

**STAFF REPORT**  
**HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION**

**FILE NO.:** HL10-194, 1650 Senter Road, Zanker House

**APPLICATION TYPE:**

Historic Landmark Nomination (HL)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Nomination of the subject building as a designated City Landmark

Existing Zoning	R-1-8 – Residence District
General Plan	Public Park and Open Space
Council District	7
Annexation Date	Original City
Historic Classification	n/a
Historic Area	n/a
SNI	Tully-Senter
Redevelopment Area	SNI
Specific Plan	N/A

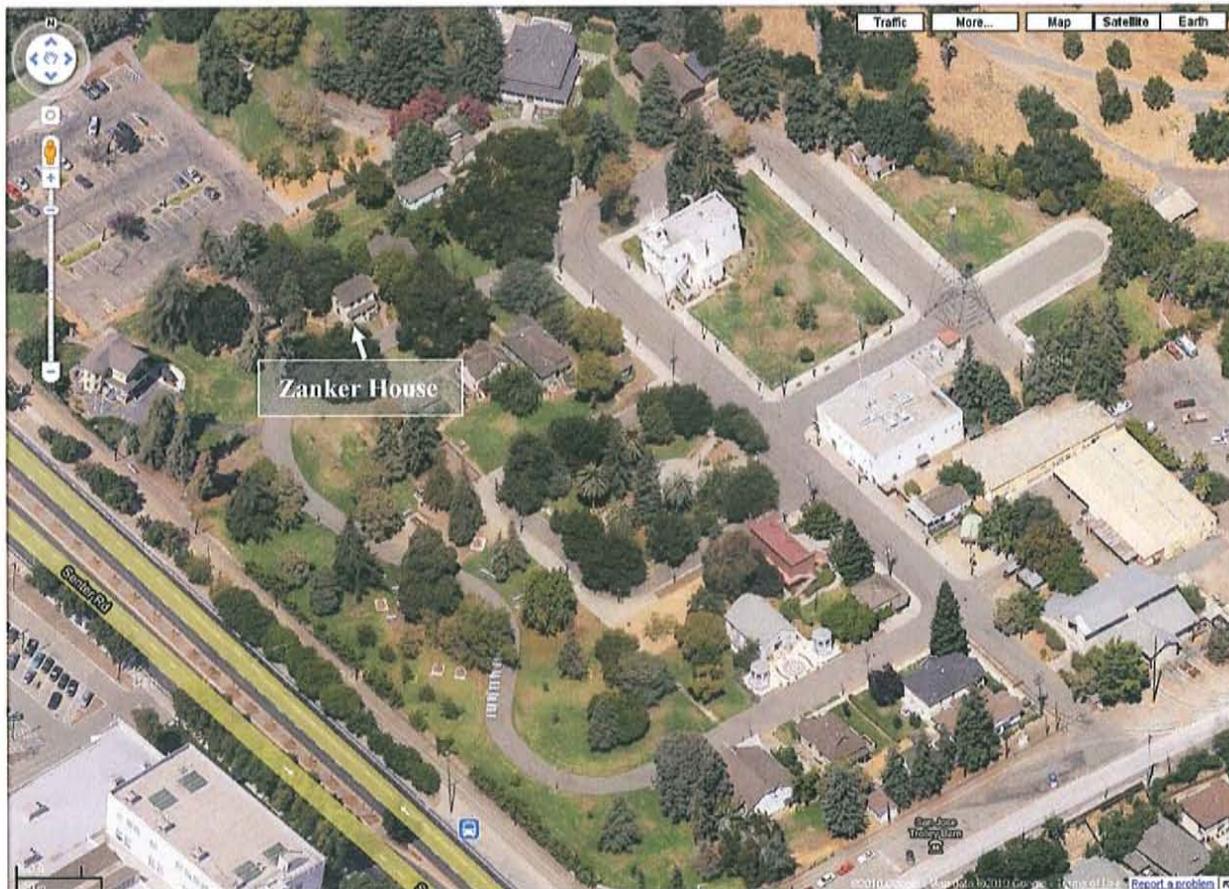


Figure 1. History San Jose site (Image source: Google Maps).

