



Office of the City Manager

## INFORMATION CALENDAR

January 22, 2019

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: Timothy Burroughs, Director, Planning and Development  
Subject: LPC NOD: 2415 Blake Street, #LMIN 2018-0004

### INTRODUCTION

The attached Notice of Decision for the designation of a City Landmark is submitted to the Mayor and City Council pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 3.24.160, which states that “a copy of the Notice of Decision shall be filed with the City Clerk and the City Clerk shall present said copy to the City Council at its next regular meeting.”

### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC/Commission) has granted City Landmark status to the property at 2415 Blake Street. This action is subject to a 15-day appeal period, which began on January 7, 2019.

### BACKGROUND

BMC/LPO Section 3.24.190 allows City Council to review any action of the Landmarks Preservation Commission in granting or denying Landmark, Structure of Merit or Historic District status. In order for Council to review the decision on its merits, Council must appeal the Notice of Decision. To do so, a Council member must move this Information Item to Action and then move to set the matter for hearing on its own. Such action must be taken within 15 days of the mailing of the Notice of Decision, or by January 22, 2019. Such certification to Council shall stay all proceedings in the same manner as the filing of an appeal.

If the Council chooses to appeal the action of the Commission, then a public hearing will be set. The Council must rule on the application within 30 days of closing the hearing, otherwise the decision of the Commission is automatically deemed affirmed.

Unless the Council wishes to review the determination of the Commission and make its own decision, the attached NOD is deemed received and filed.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Landmark designation provides opportunities for the adaptive re-use and rehabilitation of historic resources within the City. The rehabilitation of these resources, rather than their removal, achieves construction and demolition waste diversion, and promotes investment in existing urban centers.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The Council may choose to appeal the decision, in which case it would conduct a public hearing at a future date.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There are no known fiscal impacts associated with this action.

CONTACT PERSON

Fatema Crane, Landmarks Preservation Commission Secretary, Planning and Development, 510-981-7410

Attachments:

1: Notice of Decision – #LMIN 2018-0004 for 2415 Blake Street



L A N D M A R K S  
P R E S E R V A T I O N  
C O M M I S S I O N

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N O T I C E O F D E C I S I O N

**DATE OF COMMISSION DECISION: December 6, 2018**  
**DATE NOTICE MAILED: January 7, 2019**  
**APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: January 22, 2019**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE OF DECISION (Barring Appeal or Certification): January 23, 2019<sup>1</sup>**

## 2415 Blake Street

### Landmark application #LMIN2018-0004 for City Landmark or Structure of Merit designation status for a residential property in the Southside

The Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley, after conducting a public hearing, **APPROVED** the following designation:

**DESIGNATION:** City Landmark

**APPLICANT:** Paul E. Matzner, 2415 Blake Street, Berkeley CA 94704

**ZONING DISTRICT:** R-2A, Restricted Multiple-Family Residential

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:** Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061.(3)

**The application materials for this project are available online at:**  
<http://www.cityofberkeley.info/zoningapplications>

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### FINDINGS AND APPROVED APPLICATION ARE ATTACHED TO THIS NOTICE

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to BMC Section 1.04.070, if the close of the appeal period falls on a weekend or holiday, then the appeal period expires the following business day. Pursuant to BMC Section 3.24.190, the City Council may “certify” any decision of the LPC for review, within fifteen days from the mailing of the NOD. Such certification shall stay all proceedings in the same manner as the filing of a notice of appeal.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF DECISION  
LMIN2018-0004  
2415 Blake Street  
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**COMMISSION VOTE: 6-0-1-1 (one vacancy)**

**YES:** ABRANCHES DA SILVA, ADAMS, ALLEN, CRANDALL, O'MALLEY, OWENS

**NO:** None

**ABSTAIN:** FINACOM

**ABSENT:** BEIL

**TO APPEAL THIS DECISION (see Section 3.24.300 of the Berkeley Municipal Code):**

To appeal a decision of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to the City Council you must:

1. Submit a letter clearly and concisely setting forth the grounds for the appeal to the City Clerk, located at 2180 Milvia Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Berkeley; or by facsimile to (510) 981-6901. The City Clerk's telephone number is (510) 981-6900.
2. The appeal must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on the "APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION" date shown above (if the close of the appeal period falls on a weekend or holiday, then the appeal period expires the following business day).
3. Submit the required fee (checks and money orders must be payable to 'City of Berkeley'):
  - a. The basic fee for persons other than the applicant is \$500. This fee may be reduced to \$100 if the appeal is signed by persons who lease or own at least 50 percent of the parcels or dwelling units within 300 feet of the project site, or at least 25 such persons (not including dependent children), whichever is less.
  - b. The fee for appeals of affordable housing projects (defined as projects which provide 50 percent or more affordable units for households earning 80% or less of Area Median Income) is \$500, which may not be reduced.
  - c. The fee for all appeals by Applicants is \$2500.

If no appeal is received, the landmark designation will be final on the first business day following expiration of the appeal period.

**NOTICE CONCERNING YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS:**

If you object to this decision, the following requirements and restrictions apply:

1. If you challenge this decision in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written

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correspondence delivered to the Landmarks Preservation Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.

2. You must appeal to the City Council within fifteen (15) days after the Notice of Decision of the action of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is mailed. It is your obligation to notify the Land Use Planning Division in writing of your desire to receive a Notice of Decision when it is completed.
3. Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(b) and Government Code Section 65009(c)(1), no lawsuit challenging a City Council decision, as defined by Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(e), regarding a use permit, variance or other permit may be filed more than ninety (90) days after the date the decision becomes final, as defined in Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.6(b). Any lawsuit not filed within that ninety (90) day period will be barred.
4. Pursuant to Government Code Section 66020(d)(1), notice is hereby given to the applicant that the 90-day protest period for any fees, dedications, reservations, or other exactions included in any permit approval begins upon final action by the City, and that any challenge must be filed within this 90-day period.
5. If you believe that this decision or any condition attached to it denies you any reasonable economic use of the subject property, was not sufficiently related to a legitimate public purpose, was not sufficiently proportional to any impact of the project, or for any other reason constitutes a "taking" of property for public use without just compensation under the California or United States Constitutions, your appeal of this decision must including the following information:
  - A. That this belief is a basis of your appeal.
  - B. Why you believe that the decision or condition constitutes a "taking" of property as set forth above.
  - C. All evidence and argument in support of your belief that the decision or condition constitutes a "taking" as set forth above.

If you do not do so, you will waive any legal right to claim that your property has been taken, both before the City Council and in court.

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**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. **Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record.** If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission or committee for further information.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

Questions about the project should be directed to the project planner, Fatema Crane, at (510) 981-7410 or [fcrane@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:fcrane@cityofberkeley.info). All project application materials, including full-size plans, may be viewed at the Permit Service Center (Zoning counter), 2120 Milvia Street, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Findings
2. Landmark Application, received **SEPTEMBER 26, 2018**

ATTEST:   
Fatema Crane, Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

cc: Applicant/Owner  
Residents  
City Clerk

Applicant & Property Owner:  
Paul E. Matzner  
2415 Blake Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

## DRAFT FINDINGS

DECEMBER 6, 2018

## 2415 Blake Street

### City of Berkeley Landmark Application LMIN2018-0004

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Landmark Designation of the property at 2415 Blake Street - the George Wilson House and the Herbert Bofinger Cottage

#### CEQA FINDINGS

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1. The project is found to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code §21000, et seq.) pursuant to Section 15061.b.3 of the CEQA Guidelines (activities that can be seen with certainty to have no significant effect on the environment).

#### LANDMARK PRESERVATION ORDINANCE FINDINGS

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2. Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 3.24.110.A Paragraph 1.b of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, and based on the evidence presented in the Landmark application, the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley (Commission) finds that the subject buildings exhibit architectural merit as outstanding examples of Italianate architecture, in the case of the George Wilson House constructed between 1885 and 1886, and of vernacular architecture reflective of the Third Bay Tradition, in the case of the Herbert Bofinger Cottage constructed in 1979 by an informal architectural designer and professional draftsman for his personal use. Some of the identifiable features of the Italianate style evident in the Wilson House include: box-shaped building; simple, low-pitched hipped roof; overhanging eaves with decorative brackets beneath, set within prominent trim detail; tall and narrow hooded windows with bracketed, pedimented crowns; windows, cornices and doorway/porch serving as principle areas of elaboration. Identifiable characteristics of the Third Bay Tradition found in the informal architectural design of the Bofinger Cottage include: vertical orientation, geometric building form; wood shingle siding, wood and natural exterior materials and trim, and an overall simplicity of design. These buildings represent outstanding examples of architecture because of the combination of these evident features with the integrity that each building exhibits.
3. Pursuant to BMC Section 3.24.110.A, Paragraph 4, the Commission finds that the subject property exhibits direct associations with the earliest development and transformation of Berkeley from an agricultural economy to a suburban residential community through its retention of the extant 1885-86 Italianate residence, the Wilson House. This residence was constructed shortly after the Berkeley establishment as a city (in 1878) and the initial 1875 Leonard tract map subdivision of the area.

## FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED

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1. This designation shall apply to the subject property and the following distinguishing features shall be preserved:

### The George Wilson House

- All distinctive, existing exterior building features of the Italianate architectural style
- Rectangular massing with symmetrical front façade
- Low-pitched hip roof featuring decorative brackets within the eave overhangs
- Paneled frieze trim at wall plates
- Front entry cornice and sidepieces and paneled door
- Two pairs of tall, narrow windows within front façade including ornate trim surrounding and within, cornices above, and (vertically oriented) two-pane glazing within wood sashes
- Narrow windows on the west and east facades and all trim thereto
- Window (kitchen) on north façade with trim thereto

### The Herbert Bofinger Cottage

- All distinctive, existing exterior building features reflective of the Third Bay Tradition architectural style
- Vertical orientation
- General building form and massing
- Pitched roof extending further on south slope
- Shed roofs over east side and west side doorways
- Shingle cladding and natural wood trim detail
- Building placement and footprint

### Designed landscape

- Landscape and plantings as designed by Bofinger in 1979 (Exhibit A)
- Coast live oak within front yard
- Cluster of redwood trees adjacent to north property line
- Single redwood tree adjacent to east property line



#LMIN2018-0004  
Attachment 1  
Exhibit A

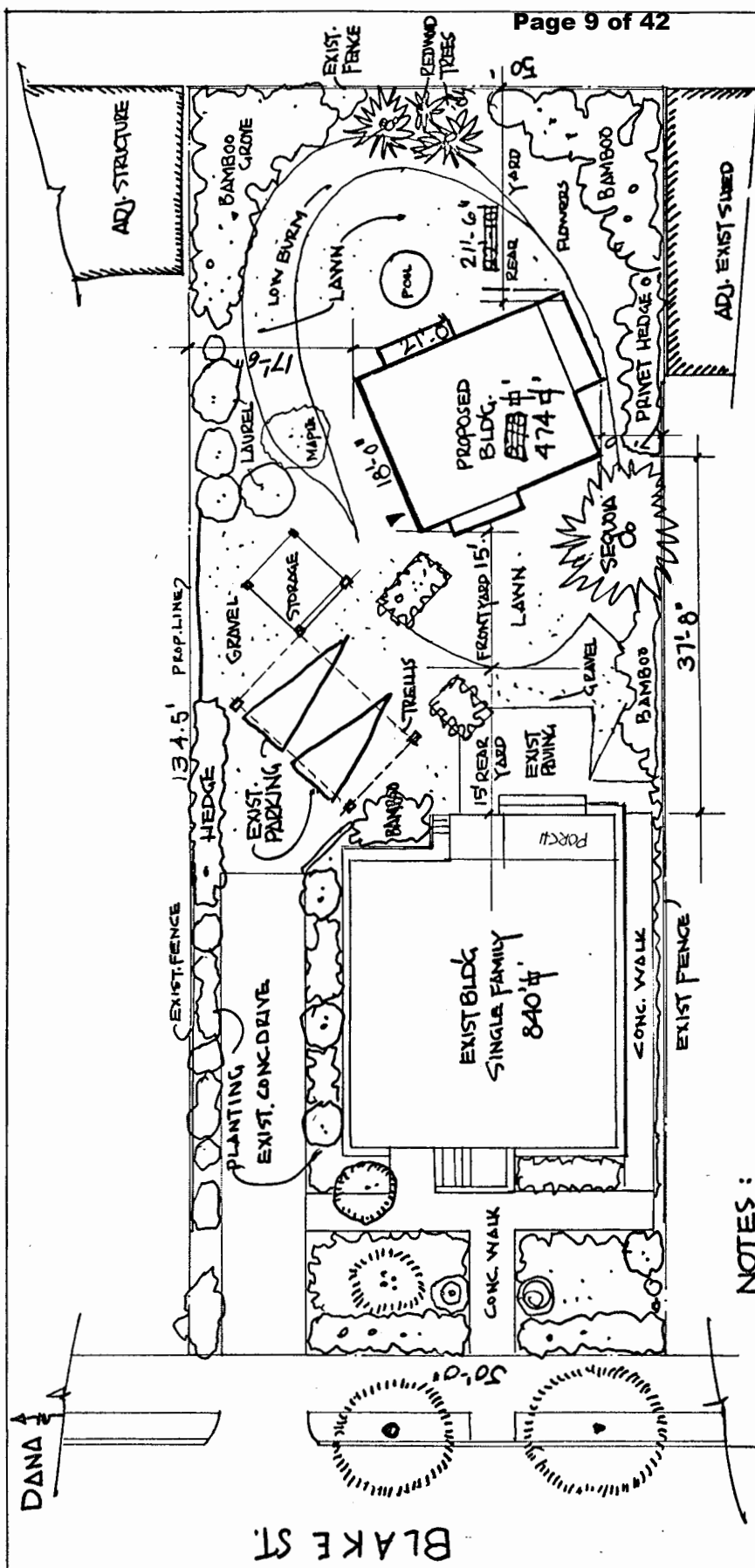
548-6130  
835-9526

H. BOFINGER - OWNER

*Handwritten signature*

*REVISIONS*

LANDSCAPE PLAN 1/8"=1'-0" 2415 BLAKE ST.



NOTES :

- LOT AREA 6,725 sq ft
- ALL LANDSCAPING EXISTING. THE GARDEN AREA IS VIRTUALLY LEVEL EXCEPT FOR A LOW BURN AT LAWN AREA AS INDICATED
- DRAINAGE SYSTEMS EXIST. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN GRADES.
- NO PLANTS WILL BE REMOVED EXCEPT LAWN INSIDE PROPOSED BUILDING PERIMETER



**Application to Landmark 2415 Blake Street**



City of Berkeley  
Ordinance #4694 N.S.  
LANDMARK APPLICATION

1. **Street Address** 2415 Blake Street  
**City** Berkeley  
**County** Alameda  
**Zip** 94704
  
2. **Assessor's Parcel Number:** 55-1838-7  
**Block and Lot:** block I, lot 12  
**Tract:** Leonard Tract  
**Dimensions:** 50 feet x 134.5 feet  
**Cross Streets:** Dana Street, Telegraph Avenue
  
3. **Is property on the State Historic Resources Inventory?** Yes  
**Form #** (none indicated on the form itself)  
  
**Is property on the Berkeley Urban Conservation Survey?** Yes  
**Form #** 17202
  
4. **Application for Landmark includes:**
  - a. **Building:**  **Garden:**  **Other features:**
  - b. **Landscape or Open Space:** **Natural**  **Designed**  **Other**
  - c. **Historic Site:**
  - d. **District:**
  - e. **Other:**
  
5. **Historic Name:** George Wilson house  
**Commonly Known Name:** NA
  
6. **Date of Construction:**
  - a. **Factual:** 1885-86 (original house construction)
  - b. **Approximate:** 1978 (carport and storage shed); 1979 (back cottage); 1987 (addition to main house, and an outdoor stairway)

**Source of Information:** June 1885 issue of *California Architect & Building News*; carved "1886" in cement slab; "improvements" assessment figure for 1886; and regarding post-1974 work, diary of (and "Landscape Plan" drawn by) then-owner Herbert J. Bofinger
  
7. **Architect:** M.J. Welch for the original house construction; Herbert J. Bofinger for the post-1974 work
  
8. **Builder:** J. Spencer for the original house construction; Herbert J. Bofinger for the post-1974 work

9. **Style:** Italianate Cottage (main house); contemporary (carport, storage shed, back cottage, and outdoor stairway)

10. **Original Owners:** George Wilson  
**Original Use:** dwelling

11. **Present Owners:** Paul E. Matzner TR

12. **Present Use:**

<b>Residential:</b>	Single Family	x	Duplex	x		
	Multiple					
<b>Commercial:</b>	Office		Store		Industrial	Hotel
<b>Institutional:</b>	School				Hospital	Other

**Current Zoning:** R-2A  
**Adjacent Property Zoning:** R-2A, R-3

13. **Present Condition of Property:**

<b>Exterior:</b>	Excellent	x	Good		Fair	Poor
<b>Interior:</b>	Excellent		Good	x	Fair	Poor
<b>Grounds:</b>	Excellent	x	Good		Fair	Poor

**Has the property's exterior been altered?** Yes, but the property has retained historic integrity.

14. **Description:**

**The Main House.** The property's main building (see Figures 1 through 7) is a wood-frame house in the style called Italianate Cottage.

