

RECEIVED FEB 22 1990

483

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DIVISION OF NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAMS NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Walnut Grove Japanese/American Historic District other names/site number Walnut Grove Japantown

2. Location

street & number Bound by River Road, Tyler Street, C Street, Winnie St. NA not for publication city, town Walnut Grove NA vicinity state California code CA county Sacramento code CA 067 zip code 95690

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories. Includes a table for contributing vs noncontributing resources.

Name of related multiple property listing: NA Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Kathryn Guethen Date: 2-13-90

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official: Date:

5. 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:)

Entered in the National Register

Signature of the Keeper: Alan Byers Date of Action: 3/22/90

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/Specialty Store  
 COMMERCE/Department Store  
 COMMERCE/Restaurant  
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling  
 DOMESTIC/Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling  
 COMMERCE/Department Store  
 LANDSCAPE/Garden, Street Furniture

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN  
 MOVEMENTS/Commercial Style  
 Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
 walls WOOD/Weatherboard  
 STUCCO  
 roof WOOD/Shingle ASPHALT  
 other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SUMMARY**

The Walnut Grove Japanese American Historical District consists of buildings designed and built by fellow countrymen for Japanese American residents. The district encompasses five acres on the east side of the Sacramento River in the northern section of the town of Walnut Grove, Sacramento County, California. It includes all of the Japanese American commercial section of town, with stores on the lower floor and residences above. Historically, the district was physically limited in size by the Sacramento River levee on the west, Southern Pacific Railroad levee on the east, C Street and the Chinese American community on the south, and Winnie Street on the north. The district is composed of 33 buildings; 23 of these were constructed shortly after a fire destroyed the original core of the Asian section of town in 1915. The buildings are of simple wood frame construction, mostly two-stories high, with overhanging balconies, recessed entryways, and storefront windows. The architecture is primarily vernacular false front commercial. Community gardens are interspersed on empty lots within the buildings. Subsurface archaeological deposits associated with the first Asian community in town are present in the southern section of the district and date between 1880 and 1915, when fire destroyed the original Asian section. The district and its buildings have changed little in appearance since its period of significance (1915-1942), has a strong sense of time and place, and maintains a remarkable degree of integrity.

**ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW**

Walnut Grove's Japantown was constructed shortly after the fire of 1915 destroyed the historic Chinatown, where the Japanese were living at the time. One consultant recalled that Japanese builders and carpenters came from San Francisco, Stockton, and Sacramento and volunteered labor and expertise to design and construct these buildings. Each family drew a number out of a hat to determine on which lot their new structure would be located (Kawamura 1987).

The district is composed of 33 buildings, most of them dating to the 1916 post-fire construction period. Twenty-three buildings in this section were built around 1916 after the fire. All are wooden and two-story, with a mixture of tar-and-gravel and shingle roofs. A, B, Winnie, Central, and Tyler streets are quite narrow, whereas C and Market streets are fairly wide. Sidewalks in the district are narrow and high.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

---

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

EDUCATION/school

RELIGION/religious structure

## 7. Description

Eighteen of the 23 1916 buildings are two-story, with gable roofs and false fronts; even the one-story structures have parapeted false fronts. Most of the two-story structures have porches across the upper stories that usually were used as residential units for the families who operated the commercial establishments on the lower floors. In some of the buildings that were used as rooming houses, the family lived in quarters in the rear of the first floor. The majority of the buildings have storefront windows and recessed entryways. Almost all have horizontal channeled siding, sometimes covered with composition shingles or other materials. There are no associated garages or sheds with the buildings; historically, a Japanese American owned taxi service provided transportation to other locations in the Delta and most residents did not own vehicles.

Eleven buildings within the district do not date to the 1916 period. The Durbin house was constructed around 1900 and served as the Japanese school and community center in 1913 and was also used throughout the 1920s and 1930s as the Japanese language school. Two small Craftsman-type bungalows are located across the alley from the school. Fuji's garage, a long, narrow brick structure, was built in the early 1920s, while the Japanese Methodist church was constructed in 1934, replacing an early church on the same site. All of these structures are located between Central Avenue and Winnie Street.

A complex of three buildings is situated at the corner of Market Street and C Street. These buildings are architecturally consistent with the remainder of the buildings in the Japantown, but have significantly more architectural embellishments. The parapets on the buildings have ogee moldings, porch posts are turned and bracketed, pilasters and brackets support the facade of the pumphouse, and decorative millwork appears on windows, doors, and wainscoting. They are significant not only for their apparent age and use, but also as possible remaining examples of the early architecture of Walnut Grove.

The largest of these early buildings, a rambling two-story structure with numerous additions and decorative architectural millwork, appears to have been altered significantly at an early date. One consultant remembered that these three buildings were not in place when the Japanese quarter was built in 1916 (Kawamura 1987). One of the buildings was constructed in 1918, while the two-story building was present on the lot by 1922 and housed a grocery store. Given the architectural detail and characteristics of these three buildings, particularly the two-story structure, it is probable that they were moved to this location.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

---

During World War II several buildings burned down within the district, including the historic Japanese Association Hall and Theater. Two of the lots remain empty today and community flower and vegetable gardens have been established on them. Two storage sheds and the Walnut Grove Market were constructed in 1948 on the site of the Japanese theater; these are the only "modern" structures within the district.

Architecturally, the district has preserved its integrity to a remarkable extent. A and B streets do not appear to have been altered in any significant manner since first constructed in 1915, and the other streetscapes have undergone little alteration. Two buildings have recently been restored to their original appearance, while others have undergone virtually no alterations in the ensuing years. The district retains a strong sense of time and place and represents a cohesive architectural unit.