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OWNERS/APPLICANTS

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Owner: City of San Jose, 200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113

Applicant: History San Jose, attn: Alida Bray, 1650 Senter Road, San Jose CA 95112

## **BACKGROUND**

In November 2009, the Zanker House was evaluated in a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form and historic evaluation sheet. This building is a transitional design that reflects both the Greek Revival/Pioneer and Italianate forms, and is an extremely rare record of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century built environment in Santa Clara County.

The building is also significant as the home of F.W. Zanker, an early emigrant who was one of the first farmers to successfully farm strawberries for the commercial market, shipping produce to San Francisco by steam ship from the port of Alviso in the 1860s.

Designation of the structure as a City Landmark would establish the requirement for the issuance of Historic Preservation (HP) permits for City approval of any exterior changes proposed to the structure. The designation would also allow History San Jose to obtain grant funding through the County of Santa Clara for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the structure.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **I. Historic Landmark Criteria (HL10-194)**

In making the findings that a proposed landmark has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature, the Commission may consider, among other relevant factors, the following:

- (1) Its character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture;
- (2) Its location as a site of a significant historic event;
- (3) Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history;
- (4) Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city of San José;
- (5) Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
- (6) Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen;
- (7) Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city of San José;
- (8) Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique.

**Summary:** Based on the information in the historical evaluation prepared by Urban Programmers for the building, as discussed below, the structure merits designation as a historic landmark based on its value as a part of the City's heritage and culture, and for its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type. The DPR form indicates that although the building was moved from its original location on Milpitas-Alviso Road, the structure retains its ability to help explain how a family farm house operated during the 1860s and 1870s.

Under the definition for historical significance within the City of San Jose Historic Preservation Ordinance, the structure helps to embody the agricultural history of the valley, and of the development of the commercial strawberry industry. The structure meets the criteria for designation as a City of San Jose Historic Landmark Structure in conformance with San José's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 13.48 of the Municipal Code). The structure qualifies for City Landmark status based on: Criterion (1), its character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture for its exemplification of the agricultural history of the valley, especially in relation to 19<sup>th</sup> century family farms; and Criterion (6), for its distinguishing characteristics of a mid-1860s rural house in the Italianate style of architecture, with original materials and methods of construction intact.

## **GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE**

The Landmark Designation for these structures conforms to, and furthers, the San Jose 2020 General Plan *Urban Conservation/Preservation Major Strategy*. This strategy recognizes that preservation activities contribute visual evidence to a sense of community. The structures also further the policies in the *Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources (HACR), in particular Policy No. 2*, which states that the City should use the Area of Historic Sensitivity overlay and the landmark designation process of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to promote and enhance the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures.

## **CEQA**

The environmental impacts of the project will not have an unacceptable negative effect on adjacent property or properties in that the project has been determined exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15331. The project is limited to maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The proposed Landmark nomination was initiated by the property owner. A public hearing notice for the project was published in a local newspaper, and posted at the site. Information about the proposed projects and the associated public hearings has been made available through the Planning Division web site, and staff has been available to answer questions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### HL10-194– Landmark Designation

Planning Staff recommends that the Commission, after holding a public hearing on the subject proposal, recommend that the City Council approve the proposed Landmark Designation of the Zanker House as Historical Landmark No. 188 at the City Council hearing scheduled for November 2, 2010 at 1:30 PM.

**Project Manager:** John Davidson

**Approved by:** John Davidson

**Date:** 10/1/2010

**Attachments:** Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form  
Location map

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

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial  
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 9 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House at History Park

P1. Other Identifier:

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County Santa Clara and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Jose West Date 1980 T    ; R    ; 3 of 3 of Sec    ;     B.M.

c. Address 1650 Senter Road City San Jose Zip 95112

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10,601067.7 mE/ 4131034.7 mN

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

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

The site is located on the north side of the History Park, a 17 acre park dedicated to preserving the understanding of local history through historic buildings and some recreations. The location of the Zanker House is between the Chiechi House to the east and the Santa Ana School house to the northwest. Although the setting is not as rural as a farm, the house represents a very important rural residential structure due both to its age (dating from 1868) and to its unique architectural style which is a transitional design that reflects both Greek Revival/Pioneer and Italianate forms. As such, this structure is an extremely significant and rare record of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century built environment in the Santa Clara Valley.

