

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section _____ Page _____

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 06001218

Date Listed: 1/10/2007

Altenheim

Alameda

CA

Property Name


County

State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

1/10/2007

Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

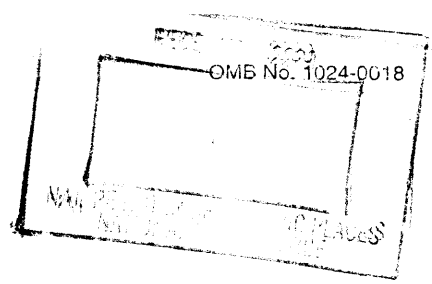
U. T. M. Coordinates:

The correct UTM Coordinates should read: 10 568618 4183781

These clarifications were confirmed with the CA SHPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Altenheim
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1720 MacArthur Boulevard NA not for publication
city or town Oakland NA vicinity
state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94602

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Steph D. Nulsel DSHPO 11/28/06
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature] 1/10/2007

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

contributing	noncontributing	
.....3.....	.....0.....	buildings
.....0.....	.....0.....	sites
.....0.....	.....3.....	structures
.....3.....	.....0.....	objects
.....6.....	.....3.....	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A.....

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0.....

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Category	Sub
HEALTH CARE.....	sanitarium.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Category	Sub
DOMESTIC.....	multiple dwelling.....
WORK IN PROGRESS.....	rehabilitation.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival/Classical Revival.....
.....
.....

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK.....
roof BUILT-UP, GABLED.....
walls WOOD CLAPBOARD (1908-1909 buildings).....
BRICK (1914 Dormitory).....
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See Continuation Sheet.

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions of property significance.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions of property characteristics.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1908-1956

Significant Dates

1908

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Haupt, Oscar

Frost, Robert

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed on 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

Name of repository:

City of Oakland Planning Department.....

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 6.1.....

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10..... 564618..... 4186781.....
 Zone Easting Northing

2

3

Zone Easting Northing

4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kitty Vieth/Architectural Historian; Shayne Watson/Architectural Historian.....

organization Architectural Resources Group..... date September 2006.....

street & number Pier 9, The Embarcadero..... telephone (415) 421-1680.....

city or town San Francisco..... state CA..... zip code 94111.....

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's locations

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property

Additional items (check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name Altenheim Inc., Michael Willis.....

street & number 1720 MacArthur Boulevard..... telephone (510) 530-4013.....

city or town Oakland..... state CA..... zip code 94602.....

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

Altenheim

Name of property

Alameda County, California

County and State

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Altenheim occupies a six-acre lot at the top of a steep rise in the Dimond district of Oakland, California. The property consists of a complex of buildings surrounded by a landscaped garden setting. Mature gardens exist to the north, east, south, and west of the Altenheim complex; the gardens to east are expansive, incorporating at least one acre of green space. The gardens are lush and buffer the Altenheim complex from the adjacent residential neighborhood, which created a park-like living situation for Altenheim residents. The Altenheim complex has been located on the same parcel since 1893, when the first Altenheim building was constructed. The Altenheim complex and surrounding gardens occupy the full parcel. The original Altenheim building was destroyed by fire in 1908 and rebuilt in 1908-09. The Altenheim complex is comprised of one and two-story buildings (all buildings except the Boiler House have basements). The buildings rest on brick foundations, have wood clapboard or brick walls, and are topped by flat, built-up roofs with parapets; a gabled roof covers the Dining Hall wing. Entrance porches supported by Doric columns, pilasters with engaged capitals, and corbelled cornices under extended roof eaves are distinguishing features on most facades. There are three contributing buildings in the Altenheim complex: the main Altenheim building (1908-09, 1914-15), the Excelsior building (1926), and the Boiler House (1914); three contributing objects: two pedestrian entrance gates and one vehicular entrance gate; and three non-contributing structures: a modern bus shelter, a concrete retaining wall and fence, and a modern cell tower located at the southwest corner of the 1914-15 Dormitory building. The Altenheim complex retains excellent integrity and maintains an appearance very similar to that of its historical appearance.

HISTORIC APPEARANCE OF THE ALTENHEIM

The first Altenheim building, constructed in 1893, was destroyed by fire in 1908. This massive structure was three and a half stories height over a raised basement and formed an "I" in plan. The building was set on a masonry foundation and was topped by a series of connected hipped and gable roofs. One of the most distinguishing features of the 1893 Altenheim was a square-shaped tower, set in the center of the symmetrical main façade, five stories in height, and capped with a pyramidal hipped roof. The original Altenheim building (1893) was sited on approximately the same spot as the current 1908-09 Administration and Dormitory wings.

Originally constructed in 1908-09, the oldest Altenheim dormitories are connected through the central Administration building (also constructed in 1908-09) to form an "H" in plan. The building's H-shaped plan was patterned after the famous Sans Souci castle in Potsdam, the home of a popular Prussian ruler, Der Aite Fritz. The building chronology of the complex is illustrated in the attached Sketch Map/Site Plan (Appendix). The eastern portion of the Dining Hall, which extends perpendicular to the length of the western Dormitory, and the attached Kitchen wing comprised the remainder of the 1908-09 building campaign. The eastern portion of the site continued to be dedicated garden space when the 1908-09 buildings were constructed.

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In 1914-15 the complex was expanded to include the third Dormitory wing, connected to the original dormitories with a Solarium, similar to the connection between the original dormitories. The 1914-15 building campaign also included the extension of the Dining Hall to the west and the construction of the Boiler House.

The complex of buildings constructed during these first two building campaigns was designed by San Francisco architect Oscar Haupt.¹ Robert Frost was the builder for the 1908-09 building campaign.² According to the building permits, the Boiler House and west Dormitory were built by the owner.³

The Infirmary was added to the north side of the Dining Hall in 1923.⁴ In addition, visual evidence indicates that the Infirmary was altered stylistically during the 1950s. The final building at the Altenheim was erected in 1926 in the northwest corner of the property on Excelsior Avenue and is known as the Excelsior building. Further construction on the site includes a small addition to the Boiler House in 1932, and the addition of a second floor to the Administration building in 1938, designed by Albert A. Schroepfer. These changes to the Administration building altered the character of the building, giving it a Moderne aspect at the second story. Other than the Moderne alterations to the Administration building and Infirmary, the complex has remained in much the same state since 1926.

The Altenheim complex has always been surrounded by more than two acres of open space since the original building was constructed in 1893. However, insufficient information exists to substantiate an assertion that this open space contained landscaped gardens.

CURRENT APPEARANCE OF THE ALTENHEIM

Main Altenheim Building (contributing building)

The buildings that comprise the Altenheim, constructed over a relatively short span of time, form a cohesive complex of multiple wings and additions with an overall irregular plan. The common spaces, such as the lounges and the Dining Hall, contain the most elaborate features, while the individual rooms are simple in style. The spatial organization of the complex is also significant to its character, with the nodal connections between buildings housing the enhanced common spaces mentioned above.

The building constructed in 1908-09 has a prominent H-shaped plan with a central Administration building that connects the long dormitories on either side. This concept was carried through the second building campaign in 1914-15, with the addition of a third Dormitory similarly oriented and connected through the Solarium. The deliberate separation of the dormitories speaks to a concern for fire safety after the destruction of the original (1893) Altenheim building. This

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concern was addressed by constructing the Administration building in an H-shaped plan and installing large sliding fire doors at the openings into the dormitories, thereby preventing the spread of fire from one wing to the other.

The three main dormitories are all built in the Classical Revival style and feature similar elements such as the fenestration pattern and the Doric columns. Entrance porches, supported by Doric columns, dominate the narrow ends of the buildings. The Solarium and the entrance porch at the Administration building also feature Doric columns. The windows are typically wood, two-over-two, double-hung sash spaced evenly on the facades. The 1908-09 dormitories are clad predominantly in wood clapboard, and the 1914-15 Dormitory is built of brick. The Altenheim building features a raised brick basement and similar full-height Doric pilasters surmounted by a continuous cornice decorated with large modillions and a simple frieze.

Constructed during the 1908-09 building campaign, the Dining Hall wing is defined by Craftsman details, including half-timbering at the second story and triangular knee braces supporting a gabled roof. In addition, the brick first floor features large arched window openings and the second floor contains a fenestration pattern of casement windows with a transom light above. During the 1914-15 building campaign the Dining Hall wing was extended to the west. The Kitchen wing, constructed during the 1908-09 campaign, is utilitarian in character, as is the Boiler House. The Kitchen wing has undergone extensive alterations including remodeling at the interior and changes to the exterior, such as infilled windows and removal of original stairs. The Infirmary was likely similar to the Kitchen wing when constructed in 1923, but was later modified with Moderne details and additional stylistic alterations during the 1950s.

Much like the exterior, the interiors of the dormitories are alike throughout the complex. The three Dormitory wings are oriented north-south with long hallways running their full length. Individual rooms are located on both sides of the hall, with restrooms, utility rooms, and stairhalls centrally located along the long axis. The small rooms are utilitarian in detail. Each room is entered through a simple door opening with a large transom window above. The transoms appear to have been infilled and the doors replaced with flush wood doors.

