February 8, 2017

Lisa Vilhauer, Development Associate  
Branagh Development Inc.  
3800 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Suite 200  
Lafayette, California  94549

Subject: Historical Resource Evaluations of 10290 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/State Route 123, El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, California (LSA Project #WDL1701)

Dear Ms. Vilhauer:

LSA prepared a Historical Resource Evaluations (HREs) of two commercial buildings in El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, California: a 6,300 square-foot two-story building built in 1965 at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/State Route 123 (SR 123) (APN: 503-394-024-7; Boulevard Gardens Tract, Block 37, Lots 21 to 24); and a 2,700-square-foot, two-story mixed-use building constructed in 1944 on a 0.057-acre parcel at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 (APN: 503-394-024-7; Boulevard Gardens Tract, Block 37, Lot 25). The building locations are shown on Figures 1 and 2. The building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 was originally constructed for use as office space. It was last used as a church. The building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 was originally constructed for use as a real estate office (Sureway Realty) with residences above. It was last used as office space for the El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce and as space for a private law office and a hair salon.

These HREs were prepared to address the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). These HREs include background research to provide information about the design, construction history, ownership, and prior occupancy of the buildings; and a field review by an architectural historian to document their existing condition.

Based on background research and field review, LSA concludes that the building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 do not appear eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) due to a lack of historical significance. The City of El Cerrito does not maintain a local register of historical resources. These buildings do not appear to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA.

The methods, analysis, and conclusions of these HREs are presented in the sections that follow. Please see the Appendix for official State of California Department of Parks and Recreation 523 (DPR 523) Series forms for CRHR eligibility evaluations of the buildings at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.
BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Records Search

LSA conducted a records search (File #16-0942) for both properties and adjacent areas on December 21, 2016, at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park. The NWIC, an affiliate of the State of California Office of Historic Preservation, is the official State repository of cultural resource records and reports for Contra Costa County.

As part of the records search, LSA also reviewed the following local and State inventories for built environment cultural resources in and adjacent to the property:

- *California Inventory of Historic Resources* (California Department of Parks and Recreation 1976);
- *Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California* (California Office of Historic Preservation 1988);
- *California Points of Historical Interest* (California Office of Historic Preservation 1992);
- *California Historical Landmarks* (California Office of Historic Preservation 1996);
- *Contra Costa County Historical Resources Inventory* (Contra Costa County Community Development Department 2016);
- *A Living Legacy: Historic Architecture of the East Bay* (Wilson 1987); and
- *Directory of Properties in the Historic Property Data File: Contra Costa County* (California Office of Historic Preservation April 5, 2012). The directory includes the listings of the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, CRHR, California Historical Landmarks, and California Points of Historical Interest.

**Results.** The records search did not identify any previously recorded built environment cultural resources or previously conducted cultural resource studies of the property. The records search identified three previously conducted cultural resource studies adjacent to the property:

- Chavez, David  
  1993 *Cultural Resources Inventory for the Stege Sanitary District I/I Correction Program, Phase IV/Moeser/Stockton/Carlson Relief Sewer Improvement Program, El Cerrito, California*. On file (S-15160) at the NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

- Chavez, David  
  2003 *Archaeological Resources Investigations for the Stege Sanitary District I/I Correction Program, Phase XI Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project, Fall 2003, Contra Costa County, California (SRF No. C-06-4665-210/SSD Project No. 02203)*. On file (S-27254) at the NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.
• Koenig, Heidi
  2013  *West of Hills Northern Pipelines Project, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Contra Costa and Alameda Counties.* On file (S-40631) at the NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

**Map Review**

LSA reviewed the following maps for historical information about the property and its vicinity:

- *San Francisco, Calif.*, 15-minute topographic quadrangle (U.S. Geological Survey 1895, 1899, 1915);

**Results.** The *San Francisco, Calif.*, 15-minute quadrangles depict both properties as undeveloped parcels in a sparsely developed area (USGS 1895, 1899, 1915). The *Richmond, Calif.*, 7.5-minute quadrangles depict the properties in a shaded pink color, indicating a high density of development in the area (USGS 1947, 1949, 1959, 1968, 1973, 1980, 1995).

**10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.** The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map depicts the property as a vacant lot. The blocks surrounding the property depict sparse residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1926, Vol 1:12-13). By 1951, the parcel contains a single-story rectangular-shaped building resting on a concrete floor with a deep street setback is labeled “Welding” is located south of and adjacent to the parcel. The blocks surrounding the property depict moderate commercial and residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1951, Vol 1:312-313; ParcelQuest 2016).

**10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.** The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map depicts the property as a 5,000-square-foot rectangular parcel (50 feet wide by 100 feet long) containing a single-story square-shaped building addressed at 86 San Pablo Avenue labeled “Rest.” (i.e., a restaurant). A small, unlabeled, square-shaped addition is depicted at the rear of the building. The parcels adjacent to the east, south and west are vacant. The parcel across the street (modern 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123) is shown containing a “Filling Station” and a detached 1.5-story residential dwelling (see below). The blocks surrounding the property depict sparse residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1926, Vol 1:12-13).

