National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

RECEIVED 413 OMB No. 10024-0018

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. Separated provided to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

. Name of Propert	ty								
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Los	Angeles	County,	CA
Count	v and State		

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.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
To realistic register mentig.)	Architecture
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Social 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.	Period of Significance 1930 - 1945
□ 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.)	Significant Dates
Property is:	
☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	O'
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
☐ C a birthplace or grave.	Cultural Affiliation
☐ D a cemetery.	_ N/A
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
☐ F a commemorative property.	·
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Architect/Builder
Within the past 50 years.	Hunt, Myron Chambers, Harold C.
	Chambers, naroud C.
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on o	ne or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
 □ 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 	☐ State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State agency ☐ Federal agency ☐ Local government ☐ University ☒ Other Name of repository: Malaga Cove Plaza Library - History Room
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Taraga cove rical mining intoory room

Name of Property		County and State	
10. Geographica	l Data		
Acreage of Prope	erty53 Acre		
UTM References (Place additional UTM	references on a continuation sheet.)		
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Verbal Boundary (Describe the boundary	Description ries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	See continuation sheet	
Boundary Justific (Explain why the bour	cation ndaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)		
11. Form Prepar	ed By		
Ne	a. Ann Hinchliffe, Chairman Beighborhood Planning Committee	16 1004 (Ov. i. Duo	er /
organization Ma	alaga Cove Plaza Library	date December 16, 1994 (2nd Dra	(בב
street & number_	3825 Paseo del Campo	telephone (310) 378-3739	
city or town	Palos Verdes Estates	state zip code	
Additional Docur	nentation		
Submit the following i	terns with the completed form:		
Continuation She	eets S		
Maps	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •		
A USGS	map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the	property's location.	
A Sketch	map for historic districts and properties having	ng large acreage or numerous resources.	
Photographs			
Represen	tative black and white photographs of the	property.	
Additional items (Check with the SHP)	O or FPO for any additional items)		
Property Owner			
(Complete this item a	t the request of SHPO or FPO.)		
name	Palos Verdes Library District/Ms		
street & number	650 Deep Valley Drive	telephone(310) 544-3800	
city or town	Rolling Hills Estates	stateCA zip code90274	
properties for listing of	n Act Statement: This information is being collected for determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and ce with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amer	or applications to the National Register of Historic Places to noming amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to ided (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).	ate obtair

Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Los Angeles County, CA

NPS Form 10-900-a 88-861

United States Department of the InteriorNational Park Service

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Description:

The Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery is located on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in the coastal city of Palos Verdes Estates, twenty-five miles southwest of downtown Los Angeles. Situated on a narrow but deep, upward sloping lot, the building--which appears from the front street at the base of the hill to have two stories -- actually contains five levels totaling 16,550 square feet. The library, designed in 1929 by the prominent architect, Myron Hunt, is a Mediterranean Revival style structure, constructed of hollow-cast, double-walled reinforced concrete covered with white stucco and roofed with red tile. A five-foot-wide balcony with corbels across the front of the building and a segmented-capped tower are two of the library's striking features. The main entrance to the library is on the west side of the building facing a park. The library's original landscaping was designed by the eminent Olmsted Brothers, and a variety of 23 different tree and shrub specimens planted on the library site in 1930, along with the original Palos Verdes stone walls on the north and east sides of the property (counted as one structure), can be seen today. The library was designed for multiple community uses, thus the building's lowest level houses a meeting room/art gallery and kitchen and has a separate entrance on the lower street, Via Campesina. The building and grounds remain virtually unchanged in appearance and usage since opening to the public in 1930. The only substantive change, except for a 2324 square foot addition made in 1962 at the rear (south side) of the library, is the addition of up-dated lighting fixtures added in 1954.

The library was originally named the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery and retained this name until 1966. When the Palos Verdes Library District constructed a larger library at the center of the Peninsula, it was renamed the Malaga Cove Plaza Library. Because the building retained its original designation throughout the period of time addressed by this application, 1930-1945, we refer to it by its original name.

Characteristic of the Mediterranean Revival style so popular in Southern California in the 1920's, the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery is simple in form and detail and is irregular in plan with a large square tower with open loggia, corbeled balcony with wrought iron railing, 20-inch-thick walls, and "S" clay tiled roof. The construction is hollow cast-in-place reinforced concrete, utilizing a technique popularized throughout Southern California by Myron Hunt. The north facade, (the lower level facing Via Campesina), is four bays wide, the leftmost bay being the entrance to the art gallery and community room, which is set behind a wrought iron gate in a deep vestibule. Native Palos Verdes stone walls line the front boundary and continue along part of the east boundary. Projecting from the facade above the four bays is a balcony supported by concrete corbels. Wrought iron railings line the edge of the balcony between wooden posts which support the roof as it extends to shelter the balcony. This extension of the second floor space also wraps 30 feet around the east side of the building. The park side (west) elevation is lower in scale, and in viewing the building from this side, it

¹ Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, *Myron Hunt, 1868-1952. The Search for a Regional Architecture* (Santa Monica: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1984), p. 42-44.

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Description (continued):

would appear to be one-storied with a tower. A shallow arcade shelters the west facade which is six bays across. The roof line extends downward to shelter the library entrance vestibule, which is also set to the left side as you face the building from the park. The piers of the arcade are repeated in the loggia of the tower but on a reduced scale. Topping the tower is a shallow-peaked cap that rises slightly above the roof line of the loggia. Along the east elevation and on the upper part of the hillside slope is a small courtyard paved in local stone, which was created when the 1962 addition was built, and is enclosed by the library on three sides. Viewed from Via Pinale, the highest elevation and south side, the library is largely obscured by shrubbery; what one sees of the building is the addition which has the same low scale as the park side facade and features similar exterior building materials.

The floor plan was designed to provide Palos Verdes, the first and only established community on the Peninsula in 1930, a library and social center. On the Via Campesina level is a 110-person capacity meeting room and art gallery with adjoining kitchen. The next level up houses restrooms and a projection room for the meeting room below. The third and largest level is for the library collection and the local history room housed in the rear addition; continuing upward is the mezzanine level which serves as storage and stack space for the library collection. The uppermost level is a tower room surrounded by an open loggia with views overlooking the adjoining park, the Palos Verdes community and the Pacific Ocean. All floors are connected by a broad central staircase.

The interior of the library reinforces the Mediterranean Revival architectural style of the building. Large, deeply recessed windows provide natural light to the gallery and library levels. High, open-beam ceilings define the main reading rooms. There is a fireplace paneled in pine in what is now the childrens' section. Furnishings of hand carved walnut are original to the building and are replicas of antique Italian Renaissance tables, chairs and couches, brought to the Peninsula home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip 1910-1920 and copied by local artisan, Meredith Watts.¹ It was Mr. Vanderlip, then President of National City Bank in New York, who purchased 16,000 acres of land, sight unseen, on the Palos Verdes Peninsula and then called upon the most respected professionals of his day -- city planner Charles Cheney, landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and John C Olmsted, and architect Myron Hunt -- to help him plan and develop an ideal suburban environment in Southern California.

The Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery has stood the test of time well. The building and grounds are still beautiful, even though library district budget constraints have necessitated some deferred maintenance. Although there are indications of needed repairs and some minor changes have been made to the interior decor, these do not alter the historic appearance or character of this Myron Hunt building.

² Delane Morgan, The Palos Verdes Story. (Palos Verdes Estates: Review Publications, Inc., 1963) p. 79.

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Statement of Significance:

The Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery is historically significant to the city of Palos Verdes Estates under National Register Criteria A because this building was the nucleus of social life in a small community during the years 1930-1945 when the area was being developed. In addition, as a prime example of the eclectic design of a prominent and innovative architect, Myron Hunt, the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery is architecturally significant to the Palos Verdes community under National Register Criteria C. Designed in the Mediterranean Revival style and built in 1929-30, the building exemplifies the ideals set by the new city's Art Jury, established in 1922 with Myron Hunt as its chair to monitor both quality of construction and exterior architectural design of all commercial and residential building. It should be noted that 1945 is an arbitrary date, chosen for the purpose of this application; in fact, the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery, although now a branch of a larger library district serving four cities, continues to provide today the same types of services for which it was designed in 1930.

The library was an important building from its beginning. Southwest Builder and Contractor, in an article dated September 19, 1930, commented, "A notable feature is the absence of stereotyped library ideas in the design. This is due in part, perhaps, to the fact that it is something more than a library building, being planned for other community uses." Indeed the art gallery and meeting room, with its projection facilities and adjoining kitchen have been used continuously through the years for community functions. Examples of use from the period of significance include Art Jury dinners, piano recitals, lectures, and art exhibits. The building was also the regular meeting place for the Palos Verdes Woman's Club and used extensively by the Palos Verdes Community Arts Association, the two primary social, service and cultural organizations of the community. The pragmatic—or practical—spatial arrangement by Hunt has allowed the library to become an integral part of community life at Malaga Cove, which was the Peninsula's population center in 1930 and remains a small commercial center in one of the most beautiful coastal communities in California.

Although Malaga Cove School and La Venta Inn were available for community functions in 1930, the library, because of its accessibility during both days and evenings, diverse rooms available for meetings and classes, and its ambiance, was the most popular. The Woman's Club, founded in 1926, met monthly at the library to plan their civic projects, which included volunteer work at the library, and social events. According to the Palos Verdes Bulletin, the tower room was used for classes in wood carving, conducted by Meredith Watts, the artisan who copied Frank Vanderlip's furniture for the library. In a 1931 article entitled "The Art Jury Dinner", it is reported that 130 residents and their guests celebrated the eighth

²In the Abstract for her thesis, "The Eclectic Architecture of Myron Hunt", Therese Hanafin describes the eclectic architect's concern for functionalism, materials, and orientation to site and classified Hunt as such because of his flexibility, attention to detail, and concern for his clients' demands.

³ "Library Building at Palos Verdes is Distinctive California Type," *Southwest Builder & Contractor* (Sept. 19, 1930): pp.30-31.

⁴ Palos Verdes Bulletin, December, 1932, p.2.

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Statement of Significance (continued):

annual meeting of the Palos Verdes Art Jury at the library.

Dinner was served in the Art Gallery, where the paintings of Ralph Holmes were on exhibit. Their high quality and interest was complimented by the chairman, Myron Hunt, in introducing Mr. Holmes, who told of his interesting experience in talking to the Palos Verdes school children when they visited the exhibit in a body. . .Mr. Vanderlip, in speaking on "Architecture appropriate to the Community" said that recovery from the present business depression might be expected first in the building industry. He thought that prices would have to come down and new methods of construction be found that would make homes much cheaper.

Other distinguished guests present included Hamlin Garland, American author, Gilbert Chesterton, English author, and Alson Clark, painter.

The Art Gallery was an important cultural resource during this period. Exhibitions changed about every one or two months and ranged from marine painting and model ships to Etruscan pottery and etchings. Both community and nationally well-known artists were encouraged to participate. Paintings were hung throughout the library as well. In addition, the Art Jury sponsored an Annual Purchase Prize Exhibit of paintings by California artists. The winning painting was purchased by the Art Jury for community display.

Myron Hunt's design for the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery was immediately recognized as an architectural landmark. In the same article quoted earlier, Southwest Builder and Contractor went on to say the structure was both "individualistic and harmonizing with the whole city scheme." This should come as no surprise since it was Myron Hunt, former president of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and recognized as "a pioneer of a style of architecture based on Mediterranean and Spanish influences" who was chosen as chair for the new Art Jury and established the Mediterranean style as the design idiom for the Palos Verdes Project which, as originally conceived, encompassed 16,000 acres. Hunt's legacy in Palos Verdes Estates lives on in the design ordinances he established for the city.

According to Art Jury records, "Mr. Hunt proposed that as people came from all over the world to Southern California, recognizing its climate, they should expect to find an individual type of architecture here which recognized this climate. He proposed in more definite form than at the previous meeting that there should be one generally dominant type of architecture for the whole (Palos Verdes) Project. "' This type of architecture was known as Mediterranean Revival, although Hunt tried to promote the style as "Californian: that distinctive style which for several decades has been successfully growing up in this State, deriving its chief

⁵ Palos Verdes Bulletin, March, 1931, p.10.

^e Pasadena Star News, November 13, 1984, p. 3.

⁷ Minutes, Palos Verdes Art Jury, December 4, 1922.

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Statement of Significance (continued):

inspiration directly or indirectly from Latin types which developed under similar climatic conditions along the Mediterranean."8 Characteristics of this style include color in light tones, materials such as plaster, adobe, stucco, or concrete, with roofs which should be low pitched, usually of tile laid random. When the preliminary plans for the library were approved by his professional colleagues, the minutes state that "Architect Myron Hunt was given felicitations of the Jury on the very lovely tower and simple design." 10

Although Myron Hunt established the image for Palos Verdes Estates and served as chairman of the Art Jury for its first seventeen years, he designed only one other structure in the city, the cliffside home of esteemed landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who was another important influence in the development of the city. Unlike the Palos Verdes Public Library, this home has been dramatically altered over the years. Indeed, throughout Southern California, Hunt's designs are increasingly at risk. For example, the Huntington Hotel in Pasadena, completed by Hunt in 1913, has been extensively remodeled. The Huntington Hotel was the prototype for the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, built by Hunt in 1919, which is currently facing possible demolition. Hunt also designed the entire campus of Occidental College; however modernist intrusions have disrupted the architectural unity of the c.1912-1940 project. All of these buildings are designed in Hunt's eclectic Mediterranean style, but only the Palos Verdes Public Library is still true to Hunt's original vision. Fortunately, its future is very secure as this library is very dear to the community which is planning to restore the building to its former 1930 splendor.

David Gebhard, author and professor of Architectural History at the University of California at Santa Barbara, in his letter accompanying this application, states that the library "in its sensitive play between the Hispanic image and modern needs, and in its splendid siting, is without question one of Hunt's most successful buildings." Although the Palos Verdes Project was a primary interest through its formative years, Myron Hunt was prolific in designing large architectural projects in other parts of Southern California during the same time period. As magnate Henry Huntington's architect, he designed four family homes, the library, finished a partially constructed hotel, and built Pasadena's major hospital. Three major educational institutions, Pomona College, Occidental College and California Institute of Technology, feature buildings by Hunt. Although he did work in the bungalow style, his most popular was in "Mediterranean"; Myron Hunt's buildings throughout Southern California are the epitome of what was popularly viewed as "California architecture".

During Hunt's professional tenure in California 1904 - 1947, he was associated with two partners. The first, Elmer Grey, who became a partner in 1904, had had

⁸ Minutes, Palos Verdes Art Jury, September 14, 1928.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Minutes, Palos Verdes Art Jury, April 10, 1929.

David Gebhard, letter to State Historic Resources Commission, November 10, 1994

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

Statement of Significance (continued):

draftsman training but no formal education in architecture and was of frail health, all of which suggests that his contributions to the firm were limited; he resigned because of poor health in 1910. Although Hunt worked alone for ten years, large post-war (WWI) commissions forced him to take on another partner, and he chose someone who had worked in his firm since 1906. Harold C. Chambers, who became first a junior partner in 1920, played an increasingly important role in the firm until 1947, when Hunt officially retired but continued to work in the office as a consultant until illness forced him to remain at home. Chambers carried on a commercial and institutional practice for 20 years longer. It should be noted that although "Hunt and Chambers" was the architectural firm for such successful projects as the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, the Ambassador Hotel and Occidental College in Los Angeles, the Public Library (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) and the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, as well as the Palos Verdes Public Library, Hunt's creative leadership is well documented, and these structures, indeed virtually all 400 projects of his career, are popularly credited to him alone.

Our research show this to be the case for the Palos Verdes Library. Although the plans are signed "Myron Hunt and Harold C. Chambers", an article of *The Bulletin*, published by the Palos Verdes Homes Association, clearly implies that Myron Hunt was the managing architect from the firm in charge of the project as well as illustrates the multiple purposes intended for the building:

Rapid progress is being made in the carrying through of the new Public Library Building for Palos Verdes Library District following the decision of the California Court of Appeals the last week in March validating the \$90,000 bond issue voted last summer. On March 31 the trustees, with architect Myron Hunt, Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect, and Jay Lawyer, general manager of Palos Verdes Project, carefully examined the site . . .Mr. Hunt's plans provide for a commodious reading room flanking the park . .an outdoor reading room or patio on the east . .another room of ample size opening onto Via Campesina for committee meetings, lectures and temporary exhibits. .space for storage of chairs . .a vault for pictures. .a mezzanine and tower . .small kitchen . .."

The Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery is an established architectural feature in Palos Verdes Estates in that the building is located at the head of a primary intersection of streets, adjacent to a community park and its architectural elements encompassing the Mediterranean Revival style -- soaring white walls, wide corbeled balcony, square tower, red-tiled roof -- make it a prominent and identifying feature in a city that treasures its Mediterranean architectural heritage. Equally important to the residents of this picturesque city is their recognition of the role played by this building in the social history of Palos Verdes Estates, 1930-1945.

^{12 &}quot;Library Building Progressing", The Bulletin, May, 1929.

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Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

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Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 23, Block 1621, Tract 6885, as per map recorded in Book 78, pages 49-52 inclusive, of maps, records of said Los Angeles County, State of California.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of Lot 23 include the original library building, trees and shrubs, and a four foot high wall of Palos Verdes stone along the 115 foot front on Via Campesina and continuing another 60 feet of the 239 foot eastern boundary, all having historically been a part of the Palos Verdes Public Library and Art Gallery and contributing to its historical integrity. Adjacent Lot S, a park, and Lot 12, a parking lot, are owned by the library district as separate parcels and have been excluded. The boundaries of Lot 23 have remained unchanged since the library was built in 1930.

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Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs #2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10:
Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery
Palos Verdes Estates, Los Angeles County, CA
Negatives are filed in the History Room of said library.
Art Evans, photographer, Redondo Beach, CA
Date of photographs: December 8, 1994.

- Looking south; front facade as viewed from Via Campesina. Photo reproduced from the <u>Palos Verdes Bulletin</u>, July, 1931.
- Looking south; front facade as viewed from Via Campesina.
- Looking east; main entrance as viewed from park.
- Looking west; as viewed from parking lot.
- 5. Looking north; as viewed from Via Pinale (1962 addition visible through shrubs).
- 6. Balcony with corbels and wrought iron railing; looking southeast.
- 7. Looking north; main library interior, showing original furniture. Photographer: Padilla Studios, Los Angeles, 1930.
- 8. Looking north; main library interior, showing original furniture.
- 9. Looking south; showing children's reading area.
- 10. Looking west (towards park); adult reading area.

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Palos Verdes Public Library & Art Gallery Los Angeles County, CA

RESOURCE PERSONS

Plans

Edward Carson Beall & Associates Edward C. Beall, AIA Miles Pritzkat, AIA

Landscaping

Jack Bauman Owner, Palos Verdes Begonia Farm

Photography

Arthur Evans, PhD Photographer and Author

Technical Assistance

Robert Avila, Los Angeles Conservancy, Los Angeles, CA

Residents' Historical Preservation Committee

Ann Hinchliffe, Chair Ginny Dixon Janet Fargo Alice LaMar Virginia Twohy

