

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch

other names/site number Oakland Public Library Melrose Branch

2. Location

street & number 4805 Foothill Blvd/1738 48th Avenue not for publication

city or town Oakland vicinity

state California code CA county Alameda code 001 zip code 94601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination / request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets / does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cheryl Zedell 12/27/95
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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register *Guym. Pappaluz 2/14/96* **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): _____

fn Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1922

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>library</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>library</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Concrete</u>
walls	<u>Concrete</u>
	<u>Stucco</u>
roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
other	<u>Terra cotta</u>
	<u>Concrete</u>

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance 1916-1946

Significant Dates 1916

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Weeks, William H. (architect)
Christensen, C. (builder)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

- Previous documentation on file (NPS)**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 - previously listed 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

Name of repository: Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library;
Oakland City Planning Department

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1	<u>10 567520 4181870</u>	3 <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
2	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	4 <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>

 See continuation sheet

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty Marvin

organization North Oakland Voters Alliance (NOVA), Friends of Golden Gate Library,
Friends of Melrose Library, Rockridge Community Planning Council (RCPC),
Temescal Neighbors Together date August 10, 1995

street & number 2646 Claremont Avenue telephone (510) 849-1959

city or town Berkeley state CA zip code 94705-1451

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for districts and properties with large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

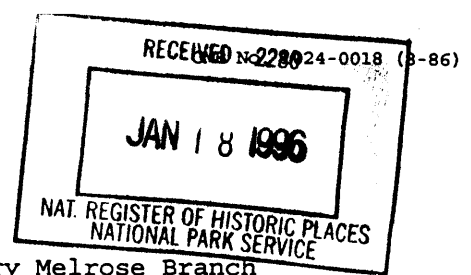
name City of Oakland

street & number 1 City Hall Plaza telephone (510) 238-3301 (City Mgr.)

city or town Oakland state CA zip code 94612

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch

name of property

Alameda County CA

county and state

Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1921
name of multiple property listing

7. Narrative Description

The Oakland Public Library Melrose Branch is a Classical Revival library building, high one story and raised basement (described by Sanborn maps as 30' tall), on a three-frontage truncated-gore lot, with a symmetrical fan-shaped plan, the front facade angled inward to the central entrance, and a shallow curved bay on the rear elevation. It has a symmetrical facade, flat roof behind a straight parapet that steps up slightly over the entries, massive modillion cornice, large wood sash windows, and monumental entry. According to the typology in the Carnegie Library multiple resource nomination, it is an example of the Classical Revival type A, with a central element with pilasters and columns supporting an entablature and pediment. Exterior walls are stucco over reinforced concrete, with cast concrete and terra cotta ornament.

The building faces a bend in Foothill Boulevard, and echoes the curve of the street in the shallow V-shaped plan of the facade. The central main door is at split levels to the interior floors, intersecting the heavy water table molding and set in front of a tall arched window flanked by round fluted columns and wide engaged square pilasters. The door itself is double, glazed, in dark wood sash. It has a rectangular terra cotta surround and a molded hood with egg and dart and other classical detailing, crowned by a figure of an owl perched on a book. The main cornice over the entry has a crest representing a book and rays of light, and the frieze is inscribed "Oakland Free Library." There are tall cast iron lamp posts with glass globes on the low rectangular side walls of the wide front steps. A cornerstone reads "Gift of Andrew Carnegie, 1915."

The main entry is flanked by symmetrical wings, rotated slightly inward, that are the ends of the two reading rooms. They have main-floor Chicago style windows, three-part basement windows, and grooved stucco rustication that wraps around the basement story. There are secondary entries on both side elevations, halfway back, leading to the basement; each is marked by a crest on the main parapet. On the side elevations there are five main floor windows: tall ones in the end bays, and smaller high ones between. As in front, the basement openings are aligned below those on the main floor. At the rear, the ends of the reading room wings have large Chicago windows; the wings are connected by a wide curved bay that houses the stacks. The cornice wraps around the whole building, but the detailing is simpler on the rear bay. Window sash is painted blue green.

