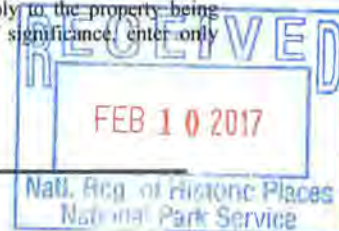


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

56 783

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.



## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Halcyon Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: Area surrounded by Halcyon Rd, The Pike, and CA St Hwy #1/Cienega St.

City or town: Halcyon

State: California

County: San Luis Obispo

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

Jenan Saunders/Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

2/7/17  
Date

California State Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other (explain:)

For Edison H. Beall 3-27-17  
Signature of the 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 ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>35</u>	<u>25</u>	buildings
<u>3</u>	<u></u>	sites
<u></u>	<u></u>	structures
<u></u>	<u></u>	objects
<u>38</u>	<u>25</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: village site

RELIGION: religious facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: post office

EDUCATION: library

FUNERARY: cemetery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural fields

LANDSCAPE: conservation area

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: village site

RELIGION: religious facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: post office

EDUCATION: library

FUNERARY: cemetery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural fields

LANDSCAPE: conservation area

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Bungalow/Craftsman

MODERN MOVEMENT

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundations: wood and concrete

Walls: wood (redwood), stucco

Roof: composition shingles

Other: Fireplaces and chimneys of brick; locally sourced, golden-hued tuff rock

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Halcyon Historic District is located on the Central Coast of California about one mile east from the Pacific Ocean in San Luis Obispo County. The Temple of the People sanctuary, the Blue Star Memorial Temple (**Photos 2, 15, 16**), was designed by noted architect Theodore Eisen, and constructed by Temple members in 1923 and 1924. Its glowing white-pillared exterior marks the gateway for the community. The architect constructed the unusual Temple with simple materials to fulfill a masterly design. Halcyon remains a rural oasis in a rapidly growing urban area. It covers 130 acres—16 square blocks—(**Figure 15**) of what had been sage and lupine covered sand hills as well as rich black bottomland for farming. Temple members built small cottages and planted shrubs and trees that have grown over the years to transform the community into a wooded area. Halcyon homes are unique and in most cases form follows function. Thus each building in Halcyon is different. Halcyon is surrounded on the north and west by typical mid-twentieth century subdivisions, consisting of rows of almost identical single-family houses with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Groves of trees and open fields between these tracts and Halcyon block most of the view of urbanization. The neighboring urban growth has not impaired Halcyon and the town remains as envisioned by the founders. The residents adhere to philosophical ideals that keep the community in its rural park-like setting despite the pressures of growth. On the east and south the district is adjoined by commercial agricultural lands. The district retains historic integrity.



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## Narrative Description

### ENVIRONMENT

As proposed, the original design concept for the Halcyon community contained a central spiritual and administrative block with streets radiating out to encompass residential lots and small farms. The first plan filed with the Recorder's Office of San Luis Obispo County is dated October 8, 1906 (**Map 1**). "Halcyon Subdivision Number 1," is dated September 1923 (**Map 2**). Economic realities and available materials dictated a simpler grid style for the community development.

Halcyon has two general types of soil on rolling hills that uniquely run perpendicular to the nearby ocean instead of parallel to the water. The Arroyo Grande Creek flows past the district east of Halcyon making a sweeping turn to the west just south of the district. The hills to the north, west, and south were formed by ancient blowing sands from the nearby ocean. The eastern edge of the district opens to the alluvial plain that was formed as the creek flooded, creating prime clay farmland. Homes in Halcyon rest on both this clay bottomland, in what could be described as a swale, and on the sandy slopes of the hills. Residents have always been appreciative and protective of the views in all directions.

Vegetation is a key element for Halcyon. The early residents planted many trees to improve the site and to protect against the cool, prevailing west wind that commonly blows from the ocean. One hundred years later these trees remain and represent the diversity of the semi-tropical, semi-Mediterranean climate. Trees include coastal redwoods, palms (including Chilean wine palms), coastal live oaks, California pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), locust (*Robinia*), bay laurel, magnolia, Monterey and other types of pines, cypress of several types, many other evergreens, other varieties of eucalyptus, and an abundance of fruit and English walnut trees. Other trees in Halcyon, native to Australia, Mexico, and Brazil, include acacia (wattle), jacaranda, and a unique strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*).

The landscape is not a pruned, trimmed park. It is a natural place, where coyotes, raccoons, opossums, and other animals enter for protection. Birds of all types delight in the environment. The largest block of trees is a grove of mature eucalyptus (blue gum) that protect the south and west side of the community from atop the largest sand hill (**Photo 23**). This has become a haven for migrating Monarch butterflies and also birds, especially owls and hawks. Another block of eucalyptus trees called the Builder's Grove (**Photo 22**), in honor of the community children, marks the center of the historic site. Community-wide tree planting continues and some homes are nearly hidden by trees, perennial shrubs, and roses.

Halcyon's enlightened approach to growth has extended to its commercial agricultural land. The twenty-plus-acre block of fertile clay soil at the southeast corner of Halcyon has been used for more than one hundred years to produce vegetables commercially. It has been converted by the lessee to a sustainable growing area where fish emulsion and non-toxic chemicals have replaced other fertilizers and sprays. The Taylor block (**Photo 54, 55**) produces celery, cauliflower and

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broccoli, with three crops a year. At the community's northwest corner is a thirty plus-acre plot (**Photo 56, 57**) of sandy soil once used for commercial strawberries that required a large quantity of water and agricultural chemicals. Converted by the lessee, the Rutiz Family Farm block is dedicated to a sustainable, no pesticide farming operation of many different crops, including berries, flowers, and vegetables of all types. A roadside stand provides direct purchases from the land. The company also offers a growing Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Irrigation is provided by wells on site. Many residents also have their own gardens for both food and flowers, as almost anything they wish to plant will grow in the fertile environment. Chickens roam backyards, supplying eggs and eradicating pests.

Only rocky blacktop covers the narrow two-lane streets (**Photo 59**) that guide visitors through the community, making it as well known for hiking and dog walking as for vehicle travel. There are no curbs, gutters, sidewalks, or streetlights. Residents of the community ride bicycles, walk, or use skateboards on the rough streets. Some streets are privately owned by the community, with others maintained by San Luis Obispo County.

## RESOURCES

The founders of Halcyon selected a location of rich farmland and benign weather, with no readily available building materials on the site, such as rocks or timber to mill. While sand, gravel, and water were available for concrete in the nearby Arroyo Grande Creek, cement had to be imported. In the community's earliest years, redwood appears to have been the most widely available wood from mills in Santa Cruz, almost two hundred miles away, and later from Northern California.

One or two rock quarries east of Arroyo Grande provided attractive yellow and gold tuff rock for fireplaces, full buildings, and retaining walls from the 1880s into the 1900s for the entire Arroyo Grande Creek valley, including Halcyon (**Photo 39, 60**). This tuff (tuffa), a sandstone type of rock composed of compacted volcanic ash, is locally called "Arroyo Grande yellow rock." Some of this rock has been found in the shadow of Mt. Picacho summit, an ancient cinder cone located near Laetitia Winery and Vineyard, just east of Highway 101 between El Campo and Los Berros Roads, south of Arroyo Grande, and due east of Halcyon (**Figure 4**). The prominent summit rises 912 feet and is visible for about 10 miles.

Halcyon homes are as unique as the community. Economics of the time formed the building philosophy and some of the first homes resembled those of pioneers of earlier eras: one or two rooms with an outdoor toilet. Unlike requirements for most urban development, the front doors do not always face the street. Building lots are of varying sizes and homes were sited to accommodate the environment, often facing the sun with protection from the west winds. Gardens and trees were planted accordingly. The actual building plans benefit from the benign Central Coast weather; for example, no steeply pitched roofs were needed to limit snow accumulation, screened porches and wide overhangs were not needed to protect from high temperatures. Outdoor and garden living encouraged neighborly interaction.

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Among Halcyon's modest homes can be found original work by local craftsmen including handmade exterior doors, hand carved door toggle closures, and unique fireplaces and porches constructed of the golden hued Arroyo Grande tuff rock. Bricks that became available in the 1930s were used solely for fireplaces. Numerous homes show influences of the American Arts and Crafts Movement. The Hiawatha Lodge (**Photo 17**), built in 1927 of redwood, exemplified simple meeting halls of the period and remains in constant community use.

Of the sixty buildings that comprise Halcyon, no two are alike. Many were built without formal plans. Sketches on scrap paper were often sufficient for Halcyon skilled craftsmen to raise a building. References in the "Family Letters" published in *The Temple Artisan* often referred to the Halcyon builders as volunteers who had time to help with the building. Fireplaces and walls show Halcyon had several gifted masons in residence. Although the homes are often small in size, they show considerable skill in design and engineering. This is evident in the often complex roof structures and window designs that demonstrate how the buildings fit the environment.

The settlement of Halcyon originated in 1903 with construction of a few modest homes, and various buildings in differing architectural styles. The most important building is the Blue Star Memorial Temple, sanctuary for the Temple of The People. Other key historic buildings are the Hiawatha Lodge, Halcyon Store and US Post Office (**Photo 14**), William Quan Judge Library (**Photo 18**), and the Open Gate guesthouse and residence (**Photo 21**). These key buildings are listed first, followed by other buildings and sites in general order of construction. This is not a perfectly chronological listing since specific building dates in many cases are unavailable. When months and years are listed they are accurately based on Temple records.

**1. Blue Star Memorial Temple** (one contributing building)      **Photos 2, 15, 16; Figures 1, 2, 3**  
3199 Temple Street, APN 062 321 019      1923-1924

The Blue Star Memorial Temple was built in 1923 and 1924 in the general shape of a triangle, a symbol of Deity or the Higher Self. The sanctuary was developed on a one-acre site with the concrete foundation laid January 4, 1923. On January 19, 1923, the center stone under the center altar was set. The Temple is built of reinforced concrete brick with concrete stucco covering, lath and concrete interior walls, and a domed wood-framed roof with composition covering. Crushed granite had been unloaded near the Arroyo Grande Creek, about a half-mile east, and concrete blocks were manufactured at that location using sand and water from the creek. The outside color of the building is white.

The form of the building is a convex, equilateral triangle, with seven as the basic number, applied to windows, doors, inside dimensions, etc. There are seven doors, while the inside dimensions of The Temple are 49 feet from corner to corner, or seven times seven. Inside it features one large congregational room with high upper pilaster windows transmitting diffused light through opalescent glass. One altar is placed in the center, at the apex above which the three large roof beams converge. A second altar is at the joining of the angles on the western side of the building. A colonnaded porch flanks the exterior of the building with 13 pillars on a side in a somewhat classical Greek order.



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**3. Hiawatha Lodge** (one contributing building)  
3065 Temple Street, APN 062 321 020

**Photo 17; Figures 6a, 6b**  
1927

Hiawatha Lodge, simple in design, was constructed in the spring of 1927 as the community center for The Temple of the People. It has been used for many purposes through the years with its large assembly room, traditional proscenium stage, stone fireplace, and multipurpose room/kitchen. The rustic, single-walled building was named after the famous American Indian Hiawatha, to recognize the efforts of the Temple founders who had worked for American Indian rights in New York State before coming to Halcyon.

The Craftsman style single-story building, flanked by a large graveled parking lot to the east, has a composition roof and specially milled horizontal redwood lap siding. The front entrance features a building-wide covered porch with benches. A handicapped entrance is off the parking lot, and two other entrances are off the kitchen at the north end. The fireplace is made from a unique golden-hued tuff rock that came from a local quarry. The main assembly room has an open-beamed ceiling. The foundation is concrete and wood.

**4. William Quan Judge Library** (one contributing building)  
906 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 321 032

**Photo 18; Figures 7, 8**  
1931-1932

The Temple of the People library is named in honor of William Quan Judge, co-founder and president of the American Section of the Theosophical Society from 1875 to 1896. Designed by long-time Temple member Evelyn Carlberg as a Guest House, construction of the two-story, redwood building was carried out by Temple workmen in 1931-1932.

The 30x60 foot building, set back from Halcyon Road, originally had sixteen rooms for students and guests. The design of the building was simple, with double-hung windows, a steep, hip-composition roof, and a foundation of wood and concrete piers. The siding is horizontal lap redwood. Each room had a built-in closet and dresser. The style contains elements of both Craftsman and saltbox architecture. A bathroom on each floor had hot and cold running water, showers, and other facilities. Funding for the building came from donations from Temple members. Labor was also donated.

The first change in building usage came in the late 1950s when several single rooms on the east side of the first floor were remodeled to make way for the new location of the William Quan Judge Library formerly housed in the Administration Cottage next door. That cottage is no longer extant. The building name changed from the Guest House to William Quan Judge Library. To provide direct access to the library, a front door and small entrance porch facing Halcyon Road were added.

In the early 1970s the upstairs that had evolved into storage rooms for furniture and documents was remodeled into offices for The Temple's daily business, archives, and bookkeeping. The building continues to dominate the LaDue Street at Halcyon Road entrance to the community. It sits directly across from the Halcyon Store and Post Office. The library houses a major collection



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of books on theosophy and philosophy, as well as books in all the categories of the Dewey Decimal System. There are approximately 15,000 books.

**5. Halcyon University Center** (one noncontributing building)  
3171 Temple Street, APN 062 321 021

**Photo 19**  
1971

The Halcyon University Center is a tall, single-story building constructed by the Temple of The People in 1971. It facilitates art shows, lectures, concerts, receptions, and study classes. Temple leader Guardian in Chief Harold Forgostein and Temple member John Mallory designed the multifunctional building. Temple member and general contractor Bob Stenquist undertook the construction. Modern in character, the 1,600 square foot building has no lower windows, allowing for ample exhibit space. The University Center is stucco over wood, with a concrete slab foundation and composition roof. The double-door entry faces Temple Street with high louvered windows. Two unique torch-like lights flank the front doors. These large lights were made by Pat Fitzgerald, a local artisan. Original plans designated this building as a central unit for a library, office, classroom, and display center for the Temple. The building has framing to easily allow for such additions. Landscaping includes raised beds of succulents and a stately row of Silver Dollar eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus cinerea*).

**6. Halcyon Cemetery** (one contributing site)  
Southeast corner of The Pike (formerly Bardin's Lane) at Elm Street  
APN 062 321 03

**Photo 20**  
1908

The Temple of the People established its community cemetery at the northwest corner of the property on three acres of land. The first burial was Olaf Paues in November 1908. The cemetery, in its rustic setting, continues to be used for internment and inurnment of Halcyon residents. All the historic grave markers remain and burial records are kept in the Temple archives. There is no separate historic section, and the family chooses the burial site. Since its establishment, the cemetery has been kept in a natural state with eucalyptus trees on two sides and open farm fields on the others. All the previous leaders, known as Guardians in Chief of the Temple, are buried here.

**7. Halcyon Water Works** (one contributing site)  
East side Helena Street at Ross Lane

1903

The water well and delivery system that serves most of the homes and other buildings in Halcyon began operating in 1903. The Temple of the People drilled an original well on a hillside location to serve the Open Gate and another cottage no longer extant. A windmill and elevated storage tanks on the hill beside the well delivered the water via a gravity system. Later a gasoline engine was added to power the pump.

In 1961 a new well was drilled about fifty feet north of the old one on the east side of Helena Street near Ross Lane. The elevated storage tanks were removed, and a pressure tank and modern pump were installed. Plentiful potable water is pumped from a depth of 120 feet and

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serves forty-two sites in Halcyon. A half dozen other privately owned wells serve other residences. An early resident, Eric Varian, was a talented water-witcher. Using the traditional forked stick method, he located the privately owned wells in use. The Temple owns three other deep wells that serve the agricultural property. In 2002, the Oceano Community Services District, which includes Halcyon, installed a 12-inch water line from their water system at Halcyon's border to serve four fire hydrants in the community.

**8. The Builders Grove** (one contributing site)

**Photo 23**

Northwest corner of LaDue Street at Hiawatha Lane

1922

One acre in the center of Halcyon was planted with a grove of eucalyptus trees following the death in 1922 of the first Temple of the People Guardian in Chief, Francia LaDue. A marker was placed in the grove, dedicated to Mrs. LaDue by the Temple Builders, the youth group of the Temple. The grove is a preferred local site for nesting hawks and owls. It is also a stopping site for the annual Monarch Butterfly migration. This grove is kept in park-like condition and is conserved as open space.

**9. Kent/J.O. Varian/Colendich** (one contributing building)

**Figure 10**

3003 Temple Street, APN 062 321 045

1905

This two-story redwood home was constructed in 1905 on the Temple of the People property. Situated on a large lot, the home has always been surrounded by many trees and gardens. It is of redwood board and batten inside and out, with a foundation combination of concrete slab and wood. The home has many characteristics of the Craftsman style. It faces south making the second story balcony a sunny gathering place. Historically, there were several outbuildings and tents. Only one small wood-framed outbuilding remains. The home has been meticulously restored over a period of thirty years by the Colendich family, who are Temple members.

