

DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
(213) 978-1200

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

RICHARD BARRON
PRESIDENT
ROELLA H. LOUIE
VICE-PRESIDENT

GAIL KENNARD
TARA J. HAMACHER
OZ SCOTT

FELY C. PINGOL
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
CALIFORNIA



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INFORMATION
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www.planning.lacity.org

CORRECTED LETTER
(To include the attached new finding)

Date: **JAN 29 2013**

Los Angeles City Council
Room 395, City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 410
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: Sharon Gin, Legislative Assistant
Planning and Land Use Management Committee

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2012-2953-HCM**
STEWART FARMHOUSE
511 WEST 31ST STREET

At the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting of **January 10, 2013**, the Commission moved to include the above property in the list of Historic-Cultural Monument, subject to adoption by the City Council.

As required under the provisions of Section 22.171.10 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, the Commission has solicited opinions and information from the office of the Council District in which the site is located and from any Department or Bureau of the city whose operations may be affected by the designation of such site as a Historic-Cultural Monument. Such designation in and of itself has no fiscal impact. Future applications for permits may cause minimal administrative costs.

The City Council, according to the guidelines set forth in Section 22.171 of the Los Angeles Administrative Code, shall act on the proposed inclusion to the list within 90 days of the Council or Commission action, whichever first occurs. By resolution, the Council may extend the period for good cause for an additional 15 days.

The Cultural Heritage Commission would appreciate your inclusion of the subject modification to the list of Historic-Cultural Monuments upon adoption by the City Council.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Barron
Seconded: Commissioner Louie
Ayes: Commissioners Hamacher and Kennard
Absent: Commissioner Scott

Vote: 4-0


Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application, New Additional Finding

c: Councilmember Jan Perry, Ninth Council District
31st & Fig Development LLC (c/o Aurora Vitar)
Laura Meyers
GIS

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CITY PLANNING
OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 620
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801
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CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

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INFORMATION
(213) 978-1270
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CORRECTED LETTER
(To include the attached new finding)

Date: **JAN 29 2013**

31st & Fig Development LLC
c/o Aurora Vitar
607 N. Alvarado Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

CASE NUMBER: **CHC-2012-2953-HCM**
STEWART FARMHOUSE
511 WEST 31ST STREET

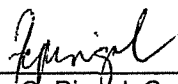
As you will note from the attached copy of our communication to the Los Angeles City Council, the Cultural Heritage Commission has moved to include the above-referenced property in the list of Historic-Cultural monuments, subject to adoption by the City Council.

In due course, our transmittal will be given a council file number and will be referred to the Council's Planning and Land Use Management Committee for review and recommendation. If you are interested in attending the Council Committee meeting, you should call Sharon Gin at (213) 978-1074 for information as to the time and place of the Committee and City Council meetings regarding this matter. Please give Ms. Gin at least one week from the date of this letter to schedule this item on the Committee Agenda before you call her.

The above Cultural Heritage Commission action was taken by the following vote:

Moved: Commissioner Barron
Seconded: Commissioner Louie
Ayes: Commissioners Hamacher and Kennard
Absent: Commissioner Scott

Vote: 4-0



Fely C. Pingol, Commission Executive Assistant
Cultural Heritage Commission

Attachment: Application, New additional Finding

c: Councilmember Jan Perry, Ninth Council District
Laura Meyers
GIS

Case No. chc-2023-2953-HCM
511 WEST 31ST STREET

STEWART FARMHOUSE

ONE ADDITIONAL NEW FINDING:

That the subject building can be moved to a new location and that later additions from an unknown date on the back and side elevations can be removed.

