

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 29 1978
DATE ENTERED SEP 18 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

Colony House

AND/OR COMMON

Colony House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

137 Strathearn Place

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Simi Valley

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

20

STATE

California

VICINITY OF

CODE

06

COUNTY

Ventura

CODE

111

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Simi Valley Recreation and Park District

STREET & NUMBER

1692 Sycamore Drive

CITY, TOWN

Simi Valley

STATE

California 93065

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of County Recorder, Ventura County

STREET & NUMBER

2387 East Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ventura

STATE

California 93001

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

The California History Plan - Inventory of Historic Features

DATE

1973

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Resources Agency - Department of Parks and Recreation

CITY, TOWN

Sacramento

STATE

California 95811

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1970</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Colony House is a two story framed Victorian structure, with a high gable roof. The exterior siding is flush horizontal boards with vertical battens. The roof trim along the sides has projecting eaves with decorative brackets at each rafter. The trim at the gable ends is extended beyond the wall with facial boards attached at the roof edge. The window and door openings are flat shaped with molded trim around each.

The interior walls of the house are lathed and the lathe was covered with a cheese cloth like cover for applying paint or wallpaper. In 1924 the dwelling changed ownership and was upgraded for renters. The improvements consisted of painting and new wallpaper. Toward the late twenties the owners prepared to move into the house by again refurbishing.

In 1935 the house was modernized by building a new leanto structure at the rear, replacing the old small one which had been added by the original owners. This new leanto contained plumbing, a modern kitchen of the time, a breakfast nook, utility room, bedroom, and a bath. In 1938 the partition between the living room and dining room was removed and the ceiling lowered. When the segments for each house had originally arrived from Chicago for the new Simi Colony, each house consisted of only a rectangular structure. Each dwelling was individualized by adding porches, and additional rooms as needed (usually a leanto for a kitchen). This particular Colony house was the only one to have a large veranda constructed across the front and along one side. A set of French doors was cut through the exterior wall, at the back of the house for additional access onto the veranda.

The only major alteration since the original erection of the house was relocating it in 1970. By this time the dwelling had become out-moded as a place of residence due to its small size, and was threatened with demolition. Destruction had become the fate of all the other houses in the original Simi Colony except one other.

The Colony house was moved from its original site because the owner of the property, the Missionary and Alliance Church, had plans to expand their facilities and add a parking lot (as exists today) in place of the house. The house was originally set in a high density area with small residential lots. The landscape was of typical residential design with foundation planting and bordered by tall eucalyptus trees (none of which remains today). Today the Colony House sits in the Robert P. Strathearn Historical Park along side a row of eucalyptus trees. The dirt drive entering the park site passes at the front entrance to the house reminiscent of the dirt roads of its old neighborhood when it flourished as a residence. Future plans are to recreate a period garden around the structure.

The leanto at the rear of the house was removed during the course of moving since it was the second one added and not a part of the initially purchased structure. Presently the structure sits on a raised concrete foundation for durable support. The second floor rooms are now restored. The old layers of wallpaper have been removed, and separated to match a pattern as closely as possible to a new paper. Before applying any new paper, the walls were finally covered with wall board as was done years ago to the first floor rooms. Other minor alterations, such as

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 2

Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board

Property Administration Agency
3900 Pelican
Oxnard, California 93030

Local Level Historical Lists:

Simi Valley Recreation and Park District
1692 Sycamore Drive
Simi Valley, California 93065

City of Simi Valley
3200 Cochran Street
Simi Valley, California 93065

Simi Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 351
Simi Valley, California 93065

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

the installation of electricity in 1922, were done over the years as the services became available within the community.

No substantial changes have occurred which effect the integrity to the architectural style of the exterior.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input 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 *1888*

BUILDER/ARCHITECT *(Chicago pre-fab)*

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Simi Colony is a unique local historic happening directly related to the land boom of the 1880's in California. Pennsylvania interests had purchased much of this part of the country for oil speculation and some had an abundance of land to subdivide and dispose. Advertising in the East captured the attention of a group of doctors in the Chicago area who saw an opportunity to begin a health resort in what sounded like a bountiful environment. Sight unseen, they purchased lots in a little townsite, which eventually became known as Simiopolis. Along with the sale of lots, the group offered for sale a pre-fabricated Victorian style house popular during the 1880's for Western settlement. The materials for building these houses were all pre-cut and sections partially assembled for ease of construction. It became a matter of merely ordering the structure and having it shipped to the required destination. As a special inducement the company agreed to pay the shipping freight on the first fifteen houses, providing they were ordered before October 1, 1888. The colonists left Chicago on November 8, 1888 for Simi Valley. The pre-fabricated houses were also shipped around that time, and arrived at Saticoy, California at the end of November. They were then hauled by wagon to Simi Valley. The structures were basically alike, but partitions, porches, etc. were a matter for the owner to install for individualizing his home. The "Colony" was short lived when it became apparent that their dream was not feasible, but twelve houses did arrive and formed the nucleus for the little town which was to evolve.

The Colony House was located at Second and Ashland Streets, and served several families as home until it finally became the property of the Missionary and Alliance Church, serving as parsonage for several years. Then in 1970 it was donated to the Simi Valley Historical Society to be moved to the R.P. Strathearn Historical Park. Only two of these houses remain; this one and one occupied by the original owner's family.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cameron, Janet Scott, Simi Grows Up, 1962

Outland, Charles F.; Newspaper Chronology: Simi and Las Posas Rancho - 1870-1900, 1975

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .31

UTM REFERENCES

A 11 334200 5793920
 C

B
 D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting at a point 158 feet south of northwest corner of park property line; thence in a southerly direction, continuing along same property line, 124 feet; thence in an easterly direction 108 feet, thence in a northerly direction 124 feet; thence in a westerly direction to point of beginning.