The interior is approached from a tall marble and oak-paneled stair hall with an elaborate vaulted and coffered ceiling and side niches, lit by the big arched window over the door. There is a central flight up to the main floor and side flights to the basement. Stair railings are elaborate ironwork and oak. Glazed doors with a transom separate the stair hall from the main floor. On the main floor are two large reading rooms (children's and adults'), to either side of the central lobby and circulation desk. Behind the central desk are the stacks; the reference room is behind the (right) adult reading room, and the librarian's office is behind the children's room. Walls are plaster, with oak pilasters and deeply molded ceilings. The tall windows on the side elevations open onto the office, the reference room, and window seats in each of the reading rooms. Window sash is all operable, much of the old library furniture including the steel stack shelving is still in use, and the interior is otherwise virtually intact. The basement contains work rooms, restrooms, utilities, and a large oval "lecture room" with a stage. The building continues in its historic use, except that the basement is occupied by a nursery school.

Surroundings are densely built up, mostly commercial along Foothill Boulevard and residential behind. The building is prominently placed on a major street. There is a small yard with trees in front, and a rear yard used by the nursery school. The building is in excellent condition and its integrity is outstanding.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 8 Page 6

Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch

name of property

Alameda County CA

county and state

Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1921
name of multiple property listing

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch, a Carnegie Library, meets the requirements for National Register nomination as set forth in the Multiple Property nomination entitled "Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1921." It was one of four architecturally similar but varied branches built under a 1914 grant to the city of Oakland, in four different North and East Oakland neighborhoods, designed by Oakland architects of statewide prominence. It has served continuously as an Oakland Public Library branch from its construction to the present. Physically it is virtually unchanged both inside and out.

Oakland pioneered branch libraries in California, opening branch reading rooms as early as 1878 and continuing to emphasize neighborhood branches as the city expanded. In August 1911, fulfilling promises made to the Melrose area when it was annexed to Oakland in 1909, a branch was opened at 1421 46th Avenue about two blocks from the present building, near Melrose Station, Fremont High School, and Jefferson and Melrose Schools. This was a new building especially constructed for lease to the library. It prospered, and the Melrose neighborhood was selected for one of the four Carnegie branches to be built with the 1914 Carnegie grant obtained by City Librarian Charles Greene and Progressive Mayor Frank Mott. Since 1899 when Oakland's downtown Main Library had been funded, Carnegie's focus had shifted to small towns and, in metropolitan areas, branches, to bring books closer to the people, so the city's application matched the Carnegie philosophy at the time. Oakland applied for and received a grant of \$140,000, or \$35,000 per branch, apparently a typical amount for a medium-large city. Oakland's match was to provide sites for the buildings, and 10% of the grant amount per year to maintain the buildings and their operations.

Melrose was the first of the four branches built, thanks to vigorous and articulate lobbying by the Melrose Business Men's and Improvement Clubs, the PTAs and Mothers Clubs of the three nearby schools, and other neighborhood organizations; and thanks also to the donation of the site (previously undeveloped) by county supervisor J.R. Talcott and railroad man Henry Root, both large local property owners with an interest in improving the amenities of this growing residential area. The early gift of the site enabled construction to begin before prices were "greatly inflated by the war, and Melrose Branch accordingly, is larger and has many important features that had to be cut out of the three buildings erected [two years] later for the same money. Among these are the steel stack, the cement main floor, and the marble vestibule" (MS branch history c.1922, in OPL files).

The same manuscript states that "Mr. Root expressed a wish that Architect W.H. Weeks, whose work at Modesto and elsewhere he admired, should design the building and the Library Board, with the consent of the Commissioner of Public Works, gladly made the choice." William H. Weeks, an Oakland resident, was the architect of at least 21 Carnegie libraries in California, and countless schools, churches, and other institutional buildings, due in part to his prominence in the use of reinforced concrete. (The three later Oakland branches were designed by C.W. Dickey and John J. Donovan.) Building permit #40382 was issued November 27, 1915, for a one story and basement reinforced concrete library, with an estimated construction cost of \$32,000. The building was dedicated September 8, 1916, with a program of music and addresses presented under the auspices of nine different civic and school organizations of the wide-awake Melrose and Elmhurst neighborhoods.

Melrose gained early prestige among the branches from a 1920 memorial donation of 3419 books and an endowment fund from Oakland philanthropist Chauncey W. Gibson, Melrose being chosen because it was considered the most fireproof of the Oakland libraries, and because of its proximity to schools and use by young people. At various times the basement was used as a union hall, as the Navy Volunteer Communication Reserve's radio room, and now as a nursery school; the main floor has been in uninterrupted use as a neighborhood branch library. Melrose is an Oakland City Landmark, designated November 4, 1980, in a group designation of the city's four Carnegie branch libraries.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

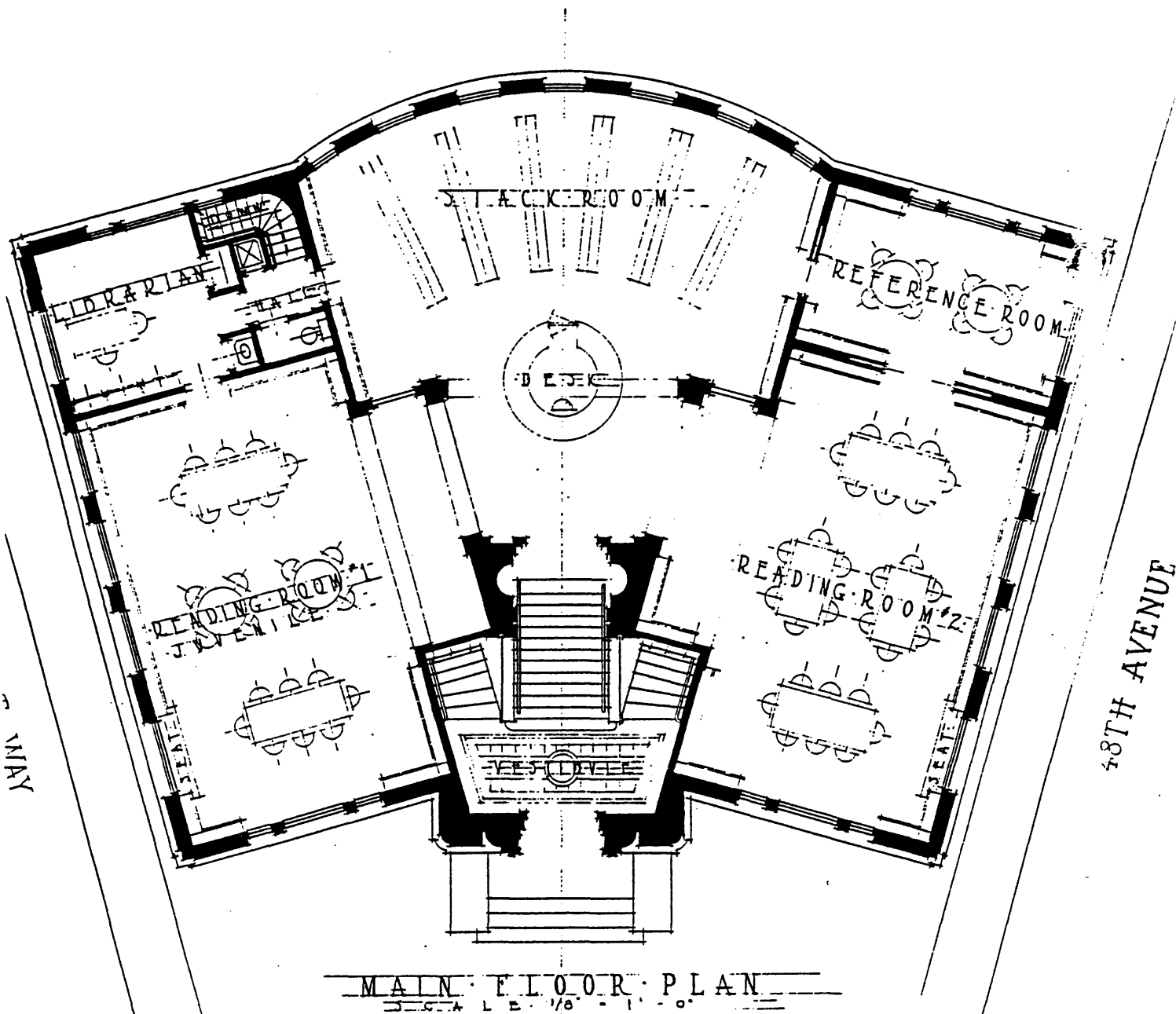
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Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch
name of property
Alameda County CA
county and state

Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1921
name of multiple property listing

Supplementary Illustrations

Main Floor Plan, W.H. Weeks, architect, 1915
Library history collection at Oakland History Room, Oakland Public Library



LIBRARY - FACING FOOTHILL BOULEVARD

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Oakland Free Library Melrose Branch

name of property

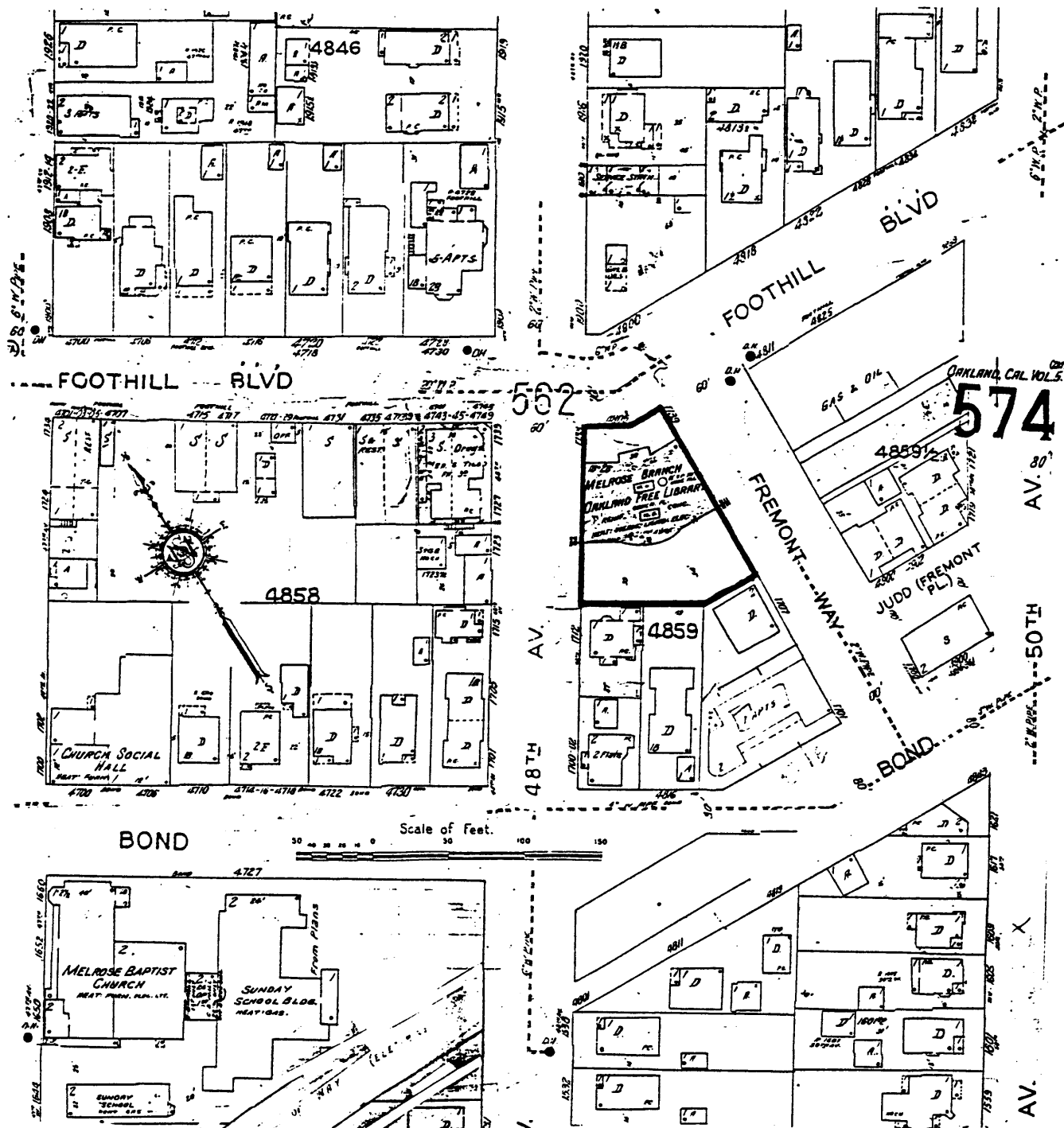
Alameda County CA

county and state

Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture it Produced, 1899-1921
name of multiple property listing

Sketch Map showing boundaries and footprints

Adapted and reduced from Sanborn insurance map, 1951 update, page 574,
Oakland City Planning Department



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Alameda County Assessor's Parcel Map showing location

Parcel 035 2384 001 00

As reproduced, about 1" to 100'

ASSESSOR'S MAP 35

2384

Map of Fremont High School Tract (Oct 16, 1921)
Map of the Patterson Ranch (Part of Plot 7) (Oct. 17, 1921)
Scale 1" = 100'

