

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received MAR 15 1985

date entered

APR 11 1985

**1. Name**

historic Kee House

and/or common Kee House

**2. Location**

street &amp; number 2310 Yale Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Palo Alto

N/A vicinity of

state California

code 06

county Santa Clara

code 085

**3. Classification**

|                                                 |                                             |                                                       |                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Ownership</b>                            | <b>Status</b>                                         | <b>Present Use</b>                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied          | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                   | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> educational                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> religious                    |
|                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific                   |
|                                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a     | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation               |
|                                                 |                                             |                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> other:                       |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Emile G. McAnany &amp; Rosemary Ellmar

street &amp; number 1305 Alta Vista

city, town Austin

N/A vicinity of

state Texas 78704

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Santa Clara County Recorder

street &amp; number Market &amp; West Streets

city, town San Jose

state California

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Palo Alto Historic Buildings Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1979

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records City of Palo Alto, Planning Department

city, town Palo Alto

state California

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

**Check one**

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

**Check one**

☒ original site  
☐ moved

date N/A

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Kee House, built in 1889, is a simplified Italianate building with some Eastlake elements. It has horizontal wood siding and a composition shingle roof. Approximately 32' x 35' in its external dimensions, it has two stories and an attic. The roof is a truncated hip which originally had an iron or wood balustrade at the top. There are porches with turned posts and sawn brackets across the front and side; a porch at the rear entrance was removed in the 1930s. Double brackets and a paneled frieze appear under the second floor eaves; smaller double brackets ornament the porch roofs. Interior modifications were made when the building was converted to apartments in the 1930s. The major exterior changes are the partial enclosure of the front and side porches, and the addition of a small apartment wing across the rear.

Inside, on the ground floor, the central hall gives access to a parlor and a living room in the front. A dining room is separated from the parlor by sliding redwood doors, and a kitchen and adjacent pantry are in the rear. Much of the paneling and many of the windows and door transoms appear to be original, although the stained glass transom in the dining room door opening to the street was brought in from another old house. Originally, there was a chimney which served iron stoves in the dining room and kitchen; it has been closed off near the ceilings and the stoves removed. On the second floor, there are four bedrooms of identical size and a bathroom. Access to an unfinished attic is obtained from the bathroom ceiling.

A gazebo, tool shed, and large garage or barn appear to be original. One other small outbuilding dates from the later 1930s.

Alterations: Two alcoves were formed in the late 1920s and early 1930s for parlor and dining room by enclosing the left half of the front porch and the right half of the side porch; the original windows and siding were reused in the new exterior walls. At about the same time, when the house was converted to boarding-house use, an apartment (bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen) was added at the rear. As well, the pantry was converted into a bathroom, and part of the kitchen was used for a hallway into the back apartment. A new kitchen porch was added. Upstairs, two apartments were formed by converting two of the four bedrooms into kitchens (in 1979, one of the kitchens was returned to its original use as a bedroom, leaving one rental unit on the second floor).

In summation, the house retains much of its original late-19th century domestic design. The partial enclosure of the porches does not detract significantly from the original character of the house; the apartment addition is located at the rear and is not visible from the street in front.

## 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/         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry                          | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |
|                                               |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                         |                                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

**Specific dates** 1889 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

### Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Kee House is one of the oldest surviving residences in Palo Alto. It is the oldest dwelling remaining from Mayfield, the village that antedated the founding of Palo Alto. It was one of the first, if not the first, house to be completed in College Terrace, the tract in which it is located. It still retains the character of its original design and has been identified as a structure of major importance in the local historical and architectural survey.

Mayfield was nearly forty years old when Palo Alto was incorporated in 1894. It was annexed to Palo Alto in 1924. In 1853, James Otterson, the first merchant, opened a roadhouse for travelers on El Camino Real at California Avenue. By 1857, shops, a post office, and a school were the village nucleus, and town lots were laid out in 1867. The surrounding grain fields and nearby stands of trees provided the crops and lumber for a lively transshipment point on the Southern Pacific Railroad. It was not until the end of the century that the newer community of Palo Alto, nearby, began to overtake Mayfield in significance and population.

Within Mayfield, the district now called "College Terrace" had its start in 1887 and 1888 when Peter Spacher and Frederick Weissar, who had bought 120 acres of the Robles Rancho in 1852, sold their property to Alexander Gordon. Gordon was a wealthy farmer and landowner of San Mateo County. (Earlier, Senator Leland Stanford had tried to buy this tongue of land adjoining his holdings.) Gordon subdivided the tract, hoping to attract faculty and students from the University. "Palo Alto" was the name he gave the district. Soon, Stanford persuaded him to allow the name to go to the new village of University Park to the north. There, Stanford was successful in establishing a community in which the sale of alcohol was prohibited. Although thereafter the town of Mayfield declined in relative importance compared to Palo Alto, Gordon's tract, which he renamed "College Terrace", succeeded over the years as an unusually pleasant residential district for faculty, students, professionals, and tradesmen.

