

WRITTEN AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Smith-DeVries House
163 North Main Street
Milpitas, California
Santa Clara County

Prepared according to the format of the HABS/HAER Standards
and HABS Historical Reports: Outline Format
of the National Park Service

Prepared for

Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition
303 Vintage Park Dr. Suite 250
Foster City, CA 94404

Prepared by

Archives & Architecture:
Heritage Resource Partners
P.O. Box 1332
San José, CA 95109

Leslie Dill, Architectural Historian
Jessica Kusz, Preservation Specialist
Charlene Duval, Public Historian
Franklin Maggi, Architectural Historian

Architectural Photography by
Franklin Maggi

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HABS FORMAT HISTORICAL REPORT

Smith-DeVries House
163 North Main Street
Milpitas, Santa Clara County, California

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Location:

163 North Main Street. Milpitas, California
APN 022-08-040
USGS Milpitas Quadrangle UTM 10 596628E 4143436N

Present Owner:

City of Milpitas

Present Occupant:

Vacant

Present Use:

Vacant

Significance:

The Smith-DeVries House is significant for its association with patterns of events that are important to the history of the community and City of Milpitas in Santa Clara County, California, and for its association with the architectural work of a local master architect, Frank Delos Wolfe.

The significance of the residence within the context of Milpitas history has to do with its association with Dr. Rensselaer J. Smith, an important local physician who was the community's principle doctor during the first part of the twentieth century. He was the second doctor to practice in Milpitas, and was well known and respected during the years of his residency on Main Street. Dr. Smith served

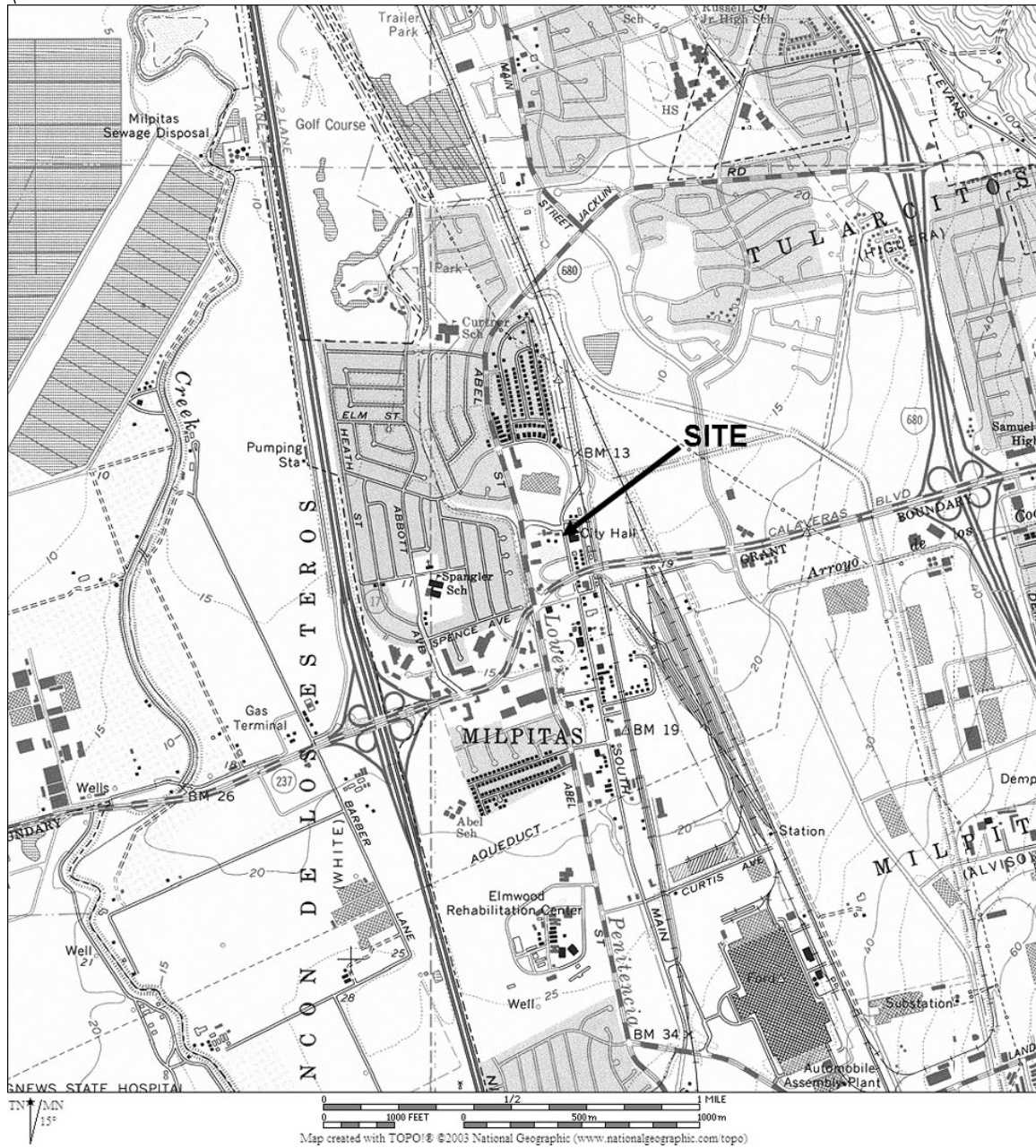
as the only doctor in the community for 22 years and played an important leadership role in the early development of the unincorporated town of Milpitas. The residence, which Smith hired Frank Wolfe to design in 1915, served as both his home and office, and sat prominently at the edge of the downtown commercial area.

During the later part of the twentieth century, the property was the home of the Francis K. and Josephine DeVries family, who had originally lived as tenants in the rear cottage. The primary residence and property are not significant due to the DeVries family ownership and residency; however, the house is commonly known in the local community as the DeVries House, due to their long-term occupancy of what is a distinguished residence within the downtown.

The residence as noted previously is also significant for its association with the architectural work of local master architect, Frank Delos Wolfe. Constructed in the Prairie style, the primary house on this site is the only example of his work in Milpitas. It boasts a prominent front porch and balcony with wide, flat roof overhangs, massive porch pillars, and geometric design art-glass windows. Wolfe was the principal proponent of this style in the South Bay area, and examples of his work have been found as far away as Eureka, California. The residence was constructed at a time when Wolfe had recently embraced the Prairie style design in partnership with his son Carl, and was fusing it with his ideals of the California Art & Crafts Movement. Prairie style houses in California during the period prior to World War I are rare, the characteristics of this style principally associated with the work of master architect Frank Lloyd Wright in the Midwest. It wasn't until after World War II that architects in the West embraced modernism that contained variants of this unique American movement in architectural design.

The Smith-DeVries House is listed in the City of Milpitas Register of Cultural Resources and also was recorded in the in the 1990 Historic Sites Inventory conducted for the City of Milpitas by Foothill Resource Associates. The property is identified in the City of Milpitas General Plan as a cultural resource and a "prime candidate" for preservation.

LOCATION MAP



USGS Milpitas 7.5 minute quadrangle (partial) 1980 photo revised

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. PHYSICAL HISTORY:

1. Date(s) of construction:

The Smith-DeVries house was constructed in 1915 at a cost of \$9,995.

2. Architect:

Frank Delos Wolfe of the firm of Wolfe & Wolfe

3. Original and subsequent owners:

Original owner: The Smith-DeVries house was originally owned by Dr. Rensselaer J. Smith and his wife Ada Vroman Smith.

Subsequent owners:

In 1950 the property was sold to Francis K. and Josephine DeVries. They lived in the house until 1996 when the property was sold to the City of Milpitas.

Current owners of property: City of Milpitas

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:

Peter T. Jorgensen

5. Original plans and construction:

No original plans were located.

6. Alterations and additions:

Interior: Many of the rooms in the residence remain in original condition with slight alterations to interior finishes, doors, one stairway, and a few windows have been replaced or are missing. The kitchen was remodeled in the 1950s as well as the original doctor's office. The office was remodeled into a studio apartment soon after the DeVries family took ownership of the house. The rear cottage was remodeled at that time as well.