(Continued on page 3)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP 2 Single family detached house

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) View N

Front Façade, 10/01/ 2009

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

Historic  Prehistoric  Both  
Constructed: c. 1868 Museum Archival  
Records

\*P7. Owner and Address:

City of San Jose  
200 E. Santa Clara St. San Jose 95112

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Bonnie Bamberg  
Urban Programmers  
10710 Ridgeview Avenue  
San Jose CA 95127

\*P9. Date Recorded: 10/03/2009

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Project  
Specific

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

History San Jose Master Plan

\*Attachments: NONE  Location 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):

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*NRHP Status Code 5S2

Page 2 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House- History Park

B1. Historic Name: F.W.Zanker House

B2. Common Name: Zanker House

B3. Original Use: Residential Single Family B4. Present Use: Public Museum

\*B5. Architectural Style: Italianate

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Constructed c. 1868, addition c. 1920 (removed)

\*B7. Moved? No  Yes Unknown Date: 9/14/1986 Original Location: West side of Zanker Road, 1 mile north of Highway 237, off Alviso-Milpitas Road

\*B8. Related Features: Landscaping and setting in History Park

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown

\*B10. Significance: Theme Residential Architecture Area San Jose  
Period of Significance 1850-1880 Property Type Farm House Applicable Criteria NA (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The building meets the criteria for designation as a San Jose Historic Landmark under criteria:

1. Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture in a distinctive, significant or important way;

The house is significant as the home of F. W. Zanker, an early immigrant family that was one of the first to successfully farm strawberries for the commercial market, shipping the produce to San Francisco by steam ship out of the Port of Alviso in the 1860's. Strawberry farming and the invention of frozen strawberries are important elements in the agricultural history of San Jose and Santa Clara Valley.

2. Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige: a. Of an architectural style, design or method of construction;

The F. W. Zanker House is significant to the history and architectural heritage of San Jose as one of, if not the oldest rural residence that remains in original condition, exhibiting transitional early Italianate design from the 1860's and construction materials and methods of that period. (continued on sheet 4)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP 15  
Museum

\*B12. References: History San Jose Archives  
See attached Sources Consulted

B13. Remarks: The house is part of the permanent collection at History Park

\*B14. Evaluator: Bonnie Bamberg

\*Date of Evaluation: 10/03/09

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

See attached map sheet

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Page 3 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 3, 2009 x Continuation Update

**P3a.Description continued**

The residence consists of a 2-story, wooden structure built on a simple rectangular floor plan of frame construction sheathed in wide shiplap exterior walls and covered by a single-gabled, moderately pitched roof which runs parallel to the front of the house. Fenestration is symmetrically placed along the facades with the entry façade south-facing and centered by a single wooden entry door. All fenestration openings are similar in style and consist of vertically-oriented double hung windows with 2 over 2 lights. Window surrounds are slightly projecting and very simple in form. The entry façade exhibits 3 windows on the second floor and one each on each side of the entry door. Like-designed single windows are located one to a floor under the gable ends. The roofline exhibits a characteristically pronounced deep eave over a simple frieze line that is broken by single and paired bracketing. An unusual feature here is the wooden boxed paneling along the frieze. The single most distinctive feature of the wooden shingled roof is the prominent broken gable returns with its paired brackets on both the west and east facades. The raised wooden quoins at the corners of the residence add its most distinctive Italianate ornament. The other most prominent design feature is the front wooden porch which is raised 3 steps above ground level and is supported by simple wooden square posts that support a slightly hipped roof. Smaller simple wooden boards form a "v" shape where the posts meet the roof. Plain wooden board balusters enclose the porch and front steps. Here one notes that the porch design is much more characteristic of the Pioneer/Greek Revival precedent than the more ornamented Italianate residential designs that would dominate the 1870's architecture in the Santa Clara Valley. That the front porch was of a more basic, unornamented design reinforces the fact that the site was a simple farmhouse for a very middle class farming family of limited means constructed in an era of prudent frugality.

The landscaping and setting in History Park is respectful of the significance of this building in a group of rural farm houses that are now part of the architectural collection. As mentioned it is not the farm setting of the original location yet it gives ample separation from other buildings to appreciate the architecture of a building that once stood alone, yet among ancillary and out buildings. The reconstructed outhouse adds to the understanding of the way the houses and families functioned in the 1860's.

