



Memorandum

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission

FROM: Sally Zarnowitz, AIA

SUBJECT: See below

DATE: April 19, 2007

ADDITION OF A QUALIFYING PROPERTY, LOCATED AT 681 NORTH CAPITOL AVENUE, TO THE HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY (H.R.I.)

BACKGROUND

The single-family house located at 681 North Capitol Avenue was evaluated in 2005-2006 as part of the CEQA environmental review for the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Capitol Avenue Light Rail Extension Project, and Planned Development Rezoning file no. PDC05-060. The Rezoning allowed 199 multi-family attached residential units and two existing single-family detached residences on the 10.5-acre site.

While the significant orchard property was demolished, the evaluation (attached) also indicated that the Messina house, located at 681 North Capitol Avenue, appeared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an exceptional example of the Spanish Colonial Revival Architectural Style in San Jose.

The Planned Development Zoning was referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission on February 1, 2006. The Commission recommended adding the Messina house to the Historic Resources Inventory as a Structure of Merit eligible for the National Register, and encouraging the owners to pursue City Landmark Designation.

ANALYSIS

Impacts to Historic Resources in San Jose, including significant alterations and demolition, are reviewed as part of Environmental Review that is triggered by a discretionary development permit (Planning permit, as opposed to a building permit). Alterations proposed to properties appearing eligible for the California Register are reviewed for conformance with the *Your Old House Design Guidelines*, based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. However, for single family houses that are not listed on the Historic Resources Inventory, and are not otherwise subject to the Single Family House Permit process, no development permits or City discretionary approvals are required for a proposed demolition and replacement with another single-family house.

Typically, addition of a single-family house to the HRI results in a requirement for a development permit (Single Family House Permit, approved by the Planning Director) for any future exterior alterations that would require building permits. However, in the case of the current project, the

Planned Development zoning does not confer upon the structure the requirement for a development permit prior to exterior alterations. Maintenance of the Inventory through addition of the Messina house alerts Planning staff to the need for environmental review of future proposed alterations to the house.

Properties listed in the HRI have use of the State Historical Building Code (SHBC). The intent of the SHBC is to protect California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction problems inherent in historic buildings and offering an alternative code to deal with these problems. The SHBC provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation of structures designated as historic buildings to facilitate rehabilitation or accommodate change of occupancy while preserving historic fabric. While the code provides for a cost-effective approach to preservation, it also provides for occupant safety, encourages energy conservation and facilitates access for people with disabilities. In addition, considerable incentives for preservation are available to designated City Landmark owners. Landmark owners can apply for Property Tax relief under the Mills Act/Historic Property Contract, and work done on Landmarks in compliance with Historic Preservation Permits is exempt from Building CRMP Taxes.

In 1986 the San Jose City Council approved a resolution authorizing the Historic Landmarks Commission to maintain the Historic Resources Inventory (HRI). The City Council recognized that the Inventory as a resource for conducting environmental review and as a land use and development planning tool. The resolution authorizes the Commission and its staff to maintain the Inventory by adding and deleting listings as appropriate.

Using the Historic Evaluation Criteria, the San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission established as a quantitative process based on the work of Harold Kalman (1980), used as a guide in evaluating historical resources. To qualify for the Historic Resources Inventory, properties must score at least 33 points through the evaluation rating system. Because the single family house located at 681 N. Capitol Avenue appears eligible for the National Register, it would automatically appear eligible for the California Register and the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory. Therefore the Historic Evaluation Criteria (Tally) form would not be required to determine eligibility for the City Inventory. With specific evaluation, the house could also be found to qualify as a Candidate City Landmark.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends that the Historic Landmarks Commission add the qualifying property to the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Sally Notthoff Zarnowitz, AIA
Historic Preservation Officer

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

HLC 5/21/07, Item 3b

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 10

Resource Name or #: (assigned by recorder) 681-721 North Capitol Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: _____ Ref. No. 9

P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary)

a. County Santa Clara

b. USGS 7.5' Quad Calaveras Reservoir Date 1980 T 6S R 1E; - 1/4 of - 1/4 of Sec. unsectioned; Mount Diablo B.M.

c. Address 681-721 North Capitol Avenue City San Jose Zip 95133

d. UTM: Zone 10; ___ mE / ___ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc.)

APN 254-06-036.037

This 15 acre, rectangular shaped parcel is at the southwest corner of Mabury Road and North Capitol Avenue. The Messina property also includes the vacant 3.41 acre parcel south of Baton Rouge Drive, APN 254-06-039.

