

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Draft

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name William Shipsey House

Other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1266 Mill Street N/A not for publication

city or town San Luis Obispo N/A vicinity

State California code CA county San Luis Obispo Code 079 zip code 93401

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

of certifying official _____
Signature

Title _____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____
Date

Title _____
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____
Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- public – State
- public – Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne, Stick/Eastlake

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Brick
walls: Wood: weatherboard, shingle

roof: Asphalt
other: Stone

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The William Shipsey House in San Luis Obispo, California was constructed in 1894. The Architect, Hilamon Spencer Laird, designed a residence that is characterized as Late Victorian with Queen Anne and Eastern Stick style features. The home faces south and is located on the northwest corner of Mill Street and Johnson Avenue (formerly Essex Street) at 1266 Mill Street. The tree lined street is a part of The Historic Mill Street District that was designated as such by the City of San Luis Obispo in 1983. The district is on a rise above the commercial center of the city and adjacent to the courthouse serving San Luis Obispo County. The house has recently been restored. At the time of purchase, the house was deteriorating from deferred maintenance, but still retained the original exterior architectural features. The interior floorplan is also intact with features that include; eleven foot ceilings, fir flooring, eight foot raised panel doors, windows, door and window hardware, lighting fixtures, redwood bead boards and ornate lincrusta wall treatments. A new garage/carriage house was constructed at the rear of the property that incorporated architectural features from the Shipsey House at the time of the Quaglino restoration. The garage is a non-contributing building on the property.

Narrative Description

Description - Exterior

The residence is a large two-story wood frame structure, with multiple cross-facing gables. The house sits on the original red brick stem walls that have been plastered. Two high pitched gables, with a peaked pediment over the front porch, face Mill Street. The left gable has a double hung sash window with fixed panes on either side. The right gable has two Queen Anne mullioned fixed pane windows. On the front of the house, to the right of the porch, there are one fixed pane window with Queen Anne mullioned multi-panes and one large, fixed three panel window flanked by two double hung sash windows. On the front porch is a large picture window with a commanding view of Mill Street.

Horizontal and vertical stick work is extensively used throughout the exterior, at the doors, windows, building corners and plate lines. Large, carved arch supports make up the brackets that act as window awning supports. These architectural features are located at the front and rear porches, and on the predominate windows located on the sides of the house. The siding material consists mostly of eight inch redwood clapboard supplemented with other materials such as vertical bead board and decorative cedar shingles. The shingles are fish scale, octagon and square edge that have been applied in various patterns including a dental pattern below most windows. The gables are covered with fish scale shingles and double sunburst fans at the lower corners.

Four locally quarried dacite steps rise to the front porch and main entry. The original, thirty-six inch wide redwood front door has the original brass mortise lock, carved hinges and turn style door bell. Centered in the door is a four inch round glass window with carved fluting radiating from the center. The door has various intricate carvings and designs including two rows of eleven wood buttons that run the width of the door.

The front porch is elevated and offset to the left. It is decorated with ornamental cedar shingles and carved columns. The floor is painted tongue and groove decking. The ceiling of the front porch is painted light blue, which was the original color and was believed to act as a deterrent for mosquitos. A large, mansard roof covered in fish scale cedar shingles wraps the front porch. The primary roof areas are covered with asphalt shingles that have embossed wood graining to emulate the original shingles. The rear portico is covered with an ornate, arched overhang supported by carved wood brackets. The portico extends to cover the adjacent eight fixed pane windows. The roof line ridges are capped with red painted crests that were duplicated from historic photographs. The ridge crests are a dental pattern twelve inches tall with twenty inch arched finials that terminate the ends of each ridge crest.

The residence is painted in colors that are believed to be comparable to those used originally. This was obtained by sanding through the layers of paint to the arrive at the original coat of paint that included shades of muted greens, mustard and off-whites.

The grounds have been re-worked using vintage red brick and cement walkways. An ornate two inch square picket fence surrounds the front and most of the east side of the garden area. To provide privacy to the rear yard, a fifty inch high solid board fence, capped with matching picket pattern, was installed and painted in a buttery off-white to match all exterior

fencing. The grounds include lawn, miniature and tree roses, painted pines, cypress trees, ferns, western red buds, heather and other period appropriate landscaping.

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Description - Interior

The interior was found to be largely intact from its 1894 date of construction. The floor plan has not been modified and, with the exception of multiple layers of paint, most of the interior features such as the hardware and lighting were unchanged. These items included the ornate, combination gas/electric lighting fixtures, the original raised, four panel doors complete with the Japanned black carved brass mortise locks, strikes and hinges, window latches and lifts, as well as fir wood flooring and the unique, lincrusta wall treatments in the entry hall, dining room and butler=s pantry.