The common spaces at the nodal connections between the dormitories, including the Administration building, the Solarium, and the Dining Hall, contain the main character-defining interior features of the complex. The Administration building contains the primary entrance. The space opens into a rotunda that connects the two dormitories and continues into the Dining Hall. The rooms that ring the rotunda were originally open to the center, with the exception of the office at the southwest corner. The office and the original parlor on the south side of the rotunda have been further enclosed. Their walls are now graced with a grandfather clock and a wall honoring Altenheim benefactors. The two rooms at the north side, a library and sitting room, remain open to the center and provided a generous gathering space for the residents.

A domed skylight with a first-floor oculus illuminates the central space of the Administration building.

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The Solarium also contains two common sitting rooms, as well as a wide hallway with large bi-fold windows lining the north wall. The centrally located and domed rotunda above echoes the dome of the Administration building.

In contrast to the rest of the complex, the Dining Hall is rustic in character, with exposed trusses and beams, character-defining features that reflect its Arts and Crafts influence. The trusses and the ceiling are painted with simple stenciled designs. The walls contain built-in wood cabinets, which are further supplemented by sideboards of German construction. Stained glass windows glow at the east end of the generously sized Dining Hall.

Overall, the Altenheim building has undergone relatively few modifications since it was rebuilt in 1908-09. The permit ledger book on file with the City of Oakland lists few alterations and changes to the Altenheim buildings. However, aside from major additions (listed in the preceding paragraphs), no record exists of additional alterations or changes. A comparison of original drawings to existing conditions reveals various small alterations, yet the dates of these changes remain unknown. A complete list of changes follows.

Administration building and 1908-09 Dormitory wings

- Wood, second-story balustrades replaced with metal balustrades
- Fire escapes added to the Dormitory wings at the north and south facades, and four fire escapes added to the Dormitory wings' east and west facades that face the courtyards to the north and south of the Administration building
- Minor window replacements (two small window replacements at East Dormitory east façade; three small window replacements at West Dormitory east façade; four small window replacements at West Dormitory west façade; six small window replacements at East and West Dormitories north facades; six small window replacements at East and West Dormitories south facades)
- All original paired, multi-lite doors have been replaced with a combination of flush wood and paired glass doors
- Awning added above East Dormitory second floor balcony
- Elevator tower added to northwest corner of Administration building
- Ramp added to fire escape on West Dormitory wing, east façade
- Porch enclosed next to fire escape entrance on East Dormitory wing, west facade

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1914-15 Dormitory wing

- Fire escape stairs and ramp added to south façade
- Elevator tower added to north facade

Solarium

- Wood, second story balustrade replaced with metal
- Operable casement windows replaced with fixed sash windows

Dining Hall

- Seven multi-lite, casement windows at first floor, south facade replaced with one-over-two and one-over-four casement windows
- Two wood, paneled doors at first floor, south façade replaced with
- Second floor covered walkway attached to northwest corner of Dining Hall (extends to Excelsior building second floor)

Excelsior Building (contributing building)

The Excelsior building, built in 1926, is located at the northwest corner of the lot and is L-shaped in plan. This brick building rises two-stories above a raised basement and is topped by a flat roof. The elevations are punctuated by evenly spaced windows with one-over-one, double-hung sash and one-by-four, fixed sash with simple brick frames and sills. There are entrances located at most elevations on both basement and first floor levels. A projected, continuous cornice decorates the roofline. The Excelsior building is connected to the Altenheim's Dining Hall by a raised, enclosed walkway at the second story. Overall, the Excelsior building has undergone relatively few modifications since it was constructed in 1926. The permit ledger book on file with the City of Oakland does not list any alterations or changes to the building.

Boiler House (contributing building)

Constructed in 1914, the Boiler House is located to the south of the Excelsior building and west of the Altenheim building. This small, brick building is single story and was originally square in plan. A tall smokestack is located at the northwest corner of the building. This building is utilitarian yet offers modest details such as segmentally arched window and door openings, large multi-lite, steel casement windows, and a corbelled brick cornice. The building has undergone very few modifications. In 1932 an addition was added to the east elevation and the exterior brick has been painted.

Three Entrance Gates (contributing objects)

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Three historic entrance gates punctuate the retaining wall at the south and east sides of the property. Two gates provide pedestrian access to the property and one gate serves as the main vehicular entrance to the Altenheim site. The gates consist of elaborate, wrought-iron, swinging doors set between heavy piers constructed of concrete masonry units. A wrought-iron banner set with white letters that spell "Altenheim" crowns the pedestrian gate at the east side of the property. Wrought iron fences, attached to the east entrance gate and set on top of the retaining wall, extend several feet to the north and south. Insufficient documentary information exists to date these gates. The information pertaining to the Altenheim contained in the Oakland History Room at the Oakland Public Library, the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey files, and the Altenheim Society's archives does not offer any evidence of when the entrance gates were constructed. A historical photograph dated ca. 1894 depicts a vehicular entrance gate in the same location as the existing gate, yet the nineteenth century gate is no longer extant. All additional historical photographs were taken inside the perimeter fence and face the Altenheim buildings. The gates do not appear on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. The gates' classical detailing echoes the stair railings on the 1908-09 buildings; from this it can be surmised that the gates were installed when the Altenheim was rebuilt in 1908-09. Documentation that describes changes or alterations to the gates could not be found.

Retaining Wall and Fence (non-contributing structure)

The Altenheim site has maintained its current boundaries since at least 1912, according to the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from that year. The Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1903 is cut in a way that makes the parcel boundaries indiscernible, but it is possible that the parcel's current boundaries pre-date 1912. The perimeter of the Altenheim site is delineated by a retaining wall punctuated by three entrance gates. The retaining wall is constructed of concrete, rises approximately a foot and a half from the ground, and is topped by a utilitarian wire fence. This retaining wall and fence are modern replacements and not original to the property. Insufficient documentary information exists to date the retaining wall and fence. The retaining wall and fence are not visible on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps or historical photographs.

Modern Bus Shelter (non-contributing structure)

The small, open-air bus shelter, located at the southern boundary of the parcel, is square in plan and constructed of concrete masonry units. A pyramidal, hipped roof covers the structure. The date of this bus shelter is unknown. The shelter is not visible on Sanborn Fire Insurance maps or historical photographs.

Cell Tower (non-contributing structure)

The cell tower structure is located at the southwest corner of the 1914-15 Dormitory building. The tower is approximately four-stories in height. The cell tower is modern and was likely erected in the 1990s or early 2000s.

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Garden

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and historical photographs show that the Altenheim complex has been surrounded by open space since the original building was constructed in 1893. The gardens buffer the Altenheim buildings from their surroundings and afforded residents an idyllic, park-like setting, where as “resident gardeners,” they were free to toil and tinker with the landscape. Formal landscape plans for the garden do not exist. Rather, the garden has historically retained a vernacular character and its planning was organic in nature, the result of tinkering by generations of Altenheim residents. Various documentary accounts reference the Altenheim gardens, yet insufficient information exists to substantiate an assertion that the open space within the Altenheim parcel contained landscaped gardens. An article in the *Fruitvale Progress* dated March 20, 1908, describes the fire that consumed the original building: “...the fire-fighters had to draw the water from a fish pond in the garden.”⁵ A second article dated September 25, 1908, describes the plans for the new (post-fire) Altenheim site: “The new home will consist of a group of imposing structures erected upon a most attractive site of six acres in the center of a most beautiful park...The buildings [will be surrounded by] parks to the south and north and between the east and west buildings.”⁶ A third article written in 1909 describes the restoration celebration: “Ten thousand German Americans from all parts of California gathered in the flower studded grounds of the institution to celebrate its restoration.”⁷ These articles imply that, although the Altenheim buildings were indeed surrounded by gardens; however, the area was not necessarily a formally designed landscape.

As part and parcel of the Altenheim living experience, as a unique retirement home located within a park-like setting, the gardens provided an easily accessible outdoor environment for Altenheim residents. Today, gardens exist to the north, east, south, and west of the Altenheim complex, yet the gardens to east are the most expansive, incorporating at least an acre of green space. The gardens are meticulous and still cared for by Altenheim Society volunteers. Meandering, concrete footpaths wind through the many sections of the gardens. Arbors, gates, and benches, placed at various spots throughout the gardens, accent the landscape. Mature trees and dense foliage are indications that the existing gardens have existed for some time. In recent years, a cell tower and other communication equipment were added to the southwest corner of the property. These structures are not located in a formally landscaped area and their presence could be removed from the property with no impact to the historic buildings or garden.

