



DeKalb County Department of Planning & Sustainability

Lee May
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Andrew A. Baker, AICP
Director



DEKALB HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION

FORMAT –

SHORT FORM

I. Name of District

Briarpark Court Historic District

II. Location of District

List principal streets, highways, and geographic features within and around the district:

The district is located in unincorporated DeKalb County and is roughly bounded east of Briarcliff Road (State Route 42) off Old Briarcliff Road. The district's northern boundary is just south of Peachtree Creek. It lies south of Clifton Road and due south of the Sage Hill Shopping Center.

City or vicinity of: Atlanta

III. Description of District

a. Brief Narrative description

Platted in 1953, The Briarpark Court Historic District is a well-preserved distinct enclave of 18 midcentury modern ranch-style homes. The design of the homes in the district are unified through thoughtful site planning and visually and materially integrated interior and exterior spaces that achieve

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Revised 2/04/11

an innate link with nature. Frank Lloyd Wright described this design approach as “organic architecture”. The homes in the district also represent rare regional examples of an expression of modern design philosophy attributable to the Bauhaus Art School, founded by Walter Gropius in the Weimar Republic of Germany in 1919. This minimalist approach which features clean lines with bold, simple coloration is reflected in many of the district’s homes, particularly those designed by architect Andre Steiner, a.k.a. Andrew E. Steiner, who studied at the Bauhaus in 1932. The Bauhaus had a major impact on art and architecture trends in the United States in the decades following its demise during World War II, as many of its artists and designers, including Steiner, fled to the U.S. to escape the Nazi regime. For Atlanta, Mr. Steiner’s work in the district, including his personal residence which he occupied for forty years, are important preserved examples of this international design phenomenon.

The district features many of the signature elements of Steiner’s Bauhaus-inspired designs:

- Use of stone patios and floors that extend from outdoor spaces into the homes’ interiors
- Homes positioned at the peak of the district’s lots with window walls to maximize the most advantageous views of the surrounding forest
- Use of sky domes
- Perforated brick walls
- Flat and/or low sloped roofs
- Horizontal ribbon windows
- T-shaped or H-shaped plans
- Concern for cataloging/retaining existing trees (topography studies commonplace in his architectural plans)
- Thoughtfully integrated carports that do not obstruct or diminish the architecture or view of the homes
- Open concept living/kitchen floor plans; seen in Steiner designs as early as 1961 and a precursor to today's favored style

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The Briarpark Court Historic District showcases premier examples of the midcentury modern ranch home in Georgia. The neighborhood visually embodies all elements and styles of ranch housing that were developed in midcentury Georgia. There are examples of Colonial Revival, Eichler inspired, contemporary and the typical "brick" ranch home. There is even a split level home in the district, constructed in 1954, well before the widespread appearance of such homes in the 1970's. The homes were built to their best advantage with attention to land topography counteracting the typical "low to the ground" feature of a midcentury ranch. All sit laterally on their lots. Backyards are often an extension of the living space in many Briarpark homes through the use of picture windows, sliding glass doors and expansive patios. The district showcases a variety of styles, exterior materials, window shapes and sizes, mono pitched & flat roofs and zoned floor plans with open spaces – all of which are typical to the period. There is great diversity of midcentury ranch homes in the district.

As previously mentioned, many homes in the district were designed by a historically significant architect who contributed much to Georgia and humanity. Steiner, a holocaust survivor, negotiated with Nazi occupiers to save some 7,000 Slovakian Jewish lives during World War II. He was also responsible for designing master plans at Stone Mountain, Jekyll Island, Callaway Gardens and Emory University. His legacy survives not only through his preserved residential designs on Briarpark Court and across Georgia, but also through the decedents of the lives he saved.

We estimate about half of Steiner's 25 built homes are extant, and many of these are in the Briarpark Court subdivision. These homes are among the finest surviving examples of midcentury modern residential architecture in Atlanta and are well worth preserving as a Historic District.

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The Briarpark Court historic District includes the following residences:

Address:	Year Constructed:
734 Briar Park Court	1954
735 Briar Park Court	1955
741 Briar Park Court	1954
742 Briar Park Court	1956
751 Briar Park Court	1953
752 Briar Park Court	1953
757 Briar Park Court	1953
758 Briar Park Court	1955
765 Briar Park Court	1953
766 Briar Park Court	1954
774 Briar Park Court	1954
775 Briar Park Court	1954
782 Briar Park Court	1954
783 Briar Park Court	1953
790 Briar Park Court	1953
791 Briar Park Court	1953
800 Briar Park Court	1955
801 Briar Park Court	1953

b. Boundaries of District

Briefly describe the proposed boundaries of the district.

The Briarpark Court Historic District consists of several contiguous and historically related midcentury modern houses constructed between 1953 and 1955 located off Old Briarcliff Road. This one street development of ranch homes differs from other developments because it is much smaller, the homes were architect commissioned and its location is closer to Atlanta than other larger suburban developments. The district is located in the 18th District, Land Lot 57.