The seven foot by twenty-two foot centered entry hallway has doors leading into three different areas of the house. To the left is the door into the parlor. At the end of the hall the door leads into the dining room. The door on the right leads to a bedroom that shares a bath with another bedroom.

The parlor has an ornate, brass period chandelier set into the original plaster ceiling medallion. Double doors lead from the parlor through an eight foot wide opening into the dining room. The dining room is the largest room on the main floor. The walls retain the original lincrusta that is set above the twelve inch original beaded base board, and below the seven inch trim board which is set at a height of thirty-two inches. There is a faux fireplace that was installed after 1913. The work appears to have been done to decorate and hide the connection of a flue pipe which exited from a hole in the back of the fireplace that was originally made for a coal burning stove. The bricks are a common brick in a light tan color that had been covered with multiple layers of paint. The fireplace is capped with a two inch thick by fourteen inch deep simple redwood mantle that still retains the nail holes from the Shipsey family hanging their stockings on Christmas eve. The original electric and gas combination light fixture hangs from the center of the ceiling on the original, ornately plastered medallion which measures twenty-eight inches in diameter. The brass fixture includes a total of six light shades, three for gas turned upwards and three electric turned downward. The shades are crystal, engraved with cherubs. Three of the original shades were in the house and a replacement match was located for the missing three. The door at the rear of the dining room opens into the back bedroom.

On the right side of the dining room a door opens into the butler=s pantry. The pantry has shelving and counter height drawers with original, brass covered steel, drawer pulls. One wall has an eighteen inch by twenty-four inch high pass-through door opening to the kitchen. The door slides up and disappears into the wall by way of rope and pulley weights similar to a double hung sash window mechanism.

The kitchen is entered from the dining room. In the kitchen is the original built-in Hoosier cabinet with original flour and bread tin inserts as well as all the original hardware. At the east end of the kitchen there is a small bead board lined breakfast nook with large double hung windows that offer a view of Johnson Avenue.

Immediately off the kitchen is the large central back porch with two smaller rooms on each side. All three areas of the rear porch ceilings and walls are covered in the original bead board. One room has been converted into a full bathroom. The other room is a large pantry, with sloping ceiling, that is the underside of the stairs to the second floor. The central area of the back porch serves as a mud room with original brass covered steel hooks for hanging coats and umbrellas. The flooring in the kitchen, back porch, breakfast nook and all bathrooms is a heavy, burlap backed, marbled patterned marmoleum, which is a reproduction of the original linoleum installed in the kitchen and back porch.

An access door in the rear of the dining room opens to the stairs leading to the second floor, which consists of one large room with a bathroom. The stairs are steep and narrow with nineteen steps to climb the thirteen foot height. The stair well is lined with the original, unpainted, redwood bead board. At the top of the stairs is the original access door to the roof area that once housed a domestic water supply tank that has since been removed. The perimeter walls of the second floor, approximately fifty inches high, are the original unpainted redwood bead boards. The short perimeter walls intersect the interior of the steep roof line. The second floor ceiling follows the rise of the high gables and low dormers with Queen Anne windows set at the end of the dormers.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Law

Politics & Government

Period of Significance

1894 – 1922

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Shipsey, William

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Laird, Hilamon Spencer, Architect

Maino & Moore, Builder

Waite & Ryan, Mill Work

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance reflects the years Shipsey lived in the house (Criterion B), beginning with the date of construction in 1894 (Criterion C) until his death in 1922.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

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The William Shipsey House, built in 1894, is an example of a well designed residence with Queen Anne and Eastern Stick influences that was done by Architect Hilamon Spencer Laird. It was constructed by Joseph Maino, a local master craftsman. The home was built for William Shipsey, a prominent force in local politics and law whose work in various levels of government guided the city into a period of change bringing to an end the isolation that had preceded his participation. The Shipsey House meets eligibility under National Register Criterion B at the local level for associations with William Shipsey, a person important to the local community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century; and meets eligibility under Criterion C as an excellent example of local design and craftsmanship.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Criterion B

William Shipsey was born on January 8, 1851 in County Cork, Ireland. He came to California and by age 18 had settled in Monterey. Shipsey completed his education at St. Mary's College in San Francisco and graduated in 1873 with a B. S. Degree. Later, deciding to study law, he worked at an office in Salinas and was admitted to the State Bar Association in 1877. In 1878, Shipsey formed a partnership with Judge Gregory of Salinas until relocating in San Francisco in 1882.ⁱ He became a partner with Judge William J. Graves in San Francisco and two years later finally settled in San Luis Obispo. Judge Graves had come to California in 1849, married a daughter of Pio Pico, the last Governor of California under Mexican rule, and later served in the State Assembly from San Luis Obispo.ⁱⁱ No doubt this was the connection that brought Shipsey to San Luis Obispo. Shipsey worked with Graves on many projects and both were an important part of the early legal community in San Luis Obispo.

