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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

MAR 08 1989

REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Locke House (Locke, William Lovering, House) RECEIVED

other names/site number

SEP 27 1988

2. Location

street & number 3911 Harrison Street NA not for publication

city, town Oakland NA vicinity

state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94611

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Ownership of Property: [X] private, [] public-local, [] public-State, [] public-Federal

Category of Property

- Category of Property: [X] building(s), [] district, [] site, [] structure, [] object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 2, 0, 0, 0, 2.

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Kathryn Swathren, Date: 2/15/89

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: _____ Date: _____ State or Federal agency and bureau: _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet. [] determined not eligible for the National Register. [] removed from the National Register. [] other, (explain): _____

Entered in the National Register Signature: [Signature] Date: 4/7/89

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Commerce/trade: professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and early 20th Century

American movements: Prairie School,

Craftsman, Mission

foundation Concrete

walls Stucco

Plaster

roof Composition

other Hardwood Floors

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Description of Physical Appearance

Located in the hills above Lake Merritt about one mile east of Oakland's central business district, Locke house was built in 1911 as a family residence for William Lovering Locke by architect John Hudson Thomas. Notable are the architect's use of roughcast stucco, which gives the building a massive feel; the repeated patterns and interior windows; the Craftsman light fixtures and the built-in bookshelves and cabinetry. Built at the same time as the house, the garage carries out the designs of the whole complex. They were designed and constructed primarily in the Secessionist style, but also incorporate elements from the Craftsman movement, Mission Revival, and Prairie School. The basic integrity of Thomas' design is intact. The garage has deteriorated, but there have been minimal alterations to the house over the years, so that it evidently closely approximates its original appearance.

The three-story house is based on a detailed rectangular plan with central circulation. It is built somewhat in the style of a California bungalow, although on a grander scale. The interlocking wings of the building are surmounted by a tower, which contains a single room on the third floor. Gables project eighteen inches beyond the roof and adjoining walls. All parapet gables and arch soffits are eighteen inches thick and convey an image of ponderosity. The space created by the hollow buttresses which support the walls is used for recessed bookshelves in the living room.

The windows are a combination of styles; about one-fourth of them are arched and display careful placement of window muntins to create inter-related designs in the window frames. Windows in the front of the house are predominantly casement style and open out, while those in the utility areas are usually double-hung and used with the upper sash divided geometrically. These geometric window designs are reminiscent of those of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The sloped roofs indicate a stepping pattern, with fascia articulation on the eave overhang. Geometric tile patterns decorate raised stucco shapes beside the large second and third-story windows, a Thomas "signature". (Prior to 1970, apparently small additional decorative fascia designs ~~apparently~~ existed over the porte-cochere, porch arches and eave overhang.) These designs are further articulated in the window muntins. The sidewalk also repeats the patterns with dark red rectangular shapes.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1911

1911

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Thomas, John Hudson

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Statement of Significance

Locke house is a large and good example of the early work of the master architect, John Hudson Thomas. It stands alone as a singular and unique architectural statement by an extremely creative architect who was fortunate to have a client willing to have a house which broke with standard forms. Along with the "Wintermute" house in Berkeley, it is commonly cited as one of Thomas' significant achievements. Distinctive are his innovative use of roughcast stucco, repeated patterns, interior windows, and Craftsman light fixtures. The sweeping design projects an image of grandeur and solidity; it mixes varied elements while achieving a unified whole. The square tower and arches are elements of the California Mission Revival style, prevalent from 1900 to 1910. The chevron-like gables are characteristic of Prairie style buildings.

Of all the Bay Area architects who worked in stucco, Thomas' work was considered most consistently fascinating. His use of stucco was a departure from prevalent styles. This material was not then in vogue, and wood was chiefly used. About 1911 stucco "overnight" became the material of choice. Thomas emphasized its heavy texture and gave the stucco a hand-crafted, rough appearance, intending it to look like masonry. His forms are heavy and overhanging; heavy stucco pieces outline the lower roofs. One has the impression the house is even larger than it is, an effect achieved by overscaling every element: thick walls covered with roughcast stucco, deep reveals at windows, ample buttresses.