The 1951 Sanborn map depicts the property as was shown in 1926. The 1951 Sanborn shows the single-story restaurant building’s street address as 684 San Pablo Avenue. The parcel also contains a rectangular, 2-story building addressed at 690 San Pablo Avenue/6306 Eureka Avenue. This building is labeled with an “S.” (i.e., a store). Behind the two-story building is a single-story, rectangular-shaped detached automotive garage.
ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

LSA architectural historian Angelique Theriot conducted archival research on December 27, 2016, at:

- El Cerrito Branch, Contra Costa County Library, in El Cerrito;
- Local History Collection, Martinez Branch, Contra Costa County Library in Martinez; and
- Shadi History Room, El Cerrito City Hall.

Ms. Theriot examined previous cultural resource survey forms and real estate information to identify past occupants and uses of buildings in the property, as well as to identify alterations to the buildings that have occurred since its construction.

Results

Based on archival information, the building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 was built in 1965 as an office building, and the two-story office building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 was built in 1944 as a mixed-use office building. The build date for the detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is circa 1951 as determined via review of Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps (see above). Please see Appendix A for DPR 523 Series forms that contain information for 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.

FIELD REVIEW

LSA architectural historian Angelique Theriot reviewed the exteriors of the buildings on December 27, 2016. The purpose of the review was to characterize the buildings’ architectural styles and to identify alterations. The field review was recorded with field notes and photographs.

Results

Both of these two-story commercials buildings are modest examples of Vernacular commercial architecture. The buildings have a rectangular footprint, are covered by a very low-pitched or flat roof behind a short parapet, and walls clad in non-original stucco or painted cinder block. The rear portions of each parcel contain asphalt-paved parking lots.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Please see Appendix A for DPR 523 Series forms containing the historical and architectural context of the properties.

ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION

Background research and a field review by an architectural historian identified two potential built environment cultural resources more than 50 years old: a two-story commercial building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 and a two-story commercial building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.
Please see Appendix A for DPR 523 Series forms, which contain CRHR eligibility evaluations of each building.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of these HREs, LSA concludes that these buildings do not appear eligible for inclusion in the CRHR under any significance criteria. They are not notable examples of Vernacular architecture, and background research did not identify any persons associated with either building that are important to the past. The architects and builders were not identified. For these reasons, these buildings do not appear to qualify as a “historical resource” for the purposes of CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21084.1).

If you have any questions about this constraints assessment, please contact me by phone at (510) 236-3810, or by email at <michael.hibma@lsa.net>.

Sincerely,

Michael Hibma, M.A., RPH #603
Architectural Historian/Senior Cultural Resources Manager

Attached: Figures 1 and 2
Appendix A: DPR 523 Series Forms for 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.
REFERENCES CONSULTED

California Office of Historic Preservation


1996 *California Historical Landmarks*. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.

2001 *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Historical Resources*. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.


Chavez, David
1993 *Cultural Resources Inventory for the Stege Sanitary District I/I Correction Program, Phase IV/Moeser/Stockton/Carlson Relief Sewer Improvement Program, El Cerrito, California*. On file (S-15160) at the NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

2003 *Archaeological Resources Investigations for the Stege Sanitary District I/I Correction Program, Phase XI Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Project, Fall 2003, Contra Costa County, California (SRF No. C-06-4665-210/SSD Project No. 02203)*. On file (S-27254) at the NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

Contra Costa County Community Development Department

Koenig, Heidi
2013 *West of Hills Northern Pipelines Project, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Contra Costa and Alameda Counties (S-40631)*. On-file at NWIC, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

ParcelQuest

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1 For a full set of references consulted, please see the DPR523 Series forms in Appendix A of this report.
Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd.


U.S. Geological Survey


Wilson, Mark A.
APPENDIX A: DPR 523 SERIES FORMS FOR 10290 SAN PABLO AVENUE/SR 123 AND 10296 SAN PABLO AVENUE/SR 123
P1. **Other Identifier:** Christian Layman Church

P2. **Location** □ Not for Publication  ☑ Unrestricted:
   
   a. **County:** Contra Costa
   
   b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Richmond, Calif. Date: 1993; T1S/R3W; Rancho San Pablo; M.D.B.L.
   
   c. **Address:** 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 City El Cerrito Zip 94530

   d. **UTM:** Zone 10S; 561124mE/4195605mN
   
   e. **Other Locational Data:** APN 503-394-026-2; Boulevard Gardens Tract, Block 37, Lots 21-24

P3a. **Description:** This property is a two-story, 6,300-square-foot rectangular commercial building in an urban setting. The building was originally designed as a two-story office building. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and is covered by a very low-pitched or flat roof. The walls are clad in stacked square-shaped cinder-block with narrow vertical ribs on the main, street-facing façade that enframe the fenestration. Subsequent alterations appear minimal with a replacement main entrance door. There is a porte-cochere at the far right side of the main, west-facing façade to provide access to interior parking off San Pablo Avenue/State Route (SR) 123. The main entrance is located in the center of the asymmetrical main façade and is accessed by two short steps. A partial-width short planter box/flower bed spans the front façade and flanks the main entrance steps. This building is a modest example of vernacular style architecture with Modernist touches. The building is in fair condition.

