

# Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)

## Ethel Guiberson / Hannah Carter Japanese Garden

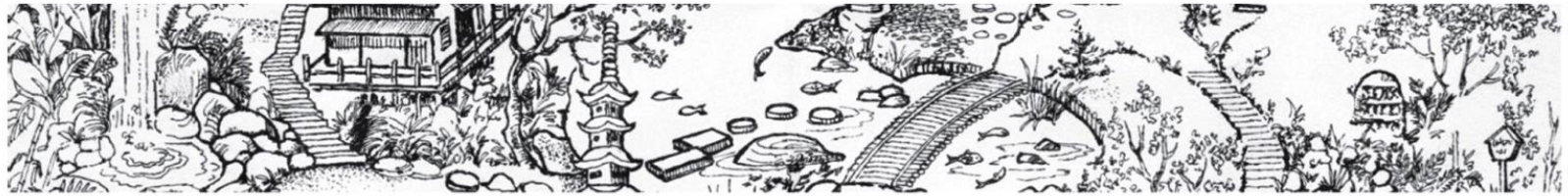


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## COALITION TO SAVE THE HANNAH CARTER JAPANESE GARDEN

American Public Gardens Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects – Southern CA 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, Los Angeles Conservancy, National Trust for Historic Preservation, North American Japanese Garden Association.





## THE BLOG

# UCLA V Endang in the U

🕒 05/02/2012 06:12 pm



The UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden in Bel-Air, despite a family bequest to remain in UCLA's possession in perpetuity, will be sold to the highest bidder. No protections are in place to prevent the destruction of the garden once the sale is complete. Photo by Christine Caldwell.

## 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 prior—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 Kawana. 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.

Please see *UCLA GARDEN* on page 6

## Barry Building Update

by Marcello Yavala

Despite their designation as Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCMs), the Barry Building (Milton Caughey, 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 #887) at 11973 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](http://laconservancy.org/issues). Thank you!