Archaeological deposits were found under the streets in the southern section of the district in 1984 during a sewer and water pipe replacement project. These deposits dated between 1880, when the historic Asian section of Walnut Grove was established, to 1915, when a fire destroyed the entire three block area. Domestic and other goods destroyed during the fire were deposited in the streets prior to repaving and represent material objects used by both Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans in both commercial enterprises and their private lives at the time of the fire (Costello and Maniery 1988; Maniery and Costello 1986).

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

1. Fuji Garage - River Road and Central Avenue. Built between 1921 and 1927, the old Fuji Garage is a long, rectangular two-story brick building with a concrete foundation. Along both sides and across the rear of the building are numerous windows with brick relieving arches. The front facade has a stepped-parapet false front. The front entries have been altered in recent years with some of the windows and a door partially blocked up and aluminum door and sash windows installed.
2. Walnut Grove Methodist Mission South - Central Avenue. Situated on the corner of Winnie Lane and Central Avenue, this structure was built in 1934 and replaced an earlier church built by the community in 1913. It serves the Japanese Methodist community. The long, rectangular two-storied building has been stuccoed on the front and sides. It has a hip roof with exposed rafters. A dove-cote cupola sits atop the center of the roof and houses a bell. There is a small dormer topped with a cross in the center front of the roof. The upper story of the mission has numerous windows, while the lower story has central double entry doors and a transom flanked by more windows. A small porch with square posts leads to the entry.
3. Japanese Language School/Durbin Home - Winnie Lane. Built around 1910, this was originally the home of Russell and Helen Brown Durbin. According to Graham (1985:30-31), the house was moved 90 degrees on Winnie Lane at one time. By 1913 it was used by the Japanese community as their community center and language and heritage school (Sanborn Company 1921:map), attended by Japanese children every afternoon after

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

completing their regular public school session. One consultant related that the reason that the district was formed in its present location after the 1915 fire was because they wanted to relocate closer to the school and church (Kawamura 1987).

This two-story frame building has a gable roof with boxed eaves and a central louvre in the front gable. It has channel siding and end boards. The windows are single-pane, double hung. There is a recessed porch in the center front of the upper story, flanked by windows. The lower story has an enclosed porch with a central entry flanked by windows. A stairway leads to the second story on the west side of the house. Although the building predates 1915, it was an important part of the historic fabric of the district during the period of significance and as such, contributes to the importance of the district, and is not individually eligible for the National Register.

4. Walnut Grove Market - 1267 A Street. This is a modern, non-conforming concrete block building with a flat roof. Located on the site of the Japanese Association of Walnut Grove Auditorium and Theater, the current store was built in 1948 by a Japanese American veteran. The theatre building burned down during the World War II internment period.

5. Storage Sheds - 1265 A Street. Two non-conforming metal buildings with gable roofs serve as storage areas for the store and were also constructed in 1948. The buildings are located on the site of a Japanese hand laundry that was burned down and demolished during World War II.

6. Dr. Yamao/Dr. Akamatsu Office and Dwelling - 1263 A Street. This structure was built in early 1916 when the commercial buildings were constructed and served as Dr. Yamao's office and residence from 1916 until the Japanese were relocated in 1942. After the war ended, the Yamao family returned to Japan and Dr. Akamatsu took over the business.

This one-story office and dwelling has a pyramidal roof with boxed eaves. The front porch is supported with four square posts and has concrete steps. It has three-in-one board siding. The entry door is located on the west front facade and there are three windows on the east front. Concrete pillars and chains delineate the front yard.

7. Hatanaka Tofu House - 1259 A Street. Built circa 1915, according to Sanborn maps this structure housed a soft drink establishment in 1921 and had added a pool hall by 1927. The building is one-story in front with a two-story rear section. The siding is channeled. A canopy, supported with knee braces, crosses the front facade above the store front. The central entry is recessed with glass and wood panel double doors flanked by four-pane store windows.

8. Yamashita Soft Drink Establishment - 1255 A Street. Built circa 1915 following reconstruction after a fire, this building sold soft drinks during the 1920s and was also used as a rooming house. It is a two-story structure with a front-gabled roof with patterned shingles, boxed eaves, and ogee molding. The upper story extends over the lower story on the front of the building. There is a small porch on the east side of the upper story supported by triangular knee braces. It has a Chippendale style railing and square

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4

porch posts. The west side of the upper story has a newer large picture window. The lower story has two central glass-and-wood panel doors flanked by single-pane sash windows. The windows on the side of the house have double-pane sash and the siding is channeled.

9. Dr. Park/Dr. Yee's Dentist Office and Dwelling - 1251 A Street. Dr. Yee's long, rectangular building was built circa 1915 and was the first house constructed in the district. Originally, it was owned by Dr. Park, a Korean dentist. After World War II, Dr. Yee moved into the structure and operated his own dental business.

The structure has a small Craftsman cottage in the front where the dental office was located and a two-story section in the rear that served as the residence. The rear section has a low-pitched gable roof, exposed rafters, and six-pane sash windows. The front portion of the building is narrow, with a side-gabled roof and a front dormer. The roof has exposed decorative rafters and triangular knee braces. Three-in-one board siding covers the entire building. The upper story has multi-pane windows, while the lower story has single-pane sash. The recessed entry is on the west front facade and has a glass-and-wood panel door. Concrete piers and chain surround the small front yard.

10. Kobata Garage - 14105 River Road. Built circa 1916, there was once a dwelling immediately south of this building which was the residence of the Kobata family. Although a garage by 1927, the building was first used for a blacksmith shop, according to the 1921 Sanborn map.

The garage is one-story on the levee with another story below on the side street. The front facade is covered with stucco and has a simple Mission Revival parapet. There are two central glass-and-wood panel entry doors flanked by boarded-up windows and new aluminum canopies over the windows.

