Master List Application
The George and Cordelia McCabe House
571 Pismo Street

I. Summary Conclusion

The George and Cordelia McCabe House at 571 Pismo Street in the Old Town Historic District has three points of significance and extreme rarity, embodying the

- single-story double-bay-front Eastlake cottage with sitting porch
- pierced-column portico

and also possessing

- photo documentation of its earliest appearance to minute detail

Eastlake was the dominant late-nineteenth-century domestic architecture of Northern California and the Central Coast and is the dominant architecture of the Old Town Historic District's nineteenth-century buildings, with 41 percent of them being Eastlake designs. The double-bay-front cottage is an important Eastlake adaptation with roots in full-width-front-porch Greek Revival cottages of the mid nineteenth century, transferred through later Italianate cottages. There are only four double-bay-front Eastlake cottages in the City of San Luis Obispo, the other three of which have been Master Listed—the Goldtree-McCaffrey

Building, Lewin House, and most recently Dana-Barneberg House—and there appears to be only one other double-bay-front Eastlake in San Luis Obispo County: 1905 Vine Street in Paso Robles. Those with sitting as distinct from entry porches—the case with all five San Luis Obispo County examples—appear to be limited to the Central Coast, with one extant example in Santa Barbara, making this a historically significant regional form.

To compound the rarity of the McCabe House, there appear to be only two houses with pierced columns in the City of San Luis Obispo and five in the entire county, and the McCabe House is one of only two in the county displaying fretwork within its piercing.

It also appears to be the sole Eastlake on the Central Coast, possibly California, using pierced columns—a form more associated with Gothic Revival and Italianate architecture of the 1850s through 1870s. As the last use of the pierced-column portico in the region, the McCabe House fulfills criteria for designation as a California Historical Landmark.

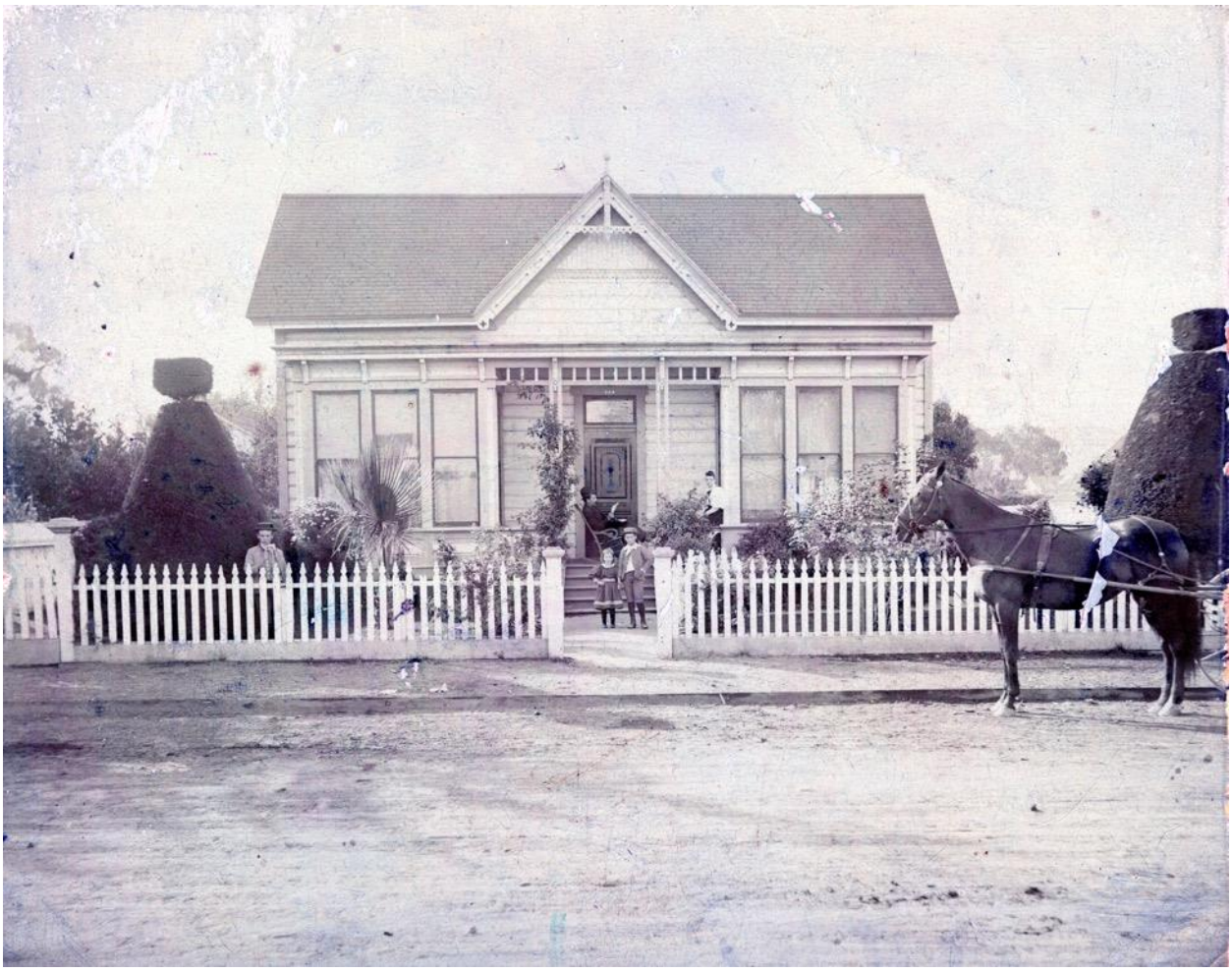
The McCabe House's pierced-column portico may also, because of its lateness, yield information important to architectural history, a National Register criterion.

Finally, a previously unidentified photograph at the History Center of San Luis Obispo County, developed from a glass plate negative, records the McCabe family with the McCabe House probably in 1895 or 1896. It is rare for historic buildings to survive, rarer still for historic photographs of demolished buildings to survive, which is why communities provide care for the preservation of both. Detailed early photographs of extant buildings that can be still be associated with them, however, are scarcer than hen's teeth, as such photos are generally family possessions that become dissociated from the structure. The practical advantage of such a photograph is that it can be used for meticulous restoration to Secretary of the Interior Standards, which is the intention of the current owners of the McCabe House, Ben and Saskia Winter.

None of the double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottages in San Luis Obispo is in perfect condition. The Goldtree House, originally an Italianate cottage later given an Eastlake façade, was still later converted into a two-story apartment building. The Lewin House's roof and southwest

façade were reconfigured in the early twentieth century, and the Dana-Barneberg House acquired canted side bays, lost its roof cresting, and was moved to a new location. The McCabe House also had its roof reconfigured in the mid 1920s or early 1930s, impacting its design, materials, and workmanship.

Nonetheless, it retains the integrity to convey the significance of its innovative double-bay-front Eastlake form and rare pierced columns in their sitting porch setting. In addition, because of its early photographic documentation, both these aspects can be further restored to Secretary of the Interior Standards.



The McCabe House circa 1895 or 1896. George and Cordelia McCabe are seated on the porch, with Leslie, Mabel, and Clarence standing in the garden. Courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County.

Eastlake architecture is particularly important to preserve, restore, research, and celebrate, as the recognition of this influential style on the West Coast has long been marginalized as a result of the East Coast architectural historian Vincent Scully's insistence—in a bizarre footnote to his 1971 book *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style*—that Eastlake architecture

never existed. This inveigled the seminal 1980s writers of architecture guides for the burgeoning preservation movement to proscribe mention of Eastlake architecture from their books, despite the fact that they included numerous images of it. As a result, Eastlake is never mentioned in the "Architectural Character" of the Old Town Historic District's description in San Luis Obispo's *Historic Preservation Program Guidelines*, despite its dominance as a style.

Eastlake architecture is alive and well and living in San Luis Obispo, and the George and Cordelia McCabe House—an exemplar of the double-bay-front Eastlake Cottage with pierced columns apparently unique on the Central Coast—should be added with its sister structures to the Master List.

Submitted on 1 December 2025 by

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on behalf of Ben and Saskia Winter

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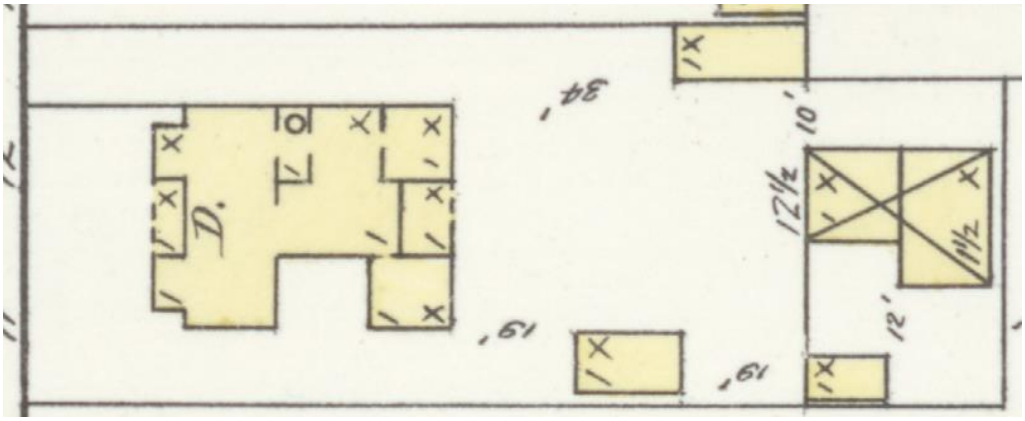
II. Timeline

ca. 1891 Construction of the McCabe House, based on its presence in the December 1891 Sanborn Map of San Luis Obispo (below). A 1 March 1891 transfer between G. W. McCabe *et al* and the Bank of San Luis Obispo (County Deed Index) may be related to a loan for construction. The block is not included in the 1888 Sanborn Map. Although we know from E. S. Glover's *Bird's Eye View of San Luis Obispo, California* that there were houses on it by 1877, there may have been too few to interest the Sanborn Company.



Above: detail from a panoramic photo taken from Cerro San Luis, early 1890s: St. Stephen's at left, Nipomo Street School at center (on what is now Emerson Park), McCabe House the last house on the right, before the vacant lot where the Biddle House will be built in 1893. Courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County.

ca. 1895 The McCabes are photographed in front of their house, George and Cordelia on the porch, the children—Leslie, Mabel, and Clarence, about 12, 5, and 11—in the front garden. George McCabe, a blacksmith and wagonmaker, would later go into the automobile business ("A Proposition: Two Trustees and a Well Known Businessman Meet," *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, 27 May 1899, p. 4).

1896 Feb 11 A surprise party is held at "the residence of Mr. and Mrs. G. W. McCabe on Pismo Street," leading to the first press confirmation of their presence at the house ("Surprise Party," *Tribune*, 12 Feb. 1896, p. 2).

1899 May 12 A 1:30 pm fire at "G. W. McCabe's residence on Pismo Street" causes $49.25 of damage ("From Chief Payne's Report," *Tribune*, 20 July 1899).

1902 Dec. 2 George McCabe *et ux* transfer the property at 571 Pismo to S. T. Coiner, local manager of the San Luis Implement Company (County Deed Index; "Getting to the Front," *Tribune*, 26 Aug. 1903, p. 1).

1905 Jan Harry A. Truesdale purchases the McCabe House from S. T. Coiner ("Coiner Place Sold," *Tribune*, 11 Jan. 1905, p. 2). Truesdale would later become County Auditor but was at that time a postman, one of the first three selected by civil service examination for the new free delivery in San Luis ("Carriers Are Selected," *Tribune*, 21 Jan. 1904, p. 1).

1911 Jan 28 The seven-room house and lot at 571 Pismo are advertised for sale for $2,450 between 28 Jan. and 2 Mar. in the *Daily Telegram*. It is purchased by Stephen Albert "Bert" Call and Georgia Alice Smith Call (William Cattaneo, Jr., "Time Traveling," *Telegram-Tribune*, 10 Dec. 1978, p. 27). Members of the family will occupy the house till 1970 (*Polk's San Luis Obispo City Directory*, 1970).

1914 The Call family pays off the property's mortgage (Cattaneo, *op. cit.*).

1925 Jul 21 S. A. Call applies for a permit for $1,000 of unspecified repairs to the residence (San Luis Obispo Building Permits Collection [1906–1927], Cal Poly Special Collections).

1926 Apr The 1926 Sanborn Map book of San Luis Obispo shows the U on the southwest side façade of the house filled in and a pushout added to the rear of the northeast side façade.

1933 Gas water heater explosion at 2 am causes fire that does $1,000 damage, "igniting the roof and back rooms of the home … while the city fire department prevented spread of the blaze into the front part of the home" ("Home Damaged in Night Fire," *Telegram*, 27 June 1933, p. 8).

1937 Feb Aerial photograph by US Army for US Department of Agriculture shows the current front-gabled roof on the house (AXH-1937, frame 39, UCSB Aerial Photography Collection).

1953 Aug 16 Bert and Georgia Call celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary with fifty guests at their house at 571 Pismo ("Golden Wedding Anniversary," 22 Aug. 1953, Telegram-Tribune, p. 2).