The district is bound by Briarcliff Road, Peachtree Creek and Old Briarcliff Road. It is in close proximity to Emory University, the CDC, the Fox 5 Atlanta television station and the Historic Druid Hills district.

c. Reason(s) for designation

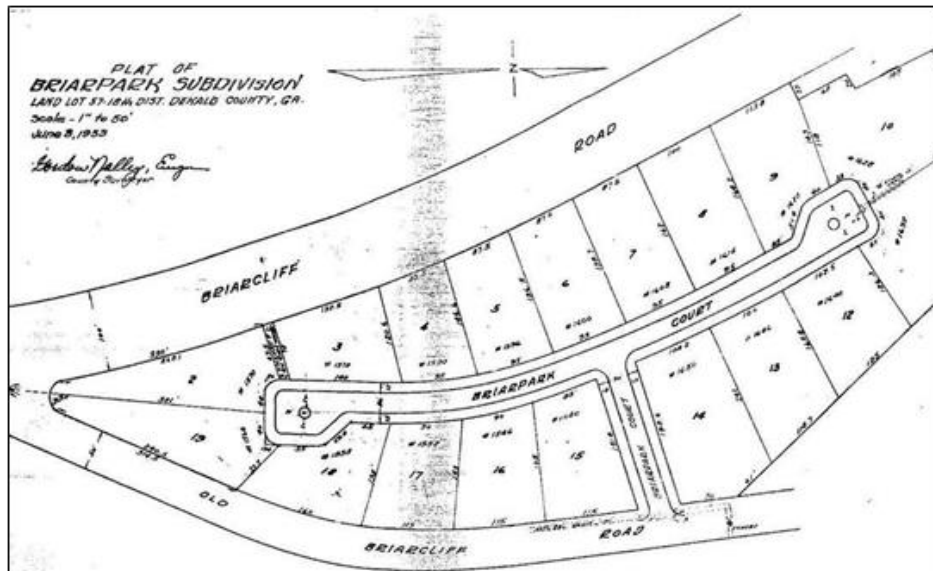
The district is being nominated at the local level of significance

because it is an excellent and intact example of a mid-20th-century subdivision that was developed at a time of rapid growth in DeKalb County and is associated with the architect Andre Steiner, a significant figure in both Atlanta and Georgia.

The district embodies distinctive characteristics in architecture related to the midcentury modern era represented by the innovative and significant work of Andre Steiner. The architect designed his own home, as well as those of several of his friends and colleagues, on the street and is credited with bringing the Bauhaus Modern style to Atlanta (Times of DeKalb, "The Ranch House in DeKalb County", April 2010.) Steiner, a significant historical contributor, was the head planner and architect at the Atlanta firm, Robert and Company. In addition to his milestone work in the district, he is credited with Master Plans for Georgia State University, Emory University, Stone Mountain, Jekyll Island and revised plans for Callaway Gardens. The Atlanta History Center holds an extensive archive of Steiner's original plans and renderings, including those of sever homes in the district (see Appendix).

d. Map

Provide a map of the district showing the boundaries and major streets.



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VI. Applicant Information

Name(s) of sponsor: Russ Haynie

Organization or agency (if applicable):

Mailing Address:

751 Briar Park Court NE

City: Atlanta State: GA Zip Code: 30306

Telephone—Monday-Friday daytime and/or work:

(404) 862-2314

E-mail: russ.haynie@gmail.com

I. Form Prepared By

Name: Carol Tarver

Title and Organization or Company, if any:

Mailing Address: 791 Briar Park Court NE

City: Atlanta State: GA Zip Code: 30306

Telephone—Monday-Friday daytime and/or work:

(404) 861-3091

E-mail: ctarver@me.com

Date: November 10, 2016

What is the preparer's relationship to or interest in the district?

