

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 7 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) John C. Morrill House

P1. Other Identifier: Briar Rose Inn

\*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 Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted \*a. County Santa Clara  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 T7S; R1E; Mt. Diablo B.M.

c. Address 897 Jackson St. Zip 95112

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10s; 598971 mE/ 4135149 mN

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

Assessor's Parcel Number: 249-27-030,  
northwest corner of Jackson and 19th Streets

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

Located on the northwest corner of East Jackson and North 19th Streets, the historic Morrill House has a distinguished presence in San José's Northside neighborhood. The house reflects early land use within the original city limits; this area was agricultural prior to development of the predominantly twentieth-century residential district that exists today. Surrounding this house are mostly pre-World War II single-family residences with a sprinkling of some newer houses. The subject property is presently configured larger than the surrounding parcels, and showcases the large Stick/Eastlake-style Victorian house that faces Jackson Street (south). The landscaping has some mature planting, including a large oak tree to the east. The property includes many small outbuildings that were added in recent times to enhance the historic appearance of the house.

(Continued on page 4, 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 from south, 3/4/05

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

\*P7. Owner and Address:

1887, 118 years, San Jose  
Mercury 1/1/1888.

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and  
Eric Thacker & Philip Ho  
897 Jackson St.  
San Jose, CA 95112

address)  
F. Maggi, B. Montgomery & L. Dill  
Archives & Architecture  
PO Box 1332, San Jose CA 95109

\*P9. Date Recorded: 3/4/05

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive

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

City of San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission and Department of City Planning. *Historic Resources Inventory*. Adopted August 1887, revised December 1998.

\*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)

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) John C. Morrill House

B1. Historic Name: John C. Morrill House

B2. Common Name: Briar Rose Inn

B3. Original use: Single-family residence B4. Present Use: Single-family residence

\*B5. Architectural Style: Stick/Eastlake

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

Constructed, 1887. Converted into duplex, 1927; back porches and new west bay window added in 1982.

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

\*B8. Related Features:

See Outbuildings and Structures on page 6

B9a Architect: unknown, possibly William Klinkert b. Builder: Unknown

\*B10. Significance: Theme Architecture and Shelter Area San Jose Northside

Period of Significance 1887-1895 Property Type Residential Applicable Criteria

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

The subject property was built in 1887 by John Calvin Morrill, a local pioneer who came to Santa Clara County in 1856. After 30 years farming 160 acres in Milpitas, he sold his ranch and moved to San Jose to begin a new business venture. Morrill became the president of the Garden City Lumber Company, and this house was his advertisement of the firm's work.

Morrill's house was built on a portion of Lots 267 and 268, in Block 24 of the Cook and Branham Addition, named for two members of the first American common council of San José, Grove C. Cook and Isaac Branham. By March 1871, this block, along with adjacent Block 30 to the east was owned by Cornelius Gooding Harrison, who was best known in his time as one of the founders of the First National Bank in San Jose, in 1874, and as the manager of the North Side Horse Railroad, a line that opened in 1875. It originated at First and St. John Streets and terminated at the rail line near Berryessa Road. Part of the route ran along 17th Street along the western edge of Harrison's property. This house was first listed on the Santa Clara County Inventory in 1975. It is currently listed on the city's historic resources inventory as Eligible for National Register. In 1986, previous owners nominated the property as a city historic landmark, but later withdrew the application. At that time, it was reported to have been Harrison's house, built in the 1870s. Based on city directory listings from the 1870s that indicate that Harrison's house was on the northeast side of 19th Street, it appears that Harrison's house was more likely the residence currently standing at 650 N. 19th St.

