

551

RECEIVED
FEB 26 1990

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

DIVISION OF
NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAMS
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Walnut Grove Commercial/Residential Historic District
other names/site number Alex Brown Business district

2. Location

street & number Browns Alley, Market Street, River Road, Depot Lane N/A not for publication
city, town Walnut Grove N/A vicinity
state California code CA county Sacramento code CA 067 zip code 95690

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>18</u>	<u>6</u> Total

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Shade R. Craig 2/16/90
Signature of certifying official 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.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:)

Rory Federman 4/12/90
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Specialty StoreCommerce/Department StoreCommerce/Financial InstitutionSocial/Meeting HallDomestic/Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/BusinessCommerce/Department StoreCommerce/Financial InstitutionDomestic/Single Dwelling**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th/20th Century Revivals/Colonial
Revival/Neoclassical RevivalLate 19th/Early 20th Century American
Movement/Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concretewalls Wood/WeatherboardBrick/Stuccoroof Asphalt Wood/Shinglesother Stone/Marble Facade

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SUMMARY

Situated on the same site as the original Walnut Grove, established by John Sharpe in 1851, the Walnut Grove Commercial and Residential Historic District encompasses five acres on the east side of the Sacramento River, Sacramento County, California. The district is situated on the south end of town and was always closely connected with Alex Brown, an entrepreneur who constructed or used most of the buildings in the district and developed Walnut Grove from a small steamer stop into a thriving commercial center. The commercial area fronts River Road. It consists of four buildings constructed by Alex Brown between 1879 and 1916: a town hall and bank in Neoclassical style, and a general merchandise store and a residence in the Craftsman style. In addition, a Neoclassical butcher shop and house, both built in the 1880s by Fred Wicker, the butcher, and later purchased by Brown, front the river. The remainder of the district is composed of 13 cottages along Brown's Alley, a wide street that extends easterly from Market Street, below the levee, towards farmland. The cottages are in Craftsman, Neoclassical, and Colonial Revival styles, and were built by custom builders for Alex Brown between 1918 and 1923. This first subdivision in town served as rental cottages for the Anglo workers and farmers in this predominantly Asian community. With the exception of the construction of a modern facade on the town hall and the installation of a storefront window in the store, the district retains a high degree of integrity and provides a strong sense of past time and place reminiscent of an 1880s to 1920s Sacramento River Delta town.

ARCHITECTURAL OVERVIEW

This district encompasses all the houses on Brown's Alley, the 1880s town hall, the original Bank of Alex Brown, Brown's Store, the Dye House, the Meat Market, and the house of Alex Brown III. All of these buildings are directly related to Alex Brown and his family. Brown developed this portion of the town between 1879 and 1923 on the original steamer and stage stop established by John Sharpe in 1851. Brown played an important role in the commercial development of the Sacramento River Delta and the district reflects his influence during a time of intense economic and agricultural expansion throughout California.

This district is the earliest commercial area of Walnut Grove and encompasses a variety of buildings dating from the late 1870s to circa 1923. Neoclassical structures include the original Town Hall, constructed by Alex Brown circa 1885 and the Bank of Alex Brown, constructed by John Brown (with financing provided by Alex) in 1916. The 1880s Dye House, Wicker's 1880s Meat Market, and a brick Craftsman style store of Alex

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Community Planning and Development
Architectural

Period of Significance

1879-1923

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Brown, Alexander II

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

SUMMARY

The Walnut Grove Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. The district represents a particular period in Walnut Grove's history when all of the buildings were built or used by Alex Brown and his family. Under Criterion A, the district is significant in the area of commerce because it served as a center of the non-Asian commercial district between 1879 and 1923. As such, it provided a variety of services both to town residents and to the farmers and families living in the outlying agricultural area. It is eligible under Criterion B for its associations with Alexander Brown II, better known as Alex Brown, who arrived in the community in 1879 and remained the most significant individual in the development of the town until his death in 1923. A highly successful entrepreneur, Brown quickly developed the town into a leading commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area. He was extensively involved with commerce, agriculture, shipping, banking, and private utilities; enterprises that were carried on by his sons and are still controlled by members of the Brown family. In addition, he was responsible for planning and developing the first subdivision in Walnut Grove in an attempt to entice Anglo residents and farmers to move into the predominantly Asian community. Brown was a staunch supporter of the local Chinese American and Japanese American communities in town, providing financial backing to several of the businessmen and renting land at reasonable rates to all of the Japanese American commercial district. Under Criterion C, the district houses the oldest buildings in town and, as such, reflects the early architectural heritage of Walnut Grove. With the exception of the three buildings built for Fred Wicker (but acquired by Brown before 1910), the buildings were constructed as a cohesive unit between 1879 and 1923 by Alex Brown. The cottages along Brown's Alley were the first subdivision in town and, although built in different architectural styles of circa 1920, are a cohesive grouping that reflects a specific time and place. The commercial section and the residential block have retained a remarkable degree of integrity and are little changed since the period of significance.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site of Walnut Grove was established around 1851 as a boat landing by John Wesley Sharpe on what turned out to be a poorly traveled route. Although few steamers

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brooks, Barbara
1987 Personal communication with Judith Cunningham, Walnut Grove, California.

Brown, Frances
1989 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Walnut Grove, California.