Resident

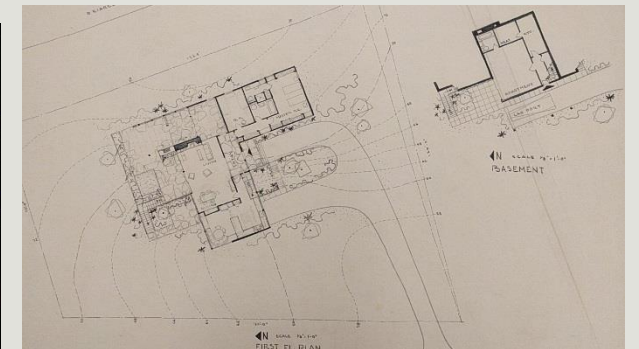
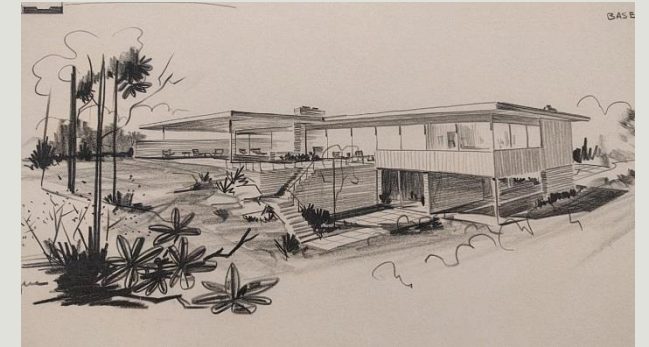
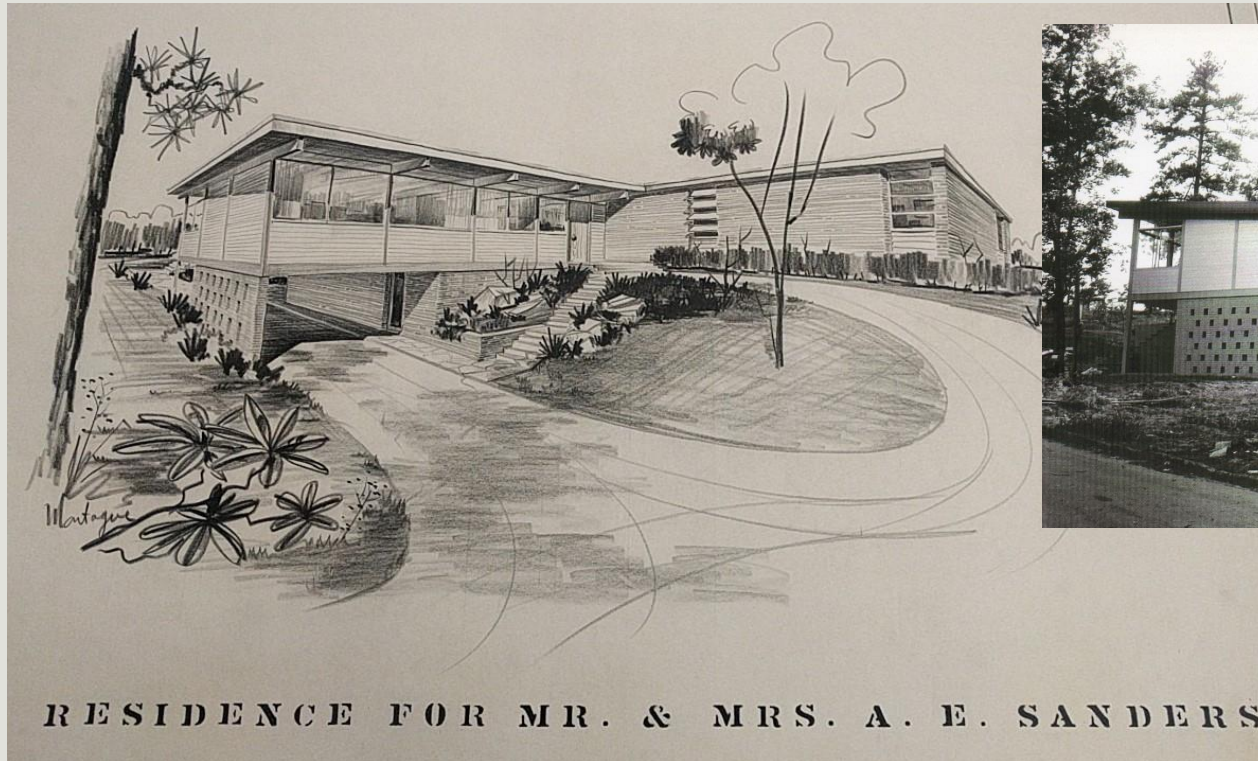
Appendix

BRIARPARK COURT HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION

Briarpark Court homes

ANDRE STEINER

Steiner's Work on Briarpark Court



742 Briarpark Court

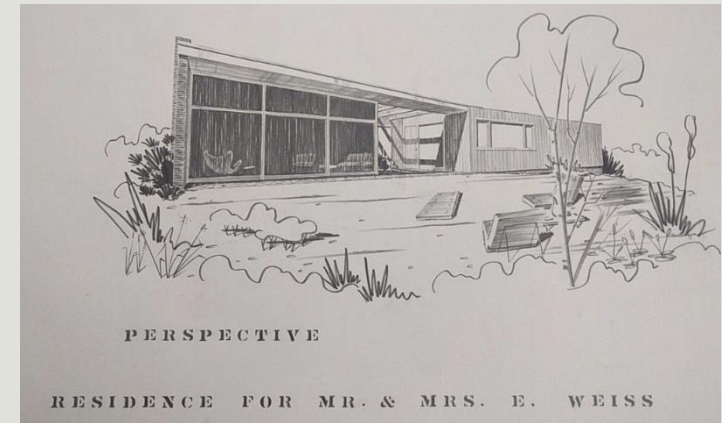
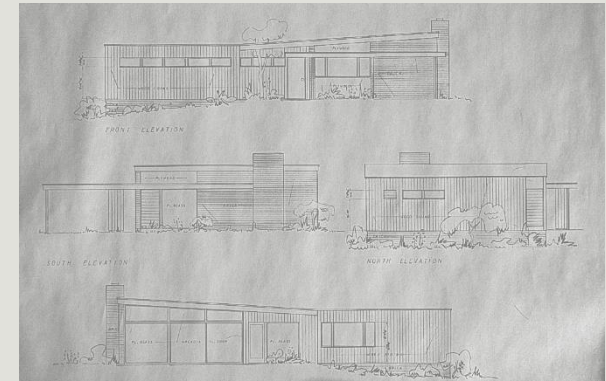
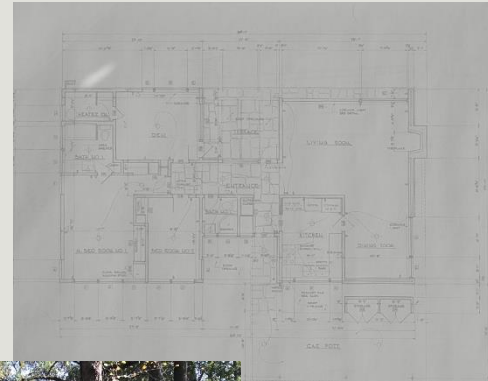
Steiner's Work on Briarpark Court