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Character-Defining Features

The following are the character-defining features of the property:

Site

Original boundaries of the site, which remain unchanged since the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance map

Mature gardens as well as the relationship between garden and historic complex

East and South perimeter entrance gates

Exterior Features

Dormitories and first floor of the Administration building:

Exterior wood and brick materials and features throughout
Doric pilasters (in wood at 1908-09 buildings and in brick at 1914-15 wing) and wood frieze with modillions
Wood porticos at the ends of the dormitories
Brick raised basements with window openings
Typical two-over-two, double-hung, wood sash with simple wood surrounds

Second floor of the Administration building:

Moderne elements such as steel casement windows
Solarium
Bi-fold windows
Doric pilasters and columns
Copper dome above cupola
Dining Hall
Arched window openings at first floor
Half-timbering and knee braces at second floor
Stained glass and casement windows at second floor

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Interior Features:

Spatial organization of complex
Common spaces at nodal connections between Dormitory wings
Long double-loaded hallways running longitudinally through dormitories
Glazed cupolas and oculi marking circulation paths

Administration:

Domed skylight with first floor oculus
Interior finishes and wood detailing including columns, cornice, and casework
Grandfather clock and donor wall

Solarium:

Domed rotunda with clerestory windows
Interior finishes including wood detailing and glazed hallway wall

Dining Hall:

Interior finishes and details including exposed wood trusses, beams, and ceiling
Decorative painting on trusses and ceiling
Built-in casework

DESCRIPTION OF REHABILITATION PROJECT

Citizens Housing Corporation proposes to convert the Altenheim, a former assisted living facility in the City of Oakland's Dimond district, into affordable, independent senior rental housing. The project involves the rehabilitation of the historic complex (approximately 87,000 sq. ft.), including the Altenheim dormitories, Dining Hall, Administration building, and Solarium; the removal of two utility wings: the Kitchen and Infirmary, and the Boiler House; and the addition of three new residential wings. The gardens (over two acres) will be retained. The Excelsior building will remain untouched during the project. The new residential wings will be located in the area of the existing Kitchen and Infirmary wings, in an existing parking area west of the 1917 Dormitory building, and in the southwest corner of the site. The new residential wings have been designed to minimize the removal of character-defining features and are compatible with the massing,

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size, scale, and features of the historic complex. The proposed project also includes rehabilitation of the original interior public spaces, such as the parlors, Dining Hall, and Solarium. The individual Dormitory rooms will be reconfigured to create new, independent apartments with kitchenettes and bathrooms. In addition, this project will include the removal of non-original features that are incompatible with the historic buildings, such as the iron fire escape stairs that currently obscure portions of the Dormitory buildings' facades and modern ramps to the dormitories. Although the proposed project does remove the Kitchen wing, Infirmary, and Boiler House, and these elements are part of the historic complex, when viewed in the overall context of the proposed project the loss of these utilitarian wings and building will not have an appreciable effect on the integrity of the Altenheim.

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Endnotes Section 7

¹ Permits 14708 and 36900, Permit Ledger Book Information from the City of Oakland.

² Permit 14708, Permit Ledger Book Information from the City of Oakland.

³ Permit 36900, Permit Ledger Book Information from the City of Oakland.

⁴ Permit 77823, Permit Ledger Book Information from the City of Oakland.

⁵ "Altenheim on Fire." *Fruitvale Progress*. March 20, 1908.

⁶ "Adopt Plans for New Altenheim." *Fruitvale Progress*. September 25, 1908.

⁷ "Corner - Stone Laid." *Fruitvale Progress*. May 7, 1909.

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Altenheim
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SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Altenheim is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its association with the social history of Oakland, California, specifically the groups and organizations that provided care to the elderly, infirmed, and underprivileged. In 1869 the Southern Pacific Railroad chose Oakland, California as the western terminus for its transcontinental route and transformed the East Bay into a popular destination. By 1900 Oakland's population was burgeoning with multi-ethnic communities. In a time that preexisted government assistance for social ills, the responsibility of caring for the elderly, infirmed, and underprivileged members of the community, particularly minorities, fell on private organizations funded and organized wholly by the community. One of these communities, the Dimond District, easily accessible from downtown Oakland by railcar, was teeming with Germanic peoples and culture. The original Altenheim building was constructed within the Dimond District of Oakland in 1893 under the auspices of the Altenheim Society, a group of Germanic immigrants dedicated to building an *altenheim* (old people's home) for their aging community members. The original Altenheim building, destroyed by fire in 1908, was rebuilt within a year. The Altenheim in Oakland is a significant example of a turn-of-the-century retirement home for peoples of European descent for the following reasons: the Altenheim was the only elderly care institution in Oakland that catered to aging German-Americans; the Altenheim complex, rebuilt over the footprint of the 1893 building in 1908-09, is primarily intact and has been located on the same parcel since 1893; the Altenheim buildings have been surrounded by over two acres of open space or gardens for over 100 years; and finally, the Altenheim maintained the same use (care institution for the aging and elderly) for over a century, continuing to thrive and expand even after the inception of welfare programs and the Social Security Act of 1935, indicating the importance of this institution to the German-American community. The Altenheim complex of historically related buildings retains a high degree of integrity. The period of significance is 1908, when the current Altenheim was rebuilt after the fire that destroyed the original building, to 1956, fifty years ago. While another significant date relates to the buildings, 1935, when the Social Security Act was passed, and the government began to provide assistance previously funded and organized by community organizations, activities that relate to the historic context continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: SOCIAL HISTORY – RELIEF AND CARE INSTITUTIONS

Overview of Oakland

The 1849 Gold Rush brought speculators to the shores east of San Francisco who viewed the region as an ideal location for a town, given its abundant natural resources and access to the San Francisco Bay. Three such speculators are credited with developing these quiet shores into a town: Horace W. Carpentier, Edson Adams, and Andrew Moon. Rather than working the gold fields, these east coast transplants sought to create a vibrant city that would provide all supporting goods and services for the region's rapidly expanding population. The town of Oakland was incorporated on March 4, 1852, and originally included only the land west of Lake Merritt.¹ Hamlets known as San Antonio, Clinton, and Lynn already

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existed to the south and west of the original town. By 1870 these communities were incorporated as Brooklyn, based on a name suggested by supervisor Thomas Eager, who arrived on the West Coast on one of the earliest ships, the *Brooklyn*, in 1846. In 1872 the city of Oakland annexed Brooklyn. The burgeoning town of Oakland, named for its glorious and dominating old-growth oak trees, primed itself for expansion.²

Oakland's next period of growth was the result of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. The western terminus of the railroad was located at 7th Street and Broadway, setting the stage for rapid development of the surrounding downtown blocks. Numerous hotels, restaurants, and a variety of additional businesses sprang up to support the tourist and commerce trades.³ With the United States linked by the railroad, people flocked to the West Coast to experience California's reputed magnificence for themselves, or to settle down in the booming region. All sectors of the economy grew rapidly: business, industry, commerce, and tourism. In 1870 the population reached 10,500; by 1880 it had ballooned to 34,555.⁴

Oakland rapidly developed technologically into a modern city that rivaled many other American cities. In 1866 the Oakland Gas Light Company introduced the City's first gaslights. By 1878 over forty-six miles of mains serviced the City.⁵ In 1891 the first electric streetcar line opened in Oakland, beginning what would become one of the most extensive electric streetcar systems in the United States.⁶ The most ambitious system, known as the "Key Route," connected Oakland's rapidly developing suburban neighborhoods, including Golden Gate, Elmhurst, Fruitvale, and the Dimond District. The Key Route eventually developed lines throughout Alameda County and was largely responsible for the development of suburban neighborhoods clustered around streetcar stations.⁷

Although Oakland experienced significant damage from the 1906 earthquake, the City fared better than San Francisco and assumed a supporting role, sending relief across the bay and sheltering the numerous refugees that fled the fire-stricken metropolis. Over 150,000 people reportedly flooded Oakland after the San Francisco earthquake and fire. Although San Francisco redeveloped rapidly after the earthquake, numerous citizens chose to remain in Oakland, creating the City's next intense expansion. In 1900 census figures indicate a population for Oakland of 67,000. By 1910 the population soared to 150,000. Oakland developed into a modern twentieth-century city with the construction of numerous early skyscrapers, public buildings, and hotels. Many of these structures remain today and include City Hall (1912), the First National Bank building (now the Broadway Building, 1908), and the Hotel Oakland (1911). As a result of the boom, the City annexed an additional forty-four square miles.⁸ During this period, real estate speculators heavily promoted suburban neighborhoods, including Fruitvale and the Dimond District.

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Overview of Dimond District

The Dimond District is named for Hugh Dimond, an Irish wholesaler who retired in the area, purchasing 267 acres in the foothills adjacent to Sausal Creek in 1873. At this time, the District attracted those who desired a country setting and salubrious climate. Downtown Oakland was easily accessible by horsecar, as the Highland Park and Fruitvale Railway connected the area to the city. By 1893 the horsecar line was electrified.⁹ Although Dimond was one of the early settlers in the area, the District has been home to German immigrants since its earliest days. In 1859 Friedrich Rhoda, a German-born immigrant, settled on a tract of land north of MacArthur Boulevard (then Hopkins Street) and planted over 2,000 cherry trees. In 1869 after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, Rhoda's cherries became the first fruit ever shipped from California.

