



Community & Economic Development Department
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Planning Division

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: JUNE 17, 2026
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 7

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	PC-2026-00544 (Historic Designation)	
Request	To consider a Historic Designation request to designate Edie as a City Landmark	
Applicant	Jen Mermilliod of JM Research & Consulting, on behalf of Anna Gaissert and Dominick Ricci	
Project Location	5958 Edith Avenue, situated on the southeast corner of Lincoln and Edith Avenues	
APN	235-292-004	
Ward	4	
Neighborhood	Hawarden Hills	
Historic District	Not Applicable	
Historic Designation	Not Applicable	
Staff Planner	Andrew Medrano, Assistant Planner 951-826-2473 amedrano@riversideca.gov	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommend that the Cultural Heritage Board recommend that the City Council:

- DETERMINE** that Planning Case PC-2026-00544 (Historic Designation) for the designation of Edie as a City 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** Planning Case PC-2026-00544 (Historic Designation), based on the facts of findings, and designate Edie as a City Landmark.

BACKGROUND

Edie

Edie is located at 5958 Edith Avenue (Exhibit 1). The Mid-Century Modern architectural style residence was designed by E. Kurt Steinmann and constructed between late 1966 and early 1967. Steinmann was commissioned by owners Dr. Robert R. Robinson and Margaret R. Robinson.

Steinmann's award-winning home on Fairview was a popular example of the modern architectural style in the Victoria and Hawarden Hills Neighborhoods. Dr. Robert R. Robinson, founder and owner of Victoria Animal hospital, and his wife, Margaret R. Robinson, were among the many that toured Steinmann's home. This led to the Robinsons hiring Steinmann to design their future home at 5958 Edith Avenue.

Mid-Century Modern

The 2009 Modernism Historic Context Statement discusses Mid-Century Modern as follows:

Perhaps in response to criticisms that modern architecture was too sterile, architects began experimenting with shapes, materials, and color. Mid-Century Modern is a term used to describe the evolution of the International Style after World War II. Mid-Century Modern architecture is more organic and less doctrinaire than the International Style. It is characterized by more solid wall surfaces. It was during this period that stacked brick became a popular material in commercial and educational buildings...In residential buildings, the post-and-beam became the preferred method of construction for Mid-Century Modern architects.

Character-defining Features of Mid-Century Modern

- Simple geometric forms
- Post-and-beam construction
- Flat or low-pitched gabled roofs
- Flush mounted steel framed windows or large single-paned wood-framed windows
- Exterior staircases, decks, patios, and balconies
- Brick or stone often used as primary or accent material

E. Kurt Steinmann

E. Kurt Steinmann was a prominent Swiss-born architect who left a lasting architectural footprint in Riverside. He is best known for his role as a principal designer at the firm Ruhnau, Evans, and Steinmann, which he joined in the mid-1950s. Key works of his include the Riverside City College Cosmetology Building (1958), UCR's Health Services Building (1963) and Agricultural Sciences Library (1965), the Main Street Pedestrian Mall (1966), and City Hall and Council Chambers (1975).

During the 1970s, municipal architecture was heavily dominated by raw, imposing Brutalism. Steinmann famously blended it with New Formalism to contrast the starkness of the style. He incorporated this vision as the lead of design on the City Hall project.

Beyond large public structures, Steinmann influenced residential architecture as well. In 1963, he designed his own family residence at 2127 Fairview Avenue, known as the "Horizon Home." The home, a showcase for early concrete and block innovation, became a regional case study for seamless indoor-outdoor living, featuring extensive glass windows and entries with functional floor plans that have been celebrated on historic architectural tours. Steinmann won a design award for his home in a competition that included over 200 homes across the country.

Steinmann was also an early proponent of adaptive reuse before it became a standard practice in modern architecture. In 1967, he helped transform a historic Julia Morgan-designed YWCA building, which included a swimming pool and gymnasium, into the modern galleries and studios used by the Riverside Art Museum today.

Naming Justification

The applicants propose the name Edie (a common affectionate nickname for Edith) for the residence to honor the street name and the home's "shy" character, featuring a secluded entrance and a yard that opens upon entering. Inspired by non-traditional naming conventions, the name encompasses the entire site rather than just the home. The name is also connected to significant figures of the property, as it is both the name of Steinmann's sister and the name of the mother of Bernice Wilson, who was a part of the subdivision of this neighborhood in 1959.

ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting approval of a Historic Designation to designate Edie as a City Landmark.

