residence occupies a trapezoidal lot at 3206 Melemele Place, oriented with its primary façade facing southwest toward the street. The property slopes gently from street level down approximately 15 feet to a small stream that defines the southern boundary. The lot measures approximately 120 feet along the street frontage and extends roughly 140 feet deep, with the northern property line angling to create the distinctive shape.

The house is strategically positioned on the upper portion of the lot to maximize spectacular views of Manoa Valley and the Ko'olau mountain range while maintaining privacy through mature vegetation. A curving asphalt driveway enters from Melemele Place along the southern edge of the property, partially covering the stream that cuts through the southwest corner. The residence sits among a cohesive collection of mid-century modern homes that Preis designed and developed, each carefully sited to complement the natural topography and preserve view corridors for neighboring properties.

## EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

**Approach and Street Façade:** Approaching from Melemele Place, visitors encounter a carefully composed sequence of landscape and architecture. The long, gently curving driveway, bordered by lush tropical plantings originally specified in Tongg's 1956 landscape plan leads to the southwest façade. From the street, the horizontal profile of the single-story residence is immediately apparent, with the distinctive tiered butterfly roof creating dramatic shadow lines beneath deep, uniformly projecting eaves that provide both architectural interest and practical protection from sun and rain. The eaves extend around nearly the entire residence, unifying the L-shaped plan.

**Richard C. Tongg Landscape Design (1956):** The landscape represents a significant cultural layer, designed by Richard C. Tongg – Hawaii's first Chinese American landscape architect and recognized "grandfather of landscape architecture" in the islands. Commissioned by the second owners, Mr. Gilbert Tam Choy Wong and Mrs. Arlene Wong, Tongg created a "Tropicalia" garden that seamlessly integrates with Preis' architecture. The design emphasizes lush plantings that mimic native rainforests while incorporating exotic species, creating natural privacy screens and framing views.

The garden features decorative rows of fragrant gardenia, mature banana groves, taro patches, ornamental bird of paradise, calamansi, ka'au orange, avocado. Many original plantings from Tongg's plan survive, supplemented by additions from the Kaya family, Japanese farmers who owned and lovingly maintained the property for over 60 years. The Kayas added numerous gardenia bushes and two rare persimmon trees. The landscape gently terraces down to the stream edge, where dense vegetation creates a natural boundary with the forest preservation land beyond.

**Garage and Entry Sequence:** The lower level features a two-car garage constructed of concrete masonry units (CMU or "hollowstone") that serve as both structural (retaining walls with post-and-beam construction) and decorative. The current owners have hand-painted these blocks in a

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diamond rustication pattern that adds textural interest while remaining true to the period aesthetic and grounding the building to its site.

Above the garage, a wooden lanai serves as the primary entry, accessed via a concrete stair along the eastern edge of the retained garage structure. This upper lanai features horizontal shiplap redwood siding with Preis' characteristic slanted rail design. The lanai roof displays exposed painted rafters with a slanted redwood fascia, creating an airy pavilion-like feeling that exemplifies tropical modern living. Coral painted accents provide color continuity with the exterior eaves while the open floor space invites functional outdoor interaction. The exterior walls display vertical tongue-and-groove redwood siding in its natural finish, exemplifying the single-wall construction technique perfectly suited to Hawaii's climate. Original color accents—coral pink on the eaves, lime green trim elements, and sunflower yellow details—remain faithfully preserved, demonstrating Preis' Austrian-influenced use of bold color to enliven modernist forms.

The Stevenson Residence employs a semi-skewed gable butterfly roof: a signature of Preis reflected in his celebrated commercial architecture projects that include the Arizona Memorial and the Honolulu Zoo gates. Preis frequently employed this style, which features two slanted surfaces sloping down toward the middle (resembling a butterfly's wings), in his residential designs. The clean, subtle slant lines of the roof and planar intersections create a seamless transition between distant ocean horizon, surrounding forest, and sky: maximizing views and organic filtration of light. The enclosed lanai further elevates with planar intersections and orthogonal gymnastics of structure, form and space to blend inside as outside, outside as inside.

**Back Yard:** The north (rear) elevation facing main living room showcases Preis' mastery of transparency and view capture. is distinguished by expansive floor-to-ceiling windows arranged in Preis' characteristic grid pattern. The fenestration includes both large, fixed panes and smaller awning windows positioned above for ventilation. This dramatic projecting glass box captures panoramic forest views and demonstrates Preis' sophisticated understanding of view corridors and his ability to create architectural drama through simple geometric forms.

The L-shaped plan creates a sheltered outdoor space where the two wings meet, with an open air lanai extending from the main living area. This encourages uninterrupted sightlines from the outside in and the inside out. The threshold between shelter and nature blend to the distant framing mountains and the surrounding native forest enshrouding the large, level, lush

backyard. There is a steep hill that leads down to a stream off the North and West facing perimeters of the property the slopes steeply into forestry preservation land

## INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

**Entry and Circulation** The entry sequence from the lanai leads into a compact foyer that immediately reveals Preis' sophisticated spatial planning. Despite the modest 1,370 square foot floor area, the L-shaped plan creates distinct public and private zones while maintaining visual connections throughout. The circulation pattern offers multiple routes through the house,

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creating what Preis termed an "architectural promenade" with unexpected spatial revelations at each turn.

**Living Room** The living room serves as the home's dramatic centerpiece, featuring exposed ceiling beams wrapped in distinctive "combed" or striated wood paneling – a signature Preis detail – that creates rich textural surfaces playing with light and shadow. This scratch wood treatment extends across portions of the ceiling and the east wall, with the aesthetic striations lending both a beautiful textural quality while cleverly concealing panel joints, and also providing acoustic benefits. All interior finishes remain extant and in excellent condition.

The space features built-in shelving units that exemplify Preis' integrated approach to storage and display. These units incorporate both open book display shelving as well as closed storage with tilted drawer faces that eliminate the need for hardware – another signature detail that creates dynamic shadow patterns while maintaining clean lines. A distinctive curved element adds sculptural interest to the millwork.

Original color elements include coral/salmon accent walls, yellow-painted structural beams, and natural wood tones throughout. One prominent yellow beam runs the length of the living space, serving as both a visual anchor and unifying element that ties together the various zones.

**Kitchen** The kitchen retains its original configuration and period character, with extant appliances (original oven still in use) and extant cabinetry featuring simple, clean lines typical of mid-century design. Original hardware and fixtures remain in place. A horizontal band of windows above the counter provides task lighting while maintaining visual connection to the landscape. The kitchen connects to the living areas through custom closed cabinetry and an extant sliding opaque glass pass through, that defines the dining zone, demonstrating Preis' use of built-in storage solutions that maximize space efficiency while delineating spaces without closed off walls.

**Bedrooms** The bedroom wing, accessed through a hallway from the living areas, maintains the home's connection to nature. The master bedroom features continuous sliding glass doors with integral screen panels along the northwest wall, providing cross-ventilation and garden views. Vertical wood paneling painted in neutral tones creates a calming atmosphere. Built-in storage and the distinctive striated wood headboard treatment remain intact. The second bedroom similarly retains all original finishes and fixtures, with awning windows providing ventilation and natural light.

**Bathrooms** Both bathrooms retain their original configurations and period fixtures. The main bathroom features original tile work, period-appropriate fixtures, and built-in storage distinguished by Preis' hallmark ventilation pukas (holes) that provide natural ventilation in the built-in laundry hamper. The half-bath off the hallway similarly preserves its mid-century character with original finishes intact.

**Climate Control Systems** Throughout the interior, Preis' innovative passive climate control systems remain fully functional. The venturi-effect ventilation, created through strategic placement of small windward windows and larger leeward openings, provides natural cooling

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without mechanical systems. Deep eaves prevent direct sun penetration while allowing filtered light to illuminate interiors. The single-wall construction facilitates air circulation, with the elevated floor system allowing cooling air to flow beneath the structure.

