



# **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**

**APPLICATION:** DHS2019-0013

**AGENDA ITEM:** AR-4

**PREPARED BY:** Sheri Bermejo  
Planning Division Manager

**MEETING DATE:** March 27, 2019

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**TITLE:** Determination of Historic Significance  
920 West Colorado Boulevard

**APPLICANT:** Raul Ramirez  
1932 La Serna Drive  
Whittier, CA 90604-2329

**REQUEST:** Determine the historic significance of a residential building built within the historic period (50 years or older) that is proposed for a substantial remodel.

**BACKGROUND:** The applicant has presented staff with a preliminary plan to remodel and construct a rear addition to single-story, "Minimal Traditional" single family residential building at 920 West Colorado Boulevard. Since the house was built over 50 years ago (1946), the proposed alterations require that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) first make a determination about the building's potential significance as an historic resource. Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.050(B)(2) allows the applicant to submit a written historic assessment and status code from a city-approved historic preservation expert regarding a property's historic merit.

On March 15, 2019, the applicant submitted an historic assessment of the building which was prepared by Charles J. Fisher, a professional historian (Attachment "A"). The assessment includes a historical research evaluation by Fisher that explains the methodology used to determine the home's historic significance and a summary of the research results. Attachment "A" also contains the property's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR 523A) survey form which assigned the property a status code of 6Z. A California Resources Historic Status (CRHS) code of 6Z the means that the property is not eligible for listing or designation under federal, state, or local evaluation criteria.

**ANALYSIS:** According to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.10.030, a home remodel that proposes to alter more than 50% of a residential building's roof area, 50% or more of a building's total exterior wall area, or 25% or more of any exterior wall facing a public street that was constructed over 50 years ago requires a Discretionary Demolition Permit. MMC Section 17.10.060 states that no demolition permit shall be approved or issued until the HPC has made a determination of historic significance. The home improvement project proposed by the applicant would exceed the maximum alteration threshold for both roof and exterior wall modification.

A site visit and evaluation of 920 West Colorado Boulevard was conducted by Charles J. Fisher. During the visit Fisher inspected the site and existing structure, as well as photo documented the property's current condition. Fisher also conducted an analysis of the history of the structure, including its previous owners and occupants, using City permit history, Los Angeles County Assessor records, census data, death records, and newspaper articles. Staff augmented this analysis using the City of Monrovia's Historic Context Statement to establish a historic background and understand the property's place in the City's history.



*Figure 1 - Primary Facade Facing North*

### ***Property History***

The subject Minimal Traditional home and detached garage were built in 1946 by contractor Marvin F. Black for George H. Whalen and his wife, Paralee. The architect is unknown. The single-story residence totals approximately 600 square feet in size. The construction history provided by Fisher references that a pool once existed in the back yard of the home, but was recently demolished last year.

Fisher's report contains a comprehensive history of all nine former property owners, none of whom are noted to have any direct association with the history of Monrovia, the San Gabriel Valley, the State of California, or the Unities States.

### ***Current Condition***

Fisher's historic assessment describes the residence as having a side facing, low-pitched gable roof covered in composition shingles. The entrance is located within the center of the front façade and is sheltered by a decorative metal roof overhang. A square bay window with multi-lights is located to the east of the entrance and a wide aluminum sliding window, flanked by shutters, is located to the west.

The historic assessment documents that changes to the original home have been made over the years. A review of the photo documentation included in Fisher's report illustrates that the south (rear facade) of the house has been altered with an addition of a rear patio cover, a large window was removed from the west façade, and several windows have been replaced with aluminum sliding units on the south (rear) and north (primary) facade. The assessment

further notes that the home is clad in a non-original rough stucco that is so thick that it protrudes above the original window framing.

### ***Historic Integrity***

The assessment evaluated the property under the seven aspects of historic integrity including: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Staff further verified these integrity thresholds using the City's Historic Context Statement, which states that given the numerous examples of Minimal Traditional homes in the City, architecturally significant properties must possess a high integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. While minor additions to Minimal Traditional homes that are not visible from the public right-of-way are generally acceptable, the Context Statement states that original doors and windows should be retained. It further states that replacement windows are only acceptable if they match the original design, size, muntin pattern, profile and material. Therefore, based on the window and stucco alterations that have occurred over the years to the original home, the integrity aspects of design and materials have been lost.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

In order to be eligible for designation as a local landmark, the property would need to meet at least one of the seven criterion listed in MMC Section 17.40.060. Based on the assessment conducted by Fisher, the property does not meet any of those standards. The house at 920 West Colorado Boulevard is not identified with persons or events that are significant in local, regional, state, or national history. It does not represent the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect. The house has been altered with window removals and replacements that are not consistent with the original styling.

A district eligibility analysis is included in Fisher's report, which summarizes his review of 32 properties within the subject residential neighborhood. He notes that while the majority of the homes within the area were built within the late 1940s and early 1950s, only six of the remaining Minimal Traditional homes remain unaltered. He further notes that the study area contains three Craftsman style homes developed between 1912 and 1923, several apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s, and newer development on the east end of Colorado Boulevard. Based on this analysis, Fisher found that the area immediately surrounding the subject property does not contain a sufficient level of cohesiveness or integrity to be considered a historic district. Therefore, the subject property would not be considered a contributor to a potential historic district.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The applicant's consultant determined that the property at 920 West Colorado Boulevard does not have architectural or known historic value that meets the criteria for state, regional, or local designation. Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission accept the DPR Form and assign a CHRS Code of 6Z to the property.

If the Commission concurs with this recommendation, then the following motion is appropriate:

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

# Historical Resource Evaluation



**Whalen House**  
**920 W. Colorado Boulevard, Monrovia**  
**East 50 Feet of Lot 4, Tract No. 1275**  
**as per Map Recorded in Book 18, Page 101 of Maps**  
**of Los Angeles County**

*Prepared by:*

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© October 2018  
Amended March 2019

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## *Section I*

### *Executive Summary*

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the structure located at 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, in the City of Monrovia, California, to determine whether it meets the requirements as a historical resource in accordance with Section 15064.5 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The ultimate conclusions in this report represent the professional opinions of the author and are based on the data that has been found through research of the historical and architectural background of the subject property that was available at the time of preparation, as well as the application of local, state and federal criteria of eligibility as well as the best professional practices.

This report has been prepared for the property owner, Raul Ramirez, for the purpose of determining the level of significance of the structure that is presently on the property. The report looks at the resource at the National level in order to determine a California Historical Resource Status Code, however it is also discussed at the local level for the purpose of establishing its level of significance under the Monrovia City ordinance.

