



RESIDENCE OF WM. SHIPSEY,
Corner Mill and Essex Streets.

Ser. No. 0063-04R
 HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 4 _____ SHL _____ Loc _____
 UTM: A 10/713000/3907080 B _____
 C _____ D _____

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Shipsey House
2. Historic name: Shipsey House
3. Street or rural address: 1266 Mill Street
 City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 County San Luis Obispo
4. Parcel number: 01-212-20
5. Present Owner: Shipsey, J.E. Address: 1266 Mill
 City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Residential Original use: Residential

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Eastern Stick (Victorian cottage with stick motifs)
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

The dwelling at 1266 Mill is a large two story frame structure with multiple cross-facing gables. Two high pitched gables face front, plus peaked pediment over front porch. One gable has 1/1 double hung window with fixed panes on either side. The other gable has multi-paned casement windows. On the front of the house there are: 1 large three-panel 1/1 double hung window, one fixed window with Queen Anne mullioned multi-panes, one large 3/1 double hung on the porch. Varied siding includes clapboard, fishscale and other decorative shingles. The front facing gable has fishscale shingles plus a sunburst fan at lower corners. Horizontal and vertical stickwork painted in contrasting color is used extensively. The open porch to one side of the front has columns, carved at the top. A high wooden fence runs along the side of the lot on Johnson Avenue.



8. Construction date: ¹⁸⁹⁵
 Estimated 1895 Factual _____
9. Architect Unknown
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
 Frontage 75' Depth 175'
 or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
December 1982

13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good X Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___
14. Alterations: _____
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up ___
Residential X Industrial ___ Commercial ___ Other: _____
16. Threats to site: None known X Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? Yes Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

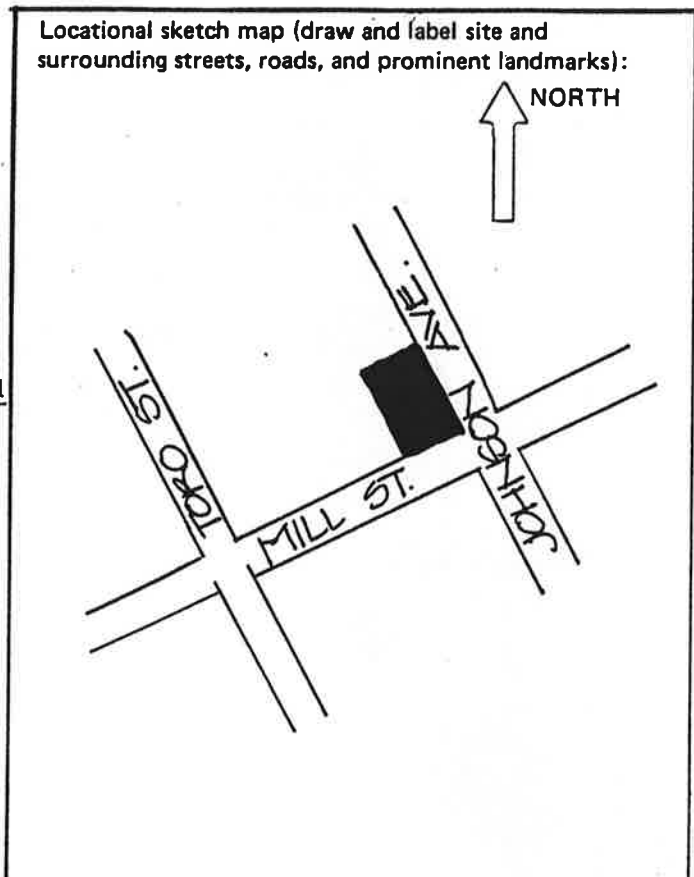
This house, built between 1891 and 1901 is a rare surviving example of a vernacularized Eastern Stick style. Though it was probably carpenter designed, the definite stick work on the porch, the varying treatments of shingle sheathing, Queen Anne mullions, and other decor reveal a decisive picturesque and irregular intent that characterizes the late Victorian era. The hipped roof is almost mansard in its effect and the dormers quite pronounced making this one of the more lively architectural specimens in San Luis Obispo.

