



**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Armando Quintero, Director

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer
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March 5, 2025

Mayor Drew Combs
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel St.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

RE: National Register of Historic Places Nomination for Sunset Headquarters

Dear Mayor Combs:

The State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC) at its next meeting intends to consider and take action on the nomination of the above-named property to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). Details of that meeting are on the enclosed notice. The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings and other cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register provides recognition and assists in preserving California's cultural heritage. If the item is removed from the scheduled agenda, you will be notified by mail.

Local government comments regarding the national Register eligibility of this property are welcomed. Written comments regarding the nomination may be submitted to California State Parks, Attn: Office of Historic Preservation, Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, P.O. Box 94296, Sacramento, California 94296-0001 OR via email to calshpo.shrc@parks.ca.gov. To allow the SHRC adequate time to consider the comments, it is requested that written comments be received by the Office of Historic Preservation seven (7) days in advance of the SHRC's meeting. Written comments received within seven days of the meeting will still be included in the nomination file as sent to the Keeper of the National Register. Interested parties are encouraged to attend the SHRC meeting and present oral testimony.

As of January 1, 1993, all National Register properties are automatically included in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and afforded consideration in accordance with state and local environmental review procedures.

A copy of the nomination has been included for your review. Supplemental information on the National register and the California Register programs is available on our website at the following address: https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21237. The federal requirements covering the National Register program are to be found in the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in Federal Regulations 36 CFR Part 60. State law regarding the California Register is in the Public Resources Code, Section 5024. Should you have questions regarding this nomination, please contact the Registration Unit at amy.crain@parks.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures: Nomination, Meeting Notice



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION
STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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COMMISSION MEMBERS

Janet Hansen, Chair
Lee Adams III
Bryan Brandes
Alan Hess
Luis Hoyos
Adam Sriro
René Vellanoweth, PhD

MEETING NOTICE

Pursuant to Government Code Section 11133, board members/commissioners of a state body may participate in public meetings remotely. The public may observe, provide public comment during the public comment periods, and otherwise observe remotely in accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

FOR: State Historical Resources Commission Quarterly Meeting
DATE: Friday, May 9, 2025
TIME: 9:00 A.M.
PLACE: Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building
914 Capitol Mall, Room 500
Sacramento, CA 95814

This meeting will be webcast on CAL-SPAN. Those wishing to speak can register via Zoom. Registration information (including dial-in access) will be included on the meeting agenda and posted in accordance with the *Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act*, no later than Monday, April 28, 2025, at https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21372.

If you need special accommodations pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, or have questions regarding the meeting, please call Executive Secretary, Monica Newman, at (916) 445-7000.

The SHRC invites comments on the nominations from the public either in writing or at the scheduled meeting. Written comments can be sent to State Historical Resources Commission, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001, **OR** via email to calshpo.shrc@parks.ca.gov. Please include nomination name and hearing date in the email's subject line.

Presentations and written comments regarding agenda items should be submitted to OHP for receipt no later than seven (7) days prior to the meeting. Presentations must not go beyond the allowable time frame for the applicable comment period as detailed at https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21372. Presentations and written comments for the May 9, 2025, meeting received after 9:00 am Friday, May 2, 2025, may not be available to the Commission in advance of the hearing. They will be added to the nomination file. Submit comments and presentations to calshpo.shrc@parks.ca.gov.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT

Historic name: Sunset Headquarters
Other names/site number: Willow South
Name of related multiple property listing: _____
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 80 Willow Road
City or town: Menlo Park State: California County: San Mateo
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- 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.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

California Style or Ranch Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: adobe, wood, stucco, steel

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Sunset Headquarters is a 1951 office building designed by Cliff May in the California Ranch architectural style, with landscape designed by Thomas Dolliver Church. Situated on an approximately seven-acre parcel in the city of Menlo Park, the property consists of one contributing building, the Cliff May-designed Headquarters building, and one contributing site, the Thomas Dolliver Church-designed landscape. Character-defining features include the building's one-story, roughly L-shaped plan consisting of a production wing and executive wing separated by a central lobby area; exterior adobe, stucco, and wood walls; gabled wood shake roof with deep overhangs and exposed wood rafter tails; clay and terra cotta pavers; monumental carved sugar pine wood doors surrounded by a large, curved sandblasted concrete frame; rectangular steel sliding windows with accompanying wood trim and/or sill; floor-to-ceiling glass window walls and sliding glass doors emphasizing the relationship between indoor and outdoor space; sawtooth wall at the south elevation of the production wing designed to provide views of the rear yard while also offering shade; enclosed courtyard and semi-enclosed courtyards in the production wing; landscaped front yard with half-circle driveway around a half-circle island; expansive main lawn at the rear of the property; and Sunset Garden consisting of a series of climate zones showcasing plants of the American West. The property retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

Setting and Site

Sunset Headquarters is situated on an approximately seven-acre parcel at the southeast corner of Willow and Middlefield Roads in the city of Menlo Park. The parcel is irregularly shaped, with its south and east borders zigzagging to coincide with the adjacent San Francisquito Creek. Buildings to the north, west, and south of Sunset Headquarters along Willow and Middlefield predominantly contain commercial offices. Across Willow to the west is a 1965 California Ranch-style building also designed by Cliff May and constructed to house the book publishing branch of Sunset. This building is located on a separate parcel and not included in this nomination's boundary. San Francisquito Creek serves as a border between Menlo Park in San Mateo County at the west and Palo Alto in Santa Clara County at the east. Beyond San Francisquito Creek to the east is a Palo Alto neighborhood containing single-family residences.

The primary west elevation containing the angled main entrance faces Willow. It is set back by landscaping and a half-circle asphalt driveway that also contains surface parking. The half-circle driveway wraps around a landscaped half-circle island with trees and shrubs. The secondary north elevation faces Middlefield and is set back from the sidewalk by an asphalt surface parking lot and landscaping. The parcel is generally separated from the sidewalk along the west and north property lines with either a low three-rail wood fence or a thick block wall made to look like adobe. The thick block wall appears to also separate the parcel from the adjacent property to the south. A chain link fence runs along the property line along San Francisquito Creek at the top of the bank that leads down to the creek bed.

Along the sidewalk on both Willow and Middlefield, there are rectangular openings that house climbing "Mrs. Sam McGredy" roses planted in 1953, some of which are still extant. An El Camino Real Bell marker on the sidewalk at Willow is adjacent to the half-circle driveway and landscaped half-circle island. A plaque on the marker notes that it was presented to Sunset Magazine and Books by the California Mission Trails Association, Ltd. in 1965 "in appreciation of outstanding service in preserving the historical and cultural traditions of the mission trails area since 1898." A wood flagpole is in the landscape to the north of the half-circle driveway.

Headquarters Building (1951; One Contributing Building)

Exterior

A one-story roughly L-shaped plan consists of several wings that run mostly parallel and perpendicular to Willow and Middlefield. The building can be understood as having three main components: a production (or editorial) wing and an executive (or entertainment) wing separated by a central lobby area. The central lobby area contains the main entrance into the building and is angled slightly from Willow, facing the half-circle driveway. The production wing stretches to the north and east of the central lobby area and consists of smaller wings that form a square

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around a central enclosed courtyard. Another rectangular courtyard is located to the east and is not fully enclosed. The executive wing is more linear, stretching to the southwest. The central lobby area has the highest volume of the building, with the gabled wood shake roof above continually stepping down the wings the further from the entrance. The roofs have deep overhangs and exposed wood rafter tails. Skylights and both functional and faux chimneys clad in plaster with rounded corners are located on the roof.

The primary west elevation of the central lobby area is constructed of thick brick that appears to be made to look like adobe. While early drawings and newspaper articles describe the wall itself as adobe, the wall may actually be constructed of jumbo brick with a cementitious or thick paint coating, as described in the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) prepared for the property in 2015.¹ The central lobby area is accessed from the sidewalk along Willow by a curved concrete walkway leading to either a concrete ramp or steps at a patio or terrace clad in clay pavers. Similar steps are also located parallel to the west elevation of the central lobby area facing the half-circle driveway. Metal handrails are installed at the steps and ramp, and a square concrete planter containing an olive tree is located on the patio to the right of the main entrance. The main entrance consists of a decorative pair of monumental carved sugar pine wood doors surrounded by a large, curved sandblasted concrete frame. The doors contain weathered and unpainted wood with three panels on each leaf. Historic documentation notes that the doors were carved and finished by I. Serisawa of Los Angeles who took his carving pattern from an antique picture frame.² Little other information about Serisawa was found other than he had carved the mantel at Cliff May's house and was of Japanese descent. There is little other ornamentation at the main entrance, though historically this elevation contained the Sunset logo and wall lettering reading "Sunset Publishing Corporation."

The rest of the west elevations consist of stucco and wood cladding, with some variation in how the wood is used. Most of the west elevation walls of the executive wing are clad in vertical board and batten, while west elevation walls of the production wing are clad in horizontal redwood siding. Though cladding materials and design vary, all walls are painted the same light brown color to provide uniformity. North elevations facing Middlefield are clad in stucco.

Windows at the west elevations generally consist of bands of rectangular steel sliding units that are most often grouped in a horizontal row of two or three. Windows set in wood siding have a surrounding wood trim, while windows set in the stucco typically only have a wood sill. Windows at the secondary north elevation facing the parking lot also consist of steel sliding units, less decorative than at the west elevation and all set in stucco with wood sill and no surrounding wood trim.

Access to the rear and interior of the property was not granted by the property owner. The following descriptions of the east and south elevations, additional courtyard spaces, and rear

¹ Janet Gracyk, ASLA, Chris Patillo, FASLA, and Jill Johnson, "Historic American Landscapes Survey: Sunset Headquarters, HALS No. CA-115," 2015.

² Gladys De Silva Castor, "Lane Publishing Co. Moves to its New Building in Menlo Park," *Publishers' Weekly*, October 13, 1951: 1566-1572.

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landscape are based on available aerials and reports prepared in 2015 including a Historic American Landscape Survey and a Historic Evaluation of Landscapes and Buildings report.

The rear southeast elevation of the central lobby consists of a floor-to-ceiling glass window wall with multiple panels providing a view of the large grass lawn and surrounding landscape. Sliding glass doors provide access to the rear patio or lanai that has a terra cotta paver floor and a heavy-beamed overhanging roof. The south elevation of the north wing facing the main lawn contains a sawtooth wall consisting of fixed windows separated by diagonal adobe walls. This configuration allows the adjacent offices to have views of the landscape while also providing relief from the sun.

The building contains a few fully enclosed and partially enclosed courtyard areas. The primary courtyard is located in the production wing and is enclosed on all sides by walls containing floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding doors. A pathway surrounds a wood floor that contains tables and bench seating and a central rectangular fountain under a rusted metal rectangular-shaped arbor. The wood floor at this location is not original and it is unclear if the previous terra cotta pavers are underneath. Honey locust trees are planted at each corner post of the arbor. Deep covered walkways encircle the courtyard. The other courtyard at the production wing is enclosed on three sides and has stone or tile paving and built-in appliances used as an outdoor test kitchen. There are three counters arranged in a C-shape that contain open countertops, sinks, and a wood oven. Courtyard-facing elevations also have floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding glass doors.

A small barbecue patio is located to the west of the executive wing. It has clay pavers and is enclosed with a block wall to the north, west, and south, and floor-to-ceiling glass windows and sliding doors at the east. The south wall of the enclosed courtyard contain a built-in barbecue with a tile mural by famed artist Millard Sheets serving as a backsplash behind. The five-by-thirteen-foot mural was acquired and installed in 1973 and “depicts the history and geography of western America, from the red buttes of Monument Valley to the Northwest’s towering redwood trees, recording the passage of Indian, Spanish conquistador [sic], cowboy, miner and settler.”³ Another patio area with a zigzag-shaped seatwall is located to the east of the executive wing and is not enclosed.

Interior

The interior of the central lobby is characterized by its high ceiling and is the tallest space in the building. It is rectangular with walls of painted adobe framed with concealed steel columns, except at the rear floor-to-ceiling glass window wall facing the main lawn and Sunset Garden. Two pairs of 10-by-10-inch wood posts help to support a central ridge beam that is exposed along with its rafters. Flooring is made of hand-made dark red square terra cotta tiles.

³ “Mural shows history geography of West,” *Peninsula Times-Tribune*, October 26, 1973: 15.

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The executive wing contains the office originally used by L.W. Lane Publishing Company founder and president L.W. Lane, a conference room, entertainment patio, and test kitchens. A wine cellar is located underground. The production wing contains additional open and private editorial and publishing offices, a test kitchen, photo studio, and a small cellar below. Spaces such as the photography studio, test kitchen, and conference room have vaulted ceilings that match the roof form, generally with exposed rafters and beams. As Sunset has since vacated the building and interior access is not available, it is unclear what the state is of interior finishes and what original furnishings and fixtures may still be extant.

Additions and Alterations

From the beginning, the building was conceived to be able to expand as needed based on the success and growth of *Sunset Magazine*. The first additions were constructed in 1953, expanding the production wing to the south and creating a new courtyard enclosed to the north, east, and west but open to the south. In 1973, the executive wing was expanded with 12,000 square feet of space added and the enclosed courtyard housing the barbecue patio constructed to the west. The construction of the 1973 addition involved demolition of an original kitchen at the south end of the executive wing and construction of a dining room, wine cellar, executive wing courtyard, and patio. During the mid-1980s, another addition was constructed at the northwest corner of the production wing extending towards Middlefield. Other alterations include reconfiguration of some interior office space, removal and replacement of asbestos-containing materials, and in-kind replacement of the wood shake roof.

The Boundary Map on page 37 illustrates the general footprint of the original 1951 building and subsequent additions. Additions were completed in collaboration with designer Cliff May and have taken on significance over time.

Landscape (1951; One Contributing Site)

The landscape designed by Thomas Dolliver Church can be best represented through three areas still extant: the public-facing front yard; the main lawn at the rear; and the Sunset Garden composed of climate zones that follow the curve of San Francisquito Creek along the southern border of the property.

The front yard at the west of the property is generally composed of two landscaped yards separated by the half-circle driveway and island. The front yard provides a generous setback to the building from Willow. While the configuration remains, the front yard was originally planted as a grass lawn and replaced with more drought-tolerant plants in the 1980s consistent with the ideals of putting into practice what was advised for homeowners in *Sunset Magazine*. The front yard continues to have various drought-tolerant shrubs as well as multi-trunk olive trees.

The 1.2-acre main lawn is located to the south of the production wing and east of the executive wing and consists of an expansive grassy area with curved paths generally made of concrete pavers. The main lawn is generally bisected into a roughly square section and a more elongated

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section at the south following the shape of the parcel. The main lawn historically included several original oak trees. At least one documented in 2015, known as "The Old Man," is no longer extant based on more recent aeriels.

