



COALITION TO SAVE THE HANNAH CARTER JAPANESE GARDEN

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AMERICAN PUBLIC GARDENS
ASSOCIATION

April 16, 2012

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Dear Regent,

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS –
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
CHAPTER

On behalf of the Coalition to Save the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden – a group of local, state, and national organizations – we are writing to ask UCLA to halt the sale and reject any bids for the purchase of this nationally significant garden. We request this item be placed on the agenda for discussion and action at the May 15-17 Board of Regents' meeting.

BEL AIR GARDEN CLUB

THE CALIFORNIA GARDEN
AND LANDSCAPE HISTORY
SOCIETY

UCLA's acquisition of the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden in 1964 was made possible through a generous gift by Mr. Edward Carter, an alumnus and former chair of the Board of Regents. The garden was later named after Edward's wife, Hannah. The terms of the bequest were twice reaffirmed (in 1982 and 1999) by UCLA with university leadership agreeing to maintain the garden "in perpetuity," meaning forever. In anticipating the need for funds to maintain and operate the Garden in the future, Carter included a provision within the gift agreement that included the donation of his residence. This allows UCLA to sell it (currently listed for sale at \$9 million) with a portion of proceeds to be used to establish an endowment in support of the garden, also "in perpetuity."

CALIFORNIA PRESERVATION
FOUNDATION

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
FOUNDATION

THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

HISTORICAL RESOURCES
GROUP

THE LOS ANGELES
CONSERVANCY

Despite Carter's financial provisions made for the garden, in 2010 – one year after Hannah Carter's passing – UCLA had a Superior Court judge overturn the "in perpetuity" terms of the bequest. This action was unbeknownst to the Carter family or garden conservation organizations which, had we known, would have voiced strong objections. In November 2011, UCLA announced plans to sell the garden, citing rising maintenance costs, deferred maintenance, and the lack of attendance due to limited parking. UCLA Chancellor Gene Block has publicly stated, "Simply put, we are selling the garden because it is in the best interests of the university."

NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

NORTH AMERICAN JAPANESE
GARDEN ASSOCIATION

UCLA's actions are unfortunately not in the best interests of the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden. Without any protections in place as part of the sale (something UCLA has the ability to do), the sale directly endangers this historic garden and severely limits its likelihood for survival. Constructed between 1959 and 1961, the one-and-one-half acre hillside garden is among the largest and most significant private Japanese-style gardens built in the United States after World War II. The garden is associated with two of the most prominent designers of Japanese gardens, Nagao Sakuri and Koichi Kawana. Students, neighbors and visitors from around the world have enjoyed the beauty and tranquility of the garden for years and more than 2,000 people have petitioned and/or written to Chancellor Block urging him to halt the sale.

UCLA's decision to break their promise to the Carter family and the public calls into question the university's integrity and commitment to donors. Not only is the university turning its back on its obligation to care for the garden "in perpetuity," but it is also moving forward with the sale without the full consideration of viable alternatives. Following Hannah Carter's death in 2009, Chancellor Gene Block sent a letter of condolence to one of the Mrs. Carter's children, in which he wrote, "Her name and legacy will live on through the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden, a beautiful reminder of her gracious and giving spirit." By breaking their promise and moving to sell the garden, the university is loudly saying it is willing to overturn the terms of every bequest and donation they have or hope to receive – even from a former chair of the Board of Regents – to suit its immediate needs.

Coalition members would like to work with UCLA to find a mutually agreeable solution and establish a partnership to maintain and support the garden for public education and enjoyment. We strongly believe we can address UCLA's concerns without placing the garden at risk through its sale. To date, the University has not been willing to meet to discuss these alternatives, including a private-public partnership.

The matter has not been discussed by the Board of Regents prior to the decision to sell the garden, and we respectfully request action now to halt the sale so as to fully examine alternatives for the future of the garden. The University is presently receiving sealed bids for the purchase of the garden, with a May 22 deadline.

On behalf of the members of the Coalition and our thousands of supporters throughout Los Angeles, California, and nationally, we ask that you place this item on the May 15-17 Board of Regents' meeting for discussion and action. We welcome the opportunity to work with the university to develop an appropriate "win-win" solution to this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Coalition to Save the Hannah Carter Japanese Garden

American Public Gardens Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
American Society of Landscape Architects – Southern California Chapter
Bel Air Garden Club
The California Garden and Landscape History Society
California Preservation Foundation
The Cultural Landscape Foundation
The Garden Conservancy
Historical Resources Group
The Los Angeles Conservancy
National Trust for Historic Preservation
North American Japanese Garden Association