In the early twentieth century an addition to create a kitchen was placed on the rear of the building. About the same time a bathroom (toilet) was added in the house. Both of these later additions were removed when the house was moved to History Park and rehabilitated to show the original design and how it functioned. A reconstructed outhouse is in close proximity to the house showing how the two would have been in relationship to each other. When the house was brought to History Park it was discovered that there was no provision for a flue in the building indicating that there was no kitchen stove or heating stove in the house when it was constructed, or for many years after.

The house provides an opportunity to understand how a family house operated on a farm during the 1860's and 1870's.

Page 4 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 3, 2009 x Continuation Update

**B 10. Significance continued:**

The house is significant for two primary and very specific reasons. The first has to do with age. San Jose and the Santa Clara Valley have very few remaining residential buildings from the 1860's. The 1870's represented the first real boom in the region and as such the more ornate Italianate styles from this period are more prevalent. The Victorian design era in San Jose is much more characteristically Italianate, Eastlake and Queen Anne dating from the last three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century than the much rarer Pioneer, Greek, and Gothic Revival styles which dominated the first half of the Century. Whether intentional or not, the Zanker House is a very unique transitional design. Here the simple wooden Pioneer/Greek Revival forms start to morph into the more ornate Italianate forms which derived their inspiration from Renaissance Italy rather than classical Greece. The clean simplicity of Greek lines were to be replaced by the high ornament of the Renaissance which used Greek and Roman design in a much more flamboyant manner. On this specific site, the simple massing of the structure, the prominent single-gabled roof and the symmetry of window placement all derive from the Greek Revival as does stripped down detailing of the front porch. Yet added to these forms are the wide horizontal shiplap siding, the corner raised quoins and the prominent bracketing which all derive from the newer Italianate school which would come to dominate local design. The result is a perfect bridge from one earlier Victorian era design style to a later Victorian era design. The number of simple, unadorned Greek Revival structures in the region are very rare while the number of Italianate residential designs are much more commonly found. But it is in the unique mix of styles that makes the Zanker House such a treasure for the City of San Jose and for History San Jose to maintain the permanent record of the built environment in Santa Clara County covering the last 175 years.

The house is also significant as the working home of F. William Zanker who was one of the first farmers in the Santa Clara Valley to grow strawberries for the commercial market in San Francisco. The varieties Sharpless and Cheney Strawberries were grown on 8 acres of the Zanker farm. When ripe they were packed in wood trays and sent by steamship from the Port of Alviso to San Francisco onboard steam ships. Commercial growers were faced with the very difficult problem of picking the fruit at the peak of sweetness with a very short shelf life or picking them early (strawberries do not gain sweetness or color after they were picked). The history of strawberries describes them as a luxury or artistic fruit which is found throughout ancient history and was cultivated in California to become an important agricultural crop for Santa Clara Valley that lasted from Zanker's work into the 1980's after which most of the strawberry fields were redeveloped with tract housing. The history of the strawberry in San Jose includes a thriving industry and the first successful frozen fruit product, strawberries in a syrup that was perfected by the Naturipe Strawberry Growers Co-Operative while located in a building on Berryessa and Old Oakland Road, part of the Modern Ice and Cold Storage facility.<sup>1</sup>

Born in 1831, Fredric William Zanker left Prussia (Germany) at the age of 19 for the United States where he worked on the east coast before taking the Nicaraguan route to California where he arrived in 1855. His first endeavor was in the gold fields of El Dorado County, but he soon left the mines to farm in Santa Cruz County where he also worked in a saw mill.<sup>2</sup> In 1857, he came to Santa Clara County to farm 120 acres of

<sup>1</sup> Urban Programmers, "Historic and Architectural Evaluation of Modern Ice and Cold Storage Co.," 2005

<sup>2</sup> *Pen Pictures From The Garden of the World or Santa Clara County, California, Illustrated.* - Edited by H. S. Foote.- Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1888. p. 544-545

Page 5 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 3, 2009 x Continuation Update