**10. Open Gate** (one contributing building)

**Photo 21; Figures 9a, 9b**

1480 Dower Avenue, APN 062 321 0280

1906

Open Gate is a large wooden building with composition hip roof, built in January 1906 by the Temple of the People as headquarters for the relief and cure of consumption, according to Temple records. Wooden-floored, tent-topped cottages were erected on the grounds for the patients. The cottages have since been dismantled. Meals and treatments were given inside the Open Gate building, administered by the staff under direction of Dr. William Dower, MD, one of the founders of the Temple. In August of 1906, electricity came to Open Gate from an electric plant recently set up in Arroyo Grande.

By the 1930s the building had been converted to Temple offices and later to a private home and guesthouse. It is built of wood with horizontal siding, and is sited on a south-facing hill with its main entrance looking east, surrounded on two sides with a wide veranda to take advantage of the sun. Open Gate is an example of Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American

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Movement style architecture, with four bedrooms and two baths on one level. Open Gate is still owned by the Temple and has the same footprint as when it was built in 1906.

**11. Munger/Foremaster** (one contributing building)

2820 The Pike, APN 062 321 002

1909

A Temple member who moved into the area constructed a tiny cottage at the northern/central edge of Halcyon in 1909. It is surrounded on three sides by open space, farm field, and eucalyptus and cypress trees. The home is constructed of wood, with wood foundation, and composition roof. This bungalow remains an example of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Movement. The home is owned by the Temple and used as a rental.

**12. Hadden/Fast** (one noncontributing building)

1684 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 017

**Photo 51**  
Circa 1920

This home is on a hillside in the southern subdivision of Halcyon beside the large eucalyptus forest. It is surrounded by gardens of native California plants and fruit trees. The wooden house has a composition roof, wood/cement foundation, and could best be described architecturally as an eclectic bungalow. Originally a one-room, one-bath cabin, it was enlarged to about 1,000 square feet. Construction projects have included raising the roof, adding a bedroom, upgrading the bathroom, and building a patio on the south side of the property, resulting in loss of integrity. The cabin was built about 1920 by Dr. Coulson Turnbull, a noted author and Temple member, to use as a place to write. Later the home and land were given to the Temple. A Temple member rents the home.

**13. Farrar/Clark** (one contributing building)

1443 Dower Avenue, APN 065 321 031

**Photo 41**  
1921

This small wooden cottage is sited with the living room and main entrance facing away from Dower Avenue. Volunteer carpenters of the Temple constructed it in 1921. A bedroom was added to the bungalow in 1962, enlarging it to about 1,200 square feet. The home is constructed entirely of wood including the foundation. The carport is to the north side of the house. Two features of the garden are a large, prolific orange tree, and a wisteria vine that covers the carport every spring. The home is owned by the Temple and used as a rental.

**14. Tarbox/Rebow** (one contributing building)

794 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 321 045

Circa 1925

This Craftsman bungalow, built in the 1920s, is one of several early homes owned and preserved by the Temple. Photographs of the era show this home to be a classic building of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Movement. The foundation is of wood and the walls are of redwood horizontal lap siding. The home has been remodeled several times for

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preservation and conservation, and the footprint remains as originally built. The home is owned by the Temple and used as a rental.

**15. Twistman/Pederson** (one contributing building)  
2926 LaDue, APN 062 311 007

**Photo 27**  
1925

Edward Twistman, a Denmark native and Temple member, built this one-room wooden cottage on the southwest corner of LaDue Street and Dower Avenue in 1925 with the aid of community friends. The wooden bungalow with wood foundation and composition roof has been remodeled several times following Twistman's simple wooden construction. The lot includes several outbuildings and a garage. The home is owned by the Temple and used as a rental.

**16. Watts/Sigurd Varian/Lorance** (one contributing building)  
1598 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 0230

**Photo 36; Figure 11**  
1925

This two-story cross-gabled house was built in late 1925 for early Temple member William Thompson. Architecturally, the home is a unique product of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century American Movement. Large for a bungalow, the roof has offset gables with one gable sloping to a shed roof. Windows are double hung and French doors are featured on either side of the fireplace. The exterior is vertical redwood to the eaves. It has the traditional fireplace of golden-hued local sandstone. The roof is composition and the foundation is concrete. There are hardwood floors throughout.

The second owner on record is Sigurd Varian who purchased the home in June 1933, and established an electronic research company in an outbuilding (no longer extant) on the property with his brother Russell. An underground concrete pit was used by the Varian brothers for their early research on vacuum tubes. The Varian family stayed only two years, moving to Palo Alto where their electronic company, Varian Associates, remains in business. The house was subsequently sold and is now privately owned. Only minor restoration has occurred.

**17. Harrison/Rollison/Seehof** (one contributing building)  
3150 LaDue Street; APN 062 311 32

**Photo 26**  
1926

Ernest (Harry) and Aileen Harrison, early members of the Temple of the People, constructed their two-story, redwood bungalow in 1926, completing the second story and living there while finishing the downstairs. The house is Craftsman in style. The setting is a large lot with a diversity of plantings including Monterey pine, live oaks, and Canary Island date palms. The original redwood single-car garage has been upgraded with a concrete foundation. A variety of interior improvements have occurred since the 1970s to meet changing needs. The footprint of the home remains the same. The roof is composition. The foundation is wood and concrete. The original single-wall construction of redwood is now double-walled from the inside. The house is used by the Temple as a rental.

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**18. Volz/Drummond** (one contributing building)  
2945 Temple Street, APN 062 321 0045

**Photo 25**  
1926

This redwood bungalow was designed and built in 1926 by Mr. Perry Moore, who also supervised construction of the Blue Star Memorial Temple. This residence is the most traditional Craftsman California-style bungalow in Halcyon. It is little changed since it was built and features the traditional gabled front porch, lapped siding, and wood window trim. Only three families have resided in the house. Built for early Temple members Augusta Volz and her son Herman, it remained in their possession until his death in 1986 when the house was deeded to the Temple. This property was the site of the Halcyon poultry and egg enterprise. At one time the enterprise had several hundred chickens. Outbuildings used at that time remain on the site.

**19. Jahran/Colendich** (one contributing building)  
2918 LaDue Street, APN 062 311 006

**Photo 28**  
1927

This bungalow was built in 1927, by a Temple member who first purchased the lot several years earlier. The home of horizontal wood siding with wood foundation and composition roof remained in the family until the early 1940s. It then became the property of the Temple and is used as a rental. The tiny one-bedroom cottage has its front entrance and porch to the west with the footprint unchanged. The building has been rehabilitated to prevent deterioration.

**20. Carlberg Complex** (three contributing buildings)

**Photos 30, 31, 32, 33; Figure 12**

- a. 1536 Hiawatha Lane; APN 062 311 018 1925
- b. 3016 LaDue Street; APN 062 311 021 1929
- c. 3062 LaDue Street; APN 062 311 022 1939

The Elliott/Carlberg family built three homes over a period of eight years on six lots that encompass the entire southern frontage of LaDue Street between Hiawatha Lane and Dower Avenue. All three homes are handcrafted with unusual design elements. The buildings are shaded by massive live oak trees and surrounded by gardens. Temple members Harry Krog Elliott and Mary Campbell Elliott purchased lots from the Temple in November 1923. They first constructed a small shop and garage set back from the street to be used as a home while the residence on Hiawatha was under construction. It is a one bedroom, one bathroom redwood cottage entirely lined in board and batten redwood, with hand carved toggles to close interior doors. A massive golden-hued Arroyo Grande tuff stone fireplace was centered in the living room with many French windows opening out into the garden.

The Elliotts' daughter Evelyn and her husband Henry Carlberg designed and built the one-of-a-kind English cottage-style home at 3016 LaDue Street. With its steep roof and exterior shingles, it is reminiscent of European Tudor homes blended with the shingle style of the 1880s to the 1900s. It is unchanged and has a small, attached garage facing LaDue, a tiny front patio with no porch, and a brick fireplace with a chimney emerging from the tallest gable.



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Henry Elliott built the third residence next door at 3062 LaDue Street after the death of his wife Mary in 1939. He built a lean-to on the west side of the garage that included a main room plus bath and tiny kitchen. In the early 1960s his daughter added to this building by moving a small cottage and attaching it to the west side of the lean-to and lining the interior in knotty pine paneling. The three homes are left as a family trust and will pass to the Temple upon the death of the trustees. All three homes have concrete foundations and composition shingle roofs.

**21. Whitney/Stenquist/Clark Complex** (two contributing buildings)

**Photo 46**

**a.** 770 and **b.** 786 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 321 045

1929-1940

Five generations of one family have lived in two homes they built on one acre of land that has always belonged to the Temple of the People. The first home was built in 1929 at 786 S. Halcyon Road. This house was of wood with vertical board and batten redwood walls, a soaring open ceiling in the living room, and a large kitchen/dining room. The original house was 717 square feet, with 235 square feet added in an early remodel. This Craftsman-style bungalow has been rehabilitated several times. A smaller one-room cottage morphed into the second home at 770 S. Halcyon Road in the early 1940s. It has Modern Movement ranch styling, with a concrete foundation and wood siding. Both houses have composition roofs.

**22. Awerdick/Lowman** (one noncontributing building)

**Photo 37**

1420 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 045

Started circa 1920

This original redwood bungalow was moved from another site in the 1920s. The two-bedroom, one-bathroom home belongs to the Temple and is used as a rental. Due to remodeling after a 1973 fire and later reconstruction this residence is noncontributing.

**23. Ross Dairy Complex** (one contributing, one noncontributing building)

**a.** 2828 Ross Lane, APN 062 321 025

**Photos 49, 53;** 1960 (replaced 1924 construction)

**b.** 2846 Ross Lane, APN 062 321 024

**Photo 60;** 1938

The Ross farming family came to the Arroyo Grande Valley in 1921. In 1924 they bought two acres in Halcyon and constructed a home and a large barn to open a dairy. The dairy was expanded to more than sixty milking cows and three teams of horses, as well as riding horses. The dairy operation was expanded to a site outside of Halcyon, but the family kept their residence. The barns and corrals used for the dairy are no longer extant. In 1960 the home was torn down and replaced with a modest cottage in the Modern Movement style. It has a concrete slab, wood frame, and composition roof. Two bedrooms, bath, living room, eat-in kitchen, and covered carport is the extent of the home. It is noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

Next door at 2846 Ross Lane, the son built his family a home circa 1938, incorporating timbers and lumber picked up on Oceano Beach. The original building had one bedroom, large living/dining room, massive Arroyo Grande stone fireplace, kitchen, and bath. The interior has extensive knotty-pine horizontal paneling. A second bedroom with fireplace was added in the

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1940s, as was a laundry room with a cellar beneath. There are many handcrafted details such as iron strap hinges decorated with animals, and peg door latches wrought by Fred Ross during construction. The Temple bought the two homes and acreage from the family in the 1970s, and uses the homes as rentals.

**24. Townsend/Wheeler/Moiseyeva** (one contributing building)  
1596 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 011

**Photos 39, 59**  
Circa 1925; Moved 1931

According to Halcyon records, a Temple member lived in and then moved this house across the street from its original location to its current address; a concrete foundation remains at the earlier site. The older part of this shotgun-style house was built of redwood, with wood foundations, and consists of a small living room, dining room, kitchen, bath, and bedroom, built with Craftsman styling. A new living room with its large, dressed Arroyo Grande tuff stone fireplace was added in the late 1930s, when the original small living room became a study/bedroom. The house is one of only a few in Halcyon with a small basement. This home belongs to the Temple and has been the residence of many families throughout the years.

**25. Veblen/Cowell/Smirnov** (one contributing building)  
2926 Temple Street, APN 062 321 045

**Photo 24**  
Circa 1921

Early Temple of the People member Ellen Veblen selected a location she described as “inside the hedge” for her small wooden cottage built prior to 1922.<sup>1</sup> Located on a large lot near the Halcyon Water Works, at the corner of Helena and Temple Streets, the bungalow was built of vertical redwood board and batten, with a large fireplace added later to the living room. Remnants of the hedge still exist in the few large cypress trees that line the east side of Helena Street.

When Ellen Veblen died in June 1926, she left her bungalow to famed composer/performer and Temple member, Henry Cowell. Cowell used the home to rest between concert tours and to lend to friends. He sold the home in 1932 to Mrs. Emilie Byrne, a widow who renovated and enlarged the home. Her late husband, Frank M. Byrne, had been an active settler of the Dakota Territories. He was a member of South Dakota’s first state senate in 1908, and went on to serve two elected terms as the eighth governor of South Dakota beginning in 1913. After an active political career, the Byrnes came west to the warmer climes of Oregon and California. He died in 1927. The house was left to the Temple, and has served several Temple member families as a rental since that time. The house has been rehabilitated over the years, keeping the redwood paneling core.

**26. Mallory/Wright** (one noncontributing building)  
952 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 311 034, -035

**Photo 47**  
Circa 1923

This home originally was a small cottage built by local builders in the early 1920s. In 1927, it was purchased for use as a rental and remodeled into two apartments. The home was remodeled again in the early 1930s, making it a large single-family residence. It has been remodeled

<sup>1</sup> *Family Letter*, December 21, 1922.

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numerous times through the years to meet changing needs, resulting in a loss of integrity. All wood construction in a mid-century style, the home is set back with the front entrance facing Halcyon Road. It is privately owned.

**27. Freeman/Zuniga** (one contributing building)

976 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 311 038

Circa 1922

This home, constructed by unknown local builders, was built for a Temple member in the early 1920s. It is a tiny wooden cottage in the bungalow style, containing one bedroom, bath, kitchen, and living room with fireplace. Walls are of redwood horizontal siding, with a wood foundation and composition roof. The home is set back from Halcyon Road, a main north/south county artery, and is surrounded by gardens and a large bearing avocado tree. This well-maintained cottage adjoins prime farm fields. Owned by the Temple, the home is used as a rental.

**28. Guest House** (one contributing building)

1652 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 045

**Photo 35**

1923

A tiny, one-bedroom cottage was built for a Temple member in 1923 and later gifted to the Temple. The all-wood residence with wooden foundation and composition roof serves as a rental and guest quarters. Louise Varnot (1874-1957), a WW I US Army nurse, occupied the house for more than 25 years. Mrs. Varnot joined the Temple in 1933, coming from New York City. She is buried in the Halcyon Cemetery. The house serves as a rental and guest quarters.

**29. Gourley/Rykman** (one contributing building)

1680 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 029

**Photo 34**

1924

This Craftsman-detailed bungalow was built in 1924. Halcyon builders constructed this wooden home that featured a large, Arroyo Grande tuff stone fireplace, and a spacious porch to the north with a commanding view of Halcyon, and east toward the rising sun and the lower Arroyo Grande Valley. The older wooden home has been remodeled internally several times to meet the needs of the tenants. The original footprint remains.

**30. Daniels/Forth** (one contributing building)

1622 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 012

**Photo 38**

1929

The redwood Craftsman cottage has a large, well-crafted living room with a massive Arroyo Grande tuff stone fireplace, built and signed by Temple member Clarence Dennis. Dennis was among the seven who laid the foundations of The Blue Star Memorial Temple. The home had two small bedrooms, bath, and kitchen. The bedrooms to the south were two steps up from the living room on the sloping lot. A large double garage, patio room, bath, and large bedroom were added to the home in the 1950s. Later owners lovingly restored the interior, focusing on its Craftsman-style elements.

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**31. Wolff/Price** (one contributing building)  
1613 Helena Street, APN 062 311 041

**Photos 44, 45**  
Circa 1932

In May 1929, Carl Wolff purchased a parcel along Helena Street. He moved his small bungalow from the LaGrande development tract south of Oceano on the dunes to the Helena Street parcel. The bungalow is no longer extant. Carl's brother Fred Wolff built the existing home on this same lot in the early 1930s. The Depression-era home appears to be an excellent focus of quality, as there was much time to devote to the project. There is a good measure of financial economy evident as well. The home is built entirely of redwood to save future replacement of wood components due to termite damage. The exceptions are the red oak flooring, the flooring underlayment, and the thin plywood that covers the walls of the kitchen and bathroom. There is no drywall or plaster in the home.

The construction design is also unusual in that it is board and batten construction for most exterior walls. Structural support is well hidden using a unique set of beams to tie the four stud walls to the outer balloon walls. The floor layout is a simple rectangle, which would present additional design concerns. Without additional bracing, the walls would be subject to racking during an earthquake, where the rectangle would transform into a parallelogram, and the building would collapse. To lock the four corners as right angles, Fred Wolff designed bump-outs at each corner that locked the walls at right angles. These were made to provide greater window surface at the corners, and provide a focused living space in the rooms. The design has proven worthy over the years surviving a large earthquake in 1952 and another in 2003. The floors remain flat and level; the ceiling has not sagged over the years, and no significant structural repairs have been needed.

This is one of the few Halcyon homes set on a hillside with front entry at street level. The back of the single floor home is at second-story level due to the slope of the lot, allowing for the full basement. There is much use of Arroyo Grande tuff stone, including a large fireplace. Restoration includes a new foundation and preservation of the redwood, as well as a tuff stone front porch in keeping with the details of the overall design. The home is surrounded by a garden that includes an old avocado tree, planted at the time the house was built. It continues to bear fruit.

