



Historic Resources Board

Staff Report (ID # 12015)

Report Type: Action Items **Meeting Date:** 2/25/2021

Summary Title: 819 Ramona Street (Zion Church)

Title: PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 819 Ramona Street [21PLN-00015]: Request for Historic Resources Board Review of a Minor Architectural Review Application for Consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Project Includes the Installation of a New Ridge Skylight and Four New Windows at the Rear Elevation at the AME Zion Church, Classified as a Local Historic Resource Category III, and listed on the California Register of Historical Resources and deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Zone District: AMF (MUO). Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act per Sections 15331 (Historical Resource Rehabilitation). For More Information Contact the Project Planner Danielle Condit at danielle.condit@cityofpaloalto.org.

From: Jonathan Lait

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Historic Resources Board (HRB) take the following action(s):

1. Discuss and review the proposed façade rehabilitation for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (SISR) and applicable Architectural Review (AR) finding;
2. Provide a recommendation to the Director of Planning and Development Services (PDS) on whether the proposed building modifications should be approved.

Report Summary

This report is to support the HRB's discussion of the installation of a new ridge skylight and four new windows at the rear elevation of the former University AME Zion Church located at 819

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Ramona Street. The proposed improvements are contingent upon consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation that safeguard retention of the building's integrity, and the building's consistency with the definition of a Category 3 building in Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 16.49.020(b).

The HRB's duties, set forth in Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) Section 2.27.040, include:

- Informing staff (acting on behalf of the Architectural Review Board (ARB) for minor projects) of the historical and/or architectural significance of buildings designated as significant outside of Downtown, and
- Providing recommendations regarding proposed exterior alterations of significant historic structures.

Staff has summarized the project's compliance with SISR. The standards analysis has been prepared and submitted by the historic consultant group Page and Turnbull (Attachment A) who is both the project architect and the preservation consultant for the proposed project. Staff requests the HRB's review of the standards analysis for compliance with the SISR. This minor project will be reviewed by staff for compliance with the Architectural Review findings (Attachment F) and action following HRB review.

Background

According to the description on the inventory form (Attachment C), 819 Ramona Street was added to the local inventory as a Category 3 historic resource. The site was also determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Events) (Attachment D) and is listed on the California Register.

The project scope for Architectural Review is considered a minor project. Palo Alto Municipal Code Section 16.49.050 (C) allows staff to review and process minor exterior alternations. Minor exterior alterations are those alterations "which the director ... determines will not adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical or aesthetic value of the historic structure, its site or surroundings". Staff can make reasonable architectural review findings per the proposed project scope; however, staff is not considered qualified in historic preservation to fully assess the proposed improvements for compatibility with the SISR. The project applicant provided staff with a Character Defining Features memo (Attachment B) and building drawings with existing and proposed conditions (Attachment E).

Exterior work includes a new aluminum ridge skylight at the middle of the existing roof. The work also includes reframing of the rear elevation for new window openings, and new stucco plaster on the rear elevation to match the existing stucco plaster. The current application does not include a proposal for changes to the existing floor plan.

Due to its listing on the local inventory and located outside the Downtown Area, the property would be considered a "Group B" resource and would be subject to historic review at staff-level. However, since the City does not currently have a historic planner on staff, the Historic Resources Board (HRB) is requested to provide a recommendation.

Discussion

The building at 819 Ramona Street was built in 1925 and was the first Black church in Palo Alto. The congregation operated in this location for 40 years and was known as the A.M.E. Zion (African Methodist Episcopal) church. The AME Zion Church relocated in 1965 when the congregation sold the building and constructed a new church at 3549 Middlefield Road. 819 Ramona was constructed by a local builder named W.S. Couter. The architect of this freestanding, single-story church with steeply pitched gable roof is not known. The historic building inventory on file with the Palo Alto Historical Association describes the building as Classical Revival in style that has undergone few architectural changes since its construction. The building represents the history of Black Palo Altans in the early twentieth century and signifies the all-embracing values deep-rooted in the community of the City.

The Character Defining Features memo (Attachment B), performed by Barrett Reiter of Page and Turnbull, describes the timeline of known alterations to the building. Alterations primarily took place during the 260 Homer Avenue development project that included the rehabilitation of this building, completed in 2009. Per the CDF memo provided, alterations that are known to have occurred during this rehabilitation include: “the replacement of the building’s stucco; the repair of original windows and the replacement of damaged amber glass; changes to the bell tower including the replacement of an original window with a louvered vent; the addition of handrails along the primary façade; the installation of a door (replacing an original window) at the west façade to allow for the installation of a lift and an accessible entrance; the installation of a new foundation; and the general reconfiguration of the main interior volume. In the interior, the mezzanine space located along south of the building (directly behind the triangular leaded glass window) was removed and partitions were erected in the main room. Until recently both the basement and first floor were used as an exercise studio”.

The National Park Service identifies four distinct approaches to the treatment of historic properties: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction. For this project, the most appropriate treatment would be rehabilitation which “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property’s historic character”. In this case, this means an alteration to the existing gable roof for a new aluminum ridge skylight. As noted in standard six of the SOI analysis the roof materials removed are not historic and the character-defining feature of the gable form and massing will not be impacted. The rear elevation is proposed to be reframed to include four new window openings where no window or door openings existed prior. As described in standards 2, 5 and 10 the new window openings will not be visible from the public right-of-way, does not propose to remove or relocate any of the original or restored character-defining leaded glass windows with amber glass, and if in the future the new windows and skylight are removed the building would retain its essential form and historic character. The proposed improvements seem to be appropriate alterations when considering the roof and rear façade rehabilitation for the propose to allow more natural light into the building.

819 Ramona Street was added to the local inventory as a Category 3 resource. A Category 3 resource is defined as a "Contributing building" which means "any building or group of buildings which are good local examples of architectural styles and which relate to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden facades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco." (PAMC 16.49.020).

The new skylight and new fenestration on the buildings rear elevation, has been indicated to meet the ten standards for rehabilitation in the analysis below and not diminish the buildings original character. The new skylight and window openings would still allow the building to remain as a Category 3 structure, based on definitions found in PAMC 16.49.020.

Any future signage or development at the subject site would be subject to future Architectural Review and Historic Review applications. The site is located within the South of Forest Area I Coordinated Area Plan.

The Building Department has approved the project with conditions contingent upon the procurement of a valid ICC ESR report for installation of the new skylight and submittal of T24 at the time of building permit for new fenestration for the new window openings (Attachment G). Additional information and study is needed to ensure the improvements are compliant with the California Building Code.

Analysis

Staff refers to the HRB for recommendation and guidance for the installation of a new ridge skylight and four new windows at the rear elevation and its compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see below).

The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation	Analysis
<p>1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: Building will continue to be used as a retail/ retail "like" use, which is the last recorded use on the site and supported by the land use table and protected by the retail preservation ordinance.</p>
<p>2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The proposed project retains the historic primary façade in its entirety and does not propose changes to the features or historic materials of the building. From the public right-of-way, the building will retain its historic character as the rear windows will not be visible, and the new roof ridge</p>

The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation	Analysis
	skylight will only be partially visible from an oblique view and will not alter the massing or character of the building's gable roofline.
<p>3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: As currently proposed, the project does not add historic features from other properties or add conjectural features that would create a false sense of historical development.</p>
<p>4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The 2009 rehabilitation of the building made minimal changes to the building's exterior, including the construction of exterior access stairs to the building's basement along both north and south facades and the installation of an elevator at the west corner of the north façade to provide access to the main floor. None of these exterior features will be altered by the proposed project.</p>
<p>5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The proposed project will retain all its character-defining features, which characterize the historic significance and craftsmanship of the property. The roof, whose massing and form is a character-defining feature, will be retained to a high degree, as only a small portion of the ridgeline will be altered with an approximately 9"-inch height increase to accommodate the skylight.</p>
<p>6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The project does not propose to repair or replace any features due to deterioration. Its scope is limited to areas that do not contain historic materials and character-defining features. Although the gable form and massing of the roof is a character-defining feature, its materials are not historic and the proposed change will not impact the form or massing.</p>

The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation	Analysis
<p>7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The proposed project does not propose the use of any chemical or physical treatments on historic materials.</p>
<p>8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: No subsurface work is proposed. However, if archaeological resources are encountered, the project shall be required to comply with applicable federal and State regulations regarding the discovery and disposition of archeological resources, which may include protection, preservation, and/or other mitigation measures as appropriate</p>
<p>9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: The proposed project does not propose any work that would destroy or alter the character-defining features of 819 Ramona Street. The rear windows are designed to be a different dimension, material, and finish to clearly differentiate them from the building's original leaded amber glass windows. The roof ridge skylight is recognizable as a contemporary design and will be finished in contemporary materials. The design will be sensitive and compatible with the building's roof design as it follows the pitch and form of the gable roof, and has a relatively low profile that is set back from the primary façade to remain unobtrusive. In addition, the skylight has been sized and placed to remain referential to the historic resource and not to overtake the design and form of the existing roofline.</p>
<p>10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT CONSISTENT <input type="checkbox"/> NA</p> <p>Explanation: If the proposed exterior alterations – the rear windows and ridge skylight – were removed in the future, the building would retain its essential form and integrity. The proposed project will not remove any character-defining features of the</p>

The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation	Analysis
would be unimpaired.	building, and while the roof will be altered to install a skylight, its form and massing will remain intact.