Thomas was a participant in the East Bay's massive residential expansion after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Designs produced by George T. Plowman and John Hudson Thomas, who collaborated from 1907 to 1910 in the building of at least 50 houses, were part of the Craftsman tradition which combined simple forms and natural materials to create comfortable living environments for their clients. Locke House was built in the first year after Plowman left their partnership, which was Thomas' most creative period. He later utilized Period Revival and Mediterranean styles.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jones, Anne Denney. "Almost an Art Form." Oakland Realtor, Nov. 1979, pp. 7-8, 12
Smallwood, Miller & DeNevi. The Cable Car Book. Celestial Arts, Millbrae, Cali., 1980, pp. 11, 142-43
Smith, Thomas Gordon. John Hudson Thomas and the Progressive Spirit in Architecture, 1910-1920. M.A. thesis, Dept. of Architecture, University of California, Berkeley, 1970, pp. iv-vii, 68-75
Woodbridge, Sally, ed. Bay Area Houses. Oxford University Press, New York, 1975, pp. 87-95

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Oakland Public Library
History Room

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A 110 566075 4186140
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point on the Northwest line of Harrison Street, formerly Walsworth Avenue, distant thereon 70 feet Northeasterly from the intersection thereof with the Northeastern line of Bayo Vista Avenue; running thence Northeasterly along said line of Harrison Street 60 feet; thence at right angles Northwesterly 125 feet; thence at right angles Northwesterly 60 feet; and thence Southeasterly 125 feet to the point of beginning. Being the Northeastern 30 feet of Lot 6 and the Southwestern feet of lot 7 in Block "B" as said lots and block are shown on the "Map of the Linda Vista Terrace, Oakland, California", filed January 9, 1891 in Book 9 of Maps, page 70, in the office of the Alameda County Recorder, Parcel #12-929-12.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property, as checked with Sanborn map references.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Margo M. Noble / Senior Analyst *Margo Noble*
organization Law Offices of Ann Rankin
street & number c/o 3671 Virden Avenue
city or town Oakland
date 8/1/88 (revised 9/24/88)
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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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The deep arches of the porch are repeated in the porte-cochere which leads to the garage in the rear. The small stucco and wood garage is now in poor condition, but was once a handsome part of the plan. As with the house, there are two intersecting wings and two parapet gables. The roof shapes therefore reflect the same angles as the house. One door still has its window of detailed design, while the other door and windows are presently without glass. The interior tongue-in-groove wood siding, although now beginning to peel away, speaks of a former beauty and a careful attention to detail, as does the presence of the work bench contained in the garage.

Rooms in Locke House are made spacially distinct by the variety of ceiling textures and decorative ornamentation. The living room ceiling has deep coffers at the corners, and an overlaid pattern of wooden stripping. The built-in Craftsman light fixtures, inverted pyramids of mica and hammered copper, are unique. The dining room ceiling is conventional, but the hallway has a groin vault with a Craftsman light fixture at the apex.

Although these spaces are differentiated, Thomas also used the Craftsman idea of total design: that window muntins, light fixtures, stair railings, and door panel arrangements should be an extension of a controlling idea. Certain formal devices - pylons, wide parapet gables, decorative tile motifs - were repeated to unify masses which would not otherwise belong next to one another.

Leading into the conference room, formerly a spacious living room, are hand-crafted etched glass doors. This room also has a grouping of six windows at the front and Thomas' distinctive repeated patterns in the windows, walls and ceiling. An inglenook, with benches and its own fireplace, provides a private place for conversation. The hallway provides circulation between the living room, foyer, stairhall, smoking room and dining room.

Moving from the smoking room near the entrance to the dining room, now a law office, one sees a striking fireplace, and built-in bookshelves and cabinets. On both sides of the fireplace are arched windows that look through to the porch on the other side, enclosed at some time in the past. To the rear of the house are a nondescript kitchen and several small rooms which served as maids quarters. These lack any of the architectural features present in the rest of the house and now contain office support services, secretarial stations and a xerox machine. Downstairs is an unfinished basement.

(continued)

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

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The wooden stairway leading upstairs is one of the quality pieces in the house. It is carefully crafted to reflect the style of the period and is unique to Thomas. At the first floor landing are a bench and an interior window which faces into the living room. The second floor provides access to eight rooms, several large built-in cabinets, three bathrooms, and another porch which was also enclosed at some time. These family quarters are spacious, but lack most of the design features contained in the more public first floor. A stairway leads to a single finished room in the third floor tower.

