

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1113

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: San Jose Central Fire Station
Other names/site number: Former San Jose Fire Station One
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 201 North Market St.
City or town: San Jose State: CA County: Santa Clara
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 x A B x C D

 State Historic Preservation Officer Nov. 14, 2014
Signature of certifying official/Title: California Office of Historic Preservation
Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____
Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Jan Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper

1-7-15
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT-Fire Station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

RECREATION AND CULTURE-Museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT-International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

San Jose Central Fire Station, also known today as Former San Jose Fire Station One, is located at the northwest corner of North Market and West St. James Streets in downtown San Jose. Situated on the southern end of a city block adjacent its modern replacement, this large, modern, two-story fire station (inactive since the year 2000), is within an urban area of moderate to large commercial and government office buildings in the northern end of the downtown. While most of these nearby buildings are contemporary in age, the area contains a mixture of building sizes and types, reflecting over a century of diverse urban development. San Jose Central Fire Station opened in 1951, during the beginnings of an expansive era of growth in San Jose. It was designed in a modernistic way as a reflection of the ambitions and goals for the future by an optimistic City intent on creating the environment for rapid industrialization. The most prestigious local architectural firm of the time, Binder & Curtis, was commissioned for the design. The execution of the project remains one of their last and finest legacies in the six decades that the firm helped define the city's downtown skyline. International Style in its simplicity and use of unarticulated volumes and voids, but with accents referencing Art Moderne in its horizontal banding of windows, and monumental in its articulation of mass, keystones, and engaged columns, it remains one of the most well executed and unique examples of post-World War II early-modern designs in San Jose's urban core. The style itself had only begun to surface locally just before the World War II, and flourished for about 20 years, to be superseded by commercial and institutional architecture more parametric in form, or Bay Regional in style. The property maintains almost all of its historic integrity, and remains in excellent condition, exhibiting only minor changes today from its original design intent and materials. Those modifications have not changed the character of the building, but rather adapted the building to changing conditions in operations, as San Jose's downtown grew to become the capital of Silicon Valley.

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Narrative Description

The main facade of San Jose Central Fire Station, as well as both its successor building located immediately adjacent to the north, has three bays facing along North Market Street, a major thoroughfare in San Jose's downtown. These bays are labeled "Battalion 1", "Truck 1", and "Engine 1". The three engine companies that have historically been associated with San Jose's Station No. 1 in its various configurations (all located along North Market Street in the downtown since the mid-1890s), are represented in this main facade of the building. San Jose Central Fire Station was configured to allow up to six vehicles inside, two in each bay, and was the first station constructed locally with drive-through bays that allowed apparatus to be driven into the building from the rear from North San Pedro Street. Some minor changes have occurred to the bays, including a change to the maximum internal height of the center bay (modified to facilitate larger apparatus), and replacement roll-up doors.

Built of reinforced poured-in-place concrete, the building is two stories in height and is rectangular in plan. It is covered with built-up roofing. The exterior walls are finished smooth, with subtle horizontal and vertical scoring that establish a matrix of large blocks on all four sides of the building. This concrete scoring, partnered with deeply recessed fenestration and door openings, and large engaged columns at the main facade, presents a vivid sense of monumentality to the building.

Fenestration consists of multi-light metal casement, tilt, and fixed windows. At the second level, the windows are horizontally grouped with integral concrete header and sill trim that visually wrap and band the windows together. These vertical casement windows are set in groups of two with alternating small and large wall separations. The banding wraps the building from the rear tower and terminates near the front center of the building at North Market Street, where an elongated keystone provides a base to what was once a roof mounted flag pole. The keystone is mirrored at the rear tower, where they rise above ventilation openings at the top of the walls. The flag pole was relocated fairly early in the life of the building to a landscaped area at the corner of the site. At ground level, the windows are also recessed deeply into the walls. The featured windows at the street elevations have large multi-light panes within wood sash, and are clustered under deep overhangs behind large rounded engaged columns. These windows are located at both ends of the front facade, and wrap around the front corner to the side facade along East St. James Street. The lower tilt windows within these groupings are matched by two similar-sized fixed windows above. The columns that frame these feature windows rise from brick-faced bases. Both sets of feature windows at the front corners contain small pedestrian doors that provide access to the office and lunchroom areas. At the front facade of the building, deep columns frame the truck bays. Other ground-level metal casement windows along the rear of the side facade at West St. James Street and at the interior elevations pierce the walls without ornamentation.

The upstairs areas contain sleeping rooms as well as other ancillary spaces originally related to the 24-hour use of the building. At the southwest corner of the building, a hose drying tower extends to the rear along West St. James Street and rises above the roof line. The ground level of

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the tower bumps out to the street and merges into an integral masonry fence that wraps the corner at North San Pedro Street. The outdoor service area is accessed off of North San Pedro Street.

The building is a physical reflection of the operational needs of running a emergency services headquarters and large downtown fire station in the 1950s, and has changed little since its design and construction. Various communication functions and related equipment were later relocated to a new Communication Building at the Civic Center near West Mission Street after San Jose's City Hall was built to the north of the downtown in the late 1950s. This change in the use of the building did not result in a physical change to the structure when it occurred.

A replacement fire station opened in 2000, and is located on the parcel to the direct north, filling the rest of the city block. It is similar in scale and form to San Jose Central Fire Station, although built of materials more visually and functionally characteristic of building technology of the present day. The new station is physically distinct from the subject building. The 1951-built San Jose Central Fire Station building has been vacant and used for storage for over a decade, and is proposed for a downtown San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) to house exhibits from the extensive collection of fire apparatus owned by SJFM that is currently housed at the City of San Jose Corporation Yard. The City of San Jose has designated the site a City Landmark (HL08-169). The SJFM presently has an agreement with the Oversight Board (successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose) to transfer ownership.

