



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
November 18, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Paul Buddenhagen, City Manager  
 Submitted by: Jordan Klein, Director, Planning and Development Department  
 Subject: Mills Act Contract – 1619 Walnut Street

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a Mills Act contract with Noemi Ruelas for the maintenance and restoration of a City Structure of Merit property at 1619 Walnut Street.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Approving the Mills Act contract for the City Structure of Merit property at 1619 Walnut Street would reduce the property tax bills for the owners by approximately \$12,000 in year one, approximately 16% of which (\$2,000) would be diverted from Berkeley's tax revenue. Final amounts are determined by Alameda County after contract execution. This will be an annual impact to the City's tax revenue, as the contract runs for ten years, in comparable annual amounts, and automatically renews annually thereafter unless notice of nonrenewal is given. In turn, the work plan commits the owners to spending the anticipated tax savings on restoring the landmarked property. The Mills Act also specifies procedures for cancellation of the contract for a breach of conditions.

Council approval will allow property tax reduction for this property to begin in the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On June 6, 2019, the property at 1619 Walnut Street was designated as a City of Berkeley Structure of Merit, making the property owner eligible to take advantage of the Mills Act (see Attachment 2).

On September 4, 2025, the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) reviewed the proposal by the present owner, Noemi Ruelas, to enter into a Mills Act contract for 1619 Walnut Street, including a proposed scope of work and maintenance schedule, and voted 5-1-0-1 to recommend approval of the Mills Act Contract application to City Council (Moved/Second Finacom/Crandall; Yes: Crandall, Finacom, Orbuch, Leuschner, Montgomery; No: Schwartz; Abstain: none; Absent: Plese).

## BACKGROUND

The Mills Act allows owners of historic properties to voluntarily enter into individual contracts with the City, in order to obtain limited ad valorem tax relief at the discretion of host jurisdictions, in exchange for maintaining and restoring their historic property. The property tax savings are offered to create an incentive for owners to maintain their historic properties, to designate historic properties that are currently not protected, and to purchase and upgrade already dilapidated historic properties.

In Berkeley, owners of properties designated by the LPC as a Landmark or a Structure of Merit may apply for a Mills Act contract. The Alameda County Assessor uses a formula, consistent with the provisions of the Mills Act, to determine the amount of property tax reduction, which applies a capitalization rate to the calculated net operating income for the property under the Mills Act contract. The Mills Act application includes a ten-year work plan to restore and maintain the subject property. The total investment in the work plan is intended to equal or exceed the total amount of the property tax relief over the contract period.

On February 24, 1998, the Berkeley City Council passed Resolution No. 59,355-N.S., which authorizes the local use of the Mills Act of 1972, as amended, which is codified in California Government Code Section 50280-90 and Revenue and Taxation Code Section 439.

In 2011, State law was amended to include more specific requirements regarding inspection, fees, and cancellation. The amendments clarified that the local legislative body may require fees for providing services pursuant to the Mills Act; shall inspect the property prior to a new agreement and then every five years thereafter; and shall cancel the contract if it determines that the owner has breached the conditions of the contract. As a result of these amendments, Land Use Planning fees for the approval and monitoring of these contracts were added in July 2012, with fee rates periodically adjusted to keep up with staff costs.

## RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

In order to qualify for Mills Act consideration, 1) the property must qualify as historic; 2) the contract must adequately meet the requirements for Mills Act contracts; and 3) the type of improvements outlined in the work plan must meet the City standards, which require that tax savings be used according to the rules and regulations outlined in the Act.

The property located at 1619 Walnut Street is eligible for the Mills Act contract because it is a Berkeley Structure of Merit. The contract template has been reviewed by the City Attorney's Office for conformance to all relevant City and State regulations. The contract includes a comprehensive work plan that the property owner has agreed to complete within the first ten-year contract period (see Attachment 3) and that provides

for the “preservation of the qualified historical property and, when necessary, to restore and rehabilitate the property to conform to the rules and regulations of the Office of Historic Preservation of the Department of Parks and Recreation, the United States Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and the State Historical Building Code” (California Government Code Section 50281(b)(1)). The LPC has concluded that the proposed work plan meets the standards adopted by the City Council, and the costs of the proposed improvements are anticipated to equal or exceed the tax savings afforded the owners.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE IMPACTS

Approval of the contract would encourage historic resource rehabilitation, materials conservation, and construction and demolition waste diversion.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council could deny the application if it found that it did not satisfy the requirements of the Act.

CONTACT PERSON

Jordan Klein, Director, Planning and Development Department, 510-981-7534  
Allison Riemer, Senior Planner/LPC Secretary, 510-981-7433

Attachments:

1. Draft City Council Resolution
2. Notice of Decision, Structure of Merit Designation for 1619 Walnut Street, effective date July 24, 2019
3. Rehabilitation Plan, dated August 27, 2025
4. LPC Staff Report September 4, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A MILLS ACT CONTRACT AND ANY NECESSARY AMENDMENTS WITH NOEMI RUELAS, FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION OF A HISTORIC PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1619 WALNUT STREET, IN RETURN FOR THE OWNER TO OBTAIN A PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION

WHEREAS, on February 24, 1998, the Berkeley City Council adopted Resolution No. 59,355-N.S. which authorized the use of Mills Act contracts; and

WHEREAS, on June 6, 2019, 1619 Walnut Street was designated as a City of Berkeley Landmark, which renders it eligible to take advantage of the Mills Act; and

WHEREAS, on September 4, 2025, the Landmarks Preservation Commission reviewed the proposed projects listed in the Mills Act Contract Application for 1619 Walnut Street, and recommended that the City Council enter into a Mills Act contract with the property owner; and

WHEREAS, the City of Berkeley Mills Act program requires each contract to be approved by the City Council and signed by the City Manager; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, in light of all evidence, finds that the contract is consistent with the purposes of the Mills Act program.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a Mills Act Contract and any necessary amendments with Noemi Ruelas for the maintenance and restoration of the historic property located at 1619 Walnut Street and in return offer a property tax reduction for a period of at least ten years, with a recorded copy of such contract and amendments to be on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Alameda County Clerk-Recorder.



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: June 6, 2019**

**DATE NOTICE MAILED: July 8, 2019**

**APPEAL PERIOD EXPIRATION: July 23, 2019**

**EFFECTIVE DATE OF DECISION (Barring Appeal or Certification): July 24, 2019<sup>1</sup>**

## **1619 Walnut Street – Las Casitas Apartments**

**Landmark application #LMIN2019-0001 for the consideration of City Landmark or Structure of Merit designation status for a multi-unit residential property – APN 058-2179-025-00.**

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

**DESIGNATION:** Structure of Merit

**APPLICANT:** Petition of Berkeley Residents prepared by Scott Wheeler, 1619 Walnut Street, Apt. A, Berkeley, CA 94709

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:** Categorically exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act 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  
LMIN2019-0001  
1619 Walnut Street  
July 8, 2019  
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**COMMISSION VOTE: 5-3-0-0 (one vacancy)**

**YES:** ALLEN, CHAGNON, FINACOM, OLSON, O'MALLEY

**NO:** ABRANCHES DA SILVA, CRANDALL, SCHWARTZ

**ABSTAIN:**

**ABSENT:**

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

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF DECISION  
LMIN2019-0001  
1619 Walnut Street  
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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.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

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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.

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**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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Questions about the project should be directed to the project planner, Alison Lenci, at (510) 981-7410 or [alenci@cityofberkeley.info](mailto:alenci@cityofberkeley.info). All project application materials, including full-size plans, may be viewed at the Permit Service Center (Zoning counter), 1947 Center Street, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

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1. Findings
  2. Landmark Application, received **MAY 16, 2019**

ATTEST: 

Fatema Crane, Secretary  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

cc: Residents  
City Clerk  
Initiator and Application Author:  
Petition of Berkeley Residents prepared by  
Scott Wheeler  
1619 Walnut Street, Apt. A  
Berkeley, CA 94709

Property Owner;  
David Downs  
1777 Lafayette Street, Unit #128  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

# ATTACHMENT 1

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## DRAFT FINDINGS

JUNE 6, 2019

### **1619 Walnut Street – Las Casitas Apartments**

**Landmark application #LMIN2019-0001 for the consideration of City Landmark or Structure of Merit designation status for a residential property.**

#### **City of Berkeley Landmark Application LMIN2019-0001**

##### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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Structure of Merit designation of the property at 1619 Walnut Street, Las Casitas Apartments.

##### 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.B Paragraph 2.c of the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO), the Landmarks Preservation Commission of the City of Berkeley (Commission) finds that the subject main building is a good example of Spanish Eclectic architecture. The building was constructed between 1927 and 1928, during the period of the Spanish Eclectic style (1915 - 1935). It includes many identifiable features of the Spanish Eclectic style, including a flat roof with parapet walls, narrow tile covered shed roofs with regularly laid tapered mission style tile, asymmetrical façade, stucco walls, stain glass windows, decorative window grills, decorative iron sconces and door knockers and arcaded walkways.

**FEATURES TO BE PRESERVED**

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

**Features of the Site:**

- Two semi-circled scored pathways, one along the side (south) property line and one along the side (north) property line;
- Five elongated diamond shape cutouts along the length of the southern pathway;
- Decorative cement urn at southwest corner of the site;
- Rounded Archway reading 'Las Casitas' at the southwest corner of the site; and
- Semi-circled scored stairways and stucco retaining walls leading to each apartment unit entrance on the south façade.

**Features of the Main Building:**

- All extant, exterior building features characteristic of the Spanish Eclectic style;
- Two-story building with slightly recessed basement level 2-car garage;
- Horizontal wood board and batten garage doors on front, west façade;
- Flat parapet roof with three symmetrically placed false gables;
- Asymmetrical façade;
- All regularly laid tapered mission style tile;
- Four narrow tile covered shed roofs with regularly laid tapered mission style tile along south façade;
- Semi-rough, rusticated stucco material;
- Wrought iron elaborations including:
  - Two faux balcony grills, one on west façade and one on south façade;
  - Two handrails, one for unit A and one for unit B;
  - Six foot long balcony on second story south façade;
  - Seven encased door awnings connected to the building with U-shaped bars;
  - Seven exterior light fixtures, fashioned in a three-fourth circular pattern; and
  - Seven unit identification plaques with doorbells and unit letter cutouts.
- Sixteen wood framed casement windows (4 on the west façade, 4 on the south façade, 2 on the east façade, and 6 on the north façade);
- Nine wood framed stained glass windows (1 on the west façade, 8 on the south façade);
- Twenty wood framed double sliding windows on the east and north façade;
- Two wood framed double-hung windows on the east façade;
- Two wood framed fixed windows on east façade;
- Seven wood doors along south façade, each inset with 12 true divided light glass panes;
- Seven wood doors with screened windows along north façade; and
- Seven hammered copper door knob plates.

CITY OF BERKELEY  
Ordinance #4694 N.S.

LANDMARK APPLICATION

Las Casitas Apartments: 1619 Walnut Street Berkeley 94709 in 1939 (photographer unknown)



Las Casitas Apartments: 1619 Walnut Street Berkeley 94709 in May 2019 (photo: Scott Wheeler)



1619 Walnut Street Landmark Application – Revised - 29 May 2019

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*Note: The elm in the 1939 photo recently died of Dutch elm disease. Tenants replanted this new elm from its own seedlings.*

Planning and Development Department Land Use Planning Division

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

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**1. Street Address:** 1619 Walnut Street

**City:** Berkeley  
**County:** Alameda  
**Zip:** 94709

**2. Assessor's Parcel Number:** 58-2179-25

**Block and Lot:** Block D, Lot 8  
**Tract:** Percy Tract

**Dimensions:** Lot size 6800, Building size 5003

**Cross Streets:** Cedar and Virginia

**3. Is property on the State Historic Resource Inventory?** No  
**Form #**

**Is property on the Berkeley Urban Conservation Survey?** No  
**Form #**

**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:** Las Casitas

**Commonly Known Name:** Las Casitas - metal arch over driveway reads: "Las Casitas"  
(please refer to numerous attached photos).

6. **Date of Construction:** 1927 and 1928

a. **Factual:**       b. **Approximate:**

**Source of Information:** Old permits, maps and photographs courtesy of Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA). Please also section 19 Bibliography.

7. **Architect:** William John Alexander Doctor

8. **Builder:** William I. Rush

9. **Style:** Spanish/Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial, aka Spanish Renaissance

10. **Original Owners:** Madge L. Rush

**Original Use:** Apartments

11. **Present Owners:** WholeLife Homes

12. Present Use: Apartments

Residential: Single Family Duplex Multiple

Commercial: Office Store Industrial Hotel

Institutional: School Hospital Other

Current Zoning: Restricted multi-family residential (R-2A)

Adjacent Property Zoning: Same, R-3 to the east

13. Present Condition of Property:

Exterior: Excellent Good Fair  Poor

Interior: Excellent Good  Fair Poor

Grounds: Excellent Good  Fair Poor

Has the property's exterior been altered? A fire escape on north side was either original or added (no information was found and it isn't mentioned on the 1927 and 1928 conversion permits).

**14. Description:****Exterior Building Description of Las Casitas, 1619 Walnut Street:****West Façade - facing Walnut Street**

The façade consists of semi-rough textured stucco siding with four large encased windows. A slightly sloping center parapet and three symmetrically placed false gables conceal a flat roof. The gables on the NW and SW sides continue at least five feet around the corners of the building. Each gable contains over hanging eaves with broad exposed V-joint rafters and all gables are covered with regularly-laid straight barrel mission tiles.

The NW corner of the West façade portrays a slightly sloping asymmetrical line from the roof to the bottom end of the structure. Encased within this line is a round arched entrance way leading to the North side and the rear of the building. The SW side of the West façade also portrays a round arched opening. Although somewhat smaller, it displays a wrought iron elaboration for the building number designation, 1619. Left adjacent to the smaller rounded archway opening is a wood encased stained glass window. The right adjacent side displays a large four foot high urn identical to the one at Sunny Gables at 1631 - 1633 Walnut Street, the "sister" building in architectural design to Las Casitas.

Additional elaborations include a large wrought iron wall faux balcony grille and the beautiful and elegant wrought iron rounded archway stating the name Las Casitas. This wrought iron arch provides the pathway and driveway to the building. The lower portion of the West façade contains two slightly recessed garages, displayed and set off by broad flat stucco beam structures that continue with the West stucco façade. Additional features include two ground level stucco garden planters designed for architectural landscape enhancement.

Las Casitas arch with driveway and stained glass 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (south side)



Front wall with "1619" wrought iron house number and large urn:



Modern photo of southwest corner of 1619 Walnut Street



Stained glass front (west side - needs restoration)



**South Façade - entrance way to Las Casitas**

The South façade building exterior is semi-rough textured stucco. The roof is flat with the illusion of a varying level at the SE end of the façade. Three large casement windows enhance the upper half of the building. In addition to window enhancement, three projected decorative ornamental roof elements adorn the side of the façade. Uniquely appearing as an ornamental feature, the projected elements actually contain three of the building's apartment closets. Each projected roof element is secured with a wide flat beam and all have regularly laid straight barrel mission tiles. Wood framed stained glass windows are an architectural feature of each projected element. The smallest decorative projection, that being closest to the West façade, displays a smaller sized wood encased stained glass window with the additional elaboration of a wrought iron faux balcony grille extending from the window. At the SE end of the façade, a fourth projected decorative ornamental element is actually part of a closet and a bedroom. This projection also displays a smaller wood encased stained glass window and regularly laid straight barrel mission tiles. Providing the connecting unity and harmony between the third and the fourth projected elements, there is a six foot length balcony with the elaboration of a wrought iron railing.

The lower half of the façade displays one casement window. Four wood encased stain glass windows display on the lower level. This level includes entrance to the seven apartment dwellings. Unique and individual, each entrance provides a personal stairway and door entrance to each unit. All stairways are cement and provide stucco walls and gently-sloping barriers between the units. Wrought iron hand rails display on the wall next to the staircase. Each door displays rectangular wooden sash windows, (also known as muntins), and a decorative elaboration of a hammered copper door knob plate. Above the door, a wrought iron encased door awning is attached to the door's side stucco exterior with wrought iron U shaped braces. Shaped metal representing leaves display decoratively entwined around the exterior light fixtures, and in turn, the fixture is protected by the decorative elaboration of wrought iron strips fashioned in a three-fourths circular pattern. Adjacent to each doorway, a wrought iron identification plaque with doorbell and a unit letter cutout identify the units A through G. A stucco decorative vent design graces the building at the lower façade midpoint.

A and B entrances (south side of the building)



Apt B stained glass and faux balcony with metal arch in foreground



Apt F projected element balcony (south side)



Apt A stained glass looking south fully restored by Avalon Glass Works July 2018:



Apt F steps and apartment entranceway barriers



Apt A front door with original hammered metal doorknob plate and number plate



### **East Façade - Back Yard and Patio Area**

Similar to the previously mentioned façades, the East façade displays rough textured stucco exterior. This façade presents two levels with the upper level displaying the termination of the previously mentioned flat roof and two very large casement windows in the center of the façade. The lower level's flat roof lies dropped twenty feet below the formerly mentioned roof line. At no angle or level of the flat roof line does the East façade display the use of barrel mission tiles. The lower level is unique in that there are six angles forming the projected element. The second flat side displays three wood encased windows: one is a double sliding window, another displays a permanently closed pane, and the third displays a very small Spanish Revival style window. The third flat side displays two wood encased double sliding windows, and the fourth flat side displays one large wood encased double sliding window.

Extending from the final lower level angle is the continuation of the façade to the firstly mentioned flat roof height. The lower level of this sub façade displays two wood encased double sliding windows. The upper level of this recessed façade displays three asymmetrically placed wood encased windows. While the largest on the northeast side is permanently closed, the window left adjacent displays a double sliding window. The far left adjacent window is another example of a small wood encased Spanish Revival style window. The East façade of Las Casitas displays the only examples of very small Spanish Revival style windows.

Both upper and lower levels of the recessed sub façade display projected stucco elaborations. Although appearing decorative, these projected elements provide exterior storage space. The lower level's recessed fifth and sixth angle area is enhanced with a small outside patio.

Rear of building and garden: upper floor is Apt F and lower floor is bedroom of Apt G



Projected element used as storage



### North Façade - The Rear Side of Las Casitas

The rough stucco surface on the north façade predominately displays eighteen windows of two styles and various sizes, seven entrance/exit apartment unit doors, and two fire escape stairways providing an entrance/exit for four doorways to the north side pathway.

The most northwest side displays six wood encased, casement windows, one large and two smaller, identically placed on the upper and lower levels. Two doorways, identically placed on each level lead to a fire escape pathway. The door on the superior level leads directly to a wrought iron rail encased fire escape landing, five feet long by three feet wide which provides direct access to the descending wrought iron, rail encased stairway. Ceasing before the doorway to the lower unit, the stairway continues as a railed four feet by three feet cement landing in front of the lower unit's doorway. Railed cement steps continue the descent from this landing to the pathway along the rear of the building.

The prominent physical features adjacent to the wrought iron fire escape are: the wood doorway at the lower level pathway leading to the building's boiler room; left adjacent to the boiler room door, a wood panel enclosure containing a gas meter; a one foot diameter stovepipe ascending two feet above the height of the north wall; and a five inch softly rounded projected element which transverses from the stovepipe to the end of the northeast façade. This projected element decoratively displays the division of the superior and inferior unit levels.

Continuing toward the east, the upper level displays two, side by side, wood encased, double sliding windows with a decorative air vent, centrally placed two feet above them. The lower level displays a grand, six feet long by four feet wide wood encased, double sliding window centrally placed below the two superior windows.

The most unique feature along the north wall is the three sided projected element, widths of four feet, eight feet and four feet. This element creates an ornamental design to the otherwise flat north façade. Extending from the pathway to the upper level, the projected element continues until approximately three feet from the flat roof. At the three foot demarcation, the element changes and extends to a flat surface at the four foot wide façades therefore creating right angles to the flat wall. On the west, the right angle creates a projected triangle overhang above one of the two, wood encased, double sliding windows while on the east, the projected triangle creates a overhang above the unit's rear doorway that leads directly to the building's second fire escape staircase. At the lower level, the projected element area displays two, wood encased, double sliding windows and a rear unit doorway directly below the one superior. Unique from all other north side doors. this door displays a non opening window above it, and the door opens onto two cement steps leading directly to the rear pathway.

The remaining north east side façade, on the superior level, displays a five feet wide by twenty five feet long railed, wrought iron fire escape landing providing rear entrance/exit

for two units - the previously mentioned upper doorway and the doorway most near the east side of the building. A wrought iron, wall side ascending step ladder leads from the landing to the roof, and a railed, wrought iron stairway extends from the landing to the north side pathway. Three small wood encased, double sliding windows display on the upper level between the doorways. The lower level displays two wood encased, double sliding windows and a unit doorway above one cement step leading to the north side pathway.

Recessed approximately twenty feet from the east corner of the north element, is the one remaining doorway which steps directly onto flat surface cement. All rear doorways at Las Casitas are wood and have an eighteen inch by twenty three inch small hinged opening, screened window at the door's superior end.

The seventy five foot north side pathway is semi circled, scored cement displaying an artistic design similar to the building's front entrance pathway. The area below the north west side fire escape provides space for landfill and recycling bins. Four feet wide and twelve feet long gardening spaces, adjacent to the north side pathway, display beneath the grand, double sliding window and the north east fire escape area. Trees, shrubs and various flowers grace the building.

North side of 1619 Walnut (photo is facing east)



Apt B back door with window (north side)



Back (north side) scored pathway



### Description of the Physical Grounds at Las Casitas

The wrought iron archway provides the entrance to the pathway and driveway to Las Casitas. On the left of this pathway is firstly, the entrance to the utility room, and thereafter, the seven individual stairways, A through G, leading to the direct and private entrance into each apartment unit. Between units A and B, B and C, D and E, and F and G there are garden spaces provided due to the stairway extension of each unit from the building wall. Barriers on each gardening space connect to the extending steps providing a continuous barrier line from the utility room to unit G. This barrier is raised approximately five inches from the pathway. Due to gardening spaces, various plants, shrubs and trees grace the building's side - ferns, sage, succulents, aloe and bougainvillea. The most notable foliage are the two pink camellia trees next to units A and B. A number of A W doctor's buildings have light pink or pink camellia trees near their entrance way. Buildings sited are the addresses 619, 642, and 843 Arlington, 791 Vicente, 1545 Beverly Place, 1570 Hawthorne and 1851 Catalina.

The right pathway barrier displays a rough stucco surface with a four feet high wall. This barrier is twenty seven feet long with a one foot wide top shelf along its entire length. The length of the wall and the width of the top allow for three indented slightly peaked archways under the top side providing for gardening space due to the pathway's edge being around twelve inches from the indented wall. Extending from the stucco wall is a five foot high wooden plank fence that continues to the first structure on the southeast side of the property. This fence additionally allows for gardening space about one foot in front of the fence. Along the entire right side pathway various plants, shrubs, and trees grace the area. Foliage includes plum trees, ferns, ivy, spider plants, roses, a lemon tree with the most notable foliage being a large brugmansia and fragrant jasmine along the majority of the fence.

The semi-circled scored cement path and driveway to Las Casitas displays artistic design. The path, approximately seven and one half feet wide, continues from the front of the entrance of the building to the middle of the last apartment unit. Within the pathway's seventy five foot length are five elongated diamond shaped cutouts. The longest at twenty feet displays near the entrance of the pathway. The shortest at six feet is approximately thirty four inches from the first. At twenty four inches from the shortest cutout, the three remaining cutouts, each approximately eleven and one half feet long with a thirty four inch spacing between each one are displayed. All diamond shaped cutouts provide an area for grass and lawn in the very center of the pathway.

Extending from the scored cement path and driveway, blacktop covers the majority of the backyard area. From the south side fence to the six foot high planked wooden fence on the north side of the property, the backyard area measures fifty three feet wide and twenty seven feet from the last apartment to the garage entrance. Within the fifty three foot area, and at the east side of the backyard, there are five one car garage spaces. The garage adjacent to the south side fence protrudes eight feet in front of the remaining four. All display rough stucco surface on the exterior and wood on the interior. All five spaces display one continuous flat roof, a height of nine feet with a seven foot

car opening. The garage most south and the fourth in line heading to the north side have wooden doors while the remainder are open.

The north west corner of the backyard provides a cemented patio measuring eighteen feet long by fifteen feet wide. The residents have provided a table, chairs and potted plants and flowers for community enhancement and enjoyment.

The remainder of the backyard area is composed of various small trees, plants and flowers, The tenant community displays lemon, oak, redwood and pine trees, bougainvillea, dahlia, iris, lobelia and alyssum. In addition the backyard provides space for a vegetable and herb garden.

Rear garages facing NE



Southermost rear garage of five rear garages (photo is facing east):



Elongated diamond shaped cutout in driveway



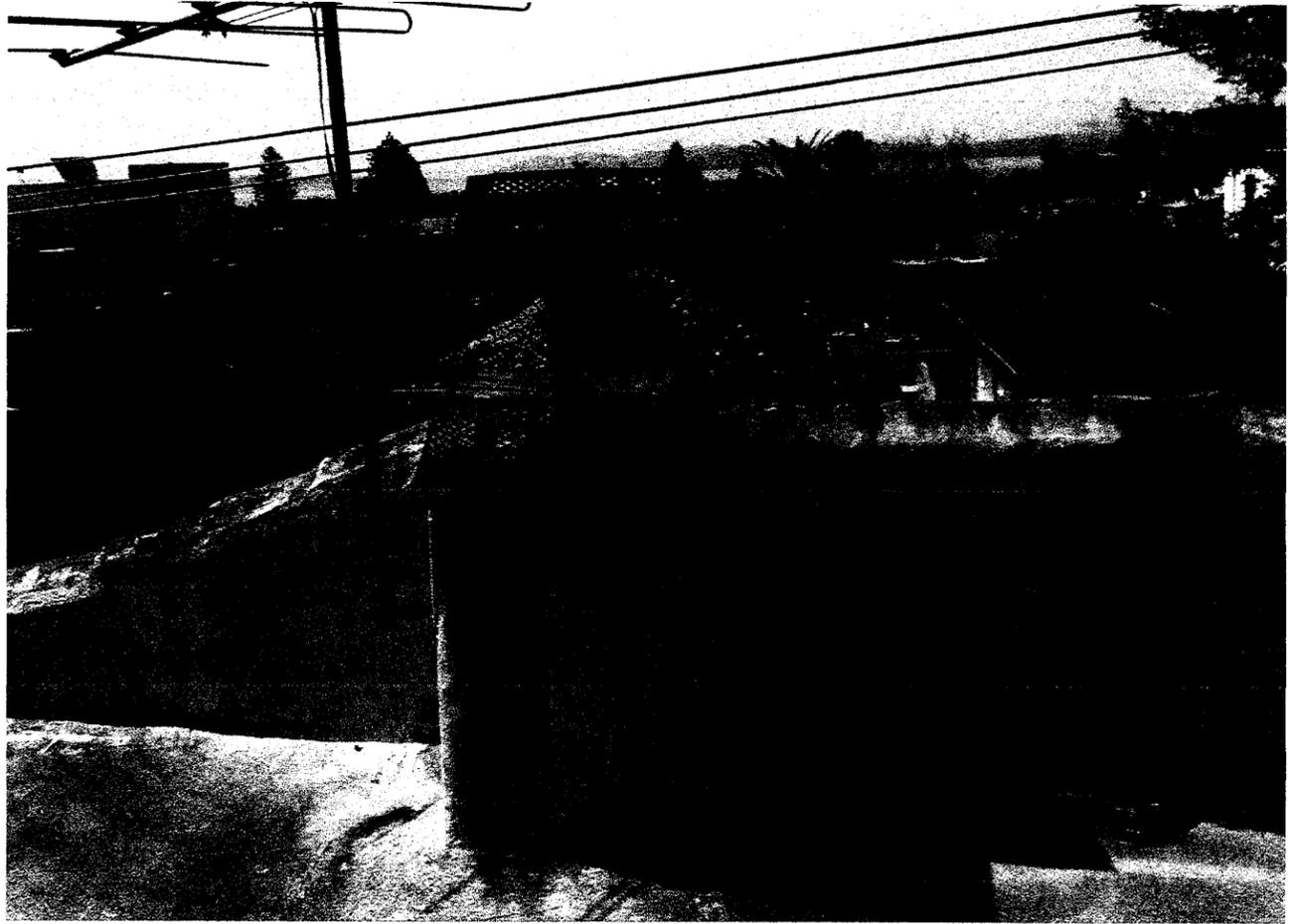
Apt G steps and scores



**Fireplace and Chimney information for Las Casitas**

The units at Las Casitas contain both faux and viable fireplaces. The living room areas of units E and G display small faux fireplaces. Unit F displays a very small faux fireplace in the larger bedroom, and also displays a formerly working fireplace in the living room area. Presently, a working steam radiator stands on the fireplace hearth. Units A and B currently display the only working fireplaces in the building. The chimneys for units A and B are centrally located on the roof's west side. The chimney for Unit F is centrally located on the building's roof.

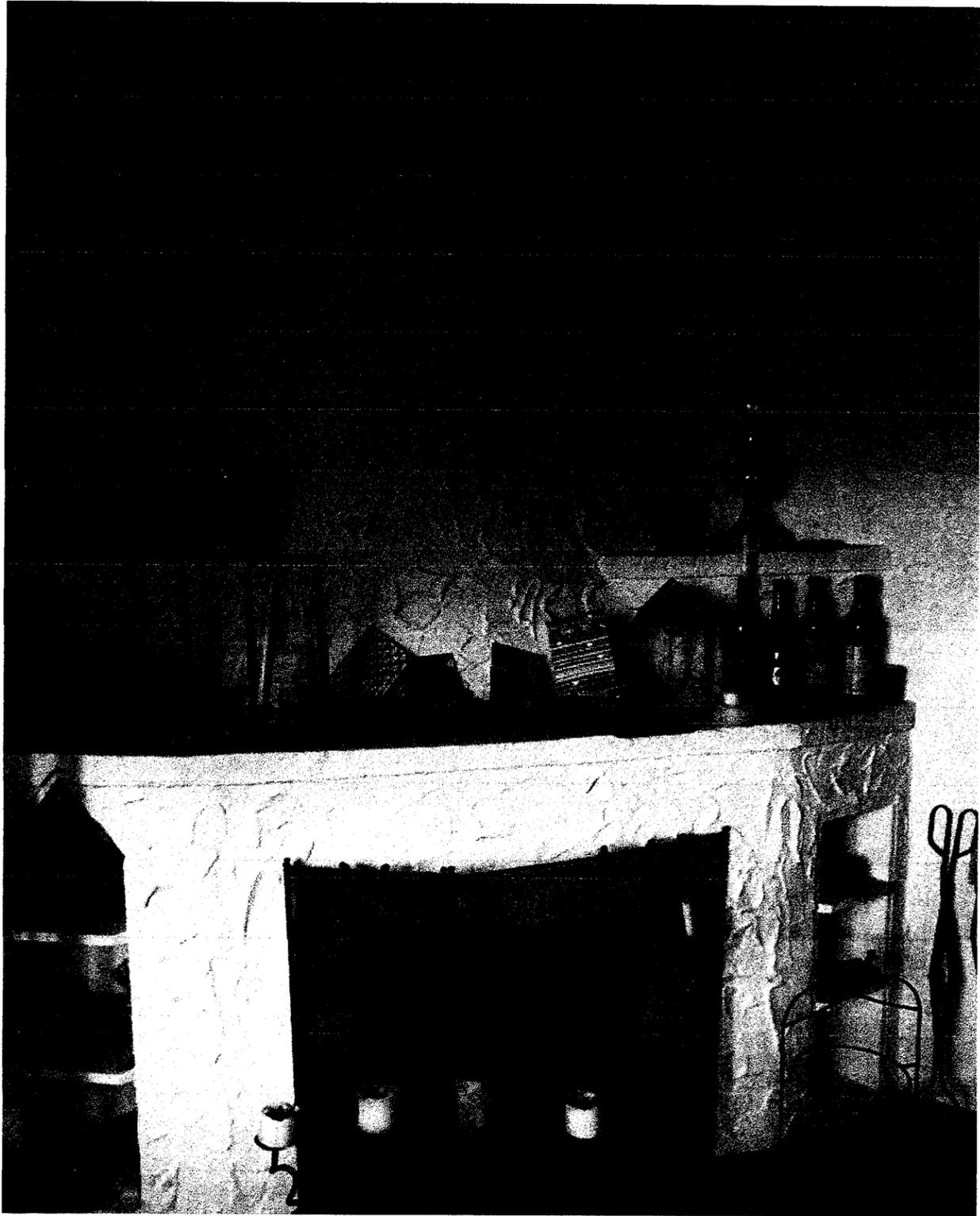
Chimneys for Apts A and B located at the center western edge of the roof:



Foreground – chimney for Apt F facing west (A and B chimneys in the background)



Apt A Pueblo-style fireplace with "cake frosting" stucco



**Features to Be Preserved:****The distinguishing features of Las Casitas include:****Overall Features**

- Semi rough textured stucco on all elements
- Slightly sloping center parapet
- Three symmetrical overhanging eaves
- Round arch entrance way providing path to the north side of building
- Round arch opening providing space for building street number identification
- Regularly laid straight barrel mission tiles on over hanging eaves and south side projected elements
- Decorative cement urn on west side identical to that of the “sister” building at Sunny Gables at 1631-1633

**Wrought Iron Elaborations**

- Rounded archway stating the name Las Casitas at the entrance to the pathway and driveway
- Plaque for building street number designation at small rounded arch on west side
- Two faux balcony grills, one on the west side, the other on the south side
- Six foot length balcony between the projected elements on the south side
- Two hand rails, one each for units A and B stairways
- Seven encased door awnings connected to the building with U shaped bars
- Seven exterior light fixtures fashioned in a three-fourth circular pattern
- Seven unit identification plaques with doorbell and unit letter cutout

**Stucco Elaborations**

- Two ground level garden planters on west side
- Five projected external storage spaces on north side
- Two decorative stucco air vents, one on the south side and one on the north side

**Projected Decorative Elements**

- Three projected elements with tiles on the south side
- One projected element without tiles on the south side
- One six sided projected element on the east side
- One three sided projected element on the north side
- Two projected triangle shaped elements on the north side

**Windows****Nine wood framed stained glass windows**

- One at 41 inches by 29 inches on the west side
- Two at 40 inches by 17 inches on the south side
- Six at 34 inches by 28 inches on the south side

**Sixteen wood framed casement windows (hand-crafted and individually-designed):**

- Two at 40 inches by 54 inches, each with eighteen handcrafted true divided panes, 11 inches by 6 inches on the west side
- Two at 46 inches by 65 inches, each with eighteen handcrafted true divided panes, 13 inches by 8 inches on the west side
- Three at 46 inches by 65 inches, each with eighteen handcrafted true divided panes, 13 inches by 8 inches on the south side
- One at 58 inches by 59 inches with twenty four handcrafted true divided panes, 13 inches by 7 inches on the south side
- Two at 40 inches by 58 inches, each with eight handcrafted true divided panes, 17 inches by 12 inches on the east side
- Two at 52 inches by 65 inches, each with twenty four handcrafted true divided panes, 11 inches by 8 inches on the north side
- Four at 40 inches by 29 inches, each with nine handcrafted true divided panes, 11 inches by 8 inches on the north side

**Twenty wood framed double sliding windows**

- All located on the east and north side, ranging in size from, the smallest at 28 inches by 24 inches to the largest at 6 feet by 4 feet.

**Two wood-framed Spanish Revival style**

- One at 12 inches by 8 inches on the east side projected element
- One at 20 inches by 10 inches on the superior level east side.

**Two wood-framed non-opening windows:**

- One at the east side projected element
- One at the superior level east side

### **Doors**

- Seven wood doors, 84 inches by 34 inches, each with a 56 inch by 24 inch inset of twelve handcrafted true divided glass panes, 12 inches by 7 inches at the south side entrance/exit way
- Seven hammered copper door knob plates on south side doors
- Seven wood doors, each 84 inches by 34 inches, each with an 18 inch y 23 inch small hinge opening with screened windows at the north side entrance/exit

### **Stairs, Pathways and Back yard**

- Seven semi circled scored stairways to each unit's door way
- Stucco walls and barriers between each unit
- Two semi circled scored pathways, one on the south side and the other on the north side
- Two very old pink camellia trees and various other vegetation along the entire south side pathway
- Five elongated diamond shaped cutouts along the length of the south pathway
- Back yard patio, 18 feet by 15 feet

Apt C leaded glass china cabinet doors restored in July 2018 by Scott Wheeler (A)



Apt A leaded glass china cabinet and cookbook cubby



**Architectural features and elaborations of significance within the interior structure of Las Casitas**

*Mission and Pueblo Influence*

Smooth textured stucco walls  
Rough textured stucco walls  
Ceiling beams  
Fireplace chimneys  
Rounded archways

*Spanish Revival Influence*

Smooth textured stucco walls  
Rough textured stucco walls  
Enlivened flat stucco walls  
Fireplace chimneys  
Rounded archways  
wrought iron wall sconces  
wrought iron lighting fixtures  
Casement windows  
Tiny small wood windows  
Asymmetrically placed windows

*Mediterranean Style Influence*

Plain smooth textured walls  
Rough textured walls  
Small wall niches and cabinets  
Wall sconces  
Chandeliers

*Probable Influences: Chicago, Prairie and English Manor styles*

Leaded and/or stained glass windows (FL Wright Chicago)  
Stained glass cabinet doors (please see attached photo of home at 619 Arlington).

**15. History:**

Per William John Alexander Doctor's Canadian birth certificate:

William John Alexander Doctor  
Born: 27 March 1871 in Carleton, Ontario, Canada

Per his record in the California, Death Index:

Name: William Alexander Doctor  
Social Security #: 552-30-3208  
Birth Date: 26 Mar 1874  
Birth Place: Canada  
Death Date: 24 Mar 1949  
Death Place: Alameda County, California  
Mother's Maiden Name: Simpson  
Father's Surname: Doctor

Although he declared in the 1930 U.S. Census that he immigrated to the U.S. in 1901, it appears that 1914 was his actual immigration year.

William Alex Doctor in the U.S., Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1914

Name: William Alex Doctor  
Arrival Date: 24 Nov 1914  
Race: Scottish  
Age: 37 [actually, 43]  
Record Type Manifests  
Birth Country: Canada  
Port of Arrival: Eastport, Idaho, USA  
Residence Country: Canada

In 1916, Doctor lived in Richmond.

In 1923, Doctor lived at 1541 Grant Street in Berkeley and worked at 410 15th Street in Oakland.

In 1924, Doctor was registered to vote at 847 Arlington Avenue.

At the time that he designed the buildings on Walnut Street (Las Casitas & Sunny Gables), he was living in the Sunset District of San Francisco.

By 1930, he was back in Berkeley, living at 1547 Josephine Street, and in 1935–1940, his home was at 3120 Deakin Street (info from his 1930 and 1940 U.S. Census records).

William A. Doctor was possibly vain about his age, perhaps pretending to be younger than he was. This could explain the varying birth dates in his vital records.

Doctor is also mentioned in Jacobsen's Biographical Index of American Artists (with an alternative wrong birth year):

Name: William Alexander Doctor  
Birth Year: 1874  
Death Year: 1949

Source: Jacobsen's Biographical Index of American Artists. Artists native to the United States or working in the United States from 1606 to 2002. Four volumes. Edited by Anita Jacobsen. Carrollton, TX: A.J. Publications, 2002. (JacBIAA)

Doctor was unbound to architectural orthodoxies, apparently feeling quite free to blend styles that he felt compatible, yet separated even by centuries, hence the introduction of his signature English Manor-style stained glass in this (1619 Walnut) Spanish Colonial, Mission Revival edifice. Per the Oakland Tribune in 1937 he built an English Provincial styled home following his prolific 1920s. BAHA records indicate that he designed more than thirty homes in Berkeley. His design of 619 Arlington's windows is clearly influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Chicago stained glass (see close-up photograph attached).

From: The Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada (Please note: all italicized text is quoted):

*Doctor, William Alexander*

*DOCTOR, William Alexander (1876-1949) is an obscure architect who was active in Vancouver from 1908 until late 1918. He first appeared in partnership with Sholto Smith in 1908, but this association was dissolved in early 1909 and Doctor practiced on his own until 1910 when he formed another brief partnership with Ormond Higman, an engineer. In 1913 he opened another office, this time with W.F.T. Stewart and Hugh S. Davie, and they remained active as a partnership until 1918. **Their best known work is a convincing Beaux-Arts scheme for the Vancouver Police Headquarters, East Cordova Street (1913-14). This project was initially won in a competition by Doctor in 1912 when he was working under his own name (Vancouver Daily World, 18 June 1912, 13).** Their firm was one of thirty architectural firms from the United States and Canada who later submitted an entry in the competition for the Vancouver Civic Centre in 1914 but their submission was not premiated (C.R., 14ix, 6 Jan. 1915, 8). **Doctor later moved to Berkeley, Calif. and continued to work as an architect after 1920.** He died in Alameda, Calif. on 24 March 1949 (D. Luxton, *Building the West: The Early Architects of British Columbia*, 2003, 461, 497) (works in Vancouver unless otherwise noted)*

*HIGMAN & DOCTOR*

POINT GREY ROAD, near Stephens Street, residence for William L. Keate, 1910  
(Northwest Architect [Portland, Ore], ii, Oct. 1910, illus. plates)  
NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C., People's Trust Co., Columbia Street, office building, 1911  
(C.R., 14v, 12 July 1911, 64)  
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C., St. Alice Hotel, Second Street West, c. 1911 (BCPA,  
Modern Architecture (in Vancouver), 1911, illus.)  
W.A. DOCTOR

HUDSON BAY INSURANCE CO., Hastings Street West near Burrard Street, office  
building, 1911 (C.R., 14v, 27 Sept. 1911, 61; dwgs. at Vancouver City Archives)  
POINT GREY, B.C., residence for Frederick W. Sterling, Second Avenue West near  
Blanca Street, 1912 (C.R., 14vi, 10 Jan. 1912, 62-3)  
SIXTH AVENUE WEST, near Balsam Street, residence for Dr. William F. Mackay, 1912  
(C.R., 14vi, 3 Jan. 1912, 65, t.c.)  
DOCTOR, STEWART & DAVIE

WEST 26th AVENUE, at Alexander Street, residence for H.E.A. Robertson, 1912;  
demol. (Vancouver Daily World, 22 Oct. 1912, 5; Vancouver b.p. 346, 14 Oct. 1912; inf.  
Patrick Gunn, Vancouver)  
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST, Georgia Street, extensive interior alterations  
to the existing church, 1912-13 (Vancouver Daily World, 2 Dec. 1912, 24)  
VANCOUVER POLICE HEADQUARTERS, East Cordova Street at Gore Avenue,  
competition-winning design by Doctor, 1912; built 1913-14 (Vancouver Daily World, 22  
Feb. 1913, 19, descrip.; C.R., 14viii, 28 Oct. 1914, 1326-27, illus. & descrip.; dwgs. at  
Vancouver City Archives)  
W.A. DOCTOR

OAKLAND, CALIF., The Knight Apartments, Desmond Street at 51st Street, for Harry C.  
Knight, 1922-23 (Oakland Tribune, 18 March 1923, Development Section, 2-3, illus. &  
descrip.)  
OAKLAND, CALIF., East Bay Country Club, on the Crow Canyon Road, off the Dublin  
Highway, 1923-24 (Oakland Tribune, 30 Sept. 1923, Development Section, 3, illus. &  
descrip.)

New Homes for Moraga Tract Oakland Tribune 23May1937

**An English Provincial home, part of brick and part of wood, is to be built by Mr. and Mrs Emil J Bouchet The architect is William A. Doctor. This home will have seven rooms, all on one floor.**

Lake Merrit electric fountain designed by WA Doctor (Oakland Tribune 13Sep1925)

## MONUMENTAL FOUNTAIN FOR LAKE URGED

The electric fountain featured by the Dons of Peralta at their recent fiesta was designed by William A. Doctor, who last year designed the Viking Ship which took first prize in the "Nights of Venice" pageant. This fountain was designed to create public interest in a permanent fountain to be located in Lake Merrit. In this connection it is pointed out that a beautiful electric fountain was built in Denver, Colorado, and is operated every evening between the hours of 8:30 and 9:15 p. m. at a cost of approximately \$30 a day. Says Harry C. Knight, president of the Mutual Business Club:

"Such a fountain in Lake Merrit would become known all over the United States and add to the reputation of this city.

"The electric fountain which operated during the past few days for the Dons of Peralta was built entirely by members of the Mutual Business Club. The Fountain Committee of the club consisted of William A. Doctor, designer; Abe Bekins, Gardner Buss, Ralph Smith, Thomas Bacon, E. M. Hynes, Wm. H. Picard, Ray Salisbury and Harry C. Knight. William A. Doctor designed the fountain and E. M. Hynes, auto electrician, installed the wiring. William H. Picard installed the plumbing and the firm of Magnus Smith with Ralph Smith in charge worked out the entire decoration and color schemes. The canvas was furnished by the firm of Marcus & Merrick. Chanslor & Lyon furnished a battery of six spot lights, Bekins Van & Storage Company, did a large amount of work on the fountain. Assistance was also rendered by Thomas L. Bacon, Robert Reed of the Emeryville Hardware & Tool Company, the electrical engineers of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Ralph E. York and City Fire Chief Short.

**16. Significance:**

1619 Walnut is an excellent example of the Romantic-eclectic style blend, predominantly Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, including unusual influences from English Manor stained glass. W. A. Doctor was already a seasoned and premiated internationally-recognized architect, having emigrated from Vancouver, B.C. in his early fifties, apparently ready for an exciting Chapter Two of his unusual career.

The Great Berkeley Fire of 1923 came at a moment of the late Arts & Crafts period and it accelerated already burgeoning interest and movements away from wood-frame and brown shingle construction to the far less flammable stone, plaster and stucco construction surfaces

**From: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1923\\_Berkeley,\\_California\\_fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1923_Berkeley,_California_fire)**

*The 1923 Berkeley Fire was a conflagration that consumed some 640 structures, including 584 homes in the densely-built neighborhoods north of the campus of the University of California in Berkeley, California on September 17, 1923.*

*Although the exact cause was never determined, the fire began in the undeveloped chaparral and grasslands of Wildcat Canyon, just east of the ridgeline of the Berkeley Hills, and was propelled over the ridge and southwestward just south of Codornices Creek by a strong, gusty, and intensely dry northeasterly wind. The fire quickly blew up as it swept through the La Loma Park and Northside neighborhoods of Berkeley, overwhelming the capabilities of the Berkeley Fire Department to stop it. A number of UC students fought the advance of the fire as it approached the north edge of the University of California campus, at Hearst Avenue. The other edge of the fire was fought by firefighters as it advanced on downtown Berkeley along the east side of Shattuck Avenue north of University Avenue. Firefighters were rushed in from neighboring Oakland, and San Francisco sent firefighters by ferry across the bay.*

*Firefighting efforts were hampered by the inadequacy of water mains in northern Berkeley, where rapid development after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake had outgrown the water supply in the fire area. Firefighters trying to fight the fire connected to hydrants in the area that hissed dry and were hampered also by the predominance of cedar shake roofs. The strong and dry wind lifted burning shakes off burning houses and quickly spread the fire. The fire was halted only when the northeasterly winds died down and were replaced by the cool, humid afternoon sea breeze. The fire lines were established at Hearst and Shattuck Avenues, where larger diameter water mains delivered a reliable water supply for firefighting.*

***Building styles in North Berkeley changed dramatically after the 1923 fire, with stucco and tile roof homes largely, but not entirely, replacing the wood-sided and cedar-shaked construction styles popularized by the Berkeley Hillside Club before the fire.***

*As a belated result of the fire, the City of Berkeley constructed a fire station in the hills at 2931 Shasta Road (at Queens Road) just below Grizzly Peak Blvd, in 1948.[1] In the early 2000s, this station was replaced and relocated to a nearby site just above Grizzly Peak Blvd. at 3000 Shasta Road,[2] on the interface between the residential area and Tilden Regional Park, very close to the putative origin of the 1923 fire.*

**From: American Shelter, by Lester Walker**

*The Spanish Colonial Style is a mixing of styles derived from the Mediterranean world, unified by the use of arches, courtyards, plain white wall surfaces, and red tile roofs. Architects were inspired by many sources: the adobe and Spanish Colonial buildings of southern California, late Moorish architecture, medieval Spanish church architecture, the Baroque architecture of Colonial Spain and Portugal, and the Pueblo and Mission styles. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style began to gain acceptance with the popularity of Spanish Colonial buildings in the San Diego Exposition. Further impetus came from designers who sought wider sources for this "Spanish Renaissance." The style became popular in areas with a Hispanic past: Southern California, New Mexico, southern Arizona, Texas, and Florida. It lasted from 1915 to 1940, but around 1925, it became a craze. Models such as mission churches, California Ranch Style houses, and Mexican Baroque forts were used for the design of all sorts of public buildings as well as single family homes. The style was essentially a continuation of the Mission Style which initiated the Spanish Revival movement.*

**From: <http://www.antiquehome.org/Architectural-Style/mission.htm>:**

*Mission Revival*

*Mission Revival style—also called California Mission or simply Mission—was part of the Art & Crafts movement in the early part of the 20th century. Taking its character from the Spanish Franciscan mission churches of the Southwestern US, it was especially well adapted to warm climate areas like California and the deserts. Its popularity was fueled by the success of Arthur Page Brown's California State Building shown at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. The style was subsequently adopted by Santa Fe Railway for its train stations. Other creative boosters sought to distinguish Southwestern regional architecture by creating Mission style resorts and public buildings for tourists.*

*Like other Art & Crafts architectural forms, Mission style also incorporated well-crafted inglenooks and built-in cabinetry, beamed ceilings, and handmade metal details like cabinet hardware and lighting fixtures. Interiors often had rough plastered walls with curved corners and coved ceilings. Tile accents are may be found but usage is*

*restrained. In the Southwest, clay tile floors cool interiors spaces during the warm season.*

*Originating in the West, Mission style was popular from about 1900 to 1940. Though most popular in California and the desert Southwest, the style diffused from West to East instead of vice versa with many fine examples occurring throughout the country.*

*The style is quite simple with covered archways and half-rounded windows, smooth stucco walls that mimic the adobe walls of the Spanish missions, and flat or shallow sloped tile roofs. Towers and roof parapets are often found. Extended roofs may form covered arcades with large square pillars or columns—a feature that allows building interiors to remain relatively cool in hot climates.*

*As the Mission style evolved there was significant borrowing from both the Craftsman bungalow and Prairie School styles. A contemporary version of what might be called Neo-Mission is currently a very popular house style throughout the Desert Southwest.*

#### *General Characteristics*

*Mission style houses incorporate many of the following characteristics:*

- Simple, smooth stucco or plaster siding*
- Broad, overhanging eaves*
- Exposed rafters*
- Either hipped or gabled tile roof*
- Roof parapets*
- Large square pillars*
- Twisted columns*
- Arched entry and windows*
- Covered walkways or arcades*
- Round or quatrefoil window*
- Restrained decorative elements usually consisting of tile, iron, and wood*

**From: <http://www.antiquehome.org/Architectural-Style/spanish-revival.htm>:**

*Spanish Revival Architecture of the 20th Century*  
*Informal eclectic style is fanciful and romantic*  
*Spanish Eclectic Style*

*The romantic Spanish Revival style—or alternately Spanish Eclectic—refers to the architectural style that was built from about 1915 to about 1940. Like Mission Revival, Spanish Revival was influenced by Spanish Colonial architecture of earlier centuries. Unlike its immediate predecessor, Mission, Spanish Revival was more ornate with*

*stylistic detail apparent in both large features and small, such as intricately patterned tilework and wrought iron hardware.*

*After the Panama-California Exposition in 1915, the Spanish Revival style caught hold. The growth of California and the film industry during the 1920s and 1930s facilitated the dissemination of the Spanish Revival style. Though it is a prominent housing style in the Southwest US as well as Florida and Texas, it is less common in Northern states.*

*Spanish Revival is an extremely eclectic style. Many Mediterranean touches are combined to create an exotic, but harmonious appearance. Influences include Spanish Baroque, Moorish, and Gothic elements. Tile roofs and stucco exteriors are characteristic with half rounded doors and windows. Elaborate tilework, applied relief ornamentation, and wrought iron grillwork is used to create frames around doorways and windows, and is used widely as decorative accents throughout the house. Towers and columns are often seen as are balustrades, cantilevered balconies, covered porches, and arcaded walkways. Front entrances were often highly ornamented and many were balanced by a commanding triple-arched focal window.*

**General Characteristics**

The following are typical features of Spanish Revival houses:

- Asymmetrical*
- Low-pitched flat, gable, or hip roof, typically with no overhang*
- Tile roof*
- Half round arches, doors, and windows*
- Stucco over adobe brick, or adobe brick exterior walls*
- Plaster interior walls*
- Ornate tile, wrought iron, and wood work*

**Historic Value:**

**National State County City  Neighborhood**

**Architectural Value:**

**National State County City  Neighborhood**

More significance may potentially follow the above.

**17. Is the property endangered?** Potentially, based upon Scott Wheeler's Jan 29th conversation with property manager Michael White.

**18. Photographs:** Date Photograph #1 is from 1939 Repository: BAHA  
Photographer: Unknown

All other attached color photographs are current.

Microfiched building permits are variously dated from July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1921 through October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944.

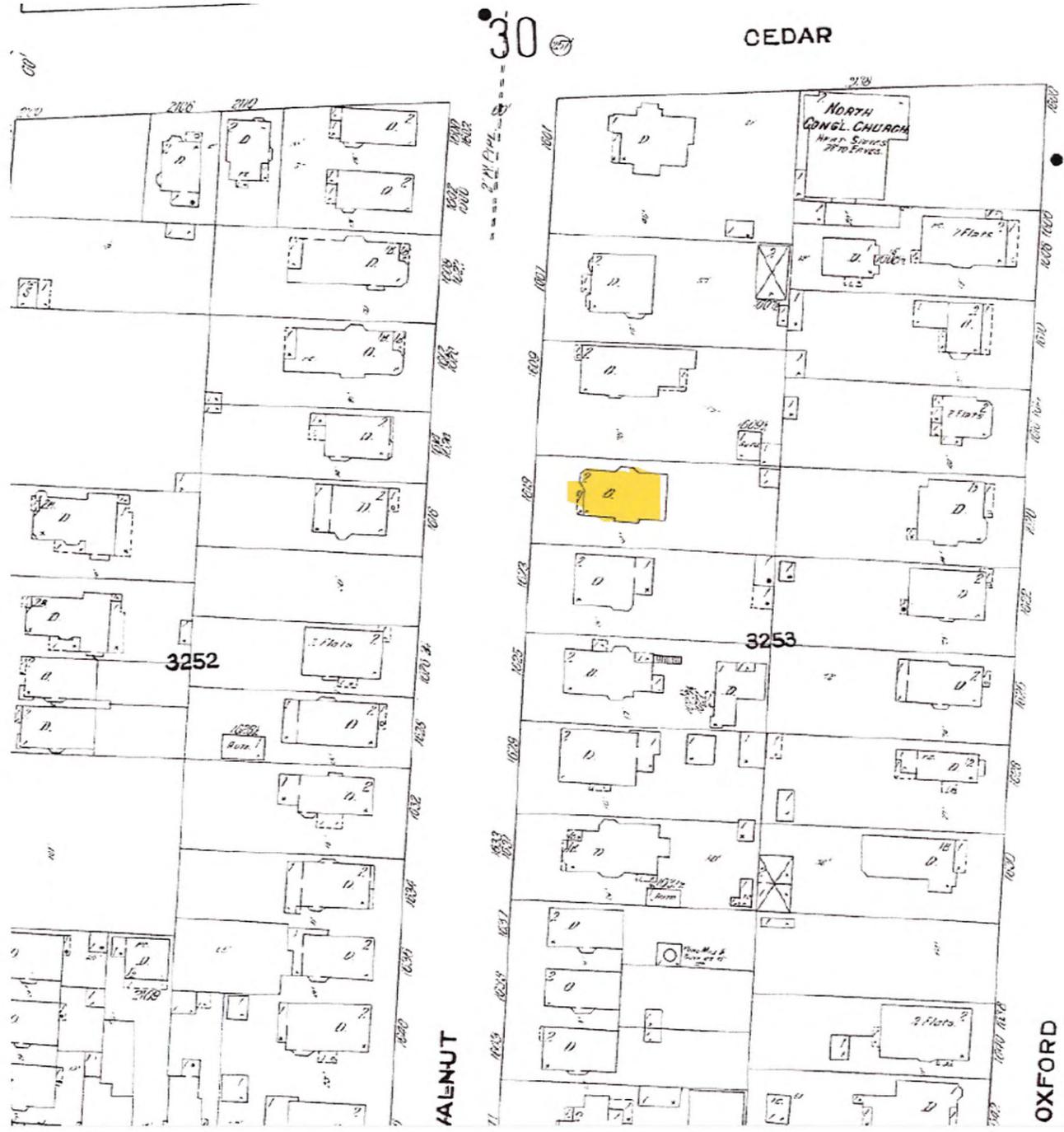
Note: Included in the application are approximately one dozen photographs of this and other homes designed by W.A. Doctor individually or Doctor & Hodgson. Please refer to the earlier Description and History sections.

## Berkeley Building Permits

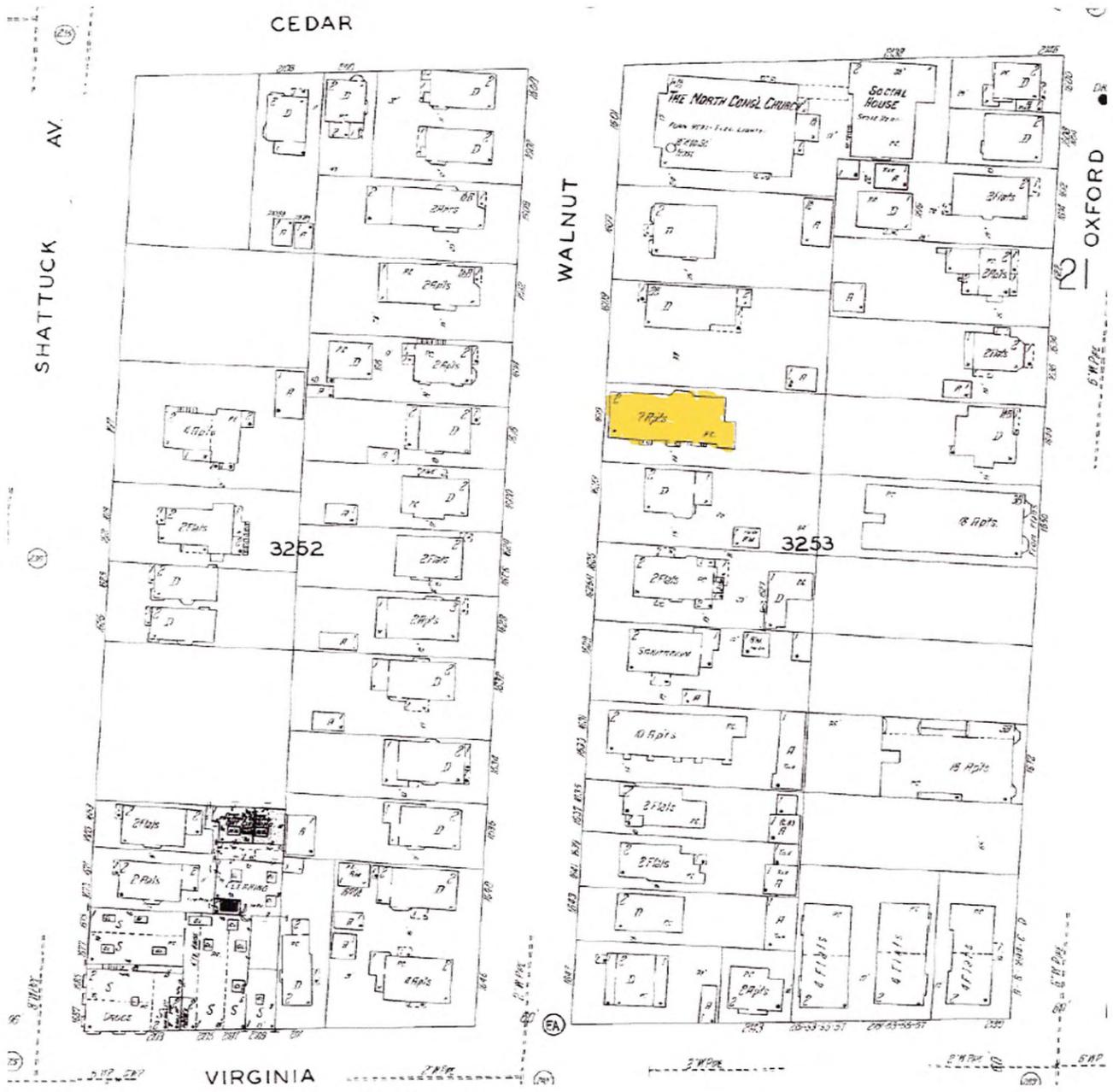
## Architects - 1909-1946

Year	Permit	St. #	Street	Owner	Architect/Designer	Contractor/Bulder
1924	<b>18850</b>	1570	Hawthorne	Hills, Elijah C.	Doctor & Hodgson	Hills, Elijah C.
1925	<b>22931</b>	859	Santa Barbara	Solomon, C.E.	Doctor & Hodgson	Solomon Bros.
1925	<b>23229</b>	1046	Cragmont	Solomon Bros.	Doctor & Hodgson	Solomon Bros.
1924	<b>16124</b>	2945	Ashby	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1924	<b>16189</b>	1514	Le Roy	Ulsh, R.L.	Doctor, W.A.	Houle, Henry
1924	<b>16310</b>	1853	Catalina	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1924	<b>16311</b>	1849	Catalina	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1924	<b>16626</b>	1215	Virginia	Rayburn, Anna	Doctor, W.A.	Henderson, Edward F.
1924	<b>17714</b>	1121	Spruce	Levy, L.S.	Doctor, W.A.	Knight, Harry C.
1924	<b>18180</b>	1611	Euclid	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1924	<b>18853</b>	2237	Spaulding	Latour, I.H.	Doctor, W.A.	Roby & Son, Daniel B.
1924	<b>19097</b>	2218	Spaulding	Latour, I.H.	Doctor, W.A.	Roby & Son, Daniel B.
1925	<b>20246</b>	793	Vincente	Adams, Leonard/Millie	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, E.D.
1925	<b>20247</b>	791	Vincente	Adams, Leonard/Millie	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, E.D.
1925	<b>22165</b>	869	Santa Barbara	Solomon Bros.	Doctor, W.A.	Solomon Bros.
1925	<b>22668</b>	723	Colusa	Palmer, M/M.J.C.	Doctor, W.A.	Bramlage, E.D.
1925	<b>23620</b>	1631	Walnut	Rush, W.I.	Doctor, W.A.	Rush, B.B.
1938	<b>46095</b>	531	Grizzly Peak	Woods, Francis N.	Doctor, W.A.	White, W.R.
1938	46096	531	Grizzly Peak	Woods, Francis N.	Doctor, W.A.	White, W.R.
1940	48878	1947	Ashby	Curtis, N.D.	Doctor, W.A.	Duncan, Robert
1940	<b>49038</b>	1637	Seventh	Mouritz, Desmond	Doctor, W.A.	Hawkins, Herbert J.
1940	<b>49349</b>	1085	Creston	Geavens, Roy C.	Doctor, W.A.	Duncan, Robert
1942	52480	1085	Creston	Gravem, Roy	Doctor, W.A.	Gravem, Roy
1923	<b>13914</b>	1545	Beverly	Siefert, Emily A.	Doctor, William A.	Campbell, Douglas
1923	<b>14725</b>	843	Arlington	Bramlage, Evan D.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1923	<b>14875</b>	1745	Madera	Nicholson, Charles H.	Doctor, William A.	Nicholson, Charles H.
1923	<b>14983</b>	847	Arlington	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1923	<b>15314</b>	649	Arlington	Bramlage, Mabel M.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1923	<b>15598</b>	2295	San Pablo	Rexy Mfg. Co.	Doctor, William A.	Knight, Harry C.
1923	<b>15635</b>	1741	Vine	Hill, Mrs. H.E.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1923	<b>15636</b>	1749	Vine	Hill, Mrs. H.E.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1923	<b>15637</b>	905	Spruce	Bramlage, Evan D.	Doctor, William A.	Bramlage, Evan D.
1926	<b>25943</b>	2532	Cedar	Cleveland, Newton	Doctor, William A.	Henderson, Edward F.

1911 Sanborn map



1929 Sanborn map



1570 Hawthorne (1924 Doctor & Hodgson) – Builder: Elijah C. Hills & C.E. Solomon - Owner: Elijah C. Hills & C.E. Solomon



1046 Cragmont (1925 Doctor & Hodgson) – Builder: Solomon Bros. - Owner: Solomon Bros.



619 Arlington (1923 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Evan D. Bramlage - Owner: Mabel M. Bramlage



619 Arlington (above) – close-up of stained glass front windows



2532 Cedar (1926 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Edward F. Henderson - Owner: Newton Cleaveland



1851 Catalina (1924 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Evan D. Bramlage - Owner: Mabel M. Bramlage



1611 Euclid (1924 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Evan D. Bramlage - Owner: Mabel M. Bramlage



2237 Spaulding (1924 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Roby & Son, Daniel B. - Owner: I.H. Latour



791 and 793 Vicente (1925 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Evan D. Bramlage - Owner: Leonard & Millie Adams



869 Santa Barbara (1925 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Solomon Bros. - Owner: Solomon Bros.



1631 Walnut (1925 William Alexander Doctor sister building to 1619 Walnut)— Builder: - B.B. Rush- Owner: W.I. Rush



1619 Walnut (1927 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: D.B. Roby - Owner: Madge L. Rush

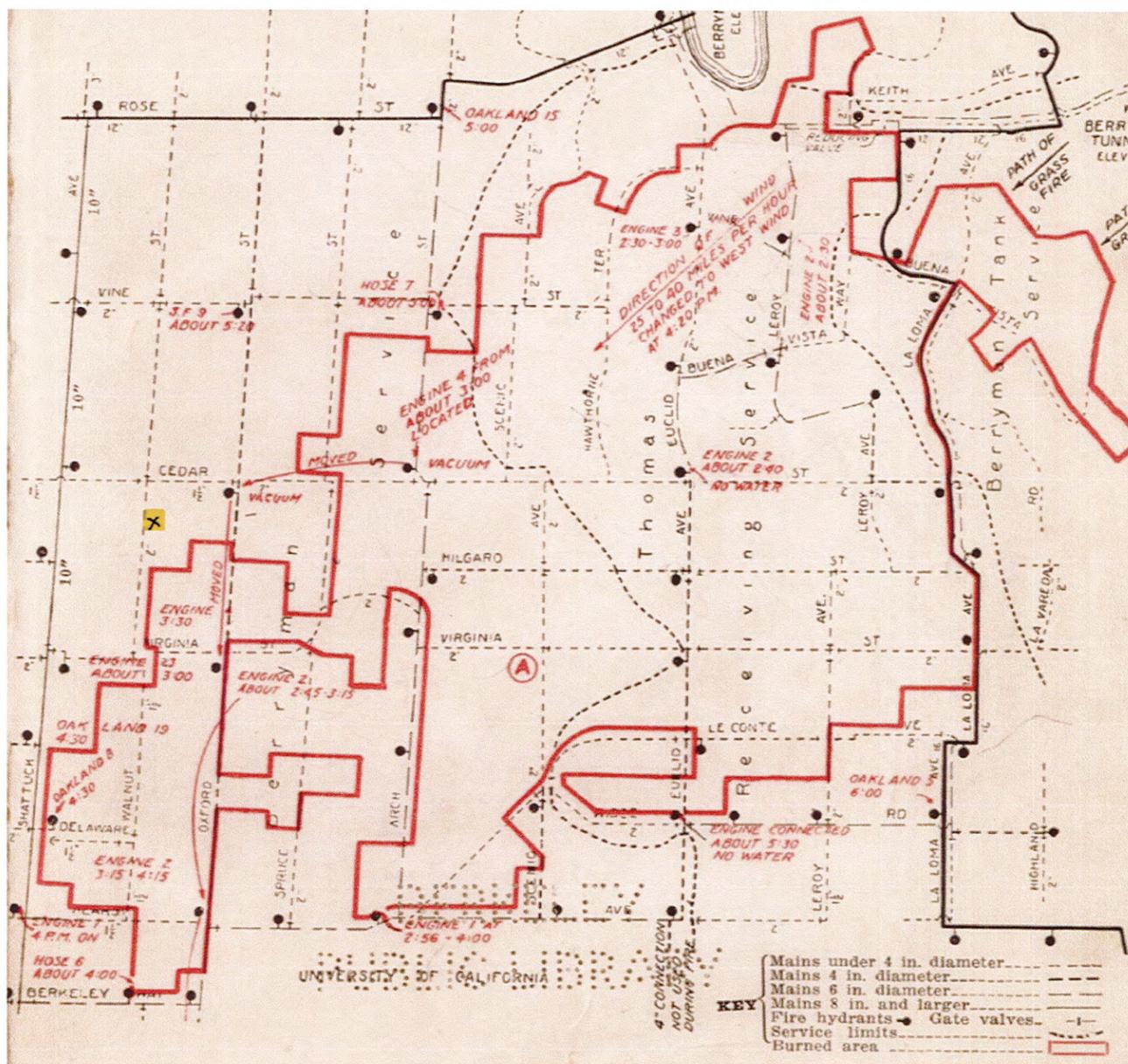


1749 Vine (1923 William Alexander Doctor) – Builder: Evan D. Bramlage - Owner: Mrs. H.E. Hill



The great Berkeley Fire of 17 September 1923

This is a map of the extent of the September 17, 1923 Berkeley Fire – just escaping was the northern half of Walnut Street, the block south of Cedar Street, including 1619 Walnut (see 'X' highlighted with yellow). Following the fire WA Doctor's designs and in particular his use of stucco and other fireproof materials became increasingly popular.



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20. Recorder: Scott M. Wheeler, PhD      Date: 19 February 2019

Organization 1619 Walnut Street Berkeley Tenants Association: Scott Wheeler, Nan Noonan, Jerry Mandel, Oswald Haase and J. Kay Tolman.

### Acknowledgements

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Berkeley/Kensington architects:  
Erick Moreau, Ralph Panecaldo, Cornelia van der Have and Paul Weir

**EXTERIOR REHABILITATION SCHEDULE**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Character Defining?</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Recommended Treatment</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Budgets (from bids)</b>
Stucco siding	Yes	Poor	Repair as part of rehabilitation work outlined herein	2030	\$20,000
Windows - front and south side	Yes	Poor	Replace 21 windows with new to match existing including repair and reuse of stained glass as interior lites	2028-30	\$65,000
Entry doors - south side	Yes	Poor	Replace 7 entry doors with new to match existing including sdalvage and reuse of ornamental escutcheon plates	2028-30	\$28,000
Driveway	Yes	Poor	Replace patterned concrete paving to match existing including removal, restoration and reinstallation of ornamental iron arch and its supports	2032	\$75,000
Ornamental wrought-iron wall-mounted unit identification plaques	Yes	Fair	Repair and where irreparable replace with new to match	2035	\$5,000
Ornamental wrought-iron wall-mounted lanterns at front and south side	Yes	Fair	Repair and replamp	2035	\$10,000
Metal awnings at south side entry doors	Yes	Poor	Replace entry doors with new to match existing	2032	\$17,500
				<b>Total Estimated 10yr. Budget</b>	<b>\$220,500</b>

**GENERAL NOTES:**

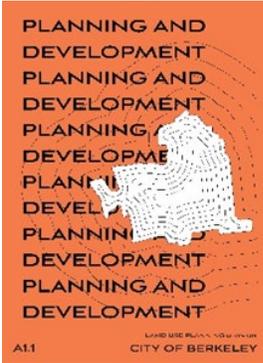
- A. This proposed 10 year work plan is focused on the rehabilitation of primary exterior features and materials.
- B. The proposed work plan exceeds the estimated Mills Act tax reduction per the accompanying spreadsheet.
- C. This focused work plan represents only a portion of current and future historic rehabilitation and maintenance work.

# Landmarks Preservation Commission Staff Report

App #LMMM2025-0002

September 4, 2025

## Mills Act Contract Application at 1619 Walnut Street - Las Casitas Apartments



Quick Facts	Project Description:
<p><b>Applicant:</b> Mark Hulbert</p> <p><b>Property Owner:</b> Noemi Ruelas</p> <p><b>Project Address:</b> 1619 Walnut Street</p>	<p>The applicant is seeking a Mills Act contract for a Structure of Merit multifamily property.</p>
<p><b>GP Land Use:</b> Medium Density Residential (MDR)</p> <p><b>Zoning:</b> Restricted Multiple-Family Residential (R-2A)</p>	<p><b>Permits Requested:</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Historic District:</b> No</p> <p><b>CEQA:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Submittal Date:</b> June 3, 2025</p> <p><b>Date Deemed Complete:</b> July 3, 2025</p> <p><b>Project Planner:</b> Allison Riemer</p>	<p><b>Staff Recommendation:</b></p> <p>Approve the proposed rehabilitation schedule and recommend favorable action to City Council.</p>

VICINITY MAP SHOWING NEARBY CITY LANDMARKS & DISTRICTS

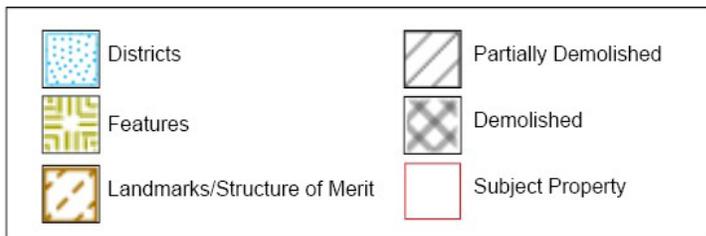
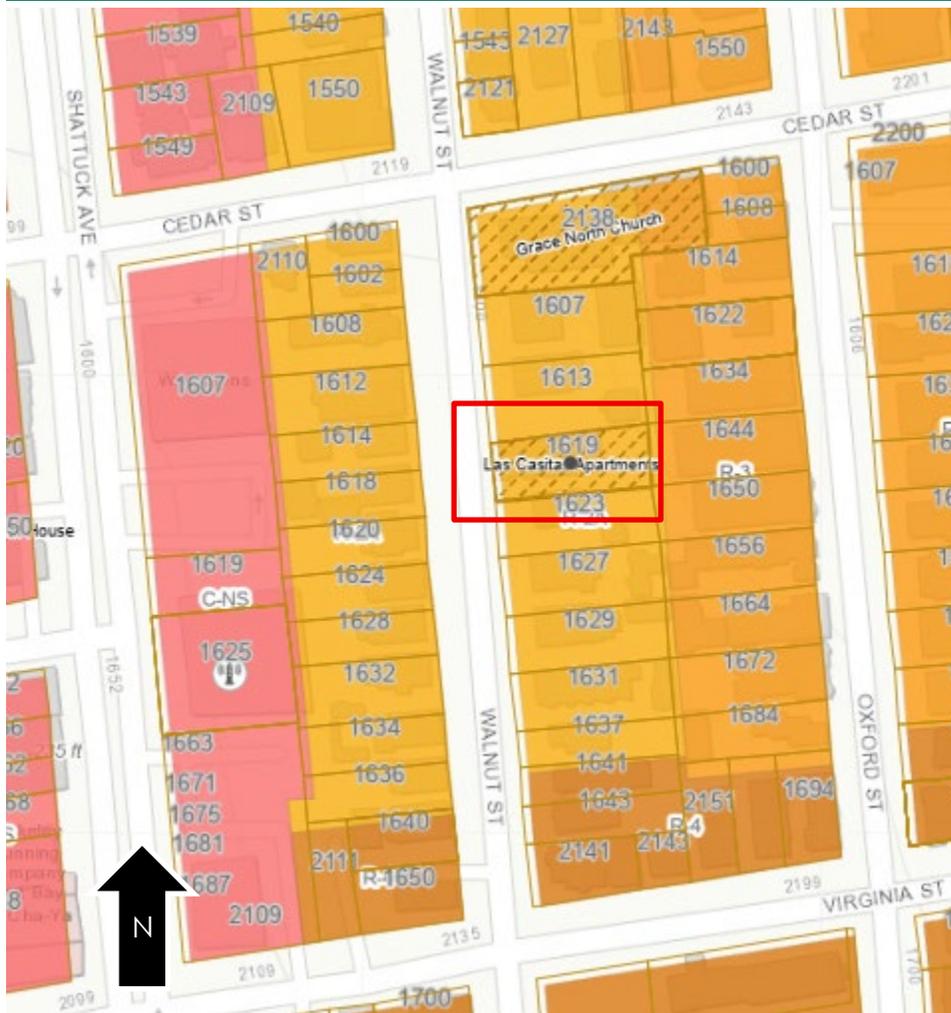


Figure 1: Vicinity and Zoning Districts Map

## AERIAL

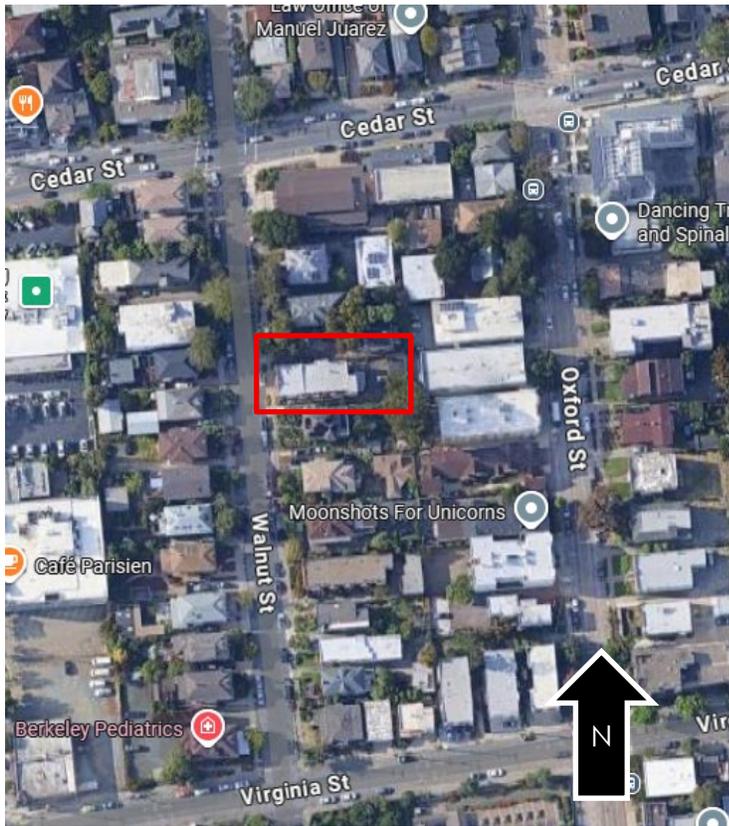


Figure 2: Aerial Image (Source: GoogleEarth 2025)

## STREET ELEVATION



Figure 3: Southwest elevation (Source: Google Maps, 2025)

## **BACKGROUND**

The building at 1619 Walnut Street was constructed between 1927 and 1928, and features elements of the Spanish Eclectic style, including a flat roof with parapet walls, narrow tile covered shed roofs with regularly laid tapered mission style tile, asymmetrical façade, stucco walls, stain glass windows, decorative window grills, decorative iron sconces and door knockers and arcaded walkways. It is two stories over a partial garage and basement, with a one-story wing at the rear, and contains seven apartments. An ornamental wrought iron archway is at the driveway entrance. The site features two semi-circled scored pathways, one along the south side property line, and the other along the north side property line. Additional architectural details can be found in Attachment 1.

The subject property was designated a City Structure of Merit in 2019; see Attachment 4. On June 3, 2025, the applicant, on behalf of the property owner, submitted a Mills Act Contract Application for the property.

## **ANALYSIS**

The applicant's historic architect, who is also serving as the historic resource consultant, prepared the Mills Act submittal in line with the City's program requirements. The Mills Act application includes the following components:

- 1) Historic Architectural Summary for the subject property (Attachment 1), which includes a list of the Features to be Preserved, which are also character-defining features.
- 2) A Rehabilitation Plan (Attachment 2), which outlines the projects identified for restoration, rehabilitation, and maintenance of the property over the ten-year contract period; and
- 3) A financial analysis spreadsheet for estimating the potential Mills Act tax savings for this request, based on property-specific figures calculated using standard formulas.

The purpose of this review is to confirm the eligibility of the property to participate in the program and verify the validity of the identified work plan items. Should the City enter into a Mills Act Contract with the property owner, the Alameda County Assessor's Office will be responsible for verifying the figures provided by the applicant, conducting calculations, and applying actual property tax reductions on future tax bills beginning in 2026.

All improvements included in the Rehabilitation Plan (Attachment 2) relate to restoring the historic, character-defining features of the building and site, or extending the Structure of Merit's useful life. Based on the rehabilitation plan (Attachment 2), all of the proposed work items can be considered "ordinary maintenance and repair" since they do not include a change to the character of any of the exterior features, and therefore, would be exempt

from the requirements of a Structural Alteration Permit (SAP), pursuant to the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Section 3.24.260). If any future work is proposed to go beyond the scope of “ordinary maintenance and repair,” it would be subject to prior approval by the Commission.

The work plan items appear to be justifiable in that they constitute restoration, repair, rehabilitation, and continued maintenance of the subject property. Further, the work plan would provide for the property’s “use, maintenance and restoration as to retain its characteristics as property of historical significance,” as provided for in the Mills Act, Government Code Sections 50280 et. Seq., as authorized by the Berkeley City Council per Resolution No. 59,355 – N.S. For these reasons, staff concludes that the proposed rehabilitation plan items represent improvements that are consistent with the requirements of the Mills Act.

### **MILLS ACT CONTRACT PROPOSAL**

The intent of the Mills Act is to provide property tax relief so that the property owners entering into Mills Act Contracts with the City will reinvest a significant portion of the property tax savings resulting from the Contract into preserving and/or restoring their property. The applicant’s proposed 10-year plan of improvements is provided in Attachment 2, and summarized in Table 1, below.

Table 1. Summary of Rehabilitation Schedule & Recommended Treatments

Feature	Treatment (as recommended by historic resource consultant)	Estimated Year of completion
Stucco siding	Repair	2030
Windows- west and south	Replace 21 windows with new to match existing, and repair and reuse stained glass as interior lites.	2030
Entry doors- south side	Replace 7 seven entry doors with new to match existing, including salvage and reuse of ornamental escutcheon plates	2030
Driveway	Replace patterned concrete paving to match existing including removal, restoration, and reinstallation of ornamental iron arch and its supports	2032
Wrought iron wall-mounted unit identification plaques	Repair, and where irreparable replace with new to match	2035
Wrought iron wall-mounted lanterns at front and south side	Repair and relamp	2035
Metal awnings at south entry doors	Replace with new to match existing	2032

Per the applicant’s calculations in Attachments 2 and 3, the owner’s work plan represents a full reinvestment of the savings into the property (i.e. spending \$220,500 on the 10-year work plan, while saving \$148,880 in property tax reduction over the 10-year period).

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff has determined that all work proposed in the Mills Act Contract work plan provides for the property’s “use, maintenance and restoration as to retain its characteristics as property of historical significance,” and advises the Commission to recommend that City Council approve the Mills Act Contract request for the subject property.

**Environmental Review**

The review of the Mills Act contract is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) “Review for

Exemptions.”

**Attachments**

1. Historic Architectural Summary, dated May 28 and July 31, 2025
2. Rehabilitation Plan, dated July 31, 2025
3. Financial Analysis Spreadsheet, received August 27, 2025
4. Notice of Decision – Structure of Merit Designation, June 6, 2019
5. Project Estimates, received June 30 and August 1, 2025