



CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA

1424 Mission Street • South Pasadena • California 91030 • 799-9101 682-2175

Cultural Heritage
Commission

NOMINATION FORM FOR OFFICIAL HISTORICAL REGISTER

I. IDENTIFICATION #10

Name of building or site (condensed legal description):

SOUTH PASADENA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address (or location description):

1115 El Centro Street, South Pasadena

Date of construction (if known):

Original building - 1907-1908; present building - 1930

Architect: Marsh and Russell - 1907; A. T. Jones (addition) - 1916;
Marsh, Smith and Powell - 1930.

Builder: J. F. Atkinson - 1907; J. Simon Fluor - 1916; Campbell Construction - 1930.

Original owner: City of South Pasadena

Significant intermediate owners:

Intermediate significant uses if any:

Present owner: City of South Pasadena

Original use: Library

Present use: Library



II. DESCRIPTION

Style or period: Present building is Mediterranean style, reminiscent of Northern Italy. Original 1907 building was neo-classic.

Construction materials: Red tile roof, stucco walls, brick trim and stone embellishments.

Additions or modifications:

1916 - addition; 1930 - building moved to center of park, enlarged and redesigned.

Significant features (exterior): Friezes of California writers over front windows. Under windows stone panels depicting literary figures. City and State seals over front entrance. Handsome plate glass with iron grille entry doors. Loggias on either side of building. Entrance to children's library at rear of building has decorative panel ~~signifying the city's history~~ above, flanked by free standing piers topped by sculptures. See enclosed description sheet.

Significant features (interior): Large circulation hall, high ceiling, hand-decorated beams, hand-wrought lighting fixtures. Over front entrance is beautiful rose window. Oak book shelves and furniture were specially designed. Children's library

photograph
or snapshot

Present condition:

Exterior: Good

Interior: Good

Site: Good

Type of neighborhood (residential, commercial, etc.): Residential

III. PRESERVATION STATUS

Is structure threatened with demolition or alteration by either public or private action? Explain: Proposed Long Beach Freeway (Meridian Route) would come within half a block to the west (off ramp at southwest corner El Centro and Diamond, across from Library, within 100-200 feet of intersection).

IV. REASONS FOR INTEREST OR SIGNIFICANCE

Note any federal, state or county surveys or other recognition.

Architectural: Period? Style? Architect? Comments: Good example of twentieth century Mediterranean revival. Local architects were involved in the designing of both the old and the new building. Merrell Gage, distinguished sculptor collaborated.

Historical: Personages, social events, influences on history.

Comments: On March 23, 1910, Andrew Carnegie visited the library which he had endowed with gifts totaling \$19,000. The library is situated in what was the original center of town.

Other: Objects of natural, aesthetic or cultural significance. Botanical or geological.

Comments: The library is situated in the center of a park one block square that contains large and rare trees, and is surrounded by streets canopied by large trees.

- V. PUBLISHED REFERENCES "On Old Rancho San Pascual" - Security Trust and Savings Bank of Los Angeles, circa 1924; "The History and Development of South Pasadena to 1917", 1938 Thesis, Edward Grant Thompson; Carew, "History of Pasadena and San Gabriel Valley", Volume III, 1930.

VI. REMARKS

See enclosed description sheet.

(Nominee may submit additional information or photographs)

APPROVED BY: Chairman, Historical Committee
CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

Please Print

Applicant (Mrs.) Margaret Leslie Fay, A.I.D.

Date 3-16-72

Address

517 Garfield Avenue

Secretary [Signature]

South Pasadena, Ca. 91030

Significant details of Library exterior:

A frieze extending along the El Centro Street elevation bears the names of writers who have made distinctive contributions to the literature of California. Beneath the window are six sculptured stone panels. The first panel depicts David and his sling, representative of old Hebrew literature, the second shows Perseus with the head of Medusa representing mythology, and a third carried a representation of Don Quixote charging a windmill. Early American literature is shown by the figures of an American Indian and Rip Van Winkle while English literature is suggested by Hamlet bearing a skull. Over the main entrance of the library are two shields, one bearing a coat of arms of the City of South Pasadena, an orange tree, and the other the California bear. The decoration of the entrance to the children's room on the south side of the building is designed to show the children's place in literature. A panel over the door depicts Longfellow's "Children's Hour" while models of a Spanish galleon and St. George and the dragon decorate piers on each side of the entrance.