

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE MAHARAJAH HOUSE 2221 North Heliotrope Drive Santa Ana, CA 92706

NAME	Maharajah House			REF. NO.
ADDRESS	2221 North Heliotrope Drive			
CITY	Santa Ana	ZIP	92706	ORANGE COUNTY
YEAR BUILT	1938	LOCAL REGISTER CATEGORY: Landmark		
HISTORIC DISTRICT	N/A	NEIGHBORHOOD	Floral Park	
NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION	B,C	NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS CODE	3S	

Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

☐ Prehistoric ☒ Historic ☐ Both

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: Moderne

The Moderne style encompassed the Modernistic, Streamlined Moderne, and Art Moderne variants. An evolution of the Art Deco style, the Streamlined Moderne flourished during the 1930s and lingered through the decade following World War II in a simplified version. In contrast to the verticality of earlier Art Deco designs, the Streamlined Moderne emphasized the horizontal, through bands of windows, use of decorative raised or incised horizontal lines, railings, flat canopies with banded fascia, and narrow coping at the roofline. Other characteristics include smooth wall surfaces, usually of stucco; metal detailing; glass block windows; rounded corners, porthole windows, and asymmetry. Incorporation of aerodynamic, transportation related imagery, especially nautical, is a signature of the style. In common with the Streamlined Moderne, Art Moderne buildings also tended to be horizontal in emphasis, but tended to be more clean-lined and rectilinear in their massing and detailing than their streamlined counterparts. Art Moderne designs can be recognized by their flat roofs, smooth stucco exteriors, and use of metal casement windows that often meet at the corners of the building.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION:

The Maharajah House appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. It also qualifies for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties under Criterion 1, for its exemplification of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style, and under Criterion 4b, for its association with a foreign ruling family, the Holkars of Indore, India. The house also contributes to the historic character of the Floral Park neighborhood through its age, style, scale, and historic associations with prominent residents. Additionally, the house has been categorized as "Landmark" for its unique architectural significance as an example of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style and its historic/cultural significance to City as the "castle" of a sitting ruler. (Municipal Code, Section 30-2.2).

EXPLANATION OF CODES:

- **National Register Criteria for Evaluation:** (From Appendix 7 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
 - B:** that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
 - C:** that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- **National Register Status Code:** (From Appendix 2 of Instructions for Recording Historical Resources, Office of Historic Preservation)
 - 3S:** Appears eligible for separate listing.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

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Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) *Maharajah House*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

*c. Address *2221 North Heliotrope Drive*

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number: *002-081-45*; TR 1036 Lot: *18 and Lot: 19*

*a. County *Orange County*

Date:

City *Santa Ana*

Zip *92706*

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

Located on a double lot on the southeast corner of Heliotrope Drive and Santa Clara Avenue, the Maharajah House is a two-story residence representative of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style. A flat roof accented by a thin band at the roofline tops the "T" shaped building, which is finished in smooth stucco. Walls extend to the north and south to enclose gardens and patios. The massing of the structure suggests an assemblage of cubic volumes and reflects the influence of the emerging International Style of architecture. The northwest and southwest corners of the second story of the facade are cut away, creating terraces that are seamlessly integrated into the massing. Horizontal lines are emphasized through the roofline banding, similar banding around the terrace parapets, and architectural details such as window grilles and canopies. A notable feature, and one highly characteristic of the style, is the use of multi-light metal casement windows that wrap the corners of the building. Located at the approximate center of the façade and flanked by pilasters scored to resemble masonry, the tripartite entry is deeply recessed and decorated in an intricate, geometric pattern. An allée of palms is paved in stone and spans the deep front lawn from the sidewalk to the entrance. On the north elevation, painted wrought iron gates shield the garage. On the south, a bronze equestrian statue is just visible behind the garden wall. In excellent condition, the property is substantially unaltered on the exterior.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) *HP2. Single-family Property*

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photo



P5b. Photo: (view and date)
*South and west elevations
April 2003*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: ☒ historic
*1938/Source: City of Santa Ana
Building Permits*

*P7. Owner and Address:
*Chan Q & Quynh Kieu
2221 North Heliotrope Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92706*

*P8. Recorded by:
*Leslie J. Heumann
SAIC
35 S. Raymond Ave. # 204
Pasadena, CA 91105*

*P9. Date Recorded:
May 25, 2003

*P10. Survey Type:
Intensive Survey

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")
None.

