

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0680613

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 31 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 20 1978

**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 William R. Thorsen House

RECEIVED
MAY 22 1978

AND/OR COMMON
Sigma Phi Place

CHP

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Piedmont Avenue #2307

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT #8

CITY, TOWN
Berkeley

VICINITY OF

STATE
California

CODE
06

COUNTY
Alameda

CODE
001

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
California Sigma Phi Alumni Association

STREET & NUMBER
2307 Piedmont Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Berkeley

VICINITY OF

STATE
California

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Alameda County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER
1221 Oak Street

CITY, TOWN
Oakland

STATE
California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Berkeley Architectural Heritage Comprehensive Urban Conservation Survey

DATE
in process

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
State Resources Agency Department of Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN
Sacramento

STATE
California

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED moderately and in process of restoration and adaptive use.

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thorsen house exterior is characterized by wood shingle siding weathered to a dark brown. The perimeter foundation is of maroon clinker brick which varies in exposed height from about 12 inches to 5 feet, according to the slope of the lot. The shingled exterior walls are punctuated by heavy timbers which frame the large plate glass windows and door openings, and whose horizontal members extend to structurally arbitrary points giving a cauculated aesthetic sense of elongation to the house. Between the foundation and the siding sit 10"x10" wood sills which extend beyond the house corners to again emphasize elongation.

The moderately pitched asbestos shingle roof has overhanging eaves throughout; these are supported by rafters whose ends extend beyond the eaves another nine inches. The gables have variable overhangs of from 18 to 36 inches.

The north-south leg of the overall L-shaped plan of the house, is a two story segment plus a full basement. The east-west wing is three stories plus a partial basement at the west end. The northwest junction point of the house forms a five-sided bay which is completely glazed at the main level, and defines the floor of the second story porch which is open to the sun.

A similar device is used on the southern-most end of the house, which, at the main level, comes to a simple pointed bay, again defining the porch space above. This porch was once open, but later enclosed with "French doors" and a glass roof by Charles Greene at the request of Mrs. Thorsen. (1927). The glass roof was later replaced by wood.

At the east end of the building is a garage structure attached to the main house by an enclosed porch on the second level, and by a brick and tile open walkway at the main level. The garden facade of the garage structure is distinguished by extensive original trellis work.

The interior of the house is characterized by extensive use of exotic hardwoods, including full Burmese teak panelling on the main level. The first and second level flooring is entirely in oak. Much wall joinery is exposed and executed in a vocabulary of carefully fitted and shaped elements peculiar to the Greens.

The house is substantially in its original form. Major alterations include: 1) Asbestos shingles on the roof replacing wood shingles.(after Berkeley fire of 1923 threatened the neighborhood)

(see continuation sheet)

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Alterations to Thorsen house: (cont'd)

- 2) Enclosure of south porch by Charles Greene (1927).
- 3) Interior alterations made c.1945 to accomodate new owners included bathroom remodeling on three floors, and modification of a second floor bedroom and back hall.
- 4) Porch connecting the second floor with garage structure was enclosed between 1950 and 1960.

All interior and exterior modification was done with great sensitivity to the original design, and is, in most cases, undistinguishable as alteration to the untrained eye.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 1909 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Greene & Greene, Architects.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

California architects Charles and Henry Greene established such significant new directions for residential building following the turn of the century, that their acclaim was immediate within the profession as well as their public following. Such acclaim was restated in years immediately following the second world war as many architects returned to attitudes which related the quality of life to building. In 1952, the Greenses were honored with the presentation of the distinguished "Citation" by the American Institute of Architects. Since that time there has been a rapidly growing succession of studies, articles, books, and, in general, a rising interest in their work. Internationally recognized architectural historian, Reyner Banham, wrote that the Greenses' work has had a greater impact on the American home than had their distinguished colleague, Frank Lloyd Wright.

This fine example of their work, the William R. Thorsen house, by nature of its design and craftsmanship alone, qualifies it as worthy of historical designation. Additionally, it is the only example of Greenses and Greene work in Northern California which demonstrates their fully developed "bungalow style". As one of the six major designs at the peak of their careers, it clearly establishes both the flexibility within the Greenses' articulated design system and within their personal responses.

Distinct differences separate the Thorsen house design from its counterparts in Southern California. The Greenses' response to differences in climate, site conditions, lifestyle and client demands, reflect here the ability to adapt their unique vocabulary at will. The Thorsen design could only have been done in Berkeley; and it is this major statement, and the ongoing preservation and study thereof, which is so important to the full understanding of the architects. Separate from its relation to the architects, the building is an important element in an historically rich region, and provides the opportunity for comparative study of immeasurable value.

This structure will continue to be an inspiration for future generations concerned with the quality of our living environment, and is fully equal to the Gamble House in Southern California which has just been designated a National Landmark.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- "Architectural Record", December, 1913.
- "The Craftsman", August, 1914.
- "The Craftsman", February, 1915.
- "The Craftsman", May, 1915.
- "Architectural Forum", October, 1948.

(see continuation)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .3621
 UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>10</u>	<u>56.519.00</u>	<u>4.19.13.40</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Boundary extends 100.8 ft. south along Piedmont Avenue from the Southeast corner of Piedmont Ave. and Bancroft Way- then East 160.85 ft.- then North 100 ft. to Bancroft Way- then West 149 ft. along Bancroft Way to return to beginning point.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
none			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Edward R. Bosley, III

May 15, 1978.

ORGANIZATION

for the California Sigma Phi Alumni Association

STREET & NUMBER

3931 Sacramento Street

TELEPHONE

415-751-1222

CITY OR TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

California

94118

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

Kenneth Mellon

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7/12/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

<i>Charles W. ...</i>	DATE <u>11-20-78</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: <i>W. Ray Luce</i>	DATE <u>11-17-78</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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"Journal of the American Institute of Architects", September, 1950.

"Los Angeles Times Home Magazine", October 14, 1951.

FIVE CALIFORNIA ARCHITECTS; McCoy, Makinson; Reinhold, 1960.

A GREENE AND GREENE GUIDE; Strand; 1974.

BUILDING WITH NATURE; Freudenheim and Sussman; Peregrine Smith,
1974.

GREENE AND GREENE-ARCHITECTS IN THE RESIDENTIAL STYLE; Current;
Morgan, 1974.

GREENE AND GREENE-ARCHITECTURE AS A FINE ART; Makinson;
Peregrine Smith, 1977.

1864

scale 1 in = 40ft.

W^m R. Thorsen house Bancroft Way

2307

2311

2325

N

Avenue

Piedmont

Waring Street

Channing Way