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION**CASE NO.: CHC-2012-2953-HCM
ENV-2012-2954-CE**

HEARING DATE: January 10, 2013
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 511 West 31st Street
Council District: 9
Community Plan Area: Southeast Los Angeles
Area Planning Commission: South Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council: Empowerment Congress
North Area
Legal Description: Lot 32 of Stewart's Nursery
Tract

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
STEWART FARMHOUSE

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

OWNER: 31st & Fig Development LLC (Aurora Vitar)
607 N. Alvarado St.
Los Angeles, CA 90026

APPLICANT: Laura Meyers
West Adams Heritage Association
1818 S. Gramercy Place
Los Angeles, CA 90019

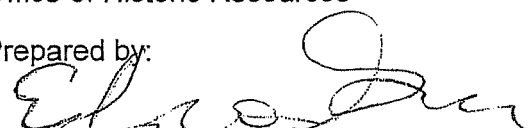
RECOMMENDATION**That the Cultural Heritage Commission:**

1. **Declare** the property a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.7
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning


Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:


Edgar García, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

FINDINGS

The building exemplifies the "broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community" as a rare example of a 1870s era farmhouse property type and for its association with the agricultural and residential development of 19th century Los Angeles.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

SUMMARY

Built in 1871 and located near the University Park area, this two-story residential building exhibits character-defining features of the Folk-Victorian style. The subject building has a rectangular-plan and a steep centered gabled roof with decorative bracketing and shallow enclosed eaves. The central gable extends full length from the front to the rear of the house. The bracketing at the top of the front-facing gable displays a carved leaf pattern. The entry porch wraps around the primary and eastern elevation and features simple square wood columns with hand cut capitals and brackets. The off-center entrance has a transom extending over the front door. The subject building's exterior features a wood board base and horizontal shiplap siding. Original windows are wood-frame elongated double-hung. Significant interior features include wainscoting and banisters.

The proposed Stewart Farmhouse historic monument was built by John Marcellus Stewart (1828-1913). Stewart was a pioneer nurseryman who moved to Los Angeles in 1871 and purchased 17 acres of land that now encompasses the subject property.

Later alterations include two single story shed-style additions, a rear shed-style addition off the porch, and the addition of a bathroom. A portion of the porch has been enclosed and incorporated into a room. The concrete stairs on the south were added to the residence at a later date. Some windows have been replaced with louvers and aluminum sliders.

DISCUSSION

The Stewart Farmhouse historic property successfully meets one of the specified Historic-Cultural Monument criteria: exemplifies the "broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community". As a rare 1870s era farmhouse associated with the agricultural and residential development of 19th century Los Angeles, the property qualifies for designation as a Historic-Cultural Monument based on this criterion.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of November 1, 2012, the Cultural Heritage Commission voted to take the application under consideration. On December 6, 2012, the Cultural Heritage Commission toured the subject property.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA") REVIEW

State of California CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Section 15308, Class 8 *"consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment."*

State of California CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Section 15331, Class 31 *"consists of projects limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic buildings."*

The designation of the Stewart Farmhouse property as a Historic-Cultural Monument in accordance with Chapter 9, Article 1, of The City of Los Angeles Administrative Code ("LAAC") will ensure that future construction activities involving the subject property are regulated in accordance with Section 22.171.14 of the LAAC. The purpose of the designation is to prevent significant impacts to a Historic-Cultural Monument through the application of the standards set forth in the LAAC. Without the regulation imposed by way of the pending designation, the historic significance and integrity of the subject property could be lost through incompatible alterations and new construction and the demolition of irreplaceable historic structures. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Rehabilitation are expressly incorporated into the LAAC and provide standards concerning the historically appropriate construction activities which will ensure the continued preservation of the subject property.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 8 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals of maintaining, restoring, enhancing, and protecting the environment through the imposition of regulations designed to prevent the degradation of Historic-Cultural Monuments.

The use of Categorical Exemption Class 31 in connection with the proposed designation is consistent with the goals relating to the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction of Historic buildings in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

Los Angeles Department of City Planning

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION

CASE NO.: CHC-2012-2953-HCM
ENV-2012-2954-CE

HEARING DATE: November 1, 2012
TIME: 10:00 AM
PLACE: City Hall, Room 1010
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA
90012

Location: 511 West 31st Street
Council District: 9
Community Plan Area: Southeast Los Angeles
Area Planning Commission: South Los Angeles
Neighborhood Council: Empowerment Congress
North Area
Legal Description: Lot 32 of Stewarts Nursery
Tract

PROJECT: Historic-Cultural Monument Application for the
STEWART FARMHOUSE

REQUEST: Declare the property a Historic-Cultural Monument

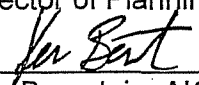
OWNER: 31st & Fig Development LLC (Aurora Vitar)
607 N. Alvarado St.
Los Angeles, CA 90026