751 Briarpark Court



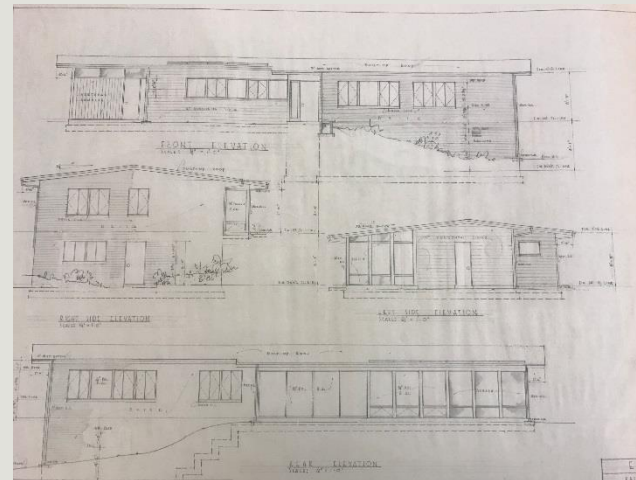
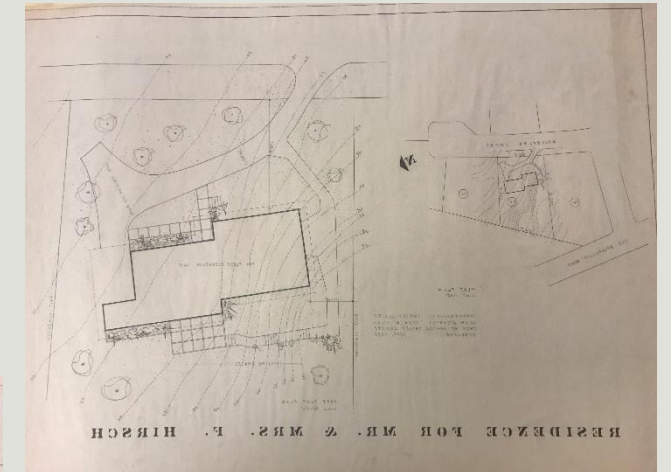
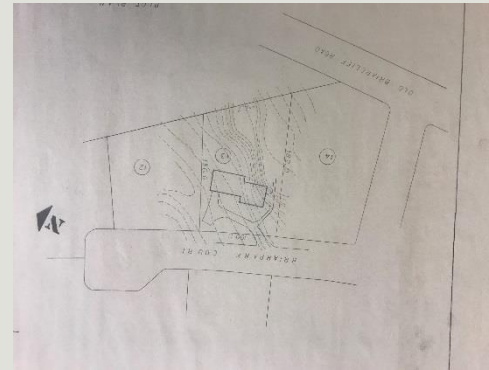
Today



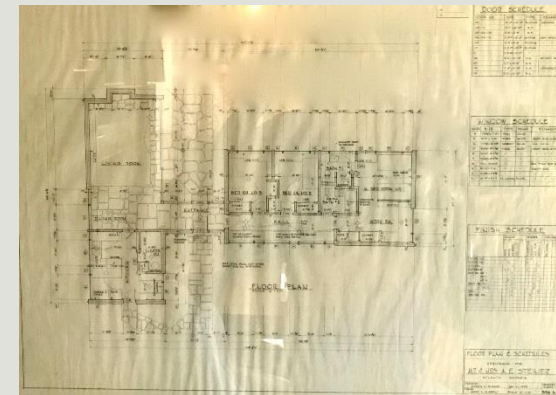
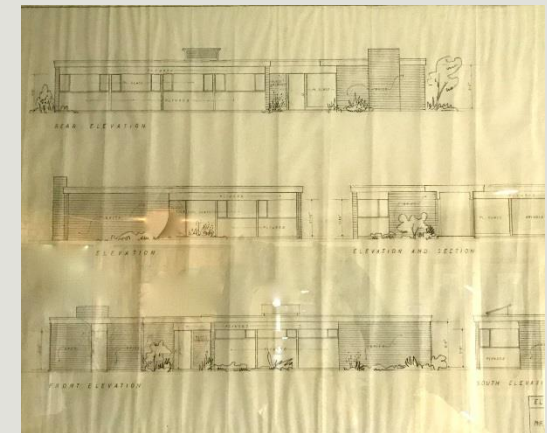
Steiner's Work on Briarpark Court