The applicant has provided an architectural description, statement of significance, photographs documenting the architecture and building setting, and copies of primary and secondary sources as summarized below (Exhibits 2 and 3).

Architectural Description

Edie is located at 5958 Edith Avenue. This Mid-Century Modern home sits on a small rise at the intersection of Lincoln and Edith Avenues. Built on a T-shaped concrete slab, the residence is turned away from the street, facing north/northeast. The home features a deep overhanging flat roof with exposed heavy roof beams on the interior and topped with small white gravel. Primary walls consist of wood-framed construction finished in textured stucco, with a matching chimney. Two perpendicular walls run along the northwestern elevations with one extending north past the north elevation to shield a rear patio. The other, a freestanding wall, is offset from the residence, shielding a planter of camelias and incorporated with an aluminum rolling gate, which leads to the attached sunken carport.

Floor to ceiling aluminum-framed fixed sashes windows with transoms make up the primary windows. Secondary windows include original aluminum sliders on the east and west rear elevations. Three jalousie windows, which were not visible from the street, have been replaced with double-hung vinyl windows. Three floating concrete steps lead to an elevated porch serving as the main entry. The front door consists of a double slab-door

entry set within a wall of full-height fixed windows and transoms. The entry is lit by an iconic mid-century opal globe fixture on the perpendicular CMU wall.

The original driveway filled the front expanse with linear board separated strips. However, several replacement sections have created an irregular cross-grid pattern. The rear yard is enclosed by a mix of wood, block, and chain link fencing, separated from the front yard, in part, by the vehicular gate. It features a central patio, sheltered by extensions of the eaves. The rear yard is also planted with open turf, shrubs, and several mature trees that include rows of citrus trees on the west and south property lines.

Statement of Significance

As stated on the DPR Form by Jen Mermilliod:

Edie embodies the character-defining features of the Mid-Century Modern architectural style and is an excellent, high-style example of the innovative work of master architect E. Kurt Steinmann in residential design. The property appears eligible for designation as a City of Riverside Landmark under Criterion 3: "Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship" and under Criterion 4: "Represents the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect, or important creative individual." Thus, the property has been assigned a California Historical Resource (CHR) Status Code of 5S3: Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation.

TITLE 20 EVALUATION

Under Title 20 (Cultural Resources), "Landmark" means: "Any improvement or natural feature that is an exceptional example of a historical, archaeological, cultural, architectural, community, aesthetic or artistic heritage of the City, that retains a high degree of integrity." Based on the applicable criteria from Chapter 20.50 of Title 20, Edie qualifies for Landmark Designation as follows:

FINDING: Criterion 3: Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.

FACTS: E. Kurt Steinmann heavily relied on classic Mid-century Modern principles to shape the design and layout of Edie. He incorporated several character-defining features of the style, including prominent horizontal lines, a sunken attached carport, a flat overhanging roof with visible structural beams extending from the interior to exterior, and extensive floor-to-ceiling, transom, and high-set windows. The home also features a hidden entryway and secluded private patios created by concrete masonry blocks. Driven by the philosophy that buildings should blend seamlessly into their natural environments, Steinmann gathered local leaves to perfectly calibrate his exterior paint colors, ultimately selecting Ameritone Leaf Green for the home's accent color.

FINDING: Criterion 4: Represents the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect, or important creative individual.

FACTS: For two decades, E. Kurt Steinmann worked as an architect in Riverside. His designs for the Ruhnau, Evans, and Steinmann firm created lasting public spaces. These locations continue to influence the city's civic, academic, and community identity.

Steinmann's career spanned a wide variety of architectural projects throughout Riverside and the surrounding region. He designed schools, universities, libraries, post offices, medical facilities, hotels, commercial properties, and private homes.

He was highly active in professional leadership. He joined the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Pasadena Chapter in 1954. Later, he served as secretary and vice president for the inland chapter.

In the late 1970s, he relocated to Cayucos to co-found Steinmann West Associates (which later became Steinmann, West, Keksi Architects) with partner Don West. During this period, he presided over the AIA Central Coast Chapter, lectured at multiple universities, and earned at least fourteen national design awards.

PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS

A public hearing notice was mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site. As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by Staff regarding this proposal.

APPEAL INFORMATION

Actions by the Cultural Heritage Board, including any environmental findings, may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Planning Division by calling 951-826-5800.

EXHIBITS LIST

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

Prepared by: Andrew Medrano, Assistant Planner
Reviewed by: Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer
Approved by: Laurel Reimer, City Planner