

CITY OF BERKELEY
Ordinance #4694 N.S.
LANDMARK APPLICATION

Laura Belle Marsh Kluegel House

2667–2669 Le Conte Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709

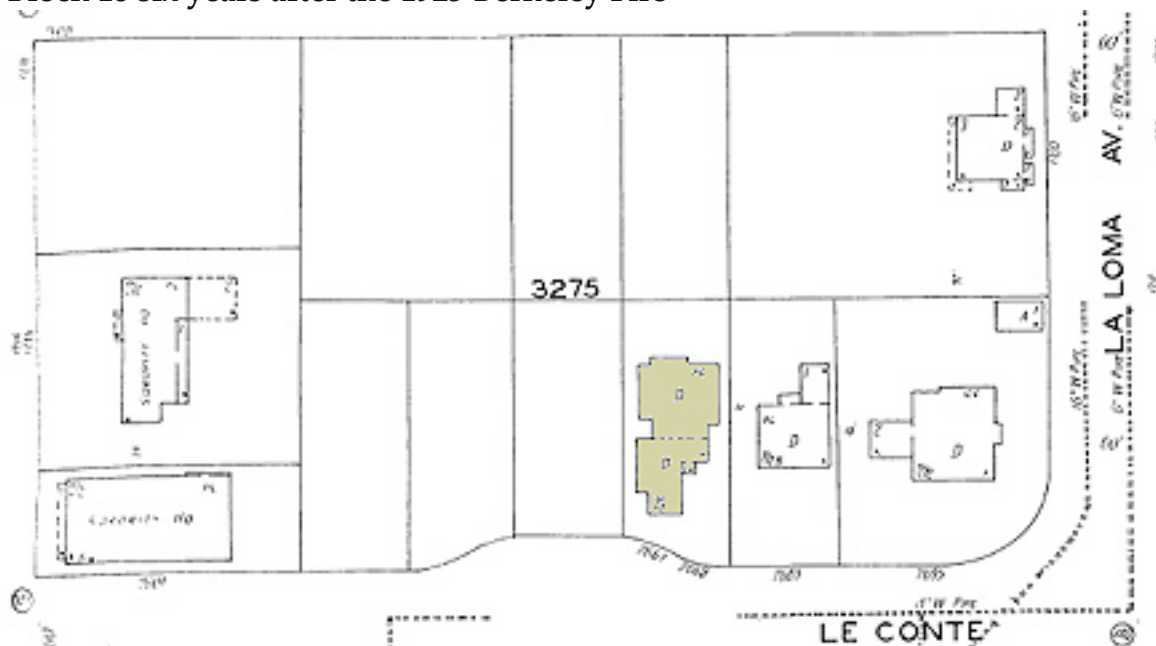


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1. **Street Address:** 2667-2669 Le Conte Avenue
County: Alameda **City:** Berkeley **ZIP:** 94709-1024
2. **Assessor's Parcel Number:** 58-2206-4 (historic: Block 18, Lot 13)
Dimensions: 50 feet x 125 feet
Cross Street: La Loma Avenue
3. **Is property on any survey?** Berkeley Urban Conservation Survey;
Northside Survey;
State Inventory: No **National Register:** No
4. **Application for Landmark Includes:**
Building(s): Yes **Other Feature(s):** Landmarked Retaining Wall
Landscape or Open Space: Natural Yes
Other: Entire Property
5. **Historic Name:** Kluegel House
Other Names: Hargo Bind Sadan; Sikh Ashram; Kundalini Yoga Center
6. **Date of Construction:** 1911
Factual: Yes, building permit #1477 (29 August 1911)
7. **Architect:** John Hudson Thomas
Contractor: Peterson & Pearson
8. **Style:** Shingled Woodframe, First Bay Region Tradition
9. **Original Owner:** Laura Belle Marsh Kluegel
Original Use: Dual family residence
10. **Present Owner:** Sonia Harris
P.O. Box 1194 Berkeley, CA 94701
Present Occupant: Unoccupied
11. **Present Use:** Rooming house
Current Zoning: R-2AH **Adjacent Property Zoning:** R-2AH
12. **Present Condition of Property:**
Exterior: Poor **Interior:** Fair **Grounds:** Poor

Block 18 six years after the 1923 Berkeley Fire



Source: Sanborn insurance map, 1929. All the buildings west of the Kluegel House (shaded) burned down in 1923. The three houses east of the Kluegel House are fire survivors (counterclockwise): Bentley House (A.H. Broad, 1900; City of Berkeley Landmark), Hatfield House (Julia Morgan, 1908), and Bolton House (William Knowles, 1899).

13. Description:

The Kluegel House is a three-story-plus-attic wood-frame Brown Shingle of approximately 5,827 square feet. Built on a hillside above the street level, the house simulates the contour of the hill, rising in height toward the rear, where its peak reaches 44 feet. The street frontage is curved to follow the curve of the street. A concrete retaining wall, part of the Hillside Club Street Improvements in the Daley's Scenic Park Tract (City of Berkeley Landmark #72), runs along the street frontage. The property is approached from the street by a flight of concrete steps.

The building was designed as a dual residence, with one dwelling occupying the front part and the second occupying the rear. They contained six and seven rooms, respectively. Two front doors served these dwellings. A raised porch leads to the west door, which opens upon the main staircase. This presumably led to the dwelling in the rear. On the east side, an arched front door sheltered by an Arts & Crafts porch roof opened into a vestibule that most likely served as the entrance to the front dwelling. The door on the east side originally faced south. Following alterations in 1976, the door was reoriented to face east.

The building has an irregular shape and massing, with a complex roofline featuring pairs of overlapping gables. In the front part, the gables face south toward the street. In the rear part, which rises higher than the front, the gables face sideways, toward east and west. A profusion of windows in various shapes

and sizes—fixed, casement, double-hung, arched, rectangular, polygonal, single, or multiple—may be observed on all the exterior walls. Originally, all the windows featured multiple rectangular panes. Although most of the original windows remain, some have lost their divided panes and acquired single panes. Three aluminum windows have been installed in the rear attic gables. A polygonal window next to the west chimney has been replaced with a vinyl substitute with fake muntins.

The Kluegel House is situated in Daley's Scenic Park, the first residential tract north of the University of California campus, where the Hillside Club had its beginning in the last decade of the 19th century, and where the First Bay Region Tradition in architecture had its first major expression. This house is an excellent example of that tradition.

The Kluegel House immediately after the 1923 Berkeley Fire



The Kluegel House (left & rear right), seen from the northwest. The adjacent house to the west (front right) burned completely and was demolished.

