

HAROLD V. LEE HOUSE
3205 Olive Street
(Moved from 8540 Troy Street)
Lemon Grove
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-437

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
Pacific West Region
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HAROLD V. LEE HOUSE

HABS No. CA-437

- Location:** 3205 Olive Street
(Moved from 8540 Troy Street)
Lemon Grove, CA 91945

Latitude: 32°44'24.30" N
Longitude: 117°01'54.93" W
- Present Owner:** Lemon Grove Historical Society
- Present Use:** Residence until 1997
Lemon Grove Historical Society Cultural Center since 2002
- Significance:** The Harold V. Lee House illustrates the trend among residents of San Diego in the 1920s to establish residences in the nearby countryside, a phenomenon associated with the rising popularity of the automobile. It is also an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style.
- Historians:** Margo Nayyar, Historian
California Department of Transportation
Cultural Studies Office, Division of Environmental Analysis
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
- Project Information:** The Harold V. Lee House recordation was completed as one of the mitigation measures for the State Route 54/125 improvement project (Caltrans #11-SD-54/125-PM 5.3/6.7 and 11.2/R15.6), and was prepared as stipulated in the Memorandum of Agreement submitted to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, in February 1994. Photographs were taken by Don Tateishi in April 1996. The Harold V. Lee House was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places on November 3, 1992 under Criterion C for its Tudor Revival architecture.
- Date:** January 2014

Part I. Historical Information

A. Physical History

- 1. Date of erection:** 1928
- 2. Architect:** Frederick Chapman Clemeshaw

Frederic Chapman Clemeshaw was born August 3, 1876 in Preston, Lancashire, England. As a young man he spent several years managing a tea plantation in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) with his brother Theodore. The two moved to Argentina in 1900 to engage in the cattle business, and later they moved to Canada. Chapman served as an officer in the Canadian armed forces during World War I.

Clemeshaw briefly lived in Regina, Saskatchewan where he was a member of the Theosophical community. It was here that he met cabinetmaker and builder George Simpson, also a Theosophist. The two were distantly related by marriage. Clemeshaw relocated to the San Diego area in the 1920s, maintaining association with the Theosophical community and the large Canadian colony in Ocean Beach and the La Jolla area.

Projects in his Canadian years included work on the Province of Manitoba capitol building at Winnipeg and design of the Memorial for Canadian Dead in Ypres, Belgium.

According to a letter at the San Diego Historical Society, during most of the 1920s Clemeshaw worked for a San Diego architect named Quayle¹, and then for an architect named Wheeler.² Projects while associated with Quayle included the Russ High School Auditorium and Glen Abbey cemetery chapel. While with Wheeler he was associated with projects at San Diego State College. Other known works include the Bank of Italy building at Ocean Beach. Clemeshaw did a large amount of residential work in the San Diego area. His English heritage likely influenced his predominately Tudor Revival style in residential architecture.³

¹ Written in: Randall Robertson, Letter to Sylvia Arden, San Diego Historical Society, October 30, 1987. Held by San Diego Historical Society. Robertson is likely referring to the Quayle Brothers, an architectural firm run by Charles and Edward Quayle between 1906-1940. For more information on the Quayle Brothers see: Historical Resources Board, "Biographies of Established Masters," Historical Resources Board: San Diego, 2011, <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/historical/pdf/201109biographies.pdf>.

² Written in: Randall Robertson, Letter to Sylvia Arden, San Diego Historical Society, October 30, 1987. Held by San Diego Historical Society. Robertson is likely referring to William Wheeler, a master architect. For more information regarding William Wheeler see: Historical Resources Board, "Biographies of Established Masters," Historical Resources Board: San Diego, 2011, <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/historical/pdf/201109biographies.pdf>.

³ David W. Powers, "Historic Architectural Survey Report for the Route 54/125 Project, Sweetwater Lemon Grove/Spring Valley, near San Diego, San Diego County, California," (Dames & Moore, Inc.: San Diego, March 1992), 3-4.