Beyond the main lawn and following the natural curve of San Francisquito Creek is the Sunset Garden, comprised of a series of climate zones designed by Church to showcase the plants of the American West. The climate zones featured include plants of the Southwest Desert, Southern California, Central California, Northern California, and the Northwest. From across San Francisquito Creek to the east of the property, tall redwood and sequoia trees are visible and extant as part of the Central California climate zone. According to the 2015 HALS, other plants in the Sunset Garden include drought-tolerant cacti and reed grass in the Southwest Desert zone and eight varieties of Japanese maples in the Pacific Northwest zone. Other features of the Sunset Garden include a wood footbridge, concrete fountain, and a Tlingit totem pole from Port Chilkoot, Alaska.

Alterations

The curved path around the lawn was altered in 1973 to accommodate additions at the executive wing. Though the path was originally covered in gravel lined with redwood headers, it was changed to asphalt that had been painted to match the building color, and then changed again to concrete pavers. Several garden beds around the lawn were renovated with drought-tolerant plants in 2000; major trees and shrubs were retained. Some plants in the climate zones have been changed out through the years, consistent with the practice of regularly testing new introductions, and the purpose and idea of the climate zone planting remains. An oak tree known as "The Old Man" located along the main lawn appears to have been removed after 2015.

Other Possible Resources (Unknown Dates and Contributing/Noncontributing Status)

As described in a 2015 Historical Evaluation of Landscapes and Buildings report by Knapp Architects:

On the east side of the parking area adjoining the East Addition Courtyard are a series of six small utility structures. These include three wood-frame storage and work buildings with board-and-batten exterior siding; a similar garage; a metal-framed, plastic-covered greenhouse; and a small masonry chiller enclosure. Adjacent to Middlefield Road in the parking lot north of the Production Wing is an emergency generator and fuel tank, painted to match the site wall. There is a small pump house on the creek bank at the south end of the property.⁴

Because access was not provided to the rear of the property, it is unclear which of the resources described may still be extant or the state of their condition. Though these other resources may have been used in the operations and methods testing at Sunset Headquarters, research did not

⁴ Knapp Architects, "80 & 85 Willow Road, Menlo Park, Historical Evaluation of Landscapes and Buildings," April 2015, 37.

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indicate any principal importance. The Headquarters building and landscape are the most significant resources. These other resources should be evaluated if access to the property is provided in the future.

Integrity

Location

The property has not been moved from where it was constructed and retains integrity of location.

Design

The property continues to convey its splayed in plan layout and configuration from its original development consisting of an executive wing and production wing separated by a central lobby area. The relationship of indoor and outdoor space is exemplified through the use of glass window walls that continue to provide views of the large, landscaped lawn and climate zone gardens that continue to be a celebrated part of the design. Other character-defining features include a decorative pair of monumental sugar pine wood doors surrounded by a large, curved sandblasted concrete frame, adobe walls, redwood siding, wood shake roof, functional and faux chimneys, and exposed rafters and roof sheathing at eaves.

Though several additions were constructed, they were done so in collaboration with Cliff May and have taken on significance over time. Early drawings and letters show that additions were planned from the beginning to accommodate future expansion of *Sunset Magazine*. Changes to the landscape planting are consistent with the magazine's goals of testing new plantings over time. Thomas Dolliver Church's general concept and layout of the property are still extant and have been documented in the Historic American Landscape Survey. The property retains integrity of design.

Setting

The property continues to sit at a prominent corner on Willow and Middlefield, with adjacent office and commercial buildings to the north, west, and south. The area to the east of San Francisquito Creek continues to be suburban residential, and there has not been substantial changes to the surrounding environment. The property retains integrity of setting.

Materials

Much of the original visible building materials used at the property are still extant, including use of adobe, redwood siding, and glass window walls. The wood shake roof has been replaced in-kind. Original tile is used at the steps and landing at the west elevation entrance of the central lobby area. Original fencing along Willow and Middlefield are extant. The property retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

The workmanship in the construction of the property is still evident through aspects of its design including the hand-carved decorative pair of monumental sugar pine wood doors surrounded by a large, curved sandblasted concrete frame at the entrance to the central lobby area, glass

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window walls emphasizing the relationship of indoor and outdoor space, functional and faux chimneys at the roof, and overall construction in relation to the natural landscape of the site. The property retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling.

Though the property is vacant at the time of nomination, it continues to convey its original use and purpose as an office building designed in the California Ranch architectural style. It retains much of the character-defining features and the important spaces from its period of significance that made the property popular with visitors and highlighted in publications nationwide. The property retains integrity of feeling.

Association

The architectural design by Cliff May and landscape design by Thomas Dolliver Church continue to reflect the property's association as the headquarters of *Sunset Magazine*. The property was designed to embody the ideals of Western architecture and landscape disseminated by the magazine, and these ideals are still exemplified through the natural building materials, relationship between indoor and outdoor space, test gardens and kitchens, and gardens reflecting the different climate zones of the west. The property retains integrity of association.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Photo 17 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view south

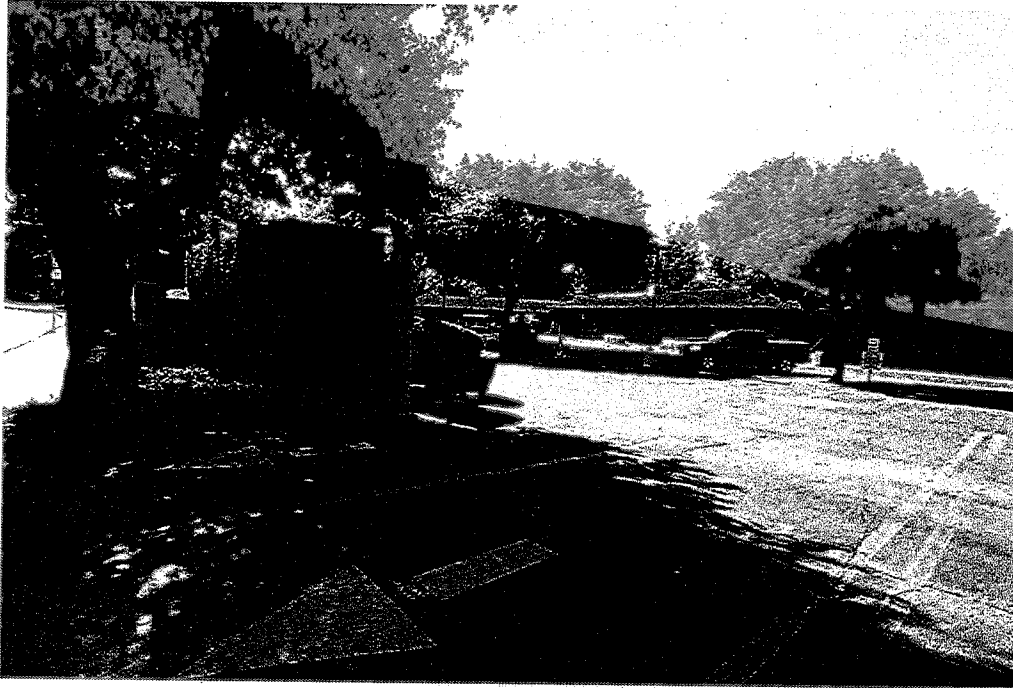


Photo 18 Block wall along Middlefield Road, view west



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Photo 15 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view southwest

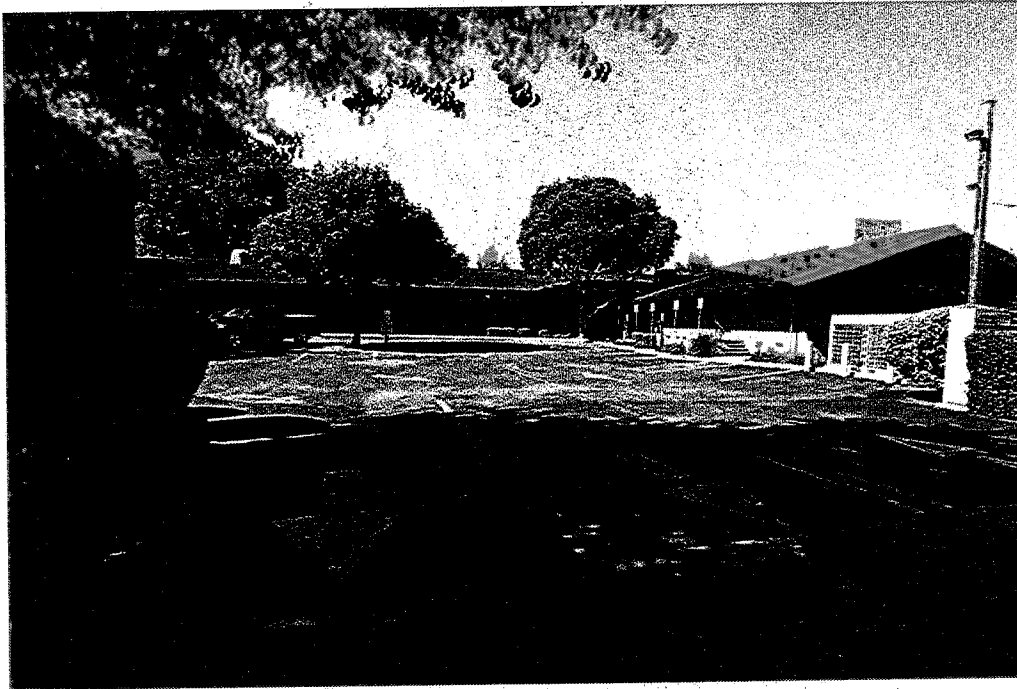
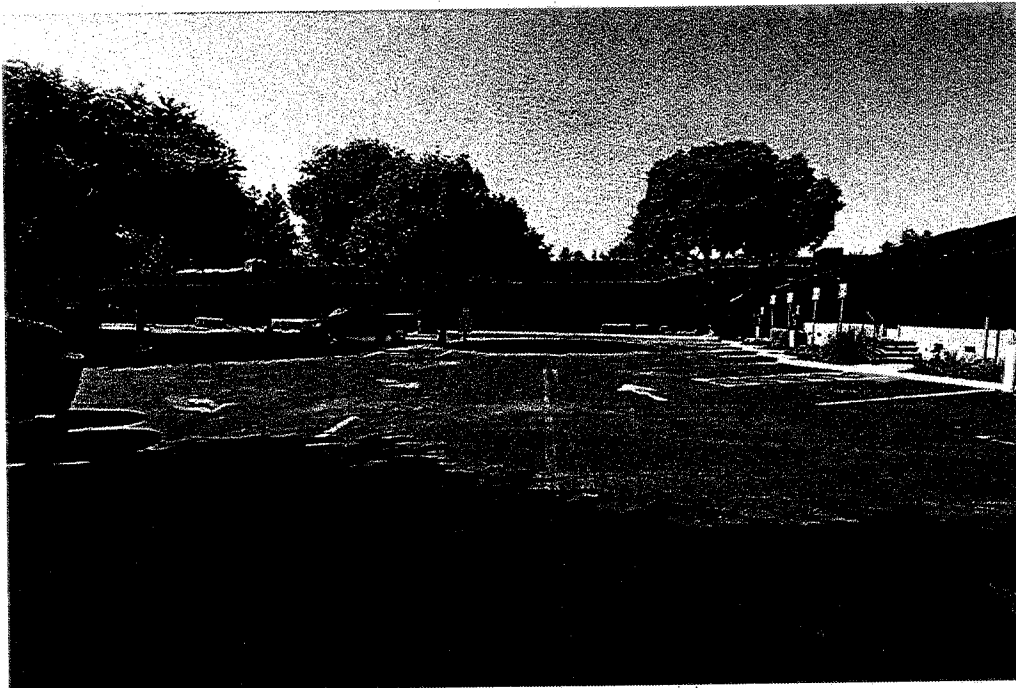


Photo 16 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view southwest



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Photo 13 Headquarters Building from Middlefield Road, view south

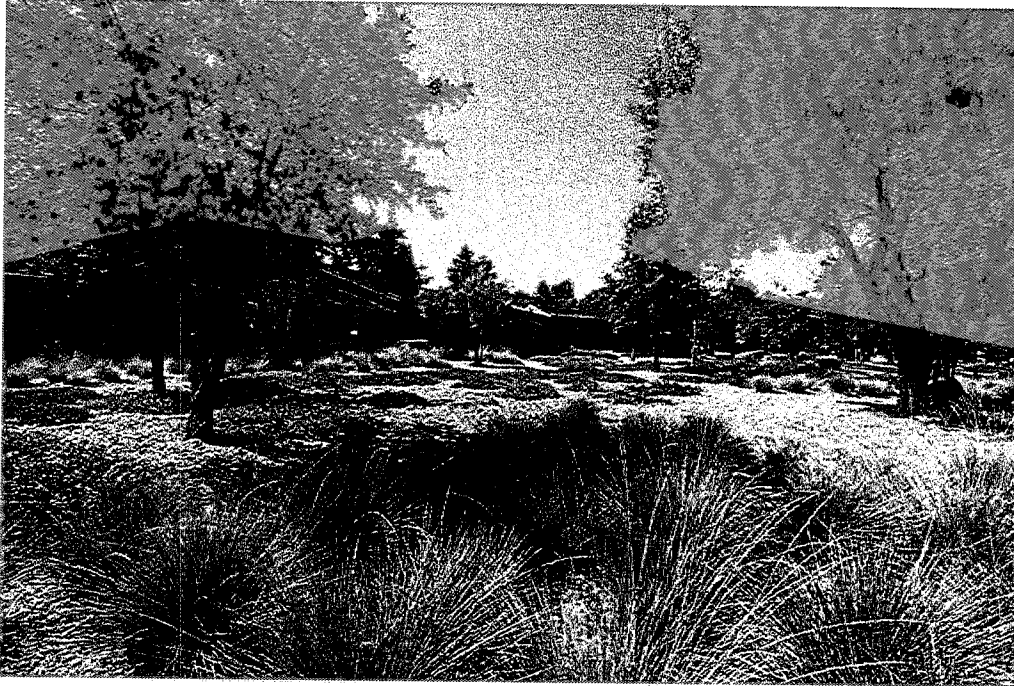
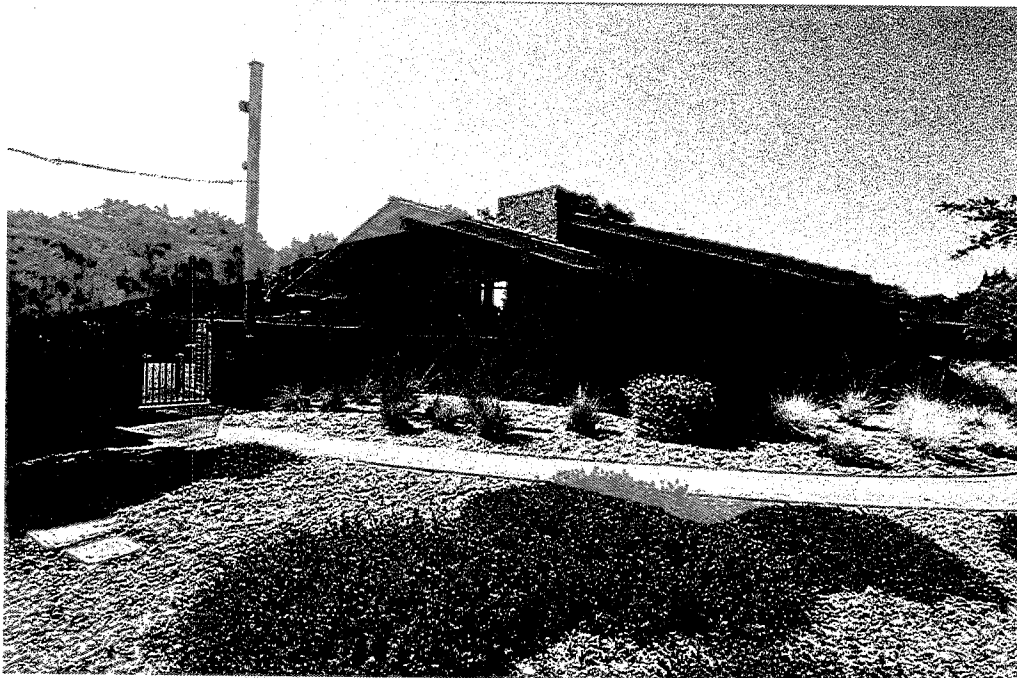


Photo 14 North elevation of production wing, view south



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Photo 11 Interior of conference room from executive wing window, view southeast

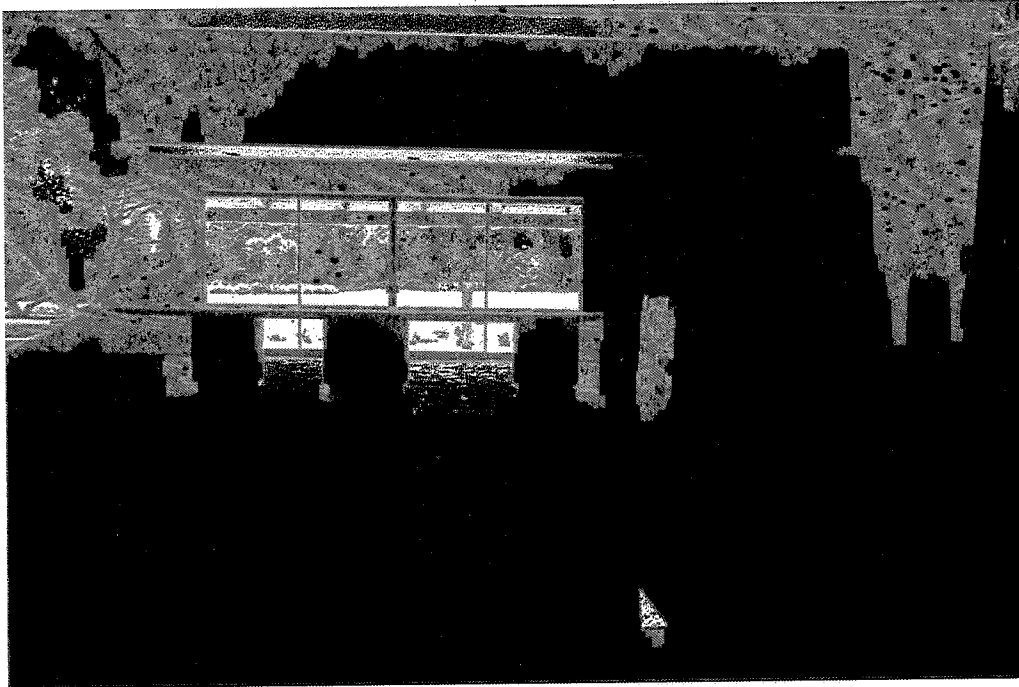
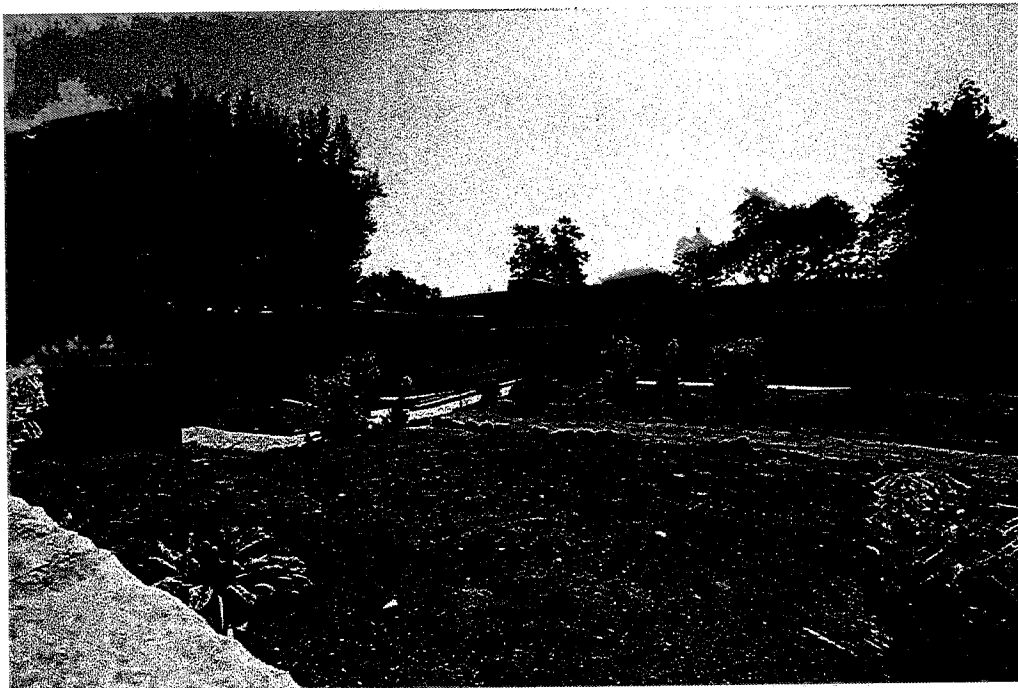


Photo 12 West elevation of executive wing, view east



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Photo 9 West elevation of executive wing, view southeast



Photo 10 Path at the west of executive wing toward enclosed courtyard entrance, view south



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Photo 7 Path from sidewalk to central lobby, view southeast



Photo 8 Transition between central lobby and executive wing, view southeast



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Photo 5 Main entrance to central lobby, view south

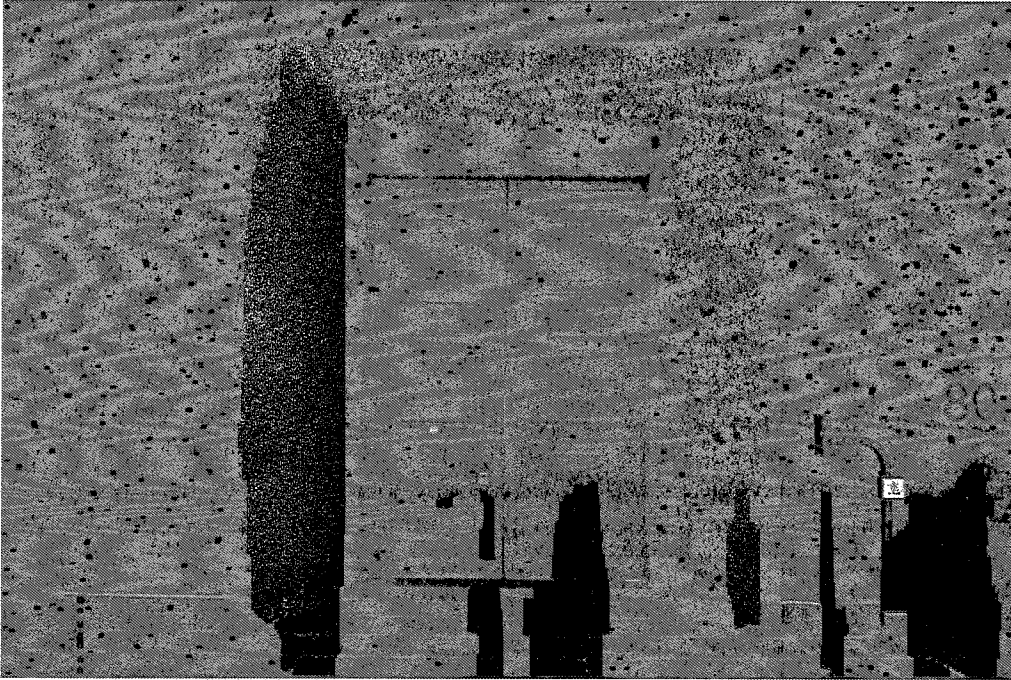


Photo 6 Square concrete planter with olive tree at patio entrance, view west



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Photo 3 Patio entrance to central lobby, view southeast

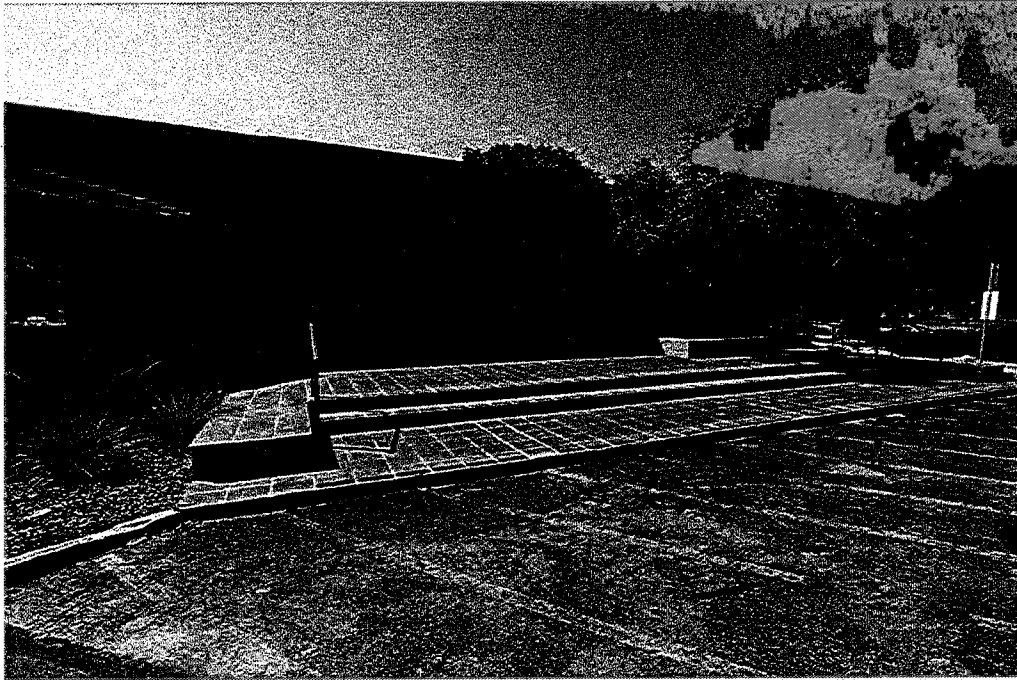


Photo 4 Half-circle driveway, view north



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Photo 1 Headquarters Building from Willow Road, view south

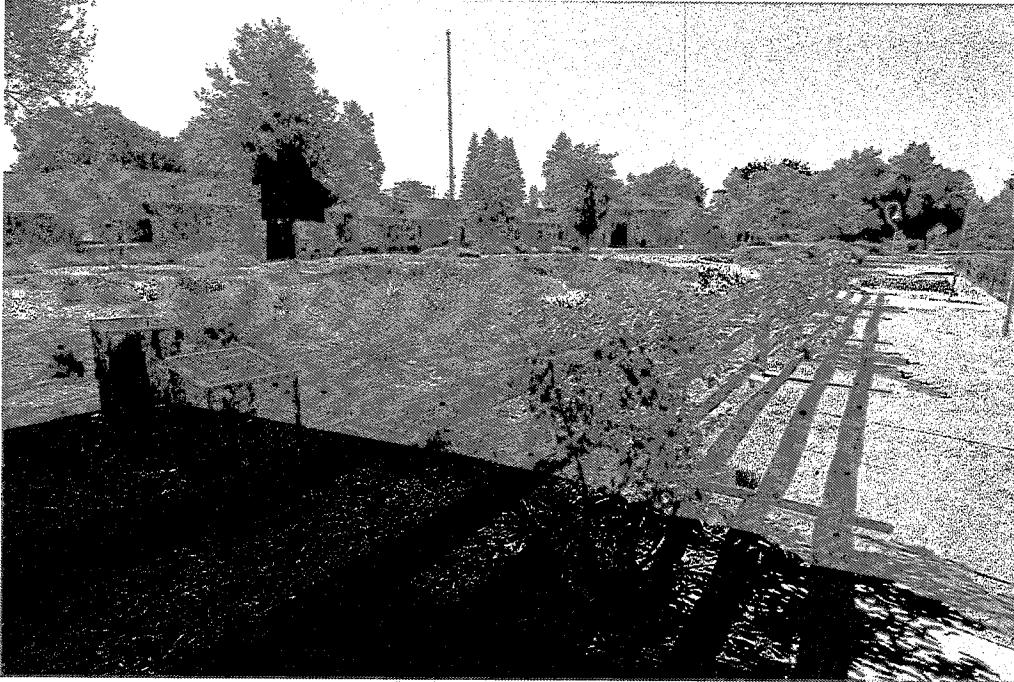


Photo 2 Headquarters Building facing central lobby and half-circle driveway, view southeast



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Figure 17 Oak trees with Headquarters Building in background, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



Figure 18 Executive wing and Chinese elm, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



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Figure 15 Dracaena grove at Sunset Garden, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



Figure 16 Pines in Central California Area of Sunset Garden, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



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Figure 13 Curved walkway at main lawn with “The Old Man” oak tree at right, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115

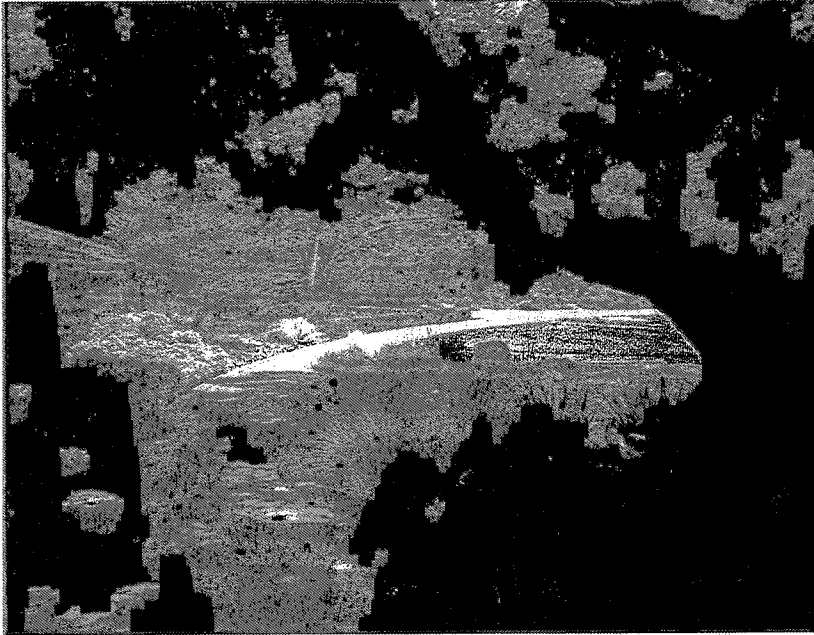


Figure 14 Production wing, pruned tree, flagstone path, and pruned hedge, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



