

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 680 19 1983

date entered

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

Substantive Review 6/16/83

1. Name

historic MITCHELL RESETAR HOUSE

and/or common *use this* MADISON HOUSE (~~MADISON/RESETAR HOUSE~~)

2. Location

street & number 335 East Lake N/A not for publication

city, town Watsonville N/A vicinity of Congressional District 16

state California code 06 county Santa Cruz code 087

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input 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 Bayer, Cleworth

street & number 730 Mission Street

city, town Santa Cruz N/A vicinity of state California 95060

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Santa Cruz County Courthouse

street & number 701 Ocean Street

city, town Santa Cruz state Calif.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Watsonville Historic Building Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records Watsonville City Hall

city, town Watsonville state California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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 date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sited on a prominent corner location in a mixed residential/commercial neighborhood several blocks northeast of downtown Watsonville, the Mitchell Resetar* house conveys the romantic Mediterranean imagery of its 1920's period revival styling. It is a one story rectangular building with irregular massing of stucco walls, a hipped red Spanish tile roof and Spanish Renaissance details as seen in the recessed arched windows, Salomonica columns and colonettes, rejas, and ornamental iron work. The house has been renovated for office use; aside from the installation of a handicap access ramp on the southwest side, the building is virtually unchanged, retaining a high level of original design integrity.

The southeast elevation is the main facade of the building. It is asymmetrical, divided into a two part composition which reflects the internal room divisions. The main entrance section leading into the living room is on the left. It is dominated by a shallow projecting entrance pavillion with tile roof. The deeply recessed entrance has sculptured Moorish intrados. The doorway is rectangular with a wooden reja screen. The entrance is flanked by deeply recessed round arches containing arched French doors. These lead onto the entrance platform which is reached from the street by a broad flight of brick steps with ornamental wrought iron railings. The railings encircle the entrance terrace; the corners are defined by squared rectangular piers with cast decorative shields and surmounted by ornamental wrought iron light fixtures. To the right of the entrance terrace is a shallow projecting bay with three arched windows separated by salomonica columns which are positioned above a planter box with paterae forming a band of running ornament. The wall terminates in a curving buttress and small pier upon which is placed an ornamental urn.

The northeast side is very simple in treatment and consists primarily of a projecting central section with hipped tile roof extending secondarily from the main roof. This section is flanked by simple rectangular windows covered with wooden rejas.

On the southwest side, two projecting wings enclose a central terrace accessed by two large French doors set in recessed arched openings and separated by salomonica columns. The small terrace connects with a new concrete handicap ramp with ornamental iron railings. The bowed bay on the right is divided into five segments, each containing a tall double hung arched window separated by pipestem colonettes. The tile roof curves over this section in a broad arc. The wing to the left projects in two stages capped by a medium intersecting hipped tile

* To avoid undue publicity, the Resetar family requested that the family name not be associated with public recognition of the building. The name Madison House is adopted from Madison Avenue, the street bounding the property on its southwest side, and is the common name now used in signage on the building.

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roof. The inner section contains a door to the terrace and three double hung rectangular windows set within a common molding and facing the street. The outer section of this wing contains two separate rectangular double hung windows positioned over a window box. Corners are defined by attenuated spiral colonnettes.

The rear of the building is simply treated with two shallow projecting bays at the southeast and northeast rear corners. Each unit contains a simple rectangular block of 3 windows. The slightly recessed center portion also contains a simple block of 3 rectangular windows and a slightly recessed rectangular wooden and glass-paned door leading down into the basement area.

Notable interior features include a living room ceiling of raised plaster ribbing in a quatrefoil pattern with square bosses at points of intersection. The dining room ceiling is also noteworthy for its intricate cornice with leaf and dart molding. The breakfast room ceiling is delicately highlighted by a handpainted ceiling border design of muted gold, brown and green tones with intertwining grapevines in each corner. The original green, pink and white patterned wallpaper in the dining room and the original sculptured green wool rug in the living room have been cleaned and restored to their original condition. The original cabinetry and molding have also been cleaned, restored and retained throughout the building.

The building is in excellent condition. The dimensions are (L) 52'8", (W) 61'5", the total floor space is 3,260 square feet and total lot size is 13,192 square feet. The building was recently renovated for use as offices. Aside from the installation of the handicap access ramp on the southwest side, the renovation has preserved and retained all important interior and exterior architectural details.

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Weeks' work in the Bay Area preoccupied most of his time and that of his offices; his staff at one point included over 30 employees. The volume of work in Santa Cruz County diminished considerably after 1915. The Mitchell Resetar House is significant as the last residence he designed in Watsonville, and represents the later work of his career. Weeks was a master of eclecticism and adapted readily to the prevailing stylistic modes of the time. This commission, drawing heavily upon Spanish Renaissance elements, shows his skill in working in the popular Spanish Colonial Revival of the 1920's.

The buildings of Watsonville were the subject of a comprehensive architectural survey completed in 1976 by Professor Kenneth Cardwell of the University of California, Berkeley, College of Environmental Design. Of the 4671 buildings surveyed in the community only 12 representing the Spanish/Mediterranean design tradition appeared in the final inventory. These buildings included commercial, institutional and residential structures; viewed in the comparative framework the Mitchell Resetar house is one of the finest examples of its type and period in the community and is Watsonville's most outstanding residential example. The building is especially notable for the high quality of its design; Professor Cardwell further elaborated upon this aspect of the building's significance:

"The Mitchell Resetar house is an excellent example of eclectic cottage design in the Spanish or Mediterranean mode...(T)he popular Mission style... changed to one based on prototypes much richer in ornamental detail than that of the simple Spanish Colonial architecture of California... (A)rchitects began enriching their designs with ornamental details copied after examples found in countries forming the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Large and extensive residences with elaborate eclectic ornament were built and builders using these large houses as examples, sometimes created cottages over-burdened with copied details.

"The excellence of the Resetar house is the sensitivity shown by its designer in the achievement of a strong Mediterranean image with a selective choice in a limited number of functional details. He used the rhythmical device of arched openings, smooth plaster surfaces and tiled roof planes to set his basic theme. The small accents of Solomonic columns, a reja or grille of turned woodwork and lightly ornamented hoppers of the rainwater leaders embellish the thoughtful design. The siting of the house is well designed and even the creation of a broad entrance terrace and urn ornamented garden wall give verisimilitude to Latin ancestors in a well-scaled manner.

"In addition Watsonville is unusually rich in the number of modest residences which are excellent examples of the style of each succeeding decade since the 1860's. The Mitchell Resetar and the Mary Resetar house a block to the west are the best remaining examples of the style of their decade in the community, and by that

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contribute to Watsonville's unusually complete panorama of the changes in architectural styles. It was for these architectural reasons that the survey team of 1976 recommended this house as eligible for consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places."¹

The house, completed in 1926, was commissioned by Mitchell Resetar, a member of an immigrant Yugoslavian family who rose to prominence in the agricultural and commercial development of the Pajaro Valley during the early twentieth century. He was one of three brothers (Michael, Mitchell, and Louis) who immigrated to Watsonville from the Dalmatian Coast of Yugoslavia from 1904 to 1907. Eventually the three brothers owned and operated numerous farms and orchards, a packing plant, and several buildings on Main Street, including the Resetar Hotel, the largest hotel in Watsonville. This family was among the first of the prominent native Yugoslavian immigrants that played an important role in the commercial development of early 20th century Watsonville.

¹Letter, Kenneth H. Cardwell to the State Historical Resources Commission, February 25, 1983.

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City of Watsonville Historic Building Inventory (1976), prepared by Dr. Kenneth Cardwell, Dean of Architecture, U. S. Berkeley, and Mrs. Betty Lewis, President, Pajaro Valley Historical Society, Watsonville.

City of Santa Cruz Historical Building Survey (1976) prepared by Charles Hall Page and Associates, San Francisco.

Betty Lewis, Watsonville: Memories that Linger, Fresno, Valley Publishers, 1976.

