Revised Architectural Description

The Van Zwaluwenberg Home

2015 Lanihuli Drive
Honolulu, HI 96822

Current residence of
Kathy Williams
held in the Living Trust of
Kwong Yen and Dorothy Wells Lum
808-955-1973

The Van Zwaluwenberg house is located on a sloping green lot in the densely populated neighborhood of Manoa. The two story Craftsman style house has a meandering floor plan with many rooms of various shapes and sizes and several doorways leading to lanais and garden paths, steps and stoops. The site offers a spectacular view of the valley.

The original foundation of the Van Zwaluwenburg house is of poured concrete and uncut stone. Two extensions of the interior living space, which include a den and master bath, also have foundations of poured concrete. The wood posts framing the master bedroom, an addition extending out from the first floor of the home, rest atop rubble and poured concrete piers that are capped with concrete slabs and tin flashing.

The old entry door (east) has been painted over. Most of its original hardware is missing or has been replaced. Two doors, located on the first floor of what has served as the front of the
home since the late 1930s (west), are bracketed arched board and batten. They have a natural wood finish and retain their original hardware (ornamental wrought iron handles, hinges, and window grilles). The main entryway sits beneath an overhanging roof and has a built-in bench nestled to the right of the front door. The bench is inset within a solid low running wood wall encircling the porch.

The second story windows are of various design. Most are single-paned, in a one-over-one pattern. There are also sliding, casement, hopper, and screen-only windows. A picture window flanked by two casement windows rests in the center of the north wall of the master bedroom. This addition is in keeping with the house's original design and actually serves to reinforce the integrity of the site. Moreover, the panoramic view, which the addition presently affords the occupants, successfully integrates a prime feature of the exterior site into the interior dwelling space. Indeed, prior to 1993 and the construction of the master bedroom, an unencumbered view of Manoa Valley from this piece of property was accessible only from outside the home.

The Van Zwaluwenburg house has a medium pitched hipped roof. It is covered over with plain composition shingles and has open eaves and rakes. The exterior is comprised of simple drop siding over a wood frame and is painted an almond color. The walls of the new addition are covered over by a narrower cut of the same style of drop siding. They are painted a shade lighter than the paint on the original exterior walls.

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The interior of the house shows evidence of changes made during the 1960s. Some of the alterations to the interior are not in keeping with the structure's original style. For example, the walls of the first floor area now used as a den/game room were originally comprised of irregular rock. They have been replaced by concrete blocks. A poured concrete floor has replaced the room's original stone floor.

Similarly, a small room just inside the front door (southwest) was originally a bath. All of its fixtures have been removed and the space is now being used as a storage closet. A modern lavatory occupies this floor as well.

Two small bedrooms occupy a once open space at the foot of the curving stairway leading up to the second story. At the level of its first landing there is a doorway leading to the master bath, bedroom and laundry room. To ensure the privacy of the master bedroom's occupants, the hallway directly connecting the smaller rooms and the front hall with the rear of the home has been sealed off. Materials used to cover the doorway replicate the existing board and batten design found throughout most of the home's interior.

The stairway is original. Wood floors, central to the integrity of the old house, have been maintained throughout. The cut and width of the new pecan flooring is identical to the darker wood floors of the original plan.

The second story hosts a grand living room, a small study and second den, along with an airy dining room and spacious kitchen. Just off of the dining area is a large room, extending the width
of the house (north). This room has been partitioned off by a wall of bookshelves and cabinets creating a small study area and a second den. The partition does not entirely seal the two spaces off from one another. The study's open doorway allows the area to retain a feeling of openness while providing a sense of privacy to both rooms' occupants.

The kitchen has been extended several feet by knocking out the wall that separated it from the pantry (southeast). All of its fixtures and appliances are new. At the center of the room, extra cabinet and counter space is provided by a kitchen block and secondary sink. New shelves, cabinets and a booth and counter line the rear of the kitchen. Many windows and a sliding glass door lead out to a patio which spans the width of the structure.

A chimney sits on the roof slope between the kitchen and the living room. The living room has a wood-burning fireplace and wood shutters that cover full length sliding glass doors opening onto a narrow wooden deck, which serves primarily as a step leading down to the brick patio outside (south). Overhead a solid roof extends outward for around a dozen feet, culminating in an arbor. Flower beds and an herb garden line the edge of the patio. A thick, high wall of night blooming cereus signals the edge of the Van Zwaluwenburg home's property line (south).

Just beyond the front door of the house is a sloping fountain of lava rock. Ferns and other fauna line the small reflecting pond at its base. At the first floor, the lot is level and forms a small front yard (west). A stone path wanders up and around from the fountain's base to the patio at the second level.

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(southwest). Steps of poured concrete, concrete reinforced rock, loose concrete slabs and rock, and an older hewn lava rock stairway mark the pathway down along the rear of the house (east) to the driveway at the base of the lot.

At the edge of the lower lawn (northwest) stands an irregular faced retaining wall of uncut stone and lava rock. The rock is reinforced with concrete mortar. A wrought iron fence is anchored in the top of the wall for the children's safety. The wall, part of the original site's plan, had to be rebuilt after roots from the night blooming cereus began to loosen the stones and send them toppling onto the driveway below. At the foot of the retaining wall, the asphalt drive spreads out covering the width of the lot and then curves down and around the hillside, emptying into Lanihuli Drive (east).
The Van Zwaluwenburg house at 2015 Lanihuli Drive is significant as one of the best examples of Craftsman style architecture in Manoa Valley. The structure is expressive of Honolulu's efforts to define a regional architecture in keeping with national trends.

The Craftsman style originated in California during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Materials used by architects and builders for such structures were meant to complement the natural setting. In addition, the proportions of the simple Craftsman design were intended to give the impression that the dwelling was a logical extension of the natural environment. The materials and design of such structures were readily adapted to the Hawaiian climate when the popularity of the Craftsman style spread to the Territory in the early 1900s.

During the 1920s Manoa Valley was undergoing rapid development. As one of Honolulu's first planned neighborhoods, College Hill served to set the standards by which other developments have been judged as either a success or failure. In 1901, the same year in which the islands of Hawaii became a Territorial Government, Mabel W. Castle had purchased the site from Oahu College (Punahou School). The agreement between Ms. Castle and the Trustees of Oahu College stipulated that for a period of twenty years (1901-1921) no dwelling could be built on this site for less than two-thousand dollars. This type of clause helped to ensure that Manoa Valley would be the site of an
architecturally stable and, presumably, aesthetically pleasing community. The desirability of the College Hill development was further enhanced when the University of Hawaii at Manoa took up residence nearby.

In 1924, Mary P. and Reyer H. Van Zwaluwenburg purchased the site from Ms. Castle and began building the home shortly thereafter, with a single car garage being added on during the 1930s. The house was built in the southeast corner of the lots, leaving most of the area open for recreation and planting, and later, for the paving of a drive-way following the introduction of the automobile as means of transportation for many of the well-to-do residents of Manoa Valley.

The dwelling's architecture is sympathetic to the environment and exhibits many of the outstanding features of the adaptive design work on Oahu in the 1920s, such as shady lanais with generous roof overhangs essential for year-round comfort in Hawaii. As well, the home exhibits a thoughtfully studied indoor-outdoor space relationship. The cool breezes and meandering floor plan, the spectacular view and easy access to exterior spaces provide the home with a feeling of comfort and a sense of permanence. The Van Zwaluwenburg home embodies the initial attraction which the College Hill's houses have had for their owners and visitors since the turn-of-the-century: an undeniable respect for both the natural setting and for their human occupants.