In the modern period, new commercial and multi-family rental housing developments have occurred on the east and south borders of College Terrace. However, a good many of the early dwellings and much of the neighborhood atmosphere of the period 1900-1940 remain. The Palo Alto Historic Buildings Inventory lists a score of residences for special emphasis in the district. The Kee House is included as one of major importance protected by the city's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

(See attached Continuation Sheet)

G-2332H

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(See attached Continuation Sheet)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .2152

Quadrangle name Palo Alto

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 10 575520 4142080  
Zone Easting Northing

B           
Zone Easting Northing

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary is drawn on current lot lines (76' x 125') which encompass the building and its outbuildings on the remnant of its once larger parcel. Assessor's Parcel No.: 137-1-108

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code    county N/A code   

state    code    county    code   

## 11. Form Prepared By

James Stone (Chairman, Historic Resources Board) & Janet Freeland (Planning Technician)  
name/title & Emile G. McAnany (OHP Staff Revision, 7/84)

organization Historic Resources Board, City of Palo Alto date 12/83

street & number 250 Hamilton Avenue, P.O. Box 10250 telephone (415) 329-2441

city or town Palo Alto state California 94303

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

   national    state X 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

*Marion Rutledge Wilson*

title

*Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer*

date

*8/24/84*

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*Entered in the*  
National Register

date

*4-11-85*

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

Representation in Existing Surveys (continued)

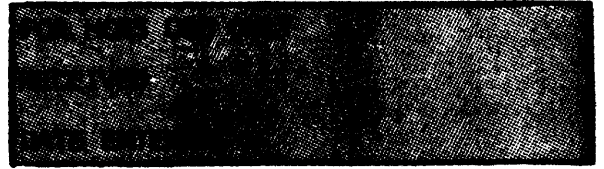
Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory

1979            x County

Records at Santa Clara County Historical Heritage Commission  
c/o County Planning Department  
Santa Clara County Government Center  
70 West Hedding St.  
San Jose, CA 95110

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



CONTINUATION SHEET

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8. SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd.)

Robert Norton Kee had a transfer business in Mayfield in the 1880s, and in 1888 and 1889, when town lots were offered for sale in College Terrace, he purchased lots 15, 16, 17, and 18, block 45. In 1889, his house was completed at a cost of \$3500 and in 1890 he added a barn for his draft horses. In 1893 he purchased the grocery business of G. Bracchi in Mayfield. He retained his home until about 1910, when he sold it to Mrs. Fannie Ferroli. Subsequently, the house was owned by William Johnson, a teamster, ca. 1913-1917; Henry Bentley (a retired gardener) and his wife Dora 1917-1925; Anthony and Adelaide Mohr, realtors, 1926-1957; and Mrs. Helen Shaffer. Mrs. Shaffer, who was adopted by the Mohrs, inherited the house in 1957 and became its sole owner in 1970 after the death of Mrs. Mohr (who, after her first husband's death, married a Mr. Shirrey).

Conversion to apartments occurred in the 1930s. The present owners, who purchased the house in 1975, hope to restore it entirely to one-family usage.

The Kee House is of historical value for two reasons. First, it represents the type of housing afforded in its time by the typical middle class owner of average means. Its survival conveys something of the qualities of life and neighborly atmosphere of the era and animates modern appreciation of those aesthetic and social values. Much of College Terrace retains those characteristics and the Kee House blends well with its environment.

Second, its history over the years is typical of such dwellings. Its use originally as a family home and then, later, as a small-scale rooming, boarding, or apartment house, occupied by (frequently) young wage-earning students, or teacher families, has been endlessly repeated throughout the nation. Fortunately, the Kee House, like a number of others in College Terrace but unlike many more of its scale, type, and age, has escaped the fate of deterioration to the point where demolition is virtually charitable, if not long overdue. Multi-family use is now restricted and there are strong expectations of its reversion to single-family occupancy, with such rehabilitation as seems appropriate. The Palo Alto Historic Resources Board, Planning Commission, and city staff recently studied the locale of the Kee House in respect to vulnerability to new investment construction and loss of historic structures. As a result, the City Council this year adopted a rezoning ordinance to help preserve the character of the immediate neighborhood. Commercial incentives and opportunities to replace the older residences with offices or condominiums have been markedly reduced by the new ordinance.

