

# Appraisal of Our House and Property

## September 2014

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15480 Albright St  
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

### Introduction

We bought and moved into this house in April 1969. It had been built in 1952 by and for the owner of the local hardware store in the Marques area of the Palisades. Its appeal was the wild, large sycamore, a 120-degree view of the Pacific and the mountains, and its solid if conventional construction. From the beginning I recognized that its L-shaped floor plan on a concrete slab would provide good earthquake stability. The location close to the Palisades village center would allow our two children to walk to school by themselves. Its markets, doctors, and dentists would provide us with all necessities in walking distance. An ideal place to retire in.

Less obvious was initially that its stand of mature trees afforded shade from the western sun in the Fall and privacy towards our neighbors on Bestor Blvd. We have improved shade and privacy over the years in exchange for some of the view by careful management of trees and plants.

The beamed wooden ceilings are original, although I refinished and enlarged them during the 1980s, when we remodeled the house to modernize its amenities, bring out its best features, and to adapt it to our needs and tastes.

### The Property

Located on a hillside 60 feet above the traffic-free western *cul-de-sac* of Albright Street one looks over the newer two-story houses on the street below. The view ranges from Santa Monica and Catalina Island across the Ocean as far as Malibu. The steep hillside into Temescal Canyon extends the circle to the Santa Monica Mountains. Except by our own trees this 120-degree view cannot be obstructed in the future.

The Temescal hillside is secured by native brush, which requires trimming every 2 years to control the fire danger it poses; Temescal Canyon is unimproved Californian wilderness. After the great brush fire in 1979 I tried to minimize this problem inherent to the location by the installation of a semi-automatic sprinkler system on the roof of the house.

A linked-wire fence, installed with the financial help of our neighbors, protects our garden and theirs from deer.

In the back of the house we have planted an intimate garden of agapanthes, lilies, and azaleas around an olive tree watered by an automatic sprinkler system. A dense bamboo hedge and a huge ficus tree provide seclusion and privacy. A system of pipes drains the rear garden during heavy rain storms.

The root system of the ficus tree became a problem, when in 2006 they

destroyed the main sewage pipe under the house. This required a gradual replacement of all cast-iron sewage and gas pipes on the property by plastic ones between 2007 and 2010. Since then we have had no problems.

During the past 20 years we employed the same tree-trimming man to prune our trees once a year – a necessity to keep them from overgrowing the gardens. A gardener comes every 2 weeks to tend to the heavy gardening work, clean fallen leaves, and keep the sprinkler system adjusted.

## The House

The present layout of the house goes back to extensive remodeling in 1984. After a careful study of its original floor plan I decided to convert the original two-car garage into a large bedroom plus a full bathroom (and a separate laundry). A carport replaced the garage. I tore out several walls to integrate an existing porch into a living-dining-breakfast area with a glass-wall including 2 French doors towards the back garden. I further combined two small bedrooms into one large room on the south-east side of the house. These changes enlarged the effective *living* space by a third *without* changing the footprint of the original structure (tax basis!).

The heating system is in-floor hot-water. New copper heating coils were installed in the living-dining area and a modern, larger gas-heated boiler. The new bedroom (former garage) is separately heated by an electric fan heater.

The electrical wiring in the house was brought up to date and all water plumbing was in due time replaced by copper tubing. In 2013 we replaced all outside windows with double glazing in plastic frames to reduce noise and heat losses.

To reduce heat losses an R-11 insulated, second roof was installed on top the existing one covering the living space in 1984, which should also increase the house's earthquake stability. The roof sprinkler has already been mentioned. A now required earthquake shut-off valve has been installed on the south side of the building when the gas supply line to the street was replaced in 2010. At the same time the main sewage pipe to the street was replaced with a 4-inch PVC-pipe and a new clean-out access in the lower driveway.

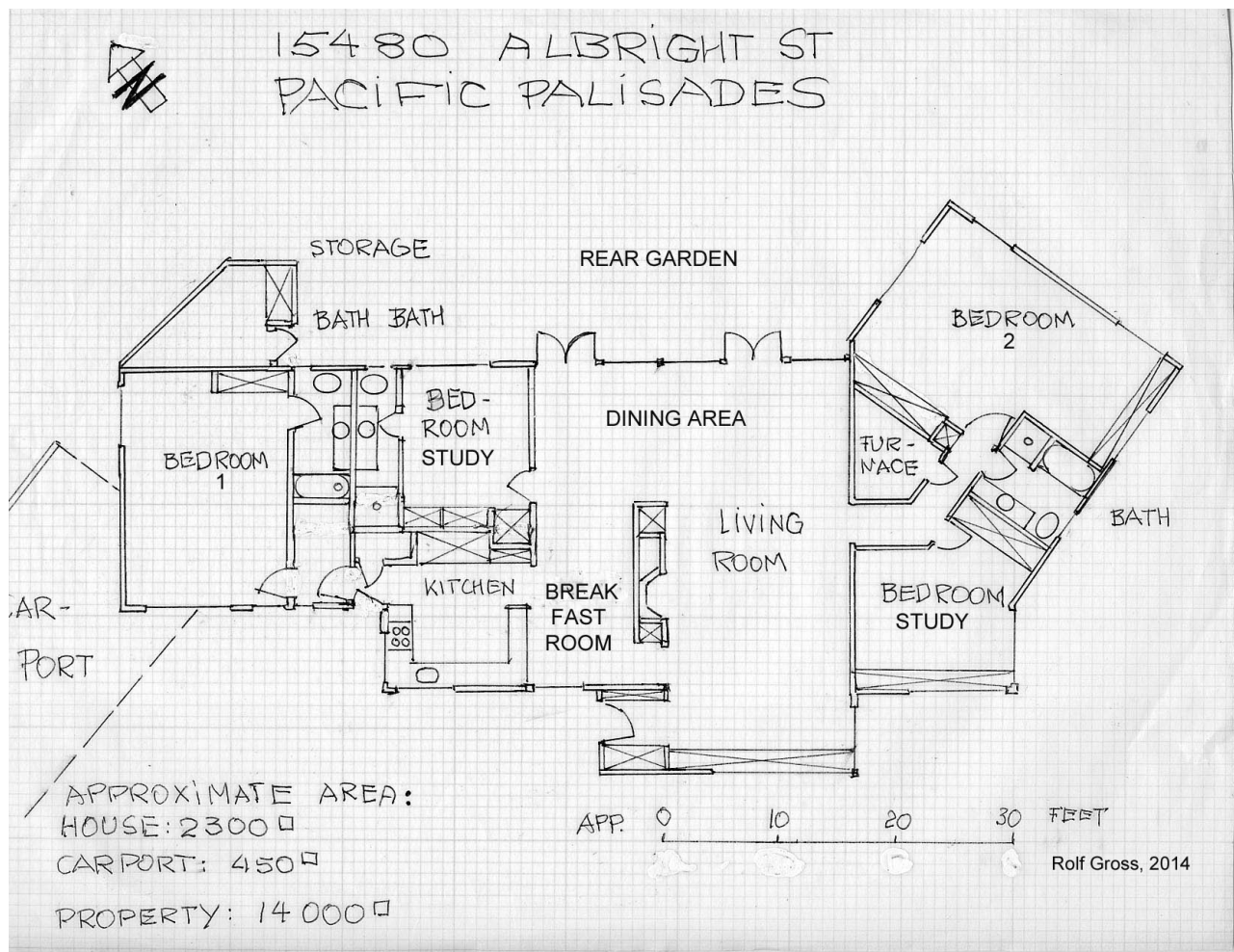
All work was performed by licensed contractors and certified by the LA City Building Department.

To keep the - in this location unavoidable - termites under control we have conducted periodic inspections and replaced/repairs damaged areas (carport and south-east corner of the house).

In the last 2 years we have installed steel railings in the bathrooms to prevent falling accidents. In this context it should be noted that the house has *no* stairs, *no* thresholds and is wall-to-wall carpeted, making it ideal for older people to live in.

## Summary

- Unique single-story house of app. 2300 sq ft living space
- A large interconnected living-dining-breakfast area with central fireplace
- 2 large picture walls opening to front and rear gardens, 2 sky-lights
- 2 large bedrooms
- 2 smaller bedrooms used as offices
- 2 full baths and one  $\frac{3}{4}$  bathroom
- Kitchen with gas-range, filtered drinking water faucet, garbage disposal
- Separate laundry area with modern washing machine and dryer
- Plenty of closet space
- Lots of light



Floor Plan, (approximate sketch)

## Selected Photos

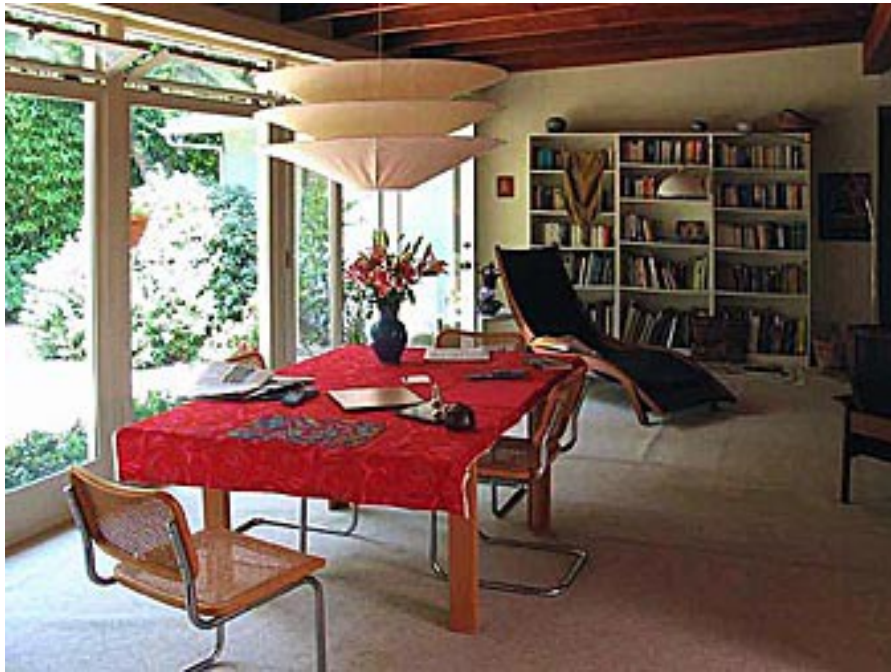


The unpretentious entry and the sycamore



Living room





Dining area



Breakfast room and kitchen



Barbara's study/bedroom



Rolf's study



Large bedroom 1, (guest room)



Large bedroom 2