

**THE
CHARLES H. THORNE
HOUSE**

A History



114 LOS ALTOS DRIVE

PASADENA

THE OWNERS

In 1928, Charles Hallett Thorne and his wife Belle Wilber Thorne purchased all of lots 23 and 24 and part of lot 25 of Tract 8702, a site with panoramic views that totaled approximately 2.86 acres. The former owner, William S. Mason, a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Thorne, had already prepared the property for development with a private road, entry gates, and landscaping. Later in 1928, the Thornes commissioned well-known architect Wallace Neff to design a retirement home for them in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Daniel Whetstone & Son of Pasadena was selected as the contractor for this job, which was to cost an estimated \$68,928. This was a very significant sum of money in 1928, when the average middle-class house and lot could be purchased for around \$3,000! The house was given the address of 204 Los Altos Drive, but the number was changed to 114 soon after construction was completed.

Charles H. Thorne was born in Chicago, Illinois on December 3, 1868, the son of George R. and Ellen (Cobb) Thorne. In 1872, his father and a merchant named Montgomery Ward established Montgomery Ward & Company, the nation's first mail-order catalog enterprise which later grew into a nation-wide department store chain. The senior Mr. Thorne served as vice-president of the firm since its inception, remaining active in the business until 1893.

Charles Thorne attended Hyde Park High School in Chicago and then spent one year at the University of Michigan. On December 31, 1891 he married the former Miss Belle Wilber of Peoria, Illinois. They were to have one son and two daughters.

Charles joined his father's firm as a stock clerk in 1889, and, by 1893, had worked his way up to Treasurer. He became president in 1903 and was appointed chairman of the board in 1915. Montgomery Ward & Company greatly expanded during Charles Thorne's period of leadership. He personally had charge of publicity, installed a modern bookkeeping and mailing system for the chain of stores, and could be considered one of the nation's first system engineers. While living in Chicago, Mr. Thorne was very active in civic organizations. He was a member of the executive committee of the Chicago Planning Commission, and between 1917 and 1921 was appointed by the Governor to serve as the chairman of State Hospitals and State Charities headquartered in Springfield. Mr. Thorne was a member of the boards of trustees of both Northwestern University and of Beloit College, Wisconsin. He was also active in the Chicago Athletic Club and the Chicago Yacht Club.

Although he retired in 1921, Charles Thorne remained as a director of Montgomery Ward for the next seven years, before he and his wife moved to Pasadena. (Their address on the building permit for the Los Altos Drive house is listed as 30 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago--Mr. Thorne's business address.)

While living in Pasadena, Mr. Thorne again became involved in local activities. He served three consecutive terms as president of the Annandale Golf Club where an annual championship trophy was named after him. For a number of years he was vice-president of the board of trustees of Occidental College and was given an honorary life membership upon stepping down. He was a major benefactor of that institution; Thorne Hall, completed in 1938, was named after him. He also served on the boards of Westridge School and of the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena and was a member of the California Institute of Technology Associates.

Mrs. Thorne died in 1934. Mr. Thorne passed away on October 10, 1948 in Pasadena, at the age of 79. For more biographical details on Mr. Thorne, please see the attached materials, beginning on page 20.

Mr. and Mrs. Thorne were survived by their three children: Hallett W. Thorne, Elizabeth (later Mrs. Robert H. Andrews of Pasadena), and Leslie (who became the wife of Palmer D. Kountze, member of an old New York banking family). By 1940, Hallett and his wife Elizabeth Andrews Thorne had moved into the house with his widowed father, after living for a number of years in Winnetka, Illinois. Upon the death of Charles, the junior Thornes, with their two children, became the legal owners of the property and lived there for about twenty more years.

Hallett Thorne worked in the hydrodynamics department of Caltech and as a mining engineer, while his wife was very prominent in local civic affairs. A native of Chicago, Mrs. Thorne was educated at the Chicago Latin School and at Rosemary Hall in Connecticut, and was a graduate of Vassar College. While in Winnetka, she became involved in garden clubs, served on the Chicago Infant Welfare Board, and was vice-president of the United States Field Hockey Association. While a resident of Pasadena, Mrs. Thorne was on the board of trustees of Westridge School (of which she served as president), was a member of the board of the California Junior Republic, and was appointed to the board of trustees of Occidental College, replacing her retiring father-in-law. Her many other interests included the Junior League, the Girl Scouts, the Pasadena Civic Music Association, the Women's City Club, the Annandale Golf Club, and the Red Cross. Please see page 23 for a complete list of Mrs. Thorne's civic activities.

In April 1968, after forty years of Thorne family ownership, the Los Altos Drive property was sold to Dr. J. Holt Rose, Jr., and his wife Darlene S. Rose. Dr. Rose was a physician in Los Angeles. Darlene Rose became sole owner in March 1974. Edward J. and Kathleen M. Templeman purchased the property in August 1974. They sold less than a year later, in May 1975, to Arthur J. and Susan L. Lacerte.

Beginning in 1967, city directories show that there was a living unit at 114 ½ Los Altos Drive. Among its early residents were Dodge Crockett, a lawyer, and his wife

Virginia (1967-1970); Tom Newcomen (1971-1972); and Scott and Kathy MacCleur (1973). Mr. MacCleur was a teacher at Mayfield School.

THE ARCHITECT

Pasadena's pre-eminent architects have often enjoyed longevity. Charles and Henry Greene, Myron Hunt and Alfred Heineman all lived well beyond the allotted Biblical span, and Wallace Neff was no exception. (He was born Edwin Wallace, was known in his young years as "E. Wallace," but dropped the "Edwin" completely soon after he started his architectural career.) The son of Edwin D. and Nannie (McNally) Neff, Wallace Neff was born on the family ranch at La Mirada on January 28, 1895, in a house designed by well-known architect Frederick Roehrig. Roehrig had also designed the Altadena home of Neff's grandfather Andrew McNally (founder of the Rand-McNally Map Company), who had left Chicago in the 1870s and with whom Wallace spent much time during his childhood. Some of Wallace's earliest recollections were of spending endless hours after Sunday dinners in the exotic oriental Smoking Room which his grandfather had purchased from the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 and had added to his Altadena mansion. Thus, in typical California fashion, Neff was exposed to eclectic influences from the start. But he also stored in his memory impressions of the then unspoiled landscape of Southern California and of the long, low, romantic Spanish Missions and adobes, which were then, as now, greatly admired in our region.

Fortuitously, Wallace Neff's architectural education proceeded in backwards fashion. At the age of fourteen he went with his family to live in Europe (primarily Germany and Switzerland) for five years. Normally an American architect would have taken the Grand Tour after completing his education, but Neff, not knowing exactly what an architectural education was at that early age, took drawing lessons in Europe which stood him in good stead later on. Thus, on his own, he acquired a first-hand knowledge of European architecture.

The family was forced to return to Altadena at the outbreak of World War I, and Wallace decided to pursue architecture in earnest. His own story, perhaps just a good story (he had many good stories), was that he tried to enroll at Caltech and was turned down, and thus was forced to get his architectural education at MIT in Boston. Perhaps it was lucky that Caltech turned him down, as MIT was and still is one of the best American architectural schools. Ralph Adams Cram was head of the school at the time, and Wallace was greatly impressed with some simple small chapels in the Mediterranean vernacular that Cram had designed in the Boston area. Although it has been said Neff never completed his studies at MIT, that institution did grant him an honorary degree many years later.

In 1919, after service in the shipyards of San Pedro during World War I where he designed munitions-transport ships, Neff joined the office of Santa Barbara architect George Washington Smith as a draftsman. Smith's interpretation of Mediterranean styles was to have a major impact on Neff's own developing tastes. After a short period of employment with Smith, Neff formed his own firm. In 1920, he moved to Pasadena and located in a the self-designed Neff-Ruppel Building at 180 East California Street. (He was later to re-locate his office to West Los Angeles.) His timing in starting his career at that point was impeccable, for, in hindsight, the era of the 1920s was to be called the "golden age" of Southern California architecture. It was a time of unprecedented wealth and growth when innumerable great homes were being built in spectacular locations. Neff had the knack of appealing to the tastes and expectations of his customers, and his success as a residential architect was almost instantaneous. His skillful, understated, yet elegant renderings entranced clients, and the houses themselves were soundly built and carefully took into account such factors as orientation and the need for cross-ventilation, so necessary in the hot summers before air-conditioning. During his career, Neff's clients included a number of celebrities and tycoons, including Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks ("Pickfair"), King Vidor, three of the Marx Brothers, Ameleta Galli Curci, Red Skelton, Claudette Colbert, Louis B. Mayer, Darryl Zanuck, Joan Bennett, Frederick March, Charlie Chaplin, as well as the E. L. Doheny, Henry Haldeman, Ralph Chandler, King Gillette and Carol Post families. Some of his other works include what is now the Alverno Academy in Sierra Madre, St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Altadena, the Manreasa Retreat House in Azusa, and the Fairbanks Ranch in Rancho Santa Fe.

Of course what really made Neff's reputation was his ability to combine diverse elements into a convincing statement. There was warmth (he was a warm man) and an almost Impressionistic spontaneity (which sometimes got out of hand) in his work. He was not afraid to mix motifs. For instance, in the house he built in Beverly Hills in 1925 for the handsomely-paid Hearst scriptwriter Frances Marion Thompson and her cowboy actor husband, the engaged columns on either side of the front door extend above the roof and are topped with Islamic finials. The gatehouse is ornamented with a Baroque cartouche, and access to the entrance court is through a parabolic arched passage. He made the parabolic arch part of the vocabulary of 1920s' Mediterranean architecture in Southern California. Neff homes are also known for their clean, uncluttered facades with minimal openings, often focusing on pieces of elaborate wrought-iron grill-work, and unique treatments of chimneys and fireplaces. This is the style, combining Spanish, Tuscan and other Mediterranean Revival elements, that Neff preferred to call "Californian." Most critics and laymen loved it, and the office was soon forced to turn down any job under \$50,000.

Until the Great Depression put an end to this phase of his career, Neff, who did all his own designing, concentrated on single-family houses, and left apartments and courts to other architects such as Robert Ainsworth and Everett Phipps Babcock, who had been

trained in his office. In the 1930s and later, Neff employed English Tudor and French farmhouse elements in warm, homey horizontal combinations. He seemed to favor the contrast of white brick walls with dark shake roofs. He also began to incorporate circular rooms and staircases into his interiors. In the depths of the Depression, Neff became interested in the problems of low-cost housing. He designed a mobile home, surely one of the first, but the company soon went out of business. His next venture was the invention of a round "bubble house" of concrete sprayed onto a rubber balloon which was deflated when the concrete had set. This air-form construction method met with great success, and was used for defense housing during World War II and after the war as quickly-built, low-cost housing in such developing countries as South Africa, Brazil, and Pakistan.

After World War II, Neff resumed his flourishing residential practice, which was more than ever keyed to the Hollywood stars. He turned out so many jobs in a number of styles (including the Modern) that they are hard to classify. But his first love, undoubtedly, was his "Californian" style, and the last house he did, in Big Canyon at Newport Beach, played off the simple stucco-covered horizontal masses against tall, elongated chimneys in typical Neff fashion.

