

ONE OF A KIND



THE JOHN HUDSON THOMAS-DESIGNED HOME at 1012 Ashmount Ave. in Oakland was built in 1912 but has many modern attributes to enhance its lifestyle.



THE GRAND ROOM maintains a coziness despite its large size. The room has a peaked ceiling, fireplace and great windows which bring in plenty of light.

Spirit of Arts and Crafts exemplified in Crocker Highlands home

BY SARAH CISTON
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Although architect John Hudson Thomas built a reputation as part of the First Bay Tradition, a movement noted for its clashes in scale and juxtapositions of historical styles, nothing about the home he designed at 1012 Ashmount Ave. clashes. Instead, the Arts and Crafts-style masterpiece in Oakland's Crocker Highlands neighborhood deftly merges opposites, folding ease and comfort into its grand scale. While its architectural elements have impressive heft, the 1912 home remains warm and welcoming rather than imposing, thanks to its counterbalance of delicate but eye-catching details.

With his contemporaries Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan, Thomas made a lasting impression on Bay Area architecture, through work that was influenced by a num-

ber of styles — from Art Nouveau to Tudor, Craftsman to Viennese Secessionist — and this home shows off his talent, anchored on a large corner lot to striking effect.

Landscaping by Goodman Landscape Design highlights the property from all angles, with brick work and rose bushes nestled among pines and palms alike.

The massive wrap-around front terrace leads to a foyer of gorgeous redwood beams and the first glimpses of the “four squares” motif Thomas would echo throughout the design — taking time to repeat his signature detailed four smaller squares that form a larger square in everything from the floor plan itself to window frame details. The foyer's wide staircase matches the scale of the home with strong, bold lines in the same dark wood from its railings to its large landing. A home office on the left offers a sunny corner to view the rose bushes and pergola outside, while to the right the enormous grand room awaits.

Large enough to make a grand piano look small, the grand room is miraculously cozy nonetheless. A hand-hammered copper fireplace hood and huge windows warm the room's dark beams of original clear-heart redwood, carved in gorgeous curves that form a peak down the center of the high ceiling. Period details like 18-inch baseboards, plus French doors with the four-square motif, unify the space with the adjoining dining room and sun room. The dining room has another large fireplace and an impressive, four-paneled, floor-to-ceiling bay window. New tile in the large sun room brings the outdoors in, transitioning between the interior home and the front terrace.

The entire space is ideal for entertaining large parties and distinguished guests alike. In its impressive history, the home is said to have hosted none other than President Harry S. Truman. Originally built for John F. Con-

nors, managing editor of the Oakland Tribune, the house was also owned by George Killian, former president of American President Lines shipping company and treasurer of the Democratic National Committee. Its most recent owners made significant upgrades during their 20 years, including seismic retrofitting and reinforcement and an updated kitchen — an important update for entertaining.

The kitchen was consolidated from a number of smaller spaces, leaving the large original butler's pantry intact, as well as a small den off the pantry. All its upgrades echo the original elements of the kitchen, down to the cabinet work that features four-square panes to continue the home's distinctive look. Updated appliances and a marble tile island large enough for eating, plus a breakfast area and a six-burner stove, make this kitchen suited for relaxing or entertaining, with views of the serene back yard. A path leads through the wooded back yard to a patio with space for grilling, and a back deck would make a great addition to connect the patio to the house and provide even more outdoor recreation space.

Next to the patio is a two-car detached garage in the style of the main house. The garden was once a regular stop on annual garden tours over the years, and its new landscaping does that history justice.

Upstairs, the bedrooms highlight unobstructed Bay views and feature large fireplaces, built-ins and closets. The master bedroom has a bay-window sitting area matching the dining room below, plus its own large deck and a dressing area that leads to the master bath. An attic suite — a perfect perch for a kids room — is bright and cozy with a gabled roof and a skylight.

In total, the home has five fireplaces, six bedrooms and 4.5 baths, including a guest half-bath on the first floor, plus an in-law apartment with its own bedroom and bathroom, which was expanded using green construction techniques to a separate 1,100-square-foot space. A bold piece of Oakland heritage is an invitingly comfortable classic — a study in attractive opposites.

Photos courtesy of Pacific Union

VITAL STATISTICS

What: A Crocker Highlands Arts and Crafts-style home with a history to match its grand scale.

Size: Approximately 6,350 square feet on an approximately 16,000-square-foot lot.

Bedrooms: Six.

Bathrooms: 4.5.

Features: Sweeping Bay views, five fireplaces, in-law apartment, updated kitchen, fresh landscaping, attic suite and many Arts and Crafts design elements.

Price: \$2,350,000.

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Information believed to be accurate but not verified.

THE NEW KITCHEN maintains its original design elements but has modern appliances plus a marble tile island and breakfast area.