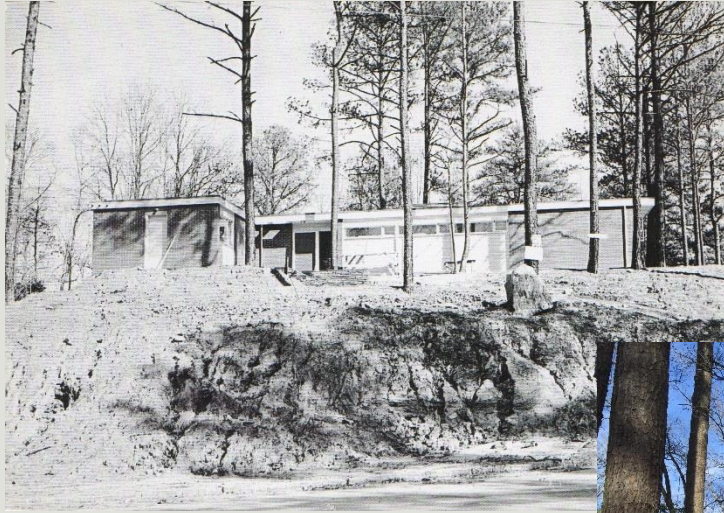
783 Briarpark Court



Steiner's Residence on Briarpark Court



Steiner's Residence on Briarpark Court



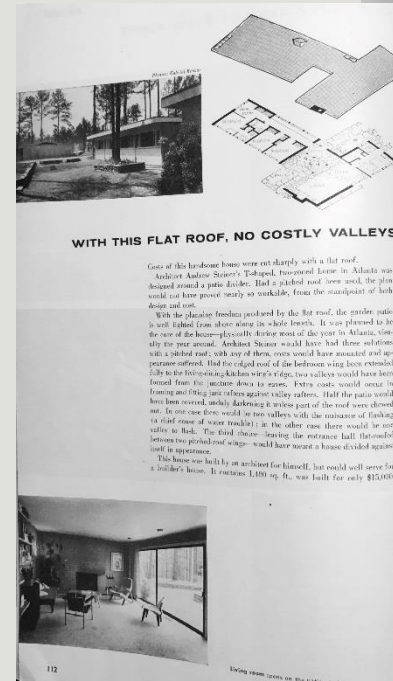
Under Construction



Today



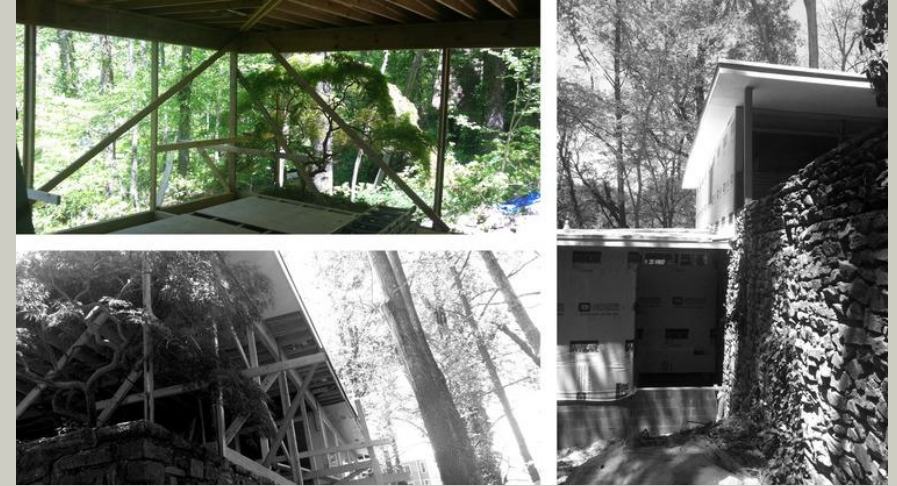
791 Briarpark Court



Featured in House & Home
June, 1955



Restoration and rehabilitation of a circa 1955 modern house designed by Steiner on a pitched site adjacent to the south fork of Peachtree Creek. New spaces include a lower level owners suite with outdoor shower and pool, and enlarged family room, screen porch and updated kitchen.



