SUBJECT: ADDITION OF THE PROPERTY AT 858 TORO STREET TO THE MASTER LIST OF HISTORIC RESOURCES AS “THE VIRGINIA LEVERING LATIMER HOUSE”

RECOMMENDATION
As recommended by the Cultural Heritage Committee, adopt a Resolution (Attachment A) adding the property at 858 Toro Street to the Master List of Historic Resources as “The Virginia Levering Latimer House.”

DISCUSSION

Background
Eric and Jaqueline Blair (Applicants) have requested that the property at 858 Toro Street be designated as a Master List Resource in the City of San Luis Obispo’s (City) Inventory of Historic Resources, as “The Virginia Levering Latimer House” (Property). The Property is currently designated as a Contributing List Resource and is located within the Mill Street Historic District.

On January 27, 2019 the Cultural Heritage Committee considered this request and found that the property meets eligibility criteria for historical listing to a degree that qualifies it for designation as a Master List Resource, and recommended that the City Council designate the Property as a Master List Resource in the City’s Inventory of Historic resources.

Site and Setting
The Property is at the southeast corner of Toro and Mill Streets, within the Mill Street Historic District (Attachment B). The district was developed at the turn of the 20th Century and has a high concentration of historic structures. The majority of the historic resources date from the early 20th Century, the district’s primary period of historical and architectural significance, though several resources also date from the late 19th Century (see Attachment C).
The site is developed with a single-family dwelling (see Figure 2 below). Though no construction date is noted in City records,\(^1\) the footprint of the dwelling first appears in a Sanborn Map of the area published in 1891. In 1983 the Property was designated as a Contributing List Resource. The Applicants have provided an evaluation of the Property and its eligibility for historic listing, prepared by James Papp of Historicities, LLC (Papp) (Attachment D).

![Figure 1: Virginia Levering Latimer House; 1904 (left) and 2019 (right)](image)

**Building Architecture**

As described in the Papp evaluation, the dwelling embodies the Italianate style.\(^2\) The City’s Historic Context Statement describes the style as one that began in England as part of the Picturesque Movement, and in the United States followed the informal model of the simple Italian farmhouse, adapted into an indigenous style (see Attachment E). The architect and builder of the dwelling are unknown.\(^3\) The architectural characteristics of the building are more fully discussed in the Papp evaluation submitted with this application, and summarized in the Evaluation section of this report, below.

**The Latimer Family**\(^4\)

The Papp report outlines the history of the Latimer Family who, by 1860, relocated to California from Maryland and Virginia. In 1878 Benjamin Griffith ("B.G.") Latimer, Jr. moved from Santa Clara County to San Luis Obispo, and by the 1900 census Virginia Levering Latimer, his mother, resided at 858 Toro Street (her husband having died in Santa Clara County in 1886), and lived there until her death in 1907. The dwelling is most closely associated with Virginia Latimer during the building’s period of significance.

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\(^1\) Historical Information File (“Yellow File”); see Attachment F.  
\(^2\) James Papp, “Master List Application – Virginia Levering Latimer House” (November 2019), pg. 6  
\(^3\) Papp, pg. 4  
\(^4\) Summarized from Papp, pp. 4-5
Evaluation of Eligibility for Listing
To be eligible for listing as an historic or cultural resource, the resource must exhibit a high level of historic integrity, be at least 50 years old, and meet one or more of the eligibility criteria described in Historic Preservation Ordinance § 14.01.070 (see Attachment G). As provided in § 14.01.050 of the Ordinance, the most unique and important resources and properties in terms of age, architectural or historical significance, rarity, or association with important persons or events in the City’s past may be designated as “Master List Resources.”

Architectural Criteria
Character-defining features of the Italianate Style are described in the City’s Historic Context Statement to include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Low pitched hipped or flat roof
- Widely overhanging eaves with large decorative brackets
- Tall narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above
- Elaborated window crowns
- One-story entry porch, often supported by square posts with beveled corners
- Centrally placed square tower or cupola

As described and depicted in pages 8-11 of the Papp evaluation, the Latimer House exhibits all of these features, albeit with a “more economical or streamlined feeling” common to later Italianate examples. A hipped roof, overhanging bracketed eaves, tall narrow windows, and a symmetrical façade at the main entry set the primary form of the building. A one-story porch frames the entry, and a parapet recalls the original balustrade on the roof.

Historic Criteria
The property is, during its period of significance, most closely associated with the Latimer family, as described in pages 4-5 of the Papp evaluation. Though the family’s background and history provide an important glimpse into early California and local history, the evaluation provided does not indicate a relevant association with singular and important historical events and patterns or significance to the community rising to a level that qualifies the property as a “Master List Resource” under Historic Criteria in the Historic Preservation Ordinance § 14.01.070 (B).

Integrity
Apart from a 1905 “lean-to” addition at the rear of the house, replacement of the roof balustrade with a parapet, loss of porch column capitals and bases, new sash windows (within the original surrounds), and a limited number of new window openings (on secondary elevations), the building retains a high degree of integrity of its external features. Some original features are evident in the building interior, but the interior has been renovated to accommodate continued residential use. The building occupies its original site, in the same location on the property, and has changed very little from its original appearance, and thus to a large degree was found to satisfy the criteria for Integrity set out in the Historic Preservation Ordinance § 14.01.070 (C).

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5 Papp, pp. 11-12
Conclusion
The information in the Papp evaluation prepared for this application, documenting the architectural character and integrity of the house, provides a basis for finding that the dwelling satisfies Evaluation Criteria for Architectural Style and Design and for Integrity described in the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance §§ 14.01.070 (A) & (C), to a degree that qualifies it for designation of the Property as a Master List Historic Resource.

Policy Context
The recommended action on this item is supported by historical preservation policies set out in section 3.0 of the Conservation and Open Space Element of the City’s General Plan, and with procedures and standards for listing of historic resources set out in the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance §§ 14.01.060 & 14.01.070.

Public Engagement
Public notice of this hearing has been provided to owners and occupants of property near the subject site, and published in a widely circulated local newspaper, and hearing agendas for this meeting have been posted at City Hall, consistent with adopted notification procedures. Public notice was also previously provided for the Cultural Heritage Committee meeting of January 27, 2020.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to the recommended action in this report, because the action does not constitute a “Project” under CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15378.

FISCAL IMPACT
Budgeted: No
Funding Identified: No

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<th>Annualized On-going Cost</th>
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Adding the Property to the Master List of Historic Resources will have no fiscal impacts. Historic designation of the Property itself has no bearing on City fiscal resources. As a Master List Resource, however, the Property would be eligible for historic preservation incentives under the “Mills Act,” which is under consideration by subsequent application (HIST-0048-2020). A separate fiscal analysis would be reviewed by the City Council should the property proposed to be added to the Mills Act list of properties.
ALTERNATIVES

1. Decline to designate the property as a Master List Resource in the Inventory of Historic Resources based on finding that the Property is not considered to be sufficiently unique or important, or found to satisfy Evaluation Criteria for listing to a degree warranting such designation. The Property would remain in the Inventory as a Contributing List Resources.
2. Continue consideration of the request for additional information or discussion.

Attachments:

a - Draft Resolution
b - Vicinity Map
c - Mill Street Historic District (Historic Preservation Program Guidelines)
d - COUNCIL READING FILE - Latimer House Master List Application
e - Italianate Style (Historic Context Statement)
f - Historic Property File
g - Evaluation Criteria
RESOLUTION NO. _____ (2020 SERIES)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISSO, CALIFORNIA, ADDING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 858 TORO STREET TO THE MASTER LIST OF HISTORIC RESOURCES AS “THE VIRGINIA LEVERING LATIMER HOUSE” (HIST-0701-2019)

WHEREAS, the applicants, Eric and Jaqueline Blair, filed an application on October 17, 2019, for review of the inclusion of the property at 858 Toro Street on the City of San Luis Obispo’s (City) Master List of Historic Resources; and

WHEREAS, the City’s Cultural Heritage Committee conducted a public hearing in the Council Hearing Room of City Hall, 990 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, California, on January 27, 2020 and recommended that the City Council add the property at 858 Toro Street to the City’s Master List of Historic Resources; and

WHEREAS, the City Council conducted a public hearing on March 17, 2020 for the purpose of considering the request to add the 858 Toro Street property to the City’s Master List of Historic Resources; and

WHEREAS, notices of said public hearings were made at the time and in the manner required by law; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has duly considered all evidence, including the record of the Cultural Heritage Committee hearing and recommendation, testimony of the applicant and interested parties, and the evaluation and recommendation presented by staff.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of San Luis Obispo as follows:

SECTION 1. Findings. Based upon all the evidence, the City Council makes the following findings:

a) The subject property is eligible for inclusion in the City’s Inventory of Historic Resources as a Master List Resource because the dwelling on the property satisfies at least one of the evaluation criteria for historic resource listing described in the § 14.01.070 of the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO), exhibits a high degree of historic integrity, and is more than 50 years old.

b) The dwelling on the subject property satisfies evaluation criteria related to architectural style (HPO §14.01.070 (A)). It conveys a purity of style, exhibits attractiveness through detailing and craftsmanship, and is a rare example within the City of the Italianate Style. The building occupies its original site, with its exterior largely unaltered, and retains its characteristic design and materials, satisfying criteria for Integrity (HPO § 14.01.070 (C)).
SECTION 2. Environmental Determination. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) does not apply to the recommended action in this report, because the action does not constitute a “Project” under CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15378.

SECTION 3. Action. The City Council of the City of San Luis Obispo does hereby include the property located at 858 Toro Street to the Master List of Historic Resources as “The Virginia Levering Latimer House.”

Upon motion of _______________________, seconded by _______________________, and on the following roll call vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:

The foregoing resolution was adopted this ______ day of __________ 2020.

Mayor Heidi Harmon

ATTEST:

______________________________
Teresa Purrington
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

______________________________
J. Christine Dietrick
City Attorney

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of San Luis Obispo, California, this _______ day of __________________________, 2020.

______________________________
Teresa Purrington
City Clerk

R ______
5.2.4 Mill Street Historic District

Setting

Established in 1987, the Mill Street Historic District is a residential neighborhood bounded by Pepper and Toro Streets on the east and west, and Peach and Palm Streets on the north and south. The Mill Street District is part of one subdivision, The Town of San Luis Obispo, recorded in 1878, although the area informally has been referred to as Fremont Heights. For its land area, Mill Street Historic District has the highest concentration of historic structures of the City’s five Historic districts. It is a relatively small district, with an area of 20 acres or 0.03125 square miles, and as of January of 2010 had 84 listed historic properties.

The Mill Street district was developed at the turn of the 20th century, with the majority of the existing buildings dating from the 1900s to 1920s, the district’s primary period of historical and architectural significance. The district was developed on high ground with originally very wide (100 ft) lots in response to both the seasonal flooding and fires that plagued early development in San Luis Obispo. A few of these wide lots remain in the 1300 block of both Mill Street and Palm Street, but the majority of them were later re-subdivided into 50-60 foot wide lots.

Site Features and Characteristics

Common site features and characteristics include:

A. Trees spaced at regular intervals along the street (especially on Mill Street)
B. Distinctive Camphor Trees lining both sides of Mill Street between Johnson and Pepper, a key entry corridor for the district
C. Consistent street yard setbacks of 20 feet or more
D. Coach barns (garages) recessed into rear yard
E. Finish floors raised 2-3 above finish grade
F. Front entries oriented toward street, with prominent walk, stairs and entry porches.
G. Front building facades oriented parallel to street

Architectural Character

Developed during a population boom in San Luis Obispo circa 1900s-1920s, the district’s residential architectural styles reflect the prosperity of its residents. While older and more elaborate residences are located on the 1300 block of both Palm and Mill Streets, the majority of
historic homes were more modest residences. The close proximity to the court house meant that Mill Street was home to many county employees, including county assessors, attorneys, and county clerks. The Mill Street District encompasses many different architectural styles, including revival styles popular at the turn of the twentieth century. These styles include Neo-classic Row House, Victorian (with elements of Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Stick and Eastern Shingle), Tudor Revival, Mission Revival, and Craftsman Bungalow, with many homes borrowing architectural details from more than one style. Most buildings in this district were built by local builders, including E.D. Bray and James Maino and were influenced by architectural pattern books of the time period.

Predominant architectural features include:

A. One- and occasionally two-story houses
B. Mostly gable and hip roof types
C. Traditional fenestration, such as double-hung, wood sash windows, ornamental front doors, wood screen doors
D. Ornamental roof features, including prominent fascias, bargeboards, prominent pediments or cornices
E. Painted wood or stucco surface material, including siding and molding

**Individually Contributing Elements in the Mill Street District**

Not all historic resources in the Mill Street Historic District were built during the district’s period of significance. Those buildings date from the late 1800s, generally do not exhibit the signature architectural elements described above, but do contribute to the historic character of San Luis Obispo in their own right based on age, architectural style or historical association. By virtue of their significance, these resources also merit preservation.

For example, the Buckley House at 777 Johnson Avenue is a converted carriage house built in the 1880s and is significant for its design, specifically the board and batten siding, of which there very few examples are left in the City. The Shipsey House at 1266 Mill Street, a National Register property, is an example of Eastern Stick and significant for both its architectural style and its association with William
Shipsey, attorney and mayor of San Luis Obispo from 1898 to 1901.

**Non-Contributing Elements in the Mill Street District**

Non-contributing buildings are those that both do not meet the criteria outlined above and have not achieved historical significance. Most of the post—1950 contemporary buildings in the district fall into this latter category.

Non-contributing architectural styles, materials or site features include:

- A. Aluminum sliding windows
- B. Rectilinear, “boxy” shape
- C. Metal or other contemporary material siding, or “faux” architectural materials or features.
- D. Unarticulated wall surfaces
- E. Non-recessed or offset street entries to buildings

*1243 Mill Street, North Elevation*
1262 Mill Street; 1261 Mill Street; 1143, 1137 and 1127 Peach Street; Righetti House, 1314 Palm Street

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Packet Page 34
ITALIANATE

The Italianate style began in England as part of the Picturesque Movement. As used in the United States, this style generally followed the informal model of the simple Italian farmhouse, but was adapted into an indigenous style. This style did not enjoy the widespread popularity of other Victorian-era styles, and relatively few Italianate buildings were built.

Character-defining features include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Low pitched hipped or flat roof
- Widely overhanging eaves with large decorative brackets
- Tall narrow windows, commonly arched or curved above
- Elaborated window crowns
- One-story entry porch, often supported by square posts with beveled corners
- Centrally-placed square tower or cupola


Fitzgerald House, 794 Buchon Street, 1902. Source: Historic Resources Group.
City of San Luis Obispo

ARCHITECTURAL WORKSHEET

1. Address: 858 Toro

2. Building Shape: Rectangular (✓) L-Shape (__) Other (___)

3. Stories: 1 (__) 2 (___) 3 (___) Other (___)

4. Roof Shape: Gable (___) Hipped (✓) Flat (___) Gambrel (___)
   False Front (___) Bell Cast Hipped (___) Other (___)

5. Roof Pitch: Low (___) Medium (___) High (___) Flat (✓)
   Red Tile (___)

6. Roof Material: Tile (___) Builtnite Composition (Gravel) (___)
   Wood Shingle (___) Composition Shingle (___) Other (___)

7. Eaves: Close (___) Projecting (___) None (___)

8. Roof Trim: (a) Gable End: Projecting (___) Roof Edge (✓) Cornice (___)
   Bargeboard (___) Parapet (___) Mission Style (___)
   Decorated (___)
   (b) Special Features: Cupola (___) Finial (___)
   Gingerbread (___) Widow's Walk (___) Pendant (___)
   Ornaments (___) Grill Work (___) Pediment (___)
   Gable Stickwork (___)

9. Dormer: Gable (___) Gable with Overhand (___) Other (___)

10. Siding: Clapboard (___) Shiplap (✓) Shingle (___)
    Plaster or Stucco (___) Brick (___) Other (___)

11. Window Shape: Rectangular (✓) Semicircular Top (___) Round (___)
    Oval (___) Gothic (___) Carved (___) Bay (___)

12. Window Surrounding Details:
   (a) Top: Plain (___) Victorian Trim (___) Shelf (___)
       Molded (___) Other (___)
   (b) Sides: Plain (___) Molded (___) Other (___)

Evaluation Score:

Date: June 1983
Time Spent: 20 minutes
Reviewed by: _______________
Evaluated by: _______________
858 TORO

Single Story Italianate

This one story wood frame house is built on a low foundation. The house is rectangular in plan with a hipped roof and a shed roof addition in rear. The roof material is composition and the house is sheathed in shiplap.

Design: Built in the Italianate style the house features a glassed-in veranda across the front. The roof trim consists of a fascia accented with gingerbread brackets. A distinctive square bay window on the side has a boxed pediment with ornamented molding and brackets.

The house appears to be in original form and is presently only in fair condition.
858 Toro: This Italianate residence rests on a low foundation. The roof is hipped with fascia accented with double brackets. The facade is a glass enclosed verandah. There is a square bay window on the side and has a boxed pediment with an ornamented molding and brackets.
14.01.070. Evaluation Criteria for Historic Resource Listing

When determining if a property should be designated as a listed Historic or Cultural Resource, the CHC and City Council shall consider this ordinance and State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”) standards. In order to be eligible for designation, the resource shall exhibit a high level of historic integrity, be at least fifty (50) years old (less than 50 if it can be demonstrated that enough time has passed to understand its historical importance) and satisfy at least one of the following criteria:

A. Architectural Criteria: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

(1) Style: Describes the form of a building, such as size, structural shape and details within that form (e.g. arrangement of windows and doors, ornamentation, etc.). Building style will be evaluated as a measure of:

    a. The relative purity of a traditional style;

    b. Rarity of existence at any time in the locale; and/or current rarity although the structure reflects a once popular style;

    c. Traditional, vernacular and/or eclectic influences that represent a particular social milieu and period of the community; and/or the uniqueness of hybrid styles and how these styles are put together.

(2) Design: Describes the architectural concept of a structure and the quality of artistic merit and craftsmanship of the individual parts. Reflects how well a particular style or combination of styles are expressed through compatibility and detailing of elements. Also, suggests degree to which the designer (e.g., carpenter-builder) accurately interpreted and conveyed the style(s). Building design will be evaluated as a measure of:

    a. Notable attractiveness with aesthetic appeal because of its artistic merit, details and craftsmanship (even if not necessarily unique);

    b. An expression of interesting details and eclecticism among carpenter-builders, although the craftsmanship and artistic quality may not be superior.

(3) Architect: Describes the professional (an individual or firm) directly responsible for the building design and plans of the structure. The architect will be evaluated as a reference to:
a. A notable architect (e.g., Wright, Morgan), including architects who made significant contributions to the state or region, or an architect whose work influenced development of the city, state or nation.

b. An architect who, in terms of craftsmanship, made significant contributions to San Luis Obispo (e.g., Abrahams who, according to local sources, designed the house at 810 Osos - Frank Avila's father's home - built between 1927 – 30).

B. Historic Criteria

(1) History – Person: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history. Historic person will be evaluated as a measure of the degree to which a person or group was:

a. Significant to the community as a public leader (e.g., mayor, congress member, etc.) or for his or her fame and outstanding recognition - locally, regionally, or nationally.

b. Significant to the community as a public servant or person who made early, unique, or outstanding contributions to the community, important local affairs or institutions (e.g., council members, educators, medical professionals, clergymen, railroad officials).

(2) History – Event: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States. Historic event will be evaluated as a measure of:

   (i) A landmark, famous, or first-of-its-kind event for the city - regardless of whether the impact of the event spread beyond the city.

   (ii) A relatively unique, important or interesting contribution to the city (e.g., the Ah Louis Store as the center for Chinese-American cultural activities in early San Luis Obispo history).

(3) History-Context: Associated with and also a prime illustration of predominant patterns of political, social, economic, cultural, medical, educational, governmental, military, industrial, or religious history. Historic context will be evaluated as a measure of the degree to which it reflects:

a. Early, first, or major patterns of local history, regardless of whether the historic effects go beyond the city level, that are intimately connected with the building (e.g., County Museum).

b. Secondary patterns of local history, but closely associated with the building (e.g., Park Hotel).
C. **Integrity:** Authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance. Integrity will be evaluated by a measure of:

1. Whether or not a structure occupies its original site and/or whether or not the original foundation has been changed, if known.
2. The degree to which the structure has maintained enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as an historic resource and to convey the reason(s) for its significance.
3. The degree to which the resource has retained its design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

### 14.01.080 Historic District Designation, Purpose and Application

**A. Historic (H) District designation.** All properties within historic districts shall be designated by an “H” zoning. Properties zoned “H” shall be subject to the provisions and standards as provided in Ordinance 17.54 (Zoning) of the Municipal Code.

**B. Purposes of Historic Districts.** The purposes of historic districts and H zone designation are:

1. Implement cultural resource preservation policies of the General Plan, the preservation provisions of adopted area plans, the Historic Preservation and Archaeological Resource Preservation Program Guidelines, and

2. Identify and preserve definable, unified geographical entities that possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development;

3. Implement historic preservation provisions of adopted area and neighborhood improvement plans;

4. Enhance and preserve the setting of historic resources so that surrounding land uses and structures do not detract from the historic or architectural integrity of designated historic resources and districts; and

5. Promote the public understanding and appreciation of historic resources.

**C. Eligibility for incentives.** Properties zoned as Historic Preservation (H) shall be eligible for preservation incentive and benefit programs as established herein, in the Guidelines and other local, state and federal programs.
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