

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received AUG 16 1983

date entered

Received OHP 2/8/83

Fomal

1. Name

historic Major George Beecher Cook House

and/or common The Greenbrier

2. Location

street & number 356 West 21st Street N/A not for publication

city, town Merced N/A vicinity of

state California 95340 code 06 county Merced code 047

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Gordon McCormack

street & number 2807 "H" Street

city, town Bakersfield N/A vicinity of state California 93301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorders Office of the County Courthouse

street & number 2222 "M" Street

city, town Merced state California 95340

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Merced Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Merced County Chamber of Commerce

city, town 725 W. 18th St., Merced state CA 95340

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This large, wood frame house is an excellent local example of the Queen Anne style. It is 2½ stories, with irregular massing and a variety of surface textures and materials. The design is dominated by a large corner tower capped with a conical roof. The house is located at the corner of 21st and K Streets in a neighborhood of single family residences of similar age. The first floor walls were originally of horizontal wooden siding now covered with textured paint. The upper story walls are sheathed in patterned shingles. There are two living rooms, dining room, kitchen and pantry on the first floor. The upper two floors contain twelve bedrooms and several small bathrooms. The exterior of this house retains much of its original appearance.

The Major George Beecher Cook House dates from approximately 1887, constructed in the popular Queen Anne styling of the period. The 2½ story house displays the irregular massing and juxtaposing of decorative patterns and textures so characteristic of its type and period. The dominant feature of the design is the round corner tower which rises a full three stories at the northwest corner of the house. It is encircled at the base by an open porch which extends across the facade and partially down the east side. A 2 story 7-sided bay is centered in the side (west) elevation, flanked by an open porch at the rear. The roof forms are complex, with a gabled roof forming the major north-south axis, broken by a central pyramidal section, a cross gable on the east, a 7-segmented roof above the projecting bay on the west, and punctuated by hip roofed dormers on the east and west; a conical roof caps the tower. The building is sheathed in horizontal siding on the first story. A heavy projecting belt course defines the separation between the first and second stories and is carried around the front as the cornice of the porch. The second story is covered with patterned shingles. This terminates in a broad frieze beneath a roll molding defining the cornice which encircles the building. This detail is replaced by a band of patterned shingles where it crosses the corner tower, and the cornice and frieze details are repeated at the top of the tower. The two major gables and the cross gable all contain windows set into flat surfaces above pent roofed extensions of the cornice; secondary pediments within the gables are created above the windows, defined by roll molding and filled with patterned shingles. Finials rise from the apex of each gable.

Still flanking the main steps on the 21st Street side are two cast iron hitching posts with a horse's head design; two more hitching posts on the "K" Street side have been removed. The walkway leads to the small projecting entrance portico in the center of the porch. After passing through the paneled and beveled glass entry doors, one enters the entrance hall or foyer, altered when the building was used as a boarding house. To the left the main carved oak staircase rises to the upper floors. Interior doors are also oak. To the right one of the living rooms (probably the "summer room") occupies the northwest corner of the building. The windows in this room make it ideally located for filtered summer light and breezes. Sliding paneled doors allow this room to be separated from the entrance hall. There are two living rooms, dining room, kitchen and pantry on the first floor. The kitchen was converted to feed boarders and now contains institutional ranges and ovens. The second living room is in the southwest

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1887 **Builder/Architect** P.A. Buell & Co., Stockton, CA (Builder)

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The house is one of the finest examples of Queen Anne architecture in Merced. Very few examples of this style remain in the community; this is the largest and most impressive example of its type and period. It has been recognized by the Merced Branch of American Association of University Women as a "Heritage Home of Merced County." In addition, this house was the residence of one of the city's prominent merchants and early mayors, Major George Beecher Cook.

The house is the largest and most impressive example of Queen Anne styling in the local community. It displays the distinguishing characteristics of the later phase of Queen Anne - a strongly asymmetrical composition dominated by complex roof forms, a prominent cylindrical corner tower, and a juxtaposition of different patterns and textures on the same wall surfaces. It retains its overall integrity of design, with few exterior modifications since its construction c. 1887. Sited on its prominent corner location, it is a pivotal structure in the city's major historic neighborhood, and stands as one of Merced's few remaining great 19th century houses.

The house was the residence of an important early merchant and civic leader, Major George Beecher Cook, said to have been a relative of the noted American writer, Harriet Beecher Stowe. Major Cook was a native of Connecticut, and enlisted as a private in the Army of the Potomac when the Civil War broke out. He served through the war and left with the rank of Major. After the war he came to San Francisco and went into business with Thomas O'Connor. In approximately 1880, he moved to Merced and established the grocery firm of O'Connor and Cook. After a few years, he bought out his partner and operated the business himself until his death. In 1882 he married Mrs. Cora Hanna of San Francisco. He was prominent in the Republican Party and eventually served as Mayor of the City of Merced. He died on November 24, 1898 at his home; the Merced Express described him as an "enterprising and patriotic citizen". His prominence was noted as far away as San Francisco, where the San Francisco Call carried the news of his death. He was 63 years of age at the time of his death.

The house was purchased around 1900 from the Cook estate by T. C. Law, a Merced attorney. He rented it out as a sanitarium for several years; eventually it was converted into a boarding house. In 1923 it was purchased by Mrs. Lola Peterson and remodeled. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Green bought the property in 1943 and carried out further interior remodeling. It was named "Greenbrier" at that time, combining the surnames of Green and Brier, Mrs. Green's maiden name. The building was used as a guest house until recently when purchased by the present owner.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

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end of the house and possibly was once the maid's quarters. There are three fireplaces on the first floor, one in each of the two living rooms and one in the dining room. There are beveled glass mirrors above the fireplaces and some of the fireplaces are trimmed with decorative ceramic tiles. The upper two floors contain twelve bedrooms. Several small bathrooms were added to accommodate boarders. However, the original marble lavatories remain in some of the bedrooms.

Known alterations include: portion of porch enclosed on the east approximately 1900; foyer, kitchen, maid's room and bedrooms remodeled 1923; kitchen and bedrooms remodeled 1943; concrete floor slab and screw jacks added in basement to shore up floor beams in 1943; original wooden entry steps replaced with concrete steps and wrought iron railing (date unknown); roof reroofed with square butt shingles (date unknown); exterior horizontal sheathing covered with textured paint (date unknown); artificial stone veneer added to exposed foundation in 1960's; original stables to the south of the house were destroyed by fire in 1982.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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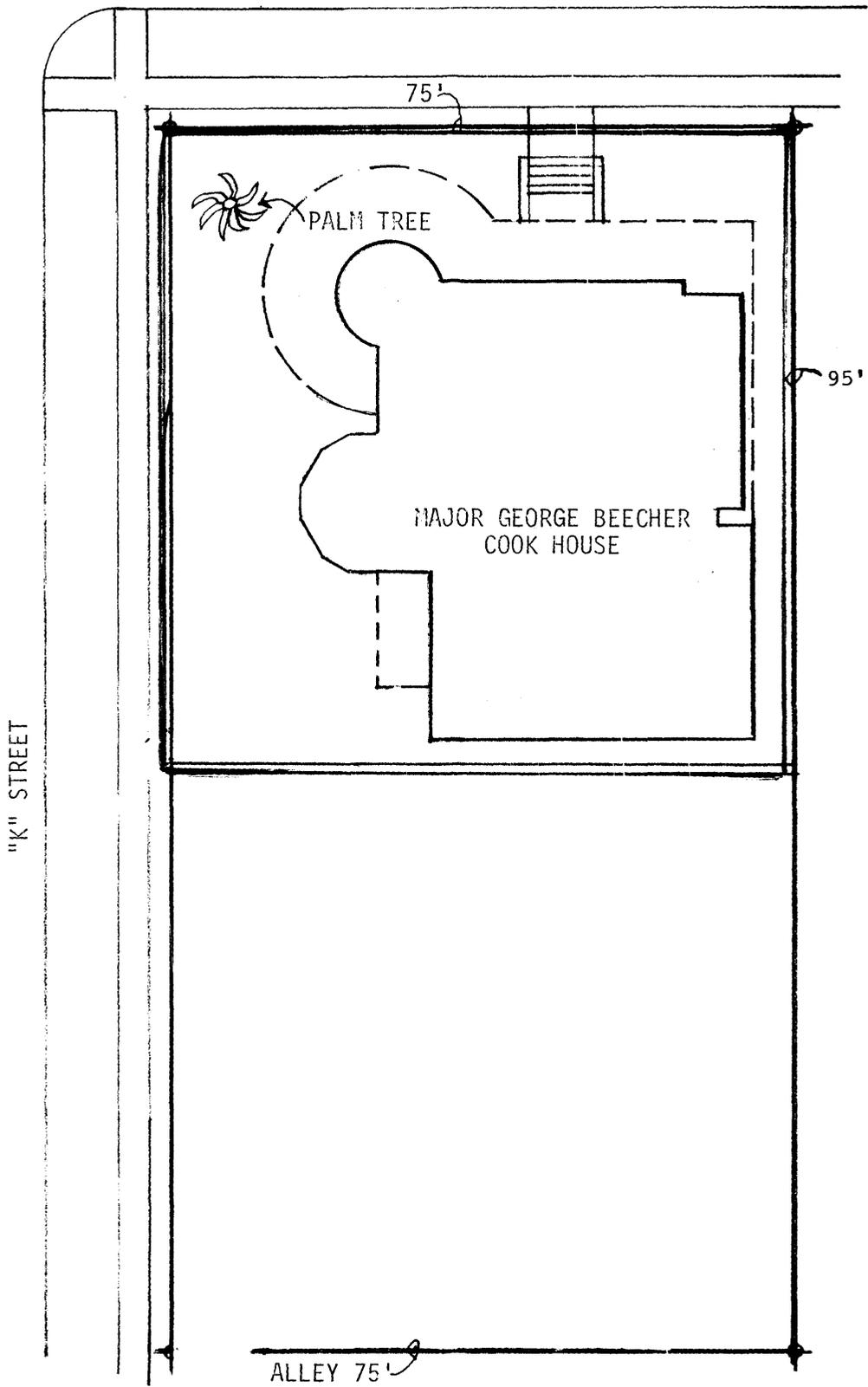
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

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house from a more recent apartment/office building constructed on the rear of the original parcel. Boundaries are shown on attached site plan.

WEST 21ST STREET



0.25 ACRES

SITE PLAN



Lot 8, and the northwesterly portion of Lot 7, Block 109, Supplemental Map to Town of Merced, in City of Merced, County of Merced, State of California, as per plat recorded in Book 2, of Maps, page 12, records of said County.

356 W. 21st Street