



Brossart, John F. and Julia House  
Name of Property

Los Angeles, California  
County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
 determined eligible for the National Register  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  
 removed from the National Register  
 other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

Site

Structure

Object



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN:

Queen Anne

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Bungalow/Craftsman

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: stone, concrete, weatherboard, wood shingle roof

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The John F. and Julia Brossart House is a large (1,632 square feet), two-story frame house built in 1887, in a simple late nineteenth century Victorian style with Queen Anne influences. The house has been moved twice since its construction, both times only a short distance away within the boundaries of the city of Monrovia, approximately twenty-three miles from Los Angeles. The house retains its significant architectural features including windows, doors, decorative wood shingles, built-in cabinet, and mantelpiece. The residence retains virtually all of its original millwork, much with its original finish, and retains integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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#### Narrative Description

##### Setting

Brossart House is located in a mostly residential neighborhood in the middle of the block between E. Lemon Avenue to the north and an unnamed alley to the south. A commercial building is across the street. The yard retains its shrubs. Since circa 1900, Brossart House occupies its third location since construction, only three and a half blocks from the original location.

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### **Exterior**

The two-story, wood-frame house, clad in dropped wood-siding, is set on a rubblework stone foundation. A simple wood skirt of vertical boards encircles the house above the foundation on the front part of the house.

Beyond the cross-gable portion of the house is a two-story addition built circa 1914 in a simplified Craftsman style. The addition extends across the rear of the house and is set on a concrete foundation. This addition is visually separated from the original front portion of the house by an original corner board, and the wall is flush with the original wall. The addition is less than a fourth of the square footage of the house.

The house faces west and is topped by a shingle-clad, intersecting gable roof with a deep overhang. A single brick chimney pierces the roof near the intersection of the gables.

A one-bay, one-story front porch occupies the northwest corner of the façade, west elevation. The porch roof is composed of a flat-roofed top with a decorative wood shingle hipped section. The porch is accessed by a set of replacement wood steps without railings or newels. The porch is supported by a single, simple chamfered post on the northwest corner. A simple handrail atop a modern section of lattice provides the only porch railing extending from the corner post to the east to the wall of the house. The porch has a wood deck and a bead-board ceiling. The front entrance is accessed from the porch and is a single-leaf entrance that contains a wooden single-leaf door of four panels, two vertically oriented rectangular panels above two square panels. A screened door of three horizontal panels below a square screened opening is located in front of the entrance door. The entire entrance is surrounded by a simple door frame topped by a simple crown molding. There is no other fenestration on the porch.

The front-facing gable to the right, south, of the porch, is fronted by a simple rectangular box-bay window composed of two one-over-one wood sash on the front with one, one-over-one wood windows on the side. The bay window is topped by a hipped roof with a low-pitched top and hipped sides clad in decorative wood shingles. A simply decorated apron of alternating saw tooth and curved sections runs below the windows on the front and sides of the bay window. Above the gable, lighting the second floor, is a double-window of two one-over-one wood windows set in a simple frame with a simple crown molding across the top and a simply decorated apron of alternating saw tooth and curved sections running below.

The south elevation of the house contains a single one-over-one wood sash window with a simple frame and crown molding on the first floor. Above this a simple casement window near the eaves lights the second floor. This casement window is framed like the sash windows with a simple frame topped with a simple crown molding and a simply decorated apron of alternating saw tooth and curved sections running below. A small one-story porch is located at the intersection of the cross-gable wing. This porch, topped by a flat roof with a decorative wood shingle hipped section similar to the front porch, is supported by a plain chamfered post at the corner as well as a latticed rail and is accessed by a set of wooden replacement steps without rail

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or newel. A partially glazed door with horizontal wood panels opens off this porch. The porch has a beaded-board ceiling and a wood deck.

In the first floor of the cross gable are located two one-over-one wood windows set in simple frames topped with plain crown molding across the top and a plain decorated apron of alternating saw-tooth and curved sections running below. The second floor of the cross-gable wing contains a double window of two one-over-one wood windows set in a plain frame with a plain crown molding across the top and a decorated apron of alternating saw-tooth and curved sections running below. Above this, a rectangular louvered vent opens into the attic. This vent is set in a plain frame with a plain crown molding across the top and a decorated apron of alternating saw tooth and curved sections running below.

In the addition beyond the cross-gable portion of the house are two windows, one on each floor, in the south elevation. These windows are one-over-one wood, more horizontal in orientation than those in the original house and trimmed out in a simplified Craftsman style with simpler crown molding and a plain apron. The second-floor window ties into the top plate of the wall instead of having a separate top part of the frame. Three small, framed openings are located in the foundation.

The rear, or east, elevation is designed in a simplified Craftsman style. The first floor, going south to north, has two one-over-one wood windows, then a single-leaf partially glazed and paneled door connected to a window opening. This back door is accessed by a concrete landing accessed by a set of concrete steps without railings approaching from the north side of the landing. A small opening in the foundation is located below the two windows and just past the concrete steps. Four one-over-one windows light the second floor. Rather than having crown molding across the top of the window frames, the top member of the window frame extends beyond the side members giving a more Craftsman appearance to the window frames.