Word about the Dimond District's idyllic location spread quickly and numerous German immigrants left San Francisco to live in the fresh air and bucolic setting of the District. By 1900 the community was primarily of German descent. Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps show this influx of development around the intersection of Fruitvale Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard.¹⁰ In 1890 the Dimond District won a location competition for the Altenheim, or German "elders home," competing with and winning over Sutro Heights in San Francisco. The original structure was completed in 1893, shown in the distance in Figure 1 (Appendix). The present structure was constructed following a devastating fire that destroyed the original building in 1908.¹¹

The Dimond District was also home to a number of other sanitariums and orphanages, including the Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored People, the Fred Finch Children's Home, and small orphanages with names like Sunshine Home and Bird's Nest.

The development of the District paralleled the growth patterns of downtown Oakland. Following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, numerous refugees flocked to Dimond seeking shelter. In 1908 the city of Oakland annexed the Dimond District, paved the roads, and improved the transportation connections. By 1910 the old farmland was rapidly being converted to lots for housing. The *Fruitvale Progress*, the local neighborhood newspaper, reported "More Bungalows and then some!" in 1916.¹² The 1912 Sanborn map (Figure 5, Appendix) confirms the District's residential development, with established lots appearing west of the Altenheim.¹³

By the 1920s developers frequently advertised the benefits of bungalows in the Dimond District in local newspapers. A map in the *Oakland Tribune* listed the trolley times from the District to the important factories in downtown Oakland. In 1921 a trolley trip took approximately 12 minutes from the Dimond District to the downtown industrial center.¹⁴ The rapid growth of this suburban area is reflected in the Sanborn maps from the 1920s and 1930s. By 1925 nearly all blocks surrounding the Altenheim were developed as single-family residential homes, the exception being several blocks north of

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Excelsior Avenue.¹⁵ Many of these homes remain today as outstanding examples of the variety of bungalows constructed by developers on speculation.

By 1935 the remaining blocks north of Excelsior Avenue were developed as single-family residential homes. These houses along both sides of Elston Avenue and on Elston Court represent an intact period residential district, as all the homes are constructed in the Spanish Revival style. This group of houses was identified as an area of local interest by the City of Oakland's Cultural Heritage Survey in 1996 and is called the Elston Avenue District.¹⁶ By 1936 the Fruitvale area, which includes the Dimond District, contained over 21,000 single-family homes, more than any district in Oakland.¹⁷

Relief Societies and Care Institutions in Oakland, California

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prior to welfare programs and the Social Security Act of 1935, the responsibility of caring for the elderly, infirmed, and underprivileged members of a community, particularly minorities, fell on private organizations funded and organized wholly by the community members. Minority groups, including Germans, Chinese, and African Americans, religious groups, and wealthy philanthropists heeded the call and raised funds to build humanitarian institutions that supported community members in need of assistance. The Altenheim was one of several relief and care institutions in Oakland, yet the Altenheim organization and the associated extant complex of historically related buildings remain unique in several ways: the Altenheim was the only large-scale care institution of its type in Oakland that catered to aging and elderly Germans; unlike most of the extant late nineteenth and early twentieth century care and relief institutions in Oakland, the Altenheim buildings are all intact and have not been moved; the Altenheim buildings have been located on the same parcel since 1893 (the current buildings were rebuilt over the footprint of the original buildings in 1908); the original boundaries of the site have remained unchanged since at least 1912, and the Altenheim buildings have been surrounded by open space or gardens for over 100 years; and finally, the Altenheim maintained the same use (care institution for the aging and elderly) for over a century, continuing to thrive and expand after the inception of welfare programs and the Social Security Act of 1935.

Historical Overview of the Altenheim

Based on a concept proposed by Charles Meinecke, president of the German Benevolent Society of San Francisco, the Altenheim Society was founded by wealthy members of the German community in the San Francisco Bay Area who wanted to develop a retirement home for their elders living in the area.¹⁸ In German the word "Altenheim" means old people's home, or retirement home for the elderly. The idea of this project had been discussed amongst the German community in the Bay Area for as many as twelve years, but the project was put on hold when the German Hospital, run by the German Benevolent Society of San Francisco, burned to the ground.¹⁹ The first meeting of the Altenheim Society

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was held on May 6, 1887, whereupon a constitution and by-laws were adopted. The Altenheim Society was ultimately incorporated in 1890.²⁰ The founders of the Society were C.C. Volberg (President), Fritz Rosenbaum, Ernst Bendel, John Koster, F. Habenicht, F. Ehrenpfort, R. Mayrisch, L.S. Rose, C. Bertheau, L. Eloessor, Otto Muser, Jos. Brandenstein, M. Watzmann, and others.²¹

Two sites were considered for the Altenheim complex, one near Sutro Heights in San Francisco and the other near the Dimond District of Oakland. Although the Sutro site was offered free of charge, the Oakland site was selected for its favorable weather conditions.²² After the site was chosen the Altenheim Society embarked on a fundraising mission, organizing drives, galas, and fairs that continued for several years. The Society organized a bazaar at Market and Larkin Streets in San Francisco. The *Oakland Tribune* announced: "For five evenings untold thousands filled the pavilion, netting the society a profit of \$39,880 – an impressive sum for the 1880s."²³ Wealthy members of the German community contributed donations, including Adolph Sutro, former mayor of San Francisco, Claus Spreckles, sugar magnate, and Frederick Delger, purportedly Oakland's first millionaire. The first event on the future site of the Altenheim was a gala picnic held in May of 1891.²⁴ According to newspaper accounts over the years, the Altenheim's May Festival has continued to be a popular event for the community.

Construction began on the first Altenheim building in 1893 and was completed by the end of 1896.²⁵ This grand building was four stories tall, with a six-story tower centered on the southern elevation (Figures 2 and 3, Appendix). In 1908 the *Fruitvale Progress* wrote: "The building is the pride of the German-Americans on the Pacific coast."²⁶ Set in the middle of an expansive park-like parcel, the Altenheim dominated the area (Figure 1, Appendix), which had limited residential development until the 1920s. The building was able to withstand the 1906 earthquake, admitting refugees rendered homeless from the catastrophe. Two years later, the Altenheim itself was destroyed by fire, and the residents were temporarily housed by surrounding German-American community members.²⁷

The Altenheim Society quickly regrouped after the fire. The fundraising effort for the rebuilding campaign was led by Altenheim Society officers and committee members, including local German businessmen J.F.W. Sohst, carriage manufacturer, Theodore Gier, wine merchant, and Albert Kayser, insurance agent. The Altenheim Society raised a hefty sum of \$70,000 toward rebuilding the new Altenheim. Society members organized a grand celebration around the laying of the corner-stone, and the event was hailed in the *Fruitvale Progress*: "Ten thousand German Americans from all parts of California gathered in the flower studded grounds of the institution to celebrate its restoration and to express by their presence and support the reverence of their race for old age and its accompanying frailty."²⁸ The new Altenheim, with a new Classical Revival design by San Francisco architect Oscar Haupt, was rebuilt in the same location within a year. By rebuilding in the same place, the gardens covering the slope down to the eastern boundary of the lot remained intact. These 1908 buildings still stand at the center of the current Altenheim complex, and the gardens remain for the enjoyment of the community.

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The Altenheim continued to expand physically over a span of thirty years. Resident population also increased with the physical expansion and continued to blossom for at least seventy-two years. In 1898 there were thirty residents. By 1909 the Altenheim's new buildings were filled to capacity with 150 residents. In 1970, after dormitory additions in the 1930s, the Altenheim's population reached its peak and housed 200 residents. When the Altenheim closed in 2002, seventy residents were displaced.

Although the Altenheim originally served the needs of the German community exclusively, the institution eventually opened its doors to non-Germans of all ethnicities. In 1970 the President of the Altenheim Society, Louis Reinthaler, reminded a reporter that "[the Altenheim] no longer is membership restrictive to those of German ancestry."²⁹ However, in 1995 the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey reported: "The Altenheim still functions as a predominantly German retirement home."³⁰ Up until the day it closed, almost a third of the residents spoke German. The last two residents to move out of the building in 2002, Bruce and Astri Feist, were a German-American couple who had been married for fifty-four years. The Altenheim remained a fully functioning retirement home until 2002. The Altenheim Society continues to lease the Excelsior Building for its services and still holds the annual May Festival and Oktoberfest on the Altenheim grounds.

Similar Relief Societies and Care Institutions

Comparable relief and care institutions existed in Oakland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Most extant examples of these care institutions and sites in Oakland are described below. The purpose of describing these institutions is to buttress the argument that the Altenheim is unique for its intact large-scale buildings and setting, as well as its continued use as a care institution that catered to mostly Germanic residents throughout its history. Most of the other similar extant institutions have suffered from demolition of buildings, parceling of the site and impacts on the setting, major moves, or changes in use. The sole exception is the Home of Peace, which still maintains its overall integrity.

