

# CITY LANDMARK ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION REPORT



FEBRUARY 2014

**SLAVIN HOUSE**  
620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hills, CA

**Prepared for:**

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

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# CITY LANDMARK ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

## Slavin House

620 North Sierra Drive  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

APN: 4341-033-010

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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 Slavin House located at 620 North Sierra 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 Leslie Heumann, Consultant, with Ostashay & Associates Consulting. Property research was provided by Tim Gregory.<sup>1</sup> 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 has not been previously surveyed and documented, and therefore has not been evaluated for architectural and historical significance. 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, its eligibility for landmark designation, and to assess its potential for contribution to a historic district. 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 from the public right-of-way.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Building Biographer* Tim Gregory. "620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hills." *Property Fact Sheet, February 2007.*

- 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 Slavin 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**

The subject property consists of a large, nearly rectangular parcel located on the east side of North Sierra Drive, approximately mid-midblock between Carmelita and Elevado avenues. Only slightly skewed from a true north alignment, the property occupies lot 10 of Block 114 in the Beverly Hills Tract. The parcel measures 75 feet along North Sierra Drive and has a maximum depth of approximately 177 feet. Behind a generous setback similar to those elsewhere on the street, the house faces west onto Sierra Drive. It is situated within a well-developed residential neighborhood on a remarkably intact block whose original improvements date primarily from the 1930s.

Although North Sierra Drive was documented in a city-wide reconnaissance survey that was conducted in 1985-1986, the subject property itself has not been previously identified and evaluated under the City’s on-going historic resources survey process.<sup>2</sup> It, therefore, is not listed in the State Historic Resources Inventory database and has not yet been assigned a California Historical Resources Status Code. Because this specific property was not documented in the 1985-1986 survey it also was not included in the 2004 and 2006 historic resources survey updates.

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<sup>2</sup> *The property has been identified in the preliminary results of the comprehensive historic resources survey update currently being completed.*

## PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

**Description.** Constructed in 1936, the Slavin House is a two-story residence showcasing a simplified 1930s interpretation of the French Revival style. An example of the asymmetrical subtype of the style, the building has an irregular, rectangular plan. The stylistic signature of a high, hipped roof crowns the main volume, flanked by lower, hipped roofs over a projecting south wing and an attached north porte cochere (or carport). Plain, semicircular pediments top second story windows on all elevations, breaking through the shallow eaves. A simple molding marks the eave line. Composition shingles with a slate-like appearance cover the roof. As viewed from North Sierra Drive, the lower story is veneered in red brick laid in running bond, while the upper is sheathed with wide, drop siding; other elevations are not visible. A stringcourse separates the stories. The central portion of the façade contains three bays, defined by the fenestration. On the first floor, the northern two full-height openings with segmentally arched heads contain eight-light, paired casement windows set above paneled spandrel panels and topped by arched, four-light transoms. Shutters flank the openings, which are punctuated with keystones. Header bricks outline the apertures. The southernmost opening, similarly segmentally arched, contains a recessed entry. A flat-headed, paneled wood door is capped by an arched transom. Paneling also characterizes the reveal of the entry recess. Built of cast stone according to the Los Angeles County Assessor's records, the arched entry surround is accented by a keystone. To each side of the entry, deeply recessed "bulls eye" windows are circled by header bricks.

On axis with the lower story openings, the second story windows are also doubled, eight-light casements. The projecting south wing is one-story in height and features a centered, multi-light, flat-roofed, canted bay window. Just visible above the south wing, a brick chimney is attached to the south elevation. The porte cochere on the north side of the house is also one-story in height and set flush with the rest of the façade; this feature may have originally been a pass-through to the garage at the rear of the property which has now been partially enclosed. Side and rear elevations of the house are completely obscured by vegetation and fences. The lavishly landscaped front is enclosed by a non-original, low fence with square newel posts and circular pickets, and the pathway to the front stoop, which is elevated two steps above ground level, has been repaved. At the rear of the property, a whitewashed brick wall and one-and-a-half story garage line the alley frontage. The garage, which features two, segmentally arched upper story windows that rise through the cornice of the hipped roof, contains a non-original garage door. Other than the complementary landscaping and hardscape, no significant alterations to the primary, street-facing elevation have been made, leaving all of its character-defining design and details intact.

**Building Permit History.** A review of building permits indicate that the property was constructed in 1936 and remained unaltered until 1957, when a home elevator was installed under the supervision of the original architect. Relevant permits and alterations that have been recorded with the City of Beverly Hills, which have occurred over the years, include the following:

YEAR	DESCRIPTION OF WORK
1936	Two-story residence; architect: Marshall P. Wilkinson (\$17,00)
1936	One-story garage; architect: Marshall P. Wilkinson (\$500)
1957	Elevator shaft for home lift; architect: Marshall P. Wilkinson (\$5,000)
1975	Kitchen remodel (\$8,000)
1975	Convert attic to sitting room and closet (\$6,000)
1976	Swimming pool (\$8,000)
1976	Wood patio (\$3,300)
1981	New driveway and apron (\$10,000)
1982	Interior partition walls in guest house (\$12,500)
1988	Reroof rear walking deck (\$1,580)
1991	Addition to existing residence; Tedesco Architects (\$60,000)
1991	Remodel existing garage; Tedesco Architects (\$20,000)
1992	Add to garden room 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, bedroom and bath on 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor; Tedesco Architects (\$120,000)
1991	Remodel existing garage; Tedesco Architects (\$20,000)
1993	HVAC for residence
1995	Re-plaster pool (\$3,000)
c. 1995	Remove and replace front yard paving, new 3-foot high front yard fence (\$10,000)
1999	Open rear of garage to alley; remove existing concrete floor (\$16,800)
2002	Roofing repair (\$2,400)
2011	Replace kitchen cabinets, counters, plumbing fixtures
2011	Convert garage attic to recreation room

Other than the elevator shaft, the swimming pool added in 1976, and a new driveway in 1981, the exterior of the house remained essentially unaltered until the early-1990s. The additions to the house that were made at that time are not visible from either the public right-of-way along North Sierra Drive or from the alley east of the property. The garage was remodeled beginning

in 1982, when interior partition walls to the “guest house” were installed, and subsequently reconfigured in 1999 and 2011; however, these changes do not detract from the overall substantial integrity of the property. The property’s architectural design as it appears from North Sierra Drive and important, visible character-defining features have remained intact.

## 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>3</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>4</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 open land at the time of incorporation with development scattered around Canon Drive, Beverly Drive, Crescent Drive, and the downtown triangle.<sup>5</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, French, Georgian, Beaux-Arts Classicism, etc.). 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. 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

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<sup>3</sup> *Beverly Hills Historic Resources Survey 1985-1986*, pg. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 11.

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>6</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.