It has a low-pitched hip roof, whose projecting eaves are visually supported at regular intervals by nicely carved brackets. The brackets normally rise from a prominent, handsome band of paneling that runs directly below and parallels the eaves. The building's strongly horizontal feeling is additionally expressed by the ornate cornices that project above each of the front facade's *pairs* of windows and, even more so, by the cornice above the front entry.

Yet the house also has some distinctive Italianate features with vertical thrust. These include the tall, narrow front doorway and the tall narrowness of the *individual* windows as such in the building's front, west, and east walls. Verticality is also notably expressed by the carved sidepieces that directly flank the front entry and each of the front facade's individual windows.

Set back slightly from the facade's main surface is the paneled front door itself, which appears to be original. On it and perhaps also original is a metal device that when duly *twisted* acts as a bell announcing that someone wishes to enter.

The present front porch is small and rather simple and is accessed, on one side, by a short flight

3



*Figure 1. The main house viewed from the street*



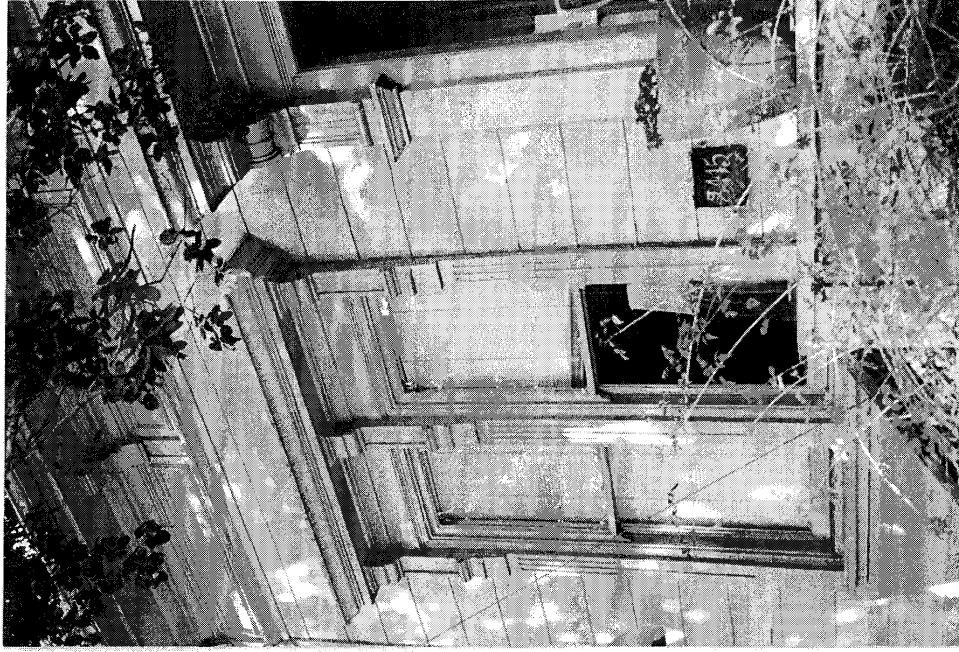
*Figure 2. Bracketed eaves and band of paneling*



*Figure 4. Living-room windows and their surrounds*



*Figure 3. Front entrance, and adjacent window, with cornices and sidepieces*



*Figure 6. Front facade's westernmost windows and their surrounds*



*Figure 5. Oak tree and view toward main house's west side*

of steps that directly adjoins the main building wall.

Each of the house's east and west sides has a single window, which is tall and narrow but has a surround that is simple rather than ornate.

The building's north face is more complex. Accessed from outside via a short flight of wide steps is the main level's back porch (seen in Figure 7), one area of which now is partly enclosed and contains a washer and a drier. Near those appliances is a door from the adjacent kitchen. Also facing north onto the back porch is a tall window. This window's surround has simple sidepieces but a top and base that are notably carved, and even much of its glass appears to be original. Immediately west of that porch is a small but specially designed room (accessed from indoors) in which there is a bathtub. Above and wider than the bathtub room there now is a sizable open balcony that supplies access to the building's present small upper unit, to help provide space for creation of which a part of the original north-facing roof and eaves, as well as two relevant carved brackets, were raised by a few feet. This balcony itself is reached via a segmented, outdoor stairway that starts up from a yard surface farther north.

Immediately west of the above-mentioned bathtub room are some outdoor steps that descend to a small paved area onto which the house's basement door faces.

Most of the main house's exterior wall areas are now coated with asbestos shingling, but compatibly so. This material (applied in 1950) does not extend onto the historic doorway and window surrounds, ornamental paneling, and carved brackets.

Inside the house's main level, most of the basic spaces per se evidently remain as originally outlined. The floor's four largest rooms currently serve as the kitchen, the living room, a bedroom, and a space potentially usable either as a dining room or as a second bedroom.

**Other Structures on the Site.** Northwest of the main house—and partially bordered by the above-mentioned outdoor stairway's middle landing—is the open-sided, timbered *carport* (see Figure 8). Instead of paralleling the property's side lot lines, this is set at about a 45-degree angle with respect to them.

Adjacent to part of the carport is a *storage shed* (seen in Figure 9). This, too, is placed at about a 45-degree angle in relation to the side lot lines.

Set at a different but quite large angle, and located roughly midway between the main house and the rear lot line, is the special *back cottage* (seen particularly in Figures 10, 11, and 14). This has a notably sloping roofline but a smallish footprint that is enabled by putting the dwelling unit's sleeping area on a mezzanine. In its special, quiet location the brown-shingled cottage adjoins lush greenery, and one of its doors faces a patio that is described in part of the next paragraph. In a manner rather as Frank Lloyd Wright would have used, the cottage is well integrated into the adjacent landscape, which includes nearby redwoods.

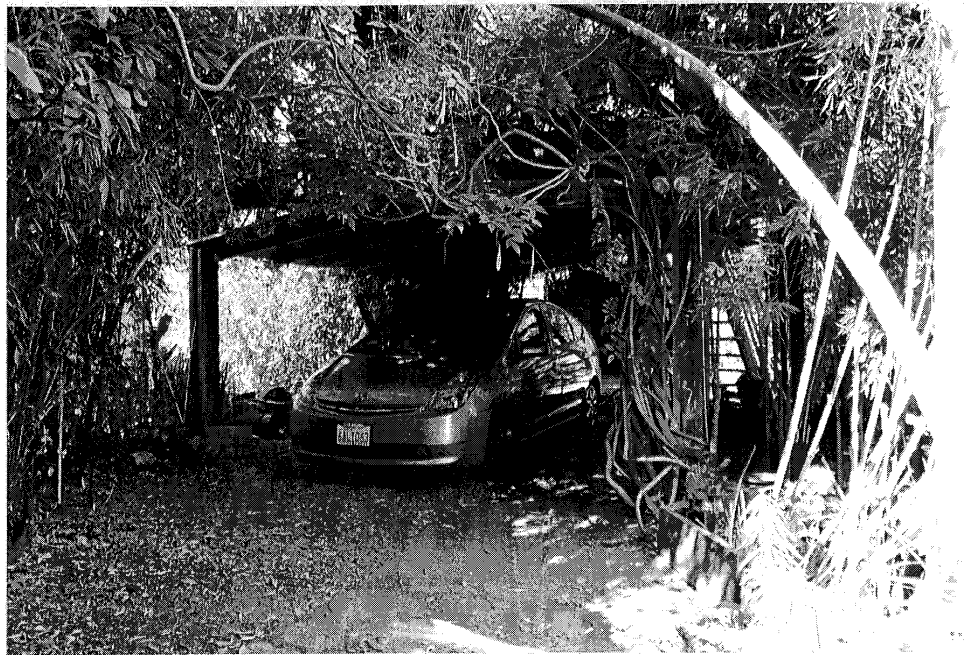
**Yards and Greenery.** Aided by extensive planting and by the angled placing and sensitive



7



*Figure 7. Main unit's back porch and some nearby features*



*Figure 8. Carport*



*Figure 9. Storage shed and part of outdoor stairway*



*Figure 10. View into part of the greater back yard*



Figure 12. Pathway into north patio



Figure 11. Back cottage

10



*Figure 13. Part of north patio and adjacent redwoods cluster*



*Figure 14. Single redwood (center background) and part of the back cottage*

design of the carport, storage shed, and back cottage—and with some interesting ground-surface undulations within it—what feels like a *greater back yard*, part of which is seen in Figure 10, flows sinuously and verdantly from the main building to the property's northern lot line. One of its features is (near the main house) a *sitting area*, beside which are a sizable pond and two sculptures done by the property's former owner Herbert J. Bofinger. From the sitting area a path runs, beside planted space and one edge of the back cottage, to reach the unique *patio* (partially shown by Figure 13) onto which one of the cottage's doors faces. Especially suitable for quiet contemplation, this patio features a pool, covered by crosshatched bamboo, in the center of which stands a columnar fountain sculpture. And currently in or beside the patio there are interesting pots, a concrete bench, and a sizable patch of multi-colored tiling.

