



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

**APPLICATION:** CofA2020-0004

**AGENDA ITEM:** AR-2

**PREPARED BY:** Vincent Gillespie  
Planning Technician

**MEETING DATE:** July 29, 2020

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**TITLE:** Certificate of Appropriateness CofA2020-0004; HL-1/MA-1  
231 North Primrose Avenue

**APPLICANT:** Kent Cornwall, Cornwall Construction  
234 North El Molino Avenue Suite 201  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**REQUEST:** A Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing detached garage and swimming pool with a new three-car garage.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** Categorical Exemption (Class 31)

**BACKGROUND:** The City Council designated the Isaac Colborn house as Historic Landmark No. 1 on June 4, 1996, along with Mills Act Contract No. 1. The designation was based on the finding that the house is representative of a notable architect (Criterion 2) and that it embodies one or more distinctive characteristics of style, type, period, design, materials, detail, and craftsmanship (Criterion 4).

The Isaac Colborn house is located at 231 North Primrose Avenue, and it represents one of the most significant and larger of the homes designed by Frank O. Eager. Eager was a local architect in the Craftsman era. The house was constructed in 1914 for Isaac Colborn and his wife Estelle who had come from Indiana to retire. The home's architectural style features a unique blend of Craftsman aesthetics with Mediterranean characteristics. In addition to the three-story residence, the property is developed with a garage built contemporary with the house and a pool that was added in 1960.

On March 18, 2020, Kent Cornwall (architect) submitted an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace an existing detached two-car garage and swimming pool currently located in the rear of the property with a new three-car garage. Upon review of the Department of Parks Recreation (DPR 523A) record form that was approved with the landmark designation, staff noticed that the existing garage proposed for demolition was listed as a "related feature" under DPR Form Section B8. As the Commission is aware, this section is commonly used to document other minor unique features on a property that warrant special preservation protection. "Related features" generally include items such as hitching posts, barns, carriage houses, and signs. It could also include a garage that is found to be a prominent feature of the property.

Upon a review of early landmark applications, when Monrovia's Historic Preservation Program was in its infancy, staff found that most DPR Forms listed *all* other structures on the property as "related features" regardless of their historic value as contributing. Listing the existing two-

car garage as a “related feature” on the property’s DPR Form followed that direction which is consistent with the City’s early landmark documentation practice and policies. Staff does not believe that the structure is a contributing feature and therefore would likely not be included on the DPR if the property was evaluated in the present. The Staff Report will document why the existing garage would not qualify as a “related feature” based on the current implementation of Monrovia’s Historic Preservation program as part of the findings for the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**ANALYSIS:** Pursuant to Monrovia Municipal Code (MMC) Section 17.40.090(A), no alteration may be conducted at a Historic Landmark without first obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

### The Existing Two-car Garage

The current property owners purchased the Isaac Colborn property in 2015. They are very happy with the beautiful home but when they acquired the property the existing garage was in a deteriorated state and no longer safe to use for vehicle storage. The foundation is cracked in several areas and portions of the exterior walls are missing or falling apart.

While Sanborn maps from 1927 suggest that this garage was likely built around the same time as the house, based on a review of early DPR Forms for other historic landmark applications from the late 1990s, staff found that the City’s standard practice was to routinely include *all* structures on the property built during the same era as the primary resource on the DPR Form as “related features.” This did not reflect an evaluation of historic value as much as to identify *all* structures and features on the property—essentially an inventory. The City has refined its practices of documentation throughout the past 25 years based on accepted historic preservation protocol. The DPR no longer identifies structures as related features unless they are a prominent or significant feature of the property that should be preserved and protected.

Staff evaluated of the architectural style, level of craftsmanship, and quality of materials used on the subject residence and garage and found that there were not many similarities between the two. The house features mix of Craftsman aesthetics with Mediterranean characteristics as shown in Figure 2 and the garage has a simple Craftsman design. Although the garage was improved with complementary materials, such as painted dark green wood shingles and



Figure 1. View of the Isaac Colborn residence from Primrose Avenue.



Figure 2. View of the south and east elevations of the existing garage.



