COUNCIL AGENDA: 10-21-08
ITEM: 2.5

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Joseph Horwedel

SUBJECT: **SEE BELOW**

DATE: September 29, 2008

Approved Deanna Santana

Date 10/1/08

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3
SNI: University

SUBJECT: HL08-175. HISTORIC LANDMARK INITIATION FOR THE SOMERS HOUSE LOCATED AT 675 S. SIXTH STREET.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Staff recommends that the City Council:

a. Adopt a resolution to initiate proceedings to consider the single-family house located at 675 S. Sixth Street as a landmark of special historic, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historic nature.

b. Refer the matter back to the Historic Landmarks Commission for its consideration at a public hearing, report and recommendation.

c. Adopt a resolution setting a public hearing on Tuesday, December 2, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. for Council consideration of City Landmark designation of the structure noted above.

OUTCOME

Initiation of the Historic Landmark Designation by the City Council begins the process for 1) referral to the Historic Landmarks Commission for report and recommendation, and 2) a subsequent public hearing for Council action on the designation of the Historic Landmark.

BACKGROUND

In August 2008, the single-family house, located at 675 S. Sixth Street, was evaluated in a Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form and historic evaluation sheet. The evaluation was prepared by qualified historical consultants Archives and Architecture. The DPR form (see attached) for the property states that the house meets the criteria for City Landmark designation under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, appears eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and for the National Register of Historic Places as part of a district. The building owners, Jason K. Rowan and Batsirai M. Mutasa, submitted an application for City

Landmark designation of the house in September 2008, using the research documented in the DPR form.

The designation would allow the owner to apply for property tax reduction under the Mills Act and for exemption from the Building and Structure construction tax and the Commercial-Residential-Mobile Home Park (CRMP) building tax for work done in conformance with approved HP permits. The owner has submitted an application for a Mills Act contract.

ANALYSIS

The following summary is based on the historical evaluation prepared for the property by Archives and Architecture. Please refer to the attached DPR evaluation form for a more detailed discussion and analysis of the building.

This two-story house, constructed in 1905, is set within the Reed City Landmark Historic District. The residential property, historically known as the Somers House, has special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value to the community for its contribution to the setting of the Reed City Landmark Historic District; and for the distinctive design of the residence, which is an excellent example of the eclectic work of the architectural firm of Wolfe & McKenzie.

Consistent with the National Register of Historic Places eligibility findings, the building appears to qualify 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*, as a distinctive building within the Reed Historic District; *Criterion (6) as an embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen*, exemplifying excellent quality of form and composition of Craftsman-style architecture; and *Criterion (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* , identified as the work of the architectural firm of Wolfe & McKenzie.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

As noted in the Recommendation section on the first page of this memorandum, once the process for Landmark designation has been initiated, the matter is then referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission for its consideration at a public hearing, followed by report and recommendation back to Council. Staff will schedule a public hearing for Tuesday, December 2, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. for Council consideration of City Landmark designation of the house.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

In conformance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Title 13.48 of the San José Municipal Code, when the nomination documentation is complete, the city council, by resolution, shall initiate the procedure for the designation of a landmark so nominated. Without designation, the structure would remain subject to review of a Historic Preservation Permit reviewed by the

Historic Landmarks Commission because the subject building is located within a City Landmark Historic District.

Pros: This alternative would not appear to confer any benefits, from a public policy perspective.

Cons: A decision not to designate the building in accordance with its eligibility as a City Landmark Structure would not further the objectives of the General Plan policies and the Historic Preservation Ordinance to promote and enhance the preservation of historically and architecturally significant sites and structures (see Fiscal/Policy Alignment section, below).

Reason for not recommending: On the basis of the evaluation prepared by qualified historical consultants, the house has been determined to meet the eligibility requirements for designation as a City Landmark Structure. To follow through with formal designation process as proposed would promote the General Plan and Municipal Code objectives relative to historic preservation.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

☐ **Criterion 1**: Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to $1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**

☐ **Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**

☐ **Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

Although this item does not meet any of the above criteria, staff has followed and will continue to follow Council Policy 6-30: Public Outreach Policy. Notices of the applications have been posted at the site and staff has been available to answer questions. Every designation of a proposed landmark, shall be considered by the Historic Landmarks Commission at a public hearing within ninety days from the date of City Council initiation. The Historic Landmarks Commission shall report to City Council within thirty days after the close of the public hearing on the nomination and no later than one hundred twenty days from initiation. Public hearing notices for the Historic Landmarks Commission and City Council hearings will be published in a local newspaper, and mailed to all property owners and tenants within at least 500 feet of the subject site. Information about the proposed project and the associated public hearings has been made available through the Planning Division web site and will continue to be available while the proposed designation remains pending.

COORDINATION

Preparation of the City Council resolution to initiate proceedings has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

This project is consistent with applicable General Plan policies. Approval of the City Landmark Designation for this structure would further the San Jose 2020 General Plan *Urban Conservation/Preservation* Major Strategy, which states that, at a strategic level, preservation activities contribute visual evidence to a sense of community. In particular, the *Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Resources (HACR) Policy No. 11* states that the City should use the Area of Historic Sensitivity overlay and the City Landmark designation process of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to promote and enhance the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable.

BUDGET REFERENCE

Not applicable.

CEQA

Not a project.

Akoni Danielsen
for JOSEPH HORWEDEL, DIRECTOR
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

For questions please contact Sally Zarnowitz, Historic Preservation Officer, at 535-7834.

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

 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Somers 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 675 South Sixth St. City San Jose Zip 95112
d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S; 599421mE/ 4131918mN
e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
Assessor's Parcel Number: 472-25-075,
west side of South Sixth Street north of Margaret Street.

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

This two-story house illustrates, through its form and detailing, an excellent residential design from the beginning of the twentieth century by prominent architects Frank Wolfe and Charles McKenzie. It is an eclectic composition that includes Prairie, Craftsman, and Neoclassical features and forms. Wolfe & McKenzie used a variety of elements to create a distinctive, unified design. The house has been recognized as a contributor to Reed City Landmark Historic District, a neighborhood significant for its patterns of development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that encompasses a variety of historic residences. The property is surrounded by much of its historic residential setting, including the surrounding properties of a similar scale and setback, mature trees and other landscaping, and adjacent houses of similar age, scale, and design.

(Continued on page 2, DPR523L)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3. Multifamily property

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

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

View facing northwest from front sidewalk, Aug., 2008.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age & Sources:
☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

1905, news articles, 103 years old.

*P7. Owner and Address:

Jason K. Rowan
& Batsirai M. Mutasa
675 South Sixth St.
San Jose, CA 95112

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)
F. Maggi & L. Dill
Archives & Architecture
PO Box 1332
San Jose CA 95109-1332

*P9. Date Recorded: 8/29/2008

*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)

(Continued from page 1, DPR523a, P3a)
The immediate setting for the house includes a moderately sized front yard facing South Sixth Street (nominally east); the yard is raised above the sidewalk by concrete retaining wall. The wide planting strips at the sidewalk include landscaping and large street trees that overhang the front of the house. The front entrance is accessed by a wide concrete walkway, with concrete steps and piers at the retaining wall. A narrow setback follows the south side of the house; a recent brick walkway follows the base of the wall. The north setback is slightly wider, with a pathway that passes around a projecting side wing. The rear yard includes a detached ancillary building near the southwest corner of the property as well as landscaping, walkways, and play structures.

The proportions of the two-story house are intentionally blocky and imposing, accentuated by square bay windows cantilevered at the second-floor corners and by heavy masonry posts at the recessed front porch. The floor plan is roughly rectangular, with some complexity along the north side wall and rear elevation. The upper floor is strongly symmetrical while the first floor has a deep, asymmetrical recessed porch. The porch is roughly "L" shaped, made asymmetrical by a square bay window that projects into its area. The pony wall provides a solid base for the house, punctuated by basement windows. The main roof is a gabled hip at the front; the hipped portion extends into square corners with lower eaves at the front bay windows. The center gable has heavy eaves wrapped in shingles; a Shingle-style detail. On the north side of the house is a distinctive cast-stone chimney. To the rear of the chimney, the plan narrows into a two-story wing with a hipped roof. The front corner of the wing is cantilevered; at the rear corner of the house, the roof steps down into a one-story hip that extends full-width across the rear elevation. An enclosed second-story sunroom, also with a hipped roof, stretches most of the width of the rear façade. The lower level at the rear also has a hipped roof. The south side elevation is relatively simple; it is primarily two stories with a lower roofline at the rear wing; the extended eaves indicate the rear addition.

Typical of the early twentieth century, the deep eaves are supported by exposed rafter tails and flat-board sheathing; the tails are trimmed to support integral metal gutters in an ogee shape. The wide rake eaves at the front façade are wrapped in shingles that continue onto the face of the gable end. The roof is covered with composition shingles. The walls are clad in tri-bevel horizontal wood siding that meets at 3/4-round corner trim. Separating the upper and lower walls is a wide bellyband that serves also as the porch beams and an edge piece at the cantilevered bay windows. The house is raised above a full basement, on a concrete foundation, and a water table wraps the house on most sides at the top of the pony wall.

Entry is through a distinctive recessed porch that features heavy cast-stone pillars. The porch floors are wood, and the ceiling is beaded-board. The front steps are wood, flanked by cast-stone walls. The front entry door has distinctive paneling; the center viewing lite is edged by a narrow band of egg-and-dart moldings and accented by a narrow raised trim that extends at the corners with a motif that mimics the floor plan of the house.

The original fenestration consists of a variety of wood window units, including asymmetrical single-hung windows with wide, short, multi-lite (20-lite) upper sash and large, 1-lite lower sash. The horizontal mullion includes a heavy shaped sill for the upper sash. At the front elevation is a wide, high focal window with a 7x2 pattern of fixed lites. Other windows include 1/1 single-hung windows, 1/1 double-hung windows, and a ribbon of 6/6 double-hung windows at the rear second-story addition. At the basement are recent 1-lite awning windows. The original windows are surrounded with flat-board casings trimmed by architrave moldings.