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Oakland's Care and Relief Institutions for the Elderly and Infirm

Home of Peace (extant)

In 1893 George and Carrie Montgomery, two local philanthropists, founded a rest home for ex-missionaries in the Beulah Heights District of East Oakland. George Montgomery amassed millions of dollars in the mining industry in Mexico and spent the second half of his life, along with his wife, Carrie, directing religious and philanthropic organizations. George Montgomery also donated the land for the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People and the original Salvation Army Rescue Home for Girls in Oakland.³¹ The Home of Peace, located at 4700 Daisy Street, eventually grew into a district of six buildings, constructed between the 1900s and 1950s, located on five partly discontinuous parcels of land. The six Home of Peace buildings consisted of three retirement homes, two chapels, and a mission supply warehouse. The Home of Peace mission was to "assist incoming and outgoing missionaries [and ministers of all denominations] and also act as a clearing house for funds for the foreign mission fields."³² The original house, constructed by George Montgomery in 1893, had eighteen guest rooms for missionaries. In 1895 the Montgomerys built the Beulah Park Orphanage on a nearby parcel. The orphanage was maintained for thirteen years and cared for over 500 children.³³ All buildings within the Home of Peace district are extant and still in use by the Home of Peace. The setting is still relatively rural.

The Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People (demolished)

At the turn of the twentieth century, African Americans were largely segregated from white society. In Oakland, California, retirement homes run by Caucasians turned away aging African Americans. Members of the African American community in Oakland were forced to organize their own institutions to care for their elderly members, especially those without friends and families who had limited resources in times of need. By the late nineteenth century, the African American population in Oakland had grown to nearly a thousand residents, and the community saw the need for a home to support its aging members. The African-American community established the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People on August 22, 1897, in the Beulah Heights District of East Oakland.³⁴ The Home was the first institution of its kind in the state.³⁵ The planning and fundraising process began in 1892 under the direction of active community member Emma Scott. Once the foundation acquired the necessary funds for construction, a large Victorian house was erected on land donated by two local (Caucasian) philanthropists, George and Carrie Montgomery. The Office of Historic Preservation publication *Five Views* describes the Home's early history:

[The Home for the Aged and Infirm Colored People] ... was an immediate success, and its rooms were soon filled. Residents had to be over sixty years old and were required to pay an admission fee of \$150. The Home became a final haven for a number of California's distinguished black pioneers.³⁶

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Dr. William Whipple Purnell, one of Oakland's first African American doctors, served as the Home's physician. Another famous resident was Virginia "Jenny" Prentiss, the personal nursemaid of Oakland author Jack London.³⁷ A San Francisco-based newspaper for the African-American community described the Home:

Facing a pretty boulevard in a beautiful part of the city, far removed from the noise and bustle of business...stands the Old Folks' Home, a monument to a race of people and a place of refuge for its children of the long ago who, having advanced beyond the age of activity, patiently await the passing of time...³⁸

The Home for Aged and Infirm Colored People remained in operation until it was forced to close in 1938. The building was sold to Mills College in 1938 and razed shortly thereafter.

St. Joseph's Home for the Aged (extant)

Located at 2647 East 14th Street in Oakland, the St. Joseph's Home for the Aged was constructed in 1912. This facility was built as a nursing home and residence for the elderly and operated by Little Sisters of the Poor, a charitable arm of the Roman Catholic Church. Jeanne Jugan founded the Little Sisters of the Poor in 1793 in Saint-Servan, France for the purpose of serving the elderly poor. The order began operating in the United States during the Civil War, eventually establishing homes for the aged, such as St. Joseph's, in thirty-three cities across the country. The Oakland Landmark Designation form states: [St. Joseph's] has intimate associations with a significant religious and social service organization that operated in Oakland for almost 70 years."³⁹ The Sisters and all the occupants were forced to leave St. Joseph's in the late 1970s when the state deemed the building seismically unsafe. In the 1980s a battle ensued when the California Department of Corrections turned St. Joseph's Home into a live-in correctional facility re-entry program for ex-inmates.⁴⁰ Today, the St. Joseph's Home building houses medical offices. The building is surrounded by dense urban development, and its setting has been impaired.

King's Daughters Home (all but two buildings extant)

King's Daughters Home was constructed in Oakland at 3900 Broadway in 1912. Designed by preeminent architect Julia Morgan, this Mediterranean/Beaux Arts complex of residential buildings encompasses an entire city block. The project was commissioned for the King's Daughters Home for Incurables who owned and occupied the building until it closed in April 1980. King's Daughters was organized in 1886 by Mrs. Margaret Bottome, the wife of a Methodist minister, to "ameliorate the suffering of the poor and the chronically ill."⁴¹ A group of local women reacted to the reported treatment of an elderly patient at Fabiola Hospital who, having been pronounced incurable, had no one to care for her and was

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essentially turned away. The group, led by Mrs. Laura Albrecht of Fruitvale, “resolved to aid this woman and others with similar needs.”⁴² In August 1897 the organization, at that time housed in temporary facilities, became the King’s Daughters Home for Incurables. According to local lore, Julia Morgan convinced the group to drop “for Incurables” from the name of the future facility “as she did not believe anyone should have to go through a gate with that name inscribed on it.”⁴³ Over the next thirteen years, the group moved from facility to facility until embarking on a fundraising drive that lasted over thirty years and successfully raised \$100,000 for the King’s Daughters Home. The complex was subsequently built in phases through the 1930s. The main administration was built in 1912; the east wing was built in 1916; the nurses’ residence was built in 1924; in 1935 the attendants’ residence was completed; and in 1936 the pergola was added. In the 1970s the nurses’ residence and an annex attached to the east wing were deemed unsafe and demolished. King’s Daughters Home was closed in April 1980, after serving over 6,000 patients. Kaiser Foundation Health Plan owns the remaining buildings of the complex, and the site now houses medical offices.

Oakland’s Care and Relief Institutions for Pregnant and Disadvantaged Women

Ladies’ Relief Society (extant)

The Ladies’ Relief Society of Oakland was advertised in a pamphlet (ca. 1890): “Ten acres of beautiful land, comprising fruitful field, dimpled pasture, and tasteful garden, situated halfway between Oakland and Berkeley, about two miles from either, form the domain of the Ladies’ Relief Society of Oakland.”⁴⁴ In 1873 the Ladies’ Relief Society of Oakland purchased a ten-acre plot of land on 45th Street in North Oakland and constructed the Children’s Home, Home for Aged Women (a woman’s retirement facility), and a home for unwed mothers. The Ladies’ Relief Society, organized in 1872 in an effort to help those displaced by the Great Fire of Chicago, “developed into one of the grandest charities in the State for the care and support of helpless infancy and helpless age.”⁴⁵ The Society was Oakland’s first non-secular charitable institution. Yet, “...in 1915, the Ladies’ Relief Society...officially endorsed racial segregation in the Children’s Home, excluding African and Asian-American children from the orphanage.”⁴⁶

The ten-acre plot of land purchased by the Society, on what was then Oakland countryside, came with a large residence, the Beckwith House. The Ladies’ Relief Society used the Beckwith House to care for “20 elderly ladies of limited means and 107 orphaned or abandoned children.”⁴⁷ This residence was used to house both the elderly and orphans until 1882 when the “Home for Aged Women” was built. Elderly women continued to live in the Home for Aged Women until a larger, modern residential building, the Autumn of Life Home, was constructed in 1928. The Autumn of Life Home was renamed the Matilda E. Brown Home in 1935 in honor of one of the Society’s founding members.

The orphans continued to live in the Beckwith House until it was ravaged by fire in 1894. Over 100 children were immediately displaced. The buildings were replaced quickly by a structure replete with all the modern conveniences and

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improvements.⁴⁸ The Children's Home was destroyed by fire for the second time on April 12, 1906. There were sixty-three orphans who were made temporarily homeless by the fire. Newspaper headlines the next morning announced: "[Children] Saved from Flames by Plucky Matron."⁴⁹ The community reacted quickly and donated the funds necessary to replace the orphanage. The building was rebuilt within a year as an almost exact replica of the former building. The Ladies' Relief Society Children's Home continued to serve as an orphanage until World War II when the United States Army leased the building for use by military police. In 1949 the City of Oakland purchased the building.

A few additional buildings existed on the property at various times throughout history, including a nursery building, constructed in the 1880s, and a "lying-in hospital" built to care for indigent mothers, added in 1928.

In 1952 the Society dropped the word "Relief" from its official name and became the Ladies' Home Society.⁵⁰ Today, the Ladies' Home Society Children's Home is home to Studio One, a public art center; the Matilda E. Brown Home is still housed in the original 1928 building and still serves the same purpose; and a children's day school, Park Day School, is located in the "lying-in hospital." Land parceling has impacted the setting, and the buildings are owned by three separate organizations. Medium-scale residential and commercial structures surround the property. The Ladies' Relief Society was listed on in the National Register for Historic Places on July 13, 2006.

