

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 20 1979  
DATE ENTERED JUL 24 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

*Residence*  
Norris Residence

AND/OR COMMON

Newman Center for Stanford

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

1247 Cowper St.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Palo Alto

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

12

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

CODE  
06

COUNTY  
Santa Clara

CODE  
085

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Arch Diocese of San Francisco

STREET & NUMBER

445 Church

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

VICINITY OF

STATE  
California

94114

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Santa Clara County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

191 North First Street

CITY, TOWN

San Jose

STATE  
California

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Palo Alto City Inventory

DATE

December 1978

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE  
California

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD             RUINS  
 FAIR              UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Norris residence is located on a large corner lot in an upper middle class residential neighborhood of Palo Alto. The house is roughly U-shaped, with a wall across the open end to create a completely enclosed courtyard at the entrance.

The north and east wing are two stories in height. The west wing and the enclosing wall on the south, are one story. The building is of wood frame construction, surfaced with stucco, and the tiled roofs are gabled.

The entry is through a door in the courtyard wall, to an L-shaped gallery which runs along the inside of the courtyard and wall, and along the west wing to the entrance to the house proper. The major ground floor rooms open into the courtyard through glass doors, and also into garden areas on the other side of the house to the north and west. The only openings in the main street facade are the courtyard entry and a large window in the gabled end of the living room wing. There is an outdoor stair in the courtyard which leads to a second floor gallery.

In the center of the courtyard is a tiled fountain with a bronze dragon fly rising from it. Around the patio are various groupings of colored decorative tile, all made especially for the house. Besides the tile, a strong ornamental contribution is made by the specially crafted wrought iron gates, grilles, light fixtures, pierced stucco grilles and hand edged timbers also animate the building's surface textures. On the interior the same materials, wrought iron, tile, and hand crafted timbers are used extensively. The stairway railing and the living room light fixtures are particularly fine wrought iron pieces.

There is a stucco wall at the sidewalk with a wrought iron gate into the lawn area. In the garden to the west of the living room wing is the so-called "Spanish Kitchen", like the house it employs stucco walls and a tile roof. Also designed by Birge Clark, this small open structure was built in 1934, and provided space for outdoor barbecues. See "V" show on map.

At the northeast corner the building has been altered to connect with a later building. This was done at the time of the property's usage change from residential to religious student center. In 1949 the residence was sold to the Archdiocese and became a religious and educational facility. St. Ann Chapel, a modern building to the north and rear of the property nominated, though now connected to the Norris House, is not part of this nomination due to its recent date, and architectural differences. The attached sketch map indicates the boundaries of the nomination and location of the chapel. The chapel, which is inconsistent in design with the nominated property, is excluded from the nomination. (A sign on the corner of the property identifies the property as St. Ann's and Newman Center for Stanford.)

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 7 1980
DATE ENTERED	JUL 24 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

---

The roof line at the end of the original garage has been extended to abut the tower of the chapel, creating a breezeway between the original structure and the newer church edifice. The roof simply abuts the new building but is not structurally integrated into the structure. The current Sanborn Insurance Map of Palo Alto indicates that the buildings are not structurally integrated.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1927

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Birge Clark

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Norris House possesses a high degree of significance due to both its historical associations with the nationally known authors, Kathleen and Charles Norris, and its excellent design, the work of an important local architect.

Both of the Norrises, for whom the house was designed by Birge Clark in 1927, achieved note in the literary world.

Kathleen Norris is regarded as one of the most popular and certainly prolific California women writers in this century. Her first novelette, Mothers, was published in 1911, and became a national success. Between the years 1911 to 1957 she wrote 90 novels; romantic stories and mysteries which were read by both men and women. Each of these works contained a female character who embodied her ideal of a fulfilled woman. Besides novels which she completed at the rate of about two a year, Kathleen Norris also contributed articles and short stories to many magazines. She wrote a weekly column and answered 700 letters a week for Bell Syndicate fulfilling a function that is today relegated to Dear Abby and Ann Landers. In the 1940's Kathleen Norris was the highest paid female author in the nation and as such, exemplified her written image of a woman who fulfilled herself as a wife, a mother and a professional.

Charles Gilman Norris, was also a literary figure in his own right. While he did not produce the volume of literary work that his wife Kathleen did, he did execute works of substance. Charles Norris was recognized as a novelist with something to say, who said it dramatically and well. His works which included the following, dealt with social values as opposed to his wife's novels which revolved around moral judgement and virtue: (The Amateur, 1915, Salt, 1917, Brass 1921, Bread 1921, Pig Iron 1925, and Zelda Marsh 1927). Before Charles Norris settled for the novelist lifestyle he was an editor of several magazines including Country Life, Sunset, and American. In addition to his writing career, Charles Norris acted as an agent and an editor for his wife. He was also very involved in social activities in San Francisco, belonging to many clubs, including The Bohemian Club, of which he served as president.

Built in 1928, the Norris House possesses considerable architectural significance as well as the historic importance gained through its associations with the Norrises. The building is a particularly fine design by a local master architect and incorporates the work of several outstanding craftsmen as well.

An interesting architectural composition is achieved through a careful balance of one and two story elements, arranged around the handsome courtyard/patio. The patio serves as a focal point for both the composition and the living activities of the house. Color from both building

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Binheim, Max, editor, Women of the West, Publisher's Press, LA, 1928 editio page 71
- Gumina, Deanna Paoli, "Kathleen Norris: The Philosophy of a Woman", Pacific Historian, Vol. 18, No. 4, Winter 1974, pages 69-73
- Hunt, Rockwell, editor, California and Californians, V. 5, Lewis Publishing Co., 1926, pages 159 and 183-4
- Who's Who in California, a biographical directory 1928-29

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .96 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Palo Alto

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7 1/2' 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	5,7,5,3,4,0	4,1,4,4,1,3,0
B			
C			
E			
G			

B			
D			
F			
H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Boundaries are shown on attached site plan.

A 200' wide and 208' deep property in a residential block bounded by Cowper, Kingsley, Webster, and Melville. Located on northwest corner of Cowper and Melville, lot 42, Book 120, Page 7 of Assessor's Records, Santa Clara Co.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
NO OVERLAPPING EOUNDARIES			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Paula Boghosian & John Beach

ORGANIZATION Historic Environment Consultants

DATE May 31, 1979

STREET & NUMBER 2306 J St.

TELEPHONE (916) 446-2447

CITY OR TOWN Sacramento

STATE California

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Handwritten Signature*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 11/13/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Handwritten Signature*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 7/31/80

ATTEST:

*Handwritten Signature*  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

DATE 7-23-80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 20 1979
DATE ENTERED	JUL 24 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

materials (tile), and flowers among the walks contrasts with the white stucco surface of the structure.

Handcrafted materials occur both in the patio and interior. Iron work executed by Herman Bleibler, was carefully and skillfully crafted to the architect's specifications. Both interior and exterior beams and some woodworking were hand adzed by skilled carpenters under the direction of contractor Wells Goodenough. The tile was specially designed by A.L.Solon of San Jose. The stucco, now painted, contains integral color, which when intermittently troweled, assumed an interesting variegated surface coloration.

The house was the largest and most expensive work executed by Clark in Palo Alto up to that time. Its design is one of his best and the craftsmanship involved unusually fine in its execution.

Additionally, the Norris House is one of Palo Alto's best examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival mode, an architectural style which has contributed strongly to both the character and building stock of the city.

The courtyard entry concept reflects one of the primary philosophies of the style; internal orientation to enclosed and private gardens and spaces, with relatively simple and undecorated street facades.

The style was first employed in Palo Alto during the early part of the 1920's, and quickly became an important model and prolific design mode for much of the city's development during that era. The prominent and prolific local architect, Birge Clark, in particular utilized the style for many of his best works, thus helping to establish the style and its image within the city,

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

---

Orr, Robert Gardin, "The Norrises, A Story of Success", The Coast, Vol. 4  
No. 3, March 1941, pages 13-14

Clark, Birge, "Notes on the Norris House", (available at the Palo Alto  
Planning Department)

(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 4 0 1979

DATE ENTERED JUL 24 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

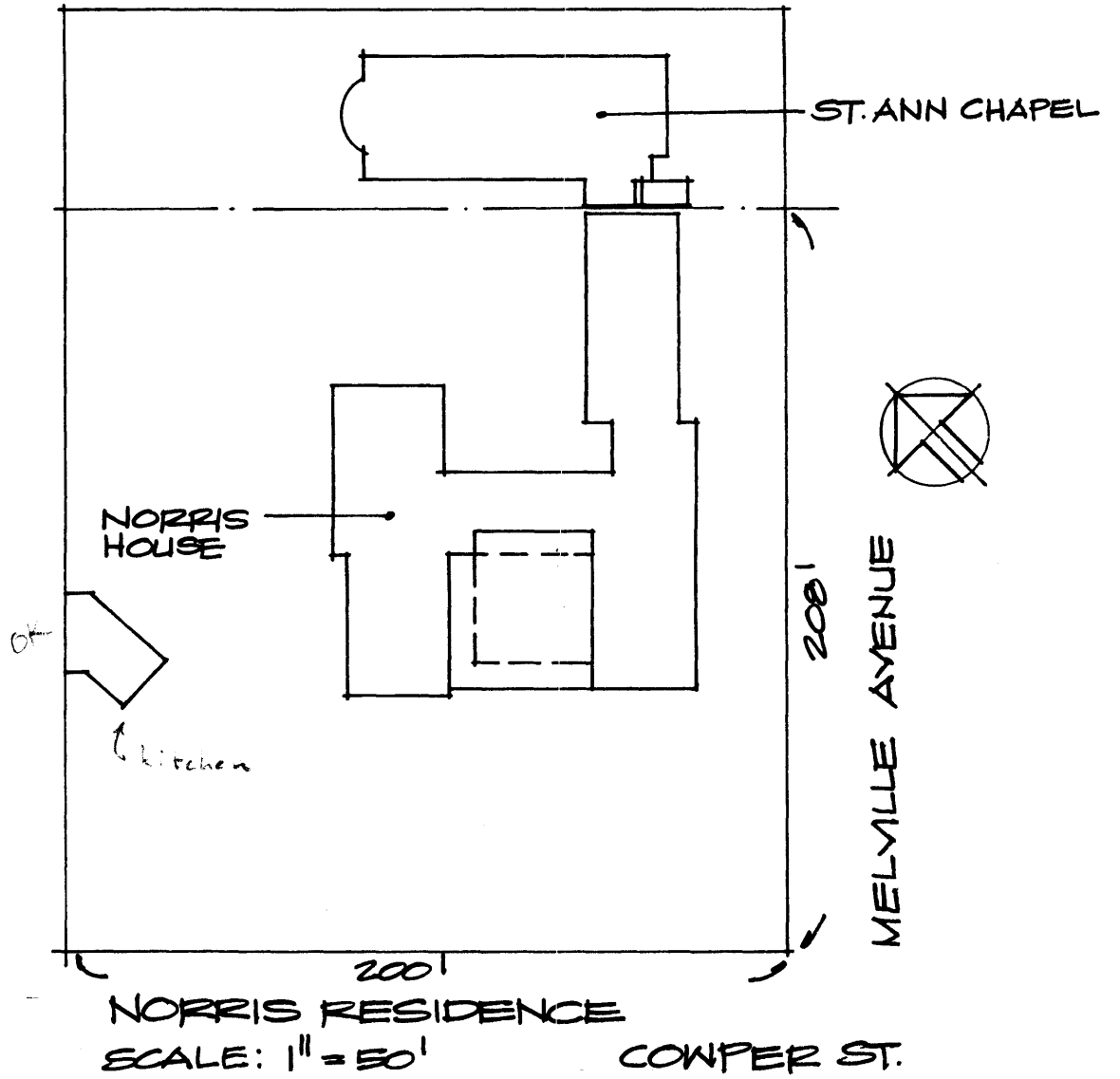
Norris Residence, 1247 Cowper, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

The boundaries are drawn to exclude St. Ann Chapel, a modern structure which occupies the north portion of the original property. The boundaries of the nominated property are based upon the remaining integrity of the original complex. Beginning at the northwest corner of Melville Avenue and Cowper Street, follow the property line parallel to Cowper northwest for 200 feet, then northeast along the property line for 208 feet, then southeast and parallel to the southeast property boundary for 200 feet, then southwest following the property line parallel to Melville Avenue, meeting the beginning point at Cowper Street and Melville Avenue.





FROM SANBORN INSURANCE MAP - 9/1979  
 PALO ALTO, SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CA.

JUL 1 1980  
 JUL 7 1980