Shipsey became increasingly involved with county business as it became an important part of his legal work. As City Attorney for the Board of Trustees, one of his first major assignments was to codify city ordinances.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 1890, Shipsey married Annie Barrie in Castroville, California. The popular Irishman's marriage amongst his men friends was the cause of much celebration.^{iv} The union produced five children; Edward S., who became a Jesuit and member of the faculty at Santa Clara University; William T., who continued the family tradition and became a San Luis Obispo City Attorney; Kathleen who died during the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918; Marguerite and Helen.

After his marriage, Shipsey purchased property within the 1887 Hathway Addition to the City of San Luis Obispo.^v However by 1893, plans were made for the route of the Southern Pacific Railroad to come to San Luis Obispo (Nicholson 1993).^{vi} The house sat directly on the route of the railroad and consequently the Shipsey family had to move, but not far away and they remained on the same street.^{vii}

In March of 1893, William Shipsey purchased a lot for \$10 at 1266 Mill Street to build a home to accommodate his growing family.^{viii} By May, he had signed a contract with Hampton and Claussen for a house of eight rooms.^{ix} But almost another year went by until after months of postponement, Shipsey signed a different contract with Maino & Moore to build a house designed by Architect Hilamon Spencer Laird. By then it was to be a large, ten room two-story residence surrounded by a fine fence at a cost of \$3,000. The Maino Construction Company is still a family operated company in San Luis Obispo and has been responsible for many buildings of importance in the county, including California Polytechnic State University, the Carnegie Library, Port Harford Lighthouse and the San Luis Obispo General Hospital. The elegant home was built on what was known at the time as Nob Hill,^x its construction reported in the local press:

ⁱ Sandra Harris, *William Shipsey in the History of Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo* [on-line]; available from <http://www.Sandrah@ix.netcom.com>; Internet accessed 19 June 2009.

ⁱⁱ Myron Angel, *History of San Luis Obispo County* (Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1979), 289.

ⁱⁱⁱ *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 16 April 1889.

^{iv} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 8, 26 January 1890.

^v Deed Book 18:169, 16 June 1891.

^{vi} Loren Nicholson, *Rails Across the Ranchos* (San Luis Obispo: California Heritage Publishing Associates, 1993), 132.

^{vii} City of San Luis Obispo Cultural Resource Committee Staff Report 2008.

^{viii} Deed Book 19:232, 20 March 1893.

^{ix} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 23 May 1893.

^x *The Reasoner*, 5 July 1894.

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It is to be situated on the corner of Main and Elise (Johnson) streets a commanding position from which a magnificent view can be obtained in every direction. It is but a short walk to the very center of town, and is on a gentle elevation which offers a fine view of the city from the front and overlooks both the valley in which the city is situated, and that which stretches towards Chorro and Morro.^{xi}

As the town grew, the Nob Hill neighborhood became home to many of the lawyers and judges that served at the Court House two blocks away.

Shipsey was working for the County Supervisors in 1895 to audit the accounts of the county officers. By 1896, he was asked to be a candidate for Superior Court Judge. It was a contentious election and one that he lost.^{xii} By 1898, Shipsey was a candidate for City Trustee (City Council) which he won handily.^{xiii} As Mayor and President of the Council, he worked to form a Militia Company to prevent privateers from entering Port Harford during the Mexican American conflict.^{xiv} Another of his efforts, while still Mayor and Assistant District Attorney, was focused in a different part of the world as a member of the General Committee of the National Boer Relief Fund Association based in New York.^{xv}

In 1901, by resolution of the city council, Mayor Shipsey was placed in charge of the festivities of President McKinley's stopover in San Luis Obispo. In May, the event took place with large crowds gathered to greet the President. Shipsey met President McKinley and gave the welcome address after which the President gave his response.^{xvi} Four months later President McKinley was assassinated.

His most important project as Mayor was leading the efforts to locate California Polytechnic School in San Luis Obispo. Enlisting the help of business men and residents, he formed several committees to help with the task.^{xvii} By the time Shipsey's term as Mayor was ending in 1902, ground breaking ceremonies were taking place for what has become the California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly). This accomplishment has resulted in slowly changing San Luis Obispo from an agricultural center and county seat to a city heavily influenced by a University that has become famous for its educational programs.