**B 10. Significance continued:**

land that he believed to be government land available for the investment of making it productive. This was not the case and after a two year legal process the court upheld the land grant to Governor Burnett. Zanker then rented the land on Milpitas-Alviso Roads until he purchased 120 acres in 1863. In 1861, F. William Zanker married San Jose resident Catherine Walters, who was also an immigrant from Germany. The family expanded with 8 children. First were 4 girls who married by the late 1880's and then 4 sons. All but two remained in the San Jose area; Emma married Christopher Roelling with whom she bore five children (1 died) and lived in the Mt. Hamilton region of Santa Clara County; Minnie married Rudolph Binder a carriage painter, and lived on Oak Street with 2 daughters, 2 sons and niece Olive Roelling according to the 1900 Census, but then moved to San Francisco. Lena married E. Glatto, and lived in San Jose; Elizabeth (Lizzie) married Cyrus Shupe and moved to Shasta County; and sons William, Frank, Douglass, and Adolph who remain in close proximity to the family farm.<sup>1</sup> William remained in Alviso and became the elected treasurer for Alviso where he also participated in social and civic organizations.

The Zanker family is important due to their early arrival into the Santa Clara Valley German community and for the generations that remained in the area contributing to the growth of the Valley. However, their work at the beginning of the fruit industry to promote the strawberry as a profitable component of agriculture in the Santa Clara Valley is their significant contribution to history.

**EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

City of San Jose Historic Landmark Program:

Historical Nature. The term "historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature" shall mean a quality that derives from, is based upon, or related to any of the following factors:

1. Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture in a distinctive, significant or important way;

The Zanker House is associated with the mid-1800's era when San Jose was growing as a city with many immigrants coming to farm the fertile land of the Santa Clara Valley.

2. Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige:  
a. Of an architectural style, design or method of construction;

The Zanker House represents one of the early iterations of the Italianate style found in Santa Clara County. The 1868 wood frame house exhibits unique transitional design and construction methods used during that the 1860's.

<sup>1</sup> *Pen Pictures From The Garden of the World or Santa Clara County, California, Illustrated.* - Edited by H. S. Foote.- Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1888. p. 544-545

Page 6 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
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EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:

City of San Jose Historic Landmark Program:

b. Of a master architect, builder, artist or craftsman;

The architect is undocumented although it is likely that a local architect was the designer. The construction is fine quality craftsmanship.

c. Of high artistic merit;

The design is of high artistic merit as a well proportioned and designed transitional style bridging the Pioneer-Greek Revival and Italianate .

d. The totality of which comprises a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige whose component parts may lack the same attributes;

As a significant artifact in the collection of historic buildings in History Park, the Zanker House is a strong contributing element depicting the early settlement era in the growth of San Jose.

e. That has yielded or is substantially likely to yield information of value about history, architecture, engineering, culture or aesthetics, or that provides for existing and future generations an example of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived or worked;

The Zanker House has yielded information that describes how a family lived in the mid 1800's. It continues to portray that information in the setting at History Park.

f. That the construction materials or engineering methods used in the proposed landmark are unusual or significant or uniquely effective.

The Zanker House is constructed of old growth redwood that was taken from the Santa Cruz Mountains where the owner F. William Zanker worked in a saw-mill and could assess the value of this species of wood. Redwood became the wood of choice for much of the building that occurred after 1870. The methods and materials are important to provide an understanding of construction in the 1869's, but are not as significant as the design.

3. The factor of age alone does not necessarily confer a special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering significance, value or interest upon a structure or site, but it may have such effect if a more distinctive, significant or important example thereof no longer exists.

The Zanker House appears to be San Jose's oldest wood frame house and likely one of the earliest wood frame houses to remain in the County. The age, unique style, and construction of the Zanker House make it one of a kind and very significant to the architectural history of San Jose.

Page 7 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 3, 2009 x Continuation Update

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE:

City of San Jose Historic Landmark Program:

San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission's Evaluation for Significance establishes the following levels of significance:

- 67-134 Candidate City Landmark
- 33-66 Structure of Merit
- 33-66 Contributing structure to a historic district
- 32-0 Non-significant