The front façade is symmetrical at the upper floor. The two corner bay windows are cantilevered on a dense row of carved corbels, a distinctive detail found on many design of architects Wolfe & McKenzie. A multi-lite single-hung window faces each direction at the corner bay windows. Between the bays, on the front, are a pair of smaller 1/1 single-hung windows set above a decorative balcony. The balcony consists of solid corners with a baluster of cross rails in a traditional Classical pattern ("clathri"); the balcony is supported on four cantilevered beams that terminate in scroll-shaped corbels with a Classical leaf form within the scroll pattern. *(Continued on next page)*

(Continued from previous page)
The front gable has wide eaves that are wrapped in shingles that continue onto the face of the gable end; there is an attic ventilation window centered within the gable end. The asymmetrical porch is recessed at the southeast corner of the house. It extends deeply along the south side of the house, and formerly extended farther; a portion of this side wall has been enclosed. Within the porch area, the house extends into a corner bay window, similar to the upper bays. The front door faces to the side. The northeast corner of the house is expressed in façade as a large discrete, volume; it enclosed the stairway. A high, wide fixed focal window punctuates the front walls.

The north side elevation includes a front wall plane that steps outward in plan into a two-story area near the rear corner. The cast-stone chimney is roughly centered in the front portion, behind the front corner bay. At the first floor, the chimney is flanked by a pair of 6/1 double-hung windows; one is set below the balcony. At the second story, there is one 1/1 double-hung window to the front, and a cantilevered second-story balcony to the rear. The balcony is supported on deep beams that terminate in carved corbels, similar to the bay windows. At the rear wing, there is a 1/1 double-hung window at each level, approximately aligned, near the front corner of the volume.

The south side façade features a prominent focal window approximately centered in the first floor wall. It is a tripartite unit, with a center 4x2/1 single-hung window flanked by a pair of 2x2/1 single-hung windows. To the front of this window is the original front porch; a section of the porch has been enclosed between two of the porch pillars, with siding and a high, multi-lite fixed window, similar to the front focal window. At the second story is the corner bay window at the front, an individual 1/1 double-hung window, and a paired 1/1 unit near the rear. At the rear corner, the wall steps in at a one-story rear addition or former porch that has been enclosed. The south-side wall of this area has vertical beaded-board siding. A second-story addition projects from the roof of the main house; its fenestration, including facing south, consists of ribbons of 6/6 double-hung windows separated by posts.

The rear façade includes some new elements along with its original features. At the first floor is a small addition or enclosed porch; it features a ribbon of five 1/1 windows around a rear door, connected by continuous trim. The door opens onto a wood stoop. At the second floor is the wide addition that is a recent interpretation of a sleeping porch. The addition is slightly "L" shaped; it steps back at the northwest corner, following the original roof plan. At the rearmost wall are five 6/6 windows separated by posts; the ribbon of windows wraps onto both sides of the addition and continues onto the rear face of the more shallow portion of the addition. At the original second-story rear wall, near the northwest corner of the house, is an individual 1/1 window. At the original first level rear wall is a door and another 1/1 unit. This five-panel door opens onto a second rear stoop.

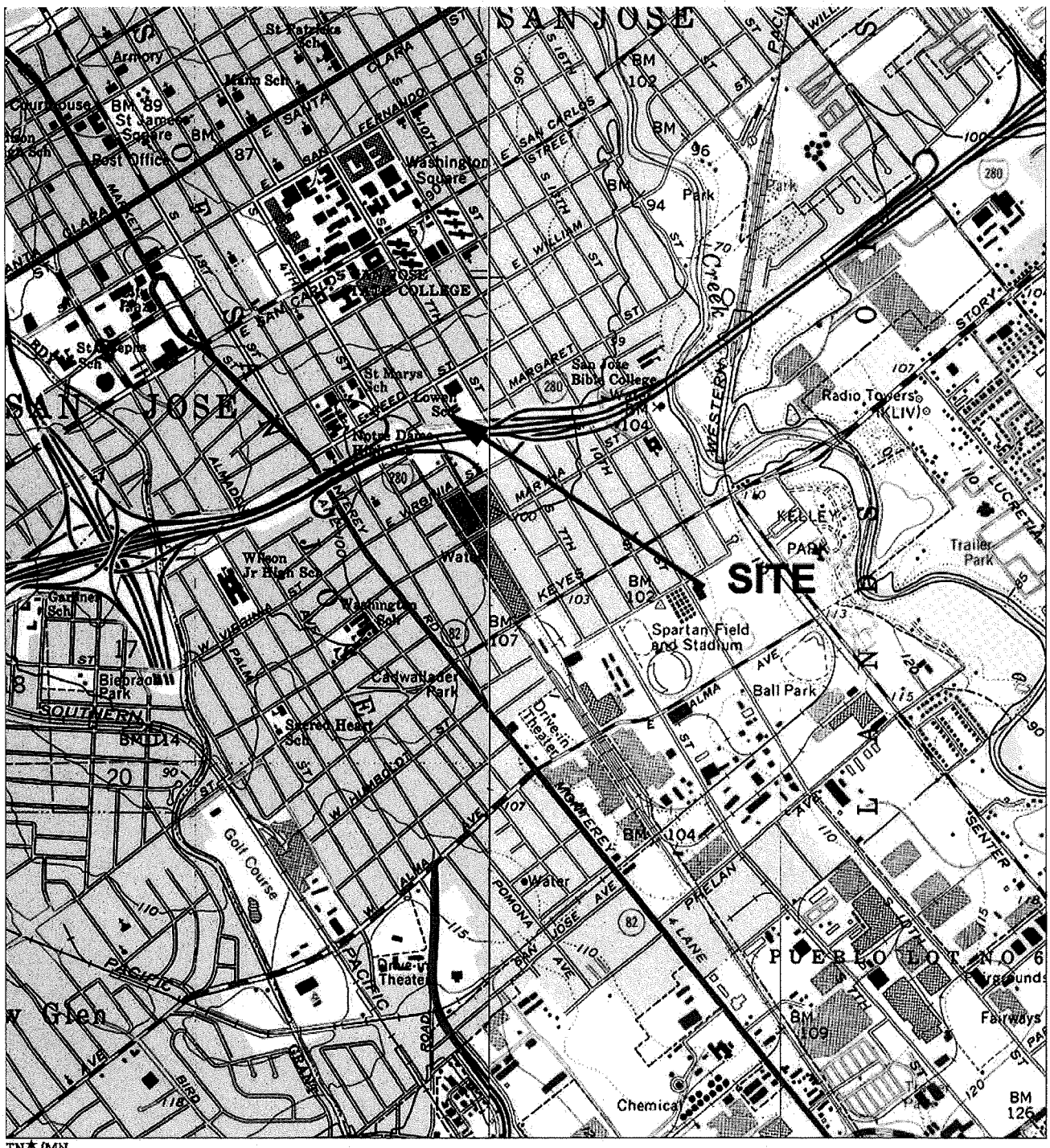
The interiors include many original features that are integrated into the overall character of the house, including the fireplace and surround, built-in inglenooks, columns in the front room, wood flooring, plaster walls and ceilings ceiling beams, buffet with leaded glass doors, dining room board-and-batten wainscoting and plate rail, staircase and newel post, pocket doors, and built-in cabinets in the front room. The kitchen has been remodeled over time. A 1920s light fixture is associated with the third owner of the house, who owned a lighting studio.

The two-story detached accessory structure represents a rehabilitated and slightly altered building from the early twentieth century. It includes a two-car garage with a somewhat complex gabled roof and rectangular footprint. Its form includes a wide gabled roof above the main portion of the building; this extends into a narrow side gable, similar to a dormer, to the north, above a full-width one-story wing. The one-story portion has a shed roof. The building has exposed rafter tails, vertical board-and-batten siding, and composition shingle roofing. The windows are new wood 6/1 double-hung units with flat-board trim. They are placed generally symmetrically around the perimeter of the outbuilding, in pairs and individually.

State of California – The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION **LOCATION MAP**	Primary # HRI # Trinomial

 ***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) Somers House

***Map Name:** USGS San Jose West/East Composite ***Scale:** n.t.s. ***Date of Map:** 1980 photorevised



Map created with TOPO!® ©2003 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

 * Required information

***NRHP Status Code** 3S

***Resource Name or #** (Assigned by recorder) Somers House

B1. Historic Name: Hermann Moser House

B2. Common Name: None

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

***B5. Architectural Style:** Craftsman

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

Constructed 1905. Garage/second dwelling unit constructed by 1910. Rear addition constructed at unknown time. Garage expanded and rehabilitated per a 2001 permit (SP01-070).

***B7. Moved?** ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ **Unknown Date:** N/a **Original Location:** N/a

***B8. Related Features:**

Ancillary building, constructed as a garage and second unit by 1910.

B9a Architect: Wolfe & McKenzie b. Builder: R. R. Wells and W. A. Scott

***B10. Significance: Theme** Architecture and Shelter **Area** Reed Historic District / University SNI

Period of Significance 1905 **Property Type** Residential **Applicable Criteria** A (1), (2), C (3)

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

This large single-family residence was constructed in 1905 for Hermann Moser on portions of Lots 12 and 13 of Block 38 of the Reed Addition to the City of San Jose. San Jose's Original Survey had been platted in 1847, and extended from about Market to Eleventh Streets and from Julian to Reed Streets. In the late 1840s, James Fraser and Margaret Reed had surveyed their large property to the south of the Original Survey, and this Addition was then included in the Original City established when California became a state.

In this neighborhood south of the San Jose Normal School, the predecessor of San Jose State University, early residential development occurred over an extended period of time, with most construction of single family-homes occurring from 1870 to 1935. A boom period from the late 1880s through the early 1890s, and then again at the turn of the century, saw the introduction of a number of large homes in the blocks south of the Normal School, as the area became one of San Jose's preferred residential neighborhoods. South Fifth and South Sixth Streets from East San Carlos to Margaret Streets had the greatest concentration of these houses, which today forms the nucleus of the Reed City Landmark Historic District.

