

Appendix F – Historic Resources Evaluation Report

# HISTORIC RESOURCES EVALUATION REPORT

## 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road

### Walnut Creek, California



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USGS Walnut Creek 7.5' Quadrangle

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## Introduction and Summary of Findings

A senior housing complex is proposed for development on a 30.4-acre parcel at 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road in unincorporated Walnut Creek, CA (APN 172-150-012). The existing building complex, which includes a house and five outbuildings, is over 50 years of age and will be removed in the course of the proposed development. Contra Costa County requires that project proponents consider whether a proposed project might cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5.

Archaeological/Historical Consultants (A/HC) of Oakland, California was retained to conduct a historical resources evaluation of the house and outbuildings at 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road. On October 1, 2020, an architectural recording of the project area was completed. The house and outbuildings **do not** appear to be a historical resource as defined in CEQA §15064.5.



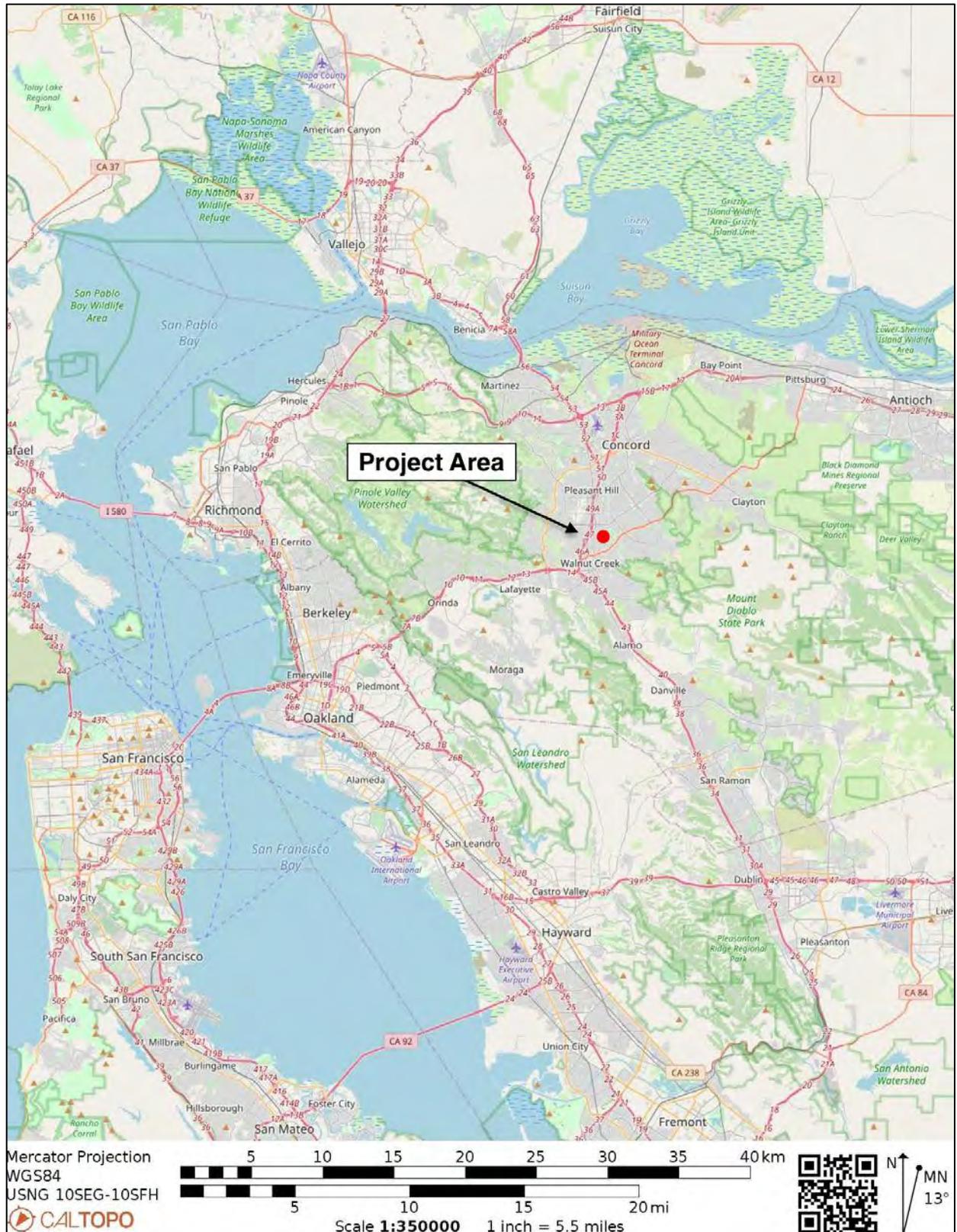


Figure 1: Project Location



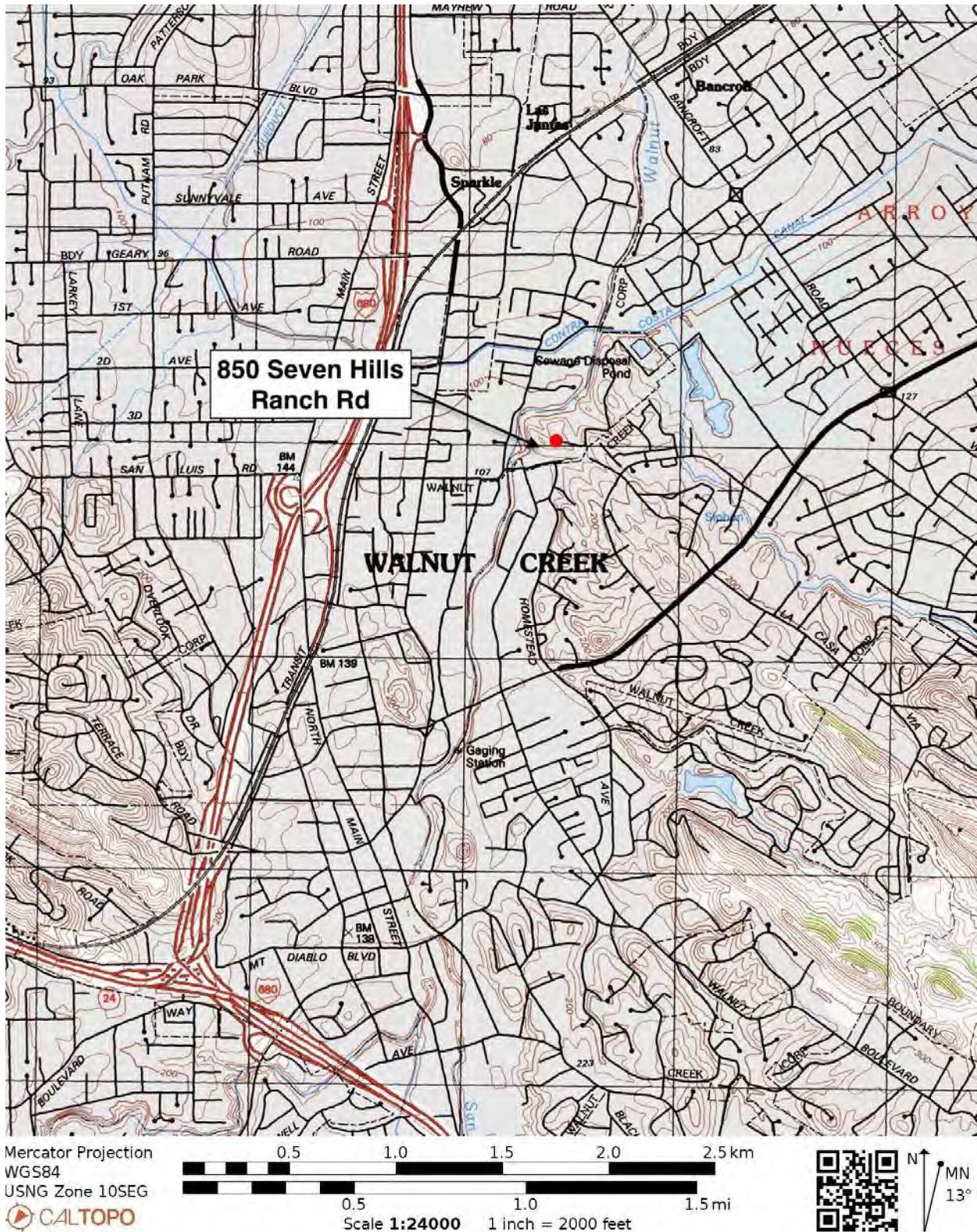


Figure 2: Project Vicinity





Figure 3: Site Plan, 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road

## Historic Context

### Walnut Creek

During the Spanish period, the Walnut Creek area was used by Mission San José for sheep and cattle grazing. Founded in 1799, Mission San José is located approximately 15 miles south of the project area in what is now the City of Fremont. After Mexico seceded from Spain in 1822, grants of land to private citizens began. After the secularization of the missions began in 1833, the number of land grants increased substantially.

