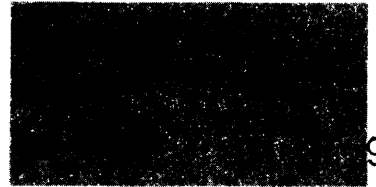


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



980

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic WALNUT GROVE GAKUEN HALL

and/or common Walnut Grove Japanese Community Center/Senior Citizen's Center

**2. Location**

street & number Pine and C Streets (Northeast corner) \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Walnut Grove \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 14th

state California code 06 county Sacramento code 067

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b> ___ district <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) ___ structure ___ site ___ object	<b>Ownership</b> ___ public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private ___ both <b>Public Acquisition</b> ___ in process ___ being considered	<b>Status</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied ___ unoccupied ___ work in progress <b>Accessible</b> ___ yes: restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted ___ no	<b>Present Use</b> ___ agriculture ___ commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment ___ government ___ industrial ___ military	___ museum ___ park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence ___ religious ___ scientific ___ transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Nutritional Center
---	--	--	---	---

**4. Owner of Property**

name Delta Estates Japanese Association and the Delta Estates Cooperative Society

street & number P. O. Box 658

city, town Walnut Grove \_\_\_ vicinity of state California 95690

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder, County Courthouse

street & number Ninth and H Streets

city, town Sacramento state California 95814

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Historic Resources Inventory  
 State of California/Ethnic Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date September 1979 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records California Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Sacramento state California

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## 7. Description

---

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

---

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall was built in 1927 to function as a Japanese language school; today it is the Japanese Community Center and Nutrition Program Center for the Elderly.

Sited on a .99 acre lot, the building is set back from the street approximately 100 feet. The setting is a grass covered/tree studded lot in the middle of a residential section of Walnut Grove. The Gakuen Hall is detached with a small service structure (24' x 16') located to the southeast of the main building.

The overall plan is a one-story ell with the projecting wing of the design oriented towards the west (front) of the building. An arcade runs along the recessed leg of the ell. The construction material is stucco over a wood frame. The hipped roof is covered with composition shingle.

Specific features such as location and number of porches, windows, doors, and chimneys are varied. The west elevation (facade) is composed of the projecting extension of the ell and the long arcade of the leg extension. The projecting gable is broken by a window opening with decorative wrought iron grill and overhead louvered vent. A spotlight has been added over the door and the original wood window frame is now replaced with aluminum sash. The entrance of the arcade is accentuated with a large arched portal with stylized wood dentil overhead. The arcade, which extends to the south, contains five arched openings with wrought iron grills. The end section of the facade is broken by four window openings (double-hung, wood-sash windows with multi-paned upper lites). A cement and plaster chimney is located at this end of the building, extending from the roofline.

The east elevation of the Gakuen Hall is a mirror image of the front except for detailing. There is no projecting gable window with wrought iron grill; instead the wall is stucco. Portions of the stucco have fallen off and wood has temporarily replaced it until restoration work can begin. The central portion of the east elevation is broken by two series of triple windows (again double-hung, wood-sash with multi-paned upper lites); three smaller windows are placed at the end of this central wing.

The north elevation of the building presents a stucco wall broken midway by a door. A row of three windows (to the west) once double-hung, wood-sash have been replaced with aluminum sashes. A small window breaks the wall to the east of the door.

The south elevation contains a stucco wall broken by two windows: one with original double-hung, wood sash frame and the other with replaced aluminum sash frame.

Perhaps one of the most unusual features of the building is the wood plaque which extends the length of the arcade. The plaque, placed against the wall, lists in Japanese characters, the donors of the building.

Service Structure: The small service structure, once a garage, now functions as a storage shed. Construction is the same as the Gakuen Hall, stucco over wood frame with composition shingle roof. Dense vegetation surrounds the one-story, single room building.

Integrity and Surroundings: Except for small changes such as repair of a few wood, double-hung sash windows with aluminum windows, changes to the structure are minimal. Integrity of the site remains intact.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1927	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1927 **Builder/Architect** E. K. Kitamura

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

### Summary of Significance:

The Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall is the only known example of a Japanese culture and language school, designed and built by Japanese, as a reaction to the 1921 California public school segregation laws. Fearing that their children would never be accepted in the United States, the Japanese residents banded together and collected donations to construct the Gakuen Hall in order that their children would be able to speak the language and understand the culture if they were forced to return to Japan. Today the Gakuen Hall, with remaining integrity of design as well as continuing historical and cultural significance, is a surviving physical document of the history of California's Japanese-Americans. The events which brought about the 1927 construction of Walnut Grove's Gakuen Hall are explained below.