Architectural Review Findings

The Architectural Review Findings in the Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 18.76 are provided as Attachment F. The HRB may wish to provide comments with respect to Architectural Review Finding 2b, which has a focus on historic resources:

“The project has a unified and coherent design...that preserves, respects and integrates existing natural features that contribute positively to the site and the historic character including historic resources of the area when relevant.”

Environmental Review

A rehabilitation project is subject to assessment in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. A rehabilitation project is Exempt from CEQA Section 15331, Historical Resource Rehabilitation. A minor alteration, if proposed, may be exempt under Section 15301, Existing Facilities.

Public Notification, Outreach & Comments

The Palo Alto Municipal Code requires notice of this public hearing be published in a local paper and mailed to owners and occupants of property within 600 feet of the subject property at least ten days in advance. Notice of a public hearing for this project was published in the Palo Alto Weekly on February 12, 2021, which is 7 days in advance of the meeting. Postcard mailing occurred on February 11, 2021, which is 10 days in advance of the HRB meeting.

Alternative Actions

In addition to the recommended action, the HRB may:

1. Table the discussion to a later date.

Report Author & Contact Information

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Attachments:

- Attachment A: SOIS Memo (PDF)
- Attachment B: CDF Memo (PDF)

¹ Emails may be sent directly to the HRB using the following address: hrb@cityofpaloalto.org

- Attachment C: Local Inventory DPR Form for 819 Ramona St (PDF)
- Attachment D: University AME Zion_NR nomination (PDF)
- Attachment E: C1 Plan (PDF)
- Attachment F: Architectural Review Findings (PDF)
- Attachment G: C1 Plan Building COAs (PDF)

MEMORANDUM

DATE	December 10, 2020	PROJECT NUMBER	20170
TO	Danielle Condit, Associate Planner	PROJECT	819 Ramona Street, Palo Alto
OF	City of Palo Alto Planning & Development Services	FROM	Barrett Reiter, Architectural Historian, Page & Turnbull
CC	Elisa Skaggs, Page & Turnbull Carolyn Kiernat, Page & Turnbull	VIA	Email

REGARDING 819 Ramona Street – Secretary of the Interior’s Standards Compliance Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The City of Palo Alto has requested this *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* Compliance Analysis for a proposed project located at 819 Ramona Street in Palo Alto’s University South neighborhood. 819 Ramona Street was the former University African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church from 1925 until 1965. It was constructed as a freestanding, one-story church building with a rectangular footprint, a gable roof with bell tower, and simple classical detailing with amber glass windows. The church was constructed by local builder W.S. Couter and was completed in 1925.

In September 2020, Page & Turnbull prepared a Character-Defining Features Memorandum (memorandum attached, see below) for the property owner to identify the historic building’s significant features and to guide Page & Turnbull’s design for the proposed project, as the property was found eligible via nomination for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) under Criterion A (Events) but was not formally listed, was listed on the California Register, and is a Category 3 (or Contributing) building on Palo Alto’s Historic Resource Inventory.¹ A preliminary conversation was held between Page & Turnbull staff and Palo Alto Planning & Development Services staff to discuss the proposed project and provide early feedback on its compliance with the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, specifically the *Standards for Rehabilitation*.

¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resources Database, Santa Clara County, updated March 2020; City of Palo Alto, Master List of Structures on the Historic Inventory, Revised July 2012.

The purpose of this memorandum is to review a proposal for an exterior alteration project at 819 Ramona Street with respect to the *Standards for Rehabilitation*. Page & Turnbull is both the project architect and the preservation consultant for the proposed project.

This memorandum includes a list of character-defining features that were outlined in the 2020 Character-Defining Features Memorandum prepared by Page & Turnbull, a description of the proposed project, and a discussion of *Standards for Rehabilitation* compliance.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The former University African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, located at 819 Ramona Street in Palo Alto's University South neighborhood was completed in 1925. The church was the first purpose-built African American church in Palo Alto and within the larger area of the San Francisco Bay Area mid-peninsula, stretching from San Mateo to San Jose. As an early location of the AME Zion church in Palo Alto (founded in 1918), the building represents the history of African American Palo Altans in the early twentieth century.²

The building served as the home of the University AME Zion church from its completion in 1925 through its sale in 1965, when University AME Zion constructed a larger church at a new location. After several years of vandalism and deferred maintenance, the building underwent a rehabilitation by the current owner as part of the larger 260 Homer Avenue development.³

Today, 819 Ramona Street remains a significant historic resource for its connection to the area's early African American families and its role as the spiritual and social center of the black community not only in Palo Alto, but also in the larger region, including Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and San Mateo County. As described in Herbert G. Ruffin's *Uninvited Neighbors: African Americans in Silicon Valley*, the church also served a broader role in the community:

In the 1920s and 30s, the church played a crucial role in promoting dialogues among African Americans, European Americans, Chinese Americans, and Japanese Americans as racial progressives supported the church financially and morally [particularly during the hardships of the Great Depression]. These supporters included the Palo Alto Ministerial Association, Japanese American Methodists, the Chinese American community, Stanford University professors, the American Legion, the Shriners, the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, the *Palo Alto Times*, and the local business and financial community. Their support relieved many working-poor blacks

² National Register of Historic Places. University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California. National Register #96000297_R.

³ Ibid.

from having to fully shoulder the burden of financing the church [...]. Ultimately, the coalition played a huge role in the African American community.⁴



Figure 1: University AME Zion Church in 1964. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.

The building's period of significance from 1922 to 1965 dates from the early fundraising for the building to its sale in 1965 (**Figure 1**).⁵ Architecturally, the building retains nearly all its character-defining features, allowing it to continue to express its significance as a 1925 purpose-built AME Zion church building.

⁴ Herbert G. Ruffin, *Uninvited Neighbors: African Americans in Silicon Valley, 1769-1990*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

⁵ National Register of Historic Places. University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, National Register #96000297_R. While the period of significance is listed within the National Register nomination as dating from 1922 when fundraising for the building was started, the period of significance for the building more clearly begins in 1925 as that is the date the building was completed.

Character-Defining Features

For a property to be eligible for national or state designation under criteria related to type, period, or method of construction, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. These distinctive character-defining features are the physical traits that commonly recur in property types and/or architectural styles. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.



Figure 2: Primary (west) façade of the subject building. Looking east.

The character-defining features of 819 Ramona Street were established by Page & Turnbull in a memorandum to the project applicant dated September 2020 that was based on the documentation of the building that was assembled for the National Register nomination. The character-defining features include, but are not limited to:

Exterior features:

- Freestanding, symmetrical one-and-a-half-story volume (**Figure 2**)

- Symmetrical massing of the primary (west) façade⁶
- Stucco cladding
- Steeply pitched gable front roof
- Triangular leaded glass window within the front gable
- Segmental arched openings along primary (west) façade including open entrance portal at left (north) and leaded amber glass window at the right (south)
- Simple molded fascia along roofline with cornice return
- Asymmetrically placed bell tower on north-facing side of gable roof
- Steeply pitched hipped roof on bell tower
- Open front porch
- Original and restored leaded glass windows with amber glass
- Concrete steps to entry portal

PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following description of the proposed project is based on the drawing set prepared by Page & Turnbull, dated December 10, 2020. Orthogonal directions used for this description follow plan north as shown in the drawing set, where the primary façade is the west elevation, etc.⁷

The proposed project includes interior and exterior alterations to 819 Ramona Street. However, only exterior work, which is under the purview of City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Board review, will be described.

Project Description

The proposed project will install four windows along the rear (east) façade, which will not be visible from the public right-of-way. The project also proposes to install a skylight, approximately 7'-6" by 11'-2 1/2", along a central portion of the building's roof ridge. The proposed project will not alter the primary street-facing façade of the building, does not propose removing any character-defining features along any façades, and while the roof will be altered to install a skylight, it will retain its form and massing as the skylight will be minimally visible from the public right-of-way due to its relatively low profile and placement at the midpoint of the roof, set back from the primary façade.

⁶ Orthogonal directions used in the Character-Defining Features Memorandum of September 2020 referred to the primary façade as the south façade. These references have been updated for consistency with plan north in the proposed project drawings.

⁷ Ibid. See previous footnote.

Rear Façade Windows

The four windows that are proposed to be installed at the east façade will be approximately 2'-6" wide and 7'-0" high and will be arranged in pairs along the rear wall of the building (**Figure 3 and Figure 4**). Unlike the existing historic windows, the proposed windows will be fixed sash with clear glass to allow more light into the building and to differentiate the new windows from the historic leaded amber glass windows. As stated earlier, the proposed new windows are located along a rear façade, facing an adjacent building over a paved areaway, and will not be visible from the public right-of-way.

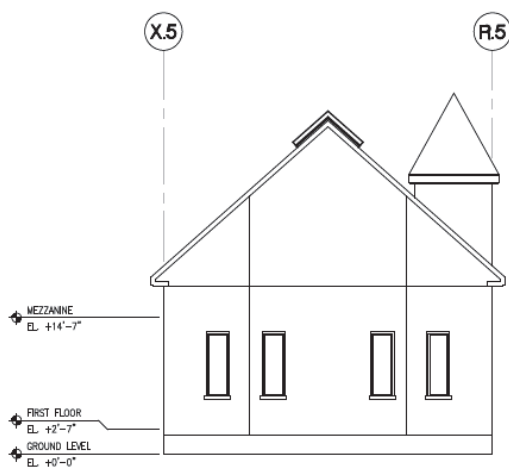


Figure 3: Proposed east (rear) elevation.

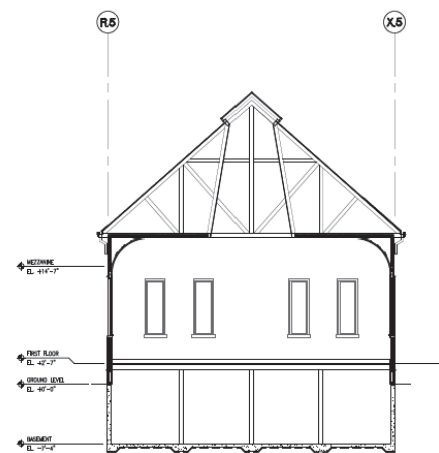


Figure 4: Proposed project, transverse section, looking east at interior of east façade.

Roof Ridge Skylight

The roof ridge skylight, sized at approximately 7'-6" by 11'-2 1/2", will be located just east of the centerline of the roof in order to align with the internal roof bay structure and allow for a setback from the primary façade (**Figure 5 and Figure 6**).

While the cladding material of the roof is not original, the form, massing, and pitch of the roof is a character-defining feature of the building. The proposed skylight will retain these features to a high degree as it follows the form and massing of the roofline, and it will not change its overall design, form, or pitch. The skylight itself will cause a height increase of approximately 9" to accommodate its framing and waterproofing.

This feature will be visible from the public right-of-way when viewed from a strong oblique angle. Due to the presence of an adjacent building to the north (along Ramona Street), and due to the

relatively narrow width of Ramona Street, the skylight is only partially visible when seen from the north, and somewhat more visible when seen from the south (looking away from Channing Avenue).

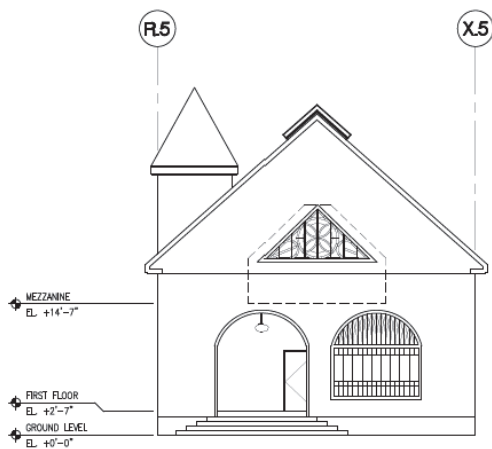


Figure 5: Proposed west elevation (primary façade).

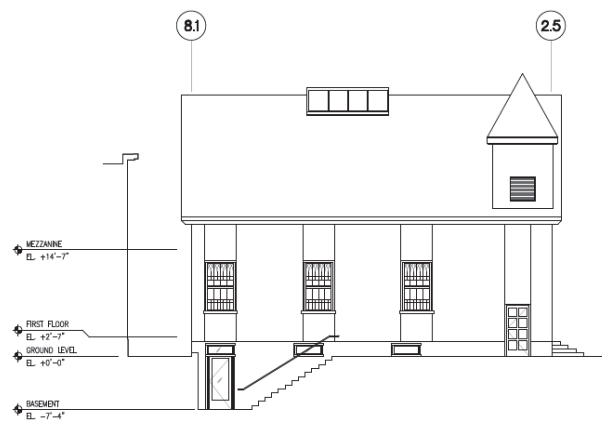


Figure 6: Proposed north elevation.

DISCUSSION OF SOI STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION COMPLIANCE

Under Palo Alto's historic preservation ordinance, planning staff may review and approve minor exterior alterations pursuant to guidelines adopted by the Historic Resources Board. Minor exterior alterations are "those alterations which the director of planning and community environment or his/her designee determines will not adversely affect the exterior architectural characteristics nor the historical or aesthetic value of the historic structure, its site or surroundings."⁸ Projects that are not considered minor exterior alterations are subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review and also go to the Historic Resources Board for review.⁹

The following discussion considers the proposed project's potential effects on, and compatibility with, the historic resource at 819 Ramona Street, and provides comments on whether the project appears to adhere to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.¹⁰

⁸ Section 16.49.050(C), Palo Alto Municipal Code, Chapter 16.49 Historic Preservation.

⁹ City of Palo Alto, "Historic Resource Project Review FAQ," <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civica/x/filebank/documents/64188>

¹⁰ Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.: 2017), accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>.

The *Standards for Rehabilitation* are:¹¹

Rehabilitation Standard 1: *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.*

Discussion: The subject building was constructed as a religious property in 1925 and retained that use until 1965 when it was used for storage. Since the 2009 rehabilitation of the building, it has served as an office and most recently as an exercise studio. The proposed project does not anticipate an additional change in use since that approved in 2009 that would precipitate changes to its historic materials or features. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with Standard 1.

Rehabilitation Standard 2: *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Discussion: The proposed project retains the historic primary façade in its entirety and does not propose changes to the features or historic materials of the building. From the public right-of-way, the building will retain its historic character as the rear windows will not be visible, and the new roof ridge skylight will only be partially visible from an oblique view and will not alter the massing or character of the building's gable roofline.

Therefore, the proposed project is in consistent with Standard 2.

Rehabilitation Standard 3: *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Discussion: As currently proposed, the project does not add historic features from other properties or add conjectural features that would create a false sense of historical development. Therefore, the project is consistent with Standard 3.

Rehabilitation Standard 4: *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

¹¹ This and the following Standards are listed in Grimmer (2007) and also at National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, "Technical Preservation Services: Rehabilitation as a Treatment," accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>.

Discussion: The historic resource's period of significance is 1922-1965, dating to the period that the property was developed and used by the University AME Zion Church. Alterations that have taken place since the building's construction – namely the rehabilitation of the building in 2009 – have not gained significance in their own right, are not considered historically significant, and therefore do not need to be retained or preserved. The 2009 rehabilitation of the building made minimal changes to the building's exterior, including the construction of exterior access stairs to the building's basement along both north and south facades and the installation of an elevator at the west corner of the north façade to provide access to the main floor. None of these exterior features will be altered by the proposed project. Therefore, the project is consistent with Standard 4.

Rehabilitation Standard 5: *Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

Discussion: The proposed project will retain all of its character-defining features, which characterize the historic significance and craftsmanship of the property. The roof, whose massing and form is a character-defining feature, will be retained to a high degree, as only a small portion of the ridgeline will be altered with an approximately 9"-inch height increase to accommodate the skylight. As all character-defining features will be retained, the proposed project is consistent with Standard 5.

Rehabilitation Standard 6: *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

Discussion: As designed, the proposed project does not specify removal or replacement of deteriorated historic features, as its scope is limited to areas that do not contain historic materials and character-defining features. Although the gable form and massing of the roof is a character-defining feature, its materials are not historic and the proposed change will not impact the form or massing. In the event that any deteriorated features are encountered during the course of the project, the *Standards for Rehabilitation* recommends repair rather than replacement. Any features that may require replacement due to a degree of severe deterioration beyond repair should be replaced in-kind based upon physical evidence. Therefore, the project is consistent with Standard 6.

Rehabilitation Standard 7: *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

Discussion: The proposed project does not propose the use of any chemical or physical treatments on historic materials. The material of the roof has been replaced and is not historic. If any

treatments become necessary, as long as they are undertaken using the gentlest means possible and follow the guidance of the Standards and the National Park Service's *Technical Preservation Briefs*, the project will be consistent with Standard 7.

Rehabilitation Standard 8: *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

Discussion: The proposed project will not involve excavation. If in the unlikely event that any archaeological material is discovered during construction, provided that standard discovery procedures for the City of Palo Alto are followed, the proposed project will be consistent with Standard 8.