The greater back yard's vegetation is especially prominent along its north and east sides. Particularly important are (a) the tight cluster of several redwoods that is in between the above-described patio and the northern lot line and (b) the single redwood that is adjacent to the back cottage and a side lot line and is partially shown by Figure 14.

The main house's own eastern side yard is just a few feet wide. Its western side yard is considerably wider and accommodates a driveway, which itself extends from the street to the carport. Though a transverse fence now crosses the driveway, it has a wide gate that can be opened to let cars go through. This side yard also contains a planting strip with flowers.

Within the property's front yard, the most distinctive feature is a coast live oak (see Figure 5). Currently on ground adjacent to the oak there are irregularly shaped cement plates, while other parts of the yard surface are lushly planted. The front yard's southeast portion is currently occupied by a dense grove of bamboo.

**The Neighborhood.** The 2415 Blake property is in the northeastern part of what is often called the LeConte (or Le Conte) neighborhood, using the longtime former name of the public school within it. This area's boundaries are typically defined as Dwight Way and Ashby, Shattuck, and Telegraph Avenues (the last-mentioned two of which have commercial strips along them).

Most of the overall neighborhood's residential structures date from before 1930, and many of those even from before 1900. Their building heights generally range from one to three stories, and their specific architectural styles often vary from lot to lot. But in most cases they sit comfortably together, often aided by mature planted yards, within streetscapes that are both interesting and harmonious.

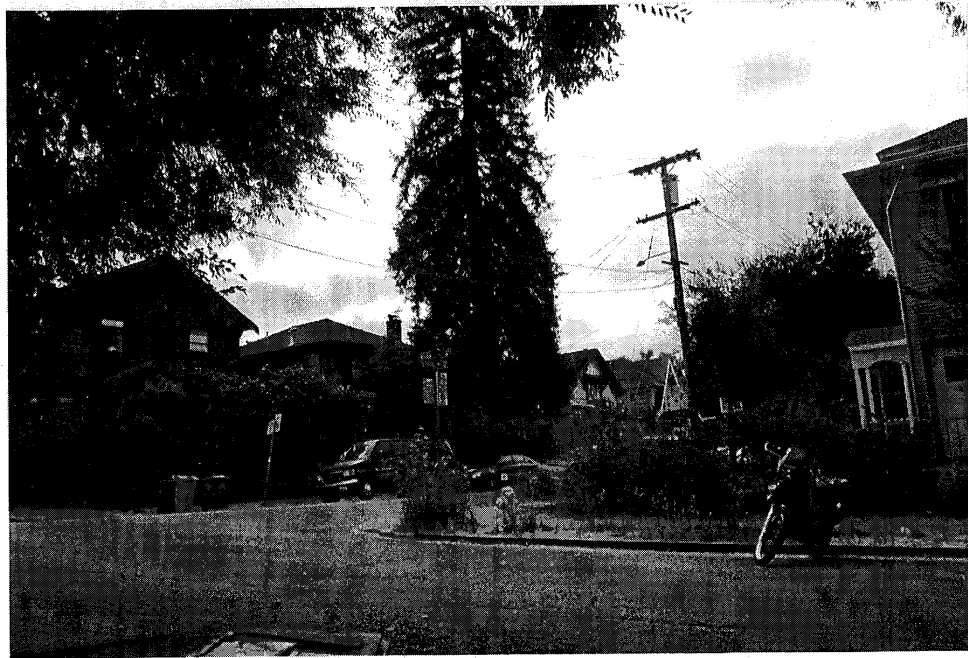
Sadly that cannot be said regarding various of the buildings that were constructed after World War II—especially ones dating from 1960 to 1975. Post-1960 buildings are mostly located within the neighborhood's portion between Dwight Way and Carleton Street. These generally range in height from two to five stories; there is also one nine-story building. A few of them, such as the large one at the Blake/Ellsworth intersection's northeast corner, were designed with serious effort to harmonize with their surroundings. But in other cases, like that shown by Figure 15, contrasts between new and old are stark and jarring.

One streetscape which has notably escaped such disruption is on Chilton Way (see Figure 16).

12



*Figure 15. A scene on Blake Street between Ellsworth and Dana*



*Figure 16. Houses on Chilton Way*

This one-block-long street is consistently bordered by houses of similar scale and feeling, with duly and in some cases uniquely planted front yards.

#### 15. History:

**Development of the Neighborhood.** Originally the whole general area was grassy open land, across which ran branches of Derby Creek with riparian lines of trees along segments of their extent. This eventually became part of the Mexican land grant Rancho de San Antonio.

Then during the 1850s—through a complex pattern of events including claims, squatting, court action, and sales—the future LeConte neighborhood's portions north of today's Russell Street were acquired by (a) James Leonard east of a line roughly matching today's Ellsworth Street and (b) George Blake west of that line. Leonard's and Blake's holdings also extended north of Dwight Way, but in 1864 their then still-remaining land north of Dwight was bought by the College of California to become part of the "College Homestead Tract."

Leonard himself was a farmer, and no later than 1855 he began farming in the area. During the 1850s the Leonard house was built near the north branch of Derby Creek: proximity that offered a high water table for wells. In 1860 Leonard established the area's first east-west road: the route we now call Dwight Way.

In 1868 the State Legislature established the University of California, into which was merged the (till then privately owned) College of California. The University held classes in Oakland (as the College had done) until construction on the Berkeley campus enabled classes to start there in 1873.

Meanwhile, James and Margaret Leonard divorced. He moved to southern California, but she and some of their children stayed in Berkeley. Under the 1868 divorce settlement she obtained the Berkeley property, and in the ensuing decades she would engage in numerous land transactions.

One of those was in 1875 when she sold a chunk of land (bounded by today's Blake Street, Telegraph, and Parker and a line some 125 feet east of Dana) to Juan Geraldo Montealegre Mora. He belonged to the family of Costa Rica's former president Jose Mora Montealegre Fernandez, who in 1870 had fled that country when his own son-in-law the then president was ousted by a coup. On this Berkeley land a substantial house was built in 1876 or 1877. Though in 1883 the property would be sold, the house itself remained there for many years.

But Margaret Leonard's biggest real estate venture was when, later during 1875, the "Leonard Tract" map was filed that included all of her remaining land. This was the general area's first subdivision south of Dwight Way. Its own street grid extended the pattern that had already been used for the College Homestead Tract north of Dwight.

Figure 17 shows most of the Leonard Tract, which also reached south to Russell Street. Note that the map's "Humboldt Avenue," on which a horsecar line then ran, was what we now call Telegraph Avenue—and that the tract even included some acreage east of that route.

