



## PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

### STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** MARCH 15, 2022

**TO:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** DAVID M. REYES, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

**SUBJECT:** APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION AS A HISTORIC MONUMENT  
171 SOUTH GRAND AVENUE (JOSEPHINE P. EVERETT  
HOUSE/SHAKESPEARE CLUB OF PASADENA)

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### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Historic Preservation Commission:

1. Find that the designation of a historic resource is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15308, Class 8 pertaining to Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment such as designation of historic resources.
2. Find that the building at 171 South Grand Avenue meets Criterion 2 for designation as a Historic Monument pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Section 17.62.040.C.1.c.(2) because it is associated with the life of a person who is significant to the history of the region and beyond. Josephine P. Everett, the original owner and occupant who commissioned the construction of the building in 1928, is widely recognized for having made substantial contributions to the development of arts and culture in Pasadena, the Southern California region, and her native Cleveland, Ohio.
3. Find that the building at 171 South Grand Avenue meets Criterion 3 for designation as a Historic Monument pursuant to PMC Section 17.62.040.C.1.c.(3) because it is an exceptional representation of the work of an architect whose work is significant to the region. Marston & Maybury, a regionally important architectural partnership comprised of Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury, designed numerous notable residences in Southern California, particularly during the 1920s through the 1940s. The Josephine P. Everett House is a unique expression of the firm's work in that it reflects the specific cultural and artistic interests of Everett in its design and configuration, which accommodates both performance and domestic use.

4. Recommend that the City Council approve the designation of the property at 171 South Grand Avenue as a Historic Monument.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On December 10, 2021, the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena submitted an application for designation of the building at 171 South Grand Avenue as a Historic Monument. The subject building, constructed as a single-family residence in 1928 and originally occupied by Josephine P. Everett, is presently owned and operated by the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena. City staff evaluated the property according to the criteria in Title 17 of the PMC and determined that the building qualifies for designation as a Historic Monument. The subject property is presently designated as Landmark, following completion of the landmark designation process in 2018.

## **DESCRIPTION:**

### Property Data:

- Address: 171 South Grand Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105
- Location: West side of South Grand Avenue, at the intersection of Maylin Street
- Date of Construction Completion: 1928 (source: Building Description Blank)
- Original Owner: Josephine P. Everett (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Architect: Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Builder: W.C. Crowell (source: Original Building Permit)
- Original Use: Single-Family Residence
- Present Use: Clubhouse
- Property Size: 40,749 square feet (source: Los Angeles County Assessor)
- Building Size: 8,580 square feet (source: Los Angeles County Assessor)

## **Architectural Description:**

### The Site:

The property is located on a flag-shaped lot on the west side of South Grand Avenue, opposite from its intersection with Maylin Street. The subject building is set back from the street and situated along the southerly boundary of the historic Vista Del Arroyo Hotel (now US District Court of Appeals) which was also designed by Sylvanus Marston. Between the building and the street is a paved surface parking lot. A low stucco-coated wall with a precast cap and finials at driveway openings lines the street edge, in addition to a solid hedge. Other walls of similar design exist in various locations on the property.

### Exterior Features of the Building:

The form of the building is composed of a two-story rectangular mass with one-story wings projecting from each end of the south elevation to form a U-shape floor plan. The building is clad in stucco and covered by a shallow hipped roof with clay tiles. The roof eaves extend moderately with exposed, sculpted-wood rafters. Elaborate classical cast stone detailing around

the door entrance and first-story window along the easterly side of the building contrast with the unadorned walls. The two-story wall plane along the north elevation is articulated by an arcade framing three door openings and a series of asymmetrically composed recessed windows on the first and second stories. The one-story west elevation is composed of a blank wall relieved by a cornice, a door opening, and a row of semi-circular windows with sculptural surrounds. The south side of the building opens out to a raised patio enclosed by the two wings of the building, a balustrade with sculptural detailing, and a fountain. A second-story loggia faces south to the patio below. Two stucco-clad chimneys project from the east and west ends of the two-story mass. Two other chimneys located at the south ends of the one-story wings extend significantly above the roof.

#### Documented Changes to the Property:

The property has undergone minimal exterior alterations since it was originally built in 1928. In 1981, the original clay tile on the roof was removed and re-installed in order to install weather-protective felt. Photographic documentation also shows windows had wood shutters at some point in time and the chimney at the westerly wing had a decorative hood. Both features are no longer extant. In addition, the windows, doors, and exterior walls have been painted.

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

The exterior of the building is currently in good condition and it is used for member gatherings and events of the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena. No changes to the property are proposed at this time.

