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March 10, 2023

Kristen Goddard
Senior Planner
T&B Planning
3200 El Camino Real, Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92602
Transmitted via email to KGoddard@tbplanning.com

RE: Cultural Resource Condition Assessment for the Alder and Merrill Project, City of Fontana, San Bernardino County, California

Dear Ms. Goddard:

At the request of T&B Planning, PaleoWest, LLC (PaleoWest) completed a cultural resource condition assessment for the proposed Alder and Merrill Project (Project). The cultural resources study was conducted in support of a proposed General Plan Amendment and Zone Change and consisted of background research and a survey to identify potential cultural resources that may be present on the Project property. This memorandum summarizes the findings of the condition assessment.

Project Description

The Project consists of a proposed General Plan Amendment and a Zone Change for a 6.4-acre property (Project Site) located north of Merrill Avenue, between Alder Avenue and Laurel Avenue in the city of Fontana, San Bernardino County, California (Attachment A, Project Location Map). The General Plan Amendment would change the General Plan land use designation of the Project Site from Single-Family Residential (R-SF) to Multi-Family Medium High Density Residential (R-MFMH) and the zoning of the Project Site from Single-Family Residential (R-1) to Multi-Family Medium/High Density Residential (R-4). The increased unit count allowance would increase from a maximum of 32 residential units (6.4 acres x 5.0 units/acre = 32) to 249 residential units (6.4 acres x 39 units/acre = 249), for a total increase of 217 units assuming maximum development potential under the existing and proposed designations. No development project is currently proposed nor is any physical disturbance of the property currently proposed.

Review of Historic Maps and Aerial Images

As part of the background research, PaleoWest reviewed aerial photographs of the Project Site and vicinity that dated to 1937, 1948, 1959, 1966, 1980, 1985, 1994, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 (NETROnline 2023). These images indicate that the current Project Site was under cultivation as a citrus orchard as early as 1938. A residential building



is noted on the Project Site at this time. Real estate records indicate that the single-family residence, which is located at 17764 Merrill Avenue, was constructed in 1924 (Realtor.com 2023). A second building, which appears to be an accessory structure associated with a residence at 17808 Merrill Avenue, is also present on the Project site; records indicate that the residential building at 17808 Merrill Avenue was constructed in 1926 (Realtor.com 2023).

By 1959, three additional accessory buildings had been constructed on the residential property at 17764 Merrill Avenue, including a rectangular structure located at the rear of the parcel. Although the southeastern portion of the Project Site is still under cultivation in the late 1950s, the citrus orchards that were once present in the western and northern portions of the property are no longer present. By 1980, the remaining citrus orchards had been removed and the only observable development is the residence at 17764 Merrill Avenue. Although the house and one accessory building (possible garage) are still present on the property, the two other buildings noted on the 1959 aerial are no longer extant. The outbuilding at 17808 Merrill Avenue also appears to have been demolished by 1980. Foundational remnants of the accessory buildings are visible on aerial images. The remainder of the Project Site appears vacant. No noted changes have occurred to the Project Site since the 1980s.

Field Survey

A survey of the Project Site was conducted by PaleoWest Staff Archaeologist Heather Landazuri on February 14, 2023. The survey consisted of walking a series of east-west oriented transects that were spaced approximately at 10- to 15-meter (33- to 50-feet) intervals across the Project Site. The archaeologist carefully inspected all areas likely to contain or exhibit sensitive cultural resources to ensure discovery and documentation of any visible, potentially significant cultural resources located within the Project area. Historical site indicators may include fence lines, ditches, standing buildings, objects or structures such as sheds, or concentrations of materials at least 45 years in age, such as domestic refuse (e.g., glass bottles, ceramics, toys, buttons or leather shoes), refuse from other pursuits such as agriculture (e.g., metal tanks, farm machinery parts, horse shoes) or structural materials (e.g., nails, glass window panes, corrugated metal, wood posts or planks, metal pipes and fittings, railroad spurs, etc.). Prehistoric site indicators may include areas of darker soil with concentrations of ash, charcoal, fragments of animal bone (burned or unburned), shell, flaked stone, ground stone, or even human bone.

The Project Site is undeveloped with vegetation consisting primarily of non-native grasses and weeds with isolated shrubs (Attachment B, Photograph 1). Ground visibility was poor to moderate (10% to 50%) with large portions of the Project Site obscured by imported gravel, vegetation, and concentrations of modern refuse (Attachment B, Photograph 2). Exposed native sediments consisted of a light brown-grey, loamy sand alluvium; inclusions include small cobbles and gravels of granitic and metamorphic materials. Modern trash was scattered across the survey area (Attachment B, Photograph 3).

Results

Results of the background research and pedestrian survey identified three possible historic period cultural resources on the Project Site (Attachment A, Project Location Map). These include: 1) the buildings and foundational remains at 17764 Merrill Avenue; 2) the foundational



remains of the accessory building associated with the 17808 Merrill Avenue property; and 3) a metal cross of unknown age. No evidence of prehistoric archaeological remains was identified during the pedestrian survey. A description of each of these resources is provided below.

17764 Merrill Avenue Property

This resource consists of the historic period residential building, garage, and foundational remains at 17764 Merrill Avenue (Attachment B, Photograph 4). As previously noted, archival research indicates that the house was constructed in the 1920s with the garage built by 1959. The pedestrian survey also identified the foundational remains of a rectangular-shaped accessory building that was present on the property in the latter half of the twentieth century. The foundation is constructed of poured concrete and measures 100 feet (east-west) by 20 feet (north-south) in area. It is currently covered with construction debris and parked cars (Attachment B, Photograph 5).

17808 Merrill Avenue Property

The 17808 Merrill Avenue property is not part of the Project Site. However, a demolished accessory building associated with this residence extends onto the Project property (Attachment B, Photograph 6). The foundational remains are constructed of concrete and measure 12 feet (east-west) by 8 feet (north-south) in area. No artifacts were associated with the foundational remains.

Metal Cross

A metal cross was identified in the southeastern portion of the Project Site. The cross lies approximately 100 feet north of Merrill Avenue and is constructed of welded metal that has been painted white (Attachment B, Photograph 7). The letters "CHP" have been welded into the cross. It is not known if the feature denotes a memorial or grave site. Examination of the ground surface in the vicinity of the cross indicates that the area is slightly raised. The cross contained no temporally diagnostic characteristics to indicate its age.

Discussion and Recommendations

The cultural resources condition assessment conducted by PaleoWest found that the Project Site has been previously disturbed by use as a citrus orchard and limited residential development. The Project Site is currently vacant and covered by gravel, non-native grasses and vegetation, and debris piles. No evidence of prehistoric archaeological remains was identified during the pedestrian survey. However, historic period cultural resources associated with the residential properties at 17764 and 17808 Merrill Avenue were found on the Project Site. A metal cross of unknown age, possibly representing a memorial or grave feature, was also documented in the southeastern portion of the property during the field visit. PaleoWest recommends that prior to the development of the Project Site, these three cultural resources be formally recorded and evaluated for significance as historical resources per the California Environmental Quality Act.



It has been a pleasure working with you on this Project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at tclark@paleowest.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tiffany Clark".

Tiffany Clark, Ph.D., RPA | Principal Archaeologist

Attachments

Attachment A – Project Location Map

Attachment B – Photographs



References

NETROnline

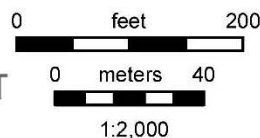
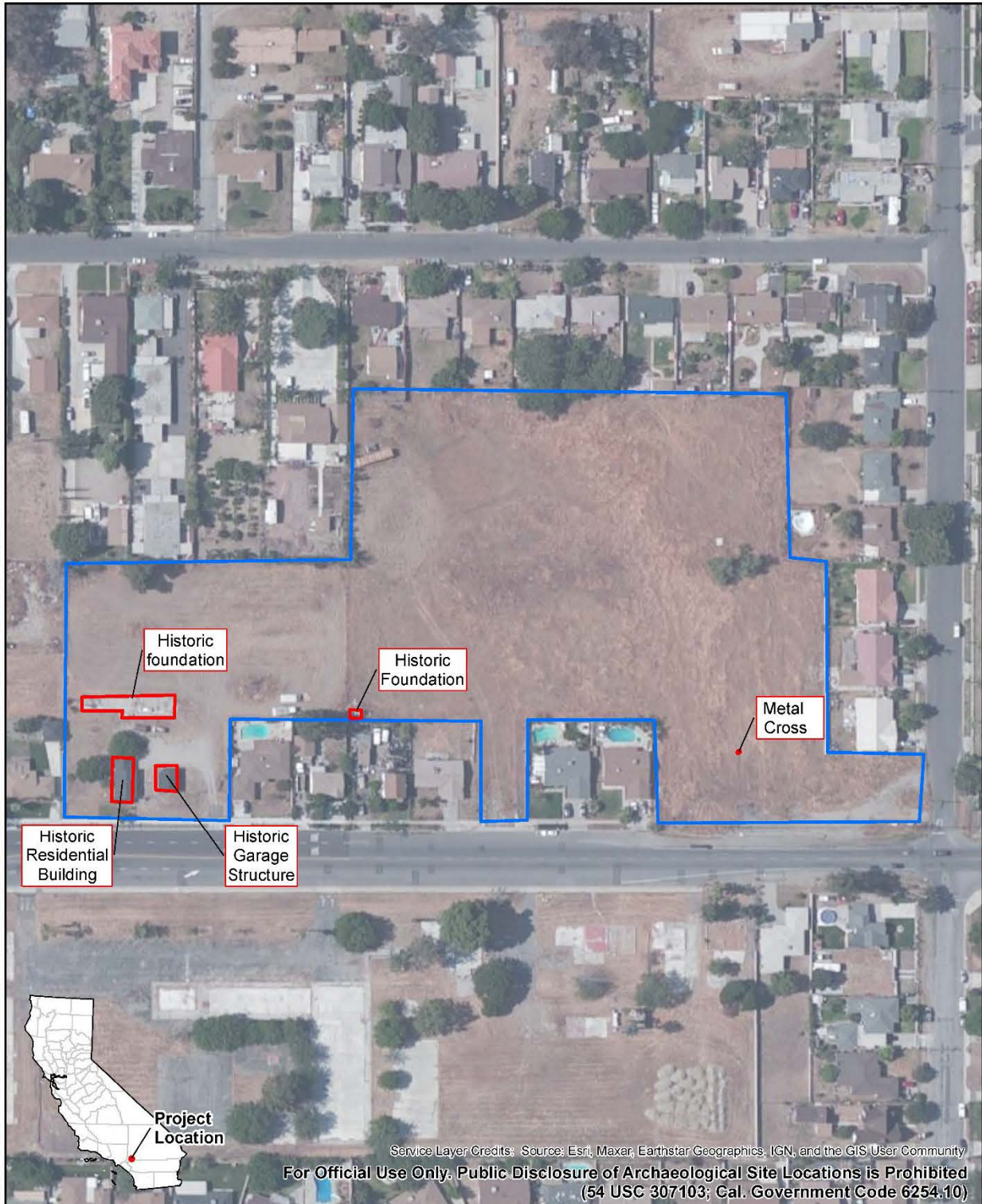
2023 Aerial images of the Project Area and Vicinity. Accessed February 24, 2023, at <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

Realtor.com

2023 Online records of buildings at 17764 Merrill Avenue, City of Fontana. Accessed February 24, 2023, at https://www.realtor.com/realestateandhomes-detail/17764-Merrill-Ave_Fontana_CA_92335_M29197-07985.



Attachment A. Project Location Map



USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:
Fontana, Ca (1980) San
Bernardino BM UTM
Zone 11, NAD 83

-  Project Area
-  Potential Cultural Resource

Attachment B. Photographs





Photograph 1. Overview of vegetated area in northwestern portion of Project Site, facing east



Photograph 2. Overview of eastern portion of Project Site covered with imported gravel, facing south





Photograph 3. Overview of Project Site showing modern refuse, facing south



Photograph 4. Historic residence and garage on 17764 Merrill Avenue, facing northwest



Photograph 5. Historic foundation at 17764 Merrill Avenue, facing east



Photograph 6. Historic foundation associated with 17808 Merrill Avenue, facing west





Photograph 7. Metal cross labeled "CHP" in southeastern option of Project Site, facing northeast.