Dakin Company
1885 California Warehouse Book. On file, Vlad Schkurkin, Palo Alto, California.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 5.0

UTM References

A

1	0
---	---

6	2	9	9	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	3	3	2	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The northwest corner of the district begins on River Road just south of its intersection with Theater Street and continues east across the top of parcel 146-340-14 to Market Street. The boundaries continue south down Market to the north property lines of houses fronting Brown's Alley and continues east along the lot lines to Grove Street. It then follows Grove Street south to the south property line of the houses facing the south side of Brown's Alley and continues west to the eastern limits of the Bank of Alex Brown lot. See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The district encompasses the Anglo commercial strip facing River Road and the Brown Alley subdivision of 13 houses. All of the buildings and the district are closely associated with Alex Brown. Although not all the structures within the district were built by Brown, they were owned by him at one time or another and used for his commercial enterprises. Also included within the district is the house he built for his son, Alexander Junior, the site of the original Walnut Grove Hotel (now Boon Dox Liquor), and the butcher shop and See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Brown (located on the site of the earlier 1880s store) are all related to the commercial development of town and were situated to best serve the wharves and warehouses once situated immediately to the west on the Sacramento River. These buildings are the oldest in Walnut Grove and were significant during the period from 1879 to 1923 when Alex Brown controlled the commercial enterprises of the community.

The lots along Brown's Alley were subdivided by Alex Brown beginning in 1918 to provide housing in the community for the Anglo workers and farmers. According to consultants, some of the houses were designed by "custom builders" while others were simply built by local craftsmen. The houses on the south side of the street were all constructed prior to 1921; one of these houses was built in the 1870s by Fred Wicker. Those on the north side were constructed between 1921 and 1923. Designed in a variety of styles including Craftsman, Neoclassical, and Colonial Revival, they appear as isolated examples of circa 1920s domestic architecture within the community and represent the first subdivision and planned residential area constructed in Walnut Grove. The home of Alex Brown, Jr., located within the district boundaries on the River Road, is a good example of a Craftsman house of the circa 1910s era and was constructed by Alex Brown for his son.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTIONS

1. Alexander Brown, III Home - Market Street. This house was constructed by Alex Brown around 1913 for his son, Alexander Brown, III, known as Alex Jr. The senior Brown was instrumental in the development of agriculture in the Delta and in encouraging growth for Asian and non-Asian populations in the town. He built houses for each of his children upon their marriage and this house was given to his youngest son. In addition to its connection with the prominent Brown family, the house is a superior example of the Craftsman style popular in California shortly after 1900 and which dominated architecture in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys for over 20 years. At the instigation of Alex Brown, Jr., the basement of the house was used by at least one Japanese family to store their possessions upon relocation in 1942 (Kawamura 1987).

The house is a typical example of the Craftsman architectural style with a low-pitched, gabled roof with wide eaves over exposed roof rafters. The front portion of the roof is supported with triangular knee braces. The front gable is pierced with double louvres above a recessed porch supported by square posts. The siding is horizontal and the upper story windows are of double-pane sash in the front and casement in the rear. The entire main floor of the house projects over a smaller ground floor or basement, a construction method typical in the Delta where flooding was common. Although in a deteriorated condition, the house appears to be intact and has not been altered. Originally, it had a more expansive garden and fronted on the river levee, but has been boxed in by the increased breadth and height of the levee (Graham 1985:19).

2. Walnut Grove Post Office - 14165 River Road. This building is a non-contributor to the district. It is a two-story stucco building that has undergone major alterations to the River Road facade for post office purposes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

3. Boon Dox Liquor Store - 14173 River Road. This modern, one-story structure is a non-contributor. It is located on the site of the historic Walnut Grove Hotel. The first hotel was built by Sharpe in the 1850s and remained in place until 1918 when Alex Brown built a new, brick hotel. The new hotel was a three-story, Tudor Revival design structure that was destroyed by fire in 1969. Alex Brown and his wife, Kate, lived in a suite in the hotel throughout their lives.

4. Public Hall/Town Hall/Charley's Auto - 14179 River Road. This building was constructed around 1884 as a town hall for the community of Walnut Grove. It is depicted on maps dated 1885, 1912, 1921, and 1927 as a hall. By 1927 the post office was also maintained in the building. Built by Alex Brown for use as a public town hall, the building served an important role in the town of Walnut Grove from its early beginnings as a hall until it was remodeled for use as a hardware store in 1957. In the early 1900s Alex Brown stabled his horses on the lower floor facing Market Street; the stalls from this use remain. This building is the oldest public building in Walnut Grove.

As originally constructed, the town hall was a simple one-story, gable-roofed Classical Revival town hall. Four, four-pane windows with pedimented windowheads are located on each side of the building. The original front was plain, with no windows and just one door. In 1957 the facade was decorated with a Mission Revival curvilinear pediment edged in roof tiles. The front facade was altered again in 1970 with the addition of large store windows, slumpstone, aluminum doors, an awning, and lap siding in the upper front gable. The original siding was channeled and remains on the sides. The rear of the structure was altered in the early 1900s to house a stage with kitchen and restrooms. Four large stable doors were also added to the lower elevation. The interior of the building is faced with tongue-and-groove walls and ceiling.