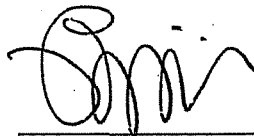
APPLICANT: Laura Meyers
West Adams Heritage Association
1818 S. Gramercy Place
Los Angeles, CA 90019

RECOMMENDATION That the Cultural Heritage Commission:

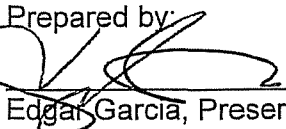
1. **Take the property under consideration** as a Historic-Cultural Monument per Los Angeles Administrative Code Chapter 9, Division 22, Article 1, Section 22.171.10 because the application and accompanying photo documentation suggest the submittal warrants further investigation.
2. **Adopt** the report findings.

MICHAEL J. LOGRANDE
Director of Planning


Ken Bernstein, AICP, Manager
Office of Historic Resources



Lambert M. Giessinger, Preservation Architect
Office of Historic Resources

Prepared by:

Edgar Garcia, Preservation Planner
Office of Historic Resources

Attachments: Historic-Cultural Monument Application

SUMMARY

Built in 1871 and located near the University Park area, this two-story residential building exhibits character-defining features of the Folk-Victorian style. The subject building has a rectangular-plan and a steep centered gabled roof with decorative bracketing and shallow enclosed eaves. The central gable extends full length from the front to the rear of the house. The bracketing at the top of the front-facing gable displays a carved leaf pattern. The entry porch wraps around the primary and eastern elevation and features simple square wood columns with hand cut capitals and brackets. The off-center entrance has a transom extending over the front door. The subject building's exterior features a wood board base and horizontal shiplap siding. Original windows are wood-frame elongated double-hung. Significant interior features include wainscoting and banisters.

The proposed Stewart Farmhouse historic monument was built by John Marcellus Stewart (1828-1913). Stewart was a pioneer nurseryman who moved to Los Angeles in 1871 and purchased 17 acres of land that now encompasses the subject property.

Later alterations include two single story shed-style additions, a rear shed-style addition off the porch, and the addition of a bathroom. A portion of the porch has been enclosed and incorporated into a room. The concrete stairs on the south were added to the residence at a later date. Some windows have been replaced with louvers and aluminum sliders.

CRITERIA

The criterion is the Cultural Heritage Ordinance which defines a historical or cultural monument as any site (including significant trees or other plant life located thereon) building or structure of particular historic or cultural significance to the City of Los Angeles, such as historic structures or sites in which the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified, or which are identified with historic personages or with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history or which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction, or a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect whose individual genius influenced his age.

FINDINGS

Based on the facts set forth in the summary and application, the Commission determines that the application is complete and that the property may be significant enough to warrant further investigation as a potential Historic-Cultural Monument.

SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

*Complete One or Both of the Upper and Lower Portions of This Page***ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

THE John Marcellus Stewart Cottage IS AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE OF
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT

Folk Victorian ARCHITECTURE
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE (SEE LINE 8)

AND MEETS THE CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS DESIGN AND THE RETENTION OF ITS ORIGINAL FORM, DETAILING AND INTEGRITY.

A N D / O R

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE John Marcellus Stewart Cottage WAS BUILT IN 1871
NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT YEAR BUILT

John Marcellus Stewart WAS IMPORTANT TO THE
NAME OF FIRST OR SIGNIFICANT OTHER

DEVELOPMENT OF LOS ANGELES BECAUSE J.M. Stewart was an early Los Angeles pioneer nurseryman who helped usher in the transformation of Southern California's agrarian economy from an export-based economy to agriculture in the service of the city's own growing population. Stewart was responsible for first bringing in many of the garden plants and trees (as well as orchard trees) that helped transform L.A. into the garden spot it is today. The house he built in 1871 is very rare extant example of a rural countryside cottage within Los Angeles's city boundaries. Stewart and his cottage are identified with L.A.'s first boom after the Civil War, but before the transcontinental railroad.