P3a. Description (Describe the resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting & boundaries):

The 15 acre property at 681-721 North Capitol Avenue includes eight buildings, an approximately 5 acre orchard and an extensive designed landscape near the two houses. The main building complex is near House 1 at 681 North Capitol Avenue. The buildings near House 1 include three vehicle sheds, a garage, a barn and fruit dehydrators. House 2 at 721 North Capitol Avenue is at the northern section of the property near Mabury Road. A brick wall along Mabury Road and North Capitol Avenue borders the extensive gardens near House 2. The orchards are west and south of House 2.

The formal garden in the vicinity of House 1 at 681 North Capitol includes a variety of trimmed hedges and small trees. A circular walkway with trimmed hedges is to the east on axis with the center of the front porch of the house. East of the circular walkway are several large palm trees. The richly detailed Spanish Colonial Revival Style, single-story, single-family, irregular shaped plan house has a cross gable roof covered with red Spanish tiles. A large rear section of the house has a hipped roof. Structurally, the house is stud-wall, wood-frame construction on a perimeter concrete foundation. The exterior walls are covered with textured stucco. The front facade and the sides of the entrance porch has round arch windows with multi-light windows. The house has wood-sash, double-hung windows on the side and back facades. (see continuation sheet)

P3b. Resource Attributes: HP2—single family property, HP33—farm complex

P4. Resources present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other

P5a. Photo or Drawing

(see continuation sheet)

P5b. Description of Photo:

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic Prehistoric Both

1935 (house 1), 1949 (house 2),

1925-27 (warehouse & dehydrators)

P7. Owner and Address:

Messina, Richard V.

681-721 North Capitol Avenue

San Jose, CA 95133

P8. Recorded by:

(Name, affiliation, and address)

Ward Hill

3124 Octavia Street

San Francisco, CA 94123

P9. Date Recorded August 1999

P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Invasive for Light Rail Corridor

P11. Report Citation (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none"):

Cultural Resources Assessment Report - Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Capitol Light Rail Corridor by Basin Research Associates and Ward Hill

Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record
 Photograph Record Other (List)

State of California - The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BUILDING, STRUCTURE AND OBJECT RECORD

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

NRHP Status Code _____

Page 2 of 10

Resource Name or #: (assigned by recorder) 681-721 North Capitol Avenue

B1. Historic Name: _____ B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: Residence/Orchard B4. Present Use Residence/Orchard

B5. Architectural Style: Spanish Colonial Revival (house 1), Mediterranean Style (house 2)

B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 House 1 was built in 1935, house 2 was built in 1949, and the fruit dehydrators were built between 1925 and 1927.

B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

B8. Related Features: _____

B9a. Architect Mr. Buckley (house 2) B9b. Builder: Charles White (house 1), Lee Jason Sunzeri (house 2)

B10. Significance: Theme Agriculture Area San Jose

Period of Significance 1920s to present Property Type Agricultural Applicable Criteria _____

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

In 1922, Steven Messina purchased the 40 acre parcel where the 721 and 681 North Capitol houses were later built. Messina planted an orchard in prunes, apricots and peaches on the property in the mid-1920s. In 1925-1927, Messina built a metal warehouse building and concrete block dehydrator, both still standing (Messina 1999). The dehydrator was used until eight years ago. At one time the orchard employed 25-30 people from picking through packing. The Messinas bought the property from the orchardist Floyd Lundy, a member of the pioneer San Jose family in this area. A Victorian house and a large barn built by the Lundys were demolished in 1935 when the Messinas built their house. The 1929 Santa Clara County Official Map shows S. [Steve, Richard's father] Messina as the owner of a 40 acre parcel at the southwest corner of Capitol Avenue and Mabury Road. The 1903 Santa Clara Official County Map shows the same parcel owned by F. Lundy.

Steve and Marie Messina built 681 North Capitol in 1935 and Richard Messina (born in 1912) and his sister were brought up in the house. Charles White was the building contractor for the house. Steve Messina died in 1946 and his widow Marie lived there until her death in 1974. Then Richard Messina's sister lived there until her death in 1994. This house is now used for the Messina's guests and children when they visit. In 1940, the mailing address for this house was Rt. 2 Box 6; in 1960-70 the address of this house was 12421 North Capitol.