3. **Original Owner:** Harold Vernon Lee

Harold V. (June 5, 1896 – September 20, 1986) and Eunice Skeel Lee (May 9, 1894 – January 14, 1942) were the original owners of the residence. Harold was born in Ludlow, England and lived in Canada for an unknown amount of time. He became a naturalized United States citizen on November 8, 1920.⁴ According to the 1930 United States Census, he was the owner and manager of a San Diego automobile paint shop.⁵ His business, known as H. V. Lee Co., specialized in painting and varnishing monograms on automobiles.⁶ By 1935, the Lee family had moved to a house on Palm Avenue in Lemon Grove.⁷ It is unclear if they maintained 8540 Troy Street as a secondary residence, or if the house was sold.

George Dorland (October 12, 1917- July, 8 2008) and Wilma Tyson Cremer (November 15, 1917- July 27, 1988)⁸ purchased the house in the early 1950s and lived at the residence until 1997 when the California Department of Transportation purchased the house as part of the Freeway 125 extension project. George was an aerospace engineer and worked at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in 1943. In 1951, he joined Solar Aircraft Co. in San Diego as their manager of research and development. He worked with Solar for more than 25 years. Some of his projects included work on the Saturn and Apollo spacecrafts and “America’s first aircraft gas turbines and afterburners.”⁹

4. **Builder:** George Simpson

Simpson (June 24, 1878 – August 8, 1968) was born in Kirkcaldy, Scotland,¹⁰ and immigrated to Canada where he worked as a carpenter in Saskatchewan before relocating to the San Diego area in 1923. Simpson worked as a cabinetmaker and builder in the San Diego area. Works include his own Tudor Revival-style house at 3055 Crane Street, Lemon Grove (HABS No. CA-436), and the furniture for Barron Long’s yacht.¹¹

⁴ Ancestry.com. *U.S., Naturalization Records - Original Documents, 1795-1972 (World Archives Project)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010; Ancestry.com. *California, Death Index, 1940-1997* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000.

⁵ Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002.

⁶ Hotel del Coronado Garage and Auto Service, *Auto Tours*, (Hotel del Coronado Garage and Auto Service: Coronado Beach California, 1920), 6; Ancestry.com. *U.S. City Directories, 1821-1989 (Beta)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁷ Ancestry.com. *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

⁸ Ancestry.com. *Social Security Death Index* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2011.

⁹ Blanca Gonzalez, “Obituary- George Cremer,” San Diego Union Tribune, July 31, 2008.

¹⁰ Ancestry.com. *California, Death Index, 1940-1997* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000; Ancestry.com. *U.S., Naturalization Records - Original Documents, 1795-1972 (World Archives Project)* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010.

¹¹ Powers, “Historic Architectural Survey Report for the Route 54/125 Project,” 4.

5. Original plans and construction: Prior to the relocation to 3205 Olive Street in Lemon Grove, the house maintained many of its original architectural and construction features with the exception of the 1960s north wing addition. The north wing was added by the Cremer family in the 1960s and was designed and built by contractor John Mortenson for approximately \$5,000.

6. Alterations and additions:

At the same time as the 1960s one-story, north wing addition, the Cremer family also converted the basement garage bays into bedrooms, and upgraded the kitchen and first-story bathroom. They also added a swimming pool east of the house, and a barn located to the north. In 1998 the southeast portion of the house was heavily damaged by arson fire. Two of the original windows and portions of the brick siding were destroyed.

After the house's relocation to 3205 Olive Street, approximately a mile from its original location at 8540 Troy Street, the house underwent numerous alterations during its relocation. Alterations included a new concrete foundation, removal of the 1960s addition and removal of the original garage bays. The swimming pool and barn were demolished.¹²

B. Historical Context¹³

The city of Lemon Grove is an incorporated city in San Diego County, and is located east of San Diego. It was first settled in 1869 and was known for sheep and poultry ranching and vegetable farming. Starting in the early 20th century, the town gained its name due to the shift from husbandry to citrus farming.