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

IDENTIFICATION

1. NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT John Marcellus Stewart Cottage
2. STREET ADDRESS 511 West 31st Street
- CITY Los Angeles ZIP CODE 90007 COUNCIL DISTRICT 9
3. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 5123-020-010
4. COMPLETE LEGAL DESCRIPTION: TRACT Stewart's Nursery Tract
- BLOCK None LOT(S) 32 ARB. NO. None
5. RANGE OF ADDRESSES ON PROPERTY 511 West 31st St.; original address has changed from 501 West 31st St.
6. PRESENT OWNER 31st & Fig Development LLC (Aurora Vitar)
- STREET ADDRESS 607 N. Alvarado St. E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____
- CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90026 PHONE (213) 598-9808
- OWNERSHIP: PRIVATE ☒ PUBLIC ☐
7. PRESENT USE vacant SFR ORIGINAL USE SFR

DESCRIPTION

8. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE Folk Victorian
(SEE STYLE GUIDE)
9. STATE PRESENT PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE OR STRUCTURE (SEE OPTIONAL DESCRIPTION WORK SHEET. 1 PAGE MAXIMUM)
- The Stewart Cottage is presently vacant and boarded up. Its asbestos siding was removed in 2010, revealing
- original wood siding. The lot has been mostly cleared. SEE ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (attached).
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

**HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION**

NAME OF PROPOSED MONUMENT John Marcellus Stewart Cottage

10. CONSTRUCTION DATE: 1871 FACTUAL: ☒ ESTIMATED: ☐

11. ARCHITECT, DESIGNER, OR ENGINEER Owner

12. CONTRACTOR OR OTHER BUILDER Owner

13. DATES OF ENCLOSED PHOTOGRAPHS 2010, 2011
(1 8X10 BLACK AND WHITE GLOSSY AND 1 DIGITAL E-MAILED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE COMMISSION@LACITY.ORG)

14. CONDITION: ☐ EXCELLENT ☐ GOOD ☒ FAIR ☐ DETERIORATED ☐ NO LONGER IN EXISTENCE

15. ALTERATIONS SEE ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION (attached)

16. THREATS TO SITE: ☐ NONE KNOWN ☒ PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ☐ VANDALISM ☐ PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
☐ ZONING ☐ OTHER _____

17. IS THE STRUCTURE: ☒ ON ITS ORIGINAL SITE ☐ MOVED ☐ UNKNOWN

SIGNIFICANCE

18. BRIEFLY STATE HISTORICAL AND/OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE: INCLUDE DATES, EVENTS, AND PERSON ASSOCIATED
WITH THE SITE (SEE ALSO SIGNIFICANCE WORK SHEET. 750 WORDS MAXIMUM IF USING ADDITIONAL SHEETS)

The John Marcellus Stewart Cottage, erected in 1871, is one of a handful of structures still extant dating from Los Angeles's first boom, after the Civil War but before the transcontinental railroad reached the city. Stewart himself was a pioneer nurseryman in the region. The Stewart Cottage meets the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria as an architectural type specimen (rural Folk Victorian); for being identified with a historic personage; as a reflection of broad economic changes that swept Los Angeles in the 1870s; and for its rarity. See Significance Statement.

19. SOURCES (LIST BOOKS, DOCUMENTS, SURVEYS, PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH DATES) Historical Los Angeles Times (Proquest), "City-Makers" by Remi Nadeau, property & map records, Ancestry.com genealogy, Los Angeles Pioneer Society journals, L.A. Historical Society journals, CRA Historic Resource Surveys (1985, 2005) - bibliography attached

20. DATE FORM PREPARED 10/22/2012 PREPARER'S NAME Laura Meyers

ORGANIZATION West Adams Heritage Association STREET ADDRESS 1818 S. Gramercy Place

CITY Los Angeles STATE CA ZIP CODE 90019 PHONE (323) 737-6146

E-MAIL ADDRESS: news@westadamsheritage.org

TYPE OR HAND PRINT IN ALL CAPITAL BLOCK LETTERS

HISTORIC-CULTURAL MONUMENT
APPLICATION

John Marcellus Stewart Cottage Significance Statement

The John Marcellus Stewart Cottage, erected in 1871, meets the Cultural Heritage Ordinance criteria which defines an Historic-Cultural Monument as any site, building, or structure in which:

- * the broad cultural, economic, or social history of the nation, State or community is reflected or exemplified;

- * is identified with historic personages;

- * is identified with important events in the main currents of national, State or local history; and

- * that embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, inherently valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction.