Richard Messina took over the orchard business after his father died in 1946. Richard and Anita Messina indicated in a July, 1999 interview that they built the house at 721 North Capitol Avenue in 1949 as a family residence, on a parcel adjoining Steve Messina's house at 681 North Capitol Avenue. The original address of the 1949 house was 12381 North Capitol Avenue. The architect was a Mr. Buckley and the general contractor was Lee Jason Sunzeri. Richard Messina is still an orchardist with about fifteen acres planted in apricots, walnuts and prunes. A western section of the Messina property was condemned for construction of Interstate 680. The Messina property west of Cedarville Lane was recently developed for apartments. (see continuation sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

B12. References:

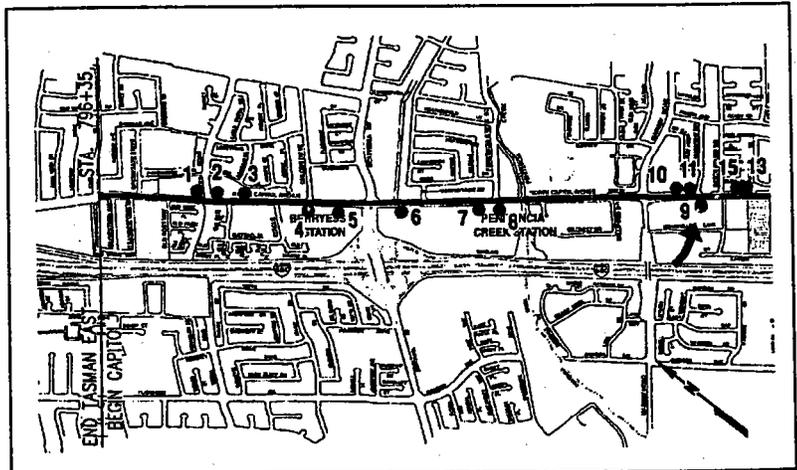
- Personal communication with Mr. and Mrs. Richard Messina, July, 1999.
- San Jose City Directories, 1920-1970
- Official Map of Santa Clara County, 1903, 1929
- Santa Clara County Assessor Records

B13. Remarks:

B14. Evaluator Ward Hill, Architectural Historian

Date of Evaluation: August 1999

(This space reserved for official comments)



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or #: (assigned by recorder) 681-721 North Capitol Avenue

Recorded by Ward Hill

Date: August 1999

Continuation

Update

Item P3a. continued

The house has a tall, side gable roof with two lower intersecting gables projecting from the front facade. The south gable on the front facade has a bull's eye window with a decorative iron grille. A cast concrete medallion is above the window. The round arch window in the north gable has a heavy hood with paired side brackets. A single arch with a twisted column connects to the north side of this gable. Between the two front gables is a recessed entrance porch with four round arch openings. The arches are supported by four twisted columns with Corinthian capitals.

A third intersecting gable projects from the south facade. A side entrance is adjacent to this on the south facade gable.

A driveway along the south side of House 1 leads to a detached garage with a flat roof. A decorative concrete block wall is adjacent to the western section of the driveway. The wood-frame garage has stucco walls and a Spanish tile parapet, repeating architectural details of the main house. Side buttresses flank the garage door opening. The roll-up garage door is a later addition. A single hinged door below a tile covered shed roof leads into a small storeroom or shop adjacent to the garage. Adjacent to and west of the garage is a rectangular plan, wood-frame vehicle shed (Shed 3). The shed has a side gable roof covered with corrugated metal and exterior walls covered with vertical boards. The east facade has openings for four vehicles. Adjacent to Shed 3 on the north are two smaller vehicle sheds (Sheds 1 and 2). These wood-frame, gabled sheds also have exterior walls covered with vertical boards. Each shed accommodates two vehicles.

Adjacent to North Capitol Avenue south of House 1 is a large, square plan, wood-frame barn covered with corrugated metal. The barn has a gently sloping gable roof. The roof has a monitor with wood sash windows facing south. The barn windows on the front (east) and north facades; the windows on the south have been boarded over. The front facade has two sliding doors. West of the barn are three contiguous fruit dehydrators. The rectangular plan fruit dehydrators are constructed of concrete block with metal front doors facing south.

A couple of hundred feet north of House 1 is House 2 at 721 North Capitol Avenue near Mabury Road. House 2 has a large formal garden in the vicinity of its east and north sides behind brick walls adjacent to the street. The garden includes a large lawn north of the house, a variety of trimmed hedges bordering driveway and the lawn, many flowers and large trees. A driveway at the southern end of the house leads to the first floor garage. The simply detailed, Mediterranean Style, two-story, single-family, L-shaped plan house has a two level hipped roof covered with red Spanish tiles. Structurally, the house is stud-wall, wood-frame construction on a perimeter concrete foundation. The exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco. The house has steel sash, multi-light casement windows. The split level design of the house has a two-story, hipped main center section with a lower hipped first floor wrapping around the south and east facades. Hipped sections project from the first floor section on the east and north. The roof eaves have exposed rafters. The north facade has two second floor balconies and a first floor porch.

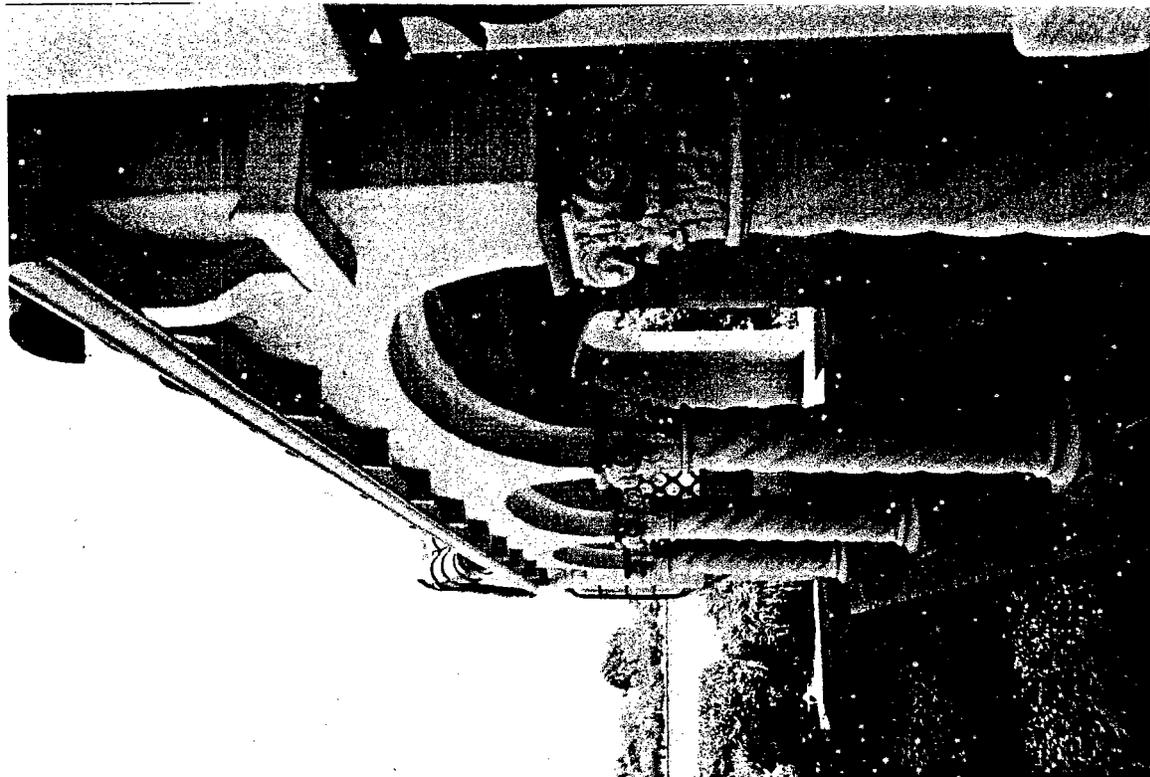
Item B10. continued

The buildings at 681-721 North Capitol Avenue generally retain a high level of historic integrity. The condition of the three sheds and the dehydrators is now rather deteriorated, but these buildings retain the essential features related to their original use. The Messina property is a rare, surviving example of an operating orchard in East San Jose dating back to the 1920s. Virtually all the original farms in this area have been replaced by new development in the last 30 years. This property retains part of its original orchard and the extensive landscaping in the vicinity of the two houses. Consequently, the houses and related outbuildings (the garage, three sheds, barn and dehydrators) appear to be significant in the agricultural history in the San Jose, and thus these buildings appear to be eligible at a local level of significance for the California Register or National Register under Criterion A. The area of potential eligibility includes the eight buildings and adjacent orchards and landscaping. The richly detailed Steven Messina house at 681 North Capital Avenue appears to be an exceptional example of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in San Jose, thus it also appears to be eligible under Criterion C. The outbuildings do not appear to be exceptional examples of their type.

In conclusion, 681-721 North Capitol Avenue appears to be eligible for the California or National Register because its appears to be significant under Criterion A. The house at 681 North Capitol Avenue also appears to be eligible for the California and National Register because it appears to be significant under Criterion C.