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# st and Gardens









# UCLA sells landmark Japanese garden for \$12.5 million

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





## 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**

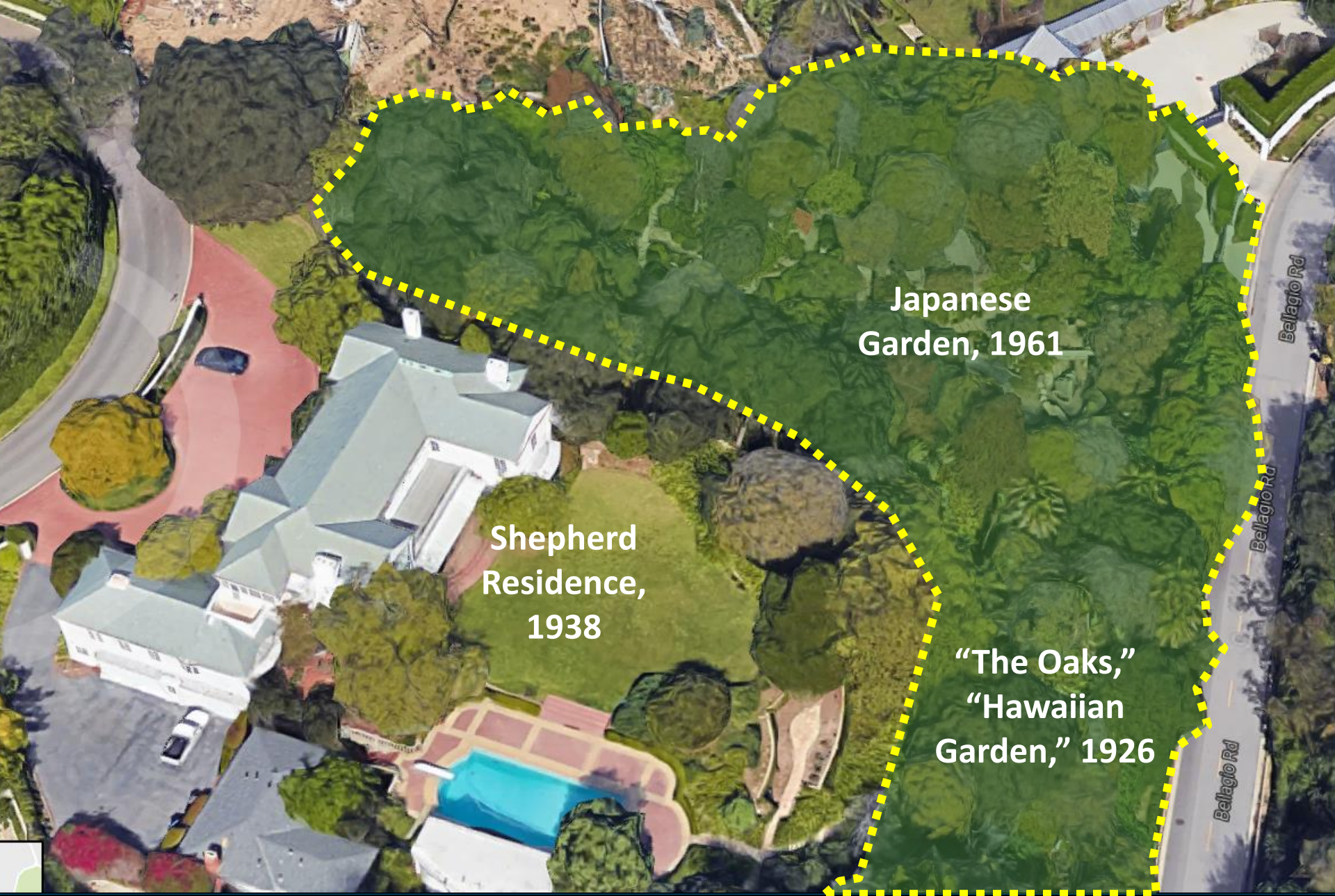




