Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)
Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden
Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden
Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Application


Coalition to Save the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden
Barry Building Update
by Marcello Rivola

Despite their designation as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs), the Barry Building (Milton Cmghe, 1951) and Coral Tree Median in Brentwood remain targeted for demolition and alteration.

The final environmental impact report (EIR) for the Green Hollow Square project calls for the demolition of the Barry Building (HCM #897) at 11733 San Vicente Boulevard. It also specifies the removal of some coral trees from the Coral Tree Median (HCM #148) in front of the project site to create a crossing midway through the block.

The Conservancy and our Modern Committee strongly believe that the Barry Building can and should be adaptively reused as part of the project. We also object to the unnecessary removal of the coral trees, which would compromise the uninterrupted, linear nature of the median.

In the coming weeks, the City Planning Commission and the Planning and Land Use Management Committee will each vote on a specific recommendation before the final EIR goes to the full City Council for certification. After the EIR is certified, very little, if anything, can be done to change the project.

It is vital that concerned residents contact Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, in whose district the project is located. He must hear from residents that reusing the Barry Building is the only acceptable alternative, and that the Coral Tree Median deserves preservation as a historic landscape. For details, visit laconservancy.org/issues.

UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden for Sale with No Protection
by Adrian Scott Fine

Since we first reported on this issue in the March/April 2012 Conservancy News, the UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden in Bel-Air has come closer to destruction, likely in the near future. UCLA placed the garden on the market in April 2012, for a minimum bid of $5.7 million and with no preservation protections in place. Bids on the garden and adjacent residence are due May 22, making it critical that concerned citizens contact UCLA as soon as possible to urge them to halt the sale and reject bids.

Historic preservation takes both reactive and proactive efforts. Many owners take great pains to make sure their historic properties survive for future generations. Yet the plight of the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden illustrates that even the best intentions—including those planned years price—can fail without sufficient safeguards.

Constructed between 1959 and 1961, the 1.5-acre hillside garden is among the largest and most significant private residential Japanese-style gardens built in the U.S. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon G. Guiberson commissioned it after traveling to Japan; they requested a garden inspired by those of Kyoto. It is associated with two of the most prominent designers of Japanese gardens, Nagao Sakurai and Koichi Kawamura. As the first major Japanese garden built in Southern California following World War II, it has come to symbolize for many the renewed appreciation for Japanese culture and early efforts to heal relations after years of anti-Japanese sentiment.

Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Application

Please see UCLA GARDEN on page 6
UCLA Broke Its Promise!

STOP

The Sale of
The Hannah Carter Japanese Garden!
UCLA sells landmark Japanese garden for $12.5 million

UCLA and Hannah Carter heirs settle suit over Japanese garden in Bel-Air

Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden
Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Application
HCM Criteria (Section 22.171.7):

Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type specimen, inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction.
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A GARDEN THAT REMINDS ONE OF KYOTO

The Japanese Garden

OF MR. & MRS. GORDON G. GUIBERSON
AT BEL-AIR, CALIFORNIA
1) Nagao Sakurai
(Original Garden Design)

2) B. Koichi Kawana
(Post-1969 Reconstruction)
Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden
Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM) Application
Teahouse and Shrine Setting for Program

In Bel-Air behind a big gate built in Kyoto the Japanese strolling garden of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon G. Guiberson unfolds hillward, along acres of footpaths, through pines and flowering trees, by waterfalls, a teahouse and a shrine of handmade timber which took 1,200 man-hours to build.

It is in this setting that guests of the Japan America Society will sip tea Sunday and hear a program of Haiku, Japanese court poetry.

The event is the society’s scholarship tea and final program of the season with proceeds dedicated to assisting Japanese students in the Los Angeles area, according to Katsuma Mukaeda, executive secretary.

The poetry readings will be by Dr. Earl Miner, author and Fulbright lecturer at Kyoto and Osaka Universities in 1960-61.


Others are Frank L. Pelissier, Drs. and Mmes. H. James Hara, Yoriyuki Kikuchi, Ralph P. Merritt, Franklin D. Murphy, Rufus B. von KleinSmid and Dr. H. Carroll Parish and the Marquis and Marchioness Hironobu Kacho.

Japan Garden Judged Best at Flower Show

A spectacular Japanese garden—80 ft. long and 60 ft. wide—which features Buddhist temple ships here in pieces from Kyoto, Japan, was judged the best exhibit at the World Flower and Garden Show at the Pan-Pacific.

The garden created by Kazuo Nakamura of Kyoto is one of the largest ever prepared for exhibit anywhere.

Another exhibit at this year’s flower and garden show which continues through March 3, is The Times Home Magazine aluminum pavilion.