**Architectural highlights:** Also include seamless floor-to-ceiling sliding glass and screen doors in both the master bedroom and the centerpiece living room. All window frames, locks, and hardware remain original, including distinctive "Made in Occupied Japan" window lock fasteners. Other significant features are Preis' bold contrasting color palette to enliven tight spaces (a practice influenced by Austrian modernists but adapted to Hawaiian aesthetics); sculptural lines that blend with the topography, seamlessly integrating the natural richness of material, light and shadow; a ceiling that serves a functional, compositional, and atmospheric purpose; the wall of windows framed in wood; custom-built in bookshelves and drawer pulls which add aesthetic uniqueness while elevating functionality; the understated redwood planks are hallmarks of the expressive structures of Alfred Preis that contribute to a distinct palette of understated beauty. Authenticity in simplicity.

There's an immense visual warmth to the space, which is naturally ventilated and is optimized for daylighting. Inspired by Viennese modernists like Adolf Loos, Preis created homes with interlocking spatial volumes, variations in ceiling heights, and unexpected architectural reveals. These elements added richness and sensory interaction to relatively tight spaces

## INTEGRITY ASSESMENT

The Stevenson Residence retains exceptional integrity in all seven aspects:

*Location:* The house remains in its original location, carefully sited to maximize views while respecting natural topography.

*Design:* All character-defining features of Preis' original design remain intact, from the overall form and spatial organization to the smallest details of built-in furnishings and hardware.

*Setting:* The property retains its residential character within the Melemele Place enclave, with mature landscaping that includes both Tongg's 1956 design elements and sympathetic later additions.

*Materials:* Original materials throughout remain extant and in excellent condition, including the distinctive scratch wood accents, the "made in occupied Japan" window lock fasteners, hollostone construction, tongue-in-groove siding.

*Workmanship:* Preis' meticulous detailing and innovative construction techniques remain clearly evident in every aspect of the building, from the precise joinery of the scratch wood panels to the carefully calculated window proportions.

*Feeling:* The residence continues to evoke the optimistic spirit of 1950s tropical modernism. with its emphasis on indoor-outdoor living, connection to nature, and faith in modern materials and methods.

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*Association:* The property's direct connection to Alfred Preis, Richard C. Tongg, and the broader Melemele Place enclave remains clear and well-documented through original drawings, plans, and continuous ownership records.

Of all the houses Preis designed, the Stevenson house may well be the most pristine, remaining in untouched and unrenovated original condition. It bears emphasizing how little has been changed over the past 75 years since original construction, with the current condition of the house in near perfect “frozen in time” preservation reflective of the enduring value of Pries timeless designs and a testament to his dedication for high quality craftsmanship.

As such, it uniquely retains its historic integrity, particularly fitting in the significant context of Melemele neighborhood – that was single-handedly shaped by the penmanship of one architect. Preis developed and designed all of the initial residences on it, including his own, in which he lived the rest of his life until passing, and in which his daughter and grandson’s family still reside. While later development eventually occurred, at least 10 original Preis designed and built residences (out of approximately 20 residences in the dead-end cul-de-sac neighborhood), still stand, in conditions that largely reflect Preis’ signature design and style.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
-

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- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions.)

- Architecture

**Period of Significance**

- 1952-1956

**Significant Dates**

- 1952 (Completion Date home was built)
- 1956 (Tongg landscape design)

**Significant Person** (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

- Preis, Alfred (architect)
- Tongg, Richard C. (landscape architect)
- Matsui, S. (contractor)

**Cultural Affiliation**

- N/A

**Architect/Builder**

- Preis, Alfred (architect)
- Tongg, Richard C. (landscape architect)
- Matsui, S. (contractor)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Stevenson Residence meets the National Register Criterion C because it represents the exceptionally well-preserved work of master architect Alfred Preis and showcases both his signature style and exemplary characteristics of mid-century modern residential architecture,

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which Preis was instrumental in establishing in Hawaii during the 1950s. The residence's horizontal massing, butterfly roof with geometric overhanging eaves (e.g., photographs #0, 25, 27), minimal ornamentation, seamless integration of interior and exterior spaces (e.g., #7, 26), and expansive use of glass exemplify (e.g., #7, 25) the finest qualities of tropical modernism. The residence stands as a significant example within the Melemele Place enclave, demonstrating Preis' evolution toward a uniquely Hawaiian interpretation of modernist principles that balanced European Bauhaus influences with practical adaptations to tropical climate and indoor-outdoor living.

The property also meets National Register Criterion B for its association with Alfred Preis, a master architect whose influence on Hawaiian architecture extends far beyond individual buildings. As the designer of the Arizona Memorial, Hawaii's first State Planning Coordinator, and founder of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, Preis shaped both the physical and cultural landscape of modern Hawaii. His development of Melemele Place, where he lived until his death and where his family still resides, represents his personal vision for community design. The Stevenson Residence, as one of the best-preserved examples within this enclave, provides direct insight into Preis' residential design philosophy and his commitment to creating livable, climate-responsive modern homes that respected Hawaiian culture and environment.

The harmonious integration of simple natural materials (wood, glass, concrete block; e.g., #32, , the distinctive use of striated comb or "scratch wood" paneling (e.g., #7, 8, 11, 23), mitered windows (e.g., #7), and meticulous attention to detail found in the Stevenson Residence represent mature examples of Preis' residential work. The innovative passive climate control systems, including the venturi-effect ventilation (e.g., #25, 29) and strategic solar orientation (e.g., #2, 3, 7, 25), demonstrate Preis' sophisticated understanding of sustainable design principles decades before they became mainstream.

The period of significance extends from 1952, when the house was constructed, through 1956, when Richard C. Tongg's landscape design was implemented, creating a complete work of environmental design that represents the collaborative spirit of Hawaii's mid-century modern movement.

## **Narrative Statement of Significance**

### **ALFRED PREIS: ARCHITECT OF PARADISE**

The giants of mid-century modernism read like an architectural hall of fame: Frank Lloyd Wright, Charles Eames, Le Corbusier, Vladimir Ossipoff. These pioneers forged a new design language built on clean lines, honest materials, flowing spaces, and harmony with nature. Among them stood Alfred Preis—not merely an adherent to their philosophy, but an innovator who wove modernist principles into Hawaii's tropical landscape with his own panache and distinct interpretative style. Born in Vienna in 1911 and trained in the European modernist tradition, Preis brought to Hawaii a sophisticated understanding of Bauhaus principles that he would gradually transform through deep engagement with tropical climate, local materials, and Hawaiian lifestyle.

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"Preis was, in my opinion, one of the most instrumental and important figures in building the Hawaii we know today," claims author Jack Gillmar. "He was the first European architect in Hawaii. He designed here in a way no one else had, channeling two streams: European and American; Bauhaus and Frank Lloyd Wright." <sup>1</sup>

Unlike the stark, machine-aesthetic modernism of his European training, Preis developed what might be termed "warm modernism"—an approach that maintained clean lines and functional efficiency while embracing natural materials, bold colors, and seamless indoor-outdoor relationships. This philosophy is perfectly embodied in the Stevenson Residence, where the rigid geometry of the plan is softened by the extensive use of wood, the integration with landscape, and the careful attention to human scale and comfort.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**

Born into Vienna's working class on February 2, 1911, Alfred Preis weathered early hardship—tuberculosis at four, his father's wartime absence, and the devastation of World War I. At twelve, his family relocated to a 400-year-old Freihaus in Vienna's center, across from the Technical University where young "Fred" would eventually pursue architecture. In a 1990 oral history for the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, an organization he founded, Preis reflected: "I paid no attention to it, but there it was. Fantastic baroque palaces and gothic cathedrals... There I grew up." <sup>2</sup>

Love catalyzed his career choice. Meeting Jana beside Salzburg's public pool at nineteen changed everything—she became his muse and wife of nearly six decades. "In Austria at that time, there was no way to marry into a middle-class family without having a job," Preis recalled. "I actually wanted to become an actor... but I [had] no talent... so I finally decided to become an architect." <sup>2</sup>

He secured work as a junior draftsman with Honolulu's modest firm Dahl and Conrad. Fresh from Vienna Technical University, the couple exhausted their savings and navigated bureaucratic mazes—five passports later, they escaped Nazi Austria for America and ultimately Hawaii. Preis' European aesthetic and furniture design expertise quickly captivated Oahu's elite circles. His success accelerated rapidly—he'd established himself as a respected architect, passed his AIA certification exams, and just received both a raise and partnership offer when the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. That single day, December 7, 1941, shattered everything he had built. Despite his professional achievements, authorities rounded up the couple and detained them at Sand Island Internment Camp due to their suspect German background. His AIA certificate arrived in the mail while he remained behind barbed wire as a prisoner.

## **PREIS' ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY IN HAWAII**

"I do believe deeply," stated Preis towards the end of his life, "that the arts reside in the truly human area where each individual is going to do something... better and better and better, until he or she gets it right. This is the essence of a successful life." <sup>2</sup>

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By his own measure, Preis' legacy encompasses both remarkable resilience and extraordinary achievement. His private practice flourished for two decades, producing landmarks that define Hawaii: the Honolulu Zoo entrance, Laupahoehoe School on Hawaii Island (Hawaii Register), Beretania's United Methodist Church, and his crowning achievement—Pearl Harbor's Arizona Memorial. His Dahl and Conrad portfolio included multiple apartments in Waikiki and the distinguished Emerald Building (Hawaii Register) at Union Mall's head.

Post-internment, he volunteered for the Territorial Department of Public Works, collaborating with Vladimir Ossipoff, Johnson & Perkins, and Phil Fisk under the name Associated Architects, shaping Hawaii's postwar landscape including the Administration Building at the University of Hawaii (now Bachman Hall) and Palolo Veterans Housing Project.

Beyond architecture, Preis served as Hawaii's first State Planning Coordinator from 1963 to 1986, spearheading "all the major environmental issues of the 60s and 70s," as Jack Gillmar describes. He founded the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, which he directed for fifteen years, establishing the Arts in Education program and America's first Arts in State Buildings law—dedicating one percent of state construction costs to public art.

"With the Arizona Memorial he was forging his own path," asserts Jack Gillmar. "It was unlike anything he'd done or anything anyone had seen. It's a sculpture." <sup>1</sup>

"He lived out his life story through the Arizona," asserts Preis' grandson Laka. "The sunken architecture in the center symbolizes initial defeat, but the raised ends represent ultimate triumph, for both America and for my grandfather as well". <sup>4</sup>

Yet among all achievements—Arizona Memorial included—Preis claimed that it was his residential work designing the neighborhood of Melemele Place, including the Stevenson Residence as: "my major joy and experience." <sup>2</sup>

## THE MELEMELE PLACE CONTEXT

After internment, when he couldn't get a job as a former interned foreigner, Preis opened his own successful architecture firm in 1943. One client, James Sinclair Turner, heir to Turner Construction, offered to pay for Preis' lot in exchange for a design fee. When Sinclair backed out, he sold the land back to Preis for pennies.

Recalling his first glimpse of future Melemele Place in a 1991 oral history, Preis painted the scene: "We were standing there looking up at the crest of the mountains. The moon was full, the clouds were whiffing there. It instantly reminded us of Wagner's Die Walkure. We were instantly in love with the land, so we decided to build there." <sup>2</sup>

The Stevenson Residence became one of more than a dozen houses Preis designed and constructed for himself and his friends on a street he developed and lived on for the rest of his life. Alfred Preis and Dr. Oswald Bushnell, a famous Hawaiian novelist and next-door neighbor

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to Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, personally christened the name "Melemele" for the street—which in Hawaiian can be translated two ways, either as "a mythic, merry place" or "golden" for the way the light shines down.

The significance of the Stevenson Residence is enhanced by its position within this enclave, representing one of the most intact collections of work by a single architect in Hawaii. Preis not only designed the houses but developed the street itself, demonstrating his comprehensive approach to residential design and community planning. His work throughout the Melemele Place enclave represents a crucial period in this evolution, demonstrating his mature synthesis of international modernism with regional adaptation.

## **DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STEVENSON RESIDENCE**

The Stevenson Residence exemplifies several key characteristics that define both Preis' individual style and the broader tropical modern movement:

*Integration of Austrian Modernism and Hawaiian Context:* The residence demonstrates Preis' sophisticated spatial planning derived from Viennese modernists like Adolf Loos, evident in the interlocking volumes, varied ceiling heights (e.g., #9), and circuitous pathways (e.g., #6) that create spatial richness within a modest footprint. However, these European concepts are thoroughly adapted to Hawaiian living through the extensive use of sliding glass walls (e.g., #7, 31), covered outdoor spaces (e.g., #2-5), and orientation toward views and breezes (e.g., #2, 29).

*Architectural Details and Craftsmanship:* The home features numerous signature Preis elements including the tilted drawer faces that eliminate the need for hardware (e.g., #11, 12, 17, 19) while creating dynamic shadow patterns and the innovative use of "scratch wood" or striated paneling that provides textural richness while hiding construction joints (e.g., #6-12, 15, 23). These details elevate the residence beyond mere shelter to a work of architectural art.

*Climate Adaptation:* The Stevenson Residence demonstrates Preis' mastery of passive climate control as observed through practical applications of a venturi-effect ventilation system (e.g., #28, 29).

*Material Innovation:* Preis' use of vertical tongue-and-groove redwood panels as the primary exterior represents an innovative adaptation of mainland construction techniques to local conditions (e.g., #3, 30-32). This single-wall system, combined with concrete structural foundation built to amplify the natural slope of the site (e.g., #2, 3), creates an economical yet sophisticated building envelope that has proven remarkably durable over seven decades, especially resistant to the heavy rains and flooding that frequently occur in Manoa valley. The bold color choice (coral pink, lime green, and sunflower yellow) demonstrates Preis' Austrian-influenced use of color to enliven modernist forms (e.g., #2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 14).

*Spatial Complexity and Movement:* Despite its modest 1,370 square feet, the residence feels spacious and varied due to Preis' sophisticated manipulation of space. The L-shaped plan creates

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distinct zones while maintaining visual connections, the varying ceiling heights add vertical drama (e.g., #8-11), and the extensive glazing extends perceived space into the landscape (e.g., #7, 8). The circulation pattern offers multiple routes and unexpected spatial revelations, creating what Preis called "architectural promenade."

The home's well-preserved condition gives visitors the feeling of stepping back in time to the 1950s. Incorporating Hawaii's natural light and landscape, it features numerous built-ins (e.g., #8-12), floor-to-ceiling windows opening onto nature throughout (e.g., #6-8), linear geometric awnings that capture natural trade winds (e.g., #25), and Preis' signature mix of wood, glass, and hollow brick (e.g., #32), with sculptural lines that blend with the topography.

### LANDSCAPE INTEGRATION

The 1956 addition of Richard C. Tongg's landscape design represents a significant enhancement to the property's cultural significance. Tongg is celebrated as a pioneering figure widely recognized as the "grandfather of landscape architecture" in Hawaii. His influence is seen in public parks, civic spaces, resorts, and private estates across the state, including: The Honolulu Hale; the Honolulu International Airport's three distinct cultural gardens; The Gloria Baker House; the Halekulani Hotel; and the grounds of the Doris Duke Shangri-La Estate.

As such, Tongg is remembered as a visionary who helped define the look and feel of modern Hawaiian landscapes.

Tongg designed a native planting schematic to enhance the natural beauty of the property. In his signature "Tropicalia" approach, he created a garden that perfectly complemented Preis' architectural vision, emphasizing lush plantings that mimicked native rainforests while incorporating exotic species, creating a seamless transition between built and natural environments. This collaboration between two masters of their respective fields exemplifies the interdisciplinary approach that characterized Hawaii's best mid-century design.

### COMPARATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

Within Preis' extensive body of residential work, the Stevenson Residence holds special significance as a well-preserved example of his mature style and a significant contribution to Hawaii's mid-century modern architectural heritage. While perhaps less sculpturally dramatic than some of his other residences (such as the Bushnell Residence with its Bauhaus-inspired fireplace), the Stevenson house demonstrates a refined simplicity and functional elegance that represents Preis at his most assured. Every element serves multiple purposes—aesthetic, functional, and environmental—demonstrating the integrated thinking that characterizes great architecture.

Unlike several other homes on Melemele that have been torn down or renovated significantly away from Preis' original design, the Stevenson Residence was fortunately maintained with nearly zero change to its original design and condition by its 3 different owners over the past 75

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
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years. This exceptional preservation provides a rare opportunity to experience Preis' residential work as originally conceived and constructed.

As part of the Melemele Place enclave, it contributes to our understanding of how visionary architects like Preis shaped Hawaii's built environment during a crucial period of cultural and architectural transformation.

The residence deserves listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an excellent example of the property type and the work of a master architect whose influence on Hawaiian architecture continues to resonate today.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

#### *Primary Sources:*

Preis, Alfred. *Original Architectural Drawings for Stevenson Residence*. Hawai'i. Private collection of current owners.

Tongg, Richard C. *Landscape Plans for Stevenson Residence*. 1956. Private collection of current owners.

#### *Secondary Sources:*

#### Interviews:

1. Gillmar, Jack. Interview by Jordan Kandell. Jan 5, 2016
2. Johnson, Jonathon. Telephone interview by Jordan Kandell. January 25, 2016. Director of Hawai'i State Foundation of Culture and the Arts.
3. Preis, Alfred. "Oral History." Interviews by Jon Rossi and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto. July 19-August 1, 1990. Accessed January 3, 2016. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/30286>.
4. Preis-Carpenter, Laka. Interview by Jordan Kandell. Jan 13, 2016.
5. Preis, Erica. Interview by Jordan Kandell. Jan 13, 2016.
6. Bushnell, Andy. Interview by Jordan Kandell. May 13, 2013.

#### Newspaper:

7. Kanemitsu, Anne. "'Reflections of an 'Art Czar'.'" *The Honolulu Advertiser*, July 14, 1980.

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence

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8. Staff Writer. "Memorial Contract in May." *Honolulu Advertiser*, Dec 4, 1960

9. Yoshishige, Jon. "'Not Bitter Over Detention, Memorial's Designer Says.'" *The Honolulu Advertiser*, December 5, 1991.

10. "Obituary of Richard C Tongg." *The Star Advertiser*, November 3, 1988.

11. "Obituary of Gilbert and Arlene Wong" *The Honolulu Advertiser*, December 19, 2021.

Magazine:

12. Hartwell, Patricia. "The Man Who Makes Art Happen." *Honolulu Magazine*, March 1993, 42-44

13. Kandell, Jordan. "Master of Mid-Century Modern." *Hana Hou Magazine*, August/September 2016, pg TBD

14. Young, Benjamin B.C. "A Tribute to O.A. Bushnell." *Pacific Health Dialog: Vol 8, No. 2*. March 2001, 462-63

15. Johnson, Jonathon. "The Legacy of Alfred Preis in Hawai'i's Public Architecture." *Hawaiian Journal of Architecture* 12, no. 3 (2020): 45-62.

16. Kobayashi, Dean. "Melemele Place: A Mid-Century Modern Enclave." *Honolulu Magazine*, March 2019, 78-84.

17. Lum, Momi. "Richard C. Tongg: Grandfather of Hawaiian Landscape Architecture." *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 108, no. 5 (2018): 92-98.

Books:

18. Gillmar, Jack, Don Hibbard, and Jan-Peter Preis. *Alfred Preis: Hawai'i's Renaissance Man*. Honolulu. Unfinished manuscript to be published 2017.

19. Schmitzberger, Alex. *Alfred Preis Displaced: The Tropical Modernism of the Austrian Emigrant and Architect of the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor*. DoppelHouse Press, 2022.

20. Kamins, Robert M., and Robert E. Potter. *Mālamalama: A History of the University of Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998, 31.

21. Filsinger, Laurie, and Scott Wilson. *A Guide to Hawaiian Modernism*. Honolulu: Honolulu Museum of Art, 2016.

22. Hibbard, Don. *Buildings of Hawai'i*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

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23. Hibbard, Don. *Designing Paradise: The Architecture of Alfred Preis*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018.

24. Sandler, Rob. *Modern Honolulu: The Architecture of Vladimir Ossipoff and His Contemporaries*. Honolulu: Sandler Media, 2015.

Other Sources (research and reference):

25. American Society of Landscape Architects. (n.d.). *ASLA's 125th: In a little grass shack – Hawai'i chapter history*. <https://www.asla.org/hawaii/history>

26. Friendship Garden. (n.d.). *History – Friendship Garden*. <http://friendshipgarden.org/history.html>

27. Schmitzberger, Alex with support from Laura Mcguire. "Alfred Preis. *Displaced – Vienna in the Tropics*." Museum Exhibition. Austrian Cultural Forum, NY. Feb 22-March 31, 2022; Pearl Harbor National Memorial. May 31-July 15, 2022; Digital: <https://online-exhibitions.at/alfred-preis>

28. United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 Bushnell Residence Honolulu, HI Name of Property County and State

Archival Collections:

29. Alfred Preis Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa Library Special Collections.

30. Historic Hawai'i Foundation Archives, Honolulu.

31. State Historic Preservation Division, Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
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- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Private collection of current owners; Alfred Preis Collection, University of Hawai'i at Manoa Library Special Collections (for additional Preis documentation)

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 50-80-14-10223**

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 0.38 acres (16,555 square feet)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

1. Latitude: 21.309876 Longitude: -157.806543

### Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated includes all the property owned by Aaron Kandell and Dr. Trina Orimoto as described by Tax Map Key: 2-9-070:001

### Boundary Justification

The property boundaries follow the historic L-shaped property lines of Lot 130, established when the residence was built in 1952. The perimeter captures the complete architectural and landscape ensemble that defines the property's significance.

The southern boundary along Melemele Place retains decades old gardenia plantings, forming a semi-continuous hedge that defines the property's street presence as conceived in the original design. The eastern perimeter features the signature rock wall construction that extends along much of the adjacent Bushnell property, complemented by the mature bamboo groves, native ferns, and fruit trees that complete the border landscaping within the L-shaped configuration.

The northern boundary showcases loose rock walls and stepped stone features, integrated with the mature tree canopy and flowering specimens including crown flower, lemon and ginger. The western edge follows the natural terrain as it slopes toward the Board of Water Supply easement,

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence

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where the vegetation has matured into a naturalized plant community featuring indigenous plants such as koa that reflect the property's integration with the local environment.

These extant boundary conditions reflect the organic relationship between the Stevenson property and its surroundings, where landscape elements transcend legal property lines to create the unified design vision that makes the property architecturally and historically significant.



## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Mr. Aaron Kandell & Dr. Trina Orimoto

Organization: Private Owners

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
Name of Property

Honolulu, HI  
County and State

**Street & number:** 3206 Melemele Place  
**City or town:** Honolulu **State:** Hawai'i **Zip code:** 96822  
**Email:** akandell@gmail.com  
**Telephone:** (808) 636-0313  
**Date:** July 1, 2025

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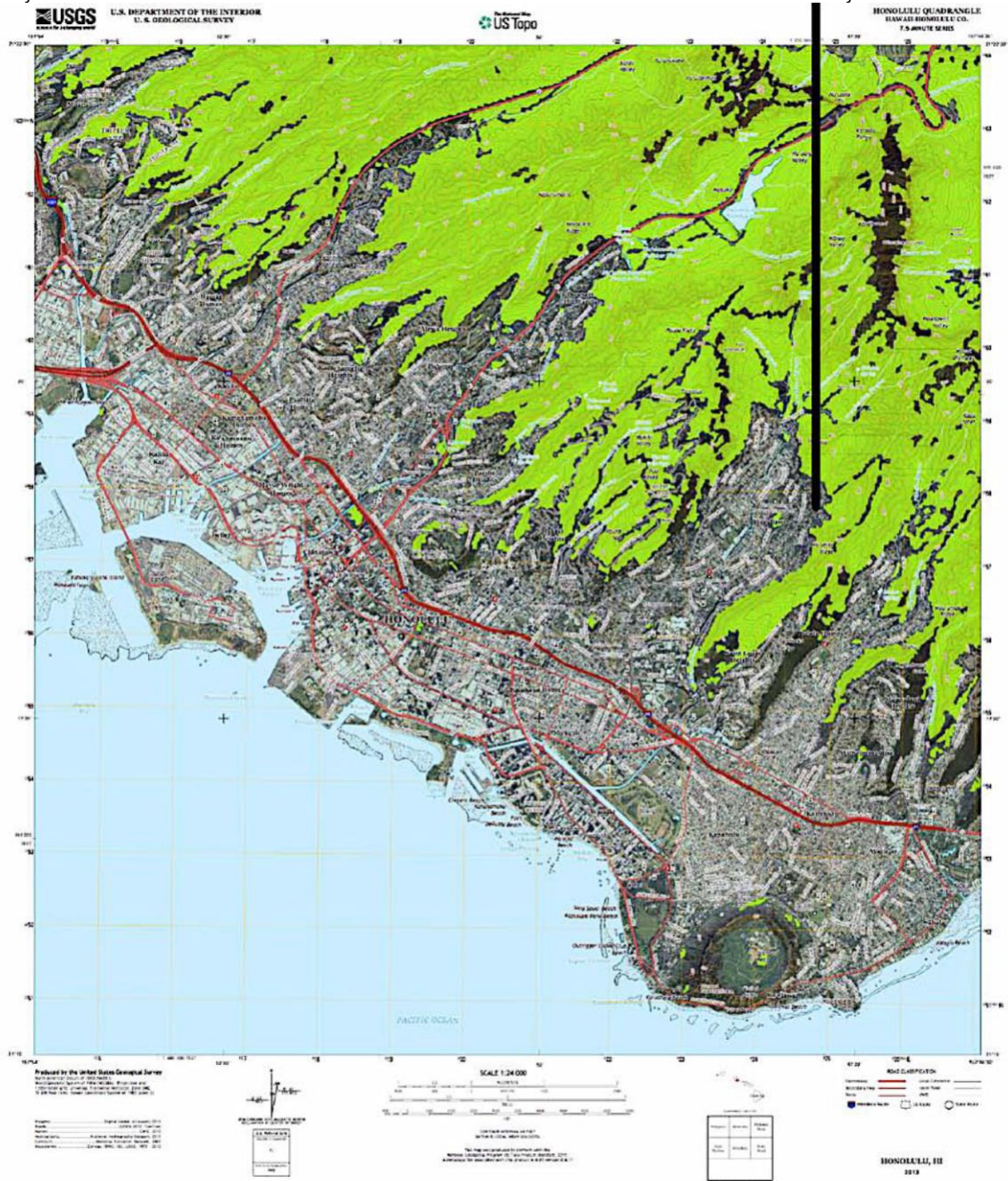
### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
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- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Tax Map Key Documentation:** TMK 2-9-070:001 (City and County of Honolulu DPP documentation included)
- **Original Architectural Drawings:**
  - Alfred Preis original blueprints from 1952, including:

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
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- Foundation and Floor Plan (Sheet 1)
- Elevations: Front, Right, Rear, Left, Cross Sections (Sheet 2)
- Bedroom "A" Floor Plan, Kitchen, Laundry, Living Room Plans (Sheet 3)
- Window and Door Schedule details
- Richard C. Tongg Landscape Plan for Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Wong property, showing original landscape design intent (Sheets 4-5)
- Site survey showing topographic features and property boundaries (Sheet 6)
- **Historic Documentation:**
  - Historic aerial photograph showing Melemele Place neighborhood context (1952)
  - Original building permit documentation (facility code confirms 1952 construction date)
  - City and County of Honolulu property records
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

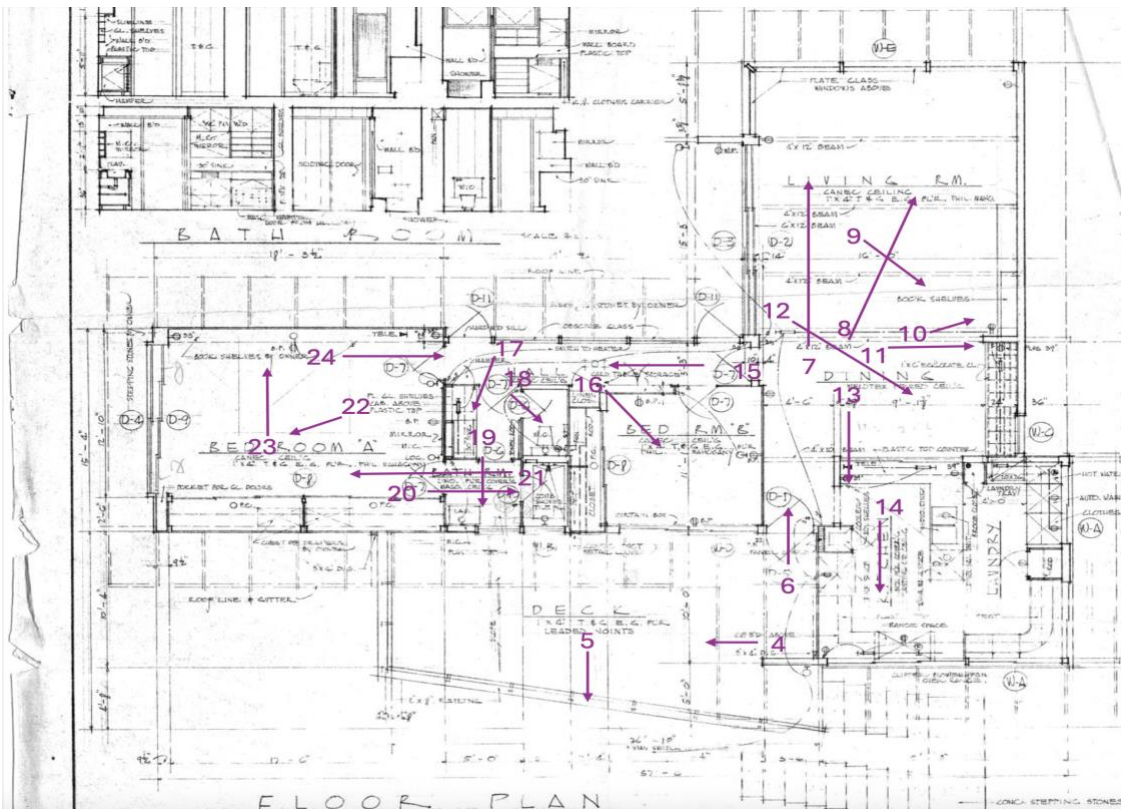
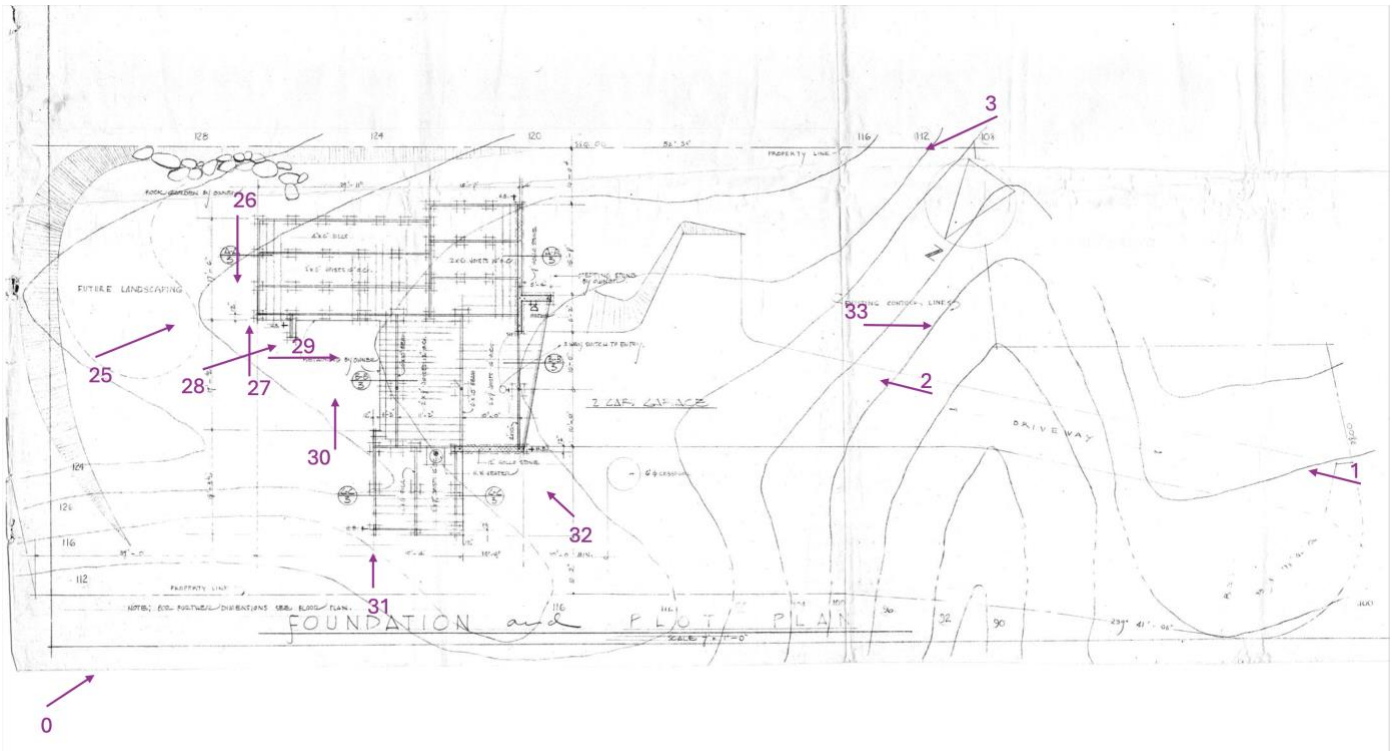
### Photographs

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

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Photo Log



Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
Name of Property

Honolulu, HI  
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Name of Property: Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence

City or Vicinity: Honolulu

County: Honolulu

State: Hawai'i

Photographer: Olivier Koenig (2-5, 7-9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 23, 25-28)

Date Photographed: November 4, 2021

Photographer: Aaron Kandell (1, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18-22, 24, 29-33)

Date Photographed: July 1, 2025

Archives (0)

Date Photographed: 1952

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

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0. **Exterior of House, from the southeast.** Historic archival photograph showing neighboring houses on adjacent hill, demonstrating the mid-century modern enclave character of Melemele Place (circa 1952).



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1. **Exterior of House, from the northeast.** Richard Tongg landscape features, including bird of paradise runners along both sides of driveway.



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2. **Exterior of House, from the northeast.** Showing garage with distinctive concrete pattern and open upper patio with butterfly roof and original coral accents.



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3. **Exterior of House, from the north.** Neighbor view from historic Bushnell Residence showing home nestled into hillside with Tongg's mature tropical landscaping.



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4. **Exterior/Interior of house, covered lanai from the northwest.** Showing combed wood walls, exposed white-painted beam construction, and mountain views through open structure.



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5. **Exterior/Interior of house, covered lanai from the southwest** . Showing valley and ocean views with exposed white beam ceiling and coral accent wall.



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- 6. Interior of house, living room from the northeast.** Combed wood lower ceiling from front door expanding into high ceiling open floor plan living room. Original wood floor.



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**7. Interior of house, living room from the northeast. Showing combed wood east and west wall and beams.**



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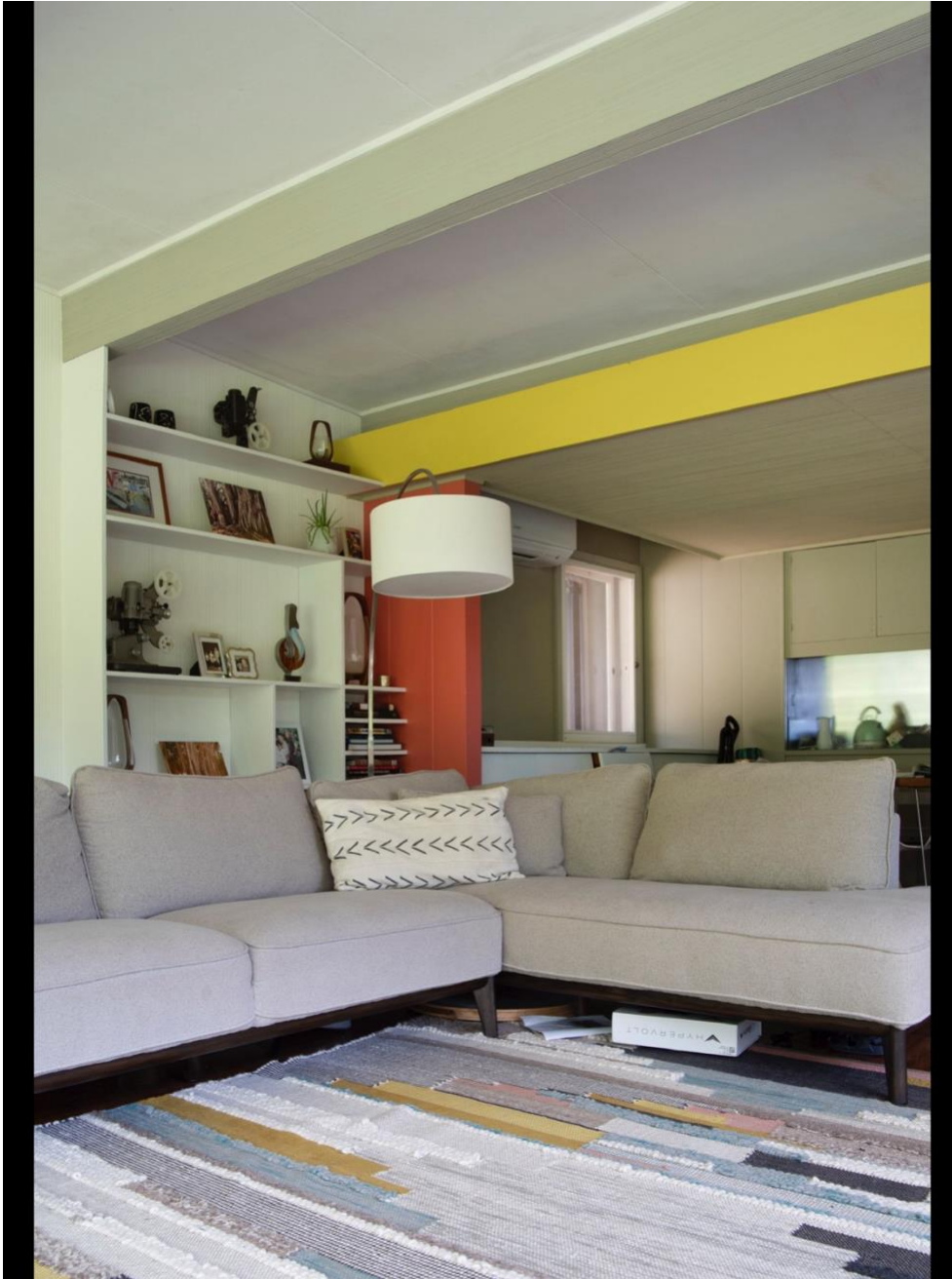
- 8. Interior of house, living room from the east. showing floor-to-ceiling windows, combed wood highlights, and connection to landscape.**



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**9. Interior of house, living room from the south.** Showing built-in shelving, striated wood ceiling treatment, and coral and yellow accent colors