The house is likewise historically important because until his death in 1922 it was the home of William Shipsey, an attorney and notary, who had his office in the Andrews Building. Shipsey was mayor of San Luis Obispo from 1898 to 1901, and president of the Public Library in 1912. After his death his wife, Annie, continued to reside in the home until her death, and ownership still remains in the Shipsey family.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
 Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure ___
 Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement ___
 Government 2 Military ___
 Religion ___ Social/Education 3

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
History of San Luis Obispo County and Its Environs by Annie Morrison, 1917.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1891, 1903)

22. Date form prepared JUN 15 1983
 By (name) Historic Res. Survey Staff
 Organization City of San Luis Obispo
 Address: P.O. Box 321
 City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401
 Phone: (805) 541-1000





REVIVING THE SHIPSEY HOUSE

By Sandy Baer

AS OF JUNE 2008, AS recommended by the city's Cultural Heritage Committee and subsequently approved by the City Council designated the Mill Street Historic District near the core of downtown San Luis Obispo, an approximate six-block area roughly bounded by Palm and Mill Streets between Pepper and Johnson Avenue.

Currently there are four distinctive, multi-colored round signs, designed by Pierre Rademaker and a resident of the historic Burch house on Mill Street, strategically placed in the district. The only other city-installed signs designate the Railroad Historic District off Santa Barbara Street.

Fortunately, a number of homeowners in recent years have promulgated resurgence in restoration of these quintessentially unique homes. Throughout the neighborhood, Stick-style homes commingle with turn-of-the-century Victorians and Craftsman bungalows.



"Such an historic designation yields resident pride in the neighborhood and hopefully promotes future restorations of some fine examples of early architecture in the area," Rademaker says. "I see it as a continuation of the trend to preserve the character of the neighborhood with sensitivity to the integrity of the original home."

Most recently, Matt and Joyce Quaglino who purchased the home owned by the Shipsey family for 128 years in January 2008 have restored "The Shipsey House" at 1266 Mill Street. After nearly a year of painstaking research, e-Bay searches and travels to locate as many as possible of the missing or damaged interior and exterior features, as well as a crew of top-notch craftsmen (including the Quaglinos), the restoration of a rare surviving example of a vernacularized Eastern Stick style home is complete.

After more or less gutting the interior in addition to removing add-ons, the house was

completely rewired and re-plumbed as well as reinsulated. The large, all-white kitchen, with its charming bead-boarded breakfast nook, has all new built-in appliances and gray marble countertops. The floors in the kitchen, baths and utility room are easy-care marmoleum vinyl.

Interior touches also include period wallpaper and drapes, antique lighting throughout, even though the original light pull-strings were replaced with brass plates and push buttons.

According to Rademaker, "The roof had to be replaced but we could not use the original cedar shingles but rather chose a code-compliant composite as near in appearance as possible. But the repair or replacement of all of the cedar fish scales and other architectural details were done in cedar, and other repairs were done with redwood. This was not a cheap 'fix-it-upper' – do now what you can then face doing it again in several years. This was a long-term investment for the Quaglinos and a labor of love."

The house is historically significant beyond its turn-of-the-century construction dates, as (Wm.) T. Shipsey bought the corner lot at



The Shipsey House in 1912

brian lawler, educator, singer, photographer, inventor, etc.

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Mill Street and Johnson Avenue to build a new family home for his wife Annie and their four children, William T., Edward, S. J., Marguerite and Helen. Shipsey was Mayor of San Luis Obispo from 1898 – 1902 and the house was built between 1891 and 1902.

According to Shipsey's great grandson, Mike, who was the last of the Shipsey family to live in the house, William and Annie first lived on the south side of Mill and Pepper Streets. "He had Ted Maino, Sr. build three structures – the main house at 1266 Mill Street, a carriage house and a storage building between them.

"At some point the carriage house was moved from the back of the lot and converted into a residence at 777 Johnson Avenue," Mike Shipsey continues. Another Shipsey descendant, Mike's sister Theresa, lives in the remodeled structure.

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Shipsey, born in Cork County Ireland in 1851, was an attorney as well as a notary with an office in the J. P. Andrews building. He served as both mayor and as an assistant District Attorney and for a time was the city's attorney. Additionally, he was on the Board of Trustees of the city's public library in 1912, a prestigious position, according to Allan Ochs, volunteer researcher at the San Luis Obispo County's Historical Museum.

