



## **The El Segundo Woman's Club Announces the Listing of its 1912 Clubhouse in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior**

El Segundo Woman's Club

The El Segundo Woman's Club Clubhouse, the 1912 grammar school for the newly founded City of El Segundo, purchased by the Woman's Club in 1936, has been added to the National Register of Historic Places following an application submitted by Club member Jane Burrell to the California State Office of Historic Preservation.

Built in 1912, the wood-framed El Segundo schoolhouse served elementary students until 1933. The building was left unoccupied until it was moved to the grounds of the high school to house students while repairs were made to the high school from damage sustained in the 1933 Long Beach earthquake. The El Segundo Woman's Club purchased the building from the El Segundo School Board in 1936 and moved it to four lots the Club had purchased in 1931 and 1936 on Standard Street and Mariposa Avenue across from the high school. John C. Austin and his partner, Frederic M. Ashley, donated their services to advise the building chairwoman, Mrs. James Hunt, on the repairs necessary to transform the building. Immediate Past President Donna Mae Ellis, noted that "in helping Jane search for documentation, we found beautifully written letters from John Austin to Mrs. Hunt, rolled up in a safe deposit box." Written at a time when traveling from Pasadena to El Segundo to oversee the renovations was a cumbersome endeavor, the letters served to support and advise Mrs. Hunt throughout the process. These letters have now been archived, along with other early documents and blueprints created by Austin when he designed the Clubhouse's new entrance in 1940.

The application was an enormous undertaking, over a two-year period, that involved reading through minutes, searching for missing facts (the cost of purchasing the building was found over eighteen months into the project), and placing the role of the Woman's Club within the history of the city and social history. During the course of this research, Jane Burrell was generously assisted by several individuals, including her sister, Jean Russo, Ph.D., who works for Historic Annapolis and the State of Maryland, and provided valuable expertise having worked on similar submissions; Frank Glynn, AIA, RIBA, Principal at SAGA Architecture who, along with interns Javier Medina and Samantha Quevedo, provided important architectural information; Sari Brann of the History Committee of the Friends of the El Segundo Public Library, who opened the study room on multiple occasions and shared photographs and documents from the city and Club's early history (much of this early material was gathered by members of the Woman's Club beginning in the late 1950s); and State Historian, Amy Crain, in the Office of Historic Preservation, who patiently guided Burrell throughout the application process.

The El Segundo Woman's Club was founded in 1922 by seventeen women to "search for knowledge and help their neighbors." The Club, which is part of the General Federation of



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Women's Clubs, has been an important civic catalyst for the City of El Segundo, holding community forums and cultural events, and participating in local and national initiatives and celebrations. Donating to local, national, and international charities has been a core mission of the Club since its inception, along with scholarships for higher education beginning in the 1930s. In 2023, the Club awarded \$22,000 in scholarships to El Segundo and Arena high school students.

"This is an historic moment in the Club's history, and we are extremely grateful to Jane Burrell for the tremendous work she has done to achieve this recognition, which is very much deserved for both the building and for all the contributions the Woman's Club has made to the community for over 100 years," noted Club President Jennifer Gage.

The El Segundo Woman's Club will be holding a celebration to dedicate a plaque announcing the addition of the Clubhouse to the National Register of Historic Places in September.