Rehabilitation Standard 9: *New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

Discussion: The proposed project does not propose any work that would destroy or alter the character-defining features of 819 Ramona Street. In areas where work is undertaken – to install new windows at the east façade and a roof ridge skylight – the alterations are differentiated in design, finish, and materials from the historic resource. The rear windows are designed to be a different dimension, material, and finish to clearly differentiate them from the building's original leaded amber glass windows. The roof ridge skylight is recognizable as a contemporary design and will be finished in contemporary materials. The design will be sensitive and compatible with the building's roof design as it follows the pitch and form of the gable roof, and has a relatively low profile that is set back from the primary façade to remain unobtrusive. In addition, the skylight has been sized and placed to remain referential to the historic resource and not to overtake the design and form of the existing roofline.

Therefore, the project is consistent with Standard 9.

Rehabilitation Standard 10: *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

Discussion: If the proposed exterior alterations – the rear windows and ridge skylight – were removed in the future, the building would retain its essential form and integrity. The proposed project will not remove any character-defining features of the building, and while the roof will be

altered to install a skylight, its form and massing will remain intact. The proposed project retains all character-defining features of the building, and while the roof is altered its form and massing is retained to a high degree. Therefore, the building will continue to express its historic significance.

Therefore, the project is consistent with Standard 10.

FINDING

The proposed project is consistent with all ten of the Standards. Therefore, the project is compliant with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

QUALIFICATIONS

Page & Turnbull was established in 1973 as Charles Hall Page & Associates to provide architectural and conservation services for historic buildings, resources, and civic areas. The company was one of the first architecture firms in California to dedicate its practice to historic preservation and is among the longest practicing such firms in the country. Offices are located in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento, and staff includes planners, architectural historians, licensed architects, designers, and conservators. All of Page & Turnbull's professional staff members meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards as published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61.

As an architectural historian and cultural resources planner within Page & Turnbull's Cultural Resources Studio, Barrett Reiter meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History. She has extensive experience researching and evaluating historic properties, as well as analyzing proposed projects that impact historic resources using the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

ATTACHMENTS

Page & Turnbull, *819 Ramona Street: Character-Defining Features Memorandum*, September 2020.

MEMORANDUM

DATE	September 1, 2020	PROJECT NUMBER	20170
TO	Jane Vaughan, Partner C. Michael Johnston, Senior Portfolio Manager	PROJECT	260 Homer Avenue (819 Ramona Street, former University AME Zion Church)
OF	Menlo Equities	FROM	Barrett Reiter, Architectural Historian, Page & Turnbull
CC	Carolyn Kiernat, Principal, Page & Turnbull Elisa Hernandez Skaggs, Project Manager, Page & Turnbull	VIA	Email

REGARDING 819 Ramona Street – Character-Defining Feature Memorandum

The following Character-Defining Feature Memorandum has been assembled to guide a future project at the former church building at 819 Ramona Street in Palo Alto.

Methodology

On July 15, 2020, Page & Turnbull staff conducted a site visit to document the subject building's existing design and extant features. A review of relevant material was undertaken, including review of the building's National Register of Historic Places nomination from 1995, the historic building inventory file at the Palo Alto Historical Association, relevant publications on the history of Palo Alto and African American history in Santa Clara County, and various online sources including Palo Alto Stanford Heritage. Photographs of the building prior to its rehabilitation in 2009 were supplied by the property owner.

Historic Status and Significance

The former University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, located at 819 Ramona Street in Palo Alto was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) under Criterion A (Events), was listed on the California Register, and is a Category 3 (or Contributing) building on Palo Alto's Historic Resource Inventory.¹ The building, which was constructed in 1925, was the first purpose-built African American church in Palo Alto and within the larger area of the San

¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resources Database, Santa Clara County, updated March 2020; City of Palo Alto, Master List of Structures on the Historic Inventory, Revised July 2012.

Francisco Bay Area mid-peninsula, stretching from San Mateo to San Jose. As an early location of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church in Palo Alto (founded in 1918), the building represents the history of African American Palo Altans in the early twentieth century.²

The building served as the home of the University AME Zion church from its completion in 1925 through its sale in 1965, when University AME Zion constructed a larger church at a new location. The building was used for medical equipment storage by Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation and then largely left vacant until it underwent a rehabilitation by the current owner as part of the larger 260 Homer Avenue development.³

The building remains a significant historic resource for its connection to the area's early African American families and its role as the spiritual and social center of the black community not only in Palo Alto, but also in the larger region, including Los Altos Hills, Mountain View, and San Mateo County. As described in Herbert G. Ruffin's *Uninvited Neighbors: African Americans in Silicon Valley*, the church also served a broader role in the community:

In the 1920s and 30s, the church played a crucial role in promoting dialogues among African Americans, European Americans, Chinese Americans, and Japanese Americans as racial progressives supported the church financially and morally [particularly during the hardships of the Great Depression]. These supporters included the Palo Alto Ministerial Association, Japanese American Methodists, the Chinese American community, Stanford University professors, the American Legion, the Shriners, the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, the *Palo Alto Times*, and the local business and financial community. Their support relieved many working-poor blacks from having to fully shoulder the burden of financing the church [...]. Ultimately, the coalition played a huge role in the African American community.⁴

The building's period of significance from 1922 to 1965, dates to the early fundraising for the building to its sale in 1965.⁵ Architecturally, the building retains nearly all its character-defining features, allowing it to continue to express its significance as a 1925 purpose-built AME Zion church building.

² National Register of Historic Places. University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California. National Register #96000297_R.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Herbert G. Ruffin, *Uninvited Neighbors: African Americans in Silicon Valley, 1769-1990*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014).

⁵ National Register of Historic Places. University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, National Register #96000297_R. While the period of significance is listed within the National Register nomination as dating from 1922 when fundraising for the building was started, the period of significance for the building more clearly begins in 1925 as that is the date the building was completed.

Brief Building Description

The subject building is a freestanding, one-story-over-basement, wood frame building with stucco cladding and features a gable roof clad in composite shingles. It is located along Ramona Street between Homer and Channing avenues in the University South neighborhood of Palo Alto (**Figure 1**). The building is rectangular in plan and it presents a largely symmetrical design apart from a small bell tower with a hipped roof on the west-facing side of the gable roof.

Typical windows for the building consist of leaded glass windows with amber glass, both in a fixed configuration, as on the primary façade, or as double-hung windows on the side façades.



Figure 1: Subject building with approximate building footprint in red. North is up. Source: Google Maps, 2020. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Primary Façade

The primary (south) façade, facing Ramona Street, features a smooth stucco façade, a slightly projecting molded cornice with a cornice return, and symmetrically placed openings that include a triangle-shaped, fixed, leaded glass window within the gable peak, a segmental arched window with multi-lite fixed leaded glass at the east side of the first floor, and a segmental arched entrance at the west side of the first floor.⁶ This entrance leads to an open porch with double doors leading to the interior space. The entrance is reached by a series of low concrete steps with metal handrails. A metal plaque containing information about the building's history is located to the west of the entrance.



Figure 2: Primary façade of the subject building. Looking north.

⁶ The subject building is not aligned exactly on a north-south axis, however, for clarity within this report the primary façade is listed as the south façade, the rear façade is the north façade, etc.

East Façade

The east façade features four double-hung leaded glass windows. A small typical window is located on the south side of the façade (towards Ramona Street), while the other three typical windows are larger in size (**Figure 3 and Figure 4**). A flight of concrete stairs with metal handrails leads to a below-grade basement entrance with a single-leaf fully glazed door with transom and a fixed window (**Figure 5**).



Figure 3: East façade of the subject building. Looking west.



Figure 4: Detail of east façade. Looking northwest.



Figure 5: Detail of below-grade basement along east façade. Looking northwest.

West Façade

The west façade features a single, non-original entrance door at the south side of the façade (towards Ramona Street), three double-hung leaded glass typical windows, and a flight of concrete stairs with metal handrails that lead to the below-grade basement entrance with a single-leaf fully glazed door with transom and a fixed window. The non-original entrance provides barrier-free access to the main floor of the building. The bell tower is visible from the west façade and along its west-facing wall the tower features a large fixed louvered vent at its base (where it meets the roofline) and an additional small louvered vent under its hipped roof (**Figure 8**).



Figure 6: West façade, looking northeast.

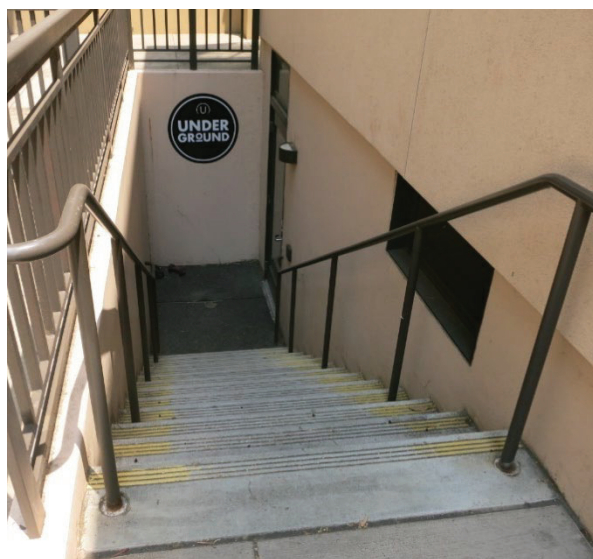


Figure 7: Detail of below-grade basement along west façade. Looking northeast.