(Continued on next page, DPR523L)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3. Multi-family property

***B12. References:**

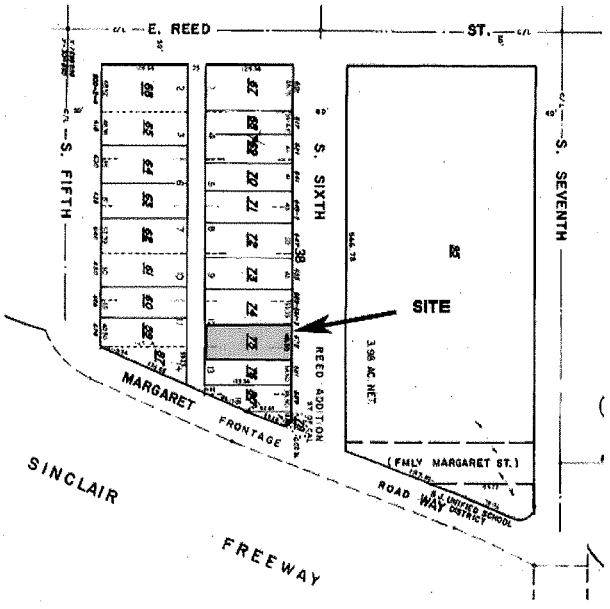
Greathead, S. *Story of an Inspiring Past*, 1928.
King, T. San Jose Historic Property Survey, 1973.
San Jose Evening News, Cottage on Sixth, *6/21/1905*.
San Jose Mercury Herald, 12/10/1905, 7/19/1916, 12/2/1917, 10/18/1919, 10/29/1918, 6/21/1921, 9/29/1922.
Santa Clara County, deeds.
U.S. Federal Population Census, 1880-1930.

B13. Remarks: Proposed landmark nomination

***B14. Evaluator:** Franklin Maggi

***Date of Evaluation:** Aug. 29, 2008

(This space reserved for official comments.)



(Continued from previous page, DPR523b, B10)
The east half of Block 38 along South Sixth Street is located across from Lowell School, which was originally known as the Reed or Third Ward School. The lot configuration of Block 38 established at the time of the survey was not followed when development occurred during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather, new lots were created by deed; and those lots were smaller than the quarter-acre lots originally envisioned.

Little development occurred in Reeds Addition in the second half of the nineteenth century, with most residential development located west of South Third Street. By 1901, five houses had been recently constructed on Block 38, with two of those facing South Sixth Street. As the local economy gained strength in the years just prior to the 1906 Earthquake, architects Wolfe & McKenzie established their prominence, becoming one of the most prolific, as well as innovative, architectural firms locally. Block 38 of Reeds Addition has the highest concentration of this firm's design work within the city, and remains today as an intact testament to their creative impact on early San Jose. The subject house was designed by the firm and built in 1905 for Hermann Moser.

Hermann Moser and his wife Miriam were well known San Jose residents who operated a barber shop and hair salon in the downtown on East Santa Clara Street. Hermann was born in 1846 in Pennsylvania and Miriam in 1856 in Georgia. Both were children of immigrants from Prussia (Germany). They married in 1874, and in San Jose raised four children (Milton, Bertha, Viola, and Hilda). In August of 1904 they acquired the subject property from E. C. and Helen Deans Haskins (Deeds 282:164). They had architects Wolfe & McKenzie design the subject house, and by June of 1905 had contracted with R. R. Wills and W. A. Scott to build the house at a cost of $3118. The local society pages noted that by December 10, of 1905 they had moved into the house with their daughter Viola and they appear as residents at 675 South Sixth St. in the 1906/1907 city directory. It is not known if the Mosers built the house as a speculative venture or if the 1906 Earthquake affected their decision to relocate, but within a year they moved away from San Jose. By the end of 1907 Hermann and Miriam had moved and were living with their son Milton and his family in San Francisco. The Mosers remained in San Francisco, Hermann working as an insurance salesman and later collection agent. It could not be determined how long the Mosers owned the subject property, but by 1908 the house was occupied by Dr. Arthur Thomas McGinty, his wife Mary, and their two children, Arthur and Marcella. The McGintys eventually acquired the house, but, following Mary's death during the Spanish Flu Pandemic in late 1918, Dr. McGinty sold the house to Harriet Somers.

Harriet L. Somers (1877-1972) was a business woman and the widow of Frank (Francis) J. Somers, a local electrical contractor and supplier. Frank had gone into business as a contractor in the late 1890s and in 1903 established Century Electric Company. In 1907 he married Harriet Quilty, and they lived at 75 Viola Ave. where they raised three sons (Frank, William, and John). In the years just before World War I, Frank J. Somers had established himself as an important community leader, heading the San Jose Merchants Association, as well as serving as President of the California Electrical Contractors Association. Following his death in October of 1919, Harriet took over the company and promoted Eugene Denoit as Manager, and placed advertisements in the local newspaper to reassure her clients about the continued existence of the company. Harriet Somers continued to operate Century Electric Company for at least 10 more years. Harriet was a graduate of San Jose Normal School (class of 1898), and had taught in Fresno and San Jose prior to her marriage. In her final year at the Normal School, she was the first editor-in-chief of the monthly student magazine *Normal Pennant*, and was also the first to hold the position of student president. In the early 1920s, her personal interest in the plight of destitute children became well known, and the local newspapers often cited her organizational work in the founding and establishment of the Community Chest. In 1921 she was a founding Vice President of the Childrens Aid Society, and helped establish the Community Shop, a downtown used clothing store for those in need.

Harriet Somers remained resident/owner of the subject house until at least 1970. She had by then taken on renters, and subsequent owners also rented out rooms, mainly to students. During the early 1970s a series of renters occupied the house until acquired by Robert and Barbara Nyden. Robert Nyden was an Engineer with Philco-Ford. Barbara Nyden remained owner of the property until purchased in 2000 by the current owners.

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SURVEY STATUS

The property at 675 South Sixth St. was first identified for its architectural distinction in 1973 within the King Survey, San Jose's first reconnaissance of historic properties. A more intensive-level survey in the late 1970s by Urban/Rural Conservation included an evaluation that the property was a "Contributing Site." In 2002, as a part of the *East Downtown Frame Historic Resources Survey*, Architectural Resources Group identified the property as being individually eligible for both the National Register and as a local City landmark structure. As a part of the 2005 *Historic District Study, South Campus Neighborhood*, Archives & Architecture identified that the property was eligible for listing as a City Landmark. The property is presently a Contributing Structure to the Reed City Landmark Historic District.

Integrity and character-defining features:

The property maintains most of its historic integrity as per the National Register's seven aspects of integrity. The house maintains its original location on South Sixth Street, in the historically significant Reed City Historic Landmark District. The property is surrounded by a traditional residential setting immediately south of downtown San José, including surrounding properties of a similar scale and setback and adjacent houses of similar age, scale, and design The subject property retains its early-twentieth-century residential scale and feeling and continues, through its massing and detailing, to illustrate its associations with the architectural work of the locally significant firm of Wolfe & McKenzie. This building has a distinctive character and composition that is expressed through its preserved materials, workmanship, and eclectic design.

EVALUATION

This house, within the now Reed City Landmark Historic District, sits in a mature residential area of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century residences. This area possesses a significant concentration of houses that are unified by their aesthetically pleasing plans and characters, and the immediate area is considered eligible for the National Register as a district. The Somers House is distinctive within this setting; its Craftsman style has artist merit due to the unique implementation of details that embellish the design. The design is the work of Wolfe & McKenzie, master architects of that period. The building is distinguished among local residential architecture from the period of *Horticultural Expansion*. The property appears to be eligible for both the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion C and (3) respectively.

The families associated historically with this house, Hermann and Miriam Moser, Arthur and Mary McGinty, and Harriet Somers, are well-known personages during their times. Among them, Harriet Somers has some significance, as a woman who ran a major electrical contracting and supplier company for ten years, and who was recognized for her involvement in the 1920s in social issues involving destitute children. When more is learned about Harriet Somers contributions, the property might individually appear eligible for the National and California Registers due to its long-term association with her.

The City of San Jose has recognized the historic context within the Reed Historic District. A smaller area within the historic district along South Fifth and Sixth Streets also appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a district. This property contributes to both the existing designated district and the potential smaller district, and would thereof qualify for eligibility for the National or California registers under Criterion A and (1).

Under the definition for historical significance within the City of San Jose Historic Preservation Ordinance, the house clearly has historic, architectural, and aesthetic value of an historical nature. Its quality derives from its distinguished architecture due to its style and design, and for its association with Harriet Somers. It appears eligible for City Landmark status.

Front façade from sidewalk, viewed facing west.

Detail view of front façade, viewed facing west.

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Leslie Dill *Date 8/29/2008 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

Detail view of front entry door, viewed facing west.

South façade at wrap-around porch, viewed facing west.

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Leslie Dill *Date 8/29/2008 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

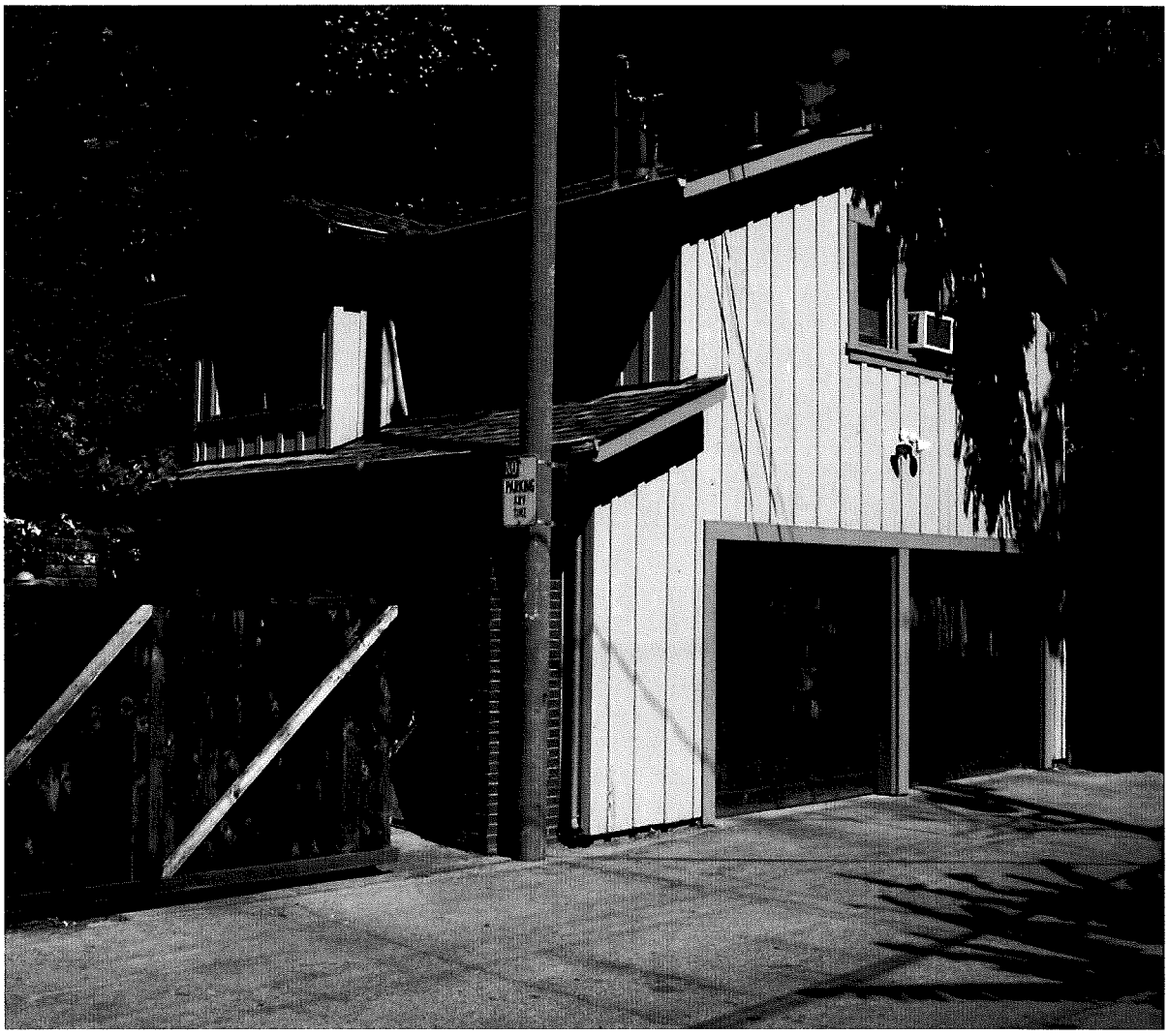
Detail view of second-story cantilevered corner bay window, viewed facing southwest.

Rear façade, viewed facing east.

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Leslie Dill *Date 8/29/2008 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

Detail view of rear northwest corner, viewed facing east.

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi & Leslie Dill *Date 8/29/2008 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update



Garage and ancillary unit, viewed from rear alley, facing east.

HISTORIC EVALUATION SHEET

Historic Resource Name: Somers House - 675 South Sixth St.

A. VISUAL QUALITY / DESIGN	Justification	E	VG	G	FP
1. EXTERIOR	Excellent quality of form, composition	x			
2. STYLE	Excellent example few survive	x			
3. DESIGNER	Designer of primary importance	x			
4. CONSTRUCTION	Of no particular interest				x
5. SUPPORTIVE ELEMENTS	Second unit / garage by 1915			x	

B. HISTORY / ASSOCIATION		E	VG	G	FP
6. PERSON / ORGANIZATION	Harriet Somers - bus. owner, social activist		x		
7. EVENT	None				x
8. PATTERNS	Primary patterns intimately connected	x			
9. AGE	1905		x		

C. ENVIRONMENTAL / CONTEXT		E	VG	G	FP
10. CONTINUITY	Maintains character		x		
11. SETTING	Maintains dominant character		x		
12. FAMILIARITY	Familiar to neighborhood			x	

D. INTEGRITY		E	VG	G	FP
13. CONDITION	Excellent condition	x			
14. EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS	Minor alterations		x		
15. STRUCTURAL REMOVALS	No removals except at ancillary bldg.	x			
16. SITE	Not moved	x			

E. REVERSIBILITY	E	VG	G	FP
17. EXTERIOR	x			

F. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS / BONUS POINTS		E	VG	G	FP
18. INTERIOR / VISUAL	Very good		x		
19. INTERIOR / HISTORY	Good			x	
20. INTERIOR ALTERATIONS	Changes but still recognizeable		x		
21. REVERSIBILITY / INTER.	2/3s or more exists.		x		
22. NATIONAL OR CALIF. REG	Appears eligible		x		

REVIEWED BY: Franklin Maggi **DATE:** 08/27/07

EVALUATION TALLY SHEET

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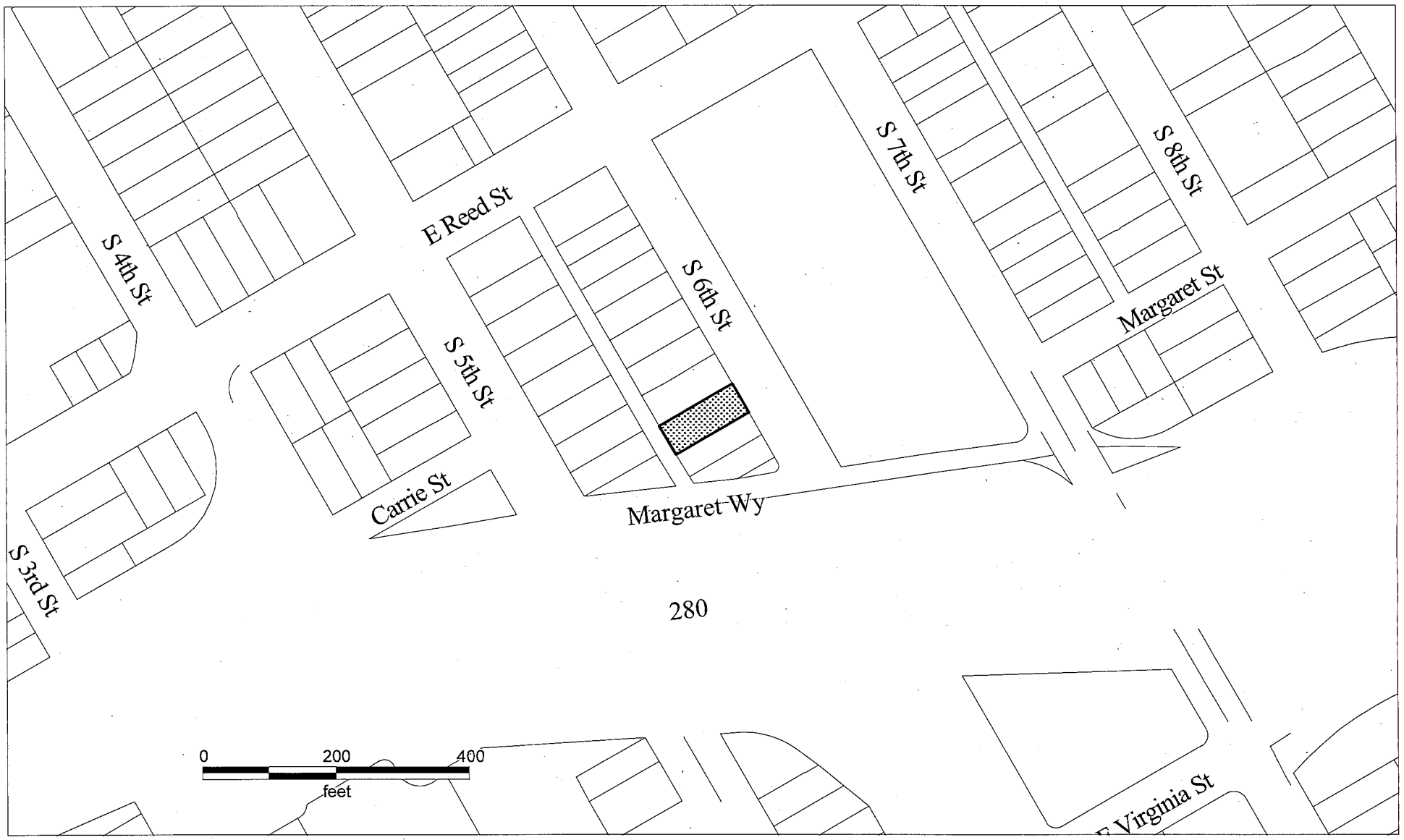
	E	VG	G	FP	Value		Value	Sub-total	Cumulative sub-total
A. VISUAL QUALITY / DESIGN									
1. EXTERIOR	I6	12	6	0	16				
2. STYLE	10	8	4	0	10				
3. DESIGNER	6	4	2	0	6				
4. CONSTRUCTION	10	8	4	0	0				
5. SUPPORTIVE ELEMENTS	8	6	3	0	3			35	
B. HISTORY / ASSOCIATION	E	VG	G	FP					
6. PERSON / ORGANIZATION	20	15	7	0	15				
7. EVENT	20	15	7	0	0				
8. PATTERNS	12	9	5	0	12				
9. AGE	8	6	3	0	6			33	
C. ENVIRONMENTAL / CONTEXT	E	VG	G	FP					
10. CONTINUITY	8	6	3	0	6				
11. SETTING	6	4	2	0	4				
12. FAMILIARITY	10	8	4	0	4			14	82
	(SUM OF A+C) =				49				
D. INTEGRITY	E	VG	G	FP					
13. CONDITION	.00	.03	.05	.10	0	x	82	0.0	
14. EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS	.00	.05	.10	.20	0.05	x	49	2.5	
	.00	.03	.05	.10	0.03	x	33	1.0	
I5. STRUCTURAL REMOVALS	.00	.20	.30	.40	0	x	49	0.0	
	.00	.I0	.20	.40	0	x	33	0.0	
I6. SITE	.00	.10	.20	.40	0	x	33	0.0	
								3.4	
ADJUSTED SUB-TOTAL: (Preliminary total minus Integrity Deductions)									78.56
E. REVERSIBILITY	E	VG	G	FP					
I7. EXTERIOR	3	3	2	2	3				81.56
F. ADD'L CONSIDERATIONS/BONUS POINTS	E	VG	G	FP					
18. INTERIOR / VISUAL	3	3	I	0	3				
19. INTERIOR / HISTORY	3	3	1	0	1				
20. INTERIOR ALTERATIONS	4	4	2	0	4				
21. REVERSIBILITY / INTERIOR	4	4	2	0	4				
22. NATIONAL / CALIFORNIA REGISTER	20	15	10	0	15			27	
EVALUATION TOTAL: (Adjusted subtotal plus Bonus Points)									I08.56



Location Map

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Map Created On:
9/26/2008

Noticing Radius: 500 Ft

Prepared by the Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement
City of San Jose, California

Joseph Horwedel, Director

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District: 3
Quad: 83

CITY OF
SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY