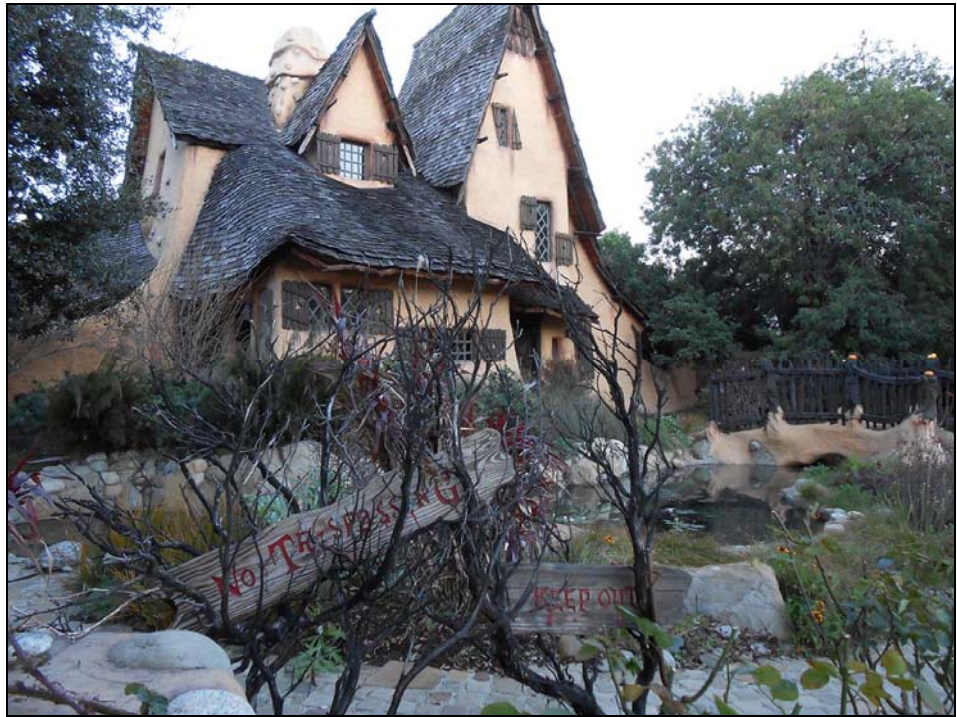


# CITY LANDMARK ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION REPORT



JANUARY 2013

## WITCH'S HOUSE

516 North Walden Drive, Beverly Hills, CA

### Prepared for:

City of Beverly Hills  
Community Development Department  
Planning Division  
455 Rexford Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210

### Prepared by:

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# CITY LANDMARK ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

## **Witch's House**

516 North Walden Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

APN: 4345-030-010

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This landmark assessment and evaluation report, completed by Ostashay & Associates Consulting for the City of Beverly Hills, documents and evaluates the local significance and landmark eligibility of the Witch's House located at 516 Walden Drive in the City of Beverly Hills, California. This assessment report includes a discussion of the survey methodology used, a summarized description of the property, a brief history of the property, the landmark criteria considered, evaluation of significance, photographs, and applicable supporting materials.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The landmark assessment was conducted by Jan Ostashay, Principal with Ostashay & Associates Consulting. In order to identify and evaluate the subject property as a potential local landmark, an intensive-level survey was conducted. The assessment included a review of the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and its annual updates, the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and the California Historic Resources Inventory list maintained by the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in order to determine if any previous evaluations or survey assessments of the property had been performed. The results of the records search indicated that the subject property had been previously surveyed and documented, and was found through those surveys to be eligible for listing in the National Register under criteria associated with historical events, important personages, and architecture. For this current assessment site inspections and a review of building permits and tax assessor records were also done to document the property's existing condition and assist in evaluating the residence for historical significance. The City of Beverly Hills landmark criteria were employed to evaluate the local significance of the property and its eligibility for landmark designation. In addition, the following tasks were performed for the study:

- Searched records of the National Register, California Register, and OHP Historic Resources Inventory.
- Conducted a field inspection of the subject property.
- Conducted site-specific research on the subject property utilizing Sanborn fire insurance maps, city directories, newspaper articles, historical photographs, and building permits.

- Reviewed and analyzed ordinances, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation, designation assessment procedures, and related programs.
- Evaluated the potential historic resource based upon criteria established by the City of Beverly Hills and utilized the OHP survey methodology for conducting survey assessments.

## **FINDINGS**

The Witch's House appears to meet the City's criteria for designation as a local landmark as required in Section 10-3-3212 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(B)(C)). The subject property satisfies the requirement of subsection A., which requires that at least two of the six BHMC 10-3-3212 "significance" criteria be met. Upon conclusion of the assessment and evaluation, the property appears to satisfy three of the "significance" criteria: criterion A.1, A.3, and A.4. It also meets the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(B), which requires that: "The property retains integrity from its period of significance," and subsection 10-3-3212(C), which requires that: "The property has historic value."

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Though slightly skewed from true north, the Witch's House is located at the southeast corner of Walden Drive and Carmelita Avenue on lot 11 of the Beverly Hills tract. The lot measures approximately 53 feet along the west side (front of property), 129 feet along the north side of the lot abutting Carmelita Avenue, 94 feet along the east parcel line, and 149 feet along the southern property line. The primary elevation fronts onto Walden Drive, facing west and the property is located within a well-developed residential neighborhood with improvements dating primarily from the mid to late 1920s.

The subject property has been previously identified and evaluated under the City's on-going historic resources survey process. It was first assessed as part of the 1985-1986 city-wide historic resources survey. At that time, the property was recognized for its distinctive architectural style and its association with the early film industry. The property was, therefore, assigned a National Register Status Code (now referred to as the California Historical Resource Status Codes) of 3, which identified the property as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). At the time of the 2004 historic resources survey update of residential properties in the city, the property was undergoing rehabilitation work and was not evaluated for historical significance (it was assigned a status code of 7R: identified in a reconnaissance level survey but not evaluated). The property has not been re-assessed for historical significance since the 1985-1986 survey work.

## **PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY**

**Description.** Constructed in 1921, this property was originally located in Culver City as a movie set and office for Willat Productions, a motion picture company. Harry Oliver, art and technical director for the studio, designed the building along with other auxiliary structures at the Willat

Productions movie studio. It was only a few years later, in 1924, that it was moved to Beverly Hills to serve as a residence for Ward Lascelle, an independent movie producer and director of the 1920s, and his family.

Designed in the Storybook style, the Witch's House is a witch's cottage incarnate. Two stories in height, the unique single-family residence is capped by extremely steep and curving gables covered with wooden shingles. Rough-textured stucco sheathes the structure which is serendipitously punctuated with small casement windows. Rough wood shutters, appearing to hang haphazardly from their hinges, flank some of the square and diamond-paned window openings. Crude posts support a shed roof in front of the main entry on the west elevation (primary elevation). One story wings stretch to either side of the façade. The entire property is enclosed with a rickety picket fence. Appropriately landscaped, the front yard features a boardwalk with crosses a "moat" and a "witch's" landing. Although rehabilitated in 2004 and 2009, the house appears similar to photographs taken of the property in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

**Building Permit History.** A review of building permits indicate that the property has undergone in-kind exterior modifications since it was built in the early 1920s. Relevant alterations that have been recorded with the City of Beverly Hills, which have occurred over the years, include the following:

YEAR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1924	Residence (\$2000)
1924	Two-car garage (\$400)
1966	Partial demolition prior to remodeling (\$1000)
1966	Remove existing 2-story residence and add new one-story addition to existing residence (\$20000), not constructed
1989	Re-roof (\$39250)
1998	Interior remodel, removal of walls (\$4000)
1998	Interior remodel, bathroom, kitchen, hall (\$50000)
1998	Repair existing bridge at front of house (\$300)
1999	New fence at side and rear yards (\$1500)
2000	New fence at side and rear yards (\$7000)
2003	Interior work: enlarge kitchen and remodel house, permit expired (\$300000)

<sup>1</sup> *State Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Form, 1986.*

YEAR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
2008	New swimming pool (\$50000)
2008	Front yard paving, permit expired (\$3000)
2008	Remodel existing pond, reduce size and construct bridge (\$5000)

The residence has undergone a number of alterations over the years, including a couple of large-scale in-kind rehabilitation projects (2004, 2009) and a large addition with garage along the southern property line and portion of the back alley (1966). Most of the alterations appear to have been changes sympathetic to the sites overall historic character and unique architectural qualities. Such evident changes have not significantly compromised the property's original architectural design, historical integrity, or important character-defining features.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

**Beverly Hills.** The early settlement and development of Beverly Hills began on what was called Rancho Rodeo de las Aguas. This land was originally claimed by Mexican settlers Maria Rita Valdez and her husband Vicente Valdez around 1822. Aptly named The Ranch of the Gathering of the Waters, the swamps or "cienegas" that characterize the natural landscape were created by rain run off flowing out of Coldwater and Benedict Canyons. Vegetable farming, sheep herding, bee keeping and the raising of walnut trees were the primary agricultural activities within the rancho lands during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Several attempts at subdividing and establishing communities on the ranch lands were attempted during the 1860s and 1880s, but ended in failure.<sup>2</sup>

In 1906, the Amalgamated Oil Company reorganized as the Rodeo Land and Water Company. Burton Green played a leading role in formulating the plans for a garden city, located between Whittier Drive on the west, Doheny Drive on the east, Wilshire Boulevard on the south, and the foothills above Sunset Boulevard to the north.<sup>3</sup> The syndicate hired notable California park planner, Wilbur F. Cook, Jr., to plan the new community. Cook had worked with landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted prior to moving to Oakland in 1905 to establish his own firm. Comprised of "Beverly" in the commercial triangle between Santa Monica and Wilshire boulevards and "Beverly Hills" north of Santa Monica Boulevard, the new community was one of the earliest planned communities in southern California.

In 1914, concern over establishment of a secure water system and the desire to improve the local school system prompted incorporation of the City of Beverly Hills. The original boundaries of the City were much the same as they are today, except for the area south of Wilshire Boulevard, annexed in 1915, and Trousdale Estates, annexed in 1955. Most of the City was

<sup>2</sup> *Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey 1985-1986*, pg. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 8-9.

open land at the time of incorporation with development scattered around Canon Drive, Beverly Drive, Crescent Drive, and the downtown triangle.<sup>4</sup>

The architecture of Beverly Hills in the years following the City's founding was dominated by the Craftsman, Mission Revival, and Period Revival styles (Tudor, Georgian, Beaux-Arts Classicism). With Beverly Hills establishing itself as a haven for movie stars in the 1920s, the architectural character of the city began to realize a varying degree of extravagance in the design of its housing stock. Flamboyant art directors and producers showed how delightful the art of set decoration could be applied to real life. Hence, fanciful houses such as Pickfair, Dias Dorados, and Greenacres were built. The Witch's House, a fairy tale Storybook style, steep-roofed version of an English thatched cottage fit right in to this self-express and theatrical exhibition of unique dwellings within the community. Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s sophisticated period revival styles dominated the domestic architecture of the city. By the mid to late 1930s Beverly Hills became one of the areas in southern California most closely connected with the development of the Hollywood Regency style. Born of the meeting of Moderne sleekness with the elegance of early nineteenth century architectural forms, it used simple, primary forms and blank wall surfaces to project exclusivity and sophistication.<sup>5</sup> Beverly Hills' domestic architecture in the post-World War II era saw the incorporation of Revival references in its new housing stock, and also the introduction of contemporary, luxury designs reflective of the Mid-century Modern idiom.

**Witch's House.** One of the most unusual structures in Beverly Hills is the residence at 516 Walden Drive. Designed by Harold (Harry) Oliver for Willat Productions in Culver City, the dwelling was originally used as a production (editing) office, movie set, and dressing rooms for that studio. In 1924, it was moved to its current location to serve as a residence for Ward Lascelle. The designer, Harry Oliver, was a recognized art director in the industry during the 1920s and 1930s. Rising from set painter to set dresser to art director, he went on to be nominated for two Academy Awards for his art direction (*Seventh Heaven*, 1927; *Street Angel*, 1928). Besides the Witch's House, he is also attributed to designing the Van de Kamp company's prominent windmill logo and the Tam O'Shanter Inn (1922) in Atwater Village (Los Angeles). The Witch's House, as it is officially and unofficially known, is a fanciful Hansel and Gretel type Storybook style adobe with appropriate landscaping. It is an early example of adaptive reuse.

In 1921, Carl A. Willat, one of the developers of Technicolor, along with his brother Irvin Willat, a motion picture director, built a new movie studio for the production company in Culver City.<sup>6</sup> The Willat Productions studio (also referred to as Willat Studio and Irvin Willat Productions) was located along West Washington Boulevard and what was once the Pacific Electric Venice Short Line stop. At this time there were almost a half a dozen studios in Culver City and the Willats wanted theirs to look different. They called upon their art director Harry G. Oliver to design the studio, including the witch's cottage office/movie set building. Irvin Willat, overseeing much of

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*. pg. 17.

<sup>6</sup> LAT. "New Studio to be Erected at Culver City." December 19, 1920, pg. V3.

the production and editing at the studio, abandoned the movie mogul life in 1923 and went back to directing. Two years later the brothers sold their studio to a developer who in turn sold the unusual production office/movie set to Ward Lascelle and his wife Lilian.

Ward Lascelle (1882-1941) was an independent silent motion picture producer who knew the Willats directly. He arranged for the relocation of the subject property from Culver City to 516 Walden Drive in Beverly Hills by obtaining the necessary building permits and preparing the site for the moved structure. A new two-car garage was built at the back of the new site in 1924 at a cost of approximately \$400. For the next several years they made very little changes to the property. In the early 1930s, the Lascelles took in a renter by the name of Louis Spadina who was a musician at the time and had just relocated to southern California from San Francisco. By the late 1930s the Lascelles had divorced (1938). According to city directory research and census records Lilian Lascelle kept ownership of the house and Ward moved to South Bonnie Brea Street in Los Angeles. Louis Spadina remained in the house as well. For over the next ten years Lilian Lascelle was listed in the city directories as Mrs. Lilian E. Lascelle. She eventually married Louis Spadina in the late 1940s. She and Louis Spadina, who by this time had become an accountant, lived in the house for the next twenty years or so. They sold the property to Martin and Doris Green in 1965 and the Spadina's moved to the Stockton area of northern California. The Green's raised a family there, and out of necessity added a 1500 square foot, one-story addition at the rear of the property in 1966. Designed in a sympathetic manner, compatible with the Storybook style the long rectangular shape addition was erected at a cost of approximately \$20,000. The work included the removal of the original 1924 garage and featured stucco sheathing, an irregular gable roof line and dormers, and multi-pane windows, as well as a built-in two-car garage off the back alley. Because of the addition's location on the lot and being well screened by a tall stuccoed walls and mature landscaping it is not evident from the public right-of-way. The Green's put the property up for sale in 1987, and later offered the house to the Culver City Historical Society if they could find a piece of land to put it on. After years of neglect, the property was eventually purchased by a sympathetic buyer who meticulously rehabilitated the entire site in a manner that retained the charm and all of the architectural features that defined the property as the Witch's House.

**Storybook Style.** Character-defining features of the style include the predominate use of stucco (often roughly troweled), frequently with half-timbering (often curved); use of rubble stone, crazed brick, and clink brick are also common; all-stone, all-brick, and all-wood construction are sometimes used. Turrets with conical shaped roofs are common features, as are faux dovecotes. Exterior walls are often sloped or curving; almost never square or rectangular; wing walls are not uncommon. Rooflines are always curved in some way – swaybacked, sagged, concave, undulating or sharply pointed; never flat; gables are usually jerkinhead or very sharply pointed; eaves are often rolled; use of cat-slide eaves are also common. Roofing materials include wooden shingles, wooden shakes or slate laid down in a seawave or other intentionally irregular pattern; and though the original roofing materials have frequently been replaced over time, the irregular pattern is sometimes still evident or imitated in the more modern material. Doors are typically irregular in shape and may be round-topped or batten (occasionally both), often with a peek-a-boo; doors are frequently set in an arched shape doorway lined with stone;

when a turret is present the building's front door usually opens into this. Fenestration for Storybook designed properties can include wood-frame or steel-frame multi-pane glazing (usually set in a diamond pattern); on older homes the glass (unless replaced) is leaded or wavy; figural insets of stained glass are not uncommon. Chimneys of stone, stucco, and/or brick are incorporated into many of the designs, some with ornate chimney pots; most feature a combination of stucco and seemingly haphazardly place stone or brick.<sup>7</sup>

Character-defining features associated with the Witch's House are those features only on the original dwelling dating from 1921 and front yard space as seen from the public right-of-way. Such features include its prominent location at the corner of Walden Drive and Carmelita Avenue; the basic asymmetrical form, height, shape, mass and composition of the dwelling in relationship to its front yard and immediate environment; physical attributes that define the Storybook architectural style. Those features on the house and front yard that reflect and define the Storybook style include, but are not limited to, the property's unique roof line and pitch, roofing material, roof eaves, irregular brick and stucco chimney flues, gabled dormers, irregular trowel finish stucco siding material, awkwardly placed fenestration of multi-pane casements some with shutters, and the rich textures and finishes evident on the exterior of the building. Landscape features include a moat; witch's landing; wood bridge; picket fence with stone and mortar piers; oddly shaped plank gate; overrun vegetation of shrubs, flowers, bushes and other plantings; rock outcroppings; boardwalk; curved paved walkway path from front sidewalk to front door (over the bridge); and ironwork hardware on the gates, fences, doors and windows.

## **EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**Evaluation Criteria.** In analyzing the historical significance of the subject property, criteria for designation under the City's local landmark program was considered. Additionally, consideration of historical integrity and the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) survey methodology was used to survey and assess the relative significance of the property.

**City of Beverly Hills Landmark Criteria.** The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Title 10 Chapter 3 Article 32; BHMC 10-3-32) authorizes the Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) to recommend the nomination of properties as local landmarks to the City Council. The Council may designate local landmarks and historic districts by the procedures outlined in the ordinance.

The Preservation Ordinance also establishes criteria and the process for evaluating and designating properties as potential local landmarks. Under the City's criteria a property must be more than 45 years old, unless it possesses exceptional significance; retain sufficient historical integrity to physically illustrate its significance; and satisfy significance criteria.

To be eligible for local designation as a historic landmark, properties must satisfy the following criteria:

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<sup>7</sup> <http://storybookers.com/sb--defined.html>, "A Storybook Primer: Defining Storybook Architecture."



A. The property meets at least two of the following (significance) criteria:

1. Is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community;
2. Is directly associated with the lives of Significant Persons important to national, state, City or local history;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction;
4. Represents a notable work of a person included on the City's List of Master Architects or possesses high artistic or aesthetic value;
5. Has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the Nation, State, City or community;
6. Is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.

B. The property retains integrity from its period of significance. The proposed landmark retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association. Integrity shall be judged with reference to the particular significance criteria specified above.

C. The property has historic value. The proposed landmark is of significant architectural value to the community, beyond its simple market value and its designation as a landmark is reasonable, appropriate, and necessary to promote protect, and further the goals and purposes of the City's historic preservation ordinance.

**California Office of Historic Preservation Survey Methodology.** The evaluation instructions and classification system prescribed by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) in its publication Instructions for Recording Historical Resources provide a three-digit evaluation rating code for use in classifying potential historic resources. The first digit indicates one of the following general evaluation categories for use in conducting cultural resources surveys:

1. Property listed in the National Register or the California Register;
2. Property determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register;
3. Property appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through a survey evaluation;

4. Property appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through other evaluation;
5. Property recognized as historically significant by local government;
6. Property not eligible for any listing or designation; and
7. Property not evaluated for the National Register or California Register or needs re-evaluation.

The second digit of the evaluation status code is a letter code indicating whether the resource is separately eligible (S), eligible as part of a district (D), or both (B). The third digit is a number that is used to further specify significance and refine the relationship of the property to the National Register and/or California Register. Under this evaluation system, categories 1 through 4 pertain to various levels of National Register and/or California Register eligibility. The California Register, however, may also include surveyed resources with evaluation rating codes through level 5. In addition, properties found ineligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or for designation under a local ordinance are given an evaluation status code of 6.

**Historical Integrity.** “Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance.” In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. Integrity is the authenticity of a property’s physical identity clearly indicated by the retention of characteristics that existed during the property’s period of significance. Properties eligible for local landmark designation must meet at least two of the local landmark designation criteria and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their historical significance.

Both the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources recognize the seven aspects of qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property should possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. Thus, the retention of the specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. The seven qualities that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The seven qualities or aspects of historical integrity are defined as follows:

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a

particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

**Application of City Landmark (Significance) Criteria.** In summary, based on current research and the above assessment the Witch's House located at 516 North Walden Drive appears to meet the necessary City of Beverly Hills Landmark criteria (BHMC 10-3-3212).

The property was evaluated according to statutory criteria, as follows:

- A. The property meets at least two of the following criteria (BHMC 10-3-3212(A)).

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(1) The property is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community.***

The subject property truly exemplifies special elements of a unique period in the City's evolving architectural history and development. The design, materials, workmanship, setting, and overall character of the site together reflect the essential features of the "Hansel and Gretel" Storybook style. A style so widely recognized in the City because of this one particular property. It is also one of the earliest, if not the earliest, examples of preservation and adaptive re-use in the City, having been relocated from a movie studio in Culver City and re-used as single-family residence in the 1920s. Its association with Willat Productions and function as a production office, dressing rooms, and movie set further associates the property with the early film industry in southern California. In consideration of eligibility, the property appears to satisfy this criterion.

***BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(2) The property is directly associated with the lives of Significant Persons important to national, state, City or local history.***

The property was built for Irvin and Carl Willat of Willat Production, a silent film studio company located in Culver City dating from the 1920s. The building was initially utilized as dressing rooms for actors, production offices for crew and staff, and as a movie set prior to its relocation to Beverly Hills and conversion to a residence. The Willat owned the structure for only a few short years before selling it off and closing their studio. Irvin Willat is a somewhat notable individual in the early years of the film industry; however, his productive life as a film

producer is not solely based on the association with this building. Since the property was used for various purposes its direct association with Irvin Willat is negligible. In addition, none of the other former owners of the property appear to qualify as significant persons important to national, state, City or local history. While some owners were associated with the early film industry of southern California, they in their own right do not appear to have made significant contributions to the annals of national, state, or local history. Therefore, the property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

**BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(3)** The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction.

The property is one of the best extant examples of Storybook architecture in the country. It has been recognized, documented, and photographed in countless newspapers, magazines, books and websites because of its unique architecture and unusual history. The design, materials, workmanship, setting, and overall character of the site together reflect the quintessential “Hansel and Gretel” Storybook style. The Witch’s House, therefore, embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular style, period of time, and method of construction. Though having been rehabilitated in-kind, the property continues to appear almost identical as to when it was relocated to its current location from Culver City in 1924. Key features of the Storybook architectural style incorporated in the property include the building’s unique roof line and pitch, roofing material, roof eaves, irregular brick and stucco chimney flues, gabled dormers, irregular trowel finish stucco siding material, awkwardly placed fenestration of multi-pane casements some with shutters, and the rich textures and finishes evident on the exterior of the building. In addition, the landscape features, which include a moat; witch’s landing; boardwalk; wood bridge; picket fence with stone and mortar piers; oddly shaped plank gate; overrun vegetation of shrubs, flowers, bushes and other plantings; rock outcroppings; curved paved walkway path from front sidewalk to front door (over the bridge); and ironwork hardware on the gates, fences, doors and windows also help to further define and reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Storybook style. In review, the subject property appears eligible for local landmark designation under this criterion.

**BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(4)** *The property represents a notable work of a person included on the City’s List of Master Architects or possesses high artistic or aesthetic value.*

This property is not the representative work of a master architect nor was it designed by a person on the City’s List of Master Architects. The structure was designed by Harry Oliver, who was the art director at Willat Production, a movie studio in Culver City. Despite lacking association with a notable architect, the property does possess high artistic and aesthetic value in its design, workmanship, materials, and style. Therefore, the subject property appears to satisfy this criterion.

**BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(5)** *The property has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the Nation, State, City or community.*

The property does not appear to satisfy this criterion.

**BHMC 10-3-3212(A)(6)** *The property is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources.*

The property is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources, nor has it been formally determined eligible for listing on the National Register or the California Register. Though the property was previously evaluated as eligible for listing on the National Register as part of the 1985-1986 citywide survey process, it does not satisfy this criterion.

B. The property retains integrity from its Period of Significance (BHMC 10-3-3212(B)).

The period of significance for the subject property is from 1921 to 1924, when the property was built and extending through to when it was relocated to Beverly Hills. Those important features of design, materials, location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association are still evident in the property and help to render it historically significant.

C. The property has Historic Value (BHMC 10-3-3212(C)).

Because of its unique architecture, historical past, and contribution to the City's architectural heritage the property is considered to have historic value. Therefore, the property satisfies this criterion.

**Character-defining Features.** Every historic property is unique, with its own identity and its own distinguishing character. A property's form and detailing are important in defining its visual historic character and significance. It is a property's tangible features or elements that embody its significance for association with specific historical events, important personages, or distinctive architecture and it is those tangible elements; therefore, that should be retained and preserved.

Character refers to all those visual aspects and physical features that comprise the appearance of every historic property. According to *National Park Service Brief 17, Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*, character-defining features include the overall shape of a property (building, structure, etc.), its material, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features (as applicable), as well as the various aspects of its site and immediate environment (form, configuration and orientation).

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* defines historic character by the form and detailing of materials, such as masonry, wood, stucco, plaster, terra cotta, metal, etc.; specific features, such as roofs, porches, windows and window elements, moldings, staircases, chimneys, driveways, garages, landscape and hardscape elements, etc.; as well as spatial relationships between buildings, structures, and features; room configurations; and archaic structural and mechanical systems.

Identifying those features or elements that give a historic property visual character and which should be taken into account and preserved to the maximum extent possible is important in order for the property to maintain its historical significance. Distinctive and important character-defining features associated with the subject property include its overall setting, immediate environment, materials and design, and any contributive out-features that aid in defining the property's association with its Storybook style architecture.

Character-defining features associated with the subject property include its prominent location at the corner of Walden Drive and Carmelita Avenue; the basic asymmetrical form, height, shape, mass and composition of the dwelling in relationship to its front yard and immediate environment; physical attributes that define the Storybook architectural style. Those features on the house and front yard that reflect and define the Storybook style include, but are not limited to, the property's unique roof line and pitch, roofing material, roof eaves, irregular brick and stucco chimney flues, gabled dormers, irregular trowel finish stucco siding material, awkwardly placed fenestration of multi-pane casements some with shutters, and the rich textures and finishes evident on the exterior of the building. Landscape features include a moat; witch's landing; boardwalk; wood bridge; picket fence with stone and mortar piers; oddly shaped plank gate; overrun vegetation of shrubs, flowers, bushes and other plantings; rock outcroppings; curved paved walkway path from front sidewalk to front door (over the bridge); and ironwork hardware on the gates, fences, doors and windows.

## **CONCLUSION**

As discussed herein, the Witch's House satisfies the City of Beverly Hill's criteria for designation as a local Landmark, as required in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (BHMC Section 10-3-3212).

The property satisfies the requirement of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(1), in that it "is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community." The subject property truly exemplifies elements of a unique period and architectural style in the City's architectural history. In addition, the subject property satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(3), in that it "embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction." The design, materials, workmanship, setting, and overall character of the site together reflect the quintessential "Hansel and Gretel" Storybook style. And under the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(4), the Witch's House satisfies this criterion in that it "represents the notable work of a person included on the City's List of Master Architects" and "possesses high artistic and aesthetic value that it so fully articulates the design theories of the Storybook style in its architecture and associated art forms." The property also satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(B) in that it fully retains sufficient integrity to physically convey its historical significance, and subsection 10-3-3212(C) since its unique architecture and historical past are considered tangible evidence that help to give it historic value.

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## **APPENDIX**

Photographs

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Tax Assessor Map

City Directory Research

Other Historical Data

Early Permit History

## PHOTOGRAPHS



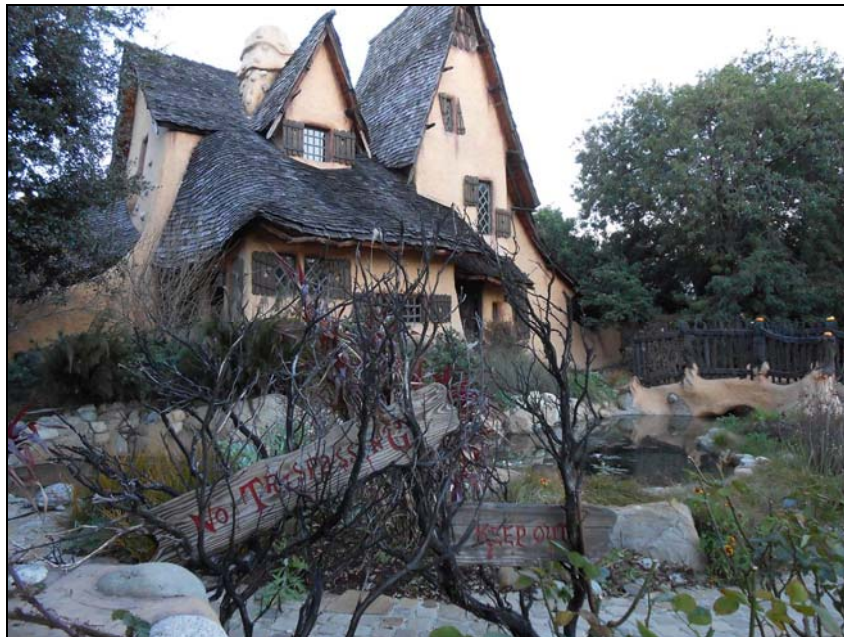
Front of residence (west elevation) from North Walden Drive



Oblique view at North Walden and Carmelita Avenue, looking southeast



Front (west) of residence with bridge and moat details



Primary elevations with architectural details, looking southeast





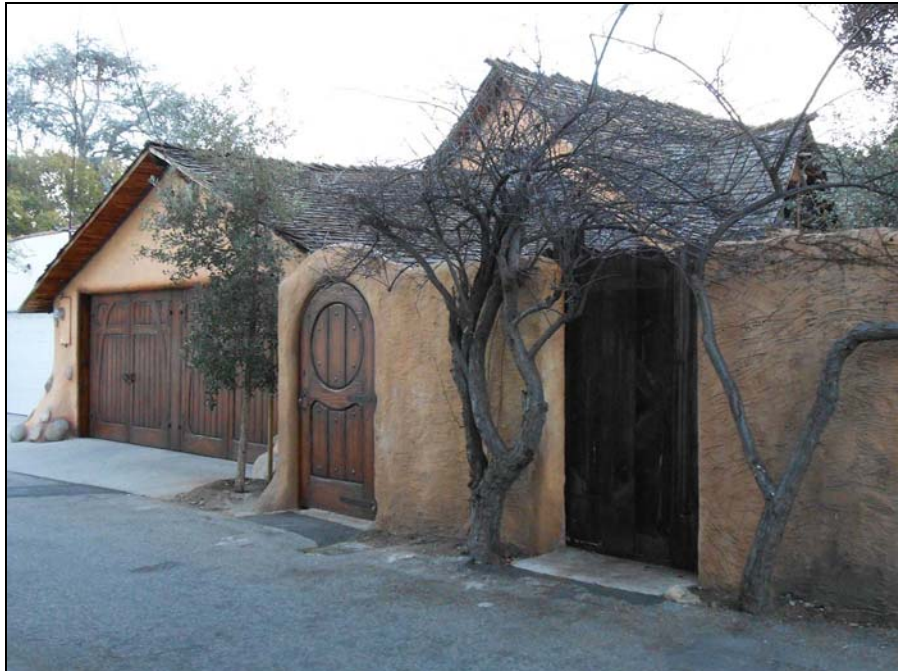
Architectural details



Ornament fencing along Walden Drive and Carmelita Avenue



Privacy wall along Carmelita Avenue and alley



Rear of property (east elevation) from alley, looking southwest





Varying perspectives of the Witches House



Historic postcard: Witch's House, after relocation to 516 North Walden Drive



Witch's House, after relocation to 516 North Walden Drive, circa 1930s





Willat Studio (Willat Productions, Irvin Willat Productions), Culver City, circa 1922



Willat Studio (Willat Productions, Irvin Willat Productions), Culver City, circa 1921



Willat Studio (Willat Productions, Irvin Willat Productions), Culver City, circa 1921



Subject property as used as a movie set by Willat Studio, Culver City, circa 1921

## **SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS**

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

2071  
LOS ANGELES, CAL. VOL. 21.

2147

BEVERLY HILLS

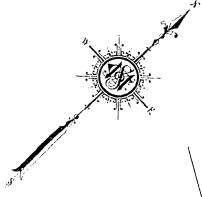


SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP

2147  
LOS ANGELES, CAL. VOL. 21

2147

BEVERLY HILLS



2157

AV.

CARMELITA

WALDEN DRIVE

2142

N. LINDEN DRIVE

DRIVE  
N. ROXBURY

2148

SANTA MONICA

BLVD

PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY RIGHT OF WAY

SANTA MONICA BLVD S

Scale of Feet.

2110

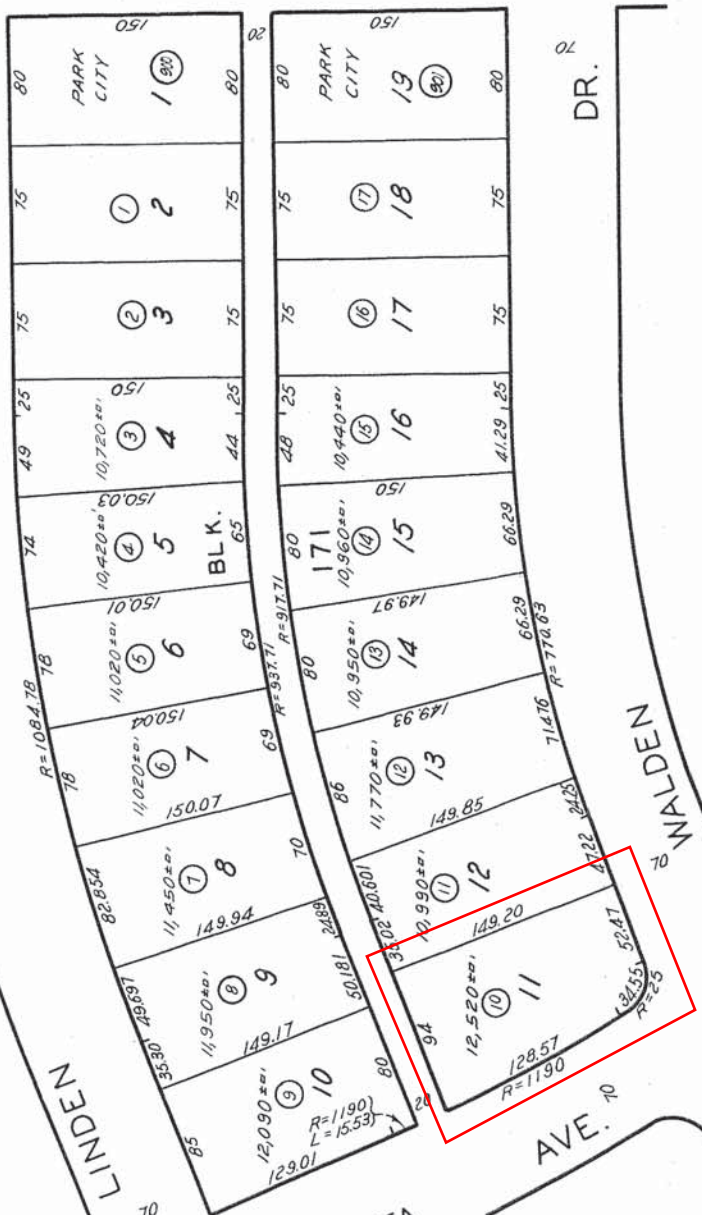
(BURTON WAY)

## TAX ASSESSOR MAP

345 30  
 1" = 80'

DR. 70

SANTA MONICA BLVD.



DR. 70

BEVERLY HILLS

M. B. 72 - 14 - 19

CODE  
 2410

FOR PREV. ASSMT. SEE: 1835-30

## CITY DIRECTORY RESEARCH



**CITY DIRECTORY RESEARCH**  
**Witch's House: 516 North Walden Drive**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Entry</b>
1931	Lascelle, Ward (Lilian), picture producer Spadina, Louise E., not listed in directory
1936	Lascelle, Ward (Lilian), picture producer Spadina, Louis E., musician
1941	Lascelle, Lilian E. Mrs. Spadina, Louis E., accountant
1943	Lascelle, Lilian E. Mrs. Spadina, Louis E., accountant
1944	Lascelle, Lilian E. Mrs. Spadina, Louis E., accountant
1951	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian)
1955-1956	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian)
1957-1958	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian)
1960-1961	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian), rtd
1963	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian), rtd
1965	Spadina, Louis E (Lilian), rtd
1970	Not listed

## OTHER HISTORICAL DATA

# *New Studio to be Erected at Culver City.*

The purchase of five acres of ground at Culver City, with frontage on both Washington Boulevard and the Venice Short Line, by C. A. Willat, president and general manager of the Willat Productions, Inc., was announced yesterday by the Harry H. Culver Company, through whom the transaction was handled. On this site a new studio, to be the future home of the organization, will be erected.

A big glass studio building, which is to be erected on the property by the Willat Company, has been designed by Irvin Willat. Plans for the structure include the best modern features of studio construction, while many original ideas of Mr. Willat will be incorporated in the new building. Harry Culver, the art and technical director for Mr. Willat, is now working on plans for buildings to house the offices, property rooms, carpenter shop and laboratory. The architecture of the main building will also be carried out in the plans for the auxiliary buildings.

The first two features made by the Willat Productions under the direction of Irvin Willat were made at the National studio in Hollywood. "Down Home" one of the productions of the company, has just been released through the W. W. Hodkinson Corporation. "Partners of the Tide" written by Joseph C. Lincoln is now in the cutting stage. The third production of the company will be filmed at the new studio at Culver City.

## EARLY PERMIT HISTORY

# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

## Application for the Erection of Buildings

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

To the Board of Trustees of the City of Beverly Hills:

Application is hereby made to the Trustees of the City of Beverly Hills, through the Office of the Chief Inspector of Buildings, for a permit in accordance with the description and for the purpose hereinafter set forth. This application is made subject to the following conditions, which shall be deemed to be entered into the exercise of the permit:

First: That the permit do not authorize the erection of any building, or the alteration or extension of any building, or the use of any portion thereof upon any street, alley, or public place.

Lot No. 11 Block 171 Tract Beverly Hills  
(Description of Job)

No. 516 Walden Street  
(Location of Property)

(USE INK OR INDELIBLE PENCIL)

- Purpose of Building Residence No. of Rooms 8 No. of Families 1
- Owner's Name Ward Lascelle Phone 582-996
- Owner's address 823 Bonnie Bree
- Architect's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Contractor's name Owner Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Contractor's address \_\_\_\_\_
- VALUATION OF PROPOSED BLDG.   
 {Including Plumbing, Gas Fitting, Sewers, Cesspools, Elevators, Painting, Finishing, all Labor, etc.} \$ 2000.00
- Is there any existing building on lot? No How used? \_\_\_\_\_
- Size of proposed building 36x90 Height to highest point 29 feet
- Size of lot: 77x94x149 Character of Ground Grade
- Number of Stories in height 2 set back from property line \_\_\_\_\_ Front 35 Rear 45 Side 15
- Material of foundation Concrete Size of footings 24x16 Size of wall 8x9 Depth below ground 6x12
- Material of chimneys Brick No. of inlets to flue 1 Interior sizes of flues 8x8 Thickness of flues 11/8
- Give sizes of following materials: REDWOOD MUDSILLS 3x6 Girders 4x4
- Materials of exterior walls Wood & Stucco Material of interior construction Wood & plaster
- Are there any other buildings within 30 feet of proposed structure? No
- Will all provisions of State Dwelling House Act be complied with? Yes
- EXTERIOR studs 2x4 INTERIOR BEARING studs 2x4 Interior Non-Bearing studs 2x3 Ceiling joists 2x7 Roof rafters 2x4 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2x6 Second floor joists 2x6 Specify material of roof Shingles

I have carefully examined and read the above application and know the same is true and correct, and that all provisions of the Ordinances and Laws governing Building Construction will be complied with, whether herein specified or not.

**OVER**

(Sign here) Lillian Lascelle  
(Owner or Authorized Agent)

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

PERMIT NO.	Plans and Specifications checked and found to conform to Ordinances, State Laws, etc.	Application checked and found O. K.	Stamp here when permit is issued.
<u>1628</u>	<u>Bannell</u> Plan Examiner	<u>Lillian Lascelle</u> Clerk	<u>1/2/24</u>

Bannell  
1/2/24

Applications must be filled out by Applicant

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS  
and other data must also be filed

# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

## Application for the Erection of Buildings

CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

To the Board of Trustees of the City of Beverly Hills:

Application is hereby made to the Trustees of the City of Beverly Hills, through the office of the Chief Inspector, for a permit in accordance with the description and for the purpose hereinafter set forth. This application is made subject to the following conditions, which shall be deemed conditions entering into the exercise of the permit:

First: That the permit does not grant any right or privilege to erect any building or other structure therein or any portion thereof upon any street, alley, or other public place or portion thereof.

Second: That the permit does not grant any right or privilege to use any building or other structure therein for any purpose that is, or may hereafter be prohibited by ordinance of the City of Beverly Hills.

Third: That the granting of the permit does not affect or prejudice any claim of title to, or right of possession of the property described in such permit.

Lot No. 11 Block 171 Tract Beverly Hills  
(Description of Job)  
2-car garage

No. 11 (Location of Building)

Owner Bonnie B. Bae Phone 582-991

Architect's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

5. Contractor's name Swaner Phone \_\_\_\_\_

6. Contractor's address \_\_\_\_\_

7. VALUATION OF PROPOSED BLDG. [Including Plumbing, Gas Fitting, Sewers, Cesspools, Elevators, Painting, Finishing, all Labor, etc.] \$ 400.00

8. Is there any existing building on lot? Will be How used? Res.

9. Size of proposed building 20 x 16 Height to highest point 11 feet

10. Size of lot: 72 x 94 x 149 Character of Ground Sub

11. Number of Stories in height 1 set back from property line 4.0 Front 4.0 Rear 4.0 Side Alley

12. Material of foundation Concrete Size of footings 6 Size of wall 6 Depth below ground 6

13. Material of chimneys \_\_\_\_\_ No. of inlets to flue \_\_\_\_\_ Interior sizes of flues \_\_\_\_\_ Thickness of flue \_\_\_\_\_

14. Give sizes of following materials: REDWOOD MUDDSILLS 2 x 6 Girders Concrete floor

15. Materials of exterior walls Stucco Material of interior construction 2 x 4 O.P.

16. Are there any other buildings within 30 feet of proposed structure? No

17. Will all provisions of State Dwelling House Act be complied with? Yes

EXTERIOR studs 2 x 4 INTERIOR BEARING studs 2 x 4 Interior Non-Bearing studs

2 x 4 Ceiling joists 2 x 4 Roof rafters 2 x 4 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS None

Second floor joists 2 x 4 Specify material of roof Shingle

I have carefully examined and read the above application and know the same is true and correct, and that all provisions of the Ordinances and Laws governing Building Construction will be complied with, whether herein specified or not.

**OVER**

(Sign here) Lillian Hassell  
by Mrs. Campbell  
(Owner or Authorized Agent)

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

PERMIT NO.

Plans and Specifications checked and found to conform to Ordinances, State Laws, etc.

Application checked and found O. K.

Stamp here when permit is issued.

Plan Examiner

Clerk

Superintendent of Building

Ref No. 100-100000 with 124 and  
to leave span in clear 6' 0"

124 sheeting for shingle roof

Skirting to have 2" fire blocks at Floor line.

Plus big truss according to Ordinance  
Hills.

OVER

NO. 100-100000

100-100000

100-100000

**OSTASHAY & ASSOCIATES CONSULTING**

---

PO BOX 542

LONG BEACH, CA 90801

562.500.9451