1970 Polk's San Luis Obispo City Directory lists Joy Call living at 571 Pismo, the last year a Call family member is recorded occupying the house.

1975 Feb 15 A photograph by Wayne Nicholls of part of a La Fiesta float in the front yard of the McCabe House in the *Telegram-Tribune* records the pierced columns, column fretwork, balustrades, balustrade fretwork, and porch frieze screen (see p. 50).

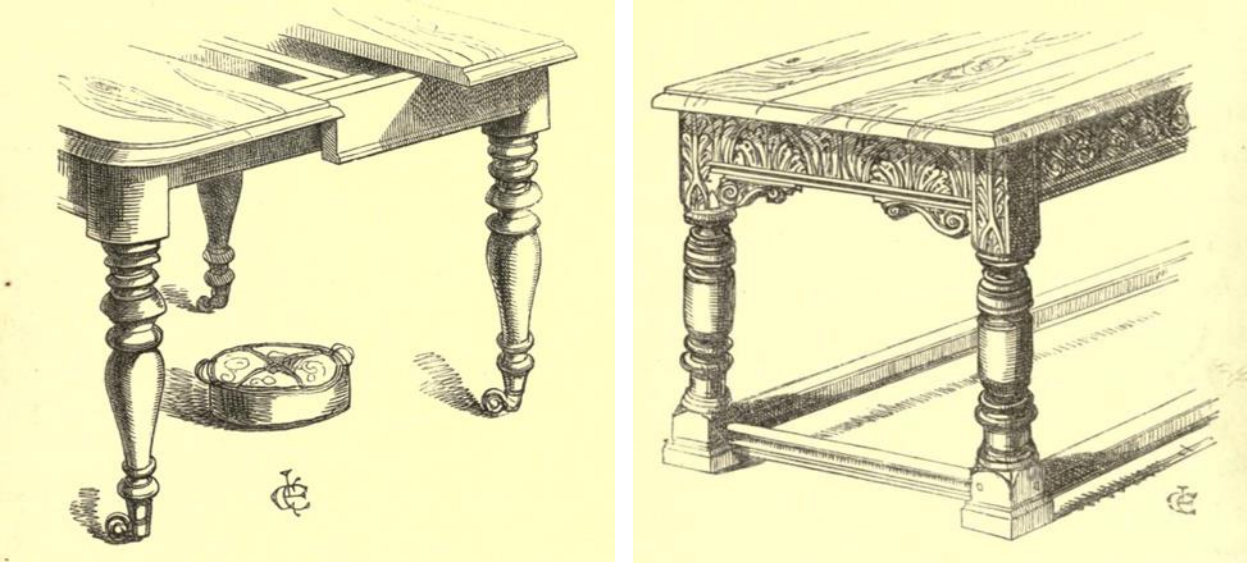
1983 Aug 16 571 Pismo is added to the Contributing List in the Old Town Historic District.

ca 1986 Photograph by Barron Wiley (below) shows the McCabe House with missing frieze screen, balusters intact but missing their fretwork, as well as fretwork, bases, and caps missing from the columns.

III. Historical Context: The Strange Rise of Eastlake Architecture

The Englishman Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906) trained as an architect, but his celebrity would come from furniture design and testy commentary about architecture, interior decoration, and the shape of common objects. He was twenty-eight when the *Cornhill* published his essay "The Fashion of Furniture." *The Queen* then commissioned a series of articles called "Hints on Household Taste," from 1865 to 1866. In 1868 Longmans published in book form *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details*, for the first time including Eastlake's drawings of historic furniture and his own designs.

Eastlake promoted traditional craftsmanship and form following function. He inveighed against false structural features ("It is not at all uncommon to see a would-be Doric or Corinthian shaft shorn of its base and actually hanging to the side of a house until the pedestal (which, of course, will also be made of cement) is completed"[1]), extension tables ("It must depend for its support on some contrivance that is not consistent with the material of which it is made" [75]), and French polish ("because the surface of wood thus lacquered can never change its color or acquire the rich hue that is one of the chief charms of old cabinetwork" [84]).



Above left: Eastlake's sketch of a contemporary "telescope table" with "planks of polished oak or mahogany laid upon an insecure framework of the same material, and supported by four gouty legs, ornamented by the turner with moldings which look like inverted cups and saucers piled upon an attic baluster" (p. 67, 1869 edition); right, his sketch of a Jacobean table "of a very simple but picturesque design, […] the moldings […] distributed in the legs to give variety of outline without weakening them […,] with a delicate bas-relief of ornament" (69–70).

1. Charles L. Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery, and Other Details* (London: Longmans, Green, 1869), p. 29.

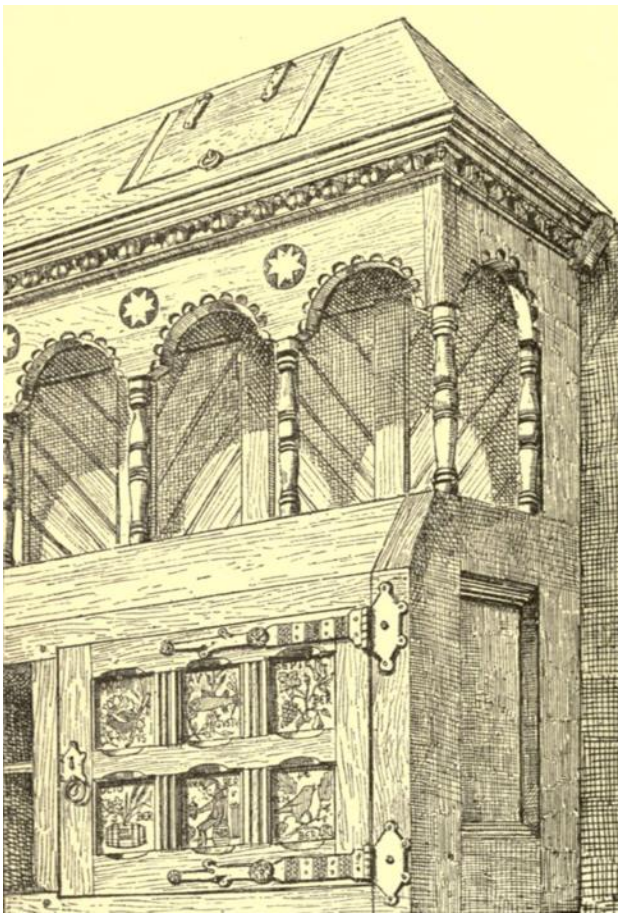
The historic furniture he illustrated was mostly early-seventeenth-century. His own designs for furniture were in what he called the "Early English" style, also pursued by his contemporary architect and furniture designer William Burges. They were solid, planar, and—apart from decorative flourishes of Romanesque arches, turned supports, corbels, bosses, rosettes, perforation, incising, and geometric borders—angular. Joinery was exposed, and flat surfaces of oak allowed to speak for themselves, with decoration reserved for edges. Eastlake's designs were explicitly an attempt to rationalize, simplify, and make furniture muscular as well as plain. "[O]bjects intended for real and daily service, such as a table which has to bear the weight of heavy books and dishes, or a sofa on which we may recline at full length, ought not to look light and elegant, but strong and comely" (146). Eastlake was also making an effort to nationalize design using English models, much as Norman Shaw was doing with Queen Anne architecture at the same time.

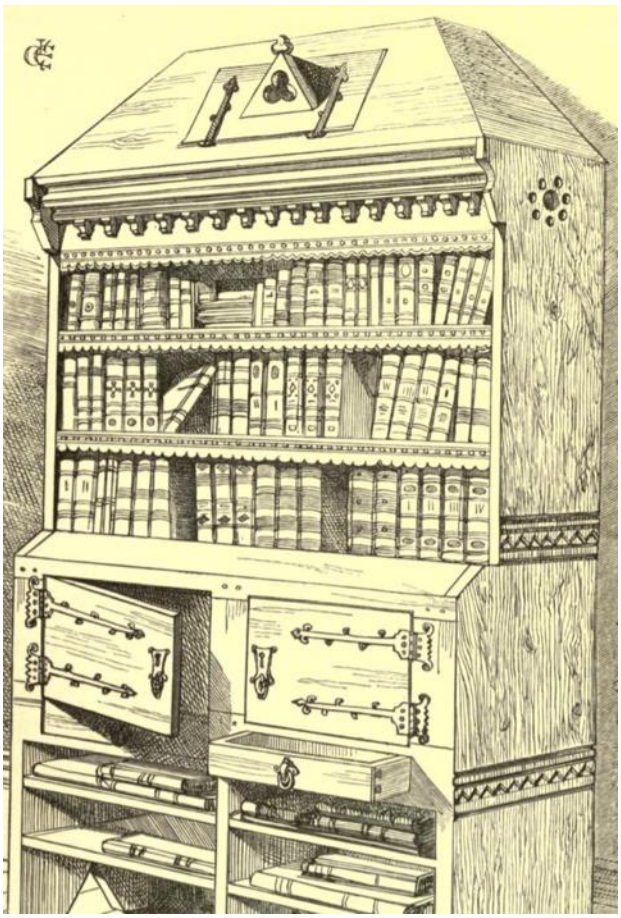
Eastlake's designs and ideas caught on in America, where their flat surfaces, straight lines, and lathe-made spindles and finials were susceptible to the new mass manufacture along less substantial lines. Eastlake fought back: In a preface to the expanded fourth edition of *Hints on Household Taste* in 1878, he warned, "I find American tradesmen continually advertising what they are pleased to call 'Eastlake' furniture, with the production of which I have had nothing whatever to do, and for the taste of which I should be very sorry to be considered responsible."

By 1878, however, America had already invented Eastlake architecture. Charles Eastlake's furniture *looked* like buildings. (John Gloag says the same of Norman Shaw's oak bookcase for the 1862 International Exhibition: "architectural composition […] masquerading as a piece of furniture [*Victorian Taste* {New York: Harper, 1973}, p. 92].) The term *Eastlake* was used of architecture in the press as early as 1875 ("the Renaissance, or more properly at the present day the Eastlake architecture" ["A Great Modern Invention Is Building," Scranton *Morning Republican*, 28 Oct. 1875, p. 3]) and was in common architectural usage by the 1880s (in William T. Comstock's *Modern Architectural Designs and Details* [1881], for instance, and Samuel and Joseph Newsom's *Picturesque California Homes* [1884]).

Yet Eastlake architecture starts as early as 1871, with Philadelphia architect Frank Furness's winning entry for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Architectural historian James O'Gorman in *Three American Architects: Richardson, Sullivan, and Wright, 1865–1915* laments it as "a building blatantly mixing forms from a variety of sources" and "a textbook example of eclecticism" without ever identifying its clear organizing aesthetic: Charles Eastlake's newly published furniture designs.[2] Mansardic roofs, arches, columns, corbels, scenic plaques, geometric decoration, and joiner-like exterior elements are all from Eastlake's book, as can be seen in comparisons on the following page.

2. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991), pp. 16–17.





Above: designs for a cabinet and a library bookcase by Charles Locke Eastlake, plates 1 and 25 in his book Hints on Household Taste*, 1868; below left: the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, designed by Frank Furness in 1871 and completed in 1876. Below right: Hilamon Spencer Laird's Masonic Temple, San Luis Obispo, 1875.*

Furness went on to be the leading exponent of Eastlake on the East Coast, but on the West Coast, one can see Hilamon Spencer Laird, San Luis Obispo's first longstanding professional architect, adapting, for the town's second Masonic Temple, the basic form of Eastlake's cabinet and bookcase through Furness's Pennsylvania Academy building, along with Eastlake decorative principles like borders of bosses and perforations (the latter doubling as basement illumination) and motifs (like the sunburst at the street façade crest). This plain, muscular building put San Luis Obispo at the cutting edge of the new architecture.