Briarpark Court Restoration

Gamble & Gamble Architects

Midcentury Modern

RANCH HOMES ON BRIARPARK COURT

Midcentury style diversity on Briarpark Court



Midcentury style diversity on Briarpark Court



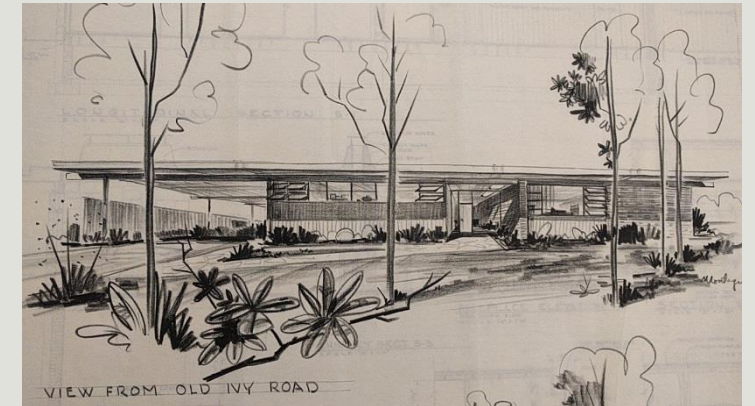
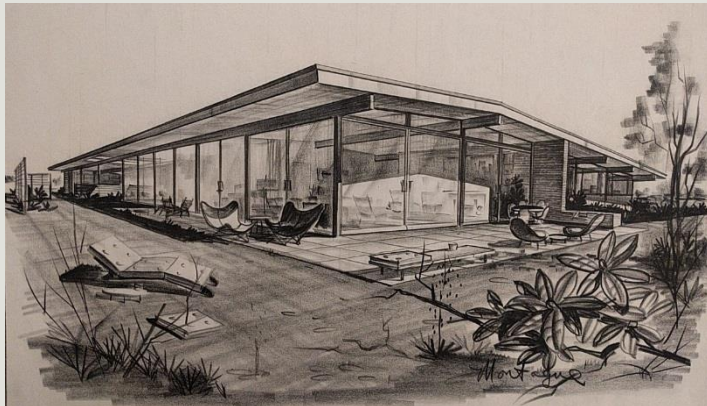
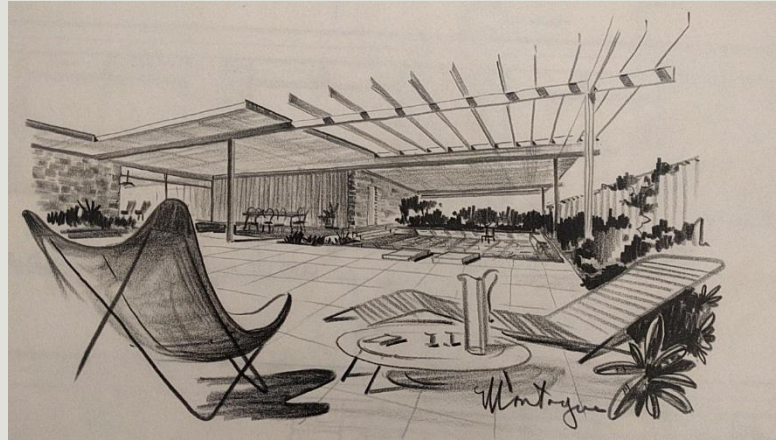
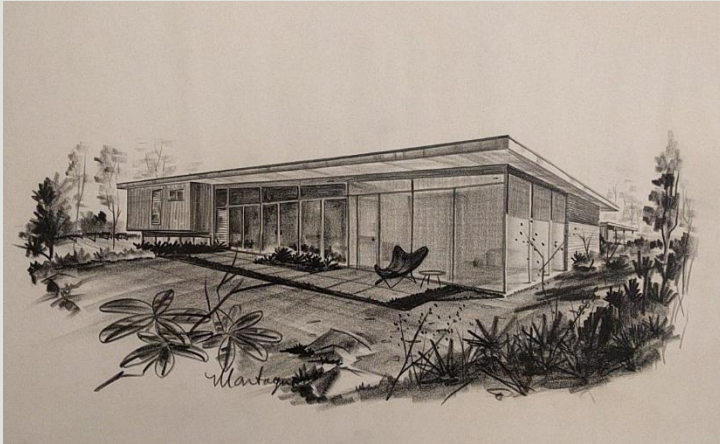
Midcentury style diversity on Briarpark Court



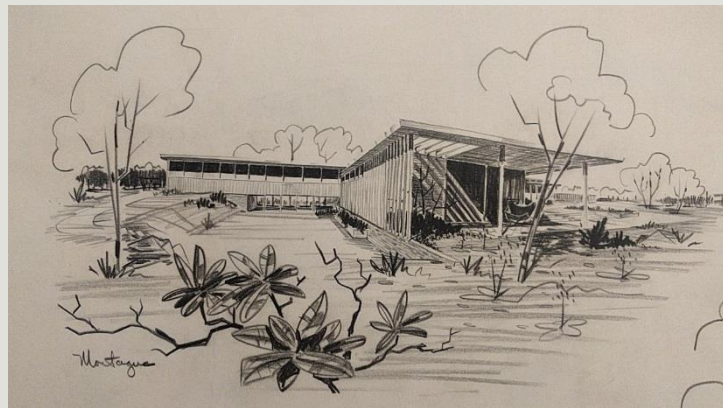
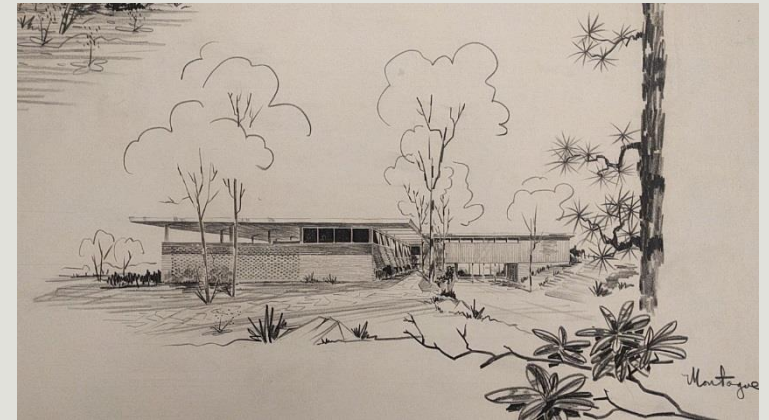
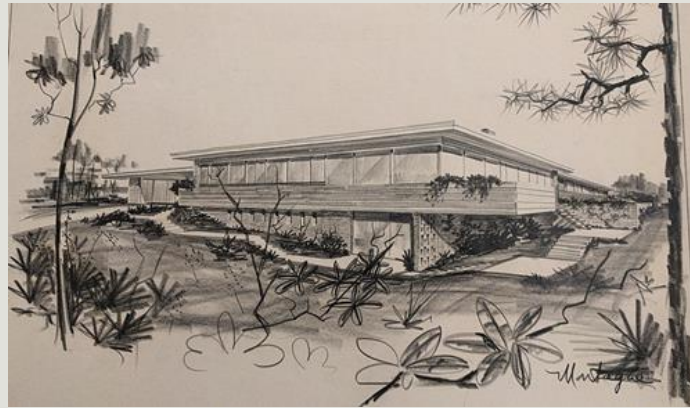
Architectural Renderings

