

**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



80

**1. Name**

historic Church of the Nativity

and/or common

RECEIVED  
MAR 1 1980  
OHP

**2. Location**

street & number 210 Oak Grove Avenue not for publication

city, town Menlo Park vicinity of congressional district 12

state California code 06 county San Mateo code 081

**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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Archdiocese of San Francisco

street & number 445 Church Street

city, town San Francisco vicinity of state California 94114

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Mateo County Hall of Records

street & number Marshall Street

city, town Redwood City state California 94063

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title See Continuation Sheet, page one has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date s <u>1877 and 1878</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

The initial, or front five bay, portion of the strictly Early Gothic Revival style church was constructed of redwood and is painted white. The sanctuary was 36' x 55' with a central 120 foot bell tower and tall slender bell spire. Its roof is a high pitched gable. The church building has all the elements of Gothic Revival style: lancet windows with hood molds, a variety of pointed forms above the entry, entrance canopy trifoliate tracery, pier buttresses with finials and crockets, and quatrefoil ornaments under the eaves. A significant interior feature is the exposed redwood hammer-beam trusses. In 1887 any addition carefully repeated all the style elements.

The H.A.B.S. description in 1974 was:

The strict Gothic Revival form and details demonstrate a remarkable adherence to an older architectural idiom, perhaps in a deliberate attempt to blend the additions with the original church building, as evidenced by the symmetrical plan, central front tower, lancet windows, decorative wood buttresses, trifoliate tracery and a generally understated, minimal use of ornamentation. Even the latest additions in the rear are carefully incorporated into the overall Gothic form. The three part nave is spanned by a series of exposed hammerbeam trusses of redwood. Stained glass leaded windows line the walls dominated by an elaborate rose window set above the altar.

In December 1877 the building was moved approximately one mile to a temporary site on the west side of Santa Cruz Avenue about one-half block south of El Camino Real. In March 1878 the church was moved to its present site.

Peter Donohue furnished the 1,200 pound bell cast at his United Iron Works, San Francisco. The gift was duly christened on Christmas Day 1881. The same bell sends out the daily summons.

In 1887 a brick foundation was inserted to replace the wooden foundation. At the time an addition was built across the rear giving the building its present Latin cross form and dimensions, i.e., 36' and 62' x 130'. The renovated church was consecrated by Archbishop Patrick W. Riordan on 12 February 1888. The rose window over the altar and the stained glass windows in the transept were not placed until 1900.

The 1906 earthquake did little damage to the church.

In 1975 approximately a quarter million dollars was spent to stabilize and to retain the church's original appearance.

The grounds were naturally landscaped with native oaks. Some exotic trees were donated by James C. Flood. In 1970 the semi-circular carriage drive was abandoned, but in re-designing the landscape Thomas Church retained a similar tranquil, informal atmosphere.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" 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** 1872, 1887      **Builder/Architect** original builder James R. Doyle

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Church of the Nativity built in 1872 represents the earliest extant wooden Catholic church on the San Francisco Peninsula. The choice of style illustrates the regional "lag" in following popular architectural forms. Early Gothic Revival had been at its height of popularity in the East in the 1840's. There was a similar flavor carried over into many of the local "summer homes" of the church's wealthy parishioners. The church served as Menlo Park's first school. A public school was not opened in Menlo Park until 1875. The church was the educational, social and religious center of the predominantly Irish-Catholic dominated early community of Menlo Park. Today it is an example of a parish's dramatic concern for its architectural history.

On 13 November 1871 Robert Emmet Doyle for a token of a dollar "sold" to the Archbishop one acre of land at the present northeast corner of Ringwood Avenue and Middlefield Road on which to build a local Catholic church. The builder-architect of the well proportioned, symmetrical church was James R. Doyle, who was no relation to the land donor. Later Robert E. Doyle put up his extensive Menlo Park property as collateral to secure a note from James C. Flood. When Doyle's wheat speculations failed, he lost his land. This caused Archbishop Alemany to petition the Court for permission to sell the one acre on which the church had stood for five years. The Archdiocese purchased the present site on 9 November 1877. For reasons unknown today the church building was moved in a circuitous fashion in two stages. (Discussed Item 7)

During the 1950's there was talk of replacing the church. The Archbishop was strongly in favor of a modern structure and drawings were commissioned for a modern church. Local parishioners preferring the intimacy and charm of their antiquity banded together to save the old church building. As a result there has been an extensive program of care and stabilization.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet, page two.