5. Hutchinson House/Dr. Spaulding's Dental Office. - 1231 Brown's Alley. This is one of 12 cottages built and leased out or sold by Alex Brown. Dixie Lane (now called Brown's Alley) originally was used as a stable area for the standard pacers raised by Brown. In 1918 he subdivided the area and built rental bungalows on the property in an effort to encourage people to move into town. Those structures on the north side of the alley were constructed after 1921 but before his death in 1923. According to consultants, this house was one of two which were custom built on the alley (Brooks 1987; Pratt 1987). This structure was built for the Hutchinson family, local farmers in the region. By 1927 a doctor's office was located in the building.

This simple Neoclassical cottage was originally faced with stucco but is now covered with shingles. It has a gable roof with boxed eaves and trimboard and a stucco-covered chimney on the east side of the house. The windows are double casement and there are louvres in the side gable ends. The front of the house has a portico with front-facing gable and returns on the gable ends. Except for the new shingles and stained glass sidelights in the front door, the house appears to be in original condition.

6. Alex Brown Cottage - Stanford Brown Family Residence - 1235 Browns Alley. This is one of 12 cottages built by Alex Brown before his death in 1923. The house was constructed between 1921 and 1923 for Stanford Brown, Alex's grandson, and has remained in the Brown family ever since. Today, his granddaughter lives in the house.

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

It is a Neoclassical cottage with some Craftsman elements. This one story building has a cross-gabled roof. The eaves are boxed and the side gables have returns and louvres, while the front facing gable is shingled. The siding is lapped. There is a recessed porch on the east front of the house which is supported by two unfluted Doric columns. The porch floor and the foundations are concrete. The original windows are single-pane, double-hung sash, but some have been replaced with aluminum sash. The front door is multi-paned and has sidelights.

7. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1239 Browns Alley. This is one of 12 rental cottages built and leased by Alex Brown and constructed between 1921 and 1923. The Craftsman cottage is one-story with a low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafters. The building is covered with stucco and the front porch has an arched Mission-Revival entry with large square posts. A louvre pierces the porch facade. The house has a new brick perimeter foundation and the porch has concrete stairs leading to the tongue-and-groove floor. The central front door has multi-panes above wooden panels. The house has new aluminum windows.

8. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1243 Browns Alley. This is also one of the 12 cottages built and leased by Alex Brown between 1921 and 1923. It is a Craftsman cottage with a low-pitched, side-gabled roof with intersecting gables and exposed rafters. The house has lap siding and its original multi-paned front door. There is a full porch across the front of the house whose front gable has open fretwork and knee braces.

9. Library/Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1247 Browns Alley. One of 12 cottages built by Alex Brown between 1921 and 1923, this house was used as a branch of the Sacramento County library in the 1940s. It is also a one-story Craftsman with a low-pitched gable roof with a separate gabled roof on the partial front porch. The roof rafters are exposed and the porch is supported by square posts and has an open railing. There are decorative beams and a louvre on the front porch facade. The windows have multi-panes in the upper sash and single pane in the lower. The front door is multi-paned.

10. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1251 Browns Alley. This is one of 12 cottages built and leased by Alex Brown between 1921 and 1923. This one-story Craftsman cottage has a low-pitched gable roof with a separate gabled roof on the partial front porch. The porch is supported by square posts and the lower portion is enclosed. There are decorative beams and a louvre on the front porch facade. The sides and rear of the house are covered with stucco, while the front has horizontal wood siding. The paneled oak front door is new and some of the windows have been replaced with aluminum sash.

11. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - Grove Street. This structure fronts on Grove Street. Although it is one of the original cottages built by Alex Brown, it has undergone extensive recent remodeling and is a non-contributor to the district.

12. Alex Brown Rental Cottage -1250 Browns Alley. One of 12 rental cottages built and leased by Alex Brown, this structure was built prior to 1921. It is a Craftsman cottage with a low-pitched gable roof and exposed decorative rafters. The house has a porch across the front which is supported by three square posts and has been recently remodeled. The front door has multi-panes above wooden panels. The windows have been replaced with aluminum sash.

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

13. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1246 Browns Alley. This rental cottage was built by Alex Brown sometime between 1912 and 1921. It is a Craftsman cottage with shingle siding and has a low-pitched front gable roof with exposed rafters and a louvre. A porch, supported by square posts, extends across the front of the house and has its original tongue-and-groove flooring. The windows have been replaced with aluminum sash.

14. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1242 Browns Alley. Alex Brown constructed this cottage sometime between 1912 and 1921. It is a Craftsman cottage but has some architectural elements which are different from the remainder of the cottages on Brown's Alley. The roof is pyramidal and the entire house is covered with shingles. It is square in shape, while the remainder of the houses are rectangular. A dormer with exposed rafters pierces the front of the roof. There is a porch across the front of the house which is supported by two battered posts and has its original tongue-and-groove flooring. The windows in the house have diamond panes in the upper sash and a single pane in the lower.

15. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1238 Browns Alley. This cottage was also constructed by Alex Brown between 1912 and 1921. It is a Craftsman cottage with low-pitched hipped roof and exposed rafters. The house has a front dormer with central louvres flanked by windows. The front porch is supported by three square battered posts with a railing of small square spindles. It has been recently refloored. The front door has eight panes above wooden panels, while the windows are of single-pane sash, double hung.

16. Alex Brown Rental Cottage - 1234 Browns Alley. This is the last of 12 cottages constructed by Alex Brown. Built after 1912 but before 1921, the 1927 Sanborn Map depicts this residence as the County Library.