The area prospered during the 1880s when large transportation companies such as the Santa Fe Railroad and Southern Pacific Railroad completed their transcontinental rail service to San Diego, allowing easy transportation of trade goods in and out of San Diego County. As transportation improved throughout the San Diego County region, irrigation projects and real estate development boomed. Land developers quickly publicized the area's agricultural potential and salubrious climate, which resulted in rapid population growth. Rail access to Lemon Grove became available in 1889 after the completion of the San Diego, Cuyamaca and Eastern Railroad.¹⁴

¹² Andrew Hope, "Re-evaluation of the H. Lee House: 3205 Olive Street (formerly 8540 Troy Street) Lemon Grove, San Diego County," (California Department of Transportation: Sacramento, August 2004), 2-3.

¹³ This historic context was altered slightly from: David W. Powers, "Historic Architectural Survey Report for the Route 54/125 Project, Sweetwater Lemon Grove/Spring Valley, near San Diego, San Diego County, California." Dames & Moore, Inc.: San Diego, March 1992.

¹⁴ Samuel F. Black, *San Diego County California: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and Achievement*, Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913, 387; Alex Summers ed., *Travel and Transportation in the Far Southwest: Brand Book Number Five*, San Diego: San Diego Corral of the Westerners, 1978, 105-119.

The early 20th century in San Diego County saw a population increase due to three events. First, the completion of the transcontinental highway to San Diego in 1923 provided an easy cross country migration route. Second, San Diego was chosen to host the Panama California Exposition of 1915 which introduced many tourists to the area; and third, World War I military facility devolvement stationed many new servicemen around the county.

The population increase accounted for the improved and expanded road systems around the county, and as road construction increased to outlying farming communities such as Lemon Grove, urban dwellers began relocating to the country.

Improved road construction around San Diego County, and the growing popularity of the automobile made suburban living far from rail and streetcar lines possible. San Diegans began building residences in the nearby countryside, especially wealthier individuals who could afford second homes. The Harold Lee House illustrates this trend.¹⁵

The Harold Lee House was part of the American Country Home Movement of the 1920s, a period when wealthy Americans purchased vacation homes in the countryside. The English Tudor Revival style was known as synonymous with country living, and was popular nationwide. The Lee House was originally located on a hilltop with a view of the countryside. Two Tudor Revivals are located in Lemon Grove, and are built by the same architect Frederick C. Clemeshaw, and builder, George Simpson.

The Great Depression of the 1930s slowed real estate development, but World War II military growth in San Diego County instituted another wave of immigration and consequently, real estate development. Beginning in the 1950s, freeway construction created the opportunity for massive suburban developments, and transportation projects continue to affect the Lemon Grove area. In the late 1990s, the Harold V. Lee House stood in the path of the six-mile extension of State Route 125, and has since been relocated and used as a cultural center for the Lemon Grove Historical Society.

Part II. Architectural Information

A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural Character:** The Harold V. Lee House illustrates the trend among residents of San Diego in the 1920s to establish residences in the nearby countryside, a phenomenon associated with the rising popularity of the automobile. It was originally located on a hilltop overlooking the countryside. The house is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style, a style known for complimenting country living. The house features Tudor Revival-style stucco and half-timber walls, a steep pitch gable roof, original casement windows, and multiple chimneys.

¹⁵ Richard F. Pourade, *The Rising Tide: The History of San Diego 1920-1940*, (San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing Co., 1967), 37-38.

- 2. Condition of Fabric:** The house was in good condition prior to its relocation. The house was fully rehabilitated after its relocation and is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior

- 1. Overall dimensions:** The Lee House is two stories with an L-shaped ground plan and two single garage bays at the basement level.
- 2. Foundation:** The house originally had a brick foundation. After its relocation, the house was placed on a concrete foundation.
- 3. Walls:** Pegged band-sawn vertical wooden members are set into the stucco walls to give the effect of irregular half-timbering. The half-timbering pattern consists primarily of vertical boards, with horizontal boards separating the two floors, diagonal braces at many of the corners.

Dormer walls are clad with wood shingles. An east façade dormer gable is clad with horizontal wood boards.

A decorative quatrefoil pattern is located in the north and south gables of the house.

A low brick wainscot wraps around the base of the house.

A scalloped wood vergeboard hangs over the two-bay garage.

Attic vents are located in the north and south gables.

- 4. Structural system, framing:** The house has wood frame construction.
- 5. Porch:** The east façade porch is recessed at the entry and extends across three quarters of the façade. The porch floor is wood, and brick access staircases are located at the south and north ends of the porch. Parts of the iron railing are missing.
- 6. Chimneys:** A massive exterior, brick chimney with running brick bond is located on the west façade. It has an elongated diamond-pane window, a stepped brick cap, and is crowned with two simple chimney pots.

An interior chimney with running brick bond is located on the roof ridge at the north end of the house; it is connected to the dining room fireplace. It has a stepped brick cap.

During the relocation the chimneys were dismantled; the original bricks were used to rebuild the chimneys at the new location.

- 7. Openings**

- a. **Doors:** The east façade entry door is made of wide wood planks and has original wrought iron hinges and cast iron heraldic knocker. The door was imported from England. The door is wood framed.

A second entry is located on the west façade.

- b. **Windows:** Original fenestration consists of singles, pairs, triplets, and quadruplets of multi-pane steel casement windows set in wooden surrounds detailed to resemble pegged mortise-and-tenon timber.

A multi-pane diamond pattern window is located in the massive west façade chimney. The window has a segmental brick arch and a decorative brick sill.

The original windows located on the original north facade (now an interior wall) were relocated to the 1960s addition at the east side.

8. Roof

- a. **Shape/covering:** The steeply pitched, bellcast, hipped-gable roof is clad in cedar shingles.
- b. **Cornice/ eaves:** The roof has slight eave overhang, closed eaves, and a simple cornice.
- c. **Dormers:** The east façade has a large, hip-roof dormer, and a smaller, gabled wall dormer. There is also a gabled wall dormer on the west side of the house. The dormer walls are clad with wood shingles. The gabled dormers have horizontal wood board cladding in the gables.

C. Description of Interior

- 1. **Floor plans:** The first floor contains the living room, dining room, bathroom, laundry room, kitchen, hallway and family room. The second floor contains the master bedroom, two additional bedrooms, and a bathroom. The basement level contains a two bay garage. The basement was originally divided into a mechanical room on the west side and a two car garage space on the east side. In 1960, the garage space was renovated to two bedrooms; the garage was demolished during the relocation.
- 2. **Stairways:** The stairwell is located at the east entry and displays wood spindle railings and a large newel post. The wood stairs have been carpeted.
- 3. **Flooring:** The original hardwood oak flooring throughout the has been carpeted.

The kitchen contains 1960s non-historic linoleum.

The second story bathroom contains vinyl flooring beneath the carpet area; it may be the original floor material in this room.

4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The living room consists of half-timbered lath, plaster wall, and chamfered ceiling beams. A coffered wood panel wall surrounds the fireplace, and a thick wood mantle is located about the fireplace.

Most of the interior is finished in plaster and imitation half-timbering, in the same manner as the exterior.

The master bedroom has plaster-clad walls and a gabled ceiling with wood crossbeams.

The second floor bedrooms have steeply pitched cathedral ceilings which conform to the underside of the roof structure.

5. Openings

- a. **Doorways and doors:** Heavy wood-paneled doors with original cast iron hardware are located throughout the house.

Doorways are framed with half-timbering.

- b. **Windows:** Original casement windows throughout the house have the original hardware.

There are missing casement windows on the south and west façades of the living room.

Second-story lattice windows are located in the master bedroom in the chimney and at the top of the staircase.

The windows in the garage (now demolished) were replaced in the 1960s in order to provide proper ventilation for the remodeled bedrooms.

6. **Hardware:** All door and window hardware is original to the house. Original medieval-style window curtain hardware is located in the living room.

7. Mechanical equipment

- a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** The fireplace in the living room contains a wood-panel surround, thick wood mantle and a raised brick hearth with tooled copper edging. The living room also contains original mechanical grillwork.

The dining room contains a fireplace with a raised brick hearth and tooled copper edging. Above the fireplace is an arched niche with a mantelet molding.

The master bedroom contains a fireplace with a raised brick hearth and a brick segmental arch.

- b. **Lighting:** The living room contains original wall sconces. The master bedroom has the original 1920s light fixture hanging from the central crossbeam.
- c. **Plumbing:** The first floor bathroom has been heavily remodeled. Only the toilet and mirror appear to be original. The second floor bathroom contains original light fixtures, grilles and toilet.
- 8. **Original furnishings:** An original bookcase is located south of the living room fireplace.

The hallway contains a telephone niche and folding wall chair. The push-button light switches appear to be original.

The laundry room contains the original concrete tube and a laundry chute that is connected to the second floor bathroom.

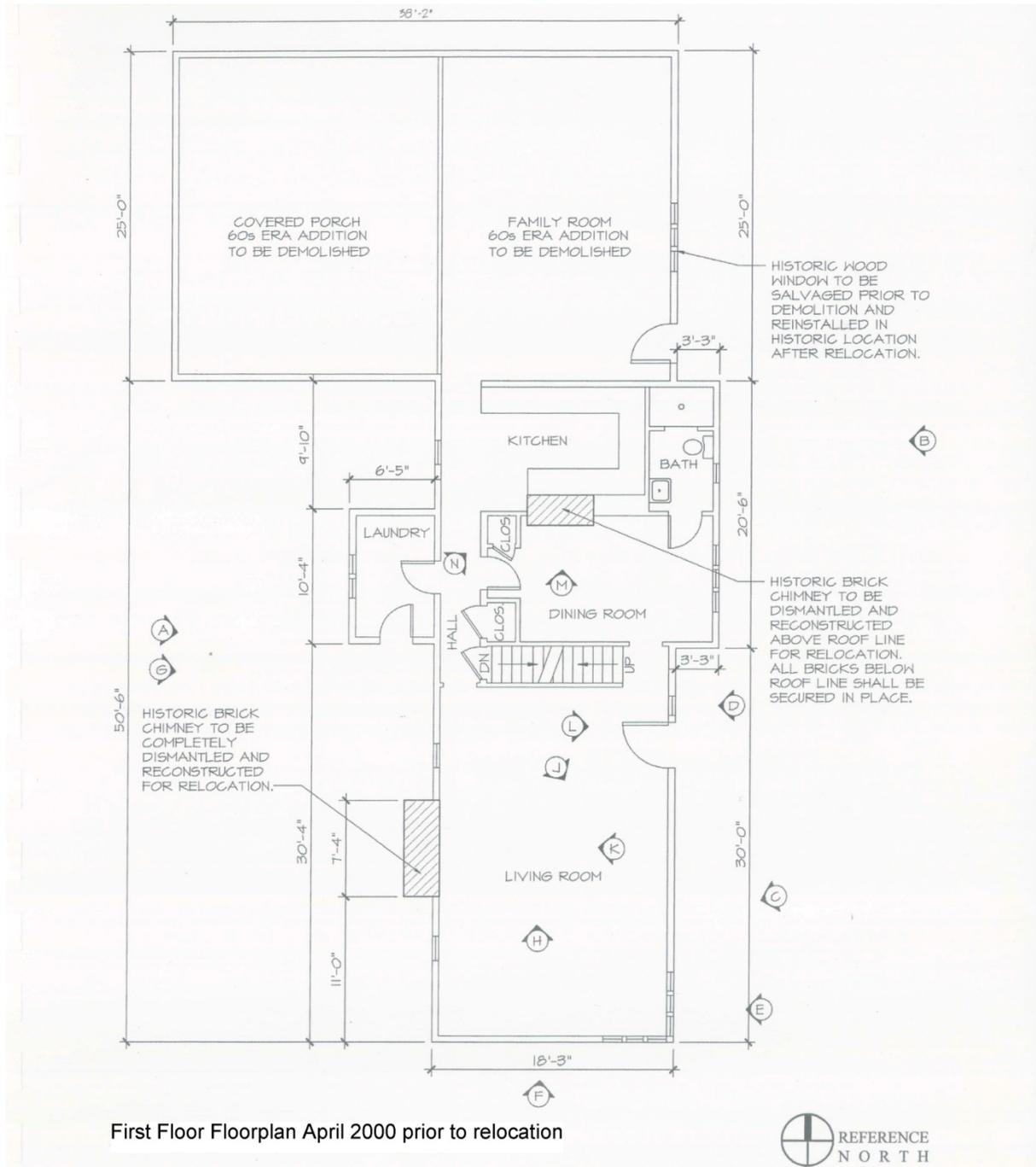
A seven foot, intricately carved wood mirror is located in the master bedroom.

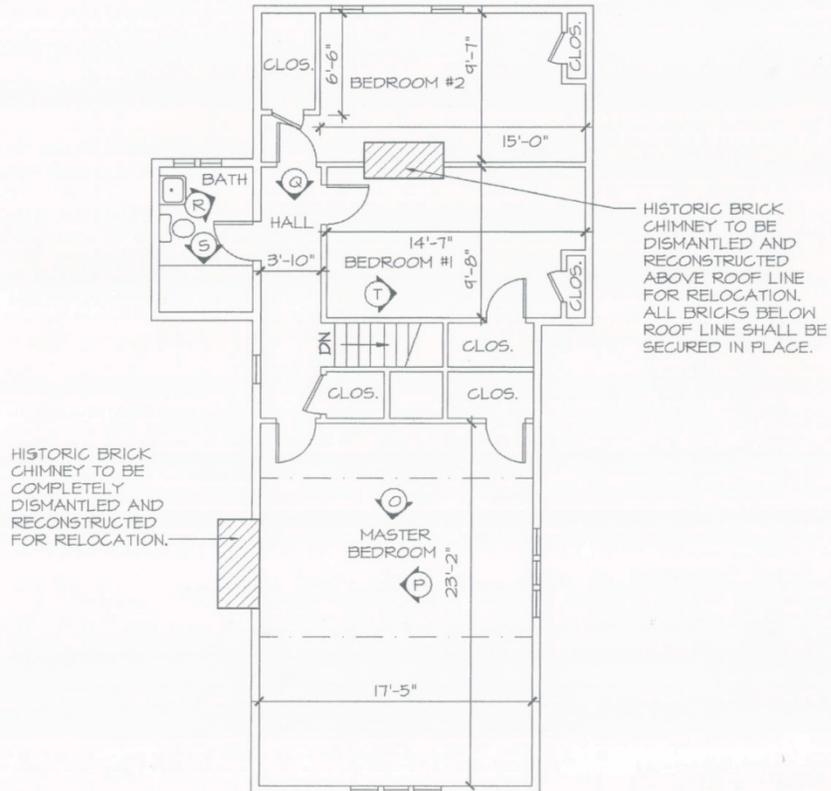
D. Site

- 1. **Historic landscape design:** Originally the house was perched atop a hill set back from the roadway. The house was surrounded by mature shade trees, palm trees, and open grassy fields.

The house was relocated and does not maintain its original historic landscape. It is now located at the entrance to a city park, with the façade facing the park's entry walkway. The front of the house consists of formal walkways and brick planters which form the entrance to the park. The west façade faces Olive Street, and the siting of the house is consistent with the setbacks and spacing of the other residences on the street. A solid, wood fence encloses the rear yard, where a modern gazebo has been constructed.

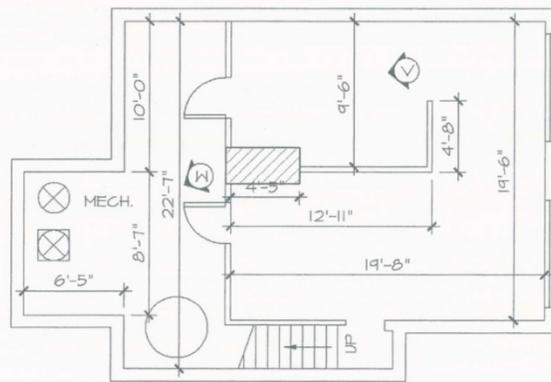
- 2. **Outbuildings:** An old barn was demolished prior to the relocation. It was not considered a historic contributor to the property.





Second Floor Floorplan in April 2000 prior to relocation





HISTORIC BASEMENT / GARAGE
TO BE DEMOLISHED. BASEMENT
WILL NOT BE RECONSTRUCTED AT
NEW SITE.

Basement Floorplan April 2000 prior to relocation



Part III. Sources

- Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002.
- Ancestry.com. *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.
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