# 10. Geographical Data **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** **UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Acreege of nominated property 1.66 acres

Quadrangle name Palo Alto, CA.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	0	5	7	2	5	8	0	4	1	4	6	1	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Southeast portion of Lot 238 fronting on Oak Grove Avenue, 264' x 275'. Includes only the church and landscaping; excludes parsonage and activities building at rear of lot. Assessor No. 061-360-030.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dorothy F. Regnery

organization Junior League of Palo Alto date 25 March 1980

street & number 488 Westridge Drive telephone 415-854-5074

city or town Portolá Valley state California 94025

# 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 Kenn M. Ellen

title \_\_\_\_\_ date April 22, 1980

**For HCERS use only**

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

[Signature] date 10-31-80

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 6-5-80

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	APR 28 1980
DATE ENTERED	OCT 31 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET One                      ITEM NUMBER 6                      PAGE 1

Title: H.A.B.S.

Date: 1974

Federal:   X  

Eligible: Yes.

H.A.B.S. nomination presented to State Preservation Officer,  
August 1974.

Depository for Survey Records: H.A.B.S., Library of Congress  
City, State: Washington, D.C.

Title: Junior League of Palo Alto

Date: 1973

County:   X  

Eligible: No.

Depository for Survey Records: San Mateo County Historical Assoc.  
City, State: San Mateo, California

Title: Certificate of Recognition, California Heritage Council.

Date: 1972

State:   X  

Eligible: No.

Depository for Survey Records: California Heritage Council  
City, State: San Francisco, California

Title: SMA-001 Point of Historical Interest

Date: 1971

County:   X  

Eligible: No.

Depository: State Parks & Recreation Department  
City, State: Sacramento, California

Title: San Mateo County Historic Sites

Date: 1966

County:   X  

Eligible: No.

Depository: San Mateo County Planning Department  
City, State: Redwood City, California

Title: Junior League of San Francisco

Date: 1964

County:   X  

Eligible: No.

Depository: San Mateo County Historical Assoc.  
City, State: San Mateo, California

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET      two                      ITEM NUMBER    9                      PAGE    1