**32. Volz/Courtland/Nolen** (one contributing building)  
1574 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 010

**Photo 40**  
Moved to lot circa 1937

Longtime Temple members Augusta Volz and her son Herman, who already owned a home and property on the north side of Halcyon, purchased this additional lot in 1926 in the Halcyon Subdivision Number 1. They were part of a group of Temple members who felt Temple property should not go to nonmember owners and therefore united to purchase these lots and return them to the Temple. In the late 1930s, Mr. Volz moved a cottage from the area of The Pike to this lot, remodeling it for a rental. This tiny two-bedroom, one-bathroom cottage has been remodeled numerous times and the footprint remains the same. It is built of wood, with a composition roof. The Temple-owned home is rented to a Temple member.

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**33. Hedin/Campbell Complex** (one contributing, one noncontributing building)

a. 1506 Helena Street, APN 062 311 002

**Photo 29;** 1935

b. 1502 Helena Street, APN 062 311 001

**Photo 61;** 1953

Elmer L. and Joyce V. Hedin came to Halcyon in 1934 from the intentional community of Cazadero on the California Russian River. They had joined the Temple in 1933. They built a one-room cottage at 1506 Helena Street, later adding two small bedrooms and a bathroom. They also added a central brick fireplace. The Craftsman style house was set back from the street with a large side driveway and garden. Built with hipped roof, walls of redwood and other woods, and foundation of wood and concrete, the home has had several remodels and additions over the years, yet retains its cottage style.

In the early 1950s, Elmer's sister Mabel Hedin retired, moving to Halcyon where Elmer and a friend built her a modest, one-bedroom, wooden cottage with brick fireplace on the lot in front at 1502 Helena Street. It is noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance. Both cottages were sold to the Campbell family later in the 1950s. The family reserves both homes for family use. The front house has wood walls and a concrete foundation. It faces Helena Street with a small front garden.

**34. Eric Varian** (three contributing buildings)

**Photo 43; Figure 13**

1596 Helena Street, APN 062 311 004

1935-1936

Eric Varian and the men of Halcyon built a bungalow (34b) in 1935-1936 on a large parcel of land he purchased. Built of redwood, with a large Arroyo Grande tuff stone fireplace and open-beamed ceiling in the living room, the home has been remodeled several times to accommodate the growing family. Behind the primary residence is a small wooden cottage (34a) built in 1947 as bedroom space for the Varian daughters. Also on the large lot is a traditional redwood horse barn built in 1945 where daughter Sheila Varian housed her first horses. This was the beginning of the world-famous Varian Arabian horse farm operation located in rural Arroyo Grande. The Halcyon home, cottage, and barn remain in the Varian family and are used as rental property.

**35. Schussman/Gibson** (one noncontributing building)

**Photo 52**

1546 Helena Street, APN 062 311 003

Moved to lot circa 1935

In the mid-1930s a small wooden home from the east side of Halcyon Road was moved here to create a family residence. In the mid-1940s two small wooden motel units from Pismo Beach were added to the house. Successive owners dramatically remodeled the home, resulting in loss of integrity. It is now a colorful, multi-level two-story, three-bedroom single-family home with tile fireplace, balconies, porches, window boxes, and unique window treatments. The farm house/storybook home blends many styles. The original motel units from Pismo Beach now serve as guest quarters and an art studio. In addition, there are a shop, a garage at the side of the home, and an original Rom caravan wagon in front. This privately owned home is set back from



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the street, fronted by a curved driveway, two mature California Live Oak trees, and a large cottage garden.

**36. Tedford/Norman** (one noncontributing building)  
1650 Helena Street, APN 62 311 005

**Photo 42; Figure 13**  
1935

Constructed in 1935 by a Temple member from Boston, Massachusetts, this home has Cape Cod styling with walls of horizontal siding and a wood foundation. The house was built by Halcyon carpenters on a south hillside adjacent to the large eucalyptus grove. The house has undergone remodeling, resulting in loss of integrity, and a bedroom, bath, and sitting room wing were added to the southwest corner. Wide stairs lead to the front door of the house. It is one of the few homes in Halcyon that has a basement. Arroyo Grande tuff rock was used for retaining walls around the hillside home. The house belongs to the Temple and is occupied by Temple members.

**37. Shumway/Rodriguez** (two contributing buildings)  
2825 Ross Lane, APN 062 321 045

1942

Kenneth and Roberta Shumway, with their three children, came to live in Halcyon in February 1942, purchasing a five-acre hillside property. The first phase of this single-story, California ranch style home built by Ken Shumway included a large, open-beamed living room, a kitchen/dining room facing south, a bathroom, and small bedroom off the kitchen for the children. The entrance is on the street side, facing north, and the rest of the house is oriented to the south, looking out over much of Halcyon. A four-bedroom, bath, and laundry room wing was added in 1944. The wooden building has a concrete pier and slab foundation and a composition roof. Soon after the house was built, a barn was constructed to house the family jersey cow, an important source of milk and butter during World War II. The barn was later enlarged and converted to house Ken Shumway's building contractor business. The home, now owned by the Temple, is rented by a Temple member. The barn is used for Temple storage.

**38. Gibson/Huetig/Arciniaga** (one contributing building)  
2845 Ross Lane, APN 062 321 045

Moved to lot 1948

Built as a motel unit in Pismo Beach in the 1930s, this bungalow was moved to Halcyon in 1948 and placed on a large, south-facing side-hill corner lot. The wooden house has a concrete block foundation and a composition roof. The house, used as a rental, belongs to the Temple and is surrounded by extensive gardens and fruit trees.

The following buildings are noncontributing due to their construction after the 1949 close of the period of significance.

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**39. Stenquist/Edmondson** (one noncontributing building)  
937 The Pike, APN 062 321 045

1952

This was one of several lots Temple member Bob Stenquist purchased along The Pike from the Temple after he returned from World War II service. In 1952 he built a split-level house in the Midcentury Modern style on the sloping lot. The wood and plaster home with a composition roof is on a concrete slab. Gardens surround the privately owned home. The garage was not counted.

**40. Central Home** (one noncontributing building)  
898 S. Halcyon Road, APN 062 321 045

**Photo 48**  
1960

Central Home was specifically designed and built in 1960 as a residence for the Guardian in Chief, leader of the Temple, and resident housekeepers. It is a modern ranch style, single-story home. Temple members built the residence that replaced an earlier Central Home on a nearby lot. It is adjacent to the Temple Offices/William Quan Judge Library near the corner of Halcyon Road and LaDue Street, and is a hub of activities in town. The 2,700 square foot house contains three bedrooms, an office, two and a half baths, two living rooms, two dining rooms, and two kitchens. With several patios and open spaces, it is the site of many community gatherings and meetings. In 1970 a three-car garage was added. Circa 1985, one section of the garage was converted into a storage room for the Halcyon Book Concern.

**41. White** (one noncontributing building)  
1566 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 022

1959-1960

Longtime Halcyon residents Fern and Lloyd William White designed their modest, one-story Halcyon home, a wooden house that was constructed with the help of friends and family in 1959-1960. He was a journeyman Carpenter's Union member and served as his own contractor and builder. The single-story residence is a front-facing L-shape in a simple, functional ranch style with no porches. It is centered on the lot east and west, with gardens to the sunny south. The foundation is concrete slab and the siding is vertical, rough-cut cedar with wood to the gables. The composition roof has rafters with low slopes, gables, and minimum overhang. Aluminum windows are fixed and sliding. A brick fireplace with stone front is placed on the outside of the building in the middle of one arm of the L. The large lot is landscaped with gardens, fruit and shade trees, an outbuilding and a gazebo, hothouse, and lathe-house for gardening. A single-car garage is to the north of the house near the edge of the street. The home is privately owned.

**42. Temple Plumbing Shop** (one noncontributing building)  
2000 Temple Street, APN 062 321 045

Circa 1952

The plumbing shop stores the tractor and plumbing supplies for the homes and water service. Former Halcyon resident, Fred "Spike" Ross, was employed by the California State Department of Fish and Game and supervised the building of a large Quonset-style storage shed on concrete foundation for use in his work. It was located on a lot adjacent to his home. When he was transferred to another locality, the State took the Quonset hut. Mr. Ross' brother-in-law, Russell

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Hoff, bought the house and lots and in the early 1950s erected the current building of wood with metal roof. The shop and adjacent homes were purchased by the Temple in the late 1970s.

**43. Temple Wood Shop** (one noncontributing building)

1641 Helena Street, APN 0062 311 006)

1974

Built originally in 1974 for Varian Electric Company on Temple property, the shop was later given to the Temple, and its use converted to woodworking and storage. It has a wood frame with metal covering, concrete slab foundation, and metal roof. Set at a busy corner in the center of Halcyon, the building epitomizes “form follows function.” It is often where repair projects for the community are undertaken and community members know where to go when they are told “meet me at the woodshop.”

**44. Mankins/Fast** (one noncontributing building)

1656 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 015

1961

This natural cedar-sided, two-story home is split-level with open interior styling and numerous glass windows. It is dominated by a large, central stone fireplace. Temple member Maryalice Mankins designed and directed the construction of her Modern Movement home. It is surrounded by mature gardens, with a stately California Coastal Live Oak tree in front.

**45. Smith/Bell** (one noncontributing building)

1649 Helena Street, APN 062 311 014

Circa 1962

This modest, rectangular home is built on a hillside, and features wood siding and an east side patio in a modern Craftsman style. Frank and Florence Smith, parents of Temple member Maryalice Mankins, built this small bungalow as a winter retreat from their primary home in Michigan. After their death, Mankins used the house as a rental and later sold it to another Temple member in the early 2000s. The remodeled home with concrete foundation and composition roof has lost integrity.

**46. D. Mallory/Nelson/Taylor** (one noncontributing building)

1649 Dower Avenue, APN 062 311 025

**Photo 58**

1964

This is a functional two-bedroom, one-bath, prefabricated rectangular home with small porches front and back. The residence is set on a large lot with gardens. This Modern Movement building with California style was set on the lot in 1964 and is privately owned. It is constructed of wood, with concrete foundation and gabled, composition roof.

**47. E. Varian/Rowlands** (one noncontributing building)

1541 Helena Street, APN 062 311 008

1965

This tiny, modern one-bedroom, one bath-home was built in 1965 on a small lot in the style of a mobile home. The house was built of wood, with wood and concrete slab floor and composition

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roof. The garage faces the street, with the entry to the residence on the north side. The garden includes a bearing avocado tree. The property was given to the Temple of the People not long after construction, and is occupied by a Temple member.

**48. Parish/Wiley** (one noncontributing building)

1616 Hiawatha Lane, APN 062 311 026

1966

This modest, modern style, one-bedroom, one-bath home has an attached carport and attractive landscaping. The home was built in 1966 of wood and stucco, with concrete foundation and composition roof. It is owned by the Temple and rented to a Temple member.

**49. Thyrring** (one noncontributing building)

1783 Helena Street, APN 062 321 045

1975

Set on a Temple-owned lot, this two-story, one of-a-kind, saltbox style home was built in 1975 from lumber salvaged from the Camp Roberts military base in Monterey County. Chris Thyrring, a building contractor and Temple member, built this home for himself and family. The home is set on a north-facing hillside with extensive views north and east of Halcyon and west to the Pacific Ocean from the porches on both levels. It has wood sides, concrete foundations, and a composition roof without eaves. The property has several shops and outbuildings, a carport, and a grove of bearing avocado trees.

**50. Alber/Carlson** (one noncontributing building)

1485 Dower Avenue, APN 062 321 029

**Photo 51**

1977

This modest two-bedroom, one-bathroom home is set on a hillside with porches to the south, affording sunshine and view of surrounding area from a corner lot with extensive gardens. There is an attached shop and carport. The Modern Movement home was constructed of wood, with a concrete foundation and composition roof, by the Temple of the People in 1977. It is rented to Temple members.

**51. Brandt** (one noncontributing building)

1565 Helena Street, APN 062 311 039

1981

This modest, rectangular, single-family home is surrounded by lawn and shrubs. It is set on a narrow lot with a garage at the street front and the front door on the south side. The ranch style house is of wood, with concrete foundation and composition roof. It was built in 1981.

**52. Brkovich** (one noncontributing building)

1459 Dower Avenue, APN 062 321 045

1984

This modest two-bedroom, one-bath home with the patio to the east is a replacement for a deteriorating cottage from the 1920s dismantled at this hillside lot. Built in 1984 of wood frame and stucco, with concrete slab foundation and composition roof, it is situated near the eucalyptus

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grove in central Halcyon. This modern style home is owned by the Temple and rented to Temple members.

**53. Ertman** (one noncontributing building)  
1573 Helena Street, APN 062 311 041

1985

This modest two-story, two-bedroom family home is set back on the lot, with a second-story porch and a carport in front. It is in the Modern Movement style with wood construction, concrete slab foundation and composition roof. This home is privately owned.

**54. Balogh** (one noncontributing building)  
3000 Temple Street, APN 062 321 045

1995

Owned by the Temple, this modest, two-bedroom, two-bath home was constructed to replace an earlier home that burned in the 1990s. This modern home is of wood frame and stucco construction, with concrete slab foundation and composition roof. It is now rented to Temple members.

**55. Strohman** (one noncontributing building)  
1684 Hiawatha Lane, APN 921 311 020

2005

This manufactured home replaced an old deteriorating cottage. With concrete and jacks for foundation and a composition roof, it is situated on a large lot in a lovely garden. Both the home and lot belong to the Temple.

Of the fifty-five numbered entries, four include two resources and two include three resources, bringing the total number of resources to sixty-three. Minor resources such as garages and outbuildings were not counted unless specifically indicated. Noncontributing properties are those that were constructed after the period of significance ending in 1949, have been altered to the extent they have lost integrity, or that have replaced construction by the original owner/builder.

## INTEGRITY

Halcyon Historic District retains all aspects of integrity. It remains where it was established in 1903 by the Temple of the People co-founders Francia LaDue and Dr. William H. Dower. Stick construction continues to be the method for most of the community's oldest and newest homes, with minimum size and traditional styling. There has never been development of multiple homes at one time and building lots are of different sizes and shapes. While many homes have been remodeled from time to time, people often realize the trees have grown up before they notice a residence has changed. Arroyo Grande yellow rock remains in many of the fireplaces, house walls, and even as garden art. Strict California fire codes have eliminated early wood shingle or tar paper roofs. All buildings are now topped with more fire resistant composition materials.



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Halcyon has evolved with minimal changes since its establishment in 1903. The residents live a relatively simple life in the sixteen square-block area with narrow paved roads without curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and streetlights. The community has resisted threats of urban development. Because of these efforts to preserve the ideals and concepts of the founders, the community has remained the same through the years, serving the needs of its residents.

The beliefs that led to the establishment of Halcyon include the concept of the Unity of all Life and each individual's unique contributions to the unseen order of things. People who come to Halcyon to walk or visit often comment on the park-like setting, open spaces, and friendly interaction with the residents.

Upon entering Halcyon, The Blue Star Memorial Temple building is the strongest visible symbol of a philosophy of life established more than one hundred years ago on the Central Coast of California. This cooperative community was created as a religious, social, and economic entity. The Temple, the homes, the open spaces, and the trees all serve to reinforce this vision.

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## 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 grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

PHILOSOPHY

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1903-1949

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1903 arrival and purchase of land

1908 construction of Halcyon Store and Post Office

1923-1924 construction of Blue Star Memorial Temple

1931-1932 construction of William Quan Judge Library

1949 Sanatorium sold, Temple property consolidated to 130 acres

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Eisen, Theodore

Mallory, Cethil

Carlberg, Evelyn and Henry

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Halcyon Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance, in order of importance, in the areas of **Community Planning and Development** because the district exemplifies a settlement pattern and town planning unique to socialist reformers in the United States from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century; **Exploration/Settlement** for being part of the wave of theosophical and utopian agricultural settlements moving from the East to California in the early twentieth century, introducing a collective scheme through the Temple Home Association, building exemplary vernacular bungalow/craftsman architecture and a unique theosophical temple; **Philosophy** for its commitment to an Anglo understanding of Native American culture, to socialist economic principles, and to the unity of religion and science through founding a nature cure sanatorium based on then-current Eclectic Medicine, Osteopathy, Naturopathy, and Electronic Reactions; **Religion** as an important illustration of the impact of the “first wave” of Theosophy and Eastern mysticism in America, and as a community founded and built according to religious and mystical principles, with a unique leadership structure; and **Social History** for being one of the most culturally oriented collective groups on the Central Coast through its emphases on education in the visual arts and pottery, public dramatic and musical performance (often by nationally recognized innovators), and scientific experimentation at the group’s sanatorium, which inspired several children in the community to practical breakthroughs in applied physics. The Town of Halcyon was founded in 1903 by members of the Temple of the People, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society in America, who moved to California from Syracuse, New York. Halcyon remains much the same physically and in spirit as when it was founded in 1903. The period of significance closes in 1949, by which time the Sanatorium was sold and the Temple property consolidated to 130 acres. As a part of the large movement toward establishing utopian/intentional communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Halcyon is one of the few remaining such communities in California. The district meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property significant in the history of religion, among other themes, having secular scholarly recognition. A district in which only a small percentage of buildings are moved does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B. A cemetery that is nominated as part of a district and is not the focal point of the district does not need to meet Criteria Consideration D.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

“With utopian visions both messianic and practical, a new cooperative colony was established in the Arroyo Grande Valley of California in 1903. Named Halcyon and organized by a new theosophical movement called The Temple, it was an attempt to practice the Christian Golden Rule in a communal setting of liberty, equality, and fraternity,” writes historian Paul Ivey, in his

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monograph *Radiance from Halcyon, A Utopian Experiment in Religion and Science* (2013), one of several scholars of religion and communal settlement to study the group since the 1960s.<sup>2</sup>

The Temple of the People is a remarkable turn of the twentieth century California communal group, whose small township of Halcyon was built to pursue theosophical principles, including socialist economics. Between 1903 and 1949, Halcyon was the center of a far-flung religious/philosophical group with over twenty branches in five countries, held together through wide-ranging publishing activities, such as *The Temple Artisan* magazine (1900-present). The group owned and operated the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium, the first nature-cure hospital in the region. However, it was an unassuming group of individuals that, through architecture, technology, science, art, and respect for brotherhood or kinship, produced a unique settlement where new ideas concerning religion, socialism, and science were encouraged and debated. The community remains a defining cultural presence in the Central Coast region, with many of its original families still making important contributions. As the oldest surviving theosophical community and a vital presence, Halcyon has been the subject of numerous press articles since the 1920s.<sup>3</sup>

As environmental consultant Mary Reents writes, “Halcyon is unique because it is not a museum of former times, but rather it is a vital living village for the people who make it their home today.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Eli Ivey, *Radiance from Halcyon, a Utopian Experiment in Religion and Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 1.