The author is a professional historian with extensive experience in property research and historic preservation, dating from the mid 1980's. This background includes the research, preparation and/or advocacy of over 160 Historic Cultural Monument Nominations for the City of Los Angeles, two for Ventura County, one in the City of Ojai and two in the City of Sierra Madre, as well as research and documentation of numerous other historic structures. Other qualifications include work as a past president and board member of the Highland Park Heritage Trust, past co-chair of the Cultural Resources Committee of the Los Angeles Conservancy, president of the Heritage Coalition of Southern California and 28 years doing property research for Transamerica Real Estate Tax Service.

The resource to be evaluated is a 1-story, single-family residential building built in 1946 and located at the center of the property, referred to as the Whalen House, named for its first owner/builder. It is sited on the East 50 Feet of Lot 4 in Tract No. 1275, which is recorded in Book 18, Page 101 of Maps in the Office of the County Recorder of Los Angeles County, and is identified with Los Angeles County Assessor's Parcel No. 8506-025-006.

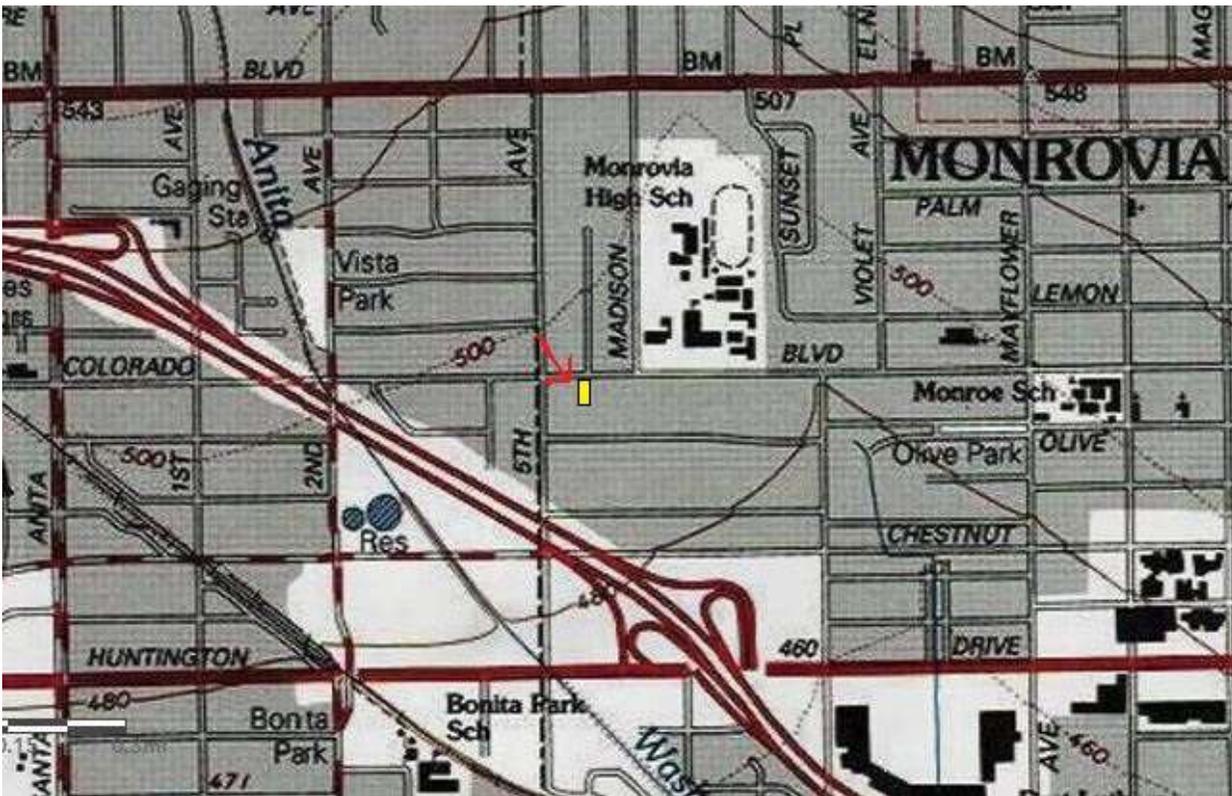
The structure is not presently listed on any local, state or federal register nor is it listed as a contributor to any local, state or federal historic district

The full legal description of the property is as follows:

**THE EAST 50 FEET OF LOT 4 IN TRACT NO. 1275, IN THE CITY OF MONROVIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS PER MAP RECORDED IN BOOK 18, PAGE 101 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAID COUNTY.**

The subject house was originally built in 1946 for George H. and Paralee Whalen by contractor Marvin F. Black. The Whalens lived in the house for less than two years, selling it February 1948. Prior to 1979, the first seven owners, with the exception of one couple, who between them had it for almost 16 years, no owner was to retain the house for over 3 years, with most selling it within two years of buying it.

The site is situated in the Southeastern portion of the City of Monrovia and is located at N34° 08.7462', W118° 01.1762'.



*Red arrow points to Whalen House on detail of United States Department of Interior Topographic Map of Monrovia, Los Angeles County, California.*

(2)

## ***Section II Methodology***

In evaluating a potential historic property, several criteria are employed, including an analysis of architectural and historical significance, as well as specific evaluations as to whether the subject property meets the various requirements for it to be considered historic.

These requirements may include the age and rarity of the design, significance of an architect, builder or owner/resident of the property, along with how the structure relates to its historic context, how much of its own architectural integrity has survived as well as whether non-historic alterations can be easily reversed.

Age and integrity are important criteria here because the structure was built 72 years ago. However it has also undergone a number of alterations.

A site visit was made on October 2, 2018 when photos were taken of the exterior and interior of the subject property.

An analysis was also made of the history of the structure including owners, occupants, using various public records, such as census data, death records and newspaper citations. Some historical context was also gathered from previously published books and articles as noted in the bibliography.

### *Section III*

## *Historic Property Regulations*

In a determination of eligibility a potential historic resource must be considered under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to determine if it is either eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register). The California Register is modeled after the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). There are only a handful of differences in the standards for the National and California Registers. The California Register has a slightly lower integrity requirement than the National Register. A resource is also presumed to be historic if it is locally listed or has been identified as historically significant in a historic resources survey.

However, a preponderance of evidence could show that a property so is either no longer historic due to alterations subsequent to a survey or further examination has found that it does not meet the criteria and requirements set forth in the California Register. The National and California Register programs are discussed below.

#### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register is described in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state or local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be protected from destruction or impairment.”

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, the resource must normally be at least 50 years of age and must possess significance in American history and culture, architecture or archeology. To be considered significant, a property must meet one or more of the following four established criteria:

- A. It must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. It must be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. It must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That it yield, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The resource must also have integrity so that, according to National Register Bulletin #15 on How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, “to be eligible for the National Register, a property must not only be shown to be significant under National Register criteria, but it must also have integrity”, which is the ability of the resource to convey its significance. In other words, a property must not be so altered from the condition during the period of significance, that it fails to show the reasons for that significance.

A resource should also be significant within a historic context to be eligible for listing. According to National Register Bulletin #15, historic contexts are “those patterns, themes or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.” The significance of a historic property can be determined only when it is evaluated within its historic context. The resource must represent an important aspect of the area’s history or prehistory and still have the integrity to convey that to qualify for the National Register.

The National Register also allows for the establishment of historic districts, where the properties may not be eligible for individual listing, but as a grouping, convey both the integrity and context to meet one or more of the four criteria.

### California Register of Historic Resources

The California Register was established in 1992, when Governor Pete Wilson signed Assembly Bill 2881. Like the National Register, the California Register is used by state and local agencies, private groups and individual citizens to identify and list historic resources and to help determine which resources are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse impacts.

The California Register consists of all California properties that are listed on or determined eligible for the National Register and all California Landmarks from No. 770 up, which are automatically listed, as well as others that are directly nominated by an application processed through a public hearing process and are determined eligible for listing by the State Historic Resources Commission (SHRC). In addition, those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and have been recommended to the SHRC are automatically listed.

To be eligible for listing in the California Register, the resource must normally be at least 50 years of age and must possess significance in local, state or national, under one or more of the following four criteria:

- 1.) It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States; or
- 2.) It is associated with the lives of persons significant to local, California or national history; or
- 3.) It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values; or
- 4.) It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important in prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Historic resources eligible for listing in the California Register may include buildings sites, structures, objects and historic districts. Resources less than 50 years of age may be eligible if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand their historical importance. While the criteria for the California Register is less rigorous with regard to the issue of integrity, there is the expectation that the resources reflect their appearance during their period of significance.

### Monrovia Historic Landmark

In 1995, the City Council adopted the Historic Preservation Ordinance. In addition to the criteria and regulations for local historic landmarks, it established a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to provide oversight of the program. The HPC consists of seven Monrovia citizens appointed by the City Council to a three-year term. Meetings are held monthly on the Wednesday following the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at City Hall.

The centerpiece of Monrovia's Historic Preservation Ordinance is the designating of local historic landmarks. The City has well over 100 properties that have been determined to be historically significant based on one of the seven criteria in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The Planning Division is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Historic Preservation Program, including:

- Answering questions from current and prospective historic landmark owners.
- Conducting office and field research related to historic homes
- Writing reports that place homes in historical and architectural context
- Presenting Historic Preservation reports and related findings to the HPC and City Council

- Applying technical work processing historical landmarks, Mills Act contracts, Certificates of Appropriateness and, demolition permit applications

Historic resources as defined by CEQA also includes properties listed in “local registers” of historic properties. A “local register of historic resources” is broadly defined in Section 5020.1 (k) of the Public Resources Code, as “a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution.” Local are defined in essentially two forms:

- 1.) Historic resource surveys conducted by or for a local agency in accordance with the procedures and standards set by the State Office of Historic Preservation and are adopted by that agency. These surveys are to be periodically updated in order to maintain the most current list of potential historic resources.
- 2.) Landmarks designated under local ordinances or resolutions. These properties are “presumed to be historically or culturally significant.” (Public Resources Guide Sections 5024.1, 21804.1 and 15064.5)

The City of Monrovia’s historic preservation efforts began in the early 1990’s with the establishment of the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee. The Committee’s purpose was to develop a strategy which would serve as a guide for the preservation of Monrovia’s significant historic structures.

The Historic Preservation Commission and the City Council must both find that the application meets one or more of the criteria and standards for the designations of a landmark as follows:

- 1.) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, regional, state or national history.
- 2.) It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect.
- 3.) It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of not less than 50% of historic or architecturally related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by physical layout or development.

- 5.) It has a unique location or physical characteristics or represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community, or the City of Monrovia.
- 6.) It incorporates elements that help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the City.
- 7.) It has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

## *Section IV*

### *Architectural Description*

The Whalen House is of a 1-story Post World War II minimal Traditional style house built in a rectangular pattern with a low side-gabled roof. The house is clad in smooth stucco with a squared bay containing a 4-part multi-light casement and fixed pane window with a brick sill to the left of the front porch and a non-original aluminum sliding window, flanked with wooden shutters, to the right of the front porch, which is at grade and is topped by a small metal awning- type roof.

The remaining windows consist of three wooden double-hung windows on the Eastern façade, a replacement aluminum slider to the left of the rear door and a single small double hung window toward the rear of the Western façade. Two other windows have been removed from the West façade, toward the front of the house. A covered patio is on the left rear façade and a small roof with a scalloped design supported by two waved support brackets over the rear door that is set above a small set of concrete steps.

A detached two car garage is set facing to the North to the rear of the house. The side-gabled roof, like that on the house, is covered with composition shingles. The interior of the garage has been split into two rooms.

The interior of the house has an original tile kitchen sink and an open counter between the living room and kitchen. Otherwise, the one-bedroom, one-bathroom interior, which includes a small utility room at the rear entry, is undistinguished.

## *Section V*

### *Architectural Significance*

The Whalen House is an example the housing that was built in Monrovia immediately subsequent to the Second World War. Built in 1946, the house is of a Minimal Traditional design. Changes that have been made over the years to some of the windows, including the removal of two in the Western facade. At least one additional layer of stucco appears to have been placed over the original, as it is so thick that it is above the original window framing.

The rear of the house has also been altered with the addition of a rear patio covering at an unknown date.

Built on a flat lot on the South side of Colorado Boulevard, the house has been altered by the various window change-outs and removals, including the window to the right of the entry, being altered enough to preclude it from being considered as a historic structure. The original Minimal Traditional design is undistinguished and is not of a level to be deemed to be a good example for an individual listing.

There are a number of other Minimal Traditional single-family houses or duplexes in the immediate area, possibly forming a potential district. However the alterations to the subject property preclude it from being viewed as a contributor to a potential district.

