

PH 0507792

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE	DATA SHEET	<i>State's Stamp</i>
RECEIVED	NOV 18 1977	SEP 14 1977
DATE ENTERED	APR 4 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

McHenry Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

906 Fifteenth Street

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Modesto

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

15

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

California

CODE

6

COUNTY

Stanislaus

CODE

099

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Modesto

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall - 11th and H Streets

CITY, TOWN

Modesto

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Stanislaus County Court House, Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

800 - 11th Street

CITY, TOWN

Modesto

STATE

California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California
by David Gebhard, et al

DATE

1973

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

c/o David Gebhard, University Art Galleries,
University of California, Santa Barbara, CA

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Published by Peregrine Smith, Inc., Santa Barbara, CA

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McHenry Mansion has undergone extensive changes to its original grounds and to its exterior and interior appearance as the result of efforts by subsequent owners to make the house a profit-making concern. This has meant the selling off of most of the grounds over a period of years, and the conversion of the house into fifteen apartments in the 1920's.

Originally, the grounds occupied almost the entire half of the block and were defined by the alley bisecting the block (and parallel to 15th Street) and the property line of a small house on the corner of J and 15th Streets. In the corner furthest from the house, and adjoining the alley, was the barn. A driveway connected this one and one-half story structure with 15th Street. Between the barn and the house was a grove of orange trees. Other buildings on the property were a woodshed near the barn and a child's playhouse. A solid wooden fence bordered the alley while an elaborate wooden fence paralleled 15th and I Streets. Walkways surrounded the house and numerous plants, including palms, filled the yard. Today, the area once occupied by the barn and the orange grove is now the site of a professional building and an asphalt parking lot. The parking lot comes to within twenty-five feet of the house. At the back of the house, and adjacent to the alley, is a series of eight interconnecting garages, some of stucco and others of cement block construction, which were built for the apartment tenants. Restoration plans call for the demolition of these garages and the landscaping of the remaining property to a late nineteenth century setting. A few orange trees will be planted to suggest the beginning of the once extensive orange grove. The wooden fence at the back of the property will be reconstructed and a fence will once again grace the property in front of and along the sides of the mansion.

The mansion is of wood frame construction, two stories high, with full basement and attic, and originally of a symmetrical plan with projecting side bays and porches. (Presently, sun porches protrude on top of the first floor porches on the front and side of the structure. These porches were added at the time the house was converted into apartments.) The weather boarding is 1 x 9 V-groove rustic. The body of the house is painted gray/green; the trim, cream; and the sash, black. The overall plan dimensions are 54 feet by 80 feet. The first floor level is approximately 5½ feet above the ground. A prominent classic cornice supported by deep brackets the full depth of the panelled frieze is at the roof line. The house is crowned by an octagonal cupola whose roof tapers to a square. Atop this is ornamental ironwork matching the widow's walk that surmounts the principal roof. From the center of the cupola roof rises a stag weathervane.

The 9 foot 9 inch wide main entrance stairs consist of eleven risers terminating at an orante porch. Originally the porch extended across the entire front of the house, but now each side of the porch is enclosed to accommodate a kitchenette and bath for what were once two front apartments. To do this, the corner columns and railing were removed and the inner porch facade moved out to the front of the porch. Originally, ten slender columns, each 6½ inches in diameter and 6 feet 11 inches high, including circular capitals, supported the porch cornice and roof. The columns rest on railing high pedestals and have heavily molded column extensions and ornamental knee braces that support the cornice. All that remain are two sets of triple columns on either side of the entrance stairs.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

Local History

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Situated near the heart of downtown Modesto is a handsome Victorian Italianate structure which was once the home of a prominent ranching and banking family in the San Joaquin Valley, the McHenry family.

This house was built in 1883 for Robert McHenry as his house in town. McHenry was a self-made man. Born in Vermont, he moved around frequently before settling in Modesto: Initially, he lived in New York State for a few years before he headed for Louisiana where he managed a plantation. During the Mexican War, he came to California via the Isthmus of Panama. In 1849, he established a draying business in Stockton. Later that year, he spent six months mining at Chinese Camp. When he returned, he purchased the property which he would develop into the Bald Eagle Ranch. Under his business acumen, the ranch expanded from 2,640 acres to over 4,000 acres. In 1878, he became the cashier of the Modesto Bank, and later, President of the First National Bank of Modesto. As befitted his increasing stature in the community, McHenry had a house built in town on land purchased in 1880 from Charles Crocker.

Robert McHenry also was civic minded. In 1856, he was elected a member of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, and in the same year, helped organize the first school district. McHenry was instrumental in the formation of the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts in 1887, and was elected the first President of the Modesto Irrigation District's Board of Directors.

After the death of Robert McHenry and his wife; their only son, Oramil McHenry, moved into the house. Oramil greatly expanded the family fortune. At the time of his death in 1906, he owned the controlling interest in the First National Bank of Modesto, the Turlock Bank, the Modesto Bank and G. P. Schafer and Company (at one time the leading department store in the Valley). The O. McHenry Packing Company, which had a capital stock of one million dollars, was another one of his businesses. He invested heavily in the Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts. One of his bequests was the money and land for the public library.

The house was inhabited by the family until 1920 when it was converted into a sanatorium and then into apartments. It has remained as apartments until its present acquisition in 1976, for restoration.

The house is the finest example of the Italianate style of architecture in Modesto. Nothing was compromised when it was built: not in the quality of materials, not in integrity of design, and not in the craftsmanship. As such, the house is recognized by all in the community. It serves as a symbol of Modesto's past history and is a fitting monument to the hard work and dedication of the early settlers to make the San Joaquin Valley one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Guinn, J.M. History of the State of California and Biographical Record of the San Joaquin Valley, California. Chicago: The Chapman Publishing Co., 1905.

Tinkham, George H. History of Stanislaus County, California with Biographical Sketches. Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1921.

Stanislaus County Evening News - Stanislaus County Weekly News.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .68 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 0	6 7 7 0 0 0	0 3 0 4 1 6 7 9 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is rectangular. The southeast side of the property is bounded by 15th Street. The Northeast side of the property is bounded by I Street. The northwest side of the property is bounded by an alley 150 feet from 15th Street. The southwest side of the property is bounded by a parking lot 200 feet from I Street.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Wayne A. Mathes, Restoration Director

ORGANIZATION

City of Modesto Parks and Recreation Department - City Hall

DATE

August 26, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

801 - 11th Street

TELEPHONE

524-4011

CITY OR TOWN

Modesto

STATE

California 95353

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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

K. Mathes

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE November 11, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Mathes

DATE

2/4/78

ATTEST: *Walter Cole*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3.16.78

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The entrance doorway is recessed; two niches, each 7 feet 4 inches high with marble bases, face each other from either side. The threshold is composed of a diamond and octagon pattern of black and white marble. Originally, this entire entryway was grained to simulate oak panelling. The double doors, each 2 feet 6 inches wide, and 8 feet 4½ inches high, still retain their original hardware. Above these doors is a rectangular transom light. The windows at the first story are 8 feet 4½ inches high, double hung, single light, with segmental heads. The window heads on the second story are similar to those on the first story. On the front portions of the building, the exterior window casings of the first and second floor are tied together by a prominent architrave. An ornamental keystone graces the second story window trim. Directly opposite each other on either side of the house are two two-story bays. Presently, the roof line above these has been cut to form balconies for the attic apartment, several dormers have been added. On the right side of the structure, as we face the front of the house, is a porch in the neoclassical style. This was built around the turn of the century in place of the original porch. It is capped with three sun porches that date from the 1930's. French doors and windows with diagonal mullions were also added during the time of the porch renovation.

The restoration plan will return the house to its appearance when it was built since the later additions and changes detract from its architectural character. When the changes were made, the contractors were surprisingly sensitive to the original elements of the house and retained them wherever possible. The front and side porches, however, will have to be reconstructed as shown in photographs of the period. The dormers on the roof will be removed, the balconies filled in, and wooden shingles will again be used.

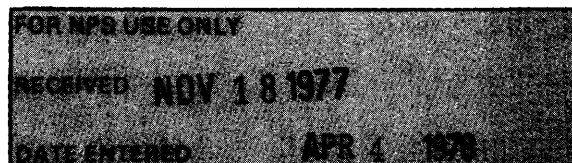
The entrance door opens into a front hallway 9 feet wide and 19½ feet deep. The principal stairway rises to the left at the far end of this hallway. Preceding this stairwell is a room that was used at various times as an office, bedroom or sewing room. Across the hall was the front parlor with the back parlor directly behind it. The back parlor could be entered from the front parlor through a large double doorway or from the end of the main hall next to the stairway through an archway. The library beyond the stairwell was entered from the back parlor through a large double doorway.

Behind the back parlor was a back hallway which connected with an exterior side door. This hallway in turn connected with a central back hallway approximately four feet wide. At its end rose the back stairway to the second and attic floors. Off of this central back hall and behind the library was a bathroom and the kitchen. The dining room was behind the back side hallway. All rooms except the kitchen and bathroom had fireplaces at one time.

The second floor had seven principal rooms; one sitting room and six bedrooms. There was one bathroom.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

The ceiling height of the first story is 13 feet, and that of the second story 12 feet 3 inches. The principal rooms on the first and second floors have run plaster ceiling cornices and ornamental plaster ceiling rosettes. Recessed shutter boxes are found in front principle rooms on the first and second floors. Although all woodwork is now painted, originally the woodwork was grained to look like oak. The doors were similarly grained. The stair railing and balusters and the handsome newel post are walnut.

In 1920, the house was extensively altered to form fifteen studio apartments. Doorways were closed in, others were opened up, and a hallway was added in the back parlor to connect the main hall with the back hall. As mentioned earlier, the front porch became kitchens and baths as did one of the bedrooms upstairs. No major structural changes were made so that it will be possible to return the house to its former appearance by simply opening up plastered-in doorways and filling others in. Once this is done, the house will once again achieve its former spaciousness. Very little remains of its original decor, so the restoration will be based on research of similar houses of the period.

When the restoration is completed, some rooms will be restored for viewing only; others will be used for receptions, recitals, poetry readings, catered dinners and educational activities. It is the intent of the City of Modesto to make the mansion available for the enjoyment of all.