Exterior: The exterior of the building has not been substantially altered and remains in good condition except for damage to an eave on the north elevation and some rot where the walls meet grade.

B. HISTORIC CONTEXT:

1. Historical Background

The area currently occupied by the City of Milpitas was once part of the Costanoan Indians lands and later, following the introduction of Euro-Americans to the region after 1769, part of the lands of Mission Santa Clara de Asis and Mission San José de Guadalupe during the Spanish Period jurisdictional control 1769-1821. Following Mexican Independence in 1822, the period of Mexican control 1822-1846 saw the secularization of the missions and the development of large ranchos throughout Alta California. The area that eventually became Milpitas was divided during this period into the land grants of Rancho Agua Caliente, Ranchos Milpitas and Rancho Tularcitos. The Smith-DeVries house is located on what was part of the Rancho de los Tularcitos land grant. Tularcitos (Little Tule Thickets) was located at the north end of present day downtown Milpitas and extended in the east hills from Penitencia Creek. Originally granted to José Higuera by the Spanish government in 1821 by Alta California governor Pablo Vicente de Lola, it consisted of 4394.35 acres. Mexican governor Juan Bautista Alvarado renewed Higuera's title in 1839, and the rancho was patented by the United States Land Commission to Higuera's heirs in 1870.

What is now Main Street was known as Mission Road during the first half of the nineteenth century because it connected Mission Santa Clara with the Pueblo of San José. By the 1850s at the beginning of the Early American Period, 1846-1868, a stagecoach ran along Mission Road which was known locally as the San José-Oakland Road. In 1855, a county road was constructed to provide local access for a growing community that was located where downtown Milpitas sits today. The road was later renamed Main Street as Milpitas continued to develop; the town kept the Spanish name Milpitas, which stood for little cornfields.

Alviso was the shipping hub of the surrounding communities. As traffic increased on the road to Alviso with the shipping of local fruits and vegetables, adobe and wood buildings were built at the crossroads of Alviso and Mission Road during this early period of development. In 1869, the Western Pacific Railroad opened a line from Stockton to San José which stopped in Milpitas, further contributing to the growth of the burgeoning town (Loomis 1986). During the period of Horticultural Development, 1870-1918, local farmers prospered in concert with the evolution of the greater Santa Clara Valley as it became an important agricultural economy. During the later part of this period, the valley saw the construction of large canneries to process the fruits of the valley's agricultural commerce. In the Milpitas area, the Oakland Preserving Company was constructed (later acquired by Del Monte) and in nearby Alviso Tom Foon Chew's Bay Side Cannery was founded. By the end of this period, Milpitas had evolved into a significant local unincorporated town. In 1914, Main Street was paved and by 1920, a second rail line reached Milpitas. Agriculture would continue to play an essential role in the community during the Interwar Period, 1819-1945, and as Santa Clara County began its shift to a modern industrial region in 1950, nearly half of Milpitas residents still lived on farms. In 1950, the Smith-DeVries house was associated with a small orchard which continued to exist until recent times.

2. Dr. Rensselaer J. Smith

Rensselaer J. Smith was born in 1859 in New York. His wife, Ada Vroman Smith was born in 1857 in New York. They were married in 1886 and had one son, Rensselaer Smith Jr., born in 1899 in New York. Dr. Smith's family was from Germany, while Ada's family was from New York. Dr. Smith resided in Albany, New York where he worked as a physician before moving his family to California in the early 1900s. His family recalls that he boasted that he had the first automobile in Albany (Smith 2005). Dr. Smith's son was asthmatic which instigated the move to Southern California for the warm climate and relief of his asthma symptoms. According to oral history accounts, Ada Smith had only one leg due to a slip on the ice in New York (DeVries 2005). One leg was amputated and she used a wooden leg for the remainder of her life. Upon moving to

California, Dr. Smith settled in town of Mentone near Redlands where he was in charge of a tubercular sanitarium (Smith 2005; *San Jose Mercury Herald* 1932). During this time, Dr. Smith and his wife purchased a 20-acre orange grove in Highland, California. At some point in the early 1900s shortly after the family relocation to California, the Sanitarium burned down which may have prompted the move to Milpitas in 1904. Dr. Rensselaer J. Smith succeeded Dr. William L. Wilson who was the first physician to practice in the town of Milpitas.

The land upon which the residence at 163 North Main St. was constructed was sold to Rensselaer J. Smith by Dr. William L. Wilson on August 27, 1904 (Deeds 282:442). This most likely is not a coincidence; as a colleague, Dr. Wilson assisted Dr. Smith in settling in the Milpitas area. According to maps on file with the Santa Clara County Surveyors office, this land at that time consisted of approximately 3.724 acres bounded by Penitencia Creek to the west and Milpitas-Oakland Rd to the east.

According to the 1910 Census, Dr. Smith and his wife, Ada V. Smith resided at Number 2 Mission Road (Oakland and San José Road). At this time, the Prairie-style residence had not yet been constructed, and the property consisted of only a small cottage (still extant) and possibly one outbuilding. Architectural and historical data indicate that this cottage is older than the front residence and most likely was occupied by the Smith family for about 10 years until the front house was constructed. Dr. Smith hired local architect Frank Delos Wolfe of the firm Wolfe & Wolfe to design a two-story house in July 1915. The house was constructed by Peter T. Jorgensen, a local contractor, for the cost of \$9,995 (*Building & Engineering News* 1915). According to family reports, the design was originally intended to be more modest; however, the owners' changes to the design about doubled the price. The house was constructed in the Prairie style which Wolfe had recently embraced after entering into partnership with his son, Carl Wolfe. Prior to that time, he had been in partnership with architect Charles McKenzie. About 1912/1913, the partnership had terminated, and during the next five years, Frank would work with his son in a new design vocabulary that had its roots in the Prairie style that had been evolving in the Midwest espoused by Frank Lloyd Wright. The house was set back from the street with a circular

driveway in the front. The garage and tank house were located in the rear of the property along with the earlier cottage, both appearing to have pre-dated the construction of the main house. A simple one bay stable/garage was most likely constructed for storage of Dr. Smith's horse and carriage prior to the construction of the house, and was later enlarged to accommodate an automobile and farm equipment.

The newly built house was also the office of Dr. Smith. An entrance on the north side of the residence provided a separate access to his office for patients. Most likely his office consisted of a reception/waiting area and an exam room; this area has since been modified, during the later part of the twentieth century. Although he claimed to have owned the first automobile in Albany, NY, he used only a horse and carriage for the years he practiced in Milpitas (Smith 2005). Dr. Smith became an important part of Milpitas community, not only as a physician, but he was also active in the war effort as part of the Santa Clara County War Work Council, Milpitas Group (Daley 1919).

Smith was also known to have one of the finest butterfly collections in the country (*San Jose Mercury Herald* 1932). His grandson noted that as an amateur entomologist, he was very interested in bugs, beetles and butterflies of which he collected hundreds of species and identified them (Smith, 2005). His collection was donated to San José State University by Ada Smith after his death (Smith, 2005). Along with his butterfly collection, he was also interested in plants, and propagated flowers which he and his wife cultivated in Milpitas on their property. His grandson noted that he had also written a book about wild ferns. An attempt was made to locate the book but was unsuccessful.

Dr. Smith retired in 1922. Upon retirement, his focus shifted to farming in which his son had been previously involved. Rensselaer Smith Jr. is listed as a fruit farmer in the City Directories from 1923 until 1949, some years which list both son and father as proprietors. An orchard was located adjacent to the house, which grew different varieties of pear, particularly Bartlett and Comice (Smith, 2005). The pears were sold to Del Monte Cannery or packinghouses in Santa Clara (Smith 2005). The Smith family also had a fruit stand on Main Street

where they sold all varieties of fruits, vegetables and other seasonal items in the summer months. Rensselaer Smith Jr. attended College of the Pacific where he majored in agriculture. He later farmed the orange grove the family had purchased in Highland and acquired other citrus properties near Highland and the Central Valley. Rensselaer J. Smith Jr. eventually married; his wife, Lillian, had been the daughter of the caretaker of the orange ranch. Rensselaer and Lillian Smith remained in Highland after their marriage and had four children. During the summer months in the 1930s and 1940s, the children would come to Milpitas to live with their grandmother and help tend the orchard and run the fruit stand (Smith 2005).