This rectangular shingled Craftsman cottage has a low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafters. The front gable is pierced by a louvre. A front porch runs the width of the house and is supported by four square posts. The porch railing has square spindles. The front glass-and-wood panel door is flanked by single-pane sash windows, double hung. Some of the windows in the house have been replaced with aluminum sash.

17. Fred Wicker House/Dr. Palliser Office - 1230 Browns Alley. This house reputedly was built in the 1870s by Fred Wicker, the local butcher, for use by his family. Since then it has housed a number of businesses and enterprises, including probable use as a tack room by Alex Brown or as lodging for his groom, the quarters for the Walnut Grove Hotel cook, and office space for Doctor Palliser in the 1920s to 1940s (Brown 1989).

A small Neoclassical house with front-gabled roof, this building has boxed eaves, eave boards and is rectangular in shape. The siding is channeled and there are end boards on the corners. The front porch is supported with four square posts and appears to be new, although Sanborn maps dated 1921 and 1927 indicate a porch in the same location. The central four-panel front door is new, but is flanked by the original six-pane sash windows. New brick steps lead to the front porch and entry.

18. Bank of Alex Brown/Brown, Meyer and Trantum Insurance - 14189 River Road. Alex Brown was an agent for Wells Fargo and Company in 1883 when he conceived the idea of using bank drafts to eliminate the costly handling of gold coins to and from the Delta. In particular, members of the Asian community relied on Brown to transport their earnings

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

out of the Delta to San Francisco and China. By 1905, Alex and his son, John, were loaning out money from the back of the Alex Brown general store. In 1913 John had collected enough capital to open a real bank, as opposed to an operation in his father's store. Over the protests of his father, who felt that a banking venture would take John away from the store, the younger Brown chartered the bank with the state with a \$50,000 capital.

John named the new bank in honor of his father, who contributed financial backing to the venture against his better judgement (Sacramento Bee, May 17, 1972). The bank building was completed in June of 1916 for a cost of \$25,000 (River News Herald 1969). The apartment above the bank, now a law office, was the home of Arthur and Amy Dye Brown for many years. The basement was once occupied by W. R. Darsie, who used it as his commission agent office. The bank of Alex Brown occupied the building until 1962 when the new bank was constructed and the insurance company took over.

The Bank of Alex Brown is a two-story brick Neoclassical structure with a concrete foundation. The front facade has four fluted stone Corinthian columns separating its three bays. An entablature with cornice, egg and dart molding, and dentils is located above the columns on the front facade which has the bank's name carved in stone of the top of the parapet. The base of the front facade is faced with granite. The front entry has double glass doors with bronze facing and an elaborate surround with marble panels, black marble pediment, and a transom with bronze mullions. The entryway is flanked by large windows with bronze muntins, while the upper story has single-pane sash windows. The windows on the sides and rear of the buildings are also of single-pane sash and all have brackets for iron shutters. The original vault and safe, as well as a few of the teller windows, have been retained in the interior of the building.

19. Alex Brown General Merchandise Store/The Big Store - 14201 River Road. This brick store was constructed by Alex Brown in 1915, after the fire of that year destroyed his earlier store. The store, a one-story frame building, appears in the same location on 1885 and 1912 maps of Walnut Grove. A long wharf once extended into the Sacramento River from the store for delivery of goods by riverboat. The store was operated by N. C. Barry Company in 1940, then Jack and Hubert Brown (grandsons of Alex), and since the 1950s by the Ping Lee family. Ping Lee's father, Bing Lee, came to Walnut Grove in 1893 and began working as a cook for Alex Brown. He was an established businessman in the Chinese community of town before moving to Locke in 1915.

A two-story rectangular brick building with Craftsman details, the front facade of the general merchandise store was remodeled by Ping Lee around 1957, when the large front windows and doors were installed. The original entrance was via a small door in the center front. The building has a concrete foundation and a pedimented parapet. An office is located in the upper portion of the southwest corner of the storefront which has two single-pane sash windows and a tile roof supported by knee braces and exposed rafters. The windows on the side and rear of the building are also of single-pane sash and have relieving arches. In addition to the alterations on the front facade, a larger entrance has been made in the basement in order to accommodate more modern delivery trucks and a frame structure has been built between the bank and the store.

20. Joe Enos Realty - 14205 River Road. This is a two-story stucco building recently remodeled as a real estate office. It is non-conforming.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

21. New Bank of Alex Brown - 14211 River Road. This is a modern bank building constructed in 1962 on the site of the Hervie Salisbury home. It is a non-conforming structure.

22. Fred Wicker/Arthur Brown House - 14215 River Road. Commonly known as the "Butcher's House," this was the home of Fred Wicker who operated a butcher shop from the building next door. Wicker was operating his butcher shop in the town by the 1870s, working from a house in Brown's Alley. He built this two-story home to house his family in the 1880s. Arthur Brown (Alex's son) and his wife, Amy Dye Brown, resided in the house from 1900 until 1916, when they moved to an apartment over the newly built bank. The house was rented out to various tenants by the Browns and was finally sold by the family in the 1950s. It was repurchased by Francis Brown in the 1970s who restored to its original appearance in 1976. It is currently used as a commercial residence.

This simple, two-story Classical Revival house has a front-gabled roof with boxed eaves and eave boards. The siding is channeled and there are end boards at the corners. The foundation is of brick and machine cut nails were used in the construction of the house. The house is square, with a porch around the front and south side, supported by square chamfered posts. Although constructed during restoration, the porch appears to match the original. The central front door is original, elaborately paneled and has a transom. It is flanked by windows of single-pane sash, double hung. All of the windows have decorative windowheads.