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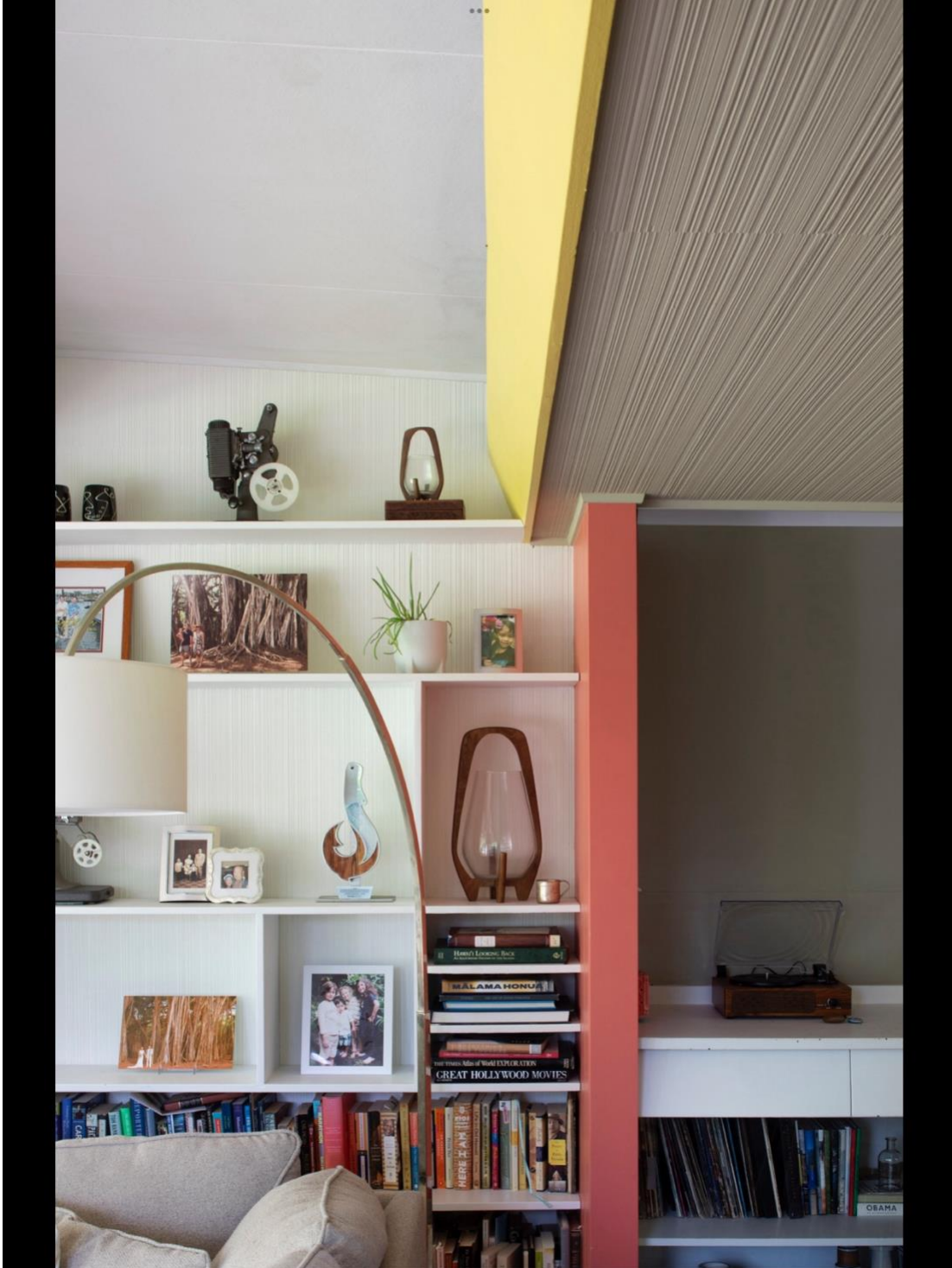
10. Interior of house, living room from the east. Detail of built-in bookshelf, showing integration of storage and display functions.



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**11. Interior of house, living room from the southeast.**



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**12. Interior of house, dining room from the southeast. Showing custom built-in storage cabinetry and shelving**



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**13. Interior of house, front door from the southwest. Reverse view from dining room looking onto kitchen and lanai with built-in pass through.**



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14. **Interior of house, kitchen from the south.** Showing original vintage oven, retro green appliances, white cabinetry, restored cork floor, and horizontal window band.



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**15. Interior of house, hallway to bedrooms from the east**



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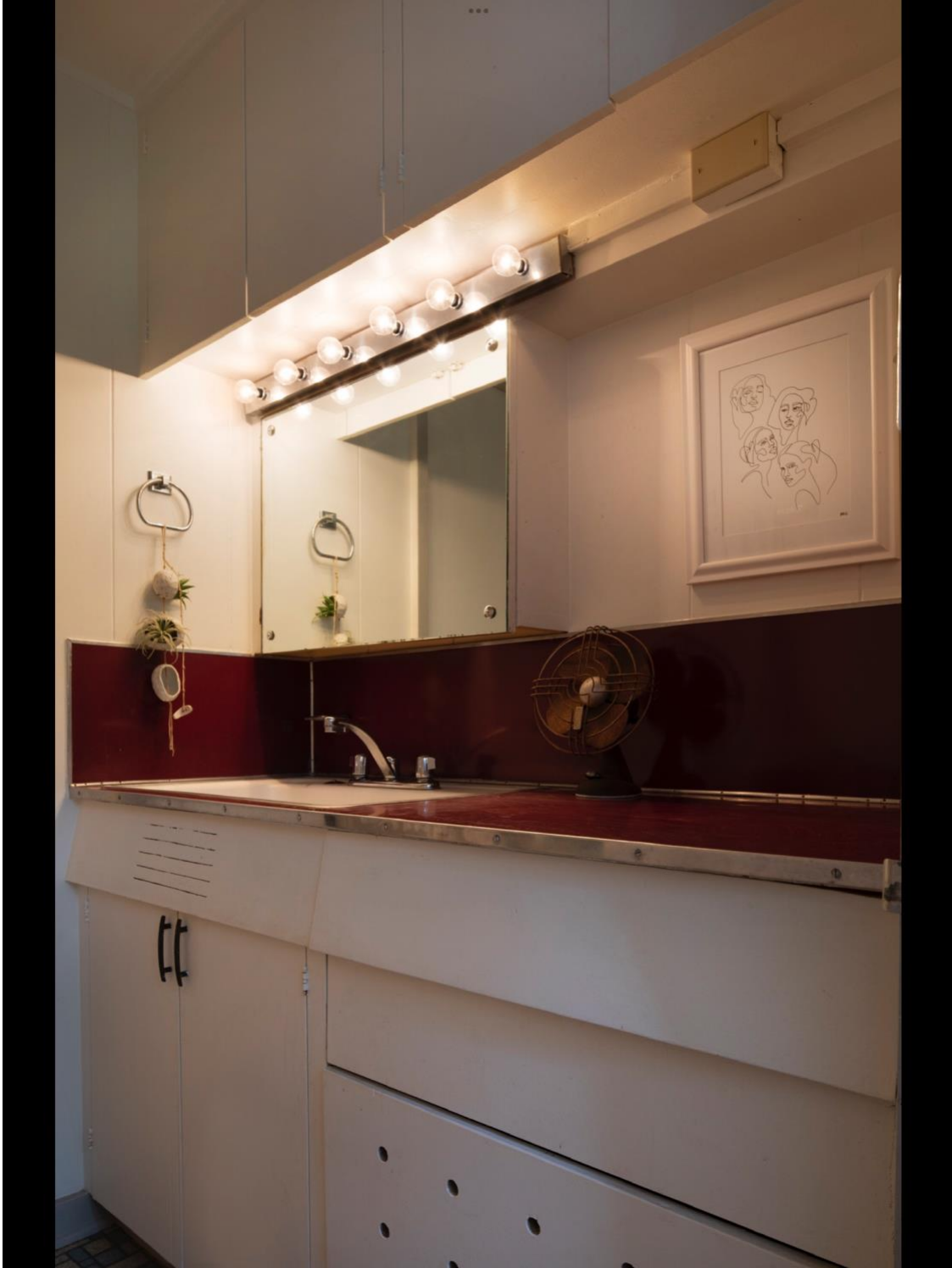
**16. Interior of house, smaller 1<sup>st</sup> bedroom (kid's room) from the northwest**



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**17. Interior of house, master bath from the southwest.** Detail: ventilation pukas (holes) in built-in laundry hamper for ventilation



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18. Interior of house, 1/2 bath from the south. Detail: original linoleum floor.



