

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

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

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

1. Name

historic Dunker House

and/or common

RECEIVED

JAN 29 1981

OHP

2. Location

street & number 420 Maple Street

not for publication

city, town Palo Alto

vicinity of

congressional district 12th

state California code 06

county Santa Clara

code 085

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process
☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military

☐ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. G.C. Hoyt

street & number 420 Maple Street

city, town Palo Alto

vicinity of

state California 94301

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County courthouse

street & number 70 W. Hedding

city, town San Jose

state California 95110

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historical & Architectural Resources of
title the City of Palo Alto

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date February 1979

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Planning Dept., City of Palo Alto

city, town Palo Alto

state California

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

In the early '20s a Palo Alto real estate firm composed of Hare, Brewer, & Clark promoted the "Crescent Park Addition to the City of Palo Alto". This was the largest single addition that had been promoted and went all the way from Chaucer Street to the creek on both sides of University Avenue. It was also the first subdivision which made an effort to attain architectural merit by setting minimum costs for the building which was to be erected. The early effects were disappointing, as several of the first houses built by contractors on "free lots" were of indifferent merit, "pseudo-Spanish" or worse.

Mr. and Mrs. John Dunker, prominent Palo Alto citizens, selected this lot at the end of Maple along the San Francisquito Creek, as both they and their architect (Birge M. Clark) regarded it as one of the best lots in the subdivision. The house itself has a length of over 100 feet on Maple and encloses on three sides a patio as shown on the enclosed sketch plan. This patio was and is still used for living purposes and serves as a setting for occasional musical entertainments. In 1926 the open end to the south was enclosed by trees and heavy shrubbery, but the landscape architect, Leslie Kiler, soon designed a wall and wishing well to enclose the fourth side. The patio has a long cloister on the west side and on the east a two-story wing with overhanging balcony above the arched windows of a solarium. The timber of the cloister and the balcony have heavily "adzed" surfaces. The interior rooms which "flow together" through arches, have wide plank oak floors, textured plaster, and a beamed cathedral ceiling in the living room. The heavy wrought iron stair rail and spindles is characteristic of the California style. The house itself has had no significant alterations whatsoever, other than painting of plaster on both the inside and outside. The original planting remains substantially as laid out by the landscape architect, except that it has become, after half a century, heavily overgrown, as can be seen on Maple Street where the little magnolias which are barely noticeable in the 1929 photograph are now huge 40-foot trees. The low brick wall along Maple Street was added subsequently by Leslie Kiler and minor additions and alterations by subsequent owners were made.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1926 **Builder/Architect** Birge M. Clark, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Wells Goodenough, Builder
Leslie Kiler, Landscape Architect

In 1926 the Dunker house was one of the first two houses to be built in Palo Alto in the Early California or Spanish style as it was then called, California Colonial as it is often known today. The Pettigrew house on Cowper Street by George Washington Smith of Santa Barbara was the other. The two houses were built simultaneously, and it was not believed that either architect knew anything about the other house. The Dunker house was designed by Birge M. Clark, architect. Leslie Kiler, the landscape architect was also the son-in-law of the Dunkers and participated as an owner. Birge Clark, who had been trained in art and engineering at Stanford, followed by three years in architecture at Columbia, returned from two years in the Air Force service in World War I to design the Herbert Hoover house with his father, Professor Arthur B. Clark.

Following the completion of the Hoover home in 1920, Birge worked with his father and presently began his own practice in 1922. This included in 1924 seven small Early California style cottages built by Mrs. Hoover for young married instructors. He also designed various other homes, none as pretentious as the Dunker house. He did, however, design Early California style stores and commercial buildings on Ramona Street in 1924 and the Palo Alto Post Office in 1931-32.