P3b. **Resource Attributes:** (HP6) 1-3 story commercial building

P4. **Resources Present:** ☑ Building

P5a. **Photograph:**

P5b. **Description of Photo:**
10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. View southeast, LSA photo 12/17/16.

P6. **Date Constructed/Age and Source:**
Historic Built 1965; ParcelQuest.com.

P7. **Owner and Address:**
Wayne E. and Susan Bass Trust
6003 Golden Eagle Way
Clayton, California 94517-1933

P8. **Recorded by:**
Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot
LSA
157 Park Place
Point Richmond, California 94801

P9. **Date recorded:** 1/15/17.

P10. **Survey Type:** Intensive

P11. **Report Citation:** Hibma, Michael and Angelique Theriot, 2017. *Historical Resource Evaluations of 10290 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/State Route 123, El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, California.* LSA, Point Richmond, California.

Attachments: ☑ Location Map  ☑ Continuation Sheet(s)  ☑ Building, Structure, and Object Record

DPR 523A (1/95)
B1. Historic Name: Undetermined
B2. Common Name: Layman Christian Church
B3. Original Use: Two story commercial building
B4. Present Use: Church
B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular with Modernist aspects
B6. Construction History: The attached two-story office building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue was constructed circa 1965 (Parella 2016). Background research did not identify an architect or builder for the building. Subsequent alterations appear minimal with a replacement main entrance door.
B7. Moved? No
B8. Related Features: None
   b. Builder: Undetermined
B10. Significance: Theme: 20th century growth of El Cerrito
     Area: El Cerrito, western Contra Costa County
     Period of Significance: N/A
     Property Type: Commercial building
     Applicable Criteria: N/A
This two-story, 6,700-square-foot commercial building is situated on a 0.23-acre parcel in a moderately-developed urban setting. Research indicates that the building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is associated with the mid-20th century growth of El Cerrito. This development trend made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of El Cerrito and western Contra Costa County. However, this building is one of hundreds of similar commercial buildings in El Cerrito, Contra Costa County and the East Bay that are associated with this theme, and no evidence was identified to elevate the building in associative stature. It does not possess specific, important associations with this context that distinguish it from hundreds of other buildings with similar design, construction history, and use. (see continuation sheets).
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: None
American Society of Civil Engineers
B13. Remarks: None
B14. Evaluator:
   Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot
   LSA
   157 Park Place,
   Point Richmond, California  94801
Date of Evaluation: 1/15/17

DPR 523B (1/95)
### B10. (continued)

**Early Settlement and Transportation.** Before European colonization, the area that became El Cerrito was inhabited by the Huchuin group of the Ohlone tribe. The Huchuin depended on local wildlife and seafood for subsistence, and practiced small-scale agriculture along Wildcat and El Cerrito creeks. Following the Spanish period of exploration and after establishment of the Franciscan mission system, modern El Cerrito was part of lands administered by Mission San Francisco De Asís (Mission Dolores). Following Mexican Independence in 1821, the missions were privatized and lands divided and granted to political supporters and former government officials. Modern El Cerrito was located within the 17,939-acre Rancho San Pablo, granted in 1823 to retired soldier Francisco Maria Castro. The grant was confirmed following his death in 1831 and divided among his heirs.

Following the Gold Rush of 1849, the population of the East Bay grew rapidly. The Camino de la Contra Costa (a.k.a., San Pablo Avenue/SR 123) became an important corridor between Oakland and the Contra Costa County seat in Martinez. In 1852, Contra Costa County ordered the construction of a more direct and improved road along the same general route between Rancho San Pablo and Oakland, which became known as “The San Pablo Road” over time the name became “San Pablo Avenue.” As a major regional thoroughfare, San Pablo Avenue became part of the Lincoln Highway, the nation's first transcontinental road made of a patchwork of existing routes. Prior to the construction of the Eastshore Highway (Interstate 80), San Pablo Avenue was the main arterial in the northern East Bay and was designated U.S. Route 40 north of University Avenue. In the 1930s, Route 40 shifted west to a new route (modern Bayshore Freeway) and was renamed Interstate 80 in the 1950s. In 1883, the California and Nevada Railroad opened a line that ran parallel to San Pablo Avenue between Richmond and Emeryville. In 1902, the line was purchased by the Santa Fe Railroad, which further opened El Cerrito to regional trade and passenger transportation (VerPlanck 2013:14). Today, that former alignment is used as a regional transit line operated by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

**Rust Township/San Pablo Avenue.** The Rust Township developed in the late-19th century around the intersection of modern San Pablo and Central avenues. One of the first settlers to the area following the subdivision of Rancho San Pablo was Wilhelm F. Rust. Rust was born in Hanover, Germany, on November 27, 1857, and relocated to California in 1883. In Germany, Rust worked as a blacksmith and brought his trade to the Bay Area, where his skills were in high demand. Rust leased land in El Cerrito in the early 20th century. Following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, Rust built a hardware store on the “Contra Costa Road.” In 1909, Rust established a post office within his hardware store, named the community after himself, and served as the community’s first postmaster (City of El Cerrito 2016).

**El Cerrito.** By 1910, residents of Rust Township had unsuccessfully sought infrastructure improvements from Contra Costa County, such as road paving and school construction. Residents chose to incorporate rather than be annexed, and on August 20, 1917, the community of Rust became El Cerrito (trans. The Little Hill) in honor of nearby Albany Hill (VerPlanck 2013), and boasted a population of 1,500. The newly formed El Cerrito Board of Trustees in 1917 soon passed a law requiring licensing fees for saloons to build roads and schools. Over 20 saloons were located in El Cerrito along San Pablo Avenue alone (City of El Cerrito), and revenues collected funded improvements such as paving San Pablo Avenue; unfortunately for local ranchers, this prevented their use of San Pablo Avenue as a route for moving their cattle to shipping points.

By 1900, El Cerrito’s population had grown to 3,900. Growth slowed through the 1920s, however, as inexpensive, developable land was readily available in Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond. Growth picked up in the late 1930s and then aggressively during World War II as people moved to the East Bay to fill defense jobs at the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, which in turn expanded related employment and housing demand. El Cerrito’s population swelled to nearly 17,000. After the war, veterans and former defense workers moved to or remained in the area where land was affordable and available. By the 1950s, El Cerrito was as a commuter suburb. This trend continues today as City has a population over 24,000 (City of El Cerrito 2016).

**Boulevard Gardens Tract.** E.N. Tapscott relocated to Oakland from Howardsville, Virginia, in the late-19th century and began working in real estate. He subdivided the 160-acre Boulevard Gardens Tract No. 1 in 1907. The tract was bounded by Moeser Lane, Ashbury Avenue, Kearny Street, and south of Eureka Avenue. The project site was located on Lot 1 of Block 21 within the tract (Boulevard Gardens Tract No. 1 map 1907).

**10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.** The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map depicts the property as a vacant lot. The blocks surrounding the property depict sparse residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1926, Vol 1:12-13). By 1951, the parcel contains a single-story rectangular-shaped building resting on a concrete floor with a deep street setback is labeled “Welding” is located south of and adjacent to the parcel. The blocks surrounding the property depict moderate commercial and residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1951, Vol 1:312-313; ParcelQuest 2016). Background research indicates that by 1934, Giacomo Parella moved to the site and owned the welding shop. In 1965 he had the present office building constructed. Background research did not indicate that a specific architect was commission to design the building or the name of the contractor hired to construct the building.
B10. (continued)

Architectural Context. Architecture in the project site parallels trends elsewhere in California during the mid-20th century. The section below describes the building types in the project site, followed by a discussion of the representative aspects of their respective architectural designs.

Vernacular. A useful approach to understanding what Vernacular style is, is by defining what it is not. That is, Vernacular architecture is not overly formal or monumental in nature, but rather is represented by relatively unadorned construction that is not designed by a professional architect. Vernacular architecture is the commonplace or ordinary building stock that is built for meeting a practical purpose with a minimal amount of flourish or otherwise traditional or ethnic influences (Upton and Vlach 1986:xv-xxi, 426-432).

The historical roots of the Vernacular style in the United States dates from colonial settlement during the 16th and 17th centuries. European immigrants, either of modest independent means, or financed with corporate backing, brought with them a wood-based building tradition. From this combination of a wood-based building tradition, in an open, unsettled, and heavily forested land, with a young population developed a vernacular style “characterized by short-lived or temporary dwellings focused on the family and distinct from the place of work” (Jackson 1984:85-87). Typically associated with older, hand-built rural buildings in remote or rural, agricultural settings, Vernacular architecture can also include modern, prefabricated, general-purpose steel buildings used as shop space, warehouses, discount-clearance centers and many other uses (Gottfried and Jennings 2009:9-16).

Modernist. The Modern style has its roots in the rise of industrial manufacturing during the late-19th century. Architects who favored this style focused on open floor plans and challenged traditional concepts of building layouts and massing. They sought to move away from decorative elements that referenced historical designs and motifs and toward designs that emphasized a building’s function. Modern style buildings also represent a large range of designs, from simple functional ranch residences to high-concept public facilities. During the early decades of the 20th century, architects gradually embraced the machine age, prompting a turn toward a sleeker, more refined appearance. While some architects created eclectic interpretations of traditional design and forms, other architects disregarded such influences as archaic. Modern buildings also encompass several subtypes, including Prairie, Craftsman, and Brutalist designs. The advent of the Modern style was dependent on advances in building material technology, as the availability of steel and concrete encouraged 20th century architects to move away from traditional forms by removing their dependence on walls as load-bearing necessities.

Following the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression of the 1930s, designers stripped away Art Deco’s rich materials and jazzy ornamentation to emphasize a sense of smooth motion conveyed by clean lines. Known as “Streamlining,” this design concept reflected the hope held by many that science and technology would rejuvenate the economy. The streamlining design movement of the 1930s helped establish the modern, post-World War II American aesthetic, which abandoned all historical reference in architecture. Bricks and stone were replaced with sheets of glass or metal. This found widespread favor as reflective of post-war American society and spread to all major cities and outlying areas (Gelernter 1999:262-263). Modern-styled buildings were economical to build, with a simple design without elaborate ornamentation that was easily replicated, a quality that appealed to businesses (Wiseman 2000:149).

