

# Agenda Report

February 25, 2013

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department  
**SUBJECT: DESIGNATION OF 182 S. ORANGE GROVE BOULEVARD AS A HISTORIC MONUMENT**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines §15308: Class 8 - Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment);
2. Acknowledge that the house and its surrounding landscape architecture was evaluated in the Ambassador West Project Final Environmental Impact Report, and that the structure and site features recommended for designation in this report were found to be historically significant in the FEIR;
3. Find that the house at 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard meets historic monument designation Criterion C in P.M.C. §17.62.040 as a regionally significant, exceptional example of an Arts and Crafts period house in the Tudor Revival style from 1902, and is an exceptional representation of the work of the regionally significant architect Frederick L. Roehrig;
4. Find that the landscape architecture features at 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard meet designation Criterion C because they have integral features of the landscape design for Ambassador College campus mall (or Great Lawn) designed by EDAW, a noted landscape architecture firm;
5. Approve the designation of the property at 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard as a Historic Monument;
6. Adopt the attached resolution approving a Declaration of Historic Monument Designation for 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, California;
7. Authorize the Mayor to execute the attached Declaration of Historic Monument Designation for 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, California; and
8. Direct the City Clerk to record the declaration with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On Monday, November 5, 2012, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that the City Council approve the designation of the property at 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard as Historic Monument under criterion C of PMC §17.62.040.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The house at 182 South Orange Grove Boulevard qualifies for designation as a historic monument under criterion “C” because it is unique and exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an Arts & Crafts period house in the Tudor Revival style. Constructed in 1902, the house was designed by Frederick L. Roehrig, an architect whose work is significant to the region. In addition, the landscape architecture on the property, specifically the walkways and retaining wall, is also part of a significant landscape design by Garrett Eckbo of the planning & landscape firm Eckbo, Dean, Austin, & Williams (EDAW).

## **BACKGROUND:**

On November 3, 2011, Zoe Rou Yuun Su, the former property owner, submitted an application for landmark designation of the property as required by a condition of the approval to build a detached garage on the property. After learning that historic monument designation qualifies the property for the Historic Property Contract (Mills Act), the applicant replaced the application for landmark designation with an application for historic monument designation on May 7, 2012. Warren Hsiau, the current remaining property owner, continues to support the nomination.

The staff evaluated the property according to the historic monument criteria in Title 17 of the Pasadena Municipal Code and determined that the house qualifies for designation. Concurrent with this application, the applicant also submitted an application for Historic Property Contract (Mills Act).

## **Property Data**

- Address: 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91105
- Historic Name: Otho Sylvester A. Sprague House/ Mayfair Mansion
- Location: Interior of the block bounded by Green Street on the north, St. John Avenue on the east, Del Mar Boulevard on the south, and Orange Grove Boulevard on the west
- Date of Construction: 1902, documented by building permit
- Original Architect/Designer: Frederick L. Roehrig (house), Garrett Eckbo/EDAW (landscape features)
- Original / Present Use: Single-family residence
- Original/Present Owner: Otho Sylvester A. Sprague/ Warren Hsiau
- Property Size: 17,890 square feet
- Building Size: 18,400 square feet

### The Site

The house is located on a portion of the former Ambassador College campus in the block bounded by West Green St. on the north, South St. John Ave. on the east, West Del Mar Blvd. on the south, and South Orange Grove Blvd. on the west. The site is in an interior area of the campus generally characterized by large houses and institutional structures, surrounded by rolling hills and large trees. The site includes the house, a front walkway, a rear retaining wall and walkway, and a portion of the Ambassador College Great Lawn.