Before 1987, when it was purchased by its present owner, the only known alterations to the house were the enclosing of two porches, some changes in the maids quarters and the removal of small portions of fascia decoration over the porte-cochere, porch arches and eave overhang. We do not know when these occurred. During 1988, minimal alterations were carried out to repair and make the house safe, to bring it into compliance with city building codes, and to allow it to be used for professional offices. These changes included a fire sprinkler system, hand rails and handicapped access. The garage remains to be restored, and additional landscaping will be done.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

John Hudson Thomas was born in Nevada in 1878. He graduated from Yale in 1902 and in the fall of that year entered the University of California's Berkeley School of Architecture where he studied under Bernard Maybeck, exponent of the Craftsman style, as well as with the University's classicist and Beaux-Arts graduate, John Galen Howard. After George Plowman left their brief but intensive partnership in 1910, Thomas designed Locke house, continuing his practice until 1945. His design was a departure from prevalent styles of the time.

This single-family residence was built near Oakland's central business area in the city's Linda Vista Terrace district, which means "beautiful view." Situated among hills, this was one of the two areas in the City of Oakland to have a cable car, the Piedmont Cable Railway, from 1890-1896. Since portions of the area are steep and not easily accessible and horse cars were not economical, the cable cars enabled development in these areas to begin before electrified trolleys took over. The cable car system fostered the real estate development which led to building in the area near Oakland's business district. The house at today's 3911 Harrison Street, near the junction of Bayo Vista Avenue, was listed in the 1912 City Directory as 655 Walsworth Avenue.

Thomas was one of the most prolific residential architects of the century. During the first 14 years of his 35 year career, Thomas designed at least 125 houses. As far as is known, his production prior to 1920 was almost entirely in the East Bay. Locke house is one of the eleven documented homes built by John Hudson Thomas in Oakland. Prevalent styles of the period might evoke Pueblo or Mediterranean or Mission architecture, but Locke House does not.

The Locke house is distinctive and represents a thorough break by John Hudson Thomas, its architect, with the classic or Beaux-Arts styles previously popular. His major works are commonly classified in the Secessionist style and also draw upon the Prairie School, Craftsman, and Mission Revival schools. Many books contain extensive discussions of Thomas' major works. Used as a single-family residence until its present conversion to professional offices, the architecture of Locke house adds significance to the area. Its importance as a landmark of architectural, historical and esthetic interest and value was recognized when it was designated as a City of Oakland landmark, pursuant to Zoning Regulations Section 7002, in 1979. Its further recognition as a landmark of national status would now seem appropriate.

LOCKE HOUSE

Appendix

- A. 1913 Photo of Locke House
- B. 1988 Photos
- C. Photo Index
- D. Sketch map showing photo vantage points
- E. Sanborn map showing "footprint" of Locke House
- F. Assessor's parcel map
- G. Topographical map

THE Architect and Engineer

Of California
Pacific Coast States

VOL. XXXIII.

JULY, 1913.

No. 3

San Francisco's Civic Center

By JOHN GALEN HOWARD, F. A. I. A.*

THE Civic Center for San Francisco is beginning already to be a reality. Ground has been broken for the foundations of both the City Hall and the Auditorium, two of the most important buildings in the group; and the ground has been cleared for most of the other parts of the work.

Not the least spectacular operation in point of popular interest is the removal of the Newton J. Tharp Commercial High School from the site of the square around which the various public buildings are to be grouped. This brick and steel fireproof building, two stories in height and measuring 120 by 140 feet, has already been moved about two blocks west and is practically entirely off the area affected by monumental building operations.

What has already been accomplished toward bringing the Civic Center into being, makes a most gratifying showing. It is difficult to believe that only eighteen months have elapsed since the Rolph administration took office, when it is realized that even the question of a new City Hall, to say nothing of a Civic Center, was still a debated question, even up to the 29th of March, 1912. At that time the city owned only the triangular piece of ground between Larkin street, McAllister street and City Hall avenue. It now owns in addition to that area the three and one-half blocks bounded by Larkin, Hayes and Polk streets and Locust avenue, and the two blocks bounded by McAllister, Polk and Grove streets and Van Ness avenue, as well as a large portion of the holdings between City Hall avenue and Market street, which are planned for a complete development of the Civic Center with a magnificent approach from Market street. The acquisition of all this property is alone a monumental achievement.

Meantime plans for the various buildings in the Civic Center have been rapidly progressing. On the 29th of March, 1912, the issuance of bonds to the amount of \$8,800,000 was authorized by the people of San Francisco. Since that time a competition has been held for the City Hall, which is to cost about three and one-quarter millions, and the drawings for the erection of that building have been nearly completed; contracts having been already let for the foundations and the steel framework. Bids will be asked for exterior stone and general masonry at once.

In regard to the design of the City Hall, of which Messrs. Bakewell and Brown are the architects, it is not too much to say that it gives promise of being one of the most distinguished architectural creations of our time; a building of which all San Franciscans and all Californians can be justly proud. The monumental scale of the building is indicated by the fact that the height of its principal feature, the dome, from the ground

*The Civic Center Commission is composed of Mr. Howard, Frederick H. Meyer and John Reid, Jr.



*Residence of Mr. W. L. Locke, Oakland
John Hudson Thomas, Architect*

tion is somewhat due to the improved modern transit facilities, to high cost of living, and the over-crowded conditions of our cities. The people have learned to prefer the beautiful flowers, pure air and fresh, wholesome food, to the foul smell of the gutters and dirty streets of the city.

Again, it is fully realized that the home to be ideal must be both beautiful and practical—must perform its functions well and be pleasant about it. Where can it perform these functions better than in the country? Within we have not only shelter from the elements but also the benefits of the sun and breezes; without it is made indigenous by the proper selection of style, materials and colors that harmonize and blend happily with the immediate surroundings. This is true in eastern Pennsylvania, where stone is easily and cheaply had, and the Colonial style prevailing, the ideal home that is accepted as native is the home built of stone in Colonial style.

In California the landscape is dotted with beautiful homes that appear as a natural growth. Field stone and rough timbers constitute the principal material, and in the hands of the architect who knows the caprices of the style, inject into it the fine, free, rugged and hospital spirit of the bungalow. Thus it was in old England where we find in the various regions styles that harmonize and blend nicely on account of this law of nature. In those early days they were compelled to build of materials most easily obtained, thus fulfilling this law unconsciously. We, on the contrary, by our present means of transportation can build of materials gathered from every part of the globe as economically as the materials gathered near at hand.

Travel and reading, besides working wonders throughout the land, have also wrought their mischief. There are always some who do not comprehend the value of a native style and erroneously model their homes after types individually beautiful and perfect under its local conditions, but brought forth and planted bodily in a foreign land and climate loses

LOCKE HOUSE

INDEX TO PHOTOS

This information is the same for all photographs:

Locke House, 3911 Harrison Street, Oakland, California 94611.

Photographs nos. 1 thru 20 were taken July 16, 1988 by Margo Noble.

Photographs number 5a and nos. 21 through 27 were taken September 12, 1988 by Margo Noble. Original negatives are filed at Locke House. Following is a brief description of the photo views (please refer also to accompanying sketch):

1. Exterior view close to house
2. Front view from Harrison Street
3. Porte-cochere leading to garage
4. Garage
5. Outside stairway (note pattern in sidewalk)
- 5a. Adjacent outside stairway
6. Entryway showing interior window to inglenook
7. Door to living room
8. Front windows in living room
9. Craftsman light fixture
10. Built-in bookcase and detailing in living room

11. Inglenook
12. Door into hallway
13. Built-in bookshelves in former dining room
14. Fireplace and interior window
15. Stairway approach, showing repeated patterns
16. First stair landing, showing interior window
17. Top of stair
18. Example of built-in cabinets on second floor
19. View from grand hall at second floor
20. Third floor "tower" room

21. Front elevation of house (from street)
22. Northeastern side elevation of house (from front)
23. Northeastern side elevation of house (from rear, showing handicapped access ramp)
24. Southwestern side elevation of house (from side)
25. Rear elevation of house
26. Front elevation of garage
27. Side elevation of garage

ARAGE

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③

Locke House
3911 Harrison Street
Oakland, CA

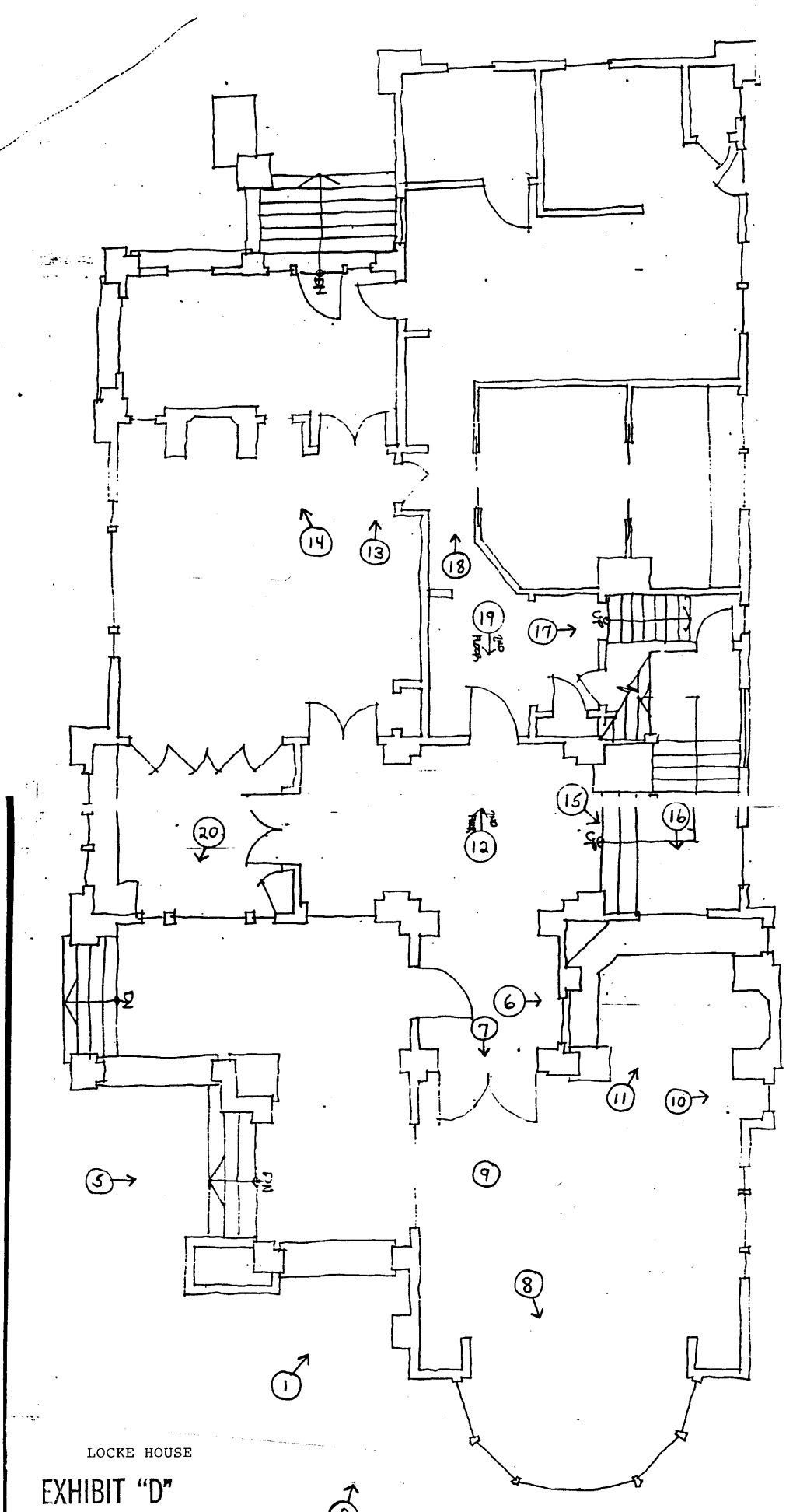
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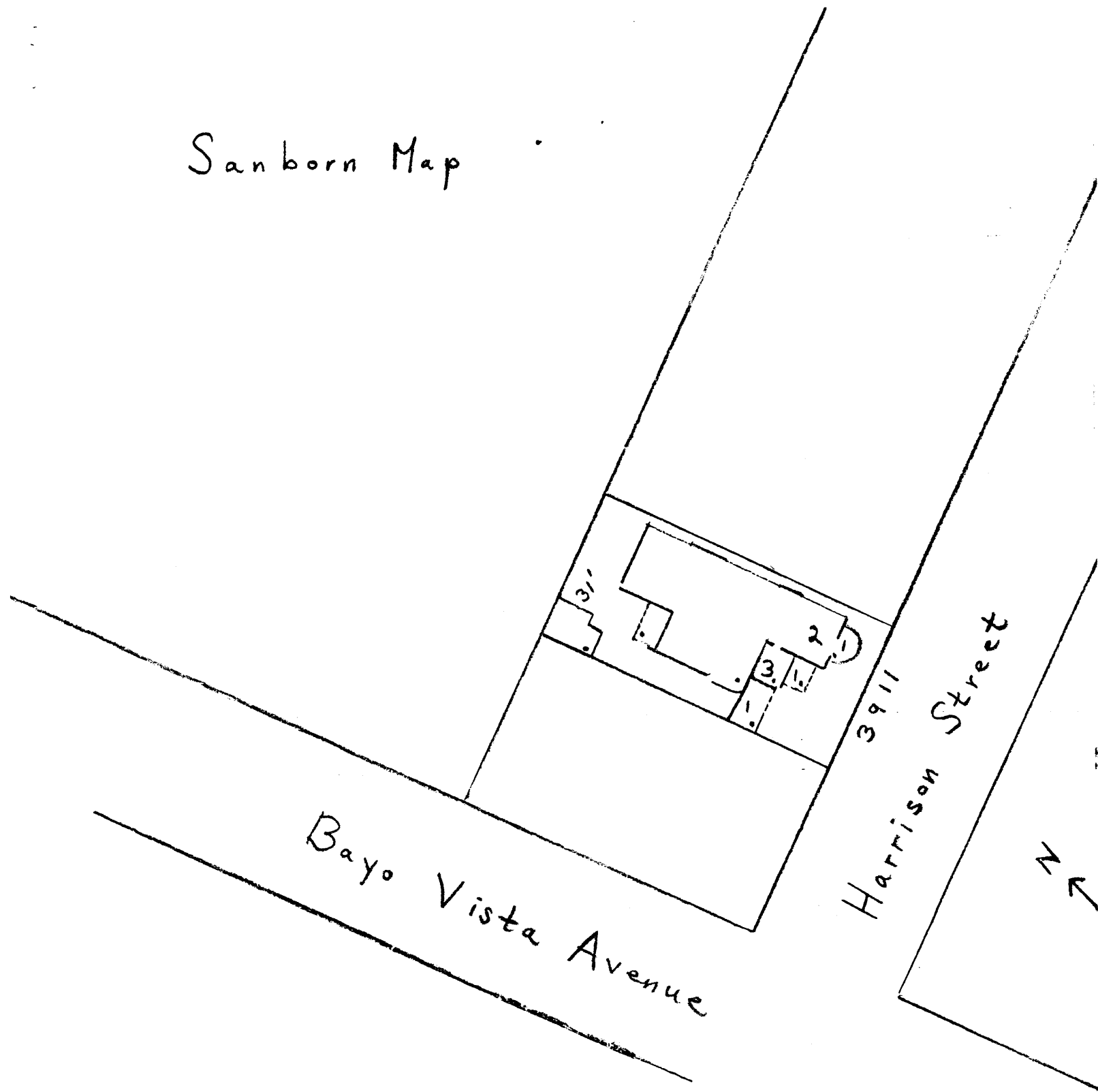
LOCKE HOUSE