<sup>3</sup> The community and its history has been part of local lore since its foundation and as the only surviving utopian community in California, its history still fascinates those in the immediate area. For example, see Reuben W. Borough, “Halcyon is Quiet Echo of Bygone Days When Utopian Colonies Abounded in California,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 7, 1968; “Halcyon, Lone Survivor of State’s Utopias, Is Little Noticed, Likes It,” *Fresno Bee*, August 6, 1968; Richard Schmidt, “Measured by the Golden Rule,” *SLO County Telegram-Tribune*, January 30, 1971; Charles Hillinger, “Legendary Hiawatha Revered as ‘Master’ by Religious Cult,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1974; Linnea Waltz, “Halcyon Temple Work Began with 1875 Plan in New York,” *SLO County Telegram Tribune*, March 12, 1977; Elaine Wohl, “Halcyon, Still Place of Peace after 83 Years,” *Five Cities Times-Press Recorder*, October 8, 1986; Jean Hubbard, “Temple Brought Beliefs, Settlers to Halcyon,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, March 27, 1991; Jean Hubbard, “Diaries Provide Peek into Halcyon Days,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, April 3, 1991; Linnea Waltz, “Halcyon Temple Work,” *San Luis Obispo Telegram-Tribune*, March 12, 1977; Sharon Lewis Dickerson, “Peace is the Door to the Temple of the People,” *South County Tribune*, SLO, February 4, 1987; Doris Olsen, “Health Group Named Halcyon,” *South County Tribune*, February 5, 1987; Jack Beardwood, “The Golden Rule Survives,” *Country Living*, November 1993; “Coleen Bondy, ‘South County’s Halcyon was New Age Before New Age Became Chic,’” *New Times*, July 20–27, 1994; Tom Parsons, “Halcyon History Based on Religious, Not Secret Beliefs,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, June 13, 1997; Jean Hubbard, “Civil War Nurse Embraced Teachings of the Temple of the People,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, May 1, 1998; Danna Dystra, “Local Religious Order Celebrates 100,” *Telegram-Tribune*, November 14, 1998; Carol Roberts, “Preserving Serenity, Residents Want Their Sylvan Town Left Alone,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, February 14, 2000; Bruce Malden, “Temple of the People: Vital Part of the Life in the South County,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, August 4, 2000; Dan Krieger, “Dower House History Follows That of the Railroad,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, July 14, 2002; Dan Krieger, “Religious Group’s Legacy Lives On In Halcyon,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, July 21, 2002; Dan Krieger, “Continuing The Story of the Temple of the People,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, July 28, 2002; Dan Krieger, “The Temple of the People—A Very Different Thing Than the People’s Temple,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, August 4, 2002; Bob Behme, “Temple of the People Celebrates 100 Years,” *Five Cities Times-Press-Recorder*, May 9, 2003; Adam Jarman, “Dawn of a New Century—Halcyon Village Celebrates Centennial Year,” *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, August 3, 2003; Janet Penn Franks, “The Coffee Rice Mansion,” *SLO County Journal*, December 2004.

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The philosophies that caused Halcyon to be established more than one hundred years ago still power life in the village today ... It includes prime agricultural land that has been farmed for more than one hundred years.”<sup>4</sup>

As Ivey puts it,

In its early history, the community of Halcyon consisted of creative, culturally attuned people, and even with their esoteric and idiosyncratic sensibilities, the community’s creativity tapped into the core forces of the time. Because larger social issues were important in the dialogues among members, the community became a laboratory that transcended its own time and led to definitive and lasting contributions to the fields of applied physics, architecture, and music. Educated in the mainstream, members nonetheless looked for broader and cosmic conceptions, embraced grand and idealistic schemes, and tried tirelessly to demonstrate their conceptions physically, to make the ideal real, as implausible and challenging as that might seem.<sup>5</sup>

When Pauline Schindler, estranged wife of well-known modernist architect R. M. Schindler, lived in Halcyon, she described the community’s atmosphere in a 1929 issue of the *Carmelite*:

A strange little settlement with an astounding quality ... if you were impervious to a thing called “spirit” which so palpably, almost visibly, governs here, you would say that the houses were drab little shacks. And yet again and again ... down to Halcyon ... will flee from the civilization of cities, people of cultivated minds and tastes,—for a day or a week in Halcyon. There are Theosophists here, and a temple,—but it is not that which causes it all. It is a quality as universal as light. Can it be a climatic thing,—the radiation at Halcyon of forces from the earth which produce a human type of unusual harmoniousness and serenity?<sup>6</sup>

Claiming support from the Great White Lodge of advanced spiritual masters who theosophists believe are responsible for facilitating all human progress, Dr. William Dower and Francia LaDue founded the Temple of the People in 1898 in Syracuse, New York, and moved *en masse* to the Central Coast of California in 1903.<sup>7</sup> The Temple emerged in the power struggles that ensued after the Theosophical Society in America fragmented into several groups following the death of the Society’s president, William Q. Judge.

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<sup>4</sup> Mary Reents, *The Master Environmental Report for the Halcyon Road Project*, prepared for the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors by The Morro Group, Inc. a division of SWCA, Environmental Services (San Luis Obispo, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Robert Sweeney, “Life at Kings Road: As It Was 1920-1940,” in Michael Darling and Elizabeth A. T. Smith, *The Architecture of R. M. Schindler* (New York: Abrams, 2001), 104; and also in John Crosse, “Pauline Gibling Schindler: Vagabound for Modernism, 1927-1936.” Southern California Architectural History Blog. <http://so-cal-arch-history.com>. See *Family Letter*, April 2, 1929.

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-Century America, Volume I: 1900-1960* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 22.

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The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 at the genesis of a widespread interest in metaphysics. The objects of the Society were “To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color; to encourage the comparative study of religion, philosophy, and science;” and “To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in Humanity.”<sup>8</sup> As scholar Timothy Miller writes, “In 1875 Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and others founded the Theosophical Society, dedicated to the propagation of occult wisdom and esoteric religiosity as well as free inquiry into science and other departments of human knowledge, and before many decades had passed the movement had spawned several collective settlements, some of which are still alive in some form nearly a century later.”<sup>9</sup> Unlike other theosophical communal groups, Halcyon’s ideals and practices were flexible and have survived all cultural upheavals to become one of the most long-lived intentional settlements in the United States.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Early Halcyon was a cooperative utopian community, one of several such experiments from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including other theosophically oriented communities in California such as Krotona of Hollywood and Point Loma.<sup>10</sup> In scholarly literature, Halcyon is viewed as a utopian community within the wider growth of early twentieth century communitarian movements.<sup>11</sup> Scholar Robert V. Hine defines a utopian colony as consisting “of a group of people who are attempting to establish a new social pattern based upon a vision of the ideal society and who have withdrawn themselves from the community at large to embody that vision in experimental form.”<sup>12</sup> Temple members would have clearly understood this definition. In their early literature and discussions in Syracuse, Temple leaders viewed themselves as founding a socialist community of brotherhood grounded on theosophical ideas, and based them broadly on examples such as John Humphrey Noye’s Oneida Community (1848-1881), and Eugene Deb’s social democrats, whose Brotherhood of Co-operative Commonwealth (BCC) was formed in 1895.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Ivey, 3. See Grace F. Knoche, “Our Directives: A Study of the Evolution of the ‘Objects of the T.S.’ from 1875-1891,” *Theosophical Forum* 25, no. 10 (1947): 582-87.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Miller, *Quest for Utopia*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> Per Ivey: “By the early twentieth century, California was home to a variety of cooperative experiments, both religious and secular. The theosophists were among them, with leader Katherine Tingley (1847-1929) founding the headquarters for her theosophical group, the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, on three hundred acres at Point Loma, outside San Diego, in 1897. The community functioned under her leadership until her death in 1929. By 1942, all of its property had been sold, and the group’s headquarters moved to Covina, then to Altadena (Pasadena) in 1951. A very ambitious building program for a theosophical headquarters and school named Krotona was undertaken in the Hollywood Hills in 1912, but by 1926 the group moved to Ojai, California, and the few buildings that had been constructed were repurposed”(6).

<sup>11</sup> See Timothy Miller, *The Quest for Utopia*, 22-23; Robert V. Hine, *California Utopianism, Contemplations of Eden* (San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1981), 43-44. Also mentioned in Robert V. Hine, *California’s Utopian Colonies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), 54-57.

<sup>12</sup> Hine, *Utopian Colonies*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the transcript of the first private business session of the Degree of the 36, held on October 16, 1899, in Hiawatha Hall, Syracuse, New York. Temple Archives.

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Formed in Syracuse in 1900, the Temple's auxiliary organization, the League of Brotherhoods, stated that one of its major purposes was the building of a city. While these early groups associated with the Temple at first worked within already existing co-operative efforts, by the early century the idea to seek a new place made it an embodiment of a very unique vision, as a religious and medical colony in the West. Crucial to the realization of a community of true brotherhood "was to [form] a settlement which must eventually become a city ... where the laws of the state will offer no constrictions and where the principles of direct legislation, municipal ownership of land and public utilities and equal rights for all, regardless of sex, color or creed, may be carried out in its government ... In the building of this new city it is proposed to restore to man a more just division of the fruits of his labor ... if then there exists a city on this continent in true harmony with the divine plan—for there is such a plan—it will be a model for other communities."<sup>14</sup>

Believing they were led by the Master of the White Lodge, directives from him indicated that they should gather people and funds necessary to build this cooperative city according to a "great design," and a pamphlet with an illustration of the unique circular city for 10,000 inhabitants was published in 1900.<sup>15</sup> The "New City" or "White City" was an ideal four by four mile proposal projected by Dower. The plan indicated that eventually a geometrical city would be built, with concentric circles within squares joined by roads radiating out over the valley. This ideal form fanned out from a civic core, with business, industry, and agriculture carefully mapped out. "Temple theosophists were inspired by their own esoteric conception of a new White City, which was in stark contrast to the actual move they made to the largely agrarian Arroyo Grande Valley."<sup>16</sup>

The wider context for the popularity of circular cities came from the influence of British urban planner and social reformer Ebenezer Howard and his garden cities, whose plans were based on the works of Edward Bellamy and Henry George, two authors popular with Temple members.<sup>17</sup> The settlement would be a "city upon a hill" and "furnish an object lesson to all that will turn their eyes in its direction." Temple members believed that the geometrical nature of the city would encourage the "unfoldment of inner senses" and raise human "vibrations" to a more spiritual level.<sup>18</sup>

## EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

As early as 1901, spiritual leader Francia LaDue claimed to have visions she later described as "'the hill at San Luis Obispo,' with 'a guardian line of entities surrounding it.' She saw a collection of buildings and felt 'a good force at work among the people there.' Temple members viewed the Pacific coast as a 'fiery zone' and believed the higher vibrations needed for their

<sup>14</sup> H. A. Gibson, President, "League of Brotherhoods: Its Purpose and Work including the Building of a City," October 6, 1900, 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Teachings of the Temple*, second series (Halcyon: Calif.: Temple of the People, 1921), 81.

<sup>16</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1898, 1965), 55.

<sup>18</sup> *Teachings of the Temple*, second series (Halcyon: Temple of the People, 1921), 63-66, 83.



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success came through fire rather than water. The Atlantic coast was under the influence of the water elementals. This idea underpinned the romanticism and desire for improvement that gripped many living in eastern states, no longer satisfied with the 'Arcadian East,' who looked toward an area 'where distance and a strange nature held hope for a rediscovery of the ideal.' To Temple members, the move to California would be an attempt to create the transcendent ideal in a real place, inspired by esoteric plans."<sup>19</sup>

LaDue traveled with League of Brotherhood vice president Edgar Conrow to the Central Coast in late 1901 and again in late 1902.<sup>20</sup> The group bought the 200-acre Granville Shinn farm (from 1887) in the Arroyo Grande Valley near Oceano in LaDue's name, and swiftly transferred it to the Halcyon Health Company (HHC) that had been formed by the Temple in 1901 and incorporated in Arizona Territory in March 1902. The area was renamed Halcyon. LaDue believed that "two magnetic lines of importance met at the site, and 'at this point the magnetic and electrical conditions are of such a nature that manifested life grows more luxuriant than in other places.' These magnetic lines were spiritual conduits through which the Master would reach [Francis LaDue] Blue Star after the headquarters cottage was built. This was a geomantic practice, akin to feng shui or dowsing, but it was also thought of literally as establishing lines of communication with the Lodge."<sup>21</sup> To members, the building of Halcyon insured a context for the gathering of the spiritual forces they believed would lead to the coming of the Avatar or Christos, a redeeming cosmic force that would heal and unify mankind.

The local newspaper reported that representatives of the group came in late 1902 to oversee demolition of existing structures, and to build a new cottage for their leadership. Harvey A. Gibson, president of the HHC, came in early 1903 to guide the work. LaDue told the group about the importance of the site as the place for a health institute within a mile of the newly completed Southern Pacific Railroad line at Oceano. Moreover, the soil was "exceedingly fertile, and produces excellent crops of fruit, vegetables and grain, without irrigation" and she encouraged core members to establish a nucleus there before others began to settle. The health institute would specialize in the "cure of the nervous wrecks of this fast-living age."<sup>22</sup> In November 1902, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that a new corporation, with \$75,000 capital, was going to open a new sanatorium in San Luis Obispo County, with a complete staff of resident physicians, on a beautifully laid out, twelve acre park. The company soon bought the Coffee Rice mansion (1886) nearby the Halcyon site in Oceano and a twenty-two-acre home site for the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium.<sup>23</sup>

The Temple center at Halcyon was dedicated on New Year's Day 1903, and soon after ground was broken for the first building, a two-story frame house, built as headquarters of the work and

<sup>19</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 100.

<sup>20</sup> Blue Star to Will Dower, December 19, 1901 letter, Temple Archives. See "Sixty Years in Halcyon," author unknown, typescript, 3, Temple Archives. Blue Star to Will Dower, December 29, 1902; Blue Star to Will Dower, March 4, 1903, Temple Archives.

<sup>21</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Blue Star to the Order of the 36, February 1, 1902, no. 104. Temple Archives.

<sup>23</sup> "San Luis Obispo County, New Sanitarium in Sight," *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1902, A4. See also Doris Olsen, "Health Group named Halcyon," *South County Tribune*, February 5, 1987, 8.

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for the home of Francia LaDue in her spiritual leadership function as Guardian in Chief. Known as the headquarters cottage and completed in May 1903 (razed in 1955), early meetings and worship services were held in the parlors.<sup>24</sup> Due to necessity, members did not strictly follow the ideal circular city plan, and buildings were first built in the inner core around the headquarters cottage.

A partial map of the northern half of the White City plan by Templar and city surveyor George Story was recorded at the San Luis Obispo (SLO) County office, showing the Temple Home Association grounds as of October 8, 1906. This approximately 100 acre plan showed the central four acres as the Temple complex, framed by three nested squares that defined roads and lots, surmounted by an arched roadway defining the larger circle, from which radiated five roads like spokes on a wheel. By 1907 Story began the process of measuring allotments from the curves that would be the terminus for the radiating lines out from the central four acres, and created plats for the Temple. In 1908 the Temple was incorporated in California as "The Guardian in Chief of the Temple of the People, a Corporation Sole."

Ivey points out that,

Temple theosophists were part of a middle-class migration into California that took place between 1900 and 1920 as a "second wave" from the East Coast. Many of these migrants believed that California represented an ideal where nature and social setting provided the fundamentals that would allow them to attempt to establish a "new life." This ideal was health, popularized in the later nineteenth century through the widespread idea that California was the land of restorative climate. Health seekers flocked to Southern California in droves in the 1880s, enough to call it a "health rush," and set up a "sanatorium belt" that stretched from San Diego to Loma Linda ... With their move to California, Temple members exchanged the actualities of urban life in the East with an image of an ideal city, both urban and agricultural, in the West. There they would escape into the perfection of their new "White City," and provide a sanatorium that would be replete with the supportive therapies then available in the advancing healing arts.<sup>25</sup>

### Temple Home Association

In 1903 the Temple Home Association (THA) was officially founded as a cooperative venture in property and mixed agriculture, formed in order to attract members and others to the new social experiment. The Association would materialize the "great work" of the Temple to "bring Heaven down to earth or earth up to Heaven."<sup>26</sup> The Association actually owned the land and leased it to members, who raised food crops and poultry, tried their hands at producing herbs and flower seeds, with many after 1912 working in the art pottery studio, producing a red ware that was

<sup>24</sup> *Family Letter*, January 5, 1921; *Family Letter*, January 1, 1921.