Dr. Rensselaer J. Smith died December 13, 1932 at the age of 74. Dr. Smith was succeeded by Dr. Al Currin who came to Milpitas from San José in 1935 (Loomis). After Dr. Smith's death, Ada continued to live at the residence, but during this time, she sold off portions of the property to other Milpitas residents. In August of 1934 she sold sections of her property to Sal M. Cracolice (OR 696:506, 531) and in May 1945 as well (OR 1261:369). Sal Cracolice had a house on Main Street which was purchased for and demolished during construction of Calaveras Boulevard (Craig, pg 28). This house may have been located on the property sold to Cracolice by Mrs. Smith. Cracolice came to Milpitas in 1928 and purchased the Pashote Building on Main Street, where he was the local pharmacist; he also served the community by selling the local newspaper and tickets, housing the post office and providing a telephone at this location (Burrill 2004). Ada Smith also sold land to Frank J. Terra in May of 1946. Terra is listed in the City Directories as the only retail fruit dealer in the 1930s other than Rensselaer Smith, Jr. Terra operated the Frank Terra General Store in 1912 and also owned a blacksmith shop. On February 10, 1947 Ada also sold 1.166 acres of the property to A.T and Annie Spangler (OR 1401:271). Spangler operated the Spangler Shell Service Station (Loomis 1986).

Ada V. Smith sold the property to Francis K. DeVries and Josephine DeVries (OR 2007:568) on June 30, 1950. After selling the property to the DeVries family, Ada moved back to Southern California near Redlands to be near her son. Ada Smith died on February 11, 1970 at the age of 105 in San Bernardino.

3. Francis K. and Josephine DeVries:

Francis K. DeVries was born in Oak Harbor, Washington on May 29, 1909 to Christian and Della DeVries. Josephine Mary Clark was born Feb 12, 1908 in Fort Casey, Washington to Thomas and Anna Clark. Francis DeVries moved to California in 1932 and married Josephine Clark in San Francisco that year. Frank and Josephine DeVries lived in San Francisco for eleven years before moving to Milpitas. Francis was a highway patrolman, stationed in various South Bay communities including San José and Gilroy, and Josephine was a nurse who worked at St. Francis Hospital in the 1930s.

Frank and Josephine DeVries initially rented the rear cottage at 163 Main Street. According to Mrs. DeVries, there were no other houses available during the war (DeVries 2005). The DeVries family formed a close bond with Ada Smith. It is here they lived until they purchased the house from Ada Smith in 1950.

Upon purchase of the house, the DeVries remodeled Smith's doctor's office into a studio apartment. The rear cottage was also remodeled and rented. The DeVries family continued the operation of the pear orchard adjacent to the house and hired crews to help harvest the fruit. They also continued the seasonal fruit stand where they sold pears. They also sold pears to the Del Monte Cannery (DeVries, 2005). Oral history accounts state that they were active in 4H (Mattos 2005). Francis continued to work as a highway patrolman until 1964 when he retired. Josephine DeVries indicated in an oral interview that she had planted 40 rose bushes, oranges, lemon and fig trees, some of which are still on the property as of early 2006 (DeVries 2005). In the 1960s Penitencia Creek, which originally ran behind the residence to the west, was moved farther west of Main Street to control flooding in the area and is now located west of North Abel Street.

Between 1963 and 1972, the land had been divided into two parcels, and the western parcel ("Parcel 1") along Abel Street, not including the subject property, was sold separately. On January 9, 1996, Frank and Josephine DeVries sold the subject property to the City of Milpitas (OR N746:1678). A proposed lot split will separate the house site included in this analysis from the former orchard

lands to the south. The parcel that encompasses the residence and its outbuildings is proposed to be approximately 1.15 acres. After the sale, the DeVrieses moved back to Oak Harbor, Washington. Francis K. DeVries died on February 16, 2000 in Seattle, Washington at the age of 90. Josephine DeVries still resides in Oak Harbor, Washington.

Since 1996, the property has been vacant aside from use as storage for various City of Milpitas maintenance items. The residence is proposed to be moved and rehabilitated to accommodate and serve senior citizens' housing that will consist of new buildings surrounding the historic residence. The parcel of land to the south of the residence (which was originally the pear orchard) is proposed for purchased by the County of Santa Clara for construction of a new health clinic.

4. Frank Delos Wolfe

Frank Delos Wolfe is a significant local architect with regional importance, who is just beginning to be recognized as a master in his field. His ability to design and build outstanding examples of California Arts and Crafts style buildings was well respected during his career, attested by the large number of clients. His creativity continues to be the subject of analysis and interpretation by architectural historians in the present time. He is one of the few architects in the western United States to grasp the foundations of the modern movement prior to 1932, and translate them into domestic architecture. His work, continuing through his multiple partnerships, blends regional architectural forms with the principles of this evolving worldwide movement. There are currently seven buildings designed by his firm that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Col House on Martin Avenue in the Shasta-Hanchett residential neighborhood in San José and Clark House on Minnesota Avenue in the Willow Glen residential neighborhood in San José are excellent examples of Wolfe's design. Additional examples of the work of Wolfe and Wolfe during the period 1913 to 1917 when they worked in the Prairie Style idiom exist in older neighborhoods throughout the South Bay Area, with a large concentration in the Shasta-Hanchett, Naglee Park, and Palm Haven neighborhoods in the nearby City of San José.

Frank Delos Wolfe (1863-1926), was born in Green Springs, Ohio. His formal training is unknown, but the Wolfe family consisted of generations of carpenter/builders; his father, Jeremiah, was a carpenter who came to the San José area in 1888 during a boom period during the Period of Horticultural Development. Frank had first briefly worked for an architect while his family still resided in Kansas, and in San José, he worked as a carpenter with his father and brother Lynn. By 1892, he had established his own practice, and soon was working with Joseph O. McKee, a distinguished local architect who was reaching the end of his long career. When McKee retired in 1894, Wolfe moved into McKee's office and took over his practice (Espinola 2004).

Soon after keeping draftsman Charles McKenzie with him in his newly established firm, Wolfe made McKenzie a partner, and by 1900 the firm of Wolfe & McKenzie had become the most prominent residential firm in the South Bay area, designing highly creative eclectic buildings that mixed the newly emerging Neo-classical Revival style and elements from the modern California Arts and Crafts Movement. By 1907, they had published their *Book of Designs*, a pattern book that exhibited 102 signature prototype houses, graced with photographs and floor plans of houses they had built during the preceding few years. The firm continued to produce these eclectic houses during the years following the 1906 Earthquake, until 1911 when the two partners terminated their relationship. The following year Frank Delos Wolfe took in his son Carl as his junior partner who remained with him until 1915. During these years, until the beginning of World War I, Frank Delos Wolfe and the firm of Wolfe & Wolfe built numerous variants of the Prairie House in the South Bay area; their body of work was prolific during this period, due to the popularity of this modern-looking house design. No other local architects are known to have embraced this style, and only minor examples can be found in California in other regions by other architects.

Frank Wolfe's architecture had been rooted in the Neoclassical Revival that began in the late 19th century as a reaction to the extravagance of Victorian exuberance. While Arts and Crafts designers in this period were greatly influenced by William Morris, John Ruskin and other leaders of the modern

movement, the work of Wolfe & McKenzie had held rigidly to classical underpinnings. This classicism held strong as Wolfe and his son married the Prairie Style to the Arts and Crafts palette.

The buildings Frank Delos and Carl Wolfe designed and built were characterized by features taken from the Prairie style developed by Frank Lloyd Wright during Wright's years in Oak Park, Illinois from 1892 to 1909, but retained a strong California Arts and Crafts presence that had been developing in the work of Frank Delos Wolfe and his peers after the turn of the century.

