



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: DHS2018-0005

AGENDA ITEM: AR-3

PREPARED BY: John Mayer, AICP
Senior Planner
Austin Arnold
Planning Technician

MEETING DATE: August 29, 2018

TITLE: Determination of Historic Significance
347 Highland Place

APPLICANT: Kenneth and Bonnie Behrmann
347 Highland Place
Monrovia, CA 91016

REQUEST: Determine the historic significance of a residential building built within the historic period (50 years or older).

BACKGROUND: The City's demolition review standards are set forth in Chapter 17.10 of the Monrovia Municipal Code and apply to main residential buildings in any zone that are fifty (50) years old or older proposing total demolition or significant alteration or removal of exterior building wall area and/or roof area. The demolition application requires the submittal of either documentation from a historic survey that indicates a California Historical Resource Status (CHRS) code for the subject building and other site data, a historic assessment and determination of CHRS code for the property by a qualified historic preservation consultant, or a written request for an exemption due to perceived obvious lack of historic significance.

The evaluation and determination made by the Historic Preservation Commission is in the form of approval of a DPR Form which includes the assignment of a CHRS code.

On June 14, 2018, the applicant submitted a written request for exemption from the demolition review permit regulations for the main residence at the subject property due to a perceived lack of historic significance. The applicant wishes to complete this historic review to facilitate the sale of the home to a potential buyer. The Commission's determination would provide useful information to help potential buyers make a decision.



Current view of the home as seen from a private road at 347 Highland Place, July 2018

ANALYSIS: According to the Los Angeles County Assessor information and building permit records, the property at 347 Highland Place was first developed in 1909 and remodeled in 1940. A series of additions occurred from 1959 onwards resulting in the 1,233 square foot house that exists today. The house is located on a 6.5 acre flag lot that is accessible via private road off of Highland Place. Since the house and subsequent additions were constructed over 50 years ago, the applicant has prepared a written request to be exempt from discretionary demolition review due to a perceived obvious lack of historic significance. The exemption request is attached as Exhibit "A".

Property History

Staff collected various documents for 347 Highland Avenue in order to obtain accurate information about its physical history, significance, and its integrity. The City's permit file and Los Angeles County Assessors records were used to gain knowledge about of the building's physical history. In addition to those resources, the owner provided staff with a tattered clipping from a 1940's-era publication that describes the property in great detail. It also contains some photographs that help illustrate the appearance of the bungalow as it existed at that time. The article was written by Nancy Watts(attached); however, the publication name and date are unknown. The owner believes the article is from 1947.

The County Assessor provided a diagram of the building's floor plan. The year of construction was handwritten within the structure's original perimeter and includes the subsequent years each component was added to it. The Assessor's office described the house as a bungalow that dates back to 1909. The 1940's era photographs of the bungalow appear to be consistent with the site plan that staff received from the County Assessor's office. According to the article, the bungalow (described as an "uninhabitable shack") was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Long who envisioned "a quiet retreat from the swift-paced city life" where they can write and paint. Mr. Long had remodeled the bungalow during World War II. The article describes the home as having horizontal redwood siding. The windows were single-pane, wood framed windows in fixed and single-hung styles with an exterior trim. There was an open patio at the front entrance and a brick-paved terrace at the rear. The article noted that Mr. Long and a carpenter incorporated building materials from various places, including junk yards. This reflects a time in history when building materials were scarce during World War II. The article also describes the surrounding lush landscaping that included various fruit trees and a pool that was carved into the hill's contours.

City building permits and information from the County Assessor's office show that a 404 square foot, two bedroom addition was built onto the rear side of the house in 1959. A notation on the floor plan indicates that his portion was raised four to six feet above the original portion. A screened porch and covered entrance was added to the front portion of the home in 1963. At some point, the home's redwood siding was completely covered with stucco, which may have occurred at the same time as the additions.

The home's first level has retained the low pitched, front facing gable roof line. The second level is stepped back from the lower level and features shed style roof lines. Roof elements include a simple wood bargeboard and boxed eave overhangs. The fenestration appears to be substantially altered on all elevations and primarily consists of some original, single-hung, wood windows and newer, vinyl, slider and single-hung windows. The entire dwelling is clad in a rough stucco finish. The enclosed, wooden front porch remains. There is an unfinished roofed area adjacent to the rear patio terrace. There are some unpainted concrete block walls around the rear patio and along a portion around the home's perimeter.

