

DRAFT

KELLEY HOUSE IN KELLEY PARK
CITY OF SAN JOSE
SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

PRELIMINARY HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

PREPARED FOR:

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Summary of Findings

The Kelley House is a potentially significant example of early 20th century domestic design in the history of San Jose. It may be eligible for the National Register under criterion C (for Design/Construction in Architecture) at a local level of significance. Kelley House may also be eligible under the City of San Jose's Historic Designation Ordinance as the "embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique" (see Section 13.48.110 of the San Jose Planning Code). The carriage house contributes to the significance of the Kelley House, but would most likely not be individually eligible to the National Register, because substantial remodeling has reduced its historic integrity.

The evaluation was undertaken at the request of the City of San Jose (through Jones & Stokes Associates, Inc.) as part of a Master Plan EIR for a proposed expansion of Kelley Park. This is a preliminary historic architectural evaluation, based on one site visit and a brief review of archival materials. A complete evaluation would require additional research, to determine the significance of Kelley House in the local historical context. The additional evaluation should include a comparison of the Kelley House with other early 20th century houses in San Jose, to determine whether it represents an outstanding or unique domestic design of the period.

Historical Overview

Introduction

The Kelley House is located in the City of San Jose, in an area now known as Kelley Park. The house was built in 1910 (according to local newspaper sources) as the principal residence of a 160-acre estate owned by Lawrence Archer, a former Mayor of San Jose, Santa Clara County Judge and a member of the California State Legislature. Archer had purchased the estate (which he named Lone Oak) in 1861. The original estate house burned in May, 1909. The house known today as the Kelley House was built as a replacement on the same site as the original house (Loomis 1951:15; Loomis 1982:4).

Lawrence Archer died on February 17, 1910, just one day after the new house was completed. After his death his daughter, Louise Archer Flavin Kelley, moved her family into the new house on the Lone Oak estate. In August, 1951, she sold the house and 63 acres of the Archer estate to the City of San Jose for use as a public park, on the condition that she be allowed to live in the family home for the rest of her life. She died six months later, in February, 1952, at the age of 89. The City of San Jose eventually purchased almost all of Lawrence Archer's 160 acre estate for use as a public park. The Archer/Kelley family home was renamed Kelley House, and the estate was developed as Kelley Park.

The Archer Family and Lone Oak Estate

Lawrence Archer, a South Carolina native, practiced law in Mississippi and Missouri before moving to California in 1852. He settled in San Jose in 1853 and established a law office there. He was twice elected Mayor -- in 1856 and again in 1878. He also served as Santa Clara County judge from 1867 to 1871. He was a member of the California State Assembly in 1875-76, and of the first Board of Regents of the University of California (Foote 1888: 90-91; Loomis 1982:4).

Lawrence Archer, his first wife, Louise Martin, and their daughter, Louise (later Louise Kelley) first lived in the City of San Jose at Fountain and Second Streets. In 1869, when little Louise was six years old, the family moved to the Lone Oak estate, then southeast of the developed district of San Jose. Archer had purchased the estate in 1861, and established a 30 acre orchard planted in cherries, apricots and prunes; he was particularly proud of his four acre cherry orchard, which produced a \$3,000 annual income. Archer was the first fruit grower in Santa Clara County to employ women and children during harvest "thus giving desirable employment to a large number of deserving people" (Foote 1888:91; Thompson & West 1876: 37, 41; San Jose News 1952).

Louise Martin Archer died in 1869. In 1870 Lawrence Archer married Alice Bethell, and together they had two sons, Lawrence, born in 1871, and Leo, born in 1874.

The Kelley Family and Ar-Kel Villa (Later Named the Kelley House)

Lawrence Archer's daughter Louise Archer married Martin J. Flavin, a San Francisco merchant, in a large society wedding at Lone Oak in 1883. Flavin died a few years later, and Louise Archer Flavin married Frank J. Kelley, founder of the Star-Peerless Wallpaper Mills, in Chicago. The Kelleys lived in Chicago until Lawrence Archer's death in 1910, when they moved to Lone Oak in San Jose (Loomis 1982:4).