11. Alex Brown's Building - 14112 Market Street. This building was constructed in early 1916 by Alex Brown for the Japanese community following the 1915 fire. While mainly used for commercial enterprises, there were also a few residences in the building. Originally, there were 14 business/residences in this structure: Maeda Fish Shop; Nakaoka Bait and Fish Shop; Kuwabara Dry Goods; Matsuoka Boot and Shoe; Ioka Groceries; Hirotsu tailor shop; Itoda bar and noodle shop (udan-ya); Murakami Taxi Service; Aichi Company Grocery (owned by Mizutani and extending over two stores); and four residences. The structure is a two-story frame commercial building with horizontal channeled siding, a flat roof and a slight parapet across the top. A horizontal band runs near the top of the buildings and once supported a porch roof. Ceramic tile was added to the area beneath the storefront windows of Ben's Drugs in 1932. The upper story once had three doors opening out onto a front porch, as well as three windows of single-pane sash. The balcony has been removed, the doors are boarded up, and two of the windows have been replaced with aluminum. The building once extended an additional 100 feet south. This portion was torn down soon after World War II due to its unsafe condition.

12. Adachi Barbershop and Bath House - 1258 A Street. This structure was built for the Arimoto family circa 1916. The Arimotos operated it as a rooming house with a sento (public bath) in the rear. The baths are still in place in the structure. It was one of two public baths in the district that served the laborers who came into town on the weekends or during the winter season.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 5

This building appears to be in original condition in every detail. It has two-stories fronting on A Street and is one-story on B Street, all with channel siding. It has a front-gabled roof with a central louvre. There is a partial porch and a room on the east upper front which extends over the street. The porch is located on the east front facade and has a railing with square posts, the room has a window facing A Street. The lower story has a storefront with a glass-and-wood panel door, covered with original screen doors. The main door is flanked by store windows above wood paneling. The windows are of single, double, and six-pane sash. The rear one-story portion of the building is in a simple Neoclassical design and faces east. A porch extends across the front (or east) side of the section and the central glass-and-wood panel door is flanked by windows.

13. Kyushu Hotel - 1278 A Street. Operated as the Kyushu Hotel during the 1920s, this was later the Yamaga Boarding House. Most of the original two-story structure was demolished and today there is only a one-story residence on the property. The house has a low-pitched front-gabled roof. It is rectangular in shape and has been covered with new plywood siding. The central front glass-and-wood panel door is flanked by single-pane sash windows.

14. Hayashi Company Store - 1281 B Street. Built immediately after the 1915 fire, Hayashis specializes in fish and Japanese foodstuffs. The Hayashi family is one of the original Japanese families in Walnut Grove. Originally, their store was situated south of C Street in the "Chinatown." Following the 1915 fire that devastated that area, they moved to the present location. The store is the oldest Japanese-operated grocery in town and is still run by members of the Hayashi family.

The store has two stories with channel siding. The roof is gabled and there is a simple Mission Revival parapet across the front with central louvres. There is a canopy across the front of the building above the recessed entryway. The windows are single-pane sash, but some have been replaced with aluminum sash. A covered stairway to the second story is located on the east side of the building.

15. Kusaba Rooming House and Restaurant - 1273 B Street. Built around 1916, this building served as a rooming house with adjoining restaurant in 1921. By 1927 it was a store. It is a two-story frame building with channel siding. The roof is gabled and has boxed eaves. There is a porch on the upper front story supported by square posts. The lower story has a recessed entryway flanked by store windows. The original doors on the upper and lower story have both been replaced.

16. Hamada Billiards and Rooms - 1269 B Street. Built around 1916, the billiard hall is one-story in front with two stories in the rear. It has a front-gabled roof with central louvre and boxed eaves. The storefront has vertical tongue-and-groove paneling below the store windows. There are double-entry doors, now covered with plywood and multi-paned lights above the door and windows. The siding is channeled.

17. Schisida Hotel - 1265 B Street. This building was also constructed in early 1916 and appears as a restaurant on the 1921 Sanborn map. By 1927, however, it is depicted as a hotel. Originally operated by the Schisida family, after World War II the Saba family took over ownership.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 6

The hotel is a two-story building with three-in-one board siding. It has a front-gabled roof with central louvre. There are remnants of a front porch on the second story front, which is covered with plywood paneling. There is a new picture window and front door on the lower story.

18. Ito Restaurant - 1261 B Street. Built around 1916, this appears as a restaurant on both the 1921 and 1927 maps. Local residents refer to the Ito establishment as a "Chop Suey House." The restaurant is one-story with an end-gabled roof and boxed eaves. There is a stepped false front with central louvre. The building is covered with three-in-one board siding and there is a canopy across the front. The entry is recessed, with double glass-and-wood panel doors flanked by store windows above tongue and groove paneling.

19. Arimoto Boarding House - 1257 B Street. Built around 1916, this structure is also listed as a restaurant in 1921 but is marked lodgings by 1927. The boarding house has two stories and channel siding. There is a front-gabled roof with boxed eaves and a central louvre. The porch on the upper story has square posts and is supported by knee braces. There is a central glass-and-wood panel door on the lower front story with a single-pane sash window on the east side.

20. Kawamura Barber Shop - 14121 Market Street. Built in 1916 by Mr. Wakimota of Sacramento, this barber shop has been in the Kawamura family since 1913, when it operated in the Chinese district of town. Following the 1915 fire, the Japanese community relocated and the Kawamuras drew this lot number for the new location of their business. Mr. Wakimoto owned a fruit stand in Sacramento and donated his time and some materials to build this house for the Kawamuras.

The building is a simple one-story frame commercial establishment with a gable roof and a porch on the front and sides supported with knee braces. The front, or B Street side of the building, has a paneled frame door with glass in the upper portion and a transom above. To the east is a large storefront window. The Market Street side of the building has six regular sized windows, one large storefront window, and two doors.

21. Sofue Chop Suey House - 14126 Market Street. According to existing maps, a boarding house was on this site in 1912. It was destroyed in the 1915 fire and the current structure was moved to this site sometime after 1918. A Portuguese family originally operated a saloon and lived in this building. A Japanese-owned barber shop and cigar store operated here in 1921 and a candy store in 1927. During the 1930s it housed a Japanese restaurant. According to consultants, the structure was not used after World War II (Kawamura 1987; Matsuoka 1987).

This one-story building has a gable roof with a frame false front and channeled siding. The front is stepped and is boxed with moldings around the top. The upper front is pierced with a rectangular louvre. The recessed entryway is flanked by two large storefront windows with paneled areas beneath. The double doors are double-paneled and have panes above. There is a porch across the front of the buildings with four square posts and an extension to the rear of the structure which is stepped above the front-gable roof.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 7

22. Kitamata Store/Nobel's Drug's - 14128 Market Street. A Japanese grocery operated out of the upstairs of this building in the 1920s. During the 1930s it was used by Fred Nobel for his drugstore and a fire engine was stored on the lower floor. In 1969 it was used as a set during the filming of the movie "The Moonshine War" and was decorated with signage for this film.

The original portions of this building consist of a two-story rectangular frame building that fronted on Market Street. This original structure has a gable roof facing front. The upper story front has three single-pane sash windows with molded corner blocks and decorated lugsills (now missing). The lower front floor is recessed beneath the upper and is topped by a row of glass panes, beneath which are large storefront windows with wooden panels. The eaves are boxed and the siding is channeled. There are two additions to the rear side of the building. These were constructed at an early date and consist of a cross-gabled section with three storefront bays and two recessed doorways. A porch runs across the front of the portion which is supported by three turned and bracketed posts. The interior of the building is faced with tongue-and-groove paneling on walls and ceilings.

The building was not on this site in 1918 but it is composed of circa 1900 architectural elements. It could have been moved to the site at a later date, possibly in sections or stages, which would explain the disparity in stories between 1927 and the 1930s. Although the building predates 1915, it became a part of the historic fabric of the district during the period of significance and, as such, contributes to the importance of the district and is not individually eligible for the National Register.

23. Pumphouse - 14130 Market Street. This structure is the only remaining building of the several which once housed the storage tanks for Walnut Grove's water system. It was in its present location after 1918 and may have been moved here. The painted words "ICE CREAM AND CANDY" present on the original false front dates from 1969 when MGM used the building while filming a movie; other than the signage the building has not been altered.

The one-story, small frame building has also served as a pumphouse for the town. There is a large metal tank on the interior, but the exterior appears to match other buildings of the period. The building has channeled siding and the corners have grooved pilasters supporting triangular molded brackets. The stepped, false front has ogee molding on the perimeter. The roof is hipped and covered with corrugated metal. There is a double door and window on the front.

24. Miyazaki Bathhouse - 1250 B Street. Built around 1916, this structure is listed as a soft drink establishment in 1921 but as a bathhouse/boarding house by 1927. The building has two stories and channel siding. There is a front-gabled roof with a central louvre. A porch is located on the upper front story, entered from a glass-and-wood panel door flanked by single-pane sash windows. The lower front facade has central double doors (and screen doors), flanked by two large windows. The interior has tongue-and-groove walls, floors, and ceilings. The upper floor has a long hallway with small rooms on either side. A one-story bath house with gable roof and a skylight is attached to the rear of the building, with two tile baths, tile floor, and a boiler system.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 8

25. Maeda Chop Suey House/Hotel Aichi - 1260 B Street. Built around 1916, this business was operated as the Maeda Chop Suey House. By 1927, it was used as a boarding house by seasonal Japanese farm laborers and was labeled "Hotel Aichi" on the Sanborn Map for that year. It is a non-conforming two-story building with original channel siding and windows replaced with plywood siding, aluminum windows, and new doors. There is a slumpstone porch with metal railing on the rear of the building.

26. Takeda/Takamura Boarding House - 1264 B Street. This building was built following the 1915 fire by the Takedas and was a two-story boarding house which provided lodgings for Japanese farm workers. It has a front-gabled roof with boxed eaves and a central louvre. The front and sides of the building have channel siding, while the rear is covered with corrugated metal. There is a porch across the upper front story, supported with square posts. The lower front story has a central glass-and-wood panel door flanked by large single-pane sash windows. The remainder of the windows on the building are double-pane sash.

27. Koga Barbershop and Pool Hall - 1268 B Street. Built circa 1916, this building housed a soft drink establishment in 1921, but was a barbershop and pool hall in 1927. Non-conforming because of recent alterations, the original building was one story in the front and two in the rear. It has a front-gabled roof with a central louvre. Although the original wood siding is still evident, the facades of the building have been covered with asphalt shingles and brick. The structure also has new windows and gingerbread trim.

28. Yagi Restaurant/Hotel - 1272 B Street. Built circa 1916 and originally a soft drink establishment, it was being operated as a hotel by 1927. Three-in-one board siding covers this two-story building. It has a front-gabled roof with a decorative central louvre. The lower story has a storefront with two glass-and-wood panel doors flanked by store windows over tongue-and-groove paneling. There is a small five-panel door on the west front facade, leading to the second story. The upper story has double bay windows with a small porch between them. The porch as a central door and is supported by turned posts. The windows on the building are of double-pane sash, double-hung.

29. Asai Drug Store/Rooming House/Dwelling - 1276 B Street. Built circa 1916, this two-story building with channel siding has been recently restored. It has a front-gabled roof with central louvre and boxed eaves. The upper story has a porch with turned railings and a central glass-and-wood panel door flanked by double-pane sash windows. The lower story entryway is recessed and has double glass-and-wood panel doors flanked by store windows above wood paneling. The rear of the building, which faces C Street, has a new recessed upper porch, railings, and stairway.

30. Kobuke Hotel/Black Cat Cafe - 1280 B Street. Built circa 1916 and operated by the Kobuke family as a rooming house/hotel during the 1920s, this two-story building has three-in-one board siding. The front-gabled roof has a central louvre. The upper front story has a bay window, of double-pane sash, and a porch supported by square posts and railings. The lower story entry consists of double doors on the corner of the building, recessed beneath the upper story. The rear of the building has a recessed upper porch with square railings and a five-panel door flanked by square, bay windows. There is a shed-roofed addition on the east side.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 9

---

31. Oda Residence - 14080 Winnie Lane. This small, rectangular one-story cottage has a low-pitched cross-gabled roof with a central louvre in the front-gabled portion. The windows are single-pane sash, double-hung, and the entry is via a glass-and-wood panel door. Shutters and asphalt brick siding are newer additions to the house.

32. Mizutani Residence - 14070 Winnie Lane. A one-story, front-gabled house with boxed eaves, a central louvre, and knee braces, this rectangular house has single-pane, sash windows that are double-hung. The front porch was enclosed and an addition to the north side was made at a later date.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Walnut Grove served as the center of social and economic life for many Japanese seasonal agricultural workers in the rural Delta area from circa 1896 to the relocation of Japanese during World War II. The first business, an udon-ya (noodle shop) was apparently started in the town by 1896 and marked the beginning of a rapidly growing community that developed out of a need to augment the Chinese agricultural work force in the Delta (Ariki 1979:2). At least seven businesses were operated by Japanese by 1900, including boarding houses, stores, a bathhouse, and a barbershop (US Bureau of the Census 1900).

By 1910, hotels, restaurants, dry goods, drug, mercantile, and grocery stores were also in operation. A 1911 county assessment book indicates that 29 Japanese owned property in that year in Walnut Grove, called "Kawa Shima" by the local Japanese community (Sacramento County 1911). An influx of "picture bridges" into the town during the 1910s resulted in the establishment of a Japanese language school and hall and a Methodist Church. The community was thriving in 1915, with 49 businesses entered in the local assessment records, including a shoe shop, fruit stores, fish and meat markets, and numerous boarding houses or hotels (Sacramento County 1916; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1910).

During the period between 1910 and 1920, nihonmachi's were being established throughout California. This was in direct response to thousands of Japanese immigrants arriving in America and finding work during the period of economic expansion and exploitation by Anglo land owners during a California agricultural boom of the early twentieth century (Waugh et al. 1988:164-166). According to Masumoto, Issei entrepreneurs cashed in on the swelling population of laborers and laborers felt comfortable in a place where they could buy some Japanese goods, eat Japanese food, and share company with other Japanese (1987:14). Walnut Grove, centrally located between San Francisco and Sacramento in the asparagus belt of the United States, served as the commercial and social center for laborers working the farms between Florin, Stockton, and San Francisco. It became the center for Japanese Americans in the Delta. Although other Japantowns were established in nearby Courtland and Isleton, they were residential and did not have Walnut Grove's range of services, community associations, and churches that catered to the local Japanese Americans (Leung 1984).

In 1915, a major fire broke out in the community, leveling over 80 buildings in a three-block-square area (Sacramento Bee October 15, 1915:1; Sacramento Union, October 7, 1915:1). According to one consultant, there was nothing left standing in the Asian section of town following this fire (Kawamura 1987). Until the fire, the Japanese people occupied the northern section of the existing Chinatown, just south of C Street. The fire afforded them the opportunity to physically separate themselves from the Chinese. They rented land from Alex Brown, a local businessman and entrepreneur, and established their own commercial/residential district north of Chinatown, near a Japanese Methodist church and language school.

The new nihonmachi was established one block north of its previous location. Lots were randomly numbered and the numbers were drawn out of a hat by each family to determine business and residence locations. One large building was constructed by Alex

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

Brown, the local landowner, and housed 14 businesses. The other buildings were constructed by Japanese American carpenters, builders, and laborers who volunteered from as far away as San Francisco, Sacramento, and Stockton to assist in the rebuilding effort (Kawamura 1987).

The new houses were similar in design and were all painted white. In most cases, businesses were owned by families who had shops or stores downstairs and resided upstairs. Community gardens, consisting of flowers, herbs, and vegetables were planted along the west side of the railroad levee, which created an artificial boundary to the district. A small shack was also constructed along the levee and was used by a volunteer watchman who walked the streets of the district at night as a fire prevention measure (Kawamura 1987).

During this period of expansion when nihonmachi's were being established throughout California, Walnut Grove was unusual in that Japanese Americans designed and constructed the commercial district in a physically-separated section of town. In urban environments, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento, Japanese American businesses were established in existing buildings (often abandoned or dilapidated), often in the Chinese section of town (California 1920). In rural settings, such as nearby Florin, Del Rey, Bowles, or Livingston, only one or two grocery stores catered to the Japanese people. For the most part the Asians patronized Anglo-owned businesses or traveled to the nearest urban area, such as Fresno or Sacramento, to purchase supplies (Masumoto 1987; Pajus 1937:60; Waugh et al. 1988:164-167). While a few of the buildings in Livingston, Del Rey, and Selma were constructed by Japanese Americans, most of them were built by Anglos under contract for the Asian owners (Masumoto 1987:15).

The buildings in Walnut Grove, while vernacular in style, are reflective of the Asian preferences in everyday architectural design (Kawamura 1987). Most of the structures are two-story and simplistic in shape. The majority of the structures are false frame commercial in style and uniformly possess recessed entryways, storefront windows, and overhanging balconies. The balconies served as porches for the upper residential units. Several of the buildings were designed with rooms that contained large, tiled public baths used by the laborers who frequented the town on Sunday and during the off season. While most urban and some rural nihonmachi's contained at least one building with distinctive Japanese elements, these were usually community oriented (meeting halls, churches, community centers, theaters) (Waugh et al. 1988). Walnut Grove was, and remains, a rare example in California Japanese American vernacular architecture (Itogawa 1989).

The new nihonmachi in Walnut Grove grew beyond expectation during the 1920s. A period of agricultural expansion and opportunity, combined with the influx of women from Japan immigrating to join their husbands and the subsequent rise in birth rates, contributed to the population boom within Japanese communities throughout the state (Waugh et al. 1988:164-167). In Walnut Grove, the population of the Japantown swelled on weekends and evenings when laborers working in the nearby orchards and fields came into town for haircuts, baths, entertainment, and food. Some laborers stayed in rooming houses within the district. The Kobuke, Aichi, and Kubashi were just three of the boarding

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

---

houses that catered to these men. During the 1920s the Japantown witnessed such a large population surge that housing within the commercial district was nonexistent and a separate residential area was constructed east of the railroad levee for the new residents (Kawamura 1987; Matsuoka 1987).

Local residents fondly recall these boom years. One woman who owned a barber shop in town remembered that on weekends the town was teeming with people. She often cut hair from dawn to dusk with no breaks and estimated that 1,000 men would come into town every Sunday (Kawamura 1987). Sanborn maps dating to 1921, 1927, and 1933 depict an active, viable community existing in Japantown. Two movie theaters, a Japanese Association, churches, a variety of commercial services, schools, a dentist, and a surgeon catered to the increasingly family-oriented population.

Japanese associations, the Methodist and Buddhist churches, and the local Japanese American theater all played important roles in the lives the townspeople and transients during this period. As pointed out by Masumoto, community organizations in rural nihonmachi included the surrounding labor camp workers in their activities, giving them a sense of belonging and of home. Potlucks, picnics, plays, meetings, and social gatherings were attended by hundreds of people and were often held on Sundays or during the off season to accommodate the agricultural workers (Matsuoka 1987; Nakamura 1987).

The Japanese American community thrived throughout the depression and into the early 1940s. Forced by the United States Government to relocate for the duration of World War II, the Japanese left town, leaving behind their buildings and many of their belongings. Only a few individual families were able to find storage for their furniture, china, and business equipment with local non-Asian residents of Walnut Grove (Kawamura 1987). During the war, the district was occupied by Filipinos and Mexican laborers, who were brought in by the local farmers to take over the work in the orchards and fields. It was during this time that fire destroyed two buildings on the south side of A Street, as well as the Japanese auditorium on the north side of A at Tyler (Kawamura 1987; Matsuoka 1987).

Most of the original occupants of the district returned to Walnut Grove following the end of the war. The majority of these families did not stay longer than a few years, some returning to Japan and others moving into the cities. The district has gradually declined through the years. Today, most of the structures are used as private residences and only five businesses operate in this area. Two of them, Kawamura Barber Shop and Hayashi Market, were started before 1913 and are still owned and operated by the original families. Kawamura is located on the corner of Market and B Street while Hayashi is situated at B and Tyler. Both enterprises remain in their 1916 location.

Mat's Shoe Store, located in the Alex Brown Building on Market Street, was established as a pool hall by H. Matsuoka in 1918 but was converted into a shoe repair shop soon after. This business is operated in the same location by Toshio Matsuoka, the son of the founder. Ben's Drugs, located next door to the shoe shop in the same building, was originally located on A Street but moved to its present location in the 1930s, replacing Maeta's fish shop. The remaining Japanese American business in this section of town, the Walnut Grove Market, was constructed on the location of the Japanese auditorium in 1948.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

---

The historic district appears almost exactly as it did in photographs taken during the 1920s, except for the planting of community gardens on several lots where the original buildings burned down and were not replaced. The presence of the community gardens, however, is consistent with the historic appearance of the district when flowers and vegetables were planted along the levee and in any available space. All of the buildings have cohesive design elements, workmanship, material, and associations and formed the core of the Japanese American community, both in the past and present. The undeveloped nature of the district and the simplicity of the structures are examples of 1) an architectural style designed for an Asian community by their countrymen and 2) a cohesive, pre-World War II nihonmachi in California.

**PROPERTY OWNERS**

1. Parcel # 146-170-001  
Delta Estate Cooperative Society  
PO Box 658  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
2. Parcel # 146-170-002  
Walnut Grove United Methodist Church  
Center Street  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
3. Parcel # 146-170-006  
Oto Mysuye  
PO Box 633  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
4. Parcel # 146-370-007  
Jack/Jane Oda  
Rt 1 Box 19  
Isleton, CA 95641
5. Parcel # 146-370-006  
James/Estrella Kincaid  
2611 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070
6. Parcel # 146-370-005  
Dean/Mitsuko Norikane  
PO Box 315  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

---

7. Parcel # 146-370-004  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
8. Parcel # 146-370-003  
James/Estrella Kincaid  
2611 San Carlos Avenue  
San Carlos, CA 94070
9. Parcel # 146-370-002  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
10. Parcel # 146-370-001  
Ralph/Misako Nakaoka  
14105 Levee Road  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
11. Parcel # 146-370-027  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
12. Parcel # 146-370-011  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
13. Parcel # 146-370-008  
Jack/Jane Oda  
Rt 1 Box 19  
Isleton, CA 95641
14. Parcel # 146-370-019  
Dennis/Hiruko Sugimota  
PO Box 366  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
15. Parcel # 146-370-018  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   8   Page   6  

---

16. Parcel # 146-370-017  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
17. Parcel # 146-370-016  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
18. Parcel # 146-370-015  
Elmer/Edith Wai  
5027 Silver Reef Drive  
Fremont, CA 94538
19. Parcel # 46-370-014  
Naoko Kawamura  
PO Box 254  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
20. Parcel # 146-370-013  
Naoko Kawamura  
PO Box 254  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
21. Parcel # 146-370-030  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
22. Parcel # 146-370-031  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
23. Parcel # 146-370-032  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
24. Parcel # 146-370-026  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

---

25. Parcel # 146-307-025  
Neil/Bobbie Collier  
17484 Grand Island Road  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
26. Parcel # 146-307-024  
Walnut Grove Homeowners Association  
PO Box 844  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
27. Parcel # 146-307-023  
Kaoru/Dorothy Koga  
PO Box 423  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
28. Parcel # 146-307-022  
Mark/Kimiko Harada  
PO Box 543  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
29. Parcel # 146-307-021  
Larry/Ann Galisky  
PO Box 236  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
30. Parcel # 146-307-020  
Dewey/Carolyn Taff  
1485 California Avenue  
Turlock, CA 95381
31. Parcel # 146-160-017  
Delta Estate Cooperative Society  
PO Box 658  
Walnut Grove, Ca 95690
32. Parcel # 146-170-003  
Henry Oda  
PO Box 496  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
33. Parcel # 146-170-004  
Jun Mizutani  
PO Box 633  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Ariki, Cathy

1979 Ethnic Minority Cultural Resource Survey: Walnut Grove. Report on file, State Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento.

California, State of

1920 California and the Oriental. Report of the State Board of Control to Governor Wm. D. Stephens. Sacramento, California.

Costello, Julia G., and Mary L. Maniery

1988 Rice Bowls in the Delta: Artifacts Recovered from the 1915 Asian Community of Walnut Grove, California. Occasional Paper 16. Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 5.0

UTM References

A 110 630200 4233640  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The Japanese American district is bound by the Sacramento River on the west, C Street to the south, the Southern Pacific Railroad levee that parallels Tyler Street to the east, and Winnie Street to the north.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The current boundaries follow the historic Japantown as outlined on Sanborn maps dated 1921, 1927, and 1933. That portion of the district between C Street and Center Avenue was constructed in 1916 and represents the primary commercial/residential nihonmachi. The section of town between Center Avenue and Winnie Street contains the 1934 Japanese Methodist Church (built on the site of the original 1913 church), the 1913 Japanese language school,

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Mary L. Maniery/Historian with Judith Cunningham/Architectural Historian  
organization PAR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC. date January 8, 1990  
street & number 2116 T Street/P.O. Box 160756 telephone (916) 739-8356  
city or town Sacramento state CA zip code 95816

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Asian  
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1915-1942

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SUMMARY**

Walnut Grove's Japanese American Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. Under Criterion A the district is significant for its association with Japanese American agricultural laborers working in the Delta region and Japanese American businessmen who began to settle in the town in 1896 in order to meet the needs of the laborers. The nihonmachi (Japanese section of town) that comprises this district catered to the hundreds of laborers working on farms throughout the region, providing boarding houses for their off season use, bathhouses, barber shops, restaurants, saloons, pool halls, and other services for the largely male population from its initial construction beginning in 1915 until the internment of the residents in 1942. The buildings within the district were designed and built by Japanese architects and carpenters who volunteered their services from all over Northern California to help the local Japanese American people build a new town after they lost all their belongings in a 1915 fire. Although several other communities in rural agricultural areas of California were built by Japanese Americans (e.g., Florin in Sacramento County, Del Rey and Bowles in Fresno County, and Livingston in Merced County), they were residential in nature; Walnut Grove was the only community in California that boasted a Japanese American designed and built commercial district. The district is also eligible under Criterion C because its two-story frame commercial/residential structures are rare California examples of the vernacular style designed by Japanese Americans for commercial and residential use by businessmen and their families. Similar commercial districts in the state, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Selma, and San Jose, were established in already existing buildings or business districts or were built under contract with non-Asian companies. As such, the buildings are representative of the approach used in Japanese American architectural design for non-public buildings. The simplicity of the design, simple recessed entrances and storefront windows, and overhanging balconies on virtually all of the buildings reflect the preferences of Asians in their everyday lives, as opposed to the more elaborate and distinctly Asian style reminiscent of Japan that was preserved for public buildings (schools, theaters, Buddhists churches). The community has remained undeveloped and unchanged since its period of significance (1915-1942) (the only Japantown in California to do so), is a cohesive unit, and retains its essential integrity of style and sense of place. The period of significance for the district, 1915 to 1942, encompasses the dates of construction for the community and reflects the 1920s to 1940 era of tremendous agricultural growth in California when Japanese Americans provided a major labor force for the Delta and the commercial district of Walnut Grove experienced an economic and social boom period in response to this growth.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   1  

---

Graham, Kathy

1985 Discovering Walnut Grove. Sacramento Delta Historical Society, Walnut Grove, CA.

Itogawa, Gene

1989 State Office of Historic Preservation. Telephone conversation with Judith Cunningham, Sacramento, CA.

Kawamura, Yash

1987 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Sacramento, CA.

Maniery, Mary L., and Julia G. Costello

1986 Celadons and Sake Bottles: Asian History Underground. The Pacific Historian 30(4):36-46.

Masumoto, David Mas

1987 County Voices: The Oral History of a Japanese American Family Farm Community. Inaka Countryside Publications, Del Rey, CA.

Matsuoka, Toshio

1987 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Walnut Grove, CA.

Nakayama, Margie

1987 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Sacramento, CA.

Pajus, Jean

1937 The Real Japanese California. James J. Gillick Company, Berkeley, CA.

Sacramento County

1911 - Personal property tax assessment books. On file, Sacramento Museum and 1916 History Center, Sacramento.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company

1921 Map of Walnut Grove, California. On file, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

1927 Map of Walnut Grove, California. On file, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

1933 Update of 1927 Map of Walnut Grove, California. On file, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.

Southern Pacific Railroad Company

1912 Map of Railroad Route through Walnut Grove, California. On file, State of California Railroad Museum, Sacramento.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   9   Page   2  

---

United States Bureau of the Census

1900 Twelfth Population Census of the United States of America.

1910 Thirteenth Population Census of the United States of America.

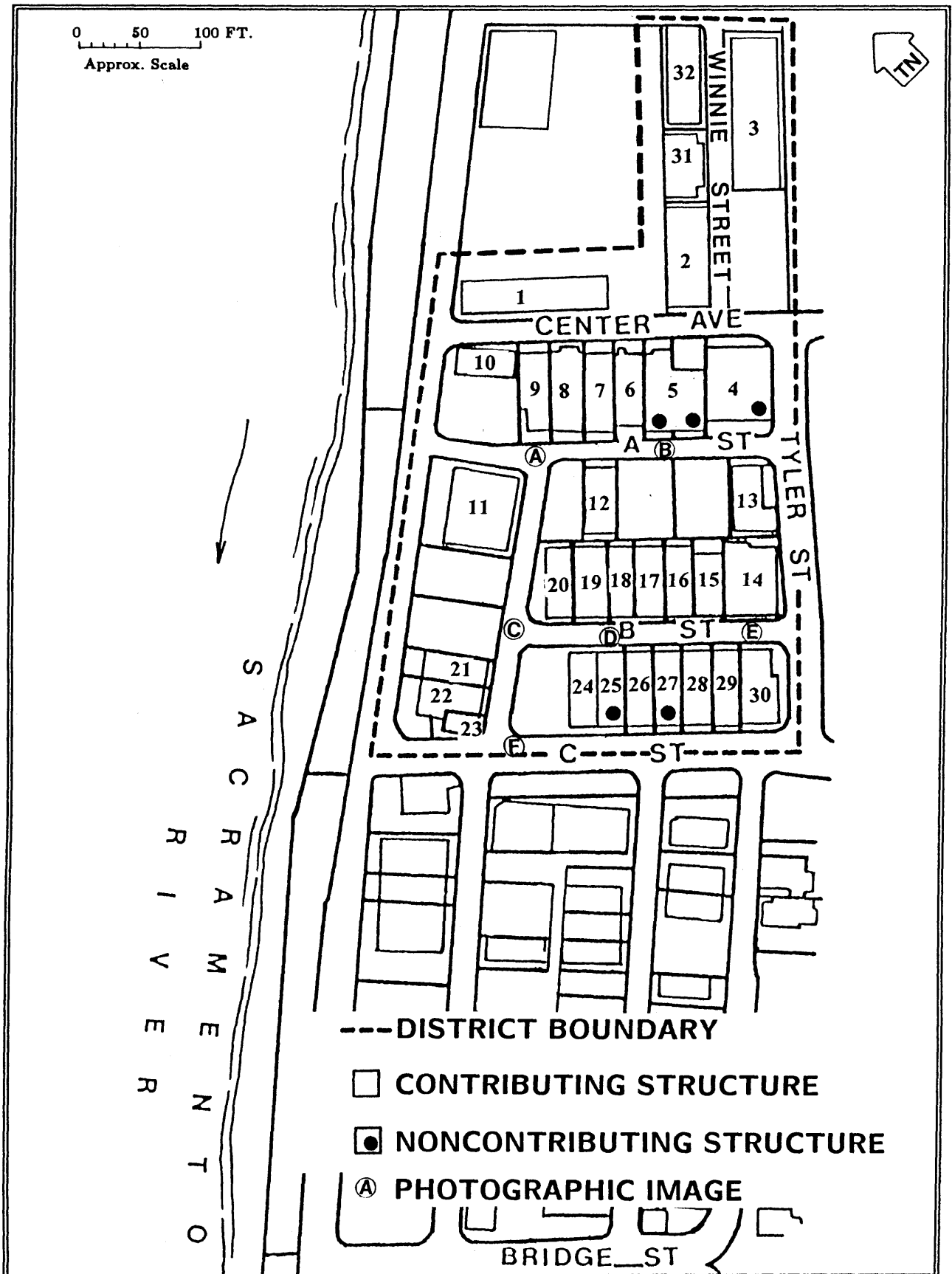
Waugh, Isami A., Alex Yamato, and Raymond Y. Okamura

1988 Japanese Americans in California. In Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California. Pp 159-204. State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento, CA.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Boundary Justification:**

the Fuji garage (constructed in the early 1920s to serve the community), and several small cottages used by Japanese American people as residences. While not developed during the 1916 rebuilding efforts, this section was part of the historic fabric of the district during the period of significance and therefore, is included within the boundaries of the district.



*Walnut Grove Historic District  
 located on River Rd, Sacramento, California  
 prepared by Historic Resources Center  
 Sacramento, California*