**District Eligibility:** The property is located on a long block of West Colorado Boulevard between South 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and South Monterey Avenue and Lincoln Place extending to the North of Colorado, across from the subject property with South Madison Avenue extending North ward approximately 330 feet to the East of the subject property. This analysis area only extends East to Madison Avenue and North for half the block on Lincoln Place, for a total of 32 parcels. The subject parcel was split from the remainder of the lot in 1946, when the house was built. Surrounding residences were for the most part, originally developed from between the late 1940s and the early 1950s with several apartment buildings constructed in the 1960s. Three of the parcels were developed at earlier dates, between 1912 and 1923. New development has replaced four of the original properties at the East end of the study area.

Most 1940s and 1950s development are single-story duplexes built in the Minimal Traditional style, with the majority on Lincoln Place. Of the 20 parcels developed in that style, only six are basically unaltered. Another eight have had window sashes replaced with vinyl and the remainder being more drastically altered. Two of the earlier houses, both of the Craftsman style, remain essentially intact. Using a 50-year benchmark, two of the apartment buildings, a Dingbat and a Minimal Traditional building, are intact.



916 W Colorado Boulevard

Improvements situated to the immediate East and West of the subject property.



922-22½ W. Colorado Boulevard



429-31 Lincoln Place

Typical intact Minimal Traditional duplex and 1912 Craftsman in subject area.



946 W. Colorado Boulevard



933 W. Colorado Boulevard

Unaltered Dingbat apartment built in 1961 and new development built in 2001.



868-878 W. Colorado Boulevard

## *Section VI*

### *Construction History*

The original house and garage were constructed in 1946 on land that had been subdivided in 1911 as Tract No. 1275, which was a subdivision of Lots 12 and a portion of Lots 6 and 7 of Block 85 of the Santa Anita Tract, as per Book 34, Pages 41 and 42 of Miscellaneous Records. .

The house was built in 1946 by contractor Marvin F. Black. It was built in a rectangular configuration, with the front entry centered on the façade. A small open porch is at the rear façade near the Southeast corner of the house. A covered patio (not an original feature) is at the Southwest corner of the house. The original cost of the 614 square foot house, in 1946, was \$3,000.00 plus \$500.00, the value of the 360 square foot two car garage. The garage was built just after the house by the owner, George H. Whalen, who was a carpenter, according to the 1940 United States Census.



Rear façade of the Whalen House showing the covered patio addition.

A kidney-shaped swimming pool was constructed by Anthony Pools in 1974. The pool was demolished in 2018 by the immediate prior owner. Google Earth satellite view shows the pool full of clear water, so it is unclear why the pool was removed before the property was sold.



See appendix for a full listing of the various permit data.

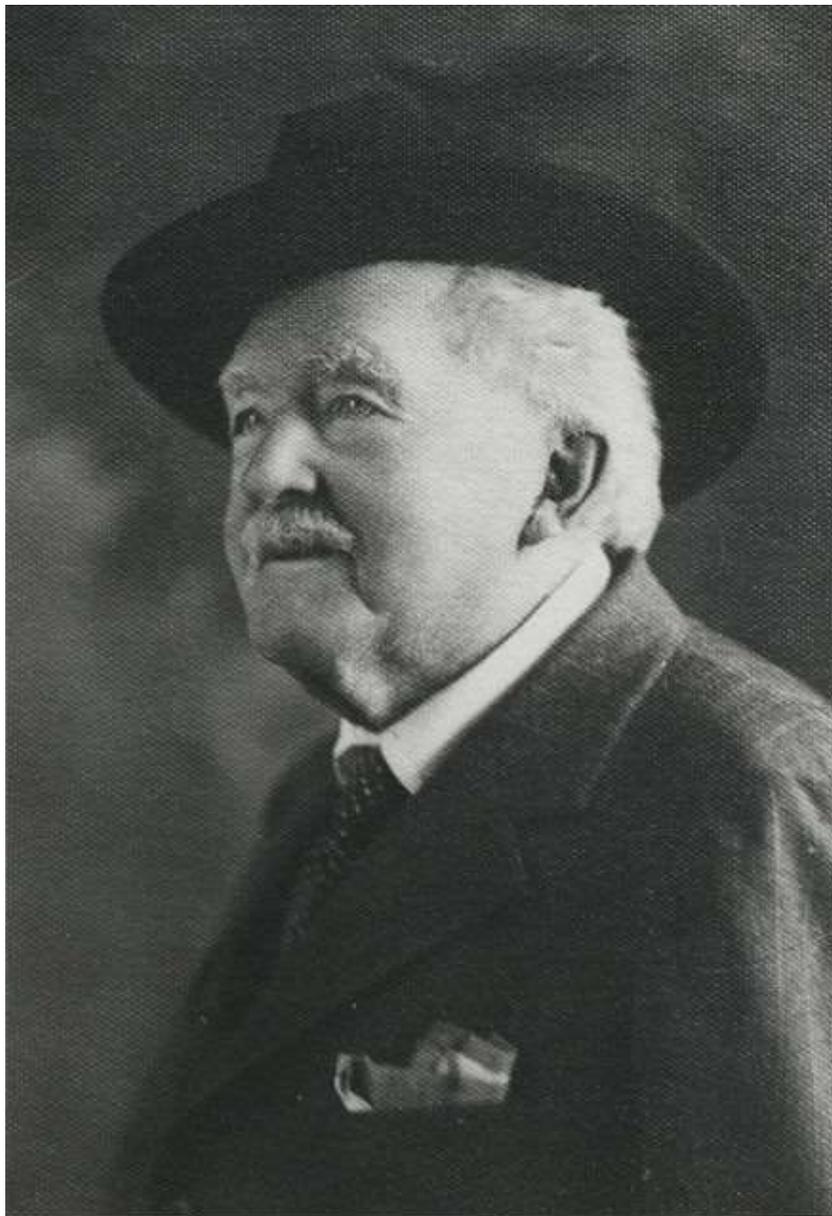
## *Section VII*

### *Historical Outline*

The Calvin Smith House is located in the Eastern part of Monrovia, on land that was a part of the Rancho Azusa de Duarte.

The town of Monrovia was founded in a portion of the Duarte Ranch and of the adjacent Rancho Santa Anita. Monrovia is the fourth oldest incorporated city in Los Angeles County (after Los Angeles, Santa Monica, and Pasadena). Incorporated in 1887 during the land boom that had come to Southern California two years earlier.

It began during the late 1880s, when a group of investors, Edward F. Spence, John D. Bicknell, James F. Crank, and J. F. Falvey, who had been successful in both banking and railroad building pooled their holdings after purchasing several parcels of the Rancho Santa Anita from Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin. They joined in the venture with William Newton Monroe, who had purchased several large parcels in the Ranchos Santa Anita and Azusa de Duarte and formed the Monrovia Land Company.



William N. Monroe, founder of the City of Monrovia, 1915 (Monrovia Public Library)

On May 27, 1886 the subdivision map of the Town of Monrovia was recorded and lots were sold for the first time at \$100 or \$150 each; however, to purchase a lot, each owner was required to build a house within the first six months (at the cost of at least

\$2,000). This protected the town from land speculators and allowed it to survive during the collapse of the land boom in 1889. The founders, as officers and directors of the Monrovia Land and Water Company, promised to plant 8,000 pepper trees along the streets, provide free water to the town and install electric streetlights. Monroe was the company's president. While not the first settler in the Town of Monrovia, Monroe was the most important of the founders and the town is named for him. The town was incorporated as a city on December 15, 1887 with Monroe serving as the first mayor.

Born in Scott County, Indiana, on June 4, 1841, Monroe became a school teacher at 18, after his family had relocated to Iowa. Following his service as a Lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Iowa Calvary during the Civil War, Monroe was superintendent of construction for the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1875, after several lines were built, he moved his family to Los Angeles. By 1880 he had become a member of the Los Angeles City Council. He left Los Angeles in 1882 for another construction project but returned in 1884. With money earned from the construction project and from the sale of a railroad car of mules, Monroe bought 240 acres of Rancho Santa Anita from E.J. "Lucky" Baldwin for \$30,000.00. He moved his family into a tent on the property until they built a small cottage where they lived until their permanent home, "The Oaks," was completed. "The Oaks" is still standing at 250 N. Primrose Avenue and is listed as Monrovia Historic Landmark #4. Myrtle Avenue, Monrovia's Main Street, is named for his elder daughter Myrtle Migonette Bailey.

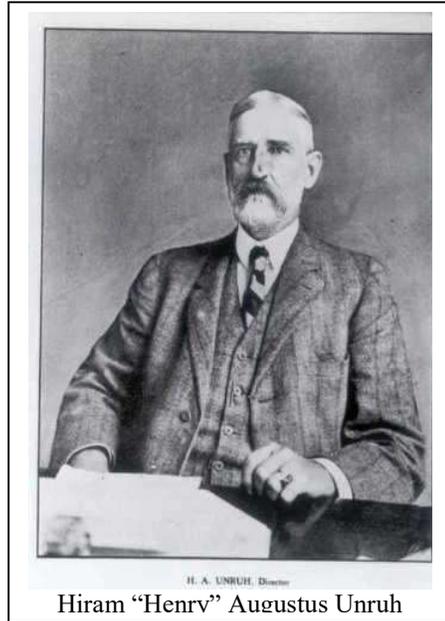
The Monroe family lived in several locations over the years, eventually retiring to their home in Monrovia. His wife, Mary Jane Monroe died at the age of 86 on February 26, 1932, and three years later, William Monroe died on December 26, 1935, at the age of 94. Monroe is buried along with his family in Live Oak Cemetery on Duarte Road in Monrovia. William Monroe found success in a variety of careers, including school teacher, banker, hotel manager, mayor, council member, real estate developer, broker, railroad contractor and railroad superintendent.

The portion of Monrovia wherein the Whalen House is located was outside the original Town of Monrovia, in a portion Block 85 of a part of the Santa Anita Tract, which was originally subdivided by Monroe, but was recorded two years after the original tract on August 24, 1888 by the Abstract Guarantee Title Insurance Company. Baldwin had retained most of that new addition to the tract, which was a part of his Rancho Santa Anita. He transferred part of his holdings, including Block 85, to his confidential agent, H. A. Unruh before the tract was even recorded.

Hiram "Henry" Augustus Unruh was born in Valparaiso, Indiana on November 1, 1845. His mother passed away when he was 6 years old. He enlisted in the Union army on July 22, 1861, before finishing high school. After serving as a non-commissioned officer in Company 'C' of the 20<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry until the end of that

conflict, he studied telegraphy and worked as a telegraph operator with Western Union. He came to California in 1866, where he found work with the Wells Fargo Express Company. On October 10, 1868, he married Janis Anna Dunn in Dutch Flat, which was in Placer County. Joseph Andrew Unruh, David Spencer Unruh architect) on June 21,

During the early 1870s, who was so impressed him to be his agent in all This arraignment was to in 1909. Baldwin had fortunes during his effort by some of his his executor. That was shrewd investments and value of the estate over



The Couple had two sons, born on June 19, 1869 and (who was to become an 1872.

Unruh met E. J. Baldwin, with his skills that he hired of his financial dealings. last beyond Baldwin's death made and lost several lifetime and there was an creditors to remove Unruh as thwarted and through sales he greatly increased the the next several years.

Unruh passed away suddenly from a heart attack on December 17, 1916, while riding in a client's automobile. He was a well-known investor in real estate, but it is uncertain whether he actually owned the land in the Santa Anita Tract, or was merely acting as Baldwin's agent with the land in his name.

On December 9, 1887, Unruh deeded Lot 12 and the West half of Lot 7 of Block 85 of the Santa Anita Tract to Marion Hauk for \$4,220.00. A search of various databases, city directories and newspapers netted no information on Hauk or a later purchaser of the property, J.B. Knoblock, who owned the land for the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A full title search of deeds during that period has not been done, so it is unknown if or when Hauk sold the land to Knoblock, or whether there may have been other owners between them.

Knoblock deeded the land to Title Insurance and Trust Company around 1910 and the title company filed the map for Tract No. 1275, showing Colorado Boulevard under its former name of Orange Avenue. In 1912, Lots 4, 5 and 6 of the new tract were sold to Anna E. Clark. Again, as with Hauk and Knoblock, no record can be verified on Anne E. Clark, a fairly common name in the Los Angeles area. On June 11, 1941, Frank H. Clark was added to the title. No records have been found to tie the two together. They may have been mother and son, rather than spouses. What is known is that the land was to remain vacant during the whole time it was in the Clark name.

### **First Homeowner-George H. Whalen:**

The East 50 feet of Lot 4 was deeded to George H. Whalen, a carpenter, and his wife Paralee, on May 23, 1946. Whalen had already taken out his building permit, 8 days

prior to his closing escrow. He hired a contractor, Marvin F. Black, to build the modest home. Whalen then went on to build the garage himself.

George Hugh Whalen was born in Iberia, Missouri on April 27, 1886. The family dropped the Irish "i" in their surname during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. George married 22 year old Paralee Perkins in 1907 and they relocated to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where George worked as a delivery clerk at the railroad depot. By 1918, he was working as a shipping clerk for a different employer, Cosden and Company oil refinery. Around 1921, they moved to New Mexico

By 1920, they had a daughter, Marie C., born on June 24, 1908 in Missouri and a son, Eugene, born in December 11, 1911 in Oklahoma. A second daughter, Eloise V. (Wilkins) was born in New Mexico on January 14, 1921.

In 1930, the Whalen couple and their two younger children were living in South Pasadena, California, where George was working as a carpenter and Eugene was beginning a lifetime career with the Southern Pacific Railroad. They were in the same house a decade later. Upon building the house in Monrovia, they moved into it. However, their time there was short. On February 19, 1948, the Whalens sold the house to Floyd E. and Madeline M. Leach. George Whalen passed away on August 28, 1950, at the age of 64.

### **Second Homeowners-Floyd E. and Madeline M. Leach:**

The son of a fireman, Floyd Eugene Leach was born in Burke, Vermont, on June 25, 1905. He moved to New Hampshire as a young man and married Stella Marie Defosses there on November 15, 1924. That marriage ended in divorce and he married Madeline M. Prentiss-Riley, a widow, on June 24, 1944. They owned the Monrovia house for a short time, deeding it to George B. and Anna S. Arken on November 9, 1948 and moving to Ventura County.

### **Third Homeowner-Anna S. Arken:**

No data could be verified on the Arkins, who owned the house until May 10, 1951, when it was transferred to Knut L. and Christine Isakson.

### **Fourth Homeowners-Knut L. and Christine Isakson:**

Knut Leonard Isaksson immigrated from Stockholm, Sweden, where he was born on April 15, 1877, settling in Chicago in 1900. On January 7, 1905, he married Christine Sunden, who was born on April 11, 1875 and had arrived in Chicago in 1896. They was naturalized in 1909. Their son Leroy was born there in 1908 and their daughter,

Lenea, in 1915. Knut worked as a carpenter for a railroad initially, but by 1920 was a piano tuner and salesman and was a janitor in 1930. They moved to Southern California upon his retirement and lived in the house, which was the first one that they actually owned, until Knut's death on October 24, 1957. Christine passed away on Christmas day of 1966, at the age of 91 and her estate sold the house to fellow Swedish immigrant, Carl H. Frintzer on March 16, 1967.

#### **Fifth Homeowner-Carl H. Frintzer:**

Carl Hugo Frintzer was born in Sothenburg Bohuslan Sweden on November 27, 1911. He married Karin Bergit in Hudiksvalls, Gävleborg, Sweden on January 27, 1940 and their son, Carl Gustav Frintzer, was born on their wedding anniversary in 1945. The Frintzer Family arrived in the United States on January 26, 1957. Carl was naturalized on July 12, 1968. He was a machinist for Anja Engineers.

The Hugo Frintzer's younger sister, Ingrid Elizabeth Hanley, moved in with them in 1966, after a divorce. She moved out after remarrying her husband, Robert Raymond Hanley, on August 12, 1970. The Frintzer's sold the house to Gregory R Borrow on June 25, 1973, but remained in Monrovia, where Hugo passed away on May 7, 1988, at the age of 76.

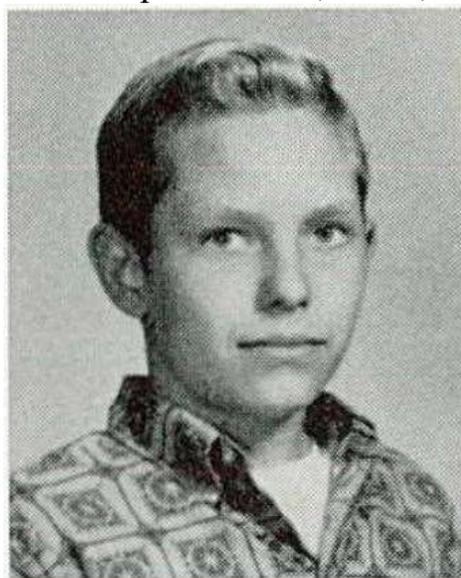
#### **Sixth Homeowner-Gregory R. Borrow:**

A Los Angeles native, Gregory Ryan Borrow was born on April 22, 1947. He grew up in Monrovia and graduated from Monrovia High School in 1965. He bought the house just before his second of three marriages, to Mitzi Ellen Burian, in Las Vegas, on October 5, 1973. They divorced in June of 1975 and on September 23, 1979, Borrow deeded the house to Muriel J. Burian, probably a relative of his wife. Records show that Borrow still lives in Monrovia, but no data has been found on his work history.

During his time at the house, Borrow had a swimming pool installed adjacent to the garage. The pool was designed by engineer R. J. Koloaziej and constructed by Anthony Pools, one of the premiere builders of swimming pools in California.

#### **Seventh Homeowner-Muriel J. Burian:**

Muriel Joselyn Burian was a California resident,



Greg Burrow at Clifton Junior High School in 1962 (Ancestry.com)

born in Minden, Nevada, on May 15, 1926. She married in Minden Henry Pollard Jewett in Stateline, Nevada on February 21, 1981. The couple moved to Arroyo Grande, in San Luis Obispo County where Muriel Jewett passed away in 2012. It's probable that Muriel did not live on the property and it was abandoned. On December 20, 1977, the city of Monrovia posted a notice of unsanitary conditions noting "young couple live in garage in rear of 920 W. Colorado. No facilities in garage. Junk and debris thrown in a junk car on property. Very unsanitary." A note on January 3, 1978 stated "unable to contact owner." Burian sold the subject house to John R. and Lillian D. Campbell on August 23, 1979.

### **Eighth Homeowners-John R. and Lillian D. Campbell:**

John R. Campbell was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada on April 21, 1935 and Lillian Dorreen Campbell was born there on September 24, 1934. They were married there on March 29, 1956 and immigrated two years later. Both took out citizenship petitions and were naturalized, he on May 14, 1965 and she on May 20, 1966.

On January 30, 1981 it appears that a deed with an erroneous legal description was recorded, transferring a different property from David Chan Wong, Frankie Chan Wong, Nancy Chan Wong, Ray Travis Akazawa and Elaine Kazuko Akazawa to Cornelio and Hilda Schmidt. Since the Campbell's did not appear on that deed, their names remained on the property along with the Schmidt's. This issue does not appear to have been corrected until June 3, 1999 when the Campbell's transferred the title into a living trust. Lillian Campbell died in 2015 and she was removed as a co-trustee on May 29, 2015. John sold the house to Aaron and Shirly Lam on February 5, 2018.

### **Ninth Homeowners-Aaron and Shirly Lam:**

The Lams only owned the property for a short time, but on April 6, 2018, they took out a permit to remove the swimming pool. As noted earlier, the pool appears to have been in good shape prior to its removal. On July 20, 2018, the Lams sold the property to the current owner.

## *Section VIII*

### *Historical Significance*

The Whalen House is a typical example of a contractor-built house that had a simple Minimalist-Traditional design. The various changes, especially the removal or replacement of windows and other exterior changes have compromised the original design.

There was no association with anyone of note, with no record of any possible architect. The earliest owners were there for a very short time. The first long term ownership (1951-1967) was with Knut and Christine Isakson, who lived their retirement years in the house. Gregory R. Borrow (1973-1979) installed a swimming pool to the rear of the house (removed in 2018) and the other long-term owners were John and Lillian Campbell, who lived there from 1979 until 2018.

The house is a visible reminder of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century development and history of Monrovia. However, it is not associated with anyone of major significance at the national, state or local level. That, coupled with an altered design with no known association with a master architect or builder, it does not meet the criteria for an individual historic listing at any level, nor could it be considered as a contributor to a potential district.

## *Section IX*

### *Conclusion*

The Whalen House is an altered example of an architectural type specimen, specifically that of a Minimalist-Traditional residence. It does not have enough quality of design to be considered for an individual listing, as it is not a perfect architectural specimen, nor is there any compelling historic connection to justify an individual designation.

The house is not distinguished at an individual level, either architecturally or historically. While the design is both representative of the type of practical craftsmanship that was representative in the United States before the Second World War, as well as it having an association with the Post World War II development of the San Gabriel Valley, and particularly with the City of Monrovia, it is not a rare example of its architectural type. There were also no persons of historical note to have lived in the house, rendering it ineligible for an individual listing on historic grounds.

The property fails to meet the various aspects of integrity, Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association, in the following manner:

1. **LOCATION:** The house is located on a portion of Colorado Street that was built after the Second World War. Many of the houses have been altered, mostly with window replacements. The subject property is more altered than most of the surrounding properties. The area does not have enough integrity to be considered a historic district;
2. **DESIGN:** The building is designed and constructed in a style that was typical of its period of significance of its location, but has been altered in several areas as noted in the report;
3. **SETTING:** Its setting remains much as it has been, historically, along Colorado Boulevard, as well as the adjacent residential properties, only a few of which retain full integrity;
4. **MATERIALS:** The building is built of materials commonly used at the time of its construction but has been significantly altered on the exterior, through window change-outs and removals;
5. **WORKMANSHIP:** The workmanship in its construction remains somewhat visible, but the alterations have compromised the overall design;
6. **FEELING:** While the block presents a feeling of its period of significance, the alterations of the subject house and other properties, mostly to the East, have compromised the feeling of time and place;
7. **ASSOCIATION:** The house may be placed in association with the neighborhood but the alterations to it have precluded it from being a contributor to any potential district designation.

The subject resource does not display enough architectural design to be eligible as a contributor to a district at any level, therefore meriting a California Historic Resource Code of 6Z.

*Section X  
Photographs*



*Whalen House, front facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, Satellite view showing pool, 616 E. Foothill Boulevard, Jan 2018 (Google Earth photo)*



*Whalen House, living room bay, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, bay window sill, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front bedroom window, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front porch, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, West facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, removed bedroom windows in West facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018  
(Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, rear facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, added rear patio cover , 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, garage, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, rear yard where pool was removed, 920 W. Colorado Blvd, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, Rear yard where pool was removed, 920 W. Colorado Blvd, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, added room in garage, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, rear window and porch, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, rear porch cover, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, East façade and driveway, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, East facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, living room, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, living room staged on multiple listing, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, c 2017 (MLS photo)*



*Whalen House, living room, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, living room 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, kitchen as staged on multiple listing, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, c 2017 (MLS photo)*



*Whalen House, bathroom, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, bathroom, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, bedroom, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, bedroom as staged on multiple listing, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (MLS photo)*



*Whalen House, bedroom, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*



*Whalen House, front facade, 920 W. Colorado Boulevard, October 2, 2018 (Charles J. Fisher photo)*

## ***Section XI Bibliography***

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- McAlester, Virginia and Lee.....A Field Guide to American Homes © 1990
- Ostrye, Peter C.....Monrovia Centennial Review (1886-1986) © 1986
- Wiley, John L.....History of Monrovia © 1927

### ***Other Sources***

#### **Los Angeles Times Articles:**

- Monrovia : Notes from the New Town.....March 18, 1887, Page 6
- A Change of Name, West Duarte now Monrovia.....May 5, 1887, Page 2
- Busy Life is Snuffed Out : Hiram A Unruh Succumbs on Automobile..December 17, 1916, Page II3
- “Daddy” of Monrovia Talks.....May 18, 1930. Page C8
- Monrovia’s Builder Dies : W. N. Monroe’s Career Ends.....December 27, 1935, Page A1

#### **Reports:**

- National Register Bulletin No. 15.....How to Apply National Register Criteria for Evaluation, 1990

#### **Other Official Records:**

- California Death Index
- Los Angeles County Assessor's Office Maps and Tax Records
- Los Angeles County Tract Maps
- Monrovia City Building Permits
- Monrovia City Directories
- Social Security Death Index
- Sweden Birth and Marriage Records
- United States Census Records from 1850 through 1940
- United States Immigration Records
- World War I Draft Registration

# Appendix

**Building Permit History**  
**920 W. Colorado Boulevard**  
**Monrovia**

- May 15, 1946: Building Permit No. 1079 to construct a 1-story, 20' X 30' 4-room frame and stucco dwelling at 920 W. Colorado Boulevard on the East 50 feet of Lot 5, Tract No. 1275.  
Owner: George H. Whalen  
Architect: None  
Contractor: Marvin F. Black  
Cost: \$3,000.00
- June 7, 1946: Plumbing Permit No. 172 to run an Orangeburg pipe water line from Colorado Boulevard to the new house under construction at 920 W. Colorado Boulevard.  
Owner: George Hi Whalen  
Architect: None  
Contractor: M. Maler - plumber  
Cost: Not shown
- October 31, 1946: Building Permit No. 477 to construct a 1-story, 18' X 20' frame and stucco garage at 920 W. Colorado Boulevard on the East 50 feet of Lot 5, Tract No. 1275.  
Owner: George H. Whalen  
Architect: None  
Contractor: Owner  
Cost: \$500.00
- January 4, 1976: Building Permit No. 1627 to construct a 312 square foot swimming pool at 920 W. Colorado Boulevard.  
Owner: Greg Burrow  
Architect: R. J. Koldziej  
Contractor: Anthony Pools  
Cost: \$3,800.00
- January 4, 1974: Plumbing Permit No. 1628 for plumbing for new swimming pool.  
Owner: Greg Burrow  
Architect: None  
Contractor: Anthony Pools  
Cost: Not Shown