The general character-defining features of the Modern style are: square or rectangular footprint; flat roof; subdued color schemes; minimal amount of façade ornamentation to draw attention of passersby to the interior; simple cubic "extruded rectangle" massing; windows running in broken horizontal rows forming a grid; façade angles at 90 degrees; and building materials of steel, formed concrete, chrome, or plated surfaces (Gelernter 1999:248-249; McAlester and McAlester 2003:464-467).

California Register of Historical Resources Eligibility Evaluation

The following section evaluates whether the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 possesses significant historical associations that would qualify it as eligible for inclusion in the CRHR and meet the definition of a “historical resource” for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (California Code of Regulations §15064.5(a)).
B10. California Register of Historical Resources Eligibility Evaluation (Continued)

Criterion 1: Is it associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage?

Research indicates that the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is associated with the growth of El Cerrito in the mid-20th century. The building was constructed in 1965 as a two-story office building with rear parking by Giacomo Parella. The architect and building contractor were undetermined. The building is one of hundreds of Vernacular commercial buildings in El Cerrito associated with this period of growth and one of thousands of similar building types in Contra Costa County, the East Bay and statewide. No evidence was identified to elevate this office building in associative stature. It does not possess specific, important associations within its historic context to distinguish it from other buildings with a similar construction history and use. For these reasons, the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is not significant under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: Is it associated with the lives of persons important in our past?

Background research did not identify an association with the office building with any persons important in our past. The building’s architect and builder were not identified. Based on background research results the previous owner, Giacomo Parella, did not appear to make significant contributions to the history of El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, or California. For these reasons, the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is not significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: Does it embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values?

The building possesses some of the general characteristics of Vernacular commercial architecture with some modernist touches, a well-represented style in the existing building stock of El Cerrito. Better examples of this style exist in El Cerrito. The building’s architect and builder were not identified. For these reasons, the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is not significant under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: Has it yielded, or may it be likely to yield, information important to history?

This criterion is typically used to evaluate the potential for archaeological deposit to contain information important in understanding past lifeways of modern El Cerrito’s early historic-period and pre-European contact inhabitants. Its application to architecture is less common in eligibility assessments due to the prevalence of popular publications that thoroughly document the form, materials, and design of a given building type. Information about the Vernacular architecture style and construction methods, as represented by the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123, can be obtained from other widely available sources on this and other common architectural styles. The building is unlikely to yield information important to the history of El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, or California. For these reasons, the building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is not significant under Criterion 4.

Integrity Assessment. Historical integrity refers to the ability of a resource to convey its significant historical associations. Integrity is a critical component of historical resources that are listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR. A building’s integrity is assessed only after its significance is established. This office building is not significant under any criteria and is not eligible for listing in the CRHR; therefore, its integrity was not assessed.

Conclusion. The office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is associated with mid-20th century growth of El Cerrito. The building does not appear significant under any CRHR criteria, and, as result, its integrity was not assessed. For these reasons, the office building at 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 does not appear eligible for inclusion in the CRHR and does not qualify as a “historical resource” for the purposes of CEQA (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21084.1).
B12. References (Continued)

California Office of Historic Preservation (continued)
1996 *California Historical Landmarks*. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.
2001 *California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Historical Resources*. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.

Contra Costa County Community Development Department
2016 Contra Costa County Historical Resources Inventory. Contra Costa County Community Development Department, Martinez, California. Electronic document, http://ca-contracostacounty.civicplus.com, accessed various.

El Cerrito Historical Society

Gelernter, Mark

General Land Office
1868 *Plat of the Northern Part of Rancho San Antonio partially confirmed to Vincent and Domingo Peralta*. U.S. Surveyor’s Office, San Francisco, California. On file at Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings

Gudde, Erwin G.

Hoover, Mildred Brooke, Hero Eugene Rensch, Ethel Rensch, and William N. Abeloe

Jackson, John Brinckerhoff

Longstreth, Richard

McAlester, Virginia Savage

ParcelQuest

Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd.
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<td>U.S. Census Bureau</td>
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<td>U.S. Geological Survey</td>
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<td>VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting</td>
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<td>Wiseman, Carter</td>
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<td>Wyckoff, William</td>
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</table>
Resource Name: 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123

Recorded by: Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot
Date: 1/15/2017

P5a. Photograph (continued)

10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. Rear façade, view to the north. 12/27/2016.

Resource Name: 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123

Recorded by: Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot

Date: 1/15/2017

P5a. Photograph (continued)

10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. West façade, main entrance view to the east. 12/27/2016.

DPR 523L (1/95)
Resource Name: 10290 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123

Map Name: USGS 7.5-minute Richmond, Calif.  
Scale: 1:24,000  
Date of Map: 1995
P1. Other Identifier: El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce, Law Offices of Darren Kessler, Denise’s Hair Salon

P2. Location □ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted:
   a. County: Contra Costa
   b. USGS 7.5’ Quad: Richmond, Calif. Date: 1993; T1S/R3W; Rancho San Pablo; M.D.B.L.
   c. Address: 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 City El Cerrito Zip 94530
   d. UTM: Zone 10S; 561117mE/4195623mN
   e. Other Locational Data: APN 503-394-024-7; Boulevard Gardens Tract, Block 37, Lot 25

