

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Briggs Mansion **DRAFT**

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2015 21st Street

City or town: Sacramento State: California County: Sacramento

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, 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 ☐

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Summary Paragraph

See document: Continuation Sheet Section 7, p.1

Narrative Description

See document: Continuation Sheet Section 7, p.1-6.

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

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1914-1928

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

unknown

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.)

See document: Continuation Sheet Section 8, p.7.

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

See document: Continuation Sheet Section 8, p.7-12.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See document: Continuation Sheet Section 9, p.13-14.

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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Acreage of Property less than one acre

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: 38.564757

Longitude: -121.483175

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

Sacramento County Parcel Number: 010-0101-001

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the extents of the city lot retaining its original property lines.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Karen Benouar
organization: N/A
street & number: 2051 Lambeth Way
city or town: Carmichael state: CA zip code: 95608
e-mail: karen.benouar@gmail.com
telephone: 916-524-7834
date: 7/1/25

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

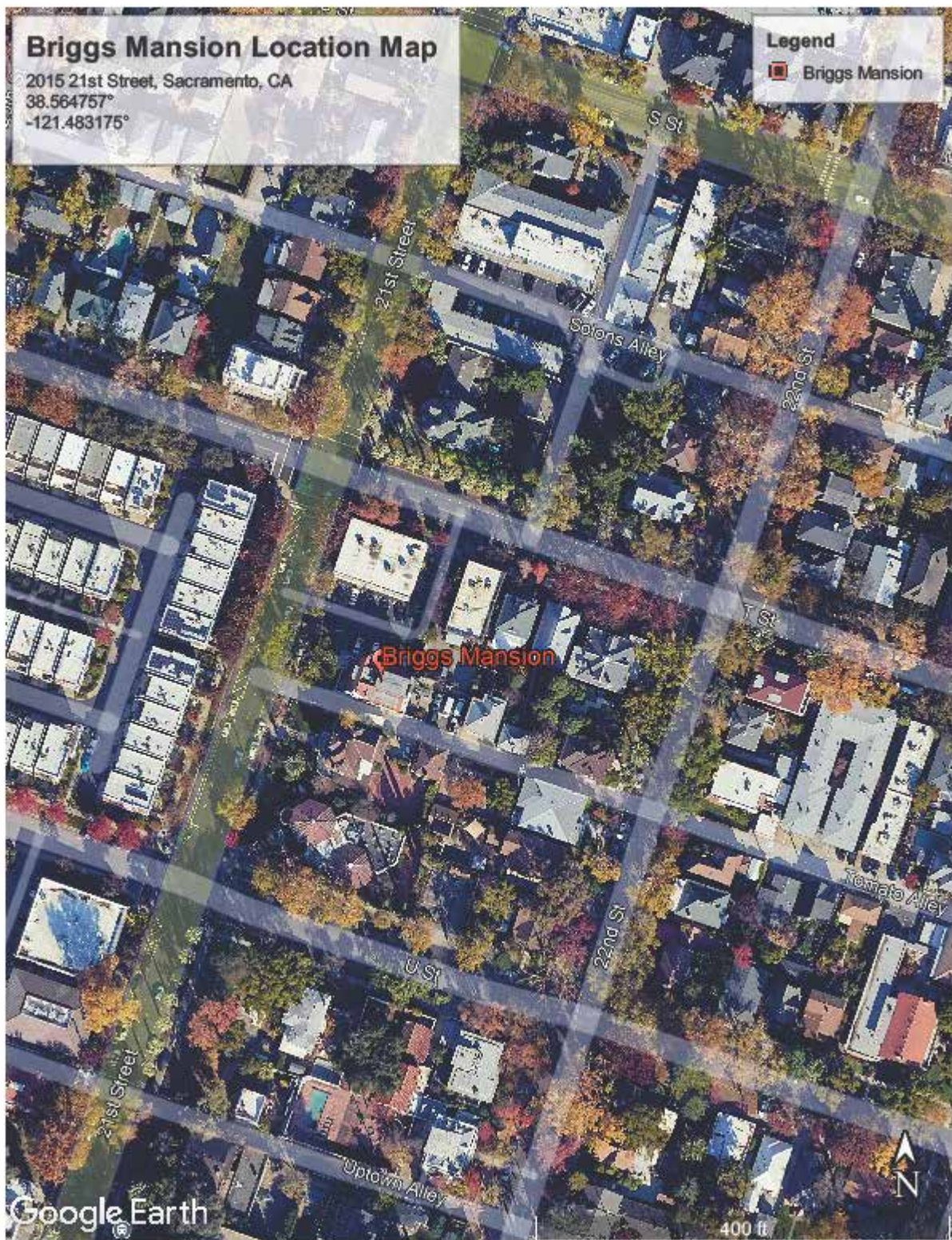
Maps: A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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.)

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

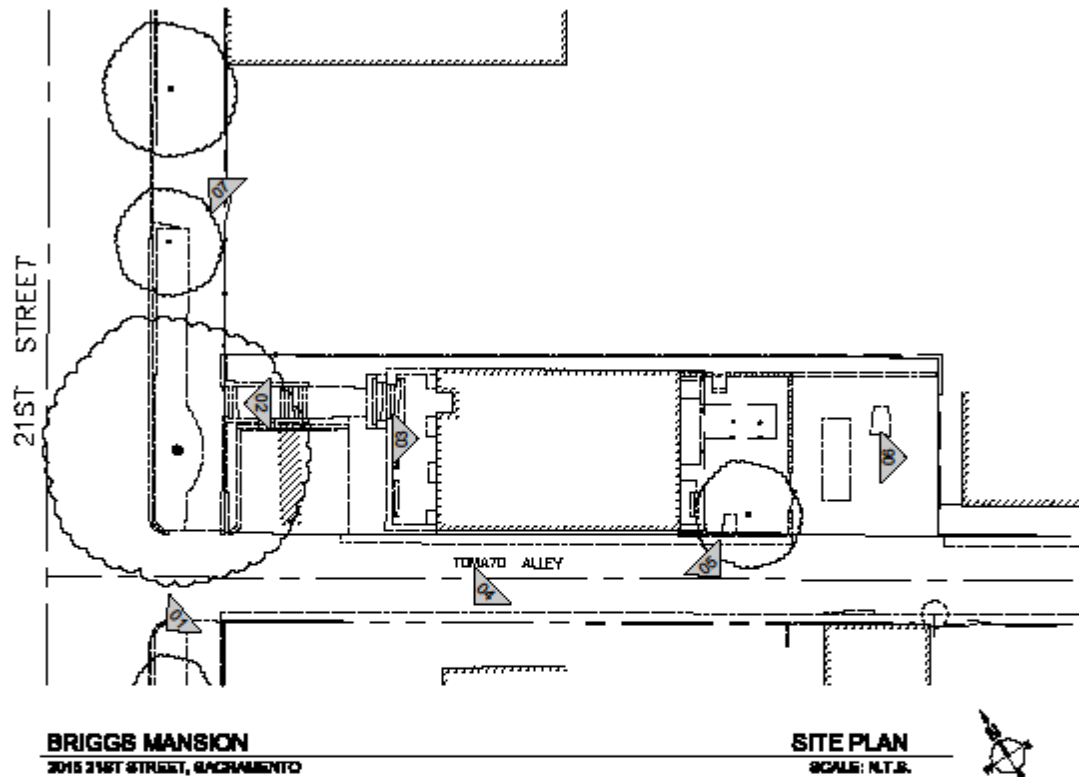


Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024

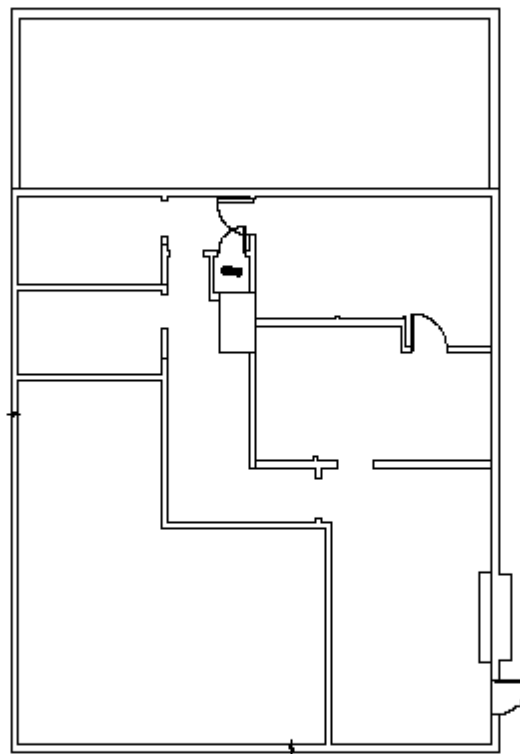


Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024



BRIGGS MANSION
2015 21ST STREET, SACRAMENTO

BASEMENT PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.

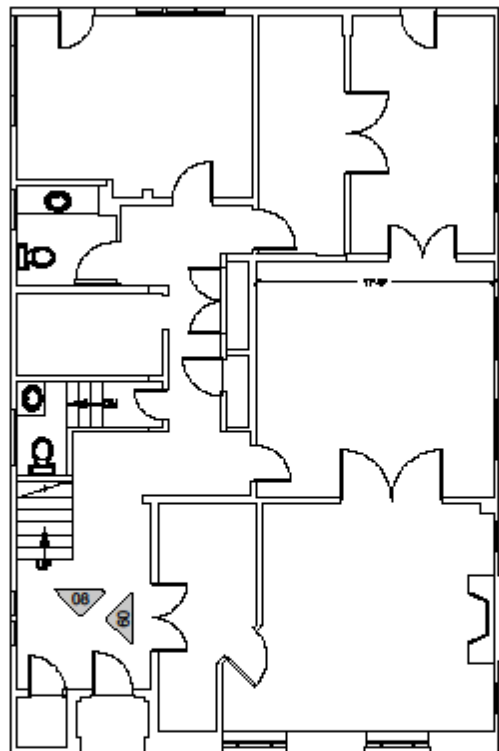


Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024



BRIGGS MANSION
2015 21ST STREET, SACRAMENTO

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.

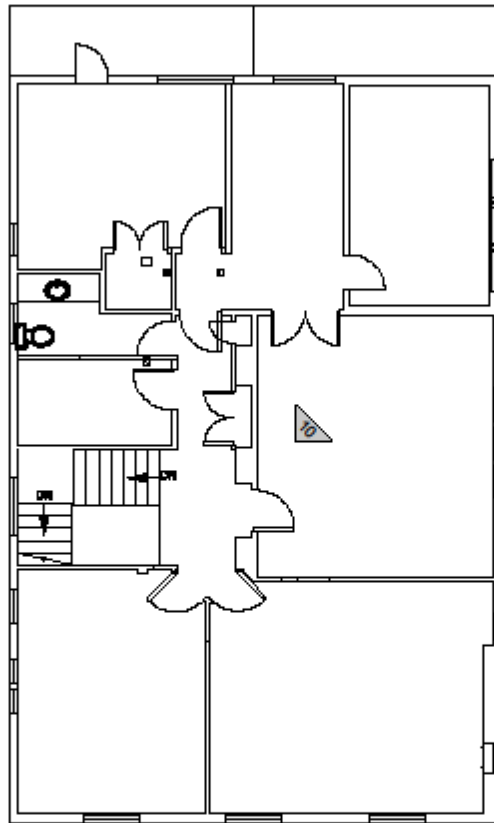


Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024



BRIGGS MANSION
2015 21ST STREET, SACRAMENTO

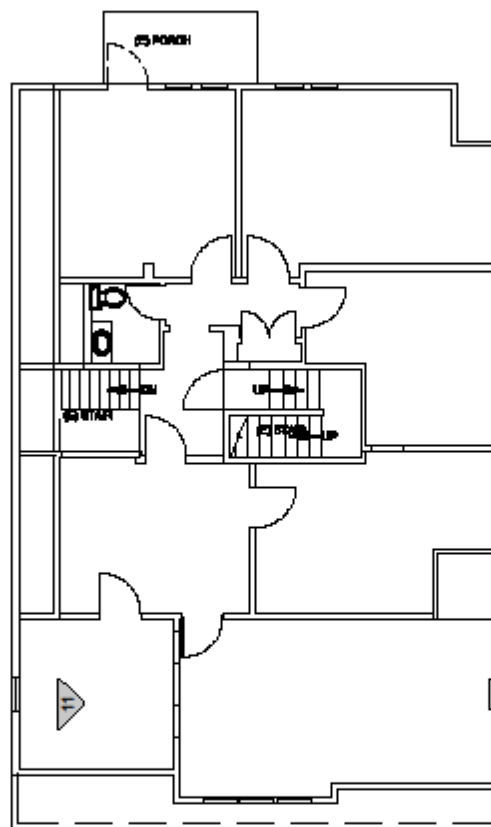
SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.



Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024

BRIGGS MANSION
2018 21ST STREET, SACRAMENTO

THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.

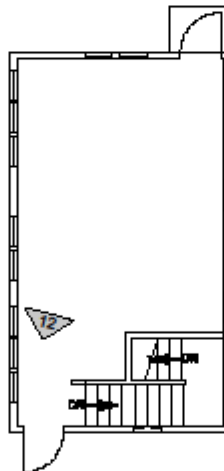


Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
2015 21st Street Sacramento, CA

Part 1 Photo Key
November 2024



BRIGGS MANSION
2015 21ST STREET, SACRAMENTO

FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.



Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

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.



No. 001: West and South Elevations of Briggs Mansion, looking east.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 002: West Elevation of Briggs Mansion, looking east from the sidewalk.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 003: Entry porch looking towards 21st Street, facing west.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 004: South Elevation east massing, looking northeast.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 005: South Elevation, looking northwest.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 006: East Elevation, looking west.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 007: West and North Elevations of Briggs Mansion, looking southeast.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 008: Entry way and main stair at first floor interior, facing east.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 009: Typical interior conditions at first floor with fireplace in background, looking south.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 010: Typical interior conditions at second floor, looking southeast.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 011: Typical third floor conditions, facing north.

Briggs Mansion
Name of Property

Sacramento, CA
County and State



No. 012: Typical fourth floor conditions, looking east.

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento, CA

County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: Briggs Mansion

City or Vicinity: Sacramento

County: Sacramento

State: CA

Photographer: Karen Benouar

Date Photographed: October 21, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BirggsMansion_001).

West and South Elevations of Briggs Mansion, looking east.

2 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_002).

West elevation of Briggs Mansion, looking east from the sidewalk.

3 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_003).

Entry porch looking towards 21st Street, facing west.

4 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_004).

South elevation east massing, looking northeast.

5 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_005).

South Elevation, looking northwest.

6 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_006).

East Elevation, looking west.

7 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_007).

West and North Elevations of Briggs Mansion, looking southeast.

8 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_008).

Entry way and main stair at first floor interior, facing east.

9 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_009).

Typical interior conditions at first floor with fireplace in background, looking south.

10 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_010).

Typical interior conditions at second floor, looking southeast.

11 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_011).

Typical third floor conditions, facing north.

12 of 12 (CA_Sacramento_BriggsMansion_012).

Typical fourth floor conditions, looking east.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 17. Narrative Description Summary Paragraph

The Briggs Mansion is a grand, four-story residential structure within Sacramento's Poverty Ridge Historic District. Completed in 1915, the building displays strong French Eclectic style characteristics, with Italian Renaissance influences evident in its design details. The mansion occupies a prominent raised lot along a tree-lined street defined by substantial early 20th-century residences.

Constructed of brick with a stucco finish, the mansion exhibits multi-light wood windows and doors, decorative wood elements such as exposed rafter tails and coffered fascia, with a steeply pitched clay tile gabled roof. Its size, materials, and ornamentation reflect the affluence and social standing of the Briggs family, for whom the house was built.

The structure and exterior materials are intact and in good condition. While interior integrity has been compromised due to repeated fire damage, the *overall integrity* of the Briggs Mansion remains high. The primary (west) and secondary (south) facades preserve their original massing, rooflines, finishes and ornamental detailing. The character-defining elements of the French Eclectic and Italian Renaissance styles remain legible.

The mansion continues to convey its historic association with Sacramento's early 20th-century elite and the architectural prestige of the Poverty Ridge neighborhood. The building retains its historic setting and feeling among other impressive houses from the era along the street, and within the larger neighborhood context. It stands as a rare and grand example of a French Eclectic residence with Italian Renaissance flourishes in the city of Sacramento.

Exterior Description

The house has a stucco exterior with a clay flat-tiled gabled roof and a small, flat fourth story with modified bitumen roofing (part of a later building addition). The mansion's overall massing is rectangular, with a steeply pitched roof line typical of the French Eclectic architectural style. The long side of the gabled roof is street facing (north-south) with a cross gable along the alley side (east-west) of the building. The eave overhangs feature exposed rafter tails with curved profiles. Eave soffits are coffered with painted wood trims.

The first and second floors are three bays wide and five bays long. The third story has a street-facing dormer with three small windows. Another third-story dormer faces south toward the alley and is larger, containing three bays of windows. The fourth story is a small later addition to the building, two bays wide and three bays long with a compact outdoor roof terrace facing west.

From the sidewalk along the primary facade, the mansion is approached via a wide concrete stair with painted concrete sidewalls and iron handrails. The three-tiered stairs align with the northmost bay of the building and terminate at the entry porch. The entry porch spans the length of the primary façade. An open concrete balustrade with decorative balusters encloses the perimeter. The floor surface is integrally

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 2

colored and scored concrete to resemble the pattern of a square tiled floor. The uncovered stucco porch with ornamental balustrades, along with the tiled, side-gabled roof and stucco exterior suggests Italian Renaissance influences.

The primary (west) façade is symmetrical. The first floor has three bays of arched openings with decorative keystones. The northmost opening is recessed with a barrel-vaulted entry that contains the main door surrounded by decorative wood moldings and low relief false columns. The other two openings feature full height arched-topped wood windows. The southeast window is original to the mansion, however the southwest window is a replica of the original. The central sashes are two by five lites tall, and the side sashes are one by five lites tall. A painted concrete sill runs along the length of each window opening. The window openings are topped with rounded fabric awnings matching the curve of the arched openings.

A decorative band separates the first and second floors on the primary façade. Three symmetrical wood windows are centered over the first-floor openings, continuing the symmetrical three-bay appearance. The rectangular wood windows are double-hung, eight-over-eight lite sashes with painted wood moldings and sills. Hardware attached to the window trims as well as ghosting on the façade indicate decorative shutters were present at one time. A half-round gutter leads into rectangular downspouts flanking the north and south ends of the primary façade. The gutters have decorative sheet metal leaders and metal brackets fastening the gutters to the building face. The third-floor dormer at the primary façade is positioned over the central bay and matches the aesthetic and finishes of the façade below. An opening contains three wood awning-style window sashes with six lites each. The fourth-floor façade is not visible from the street, however it contains a window and an access door to the small terrace.

The secondary façade of the mansion faces the alley to the south. The materials and detailing are the same as the primary façade. The western mass over the long gable features two bays of fenestration and a central chimney with stucco finish running from the basement level to the roof. One window bay at the first floor has a wood casement window (two lites by five lites). The window opening in the opposite bay has intact wood trim, however the sash has been removed and covered over due to damage from a building fire. At the second-floor level, there is one rectangular window opening with intact wood trim, also covered due to fire damage. Ghosting in the stucco façade opposite this window suggests a window in this bay was present at some time. The third floor contains two small quarter-round wood windows flanking the chimney. A basement access door and basement window, respectively in each bay, have been covered over.

The eastern mass of the cross gable contains five bays along the secondary façade. The first floor displays two matching wood casement windows along the first two bays, two lites by five lites at each sash. The third bay contains a three-sash casement window, also two lites by five lites, but with a higher sill level than the adjacent windows. The west bay of the second floor has a four-sash window, with many missing sashes. The east bay contains window opening with three double-hung six over six lite wood windows. The third-floor dormer displays three bays of casement windows: a central opening with

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 3

five casement sashes (two lites by three lites) flanked by openings with two casement sashes (also two lites by three lites). The fourth floor of the secondary façade has three bays of double-hung windows (six lites over six lites). Adjacent to the south building wall is a high stucco wall running along the alley, obscuring a portion of the rear yard from view.

The rear (east) façade of the building contains a complex steel and concrete exterior staircase connecting all four floor levels of the building. The staircase connecting the first and second stories was added in 1926 and features a steel and glass enclosure. More additions were made in 1944 to access the third floor. The addition of a staircase to access the fourth floor occurred between the mid-1970s and 2015. Massing along this façade tapers up with the gabled roofline, with a four bay first, second and third floor, and a two bay fourth floor. While the façade itself is symmetrical, the fenestration and door opening patterns are not. The first floor contains boarded over windows with a simple door opening at the north. The second floor displays multi-lite wood windows/doors. Some windows appear intact while others are boarded over or missing. The doors are boarded over. The two south bays are enclosed within the steel and glass landing. The third floor has what appear to be replacement wood sash windows (two lites over four lites) in the south two bays, with a boarded door opening at the north bay. The fourth floor has a boarded door opening to the south and two replacement windows (two lites over three lites) to the north. The east façade materials and detailing are simplified versions of the primary façade, with no decorative banding separating the first and second floors. The rear yard at the east side of the site has been fully paved and is used as a parking area. There is a concrete sidewalk and ramp along the building at the east façade.

The north façade of the mansion contains the same materials and detailing as the primary façade. The exposed rafter tails display fire damage. The facade has a less organized grouping of bays than the primary building façades. The western mass has a central first floor window- a double casement window with leaded glass that has been warped by fire damage. The second floor has a double casement wood window (each sash two lites over four lites) with a smaller casement window to the east (each sash one lite over three lites). Above this at the third-floor level is a centered wood window opening with a missing sash. The eastern mass of the cross gable displays various boarded window openings at the three lower floors. A large glass block window sits at the easternmost bay of the façade at the first floor (a later addition). A large wood casement window with a corbeled window box is situated at the westernmost bay of the second floor. The fenestration at the dormer at the third-floor level is a symmetrical mirror of the south façade of the dormer.

Interior Description

Damage from multiple fires (most recently in 2015) have destroyed a large portion of the building interiors- few architectural features remain, and minimal finishes are intact. Walls have been cleared down to the studs and subfloors and ceiling framing are exposed.

The basement is largely inaccessible due to the condition of the staircase. The basement floors and walls are concrete and brick. A large portion of the north and west of the basement is a crawl space. Beyond this, there is a hall running east-west with office spaces and a mechanical room flanking the hall.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 4

At the first floor, the interior staircase leading to the second floor is original and possesses decorative qualities but is in poor shape due to fire damage. The staircase has a broken volute railing at the bottom newel post, polished wood handrails with slim, tapered wood spindles and stairs with molded nosings. A brick fireplace is located in the southwest segment of the mansion along the south wall. The only other intact notable feature at the first-floor level is remnants of the ceiling framing for a barrel-vaulted ceiling in the southeast corner.

Wall framing at the first-floor level indicates a floor plan with an entry foyer at the north bay of the west façade with staircase directly beyond. Adjacent to the stair is a hall connecting multiple office spaces to the east, south and west, with restrooms tucked behind the stair to the north.

The main stair leads to the second-floor level, with a central hall and office wall framing to the east, south and west. Much of the third-floor interior was rebuilt following a fire in 1992, including the staircase. The framing is similar to the second floor, with a central hall and flanking offices. A central stair opposite the main stair leads from the third floor to the fourth-floor addition. The fourth floor plate is significantly smaller than the other building stories, with a single open office space and a west door leading to a small roof terrace.

Alterations

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, 2015 21st Street had many owners. Most of these owners made changes to the property, including dormer additions, story additions, and fire damage repairs. It is likely that many of these owners completed the changes without building permits, as there are no permits on record for most of the alterations. A series of photographs from the mid-1970s and mid-1990s contain much of the alteration evidence, but exact dates of the alterations are unknown and can only be inferred.

The Briggs family purchased 2015 21st Street in 1911 and constructed a single-family residence in the French Eclectic style with Italian Renaissance influences (known today as the Briggs Mansion) between 1914 and 1915. The Briggs family made one major alteration during their residency: the addition of the steel enclosed balcony to the mansion's east façade in 1926.¹

The Briggs family sold the mansion in 1928 to the Standard School for Private Secretaries.² In 1929, they sold the mansion to the Margaret Place Secretarial School, where it remained as such until 1945.³ Between 1915 and 1944, the attic was likely converted into a living or office space, turning it into the third floor. The owners of the Margaret Place Secretarial School added a staircase in 1944 to access the

¹ 2015 21st Street Record of Subsequent Permits Issued, CTY0007, Cabinet 68: B: 1: C, Drawer 1, Sacramento (Calif.) Building Division Records Collection, Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento, CA.

² *The Jewish News of Northern California*, April 26, 1929, 103.

³ "Requiem Mass Is Slated for Margaret Place," *The Sacramento Bee*, April 1, 1967, 24.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento, CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 5

third-floor west balcony from the ground floor.⁴ The home was sold in 1945 and converted back to a single-family home. In 1960, it was sold again and converted into a boarding house, where it remained as such until 1968.⁵

In 1969, new owners remodeled the Briggs Mansion to be used as office space.⁶ Various tenants included photography studios, counseling services, attorneys, and travel agents who remained in the Briggs Mansion through 2015. Between 1979 and 2015, the mansion's exterior saw alterations that primarily affected the rear facade and upper stories. The alterations remained compatible with the French Eclectic and Italian Renaissance architectural styles and retained the integrity of the primary and secondary facades.

Although it is unknown when the third and fourth stories were added, they both are present in photos from the mid-1970s. Between the mid-1970s and 2015, the owners decided to enlarge the penthouse on the fourth floor to lay flush with the west side of the building. They also removed a rear chimney to allow for the extension of the fourth-story penthouse on the north side. Furthermore, the third-floor windows were replaced. The addition of a staircase to the east facade during this period allowed the balconies on the third and fourth floors to connect.

The mansion has been damaged by multiple fires. The first fire, believed to be set by an arsonist, afflicted the Briggs Mansion in 1992. Only the third floor suffered damage, and repairs followed in 1992 and 1993.⁷ The second fire in 2015 proved to be more damaging. There is evidence of fire damage in all parts of the building from the basement to the fourth floor. Many of the interior staircases have been lost to the fire, the exposed rafters above the second story are charred on the north facade, and much of the basement's ceiling is burned. The third and fourth floors did not suffer as much damage, but many of the walls contain evidence of burning. Little of historic significance remains inside the mansion because of the extent of the damage.

Shutters on the three second story, west-facing windows were removed between 2015 and 2018. Each window originally had wood shutters carved with crescent moons. Conversion of the back yard to a parking lot occurred between 1976 and the present. The owners removed trees and fencing and replaced them with an open concrete parking lot. Furthermore, between 2018 and the present, the plants below the porch and lining the front walkway were removed. Exterior stucco replacement occurred in 2008, though the extent of patching and replacement is unknown.⁸

⁴ 2015 21st Street Record of Subsequent Permits Issued, Sacramento (Calif.) Building Division Records Collection.

⁵ "1/2 Price," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 3, 1949, 37; "Rooms," *The Sacramento Bee*, November 26, 1964, 83.

⁶ 2015 21st Street Record of Subsequent Permits Issued, Sacramento (Calif.) Building Division Records Collection.

⁷ "Historic Mansion Fire Being Probed," *The Sacramento Bee*, December 17, 1991, B3.

⁸ Building Permit COM-0806852, City of Sacramento, Community Development Department, May 21, 2008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 6

Conclusion

Although the Briggs Mansion has endured alterations to its exterior, its integrity remains strong. The stately setting, building massing, distinct roofline and primary architectural features and materials remain intact. Primary and secondary façades retain much of their original character and historic materials. The east and north (tertiary facades) have undergone more visible modifications and have experienced more loss from fire damage than the other facades. Alterations over time were completed in a manner compatible with the French Eclectic and Italian Renaissance styles, and most of the alterations do not take away from the Briggs Mansion's overall feel. Unfortunately, the interior has suffered extensive damage due to two fires, thus possesses little significance. Regardless of the losses at the interior, the Briggs mansion's exterior portrays the feeling and association of the larger Poverty Ridge neighborhood and stands as a grand example of French Eclectic and Italian Renaissance architectural styles.

8. Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Briggs Mansion is significant at the local level under Criterion C in the area of significance of Architecture. It is an excellent and rare example of the French Eclectic architectural style with Italian Renaissance influences in Sacramento. The period of significance, 1915–1928, spans the construction of the building through its role in shaping Sacramento’s upper-class residential development.

The mansion is a contributing resource to the Poverty Ridge Historic District, a neighborhood characterized by a high concentration of large, architecturally distinctive single-family residences. The development of Poverty Ridge reflects the early 20th-century shift in Sacramento’s residential planning as the city expanded beyond its original 1848 boundaries. This shift was shaped by increasing industrialization, the arrival of streetcars, and a growing middle and upper class seeking planned, parklike environments. Poverty Ridge became the neighborhood of choice for Sacramento’s elite, and the Briggs Mansion stood out even within this affluent context.

Character defining features found on the Briggs Mansion representative of the French Eclectic Style include the steeply pitched roof, stucco wall cladding, symmetrical arrangement of fenestration at the primary façade, wood windows and doors with divided lights, and arched colonnade of openings along the primary façade with faux keystones.

Italian Renaissance influences can be seen in the widely overhanging eaves with exposed decorative rafter tails, clay tile roof, symmetrical massing, upper story windows smaller and in deference to the first-floor windows and arched openings at the first-floor entry porch. The mansion serves as a premiere example of the style, size, quality and setting represented in the neighborhood and greater city from this period.

Accordingly, the Briggs Mansion is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as a distinctive and well-preserved local example of period revival architecture connected to nationally significant design movements and the social history of early 20th-century Sacramento.

Statement of Significance

In the late-nineteenth century, the increasing industrialization of Sacramento’s downtown, influx of low-income laborers into the central city, and introduction of streetcar service led to the development of new residential neighborhoods on the fringes of Sacramento’s original 1848 city limits. Affluent middle- and upper-class residents migrated to these new neighborhoods, many of which incorporated modern urban planning principles and landscaping to create clean, orderly, and parklike living environments. Poverty Ridge became the neighborhood of choice for Sacramento’s wealthiest and most influential citizens.⁹

Ella M. Briggs and Dr. Wallace A. Briggs purchased 2015 21st Street in 1911, within the Poverty Ridge neighborhood.¹⁰ Dr. Briggs was a physician in Sacramento who specialized in tuberculosis treatment. As an active member of the Sacramento Society for Medical Improvement, Briggs served as their secretary in 1913.¹¹ Furthermore, Briggs participated in the White Crusaders, a group of physicians who advocated for better treatment of patients suffering from tuberculosis, also known as the “white plague.”¹² As a White Crusader, Briggs worked to ensure patients had access to outdoor sleeping quarters and hospitals had enough beds for tuberculosis patients.¹³ In addition, Briggs served on

⁹ “Poverty Ridge Historic District Plans” in *Sacramento Historic District Plans*, 318-321.

¹⁰ City of Sacramento Assessor Book, 1911, 280.

¹¹ “Society Reports—Sacramento County,” *California State Journal of Medicine* XI, no. 3 (March 1913): 126.

¹² “White Crusaders Talk over Bill—Senator Burnett Tells of Measure for Tuberculosis Home,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 14, 1911, 11.

¹³ “More Beds for Patients,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, March 4, 1910, 7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 2

Sacramento's Board of Playground Directors, founded in 1911.¹⁴ Both Briggs and his wife, Ella, gave back to the Sacramento community. They held cribbage fundraisers and donated money to the Home of the Merciful Savior, a Sacramento orphanage.¹⁵ Their community involvement reflects broader Progressive Era ideals of public health and urban reform, aligning with the neighborhood's character as a hub for social and civic leaders.

The Briggs Mansion is a contributing building to the local Poverty Ridge Historic District in Sacramento, significant for its concentration of large, single-family houses constructed as part of the development of the neighborhood. The grandest houses in the neighborhood were built primarily between 1870 and 1915 (including the Briggs Mansion, completed in 1915). The variety of architectural styles that are visible within the Poverty Ridge Historic District are representative of the styles that were most popular during the neighborhood's primary period of development from the late nineteenth century to the early decades of the twentieth century, reflecting design preferences following the First World War influenced by the Better Homes Movement and the Arts and Crafts movement.

The later development of Poverty Ridge, including construction of the Briggs Mansion, coincided with the national Better Homes Movement which received broad support from both government and industry. It was a campaign of home ownership, modernization, and beautification that grew from a critical shortage of homes in the years following the First World War. Titled the *Better Homes Movement*, it was initiated in the Butterick Publishing Company's magazine, *The Delineator*, a householder's publication. The movement sought to educate consumers to the values of building, owning, remodeling and improving their homes including home furnishings and decorations. Such activities would substantially improve the quality of domestic living, and the improvement of homes and home life were widely encouraged. The Briggs Mansion's use of period revival architectural styles (French Eclectic with Italian Renaissance influences) is emblematic of the architecture that resulted from the Better Homes Movement.

Construction of the Briggs Mansion was completed in 1915. The mansion cost \$17,000 to build, which was dramatically more expensive than other homes in Sacramento at the time.¹⁶ Typical homes in Sacramento during this time cost between \$1,500 and \$3,000 to build. The *Sacramento Daily Union* discussed the development of grand homes in wealthy Sacramento neighborhoods, thus they widely reported on the cost of the Briggs' home.¹⁷ Its high cost and architectural design indicate a deliberate intent to construct a showpiece residence emblematic of wealth, taste, and modern domestic ideals.

¹⁴ "Dr. W. A. Briggs Is Fund Trustee—Bonnheim Scholarship Body Names Local Physician," *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 11, 1914, 4.

¹⁵ Myra D. Steele, "Social Notes," *Sacramento Daily Union*, November 24, 1921, 14; "Mrs. Bills Head of Children's Home—Annual Report Show Home of the Merciful Savior in Fairly Prosperous Shape," *Sacramento Daily Union*, December 11, 1914, 9.

¹⁶ "Building Permits of Minor Variety—Many Sleeping Porches Added as Summer Comes," *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 31, 1914, 26.

¹⁷ "Many New Buildings Planned for This Year," *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 10, 1915, 31.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 3

The Briggs Mansion is a locally significant example of the French Eclectic architectural style with Italian Renaissance influences. French Eclectic architecture is a romantic and picturesque style that draws from various periods and regions of French domestic architecture, especially those of the 17th and 18th centuries. It was especially popular in the United States from about 1915 to 1945, particularly in suburban residential design in affluent neighborhoods. The style gained prominence after World War I, when American soldiers returned from France with admiration for its buildings. Typical characteristics of the style include:

- Asymmetrical or symmetrical façades
- Tall, steeply pitched hip roofs
- Multiple rooflines and cross-gables are common, especially in larger homes
- Tall, narrow windows, often with multi-pane glazing (casement or double-hung)
- Segmental or arched openings above doors or windows
- Decorative shutters, though often non-functional, are commonly used
- Brick, stone, or stucco exteriors, sometimes a combination
- Stone quoins or detailing at corners and around windows/doors

The French Eclectic style is evident at the Briggs mansion, displayed in the steeply pitched hipped roof with cross gables and stucco wall cladding. The style is also clearly expressed in the fenestration, especially at the primary façade, with grouped, tall wood windows and doors with divided lights, both casements and double-hung, and arched openings at the first-floor level as well as indications of decorative shutters at the second-floor level.

Italian Renaissance Revival architecture is a grand, formal style inspired by the palazzos of 15th and 16th century Italy. It was most popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly from 1890 to 1935, and was typically used for large, upscale residences, public buildings, and mansions. Typical characteristics of the style include:

- Symmetrical façades
- Rectangular, boxy massing, often two or more stories
- Stucco, stone, or smooth-faced masonry walls
- Clay tile roofs
- Low-pitched or flat roofs, typically hipped
- Broad, overhanging eaves with decorative brackets or corbels
- Round-arched windows and doors, a key feature, often with voussoirs or keystones
- Paired or triple windows, often separated by columns or pilasters
- Tall, narrow windows with multi-pane glazing or large single panes

The Italian Renaissance influence of the Briggs Mansion is expressed in the clay tile roof and widely overhanging eaves with exposed decorative rafter tails, symmetrical, boxy massing and upper story windows smaller and in deference to the first-floor windows. Similar to the French Eclectic style, the tall, narrow windows with multi-pane glazing and the stucco wall finish are indicative of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 4

commonalities between the two styles. While there is an overlap in some characterizes of the two styles, it is clear that the building has been influenced distinctly by both architectural styles- most evident in the steeply pitched, hipped roof and cross gables (French Eclectic), with the clay tile roof and broad, overhanging eaves with decorative wood rafter tails and coffered eave soffits (Italian Renaissance). Together, these features make the Briggs Mansion a standout example of the eclectic but coherent architectural tastes of the early 20th century. The symmetrical primary façade, arched entry, and faux keystones convey a sense of European elegance tailored to an urban residential lot.

Despite fire damage and alterations over the decades, the Briggs Mansion retains its overall integrity. Integrity of location is intact because it stands at its original site at 2015 21st Street in Sacramento's Poverty Ridge neighborhood, where it has remained since its construction in 1915. The building has not been moved or relocated, and its position on a raised lot among early 20th-century homes continues to contribute to its historic character. The unchanged location affirms the mansion's association with the city's early 20th-century development and elite residential expansion.

Despite modifications, the mansion retains integrity of design, as its original massing, rooflines, and primary architectural features remain intact. The building still displays character-defining features of the French Eclectic style, notably the steeply pitched hipped roof with cross gables, arched colonnade, and symmetrical primary façade, as well as Italian Renaissance influences such as the clay tile roof and decorative eaves with rafter tails. Later additions, including the third and fourth stories and rear staircases, were compatible in style and did not compromise the overall architectural coherence of the building. Modifications made during or before the period of significance, including the 1926 enclosed balcony, have acquired their own historic character. The visual unity of form, ornament, and proportion is still clearly legible and evocative of its period.

The mansion retains integrity of setting, as it continues to be surrounded by other substantial early 20th-century residences within the Poverty Ridge Historic District, an area long associated with Sacramento's upper-class residential development. The tree-lined street, scale of surrounding buildings, and the mansion's prominent placement on a raised lot help preserve the environmental context in which the home was originally built and occupied. Even with alterations to landscaping and the conversion of the backyard into a parking area, the larger neighborhood setting remains visually and historically consistent.

The Briggs Mansion demonstrates strong integrity of materials, particularly on its exterior, which retains original stucco cladding, multi-lite wood windows and doors, clay tile roofing, and painted wood decorative elements. Although fire damage and repairs have necessitated some replacement (notably some window sashes and stucco patches), the repairs were conducted using **materials** in keeping with the original, and many character-defining materials remain intact on the primary and secondary façades. These surviving materials allow the building to continue conveying its historic character and period craftsmanship.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 5

The mansion retains integrity of workmanship through its surviving decorative details, including the exposed rafter tails, coffered soffits, arched entry and porch with balustrade, and window moldings. These features reflect the skilled craftsmanship and architectural attention to detail that typify high-style revivalist homes of the early 20th century. The careful preservation of these features, especially on the more publicly visible façades, ensures that the building continues to illustrate the aesthetic and construction values of its time.

The Briggs Mansion retains a strong integrity of feeling, as its scale, style, and quality of design still evoke the historic character of early 20th-century elite residential neighborhoods. Despite fire damage and incremental changes over time, the mansion's grand exterior, period architectural detailing, and prominent presence among other historic homes allow it to communicate its original residential function and the affluence it was meant to represent. The overall historic atmosphere remains readily apparent.

The mansion also retains integrity of association with its historical significance under Criterion C for Architecture. Built for the Briggs family in 1915 and located in one of Sacramento's most prestigious neighborhoods, the home continues to reflect its association with the Better Homes Movement, period revival architecture, and early 20th-century social ideals. It also maintains its role as a contributing property to the Poverty Ridge Historic District, preserving its connection to the broader historic development of Sacramento's upper-class residential landscape.

While the interior of the Briggs Mansion has suffered extensive damage from multiple fires, resulting in the loss of almost all historic interior finishes and features, this does not significantly compromise the building's overall integrity. The National Register permits listing of properties with lost interior integrity when the exterior retains sufficient integrity to convey the property's historic and architectural significance. In this case, the Briggs Mansion's intact exterior form, materials, ornamentation, and setting ensure that it continues to express its significance as a rare and grand example of French Eclectic architecture with Italian Renaissance influences in Sacramento. Therefore, the building retains a high degree of integrity as defined by the National Register and is eligible for listing based on its exterior alone. The mansion stands as one of the few remaining high-style urban residences from this period in Sacramento, and one of the finest local examples of eclectic revival architecture associated with the city's historic expansion and cultural refinement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7, 8, 9 Page 6

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Briggs Mansion

Name of Property

Sacramento CA

County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 8 Page 7

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