Figure 8: Oblique view of primary and west façades, showing bell tower. Looking northeast.



Figure 9: Rear (north) façade of the subject building. Looking southeast.

Rear (South) Façade

The rear (south) façade of the subject building consists of a plain stucco wall with no openings and several utility boxes and utility connections, including air conditioning, are located along this façade **(Figure 9)**.

Historic Development

The following is a brief overview of the construction chronology of the subject building.

The subject building was constructed by a local builder, W.S. Couter, and was completed in 1925.⁷ The building remained the home of the University AME Zion church until the congregation constructed a new church and sold this building in 1965. Photographs of the building in 1964, during its time as the University AME Zion church show that few changes have been made to the building since its erection (**Figure 10 and Figure 11**).



Figure 10: University AME Zion Church in 1964. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.

From 1965 until its rehabilitation in 2009, the building was used as a storage facility for the Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation and then largely left vacant, leading to damage through vandalism and neglect. In 1995, the National Register nomination was written and submitted to the California

⁷ Information on file at the Palo Alto Historical Association, Historic Building Inventory files. No architect is known.

Office of Historic Preservation as a means of raising awareness of the importance of this building to Palo Alto's history and to help prevent the demolition of the building.⁸ The completed development project at 260 Homer Avenue included the rehabilitation of this building in 2009.



Figure 11: Oblique view of west and primary façade of church, 1964. Source: Palo Alto Times.

Alterations that are known to have occurred during this rehabilitation include: the replacement of the building's stucco;⁹ the repair of original windows and the replacement of damaged amber glass; changes to the bell tower including the replacement of an original window with a louvered vent; the

⁸ National Register of Historic Places. University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California. National Register #96000297_R.

⁹ Of note is the removal of the slightly projecting stucco surround around the primary entrance opening and first-floor window along the primary façade.

addition of handrails along the primary façade; the installation of a door (replacing an original window) at the west façade to allow for the installation of a lift and an accessible entrance; the installation of a new foundation; and the general reconfiguration of the main interior volume. In the interior, the mezzanine space located along south of the building (directly behind the triangular leaded glass window) was removed and partitions were erected in the main room. Until recently both the basement and first floor were used as an exercise studio.

Character-Defining Features

For a property to be eligible for national or state designation under criteria related to type, period, or method of construction, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. These distinctive character-defining features are the physical traits that commonly recur in property types and/or architectural styles. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.

The features of the building that date to its period of significance and convey the historic character of the building include:

Exterior features:

- Freestanding, symmetrical one-and-a-half-story volume
- Symmetrical massing of the primary (south) façade
- Stucco cladding
- Steeply pitched gable front roof
- Triangular leaded glass window within the front gable
- Segmental arched openings along primary (south) façade including open entrance portal at left (west) and leaded amber glass window at the right (east)
- Simple molded fascia along roofline with cornice return
- Asymmetrically placed bell tower on west-facing side of gable roof
- Steeply pitched hipped roof on bell tower
- Open front porch
- Original and restored leaded glass windows with amber glass
- Concrete steps to entry portal

Qualifications

Page & Turnbull was established in 1973 as Charles Hall Page & Associates to provide architectural and conservation services for historic buildings, resources, and civic areas. The company was one of the first architecture firms in California to dedicate its practice to historic preservation and is among the longest practicing such firms in the country. Offices are located in Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Francisco, and staff includes licensed architects, designers, architectural historians, conservators, and planners. All of Page & Turnbull's professional staff members meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Historic Preservation Professional Qualification Standards.

As an architectural historian within Page & Turnbull's Cultural Resources Planning Studio, Barrett Reiter meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Architectural History. She is experienced in surveying, researching, and evaluating historic properties, as well as analyzing proposed projects for potential impacts to historic resources.

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

(State use only)

Ser _____ Site _____ Mo. _____ Yr. _____
 UTM _____ Q _____ NR _____ SHL _____
 Lat _____ Lon _____ Era _____ Sig _____
 Adm _____ T2 _____ T3 _____ Cat _____ HABS _____ HAER _____ Fed _____

IDENTIFICATION Cat. III

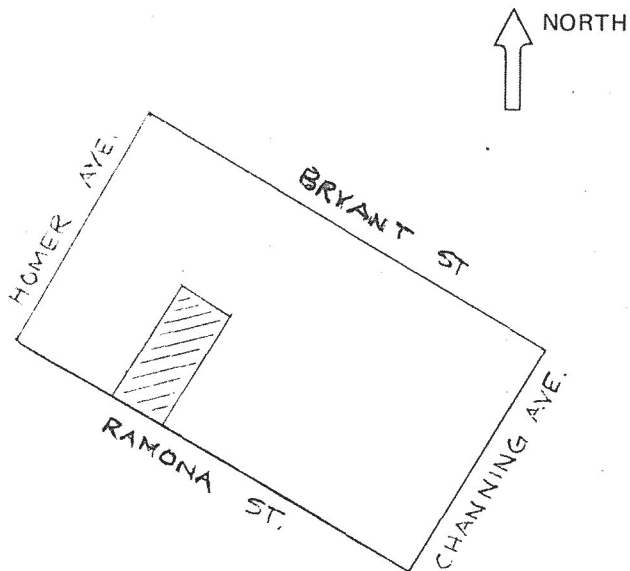
- Common name: _____
- Historic name, if known: _____
- Street or rural address 819 Ramona Street
 City: Palo Alto ZIP: _____ County: Santa Clara
- Present owner, if known: Palo Alto Medical Foundation Address: 300 Homer Avenue
 City: Palo Alto, Ca 94301 ZIP: _____ Ownership is: Public Private
- Present Use: Abandoned Original Use: Church
 Other past uses: _____

DESCRIPTION

6. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

This simple church structure is essentially Classical Revival in style, with minimal detailing. It is possible that the original surface was not stucco.

7. Locational sketch map (draw and label site and surrounding streets, roads, and prominent landmarks):



8. Approximate property size:

Lot size (in feet) Frontage 50
 Depth 112.5
 or approx. acreage _____

9. Condition: (check one)

- a. Excellent b. Good c. Fair
 d. Deteriorated e. No longer in existence

10. Is the feature a. Altered? b. Unaltered?

11. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary)

- a. Open land b. Scattered buildings
 c. Densely built-up d. Residential
 e. Commercial f. Industrial
 g. Other

12. Threats to site:

- a. None known b. Private development
 c. Zoning d. Public Works project
 e. Vandalism f. Other

13. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s): 1978

819 Ramona

NOTE: The following (Items 14-19) are for structures only.

14. Primary exterior building material: a. Stone b. Brick c. Stucco d. Adobe e. Wood
f. Other
15. Is the structure: a. On its original site? b. Moved? c. Unknown?
16. Year of initial construction 1924 This date is: a. Factual b. Estimated
17. Architect (if known): _____
18. Builder (if known): _____
19. Related features: a. Barn b. Carriage house c. Outhouse d. Shed(s) e. Formal garden(s)
f. Windmill g. Watertower/tankhouse h. Other i. None

SIGNIFICANCE

20. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site when known):
Formerly the A.M.E. Zion (African Methodist Episcopal) church, which, since 1964, has been located at 3549 Middlefield Road. This was the first black church in Palo Alto, begun in 1919 and holding services at Fraternity Hall. Then, with 22 members and funds raised in part throughout the town, the new building was planned in 1923 and dedicated April 5, 1925. During the Depression, appeals to assist in payment of building and mortgage expenses were generously met by contributions from other churches and from private individuals, Kathleen Norris, Frank Crist, and Fred Tinney, among others.

21. Main theme of the historic resource: (Check only one): a. Architecture b. Arts & Leisure
c. Economic/Industrial d. Exploration/Settlement e. Government f. Military
g. Religion h. Social/Education
22. Sources: List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews, and their dates: Guy Miller, Palo Alto Community Book; P.A. Times 4/4/25, 4/27/35, 8/2/35, 7/9/71, 12/7/74

23. Date form prepared: 1979, 1985 By (name): Gail Woolley; Historic Resources Board; P.A. Hist. Assn.
Address: 250 Hamilton Ave City: Palo Alto, Ca 94301 ZIP: _____
Phone: _____ Organization: _____

(State Use Only)

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

other names/site number The Ramona Street Church or the Former University A.M.E. Zion Church

2. Location

street & number 819 Ramona Street not for publication

city or town Palo Alto vicinity

state California code CA county Santa Clara code 085 zip code 94301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
Church Building		buildings
_____		sites
_____		structures
_____		objects
_____		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- RELIGION/Religious Facility/ Church
- RELIGION/Church-Related Residence/Parsonage
- SOCIAL/Meeting Hall/Fraternal Organizations
- SOCIAL/Civic/Volunteer and Public Service
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility
- RECREATION AND CULTURE/Auditorium/Hall
- SOCIAL/Clubhouse
- RELIGION/Church School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

- VACANT/NOT IN USE
- COMMERCE/TRADE/Warehouse/Warehouse and Medical Storage
- LANDSCAPE/Parking Lots

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Perimeter, Concrete Stem Foundation

walls Perimeter wood frame constructed with 2 in Stud walls and Cripple walls

roof High (1/2) Pitch "Cathedral"

other External finish Stucco with wire mesh fastened to plank wood board sheathing

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/African American

SOCIAL HISTORY

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1922 - 1965: Church founded in Palo Alto

1942 - 1945: Commercial building construction

Significant Dates

1918: Church Founded in Palo Alto

1922-1925: Groundbreaking and Construction

1945: Purchase of Parsonage (827 Ramona)

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Palo Alto Main Library & Palo Alto
Historical Society Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .13 for Lot APN# 120-028-024; .12 for Lot APN# 120-028-025
.11 for Lot APN# 120-028-013

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruth Anne Gray

organization _____ date November 4, 1995

street & number 795 North Fair Oaks Ave. Unit #2 telephone (408) 749-9032

city or town Sunnyvale state CA zip code 94086

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Palo Alto Medical Foundation Health Care, Research and Education

street & number 400 Channing Avenue telephone _____

city or town Palo Alto state CA zip code 94301

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

University A.M.E. Zion Church
Santa Clara County, CA

Architectural Description

Summary:

The former University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church is a large rectangular one-story building designed and constructed between 1924-1925, to serve religious, spiritual and social needs for gatherings of the Palo Alto community. The building plan includes an open porch and "bell tower" in the front part of the church. It also has a high (1/2) pitch "cathedral", gable type roof, and a vaulted ceiling inside the church hall itself. Its simple modern style does not follow any specific architectural trend, and is a simple wood frame structure with wood plank boards, sheathing, and a stucco exterior covering the entire building. The church building retains its original character and appearance. The building has not been modified, altered or remodelled in any way since its construction in 1925. However, this building is in danger of demolition, and is currently being used as storage by the present owner: the Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation who has owned it since 1965. It is presently in a deteriorating state: abandoned, unused, and neglected. At this writing, we were only able to make exterior visual observations and assessments. We have not yet had access to the interior of the building or to the basement areas. We are hoping for access in the future. The church is located in downtown Palo Alto at 819 Ramona Street in the block between Homer and Channing Avenue, and three blocks east of University Avenue. The church is bordered by two parking lots on either side. The surrounding neighborhood is transitional, and is of mixed use ranging from commercial and office use, medical laboratories, light industrial, and high to single-family residential.

Building Design and Current Status

As one stands on Ramona Avenue and faces the church, the building is set on the center of a rectangular shaped lot with dimensions of 50 ft. by 112.5 ft. We utilized the current Santa Clara County Tax Assessor map. The APN number is: 120-28-025; and neighboring lots: 1) 827 Ramona, to the right of the church, on the Southeast with APN number: 120-28-024, and 2) the lot situated on the left of the church to the Southwest at the corner of Homer and Ramona, APN number: 120-28-013. The lot on the corner of Homer and Ramona served as a parking lot for parishioners during the days of the church. It is currently in need of resurfacing. Currently, this lot and the lot at 827 Ramona serve as private parking for the Palo Alto Medical Research Foundation. The parking areas are finished with concrete pavement. The parking lot at 827 Ramona has a large untrimmed and overgrown tree whose roots have cracked the pavement. The tree is close enough to the Southeast corner of the church (at the front) to obstruct the visual view of the church,

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and to possibly causing damage to the church via its root system. The concrete pavement surrounding the tree is cracked and uneven.

The church building is set back five feet from the pedestrian pavement, and the entrance to the building is located in the front facade, thus, providing an inviting and welcoming sense to the building's entrance. The building is accessed by four external concrete steps, and the actual interior hall is entered by one wooden step which is part of the porch floor. The building owners have blocked access to the porch with a hurricane fence. Additionally, medical equipment and furniture is stored on the porch. There is limited access to the main hall of the church.

The roof has a one foot overhang formed in the shape of a wide box cornice, and extended for one foot to the neighboring walls. The roof is covered by composite, asphalt shingles fastened to the sheathing on the structure of the roof. We will discuss current damage to the roof as we look at each elevation. However, wherever shingle and composite roof material is missing, one can easily see the wood sheathing of the roof. The exterior wall finish on all sides of the building, including the "bell" tower and chimney, are of conventional "stucco", laid with chicken or similar wire mesh, and fastened to the wall sheathing of the wood plank boards fastened to the stop wall. Originally the building's stucco exterior was painted a light tan or off white, to match some of the regional sandstone architectural style buildings in the area. The wood framework was painted chocolate brown, and the ornamental glass filtered the light to the church through its muted yellowish coloration. Unfortunately, the stucco has now an pinkish-orange discoloration. The church has a rectangular floor plan, approximately 36 feet by 50 feet, including its open front porch. It also has a high (1/2) pitch "cathedral", gable type roof, and a vaulted ceiling inside the church hall itself.

The left front (southwest) portion of the building has an 8 foot by 8 foot "in plan" in the form of a "bell" tower, with an elevated roof, approximately two feet above the ridge of the church roof. The "bell" tower has a window on the west elevation. Currently, the overgrown tree (once a sapling bush) grows against the southwest corner of the building, along side of the bell tower. It may be another cause of root damage to the building, and its branches may also damage the roof. It should be removed. On that same side, the location where the church sign was mounted, the wall is badly discolored. A large City owned curb side tree has been allowed to become overgrown, thereby damaging the roof of the church. The sidewalk is cracked and uneven, and a trip hazard due to root damage.

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The entrance to the building is through a nine foot wide opening with an arch form top finish, leading to the porch, and then to the church hall interior. To the right of the opening is a six foot wide window, also with an arched top and ornamental glass. Some of the glass in the lower portion of this window has been broken out. The frame of the window is badly weathered and paint and surface wood is missing. Above the arched porch opening and the six foot window is a second window in the form of an isosceles triangle, also with ornamental glass. This window, other than perhaps some missing caulking and minor cracking in the stucco below the left corner, is in good shape. Windows and doors are surrounded by plain milled boards, and the front windows have simple mouldings. Fascia on the roof and gable ends are of the same simple millwork.

The Southwest or Western elevation has three, 3 ft. wide x 7 ft. high windows to light the church hall, and one 3 ft. x 3 ft. window to the porch, beneath the "bell tower". There are three ventilation openings beneath each large window for the crawl space or basement. The stucco finish is badly cracked and bulging for several feet in a horizontal crack along the level of the basement vents, and downward from mid wall of this elevation. The stucco has peeled away from the structural framework in this area, and this damage is most prevalent towards the rear of the building on this elevation side. At the Northwest corner of the building (in the rear) missing stucco appears to have been recently "filled" in as a "quick-fix". Most of the damage and deterioration of the roof is very evident from this elevation side. The original roofing is missing in large chunks, and the owner has covered the roof with two large tarps. The rain gutter is missing from this side. Windows and vent openings appear to have been blocked from the inside, either by wood or by equipment. The stucco finish in general is cracked and discolored.

The Eastern elevation has two windows which are three feet wide and seven feet high over a shed roof which covers the entrance to the basement. The entrance to the basement of the building is located on the east foundation stem wall. Access is gained through concrete steps 2 ft. 6 in wide, and surrounded by concrete retaining walls. The steps are covered by a shed roof over a wood post frame and joists. There is one 3 ft. x 3 ft. window above a wood-panelled evacuation door. There is also one vent opening to the basement. There are no steps to the evacuation door. The windows have been blocked from the inside, and the evacuation door is very weathered and damaged. Stucco surrounding the bottom of the door frame has crumbled away. There is a large buckling, sagging crack in the stucco between the vent openings. On this elevation some of the glass has been broken out of the windows. A spotlight appears to have been added near the rear of the building on this elevation side: its purpose being to provide light for the parking lot at 827 Ramona.

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There is cracking in the stucco around the window and door frames. The stucco is badly discolored and stained above the shed roof structure, at the bottom of the windows, and from the roof/rain gutter area. Some of the roof is missing near the rain gutter edge, and the plank board sheathing is visible. The rain gutter on this side is detached from the roof, and the lower half of the rain gutter is missing.

The rear or Northeast wall of the building has an attached chimney elevated approximately two feet above the ridge of the roof, and located slightly off-center (towards the west) on this wall. The rear wall also has two vent openings in the cripple wall leading into the basement of the building. Unused equipment appears to block both basement windows. The stucco exterior has minor cracking throughout.

The building is constructed as a simple 2 in. x(unknown size) studs wall frame over the first (ground) floor; it also consists of wooden plank boards supported by 2x joists on short two foot high perimeter "pony" or "cripple" walls extended up from the perimeter, concrete foundation stem work, and short 4 in. x 4 in. posts supported by concrete footings inside the building, inside the high crawl space, and in the basement, which contains the furnace/heater.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The building is in very poor condition: neglected, abandoned, in a state of dilapidation, and not maintained by the present owner. A substantial portion of the original roofing material is missing and tarpaulin covers only part of the damage. Water is infiltrating the building through the roof, as are other damaging environmental elements such as bird droppings, and overgrown trees. Stucco on some portions of the walls is missing, cracked and bulging on the level of the ground floor structure, particularly near basement vents. The budging does not indicate structural damage, since the stucco appears to peel away from the framework. This may mean that the cripple walls of the longitudinal walls (for the East and West elevations) are carrying all the load of the roof structure. There is a wide diagonal crack in the stucco on the top of the front wall at the level of the roof, and also a vertical crack between the chimney and the building at the Northeast elevation, and other hairline cracks on the other walls. These cracks were caused, most likely, by the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, and by age.

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Although costly, restoration of the building would be of tremendous benefit and historic value to the community. A rough estimate of the work and funding needed to complete this task still requires further assessment. The whole structure and the particular elements of the building should be thoroughly checked, and the stress capacity connection examined, including proper anchorage, bolting, bracing, sheathing where needed, in accordance with current UBC standards, city ordinances, and earthquake/seismic requirements. To date accurate determinations of these issues have not been addressed, and nothing has been done to maintain or preserve this structure. Additional items needed to be checked are: insulation, water and weather protection, electrical systems, circuit protection, wiring, heating/cooling systems, pest inspection, etc.

To date two cursory assessments have been made by the Palo Alto Medical Foundation to support their claim that the building is unsafe and to justify destroying the building. We very much need an equal chance to fairly assess this historic building and thereby provide some alternate proof and "balance" to our argument. We ask for your support for this effort.

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Statement of Significance

The former University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church sanctuary located at 819 Ramona Street in downtown Palo Alto, and built in 1925, is historically significant for being the first African American church built in Palo Alto, and for being the first African American church, of any religious denomination, to be established in the San Francisco mid-peninsula between San Mateo and San Jose, CA. The cornerstone for this church was laid on April 25, 1925. This church served as a religious, social, and community focal point throughout its active life (1925 - 1965). This building was and still is Palo Alto's most important symbol of multicultural, multi-ethnic cooperation and unity manifested during the early part of this century. Although this church was built primarily for use by the African American congregation, the entire local community contributed to the effort. It is a unique edifice in that it reflects the positive racial and ethnic harmony and good will of Palo Alto.

Historic Background and Significance

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was founded in New York City in October 1796. It grew under the auspices and guidance of the United Methodist movement in the United States, founded by Rev. John Wesley. The church, and Methodists in general, had at their core beliefs a commitment to individual freedom, human rights, and education. The struggle for African American freedom, symbolized by the Underground Railroad, had its basis and support in the church. Historically, African Americans had to struggle for the right of religious freedom and assembly. Even within the American Methodist church movement, severe restrictions and limitations were imposed on African Americans who wanted to worship. White Americans often feared the emergence of preachers amongst African American slaves; there was fear that a strong minister or leader might encourage slave insurrections. This idea prevailed after slavery during the Reconstruction Era. Religious worship was eventually permitted and African American ministers were allowed ordination and permission to preach, but not without limitations, intimidation, and fear.

One of the first A.M.E. Zion ministers, Rev. John Jameson Moore, left Baltimore, MA in 1852. Often travelling by foot, he made his way to California. As he travelled, he preached to fugitive slaves, traveling by day and preaching at night. In California Rev. Moore also established the first Negro school in California and on the Pacific coast. Throughout history the A.M.E. Zion Church proved to be in the forefront of ministering to African Americans. The A.M.E. Zion Church had missions in California in the 19th

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century. First A.M.E. Zion Church was organized in San Francisco on August 1, 1852 by Rev. Moore. On January 10, 1868 Bishop J.J. Clinton established the first California Conference (a meeting of all A.M.E. Zion churches) in San Francisco, of which three churches participated: San Francisco, San Jose, and Napa. Due to occasional lapses in leadership, the growth of the church in California stagnated between 1868 - 1881. However, after 1881, the A.M.E. Zion church in the Western United States experienced rapid growth. By the turn of the century, the California Conference embraced not only California, but Oregon, Washington state, and Arizona. There were half a million members with 3,612 church buildings, and 2,500 ordained clergymen.

University African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Mission (University AME Zion Church) was founded in 1918 in Palo Alto under the leadership on Rev. J.W. Byers, and was the twenty-fourth church established of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church California Conference (a collection of churches within designated districts and states). The original Palo Alto church founders: Mrs. Melvina McCaw, Mrs. Maude Natis, Mrs. Jennie Moore Bass, and Mr. Isaac MacDuffey Hinson initially met at the home of Mrs. McCaw located at 330 Cowper Street in Palo Alto. Membership increased and the newly formed church held services at rented meeting halls in downtown Palo Alto. As more African Americans settled and established themselves in Palo Alto during the early 1920's, there arose a need for a permanent church home. In 1922, under the leadership of Rev. Lloyd W. McCoy, the membership launched an effort to raise money to purchase land and build a church. Since the Church Mission itself did not qualify for a loan due to its lack of collateral, Mr. Christiansen, a wealthy member of the white community and a personal friend of one of the founders and church Trustee, Isaac Hinson, agreed to make a loan to the seven Trustees of University AME Zion Church. The Trustees all owned property in downtown Palo Alto, and were willing to use their personal assets as collateral for the loan. After a successful fund drive to raise \$1,264.00 to begin construction, the cornerstone was laid for the new church on April 25, 1925. The total cost of the church was \$6,000.00, of which half was earned by various fund raising events. The remainder of the cost was covered by a mortgage.

In 1935 the effort to retire the mortgage was launched by Rev. J.E. McCorkle who had long standing experience in the A.M.E. Zion California Conference. Under his leadership church members canvassed Palo Alto and the surrounding community. Wealthy Palo Alto citizens, prominent scholars at nearby Stanford University, and area businesses contributed financial and moral support. The Palo Alto Ministerial Association organized a committee

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to assist the fund-raising cause. Other religious denominations offered facilities, donations, and moral support as well. All Saints' Episcopal Church of Palo Alto figured prominently in hosting fund-raising dinners sponsored by University AME Zion Church. Social and fraternal clubs such as the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis, the Shriners, and the American Legion, offered financial assistance. Newspaper columnist Dallas E. Wood, writer of "The Prowler" for the Palo Alto Times, wrote favorably about the efforts of Palo Alto African American citizens to support their church and its contribution to the community. Mr. Wood's weekly articles gave the fund-raising effort needed visibility. The Japanese Methodist Church donated \$550.00 in July 1939, serving as the critical, final payment of University AME Zion Church's mortgage. As a result of this generosity, the mortgage was burned on July 8, 1939 with much ceremony.

In 1945 the adjacent house at 827 Ramona Street was purchased for use as a parsonage. The house became available for sale as a result of the Japanese internment during WWII. This house had its own unique history: Mr. G. Okazawa had owned the home for many years and utilized it as a boarding house. However, in the basement of the house, Sunday school and adult workshops were held by the Palo Alto Japanese Methodist Church, established by Japanese American students attending Stanford University. This building was a two story structure with an enclosed upstairs porch. It has since been demolished by the current owner. However, between 1945 through 1965 the house served as a banquet hall, multipurpose meeting room, theatre, and class rooms to suit whatever educational or cultural needs University A.M.E. Zion church required.

In subsequent years the church continued its traditional historic goals of individual freedom, human rights, and education. The church served as a focal point for events raising social and community awareness. For example, on June 22, 1947 Community Lodge 43: Free and Accepted Masons, celebrated St. John's Day at the church. Historically, Negro Freemasonry was established in the United States in 1787 by Prince Hall of Boston, MA who received a charter from England to begin the movement on behalf of African Americans. The Palo Alto fraternal organization was created in 1927, and, of course, supported by the church. With the onset of the Civil Rights movement, rallies were held at the church, as well as voter registration drives.

In 1965 the congregation sold the church property to the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, and relocated to its present site at 3549 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

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The existence of this church points directly to the long-standing African American heritage, notably in Palo Alto, but also in the Bay Area and California in general. African Americans lived within close proximity to downtown University Avenue and to their White neighbors. Several African Americans owned properties which were situated near Ramona Street close to the church. This section of town, in addition, reflected a multicultural, mutli-ethnic neighborhood mix. Although there was real estate "Red Lining", even during Palo Alto's early years, ethnic and racial groups lived throughout Palo Alto.

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NOTE: There is an extensive number of newspaper articles pertaining to this church and its congregation. This listing reflects only a representative sample of available information.

The Palo Alto Weekly (April 1, 1992; February 10, 1993; December 8, 1993)

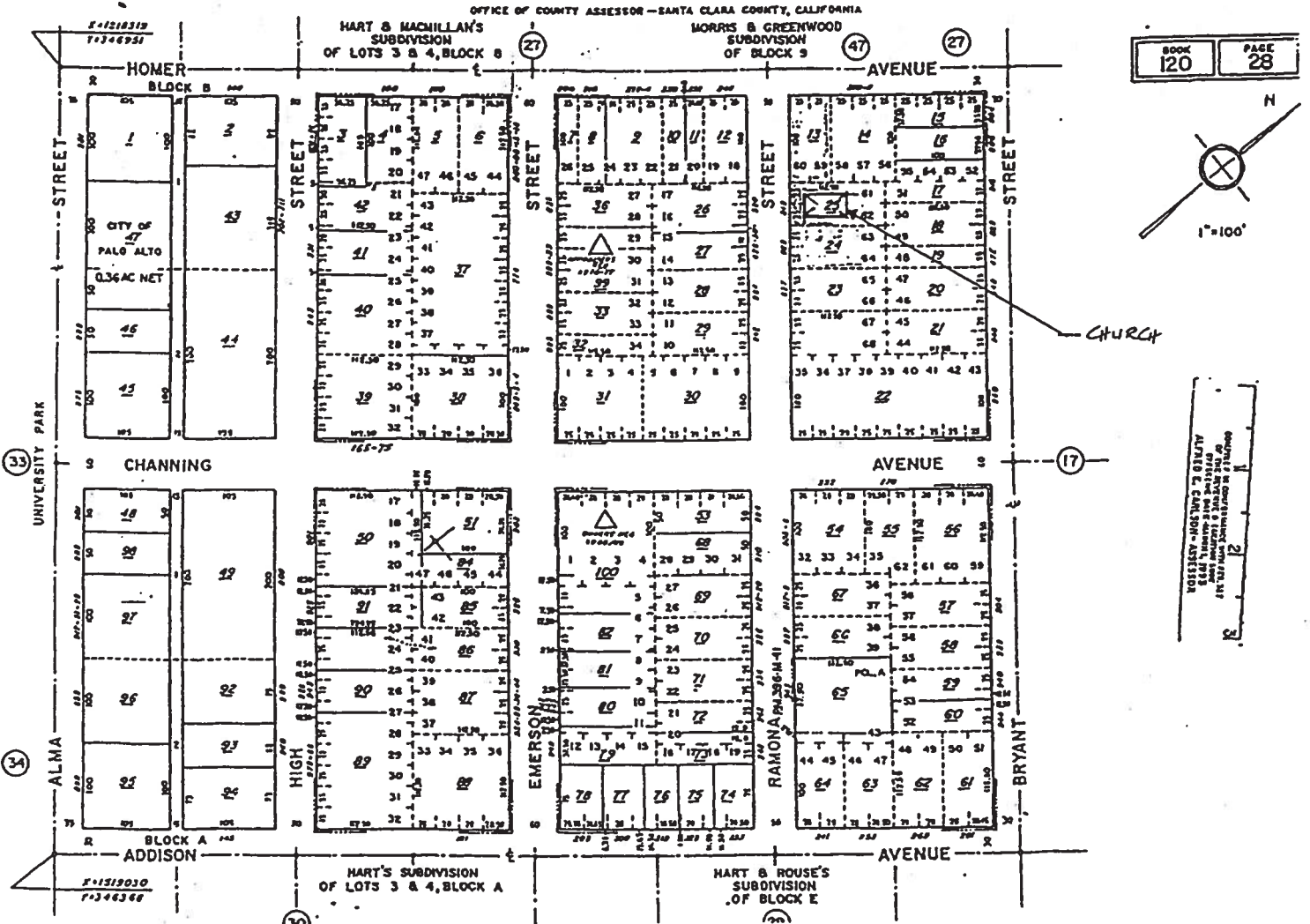
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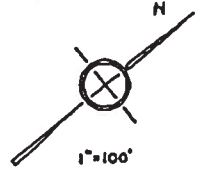
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Verbal Boundary Description



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Original in County Assessor's Office, Santa Clara County, California. Photocopy made by National Park Service, San Francisco, California, 11/1975. Date of Survey 1/1875. Surveyed by Alfred C. Cameron - Assessor.

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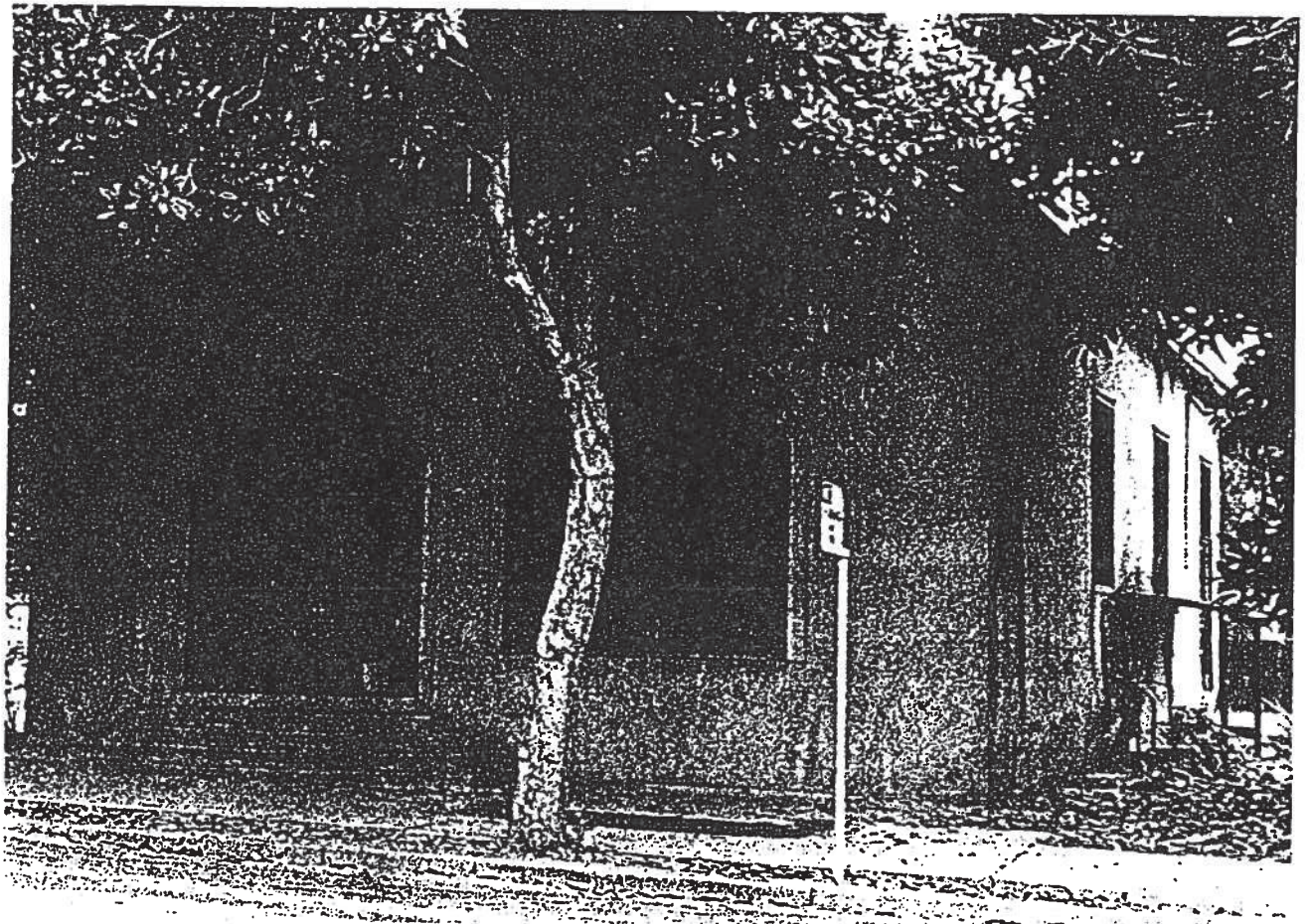
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Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the church, and parking lots on either side. The lot at 827 Ramona is significant for being the location of the two-story house which served as a parsonage and multi-purpose building for the church beginning in 1945. Prior to 1945, the building was significant in the history of Palo Alto Japanese Americans. The lot on the corner of Ramona and Homer is significant in that it was utilized for many years as parking for the church.



Attachment E

Project Plans

During the ongoing Shelter-in-Place, project plans are only available online.

Directions to review Project plans online:

1. Go to: <http://bit.ly/819RamonaAME>
2. On this project specific webpage you will find a link to the project plans and other important information