



City of Pasadena  
City Council Hearing  
Monday, February 10, 2025

Conditional Use Permit #7114

## Conditional Use Permit

Applicant: Western Justice Center Foundation  
Use: Short Term Rental for Special Events  
Location: The Maxwell House  
55 S. Grand Ave., Pasadena



# The WJC Campus



- **1920s-30s:** The Maxwell House was built by George H. Maxwell to host Hollywood parties and later sold to The Vista del Arroyo Hotel.
- **1940s:** The Vista del Arroyo Hotel, including The Maxwell House and adjacent bungalows, were taken over by the U.S. Government. After WWII, they were transferred to the General Services Administration.
- **1950s thru 70s:** The properties become surplus federal property, remained vacant and were a frequent neighborhood nuisance.
- **1980s:** The Hotel became the Ninth Circuit Courthouse. WJC was founded by Ninth Circuit Judge Dorothy Nelson and her colleagues.
- **1990s-2000s:** The City leased The Maxwell House and 3 bungalows to WJC, which took nearly 2 decades to renovate the Campus.
- **2010's-2020s:** WJC welcomed an increasing number of nonprofits to the Campus and expanded use of the West Pasadena community by a diverse cross-section of people. An average of 30-40 weddings per year occurred during this time period.

# Conflict Resolution Education



# WJC Today

- **Serving a Dual Mission:** WJC empowers people to strengthen their communities by growing the conflict resolution skills and capacity of youth, educators, schools, and community partners.

WJC also provides a home to nonprofit organizations on its Campus as well as event and meeting space at The Maxwell House for these and other nonprofits in order to enhance their ability to serve the Pasadena community.

- **Growth:** Over the past 4 years, WJC has trained and mobilized more than 4,000 students and educators at over than 40 schools across a dozen school districts.
- **Pasadena:** In 2023, WJC and PUSD launched a multi-year partnership designed to integrate conflict resolution education and restorative practices into all 23 schools. This partnership is a continuation of a long-standing relationships between WJC and PUSD.



# The WJC Campus Today

- **The Lease:** Requires WJC to bear the extensive cost of repairing, maintaining, preserving and improving the four historic buildings that comprise the Campus, all of which were built between the 1890s and the 1920s.
- **The Maxwell House:** Serves as a community gathering place, welcoming a diverse array of people and organizations into West Pasadena. The Maxwell House is available to rent on a short-term basis, including for lifecycle events, such as weddings.

**Like many other nonprofits with stewardship over historic buildings** that require intensive maintenance, repair and improvement, WJC uses the wedding rental revenue to keep the Campus in good condition. Funds are also used to support our school-based programs.

## Nearly 20 nonprofits make their home at WJC:

- Amigos de Los Rios (NEW)
- California Art Club
- Create California
- Community Women Vital Voices
- League of Women Voters of Pasadena
- GRACE (Sisters of Charity)
- Innovative Space for Asian American Christianity
- Jericho Road Pasadena
- Laurel Foundation
- Leadership Pasadena
- MobilityDog
- Mt. Wilson Institute
- Pasadena Audubon Society
- Pasadena Beautiful Foundation
- Tools for Peace
- United Nations Association of Pasadena
- Western Justice Center

# Eaton Fire Response

- **Leaning in with PUSD:** WJC is a critical resource and partner for the district in its time of need.
- **Helping Displaced Nonprofits:** WJC is offering one month's free rent and short-term leases for nonprofits displaced by the Eaton Fire.
- **Free Meeting Space:** WJC is also offering free use of The Maxwell House for displaced nonprofits, as well as groups and people serving communities impacted by the fire.
- **Free FEMA Appeals Clinics:** WJC is serving as a hub for free FEMA appeals clinics held by participating legal services groups.
- **Free Weekly Therapy:** WJC is providing space for free therapy for people affected by the fires.

## FREE MEETING SPACE

*For nonprofits and community members who are working to help people recover from the fires.*





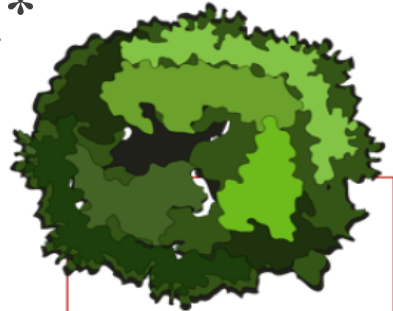
# Community Outreach

- **Spring and Fall of 2023:** WJC reached out to known representatives from our 3 neighboring HOAs (1 S Orange Grove, Vista Grande and Vista Del Arroyo) to discuss the CUP application.
- **October 11, 2023:** WJC held a meeting with our neighbors to hear their concerns.
- **Oct thru Dec 2023:** WJC held individual meetings with HOA reps to address those concerns.
- **Oct thru Dec 2023 :** WJC met face-to-face with Appellants to address their specific concerns. At the final meeting, WJC suggested the parties enter mediation. Appellants declined.
- **February 2024:** WJC notified neighboring HOAs about CUP amendments and received positive responses from all but Appellants.
- **March thru May 2024:** WJC engaged in good faith negotiations with Appellants and voluntarily integrated multiple additional modifications into our Amended CUP at their request.
- **June 2024:** WJC was informed that Appellants did not attend the Zoning Administrator hearing based on a pending settlement agreement.
- **June thru Oct 2024:** Appellants withdrew from settlement talks and appealed. WJC continued to negotiate in good faith and to suggest mediation.
- **October 10, 2024:** Additional conditions were added to the CUP. Appellants appealed regardless.
- **Nov thru Dec 2024:** WJC continued to suggest mediation. Appellants declined.



# Floor Plan\*

\*85 S. Grand Avenue is part of the Campus but is not accessed during events.

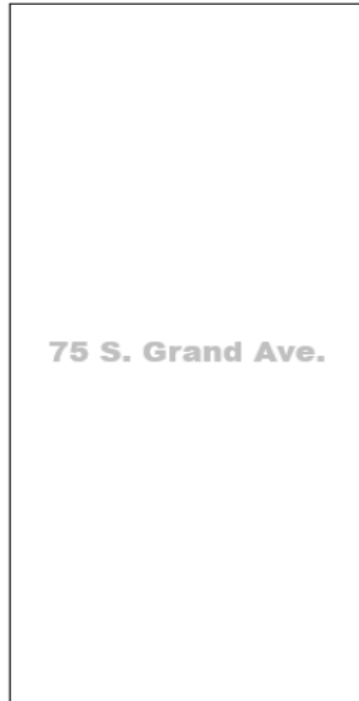


Oak Tree Area

Small Patio  
17' x 34' 6"

Garden Patio  
20' x 45'

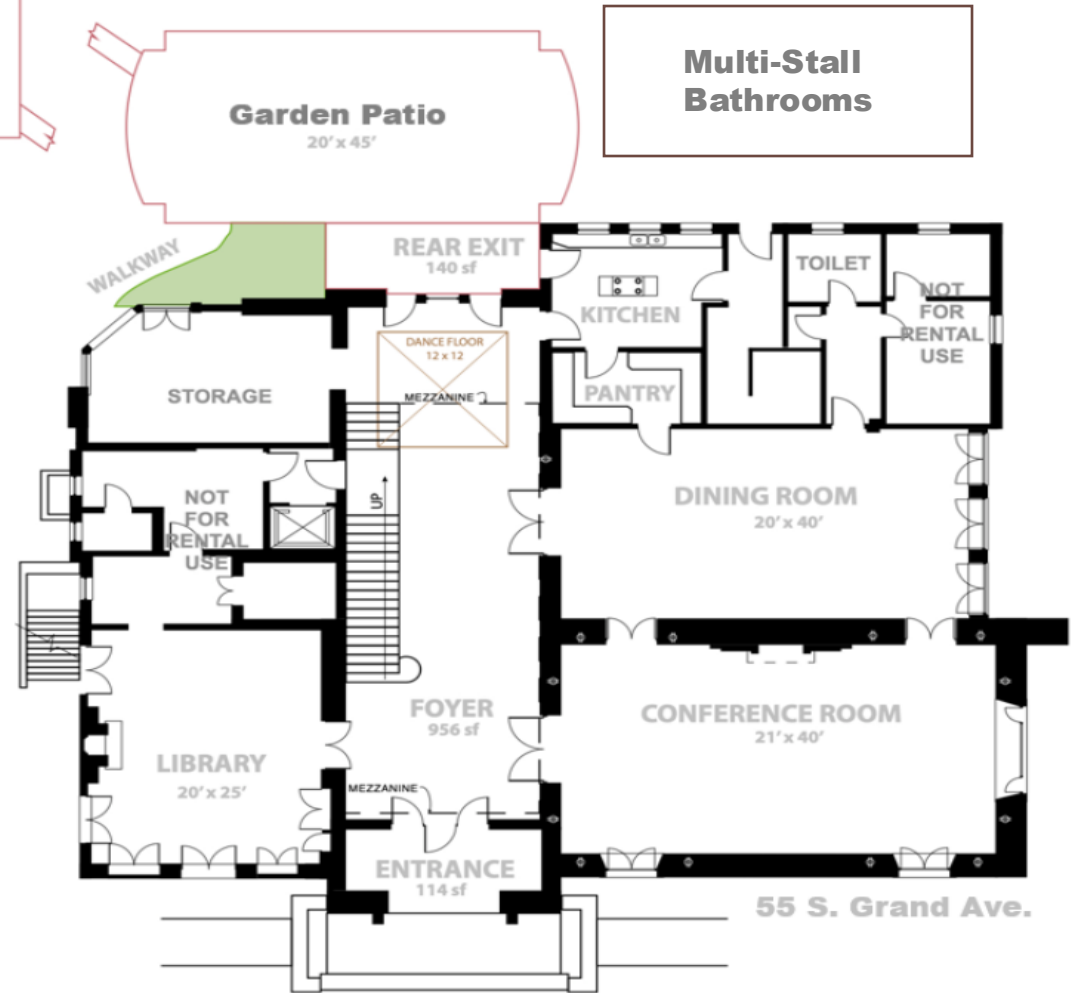
Multi-Stall  
Bathrooms



75 S. Grand Ave.



65 S. Grand Ave.



55 S. Grand Ave.

The Maxwell House

# CUP Revisions and Additional WJC Policies

- **Reduced Number of Weddings:** Reduced from 66 to 21 weddings a year on a limited set of weekends, with the potential to reset to 28 weddings in the future.
- **Security:** Professional security guards (one in back and one in front of building) are required at each wedding. They are there to receive direct calls from neighbors should any issues arise, keep guests quiet during post-ceremony use of the back patio to access the outdoor multi-stall restrooms and help enforce other permit conditions and WJC event policies.
- **Parking:** Security guards are also tasked with ensuring that guests park in the designated lot.
- **Noise Reduction:** A decibel meter is used to monitor interior amplified music. As a courtesy, dancing has been moved to a side room where noise can be contained better.
- **Exterior Use & Alcohol Service:** Ceased all exterior receptions and bar service and limited weddings ceremonies to a maximum of 3 hours. The Small Patio & Oak Tree Area are limited to photography. All alcohol must be served inside.
- **Preferred Vendors:** Wedding coordinators, DJs, and bartenders must be from WJC's preferred vendor list and comply with permit conditions.
- **Schedule Notification:** WJC agrees to notify the neighboring HOAs of the wedding schedule and, as a courtesy, notifies Appellants of the timing of each wedding ceremony.

# CUP Compliance Monitoring System & Review

- **Code Inspections Fund:** WJC will contribute a pre-set amount annually to offset the cost for the City to conduct unnoticed code inspections to ensure WJC is in compliance with permit conditions.
- **Annual Review:** WJC will appear annually for review of its implementation of the permit conditions, unless the City determines less frequent review is merited.



# Schedule of Weddings



Month	# of Weekends	Maximum # of Weddings
January	0	0
February	1	2
March	2	4
April	2	4
May	1	2
June	1	2
July	1	2
August	0	0
September	2	4
October	2	4
November	1	2
December	1	2
<b>Max Annual Total</b>	<b>14 weekends</b>	<b>21 weddings</b>

Thank you.

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