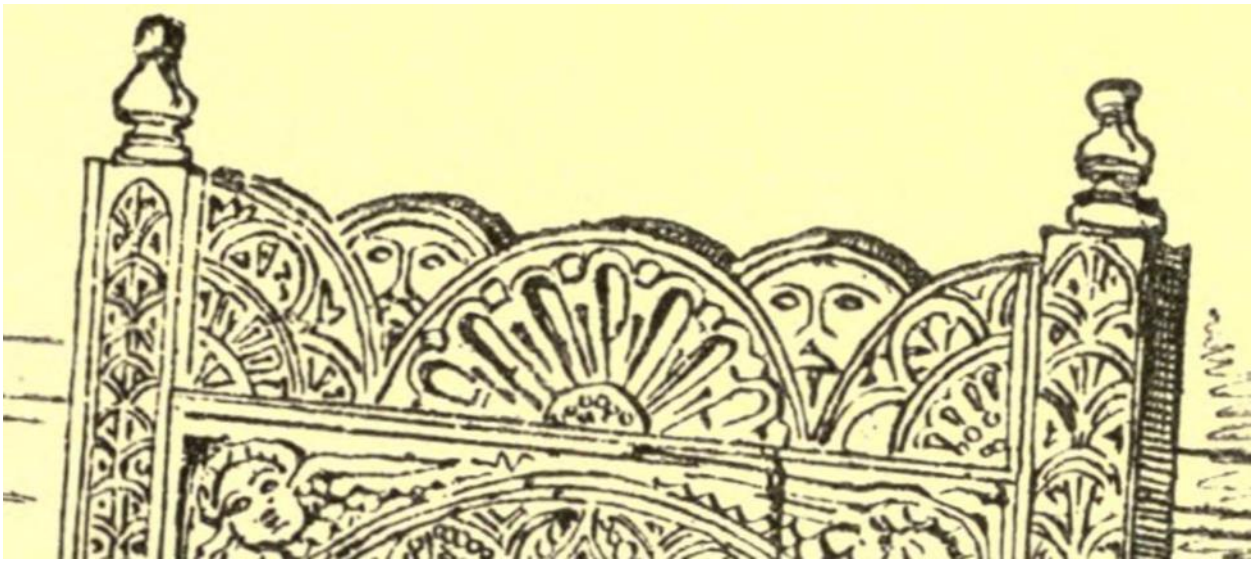
Wood construction lends itself to Eastlake architecture, given its origin in furniture and preference for geometric shapes, and it is not surprising that Eastlake would come to dominate the wood architecture of California. Queen Anne architecture, in contrast, has its origins in English brick, hung tiles, and plaster, and its curvatures and Neoclassical motifs had to be adapted to wood.

Eastlake architecture developed, as we see, at the beginning of the 1870s; Queen Anne architecture was introduced to America by Henry Hobson Richardson with the William Watts Sherman House in Newport, RI in 1875–1876; and the firm of McKim, Mead, and Bigelow (later McKim, Mead, and White) introduces Colonial Revival with Oakswood in Lennox, MA in 1877–1878.

Good rules of thumb for distinguishing Eastlake, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival are that

- Eastlake, in urban circumstances, generally has a flat, mansardic, or hip roof (in suburban circumstances side gables), often with a diminutive or decorative front-facing gable or gablet; Queen Anne, a large open gable, front-facing; Colonial, a front-facing closed gable or open-pediment gable, usually accompanying a hip roof, or a hip roof with central hip dormer
- Eastlake, square towers and bays; Queen Anne, round ones; and Colonial Revival, octagonal or canted ones
- Eastlake, spindle columns; Queen Anne, Ionic; and Colonial Revival, Tuscan
- Eastlake, geometric friezes; Queen Anne, figural; and Colonial Revival, blank
- Eastlake, plain sash windows and occasionally square and usually stained perimeter panes; Queen Anne, plain sash windows (occasionally a Juliet balcony and/or a Palladian window); and Colonial Revival, diamond or square panes in the upper sash
- Eastlake, arches; Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, porticoes
- Eastlake, vertical corbels; Queen Anne, horizontal modillions; Colonial, plain soffits
- Eastlake, porch frieze screens; Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, none
- The sunburst pattern is a specifically Eastlake motif, possibly with its origin in an early seventeenth-century chair at the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe's Cotehele,

illustrated by Charles Eastlake in plate 11 of *Hints on Household Taste* (detail below) and still extant in the great hall at Cotehele, now belonging to the National Trust.



At the discretion of the architect, builder, client, or local practice, decorative elements were occasionally borrowed from one style to another, but, in general, stylistic vocabularies were consistent. Charges of eclecticism and mixing forms tend to come from a present-day inability to listen to nineteenth-century architectural vocabulary rather than a nineteenth-century inability to speak it clearly.

Though Eastlake was initially a reform style emphasizing strength, simplicity, and form-following-function, it is the style people think of as "Victorian" and cluttered, from the propensity of builders and clients to add more—and more elaborate—spindles, borders, bosses, rosettes, moldings, stained glass perimeter panes, and wall shingles. Some Eastlake buildings reveal a compulsion to cover every surface and extend decoration from every line or point, from ridge cresting to frieze screens and ascending or descending finials. Samuel and Joseph Newsom's 1884–1886 Carson Mansion in Eureka is the apotheosis of this tendency. (Pure Eastlake, the Carson Mansion is often called Queen Anne, as Queen Anne is the only late-nineteenth-century architectural style most people have heard of.)

Eastlake, like Queen Anne, fell from fashion in San Luis Obispo soon after the turn of the century. Colonial Bungalow architecture, which came late to California ("Our Colonial Craze," *San Francisco Examiner*, 13 Sep. 1891, p. 13), and lacked the multipliable decorative features of Eastlake, became the latest reform architecture for simplifying and streamlining. It dominated from the early 1900s to the early 1910s in San Luis Obispo, interspersed and influenced by the Prairie School, before being displaced by yet another simplifying, muscular, back-to-basics architecture: the California Bungalow.

IV. Pictorial: San Francisco Eastlakes

V. San Luis Obispo Eastlakes

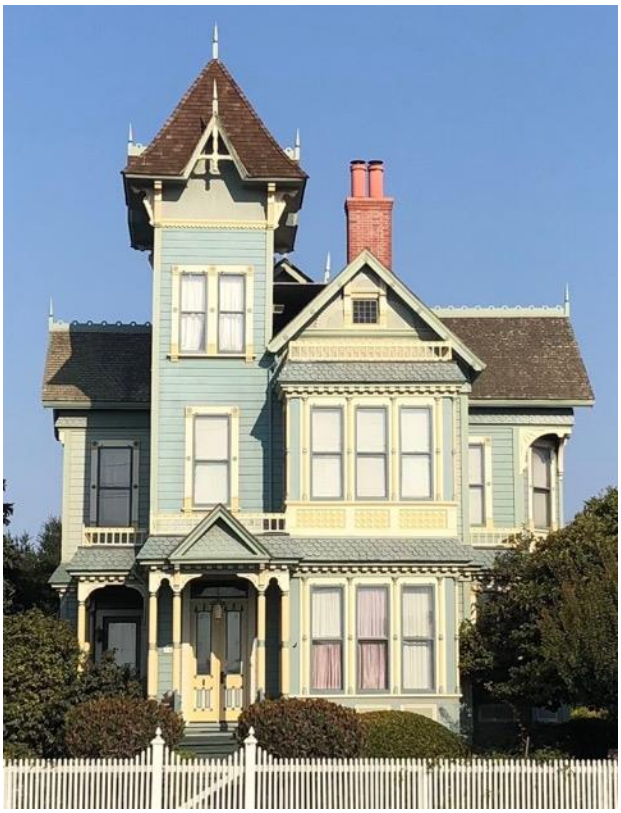
Erickson House (above); Shipsey House (right)

Biddle House

McKennon House

VI. Arroyo Grande Eastlakes

Heritage House Museum (126 S. Mason)

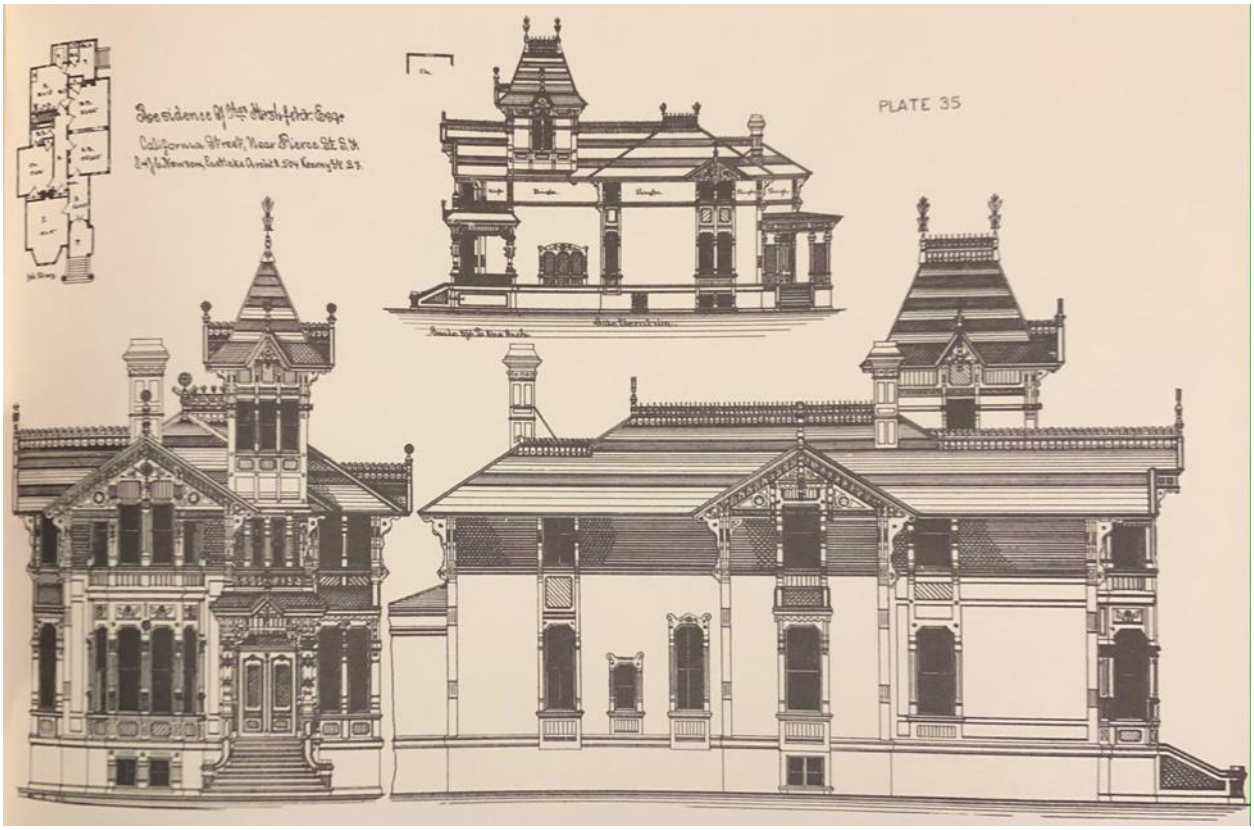


Above: Pitkin-Conrow House; left: 127 S. Mason

VII. San Luis Obispo's Lost Eastlakes

Above: Cortesi House; below: a house once on the Cuesta Grade, photographed 1912

VIII. Samuel and Joseph Cather Newsom's Eastlake Designs



Above: a design advertising "S. and J. C. Newsom, Eastlake Archts." From their pattern book Picturesque California Homes, *1884; left, the Newsom's 1884–1886 Carson Mansion, Eureka*

IX. Historiographic Context: The Strange Erasure of Eastlake Architecture

Eastlake disappeared from architectural historiography through the hubris of an influential scholar dismissing something he knew nothing about in a footnote to an essay about something else that, unlike most footnotes, everyone read. In his 1955 dissertation–based *The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright*, Vincent Scully transformed a fabric into an architectural style. The nature of academia is to look, ex post facto, for patterns that people were not aware of at the time, yet it is as dangerous to deny the self-awareness and intentionality of people in the past as it is of people from other cultures, by assuming that either is more primitive than the analyst.

Suddenly, every building covered with unpainted shingles was being labeled Shingle Style as if that had more reality than the Colonial Revival, Queen Anne, or other styles their architects or builders thought they were creating. Worse, sometimes the shingles were put on later, or unpainted shingles were painted, or they were merely a fungible option to other fabrics on a model, instead of clapboard or novelty siding.

Next, in 1971, Scully combined his shingle book with an essay on a phenomenon he had noticed in some Swiss Revival architecture, "the development in [American] wooden domestic architecture between 1840 and 1876" of asymmetry and external articulation of framing ([New Haven: Yale] p. 2).[3] Having shown his facility for catchy names, Scully decided to call this the Stick Style, and indeed the name caught on—so well that people forgot that what he was explicitly and admittedly describing was Swiss Revival, one of the earliest and most persistent and influential revival styles, which from England to America and back to Continental Europe.

Scully includes no single example of Eastlake architecture in his "Stick" section, but someone must have suggested that one example (the Bassett House, New Haven [fig. 17]) was Eastlake (it isn't), because in an accompanying footnote (note 90, p. lv) Scully denounces the notion that Eastlake was a recognized architectural style in nineteenth-century America. In point of fact, Eastlake architecture was much designed in, written about, and hugely popular, particularly on the West Coast. A search of newspaper.com's database shows the term "Eastlake cottage" mentioned 1,687 times in California newspapers between 1881 and 1900, compared to 245 times in the rest of the United States. In contrast, during the same period "Queen Anne cottage" was mentioned 12,086 times in the rest of the United States and only 458 times in California. So a Yale-based architectural historian might be excused for not having seen much Eastlake architecture—though not for denying its existence.

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3. *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Downing to the Origins of Wright* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1971), p. 2.