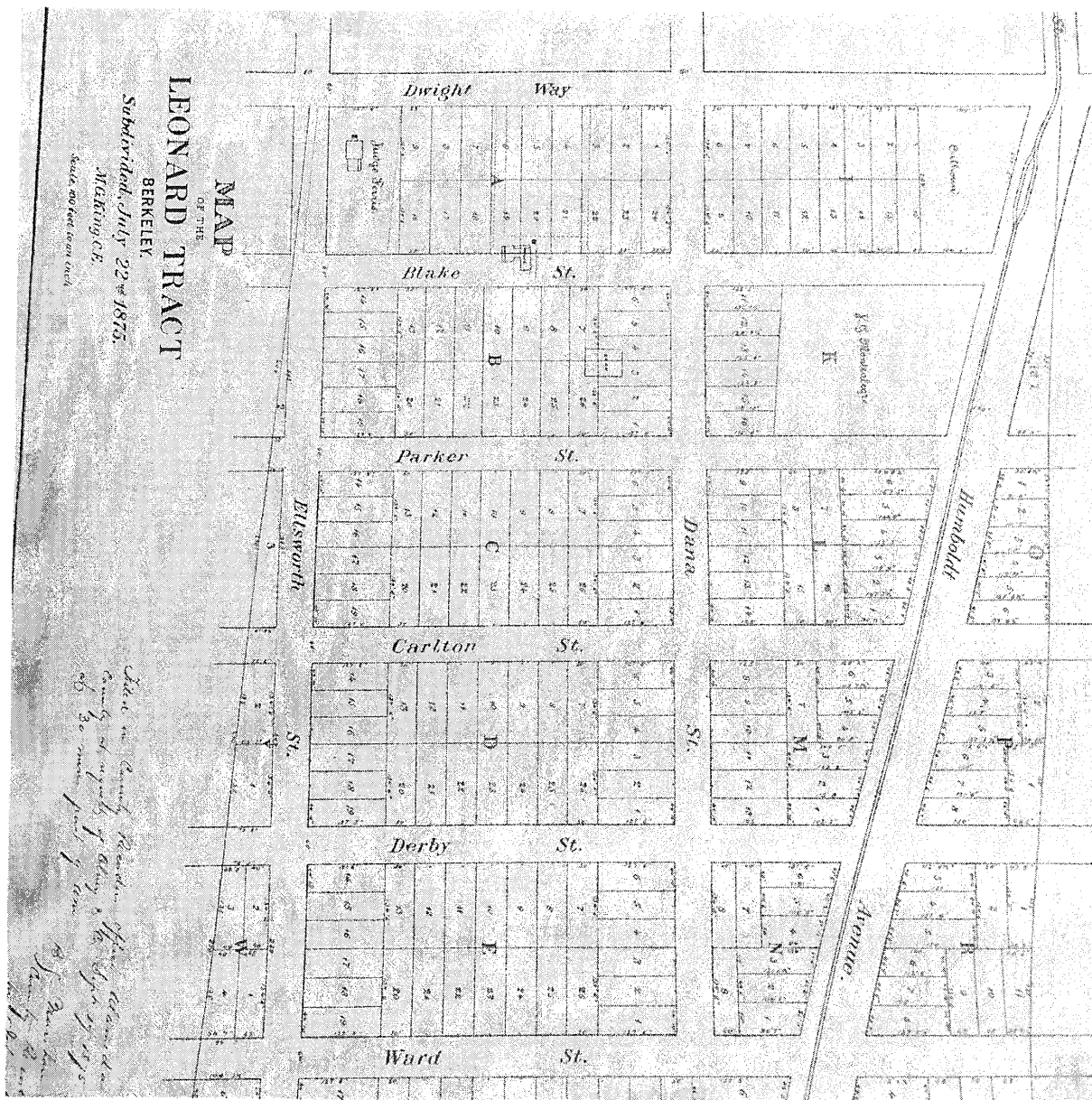


Figure 17. Northern and middle parts of the 1875 Leonard Tract map



The tract map recognized the already-defined extent of the Montealegre property. It also depicted a few already-existing buildings, including the Leonard house itself with its footprint overlapping the map's Blake Street about midway between Ellsworth and Dana. (Blake Street would not physically go through that point until later, when Margaret Leonard's new house had been built on a nearby lot.)

In 1876 George Blake subdivided his own land, and in doing so he extended westward the grid pattern that the Leonard Tract map had used.

Just a small percentage of the Leonard Tract's lots sold at first; and even after lots would be bought, many of them would long remain undeveloped. But ongoing lot sales would continue to be an important source of income for Margaret Leonard, who lived till 1898. She also leased out some of her land, such as to truck farmers.

Meanwhile though the City of Berkeley incorporated in 1878, it then covered much less territory than it now does. Within the Leonard and Blake tracts the southern city limit initially was about midway between Blake and Parker streets. The rest of the neighborhood was not annexed till 1892.

As of 1888 much of the area's acreage was still farmland, though some pockets of development were already underway and the rate of development would soon increase. But within the general neighborhood some farming continued till after 1900.

Figure 18 shows the 1902-03 Sanborn map's portion for the vicinity around 2415 Blake Street and illustrates how, even then, there nearby still were many undeveloped lots. But within the new century's first few decades nearly all of the LeConte neighborhood's remaining open lots got built on. One notable change involved the former Montealegre property, which was subdivided in 1909. (The former Montealegre house itself was moved to the southeast corner of Parker and Dana streets.) One part of this subdivision involved creating Chilton Way and the lots along it, which parcels were built on within the next several years.

Some of the LeConte neighborhood's vacant lots got developed by *moving*, onto them, buildings that had previously stood elsewhere. And indeed this happened with the lots immediately east and west of the Wilson house. In 1914 a large house (itself dating from the 1890s) was moved to 2417 Blake. And evidently in 1923 a sizable house was moved (from Channing Way) to 2409 Blake.

Meanwhile, Derby Creek's branches within the neighborhood had long remained open (even though some segments had been slightly rerouted). But in the period around 1910 the creek beds were filled in and were replaced by storm sewers beneath nearby streets.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, before City development controls were tightened, many new buildings were constructed within the neighborhood's northern portion. And to make way for them in various cases, existing houses got demolished. Fortunately the dwelling at 2415 Blake escaped that fate.

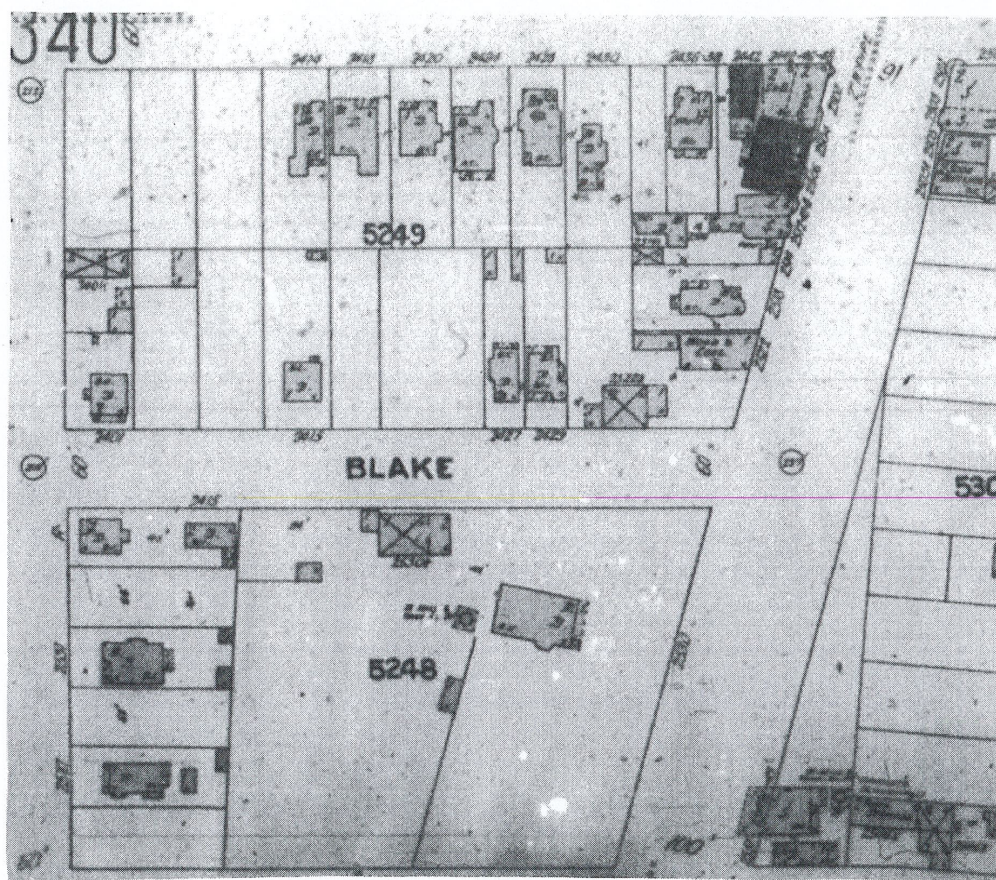


Figure 18. The Wilson house's vicinity as shown by 1902-03 Sanborn map

**Construction of the Wilson House.** In 1885—when most of the neighborhood was still undeveloped—lot 12 of the Leonard Tract’s block I was bought, apparently for \$350 in gold coins, by San Francisco banker George Wilson. He then proceeded to have a house built on it.