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Figure 11 Central enclosed courtyard at production wing, 2015; Chris Pattillo, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115

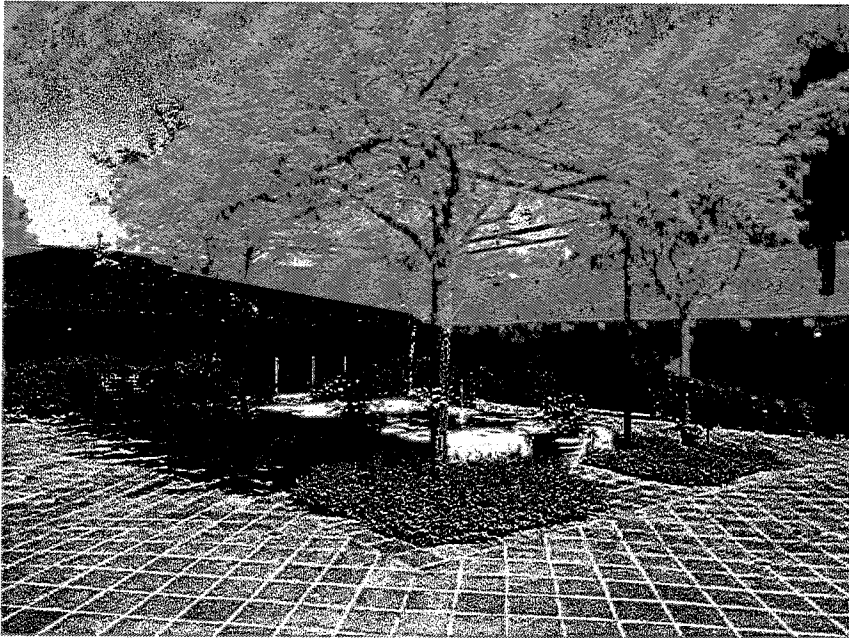


Figure 12 Production wing, main lawn, and “The Old Man” oak tree, 2015; Gordon Osmundson, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



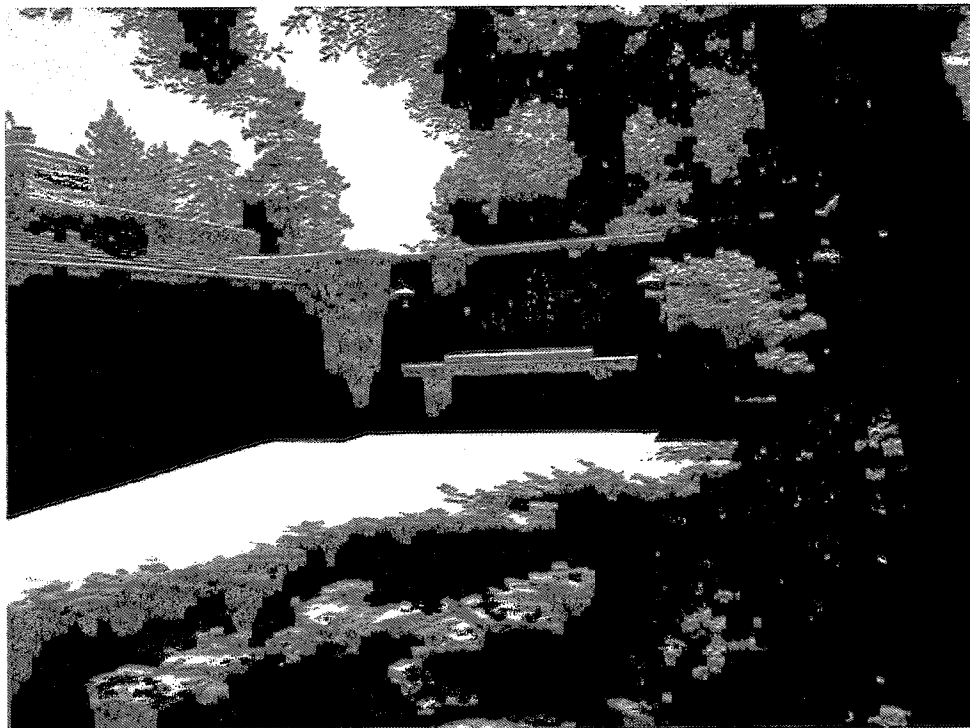
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Figure 9 Interior of office at south of production wing, angled adobe wall visible, 2014; Emma Watzman, Sunset.com



Figure 10 Enclosed courtyard at west elevation of executive wing with Millard Sheets mural visible, 2015; Chris Pattillo, Historic American Landscapes Survey CA-115



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Figure 7 Interior of office at south of production wing, angled adobe wall visible, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB

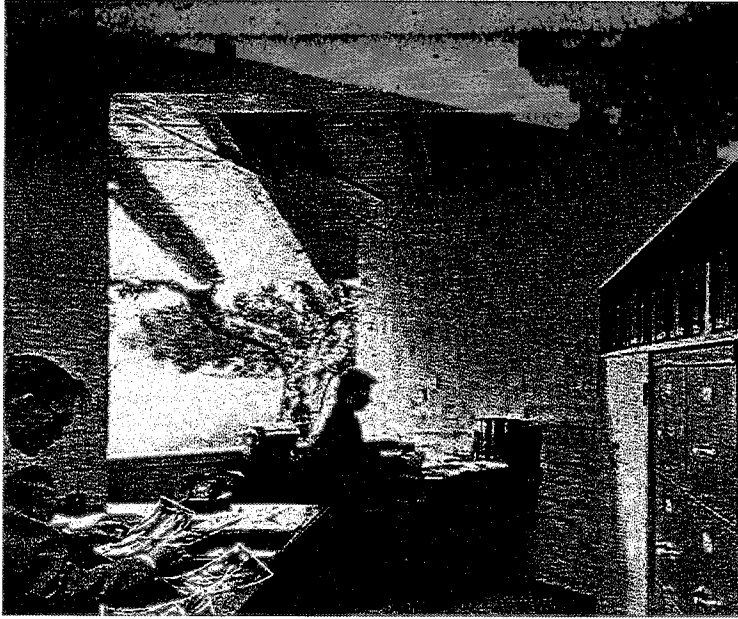
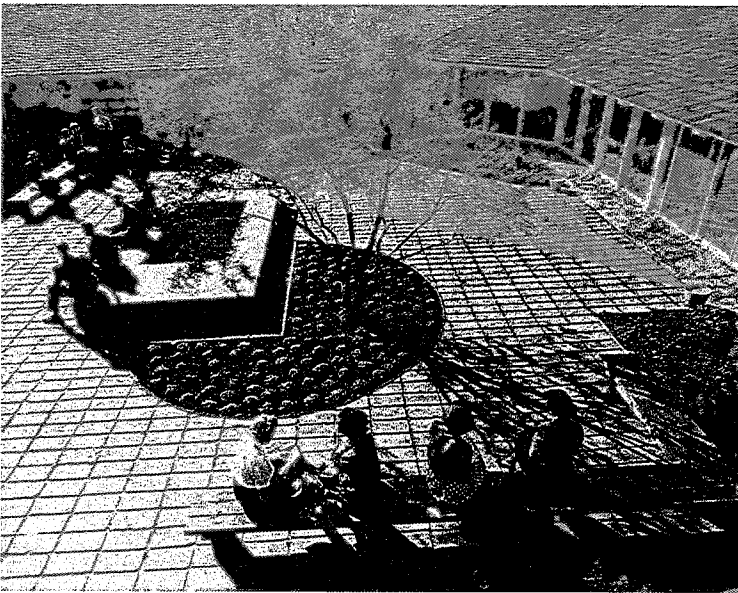


Figure 8 Central enclosed courtyard, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB



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Figure 5 Rear patio or lanai at central lobby area, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB



Figure 6 Sawtooth wall at south elevation of production wing, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB



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Figure 3 Map of property, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB)

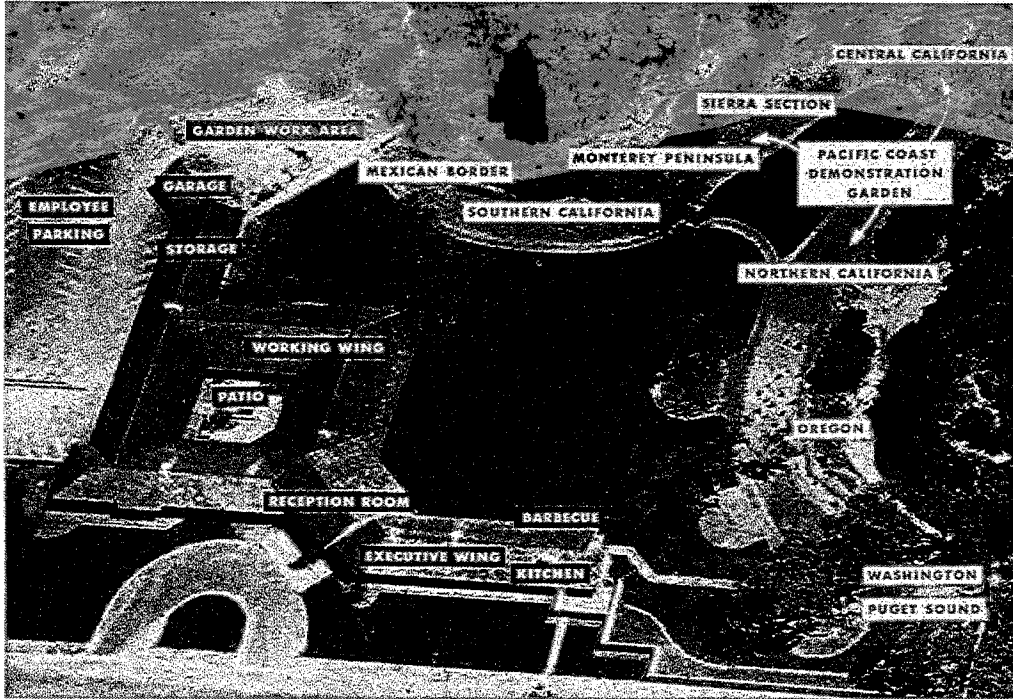


Figure 4 Door to central lobby area, *Sunset Magazine*, August 1952; Architecture and Design Collection, Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB



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Figure 1 Primary west elevation from Willow, 1951; *Daily Palo Alto Times*



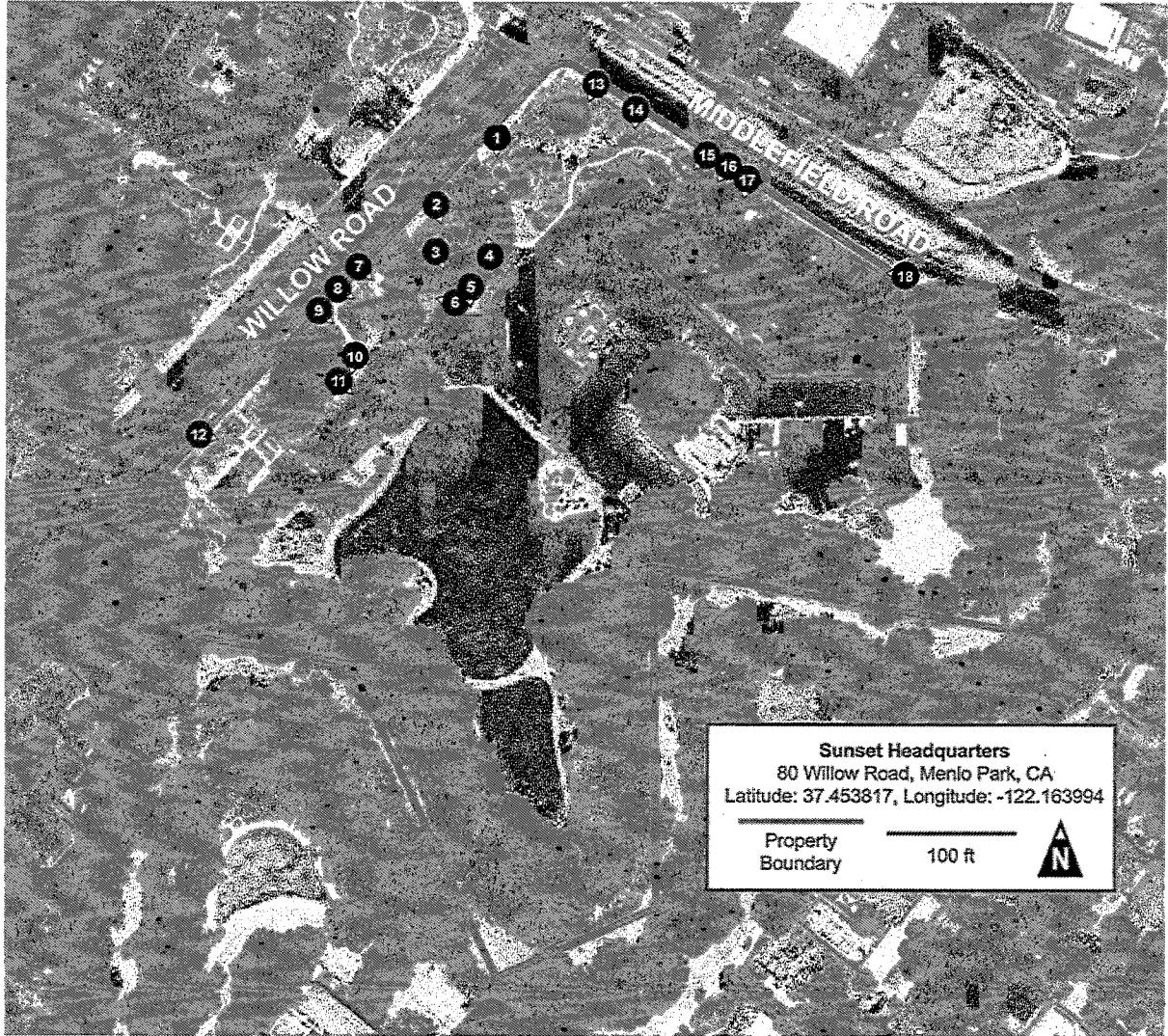
Figure 2 View from main lawn with south elevation of production wing visible, 1951; *Daily Palo Alto Times*