In Footnote 90, Scully, contradictorily, both criticizes Eastlake architecture as "watered-down Gothic revival *Sachlichkeit*, derived from Pugin and Ruskin" and questions its existence. He adds, "[Charles] Eastlake's actual influence was mainly in furniture design" and claims the term Eastlake architecture is "an epithet coined by the Eclectic Apologists of the early twentieth century." All of which is demonstrably false:

- Charles Locke Eastlake's "Early English" furniture designs were intentionally stripped down, handcraftable Romanesque compared to Pugin's complex Gothic.
- His furniture designs were portrayed as simple unpainted wood, in contrast to Ruskin's polychrome Continental Gothic.
- Hermann Muthesius's *Das englische Haus* (Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth, 1904, 1905) focuses on Norman Shaw, C. F. A. Voysey, Edwin Lutyens and their ilk and their Queen Anne– and Arts and Crafts–descendant architecture from the mid to late 1890s and early 1900s (the more Neoclassical of which gains the nickname Wrenaissance later in the twentieth century), which was antithetical to Pugin and Ruskin (whose English and Continental Gothicisms were in turn antithetical to each other) of many decades earlier. Muthesius's concept of English *Sachlichkeit* (objectivity or functionalism) is best expressed by his epigram from William Morris at the beginning of his third chapter, "Der Aufbau des englischen Hauses" (The Construction of the English House): "Of all things not wanted at the present day, the thing that is least wanted is ornament"—which is antithetical to American Eastlake architecture. It is hard not to accuse Scully of being disingenuous here, since he knew almost no American readers would have access to Muthesius's book, untranslated even in abridgment till 1979 and in full till 2007. (The fact that he doesn't explain where the term *Sachlichkeit* is from is even more snobbish and disingenuous.)
- Charles Locke Eastlake, a trained architect, designed furniture, but his furniture designs were quickly translated to architecture, particularly in the American West, where the forms and decorative elements of the one were easily adapted to the wood material and machined spindles, molding, and bosses of the other. Scully might not have been expected to pore through contemporary newspapers, but *The American Architect and Building News*, which in its first two years discussed Eastlake exclusively as furniture, by its 19 January 1878 edition was discussing Eastlake as architecture (A. F. Oakey, AIA, "The Possibility of a New Style in Architecture," vol. 3, no. 108, p. 22). By 9 August 1884 the journal was speculating that "the Neo-Gothic and the 'Eastlake' have not become so completely things of the past in the West as they have in the East" ("American Interiors," vol. 16, no. 450, p. 63).

  Doubtless the mainstream architectural profession on the East Coast mostly looked down on Eastlake architecture so-called, despite Furness have apparently introduced it to America and practiced it in a variety private and public buildings, but a reading of *The*

> *American Architect and Building News* would make it hard to deny its existence. And even if Scully did not have access to West Coast pattern books like those of the Newsoms, he should have done to East Coast books like William T. Comstock's previously mentioned *Modern Architectural Designs and Details*, published in New York in 1881. It's subtitle is "Containing eighty finely lithographed plates, showing new and original designs in the Queen Anne, Eastlake, Elizabethan, and other modernized styles."

One may glory in or abhor Eastlake architecture, but one must be willfully obtuse to deny its existence and popularity in the late nineteenth century.

Yet that is what Scully's followers did: a cultlike denial of the objective reality in front of them. The popular guides to American building styles that guided the Preservation Movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s largely blackballed Eastlake *and* Swiss Revival, in deference to Scully, while writing of "Shingle" and "Stick." This created a particular problem in San Francisco, where Eastlake architecture was the overwhelming choice in the late nineteenth century, solved by creating a category called "Eastlake/Stick" or "Eastlake-Stick," despite the fact that beyond the occasional Swiss gable bracket in an Eastlake gable, Swiss Revival and Eastlake have nothing whatever to do with each other as architectural styles, either aesthetically or in time period.

Virginia McAlester's 1984 *A Field Guide to American Houses* has become the longest survivor in print of the preservation guides and is demonstrative of the phenomenon. She admits to Eastlake being only a decorative overlay of other forms but not an architecture in itself. Her "Stick" chapter's 16 photos comprise 12 Swiss Revival houses (pp. 258–260), 3 Eastlakes (p. 261), and 1 Queen Anne (260). Meanwhile, the "Queen Anne" chapter contains about two dozen photos of Eastlake houses, as she transfers spindle columns and porch friezes—core characteristics of Eastlake houses—to a newly invented category of "Spindlework Queen Anne."

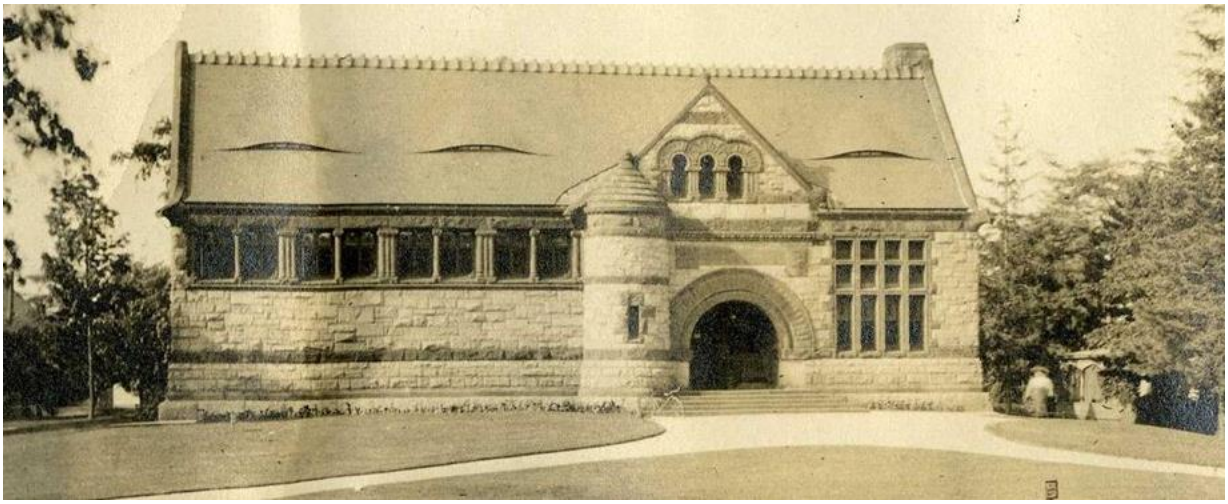
"Stick" became so popular (and poorly understood) a term that it was even included in a 1973 episode of *The Streets of San Francisco*, where old-school detective Karl Malden and college-educated detective Michael Douglas have the following conversation while staking out at a house that's a potential crime scene:

> "Looks kind of creepy."
> "Huh, Stick."
> "What?"
> "The architecture's called Stick. You can tell by those bay windows. See how they're squared off? Must be 1885 or '90, maybe."
> "But you just put that down in the report. Observations like that are going to get you right to the top of the department."

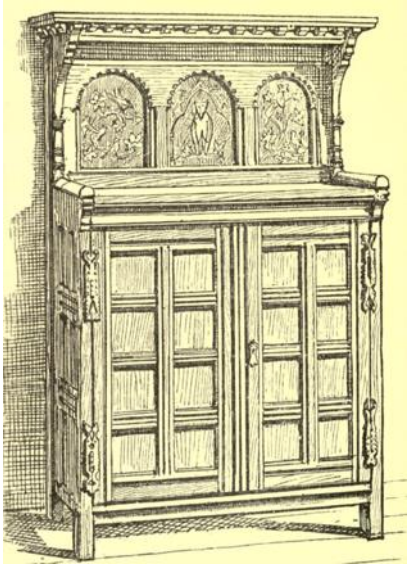
In fact, the house used for the episode was the 1867 Italianate Adams House, 300 Pennsylvania Avenue, with canted bays, but in a brief night shot with the film flipped left to right it was hard to tell. (Square bays, of course, are indicative of Eastlake. Swiss Revival tends to eschew bays, which were not part of Swiss architectural vocabulary.)

The residual effect of the Scully Cult for the preservation profession can be seen in contrasting Charles Page and Associates' 1976 *Santa Cruz Historic Building Survey* (Santa Cruz: City of Santa Cruz, 1976), where Eastlake cottages are frequently so identified, with successor firm Page & Turnbull's 143-page 2013 *Historic Context Statement and Survey Report: City of Arroyo Grande*, where the word Eastlake goes unmentioned, despite the Arroyo Grande having one of the finest concentrations of Eastlake architecture south of Pacific Grove, including the masterwork Pitkin-Conrow House.

Ironically, the American architect who most closely followed Eastlakes actual beliefs and practices was lionized by Scully: Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson's mature style—with semi-circular arches; reliance on planes where the texture of the stone, like the texture of Eastlake's oak, speaks for itself; and decoration reserved for borders—



Richardson's 1880–1882 Crane Memorial Library, exterior above and interior at left, uses planes, surfaces, shapes, and repetition in much the same simple and rhythmic way that Eastlake did in his cabinet design at right (plate 30, Hints on Household Taste*, 1868).*



X. The Development of the Double-Bay-Fronted Eastlake Cottage

Some architectural styles, like Greek Revival, are defined by symmetry; others, like Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Bungalows, favor asymmetry. But certain forms persist through changes of decorative style. The symmetrical one-story Greek Revival cottage with full-width front porch appears to be the forebear of the double-bay-front Eastlake cottage.

The above 1850s building, Sunnyside, near Natchez, with square columns and rectangular transom (Greek Revivalists were aware the ancient Greeks did not use arches on their buildings so eschewed fanlights) demonstrates the one-story Greek Revival cottage subtype, as do examples below (1850 and 1873 respectively) from New Orleans.

The subtype was equally present in San Luis Obispo, as in the lost Stanusich Adobe, top of next page, center rear, to the right of the extant Gothic Revival Hays-Latimer Adobe on West Monterey Street, in a detail of Leon Trousset's 1870 panorama at the Mission Museum.

The subtype also survives as the Dallidet Adobe (below left in a detail from an 1876 Carlton Watkins photograph), whose symmetry, hip roof, porch, white-painted square posts, and rectangular transom conveyed the Greek Revival to contemporary observers (photo at bottom by Gregory Morris, 1954).

The last extant nineteenth-century Greek Revival in San Luis Obispo was built between the 1870 Trousset painting and the first Sanborn Map in 1874: the redwood cladding of the Sauer-Adams Adobe at 964 Chorro, which is essentially a Greek Revival cottage on top of a lower commercial story—or Monterey Style adobe, three-dimensional Greek Revival having been brought to Monterey by Thomas O. Larkin of Massachusetts by way of the 1835 Larkin

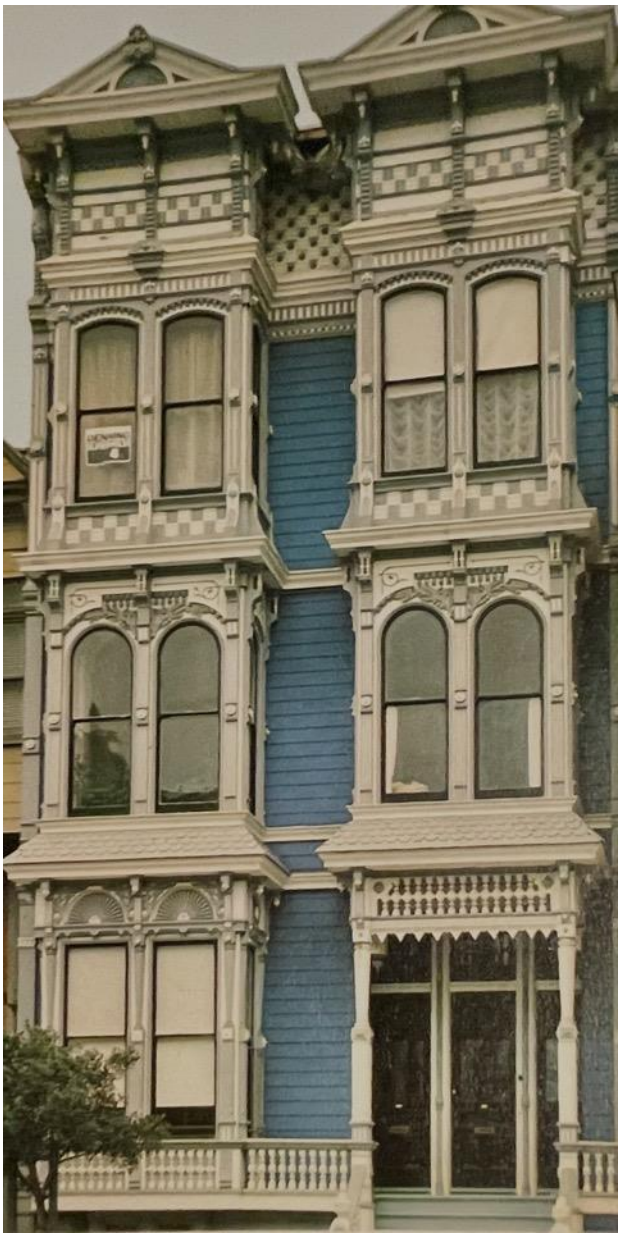
House. Yet Esteban Munras of Monterey had designed a two-dimensional Greek Revival trompe l'oeil interior for the Mission San Miguel, executed by Salinan Indians, in 1820 as California's earliest Greek Revival architecture. The Sauer-Adams' square columns with capitals and bases, as well as pediments above each window (seen below in a 1950s photo), are more sophisticatedly Greek than the Dallidet, but the layout (and rectangular transom above the entry door on the ground floor) are the same Greek Revival form.