In 1913, Frank Delos Wolfe built what may be the first example of a truly modern style building (called Woodhills) in the foothills above Cupertino for Fremont and Cora Older. In 1912/1913, Wolfe & Wolfe built two significant residences (now City of San José landmarks): the Col House (Woodbridge 1988) in the Shasta Hanchett district of San José and the Clark House (Laffey 1997) in Willow Glen. The Col House has remained a signature building for the Wolfe firm during this time period.

By the end of World War I, Frank Delos Wolfe had joined in partnership with William E. Higgins, a partnership that continued until Wolfe's death in 1926. With Higgins, the firm began to shift to revival styles popular during the 1920s, focusing mainly on Spanish Eclectic and Colonial Revival designs. Higgins continued the firm into the 1930s with Carl Wolfe replacing his father in the firm. Higgins then brought in his own son William who would eventually establish the firm of Higgins & Root, following his father's death in 1936. Higgins & Root was a firm prolific in the South Bay during the second half of the twentieth century.

The design for the Smith House is one of three known commissions that were two stories in height, one other is in Hayward and the third is at 1225 Martin Ave., in the Shasta-Hanchett neighborhood of San José. The Smith House is distinguished from other designs by Wolfe during this period by its heavy front porch and balcony with oversized piers, and over-wide overhangs. The architect is known to have worked with the contractor Peter T. Jorgensen on two other significant projects prior to this house, and there may have been many more. The

Peter Col House (1912) in San Jose's Shasta-Hanchett District, and the Burke House (1913) in unincorporated Santa Clara County on Monterey Road, are the identified products of their association (Espinola 2005).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. GENERAL STATEMENT:

1. Architectural character: The main building on the property is an excellent example of a Prairie-style residence in the San Francisco Bay Area. The one-and-two-story house's traditional Prairie-style proportions are expressed by a high, wood, bellyband that exaggerates the height of the first floor, and, therefore, the solidity of the house's base. The band is at the level of the second-story windowsills and extends around the tall first-floor parapet walls where it becomes the coping trim. Additional horizontality and strength are conveyed by the broad second-story eaves that emphasize the flat roof. The pillars of the front and south side porches are massive, passing the recessed parapet walls to form high pedestals; they have no trim bands that mitigate the height between their bases and their coping. Smaller details that express the Prairie style include geometric art-glass windows, windows with Prairie-style lite patterns (compositions of rectangles and squares), and stripes of trim. The details, form, and materials are consistent throughout the design, both inside and out, and act as a complete composition. The setting is open, and there are four outbuildings that correspond to the more rural character of the property when the house was originally built.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in good overall condition. Most of the building envelope, such as the walls and roof, and the interior finishes appear to be in excellent shape; however, there is considerable rot and/or insect infestation evident where the exterior walls meet grade, and some of the eaves show water damage. Additionally, some portions of the building have been modified, including most of the kitchen, some interior finishes, and a few windows have been either replaced or missing.

B. DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR:

1. **Overall dimensions:** The “L”-shaped, main block of the house is two stories with a roughly square footprint at the ground floor of about 40 feet each side (one unlabeled floor plan shows a front width of 42' +/-), but somewhat extended to the rear at the northwest corner. To the sides and rear, several flat-roofed, one-story wings project from the main mass of the house, creating a more asymmetrical and less imposing composition than the front façade. At the rear of the south side is an enclosed room projection that mimics the detailing of the front porch; it continues the rear wall and opens forward onto a patio along the side of the house. On the north side of the house is a shallow section of wall that projects along most of the length of the dining room; similar to a square bay window, it has its own narrow, flat roof, and is separated from the front porch pilasters that project approximately the same distance. At the northwest corner, a one-story section of house projects to both the rear and the north side. This portion of the house is mostly integrated into the main house plan; for example, the screened porch adjacent to the kitchen is incorporated into this one-story section, but this area also contains the separate entries into the original owner's office. The front wall of this rear corner abuts a north-side entry porch.

2. **Foundations:** The house is set low on a concrete foundation that is concealed with a wood trim band; there is a small basement under the rear of the house with concrete retaining walls that are beginning to overturn in some sections. Access to the basement is via an external concrete stairway. The foundation vents have decorative cast-iron screens.

3. **Walls:** The exterior walls are painted stucco with a heavy dash finish. The stucco was applied over expanded metal lath, visible at a damaged portion of the wall. The trim work is almost entirely wide flat boards, including the high, 1x belt course along with lower bands of accent trim; however, the parapet and base

of the house are encircled by an additional accent strip of very narrow 1x material. This trim is used on the north porch as well (see #5 below).

4. Structural system, framing: This house rests on a concrete perimeter foundation and concrete retaining walls around the partial basement. Framing members, including conventionally framed studs and joists, are full dimension 2x material, and appear to be Douglas fir. Floor sheathing is diagonal 1x and roof sheathing consists of abutted boards.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: At the front elevation is a full-width, one-story porch that has an upper parapet designed to look like a balcony. The front façade and porch are symmetrical and boldly geometric, accentuating the visual solidity of the overall design. The pillars are continuous from grade to parapet top; the walls are recessed and accented by simple, wide flat-board trim at the porch header and cap rail, as well as at the coping. In front of the two center pillars of the front porch are a pair of large, square, stucco planters that are integral with the remainder of the design. Both lengths of porch railings are topped by integral, full-width planter boxes. A second open porch extends outward from the center of the north side; it has detailing somewhat similar to the front porch, but is less massive in form, being lower than the bellyband and without a parapet wall. It has a low-slope roof with wide eaves that echo the second-story roof, and it has some additional, more delicate, trim features that distinguish it from the remainder of the house. The trim includes horizontal stripes in threes along the top of the columns, representing column capitals, and a pair of horizontal strips at the bottom of the posts, creating a column base. The solid guardrail of the porch has a wooden cap, and also a second, thinner, decorative stripe just below the cap for additional stylistic definition.

6. Chimneys: A single stucco chimney projects from the exterior face of the south side of the house. It is as wide as the firebox from grade to the first-floor parapet band, then steps down in size, passes through the second-story eave, and

terminates with a simple coping band. A second stucco chimney projects from the center of the house; it serves as a vent for the kitchen and basement furnace.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The front door and sidelights are recessed slightly from the main wall plane. The door is grained on the exterior to look like highly figured oak and the sidelights are painted. The sidelights are operable with full-height screens on the exterior. The door has a 4x4-lite pattern that mimics the main window design (see below), but the even number of vertical lites and heavier muntins give it a somewhat different appearance from the windows. The sidelights have a 2x4-lite pattern that also centers on a muntin rather than a pane. Interestingly, the front doors all have gold pebble glass that is commonly associated with the 1970s; however, the glass appears to be original (the door graining is intact, specifically) and the color matches the color of the art glass in the house. Additionally, other forms of pebble glass are used throughout the house. Further research is required to determine the history of the door glass.

To the south side is a pair of large door openings that appear original; however, the wide living room opening (that likely had a pair of French doors matching a pair of interior French doors) is boarded up, and a sliding aluminum door opens onto the sun porch. At the south end of the front porch, a corrugated fiberglass door has been set into an infill of corrugated fiberglass. To the north side and rear are a number of doors that either match the front door or are replacements. There is a side entry from the north porch into the area that was once the office; it has gold pebble glass that matches the front door, in a matching 3x4-lite pattern. On the rear, at the northwest corner of the house, is a utilitarian, likely recent, wood door with a metal double-hung lite above a single flat panel. This entry has an aluminum awning above a stoop that also appears recent. A replacement security-style screen door opens from the back (west) of the house into the screen porch; it has an original screened transom. The kitchen door that

opens from the screen porch is original; it has a single, square lite above a single flat panel. Above this door is an operable transom with a single lite.