*Attachments: ☐ None ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (list)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 4

*NRHP Status Code 3S

*Resource Name or #: *Maharajah House*

B1. Historic Name: *Maharajah House*

B2. Common Name: *Same*

B3. Original Use: *Single-family Residence*

B4. Present Use: *Single-family Residence*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Moderne*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed in 1938-1939.*

December 14, 1938. 12 room frame & stucco residence and garages.

May 6, 1941. Reroof.

March 15, 1955. Swimming pool.

May 24, 1955. Cabana for swimming pool.

January 24, 1989. 6' high bolock wall.

July 21, 1993. Add 2 bedrooms and 1 bath, 319 square feet.

September 15, 1997. Reroof.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features:

Garage, garden walls, mature landscaping, statue if original.

B9a. Architect: *Donald Beach Kirby*

b. Builder: *Allison Honer*

*B10. Significance: Theme *Residential Architecture*

Area *Santa Ana*

Period of Significance: *circa 1888-1953* Property Type: *Single-family Residence*

Applicable Criteria: *B, C*

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

The Maharajah House is architecturally significant as an exceptional example of the residential use of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style, one of the best in Orange County. It is historically significant for its association with the Maharajah of Indore, the hereditary ruler of a central Indian state and reputedly one of the richest men in the world at time. Designed by architect Donald Beach Kirby of Balboa, the house was built in 1938-1939 by prominent Santa Ana contractor Allison Honer for \$40,000 according to the building permit, although the local press reported the cost of construction as \$50,000 and of the furnishings as \$150,000.

(See Continuation Sheet 3 of 4.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

*City of Santa Ana Building Permits
Santa Ana History Room Collection, Santa Ana Public Library
Sanborn Maps*

(See Continuation Sheet 4 of 4.)

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: *Leslie J. Heumann*

*Date of Evaluation: *May 25, 2003*

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Sketch Map



MAHARAJAH HOUSE
2221 NORTH HELIOTROPE DRIVE

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Maharajah House

*Recorded by Leslie J. Heumann, SAIC

*Date May 25, 2003

☒ Continuation ☐ Update

***B10. Significance (continued):**

Even before the house was constructed, Yeshwant Rao Holkar, the Maharajah, had captured the public imagination. Educated at Oxford, the Maharajah had been traveling in the United States in 1936, had taken ill in Los Angeles, and had been nursed by Marguerite Lawler Branyan, an American divorcee. They married in 1938, following the death of the Maharajah's first wife in 1937. In search of a safe haven prior to the beginning of World War II, the Maharajah decided to settle his young daughter, Princess Usha, and his new wife in Santa Ana. The large home, one of several owned by the Maharajah, was protected by high walls and by interior and exterior gates. According to one account, the Maharajah's instructions to Allison Honer, the prominent Orange County builder who lived across the street from the property at 615 West Santa Clara Avenue, were to build a modern, but not too severe refuge. Lavishly appointed, the house contained, in 1986 when it was the International Society of Interior Designers Orange County Chapter Design House: three bedroom suites, eight bathrooms, four fireplaces, a grand foyer, spacious living room, formal dining room, library, solarium, kitchen, butler's pantry, pool house (added later), servants' and guards' quarters, and an attached garage.