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Grant T. Burrows, Development Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Simi Valley Recreation and Park District

DATE

March 1, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

1692 Sycamore Drive

TELEPHONE

(805) 526-3260

CITY OR TOWN

Simi Valley

STATE

California 93065

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Knox M. Ellison

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 3/9/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

R. B. Rettig

DATE

9/18/78

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William Lebarich

DATE

9/14/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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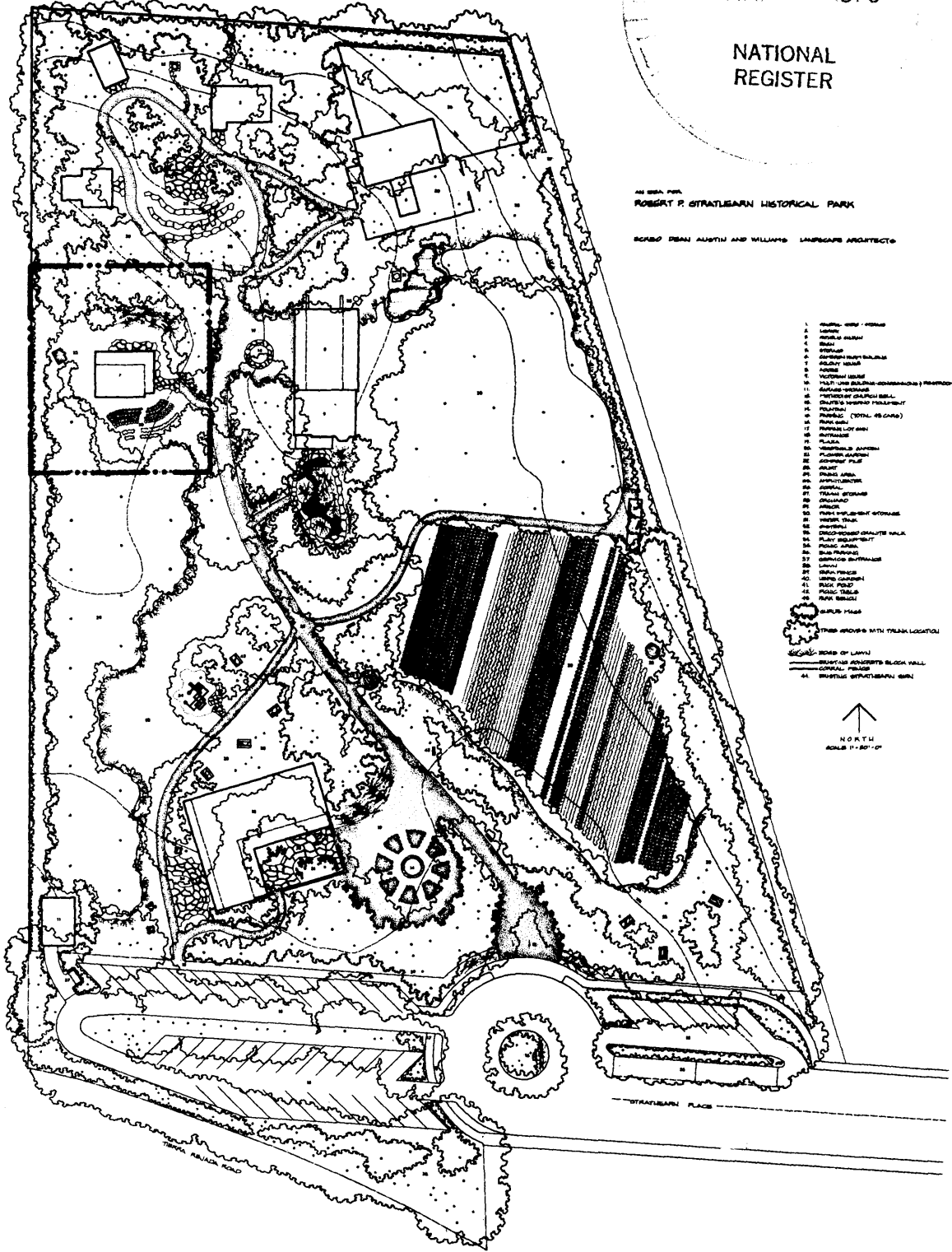
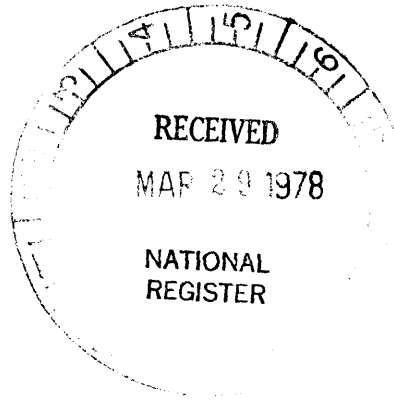
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Simi Valley Historical Society Archives, Strathearn Historical Park, Simi Valley,
California.

BOUNDARY LIMITS



AS SHOWN FROM
 ROBERT F. STRATIGEAN HISTORICAL PARK
 SCAPED BY BRIAN AUSTIN AND WILLIAMS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

- 1. BUILDING WALK / DRIVE
- 2. LAWN
- 3. PAVED WALKWAY
- 4. BRICK
- 5. STONE
- 6. GARDEN WALKWAY
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