The property known as San Jose Central Fire Station maintains almost all of its historic integrity as per the National Register's seven aspects of integrity. The historic fire station maintains its original location on the northwest corner of North Market and West St. James Streets in downtown San Jose. It is surrounded by a setting that includes a variety of industrial and commercial buildings, but with little continuity of design or type of building, as has existed since the building was constructed in 1951. The building exhibits two changes that have not compromised its integrity, including a like-for-like replacement of the drive-through bay doors, as well as an extension of the maximum height of some of the bay openings themselves to allow for larger apparatus. The original form, massing, and materials of the building remain true to the original design and the property retains its mid-twentieth century institutional scale, and sense of workmanship, and feeling of the era. The building today effectively illustrates its direct association with the expansion of emergency services in San Jose during a period of explosive growth following World War II, and its future use as a museum will provide an interpretative setting of the historic and vital role of emergency services in modern San Jose. It also retains architectural features that identify it as a late but significant work of the architectural firm of Binder & Curtis, whose body of work influenced the design of downtown San Jose over sixty year period, beginning in the 1890s, and extending to the closing of the firm in the late 1950s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CRITERION A: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT,
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1951-1958

Significant Dates

1951 (date of construction)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Curtis, Ernest N. (architect, Binder & Curtis)

Heid, Warren (project architect, Binder & Curtis)

Bridges Construction Company (builder)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

San Jose Central Fire Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance for its association with the mid-century expansion of the City of San Jose in the areas of Community Planning & Development and Politics/Government. San Jose Central Fire Station is also eligible under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of the later work of the architectural firm Binder & Curtis. The building is a significant modern architectural work that is representative of a period of rapid urban expansion in San Jose following World War II. Locally, the business community launched a campaign to attract new non-agricultural industries to Santa Clara Valley, resulting in the creation of a new economic base in the region focused on the electronic and defense industries. This growth resulted in a population increase between 1950 and 1975 from 95,000 to 500,000 residents. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, city leaders, anticipating this new growth, presented two bond measures to the public for fire safety improvements. San Jose Central Fire Station was one of five fire stations constructed in the downtown area with proceeds from the first bond measure in 1946, and is the most historically significant due to its design and its function as an innovative new emergency communications center, a role it played until 1958. The new stations reflected the new regional vitality, were built to expand emergency services in an era of rapid growth. Central Fire Station was intended to serve as a communication and command center, and was designed in a modern and monumental way to reflect its pivotal role in the larger emergency services system.

The building was identified for its historical significance as a part of the early 1990s San Jose Historic Resources Inventory Update, Phase II, and was designated a local San Jose City Landmark in 2012.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance of San Jose Central Fire Station is 1951-1958.

The period of significance spans a seven year period from the initial construction and opening of the building in 1951, until the completion and opening of San Jose City Hall and its companion new Communications Building on West Mission Street north of downtown San Jose.

Criteria Considerations

n/a

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Patterns and Events

San Jose Central Fire Station has local cultural significance as an intact representation of significant patterns of community development in San Jose's post-World War II era when it began to industrialize and suburbanize into a large urban metropolis that exists today. San Jose Central Fire Station is directly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of San Jose's history, in the area of community planning and development. It remains today a primary symbol within the history of the City of San Jose's Fire Department, and sustains an important link to the City's formative expansion following World War II and the mid-twentieth century efforts at community planning and development, which endured to support pioneering methods in construction and expressions of post-War Modern architecture.

The San Jose Fire Department was formally organized on January 27, 1854, by San Jose Ordinance No. 239. Originally, the department was composed of several volunteer groups, each dedicated to a specific piece of apparatus and trained to be highly proficient on that equipment. As the early city evolved, the City of San Jose bought more firefighting equipment and built fire houses for each of the groups. It took several years and a few large fires before a more reliable volunteer organization was in place, although San Jose escaped the horrific fires that destroyed San Francisco four times and wiped out many other Gold Rush era settlements in California.

The first fire house was built by the City of San Jose in 1854, on Lightston Alley two blocks south of San Jose Central Fire Station. The building housed, Hook & Ladder No. 1, reorganized and newly named to man this first publicly operated fire station in the city. This building was the home of three fire companies for the next 15 years. In 1869, the State Legislature passed an act incorporating the department, and that same year the City of San Jose bought property on Second Street in the downtown for Empire Company No. 1, while Hook and Ladder No. 1 moved into rented quarters. The third company, Torrent Engine Company No. 2, was moved to the 1855-built City Hall building on North Market Street. Torrent remained at the city hall site for 82 years until construction of San Jose Central Fire Station in 1951. After 1869, a number of additional volunteer companies were organized in the city, but they were replaced by a professional fire department that was organized in 1876. In October of that year, the City of San Jose established a department with paid staff, consisting of a Chief and 29 men, although volunteer companies continued to exist in order to supplement the professional fire department.

During the next three quarters of a century, the Fire Department grew slowly, but political upheaval brought in a new reformist administration to the City of San Jose in 1944. One of the new administration's key objectives was to update obsolete fire equipment and the aging fire houses around the city, echoing what was occurring across the country as the nation prepared for the post-war years. As World War II came to an end, fire officials in every city and state began to make plans for postwar improvements in firefighting, using new technology made available through wartime research. In the years following World War II, California also experienced a

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period of unparalleled prosperity and optimism spurred by unprecedented urban growth and economic expansion. The state's population doubled between 1940 and 1950, and this increase in population created a new problem, one of accommodating this influx of new residents with essential services.

In 1945, upheaval within the Fire Department and exposés in local newspapers regarding the inadequacies of the then leadership led to both bureaucratic and public approval of organizational changes and improvements to the San Jose Fire Department. In 1946, a \$350,000 fire bond measure provided the funds necessary to build five new fire stations, although Station No. 1, the last funded by the 1946 bond, required creative financing to pay for its construction, which exceeded the bond proceeds. In addition to the construction of new stations, the bond also high-lighted the implementation of plans for a central emergency communications center, to be included within Station No. 1. At the time of opening, the name had become Central Fire Station, in recognition of the new status of the station, which included a new communication system integrating the communication and command center for emergency services throughout the city.

Construction of four neighborhood fire stations preceded Central Fire Station, including Engine Company No. 2 (inactive) at North 6th and East Julian Streets in 1948, Engine Co. 5 (demolished) at North 6th and East Taylor Streets in 1948, Engine Co. 6 (demolished) at Minnesota Avenue and Iris Court in 1949, and Engine Co. 8 (active) at East Santa Clara and South 17th Streets in 1949. San Jose had risen from Class 5 to a Class 4 in fire insurance classification due to equipment upgrades, saving an estimated \$225,000 annually in insurance premiums. A second bond in 1952 added similar stations at South 3rd and Martha Streets (Active Engine Cos. 3 and 13), and Auzerais and Minor Streets (Active Engine Cos. 4 and 12). By 1955, the expanding population required additional stations, and temporary locations were established in the outlying neighborhoods - those growing needs met with permanent fire stations which have kept pace with the expansion of the urban service area to the present.