### The Building Structure and Exterior Features

Built in 1902, the two-story house is irregular in plan with the main entrance oriented to the west. The floor area of the house is 18,400 square feet including the attic and basement. The house exhibits many of the character-defining features of the Tudor Revival style including decorative half-timbering, decorative exposed carved rafter tails and corbels, stucco, and a steeply-pitched cross-gable roof. It has several exceptional characteristics. There is a balustraded balcony beneath the windows on the second story of the south elevation. On the east elevation, there is a half-rounded turret with a conical roof and exposed carved rafter tails. On all four elevations, “a variety of double-hung and awning windows are located within the first story; horizontal bands of double-hung windows are framed by the half-timber pattern of the second floor.” (1997 WGSP Survey) On all sides of the house, each story intermittently jetties outward from the floor below with decorative corbels and floor joints. Also found around the entire façade are decorative rainwater downspouts—typical of high-style Arts and Crafts houses—painted to match the half-timbering and stucco. Buttresses are at the major corners of the building. Pegs are at the intersections of the half-timbers. The five steeply pitched gables have heavy wooden barge boards and deep eaves. The northern gable on the west elevation is shaped similar to a steeply pitched “M,” and has a decorative downspout leading down from its valley. The eaves at the gables are supported by shaped knee braces. Tudor-arched doors, windows, and openings are found on the west and east elevations at the first floor. Also found on the west elevation, above the recessed main entry door, is a three-over-three square grouping of deeply recessed windows with leaded glass.

### Site Features

Included on the Mayfair property are a front walkway, rear retaining wall, and walkway designed by Garrett Eckbo, a large portion of the Ambassador College Great Lawn, and portions of other walkways from a 1960s EDAW plan for the Ambassador campus. The western (front) walkway runs parallel to the house, and has a rectangular pattern of enhanced paving. The eastern (rear) retaining wall and walkway has a similar paving pattern, while the retaining wall itself articulates itself in a triangular pattern at right angles to the house. These site features are contributing to the landmark designation. The landscaping of this property and adjacent properties was “unified and configured for

the Ambassador College campus by EDAW in 1963, 1964, and 1969... [and] include walkway and stairs, enhanced paving and walls, water feature and gardens, wall and the Great Lawn.” (Ambassador West Project Final EIR. Pg. 3.4-39)

#### Documented Changes to the Property

At the time of its construction, the mansion had access to the now-vacated Terrace Drive. This access has been lost because the site was made a part of the Ambassador College campus. The house has undergone several insignificant alterations. It originally had a detached, two-story garage, which was demolished in 1949. The location of the main entrance has also been changed. The original front porch on the east elevation was enclosed into a room, and an existing door on the west elevation became the main entrance as part of its use as a dormitory facility for Ambassador College in 1951. In 1986, a pergola was added to the west façade to accentuate the west entrance. A fire escape was added to the east elevation, presumably to meet code to use the building as a dormitory and classrooms for the College. In 2011, decorative glass window panes were installed in the kitchen area.

#### Current Conditions, Use, and Proposed Plans

The property and house exterior are currently in good condition. It is currently used as a private residence. In 2010, the applicant received approval to build a two-car garage in the west yard opposite the secondary house entrance.

#### Historical Overview

The Arts & Crafts movement began in England around the year 1860 as a response to industrialization and mass production of goods. Its focus was one of promoting manual craftsmanship rather than machine production, which was believed to result in a harmonious society where producers and consumers could take pride in their work and, thereby, enhance their lives. Works were simple and designed to show evidence of construction methods. William Morris is widely cited as being the movement’s primary proponent in England, with his Red House being one of the earliest pieces of English Arts & Crafts architecture. The movement included many other forms of craft including printmaking, decorative objects, wallpaper, textiles, furniture and stained glass.

In America, Elbert Hubbard and Gustav Stickley, who both organized Arts & Crafts guilds, were the movement’s primary proponents. Stickley’s magazine *The Craftsman* was influential in spreading the ideals of the movement throughout the country. The American Arts & Crafts architectural movement was centered in three primary locations: Oak Park, Illinois; Berkeley and Pasadena, each drawing on local materials. In Pasadena, the primary architectural tenet of the movement was to enhance the connection between house and landscape. This was achieved through large roofed front porches, use of wood exterior cladding materials and other locally available materials such as stones from the Arroyo Seco, elimination of ornament, and planning

of the house around natural features of the site (contours, trees, etc.). Architectural details were frequently handcrafted by local artisans.

Character-defining features of the English-influenced Tudor variant of the two-story Arts and Crafts period house, as described in the 1998 study “Residential Architecture in Pasadena 1895-1918: The Influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement” include “front-facing gabled bays or dormer windows articulated with decorative barge board or half-timbering.”

### Frederick L. Roehrig

Frederick Louis Roehrig (1857-1948) is recognized as one of the foremost architects to practice in southern California during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Classically trained, he was influenced by Henry Hobson Richardson and Stanford White and studied architecture in England and France before coming to Pasadena in 1886 during the City’s early boomtown years. Much in demand by wealthy clients, he was highly regarded for his originality and his ability to mix details from various architectural modes into a single harmonious expression. Roehrig displayed his artistic versatility by designing projects with virtuosity in the popular stylistic modes of the day—Queen Anne, Chateausque, Beaux Arts, Spanish Colonial, Mission Revival, Gothic, and Tudor Revival.

In their book *Architecture in Los Angeles*, David Gebhard and Robert Winter describe Roehrig as part of a group of architects whose work kept up with Pasadena’s demand for luxury mansions. Some of the largest and most expensive residences built on the West Coast were designed by Roehrig and built in Pasadena, such as the Marshall-Eagle and Durand residences which are comparable in scale and lavishness to the Gilded Age estates of Newport, Rhode Island. His most famous Pasadena-area commissions covered a range of building types and architectural modes, such as the McNally Residence (1888) Altadena, the Castle Green Apartments and Hotel Green (1898), Pasadena Presbyterian Church (1906; demolished 1972), and the Marshall-Eagle Residence (now the Mayfield School) (1917). Roehrig was very active in southern California and in the Los Angeles area in particular.

In addition to his successful architectural practice, Roehrig was one of the founders of the California State Board of Architectural Examiners, which serves as the licensing agency to architects practicing in California. On a local level, Roehrig was one of three coauthors for the Pasadena Building Code along with Elmer Grey and Henry Mather Greene.

### Garrett Eckbo

Garrett Eckbo (1910-2000) is recognized as an important landscape architect for both his residential and large-scale plans. According to historian Marc Treib, he was known for thinking of the “broad landscape and society first, before focusing on the garden,” a

notion that was reflected in the types of work he was commissioned for during his career. A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Eckbo went on to do graduate work at the Harvard School of Design. Even before his graduation, Eckbo published the first of a long line of studies and books on landscape architecture; entitled "Small Gardens," the study focused on how creative gardens could be designed for increasingly small lots. After graduating, he went on to form numerous architecture partnerships, designing gardens and working on plans for camps and recreational facilities for the Farm Security Administration. His first office in California, established in 1946, was located in Pasadena. During the 1960s, Eckbo was commissioned with the strategic open space plan for the entire state of California.

In 1964, Eckbo went on to form EDAW with Francis Dean, Don Austin, and Edward Williams. During the sixties, Eckbo, working with EDAW, designed the landscape plan for the Ambassador College in Pasadena. EDAW has become one of the foremost private planning and landscape architecture firms in the world, and is internationally involved with large-scale urban projects, ranging from the Washington DC Downtown Action Plan to the winning proposal for London's 2012 Olympic bid.

#### Otho Sylvester A. Sprague

Born and educated in Vermont, Otho Sprague began his career by purchasing an interest in a general store at the age of twenty-one. After serving in the Civil War, he moved to Chicago to live with his brother and together they established Sprague, Warner & Co. The enterprise became the largest wholesale grocery business in the United States and is now known as Sara Lee. Sprague was also a director of the Pullman Co. and the Southern California Railway Co., a founder of The Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a patron of Jane Addams, as well as a Commissioner to the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Because of his failing health, he built the Mayfair Mansion as a winter residence and as a private sanitarium for himself, his wife, and a niece.

After the death of his wife, Sprague furnished a Presbyterian hospital in Pasadena in her memory. He lived in the house for six years before his death. In his will, he founded the Otho S.A. Sprague Memorial Institute in Chicago, which continues to support medical research and education.

#### **ANALYSIS:**

The property at 182 S. Orange Grove Boulevard is eligible for historic monument designation under Criterion C, (§17.62.040 PMC):

[The property] is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type, period, architectural style, or method of construction, or that is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose work is

significant to the region, State, or nation, or that possesses high artistic values that are of regional, State-wide or national significance.

Mayfair Mansion is a regionally significant, exceptional example of an Arts and Crafts period house in the Tudor Revival style from 1902, and is an exceptional representation of the work of the regionally significant architect Frederick L. Roehrig. It is exceptional in its large scale and harmonious composition of massing and detailing and shows the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement in the design, materials, and workmanship as applied to an English-influenced Tudor Revival style. Although the house is monumental in size and scale, the multiple roof planes, asymmetry, and large-scale detailing result in a heavily articulated and thoughtful composition with a picturesque, romantic quality. Design features and materials, including wood half-timbering with pegs at the intersections of the timbers, wood corbels supporting projections of the second story and attic, wood knee braces, exposed rafter tails, and the use of heavier materials at the lower levels (exclusive use of stucco and the presence of buttresses at the first floor) convey the Arts and Crafts design idea of showing the structure of a building. The use of deep eaves responds to the Southern California climate. The carved rafter tails and corbels, shaped knee braces, balustraded balcony, decorative downspouts, pegs, and leaded glass windows demonstrate craftsmanship. The basic qualities of the Tudor Revival style are demonstrated through the house's half-timbering and cross-gable roof, as well as the asymmetrical plan, decorative barge boards, carved rafter tails and corbels, half-timber-framed windows, projecting upper stories and gables, and the Tudor-arched openings.

Few comparable examples of high-style Tudor Revival architecture are extant within the City. Under the Period Revival context, the house at 901 S. San Rafael Avenue (1928) is a designated historic monument but is roughly one-third the size of the Mayfair Mansion. It is clad in stone veneer, and was designed to be evocative of an English country estate. The *El Roble* mansion at 141 North Grand Avenue, a designated landmark, is somewhat smaller in scale to the Mayfair Mansion. Remodeled from a shingle-style mansion to its current appearance in 1923, *El Roble* was designed by J.J. Blick of The Postle Company. Under the Arts and Crafts context, the apartment building at 451 Ford Place (1913, designated landmark), and the house at 350 S. Grand Avenue (1908, eligible for landmark designation), are similar in style with irregular plans, cross-gable roofs, and timber-framing, but are approximately half the size of the Mayfair Mansion, and lack the Mayfair Mansion's harmonious composition of massing and detailing.

Mayfair Mansion is the best representation of an Arts and Crafts period house in the Tudor Revival style by Frederick L. Roehrig. The Edwin R. Chadbourne Residence (1898, Los Angeles), and the Ezra T. Stimson House (1901, Los Angeles HCM#456) are the closest predecessors that show experimentation with design elements such as the eave treatment, knee braces, balconies, and use of cladding seen on the Mayfair Mansion. No other homes by the architect are similar to the Mayfair Mansion.

Under this criterion, the landscape architecture surrounding the house at 182 S. Orange Grove Blvd. is also significant as work of Garrett Eckbo of EDAW. In particular, the walkways and retaining wall demonstrate architectural integrity through their location, design, and setting as they create pedestrian paths and frame the Great Lawn at the east side of the house. These landscape features were denoted as significant historic resources in the EIR prepared for the new Ambassador West development project. The landscape architect is also significant for both Eckbo and his firm's contributions to the region, state, and country.

Staff also analyzed the eligibility of the property under Criterion B, (§17.62.040 PMC): “[The property] is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the City, region, or State.” Properties eligible under this criterion are usually associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance. (How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Park Service, Park Service Bulletin #15, 2002) Because the house is associated with Sprague's retirement and not the productive part of his life, the house is not eligible for designation under Criterion B.

The registration requirements in the City's 1998 study of the Arts & Crafts period state:

Since there are many Arts and Crafts period dwellings in Pasadena, to qualify [for designation] under Criterion C, the eligible property must exemplify the values of design, craftsmanship, and materials which embody the philosophy and practice of the Arts and Crafts movement. The property should comprise the distinguishing features of the associated property type... They must also have a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship and setting.

This property is a strong example of an eclectic house in the Tudor Revival style from the beginning of the Arts and Crafts period that conveys the values of the Arts and Crafts movement and includes the distinguishing features of the property type, as cited in the Historical Overview of the Arts & Crafts period. It has architectural integrity (its ability to demonstrate why it is significant) through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling, as follows:

- Location: The building is in its original location.
- Design: The building retains its form, plan, space, structure, and style, as described above.
- Setting: The setting of the property has changed since its original construction. The setting has changed from a residential neighborhood of large estate lots to a residential and institutional campus setting that was developed by Ambassador College in the 1950s and 1960s. The landscape features on the property as designed by Garrett Eckbo of EDAW have achieved their own



significance. The changes to the setting do not impair the ability of the 1902 structure to convey its significance.

- **Materials**: The building retains virtually all of the original materials used in its construction. The apparent replacement of roof materials was done with compatible materials that continue to convey the character of the original.
- **Workmanship**: The building demonstrates the characteristics of a distinct architectural movement and the craft of the master architect, Frederick L. Roehrig.
- **Feeling**: The building clearly expresses the characteristics of Arts & Crafts period architecture in the Tudor Revival style, as detailed above.

Integrity of association does not apply to the house because it is not associated with a significant event or the life of a significant person. Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a historic monument under criterion C.

#### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The General Plan – Objective 6: Promote preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings and revitalization of traditional neighborhoods and commercial areas.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

Class 8 exemptions consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for the protection of the environment.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

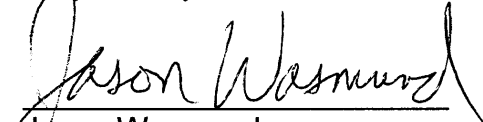
In some instances, owners of designated properties may apply to the City for Historic Property Contract, which allows an alternative and often lower property tax assessment. The City Council reviewed the projected loss of property tax revenue from this program in 2002 when it adopted a local Historic Property Contract (Mills Act) ordinance.

Respectfully submitted,



VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
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Approved by:

  
MICHAEL J. BECK  
City Manager

Attachments:

- Attachment A – Application Materials
- Attachment B – Current Photographs
- Attachment C – 1997 WGSP Survey
- Attachment D – Historic Resources Map and Existing Site Elements Plan from 2007  
Ambassador West EIR
- Attachment E – Effects of Historic Designation
- Attachment F – Ambassador West EIR [CD]

**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASADENA  
ADOPTING A DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION OF  
182 SOUTH ORANGE GROVE BOULEVARD, PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has found that 182 South Orange Grove Boulevard meets criterion "C", as set forth in Section 17.62.040(B)(1) of the Pasadena Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the property at 182 South Orange Grove Boulevard is significant because it is exceptional in the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a historic resource property type and architectural style and is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect whose work is significant to the region; and

WHEREAS, the application for Historic Monument designation is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15308; and

WHEREAS, Warren Hsiau, the property owner, submitted the application for Historic Monument designation; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may approve a recommendation from the Historic Preservation Commission to designate a Historic Monument and evidence such approval by adopting a declaration executed by the Mayor pursuant to Subsection 17.62.050 (C) of the Pasadena Municipal Code.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Pasadena that the attached declaration of Historic Monument designation for 182 South Orange Grove Boulevard is hereby adopted.

Adopted at the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting of the City Council on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2013 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

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MARK JOMSKY, CMC, City Clerk

Approved as to form:



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Theresa E. Fuentes  
Assistant City Attorney

**DECLARATION OF HISTORIC MONUMENT DESIGNATION FOR:**

**182 SOUTH ORANGE GROVE BOULEVARD  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA**

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 17.62.050 of the Pasadena Municipal Code, the City Council of the City of Pasadena by this declaration hereby designates as a Historic Monument certain real property described as:

Lot 8 in Tract No. 63103, in the City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map recorded in Book (pro-forma) Pages (pro-forma) of maps in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

Under Pasadena Municipal Code Section 17.62.090, all work affecting designated Historic Monuments, except ordinary maintenance and repair, such as but not limited to new construction and additions, exterior alterations, relocation, and demolition, is subject to review by the City of Pasadena.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

CITY OF PASADENA  
A municipal corporation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Jomsky, City Clerk

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Bogaard, Mayor