



The Samuel Merrill House in Pasadena, built in 1910, is being restored after years sitting vacant.

## Preservation Groups, Bank Work to Save a Gem From Pasadena's Past

**T**he Samuel Merrill House, designed by Pasadena architects Charles and Henry Greene, will be restored by Heritage Homeownership Partners and Pasadena Heritage.

The Merrill House was built in 1910 at 1285 Summit Ave. near Washington Boulevard and has survived in nearly original condition.

Designed by the Greenes for Samuel Merrill, a conservationist and friend of John Muir, the house remained the Merrills' home for four decades. A second family, the Griders, were also longtime owners who made few changes to the house.

In the last few years, however, the house has been vacant. It became a target for transients and drug dealers and was in danger of being damaged or destroyed.

"The Merrill house came to our attention when neighbors asked if anything could be done," said Alison Becker, Heritage Homeownership Partners project manager. The staff began

investigating whether city funding it had been granted for a home ownership project could be used for this house.

The property's large lot and multifamily zoning appealed to the rental property developers. Alarmed at the potential loss of the significant home and erosion of a largely intact residential street lined with historic houses, Heritage Homeownership Partners and Pasadena Heritage began negotiations to buy the property and sought the assistance of its owner, Washington Mutual.

"We requested that the bank consider discounting the price of the Merrill House so that . . . funds could be spent on rehabilitation and restoration. We are thrilled that Washington Mutual representatives were so responsive," said Sue Mossman, executive director of Pasadena Heritage.

The Merrill House illustrates several of the Greenes' design hallmarks, including broad overhanging eaves, distinctive casement windows, clinker brick and

Arroyo stone piers and retaining walls.

Innovations in the Merrill home include its modified L-plan, a raised front terrace rather than a more typical covered porch and the use of wide horizontal siding. The house has three bedrooms, one bath, living room, dining room, library and kitchen.

The addition of sliding glass doors in the front, an extra room and bath in the rear and damage to the fireplace in the living room are the biggest changes to the original design, but all appear to be reversible.

Heritage Homeownership Partners has committed its resources and funding from the city of Pasadena and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Pasadena Heritage will lend the project money from its Preservation Fund and provide technical assistance and restoration expertise. A fund-raising campaign is also being launched by the groups.