Bridges Construction Co. won a competitive bid to build Central Fire Station and was issued a building permit on April 12, 1950 (SJ BP #10395). Central Fire Station was put into service on March 15, 1951, the brass poles from the old station No. 1 at 35 North Market St. installed on that date to signify the relocation. The official dedication on April 30, 1951, was a day-long open house event brought together the San Jose Chamber of Commerce, San Jose High School Band, civic officials, veterans groups, and 500 school children to celebrate the opening of the station.

Forty-five years after opening San Jose Central Fire Station, on April 30, 1996, San Jose City Council voted to build a new fire station just north of the existing renamed San Jose Fire Station One. The new station to the north was opened for service on September 15, 2000. On January 5, 1999, the City transferred the site of Fire Station One to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose. Today, The Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San Jose holds the title to the subject property.

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Criterion C: Architecture

San Jose Central Fire Station is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent locally significant example of the work of locally prominent architectural firm of Binder & Curtis. Fire station design in the post-World War II era differed substantially from the traditional, and typically classically-inspired design types of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the 1951-built Central Fire Station reflects the then-contemporary ideas for fire stations (as well as other public buildings) across the United States. The fire station building is a late but significant International style architectural work that is representative of a period of rapid urban expansion in San Jose following World War II, as well as the evolution of fire station construction in the post-War era.

Fire station architecture in the United States prior to World War II was dictated by many factors, including architectural trends at the time of construction, budget, the location of the fire station and surrounding setting (whether urban or rural), and availability of materials. Cities with larger budgets were able to demand the latest and greatest in fire-station technology, while locales with less to spend were forced to make do with older and oftentimes outdated technology.

In 1932, following an exhibit of modern architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York by H. R. Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, the beginnings of the Modern Movement in America began, influenced by the evolving International Style that had its roots in Interwar Europe that had stressed rationality, logic and a break with the past. This new aesthetic was first called the "International Style" by the 1932 MOMA exhibit and its accompanying publication. This style was a reaction against the ornamentation of previous decades, and sought a sense of authenticity in both the use of materials and the visual representation of a building's function. The International style and the philosophy of rationality and simplicity it represented is best represented in the work of architects Walter Gropius (founder of the Bauhaus, the first Modernist school of design and architecture), Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Gropius and van der Rohe brought this style to America after fleeing Germany with the closure of the Bauhaus in 1933. These pioneers of the modern movement influenced Modernist American architects through both their designs and the influence they had as teachers; Mies at the Illinois Institute of Technology and Gropius at the Harvard School of Design. The International style buildings, composed of steel, glass and concrete, were minimalist in concept, stressed functionalism and were devoid of nonessential decoration.

The International style is primarily associated with commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings rather than residential architecture. During the 1930s and 1940s, American designers sought to distance themselves from the complexities and associations of historical antecedents, exploring the beauty in materials themselves and the forms that resulted from an approach to design based on function. The Modernist movement found its way into every other facet of architecture in the post-war era, and in the 1950s, Modernism became the primary means of expression in the built environment.

The works of local architects were influenced by designs promulgated in national architectural magazines such as *Architectural Record* and *Progressive Architecture*. By the 1950s, the

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contemporary works of architects with world-wide stature such as Mies Van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright, Eero Saarinen, Le Corbusier, and Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill provided a full range of design ideas - and validation of Modernism at the local level - due to the immediacy that the national magazine press provided. Until the 1950s, most of the work of local modernist architects had characteristics related to the evolving Bay Tradition style associated with regional architects such as William Wurster, Gardner Dailey, and others. In San Jose, architects such as Binder & Curtis, Ralph Wyckoff and Edward Kress were first to embrace this new aesthetic, although their work is more directly related to the Art Moderne movement, that had been built upon the principles of the International Style during the late 1930s. This local work, which San Jose Central Fire Station distinctly symbolizes, tended towards an implementation of modernistic principles focused on the interplay of mass, volume, and space, with strong abstract symbolism related to movement, horizontality, and function. The local architectural firm of Binder & Curtis (comprised of William Binder and Ernest N. Curtis) were the architects for the new San Jose Central Fire Station, and Ernest N. Curtis was architect of record, while Warren Heid was the project architect. Binder & Curtis was San Jose's most prolific firm at that time, having designed much of downtown San Jose during 60 years of active work that began when William Binder first established his own firm in 1897. Curtis became Binder's partner in 1918.

William Binder (1871-1953) began his career in the 1890s. Born in San Francisco, he acquired his education by working under architect George W. Page, one of San Jose's leading architects during the late nineteenth century. Binder was influenced by Louis Henry Sullivan, a Chicago architect who pioneered the use of steel framing and newly-invented electric elevator, making the construction of skyscrapers possible. When Binder left Page's firm to establish his own in the late 1890s, he became the first San Jose architect to utilize these innovative ideas in his designs, which quickly proved their fitness in the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake.

Binder's partner, Ernest N. Curtis (1889-1956), was born in San Jose. Like Binder, Curtis also served as an apprentice to George Page and then Binder himself. Following his return from the warfront in 1918, Curtis became Binder's partner, extending the capability of the firm into the future that would continue to shape the built-landscape of San Jose during the Interwar years and later. Major commissions that are now local City Landmarks included the Theatre Jose, Towne Theater, the Twohy Building, Montgomery Hotel, Commercial Building (high-rise), San Jose's Civic Auditorium, and the San Jose Water Company headquarters. During the post-war years, Binder & Curtis became the area's premier institutional architect, designing schools, and managing the creation of Santa Clara County's government center.

Warren Heid, the project architect, was also born locally, and received his B.A. in Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley in 1950. He later received several awards and distinctions in his career, including one of Factory Magazine's "Top Ten National Industrial Plants" of 1968 for his design of the San Jose Mercury Newspaper plant.

San Jose Central Fire Station remains the most architecturally distinctive of a dispersed grouping of seven firehouses built in San Jose during the first decade after World War II, of which five remain. The design by Binder & Curtis is a distinguished feature in downtown San Jose, a clear physical representative of a specific time within the evolution of the city's modern urban core.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Farrell, Harry. "Old Firehouse Abandoned; Long Serve the New!" *San Jose Mercury Herald*, 16 March, 1951.

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Zurier, Rebecca. *The American Firehouse: An Architectural and Social History*. New York: Abeville Press, 1982.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HL08-169

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.338797 | Longitude: -121.894741 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the property is as defined on the Santa Clara County as Assessor's Parcel Number 259-33-077, a 0.453 acre parcel comprising the southerly portion of the block bounded by North Market Street on the east, St. James Street on the south, North San Pedro Street on the west, and Devine Street on the north.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the property is restricted to the historic fire station and city lot on which it has been located since its initial construction date, according to Assessor's Parcel records.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Franklin Maggi/Architectural Historian and Sarah Winder/Historian
organization: Archives & Architecture, LLC
street & number: PO BOX 1332
city or town: San Jose state: CA zip code: 95109
e-mail: franklin.maggi@archistory.com
telephone: (408) 297-2684
date: August 28, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State



37.338457 degrees -121.894335 degrees San Jose Central Fire Station 201 North Market St.