(Continued on page 5, DPR523L)

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

\*B12. References:

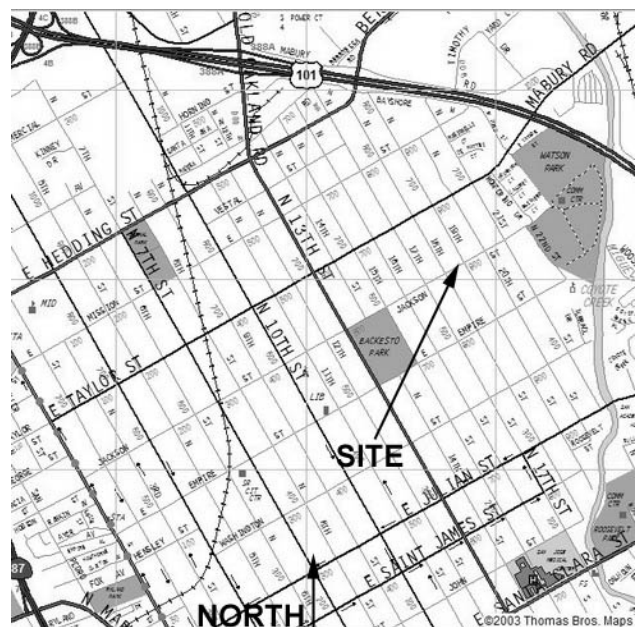
See Continuation Sheet: page 7

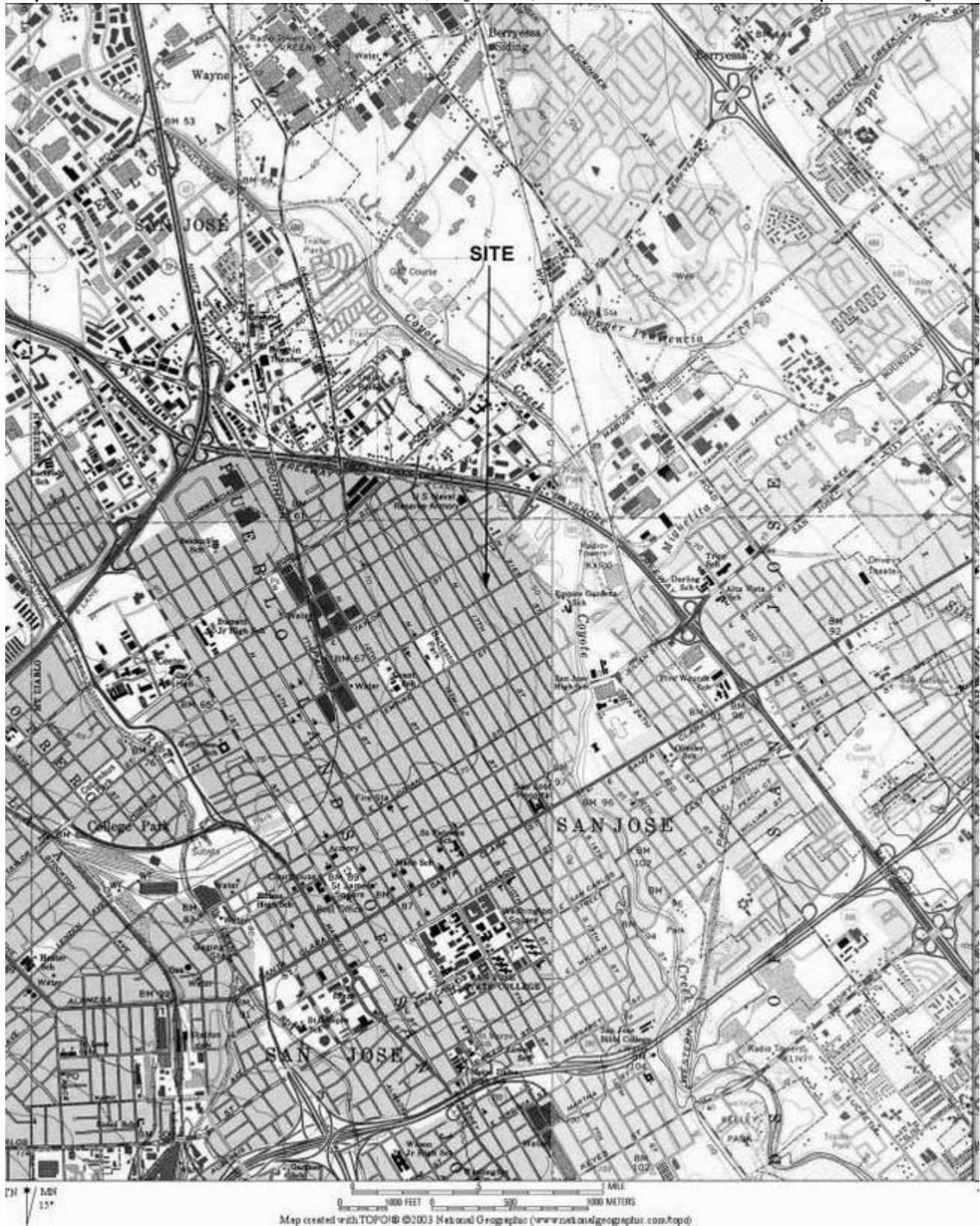
B13. Remarks: City historic landmark nomination

\*B14. Evaluator: Franklin Maggi

\*Date of Evaluation: 3/4/05

(This space reserved for official comments.)





(Continued from page 1)

The main portion of the house is a one-and-one-half-story block, approximately square in plan, with a moderately pitched, pyramidal, hipped roof; the house is set on a high brick basement that has been converted to living space. Gabled projections extend from each of the elevations, all with lower ridgelines. At the front and east side elevations, facing the two streets, the prominent gabled wings are tall and project relatively far. On the front façade, a shed-roof front porch fits between the main wing and the projecting gabled wing. The porch roof extends shallowly across the face of the gabled wing and becomes the roof of a centered, one-story square bay window. On the east side the prominent gable steps down into a centered, one-story square bay window, also with a shed roof. On the west side, the gabled projection is shallower than on the two street façades; it projects in a cantilever only at the second story, supported by carved outlookers. A salvaged angled bay window has been added to this façade. To the rear (north), the gabled projection is one story, slightly narrower than the main block; the eaves are lower than the front eaves. Along the west side of the rear wing, a side porch fills the setback; to the east, a shallow addition fills the same area. Both side elevations have had basement entrances added under the rear wing. To the rear two corners of the house, recent octagonal additions have been added; one is enclosed with salvaged windows and trim, and one is an open porch, also with salvaged, non-original trim. The foundation is original, but the basement has been modified for living space, and windows added or modified.

A distinctive, wide, shingled frieze band encircles the top portion of the walls; the shingles are clipped in a "bow tie" pattern, and the bottom of the frieze arches up to accentuate windows at each main gable. The unique cornice trim under the eaves is a hefty, crisp spiral-rope pattern where it follows the rake; the cornice piece changes to a thick quarter-round under the eaves. At the bottom of the shingled frieze is a simple trim band that is punctuated by decorative frieze blocks at the window surrounds. The gable ends are further ornamented by Stick-style bargeboard trusses with decorative pendants; the modest truss frames a pair of triangular, scroll-cut panels with a carved, raised, flower embellishment that is duplicated on the bay-window panels. The attic vents are simple, round louvers set high in the shingled gables. The remainder of the residence is clad in v-groove siding with flat board trim at the corners and window surrounds. A heavy watertable stretches around the base of the house, above the foundation. The eaves are boxed with flat soffit boards, and edged with integral wooden gutters. The roof is covered with composition shingles.

The front porch is raised on the brick foundation; turned posts, typical of the style, support its shed roof. Between the posts is heavy spindlework under the eaves, and the low guardrail is built up of heavy square posts framed with a rectangular pattern of openings. The guardrail continues down the length of the front steps, ending in a pair of Eastlake newel posts. The front entry consists of a pair of heavy, raised-panel doors. Each door has a single lite and three lower panels that are in a configuration found in five-panel doors. To the west side is an original rear door onto what appears to be an original side porch with turned posts and heavy handrail boards that match the front. The added rear octagonal porch has matching handrail details, but utilizes modern lumber dimensions. The Sanborn maps do not show a porch on the east side, and the rear porch was initially off-center to the east side, so the east side porch and centered rear porch are not original.

The original fenestration consists primarily of one-over-one, double-hung wood windows in pairs and individually; most are symmetrically placed within their wall planes. The original windows have a jigsawn apron with side tabs and a central half-wheel design. The windows in the bays have raised paneling with a central, raised, carved flower. In an area of low eaves above the front door is a decorative window, either fixed or inward opening, with a six-over-two muntin pattern. At the rear of the house, a number of windows have been added, including the octagonal room that has one-over-one double-hung windows with dog-ears and Neo-Classical transom mullions. The added windows also include a stained glass window near the northwest corner of the first floor and a greenhouse window with added Victorian scroll brackets. Although many of the recent windows have the tab-and-wheel apron to match the original design, the newer aprons can be identified from their thinner board stock.

(Continued from page 2, DPR523b, B10)

John C. Morrill was born in New Hampshire on September 4, 1820. In 1852 he arrived in San Francisco via Cape Horn. He proceeded to the Gold Country and remained six months, then returned to New Hampshire. In 1855, Mr. Morrill returned with his wife Emeline and their three children to San Francisco via Nicaragua. On October 1, 1856, he purchased 160 acres of the Milpitas Rancho. Brainard visited the ranch in 1886 and described it as a combination of fruit orchards, including an orange grove, and grain fields. The western edge of the ranch ran along what was even then called Morrill Road, and abutted the Berryessa Creek. That April, Morrill had sold the ranch to W. R. S. Foye for \$35,000 (Deeds 83:396, 4/16/1886).

Morrill used the proceeds of the sale of his ranch to purchase several parcels of land in San Jose. His major property purchase was from Cornelius G. Harrison, who sold Morrill Block 24 of the Cook and Branham Addition, which lies between 17th and 19th Streets and Jackson and Taylor Streets (Deeds 90:173, 2/25/1887). The *San Jose Mercury* reported on January 1, 1888, that Morrill had built "a handsome Eastlake house on Fifteenth [now 19th] street. It has eight rooms, and a brick basement under the whole building. There are also a new barn, tank and mill on the premises and the improvements cost \$5,000."

In April 1888, Morrill had his Jackson Street property surveyed and recorded the J. C. Morrill subdivision (Recorded Maps C-89). He ran a street down the middle of the block (now 18th Street) and subdivided the resulting two blocks into 56 house lots. He reserved for himself a 275-foot-deep lot along Jackson Street between 18th and 19th Streets. In 1891, he sold the northeast corner of 18th and Jackson Streets to his business partner Robert Hall (Deeds 138:554, 9/21/1891), who built the house at 851 Jackson St.

In San Jose, Morrill embarked on a new business venture, the Garden City Lumber Company, which advertised itself as manufacturing "doors, sash, moldings, etc." With Morrill as president and Robert Hall as vice president, they employed William Klinkert as their superintendent and architect. It was a short-lived venture, listed in the city directories only between 1890 and 1893; the residential building boom of 1887 and 1888 had fizzled out in the economic downturn of the early 1890s. The J. C. Morrill subdivision failed to develop as a residential tract during Morrill's lifetime. He died on March 6, 1895.

Morrill's house appears to be architect designed, but the architect is not known. The prominent local architect William Klinkert may have been involved, as Morrill later hired him to supervise his lumber company and be its resident architect. However, Klinkert's obituary and the records of his family indicate that he did not settle in San Jose until 1888.

Sarah Morrill, his widow and second wife, and Robert Hall, his former business partner, sold the entirety of the mostly unsold J. C. Morrill subdivision lots to Wesley D. Knapp in 1903 (Deeds 263:444, 447). Wesley D. Knapp, a banker from South Dakota, had recently moved to San Jose. He did not live long and died here on January 23, 1906. It was her widow, Emma A. Knapp, who sold many of the lots in the J. C. Morrill subdivision. Residential development had progressed considerably when Mrs. Knapp sold the subject property to Jean and Euphrosine Palé at the end of 1925 (OR 302:538, 12/17/1925).

The parcel changed hands frequently through the 1930s. In 1927 Emil Silkenat purchased the house and divided it into a duplex (San Jose Building Permit 302, 3/8/1927). A later owner, Charles E. Ritter, moved a carriage house from the rear of the parcel to the present site of 895 Jackson St. (Notice of completion, OR 774:129, 5/18/1936). A series of mortgage defaults eventually placed the property in the hands of James M. McElhinney, a Presbyterian minister from San Francisco, who parceled out the property into six lots, leaving only the subject property's parcel unsold at the time of his death in 1944. On March 19, 1945, Kenneth Emery purchased the house (OR 1248:267); his brother Waldo had been renting the house since 1940. Waldo and Helen Emery purchased the property from his brother in 1958 (OR 4097:26, 6/12/1958). The Emerys remained in the house for over 40 years; Mr. Emery worked nearby for Golden State Dairy on North First Street.

After Waldo Emery's death in 1980, Helen T. Emery sold the subject property to James and Cheryl Fuhring (OR G919:637, 7/23/1982). In 1986, the Fuhrings had the property rezoned to use it as a bed and breakfast inn. The property has since been known as the Briar Rose Inn. Also in 1986, the Fuhrings applied to nominate their property as a city historic landmark, but they later withdrew the application. In 1989, the Fuhrings purchased 895 Jackson St., repainted it to match the subject property, and used it as part of the inn (OR L205:2123, 12/22/1989). They resold it again in 1994, the year before they sold the inn to Thomas E. and Patricia S. Worthy (OR N462:1347, 5/31/1994; doc. no. 13033830, 9/29/1995). The Worthys continued to operate the Briar Rose Inn until they sold the property to the current owners, Eric Thacker and Philip Ho (doc. no. 17551318, 12/30/2003), who have converted it into a single-family residence. (Continued on next page)

\*Recorded by F. Maggi, B. Montgomery & L. Dill

\*Date 03/04/05

Continuation  Update

*(Continued from previous page)*

Character-defining features: The house reflects an intact composition of a Stick/Eastlake-style estate residence. Notable features include, but are not limited to: its massing (hipped center with extended wings plus square bay windows), the shingled frieze and frieze trim, the porch with its blocky guardrail and incorporation of the bay window, many original windows and doors and associated trim, siding and its trim, the brick foundation, etc.

Outbuildings and Structures: There is a collection of small outbuildings that have been adorned with Victorian-era salvage. The garage for the house is adjacent to 19th Street, at the rear of the lot; it is a modest hipped structure where it faces the street, but includes Italianate arched windows, a leaded-glass door, and windows with tracery where it faces the rear yard. This is typical of the other diminutive structures on the site. In addition to the garage there are two sheds in the rear yard; one is decorated with Neo-gothic elements to emulate a church façade, and the other is similar to the garage, with various Victorian-era windows, doors, and trim. The front yard includes a gazebo with scroll-cut handrail and bell-cast eaves, and the property is bounded by a fence with wrought-iron blusters, but these are also of modern construction.

The adjacent house to the west on Jackson Street appears to be the original carriage house for this residence, although relocated in 1936 from its original position to fit on a separate property. It has matching shingles and window trim, and has some windows at the upper level that appear to be original.

**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 Northside Neighborhood and era of the Morrill family. 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 and ornamentation, and the west side has been modified with the angled bay window. These changes appear primarily cosmetic, and most would be reversible, and generally these types of modifications do not meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The residence is a distinguished representation of the Stick/Eastlake style from the 1880s in San José.

**Significance:**

Criteria A/1: The Morrill House is associated with John C. Morrill's 1888 subdivision of this immediate area into a residential district, it and the house at 851 Jackson St. being the only houses built in Morrill's lifetime. Residential development of this area did not begin in earnest until after 1903, peaking in the late 1930s. The house is therefore not associated with the major patterns 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 property is associated with John C. Morrill, and particularly with his brief career as a lumber company president. No subsequent occupants are known for their contributions to the community. The property does not appear to be significant based on its association with personages as required to 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 distinguished local example of an 1880s Stick/Eastlake residence, 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 Santa Clara County. Because the integrity has been somewhat compromised with contemporary changes that are inconsistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, it would not appear to qualify for the National Register under Criterion C. However, these changes appear to be reversible, and the property might be eligible in the future if renovated in a way that is more consistent with the Standards.

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\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) John C. Morrill House

\*Recorded by F. Maggi, B. Montgomery & L. Dill

\*Date 3/4/05

Continuation  Update

(Continued from page 2, DPR523b, B12)

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