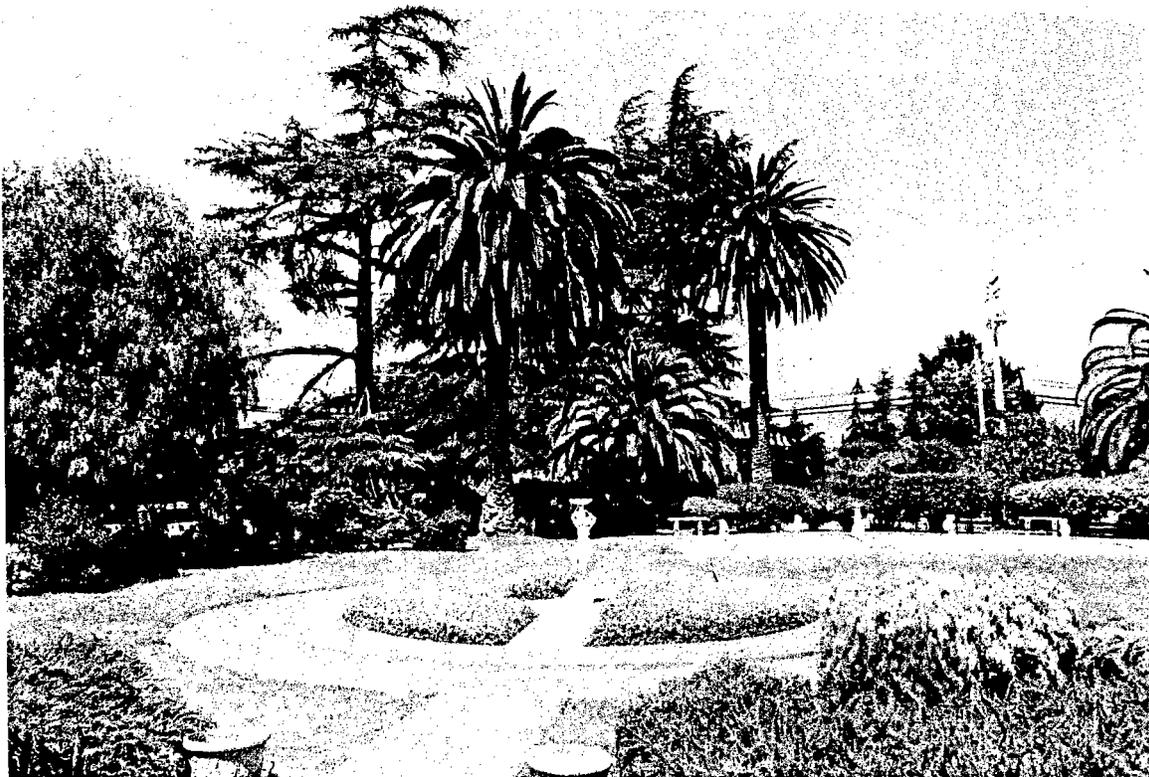
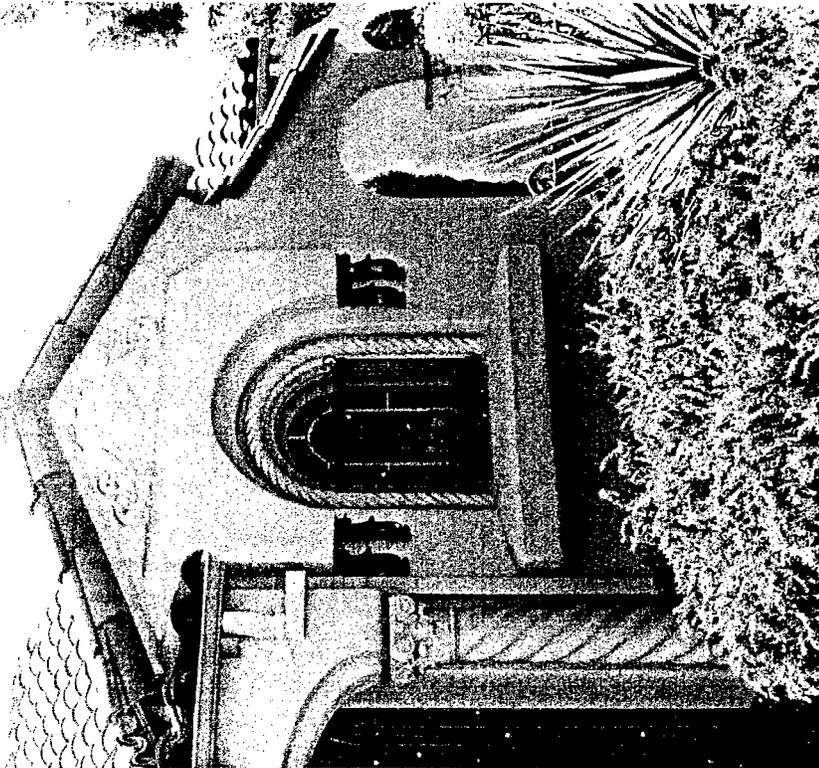
Item P5a. Photo. continued

House 1 (above) and porch detail (below)



Item P5a. Photo, continued

House 1 – window detail (above) and landscaping (below)



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Recorded by Ward Hill

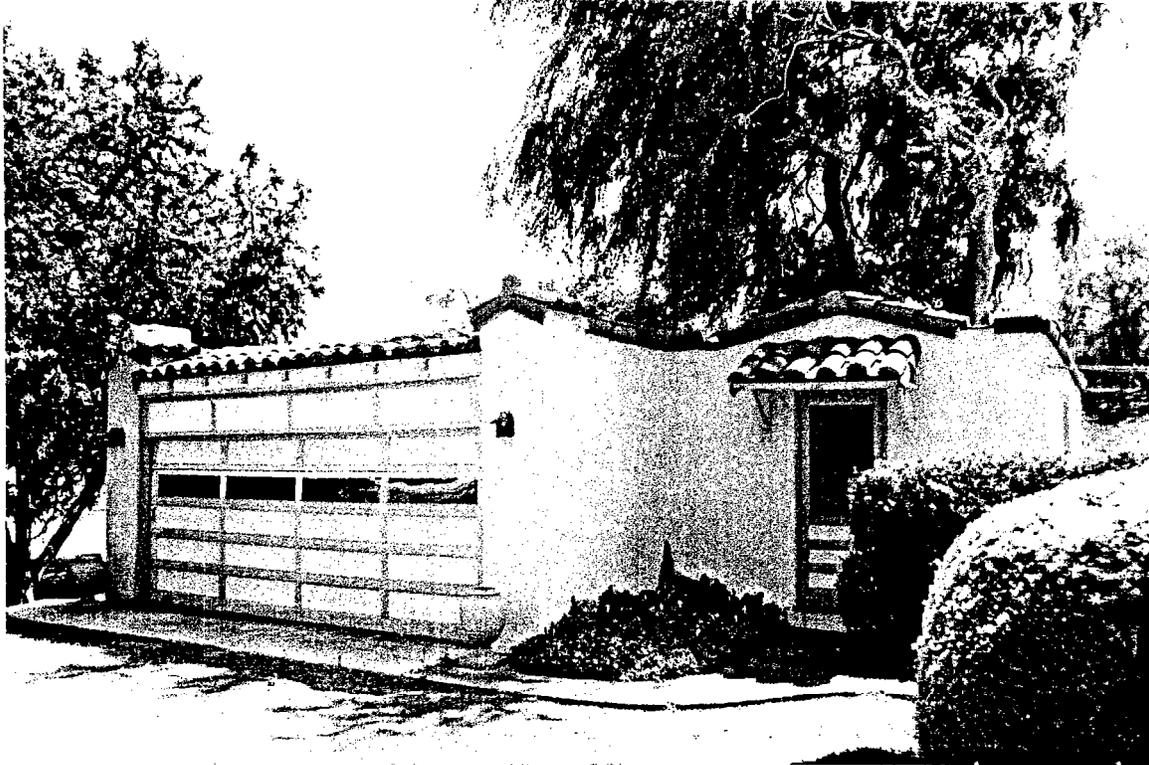
Date: August 1999

Continuation

Update

Item P5a. Photo. continued

House 1 – garage (above) and House 2 – view from southeast (below)



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

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Recorded by Ward Hill

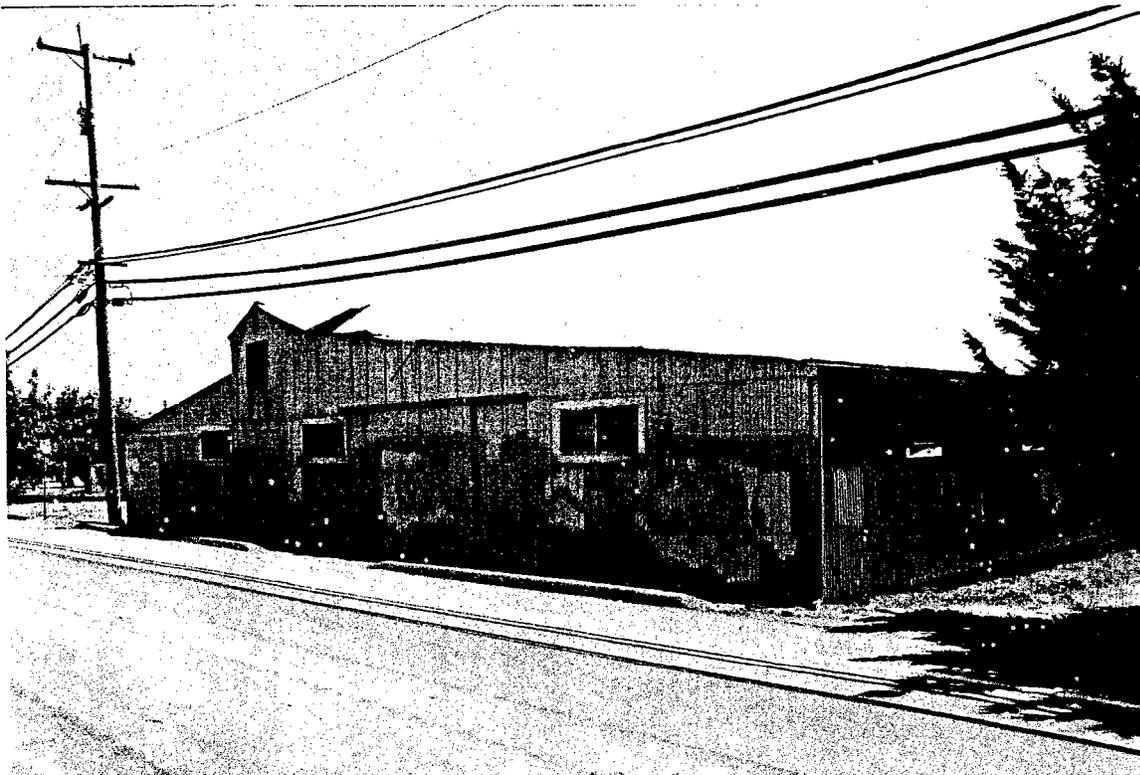
Date: August 1999

Continuation

Update

Item P5a. Photo. continued

House 2 – view from northeast (above) and Barn (below)



Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or #: (assigned by recorder) 681-721 North Capitol Avenue

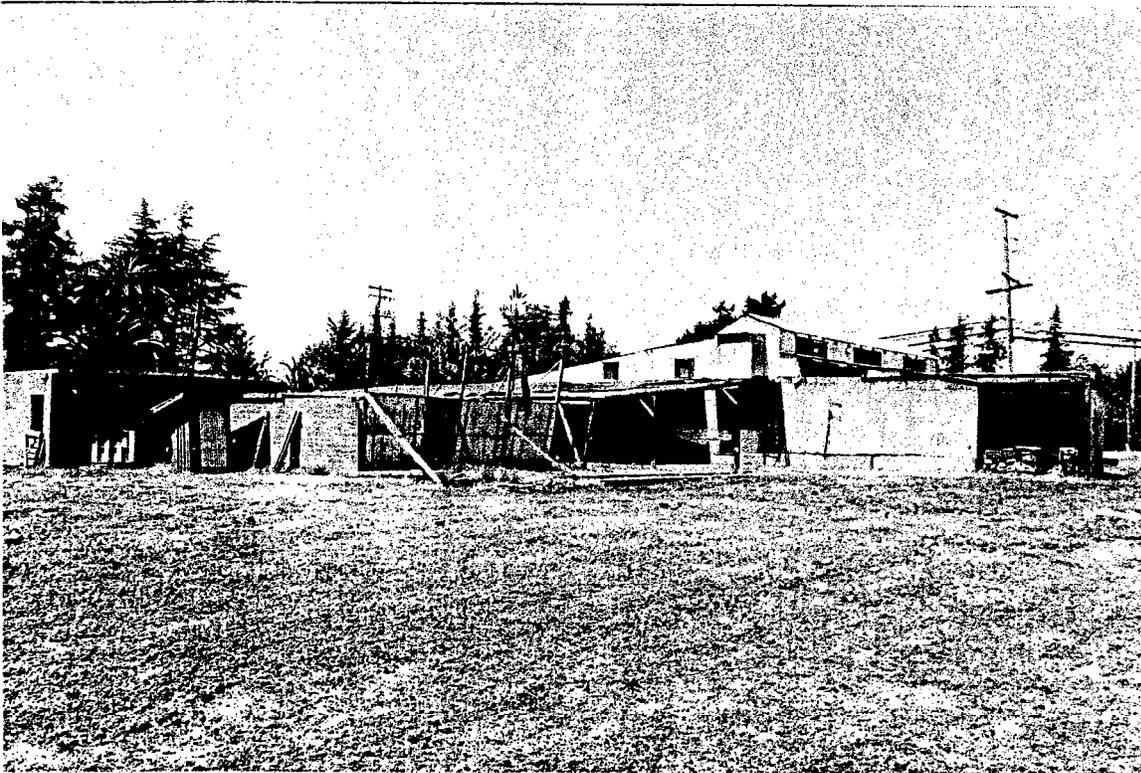
Recorded by Ward Hill

Date: August 1999

Continuation Update

Item P5a. Photo, continued

Fruit dehydrators (above) and Vehicle shed 1 (below)

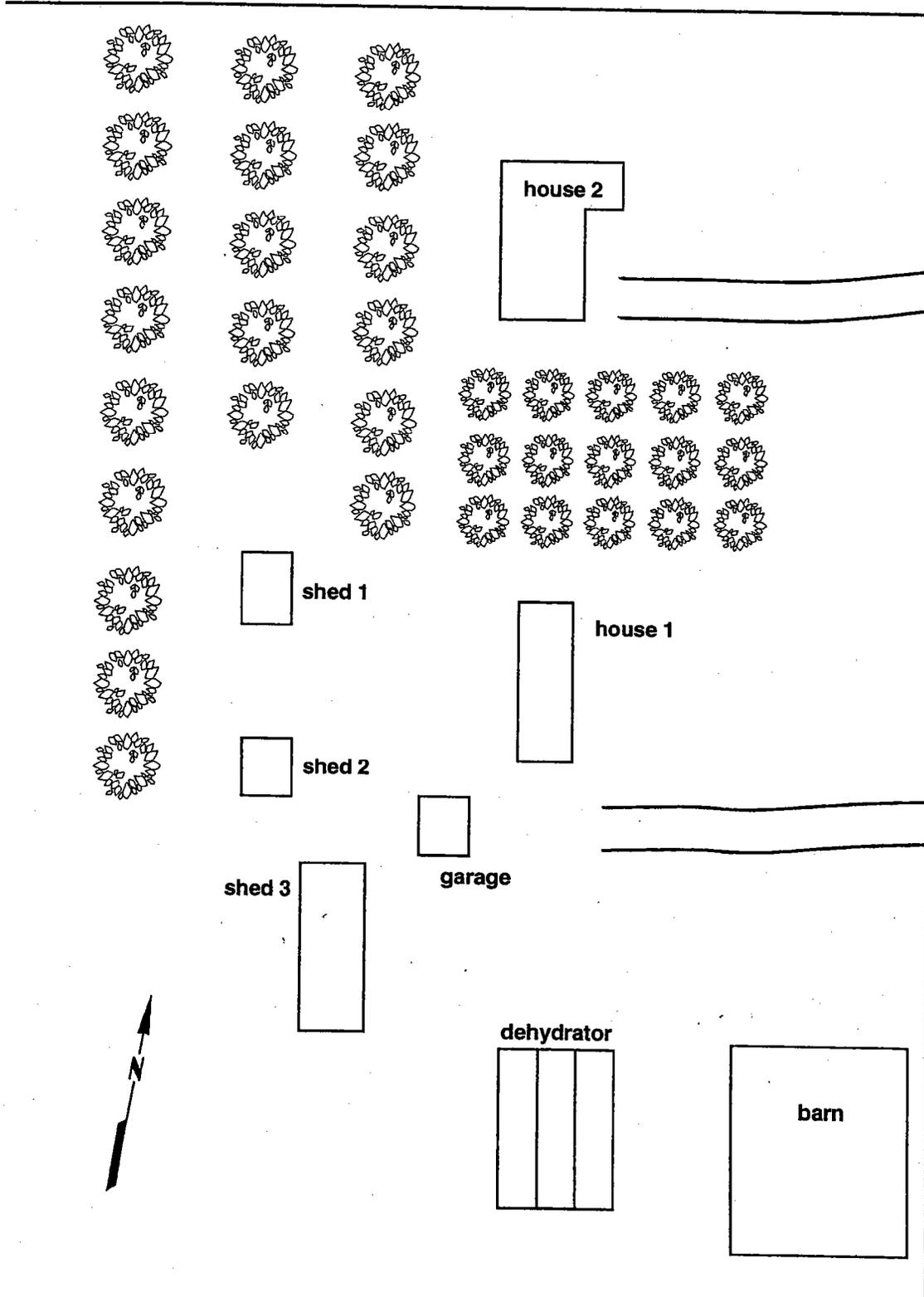


Item P5a. Photo. continued

Vehicle shed 2 (above) and Vehicle shed 3 (below)



MABURY ROAD



NORTH CAPITOL AVENUE

Richard V. Messina
721 N. Capitol Avenue
San Jose, CA 95133

April 3, 2007

Dear Mr. Messina:

Your property has been determined to be eligible as a Historic Resource in a State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) Evaluation form provided as part of the development review process for Planned Development zoning file no. PDC05-060. The Historic Landmarks Commission will consider the addition of your property to the Historic Resources Inventory at the May 2, 2007 Historic Landmarks Commission hearing.

This letter is intended to give you additional information on what the inclusion of your building in the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory means to you.

I have enclosed the following:

- A list of frequently asked questions about Historic Resources
- Informational brochures on Historic Preservation, the Historic Resources Inventory, and the Historic Building Code

More information is available on the Planning Division's web site at sanjoseca.gov/planning/historic. The week before the hearing, you will also be able to review the Commission agenda and staff reports on the web site.

Please feel free to contact me at (408) 535-7822 or by e-mail at darren.mcbain@sanjoseca.gov with any questions.

Sincerely,

Darren McBain
Historic Preservation Planner

Cc: John Moniz, Pinn Brothers

Enc:
FAQ
Brochures