

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

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

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

**1. Name**

historic Sheriff William Joseph Nesbitt Residence <sup>House</sup>  
and/or common 66 Capitol Street

**2. Location**

street & number 66 Capitol Street \_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Salinas (93901) \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 16th  
state California code 067 county Monterey code 053

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Robert A. Farrell, Dennis J. & Nancy L. Hoeft, Paul T. Golden-Trust  
street & number 102 Lincoln Avenue  
city, town Salinas \_\_\_ vicinity of state California 93901

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office -- Monterey County Courthouse  
street & number 240 Church Street  
city, town Salinas state California 93901

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title n/a has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no  
date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local  
depository for survey records  
city, town state

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## 7. Description

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<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The residence at 66 Capitol Street in Salinas is a two-story, wood-frame building, square in plan, with a single-story wing to the north. The entire ensemble is resting on a railroad tie foundation three tiers high. The skin of the structure is of horizontal redwood drop-siding and the building is capped with a medium pitch gable roof covered with a composition shingling, replacing the original wood shingle. The slightly pitched shed roof of the single-story north wing is also covered with the same composition shingle. There is a slight false-front on the east elevation concealing the shed roof on the facade. The parapet is decorated with a raised wood detail in the form of a balustrade resting on a cornice. Shelf-like drip moldings at the first floor level and a small, open, straight approach raised entry porch with very simple stickwork at the top of the porch posts are all nicely framed by the building's vertical corner boards and plain boxed cornice with its frieze in the gable. The resultant formal expression to the street greatly enhances the structure's vernacular origin.

Fenestration throughout the original building is 2/2 double hung sash. Full exterior shutters along the first floor at the facade and along the north elevation may be later additions, as is a small, rectangular, segmented colored glass window tucked up under the eaves at the northwest corner of the two-story portion of the residence. The main entrance floor is a four-panel affair glazed at the top, surmounted by a side-by-side two-light transom.

The only apparent major addition to the structure appears on the west elevation (rear), in the form of a two-story, ell-shaped unit capped with composition shingle shed roofs enclosing the indoor plumbing and a kitchen porch. This element dates from just after the turn of the 20th century and is quite sympathetic to the remainder of the building. Fenestration here consists of a combination of smaller 1/1 double hung sash and fixed windows. There is a rear entrance (modern door), reached by a straight approach raised porch stair. There is a rectangular wood-frame garage to the northwest of the house with a flat, asphalt covered roof. It is sheathed in a redwood drop-siding, and may have been a carriage house at one time. It is in fair condition. The grounds are well planted in front with a wide, concrete parking apron to the rear of the house. The building is located in a built-up residential neighborhood with a related structure of a similar age and builder about half-a-block away at 151 Archer Street.

While the exact date of construction has not been determined, the house does appear on the 1886 Sanborn Map of Salinas, and was in existence in 1881 when occupied by Sheriff Nesbitt.

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates	Prior to 1881	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### ARCHITECTURE:

The house at 66 Capitol Street is an excellent example of the type of vernacular residential structures built during the settlement of California in the mid to late 19th century. These forms, so strongly associated with "home" by the western migration, formed the basis for many emerging communities in the far west, including Salinas. Based upon the Greek Revival farmhouse with its low gable, boxed cornice, broad unornamented frieze, endboards, and classical architraves, these structures tended to lack strong stylistic pretensions; what decoration does appear seems derived from remembered regional expression. Few of these house types remain in the urban environment, being lost to evolving stylistic taste and social fashion. A few examples appear in the more rural communities of California, like Salinas, where they offer the student of anthropology, history, and architectural history a valuable resource for understanding the forces, both external and internal, that shaped their making. Sheriff William J. Nesbitt's home on Capitol Street embodies the distinctive characteristics of this type, period, and method of construction and possesses integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling, and association.

#### LAW:

Sheriff William Joseph Nesbitt (1853-1933) was considered "the dean of all peace officers"... "he was the law". "In the administration of the law he was fearless and in the discharge of his duties, prompt." So state various obituaries eulogizing this well-known western lawman. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about Sheriff Nesbitt was the fact that in over forty years of police work in the raw and sometimes rough Salinas Valley, he had never taken a man's life in the performance of duty. Nesbitt and his wife, Frances Camilla Dunham, established residence at 66 Capitol Street at the time of their marriage in 1881, just two blocks from the seat of county government, in a house that was as unpretentious as its owners. There they remained until the Sheriff's death, at home on January 25, 1933. An equally remarkable figure was born less than two blocks to the east of the Nesbitt family home, one of America's literary giants, John Steinbeck. Steinbeck's formative years in Salinas paralleled Nesbitt's tenure in office and prompted the author, many years later, to include him in his most personal novel, East of Eden. Steinbeck's description of the office of county sheriff is perhaps the most accurate in American letters, refuting as it does misconceptions of the past perpetuated from the dime novel to the contemporary television series.

"The sheriff's job was not an easy one, and that county which, out of the grab bag popular elections pulled a good sheriff was lucky. It was a complicated position. The obvious duties of the sheriff -- enforcing the law and keeping the peace --

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Steinbeck, John, East of Eden, The Viking Press, New York, 1952, Part Two, Chap. 18.  
Salinas Index-Journal, Thursday, January 26, 1933, p. 51 (obituary).  
Salinas Californian "He Never Killed a Man...", Our History and Heritage by Dorothy H. Vera,  
 Saturday, November 29, 1969, p. 14A.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .172

Quadrangle name Salinas Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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6	1	9	7	5	0
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4	0	5	9	6	7	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Refer to survey plot map attached and see continuation sheet.

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

state n/c code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kent L. Seavey

organization N/A date July 20, 1980

street & number 310 Lighthouse Avenue telephone (408) 375-8739

city or town Pacific Grove state California 93950

# 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 *K. Miller*

title SHPO date 11-10-81

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 Entered in the  
 National Register

*for factoring*

Keeper of the National Register *Alanna Byrne* date 2/19/82

Attest:

Chief of the National Register

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JAN 20 1982  
DATE ENTERED FEB 19 1982

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

were far from the most important ones. It was true that the sheriff represented armed force in the county, but in a community seething with individuality a harsh or stupid sheriff did not last long. There were water rights, boundary disputes, astray arguments, domestic relations, paternity matters - all to be settled without the force of arms. Only when everything else failed did a good sheriff make an arrest. The best sheriff was not the best fighter but the best diplomat. And Monterey County had a good one. He had a brilliant gift for minding his own business."

If it is true that certain forms are taken for granted and strongly resist change, and that there might be a close relation between these forms and the culture in which they are imbedded, and also that some of these forms persist for very long periods of time, it seems reasonable that the William J. Nesbitt home at 66 Capitol Street in Salinas is not only likely to yield information that is important to the study of early American building types in the far west, but to the legal institutions that characterized the orderly evolution of society as well, further qualifying it for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

WILLIAM JOSEPH NESBITT (1853-1933) was born in Fayette County, Illinois on April 21, 1853. Orphaned early in life, he was raised and cared for by an aunt and uncle until he struck out on his own at age 13. He initially found employment as a laborer on a farm, in which line of work he remained even after migration to California in 1871. For the following seven years or so, Nesbitt tried his hand at ranching, sheep-raising, stock buying and shipping in southern Monterey County. His first encounter with law enforcement came in 1878 when he was detailed as special deputy to then county sheriff C. Franks. This new line of endeavor apparently appealed to the young man as he ran for and was elected to the office of town marshall in Salinas in 1882, the year after his marriage and move to 66 Capitol Street. Robert Louis Stevenson, on his American visit in 1879, described the town that Nesbitt was responsible for protecting as, "the new county seat, Salinas City, in the bald corn-bearing plain under Gabilano Peak, a town of purely American character". Nesbitt next became constable of Alisal Township in 1884, continuing in that position until 1887 when he joined Sheriff John L. Matthews as deputy. He held that job for about six years before again being elected Salinas town marshall. In 1902, he was elected county sheriff and was sworn in on January 1, 1903. He remained in office as sheriff until his retirement from active service in 1923. He died on January 25, 1933, survived by his wife and two daughters.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED JAN 20 1982  
DATE ENTERED FEB 19 1982

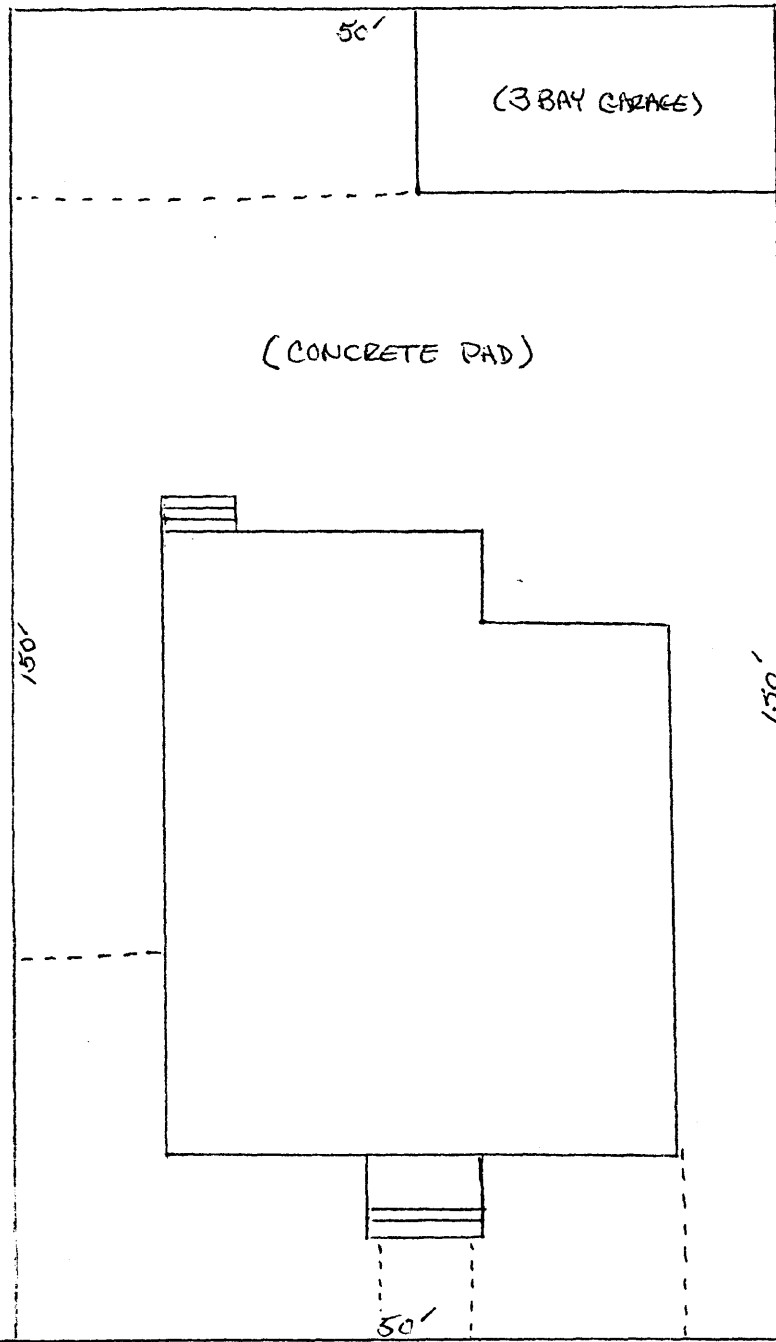
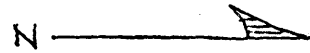
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

Beginning at a point along the west side of Capitol Street 100 feet from the northwest corner of Capitol and Central Avenue, thence running west 150 feet, bounded, on the south by a residential structure, thence running north 50 feet, bounded on the west by a residential structure, thence running east 150 feet, bounded on the north by a residential structure, thence running south 50 feet to the point of beginning, bounded on the east by Capitol Street, this lot is recorded as Parcel Number 2-153-2.

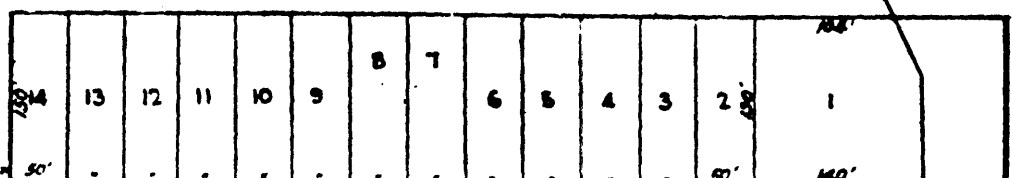
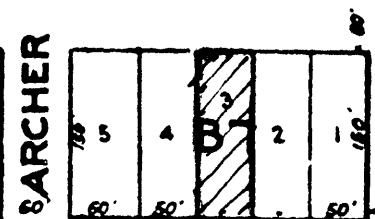
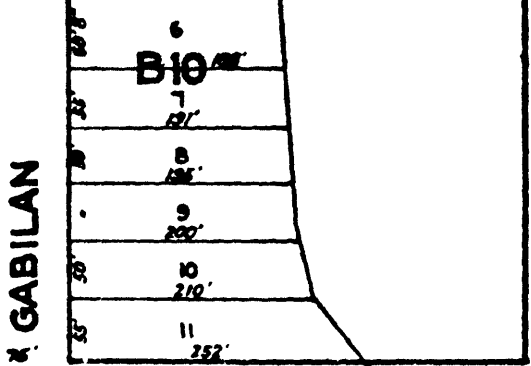
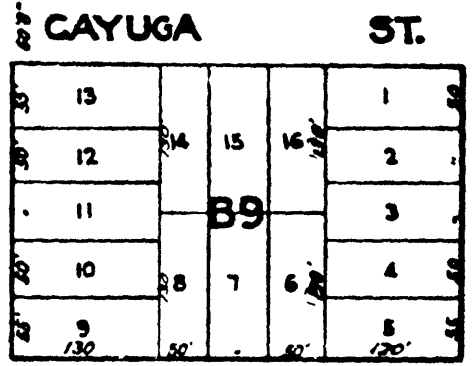
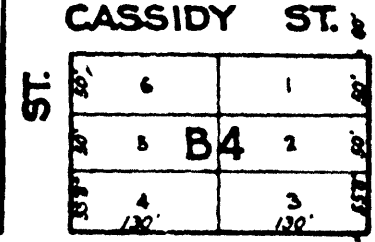
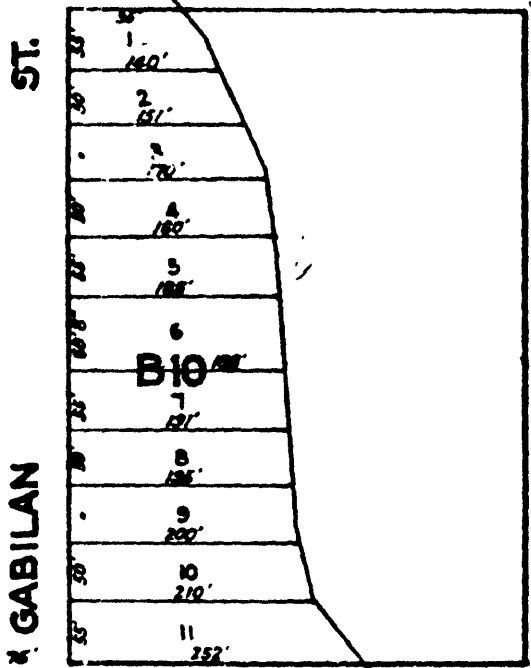
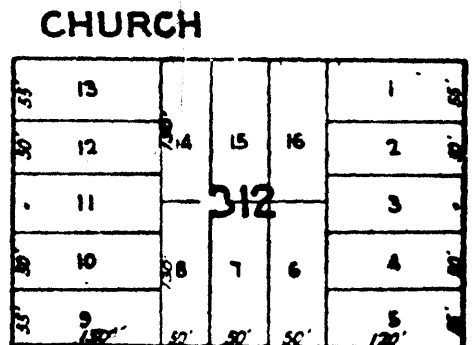
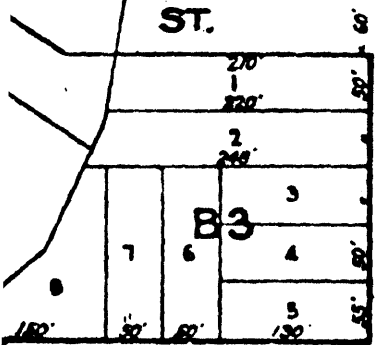
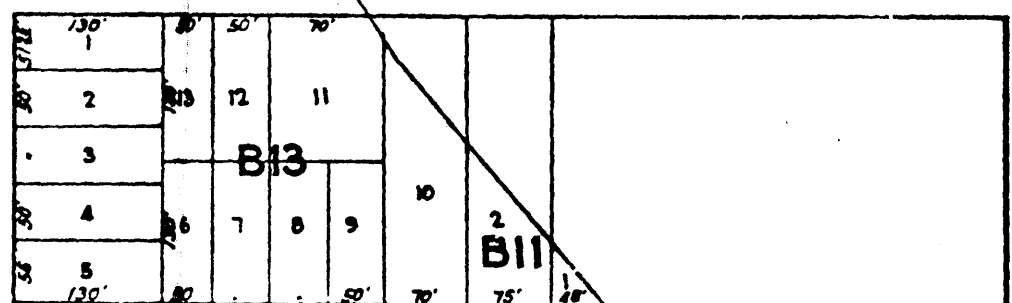
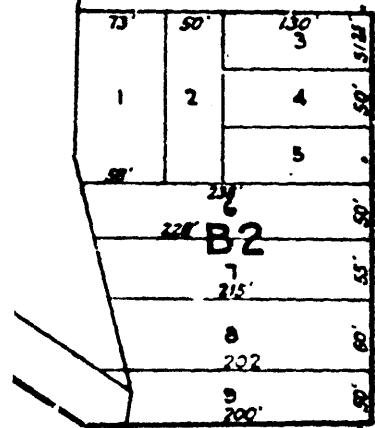
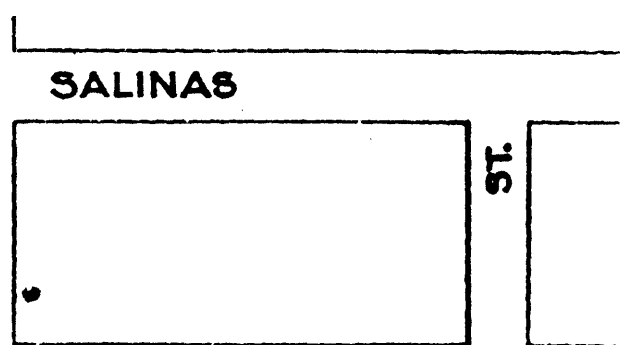
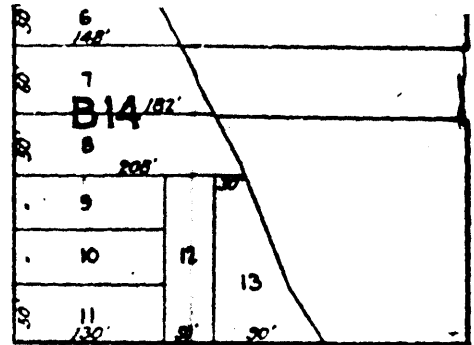
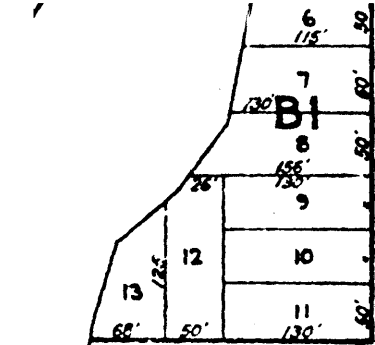
NOTE: The Sanborn Map of Salinas, California for 1886, (p. 8A) shows the Nesbitt residence as described in this nomination with the exception that the carriage house is centered at the rear, (west) of the property rather than in the northwest corner as it now appears. This map is the earliest recorded in the Union Lists of Sanborn Maps. Reference: The McHenry Library, Slide Room, University of California at Santa Cruz (95060).

Site plan for a proposed building  
situated on a lot in California



66 CAPITOL ST.

CAPITOL STREET



County Recorder  
Deputy



Sheriff William Joseph Nesbitt Residence  
Salinas, Monterey Co., California

FEB 15 1971 JAN 1971