

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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MAY 10 1986

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 6 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pitzer House

and/or common Pitzer/Peairs House

2. Location

street & number 4353 North Towne

N/A not for publication

city, town Claremont N/A vicinity of

state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name John and Pat Hodges

street & number 4353 N. Towne

city, town Claremont N/A vicinity of state California 91711

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Los Angeles Hall of Records

street & number 227 North Broadway, Room 5

city, town Los Angeles state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Claremont Historic Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Claremont Heritage

city, town Claremont state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Pitzer House is a one-story, fieldstone bungalow with tiled, hipped roof. The plan is essentially square with a central patio which is encased in fieldstone and glass. The house is frame with a veneer of skillfully fitted fieldstone. There is a distinct relationship between Mission Revival in the arches, tile roof, and courtyard with Craftsman detailing in the 3 ft. eave overhangs, exposed rafter ends, and the horizontal configuration. Orr and Pitzer also chose the fieldstone building material to blend with the rustic environment, which is typical Craftsman sensitivity. The landscaping includes fieldstone walls and borders; a stone garage contemporary with the house is located at the back. Aside from minor interior alterations, integrity remains very high for the house and grounds. Several non-contributing later structures are located at the rear of the property.

The east and south elevations of the house are the most dramatic. In front (east) are two arches behind which is a large front porch which is extended in a pergola to the south and supported with large fieldstone columns. The entries to the house from the porch are two sets of French doors with beveled glass set in multilight doors. There are two square casement windows north of the porch that are part of the front bedroom (now office). It is on the south elevation that one has the picture of the size and number of fieldstones used in the construction of the house. It is obvious that the stone mason, Mr. Roseburg, carefully chose the stones, generally using large boulders at the bottom with gradually smaller stones at the top. The larger stones at the bottom make the bottom sides of the house battered or flared. Some of the boulders are almost three feet in diameter. The five casement windows on the south elevation are surrounded with carefully selected stones which make a three-sided sash that combines with the concrete sills. A massive chimney for the boulder fireplace in the living room is near the east end of the south elevation under the pergola surrounded by the exterior view of two additional windows in stained glass depicting Dutch children. It is the west, rather than the south elevation that was designed to capture the sun. Centrally, there is a multi-paned window with one large glass pane and two smaller multi-paned sidelight windows which are part of the back entrance to the patio. In addition there are two vertically double-hung windows in the north bedroom and one large and one small casement window in the west bedroom. Four large casement windows on the west side of the sleeping porch descend vertically into pockets between the interior and exterior walls to leave the openings entirely free of obstruction when fully opened. The two casement windows on the south of this room are of similar design. It is also the west side of the house where the basement is most visible. There is a small chimney on the west which once serviced a stove or water heater in the laundry area of the basement and there are two square casement basement windows and a basement entrance from this side. An arched entrance with five stairs to the first floor screened porch is on the northwest side of the house.

The least significant elevation of the house is the north side. Since the nearest immediate neighbor is Base Line Road, this setting is also the least desirable. There is a third chimney in the center of the north side which services the furnace in the basement. Nine windows on the north side are in an interesting pattern reminiscent of the Prairie style. A row of four windows in the dining room, visible on the north elevation, line up with the two windows on the east elevation.

A unique interior architectural feature of the house is the open Patio or court in the center of the house. The original plan called the area a "court."

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1912 **Builder/Architect** Robert H. Orr

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Driving north towards the towering peaks of the San Gabriel mountain range, a strong rustic flavor envelops the traveler. Reaching the intersection of Towne Avenue and Base Line Road, after passing under the expansive breadth of a parallel row of date palm trees, one senses the return to days gone by, perhaps to a time when nature and the climate of this Southern California region dictated the lifestyles of the settlers. Set back some 100 feet from the intersection stands the Pitzer House. The Pitzer House, designed by Robert H. Orr in 1912, is a fieldstone bungalow situated in the middle of a 1.98-acre parcel in Claremont, California. The structure is a significant part of the "bungalow" tradition, unique because of its superior stone facade and, according to Robert Winter, architectural historian, "the finest stone house in Southern California." The Pitzer House is also associated with the agricultural heritage of Claremont and Southern California, with the earliest settlement and exploration of the citrus-producing land on Base Line Road, with the history of the changing use of natural resources in the region, and the structure has strong ties to one of the families important to the settlement of Claremont. The house has had only three owners to date: the Pitzer family, the Peairs family and Claremont Psychological Services, owned by John and Pat Hodges.

Lee C. Pitzer, who had the house built, was born in 1873 on a farm in Mills County, Iowa. Because of his brother Grant's asthma, the family moved first to a farm near Ainsworth, Nebraska, and then when Grant was college age, to Boulder, Colorado. Grant and his sister Clara entered the University Prepschool while Lee and his younger brother, Russell, attended grammar school. In 1893, on a visit to California, Lee Pitzer's father Samuel purchased thirty acres of land near Pomona to plant oranges and lemons. Soon the family was on their way with themselves and all of their belongings in a railway boxcar. After renting a small house for a period of time, the family constructed the largest house in Pomona on the corner of Pearl and Garey (this house was torn down in 1967).

Samuel Pitzer was a pioneer developer of the citrus industry to which his sons also devoted their energies. Lee Pitzer entered Pomona College in Claremont in 1895 but returned to Colorado to graduate from the University at Boulder in 1898. Returning to California, he joined his father in a fruit canning operation in which he became a half partner. He traveled all over the Pomona Valley and the San Joaquin Valley, buying and shipping the "deciduous" fruit to the cannery.

On January 1, 1901, Lee married Edith Blanche Becket. Her father and Peter Fleming had established early water rights for the City of Pomona and established the Consolidated Water Company. Through the ingenious use of tunnels from the San Antonio water source, Becket's water company supplied Pomona and Claremont for many years. When Mr. Becket died, Mrs. Becket asked Lee to join the water operation. He was the manager for seven years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

American Architects Directory, p. 527, 1952.

_____, "Mid Southern California Orange Blossoms," The Architect and Engineer, August, 1912

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.98 acres

Quadrangle name Ontario

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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4	3	2	1	1	0
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3	7	7	5	6	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification Boundaries are drawn on current lot lines which encompass the surviving remnant of the once-larger property. Parcel 10, Block 8669 of Kluegel's subdivision in the City of Claremont located on the southwest corner of Base Line Road and Towne Avenue; lot is 220' x 393'.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state		code	county		code
-------	--	------	--------	--	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judy Wright

organization Aegis date 4/25/85

street & number 111 South Spring Street telephone (714) 621-1207

city or town Claremont state California 91711

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Kathryn Guattari*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7/29/86

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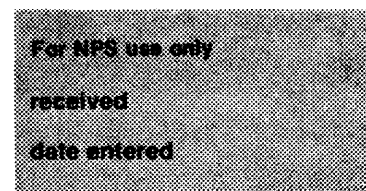
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Allen B. ... date 9-4-86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (continued)

Determination of Eligibility, August 3, 1983
Foothill Freeway (I-210) Federal
Federal Highway Administration
P. O. Box 1915
Sacramento, CA 95809

Published in A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles and Southern California
By David Gebhard and Robert Winter
Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City, 1977
Records c/o Dr. David Gebhard
Department of Art
University of California
Santa Barbara, California

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In published illustrations, Mr. Orr changed the designation to "Patio." There is an interesting story about the glass roof on the patio. The frame over the court was originally open until about 1915 when, it is said, one morning Mrs. Pitzer and her sister, Beatrice Pomeroy, saw a rattlesnake coming through the open area. Mrs. Pitzer decreed the court should be glassed in and it was. The cleverness of the overall design reveals an arrangement of the interior doors is such that the entire house is accessible without entering the originally open patio. Furthermore, large windows and glass paneled doors permit light from the patio to illuminate rooms from the interior. The existing court interior is shown in an enclosed photograph. Because the court is now glassed-in, the original interior door arrangements were not required, and many small modifications have been made. All of the original double doors for the openings to the courtyard have been located, although the modified 1/2 door was damaged and had to be rebuilt. The original beveled glass panes were stored and are available for rehabilitating the doors. At the end of the planned rehabilitation, as much as possible, all patio windows and doors will be returned to the original design. In the 1950's, the original court lamp fixtures were replaced with modern "bullet" lamps. All of the original lamps were stored, with minor damage occurring to some. They will be rehabilitated and will be returned to their original settings. Perhaps the most serious damage to the courtyard was the mistaken attempt to modernize by painting both stone and woodwork on the interior of the courtyard. All of the doors will be refinished and the paint removed from the stone work with steel brushes and water. Chemical paint removal was considered, but there was fear for the safety of the ficus vines growing on the patio walls.

The living room has a vaulted oak-beamed ceiling typical of many Craftsman Bungalows. There are small oak pieces covering the places where light fixtures have been removed. The south end of the living room is dominated by a large stone fireplace. The flanking stained glass windows are of a Dutch girl (left) and a Dutch boy (right). The speculation is that these windows were supplied by the Judson Studios in Los Angeles, but any significance of the Dutch theme is unknown. The double doors in the north end of the living room lead to the dining room. These beveled-glass doors are interesting in that they are oak on the living room side and walnut veneer on the dining room side, in order to match the dining room woodwork. A bookcase on the north wall of the living room was originally a door to a coat closet, but this was modified, probably around 1950, to permit installation of a modern shower in the small bathroom. In the rehabilitation, the shower space will become a hall linking the northeast bedroom to the dining room, thus permitting entry from either the living room or dining room areas.

Details of the dining room are exquisite. All of the woodwork and the buffet in the room are Circasian walnut. The veneer in the buffet is laid in double-book style. The floor of the dining room is clay tile. (Interestingly, the patio floor, originally brick over sand, is now paved with this tile and stained/formed concrete. The workmanship is such that it is impossible to detect the difference between the concrete and the tile portions.)

The remainder of the interior spaces have already been greatly altered. For example: all of the existing bathrooms and the kitchen have been thoroughly modernized and will

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remain so; two of the existing bathrooms will be modified for separate men's and women's handicapped restrooms to meet city code requirements; the bedrooms will be modified and rearranged to optimize their use as therapy offices. The southwest "sun porch" is particularly bright and cheerful.

One general change throughout the house will be the replacement of the existing forced hot water radiators with modern heating/cooling airhandlers with individual thermostatic control. (The existing radiators were installed in 1950.) Airconditioning will be added to the forced water system so that all of the existing window air conditioners can be removed.

A related building on the site is a 900 square foot, triple garage (one of Orr's characteristic designs) with battered walls and deep reveals. The flare of the battered walls of the garage matches the battered walls of the main house. Phase II of the planned rehabilitation of this property involves the adaptation of the garage into an office. The existing, vertically opening, garage doors which replaced the original, horizontally sliding doors, will be replaced with glass panels and doors compatible with those in the main house.

Setting is an important contributor to the significance of the property. The house is set back more than 100 feet from the lot line, leaving a majestic front yard enclosed on the north and east by a fieldstone wall. Two curved sweeping walks extend from the corners of the house to the respective corners of the lot. Much of the north path, which originally led to a pedestrian entrance on Towne Avenue and Base Line Road, was removed by Lee Pitzer in the 1940s. Part of the south walkway and two low steps have been converted into a ramp for the handicapped but will only cover two low steps at the south part of the porch. The City of Claremont imposed a condition on the rezoning of the property that no development can occur in the front setback.

South of the house is a winding drive lined with fieldstone and paved with asphalt. The entrance of the drive from Towne has two stone entry pillars. The south pillar is severely damaged and will be rehabilitated when the drive is widened. The entire north border of the drive will be preserved as it exists, although repairs will be made to take care of the damage caused by cars hitting it throughout the years. Most of the southern border will be replaced using the existing fieldstones.

The north side of the lot has a fieldstone wall extending the full length of the property (with minor gaps). The proposed widening of Base Line Road will force the removal of the wall as well as the removal of many of the barrier plants, but Cal-Trans is obligated to rebuild the wall. A view along the existing Base Line frontage is shown in the photograph. Previous widenings of Base Line have already removed the date palms from the property's north side, the south side of Base Line Road, while the planned widening will remove the remaining palms from the north side of the road. The City of Claremont has planned to preserve the date palms, shown in the enclosed photograph, and replant palms on the east side of Towne Avenue when widening Towne Avenue.

