

Villa Carlotta
Name of Property

Los Angeles County, CA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Mission/ Spanish Colonial Revival

Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: Concrete

Walls: Stucco, Wood

Roof: Clay Tile

Other: Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Villa Carlotta is a two-story single-family house that is approximately 7,000 square feet. The style of the house is Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival. It is located in a small suburb of Los Angeles named Altadena, which is directly south of the Angeles National Forest. Locally renowned architect Myron Hunt designed the house in 1918 as a summer residence for Francis R. Welles and his family, a notable associate and employee of Alexander Graham Bell. The exterior of the house is characterized by its use of natural resources such as arroyo boulders. The buildings fenestration is placed to enhance the indoor/outdoor connection and present views of surrounding landscape. The interior is noted for its original designs and fixtures that remain intact and used presently, particularly those that display the introduction of technological advances in the early 20th century such as the original Alexander Graham Bell telephones built in throughout the house. The detached garage was rebuilt I 1965 and is a non-contributor.

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Narrative Description

Villa Carlotta is located in a small suburb of Los Angeles named Altadena. It is a Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style single-family residence measuring approximately 7,000 square feet. It was designed and constructed in 1918 by renowned architect Myron Hunt as a vacation home for Francis R. Welles and his family. The house is a two-storied rectangular structure with a cross-gabled roof and includes a central ridge chimney. The house includes a daylight basement, four bedrooms, four and one half bathrooms, servant's quarters (two bedrooms, one bathroom), kitchen, a butler's pantry, sunroom, library, and formal dining room.

The site on which the house was built is slanted and siting was adjusted accordingly to accommodate the house, backyard, back patio and garden, and pool. The site also includes a plethora of dense vegetation that can be found at the front of the property as well as the back of the property. (See Section 7 Continuation Sheet)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information

important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

B. Removed from its original location

C. A birthplace or grave

D. A cemetery

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

F. A commemorative property

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G. Less than 50 years old or
achieving significance within
the past 50 years

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked
above.)

N/A

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Period of Significance

1918

Architect/Builder

Myron Hunt, Architect

Significant Dates

N/A

Period of Significance (justification)

Period of significance is determined to include initial construction of the house in 1918.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Villa Carlotta is a single-family two-story residence under National Register Criterion C at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1918. Designed and constructed in 1918, the house is an excellent example of early 20th century residential architecture by master architect Myron Hunt, incorporating Craftsman and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival style features. The home was the summer and later full-time residence of Francis R. Welles, an associate of Alexander Graham Bell who lived and traveled throughout Europe to promote the use of the technology that Bell invented. The property retains distinctive original features and fixtures, including an original oak library with built-in shelves, bathroom fixtures such as tile and toilet features, and kitchen pieces such as the stove and oven. Arroyo boulders incorporated into the exterior primary façade, original Alexander Graham Bell telephones, and a large oak library with original built-in floor to ceiling shelves. Modifications include a 1946 elevator and a garage rebuilt in 1965, but overall the residence retains a high degree of historic integrity.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

(See continuation sheet)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

“BTMC and ATEA—Antwerp’s Twin Telephone Companies.” Information obtained 2009.
Provided by Judith O’Neill, 2012. <<http://strowger--net.telefoonmuseum.com>>

Carpenter, Thomas D. Pasadena: Resort Hotels and Paradise. Castle Green Times, 1984.

Clark, Alson. “Myron Hunt’s Pasadena.” Informational Brochure. 18 Nov. 1984. Obtained in 2012.

County Assessor Records. Records obtained in 2012 from Office of the Assessor.

“European Bell and Western Electric Phones.” Information obtained 2009. Provided by Judith O’Neill, 2012. <http://www.bobsoldphones.net/Pages/Bell_WE_files/BellWEHistory.htm>

Gebhard, David, ed. Myron Hunt, 1868-1952: The Search for a Regional Architecture. Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1984.

Gelernter, Mark. A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1999.

City of Pasadena. “Heritage: A Short History of Pasadena.”
<<http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/History/>>

Iardella, Albert B., ed. “Western Electric and the Bell System.” New York: Western Electric Company, 1964.

Masson, Kathryn. The California House. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2011.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

“Myron Hunt Remembered.” Brochure. Pasadena Heritage, 1984.

“P.A. L.A.C. Arch. Touring—Villa Carlotta.” Tour Brochure, 2000. Provided by Judith O’Neill, 2012.

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Smith, George David. The Anatomy of a Business Strategy: Bell, Western Electric, and the Origins of the American Telephone Industry. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.

Villa Carlotta Informational Brochure. Provided by Judith O'Neill, 2012.

“Welles Family History.” Provided by Judith O'Neill, 2012.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 25,609 sq.ft.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of Villa Carlotta is shown as the dotted line on the accompanying map entitled "Tax Assessor." Legal description: MAP 1 ALTADENA LOT COM SE ON NE LINE OF LOT 4 BLK 27, 22 FT FROM NW LINE OF SD LOT TH NE PARALLEL WITH SE LINE OF RAYMOND AVE 16 FT TH SE ON SW LINE OF MENDOCINO ST 131 FT TH SW PARALLEL LOT 5.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is dictated by the city lot parcel and includes sufficient land to include the two-story residence and accompanying features of the property such as the swimming pool and detached garage.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stephanie Cisneros
organization: Historic Preservation Partners
street & number: 419 Concord Avenue
city or town: Monrovia state: CA zip code: 91104
e-mail scisneros123@gmail.com
telephone: (626) 605-5007
date: December 29, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

(See continuation sheet)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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The primary (north) façade of Villa Carlotta features a recessed entrance with a geometric wood surround that is located slightly right of the center of the house. Windows include a collection of single pane side-hung wood casement windows distributed across the north façade. Above the entrance is an overhanging cantilevered deck that extends over the entrance and across the center of the façade. The house's exterior is finished throughout in a warm gray stucco on the second story and large arroyo stone boulders clad the first story. The west and east facades of the house contain the same exterior finishes as that of the primary façade, along with a similar window type and distribution. Also included in these two facades are top-hung wood casement "lookout" windows from the basement. The south façade offers access to the daylight basement and includes similar window type and distribution as that of the other facades. The same stucco and arroyo stone construction can be found on the east and west ends of the south façade, while the center of the façade is purely stucco clad. The rear of the house accommodates single pane French doors that lead from the interior of the house to the backyard. The roof is constructed in a gabled manner and finished in clay tiles.

Original designs and fixtures of the interior remain almost completely unaltered, although main living spaces have been refurbished. The first interior space experience is a large entry hall with a sizeable wooden staircase, wooden-seated landing, crown molding and a chandelier. Six-foot wide glass pocket doors separate the main entryway from the library that sits southwest of the entryway. The library is an 800 square foot room with wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling oak built-in bookcases and an original Batchelder tile fireplace. A music room can be found immediately north of the library and has floor-to-ceiling single pane windows framed with quarter sawn oak as well as an original Batchelder tile fireplace. Also located on the first floor is a sunroom directly south of the entryway; a powder room located northwest of the entryway; a formal dining room directly east of the entryway; a butler's pantry east of the formal dining room and a formal kitchen north of the butler's pantry; and finally a service room and walk-in dry pantry located southeast of the formal kitchen.

The second floor is composed of three bedrooms, each with an en suite bathroom, a fourth bedroom that is currently being used as a sitting room, all located on the west side of the house; and servants quarters contain two bedrooms and an extra bathroom for the shared use of both servants bedrooms that are placed on either side of a long hallway on the east side of the house. Each room on the second floor is characterized by smooth plaster walls, painted wood moldings, and wood sash windows. The second floor is divided into two areas of different character. The first is composed of the main bedrooms and bathrooms, which are larger with more elaborate features such as wood molding and a combination of louvered and multi-paneled doors. The second is composed of the servants quarters marked by a narrowing of the hallway, a difference in floor material, and an overall simplification of trims and ornamentation.

An attic lies above the second story, but not high enough to be considered a third story. The attic is entirely floored and includes two small storage areas. The finished basement includes partitioned storage rooms and is finished in part concrete, part plaster. It also includes a laundry room, and a bathroom.

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There are seven original Alexander Graham Bell telephones located throughout the house, which have been transformed into a modern day intercom system for the entire house. Other features of the house include an elevator that was installed in 1946, an original basement that houses a laundry room, cast iron stove, wine cellar, bathroom, and twelve original gravity furnaces. An attic with two walk-in cedar lined closets can also be found in the house as well as a back wooden staircase leading from the formal kitchen on the first floor to the servants’ quarters on the second floor. There is a laundry chute that travels between the basement and the second floor as; a screened-in porch that leads from the outer east side of the property into the kitchen; and exterior concrete stairs leading down into the basement from the ground level.

Additions and alterations to the house include the following: addition of an elevator at the west end of the house in 1946; addition of a pool in 1963; demolition of the previously existing detached garage and rebuilding of a new detached garage in 1965 that has been finished with a shake roof, concrete floor, stucco exterior; and installation of a new clay tile roof in 2012. The reconstructed garage is a non-contributing property due to its construction date, but other alterations do not represent architecturally significant changes to the property.

Integrity Analysis

Location

The residence located at 234 East Mendocino Street in Altadena is in its original location and has not been moved. Therefore, it retains its integrity of location.

Design

The design of 234 East Mendocino Street has not been substantially altered from its original appearance. Exterior modifications include replacing the original clay tile roof with similarly designed and colored clay tiles, the demolition of the original detached garage and construction of a new detached garage, and construction of a private swimming pool. These modifications do not interfere with the original design intent of the architect. Therefore, the building retains its original integrity of design.

Setting

The immediate setting of 234 East Mendocino Street has not changed dramatically. The setting around Villa Carlotta has developed over the years as a residential area and has retained this residential setting for the duration of Villa Carlotta’s existence. Therefore, the building retains its integrity of setting.

Materials

The materials used in the original construction of the house have not been significantly altered or changed, the 2012 roof uses new tile but like materials. Therefore, integrity of materials remains intact.

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Workmanship

A great majority of the building's original features and materials are visible. Later additions and alterations have not compromised the original intent of the building. The integrity of workmanship of Villa Carlotta remains intact.

Feeling

Villa Carlotta was originally constructed as a part-time summer residence for the Welles family, and later became a full-time residence for the family. It remains a single-family residence and retains its integrity of feeling.

Association

The residence was originally constructed for the Welles family, of whom Francis R. Welles was an associate of Alexander Graham Bell's. The building retains integrity of association.

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Criterion C: Architecture

Villa Carlotta displays an excellent example of a well-designed residence that incorporates characteristics of Craftsman and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Having been designed by Myron Hunt in 1918, Villa Carlotta portrays the holistic and nature-based experience that was notable in many of Hunts’ designs throughout his career in greater Pasadena. Having studied in Italy after graduating from MIT with a degree in architecture, Hunt developed an eye and passion for the Mediterranean style seen in Italy that upheld a high regard for and relationship with the natural environment, which he would eventually incorporate into his design of Villa Carlotta. After his time in Italy, Hunt returned to the United States and gained some office experience in different architectural firms before he moved to Pasadena and began a partnership with Elmer Grey. Together, Hunt and Grey established their residential style in such a way that “took advantage of the climate by opening out to patios and gardens which [they] considered integral parts of their whole schemes.”¹ Hunt recognized the optimistic weather in Pasadena and in greater Los Angeles and wanted his designs to take advantage of it all: sunlight, warmth, and breezes. Hunt’s life and career are embodied in his designs that make up an integral part of Pasadena heritage in particular such as California Institute of Technology (formerly known as Throop Polytechnic Institute), the Huntington Library, Occidental College, and the Pasadena Public Library. Myron Hunt “pioneered in developing a style based on the Mediterranean vernacular and the vernacular of California’s Spanish past.”²

Villa Carlotta encompasses characteristics and features of both the Craftsman and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Myron Hunt’s studies of Italian vernacular, such as the Mediterranean style, also played a significant role in the design because of its ability to acknowledge and take advantage of warm climates.

At the time Villa Carlotta was constructed, Altadena and greater Pasadena were experiencing population and economic growths, causing them to grow from small towns into cities. Tourists were beginning to settle full time or part time in these areas and entities such as culture, education, politics, and social organizations were established and prospering due to the growth. Architecturally, Altadena and Pasadena were undergoing an uprising of styles that incorporated and praised the local weather. The American Arts and Crafts movement was far underway and had become the vernacular of the area, while the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles followed the Arts and Crafts movement in popularity. Myron Hunt’s architectural mannerisms, particularly those used in his design for Villa Carlotta, recognized the growing importance of acclimating designs to fit the warm weather and take advantage of the lush environment within which these towns were flourishing.³

¹ Clark, Alson. “Myron Hunt’s Pasadena.”
² Clark, Alson. “Myron Hunt’s Pasadena.”
³ Clark, Alson. “Myron Hunt’s Pasadena.”

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The Craftsman style, used by Myron Hunt, stemmed from the Arts and Crafts movement that was developed in England by William Morris in the mid 1800s, which was a direct result of the Industrial Revolution. In America, the Craftsman style began at the end of the Victorian era—in the late 19th century—as a tribute to the movement that had developed in England. This new style focused on praising the physicality of workmanship and the use of natural materials and resources to develop a simplistic yet elegant design for the American middle class. Craftsman design is defined by “exposed rafters, simple wooden details like triangular knee braces, broad front porches, and shallow overhanging roofs.”⁴ The Craftsman style displays a great appreciation of nature and natural resources and of the physical labor builders undergo to achieve this simplistic elegance.

The Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles also incorporated into Hunt’s technique developed in the early 20th century. The Spanish Colonial Revival developed from the earlier Mission Revival style. The Mission Revival style was a later reinstatement of the earlier Mission style established by early missionaries in the West, which was characterized by enclosed courtyards, large adobe walls with expansive simple plaster surfaces, low-pitched clay tile roofs, and a formal arrangement of interior rooms and halls. The Mission Revival style took design aspects and characteristics from the architecture of the earlier missions and directed them toward warm climate, luxurious yet simplistic, residential living.⁵ The Spanish Colonial Revival style shares the same attitude toward warm climates as the Mission Revival style. It draws design influences from earlier styles such as the Spanish Baroque, Spanish Colonial, and Churrigueresque styles. Spanish Colonial Revival designs envelope a number of features and characteristics including smooth plaster wall finishes, low-pitched clay tile roofs, and terra cotta ornaments.⁶ Both the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival styles consider and take advantage of warm climates through design and materials used.

⁴ Gelertner, Mark. *A History of American Architecture*. 224
⁵ Gelertner, Mark. *A History of American Architecture*.
⁶ Gelertner, Mark. *A History of American Architecture*.

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Figure Log

Historic Photographs

1. Villa Carlotta
2. Altadena, Los Angeles County, California
3. Photographer Unknown
4. Date Unknown
5. Historic photograph of the south façade, camera facing northwest
6. Figure #1



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Figure Log

6. Photo #2



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Current Photographs

1. Villa Carlotta
2. Altadena, Los Angeles County, California
3. Stephanie Cisneros
4. November 2012
5. Primary (north) façade, camera facing southwest
6. Photo #1

5. Primary (north) façade, camera facing southeast
6. Photo #2

5. South façade, camera facing north
6. Photo #3

5. East and south facades, camera facing northwest
6. Photo #4

5. West facade, camera facing northwest
6. Photo #5

5. Backyard, camera facing south
6. Photo #6

5. Entryway, camera facing north
6. Photo #7

5. Entryway, Staircase, camera facing northwest
6. Photo #8

5. Sunroom, camera facing west
6. Photo #9

5. Sunroom, camera facing east
6. Photo #10

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5. Library, camera facing northwest
6. Photo #11

5. Library, camera facing southeast
6. Photo #12