Said to be a progressive ruler who instituted many reforms, the Maharajah had governed Indore since the abdication of his father in his favor in 1926. The Maharajah and his American Maharani returned to India following an only one-year residence in the house, leaving Princess Usha in the care of a governess in Santa Ana, where she continued to attend public schools. The pair divorced in 1943. The Maharajah married again, to another American, who bore him four children including a male heir, but Princess Usha, as the only offspring born of an Indian woman, succeeded her father as ruler in 1961 following the death of her father. Marguerite, who also remarried, remained in the house until 1952. As of 1994, according to one account (Marsh), Princess Usha occupied one of the Holkar's hereditary palaces in India, although, other information ("Indore: The Holkar Dynasty") indicates that she was stripped of her rank and titles by the Indian state in 1970

The Maharajah House is located in Floral Park, a neighborhood northwest of downtown Santa Ana bounded by West Seventeenth Street, North Flower Street, Riverside Drive, and Broadway. Groves of oranges, avocados, and walnuts and widely scattered ranch houses characterized this area before 1920. Developer and builder Allison Honer (1897-1981), credited as the subdivider and builder of a major portion of northwest Santa Ana, arrived in Santa Ana from Beaver Falls, New York in 1922 (Talbert, pages 353-356). "Before nightfall on the day of his arrival, Mr. Honer purchased a parcel of land. And that month, he began building custom homes in Santa Ana" (Orange County Register, September 15, 1981). The parcel chosen became the Floral Park subdivision between Seventeenth Street and Santiago Creek. "When built in the 1920s, the Floral Park homes were the most lavish and expensive in the area. They sold for about \$45,000 each" (Orange County Register, September 15, 1981). Revival architecture in a wide variety of romantic styles was celebrated in the 1920s and 1930s and Floral Park showcased examples of the English Tudor, French Norman, Spanish Colonial, and Colonial Revival. The Allison Honer Construction Company went on to complete such notable projects as the 1935 Art Deco styled Old Santa Ana City Hall, the El Toro Marine Base during World War II, and the 1960 Honer Shopping Plaza. Honer lived in the neighborhood he had helped to create, at 615 West Santa Clara Avenue.

In the late 1920s and 1930s, another builder, Roy Roscoe Russell (1881-1965), continued developing the groves of Floral Park. An early Russell project was his 1928 subdivision of Victoria Drive between West Nineteenth Street and West Santa Clara Avenue. The homes were quite grand and displayed various revival styles, including Russell's own large, Colonial Revival mansion at 2009 Victoria Drive. In the early post World War II years, Floral Park continued its development as numerous, smaller, single-family houses were built. Continuing in the Floral Park tradition, they were mostly revival in style. In the 1950s, low, horizontal Ranch Style houses completed the growth of Floral Park. Today (2003) Floral Park maintains its identity as the premier neighborhood of Santa Ana, historically home to many affluent and prominent citizens.

The Maharajah House appears eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. It also qualifies for listing in the Santa Ana Register of Historical Properties under Criterion 1 for its exemplification of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style and under Criterion 4b for its association with a foreign ruling family, the Holkars of Indore, India. Architecturally, the house is distinguished by its scale, massing, horizontal lines, use of characteristic features such as corner casement windows, and its fortress-like quality. The house also contributes to the historic character of the Floral Park neighborhood through its age, style, scale, and historic associations with prominent residents. Additionally, the house has been categorized as "Landmark" for its unique architectural significance as an example of the Art Moderne variant of the Moderne style and its historic/cultural significance to City as the "castle" of a sitting ruler. All original exterior features of the Maharajah House are considered character defining and should be preserved. These features include, but may not be limited to: materials and finishes (stucco, wrought iron); roof configuration, materials, and treatment; massing and composition; entry, doors and windows; terraces and walled gardens; architectural detailing (banding, window grilles, canopies, entry surround); chimneys and fireplaces; attached garage; original landscaping; and any original interior materials, spaces, finishes, and furnishings.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Maharajah House

*Recorded by Leslie J. Heumann, SAIC

*Date May 25, 2003

☒ Continuation ☐ Update

***B12. References (continued):**

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P5b. Photograph: *North and west elevations, April 2003.*

