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NATIONAL REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Machell-Seaman House
other names/site number Seaman House

2. Location

street & number 2341 Scarff Street N/A not for publication
city, town Los Angeles N/A vicinity
state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90007

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

Kathleen M. Maloney
Signature of certifying official 5-10-88
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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:

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:) _____

Alan S. Byers 6-23-88
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)

Queen Anne
Eastlake

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Wood

roof Fiberglass Shingles

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Machell-Seaman House is an intact two- and one-half story, wood frame Queen Anne style residence located on Scarff Street, directly west of the Chester Place section of South Central Los Angeles. The house's richly ornamented exterior features a wealth of exuberant Victorian architectural detailing. The house is set back far from the street on a narrow lot that is landscaped with citrus, palm, and camphor trees, bamboo, and other typical Southern California plantings. There are no other buildings on the lot. The house retains a high degree of integrity inside and out.

The Machell-Seaman house is located in a neighborhood of single family homes built from the 1880s to the 1920s, interspersed with apartment buildings constructed from the turn-of-the-century to the present. It is on the west side of Scarff Street, a one-block long street that runs between West 23rd Street and West Adams Boulevard. The house is set back 60' from the street on a 50' wide by 180' deep lot with citrus, palm, and camphor trees, bamboo and other plantings typical of Southern California. A picket fence lines the front edge of the lot. A circa 1960 apartment building sits north of the house; to the south is the circa 1918 "Albemarle Apartments".

The house is a two-story, wood frame, asymmetrical and picturesque Queen Anne style residence with detailing and massing characteristic of the style. The exterior is enlivened by a play of surface textures and ornamentation. The first floor of the house is clad in wide lap siding, while narrow clapboard sheathes the upper story. Wood shingles, vertical panelling, stickwork and other ornamental details adorn the gable ends while vertical board skirts the brick foundation. The one-story back wing is clad in vertical tongue and groove siding. The building has an intersecting hipped and multiple gabled roof that has a pyramidal cap at the southeast corner of the facade, creating the effect of a corner tower. A large open entrance hipped roof porch dominates the main facade and wraps around the north side wall. The porch has turned columns with brackets that have incised carving, an Eastlake type balustrade with spindles and cut out square panels, vertical board skirting, and a sunburst pediment marking the double-leaf panelled doors with bevelled glass windows and a colored glass transom. To the south of the front porch is a three-sided corner bay. Adorning the south side wall of the house is a fanciful, small porch which has an archway resembling two horseshoes set end to end, brackets with cut-out scrollwork, spindles, and a pendant. This porch can be reached from the interior stair landing. At the center of both the

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7. Description--continued

north and south side walls are identical first floor rectangular oriel windows, each with paired double hung windows, and a shed roof eave adorned with a sunburst motif along its sides.

The house has tall, narrow double hung windows, many of which retain the original window glass. Some colored and etched glass is found, with colored glass transoms over many of the interior doorways. Many of the windows have the typical Queen Anne pattern of small square panes set around a central expanse of glass in the top half of the double hung sash.

The interior of the house is remarkably intact. The main entrance leads to a hall, with a receiving room and grand stairway to the left (south), and the front parlor to the right (north). Behind (west of) the stairway is a formal dining room, and the kitchen, while the sitting room is located behind the front parlor. The one story service wing at the back of the house accommodates the kitchen, a study, a back porch, and a small wash room. The second floor has four bedrooms (each with a closet), a bathroom, and a separate toilet. The house has a large attic.

Many of the original gas lighting fixtures that were later electrified remain in the house and some of them are suspended from ornate plaster ceiling medallions. Most of the original Eastlake type hardware remains. There are three coal-burning fireplaces remaining on the first floor of the house, each with an enamelled cast iron mantle with marbleized gold stencilled detailing. The mantles were probably shipped in from the Midwest or the East Coast, and are more classical and more restrained than much of the more flamboyant Victorian detailing found through much of the house. The redwood woodwork is typical of the Victorian period--rounded corner blocks, diagonal and horizontal wainscoting, incised carving on brackets, built in cabinets and buffets, paneled doors, and other features. Much of the interior woodwork is unpainted and retains its original finish, and the original pine floor boarding is intact.

The carriage house that originally stood at the southwest corner of the site, along the alley, was severely damaged by fire and was subsequently demolished in 1986.

The house has been carefully restored by the current owners. The original wood shingle roof has been covered by fiberglass shingles that resemble wood shingles, a rear addition has been removed, portions of the porch have been restored, and the new polychromatic paint color scheme highlights the house's exuberant detailing. The central chimney has been rebuilt.