Until the last couple of years he lived in Pasadena in one of his "bubble houses," which had originally been designed for his brother. Although the "bubble" technique worked most of the time, there were occasional setbacks. In this particular house, the concrete happened to collapse the first time after the balloon had been deflated. The next day, Wallace Neff, a tall distinguished figure dressed as always in black shoes, dark suit, and plain dark tie (he hated anything that was not simple and restrained, and this included his wardrobe) was out surveying the disaster and planning the removal of the mess and the reinflating of the balloon for the next (and more successful) try at unconventional building. Wallace Neff was usually undaunted, and Pasadena can feel fortunate in counting this man who gave us so many beautiful buildings, as one of its most distinguished architects.

Neff lived most of his life in Pasadena, Altadena and San Marino. He was honored during his own lifetime by the American Institute of Architects, which he had joined in 1924. In 1956 they conferred on him the status of Fellow for his many contributions of excellence in design. Articles and photographs of his projects appeared in many national and regional architectural magazines. Neff was not particularly active in civic organizations, but he was a member of the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and the Annandale Country Club. He had married Louise (Up de Graff) Neff in 1924 and they had three children. Wallace Neff retired in 1975 and died in Pasadena June 8, 1982 at the age of 87. Further biographical information on Wallace Neff can be found beginning on page 15.

(Note: The above summary of the life and work of Wallace Neff is largely based on an essay published in the Spring 1982 edition of the Pasadena Heritage newsletter.)

THE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

One of the greatest influences on American domestic architecture, particularly in the Pacific Southwest, has been the Spanish Revival. In the New World, Spanish colonists blended the adobe building traditions of the Native Americans with similar Spanish housing traditions originally brought to Spain from North Africa. Often, both the Spanish Colonial style and the Pueblo Revival style use real or pseudo-adobe construction techniques which show this mixing of Spanish and Native American precedents. Spanish Colonial ecclesiastical buildings of the American Southwest provided the inspiration for the Mission Style (1890-1920). This was followed by the Spanish Revival style (beginning about 1915), which broadened the precedents to include the entire spectrum of Spanish and Spanish-American architecture, thus making it an unusually varied style. Some Spanish Revival houses have elaborate decorative detailing patterned after formal Spanish Renaissance buildings. Others show Moorish and Islamic influences, while still others, such as those of the Andalusian and Majorcan sub-styles, are based upon rural Spanish folk houses. The most recent style to emerge in the Spanish tradition is the Monterey style (1925-1955), which is loosely based on certain houses of the American Southwest that show a mix of Spanish and English Colonial influences.

Spanish Revival houses are typically identified by low-pitched roofs, usually with little or no eave overhang, red-tile roof coverings, one or more prominent arches placed above a door or a principal window or beneath a porch roof, wall surfaces of stucco, and asymmetrical facades. The style uses decorative details borrowed from the entire history of Spanish architecture. These may be of Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance inspiration, an unusually rich and varied series of decorative precedents. The typical roof tiles are of two basic types: Mission tiles, which are shaped like half-cylinders, and Spanish tiles, which have an S-curve shape. Both types occur in many variations depending on the size of the tiles and the patterns in which they are applied. Dramatically carved doors are typical of Spanish architecture; these are more common on high-style Spanish Revival houses, but also occur on modest examples. Doors are usually emphasized by adjacent spiral columns, pilasters, carved stonework, or patterned tiles. Less elaborate entrance doors of heavy wood panels, sometimes arched above, are also common. Doors leading to exterior gardens, patios and balconies are usually paired and glazed with multiple panes of rectangular glass.

Many examples of Spanish Revival architecture have at least one large focal window. These are commonly of triple-arched or parabolic shape and may be filled with leaded and stained glass or may be dotted with stained-glass inserts of varying design. Decorative window grilles of wood or iron are common, as are similar balustrades on cantilevered

balconies, which occur in a variety of shapes and sizes. Other typical details include tile-roofed (and otherwise decorated) chimney tops; brick or tile vents; fountains; arcaded walkways (usually leading to a rear garden); and round or square towers.

Domestic buildings of Spanish precedent built before about 1920 are generally free adaptations in the Mission style. It was not until the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego in 1915, that precise imitation of more elaborate Spanish prototypes received wide attention. The exposition was designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who had previously authored a detailed study of Spanish Colonial architecture. Goodhue wanted to go beyond the then prevalent Mission interpretations and emphasize the richness of Spanish precedents found throughout Latin America. Inspired by the wide publicity given the exposition, other fashionable architects soon began to look directly to Spain for source material. There they found a still longer and richer sequence of architectural traditions which became melded into a style that they continued to call the Spanish Colonial Revival, or sometimes just Spanish Revival. The style reached its first apex during the 1920s and early 1930s and passed rapidly from favor during the 1940s. It emerged again during the 1970s, when the public's fascination with the "California Ranch" style began to run its course. Spanish Revival has once again been the style of choice for many subdivisions in the 1980s and 1990s.

Spanish Revival is most common in the southwestern states, particularly California, Arizona, and Texas, and in Florida, all regions where original Spanish Colonial building occurred and continued into the 19th century. Landmark houses in this style are rare outside of Florida and the Southwest but, as in the related Mission style which preceded it, scattered vernacular examples are found in suburban developments throughout the country. During the 1920s, many new communities in Florida and Southern California were planned in the Spanish Revival style, and older towns (such as Santa Barbara) sought to affect a Spanish Colonial image.

Perhaps no single style has epitomized the romanticized heritage of Southern California so much as has the Spanish Revival. Especially during the 1920s, newcomers to the Golden State were enchanted by tales of the missions and the supposedly idealistic lifestyles of the early *Californios*. What made the architecture equally attractive was the fact it was ideally suited to the Mediterranean climate, with its thick, white reflective walls, tile roofs, small windows, and overhanging eaves.

Note: The discussion above is largely based on material found in A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester (New York, Knopf, 1984).

THE HOUSE AND PROPERTY IN THE PUBLIC RECORD

On July 7, 1928, the City of Pasadena issued building permit #8104-D to Mr. Charles H. Thorne for construction of a two-story, twenty-room residence. The house was to have a concrete foundation, wood-frame walls, a tiled roof, four brick chimneys with two flues each, and wood and tile floors. The building was to measure approximately 136 by 151 feet and its highest point was to be 24 feet. A copy of this permit is attached, on page 14.

An earlier permit, #194E, had been issued on May 9, 1928 for a lath-house with a concrete floor that was to cost \$800. Wallace Neff was the architect and Whetstine & Son was the contractor. No other details about the structure are given on the building permit.

On February 9, 1931, permit #7278-E was issued to allow some remodeling to be done on the main house at an estimated cost of \$1,500. Wallace Neff and Whetstine & Son were again involved. Alterations included in this permit were: a new small basement room, an enlargement of the pantry, a new vault, the remodeling of a studio into a bedroom, the addition of a new sleeping porch, and a new bathroom. These changes added a 13-by-18 foot area to the house that was also to have a concrete foundation and a tiled roof.

Permit #8966-F, issued on November 28, 1934, allowed the enclosure of a portion of a rear outside porch that was already covered with an extension of the second story. Also included were the installation of bookcases and paneled walls. The cost was to be \$975. Wallace Neff and Whetstine & Son were recalled to do this work.

Copies of these later permits can be found on pages 24 through 26.

Other, more minor, permits were issued over the years. Construction of retaining walls measuring 54 and 70 feet were permitted in April 1934. Re-wiring jobs occurred in September 1939 and March 1940. In July 1947, a new furnace with a capacity of 90,000 BTUs was installed. This was followed in October 1965 by the installation of a two-unit furnace, the units having capacities of 50,000 and 30,000 BTUs respectively.

In February 1952, the kitchen was updated with a new sink and a garbage disposal. The roof was repaired in January 1966 for \$296. New water heaters were installed in both July 1959 and December 1960.

The Pasadena City Assessor first visited the property soon after the house was constructed. He recorded a single residence and garage. The house had a concrete foundation, plaster walls, and a gabled tile roof. Heat was provided by two fireplaces and a gas furnace with seven openings. There were twenty good-quality plumbing fixtures. Electrical fixtures were also given a "good" rating. Interior finishes were categorized as "special"--the highest

rating allowable. A refrigerator was built-in. Over-all construction quality of the house was rated "good"--again, the highest category available.

The Assessor estimated the square footage at 16,707. (This would appear to be a miscalculation, based on current County Assessor's estimates of 8,819 square feet.) On the first floor were seven living rooms, three bedrooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, and a pantry. The second floor contained two living rooms, seven bedrooms, three bathrooms, and another kitchen. There were seven hardwood floors in the house, and sixteen of the rooms had hardwood finishes. There was also a 6,860-cubic-foot basement. A copy of the Assessor's record is attached on pages 27 and 28.

THE WORLD AND COMMUNITY IN 1928

One year before the onset of the Depression, the United States and the world at large continued to bask in an era of unprecedented prosperity. As a symbol of technological progress, the Graf Zeppelin stopped at Lakehurst, New Jersey on its way around the world with 20 passengers and a crew of 38. The first all-talking picture, "Lights of New York", opened at the Strand Theater in New York. However, not all the news was good in 1928. Trotsky and his associates were exiled from Russia and a hurricane swept through the West Indies and Florida, killing up to 3,500 people.

In California, Clement C. Young, a Republican, was Governor. At that time, the state's population was only about 5,000,000. Tragedy also hit the state when the St. Francis Dam, forty miles north of Los Angeles, collapsed on March 13, destroying 700 houses and claiming 450 lives.

Pasadena had just about completed its transition from a resort town to a city in its own right with a population of 74,000. It is said that during the 1920s Pasadena had the highest per capita income of any city in the nation. In 1928 the much-revered Dr. John A. Sexson became the Superintendent of Schools, and Pasadena Junior College was established. The Huntington Library and Art Gallery opened to the public for the first time in January. The Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District was organized, choosing Pasadena as its first meeting place. The City's Department of Health was formed as was the Pasadena Health School. The open south end of the Rose Bowl was filled in to make room for 19,000 additional seats.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPERTY

The Thorne house is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources due to its association with both a nationally significant architect and a nationally significant original owner, its fine state

of preservation, and its contribution to the architectural and historical context of the upper San Rafael neighborhood.

NOTES

Construction of the Thorne house was announced in the July 13, 1928 issue of the Southwest Builder & Contractor journal. It was described as having "tile and composition roofing, hardwood floors, hardwood and pine trim, automatic water heater, gas unit heating system, wrought iron, electric refrigeration, tile baths and drainboards, garage." The cost was shown as \$75,000. A copy of this short announcement can be found on page 13.

An illustration of the lush patio garden of the Thorne house was published in the December 19, 1931 issue of the Pasadena Star-News. The garden was described as having "orange trees, jasmines, palms, eugenias and roses--plants dear to the Andalusian heart." A copy of this article is on page 29.

The Thorne house is featured in the book on Wallace Neff written by his son Wallace Neff, Jr. The article is reproduced on pages 30 through 32.

The property was featured in the real estate section of the Pasadena Star-News in both 1993 and 1996. These articles can be found on pages 33 through 35.