The original main door hardware is heavy bronze, in a pattern outlined by squares and lines, in keeping with the remainder of the house detailing.

b. Windows and shutters: The original fenestration is trimmed with standard, shaped, stucco molding and a heavy squared-off apron. The windows all have wood sash and trim, except where replacements have been installed. The house features a distinctive, repeated muntin pattern throughout many of its more prominent windows, as well as a number of large single-lite picture windows that appear original. The first-floor focal windows are tripartite; a large picture window is flanked by a pair of casements with a 3x4-lite “Prairie-style” pattern typical of the house. The design includes two rows of small squares topping a row of narrow vertical rectangles over a base row of squares. The odd number of vertical rows creates a central square lite. The main upper level windows are paired casements with the same lite pattern; the center upstairs windows have been replaced by wire glass. A few individual casements are part of the design; they also use the same lite pattern. A glazed windscreen on the north side of the front porch has the same lite proportions in a 9x4-pattern, and the doors have matching patterns both interior and exterior.

Facing south is a huge, single-lite picture window that illuminates the enclosed sun porch. The family indicates that the window was once multi-pane. To the north, along the office portion of the house, is a row of roughly square windows; two of these have what appear to be original fixed-pane picture windows; two have been replaced with aluminum sliders. On the rear and south side façades, some of the windows are one-over-one double-hung windows; these primarily overlook the first-floor roof, but the kitchen windows also have one-over-one sash. The rear façade encompasses an original screened porch. The screens are supported in their

large openings by thin muntins in square patterns, primarily in a 2x3 pattern; one screen, by the back screen door is narrower and has a 1x3 pattern.

Of particular note is the ribbon of leaded, art-glass windows on the north elevation, at the dining room. They are set high in the slightly projecting wall, above a buffet on the interior. Three of the windows are extant, and a fourth opening is boarded up. The windows feature a series of thin, paired, vertical stripes with multi-piece, upward-pointing triangles serving as arrowheads for the stripes. The pattern is heightened by pieces of gold-colored, marbled glass; the background glass is clear glass that is heavily textured and so translucent. The materials and pattern are echoed on the interior of the dining room.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The upper roof is flat or extremely low slope; the lower roofs are flat, covered with built-up roofing.

b. Cornice, eaves: The lower roofs have parapet walls; the upper roof steps down into widely projecting flat eaves on all sides. The second-story eaves have integral wood gutters that edge the roofline. The gutter appears to be built up of flat boards angled outward with a flat baseboard in line with the rest of the soffit. There is a thin reveal between the gutter board and the main soffit. The soffit is faced in stucco that matches the wall finish. There is a flat board bordering the soffit; a thin trim band fills the corner where it meets the wall; there is no fascia board along the upper wall, but there is a narrow trim piece set aside from the eaves that creates a fascia area. At each of the outer corners is a $\frac{3}{4}$ -spool-shaped projecting ornament.

c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: There are no separate roof features in this design.

C. DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR:

1. Floor plans: The ground floor has a roughly square plan with some recesses and projections that add complexity. The main foyer and stair hall are centered between the living room to the south and the dining room to the north. Immediately behind the front stair hall, past a small alcove, is a service stair and the kitchen. These are roughly centered between an “L”-shaped sun porch that wraps the rear corner of the living room and a square room that is behind the rear corner of the dining room. This room was once part of a separate office suite; it projects slightly to the north with its own entry from the north-side porch. Behind the kitchen and office are a screened porch with half-bath and a tiny bedroom suite, respectively. Upstairs are five bedrooms and two baths in a roughly “L”-shaped plan. Three of the bedrooms encircle the stair hall; they are in each corner (southwest, southeast and northeast) of the upper level, with closets and bathrooms between them. The other two bedrooms are entered from a separate short hall behind the service stair.

2. Stairways: There are two stairways still usable in this house; a third has been blocked off. The front stair is “U”-shaped; it is set off from the front door and hallway by a large, integral planter box with a squared top cap and thin trim band that mimics the exterior parapet and porch trim. The planter box is wood paneled along the front and thickens out into a large pilaster at the wall. The stair has square newel posts with similar caps and trim bands. These support a dark-stained handrail above tightly slatted square balusters. The wide stair leads to an open hallway at the second floor; the hallway has a “U”-shaped balustrade that surrounds the staircase opening. The stair hall is enhanced by a flat-light skylight with pebbled glass in a 9-lite pattern. The bottom three steps flare out away from the front foyer, in concentric quarter-circles. The stair risers and treads are covered in carpet; their original material is unknown.

The rear stairway is a narrow, “L”-shaped service stair from the kitchen on the ground floor to the rear hall of the upstairs. It is a winder, enclosed on both sides by walls and with a door at the bottom.

A winding, “L”-shaped basement stair was located directly underneath the service stair, but it has been blocked off at floor level in the southeast corner of the kitchen. This area is now a refrigerator alcove. The steps are still extant and visible from the basement.

3. Flooring: Oak flooring was observed under the carpeting in the living room and dining room. Stained, straight-grain, narrow tongue-and-groove fir flooring can be found under the carpeting that covers most of the remaining ground floor, including the sun porch; not every room was surveyed beneath the existing floor covering. The upstairs is also mostly carpeted, including the bathrooms; some uncarpeted areas include fir flooring similar to the sun porch. None of the carpeting appears original. Under the carpeting in the upstairs bathroom is sheet linoleum in a green marbleized pattern. The kitchen has sheet-vinyl flooring that is part of the late-twentieth-century remodeling. The rear screen porch has painted wood flooring, likely fir.

4. Walls and ceiling finish: The majority of the downstairs walls are wallpapered plaster, and the ceilings are smooth-finish, painted plaster. The sun porch has applied plywood veneer paneling. It is not clear which, if any, wallpapers are original. There is a high trim band that serves as a visual break between the walls and ceiling. This band continues the door and window header trim, and consists of a heavy cap and a thin ribbon trim over a flat board. The ceilings are coved and then step up in cross section. The baseboards are distinctive. They are atypically tall boards with a narrow four-step ziggurat at the top, which creates a “speed stripe” pattern around the room; they have only a tiny toe-kick.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The interior door side casings have a flat face between a pair of raised borders. The doorways have a thickened flat board header trim that is flush with the raised borders, creating a rectangular panel within the side casings. The header seamlessly continues the wall band that surrounds the rooms. The typical doors in this house include a single-panel door with a tall lower rail and French doors with the Prairie-style lite patterns. Between the living room and front foyer is a double-width sliding door. It has a center stile flanked by pebble glass lites each side has the 4x4 pattern matching the front door. The door between the dining room and kitchen is a spring-loaded two-directional swinging door with a single upper lite.

b. Windows: The interior window trim matches the door casings with a cap and trim band that match the motif of the exterior walls and other interior details. The window header is contiguous with the molding band in all the main downstairs spaces, and the apron is a simple flat board.

6. Decorative features and trim: In addition to the stepped ceilings, the trim band at the base of the coved ceilings, and the elaborate door and window trims typical of all the main living spaces of this house, a number of rooms have special features that add to the overall composition of the house. The trim throughout the house is currently painted, but the family reports that the stairs, front foyer, and dining room trim used to be “all natural wood stained and varnished.” (Smith:2006)

a. Stair Hall: The stair hall has many decorative elements in addition to the staircase and overhead flat-light described in C.2 above. There is an inglenook-style built-in bench along the north wall; it includes storage in the seats, a paneled back, and an angled wing wall that is mirrored by angled paneling on the opposite wall. Between the hallway and the front foyer is a substantial, low, header beam supported on two massive pilasters at the sidewalls. The wall section is at the door header height, it and the pilasters have the combination of thick and thin trim bands that match the motif prevalent throughout the house. A bevel-mirrored door leads to a large coat

closet in the corner under the stairs. The trim is currently painted, but the family reports that it used to be “all natural wood stained and varnished.”

b. Living Room: Tied into the overall trim design, special living room features include a centered fireplace unit on the south wall with a surrounding built-in bookcase and a separate built-in bookcase in the southwest corner of the room. The fireplace brick is laid in a frame pattern that mimics the Prairie-style lines and squares of the door and window muntins. A pair of cabinets flanks the fireplace; they have faux-louvered doors that are not original; however, their interiors are lined with boards that match other original cabinet interiors in the house. The separate built-in cabinet is in the corner of the living room nearest the sun porch. This is the same height and has the same plain detailing of the cabinets at the fireplace surround. Over the fireplace mantle is a full-width mirror that fits in height between the mantle and the upper wall trim band.

c. Dining Room: The dining room has a particularly rich collection of decorative features including paneled wainscoting, a built-in buffet, a cabinet with a pair of art-glass doors, and special wall brackets above the buffet. The wainscoting rises to approximately chest-high; it is laid out in a wide board-and-batten pattern with smooth flat panels divided by shallow flat-board batten frames. It incorporates the standard tall, stepped baseboard trim below, and has no plate rail above, only a flat trim band with a thin trim stripe that wraps around and into the buffet. Above the wainscoting and below the standard picture-molding trim is a horizontal wall section that wraps the room in a wallpapered eye-level band. A portion of the room projects outward into an exterior bay the height of the upper picture-mold-height trim band. The wall brackets mark this opening; they face each other in line with the interior wall, supporting the header band. They each have a square corner block with a diagonal square inset; the blocks are supported by tall, acutely angled bases with slightly articulated outer frames, and, in turn, the blocks support ogee cantilevered corbels. The buffet is partially recessed into the

exterior bay and partially projecting into the room. The outer sides of the buffet are constrained by large pillars the height of the wainscoting. The buffet top is table-height, above two centered banks of drawers flanked by two outer cabinets. The paired cabinet doors have 9-lite Prairie-style glazing. The cabinetry does not have baseboards, so the paneled side pillars appear heavy and tall in contrast. Above the buffet counter and below the wainscoting band are three beveled mirrors. One is the full width of the buffet and the other two fill the sidewalls; the center mirror is remarkably long and narrow. The ribbon of four art-glass windows is centered above the buffet, in the wall of the projecting bay. Matching the glass pattern and colors is the glazing of the doors of the built-in display cabinet and of the viewing window of the swinging kitchen door. The display cabinet is flush with the west wall of the dining room, opposite the front windows. It fills the height between the baseboards and the picture-mold-height trim band. The cabinet has a pair of doors with simple wood frames. The door to the kitchen has a square window above a single, tall flat-panel. The window also has gold and clear leaded glass in a pattern of rectangles and square. Unlike the exterior windows, the interior art glass does not have any diagonal pieces.

e. Sun porch: The sun porch has primarily the typical trim; however, the large fixed south window has a long, interior window box-type shelf supported by a series of coved corbels. The thick, shallowly projecting shelf spans the width of the window; the brackets have multiple thin trim stripes at their tops and bases, and the curved faces have raised borders.

f. Kitchen: The kitchen, although extensively remodeled, still has much original trim at the doors and windows and some original built-in cabinets, including a cabinet that vents top and bottom at the screen porch. The vented cabinet has decorative trim casing using the door side trim on both sides and the top, creating square corner blocks. It has an unfinished redwood beaded-board interior. There is a piece of true linoleum tacked to the ceiling of the cabinet; it may represent the pattern of the original kitchen floor. The

linoleum has a geometric pattern of black, rust, and brown on a marbled background of brown and beige. One wide bank of both upper and base cabinets spans a portion of the north wall, and a narrow pantry cabinet is recessed under the stairs. Between the kitchen and dining room is a tiny butler's pantry that includes a lockable upper cabinet with a pair of doors glazed with cream-colored pebble glass.

g. Upper Hall: The main upper hall has a built-in linen cabinet; this has an upper cabinet door and a bank of lower drawers with spring-hinged fronts and clear glass knobs. It is all lockable, and the bronze key was in one of the locks. The trim matches the adjacent door casings. There is a more modest linen cabinet in the service hallway; it has a cabinet above a bank of deep drawers.

7. Hardware: The majority of the interior door and window hardware appears to be original to the house. The interior doorknobs include glass handles with escutcheon plates that are rectangles extended by arches top and bottom; original door hinges have removable ball-topped hinge pins. Bedroom locks have small knurled knobs with small escutcheons. Original window hardware includes casement handles and hinges as well as the recessed handles for the double-hung units; the kitchen transom has its operating handle.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation The forced-air heater is located in the basement. Heat supplies are primarily installed in baseboards around the house; these have heavy, cast-metal grills in a grid pattern. A large air return is located in the entry hall floor; this has a modern grate.

b. Lighting and electrical: The dining room has a crystal chandelier and two matching sconces that are not likely original since they have plastic faux candles and the sconce escutcheons do not fit into the surrounding trim. All

other light fixtures in the house also appear to have been replaced or added much later. The living room, kitchen, and bedrooms do not have overhead lighting. The kitchen has a small, simple sconce over the sink. The fuse box is located in the screen porch; it has a knife switch main shutoff and porcelain fuse holders.

c. Plumbing: One of the upstairs bathrooms has what appear to be original fixtures, although the surrounding finishes have been modified. The freestanding, oblong, cast-iron tub has a flared, baseboard-style base; the sink is a simple pedestal with separate hot and cold faucets. A built-in painted-wood medicine cabinet with mirror is centered above the sink. The toilet has been replaced. No other original fixtures remain.

9. Original furnishings: There are no original furnishings remaining in the house.

D. SITE:

1. General setting and orientation: The subject property includes five frame buildings—the large, stucco, Prairie-style main house and four modest outbuildings—on a large, level parcel in an area of Milpitas that includes a variety of uses: residential, commercial, civic, religious, and industrial. The property is still visually connected to the parcel adjacent to the south, which has recently been split from this property. The subject property includes the house, outbuildings, and trees that include a variety of fruit trees, such as fig, orange, and stone- and seed- fruit, as well as a number of large, mature landscaping trees, including pine, palm, and magnolia. Although known to have been an orchard, the parcel to the south is cleared; there is no fence or other division between these existing lots. The surrounding properties include a church to the north side of the parcel and industrial buildings to the rear (west). Across the street are a Neo-classical former elementary school and its open grounds, designed by the same architect as this house.

The two-story main house faces east and is roughly centered in its current parcel. It is set back from the street by a large yard that includes a circular driveway. To the north side of the house is a driveway that leads to a large, gravel parking area at the rear outbuildings. Set apart from the house by the parking area, behind the northwest corner of the house, is a vernacular two-story residential building that has added Prairie-style elements on its main (east) façade. Immediately to the north of the detached residence, near the property line, is a tank house. To the southwest of the detached residence, not far from the rear property line, is a two-car garage that faces the center of the main house. In the northwest corner of the parcel (to the west of the tank house and north of the garage) is a one-story agricultural shed that is surrounded in vegetation; its rectangular footprint runs east/west.

2. Historic landscape design: Long-term gardening efforts are in evidence at the site; fruit trees and large species trees are distributed around the generally open site. Ornamental shrubs and bulbs—such as pelargoniums, *amaryllis belladonna*, and cannas—are arrayed in foundation plantings and border the driveway.

3. Outbuildings:

a. Residential cottage: The two-story detached residential outbuilding has a rectangular footprint. Its underlying core appears older than the main house; it has nineteenth-century doors that seem original, not salvaged, board-wall construction, and low-ceiling interior spaces indicating remodeling. Further indicating its earlier use, on its north side is centered a second-story hay-loft door with a projecting hoist beam. The residence now has a flat roof with built-in gutters similar to the main house. Centered on the long front (east) side, facing the rear of the main house, is an arbor that is detailed to match the Prairie-style main house. The arbor has a pattern of vertical lines and rectangles combined with corner squares; this pattern mimics the window and door lite patterns of the front house. The house is clad with v-groove

siding that meets at round corner moldings. The house has asymmetrically placed aluminum slider windows that either replaced earlier fenestration or were added to the structure later. On the rear (west) is a one-story lean-to with a 4-lite window.

b. Tank house: This tank house has traditionally sloped walls and square footprint. It is clad in v-groove siding that meets at corner boards with cloverleaf cross sections. The flat roof of the approximately two-story structure has overhanging eaves; there is no tank atop the building. There is a narrow frieze board under the eaves and an ogee molding at the corner between the frieze and the enclosed soffit. One door opens in the east façade; it has flat-board trim.

c. Garage: Encapsulated within the detached two-car garage is an early, gabled, one-bay stable or garage. The second garage bay was added so that the whole building now has a high, flat roof and false-front parapets that conceal the older structure at the front. The main elevation (east) of the channel-rustic-clad building has two garage openings cased with flat-board trim; the corner boards are also 1x flat boards. The east and south elevations have a large “fascia-type” metal gutter attached at a mid-point of the parapet; these might act as scuppers for the low-slope roof, but appear to be ornamental, as there are no downspouts. The older portion of the garage has studs with aligned rafters atop a single top plate and an unpaved floor; there is no ridge beam, but there is one crosstie. The old bay has two original windows; the north and west sides each have a 2x2-lite window. Two matching openings within the south-facing, originally exterior, wall have no sash. The new automobile bay also has stud walls and rafters that rest on the pitched roof; this bay has a concrete floor that may have been added later. An open shed has been added to the rear (west) of the garage. Its corrugated-metal shed roof is supported at the rear beam by three heavy posts that appear to be salvaged utility poles, as well as a beam line with 4x4 posts underneath the center of the tongue-and-groove sheathed roof. The pitched

roof of the original stable and the shed roof of the addition are visible from the rear.

d. Shed: The vernacular detached agricultural building has a rectangular footprint and simple gabled roof that is asymmetrical in pitch. The board-and-batten walls support the shingled roof with exposed rafter tails. This building was engulfed in vegetation and enclosed by a fence that made it difficult to document.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings:

No original drawings located.

B. Early views:

No early views located.

C. Interviews:

Oral History Interviews:

Rensselaer Smith III 12/05-1/06

Josephine DeVries- 12/20/05

Mabel Mattos- 12/15/05

Other Contacts:

Ed Cavallini-12/12/06

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Maps

1902 Map of Santa Clara County on file with the Santa Clara County Surveyors Office.

1929 Map, Official Map of Santa Clara County, California. McMillian & McMillian.

1946 School District Assessment Maps on file with the Santa Clara County Surveyors Office.

1963 Record of Survey of Portion of Abel Street being a portion of Milpitas Rancho and Tularcitos Rancho, Santa Clara County, CA. Public Works Department, City of Milpitas.

1972 Parcel Map. Consisting of One Sheet Being a Portion of Tularcitos Rancho, Santa Clara County. Lying within the City of Milpitas. Mackay & Sons. February 1972.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by Archives and Architecture: Heritage Resource Partners and provided to Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition, the developer, for submittal to the City of Milpitas as a mitigation requirement as part of the Milpitas Senior Housing project. This mitigation measure consists of documentation of the extant buildings on the subject property their methods of construction according to HABS/HAER-like standards of the National Park Service. This documentation and archival photographs are intended to be archived at a local repository.

Archives and Architecture:

Leslie Dill-Architectural Historian

Jessica Kusz- Preservation Specialist

Franklin Maggi-Architectural Historian and photographer

Charlene Duval-Public Historian

PART V. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INDEX OF ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHS

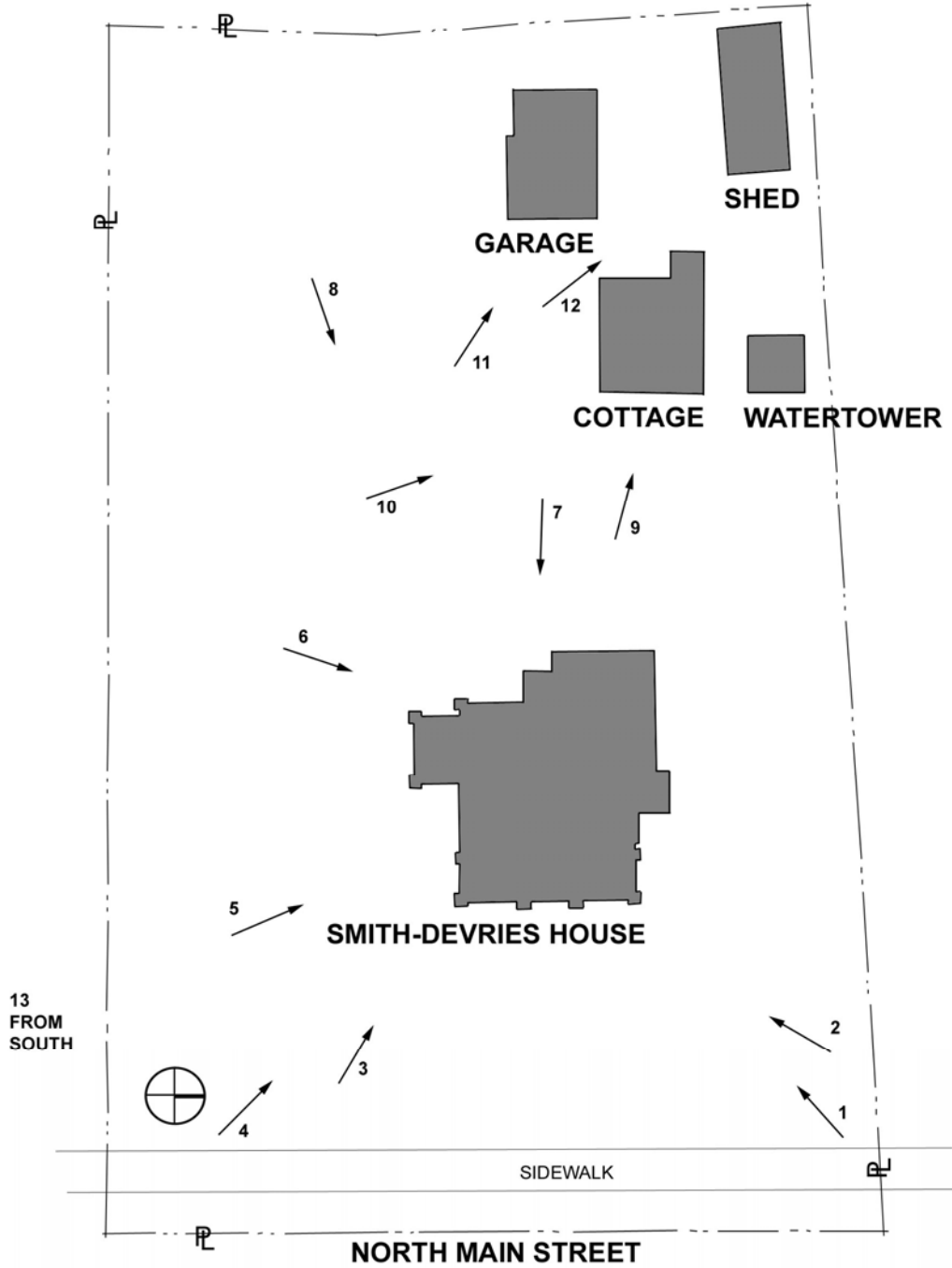
Photo Number 1	View of southwest, North Main Street elevation
Photo Number 2	View of south, front facade
Photo Number 3	View of northwest, front façade
Photo Number 4	View of northwest, North Main Street elevation
Photo Number 5	View of northwest, northwest building corner
Photo Number 6	View of northeast, northeast building corner
Photo Number 7	View of east, rear facade
Photo Number 8	View of east, rear garden area
Photo Number 9	View of west from garden area, rear cottage
Photo Number 10	View of northwest, rear cottage
Photo Number 11	View of northwest, garage
Photo Number 12	View of northwest from rear cottage, shed
Photo Number 13	View of northwest from adjacent lot
Photo Number 14	View of southwest, main entry stairs
Photo Number 15	View of northwest, main entry hall
Photo Number 16	View of south from dining room toward entry hall
Photo Number 17	View of southwest, living room

- Photo Number 18 View of northwest, dining room
- Photo Number 19 View of west, dining room
- Photo Number 20 View of southeast, sun porch
- Photo Number 21 View of north, second floor stairs and hallway
- Photo Number 22 View of west, second floor hallway
- Photo Number 23 View of southeast, second floor bathroom

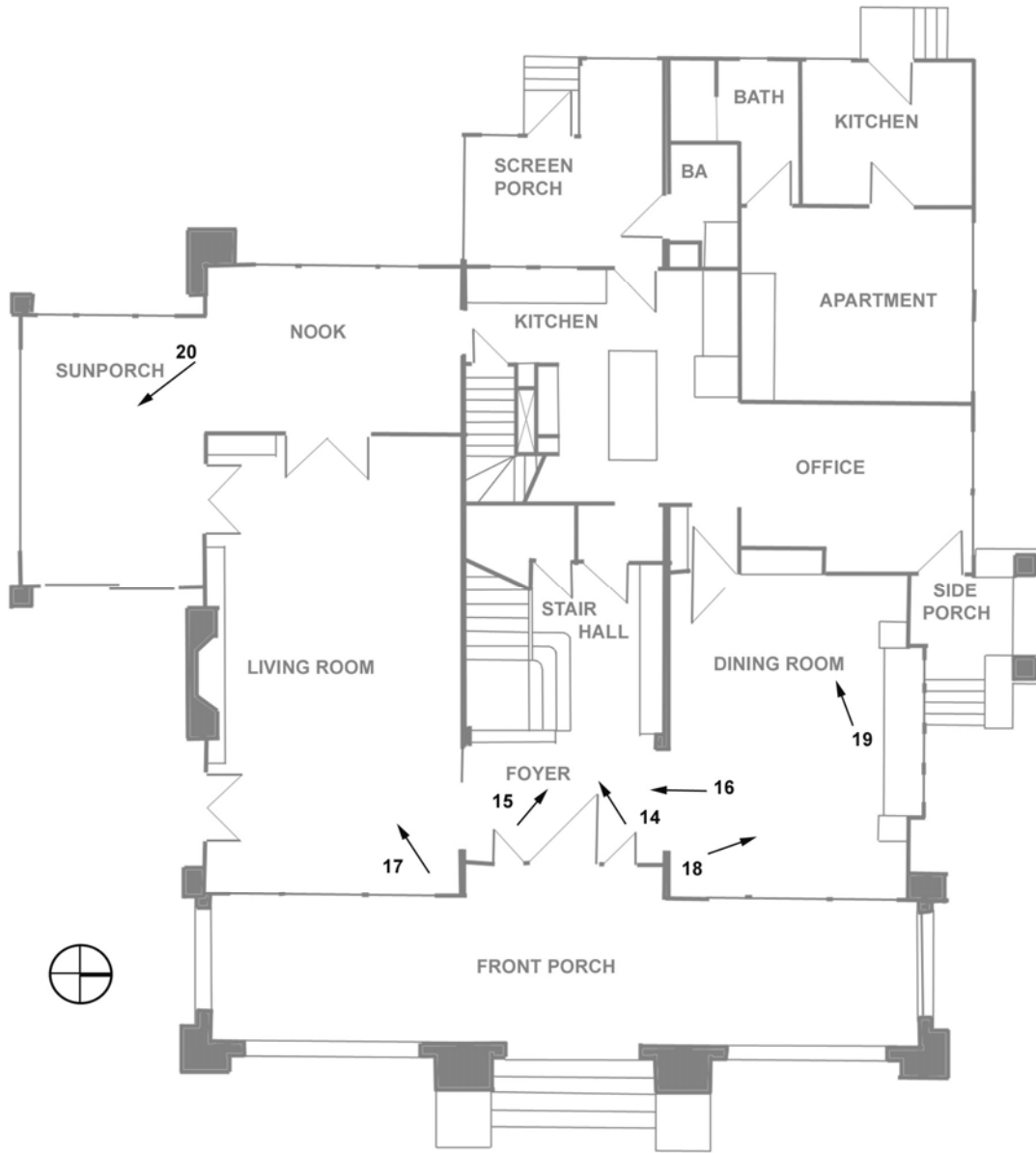
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1. Name of property and/or address
2. County and state where the property is located.
3. Name of photographer
4. Date of photograph
5. Location of original negative
6. Description of view indicating direction of camera
7. Photograph number

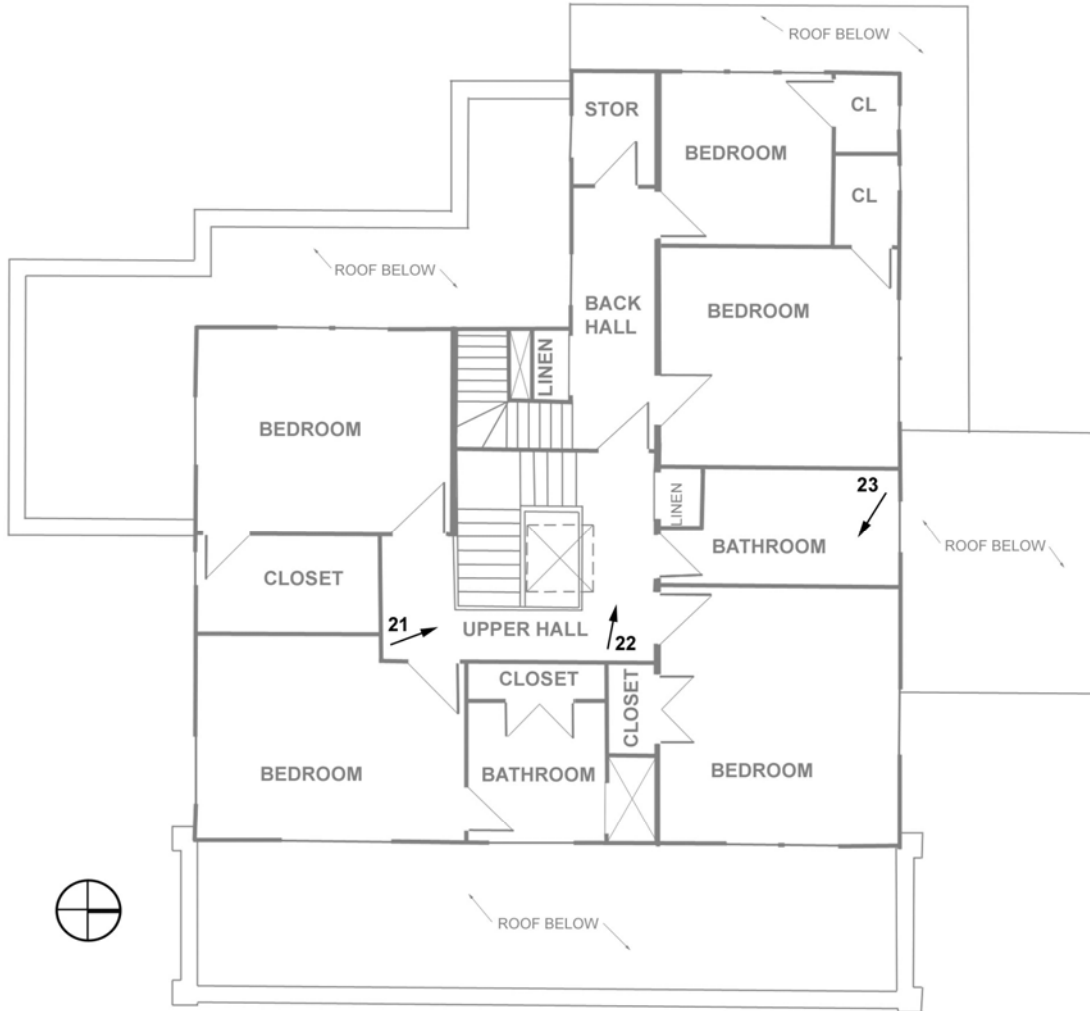
SITE DIAGRAM



FIRST FLOOR DIAGRAM



SECOND FLOOR DIAGRAM



APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINTS AND NEGATIVES (ATTACHED)