Immediately following World War I, the so-called Mission Revival, or Spanish Colonial or Early California Style was evolving rapidly. The City of Santa Barbara espoused this style with enthusiasm, and the work of George Washington Smith, a Santa Barbara architect, became well known. The style as it was evolving had thick walls with the appearance of masonry, iron grilles, balconies, deeply recessed and paneled front doors, and always tile roofs. Many of these houses seemed to turn their back on the street, so to speak, and the main rooms normally opened into a patio or a partial patio. The second floor fenestration was minor and informal. Many of these elements occur in the Dunker residence with the exception of the Maple Street elevation; as a transitional house in Birge's work, it is a little more formal with a strong vertical axis of the two-story portion and then the stepped down roof running from the higher roofs of the living room, dining room, and down to the wall and gate of the service yard. It should be noted that the tile roof is graded from light tile at the eaves to darker tile at the ridge. Birge felt that this early "California Colonial" was an indigenous style developed in California and eminently suited to the increasingly informal indoor-outdoor life of the 20's and 30's. Eventually, the Pettigrew house by George Washington Smith and the Dunker house by Birge Clark were to have a definite impact on Palo Alto architecture, although it did not come all at once as the first reaction of many people was that it was too severe, lacking the filigree and small tile copings, etc. of the pseudo-Spanish and Mission Revival styles. Birge always felt that the Dunker residence was a definite ancestor of the large and more pretentious Charles and Kathleen Norris residence on Cowper Street.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Palo Alto Historical Association Archives

10. Geographical DataAcreage of nominated property 3/4 +Quadrangle name Palo Alto, CaliforniaQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 10 575 225 870
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 3639 Block III Crescent Park, Palo Alto, Assessor's No. 3-6-39: The lot commences at center of San Francisquito Creek 231' + along SW side of Maple Street then 150' SW, then 231' NW to center of S.F. creek then NE along center of creek to point of origin.

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

state Ca code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Birge M. Clark, Architect

organization Palo Alto Historical Association

date July 15, 1980

street & number 3200 Hanover Street

telephone (415) 492-4545

city or town Palo Alto

state California 94304

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature K. Mullen

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-13-81

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

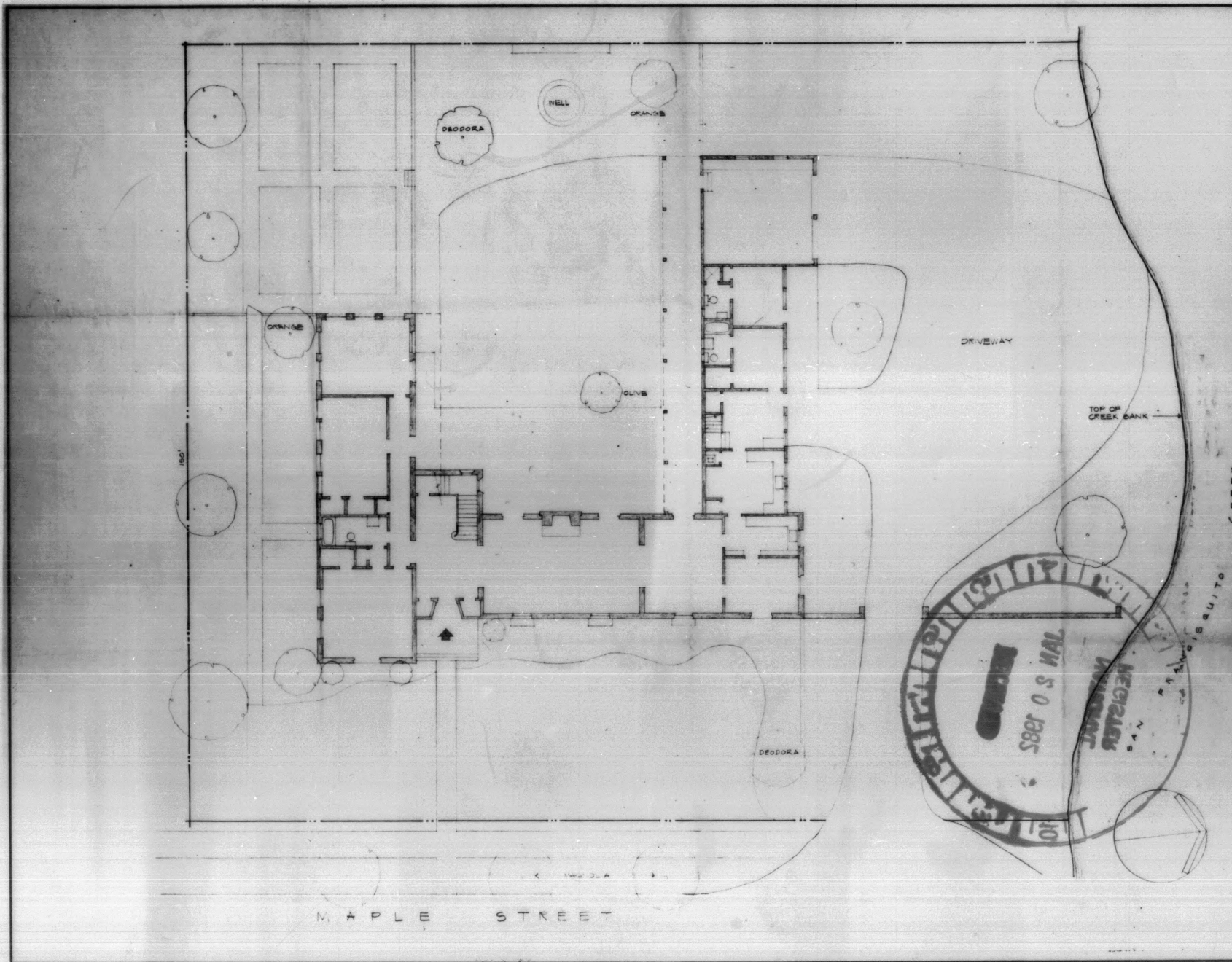
date 2/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



**CLARK, STROMQUIST
& SANDSTROM**
ARCHITECTS

1000 MARKET STREET - FREDERICK, CALIFORNIA 94501
1930-1931

ROBERT A. CLARK, F.A.A.
WALTER STROMQUIST, F.A.A.
PAUL W. SANDSTROM, F.A.A.
EDITH G. SANDSTROM, F.A.A.
JOHN L. SANDSTROM, F.A.A.



SITE PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

ORIGINAL HOUSE FOR:
MR. & MRS. JOHN DUNKER
420 MAPLE STREET
PALO ALTO
BUILT IN 1926

JOB NUMBER	SHEET NUMBER
DATE 16 JANUARY 51	1 OF 1 SHEETS

FEB 10 1951



DUNKER HOUSE

FEB 19 1982

420 Maple Street, Palo Alto

Santa Clara County, California

Photographer - Carolyn Caddes

Photo taken - 1979

View - looking southeast

JAN 20 1982

177



Bertram Crandall 29

DUNKER HOUSE

420 Maple Street, Palo Alto
Santa Clara County, California

Photographer - Berton Crandall

Photo taken - 1926-27

View - From Maple Street looking southeast

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

2 9 7

Berton
Crandall
Palo Alto, Calif.
Photographs

DUNKER RESIDENCE - 1926

Birge M. Clark, Architect



Dunker

DUNKER RESIDENCE

Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California

Photo by Berton Crandall, 1927

Negative: Birge Clark, Palo Alto, CA

Camera facing North

3 of 7

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982



Photo: John A. Dunker House
Patio, taken 1927

Note plaster texture on
chimney.



DUNKER RESIDENCE

Palo Alto, California Santa Clar County

Photo by Carolyn Caddes, 1981

Negative: Birge Clark, Palo Alto, CA

Camera facing east

4 of 7

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

Dunker Residence - patio

1981

47

photograph by carolyn caddes



DUNKER RESIDENCE

Palo Alto, Santa Clara Co., California

Photo by Carolyn Caddes, 1981

Negative: Birge Clark, Palo Alto, CA

Camera facing south

5 of 7

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

Dunker Residence

1981

57

photograph by carolyn caddes



DUNKER RESIDENCE
Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California
Photo by Carolyn Caddes, 1981
Negative: Birge Clark, Palo Alto, CA
Interior view
6 of 7

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

Dunker Residence
1981

6 of 7

photograph by carolyn caddes



DUNKER RESIDENCE

Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California

Photo by Carolyn Caddes, 1981

Negative: Birge Clark, Palo Alto, CA
Interior view

7 of 7

FEB 19 1982

JAN 20 1982

Dunker Residence

1981

2 of 7

photograph by carolyn caddes