The project area lies east of downtown Walnut Creek on the former Rancho de las Nueces y Bolbones, granted to Juana Sánchez de Pacheco in 1834, and patented to her heirs in 1866. The grant included 17,782 acres on the western side of Mount Diablo (Hoover et al. 1966:64). The Pacheco family ran cattle on the ranch, and lived at an adobe house that stood at 1056 Hacienda Drive until selling the property in 1860. Walnut Creek was originally known as “The Corners” for the intersection of two major roads to Oakland and San Jose/Monterey at what is today Mt. Diablo and Main Streets (Purcell 1940:708).

Hiram Penniman platted the first lots at the Walnut Creek town site in 1856, and the first stage line started in 1863 with service from Walnut Creek to Oakland. A schoolhouse was built in 1871 and in 1872, a Methodist Church was one of the first churches constructed in Walnut Creek. Beginning in the 1880s, the agricultural economy in Central Contra Costa County changed from grain to fruit and nut cultivation. The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 opened a tremendous new market for California fruit, so that in almost every area served by adequate rail transportation the big grain ranches were subdivided into smaller holdings. The railroad provided a way to get fruit to market while still fresh, and improvements in refrigerated rail cars made it possible to ship fresh produce longer distances. The development of the canning and drying industries also created new methods of preserving and storing for later consumption. The major orchards in the Walnut Creek area included apricots, pears and walnuts, in addition to vineyards (Rovanpera 1999:26). The Southern Pacific Railroad brought the first railroad service to Walnut Creek in June, 1891. Walnut Creek was on a line that continued south from Avon (3.5 miles east of Martinez) to San Ramon. The trip from Walnut Creek to San Francisco took 2 hours and 45 minutes by train and ferry boat.