At the beginning of Shipsey's tenure as Major, the city was bankrupt with unpaid salaries and claims. By the end of his term in 1902, the city had achieved a fiscal surplus. His major issues were water and sewer problems, both of which were solved.^{xviii}

During his long career as a practicing attorney, Shipsey was involved in many of the headline court cases of his day defending citizens whose names are still familiar in the City of San Luis Obispo. His suite of offices in the Warden building was shared with attorneys Albert Nelson and later Thomas Norton. Eventually, his son William Jr., joined the firm. It was relocated to the Andrews Building across from the Courthouse and became known as Shipsey & Shipsey.

After he was Mayor, Shipsey continued serving the community in various capacities. He was a charter member of the San Luis Obispo Board of Trade in 1903. After the free library was established, he was appointed by the City Council in 1909 to the Library Board of Trustees where he served as President of the Board for thirteen years until his death in 1922.

Ending a long career which he had been an outstanding political figure in the city and county, William Shipsey died this morning at the family home, 1266 Mill Street, aged 71.^{xix} On the day of the funeral both the offices at California Polytechnic and the Public Library were closed. Among his pall bearers were attorneys, a Superior Court Judge and the Mayor.

Criterion C – Architecture

In 1869, the arrival of the Pacific railroad ended the isolation of San Francisco from the east coast cities. With the railroad came a growing body of architects and builders. Architects like William Mooser, H. H. Richardson, Bernard Maybeck, J.

^{xi} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 28 May 1903.

^{xii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 13 September 1896.

^{xiii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 12 April 1898.

^{xiv} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 26 April 1898.

^{xv} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 3 June 1900.

^{xvi} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 10 May 1901.

^{xvii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 6 December 1898.

^{xviii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 21 April 1902.

^{xix} *San Luis Obispo Daily Tribune*, 27 July 1922.

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A. Walls, William Weeks and Sumner Hunt located practices in San Francisco and later Los Angeles. Becoming celebrated for their work, they formed chapters of the American Institute of Architects in their respective areas and pressed for the recognition of their profession. A particular California style was developed that had elements of Queen Anne and Stick/Eastlake that served as popular new domestic housing. It was somewhat different from east coast homes of similar styles in its predominance of the use of wood over stone and brick in construction. In part, this was due to the rapid increase of milling machinery and the adjacent redwood forests.

Architectural styles that were already in prominence in San Francisco and Los Angeles in the 1870s, came to San Luis Obispo years later. The Shipsey House has all the elements of an elaborate and well proportioned asymmetrical design that represents the late Victorian Period with its Queen Anne and Stick/Eastlake elements. The shingle work, and gables topped with roof cresting and mullioned windows work together as a fine example of residential style that became more readily available in San Luis Obispo when the planing mill opened with better equipment. This allowed for an exuberance in design that benefitted from the easily worked redwood. The combination of the mill and the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1894, ending years of isolation, brought economic changes that were reflected in design of residences in San Luis Obispo. The 1890s were a period of new growth in San Luis Obispo that inspired a more elaborate and formal architecture for the first time in the city's history. Taking advantage of the new options in design and construction was the Shipsey House Architect, Hilamon Spencer Laird.

Hilamon Spencer Laird, Architect

The Shipsey House was one of several buildings designed by a highly regarded local architect, Hilamon Spencer Laird. Most of his remaining buildings are on the City of San Luis Obispo's Master List of Historic Properties. They are highly individual in design and executed with craftsmanship and attention to detail. His work is reflective of the development of the city at a time when there was great enthusiasm over its possibilities for the future.

Hilamon Spencer Laird came to San Luis Obispo from New York in the 1870s. He may have been influenced by H. H. Richardson who left New York around the same time to develop the San Francisco vernacular housing that also used combinations of several styles that became known as the San Francisco Style. Like Herbert Wyman, architect for the Bradbury Building in Los Angeles, Laird apparently had no formal training in architecture when he arrived in San Luis Obispo from New York. Unlike Wyman, who left Los Angeles, Laird remained in San Luis Obispo to become a major influence on the changing face of both the city core and surrounding residential neighborhoods. He was never a part of the "officially recognized" architects in more populous areas. It is only his buildings that remain in the community that speak for him and his work.

Laird made other contributions as an inventor and as construction engineer on city projects early in his career in San Luis Obispo. He filed patents for a nut lock and a baling press in 1877 and 1878 respectively.

