

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Ser. No. 0024-04R
HABS _____ HAER _____ NR 4 _____ SHL _____ Loc _____
UTM: A 10/712920/3906080 B _____
C _____ D _____

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Petrick Home
2. Historic name: Thomas Norton Home
3. Street or rural address: 850 Buchon Street
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 County San Luis Obispo
4. Parcel number: 03-537-23
5. Present Owner: Petrick, E.C. and T.M. Address: 850 Buchon Street
City San Luis Obispo Zip 93401 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Residential Original use: Residential

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Wood Frame House
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical description* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

This house sits high on a hill, and is not easily seen from the street, but appears to consist of two rectangles, and one story possibly added to the two story section. The two story portion has a high pitched roof with end gable. Double hung windows are decorated with stickwork at the sides, and are arranged to suggest shutters. A slanting bay projects above the roof of the one story portion. The exterior of the upper floor section is covered with shingles. A one story rectangular portion faces Buchon Street, and has a long and low appearance with multiple windows in each panel and quartered with wood mullions its entire length. The windows inside are covered with wooden shutters, giving a "solarium" feeling. The ground floor portion of both rectangles is covered with shiplap siding. Heavy vegetation and location above the street prevent detailed description. The house is reached by concrete stairs at the corner of the lot. A mortared stone wall borders the entire property on two street sides.



8. Construction date:
Estimated 1906 Factual _____
9. Architect Unknown
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 175' Depth 175'
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
December 1982

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

SIGNIFICANCE

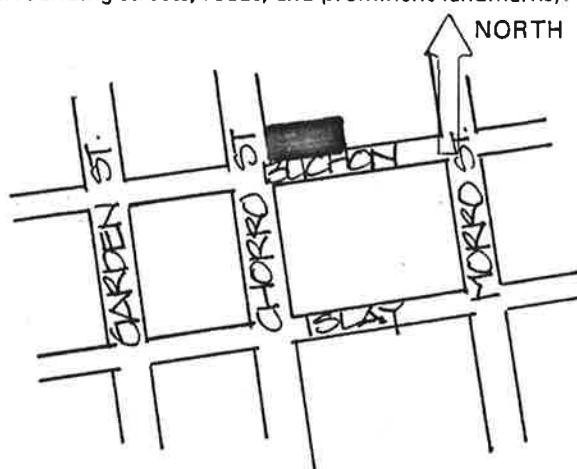
19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

The house at 850 Buchon, with its elevated and unusual presence very pronounced, was built between 1904 and 1908. Its architectural merit lies mainly in its uniqueness as a non-categorical vernacular building found in San Luis Obispo around the turn of the century. Probably influenced by the Neo-Colonial style that predominated in the early 1900's, the house has a distinct horizontal effect and the first story has window banding that expands its entire side fronting Buchon Street. Of historical note is the fact that two of the past residents of this house were mayors of San Luis Obispo, although neither was mayor at the time that he resided here. Elmer Clerk, an official in the Pacific Coast Railroad and mayor from 1908 to 1909 lived here in 1914. In 1916 Thomas Norton, mayor from 1913 - 1915, resided here in 1916.

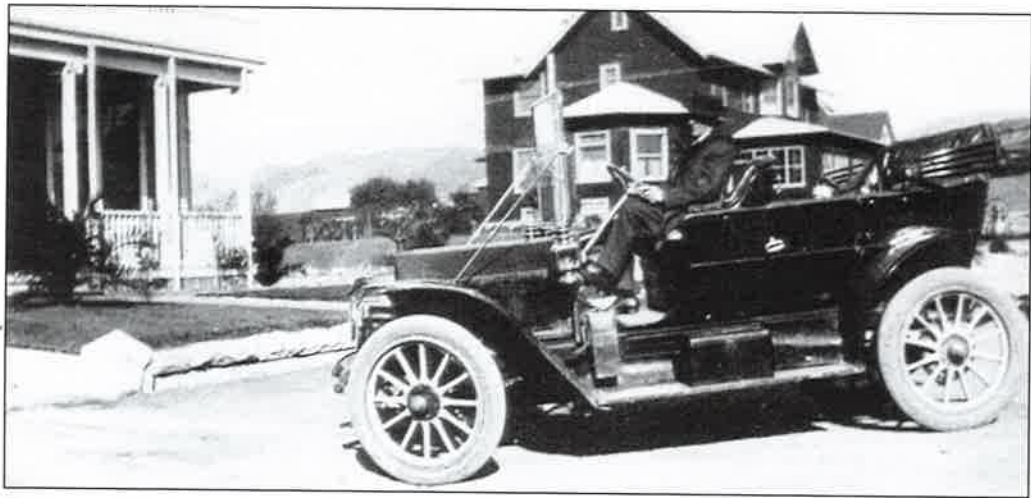
20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure _____
Economic/Industrial _____ Exploration/Settlement _____
Government _____ Military _____
Religion _____ Social/Education _____
21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
(1903, 1909)
City Directory (1904, 1914)

22. Date form prepared 21 June 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

Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



Source: Janet Penn Franks, Images of America - San Luis Obispo: A History in Architecture (2004)



THOMAS NORTON HOUSE, 850 BUCHON STREET, c. 1906. In 1906, Pacific Coast Railway superintendent E.W. Clark built the largest home in the city at that time. He chose a site across the street from the Kimball House, on the northeast corner of Buchon and Chorro. Known as Greystone, Clark's house (seen behind the man in the automobile) stood on a hillside with a commanding view of the city. The Neo-colonial/Craftsman, ten-room, "ultra-modern" residence had an unusually large parlor and a retaining wall of gray granite quarried at Bishop Peak. When Clark and his wife moved to Los Angeles in 1914, Mayor Thomas Norton purchased the home fully furnished. (Courtesy of the Swift Collection.)

Community

Designers tackle SLO's ultimate challenge

By Dorie Bentley
Telegram-Tribune

A historic San Luis Obispo home that has become a community eyesore is going to get a chance to get a new look.

Twenty designers will show their plans for revamping the so-called "Greystone House" at 850 Buchon St. during a "before-the-remake" Designer's Showcase preview from 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29.

Proceeds of the Designers Showcase will go to San Luis Obispo County Transitions Inc., a non-profit organization that provides a variety of mental health and social service programs for youths and adults.

Tickets, \$2 each, are available at all Home Savings and Loan branches, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, and at the Transitions booth at Thursday night Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. Tickets will also be available at the door.

The restoration project is expected to be completed in April, 1990, and at that time another tour will be held. Tickets will be \$10.

People who participate in the preview look will get a \$2 discount at the April event.

Built between 1904 and 1908, the neo-Colonial style house has been home to two former San Luis Obispo mayors: Elmer Clark, a railroad official who was mayor in 1908-09, and Thomas A. Norton, a lawyer, mayor from 1913 to 1915.

For many years, the 4,500-square-foot Buchon Street house, now owned by San Luis Obispo architect Rob Rossi, was used as a rental for college students.

The towering hillside structure, 30-feet taller than adjacent buildings, has also been proposed as a "collaborative housing" home for single adults.

Rossi has invited local designers to



Telegram-Tribune

The Greystone House, once home to two San Luis Obispo mayors, sits at Buchon and Chorro streets.

restore and redecorate the home for a "Designers' Showcase."

The designers' plans for revamping the house include everything from tromp l'oeil painting in a tiny maid's room to recreating a play train station for a child's bedroom.

San Luis Obispo color consultant Pierre Rademaker will dictate the color scheme.

Designer Michael Sagouspe of Interior Planning Resources will redo the solarium-like sunroom "to create a mood of casual elegance."

Jennifer Vance of Interior Motives said her firm will utilize Shaker style furnishings and tromp l'oeil painting

of flowers and drapery on walls and hardwood floors of the 10-by 12-foot maid's room.

The living room will become a "posh living area, elegant without being studied," said Sue Mason of The Showroom. "When completed, the room will probably have a 1930s look."

Madi Gates of Madi Gates Interiors and Lee Anna O'Daniels of San Luis Kitchen Co. will take over the kitchen.

One of the upstairs bedrooms will be a child's room, complete with a train scene provided by Kriste Judd of Howard and Judd. Judd plans to have a bed in a mock train car, and a train

track on the floor.

Other designers and decorators involved include:

Amanda Lambert of Interiors by Amanda; Richard Dudick, Studio Interior Design; Jeannie Mac Dougall, Interior Planning Resource; Alison Miller, Lifestyles Interiors; Maureen Morrow, Coastal Designs; Mary Muncy, St. Mary Mead; Janice Nelson, Interior Motives; Lee Anna O'Daniel, San Luis Kitchen Co.; Cherise Rosenthal, Design House; Steven Smith, Cal Poly; Angeline Vollmer, Eklekta Designs; Donna Young, The Showroom; and Eva Young, Daylight Gardens.

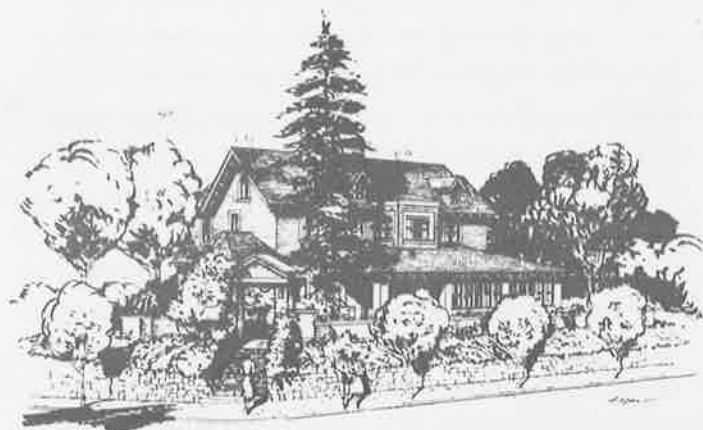
"Mayors' Corners"

The Thomas Norton Home is located a few blocks from downtown San Luis Obispo at the intersection of Chorro and Buchon Streets. This intersection is known as "Mayors' Corners" since three of San Luis Obispo's past mayors have lived there: Elmer Clark, Thomas Norton, and Fred Kimball who lived at 794 Buchon Street.

Greystone House Designer's Showcase Sunday

October 29, 1989

Designers' Showcase



*Greystone House
850 Buchon Street
San Luis Obispo
California*

At the Turn of the Century

It was a small town nestled in the valley among winter-green meadows and pastures, with two railroads serving its population of less than 4,000. The city had five downtown hotels, eight blacksmiths, three Chinese laundries, and three cigar manufacturers. And there were three bootblacks—one with the unlikely name “No Monkey Shine Bootblack Stand” which stood on Monterey Street next to Sinsheimer Bros.

This was San Luis Obispo at the turn of the twentieth century. The horse was still king, and hay far outsold gasoline. Everywhere you went, there was a craftsman or a business or a store to serve the horse: Dorsey the carriage painter, Keller the hay man, S. R. Call the harness maker, and Rowan with his livery stable on Higuera opposite Court Street.

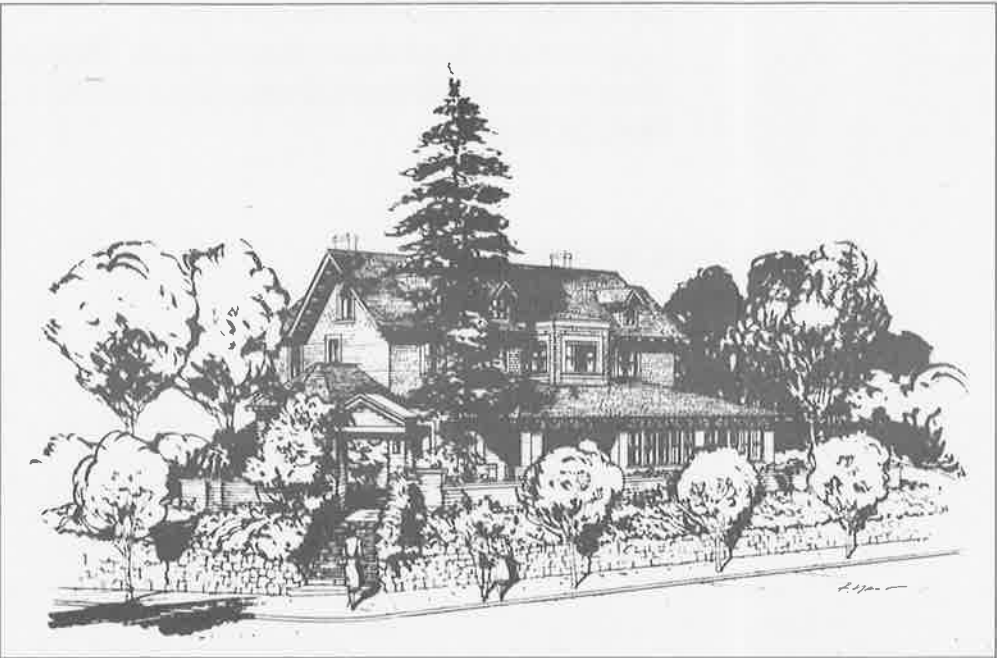
850 Buchon Street

It was in this period that a house was built at 850 Buchon Street in a neighborhood where many fine homes were being established. Overlooking the city, the structure was of wood-frame construction and its design thought to be influenced by the Neo-Colonial style popular in the early 1900s. The home’s distinctive western and southern property

walls were built of mortared stone quarried from Bishop’s Peak, located north of town.

Its First Residents

Elmer Clark, a railroad official, first lived at



Greystone House by Richard Yaco

850 Buchon, and in 1916, attorney Thomas A. Norton established his home there. Both men served as mayor of San Luis Obispo: Clark (1908-1909) and Norton (1913-1915).

Mr. Thomas A. Norton

Thomas A. Norton, born in 1876, arrived in San Luis Obispo in the early 1880s. Prior to moving his residence to 850 Buchon in 1916, he lived in the Norton family home at 676 Monterey Street. A graduate of Santa Clara University, class of 1898, he had his law

offices in the historic Warden Building located at 762 Higuera Street. Norton was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Norton, a physician with offices in the Norton Building at 705 Higuera.

The Later Years

After Thomas Norton’s residency at 850 Buchon Street, two local physicians lived in the home, and in recent years, it has served as a rental for local students attending Cal Poly and Cuesta College.

The Rossi Family

Now known historically as the Thomas Norton Home, a challenging and creative plan has been conceived to restore and redecorate

850 Buchon. The Rossi Family, its present owners, have invited twenty Central Coast interior designers to collaborate in fashioning the Norton Home into a San Luis Obispo “Oldtown” showpiece.

The Best of Everyone

The twenty designers will be given single rooms with free rein to develop their own decorating plans, expressing their individual visions and styles. While choice of mood, furnishings, surface materials, and arrangements will be left to the designers and designer-teams, their final designs must be compatible with the basic color scheme already created by San Luis Obispo color consultant, Pierre Rademaker.

From “Posh” to “Soft and Romantic”

The designers already envision the fifteen-room, 4500 square-foot home with a “posh” living area, a sunroom of “casual elegance,” a maid’s room with a “soft and romantic feeling,” a kitchen “classically detailed,” and an upstairs bedroom designed as a child’s room incorporating a “train scene.”

Community/Home & Garden

Developer, designers bring new life to historic home on SLO's 'Victorian Row'

Heart and 'Stone

By Dorie Bentley
Telegram-Tribune

FORMER San Luis Obispo Mayor Elmer Clark would be proud.

Greystone House, a turn-of-the-century home the former railroad official built on a hillside overlooking Broad and Chorro streets in San Luis Obispo, has a new look.

It was once the plush Victorian-style home of former San Luis Obispo Mayor Thomas A. Norton and other prominent county figures.

The majestic two-story wooden structure towered 30 feet higher than any buildings in the nearby downtown core.

It bowed only to age and neglect. The once stately home became a student rental. The plush decor was replaced by second-hand couches and football banners.

In recent years, the deteriorated condition of the house and the unkempt grounds stirred the wrath of City Council.

Eighteen designers have lent their talents to restore the vintage home.

Best of all, perhaps, is that net proceeds from tours of the extensive renovation will go to SLO Transitions Inc., a mental health and social service organization that operates the Children's Shelter and other community programs.

The historic home at 850 Bush-



Jeffrey May/Telegram-Tribune

Aging Greystone House, left, in early 1989, with the new look below.



other community programs.

The historic home at 850 Buchon St. on San Luis Obispo's "Victorian Row" will be open to the public for 10 days, starting Friday during "Designer's Showcase."

There's a nostalgic twist reminiscent of the celebrations of yesteryear in the event director Betsy Camp has planned.

The home and grounds both will be part of the gala celebration.

The home will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. through July 8.

County food specialties and crafts and antiques will be displayed under a huge canopy at the rear of the grounds.

A gourmet lunch and dinner will be served daily, and wine tasting will be available in the cellar.

There also will be an informal fashion show by Clancy's starting at 5:30 p.m. Friday, July 6.

The event will begin with a gala "Opening Preview" from 5:30 to 8:30 tonight.

Guests can meet the designers



In 1989, Betsy Camp and owner Rob Rossi assessed needed work.

during a champagne reception.

Hors d'oeuvres will be provided by A Gourmet Touch.

Preview tickets are \$35. For ticket information, call Transitions at 541-5144.

Tickets for the daily opening will

be \$10. Tickets also are available from each participating designer, at the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, Home Savings of America, and at the door.

For details, call Camp, of Camp Associates, at 544-9026.



David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

Event director Camp discusses final details with designers on a porch that used to be a front room.