"He was extremely prominent in making arrangements when President William McKinley conducted a cross-country train tour with a stop in San Luis Obispo in 1901. After traveling by horse and buggy from City Hall to what is now Mitchell Park but was then an open pasture, Shipsey made the welcoming speech," Ochs relates from his research. "He also was an early supporter of Cal Poly and served on its Board of Regents."

According to Matt Quaglino, "This has been a unique and rewarding project since the majority of the house was intact from the original construction with few modifications. The interior of the home still had the original gas lighting fixtures, lincrusta dado wall treatments, most wood work, doors and carved brass hardware."

"The two-story frame structure has multiple cross-facing gables. Two high-pitched gables face the front, plus there is a peaked pediment over the front porch," according to the City's 1983 Historic Resources Inventory. Varied siding includes clapboard, fish scale and other decorative shingles. The front-facing gable has fish scale shingles plus a sunburst fan at the lower corners. Horizontal and vertical stick work painted in contrasting color is used extensively."

Rademaker, who assisted with the design of the restoration, says, "We wanted to be as true to the history of the house as possible, so we took layers of paint scrapings to determine as close as possible the original color scheme, resulting in a combination of earth tones – predominantly brown, green and yellow, to be consistent with the original intent."

"The Quaglinos chose the ideal solution, in my opinion. It's a very sensitive restoration of one of the oldest homes in the downtown district. We basically did an 'un-remodel,' as often people do a really bad job of remodeling rather than restoring, largely driven by economics."

Therefore, gone are the fiberglass bathtubs, a dilapidated outside staircase to the upstairs loft as well as other interior "modernized" changes over the years. The original fir wood floors, constructed with round nails, were refurbished as were all of the original brass fixtures and decorative touches, many of which were lovingly brought back to life by Joyce Quaglino. The eight-foot tall doorways and 12-foot ceilings are still intact as is the lincrusta wainscoting.

Jerry Shipsey, himself a retired local attorney and grandson of William T., visited the property frequently during the restoration. "My grandmother and Aunt Helen lived in the home when I was a youngster attending Fremont Grammar School, and I often visited them there," Jerry Shipsey recalls. "I think that the Quaglinos have done an excellent job of renovating the old family home. It wasn't in very good shape when they bought it, and I am delighted with their efforts to bring it back to its original state."

Minor structural adaptations were made to the interior. In what was once Annie Shipsey's pantry for canned goods is now the utility room, but the butler's "pass-through" from the kitchen to the formal dining room is intact. The parlor features a fireplace but according to

Mike Shipsey, it was never a functional fireplace, but was a decorative focal point for the room. After refinishing the mantle, nail holes where family Christmas stockings once hung are still evident.

An upstairs "loft" was largely unfinished even though in later years there was an attempt to create a studio apartment so a bathroom was added as well as the exterior staircase. Mike recalls that his great grandmother often held "socials" there with her women friends and in later years, it was used as a dormitory for World War II soldiers.

The Quaglinos upgraded the bathroom and finished the 1200 square foot space where dormer windows face Mill and Johnson Streets, offering the opportunity for a large fourth bedroom (in addition to the three downstairs), an art studio or any number of other possibilities.

The 3000-square-foot downstairs has three bedrooms as well as two full baths with claw-foot tubs. A new one-car garage, with shop space and a loft, was built to the rear of the property and according to Rademaker, "We repeated the roof pitch of the house and some of the architectural details such as fish scales with the intent of not only befitting the house but also the neighborhood."

Barbara Breska, another Mill Street neighbor as well as chairperson of the Cultural Heritage Committee when the Quaglinos presented their restoration plans, comments, "They have put so much into the property, a cornerstone of our district, and it's an example of an exemplary job of authentic restoration." Jeff Hook, Senior Planner with the City's Community Development Department sums it up, "It is a rarified example of the best of our turn-of-the-century architecture in the core of San Luis Obispo."



Tom Meinhold Photography

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PHOTO OF TOM MEINHOLD TAKEN BY HIS GOOD FRIEND JUDY HOST