Figure 3. View of existing garage (North and East Elevation).

vertical siding, it does not have the same level of craftsmanship or high quality of materials found on the main house. The garage also appears to have been altered at some point. As illustrated in Figure 3, a tacked-on roof covering connects the garage to the property line wall. For these reasons, staff's determination is that the demolition of the existing garage will not alter the historic significance of the property.

### **New Three-Car Garage**

The applicant is proposing the demolition of the existing two-car garage to make way for the construction of a new three-car garage. The proposed garage does not replicate the design of the existing garage; its architectural style is harmonious with the main house. The new garage would total 1,033 square feet in size and be located the northeast corner of the property. The garage's placement will reduce the amount of driveway area on the lot and improve the functionality of the back yard for the property owners' enjoyment. The floor plan accommodates the storage of three vehicles, a workshop area, and an attached bathroom. Although the plan references a future pool and remodeled patio, these improvements are anticipated at a later date.

The new garage will complement the main house in architectural style, form, colors, and materials to the extent feasible and practical. The garage will incorporate a cross gable roof structure that will be clad in modern "S" clay tile. The walls will be clad in a mix of stucco and shingle siding; the stucco will be painted tan and the shingles will be painted dark green to match the house. The homeowners would like to use a modern composite shingle material instead of traditional wood shingles for cost and maintenance purposes. Staff believes this is a reasonable request given that the improvements would be on a detached accessory and not the primary dwelling.

The new garage will also feature craftsman wood detailing found on the main house including two-foot deep eave overhangs, outlooker beams, single-hung and fixed windows, and craftsman style doors. The west side of the structure (the elevation facing the interior of the property towards the back yard) includes two large columns that will be supported with a round river rock veneer. Staff believes the use of veneer in this location is appropriate, as it will likely not be visible from the public right-of-way.

### ***Certificate of Appropriateness Findings***

Pursuant to MMC Section 17.40.090(D), the HPC may issue a Certificate of Appropriateness if it is determined that certain findings can be made regarding the proposed alterations. Based on staff's analysis of these alterations, the HPC can approve them based on the following findings:

- *It will not adversely affect any significant historical, cultural, architectural or aesthetic feature of the concerned property or of the Historic District in which it is located;*

The proposed alteration will not affect significant features of the property because the proposed alterations involve the demolition of an existing garage that is in disrepair and no longer safe for vehicle storage. Although the garage was improved with complementary materials, such as painted dark green wood shingles and vertical siding, it does not have the same level of craftsmanship or high quality of materials found on the main house. The new garage will be detached from the primary landmarked residence, and it will complement the home in architectural style, form, colors, and

materials to the extent feasible and practical. The incorporation of modern materials on the new garage will aid in distinguishing the new construction from the historical home.

- *The proposed change is consistent with or not incompatible with the architectural period of the building;*

The proposed garage will match the mix of Craftsman and Mediterranean architectural style of the main house through the use of design features, colors, and materials. The new garage will remain single story to match the existing garage, and will remain detached from the main house. The new garage will feature a cross gable roof structure with clay “S” tiles. The exterior will include stucco to match the main house in texture and color. Modern composite shingle siding is proposed, and cut granite and plaster columns. The incorporation of modern materials on the new garage will aid in distinguishing the new construction from the historical home

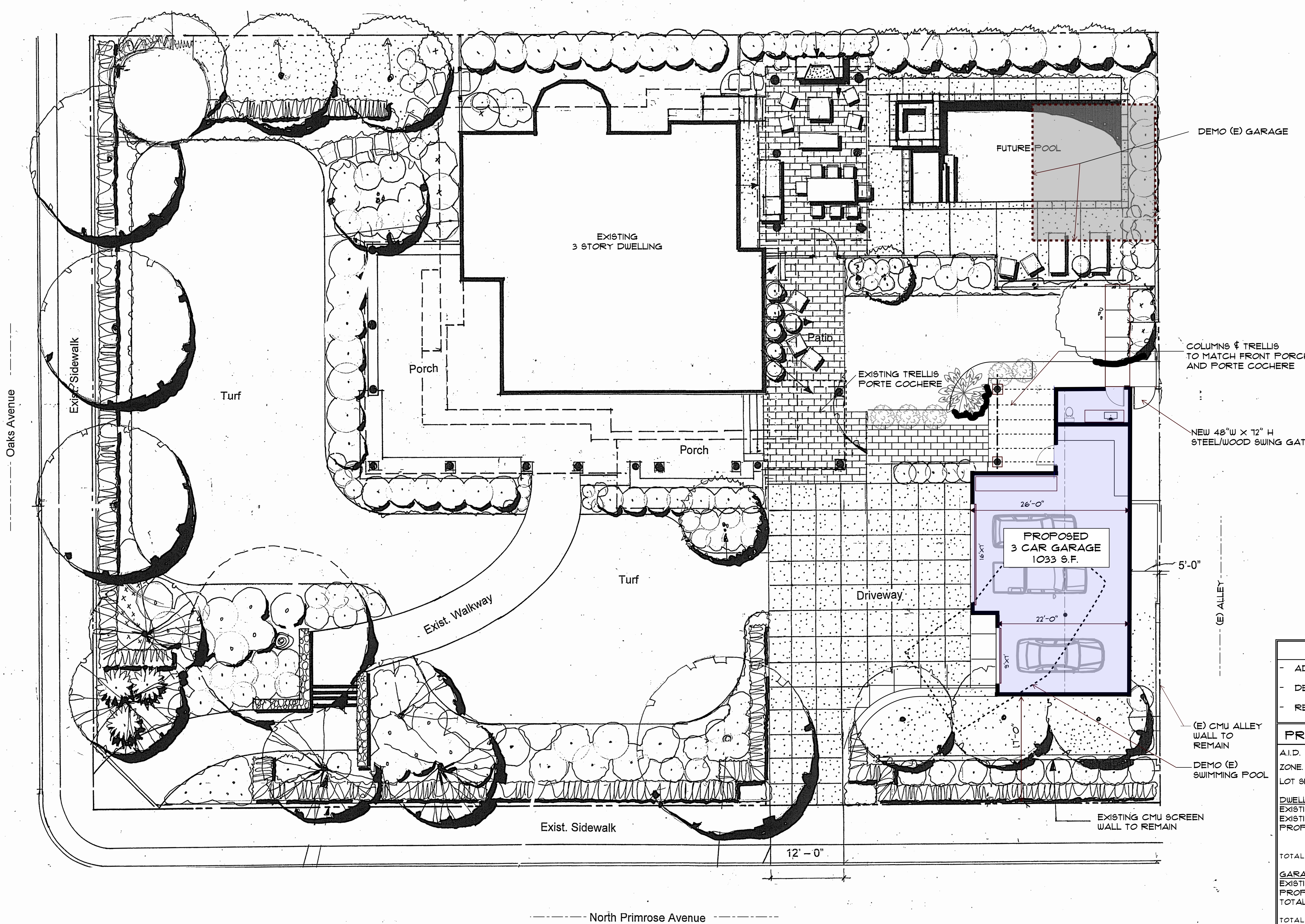
- *The scale, massing, proportions, materials, colors, textures, fenestration, decorative features and details proposed are consistent with the period and/or compatible with adjacent structures;*

The scale, massing, and proportions of the garage are complementary to the home because the new garage will remain single story, and will not be taller than the existing garage. The new garage’s placement will reduce the amount of driveway area on the lot and improve the functionality of the back yard for the property owners’ enjoyment. The new garage will also feature craftsman architectural details found on the main house including two-foot deep eave overhangs, outlooker beams, single-hung and fixed windows, and craftsman style doors. The colors of the exterior materials will match the main house with the stucco painted tan and the shingles painted dark green to match the house.

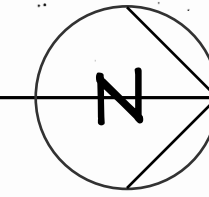
**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff has determined that the proposed project meets the findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness and recommends approval. If the Historic Preservation Commission concurs then, the appropriate action would be a motion to:

**Approve Certificate of Appropriateness CofA2020-0004**





**PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN**  
1/8" = 1'-0"



PROJECT SCOPE	
-	ADD 1033 S.F. GARAGE
-	DEMO (E) 400 S.F. GARAGE
-	REMOVE (E) SWIMMING POOL
PROJECT INFORMATION	
A.I.D.	8519-016-032
ZONE	RL
LOT SIZE (136 X 110)	23,120 S.F.
DWELLING	
EXISTING GROSS AREA	4,289 S.F.
EXISTING AREA DEMO	0 S.F.
PROPOSED NEW AREA	0 S.F.
	0% INCREASE
TOTAL ALLOWED MAX. SIZE... 5,716 S.F.	
GARAGE/ ACCESSORY	
EXISTING GARAGE (DEMO)	400 S.F.
PROPOSED NEW GARAGE	1033 S.F.
TOTAL ACCESSORY	1033 S.F.
TOTAL ALLOWED ACCESSORY, 2000 S.F.	
HEIGHT	
HEIGHT OF DWELLING	(E)
HEIGHT OF NEW GARAGE	14'
CONSTRUCTION	TYPE VB
GARAGE OCCUPANCY	U

drawn: \_\_\_\_\_ checked: \_\_\_\_\_  
revisions

agency approval

consultant

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architecture  
interiors  
kent n. cornwall  
architect c.i.a.  
626.793.5782

**Cornwall**  
**A**ssociates  
234 n. el molino ave., pasadena, ca. 91101

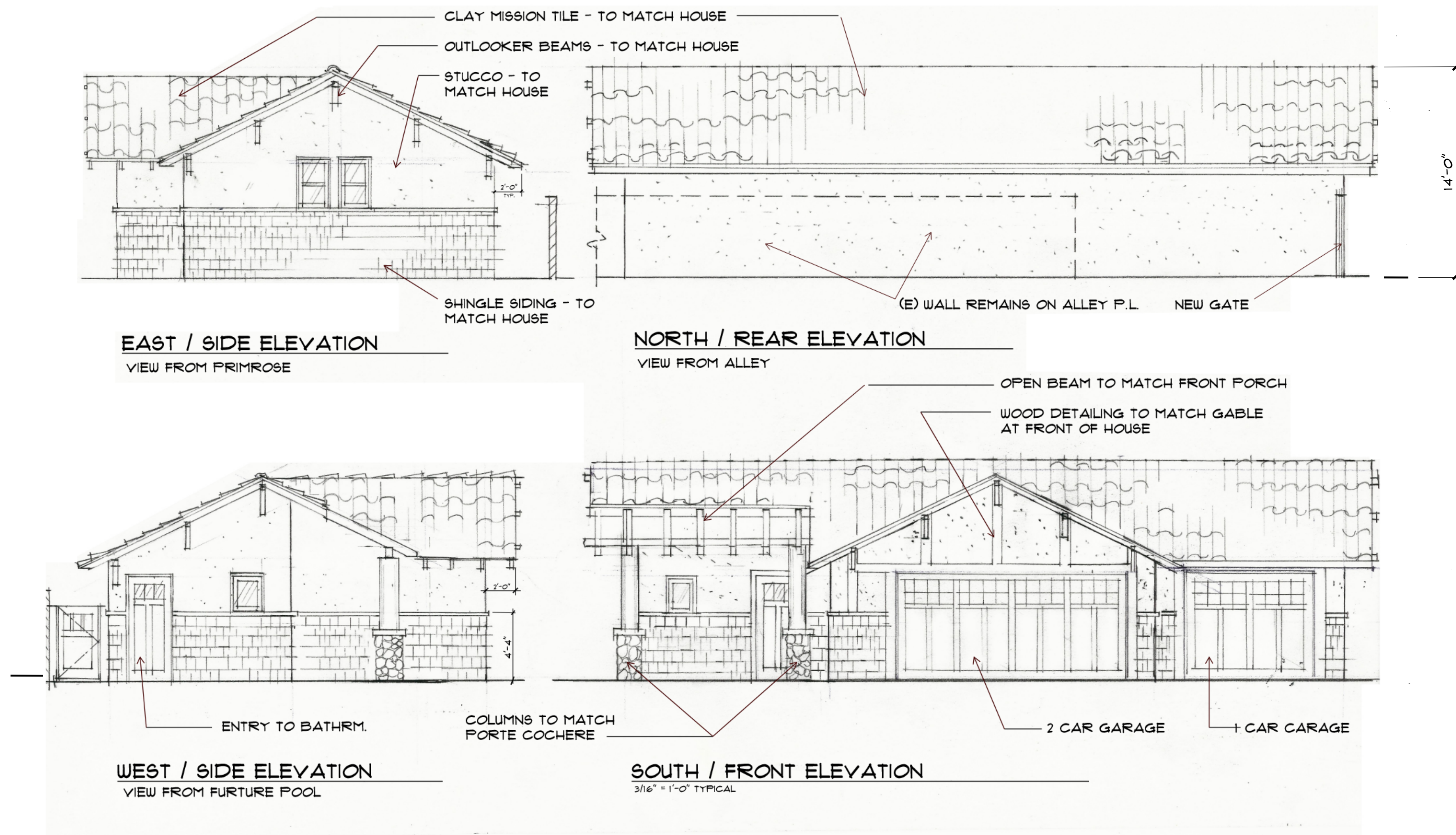
**HENDRY RESIDENCE**  
231 N. PRIMROSE AVE.  
MONROVIA, CA  
NEW GARAGE  
sheet title

sheet number  
**A0.1**

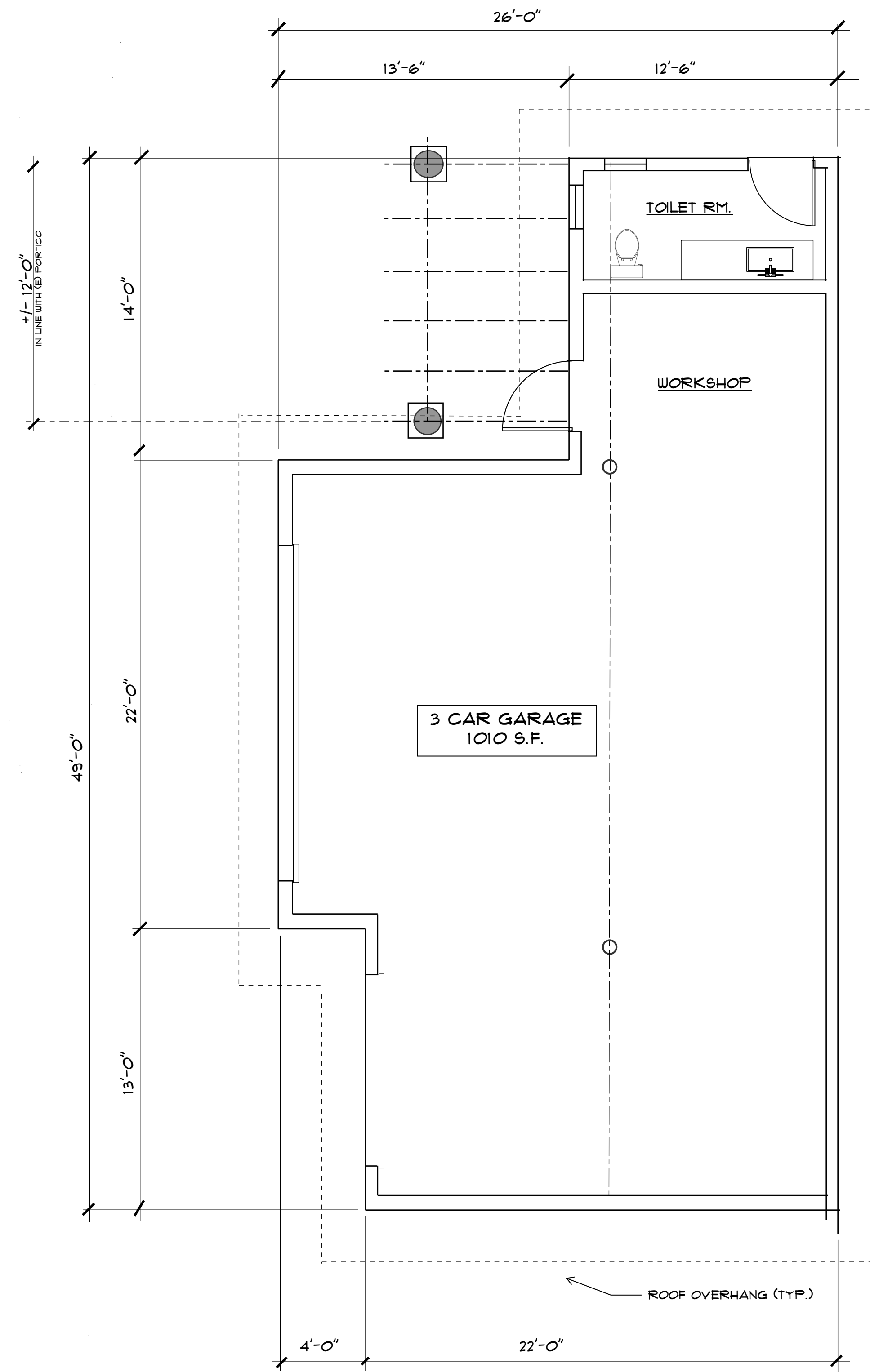
28 MAR 20

SITE PLAN + NOTES





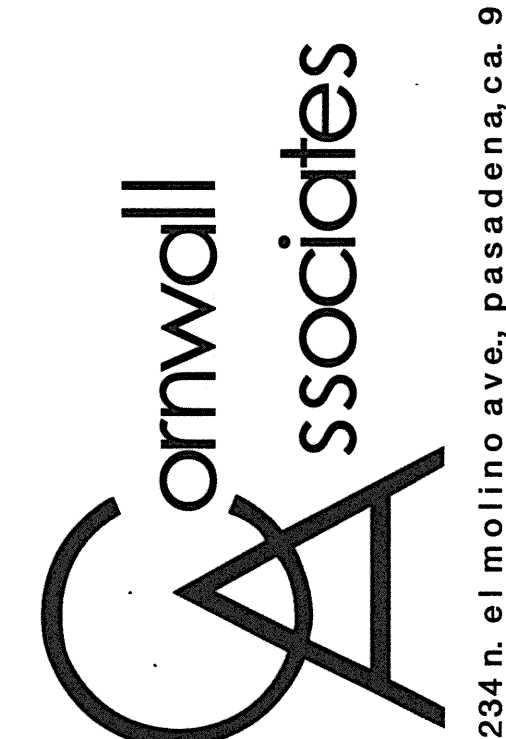
**ELEVATIONS**  
3/16" = 1'-0"



**FLOOR PLAN**  
1/4" = 1'-0"

down	checked	revisions
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architecture  
interiors  
kent n. cornwall  
architect a.i.a.  
626.793.5782



HENDRY RESIDENCE 231 N. PRIMROSE AVE. MONROVIA, CA NEW GARAGE		FLOOR PLAN + ELEVATIONS sheet title
sheet number <b>A1.1</b>		28 mar 20

284 n. el molino ave, pasadena, ca. 91101

agency approval

consultant



# Application

State of California - The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

## PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Resource Name or #: ISAAC COLBORN HOUSE

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

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted  
 b. USGS 7.5' Quad Mt. Wilson Date 1972 T 1N, R 11W, SW 1/4 of XX of Sec 23, San Bern Co.,  
 c. Address 231 N Primrose Avenue City Monrovia Zip 91016  
 d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear feature) Zone \_\_\_\_\_ mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g. parcel #, legal description, directions to resource, elevation, additional UTM's, etc. as appropriate)  
Northwest corner of Oaks Avenue.

A.P.N.'s: 8519-016-013 and 8519-016-028

Lots 13, 14, and the east 19 feet of Lot 15, C. O. Monroe Tract

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

Three story single family house with semi-finished basement (4918 s.f. + 1600s.f.). Four bedrooms, two bathrooms, maid's quarters, breakfast nook, library upstairs. Late Craftsman style with several Mediterranean characteristics: clay tile roof, and stucco siding. Deep porches (one pergola removed on east side). Extensive quarter-sawn oak on first floor and cherry on second floor. Lavatory in northeast bedroom. Three sleeping porches upstairs. Inglenook. Swimming pool added in 1960. Extensive exotic trees. Stained glass windows on staircase landing; colored, leaded glass windows in sitting room and dining room. Substantial remnants of original solar water heating system by Day & Night Company of Monrovia.

\*P3b. Resources 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, etc.)  
from south east

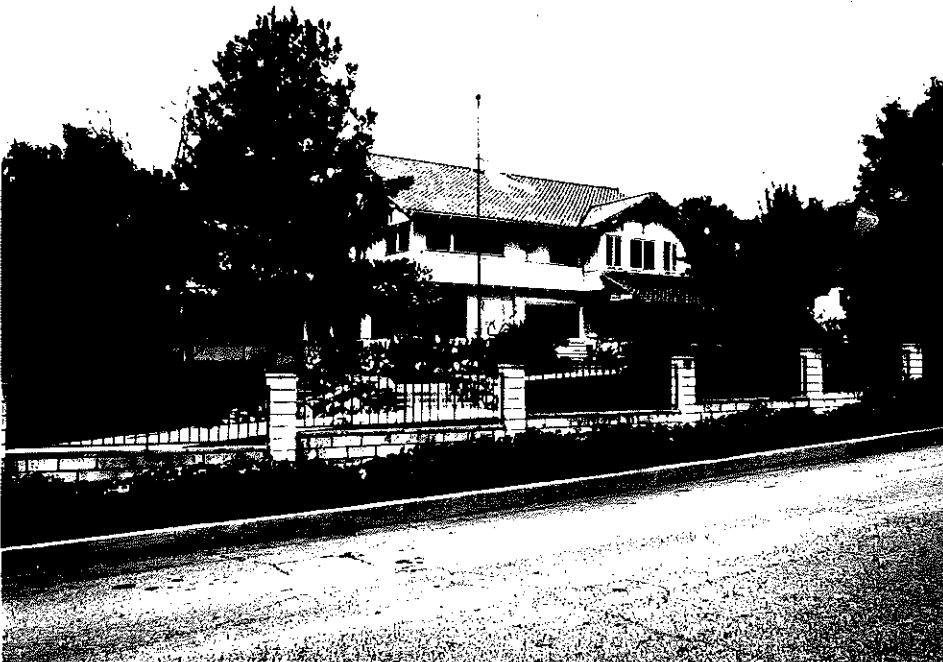
\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:  
 Prehistoric  Historic  Both  
1914 (from LACo Tax Roles)

\*P7. Owner and Address:  
Charles H. Pomeroy, IV  
231 N. Primrose Ave.  
Monrovia CA 91016

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, address)  
owner

\*P9. Date Recorded: February 1, 1996

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
 \_\_\_\_\_



\*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) \_\_\_\_\_

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

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\*NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

\*Resource Name or #: ISAAC COLBORN HOUSE  
81. Historic Name: ISAAC COLBORN HOUSE  
82. Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
83. Original Use: Single Family Residence 84. Present Use: Single Family Residence  
85. Architectural Style: Craftsman / Mediterranean  
86. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations.)  
1914 - construction; 1960 swimming pool; 1971 - aluminum siding

\*87. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*88. Related Features:  
2-car garage at the northwest corner of the property, contemporary with house.

89a. Architect: Frank O. Eager b. Builder: \_\_\_\_\_

\*810. Significance: Theme Architecture Area Criteria 1; 2; 4  
Period of Significance 1910-1920 Property Type \_\_\_\_\_ Applicable Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Represents one of the most significant and large homes designed by Frank O. Eager, premier local Monrovia architect in the craftsman era. An extremely unusual mixture of Craftsman aesthetics with Mediterranean characteristics. Built for Indiana lumber businessman Isaac R. Colborn and his wife Estelle (Foe) Colborn, pioneer in the movement which resulted in the chain yard system. Contains one of the earliest examples of the solar water heating system developed by Monrovia-based Day & Night Company.

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

\*812. References:  
City of Monrovia Building Permits; Los Angeles County Tax Assessor records; Monrovia's Heritage Volume II, T. M. Hotchkiss, Monrovia Historical Society, 1982.

813. Remarks:

\*814. Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

(This space reserved for official comments.)