The Wallace Neff collection at the Huntington Library contains several original plans of the Thorne house (both the 1928 house--job #257-- and the alterations of 1934), including a plot plan, foundation plan, floor plans, elevations, sections, and details.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Los Angeles County Assessor (archives)
 Los Angeles Public Library
 City of Pasadena, Planning Dept., Design & Historic Preservation Section
 (Archives)
 Pasadena Public Library (Centennial Room)
 Pasadena Historical Museum (Library & Archives)

Carew, Harold D. History of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley, Vol. 2.
 Chicago, S. J. Clarke, 1930.
 Gebhard, David and Robert Winter. Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide.
 Salt Lake City, Gibbs-Smith, 1994.
 McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses.
 New York, Knopf, 1984.
 Neff, Wallace, Jr., ed. Wallace Neff: Architect of California's Golden Age.
 Santa Barbara, Capra Press, 1986.
Pasadena Community Book, 1947, 1951.
 Phillips, Steven J. Old-House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide To American
 Domestic Architecture (1600-1940). Lakewood, CO, American Source
 Books, 1989.
 Pinney, Joyce Y. A Pasadena Chronology 1769-1977: Remembering
 When--Where. Pasadena, Pasadena Public Library, 1978.
 Rolle, Andrew. Occidental College: A Centennial History. Los Angeles,
 Occidental College, 1986.
Wallace Neff: the Romance Of Regional Architecture. San Marino,
 Huntington Library, 1989.
Who Was Who In America, 1943-50.

City Directories: 1929-

Los Angeles Times, June 10, 1982.
Pasadena Heritage Newsletter, Spring 1982.
Pasadena Star-News: December 19, 1931; October 11, 1948; June 10, 1982;
 May 17, 1987; August 22, 1993; October 19, 1996.
Southwest Builder & Contractor: July 13, 1928.

Tim Gregory
 The Building Biographer
 400 East California Blvd., #3
 Pasadena, CA 91106
 Phone/Fax: 626-792-7465
 e-mail: timothygregory@earthlink.net

Copyright
 June 2000

ALTA SAN RAFAEL

Alta San Rafael (Tract 8702) is a 30-acre single-family residential subdivision of 35 lots designed in 1925 by Olmsted & Olmsted, an influential landscape architectural firm. The community is located in a hillside area in the northwest portion of Pasadena, north of the 134 Freeway, between North San Rafael and Linda Vista Avenues. The subdivision is characterized by formal entry gates, winding and sloping streets, ornamental lighting, Arroyo stone retaining walls, steps and pathways between street switchbacks, a balanced arrangement of large residential lots, and extensive open spaces with landscaping and mature trees. The developers set aside several lots for use of the subdivision's residents including one large lot roughly in the center that was to be a common park, although it was later subdivided.

Alta San Rafael was advertised in local newspapers during 1926 as offering "choice home estates" within a ten-minute drive of downtown Los Angeles and in close proximity to the Annandale Golf Club. The Alta San Rafael Company was co-owned by C. B. Eyer and William S. Mason, a Chicago railroad magnate, who envisioned the new neighborhood as a "winter retreat" for Eastern millionaires. Each lot was to have "unequaled" views of the Arroyo and the San Gabriel mountains. Many of the trees on the site had been planted in the 1890s by Pasadena pioneer Charles B. Scoville. To these, the Alta San Rafael Company added many more, including three types of cypress, oak, eucalyptus, Torrey and Canary Island pines, deodars, and wild lilac, bringing the total tree-count to over 9,000. Interspersed among the trees were iris and other bulb plants. On top of a hill, reached by an avenue of pines, was a small meadow landscaped with wildflowers and a reservoir lake banked by lilies and other flowering plants.

Olmsted & Olmsted, located in Los Angeles, was a partnership between the Olmsted brothers, Frederick Law, Jr., and John Charles. They were the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., who had laid out Central Park in New York City and was one of the country's most well-known early landscape designers. Ranked among the best landscape architects of early-20th-century Southern California, the Olmsted brothers' most praised and beautiful work are the coastal communities of Pacific Palisades and Palos Verdes Estates. In association with major architects who were also working in these communities, such as Myron Hunt, they designed picturesque master plans that included winding streets following the contours of the land, commercial centers, parks, and large estates. The La Venta Inn, the Malaga Cove Plaza and School, the Palos Verdes Golf Course, and the Palos Verdes Public Library are prime examples of their landscaping work in Palos Verdes. Besides Alta San Rafael, Olmsted & Olmsted were also responsible for planning the development of Leimert Park in 1927, the gardens of a number of estates (such as the Cravens house in Pasadena-1929), and the curving streets north of Sunset Blvd. in Beverly Hills.

William Mason was one of the first to build a home in Alta San Rafael. Those who followed included Charles H. Thorne, former president of Montgomery Ward & Company, who commissioned famed architect Wallace Neff to design a house for him in the Italian style; Harold Arnold, a Los Angeles motor-car dealer; and business executive James S. Woolacott.

Tim Gregory
The Building Biographer
400 East California Blvd., #3
Pasadena, CA 91106-3763
626-792-7465 (office)
626-241-4471 (cell)
timgregory@sbeglobal.net
www.buildingbiographer.com

Copyright July 2019
by Tim Gregory

STUCCO DWELLING—Daniel Whetstone & Son, 1527 E. Orange Grove Ave., Pasadena, was awarded general contract for erecting a 2-story, 20-room frame and stucco dwelling at 204 La Alton Dr., Pasadena, for Charles H. Thorne; Wallace Neff, architect, 801 Central Bldg., Pasadena; 136x151 feet, tile and composition roofing, hardwood floors, hardwood and pine trim, automatic water heater, gas unit heating system, wrought iron electric refrigerator, tile baths and drainboards, garage; \$75,000.

Southwest Builder & Contractor,
July 13, 1928

All Applications Must Be Filled Out by Applicant

(USE INDELIBLE PENCIL)

APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF FRAME BUILDING

2

CLASS "D"

ZONE

Application is hereby made for a permit to construct the building hereafter described at the point hereinafter specified:

(SIGN HERE) Whitaker & Son (Applicant)

Lot No. 25527 Block Tract # 8792

No. 204 6th Altes Drows Map No. 467
STREET AVENUE

1. PURPOSE OF BUILDING Residence Number of Rooms 20

2. OWNER'S NAME Mr. Chas. H. Thorne

3. Owner's Address 30 No. Michigan Ave. Chicago Ill.

4. Architect's Name Wallace

5. CONTRACTOR'S NAME Daniel J. Thorne & Son

6. Contractor's Address 1527 E. Orange Grove Ave

7. ENTIRE COST OF PROPOSED BUILDING: 68,227.

8. Size of Lot 150 x 200 Size of Building 13.6 x 15.1

9. Will Building be erected on front or rear of lot? Front

10. NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT Two Height to highest point of roof 14.4 ft.

11. Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? Concrete

12. GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below surface of ground 1-6"

13. Give dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall FOOTINGS 12 x 20 x 24"

14. GIVE width of FOUNDATION and cellar wall at top 8' 4" 1/2"

15. NUMBER and KIND of chimneys 4 Brick Number of flues 2 to each

16. Number of inlets to each flue 1 Interior size of flues 4 x 8 x 13 x 17

17. Give sizes of following materials: MUDSILLS 2 x 6 Girders and stringers 4 x 6 x 8

EXTERIOR STUDS 2 x 6 BEARING STUDS 2 x 8 Interior Studs 2 x 4

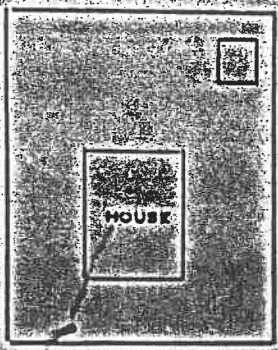
Ceiling joist 2 x 6 Roof rafters 2 x 8 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2 x 6

SECOND FLOOR JOIST 2 x 6 Third floor joist _____ Fourth floor joist _____

18. Specify material of roofing Tile Material for floors Wood

THE FIGURES ON THIS CHART SHOW YOUR SET-BACK LINES.

In Zones C, D and E, or Third, Second and First Residence Districts, respectively, no buildings or structures other than fences not exceeding eight (8) feet in height, shall be constructed nearer than four (4) feet to the side line of any lot within one hundred (100) feet of the street to which such side line runs. As used herein, the term "side line" shall mean all boundaries of any lot, except the street frontage thereof and the rear line thereof. In the case of lots, the rear lines of which abut on the side line of any other lot, such rear line shall also be considered a "side line" for the purpose of this section.



No building or portion thereof or other structure above the mean ground level of the lot upon which it is erected shall be built nearer to the street line of the street on which the lot abuts than the distance from such street to the building line hereby established for the lot on which it stands in the zone or district is permitted, provided, however, that fences not exceeding three feet in height shall not be deemed a violation hereof. Building lines are hereby established as follows:
The setback line includes porches, steps, cornices or any part of the building above the mean ground level.

There must be a clear air space of at least twelve inches under the first floor joist of all buildings. (State Housing Law of California.)

PERMIT NO. _____ Date issued 3-7-1929 192

Veteran architect to be remembered for his showplaces



WALLACE NEFF

Private services have been held for world-renowned master architect Wallace Neff, the father of hundreds of showplace mansions in Pasadena, San Marino, Hollywood and Beverly Hills, creator of dozens of the gorgeous Pasadena Showcase Houses, inventor and developer of the innovative "balloon houses" and the designer of homes for the well-to-do around the globe.

Neff, who played an integral part in giving many Southern California cities their beauty, brought architectural elegance, untainted by theatricality, to the area, critics said.

Neff, born in La Mirada Jan. 28, 1905, moved with his family to Pasadena three years later. He maintained a home and offices in Pasadena throughout his architectural career, which ended only a few years ago when ill health forced his retirement. He died Tuesday afternoon at a Pasadena convalescent home.

Neff reached far into the past for a solution to the future for his pneumatic form-type of home, popularly referred to as

"Airform" or "Balloon Form" houses. The homes were designed to give protection against the elements and against the developments of modern warfare too.

The balloon-type homes were originally constructed in underdeveloped areas around the world under the Marshall Plan after World War II. Today the balloon home's popularity is still growing because it is said to be the fastest and most economical method of construction. Many of the balloon-type homes are located throughout Los Angeles County including Pasadena, San Marino, South Pasadena and Beverly Hills. Neff also built thousands of that type home in South Africa, more than 900 in slum areas in Brazil and hundreds more in Pakistan and Egypt, where he was awarded a gold medal by King Farouk.

He designed the first bubble home for his late brother, Andrew Neff, a founder of the Pasadena Symphony. The brothers lived in the home for many years.

Neff, who had been honored with many National American Institute of Architecture accolades, often recalled how much he was like his grandfather, Andrew McNally, who was kicked out of his home in Ireland because he wouldn't go to college. Wallace Neff never graduated, he frequently said, from anything, but he received an honorary degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He attended and flunked out of the little elementary school his grandfather built for him and his brother on the family's La Mirada ranch, now the city of La Mirada. He got the MIT honor because of what he learned studying design and working with architects in Florence, Ita-

ly. He tried to enroll at MIT, but because he had had little formal education, was given a special project to design a library. He filled his drawing with statues and when the math professor saw it, enrolled him.