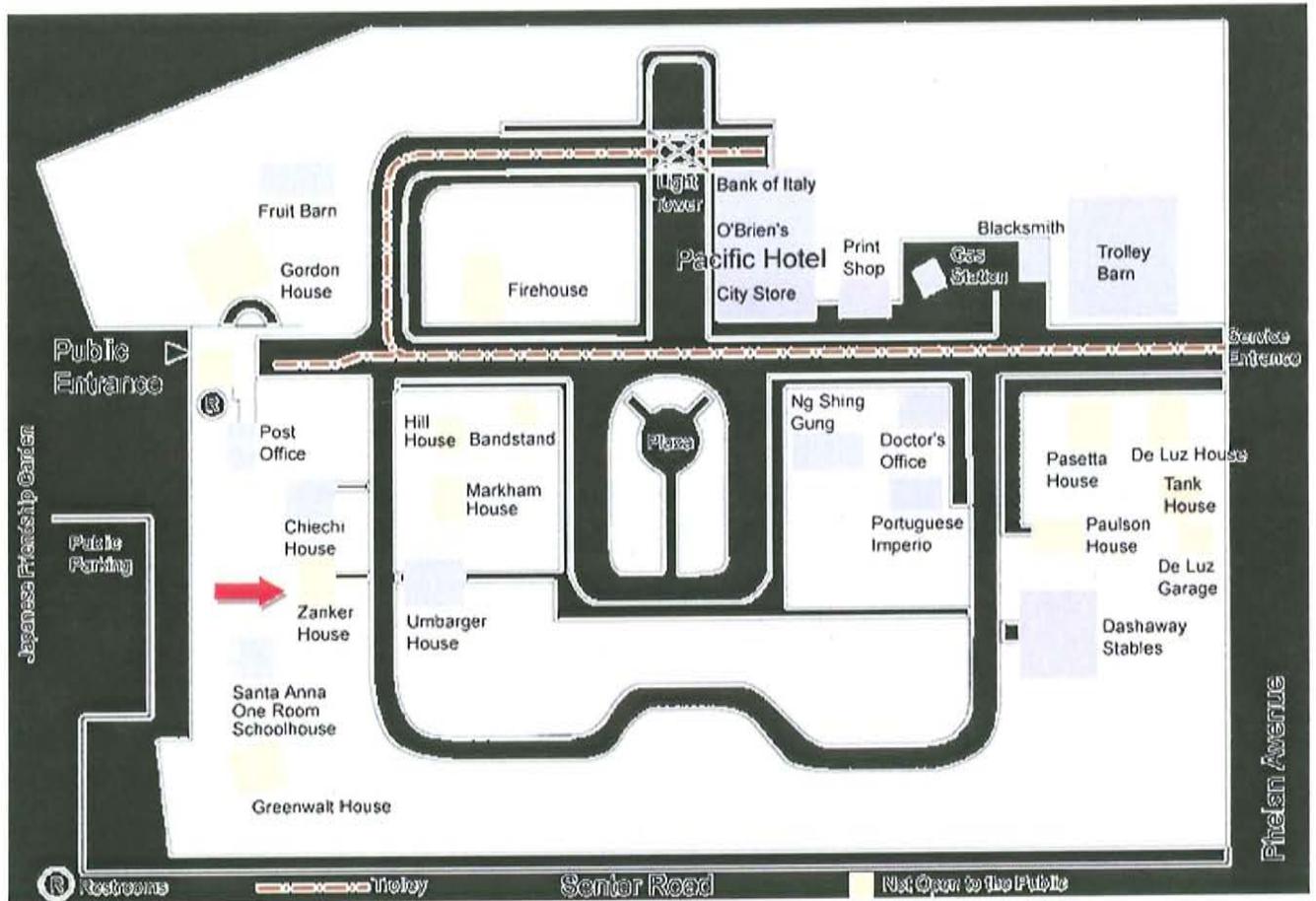
In summary, the Zanker House at History Park represents a significant building of landmark quality in San Jose. Evaluated using the Historic and Architectural Tally Sheet, the facility rated over 80 points, well above the threshold of Candidate City Landmark, The Tally sheets are attached.

Generally, buildings that have been moved away from their original setting and location are not eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places.