The previous owners/builders are identified as Mr. Fritz Long, Victor C. Muller, and the current owners, the Behrmanns. There is no indication that these people were associated with any significant events important to Monrovia history.

Evaluation of Context

The City of Monrovia's Historic Context Statement is used to establish the historic background and understand the property's place in local history. Since the original bungalow was constructed in 1909, the context of "Residential Development 1903-1940", with the subtheme: "single family residential" is used to evaluate its historic significance.

The original bungalow was built during an era when agricultural land was slowly infilled with residences scattered throughout the City (1903-1940). Although homes were built with a mix of styles during those years, the bungalow was considered a popular housing type. Bungalows were typically simple one and one-half story structures with low-pitched gabled roofs and overhanging eaves. They sometimes featured sleeping porches that were conducive to healthy living in their connection with nature.

The remodeling work that was described and photographed in the 1940's article seem to be in keeping with important character defining features that are called out in the City's Context Statement for eligibility in the 1903-1940 era. These include: the original shape and massing of the one and one-and-a-half story bungalow; modest vernacular elements (i.e. the assorted building materials from random sources); restraint from using stylistic details, and relationship between the dwelling and surrounding landscape as a healthful environment. The home's alterations in 1959 and 1963 compromised the bungalow's historic integrity of the early 20th Century.

Historic Integrity Thresholds

To retain historic integrity a property should possess several and usually most of the seven aspects of integrity. These seven aspects are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Staff has evaluated these seven aspects with respect to 347 Highland Avenue. The property retains the integrity of location since the house has remained on its original site since construction in 1909. The property has not retained design integrity due to the exterior alterations. The most prominent alterations include the additional massing to the second floor, the front porch enclosure, the rough textured stucco applied to the exterior red wood siding and the incompatible vinyl framed windows. The property retains an acceptable level of integrity for the setting due to the intact nature of the surrounding property; however, the front porch enclosure and barricaded rear yard patio terrace has impacted the home's original connection with nature.

In order to have material integrity, a property must retain key exterior materials dating from the period in which the property gained significance. The bungalow has retained very few key exterior elements. The only exterior elements that are visible and in fair condition are a few windows and two chimneys that still remain. Other key elements, like the roof and eave design have completely changed over time. The home's original workmanship was damaged due to the loss of the exterior redwood materials. The building's loss of that natural rustic appearance and the changes to its connection with the nature and its surroundings have compromised the property's feeling and association.

According to the City's Historic Context Statement, an individual property that is important for an association with the 1903-1940 historical era should consider the following factors to determine if sufficient integrity was retained for individual properties:

- *Original massing, scale, and form of building should be retained.*
The bungalow's alterations in the late 1950s and early 60's added mass and bulk without regard for the home's original scale and form when the large second story additions were built. The rear patio terrace was abandoned and the space was enclosed with block walls that cut the space off from its relationship with the surrounding landscape. The open patio at the entrance was enclosed with a porch and covered entrance.
- *Original doors and windows should be retained.*
At least two windows appear to be original; however, several windows were replaced with vinyl windows.
- *Retain distinctive stylistic elements if present originally such as shingle patterns, bargeboard or gable end details, roof dormers and turrets, porch posts and railings.*
The original redwood siding was completely covered with a rough-textured stucco material. The alterations added major shed style roof lines to the overall design of the home.

According to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, a building's changes over time can acquire historic significance in their own right and must be retained and preserved. Staff evaluated the late 1950's/early 1960's changes that occurred during the Context Statement's single family residential theme of 1941-1967. The typical residence and its setting of that time period express the updated functionality and quality of life expectations of housing in the post-World War II era. To be eligible for historic significance under this theme, an individual property would need to represent an important association with residential development during this period and be compared to similar properties in order to determine which ones are the best representations.