The Kluegel House was designed by John Hudson Thomas in the early days of his solo practice, a year after his partnership with George T. Plowman was dissolved. Among the architect's independent projects, this building is a rarity, being one of a mere handful with a wooden exterior and the only originally designed house with a fully shingled exterior. It also appears to have been the only duplex designed by Thomas in Berkeley.

The house barely survived the 1923 Berkeley Fire, as it was on the very edge of the burned area (see map). Although its west façade was badly scorched, the building remained standing. As a result of post-fire repairs and changing use over the ensuing decades, the Kluegel House underwent various modifications (see History). However, these did not change its original footprint and massing. The most notable alteration was made in 1976 by the Sikh ashram then in residence. They enclosed a deck leading to the east front door, reconfigured the entrance on that side, and added a domed turret at the southeast corner. The turret was used to house the Sikhs' religious shrine.

Owing to the building's size, the alterations—although not always appropriate to the historic context—do not significantly affect overall appearance. Applying the California Office of Historic Preservation's criteria for evaluating visual integrity, it can be concluded that:

- The building retains sufficient historic fabric and character-defining features to convey its historical significance.
- The building would be easily recognizable by someone who knew it during its period of significance.

The distinguishing design features of the Kluegel House include the following:

Complex massing. Set back from the street and fronted by a concrete retaining wall, this large building with its numerous facets, bays, and recesses cannot be seen in its entirety from any vantage point. Viewed from any direction, it presents an imposing image.

Parapet gables, buttresses & dramatic roofline. As can often be observed in John Hudson Thomas' work, the house is crowned by cascading and overlapping steep gables facing all four directions. The front gables face north and south, while the rear gables face east and west. Parapet gables and buttresses were design elements that Thomas began using in 1911. The parapet gables on the Kluegel House echo in shingle the stucco parapet gables that Thomas included in his own house and in the two adjoining Pratt houses on Indian Rock Ave. In the rear of the Kluegel House, the roof boldly descends in a single sweep from the fourth-level attic to just above the ground floor.

Patterned brick chimney. The building has two red brick chimneys. The taller central chimney, visible only above the roof, is currently shingled. A shorter external chimney is located on the west side. This chimney's design is very similar to that of the stucco chimney Thomas built on his own house (Pratt-Thomas House, 800 Shattuck Ave., 1911). Tapering toward the top, the chimney is decorated with a Charles Rennie Mackintosh-inspired symmetrical design in raised brick along the sides and an inset central channel running vertically along its length.

Creative use of windows. Numerous windows of varying shapes and sizes may be seen on all four façades. These include casements, double-hung, and fixed windows with divided rectangular panes. The top front windows and those on either side of the west chimney are polygonal. Of particular interest is a

large, arched window above the entry porch on the west side. Glazed with amber glass, this elegant window illuminates the main stairwell and is divided into three vertical sections, each with ten panes.

Arched east entrance door. One of the original entrance doors that served the duplex, the east front door is thick, arched, and set in an arched doorway, although the door has been relocated from its original position, and its original Arts & Crafts roof was not preserved. Historically, the door faced south and opened into a vestibule. Presently, it faces east and opens directly into the communal living and dining rooms.

A wide arched band surrounds the central door panel, which is divided horizontally and vertically into three parts. At the top of the central panel is a triptych of glass panes that together form an arch. The panes are divided from the door's main central panel by a wide horizontal band of wood. The two vertical mullions separating the three panes are repeated in the vertical battens below the horizontal band.

John Hudson Thomas was fond of arched doors and included them in several other projects of the same period. They may be seen in the John Hopkins Spring Estate, 1960 San Antonio Road (1912, City of Berkeley Landmark #231) and the Anthony House, 1010 Cragmont Ave., Berkeley (1915).

Shingled exterior. While John Hudson Thomas was working with George T. Plowman (1906–1909), the firm designed several shingled residences (including the Maxwell House at 15 Hillside Court, attributed by Prof. Maxwell's daughter to Thomas alone). However, once Thomas had established his independent practice, he designed primarily in stucco. Although Thomas built a few wood-exterior houses during his solo practice, the Cluegel House appears to be his only fully shingled original building from this period.

Other John Hudson Thomas wood-exterior houses from the 1910s:

- Dungan House, 41 Oakvale Ave. (1911)—redwood siding, stucco & shingle
- Hoyt House, 30 San Mateo Road (1911)—partially shingled (ground floor)
- Hunt House, 26 Tunnel Road (1912)—redwood siding, shingle & stucco
- Randolph House, 636 Vincente Ave. (1913)—redwood siding

Two other fully shingled houses in which the architect had a hand during his solo practice were remodels: the Mouser-Parsons House, 21 Mosswood Road, a Victorian farm house built in 1888 and remodeled by Thomas in 1910, and the Captain Maury House, 1317 Shattuck Avenue (City of Berkeley Landmark #67), built in the 1870s and remodeled by Thomas in 1922.

14. History:

The neighborhood & the lot.

Daley's Scenic Park was the first residential subdivision in the North Berkeley Hills. Bounded by Hearst Avenue on the south, Arch Street on the west, Cedar

Street on the north, and La Vereda Road and Highland Place on the east, the tract initially comprised 26 city blocks immediately to the north of the U.C. Berkeley campus. On 26 August 1889, owner **Thomas Daley** filed a subdivision map of the tract at the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County. Two years later, the entire tract plus an adjacent tract to the east were purchased by **Frank M. Wilson**, a wealthy Chicago businessman who began selling lots for houses. In 1894, Wilson built his own house, a barn-like Brown Shingle designed by Frederick Esty, at 2400 Ridge Road, on the site now occupied by the GTU Library. An early member of the Hillside Club, Wilson hosted Club meetings at his home.

Wilson founded the Scenic Park Realty Company, which was incorporated in 1898. On 30 January 1906, Scenic Park Realty Co. sold Lot 13 in Block 18 (future site of the Kluegel House) to the eminent scientist **Jacques Loeb** (1859–1924), who headed the Physiology Department at the University of California. Loeb lived in Berkeley from 1902 until 1910, during which time he was twice nominated to the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his work in the following areas: bacteriology; histology of the nervous system; experimental morphology and comparative physiology; and artificial parthenogenesis. Professor Loeb's own house was located on the north side of Block 18, at 2616 Virginia Street.

The deed of sale to Jacques Loeb excepted a portion from Lot 13 in Block 18.

A piece of land off of the front of said lot which is to be used as street purposes. Said piece to be used for street purposes is described as follows:

Commencing at the Southeast corner of said lot; and running thence in a curve line in a Northwesterly direction to a point on the Western line of said lot distant not more than 20 feet on the last named line from the Southwest corner of said lot. Said curved line verging Northerly.

