



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Stephen M. Haase

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** September 8, 2005

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**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 3

**SUBJECT: HL05-153. HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION FOR THE DENNIS HOUSE, LOCATED AT 237 NORTH AUTUMN STREET.**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Landmarks Commission recommends the City Council adopt a resolution designating the Dennis House located at 237 North Autumn Street as Historic Landmark No. HL05-153.

## **BACKGROUND**

In April 2005 The Dennis House, located at 237 North Autumn Street, was evaluated and found to qualify for listing as a City Landmark. Building owner, Earl Paden, submitted an application for Historic Landmark designation of the residence.

On August 16, 2005, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 72854 initiating proceedings to designate the Dennis House as a City Landmark of special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historic nature. The Council referred the proposal to the Historic Landmarks Commission for its consideration at a public hearing and for its report and recommendation. On September 7, 2005 the Historic Landmarks Commission held a public hearing. The historic consultant, Franklin Maggi, was present to represent the owner. Chair Youmans asked whether the replacement windows had been installed prior to the historic evaluation of the property. Mr. Maggi noted that the windows had been replaced as part of the San Jose International Airport Acoustical Treatment (ACT) Program, and that while the new windows are not exact matches of the original windows, the house has preserved the greater part of its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials. Commissioner Cunningham asked whether the home required seismic reinforcement. Mr. Maggi noted that one of the Mr. Paden's goals is to apply for a Historical Property Contract in order to apply property tax savings towards the repair of the home. Commissioner Leong asked whether the barn is included in the



designation. Mr. Maggi replied that it is because it appears to have been built in 1884, and as such is included in the property's 1870-1909 period of significance. Chair Youmans stated that he supported the designation. He noted further that while the ACT Program has made excellent presentations to the Historic Landmarks Commission regarding window replacement work, it is important to emphasize to building owners that the majority of energy is lost through roof and wall construction rather than windows. The Commission unanimously recommended (7-0-0) that the City Council adopt a resolution designating this structure as a City Landmark.

## **ANALYSIS**

The subject site is currently zoned Light Industrial. The Landmark Designation for this single-family residence on a 0.14 gross-acre site is consistent with the site's General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Combined Industrial/Commercial (CIC) utilizing the General Plan's Discretionary Alternate Use Policy for Structures of Historical or Architectural Merit. Under this policy, alternate uses may be allowed on sites with structures of significant historical or architectural merit if to do so would preserve the structures' historic and architectural qualities and the use would not otherwise be incompatible with the surrounding area. This neighborhood along Autumn Street to the west of the Guadalupe River evolved as a residential neighborhood in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A single family residential neighborhood continues to the east and south of the subject site. The Landmark Designation is also consistent with General Plan historic, archeological and cultural resources goals and policies, which state the preservation of historically or archeologically significant sites, structures and districts is a key consideration in the development review process. These policies also state, "the city should use the landmark designation process of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to promote the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures."

The attached Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form states that the building exceeds the threshold for City Landmark status and appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and for the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3 as a significant and distinguishable entity in the context of mid-to-late nineteenth-century residential architecture in San Jose. The Dennis House merits designation as a historic landmark based on its historical, cultural and architectural significance based on the following criteria of the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 13.48.110):

6. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of the Greek Revival architectural type or specimen.
8. Its embodiment of elements of brick residential architectural design detail, materials and craftsmanship, which represent a uniqueness within the city.

**OUTCOME**

Designation of the structure would establish the requirement for the issuance of Historic Preservation (HP) permits to approve any exterior changes proposed to the structure. The designation would also allow the owners to apply for property tax reduction under the Mills Act and for CRMP construction tax exemption for work done in conformance with approved HP permits.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The property owner requested City Landmark designation. A public hearing notice for the Historic Landmark designation hearings will be published in a local newspaper, posted at the site and mailed to all property owners and tenants within 500 feet of the subject site.