ANDRE STEINER

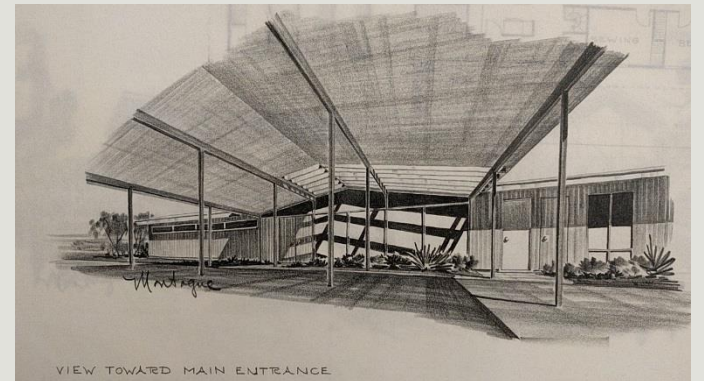
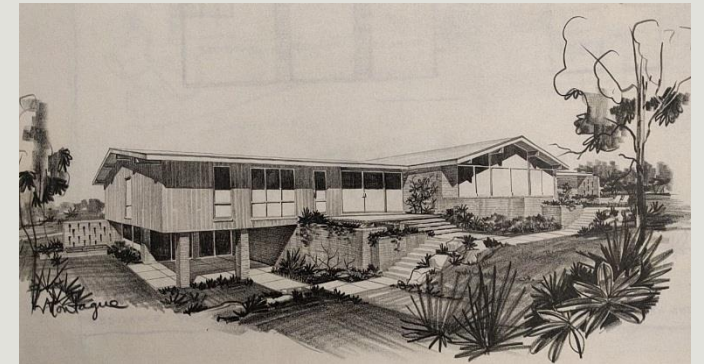
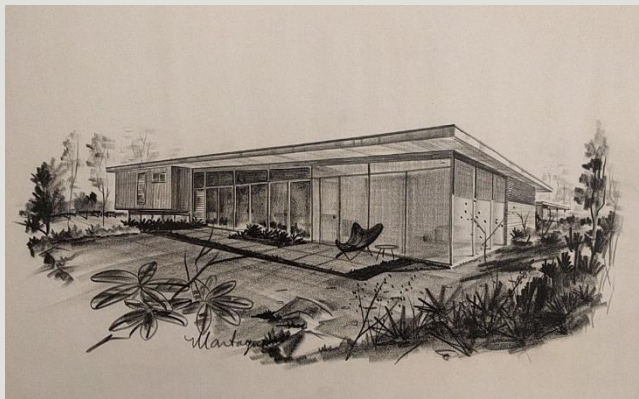
Steiner's Other Residential Work



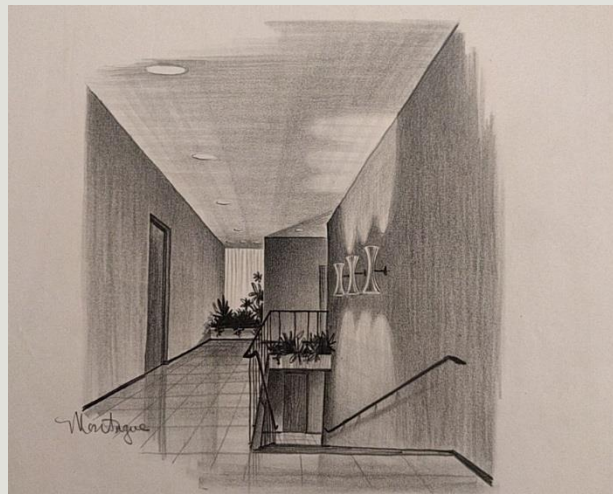
Steiner's Other Residential Work



Steiner's Other Residential Work



Steiner's Commercial Work



Other Atlanta work

ANDRE STEINER



For years, the light-flooded ranch sat relatively untouched on its hillside perch, until the homeowners found the house and embraced the idea a full-scale renovation. The original house—defined by its simplicity with clean lines and a multitude of windows celebrating the outdoors—was designed by Andre Steiner, a Bauhaus-trained architect and unsung Holocaust hero. After fleeing Europe in the '40s, Steiner called Atlanta home, and this house is one of his last remaining works. “