P3a. Description: This property is a two-story, 2,700-square-foot rectangular commercial building with a detached garage in an urban setting. The primary building faces San Pablo Avenue/State Route (SR) 123 and was originally designed as a two-story mixed-use building with upper story residential over a ground floor commercial space. The building rests on a concrete slab foundation and is covered by a very low-pitched or flat roof behind a raised, boxy stucco-clad parapet. Roof-mounted climate control equipment is visible. The walls are clad in textured stucco with boxy horizontal banding on the main, street-facing façade that enframe the fenestration and break up the façade. Subsequent alterations include non-original brick and stucco cladding, replacement fixed-pane aluminum framed windows, a non-original security grate on the main façade, a small non-original awning on the north façade, non-original stucco added to small parapets on the main and rear façades, and vinyl framed windows on the building’s second floor. The secondary building is a detached four-car single-story garage of cinder block masonry construction behind the primary building. The garage rests on a concrete slab foundation and is covered by a flat roof behind a short parapet. The garage doors appear to have been removed and space converted to other uses, such as storage space. The main entrance is located at the far left of the asymmetrical north façade and is accessed via a recessed alcove. Secondary entrances face Eureka Avenue and access ground-floor office space. A set of cast concrete stairs at the rear of the primary building accesses the upper-floor space. It is not clear if the upper floor is currently used as residential. This building and is an unexceptional example of vernacular style architecture. The building is in poor condition.

P3b. Resource Attributes: (HP6) 1-3 story commercial building

P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building

P5a. Photograph:

P5b. Description of Photo:
10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123.
North and west façades. View east.
Google Street View image, August 2016.

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic Built 1944; ParcelQuest.com.

P7. Owner and Address:
Wayne E. and Susan Bass Trust
6003 Golden Eagle Way
Clayton, California 94517-1933

P8. Recorded by:
Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot
LSA
157 Park Place
Point Richmond, California 94801

P9. Date recorded: 1/15/17.

P10. Survey Type: Intensive

P11. Report Citation: Hibma, Michael and Angelique Theriot, 2017. Historical Resource Evaluations of 10290 and 10296 San Pablo Avenue/State Route 123, El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, California. LSA, Point Richmond, California.

Attachments: ☒ Location Map ☒ Continuation Sheet(s) ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record

DPR 523A (1/95)
B. Historic Name: Undetermined
B2. Common Name: El Cerrito Chamber of Commerce; Law Offices of Darren Kessler; Denise’s Hair Salon
B3. Original Use: Two story mixed-use building
B4. Present Use: Offices
B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular
B6. Construction History: The two-story building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 was built in 1944. The detached auto garage behind the building was constructed circa 1951, per Sanborn Map information. Archival research indicates that the original owner was Giacomo Parella who also owned a parcel containing a gas station at 10192 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 adjacent parcel to the south. The building was originally a two-story, mixed-use dwelling with residential space above a store front. Background research did not identify an architect or builder for the building. Subsequent alterations to 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 include non-original brick and stucco cladding, replacement fixed-pane aluminum framed windows, a non-original security grate on the main façade, a small non-original awning on the north façade, non-original stucco added to small parapets on the main and rear façades, and vinyl framed windows on the building’s second floor. The detached garage appears to have had the original garage doors replaced and filled with plywood and appears to indicate a change from parking automobiles to other uses, such as storage space.

B7. Moved? No
B8. Related Features: None
b. Builder: Undetermined
B10. Significance: Theme: 20th century growth of El Cerrito  
Property Type: Commercial building
Applicable Criteria: N/A  
This two-story, 2,700-square-foot commercial building and detached garage completely cover a 0.057-acre parcel in a moderately-developed urban setting. Research indicates that the building at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 is associated with the mid-20th century growth of El Cerrito. This development trend made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of El Cerrito and western Contra Costa County. However, this building is one of hundreds of similar commercial buildings in El Cerrito, Contra Costa County and the East Bay that are associated with this theme, and no evidence was identified to elevate the building in associative stature. It does not possess specific, important associations with this context that distinguish it from hundreds of other buildings with similar design, construction history, and use (see continuation sheets).

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: None

American Society of Civil Engineers

B13. Remarks: None
B14. Evaluator: Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot
LSA
157 Park Place, Point Richmond, California 94801

Date of Evaluation: 1/15/17
DPR 523B (1/95)
B10. (continued)

Early Settlement and Transportation. Before European colonization, the area that became El Cerrito was inhabited by the Huchuin group of the Ohlone tribe. The Huchuin depended on local wildlife and seafood for subsistence, and practiced small-scale agriculture along Wildcat and El Cerrito creeks. Following the Spanish period of exploration and after establishment of the Franciscan mission system, modern El Cerrito was part of lands administered by Mission San Francisco De Asis (Mission Dolores). Following Mexican Independence in 1821, the missions were privatized and lands divided and granted to political supporters and former government officials. Modern El Cerrito was located within the 17,939-acre Rancho San Pablo, granted in 1823 to retired soldier Francisco Maria Castro. The grant was confirmed following his death in 1831 and divided among his heirs.

