

Appendix E:

**Northwest Information Center Record Search Results, Native
American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File Search Results,
and Historic Resource Evaluation of 1531 Oak Park Boulevard**

CALIFORNIA
HISTORICAL
RESOURCES
INFORMATION
SYSTEM



ALAMEDA
COLUSA
CONTRA COSTA
DEL NORTE

HUMBOLDT
LAKE
MARIN
MENDOCINO
MONTEREY
NAPA
SAN BENITO

SAN FRANCISCO
SAN MATEO
SANTA CLATA
SANTA CRUZ
SOLANO
SONOMA
YOLO

Northwest Information Center
Sonoma State University
150 Professional Center Drive, Suite E
Rohnert Park, California 94928-3609
Tel: 707.588.8455
nwic@sonoma.edu
<http://www.sonoma.edu/nwic>

September 20, 2018

NWIC File No.: 18-0563

Sharon Wright
Lamphier-Gregory, Inc.
1944 Embarcadero
Oakland, CA 94606

Re: Record search results for the proposed Cambria Hotel project.

Dear Sharon Wright:

Per your request received by our office on 9/18/18, a records search was conducted for the above referenced project by reviewing pertinent Northwest Information Center (NWIC) base maps that reference cultural resources records and reports, historic-period maps, and literature for Contra Costa County. Please note that use of the term cultural resources includes both archaeological resources and historical buildings and/or structures.

Review of this information indicates that there has been one archaeological study that covers approximately 100% of the Cambria Hotel project area (S-000623, Hastings 1975). This project area contains no previously recorded archaeological resources. The State Office of Historic Preservation Historic Property Directory (OHP HPD) (which includes listings of the California Register of Historical Resources, California State Historical Landmarks, California State Points of Historical Interest, and the National Register of Historic Places) lists no recorded buildings or structures within or adjacent to the proposed project area. In addition to these inventories, the NWIC base maps show no recorded buildings or structures within the proposed project area.

At the time of Euroamerican contact the Native Americans that lived in the area were speakers of the Karkin language, part of the Costanoan (Utian) language family (Levy 1978: 485). A more recent ethnographic source, however, offers a different description, attesting that the Native Americans in the vicinity of Walnut Creek spoke Tatcan, a Bay Miwok language also in the broader Utian language family (Milliken 1995: 256). There are no Native American resources in or adjacent to the proposed project area referenced in the ethnographic literature [Levy 1978; Milliken 1995; Kroeber 1925; Cook 1957].

Based on an evaluation of the environmental setting and features associated with known sites, Native American resources in this part of Contra Costa County have been found in hill to valley ecotones, alluvial fan deposits, and near intermittent or perennial watercourses. The Cambria Hotel project area is situated in an alluvial valley approximately 0.5-mi from Walnut Creek. Given the similarity of one or more of these environmental factors, there is a moderate potential for unrecorded Native American resources in the proposed Cambria Hotel project area.

Review of historical literature and maps gave little indication of historic-period activity within the Cambria Hotel project area. Although an early route of Main St/I-680 is depicted in the 1897 USGS Concord 15-minute quadrangle map, no historic maps depict buildings or structures within or adjacent to the proposed project area until 1947, when the area began to urbanize. With this in mind, there is a low potential for unrecorded historic-period archaeological resources in the proposed Cambria Hotel project area.

The 1948 USGS 15-minute topographic quadrangle fails to depict any buildings or structures within the Cambria Hotel project area. However, NWIC basemaps indicate that the project area has been highly urbanized since 1959; therefore, there is a possibility of identifying buildings or structures which meet the Office of Historic Preservation's minimum age standard that buildings, structures, and objects 45 years or older may be of historical value.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) There is a moderate potential of identifying Native American archaeological resources and a low potential of identifying historic-period archaeological resources in the project area. Due to the passage of time since the previous survey (Hastings 1975) and the changes in archaeological theory and method since that time, we recommend a qualified archaeologist conduct further archival and field study for the entire project area to identify archaeological resources.