Salvation Army Rescue Home for Girls (demolished)

The Salvation Army Rescue Home for Girls was constructed in 1921 at 2794 Garden Street in the Fruitvale District of Oakland. The Beaux Arts/Spanish Colonial hospital and residential building were set among a complex of support buildings, including a nurses' home and a child-development center. The complex was located on five acres of landscaped grounds.⁵¹ William Booth founded the Salvation Army in London, England in 1852. Booth's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Bramwell Booth, oversaw the needs of destitute women, most of whom were young, pregnant, and in need of financial and medical help. In the late 1880s the Salvation Army, realizing the different needs of pregnant women, opened "rescue homes" throughout the United States. The first rescue home in the Salvation Army's Western Territory was established in Oakland, California in 1887. George Simpson Montgomery, a local philanthropist, donated the original plot of land for the Salvation Army Rescue Home for Girls (built in 1887). The second Rescue Home for Girls was rebuilt in 1921 on land donated by the Elks. In 1945 the hospital "provided 316 unmarried mothers with an average of four months care each. A few babies, born elsewhere, were given care at the hospital, while 226 babies were born at the hospital."⁵² A brochure for the hospital (ca. 1950) advertised: "[Our services are] offered to all regardless of color or creed."⁵³ The hospital had a total of sixty-five beds: fifteen hospital beds and fifty beds in a dormitory where women received pre and post-natal hospital care. The Booth Memorial Hospital/Salvation Army Rescue Home for Girls was demolished in the fall of 1996 to make way for a new Salvation Army homeless center.

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Orphanages and Childcare Institutions

St. Vincent's Day Home (extant)

St. Vincent's Day Home, formerly the home of Charles D. and Laura Haven, was constructed in the 1860s at 1074 8th Street in Oakland and expanded and altered in 1892. The Sisters of the Holy Family bought the Queen Anne/Italianate house from the Havens in 1911 to provide childcare for working parents. Elizabeth Tobin organized the Sister of the Holy Family, an Irish Catholic order of nuns, in the 1870s.⁵⁴ The Sisters provided day care relief for working parents in the San Francisco Bay Area. The *Catholic Voice* reported in 2001: "Child care was in great demand for many families whose husbands were away from home because of military service or other circumstances, forcing wives into the workforce."⁵⁵ Over the years, the large residence housed a convent, orphanage, and a day home, "the only day home run by Irish Catholics in [Oakland]," according to architectural historian, Marta Gutman.⁵⁶ Although the Home accepted children of all faiths, St. Vincent's was racially segregated and only accepted the white children of working mothers.⁵⁷ The Sisters of the Holy Family operated St. Vincent's Day Home until approximately 1937, according to city directories. The Roman Catholic Arch Bishop owned the building from at least 1912.⁵⁸ The sisters provided a second home to more than 30,000 children over a span of ninety years. The Home's mission has changed over the years to adapt to the needs of the community. In the mid-1970s St. Vincent's cared for the children of displaced Vietnamese immigrants. Today, the Day Home supports mostly mothers in the state welfare program who need childcare relief while looking for work during the day.⁵⁹ St. Vincent's Day Home is the only extant nineteenth-century building on the block and is surrounded by dense, modern infill.

Fred Finch Children's Home (few original buildings extant)

The Fred Finch Children's Home was dedicated on February 22, 1892, at the behest of Captain Duncan Blair Finch, who donated six acres of land to the Home in memory of his son, Fred. Duncan Finch acquired his fortune through the establishment of one of the first lumber companies on the San Francisco waterfront. Finch also owned a steamship company that ferried passengers back and forth from San Francisco to the Puget Sound. The Finch's only son, Frederick, died in the 1870s, a short time after their only daughter died at the age of nine. Duncan and Eunice Finch were devastated by the deaths of their children and turned to philanthropy as catharsis. The Fred Finch Children's Home opened on February 22, 1892. The original location of the Children's Home was in the Dimond/Fruitvale District of Oakland at 2800 Coolidge Avenue (then Peralta Avenue). Surrounded by six acres, the land and buildings were officially owned by the California Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. According to a newspaper account dated February 23, 1892, "The home is pleasantly situated in one of Oakland's finest suburbs, and is surrounded by everything conducive to

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health.”⁶⁰ The entire complex consisted of a tennis court, playgrounds, a junior boys’ building, a senior boys’ building, a hospital, a dining room, a girls’ dormitory, and an administration building. According to a brochure:

The program of the home include[d]: Regular public school work (in Oakland public schools), medical and hospital care with a registered nurse, religious training in a nearby Sunday school and church, boy scout work within the home...regulated meals, with butter and milk at each meal and plenty of fruits and vegetables, and a separate bed for each child.”⁶¹

In 1901 four acres were added to the complex, and by 1923, 2,500 children had been admitted as residents. The oldest extant substantial building dates from 1913. Today, the Fred Finch Children’s Center, now known as the Fred Finch Youth Center, still serves the needs of at-risk children. The Youth Center continues to maintain a large campus-like setting.

Fannie Wall Children’s Home and Day Nursery (demolished)

The Northern Federation of California Colored Women’s Clubs (NFCCWC) was founded in 1913 when Elizabeth Brown decided to combine several existing African American women’s clubs, including the Fanny Jackson Coppin Club, the first all-black women’s organization in the Oakland.⁶² By 1914 “West Oakland was the geographic center of African-American life in the city,” according to Marta Gutman.⁶³ The conglomeration of clubs, led by president Fannie Wall, “[recognized] the lack of services rendered minority groups, particularly the Negro child”⁶⁴ and immediately drew up plans for an orphanage. The orphanage’s mission was “to care for homeless, dependent, neglected children from broken homes, and to provide day-care for children of working parents.”⁶⁵ The NFCWC fundraised and acquired the funds necessary to construct the orphanage after a four-year effort. In 1918 the Northern Federation Home and Day Nursery (renamed Fannie Wall Children’s Home and Day Nursery) was erected at 1215 Peralta Street in Oakland. At one point in its history, the home supported twenty children residents and cared for an average of eight to fifteen children in the Day Nursery.⁶⁶ In order to support the growing community, the organization expanded and moved to 815 Linden Street in 1928. The Northern Federation Home and Day Nursery maintained its operation until 1965. Marta Gutman writes: “The institution fell into disrepair, as the neighborhood declined after World War II, and the building was demolished during the 1960s, when massive urban renewal projects wiped out much of the urban fabric in the western part of the city.”⁶⁷ The Fannie Wall Children’s Home and Day Nursery moved its operation to another neighborhood in West Oakland where it still exists today.

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Conclusion

Among the many turn-of-the-century relief and care institutions located in Oakland, California, the Altenheim was the only care institution for elderly peoples of German descent. Although similar care institutions that catered for elderly minorities existed in Oakland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, none were of the same scale as the Altenheim, and only one other site retains a high degree of integrity. The Altenheim buildings are intact and have been well maintained. The setting, including expansive gardens and open-space, has remained relatively unchanged since the 1890s. And finally, the Altenheim maintained the same use (care institution for the aging and elderly) for over a century, continuing to thrive and expand after the inception of welfare programs and the Social Security Act of 1935. The Altenheim reflects the determination of German Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area dedicated to the care of their elderly community members. The buildings and garden retain a high degree of integrity and the residential, low-density setting of the neighborhood has been retained. Therefore, this important complex of historically related buildings meets National Register Criterion A at the local level in the social history area of significance.

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Endnotes, Section 8

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³ Neighborhood Profiles: San Antonio.

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⁶ Bagwell, p. 145.

⁷ Bagwell, p. 165.

⁸ Bagwell, p. 179-180.

⁹ Brookes, Douglas S., "The Early Years of the Dimond District." Oakland Heritage Alliance Newsletter, Vol. 6, No. 3, Fall 1986, p. 2.

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¹¹ Brookes, p. 6.

¹² "Dimond Doings," *Fruitvale Progress*. October 20, 1916.

¹³ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Volume 1, Oakland, California, 1911-1912.

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¹⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, Volume 1, Oakland, California, 1925-1929.

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¹⁸ "The Altenheim's Cheerful Story," *Oakland Tribune*. January 24, 1960, p. 8M.

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²¹ "Corner - Stone Laid." *Fruitvale Progress*. May 7, 1909.

²² "Altenheim - a grand venture for German-Americans," by Erika Mailman. *Hills Newspapers*. September 25, 2001, p. A3.

²³ "It was climate they were after." *Oakland Tribune*. November 22, 1970.

²⁴ "Diamond Jubilee."

²⁵ "Diamond Jubilee."

²⁶ "Altenheim on Fire." *Fruitvale Progress*. March 20, 1908.

²⁷ "Altenheim - a grand venture for German-Americans."

²⁸ "Corner-Stone Laid."

²⁹ "It was climate they were after."

³⁰ Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Unpublished manuscripts from the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey department. September 30, 1995.

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⁶⁰ Evaluation Tally Sheet.

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⁶³ "Under Siege: Construction and Care at the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery."

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⁶⁴ "Under Siege: Construction and Care at the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery."

⁶⁵ "Under Siege: Construction and Care at the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery."

⁶⁶ Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Unpublished manuscripts.

⁶⁷ "Under Siege: Construction and Care at the Fannie Wall Children's Home and Day Nursery."

