

A P P E N D I X I

HISTORICAL RESOURCE
ASSESSMENT



KnappARCHITECTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Memorandum

Date 29 August 2014

Project Homes at Deer Hill
Dog Park
3312 Deer Hill Road,
Lafayette, CA

To Alexis Mena

From Frederic Knapp

Topic Historical Background &
Evaluation

Copied Jill Johnson

Via e-mail

Purpose of Memorandum

This memorandum was prepared at the request of PlaceWorks to provide basic historical information and evaluation of whether the subject property is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. It relates historical information provided by the client, augmented by information gathered from local and online repositories. An evaluation of eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources is the basis of the professional opinion of whether the property is a historical resource.

This document relates to five buildings at the subject address. Based on the information conveyed in this document, it provides an evaluation under the California Register Criteria to indicate whether the buildings are eligible either individually or as a district. This memo does not consider whether the property contains historically significant landscape features. It does not address archaeological resources.

Methodology

Frederic Knapp, AIA and Jill Johnson¹ conducted a site visit to observe and photograph the five buildings. Jill Johnson conducted research at the Contra Costa County Building Inspection Department, the Contra Assessor, the City of Lafayette, and the Lafayette Historical Society, as well as online resources.

Based on the information presented in this document, the subject buildings were evaluated for eligibility under the California Register of Historic Resources. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 provides that properties eligible to the California Register are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Properties listed in qualifying local registers are also considered historical resources under CEQA. A project that would cause a substantial adverse change to historical resources would have a significant impact. The methodology used for this document first identifies whether the subject properties are eligible to the California Register, and then assesses impacts only if they do appear eligible.

The text of this document was written by Jill Johnson and Frederic Knapp and was edited and compiled by Frederic Knapp.

¹ Frederic Knapp, AIA meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architecture and Historic Architecture; Jill Johnson meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History, Historic Architecture, and Architecture.

Current Historical Status

The subject buildings are not listed in any City of Lafayette register. According to the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University (part of the statewide CHRIS information system), they are not listed in any state or federal register.



Site, with north at top. See text for key. Google Maps.

Description of Site

The site is located in the northwest quadrant of the intersection of Pleasant Hill Road and Hwy 24; Downtown Lafayette is located in the southwest quadrant, across the Hwy 24 freeway from the subject parcel and Homes at Deer Hill Project Site. Residential areas and Accalanes High School are located in the quadrants to the east of the intersection. Deer Hill Road begins on the west side of Pleasant Hill Road approximately 1500 feet north of Hwy 24 and turns southwest for approximately 2000 feet, where it approaches Hwy 24; it runs parallel to Hwy 24 approximately 1.5 miles west where it ends at Happy Valley Road.

The subject buildings are located on an approximately three acre site on the north side of Deer Hill Road. The subject site is located across Deer Hill Road from the main 22.27-acre parcel of the Homes at Deer Hill Road project on which the proposed new 44 detached dwellings would be built. The subject parcel is roughly triangular; it is bounded by Deer Hill Road on the southeast and by adjoining privately owned parcels on the north and west. (The main project site for the 44 proposed houses is bounded by Pleasant Hill Road on the east, the Pleasant Hill Road westbound on-ramp to Hwy. 24 on the southeast, Hwy. 24 on the south, and Deer Hill Road on the northwest.)

The subject buildings' site slopes gently up to the northwest from Deer Hill Road; about 250 to 300 feet from the road, a shallow canyon which runs southeast-northwest begins rising gently to the northwest. The southeast portion of the site may have been graded, infilling the canyon, when the Hwy 24 freeway and Deer Hill Road were constructed. Clustered near the bottom of the canyon are the five subject buildings of this report: a house (1), a garage (2), two outbuildings (3 and 4), and a livestock shed (5). Immediately to the southwest of the subject buildings are another house and related outbuildings (A), which are not covered in this report and are not part of the Homes at Deer Hill or Dog Park projects. The subject buildings are reached by a paved driveway (B) which starts perpendicular to Deer Hill Road and runs northwest about 75 feet, then turns southwest for about 100 feet, then northwest again for another 75 to 100 feet. The garage lies a short distance northeast of the end of the driveway pavement. The house, east-northeast of the garage, is connected to it by an open breezeway. The outbuildings are north-northwest of the house, set near the mouth of the small canyon. There is a sizeable area north of the garage and the end of the paved driveway that was paved long ago; the pavement in this area has disintegrated to varying degrees and is overgrown with plants, making it difficult to determine the original boundaries of the pavement. The small canyon and its mouth have a number of trees, including some large, apparently native trees that likely predate the buildings; there are a few other, smaller trees near the house and garage. The rest of the site is grassland. There are various fences and gates on the property, but no corral.

Description of Buildings

3312 Deer Hill Road (Main House)

The wood-frame house (1) is one story with a partial basement. The first floor is very near grade on the west side of the house; on the east side it is one story above grade. There are windows at the



House (right) and garage (left) from driveway, looking north.



Main house, looking east-southeast.

partial basement, which was not accessible for this report.

The county assessor's Residential Building Record lists an unfinished basement of 471 square feet. The grade slopes down from west to east on the north and south elevations.

The house is a T-shape in plan, with a short stem and longer crossbar. The crossbar is oriented north-south and the stem is a short wing that extends to the west. The house has a hip

roof over the crossbar (main) portion, with a lower intersecting

gable roof over the stem (west wing). There is a notch in the southeast corner of the floor plan, with a raised, covered porch at the first floor. The main portion of the house (the stem of the T shape) is faced in horizontal wood V-groove siding, while the west wing is faced in narrower, vertical wood siding. The exterior is painted red. The windows are wood, double-hung units with two-over-two horizontal lights. There are wood French doors at the living room on the west elevation and aluminum sliding doors in the dining room on the south elevation. The windows and exterior doors are covered in plywood for security (the house appears to have been vacant for some time).

The house has a living room, dining room, kitchen-family room, laundry room, two bedrooms, and one bathroom. The walls and ceilings are gypsum wallboard, except for the family room which has painted vertical paneling (probably plywood with scored lines mimicking wood joints). It appears the original floors were hardwood; this is covered in resilient sheet flooring in the living room, bathroom, and kitchen-family room and in carpet in one bedroom. There is a simple baseboard and similar casing at doors and windows. There is no picture rail or crown molding. The exterior doors are wood with a glazed upper panel. The interior doors are one-panel wood doors. The kitchen has painted wood cabinets and a plastic-laminate countertop. The bathroom fixtures appear to be replacements newer than the house.



Living room.

Other Buildings

The house is connected to the garage (2) by an open, wood-frame breezeway. The garage is not aligned on the same axis as the main house; it is rotated roughly 20 to 25 degrees from the axis of the house. The garage is on a higher grade than the house, with steps at the breezeway to mediate the grade change. The exterior of the garage is the same type of horizontal wood siding found on the main house. The two-car garage has a wide single plywood door with overhead hardware. There is a workshop area on one side of the garage space with a simple wood workbench. The garage has exposed two-by-four wood framing. There are two windows in the south elevation of the garage; both are boarded over. The garage floor is a concrete slab.



Garage, looking south. Portion of house is visible at left.

The outbuilding closest to the house and garage is a small, one-story shed (3) with wall and roof surface entirely covered in corrugated sheet steel. It has no windows; the metal doors match the rest of the walls. It is set on wood piers. The assessor's records list its dimensions as 10 by 24 feet. Its interior was not observed for this report.

To the west of this is a gable roofed shed (4), clad in unpainted horizontal wood siding. It has sheet metal roofing. This building has wood posts and a railing on the south side; these may be remnants of a fence or hitching rail. Its interior was not observed for this report.

The last outbuilding, further to the northwest from the main house and garage, is a much larger



Outbuildings, from left: Shed (3), looking north; shed (4), looking west; interior of livestock shed (5).

livestock shed (5). This wood-frame structure has two main areas; its sides are open except at one wall where there is sheet metal attached to light wood framing and other walls with vertical wood siding. The shed has a dirt floor. It has a series of internal four-by-four posts; all the framing is open. There are feeding troughs built against one wall. The shed is covered in asphalt roll roofing.

History

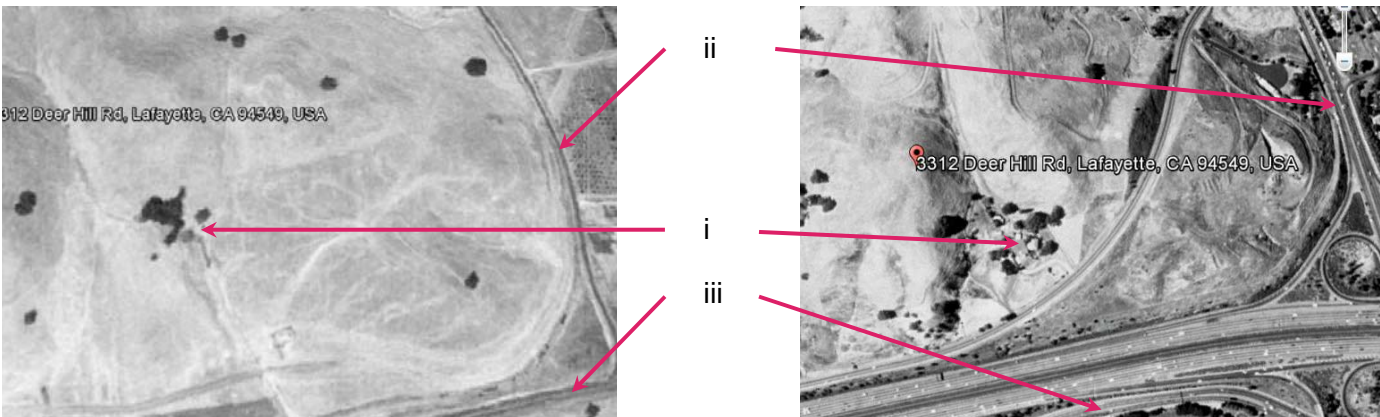
According to the county assessor's Residential Building Record, the main house was built in 1948, followed by the garage in 1951. Four outbuildings were built from 1950-64. Two storage sheds were built c. 1950, including a 19x20 composition shingle-clad gable-roofed storage shed with plywood-clad walls and a dirt floor and a shed-roofed storage building composed of 9x18 and 16x24 sections, with wood sheathing and a tongue-and-groove wood floor. One of these sheds has apparently been demolished. The corrugated steel-clad storage shed (3) followed in 1962 and a livestock shed followed in 1964 (this is presumed to be structure no. 5 but the assessor's description of the building does not appear to match any of the extant buildings). The driveway, which appears in a 1946 aerial photograph and originally branched off of Mt. Diablo Boulevard, was shortened and reconfigured to branch off of Deer Hill Road when Highway 24 and BART were constructed.

The house and at least two of the outbuildings appear to have been built by Sumner Hodges, but its original occupant is unknown. Hodges was the grandson of Samuel Hodges, who was one of the early settlers of Lafayette. Samuel Hodges was born in Illinois in about 1830 and came to California in 1850 with the Gold Rush. After little success as a miner, Samuel Hodges purchased about 275 acres of farming and pasture land in eastern Lafayette near Reliez Creek and Old Tunnel Road. He built an Italianate house on Reliez Station Road, at the east side of the present freeway interchange. It was in this house he and his first wife, Jane, and second wife, Mary, raised their children, Albert E. (b. c. 1856-577), Elizabeth and Roda.² It appears Albert retained the family home and, after his marriage to Hattie

² *Lafayette*, p. 97. "United States Census, 1880," Albert Hodges in household of Samuel Hodges, Lafayette, Contra Costa, California, United States.

Esther Donner, he and his wife raised sons Sumner C. (May 16, 1885 [birth year also listed as 1886]- November 3, 1972), Francis T., and Harold E. and daughter C. Alberta there. By 1920, Sumner Hodges resided in Oakland with his wife, Katie, and, later, daughters Elaine and Jean; but, by the time of his second marriage to Clara M. Morton in 1966, he again resided in Contra Costa County. Hodges died at the age of 87 in 1972.³

In the early 1960s, the property was purchased by Clayton Gelhaus and his father, George Joseph Gelhaus. Clayton Gelhaus and his siblings, Clark and Lawrence "Larry," were born to George and Dorothy Helen "Dot" (Randall) Gelhaus in Oakland, before the family moved first to El Cerrito and later Lafayette in about 1940. The family installed one of the first in-ground, residential swimming pools in the city at their Victoria Avenue home and all three of the boys went on to work in the pool service industry, including ownership of various local pool service and supply companies.⁴



Location of building cluster (i), Pleasant Hill Road (ii), and Mt. Diablo Blvd. (iii) in 1939 (left) and 1987 (right). Google Earth.

³ "United States Census, 1930," Albert E Hodges, Lafayette, Contra Costa, California, United States. "California, Marriage Index, 1960-1985," Sunner (sic) C Hodges and Clara M Morton, 10 Mar 1966. "United States Social Security Death Index," Sumner Hodges, Contra Costa, California. "United States Census, 1920," Sumner Hodges, Oakland, Alameda, California, United States. "United States Census, 1940," Sumner Hodges, Oakland, Alameda, California, United States.

"United States Social Security Death Index," index, Sumner Hodges, Nov 1972.

⁴ "Lawrence George Gelhaus" Obituary.

Clayton Gelhaus built a roughly 15 foot x 15 foot family room addition on the west side of the house and the breezeway between the house and garage; this construction is assumed to have occurred during the 1960s. Shed (3) was built by Clayton Gelhaus as a storage shed for his pool service business. Shed (4) contained a tack room and a single stall for sick horses the Gelhauses owned and boarded. The livestock shed (5) is believed to have been built for cattle and converted for use as a horse barn by the Gelhauses. An arbor, built adjacent to the breezeway, an elevated water tank and feeding corrals which once surrounded the outbuildings are no longer extant. After Clayton Gelhaus's death, the property was sold to Asian investors.⁵

Tony Lagiss, long-time owner of 3233 Deer Hill Road, purchased the subject property in his daughter's name during the 1980s from the Asian investment group. Anthony Gus Lagiss was born in Port Chicago, California, to Gus and Patra Lagiss on February 6, 1921. He was a first-generation American, born to parents who immigrated from Greece. He graduated from Mt. Diablo High School, Concord, in 1938 and soon thereafter enrolled in the Merchant Marine. After leaving the Merchant Marine in 1948, he worked briefly for Captain Sanford, one of two real estate brokers in the Lafayette area during the late 1940s.⁶ He was licensed as a realtor in March 1949 and opened his own firm—Contra Costa Realty—later that year. Although Lagiss was a developer and investor, according to his daughter his main trade was as a real estate agent, representing buyers and sellers of property.⁷ According to his daughter, a significant portion of his income stemmed from condemnation of his property for construction of highways and BART.⁸

In 1967, Lagiss applied for a temporary quarry permit to provide gravel from the hillside east of the subject property to provide a gravel base for road construction. Opposed by nearby residents who objected to the dust, truck traffic and scarification of the landscape the quarrying would cause, the quarrying did not occur because of delays in obtaining its approval. It had occurred at this location on a number of occasions in the past. Lagiss died on September 16, 2007, at the age of 86.

⁵ Telephone interview, Kern Gelhaus, August 26, 2014.

⁶ *Voices of Lafayette*, 170.

⁷ Dettmer, Anna Maria. Telephone conversation with Frederic Knapp, December 2011.

⁸ Dettmer, *ibid.*

Recently, the property was rented by the Lagiss-Dettmer family. Tenants included Erica Braun and Wakean Maclean who kept horses and, later, Wendy Linka and Terry Miller.

The California Register

Modeled on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register is the state's primary inventory of buildings, sites, structures, and objects which are historically significant. The register is administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation, a unit of State Parks within the Resources Agency of the State of California. To be eligible to the California Register, a property must be significant under at least one of the following criteria:

- 1 Association with important events
- 2 Association with important persons
- 3 Design or construction
- 4 Information potential (usually archaeological) – excluded from this document

There are two “property types” for which the subject buildings could qualify: either individually, or as a group – known as a historic district.

A property which is significant must also retain historical integrity. Historical integrity is retention of physical characteristics from the period of time for which the property is significant which allow it to convey its association with its area of significance. Integrity is determined holistically, but is evaluated under seven aspects:

Location	Whether it is in its original location or a similar one
Setting	Whether the surrounding topography, landscape, and buildings allow an understanding of the original significance
Feeling	Whether the property conveys character and overall qualities it originally had

Association	Whether the property retains the relationships it originally had to its area of significance
Materials	Whether the property retains the important materials from its past
Design	Whether the property continues to convey its important historic design traits
Workmanship	Whether original details and techniques which define the property survive

Assessment of Eligibility

Buildings Evaluated for this Memorandum

This memorandum evaluates the individual eligibility of the buildings described above, and whether they appear eligible to the California Register as a group. Other buildings and landscape features were not evaluated.

Significance

Criterion 1

None of the individual buildings, nor the group, are associated with events significant to local, state, or national history. Although their current condition results to varying degrees from developments which are significant (e.g. agricultural history, development of the City of Lafayette, development of freeways and BART), none of them has an important association with any of these, nor does any of them convey an understanding of the significant event itself.

Criterion 2

Research conducted for this report does not indicate that any person with a significant association with the subject property was important to local, state, or national history under California Register Criterion 2.

Criterion 3

While the buildings are more than 50 years old, none of them exhibits unusual construction techniques or high artistic values as required for eligibility under Criterion 3. The main house is typical of modest California houses of the mid-20th Century, but is not a rare prototype exhibiting a pure combination of traits which characterize its era. The garage and outbuildings are not unusual in their design, materials, or construction techniques. The siting of the buildings and their apparent function is not a noteworthy example of residential or agricultural development.

District

Under the California Register Criteria, a collection of buildings which do not qualify individually can be eligible as a group if they meet one of the Criteria collectively. In the case of the subject buildings, there is no added significance that the group possesses beyond what any one building in the group has. In this case, the aggregate collection is simply larger than any one building in the group, but it does not appear to have any additional significance.

Integrity

While historical integrity cannot be assessed for a property unless it is significant, it is worth noting that the individual buildings all appear to have lost varying aspects of their original condition. Construction of the Hwy 24 freeway at its doorstep would be highly likely to impair the significance of a property associated with ranching or rural development of Contra Costa County.

Conclusion

The subject buildings were constructed at least 50 years ago, starting with the main house and then expanding with the garage and other outbuildings. None of the buildings meets California Register

Criteria 1, 2, or 3. As a group, they do not possess any additional significance. For this reason, the subject buildings are not eligible to the California Register individually or as a district. Therefore, they are not historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Alteration, moving, or demolition of the subject buildings would not cause a significant impact under CEQA.

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