

**Joint Press Release – April 1, 2021**

From: **Women’s City Club of Pasadena** and **Pasadena Heritage**

**Women’s City Club Transfers Ownership of Historic Edmund Blinn House to Pasadena Heritage**

*Nationally Prominent Structure Will Return to Service as Valued Community Resource in the future*

*Blinn House to Become Headquarters for Pasadena Heritage*

Pasadena, CA (March 30, 2021) – After more than 75 years of service to its members and the Pasadena community, the Women’s City Club of Pasadena has decided to dissolve and transfer ownership of the Edmund Blinn House to Pasadena Heritage. The decision by the Women’s City Club means that the Blinn House – one of Pasadena’s best recognized and historically important structures – will continue to be owned and occupied by a non-profit organization committed to its preservation and protection.

Founded in 1945 as a social club for women and a center for women’s organizations and other civic groups, the Women’s City Club has been headquartered in the Blinn House since its inception. The structure was acquired by the Club, with support from philanthropist Gloria Crane Gartz, to provide a comfortable, elegant place for women to meet, socialize and work together on various community projects. Over its many years, the Women’s City Club has welcomed thousands of members, guests, and visitors.

Ms. Gartz, an Altadena native, was an heir to the fortune created by her grandfather’s company, Crane Plumbing Co. of Chicago. Ms. Gartz purchased the Blinn House from the Blinn family in 1941, and transferred the house to the Women’s City Club of Pasadena, which she helped found, in 1945. Ms. Gartz was involved in

numerous civic activities and social causes and had a role in the founding of the American Association of Retired People (AARP).

The Blinn House was designed in 1905 by renowned Chicago architect George Washington Maher who also designed the Blinn's home in Chicago. Maher was recognized as one of the finest architects in Chicago, along with Burnham & Root, Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. He is cited as a leading architect of the Prairie School, along with Wright. The Blinn House is the only known Maher residential structure built west of the Mississippi River.

Maher is credited with a design philosophy which he called the "Motif-Rhythm Theory," whereby geometric and/or floral motifs were repeated as a decorative elements throughout a structure. In the Blinn House, a broken-arch motif is seen repeatedly, and a trailing wisteria pattern is found in the windows, doors and in an extraordinary glass tile fireplace surround. Unusual in Southern California, the fireplace was crafted by the Chicago firm Giannini and Hilgart and provides a dramatic centerpiece in the main living room.

The Blinn House is widely recognized as an architectural gem. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, both individually and as a contributor to the Ford Place Historic District. Located at 160 N. Oakland Avenue in the heart of Pasadena, it is also a Pasadena Cultural Landmark and is listed on the California Register of Historical Resources. In 1945, the immediate success of the Women's City Club prompted the group to add a large dining room designed by Pasadena architects Myron Hunt and Harold Chambers. Later, the original open front porch was enclosed, and the existing north entry became the main entrance.

In May of 2020, after decades of service to the Pasadena area, members of the Women's City Club voted to dissolve the organization. In accordance with its founding mission and bylaws, members chose to transfer ownership of the Blinn House to

Pasadena Heritage, the local non-profit historic preservation organization, which has had a long and mutually supportive relationship with the Club and whose mission is closely aligned. Arrangements for the ownership transfer are now complete.

Suzanne Burger, President of the Women's City Club, stated, "It was a very difficult decision for us to dissolve the Club after so many years, and it was with much thought and careful consideration that we decided Pasadena Heritage should take over the historic house. We feel confident they will take the best care of it and be able to continue many of its fine traditions as well as bring the resources to maintain the restoration and preservation of the building." She added, "I am grateful and proud to have been part of an incredibly caring and resilient community of women and men over the years. It is with this gratitude and pride that I stand with the recent Board of Directors, members, staff, and friends of the Women's City Club who rallied to meet the demands of these times of uncertainty and challenge. Further, I am confident that our historic home will continue to serve the community as a center for civic, cultural and educational activities."

Pasadena Heritage, a non-profit historic preservation organization founded in 1977, is well known and respected as an effective community organization. Its mission, to preserve and protect Pasadena's architectural and cultural resources through advocacy and education, dovetails perfectly with the stewardship of the Blinn House.

"We are, of course, very sorry to see the Women's City Club end its operations and longstanding presence here in the Pasadena community. Pasadena Heritage is truly honored to be the next steward of this historic house," said Brian Alan Baker, Pasadena Heritage Board Chair.

"We are excited and very grateful for the opportunities this historic place will provide for our organization," added Sue Mossman, Executive Director. "We look

forward to the time when we can welcome our members and supporters, the greater community, and other organizations back into the house to experience and enjoy it.”

The Blinn House Foundation, a separate non-profit organization founded in 2002 to raise funds and oversee the historic integrity of the Blinn House, remains in place. Its signature event, the Dr. Robert Winter Award, has recognized and celebrated leadership in preservation since 2004 and will continue in the future.

“The Blinn House is an outstanding historic and architectural treasure. Pasadena Heritage looks forward to relocating its offices to the Blinn House and sharing its new home with the community,” Mr. Baker said.

– 30 –

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