It is during the 1880s that we begin to see evidence of his architectural work. He took the spare and simple one or two room county schoolhouse and gave it an expression of elaborate exuberance for the first time.

The Corral de Piedra schoolhouse was completed yesterday, and receives the warm approval and flattering criticism of all who have seen it. It is claimed to be the handsomest and most comfortable and convenient of our county schoolhouses. Mr. H. S. Laird is responsible for the design and arrangement.^{xx}

His interest in the local schools continued when he volunteered to build, finish and set flag poles for the local schools in honor of July 4th, 1890.

One of Laird's major accomplishments was the design of the First National Bank at the cost of \$30,000. Built from his plans and designs, it was enthusiastically reported in the local press.

It will be altogether the finest building yet constructed in the business part of town. It is to be what is known as Romanesque in style, of pressed brick with terra cotta belt course, courses and cornice. It is two stories with a high pitched hipped roof with cresting. The bank entrance is at the corner of Chorro and Higuera streets, and is flanked on either side by large iron columns carrying an arch and the projection of the tower which rises about twenty-five feet above the roof, with an ogee roof and crestings. The Chorro street front has in the lower story five large segment-head windows of plate glass. On each

^{xx} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 29 October 1889.

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side of the center window is a pilaster carrying a overhanging projection with a large rounded jamb arch, ending above the cornice in a pediment with ornamental terra cotta coping and tiled tympanum. The stair entrance has a flanking column on either side, and an archway projection ending under the cornice. The Higuera street front has one large plate-glass window with full arch, spanning from lower tower to corner, the architrave resting on short columns on either side. Above the belt course are two large windows and over them rises a pediment.

The interior is equally well designed. The counting room is about 31 x 22 feet. Then comes the cashier's office 12 x 20 and vault 8 x 12 2 , and the board room about 16 x 25. A stairway from the counting room leads to the safe deposit vault in the basement. The second floor is divided into six offices, five on the Chorro street front about 15 feet square, the front office being 18 2 x 22 2 . The building is to be heated by steam and lighted by electricity, and is to be elaborately finished in every particular.^{xxi}

This was quite a change for an isolated community that was still constructing adobe buildings in the 1860s and 70s. It was a promise of things to come. The former bank building is on the Master List of Historic Resources for the City of San Luis Obispo.

The William Shipsey residence was constructed in 1894. In a newspaper article on the work taking place at the planing mill of Waite & Ryan, the Shipsey house was described.

“Another order which is now at hand is the work for the house of Mr. Wm. Shipsey, which includes the mouldings, doors, windows and fancy work for that elaborate specimen of architecture, and we may remark that Mr. Laird, the architect, has a great love for highly ornamental wood work and makes quite heavy demands on the mill men. The job will probably keep Messrs. Waite & Ryan busy for the next few weeks.”^{xxii}

Other architectural efforts included the 1893 Rectory for the historic St. Stephens Episcopal Church that was first constructed in 1873 and the Call Building at 894 Monterey Street constructed in 1895. “H. S. Laird, the well known architect,” drew up the plans and specifications for the “modern” two-story commercial Call Building.^{xxiii} The Peterson residence was completed in 1896. “H. S. Laird was the architect, and his splendid talent in that line, so well known to the people of this city is displayed to good advantage.”^{xxiv}

An important year in Laird's career occurred in 1903 when he was in his mid-sixties. Three buildings that he completed in that year are on the Master List of Historic Resources for the City of San Luis Obispo. One is a residence that was described in great detail in the local press of the day and another was Laird's plans for the First Presbyterian Church. The most important was the commercial building that is known as the Warden/Tower Building that still occupies the primary corner in the business district of San Luis Obispo. The project based on the plans and specifications of Laird went out for bid at the end of the year.

This building although not the largest will probably be the handsomest structure in the city. It will occupy the northeast corner of Higuera and Chorro streets where the old wooden buildings burned and will have a frontage on Higuera street of 70 2 feet and on Chorro street of 91 feet. It will be two stories high with the main entrance in the center of Higuera street. A cupola clock tower will surmount this entrance and a Seth Thomas clock with bell will indicate the time of day to all. The material will be stone, pressed brick, terra cotta and steel.^{xxv}

By 1912, Hilamon Spencer Laird had retired and at age 77 was living in a small home on San Luis Obispo's “Nob Hill” one block away from the Shipsey House. His impact on the community is evident even today with several of his buildings remaining and prominent in the City of San Luis Obispo.

Registered architects of the period rarely worked in San Luis Obispo prior to the early 1900s. No official architect register with Laird's name has been found. This does not do his legacy justice in the county seat of San Luis Obispo. He was

^{xxi} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 2 September 1891.