Mrs. Kelley renamed the estate Ar-Kel, and the estate house Ar-Kel Villa, after her maiden and married names (Archer-Kelley). During her forty-year residence in the estate house, Mrs. Kelley devoted herself to maintaining and expanding the park and garden areas on the estate (Arbuckle 1986:429)

Louise Archer Flavin Kelley had four sons: Martin Flavin, a novelist and playwright who lived in Pebble Beach; Frank Kelley Jr. who worked in his father's wallpaper firm in Chicago; Dr. Kenneth Kelley, a New York psychologist; and Lawrence A. Kelley, a San Louis Obispo cattle rancher (San Jose News 1952).

In 1951, at the time of Mrs. Kelley's sale of 63 acres of the estate to the city (for \$142,000), Lawrence Archer's fruit trees had been replaced by walnut orchards. The estate extended along the west bank of the Coyote River, west and south of the city dump. The entrance to the property was a pepper tree drive off Senter Road. The pepper trees had been planted in the 1860's by Lawrence Archer, along with some yew trees, wisterias, and other decorative shrubs and trees. Wide graveled driveways wound among the trees and several acres of lawns. Most of these old plantings had disappeared by the 1980's (Loomis 1951:15; Loomis 1982:4).

The property in 1951 included the main house, a carriage house with several garages and living quarters for the estate gardener, a barn, a walnut dehydrator, and a tank house that dated back to the late 19th century. Today only the main house and the carriage house survive (Affonso 1994).

Kelley Park

Mrs. Kelley hoped that the proposed park would be named Archer Park, after her father. But the city chose to name the house and the park after her married name (Arbuckle 1986:429; Loomis 1982:4).

The City of San Jose eventually acquired 156 acres of Lawrence Archer's 160 acre estate, in successive parcels, until it owned all of the land bounded by Keyes Street, Coyote Creek, Phelan Avenue and Senter Road. The

park's current boundaries are Story Rd., Coyote Creek, Phelan Avenue and Senter Road. A detailed study of the acquisition of land for Kelley Park is outside the scope of work for this report (Arbuckle 1986:429).

The first unit of Kelley Park opened in 1961 as a children's playland named Happy Hollow. The Japanese Friendship Garden opened in 1965; construction of the San Jose Historical Museum began in 1965. The Leininger Community Center, named after City Engineer Carl J. Leininger, was dedicated in 1966 (Arbuckle 1986:429; City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Department Brochure).

The Kelley House has not been opened to the public. In recent years, the City of San Jose arranged for most of the the house to be used as a storage space by a local theater troupe. A park ranger currently occupies the northeast corner of the ground floor of the house as a caretaker.

Kelley House : Resource Description

The Kelley House is just east of the Leininger Center, a modern community building, in Kelley Park in the City of San Jose. From the park's parking lot north of the Leininger Center, an asphalt driveway runs along the south side of the house to the carriage house. The Kelley House, and its adjacent carriage house, are on a flat site in a natural setting separated from other park structures. The landscaping in the vicinity of the Kelley House, grass and a variety of young trees, post-dates the sale of the property to the City of San Jose in 1951. Both the Kelley house and carriage house face west toward Senter Road.

The following description is based on field notes taken during a visit to the site on May 5, 1994. The northeast corner of the house on the ground floor, currently used as a park ranger's residence, was not open during the visit, and is not described below.

The stucco-covered, rectangular plan house has a two-story central, hipped roof pavilion flanked by single-story, hipped dependencies. Structurally, the house is stud-wall, wood-frame construction on a perimeter concrete foundation. The house's gently-pitched, central and side hipped roofs are covered with wood shingles (the roof, however, has been patched with asphalt shingles in several locations). The broad roof eaves have decorative curved, exposed rafters, and large, notched pairs of corner rafters. The house has a variety of double-hung, fixed pane and casement windows.