<sup>25</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 99-100. See James E. Vance, "California and the Search for the Ideal," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 62 (June 1972), 2, 195, 197-198, 200. On the perceived relationship between California's climate and public health see Henry Harris, *California's Medical Story* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press for J. W. Stacey, Inc., 1932) 222-227.

<sup>26</sup> *Temple Artisan* 6 (August 1905), 53-54.

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indicative of the rise of the California Arts and Crafts movement. Each membership in the Association cost one hundred dollars, and included a half-acre of land and a vote in the Association. Profits from businesses started through official departments were shared with the members, and members could use their half-acre as they chose, including starting their own businesses—creating a hybrid between capitalism and socialism. By 1905 there were at least five departments: construction, printing, farming, poultry, and medical, with the medical department represented by the Sanatorium the most successful. Auxiliary concerns of the sanatorium included Open Gate, which was founded in 1906 for the treatment of tuberculosis in a small outdoor tent city at Halcyon. By 1913 the Association abandoned socialism and became a land holding corporation.<sup>27</sup>

At the apex of growth in the mid 1920s, the Temple of the People was settled around the Sanatorium with Dr. Dower's two-story house and the houses of a few members nearby. Over the hill, Halcyon was grouped around a post office and Temple office, and a new Temple edifice for worship was being built. Halcyon was developing into a community of small houses scattered about with flower gardens, with large straight rows of high cypress and eucalyptus trees. There were palms and pepper trees and carpets of wild flowers and greenery.

By 1920, the United States census counted fifty residents in Halcyon, with families from Australia, England, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, Canada, Portugal, Norway, Denmark, and Ireland and from several states around the United States. A *Family Letter* suggested that they had "been chosen and led together in strange ways."<sup>28</sup> Halcyon was emerging as a truly multicultural community.

In 1923 Story subdivided a sixteen-acre tract south of the headquarters cottage into 80 lots. Called the New Halcyon Addition (Subdivision #1), a number of lots sold that year.<sup>29</sup> In the 1940s much property was sold, including the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium in 1949, and other properties and mortgages on present-day Halcyon were retired. The Temple Home Association became the Home of the Temple Associated, Inc., in 1949.

### **The Blue Star Memorial Temple of Science, Philosophy, and Religion**

Halcyon boasts one of two extant and dedicated theosophical temples in the United States, and it is a completely unique edifice built solely by the membership. Temple members widely believed that the Masters used the specific magnetic forces present at Halcyon to transmit "streams of force" to facilitate human physical, mental, and spiritual advancement.<sup>30</sup> When the edifice of the Temple was completed in 1924, these new spiritual forces had a concrete mechanism where both the physical orientations of the Temple services and the architecture provided a focusing of spiritual energy. As Ivey writes,

<sup>27</sup> *Temple Artisan* 5 (September 1904), 51-54.

<sup>28</sup> *Family Letter*, March 15, 1921.

<sup>29</sup> *Family Letter*, August 21, 1923.

<sup>30</sup> *Temple Artisan* (March, April, May 1924), 14-15.

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By the early 1920s, the group committed to build a temple for worship as a symbol for the entire community ... Members believed it was a powerful esoteric technology for centering unseen spiritual forces, important for the coming of the Christos or Avatar, a cosmic force that would raise the vibrations of humanity. The new building acted as a conduit between the spiritual and material planes, and services in the temple balanced the duality of spirit and matter through the worship protocols of what the members called the “square” arrangement, a gathering of men and women around a central altar that produced higher spiritual vibrations for the New Age.<sup>31</sup>

The Scribe told the congregants at their annual convention in 1924: “With the establishment of the building in which we now meet, a new force permeates the Temple aura ... of the great Cosmic Forces which impel our work and for which it is given to provide a medium of expression.”<sup>32</sup> Temple architecture became an apparatus of communication, not only through its attractive and unique style, but also through the Templars’ belief that spiritual energies engage us through harmonies of numbers, the balancing of forces in worship, and geometrical forms designed into the physical structure of the edifice.

Building the temple gained momentum after Francia LaDue’s death in 1922. Dower became the next Guardian in Chief and immediately began supervising the building’s construction.<sup>33</sup> By 1923 a center stone for the edifice had been laid and plans by Los Angeles member and architect Theodore Eisen had been received, discussed, and altered in preparation for building. It was Eisen’s last project. His only other church design was the late Victorian Gothic, National Register-listed First Presbyterian Church in Napa, California (also California Historical Landmark #878). Among his other buildings were the Doheny Mansion from 1899 with Sumner P. Hunt (LA Historic-Cultural Monument #30), and the Spanish Colonial Casa de Adobe from 1914 (LA Historic-Cultural Monument #493), both in Los Angeles.

Eisen and Dower’s convex equilateral triangle is rife with number symbolism. The unique building is surrounded by thirty-six white pillars supporting the roof. The important esoteric number seven was the most basic number in the temple design, and was applied to windows, doors, and inside dimensions. The foundation stone is beneath the Central Altar, with the apex of the roof directly above it. The windows were placed high to symbolize the Divine Light that comes from Above, and are glazed with a special opalescent glass to diffuse the sunlight into a golden glow. The Temple building was not only effective as a geometric technology for centering unseen spiritual forces, but was also a symbol in the physical and organic realm. Besides inculcating the trinities central to all world religions, “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, –Brahman, Vishnu, and Shiva, –Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, – Matter, Force, and Consciousness ...”<sup>34</sup> as one member put it, the triangular plan of the Temple was said to symbolize the radiant central heart of the Temple work, or Heart Consciousness, as the point from which the Master’s force flowed into the hearts of the members and out into the world.

<sup>31</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> *Temple Artisan* (August, September 1924), 21-23.

<sup>33</sup> *Temple Artisan* (March, April, May 1924), 20.

<sup>34</sup> *Temple Artisan* (June–July August 1923), 5-10, 24.

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The Temple went up slowly. Concrete blocks for the Temple were made nearby. The shape of the edifice was a difficult one; the roof in particular posed a significant engineering problem to the builders. When the \$6,000 edifice was completed, the *Temple Artisan* reported that it was “a center of great Forces, and it is quite interesting to note how many people are being attracted to Halcyon as a result ... The new Temple thus dignifies our work and is a light in itself that attracts those who are looking for inner things.”<sup>35</sup>

## PHILOSOPHY

### Meditation on Native American Spirituality

Halcyon theosophists emphasized humanity’s unity with nature, particularly read through an emphasis on an Anglo understanding of Native American religion. Moreover, Temple members,

were anchored by the belief that the Native American Iroquois League had been founded and governed by the great Lodge of Masters, specifically through the incarnation of the Master Hilarion as Hiawatha. To Temple members, their understanding of the spirituality of the Onondagas was a sacred form of theosophical teaching, and the legendary success of the Iroquois League was therefore an excellent model, applicable to the political and social problems and impasses of their era. Hilarion would now guide the group in their new venture and connect them with the spiritual resources of the Lodge.<sup>36</sup>

Templars believed that Hilarion’s last incarnation was as the great Iroquois Confederacy founder Hiawatha, and both Dower and LaDue were honorary members of the Onondaga tribe based near Syracuse. Ideas derived from native spirituality deeply mark their interpretations of Theosophy. The group believed Hilarion ruled a line of spiritual force, surrounding the planet, which could be effectively manifested through a geometrical city and temple at the site of their new community. Informed by geomantic Native American ideas about the healing power of the spirit of the earth, LaDue investigated sites in California for their positive intersections of lines of spiritual and magnetic forces in order to build a community to fulfill the directives of the Masters.

### Support of Socialism

For its first decade, Halcyon was an economic socialist community, as it intentionally attempted to create economic conditions of equality as part of its mission. Members were also politically minded but not slavish to the more materialist aspects of socialism. After their experiences with attempts at organizing in Syracuse 1898-1902, Dower and LaDue decided to simply start their own colony, outside any national organization, to create and demonstrate the rules of health and brotherhood through the founding of the Halcyon Health Company as an early supporter of the new settlement. Reform-minded Dower wanted to create an ideal socialist community, based on a hybrid of capitalism/socialism. The Temple Home Association was incorporated as a co-operative Association that struck “the line of least resistance between the selfish competitive

<sup>35</sup> *Temple Artisan* (February, March, 1925), 25.

<sup>36</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 5.

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system of the world on one hand, and the extremes of socialistic endeavor on the other. The founders of the Temple Home Association claimed that the successful demonstration and operation of its plans will be the ‘entering wedge which will rive asunder the present unnatural social order and prepare the way for the Co-operative Commonwealth on the basis of true liberty, equality, fraternity.’”<sup>37</sup>

Debates about the nature of socialism took place in the *Temple Artisan* in 1908, and the magazine included articles on other cooperative communities.<sup>38</sup> The group also sought the advice of socialist economic leaders, such as Thomas E. Will, editor of *Social Ethics*, who advised them that the experiences of the Ruskin Colony (1894-1901) afforded some lessons to be learned. Its founder, Julius A. Wayland, published *The Coming Nation* newspaper that inspired the Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth. Will concluded that “if a body of high-minded and at the same time practical people can maintain themselves in a community on an ethical plane somewhat higher than that of the capitalistic world, and make of it a propaganda centre—a city set upon a hill, so to speak—it will make for itself a place in history. All such attempts I should look upon simply as a means to end, the end being the Co-operative Commonwealth.”<sup>39</sup>

Francia LaDue concurred. In the article, “Do the Masters Encourage the Formation of a Co-operative Commonwealth?” she argued that it was a means to an end: to work towards the true cooperative commonwealth within which the Masters “live and have their being.” She wrote that “as long as the doctrines of Socialism agree with the laws of Occultism, the Temple teachings endorse Socialism, but no farther. When it comes to eliminating the religious or higher aspect of life from the social and political life, those teachings are immovably opposed to it.”<sup>40</sup> Hine suggests that, “As Theosophists of an earlier generation had embraced Nationalism, so many members at Temple Home looked favorably on the cause of socialism, finding Eugene Debs and Upton Sinclair moving in the same direction as Theosophy. One member wrote, ‘While [all] Socialists are not Theosophists, I have a feeling that all Theosophists should be Socialists.’”<sup>41</sup>

Photographer and scholar Paul Kagan observed, “The Temple Home Association was run along socialist lines: ‘All the land will be owned all of the time by all of the people; all the means of production and distribution, tools, machinery and natural resources will be owned by the

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in *Temple Artisan*, vol. 8, 234. After arriving in California, the Temple continued to forward its notion of evolutionary socialism based in Edward Bellamy’s nationalist utopia, novelized in 1888’s *Looking Backward*. The Book Concern advertised a number of books that synthesized liberal spiritual ideals with socialist political notions, such as George D. Herron’s populist *Between Caesar and Jesus* (1899); Laurence Gronlund’s Marxist-based *The Co-operative Commonwealth, An Exposition of Socialism* (1884, 1894 edition), W. L. Garver’s *Brother of the Third Degree* (1894) and his *Socialism in Brief* (1905), progressive reformer Frank Parson’s *The City For The People, or the Municipalization of the City Government and Local Franchises* (1899), which argues for a reconciliation of the idea of individual liberty with socialism in mutuality, and single-taxer Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty* (1879), which supported the idea, upheld by the community, that unequal distribution of wealth led to a loss of liberty, bred contempt, and eventual despair that caused brute rebellious forces to overtake the civilizing tendencies of mankind.

<sup>38</sup> *Temple Artisan* 8, 13. See also Blue Star “Cooperative Commonwealth,” 7, 203.

<sup>39</sup> *Temple Artisan* 6 (1904), 46.

<sup>40</sup> *Temple Artisan* 6 (1905), 203-204.

<sup>41</sup> Hine, *Utopian Colonies*, 55.

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people—the Community; and Capital and Labor may meet on equal terms with no special privileges to either.’ Many of the early Theosophists were also utopians of the Edward Bellamy school, and many later embraced the brand of socialism presented by men like Upton Sinclair.”<sup>42</sup>

Hine writes, “By 1908 *The Temple Artisan*, a monthly magazine of the Temple of the People, which also included news of the Temple Home Association, gave evidence, if sometimes veiled, of internal conflict. ‘We would not be on a human basis if there were not a splash of friction occasionally here and there between workers—but this is soon adjusted by the inflow of Lodge light and force ever welling from the real Temple Heart.’ The same issue and that of the following May printed open letters imploring members not to heed the current rumors and criticism. Confronted with such troubles and a financial stringency, which had slowly intensified through the years, in 1912 the Board of Directors recommended a revision of the Temple Home Association. All mortgages would be retired by the sale of available property; the actively cooperative work of the colony would cease; and the Temple Home Association would become no more than a land-holding adjunct to the Temple of the People. By 1913 all of the recommendations had gone into effect, and the economic aspects of the venture in utopia had ended.”<sup>43</sup>

Later in his life, Dower wrote to a member of the Cooperative League of the USA, saying he and other Temple members would look over the organization’s materials and that it was much like what they had been working for in the past. Given his earlier experience with the THA, he summarized his knowledge of cooperative efforts. They,

start out very well, there is much enthusiasm for a time, and then it wanes, and there are quarrels and dissensions, factions spring up, because of the selfishness and ambition in human nature, and the cooperative association is broken up. But of course the principle back of this effort is all right, if humanity could only be unselfish enough and spiritual enough to carry it out for the benefit of all others, and not just themselves. The day must come when we will have spiritual cooperation, and such a plan will succeed. But whether that day is now is a question. Human nature seems to be just as selfish now as it was a thousand years ago. But yet social and economic conditions have changed, and the time may be more opportune than anybody can say.<sup>44</sup>

### Unity of Science and Religion

Key Temple concepts included the importance of fostering a religious instinct as a fundamental factor in human evolution; the worth of science and art as manifestations of spiritual energy, and the realization of “true social science” based on man’s relationship to God. Moreover, electricity, magnetism, and light were core interests and pursuits by Dr. Dower and his followers because they believed these forces would help reveal mankind’s promising spiritual and material future.

<sup>42</sup> Paul Kagen, *New World Utopias: A Photographic History of the Search for Community* (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), 66.

<sup>43</sup> Hine, *Utopian Colonies*, 56-57.

<sup>44</sup> William Dower, *Letters of Light*, 111-112.

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Ivey points out that from the beginning of settlement, Temple members at Halcyon, in consonance with Dr. Dower's vision, held both technology and social science as primary to the group's vision, derived from their interest in Theosophy. As he put it,

Theosophy deals with duality, with the belief that two distinct but complementary forms of reality, such as spirit and matter, must be in right relation to one another in order for balance and harmony to occur. The constant balancing of opposing forces leads to motion that is either progressive or retrograde, depending on its positive or negative energy, but that is always subsumed in an overarching inevitable evolution to Spirit. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Theosophy emphasized that the intuition of religious teachings and the rationality of science, in duality, were both necessary roads to spiritual and material progress ... In a broader framework, members believed in a continuum from matter to spirit and felt directed to synthesize spirituality with science in order to bring them together to benefit those seeking health and spiritual well-being. In its commitment to unifying the material and the spiritual through an integrative worldview, the small but important hamlet of Halcyon was an unexpected source and generator of significant cultural change.<sup>45</sup>

Kagan, in *New World Utopias* writes, "For a group so small, their [Halcyon's] influence in California has been considerable."<sup>46</sup> As Ivey concludes, "The think tank the Temple members created attempted to balance spiritual ideas with scientific ones, the intuitional and the rational, and they believed that this balancing would create a new place of discovery by producing and focusing mental and spiritual forces that would interpenetrate the physical world."<sup>47</sup>

### **Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium**

Halcyon is unique as a community for supporting the first nature-cure hospital, the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium, in the Central Coast, home of the first X-ray experiment in California. The early 1900s could be called the Age of the Sanatorium, as hundreds sprung up across the United States to treat nervous disorders, chronic conditions and addictions, insanity, and particularly tuberculosis.<sup>48</sup> The Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium, opened in May 1904, was a private institution treating nervous disorders, alcoholism, and chronic diseases. By the 1890s, Americans had a remarkable medical marketplace of patent medicines, Sylvester Graham's pure food system, Hydropathy, Mesmerism, magnetism, Electropathy, Homeopathy, Osteopathy, Chiropractic, and Naturopathy. Advocacy for symptomatic medicine rose with the formation of the American Medical Association (AMA) in 1847, which considered all other systems medical quackery. Earlier concepts of mind, spirit, and body were increasingly compartmentalized in the emerging bio-medical science, and many of the new supportive therapies sought to reunify these in their practices. This was also the concern of Dr. Dower.

<sup>45</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 2, 239.

<sup>46</sup> Kagan, *New World Utopias*, 64.

<sup>47</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Katherine Ott, *Fevered Lives: Tuberculosis in American Culture Since 1870* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996), 149; Frank E. Mera, "History of the Sanatorium Movement in America," *Chest* 1 (1935), 8-9.