23. Wicker/Brown Butcher Shop - 14219 River Road. Built by Fred Wicker for his butcher shop in 1880s, this building was used as such into the 1940s (Graham 1985). From 1900 until around 1920 it was operated as a butcher shop by Arthur Brown and other members of the Brown family. In 1927 there was a sausage works in the basement and a smokehouse directly behind the building (Sanborn Maps 1921, 1927). It was restored in 1976 by Frances Brown, along with the butcher's residential building located next door. According to Mrs. Brown, the sausage machine and an old refrigerator remain in the basement of the building.

This square building with pyramidal roof, boxed eaves and ogee molding appears to have been altered but little over its 100-years plus history. The building has a brick foundation and is constructed with machine cut nails. The siding is channeled and there are end boards on the corners. There are no windows on the side walls, but the rear windows are of double-pane sash. The front porch as four round columns for support and has been restored. The glass front doors and the large paned windows on the front facade are new, but appear much the same as the original ones in historic photographs.

24. Residence - Shop Street. Although included on the 1921 and 1927 maps of Walnut Grove, this structure has undergone significant alterations to its facade in recent years and is non-conforming.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Commerce
Community Planning and Development
Architectural

Period of Significance
1879-1923

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
Brown, Alexander II

Architect/Builder
Unknown

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

SUMMARY

The Walnut Grove Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. The district represents a particular period in Walnut Grove's history when all of the buildings were built or used by Alex Brown and his family. Under Criterion A, the district is significant in the area of commerce because it served as a center of the non-Asian commercial district between 1879 and 1923. As such, it provided a variety of services both to town residents and to the farmers and families living in the outlying agricultural area. It is eligible under Criterion B for its associations with Alexander Brown II, better known as Alex Brown, who arrived in the community in 1879 and remained the most significant individual in the development of the town until his death in 1923. A highly successful entrepreneur, Brown quickly developed the town into a leading commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area. He was extensively involved with commerce, agriculture, shipping, banking, and private utilities; enterprises that were carried on by his sons and are still controlled by members of the Brown family. In addition, he was responsible for planning and developing the first subdivision in Walnut Grove in an attempt to entice Anglo residents and farmers to move into the predominantly Asian community. Brown was a staunch supporter of the local Chinese American and Japanese American communities in town, providing financial backing to several of the businessmen and renting land at reasonable rates to all of the Japanese American commercial district. Under Criterion C, the district houses the oldest buildings in town and, as such, reflects the early architectural heritage of Walnut Grove. With the exception of the three buildings built for Fred Wicker (but acquired by Brown before 1910), the buildings were constructed as a cohesive unit between 1879 and 1923 by Alex Brown. The cottages along Brown's Alley were the first subdivision in town and, although built in different architectural styles of circa 1920, are a cohesive grouping that reflects a specific time and place. The commercial section and the residential block have retained a remarkable degree of integrity and are little changed since the period of significance.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site of Walnut Grove was established around 1851 as a boat landing by John Wesley Sharpe on what turned out to be a poorly traveled route. Although few steamers

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

traveled to Sharpe's Landing in the 1850s, Sharpe remained at the location, building a frame hotel and general store for those few travelers who found their way to his dock. His settlement was the first established in the Delta region.

By 1870, Sharpe had been joined by several other families who were lured to the area by reclamation efforts, including the Dye, Sperry, and Salisbury families. Sharpe had built a brickyard, blacksmith shop, lumber mill, armory hall, school, ferry, and ran a post office in his store after 1857 (Graham 1985; Sacramento Union, January 17, 1943:13).

Sharpe died in 1880, leaving behind a thriving town at the site of his landing. His widow sold the hotel and store to Alexander Brown, II, known as Alex. Agnes Brown, Alex's mother, had come to Walnut Grove in 1865 and rented the hotel from Sharpe. Alex came to the town in 1879 and began helping his mother operate the hotel, buying and selling fruit at the same time.

In 1880, at the time of Sharpe's death, Walnut Grove had a "commodious wharf" belonging to the California Transportation Company, the hotel, a general merchandise store with a post office and Wells Fargo express inside, blacksmith and wheelwright shops, butcher shop, and seven residences. Four steamers traveling from San Francisco to Sacramento stopped daily and reclamation was well underway (Sacramento Bee December 24, 1880:8). While other towns were developing in the Delta (i.e., Rio Vista, Isleton, Courtland, Hood, and Freeport), Walnut Grove was the largest and most visited, due to its midway location between the major cities of Northern California.

Walnut Grove's commercial district grew rapidly in the eight years following the death of Sharpe. In 1888, the local newspaper reported that the "town is of considerable importance . . . it is the general supply center for all of Grand, Andrus, and Tyler Islands and a good portion of Peirson District" (Sacramento Union, January 1, 1888:3). Fruits and vegetables from the surrounding agricultural areas were shipped to points throughout the United States from the Walnut Grove wharf on flat barges and the hotel continued to serve a large clientele from all over Northern California who disembarked from the steamers that frequently stopped in the town (Brown 1989). Walnut Grove continued to serve as the primary supply and shipping point for the surrounding area well into the 1920s.

By the mid-1880s the town was becoming associated with Alexander Brown. A newspaper article published in 1886 noted that Brown recently raised the hotel one story, erected a large public hall, operated a general store, and was an agent for the Southern Pacific Company (Sacramento Union, June 25, 1886:3). By 1888, another general merchandise store was operating and Alexander Brown, aside from his hotel and store, was in charge of the wharf, post office, and express office. As postmaster, Wells Fargo and Western Union agent, and businessman, Brown was a central figure during these commercial boom years.

Alexander Brown also tried his hand at agriculture. In 1884 he rented 300 acres in the Peirson district; by 1890 his leased holdings had increased to over 3,000 acres. He raised barley, vegetables, beans, and, after 1890, asparagus. He went into the cattle business in 1887, raising stock on a ranch in Colusa and transporting the cattle to Walnut

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Grove to be slaughtered and sold. An 1890 history of Sacramento County noted that by that year, Brown ran his hotel, store, and ranch business, was agent for the Southern Pacific Railroad line of steamers, Wells Fargo and Company Express, the Western Union Telegraph Company, was post master, owned and conducted the town warehouse, and raised crops on nearly 4,000 acres of rented land (Davis 1890).

Brown was instrumental in establishing Walnut Grove as a center for shipping agricultural goods throughout the nation. He was the first Anglo person to successfully grow asparagus as a marketable product. Every year the first pickings of the asparagus crop were rushed to the Plaza Hotel and Waldorf-Astoria in New York City for use in their dining rooms. These two world renown establishments had standing orders for Brown's spring crop (Galt Herald, May 28, 1981).

Apart from his business endeavors, Brown supported the Chinese American and Japanese American communities in town. Initially, he financially backed several Chinese businessmen and aided in them establishing enterprises in the town. Around the turn of the century he rented a portion of his store to a Japanese American man and allowed him to establish a Japanese American-oriented grocery in the building. In 1883, he began issuing drafts for gold coins entrusted to him for shipping to San Francisco by Chinese and non-Asian members of town. One thing led to another and by 1905 he was operating a bank out of the back of his store, issuing loans to farmers, and lending money to members of the local Asian communities. This modest start led to the establishment of the Bank of Alex Brown, chartered in 1913 by Alex's oldest son, John Stanford Brown, and named for his father.

When a fire broke out in the Chinese American section of town in 1915, Alexander Brown provided two fire tug boats that hosed water on the ruins for days to put out the blaze. Although he suffered financial losses in the blaze, he was concerned about the welfare of the Asian community. Following the 1915 fire, he rented land to the Japanese people and encouraged them to build their own community north of the previously-established Chinatown. To aid in this endeavor, he constructed a building in the district capable of housing 14 businesses. He organized a water company and supplied water and sewer facilities to the two Asian districts, as well as to the Anglo community, and helped in the rebuilding effort.

Throughout its early history, the Asian population in town always outnumbered the non-Asian contingent. Assessment rolls dated 1914, for example, lists 62 Chinese, 34 Japanese, and only 16 non-Asians who paid personal taxes on property owned (excluding real estate) in that year. The Anglo population consisted primarily of the few original families who settled in Walnut Grove before 1880; namely the Dye's, Brown's, Salisbury's, and Wise's. These families resided in homes interspersed throughout the commercial district and facing the River.

In an attempt to encourage new people to move into "his" town, Brown subdivided his old racetrack/stables area behind the town hall into small lots around 1918 and began building bungalows. Brown's motives were both commercial and personal. The new residents would not only frequent his businesses but would also contribute to the social makeup of the community, ultimately strengthening the non-Asian population of town.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 3

The subdivision along Brown Alley represents the first concerted effort towards community planning and development in Walnut Grove with the express purpose of attracting non-Asian residents to supplement the few old time families in town. The establishment of this small community within the commercial district was complete by his death, effectively fulfilling his dream for a viable residential community.

At Brown's instigation, and with his financial backing, the Imperial Theatre in Walnut Grove was constructed in 1920 by Mr. Takeda to serve the Delta region. Brown envisioned this theatre as a place for all the people in the region and it was used by Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Anglos, and Portuguese well into the 1970s. This theatre, with its large stage, was used for community dances and gatherings, rotary meetings, moving picture shows, plays, and other gatherings attended by people from all over the Delta.

By the time of his death in 1923, Alex Brown owned, operated, or backed most of the commercial enterprises in the non-Asian portion of town, was a silent partner in several of the Chinese businesses, and rented land and building space to the Japanese community. In addition to his store, hotel, wharf, and warehouses, he had a financial interest in the town bank, the local butcher shop, and post office, all owned by his sons. Brown also organized and owned the local water district, electric company, telephone company, and other public utilities.

While the commercial and residential history of Walnut Grove revolved around Alex Brown and his investments, other people were also operating businesses in the community. Auto garages, blacksmith shops, restaurants, and several residences not owned by Brown were depicted on Sanborn maps dated 1921 and 1927. The majority of the commercial ventures, however, were either started or acquired by the Brown family between 1880 and 1923 and the history of the community, both commercially and residentially, is directly associated with Brown. Most of the accomplishments and values maintained by Brown in his life were continued by his children and grandchildren after his death contributing to the sense of time and place and to the continuity of the district as a commercial center.

Four of the buildings in the district, a small cottage on Brown's Alley built by Fred Wicker, the town butcher, in the late 1870s, the original butcher shop, and Wicker residence, and the old public hall, all built around 1885, are reminiscent of this initial spurt of growth that occurred around the time of Sharpe's death in 1880. In addition, the buildings are the oldest in the community and are reflective of the early architectural heritage of Walnut Grove. Although three of the structures were built for Fred Wicker, the butcher, they were acquired by Alex Brown by 1900 and remained in use by the Brown family long after Alex's death (Brown 1989).

The period between 1916 and 1923 represented a time of commercial and residential expansion within the district. The Bank of Alex Brown and a new brick general store (that replaced the earlier 1880s wooden structure) were constructed by Brown across the street from the public hall. These two structures completed the commercial district that fronted River Road and were architecturally unique when compared both to the older structures in the District and to others in town. The remaining buildings outside the commercial district were situated within the Asian community and were simplistic, wooden, false frame

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

commercial structures. The elaborate facade of the bank and the use of brick during construction of both the bank and the store set the structures apart from the remainder of the town outside the commercial district, adding to the importance of the district. With the completion of the bank and store, the buildings within the commercial district represented the entire range of the architectural heritage of Walnut Grove, beginning in the late 1870s and extending to the end of the expansion period associated with Alex Brown.

In addition to the commercial buildings, a dozen residential cottages were constructed by Alex Brown below River Road, east of the business section. The buildings along the Brown's Alley differ from others in town. They appear as an isolated example of 1920s domestic architecture within the community, possess a very strong and positive character, and represent an important milestone in the eventual development of the non-Asian community.

While there are other sections of Walnut Grove, such as the Chinese American and Japanese American districts, the buildings contained within these sections were built at different time periods than the bungalows and are commercial in nature. The Japanese American community established a residential district in town in the late 1920s and early 1930s; however, these buildings do not share the same architectural style, nor were they designed and constructed as a cohesive unit. In light of this, the cottages along Brown's Alley are unique in Walnut Grove, both in architectural design and in period of construction. In addition, they are the only example of a group of buildings designed, built, and occupied by non-Asians in a predominately-Asian community and remain relatively unchanged since their initial construction.

One of the houses along the Alley was used by Brown's son as a residence and is still used by his granddaughter today. At the time of Brown's death in 1923, 12 cottages had been constructed along "Dixie Lane" and were occupied by local farmers and businessmen.

The houses that line Browns Alley, combined with the commercial buildings that front River Road, have been little altered since their initial construction date. As such, they convey a strong sense of past time and place associated with an agricultural Sacramento Delta river town between 1879 and 1923.

PROPERTY OWNERS

1. Walnut Grove Homeowners Association
PO Box 844
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
2. United States Government
Walnut Grove Post Office
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
3. Boon Dox Liquor
14165 River Road
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5

4. Parcel # 146-340-008
Charles/Georgia Herring
PO Box 854
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
5. Parcel # 146-340-043
Norman/Gail Spaulding
PO Box 1026
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
6. Parcel # 146-340-042
Barbara Brooks
PO Box 272
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
7. Parcel # 146-340-041
Sandy Morgan
PO Box 826
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
8. Parcel # 146-340-028
Dianne Fennell
Rt. 1, Box 112 A
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
9. Parcel # 146-340-027
John Lira
PO Box 486
Thornton, CA 95686
10. Parcel # 146-340-026
James/Diane Dahlberg
1251 Browns Alley
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
11. Parcel # 146-340-032
Larry/Joanne Parsons
9895 Orr Road
Galt, CA 95632
12. Parcel # 146-340-033
Thomas/Bonnie Pishos
31 East 6th Street
Tracy, CA 95376

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

13. Parcel # 146-340-034
Thomas/Bonnie Pishos
31 East 6th Street
Tracy, CA 95376
14. Parcel # 146-340-029
Thomas/Bonnie Pishos
31 East 6th Street
Tracy, CA 95376
15. Parcel # 146-340-030
Thomas/Bonnie Pishos
31 East 6th Street
Tracy, CA 95376
16. Parcel # 146-340-031
Thomas/Bonnie Pishos
31 East 6th Street
Tracy, CA 95376
17. Parcel # 146-340-036
Frances Brown
PO Box 674
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
18. Parcel # 146-340-040
Frederick/Glenda Meyer
PO Box 277
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
19. Parcel # 146-340-011
Darwin Kan/Ping Lee
PO Box 68
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
20. Parcel # 146-180-001
Joseph/Patricia Enos
PO Box 222
Walnut Grove, CA 95690
21. Parcel # 146-180-002
Bank of Alex Brown
14211 River Road
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 7

- 22. Parcel # 146-180-004
Frances Brown
PO Box 674
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

- 23. Parcel # 146-180-005
Frances Brown
PO Box 674
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

- 24. Owner unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brooks, Barbara
1987 Personal communication with Judith Cunningham, Walnut Grove, California.

Brown, Frances
1989 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Walnut Grove, California.

Dakin Company
1885 California Warehouse Book. On file, Vlad Schkurkin, Palo Alto, California.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 5.0

UTM References

A 1 0 | 6 2 9 | 9 6 0 | 4 2 3 | 3 2 0 0
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____ | _____

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____ | _____ | _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The northwest corner of the district begins on River Road just south of its intersection with Theater Street and continues east across the top of parcel 146-340-14 to Market Street. The boundaries continue south down Market to the north property lines of houses fronting Brown's Alley and continues east along the lot lines to Grove Street. It then follows Grove Street south to the south property line of the houses facing the south side of Brown's Alley and continues west to the eastern limits of the Bank of Alex Brown lot.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The district encompasses the Anglo commercial strip facing River Road and the Brown Alley subdivision of 13 houses. All of the buildings and the district are closely associated with Alex Brown. Although not all the structures within the district were built by Brown, they were owned by him at one time or another and used for his commercial enterprises. Also included within the district is the house he built for his son, Alexander Junior, the site of the original Walnut Grove Hotel (now Boon Dox Liquor), and the butcher shop and

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Davis, J.