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Oakland Heritage website: www.oaklandheritage.org

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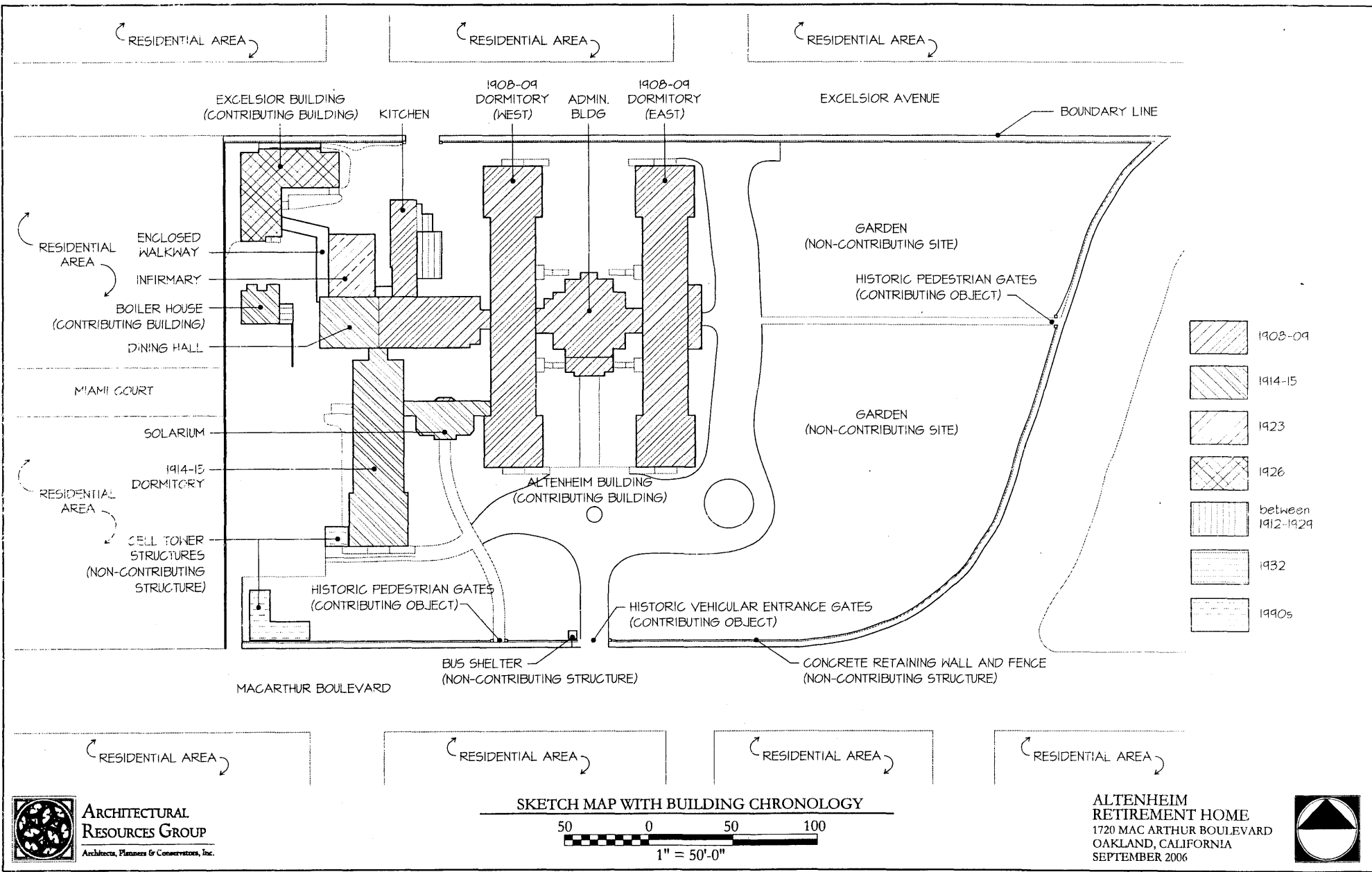
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Verbal Boundary Description

The Altenheim occupies a six-acre lot at the top of a steep rise in the Dimond district of Oakland. The Altenheim complex and the gardens occupy the full parcel. The parcel is bounded by Excelsior Avenue to the north, MacArthur Boulevard to the south and east, and a row of residential lots that abut the border of the Altenheim parcel to the west. Existing site boundaries are consistent with the boundaries that are shown on the 1912 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (see Appendix). The Altenheim is located less than one-half mile from Fruitvale Avenue, the main street of the Dimond district.

Boundary Justification

The boundary consists of the entire parcel, including the fence that surrounds the property. This parcel has been associated with the Altenheim since at least 1912, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.



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Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Historical Garden, looking west
Photo 1.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #2, South Façade, looking north
Photo 2.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Buildings #2 and #3, South Facades, looking north
Photo 3.

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The Altenheim
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Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #1, East Façade, looking southwest
Photo 4.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #6, South Façade, looking north
Photo 5.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Buildings #1 and #3, North Facades, looking west
Photo 6.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #3, East and North Facades, looking southwest
Photo 7.

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Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #1, West Façade, looking east
Photo 8.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Kitchen Wing (foreground) and Excelsior Building (background), looking west
Photo 9.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Boiler House, looking southwest
Photo 10.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #2 Interior, Foyer and Rotunda, looking west
Photo 11.

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The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #4 Interior, Dining Hall, looking west
Photo 12.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #2 Interior, Nodal Connection, looking west
Photo 13.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
Building #6 Interior, Corridor and Rotunda, view west
Photo 14.

The Altenheim
Oakland, Alameda County, CA
Shayne E. Watson
April 14, 2005
Negatives located at Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco
East Pedestrian Entry Gate, looking west
Photo 15.

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Figure 1



View of the Dimond district, ca. 1894, showing the Altenheim in the distance (photograph courtesy of OaklandHistory.com).

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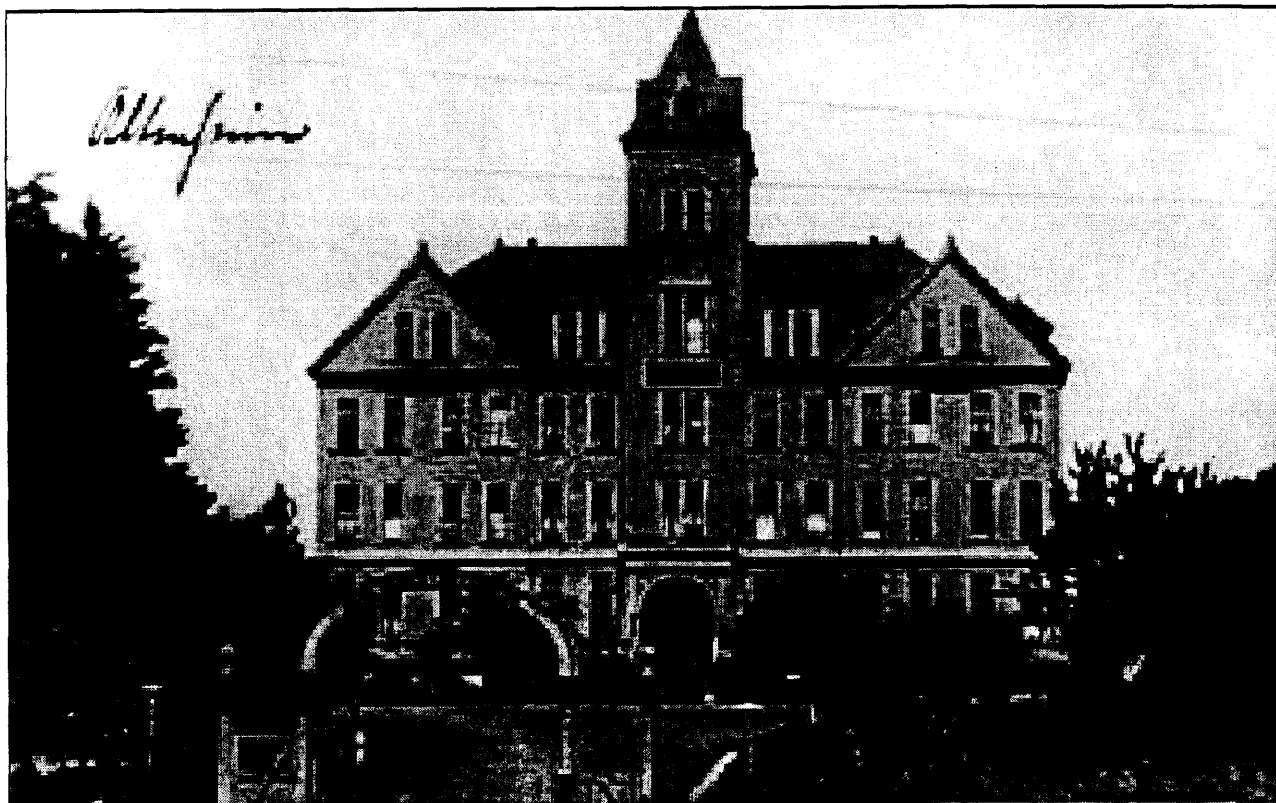
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Figure 2



Altenheim Retirement Home, built 1893 and destroyed by fire in 1908 (photograph courtesy of OaklandHeritage.com).

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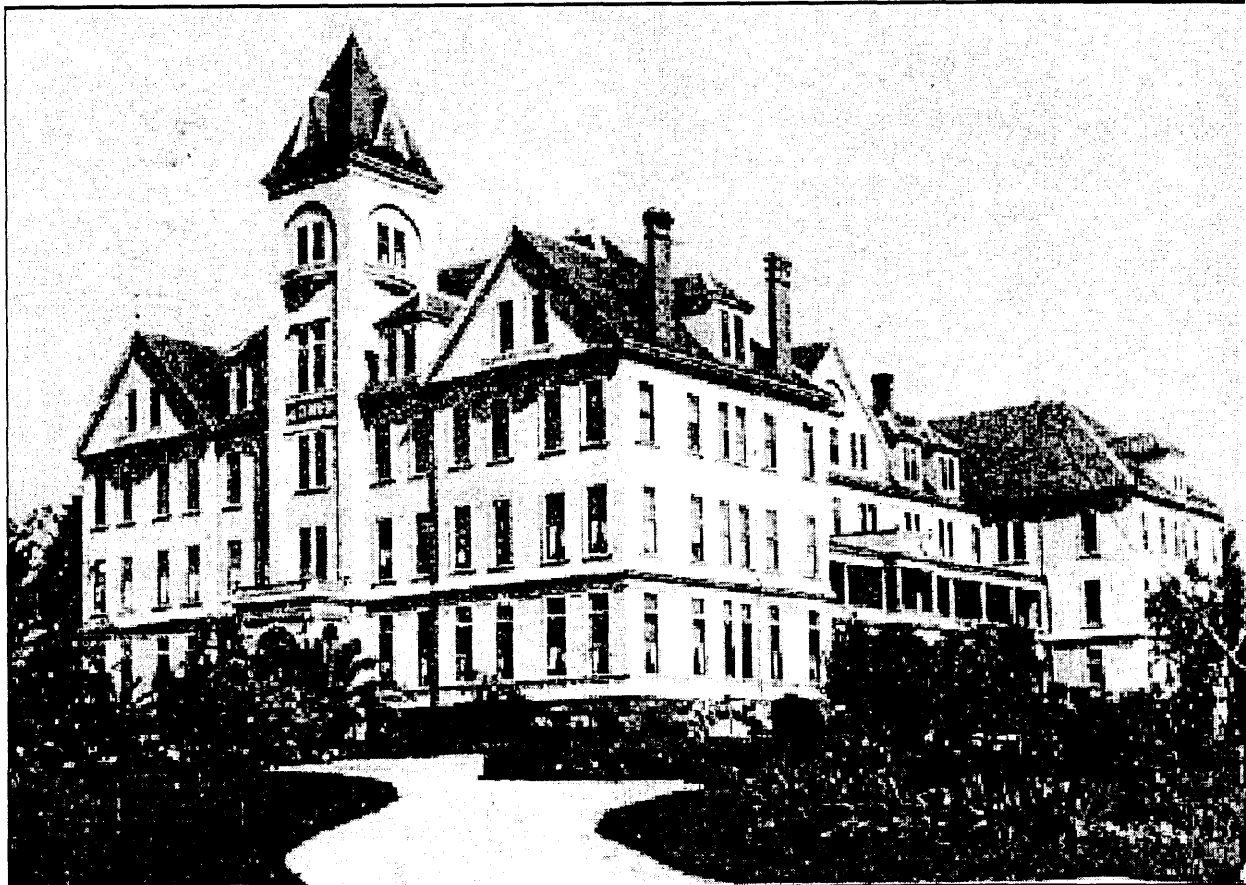
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Figure 3



Postcard of 1893 Altenheim building (courtesy of OaklandHeritage.org).

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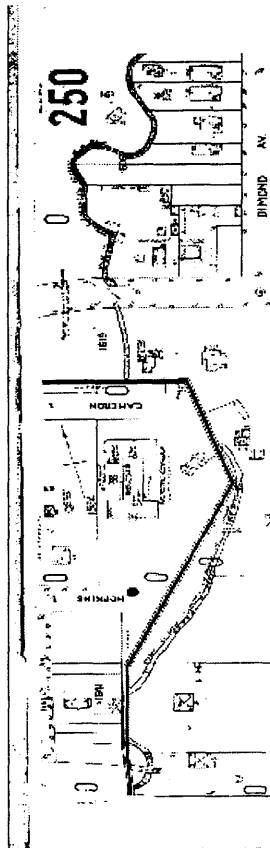
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Figure 4



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1903

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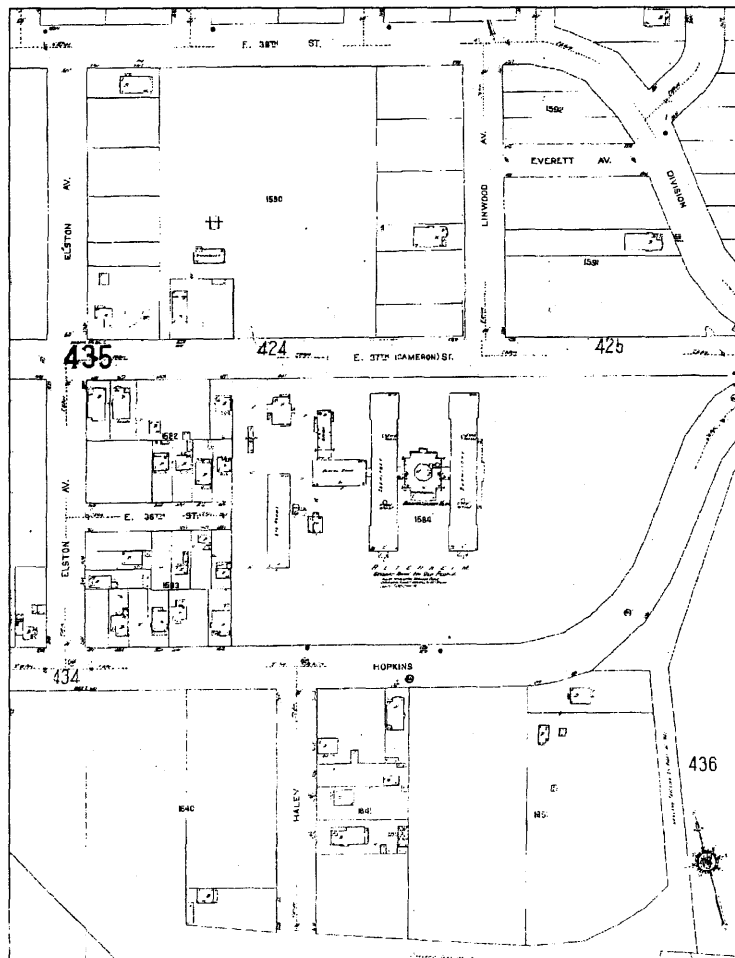
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Figure 5



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1912

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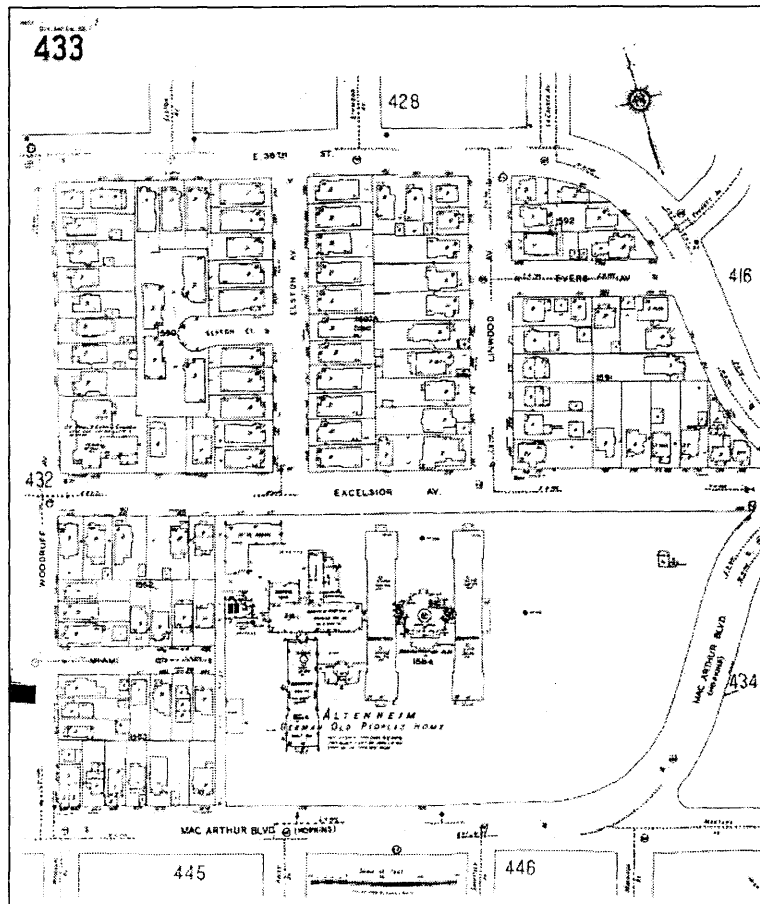
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Figure 6



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, updated to 1951.