



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

801 19TH STREET, N. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

IN REPLY REFER TO:

### NATIONAL REGISTER NEWSLETTER

March, 1970

VOLUME II --- NO. 10

#### Dodge House Destroyed

The Walter Luther Dodge House in West Hollywood (Los Angeles County), California, fell victim to the wrecker's ball on February 9. An article about the demolition appeared in the Los Angeles Times the following day, and a copy was sent to the National Register by Raymond Girvigian, California's State Preservation Coordinator for the American Institute of Architects. The Riviera Management Corporation, Inc., of Torrance, California, had recently purchased the house. The land on which it stood will become the site of an apartment complex.

#### Urban Renewal Projects

There have been properties nominated to the National Register in the past month which are located in areas slated for urban renewal. After reviewing such a form, a National Register staff member must then telephone the State Liaison Officer involved and attempt to ascertain the exact stage of development of the urban renewal plans. Therefore, State Liaison Officers and their staff members (and any other persons who complete the Inventory-Nomination forms) are asked to send all details of a proposed urban renewal project with the submission. Such details as date of contracts and phase of the renewal plans are important in making a determination concerning the applicability of Section 106 of P.L. 89-665.

A similar procedure should be followed with regard to proposed highways. In order to receive Section 106 protection, districts, buildings, or sites in urban renewal areas or along proposed highways must have been signed onto the Register prior to the signing of construction or demolition contracts.

#### Guide To Architectural Styles

Several states have requested assistance from the National Register office when writing architectural descriptions on the Inventory-Nomination forms. The most common difficulty appears to be the proper identification of architectural styles. Consequently, the National Register staff strongly suggests that each state survey staff arm itself with a copy of a book by Marcus Whiffen titled American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. The book was published in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by the M.I.T. Press (1969) and sells for \$6.50.

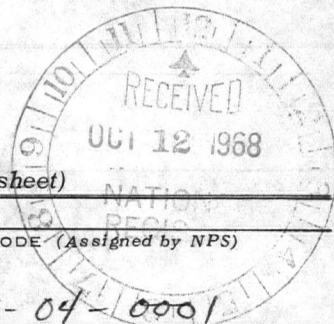
Arrangement of Independent Cities in State Registers

When compiling state registers of historic places, staff members may be uncertain about the placement of independent cities. The National Register has been arranged alphabetically by county within each state. Independent cities appear as equals of the counties. Their location in the list is determined only by spelling.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY- NOMINATION FORM**

**DRAFT**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections - use continuation sheet)



1. NAME		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Walter Luther Dodge House		68-11-04-0001

2. LOCATION		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
California	Los Angeles	Hollywood District
STREET AND NUMBER (or District-Site boundaries)		
950 N. Kings Road		

3. PRESENT STATUS	
OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS (Street, number, town, state)	
Lytton Financial Corporation, 8150 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles <sup>90046</sup>	
(Property for sale by same, 1968)	

USE (Specify)
Used as office space by Adele Faulkner and Associates, A.I.D.

ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC	REMARKS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	Occupants under no obligation from owner to show the house.

4. LEGAL RECORD	
LOCATION OF CURRENT PROPERTY TITLE(S) - NAME AND ADDRESS (Courthouse, Registry of Deeds, Etc.)	APPROX. ACREAGE
Hall of Records, 320 W. Temple St., Los Angeles, Calif. Lot 8 and southerly 10' of Lot 7, Block 1, Tract 2679, Book 27, page 38	2 3/4

5. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
NAME AND DATE OF SURVEY (Federal, State, Local, Etc.)	NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION RETAINING SURVEY RECORDS
A.	A.
B.	B.
C.	C.

6. CLASSIFICATION		
CATEGORY	MAJOR SIGNIFICANCE IN	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE
DISTRICT <input type="checkbox"/>	HISTORY <input type="checkbox"/>	NATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SITE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ARCHITECTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	STATE <input type="checkbox"/>
BUILDING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ARCHEOLOGY <input type="checkbox"/>	LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/>
STRUCTURE <input type="checkbox"/>	CULTURE <input type="checkbox"/>	
OBJECT <input type="checkbox"/>	(Other) <input type="checkbox"/>	

7. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

DESCRIBE THE ORIGINAL (If known) AND PRESENT CONDITION

Excellent condition except for recent damage to two ceilings from plumbing leaks. Interiors need painting--and with some regard for the architectural spaces.

Two-story reinforced concrete house with 1-story servants' wing and attached 3-car garage; basement under 2-story block. First floor: vestibule, hall, morning room, living room, hame room, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, servants' rooms (partition removed between two); 2nd fl: 4 bedrooms, three baths and double bath with 2 dressing rooms. U-shape plan for main block, the recess a raised porch on north, continuing around the west side; all rooms except breakfast room open onto the recessed patio and porch. Slab floors, built up with sleepers with oak floors on 1st and 2nd story. Slab roof with composition roofing over. Main entrance on south through porte cochere; arched wall encloses a dining court on south. 8" sandwich concrete walls with felt membrane enclosed in steel lattice at core. Vacuum cleaner outlets in each room connect with furnace in basement; skylighted kitchen, halls and baths; metal window frames and mullions cast in place. (E. McCoy)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

INCLUDE HISTORY, PERSONAGES, EVENTS, MAJOR SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ETC.

<sup>Irving</sup> Gill's finest house remaining since the destruction of the La Jolla Scripps house by the La Jolla Museum. It is the culmination of ten years of experimental work toward finding an aesthetic for concrete, developing a technology for concrete (his inventions have now become standard practice). He was one of the early U.S. technologists, searching out repeatable forms and details; when he had perfected a form or a detail he repeated it until he found a better solution. What was good for the high-budget house was also used for social housing; he made no distinction. His simple cubic forms, from which extended rough timber ramadas, were derived from indigenous adobes, and the floor plan of the Dodge house derives from the plan-around-a-court of Ramona's Marriage Place. Gill was one of the few non-tangential architects in the U.S. His style had precedents but he brought to his work a Puritanism and an aesthetic sense based on the mechanics of building that made him a true original.

9. CERTIFICATION

FORM PREPARED BY: (Name, organization)

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER.

Ernest Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archeology & Historic Preservation

William J. Murtagh  
(Keeper of the National Register)

DATE 11/22/68

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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

NAME [Signature]

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

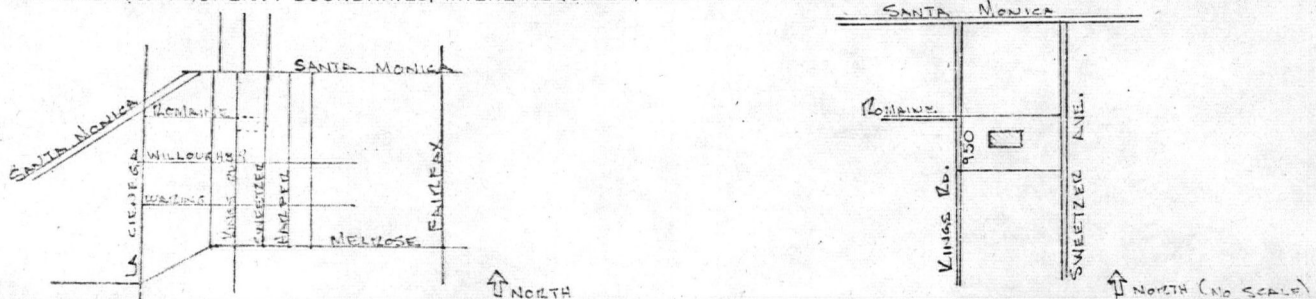
**DRAFT**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY MAP FORM**  
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

*Duplicate copy*  
*please sign & return*  
RECEIVED  
OCT 12 1968  
NATIONAL REGISTER

<b>1. NAME</b>		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Walter Luther Dodge House		68-11-04-0001
<b>2. LOCATION</b>		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
California	Los Angeles	Hollywood District
STREET AND NUMBER		
950 N. Kings Road		
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>		
SOURCE	DATE	SCALE
THOMAS FITZGER MAPS LOS ANGELES COUNTY - 1907		1" = 2,800'

REQUIREMENTS: PROPERTY BOUNDARIES, WHERE REQUIRED, AND NORTH ARROW



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**  
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

<b>1. NAME</b>		
COMMON	AND/OR HISTORIC	NUMERIC CODE (Assigned by NPS)
Walter Luther Dodge House	Arch.	68-11-04-0001
<b>2. LOCATION</b>		
STATE	COUNTY	TOWN
California	Los Angeles	Los Angeles
STREET AND NUMBER		
950 N. Kings Road		
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>		
PHOTO CREDIT	DATE	NEGATIVE FILED AT
Marvin Rand		

**4. IDENTIFICATION**  
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

- |                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 NORTH                      | 6. SOUTH     |
| 2 NORTH END OF FORMAL GARDEN | 7 NORTHWEST  |
| 3 CHIMNIES - NORTH ELEVATION | 8 SOUTHEAST. |
| 4 SOUTHEAST ELEVATION        |              |
| 5 NORTH ELEVATION            |              |





2. Dodge House Irving Gill, Architect North End of Formal Garden



3 Dodge House Irving Gill, Architect Chimneys North Elevation



4 Dodge House

Irving Gill, Architect

Southeast Elevation



5 Dodge House

Irving Gill, Architect

North Elevation



6 Dodge House Irving Gill, Architect

South



7 Dodge House

Irving Gill, Architect

North West Facade



8 Dodge House

Irving Gill, Architect

Southwest

## DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390  
SACRAMENTO 95811



November 1, 1968

Mr. William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National Register  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
801 - 19th Street N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

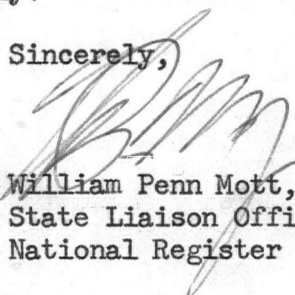
Dear Mr. Murtagh:

Attached you will find an emergency nomination to the National Register. This concerns the Walter Luther Dodge House, in Los Angeles, which was recently recorded under the H.A.B.S. program.

Its placement upon the Register is considered most urgent because local plans for its demolition are said to be progressing at an alarming pace, and its only means of guaranteed survival is dependent upon national recognition.

If supplemental material is required in support of this request, please contact me immediately.

Sincerely,

  
William Penn Mott, Jr.  
State Liaison Officer  
National Register - California



# Blue Monday In Los Angeles

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

ANOTHER Monday morning wrecking has destroyed Irving Gill's 1916 Dodge House in Los Angeles, considered one of the 15 most significant houses in the history of American domestic architecture. (After Saturday, early Monday is the most popular time for landmark demolition. It has the obvious virtue of catching people napping, while avoiding overtime rates.)

The fight to save the Dodge House failed, and there are two good reasons for telling the story now. One is the obvious, tragic commentary on how we throw our national heritage away. The other is the really revolting way in which it happened, which offers an all-too-clear link between the state of our society and our culture. Take a venal and uncaring officialdom increasingly pressed for operating funds, add conventional real estate mores, and the story almost tells itself. The combination is enough to radicalize a conservative. It does something to explain the crisis of confidence between people and government, and people and real estate—a profession which finds itself, in its growing battles with the public conscience, increasingly without respect or credence. (Who cares, with a pocket full of money?)

The story might as well be told substantially as it appears in the documents of the Historic American Buildings Survey. With the National Register, the HAES is the Federal Government's official record and recognition of the country's historical and architectural landmarks. The Walter Luther Dodge House, built for a wealthy manufacturer of a "tired feet" remedy, appears in both.

This is the HAES summary evaluation. "The Dodge House is an unusually well-preserved (sic) example of the architecture of Irving Gill; it is a culmination of his genius, a rare example of the early manifestations of the International Style, and also one of the great monuments of the early ex-

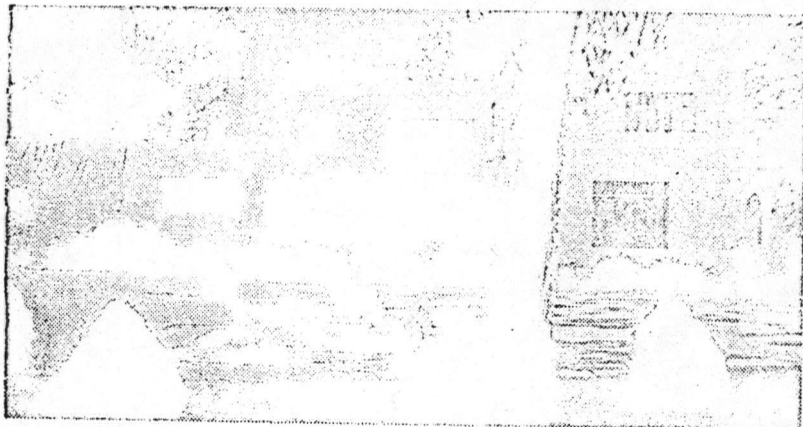
perimental architecture of reinforced concrete." There is a quotation from Lewis Mumford: "Irving Gill was beyond doubt one of the great leaders of modern architecture, worthy to rank with Sullivan, Wright and Mayteck . . . examples of his work are so few that their preservation should be a matter of national concern as well as local pride."

Esther McCoy, a leading architectural historian and specialist on West Coast building, features Gill in her authoritative book, "Five California Architects." The Dodge House, with its complete garden and rare plantings, was his masterwork.

To continue with the HAES account. "In 1924, the house was sold (by the Dodges) to T. Morrison McKenna and Anita K. McKenna for \$125,000. The Los Angeles High School District condemned the property in 1939, an action fought without success by the McKennas. On June 6, 1939, the property passed to the High School District, the McKennas being paid \$69,000. The High School District, after making a survey of high school age students in the area, found that it was not needed as a high school site and transferred title to the Junior College District."

From 1951 to 1962, the house had mixed and desultory educational use. In 1963, the Board of Education declared the property surplus. Later that year, the Board of Supervisors approved the rezoning of the street and property for higher density, reflecting other area changes, to make it a prime speculative development property.

In spite of protests, including a proposal by the American Institute of Architects for an architectural and historical library in the building, in 1965 the Board of Education put the Dodge house and grounds up for auction. It set a minimum bid of \$773,000 on the property that it had paid \$69,000 for after condemnation for a school site it didn't need, according to a survey taken after the forced sale. Both rezoning and disposition took



The Dodge House as a landmark, top, as a real estate investment, below



place with full knowledge of the nature of the building, and of the movement for its preservation that began immediately after it was declared surplus property.

As news of the threat of demolition spread, the approximately 1,000 American and foreign students, architects and historians that visited the house annually more than tripled. The preservation campaign was backed by the California Art Commission, the City Council of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Cultural Heritage Board of Los Angeles and leading historians and critics.

After some postponements under public pressure, the Board of Education sold the property to the Lytton Savings and Loan Association for \$800,000 in 1936. According to Mrs. McCoy, Bart Lytton, head of the company, made a verbal agreement, publicized at that time, to save the house, which gave Lytton preference over another buyer. Lytton Savings and Loan became Equitable Savings and Loan and Mr. Lytton died.

Equitable declared its intention to sell. It would not say that a buyer would be selected who would not destroy the house. The Citizens Committee for the Dodge House brought suit to prevent sale and demolition, and lost. Shortly after, Equitable

sold to the Riviera Management Company of Torrance, Calif., which declined comment on how the property would be used.

Mrs. McCoy says that Equitable disposed of the house "so discreetly" that the public was not immediately aware of the sale. "The office of Charles Wellman, president, refused to say who had bought it, but the County Assessor's office did. The new owner, Riviera, answered no telephone calls or registered letters from preservationists or the A.I.A."

Michael J. Elliott, executive director of the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has written of efforts to find and contact the buyer. "Riviera Management has no telephone listing and Torrance City Hall could give us no information about a business license for the firm . . ." They could not find any incorporation. (Just incidentally, when will real estate companies have to list their names, addresses and principals like real people? In New York, pursuit of delinquent owners more often than not leads to a dummy corporation. Another reason why real estate lacks credence.)

Mr. Elliott succeeded in meeting with Riviera representatives on Friday, Feb. 6, and reports that he was told

they had no definite plans for the site. "I mentioned a proposed historic easement and that plans had been drawn to allow commercial development and retention of the site and buildings. I offered to discuss these with them and they seemed receptive, but wanted to talk to the other partners. I left the meeting (Friday) believing we would have cooperation even though they did not commit themselves. . ."

The bulldozer moved in unannounced the following Monday morning, Feb. 9, in pouring rain.

On Thursday, Feb. 12, 140 UCLA students came to the Dodge House site on an architectural field trip that had been planned by the school last November. The tour became a wake.

When Gill designed the Dodge House he wrote, "We should build our house simple, plain and substantial as a boulder, then leave the ornamentation of it to nature, who will trim it with lichens, chisel it with storms, make it gracious and friendly with vines and flower shadows as she does the stone in the meadow." From his teacher, Louis Sullivan, he had learned that architecture is "the luminous idea of simplicity."

He should have added, do not leave it to city officials or real estate developers. It is all rubble now.

Demolition climaxed a seven-year struggle by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and preservationists to save the treasured landmark. The AIA chapter has already demanded a new Los Angeles County ordinance to protect historic structures.

Designed by Irving Gill, who apprenticed under Louis Sullivan, the Dodge House was internationally recognized as years ahead of its time. A progressive blend of Spanish mission and modern style, the two-story, 16-room mansion was one of the first to use reinforced concrete.

The 54-year-old home had such futuristic features as skylights in the kitchen and bathrooms, a central vacuum system, even an overhead carwash in the garage.

"The Dodge House is just the latest tragic example of this kind of cultural vandalism that robs America of its historic landmarks," commented James Biddle, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Other officially registered national historic landmarks that have been destroyed recently, said Mr. Biddle, include the Grand Rapids (Michigan) City Hall, the Lycoming (Pennsylvania) City Courthouse, the Deering Barn in Portland (Maine), seven houses in the West High Street Historic District in Lexington (Kentucky), and the General Worth Hotel in Hudson (New York). All of these, Biddle pointed out, have been designated as properties worth saving, and they were given protection under the law.

H30-HR

November 14, 1968

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.  
State Liaison Officer  
State of California-Resources Agency  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
P. O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Mr. Mott:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of November 1 and the emergency nomination of the Walter Luther Dodge House in Los Angeles for entry in the National Register. The material submitted is being reviewed in this office and our recommendations will be made to the Chief of this office upon his return on Monday, November 18. The authority to place historic properties in the National Register has been delegated to the Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation.

It should be noted that there were no photographs included with the nomination although the notations on the Photograph Form indicated eight photographs.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Murtagh (Sgd.)

William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National  
Register

cc:  
Regional Director, Western region

HR

RVKeune:jah 11-14-68

H30:HR

November 25, 1968

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.  
Director  
Department of Parks and  
Recreation  
P.O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Mr. Mott:

We wish to inform you that the Walter Luther Dodge House, 950 North Kings Road, Hollywood District, Los Angeles, California, was entered in the National Register in accordance with your nomination on November 22, 1968.

The continuance of this property in the National Register requires that you fill out the official inventory-nomination forms after they have become available and that you comply with all applicable provisions in the manual Grants For Historic Preservation: Guide To State Participation.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Murtagh (Sgd.)

William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National  
Register

Enclosure

cc:  
Regional Director, Western Region

HR

JRogers:bk 11/25/68

November 1, 1963

Mr. William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National Register  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
801 - 19th Street N. W.  
Washington, D. C.

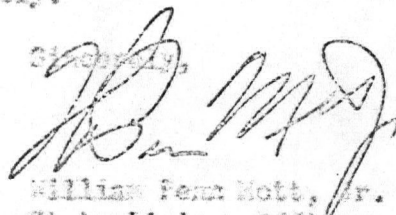
Dear Mr. Murtagh:

Attached you will find an emergency nomination to the National Register. This concerns the Walter Luther Dodge House, in Los Angeles, which was recently recorded under the N.A.S.S. program.

Its placement upon the Register is considered most urgent because local plans for its demolition are said to be progressing at an alarming pace, and its only means of guaranteed survival is dependent upon national recognition.

If supplemental material is required in support of this request, please contact me immediately.

Sincerely,



William Fern Mott, Jr.  
State Liaison Officer  
National Register - California

WFM:AMM:bg

cc: Mr. Raymond Girvigian, A.I.A.  
Mr. James P. Tryner  
Mr. Michael Elliott, Exc. Dir.  
A.I.A.  
8999 Beverly Boulevard  
A.A. 90048

*Am... - ...*  
*11/1/63*  
*WJ/B*

## DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390  
SACRAMENTO 95811



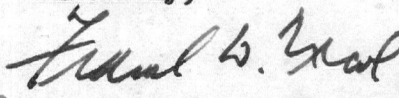
December 13, 1968

Mr. William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National Register  
Office of Archeology and Historic  
Preservation  
801 19th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Mr. Murtagh:

Enclosed you will find eight (8) photographs of the Walter Luther Dodge House recently submitted in an emergency action for placement upon the National Register of Historic Places. Inadvertently they were misfiled and did not accompany the forms sent to you on November 1; copies of which we enclose. Please accept our apology.

Sincerely,

  
for William Penn Mott, Jr.  
Director

enc.

H30-HR

December 30, 1968

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.  
Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
P.O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Mr. Mott:

This to acknowledge your letter of December 13, enclosing  
eight photographs of the Walter Luther Dodge House. Thank  
you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Jerry L. Rogers

Jerry Rogers  
Assistant Keeper ~~for~~ of  
the National Register

cc: HR

JRogers:bk 12/30/68

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

FNP  
FEB 11 1969

*Interior*  
1969 JAN 24 AM 6 33

WA209 (DT) DN PDF 7 EXTRA

LOS ANGELES CALIF 22 143A PST

MRS PAT NIXON

THE WHITE HOUSE

DEAR MRS NIXON THE DODGE HOUSE A CULTURAL MONUMENT ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER AS OF NOVEMBER 22 1968 WILL BE DESTROYED IF WE DO NOT GET YOUR HELP TO SAVE IT. CHARLES WELLMAN PRESIDENT OF EQUITABLE SAVINGS AND LOAN CAN NO LONGER SAVE THIS HOUSE AND WANTS TO SELL IT TO SPECULATIVE BUILDERS WE NEED YOUR HELP DESPERATELY.

PC: CONSULT WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN REGARDS

TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS NATIONAL MONUMENT

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR THE DODGE HOUSE, 3079 ST GEORGE

LOSA.

SL

Wm  
OKS  
J  
O'Keefe

FEB 18 1969

H30-HR

Citizens Committee for the Dodge House  
3079 St. George Street  
Los Angeles, California 90027

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your telegram of January 24 to Mrs. Nixon concerning the Walter Luther Dodge House.

The Dodge House is considered the finest surviving example of the work of architect Irving Gill, a major pioneer of the modern movement, and an innovator in using concrete in house construction. Because this structure is important in the history of American architecture it was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places by the California State Liaison Officer and placed on the Register after professional review by the National Park Service.

Properties are placed in the National Register of Historic Places by virtue of their national, State, or local significance in American history, archeology, architecture, and culture. The National Register provides an authoritative guide by which Federal, State and local governments, and private groups and citizens everywhere, may know what should be protected from destruction or impairment.

Properties in the National Register are protected by the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665) from federally financed undertakings, including those licensed by a Federal agency but using private funds. If the Dodge House is threatened in any way by Federal action, by law the agency involved must give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, appointed by the President, an opportunity to comment on the undertaking in an effort to resolve the conflict in the public interest.

The Dodge House has also been recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey, a national collection of records of architecturally and historically significant buildings, as an outstanding example illustrating the development of contemporary architecture in the

United States. The records, measured drawings, photographs, and written documentation are deposited at the Library of Congress, which maintains the Survey's collection.

No funds are available at the moment under Public Law 89-665 for preservation projects. However, under Title VI of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-754), the Department of Housing and Urban Development is authorized to make grants to local public bodies of up to 50 percent of the cost of acquiring and restoring structures of historic or architectural value in urban areas. Information may be obtained from the Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C. 20410.

We hope this information will be helpful to you.

Sincerely yours,

J. B. N. Jensen

Acting

Director

cc:

Regional Director, Western ) w/c of telegram  
/HR - Mr. Rogers }  
DAL - Mr. Melvin }

JLRogers:reo 2/18/69

H30-HR

Los Angeles  
Cal

JUN 4 1969

52  
=

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.  
Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
State Resources Agency  
P.O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Mr. Mott:

While organizing our files we have taken note that the Walter Luther Dodge House, nominated by you and signed onto the National Register, has not yet been submitted to us on the approved Inventory Nomination forms. In accordance with our agreement this property was included on the Register on the condition that the approved forms would be completed when available. Further, no regulation map or Property Map form were sent with the original nomination, and we would appreciate your sending us both items as well as completed Property Photograph forms for the eight pictures of the property which we now have.

It will facilitate protective qualities of the National Register if you would supply us with the items requested above as soon as it is convenient. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Murtagh

William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National  
Register

cc:  
Regional Director, Western Region  
T, Butterfield  
Mr. Steen  
HR

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

EDippel:je

Chambers  
2/7/70

*on*  
*Los Angeles Calif.*

FEB 7 1970

H34-HR

HR

Riviera Management Company, Inc.  
22410 Hawthorne Boulevard  
Terrance, California 90503

Gentlemen:

T

It has recently come to our attention that the Walter Luther Dodge House in Los Angeles, California is being demolished. We wish to inform you, as owners of the property, that the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 22, 1968, and is the first property nominated to the Register by the California State Liaison Officer, Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811.

DOC

Properties on the National Register are protected to the extent outlined in Section 106 of Public Law 89-665. This section is underlined in the accompanying folder describing our program. If any Federal agencies are involved in either the demolition of the building or in any future proposals for the site, it is required that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be notified. We would appreciate your notifying the agency involved, if such be the case, of this requirement.

The Dodge House is one of the important buildings in the history of American architecture, and should be preserved.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel Allen Chambers, Jr.

Ernest Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archeology  
and Historic Preservation

Enclosure

SACHambers:ps 2/6/70

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

cc: Mr. Ray Givvishan 1015 Fremont Avenue; Department of California Recreation, State Resources  
Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director; Department of California Recreation, State Resources  
Agency, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811  
Regional Director, Western Region  
Mr. Charles Steen, Southwestern Regional Office

Circulate, and File with Demolished Property

# NEWS



Am  
B.L.  
CAG  
MB  
RE

## National Trust for Historic Preservation

748 JACKSON PLACE, N.W. • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 • (202) 382-3304

2-25-70

Frederick Haupt  
Sabin Robbins  
382-3304

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DEMOLISHED IN LOS ANGELES

Another historic landmark has been clubbed to death.

The victim is the Dodge House in Los Angeles - a structure certified by the U.S. Department of the Interior as "significant in American history and culture," and recorded in the official National Register of Historic Places.

Only 1,100 structures in the United States have been so honored to date.

### End of Seven-Year Struggle

The Dodge House, built in 1916 for patent medicine tycoon Walter Luther Dodge, was demolished February 9 to make way for an apartment house.

"It was like seeing someone clubbed to death - and not being able to stop it," remarked one onlooker who stood by helplessly as the building was pounded to rubble by wrecking ball and bulldozer.

MORE

Demolition climaxed a seven-year struggle by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and preservationists to save the treasured landmark. The AIA chapter has already demanded a new Los Angeles County ordinance to protect historic structures.

Designed by Irving Gill, who apprenticed under Louis Sullivan, the Dodge House was internationally recognized as years ahead of its time. A progressive blend of Spanish mission and modern style, the two-story, 16-room mansion was one of the first to use reinforced concrete.

The 54-year-old home had such futuristic features as skylights in the kitchen and bathrooms, a central vacuum system, even an overhead carwash in the garage.

"The Dodge House is just the latest tragic example of this kind of cultural vandalism that robs America of its historic landmarks," commented James Biddle, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Other officially registered national historic landmarks that have been destroyed recently, said Mr. Biddle, include the Grand Rapids (Michigan) City Hall, the Lycoming (Pennsylvania) City Courthouse, the Deering Barn in Portland (Maine), seven houses in the West High Street Historic District in Lexington (Kentucky), and the General Worth Hotel in Hudson (New York). All of these, Biddle pointed out, have been designated as properties worth saving, and they were given protection under the law.

*not on*

*R. Gambale  
3/3/70 B. Lery 3/3/70*

*Calif*

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN: HR 64-HR

MAR 5 1970

Mr. Raymond Cirvagian, A.I.A.  
1015 Fremont Avenue  
North Pasadena, California 91030

Dear Ray:

3/3/70 Thank you so much for sending us the xerox copies of the newspaper articles concerning the demolition of the Dodge House in Los Angeles. This is indeed an architectural loss, not only for California but for the entire nation.

It is encouraging to learn that the destruction of the Dodge House is being given such extensive television and newspaper coverage. Perhaps growing public awareness through the use of the mass media in such cases will help to lessen the possibility of this type of callous demolition in the future.

Since Federal legal measures to prevent or delay the razing of historic properties apply only to Federal undertakings, we have no authority to interfere in situations like that of the Dodge House. Public education and local action are the best hope. One of our reasons for publishing the National Register is to assure wide public recognition of the value of the properties recorded in it and to encourage their preservation by private as well as public means.

We deeply regret the loss of the Dodge House, and hope that this will not discourage preservation efforts in the Los Angeles area. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

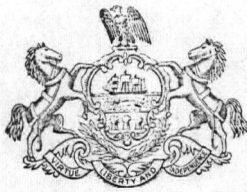
Sincerely yours,

/S/ Ernest Allen Connally

Ernest Allen Connally  
Chief, Office of Archaeology  
and Historic Preservation

cc: Regional Director: Western Region w/cy inc.  
Mr. Steen Midwest Region w/cy inc.  
T-Butterfield

cc: Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION  
WILLIAM PENN MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES BUILDING  
BOX 1026 HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17108

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 12, 1970

Mr. S. Allen Chambers, Jr.  
Architectural Historian  
National Park Service  
801 Nineteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Allen,

I am gathering material for a possible book which will illustrate the damage which is being done to historic places. I am very much interested in the note in your NATIONAL REGISTER NEWSLETTER for March on the Walter Luther Dodge House in West Hollywood, California. Do you have any photographs of this property before and after hand? If not, could you give me a source from which they might be secured.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "S. K. Stevens".

S. K. STEVENS

S s

30

MAR 17 1970

H34-HR

Mr. Roy Girvigian, A. I. A.  
1015 Present Avenue  
South Pasadena, California 91030

Dear Mr. Girvigian:

Our staff was most unhappy to learn of the destruction of the Walter Luther Dodge House in Los Angeles. This is an unfortunate architectural loss not only for California but for the entire nation.

We are attempting to keep a visual record of the destruction of National Register properties. The Dodge House is of particular interest to us, since we have recently used a photograph of it in our budget justification material for the congressional hearings concerning our program.

We would be most grateful to you if you could send us any black-and-white photographs depicting the destruction of the Dodge House for our archives. If you could send negatives, we will have prints made from them here, returning the negatives to you.

Any cooperation that you can give us will be very deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,  
(Signed)

Robert S. Gamble  
Historian  
National Register of  
Historic Places

cc: Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811

Regional Director, Northwest Region  
Mr. Charles Steen, Midwestern Regional Office

e

T  
HR

RSGamble:

3/16/70

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

3-23-70

MR. R. S. GAMBLE:

RAY GIRUGIAN ASKED ME TO MAIL PHOTOS  
COVERING THE DODGE HOUSE DESTRUCTION TO YOU.  
I AM ENCLOSING 3 PRINTS & 2 PROOF SHEETS  
FOR YOUR USE.

MY BEST WISHES TO YOU & YOUR STAFF  
MEMBERS TOWARDS OBTAINING ADDITIONAL FUNDING  
IN THE BATTLE TO PREVENT THE MANY FUTURE  
DESTRUCTION WE FACE.

SINCERELY,

*Harvey Steinberg*

PLANNING CONSULTANT

2953 EFFIE STREET

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

90026

March 25, 1970

Mr. Robert S. Gamble, Historian  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
801 - 19th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. Gamble:

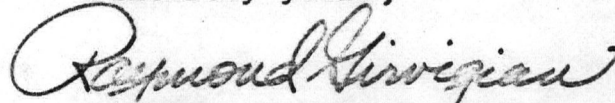
In response to your letter of March 17, 1970, I have contacted Mr. Harvey Steinberg, a local planner, who was with us at the scene during the demolition of the Dodge House. He graciously has consented, both as a member of the Dodge House Campaign Committee and interested citizen, to forward photos of the destruction that he has taken. My photos unfortunately are colored slides and difficult to enlarge.

The best picture of all, however, was that taken by the Los Angeles Times newspaper. I have contacted Mr. Rosen in the Times News Bureau. He states that an 8 x 10 black & white glossy would cost \$22.50. Their policy is no contributions to any group. I am enclosing a machine copy of the picture. If you would like a glossy of this photo, send him a Purchase Order or check for \$22.50, which covers the cost of printing, handling and mailing directly to you the same day ordered.

I have also sent a copy of your letter to KNXT Television, Betty Penny News Department, Los Angeles, 90028, California. They did a thorough documentary on it. They may possibly forward photos for your use.

Please notify me if I can be of additional assistance.

Sincerely yours,

  
RAYMOND GIRVIGIAN, A.I.A.

State Preservation Coordinator

RG:brg

C: KNXT Television

H34-HR

MAR 27 1970

Los Angeles Co., CA

Dr. S. K. Stevens  
Executive Director  
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission  
William Penn Memorial Museum and Archives Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108

Dear Dr. Stevens:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Walter Luther Dodge House. We do have some before and after photographs, as well as several taken during the actual demolition. Unfortunately, we have only one copy of each and no negatives of any. I would be reluctant to send them or have them copied without knowing which would be most appropriate to use for your book. It might be best to have a look when you're next in the office and we can proceed from there.

On the other hand, you might check with Mr. Raymond Girvagian, 1015 Fremont Avenue, South Pasadena, California, 91030. He is the A.I.A. State Preservation Coordinator in California, and was quite involved with the efforts to save the Dodge House. Several of our photographs were sent, at his request, by Mr. Harvey Steinberg, Planning Consultant, 2953 Effie Street, Los Angeles, California, 90026. You might be able to get some photographs from him, especially ones taken while the bulldozer did its duty.

Hope this will help.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

S. Allen Chambers, Jr.,  
Architectural Historian

cc:  
Director, Northeast Region w/cy. inc.

T-w/cy. inc.

HR-w/cy. inc.

SAChambers :mm

3/27/70

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

R. Gamble  
3/27/70

MAR 30 1970

H34-HR

Mr. Harvey Steinberg  
Planning Consultant  
2953 Effie Street  
Los Angeles, California 90026

Los Angeles Co,  
Ca

Dear Mr. Steinberg:

Thank you very much for the three prints and two proof sheets covering the destruction of the Dodge House. The photographs are excellent.

This graphic presentation of the destruction of an important architectural landmark should prove most useful in our continuing efforts to alert the American public and the Congress to such disregard of our heritage.

Again, thank you for your kindness.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Robert S. Gamble  
Historian  
National Register of  
Historic Places

cc:  
Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation,  
State Resources Agency, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811 w-cy/inc.

Director, Northwest Region w-cy/inc.

Mr. Charles Steen, Midwestern Region w-cy/inc.

T-w-cy/inc.  
HR-w-cy/inc.

RSGamble:cm

3/27/70

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

APR 1 1970

H34-HR

Mr. Raymond Cirvician, A.I.A.  
1015 Fremont Ave.  
South Pasadena, California 91030

Dear Mr. Cirvician:

Thank you very much for your letter of March 25 and the accompanying copy of the Dodge House photograph which appeared in the Los Angeles Times on February 10. This is indeed a striking picture and we are adding this to our pictorial archive of demolished landmarks. Thank you, also, for the information on how to obtain a glossy print from the Times.

A few days ago, we received from Mr. Steinberg the fine photographs mentioned in your letter. Your generous assistance, and that of Mr. Steinberg, is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Robert S. Gamble  
Historian  
National Register of  
Historic Places.

cc:

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811 w-cy/inc.

Director, Northwest Region w-cy/inc.

Mr. Charles Steen, Midwestern Regional Office w-cy/inc.

T-w-cy/inc.  
HR-w-cy/inc.

RSGamble:cm

3/31/70

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

R. Gamble 3/26  
Blery 3/26  
Murtagh 3/26  
Connally 3/27

*on*

H34-HR

APR 7 1970

*Take 4-3*

Mr. William H. Brown  
191 West 10th Street  
New York, New York 10014

*Los Angeles Co., Calif*

*Freeman*

*4/3  
Low Jensen  
Garrison 4/6  
Bill 4/7*

Dear Mr. Brown:

On behalf of President Nixon, thank you for your letter concerning the demolition of the Walter Luther Dodge House in Los Angeles. This is indeed an unfortunate architectural loss.

As you perhaps know, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665) was designed to extend a measure of protection to historic properties. This act provided for the expansion of the National Register of properties significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Under this law, any federally funded or federally licensed project affecting a property placed on the National Register of Historic Places must first be reviewed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The Dodge House was placed on the National Register in 1968; but since the project endangering the mansion was a private undertaking, the National Government could not be involved under the terms of section 106 of the act.

A leaflet explaining the National Register of Historic Places and a copy of Public Law 89-665 are enclosed. We appreciate your interest in historic preservation and trust that you will call upon us should you have further inquiries.

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) HARTHON L. BILL

Acting Director

*4-3  
[Signature]*

Enclosures

cc: Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.  
Director, Department of Parks and Recreation  
State Resources Agency, P. O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811

CL-Mr. Holley )w/c of inc.  
Director, Western Region )w/c of inc.  
LL-Mr. Melvin )w/c of inc.  
T )w/c of inc.  
HR )w/c of inc.

)w/c of inc.

(BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR)

RGamble:cf 4/2/70

APR 8 1970

H34-HR

Mrs. Elise Rhee  
851 North Sweetzer Ave.  
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mrs. Rhee:

The Director of the National Park Service has asked me to respond to your letter of March 10 concerning the Dodge House in West Hollywood, California. We too regret the loss this important architectural landmark.

The Dodge House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1968. Such a designation provides a measure of protection for a property affected by a federally funded or federally licensed undertaking, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. However, this protection does not extend to private projects involving a National Register property. Since the Dodge House was privately owned and its demolition did not involve either federal funds or federal license, the national government could do little to save it.

It is unfortunate that this outstanding building has disappeared, and we hope that such destruction can eventually be curtailed. Thank you for your interest in historic preservation.

Sincerely yours,  
William J. Murtagh (Sgd.)

William J. Murtagh  
Keeper of the National  
Register

cc?

Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, P. O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811 w-cy/inc.

Director, Northwest Region w-cy/inc.

Mr. Charles Steen, Southwestern Regional Office w-cy/inc.

T-w-cy/inc.  
HR-w-cy/inc.  
RSGamble:cm

4/7/70 BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

## Councilman's Corner

By Edmund D. Edelman  
5th District

### X Dodge House Only a Memory X Councilman Edelman reports

Several weeks ago, one of the fifteen most architecturally unique homes in America was demolished. A wrecking crew moved in early one morning without any warning and destroyed the lovely Walter Luther Dodge House.

The Dodge House, which was located at 950 North Kings Road in West Hollywood, was a Recognized Historical Landmark of the City's Cultural Heritage Board, and it was in the National Registry of Historic Landmarks of the U. S. Department of the Interior's Park Service. Now, because of governmental dereliction of duty, we have lost for all time this work of noted California architect Irving Gill.

Since 1966, I had worked for acquisition of this beautiful structure. I appeared before the L. A. Board of Education, opposing its sale of the Dodge House to a savings and loan association. Nevertheless, the school board went ahead and sold the house for \$800,000.

Unfortunately, the Dodge House was then sacrificed to make way for an apartment complex. The very school board that serves the educational needs of Los Angeles failed to realize its opportunity to preserve one of the outstanding cultural monuments of California. Architects, educators, historians, and the interested public can no longer enjoy this example of our precious heritage.

The Dodge House was located in West Hollywood which is an unincorporated County area adjacent to the Fifth District. Had the structure been within City limits, it would have been protected from demolition by the City's Cultural Heritage Board. However, the County has no ordin-

ance protecting such historical landmarks, and to that extent the County is to blame for the loss of this architectural milestone.

The City Council also failed to rescue the Dodge House. In 1966 and again in 1969, I introduced Council resolutions which would authorize the City to make a financial contribution along with other governmental agencies and with civic groups to preserve the Dodge House as a museum of arts and a recreational facility. Despite my efforts and those of the American Institute of Architects and the Citizen's Committee for the Dodge House, the City Council did not take positive action to save the Dodge House.

It is imperative that we learn from this fiasco. Los Angeles is a modern City with very few historical structures to attest to our heritage. We cannot afford to destroy our few remaining architectural masterpieces. The governmental agencies which did not act must never again allow the name of progress to be used to sacrifice such an important historical legacy. The Dodge House is now only a memory.

March 10, 70

To the Director of the National Park  
Service.

This is the end of the Dodge House, My  
heart aches and bleeds when I see the debris and  
the enormous roots of the precious trees lying there.  
They did not even save and transplant the trees  
and the plants.

Sincerely

Mrs. Elsie Bhee.

RECEIVED  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
WASHINGTON OFFICE  
MAR 13 11 31 AM '70

Los Angeles Times, Tues. FEB. 10, 1970 Part 1 p. 3



**HISTORIC MANSION FALLS** — The 16-room Dodge House in West Hollywood crumbles under blows of wrecking ball. It was built in 1916.  
Times photo by Cal Montney

# Wreckers Demolish Old Dodge House in Surprise Move

BY RAY HEBERT  
Times Urban Affairs Writer

The Dodge House came crashing down Monday.

A dramatic 11th hour attempt to save the renowned architectural monument fell short and demolition crews tore it apart with bulldozers and a wrecking ball.

Even a drenching rain failed to hold up destruction of the two-story, 16-room mansion which was considered one of the 15 most architecturally significant residences in the United States.

The end for the house, built for Walter Luther Dodge in 1916, climaxed a seven-year fight by architectural, civic and private groups to preserve the famed structure and its parklike grounds at 950 N. Kings Road in West Hollywood.

Demolition crews moved equipment onto the property unannounced Monday morning and by mid-afternoon the house looked as if a bomb had hit it.

## Institute Members Notified

A Kings Road resident alerted members of the Southern California Chapter, American Institute of Architects, that bulldozers were on the grounds, but by the time they arrived the job was done.

"This is like slashing a Rembrandt with a razor," said architect Kurt Meyer, a member of one of the groups fighting to save the house.

A dismayed Raymond Girvigian, state preservation coordinator for the AIA, called the residence's destruction a sad commentary on the lack of concern for landmarks with historic, architectural and environmental significance.

AIA members had seen signs last week that the house, which had been sold to a management firm, was in jeopardy and had made appeals to Washington and Sacramento for help in saving it.

Architectural students recorded and documented material about the mansion last year and it was placed in the National Registry of Historic Landmarks, a documentation maintained by the National Park Service.

The house, designed by architect

16 Part I—Tues., Feb. 10, 1970 Los Angeles Times 2★

# Famed Dodge House Razed in Surprise Move

Continued from Third Page

Irving Gill, had gained international attention because it represented a milestone in architecture.

It was designed as a blend of Spanish mission and modern architecture and incorporated one of the first uses of reinforced concrete.

"No one thought demolition would come this soon," said Girvigian.

Keith Abrams, a supervisor for the Roger Roy Land Clearing Co., said he learned only Sunday night about the structure's architectural significance but did not know who had ordered its demolition.

He said the house and the rare trees and plants which comprised the 2.75-acre estate would be cleared away by Friday.

Apparently the grounds will become the site for a large apartment development—one of many either completed or under construction along that section of N. Kings Road.

The property, according to reports, was sold by Equitable Savings and Loan Assn. Dec. 30 to Riviera Management Co., Inc., of Torrance.

At the time a Riviera spokesman declined to say how the property would be used.

An official at the company's offices Monday said he knew nothing about the project but admitted it was a "sensitive subject."

Last summer a citizens group sued Equitable to halt demolition of the house and sale of the property but Equitable won the suit.

Equitable's predecessor, Lytton Savings & Loan Assn., acquired the property in 1966. Company officials said they were also interested in seeing the house preserved.

The property originally was purchased by the Los Angeles School District for a high school, but the project was abandoned and the estate was sold to Lytton for \$800,000.

DODGE, WALTER, LUTHER, HOUSE

(Resource Name)

48000058

(Reference Number[s])

12/12/86

(Date form completed)

LOS ANGELES

(County)

CALIFORNIA

(State)

Mark J. Baker

(Completed by)

STATUS:

1. MISSING \_\_\_\_\_ 2. REMOVED/  DEMOLISHED 3. NHL \_\_\_\_\_ 4. TR \_\_\_\_\_ 5. MRA \_\_\_\_\_ 6. OVER-SIZED \_\_\_\_\_ 7. NPS - \_\_\_\_\_ UNDOCUMENTED 8. DOE - \_\_\_\_\_ OWNER OBJECTION 9. RESTRICTED \_\_\_\_\_

EXPLANATION:

1. Missing Status: Entire Folder ( ) ; Nomination ( ) ; Map(s) ( ) ; Photos ( )  
Available on: Microfiche ( ) ; Optical Disk ( )

2. DEMOLITION  
(Cause for removal)

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(Date Removed)

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(NHL Name, if different than NRHP Name)

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(TR or MRA Name)

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(If multi-state/county MRA, state/county where filed and location)

6. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Location of oversize file)

7. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Current source of partial documentation)

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COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Where found, or source of replacement)

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