The north elevation of the rear addition is set slightly back from the north elevation of the original house. The north elevation of the addition contains two single-light square casement windows on the first floor with frames that match those of the rear elevation and a single window on the second floor that matches that on the south elevation of the addition. The north elevation of the cross gable contains at the first-floor level two one-over-one wood windows set in a simple frame with a plain crown molding across the top and a simply decorated apron of alternating saw tooth and curved sections running below. Located at the second-floor level of the cross gable is a replacement door unit consisting of a single leaf glazed door flanked by sidelights. A small rectangular fixed-sash window of a clear central pane surrounded by margin lights of yellow stained glass is located on the first floor beyond the cross-gable. This decorative window is set in a plain frame with a plain crown molding across the top and a plain apron of alternating saw-tooth and curved sections running below.

### **Interior—First Floor**

From the front porch the front door opens into a vestibule. Directly opposite the entrance is a single-leaf four-panel door matching the front door that opens into a bedroom. Located to the

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right, or south, of the entrance, near the southeast corner of the room, another matching four-panel door opens into the parlor. To the left, or north, of the entrance a rectangular fixed-sash window of a clear central pane surrounded by margin lights of yellow stained glass is centered on the wall. The doors and windows are all surrounded with original fluted trim with corner blocks containing a simple rosette and plinth blocks. A baseboard and picture rail encircle the room. All the woodwork retains its original finish. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floor is wood.

To the south of the entrance vestibule is the parlor. To the right, west, is a rectangular box bay window with two one-over-one wood windows on the front and one, one-over-one wood windows on each side. A single one-over-one window is located in the southern wall near the southwestern corner. Centered on the eastern wall is the original cast-iron mantel piece designed in a simplified Italianate style with a large keystone above the square firebox which is flanked by pilasters. To the right, south, of the fireplace, a single-leaf four-panel door opens into the dining room. The door and window trim, baseboard and picture rail are intact with their original finish and match that in the entrance vestibule. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floor is wood.

East of the parlor is the dining room. Upon entering the dining room from the parlor, to the left, or north, is a small recess providing access through a single-leaf, four-panel door into the first-floor bedroom to the north and a storage closet located under the enclosed staircase to the east. Located in the same wall is the entrance into the dining room from the parlor. To the right or south is a partially glazed three-horizontal-paneled door opening onto the side porch. The south wall contains two one-over-one wood windows. The east wall contains a large built-in storage cupboard, apparently dating from when the Craftsman style remodeling took place since it does not match the rest of the woodwork in the room. Adjacent to the built-in to the north is a single-leaf four-panel door opening into the kitchen. All of the doors and windows are framed in trim similar to that in the parlor and entrance vestibule, however, all of the trim has been painted. The ceiling and walls are plaster and the floor is wood.

To the east of the dining room is the kitchen, located in the south end of the addition. Also located in this addition, to the north of the kitchen, is a mud room and bathroom. The kitchen retains its original cabinets with beaded board doors and its original sink with wood drain board. The door from the dining room is located in the west wall of the kitchen. To the north of the dining room door is located an additional door to the enclosed staircase. It is a four-panel door like those in the rest of the first floor. A partition wall to the north of the staircase separates the kitchen from the mud room. Located in the mud room is access to the first-floor bedroom, as well as to the exterior, via a single-leaf partially glazed door and adjacent window unit on the east wall. Access to the first-floor bathroom, to the north, via a single-leaf four-panel door is also located in this space. This bathroom has an original medicine chest flanked by casement windows in the north wall. The door and window trim in the addition is in the Craftsman style rather than the trim found in the original part of the house. The walls of the kitchen and bathroom are plaster. The kitchen ceiling is covered with acoustical tile. The walls of the mud room are lap siding. All the floors in this addition are wood covered with vinyl flooring.

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To the north of the dining room is the first-floor bedroom that is accessed from the dining room via a single-leaf door in the west end of the north wall. Located at the east end of the south wall of the bedroom is a single-leaf four-panel door opening into the enclosed staircase to the second floor. To the left of the entrance is a single-leaf four-panel door opening into the entrance vestibule on the west wall. Two one-over-one wood windows are located in the north wall. The east wall contains a centered single-leaf four-panel door opening into the rear addition. All the doors and windows are framed in trim similar to that in the parlor, entrance vestibule, and dining room and retain original stained finish. The ceiling and walls are plaster and the floor is wood.

### **Interior-Second Floor**

The second floor is accessed via an enclosed staircase located between the dining room and first floor bedroom. A small irregularly shaped vestibule at the top of the stairs provides access to the three second-floor bedrooms. The doors in this vestibule are four-paneled like those on the first floor and have simple painted trim that matches that on the first floor. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are wood.

The bedroom at the top of the stairs over the parlor has a double window of one-over-one wood sash in the west wall and two small casement windows near the center of the north and south walls. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are wood. The walls are slightly truncated reflecting the pitch of the roof.

The bedroom over the first-floor bedroom to the north of the staircase has one small, fixed sash window in the west wall and a modern single-leaf glazed door with sidelights in the north wall. Two, three horizontal paneled doors located in the east wall open into the rear addition which contains a kitchenette and a bathroom and both without distinctive fixtures or finishes. All of the door surrounds in the addition as well as that around the exterior door are simple modern trim. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are wood. The bedroom walls are slightly truncated reflecting the pitch of the roof.

The bedroom over the dining room to the south of the enclosed staircase has a double window of one-over-one wood sash in the south wall. Two, three horizontal-paneled doors located in the east wall open into the rear addition which contains a kitchenette and a bathroom and do not possess any distinctive fixtures or finishes. All of the door trim in the addition is simple modern trim. The walls and ceilings are plaster and the floors are wood. The bedroom walls are slightly truncated reflecting the pitch of the roof.

### **Alterations**

The 1887 house was renovated in 1914 when a new kitchen and service areas were added on the first floor and additional bedroom and support space on the second floor above. This addition is in a very simple Craftsman-inspired style that complements the simple design of the original house. The addition is restricted to the rear and is not visible from the front of the house. When constructed, the kitchen was considered a great improvement over the original board and batten lean-to it replaced. The kitchen included built-in cabinets that held bins for sugar and flour and a built-in ironing board. These features remain in the house. Plans to use the house for a bed and



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breakfast include the anticipated installation of bathrooms in closets and kitchen modernization. A Historic Preservation Certification Application is under review and alterations will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.

### **Integrity**

*Location:* Brossart House occupies its third location since construction. Although in this location since circa 1900 and close to where it was constructed, the house has been moved twice and no longer retains integrity of location.

*Design:* The house remains almost entirely as it was when it was built with the exception of the 1914 addition that does not diminish the design of the original building. The Craftsman-inspired features added to the 1887 house were sensitively designed and do not diminish the original design of the house. Therefore, the house retains integrity of design.

*Materials:* The house retains its original timber frame, white-painted wood lap siding, and windows. Original interior materials include doors, parlor mantelpiece and built-in cabinets, as well as the majority of its original millwork, most of which still retains its original finish. Therefore, the house retains integrity of materials.

*Workmanship:* Evidence of the craftsmen's labor and skill in construction is evident in the original materials and finishes, many of which remain intact and do not need replacing. Therefore, the house retains its integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* Brossart House has the character of a late nineteenth-century house. The houses surrounding the property on all sides vary in design reflecting the growth and development of the neighborhood that has been the setting for the house since its relocation to this site circa 1900. Therefore, the house retains integrity of feeling.

*Association:* Brossart House retains the significant materials and design that were part of its original construction. The house was used as a single-family residence until its last purchase in 2022. If the plans to rehabilitate the house into a bed and breakfast come to pass, the house will continue to be a residential building and the changes will not be evident from the exterior. Therefore, the house retains integrity of association.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1887-1914

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Brossart House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The house is a single-family residence that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a simple late Victorian farmhouse with Queen Anne detailing. Its period of significance is 1887, the year of its initial construction, through 1914, the date it was altered with the Craftsman-inspired addition at the back. Although the house has been moved twice, each move was within the limits of the city and each lot was similar to the others in relationship to the street, sidewalk, and other houses. Each move was carefully executed, thus preserving the house's original architectural details both on the exterior and the interior. As a moved property significant under Criterion C, Brossart House retains enough historic features to convey its architectural values; retains integrity of design, setting materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and meets Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Criterion C: Architecture**

Brossart House is significant as an intact and fine local example of a single-family residence that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a simple late Victorian farmhouse with Queen Anne detailing. Brossart House is one of sixty-seven extant houses in Monrovia built before the end of 1887, the year that the community was incorporated. A list of these early houses has been compiled by the Monrovia Historical Society. Many of the houses were built in one of the architectural styles popular in the late nineteenth century such as Queen Anne or Eastlake or in a simpler interpretation of these more elaborate styles. Brossart House does not possess the elaborate architectural trim of some of the other early houses particularly like The Oaks. Nor does it display the common L-plan, or gable and wing plan, incorporated in so many of the smaller early houses like the Anderson House. Brossart House is a two-story wood frame building with a T-shaped plan and a simple cross-gable roof.

Mr. Brossart was from Iowa City, Iowa and appears to have been inspired by the simple farmhouses of his home state when he had this personal residence built.<sup>1</sup> Rather than choosing to build his house in a high style variation of one of the then popular architectural styles such as the Queen Anne or Eastlake being constructed in Monrovia, Mr. Brossart chose a simple, old-fashioned style reminiscent of the mid-western farmhouses he remembered from his youth, with some Queen Anne detailing. In his article *Vernacular Building and Victorian Architecture: Midwestern American Farm Homes*, Fred Peterson writes that the farmhouse type is a distinctive and significant generic art form that is “a vanishing phenomenon that merits recognition and

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Brossart (1842-1939), Find a Grave Memorial ID 151044455, Calvary Cemetery, East Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, CA [John Francis Brossart \(1842-1939\) - Find a Grave Memorial](#) (accessed May 12, 2023).

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evaluation as a significant part of American architecture and culture.”<sup>2</sup> He states that the farmhouse should be recognized as a “valid and meaningful style that was generated by the untutored and anonymous artists of vernacular building.”<sup>3</sup>

Per Monrovia’s architectural context statement, listing a Queen Anne residence requires the building must have been constructed during the period of significance (1885-1905), exemplifies tenets of the Queen Anne style, retains character-defining features, and retains the essential aspects of integrity. The characteristics of Brossart House satisfy each of these requirements. It was built in 1887 and maintains its Victorian era design and Queen Anne style features including its bay window, decorative wood shingles, and porch posts. In addition, the house retains its integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Monrovia context statement registration requirements also note that the retention of integrity of design, workmanship, and materials will usually be more important than integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, therefore allowing for the relocation of the building. More importantly, the original massing of the building should be retained. This requirement is met even with the rear addition, because the addition is not visible from the front. As well, the addition has achieved significance in its own right because of its construction over one hundred years ago. Original doors and windows should be retained—they have been, and the distinctive elements such as shingle patterns, bargeboard, porch posts and railings should be in evidence—they are.

### **Queen Anne Style**

The Queen Anne style was popularized in England and became very common in the United States from the 1880s until about 1900. Despite the name, the style had nothing to do with the style of architecture dominant during the reign of Queen Anne; rather, it combined elements of Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.<sup>4</sup> The American interpretation of the style included cross-gables, elaborate spindle work, and wood details that were more easily accessible due to the expanding railroad lines across the country. Queen Anne avoids flat surfaces using elements such as bay windows, towers, overhangs, and wall projections, as well as a wide variety of materials with differing textures when possible.

Characteristics of the style are curved brackets; posts of porches and exposed framing members of roofs bearing a marked resemblance to table legs; rows of spindles in friezes or fascias; elaborately detailed gable ends with incised boards, pendants, and brackets; and the use of numerous porches and bay windows.

The Victorian era in California was shorter than it was back east, with fewer style variants. The style coincides with Monrovia’s incorporation in 1887, and most of the city’s earliest surviving buildings reflect the Queen Anne style and its Victorian-inspired examples.

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<sup>2</sup> Fred W. Peterson, “Vernacular Building and Victorian Architecture: Midwestern American Farm Homes,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1982, 409.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, 427.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 268.

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The rise of industrialization made it easier and more affordable to add mass produced decorative details to buildings. Many communities had local sawmills equipped with sophisticated woodworking machinery that could easily produce elaborate jigsaw cut trim in a variety of patterns or turn spindles in an endless number of sizes and types to adorn new houses built in variations of the newly popular Queen Anne and Eastlake Styles. Other mass-produced architectural elements could be shipped in via the railroads, which crisscrossed the nation from coast to coast allowing ever more elaborate houses to be constructed in areas recently settled. Many new towns had neighborhoods of houses that easily compared or even surpassed in elegance and detail those found in older more settled communities.

While many of the homeowners and builders in Monrovia took full advantage of these resources to create elegant modern Queen Anne style houses, Mr. Brossart chose to build his new home in a much simpler mode. While the parlor has a nice mantelpiece, most likely ordered from a catalogue, and the doors and surrounds are elegant, they are not nearly as ornate as those found in other houses of the same time and place. His simple home thus stands apart from the others from the earliest years of Monrovia.

### **History of Monrovia, California**

The native people of the area known as Monrovia were the Tongva, or Gabrieleno Indians. Before Spanish colonization of Central America and Alta California, the San Gabriel Valley was occupied by indigenous people of Native American Shoshonean Tribes as early as 500 B.C., although archaeological investigations have documented human habitation of southern California as early as 12,000 years B.C.E. Later, this tribe became known as the Gabrielinos, after the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. The indigenous tribes living at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains were said to be the “wealthiest, most populous and most powerful ethnic nationality in aboriginal southern California.”<sup>5</sup> The tribes were sustained by the rich land they occupied in and near the arroyos in the steep mountains to the north, which seasonally carried water down into the valley, joining the San Gabriel River and eventually reaching the Pacific Ocean.

Recorded history of California began in the sixteenth century with Spanish colonization of Central America and Alta California. In 1771, Spanish missionaries arrived in the area and established Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. After Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, California territory fell under the jurisdiction of the Mexican government. This led to the secularization of the missions by the 1830s, which resulted in the transference of mission land to Mexican ranchos. The 9,000-acre Rancho Santa Anita, within which present-day Monrovia is located, was granted to Hugo Reid in 1841.<sup>6</sup> The same year, Mexican Governor Juan Alvarado granted the eastern half of the rancho to Andreas Duarte, which created Rancho Azusa de Duarte. In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo established California as part of the United States. Two years later, it became the nation’s thirty-first state.

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<sup>5</sup> Lowell J. Bean and Charles R. Smith, *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8 (Washington D.C., Smithsonian), 570-574.

<sup>6</sup> Peter C. Ostrye, *Monrovia Centennial Review, 1886-1986*, (Monrovia: Monrovia Centennial Committee, 1986), np.

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In the 1850s, the strong demand for beef in the rapidly growing mining areas and cities in northern California had led the owners of some large ranchos in agricultural southern California to overextend their cattle operations. A period of flood and extended drought in the early 1860s destroyed the livestock and left them unable to pay their taxes. Many of the large ranchos were divided and sold, and both Rancho Santa Anita and Rancho Azusa de Duarte were sold to a series of owners. Large portions of both ranchos were eventually purchased by Elias “Lucky” Baldwin, who held most of the land holdings of present-day Monrovia in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, the Southern Pacific Railroad built a rail line to Los Angeles in 1876. Its competitor, the Santa Fe Railroad, was also building a line west from Texas, reaching Needles, California, in 1883.<sup>7</sup> Stanley Jewett, an engineer who moved to Pasadena in 1879, proposed to James Crank, who owned the Fair Oaks Ranch north of Pasadena and was the first vice-president when the First National Bank of Los Angeles was organized in 1875, the construction of a rail line between Pasadena and Los Angeles. Crank organized the line as the San Gabriel Valley Railroad (SGVRR) and raised the funding for its construction. The first track was laid in 1884, and the line was built to Mud Springs (present-day San Dimas) on the San Gabriel River, where it met the westward construction of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1887, opening the line to trains from Chicago and the East.<sup>8</sup> The construction of the SGVRR initiated an increase in interest in land along its route, contributing to a major real estate boom in southern California in the mid-1880s.

William N. Monroe had been a superintendent for the Southern Pacific’s rail construction in Utah before retiring to California in 1875. Monroe became a member of the Los Angeles City Council in 1880, and was acquainted with Collis P. Huntington, one of the partners of the Southern Pacific Railroad.<sup>9</sup> In 1884, Monroe and his brother C. O. Monroe purchased 120 acres of the former Rancho Santa Anita from Lucky Baldwin, and an additional ninety acres the following year. He moved his family into a tent on the property while he built a small cottage and then later their permanent home in 1885, “The Oaks.” In partnership with Crank, Edward Spence (Monroe’s cashier at First National Bank), and attorney John D. Bicknell (who succeeded Crank as first vice-president of the First National Bank in 1888), Monroe laid out a 120-acre town centered at Orange (later Colorado Boulevard) and Myrtle avenues, with 8 square miles of farm and orchard lots around it, and organized the first auction-excursion in May 1886.<sup>10</sup> The men, as officers and directors of the Monrovia Light and Water Company, promised to plant 8,000 pepper trees along the streets, to provide free water and to install electric streetlights. More than 40 tracts and additions to the original town area were filed in 1886 and 1887.<sup>11</sup> In 1887, Monrovia was incorporated as the fourth city in Los Angeles County.

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<sup>7</sup> Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California*, (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1966), 22.

<sup>8</sup> Dumke, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Ostrye, xviii.

<sup>10</sup> Dumke, 79-80.

<sup>11</sup> Dumke, 80.

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Monrovia was one of the most successful of the many towns in Los Angeles County that were started during the boom period. In part, this was most likely due to the fact that Monrovia required that all property purchased for residential purposes must have a building constructed within six months, which generally cost at least \$2,000. This requirement helped decrease speculation that resulted in the collapse of other communities in Los Angeles County during the recession that hit in the 1890s.<sup>12</sup> The rise in price of Monrovia lots was phenomenal for a boom town. The first lots available for purchase in May 1886 sold from \$100 to \$150 each. Monroe sold lots much cheaper than lots in surrounding developments, on condition that substantial improvements would follow. The increase in value of the lots reflects those improvements. For example, in 1887, \$8,000 was offered for a lot bought the year before for \$150, while another lot 100 feet by 150 feet bought for \$3,500 was sold in 13 months for \$13,500.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the recession of the late 1880s, Monrovia continued to grow. In 1887, nineteen months after the first lot was sold in Monrovia, the local newspaper reported the city had already had as much as a half million dollars' worth of construction in that year, which included two banks, two brick commercial buildings, several hotels and boarding houses, churches, and schools, with more planned for 1888.<sup>14</sup> Local utilities were first developed when the Monrovia Electric Light and Power Company established electrical services shortly before 1900.

Soon after the first lots were sold, the promoters of Monrovia made plans for building a railroad to Los Angeles. The San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railroad Company was organized on April 26, 1887 for the purpose of constructing a railroad from some convenient point in the City of Los Angeles to the town of Monrovia. Directors of the railroad included Spence and Monroe.<sup>15</sup> Construction of the railroad was begun in Monrovia, and by August 1888, the eastern boundary of Los Angeles had been reached.<sup>16</sup> By January 1892, the company was operating four trains to Monrovia on weekdays and two on Sundays. Two months later the railway was leased by the Los Angeles Terminal Railway, and in June it was announced that the line was being broad-gauged and turned over to the Terminal Railway.<sup>17</sup> The Los Angeles Terminal Railway did not renew its lease and in 1893, the Southern Pacific was persuaded to take over the railroad for an undisclosed price.<sup>18</sup> In 1903, the Pacific Electric rail line established an interurban railway line to Monrovia. Known as Red Cars, the line traveled through Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties and was an important part of southern California history as it made traveling easy for those inland to take day trips to the beach, for commuters to travel to downtown Los Angeles, and for the public to explore other areas of southern California..<sup>19</sup> City officials desired the establishment of railway stops within their community as it resulted in

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<sup>12</sup> Ostrye, np.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Netz, "The Great Los Angeles Real Estate Boom of 1887," *Annual Publication for the Historical Society of Southern California*, Vol. 10, 65.

<sup>14</sup> "Monrovia Planet," December 31, 1887.

<sup>15</sup> Franklyn Hoyt, "The San Gabriel Valley Rapid Transit Railroad," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, September 1951, 213.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 215-216.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Craig Jimenez, *Wild Rose Tract Historic District*, Monrovia Department of Community Development, 2008, np.



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increased population, easy and reliable accessibility to other locations, and economic development and prosperity. The Pacific Electric played an important role in Monrovia's growth between 1900 and 1910.<sup>20</sup>

By 1905, the City's boundaries stretched out to Fifth Avenue on the west, Shamrock Avenue on the east, south of Santa Fe Avenue (later Duarte Road) on the south, and on the north Monrovia extended up into the foothills.<sup>21</sup> In 1906, the 50-acre Oak Park tract on the east side of the town, formerly part of the Bradbury estate, was subdivided and opened for development. Residential development began to fill the lots on streets north of the Southern Pacific rail line at Chestnut Avenue, between Myrtle and Shamrock Avenues. By 1910, the City's population had almost tripled in just a decade to 3,576 residents.

In 1915, 500 acres between the western city limits and neighboring Arcadia were annexed by Monrovia.<sup>22</sup> There was a decline in the number of building permits issued between 1912 and 1916, with World War I causing stagnation in building activity. The pace of construction resumed at the war's end, with the number of permits issued in 1923 exceeding all previous years.<sup>23</sup> Between 1920 and 1930, Monrovia's population doubled from 5,480 to 10,890 residents. Residential construction infilled available lots in the neighborhoods closest to Monrovia's downtown and increased in the outlying areas beyond. In the mid-1930s, the Bradbury Ranch on the east side of Monrovia was subdivided.<sup>24</sup> The City's growth slowed during the Great Depression, with the population reaching 12,807 by 1940.

The beginning of World War II ended the Great Depression and resulted in a boost in the economy in California through government war contracts and support for military installations, and concurrently, an increase in jobs. After the war, the United States economy exploded, and families arrived in southern California drawn by the plentiful jobs in the booming aerospace and automobile industries. Between 1968 and 1971, Interstate 210 was constructed from Arcadia through Monrovia and east to Pomona. The construction of the interstate marks a change in the history of the community. As a result of new transportation connections, easy financing through government-sponsored housing programs such as FHA loans, and new technologies that allowed for more efficient building techniques, Monrovia, like the rest of the San Gabriel Valley, opened to residential and commercial suburbanization and rapid expansion of housing, which quickly replaced many of the vineyards and orchards. As a result, downtown Monrovia experienced redevelopment and renovation in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>25</sup> Monrovia has a population of 37,500 (2021) and is headquarters for companies including Naked Juice, Trader Joe's, and Original Tommy's. It has also been featured in TV commercials, pilots, and films.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Jimenez, *North Encinitas Historic District: Historic Context and Survey*, Monrovia (California) Department of Community Development, 2017, 8.

<sup>22</sup> John L. Wiley, *History of Monrovia*, (Pasadena: Press of Pasadena Star News, 1927), 155.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>24</sup> Ostrye, 61.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

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**John F. and Julia Brossart and Subsequent Owners**

The house was built in 1887 for John F. and Julia Brossart for \$2,300.00. J. F. Brossart was a partner in Wilde and Brossart real estate as well as president of the First National Bank of Monrovia. The similarity of the Brossart House to a simple mid-western farmhouse was noted by the previous owner of the house, local historian Steve Baker. His great-great-grandparents, Bradford and Caroline Arthur, purchased the house in 1888 from Mr. Brossart. Mr. Arthur was a retired farmer from Albion, Michigan, and he may have found the house to be as comfortably familiar as did his predecessor.

Soon after Mr. Arthur's death in 1900, daughter Jennie Arthur Church moved the house from its original lot at 323 South Heliotrope Avenue to 202 East Lemon Avenue. Before her death in 1909 she moved the house again to 512 South Ivy Avenue. The lot at 202 East Lemon is the southeast corner of the intersection of Lemon and South Ivy, so the last move was just two lots to the south on the same block. The reason for the move was apparently so that she could live closer to town and shopping. The original location at 323 South Heliotrope Avenue is only three and a half blocks east of 512 South Ivy Avenue. This modest distance by twenty-first century standards was harder to travel in the early twentieth century using horse and buggy, particularly for a lady in her late 60s or early 70s when she had the house moved.

Daughter Viola Church married James Robert Baker in 1906. James and Viola's son Robert Munson Baker married Helen Keller. Their son Steve was the fifth and last generation of the family to own and live in the house. Steve Baker was also actively involved with the Monrovia Historical Society and was regarded as the town's historian. For his love of the history of his hometown and his family, Steve Baker maintained the house in such a way that the earliest family members to live in the house would immediately recognize it.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Peterson, Fred W. "Vernacular Building and Victorian Architecture: Midwestern American Farm Homes." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 12, No. 3, 1982.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Name of repository: Monrovia Department of Community Development

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 34.146711                      Longitude: -117.998811

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

AIN parcel #8516021013 Monrovia S. 110 ft or Lots 11 and Lot 12 Blk J.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the lot on which the building sits, where it was moved to circa 1905.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nancy H. Bell  
organization: Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation  
street & number: 1107 Washington Street  
city or town: Vicksburg state: MS zip code: 39183  
e-mail: [vburgfoundation@aol.com](mailto:vburgfoundation@aol.com)  
telephone: (601) 636-5010  
date: March 2023; Revised July 2023, October 2023

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property:	Brossart, John F. and Julia, House
City or Vicinity:	Monrovia
County:	Los Angeles
State:	California
Photographer:	Joshua Cain
Date Photographed:	October 14, 2022

No rehabilitation work has begun, so photos still accurately represent property at time of nomination.

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 11    Front (west) elevation, view to east

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- 2 of 11 Front (west) and south elevations, view to northeast
- 3 of 11 South elevation, view to north
- 4 of 11 Rear elevation, view to west
- 5 of 11 North elevation, view to southeast
- 6 of 11 First floor, parlor, view to southwest
- 7 of 11 First floor, mantel in parlor, view to east
- 8 of 11 First floor, dining room built-in cabinet, view to east
- 9 of 11 Stairs to second floor, view to south
- 10 of 11 Second floor, bedroom north side, view to north
- 11 of 11 Second floor bedroom north side, view to southeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

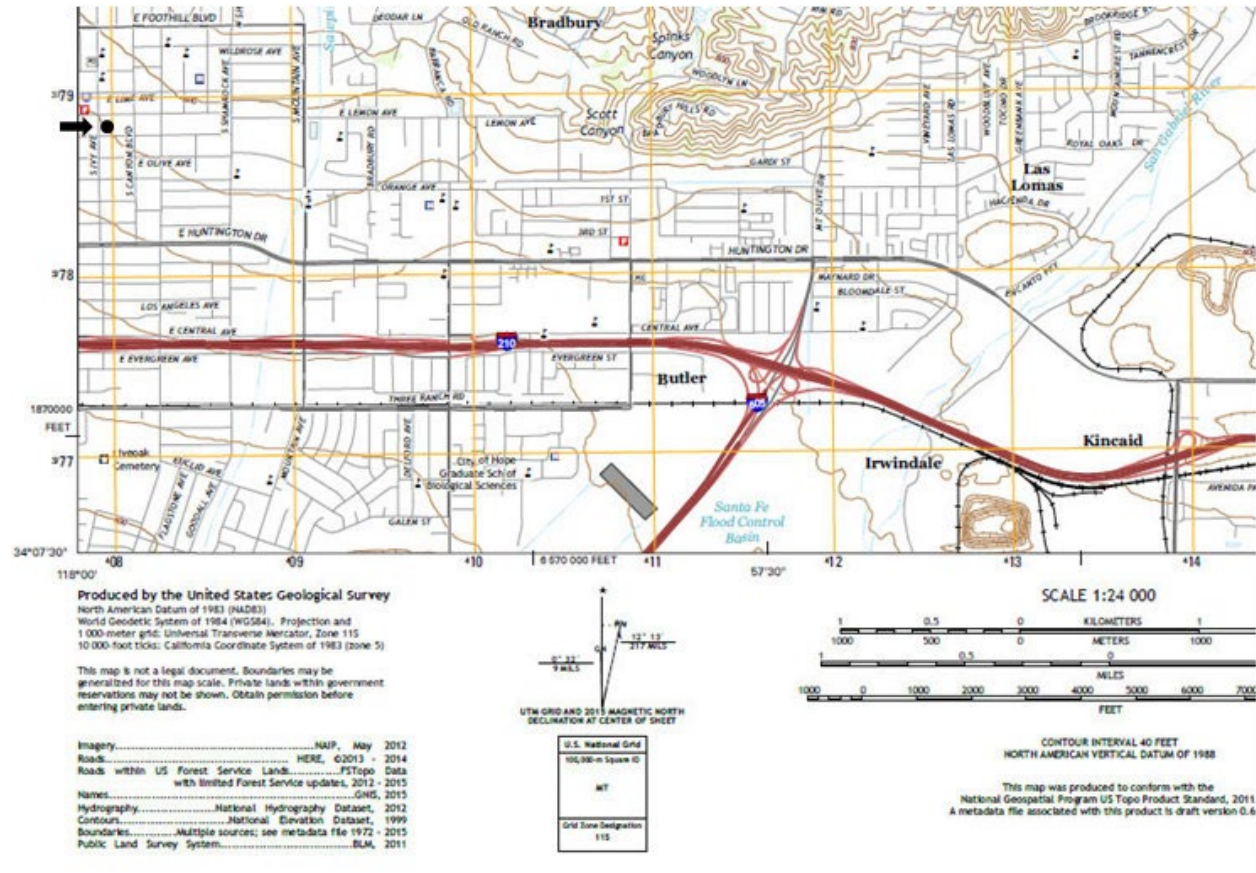
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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**Location Map**

Latitude: 34.146711 Longitude: -117.998811



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**Vicinity Map**

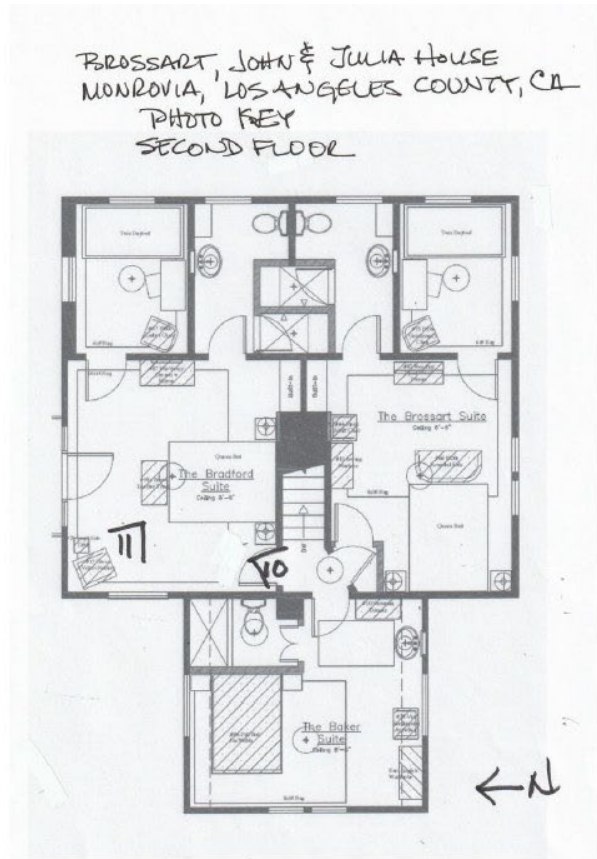
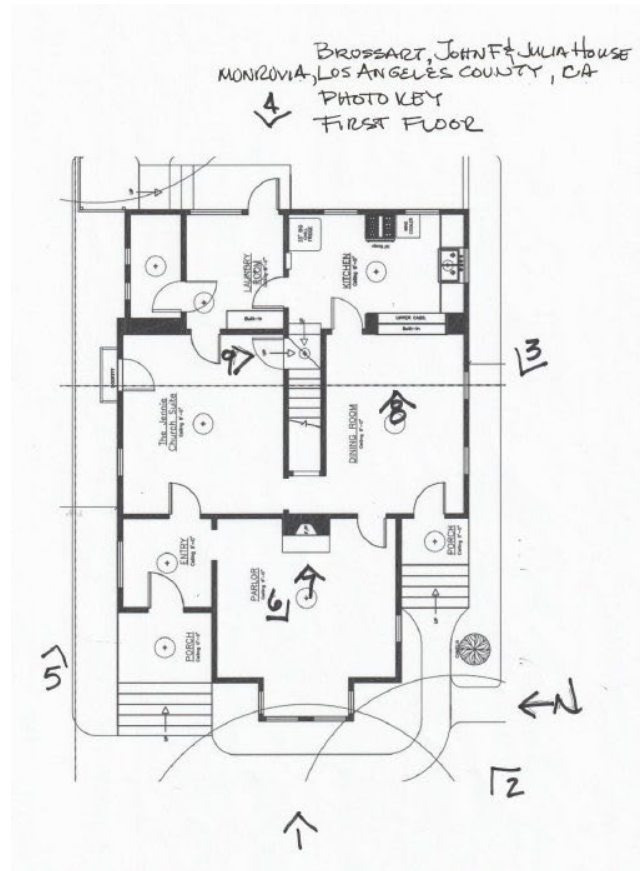




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**Sketch Map/Photo Key**



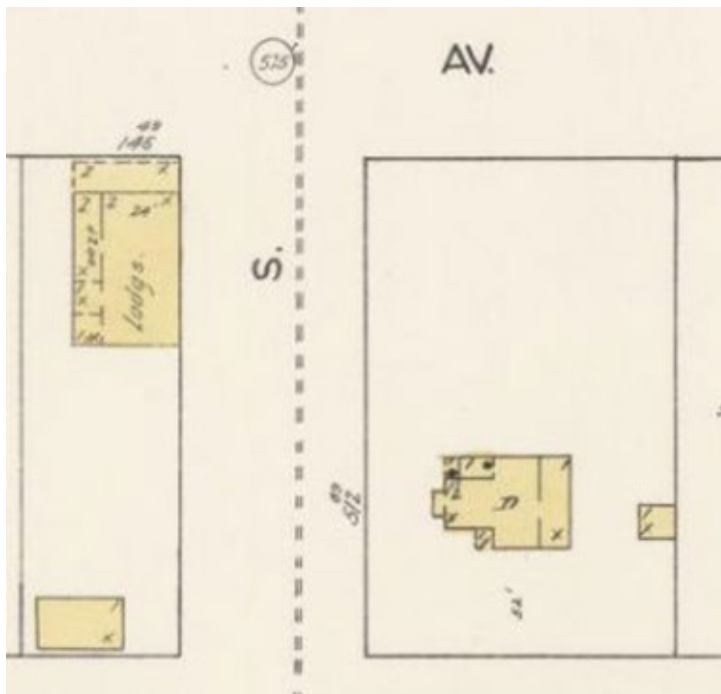
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**Figure 1** Brossart House at its original location, 323 S. Heliotrope Avenue



**Figure 2** Brossart House at third location, 1913 Sanborn Insurance Map excerpt (no information available regarding building at back of lot)



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**Photo 1** Front (west) elevation, view to east



**Photo 2** Front (west) and south elevations, view to northeast



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**Photo 3** South elevation, view to north



**Photo 4** Rear elevation, view to west



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**Photo 5** North elevation, view to southeast



**Photo 6** First floor, parlor, view to southwest



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**Photo 7** First floor, mantel in parlor, view to east



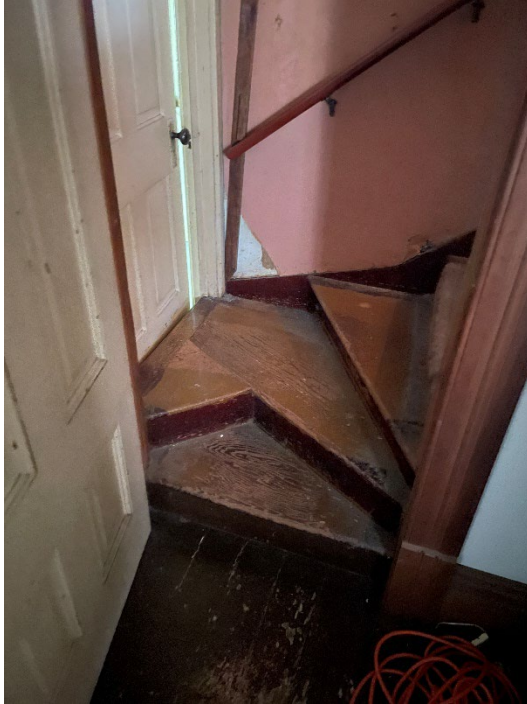
**Photo 8** First floor, dining room built-in cabinet, view to east



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**Photo 9** Stairs to second floor, view to south



**Photo 10** Second floor, bedroom north side, view to north



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**Photo 11** Second floor bedroom north side, view to southeast