San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photograph Log

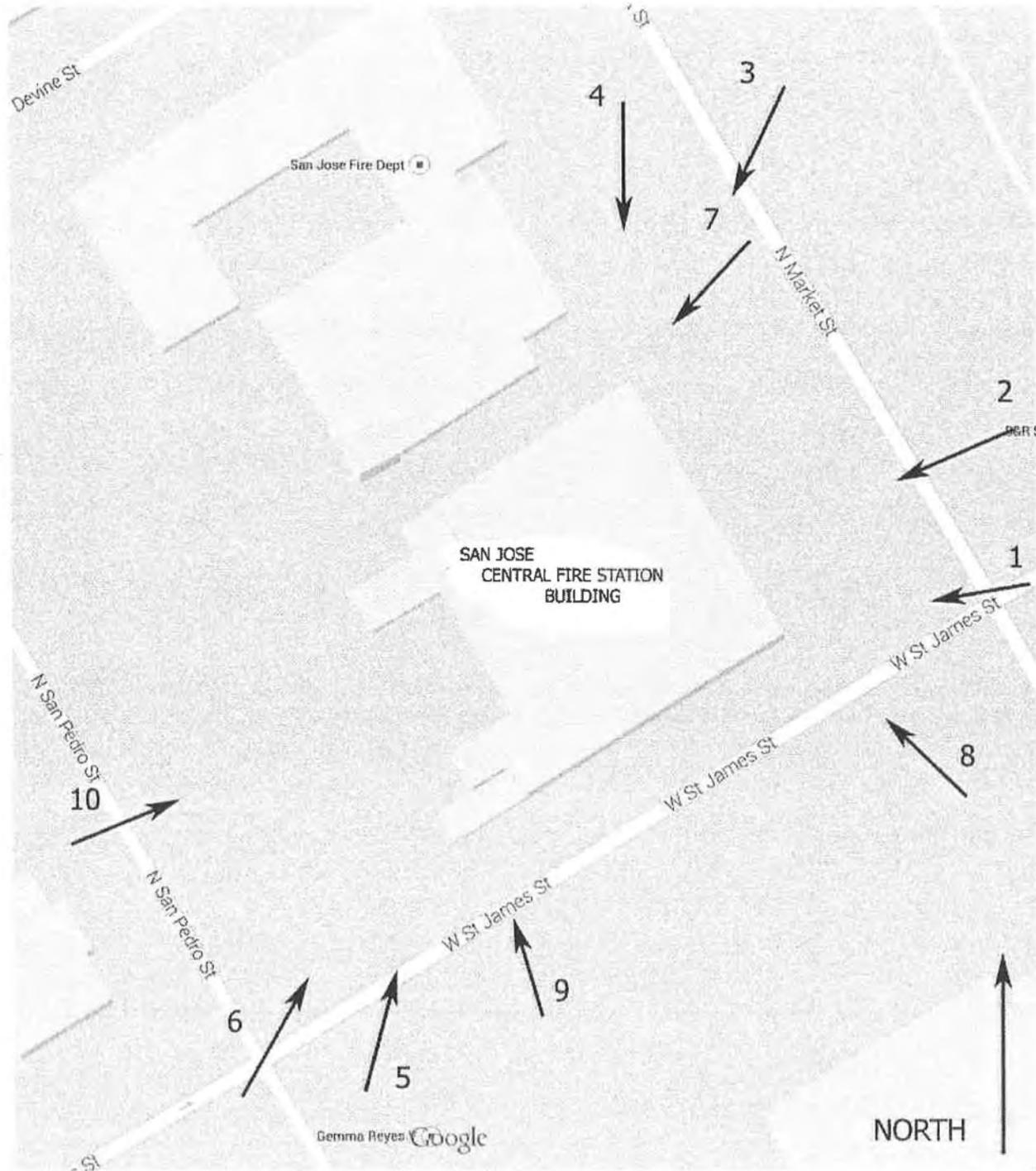
Name of Property	San Jose Central Fire Station
City or Vicinity	San Jose
County	Santa Clara County
State	CA
Name of Photographer	Franklin Maggi
Date of Photographs	March 2014
Location of Original Digital Files	533 N. 10th St., San Jose, CA 95112
Number of Photographs	10

1. Overview of San Jose Central Fire Station, viewed facing east.
2. Front façade, viewed facing east.
3. Easterly (front) and northerly elevations, viewed facing south.
4. Detailed view of easterly and northerly elevations, viewed facing south.
5. Westerly (rear) and southerly elevations, viewed facing north.
6. Rear elevation, viewed facing northeast.
7. Northerly elevation, viewed facing south.
8. Southerly elevation, viewed facing west.
9. Detailed view of hose drying tower, viewed facing north.
10. Rear elevation, viewed facing east.

San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo Key



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo 1



Photo 2



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo 3



Photo 4



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo 5

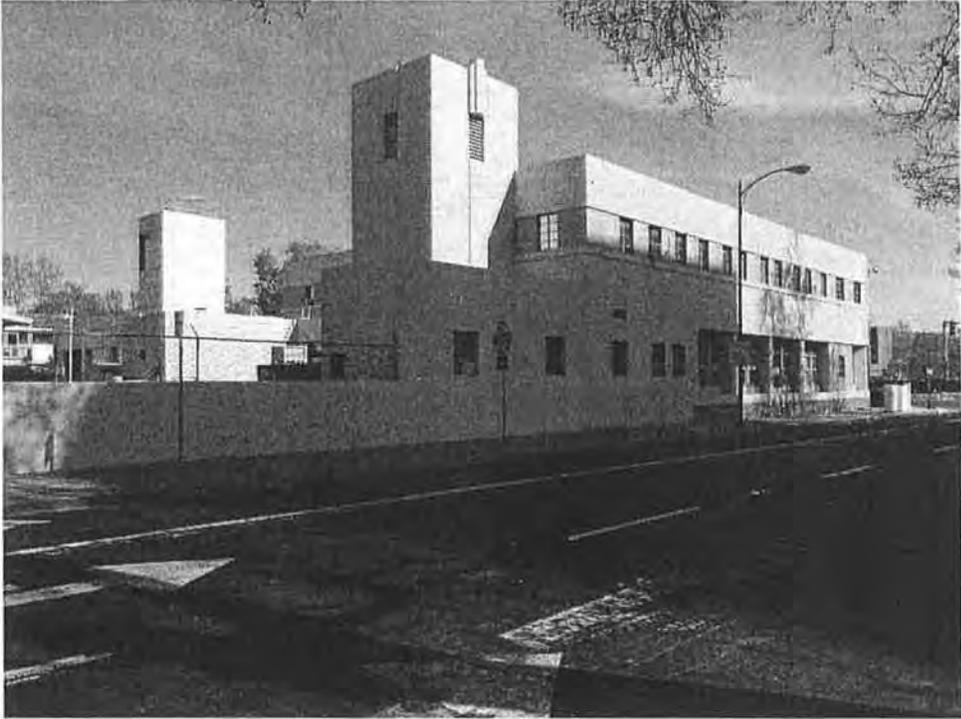
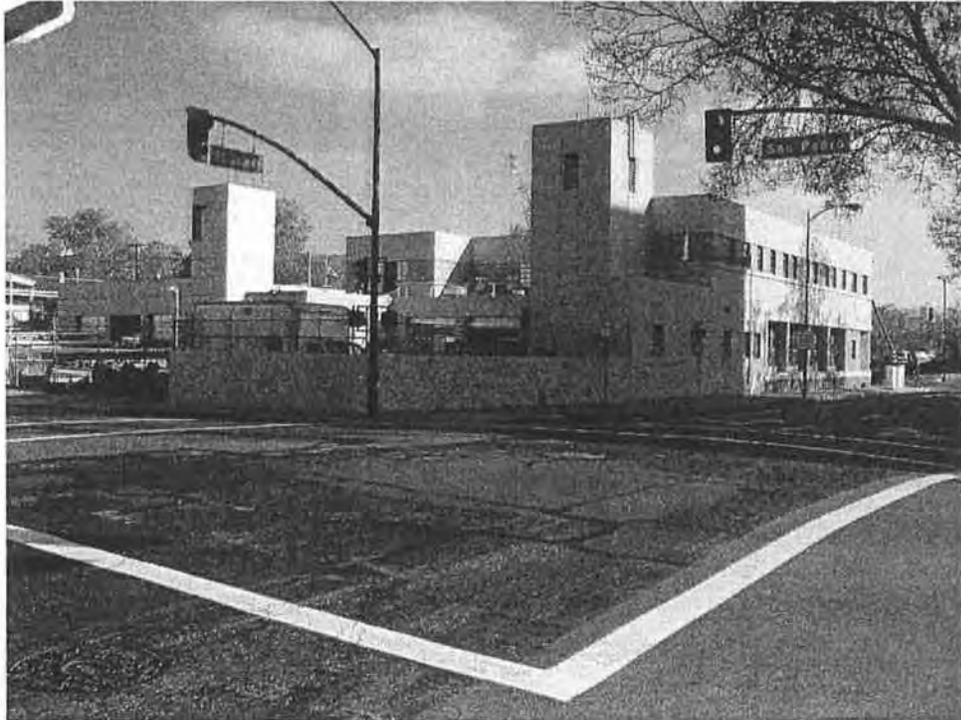


Photo 6



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo 7



Photo 8



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Photo 9

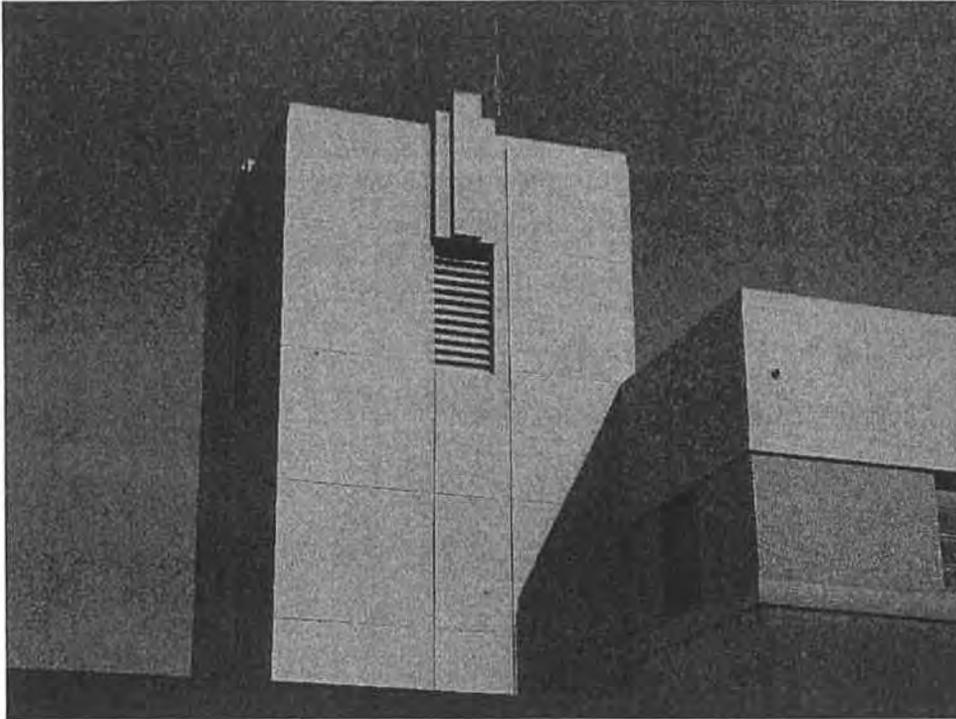
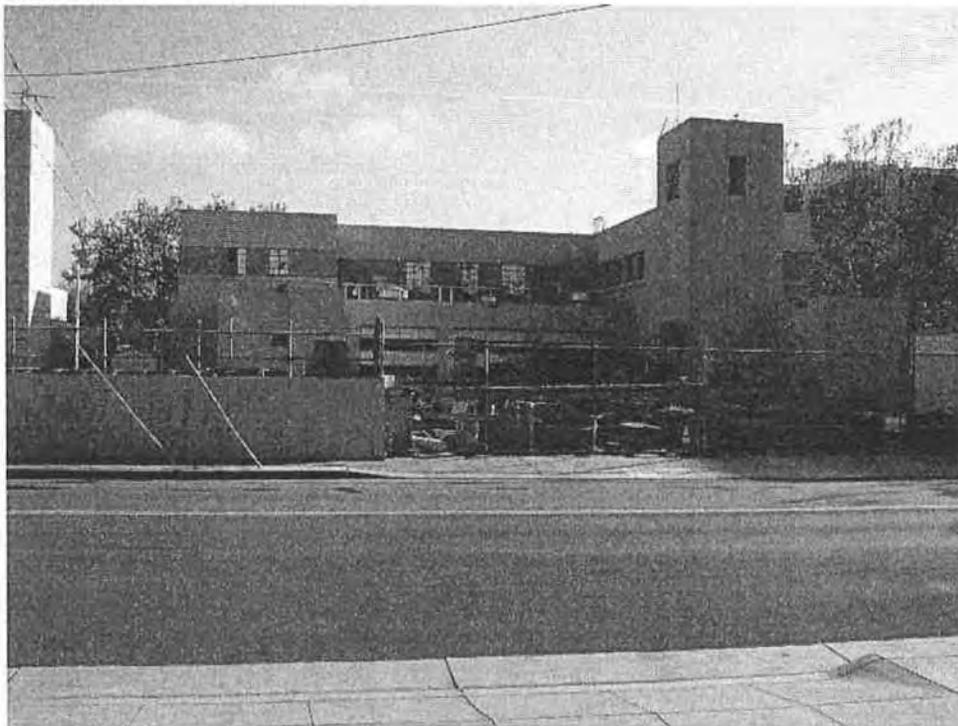


Photo 10



San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Index of Figures

Name of Property	San Jose Central Fire Station
City or Vicinity	San Jose
County	Santa Clara County
State	CA
Number of Figures	2

Figure 1. New Headquarters at 201 N. Market Street, 1951. Nailen, R. L. *Guardians of the Garden City: The History of The San Jose Fire Department*. San Jose: Smith & McKay Printing Co., 1972.

Figure 2. Central Fire Station, ca. 1962. Nailen, R. L. *Guardians of the Garden City: The History of The San Jose Fire Department*. San Jose: Smith & McKay Printing Co., 1972.

San Jose Central Fire Station
Name of Property

Santa Clara County, CA
County and State

Figure 1.

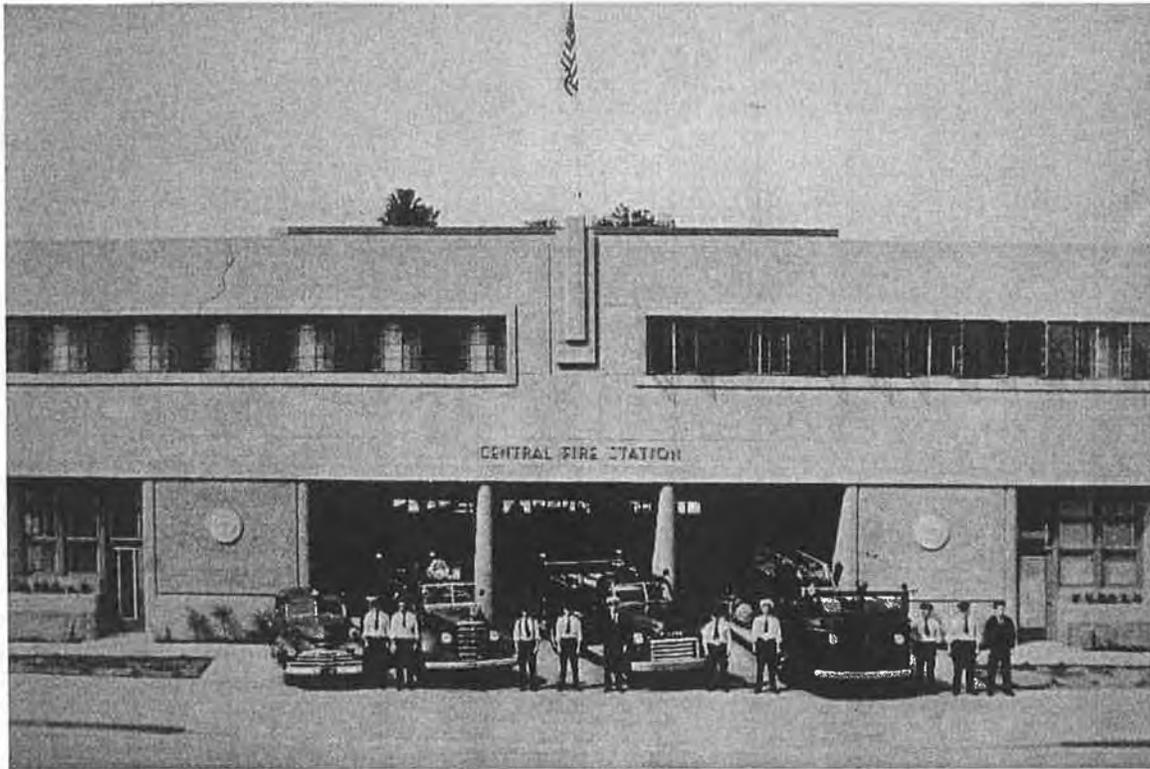
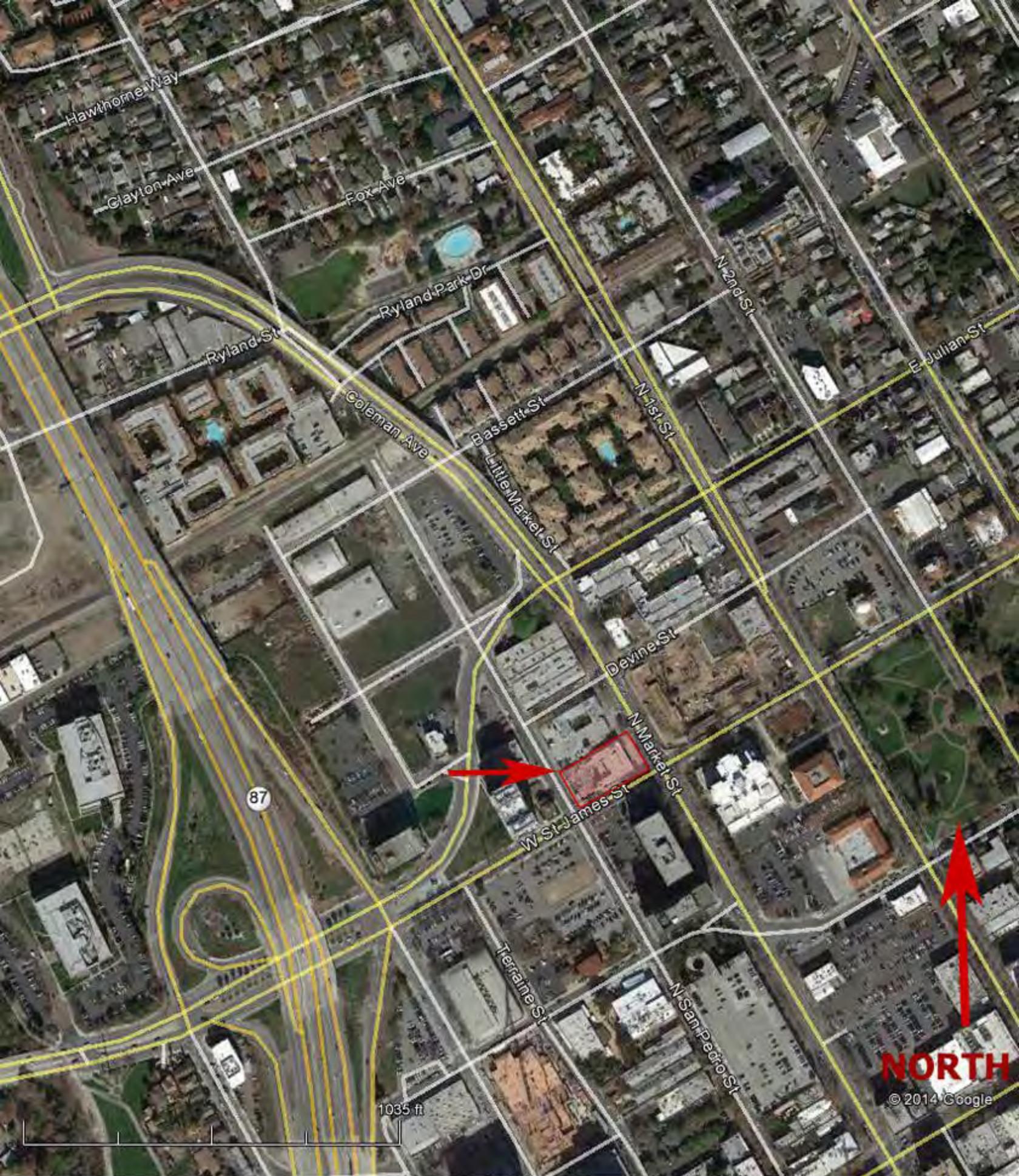


Figure 2.





37.338457 degrees -121.894335 degrees

San Jose Central Fire Station

201 North Market St.

NORTH
© 2014 Google



37.338457 degrees -121.894335 degrees

San Jose Central Fire Station

201 North Market St.









TO
INTERSTATE
880
←

LEFT LANE
MUST
TURN LEFT



St James

San Pedro

TO
880
←

LEFT LANE
MUST
TURN LEFT





ONE WAY

ONE WAY

ONE WAY





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: San Jose Central Fire Station

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CALIFORNIA, Santa Clara

DATE RECEIVED: 11/21/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/07/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001113

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-7-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Added to
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

San Jose Central Fire Station
San Jose, Santa Clara County, California
National Register of Historic Places

The San Jose Central Fire Station, located in downtown San Jose, is a two-story International Style fire station constructed in 1951 during the beginnings of an expansive era of growth in San Jose, designed by the prestigious local architectural firm of Binder & Curtis. Built of reinforced, poured-in-place concrete, the main façade is divided into three bays along North Market Street, each with a vehicular entrance for its associated engine company. Fenestration consists of multi-light metal casement, tilt, and fixed windows, horizontally grouped on the second story with integral concrete header and sill trim that visually wraps and bands the windows together. An elongated keystone along North Market Street originally provided a roof-mounted flagpole base.

The property is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A for its role as a central fire station in downtown San Jose during the city's period of transition from an agricultural community to the capital of Silicon Valley, and under Criterion C as a significant work of institutional architecture by architects Ernest N. Curtis and Warren Heid, with a period of significance of 1951-1958. San Jose's transition to non-agricultural industries was accompanied by enormous population growth, from 95,000 in 1950 to 500,000 in 1975. The property was one of five fire stations constructed after a 1946 bond measure, and the most significant due to its design and function as an emergency communications center, a role it played until 1958. Binder & Curtis, the architectural firm who designed the fire station, designed much of downtown San Jose during 60 years of active work. The project architect, Warren Heid, was a San Jose native who received multiple awards and distinctions during his career. The firehouse combines architectural simplicity and functionality. Its use of International Style design elements represent a transition from late 1930s Art Moderne styles, as expressed in civic buildings of that era, to the late 1950s parametric styles characterized by the evolving regional Bay Tradition style.

The nomination is submitted on behalf of the city of San Jose, the property owner. The City of San Jose, a certified local government, has provided a letter of support for the nomination.

Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends that the State Historical Resources Commission determine that the San Jose Central Fire Station meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local level of significance with a period of significance of 1951-1958. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

William Burg
State Historian II
October 15, 2014

October 23, 2014

Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Parks and Recreation
1725 23rd Street, Ste 100
Sacramento CA 95816

Dear Ms. Roland-Nawi:

I write in response to your letter dated September 8, 2014, in which you provide the City of San Jose with a 60-day review and comment period before the State Historic Resources Commission takes action on a National Register of Historic Places (National Register) nomination of the San Jose Central Fire Station (201 N. Market Street).

On October 21, 2014, the San Jose City Council voted unanimously to recommend approval of the above stated National Register nomination. The memorandum from the Historic Landmarks Commission regarding their October 1, 2014 meeting commenting on the proposed National Register nomination is attached.

Sincerely,



Martina Davis
Acting Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments:

Memorandum from Councilmember Sam Liccardo
Historic Landmarks Commission Memorandum



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Historic Landmarks
Commission

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 9, 2014

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FOR
SAN JOSE CENTRAL FIRE STATION**

RECOMMENDATION

Consider the comments of the Historic Landmarks Commission and provide comments to the State of California regarding the proposed nomination of the San José Central Fire Station (201 N. Market Street) for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

OUTCOME

The City Council's comments on the proposed nomination of the San José Central Fire Station for listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be forwarded to the State of California Office of Historic Preservation and the State Historical Commission for their consideration and recommendation to the National Park Service regarding the site's potential listing on the National Register of Historic Places. This memo contains comments from the City's Historic Landmarks Commission, and the Council may consider and transmit some or all of those comments to the State.

BACKGROUND

On September 8, 2014, the City of San José received a referral from the California Office of Historic Preservation to allow the City to review and provide comments on the pending nomination of the San José Central Fire Station for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (see attached Staff Report for the nomination materials). The site was designated as a City Landmark in March 2012 (File No. HL08-169).

The San José Central Fire Station (former San José Fire Station No. 1) opened in 1951 and was constructed in the International Style. The building has been closed as a fire station since 2000 and is currently planned to be used as a museum to house exhibits and the collection of the San José Fire Museum, a 501(c)3 Non-Profit organization. The Oversight Board - Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José (Successor Agency) owns the property.

October 9, 2014

Subject: San José Central Fire Station National Register Listing

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Pursuant to the Successor Agency's adopted Long Range Property Management plan, the property will be appraised at highest and best use to determine fair market value, and then the Successor Agency will enter into an Option Agreement which will allow the San José Fire Museum a certain amount of time to acquire the property at the appraised price. Should the San José Fire Museum not purchase the property in the prescribed amount of time, it may be placed for sale on the open market.

The National Register of Historic Places is maintained by the National Park Service and is the federal government's official list of districts, sites, and buildings deemed worthy of preservation. The State Historical Resources Commission is scheduled to consider the nomination on November 7, 2014, and will forward a recommendation to the National Park Service.

At their meeting on October 1, 2014, the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) discussed the referral from the California Office of Historic Preservation on the pending nomination of the San José Central Fire Station for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

ANALYSIS

National Register Criteria

According to the National Park Service, the criteria for inclusion in the National Registry are as follows:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- b. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- c. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d. That has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

According to the draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form the property qualifies for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The building is significant under Criterion A because it is an "intact representation of significant patterns of community development in San José's post-World War II *Period of Industrialization and Suburbanization*." The building achieves significance under Criterion C: Architecture as a significant example of the work of locally prominent architecture firm Binder & Curtis and as a late but significant International style work that is representative of San José's urban expansion and evolution of fire station construction post-World War II.

A Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form, completed by Archives and Architecture in January 2004, makes the same conclusion that the building appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NR) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CR). The form states "Under NR Criterion A and CR Criterion 1, the building represents a linkage to the early formulation of the San José Fire Department, being the fourth of five Station No. 1 buildings (the first three no longer extant). Fire Station No. 1 has always had important associations as the command headquarters of a complex and essential component of government service." The DPR form also states "former Fire Station No. 1 also is significant for its architectural design within the context of local modern architecture, created as a part of a dispersed grouping of seven new firehouses with similar characteristics of the new modernism. Designed by the firm of Binder & Curtis, the building is distinctive in downtown San José, a clear representative of a specific time within the evolution of the city's urban core. It would, therefore, also qualify for the National and California Registers under Criteria C and 3, as the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period, representing the work of a master architect."

Implications of the National Register of Historic Places

Registration or eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places does not by itself place any restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property; however, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historic Resources. The California Register is intended to encourage public recognition and protection of resources of architectural, historical, archeological and cultural significance.

Buildings listed in the California Register of Historical Resources and/or as a City Landmark are considered as historical resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and, therefore, any project that results in a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource (including demolition) may have a significant effect on the environment and will require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the proposed project.

City Landmark Status

In March of 2012 Resolution No. 76165 was adopted by the City Council to designate Former Fire Station No. 1 as a City Landmark based on the following criteria from the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- a. Criterion 1: "*Its character, interest, or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage, or culture*" due to linkage to the early formulation of the San José Fire Department, being the fourth of five Station No. 1 buildings;
- b. Criterion 4: "*Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of San José*" by its important associations as the command headquarters of an essential component of local government service; and

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

October 9, 2014

Subject: San José Central Fire Station National Register Listing

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- c. Criterion 6: *"Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen"*, as an example of local Modern design emerging in the postwar period.

Historic Landmarks Commission Comments

At their meeting on October 1, 2014, the Historic Landmarks Commission discussed the referral and provided comments. There was no public testimony on the item. Below is a summary of the comments made by the Historic Landmarks Commission:

The Commission unanimously voiced their opinion that the San José Central Fire Station qualifies for listing on the National Register of Historic Places based on the nomination materials provided by the State and the 2004 analysis by Archives and Architecture.

This is a great example of a historic structure that would contain a new use that is consistent with its historic usage in the event that the San José Fire Museum will use it to house exhibits and collections.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The City Council's comments will be transmitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation and State Historical Resources Commission. The Commission is conducting its public hearing on the nomination on November 7, 2014, and will forward a recommendation to the National Park Service.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Staff followed Council Policy 6-30: Public Outreach Policy. The referral from the State was heard at the Historic Landmarks Commission meeting on October 1, 2014. This meeting provided an opportunity for the public and the Commission to provide comments on the proposed National Register Listing.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

October 9, 2014

Subject: San José Central Fire Station National Register Listing

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CEQA

Not a project, File No. PP10-069, City Organizational & Administrative Activities.

/s/
HARRY FREITAS, SECRETARY
Historic Landmarks Commission

For questions please contact Steve Piasecki, Interim Planning Official, at 408-535-7893.

Attachment: HLC Staff Report including State Historic Preservation Office Letter and Nomination Materials and Department of Parks and Recreation Form by Archives and Architecture



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Sam Liccardo

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 21, 2014

Approved Sam Liccardo R.C. Date 10/21/14

SUBJECT : NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION FOR
SAN JOSE CENTRAL FIRE STATION

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the State of California that the San José Central Fire Station be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

DISCUSSION

I'd like to thank John McMillian, Jim Carter, and all of the volunteers with the San Jose Fire Museum organization for their advocacy for the preservation of our city's unique history.

San José Central Fire Station, formerly Fire Station No. 1, represents the City's distinctive past and the architectural evolution of Downtown. The building style is consistent with post-war architecture and was designed by architectural firm Binder & Curtis, which designed many buildings in Downtown beginning at the turn of the last century. Placement on the National Register of Historic Places would serve the station's future intended use as the home of the San Jose Fire Museum, a local non-profit dedicated to educating the public and preserving the history of the San José Fire Department.

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-7100
(916) 445-7000 Fax: (916) 445-7053
calshpo@parks.ca.gov
www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



November 14, 2014

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service 2280
1201 I (Eye) Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005

Subject: **San Jose Central Fire Station**
San Jose, Santa Clara County, California
National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the **San Jose Central Fire Station** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in San Jose, Santa Clara County, California. On November 7, 2014, the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A and C at the local level of significance.

The property is nominated on behalf of the property owner, the City of San Jose, who provided a letter of support.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact William Burg of my staff at 916-445-7004.

Sincerely,

Carol Roland-Nawi, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures