

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

OHP

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).

1. Name of Property

historic name Howell House other names/site number Leighton House

2. Location

street & number 103 West Eighth Street city, town Escondido state California code CA county San Diego code 073 zip code 90225

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public and building/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: [Signature] Date: 10/13/92 California Office of Historic Preservation

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] 11/20/92 Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIANQueen AnneSecond EmpireEastlake

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETEwalls WOOD/shingleWOOD/weatherboardroof WOOD/shingleother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Sitting high on a hill with views of the valley below, this well preserved, 1887, wood and shingle Victorian house is one of the most important structures in establishing the historic setting of the neighborhood. The design combines Queen Anne, Eastlake and Second Empire details including a mansard roof, which is unique in Escondido. A rounded front porch with ornate frieze, tall windows with ornamental moldings, and extravagant combination of wood siding and decorative roof shingles all contribute to the architectural significance of this small, two story house.

The floor plan of the original structure is L-shaped with several shallow bays. The roof of the main section is a tall mansard clad with wood shingles. The center third has rounded shingles creating a decorative band around the mansard. These shingles are used again in various wall dormer gable ends around the house. Shiplap siding, and unusual boxed cornice with curved continuous bracket support, and tall, narrow windows featuring a shaped lintel with molding accenting the top, all emphasize the 1880s period.

An important feature is a rounded one story entry porch placed in the "L". The porch was planned to provide a view of the valley to the northwest. Opening onto this porch is a corner door in a canted wall and two windows. All are configured with trim to match those of the rest of the house. Above the porch roof is a small dormer set into the corner. It is on the same plane as the door wall below and so accentuates the entry. The porch is heavily ornamented with a saw tooth barge board, turned posts, and wood balustrade with square balusters interspaced with "S" shaped sawn decorations. The exposed roof rafters radiate from the canted corner wall. A steep wooden flared stair with rails matching the porch balustrade lead to the wooden porch.

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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1887

Significant Dates

1887

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

103 West Eighth Avenue built in 1887 is one of Escondido's oldest houses. The architecture is Victorian with Eastlake and Second Empire details and has the only mansard roof remaining in Escondido. The house has been owned by several prominent Escondidians.

The property was originally owned by the Escondido Land and Town Company and was purchased by Henry Martin Voorhees, minister of The First Congregational Church. Voorhees lived here from 1893 to 1895.

In about 1905 William Hutchins, an inspector of Chinese workers for the U.S. Customs office, purchased the property.

After Hutchins ownership, the house was vacant and an Escondido legend came into being when people thought the house was haunted, for people claimed they heard things when they went by the outside.

In the late 1940s Zora Howell purchased the property. She was the widow of Gordon Howell. Mr. Howell was part of a pioneer Escondido family and a school trustee for many years. He also owned a hay, grain, and feed store with his brother Dean. Dean Howell was a trustee (city council member) of Escondido and a member of the Board of Supervisors of San Diego County. Melville Howell, Gordon and Dean's father, owned the Howell Heights Citrus Nursery and they all lived in Howell Heights, a hill just west of the depot. When Mr. Howell died suddenly in 1942, the family business was sold and Mrs. Howell moved into the city. Zora Howell, housewife and mother, looked for an occupation that would support her family. She purchased the M. C. King Jewelry Store on Grand Avenue in 1945 and retired twelve years later at the age of sixty-six.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

City of Escondido Historic
Resources Inventory 1983/1990

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	1
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4	9	2	9	0	0
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3	6	6	3	8	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

A 7,000 sq. ft. lot, block 193, lot 01, City of Escondido

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This building is located on the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judy Wright, AEGIS for
organization City of Escondido date October 30, 1991
street & number 111 Spring Street telephone (714) 621-1207
city or town Claremont state CA zip code 91711

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A one story, three-sided bay with canted sides in the north facade to the left of the porch has a shed roof with scalloped shingles and flat roof top with molding trim. In the bay are four one-over-one tall, windows accentuated by flat board trim and a sill with scalloped decorations below. Above the bay is a wall dormer cut into the mansard roof with a pair of two-over-one windows with decorative molding trim. The top sash is above the eave and the bottom sash below. This theme is repeated at various points around the house. Where there is no bay below but a wall window instead, the line of the dormer is continued down the wall by board trim. On the west wall this theme is carried out with a pair of windows above and below rather than single windows. In all cases the dormers have scalloped shingles and the windows maintain the same molding trim and scallop design under the sill.

On the south corner of the east facade, is a two story shallow salient with a gable wall dormer on the second story. A canted wall on the northeast corner of the first story creates a protective hood over a stained glass window with transom where, according to the current owner, originally there was a narrow door. In the wall of the salient is a multi-paned French door replacing the original window.

Two roof dormers at the back (south) side depart from the style of the others and have low pitched gables and two-over-two windows above the eave. Extending from this facade is a one story wing with combination gable and shed roof. Part of this wing was originally an open porch which has been enclosed. This alteration appears to have been done at an early date.

The house retains its original integrity except for the minor alterations of the French door, stained glass window, and back porch enclosure.

The grounds are landscaped with large Pepper trees and lawn with rock retaining walls in the front and large Olive and Juniper trees, boulders and natural ground cover in the back.

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Zora Howell was a native of Missouri. In 1909, when she was eighteen she came to California to visit cousins in Colton. They also happened to be cousins of Gordon Howell. Three years later they were married and she moved to Escondido. For many years they were active together in church work and in the community. Mrs. Howell lived in the house until her death in 1973.

The Howell House is also significant because of its architecture and setting.

Sitting at the top of a hill, The Howell House is sited on the southeast position of the hill taking full advantage of the triangular shape of the front yard. The house is one of the finest in Escondido. It is the only remaining Victorian house with Second Empire influence in Escondido complete with mansard roof and Queen Anne porch and Eastlake detailing. The mansard roof has two slopes with the lower slope steeper than the upper one. Features that emphasize the 1880s period are tall narrow windows accented with crown molding and a square bay window on the north side, topped by a dormer cut into the mansard roof.

The circular porch is one of the most unusual features of the house. A rather plain balustrade is interrupted by sawn ornamental millwork pieces that are repeated as brackets on the top of the porch. This millwork is repeated on the interior stairway.

Built at the height of the California Victorian house era, this house, although smaller, has some of the same characteristics as the William McKendrie Carson mansion in Eureka, California. Carson, who was the owner of California redwood forests, used every kind of wood in the house and hundreds of carpenters and woodworkers worked on the ornamentation and details of this mansion. Undoubtedly this house with its second empire tower with mansard roof, Queen Anne roofs and towers, and Eastlake trim was a model for many other houses in California.

The Second Empire Period of architecture started about 1855 and was more influential than any other style from 1860-1875. The hallmark of the style is the mansard roof. Second Empire did not remain pure for very long. After 1875 it was often used with Italiante, Carpenter Gothic, and Queen Anne.

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The Queen Anne Victorian is the culmination of all Victorian styles. The Queen Anne Style borrowed many of its details from Islamic styles (Moorish or Turkish), with exotic results. Cusped arches, onion-shaped domes and circular open kiosks are regularly found in Queen Anne buildings. Other exotic features, such as the oval and partial or full circular openings, were taken from the Orient.

Although it was popular for only twenty years, the impact of the Queen Anne Style on the American house-building scene was enormous: The rapid growth of the economy during the period of popularity resulted in the erection of hundreds of thousands of Queen Anne houses. The style represented a reaction to High Victorian "reality" and renewed interest in the picturesque.

The first floor plan became much more open, allowing light and air into the rooms from all directions. Huge sliding doors opened up the rooms to each other, creating one large space, or smaller private rooms. This was made possible with the introduction of central heating. There was rarely more than one bathroom in the Queen Anne house. Even in 1880 indoor toilets were considered a luxury.

Queen Anne houses, with every conceivable type of trim, were built in towns across America during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. There were practically no regional differences, because house designs were chosen from widely circulated pattern books. These pattern books, along with house plans, often gave plans for landscaping, interior design, and furniture style, allowing little for the imagination.

The Eastlake Style was simply a decorative style of ornamentation found on houses of various other Victorian styles, primarily the Queen Anne and Stick Styles. It is named after Charles L. Eastlake, an English architect who wrote Hints on Household Taste, published in 1868. The book was reprinted in America in 1872 and became so popular that it required six editions within eleven years.

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In his book, Eastlake promotes a peculiar kind of furniture and interior decoration that was angular, notched and carved, and deliberately opposed to the curved shapes of French Baroque Revival Styles such as the Second Empire. Traditionally, furniture makers imitated architectural forms, but Eastlake reversed this process. Eastlake houses had architectural ornamentation that had copied the furniture inside the house.

American housebuilders found their own interpretations of the Eastlake Style, much to the displeasure of Eastlake himself. Porch posts, railings, and balustrades were characterized by a massive, oversized, and robust Eastlake quality; but over the years they became more curvilinear, more Baroque in style. This was a result not only of the independent minds of American architects and builders, but also of the need to have these members machine made - turned on a mechanical lathe.

Builders and architects, influenced by the Queen Anne Style put no limits on the arrangement of forms or the amount of ornamentation on the exterior of the Eastlake house. Many of the pieces of the house had to be ordered by catalog and assembled at the housebuilding site, like a large piece of furniture.

The Howell house is an excellent example of bringing these three 19th century styles together.

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HOWELL HOUSE

103 West Eighth Street

Escondido, California

Photographer - Mary Stoddard, AEGIS

September, 1991

Original Negative - City of Escondido, Planning Department

1. North facade
- 1a. North facade - close up - including bay east facade
- 1b. North facade - window detail
2. Northwest porch facade
- 2a. Northwest porch facade - close up
- 2b. Northwest porch - detail
3. East facade - north end
4. South facade
5. West facade - window detail