There apparently is some minor inconsistency between sources regarding the house’s exact construction date. A 1975 newspaper article said the dwelling was “completed in 1887.”\* And a 1974 letter by Eda McLaughlin (evidently then the widow of a direct descendant of George Wilson) said the house was built in 1887.\*\* But when the same man who had written the newspaper article later filled out the State Historic Resources Inventory form about the house, he indicated the “Year of Initial Construction” as 1885. He may have based that on the “1-story frame East Berkeley, owner: G. Wilson” entry, with a \$1,000 figure, in the June 1885 issue of *California Architect & Building News*. That entry plausibly reflected the *contract* to build, and it is also plausible that actual construction began during 1885. But a cement slab in front of the house’s basement door shows, carved into it, the year “1886.” It is unlikely that the rather small house’s actual construction work continued into 1887. And assessment data for 1886\*\*\* showed the property with the “improvements” figure of \$500: a sizable amount during that era.

So evidently the house’s construction occurred in 1885-86.

**The Property’s Subsequent History.** It appears that the cottage originally had been built as a vacation place for the Wilson family, whose regular home was in San Francisco. But according to a letter that Eda McLaughlin wrote in 1975 to then-owner Herbert J. Bofinger, Mrs. Wilson was afraid to stay alone in the Berkeley house because of the vicinity’s “many roaming and howling coyotes.”\*\*\*\* Later on, after his wife’s death, George Wilson and their daughters began living full-time in the house on Blake Street.

Back then and for many subsequent years the north branch of Derby Creek remained open in the middle of the block. In her 1975 letter Eda McLaughlin said that when her husband was a child he had “played in the creek, under a high weeping willow tree.” She also remarked how the creek had supplied underground water for diverse fruit trees in the house’s back yard: “an apple, plum, cherry and an apricot.”

In that same 1975 letter she said that when George Wilson and his daughters had moved in full-time, “the house had a white picket fence around it with a gate.” Such a fence does appear in Figure 19, which despite the unfortunate shadowing in the photo does give us an early glimpse of the house. This photo obviously was shot at some time before—maybe long before—about 1914 (which, as mentioned above, was when a sizable, now-adjacent building got moved onto the previously undeveloped lot at 2417 Blake).

Sanborn maps from 1902-03 and 1950 (though oddly, not the 1911 map) showed one or two small accessory buildings in the northernmost part of the 2415 Blake lot. If either of those

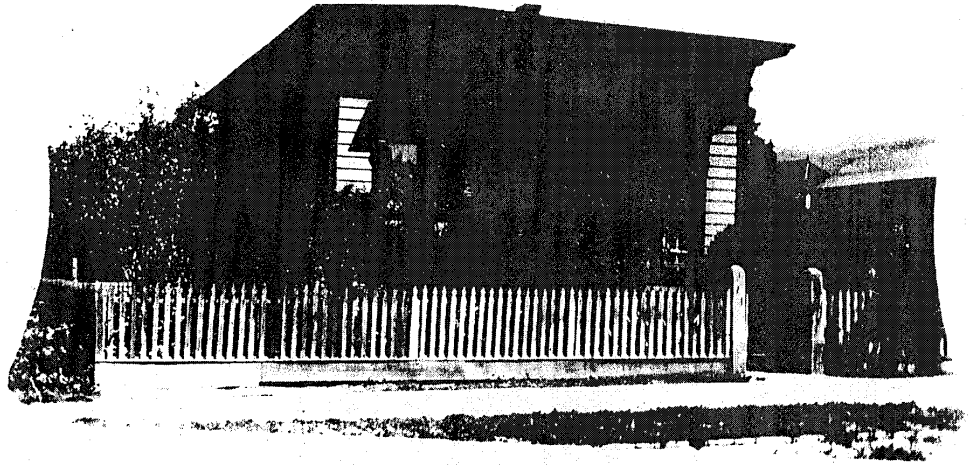
\*Mark Anthony Wilson for the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, “Berkeley’s Architectural Heritage” (series title), *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, November 5, 1975.

\*\*Eda McLaughlin, letter to Herbert J. Bofinger, October 24, 1974.

\*\*\*Lyndon Comstock, *On Parker Street: The Evolution of a Berkeley Neighborhood, 1855-1965*, page 161.

\*\*\*\*Eda McLaughlin, letter to Herbert J. Bofinger, June 25, 1975.

18



*Figure 19. The house in some early year*



*Figure 20. The house in about 1939*

structures survived into the early 1970s, it likely got demolished then.

Comparison of the 1902-03 Sanborn with the ones for 1911 and 1950 seems to imply that some porch extension and/or other addition occurred along the house's north side, but it is unclear what happened there during that era.

Figure 20 shows the house in about 1939. At least by then the old picketed front fence obviously had been replaced by hedges. The child seen standing on the small front porch may well have been a direct descendant of George Wilson.

It appears that the property's ownership stayed within the family line, at least via marriage, till about 1973, though the house was unoccupied for a while within that decade's early portion. By April 1974 it was again occupied and the property had been sold to someone named R. Edler. But later during 1974 it was purchased by Herbert J. Bofinger.

That new owner was well equipped to care for the historic property. He had graduated from UC Berkeley with a major in decorative arts, and he had attended the San Francisco Art Institute. He had long work experience as a draftsman in prominent San Francisco architectural offices. On his own, he had designed some houses. And he had done some work with plant nurseries and landscapers. He was fascinated by Japanese and Chinese landscape and culture: fascination symbolized by a painting, from the Hiroshige studio, that is still prominently displayed within the Blake Street main unit's entrance hall.

It appears that for exterior work done at 2415 Blake during the years after he bought the property, Bofinger was both designer and builder, directly retaining workers and/or subcontractors as needed (and/or sometimes doing physical work himself).

In 1975 he did painting and repair work on the house (and replaced its small old front porch with the small new one visible in Figure 21). He energetically also did extensive regrading and landscaping work, one part of which was planting some redwoods adjacent to the northern lot line.

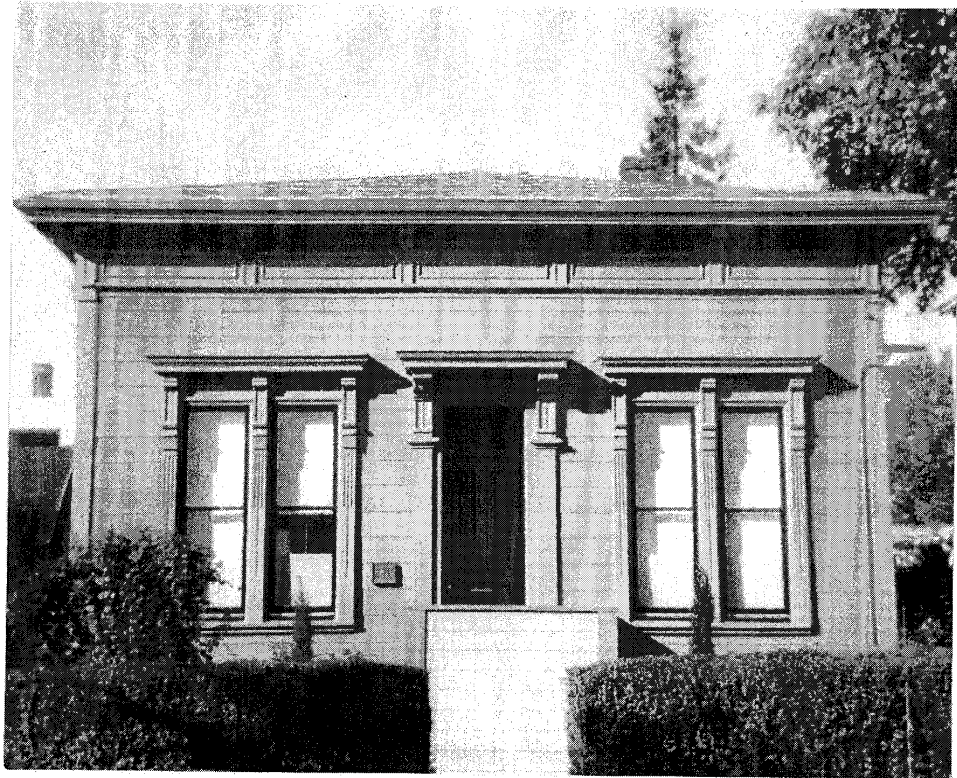
Then within the dozen-year period after 1975 Bofinger constructed the present carport, storage shed, back cottage, and segmented outdoor stairway; made above-mentioned changes to the main house that included some altering on its north face; and did additional planting and landscape work. In designing these projects he kept well in mind the property's historic character.

Dating presumably from January 1979 is Figure 22, which photo appeared on the pertinent form that was filed that month for the State Historic Resources Inventory.

16. **Significance:** This statement of significance is organized under pertinent landmarking criteria that are contained within Section 3.24.110 of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance.

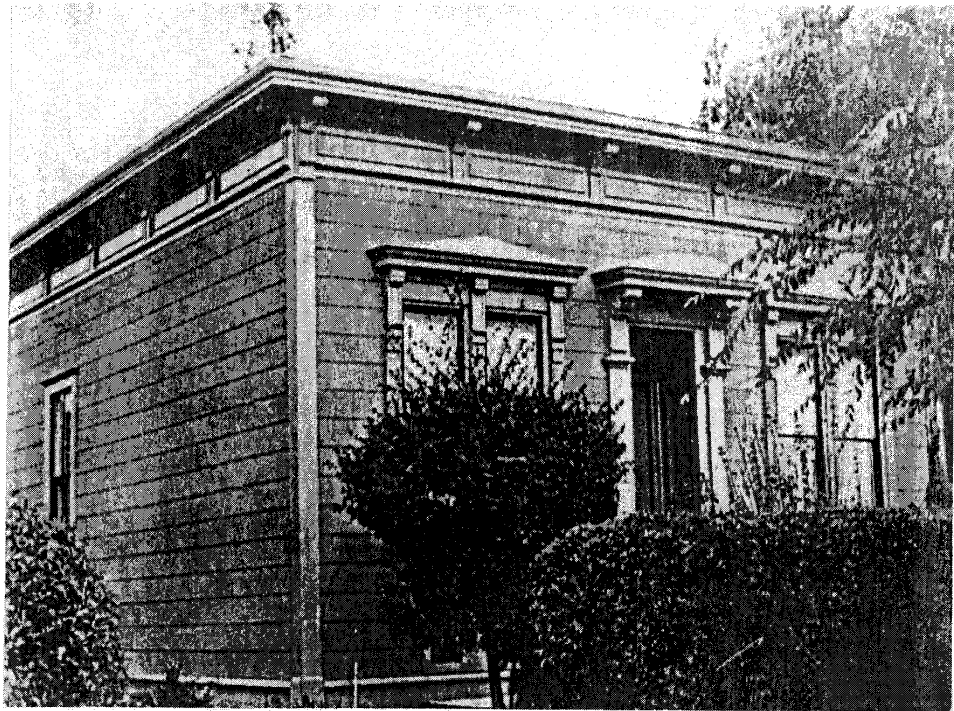
**“Architectural merit: . . . Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric”:**

20



*Figure 21. The house in 1975*

21



*Figure 22. The house in 1979*

Modestly scaled but handsome and distinctive, the property's main house contributes subtly but importantly to the neighborhood fabric. One such benefit is the house's giving some much-needed relief from buildings within the area that are bigger, dull, and/or ugly. Another benefit is that the house very interestingly displays the particular architectural style (now relatively rarely preserved) that, in distinction from Italianate's larger version, is called Italianate Cottage.

With his own long experience regarding design, former owner Herb Bofinger appreciated and respected the architecture of the old house—which he interestingly called a “workingman’s Victorian.” Though he made some alterations to it, he did them with sensitivity and the house has retained historic integrity.

**“Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the city”:**

In a 1975 article Mark Wilson called the old house “a link with Berkeley’s rural past.”\* Indeed it is one of the LeConte neighborhood’s oldest houses and dates from a time when various plots within the area were still being farmed.

The property’s greater back yard also says something quite pertinent regarding Berkeley’s evolution. It has a lushly planted yet spacious character that (even though most of its individual trees and shrubs are fairly young) helps us recall the era when, as with streams elsewhere in Berkeley, Derby Creek’s north branch still flowed, open, within the area. Indeed it ran in the middle of this particular block—and in doing so it supplied underground water for diverse trees that then grew in the Blake Street house’s back yard.

**“Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force”:**

The property’s main house valuably offers to people (even casual passersby) information relevant to the neighborhood’s, and Berkeley’s, nineteenth-century past and the architectural heritage from that era. With its historic integrity, the house very instructively demonstrates the particular style called Italianate Cottage.

Also very instructive are the back cottage’s special character, placement, and setting. As ably and inspiringly designed by then-owner Herb Bofinger, this unique cottage valuably helps illustrate how truly livable new dwellings could be added to neighborhoods, even within some special properties and/or near to noisy major streets.

**“Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military”:**

The property’s main house was built in—and valuably helps us understand—the period when

\*Mark Anthony Wilson, for the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association. “Berkeley’s Architectural Heritage” (series title) article about 2415 Blake Street. *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, November 5, 1975.



the surrounding Leonard Tract's actual development was still just slowly proceeding and various land within the area was still being farmed. And the 2415 Blake lot's much-planted greater back yard subtly but importantly reminds us about relevant history, including the property's former interplay with an open branch of Derby Creek.

In planning for the lot's present back cottage and other new structures, Herb Bofinger thoughtfully sited and designed them to minimize impact on the greater back yard's landscaped character.

That landscaped character is also much appreciated and respected by present owner Paul E. Matzner, who in his past had for years worked as a curator in the Natural Sciences Department of the Oakland Museum of California.

**Historic Value:**

National    State    County    City x    Neighborhood x

**Architectural Value:**

National    State    County    City x    Neighborhood x

17. Is the property endangered? No.

18. **Photographs:** **Date:** September 2018 (cover's lower portion, Figure 2, and Figures 7 through 16); October or November 2016 (cover's upper portion, Figure 1, and Figures 3 through 6); some time before 1914 (Figure 19); about 1939 (Figure 20); 1975 (Figure 21); presumably 1979 (Figure 22) **Repository:** Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association **Photographer:** John S. English (cover and Figures 1 through 16); unknown (Figure 19); presumably A. Ormsby Donogh (Figure 20); presumably Mark Anthony Wilson (Figures 21 and 22)

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**20. Recorder:** John S. English **Date:** September 2018 **Organization:** NA

RECEIVED

NOV 20 2018

LAND USE PLANNING

Fatema Crane, Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1947 Center Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704

November 20, 2018

Re: **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELEVANT TO 2415 BLAKE LANDMARKING**

Dear Fatema:

Here is the information—regarding former owner Herbert J. Bofinger—that you requested to supplement the application to landmark the property at 2415 Blake Street.

**Architectural Firms That Had Employed Mr. Bofinger as Draftsman**

Firms for which Herb Bofinger had worked as a draftsman included these, all located in San Francisco:

- . Sabaroff & Dow
- . Marquis & Stoller
- . Harold C. Dow
- . Leonard Mosias
- . Henry V. Chescoe
- . Angus McSweeney / Angus McSweeney John Michael Lee (Associated Architects) / McSweeney & Schuppel Architects Michael D. Kelly Associate — the firm's name varied
- . John S. Bolles

**Houses That Mr. Bofinger Had Designed in Stinson Beach**

In about 1949 a house was built for him on “Lot 20 of Stinson Beach Highlands” (land he owned on Avenida Las Bolinas). And this house was enlarged in about 1954. The named architect for the initial project, and probably also for the enlargement, was Oran A. Jenkins. But in reality Bofinger himself in both cases very strongly influenced the design.

For construction of the following houses, known drawings explicitly named Bofinger as both owner and designer:

- . house built on the north side of Avenida Olema (plans dated March.1959)
- . house at 255 Calle Del Mar (built in about 1971)

Regarding at least some of the above-mentioned three houses, Bofinger himself lived there at least initially but one or more relatives moved in then or later on.

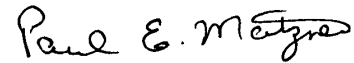
2

It appears that Bofinger designed a house, perhaps on Avenida Las Bolinas, for an old college friend.

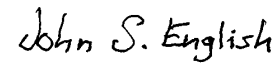
**Material from Mr. Bofinger's Memorial Service**

Photocopied and attached hereto is relevant material from Herb Bofinger's memorial service.