EXHIBIT "D"

②



Sanborn Map



• = composition roof

LOCKE HOUSE
3911 Harrison Street
Oakland, California
Alameda County

EXHIBIT "E"

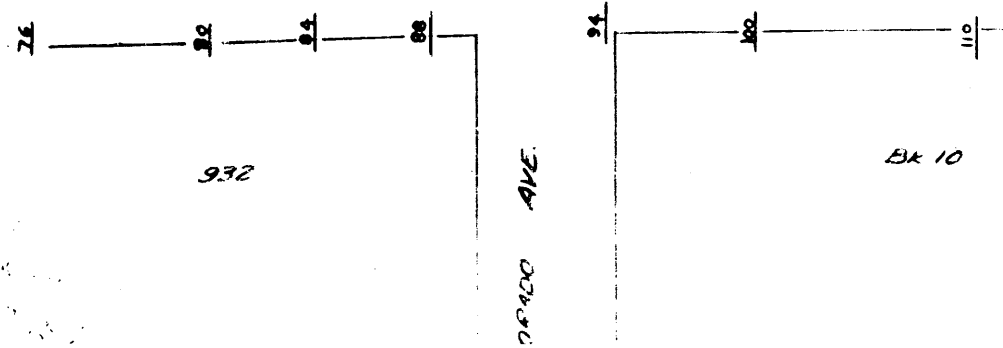
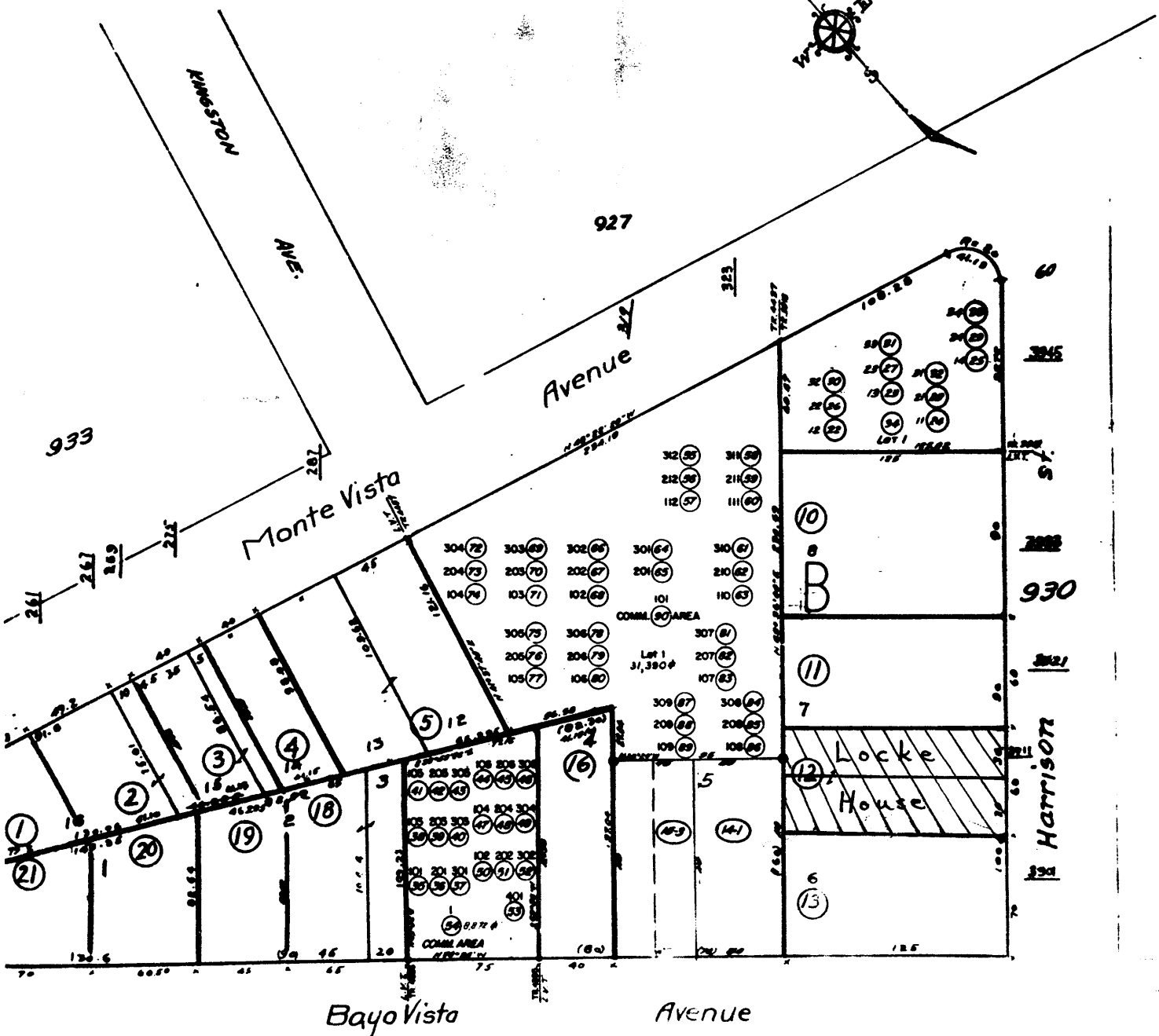
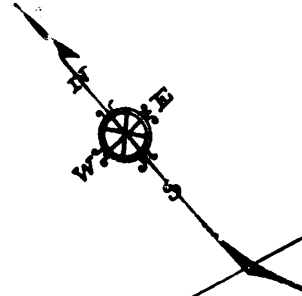
ASSESSOR'S MAP 12

Code Area No. 17-001

12

Linda Vista Terrace Map No. 2. 12/15/44
Scale 1 in = 50 ft.

TR. 3918 4/21
TR. 4355 10/70 TR. 4437 120/72



LOCKE HOUSE
3911 Harrison Street
Oakland, California
Alameda County

EXHIBIT "F"