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19. Interior of house, master bath from the southwest. Bathroom detail showing period-appropriate fixtures and red and teal accent color



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**20. Interior of house, master bath from the southeast. Detail: original bath and shower with red accent tiles and crank windows.**



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**21. Interior of house, master bedroom from the northwest**



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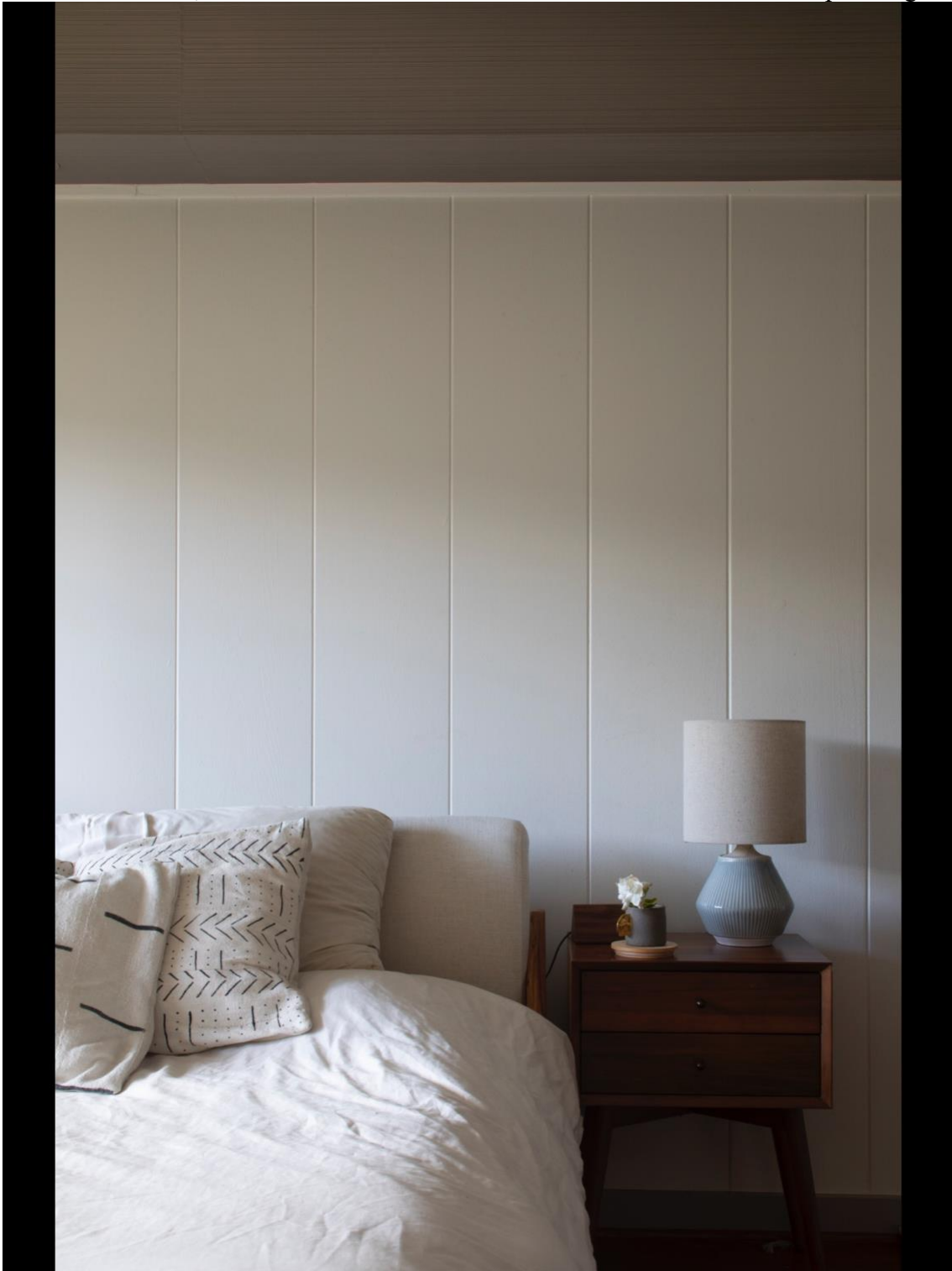
**22. Interior of house, master bedroom from the west**



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**23. Interior of house, master bedroom from the north. Detail: combed wood paneling**



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24. Interior of house, master bedroom from the east. Reverse view on bathroom and hallway to living room.



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**25. Exterior of house, living room from the south.** Showing “glass pavilion projection” with white frame and blue-gray siding. Twin coral accent doors.



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**26. Exterior of house, living room from the west**



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**27. Exterior of house, living room from the east: Showing sloped butterfly roof and orthogonal angles.**



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**28. Exterior of house, living room from the south.**



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**29. Exterior of house, back patio from the southwest. Detail: Venturi effect ventilation  
pukas in the awnings.**



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**30. Exterior of house, back patio from the south**



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**31. Exterior of house, master bedroom from the southeast**



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32. **Exterior of house, garage from the southeast.** street level showing garage with distinctive concrete pattern and upper level with butterfly roof.



Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence

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33. **Exterior of house, front yard from the west.** Lush landscaping Showing kalo patch, banana, torch ginger, and persimmon tree.



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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

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

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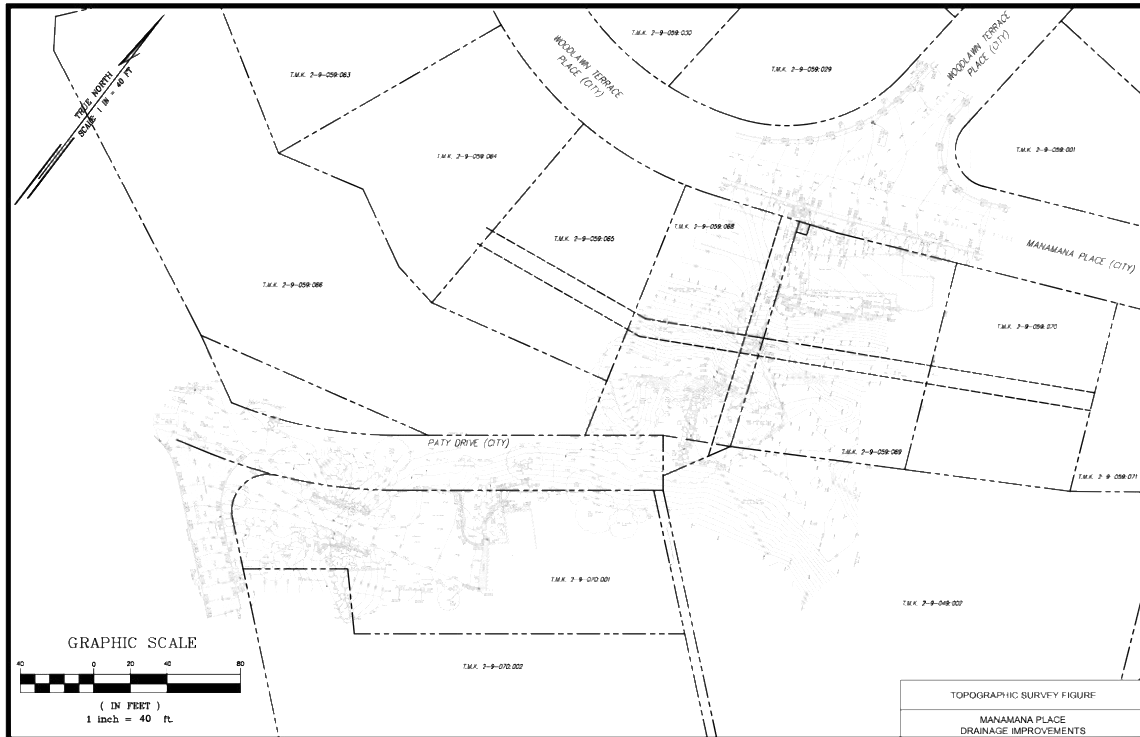
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- Tier 4 – 280 hours

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

### Location Map

Updated topographical survey conducted Jan 2025 for the City Department of Design and Construction as part of City Project # 12037: “Manamana Place Drainage Improvements”.



**Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence**  
3206 Melemele Place, Honolulu, HI  
TMK: 2-9-070:001

HONOLULU QUADRANGLE  
HAWAII-HONOLULU CO.

Mr. & Mrs. Albert O. Stevenson Residence  
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The property is located in the Woodlawn area of Manoa Valley, situated on the lower slopes of the Ko'olau Mountains. The residence is positioned on Melemele Place, a cul-de-sac developed by Alfred Preis, approximately 3 miles northeast of downtown Honolulu.