



CITY of CALABASAS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

October 16, 2024

TO: Members of the Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Tom Bartlett, City Planner
Joel Hayes, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: Park Moderne Pump House

RECOMMENDATION: That the Historic Preservation Commission receive and file this report regarding the Park Moderne Pump House

BACKGROUND:

The Park Moderne housing development came to fruition after real estate speculator William Lingenbrink bought 140 acres of land in 1927 from homesteader Sam Cooper. Lingenbrink divided the lots and initially offered them for sale for \$525 to \$2,500 apiece, depending on size and location. Envisioned as an artist colony, Park Moderne included 174 lots organized along narrow meandering streets named for birds that inhabited the area: Bluebird Drive, Blackbird Way, Hummingbird Way, Meadowlark Drive, Wrencrest Drive, and Sparrowdell. To attract artists, Rudolf Schindler and Jock Detloff Peters were hired to design model homes and other features for the community such as footpaths, pools, fountains, and a pump house. Due to the Depression, few of the houses were built and the area remained mostly undeveloped until the 1960s.

The original houses in Park Moderne were either designed by Jock Peters or Rudolph Schindler in the early Modern style, or were designed by the original owners. These houses were very small, reflecting the means of the struggling artists who lived there. Sometimes they were no more than artist's studios with kitchens and bathrooms. Park Moderne became a weekend retreat and a quiet place for artists to live and work. One of the first residents was the famed sculptor, Jan de Swart. His wife Ursula was the daughter of Jock Peters. Other notables included woodcarver Andy Anderson, equestrian rider Jane Reed, artists Robert Witt Ames, Paul von Kleiben, and Olinka Hardy, songwriter Dick Colburn, authors Margaret Larson and Laura Gaye, and designers Walter Dorrer and Charles Gretz.

ANALYSIS:

The Calabasas Historic Context Statement describes that the Park Moderne pump house located along Hummingbird Road is a structure that is historically important to the City of

Calabasas and is eligible for local designation. The pump house was constructed in an art deco style that matched many of the homes that were developed in the Park Moderne community. The Art Deco style takes the decorative, ornamentation of the Victorian era, and the clean lines and shapes of modernism. Art Deco became a fad by the late 1920s and remained popular into the 1930s.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission discuss the merits of the Park Moderne pump house as a local historic resource, and recommend appropriate follow-up actions to Staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit A: Park Moderne pump house photo and source documents