The portion excepted corresponded to a curve in the street. Le Conte Avenue was curved and divided at this point to accommodate a large oak tree that grew in the middle of the street, in accordance with the wishes of the neighbors and the design of the Hillside Club. The Club's minutes for 12 December 1903 report:

On motion of Mrs. Bitting [of 1731 La Loma Ave.], seconded by Mr. Doyle, the President appointed Mr. Coxhead, Mr. Maybeck, Mr. Arthur Bolton [of 1700 La Loma Ave.] & Mr. Chick a Committee to draw up plans for laying out the intersection of Bonte [now La Loma] and Le Conte Avenues and to submit same to the Board of Trustees.

In its annual report of 2 September 1905, the Club reported the results of that effort:

One of the most important pieces of practical work which the Club has accomplished is the surveying of Le Conte Avenue from Le Roy to Bonte, and of the intersecting blocks of Bonte as a basis for an artistic treatment of grades and retaining walls, which would take into consideration the preservation of the live-oaks and involve as little alteration as possible of

the present topography. A committee consisting of Messrs. Frick, Coxhead and Bolton have had this work in charge and the careful surveys were made at the personal expense of Mr. Bolton. In addition to preparing a charming plan for these two streets, providing for a small bridge across the creek, etc., the committee has interviewed the interested property owners and has obtained the cooperation of practically all who are most directly concerned in the improvement.

Owners, residents, and alterations.

When Professor Loeb left Berkeley to join the Rockefeller Institute (now Rockefeller University), his residence on Virginia St. became the home of the Abracadabra fraternity, and Lot 13 was sold to **Laura Belle Marsh Kluegel** (1863–1928). Laura Belle Marsh was born in Indiana. Her father was a real-estate dealer, and the family was quite mobile. In the 1870 census record, the Marsh family is listed in Des Moines, Iowa. Ten years later, they were residing in Hyde Park, Illinois. Sometime during the 1880s, the Marshes moved to California. In 1889, Laura Belle married Edward A. Kluegel. Ohio-born, Kluegel resided in Oakland and worked as bookkeeper for Christy & Wise, wool commission merchants in San Francisco. Following their wedding, Belle and Edward lived on Linden Street in Oakland. Belle's parents lived with them.

Laura Belle's elder sister, Jessie Katherine Marsh, married the wealthy San Francisco businessman Allen G. Freeman and was a founder of the Berkeley Day Nursery on 6th Street. The Freemans were Unitarians, and when the First Unitarian Church (A.C. Schweinfurth, 1898) was built on Dana St. and Bancroft Way in Berkeley, they established their residence nearby, in a duplex at 2401 Telegraph Avenue, where they remained until 1904. As members of the Maybeck-Keeler circle, the Freemans had many social connections on Berkeley's Northside and eventually purchased a large lot on the corner of Le Roy Ave. and Ridge Road. In 1903, they commissioned Ernest Coxhead to design for them a grand clinker-brick residence, which they named Allenoque Manor. While this house was being built, the Freemans lived across the street at the Cloyne Court Hotel. Living with them at the time was the recently widowed Laura Belle Kluegel. She continued to reside with her sister and brother-in-law after they occupied Allenoque Manor, and remained there until her own house was completed, probably in 1912. Her first directory listing on Le Conte Ave. appeared in 1913.

According to the building permit, the Kluegel House was built as a 2-1/2 story, 13-room building containing dwellings for two families. The exterior was specified as "shingles." The house was constructed at a cost of \$8,340, a significant amount for the period. In the assessment rolls of the time, it was valued at \$5,000, the second highest valuation on the block.

Mrs. Kluegel was an art and nature lover. For a number of years, she was an officer of the Agnes Meeker Gift Shop, Inc., an establishment purveying art goods at 2310 Telegraph Avenue, near the corner of Bancroft Way. The shop's advertisement in the 1910 *Blue & Gold* described the business as "House Decorators and Art Furnishings," offering "gifts suitable for birthdays, weddings, and the holidays." Agnes Meeker was president of the business, and Mrs. Kluegel was listed as [corporate] secretary. According to the 1910 census record, she was the proprietor at the time.

Like other educated women of her milieu, Mrs. Kluegel was a member of the Cooper Ornithological Club—now the Cooper Ornithological Society, one of the largest ornithological societies in the world. It was organized in 1893 by a small group of individuals in California who were interested in the study of birds. The name of the Society commemorates Dr. James G. Cooper (1830-1902), who was one of the earliest to study birds in the far western United States.

Mrs. Kluegel joined the Cooper Ornithological Club in 1916, while she was living on Le Conte Ave. (the house address at the time was 2623 Le Conte). Her neighbor, the teacher Lydia Atterbury, who lived across the street at 2620 (now 2656) Le Conte Ave., had joined the club a year earlier. Around 1919, Mrs. Kluegel moved to Carmel, but her name continued to appear in the Cooper Ornithological Club's member rosters until her death in 1928. Her field notes on sightings of the Clarke Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*) in Carmel were published in *The Condor* in 1920.

Had Mrs. Kluegel not moved to Carmel, she no doubt would have joined 47 of her neighbors who in November 1919 wrote a letter to the Berkeley City Council to "protest against the removal of trees or shrubs within such district, by employees of the City, without first submitting proposal for such removal to the majority of the property owners in said district, or to all the property owners within a radius of two blocks from-such proposed removal."

In August 1927, Mrs. Kluegel was one of the founding members of the Carmel Art Association, organized "to advance the knowledge of and interest in art, create a spirit of cooperation and fellowship between artists and the people." She passed away the following year, as noted in Vol. XXXII of *The Condor*:

By the will of the late Mrs. Edward A. Kluegel (Belle Marsh Kluegel) the Cooper Ornithological Club receives \$500.00, bequeathed to it as an addition to the endowment fund. Increments of this character mean permanency in the Club's capacity to publish and thus distinctly encourage the Business Managers and the Editors.

Mrs. Kluegel was a regular attendant upon Northern Division meetings for many years. While not an active participant in our programs, she evinced lively interest and her pleasant personality is lastingly remembered as making the occasions pleasurable. Her death took place at Carmel on the 28th day of May, 1928.