^{xxii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 13 July 1894.

^{xxiii} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 12 February 1895.

^{xxiv} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 5 April 1896.

^{xxv} *San Luis Obispo Morning Tribune*, 12 December 1903.

Draft

referred to as “the well known architect” throughout his career in San Luis Obispo and was certainly “well known” making an impact on the community he served for over twenty-five years.

There was no other architect practicing in San Luis Obispo that more defined the character of the community during the period of economic growth and speculation that both preceded the railroad coming to San Luis Obispo and continued until the tracks were completed to Los Angeles in 1904. By 1915, the growth of San Luis Obispo slowed and architectural styles were changing. The period of speculation and exuberance was over; houses became smaller. The Craftsman Bungalow, often built from a kit, became popular in a community that settled back into being a quiet county seat. Later, the emerging popularity of Spanish Revival became the design choice sprinkled with other various revivals amongst the housing districts of the City of San Luis Obispo. The Shipsey House remains as a significant example of the earlier period and its architect, Hilamon Spencer Laird.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Contextual Setting

The first known recorded European contact in San Luis Obispo occurred on September 6, 1769 when the Spanish land expedition, led by the Governor of Baja California, Gaspar de Portolá, arrived from Loreto, Baja Sur, via San Diego. At that time, Fr. Crespí gave the name La Cañada de Natividad de Nuestra Señora near the location where Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was founded three years later.^{xxvi} The time of greatest growth for the Mission was between 1790 and 1810 (Kocher 1972).^{xxvii} Unfortunately, the annual reports that were filed by the Mission Fathers giving the extent of growth and construction for the first twenty-five years are missing. Mill Street, the location of the Shipsey House, was felt to have been named after a part of an aqueduct system that brought water from springs to the mission reservoir.

Later in 1822, Mexico, including California, achieved independence from Spain and the missions began to be secularized.^{xxviii} Ownership of the large Mission ranchos and outposts were petitioned for by Mexican citizens and awarded to them by their new government.

1846, the American Flag was raised in Monterey, briefly the capital of California, thus heralding the beginning of the American Period. Many languages were spoken in the town of San Luis Obispo at this time when it struggled to form a community under the laws of the United States Government. Small adobes housed saloons and not much else during the 1850s. Reading and writing were not common skills and lawyers were needed to resolve the land court cases resulting from the breakup of the large rancho tracts of land.

Besides English and Spanish in the newspapers, French, German, Portugese and Italian were also common voices in the small hamlet that still thought of itself as a pueblo. Many residents originally came to California to work the goldfields in the north. Some became disillusioned, drifted south and stayed in San Luis Obispo. San Luis Obispo, the county seat served an agricultural community that was rather isolated. Markets in San Francisco were reached by way of small ports along the coast.

People had already begun to settle along Mill Street when the 1872 Act to Reincorporate the Town of San Luis Obispo was passed, one hundred years after Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was founded. This allowed the town to appoint an Attorney and Surveyor and finally address civic improvements such as the opening and grading of roads, addressing sanitation and caring for the roads within the Town limits.^{xxix} Finally, the first County Courthouse was constructed in 1873. Lawyers were still involved in solving land issues remaining from the Mexican Period as well as growing land speculation fueled by the promise of good available land.

By the late 1880s, the town had gone from adobe to wood construction and was entering an era of brick commercial buildings that formed an increasingly bustling downtown. Brick construction, an improvement offering more protection from fires, began encouraging local businesses to build grander, more permanent structures. At about the same time, speculators were gambling on the Southern Pacific Railroad building a coastal line from San Francisco to Los Angeles. In 1886, the rails entered San Miguel at the northern county line. Near the line of the proposed tracks, a grand hotel - the Ramona - was opened in San Luis Obispo in 1888. However, it took the railroad until 1894 to reach San Luis Obispo after building a series of tunnels to descend the grade into town. That was the same year the Shipsey House was built.

^{xxvi} Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O. F. M., *Mission San Luis Obispo in the Valley of the Bears* (Mission Santa Barbara, 1933), 7.

^{xxvii} Paul H. Kocher, *Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa 1772-1972* (San Luis Obispo: Blake Printing & Publishing, 1972), 27.

^{xxviii} Kocher, *Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa 1772-1972*, 47.

^{xxix} Joseph A. Carotenuti, *San Luis Obispo 1850-1876* (San Luis Obispo: Privately published, 2006), 39.