1890 Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World: A History of Sacramento County, California. On file, California Room, California State Library, Sacramento.

Graham, Kathy

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

Kawamura, Yash

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

Lee, Ping

1989 Personal communication with Mary L. Maniery, Walnut Grove, CA.

Pratt, Clarence

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

Sacramento County

1911- Personal Property Tax Assessment Books. On file, Sacramento Museum and History Center, Sacramento.
1916

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company

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

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

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

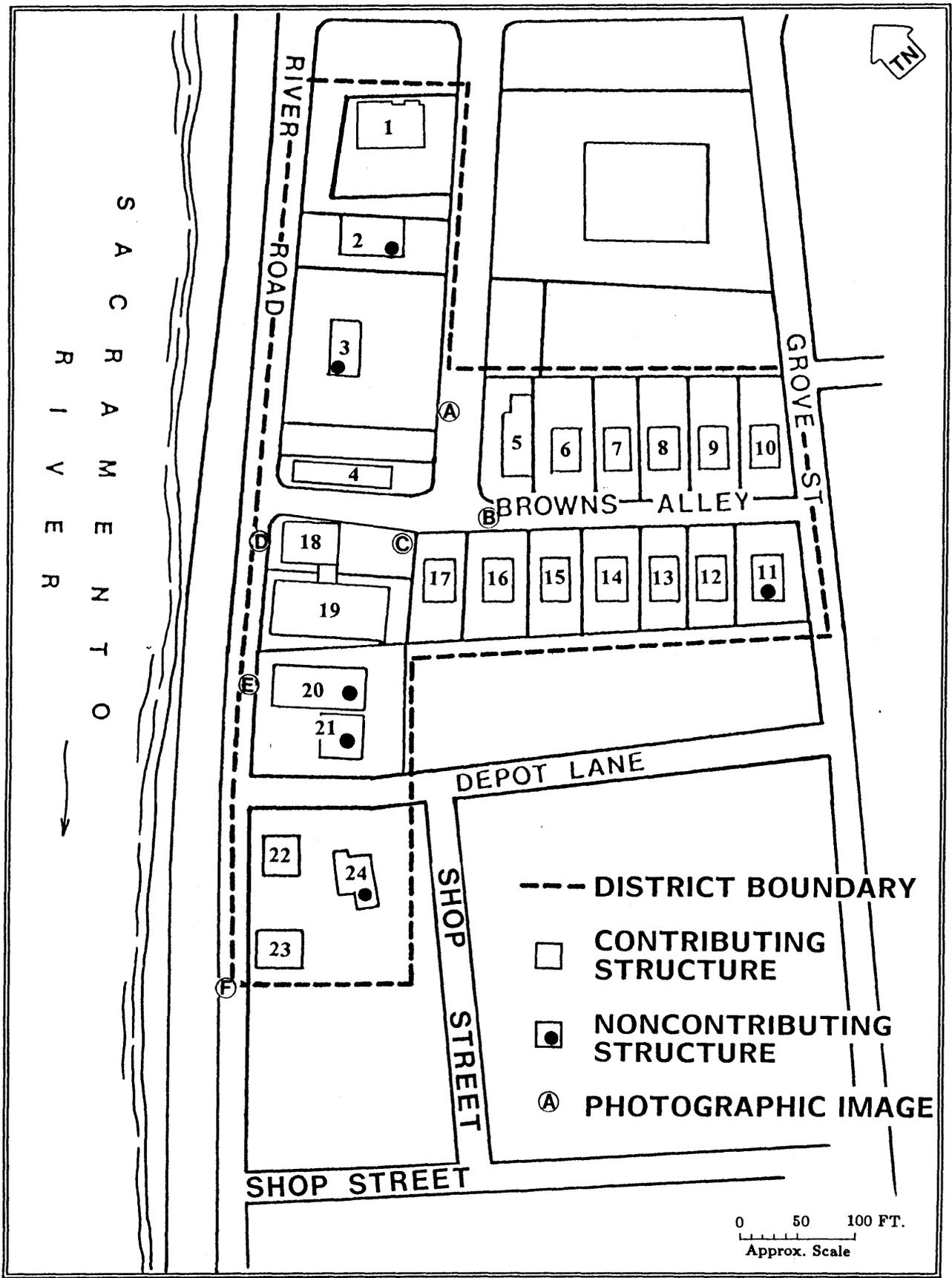
Southern Pacific Railroad Company

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

10. Geographical Data.

Verbal Boundary Description: From here the district continues south one-half block south of Depot Lane and continues west to the River Road. The district's west side follows the River Road north to the beginning point.

Boundary Justification: residence, purchased by Brown around 1900 and run by his son, Arthur. This district encompasses the base of Brown's business enterprises and was his home from 1879 until his death in 1923.



*Maintain Grove Commercial Residential Historic District
 Browns Alley, Market St, River Rd, Depot Lane
 Sacramento, CA
 Sacramento County*