Page 8 of 9 Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House History Park CA

\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 03, 2009 x Continuation Update

Sketch Map:



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

Primary  
HRI #  
Trinomial

#

Page 9 of 9 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Zanker House-History Park San Jose, CA  
\*Recorded by: Urban Programmers \*Date November 3, 2009 x Continuation Update



Zanker House photograph c 1927  
Source: History San Jose Photographic Archives



Address: F. W. Zanker House, History Park, San Jose

View: South (Front )and West Facades

Date: August 14, 2010

Format: Digital



Address: F. W. Zanker House, History Park, San Jose

View: West Facade

Date: August 14, 2010

Format: Digital



Address: F. W. Zanker House, History Park, San Jose

View: East Facade

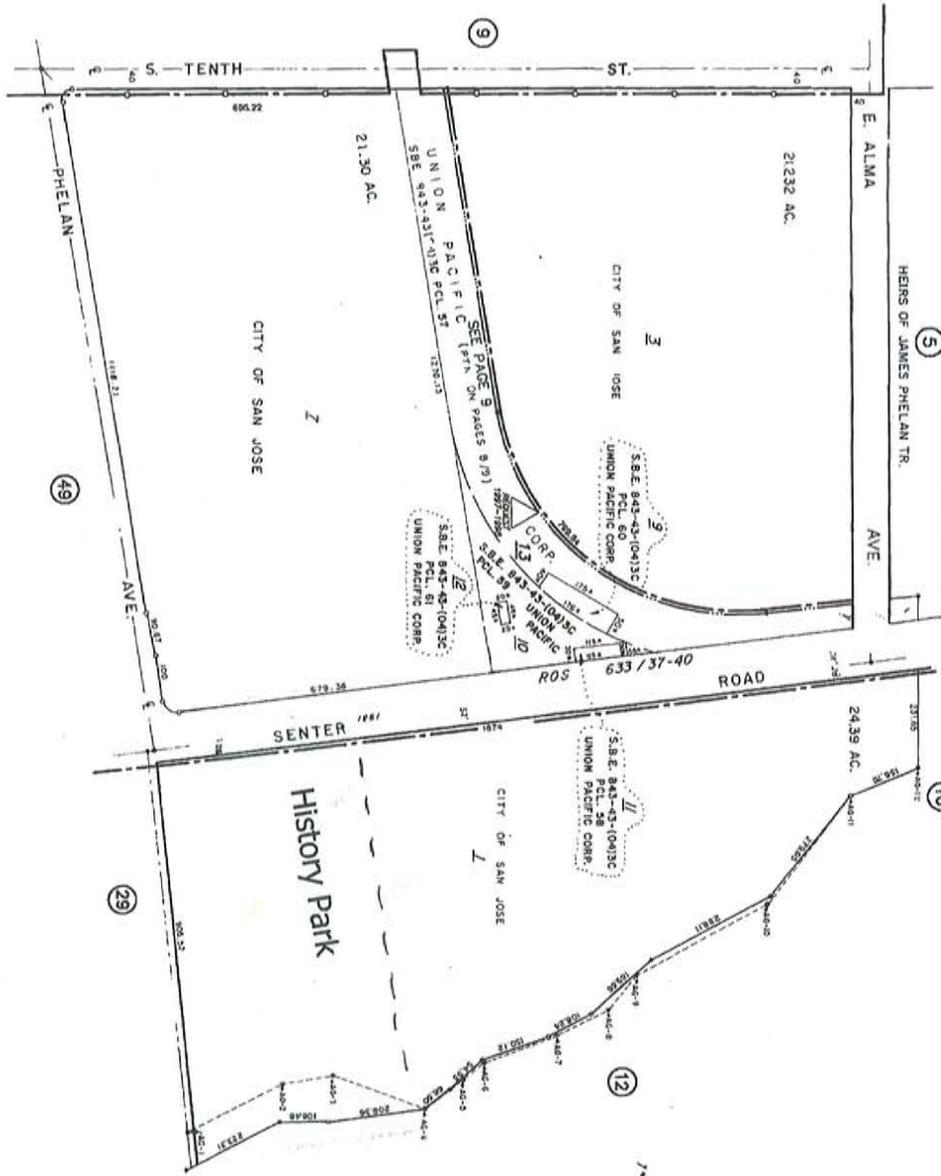
Date: August 14, 2010

Format: Digital

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BOOK PAGE  
477 38



LAWRENCE E. STONE - ASSESSOR  
Detailed map by computer program  
of Santa Clara County, California  
Division Map Year 2004-2005

Location Map

File Nos. HL10-192, -193, -194, -195