He often credited his study in Florence as necessary background for an Italian Villa in Sierra Madre that today is the Alverno Academy. The design for the structure followed the architectural pattern Neff discovered while studying works of Michaelangelo. Neff also designed the St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church in Altadena, which Pope Pius XII toured two months before he became pope, and the Manreasa Retreat House in Azusa, which received a national AIA award.

Celebrity homes Neff designed included those of Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford (Pickfair), Groucho Marx, Galli Curci, Clark Millikan, Charles Thorne, the Doheneys, Anheuser Busch and Carol Post, Red Skelton, King Vidor, Darryl Zanuck and other wealthy persons in all walks of life.

Other famous people who commissioned Neff to design their homes were Ralph Chandler and King C. Gillette, of razor blade fame. Most of the homes he designed still are in use.

Neff had rubbed elbows with presidents including Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, university professors and presidents including Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago and Dr. William Milli-

kan of Caltech, and was a friend of Henry Ford's. When Ford saw Neff's work in pre-pressed concrete design for the "bubble home," Ford said Neff's "balloon" would do for residential areas what his "lizzie" had done for travel.

continued...

Neff frequently recalled how people who bought his early homes had the habit of falling in love with them and when there was upgrading to do, called on him to do the job. His son, Arthur Neff, and his family, occupy one of Neff's homes in Pasadena, but they have not changed it. It was built originally for his mother and grandmother, both who died several years ago.

His design of Rancho Zorro for Douglas Fairbanks Sr. before he and Mary Pickford separated, was constructed in Rancho Fe Springs. It bears the name Fair-

banks Ranch and is now owned by wealthy couple from Texas.

A home Neff built on Orlando Road in San Marino, across from the Huntington Library, received a national award upon its completion. Most of the homes

Neff designed have at one time or another appeared on cover and inside pages of national magazines and have been featured in many newspaper articles.

Neff's wife of 50 years, Louise

Up de Graff Neff, died two years ago. He is survived by two sons, Wallace Libby Neff of Laguna Beach and Arthur Libby Neff of Pasadena, and two grandchildren, Arthur M. Neff, 15, and Andrea, 9, of Pasadena.

Wallace Neff, Architect for Famous Homes, Dies

Architect Wallace Neff, whose imagination and craftsmanship encompassed mansions for movie magnates and utilitarian "bubble houses" for the masses, is dead at the age of 87.

In ill health for several years, he died of pneumonia Tuesday in a Pasadena convalescent home.

His fame and fortune were based largely on splendid, expansive "Californian" country homes, suburban retreats and movie star showplaces.

Creator of Pickfair

His design for Pickfair—the Beverly Hills mansion of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks Sr.—was considered the epitome of Southern

California architecture. Neff also was concerned with housing for ordinary Americans and he pioneered in the design of inexpensive, mass-produced "bubble" structures in which inflated reusable balloons are sprayed with concrete.

Henry Ford once wrote Neff a letter in which he said the architect's "bubble house" could have the same impact on housing as

Ford's famous Model T.

The concept was tested in a 21-home development in Falls Church, Va., reportedly the first of its kind. In the 1950s, entire housing projects were built using this technique in South Africa, French West Africa, Pakistan and Brazil.

Born in Southland

Neff's grandfather, publisher Andrew McNally, settled in Southern California in the late 1870s. Neff was born in La Mirada in 1895.

He studied art in Germany and Switzerland in the early 1900s and returned to the United States to study architecture with Ralph Adams Cram at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After a stint at the shipyards in San Pedro during World War I, Neff joined the office of Santa Barbara architect George Washington Smith as a draftsman in 1919. Later in the same year he formed his own firm in Santa Barbara, moving it to Pasadena a few years later.

He worked as an architect until his retirement in 1975.

Although Pickfair was his best-known design, he created literally hundreds of others, many of them considered among the best of their style and time.

Among them are the Gillette Ranch in Calabasas; Norman Chandler House in Nottingham Road, Los Angeles; Doheny Ranch in Santa Paula; the Frederick Marsh Estate in Beverly Hills; Joan Bennett House in Holmby Hills; King Vidor Estate in Beverly Hills; William Goetz House in Santa Monica; the Elizabeth Hay Bechtel Estate in Santa Barbara, and the Browne Estate in Newport Beach.

He also designed homes for three of the Marx brothers, Groucho, Harpo and Gummo.

An article in Contemporary Architects credits Neff with helping to create what is known as the Southern California style of architecture in the 1920s and '30.

His eclectic style was widely imitated through the decades of the '30s and '40s and still is much in evidence.

Neff is survived by sons Wallace Neff Jr., a real estate man, and Ar-

thur Neff, a publisher.

Private funeral services will be held.



Los Angeles Times

Wallace Neff

Los Angeles Times,

June 10, 1982

California's architect for the 'golden age'

By KATHY REGISTER
Arts Editor

PSN 5-17-87(B-1)

IN architectural circles, the 1920s and '30s are now referred to as California's "golden age." It was a time of unheralded excess, an era when great homes were designed and built in spectacular locations. And Pasadena architect Wallace Neff figured prominently in this glittering epoch.

As one of the most sought-after designers of the day, Neff created dream homes and vacation getaways for Hollywood's elite and the Southland's great tycoons. Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, King Vidor, Joan Bennett and Charlie Chaplin, the Dohenys, Chandlers, Gillettes and Posts all commissioned Neff houses.

Exactly how much the prolific architect figured into the Southland's

'I wanted to show his flair. People recognize his work, but they don't know why.'

— Wallace Neff Jr.
the architect's son

domestic-domicile heyday becomes clear upon reading "Wallace Neff: Architect of California's Golden Age" (Capra Press, \$50), compiled by the architect's son, Wallace Neff Jr., and written by Alson Clark.

Hundreds of photographs, plans and drawings of 72 of Neff's commissions make up the slightly over-sized book. Of the 198 works the younger Neff is aware of, only the houses he



believes were his father's better creations are featured.

Like Charles and Henry Greene, the elder Neff became known for creating homes that were uniquely Californian, but with a European flavor. Born and raised in La Mirada, and later Altadena, Neff eventually

continued...

entered Massachusetts Institute of Technology to study architecture, after spending five years living in Europe with his family.

Neff's work is distinctively his own, but it's often difficult to establish exactly what makes it so unusual. It's to this end that the younger Neff decided to produce his book.

"I wanted to show his flair," said Neff. "People recognize his work, but they don't know why."

Neff describes his father's style as "clean and uncluttered. There weren't a lot of windows. And he was known for his chimneys and fireplaces. When he did a home it was like a work of art."

The many renderings included in the book show his father had an artist's hand in the drawing stages as well.

The architect used a variety of styles in his homes, most notably a combination of Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean images in his early houses of the mid- to late '20s. Designs from this period were usually stucco with red-tile roofs, and usually featured a prominent oval window and elaborate wrought iron grill work.

In the '30s and later, the designer employed English Tudor and French farmhouse elements in warm, homey, horizontal combinations. "He liked the texture of white brick and shake roofs," said Neff. His father also became well known for his circular rooms and staircases.

Many excellent examples of both of these distinctive Neff styles can be found all over Pasadena and San Marino, and 18 are featured in the book. Most were built during the 1920s, before the architect's commissions abruptly dropped off during the Depression.

For the younger Neff, chronicling his father's work has become a hobby — one started in boyhood, but which has kept him seriously occupied for the

last 22 years.

"I wasn't even born during my father's peak," said the 57-year-old Orange County real estate agent. "I once counted them, and during his heyday, 1928 and '29, he did 10 or 11 homes, really BIG ones."

The younger Neff was born in the stately San Marino home the architect designed and built for himself in 1928 (and later was forced to sell). Though his parents separated when he was a child, Neff maintained close contact with his father and eventually developed an appreciation for his style. "When I was about 10 or 12, I picked up an interest in his work," Neff explained. "I went on tours with my father. I knew his work, I could see it, spot it. I knew if things had been changed."

When the architect compiled a book of his own designs in 1964, Neff felt his father had omitted many of the best drawings and photographs.

"I never had the idea to do a book until I saw his book, and I was disappointed in it," said Neff, shaking his head. "So, I began collecting everything I could get my hands on, and then I hired a photographer."

Neff has been working on the book full time for the last two years, "mostly gathering photos." If he couldn't locate originals, he had new photographs taken of his father's homes, which are located all over California.

One of the more interesting aspects of the architect's career, is the fact that he wasn't only concerned with designing homes for the rich. Two of his more adventurous projects — a line of mobile homes and innovative "bubble" houses — were created as affordable housing alternatives.

Conceived during the 1940s as a low-cost, labor-saving method of building, his air-form construction was put to considerable use in this country and in many Third World nations.

THORNE, Charles Hallett, retired mcht.; b. Chicago, Ill., Dec. 3, 1868; s. George R. and Ellen (Cobb) T.; ed. Hyde Park High Sch., Chicago, and U. of Mich.; m. Belle Wheeler, Dec. 31, 1891; children —Hallett, Elizabeth (Mrs. Robert Andrews), Leslie (Mrs. Palmer D. Kountze). Entered employ of Montgomery Ward, as stock clerk, 1889, becoming treasurer, 1893, president, 1914, later, chairman board (now retired). Life trustee Northwestern University; trustee Occidental Coll. Clubs: Chicago, Chicago Athletic, Chicago Yacht, Annandale Golf. Home: 114 Los Altos Drive, Pasadena, Calif. Office: 30 N. Michigan Av., Chicago, Ill. Died Oct. 10, 1948.

Who Was Who In America, 1943-50
vol. 2

Charles H. Thorne

Among the outstanding retired business executives who have chosen Pasadena as a desirable place to live is Charles H. Thorne, former President of Montgomery Ward & Company of Chicago—the original mail-order company of the country.

It was in 1928 that Mr. Thorne established his home in Pasadena. He erected an unusually attractive Spanish style residence on Los Altos Drive, where he has lived since his retirement from business. Mr. Thorne has been active in social and club circles here, and has the distinction of having served for three years continuously as President of Annandale Golf Club. For some years he was Vice-President of the Board of Trustees of Occidental College, and he is now an honorary life member of the Board. For a number of years he was on the Board of the Westridge School, and he continues as a member of the California Institute of Technology Associates. He is a former member of the Board of Directors of Huntington Memorial Hospital.

In appreciation of his generous service to the Annandale Golf Club, the Board of Directors of the Club recently presented the "Charles H. Thorne Trophy," which is to be played for annually, the winner's name each year to be inscribed on the cup.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Mr. Thorne was born on December 3, 1868, the son of George R. and Ellen (Cobb) Thorne. His father and Montgomery Ward established the firm of Montgomery Ward & Company in 1872, and Mr. George Thorne remained active in the business until 1893, having served as Vice-President of the company since its inception.

Charles H. Thorne graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago, and then spent one year at the University of Michigan. He started with Montgomery Ward & Company as a stock clerk at \$6.00 per week and after serving in many departments of the business he was made Treasurer in 1893, and ten years later he became President. In 1915 he was appointed Chairman of the Board, and retired from active management in 1921, although he remained as a director of the company for the following seven years.