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The impact of the Southern Pacific Railroad coming in 1894 and the development of the California Polytechnic State University in the early 1900s forever changed the future of San Luis Obispo. Comparable affects in the community weren't felt until World War I, the Great Depression and World War II.

The Historic Mill Street District once supported a residential community that was closely associated with the functions of the county seat. They included past County Assessors, attorneys, the County Clerk/Recorder, Judges and Court Reporter. All with unique contributions to early development of the court system in San Luis Obispo County. The Shipsey House reflects that part of the history of San Luis Obispo during its period of change. Today, several of the former residences, some that were constructed by Joseph Maino, have been converted into offices for the legal profession still conveniently located near the courthouse.

Property History

The property containing the Shipsey House at 1266 Mill Street is located within the original boundaries of the town. The layout is depicted on the 1870 Map of the Town of San Luis Obispo that was surveyed by R. R. Harris and H. D. Ward. No structures are shown nor the name of property owner given for the project parcel at that time. However, a deed was filed on September 27, 1870 in which the property was deeded from Maria J. (Pico) Forrester to Mary F. Parkhurst.^{xxx}

A Petition for Grant of land was presented by W. W. Hays, the first San Luis Obispo doctor, in July 7, 1871. The document states that; A...petitioner further represents that he has taken possession of the said land for the purpose of boring an Artesian Well...., for the purpose of supplying the town with water and for his own benefit. Land consists of Lots 1-6 (all) in block 39 surrounded by Toro, Peach, Mill and Essex Streets (Johnson Avenue).^{xxxii} The 1874 AMap of the County of San Luis Obispo@ published by R. R. Harris depicts W. W. Hays as the owner of the entire block (39)

An 1882 AMap of the City of San Luis Obispo, that was compiled by Hubert C. Ward and drawn by P. A. Forrester gives additional information. Forrester was an attorney from Pennsylvania who came to the county in 1857. He was District Attorney from 1861 to 1864. The map is located at the office of the San Luis Obispo County Clerk/Recorder. The map splits the block in half with M. J. Forrester owning the portion surrounded by Peach, Essex and Mill Streets and C. J. Russell owning the portion surrounded by Peach, Toro and Mill Streets. It is the same Maria J. Forrester that was on the first deed in 1870.

In May 24, 1884, Mary F. Parkhurst deeded the lot to William Buckley.^{xxxiii} On Nob Hill, along Mill and Palm Streets, lots were sold and several elegant homes were being planned. Finally, William Buckley deeded the undeveloped lot in March 20, 1893 to William Shipsey.^{xxxiii}

Originally, three other structures were a part of the property. Besides the Shipsey residence there was a carriage house, stable and storage building.^{xxxiv} By the time of William Shipsey=s death in 1922, the lot had been split on the Mill Street frontage reducing the Shipsey House portion to a frontage of sixty feet. The lot that was split from the parcel contained the stable which was removed and a new residence built. After William Shipsey=s death, the property was further divided through the sheet metal garage that was constructed a few years prior to Shipsey=s death. The garage was entered from Essex Street (Johnson Avenue) and was removed when the lot was split giving thirty-nine feet frontage on Essex Street (Johnson Avenue). The back of the property became 777 Essex Street (Johnson Avenue) and the carriage house that already was relocated and converted into a rental on that portion became a separate property.^{xxxv} The storage building was demolished in 1992, as was required by the City of San Luis Obispo because it was a nonconforming structure on a mud still (City of San Luis Obispo 2007).^{xxxvi}

The ownership of the property remained in the Shipsey family until 2008.

^{xxx} Deed Book L:512

^{xxxii} Betsy Bertrando, *Annotated Index to the Historic Documents "Petitions for Land in the City of San Luis Obispo"* (Prepared by Bertrando & Bertrando Research Consultants for the City of San Luis Obispo, 1996), II - 6.

^{xxxiii} Deed Book S:318

^{xxxiii} Deed Book 19:232

^{xxxiv} Sanborn Map Company 1903

^{xxxv} Sanborn Map Company 1926

^{xxxvi} City of San Luis Obispo 2007

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

Angel, Myron. *History of San Luis Obispo County, California*. Thompson & West, Oakland, California, 1883. Facsimile reprint Valley Publishers, Fresno, CA 1979.

Bertrando, Betsy. *Annotated Index to the Historic Documents "Petitions for Land in the City of San Luis Obispo."* Prepared by Bertrando & Bertrando Research Consultants for the City of San Luis Obispo, 1996.

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Haggard, Ken. *A Brief Architectural History of San Luis Obispo County*. Central Coast Press, San Luis Obispo, CA. 2008.

Harris, Sandra. *William Shipsey in the History of Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo*. 2003. SandraH@netcom.com

Kirker, Harold. *California's Architectural Frontier*. Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City. 1986.

Kocher, Paul H. *Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa 1772-1972*. Blake Printing & Publishing, Inc., San Luis Obispo, California 1972.

Nicholson, Loren. *Rails Across the Ranchos*. California Heritage Publishing Associates, San Luis Obispo, CA 1993.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)

____ previously listed in the National Register

____ previously determined eligible by the National Register

____ designated a National Historic Landmark

____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office

____ Other State agency

____ Federal agency

Local government

____ University

Other - San Luis Obispo County Historical Society Archives

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>10</u> Zone	<u>760467</u> Easting	<u>1897667</u> Northing	3	<u>10</u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u>10</u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u>10</u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

That part of lot six (6) in block thirty-nine (39) of the City of San Luis Obispo described as follows:

Commencing at the corner of Mill Street and Johnson Avenue and the lot runs northwesterly along the line of Johnson Avenue for 111 feet; from the corner southwesterly it continues for a distance of 60 feet.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The lot is associated with the William Shipsey House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Bertrando, researcher

organization Bertrando & Bertrando Research Consultants date July 27, 2009

street & number 267 Foothill Boulevard telephone 805 543-7831

City or town San Luis Obispo state CA zip code 93405

e-mail betsyb@charter.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: William Shipsey House

City or Vicinity: San Luis Obispo

County: San Luis Obispo **State:** CA

Photographer: Luther Bertrando

Date Photographed: 15 July 2009

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 4. CA_SANLUIOBISPOCOUNTY_SHIPSEY_001.tif

View facing northwest

2 of 4. CA_SANLUIOBISPOCOUNTY_SHIPSEY_002.tif

Side of house facing southwest

3 of 4. CA_SANLUIOBISPOCOUNTY_SHIPSEY_003.tif

Rear of house facing south

4 of 4. CA_SANLUIOBISPOCOUNTY_SHIPSEY_004.tif

New non-contributing garage facing southwest

Property Owner:

name Matthew Quaglino

street & number 643 Grove Street

telephone 805 543-0560

city or town San Luis Obispo

state CA

zip code 93401

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

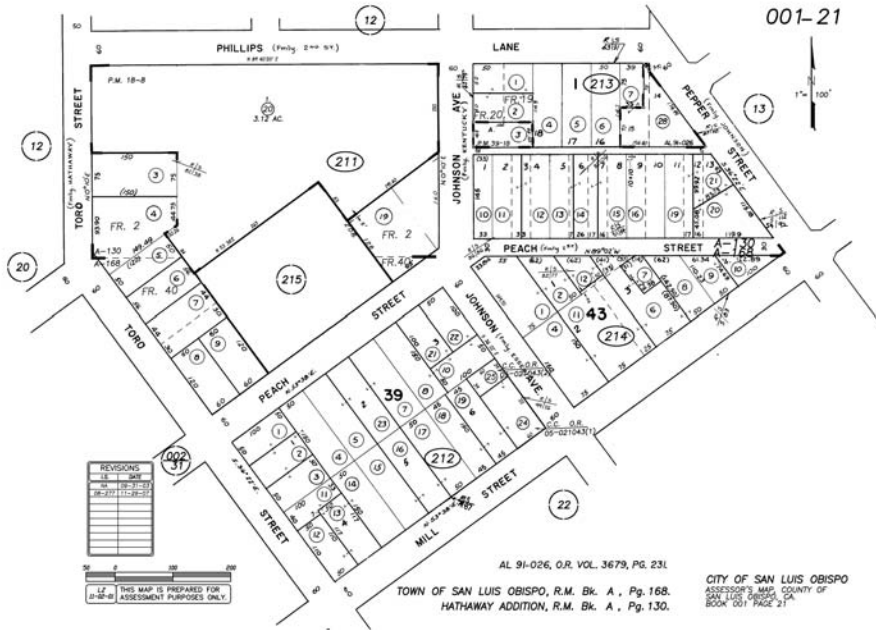
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William Shipsey House
Name of Property
San Luis Obispo County, CA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Documentation Page 1

Sketch Map



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Draft

William Shipsey House
Name of Property
San Luis Obispo County, CA
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 2

Historic Photographs

- William Shipsey House, 1904 – page 1 of 3
- Mayor William Shipsey and the Board of Trustees, 1900 – page 2 of 3
- Work of Architect Hilamon Spencer Laird – page 3 of 3
 - Corral de Piedra Schoolhouse, 1889
 - First National Bank, 1891