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Sketch Map/Photo Key

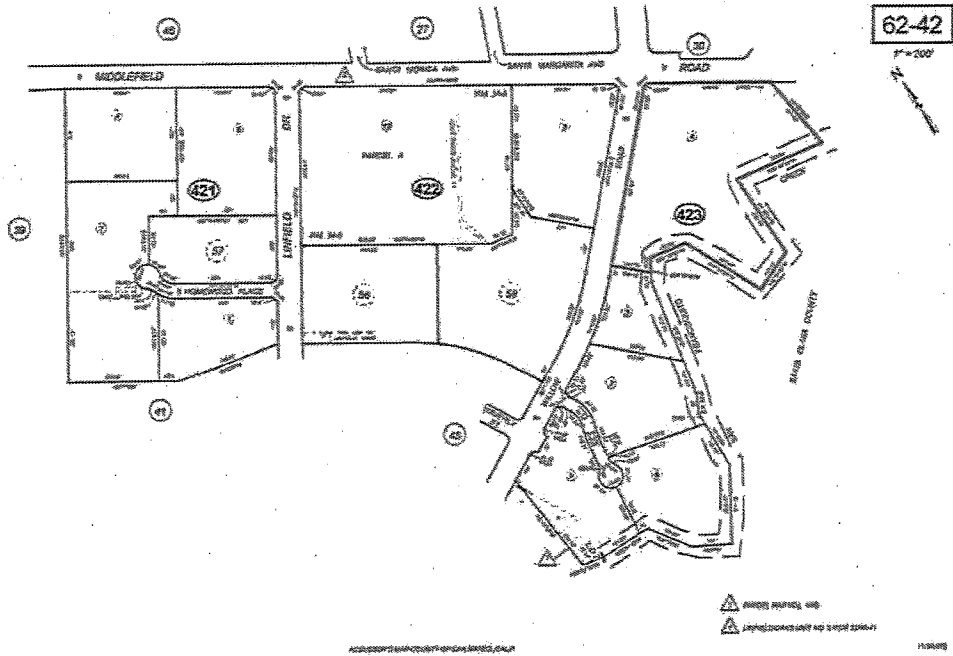


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Assessor Map

San Mateo County Assessor, 1979



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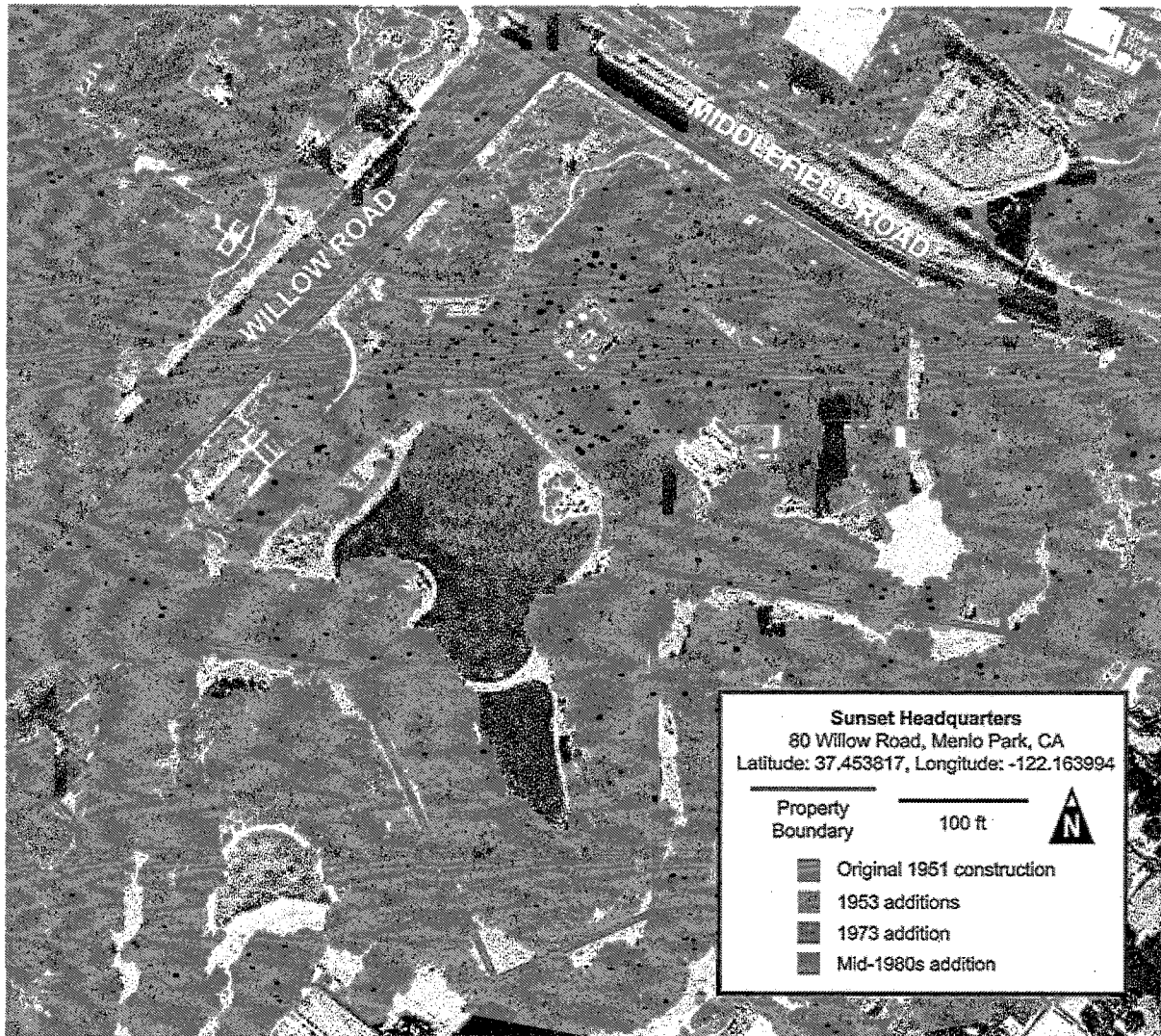
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Boundary Map

Google Earth, 2024

Latitude: 37.453817

Longitude: -122.163994

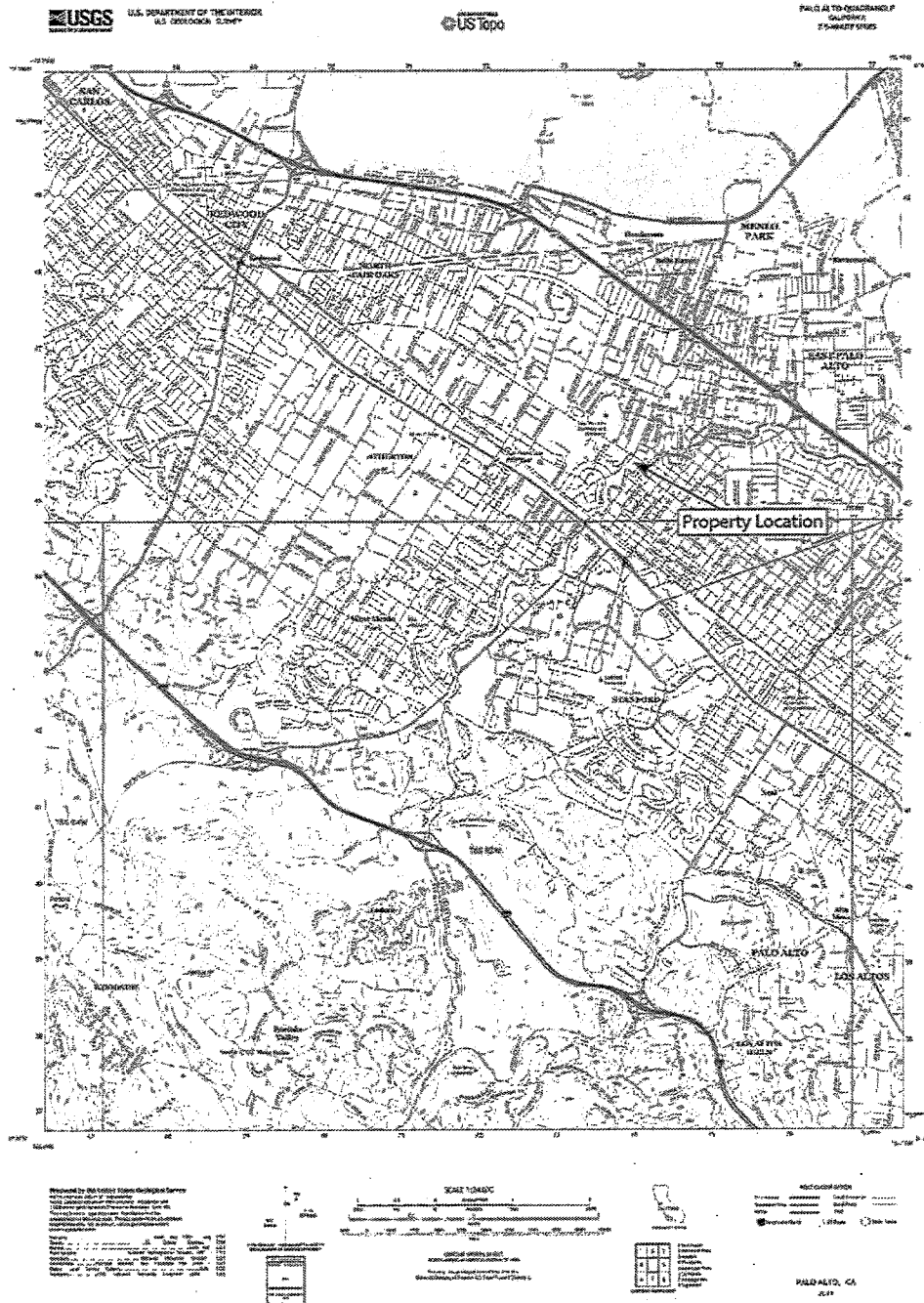


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Location Map

United States Geological Survey (USGS), 2021



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- 8 of 18 Transition between central lobby and executive wing, view southeast
- 9 of 18 West elevation of executive wing, view southeast
- 10 of 18 Path at the west of executive wing toward enclosed courtyard entrance, view south
- 11 of 18 Interior of conference room from executive wing window, view southeast
- 12 of 18 West elevation of executive wing, view east
- 13 of 18 Headquarters Building from Middlefield Road, view south
- 14 of 18 North elevation of production wing, view south
- 15 of 18 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view southwest
- 16 of 18 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view southwest
- 17 of 18 North elevation of production wing from parking lot entrance, view south
- 18 of 18 Block wall along Middlefield Road, view west

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Sunset Headquarters
City or Vicinity: Menlo Park
County: San Mateo
State: California
Photographer: Robert Chattel and Alvin Nuval
Date Photographed: August 30, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 18 Headquarters Building from Willow Road, view south
- 2 of 18 Headquarters Building facing central lobby and half-circle driveway, view southeast
- 3 of 18 Patio entrance to central lobby, view southeast
- 4 of 18 Half-circle driveway, view north
- 5 of 18 Main entrance to central lobby, view south
- 6 of 18 Square concrete planter with olive tree at patio entrance, view west
- 7 of 18 Path from sidewalk to central lobby, view southeast

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- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Stanford University Special Collections; University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Art, Design, and Architecture Museum; University of California, Berkeley Environmental Design Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.7

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.453817

Longitude: -122.163994

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the property is delineated by the boundary of the parcel (Assessor Parcel Number 062423040). See Assessor and Boundary Maps.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary coincides with recorded parcel boundaries and encompasses the full extent of the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Alvin-Christian Nuval, Principal Associate; Robert Jay Chattel, AIA, President

organization: Chattel, Inc.

street & number: 13417 Ventura Boulevard

city or town: Sherman Oaks state: CA zip code: 91423

e-mail: alvin@chattel.us

telephone: (818) 788-7954

date: September 2024; Revised October 2024

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Marc Treib. *Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern California Landscape*. San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2003.

Menlo Park Historical Association archives.

The Modesto Bee newspaper articles, 1989.

Palo Alto Daily Post newspaper articles, 2023.

Peninsula Times-Tribune newspaper articles, 1967-1973.

Publishers' Weekly magazine articles, 1951.

Redwood City Tribune newspaper articles, 1950-1967.

San Francisco Chronicle newspaper articles, 1980.

San Francisco Examiner newspaper articles, 1978.

Santa Barbara News Press newspaper articles, 1961.

Santa Cruz Sentinel newspaper articles, 1953-1978.

Sunset Magazine records, 1931-1998. Stanford University.

SurveyLA. Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: The Ranch House, 1930-1975. City of Los Angeles, December 2015.

Thomas D. Church Collection. Environmental Design Archives at the University of California, Berkeley.

Ventura County Star newspaper articles, 2007.

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 # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # HALS No. CA-115

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Berkeley Gazette newspaper articles, 1978.

Cliff May Papers, held in the Architecture and Design Collection of the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Contra Costa Gazette newspaper articles, 1935.

Daily Palo Alto Times newspaper articles, 1951-1960.

Daniel P. Gregory. *Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House*. New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008.

The Dispatch [Moline, IL] newspaper articles, 1928.

Enterprise Record newspaper articles, 1967.

Historic Places LA. "Cliff May House No. 3." <http://historicplacesla.org/reports/cd691e9b-3fda-4fb0-b0e0-7d8313313e10>.

The History of Sunset. Menlo Park, CA: Lane Publishing Co., 1981.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin newspaper articles, 1984.

Janet Gracyk, ASLA, Chris Pattillo, FASLA, and Jill Johnson. "Historic American Landscapes Survey: Sunset Headquarters, HALS No. CA-115." 2015.

Knapp Architects. "80 & 85 Willow Road, Menlo Park, Historical Evaluation of Landscapes and Buildings." April 2015.

LA Conservancy. "Cliff May – LA Conservancy."
<https://www.laconservancy.org/learn/architect-biographies/cliff-may/>.

Laurence W. "Bill" Lane, Jr. papers. Stanford University.

Lincoln Star Journal newspaper articles, 1980.

Los Angeles Times newspaper articles, 1974-2010.

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building intended to also expand in the future. Following construction of Sunset Headquarters, May continued to design several more prominent non-residential buildings. Under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture, Sunset Headquarters is a prominent example of a planned landscape by master landscape architect Thomas Dolliver Church. Like May, Church's designs were also regularly featured in *Sunset Magazine* and emphasized the relationship between indoor and outdoor space. Church was renowned for having a modernist approach to landscape design that incorporated his views that gardens should be designed with the use of people in mind. At Sunset Headquarters, his Sunset Garden consisting of a series of climate zones showcasing plants of the American West became popular with visitors who came to tour the property. In bringing May and Church together, Sunset Headquarters represents a collaboration between two celebrated California masters in their field.

The period of significance is from 1951, the year of construction, to 1990, when *Sunset Magazine* was sold to Time Warner and no longer owned or managed by the Lane family. The property satisfies Criteria Consideration G as the period of significance encompasses the continued development and influence of *Sunset Magazine* through the 1980s as a nationally recognized enterprise owned and operated by the same family for sixty-two years. Housing the operations of a popular regional magazine whose reach extended far beyond Menlo Park and helped shape the taste of homeowners across California and throughout the West, Sunset Headquarters exceeds local significance and is a significant property at the state level of significance.