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

Circa 1888

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Machell-Seaman House is architecturally significant as a large Queen Anne style residence built for a middle class family in Los Angeles. The house is remarkably intact on both the interior and exterior. It was built in the late 1880s at the height of a real estate boom in the area that followed the establishment of the nearby University of Southern California, and the expansion of the railroad system in Southern California. The house is typical of Victorian residential construction, and was probably designed and erected in 1888 by a local builder who may have drawn inspiration from a patternbook design and who used stock woodwork, mantels, and hardware, some of it probably shipped to Los Angeles by the railroad, such as the hearth tiles stamped "U.S. Tile Company, Indianapolis, Indiana". Among the relatively few intact exuberant 1880s Victorian houses remaining in Los Angeles, the house is also of significance as one of the first built and oldest remaining residences in the neighborhood around Chester Place and St. James Park in South Central Los Angeles. While the significance of the house is primarily architectural, it is also of interest as the home of several important educators in the early history of Los Angeles.

At the time the house was built it was considered to be in part of "West Los Angeles". It is located in the Ellis Tract which was recorded in 1886 at the request of C. J. Ellis, Dan McFarland, and L. T. Garnsey. Scarff Street appears on an 1888 map of the city, showing that it was 2-1/2 miles from the courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. The area was connected to downtown by streetcar lines in the early 1890s, with lines running along Figueroa, Hoover, and 23rd Street. In the mid-1890s Chester Place, the neighborhood directly east of Scarff Street, was developed by Judge Charles Silent as an exclusive

9. Major Bibliographical References

County of Los Angeles Assessment Records and Deeds.

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: _____

Historic Resources Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	1
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3	8	1	8	9	0
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3	7	6	6	2	5	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

Ellis Tract, Lot 93, Parcel 19.
Parcel #5124012019

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the parcel that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Murphy, Architectural Historian

organization _____ date _____

street & number P.O. Box 1615 telephone (818) 398-1770

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90053

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8. Significance--continued

residential park. By that time the area had become recognized as the most fashionable section of the city as wealthy residents moved from Bunker Hill and South Grand Avenue in the heart of the city to West Adams Boulevard, St. James Park and Chester Place.

The original owner and builder and exact construction date of the house are not known for certain, although strong evidence point to William W. Seaman as the original owner, and 1888 as the construction date. According to a L.A. County Tax Assessor's Building Description Blank completed in 1921, the estimated construction date was 1888.

The 1888 Los Angeles City Directory lists W.H.H. Russell, President Security Title Insurance and Abstract Co., as residing on the west side of Scarff Street between Ellis Avenue and Thompson, and by 1891 when house numbers had been assigned on Scarff Street, Russell is listed as living at 2341 Scarff. He may have been the first resident of the house.

In 1892, a deed was recorded in Los Angeles County showing the lot was sold by John Machell and Adelaide C. Machell (not listed in the city directories) to William W. Seaman for \$3,500, and it would seem almost certain that the house had been constructed before this transaction, given the relatively high purchase price at a time when lots in this section were selling for no more than a couple hundred dollars. It may be that the Machells held the mortgage on the property for Seaman up to 1892, with the Machell deed representing a sum to finance one of Mr. Seaman's many oil and real estate ventures. William Seaman (who was the county superintendent of schools until 1893) is listed as living elsewhere in the Los Angeles city directories for 1888, 1891, and 1892, but by 1893 he is listed at 2341 Scarff Street, along with Josephine E. Seaman, a teacher at the State Normal School, and presumably William Seaman's sister. (The State Normal School of Los Angeles opened in 1882 with a principal, two teachers and 61 students. In 1919 it became the southern branch of the University of California, and it eventually was renamed U.C.L.A. Statistics were not located to determine how many women professors there were at the school at the time that Josephine Seaman was an instructor. However, it would seem likely that she was one of the first women professors at the school. Josephine E. Seaman continued to be listed in the city directory as a teacher at the State Normal School until 1920.) William Seaman's wife, Alice Rhodes Seaman, was originally from Rosendale, New York and had moved to Los Angeles and was married to Seaman by 1888. They evidently had two children, George W. Seaman who passed away at an early age, and Josephine Seaman.

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8. Significance--continued

Although the Seamans continued to own the house, by 1896 William Seaman was the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of California where he had his office. He then lived at 1419 O Street in Sacramento. By 1896, the Scarff Street house was the residence of Seaman's successor as Superintendent of Schools, James A. Foshay, and Miss Amelia M. Foshay, a teacher at the Norwood Street School. James Foshay and William Seaman were also both on the board of directors of the Los Angeles-based Banner Oil Company from 1891 through 1894, and both served on the Board of Education of Los Angeles County, in addition to serving succeeding terms as County Superintendent of Schools.

James Foshay lived in the house until the turn-of-the-century (at this address in 1899; not in 1905; intermediate city directories not available). James A. Foshay served as the school superintendent until 1906 when he entered the insurance business. Born in 1856 in Cold Spring, New York, Foshay graduated from the State Normal College in Albany in 1879, was married in 1885 and came to California in 1887, and taught in Monrovia before he was elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Education in 1889. After serving as the president of the Board of Education in 1891-1892 he became the deputy superintendent of schools, and was chosen superintendent in 1895. He was active in various educational associations, and served as a vice-president of the National Educational Association. Foshay was a prominent citizen who was active in the Masons, the Republican party, the Jonathan and University Clubs, and the Temple Baptist Church. He died in Los Angeles in 1914, according to one source, and in 1915 according to another.

For several years the occupants of the house are not known, although the 1905 reverse city directory lists Harry V. Carter, president of the Pacific Electrical Works, at this address. By 1910, and for many years thereafter, the Seamans again lived at 2341 Scarff Street. William W. Seaman's occupation was not listed in the 1910 city directory but was listed in 1908 as "real estate" and beginning in 1915 as "clerk" and "clerk, city auditor". By 1910, Alice R Seaman (William Seaman's wife) was also listed as an owner.

By 1924, Alice and William Seaman's daughter, Josephine, is listed in the city directories as residing in the house with her parents. Her name was listed as "Josephine Roberts (Mrs.)". She was a graduate of a Miss Head's School in Berkeley, according to an undated newspaper clipping announcing her marriage. Little is known of her husband, James Albert Roberts, whose name is not listed in city directories as residing at 2341 Scarff Street. Josephine Seaman Roberts apparently survived her parents, her Aunt Josephine Seaman, and her husband Mr. Roberts, and continued to own and live in the house until her

(continued)

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8. Significance--continued

death in the early 1970s. Josephine Seaman was an artist and art teacher who taught at Santa Monica City College. She was also a collector of oriental art and rugs. Following her death the house was sold and rented to students for about five years until it was purchased by the present owners, Jean Frost and Jim Childs, in 1978.

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9. Major Bibliographical References--continued

Draft, North University Park Building Survey prepared for the Cultural Heritage Board, Municipal Arts Department by University of Southern California Graduate Planning Library, January, 1979 (includes an essay by Ruth and Chuck Powell on "Chester Place" written in 1964).

J. M. Guinn. Historical and Biographical Records of Los Angeles and Vicinity. Chicago: Chapman, 1901, p. 761.

Historic Resources Inventory Form prepared by Roger Hatheway, 1981.

Rockewell D. Hunt. California Firsts. San Francisco: Fearon, 1957.

Los Angeles City Directories, scattered volumes, 1880s to 1940s.

Maps and real estate atlases of the City of Los Angeles published in 1888, 1902, 1910, 1921 (at the Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History).

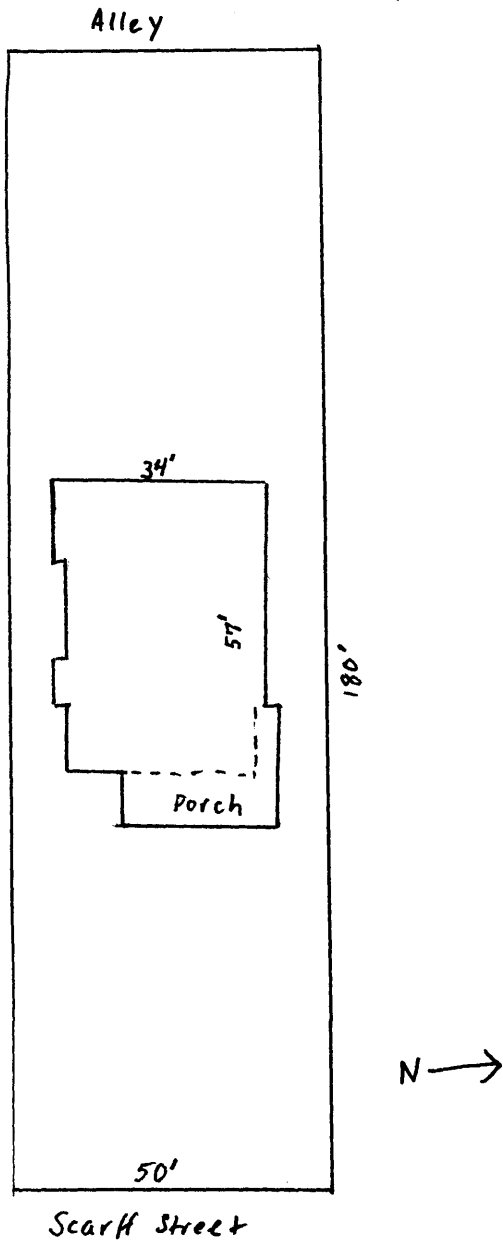
Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark. Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913. New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1926, p. 532, 606, 625, 626.

Seaman family correspondence in possession of the current owners.

William A. Spalding. History and Reminiscences of Los Angeles County. Los Angeles: J. R. Finnell, 1930, v. II, p. 96.

0-5368H

Sketch Map of the Seaman House
2341 Scarff Street, Los Angeles
Los Angeles County, CA



Approximate Scale
1" = 32 feet