The growth of Walnut Creek in the early 20th century led to many new buildings and businesses in the town. The first tunnel (wide enough for one car) through the East Bay hills to Oakland opened by October 1900. The commercial district of Walnut Creek grew to have 25 businesses in 1909 (Brubaker 1975:115). The earliest subdivisions in the Walnut Creek area were 10 to 30-acre parcels for small farms, beginning with the Walnut Orchard Tract in 1909. Later subdivisions include Williams Walnut Subdivision of 1910 and Frandsen’s Subdivision, 1911. This early 20th century growth in Walnut Creek culminated in its 1914 incorporation in an area that included about one square mile. The City Trustees had their first meeting in the San Ramon Bank Building in October 1914. The population of Walnut Creek was 538 in 1920. The Walnut Creek area was still primarily an agricultural economy in the early 20th Century. The passage of the Volstead Act instituting prohibition in 1919 resulted in a further expansion of walnut growing as walnut trees replaced many of the grapevines. After Prohibition was repealed, walnut growing continued to be the main crop in the area, reaching its peak in 1946.

Walnut Creek continued to grow during the boom years of the 1920s, and the population of reached 1,552 in 1940, a threefold increase from 1920. However, the area remained predominantly rural until new regional infrastructure projects in the late 1930s and 1940s made suburban development in the Walnut Creek area possible. The completion of the Caldecott Tunnel in 1937 made automobile travel from interior Contra Costa County to San Francisco Bay feasible, and was followed by construction of the Contra Costa Canal (about 1/2 mile north of the project area) between 1940 and 1947. The first Central Valley Project canal, it supplied water to the Contra Costa Water District, enabling residential development in areas previously served mostly by well water (Bunse 2004).

The population boom of the Post-World War II period transformed Walnut Creek from a small rural town into a major suburban commercial and residential center. The new growth led to the city becoming part of the Contra Costa County Sanitary District in 1948 and the East Bay Municipal District in 1952. Many new subdivisions and apartment buildings were constructed in the Walnut Creek area in the 1950s and 1960s, as the population grew from 2,460 in 1950 to 9,900 in 1960. BART arrived in May 1973, connecting Walnut Creek to downtown San Francisco and reinforcing its identity as a bedroom suburb of the core Bay Area.

## History of the Seven Hills Ranch

850 Seven Hills Ranch Road (the project area) is located one-half mile northeast of downtown Walnut Creek. The house and its outbuildings sit on a 30.4 acre parcel, east of the channel of Walnut Creek on low rolling hills north of Ygnacio Valley Road and east of Interstate 680.

The property has been in the Hale family since 1928, and the house was built circa 1947 by the family of Idolene Hooper Hale. Born in San Francisco, Idolene Hooper (1883-1968) was daughter of Charles Appleton Hooper and Idella Geneva Snow. Charles Hooper was a lumber baron and capitalist best known as the founder of Pittsburg and developer of industry on the Contra Costa County shoreline. Idolene and her sister Isabelle were raised in Alameda. Idolene married her first husband, William Sumner Crosby (1878-1954), just after her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday (*Oakland Tribune* 1908). Crosby was a Harvard graduate and won seats on the Alameda City Council (1907-1909) and California State Assembly (1911) before later becoming editor of the *South Coast News* in Laguna Beach. The couple had four children, but Crosby left the family in December 1915. Hooper secured a divorce in late 1917, claiming desertion and noting Crosby's interest in the occult.

Idolene Hooper remarried in 1921 to Elbert Winfield Hale (1883-1932) of Piedmont. The couple had three children together, and moved to Walnut Creek in 1928 after purchasing the Seven Hills Ranch from J.B. John. Hale was the wealthy son of a southern California banking family and practiced as a mechanical engineer. An enthusiastic flier, he owned his own small aircraft, which he flew long distances. He died in March 1932 when his plane crashed off the coast of Ecuador during a tour of South America (*Oakland Tribune* 1932a). Though city directories and newspaper articles place the family in Walnut Creek by 1928, it is not clear whether they lived on the property, since the current house was built in 1947, and the only older building is a small cottage built in the 1910s or 1920s – which does not seem big enough for a family of six.

Hooper remarried just three months after Hale's death. Her new husband, Rathborne Ellyson Ewell, was a native of Virginia. The marriage took place in Fortuna, Trinity County, where the two had had nearby vacation homes (*Oakland Tribune* 1932b). Ewell came to live on Seven Hills Ranch almost immediately after his marriage to Idolene Hooper. The two raised thoroughbred horses at Seven Hills Ranch until Hooper filed for divorce in November 1941, citing cruelty

(*Oakland Tribune* 1941). Again, it is unclear where they lived until the current house was constructed in the later 1940s – it is possible that there was an older house on the property which no longer stands.

Idolene Hooper gave or sold the Seven Hills Ranch property to her son Sheridan in 1950, according to deeds provided by the property owner. During the 1950s she published a novel, *Nothing on Earth*, which was set in a California cattle ranch. By the 1960s she was living in Clayton. In 1965, Sheridan petitioned to be appointed conservator of her estate, claiming that she was unable to properly care for herself. Hooper died in 1968 in Jamaica during a visit to one of her sons (*Oakland Tribune* 1955, 1965). She is buried in Cypress Lawn Cemetery.

Sheridan Winfield Hale (1921-2015) was born in Piedmont, the eldest son of Idolene Hooper and Winfield Hale. He worked for over 50 years as an airline mechanic, and was an enthusiastic private pilot who flew regularly until the age of 90. With his wife Barbara he had three children, Norman, Ken, and Clarissa, who were raised at 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road. Sheridan Hale lived on the project area from childhood until his death in 2015.

### The Architectural Context

850 Seven Hills Ranch Road is a modest ranch house in style, but was constructed an unusual material: adobe brick. Ranch houses in adobe were an outgrowth of the Pueblo Revival and Spanish Colonial styles of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These styles are diverse but share several common architectural elements: construction of adobe bricks, concrete blocks, or balloon frame; stucco wall surfaces, usually earth-colored, that imitate the hand finish of Native American prototypes; exposed roof beams, called *vigas*; covered porches that form a portico; tile roofs; rounded wall corners and roof edges; and wooden beams for lintels (McAlester 2015:542-546).

The Pueblo Revival was inspired by the novels of Helen Hunt Jackson (*Ramona*, 1884) and Charles Fletcher Lummis (*Land of Poco Tiempo*, 1893), which romanticized the lifestyle and architecture of the Pueblo Indians of Arizona (Longstreth 1983:277). The popularity of Jackson's and Lummis' work helped to foster preservation of California's crumbling Spanish missions and to stimulate the creation of a Mission Revival school of architecture. With its roots in California's past, the latter was compatible with the Pueblo Revival, but with its curvilinear gables and dormers, occasional quatrefoil windows, and frequent vertical emphasis it was very much a different style. In the hands of architects, the Mission Revival was often picturesque, even elaborate; the Pueblo Revival tended to be restrained in treatment and quiet in feeling. The Mission Revival style was applied to houses, civic buildings, banks, and churches, and became very common. The Pueblo Revival was almost strictly applied to houses, and was not common.

Nevertheless, one great Pueblo Revival house was built almost immediately after Lummis wrote his book. That was Hacienda del Pozo de Verona, a sprawling house built by architect A. C. Schweinfurth for the newspaper publisher William Randolph Hearst and his mother Phoebe Apperson Hearst (1895-1896). It was located in Pleasanton, in eastern Alameda County, at the time far from neighbors and traffic. It was an elaborate Pueblo, probably wood-framed, composed of structures one, two, and three stories in height and covered with stucco. It burned down in 1969 (Longstreth 1983: 279-286).

Several Pueblo Revival style houses were built in San Francisco from 1909 through the 1910s, most notably by architect Charles Whittlesey. All of these were wood-framed buildings, but they were covered with stucco and had massing and details that evoked the Pueblo Revival.

More modest than the Hearst house in Pleasanton, and more authentic than it or the wooden houses in San Francisco, is Casa de Adobe (1917), built of adobe in Los Angeles by architect Theodore Eisen, who had once worked for Charles Lummis. It is one story in height and covered with stucco, patches of which are missing and reveal the adobe bricks beneath.

A fairly large Farm Bureau office building was built of adobe in Visalia in 1928. Almost 100 community members volunteered in making the bricks and stacking the walls, while skilled construction workers did the rest. Arched openings and a shaped parapet gave this building more of a Mission Revival than a Pueblo Revival style, however. (It still stands on Oak Street near Court.)



Figure 4: Hacienda del Pozo de Verona, Pleasanton (1895-1896) (Photo: California Architect and Building News, September 1899)



Figure 5: at left, 1230 Washington Street, SF (Whittlesey, 1909) (Photo: Western Neighborhoods Project 27.5889); at right, Casa de Adobe, LA (Eisen, 1917) (Photo: William Kostura 2018)

Adobe was revived as a structural material in the late 1920s, when the California Agricultural Experiment Station issued a bulletin for builders which gave detailed instructions on how to mix, form, dry, stack, and build in adobe (Long 1929). Adobe houses then began to be built in moderately large numbers in the southern San Joaquin Valley, especially in Fresno. Commercial adobe brick manufacturer Hans Sumpf was active in Coalinga from 1938 to 2006, and sold to builders around the state (Hattersly-Drayton 2008).

The origins of the Ranch style are intimately connected to adobe as a building material through Cliff May, who was a major popularizer of the style in southern California and began building in adobe during the early 1930s. As a designer-builder, May created over 1,000 custom residences and 18,000 tract homes during his career. His buildings blended Spanish Colonial, California adobe rancho, and Modernist styles to create homes with a strong horizontal orientation, open floor plans, large windows, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space via porches and courtyards (Gregory 2008).

The three styles complemented each other well, for the original prototypes that the revival was based on were also usually horizontal in their emphasis. Thus, one would see Pueblo elements such as the outlines of adobe bricks and vigas alongside large Ranch style windows and Spanish Colonial tile roofs. In the 1940s and 1950s, this blended aesthetic was heavily promoted by *Sunset Magazine* promoted for dry, semi-rural environments in California and the Southwest.

850 Seven Hills Road is a modest example of an adobe Ranch house with Spanish Colonial and Pueblo elements: it is built of adobe bricks, it has been painted in an earth tone, and uses wooden beams as interior and exterior lintels. However, it lacks the flat roof, vigas, rounded corners, and additive massing typical of the Pueblo Revival, nor does it feature the tile roofs of Spanish Colonial homes. The gable roof, large windows, interior wood details, and horizontal orientation, places it closer to the Ranch style than either of the two period styles.

It appears that no survey of modern adobe or Pueblo style houses in the San Francisco Bay Area has ever been completed. Though it was never a common style, examples exist throughout the region. Many of them exhibit much greater architectural distinction than 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road, including:

- City of Mountain View Adobe Building, Moffett Boulevard near Central Expressway (1934). This was built, and still serves, as a community center that is rented for social events. The building is coated in stucco so that the outlines of its adobe bricks are not visible. Its distinguishing characteristics are a side-gabled roof covered with clay tiles, a recessed porch with thick square piers, a massive chimney that tapers in steps, and open roof beams. It is on the National Register.
- Casa Tierra, Quito Road, Saratoga (1941-1942). This house was built of adobe bricks that were manufactured on the site. It is a large, rambling seventeen-room house that is partially obscured by vegetation and so is difficult to photograph. The house is approached via a courtyard, and its walls enclose a central patio. With a reported area of 13,000 square feet, it has been said to be the largest secular adobe building in North America.
- Nelson M. Welbanks residence, 2355 Whipple Road, Redwood City (1945-1946). The original owner and resident, Welbanks, was a building contractor who built this house himself. The roof is side-gabled and hipped and is covered with clay tiles. Windows are large, and adobe bricks are very lightly coated, revealing the shape of

individual bricks. This superior example is perhaps more Ranch style than Pueblo Revival, though its massive chimney and its roof tiles do evoke the Spanish and Mexican period.

- 17680 Bruce Avenue, Monte Sereno (1946). This house has a dramatic tile roof and a low wall that appears to also be of adobe bricks. Its broadly horizontal plan and recessed entrance make this a Ranch style blend.
- 18581 Blythwood Dr, Los Gatos (1945). This house has exceptional width, an equally-broad clay tile roof, wood-beam lintels over the windows, and a porch roof supported by wooden posts. Vertical siding in the gable is a clue to the construction date; it is common to houses built in the 1940s and 1950s.



*Figure 6: City of Mountain View Adobe Building, Moffett near Central Expwy (1934)*



*Figure 7: Casa Tierra, Quito Road, Saratoga (1941-1942).*



*Figure 8: 2355 Whipple Road, Redwood City*



*Figure 9: 18581 Blythswood Dr, Los Gatos (1945).*



*Figure 10: 17680 Bruce Avenue, Monte Sereno (1946).*

Within a few miles of the project area, the authors are aware of at least seven adobe houses of the same period: 83 Roberta Avenue, 11 Meier Road, and 590 Creekside Road in Pleasant Hill; and 3606 Chestnut Street, 1064 Oak Hill Road, 3562 Boyer Circle, and 3145 Gloria Terrace in Lafayette. These houses date from between 1930 and 1947 and take a variety of approaches to the Ranch/Pueblo fusion.



*Figure 11: 3145 Gloria Terrace, Lafayette*

Of these, 3145 Gloria Terrace in Lafayette, (ca. 1944) is similar in size and shares some architectural features with 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road: a portico running the length of the façade, wooden lintels over a mix of fixed and moveable sash with tile sills, horizontal massing, and two separate wings. 11 Meier Road in Pleasant Hill (ca. 1930s) has a sizeable frame addition to the older adobe structure, which makes it difficult to discern its original exterior appearance. This house, however, has similar interior treatments, with exposed ceiling beams, a Spanish-style chandelier, and rustic stone facing on its fireplace.



*Figure 12: 11 Meier Road, Pleasant Hill*

## Description of 850 Seven Hills Road

### Setting

The property is accessed through a metal gate which leads to a line of mature eucalyptus trees. At the end of the trees, a hairpin turn left leads up to the house, which is located on the top of a hill. The house is set among a grove of oaks of varying age; it overlooks Walnut Creek to the west, and the undeveloped valley that forms the eastern part of the property. Five outbuildings are scattered to the south, west, and north of the house. The front yard of the house features a garden planted in succulents, cannabis, and ornamental shrubs. The current tenant planted the garden in 2015 when he moved in.

### Exterior

850 Seven Hills Road is a one-story home constructed circa 1940 in the Ranch style. The house measures 52 by 48.5 feet. It is T-shaped in plan, with the main façade on the east and the arm of the ‘T’ on the left (south) side. The house is constructed of painted adobe bricks measuring 17.5 inches wide, 12 inches deep, and 4 inches high, set on a concrete perimeter foundation. The wood-frame roof has a moderate pitch and is taller along the wide leg of the T. It is covered in asphalt shingle, and features three gables and a partial gable where the two parts of the T meet. Adobe-faced chimneys, both set at 45 degrees to the house plan, project from the roof at the northeast and southeast corners. The house has uncased single-pane steel sash throughout, with a mix of casement and fixed windows. Above each window is a timber lintel set flush with the wall of the house, while below each window is a sloping brick sill which projects two inches from the exterior wall.

The front (eastern) side of the house has a covered porch running the length of the façade east of the entry door. The porch is constructed of timber beams with a ceiling of 6-inch wide boards, with a clay tile floor and the roof covered with asphalt shingle.



*Figure 13: East Façade, Main House*



*Figure 14: West Façade, Main House*



*Figure 15: South Façade, Main House*



*Figure 16: Southeast corner of main house showing South façade*



*Figure 17: Southwest Wing*



*Figure 18: Covered Porch*



*Figure 19: at left, window detail showing lintel; at right, adobe brick detail*

## Interior

Inside, the house is divided into two functional zones. The south (left) side of the house, which forms the arm of the ‘T’ plan, has three bedrooms and a bathroom arranged along an east-west hallway. The north (right) side of the house has a north-south axis and contains a living room, kitchen, and open dining area.

From the front door, a hallway 4 feet wide leads straight ahead to the kitchen; one archway opens onto the living room to the right, while another archway opens left onto a parallel hallway connecting the bedrooms. The interior wall surfaces are adobe brick throughout, except in the kitchen and bathroom. Each room has exposed timber rafters over wood paneling, while the doorways have wide timber lintels with wood casing. The floor appears to be covered in linoleum.

The living room and dining area form one open, L-shaped space with high ceilings. The living room (26 by 18 feet) faces the front of the house, while the dining area (10.5 by 12 feet) forms the short leg of the ‘L’, at the northwest corner of the house. A chimney faced in rustic stonework stands at the northeast corner of the living room and is angled 45 degrees to the house. In the living room, a large picture window flanked by two 4-lite casements faces east onto the porch, while a brass chandelier hangs from the exposed beams of the ceiling. In the dining area, windows open north and west, while a door to the south opens onto the kitchen.

The kitchen (16 by 12 feet) runs parallel to the living room. The walls are covered in recent-looking drywall. Counters and a sink run the length of the west wall, which has a large fixed window. Doors open from the kitchen onto the dining area (north), entrance hallway (southeast), and back patio (southwest).

From the entrance hallway, an archway leads left to a second, parallel hallway 4 feet wide which connects the bedrooms and bathroom. The master bedroom is at the eastern (front) end of this hallway and measures 15 by 13.5 feet. A chimney faced in rustic stonework stands at the southwest corner of the room, and there are windows on the south and west sides.

Moving west from the master bedroom, a bathroom opens to the left off the hallway. The bathroom (11 by 13 feet) has a sink, vanity and toilet on the left (east) side, and an enclosed shower stall and bathtub on the right (west) side. The bathroom has a six-lite window with two casements, drywall walls, and a linoleum floor.

Continuing west, two connected bedrooms lie beyond the bathroom at the end of the hallway. The central bedroom is 11 by 15 feet in size, with a south window and a door leading into the kitchen. The rear bedroom has windows on the south and west sides and measures 15 by 13 feet, with a door leading to the back porch. Both bedrooms have built-in closets on their north sides.

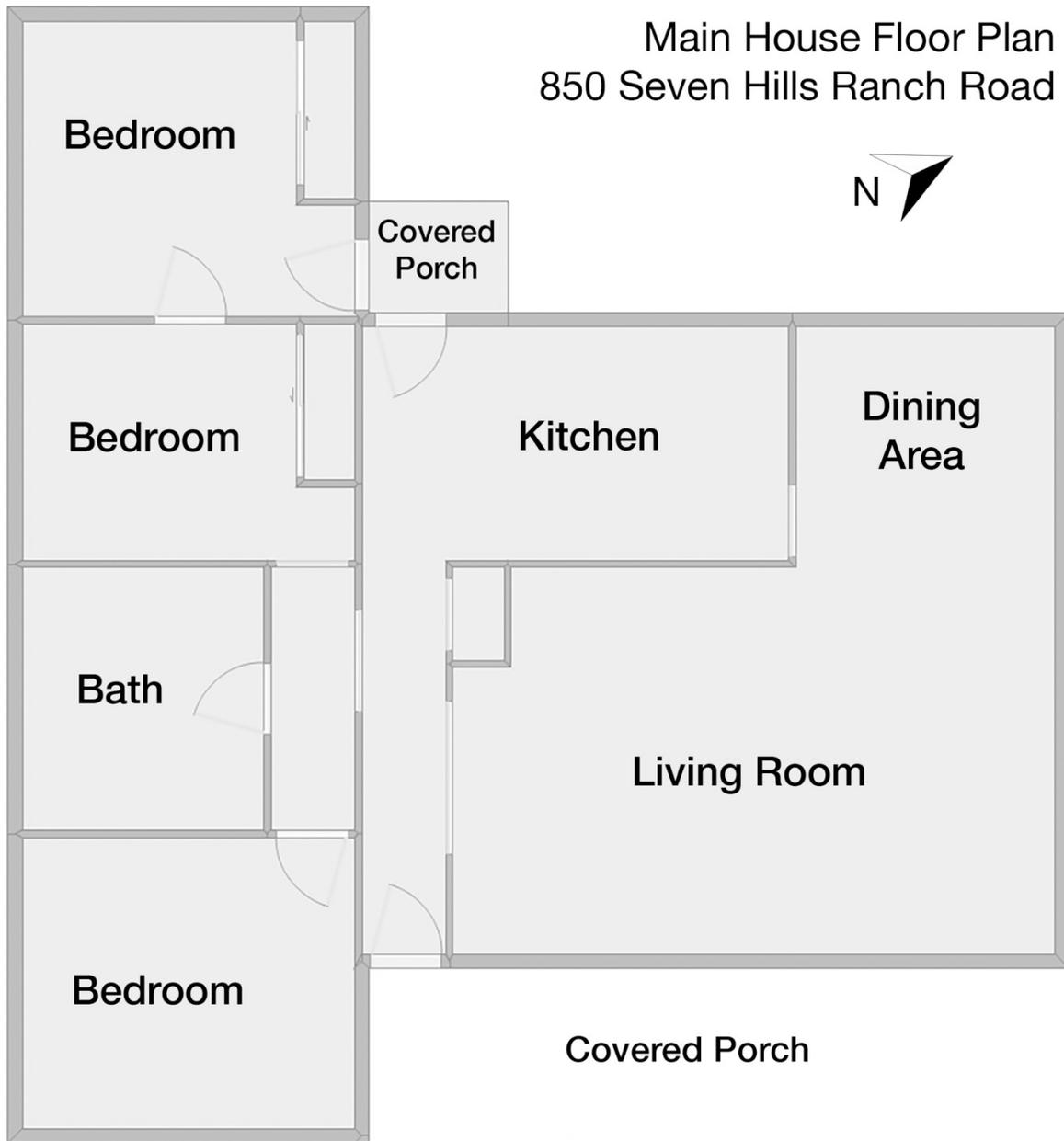


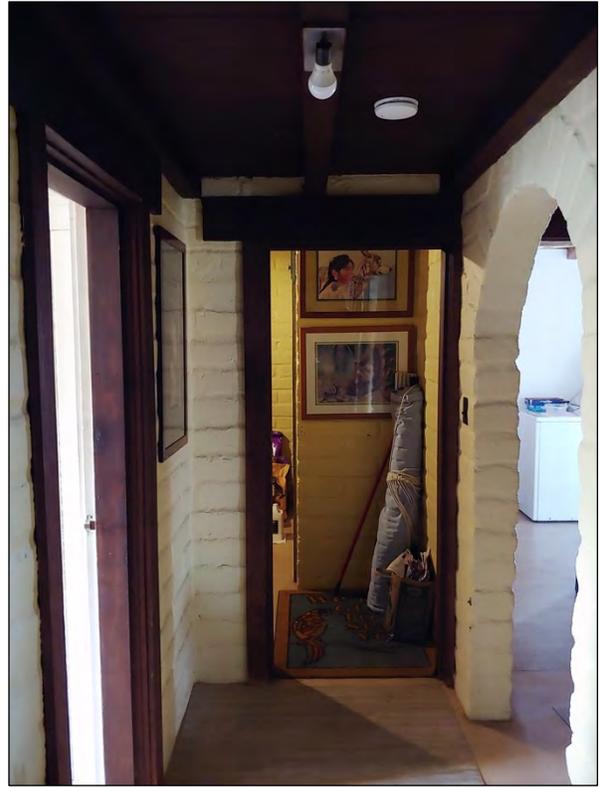
Figure 20: Floor Plan of Main House



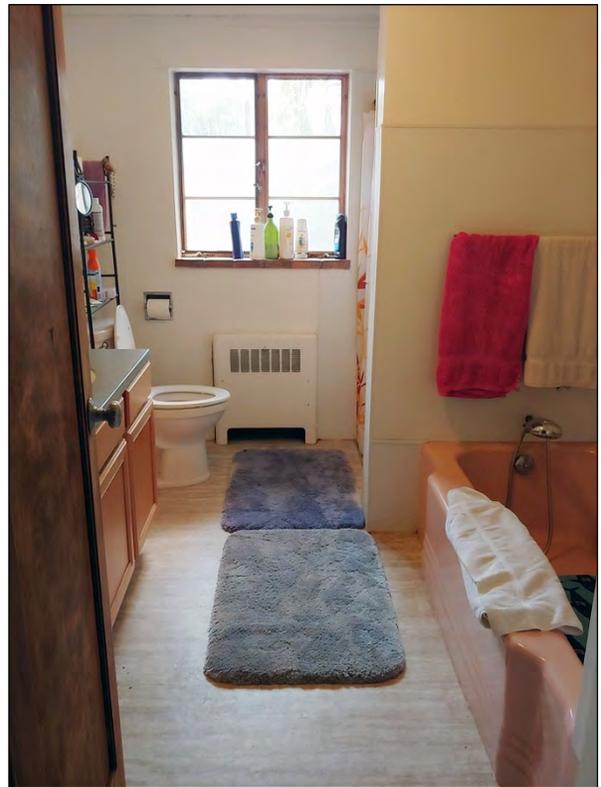
*Figure 21: at left, Living Room with chimney; at right, Living Room ceiling detail*



*Figure 22: Dining Area*



*Figure 23: at left, Kitchen; at right, Bedroom/Bathroom Hallway*



*Figure 24: at left, Master Bedroom with chimney; at right, Bathroom*



*Figure 25: at left, Rear Bedroom; at right, Door between rear bedrooms, built in closets in background*

## The Outbuildings

### *Garage (Building 1)*

The garage is a frame building on a concrete slab foundation measuring 30 feet (east-west) by 20 feet (north-south), with gables on the long ends and the entrance door on the north side. The east, west, and south sides are covered in wide, vertical redwood boards with battens, while the north side has painted wooden boards set horizontally and a central sliding barn door with one six-lite wood sash window set in its center. Three more six-lite fixed wood sash windows are set in the south wall. The roof is corrugated metal. The size and saw marks on the exterior redwood boards suggest that they are over 100 years old, but they are fastened with modern wire nails. The building thus appears to have been constructed in the last 50 years, using recycled material.



*Figure 26: at left, North Façade, Building 1 ; at right, South Façade, Building 1*

### *Cottage/Garage (Building 2)*

This building appears to be a 1920s cottage with a later garage addition. The building is 37.5 feet long and 20.5 feet wide and has side gables. It has wood siding and a corrugated metal roof. Viewed from the front, which faces northeast, the garage is at left, cottage in the center, and a small outhouse or toilet addition is at right. The cottage, which originally measured 20 by 20 feet, has two fixed wood-frame windows flanking a central entry door. The outhouse/toilet is entered from outside of the building and measures 8 by 10 feet. A toilet and sink are set in the northwest wall, with a bookshelf lining the southeast wall. The cottage and outhouse sit on a perimeter concrete foundation and have 7-inch horizontal siding. The garage addition is 10 feet by 20 feet and sits on a slab foundation, with horizontal wood siding on the short end of the building and vertical wood siding on the long sides. It is accessed through a sliding barn door at the southeast side of the building.



*Figure 27: at left, Northeast Façade, Building 2 ; at right, Northwest Façade, Building 2*



*Figure 28: Southeast Façade, Building 2*

*Stable (Building 4)*

This building is a two-stall stable built of redwood and open on two sides. It measures 19 by 22 feet and has a 14-foot long rear addition. The stable is constructed of 4 by 4 inch redwood timber set on concrete piers, and sided in redwood planks. It is in a dilapidated condition.



*Figure 29: at left, Southeast corner, Building 4 ; at right, West side, Building 4*

*Barn (Building 5)*

The barn is of frame construction set on a perimeter concrete foundation. It is clad in corrugated metal on the sides and roof. The barn measures 20 by 40 feet with plain gables on the short side. A sliding entrance door is on the east side; there are no internal partitions.

*Stable (Building 6)*

The second stable is at the northern end of the building complex and measures 20.5 by 22.5 feet. It is of redwood frame construction, with 4x4 timbers on concrete post foundations with board-and-batten siding. Two sides of the building are open, and three paddocks are inside. This stable is also in a dilapidated condition.



*Figure 30: at left, Building 5 ; at right, Building 6*

## Significance Evaluation

### Framework for Evaluation

Under CEQA, local agencies must consider whether projects will cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, which is considered to be a significant effect on the environment (Public Resources Code §21084.1). A “historical resource” is a building, structure, or site that has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Resources (California Register), or a local register of historic resources (14 Code of California Regulations §15064.5). A “substantial adverse change” can include “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings” that changes it in a way that impairs the features that make it eligible for Federal, State, or local registers.

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

### California Register Evaluation

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

*Criterion 1 (Events): resources that are 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.*

Research did not reveal any important events associated with 850 Seven Hills Road. The property therefore appears to be **not eligible** under this criterion.

*Criterion 2 (Persons): Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.*

While Idolene Hooper Hale was from a prominent Contra Costa County family, she herself does not appear to have played an important role in the history of Walnut Creek: she is not mentioned in standard sources on local history. No information was found linking her or her family to important events, groups, or locations in Walnut Creek or Contra Costa County. Thus, the family do not appear to have been prominent residents of Walnut Creek or to have contributed to regional, California, or national history in a significant way. 850 Seven Hills Ranch road therefore appears to be **not eligible** under this criterion.

*Criterion 3 (Architecture): Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.*

The subject house is an adobe Ranch-style house constructed circa 1947. Adobe construction is somewhat common in parts of California, but uncommon in the San Francisco Bay Area. Numerous examples can be found, but the style represents much less than one percent of all houses in the region. Early Ranch houses, as constructed by May or other early Ranch-style architects,

often made a conscious effort to evoke California's early domestic architecture in materials and style.

The subject house evokes Spanish, Mexican, and early California houses through its window and entrance lintels of heavy wooden beams, and is painted in earth tones in a way that leaves the outlines of the adobe bricks clearly visible. Because they are made of clay tiles, the window sills also relate to the Pueblo or Spanish Colonial Style. The open roof beams in the interior are also common to houses of this type.

Despite these interesting details, the house is a conventional Ranch in many important respects. The treatment of the roof and eaves with modern asphalt shingle lacks interest, the plan is a conventional T-shape, and the house is modest in size. The roof of the front porch is supported by thin wooden members (three posts and a beam) that do not relate to a Pueblo Revival or Spanish style; this feature is a predominant element of the front elevation but is plain and lacks architectural interest.

The large front window is made of steel sash, which was sometimes used successfully in blends of Pueblo Revival and Ranch styles. It also has a wood beam lintel and a sill of clay tiles. In this house, however, the window is much larger than is typically found in such blends, and so weighs the architecture of the house more toward that of a conventional Ranch style.

850 Creekside Road is one of a number of adobe Ranch houses in central Contra Costa County and the Bay Area region, many of which are more distinguished architecturally. For these reasons, 850 Seven Hills Ranch Road appears to be **not eligible** under this criterion.

*Criterion 4 (Archaeology): Resources that have yielded, or have the potential to yield, information important to prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.*

While the Chupcan Bay Miwok people lived in the vicinity, no prehistoric sites are known in or near the project area, and a recent survey did not identify any archaeological resources on the property (Busby 2020). The property therefore appears to be **not eligible** under this criterion.

## Preparers' Qualifications

Daniel Shoup holds a PhD in Classical Archaeology and a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Michigan. Dr. Shoup has 15 years of experience in California archaeology and history, and has published numerous articles on cultural heritage management. Since 2013, he has been Principal of Archaeological/Historical Consultants, where he has managed over 200 archaeological, historical, and forensic history studies.

William Kostura has a Bachelor's degree in History from San Francisco State University and has worked professionally as an architectural historian since 1993. He worked for Caltrans as an architectural historian and environmental planner during 1998-2001, for URS Corporation in the same field during 2001-2003, and independently before and after these years. He also served on San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board during 1995-1996. He has documented over 1,000 properties in National Register and California Register evaluations, HABS and HAER reports, and landmark nominations. His publications include two books and nearly twenty articles.

Jennifer Ho holds a BA in Anthropology and an MA in Journalism from Columbia University. She has over 20 years of experience in historical and an ethnographic research in the documentary film and cultural resources industries. She has helped developed historic context statements for dozens of historic resources evaluations in California.

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