The Kluegel House continued to be used as a dual residence until 1950. From the second half of the 1920s until the late 1930s, **Antonio Perry** occupied one half of the building (2669 Le Conte). Two occupants of the other half were widows. **Jessie H. Ross** (1872–1970), who during the 1920s and early '30s had lived with her husband Donald at 2540 Le Conte Ave., moved after his death (c. 1935) to 2667 Le Conte. Mrs. Ross was followed in 1941 by **May E. Pearce**, another widow. One would assume that these widows rented out rooms to students. Mrs. Ellen Bentley, who lived next door from 1941 until 1996, remembered shipyard workers boarding there during the war, followed by co-eds. In 1944, Mrs. Pearce gifted the building to her son, **Gerald G. Pearce**, who apparently never lived there. In a 1946 building permit application to erect a fire escape in the rear, Pearce described the property as a "hotel." But the same year, he sold the building in two half interests to a pair of up-and-coming academics from the

University of California. **Charles Richard Grau** settled in at 2667 Le Conte, while **Sigurd and Laurabelle Burckhardt** took over 2669 Le Conte.

Charles Richard "Dick" Grau (1920–2002) graduated from U.C. Berkeley in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and received his Ph.D. in animal nutrition from U.C. Berkeley in 1946. While attending college, he met Lois Sandner, a fellow student. They were married in 1941 and continued to live in Berkeley, where he was a professor of Poultry Husbandry, until 1954, when his department, which later became the department of Avian Sciences and is now the department of Animal Sciences, moved to the U.C. Davis campus.

Grau served as a professor of Avian Sciences at U.C. Davis (he was chair of the department from 1969 to 1976) until he retired in 1990 after 50 years of service with the U.C. system. His research interests included nutrition and physiology of poultry, seabirds, and other wild birds. He was one of the world's experts on eggs. His background in studying the effects of oil and pesticides on shorebirds led him to become an active supporter of many environmental causes.

Sigurd Burckhardt (1916–1966) was born in Bielefeld, Germany, where he completed his secondary education. His family was relatively large and had long been working to earn enough money to send one of the children to America. When that sum had been accumulated, Sigurd seemed the most worthy recipient owing to his scholarly inclinations and ambitious intellect. In the autumn of 1938, he matriculated at U.C. Berkeley, where he received a B.A. in German in 1940 and, after some interruptions of his graduate studies by employment in a war industry and as a high-school teacher, received his M.A. in English in 1945.

From 1947 to 1953, Burckhardt was employed as an instructor and assistant professor at Saint Mary's College of California. In 1953, he entered Ohio State University, where he obtained his PhD and taught German language and literature. In 1963, he accepted a professorship at U.C. San Diego, where he was one of the founding members of the Department of Literature. Professor Burckhardt was a comparatist, with special interests in Shakespeare, Goethe, and Kleist, and also in literary theory. He played a central role in the establishment of the Revelle Humanities Sequence, which in form served as a model for such sequences at the other colleges. In 1963 he committed suicide. The distinguished professor Oskar Seidlin (1911–1984) wrote that "only those who know his work can fully appreciate what American literary criticism has lost with this premature death at the age of 50. His essays are of such quality that a posthumous volume of his Shakespeare papers was just published by the Princeton Press (Shakespearean Meanings, 1968); and a collection of his essays on German literature (Goethe, Kleist, Mörike) is being prepared by the Johns Hopkins Press."

The Burckhardt Prize is awarded each year to the most outstanding senior honors student majoring in Literature at UCSD.

By 1950, Charles Grau was sole owner of the Kluegel House, and he sold it to a young woman by the name of **Caroline J. Smith** (later Mitchell), who lived in part of the house for the first half-dozen years and rented rooms to students.

In December 1951, Ms. Smith filed an application for a building permit, indicating herself a designer and builder and proposing to do the following:

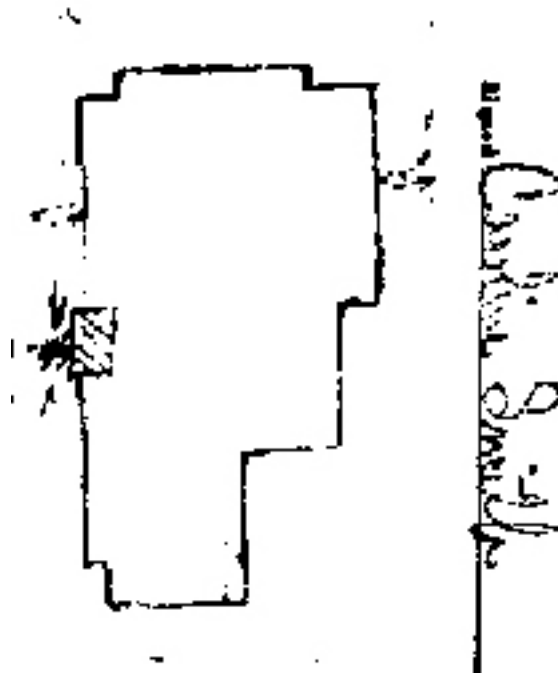
To create 2 laundry rooms with 2 bathrooms; to frame partition for door, [?] each room.

No drawings accompanied the application. In September 1952, Ms. Smith filed another application for a building permit, again signing as designer and builder. The scope of work proposed was as follows:

Construction of a 10' x 11' single story dining room. To replace back stairs & porch. Will consist of construction of foundation, extension of joists, flooring, erection of one wall & utilizing 3 existing walls, one wall containing 3 windows to be opened and maintained with two 2" x 8" headers. Includes installation of new windows and one door.

One wall existing in kitchen to be removed and kitchen area to be extended into large existing hall (does not include bearing wall).

This time she provided the drawing below. The hatched area on the west side is the location of the kitchen (ground floor) and laundry room (second floor). The dining room is located directly to the east. Drawing proportions are inaccurate.

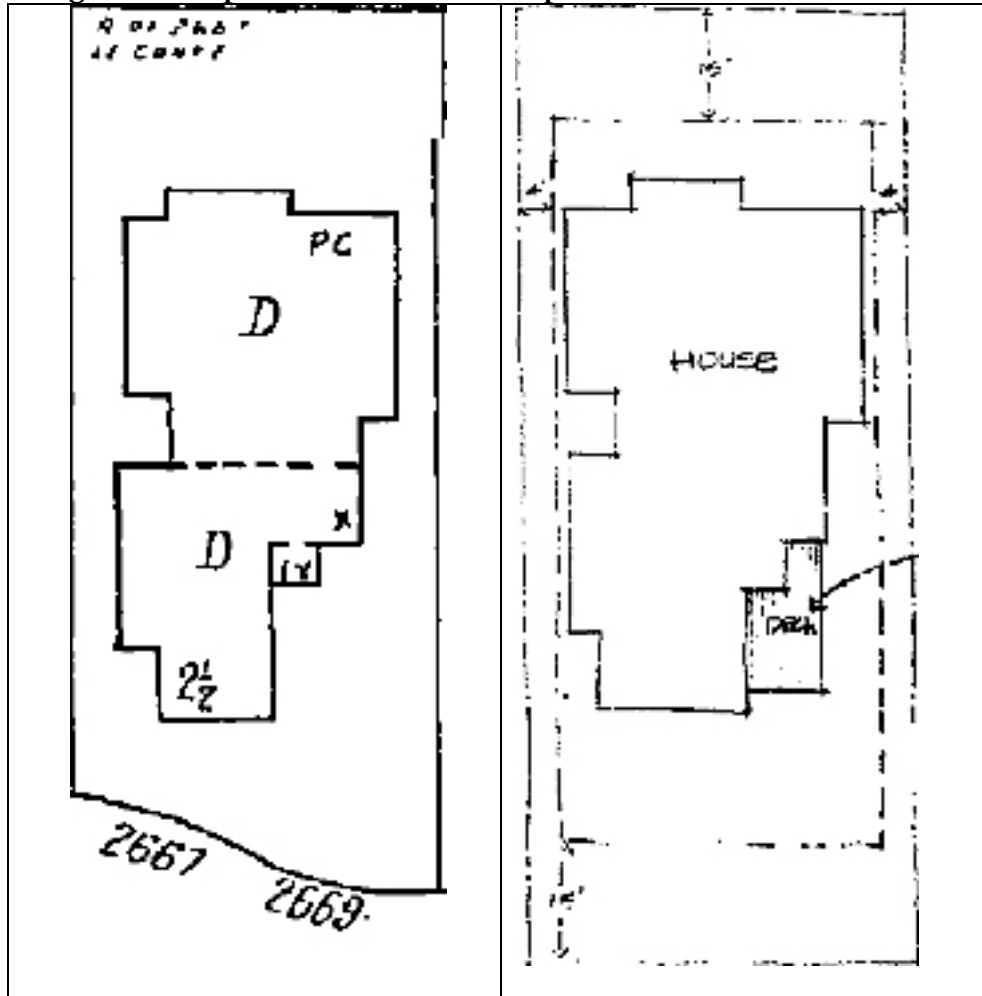


Eventually, Ms. Mitchell moved to Lafayette but continued to operate the building as a rooming house until 1976. Between 1964 and 1975 the house was repeatedly inspected, and numerous Housing Ordinance violations were reported. It was also during her tenure that a separate apartment was created on the ground floor.

In 1976, Ms. Mitchell sold the house to the **Siri Singh Sahib Corporation of Sikh Dharma**, which used it for the next twenty years as a religious center, providing housing for the Sikh Dharma community of Berkeley. No sooner had they moved in than Kim Allen, who lived at 1709 La Loma Ave., filed a formal complaint on the grounds that the "property is being used for yoga instruction commercially in a residentially zoned district." In response to an inspection, the city was informed on 23 February 1977 that "Mr. and Mrs. Khalsa have stopped

giving yoga instruction commercially and for profit. They now have no business operations at this address. They teach yoga commercially and for profit at their downtown Yoga Center." Ms. Allen left Berkeley several years later, and the Sikhs continued to offer Kundalini yoga classes on the premises until they moved to San Leandro in 1996.

Kluegel House plan in 1929/1950 and post-1976

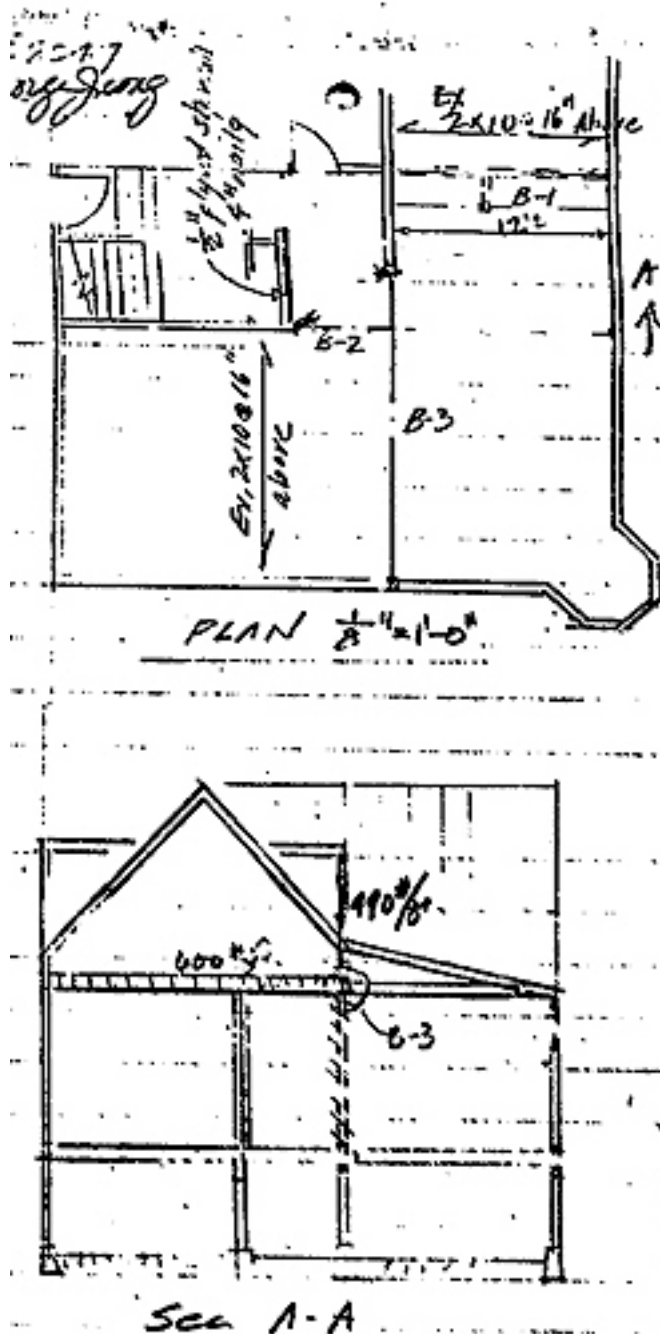


Sanborn maps, 1929 & 1950 (left) and Sikhs' plan, 1976.

In August 1976, the ashram submitted plans to enclose the deck leading to the east door and add a domed turret at the southeastern corner of the building. As part of this construction, the east door, which used to face south, was relocated and reoriented to face east.

Since the house stopped being a duplex, the west door had become the main entrance, leaving the one on the east to serve as a side door. By enclosing the deck, the Sikhs were able to enlarge their living room (used as assembly and worship room) and open it to the dining room. The reoriented east door now opens directly into this enlarged living-dining space.

It was most likely during the Sikhs' tenure that the front windows lost their multiple panes. They also reconstructed the retaining wall, which was found to be failing in a 1970 inspection report.



Floor plan and south façade elevation in the building permit application for enclosing the deck and constructing the corner turret, 1976

Facing declining membership in Berkeley, the Siri Singh Sahib Corporation was unable to maintain the house and sold it to the current owner in 1996. The house was used as a rooming house called "Le Conte House," serving primarily

foreign short-term students attending the University Extension's English Language Program (ELP).

During the early hours of 24 February 1997, a two-alarm fire broke out on the western side in the rear. The repairs included replacement of an external staircase descending from a small deck on the second floor.

In 2004, U.C. Extension terminated its English Language Program, and the last residents of "Le Conte House" left in June of that year. Since then, the house has stood empty.

The architect.

John Hudson Thomas (1878–1945) was born in Ward, Nevada and grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area. After graduating from Yale University, he began a special three-year graduate course in architecture at U.C. Berkeley, where he studied under Bernard Maybeck and John Galen Howard. Having completed his degree, Thomas worked for two years as a draftsman in Howard's office, where George T. Plowman was a supervisor at the time. In 1906, in advance of the residential building boom in the East Bay, Plowman and Thomas opened an office in Berkeley.

In early 1910, Plowman left Berkeley for Los Angeles, and John Hudson Thomas gained professional independence. His work and style during the 1910s were analyzed by Thomas Gordon Smith (now a distinguished architect, author, and professor of architecture at the University of Notre Dame), in his 1975 master's thesis at U.C. Berkeley. Smith observed:

Between 1910 and 1915, John Hudson Thomas produced a large number of houses in the San Francisco East Bay Area. They are idiosyncratic in style and derive from early twentieth century avant garde architecture in Europe and the United States. Thomas did not hold an exclusive set of criteria which governed his decisions in design. His imagery is drawn from the published work of the Glasgow School, the Viennese Secession, and the Prairie School, in addition to the work which he knew first-hand of Irving Gill, the Greene Brothers, Bernard Maybeck, and the Mission and Pueblo Revivals. [...]

Thomas' method of design was similar to the approach of two Bay Area eclectic designers of an earlier generation, Ernest Coxhead and Bernard Maybeck. Their work is a rich blend of motifs from diverse periods and cultures. Although Thomas confined himself to early twentieth century imagery, his process of design lends an awkward vitality to his buildings which is in line with the work of Coxhead and Maybeck.

Thomas' buildings of the early teens dominate their sites. A quality of indisputable presence provides a common ground for the diverse forms of his houses. [...] Thomas over-scaled certain parts of his buildings to give them a quality of solid mass. [...] Fortunately, his clients held a strong priority on individuality and allowed him to execute the inventive and sometimes bizarre forms which make his buildings distinctive. [...]

John Hudson Thomas developed his idiosyncratic approach to architecture during one of the most expansive periods of residential development in Oakland and Berkeley. From 1910 to 1920, Thomas'

practice consisted of residential commissions for middle and upper middle class clients in new East Bay subdivisions. The forms which his buildings took were influenced by the enterprising values of his clients and by the hilly topography on which his buildings stood. [...]

Hudson Thomas was intimately involved in defining the image of the new residential developments [...] The first houses which he built in the tracts were the image-setters. [...] They influenced the taste of potential clients and of contemporary architects. [...]

Hudson Thomas was the most innovative architect based in the East Bay involved in the residential development of the early teens. Throughout this period, Thomas and his San Francisco contemporaries, Bernard Maybeck and Louis Christian Mullgardt, were the only Bay Region architects who designed houses in a style which consistently reflected the progressive spirit of their times.

As architect Jim Stetson observed, Thomas' work after 1915 is tamer. There is less whimsy and a more literal interpretation of historical styles. Throughout his career though, Thomas paid particular attention to the siting of his buildings, taking full advantage of streams, views, and street exposure. Hallmarks of his work include picturesque silhouettes, bold massings, and interesting fenestration with great care taken to provide ample natural light.

A resident of North Berkeley, John Hudson Thomas was a member of the Hillside Club.

15. Context:

The Kluegel house is located in Daley's Scenic Park—the neighborhood just north of the University of California Campus. Here, the essence of what Berkeley stands for in the early development of the American Arts and Crafts Movement and the history of American residential architecture was expressed between 1893 and 1923. The presence of the university attracted intellectuals, artists, writers, naturalists, and businessmen to Berkeley who found the ideas of John Ruskin and William Morris compatible with their own.

When the lots were put on the market in 1889, Thomas Daley, the Scenic Park's original developer might have envisioned a park-like setting for Stick-style villas and Queen Anne cottages. What eventually took place was very different. The physical attributes of the tract itself—the hills, ravines, creeks, and ancient oaks—seem to have inspired a respectful architecture that would harmonize with the landscape. The significance of Daley's Scenic Park today lies in the fact that not only did a new type of residential architecture, identified as unique to the Bay Area, take hold here, but it was then promoted throughout the region by the neighborhood's Hillside Club. In June 1899, Hillside Club founder Madge Robinson, who lived at Weltevreden, on the corner of Le Conte and Le Roy Aves., published the article "The Hillside Problem" in *The House Beautiful*, espousing the club's principles. During the same period, the club's guru, Bernard Maybeck, was spreading the word locally. The *Berkeley World-Gazette* of 28 April 1899 announced that Maybeck would lecture on "Hillside Architecture" for the Hillside Club at the home of Frank Wilson on Ridge Road. The club's

indefatigable spokesman Charles Keeler published the book *The Simple Home* in 1904. He followed it in 1905 with *Hillside Club Suggestions for Berkeley Homes*. In 1906, Maybeck would publish the illustrated booklet *Hillside Building*.

Early Berkeleyans rejoiced in the natural landscape surrounding the small, but densely packed, settlement around the university campus. The hillsides and creek-fed canyons were readily available to walkers, birdwatchers, and amateur botanists. In 1898, Cornelius Beach Bradley wrote of the “number and variety” of “rambles” that were “a source of unending pleasure to those who have come to know them.” The natural beauty of the tract that became known as Daley’s Scenic Park was dear to its residents. Madge Robinson (who would later marry the photographer Oscar Maurer) expressed her neighbors’ collective sentiment in the opening paragraphs of her article:

The suburban home all about this glorious bay of ours has for its resting-place, with but few exceptions, the foothill. Our cities have barely room for their busy centers on the level strips that frame the bay, before the land begins its higher sweep from rise to rise, until the nature-lover, the home-lover, the peace-lover, seeks the hillside against which, or upon which, to rest his hearthstone.

But O, such hearthstones! Such blots on the fair sides of green slopes as menace the eye! And why? Because home builders have not yet awakened to the truth that hillside-building is an art in itself; that however pretty or “freshly painted” the town house may be, it becomes an enormity when transplanted and placed as a part of the contour of the hilly landscape.

Any lover of the beautiful knows what a source of irritation and misery this thoughtlessness proves to be.

One looks toward God’s everlasting hills for rest and peace; but where can rest and peace be found, so long as our portion of these, God’s hills, is scarred with such unhealthy growths, such freaks of houses?

In 1919, when city workers cut down a mature oak tree on Le Conte Ave. near Le Roy, 47 residents of the surrounding blocks signed a letter of protest addressed to the City Council. In this letter, the residents stated:

We consider the removal of trees, especially native trees, without representation to the property owners in the immediate districts concerned, as a high-handed measure. The oaks and Native Trees and Shrubs in this district make it one of the most beautiful resident sections about the Bay Shore, they have attracted the present owners and helped to establish the present property values, which in turn react on the City Treasury; it is therefore imperative that the matter of the removal of these trees should be given due consideration, and submitted to the people most interested in their preservation, and not left to the uncertain judgment of ever changing and probably uninformed City employees, who may in a few moments, before protest may take effect, destroy one or more trees which may be the most prized asset of a district and are absolutely invaluable, in that they can never be replaced.

By 1923, when the Berkeley Fire destroyed more than half the buildings in Daley's Scenic Park, the vision of the neighborhood's Hillside Club had been realized. The hill slopes were covered with shingled, redwood homes, and vines and other plantings had been encouraged to grow and soften their lines. Even many of the early Victorian painted houses had been either remodeled, shingled, or painted in earth tones. The accomplishments of this group of people, who were determined to build in harmony with nature, survive today on the eastern edge of the tract, where redwood homes stand embowered in well-tended gardens on hillside country lanes.

Along the edges of the fire-line, enough surviving buildings remain to gain a sense of the pre-fire neighborhood. The surviving buildings represent an architectural heritage that had a profound influence on post-World War II domestic architecture, and which continues to have an ongoing influence on design theory and practice internationally.

After World War II, institutional expansion and development pressures have taken their toll on surviving historic structures in this fragile neighborhood. Three seminal Maybeck houses on Highland Place and Ridge Road were torn down in the 1960s to make way for apartment blocks. The same fate befell the house of Mary McHenry Keith (William Keith's widow) at 2701 Ridge Rd. The house of Mrs. Keith's brother-in-law, Rear Admiral Charles Fremont Pond, formerly at 2621 Ridge Rd., was replaced by a modern Beta Theta Pi chapter house, now the Jesuit School of Theology's Chardin Hall. Twelve buildings, representing two-thirds of the block between Ridge Rd., Le Roy Ave., and Hearst Ave. were demolished for the construction of U.C.'s Etcheverry Hall and the eventual building of Soda Hall. A U.C. parking structure and lot replaced the historic Newman Hall and College Hall on La Loma Ave. between Hearst and Ridge.

The Kluegel House is an important part of the original heritage of Daley's Scenic Park, built at a time when the First Bay Region Tradition was in its heyday, and when the neighborhood was populated by Hillside Club members who espoused the ideals of Living with Nature and The Simple Home.

Historic properties on the same block with the Kluegel House include the following:

- **Moody House, aka Weltevreden**, 1755 Le Roy Ave. at Le Conte (A. C. Schweinfurth, 1896) City of Berkeley Landmark, Structure of Merit
- **Atterbury House**, 2656 Le Conte Ave. (McCrea & Knowles, 1898)
- **Bolton House**, 1700 La Loma Ave. (William Knowles, 1899)
- **Bentley House** (A.H. Broad, 1900) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Hatfield House**, 2695 Le Conte Ave. (Julia Morgan & Ira Hoover, 1908)
- **Theta Xi Chapter House**, 1730 La Loma Ave. (Drysdale & Thomson, 1914) City of Berkeley Landmark

Historic properties within a one-block radius include the following:

- **Wilson House**, 1732 La Vereda Rd. (1895)
- **Hunt House**, 2625 Ridge Road (Frederick Esty, 1896–97)
- **Bridgman House**, 1715 La Loma Ave. (Bridgman & Knowles, 1899)

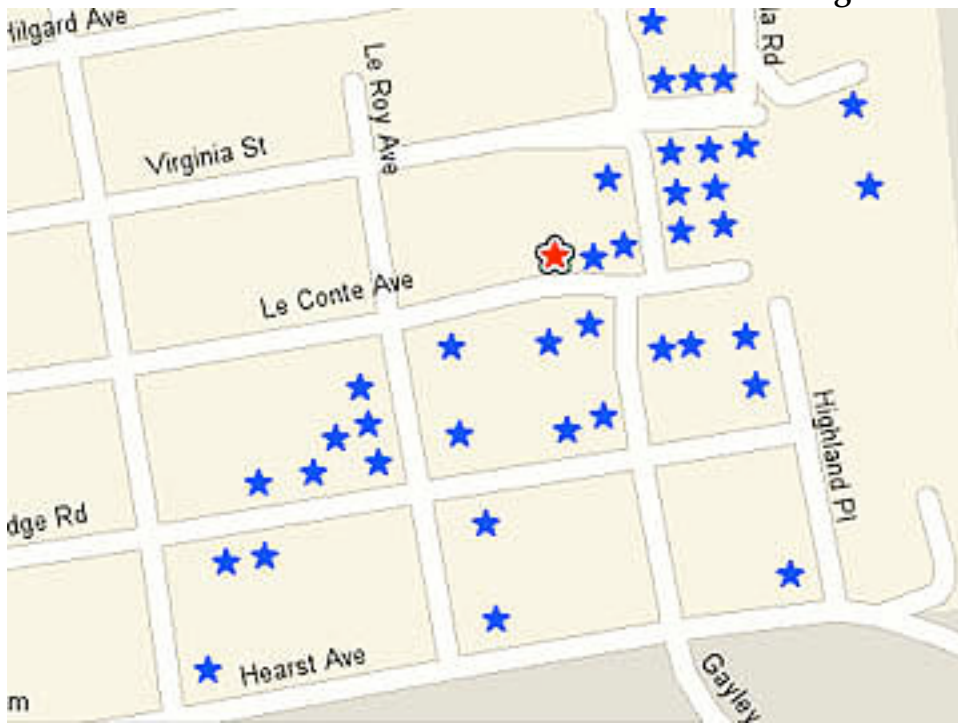
- **Adams House (Phi Kappa Psi Chapter House)**, 625 Ridge Road/1770 La Loma Ave. at Ridge Road (1901–02)
- **Bitting House**, 1731 La Loma Ave. (F.E. Armstrong, 1902)
- **Freeman House, aka Allenoke Manor**, 1777 Le Roy Ave (Ernest Coxhead, 1903) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Blossom House**, 1780 Le Roy Ave. (F.E. Armstrong, 1904)
- **Frederick Maurer House**, 1776 Le Roy Ave. (F.E. Armstrong, 1905)
- **Rees House**, 1705 La Loma Ave. (Maybeck & White, 1906)
- **Oscar Maurer Studio**, 1772 Le Roy Ave. (Bernard Maybeck, 1907) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Bridgman Studio**, 1715 La Loma Ave., rear (Lilian Bridgman, 1908)
- **Jockers House**, 1709 La Loma Ave. (Maybeck & White, 1911)

Historic properties within a two-block radius include the following:

- **Jensen House**, 1675 La Loma Ave. (George Jensen, 1892–93) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Peterson House**, 2531 Ridge Road (1892–93)
- **Beta Theta Pi Chapter House**, 2607 Hearst Ave. at Le Roy (Ernest Coxhead, 1893) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Mix House**, 2701 Virginia St. (1894–95)
- **Charles Keeler House**, 1770 Highland Place (Bernard Maybeck, 1895) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Wright House**, 1730 La Vereda Rd. (Frank M. May, 1896)
- **Lezinsky House**, 2731 Virginia St. (1901)
- **Scott Apartment House**, 2516–20 Ridge Road (1902–03)
- **Charles Keeler Studio**, 1736 Highland Place (Bernard Maybeck, 1904) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Cloyne Court**, 2600 Ridge Road at Le Roy (John Galen Howard, 1904) National Register of Historic Places
- **2704 Virginia St.** (pre-1905)
- **Smith House**, 2702 Virginia St. (A.B. Smith, 1905)
- **Treehaven Apartments**, 2523 Ridge Road (George W. Patton, 1909)
- **2705 Virginia St.** (1910)
- **2707–11 Virginia St.** (1912)
- **Euclid Apartments**, 1865 Euclid Ave. (John Galen Howard, 1912) City of Berkeley Landmark
- **Jenness House**, 2708 Virginia St. (remodeled by John Hudson Thomas in 1913)
- **Phi Delta Theta Chapter House**, 2717 Hearst Ave. (John Reid, Jr., 1914) National Register of Historic Places
- **Apartment House**, 2508 Ridge Road (late 1890s & mid-1910s)
- **Allenoke Carriage House**, 2533 Ridge Road (Clarence Tantau, 1919)

In the map below, the edge of the burned area in the 1923 fire is clearly outlined by the surviving historic structures in the neighborhood.

Historic structures within a two-block radius of the Kluegel House



Kluegel House is represented by the outlined star.

Designated landmarks in the immediate vicinity of the Kluegel House



Detail from City of Berkeley Landmarks map, June 2003

The 2600 block of Le Conte Ave. and several adjacent blocks of La Loma, Virginia, Le Roy, and Hilgard are knitted together by the network of retaining walls, public steps, street dividers, and elevated sidewalks designed by a Hillside Club Committee, constructed in 1909 by the city engineer, and collectively known as the Hillside Club Street Improvements in the Daley's Scenic Park Tract (City of Berkeley Landmark #72).

16. Significance:

The Kluegel House qualifies as a City of Berkeley Landmark as one of very few wood-exterior residences designed by John Hudson Thomas in his independent practice, which began in early 1910, following the dissolution of his partnership with George T. Plowman. The Kluegel House is the only fully shingled original commission designed by Thomas during his solo practice.

The house is also a rare example of a multi-family structure designed by the architect, who specialized in single-family homes.

The Kluegel House dominates its site and the block on which it stands. Its towering gables and weathered wood exterior mirror the surrounding hilly terrain and are instantly recognizable by anyone who has driven or walked by.

The Kluegel House incorporates some of John Hudson Thomas' signature design features of the 1910s, his most creative period, including bold rooflines, parapet gables and buttresses, a patterned chimney, and varied fenestration.

The Kluegel House is an excellent example of Living with Nature and a vivid reminder of the early days of Daley's Scenic Park. A survivor of the 1923 Berkeley fire, the Kluegel House is worth preserving for the exceptional architectural value it adds as part of this historic neighborhood's fabric.

The building retains sufficient historic fabric and character-defining features to convey its historic significance; it would be easily recognizable by someone who knew it during its period of significance. Therefore, it meets the State Office of Historic Preservation's criteria for visual integrity.

In addition to its architectural value, the Kluegel House possesses cultural and historic value in connection with its long and heterogeneous history. Its first owner, Laura Belle Marsh Kluegel, was very much in the mold of the well-heeled, art- and nature-loving early neighborhood that spawned the Hillside Club. Later owners included two future professors in the University of California system, Charles Richard Grau and Sigurd Burckhardt, both of whom would leave their mark on their respective disciplines.

Tenants in the building have ranged from World War II shipyard workers to university students. In the 1970s, when many Americans were drawn to Eastern religions and communal living, The Kluegel House became an ashram where U.S.-born converts practiced the Sikh religion, lived as a family, and taught Kundalini yoga.

The Kluegel House is one of the better known and loved buildings in the Northside neighborhood.

Historic Value: County Yes City Yes Neighborhood Yes
Architectural Value: County Yes City Yes Neighborhood Yes

17. Is the property endangered? Yes

Explain: The building is undergoing slow demolition by neglect. It has been vacant since June 2004. A number of windows have been open for months and several are broken. Paint and glazing are flaking off. Maintenance has been deferred for many years, and windows have not been painted in the seventeen years this recorder has lived next door. The original windows in particular appear to be in precarious condition.

18. Photographs & Illustrations:

Le Conte Avenue circa 1910.

Daley's Scenic Park before the 1923 Berkeley Fire.

Kluegel House immediately after the Berkeley Fire of 1923.

Kluegel House in 1950, 1972, and 1975.

Kluegel House front door in 1972 (Jim Stetson).

Kluegel House in 2005 (22 photographs).

City zoning map of the 1923 fire boundaries (published in *History and Significance of Daley's Scenic Park*) and detail.

Sanborn map of Block 18 in 1929.

Kluegel House plans from 1952 and 1976 building permit applications.

Map of designated landmarks in the neighborhood.

Map of historic properties within two blocks of the Kluegel House.

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Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Archives on John Hudson Thomas buildings and historic properties in Daley's Scenic Park.

20. Recorder:

Daniella Thompson, 2663 Le Conte Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709-1024
Tel: 510-644-9344.

21. Recorded: November 2005