- January 11, 1974: Building Permit No. 1649 to enclose swimming pool with 6' grape stake.  
Owner: Gregory Ryan Burrow  
Architect: None  
Contractor: Owner  
Cost: \$450.00
- February 6, 1974: Electrical Permit No. 1725 to install three outlets, one 1½ motor and one time clock.  
Owner: Gregory Burrow  
Architect: None  
Contractor: Cobine Electrical Company  
Cost: Not Shown
- April 6, 2018: Building Permit No. 108 to demolish swimming pool.  
Owner: Aaron and Shirly Lam  
Architect: Owner  
Contractor: Owner  
Cost: \$10,000.00

State of California The Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
 HRI #  
 Trinomial  
 NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer Charles J. Fisher Date Oct 2, 2018 Listings

Page 1 of 2 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Whalen House

P1. Other Identifier: \_\_\_\_\_

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County Los Angeles and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad N34°08.7462', W118°01.1762' Date 10-02-2018 T   ; R   ;  of  of Sec   ;    S.B.B.M.

c. Address 920 W. Colorado Boulevard City Monrovia Zip 91016

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone   ,    mE/    mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate) APN 8506-025-006

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

The Whalen House is a simple 1-story Post World War II Minimal Traditional style house built in a rectangular pattern with a low side-gabled composition roof. The house is clad in textured stucco. A square bay with a multi-light set of steel casement windows is to the left of the front entry and a wide aluminum slider flanked by wood shutters is to the right. Three wood double hung windows are in the East façade and two similar sized windows have been removed on the West façade. The central front entry is at grade and topped by a simple metal awning-type roof. The rear façade features a small porch to the right with a step up entry, topped with a braced wooden roof. An aluminum slider window is to the left of the entry and a covered patio is to the left of that. A two-car garage is set to the left rear of the house. The property is located on the South side of Colorado Boulevard in a neighborhood that was mostly developed with Minimal Traditional Duplexes during the late 1940's and early 1950s, with a small amount of earlier development and a few apartments from the early 1960s.



P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) \_\_\_\_\_

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) front façade  
10-02-2018

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:  Historic  Prehistoric

Both  
 Built 1946, Building Permit No. 1079

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Raul Ramirez  
10932 La Serna Drive  
Whittier, CA 90604-2329  
 \*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Charles J. Fisher  
140 S. Avenue 57

Highland Park, CA 90042

\*P9. Date Recorded: 10-11-2018

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

NONE

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

State of California The Resources Agency Primary #  
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HR#  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Whalen House \*NRHP Status Code 6Z  
 Page 2 of 2

B1. Historic Name: Whalen House  
 B2. Common Name: NONE  
 B3. Original Use: Single Family Residence B4. Present Use: Single Family Residence  
 \*B5. Architectural Style: Minimal Traditional

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)  
 Original construction of house and garage in 1946. A swimming pool was added in 1974 but removed in 2018. No permits were found for other work, such as a re-stucco job, the replacement of at least two windows and the removal of two more.

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*B8. Related Features: Deck and patio area to rear of house. Garage built in 1946 at East-center of lot.

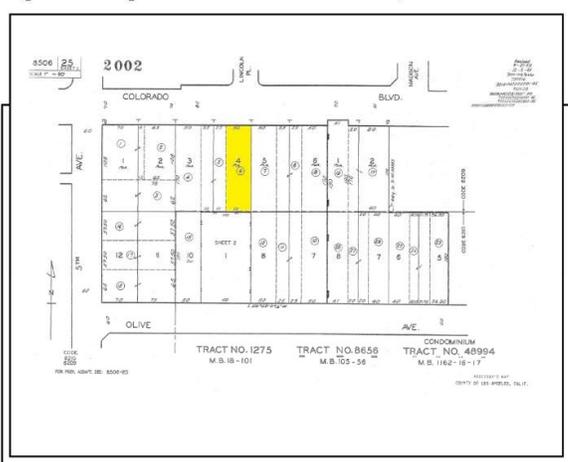
B9a. Architect: None b. Builder: Marvin F. Black

\*B10. Significance: Theme Residential Development 1941-1967 Area City of Monrovia

Period of Significance 1946-1960 Property Type SFR Applicable Criteria Architecture  
 (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The subject house was constructed on the East 50 feet of Lot 4, Tract No. 1275, in 1946 by contractor Marvin F Black for George H. Whalen and his wife, Paralee, recently coming to Monrovia from Summerville, New Jersey. Whalen was a native of Iberia, Missouri, born on April 27, 1886. Upon purchase of the land, he immediately took out a permit to build a house on the lot. Being a retired carpenter, he built the garage, himself. Whalen passed away on August 28, 1950, at the age of 64. On February 19, 1948, they sold the house to Floy E. and Madaline M. Leach, who deeded it to Swedish immigrants Knut L. and Christine Isakson on May 10, 1951. Knut passed away on October 24, 1957 and Christine remained there until her death on December 25, 1967. It was then sold to fellow Swede, Carl Hugo Frintzer, a machinist, who sold it to Gregory Ryan Burrow on June 25, 1973. Burrow installed a swimming pool in 1974 and, after a divorce, sold the house to Muriel J. Burian on September 22, 1975. She deeded it to John R. and Lillian D. Campbell on August 23, 1979. John Campbell, by then a widower, sold the house to Aaron and Shirley Lam on February 5, 2018. The Lams had the swimming pool removed shortly after buying the property and then sold it to Raul Ramirez on July 20, 2018. A number of changes were made to the exterior of the house, including the replacement of windows, the removal of others and a re-stucco to a rough cover, rendering it ineligible for any historic designation either individually or at a district level on architectural grounds. There are no records of significant individuals associated with the house. There is no evidence of any direct association with this property and the lives of any persons important to the history of Monrovia, the San Gabriel Valley, California, or the United States.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \*B12. References:  
 B13. Remarks:  
 \*B14. Evaluator: Charles J. Fisher  
 \*Date of Evaluation: Dec. 27, 2018



(This space reserved for official comments.)