The home's additional floor area does reflect the changing expectations for housing after World War II. However, the home is a remodeled bungalow from the early 1900's. It does not have the stylistic elements that were common at that time such as flag stone veneer, decorative trim, birdhouse details, or decorative metal porch supports. The City has numerous examples of properties that better reflect this era including homes that still convey popular architectural themes such as the mid-century modern theme and the ranch house.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant's exemption request demonstrates that the property at 347 Highland Place does not have architectural or known historic value that meets the criteria for local landmark status and is not a contributor to a potential historic district. Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the DPR and assign a CHRS Code of 6Z to the property. If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs with this recommendation, then the motion is appropriate:

Approve the DPR Form with a Status Code of 6Z.

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 4 *Resource Name or #: _____

P1 Other Identifier: 347 Highland Place

*P2 Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

a. County: Los Angeles

c. Address: 347 Highland Place City: Monrovia Zip: 91016

e. Other Locational Data: APN # 8503-013-004

P3a Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

347 Highland is a 1,233 SF two-story house is located on a 6.5 acre flag lot that is accessible via private road off of Highland Place and is not visible from the street. The home's first level has a low pitched, front facing gable roof line. A brick chimney is situated in the middle of the south facing gable with two square, single-paned wood windows. The second level is stepped back from the lower level and features shed style roof lines. Roof elements include a simple wood bargeboard and boxed eave overhangs. The fenestration primarily consists of some original, single-hung, wooden windows and newer, vinyl, slider and single-hung windows. The entire dwelling is clad in a rough stucco finish. There is an enclosed, wooden front porch with an extended flat roof supported by v-shaped wooden posts on concrete blocks. There is an unfinished roofed area adjacent to the rear patio terrace. There are some unpainted concrete block walls around the rear patio and along a portion around the home's perimeter.

P3b Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2. Single family property

*P4 Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a Photograph



P5b Description of Photo:

Facing North, July 2018

P6 Date Constructed: 1909

Source: LA County Assessor

P7 Owner and Address:

Kenneth and Bonnie Behrmann
347 Highland Place
Monrovia, CA 91016

P8 Recorded by:

City of Monrovia

P9 Date Recorded: August 2018

P10 Survey Type: Individual

P11 Report Citation:

Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

Page 2 of 4 *Resource Name or #: 347 Highland Place

- B1 **Historic Name:** N/A
- B2 **Common Name:** N/A
- B3 **Original Use** Single-family Residence
- B4 **Present Use** Single-family Residence
- B5 **Architectural Style** Altered Vernacular Bungalow.

B6 Construction History (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1909 – House
 1959 – Second-Story, Bedroom Addition
 1963 – Screened porch and covered entrance
 2013 – Bathroom remodel

B7 **Moved:** No **Date Moved** N/A **Original Location** N/A

B8 Related Features:

None.

B9a **Architect:** Unknown **b. Builder:** Unknown

B10 **Significance: Theme:** Single-Family Residential **Area:** Monrovia

Period of Significance: 1903-1940 **Property Type** HP2 - Single Family Property

Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as well as integrity.

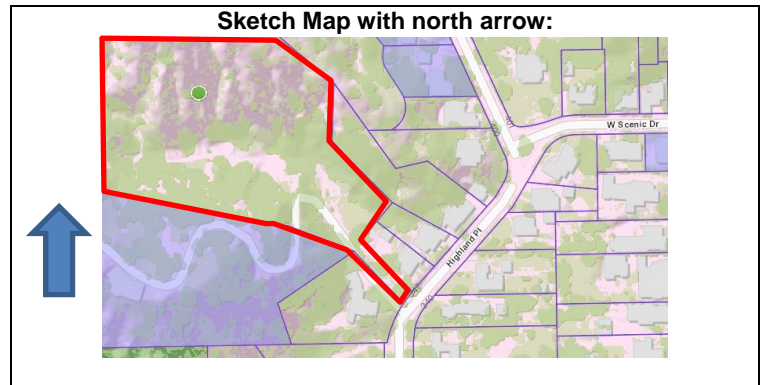
The house was an example of an early twentieth century bungalow until it was altered in 1959 and early 1960's. The property retains the integrity of location since the house has remained on its original site since construction in 1909. The property has not retained design integrity due to the exterior alterations. The most prominent alterations include the additional massing to the second floor, the front porch enclosure, the rough textured stucco applied to the exterior red wood siding and the incompatible vinyl framed windows. The property retains an acceptable level of integrity for the setting due to the intact nature of the surrounding property; however, the front porch enclosure and barricaded rear yard patio terrace has impacted the home's original connection with nature. The bungalow has retained very few key exterior elements. The only exterior elements that are visible and in fair condition are a few windows and two chimneys that still remain. Other key elements, like the roof and eave design have completely changed over time. The home's original workmanship was damaged due to the loss of the exterior redwood materials. The building's loss of that natural rustic appearance and the changes to its connection with the nature and its surroundings have compromised the property's feeling and association.

The home's additional floor area does reflect the changing expectations for housing after World War II. However, the home is a remodeled bungalow from the early 1900's. It does not have the stylistic elements that were common at that time such as flag stone veneer, decorative trim, birdhouse details, or decorative metal porch supports. The City has numerous examples of properties that better reflect this era including homes that still convey popular architectural themes such as the mid-century modern theme and the ranch house.

B11 Additional Resource Attributes:

- B12 **References:**
 LA County Assessor's Records
 City of Monrovia Building Permits
 Miscellaneous Publication/Magazine Article
- B13 **Remarks**

B14 **Evaluator/ Date** City of Monrovia
 August 2018



P5a Photograph




P5b Description of Photo: Front porch, looking north, July 2018.

P5a Photograph



P5b Description of Photo: Front porch, side view, looking west, July 2018.

P5a Photograph	P5b Description of Photo: Side view, looking east, July 2018.
 A photograph showing the side view of a house. The house has a light-colored stucco exterior and a prominent brick chimney. A covered patio area with a white metal frame is visible. There are several potted plants in the foreground, and a palm tree is visible in the background under a clear blue sky.	

P5a Photograph	P5b Description of Photo: Rear of house, looking east, July 2018.
 A photograph showing the rear view of a house. The house is a two-story structure with a light-colored stucco exterior and a dark roof. A stone wall is in the foreground, and there are trees and a hillside in the background. The house appears to be built on a slight incline.	

14 June 2018

To: City of Monrovia

Subject: REQUEST FOR EXEMPTION

For HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT

347 HIGHLAND PLACE

This letter of request for exemption is provided in accordance with Monrovia Municipal Code regarding main residential buildings that are fifty (50) years old or older. My name is Bonnie Behrmann , my husband is Ken Behrmann and we have lived here since we purchased the property from Victor C. Muller in 1979. We are 74 and 78 years old. Our purpose in gaining exemption is to make the sale of our property easier for buyers. We only want to make it possible to sell our house without unnecessary restrictions, and to move to a home more suitable to our ages and physical condition.

Prior to 1979, we lived in a home on Alta Vista for 3 years. We are long time Monrovia residents.

. Ownership

The earliest records we can find come from an old newspaper clipping from Los Angeles Times Magazine dated November 2?, 1947. This clipping was matted and framed, although it is torn and falling to pieces. It describes how Fritz Long came upon an uninhabited shack and how he used scrap wood and other found pieces to create a shelter in the canyon for the purpose of spending vacations and time off there with his family.

There are no records found from that time until the property was purchased by Victor C. Muller. Mr. Muller lived there with his wife and son until he sold it to the Behrmanns in 1979. Mr. Muller was the owner who was responsible for most of the improvements and additions to the original shack. There are no permits issued to this property before he lived here.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENT

THIS BUILDING CANNOT BE SEEN FROM THE STREET.

The subject property is not associated with a recognized historic area or district. Most older neighborhood homes have been modernized and/or changed over the years.

EVALUATION

1. Historical Persons or Events:

There is no record of anyone or any event associated with the property who is of historical note or interest. Owners and occupants of record have no documented historical significance or involvement with any notable historical circumstances. A specific historical event, trend, or evolution of events is not recorded to have occurred on the subject property that would rate it as contributing significantly to the development of the community, region, state, or nation.

2. Notable Builder or Architect:

The original architect, if any, and builder are unknown. The building does not exemplify notable design or the work of a master builder whose work was of significant influence or character.

3. Historical Grouping:

The subject property is not associated with an historic area or district. It is not foreseeable that the area of which the subject property is a part will be designated historic due to the diverse variety and quality of the homes and the span of original construction dates.

4. Architecture:

The subject property began as an uninhabited shack and is not representative of a particular or distinguishing architectural type specimen. Its plain characteristics provide no notable or special value for a study of a period, style, or method of construction.

5. Unique Feature:

The location and characteristics are not particularly special or unique. No part of the building can be seen from the street.

6. Historic Place:

The property and its improvements are not interrelated in the establishment, preservation or protection of an historic place or region in the city.

7. Source of Future Prehistory or History:

No evidence is known to exist of any archaeological findings or paleontological specimens. The building, being constructed using common materials, methods and features is not likely to have the potential to yield important data in regard to its period of construction or occupancy.

CONCLUSION

The subject structure is not presently listed on any local, state or federal register. The subject property is not listed or regarded as a contributor to any local, state or federal historic district. The subject structure does not possess any known historical associations or historic architectural significance or uniqueness.

No evidence was found that would suggest the subject property or its occupants or owners would qualify now or in the future life of the building for any historic significance.

Due to the perceived obvious lack of historic significance, please accept this formal request to be exempt from being considered a protected historic property.

Bonnie and Ken Behrmann

347 Highland Place

Monrovia, CA 91016

CITY BUILDING PERMITS

No records are on file regarding the original construction as to when the structure was built, or the builder(s).

BUILDING PERMIT RECORDS/ACTIVITY

Date	PERMIT DESCRIPTION	OWNER	BUILDER
1953	Plumbing: gas and sewer	Victor C. Muller	Victor C. Muller
1959	Add bedroom to existing structure	Victor C. Muller	Victor C. Muller
1960	Gas piping/wall furnace	Victor C. Muller	A-1 Quality Plumbing
1998	sewer	Bonnie and Ken Behrmann	Ken Behrmann
1998	electrical	Bonnie and Ken Behrmann	Ken Behrmann
2013	Bath remodel	Bonnie and Ken Behrmann	L & W Kitchen and Baths

RESOURCE FINDINGS

Two reference librarians at the Monrovia Public Library assisted in a search through their materials for information about 347 Highland Place and/or about Fritz Long, the only name we had in association with an early property owner. No reference for either was found prior to the permit in 1953 noted above.



The chairs, the fireplace and windows in the living room in the hillside home.



Found in the

By Nancy Watts



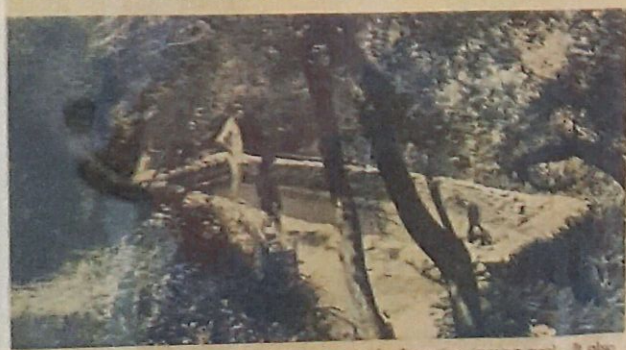
A corner view in the hillside home of Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Long shows the dining area.

SOME people dream their dreams, others find something they dreamed about. The Fritz Longs did the latter. Desiring a quiet retreat far from the well-paced city life, they found a wooded nook tucked away in the Maravilla foothills. It was an answer to a long-cherished dream — a place to write, paint and to enjoy the surrounding levelness.

The casual passer-by never would realize what was hidden behind the grove of fruit trees visible from the street front. But turning into the narrow grade, a driveway will wind slowly through avocado, orange, lemon, apricot and plum trees. Suddenly you arrive at the retreat.

A quality of make-believe prevails about the place which undoubtedly explains why children visitors here are so entranced. Tall, shimmering maples, whose leaves filter the sun, cast patterns of dancing light. A large lamppost and wide brick walk leading up to the house extend a pleasant welcome. A small redwood dwelling rises to suit the grade with a pale entrance to the right. A soft green trim of windows and doors repeats the background color of the trees.

At the back of the house a brick-paved terrace spreads in-



Peace and utility are derived from the water in the Longs' swimming pool. It also



A wide brick path leads to the living room in narrow wooded retreat near Maravilla.

Twinkling Forest

Although in the shade, Sun-bleached gardenias and Natal palms mingle with the desert brush, a rare mango tree and several oaks, beneath which grows the banana.

Working up the narrow hillside, one is pleasantly surprised to come upon a beautiful little pool. Conforming to the contour of the canyon, the pool's glassy surface will hold the sun's rays in a small, lively aquarium. The pool is a refreshing oasis in the desert which



A brick-paved terrace at the rear of the house is an inviting place for day-dreaming under shade trees.

The house is a fine example of simplicity, beauty and harmony. Originally an unimproved shack, the cottage was designed and rebuilt largely by Mr. Long with a carpenter. All materials used were scrap picked up from random sources and junk yards. This includes windows, doors, trim, and even used brick. The exterior is of redwood paneled horizontally. The interior features the rustic pattern of a madrigal. The walls are all concrete, and the walls are made of brick. A simple kitchen and Chinese furniture lend an air of sophistication to the otherwise rough-hewn atmosphere. On either side of the red brick fireplace a large single-paneled window frames the



—see enhanced pictures for reading

By Nancy Watts

SOME people dream their dreams, others find something they dreamed about. The Fritz Longs did the latter. Desiring a quiet retreat far from the swift-paced city life, they found a wooded canyon tucked away in the Monrovia foothills. It was an answer to a long-cherished dream — a place to write, paint and to enjoy the surrounding loveliness.

The casual passer-by never would realize what was hidden behind the grove of fruit trees visible from the street front. But turning into the narrow gravel driveway one will wind slowly through avocado, orange, lemon, apricot and apple trees. Suddenly you arrive at the retreat.

A quality of make-believe prevails about the place which undoubtedly explains why children visitors become so entranced. Tall, shimmering maples, whose leaves filter the sun, cast patterns of dancing light. A large lamppost and wide brick walk leading up to the house extend a pleasant welcome. A small redwood dwelling rises to suit the grade with a patio entrance to the right. A soft green trim of windows and doors repeats the background color of the trees.

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Twinkling Forest

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Wandering up the narrow-canyon, one is pleasantly surprised to come upon a beautiful little pool. Conforming to the contour of the canyon pool gleams with all the colors of a rainbow. A small, lovely aqueduct just a refreshing swim, the pool is a gem which I might the

The house is a fine example of simplicity, taste and ingenuity. Originally a mahogany shack, the cottage was designed and rebuilt during the war by Mr. Long and a carpenter. All materials used were scrap picked up from random sources and junk yards. This included windows, doors, plumbing and even used brick. The exterior is of redwood placed horizontally. The interior continues the rustic pattern by use of a mahogany dado. Floors are covered wall to wall with grass matting. An old mirror, a temple carving and Chinese figurines lend an air of sophistication to the otherwise rough-hewn atmosphere. On either side of the red brick fireplace a large single-paned window frames the

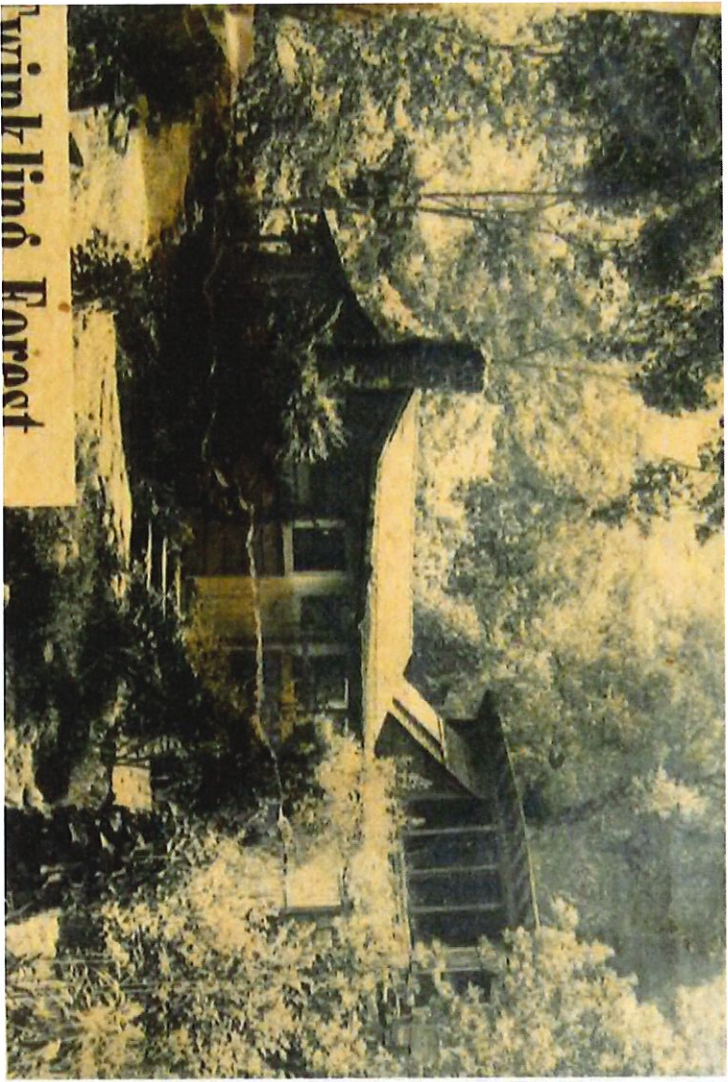
(Continued on Page Twenty-three)

A wide brick path leads to the Long home in narrow wooded canyon near Monrovia.



Leslie Watts photos

A brick-paved terrace at the rear of the house is an inviting place for day dreaming under shady trees.





Twinkling Forest

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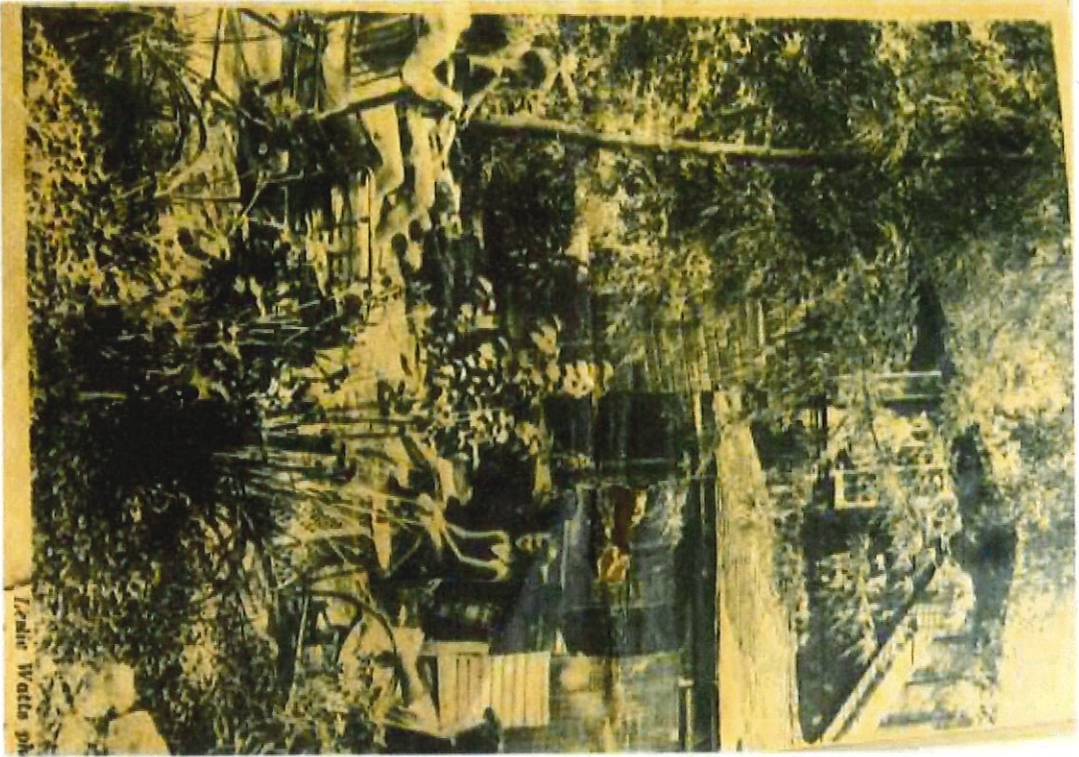
Wandering up the narrowing canyon, one is pleasantly surprised to come upon a beautiful little pool. Conforming

A wide brick path leads to the Long home in narrow wooded canyon near Monrovia.









L'Annie Walter 9/18



A wide brick path
in narrow wooded canyon near Monrovia.

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Leslie Watts photos

A brick-paved terrace at the rear of the house is an



