Completed in 1917 in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, STIMSON HOUSE HISTORY one of San Marino’s most distinguished historic homes, designed and built by George Lawrence Stimson for his father and mother George Woodbury and Jennie Stimson. Serving as the site of the 1972 Pasadena Junior Philharmonic Showcase of Interior Design, this beautiful mansion comprising of over 10,000 square feet of living space and resting on over 2 acres in the Estate area of San Marino, is now being revisited 37 years later for the 2009 Pasadena Showcase House of Design.

The Architect
George Lawrence Stimson attended Throop Polytechnic Institute, Pasadena High School, and the Thatcher School in Ojai. As a young man he took an extended tour of Europe where he studied at the Lycee in Grenoble, France and the Real Schule in Leipzig, Germany. Upon his return, he joined his father in the family home-building enterprise. The successful architect was renowned for moving easily through all the popular architectural styles. He and his father are credited with conceiving the idea of electrically-controlled unit furnaces for home heating. His houses are known for their big halls on the second floor which were meant to provide temporary space for trunks because residents dividing their time between East and West coast were constantly packing and unpacking. He was a Mason, a Republican, a member of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, the Valley Hunt Club, the Newport Harbor Yacht Club, and the California Club. G. Lawrence Stimson died in 1939 at the age of 57.

A History of Owners
The first occupant of this magnificent estate was the father of the home’s architect and builder. George Woodbury Stimson was engaged in the wholesale grocery business in Ohio before moving his wife and five children to Southern California in 1885. He then began a new career in real estate development, becoming a pioneer in the home building business. He and his son, G. Lawrence Stimson, are credited with designing and building over 1000 homes in the Los Angeles area. G. Lawrence Stimson designed all the residences the elder Stimson constructed in Pasadena. As well as building custom homes, George Woodbury Stimson also did his share of speculative building. He would buy land, have his son provide the plans, execute the contracting, and then sell the fully-improved properties to new residents who were flooding into Pasadena during the late “teens” and the early “twenties.” He maintained an office in the still-existing Braley Building in Pasadena. George Woodbury Stimson was active in the Twilight Club, the California Club, and the Pasadena Presbyterian Church. Prior to moving to this San Marino estate, the Stimson family lived in a South Orange Grove mansion also designed by their son, which later was sold to William Wrigley and is now the headquarters of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses.

After his wife’s death, Mr. Stimson transferred title of the San Marino estate to his daughter Jane Stimson Dulin and her husband Garretson Dulin. Mrs. Dulin was one of the original members of the Junior League of Pasadena and served as president of the Pasadena Garden Club. She died in 1968 at the age of 91.

In October 1943, after 26 years of Stimson/Dulin family ownership, the property was sold to Virginia and Mary Strub. Living in the house was their father Dr. Charles H. Strub and his wife Vera. Dr. Strub was educated as a dentist but preferred a career in sports promotion. He was the executive vice-president of the Los Angeles Turf Club and the “guiding spirit” of the Santa Anita Park racetrack. The Strubs were well-known for their frequent entertaining at their San Marino home, sometimes for hundreds of guests at a time. The wedding reception of their daughter Virginia, occurring in 1951, was a lavish event that was held at their San Marino estate.
The property had various owners from 1968 until the present. It was advertised for sale in the Los Angeles Times in 1972 for the asking price of $284,500. In this advertisement the home is referred to as an “incomparable mansion: with “European Elegance.” The home was again advertised for sale four years later and the asking price had increased to $350,000.

The Estate

As one enters this impressive estate through the gate post topped with cast-stone urns, notice the sweeping lawn and the circular driveway running through a grand central porte-cochere with heavily decorated arched openings and a balustrade terrace on its roof. The grand entry door of ornate grillwork leads to the formal entry hall with a black and white marble floor, graceful Corinthian columns, and a sweeping circular staircase that leads to the second floor. Throughout the house the fine workmanship by German craftsmen is seen in the hand carved pilasters, paneled ceilings, and the Greek influenced garlands of leaves, vines and flowers—the latter so beautifully executed in the dining room. Some features of this extraordinary home that are typical of the Italian Renaissance Revival Style include a central mass with two recessed wings which are symmetrical in form. The tile roof has prominent ridge-lines while the coffered eaves have continuous dentil detailing below. The home has two prominent plaster chimneys rising from the roof’s summit. Aside from the home’s striking architecture, the grandeur is carried through to the terraced gardens of this magnificent estate.

Research by Tim Gregory, The Building Biographer