**Slavin House.** On June 3, 1936, two building permits for 620 North Sierra Drive were obtained from the City of Beverly Hills by architect Marshall P. Wilkinson. The first was for a two-story, ten-room residence estimated to cost \$17,000. The second permit was for a one-story, two-car garage, which was to cost an additional \$500. The owner of the property was Bullock's Department Store executive Mr. Barney C. Slavin.<sup>7</sup> Born in 1887 in New York and raised in Los Angeles, Barney Slavin began working for Bullock's in 1907 as a warehouseman.<sup>8</sup> He rose through the ranks, becoming manager of delivery services by 1916,<sup>9</sup> and manager of the downtown store by 1930. In 1944, he was promoted to vice-president in charge of building, construction, and maintenance of the Bullock's chain. He retired from Bullocks in 1948.<sup>10</sup> Slavin was married twice, apparently building this house with his first wife, Helen, who passed away in 1970. Slavin died at the age of 87 in 1975 and was survived by his second wife, Carmen. Slavin (and subsequently his estate) owned the property until August 1975, when it was purchased by attorney Charles Levy and his wife, Lydia. In 1988, the property was sold to attorney Geoffry Oblath and his wife Benedicta.

When the house was first inspected by the Los Angeles County Assessor on April 12, 1937, the inspector recorded a newly completed, two-story residence with a concrete foundation; walls of stucco, shakes, wood siding, and brick veneer; a cast-stone entrance, a hipped shingled roof; and steel sash with roll-down screens.<sup>11</sup> Heat was provided by a fireplace, a gas furnace, and electric heaters. Plumbing fixtures and lighting fixtures were rated of "good" quality. Interior finishes were primarily plaster, Sanitas paper, and plain woodwork. Bookcases, two cedar closets, and a water softener were built in. Overall construction quality of the house was rated "extra special." The Assessor estimated the square footage at 4,287 (the current Assessor's estimate is 4,870). The first floor contained an entry hall; three living rooms (i.e., living room, library with cypress paneling, and dining room); one bedroom; one and two-thirds bathrooms; kitchen with tiled walls and a Sanitas ceiling; butler's pantry; and breakfast room. The second floor contained three bedrooms and two and one-third tiled bathrooms. Tubs and toilets in some bathrooms were in tiled recesses. Hardwood floors were located in most rooms. The garage, measuring approximately 22 by 30 feet, had a cement floor, stucco walls, a hipped and

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Interestingly, Slavin was not the only Bullock's employee who chose this block of North Sierra Drive to build a residence. At 630 North Sierra Drive, also in 1936, Mr. O. B. Dowd, also with Bullock's, constructed a Paul Williams' designed home.*

<sup>8</sup> *The Building Biographer Tim Gregory. "620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hills." February 2007.*

<sup>9</sup> *"One of a fleet." Los Angeles Times, July 9, 1916.*

<sup>10</sup> *"Barney Slavin, Former Bullock's Vice President, Dies at 87." Los Angeles Times, February 8, 1975.*

<sup>11</sup> *This paragraph, providing information taken from the Assessor's building description, is largely quoted from The Building Biographer Tim Gregory, "620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hill," February 2007, page 3.*

shingled roof, three overhead doors, and a plastered interior. The property also contained 220 linear feet of stone-tile wall that average five feet tall.

A year after the house was completed it was published in the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>12</sup> Comparison of the exterior photograph in the pictorial with current images confirms the integrity of the façade. Interior spaces pictured in the article included the dining room and the library, with its wood paneled walls and built-in bookcases.

**Marshall P. Wilkinson, Architect.**<sup>13</sup> Born on August 29, 1892, Marshall Phillips Wilkinson worked his way up from a draftsman to contractor to architect over the course of a career spanning at least three decades. Although his legacy is scores of buildings throughout the Los Angeles region, with at least fourteen homes documented in Beverly Hills alone, little is known about the early years and training of Wilkinson. He was based in Hollywood for much of his professional life, first appearing as a draftsman in the 1915 city directory. Two years later, he was a superintendent of construction for the Frank P. Meline Company, the company that would achieve fame as builder of upscale suburbs and subdivisions in communities such as Bel-Air and Pacific Palisades. By 1920, Wilkinson had opened his own office on Hollywood Boulevard, providing design, construction, and engineering services. One of his earliest commissions was a home for portrait painter Ivey de Verely in 1921 (Hollywood). By 1922, he had numerous projects to his credit, including houses at 262 North Crescent Drive, 616 and 707 North Canon Drive, and 719 North Rexford Drive in Beverly Hills, the Thibodeau Building (location unknown), and an apartment building at the corner of Hobart Avenue and Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. For these and most subsequent projects, Wilkinson acted as both designer and builder. During this period he also worked as a builder for other architects and designers (e.g., the Vaughn House, 618 North Canon Drive, designed by architect Arthur Eichler). His practice was diverse, encompassing not only single and multi-family residential properties but also commercial and industrial buildings, the latter primarily for motion picture production related facilities. By 1933, newspaper articles about Wilkinson's projects had begun referring to him exclusively as "architect" and in some cases his designs were constructed by others (e.g., the General Service Studios built at the corner of Eleanor and Seward Streets in Hollywood in 1937).

Like most architects and designers of the period, Wilkinson was adept at several styles of architecture, including Spanish Colonial Revival (the El Encanto Apartments in Palm Springs, 1929), Colonial Revival (803 North Alpine Drive in Beverly Hills, 1930), French Revival (620 North Sierra Drive in Beverly Hills, and Art Deco (714 North Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles). His work was covered several times in the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as published in *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Digest*. Wilkinson continued to practice into the 1940s and was joined by his son, Marshall P. Wilkinson, Jr., also an architect. Wilkinson, Sr., died on September 6, 1969 at the age of 77.

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<sup>12</sup> "Southland Homes." *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1938.

<sup>13</sup> This section is largely derived from *The Building Biographer* Tim Gregory, "620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hills," *Property Fact Sheet*, February 2007 and from historical issues of the *Los Angeles Times*, indexed and available through ProQuest Newsstand.

**French Revival Style.** The French Revival, or French Eclectic Style, was popular between the two World Wars. It is generally recognizable by its prominent roof treatment, which is usually configured with tall, steeply pitched hips or gables with shallow, sometimes slightly upturned, eaves. Three subtypes have been identified: symmetrical, asymmetrical, and towered. Dormers, either hipped; gabled; or rounded, are often present and may, like upper story windows, be positioned to intersect the cornice. Multi-paned casement windows are common. Tall chimneys may accent the verticality of the roof treatment. Other popular details include quoining; simple arched entries or more formal, classical ones; and shuttered entries. Exteriors are clad in stone, brick, or stucco. French Revival buildings may have formal, Beaux-Arts antecedents, or more likely in the 1920s and 1930s, be based upon country manor houses and vernacular farmhouses, especially from the Brittany and Normandy regions. The style overlaps with the English Tudor, with which it shares some precedents, and like the Tudor style, may also feature half-timbered exterior walls. In the mid to late 1930s, French Revival designs, like most traditional styles, took on a more modern and sophisticated appearance through simplification of details, surfaces, and volumes, allowing the style to be communicated through a few carefully chosen signature elements.

Character-defining features associated with the Slavin House are those features only on the dwelling dating from original construction in 1936, and property space as seen from the public right-of-way on North Sierra Drive. Such features include its siting and setback on the east side of North Sierra Drive; the basic asymmetrical form, height, shape, mass and composition of the dwelling in relationship to its setting and immediate environment; and physical attributes that define the late French Revival architectural style. Those features on the house and publicly visible portions of the property that reflect and define the late French Revival style include, but are not limited to:

- Complex hipped roof; steep pitch; shingled (non-original but compatible) roofing material; slightly upturned, shallow, molded roof eaves; and cornice-piercing position of upper story windows
- Brick chimney
- Combination of siding materials, including brick veneer, wide wood drop siding, and stucco
- Stringcourse between stories
- Segmentally arched, steel and wood, multi-light, casement windows; window detailing, including blank, arched pediments, transoms, shutters, spandrel panels, and header arch-and-keystone surrounds; bulls eye windows; bay window
- Arched entry with paneled front door, segmentally arched transom, and cast stone surround with keystone and paneled reveal
- Porte cochere

- Any original hardware and lighting on the façade
- Overall restraint and simplicity of design
- Publicly visible mature landscape features

## **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:

- 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 Slavin House located at 620 North Sierra 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 French Revival style. Gaining popularity in the late 1920s, the French Revival was one of the several favored "period revival" styles that set the tone for most residential architecture during the 1920s and 1930s. Although less common than the Spanish Colonial, American Colonial, or Tudor Revival styles, the French Revival style was particularly adaptable to the taste for romantic and picturesque architecture that characterized southern California in the 1920s. The Slavin House represents a later, more mature expression of the idiom, when a preference for modernity and sophistication tamed some of the more fanciful tendencies of the 1920s. Similar evolutions characterized other revival styles of the period. This late flowering of the French Revival found favor in Beverly Hills in both residential and commercial architecture, as the City's image gained a certain cachet. 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 Barney C. Slavin, an executive with the Los Angeles-based Bullock's Department store, and his wife. Slavin apparently lived there (or owned the property) until his death in 1975. Although Bullock's was a significant local retail institution, it was neither founded by nor led by Slavin, and despite his role as a company vice-president, cannot be assumed to confer significance on the house by virtue of that association only. Subsequent owners, both attorneys and their families, have more recent associations with the property which have occurred subsequent to the period of significance. There is no known or confirmable evidence that supports the association of significant persons with this residence; 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 a fine example of the late French Revival style, incorporating many of the features that define the "asymmetrical sub-type" of French Eclectic design.<sup>14</sup> In particular, the styling reflects the refinement of traditional styles that closely associated with Beverly Hills during the mid to late 1930s. Key features of the French Revival architectural style incorporated

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<sup>14</sup> McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990, pp. 386-395.

in the property include the building's restrained styling, asymmetry and massing, roof treatment, materials, fenestration, and siting. It was recognized as a fine exemplar of its type at the time and was published in the *Los Angeles Times*. The Slavin House, therefore, embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular style, period of time, and method of construction. From the street, the property continues to appear almost identical as to when it was built in 1936 and published in 1938. 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 a notable work of Marshall P. Wilkinson, a prolific designer and builder whose homes constructed in the 1920s and 1930s in Beverly Hills helped to define the image that Beverly Hills projected to the world. Adept in a variety of period styles, Wilkinson contributed numerous houses—approximately fifteen of which have been documented to date—to the residential districts north of Santa Monica and south of Wilshire Boulevards during the Beverly Hills build out years of 1922-1942. Wilkinson is included in the City's list of Master Architects. Furthermore, the property possesses 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. Although the property has not previously been evaluated as eligible for listing, it is included in the preliminary results of the City's ongoing historic resources survey update. The property 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 1936, when the property was built. The publicly visible portion of the property, comprising the front setback, west (primary) elevation, and any visually accessible features on the north and south elevations, are substantially intact. Those important features of design, materials, location, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association from this period are still evident on this portion of the property and help to render it historically significant.

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

Because of its historic architectural character 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. Character-defining features associated with the Slavin House are those features only on the dwelling dating from original construction in 1936, and property space as seen from the public rights-of-way on North Sierra Drive. Such features include its siting and setback on the east side of North Sierra Drive; the basic asymmetrical form of the façade; the height, shape, mass and composition of the dwelling as perceived from North Sierra Drive; and physical attributes that define the French Revival architectural style. Those features on the house and publicly visible portions of the property that reflect and define the French Revival style include, but are not limited to:

- Complex hipped roof; steep pitch; shingled (non-original but compatible) roofing material; slightly upturned, shallow, molded roof eaves; and cornice-piercing position of upper story windows
- Brick chimney

- Combination of siding materials, including brick veneer, wide wood drop siding, and stucco
- Stringcourse between stories
- Segmentally arched, steel and wood, multi-light, casement windows; window detailing, including blank, arched pediments, transoms, shutters, spandrel panels, and header arch-and-keystone surrounds; bulls eye windows; bay window
- Arched entry with paneled front door, segmentally arched transom, and cast stone surround with keystone and paneled reveal
- Porte cochere
- Any original hardware and lighting on the façade
- Overall restraint and simplicity of design
- Publicly visible landscape features, including mature trees

## **CONCLUSION**

As discussed herein, the Slavin 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, and setting of the publicly visible portions of the site together reflect the essence of the late French Revival style. And under the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(A)(4), the Slavin House satisfies this criterion in that it “represents the notable work of a person included on the City’s List of Master Architects,” the architect/designer/builder Marshall P. Wilkinson, and “possesses high artistic and aesthetic value” as a fully realized expression of late French Revival design. The property also satisfies the requirements of subsection 10-3-3212(B) in that it 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**

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Tax Assessor Map

Location Map

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Photographs

Ephemeral Material

Early Permit History

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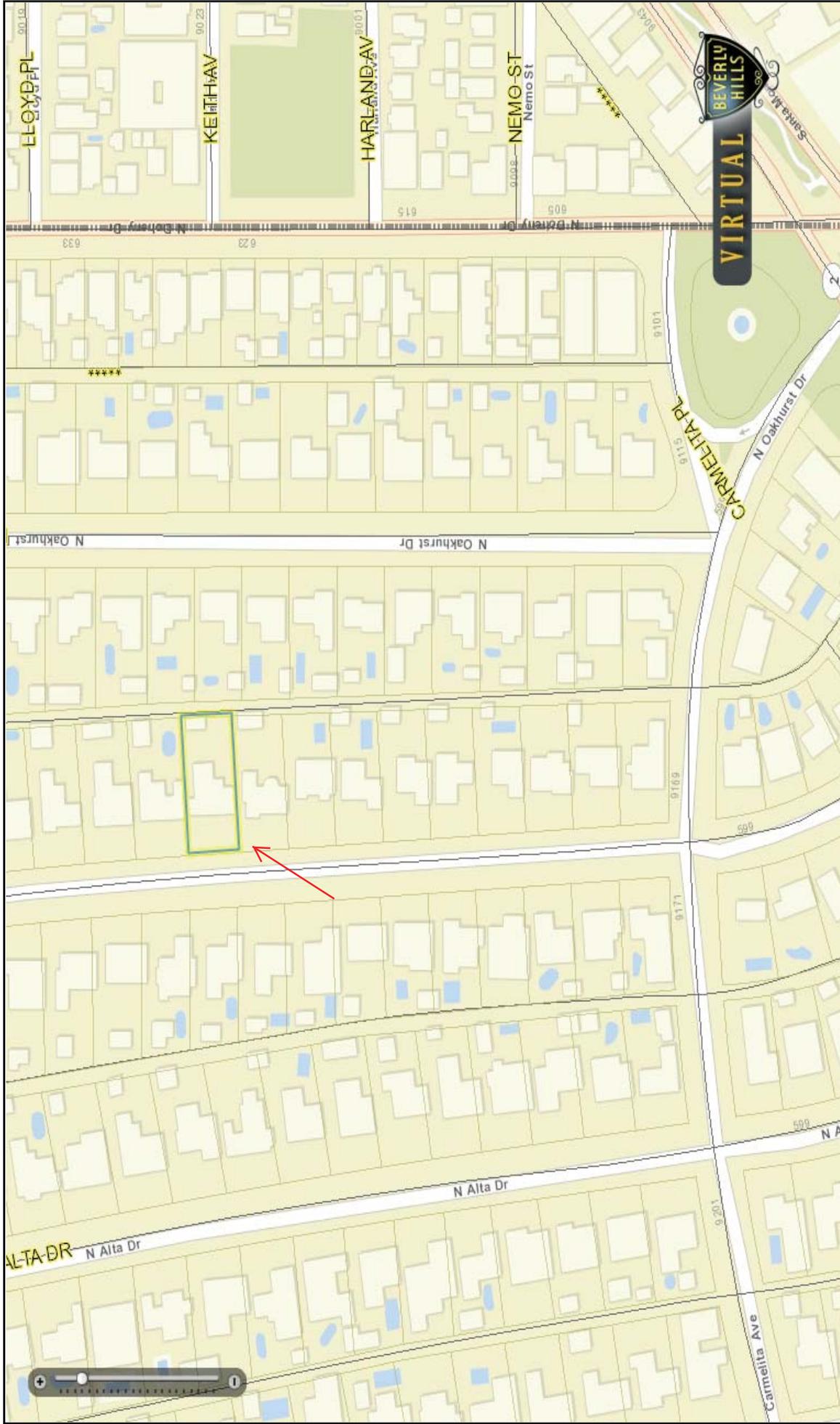
**TAX ASSESSOR MAP**

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**LOCATION MAP**

---



# Location Map

## 620 North Sierra Drive

Author: OAC

Date: 11 February 2014



42

84 m

Projection: Web Mercator

© Copyright 2010 City of Beverly Hills. All rights reserved. Although we make every effort to provide accurate data herein, this map is only representational and no warranties expressed or implied.

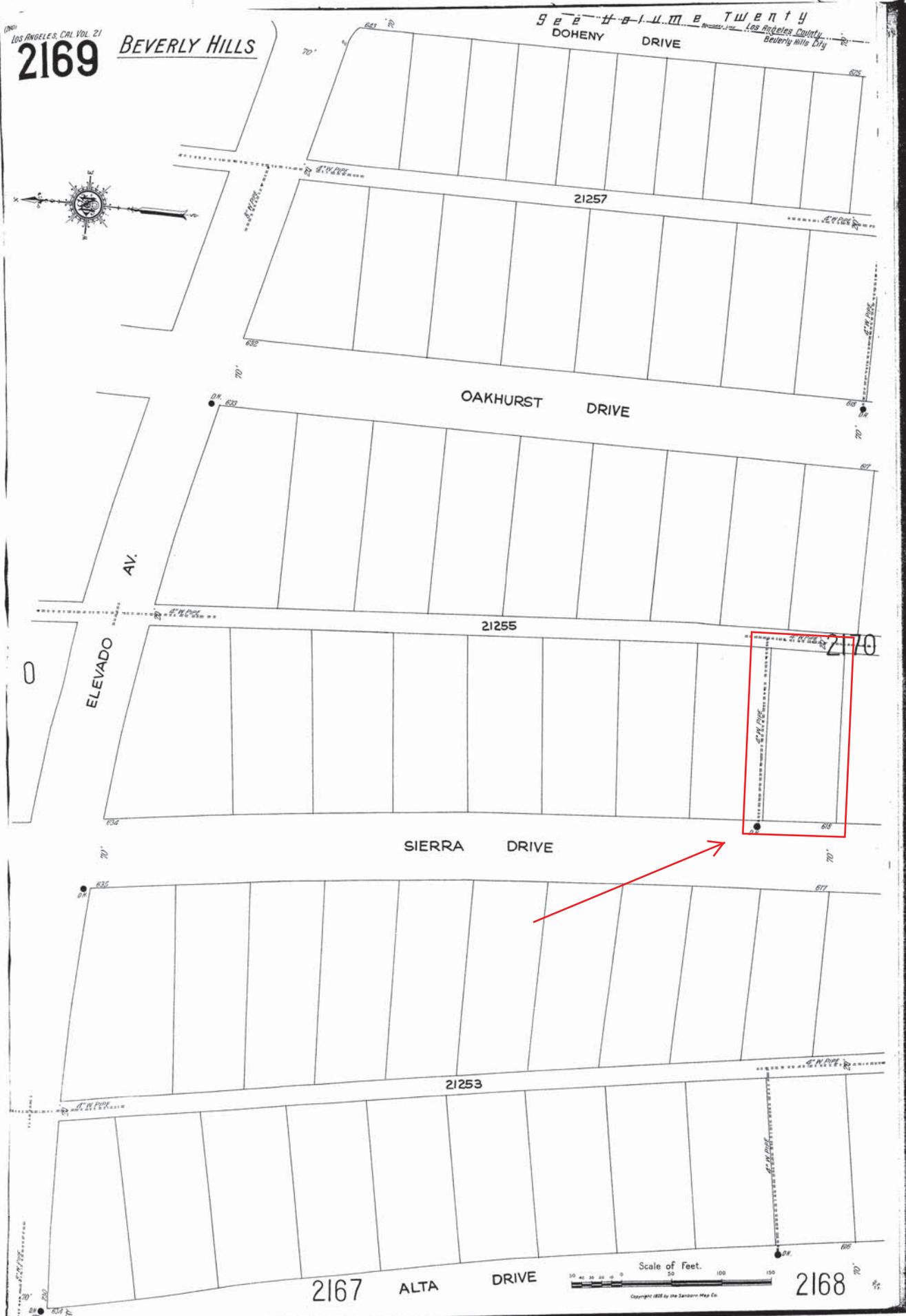


**SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS**

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SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP, Beverly Hills



Los Angeles, 1906, Jan 1950, 1926

SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP, Beverly Hills

CAL. . . 040  
LOS ANGELES, CAL. VOL. 21  
**2169** BEVERLY HILLS



SEVENTH-TWENTY  
N. DOHENY DRIVE

ELEVADO AV.

N. OAKHURST DRIVE

SIERRA DRIVE

21253

2167 ALTA DRIVE

2168

Scale of Feet  
0 50 100 150  
Copyright 1926 by the Sanborn Map Co.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

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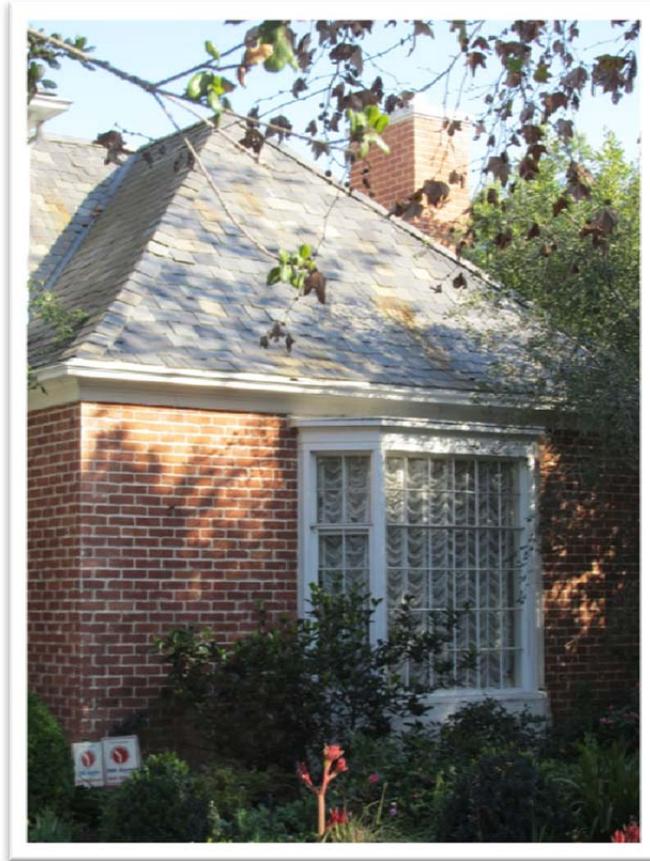
**PHOTO - 1: Front (primary, west) elevation, looking northeast**



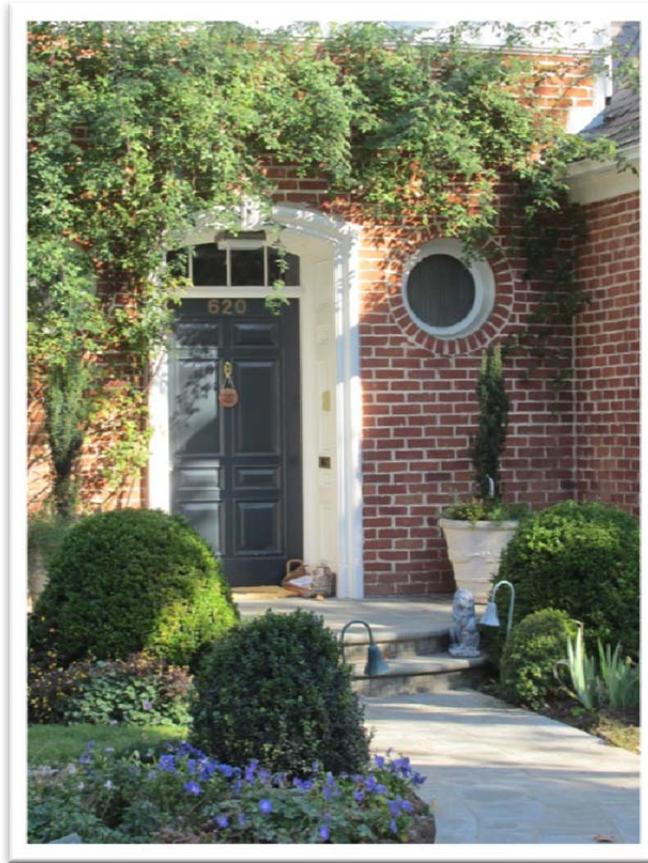
**PHOTO - 2: Façade, central portion of west (front) elevation, looking east**



**PHOTO - 3: Looking southeast at west (façade) elevation with driveway to left**



**PHOTO - 4: View of south wing of west (front) elevation**



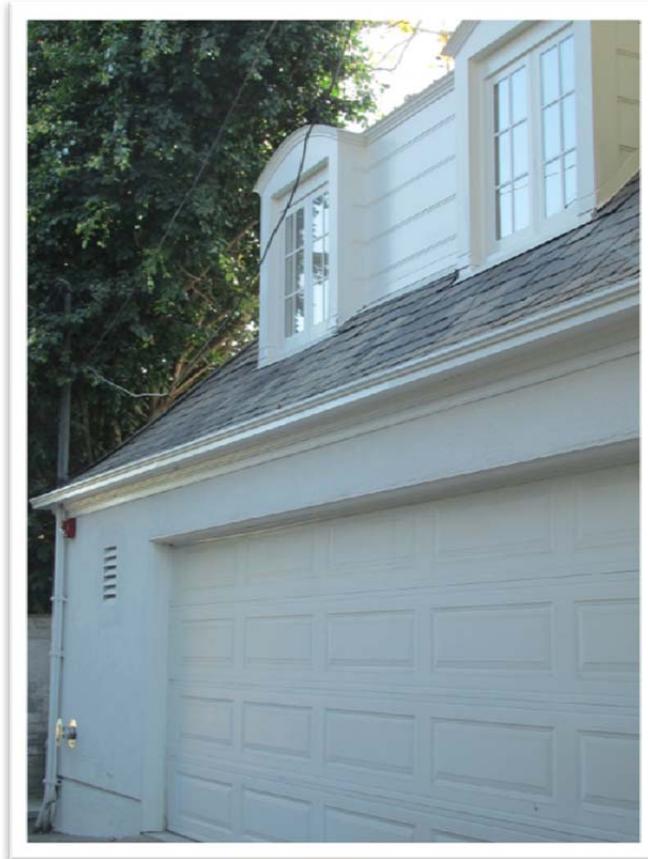
**PHOTO - 5: Main entry and approach off west (front) elevation**



**PHOTO - 6: Porte cochere off north end of west (front) elevation**



**PHOTO - 7: Street setting along North Sierra Drive, looking northeast from property**



**PHOTO - 8: Garage on east (rear) elevation off alley, looking southeast**

**EPHEMERAL MATERIAL**

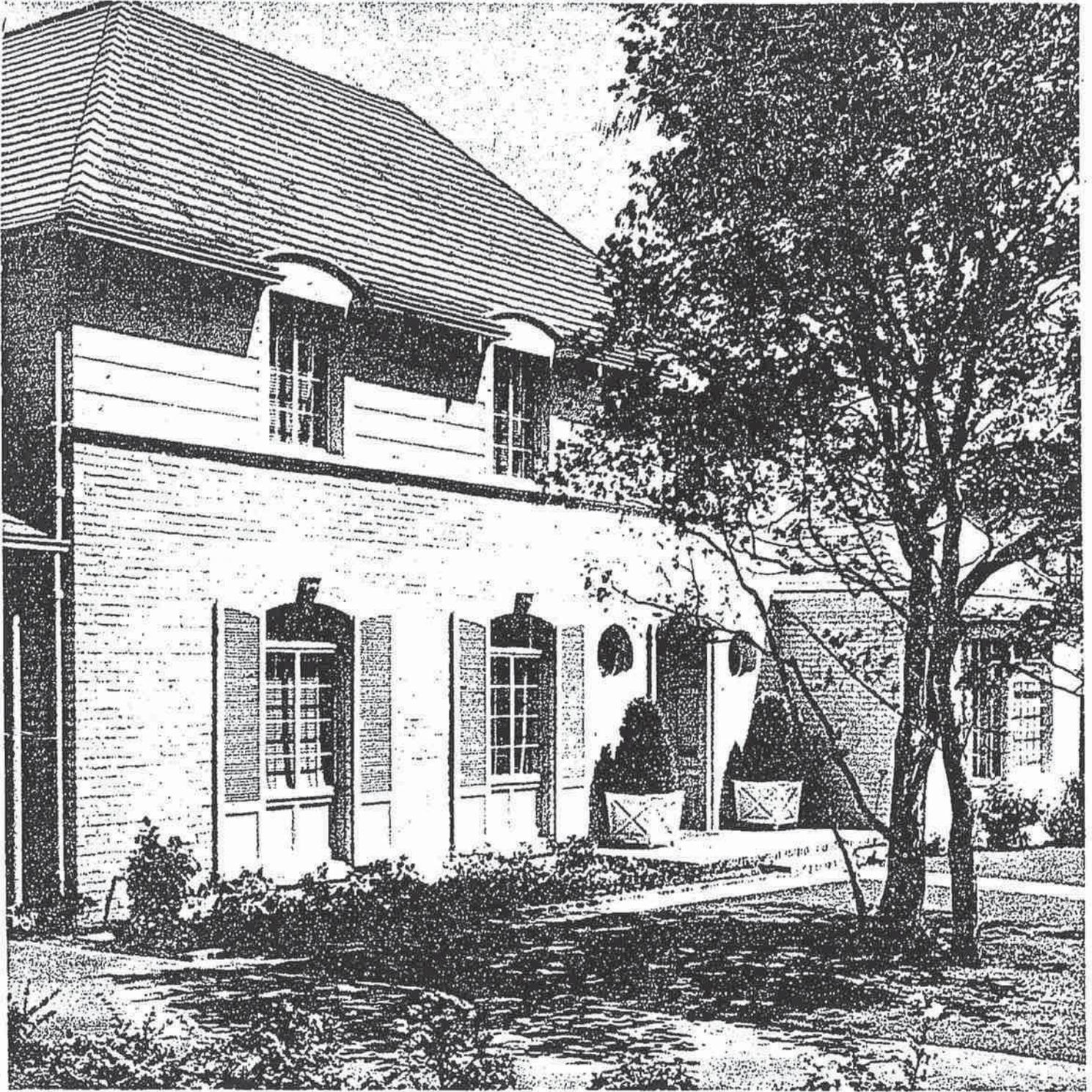
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## HOMIE TO COST \$17,500

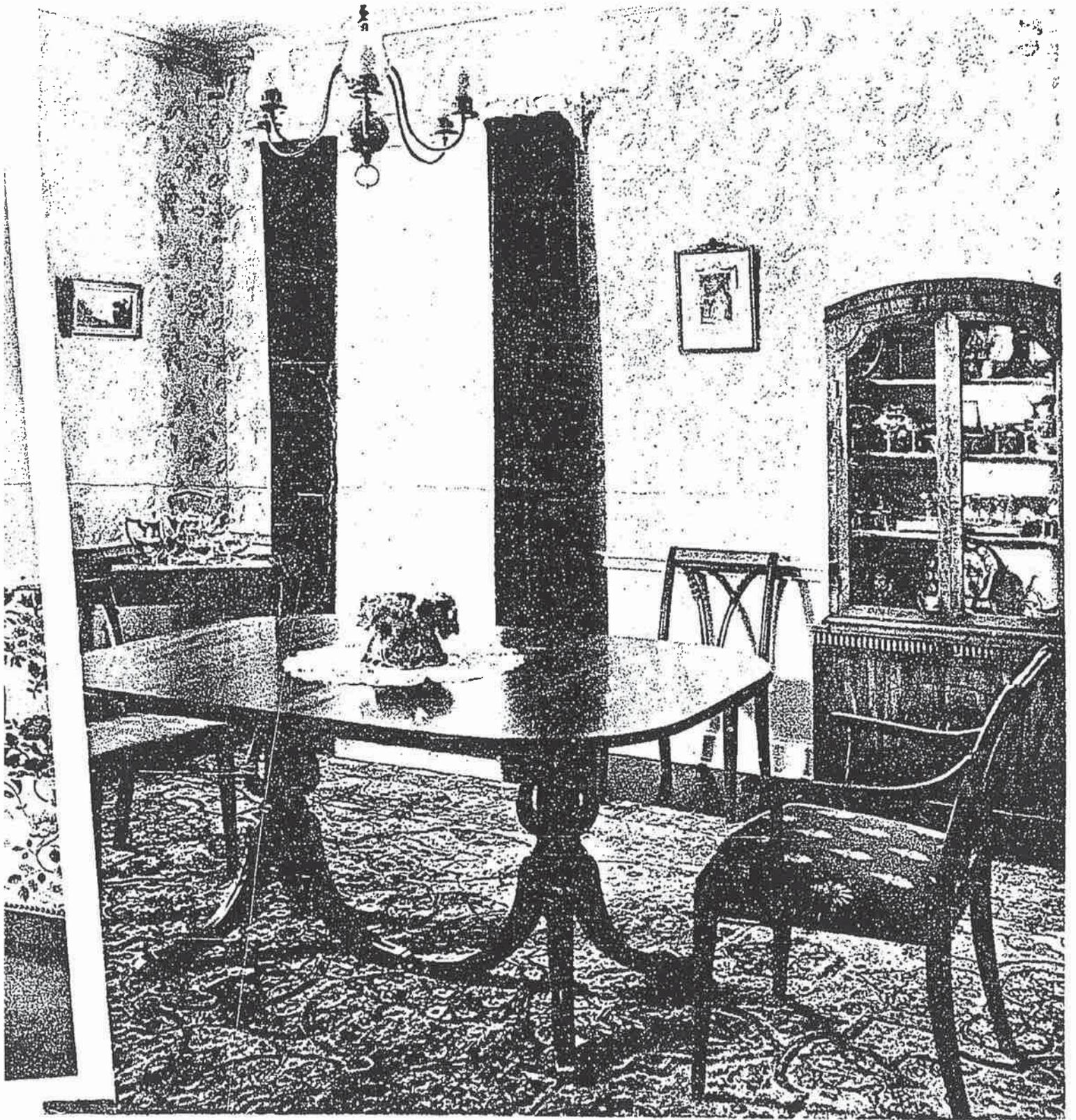
Work is to be started immediately on a \$17,500 residence at 620 North Sierra Drive, Beverly Hills, for B. C. Slavlin. Plans provide for a two-story structure to contain ten rooms.

Los Angeles Times  
June 14, 1936; p. E2

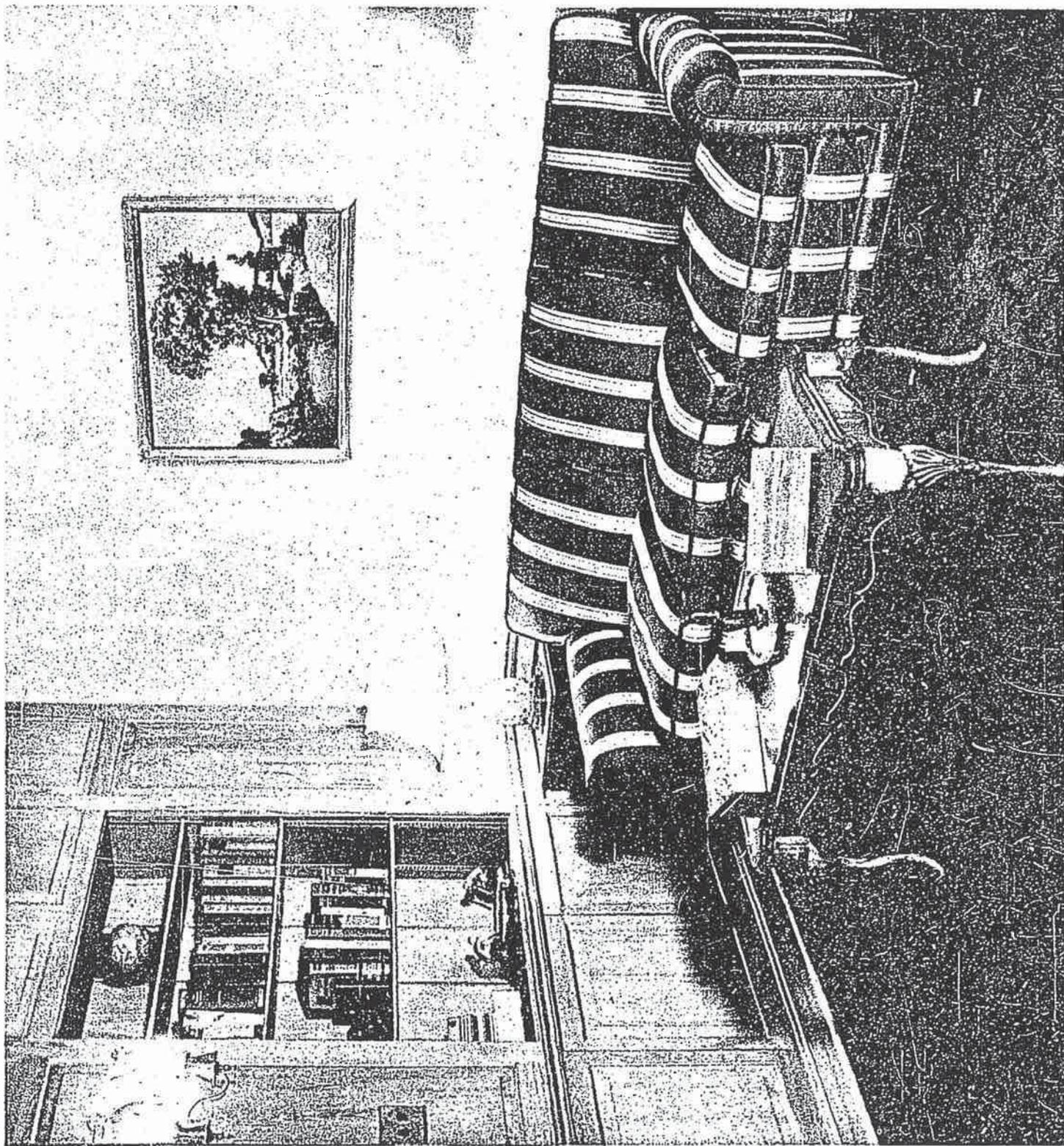


EXTERIOR OF THE HOME of Barney C. Slavin, 620 North Sierra, Beverly Hills. Below are shown some interiors of the Slavin home.

Los Angeles Times  
January 2, 1938; p. H6



DINING-ROOM in the Slavin home.



A COUCH AND SOME BOOKS near at hand in the Slavín home.  
(Mass: Studios photograph)

## EARLY PERMIT HISTORY

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# DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

## Application for the Erection of Buildings

CLASS D

JUN 8 1936

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 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 described, 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 described, or any portion thereof, 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 in, the property described in such permit.

Lot No. 10 Block 114 Tract Beverly Hills  
(Description of Job)

No. 620 Sierra St Street  
(Location of Property)

(USE INK OR INDELIBLE PENCIL)

1. Purpose of Building RESIDENCE No. of Rooms 10 No. of Families 1
2. Owner's Name B. C. SLAVIN Phone TR. 1911
3. Owner's Address .....
4. Architect's Name MARSHALL P. WILKINSON C-122 Phone GR. 7675
5. Contractor's Name .....
6. Contractor's Address 6907-09 Hawthorne L.A.
7. VALUATION OF PROPOSED BLDG. {Including Plumbing, Gas Fitting, Sewers, Cesspools, Elevators, Painting, Finishing, all Labor, etc.} \$ 17000.00
8. Is there any existing building on lot? no How used? .....
9. Clear Height of Ceiling: Bath, Toilet 7'-6" Living Rooms 9'-6" Halls 8'-4" Cellars 7'-0"  
(State Law)
10. Number of Stories Two Height to Highest Point 27
11. Size of Lot 75 x 175 Area of Lot 13125 Per Cent of Area Covered by All Buildings 27.8  
(Fill out Item 3 of No. 11 in case of Courts, Apartments, Hotels only.)
12. Set Back from Property Line {including balconies, bays, porches, chimneys, steps, etc.} Front 4' Rear 66' Side 5'
13. Foundation Material CONCRETE Footing Width 16" Depth Below Natural Ground 12"
14. Height of Foundation Above Finished Grade 6' Wall Width 4'-8" Mud Sills 2 x 6
15. Joist Clearance from Ground 18' Girders 4 x 6 Posts Under Girders CONCRETE
16. Chimney Material Brick No. of Inlets to Flue 1 Sizes, Flues 14 x 14 Thickness of Chimney Wall 8"
17. Materials of Exterior Walls Frame & plaster Material of Interior Construction Frame & plaster
18. Will all Provisions of State Dwelling House Act be complied with? YES
19. 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 6 FIRST FLOOR JOISTS 2 x 8 Second Floor Joists 2 x 12 Roof Material SHINGLES
20. Location of Plumbing Cleanouts..... Depth of Sewer "Y"..... Sewer Length..... Fall per ft.....

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

(Sign here)

*[Signature]*  
Inspector of Buildings

(FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY)

PERMIT NO. <u>4282</u>	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	<i>[Signature]</i> Clerk	June 1936

*[Signature]*  
Inspector of Buildings

46  
50

All 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 \_\_\_\_\_

JUN 3 1936

TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS:

Application is hereby made to the Council 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 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 herein described, 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 described, or any portion thereof, 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 in, the property described in such permit.

Lot No 10

Block 114  
(Description of Job)

Tract Beverly Hills

No. 620 Sierra St  
(Location of Property)

Street

(USE INK OR INDELIBLE PENCIL)

1. Purpose of Building *Two Car Garage* No of Rooms \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Families \_\_\_\_\_
2. Owner's Name *B. C. Slakin* Phone *TR. 1911*
3. Owner's Address \_\_\_\_\_
4. Architect's Name *Marshall P. Wilkinson* Phone *CR. 7675*
5. Contractor's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_
6. Contractor's Address *6807-09 Hawthorne L.A.*
7. VALUATION OF PROPOSED BLDG. { Including Plumbing, Gas Fitting, Sewers, Cesspools, Elevators, Painting, Finishing, all Labor, etc. } \$ *500.00*
8. Is there any existing building on lot? *NO* How used? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Clear Height of Ceiling: Bath. Toilet ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Living Rooms ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Halls ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~ Cellars ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~  
(State Law)
10. Number of Stories *one* Height to Highest Point *8'*
11. Size of Lot *75 x 125* Area of Lot *13125* Per Cent of Area Covered by All Buildings \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fill out Item 3 on No. 11 in case of Courts, Apartments, Hotels only.)
12. Set Back from Property Line { Including balconies, bays, porches, chimneys, steps, etc. } Front \_\_\_\_\_ Rear *10"* Side *10"*
13. Foundation Material *Concrete* Footing Width *12"* Depth Below Natural Ground *6"*
14. Height of Foundation Above Finished Grade *6"* Wall Width *8"* Mud Sills *2" x 6"*
15. Joist Clearance from Ground Girders \_\_\_\_\_ x Posts Under Girders \_\_\_\_\_ x
16. Chimney Material No. of Inlets to Flue \_\_\_\_\_ Sizes, Flues \_\_\_\_\_ x Thickness of Chimney Wall \_\_\_\_\_
17. Materials of Exterior Walls *stucco* Material of Interior Construction *Frame & Plaster*
18. Will all Provisions of State Dwelling House Act be complied with? *yes*
19. EXTERIOR Studs *2" x 4"* INTERIOR BEARING Studs \_\_\_\_\_ x Interior Non-Bearing Studs \_\_\_\_\_  
x Ceiling Joists *2" x 4"* Roof Rafters *2" x 6"* FIRST FLOOR JOISTS \_\_\_\_\_ x  
Second Floor Joists \_\_\_\_\_ x Roof Material *Shingles*
20. Location of Plumbing Cleanouts \_\_\_\_\_ Depth of Sewer "Y" \_\_\_\_\_ Sewer Length \_\_\_\_\_ Fall per ft. \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Sign Here) *Marshall P. Wilkinson*  
*By Ed. Williams* (Owner or Authorized Agent)

(FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY)

PERMIT NO.

*14283*

Plans & 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

*[Signature]*

Clerk

*JUN 1936*

*[Signature]*

Superintendent of Building.

**DEPARTMENT USE ONLY**

PLAN CHECK FEE

✓ 10<sup>20</sup>

BUILDING PERMIT FEE

✓ 18<sup>00</sup>

EXTRA FEE

\$

PLANS CHECKED BY

*mmis*

CORRECTIONS VERIFIED BY

APPLICATION APPROVED BY

*mw Strams*

BUILDING TYPE

GROUP

DIVISION

PLAN ON B. P.

PLAN ON BACK

NO PLANS

STREET ADDRESS OF JOB

*620 No Sierra Dr.*

**BUILDING**

DEPT. OF BLDG.

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.

LOT

*1*

BLK.

*114*

TR.

*BH*

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

*NEW ELEVATOR SHAFT*

OWNER'S ADDRESS

*# 23642 OAKLEY MODEL*

OWNER

*HOME LIFT*

OWNER'S ADDRESS

*BARNEY C. SLAVIN*  
*620 No SIERRA DR.*

PHONE *WE35765*

ARCHITECT

*MARSHALL P. WILKINSON*

STATE LIC. NO.

*122 C*

PHONE *WE35765*

ENGINEER

STATE LIC. NO.

PHONE

CONTRACTOR

*OWNER*

CONTRACTOR'S ADDRESS

*151 No FAIRFAX AVE.*

PHONE *WE35765*

CITY LIC. NO.

STATE LIC. NO.

VALUATION OF JOB

*\$ 5,000.00*

AREA OF BLDG.

NO. OF FAMILIES

*ONE*

STORIES

*TWO*

HEIGHT

FRONT SET BACK

SIDE SET BACK

MATERIALS OF EXTERIOR WALLS

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT

*MARSHALL P. WILKINSON*

WHEN PROPERLY VALIDATED THIS IS YOUR PERMIT

JUL-23-57

46825

A - 32

10.00

JUL-24-57

46878

B - 32

18.00

*Rev AA*

**OSTASHAY & ASSOCIATES CONSULTING**

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PO BOX 542

LONG BEACH, CA 90801

562.500.9451