**COORDINATION**

Preparation of the City Council resolution to designate this City Landmark has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

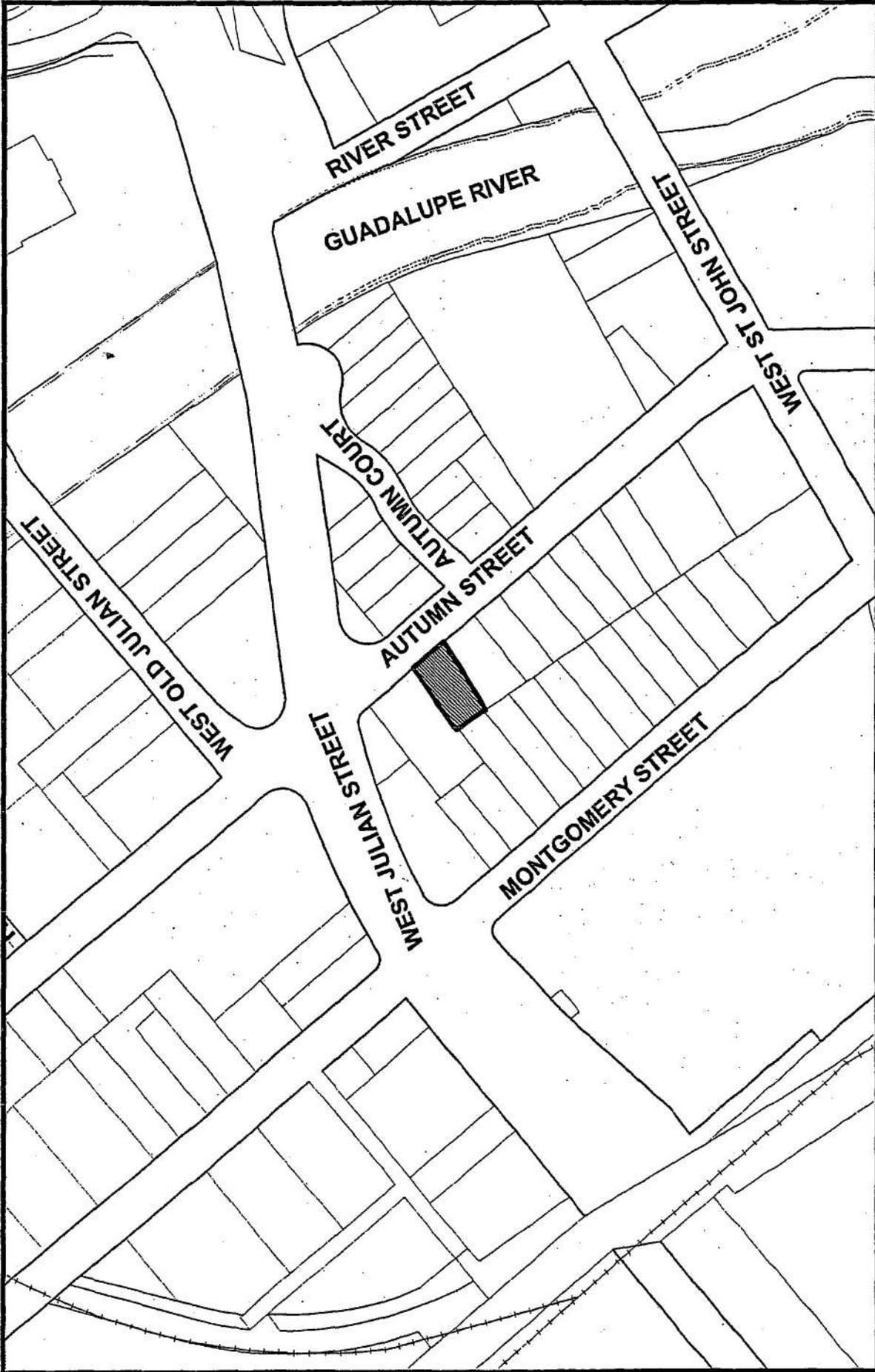
**CEQA**

Exempt. HL05-153



STEPHEN M. HAASE  
Secretary, Historic Landmarks Commission

Attachments



File No: H05-153

District: 03

Quad No: 83

Scale: 1"=200'  
Map Created On: 05/26/2005



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 6 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Dennis House

P1. Other Identifier: None

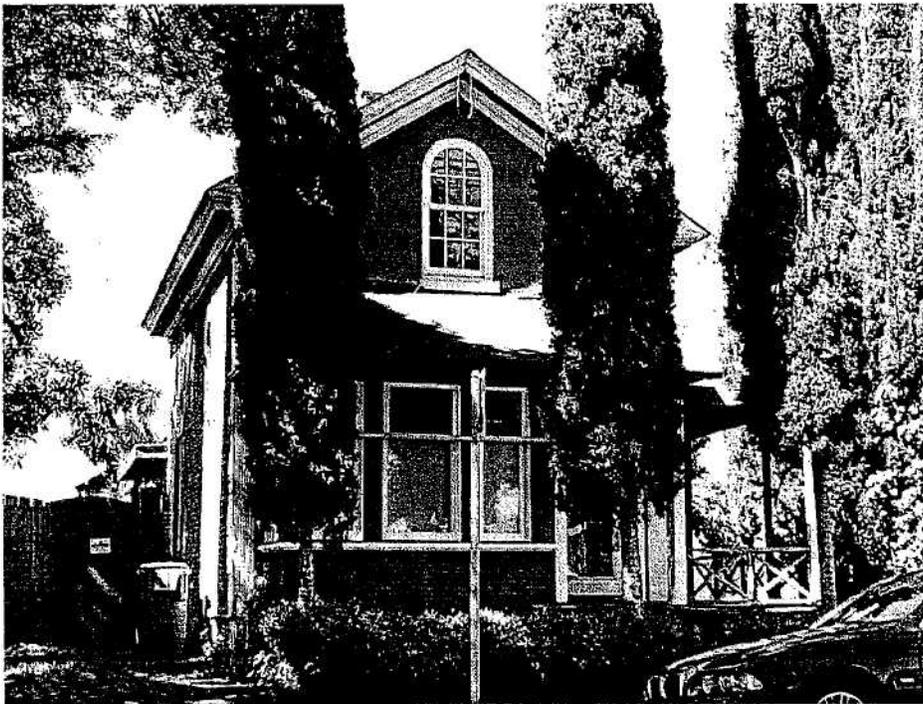
\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted \*a. County Santa Clara  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)  
\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Jose West Date 1980 photorevised T 7S; R 1E; Mount Diablo B.M.  
c. Address 237 North Autumn St. City San Jose Zip 95110  
d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S ; 599998 mE/ 4133198 mN  
e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)  
Assessor's Parcel Number: 259-29-021,  
west side of North Autumn St. between West Julian and West St. James Streets

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

This one and one-half story building is a rare brick residence built in 1870 in the Greek Revival Style within what was then the edge of the city limits in San Jose's First Ward district. An imposing volume of classical proportions, the main section of the house is a simple rectangle with front and rear gables. An arched window is set prominently within the front gable, and the original composition has an offset front door and fluted corner pilasters with capitals. Above the pilasters, the solid multi-layered soffit tops the side elevations, but is discontinuous across the front and rear elevations; a character-defining feature of this style. The brick walls rise the full height of the building without break other than for the multi-lite windows placed over heavy timber sills and capped with vertically placed bricks.  
(Continued on page 2, DPR523L)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2. Single family property

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



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

View looking west,  
April 2005

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:  
 Historic  Prehistoric  Both

1870, tax records/  
directories, 135 years old

\*P7. Owner and Address:

Earl Paden  
237 North Autumn St.  
San Jose, CA 95110

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

Franklin Maggi  
& Charlene Duval  
Archives & Architecture  
PO Box 1332  
San Jose CA 95109-1332

\*P9. Date Recorded: 5/16/05

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive

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

None

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

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) Dennis House

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Charlene Duval

\*Date 5/16/05

Continuation  Update

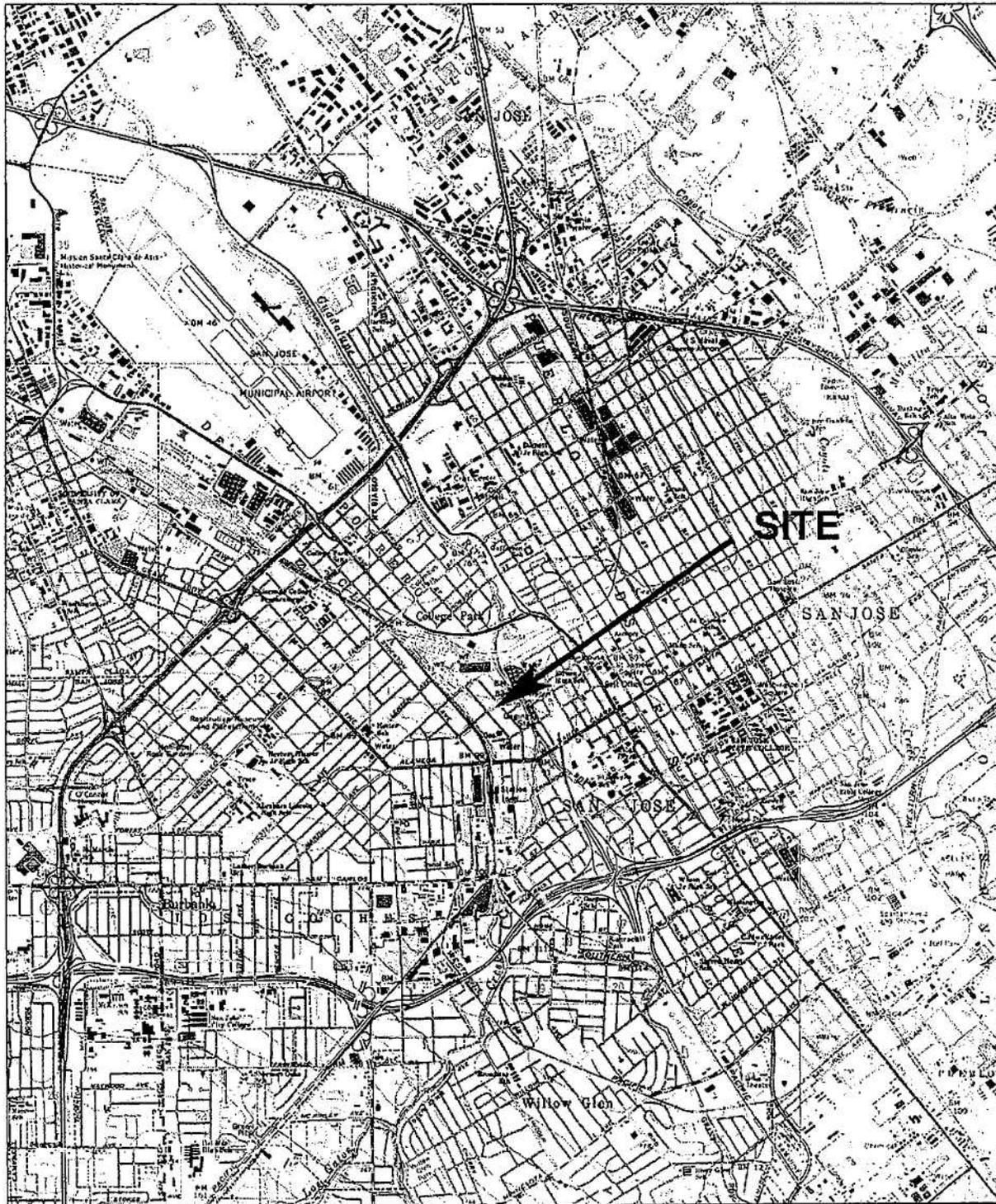
(Continued from previous page, DPR523a, P3a)

The original building as evidenced by the 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map appears to have had a full-width front wood porch and two one-story rooms to the rear of the larger volume that were narrower in width than the front of the house. One of these rooms was (and is) of brick construction, and the rear room was framed with wood and connected to an accessory shed to the northwest. Both of these rooms have a slight offset along the south elevation from the main volume.

Sometime after 1891, the front (hipped) porch was partially enclosed - expanding the front pallor, and the porch was expanded by wrapping it around the north side of the building to where the rear wood-framed room was expanding slightly to the north. As noted in the historical overview on page 5, this modification was mostly likely done to accommodate the inclusion of a small grocery store within the building and the new porch probably provided a secondary access to the residence. The present porch has brick steps (possibly original) and cross-board balustrades that are of an early style but of replacement construction. The porch roof is in deteriorated condition but appears to be associated with the 1890s remodeling. The windows have all been replaced with multi-lite double-hung wood windows as a part of the airport sound-proofing program coordinated by the City of San Jose. The new windows stylistically relate to the early windows but are not exact matches, and some of the brickwork was replaced to set the windows within the structure.

The interior of the building has some original features, such as the original fireplace and flue in the center of the large volume, and the entry hall has circa 1870s trimwork and stair railing. The front door, although not original, retains the original frame and sidelights that are visible from the inside, and a double-pane glass door has been added for sound-proofing.

To the rear of the building is a two-story barn that appears on the Sanborn Maps as early as 1884. A front wing has been added to the barn, and both this wing and portions of the barn have been clad with plywood. Other small additions to the rear and side of the house also have been clad with plywood indicating their contemporary nature. The house has a large sideyard with small ancillary structures and does not have a garage.



Map created with TOPO 8 © 2002 National Geographic ([www.nationalgeographic.com/topo](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/topo))

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

Primary #  
HRI #

Page 4 of 6

\*NRHP Status Code 35

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Dennis House

B1. Historic Name: Dennis House

B2. Common Name: None

B3. Original use: Single family residential B4. Present Use: Single family residential

\*B5. Architectural Style: Greek Revival

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

Constructed 1870. Barn constructed sometime between 1870 and 1884. Remodeled to accommodate the inclusion of a grocery store circa 1893. Additional additions at rear post 1909 (date unknown). Windows retrofitted per airport sound abatement program post 2000.

\*B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: n/a Original Location: n/a

\*B8. Related Features:

Barn at rear of property

B9a Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Probable Thomas Malloy

\*B10. Significance: Theme Architecture & Shelter Area Downtown San Jose frame

Period of Significance 1870-1909 Property Type Residential Applicable Criteria C (3)

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

The Dennis House at 237 Autumn Street, constructed between April and August 1870, is locally unique as one of the few remaining brick residences built in San Jose during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although the majority of commercial structures built in downtown San Jose during the later half of the 19th century were of brick, few residences used this building technology. The first brick residences were built at the southwest corner of North Fifth and East St. John Streets in the 1850s, but with the quick evolution of the logging industry in the 1850s, house construction focused mainly on redwood as the structural material of choice. These early brick houses tended to be associated with brick masons who built these houses for themselves.

The neighborhood along Autumn Street to the west of the Guadalupe River in the late 1860s and 1870s was largely ethnic Irish, later supplanted by Italian immigrants by the early 20th century. Some large estates were located on the east side of Autumn Street during the 19th century that included homes of prominent local residents such as J. J. Owen and B. H. Cottle, owners of the San Jose Mercury, F. E. Spencer, prominent attorney and later judge; and Edgar Pomeroy, a local businessman and government official (Guinn p. 638). However, most of the area evolved as a working class neighborhood - many laborers, teamsters, and tradesmen settled in the nearby blocks that worked at Froment's Mill to the south on Autumn Street.

(Continued on next page, DPR523L)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) None

\*B12. References:

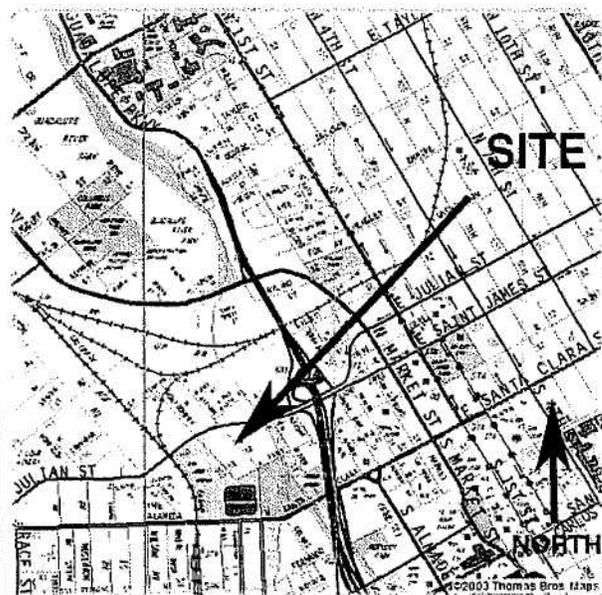
California Death Index, 1905-1997.  
San Jose City Block Books, 1871-1924.  
San Jose City Directories, 1870-1926.  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, San Jose, 1884-1915.  
San Jose Tax Assessment Rolls, 1866-1871.  
Santa Clara County Voter Registration, 1866-1892.  
United States Population Census, 1860-1930.

B13. Remarks: Proposed landmark nomination

\*B14. Evaluator: Franklin Maggi

\*Date of Evaluation: 5/16/05

(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) Dennis House

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Charlene Duval

\*Date 5/16/05

Continuation  Update

(Continued from previous page, DPR523b, B10)

The property located at 237 Autumn Street was part of a 336' by 124' parcel owned in 1868 by Thomas Malloy, an Irish immigrant and brick mason. By March 31, 1869, Malloy had sold a 50' by 116' parcel to fellow Irish immigrant, Joseph Dennis, but the property was a vacant lot at that point. In August 1870, the federal census of that year showed Joseph Dennis and his family living on this property. The household consisted of Joseph Dennis (also going by Dennison), age 35, a laborer; his wife Margaret, age 27, and infant daughter Belle, born in January 1870. Also living on the property were Owen Connolly, age 23, a tinsmith, and Mary Cronin, age 16, a house servant. Joseph Dennis was living in San Jose as early as 1867 as he was naturalized in July 1867. He married Margaret Conlee on February 9, 1869. Margaret died a few years later, however, as in January 1873, Joseph married again, this time to Sarah Moran. In 1878, Joseph and Sarah had a daughter named Teresa. City directories describe Joseph as a laborer and a teamster until 1892.

There is no directory entry for the Dennis family in 1893. In 1894, they reappear, with Joseph listed as a grocer operating at his home address on Autumn Street. It appears that the house must have undergone a level of remodeling in order for the building to accommodate the store as well as living quarters. When the federal census was taken in June 1900, the Dennis household consisted of Joseph, a widower, and his daughter Teresa, then age 22. Ellard Knapp, age 25, was listed as a lodger. Joseph Dennis operated the grocery in his house until his death in December 1900. Joseph's heir was his daughter Teresa who by then had married Ellard Knapp. His daughter Belle had previously married Frank Pancera. Ellard Knapp was a candymaker and he and Teresa made the Dennis house their home until Ellard's death in 1907. Teresa maintained ownership of the house until at least 1909, but it was subsequently used as a rental as were most of the houses in the Autumn Street neighborhood by this time.

None of the early brick residences from the 1850s remain extant. It is very likely the Dennis House was constructed by Thomas Malloy, the previous owner of the property. Malloy was naturalized in July 1867, at the nearly the same time as Joseph Dennis. The Malloy family remained residents nearby at 199 Autumn Street until at least the end of the 19th century.

**Integrity:**

The property maintains integrity to many of the National Register's seven aspects of integrity. It maintains its location, long-term historic setting, feeling, and associations with the early development of the downtown frame area. The house has preserved the greater part of its integrity of design, workmanship, and materials although some of the rear of the structure has been modified with added space. The changes to the front of the building are part of the period of significance of the house as they were done by the original owner. The changes at the rear do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, but are not within public view. The residence is a distinctive representation of an early brick house of the Greek Revival Style in San José.

**Significance:**

Criteria A/1: Residential development of this area occurred piecemeal during the 19th century peaking in the late 1930s. The house is therefore not associated with a distinguishable pattern of neighborhood residential development. The property would therefore not be eligible for the National Register under Criterion A or the California Register under Criterion 1.

Criteria B/2: The Dennis House is associated with the family of Joseph Dennis until at least 1909. Neither Dennis, members of his family, or later tenants are known for contributions to the community. The property would therefore not be eligible for the National Register under Criterion B or the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criteria C/3: Based on an assessment of the architectural qualities of the house as a rare and distinctive local example of an 1870 Gothic Revival brick house, it appears to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3, as the building is a significant and distinguishable entity in the context of mid-to-late nineteenth-century residential architecture in San Jose. The integrity has only been slightly compromised with contemporary changes that are inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Due to the distinctive nature of the building, it appears to qualify for the National Register under Criterion C and the California Register under Criterion 3. It also therefore appears eligible for listing as a local historic landmark.

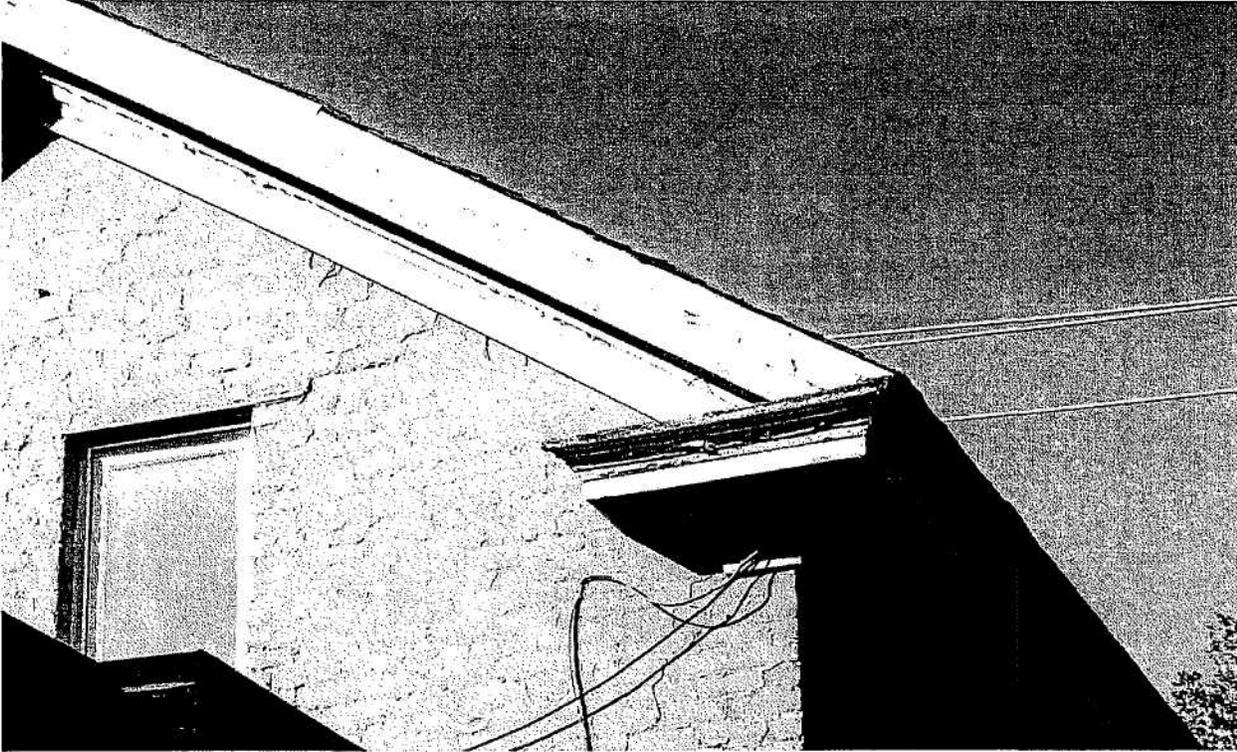
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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Dennis House

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Charlene Duval

\*Date 5/16/05

Continuation  Update



Rear upper elevation, viewed looking northeast



Barn at rear of property, viewed looking west