The Stewart Cottage is significant for its rarity. In Los Angeles, there are only a handful of identified, extant wood-framed residences dating from the years just after the Civil War and before the transcontinental railroad linked Los Angeles directly with the rest of America, in 1876. These include the Phineas Banning Mansion in Wilmington; possibly a small cottage that has been moved from Downtown to Highland Park; and this 1871 residence still extant on its original parcel. It was reported in its era as being the “first” residence built south of Sixth Street in the “southern reaches of the city” at a time when Los Angeles’s residences were clustered in the heart of the pueblo, and in the area between First and Fourth near Main Street. It is nothing less than a miracle that this 141-year-old cottage has survived, and it is certainly the oldest still-standing structure in the Historic West Adams District.

The Stewart Cottage reflects the broad cultural, economic and social history of the community. It is associated with the development of Los Angeles during what historian Remi Nadeau (a great-grandson of L.A. pioneer Remi Nadeau) in his book *City-Makers* calls “Southern California’s First Boom, 1868-1876.” In the 1860s, there were still more heads of cattle than people in the Los Angeles region. John Marcellus Stewart arrived in Los Angeles and built this cottage as the city transitioned from a dusty pueblo surrounded by cattle-grazing rancho lands, to a town of promise at a time when its citizens launched a vigorous campaign to bring banking, industry and a railroad to the area. J.M. Stewart played an important role in the transition of the region from an agricultural (export) economy specializing in wine, leather and tallow to an agricultural economy that supported the needs of its own growing population. In 1871, J.M. Stewart purchased and then plowed under the grape vines on his 17-acre vineyard located south of Downtown, and he turned the soil over to the development of a nursery supplying orchard and decorative plants to other Angelenos. Within a decade he was famed for the quality of his citrus and fruit trees, his pepper trees and, especially, his Pampas grasses (grown on other land he acquired.)

The Stewart Cottage stands as witness to the establishment and growth of the University of Southern California (today, just one block away), less than a decade after Stewart erected his cottage and began his nursery. J. M. Stewart and this parcel are also associated with the Boom of 1887, when Stewart and scores of other investors and developers laid out subdivision tracts and entire townships, as promoters lured East Coast and Midwest residents to Southern California with tales of year-round sun, healthy climate and sweet-scented breezes. Having sold seven of

his original acres previously, Stewart recorded his 10-acre Stewart's Nursery Tract in July, 1887. He erected a larger home but retained (for some years) this cottage as well as some original sheds and a barn. The Stewart's Nursery Tract is one of the oldest in the University Park/Exposition Park neighborhood of Historic West Adams.

The Stewart Cottage is identified with a historic personage, John Marcellus Stewart.

Stewart was a pioneer nurseryman in Los Angeles who, before arriving in the City of Angels, had been a California pioneer – having first arrived to seek his fortune during the California Gold Rush. Descended from a Colonial American family with roots in New England, John Marcellus Stewart pioneered in Wisconsin in the 1840s, walked across America in 1850 through dangerous country with obstacles including storms, fires, potentially unfriendly Sioux and Snake Indians, and unfordable rivers. In the 1850s, back and forth between Wisconsin and northern California, Stewart mined for gold and operated a successful sawmill. In the 1860s, he was a merchant in Sacramento and then San Francisco. Stewart and his family moved to Los Angeles in 1871. Stewart purchased a 17-acre vineyard, converted it to a nursery, and became famous for his many fine orchard tree varieties (oranges, lemons, peaches, limes, and almonds) and, soon, his flora (pepper trees, Pampas grass) grown as decorative plants for the growing number of residences in the fledgling city. He was important for helping preside over Los Angeles's transition from an agricultural export economy to an agricultural economy in support of its own residents, along with his increasing focus on decorative plants. John Marcellus Stewart lived on his original plot of land (in a c. 1890-1892 residence, not extant) until his death, in 1913, and his daughter lived there another two decades, although the cottage itself had passed into other ownership by 1900. (See full Biography, attached.)

The Stewart Cottage is a very rare extant example of an early 1870s vernacular Folk Victorian style rural farmhouse, and embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen. Although it was a simple owner-built country farmhouse cottage it reflects the common style of its time, and few – if any – of these residences are extant. This type of housing was common in Los Angeles in the late 1860s and early 1870s, but all but a handful were demolished at least a century ago, as the city grew and higher density residential and commercial development replaced the simple cottages that lined the city's early streets and dotted the countryside. (See Architectural Description, attached.)

Although there have been alterations and additions, the Stewart Cottage has retained its essential Folk Victorian character, and the original portion is typical of wood-framed farmhouses of its era in California in the years just after the Civil War. The Stewart Cottage was evaluated by several qualified architectural historians in 1985 (Christy Johnson McAvoy and Leslie Hueman,) and in 2005 (PCR Services Corp, Jan Ostashay and Peter Moruzzi), and based on visual inspection/architecture alone each evaluation identified the Stewart Cottage as a potential Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument.

Without the benefit of subsequent historic research conducted by this author and others, neither McAvoy/Hueman nor PCR/Ostashay/Moruzzi realized that the Stewart Cottage actually dates back nearly two decades before tract development in the University Park/Exposition Park area. McAvoy/Hueman noted: "Dates from inception of tract development; examples of this type increasingly rare in Los Angeles." PCR/Ostashay/Moruzzi also identified the dwelling as

“eligible for individual listing as a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument,” noting that its “character-defining features include the building’s mass and scale, front-gabled roof with shallow eaves, elongated wood frame double-hung sash windows with plan surrounds, symmetry, and projecting full width front entry porch with carved brackets.”

In 2007, and again in 2010, historian Charles J. Fisher further evaluated the Stewart Cottage. He concluded that it was an architectural specimen type and that:

“The Stewart House is one a very few remaining extant structures dating from the period of Los Angeles history between the Civil War and the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad....It is also an early pioneer home that ushered in the later development of the area. Furthermore, it is associated with an important individual, John M. Stewart, who was responsible for first bringing many of the garden plants and trees, as well as orchard trees to Southern California that helped to transform the area from a desert to the garden spot that it is famous for today.

“Due to these reasons, as well as the structure’s integrity of design, the Stewart House easily meets three of the four qualifications for listing as a Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, as well as being eligible for State and National Register listing.”

John Marcellus Stewart Cottage

Architectural Description

The John Marcellus Stewart Cottage is a vernacular Folk Victorian style rural farmhouse, with elements that are evocative of both Carpenter Gothic and the later Eastlake style. Character-defining features include a steep gabled roof; decorative gable brackets; shallow enclosed eaves; elongated double-hung sash windows; transom over the front door; projecting pent roof, full-width, wrap-around front entry porch; and simple square porch columns with hand cut capitals and brackets.

The original 1871 cottage is a 1-and-1/2-story structure, built on a rectangular plan (18'3" wide and 26'4" long, exclusive of the porch). On the exterior façade, it has a vertical wood board base with horizontal wood-board ship-lap siding; each board has a beveled profile on both edges. The vertical corner edge boards are not extant, but the recent removal of asbestos siding reveals the shadow lines/unpainted portions of the siding. The front gable rises to a distinctive peak, and a six-foot-wide porch wraps the southern and eastern elevations. There is a contemporary report of an 1886 remodel but it did not change the basic footprint of the original cottage, as documented on the 1894 Sanborn Map.

There are several later single-story additions (see discussion below). With the additions, the residence today has a modified shotgun plan, with a footprint that is approximately 52 feet long, inclusive of the open porch. At its widest, where a room projects on the east elevation, the residence today is approximately 33 wide.

As built in 1871, the cottage appears to have been a single first floor parlor/living space, with a sleeping loft in the attic gable. Originally its porch stretched across the entire southern and eastern elevations, with door openings to each of these sides. Today, that open porch is retained on the south elevation and wraps around to the right of the structure (east elevation), with a wooden floor, supported by simple columns (these have been described in previous reports as "Eastlake" but that style evolved in the 1880s). A portion of the east porch has been enclosed and incorporated into a room. The concrete stairs on the south are a later alteration.