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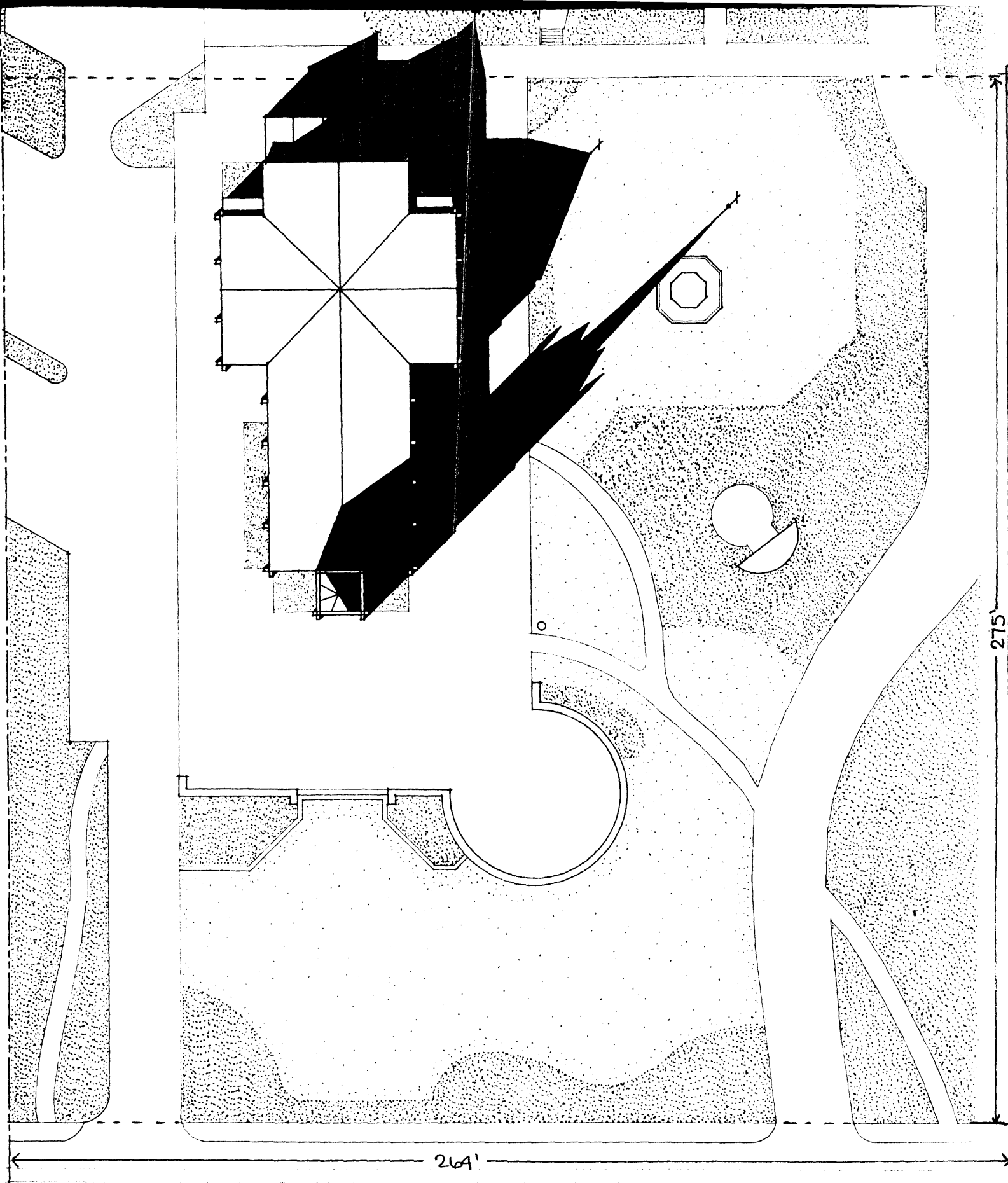
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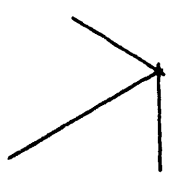
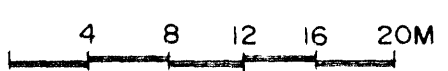
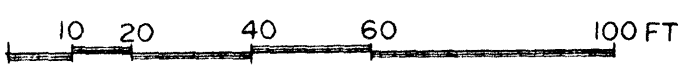
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sity Press, 1976.

Stanger, Frank M. South from San Francisco. San Mateo: San  
Mateo County Historical Association, 1963.



Oak Grove Avenue

SITE PLAN



Source of map  
see reverse side.

OCT 31 1980

APR 28 1980

DRAWN BY: KIM SPURGEON 1974

SAN MATEO COUNTY SURVEY

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

210 OAK GROVE AVENUE

NAME AND LOCATION  
THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

MENLO PARK

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN  
BUILDINGS SURVEY  
SHEET 1 OF 4 SHEETS