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Dr. Dower, who received his MD from the prestigious University of Syracuse, maintained a dialogue with the traditional medical establishment, and in December 1911, passed all subjects successfully in his medical examination before the state board of medical examiners, and received his license to practice medicine in California. However, he and his colleagues were not willing to accept the scientific limitation of evidence in exclusively material forms. They wanted to maintain, to themselves, a rigorous notion of science, but were curious to seek out new theories that emphasized the mind/body connection, over what they saw as the mechanistic viewpoints of “regular” medicine.

Dower’s medical practice consisted of an unusual mix of traditional and alternative therapies that included eating locally grown produce, and using herbal remedies, aura therapy, and even the “radiant” sand dunes nearby. These were later supplemented with all manner of electrical devices, a solarium, and even suggestive therapeutics, a version of magnetic or hypnotic healing. With John Varian in residence, the Halcyon Sanatorium had an osteopathic massage therapist. A naturopath, German doctor and occultist Ernest Heckler, of the Naturopathic School of Germany, also began assisting Dower in 1922.

Though very different from Radiography and its increasing use of the X-ray in medical treatments, “radiant rays” became the focus of Dower’s treatments at the sanatorium by 1922, when he began publishing sweeping accounts of his experiences with electronic healing devices, announcing what he called the emergent “Age of Radiance,” where new “electron theory” superseded the “cell theory” of disease. In several issues of *The Temple Artisan*, he introduced a new system of healing through the power of electricity, called the Electronic Reactions of Abrams (ERA), already publically criticized by the AMA, but whose apparent success brought more and more people to the sanatorium. The sanatorium, with a number of treatment options, operated under his supervision until late 1933. The sanatorium continued to be a center of importance to the Halcyon community, a focus of social, educational, and religious activities until it was sold in 1949.

## RELIGION

Temple founders joined other theosophical groups who moved to California and were unique in their commitment to communitarian economic ideals and in their desire to build a city as a physical manifestation of the New Jerusalem. Halcyon was a cooperative colony economically, and also shared aspects of charismatic perfectionism, since members believed that as a sanctified body, they were serving a religious goal—preparing for the Avatar to reappear. The founders were also politically pragmatic—as they were eager to demonstrate the viability of socialist principles as religious principles.

Their theology was based on Theosophy founder Madame Blavatsky’s inscriptions of ancient wisdom teachings, coupled with a direct relationship with an active Master Hilarion, who spoke through the Guardian of the Temple, then Francia LaDue, who was known to her followers as Blue Star. The Temple supported a large Book Concern, and Temple literature, as well as

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communications and lessons from the Master, were regular, and studied weekly by the world membership in study meetings and worship. The community created a matrix for education, communication, and regular group discussion for both adults and young people, and this atmosphere influenced group goals and dynamics. As Ivey puts it,

Temple members believe in the advanced spiritual guidance of the Master Hilarion, who speaks through his agent, the Guardian in Chief. This belief is not unlike the belief in the mediation of angels or saints in orthodoxy, with the proviso that the Master has earned his position through hard work and is compelled to help humanity. The belief in the Master led the group to believe they were creating a milieu that would lead to positive social, cultural, spiritual, and scientific change. The Master was the important leadership function in the community, which also allowed for progressive revelation through his agents, LaDue and Dower.<sup>49</sup>

The Temple as a religious society is non-denominational, with members and friends coming from a wide variety of religious backgrounds. Since the early 1930s, a daily noon Healing Service is held, with prayers and meditations directed toward the health and safety of the world. Sunday morning services, open to all, include a monthly communion service, lectures, and a monthly meditation service. The content of these services comes from the Master and are universal in nature. Temple members who desire to pursue a course of study may do so. This study, service and continued dedication lead to the priesthood if the member so chooses. In the Temple the priests do not intercede, as Temple teachings clearly state that each person is his/her own priest in the connection to God or All That Is. Marriages, naming services, and funerals are some of the other celebrations held in the Temple. "Creeds Disappear, Hearts Remain," "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and "Judge not lest ye be judged," are three of the most basic tenets of the Temple.

The Temple of the People has a unique leadership structure based on directives from the Master Hilarion. This results in a self-perpetuating line of succession in the leadership, which has proceeded as follows: Francia LaDue (Blue Star) until 1922, William Dower (Red Star) until 1937, Pearl Dower (Gold Star) until 1968, Harold Forgostein (Violet Star) until 1990, and Eleanor Shumway (Green Star).

## SOCIAL HISTORY

### The Arts

By 1923, the promotion of "the study and practice of Art on fundamental lines," became a central component of Temple thought, since to members Art was "in reality the application of knowledge to human good and welfare," and they believed "that the Christos can speak to humanity through Art as well as through any other fundamental line of manifestation."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ivey, 10.

<sup>50</sup> *Temple Artisan* 24 (1923), 4, 43.

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During the 1920s and 1930s, Halcyon established a reputation for being an important cultural center in the state. A 1937 issue of the *San Luis Obispo Telegram* reported that, “much interest manifests itself in the cultural work being done at Halcyon, and which has given Halcyon the statewide reputation of being second only to Carmel as a center of music, art, the drama, and other education activities.”<sup>51</sup> By the early 1930s, the atmosphere of the dunes attracted a group of artists and seekers called the Dunites, loosely affiliated with Halcyon, who helped bring about an important, if short-lived, experiment in community, publishing, and the arts.

Halcyon had always enjoyed a lively social life that included music, art, and drama, with performances of dramatic productions often attracting large local audiences. For example, as a way of interfacing with the larger community, the group contributed literary and musical programs to the local Arroyo Grande fair in 1909. Impressed with the members, the *Arroyo Grande Recorder* reported, “One of the pleasantest features of the Arroyo Grande fair was the literary and musical programme rendered by the members of the Halcyon colony ... one of the first co-operative colonies of the many that have started in California that is really fulfilling its mission. While its ideals are high, the membership is sufficiently leavened with hard-headed, practical, commonplace folk to keep its roots firmly planted in the earth.”<sup>52</sup>

The community atmosphere that emphasized “inner” forces not actually seen but practically felt and demonstrated as art and science produced several important contributors to modern American literature and music.

### **John Varian, Ella Young, and the Dunites**

John O. Varian, poet, playwright, inventor, and masseur, was a visionary artist whose works were meditations on theosophical cosmological and racial ideals. He published work in the *Temple Artisan*, *Troubadour*, and *Everyman* magazines, and in his own books. His mystery plays, poetry, prose, and inventions inspired musicians such as Ultramodernist Henry Cowell, and photographer Ansel Adams. Varian’s work celebrated the epic qualities of Irish myth, his faith in spiritual development, and the grandeur of nature and its processes, displaying what one editor called the “bold originality and rugged grandeur of Walt Whitman’s,” that “sang of the cosmos, thrilling us with the magnificence of evolutionary eons.”<sup>53</sup>

An Irishman and originally a member of the Dublin Lodge from 1892, Varian and his wife Agnes, an early feminist, settled in Palo Alto, California, in 1903, and created a rich intellectual and literary salon atmosphere in their regular theosophical meetings. Moving to Halcyon in 1914, their home became a center for artists, authors, and musicians. Many visitors, such as Ella Young, came from Ireland and settled in the vicinity. Young was a specialist in fairies and nature spirits, who left Ireland due to fear of arrest for her support of the Irish Republican cause. She came to the United States in 1925, where she lectured on Irish mythology at the University of California at Berkeley. She moved to Halcyon in 1928 and lived in a cottage behind the Varians’

<sup>51</sup> *San Luis Obispo Telegram*, January 30, 1937.

<sup>52</sup> *Arroyo Grande Recorder*, October 12, 1909, *Artisan* 10 (1909) 6, 118.

<sup>53</sup> *Troubadour* 3 (July 1931), 8, 5. See Peter Brooker, Andrew Thacker, *The Oxford Critical and Cultural History of Modernist Magazine: Vol. 2, North America 1894–1960* (New York: Oxford, 2012), 349-352.

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house, where she finished her children's book of Irish legends *The Tangle-Coated Horse* in 1929, for which she won the prestigious Newbery Medal the next year.

Varian and horticulturalist and musician Edgar Cheetham were the primary experimenters in poetry, music, and theater who led the group's endeavors to integrate these into the life of Halcyon and beyond. Inspired by the success of the outdoor dramas at Carmel, Temple members decided to produce an open-air spectacle, and beginning in 1914, these "mystery plays" were performed and became a regular feature at the group's annual August convention over several years. The plays were presented with a musical setting combining "illuminating and spectacular color and fire effects."<sup>54</sup> One play, "The Cauldron of the Gods," was an ambitious program that included solo, quartet, and choral work with musical accompaniment, fire, and lights, with a Priest Interpreter, clad in flowing white robes, with hair and long beard to match, who led the audience through the mythical building of the Cauldron of Light, a Celtic story of creation.<sup>55</sup> In their mystical subjects and combination of music, theater, and effects, Temple members believed, like the theosophists at Point Loma, in a connective synesthesia that they heartily embraced as indicative of advancing spirituality. This bringing together of music, theater, and lights had relevance to theosophical artists in their quest for a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a total synesthetic art that integrated all art forms into a total unity, thought to be "powerful factors in the quickening evolution of the present Race."<sup>56</sup>

Varian created a rich textual practice based in theosophical conceptions of the universe, racial myth, and spiritual evolution. These ideas informed his art in the context of his love of California's Central Coast, and in his support for the Irish nationalist cause, with Ireland holding a special place in theosophical literature in the aftermath of World War One. Varian was the massage therapist at the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium, and his principles undoubtedly produced a unique healing practice, based in Osteopathy and Chiropractic, that utilized theosophical ideas.

Later a *Dune Forum* magazine celebrated his work and life: "John Varian's death three years ago was a blow from which the Halcyon Temple has scarcely yet recovered ... Although Henry Cowell was largely inspired by Varian's sagas ... very little of the inspirer's work was published during his life-time. Perhaps now that he is dead California will wake up to the fact that he was one of its greatest poets."<sup>57</sup> Photographer, naturalist, and friend Ansel Adams, who knew Varian through the Sierra Club, published a poem in his honor and later included some of his poems in his fourth portfolio, "*What Majestic Word*," dedicated to Varian's son Russell.<sup>58</sup>

Halcyon was also central to the short-lived literary and bohemian dune dwellers. Ella Young earlier met Chester Alan Arthur, III, grandson of Chester Alan Arthur, twenty-first President of

<sup>54</sup> *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, Tuesday August 14, 1917. See also *San Francisco Examiner*, June 7, 1914.

<sup>55</sup> *Temple Artisan* 15 (1914), 30, 61, 80, 94, 108, 121. See also *Temple Artisan* 15 (1915), 69–76.

<sup>56</sup> Edward Maryon, "The Theosophical Society and Music," *Transactions of the Second Annual Congress of the Federation of European Sections of the Theosophical Society Held in London July 6–10, 1905* (London: Published for the Council of the Federation, 1907), 371.

<sup>57</sup> *Dune Forum* 1 (February 15, 1934), 2, 63.

<sup>58</sup> "To John Varian," *Troubadour* 3 (July 1931), 8, 11.

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the United States. While in Ireland, he came under the influence of the theosophical literary group, including Young. He fled Ireland right before she did. Arthur came to Halcyon in 1930 to see her and meet the Varians, and decided to stay. He became the most notable dweller in the Oceano dunes and interested Young in his utopian plan for a colony of like-minded seekers, now known as the Dunites, who published the short-lived *Dune Forum* magazine, and are already much celebrated in the Central Coast.

### Henry Cowell

At Halcyon, Varian inspired an interest in experimentation in musical resonances and dissonance, particularly as a surrogate father to the young Henry Cowell, who visited often, and then owned a house and lived at Halcyon on and off over a six-year period.<sup>59</sup> Some of Varian's ideas and inventions, such as a "drum piano," a "gong piano," and the large harp he patented in 1912, undoubtedly influenced Cowell's ideas.<sup>60</sup>

Henry Cowell was possibly the most important young American composer in the first half of the twentieth century, and a member of the Temple. He was to become an innovator in dissonant and modernist music and teacher of John Cage, among other important musical visionaries. He became known internationally for his famous resonant tone clusters, invented at Halcyon while he was scoring a piece for John Varian. Music was an important spiritual force and all Temple meetings were accompanied by music, with traditional, classical, and original compositions, often by the young Cowell. "Using palms, fists, and forearms," the composer, according to a 1929 review of one of his Central Coast concerts, "invented new ways of experiencing sound. Instead of observing it objectively and analytically, as with the old music, you must enter the whole wave of it, become drowned in it, become overwhelmed in its mass and volume."<sup>61</sup> Cowell met musician and mystic Dane Rhudyar while in Halcyon, and together they became founders of American dissonant music, known as the Ultramodernists. His performance and publishing activities brought a new generation of musicians to the forefront of music culture. The experimental music emanating from Halcyon through Cowell was subsequently presented around the globe.

### The Pottery and the Visual Arts

The formation of the Industrial School of Arts and Crafts in 1909 was emblematic of the Temple Home Association's commitment to the useful arts. The School was designed to "promote and advance the purposes of the crafts in the production and distribution of useful things." A pottery was suggested, and appeals for funds and interviews with prospective potters took place that year.<sup>62</sup> Alexander W. Robertson, a well-known potter from the San Francisco Bay-area Roblin

<sup>59</sup> Cowell believed that dissonance was emotionally stronger than consonance, and was the "next historical step" in the evolution of music. Chilton Reynolds, *Henry Cowell's "Music as a Social Force": An Ultramodernist's Advocacy in the 1920's and 1930's*, MA Thesis (Binghamton University, 2012), 57–58.

<sup>60</sup> Steven Johnson, "Henry Cowell, John Varian, and Halcyon," *American Music* 11, no. 1 (1993), 5.

<sup>61</sup> "The Mystic in the Machine Age," *The Carmelite*, August 21, 1929.

<sup>62</sup> *Articles of Association of the Industrial School of Arts and Crafts*, 1909, exact date unknown.

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Art Pottery (1898-1906), became the director. Firings began in 1910.<sup>63</sup> A two-kiln pottery was built on the grounds of the Halcyon Hotel and Sanatorium. The local clay produced a beautiful redware that was decorated with molded raised decoration, exemplary of the rise of California Arts and Crafts pottery. The potters produced incense burners, vases, toothpick holders, bowls, pitchers, match holders, and clay whistles during its two-year operation.<sup>64</sup> With the end of active cooperative work in 1913, the pottery was closed, then reopened between 1929 and 1931 when Gertrude Rupel Wall of Walrich Pottery taught summer classes.<sup>65</sup>

In the visual arts, Halcyon artists generally created symbolic pictures and landscapes of the dramatic dunes to the west of Halcyon. Halcyon founders' deep connection to the American Indian culture, which treated the earth as sacred, as well as the Temple teachings which stressed the importance of the contribution of Hiawatha and the League of the Six Nations to the history of present-day government, are graphically portrayed in the collection of paintings in the Temple's University Center. The visual art's importance became especially pronounced through Harold Forgostein, the fourth leader of the group, a commercial artist who studied Native American artifacts in the museums and libraries while living in New York, and in the 1930s created the most long-lasting contribution to the visual arts at Halcyon: the painting cycles on Native American themes such as the League of Six Nations and the life of Hiawatha. The twenty-two oil paintings, each over four feet square, and the central four by eight foot panel, hang in the University Center, and often travel to regional exhibitions.<sup>66</sup>

Visual artists in the group were often inspired by the example of Nicholas Roerich, a friend of the group who later founded the Arsuna School of Fine Arts in Santa Fe in 1938, to teach art as "a common language" to bring about universal kinship. This ideal was held as both a spiritual and practical one by Halcyon artists. Following Roerich's lead, many *Temple Artisan* authors wrote that the visual arts aided in the unification of human consciousness with its divine source through cultivating intuition, imagination, and compassion. In turn, the truly artistic creation produced an energy that would inspire and unify future generations, as a "perpetual fountain from the Godhead."<sup>67</sup> Visual art, therefore, was a "fundamental line" which allowed the Christos to speak to humanity.

### Scientific Breakthroughs

Halcyon's atmosphere of active spiritual and scientific ideas was also the context for emerging innovative science. George Russell Harrison, son of a founding officer of the Temple, as a

<sup>63</sup> "Keramics at Oceano," *The Clarion* 2 (March 1910), 15; "Local News," *The Clarion* 2 (May 1910), 16. See also G. E. Grutchfield, A. Adelson, Letter to members soliciting funds for the Pottery, August 23, 1909, Temple Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Hall-Patton, "Halcyon a Hotbed for Art Pottery," *South County Tribune*, January 14, 1988, 4. On the pottery see Paul Evans, *Art Pottery in the United States: An Encyclopedia of Producers and Their Marks* (New York: Scribners, 1974), 124-126.

<sup>65</sup> See "The Summer Pottery Work," *Artisan* 31 (1931), 82.

<sup>66</sup> *Letters of Light*, 97. The Forgosteins moved to Halcyon in 1941. He continued to paint watercolor landscapes of the dunes, over 800 of them before his death in 1990. See Harold Forgostein, "Art in its Relation to Life," *Artisan* 39 (1938) 5-6, 48-51; *Temple Artisan* 39 (1938) 3-4, 34.

