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CHRIS STEWART / *The Chronicle*

William McCormick, a local architect, built a relaxed, spacious home that reflects sweeping views of the San Francisco Bay outside.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT | *1 Norwood Place, Kensington*

Windows on the world

By *Carolyn Said*
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

“Something here is really right,” was Cynthia Correia’s first reaction to the Kensington home. Built in 1950 by local architect William McCormick for himself and his wife, the house at 1 Norwood Place is situated on a half-acre site with a stunning panoramic view of the Golden Gate Bridge, the San Francisco skyline,

Angel Island and Mount Tamalpais.

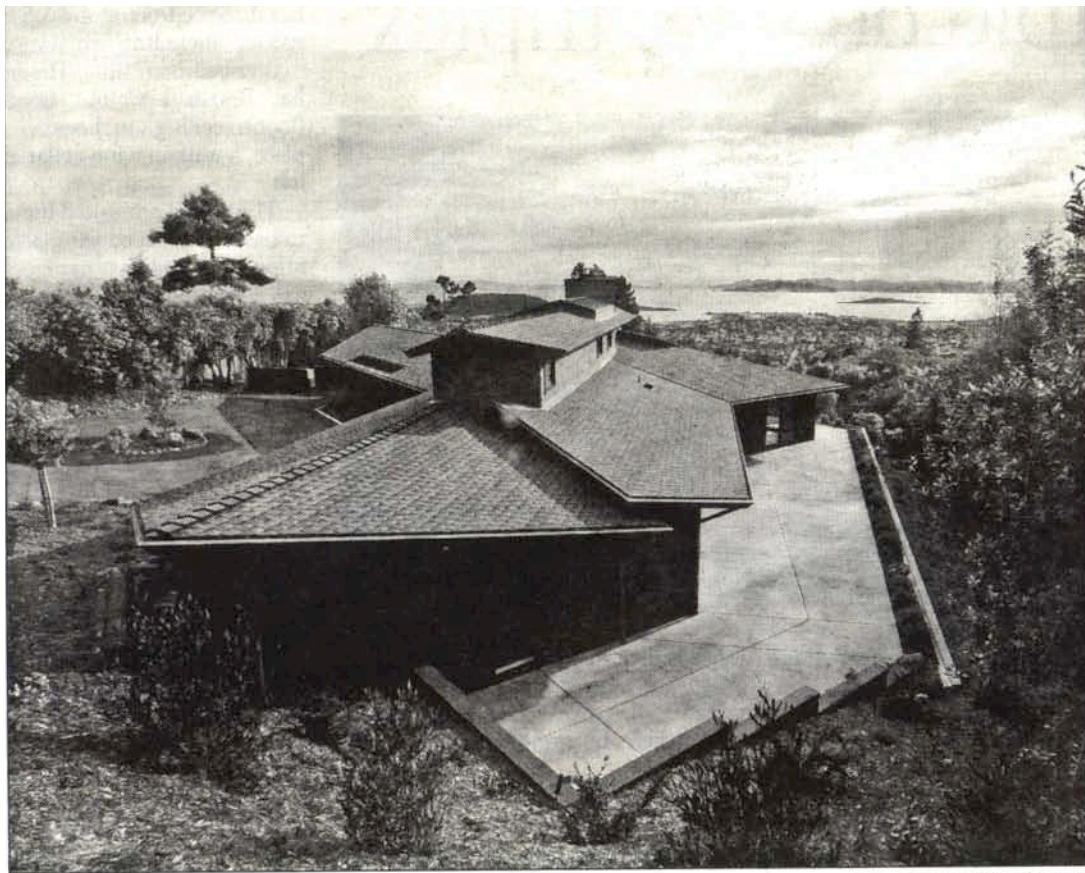
McCormick, who served in Japan after World War II and was an admirer of Frank Lloyd Wright, brought a modern, almost Zenlike, sensibility to the house, which features huge windows showcasing the view from all rooms, and all-natural materials such as redwood, cherry wood, slate, granite and copper.

“There’s a conversation between past and present,” Correia said. “The feng

shui of it is nature — sun, sky, earth.”

The dark moss-green slate floors feel like an extension of the sweeping lawn outside, while the floor-to-ceiling windows flood the house with light and open it to the vast expanse of sky and nature it overlooks. Overhanging eaves echo the gray-blue of the bay, while a blue ceiling in the master bedrooms evokes the twilight sky.

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CHRIS STEWART / *The Chronicle*

Sprawling and almost Zenlike, the house at 1 Norwood Place in Kensington was built in 1950 and renovated by its current owners with an eye to its original details and sensibilities.

An architect's retreat reflects his influences

► NORWOOD PLACE

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Correia, who teaches construction at Laney College, and her partner, Joel Meltzer, who owns a construction business, bought the home two years ago intending to remodel it for themselves, but the project ended up costing so much that they're putting it on the market for \$3.2 million instead.

While adding a wing with two bedrooms, a loft and expanded kitchen, and updating the bathrooms, the couple agonized over matching all the original details, meticulously re-creating everything from the radiant heating system to cabinet knobs.

The result is a boomerang-shaped, single-story home that hugs the contours of the land. The simple, clean lines give it the feeling of a ship with the prow pointing straight at the Golden Gate.

Like Wright's hexagonal Han-

na House in Palo Alto, the house has a strong geometric presence but abstains from conventional 90-degree angles between the walls and ceiling and even in some of the corners. With an open floor plan, the rooms flow into one another.

McCormick's inspiration was Wright's Usonian style, which grew out of the architect's social philosophy. Making abundant use of readily available natural materials, Usonian houses were intended to be affordable, simple and beautiful dwellings. While the Norwood Place house is lovely, it obviously doesn't meet the ideal of affordability. (Usonian, short for "United States of North America," was Wright's suggested substitution for "American.")

With three bedrooms, 2½ baths and a library and loft, the house is 2,753 square feet plus a 400-square-foot garage.

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SOMETHING DIFFERENT

kitchen and laundry room with top-of-the-line appliances.

About halfway through the remodel, the couple realized they couldn't afford to keep the house. "Was I sad?" Correia said. "Oh, tragically so."

But she's pleased with how the house turned out and the reactions it engenders from visitors entranced with it. "People want to pet the wood on the cabinets," she said. "It cracks me up."

"I think the original architect would be really happy," Correia said. "We've paid homage."

The Grubb Co. in Berkeley has the listing.

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The kitchen at 1 Norwood Place reflects the original architecture but with the modern addition of new appliances. The original KitchenAid dishwasher was placed in the company's museum. To say thanks, KitchenAid outfitted and updated the room.



CHRIS STEWART / *The Chronicle*