

## MEMORANDUM

DATE	April 11, 2019	PROJECT NO.	16252
TO	Elena Lee, Planner	PROJECT	340 Portage Avenue
OF	City of Palo Alto	FROM	Christina Dikas, Senior Architectural Historian, Page & Turnbull, and Robert Watkins, Project Assistant, Page & Turnbull
CC	Ruth Todd, Principal, Page & Turnbull		

REGARDING: **NVCAP Windshield Survey and Preliminary Historic Resource Eligibility Analysis**

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### Introduction & Purpose

Page & Turnbull has prepared this memorandum at the request of the City of Palo Alto to assess the potential historic significance of properties within the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP). Coupled with an in-depth Historic Resource Evaluation for the former cannery property that comprises 340 Portage Avenue and 3201-3225 Ash Street, the purpose of this study is to identify potential historic resources that may be affected by the implementation of the NVCAP. This document offers a brief historic context of Palo Alto and, in particular, the vicinity of the present NVCAP Planning Area. Page & Turnbull conducted a windshield survey of the buildings that are 50 years or older within the Planning Area and made a preliminary determination of their eligibility as individual resources or as contributors to a potential historic district eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Results from this survey are contained in an attached table (**Attachment A**). A short analysis follows that briefly characterizes the area's construction dates, building types, and architectural styles.

### Methodology

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a windshield survey of the Planning Area on November 23, 2019. Windshield surveys are the most high-level of historic resource survey types, followed by reconnaissance surveys and intensive surveys. When a windshield method is employed, surveyors drive or walk the streets of a community to take representative photos and make notes of the buildings, structures, and landscape characteristics they see. The main goal of a windshield survey is to get a general picture of the property types, architectural styles, and the character of the neighborhood and/or to gain a preliminary understanding of individual properties.

The windshield survey for the NVCAP Planning Area was conducted for properties 50 years or older because this is the age threshold specified by the National Register of Historic Places and typical practice for considering buildings for potential historic significance as part of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review.

Aided with a list of parcels and construction dates in the NVCAP from Palo Alto's GIS database, Page & Turnbull photographed each age-eligible property. A historic context previously prepared by Page & Turnbull on the development of Mayfield and Palo Alto was referenced (and is included in the following section). Page & Turnbull also undertook limited historic research, including historic aerial photographs, to develop a brief context for the Ventura neighborhood. Following limited historic research, Page & Turnbull recorded preliminary findings of historic resource eligibility in the survey spreadsheet.

## Historic Context

### Mayfield/Palo Alto History and Development

The earliest known inhabitants of the land that now makes up Palo Alto were the Ohlone people. The region was colonized by Gaspar de Portola in 1769 as part of the Spanish territory of Alta California. The Spanish and Mexican governments carved the area into large ranchos, and the land that would become Palo Alto spanned across several of these land grants. The land grants were honored in the cession of California to the United States during the 1840s, but parcels were subdivided and sold throughout the nineteenth century.

The Planning Area is situated within what once constituted Mayfield, the earliest township within the current boundaries of Palo Alto. Mayfield was established around the present intersection of California Avenue and El Camino Real in 1855 and developed into the California Avenue commercial district. In 1882, railroad magnate and California politician Leland Stanford purchased 1,000 acres adjacent to Mayfield to add to his large estate in northwestern Santa Clara County. Stanford's vast holdings became known as the Palo Alto Stock Farm. After Leland and Jane Stanford's teenage son, Leland Jr., died in 1884, the couple chose to create a university in his honor. Using their Stock Farm land, the Stanfords established Leland Stanford Junior University, which opened in 1891.

In 1886, Stanford considered siting the university's entrance in Mayfield to bolster ties between the fledgling institution and the existing town. However, when Stanford requested the town become a Temperance Town, Mayfield declined the benefactor's support, reluctant to close its 13 saloons. Accordingly, Stanford looked elsewhere to develop a dry college town and his friend and Southern Pacific Railroad colleague, Timothy Hopkins, developed 740 acres of private land into a new townsite northwest of Mayfield, called University Park, later to become Palo Alto by 1894.

Mayfield and Palo Alto continued to develop independently of one another, enlarging their respective boundaries through a patchwork of grid additions, divided by the railroad tracks that ran between San Jose and San Francisco. In the first decade of the twentieth century, a local streetcar and interurban railway more integrally linked Mayfield and Palo Alto. However, the two cities developed distinct identities, with Palo Alto attracting wealthier residents, often associated with the university, while Mayfield was considered less affluent. By 1925, Palo Alto annexed its smaller neighbor.