A central gable with decorative bracketing is situated from the front to the rear of the original house (second story). The bracketing, which is at the top of the front gable, displays a carved leaf pattern.

The majority of the original windows are intact wood sash, double hung, single light over single light. However, some of the other remaining windows on the gable and the addition(s) are changed out with louvers and/or aluminum sliders, most often within their original fenestrations. There is a pair of elongated vertical windows in the south attic gable. There is also a pair of vertical windows in the north elevation attic gable; it appears that they may not be in their original location(s). It is unknown when the smaller attic gable windows were added, but they are now aluminum sliders in original fenestrations.

In contemporary news and biographical reports during his lifetime, it was stated that J.M. Stewart had erected "several" buildings on his 17-acre property, which no doubt would have included a barn, an outhouse and a detached kitchen (although the Los Angeles Fire Department was also founded in 1871, it did not include the rural "southern reaches" in its firefighting efforts; generally kitchen structures were separated from the main living quarters.) An examination of a portfolio published by Thompson and West in 1880, depicting more than 90 of 1870s Los Angeles residential "country" properties (both within and near the City boundaries), would also indicate that property owners with large acreage erected many "practical" out buildings in addition to the parlor(s)/dining/great room and sleeping quarters for their families. In any case, by the time of the 1894 Sanborn Map, after Stewart had subdivided his land, most of the out-buildings are no longer extant; the cottage retains its original smaller form but the Stewarts by then had erected and moved into a large Victorian mansion (no longer extant) on the same property, facing what is now 30th Street. A barn (no longer extant) sat between the two residences, as did a storage shed.

ADDITIONS

The original structure has several additions:

- A single-story addition (after 1922) added on the east elevation at the rear of the porch (with different siding);
- A single-story addition across the rear of the cottage that is clad in the same style exterior siding of the original cottage;
- A second rear shed-roofed addition attached to that on the north elevation. (These latter two date to the period between the 1894 and the 1922 Sanborn Maps, but were most likely completed by 1900); and
- A small addition to the rear shed-roofed addition to accommodate another bathroom (after 1922).

The earliest addition, extending from the north wall of the original cottage, now contains the kitchen and a bedroom, while the smaller rear shed style addition to the further north contains a laundry room and a bathroom. A portion of that shed-style addition containing another bathroom on the easternmost side appears to be an even-later addition, based on the 1922 Sanborn Map illustration. No permits were found for these additions (however, the first year that permits are on file for the City of Los Angeles is c.1905, even though permits had been issued in the City much earlier than that). Without access to County Assessor individual "packet" records (available to the owner of the property and certain city officials but not to private third parties), we need to base estimates of dates on Sanborn Maps, the materials and workmanship, the fact that the City sewer system was extended to the area starting in mid-1894 (which allowed for interior bathrooms), and to some extent the change of property ownership which occurred by 1900. Based on this it is estimated that the first rear addition, and a portion of the second rear addition, likely occurred between 1895 and 1900.

The two easterly projections (one to accommodate the bedroom off the porch, the other to create the tiled bathroom) occurred after 1922, and utilize a different wood siding profile.

The original east elevation porch was partially enclosed and made a part of a room in an undated addition (after 1922) that projects from the house; there are no permits on City records. This room measures approximately 16X15 feet, and has a bank of five windows on its east elevation, with two windows each on its north elevation and its south elevation. Inside, the porch elements are retained; the beadboard ceiling, the framing, and the bracket remain visible. A wide doorway from the original cottage parlor/great room has been partially sealed to accommodate a newer door but its frame and trim are extant. At one point there were French doors opening to this part of the porch (apparently no longer extant; they had been stored under the house as recently as 2010.)

INTERIOR

The living room still retains the unique historic horizontal wainscoting, with a staircase to the left side of the front entry. The first-floor banister has been replaced with a later steel one, while the original wooden one appears to be at the top of the stairs, along with a simple square beveled newel post with ball top. The second story has been remodeled during repairs from a fire in 1984. In the original parlor/great room a partition (creating a separate dining room) has been added. The kitchen appears to have been remodeled in the 1930s or 1940s. The rear bathroom also appears to date from the same period as the kitchen.