Given the potential for archaeological resources in the proposed Cambria Hotel project area, our usual recommendation would include archival research and a field examination. The proposed project area, however, has been highly developed and is presently covered with asphalt, buildings, or fill that obscures the visibility of original surface soils, which negates the feasibility of an adequate surface inspection. Therefore, prior to

demolition or other ground disturbance, we recommend a qualified archaeologist conduct further archival and field study to identify archaeological resources, including a good faith effort to identify archaeological deposits that may show no indications on the surface. Field study may include, but is not limited to, hand auger sampling, shovel test units, or geoarchaeological analyses as well as other common methods used to identify the presence of buried archaeological resources. Please refer to the list of consultants who meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards at <http://www.chrisinfo.org>.

2) We recommend the lead agency contact the local Native American tribe(s) regarding traditional, cultural, and religious heritage values. For a complete listing of tribes in the vicinity of the project, please contact the Native American Heritage Commission at 916/373-3710.

3) If the proposed project area contains buildings or structures that meet the minimum age requirement, prior to commencement of project activities, it is recommended that this resource be assessed by a professional familiar with the architecture and history of Contra Costa County. Please refer to the list of consultants who meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards at <http://www.chrisinfo.org>.

4) Review for possible historic-period buildings or structures has included only those sources listed in the attached bibliography and should not be considered comprehensive.

5) If archaeological resources are encountered **during construction**, work should be temporarily halted in the vicinity of the discovered materials and workers should avoid altering the materials and their context until a qualified professional archaeologist has evaluated the situation and provided appropriate recommendations. **Project personnel should not collect cultural resources**. Native American resources include chert or obsidian flakes, projectile points, mortars, and pestles; and dark friable soil containing shell and bone dietary debris, heat-affected rock, or human burials. Historic-period resources include stone or adobe foundations or walls; structures and remains with square nails; and refuse deposits or bottle dumps, often located in old wells or privies.

6) It is recommended that any identified cultural resources be recorded on DPR 523 historic resource recordation forms, available online from the Office of Historic Preservation's website: http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=1069

Due to processing delays and other factors, not all of the historical resource reports and resource records that have been submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation are available via this records search. Additional information may be available through the federal, state, and local agencies that produced or paid for historical resource management work in the search area. Additionally, Native American tribes have historical resource information not in the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) Inventory, and you should contact the California Native American Heritage Commission for information on local/regional tribal contacts.

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) contracts with the California Historical Resources Information System's (CHRIS) regional Information Centers (ICs) to maintain information in the CHRIS inventory and make it available to local, state, and federal agencies, cultural resource professionals, Native American tribes, researchers, and the public. Recommendations made by IC coordinators or their staff regarding the interpretation and application of this information are advisory only. Such recommendations do not necessarily represent the evaluation or opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer in carrying out the OHP's regulatory authority under federal and state law.

Thank you for using our services. Please contact this office if you have any questions, (707) 588-8455.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Cameron Felt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cameron Felt
Researcher

LITERATURE REVIEWED

In addition to archaeological maps and site records on file at the Northwest Information Center of the Historical Resources Information System, the following literature was reviewed:

Bowman, J.N.

- 1951 *Adobe Houses in the San Francisco Bay Region*. Geologic Guidebook of the San Francisco Bay Counties, Bulletin 154. California Division of Mines, Ferry Building, San Francisco, CA.

Contra Costa County Planning Department

- 1976 Preliminary Historic Resources Inventory, Contra Costa County, California. Prepared by Contra Costa County Planning Department, n.p.

Cook, S.F.

- 1957 *The Aboriginal Population of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties*. University of California Anthropological Records 16(4):131-156. Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Fickewirth, Alvin A.

- 1992 *California Railroads*. Golden West Books, San Marino, CA.

General Land Office

- 1868 Survey Plat for Las Juntas Rancho.

General Land Office

- 1892 Survey Plat for Township 1 North/Range 2 West.

Gudde, Erwin G.

1969 *California Place Names: The Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Third Edition. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Hart, James D.

1987 *A Companion to California*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Hastings, R. B.

1975 Archaeological and Historic Architectural Survey of 04-CC-680 15.4/17.4, 0.2 mile north of North Main St. to 0.1 mile north of Oak Park Blvd., Bart Interface and I/C Revision, 04205-377111 (letter report). Caltrans. [S-000623]

Heizer, Robert F., editor

1974 *Local History Studies*, Vol. 18., "The Costanoan Indians." California History Center, DeAnza College, Cupertino, CA.

Helley, E.J., K.R. Lajoie, W.E. Spangle, and M.L. Blair

1979 *Flatland Deposits of the San Francisco Bay Region - Their Geology and Engineering Properties, and Their Importance to Comprehensive Planning*. Geological Survey Professional Paper 943. United States Geological Survey and Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Hoover, Mildred Brooke, Hero Eugene Rensch, and Ethel Rensch, revised by William N. Abeloe

1966 *Historic Spots in California*. Third Edition. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

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1990 *Historic Spots in California*. Fourth Edition. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

Hope, Andrew

2005 *Caltrans Statewide Historic Bridge Inventory Update*. Caltrans, Division of Environmental Analysis, Sacramento, CA.

Kroeber, A.L.

1925 *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 78, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (Reprint by Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1976)

Levy, Richard

1978 Costanoan. In *California*, edited by Robert F. Heizer, pp. 485-495. Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 8, William C. Sturtevant, general editor. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Meyer, Jack

2011 Buried Archaeological Site Assessment and Extended Phase 1 Subsurface Explorations for the I-80 Integrated Corridor Mobility Project, Caltrans District 04, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, California. Submitted by Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. Submitted to Kimley-Horn Associates, Inc.

Milliken, Randall

1995 *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area 1769-1810*. Ballena Press Anthropological Papers No. 43, Menlo Park, CA.

Myers, William A. (editor)

1977 *Historic Civil Engineering Landmarks of San Francisco and Northern California*. Prepared by The History and Heritage Committee, San Francisco Section, American Society of Civil Engineers. Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Francisco, CA.

Nelson, N.C.

1909 *Shellmounds of the San Francisco Bay Region*. University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology 7(4):309-356. Berkeley. (Reprint by Kraus Reprint Corporation, New York, 1964)

Nichols, Donald R., and Nancy A. Wright

- 1971 Preliminary Map of Historic Margins of Marshland, San Francisco Bay, California. U.S. Geological Survey Open File Map. U.S. Department of the Interior, Geological Survey in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C.

Roberts, George, and Jan Roberts

- 1988 *Discover Historic California*. Gem Guides Book Co., Pico Rivera, CA.

State of California Department of Parks and Recreation

- 1976 *California Inventory of Historic Resources*. State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.

State of California Department of Parks and Recreation and Office of Historic Preservation

- 1988 *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California*. State of California Department of Parks and Recreation and Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento.

State of California Office of Historic Preservation **

- 2012 *Historic Properties Directory*. Listing by City (through April 2012). State of California Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento.

Welch, Lawrence E.

- 1977 *Soils Survey of Contra Costa County, California*. United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, in cooperation with the University of California Agricultural Experiment Station. n.p.

Williams, James C.

- 1997 *Energy and the Making of Modern California*. The University of Akron Press, Akron, OH.

Woodbridge, Sally B.

1988 *California Architecture: Historic American Buildings Survey*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco.

Works Progress Administration

1984 *The WPA Guide to California*. Reprint by Pantheon Books, New York. (Originally published as *California: A Guide to the Golden State* in 1939 by Books, Inc., distributed by Hastings House Publishers, New York.)

****Note that the Office of Historic Preservation's *Historic Properties Directory* includes National Register, State Registered Landmarks, California Points of Historical Interest, and the California Register of Historical Resources as well as Certified Local Government surveys that have undergone Section 106 review.**

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

Environmental and Cultural Department
1550 Harbor Blvd., Suite 100
West Sacramento, CA 95691
(916) 373-3710



October 3, 2018

Sharon Wright
Lamphier-Gregory

Sent by Email: swright@lamphier-gregory.com
Number of Pages: 2

RE: Cambria Hotel Project, Walnut Creek, Contra Costa County

Dear Ms. Wright:

A record search of the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) *Sacred Lands File* was completed for the area of potential project effect (APE) referenced above with negative results. **Please note that the absence of specific site information in the *Sacred Lands File* does not indicate the absence of Native American cultural resources in any APE.**

I suggest you contact all of those listed, if they cannot supply information, they might recommend others with specific knowledge. The list should provide a starting place to locate areas of potential adverse impact within the APE. **By contacting all those on the list, your organization will be better able to respond to claims of failure to consult.** If a response has not been received within two weeks of notification, the NAHC requests that you follow-up with a telephone call to ensure that the project information has been received.

If you receive notification of change of addresses and phone numbers from any of these individuals or groups, please notify me. With your assistance we are able to assure that our lists contain current information. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact via email: Sharaya.Souza@nahc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sharaya Souza".

Sharaya Souza
Staff Services Analyst
(916) 573-0168

**Native American Heritage Commission
Native American Consultation List
10/3/2018**

Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista Irenne Zwielerlein, Chairperson 789 Canada Road Woodside, CA 94062 amahmutsuntribal@gmail.com (650) 851-7489 Cell (650) 332-1526 Fax	Ohlone/Costanoan	The Ohlone Indian Tribe Andrew Galvan P.O. Box 3388 Fremont, CA 94539 chochenyo@AOL.com (510) 882-0527 Cell (510) 687-9393 Fax	Ohlone/Costanoan Bay Miwok Plains Miwok Patwin
Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan Ann Marie Sayers, Chairperson P.O. Box 28 Hollister, CA 95024 ams@indiancanyon.org (831) 637-4238	Ohlone/Costanoan	Wilton Rancheria Raymond Hitchcock, Chairperson 9728 Kent Street Elk Grove, CA 95624 rhitchcock@wiltonrancheria-nsn.gov (916) 683-6000 Office (916) 683-6015 Fax	Miwok
Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the SF Bay Area Charlene Nijmeh, Chairperson 20885 Redwood Road, Suite 232 Castro Valley, CA 94546 cnijmeh@muwekma.org (408) 464-2892 (408) 205-9714	Ohlone / Costanoan		
Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe of the SF Bay Area Monica Arellano, Vice Chairwoman 20885 Redwood Road, Suite 232 Castro Valley, CA 94546 marellano@muwekma.org (408) 205-9714	Ohlone / Costanoan		
North Valley Yokuts Tribe Katherine Erolinda Perez, Chairperson P.O. Box 717 Linden, CA 95236 canutes@verizon.net (209) 887-3415	Ohlone/Costanoan Northern Valley Yokuts Bay Miwok		

This list is current only as of the date of this document and is based on the information available to the Commission on the date it was produced.

Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resource Code, or Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.

This list is only applicable for contacting local Native American Tribes for the proposed:
Cambria Hotel Project, Walnut Creek, Contra Costa County.

June 29, 2010

1531 Oak Park Boulevard, Pleasant Hill
Historic Resource Evaluation - DRAFT

Introduction

The primary purpose of this effort is to provide an historic resource evaluation of an existing commercial building and its property, referred to by its address, 1531 Oak Park Blvd., and which is located in the city of Pleasant Hill.

The setting of this property is a commercial strip on Oak Park Blvd., and which adjoins commercially developed lands to the east that front on N. Main Street, a frontage road running parallel to and facing Interstate 680. To the north, across Oak Park, a freeway overpass ascends parallel to Oak Park. To the southeast lies a suburban neighborhood of single-family homes. [See fig.1]



Fig. 1: 2009 Aerial identifying subject property and indicating approximate property lines (north is up)

Evaluation Summary

As detailed herein, 1531 Oak Park Blvd., a neighborhood serving retail property developed in 1949-50, is not associated with any events or persons of historical importance, nor does the property embody distinctive characteristics, nor is it a noteworthy work either in-and-of-itself or in relation to a designer, architect, or engineer. Therefore, 1531 Oak Park Blvd. is not potentially eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), as it does not meet any of the CRHR eligibility criteria. Neither is it eligible for designation as a City of Pleasant Hill cultural resource, since it does not meet any of the City's designation criteria.

Summary History

The subject property of .43 acres houses a single-story retail structure of some 2,500 square feet of area. The property is configured in two sections, with roughly one half fronting on Oak Park Blvd., and with a rearward half that is offset westerly, creating a dog-legged or roughly L-shaped parcel. The building thereon, which is primarily the subject of this evaluation, occupies about 1/10th of the area of the site, the remainder given over to parking and drives. The building is pushed to the back of the front half of the site, with a parking lot at the Oak Park Blvd. frontage, and an access drive to the east that passes to both on and off site parking areas behind and beyond. Though surrounded by drives and parking on its own parcel, the building aligns with and is directly attached to a neighboring structure to the west, yet that adjoining structure is on a separate and independent parcel.

Contra Costa County tax and City of Pleasant Hill building records indicate that the present structure at 1531 Oak Park dates to 1949. A 1950 telephone directory confirms that the building was open during 1949-50, with a first listing for Pl[easant] Hills Garden Supplies and Hdwe. At that time, the area of present day Pleasant Hill was County land. Pleasant Hill incorporated in 1962-63.

The subdivision to which this commercial property belonged was mapped in 1939 (Pleasant Hill Homesites Unit No.1, Nov. 1939), just prior to which the property owner is identified as the Bank of America (Contra Costa County Map, 1938). However, and more importantly, immediately previous, the subject property was a small part of the 500 acre James S. Hook estate. James Simeon Hook (1853-1946), who had grown up on his family's nearby lands, and who graduated in the field of agriculture from the University of California's first graduating class of 1874, acquired and settled this land c1880. The property was agricultural, which included the cultivation of orchard fruit, vineyards and grains. The family residence was located approximate to the intersection of present day Oak Park Blvd. and Hook Ave. In 1938, in the wake of the Depression, the bank apparently took ownership of the land. The large Hook holdings were dispensed during the World War II era. Finally, the Hook residence was demolished in 1953. (History of Pleasant Hill, pp.74-78)

With the outbreak of WWII, it is not likely that any of the Pleasant Hill Homes subdivision was undertaken in the early 1940s. Immediately after the war, the suburbanization of the Pleasant Hill area proceeded with haste. By the early 1950s, large tracts of former farmlands had been converted to single-family residential neighborhoods, and a variety of commercial areas were also developed to support the growing post-war population.



Fig. 2: 1531 Oak Park Blvd.
View of front (north)



Fig. 3: 1531 Oak Park Blvd.
View of rear (south, at left) & side (east, at right)

The subject property was part of one such commercial development. The overall site of the several contiguous stores along Oak Park was originally mapped as a single parcel. Whether the stores were built by one developer before being subparceled into the present, individual lots separately owned, or vice-versa, these contiguous stores were apparently built at the same time. At the very least, 1531 Oak Park and 1551 Oak Park, the adjoining building, were constructed at the same time, evidence for which includes that the brickwork of their facades match and align, and their Western-front façade styles are very similar in kind. The Oak Park Rexall Drugs, which occupied the western half of the adjoining building at 1551 Oak Park, is recorded as having opened in 1948. (History of Pleasant Hill, p291). If that information is accurate, then 1551 Oak Park Blvd. was constructed first, followed by the structure at 1531 Oak Park.

In 1940, the overall parcel of commercial property also included the land fronting the Contra Costa Highway, otherwise then referred to as Highway 21. According to a summary of “first commerce and industry” in Pleasant Hill, the Farmer’s Feed and Supply Store occupied the land along the highway frontage and directly east of 1531 Oak Park from 1940 to the late 1950s. (History of Pleasant Hill, pp.289-291)

Oak Park Boulevard was first mapped as part of the Pleasant Hill Homes subdivision. The stretch of Oak Park upon which 1531 and its neighbors front may have prior to then been an entry road into the Hook estate and, specifically, to the Hook residence (see figs.4-5). Coincidentally, as can be seen in these maps, Oak Park branched off the highway at the slightest hook in the road, and which is still evident in the local geography. The name of the newly created “boulevard” thus appears to have originated in 1940, the product of the designers of this 1940s subdivision (unless the Hook residence and its entry drive was known as Oak Park).

As noted, the first occupant of the building at 1531 Oak Park was the Pleasant Hills (or P-H) Garden Supplies and Hardware store. Listings first identify its location as Nimitz Highway and Oak Park (1950), then at 3185 N. Main St. (1956), then at Oak Park Bl. and Contra Costa Hwy. (1957) and, finally, at 1531 Oak Park Bl. (1958). Directory listings also indicate that the garden and hardware store operated until 1968, when it is last listed.

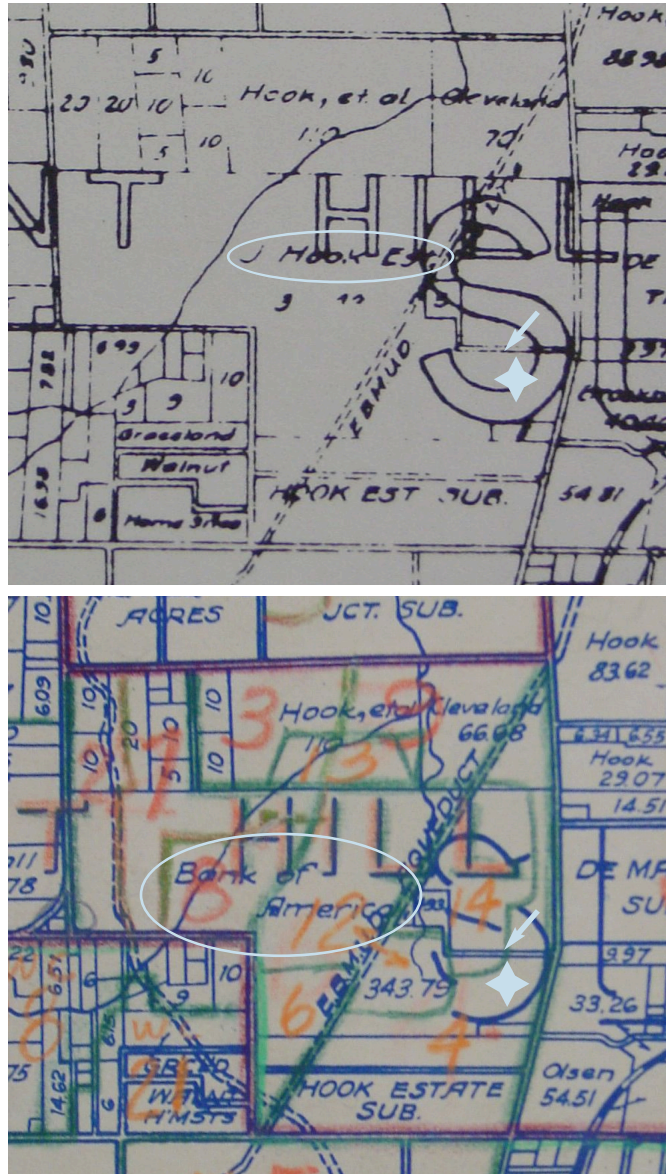


Fig. 4 (top): County Parcel Map (n.d., c1935)

Fig. 5 (bottom): County Parcel Map (1938)

- With property approximately located ◆
- Arrows point to former drive to Hook estate – now Oak Park Blvd.
- Note landowner identifications: “J Hook Est” at top & “Bank of America” at bottom
- Horizontal line at bottom of ea. map is current Geary Blvd.
- Horizontal line across top of ea. map is current Gregory Ln.

A c1968 photo of 1531 and 1551 Oak Park Blvd., with the Garden Center at 1531 and a lawn mower and lock shop and drug store at 1551, is included in a volume of images of Pleasant Hill. (see fig.6, from Images of Pleasant Hill, p91)

No building or planning permit records exist for the subject property for any dates earlier than 1970, so no information that can be gleaned from such records – including original owners, architects, or builders – has been located. The earliest available building records indicate that the property was, c1970, undergoing conversion to a “young adult night-club.” Exchanges of formal correspondence from that time indicate that this conversion effort had been discontinued by 1971. So it is evident that sometime about 1968, the garden center closed its doors, and the building was thereafter unoccupied for several years. In 1972, 1531 Oak Park reappears in permit applications under the “ownership” (owners listed on permits are often business owners, not property owners) of West Coast Beauty Supply. In the 1973 phone directory, 1531 Oak Park also reappears under a listing for that beauty supply business.

With respect to property ownership, the record previous to 1970 is again unclear. Per Assessor’s records, the only ownership transaction in the County’s parcel inquiry database dates to October of 1973, when a Grant Deed was transacted between and from Lawrence’s Pleasant Hill Inn to Pomfret Estates Incorporated. This deed identifies three parcels. Parcel 2 was the site of the subject building and its frontage on Oak Park. Parcel 1 was, essentially, the access drive and parking areas to the east (side) and south (rear) of 1531 Oak Park, yet at that time also including a portion of present day Lot 57, which lies to the south and across the Walnut Creek city boundary. Parcel 3 was a utility easement across an east adjoining property to the Main Street frontage, and also across the boundary of Walnut Creek.

In these property records, a Michael Lawrence is identified as the General Partner of Lawrence’s Pleasant Hill Inn, and a William Sharon is identified as the President of Pomfret Estates.

The current property owner is Pomfret Estates, whose acquisition thus dates to 1973.

Deed searches for a previous property transfer to Lawrence found no results. Other general searches for names associated with adjoining properties also found no direct results. At present, there is no identity of specific owners between 1938 – when the Bank of America is identified as the landowner in the County map – and c1968, when the garden center closed and Lawrence may have entered the picture. One possibility is that Lawrence was the landowner since c1940.

While additional research could provide supplemental information, overall, and despite detailed efforts, little of interest has been located about this property. Moreover, little is likely to arise. A dearth of information often exemplifies a simple resource.

Historic Context

In describing a resource of this era and kind, it is not possible to limit one’s description to the building. In the mid-19th century, in the lands outside of U.S. urban centers, the building and the parking were interdependent. In fact, the parking was far more often forward of the building, signalling, perhaps, its relative importance in the development equation. Yet, the development itself was highly dependent on the road, the ultimate shaper of 20th century communities like Pleasant Hill.



**Fig. 6: Oak Park Blvd. c1968
w/ P-H Garden Center seen at far end**

In the case of this property, the highway is definitely the context. Though it isn't a frontage property — it stands off the highway along a lateral roadway — the definition of this commercial property is a result of its proximity to the highway that interconnects the early Contra Costa towns of Martinez and Walnut Creek. Known previously and variously as the Contra Costa Highway, Highway 21, the Nimitz Highway, and/or Highway 24, since 1963 it has been known as Interstate Route 680. What was once likely a “telegraph road” is today a massive, multi-lane freeway, along which North Main Street runs as a parallel yet quite separate frontage road. There is no Oak Park Blvd. exit or even a direct route from the freeway. An overpass with the road name of Coggins Ln. has supplanted the Oak Park Blvd. crossing, so the eastern end of Oak Park is essentially a spur road that terminates at N. Main, below and subordinate to the Coggins overpass.

In addition to its contextual relationship to the highway, the subject property and building follow the pattern of mid-20th century suburban commercial development, with a relatively diminutive structure surrounded by parking and roadways. Even today, that disproportion is reflected in the relationship of building area to site area. When such structures were built, not only were they built to accommodate vehicular convenience; the relative value of land was such that buildings could be built surrounded by large parking areas, as such former agricultural land was literally ripe for suburban development.

Such a history is not unique. Rather, it exactly fulfills the pattern of mid-20th century development throughout the United States.

Building Description

The building at 1531 Oak Park is a single-story structure that faces north towards Oak Park Blvd. The structure stands in two parts. The main and original building is a rectangular and open plan structure with concrete masonry exterior walls, a concrete floor slab, and a low-slope, wood-framed roof. Flanking, aluminum and glass storefront windows slant inward in-plan toward the central doorways. A slight canopy runs the width of the north façade above the storefront and below a flat, vertical parapet. The other part of the building is a wood frame shed addition off the rear, the origins of which are undated — though certainly not original — and which also recently suffered a fire, so is in very poor condition.

Little else can be added to this description. There is even an absence of appended signs. The structure is a very plain and almost featureless building. Its original façade is only partially intact, as it appears that the canopy and parapet have been altered, though again no records identify when or by whom.

Evaluation

The purpose of this effort is to evaluate the property and building with respect to pertinent historic resource criteria, and to determine whether the property has historic resource potential. Pertinent criteria are both the City of Pleasant Hill's (CPH) criteria for establishment of historic districts and cultural resources designations, and the California Register (CR) criteria.

In the following, 1531 Oak Park Blvd. is evaluated with respect to both CPH and CR criteria, beginning with the latter.

California Register of Historical Resources

In order to be eligible for the CR, a resource must be found significant under at least one of four criteria. In the following, each criterion is listed, then the subject resource is analyzed in order to draw a conclusion regarding fulfillment of each criterion.

- 1. It is 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.

As described and illustrated herein, this is a simple commercial building surrounded by paved roads and yards, a combination that may well have been an invention of the post-WWII era, though not an invention that has proven any test of time. No events of potential significance have been found to be associated with 1531 Oak Park Blvd. The resource therefore does not meet Criterion 1.

2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.

No persons of importance have been found to have been directly associated with 1531 Oak Park Blvd. While James S. Hook — who owned, inhabited and ministered farmlands, orchards and vineyards on a large agricultural estate upon which the future commercial development occurred — may be considered a person of local importance, there is no direct relationship between this commercial property and the former landowner, Hook. Even though the property may stand along what may have been the entry drive to Hook's estate, the relationship between this commercial property and Hook is not only incidental but contrary. Consequently, the property does not gain significance as a result of any association to James S. Hook, and no other associations to persons of importance have been identified, so the property at 1531 Oak Park Blvd. does not meet Criterion 2.

3. It 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.

The building and site at 1531 Oak Park embody the characteristics of a type and period of planning and design, that of mid-20th century suburban and commercial development. But the overall resource is not distinctive in any planning or design respect. It fits common patterns of planning and design exercised in the immediate post-WWII era, when property production expanded vigorously in suburban North America. Those planning patterns and building methodologies as are manifest in the character and characteristics of this property are without distinction.

While once a quasi-shopping center, the several properties that form that center are separately and individually owned, so there is no specific unity other than that of adjoining buildings. Nor are any of those adjoining properties of any apparent planning, architectural or historical importance.

The building at 1531 Oak Park does not embody any identifiably distinctive characteristics, so does not meet Criterion 3.

4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

The subject property is not informative in any important way, nor does the property appear to have any potential to yield valuable information.

In summary, the property at 1531 Oak Park Blvd. does not meet any of the four CR criteria, so is therefore not eligible for listing on the CR.

Under the CR, an additional consideration is that of Integrity. Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. Since the resource in question is not eligible for the CR, no integrity evaluation is required.

City of Pleasant Hill

The following lists and analyzes the City of Pleasant Hill's eight criteria for the designation of historic districts and cultural resources [CPH Municipal Code Section 18.45.070].

1. The area, structures or site possesses value as a visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the city.

The subject property is a minor representative of the post-WWII cultural history of the City. The primary representatives of those times are the residential subdivisions that form a large part of the present City, as well as the commercial center of the City, which has continued to fill that role through contemporary development. 1531 Oak Park is part of a mid-century commercial strip that does not embody or convey any historical importance. The property and structure therefore do not meet CPH criterion 1.

2. The area, structure or site is identified with a person, group, or event that contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city.

No persons or events of any potential historical or cultural importance have been found to have been associated with 1531 Oak Park. The property therefore does not meet CPH criterion 2.

3. Structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or way of life important to the city.

No important building type, architectural style, or pattern of life are associated with the subject property, so it also does not meet CPH criterion 3.

4. Structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style in a neighborhood.

The c1950 architecture of the subject building is ubiquitous in the neighborhood. More representative examples of mid-20th century design in the vicinity are the civic buildings, such as the fire station, schools and library. The best examples of the style are the many homes of the area, which better exemplify the post-WWII period. Neither the subject building nor any of the neighboring commercial structures can be deemed to be good examples of their architectural type, and are not the best remaining examples. The building at 1531 Oak Park Blvd. does not meet CPH criterion 4.

5. The area or its structures are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city.

No influential individual or group has been associated with the development of the Oak Park commercial buildings. The subject property does not meet CPH criterion 5.

6. The area or its structures embody elements of outstanding attention to architectural or landscape design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

The property and its structure do not embody outstanding elements of design, materials or workmanship, so the property also does not meet CPH criterion 6.

7. The area is related to a designated historic or landmark building or district in such a way that its preservation is essential to the integrity of the building or district.

There is no association or relationship to any adjoining cultural resources, therefore 1531 Oak Park does not meet CPH criterion 7.

8. Specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present.

This evaluation does not address archaeology. Criterion 8 is therefore not applicable.

As no CPH criterion is met by the subject property, 1531 Oak Park is not eligible to be designated a CPH cultural resource, nor is there potential for this associated grouping of commercial buildings to be designated a CPH historic district.