Montgomery Ward & Company experienced its greatest growth during the period Mr. Thorne headed the business. For years he personally had charge of the firm's publicity, and being an expert at detail work, he installed the bookkeeping and mailing systems for the company, and he achieved a high reputation as an expert systematizer.

Mr. Thorne was very prominently connected with numerous civic enterprises in Chicago and Illinois. He was a member of the executive committee of the Chicago Planning Commission, and for four years, during 1917-1921, he was in charge of State Hospitals and State Charities under appointment of former Governor Lowden, having his headquarters at Springfield during this period. Always interested in education, Mr. Thorne is a member of the board of trustees of Northwestern University and also formerly of Beloit College, Wisconsin.

Mr. Thorne married Miss Belle Wilber of Peoria, Illinois, in 1891. She passed away in 1934 at Pasadena. The three children are: Hallett W., who is in the Hydrodynamics Department of the California Institute of Technology; Elizabeth, the wife of Robert H. Andrews of Pasadena; and Leslie, the wife of Palmer Kountze, from the old New York banking family of that name. Mr. and Mrs. Kountze live near Charlotte, North Carolina.

Plan Services for Ward Co. Ex-President

Funeral arrangements were made today for Charles H. Thorne, 79, former president of Montgomery Ward & Co. of Chicago, who died Sunday in the Huntington Memorial Hospital.

They will be held at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday at the home, 114 Los



CHARLES H. THORNE

Altos Drive. Turner and Stevens are in charge.

Mr. Thorne is survived by a son, Hallett, of Pasadena, and two daughters, Mrs. Robert Andrews, Pasadena, and Mrs. Palmer Kountze of Charlotte, N.C.

Mr. Thorne was the son of George R. Thorne, co-founder of the Montgomery Ward Company. He first became affiliated with the company in 1893, serving as treasurer until 1903 when he was appointed president. In 1915 he became chairman of the board.

He retired from active business in 1921 and seven years later came to Pasadena. He served as vice-president of Occidental College during his residence here.

Elizabeth Andrews Thorne

Elizabeth Andrews Thorne, the wife of Mr. Hallett W. Thorne, who is the son of the late Charles H. Thorne, has for many years taken a most active and prominent part in civic affairs. Prior to coming here to make her home, she had also been an active civic worker in Winnetka, Illinois. Few women have given so generously of their time and means to worthy causes as has Mrs. Thorne.

She was born in Chicago and is the daughter of the late Dr. Frank T. Andrews and Clara Marie (Gallup) Andrews. Her education was received at the Chicago Latin School and Rosemary Hall, Greenwich, Connecticut, and she is a graduate of Vassar College.

After her marriage to Hallett W. Thorne, they established their residence in Winnetka, near Chicago, and here Mrs. Thorne became particularly interested in garden clubs, becoming treasurer of the Winnetka Garden Club and subsequently president of the North Shore Garden Club. She was also on the Chicago Infant Welfare Board of Trustees. She has always been fond of sports—especially field hockey, tennis and sailing. She was formerly vice-president of the United States Field Hockey Association.

To mention Mrs. Thorne's local connections is to list the names of a number of the most important and valuable organizations in this part of California. For fourteen years, she was president of the Board of Trustees of the Westridge School for Girls and is still a member of that Board. She is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the California Junior Republic. She was appointed a member of the Board of Trustees of Occidental College at the time of Mr. Charles Thorne's retirement from the Board. She has been a member of the Board of the Pasadena Junior League, of the Pasadena Girls Scouts Council, and of the Pasadena Civic Music Association, and for two years was president of the Southern California Vassar Club. She is a charter member of the Women's City Club of Pasadena and is currently president of the Town Club. She belongs to the Annandale Golf Club and maintains membership in the Contemporary Club of Chicago. At the present time, Mrs. Thorne is devoting a large part of her time to the valuable work of the American Red Cross in connection with the Blood Bank Program. She serves on the Board of the Citizens' Council on Education, and is also a member of the Board of the National Society of Colonial Dames.

During World War II, Mrs. Thorne ably did her part by taking courses at the California Institute of Technology and received a U. S. Civil Service junior engineer's certificate. After this, she worked for the National Defense Research Council with the Polarized Light Flume in the Hydrodynamics Department of the California Institute of Technology.

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Thorne are: Susanna Elizabeth, a Vassar graduate and now the wife of Mitchell H. Dazey; and Charles Hallett Thorne II, who is a student at the noted Thacher School in the Ojai Valley.

All Applications Must Be Filled Out by Applicant

(USE INDELIBLE PENCIL)

2

APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF FRAME BUILDING

CLASS "D"

Application is hereby made for a permit to construct the building hereafter described at the point hereinafter specified.

Lot No. 24 Block Hoffman

Tract 1702

Map No. 469

No. 209 Los Altos Drive STREET AVENUE

1. PURPOSE OF BUILDING Res. Home Number of Rooms 3

2. OWNER'S NAME G. H. Thomas

3. Owner's Address 209 Los Altos Drive

4. Architect's Name Wallace Puff

5. CONTRACTOR'S NAME W. H. Thomas

6. Contractor's Address 1577 East Orange Ave

7. VALUATION OF PROPOSED BUILDING, \$ 5000

8. Size of Lot x Size of Building x

9. Will Building be erected on front or rear of lot? x

10. NUMBER OF STORIES IN HEIGHT 1 Height to highest point of roof 10

11. Of what material will FOUNDATION and cellar walls be built? Concrete Base

12. GIVE depth of FOUNDATION below surface of ground 4

13. Give dimensions of FOUNDATION and cellar wall FOOTINGS 10 x 10

14. GIVE width of FOUNDATION and cellar wall at top 10

15. NUMBER and KIND of chimneys 0 Number of flues 0

16. Number of inlets to each flue 0 Interior size of flues 0

17. Give sizes of following materials: MUDSILLS x Girders and stringers x

EXTERIOR STUDS x BEARING STUDS x Interior Studs x

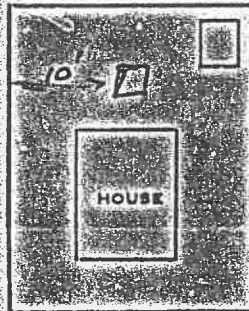
Celling joist x Roof rafters x FIRST FLOOR JOISTS x

SECOND FLOOR JOIST x Third floor joist x Fourth floor joist x

18. Specify material of roofing Asph. Flt. Shingles Material for floors Concrete

THE FIGURES ON THIS CHART SHOW YOUR SET BACK LINES. Indicate all other existing buildings on lot.

In Zones C, D and E, of Third, Second and First Residence Districts, respectively, no buildings or structures other than fences not exceeding six (6) feet in height, shall be constructed nearer than four (4) feet to the side line of any lot within one hundred (100) feet of the street to which such side line runs. As used herein, the term "side line" shall mean all boundaries of any lot except the street frontage thereof, and the rear line thereof. In the case of lots, the rear lines of which abut on the side lines of any other lot, such rear line shall also be considered a side line for the purpose of this section.



No building or portion thereof or other structure above the mean ground level of the lot upon which it is erected shall be built nearer to the street line of the street on which the lot abuts than the distance from such street to the building line hereby established for the lot on which it stands in the zone or district in which it is provided, however, that fences not exceeding three and one-half feet in height shall not be deemed a violation hereof. Building lines are hereby established as follows: The setback line includes porches, steps, cornices or any part of the building above the mean ground level.

There must be a clear air space of at least twenty-four inches under the first floor joist of all buildings.

It is understood and agreed by applicant that the Department of Building of the City of Pasadena, in granting the permit herein applied for or in approving any plans and specifications submitted by applicant in connection with this application, shall be considered only as approval of the interpretation of the various requirements of the Building Code of the City of Pasadena, and said City shall in no case be liable for accidents which may result from faulty engineering or architectural designs of any building or structure erected under said permit.

Date 5/4/29 day of May

By W. H. Thomas Applicant

ZONE E PERMIT NO. 194 Date Issued 5/4/29

All Applications Must Be Filled Out by Applicant

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS and Other Data Must Also Be Filled

Fire District No. _____

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING CITY OF PASADENA

Type _____

Application to Alter, Repair or Demolish

(FOR SET BACK REQUIREMENTS SEE ORDINANCE 2113)

Lot No. 24 Tract _____

Street No. 114 For Altos Drive Map No. 764

1. Owner's Name C. H. Thomas

2. Owner's Address 114 For Altos Drive

3. Architect's Name W. Jeff Address Calif St

4. Contractor's Name Whetstone & Son Address 1517 E Og

5. Entire cost of the Proposed Improvements, \$ 1500.00 (estimated)

6. Existing Occupancy of Building Residence Group _____

7. Proposed Occupancy of Building _____ Group _____

8. Size of New Addition 13' x 18' Material of Foundation Concrete

9. Depth of Foundation 7 1/2" To 6 Ft Size Footing 12' x 12" Size of Wall 10"

10. Size of Exterior Studs 2' x 6' Interior Studs 2' x 4'

11. Size of Mud Sills 2' x 6' Bearing Studs 2' x 6'

12. Size of First Floor Joist 2' x 8' Second Floor Joist 2' x 10'

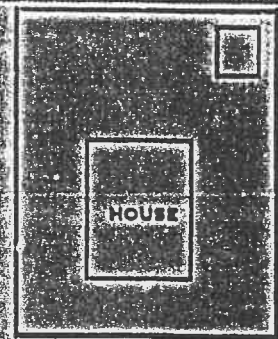
13. Ceiling Joists 3' x 6' Roof Rafters 3' x 6'

14. Specify Material of Roofing Tile

WRITE PLAINLY FULL DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE DONE

New small basmt room
Enlarge pantry
New toilet
Remodel stairs to bedroom
New sleeping porch
New bath

State Contractor's License No. _____



It is understood and agreed by applicant that the Department of Building of the City of Pasadena in granting the permit herein applied for or in approving of any plans and specifications submitted by applicant in connection with this application shall be considered only as approval of the interpretation of the various requirements of the Building Code of the City of Pasadena, and said City shall in no case be liable for accidents which may result from faulty engineering or architectural designs of any building or structure erected under said permit.

Date _____ day of _____ 1933
Checked by [Signature] Applicant Whetstone & Son
By [Signature] Agent

ZONE _____ PERMIT NO. 12345 Date issued _____ 1933

ORIGINAL

LOCATION OF JOB

114 Los Altos Dr
NUMBER STREET No

BUILDING ALTERATION

Permit No. 89667 Final Insp. [initials]
Department of Building, Pasadena, Calif.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION of lot or
DO NOT FILL IN FOR USE OF ASSESSOR or personnel
1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Tract 8702
Map No. 469

Size of Lot	Size Bldg.	Date
		Nov 28-1934
Height, Feet	Stories	Type
		260e

Use Residence

Side	SET BACK Front	Side
------	-------------------	------

Owner Name... C. B. Thorne
Address... 114 Los Altos Dr

Arch Name... Wallace Neff
Address... Pasadena

Contractor Name... Whittaker & Son
Address... 1527 E Orange Ave
Contractor's License No. 2317

State Clearly All Alterations to Be Made
that
In closing portion of
outside porch which
is already covered
with second story.
Installing book cases
and paneled walls.

TOTAL Cost \$ 975.00 Fee 37.50
Including P.L.C., Wiring, H.C., etc.
Special Permit No.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION BLANK

91800
 No. Altos St. Map No. 469
 Tract # 114 Ave.

8102 91800

4-67 109-366
 c. 12650

Lot No. 24 Block No.
 Examined by _____ Date _____

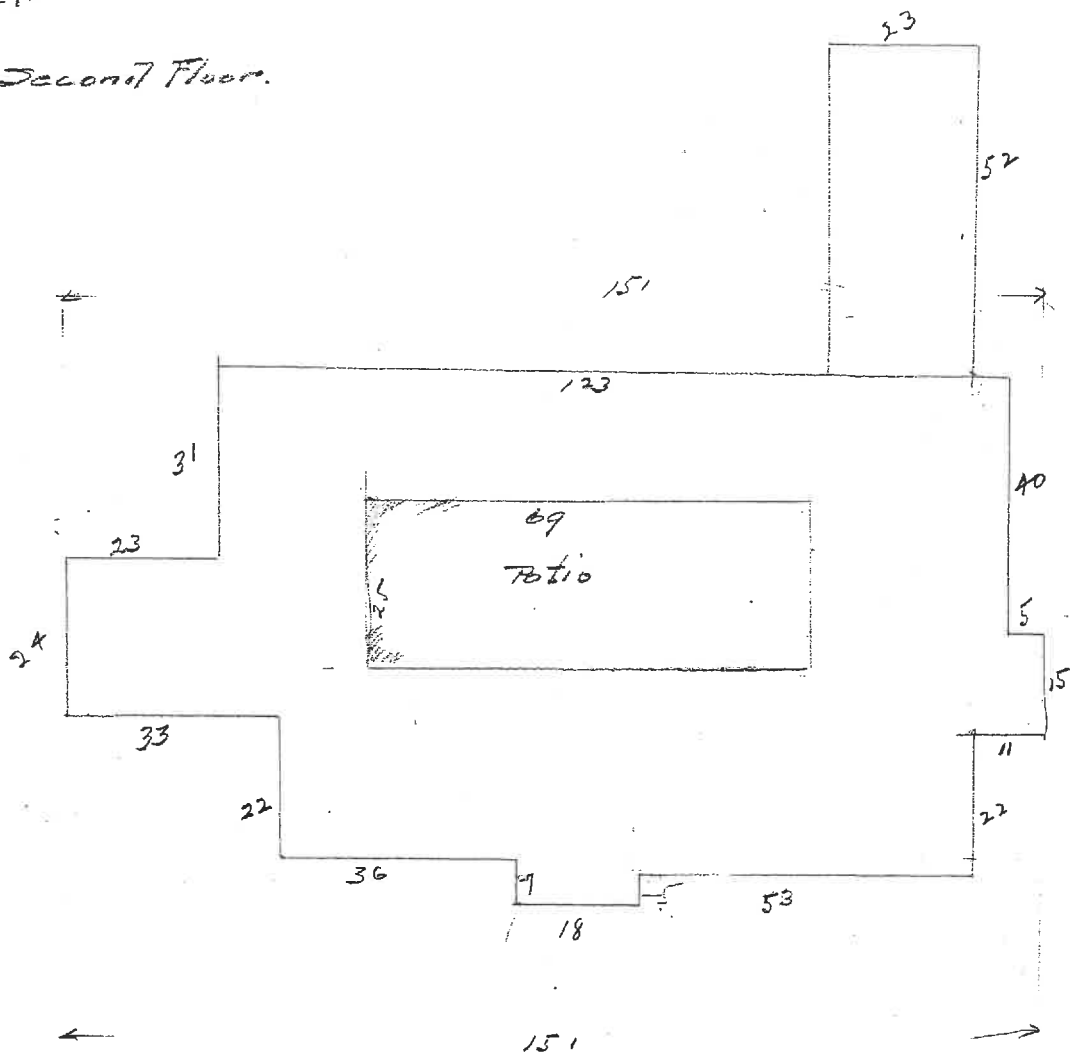
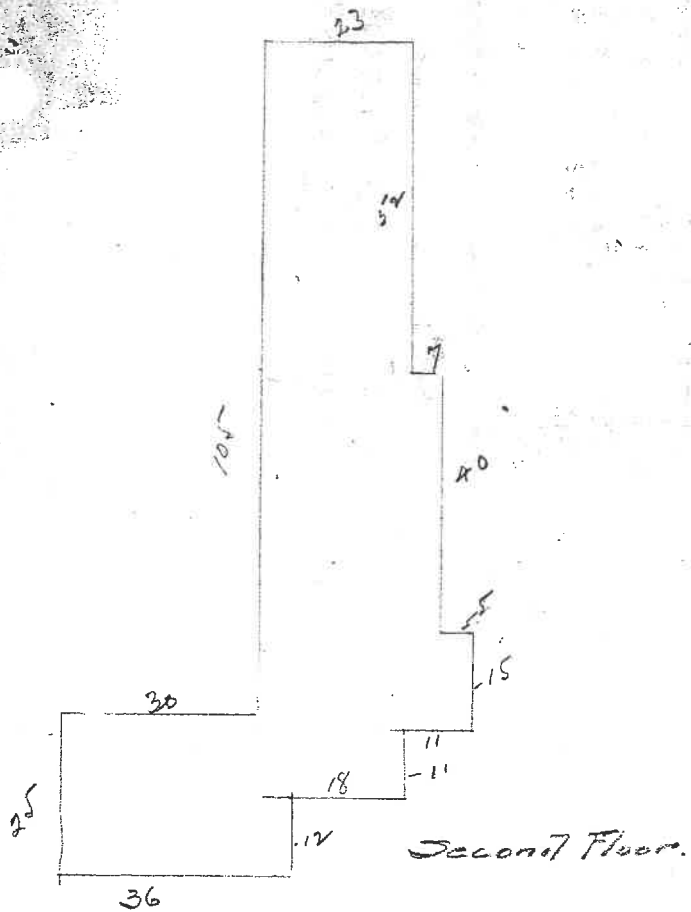
PERMIT NO. 8104-D Cost \$68,927 Res 136/151
 OWNER Chas H. Thorne

Basement	Room	1	2	3	4	5	Attic
ft. x ft.	Living Room	7	2				
ft. deep	Bed "	3	7				
cu. ft. @	Bath "	3	3				
Sq. ft. in Drives, etc.	Kitchen	1	1				
	Storage <u>Paney</u>	1					
	Offices						
	Store						
	Tile Floor	4	3				
	Hardwood Floor	7	9				
	Hardwood Fin.						
	Cement Floor						
	Unfinished						

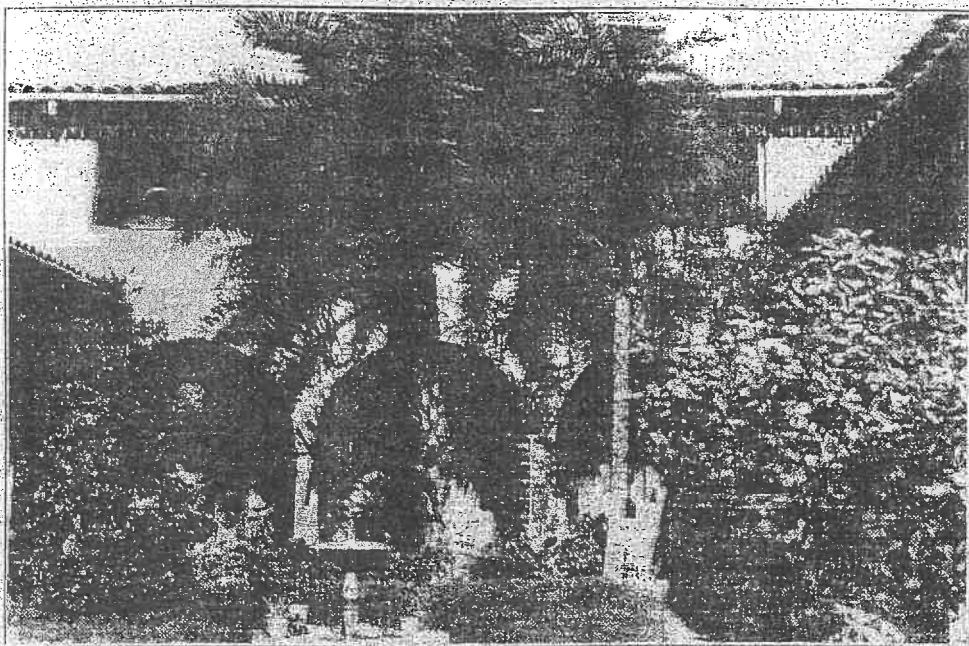
CLASS	ROOF	TRIMMINGS	BUILT IN FEATURES
Single, Double	Flat Hip	Tile, Marble	Desk, Buffet
California	Cables, Dormers	Cobblestone	Patent Beds
Bungalow	Cut up, Ordinary	Brick, Plaster	Refrigerator
Residence	Plain, Gravel	Stone, Wood	Bookcases
Flat, Apart.	Tile, Shingle	Plain, Concrete	Plain
Factory <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Corr. Iron, Tin	Ornamental	Ornamental
Garage	Composition	Terra Cotta	
Shed, Barn	Slate, Concrete	INSIDE FINISH	CONDITION
Church	CONSTRUC-	Plain, Ornamental	Good
School, Office	TION	Stock, Special	Medium
Store, Storage	Good, Medium	Plaster	Poor 29
FOUNDATION	Cheap	Plaster Board	
Stone, Brick	HEATING	B. & B., T. & G.	2 1/2 3 1/2
Concrete, Wood	Fire Place	BLDG. VALUES	

EXTERIOR	PLUMBING	LIGHTING	NO. CU FT.
Bay Windows	No. of Fixtures	Electric	No. SQ. FT. <u>16707</u>
1 sty 2 sty 3 sty	Automatic	Good, Medium	AT \$ <u>25</u>
Number	Storage	Cheap, Sewer	BLDG. COST \$ <u>36272</u>
Wall Covering:	Cesspool	Cheap	BSMT. COST \$ <u>686</u>
Plaster, Met Lath	LIGHTING	Electric	HEAT COST \$ <u>450</u>
Hollow Tile	Automatic	Good, Medium	Out-Buildings <u>None</u>
Concrete Brick	Storage	Cheap	Drives, Walks, etc. <u>None</u>
Reinforced Con-	Cesspool	Cheap	TOTAL COST \$ <u>37378</u>
crete	LIGHTING	Electric	Assessed Value \$
Shakes, T. & G.	Automatic	Good, Medium	" " \$ <u>2700</u>
Siding, B & B	Storage	Cheap	" " \$
Brick, P or C	Cesspool	Cheap	16% x 37378 = <u>28407</u>
Corr. Iron	LIGHTING	Electric	
Steel	Automatic	Good, Medium	
	Storage	Cheap	

Sold: Apr 1967 @ 115,000
 1,373,48 35882



Exotic Shrubs and Palms Prominent Features
In Patio of Residence On San Rafael Hillside

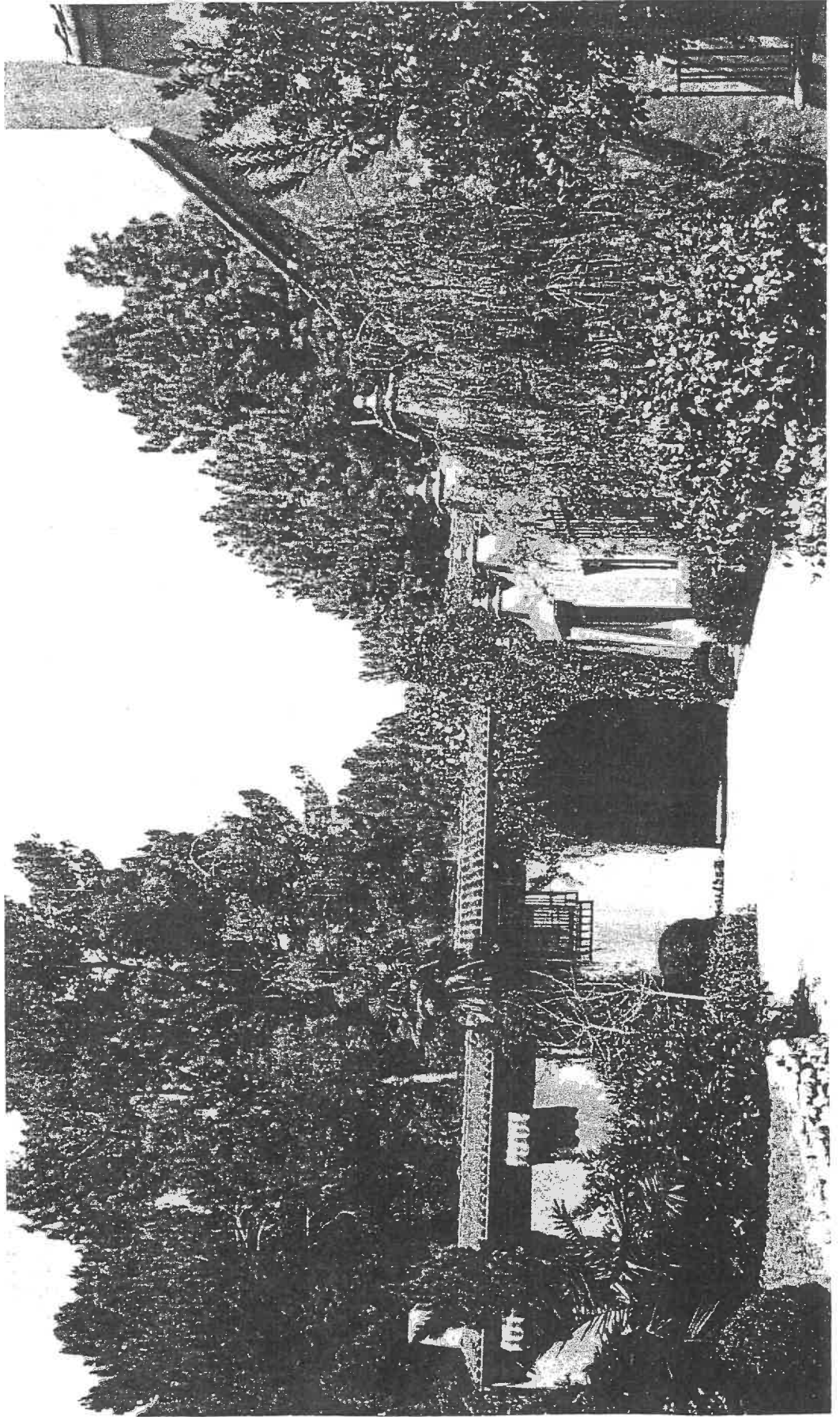


INNER COURT OF CHARLES H. THORNE'S GARDEN

This Attractive Old World Patio Is in the Center of the Attractive Spanish Home of the Thornes at
114 Los Altos Drive

Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Thorne Bowl. The gardens and shrubbery is built in the form of a hollow
look down from their hilltop home felt away gently to the bed of the square. The central patio is like
in the San Rafael section onto a Arroyo, where native plants to be so many in Gamalajata but even
charming vista of the beautiful a ground cover. more beautiful. It has orange trees,
Arroyo Seco, reaching from beyond. But their most charming garden qualities: palms, eucalyptus and roses
the Colorado street bridge to Rose is in the midst of their home, which plants dear to the Amalujan heart.

CHARLES H. THORNE HOUSE
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 1928



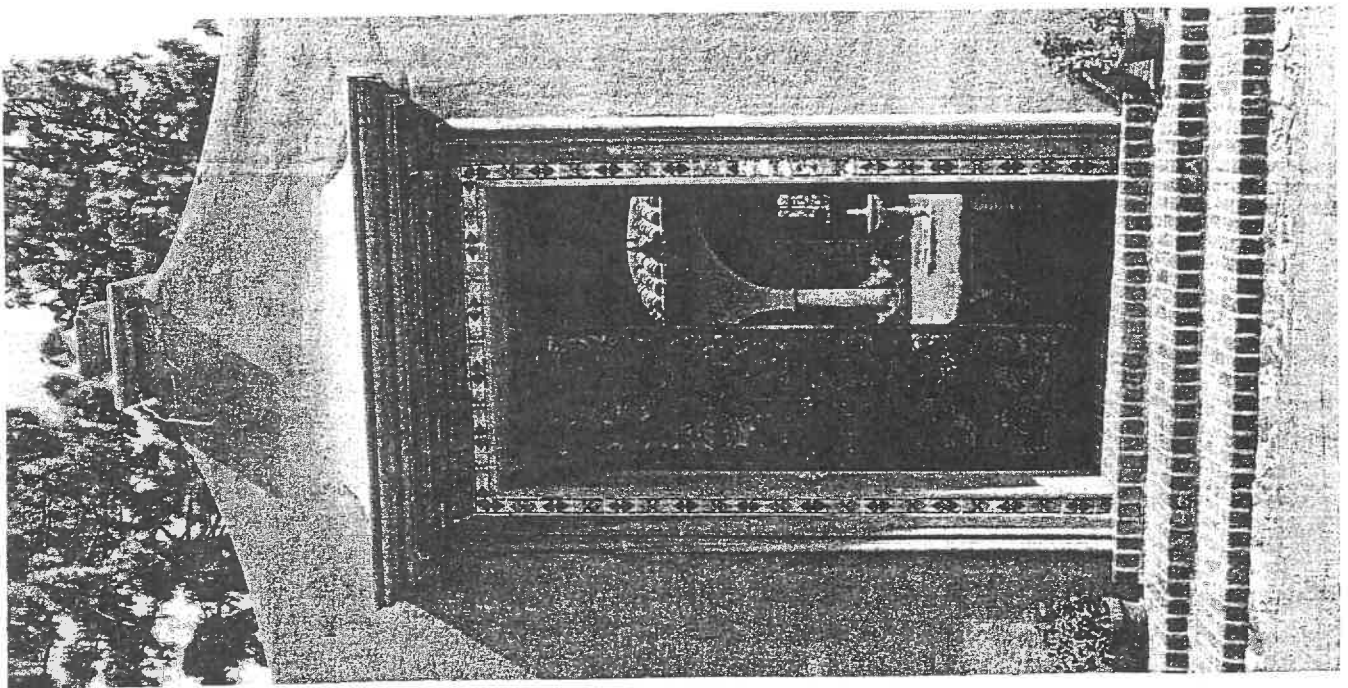
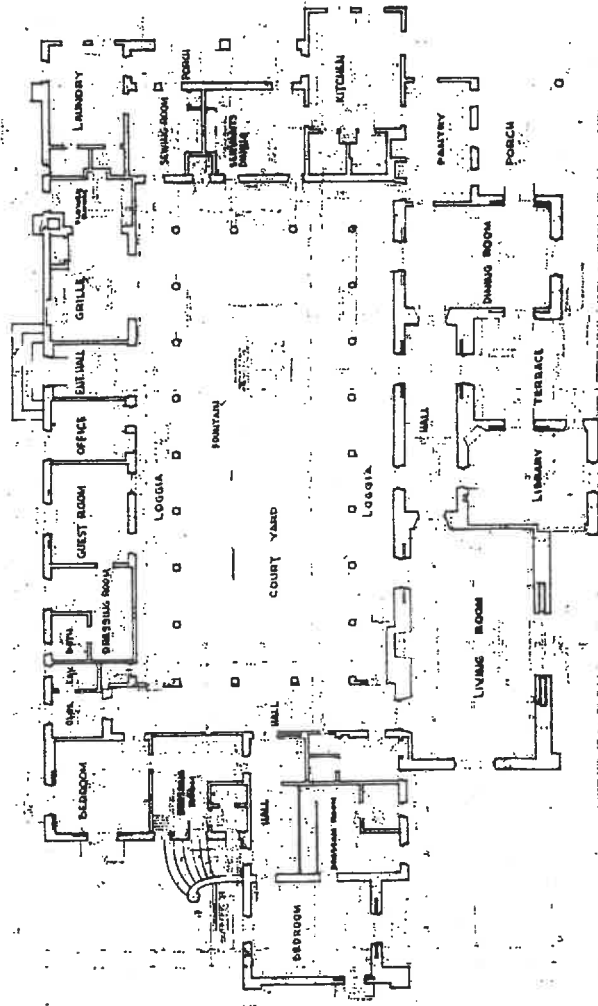
WILLIAM S. MASON of Chicago bought a choice hill overlooking the Arroyo Seco, the city of Pasadena, and the San Gabriel Mountains, planted it with beautiful Italian stone pines, and built a private road with elaborate gates for access to the two choice view par-

rels, one of which he reserved for himself. The other he sold to fellow Chicagoan and friend Charles H. Thorne, chairman of the board of Montgomery Ward and Company. Upon his retirement in 1928, Thorne commissioned Wallace Neff to design his house.