#### **Historical Overview:**

##### Josephine P. Everett (1866-1937):

The applicants have provided an extensive study of the life of the original owner and occupant of 171 South Grand Avenue, Josephine P. Everett. This biography, which examines her specific contributions to the visual arts, as a book collector, and as a patron of music, is included in Attachment B. As described in the excerpt below, the house on the subject property is directly associated with her life and contributions to the field of arts and culture, which extend far beyond Pasadena. She lived at the property after completion of the house in 1928 until her death in 1937.

"The subject property has been widely recognized as significant, having been remarked upon repeatedly in the local newspapers over the years and when the Shakespeare Club came to occupy it in 1973. The City's Primary Record survey form completed for this property states in Section 813, Significance that the property "is significant as a fine and unusual example of Mediterranean Revival architecture in the City of Pasadena and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, at the local level of significance." As this was primarily an architectural survey, other criteria under which the building might be significant were not considered or evaluated at that time.

Josephine Everett took on many leadership roles with arts organizations and causes and knew how to leverage her own donations, which were often noted in the Los Angeles Times in addition to the *Star News* and *Pasadena Post*, to gain support from a broader range of donors. In addition to her financial generosity, her experience with a variety of organizations would have been an asset to the boards that she served.

The property was designated as a Landmark in 2018 for its significance as a work of Marston & Maybury, its architects, and for its association with Josephine Everett, a prominent patron of the arts who commissioned the house. Everett was a significant person in the history of Pasadena, as the prior Landmark nomination for the property established, but the impact of her work extended beyond Pasadena to a regional impact and was felt in the County of Los Angeles, in San Diego, and as far away as her native Cleveland, Ohio. Therefore, the property appears eligible as a Monument, which requires that a property have regional significance.

Josephine P. Everett commissioned the distinguished and prolific architectural firm of Sylvanus Marston & Edgar Maybury to design her residence at 171 S. Grand Avenue in 1928. She lived in the house during her most productive years of fine arts patronage and philanthropy until her death in 1937.

Josephine Everett was one of a small number of women who were significant arts patrons in Pasadena and contributed to the region's cultural climate and resources. Pasadena's institutions, with the town's early and self-conscious development as a center for art and music, led the Southern California region through much of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Josephine Everett's cultural activities place her in a category with women such as Eva Scott Fenyes, an artist and collector, Grace Nicholson, a gallerist and dealer in Asian art, and Alice Coleman Batchelder, founder of the still-existing Coleman Chamber Concerts. These women had high profiles among artists, dealers, collectors, and gallerists; some had independent wealth, and all had their own interests and motivations that defined their place in the world. While women generally had limited avenues open to them professionally, Everett, Fenyes, Coleman, and Nicholson managed to make names for themselves by making the most of their privileged place in society. In addition--significantly--all (with the exception of Coleman) used architecture to define their place in the town by constructing distinct buildings that would be their homes as well as their places of influence. The Fenyes mansion had a large wing added to the Robert Farquhar-designed house in 1911 for an art studio (and, for her entomologist husband, a smaller laboratory). Grace Nicholson's home, store, and gallery was unlike any building ever seen in Southern California (or most of the U.S., for that matter), taking the form of a Chinese temple oriented around a courtyard. Everett built a public-scaled residence with seating for concerts for 200 people and display of her art collection.

All three of these building projects—the Fenyes studio, the Everett house, and the Grace Nicholson building—had something else in common: all were projects by Sylvanus Marston, in combination with his various partners according to when they were undertaken. These three buildings have gone on to institutional uses that make excellent

use of their size, robust construction (adaptable to public occupancy), and idiosyncrasies.”

Sylvanus Marston (1883-1946) and Edgar Maybury (1889-1969):

Refer to Attachment B for an extensive overview provided by the applicant regarding the regional contributions of architects Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury within the context of Period Revival architecture. Marston, in particular, is credited for designing as many as 1,000 projects in Southern California with various professional partners during his more than three-decade career. In partnership between 1923 and 1941, the Marston & Maybury firm developed numerous regionally significant Period Revival buildings.

Sylvanus Marston was a master of disparate styles and one of the most distinguished and prolific architects in Pasadena and Southern California during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Oakland, California in 1883 and received his education at Pomona College and Cornell University. After graduating, he returned to Pasadena and began his practice designing Craftsman bungalows. One of his first commissions, St. Francis Court, was for a new form of housing which became known as the bungalow court. This housing type became popular in real estate development in Southern California for the following two decades. In 1914, Marston formed a partnership with Garret Van Pelt and designed many Spanish Colonial Revival style houses in Pasadena. Marston & Van Pelt developed many Period Revival houses. In 1923, Edgar Maybury joined the firm and in 1927 Van Pelt left it. Edgar Maybury, who attended the University of Washington, had previously worked as the employee in charge of Reginald D. Johnson and Gordon B. Kaufmann's new office in Phoenix, Arizona in 1920. When Maybury partnered with Marston, they continued to develop residential, public, and commercial buildings in Pasadena and throughout the region until 1941. In 1942, Maybury opened his own office in Altadena.

Period Revival Architecture in Pasadena:

The subject property is a unique example of a custom-designed, Period Revival-era residence, in that it reflects the cultural and artistic interests of its original owner in its design and configuration, which accommodates both performance and domestic use. Specifically, the residence incorporates many elements of the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

According to the City of Pasadena Historic Context Report entitled, “Residential Period Revival Architecture and Development in Pasadena from 1915-1942,” Pasadena was solidly established in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a national center of residential architectural design in the Arts and Crafts genre, and continued to be in the innovative forefront of architectural design during the period 1915-1942. In this era of Period Revival design, an affluent population, rapid growth and the presence of highly trained and skilled architects ensured that Pasadena would be a place where trends in California architecture were happening. In Pasadena, these architects produced designs that interpreted both national and regional precedents. The Arts and Crafts philosophy of design idealized the Colonial past. After 1915, it became increasingly fashionable to create new designs based on the older, classical elements to meet contemporary needs. New England and Southern Colonial and English vernacular residential designs were a major influence in residential architecture in Pasadena during the early part of the period (1915

through the early 1920s). Beginning in the mid-1920s, the revivals were predominantly influenced by Italian, Spanish and California Colonial styles. Because of the influences of designers during the Arts and Crafts period, architects, mostly classically educated, chose to practice in Pasadena in existing firms, such as Greene and Greene, Reginald Johnson, Myron Hunt and Sylvanus Marston; or established their own offices and partnerships. By 1915, talented architects designing residences to house the growing population of the city included Cyril Bennett, Gordon Kaufmann, Paul Williams, Edgar Maybury and Garrett Van Pelt, among others. Period Revival houses appeared in residential neighborhoods in existing annexed tracts in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where, in some cases, houses replaced orange orchards, or in others, filled a vacant parcel in an established neighborhood of Arts and Crafts period houses. Development of newly annexed lands along transit lines expanded the city's boundaries to include new tracts of land west of the original city. This pattern continued with additional annexations, beginning in the 1920s, to the east and northeast. By 1929, most of the current city, except sections of the northeastern part, had been annexed.

Residential development in Pasadena during the 1915 to 1942 period has two distinct phases. Residential building activity in the first phase encompasses the time through World War I up to 1925. Architect and builder-designed houses alike from this ten-year period reflect, almost exclusively, influences of residential styles of the American Colonial period, including the regions of New England, Mid-Atlantic, Southeastern, Southwestern and Monterrey, although the architecture of the 1915 California-Panama Exposition in San Diego is reflected in upper-class architect-designed houses of the late teens and early 1920's. In the second phase, the approximate fifteen years up to World War II, architects and designers were influenced more predominately by the European residential styles of England, Spain, Italy and France, although in the late 1930s there was a re-emergence of designs that reflected Colonial California that was a major force in the development of the California Ranch style. Residential architectural designs beginning in the late 1920s also incorporated distinctly proto-modernist elements and materials in new classical design interpretations.

#### Italian Renaissance Revival Style:

The "Development of Pasadena & Key Influences" section of the Cultural Resources of the Recent Past Historic Context Report describes the context in which Period Revival Architecture and the City Beautiful Movement gained in popularity:

"Following the First World War, as enthusiasm for the Arts & Crafts movement waned, Pasadenans turned to Period Revival styles for their homes and major civic buildings. The wealthy population continued to draw some of the most prominent architects of the period to work in Pasadena, ensuring that the City would continue to be a place where trends in California architecture happened. Along with Santa Barbara, Pasadena emerged as a major center of Mediterranean Revival design.

The use of architectural elements and designs indigenous to the countries surrounding the Mediterranean Sea first emerged in the late 19th century and played an important role in the search for a regional architecture for Southern California because of similarities in landscape and climate. Local residents were

also attracted to the Mediterranean Revival as a way to identify with California's Spanish and Mexican past. This trend is exemplified by the 1915 San Diego Panama-California Exposition.

This resulted in a proliferation of the style by some of the period's most renowned architects, known loosely as the California school. Architects such as Gordon Kaufman, Myron Hunt, Reginald Johnson, Roland Coate, and Wallace Neff worked to capture the uniqueness of California as a place by using traditional influences in innovative ways. [Theirs was] a prodigious output of graceful, picturesque structures with red tile roofs, thick walls, and plain stuccoed surfaces."

The character-defining features of Italian Renaissance Revival-style single-family residences are:

- Asymmetrical form with rectangular U-plan
- Two stories with a shallow hip roof and clay tile
- Smooth, modulated or textured stucco walls
- Prominent, entry bay with column or pilaster surrounds and distinctive classical detailing
- Recessed, heavy front door with heavy hardware
- Arched opening at porte cocheres, side wings, loggias
- Recessed windows that are small in relation to the wall surface (often with heavy shutters)
- Stucco chimneys (plain, hooded, or with chimney pots)
- Use of quoins and other classical detailing

Character-defining features are those visual aspects and physical features or elements constructed during the property's period of significance that give the building its character. In general, a property that retains its character-defining features continues to convey its significance and therefore retains integrity as an historic resource. Removal or alteration of just one character-defining feature does not necessarily alter the integrity of an historic resource. Impacts to historic integrity can result from a single major change or from many incremental changes over time.

## **ANALYSIS:**

The subject property was designated as a Landmark in 2018 for its significance as a work of Marston & Maybury, its architects, and for its association with Josephine P. Everett, a prominent patron of the arts who commissioned the house. Everett was a significant person in the history of Pasadena, as the prior nomination for the property established, but the impact of her work extended beyond Pasadena to a regional impact and was felt in the County of Los Angeles, San Diego, and as far away as her native Cleveland, Ohio. Likewise, while Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury are widely known for their work in Pasadena, their design influence is visible throughout Southern California.

The property at 171 South Grand Avenue is eligible for Historic Monument designation under Criterion 2, (PMC Section 17.62.040.C.1.c.(2)) which states:

[The property] is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in the history of the region, State, or nation.

The property is also eligible for Historic Monument designation under Criterion 3 (PMC Section 17.62.040. C.1.c.(3)), which states:

[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.

Under Criterion 2, the subject property is significant because it is associated with Josephine P. Everett, a patron of arts, culture, and other philanthropic causes whose contributions extend to Pasadena, Southern California, and her native Cleveland, Ohio. Under Criterion 3, it is an exceptional example of a custom-designed Italian Renaissance Revival-style residence designed by regionally significant architects Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury. The property retains historical integrity as follows:

- Location: The building and other site features are in their original locations.
- Design: The building retains its original form, plan, structure, and style, including its exterior stucco cladding, original fenestration, roof form, and entryway.
- Setting: The building retains its setting adjacent to the historic Vista Del Arroyo Hotel (now US District Court of Appeals). Many other extant building in the surrounding neighborhood date to the same period as the subject property. Although the construction of parking lots and driveways have slightly diminished the integrity of the immediate setting, the courtyard on the property remains the primary focus of exterior space and use.
- Materials: The building retains its original exterior materials.
- Workmanship: The building retains the majority of its exterior materials and features that reflect the craftsmanship of early 20<sup>th</sup> century single-family residential design and construction, and therefore retains integrity of workmanship.
- Feeling: The property clearly expresses the characteristics of the Italian Renaissance Revival architectural style and evokes the feeling of the early Period Revival neighborhood character based history of Pasadena.
- Association: Although the building no longer serves as a single-family residence, its change in use under the ownership of the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena required little physical adaptation. Per Everett's instruction, Marston & Maybury designed the residence to include a conservatory with seating to accommodate 200 people. As the clubhouse for the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, the building continues to be used as a performance and gathering space.

Based on the above, the property retains sufficient integrity to qualify for designation as a Historic Landmark under Criteria 2 and 3. The building retains all of its original character-defining features, including two-story configuration with a basement, simple geometric forms, shallowly pitched roof with red clay tile, exposed sculpted-wood rafters, stucco cladding, recessed wood windows, second-story loggia, enclosed patio, and elaborately detailed



entryway. All alterations to the building, including exterior paint, removal of shutters, and removal of chimney hood are compatible with the original structure.

**CONCLUSION:**

The building at 171 South Grand Avenue qualifies for designation as a Historic Monument under Criterion 2 for its association with Josephine P. Everett, a person who is significant to the history of the region and beyond. The building also qualifies under Criterion 3 as an important work of regionally important architects Sylvanus Marston and Edgar Maybury.

Respectfully Submitted,



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For David M. Reyes  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Kevin Johnson  
Principal Planner

**Attachments:**

- A. Vicinity Map
- B. Application & Historical Documentation (Building Description Blank; Original Building Permit; Sanborn Map)
- C. Current Photographs
- D. Effects of Historic Designation