

EVALUATION

Need/Purpose

An evaluation of the complete body of work of a given architect has thus far not been completed in the state of Oregon. The need for an evaluation of Frank Chamberlain Clark designed buildings in the Rogue River Valley of Southwestern Oregon has become evident over the last five years. Designations of architectural significance of Clark buildings by local planning agencies, architectural/historical plaque committees, and the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation have become increasingly difficult due to the preponderance of buildings in a relatively concentrated geographic area that are the work of one architect. Although Clark is recognized as an architect of prominence in the Rogue River Valley, not all of his work is exceptional nor warrants special historical or architectural recognition or consideration in the local planning process.

To date twenty-three Clark designed buildings have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of their local architectural and historical significance. The Oregon Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation, which is charged with the responsibility of making decisions of eligibility for listing in the National Register, has become increasingly hesitant to pass judgment on any building designed by Frank Clark since it has become unclear as to which Clark buildings are especially noteworthy. Although the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is broad, it specifies that buildings nominated for their architectural significance possess qualities of distinctiveness, intactness and that are the best examples of work if done by a single architect, builder, or craftsman. An assessment of such qualities in extant Clark buildings would serve as a valuable tool for the Advisory Committee in reviewing future National Register nominations for individual Clark buildings, or could be the basis of a thematic group nomination of Clark buildings in the Rogue River Valley.

Scope

The evaluation of Clark buildings was limited only to those structures documented by newspaper articles, journals, account books, and photographs belonging to Clark, building plans signed by Clark, correspondence written and received by Clark, and reliable informants including Robert J. Keeney (AIA), long-time associate of Clark in the firm of Clark & Keeney, four of Clark's five children (Frank, Jr., Edwin, Louise, and James), and long-term owners and/or occupants of Clark designed buildings. Research in the early phases of this project revealed a number of buildings that were designed by Clark, which were either never constructed, have not been located, or are presently no longer standing; this evaluation includes only those Clark buildings standing in 1982. Only those extant Clark buildings designed between 1903, at the eve of Clark's professional career in southern Oregon, and 1937, when Clark was officially joined by Robert J. Keeney, have been evaluated. After 1937 the firm name of Clark & Keeney appears consistently on building plans making it exceedingly difficult to discern which of the two partners was responsible for the design of the major portion of a building. A few buildings outside southern Oregon are known to be the work of Clark; however, for the purposes of this project, only those Clark buildings located in Jackson and Josephine counties, where the greatest preponderance of his work exists, were inventoried and evaluated.

Clark designed buildings with only minor alterations or additions, such as the construction of a portico, or a minor change in window fenestration, were not evaluated but are simply listed elsewhere in this study. Also listed but not evaluated are those buildings designed by Frank Clark between 1903 and 1937 but are not standing in 1982 or have not been located.

As in any research endeavor, Frank Clark designed buildings will continue to be 'discovered' in the future, yet it is hoped that the majority of his work in southern Oregon has been included in this survey and evaluation. (During the course of the project, several valley buildings were identified as 'highly likely' Clark designs which, through further research, might be definitely documented as the work of Frank Clark.)

System of Evaluation

An effort has been made in this inventory to evaluate the work of Frank Chamberlain Clark buildings on the basis of explicit objective criteria in order to arrive at results which will be widely accepted as credible and valid. Although an objective evaluation system is questioned by some architectural historians and preservationists who feel that the aesthetic qualities of architecture cannot be quantified, such evaluation systems have become increasingly used in recent years. An objective evaluation of Clark designed buildings seems especially appropriate and desirable since the number and variety of extant Clark buildings is so great.

The Frank C. Clark evaluation was based on the evaluation system used in San Francisco conducted by Charles Hall Page & Associates, Inc., for the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage (and published in Splendid Survivors, 1979), and in the Portland Historic Resource Inventory coordinated by Virginia Guest Ferriday, Portland Bureau of Planning (1981-82).

Architectural Styles

Stylistic classifications assigned to Clark designed buildings were based on an outline of architectural styles developed by Marion Dean Ross (Professor Emeritus, University of Oregon) and Elisabeth Potter (Nominations Coordinator, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office), in collaboration with Rosalind Clark, author of a layman's guide of architectural styles in Oregon produced for the city of Albany with assistance from the Oregon Historic Preservation Fund.

Criteria

All Frank Clark designed buildings included in this objective evaluation were rated against a preestablished criteria. The criteria used were designed to fit the needs of this project; however, they are based on the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places and the weighted factor rating system used by the Oregon State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation in determining eligibility of National Register nominations. The criteria applied are divided into three broad categories of architectural significance, environmental significance, and historical significance, and are arranged in a form

that is patterned after the San Francisco inventory and evaluation. Each of the three broad categories of significance are broken into several criteria which are evaluated separately.

Although the category of historical significance is included in this evaluation, buildings were ranked and scored only on the basis of their architectural and environmental merits. Future in-depth research on individual Clark designed buildings is necessary to assess the level of historical significance on the basis of their association with persons and events of significance and with broad cultural patterns of local, statewide, or national significance. The primary objective of this evaluation is to determine the level of distinction of Clark buildings in strictly architectural and environmental terms.

Rating/Scoring

Each of the eight criteria in the two major categories of architectural and environmental significance was rated on a four-level scale: Excellent (E), Very Good (VG), Good (G), or Fair/Poor (F/P). An explanation of each rating is given on the accompanying pages.

A progression of numerical values was assigned to each four-level scale of rating for each separate criteria. While the rating of Excellent, Very Good, Good, and Fair/Poor stayed the same for each criteria, the numerical values changed. A higher numerical value was given, for example, to the criteria of architectural style and building type, then to the criteria of building materials and method of construction, indicating that the former criteria was considered more important than the latter. Numerical scores were not assigned to each criteria and total scores tallied until after all buildings were rated (E, VG, G, F/P) to avoid prejudice in the process itself.

It is important to remember that the cumulative rating score for each building was the sum total of points in only those categories of architectural and environmental significance: a total of 65 points was possible (Architecture = 50 points; Environment = 15 points). Although a total of 35 possible points was assigned to the category of historical significance, this was done only to allow for the ranking of Clark buildings after further historical research is conducted when and if individual or thematic group National Register nominations are completed.

(Historical descriptions of buildings, when known, are included on the individual inventory forms for each building.)

The total score for each Frank Clark building reflects only levels of architectural and environmental significance. Thus, the total score for each building does not constitute a final determination of eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places.

Buildings with only minor alterations or additions designed by Frank Clark were not rated or scored.

Criteria

Architecture (50 possible points)

Criterion

- A. Style: Significance as an example of Clark's work of a particular architectural style, building type or convention
- E - Especially fine or extremely early example if many survive; excellent example if few survive
 - VG - Excellent or very early example if many survive; good example if few survive
 - G - Good example if many survive; mediocre if few survive
 - F/P - Of little particular interest
- B. Design/Artistic Quality: Significance because of quality of composition, detailing and craftsmanship
- E - Excellent
 - VG - Very good
 - G - Good
 - F/P - Fair or poor
- C. Materials/Construction: Significance as an example of a particular material or method of construction
- E - Especially fine or extremely early example if many survive; excellent example if few survive
 - VG - Excellent or very early example if many survive; good example if few survive
 - G - Good example
 - F/P - Of little particular interest
- D. Integrity: Significance because it retains its original design features, materials, and character
- E - No changes or very minor changes
 - VG - Minor changes which do not destroy the overall character
 - G - Major changes to portion of building with remainder intact, or overall character changed but recoverable through restoration
 - F/P - Altered substantially
- E. Rarity: Significance as the only remaining or one of few remaining properties of a particular style, building type, design, material, or method of construction
- E - One of a kind
 - VG - One of few remaining
 - G - One of several
 - F/P - One of many

Environment (15 possible points)

- F. Landmark: Significance as a visual landmark
- E - A structure which may be taken as a symbol for the city or region as a whole
 - VG - A conspicuous and familiar structure in the context of the community or the Rogue River Valley
 - G - A conspicuous and familiar structure in the context of the neighborhood
 - F/P - Not particularly conspicuous or familiar
- G. Setting: Significance because the current land-use surrounding the property contributes to an aura of the historic period
- E - Excellent
 - VG - Very good
 - G - Good
 - F/P - Fair to poor
- H. Continuity: Significance because the property contributes to the continuity or character of the street, neighborhood, or area
- E - Of particular importance in establishing the character of an area
 - VG - Of importance in establishing or maintaining the character of an area
 - G - Compatible to the dominant character of the area
 - F/P - Incompatible with the dominant character of the area

History (35 possible points)

- Person: Associated with the life or activities of a person, group, organization, or institution that has made a significant contribution to the community, state, or nation
- Event: Associated with an event that has made a significant contribution to the community, state or nation
- Patterns: Associated with, and effectively illustrative of, broad patterns of cultural, social, political, economic, or industrial history in the community, state, or nation

Final Evaluation

Based on the total cumulative points for each extant Clark designed building evaluated for architectural and environmental significance, buildings were placed in the following summary categories:

Primary Importance - Individually the most important Clark designed buildings in the Rogue River Valley distinguished by outstanding qualities of architecture and relationship to the environment

Secondary Importance - Clark designed buildings which are not of outstanding distinctiveness or rarity architecturally and that also may have experienced some loss of environmental integrity

Minor Importance - Clark designed buildings which are insignificant examples of architecture and environmental context. This category includes buildings that lack

qualities of distinctive original design and, most often, buildings that have been insensitively "remodeled." Loss of architectural integrity for such buildings often coincides with significant alteration of the building's environmental setting

The purpose of translating the numerical scores into three summary groups is to avoid an explicit preciseness about each building which could suggest that a building with a score of 63 points is necessarily better than a building with 58 points. It is only possible to assume that buildings within a certain range are better than those within a lower range.

A full list of buildings within each summary category appears after a discussion of the evaluation results for each of the four major building types: Residential, Commercial, Institutional, and Agricultural.

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