historical resource evaluation report
1753 gum street, san mateo, ca

completed for:
the city of san mateo
community development department

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submitted by:

architecture + history, llc
san francisco, ca
415 760 4318
bridget@architecture-history.com
www.architecture-history.com

I. Introduction

This historical resource evaluation was prepared by architecture + history, llc (a + h) at the request of the City of San Mateo Community Development Department, to determine whether the residence at 1753 Gum Street in San Mateo (APN 035-222-100) qualifies as an historical resource in accordance with Article 5, §15064.5 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

II. Methodology

The methodological approach for this historical property evaluation consisted of a site visit and research on the history of the property the neighborhood, and associated persons and events at the San Mateo Public Library, the Redwood City Public Library, the San Francisco Public Library, the San Mateo County Historical Association research archives in Redwood City, the San Mateo County Genealogical Society at Canada College Library in Redwood City, and with the City of San Mateo. Additional research was conducted online using Ancestry.com (Census Records) and the San Mateo County Genealogical Society website and databases. Further research was conducted using the in-house library of architecture + history, llc. Planning Staff at the San Mateo Community Development Department provided a + h with copies of building permit information for the property. Further, a + h consulted with the City's consulting arborist, Walt Fujii of Fujiitrees Consulting, regarding the fruit trees and remnant orchard on the property.

The research conducted at the San Mateo Public Library included a review of *San Mateo City Directories* dating back to the 1910s, general histories of San Mateo, and the library catalogue for any additional reference resources related to the properties. Additionally, the vertical file within the Library's California Collection was searched. This collection includes clipping files of topics from local newspapers from the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. A small portion of this collection can be found within the Online Archive of California

(OAC). The OAC was consulted with regard to long-term occupants and affiliated business of the properties and historic photographs of San Mateo.
Historic Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps of San Mateo (1908, 1920, and 1950) were viewed online through the San Francisco Public Library's online catalogue. Only the 1950 Sanborn Map shows this area of San Mateo, the area was not mapped earlier.[1]

Research conducted at the San Mateo County Historical Association archives included searching the card index by subject and then reviewing assorted clippings files, maps, photo albums and articles for information about the subject properties, associated persons, and general San Mateo history. Additionally, the 1989 *City of San Mateo Historic Building Survey* was consulted and the subject property was not surveyed in this earlier effort. There are two buildings several blocks away that were inventoried as part of the 1989 survey in Hayward Park: 1712 Ivy, a turreted, Queen Anne bungalow and a building at the intersection of Palm Avenue and South Boulevard.

In July 2014, a site visit was conducted to photograph the building and the surrounding setting and neighborhood. During the site visit, notes on the architectural features of the building and neighborhood were taken for later use to create site and building descriptions. Google Earth satellite images and maps were utilized for reference.

III. Historical Overview of San Mateo

The City of San Mateo was officially incorporated in 1894.[2] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the town of San Mateo was an outpost crossroads connecting the north-south rail lines with the east-west stagecoach route to the Pacific. San Mateo had its beginnings as a small village, with development typical of growth along the Peninsula below San Francisco. Train service to San Mateo commenced in October 1863. A wealthy San Franciscan and railroad director, Charles Polhemus, purchased a large swath of land near what became downtown San Mateo and laid out lots for sale in the late 1860s. As rail

service expanded, San Mateo became a frequent stop for travelers. The town was ideally situated mid-point on the Peninsula, where roads and rail lines between San Francisco and San Jose connected. Initially a popular summer community, San Mateo soon became a commuter town, a suburb of San Francisco, with families establishing year round homes, and businessmen commuting to the city via train service.

By the 1890s, the town had not extended much beyond Polhemus' original lot demarcations. The 1891 Sanborn Maps shows that development was clustered around the Railroad Depot near 2nd Street, and what would be become Railroad Avenue.[3] Richard Jury established a weekly newspaper, *the Leader*, in 1889. An industrious Irish carpenter, Robert Wisnom, built upon his earlier established lumber business and became a town leader at the turn of the century. The first two decades of the next century brought dramatic change to San Mateo; salt-harvesting operations dominated the baylands, nurseries cropped up on the hillsides, a country club was founded for affluent weekenders, early large estates were subdivided for suburban residential development and a commercial downtown began to take shape. A large-scale hotel, the Peninsula Hotel, was established in 1908 on the former estate of Alvinza Hayward. The hotel was moderately popular as a destination until it was destroyed by fire in 1920. During this period, residential areas of San Mateo expanded through development of fairly large subdivisions such as the Western Addition (1889), Bowie Subdivision (1897), San Mateo Heights (1904) and Hayward's Addition (also 1904 - which included the former Peninsula Hotel site).[4] San Mateo Park was laid out in three sections above El Camino Real between 1902 and 1904.[5]

By 1900, San Mateo had 1,832 residents. In 1903 the town was linked to San Francisco by an additional mode of transportation, trolleys, which coupled with refugees from the 1906 earthquake, resulted in expanded residential construction in the first two decades of the twentieth century. From 1900 to 1910, the city's population doubled to 4,384.

Downtown was growing and City Directories from this period list several general stores, two pharmacies, two bakeries, a jeweler, two furniture stores, three barbershops, and about a dozen saloons.

By 1920 there were almost 6,000 residents living in San Mateo. A second population boom occurred between 1920 and 1929, when San Mateo had 17,109 inhabitants. Building on its reputation as a summer destination for the elite, the town began to attract middle-class residents who desired the recreational opportunities and mild climate afforded along the Peninsula. Also in the 1920s, the extensive William Kohl estate, once part of Polhemus' lands, was subdivided, and an approximately 16-acre portion was purchased by the city to become Central Park, the first municipal park in the county.

During Prohibition, San Mateo and other parts of San Mateo County were known for their rum running, illegal saloons and speakeasies. The money made by transporting illegal liquor was staggering and gambling and prostitution accompanied the contraband. Bay Meadows race track, where the famous thoroughbred Seabiscuit won two races, was founded in 1934 and became one of the most successful west coast racing venues.

The expansion of the San Francisco International Airport (located on mudflats adjacent to San Bruno and purchased by the City of San Francisco in 1926) brought jobs and increased economic expansion to San Mateo, even during the Depression. Major Works Progress Administration (WPA) airport projects during the 1930s provided work relief and much needed economic stimulus to both San Francisco and the Peninsula.

World War II brought many service men and women to the Bay Area. Military installations and affiliated businesses further invigorated the post-Depression economy. San Mateo's Bay Meadow Race track was a popular entertainment venue for soldiers and

civilians alike, looking to forget wartime troubles. The track remained open primarily because portions proceeds of race gambling were donated to the War effort.

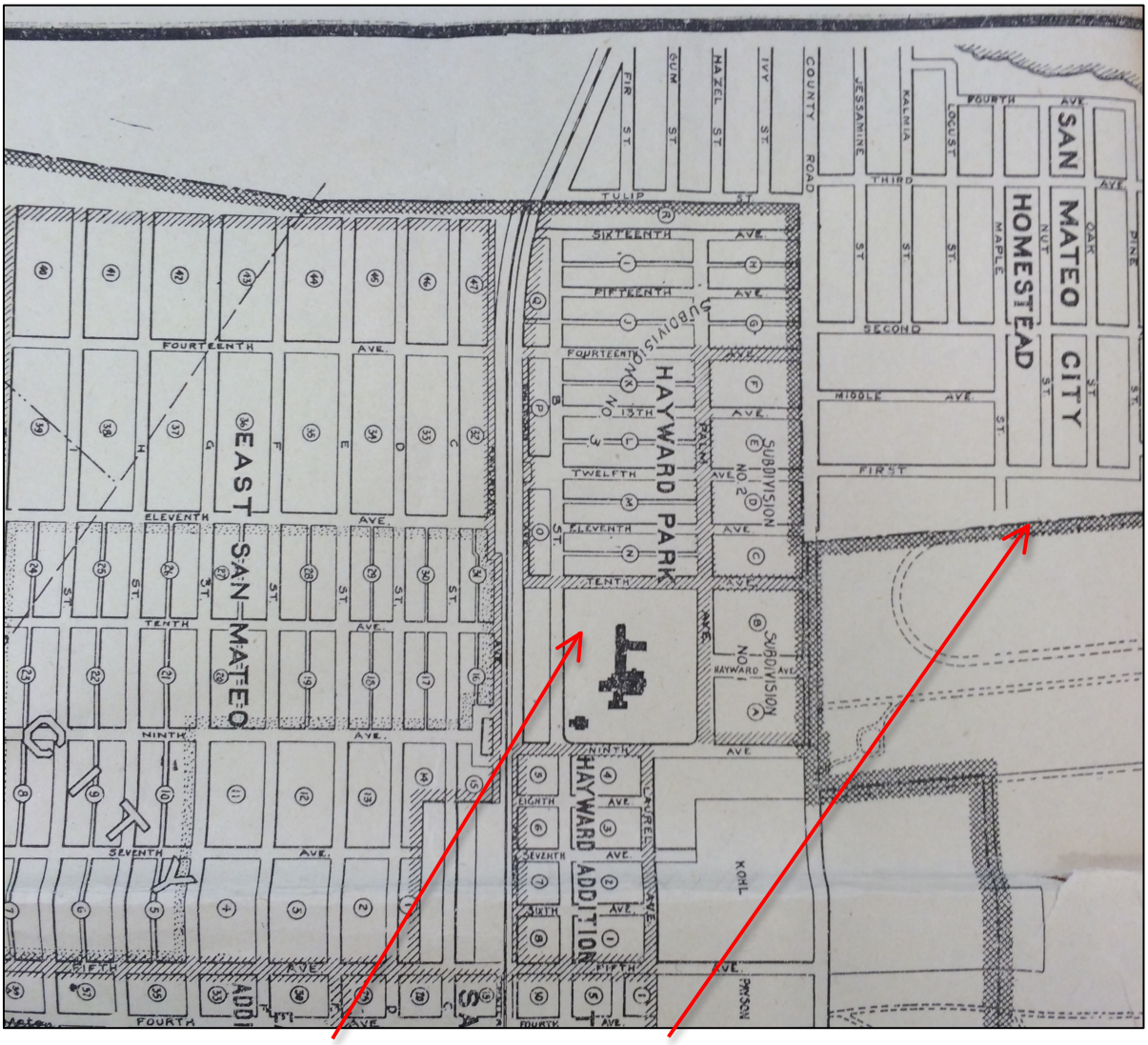
More than 10,000 San Mateo county men entered World War II, with over 300 losing their lives during service. Upon return to California after the war, these former military personnel contributed to major postwar development and expansion that was unprecedented in San Mateo County history. The "build out" of San Mateo and other Peninsula towns was extensive during this period. By the 1960s, the Peninsula's string of commuter towns contributed to the county's population that swelled close to half a million people. El Camino Real, the old county road, became a major thoroughfare lined with early suburban sprawl.

IV. Associated Historic Contexts

Land Use and Residential Development

For the purposes of this report, Gum Street runs north-south parallel to El Camino Real, at the end of the 1700 - 1800 block Gum Street turns at a roughly 90 degree angle and continues east one block to Leslie Street, where it terminates. The surrounding built environment consists of a mix of single- and multi-family dwellings from a range of eras of construction, as well as buildings with commercial and industrial uses. Highway 92 runs just south of the subject property. The Caltrain line and the Hayward Park station are to the east and downtown San Mateo is to the north. There is a concentrated commercial area along 17th Avenue between the Caltrain tracks and El Camino Real to the west.

The area immediately to the north from 10th to 16th Avenues and from El Camino to the Railroad Tracks was first subdivided in 1907 as Hayward Park Subdivision Number 3. At that time, the San Mateo City limits terminated at 16th Avenue. The area bounded by 16th Avenue to the north, El Camino Real to the west, the Railroad tracks to the East and 20th Avenue to the south, including Gum Street was not annexed in the City of San Mateo until the early 1920's. The area was not mapped for the effort to complete the 1920 Sanborn Map. A Map reproduced in the 1920 City Directory calls this area of San Mateo, "San Mateo City Homestead." The street names in this small area were all originally after trees or plants: Gum, Ivy, Fir, Tulip, Hazel, Kalmia, Locust, Maple, Nut, and Oak.[6] When Highway 92 was constructed, this area was reconfigured to accommodate the El Camino Real / Highway 92 exiting ramps.



The map located at the front of the 1920 San Mateo City Directory. The arrow on the left points to the Peninsula Hotel, the former estate of Alvinza Hayward. The arrow on the right points to the polo field that occupied a portion of the C. W. Clark estate (later annexed and subdivided as Aragon). Visible in the upper right hand corner of the map is the San Mateo City Homestead. The heavy shaded line indicates the San Mateo city limits in 1920.

Cultural Groups - Italians in San Mateo

The long-time residents of 1753 Gum, Bartolemeo and Theresa Casazza, were members of San Mateo's Italian-American community. The Italian community has a long history in San Mateo and San Mateo County, with nearly 600 Italians living in San Mateo by 1890 and close to 3,500 by 1920.[7] By far the City's most significant Italian-American was A. P. Giannani, who founded the Bank of Italy, which later became the Bank of America. Historian Mitchell P. Postal notes: "There were no real segregated neighborhoods for San Mateo's ethnic communities in those days before 1920, but the Japanese and Italians tended to live east and north of the center of town."[8] The Italian community had its own stores and businesses that were successful including Daba's, the Guido Brothers, and Rodolari's. These stores catered to old world tastes and needs selling "pasta, olive oil, Italian spices, special cheeses, salami, anchovies (dried and salted), dried codfish, and freshly baked Italian and French breads. . .Shopping at Italian-owned stores was an important social event."[9] The owners of these stores and businesses also became leaders in the Italian community.

See below for a further discussion of Bartolemeo and Theresa Casazza, but they does not appear to have played any significant role in the history of San Mateo, nor do they appear to have been important leaders within the Italian-American community in the city.

V. History of Subject Property

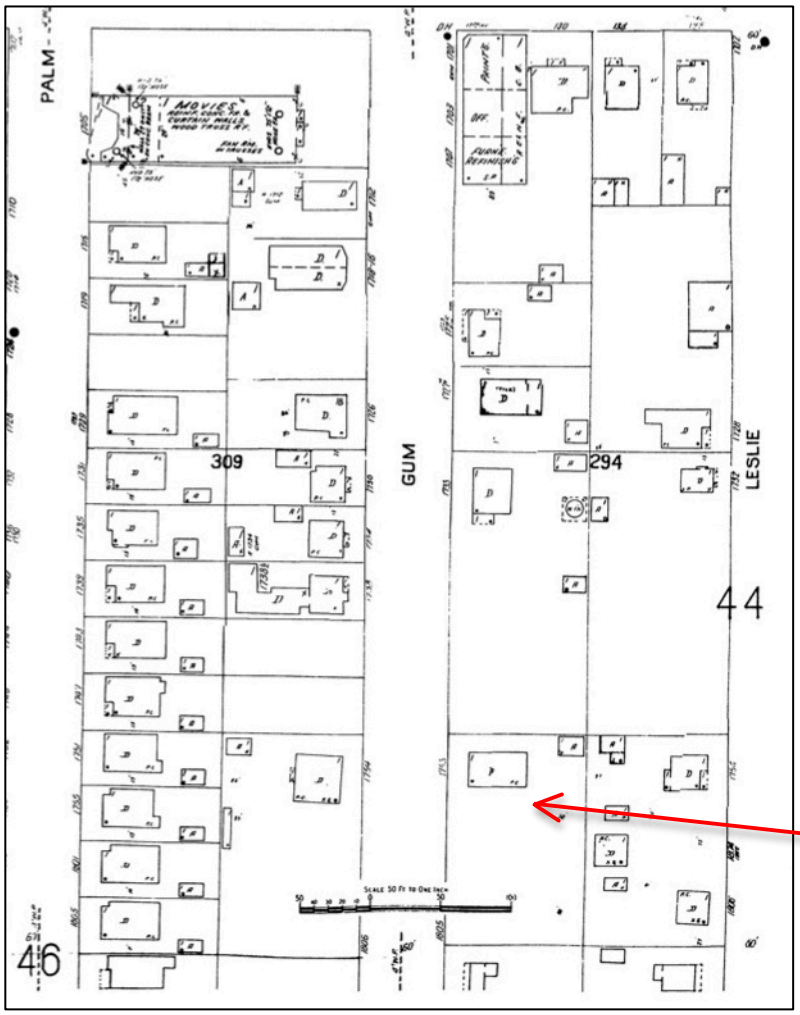
1753 Gum Street, San Mateo

Building and Site Chronology

An original building permit for the house was not located. The 1908 San Mateo Sanborn Map extended as far south as 8th Avenue. The 1920 San Mateo Sanborn Map extended to 16th and Palm, but 17th Avenue and Gum Streets were not mapped.[10] The house at 1753 Gum appears on the 1950 Sanborn Map, which illustrates a large lot with a small, rectangular-shaped house sitting toward the front, or western portion, of the lot. An auto garage was located at the northeastern-most corner of the lot. The remainder of the lot was unoccupied of buildings and was likely occupied by a small plum tree orchard.

The 1950 Sanborn Map indicates that many of the lots on the 1700 block of Gum Street had been built out with a mix of multi-unit residential properties, single family houses and several commercial buildings where Gum intersects with 17th Avenue. A number of the small houses illustrated on the map were located on large lots or multiple parcels. The Palm Theater was located nearby at Palm and 17th Avenue.[11]

A review of the few building permits that exist for the property indicate that the roof was replaced in 1968 by Theresa Casazza and then again in 1997 by John Casazza, son of Theresa and Bartolemeo Casazza. No other building permits were located documenting changes to the house.[12]



The red arrow points to 1753 Gum, illustrating the simple footprint of the house and garage. Note that the several properties to the north and the property across the street also consisted of small houses on fairly large lots.

A current view looking north down Gum Street toward 17th Avenue. The gable roof of 1753 Gum is visible just at the right hand side of the photograph. The street has many mature trees lining the sidewalk.

Occupants and Owners

The house at 1753 Gum Street was owned and occupied for many years by Italian immigrants Bartolemeo and Theresa Casazza. When they immigrated, Bartolemeo was 32 and Theresa was just 17 years old. The two are listed on the manifest list of the *SS La Savoie,* sailing from Le Havre, France, on October 4, 1913.[13] They are listed as husband and wife on the manifest. Bartolemeo was born in Italy on December 26, 1880.[14]

The earliest reference found to Bartolemeo Casazza in San Mateo County is associated with the San Mateo Burlingame Garbage Company in 1917, where he was likely an employee.[15] Then, on September 12, 1918, Casazza registered with the Armed Services. His Registration Card indicates Casazza was a farmer, owned his own business, and his address was simply listed as "Homestead" San Mateo.[16] Casazza first appears in the San Mateo City Directory in 1924 with an address listed as Route 1, Box 54D. However, it is possible that by this point he and his family were residing at 1753 Gum, but that the house had a rural route address. The Casazza's are not listed in the 1922 City Directory. This may be because Gum Street was not within the city limits at that time.

A search of the 1920 Census Records did not locate the names Bartolemeo or Theresa Casazza. By the 1928 City Directory the Casazza's address is identified at 1753 Gum. The 1930 Census lists the Casazza's as residing at 1753 Gum Street with their two children John (15) and Rose (11). Bartolemeo was 50 years old at that time and his occupation was listed as "garbage man", while Theresa had no occupation. They owned the house and it was valued at $2,000.[17] The 1930 City Directory lists Casazza as a "scavenger." The 1935 City Directory again lists the Casazza's at the Gum Street location, and Bartolemeo Casazza's occupation is listed as farmer; although, the 1930 Census Record does not identify their residence as a farm.[18]

The 1940 Census Record confirms that the Casazza's owned the Gum Street house, valued at $3,000 at the time. Their two children still lived with them, and at the time John was 25 and Rose was 21, both were identified as single.[19] By 1955, the San Mateo City Directory does not indicate an occupation for Casazza, implying that perhaps he was retired. The Casazza's would continue to reside at 1753 Gum until Bartolemeo died on May 31, 1964.[20] Theresa Casazza continued to live in the house until her death on December 23, 1976. The Casazza's heirs continued to own the house until just recently.

The San Mateo County Historical Society Archives, particularly the subject card catalogue, does not contain any references to the Casazza family. The San Mateo County Genealogical Society has a number of searchable databases that were checked for the Casazza name, including:

Clipping File Index by Name (no Casazza)
Obituary Index of local and regional newspapers (no Casazza)
Marriage Index 1853-1965 (no Casazza)
The Shellens Collection Index - contains the reference to Casazza at the San Mateo Burlingame Garbage Company in 1917.

VI. Architectural Analysis

Site and Building Description

Originally constructed circa 1915, the small, one-story, wood-frame house at 1753 Gum is situated at the northwestern portion of a large lot. The house is sided in horizontal wood siding, with a wider siding at the building base. The house is elevated above a crawl space, with the front entry accessed by a small stair of about 10 steps to the landing. The front door is paneled wood with a single glass light at the upper panel. There is a tripartite window at the south side of the front (west) elevation. The house has a gable roof running perpendicular to the street. Gable ends have exposed purlins and there is a generous overhang to the gable. There is a multi-light, wood window and a brick chimney at the north side of the house. The south elevation has several double-hung, wood windows. The southern portion of this large lot contains a remnant plum orchard.

The front (west) façade of 1753 Gum, looking east.

Architectural Style Employed

No original building permit was located for the house, but from visual inspection it appears to date to the early to mid-1910s. The house is a simple cottage with no strong defining stylistic features. It could be classified as "Folk Victorian." However, the cottage has no decorative elements that would adorn even a simple Folk Victorian house.

Historic Landscape

The southern portion of the lot at 1753 Gum Street contains remnants of a small plum tree orchard. The trees are not tended, nor irrigated and the fruit is very small. These multi-stem trees do not have a single stem trunk six inches or greater in diameter. Besides the plums, two loquats and two figs were observed on the lot. The trees are planted both in line (grid) and others were planted apparently at random. It is the professional opinion of the City's consulting arborist, Walt Fujii, that these plum trees have exceeded their customary and useful life expectations. The subject trees are in irreversible decline and are not suitable for preservation.[21]

VII. Application of California Register Criteria

Under that California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) resources that meet the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Determinations of historical significance require that several factors are considered including: the property's history (both construction and use); the history and context of the surrounding community; an association with important persons or uses; the number of resources associated with the property; the potential for the resources to be the work of a master architect, builder, craftsman, landscape gardener, or artist; the historical, architectural or landscape influences that have shaped the property's design and its pattern of use; and alterations that have taken place, and lastly how these changes may have affected the property's historical integrity.

These issues must be explored thoroughly before a final determination of significance can be established. To be eligible for the California Register historic resources must possess both historic significance and retain historic integrity. The following are the four significance criteria of the California Register. Upon review of the criteria, if historic significance is identified, then an integrity analysis is conducted. To be eligible for the California Register, an historical resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under at least one of the following criteria:

Criterion 1: Event or Patterns of Events

It is associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Historical research has determined that the house at 1753 Gum Street in San Mateo does not qualify under Register Criterion 1: Event/Patterns of Events. While the building possesses an association with the early development of the San Mateo

City Homestead, located to the south of downtown San Mateo, and it is one of the earlier houses in this area, this association does not rise to a level of significance to justify individual California Register eligibility. Further, while the house is associated with a family of Italian descent, it does not appear that this particular area of San Mateo was developed exclusively by Italian immigrants. There is no specific event or pattern of event associated with the house.

Criterion 2: Important Person(s)
It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

Historical research has determined that the building at 1753 Gum Street is not associated with any individuals who have had an important role in local, California or national history. While the Casazza family held a long association with the property, there is not a link between the family and local, state or national historical events of importance. Further, while the Casazza's were early Italian immigrants to San Mateo, they do not appear to have played any significant role in the overall history or development of San Mateo. As a result, this residence does not qualify under California Register Criterion 2: Important Person(s).

Criterion 3: Design/Construction
It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

While the house at 1753 Gum Street appears to be an early residence for this area of San Mateo, it does not embody the characteristics of a particular style or type of architecture, and its design and features do not rise to a level of significance to justify individual eligibility under Criterion 3. No architect has been identified through research and it does not appear to be the work of a master architect. The

house does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction that would result in historical significance. Further, while the remnant plum orchard is a rare feature within San Mateo, the orchard is beyond its useful life and lacks the integrity necessary to illustrate its association with the Casazza family.

Criterion 4: Information Potential
It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Evaluation of archeological resources was outside the scope of this report. There is the possibility that archaeological resources could be present on the site. This should be taken into consideration and standard monitoring practices should be employed if construction involves extensive excavation.

Since the house at 1753 Gum Street does not possess historical significance, a full analysis of integrity has not been undertaken.

VIII. Application of CEQA

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Public Resources Code §21084.1 provides that any project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Public Resources Code §5020.1(q) defines "substantial adverse change" as demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of the historical resource would be impaired. According to Public Resources Code §5024.1, an historical resource is a resource that is listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California

Register of Historical Resources; included in a local register of historical resources; or is identified as significant in a historic resource survey if that survey meets specified criteria.

According to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a)(3), a lead agency can find a resource has been determined to be significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided that the determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

The house at 1753 Gum Street does not meet the level of significance necessary to be individually eligible for the California Register. The property is not included in a local register of historic resources or designated as historically significant sites, nor has it been identified or documented in previous historic resource survey efforts or documentation projects.

IX. Conclusions & Recommendations

The older residential structure at 1753 Gum does not possess historical significance, it is not a strong example of a style or type, it was not designed by a master architect, and it is not associated with important events or persons. It is the professional opinion of architecture + history, llc (a + h) that the property is not eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources and therefore, does not qualify as a historic resource under CEQA Guidelines §15064.5(a)(3).

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XI. Endnotes

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[1] San Mateo Sanborn Maps, San Francisco Public Library Online.

[2] Research for the Historical Overview section of this report was generally taken from Alan Hynding. *From Frontier to Suburb: the Story of the San Mateo Peninsula* (1982); Mitchell Postel. *San Mateo: A Centennial History* (1994); and Frank Stanger. A History of San Mateo County (1938).

[3] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, 1891 San Mateo Map, Sheet 1.

[4] Arthur Schade, "The Development of San Mateo Through Subdivision and the History of the City Limits of San Mateo," Maps, 1 – 7, 9, and 12.

[5] Ibid, Maps 8, 10 and 13.

[6] Frontispiece Map. City of San Mateo City Directory, 1920.

[7] Hynding, 164 and 189. Also, Elaine Thomas. "In Pursuit of a Dream: The Italians in San Mateo County," *La Peninsula*, Fall 1981.

[8] Postel, 143.

[9] Postel, 163.

[10] 1908 and 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

[11] 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

[12] City of San Mateo Building Permits 1997 and 1968.

[13] Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States. *SS La Savoie*, October 4, 1913.

[14] Casazza, Bartolemeo, September 12, 1918, United States Selective Service System Draft Registration Card World War I.

[15] Shellens Collection Index. San Mateo County Genalogical Society. Reference to Casazza as employee of Garbage Company.

[16] Casazza, Bartolemeo, September 12, 1918, United States Selective Service System Draft Registration Card World War I.

[17] United States Census Record 1930. San Mateo, California. Township 29. Enumeration District No. 41-31. April 9, 1930.

[18] San Mateo City Directories and 1930 Census Record.

[19] United States Census Record 1940. San Mateo, California. Township 2. Enumeration District 41-44. April 9, 1940.

[20] California Death Index. 1964

[21] Correspondence with Christy Usher, Planner, City of San Mateo and Walt Fujii, Fujiitrees Consulting, the City of San Mateo's consulting arborist. August 6 – 7, 2014. Based on a site visit on August 6, 2014.