The house has a formal, symmetrical front elevation with a projecting, hipped roof entrance porch supported by square columns on heavy bases. Set on the porch roof is a second floor porch enclosed by a low parapet wall. Paired double doors open on the second floor porch. Projecting from the walls at the corners of the front elevation are paired buttresses. A water table forms a base across the front and the side elevations of the house. The front elevation has large, fixed-pane windows flanking the front entrance. All the first floor windows in the house are now boarded up. A beltcourse joins together the large hoods over the windows flanking the front entrance to the hood over the front door. The window and front door hoods have elaborately carved, end modillions.

A pair of double doors at the western end of the south elevation open onto a side porch. These doors are also below hoods with modillions. A hipped dormer projects from the roof on the south elevation; to the north of the dormer, a stuccoed chimney projects above the roof. A hipped roof pavilion (with a door opening to the east into a back yard) extends from the southeast corner of the house.

The rear (east) elevation is a complex combination of insets and projections. In the center of the east elevation is a hipped roof arboretum that appears to be a later addition. The arboretum has a door opening into the backyard, and its narrow windows are flanked by classical pilasters. Another

rectangular, hipped roof addition projects from the north elevation. A door from this addition's west elevation opens to a small, recently constructed porch of wood planks with an iron railing. Like the south elevation, the north elevation has a hipped dormer and a tall, stuccoed chimney projecting from the roof.

Concrete steps lead from the front entrance porch into the large stair hall. The house has a essentially a central hall plan with the main rooms symmetrically placed on each side of the stair hall. These large rectangular shaped rooms, opening to the north and south of the stair hall, are the main living areas in the house. The southern room has a large, double door opening to the porch along the south elevation. This room has a particularly large fireplace with an elaborate classical mantelpiece. The floor in this room has been seriously damaged by water from a roof leak. The plaster in this room is also badly cracked because the foundation has settled under the southwest corner of the house.

The room to the north of the main stair hall has three large, multi-pane, double-hung windows opening to the north. A door near the northeast corner in this room opens into a kitchen storage area with its original built-in cupboards. The small kitchen has a sink along the north wall under the windows, and a pantry area to the east of the kitchen.

The rooms to the east of the main stair are arranged more informally. A door in the southeast corner of the stair hall opens into a hallway that leads to a bathroom and two first floor bedrooms arranged along the south side of the house. Another door from this hallway opens to the north into a small library with built-in shelves on its west and north walls. Double sliding doors open from the library to the dining room. The dining room has a handsome fireplace, and built-in cupboards on the north and west walls. A round arch opening just east of the main stair also joins the stair hall to the dining room. A hallway from the dining room leads to the servant's stair and the kitchen. Another door from the dining room opens east into the arboretum. The interior of the arboretum was not accessible.

The dog-legged main stair has handsome turned balusters and newels with inset panels and moulded caps. At the second floor landing, the balustrade curves around to a door opening to the north onto the roof. The second floor stair landing opens into a bedroom on the east and west side of the house. The eastern bedroom has paired casement windows on the north and south walls, and paired double-hung windows opening out to the east. A pair of double doors, flanking a central casement window, open from the west wall of the western bedroom onto an outdoor porch. Built-in dresser drawers are on the north wall of this bedroom.

Northeast of Kelley House is a two-story carriage house with a central third story tower. This simply detailed wood-frame, stucco building has a rectangular plan and a combination gable/hipped roof covered asphalt shingles. The tower has a flat roof with a wide, moulded eave. The building

generally has standard one over one, double-hung windows, but the tower has round arch windows each with a small balcony on the south and east elevations. The original carriage entrance on the front elevation has been filled in with horizontal wood siding. The interior of the carriage house has been extensively altered. The first floor has been remodeled as a reception area for the park patrons. The second floor appears to have been an apartment for the Kelley's caretaker. The rooms on this floor have been remodeled for park offices. The third floor tower room has also been remodeled with new wood paneling for an office.

Kelley House: Evaluation

The Kelley House is an early 20th century domestic design of quality and originality. The house represents a particularly unique combination of residential styles - Craftsman bungalow, Prairie School and Classical Revival - popular during the first decade of this century. In its massing, scale, and ornamental details (especially the large modillions under the window hoods), the Kelley House can certainly be identified as domestic design that is more distinguished than the typical house from this period. The house has only received minor alterations since it was originally built, and thus it retains a high level of integrity. Damage to the house resulting from deferred maintenance - especially the water and foundation damage in the southwest corner of the house - have somewhat compromised the house's integrity. The house's deterioration, however, has not progressed to the point that the damage is irreparable.

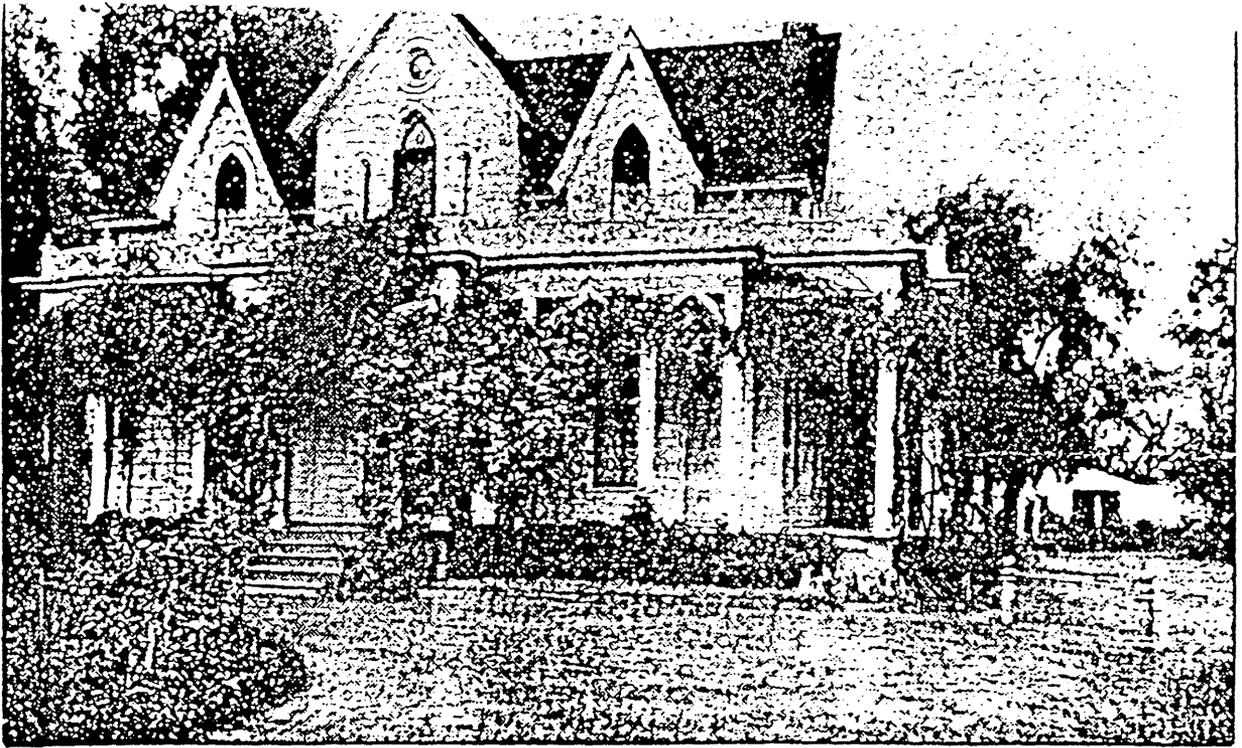
In conclusion, the Kelley House is a potentially significant example of early 20th century domestic design in the history of San Jose, and thus, the house could be eligible for the National Register under criterion C at a local level of significance. The house also could be eligible under the City of San Jose's Historic Designation Ordinance as the "embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique" (see Section 13.48.110 of the San Jose Planning Code). Although it has less integrity, the carriage house contributes to the significance of the house.