Available at The Times display are copies of the recently published Home Magazine Gardening—a 148-page book on year-round gardening in Southern California.
BEL-AIR—The regents of the University of California have acquired the Guiberson Garden here, considered one of the foremost Japanese gardens in the United States.

The regents purchased the garden from Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Guiberson with funds previously donated by Edward W. Carter of this community, chairman of the Board of Regents.

Mrs. Guiberson, who now resides in Westwood with her retired oilman husband, said he got the idea for the garden while touring Japan. It was completed in 1963 from plans drawn by a Japanese architect who brought a work crew from Japan.

The house an acre lot, descents the back lawn of to Bellagio Road or so below, unusual Japanese

The house belonged to Gordon Guiberson, a wealth

UCLA Purchases Japanese Gardens

a tea house, a hokora shrine, stone water basins and natural and carved stoned imported from Japan.

UCLA will use it in connection with instruction in several departments, including architecture, art, botany and theater arts.

Carter has also advised UCLA that he intends to make a gift of his home at 626 Siena Way, adjacent to the garden, for use as a university residence no later than one year after his death.

"We are delighted that the Guiberson Garden has been added to the resources of the university," said Chancellor Franklin D. Murphy. "and we are deeply grateful to Regent Carter for his continuing generosity to his alma mater."

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phory said the worth the cost if se it provides al felicity" for ways bothered that Harvard universities had gardens . . . had absolutely t published by the garden is adjunct to the ogroms of sev-departments.

d details gift of
Welcome to the garden

We are pleased to welcome you to the UCLA Japanese Gardens, a gift of rare beauty and authenticity.

Created by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Guiberson in memory of his mother, Mrs. Ethel L. Guiberson of Beverly Hills, this lovely sanctuary was donated to UCLA in 1965 by Mr. Edward W. Carter, then Chairman of The Regents of the University of California. It is used by the University as an adjunct to the teaching programs of several UCLA departments, including Biology, Art, Architecture and Theater Arts. Equally important, however, we look upon the garden as something to be treasured for its unique beauty and validity.

The Japanese Garden is an art form with which Americans have great affinity—perhaps because of the pace at which we live, perhaps because it was “discovered” by so many of us at the end of the Second World War when, sick of violence and in search of stable values, we found in Japan, especially around Kyoto, the ultimate in serenity and permanence. The Japanese Garden, ancient in purpose, pattern and symbolism, brings peace to both eye and spirit.

In creating the UCLA Japanese Gardens, Mr. and Mrs. Guiberson travelled many thousands of miles and devoted many long months to planning in order to achieve authenticity in keeping with fourteen centuries of Japanese tradition. They personally selected many of the stones, basins, bridges and other artifacts and brought landscape architects and artisans from Japan to assure themselves that the garden would not displease so ancient a culture through breach of knowledge or skill.

We are indeed grateful to the Guibersons for this product of their devotion and to Mr. Carter for so generously making it available to all of us.

Charles E. Young
Chancellor
PRINCIPAL FEATURES WITHIN THE GARDEN

Main Gate and Fence

In Japan, the main gate is an important structure long used as an entrance to the residences and gardens of those who were in the aristocracy or belonged to the upper social and business strata. The main gate of the UCLA Japanese Gardens is similar to that of the famous Ichida estate, located in the Nanzen-ji district of Kyoto. It was ordered from Mr. Yoichiro Yoshiharo in Kyoto. After completion in Japan, it was dismantled for shipping to America. It was reassembled in the garden by Mr. Kazuo Nakamura, who had supervised its construction. The wood is tongue-and-groove construction with pegs in lieu of nails. Mr. Benny Shinto of Los Angeles laid and cemented the gate roof tiles, a job that few artisans in the United States know how to do.

The black rock at the base of the entry walls is Japanese black slate, found only in the mountains near Nara.

The bamboo fence next to the main gate is called Katsura-type in that it was copied from fences located on the grounds of the famous Katsura Detached Palace in Kyoto. The palace and garden were built in 1590 for Prince Hachijo by the Regent Hideyoshi Toyotomi, who commissioned a Zen tea master, Enshu Kobori, for the task. The Katsura garden is considered to be the highest achievement in Japanese landscape art and is maintained under the protection of the Imperial Household Ministry.

It is to be noted that the Kyoto region is famous for bamboo of the finest quality; Thomas Edison used Kyoto bamboo for the filament in his electric light bulbs before the adaptation of tungsten.
The garden house is located away from the center of the Garden, shielded by black bamboos and pines. Deliberately inconspicuous, its purity is intended as a sanctuary from the complex world. The garden house may also be used for the tea ceremony or cha-no-yu. A tea ceremony is limited to five people, hence the size of the house. The stone water basins, or tsukubai, are for ritual washing before entering. A dry streambed of white stones runs beneath the house. At its source behind the house is a symbolic arrangement of 16 carefully chosen large stones in an area especially conducive to intense meditation.

Behind the garden house is the Hawaiian garden. It contains five species of tree ferns and 25 other fern varieties, as well as seven classes of palms. Various tropical vines and epiphytes, including aroids, orchids, and bromeliads are also present. The pool is used as a nursery for baby koi.

Like the main gate, the tokona or family shrine is made of Cryptomeria wood and the roof is Cryptomeria bark. The materials are deliberately left unpainted to mellow with age. The antique hand-carved Buddha inside the shrine is decorated with gold leaf. The two stone lions were carved in China during the 18th century.

The outdoor sunken bath might be found at a Japanese mountain resort. Being a volcanic country, Japan has many hot springs. Here appropriate volcanic rocks placed above the bath and the pebbled walk below suggests a spring-fed stream. The camellias near the bathhouse bloom in winter and spring.

The moon-viewing deck is authentic except for the modern furniture. The part of the Garden near the main entrance is more exuberant than the relatively controlled areas to the right. The general plan of the Garden is supposed to embody the cycle from wild youth to sedate maturity in a sequence arranged in a counterclockwise order.

Fine bonsai are displayed in the former barbeque area, an amusing cultural hybrid showing Japanese craftsmen’s adaptability to California ideas. Here a modern serving counter is decorated with old chrysanthemum and camellia patterns. The pavement is pebbled in a pattern representing the legend of the leaf, the butterfly, and the family.

Los Angeles Conservancy

The main gate is in the style of the famous Ichida estate in Kyoto. The wood is Cryptomeria, a Japanese relative of the redwood, the proper material for sacred structures. The black slate was quarried in the mountains near Nara. The bamboo fence is a classic type first used in the 17th century.

The first bridge inside the gate is a natural stone from Kyoto. On the right side of the first flight of steps is a stone carved more than 1,000 years ago showing the Buddha seated in 16 different positions of worship; it signifies immortality.

A focal point of the garden is the pool with colorful for swimming among water-lilies. Some of these koi are as old as the garden itself. Koi can live for more than 200 years. Near the pool are Japanese maples with red and purple foliage.

Each of the pines by the pool has a special name and role. The view-perfecting pine overhangs the smooth pebble beach. By the round stepping stones is the stretching pine. Below and to the right of the waterfall is the cascadescreening tree. Above and to the left of the waterfall is the principal tree or upright spirit.

At the base of the view-perfecting pine is the rugged dedication stone or naohai oshi, the spiritual center of the garden. The big flat stone by the smooth pebble beach is the thinking stone. In the pool are the crane and tortoise islands.

The two large rectangular stepping stones, like those at the Heian Shrine in Kyoto, are called devil-casting stones. If you take this zig-zag path across the pool, a pursuing devil may fall into the water and drown. The round stepping stones are old millstones. The noisy bamboo device, perpetually filling with water and spilling over, is a wild boar chaser.

The etupa, a five-tiered pagoda, stands above white stones representing Buddha’s bones. There are five elements—sky, wind, fire, water, and earth; and five cardinal virtues—humanity, justice, politeness, wisdom, and fidelity. Above the etupa stands a deciduous spring-flowering Chinese magnolia.

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January 24, 2012

Chancellor Gene Block
University of California, Los Angeles
Box 951405, 2147 Murphy Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1405

Re: Sale of UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Gardens

Dear Chancellor Block:

I am writing you on behalf of many of my constituents, neighborhood groups, and the UCLA community to express my strong opposition to the proposed sale of the UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Gardens.

The sale of these gardens would deprive the UCLA campus and our community of a unique educational resource. This two-acre garden, located in Bel Air, is considered to be one of the most notable Japanese gardens in the United States. I am disheartened to hear that, besides the cultural artifacts donated to the Fowler Museum; no efforts are being made to preserve the garden property as a whole.

I am very concerned that if the Japanese Gardens are sold, they will be sold to a developer who has no intention to preserve it. Please be advised that I do not support the sale of this cultural resource and, should it be sold, I will oppose any effort to develop the property or change its use to anything other than the beautiful cultural landmark it is today.

It is my understanding that the revenue generated from the sale of the gardens is intended to fund professorships and endowments. I have also heard that accessibility and recurring landscaping and maintenance costs were considered when decisions regarding selling these historic gardens were made. Of course, I and the broader
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