

ATTACHMENT D:
Woodbury Well Description and Photographs

1879 E. WALNUT STREET

Description

The water well and pump-house at 1879 E. Walnut Street (known as Woodbury Well) is located on a 0.3-acre property north side of East Walnut Street between North Allen Avenue and the fork at East Foothill Boulevard and was built in 1930 and designed by Aubrey St. Clair (ca.1890-?). The building is situated at the southern end of the property adjacent to the street. The remainder of the property consists of unenclosed water pumping infrastructure and landscaping surrounded by a six-foot high block wall.

The one-story building is rectangular in plan and designed in an exuberant Art Deco style. It has a flat roof and hand-troweled cement-plaster walls with articulated pilasters. The street-facing elevation is asymmetrical with the eastern end containing the entry door framed by a surround consisting of fluted pilasters and a stylized header with sunburst imagery. Above the entry is a decorative relief with chevrons surrounding a "crown city" logo flanked by large vertically oriented chevrons. The entire entry area is flanked by large fluted piers. The western wing of the street-facing elevation has three narrow bays with rectangular recessed panels below and stylized chevrons with water imagery above. The east elevation is minimally visible above the perimeter wall and consists of similar detailing above and a window opening below.

The building is used for pumping groundwater, occasional treatment/chlorination of groundwater (when necessary) and distribution to customers. The facility is still in use and pumps approximately 1,800 gallons of water per minute. With its small size and its largely windowless walls, the structure resembles Art-Deco style mausoleums from the 1930's, such as the Wilson mausoleum (1939) in Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit and a comparable mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery in Chicago.

It is unknown at this time whether architect Aubrey St. Clair designed any other buildings in Pasadena; however, cursory research indicates that he designed several buildings in Laguna Beach (including the City Hall circa 1933) as well as developing plans for affordable modern housing which were displayed at the Architects' Building Material Exhibit in downtown Los Angeles in 1931. He was the Water & Power Department's first draftsman in 1913 and the city contracted with him to design the Woodbury Well after he had left city employment to pursue his own architectural practice. Our research indicates that St. Clair worked in a variety of styles including streamline moderne, minimal traditional, and Mediterranean revival. Staff was unable to determine whether St. Clair designed other buildings in the Art Deco style.