<sup>67</sup> See Harold Forgostein, "Art in Its Relation to Life," 1938 Temple Convention Talk, typescript, 1-7.

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college student at Stanford contributed a correspondence course for Temple members on the fundamental principles of science, concerning matter and energy. He eventually became one of the most important MIT research physicists on spectroscopy. The physics department at MIT still bears his name. He also authored one the first popular books on physics from 1937 entitled *Atoms in Action*, which was translated into 12 languages.

Russell and Sigurd Varian, sons of John and Agnes Varian, did initial vacuum tube experimentation in Halcyon and perfected the klystron tube in the late 1930s while at Stanford, which amplified and generated oscillating radio waves that compelled the development of the airborne radar used successfully by the British in World War II. Letters between Cowell and the Varians reveal a fertile atmosphere of inventiveness based on the emerging interest in electricity, magnetism, and vibrating oscillation being discussed as spiritual forces and manifestations at Halcyon. The Varian brothers' invention undoubtedly led the way to the development of myriad microwave technologies, including safe aircraft navigation systems and worldwide satellite communication.<sup>68</sup>

As Ivey puts it,

In the context of discussions of electricity, vibrations, and occult science, the first-generation Builders, particularly the sons of the Harrisons and the Varians, became enamored with the study of science. The Temple's study groups and the tenor of the lessons taught, as well as active experimentation, provided an important atmosphere for the budding young scientists of Halcyon. In an important sense, this was, indeed, a coming of higher vibrations, as both microwave technology and "atom smashing" spectroscopy found their most important inventors and practitioners in the sons of the first settlers of Halcyon. The esoteric forces spoken of by their fathers, although based in occult ideas, were increasingly realized as usable though intangible material forces, arrived at through a stunning mix of intuitive creativity and scientific precision ... The early interchange between spirituality and science in Halcyon, a balancing of intuition and rationality taught in the Builders' lessons, provides a striking and suggestive model for successful creative endeavor. Dower and his Halcyon colleagues invested in ideas that were in many ways science fiction, or pseudoscience, but they were convinced of the potential of invisible subatomic particles for the healing of disease. Their encouragement to "think outside the box" and their belief that spiritual forces could be manifested physically serve as a remarkable backdrop to the objective techniques required in the scientific enterprises of their children, who substantiated the technological and healing capacities of radiant rays.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Edward L. Ginzton, "The \$100 Idea: How Russell and Sigurd Varian, with the help of William Hansen and a \$100 Appropriation, Invented the Klystron," *IEEE Spectrum*, 12, 2 (February 1925), 30-39.

<sup>69</sup> Ivey, *Radiance*, 223-224; 235.

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**Additional architects/builders**

Bardick, Claude  
Cheetam, Edgar  
Dennis, Clarence  
Elliott, Harry E.  
Ferguson, Duncan  
Harbison, Jackie  
Harrison, Ernest & Aileen  
Hedin, Elmer  
Hoff, Russell  
Kent, William  
Lentz, Herb  
Mallory, David  
Mallory, John  
Mallory, Roland  
Moore, Perry  
Nelson, Emory  
Nelson, Mark  
Ross, Fred (Spike)  
Shumway, Kenneth  
Schussman, Ken  
Sears, Mike  
Stenquist, Bob  
Thompson, William  
Thyrring, Chris  
Townsend, William H.  
Varian, Eric  
Varian, John O.  
Volz, Herman  
White, Lloyd  
Whitney, Fred Elias  
Wolff, Carl  
Wolff, Fred  
Unnamed Halcyon Builders  
Wood, First Name Unknown



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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☒ Local government  
☒ University  
☒ Other

Name of repository: San Luis Obispo County Recorder's Office; Stanford University Library; California Polytechnic State University Library at San Luis Obispo; South County Historical Society, Arroyo Grande, California; San Luis Obispo County Historical Society

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 130 acres

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                         |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 35.106313 | Longitude: -120. 591645 |
| 2. Latitude: 35.098202 | Longitude: -120.592504  |
| 3. Latitude: 35.098202 | Longitude: -120.600443  |
| 4. Latitude: 35.106418 | Longitude: -120.600529  |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Halcyon Historic District is defined generally as west of Halcyon Road, starting at the northeast corner of Halcyon Road and The Pike, then south to the junction of California State Highway 1 (Cienaga Street); then west on Highway 1 to the junction with Tierra Nueva Lane; then north on Tierra Nueva Lane to a line of the San Luis Obispo County assessment map marked PM 29-78, RM A-65; then west on that assessment line to the junction with S. Elm Street; then north on S. Elm Street to the junction with The Pike; then east on The Pike to the junction with S. Halcyon Road.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries were determined by the purchase in 1903 of the Shinn Ranch. The roadways in the area already existed in the form of narrow, dirt or graveled, unimproved tracks. These roads have since been developed and paved. They include three county roads and one state highway.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Eleanor L. Shumway, Guardian in Chief  
organization: Temple of the People  
name/title: Karen M. White, President  
organization: Halcyon Community Association  
name/title: Marti Fast, Temple member, community member  
street & number: 906 South Halcyon Road/P.O. Box 7100  
city or town: Halcyon state: California zip code: 93421  
e-mail [ginc@templeofthepeople.org](mailto:ginc@templeofthepeople.org)  
telephone: (805) 489-2822  
date: September 2014; Revised August 2015, September 2015, August 2016

---

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs

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to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Halcyon Historic District

City or Vicinity: Halcyon

County: San Luis Obispo

State: California

Photographer: Karen M. White

Negatives Filed: The Temple of the People Judge Memorial Library,  
906 South Halcyon Road, Halcyon, CA 93421

Date Photographed: May-June, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera, resource number indicated in [ ]:

- 1 of 61 Halcyon Road and Temple Street intersection sign, looking northwest
- 2 of 61 The Temple of the People Blue Star Memorial Temple [1] looking northwest from Temple Street
- 3 of 61 Temple Street, looking west, from Halcyon Road
- 4 of 61 Temple Street, looking east from Helena Street
- 5 of 61 LaDue Street, looking west from Hiawatha Lane
- 6 of 61 LaDue Street, looking east from Dower Avenue
- 7 of 61 Hiawatha Lane, looking north from LaDue Street
- 8 of 61 Hiawatha Lane, looking south from LaDue Street, showing farm land on left
- 9 of 61 Dower Avenue, looking north from south dead end of roadway
- 10 of 61 Dower Avenue, looking south from LaDue Street, showing large eucalyptus grove at center
- 11 of 61 Helena Street, looking north from south dead end of roadway [33]
- 12 of 61 Helena Street, looking south from junction of Ross Lane
- 13 of 61 Halcyon Road, looking south from Temple Street [2]
- 14 of 61 Halcyon Store and US Post Office [2], 936 S. Halcyon Road, looking south from the junction of Halcyon Road and LaDue Street

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- 15 of 61 The Temple of the People Blue Star Memorial Temple [1], 3199 Temple Street, looking north from Temple Street, afternoon
- 16 of 61 The Temple of the People Blue Star Memorial Temple [1], 3199 Temple Street, looking north from Temple Street, morning
- 17 of 61 Hiawatha Lodge [3], 3065 Temple Street, looking northwest from the junction of Temple Street and Hiawatha Lane
- 18 of 61 William Quan Judge Library [4], 906 S. Halcyon Road, looking west from Halcyon Road
- 19 of 61 Halcyon University Center [5], 3171 Temple Street, with the Temple of the People Blue Star Memorial Temple [1] at the rear
- 20 of 61 Halcyon Cemetery [6], The Pike and Elm Street, looking northwest
- 21 of 61 Open Gate [10], 1480 Dower Avenue, looking northwest from the junction of Dower Avenue and LaDue Street
- 22 of 61 The Builders Grove [8], from the junction of LaDue Street and Hiawatha Lane
- 23 of 61 Large eucalyptus grove on south edge of Halcyon, looking south
- 24 of 61 Veblen/Cowell/Smirnov [25], 2926 Temple Street, looking west from the corner of Temple Street and Dower Avenue
- 25 of 61 Volz/Drummond [18], 2945 Temple Street, looking north from Temple Street
- 26 of 61 Harrison/Rollison/Seehof [17], 3150 LaDue Street, looking southwest
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- 32 of 61 Carlberg Complex [20b], 3016 LaDue Street, front view looking south
- 33 of 61 Carlberg Complex [20b], 3016 LaDue Street, rear view showing roof line, looking north

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- 34 of 61 Gourley/Rykman [29], 1680 Hiawatha Lane, looking west from Hiawatha Lane
- 35 of 61 Guest House [28], 1652 Hiawatha Lane, looking west from Hiawatha Lane
- 36 of 61 Watts/Sigurd Varian/Lorance [16], 1598 Hiawatha Lane, looking west from  
Hiawatha Lane
- 37 of 61 Awerdick/Lowman [22], 1420 Hiawatha Lane, looking west from Hiawatha Lane
- 38 of 61 Daniels/Forth [30], 1622 Dower Avenue, looking southwest
- 39 of 61 Townsend/Wheeler/Moiseyeva [24], 1596 Dower Avenue, looking southwest
- 40 of 61 Volz/Courtland/Nolen [32], 1574 Dower Avenue, looking northwest
- 41 of 61 Farrar/Clark [13], 1443 Dower Avenue, looking northwest from the side yard,  
because front and back obscured by trees
- 42 of 61 Tedford/Norman [36], 1650 Helena Street, looking west from Helena Street
- 43 of 61 Eric Varian [34], 1596 Helena Street, looking west from Helena Street
- 44 of 61 Wolff/Price [31], 1613 Helena Street, looking north from Helena Street to show  
structural design
- 45 of 61 Wolff/Price [31], 1613 Helena Street, looking west from Helena Street
- 46 of 61 Whitney/Stenquist/Clark Complex [21], 786 S. Halcyon Road, looking north
- 47 of 61 Mallory/Wright [26], 952 S. Halcyon Road, looking west from Halcyon Road
- 48 of 61 Central Home [40], 898 S. Halcyon Road, looking north from LaDue Street
- 49 of 61 Ross Dairy Complex [23], 2846 Ross Lane, looking north
- 50 of 61 NHadden/Fast [12], 1684 Dower Avenue, looking southeast from Helena Street
- 51 of 61 Alber/Carlson [50], 1485 Dower Avenue, looking north
- 52 of 61 Schussman/Gibson [25], 1546 Helena Street, looking west from Helena Avenue
- 53 of 61 Ross Dairy Complex [23a], 2828 Ross Lane, looking northwest from Ross Lane
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northwest

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- 57 of 61 View of western Halcyon agricultural land (Rutiz Family Farm), looking east from center of field, showing sandy loam soil used for variety of crops, including flowers and strawberries (at right)
- 58 of 61 [46] View of Halcyon, showing hillside and lower homes, view looking northwest from southern dead end of Dower Avenue
- 59 of 61 [24] View of Dower Avenue looking south toward large grove of eucalyptus, showing relationship of homes to narrow streets, without curbs, gutters, sidewalks or street lights
- 60 of 61 View from Ross Lane, showing portion of Ross Dairy Complex [23] in relationship to streets, surrounded by trees
- 61 of 61 View from Helena Street, looking west, shows Hedin/Campbell Complex [33], with diverse garden, including agave (right) and Matilija poppies (left) in front, and pine and eucalyptus trees in rear

**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.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



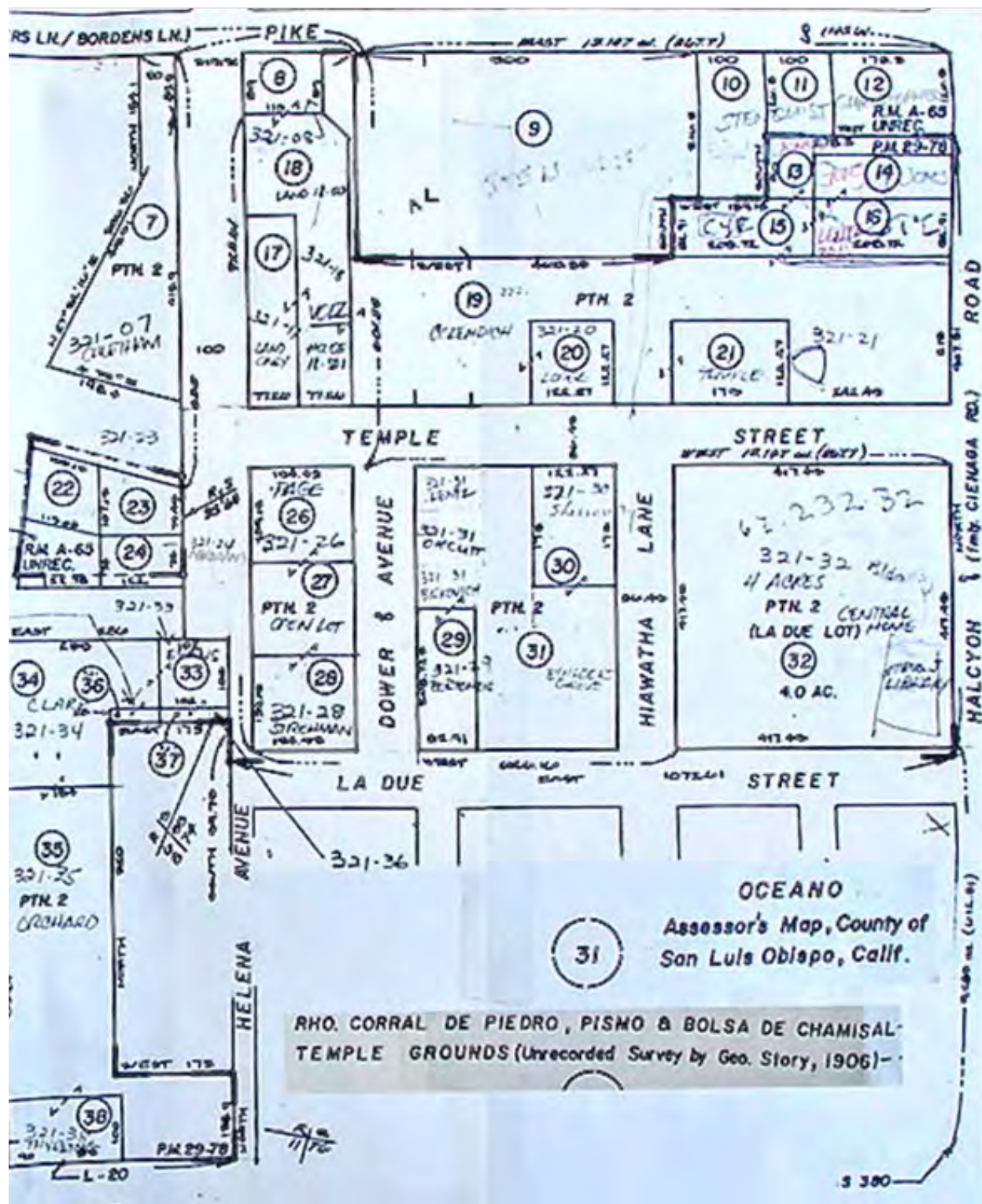
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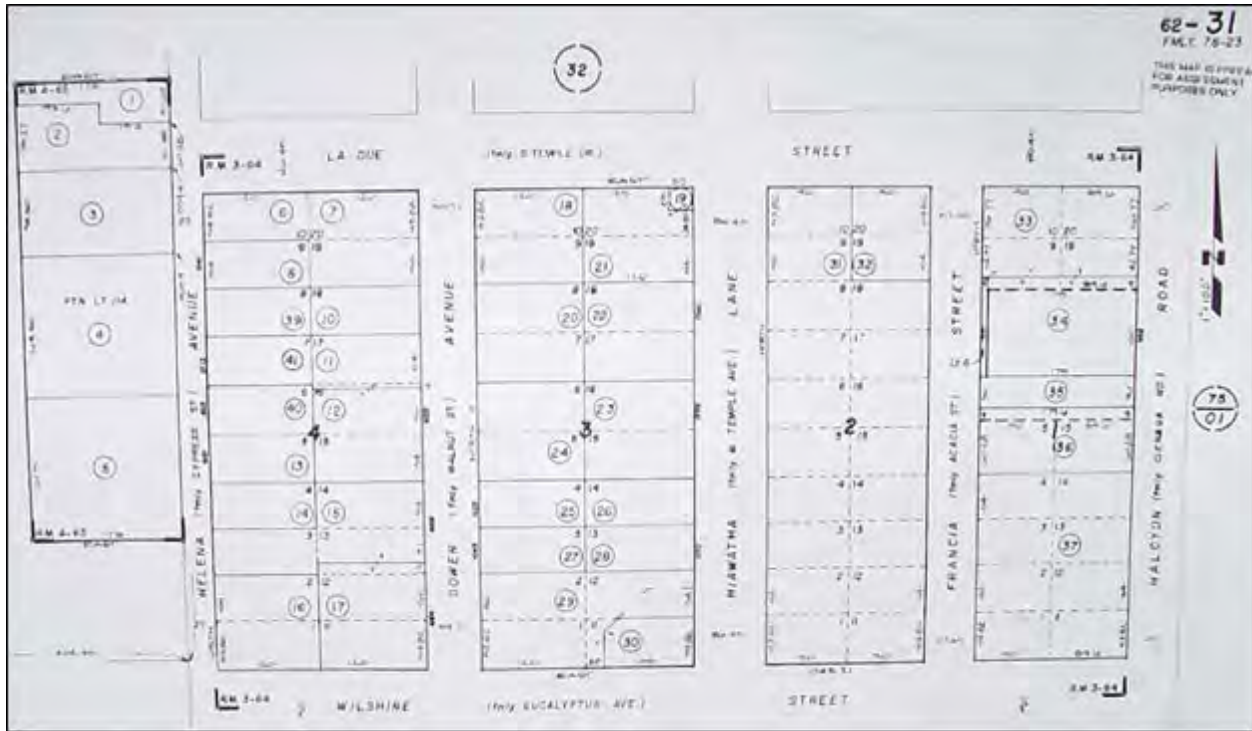
**Map 1.** Assessor's Map County of San Luis Obispo, Unrecorded Survey, 1906