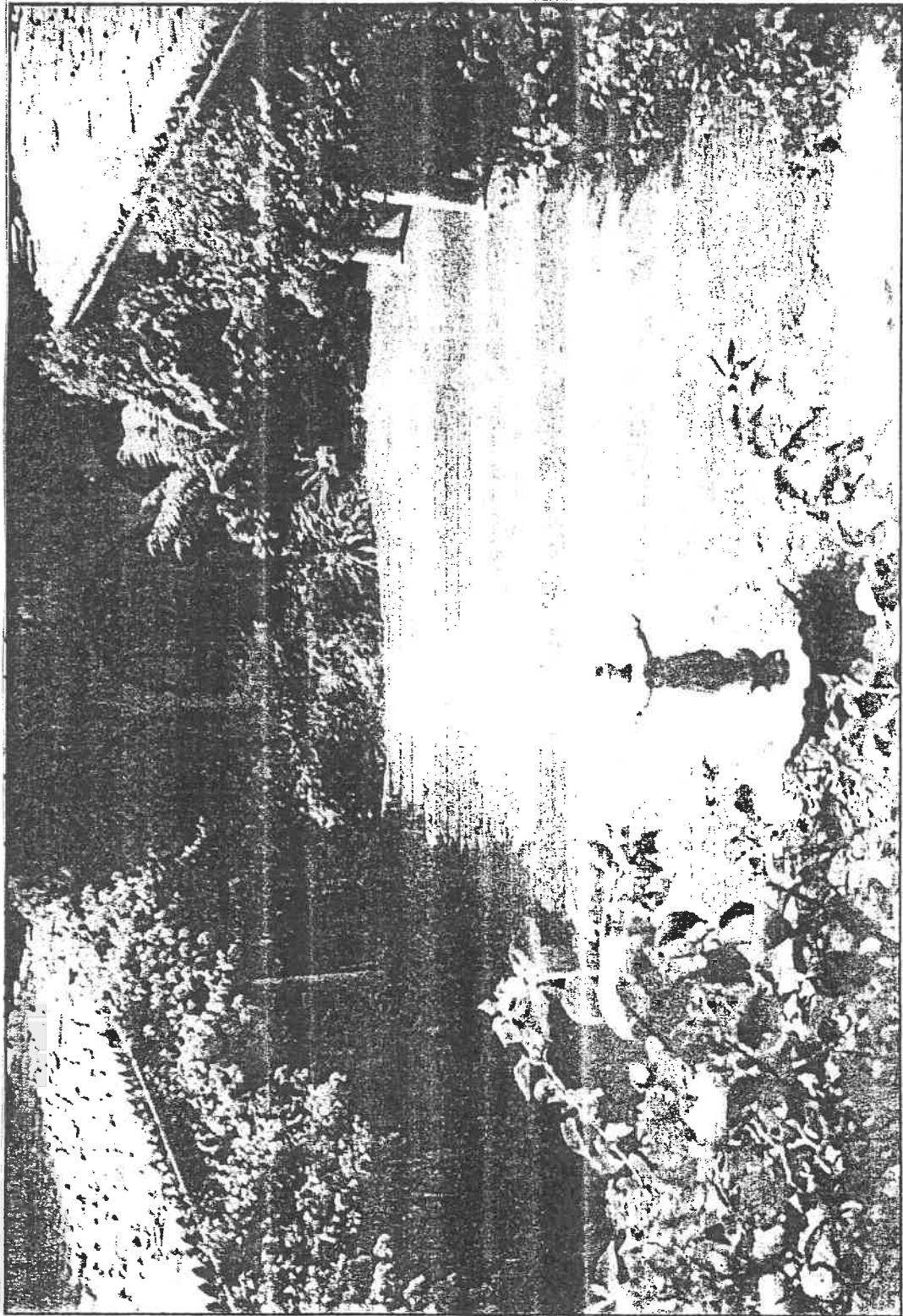
Neff's reputation was by this time impressive enough that a business executive could be talked into buying a unique plan. The view from the hilltop site was so all-encompassing that what was needed was a contrasting, sheltered, outdoor living space. So the whole house was built around a large atrium court

garden, completely surrounded by a loggia. The entrance elevation looks like a garden wall in Mexico. Stepping through the entrance portal which leads to a hall and then a loggia, the visitor proceeds directly across the atrium to another hall, which gives access to the living room, dining room, library, and an outdoor terrace, all of which enjoy the spectacular view. This imaginative idea was carried through with the requisite restraint to make the place liveable and enjoyable. The exterior is covered with beige stucco; the roofs are subtle red mission tile and the trim a rich dark green.

The Thorne house was never published anywhere, perhaps at the request of the owner.



Entrance



MAGNIFICENT MEDITERRANEAN VILLA: This Pasadena home overlooking Annandale Golf Course and the Arroyo Seco was the original home of Charles H. Thorne, chairman of the board of Montgomery Ward & Company.

Historic Pasadena home for sale

William S. Mason of Chicago bought a choice hill overlooking the Arroyo Seco, the city of Pasadena and the San Gabriel Mountains, planted it with beautiful Italian stone pines and built a private road with elaborate gates for access to two choice view parcels, one of which he reserved for himself. The other he sold to fellow Chicagoan and friend, Charles H. Thorne, chairman of the board of Montgomery Ward & Company.

Upon his retirement in 1928, Thorne commissioned Wallace Neff to design his house. Boasting many characteristics of the Neff design, this home of 8,810 square feet is for sale at \$2,250,000 or for lease at \$6,800 per month (or lease option).

Features include lovely wrought iron ornate trimmed doors and windows, tall double entry doors, fireplace mantles of carved wood, fireplaces lined with herringbone brick, exterior "Hercules" style windows, also windows of bottled glass, rooms

with high open beamed ceilings of natural wood and a porte cochere.

This magnificent Mediterranean Villa with a breathtaking view sits on a 73,800-square-foot lot and has nine bedrooms and 11 baths.

There's a formal entrance hall, atrium courtyard garden with working fountain, a galleria wing, west wing, north wing and east wing.

Additional features include a circular driveway, sprinklers, four car garage, RV parking, room for a pool, large basement,

pocket screen doors, private street, private gated community, three fireplaces, located above Annandale Golf Course, large yard area for play and an 800-square-foot apartment over the garage (presently rented out).

There's a \$1,000 annual association fee per owner to maintain private road and adjacent grounds.

For more information, call listing agents Alice and Robert Rathke, Loeffler & Rathke Properties, at 1-800-282-SELL, or (818) 419-5114, Ext. 4.

1920s hacienda-style estate in Pasadena

By STAN WAWER
SPECIAL SECTIONS EDITOR

Common along for a trip back to the days of Southern California's Spanish land grants.

This magnificent Pasadena hacienda was designed by Wallace Neff in 1928 for Charles H. Thorne, who resigned the chairmanship in 1921 of the giant Chicago retailing firm of Montgomery Ward.

Giving up the responsibility for the company his father helped found left him free time to travel and plan his own ideal retirement home. In the early 1920s he purchased the ideal lot — it had the best view in Pasadena, out over the Arroyo, the city and the mountains beyond. It was a secluded little private road and had been beautifully landscaped so that the Italian stone pines had reached majestic proportions by the time he was ready to build in 1928.

By that time, Wallace Neff had gained a reputation as a designer of imaginative houses. He also was known as a practitioner delightfully easy to get along with. Most likely the house was the result of a collaboration between three sensitive

minds — that of the architect and those of Thorne and his wife, Belle Wilber Thorne.

The Thornes had surely spent time in Cuernavaca, Mexico, for their ideal home seems transported magically from a little street in that city to a remote ridge overlooking Pasadena. The house is no copy, however, it is full of design elements that had not appeared in Neff's work and were not to appear again.

The plan is tailored to the view — living room, dining room, library, master bedroom, all enjoy it. The plan, however, affords an alternative to the view — the large arcade courtyard garden, completely surrounded by the house, assuring perfect privacy.

Thought to be inspired by the Mission San Juan Capistrano, the large central atrium garden courtyard opens to all of the upstairs and downstairs living areas. The 10-foot-high columns support the recurring rhythm of bougainvillee-adorned archways, tiled terrace floors, wrought iron fixtures and detailing, high beamed ceilings and a central fountain and outdoor entertaining area.

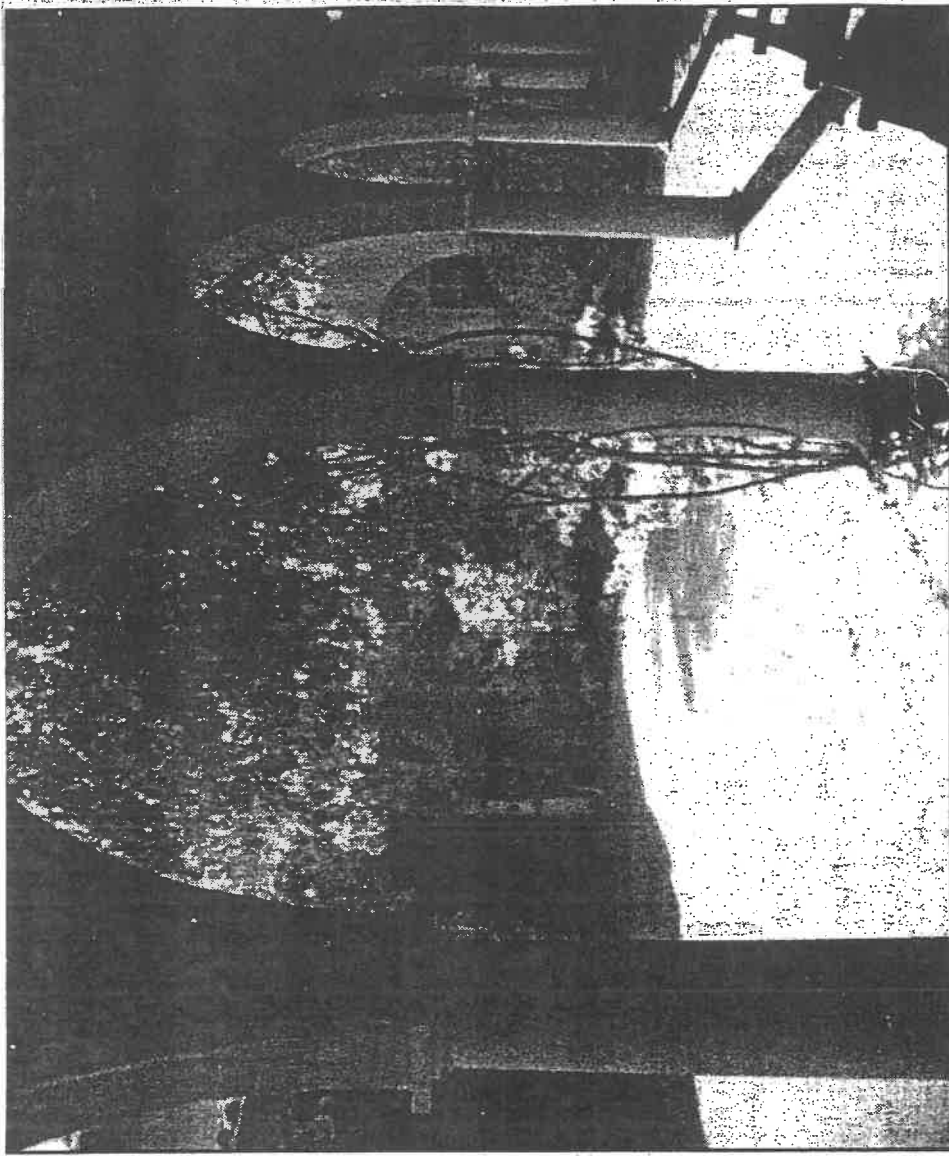


PHOTO BY CHERY HIMMELSTEIN

The main floor of the home has 6,681 square feet of living space, the second floor has 2,485 square feet and an apartment has 925 square feet for a total of 10,091 square feet. The east wing caters to the needs of daytime living. Wrought iron and glass double doors open to the main living room. The master bedroom and adjoining suite are in the south wing. This incredible property is priced at \$1,995,000.

Contact Diane B. Hardie or Jeannette M. Muirhead, Podley Caughey & Doan Realtors, at (818) 793-9291 or (818) 568-7289.