Following the Gold Rush of 1849, the population of the East Bay grew rapidly. The Camino de la Contra Costa (a.k.a., San Pablo Avenue/SR 123) became an important corridor between Oakland and the Contra Costa County seat in Martinez. In 1852, Contra Costa County ordered the construction of a more direct and improved road along the same general route between Rancho San Pablo and Oakland, which became known as “The San Pablo Road” over time the name became “San Pablo Avenue.” As a major regional thoroughfare, San Pablo Avenue became part of the Lincoln Highway, the nation's first transcontinental road made of a patchwork of existing routes. Prior to the construction of the Eastshore Highway (Interstate 80), San Pablo Avenue was the main arterial in the northern East Bay and was designated U.S. Route 40 north of University Avenue. In the 1930s, Route 40 shifted west to a new route (modern Bayshore Freeway) and was renamed Interstate 80 in the 1950s. In 1883, the California and Nevada Railroad opened a line that ran parallel to San Pablo Avenue between Richmond and Emeryville. In 1902, the line was purchased by the Santa Fe Railroad, which further opened El Cerrito to regional trade and passenger transportation (VerPlanck 2013:14). Today, that former alignment is used as a regional transit line operated by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District.

Rust Township/San Pablo Avenue. The Rust Township developed in the late-19th century around the intersection of modern San Pablo and Central avenues. One of the first settlers to the area following the subdivision of Rancho San Pablo was Wilhelm F. Rust. Rust was born in Hanover, Germany, on November 27, 1857, and relocated to California in 1883. In Germany, Rust worked as a blacksmith and brought his trade to the Bay Area, where his skills were in high demand. Rust leased land in El Cerrito in the early 20th century. Following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, Rust built a hardware store on the “Contra Costa Road.” In 1909, Rust established a post office within his hardware store, named the community after himself, and was the first postmaster (City of El Cerrito 2016).

El Cerrito. By 1910, residents of Rust Township had unsuccessfully sought infrastructure improvements from Contra Costa County, such as road paving and school construction. Residents chose to incorporate rather than be annexed, and on August 20, 1917, the community of Rust became El Cerrito (trans. The Little Hill) in honor of nearby Albany Hill (VerPlanck 2013), and boasted a population of 1,500. The newly formed El Cerrito Board of Trustees in 1917 soon passed a law requiring licensing fees for saloons to build roads and schools. Over 20 saloons were located in El Cerrito along San Pablo Avenue alone (City of El Cerrito), and revenues collections funded improvements such as paving San Pablo Avenue; unfortunately for local ranchers, this prevented their use of San Pablo Avenue as a route for moving their cattle to shipping points.

By 1900, El Cerrito’s population had grown to 3,900. Growth slowed through the 1920s, however, as inexpensive, developable land was readily available in Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond. Growth picked up in the late 1930s and then aggressively during World War II as people moved to the East Bay to fill defense jobs at the Kaiser shipyards in Richmond, which in turn expanded related employment and housing demand. El Cerrito’s population swelled to nearly 17,000. After the war, veterans and former defense workers moved to or remained in the area where land was affordable and available. By the 1950s, El Cerrito was as a commuter suburb. This trend continues today as City has a population over 24,000 (City of El Cerrito 2016).

Boulevard Gardens Tract. E.N. Tapscott relocated to Oakland from Howardsville, Virginia, in the late-19th century and began working in real estate. He subdivided the 160-acre Boulevard Gardens Tract No. 1 in 1907. The tract was bounded by Moeser Lane, Ashbury Avenue, Kearny Street, and south of Eureka Avenue. The project site was located on Lot 1 of Block 21 within the tract (Boulevard Gardens Tract No. 1 map 1907).

10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map depicts the property containing a single-story, square-shaped building addressed at 86 San Pablo Avenue labeled “Rest.” for restaurant. A small, unlabeled square-shaped addition is depicted at the rear of the building. The blocks surrounding the property depict sparse residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1926, Vol 1:12-13). By 1951, the parcel contains the restaurant depicted in 1926 with a street address of 684 San Pablo Avenue. The parcel also contains a rectangular, 2-story building with a street address of 690 San Pablo Avenue/6306 Eureka Avenue and a detached single-story automotive garage. This building is labeled with an “S.” indicating that it is a store. Behind the two-story store building is a single-story rectangular-shaped automotive garage building. The blocks surrounding the property depict moderate commercial and residential development (Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd. 1951, Vol 1:312-313; ParcelQuest 2016). Background research indicated that Giacomo Parella owned the property however the architect who designed the building or contractor hired to construct the building were not identified.

DPR 523L (1/95)
Architectural Context. Architecture in the project site parallels trends elsewhere in California during the 1950s. The section below describes the building types in the project site, followed by a discussion of the representative aspects of their respective architectural designs.

Vernacular. A useful approach to understanding what Vernacular style is, is by defining what it is not. That is, Vernacular architecture is not overly formal or monumental in nature, but rather is represented by relatively unadorned construction that is not designed by a professional architect. Vernacular architecture is the commonplace or ordinary building stock that is built for meeting a practical purpose with a minimal amount of flourish or otherwise traditional or ethnic influences (Upton and Vlach 1986:xi-xii, 426-432).

