

Save Our Heritage Organisation PRESENTS

Seventh Avenue Historic Home Tour



Historic Seventh Avenue

Nestled into Balboa Park's northwest corner, the 3500 block of Seventh Avenue is one of San Diego's best-kept secrets. This lush tract looked very different – vacant, dusty and studded with chaparral – in 1886, when it became Thomas T. Crittenden's Addition.

In 1903, George White Marston, a successful merchant and visionary civic leader, bought ten acres on the east side of Crittenden's Addition for his extended family's estates. Today, five of those acres belong to the George Marston House & Gardens.

Within two decades, this subdivision was transformed into a fine collection of thoughtfully landscaped Arts & Crafts houses created for the Marstons and other prominent San Diegans who were eager to live indoors and out and to blend their hidden street into the evolving City Park. Being leading citizens of the day, they helped produce major civic projects, including the two international expositions.

The block represents an important slice of San Diego's architectural history, with the strong imprint of architect Irving J. Gill. We can see Gill's buildings change from variations on the English Arts & Crafts style in brick to the horizontal Prairie Style with wide, sheltering eaves to geometric Early Modernism devoid of surface ornament. Gill designed two residences alone (one, the Thomas and Margaret Hamilton House, was demolished for a residential tower) and six others in partnership with another influential architect, William S. Hebbard.

Nationally acclaimed planners and landscape architects such as John Nolen, Samuel Parsons, Jr., and Thomas D. Church worked on this block, usually hired by George Marston. Also heavily involved was Marston's friend, horticulturist Kate Sessions, who is considered the "Mother of Balboa Park." Original plantings, many still extant, came primarily from Ernest Benard, a prominent nurseryman, whose business was located in Mission Valley, though the California pepper trees that originally lined the street (as seen in the cover photo) were later changed to jacarandas. Together they banished the dust and weeds to create an enduring pocket of Eden on Seventh Avenue.

Seventh Avenue Historic Home Tour



3574



3536



3534



3530



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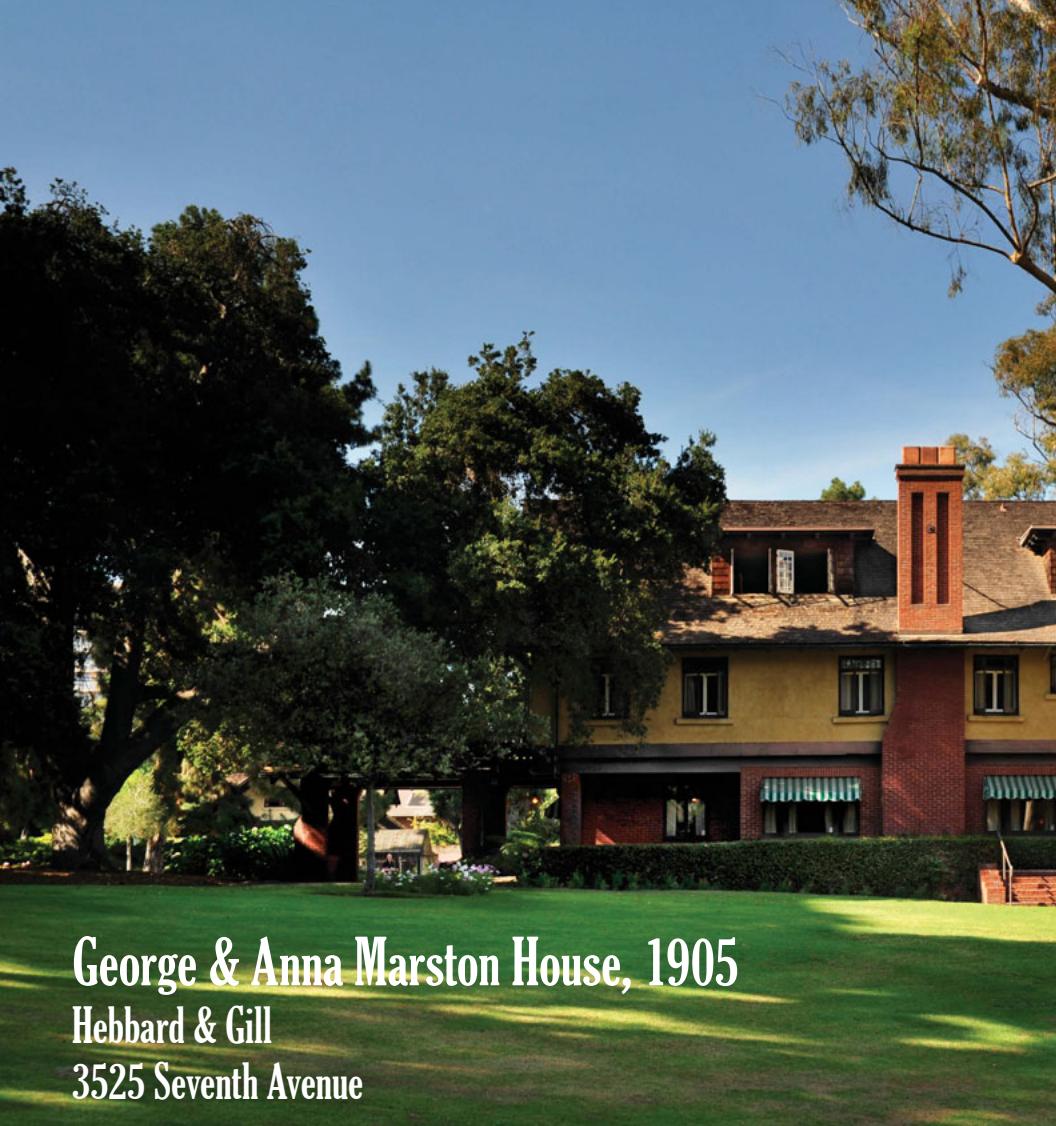
MARSTON HOUSE
MUSEUM SHOP

3525



Tour Rules

- Do not park on Seventh Avenue
- No photography inside the homes
- Turn off pagers & cell phones
- Do not touch anything in the homes, including doors, drawers or furnishings
- No large bags or backpacks
- Public restrooms are next to the Marston House Museum Shop



George & Anna Marston House, 1905

Hebbard & Gill
3525 Seventh Avenue

George Marston is noted for many things but most prominently as a civic leader of extraordinary vision, whose interest and work in historic preservation, urban planning, conservation and history is renowned. He, his wife Anna, and his family were ardent advocates for quality of life issues for San Diegans.

Marston sited his family's estate at the edge of City Park (now Balboa Park) and chose the firm of William Sterling Hebbard and Irving J. Gill as his architects.



Hebbard's work can be seen most prominently on the exterior of the house while many of the details that would later become Gill signatures can be seen throughout the interior. Recognized internationally as the father of Modern architecture in America, Gill designed the six-bedroom, seven-bath Marston House early in his San Diego career. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house is one of the finest remaining example of Hebbard & Gill's residential work. A grand house used often for indoor-outdoor entertaining, it also included such design innovations as raised thresholds to keep rooms cleaner,



solar heating, built-in furniture, and interior windows that bring light and fresh air into closets.

The historic gardens include formal beds, a cutting garden and broad lawns, complemented by a brick tea house and a viewing pavilion. In an adjacent canyon dotted with eucalyptus trees, remnants of stone benches and cobble-lined paths delineate a naturalistic Arts & Crafts landscape that the Marstons enjoyed.

The evolving design of the formal gardens through the years corresponds with Marston's visionary civic activities, such as cultivating the undeveloped Balboa Park and founding Presidio Park in Old Town San Diego. George Marston, himself an avid gardener, employed leading



landscape designers and nursery owners for different phases of the garden's development. Some of the nation's most prominent landscape architects and planners were involved at different times.

The original 750-square-foot Craftsman-style carriage house is paneled in warm Douglas fir and features an original horse stall and handsome windows. It is now utilized as the admissions and gift shop for the museum.

The property became a house museum in the 1990s after the Marston family gave it to the City of San Diego for "the enjoyment of the public." It is now managed and operated by Save Our Heritage Organisation.



Alice Lee House, 1905

Hebbard & Gill
3574 Seventh Avenue

Originally owned by Alice Lee, who moved to San Diego in 1902, this large two-story home is currently undergoing restoration.

The Lee family was involved in real estate development and Alice is credited for helping create the model town of Westport, New York on



family-owned property alongside Lake Champlain. Lee's prestigious Seventh Avenue residence was designed in 1905 by the firm Hebbard & Gill. It was completed in early 1906 at a cost of \$5,000, with the adjacent two cottages on either side for \$3,500 each. Now owned separately and divided by fences, the three buildings were originally configured around a shared courtyard and connected by a U-shaped pergola, a portion of which still exists on the north end of the center residence. The project was one of Irving Gill's first experiments in multiple-residential designs, which he would become known for later in his career.





One of the city's first female architects, Hazel Waterman served as draftsman on the Alice Lee commission and is said to have worked closely on various aspects of the designs with the client and her close companion Katherine Teats. Miss Lee deeded the cottage to the south to Miss Teats, but both women lived in the main house at No. 3574 while renting out the smaller structures. In 1911 and 1912, they commissioned Gill to expand and remodel all three buildings.

Born into a wealthy, influential family, Miss Lee often dined at the White House on her return trips east. She had many notable friends visit her on Seventh Avenue including President and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt and Mrs. Grover Cleveland. Although subsequent owners remodeled much of the house in the 1950s and 1960s, the main public areas of the living and dining rooms, remain in mostly intact condition and reflect largely how they appeared during the home's illustrious early heyday. Of single-wall construction, much of the historic fabric of the home, including interior Douglas fir wood detailing, fireplaces, and brass hardware remain, with key features being unearthed from under decades of remodeling and cosmetic changes. Upon completion the home is likely to once again become one of the finer examples of Gill's work.

Dr. Frederick & Lilla Burnham House, 1906

Hebbard & Gill 3563 Seventh Avenue

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and No. 41 on the City of San Diego's Register of Historical Resources, the Dr. Frederick & Lilla Burnham Residence was designed in 1906 by the architectural firm of Hebbard & Gill for the sister and brother-in-law of George Marston. In March of that year, Marston had sold the Burnhams one-third of his ten-acre parcel, and in June the City issued a building permit for their \$16,000 home. With Irving Gill as the lead architect, the emerging Midwestern Prairie Style influenced his design.

The landscape plan was created by Samuel Parsons Jr. and his renowned firm Parsons & Company, and implemented in 1907 and 1908. Parsons was superintendent of New York City parks in 1900, and had first come to San Diego at the invitation of George Marston in 1902 to draw up the early designs for Balboa Park, then known as City Park.





The two-story brick house possesses many of the hallmarks of the “modern” early twentieth century Prairie Style, including a boxy and linear form, low-pitched roofs, and broad eave overhangs. Features such as half-timbering on the second level, original casement and transom windows with multiple square lights, and a massive, unadorned external brick chimney emphasize the characteristically strong geometric feeling of the style.

The Burnham family occupied the house for decades. Frederick, the patriarch, held several important positions in San Diego including Harbor Commissioner, President of the Board of Education, and the Board of Health, and Director of the Y.M.C.A. Daughters Katherine Ostrander and Lilla Barney bought out the interests of their siblings after the deaths of their parents and moved back into the family home in 1948. Living on separate floors, they had the main entrance reconfigured to the north side of the house to be closer to the central staircase. A new wall inserted beneath the staircase divided the house into separate upstairs and downstairs units, with the staircase providing a private and direct access to the second level apartment. Fortunately, this alteration was done with care, leaving the grand staircase intact and preserving one of the home’s most spectacular architectural features that is quintessential Irving Gill. Demonstrating Gill’s love for natural lighting, the stairwell on the second level is open on three sides and brightly illuminated by banks of windows on the north and west walls. Although originally finished in natural wood, its beauty in both form and design are still evident.

In recent years the building has been converted from a residence into offices. Although much of the interior has been remodeled and several windows have been replaced, the Burnham Residence still retains much of its original historic fabric and character.





Sarah M. Elston House, 1908

Henry Harms Preibisius (attributed)
3536 Seventh Avenue

One of the most visually prominent houses on this prestigious block, the large, two-story Arts & Crafts style residence is attributed to the architect Henry Harms Preibisius and constructed in 1908 for Mrs. Sarah M. Elston. Although Mrs. Elston lived in the house until 1919, very little is known about the original occupants.



Preibisius is considered a master architect skilled at designing both commercial and residential buildings. Both contractor and architect, he also designed and built the St. James Hotel, the tallest building in downtown San Diego for many years. Born in Hanover, Germany in 1872, he first immigrated to New York in 1884, and later moved to San Diego where he remained until his death in 1964 at the age of 92.

The Elston Residence demonstrates the strong geometric horizontality and abundant use of natural materials (primarily redwood) that is

typical of the Arts & Crafts style. The exterior is defined by an asymmetrical façade, steeply pitched side-gabled roof with shed-roofed attic dormer, off-center front entry porch with upper balcony, massive square front porch columns, and secondary balconies off the side and rear elevations. Additional visual interest is created by a second-story bay-window projection, the incorporation of a variety of window types with contrasting divided light patterns, plus the use of elaborate wood detailing including clapboard siding on the first level, shingle siding on the second level, decorative corbel brackets beneath the roof eaves and delicately “cut-out” porch railings. Originally, the exterior siding was finished with a dark stain.

Some portions of the house, including its floor plan, have been remodeled. Existing historic features on the interior include an impressive open-ceilinged central staircase with wooden railings, two large fireplaces located in the living room and in the original upstairs master bedroom, wood floors, interior wood panel doors with original hardware, and claw foot bathtubs. A new garage and a c.1960s swimming pool now occupy the backyard. The garage was designed and constructed in a style sympathetic to the property’s overall historic character.



George & Anna Barney House, 1911

Pacific Building Company

3530 Seventh Avenue

Known as the “Father of Mission Beach,” real estate developer George Barney with his wife Anna commissioned their own residence with the well-regarded Pacific Building Company, who designed and built this two-story Pueblo Modernistic style house. Founded in 1906, the Pacific Building Co. was responsible for the construction of many residential and commercial buildings throughout San Diego during the first three decades of the 20th century.

In 1913, they had Frank Mead and Richard Requa design a house on the lot adjacent to their home as a wedding gift for their son Lorenze and new daughter-in-law. Both the senior and junior Barney residences, although conceived and constructed by different firms, strongly reflect the unique influence of Irving Gill and in fact, Mead, Requa, and some of the draftsmen from the Pacific Building Company had all worked for or in collaboration with Gill previously at different times. Also of significance, John Lloyd Wright was chief



designer for the company at this time. This influence is seen here with the design and plan of the two homes created to complement each other with a large outdoor patio originally connecting the two properties, the use of bold geometry and the lack of superficial adornment. Some of Gill's experimental interior design concepts such as flush wood trim and wainscoting were also adopted in this house.



The current state of the George Barney Residence represents an excellent example of sensitive remodeling combined with historic preservation and restoration. A succession of past owners had significantly altered portions of the home, including installing new bathrooms, enclosing porches and covering the original exterior sand-textured plaster with newer, heavier and inappropriate “Spanish lace” style stucco. Years of deferred maintenance then took their toll. However, after purchasing the house in poor condition several years ago, the current owners undertook a major project to preserve and bring back as many of the historic features as practicable. Saving as much of the original building fabric as possible, the contractor, for example, reused the glass from upstairs rotted windows in new built-in cabinetry in the downstairs office.

Fortunately, the breathtakingly beautiful redwood interior of the living room, entry foyer and dining room, as well as the brick fireplace and red birch floors have all survived. On the exterior, in addition to restoring the walls to their original stucco finish, new wood windows were recreated on the second story to match the originals, as were the wood trellises on both the upper and lower patios. Most of the original windows on the first level could be retained and restored. The front entrance was reconfigured to the south wall of the entry foyer with the new French doors reflecting the same design, construction and materials as the originals, as do new doors found throughout the home. The floor plan of the first level remains intact, with the rooms in the rear portion repurposed. The floor plan upstairs has also been altered. While many contemporary elements have been incorporated, it is obvious that the recent restoration has been executed with extreme care, employing the best craftsmanship and materials available to honor the unique character of this well-built historic residence.







Lorenze & Miriam Barney House, 1913

Frank Mead & Richard Requa
3534 Seventh Avenue

The 1913 Lorenze & Miriam Barney Residence was designed by the prominent San Diego architects Frank Mead and Richard Requa for the son and daughter-in-law of George and Anna Barney. The senior Barneys lived next door at No. 3530 Seventh Avenue. Like their father, sons Lorenze and Philip were involved in real estate and cofounded Barney & Barney Insurance Company, which provided insurance for the 1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition in Balboa Park. Miriam



Barney was also active in the planning of the Exposition as Chair of the Women's Committee. After moving from this home around 1920, Lorenze returned to Seventh Avenue in 1940 and purchased his parents' house in which he lived until his death in 1963.

The Pueblo-inspired Modernistic style of the home reflects the influence of Irving Gill's innovative design concepts as well as Frank Mead's interest in southwest Native American architecture; both Mead and Requa had worked previously alongside the pioneering Modernist architect. Mead and Gill were partners in 1907, and Requa was Gill's



superintendent from 1908 to 1910. Although the small, single-story house has been altered and expanded, many original features are still intact with its strong historic character sensitively preserved on the exterior as well as within the main public interior spaces. The first changes to the residence occurred in 1921 and were conducted by Requa with Herbert Jackson. In more recent decades, the front entrance was reconfigured from the north to the south side because of a wall that had not divide the property originally, and a second-story addition containing bedrooms was added to the rear. This sensitive addition was made with



deference to the significance of the home's architectural pedigree, the addition adheres to the original footprint, and all alterations, such as the historically accurate replica of the original arched wood front door, have been designed to compliment Mead & Requa's aesthetic vision. Notable historic design elements on the interior include rich redwood paneling in the living room, wood floors throughout, and flush wainscoting (*à la* Irving Gill), built-ins, painted wood surfaces; the leaded glass cabinet doors in the dining room have been slightly remodeled with their placement adhering to the original blueprints.

Other Historic Homes on Seventh Avenue

Although not on our tour today, four other historic homes on Seventh Avenue complete the picture of this storied avenue with its amazing group of work by this region's most prominent architects: Irving J. Gill, William S. Hebbard, Frank Mead, Richard Requa, Hazel Waterman, Louis Gill, and Emmor Brook Weaver. Please respect the privacy of all of these homeowners and do not trespass.

Alice Lee Cottage, 1905

3578 Seventh Avenue (north cottage)

Hebbard & Gill

In 1911, Gill was commissioned to enlarge the cottage, extending the building to the north, adding a basement garage down the slope. Gill added a dining room on the first floor, and, upstairs, a bedroom and bath with a sleeping porch on the southeast corner. Architect and engineer Frank P. Allen, Jr., and his family resided here from 1911 to 1915. Allen came to San Diego to work with Bertram Goodhue and Gill as Director of Works for the Panama-California Exposition (1915). The Cabrillo Bridge leading into Balboa Park is probably his most famous design in San Diego.

Katherine Teats Cottage, 1905

3560 Seventh Avenue (south cottage)

Hebbard & Gill

Altered in 1912 by Irving Gill and again by Gill's nephew, Louis Gill, in 1922. Changes enclosed the porch to the south and extended the second story over it. The home was sold to Henry and Ellen Babcock in 1923. Gill's relationship with Miss Lee and Miss Teats continued with the design of a number of houses along a canyon between Albatross and Front Streets.

Hazel Waterman was a draftsman for the Lee house and possibly the two cottages as well. When Hebbard & Gill designed a home for Waldo and Hazel Waterman in 1900, Gill was impressed with her marked ability to understand architectural concepts. After she was widowed in

1903, she took a correspondence course in architectural drafting and worked on several Hebbard & Gill projects.

The Lee and Teats houses also appear to be the first experiments in an area that Gill later became known for: innovative multiple residential designs. Originally one piece of property, the three houses were connected by a U-shaped pergola around a shared garden. Today they are individually owned private residences.

Rev. Frederick & Mary Cossitt House, 1906

3526 Seventh Avenue

Hebbard & Gill

This beautiful two-story home with its original red sandstone retaining walls is one of the premier residences from the firm of Hebbard & Gill. Designed as a series of receding and enlarging cubic shapes with broad flat eaves, the emerging influence of the Prairie Style and the modern trends of Gill's later work can be seen. The interior features extensive use of redwood paneling, a large inglenook that broadens into a living room with a high ceiling, and clerestory windows. The Cossitts were frequent clients of Gill with numerous commissions, including rental properties.

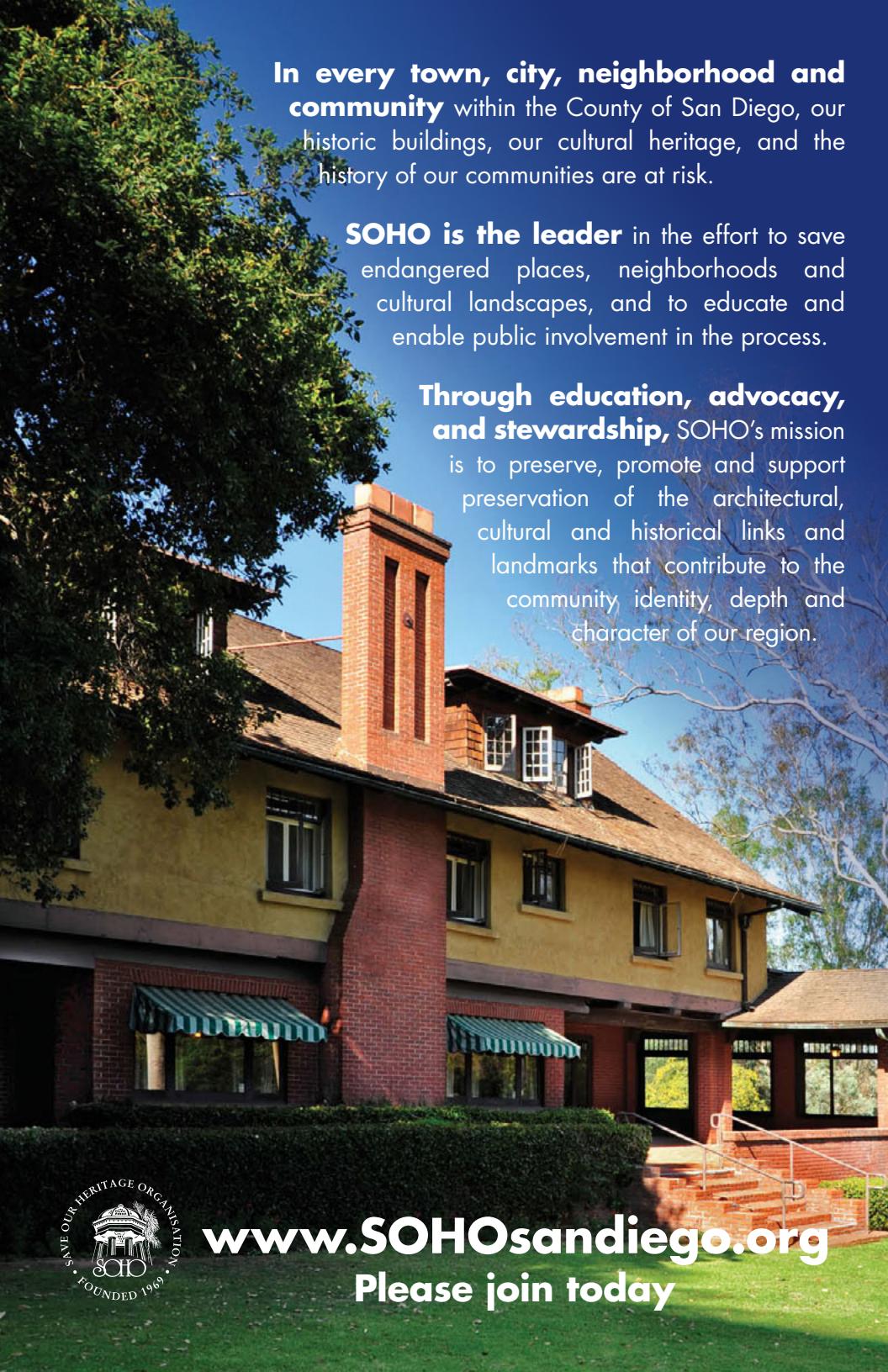
Arthur & Elsa Marston House, 1909

3575 Seventh Avenue

Irving J. Gill

George Marston sold this property in April of 1908 to his son Arthur, who had become vice president of the Marston Company, and his daughter-in-law, Elsa. Like his father, Arthur hired Irving Gill, who was no longer with William Hebbard by this time; the home was completed in December of 1909.

Typical Gill features such as a boxy shape, casement windows, and recessed arched entry can be seen and although Gill produced several presentation renderings for the home with most showing a stucco finish, the Marstons kept to the family's fondness for red brick. In 1929 and 1930, Irving Gill's nephew, Louis Gill, who had been his partner from 1914 to 1919, designed a north wing addition and the separate garage with apartment above.



In every town, city, neighborhood and community within the County of San Diego, our historic buildings, our cultural heritage, and the history of our communities are at risk.

SOHO is the leader in the effort to save endangered places, neighborhoods and cultural landscapes, and to educate and enable public involvement in the process.

Through education, advocacy, and stewardship, SOHO's mission is to preserve, promote and support preservation of the architectural, cultural and historical links and landmarks that contribute to the community identity, depth and character of our region.



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Photo Unidentified woman in front of George Marston House, c. 1930. Coons collection