



November 25, 2022

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From: Louise Ivers, Ph.D., Vice President for Advocacy, Long Beach Heritage ([livers@csudh.edu](mailto:livers@csudh.edu))  
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Subject: Agenda Item #1, Cultural Heritage Commission, November 29, 2022  
2749 East Ocean Boulevard (Application # COAC2203-01)

Long Beach Heritage is extremely concerned about the proposed addition to the Samuel Raymond house, designed by master architect Irving Gill (1870-1936), at 2749 East Ocean Boulevard. Thomas S. Hines, author of *Irving Gill and the Architecture of Reform* [The Monacelli Press, 2000] and a Professor Emeritus at UCLA, states that the Raymond residence is one of the few well-preserved homes by Gill that is still extant in southern California. Gill, who lived in San Diego and is world-renowned, was probably the first architect in the United States to pioneer concrete tilt-slab construction, as well as one of the first to break away from the use of excessive architectural ornament to create a modern style.

The Raymond house is an excellent example of Irving Gill's simplified architecture, which he derived from the plain stucco walls and arcaded courtyards of the California missions. Gill wrote that we must "get back to the source of all architectural strength—the straight line, the arch, the cube and the circle...." The Samuel Raymond residence perfectly embodies this philosophy with its cubical massing and arched openings. Gill also believed in producing "perfectly sanitary, labor saving house, one where the maximum of comfort may be had with the minimum of drudgery." [Irving Gill, "The Home of the Future: The New Architecture of the West," *The Craftsman* (May 1916)] The Raymond home follows this precept as well, where the interior cement floors curve upward toward the walls with no baseboard moldings. The doors and windows also display Gill's concept of simplicity and have unadorned planar frames. The Samuel Raymond residence was built with Gill's revolutionary tilt-slab construction, where the walls were made on the ground and raised upward to form the envelope of the home. Gill was the owner of the Concrete Building and Investment Company in Los Angeles, which received the permit for the Raymond home. [*Press-Telegram*, August 24, 1918]

According to Standard 9 of the Secretary of Interior Standards for historic buildings, "new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property." The proposed addition to the Samuel Raymond house will



cause the removal of an original arched entrance and changed placement of a second story window, as well as the addition of a large vertically projecting chimney. The new first story windows are placed too close to the chimney and disrupt the character of the rear elevation. The loss of the original elements will irrevocably change Gill's design for the back of the house (north elevation).

Preservation Brief 14 "from the Secretary of the Interior states that "it is most important... that alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. The proposed addition to the Raymond house will definitely destroy the character of the north side of the building. Although it is at the rear of the home, it is an original design by Irving Gill and should be accorded more consequence than the back of a home by an unknown builder. The plans for the ill-conceived addition do not specify which materials will be used, but the original material is tilt-slab concrete with hollow tile infill.

It would be a terrible shame to alter the exterior of such a notable building by removing and drastically changing part of the rear wall for an addition. The Raymond house is one of the most significant structures in Long Beach (it might even be the most significant because it is the work of such a renowned master architect). This residence qualifies for Long Beach City Landmark, California State Landmark, and National Register status, particularly because its exterior has not been altered by additions or removal of original materials.

Long Beach Heritage respectfully requests that the Cultural Heritage Commission deny a Certificate of Appropriateness for the alteration of the Samuel Raymond home because it is an irreplaceable piece of California history. At the least, we ask that Item #1 be postponed until the January meeting of the Cultural Heritage Commission, which will give us time to discuss the plans with the architect and the owner of 2749 East Ocean Boulevard.