Greek Revival was going out of fashion by the 1870s, having dominated San Luis architecture in the early American period, but Italianate domestic architecture would remain popular through the end of the century in San Luis. The simple, functional, and attractive Greek Revival cottage had only to replace the Greek columns that held up its portico with Italianate ones (chamfered square posts with horizontally exaggerated capitals, astragals, and high bases) and separate them with their own hip or shed roof (seen on the following page in the circa 1887 Pinho House, Marsh Street, before it was surrounded by the Manse).

Of new architectures, Queen Anne was too high-gabled to adapt to the low-pitched hip or side-gabled Greek Revival cottage form, and the Colonial Bungalow would establish itself with an asymmetric porch and front-facing gable as a pediment over either colonnade or bay. Eastlake architecture, however, had been introduced to America by Frank Furness as a symmetrical form with mansardic roof (steeply tilted hip but unoccupied and unfenestrated, unlike an actual Second Empire mansard). Add spindle columns, frieze screens, perimeter-paned windows, and peaked roof peeking over a hip portico and the Italianate cottage, formerly a Greek Revival cottage, becomes an Eastlake cottage, as seen

below on two New Orleans examples, from the Uptown Historic District (left, photo by David J. L'Hoste) and 815 St. Maurice Avenue in an 1883 duplex. Revealing their heritage, the ground-floor frames and crown molding on both are still distinctly Italianate.

In New Orleans such cottages acquired Eastlake decorative features—including front-facing gable exposed above a hip porch roof (see also the late Greek Revival from 1873 on page 22, which seems to have been influenced by its contemporaries), but they kept their full porches, presumably out of utility for the heat. In San Luis Obispo, in contrast, two bays enclosing the central porch and entrance would give the same light and views behind huge sash windows but some measure of protection from cold days and evenings—akin to 1940s Streamline enclosures of earlier Colonial and California Bungalow porches but designed in from construction.



Double-bay-front is an Eastlake characteristic. In San Francisco, nineteenth-century townhouses typically have asymmetrical bays opposite entrances. The few double-bay-front examples tend to be Eastlake, like the triplex at left (2139–43 Pine), with characteristic square bays; spindle frieze screen; corbels; gablets; and geometric dogtooth fretwork, window dentilation, bosses, checkerboard, and sunbursts, or the quadriplex with similar characteristics (4186–92 17th Street) below (Elizabeth Pomada *et al.*, *Painted Ladies: San Francisco's Resplendent Victorians* [New York: Dutton, 1978], pp. 23 and 58).

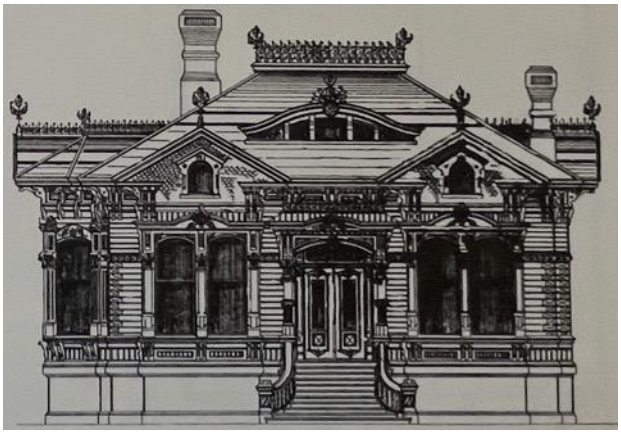
The other double-bay-front style in San Francisco, however, is Renaissance Revival, recalling the flanking towers of French châteaux. Renaissance Revival arrived in America just before Eastlake. The *Hartford Daily Courant* in a 25 Sep. 1869 column "Our Architecture" notes, "We are just now in a reaction against the Renaissance revival of the classic and returning to the Gothic" (p. 2), perhaps the first American newspaper mention of a style already employed in Europe by the mid 1850s. Renaissance Revival is today often mistaken for Eastlake and even was in the nineteenth century, as the 1875 quotation from the Scranton *Morning Republican* on page 10 suggests: "the Renaissance, or more properly at the present day the Eastlake architecture."

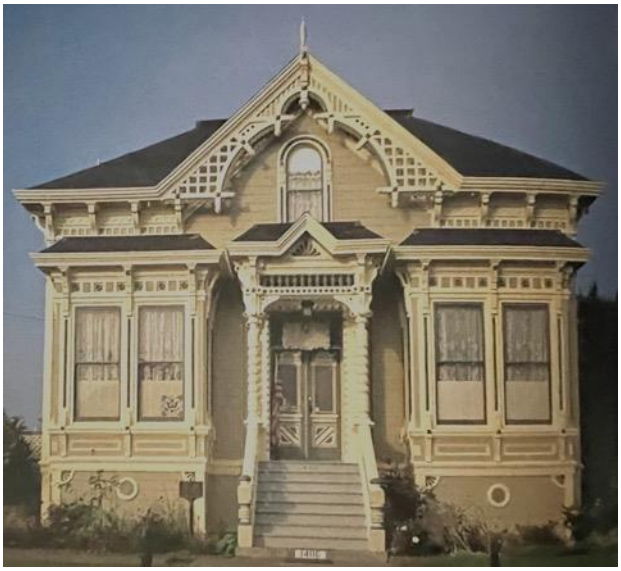
Classical columns, arches and segmental arches in and above windows, figurative bas relief, and the absence of spindlework and geometric decoration indicate Renaissance Revival, even though some elements, particularly the triangular pediments over windows—a motif absent from Charles Eastlake's Mediaevalist furniture designs—will be borrowed in Eastlake architecture as the gablet (photos from Pomada, *et al.*, pp. 27, 46, and 63).

We now have two possible progenitors of the double-bay-front Eastlake: (1) the Greek Revival full-width-front-porch cottage, through its Italianate adaptation, Eastlake adaptation, and glazing of the porch ends with square bays, and (2) the double-bay-front Renaissance Revival.

Notably, none of the Renaissance Revival buildings above—2537–41 Washington, 1491–99 McAllister, and 3933 21st Street—or the Eastlakes on the previous page has a sitting porch, only an entry porch (the wide porch of 4186–92 17th Street is to accommodate four doors). Sitting porches are for small towns, not big cities. But even in surrounding areas of Northern California, double-bay-front Eastlake cottages have entry porches rather than sitting porches between the bays.

Samuel and Joseph Newsom's 1884–1885 *Picturesque California Homes* 1 and 2 include one double-bay-front out of seventy-four plans: vol. 1, pl. 12, "now building at Eureka." The front elevation, top left below, shows a Renaissance Revival cottage (classical columns, segmental arched windows, segmental pediments, quoining, elaborate free-form crest decoration) has only a stair-top entry porch (confirmed by the floor plan); likewise the circa 1885 Renaissance Revival cottage in Napa (top right) and the Eastlake (with Swiss Revival gable bracket) 1888 W. S. Clark House in Eureka (bottom left). Is this a cultural or climatological feature of Northern California double-bay-front architecture? Or influenced by the more formal affect of Renaissance Revival? At bottom right we see a much less elaborate building, the Eastlake 1905 Vine Street, Paso Robles, built between the 1892 and 1903 Sanborn Maps. Besides the four in San Luis Obispo City, it appears to be the only double-bay-front Eastlake in San Luis Obispo County, and all five have sitting porches between their bays.





Pacific Grove's cottages tend to asymmetry or full-width front porches, the latter perhaps because they were used only during summer. I have found no extant examples there, though I have found one demolished example built between the 1897 and 1905 Sanborn Maps.

Trio of full-width-front-porch cottages on 18th Street's 100 block, Pacific Grove. The left two combine Italianate columns, Eastlake frieze screens, and Swiss gable brackets; the rightward one, Italianate columns, Eastlake sunburst corbels, Swiss gable bracket, and later bay.

Moving south to Santa Barbara, one-story cottages tend to have full-width front porches and be Italo-Eastlake, with hip roofs and Italianate columns but center gablets, like the four at the south end of Brinckerhoff Avenue in the Brinckerhoff Landmark District and the two at left. The rare star of Brinckerhoff Avenue is 519, below, an angled -double-bay-front sitting-porch Eastlake.

The hundreds of photographs of nineteenth-century houses in Virginia McAlester's *A Field Guide the American Houses* include (apart from Beaux Arts plutocrat palaces in Newport and the Vanderbilts' Renaissance Revival Biltmore in Asheville) only three double-bay-fronts, all with sitting porches: a one-story 1858 Gothic in Demopolis, Alabama; two-story 1877 Italianate in Bloomington, Wisconsin; and two-story Italianate I-house in Laurens, South Carolina (pp. 204, 219, and 314 [New York: Knopf, 1984). Frequently reprinted pattern books of the mid nineteenth century—Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850) and Henry Cleaveland's

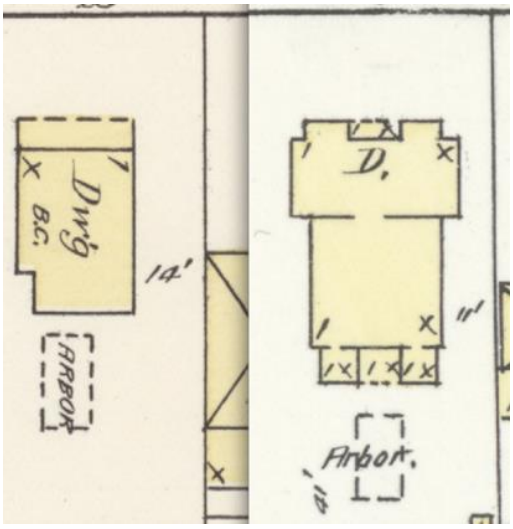
Village and Farm Cottages (1856)—have, among hundreds of designs, no single-story double-bay-front cottages and just three two-story houses with ground-floor double bays.

Dozens of catalogues of historic houses in California and other states reveal no double-bay-front Eastlake cottages. It is an exceedingly rare nineteenth-century form in America, which—after the symmetry of Georgian, Federal, Greek, and Gothic—embraced asymmetric urban, suburban, and rural architecture. The surviving concentration of the form in San Luis Obispo County is extraordinary and extremely historically significant.

The city's earliest documented examples still extant are the GoldtreeMcCaffrey Building at 1212 Garden Street and Dana-Barneberg House at 531 Dana Street, both on the 1888 Sanborn Map (the Dana-Barneberg later being moved across the street).

The Goldtree House is an Italianate cottage with a double-bay-front Eastlake porch and gablet. It was not a later adaptation, because the 1886 Sanborn Map shows the previous Gothic-form cottage; the 1888 map, the Italo-Eastlake footprint, confirmed in the photo detail below, with the Italianate hip roof and roof balustrade and Italianate hip porch roof (the Dana-Barneberg, Lewin, and McCabe Houses all have or had flat porch roofs).

The Dana-Barneberg, Lewin, and McCabe Houses also appear to have been originally constructed as double-bay-front Eastlake cottages from the physical evidence. A full-width-front-porch cottage, however, is at the Lewin House site in the 1888 Sanborn Map (near right), replaced with a double-bay-front cottage by 1891 (far right), but if the second house was constructed with the bones of the first, which is certainly plausible, it was a thorough transformation into the Eastlake form.



Dana-Barneberg House around the turn of the last century

Dana-Barneberg House now, absent ridge cresting and gable finial

Goldtree House as an Italianate cottage with double-bay Eastlake porch attached

Goldtree House now, with McCaffrey Flats conversion of 1908

McCabe House in original form

McCabe House with 1925 or 1933 roof

Lewin House in 1986, photographed by Barron Wiley. Courtesy of the History Center.

Lewin House now

Lewin House prior to restoration in 2017 (above left and right)

Significant to the Eastlake double-bay front is that it is not just a decorative departure from the Greek Revival cottage but a departure in form, replacing the full-width portico with a smaller portico (or, in the case of the Lewin House, an uncolumned porch) sandwiched between characteristically square Eastlake bays. The square bays' sash windows took advantage of the newly available larger panes of glass (unlike the two-over-two of Italianate and six-over-six of Greek Revival) and clustered the sashes together to let in light and views. The reduced portico was emphasized by its own gable or gablet peak (in the San Luis and Eureka examples; in the Paso Robles and Santa Barbara examples, the peaks were put over the bays).

None of the San Luis examples indulged in spindle columns: Goldtree and Dana-Barneberg have chamfered square posts, like stripped-down Italianate, while the Lewin House has no columns and the McCabe House the rare pierced ones, though modified for Eastlake use by eschewing capitals that would interfere with a frieze screen. The Goldtree had (and has) dogtooth fretwork borders; the Dana-Barneberg and Lewin, modified perforated egg-and-dart without the darts, which may well be a borrowing from the lobed decoration of Swiss

Revival. The Goldtree and McCabe were constructed with porch frieze screens (partial, in the case of the Goldtree, and surviving till the 1970s, in the case of the McCabe). Goldtree, Dana-Barneberg, and McCabe all had fretwork-enhanced balustrades. Only the Goldtree had perimeter stained glass; only the Goldtree and McCabe, corbels. Thus, with the same elements of Eastlake form adapted from the Greek Revival cottage, these four Eastlake double-bay-fronts demonstrate a wide variety of distinct and character-defining decorative elements.