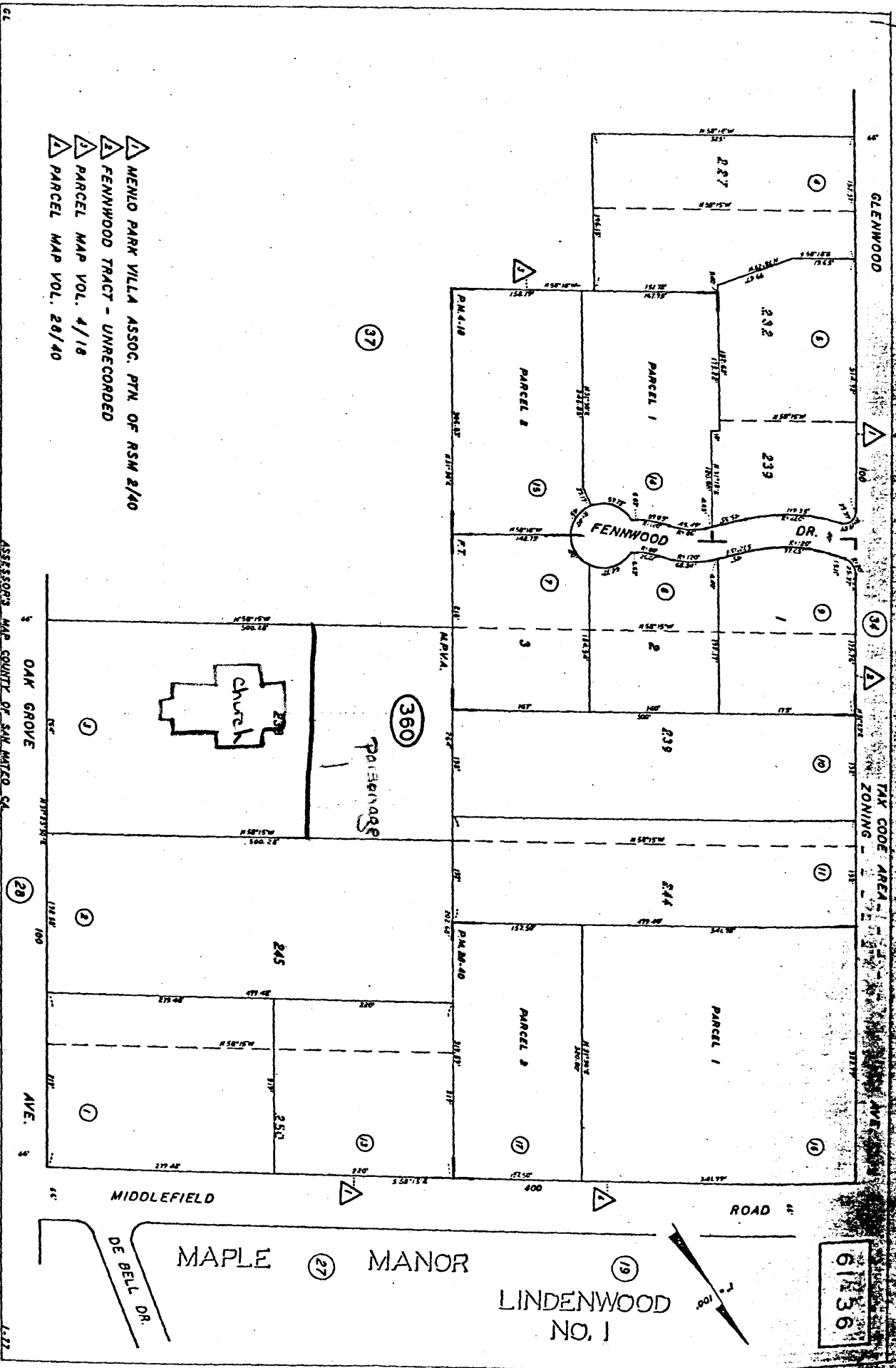
LIBRARY  
IN

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

MENLO PARK

SAN MATEO, CALIFORNIA





▲ MENLO PARK VILLA ASSOC. PTN. OF RSM 2/10  
 ▲ FENWOOD TRACT - UNRECORDED  
 ▲ PARCEL MAP VOL. 4/18  
 ▲ PARCEL MAP VOL. 28/40

ASSESSOR'S MAP COUNTY OF SAN MATEO CA.

61-37

GLENWOOD

AVE 3

TAX CODE AREA

MIDDLEFIELD

DE BELL DR.

MAPLE MANOR

LINDENWOOD NO. 1

GLENWOOD

TAX CODE AREA

ZONING

AVE 3

ROAD 2

35

28

37

360

61-37