Of all the buildings for which this rezoning is relevant, the Kee House is the principal example and the "anchor" of its neighborhood.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

9

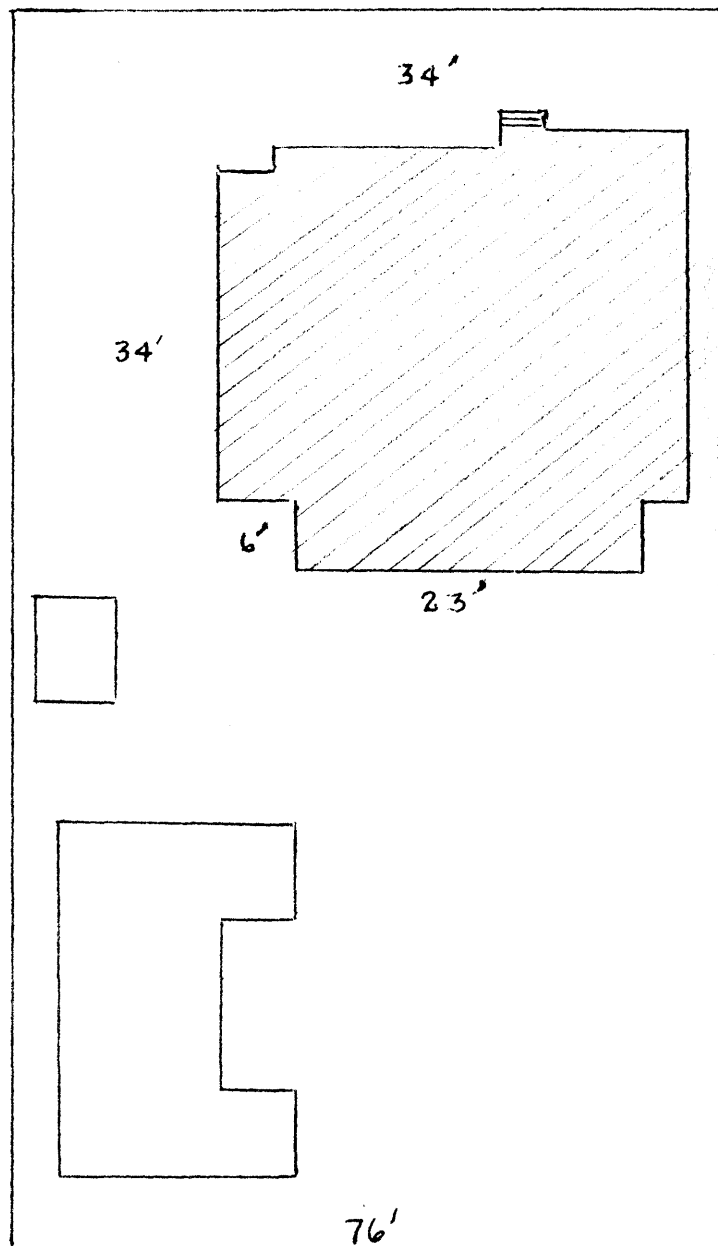
PAGE

1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Block Book #109, p. 65, Santa Clara County, Nov. 17, 1888; ibid., #113, p. 304, Jan. 7, 1889; Mayfield Palo Alto, Vol. 1, No. 2, April 19, 1890; promotion poster, "Bird's-Eye View of Mayfield, Leland Stanford Jr. University and Palo Alto, the University Town," Carnall-Fitzhugh-Hopkins Co., San Francisco, 1889; San Jose Daily Mercury, Promotion Edition, 1892, Nov. 4, 1981; Palo Alto Times, Jan. 12, 1893, June 22, 1894; archives of Palo Alto Historical Association (Mayfield voter registration list, marriage scrapbook Kee and Cooley; obituary files, Kee, Palo Alto city directories, 1895ff); E. J. McAnany, Helen Shaffer interviews and notes for Palo Alto Historic Resources Board, 1982-1983.

YALE 76' ST



SITE PLAN OF  
KEE HOUSE  
2310 Yale St.  
Palo Alto, Ca.



2310

Kee House, 2310 Yale Avenue, Palo Alto  
Santa Clara County, California  
Elizabeth Kittas - photographer  
April, 1983  
Negative in City of Palo Alto Planning  
Dept., 250 Hamilton Av., Palo Alto  
Front of house, northeast elevation,  
photographer facing southwest

#1 of 4



Kee House, 2310 Yale Avenue, Palo Alto,  
Santa Clara County, California

Elizabeth Kittas - photographer

Negative in the City of Palo Alto

Planning Dept., 250 Hamilton Av. Palo Alto

Rear of house, southwest elevation,  
photographer facing northeast

#2 of 4



Kee House, 2310 Yale Avenue, Palo Alto,  
Santa Clara County, California

Elizabeth Kittas - Photographer

Negative in City of Palo Alto Planning

Dept., 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto  
Northwest side of house - photographer  
facing southeast

#3 of 4



Kee House, 2310 Yale Avenue, Palo Alto,  
Santa Clara County, California

Elizabeth Kittas - photographer

Negative in the City of Palo Alto

Planning Dept., 250 Hamilton Av. Palo Alto

Southeast side of house - photographer  
facing northwest

#4 of 4