The historical roots of the Vernacular style in the United States dates from colonial settlement during the 16th and 17th centuries. European immigrants, either of modest independent means, or financed with corporate backing, brought with them a wood-based building tradition. From this combination of a wood-based building tradition, in an open, unsettled, and heavily forested land, with a young population developed a vernacular style “characterized by short-lived or temporary dwellings focused on the family and distinct from the place of work” (Jackson 1984:85-87). Typically associated with older, hand-built rural buildings in remote or rural, agricultural settings, Vernacular architecture can also include modern, pre-fabricated, general-purpose steel buildings used as shop space, warehouses, discount-clearance centers and many other uses (Gottfried and Jennings 2009:9-16).

California Register of Historical Resources Eligibility Evaluation

The following section evaluates whether the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 possess significant historical associations that would qualify it as eligible for inclusion in the CRHR and meet the definition of a “historical resource” for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (California Code of Regulations §15064.5(a)).

Criterion 1: Is it associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage?

Research indicates that the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are associated with the growth of El Cerrito in the mid-20th century. The building was constructed in 1965 as a two-story office building with rear parking by Giacomo Parella. The architect and building contractor were undetermined. These buildings are one of hundreds of Vernacular commercial buildings in El Cerrito associated with this period of growth and one of thousands of similar building types in Contra Costa County, the East Bay, and statewide. No evidence was identified to elevate either building in associative stature. They do not possess specific, important associations within its historic context to distinguish it from other buildings with a similar construction history and use. For these reasons, the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are not significant under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: Is it associated with the lives of persons important in our past?

Background research did not identify an association with either building with any persons important in our past. The building’s architect and builder were not identified. Based on background research results the previous owner, Giacomo Parella, did not appear to make significant contributions to the history of El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, or California. For these reasons, the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are not significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: Does it embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values?

This office building and detached garage possess some of the general characteristics of Vernacular commercial architecture, a well-represented style in El Cerrito’s existing building stock and to the thousands of similar office buildings in Contra Costa County, the East Bay, and statewide. The buildings’ architect and builder were not identified. For these reasons, the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are not significant under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: Has it yielded, or may it be likely to yield, information important to history?

This criterion is typically used to evaluate the potential for archaeological deposit to contain information important in understanding past lifeways of modern El Cerrito’s early historic-period and pre-European contact inhabitants. Its application to architecture is less common in eligibility assessments due to the prevalence of popular publications that thoroughly document the form, materials, and design of a given building type. Information about the Vernacular architecture style and construction methods, as represented by the office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123, can be obtained from other widely available sources on this and other common architectural styles. These buildings are unlikely to yield information important to the history of El Cerrito, Contra Costa County, or California. For these reasons, office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are not significant under Criterion 4.
B10. California Register of Historical Resources Eligibility Evaluation (Continued)

Integrity Assessment. Historical integrity refers to the ability of a resource to convey its significant historical associations. Integrity is a critical component of historical resources that are listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR. A building’s integrity is assessed only after its significance is established. This office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are not significant under any criteria and are not eligible for listing in the CRHR; therefore, their integrity was not assessed.

Conclusion. The office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 are associated with mid-20th century growth of El Cerrito. These buildings do not appear significant under any CRHR criteria, and, as result, their integrity were not assessed. For these reasons, office building and detached garage at 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 do not appear eligible for inclusion in the CRHR. For these reasons, these buildings do not qualify as “historical resources” for the purposes of CEQA (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 21084.1).

B12. References (Continued)

California Office of Historic Preservation (continued)
1996 California Historical Landmarks. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.
2001 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Historical Resources. California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento.

Contra Costa County Community Development Department
2016 Contra Costa County Historical Resources Inventory. Contra Costa County Community Development Department, Martinez, California. Electronic document, http://ca-contracostacounty.civicplus.com, accessed various.

El Cerrito Historical Society

Gelernter, Mark

General Land Office
1868 Plat of the Northern Part of Rancho San Antonio partially confirmed to Vincent and Domingo Peralta. U.S. Surveyor’s Office, San Francisco, California. On file at Northwest Information Center, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings

Gudde, Erwin G.

Hoover, Mildred Brooke, Hero Eugene Rensch, Ethel Rensch, and William N. Abeloe

Jackson, John Brinckerhoff
### B12. References (Continued)

- **Longstreth, Richard**

- **McAlester, Virginia Savage**

- **ParcelQuest**

- **Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Ltd.**

- **Upton, Dell, and John Michael Vlach**

- **U.S. Census Bureau**

- **U.S. Geological Survey**

- **VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting**

- **Wilson, Mark A.**

- **Wiseman, Carter**

- **Wyckoff, William**
**Resource Name:** 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123

**Recorded by:** Michael Hibma and Angeline Theriot  
**Date:** 1/15/2017

**P5a. Photograph (continued)**

![Image of 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 (west façade, view to the north).](image1)

10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. West façade, view to the north. 12/27/2016.

![Image of 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123 (north and east façades, view to the southeast).](image2)

Resource Name: 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123

Recorded by: Michael Hibma and Angelique Theriot  
Date: 1/15/2017

P5a. Photograph (continued)

10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123. East and north facades, view to the west. Google Street View image, August 2016.
Resource Name: 10296 San Pablo Avenue/SR 123
Map Name: USGS 7.5-minute Richmond, Calif.
Scale: 1:24,000
Date of Map: 1995