Sincerely,



Paul E. Matzner  
2415 Blake Street  
Berkeley, CA 94704



John S. English  
2500 Hillegass Ave., Apt. 3  
Berkeley, CA 94704



*Please join us for the celebration  
of the life and works of*

*Herbert J. Bofinger*

*Memorial Service, Saturday, February 5, 2000*

*10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.*

*Town & Town Club*

*2401 Dwight Way, Berkeley*

*Reception and Buffet to follow*

*12:00 to 3:00 p.m.*

*2415 Blake Street, Berkeley*

*RSVP Paul Matzner 510-549-8010*

*or Mary Muerle 925-932-1269*

Herbert John Bofinger  
August 25, 1920 – December 1, 1999  
A Life's Landscape

Herb was born in Berkeley, California, a second generation Californian, the oldest child of August and Emma E. Bofinger (nee John). His sister, Beatrice (Bee) was born three years later.

Herb's father, August, was the oldest of six children and from an early age had been the family breadwinner for his mother and five siblings. His great grandfather had immigrated to the United States from Hamburg, Germany, and his grandfather, Jacob, had been born in this country. Although Bofinger is an Alsatian name, the family bearing that name had branched to several different locations in Europe, including Paris and Hamburg. August was born and raised in San Francisco, and his first job was as a hatter for the Palace Hotel. He later worked for Gatner and Mattern, the swimsuit manufacturer, where he learned the knitting trade. After the San Francisco earthquake and fire, which forced the family to abandon their dwelling on Minna Street and camp in Golden Gate Park, August moved the family to Berkeley. While in Berkeley, he attended the German Methodist Church, where he met Emma E. John, the church's organist. Emma's father was a Welsh sailmaker who immigrated to the United States on a sailing vessel, landing in New York. At this point, he took up the occupation of surveying and worked his way in this capacity through the West to the Columbia River in Oregon, after which he moved to San Francisco. As a result of his surveying, he was offered acreage in the Berkeley Hills for a \$1 per acre, which he turned down as too inaccessible. He later worked for Simpson and Fisher as a sailmaker, and his son Edward also apprenticed as a sailmaker. He married in San Francisco to a woman who was originally from Kiel, Germany, but his first wife died in childbirth. He sent for her sister, who arrived with their mother; he married the sister and had three boys and one girl, Emma. Neither Emma nor August completed more than six years of schooling as they were required to help their families. They were married on November 19, 1919. Ultimately, August opened the Bofinger Knitting Mills on Alice Street, Oakland, and was quite successful during the Depression and the Second World War in this business.

During the first seven years of Herb's life, he lived in Berkeley. The pictures that exist demonstrate Herb's early ability with mechanics of building, as he worked on his wooden car. Around the time he was seven, he contracted scarlet fever and was quarantined; Bee lived with her grandmother next door for a prolonged period to avoid exposure to the disease. The recollection Herb had from this time was that as a curative, he was required to drink a glass of port each day to build up his blood. This illness required that he miss a great deal of school during his first year. August took the family on his travels

representing the knitting factory, which made men's and boy's sweaters. August is credited with inventing the 'barrel sweater', a V-neck, sleeveless sweater with a long body that could be rolled up to waist-length after which the rolls were used as pockets to store cigarettes and other items. August personally visited department stores throughout California during this period to demonstrate and sell his products. The family would wait in the car, and amuse themselves with playing word games, spelling games, and guessing games.

In 1927 the family moved to a home in San Leandro which August had retained an architect to design. It was a spacious nine room home with gardens in the back and side of the house. Herb lived here until he was drafted into the Army in 1942 (true?) Throughout his school years, as in later life, Herb was an avid reader. He took piano and voice lessons (he had a good baritone voice), and in high school, was in the Honors Society, the yearbook committee and the Junior Prom committee. He also attended the California College of the Arts and Crafts for art instruction. He enjoyed theatrics and costumes, as evinced by the pictures of some creative costumes he had worn as a boy. He was accounted to be a sharp dresser and in the high school yearbook willed his appearance to the class slob. He participated in ROTC, but hated the war games that were played.

At the San Leandro house, Herb and Bee had a playhouse, which was built around a door salvaged by a man who needed work during the depression, and at sixteen Herb built the first of his many ponds in the back yard, which became the swimming hole for the neighborhood kids.

Herb graduated from San Leandro High School in January 1939. He initially attended the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco (now the Art Institute in San Francisco), and the University of California at Berkeley, in the School of Environmental Design. Art pieces, primarily sculptures that he completed during that survive in his garden and home. Shortly after the start of America's involvement in the Second World War and the institution of the draft, Herb was drafted into the U.S. Army, there being no student deferments in those days. He was stationed at Tonopah, Nevada and Denver. While in the service, his entire his barracks were identified or identified themselves as homosexual. Herb was placed in a military mental hospital for a time, becoming a librarian, but was ultimately dishonorably discharged for being gay. When the U.S. government rescinded the dishonorable discharges some years ago, Herb refused to apply for the amnesty, so strong was his distaste and cynicism for how the government had treated not only him, but others in his unit and throughout the military.



When Herb returned from the service, he worked in a shipyard in Mare Island, and he worked at Hormel Foods, a meatpacking plant. After the war, he spent a year or two working for Lucien Marsh, who imported Asian antiques, and lived for a year in Monterey managing a retail outlet. He resumed schooling at Heald College in San Francisco, where he completed a drafting course. Following this, he began working for a variety of architecture firms in the city, including John Bole, Sweeney, Marquis and Stoller. One of his commercial projects included the bell tower for St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco. He assisted architects with their private projects as well, mostly home remodeling. And, after the move to Stinson Beach, he worked as a nurseryman.

In 1948, August suffered a stroke that left him incapacitated until his death in 1952. Following the war, the Bofinger Knitting Mills had undergone bankruptcy, due in part to failed attempt by August's then-partner, Otto Klinger, to start a womenswear line. The factory was moved to Fremont Street in San Francisco, and then back to Oakland. Herb was charged with arranging the sale of the factory and dispersal of assets. He had begun work at Stinson beach on a bachelor house but expanded his design in order that his family could move to the location in 1949.

Herb's first solo building was the precursor of many of his design ideas to come. It was an open plan, where the transition between indoor and outdoor living was transparent. He carefully sited his designs to take advantage of views, patios, and gardens. During his period at Stinson Beach, which lasted until 1969, Herb frequently worked with his friend Otto Reutinger [spelling, please] on his building project. His first house, and his second, were based on concrete block materials and were reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright. He built a home for an old college friend across the street from the family house. The 'round house' was a wooden structure. Herb did most of the work on these houses himself, and afterwards always lived in them for a time to see how they 'worked' which gave him ideas for his next project. Herb completed these projects while continuing to work as a draftsman in the City. He attempted a short foray to live in San Francisco, as access to services was felt to be easier for his mother, who was by then quite ill, and his sister, who was acting as primary caretaker, but did not like city life and moved back to Stinson.

In 1969, following the death of his mother, Herb liquidated his Stinson Beach assets and moved to Berkeley. He found and bought the 2415 Blake Street house that became his 'home base' for the remaining thirty years of his life. While in Berkeley, Herb continued his building projects, although generally on a smaller scale. He designed rolling vistas which included redwood trees in the backyard; and later, with Marty Reutinger as the builder, he added the back cottage without seriously disturbing his garden plan. He

included two ponds and many small meditative spots. His last major project was designing and building a second floor studio without damaging the style or integrity of the original building. He also did many smaller remodeling projects, including building the 'fantasy bathroom' and the carport. Herb became the master of the small space, viewing and rearranging interiors until they found a synergy of their own; and even then, interiors were subject to change in quest of a new synergy of art, the objects he used in his daily life, and the demands of the structure which bind everything together.

While in Berkeley, Herb stayed connected with the friends that he had made over the years, stretching back to high school. He built a circle of friends and acquaintances to add to many people he had met over the years and had kept in touch. It was also during this period that Herb also embraced a more openly gay lifestyle and entered into a lifelong committed relationship with Paul Matzner, his partner of 24 years. Herb's character, that of being a good listener, a generous host, and a gentle and supportive friend, brought many people to his door and kept them coming back to visit. He loved to debate politics and history and even the most revered icons would fall before his caustic opinion, if the reverence made no sense. He consulted frequently with friends on building, interior and garden design, giving advice freely. He loved a good game of gin rummy and anyone who was a repeat visitor to the house learned to play the game, much to everyone's mutual enjoyment.

During this time, he revived his interest in making music as well as listening to it, and frequently played piano, taking up lessons after a hiatus of many years. With Paul, he traveled to Alaska, New York and to points in California. He also became more active in gay affinity group functions. Until his health began failing several years ago, he remained physically vigorous. He maintained his mental vigor until the very end, in no small part due to Paul as his primary caretaker, and the efforts of Sandra and Jane.