### Historical Events:

As a result of the 1921 California segregation laws, public schools were built in Courtland, Isleton, Florin and Walnut Grove.<sup>1/</sup> Adoption and enforcement of the laws were on a County-by-County basis; Sacramento County was the only School District which actively pursued the laws. All four communities where segregated schools were constructed were rural and undoubtedly their embrace of the law was due to the perceived threat of a substantial Asian population present in the County to provide the agricultural labor force necessary for economic survival of the area. By 1896, the first Issei (first generation) enterprises had been opened in Walnut Grove. By 1905, the Japanese were farming 7,124 acres or approximately 80% of the land around Walnut Grove.<sup>2/</sup> Thus, by the second decade of the Twentieth Century anti-Japanese sentiment was mounting in Sacramento County. The Editors of The Sacramento Bee (May 1, 1913) complained that the Japanese owned and controlled the town of nearby Florin with:

"only one white man in business in a country town once a flourishing community of sturdy American farmers...less than one-fourth of its population of five hundred are white...The school, built for the children of white men, is now almost half Japanese. In one room there are twenty white children and twenty-two Japanese."<sup>3/</sup>

Sentiment had become so strong that in 1919, V. S. McClatchy resigned as Publisher of the Bee to serve with the Japanese Exclusion League and the California Joint Immigration Committee. As a result of such work the Pacific Coast hearing of the U.S. Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in July 1920, brought about the legislative amendment of Section 1662 of the Political Code in August 1921. Paragraph Three of Section Three of Section 1662:

"...the governing body of the school district shall have power to...establish separate schools for children of Chinese, Japanese, or Mongolian parentage. When such separate schools are established Indian children of Japanese or Chinese, or Mongolian parentage must not be admitted into any other school."<sup>4/</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .99 acres

Quadrangle name Isleton Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

A 

1	0	6	3	0	4	6	0	4	2	3	3	5	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

1														
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

E 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Both the Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall and the surrounding grounds are included within this boundary description since they were designed as a unit (school building and playgrounds) and remain intact with integrity as originally designed. See Continuation Sheet for boundary description.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Toshio Sakai (Resident/Walnut Grove), Carol Branan (Architectural Historian, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency)

organization Delta Estates Cooperative and Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency

date February 1980

street & number 630 I. Street

telephone (916) 444-9210

city or town Sacramento

state California 95814

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Kim M. Ellen*

title

date May 5 1980

For HCRS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Keeper of the National Register

date 6/17/80

Attest:

date 6/13/80

Chief of Registration

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

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Once the 1921 law was passed, the Walnut Grove Japanese began to collect money in order to construct their own school. By 1927 over three hundred donors had collected enough money to hire a Japanese architect from San Francisco to design their school. Today a plaque in Japanese characters runs the length of the arcade of the Gakuen Hall; the plaque bears the names and the amount of the donation of all those who gathered together to create this unique building. The significance of the Gakuen Hall is not its design, although it is a fine example of the Mission Revival style popular at that time. It is, however, quite significant that a Japanese architect was hired to design the building. The documentation on minority architects practicing in California in the early Twentieth Century is meager and to discover a case where such an architect was employed is quite rare.<sup>5/</sup> Of greater significance than the use of a minority architect is the function of the Gakuen Hall as a symbol of the perseverance of the Japanese amidst racial prejudice and their ability to band together to preserve and continue their language and traditions. As a Japanese resident said:

"This building was built through the efforts of the Issei pioneers who saw the need to perpetuate the Japanese culture and language. The main purpose of this building was to enhance reading, writing and speaking ability of the Japanese language. There were three full-time teachers up to evacuation."<sup>6/</sup>

The Japanese residents of Walnut Grove did not own the land on which the Gakuen Hall was erected. Due to the Alien Land Law, Asians were excluded from owning land in the United States. As was the custom in other Sacramento Delta towns the land under the Gakuen Hall was leased from a Caucasian landowner. This situation continued until World War II when, in 1942, Japanese-Americans were sent to relocation camps. Again, the unusual history of the Gakuen Hall is evidenced by the treatment of the building during the years that the Japanese of Walnut Grove spent in camps. The local landowner held the building in trust until the Japanese residents returned after the War.

In 1945 a Japanese family challenged the constitutionality of California's separate school provision and in the following year the California Legislature repealed the 1921 law. The Gakuen Hall of Walnut Grove continued, however, to offer a meeting place where Japanese could be spoken.

Today it is a community center for the Japanese residents of Walnut Grove as well as a nutritional center serving, in these later years, the very "Issei" pioneers who banded together to perpetuate their heritage. In the 1970's the Japanese residents surrounding the location of the Gakuen Hall formed a cooperative estate and purchased the land over which their building has stood a symbol for so long.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

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Footnotes:

- 1/ The California Ethnic Cultural Resources Survey, which is currently in progress, identifies one remaining school---the Florin School which functions as a community center. It should be emphasized that these four schools were built as public schools by the County of Sacramento while the Gakuen Hall was a private school constructed with private funds.
- 2/ Cathy Arika. Ethnic Minority Cultural Resources Survey, unpublished. California State Office of Historic Preservation, September 1979.
- 3/ Sacramento Bee. "Editorial" dated May 1, 1913.
- 4/ "Statutes of California, General Laws, Amendments to Code, Resolutions, Constitutional Amendments", Regular Session of the Forth-Fourth Legislature, California State Printing Office, 1921.
- 5/ Original Blueprints of Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall, Delta Estates Cooperative, Pine and C Streets, Walnut Grove, California.
- 6/ Quote by resident Toshio Sakai, Walnut Grove, 1980.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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(Major Bibliographical References)

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Bailey, Thomas "Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese American Crises" Stanford University Press, 1934.

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Kawakami, K. K. "The Real Japanese Question" The MacMillan Co., 1921.

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"Statutes of California" General Laws, Amendments to Codes, Resolutions, Constitutional Amendments, Regular Session of the Forty-Forth Legislature, California State Printing Office, 1921.

Strong, Edward "The Second Generation Japanese Problem" Stanford University Press, 1934.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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CONTINUATION SHEET 4

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Interviews:

Hamada, Isao, Walnut Grove resident, 1979.

Sakai, Toshio, Walnut Grove resident, 1979.



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(11/78)

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five

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PAGE one of one

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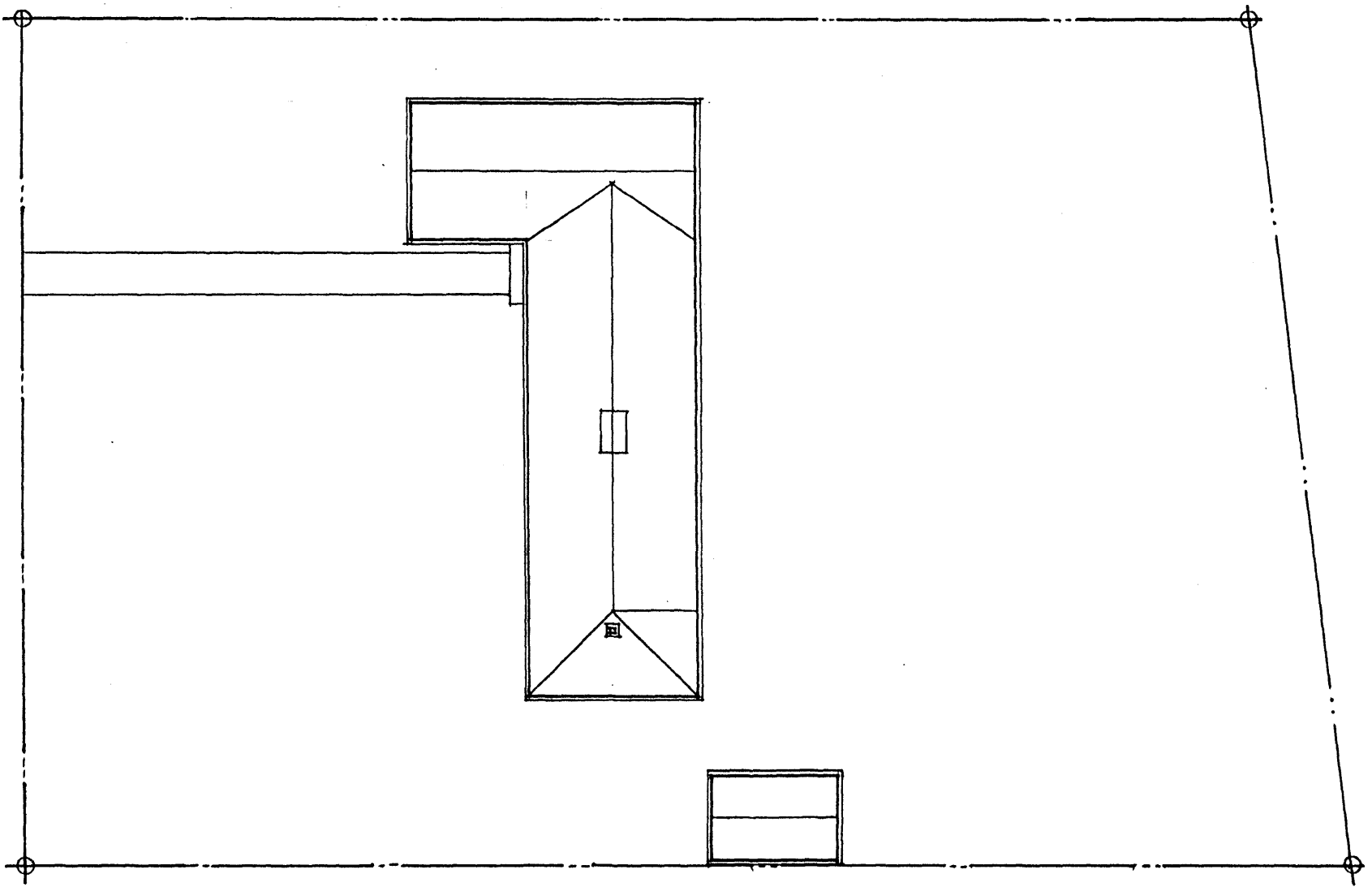
Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northeast corner of Pine Street and proceeding east along C Street for 276 Feet, then turning north and proceeding along the east boundary of the property for 160 Feet, then turning west and proceeding back to Pine Street for 276 Feet, then turning south on Pine and proceeding back to the point of the beginning some 160 Feet.

Walnut Grove Gakuen Hall  
Walnut Grove, Sacramento County, CA.  
Site Plan as of February, 1980  
(drawn by Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency)  
Scale: 1/16" = 1.0'

PINE STREET

SITE PLAN



'C' STREET