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Japanese  
Garden, 1961

Shepherd  
Residence,  
1938

"The Oaks,"  
"Hawaiian  
Garden," 1926





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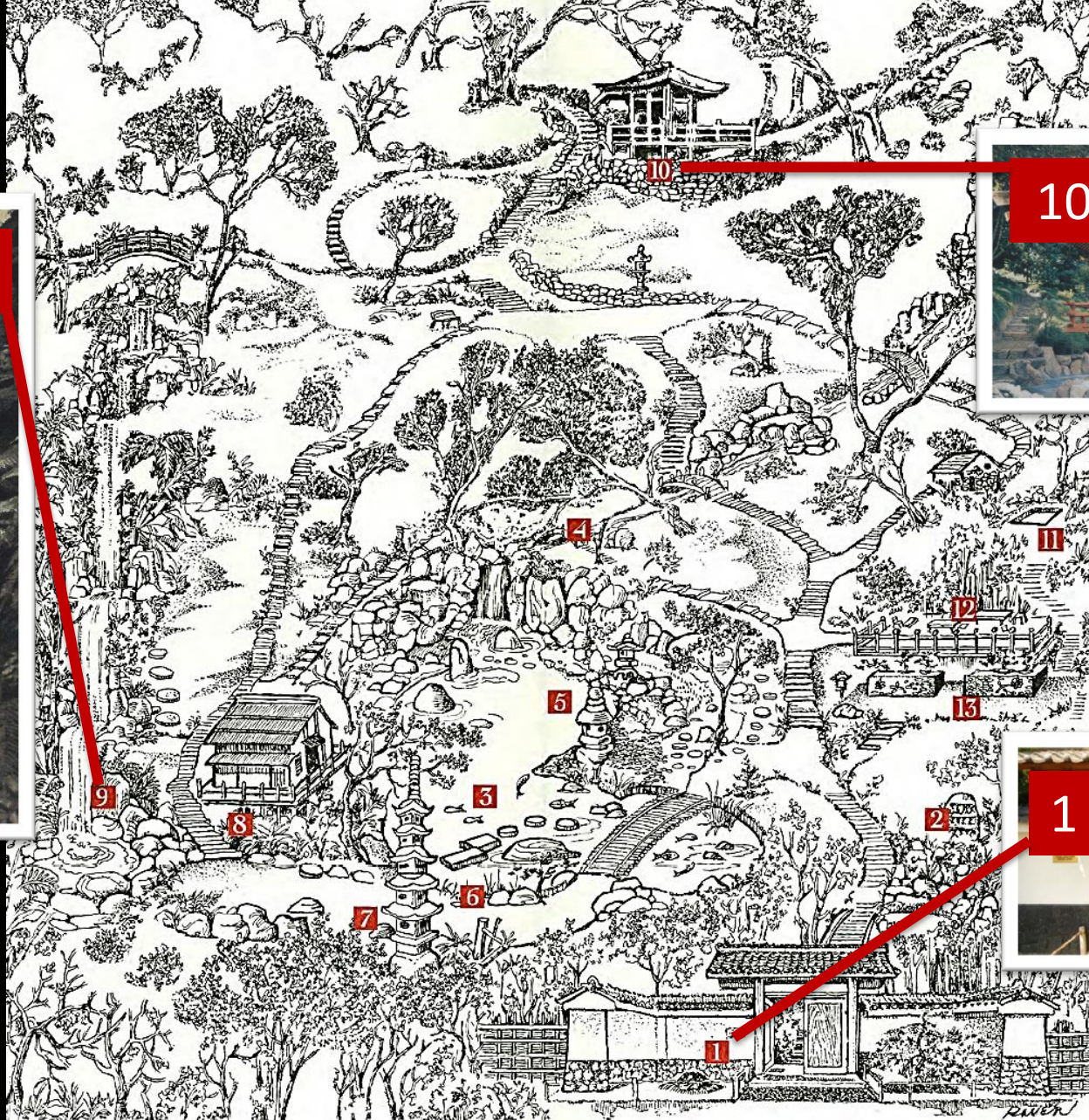
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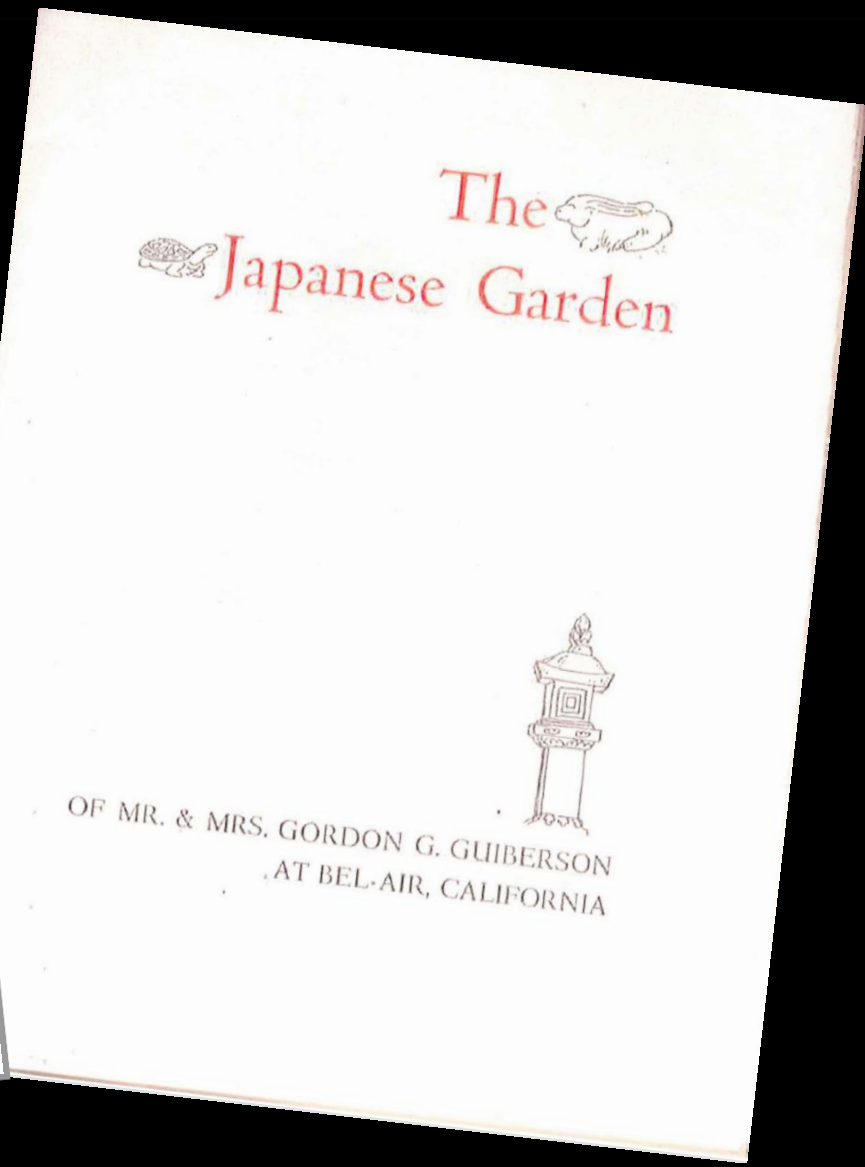
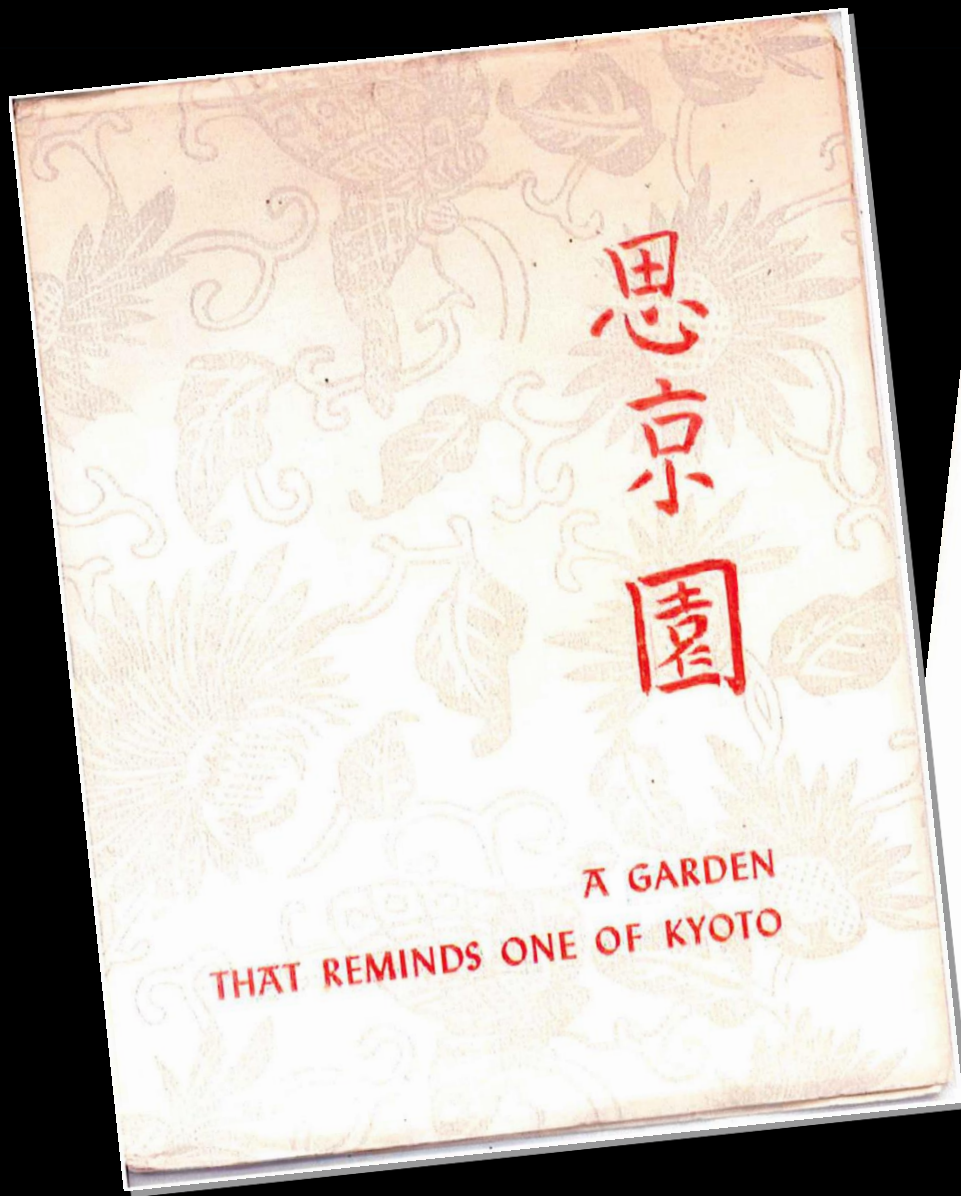
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**1)  
Nagao Sakurai  
(Original Garden Design)**

**2)  
B. Koichi Kawana  
(Post-1969 Reconstruction)**







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## 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 tea-house and a shrine of hand-hewn 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.

Among patrons are Japanese Consul Gen. Matao Uriu, Messrs. and Mmes. Victor M. Carter, Donald W. Douglas Jr., Eugene D. Flaherty, Arthur Y. Fujiwara, Masaaki Ishibashi, Morijo Ito, Saburo Kido, Ko Miwa, J. Marion Wright and Mukaeda.

Others are Frank L. Pellissier, 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.

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## Japan Garden Judged Best at Flower Show

A spectacular Japanese garden—90 ft. long and 80 ft. wide—which features a Buddhist temple shipped 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.







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# Details Gift of

BY WILLIAM TR  
Times Education

The stately, white Georgian house at 626 Siena Way in Bel-Air is the fancy of Hannah Carter, who she shopped for home in the summer of 1964, several months after she had married her business partner and University of California Regent Edward W. Carter.

One thing troubles Carter, however. The acre lot, descending the back lawn of 626 to Bellagio Road or so below, is an unusual Japanese garden.

The house and garden belonged to Gordon Guiberson, a wealthy

ONE OF TOPS IN U.S.

## UCLA Purchases Japanese Gardens

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.

Constructed on a sheltered hillside off Bellagio Road, the garden includes

a tea house, a hokora shrine, stone water basins and natural and carved stones 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."

# Carter closed

0,000 to maintain the garden. The University of California will have more than \$200,000 in by the end of the year.

phy said the worth the cost if it provides "a special felicity" for the community.

ways bothered that Harvard universities had gardens . . . had absolutely kept a not very culty club," he said.

t published by the garden is adjunct to the programs of several departments."







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### **Welcome to the garden**

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

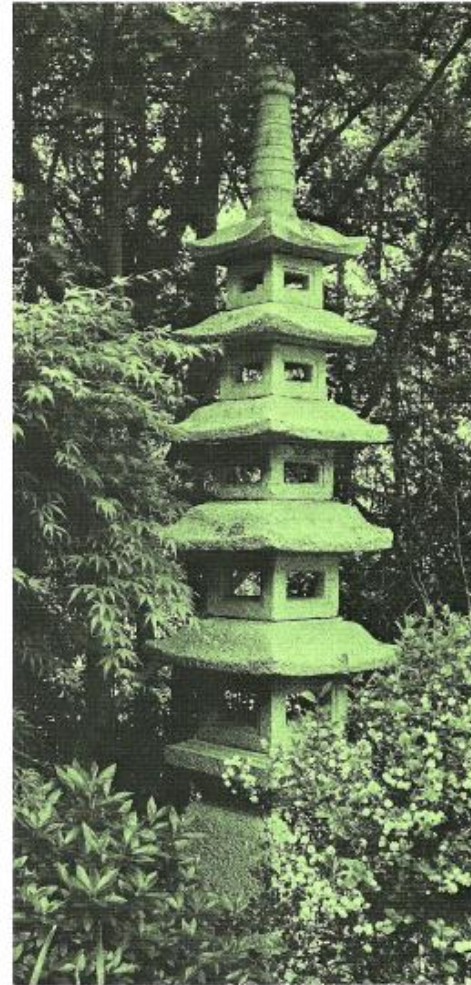
Created by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Guiberson in memory of his mother, Mrs. Ethel L. Guiberson of Beverly Hills, this lovely sanctuary was donated to UCLA in 1965 by Mr. Edward W. Carter, then Chairman of The Regents of the University of California. It is used by the University as an adjunct to the teaching 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 dishonor 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







- (1) Entrance gate and Katsura-type bamboo fence (2) Stepping stones across pond, home of colorful Japanese carp (3) Garden house for rest, contemplation, and the tea ceremony (4) Bath house and the outdoor sunken Japanese bath (5) Hokora (family shrine) with ancient Buddha figure (6) Hawaiian waterfall (7) Traditional "moon-viewing" deck with Japanese wood rail detail (8) Stone surfaced barbecue terrace

## 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 Yoshihara 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 globe before the adaptation of tungsten.



8. 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 *tukubai*, 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.



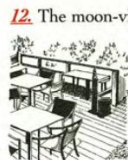
9. Behind the garden house is the Hawaiian garden. It contains five species of tree ferns and 25 other fern varieties, as well as seven classes of palms. Various tropical vines and epiphytes, including aroids, orchids, and bromeliads are also present. The pool is used as a nursery for baby *koi*.



10. Like the main gate, the *bokora* 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.



11. 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.



12. 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.

13. 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.



1. 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.



2. 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; 16 signifies immortality.

3. A focal point of the garden is the pool with colorful *koi* 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.



4. 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 cascade-screening tree. Above and to the left of the waterfall is the principal tree or upright spirit.



5. At the base of the view-perfecting pine is the rugged dedication stone or *raibai seki*, 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.

6. 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.



7. The *stupa*, 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 *stupa* stands a deciduous spring-flowering Chinese magnolia.







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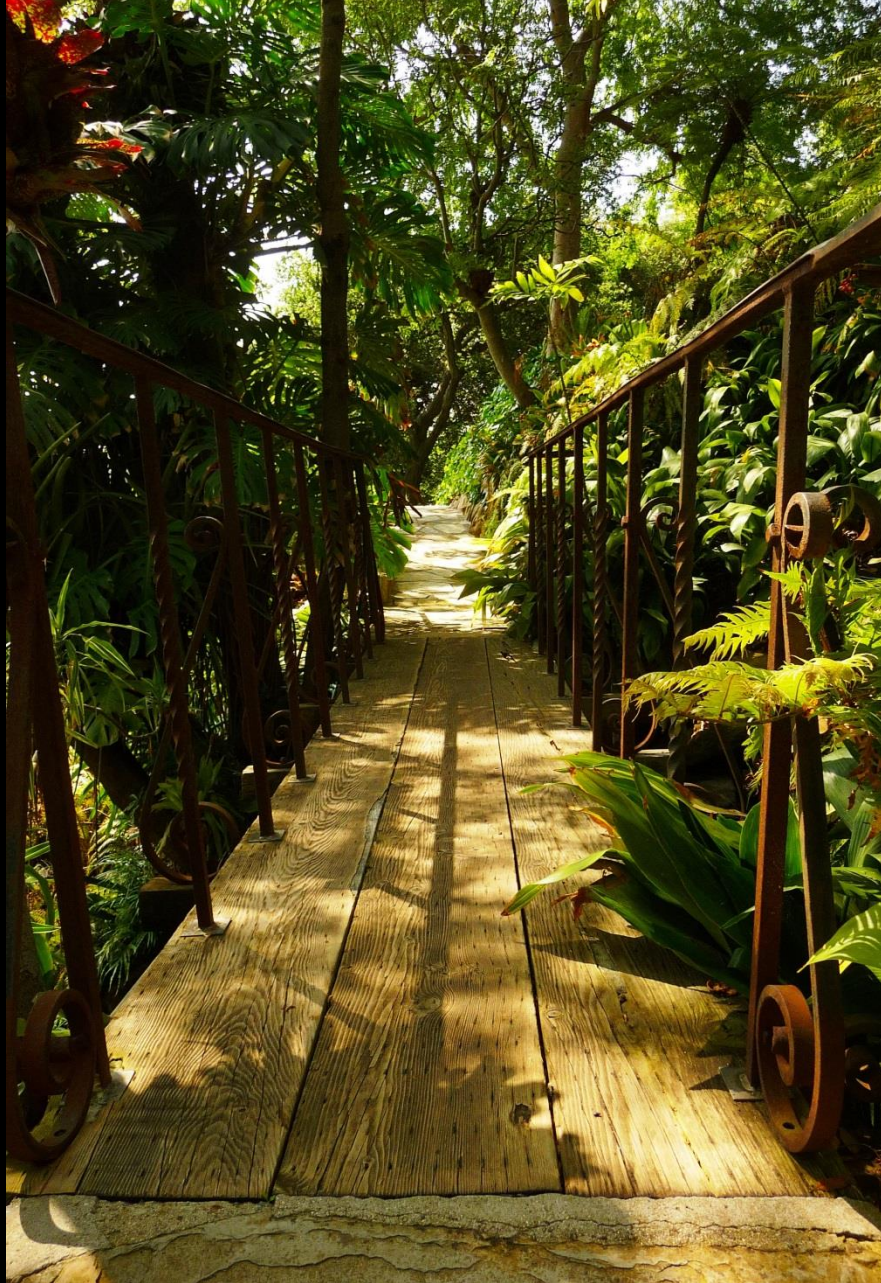


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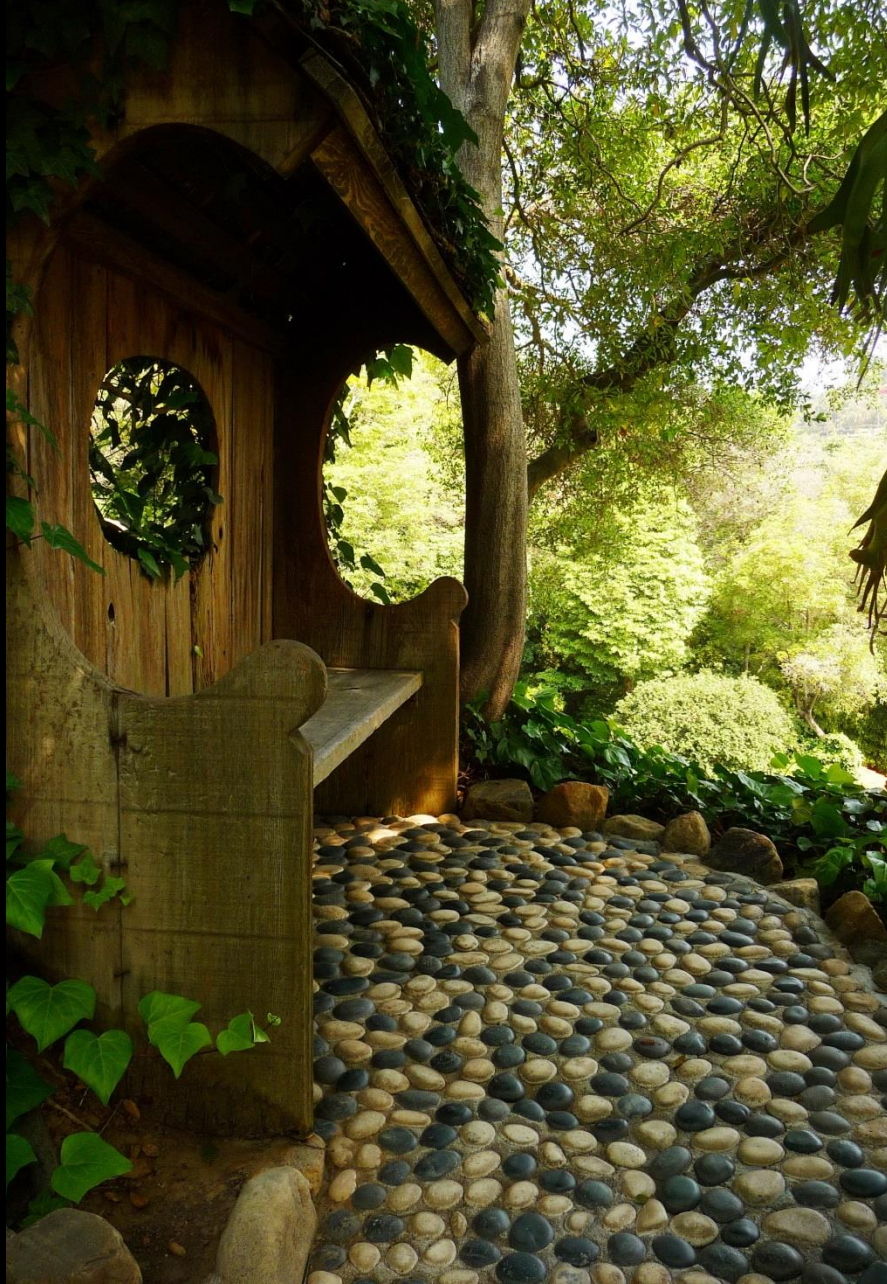


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January 24, 2012

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



Proudly serving the communities of Bel Air, Beverly Crest, Beverlywood, California Country Club, Carthay Circle, Century City, Cheviot Hills, Comstock Hills, Encino, Fairfax, Hollywood, Mar Vista, Melrose, Oak Forest Canyon, Palms, Pico-Robertson, Rossmore, Sherman Oaks, Sherman Village, Studio City, Triunfante, Valley Village, West of Westwood, Westside Village, Westwood, Westwood Gardens, Westwood South of Santa Monica.







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