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constructed at the direction of L.W. specifically to house growing operations. Sunset Headquarters served as the main office for *Sunset Magazine* for sixty-five years, from 1951 to 2016, including thirty-nine years under the ownership of the Lane family.

Sunset Headquarters is also most representative of May's career evolution from solely designing residential projects to also designing large scale commercial properties across California. It was May's first commercial office building and adapted his California Ranch style in a way described by newspapers as an architectural first. Following the construction of Sunset Headquarters, May began taking on a series of other non-residential projects, including the 1965 office building housing the Lane Book Company. May also designed the Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley in 1966, and soon after the National Register-listed Bell Canyon Equestrian Center (NR #SG100010547) in Bell Canyon, Ventura County in 1968.

Sunset Headquarters reflects the broader commercial and architectural history of California by serving for over six decades as the headquarters of *Sunset Magazine*, which influenced public aesthetics locally, across California, and throughout the West. May's first commercial office building was followed up by May designing additional commercial projects throughout the state from Napa Valley to Ventura County. Because the significance of the property extends beyond the surrounding community, Sunset Headquarters exceeds local significance and is a significant property at the state level of significance.

Conclusion

Sunset Headquarters is eligible under National Register Criteria A and C at the state level of significance. Under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, Sunset Headquarters is associated with *Sunset Magazine*, a longstanding publication that has greatly influenced public perception of the west and was managed by the Lane publishing family. As "The Magazine of Western Living," *Sunset Magazine* was significant in advising its readers on gardening, cooking, home improvement, travel, and more, specifically adapting to western climate zones. The magazine often highlighted architectural and landscape projects that represented the ideal western home and garden, incorporating natural materials and a strong relationship between indoor and outdoor space. Sunset Headquarters was constructed in 1951 to house the growing operations of the magazine and exemplify those design concepts that it had long advocated. Under the direction of the Lane family, including L.W. Lane, Sr., his wife Ruth, and sons Bill and Melvin, *Sunset Magazine* grew to be a successful venture reaching a circulation of 1.4 million with four editions across the western United States. The Lane family owned and managed *Sunset Magazine* for over sixty years from 1928 to 1990.

Under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, Sunset Headquarters is a prominent and first example of the California Ranch architectural style applied by master designer Cliff May to a commercial office building. May had already established himself as one of the most prominent practitioners of the California Ranch style, with many of his residential projects regularly featured in *Sunset Magazine*. Though initially reluctant to take on the Sunset Headquarters project, May was able to adapt his residential design philosophies for use in a commercial

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and the sixty-five or seventy reported in 2015. Both L.W. and Ruth had already died, and by then Bill and Melvin were in their late 60s and early 70s. With the growth and changing landscape of the communications industry happening during this period in which larger media companies emerged to consolidate smaller enterprises, the sale in 1990 marks the end of the Lane family's continuous operation of *Sunset Magazine* after sixty-two years of ownership.

State Level of Significance

Sunset Magazine has a long relationship with California and the western United States, originally developed in 1898 by the Southern Pacific Railroad to challenge notions of a lawless west and encourage travel and growth in the region. Following L.W.'s purchase of the magazine in 1928, the focus shifted to cater specifically to families already living in these western states, setting the stage to define the tastes of its growing circulation of readers. The growth of the company and the expansion of *Sunset Magazine* into Sunset Headquarters in Menlo Park coincided with California's own population growth following the end of World War II, as more staff was needed to accommodate the increasing readership base. Under L.W.'s direction, circulation of *Sunset Magazine* was divided into three, later four, editions tailor-made to address conditions in the varying western regions. Because of their different climate zones, Northern California and Southern California were separated by edition to provide more specific guidance to families living in those parts of the state.

The L.W. Lane Publishing Company, through *Sunset Magazine* and the Lane Book Company, was influential in helping to develop the overall built environment of California. *Sunset Magazine* would regularly feature articles about and photos of projects by renowned architects, designers, and landscape architects such as May and Church, disseminating and even recommending their design philosophies to its readers. In 1960, the Lane Book Company published May's *Sunset Western Ranch Houses*, considered a seminal text in increasing nationwide recognition of May's signature Ranch style, also known as the California Ranch style because of its origins within the state.

Through curation of the magazine articles, how-to guides, and books that were published, L.W. and the rest of the Sunset staff essentially served as tastemakers to the growing population in California and the American West, advising readers on what plants to grow, what meals to cook, where to travel, and more. *Sunset Magazine* had branded itself as "The Magazine for Western Living," the go-to source for learning how to live in the West. The ideals circulated through *Sunset Magazine* were embodied in the design of Sunset Headquarters, which brought together May and Church in a collaboration to bring L.W.'s vision of a headquarters building compatible with the surrounding residential community to life.

While other buildings related to Sunset and the L.W. Lane Publishing Company exist, such as the previous 1907 San Francisco headquarters building at 576 Sacramento Street and the 1965 office building across from Sunset Headquarters at 85 Willow Road that housed the Lane Book Company, Sunset Headquarters is the most representative of *Sunset Magazine* and the Lane family's contributions as it embodies the design aesthetics distributed by the magazine and was

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defined the modern California Garden, and more important, promulgated an idealized postwar California (and mostly suburban) lifestyle.¹⁰⁸

In addition to his work at Sunset Headquarters and the estimated 2,000 residential gardens he designed, Church is recognized as being “the guiding hand in the landscaping of the Berkeley campus of the university, of the modern campus of Stanford University and the development of the land use at [the University of California, Santa Cruz].”¹⁰⁹ Church won many awards during his career, “including the Fine Arts Medal of the American Institute of Architecture, the Fold Medal of the American Society of Landscape Architects and a fellowship of the American Academy of Arts and Science.”¹¹⁰ He was recognized as one of the most influential landscape architects of his generation, having also worked with Garrett Eckbo and Robert Royston early in their careers.¹¹¹

Only a year after his retirement, Church died at his San Francisco home in 1978. Obituaries across the country heralded him as “internationally known as one of the founders of modern landscape architecture,” and the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* issued an editorial stating that “perhaps his most famous gardens surround the elegant facilities of Sunset Magazine’s headquarters in Palo Alto [sic] on Middlefield Road.”¹¹² The Thomas D. Church Collection, including drawings and photos of the landscape at Sunset Headquarters, is held at the Environmental Design Archives at Berkeley.

Criteria Consideration G

The period of significance ends in 1990 to capture the construction of May’s additions to the property and the extent of the Lane family ownership and operation of the company. Sunset Headquarters represents May’s first venture in designing a commercial office building using his pioneering California Ranch style. As part of adapting the style to this use, May designed the property to allow for future expansion by extending the various wings that comprise the Headquarters Building. Several additions were periodically constructed, first in 1953 and most recently in the mid-1980s. These additions, all designed by May, have taken on significance over time as they were in line with May and L.W.’s original vision for the Headquarters Building and represent the growth and success of *Sunset Magazine* in the latter part of the twentieth century.

In 1990, the Lane family chose to sell *Sunset Magazine* with the rest of Lane Publishing to Time Warner. As described, by that time, *Sunset Magazine* was one of the oldest continually published magazines in the country, with over 400 employees working in the mid-1980s, substantially more than the approximately one hundred employees from when Sunset Headquarters opened

¹⁰⁸ Treib, *Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern California Landscape*, San Francisco, CA: William Stout Publishers, 2003, ix.

¹⁰⁹ “Gardens Are For People,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, September 1, 1978: 45.

¹¹⁰ “Thomas Church, 76, pioneer in landscape architecture.”

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “Principal planner of UC campuses dies at age 76,” *Berkeley Gazette*, August 31, 1978: 4; “Gardens Are For People,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, September 1, 1978: 45.

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When Sunset Headquarters opened to the public, the landscaped gardens were immediately popular with tours occurring five times a day and tens of thousands of people visiting each year.¹⁰¹ Church broke up his design into several zones “that correspond to the entrance, social, recreational, and service zones Church used in the suburban house lots he designed during this period.”¹⁰² A 2015 HALS report for Sunset Headquarters further describes Church’s general approach to his design:

The landscape design for Sunset Headquarters’ gardens was restrained, still it shared some characteristics of the [widely published 1948 Donnell Garden in Sonoma County] and other well-known and groundbreaking Church landscapes. Curvilinear forms sprang off the rectangular forms of the building, and large native oaks were retained and used to great effect. The property perimeter, viewed from the many windows and patios of the building is obscured, extending the view beyond the garden. Church wrote about methods for leading “your eye around a corner” by use of plants and lines in the landscape, a method he employed at Sunset on each side of the main lawn.¹⁰³

In 1956, Sunset Headquarters was named “the only Western winner in the third annual national ‘Plant America’ competition for industrial landscaping” conducted by the American Association of Nurserymen.¹⁰⁴ The award was made “in recognition of achievement in industrial landscaping and beautification contributing to employee and civic pride in our American Heritage.”¹⁰⁵

In addition to his work as a landscape architect, Church was a writer whose articles appeared in both *Sunset Magazine* and *House Beautiful*. He “wrote a regular series in the Sunday edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* in which he addressed wide-ranging design issues.”¹⁰⁶ Church authored two books, *Gardens Are For People* (1955) and *Your Private World: A Study of Intimate Gardens* (1969), which helped outline his design philosophies. In Church’s obituary, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* stated, “If a man was entitled to author such a volume [referring to Church’s first book], it would be Tommy Church, who spent a lifetime designing gardens for people.”¹⁰⁷

In his book *Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern California Landscape* (2003), author, historian, and architectural critic Marc Treib noted:

This single book [*Gardens Are For People*] directed the course of garden making at the popular and polite levels not only in the United States, but in countries as geographically distant as Denmark and Australia. Perhaps more than any other single publication, it

¹⁰¹ Janet Gracyk, ASLA, Chris Pattillo, FASLA, and Jill Johnson, 16.

¹⁰² Knapp Architects, 6.

¹⁰³ Janet Gracyk, ASLA, Chris Pattillo, FASLA, and Jill Johnson, 16.

¹⁰⁴ “Sunset Wins in Landscaping,” *The Times*, January 27, 1956: 19.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Knapp Architects, 52.

¹⁰⁷ “Gardens Are For People,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, September 1, 1978: 45.

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Following his graduation, Church worked for several years as an instructor, teaching at Ohio State University and Berkeley. He worked in the Oakland office of landscape architect Floyd Mick and in 1930 “began work on site planning and patio garden designs for the weekend retreat homes in the Pasatiempo Estates near Santa Cruz.”⁹¹ Church established his own office in San Francisco in 1932 and maintained his practice in the city until his retirement due to poor health in 1977.⁹²

Though Church worked on a variety of projects throughout his life, he was well-known for his residential gardens that emphasized design for use by people. It was early in his career that Church “developed his modernist approach to landscape design and published articles expressing his views of how gardens must be designed to reflect people’s contemporary needs and not be tied to formulistic styles from the past.”⁹³ After traveling around Europe in 1937, Church “began to experiment with curvilinear forms and asymmetry in his garden designs.”⁹⁴ He put these principles to use in 1940 as he designed the Exposition Garden at the Golden Gate International Exposition on San Francisco’s Treasure Island.⁹⁵ Through the 1940s, Church’s design aesthetics continued to evolve as he explored “new forms governed by a response to the site, the architecture of [the] house, his client’s personality and preferences, and the activities that would occur within the garden.”⁹⁶

Even before Church was commissioned to design the landscape for Sunset Headquarters in Menlo Park, his designs were often featured in several publications including *Sunset Magazine* as they illustrated “the magazine’s notions of outdoor living that they believed typified the Western lifestyle.”⁹⁷ As “one of the Bay Area’s best-known landscape architects,” Church “achieved an equivalent status to Cliff [May] in the eyes of the magazine.”⁹⁸ By the 1950s, Church had already established himself as one of the founders and early proponents of modern landscape architecture who “was one of the first to integrate the indoors and outdoors in a style that became known as ‘The Bay Area Style.’”⁹⁹ *Sunset Magazine* editor Walter L. Doty shared that “another characteristic of the Church garden is that it can be photographed almost as soon as it is in,” with Doty’s successor, Proctor Mellquist, noting “it was very clear that in everyone’s view Mr. Church was more than just the leading landscape architect, he was the revolutionary.”¹⁰⁰

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Thomas Church, 76, pioneer in landscape architecture,” *San Francisco Examiner*, August 31, 1978: 42.

⁹³ Knapp Architects, 50.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “Thomas Church, 76, pioneer in landscape architecture.”

⁹⁶ Knapp Architects, 50.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 51.

⁹⁸ Gregory, 107.

⁹⁹ “Thomas Church, 76, pioneer in landscape architecture.”

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Gregory, “Just Add Water: The Productive Partnership Between Thomas Church and *Sunset Magazine*,” in *Thomas Church, Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern California Landscape*, Edited by Marc Treib (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2003), 80-82.

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As described, commercial and institutional examples of the Ranch style typically incorporated characteristics of traditional or contemporary Ranch houses. These include asymmetrical informal composition with one or more wings; close relationship to a yard; gabled roofs that were originally shingled; exposed post and beam construction; and wall materials of stucco, vertical and horizontal wood board, and board and batten.⁸⁶ Sunset Headquarters embodies these character-defining features and more through its one-story, roughly L-shaped plan consisting of a production wing and executive wing separated by a central lobby area; exterior adobe, stucco, and wood walls; gabled wood shake roof with deep overhangs and exposed wood rafter tails; clay and terra cotta pavers; rectangular steel sliding windows with accompanying wood trim and/or sill; floor-to-ceiling glass window walls and sliding glass doors emphasizing the relationship between indoor and outdoor space; sawtooth wall at the south elevation of the production wing designed to provide views of the rear yard while also offering shade; and enclosed courtyard and semi-enclosed courtyards in the production wing.

The Ranch style began to fall out of favor in the 1970s as buildable land became scarcer due to the rapid pace of Post-War development. May died at his Brentwood office October 18, 1989, after a fifty-seven-year career in which he “designed about 1,000 custom homes and produced plans that were used in the development of an estimated 18,000 other houses and numerous subdivisions across the United States and in other countries.”⁸⁷ May continues to be celebrated for his work as the preeminent practitioner of the Ranch style. Following May’s death, the *Los Angeles Times* noted that “arguably no other home designer who has ever practiced in Southern California was more sensitive to the region’s unique climate, evolving life styles and rich architectural history than Cliff May.”⁸⁸ The Cliff May Papers, including architectural drawings, photographs, and articles related to the Sunset Headquarters, are held in the Architecture and Design Collection of the Art, Design & Architecture Museum at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Thomas Dolliver Church (1902-1978)

Master landscape architect Thomas “Tommy” Dolliver Church was born April 27, 1902 in Boston, Massachusetts; and moved to California’s Ojai Valley when he was six months old. When his parents separated, Church relocated with his mother and sister to the San Francisco Bay Area where he spent much of his life. Though he had originally studied law at the University of California, Berkeley, Church switched his major to landscape architecture after taking a course on the history of gardening.⁸⁹ He received his degree in 1922, later attending the Harvard University Graduate School of Design “where he was awarded the university’s prestigious Sheldon Traveling Scholarship which enabled him to visit and study the gardens of England, France, Italy, and Spain.”⁹⁰ Church graduated from Harvard in 1926, receiving a master’s degree in landscape architecture.

⁸⁶ SurveyLA, 21-27.

⁸⁷ Sam Hall Kaplan, “Cliff May: Designer of Dream Houses,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1989: 359.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Knapp Architects, 50.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

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of belonging to the site. In short, the kind of a building that an easterner having read *Sunset* for a long time and making his first trip to California would expect to see.⁸⁰

May had a good working relationship with Higgins & Root and regularly shared his input on development of the design. In a letter to Chester Root and W.L. Higgins following construction of Sunset Headquarters, May wrote:

You may rest assured that I took pains to explain to the [*Architectural Forum*] boys that it was a three way collaboration and one that we think was very successful. It certainly was fun working with you—not a cross word or a misunderstanding on the whole job. That is quite a record. And, of course, the main thing is that they are so very, very, happy.⁸¹

In a letter to Chester Root following work on the 1953 addition, May added:

Sorry Larry Lane keeps embarrassing us both by referring to me as the Designer and you as the Architect. We both know how it should be, but I guess that is Larry's way of pushing an old friendship. It is fun working with you and know that the new addition will enhance the building a great deal.⁸²

May integrated the concepts and ideals that he had developed through his home designs into the construction of Sunset Headquarters. According to Gregory, Sunset Headquarters was one of May's "most important commissions."⁸³ Though May was highly celebrated for his Ranch-style residences, Sunset Headquarters represented the designer's first foray in applying the style to a commercial office building. The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* called the building an "architectural 'first,'" claiming that "Sunset has proven that a professional building can be a business office and adapt the indoor-outdoor living theme of the early California ranch-house. Sunset's headquarters are built like a home, but 25 times larger."⁸⁴

May's "theory that a ranch house was easy to adapt and expand suited a business like *Sunset*, which was in expansion mode." Following the move to Sunset Headquarters, the staff size had grown substantially, and May was tasked with designing several additions to accommodate. More than ten years after the construction of Sunset Headquarters, May was asked to design the 1965 office building across the street to house the Lane Book Company, also in the Ranch style. The *Redwood City Tribune* reported that "designer of the new 23,000 square foot building is Cliff May of Los Angeles, residential designer whose only previous office building is the existing Sunset headquarters."⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Ibid., 106.

⁸¹ Letter from Cliff May to Chester Root and W.L. Higgins, November 21, 1951.

⁸² Letter from Cliff May to Chester Root, April 7, 1953.

⁸³ Gregory, 102.

⁸⁴ "Sunset Magazine Will Hold 'Open House' Sunday Afternoon," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, November 6, 1953: 8.

⁸⁵ "Sunset Plans New Building," *Redwood City Tribune*, October 21, 1963: 13.

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By the 1940s, “the Ranch style had emerged as a popular choice for residential architecture and had secured its position as ‘an accepted style for custom houses throughout the United States.’”⁷¹ The style subsequently “surged in popularity in the decades after [World War II] as American society entered into a period characterized by a prevailing sense of optimism and economic prosperity.”⁷² During this time, *Sunset* magazine released “two influential publications [in collaboration with May]—*Sunset Western Ranch Houses* (1946), followed by *Western Ranch Houses by Cliff May* (1958).”⁷³ These publications, in addition to articles in other general interest magazines, helped advertise May’s designs to a national audience, increasing his recognition as the foremost designer of the Ranch style. May’s designs had already consistently featured in issues of *Sunset Magazine* in the 1930s and 1940s.

Between the mid-1940s and the 1970s, “entire neighborhoods of Ranch houses were rapidly developed in the hinterlands of cities across the nation.”⁷⁴ Middle-income Americans “became infatuated with the Ranch style and the casual, informal lifestyle that became associated with its aesthetic,” with May remarking that the Ranch style “because of its name alone, borrows friendliness, simplicity, informality and gaiety from the men and women who, in the past, found those pleasures in ranch-house living.”⁷⁵

Following World War II, the Ranch style also “transcended the single-family house and was applied to other property types,” including commercial and institutional buildings.⁷⁶ These buildings generally incorporated “many of the same essential characteristics of single-family Ranch houses” and “are important in representing the broad appeal and adaptability of Ranch style architecture and the Ranch house type.”⁷⁷ Architects and developers wanted to ensure that even commercial buildings would be compatible with the large Ranch style suburbs where they were located.

When L.W. sought to relocate his firm from San Francisco to Menlo Park, he reached out to May to design the new building. May initially declined, thinking it would be better if he advise a Bay Area architect instead.⁷⁸ L.W. was unhappy with the designs that other architects had proposed and was able to convince May to take a larger role working on the design in collaboration with the San Jose-based architectural firm Higgins & Root.⁷⁹ L.W. directed to May:

The building itself must be definitely WESTERN in its general structure and in the material used and in the feeling and atmosphere which it creates. It must give the feeling

⁷¹ SurveyLA, 8.

⁷² Ibid., 11.

⁷³ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁸ Gregory, 105.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

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Highly celebrated for his California Ranch architectural style,⁶¹ Cliff May (1908-1989) was a designer who developed thousands of custom homes in California and around the world with no formal architectural training. Born August 29, 1908, May was a sixth-generation Californian who was “fiercely proud of a heritage that included a great grandfather, Jose Maria Estudillo, who was the last mayor of San Diego under Mexican rule.”⁶² He had been raised on a ranch that later became part of Camp Pendleton in San Diego County, likely influencing the style for which May would be best known, described as “a marriage of the Hispanic style and Yankee ingenuity that was part of May’s heritage.”⁶³

May designed his first Ranch style house in San Diego in 1931, subsequently finishing roughly fifty more designs in the next few years before relocating to Los Angeles in 1938.⁶⁴ He used the still growing city to develop a small subdivision comprised of Ranch houses called Riviera Ranch, which opened in 1940 and is “generally considered to be the most complete embodiment of May’s early work.”⁶⁵ May’s home in Riviera Ranch, recognized as Cliff May House No. 3, is considered “the most significant Ranch house in America, as it most fully embodies Cliff May’s ideas for the California ranch house.”⁶⁶ May lived in the house from its construction in 1938 until 1953, and continued to develop the property with additions well into the 1980s. Referring to Sunset Headquarters in the book *Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House*, architectural historian and former *Sunset Magazine* editor Daniel P. Gregory wrote that “in effect, Cliff had come up with a gigantic version of Cliff May Number 3, adapted to this new site.”⁶⁷

Though May did not invent the Ranch style, with several prominent Los Angeles architects like Gerald Colcord and Paul R. Williams also incorporating the style in their works, he “developed his own distinctive aesthetic that was characterized by open and free-flowing interior plans, a blending of interior and exterior spaces, and hand-hewn character that loosely resembled the haciendas of early California.”⁶⁸ May “combined the informal layout of the California adobe courtyard home with the practical and affordable materials of the board-and-batten bungalow.”⁶⁹ He also “fused elements of the Spanish Revival style with Modernism to produce low-slung, horizontally oriented, pitched-roof ranch houses” with an “open, relaxed layout [emphasizing] outdoor living, perfect for the casual lifestyle and temperate climate of Southern California.”⁷⁰

⁶¹ The Ranch style is also known as California style or California Ranch style.

⁶² Sam Hall Kaplan, “Cliff May: Designer of Dream Houses,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1989: 359.

⁶³ Burt A. Folkart, “Cliff May; Home Designer Perfected the Ranch Style,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 20, 1989: 32.

⁶⁴ SurveyLA, Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: The Ranch House, 1930-1975, City of Los Angeles, December 2015, 7.

⁶⁵ SurveyLA, 9.

⁶⁶ Historic Places LA, “Cliff May House No. 3,” <<http://historicplacesla.org/reports/cd691e9b-3fda-4fb0-b0e0-7d8313313e10>> accessed November 12, 2023.

⁶⁷ Gregory, 109.

⁶⁸ SurveyLA, Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: The Ranch House, 1930-1975, City of Los Angeles, December 2015, 7.

⁶⁹ Folkart, “Cliff May; Home Designer Perfected the Ranch Style.”

⁷⁰ LA Conservancy, “Cliff May – LA Conservancy,” <https://www.laconservancy.org/learn/architect-biographies/cliff-may/> (accessed October 16, 2023).

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to 1.4 million and their initial \$60,000 investment had increased to be worth \$80 million in cash and \$145 million in preferred stock at the time of sale.”⁵³

Bill and Melvin continued to have an active life outside of Lane Publishing, pursuing passions that developed during their time working with *Sunset Magazine*. Both were avid environmentalists, consistent with the ideals of protecting the natural heritage of the West that the magazine advocated.

Bill served a brief 20-minute stint as mayor of Portola Valley in 1964, resigning after “saying he was too busy to do the job.”⁵⁴ He was Ambassador-at-Large in the Pacific from 1975 to 1976 and appointed Ambassador to Australia and Nauru from 1985 to 1989 by President Ronald Reagan. Bill was a devoted supporter of Stanford University and donated millions to the school, “including \$5 million to endow a university center to study the American West.”⁵⁵ He was also named “Conservationist of the Year” in 1995 by the National Parks and Conservation Association.⁵⁶ In Bill’s obituary in the *Los Angeles Times*, University of Southern California professor and State Librarian Emeritus Kevin Starr praised, “For the second half of the 20th century, [Bill] was a very important value maker and taste maker for the American West.”⁵⁷

Melvin served as the first chair of the California Coastal Commission after being appointed by Governor Ronald Reagan in 1972.⁵⁸ He had also chaired the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Sierra Club’s National Advisory Committee, California Fund for the Environment, and the Conservation Foundation. In 1998, Melvin was named “Conservationist of the Year” by the California League of Conservation Voters.⁵⁹ Melvin was also a Stanford University trustee and was credited as being “a major force at his alma mater, playing key roles in the creation of Stanford’s long-range land-use plan, the Center for International Security and Cooperation, and the Woods Institute for the Environment.”⁶⁰

Melvin died in 2007, with Bill dying only three years later in 2010. The Laurence W. “Bill” Lane, Jr. papers, including correspondence and documents relating to Lane Publishing, are held at Stanford University.

Criterion C: Architecture and Landscape Architecture

Cliff May and the California Ranch Style

⁵³ Knapp Architects, 44.

⁵⁴ “Media Briefs,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1974: 122.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Elaine Woo, “Melvin B. Lane, 85; conservationist helped protect California’s coast,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 2007.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Lane: Publisher was major force at Stanford,” *Ventura County Star*, August 1, 2007: 21.

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War II, and later took on the role as the vice president and director of Lane Publishing.⁴⁷ Ruth's other involvements included serving on the board of directors of the American Red Cross, Sequoia Region, Golden Gate Chapter, and sponsoring the California Historical Society, American Association of University Women, and the Western Horticultural Society.⁴⁸

Both Bill and Melvin grew up to manage different operations at Lane Publishing, joining the company after the end of World War II. A 1952 *Daily Palo Alto Times* article announcing the appointment of Bill as advertising manager and Melvin as business manager of Lane Publishing describes the variety of roles held by the two brothers:

The company's division and the editorial and circulation sales departments of Sunset Magazine were placed under the direction of L. W. Lane Jr. in the same move. For several years a member of the company's advertising staff in its West Coast and New York offices, he was until his promotion the assistant managing editor of *Sunset Magazine*. In 1948 he was co-manager with Melvin B. Lane of the company's book division and earlier had served in the circulation department of the magazine.

In his new capacity as business manager, Melvin B. Lane will supervise the operation of purchasing, production, subscription fulfillment, accounting, personnel and maintenance departments. He has been Sunset's purchasing and production manager since 1949, and prior to heading the Sunset Books division was assistant production manager of the magazine with headquarters at Pacific Press in Los Angeles.⁴⁹

The article noted that Bill and Melvin would maintain their offices at the headquarters in Menlo Park. In 1955, both Bill and Melvin were elected vice presidents of Lane Publishing, with Bill continuing "to supervise the magazine's editorial, advertising, circulation sales activities and the company's book publishing operation" and Melvin continuing "to supervise the production, purchasing, accounting, personnel, circulation fulfillment, and building operations" from the Menlo Park headquarters.⁵⁰ By 1960, L.W., Bill, and Melvin were all serving key roles—L.W. as president of Lane Publishing and chairman of the board, Bill as president and publisher for the Lane Magazine Company, and Melvin as president of the Lane Book Company.⁵¹

After L.W. died in 1967, Lane Publishing continued to be managed by the Lane Family. In 1974, the Magazine Publishers Association recognized the Lane family as "Publisher of the Year," honoring Bill as chairman, Melvin as president, and Ruth as vice president.⁵² Ruth died in 1980 and, in 1990, Bill and Melvin chose to sell Lane Publishing to media and entertainment company Time Warner. Under the ownership of the Lane family, "circulation had increased from 100,000

⁴⁷ "She Learned Business From Ground Up," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 1980: 18.

⁴⁸ "Ruth B. Lane of Sunset Magazine," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 11, 1980.

⁴⁹ "Sunset announces 3 promotions," *Daily Palo Alto Times*, January 10, 1952: 10.

⁵⁰ "Sunset Elects 2 Vice Presidents," *Redwood City Tribune*, March 7, 1955: 3.

⁵¹ Webster, "Lane Publishing: Western living magazine, books."

⁵² "Media Briefs," *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1974: 122.

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The Lane Family and the L.W. Lane Publishing Company

The success of *Sunset Magazine* through the twentieth century can be attributed to the Lane family, who held key roles in the growth and publication of the magazine from 1928 to 1990, spanning a period of over sixty years.

Born in Horton, Kansas on March 5, 1890, Laurence William Lane, Sr. (1890-1967) got his start in the magazine business selling advertisements for Meredith Publishing Co. while still enrolled as a student at Drake University.⁴¹ It was at Drake that L.W. met his wife, Ruth Bell (1895-1980), who was the daughter of the university president.⁴² L.W. and Ruth graduated in 1917 and married later that year. After briefly serving as a U.S. Army lieutenant in World War I, L.W. continued to work for Meredith Publishing Co., spending fifteen years with the company and rising to the rank of advertising director.⁴³

In 1928, L.W. sought to create a venture of his own, forming the L.W. Lane Publishing Company. L.W. had purchased *Sunset Magazine*, based in San Francisco, and moved from Des Moines to the west coast with Ruth and their two children—Laurence William Lane, Jr., known as Bill (1919-2010), and Melvin B. Lane (1922-2007)—to manage operations. In describing his vision to revolutionize *Sunset Magazine*, L.W. was quoted saying, “The magazine will be maintained as a strictly western one, designed to serve western and national advertisers in reaching the substantial homes of the western states. Editorially, a large portion of the magazine will be devoted to the home and outdoor life of the west.”⁴⁴

As president of Lane Publishing, L.W. was credited with transforming the purpose of *Sunset Magazine* from enticing families to move west to serving families already living in the west. An editorial in *Sunset Magazine* after his death noted that L.W. “intended to change *Sunset* into a new kind of magazine never tried before, a regional magazine, designed to serve the differences of its region.”⁴⁵ It was under L.W.’s direction that circulation was limited to states west of the Rocky Mountains, editions varied by three (later four) different zones, and the focus of the magazine was “revamped to stress western foods, gardens, homes, travel, and crafts.”⁴⁶ It was also L.W. who decided to move *Sunset Magazine* headquarters to a new building in Menlo Park that matched the aesthetic ideals being perpetuated in the publication.

While L.W. served as president, Ruth utilized her background in home economics to test different recipes and gardening tips submitted by readers for the magazine. She worked as a copy editor, was managing editor for the magazine from 1940 to 1946 during staff shortages in World

⁴¹ “Larry Lane dies in Portola,” *Peninsula Times-Tribune*, February 21, 1967: 1.

⁴² “Wife of founder of *Sunset* journal is dead at age 84,” *Lincoln Journal Star*, June 11, 1980: 19.

⁴³ “L.W. Lane Buys *Sunset Magazine*,” *The Dispatch*, September 21, 1928: 28.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Vida Shepard, “Take It From Me,” *Enterprise Record*, March 27, 1967: 14.

⁴⁶ “L.W. Lane Sr. of ‘*Sunset*’ Dies,” *Redwood City Tribune*, February 21, 1967: 1.

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had become a separate branch that required its own operating space as publications had grown from sixteen books when Sunset Headquarters opened in 1951 to eighty books being published in 1963.³² To supplement the growth, Cliff May was once again engaged to design another office building across the street to the west at 85 Willow Road to house the Lane Book Company. Magazine operations would largely stay in the 1951 headquarters. The 23,000 square foot building cost more than \$600,000 and was designed in a similar California Ranch style.³³ It was constructed in 1965 and known as Willow North. The Headquarters Building was subsequently referred to as Willow South.

In addition to being unique in its voice as a how-to magazine advising families on western living, *Sunset Magazine* encouraged conservation efforts and sometimes commented on environmental issues facing the nation. Several years before the pesticide DDT was banned in the United States in 1972, *Sunset Magazine* was already urging readers to stop using the chemical.³⁴ Laurence William Lane, Jr. told the *San Jose Mercury News* in 1990, "There's no magazine in the country, even *National Geographic*, that has done as much of what I would call participatory environmental coverage."³⁵

Sunset Films was created in 1971 to supplement the magazine and book publishing ventures. Magazine circulation had also grown to one million that year, with Sunset publishing its first issue with \$1 million in advertising revenue.³⁶ In 1985, a two-story building at 75 Willow Road (demolished) was designed by architect Al Hoover for additional Sunset operations. By 1990, *Sunset Magazine* was one of the oldest continually published magazines in the country. Due to the "changing landscape of the communications industry in the 1980s, which favored larger and larger media companies," operations were sold to Time Warner (later Time Inc.).³⁷

Employment at the Sunset Headquarters "decreased from over 400 in the mid-1980s to 65 or 70 in 2015."³⁸ All employees at 85 Willow Road were moved back to the main headquarters at 80 Willow Road that continued to serve as the primary operating building for the magazine. In November 2014, Time Inc. sold both of its properties on Willow Road to real estate investment firm Embarcadero Capital Partners, Ltd.³⁹ It was later sold again in 2019 to Russian businessman Vitaly Yusufov and was proposed for demolition and redevelopment in 2023.⁴⁰

Sunset Magazine continues to operate in Oakland, California with both print and digital formats. The *Sunset Magazine* records, 1931-1998, are held at Stanford University.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Valerie J. Nelson, "Publisher helped define Western lifestyle," *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 2010: 21.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *The History of Sunset*, 13.

³⁷ Knapp Architects, 44.

³⁸ Ibid., 45.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Emily Mibach, "Developer wants to replace Sunset campus with four buildings, one taller than Hoover Tower," *Palo Alto Daily Post*, July 22, 2023, <https://padailypost.com/2023/07/22/developer-wants-to-replace-sunset-campus-with-a-building-as-large-as-hoover-tower/> (accessed August 12, 2024).

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cooking, Western home styling. We have freed ourselves of the pressures of metropolitan living and working conditions.”²²

Part of the charm of the new headquarters building was the incorporation of test kitchens and test gardens where *Sunset Magazine* staff could experiment with potential recipes and gardening techniques to be featured in future articles. Sunset Headquarters was known as “a laboratory of western living” and “that sense of responsibility for testing the cooking, gardening, home-repair and travel ideas addressed in the magazine, and using the principles behind these ideas, is evident throughout the tour of Sunset.”²³ Sunset Headquarters was so intrinsically linked to the magazine that when the publication discussed “virtues of drought-resistant plants in this era of low rainfall, the large lawns in front of the main headquarters building... were recently replaced by a different kind of grass that needs half the water the original lawn required.”²⁴

By November 1953, Sunset Headquarters had already seen 3,900 square feet of additions as a result of “unprecedented growth of the magazine since the move down the Peninsula [in which] the editorial staff... increased more than 50 percent in the last two years.”²⁵ The building was “one of the most popular tourist attractions in the San Francisco bay area” with “more than 76,000 visitors from nearby and all over the world.”²⁶ Sunset welcomed its 100,000th visitor the following year in May 1954. Sunset Headquarters was considered a “mecca for visitors” with “regional and national conventions held in San Francisco frequently [planning] a ‘visit to Sunset’ as a convention feature.”²⁷

Sunset Magazine was distributed at newsstands in eight western states in 1960, separated into three unique editions: the northern edition in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho; the central edition in Northern California, Nevada, and Utah; and the southern edition in Southern California, Arizona, and Hawaii.²⁸ Each edition was tailor-made to address the particular climates to provide the best advice for readers in those location as plants that might do well in one region may not do well in another. The southern edition was later divided into a more concentrated Southern California edition and a desert edition.²⁹ In 1960, *Sunset Magazine* had a circulation of 660,000, with almost 350,000 people having toured the headquarters since it opened.³⁰

As operations continued to be profitable and grow, the Sunset Headquarters building was no longer able to sufficiently handle the needs of the company. Between 1953 and 1963, “Sunset headquarters staff [had] grown by 80 per cent, to 245 members; magazine circulation has grown by almost 50 per cent, to 730,000, and gross revenue... has tripled.”³¹ The Lane Book Company

²² Ibid.

²³ Jonathan Taylor, “Inside Sunset Magazine,” *The Modesto Bee*, May 25, 1989: 35.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ “Sunset Magazine Will Hold ‘Open House’ Sunday Afternoon,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, November 6, 1953: 8.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “Sunset Wins in Landscaping,” *The Times*, January 27, 1956: 19.

²⁸ Don Webster, “Lane Publishing: Western living magazine, books,” *Daily Palo Alto Times*, September 7, 1960: 20.

²⁹ “Sunset Plans New Building,” *Redwood City Tribune*, October 21, 1963: 13.

³⁰ Webster, “Lane Publishing: Western living magazine, books.”

³¹ “Sunset Plans New Building,” *Redwood City Tribune*, October 21, 1963: 13.

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The new headquarters was designed in a way to reflect the ideals of *Sunset Magazine* and how the L. W. Lane Publishing Company wanted to project the magazine's image to its readers. The company engaged master designer Cliff May, who had already been regularly featured within the magazine, to design an office building that "had expansion potential and [was] a building that expressed what the magazine was about, which was, essentially, suburban life."¹⁷ Cliff May used his quintessential California Ranch style to design a one-story splayed building using natural materials like wood and adobe that corresponded with the surrounding landscape developed by landscape architect Thomas Dolliver Church.

Cliff May's plan divided the building into three sections "to accommodate a 'reception and entertainment unit' (which included a 'test kitchen' for testing recipes), a 'creative unit' (editorial offices), and a 'production unit' (offices for accounting and circulation, etc.)."¹⁸ Approximately one hundred employees were to be relocated the new Sunset Headquarters, while advertising sales would remain in San Francisco and printing would remain in Los Angeles. Sunset Headquarters officially opened with four days of ceremonies October 11 to 14, 1951, with several thousand people in attendance. Newspapers lauded the new headquarters, noting "that way of Western living to which *Sunset Magazine* is dedicated is richly preserved in every detail of the new office-home of Lane Publishing Co."¹⁹

A short guidebook titled *The Sunset Story* printed by the L. W. Lane Publishing Company as an introduction to the new headquarters notes:

In appearance, *Sunset's* home has little in common with most "office" buildings. The heavy roof shakes were hand-split from redwood logs cut in the La Honda mountain area 20 miles to the west. The adobe bricks used here in the two-foot thick wall at the building entrance were handmade for *Sunset* in Fresno, California. The 10-foot entrance doors were hand-carved from four-inch thick pine panels.

As Cliff May's first application of the California Ranch style to an office building, the \$500,000 Sunset Headquarters was being recognized as "[representing] the first large-scale adaptation of the informal indoor-outdoor theme of western living to the professional needs of a large publishing enterprise."²⁰ Sunset Headquarters was unique in that "no other magazine, except Reader's Digest, [had] ever moved to the country in the manner in which L. W. Lane, publisher, brought his entire organization to the Peninsula."²¹ The design of Sunset Headquarters was so important to the philosophy of the magazine that after it was completed, L. W. Lane, Sr. remarked, "Here we can work in an atmosphere related to the things we write about—gardening,

¹⁷ Gregory, 104.

¹⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹⁹ Frances Moffat, "Sunset plans open house for new plant Oct. 13-14," *Daily Palo Alto Times*, October 3, 1951: 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

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Lane, Sr. of the L.W. Lane Publishing Company who revolutionized the magazine format again to be focused on advising families already living in the American West.¹⁰ The first issue of *Sunset Magazine* under the ownership of the L.W. Lane Publishing Company was published in February 1929.¹¹ Articles shared guidance on Western living, focusing on a range of skills from gardening to cooking. A 1935 advertisement emphasizes how *Sunset Magazine* could benefit the reader:

As soon as you open the colorful cover of your first copy of SUNSET Magazine you begin discovering ways to make your dreams come true, for SUNSET, alone among magazines, tells you "how-to" do these things:

How to have a beautiful Western garden blooming the year 'round, how to furnish and decorate your Western home, how to prepare appetizing meals in the distinctive Western way, what beauty rules to follow for Western climate, how to get the most fun outdoors, and a host of other things you've always wanted to know.

SUNSET's attractive, timely pages cover the whole range of Pacific Western living from Seattle to San Diego, from the Coast to the Rocky Mountains! With its helpful time-and-money saving articles and good ideas, SUNSET is bringing inspiration and happiness to over 200,000 Western families. For years to come you will value SUNSET as you would a warm, personal friend and counsellor.¹²

From June 1943 on, *Sunset Magazine* began printing its issues with the tagline "The Magazine of Western Living," emphasizing its role in dictating the taste of the West.¹³

Under the direction of the L.W. Lane Publishing Company, *Sunset Magazine* began to develop into a profitable enterprise and its previous headquarters building at 576 Sacramento Street in San Francisco was no longer sufficient for housing the growing business. By 1950, the magazine had a circulation of 500,000 households with more than \$2 million worth of space bought by advertisers that year alone.¹⁴ The end of World War II, in particular, helped serve as the stimulus for greater growth in *Sunset Magazine* as economic prosperity led more Americans to move west and California and Arizona saw large population booms. In order to accommodate the increasing operations, a new headquarters building was designed and constructed in Menlo Park to take advantage of a new "garden office zone," in which "residential-like landscaping and underground utilities were required, and manufacturing, neon signs, and retailing were prohibited."¹⁵ The location was previously part of the old Rancho de las Pulgas, a land grant made by Spain to Don Jose Arguello, governor of Spanish California, in 1815.¹⁶

¹⁰ Shelgren, "Sunset keeps its gardens open in Menlo Park."

¹¹ *The History of Sunset* (Menlo Park, CA: Lane Publishing Co., 1981), 7.

¹² "Advertisement: Special Announcement," *Contra Costa Gazette*, March 29, 1935: 2.

¹³ *The History of Sunset*, 9.

¹⁴ "Work Begins in Menlo Park for Sunset's Office Building," *Redwood City Tribune*, December 13, 1950: 7.

¹⁵ Daniel P. Gregory, *Cliff May and the Modern Ranch House* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2008), 104.

¹⁶ *The History of Sunset*, 9.

Sunset Headquarters
Name of Property

San Mateo, California
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Sunset Headquarters is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with *Sunset Magazine*, a longstanding publication managed by the Lane publishing family that greatly influenced public perception of the West, and under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture as a prominent and first example of the California Ranch architectural style being applied by master designer Cliff May to a commercial office building and as a prominent example of a planned landscape by master landscape architect Thomas Dolliver Church. The period of significance is from 1951, the year of construction, to 1990, when *Sunset Magazine* was sold to Time Warner and no longer owned or managed by the Lane family. The property satisfies Criteria Consideration G as a property associated with the continued development and influence of *Sunset Magazine* through the 1980s as a nationally recognized enterprise owned and operated by the same family for sixty-two years.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Commerce

Sunset Magazine

Sunset Magazine was first published in May 1898 as a publication of the Southern Pacific Railroad to entice Americans living in eastern states into going west.⁵ The magazine was named after the Sunset Limited, a train line owned by Southern Pacific Railroad that ran between Los Angeles and New Orleans.⁶ Initially, part of the focus of the magazine was to challenge preconceived notions of the West as lawless and barren by promoting “economic development schemes, recreational opportunities, and the West’s desirable climate.”⁷ The magazine had national circulation and in 1914, the company was “sold by the railroad to its employes [sic] [(Woodhead, Field and Company, comprised of former magazine editors)], and it became a high-class literary magazine” that featured writers such as Will James, Sinclair Lewis, Mary Hunter Austin, and Zane Grey.⁸

Though the magazine survived fourteen years under the ownership of Woodhead, Field and Company, by 1928, the firm was close to bankruptcy.⁹ Seeing dwindling profits and having been “never economically sound,” *Sunset Magazine* was sold in 1928 to Laurence William “L.W.”

⁵ “Rotary Club to Hear Talk on Magazine,” *Santa Barbara News Press*, July 19, 1961: 4.

⁶ Jonathan Taylor, “Inside Sunset Magazine,” *The Modesto Bee*, May 25, 1989: 35.

⁷ Knapp Architects, 40.

⁸ Don Webster, “Lane Publishing: Western living magazine, books,” *Daily Palo Alto Times*, September 7, 1960: 20; Margaret Shelgren, “Sunset keeps its gardens open in Menlo Park,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 29, 1984: 69-72.

⁹ Knapp Architects, 41.

Sunset Headquarters
Name of Property

San Mateo, California
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1951-1990

Significant Dates

1951

1990

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

May, Cliff (designer)

Higgins & Root (architect)

Church, Thomas Dolliver (landscape)