With the exception of the garage in the rear, no other historic structures are on the grounds. A small house was moved onto the property in the 1940s. A corrugated metal shed and a metal barn are also present. These three buildings are all located at the rear of the property; all are later additions and do not contribute to the nomination. Current plans call for their eventual removal.

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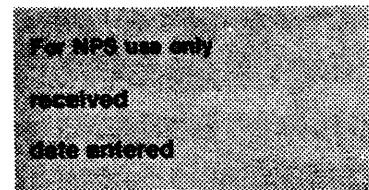
In 1903, Lee Pitzer purchased the sagebrush covered land at Base Line Road and Towne Avenue (then San Antonio Avenue) on which the Pitzer House now stands. He tried a small lemon grove, and the lemons were so good that he eventually purchased 200 acres of land in the area at \$25.00 to \$50 an acre. Unfortunately, it cost him \$100 to \$300 an acre to get the stones off the land. When Lee Pitzer purchased his property he was advised by long-time citrus growers that his land, with its sandy soil and cool climate, would not yield citrus. Yet Pitzer persisted and became the first citrus producer in the northern region of Claremont. It was only a matter of years before other citrus ranchers followed suit, and the lemons (from which Claremont gathered its acclaim) were soon available in mass quantity from the north of Base Line groves. Thus Lee Pitzer inspired the investigation and growing of citrus groves in a region previously unknown for such products. Most of the citrus ranches in that area developed between 1903 and 1915. On the northeastern corner of one of the Pitzer's six tracts was a reservoir. In 1919, that part of the parcel was sold to the Claremont Cooperative Water Company. Pitzer's neighbors included Richards Orange Growers Company, which made a significant contribution (starting in 1914) to the Pomona Valley citrus industry, the George McKenna Ranch on Base Line, and the Johnson/Campbell Ranch on Base Line and Mountain.

The Pomona Valley area, of which Claremont is a part, was a leader in the cooperative marketing movement for the California citrus industry. Growers worked through associations and then cooperation among associations resulted in an exchange which acted as a broker for the associations in selling the fruit. The San Antonio Fruit Exchange, founded in Claremont in 1892, was the forerunner in structure and makeup to the state-wide Sunkist marketing system. The Pitzer family, for four generations, have been active leaders in the citrus marketing system. In 1909, Lee Pitzer and his brother Russell became original stockholders in the College Heights Orange Association; this name was changed to the College Heights Orange and Lemon Association in 1916. In 1911, Lee was elected to the Board of Directors of the association where he served until 1939. Russell Pitzer was president of the San Antonio Fruit Exchange, was the owner of significant amounts of citrus land (over 10,000 acres), and was instrumental in starting two of the Claremont Colleges.

In 1911, Lee Pitzer hired the Pomona architect, Robert H. Orr, to design a house for his family. Mr. Orr had designed the Pilgrim Congregational Church, Pomona; the Johnson House, 1333 North Mountain, Claremont; the first high school in Claremont at Foothill and Indian Hill Boulevards; and the First Christian Church in Pomona. Mr. Orr, who practiced for many years in Los Angeles as well as Pomona, designed many buildings in fieldstone. The plans for the house were completed in April 1912 and construction commenced. Blanche and Lee Pitzer moved into their new house on Friday the 13th, September, 1912. According to Lee Pitzer, "A neighbor across the street said that we should never have moved in on Friday the 13th and that we would have bad luck We sure did. In January 1913, the weather-man dropped the temperature to 18 degrees. . . . I ran water in the grove hoping it would raise the temperature some, but the water froze and I had a lake for the children to skate upon for several days." It required five years to return the grove to production and ten years for the

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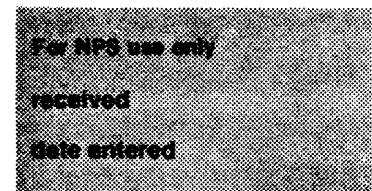
Pitzers to recover financially. Meanwhile, the Pitzer family was active in civic affairs. Blanche Pitzer became one of the first Girl Scout leaders in Claremont. Blanche and Lee Pitzer bought 5 acres of mountain ground and built the Girl Scout Cabin, "La Casita," where California troops still travel for their hikes and campouts in the Claremont foothills. Lee was active in several aspects of agricultural, civic, and commercial life in Claremont. He was director on several boards including: Bank, Building and Loan Security Company, Pomona Pest Control Board, Citizens National Bank, Claremont, and The San Antonio Fruit Exchange. In 1948, because of Blanche Pitzer's health, the Pitzers needed a smaller house. Lee Pitzer worked with Pacific Homes of California to build Claremont Manor, a home for retired people. He purchased the land and donated the orange grove where it now stands. Lee and Blanche Pitzer moved into a third floor apartment at the manor in 1949 and the stone house was rented. Lee Pitzer died in 1969, 9 days after his 96th birthday. His noted family members include brother Russell K. Pitzer, founder of Claremont's Pitzer College and Claremont McKenna College, and nephew Kenneth S. Pitzer, one-time president of Stanford University.

The second owners of the house, Maurice C. and Adele J. Peairs, had often driven by the house and admired it. One day, Lee Pitzer saw them parked in front and invited them in. They marveled. Some years later, Pitzer phoned them and said, "Would you like to buy the house?" Escrow closed on the house October 20, 1950. The Peairs family moved into the house just before Thanksgiving, 1950. The Peairs family is responsible for the excellent preservation of the house. Although many interior modifications were made to accomodate the family of four children and to provide modern kitchen, laundry, and bathroom facilities, the Peairs stored all of the pieces that were removed: doors, windows, lighting fixtures, curtain rods, etc. Marty Peairs served on the Claremont Parkways and Trees Commission. The family owned the Claremont Nursery on Foothill Boulevard for many years. Mr. Peairs also operated the lemon groves to the south of the house until the late 1970s. The groves were plumbed to provide heat from fixed burners rather than using the more familiar oil smudge pots which required laborious hand refilling each morning after use. Marty Peairs made modifications in the house so that during smudging operations, air from the cellar "pressurized" the house so that the smoke would not enter.

The present owners, Patricia and John Hodges, have lived close to the Pitzer House for many years. Often they walked by the house and thought it would be wonderful to own that beautiful house, always thinking it to be the wildest of dreams. They agonized when it appeared the house might be demolished for the proposed Foothill Freeway or damaged because of the widening of Base Line Road. For more than two years, they had been looking for a building to house Patricia's business, Claremont Psychological Services. In October, 1983, they entered the house for the first time as part of a fund-raising project of the Claremont Historic Resources Center. The price considerably exceeded their office criterion, but they finally decided that this was the sort of thing they should invest their savings in. On the 5th of November, 1983, they made an offer. Escrow closed Friday, the 16th, March, 1984.

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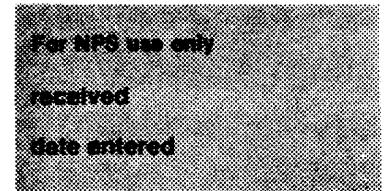
During 1983, the project came under the scrutiny of the California Transportation Department as a significant structure that might be damaged by a State Highway (Base Line Road) widening project. The structure was determined eligible for The National Register and certain mitigating measures were required to protect the setting and the structure when the street widening occurs.

In addition to the historical significance of the house, the structure is an exceptional example of bungalow architecture in the tradition of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The region of America where the bungalow reached its highest form of expression was Southern California. Bungalows were a practical means of shelter. At the turn of the century when they became a "serious architectural artifact," they were attractive for several reasons. Bungalows were affordable (they cost between \$500 and \$5,000 to build). They were simple but artistic dwellings. Migration to a warm climate, such as Southern California, at a time when property was relatively inexpensive, allowed builders to economize in materials and structure so that the bungalow's appeal reached many. The bungalow became, for many, the symbol of something greater-- the bungalow contributed to the privacy considered sacred to the middle class. In its economy, practicality and efficiency, the California bungalow grew to encompass individualistic, and in this sense, democratic traits. "More significantly," according to Gustav Stickley, father of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, "the bungalow reflected specific Southern California qualities that have, over time, developed into recognizable traits of the region." According to Robert Winter, author of The California Bungalow, certain structural features are inherent in the bungalows of Southern California. Those attributed to the Pitzer House when it was first constructed are still recognizable today: "convenience, simplicity, sound building, and excellent plumbing." Another distinguishing aspect of the Pitzer House is its enclosed patio onto which six rooms (including five bedrooms and a living room) face out. Though many bungalow architects, including the Greene brothers, opted for this architectural plan, the Pitzer House patio is by all odds the most dramatic use of the enclosed patio. Adhering to the climatic resources of Southern California, Orr built a trellis-cover for the patio and long stretches of canvas could be rolled across the beams during the warm, sun-filled summer days, or pulled back against the interior house frame to allow for sun-exposure during the relative chill, but nevertheless, sunny-skied, winter days. The stone fountain, which was once the central focus of the patio, has since been replaced by painted tiles. Hammock rings were diagonally positioned in the stonework which makes up the interior walls of the area. French doors with bevelled glass provide attractive entrance and/or exits there. Today the trellis is glazed with sheets of glass, but continuing to allow for a breathtaking view of the surrounding mountain sides.

The Pitzer House is not only a fine example of a Craftsman bungalow, but also the finest example of the fieldstone structures built along the "Foothill Belt" in the Los Angeles area. Claremont is fortunate to have many fine stone structures, wooden structures that utilize stone trim or foundation, stone walls and stone curbs. Many of these were built in the first part of this century, but none is as fine as the Pitzer House. Claremont has so much stone work because we have so many stones--a gift from the surrounding hills and mountains because of location on an alluvial fan. There are large stones in the north and smaller ones in central and south Claremont. Builders in early

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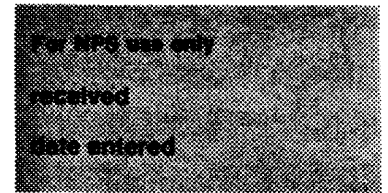
Claremont used many indigenous materials: the most decorative are the lovely granite fieldstones used in many grove houses. Most of the all-stone structures are located in north Claremont, having some relationship to families involved in the citrus industry and being close to the larger northern stones that had been piled along roads after the land was cleared for citrus groves. There are 2 ways of constructing stone buildings. One is to construct the stone bearing walls and then build a frame on the inside. Most stone structures in Claremont were built this way. The other is to build a wooden frame and then apply the exterior stone work as veneer. The Pitzer House at Towne Avenue and Base Line utilizes this method. The frame of the house was

constructed of two-by-fours and twelve-by-fourteens covered with lath and then by plaster which combined provide six inches of sturdy insulation. Over the plaster the stone facade was laid. The plaster is still evident on the eave overhangs. The plan of the Pitzer House, Claremont's first tax act project, is reflective of the philosophy behind bungalow architecture. Circulation between rooms is exceptionally clear of obstructions, and with each room leading to the next through doorways or extended halls, a feeling of continuity exists. Though each room is easily accessible and opens into the next, the dining and living rooms retain their individuality. The centrality of these rooms "cannot be overlooked as a symbolic gesture of conserving earlier values in an era of social fragmentation."

Boundaries: The boundaries are drawn on the current lot lines which encompass the 1.98 acre historic property. This is the surviving remnant of the once-larger property, reduced by subdivision over the years. Lee Pitzer originally owned 40 acres of property located north and south of Base Line Road, including the house and surrounding orange groves. Over the years, the property was reduced to 10 acres in size; approximately 20 years ago it was reduced to the present lot containing the house and grounds.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

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A Guide to

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Interview with Jean Pitzer McBurney, 1983.

Interview with Harold Becket Pomeroy, 1983.

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California Department of Transportation Documents

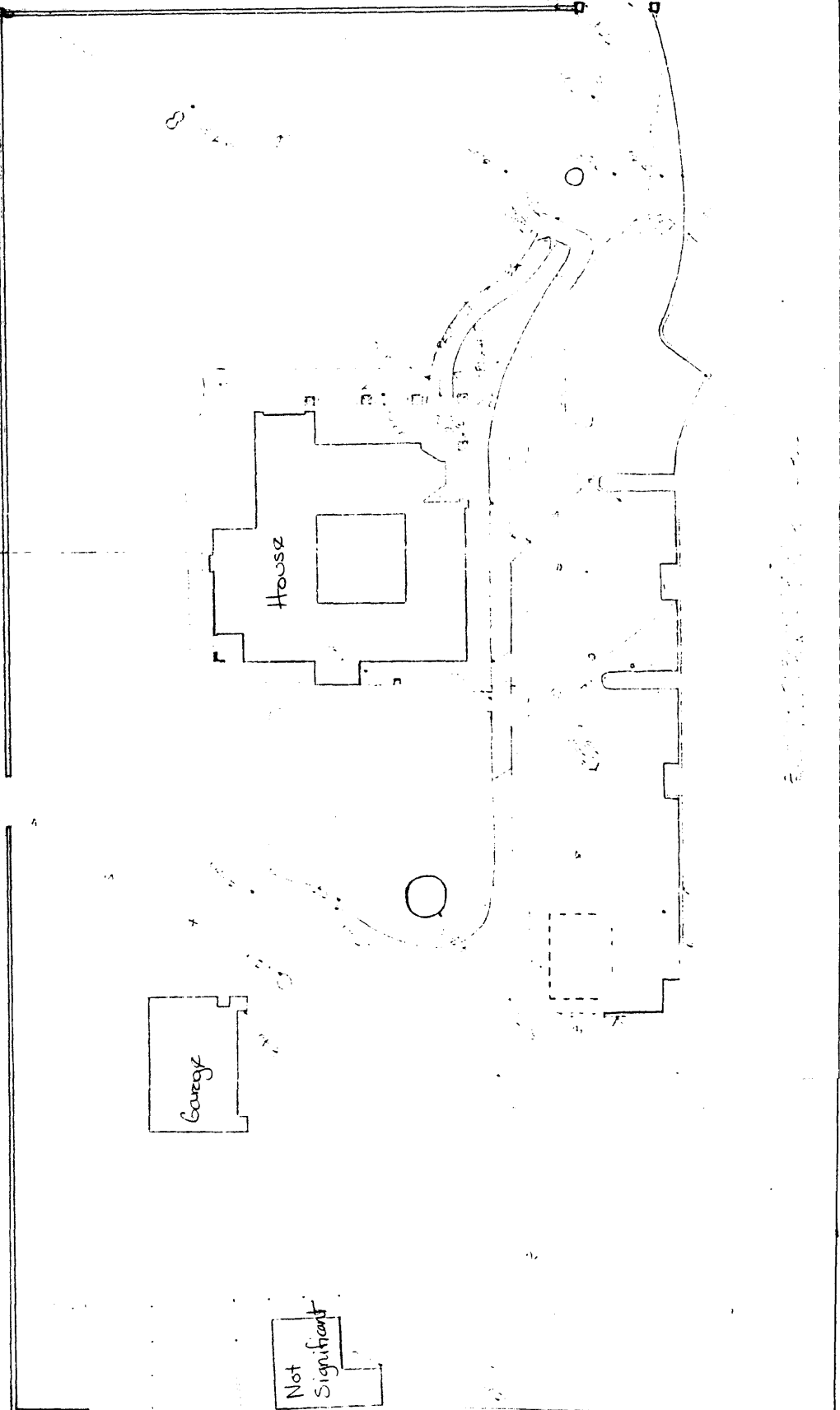
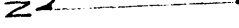
1. E. O. 11593, Determination of Eligibility Notification and Correspondence.

2. Historic Property Survey.

PITZEN HOUSE
4353 North Towne
Claremont, Los Angeles County, California

Base Line Road

Towne Avenue



Not Significant

220 ft.

3751L

0 5 10 20 40 60 80 100'