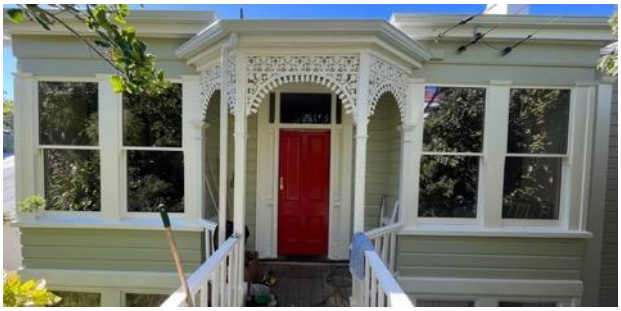
I have been able to track down no American double-bay-front Eastlake cottages outside California and few in this state, but a strange coda to the form is its rebirth in New Zealand/Aotearoa—a British Empire outpost more influenced by England and such forms as Gothic Revival and Queen Anne—in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Double-bay-front cottages with sitting or entry porches turn up frequently in Auckland on the North Island, as a half dozen examples on the following page attest. They more often have gables over than gablets between the bays. Eastlake porch frieze screens are common, along with Italianate columns and Swiss gable brackets.

This incursion would anticipate the second and broader architectural invasion of the California Bungalow to New Zealand and Australia in the 1910s—particularly Australia, where it suited the climate. But how the double-bay-front in the compact California form characteristic of Eastlake and Renaissance Revival cottages made its way to Auckland remains a mystery. Eastlake furniture was mentioned in New Zealand newspapers as early as 1877 ("Fashions and Fancies," *New Zealand Herald*, 1 Sep. 1877, p. 6) and was also available ("The Greatest Sale of American Furniture," advertisement, [Wellington] *Evening Post*, 6 May 1886, p. 3). Charles Eastlake's death in 1896 was widely covered in the New Zealand press. But the press never mentions the characteristically American Eastlake architectural style.

Italianate columns and canted bays and Swiss Revival gable brackets distinguish the cottages above left and right (no date) and below left (1910), but gables and gablets, porch frieze screens and decorative wall shingles make Eastlake origins clear.

The cottages above (1910), below (1903) and bottom left have Eastlake square bays, though the faux quoining above would be characteristically Italianate in America.



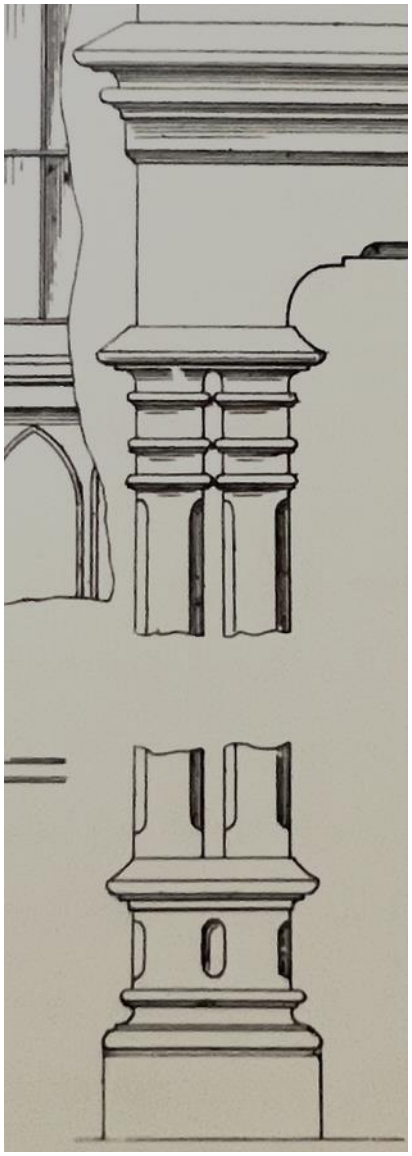
Right: a spindle-columned fireplace from the cottage above—beyond the square bays, porch frieze screen, and door perimeter panes—makes the Eastlake connection clear.

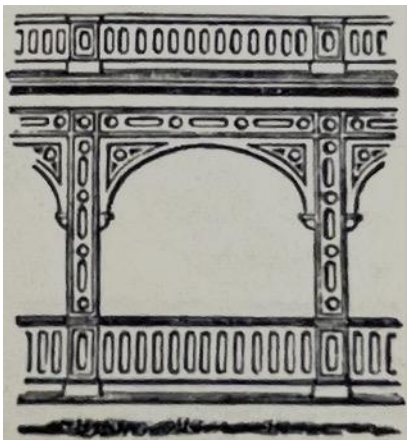
XI. Pierced Columns in American Architecture

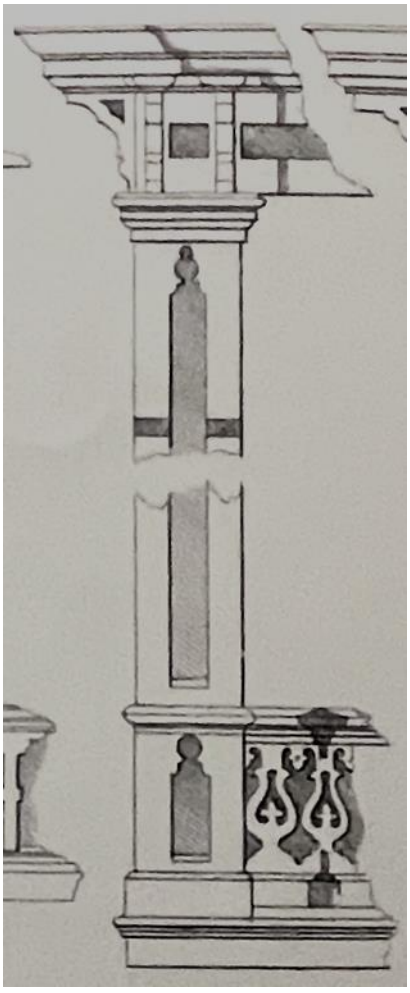
The innovative American architect Alexander Jackson Davis appears to have originated—or first published—pierced columns in the illustration for "Cottage Orné Designed for David Codwise, Esq." in his 1837 book *Rural Residences* (below, the original 1835 elevation [Metropolitan Museum of Art]), specifying that they were made of wood.

The cottage's design is essentially Greek Revival, but Davis in the early 1840s would use similarly two-dimensional columns on Gothic Revival designs, in lattice or foliate fretwork. Davis's disciple Andrew Jackson Downing portrays the master's latticework columns on Gothic houses in his popular 1842 *Cottage Residence* (fig. 51) and 1850 *The Architecture of Country Houses* (figs. 33, 76, and 128). At right, foliate pierced columns on the 1852 Peter Davis House in Noank, Connecticut, an 1852 essentially Italianate house with fretwork more common to the Gothic, built by a 22-year-old shipbuilder who did his own carpentry (Alma deC. McArdle *et al*, *Carpenter Gothic*, [New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1983, p. 33).

Samuel Sloan's 1852 *The Model Architect* has detailed images of both flat fretwork columns and heavier pierced bases for substantially three-dimensional Greek and Gothic double columns (the Gothic examples at near right, but the Greek Revival example similar and both essentially Italianate in form [republished as *Sloan's Victorian Buildings*, {Mineola: Dover, 1980}, design 11, pl. 52, and design 12, pl. 56]).







Calvert Vaux's 1857 *Villas and Cottages* shows several examples of lattice columns but also a veranda with elaborately pierced columns, spandrels, frieze, and floor and roof balustrades (at top far right; fig. A, p. 111 [Mineola: Dover, 1970]).

A. J. Bicknell and Company's 1873 *Detail, Cottage and Constructive Architecture*, shows the pierced column (at bottom far right) close to how it will appear in San Luis Obispo County and in the decade it seems to first appear here (at least among its survivors) (republished as *Victorian Architectural Details* [Mineola: Dover, 2005], pl. 23). Bicknell's

pattern book focuses on the Renaissance Revival, Swiss, and Second Empire styles, though there are some repetitive geometric patterns that are either already seeping over from Eastlake or will be picked up in that style. Only eight years later, in the 1881 publication of William T. Comstock's *Modern Architectural Designs and Details: […] Showing New and Original Designs in the Queen Anne, Eastlake, Elizabethan, and Other Modernized Styles*, columns are largely spindle, with the occasional chamfered or fluted square column that would do with Renaissance Revival or Italianate (or Queen Anne and Elizabethan/Tudor, which puzzled American architects and builders, as the styles came from England, where there was no tradition of porch building so no predetermined column type) (republished as *Victorian Domestic Architectural Plans and Details*[Mineola: Dover, 1987]). Comstock has not a single pierced column in his pattern book, since piercing does not suit the three-dimensionality of spindle columns

Above: the 1830 John Lane House, a Greek Revival with Vicksburg's earliest pierced columns. Most of that city's pierced columns appear on Italianates of the 1870s, such as those on Belle Fleur (above right, circa 1872–1875), resembling ones on the Bianchini and Music Houses in Cambria and 1429 Nipomo in San Luis Obispo. Photographs from southernlagniappe.blogspot.com/2011/02/architectural-mystery.htm, accessed 7 Nov. 2025.

In the built (and extant) world, pierced columns appear to concentrate in specific locations, presumably from local information cascades. The form is so prevalent in Vicksburg, Mississippi, for instance, that the Vicksburg Foundation for Historic Preservation refers to it

as the Vicksburg Pierced Column and claims it is found more often there than in any other community, having sent enquiries to SHPOs in the Southeast and along the Mississippi.[4] A 1987 inventory found fifty examples of buildings with pierced columns in Vicksburg; as of the writing of an undated article on the foundation's website, there were only forty, attesting to the form's fragility.

Pierced Columns in San Luis Obispo County

There is a concentration of pierced columns in Cambria, whose eleven nineteenth-century houses of recognizably nineteenth-century appearance include three with pierced columns, or nearly a quarter: the 1870 Guthrie-Bianchini House (now Cambria Historical Museum) at 2251 Center Street, 1865 Music House (converted into a residence in the early 1870s) at 2581 Main Street, and 1877 Darke–Van Gorden–Squibb House at 4063 Burton Drive (dates of construction from Cambria Historical Society plaques). How many other houses that may have had pierced columns and were demolished—or whose columns were lost or replaced—is unknown.

The Guthrie-Bianchi House's pierced columns around the turn of the century, with spindle columns on the porch at far left.

All three houses are Italianate. The Music House is out of the frame of the earliest, 1886 Sanborn Map of Cambria, but the Bianchini and Squibb Houses appear with their current

4. "The Vicksburg Pierced Column," preservevicksburg.org/column.htm, accessed 6 Nov. 2025

pierced-columned porches, so the columns are less likely later additions. Physical evidence suggests, however, that the three Bianchini porches were built (or altered) at separate times, as the rear one has Italianate chamfered square columns, the Burton Drive porch has Eastlake spindle columns, and the Center Street porch has pierced columns.

Similar pierced columns on the Guthrie-Bianchini House (above) and Music House (below). Note their larger upper and smaller lower piercings, emphasized by horizontal astragals between them on the Bianchini House.

I have not been able to find pierced columns in Paso Robles, Arroyo Grande, or other county communities apart from San Luis, where the only two pierced-column buildings are the McCabe House and nearby 1429 Nipomo Street (equally notable as the only false-front

aedicular Neo-Baroque house in the city or [possibly] county, the style having been reserved almost exclusively for commercial buildings in the Old West). 1429 Nipomo *may* date as far back as 1877, as a structure consistent with the center block appears in the same location in E. S. Glover's *Bird's Eye View of San Luis Obispo, Cal.* of that year, though it is portrayed as a hip-roof Italianate without a front porch rather than a false-front gabled building with a porch. Unfortunately, the Sanborn Map does not cover the block till 1891, when 1429 appears in its current form, and the original structure was either rebuilt or replaced in the interim. With square capitals and astragals, its columns are consistent with the 1870s Italianate pierced columns of Cambria, and its existence may have influenced the pierced columns on the McCabe House.

The Squibb House pierced columns, with elaborate fretwork inserts apparently never present in the pierced columns of the Bianchini and Music Houses

The 1889 Righetti (Graves) House at the corner of Johnson and Palm appears at a glance to have pierced columns, but they are, in fact, paired columns joined by a crown bracket but terminating in separate bases. (The house is self-consciously Eastlake—its architect described it as a "Romanesque cottage,"[5] and Eastlake presented his round-arched furniture

5. "Bids on the Ernest Graves Cottage," *Tribune*, 24 May 1889, p. 3.

as a Romanesque alternative to Gothic—but it also incorporates Swiss, Queen Anne, and Colonial elements.) Paired columns in California Bungalows of the earlier twentieth century also have distinct bases, referring to the columns on either side of Shinto *torii* gates.

In other words, pierced columns are, in San Luis Obispo, a specific and rare statement, apparently numbering two survivors in the city and a total of three more in the county.

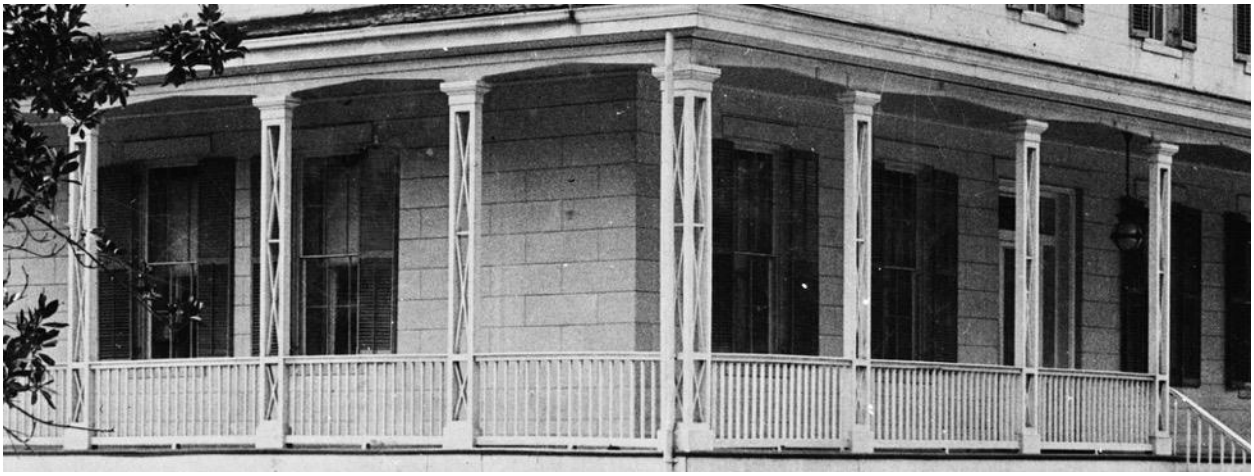
Above: paired columns on the 1889 Eastlake Righetti (Graves) House with separate bases (photograph 1904); below: paired pairs of paired columns in the California Bungalow–style duplex at 697 and 699 Chorro, the paired columns with separate bases representing the torii *or entrance gate to a Shinto shrine*

Like the Bianchini and Music Houses, 1429 Nipomo (next page) has a simple rectangular piercing with bead terminations (in profile). The McCabe House, in contrast, has fretwork inserts of ball finials in profile—six per column originally, now four—themselves pierced. Such fretwork balls or lobes often decorated Swiss Revival and were borrowed for Eastlake.

Importantly, unlike 1429 Nipomo or any of the pierced columns in Cambria—or any other post-Gothic pierced columns I can find in California or anywhere else in the United States—

the McCabe House columns lack capitals, so, in common Eastlake practice, they could accommodate an openwork porch frieze screen.

Above: The aedicular Neo-Baroque duplex 1429 Nipomo, central section possibly built by 1877, with pierced columns, here photographed by Barron Wiley (courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County); below: 2019 Google Street View of the square capitals, astragals, and bead terminations of the piercings; bottom: pierced columns with lattice inserts, 1854 Greek Revival adobe Casa Grande, New Almaden (San Jose)



XII. The McCabe House: Period of Significance

The McCabes—assuming they either bought or built the house at 571 Pismo in 1891, which is plausible given their mortgage history and documented occupancy of the property by 1895–1896—lived at the house for eleven years, long enough to establish association, if any of them was historically significant during the period of association. In 1899, the *Tribune* refers to George McCabe as a well known businessman, but that condition does not rise to historic significance. Nothing is documented about any historically significant activities of Cordelia McCabe's at the time. The next occupants, the Coiners and Truesdales, lived in the house too briefly to establish historic association and were, at any rate, either not historically significant or, if arguably so (as with later county auditor Harry Truesdale) not living in the house during their period of significance.

The Call family celebrates Joy Call's birthday in the garden at 571 Pismo circa 1915: from left to right, Albert G., Georgia, Joy, Beth, Aunt Rhoda Reed, Arthur, and Si. Courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County.

The next occupants were Stephen Albert "Bert" Call—manager of San Luis Obispo's gas and electric company 1906–1909 before he and his wife purchased the house in 1911 and subsequently a stationary engineer for the San Luis Obispo Ice and Cold Storage Company

until his retirement in 1941, living in the house till his death in 1955 ("Bert Call, 84, Native Obispan, Taken by Death," *Telegram-Tribune*, 10 Aug. 1955, p. 1)—and his wife Georgia, who died in 1958 and did not receive attention from the newspapers except for social activities. Son Albert G. Call, chief criminal investigator for the county sheriff and a union leader, did not live at the house during these activities. Daughter Joy Call is documented by city directories as living in the house until just before her retirement in 1975 from work in the county tax collector's office.

Georgia and Stephen Albert "Bert" Call in 1950. Courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County.

Thus the McCabe House's significance is based entirely on its embodiment of the rare double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottage form and the pierced column form in American architecture, which the circa 1895–1896 photograph shows to be the house's original form, and the period of significance coincides with the date of its construction to this documentation, 1891–1896.

XIII. Significance

The George and Cordelia McCabe House at 571 Pismo Street has three points of extreme rarity in San Luis Obispo City and County:

- It is 1 of only 4 double-bay-fronted sitting-porch Eastlake cottages in the city, 5 in the county, and 6 in the Central Coast region
- It retains 1 of only 2 examples of pierced-column porticoes in the city and 5 in the county
- The façade has detailed photo documentation within 5 years of construction

Per the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the house embodies two types of construction, the **double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottage** and the **pierced-column portico**. Under NRHP Criteria for Evaluation, the pierced columns are likely to yield knowledge important in architectural history, and, as likely the last use of pierced columns on the Central Coast, the house meets criteria for California Historical Landmark designation as "the first, last, only, or most significant of its type in the state or within a large geographic region."

The McCabe House as a double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottage Eastlake is the dominant late-nineteenth-century architecture style in California. The Old Town Historic District's 37 documentably nineteenth-century Master and Contributing resources include[6]

- 1 Gothic Revival (St. Stephen's Episcopal Church)
- 1 Neo-Baroque (1429 Nipomo)
- 1 Queen Anne (Erickson—687 Islay)
- 4 Swiss Revivals (Snyder, Angel, Greenfield, and Meredith)
- 6 full-width-front-porch (i.e., Greek Revival–based) Italianate cottages (654 Buchon, 654 Islay, 662 Islay, 454 Islay, 1526 Osos, and 673 Buchon)
- 9 Gabled Italianates (Rogers, Dana-Parsons, Fitzpatrick, 1415 Nipomo, 1516 Nipomo, 722 Buchon, 969 Pismo, 530 Buchon, and 651 Buchon,)
- 15 Eastlakes (Lewin, Jessie Wright, McKennon, Brooks, McCabe, Vollmer–497 Islay, Biddle, Falkenstein, Nichols, Fleuger, Miller, Fumigalli, Erickson–461 Islay, McManus, and 550 Islay [this last altered in form and decoration almost beyond recognition])

That is, 41 percent of the documentably nineteenth-century listed properties in the district are Eastlake. It is an impressive concentration, and 87 percent of them are Master Listed—with the two exceptions of the McCabe House and 550 Islay (the latter of which has had its

6. From E. S. Glover's *Berd's Eye View of San Luis Obispo, California*, Sanborn Maps, and newspaper accounts; see Papp, *Master List Application: Hans Nissen and Lena Peterson Hansen House, 1110 Buchon Street* (2025), pp. 35–36.

front porch subsumed into the house and has been shorn of any decorative features apart from one wall-shingled front gable).

The subset of double-bay-fronted Eastlakes in the district is far smaller, 2 of the 15 Eastlakes in the district, the Lewin House and McCabe House. The McCabe House's surviving columns and balustrade, which the Lewin lacks; five-windowed compared to the Lewin's four-windowed square bays with crown and base panels—not to mention the frieze screen, corbels, and fretworked balusters that can be restored to Secretary of the Standards from the circa 1895 photograph—makes the McCabe House more complex than the Lewin House in both its double-bay-front and porch and their decorative motifs.

The McCabe House's pierced columns There seems to be little if any research on pierced columns outside of the American South, yet the two photographs below of an unidentified but no longer extant full-width-front-porch Italianate cottage (perilously leaning) and a gabled Italianate, both in San Luis Obispo, show they were once more abundant than the city's two survivors. Pierced columns were used on structures as varied as the urban and sophisticated 1856 extension of the Gothic Revival Moses Chase House in Oakland (next page top left) and the remote and simple circa 1860 Italianate Pierano House in Angels Camp and 1863 Knapp House in Pescadero (next page bottom left).

In general, pierced columns date to styles and structures decades earlier than the McCabe House. Otherwise evidenced in San Luis and Santa Barbara Counties on Italianate and Neo-Baroque architecture, the pierced columns on the McCabe House are likely the last used on the Central Coast and possibly California, are exceedingly rare or possibly unique examples of capital-free Eastlake pierced columns, and are likely to yield information important in architectural history and meet the criteria for State Historical Landmark status.

Both photos courtesy of the History Center of San Luis Obispo County

Above left: Moses Chase House, Oakland, extant; below left, Knapp House, 85 Stage Road, Pescadero (Google Street View); above: Italianate Trussel House, Santa Barbara (HABS photograph, 1930s), demolished

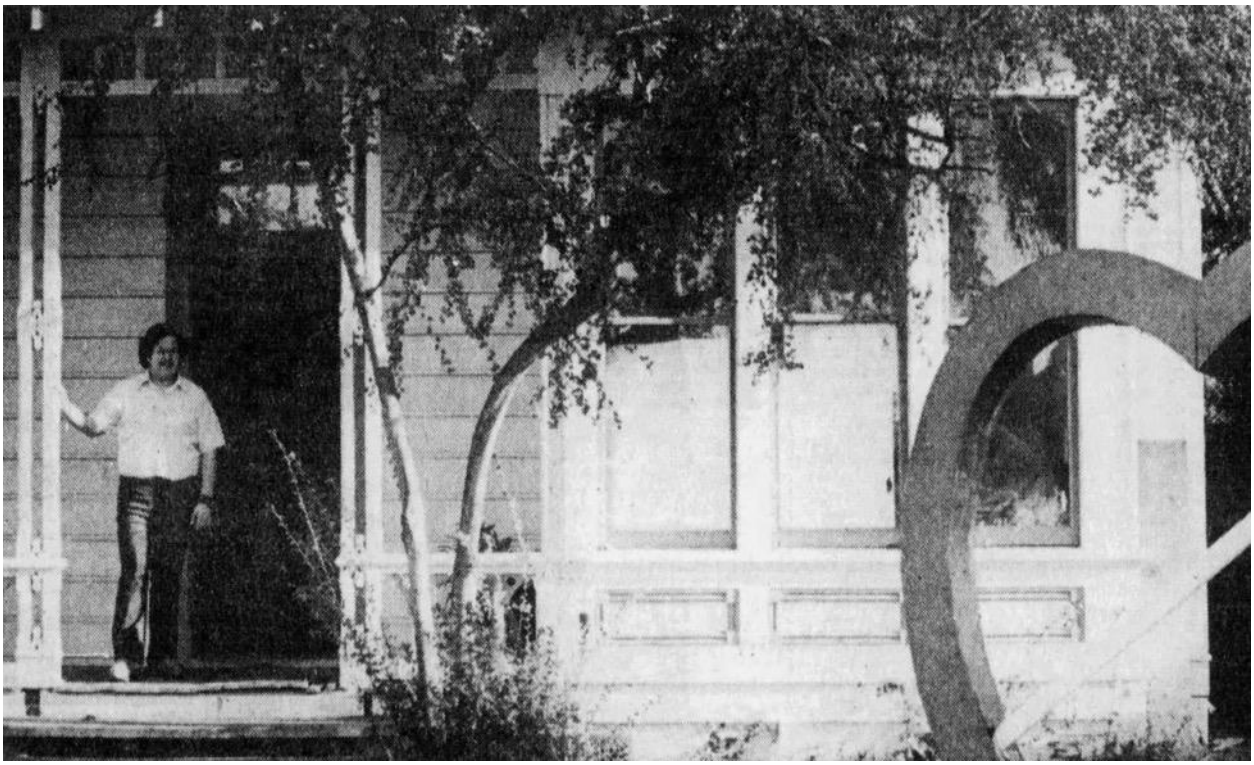
Rare and delicate, pierced columns tend not to survive and for that reason warrant heightened recognition and protection. Not only have three of the five examples pictured on this and the previous page been demolished, the pierced columns of the Pierano House in Angels Camp have been "restored" as double columns, as seen in the Depression Era HABS photo on the next page at top (loc.gov) compared to the 2018 photo below it (beyond.nvexpeditions.com/california/calaveras/angelscamp).

The McCabe House's photo documentation The detail from the McCabe House photograph of circa 1895 on the following page shows the extraordinary degree of glass-plate-negative precision in recording original detail merely of the porch, including corbels, frieze screen, pierced column interior fretwork, fretwork baluster corbels, and door molding and incising. Photographs of demolished, usually unidentified houses are rare, as are historic house with *no* photo documentation earlier than HABS reports, historic resources surveys, or Google street views. Of vanishing rarity are extant historic houses with early, detailed photographic documentation. This photograph in the History Center archives will allow restoration of the porch woodwork to Secretary of the Interior Standards. In combination with the 1975 Telegram-Tribune, 1982 historic resources survey photograph, and 1980s Barron Wiley photograph at the History Center, it allows us to

identify any earlier restoration work, its source and accuracy, as seen in the 1895 and 1975 photos compared on page 41.

Though not a technical reason for listing, detailed photo documentation is of enormous utility for accurate restoration to Secretary of the Interior Standards. A substantial number of Master List resources in the Old Town Historic District have had either porches added after the period of significance (e.g., the Italianate Rogers and Eastlake Jessie Wright) or character-defining porches enclosed. Lack of photography or lack of interest in investigating the existing photography has led to much misunderstanding of historic integrity in San Luis Obispo, with many Master Listed buildings far more changed than we generally believe or might care to admit.

Circa 1895–1896 (above) and 1975 (below)

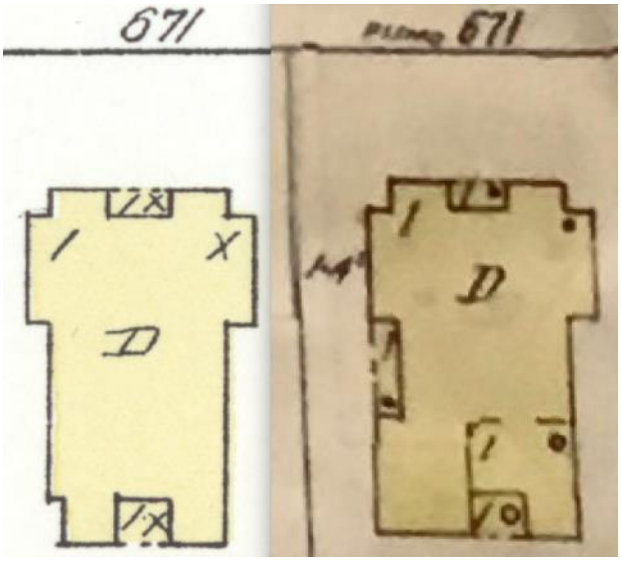


XIV. Integrity

Each of the three Master Listed double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottages in San Luis Obispo has significant challenges with integrity that were deemed insufficient to prevent them from conveying their significance.

Of the two included in the original round of Master Listing, the Goldtree House lost its Italianate hip roof and roof balustrade and Eastlake front central gablet and frieze molding when in 1908 it became the McCaffrey Flats, leaving only its square bays and front porch. The Lewin House's roof had been reconfigured, presumably with the pushout of its southwest wall between the 1909 and 1926 Sanborn Maps (below), engulfing the façade's original side gables and also giving the street façade an asymmetric appearance (above right).

Below: The original side gable is the front multicolored one. The second multicolored one topped a later (but since enclosed porch), with the larger, non-original gable enclosing both.



In addition, the Goldtree House, originally a cottage in a residential district, gained its apartment floor because of the expansion of downtown, and by the time of its Master

Listing, its original setting had been replaced by an apartment house on one side and office buildings and parking lots on the others, none of which were there when it was a double-bay-front Eastlake cottage or even at the McCaffrey Flats' conversion of 1908.

The more recently Master Listed Dana-Barneberg House, whose façade and side gables remain in original configuration, was moved across the street in 1911, losing integrity of location, and also had un-Eastlake canted bays added to both side façades between the 1891 and 1903 Sanborn Maps and lost its ridge cresting.

Thus the integrity of the McCabe House to convey the significance of the double-bay-front Eastlake cottage type exists not in a vacuum of perfection but among real-world comparisons.

Location The McCabe House retains its original location as shown on the 1891 Sanborn Map about the time it was likely constructed.

Setting The McCabe House remains in a suburban residential setting. The Biddle House, built about two years after it, in 1893, stands on its southwest side; 1415 Nipomo, dating from the 1870s, is visible behind it, and the 1873 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and tower of the circa 1899 McManus House contribute to its front viewshed. The Nipomo Street School, closed at the end of the school year in 1949 and demolished soon after, has disappeared from the viewshed, but the schoolyard persists as Emerson Park, allowing the same view of Cerro San Luis (right) through the clear sash windows of the McCabe House's square bays and to the street observer standing in front of the house.

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Design The design of the character-defining Eastlake square bays remains the same, including the five sash windows on each, the panels below and above the windows, and the vertical edge-molding of each bay,

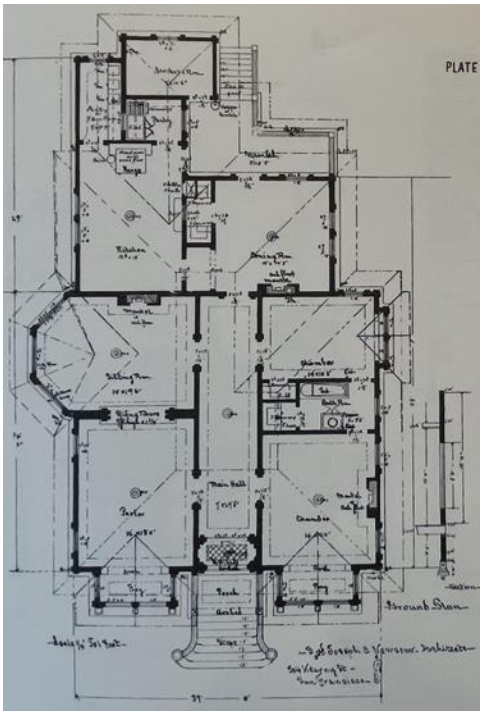
The design of the character-defining porch between the bays remains the same, including the pierced columns and balustrade railing, but excepting the missing frieze screen, four missing of the twelve original fretwork column inserts, and missing upright balusters with their fretwork corbels.

The design of the character-defining frieze molding and its ten supporting corbels, flat porch roof, and porch gablet with bargeboard incising (all Eastlake features), as well as gable bracket and vertical plank decoration (borrowed from Swiss Revival) has been replaced by a hip porch roof.

The design of the character-defining side gables has been replaced with a chalet-style front-gabled roof, possibly circa 1925 with the filling in of the southwest façade U (not a character-defining feature) or possibly circa 1933 after a roof fire.

The design of the character-defining Eastlake solid door, with molding and incising, has been replaced by a two-panel two-pane door.

The wall design throughout the front and side façades of character-defining shiplap and one-over-one sash windows remains.



The McCabe House, like the double-bay-front Renaissance Revival cottage published by the Newsom brothers in 1884 (left), has a parlor attached to one bay and bedchamber to the other, still used as such by the current owners.

As with the Goldtree-McCaffrey House, the replacement of porch roof, gablet, and side gables is a substantial loss to the McCabe House's ability to convey its significance as an Eastlake façade, though not as substantial, in terms of massing, as if an apartment story had been set on top of it, and the Goldtree-McCaffrey House was judged able to still convey its significance as an double-bay-front Eastlake cottage with the retention of its square bays and porch and their decorative features. The one feature the Goldtree retains that the McCabe does not is its original Eastlake doors, although the McCabe door could be reproduced to SOI Standards.

The McCabe porch, however, unlike the Goldtree, retains structural independence and could be returned to flat-roof design with corbels, frieze, frieze screen, and conceivably even gablet to SOI Standards.

Though in imperfect condition, overall, the McCabe House retains the chief part of its double-bay-fronted Eastlake design to convey the significance of the type.

The other key physical feature of the McCabe House's significance, independent of its Eastlake design, is its pierced columns and associated fretwork. This unique and historically important feature, with potential eligibility for State Historical Landmark

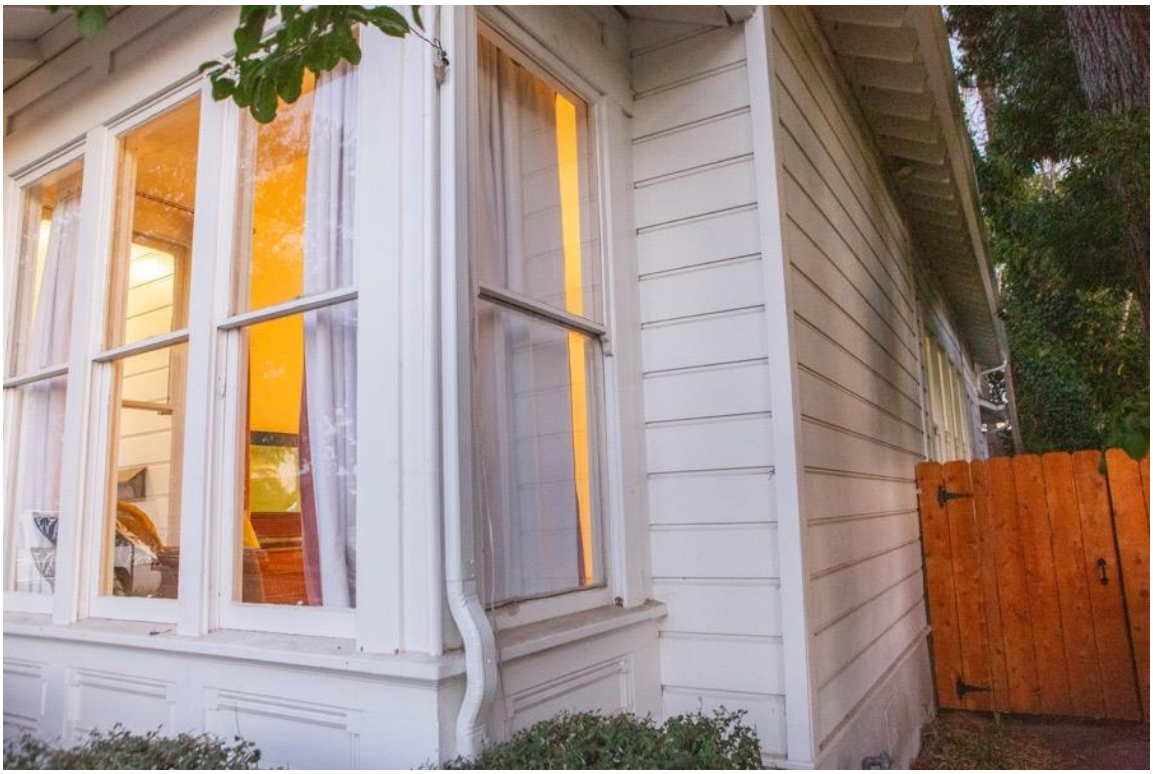
status, retains its integrity, apart from four missing fretwork decorations and the original integrated openwork frieze screen.

Materials As with design, retained material includes shiplap siding, sash windows, panels, molding, columns, most column fretwork, and railing. Lost material includes the front door, balusters and their fretwork faux corbels, some fretwork, corbels, frieze molding, frieze screen, gablet siding and bargeboard, and gable bracket.

Workmanship Most structural and decorative building materials of the mid to late nineteenth century are factory milled, with local workmanship the assembly by hand. As with design and materials, the retained assembly is in the bay and porch features, the lost assembly in the corbels, frieze, frieze screen, and gablet. The key pieces of individual handwork—the pierced columns and most of the column fretwork—are retained, with the fretwork faux corbels of the balusters lost but reproducible by modern craftspeople to SOI standards, given the photographs.

Feeling Feeling is a combination of the material integrities (location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship) in the expression of an aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time. The McCabe House retains its location and setting and the design, material, and workmanship of its pierced columns and the majority of the design, materials, and workmanship of its double-bay-front Eastlake architecture. It continues to convey the aesthetic sense of its time.

Association In absence of historically significant persons and events for the house or its features to be associated with, association is not relevant.



Southwest (above) and northeast (below) side façades. All color photographs of the McCabe House in this report are by Ben Winter.

XV.

In sum, the integrity of the McCabe House in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling allows it to convey the significance of its rare double-bay-fronted Eastlake cottage design in massing, spatial relationships, and decoration, as well as the significance of its rare pierced-column portico, well in line with precedent set by other Master List resources.

XV. Conclusion

The McCabe House is significant for embodying the single-story double-bay-front sitting-porch Eastlake cottage and pierced-column portico architectural types. Both types are important in American, Californian, and San Luis Obispan architectural history, the first as a possibly peculiarly Central Coast descendant of the full-width-front-porch Greek Revival cottage form, the second as a phenomenon associated with the Greek and Gothic Revivals and Italianate architecture here adapted—possibly uniquely—to Eastlake. They are extraordinarily rare and important survivors in San Luis Obispo City and County but also for California and the nation as a whole. The McCabe House retains the integrity to communicate the significance of both architectural types, and Master Listing will ideally lead to a Mills Act project to restore lost but thoroughly documented features of the façade to Secretary of the Interior Standards, as the Mills Act was intended.