Palo Alto was one of the first California cities to establish a City Planning Commission (CPC). In 1917, zoning matters were tasked to this advisory commission in order to control development and design. Regulations on signage, public landscaping and lighting, and appropriateness within

residential areas fell under the purview of the CPC. From this early period, Palo Alto maintained control over the built environment, which resulted in its relatively low density and consistent aesthetic. However, the zoning controls in the early part of the twentieth century played a part in the racial segregation of the city and the exclusion of certain groups from residential areas. Several neighborhoods were created with race covenants regarding home ownership and occupation, until this practice was ruled unconstitutional in 1948.<sup>1</sup> The university's precedence in Palo Alto prevented factories or other large industries from developing in the city, limiting the range of people who would populate the area.

Like the rest of the nation, Palo Alto endured the Great Depression in the 1930s and did not grow substantially. World War II brought an influx of military personnel and their families to the Peninsula and when the war ended, Palo Alto saw rapid growth. Many families who had been stationed on the Peninsula's military bases or who had worked in associated industries chose to stay. During the post-war Baby Boom, Palo Alto's population more than doubled, from 16,774 in 1940 to 33,753 in 1953.<sup>2</sup> Stanford University also steadily attracted residents and development throughout the twentieth century. Palo Alto's University Avenue commercial center greatly expanded in the late 1940s and 1950s with new offices and light industry that diminished the city's strict "college town" reputation.<sup>3</sup>

Palo Alto annexed a vast area of mostly undeveloped land between 1959 and 1968. This area, west of the Foothill Expressway, has remained protected open space. Small annexations continued into the 1970s, contributing to the city's current irregular footprint. Palo Alto remains closely tied to Stanford University, which remains the city's largest employer. It is also an essential Silicon Valley city, and technology remains integral to Palo Alto's economy. Palo Alto consciously prides itself in its extensive conservation of open land, and the city's built environment is characterized by gridded streets and a generally suburban density.

#### Ventura History and Development

Though the town of Mayfield predates its more prosperous neighbor to the north, southern Palo Alto neighborhoods remained largely undeveloped in the early twentieth century. While a historic aerial photography from 1941 indicates that many gridded streets had been laid out, few houses populated these new roads (**Figure 1**). The highest concentration of houses was near Mayfield's historic core, at the intersection of California Avenue and El Camino Real. Commercial buildings lined these two roads, and industrial activities, such as Bayside Canning Company, were situated near the railroad tracks.

After World War II, residential development in southern Palo Alto neighborhoods accelerated rapidly, as new homeowners flocked into ubiquitous, modestly-sized tract housing that was constructed on previously undeveloped streets. While official and de facto practices continued to regulate and ensure the physical separation of Palo Alto's white, black, and Latino residents through the early 1960s, some areas of the city were more accommodating; for instance, the Ventura neighborhood

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<sup>1</sup> Corbett and Bradley, "Palo Alto Historic Survey Update," 1-7.

<sup>2</sup> "Depression, War, and the Population Boom," Palo Alto Medical Foundation- Sutter Health, website accessed 11 June 2013 from: <http://www.pamf.org/about/pamfhistory/depression.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Comprehensive Plan," section L-4.

had a substantial number of black and Latino residents.<sup>4</sup> Historic aerial photography suggests that by the 1960s, Ventura's residential lots were largely built out (**Figure 2**).



Figure 1: 1941 aerial photograph of Ventura and surrounding area. NVCAP Planning Area highlighted in orange. Source: UCSB Historic Aerials Collection.



Figure 2: 1965 aerial photograph of Ventura and surrounding area. NVCAP Planning Area highlighted in orange. Source: UCSB Historic Aerials Collection.

## NVCAP Windshield Survey

On January 23, 2019, Page & Turnbull conducted a survey of properties 50 years or older within the NVCAP bounds. **Attachment A** contains the results of the survey, including addresses, construction dates, preliminary historic resource eligibility findings, and photographs.

## Survey Analysis

### Construction Dates

The former cannery at 340 Portage Avenue represents the oldest surviving development within the NVCAP bounds and was constructed in 1918. Residential lots on Pepper Avenue were largely built out by World War II, but most other surveyed structures in the Planning Area were erected following the war. For example, of the properties 50 years or older on Olive Avenue, 17 were constructed in 1946, while one was built in 1904, one in 1940, one in 1942, one in 1948, and two in 1968. Commercial buildings along Lambert Avenue, Park Boulevard, and El Camino Real were built in the following decades, especially in the early 1960s.

<sup>4</sup> Hilbert Morales, "What is happening," *El Observador*, San Jose, April 1, 2016, <https://el-observador.com/2016/04/01/what-is-happening-is-gentrification/>;



### Building Types & Massing

Most surveyed residences in the Planning Area are stucco-clad, one- and one-and-a-half-story buildings. The houses have unelaborated rectangular massing and simple gable roofs, oriented either parallel with or perpendicular to the street. Most of the residences have small front porches with gable or shed roofs, as well as small, attached single-car garages. The houses have little to no ornamentation, and nearly all the houses along Olive Avenue adhere to three or four common plans. The residential architecture within the NVCAP Planning Area is representative of mid-twentieth-century mass-produced tract housing found in suburban communities around the United States.

Non-residential development in the Planning Area that is 50 or more years old is clustered along El Camino Real, Lambert Avenue, and Park Boulevard. The buildings adhere to development patterns common to the mid-twentieth century, with an assortment of unadorned concrete block or stucco commercial buildings and garages, as well as a two-story courtyard motel. Most of the commercial buildings have no ornamentation; at most, variations in roof massing or wall cladding provide primary visual interest. Some concrete block buildings have brick cladding on their primary facades, and two otherwise unassuming buildings along El Camino Real have clay-tile mansard roofs.

### **Preliminary Evaluation**

Based on the windshield survey and preliminary research, none of the buildings that were surveyed in the Planning Area appear to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, either as individual resources or contributors to a potential historic district. Most of the houses were built at the end of the Sutter Packing Company cannery's operation, which continued to 1949 (see Page & Turnbull's Historic Resource Evaluation for 340 Portage Avenue). No historical information has been uncovered for this preliminary memorandum that associates the construction of the houses along Olive and Pepper Avenues with the cannery, nor would such an association have been particularly significant at the end of the canning company's operation. More likely, the residences are representative of suburban postwar development in Palo Alto. However, there are numerous other examples of post-World War II tract housing in Palo Alto, the Bay Area, and across the United States. The commercial and industrial buildings within the NVCAP Planning Area are similarly of little architectural note, and many similar mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings can be found elsewhere.

While the Ventura neighborhood had more African American and Latino residents than other areas of Palo Alto in the mid-twentieth century, preliminary research did not find that the area's history of accommodating underrepresented communities rises to a level of significance to warrant historic designation in the National Register or California Register. cursory research on the Ventura neighborhood was difficult because few newspaper articles, webpages, or other sources refer to the area as a distinct neighborhood. Further research into the developers of the Pepper and Olive Avenue houses, their housing policies in comparison with other Palo Alto neighborhoods, and relevant community organizations including the Ventura Neighborhood Association may uncover additional historic contexts that have the potential to distinguish the neighborhood for its associations with the city's African American or Latino communities.

Otherwise, the windshield survey of buildings 50 years or older within the NVCAP Planning Area did not identify any potential individual historic resources or districts.

**Attachment A**





# Preliminary Findings of Historic Resource Eligibility in the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan

**DRAFT**





FEBRUARY 21, 2019





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PAGE & TURNBULL





APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-26-076	3197 Park Boulevard	LI	GM	Commercial/ Manufacturing		none	10215	170x147	1961	N		
132-32-024	395 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-32-025	385 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998	none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-32-026	375 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998	none	801	50x119	1946	N		







APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-32-027	365 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-32-028	345 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998	none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-32-029	315 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-32-030	305 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x120	1948	N		

APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-32-031	295 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1601	50x110	1946	N		
132-32-032	285 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x98	1946	N		
132-32-033	275 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	801	50x83	1946	N		
132-32-034	265 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	801	50x63	1946	N		







APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-32-036	3040 Park Boulevard	LI	GM	Commercial/ Manufacturing		none	1740	130x95	1964	N		
132-37-004	430 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	942	50x134	1940	N	1940 house demolished; new building under construction.	
132-37-005	440 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	2400	50x135	1953	N		
132-37-024	420 Olive Avenue	LI	GM	Commercial/ Manufacturing		none	2450	50x120	1968	N		





APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-025	430 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1021	50x119	1946	N		
132-37-027	450 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1651	50x119	1942	N	House largely obscured by vegetation	
132-37-028	456 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	832	50x119	1904	N		
132-37-029	470 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	3710	50x120	1968	N		






APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR? (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-033	2905 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	6400	96x150	1950	N		
132-37-034	473 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1360	50x119	1920	N	Alternate address for 471 Pepper Avenue. See entry below.	
132-37-034	471 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1360	50x119	1920	N	1920 house demolished; new building under construction.	
132-37-035	461 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	1065	50x119	1940	N		





APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-036	451 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	995	50x119	1939	N		
132-37-037	441 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	995	50x119	1939	N		
132-37-039	421 Pepper Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	1256	50x119	1940	N		
132-37-042	399 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	801	50x139	1946	N		








APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-044	411 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	819	50x119	1940	N		
132-37-045	421 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1021	50x119	1946	N		
132-37-046	431 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	801	50x119	1946	N		
132-37-047	441 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	960	50x119	1946	N		

APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-048	451 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family	"Deemed NOT eligible for the CRHR or the NRHP in 1998"	none	749	50x119	1946	N		
132-37-053	405 Olive Avenue	SF	R-1	Residential Single-Family		none	1137	55x139	1946	N		
132-37-055	3017 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	2988	69x150	1968	N		
132-37-055	3051 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	2988	69x150	1968	N	Alternate address for 3017 El Camino Real. See entry above.	







APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-37-056	3001 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	6112	71x200	1930	N		
132-38-011	3275 Ash Street	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	1122	100x90	1900	N		
132-38-013	3251 Ash Street	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	4760	50x141	1952	N		
132-38-017	460 Lambert Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	900	50x199	1937	N		


APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-38-020	3265 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	0	50x150	1960	N	Parcel contains a hotel pool, hidden by a construction fence.	
132-38-021	3255 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	7988	100x150	1953	N		
132-38-042	3201 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	7000	150x150	1959	N	Alternate address for 3225 El Camino Real. See entry below.	
132-38-042	3225 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	7000	150x150	1959	N		


APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-38-042	3215 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	7000	150x150	1959	N	Alternate address for 3225 El Camino Real. See entry above.	
132-38-046	3250 Ash Street	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential	Deemed potentially eligible for the CRHR in 1998	none	4412	100x166	1948	N		
132-38-048	270 Lambert Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	6228	98x159	1963	N	The addresses of 270 Lambert Avenue and 268 Lambert Avenue share a building and an APN.	
132-38-048	268 Lambert Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	6228	98x159	1963	N	The addresses of 270 Lambert Avenue and 268 Lambert Avenue share a building and an APN. See entry above for photo.	



APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-38-056	450 Lambert Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	26320		1961	N	The addresses of 450 Lambert Avenue and 430 Lambert Avenue share a building and an APN.	
132-38-056	430 Lambert Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	26320		1961	N	The addresses of 450 Lambert Avenue and 430 Lambert Avenue share a building and an APN.	
132-38-062	435 Acacia Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	24240	108x120	1956	N		
132-38-068	425 Portage Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	8120	100x175	1954	N		



APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-38-070	3127 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	7525	159x120	1955	N	Several addresses are provided for this APN. Photos are provided for the addresses associated with structures: 3159 El Camino Real and 3111 El Camino Real.	
132-38-070	440 Portage Avenue	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	7525	159x120	1955	N	Several addresses are provided for this APN. Photos are provided for the addresses associated with structures: 3159 El Camino Real and 3111 El Camino Real.	
132-38-070	3101 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	7525	159x120	1955	N	Several addresses are provided for this APN. Photos are provided for the addresses associated with structures: 3159 El Camino Real and 3111 El Camino Real.	
132-38-070	3159 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/Residential		none	7525	159x120	1955	N	Several addresses are provided for this APN. Photos are provided for the addresses associated with structures: 3159 El Camino Real and 3111 El Camino Real.	

APN	ADDRESS	LAND USE	ZONE	ZONE TYPE	HRB Category	Historic District	Building SF	Lot Dimensions	Year Built	Preliminary Finding of Eligibility for NRHP or CRHR (Y/N)	Notes	Photo
132-38-070	3111 El Camino Real	CS	CS	Commercial/ Residential		none	7525	159x120	1955	N	Several addresses are provided for this APN. Photos are provided for the addresses associated with structures: 3159 El Camino Real and 3111 El Camino Real.	
132-38-071	340 Portage Avenue	SMF	RM-30	Residential Multi-Family		None	240056		1900	Y	For a more in-depth evaluation of 340 Portage Avenue's historic resource eligibility, please refer to "340 Portage Avenue Historic Resource Evaluation," prepared by Page & Turnbull (San Francisco, 2019).	