The Kelley House appears not to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion B, for association with persons significant in our past. Although the house was built by a person significant in San Jose history -- Lawrence Archer, Mayor of San Jose and County Judge -- the house is not associated with the period in which he achieved significance. In fact, Archer died just as the house was being completed. According to National Register Criteria, properties eligible under Criterion B are "usually those associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance" (National Register Bulletin 15:15).

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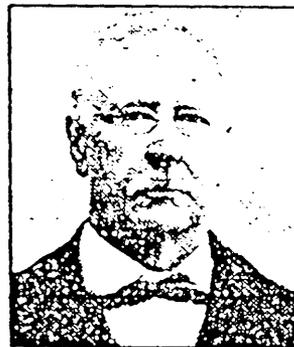
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The original Archer home, above, burned in 1909. After the house was rebuilt, Louise Archer Flavin Kelley, left, lived in it for 40 years.



Lawrence Archer was a San Jose lawyer and twice mayor of the city.



KELLEY HOUSE IN 1951
San Jose News. August 10, 1951:15.

The Kelley House
San Jose, California

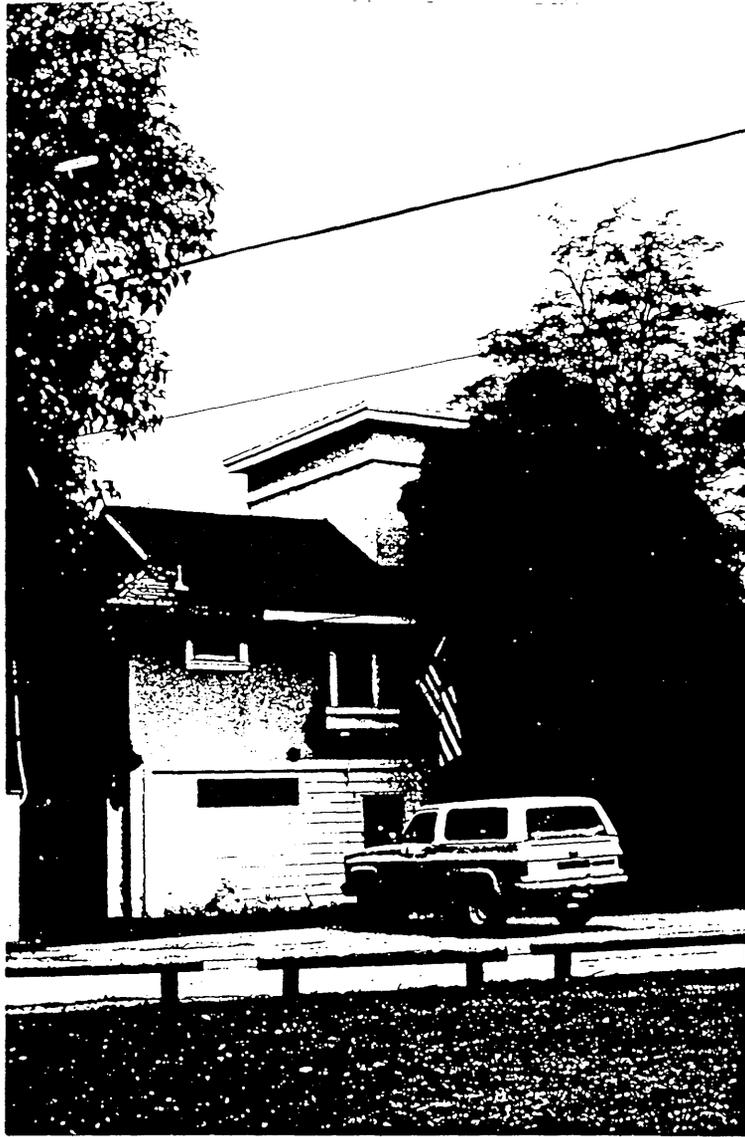


Main House: Front Elevation



Main House: Interior - Stair Hall

The Kelley House
San Jose, California



Carriage House: Front Elevation