Restored Steiner home

Chastain Park; Atlanta Homes and Lifestyle, October 2014



Andre Steiner designed Ahavath Achim Synagogue which was completed in 1958. The sanctuary seats 2,500 and has room for 3,500 in a pinch. Big, warm, not intimidating, it's minimal with plenty to see. The windows are more folksy than abstract and are loaded with symbolism. Each of the 28 windows in the sanctuary deserves a long look.

Steiner designed synagogue

Architecture Tourist, September 23, 2011

His Legacy

ANDRE STEINER

Legacy



Endre Steiner was born to a Jewish family in Dunajská Streda, Slovakia on 22 August 1908. In 1925-32 he studied at the German Technical University in Brno. Having completed his training at Ernst Wiesner's studio, he set up his own office in 1934; the commercial and apartment building in Kamenné Square in Bratislava was one of his first major contracts. His projects in Brno mainly involve apartment buildings and interiors for Jewish clients and the Stanislav Neděla building company. He and architect Endre Szönyi published the journal Forum in Bratislava in 1931-38.

During World War II, Steiner was a member of the Working Group, an illegal organization working to prevent deportations of Slovak Jews to extermination camps in Poland. After the Communist takeover in 1948, he emigrated with his family to Cuba, where he was offered the position of chief architect in an American design studio. In 1950 he settled in Atlanta in the USA. In the 1960s he became the manager of the area and town planning division at Robert and Company Associates, an architecture company based in Atlanta. At the same time, he was a vice-chairman of the Urban Design Department at the American Institute of Planners and the chairman of its chamber in Georgia; he also taught at the university in Atlanta.

The architect's adventures and activities during WWII were depicted in Brad Lichtenstein's 1999 documentary entitled *André's Lives*.

Legacy



USA Today, August 22, 2008, in honor of Steiner's 100th birthday:

"He became a celebrated architect here, responsible for planning some of the state's largest attractions, from Stone Mountain Park to Emory University. He was also known for more ambitious ideas, like a 1970s proposal for a mini-city in downtown Atlanta that could be home to 130,000 people."

Record of the Jekyll Island State Park Authority (JISPA) Board Meeting of 8 June 2009, in the Convention Center:

Dr. McCash announced that Andre Steiner had passed away on 22 April 2009, at the age of 100. In the process of preparing an article about the State-owned period of Jekyll Island State Park, McCash had discovered that Steiner had been the designer of the original Master Plan for the State Park. [McCash noted that the article was published in a book entitled "Southern Journeys", Alabama Press.] In November, 2008, McCash ran across an article about Steiner, citing his heroism in saving some 7,000 Slovakian Jewish lives during the Holocaust. McCash interviewed Steiner in Atlanta twice in early 2009, and the result has been an article published in "Georgia Backroads" magazine (the current issue). Before World War II, Steiner had been a well known architect living in Brno, Czechoslovakia. Steiner was arrested for being Jewish when the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, but when the Nazis realized his value as an architect, they put him to work on partially-completed building complexes and later on resort edifices that they wanted to see finished. When the Nazis began deporting Slovakian Jews to concentration camps, Steiner was able to save many who would otherwise have been taken to Auschwitz, by convincing the invaders to keep them in Slovakia and use them in manufacturing work camps. Conditions eventually worsened, and Steiner and his family were forced to flee to the mountains, and hide in a woodcutter's hut. When the war ended, the Steiners moved into one of the resorts that they had built for the Nazis, and used it as a center for reuniting of orphans with their families.

In 1948, the Steiners moved to Cuba. After two years, they were able to immigrate to Atlanta, where Steiner obtained a position with Robert & Company, the famous architectural firm which was eventually given the contract to design Jekyll Island State Park, in 1951. This project was Steiner's favorite through the rest of his life (others included Callaway Gardens, the campus of Georgia State University, and buildings for Emory University). It was Steiner who made the decision to limit development to 35% of the upland acreage, because he felt that the natural beauty of the Park should never be compromised. His plan won out over a competing one, which included turning Jekyll Island into a little Daytona Beach, with auto racing on the beaches. Steiner had argued vehemently against overdevelopment, with houses and houses (his words) like we have now along the Florida coast. He also intended for his plan to favor the use of the Park by the middle class, rather than the rich. He spent several months living in Villa Mariana, completing his plan. He was, in many respects, the creator of Jekyll Island State Park as we know it today. Dr. McCash called for Steiner to be paid tribute by the Park Authority, and regretted that he could not be present to accept the honor himself.

Chairman Royal offered the official recognition of Andre Steiner's contribution to the formation of Jekyll Island State Park as an action item for the Authority Board. Chairman Krueger thanked Dr. McCash for her presentation.