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**Map 2.** Subdivision of Map 1, Assessor's Map, County of San Luis Obispo, September 1923



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**Map 3.** Location Map indicating latitude/longitude coordinates

NE Boundary (Halcyon Road and The Pike):	35.106313	-120.591645
SE Boundary (Hwy 1 and Halcyon Road):	35.098202	-120.592504
SW Boundary (Hwy 1 and Elm Street):	35.098202	-120.600443
NE Boundary (Elm Street and The Pike):	35.106418	-120.600529







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**Map 4b. Sketch Map—Detail**



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**Resource/Photo/Figure Table**

#	Name	Photo(s)	Figure(s)	Status
1	Blue Star Memorial Temple	2, 15, 16	1, 2, 3	contributing
2	Halcyon Store & US Post Office	13, 14	5a, 5b	contributing
3	Hiawatha Lodge	17	6a, 6b	contributing
4	William Quan Judge Library	18	7, 8	contributing
5	Halcyon University Center	19		noncontributing
6	Halcyon Cemetery	20		contributing
7	Halcyon Water Works			contributing
8	The Builders Grove	22		contributing
9	Kent/J.O.Varian/Colendich		10	contributing
10	Open Gate	21	9a, 9b	contributing
11	Munger/Foremaster			contributing
12	Hadden/Fast	50		noncontributing
13	Farrar/Clark	41		contributing
14	Tarbox/Rebow			contributing
15	Twistman/Pederson	27		contributing
16	Watts/Sigurd Varian/Lorance	36	11	contributing
17	Harrison/Rollison/Seehof	26		contributing
18	Volz/Drummond	25		contributing
19	Jahran/Colendich	28		contributing
20a	Carlberg Complex	30	12	contributing
20b	Carlberg Complex	32, 33	12	contributing
20c	Carlberg Complex	31	12	contributing
21a	Whitney/Stenquist/Clark Complex	46		contributing
21b	Whitney/Stenquist/Clark Complex			contributing
22	Awerdick/Lowman	37		noncontributing
23a	Ross Dairy Complex	49, 53		noncontributing
23b	Ross Dairy Complex	60		contributing
24	Townsend/Wheeler/Moiseyeva	39, 59		contributing
25	Veblen/Cowell/Smirnov	24		contributing
26	Mallory/Wright	47		noncontributing
27	Freeman/Zuniga			contributing
28	Guest House	35		contributing
29	Gourley/Rykman	34		contributing
30	Daniels/Forth	38		contributing
31	Wolff/Price	44, 45		contributing
32	Volz/Courtland/Nolen	40		contributing
33a	Hedin/Campbell Complex	29		contributing
33b	Hedin/Campbell Complex	61		noncontributing
34	Eric Varian	43	13	3 x contributing
35	Schussman/Gibson	52		noncontributing

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#	Name	Photo(s)	Figure(s)	Status
36	Tedford/Norman	42	14	noncontributing
37	Shumway/Rodriguez			2 x contributing
38	Gibson/Huetig/Arciniaga			contributing
39	Stenquist/Edmondson			noncontributing
40	Central Home	48		noncontributing
41	White			noncontributing
42	Temple Plumbing Shop			noncontributing
43	Temple Wood Shop			noncontributing
44	Mankins/Fast			noncontributing
45	Smith/Bell			noncontributing
46	D. Mallory/Nelson/Taylor	58		noncontributing
47	E. Varian/Rowlands			noncontributing
48	Parrish/Willey			noncontributing
49	Thyrring			noncontributing
50	Alber/Carlson	51		noncontributing
51	Brandt			noncontributing
52	Brkovich			noncontributing
53	Ertman			noncontributing
54	Balogh			noncontributing
55	Strohman			noncontributing

TOTAL

35 Contributing buildings

3 Contributing sites

25 Noncontributing buildings

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- Figure 5a Halcyon Store and US Post Office, 800 block of Halcyon Road, looking west from Halcyon Road, circa 1940
- Figure 5b Halcyon Store and US Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Road, looking south from the junction of Halcyon Road and LaDue Street, circa 1955
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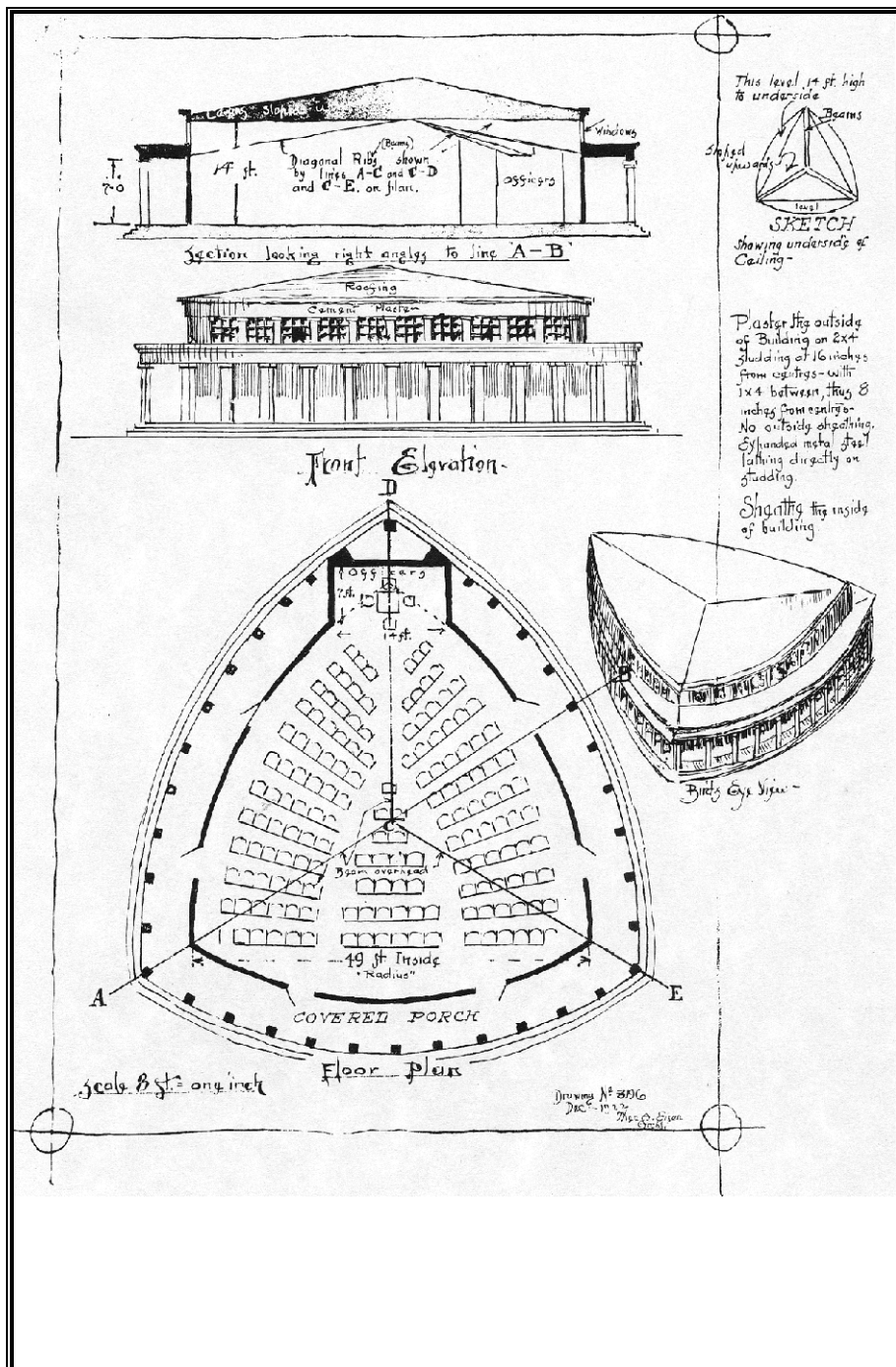
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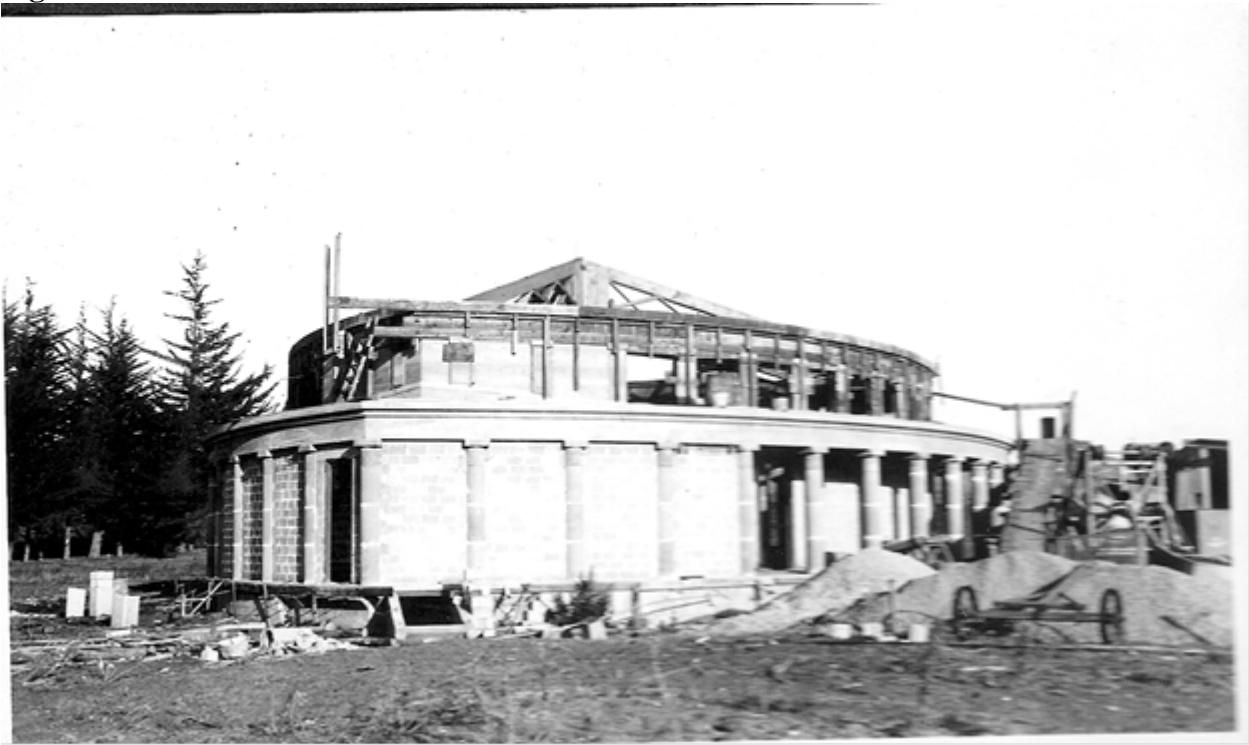
Figure 1.



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**Figure 2.**



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**Figure 3.**



**Figure 4.**



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**Figure 5a.**



**Figure 5b.**



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**Figure 6a.**



**Figure 6b.**



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**Figure 7.**



**Figure 8.**





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**Figure 9a.**



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**Figure 9b.**



**Figure 10.**





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**Figure 11.**



**Figure 12.**



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**Figure 13.**



**Figure 14.**











3199

The Temple of the People









TEMPLE ST  
HELENA ST





HIAWATHA LN

LA DUE ST









LA JOLLA  
HAWAIIA













DEAD  
END













SPEED  
LIMIT  
45  
YOUR  
SPEED  
37

EDNA BIRD  
RESTAURANT





HALCYON STORE  
POST OFFICE

HALCYON STORE  
POST OFFICE  
SINCE 1918

936 3  
WE  
ACCESSIBLE

HALCYON STORE  
WE OPEN BY APPOINTMENT

LOVE

OPEN

SPEED  
LIMIT  
45













Hammock Lodge













































2918





























1852





























WELCOME

1650





























2846

DAVID H









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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Halcyon Historic District**  
**Halcyon, San Luis Obispo County**  
**Staff Report**

Halcyon Historic District is located on the Central Coast of California about one mile east from the Pacific Ocean. The Temple of the People sanctuary, the Blue Star Memorial Temple, was designed by noted architect Theodore Eisen, and constructed by Temple members in 1923 and 1924. Its glowing white-pillared exterior marks the gateway for the community. Halcyon remains a rural oasis in a rapidly growing urban area. It covers 130 acres—16 square blocks—of what had been sage and lupine covered sand hills as well as rich black bottomland for farming. Temple members built small cottages and planted shrubs and trees that have grown over the years to transform the community into a wooded area. Homes are unique and in most cases form follows function. Thus each building in Halcyon is different. Halcyon is surrounded on the north and west by typical mid-twentieth century subdivisions, consisting of rows of almost identical single-family houses with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Groves of trees and open fields between these tracts and Halcyon block most of the view of urbanization. The neighboring urban growth has not impaired Halcyon and the town remains as envisioned by the founders. The residents adhere to philosophical ideals that keep the community in its rural park-like setting despite the pressures of growth. On the east and south the district is adjoined by commercial agricultural lands. The district retains historic integrity.

Halcyon Historic District is eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance, in order of importance, in the areas of **Community Planning and Development** because the district exemplifies a settlement pattern and town planning unique to socialist reformers in the United States from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century; **Exploration/Settlement** for being part of the wave of theosophical and utopian agricultural settlements moving from the East to California in the early twentieth century, introducing a collective scheme through the Temple Home Association, building exemplary vernacular bungalow/craftsman architecture and a unique theosophical temple; **Philosophy** for its commitment to an Anglo understanding of Native American culture, to socialist economic principles, and to the unity of religion and science through founding a nature cure sanatorium based on then-current Eclectic Medicine, Osteopathy, Naturopathy, and Electronic Reactions; **Religion** as an important illustration of the impact of the “first wave” of Theosophy and Eastern mysticism in America, and as a community founded and built according to religious and mystical principles, with a unique leadership structure; and **Social History** for being one of the most culturally oriented collective groups on the Central Coast through its emphases on education in the visual arts and pottery, public dramatic and musical performance (often by nationally recognized innovators), and scientific experimentation at the group’s sanatorium, which inspired several children in the community to practical breakthroughs in applied physics.

The Town of Halcyon was founded in 1903 by members of the Temple of the People, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society in America, who moved to California from Syracuse, New York. Halcyon remains much the same physically and in spirit as when it was founded in 1903. The period of significance closes in 1949, by which time the Sanatorium was sold and the Temple property consolidated to 130 acres. As a part of the large movement toward establishing utopian/intentional communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Halcyon is one of the few remaining such communities in California. The district meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property significant in the history of religion, among other themes, having secular scholarly recognition. A district in which only a small percentage of buildings are moved does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B. A cemetery that is nominated as part of a district and is not the focal point of the district does not need to meet Criteria Consideration D.

The property is nominated by the Temple of the People and the Halcyon Community Association. Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends the State Historical Resources Commission determine Halcyon Historic District is eligible under National Register Criterion A at the local level of significance with a 1903 to 1949 period of significance, meets Criteria Consideration A, and does not need to meet Criteria Considerations B and D. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing on the National Register.

Amy H. Crain  
State Historian II  
January 9, 2017

**OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

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February 7, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8th Fl.  
Washington D.C. 20005

Subject: **Halcyon Historic District  
San Luis Obispo County, California  
National Register of Historic Places Nomination**

Dear Mr. Loether:

**The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the HALCYON HISTORIC DISTRICT to the National Register of Historic Places.** On February 3, 2017 in Sacramento, California, the California State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A with a period of significance 1903 to 1949.

The district is significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Exploration/Settlement, Philosophy, Religion, and Social History. The Town of Halcyon was founded in 1903 by members of the Temple of the People, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society in America, who moved to California from Syracuse, New York. Halcyon remains much the same physically and in spirit as when it was founded in 1903. In 1949 the Sanatorium was sold and Temple property consolidated to 130 acres. As a part of the large movement toward establishing utopian/intentional communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Halcyon is one of the few remaining such communities in California. The district meets Criteria Consideration A as a religious property significant in the history of religion, among other themes, having secular scholarly recognition. A district in which only a small percentage of buildings are moved does not need to meet Criteria Consideration B. A cemetery that is nominated as part of a district and is not the focal point of the district does not need to meet Criteria Consideration D.

The property is nominated by the Temple of the People and the Halcyon Community Association. No letters have been received to date. If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Amy Crain of my staff at (916) 445-7009.

Sincerely,

Jenan Saunders  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosure