

Appendix 3.3-1
Historic Resource Evaluation

THE SHOPS AT TANFORAN SAN BRUNO, CALIFORNIA HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CHL	California Historical Landmark
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
Eimac	Eitel-McCullough, Inc.
HRE	Historic Resource Evaluation
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NPS	National Park Service
NETR	Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC
P-D	Planned development district

1.1 Executive Summary

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) was prepared by ICF on behalf of the City of San Bruno, California, to evaluate The Shops at Tanforan at 1150 El Camino Real for historical significance prior to beginning renovation work. As a Secretary of the Interior Standards-qualified consultant, ICF prepares HREs for developments that may affect historical resources, as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This HRE focuses on the entire shopping center complex, which covers multiple parcels and includes the primary two-story shopping center building, combined multi-level movie theater and parking structure, multiple free-standing parking structures, and a commemorative garden.

The site of The Shops at Tanforan is the location of California Historical Landmark (CHL) No. 934, the Temporary Detention Camps for Japanese Americans/Tanforan Assembly Center in San Mateo County. However, no physical historic fabric of the temporary detention camps remains on the site. The site was vacant in the mid-to-late- 1960s before redevelopment as a shopping center complex. The extant shopping center complex does not have a survey and evaluation for its eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR).

This HRE will supplement a draft of the Tanforan Planned Development Project Environmental Impact Report. This HRE evaluates the potential historical significance of The Shops at Tanforan as an individual resource.

1.1.1 Property Information

1.1.1.1 Zoning

The subject property is zoned P-D (Planned development district), which allows a mixture of uses, or unusual density, building intensity, or design relationships which will produce an environment and use of land in each case superior to that which would result from the regulations of the standard districts or combination of districts (City of San Bruno 2024). The shopping center complex's property boundary is Camino Real (State Route 82) to the west, Sneath Lane to the north, Huntington Avenue to the east, and the Quentin L. Kopp Freeway to the south.

1.1.1.2 Current Historic Status

The following sections examine previous national, state, and local historic status ratings currently assigned to the property. Additionally, ICF searched federal, state, and local records to determine if the property on the project site has been identified in any official registers of historical resources.

1.1.1.3 National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historical resources. It is administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and includes buildings,

structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

The Shops at Tanforan is not listed in the NRHP as an individual resource, or as part of a designated historic district.

1.1.1.4 California Register of Historical Resources

The CRHR is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources listed in the State Historical Landmarks and the NRHP are automatically listed in the CRHR. Resources can also be nominated to the CRHR by local governments, private organizations, or citizens.

The Shops at Tanforan is the site of CHL No. 934 Temporary Detention Camps for Japanese Americans/Tanforan Assembly Center in San Mateo County. CHLs No. 770 and above are automatically listed in the CRHR. However, no physical historic fabric of the temporary detention camps remains on the site; In 1943, the U.S. Navy transformed the site into a base for barracks and sailor assignments, in the 1940s, John Marchbank remodeled and reopened the site as a seasonal horse racing track. And in 1964, a fire destroyed all remnants of the Tanforan Racetrack. The site was vacant in the mid-to-late- 1960s before redevelopment as a shopping center. See Chapter 2, *Property Description and History*, for a full history of the site's development.

1.1.1.5 San Bruno General Plan

The *San Bruno General Plan* (City of San Bruno 2009), adopted March 24, 2009, outlines a vision for the long-range physical and economic development of the community through 2025. The general plan land use designations, policies, and implementing actions will guide local officials in making decisions on private development proposals and public facilities. The Land Use Element states that the City is participating in the Grand Boulevard Initiative, an initiative to revitalize communities along the El Camino Real corridor into vibrant, people-friendly places (Joint Venture Silicon Valley 2025). As part of this program, "cities are encouraged to design for neighborhoods that include high quality building designs and diverse land uses, preserve historic buildings and places, and enhance our economic and cultural diversity, with the broad involvement of residents, workers and location businesses." The following guiding policy from the Land Use Element is relevant to cultural resources and the proposed project.

Grand Boulevard Initiative: 7. Preserve and accentuate unique and desirable community character and the existing quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods.

The general plan also contains an Environmental Resources and Conservation Element, which outlines policies relating to biological resources and habitat, water quality, air quality, global climate change, historical and cultural resources, and environmental resources and conservation policies. The following guiding policies from the Environmental Resources and Conservation Element are relevant to cultural resources and the proposed project.

ERC-F: Preserve and enhance historic and cultural resources within the city, particularly within the historic Downtown area.

ERC-35: Develop criteria for designation of local historic or cultural resources. Designation may not be based solely on the age of a resource, but rather special qualities, detailing, people, or events associated with it. Resources may also include special signage and/or landmarks known to city residents.

ERC-36: Preserve historic structures and resources during reuse and intensification within the city's older neighborhoods.

ERC-37: Designate the vicinity of Taylor Avenue, San Mateo Avenue, and El Camino Real as the beginning of the State Highway System as a historic landmark with a marker.

ERC-38: Work cooperatively with the developers of The Shops at Tanforan to identify the site as the former Tanforan Racetrack as a historic landmark with a marker.

ERC-39: Continue to protect archaeological sites and resources from damage. Require that areas found to contain significant indigenous artifacts be examined by a qualified archaeologist for recommendations concerning protection and preservation.

ERC-40: Ensure that new development adjacent to historic structures is compatible with the character of the structure and the surrounding neighborhood.

ERC-41: Educate citizens about San Bruno's past by creating a brochure describing the City's history and resources for distribution to community groups and public schools.

ERC-42: If demolition of a historical building is necessary for safety reasons, attempt to preserve the building façade for adaptive reuse during reconstruction. Offer funding through the Redevelopment Agency for façade preservation projects.

ERC-43: Conduct a thorough study of the historic and cultural resources within San Bruno, in coordination with the City's centennial anniversary in 2014.

ERC-44: Rehabilitation, renovation, or reuse of historic resources will be implemented in coordination with the standards of the Secretary of the Interior and the Office of Historic Preservation.

PFS-47: Develop criteria to determine whether damaged buildings can be preserved and/or restored following a natural disaster, rather than demolished.

1.1.2 Architectural Survey

ICF architectural historians Nicole Felicetti and Patrick Maley surveyed The Shops at Tanforan at 1150 El Camino Real on September 8, 2023, to record the existing conditions, current features, and visible alterations of the property. The site survey documented exposed exterior façades, accessible areas of the shopping complex, and exterior landscape features within the complex using photographs and written notes. Except where otherwise noted, all photographs in this report were taken by ICF on September 8, 2023.

1.1.1 Research

ICF prepared this report and Appendix A, *Department of Parks and Recreation 523 Form*, using primary and secondary sources associated with The Shops at Tanforan. These sources were collected at various repositories. Property ownership and parcel boundaries were discerned from ParcelQuest, historic images of the property were sought through the Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR), and site-specific research, including site history, building alterations, tenant history, was conducted using various online newspaper databases and resources.

2.1 Property Description

2.1.1 Site Description

The subject property, known today as The Shops of Tanforan, is a mall complex that occupies a flat, approximately 37.9-acre property west of U.S. Highway 101 and north of Interstate 380 (Quentin L. Kopp Freeway) in San Bruno, California. The complex is bound by El Camino Real (State Route 82) to the west, Sneath Lane to the north, Huntington Avenue to the east, and the Quentin L. Kopp Freeway to the south. The Shops at Tanforan complex consists of three permanent buildings and two aboveground parking structures constructed between 1970 and 2009.



Figure 1. Shops at Tanforan complex: 1. Primary shopping center, 2. Automotive service building, 3. Cinemark Century at Tanforan building, 4. The Shops at Tanforan parking garage #1, 5. The Shops at Tanforan parking garage #2, 6. Site of a former building or structure (unknown size and use), 7. Commemorative Garden and California Historical Landmark No. 934.09 bronze marker. Source: Google Earth, notations by ICF 2024.

The primary shopping center building and the associated automotive service building to the north are of historic age; the remaining buildings and structures in the complex are less than 50 years old (Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC [NETR] 1980). Two contemporary, sculptural archways cantilever over the primary shopping center's entrances at the northeast and southwest sections of the building (Figures 2 through 6). The northeast entrance faces the San Bruno Bay

Area Rapid Transit (BART) station and its associated parking structure; the southwest entrance faces a surface-level parking lot, an adjacent, below-grade lot, and additional exterior store entrances.



Figure 2. Northeast entrance, facing southwest.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 3. Northeast entrance, facing west.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 4 Interior sculptural entrance's roof and connection to the original massing, facing southwest.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 5. Southwest entrance, facing northeast.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 6. Southwest entrance, facing south.
Source: ICF 2023.

The primary shopping center sits at the center of the complex, with attached anchor stores at the south, east, and north elevations (JCPenney, Target, and Hyundai, respectively) (Figures 7 through 9). A movie theater and attached parking structure sit to the north of the shopping center. A one-story automotive service building sits further north at the complex's northern boundary. Surface parking lots and multi-level parking structures comprise the remaining complex space surrounding the primary shopping center.¹



Figure 7. South anchor. JCPenney's west elevation, facing north.

Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 8. East anchor. Target's south elevation, facing northwest. Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 9. North anchor. Gensis/Hyundai's north elevation, facing east.

Source: ICF 2023.

The primary shopping center, constructed in 1970–1975, comprises a core two-story building with three attached anchor stores and two pedestrian entrances. The building has an irregular plan, horizontal massing, and asymmetrical composition with exterior features and signage of specific store branding. The two mall entrances are two-story curtain-wall class and steel systems with attached metal awnings and pairs of double pedestrian doors. A vertically oriented metal sculpture roof with a point at the apex caps each entrance with small skylights at the center. In addition to the shopping center's two public entrances, exterior-facing stores also have their own entrances. A

¹ Adjacent to the complex's eastern boundary are a five-level San Bruno BART parking garage (including an accessible roof), the San Bruno police station, and the San Bruno BART station with associated structures. These properties are sited on parcels between the shopping center buildings and Huntington Avenue, and are not part of the shopping center complex property; therefore, they are not addressed in this historical resource evaluation. Similarly, vacant parcels to the north of Sneath Lane are not included in the shopping center complex.

three-level parking structure provides access to Target's east elevation at the ground level and the second level through the structure's roof level. The Cinemark Century at Tanforan building sits atop a three-level parking structure and is accessed from an enclosed pathway from the second floor of the shopping center's north elevation. The primary building's flat roof is also punctuated with a centered, narrow row of square skylights in a northwest-to-southeast line. The shopping center does not exemplify one predominant architectural style or express universal patterns or exterior finishes. Mixed cladding, curtain-wall entrances, fenestration patterns, and signage of the exterior-facing stores are specific to each store's typical corporate branding (**Figures 10 through 13**). Exterior stores include Barnes & Noble, Petco, BJ's Restaurant, and Genesis; the entire shopping center comprises a mix of stores, offices, and restaurants.



Figure 10. Example of exterior-facing stores' corporate branding. BJ's Restaurant's south and west elevations, facing north.

Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 11. Bronze Seabiscuit statue in the foreground, an example of exterior-facing stores' corporate branding in the background. Barnes & Noble's west elevation, facing east.

Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 12. Example of exterior-facing stores' corporate branding. Split ground level. Planet Fitness' north elevation, facing south.

Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 13. Example of exterior-facing stores' corporate branding. Split second level. Petco and Hyundai's west elevations, facing northeast.

Source: ICF 2023.

The one-story automotive service building, constructed ca. 1972, was an ancillary building of the northern tenant and the shopping center's expansion in the early to mid-1970s. Other planned buildings surrounding the primary shopping center are no longer extant (*San Mateo Times* 1971:49). The building is currently associated with Genesis and Hyundai (**Figures 14 and 15**). The building has a long and narrow rectangular footprint and a low massing. The flat roof extends over each elevation adorned with attached corporate signage. The north and south elevations comprise of

seven bays punctuated by overhead doors for automotive service; five doors are double-width, and two are single-width. Single pedestrian doors punctuate the elevations as well. An associated office comprises the western end of the building with a curtain-wall system and pedestrian entrances on the north and south elevations. The building’s east and west elevations do not have any openings.



Figure 14. Automotive service building’s south and west elevations, facing northeast.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 15. Automotive service building’s north and west elevations, facing southeast.
Source: ICF 2023.

The remainder of The Shops at Tanforan’s built-environment features are less than 50 years old. They include the following free-standing structures and buildings to the north, east, and south of the primary shopping center: the Cinemark Century at Tanforan building and parking structure, and two free-standing aboveground parking structures (**Figures 16 through 19**). For additional details on building alterations and site history, see Section 2.2, *Property History*.



Figure 16. Century Theaters move theater atop a parking structure’s north and west elevations, facing southeast.
Source: ICF 2023.

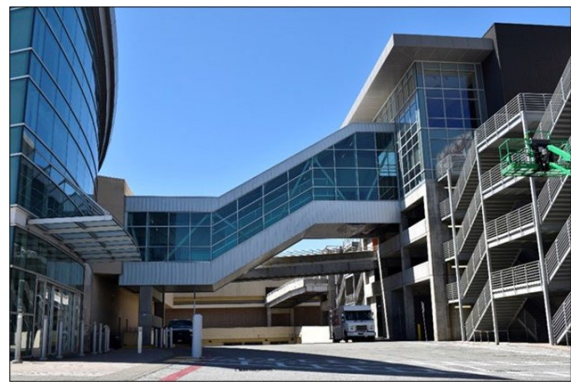


Figure 17. Enclosed connection between the shopping center and the movie theater, facing southwest.
Source: ICF 2023.



Figure 18. Parking structure #1's entrance from Huntington Avenue, facing southwest.

Source: ICF 2023.

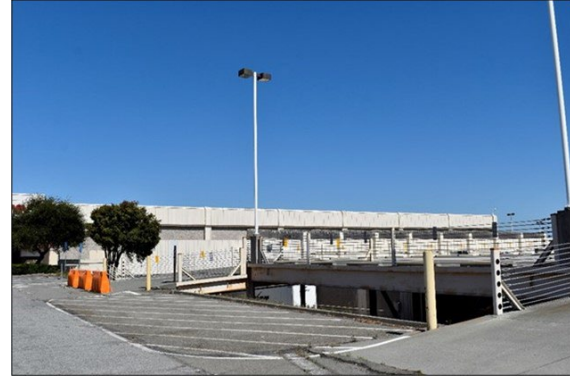


Figure 19. Parking structure #2's entrance from the JCPenny surface lot, facing northeast.

Source: ICF 2023.

2.2 Property History

The following sections provide a site history and construction chronology based on historic maps, photographs, newspaper articles, and additional primary and secondary resources collected from repositories and online sources listed in Section 1.2, *Methods*.

2.2.1 Site History

In 1899, the first Tanforan Racetrack viewing stands and racetrack was built between El Camino Real and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks in San Bruno. The racetrack was connected to transit systems. The #40 Interurban Trolley Line was adjacent to the racetrack's first viewing stands, which were then on the east side of the racetrack, facing west. The #40 Interurban Trolley Line ran from San Francisco to San Mateo from 1903 to 1949 (Fredericks 2003:23,28).

The Tanforan Racetrack attracted horse racing seasonally and was an economic boost for the city and residents of San Bruno. In 1917, the grounds were used to pitch tents and train the California Grizzlies (a regiment of the 144th Field Artillery of the U.S. Army) for their anticipated deployment in World War I (San Bruno Public Library 1917). Gambling was outlawed in the 1910s, and the racetrack stands were torn down in 1918. Not long after, in 1923, the second viewing stands of the Tanforan Racetrack were constructed on the west side of the track along El Camino Real, and horse racing began again. Adolph R. Spreckels, a notable California businessman, also financed the construction of a large grandstand and clubhouse. In the late 1930s, the racehorse Seabiscuit was moved to the West Coast, where he began to achieve racing success at the Tanforan Racetrack and other West Coast racetracks (The San Mateo Daily Journal 2017; Fredericks 2003:24). Seabiscuit became the highest money-winning horse in horseracing in the 1930s and 1940s. Seabiscuit's owner, Charles Howard, used the Tanforan Racetrack as the horse's training track and lived on a ranch in Willits (Fredericks 2003:24).

The Tanforan Racetrack was also the site of notable Bay Area aviation achievements. In January 1910, during an air promotion event, Louis Paulhan attempted the first airplane flight in the San Francisco Bay Area at the Tanforan Racetrack. Thousands watched as Paulhan flew for eight minutes, soaring to an altitude of 700 feet. Eugene Ely took off from the Tanforan Racetrack in

January of the following year. He landed on a 30-by-130-foot platform constructed on the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania, anchored in San Francisco Bay. Ely's historic flight marked the first carrier landing and take-off, a triumph in the early history of naval aviation (Fredericks 2003:23).

During World War II, the Tanforan Racetrack was closed and used to detain approximately 8,000 Japanese and Japanese-American internees from Northern California before they were moved to more permanent incarceration camps. The Tanforan site was one of 17 temporary "assembly centers" or "detention centers," established by Executive Order 9066 in 1942 to remove and imprison anyone deemed a threat on the West Coast and was applied to civilian Japanese-Americans. Existing horse stalls and new, impermanent barracks were used to temporarily detain internees before their relocation to more isolated internment camps (Tanforan Memorial 2023a). In 1943, the U.S. Navy took over the facility and used it as a naval base for barracks and sailor assignments in the war effort. Also, during wartime, the Golden Gate National Cemetery developed to the northwest of The Shops at Tanforan complex (Fredericks 2003:29). Congress established the Golden Gate National Cemetery in 1937. The War Department purchased the 161.5-acre tract in 1938 as a cemetery for American veterans. The first burial occurred in 1941, and the official dedication was on Memorial Day in 1942 (Fredericks 2003:28).

Following World War II, John Marchbank, owner of the Tanforan Racetrack since the 1920s, led the remodeling of the track and stands and reopened the racetrack. Seasonal horse racing resumed in the 1940s and 1950s (Fredericks 2003:25). In 1964, a fire destroyed the Tanforan Racetrack.

The site was vacant in the late 1960s as developers and city officials engaged in disputes over the land and the development of a new shopping center. As early as March 1965, developers were in front of the City Planning Department with plans to rezone and redevelop the racetrack property for a commercial and residential complex (*San Mateo Times* 1965:4; *San Mateo Times* 1966b:31). In 1966, San Bruno officials approved final subdivision maps of the (then called) Tanforan Shopping Center, effectively accepting proposed dedicated streets and a general layout of commercial-only development (*San Mateo Times* 1966a:79). However, there was debate between the planning commissioners and private developers over issues such as a change to commercial zoning and height variances on the property. The lots were sold among development companies multiple times during the course of the argument (*San Mateo Times* 1965:4). The final sale to the Hapsmith Company (see below) occurred in March 1968, and the first anchor store—Sears, Roebuck, and Co.—was secured for planned construction by June of the same year (*Redwood City Tribune* 1965:14; *Palo Alto Times* 1968:3; *SanMateo Times* 1968a:25). The Sears, Roebuck, and Co. retail store opened in October 1970, comprising 180,000 square feet of space in a main retail unit, a garden shop, and an automotive center (*San Francisco Examiner* 1970:57). In 1972, the Tanforan Shopping Center celebrated its grand opening.

2.2.2 Construction Chronology

Table 2-1 provides a chronology of known construction activity on The Shops at Tanforan and the general shopping complex. Table 2-1 does not include the various interior remodeling and upgrading projects that have taken place since The Shops at Tanforan's construction, which occurred frequently on the primary shopping center building as new tenants occupied commercial spaces. Safety and tenant improvements—such as reconfiguring partition wall locations, replacing wall, ceiling, and floor finishes, and replacement or addition of attached signage—have not influenced the exterior and publicly accessible interior areas of the property.

Table 2-1. Construction Chronology

Date	Detail	Sources
1970– 1975	The primary shopping center building (Map Reference 1 on Figure 1) was constructed; stores were built in stages. The northern anchor store (a Sears, Roebuck, and Co. retail store) was built first in 1970, followed by the southern and eastern anchor stores in approximately 1972. By May 1975, the shopping center expanded to include three department stores, four United Artists Theaters, and approximately 75 stores, with eight more planned for completion by the end of the year.	<i>San Mateo Times</i> .1968a. “Sears Plans New Store At Tanforan.” June 10. <i>San Mateo Times</i> . 1970. “Emporium to Be Built at Tanforan.” November 13. <i>San Mateo Times</i> . 1971. “Public Hearing Monday on Tanforan Expansion.” August 5. <i>San Mateo Times</i> . 1975. “Lots of Growth For Shop Center.” May 14.
1972– 1980	An associated three-level parking structure with an accessible roof (Map Reference 4 on Figure 1) was constructed adjacent to the eastern anchor store.	NETR. 1980. <i>San Bruno, California, 94006, Aerial Photograph</i> . Accessed: September 12, 2023.
1975– 1980	The automotive service building (Map Reference 2 on Figure 1) was constructed north of the primary shopping center building, presumably as an ancillary service building to the northern anchor store.	<i>San Mateo Times</i> . 1971. “Public Hearing Monday on Tanforan Expansion.” August 5. NETR. 1980. <i>San Bruno, California, 94006, Aerial Photograph</i> . Accessed: September 12, 2023.
2005– 2009	The Cinemark Century at Tanforan building and parking structure (Map Reference 3 on Figure 1) was constructed. Additionally, a two-level parking structure with an accessible roof (Map Reference 5 on Figure 1) was constructed adjacent to the southern anchor store.	NETR. 2005. <i>San Bruno, California, 94006, Aerial Photograph</i> . Accessed: September 12, 2023. NETR. 2009. <i>San Bruno, California, 94006, Aerial Photograph</i> . Accessed: September 12, 2023.

2.2.3 Complex Alterations

Between 1972 and 1980, a building or structure of unknown size and use was constructed at the complex’s southeast corner, surrounded by surface lots and parking structures (Map Reference 6). It was demolished between 2002 and 2005 (NETR 2002, 2005). Additionally, two additions were constructed at the primary shopping center’s northeastern corner and southwestern elevation, housing new exterior entrances. Prior to 2005, the shopping center closed for renovations, including the addition of two entrances at the northeast and southwest sections of the building. The entrances replaced existing elevations with curtain-wall systems topped with sculptural, cantilevered archways (NETR 2002, 2005). Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, exterior cladding materials and attached signage were altered and replaced, signifying changing store tenants.

Two memorials are located on the complex’s property. Emile Hons and Don Frate, managers of the Tanforan Shopping Center, installed a large bronze statue of Seabiscuit, a racehorse, adjacent to the

shopping center building's west elevation in October 1972 (*The San Mateo Daily Journal* 2017; Fredericks 2003:28). Between 2006 and 2007, Breevast U.S., then-property owners, dedicated a 16 by 36-foot plot of land adjacent to the building's southwest entrance for a commemorative Japanese garden designed by renowned landscape artists Isao Ogura and Shigeru Namba. In September 2007, a groundbreaking ceremony for the "Tanforan Assembly Center Commemorative Garden" took place, aligning with the 65th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 and the resulting internment of people of Japanese ancestry in the United States (Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California 2007:1). A CHL No. 934.09 bronze marker sits in the commemorative garden (California Historical Landmarks 2016).²

² Public interpretation of the site's historic use as an assembly or detention center for Japanese and Japanese-American internees during World War II exists just east of the mall complex as well. The Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial Committee, in partnership with the Bay Area landscape architectural firm RHAA, installed a permanent bronze statue and memorial plaza just outside the nearby San Bruno BART station. The groundbreaking took place in February 2022, and completion was marked with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in August 2022 (Tanforan Memorial 2023b). This memorial is not located on the mall property.

3.1 Location Context: Modern San Bruno

In 1863, the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad was built along the peninsula through San Bruno. The Southern Pacific Railroad acquired it in 1868. Around this time, the first roadhouse was constructed, the 14-Mile House (later named Uncle Tom's Cabin). The founder of the Bank of California, Darius Ogden Mills, acquired thousands of acres in San Bruno for his estate. The Sneath, Tanfaran (original spelling), and Silva families developed the remaining acreage beyond Mills' land for farms, dairies, and horses.

In the early 1900s, real estate developers began platting land into 25-foot lots for housing sites; San Bruno began developing as a rural community that was accessible to surrounding communities via the El Camino Real, the railroad, the #40 Interurban Line of streetcars, and the slow introduction of the automobile (Fredericks 2003:7). Over 1,400 people moved onto the primarily undeveloped vacant landscape of San Bruno following the earthquake and fire in San Francisco in 1906. In 1914, the city was incorporated as a sixth-class city. San Mateo Avenue became a popular business avenue until the Great Depression stagnated development.

Industry was revitalized in San Bruno with the United States' involvement in World War II: the Tanforan Racetrack was turned into Navy facilities, the local airport became an Army airbase, and the only large business manufacturer based in the city, Eitel-McCullough, Inc. (Eimac), became critical to the war effort for the production of vacuum tubes for military equipment (World Radio History 1944:4). In addition to the Tanforan Racetrack, the Navy developed land to the west for personnel barracks, office barracks, and a large recreational complex were constructed at the corner of San Bruno Avenue and El Camino Real. They also constructed ancillary hospital buildings throughout the area (Fredericks 2003:118). Industry and factory work to support the war effort drew thousands of people to San Bruno, thus inundating the housing market and catalyzing a building boom in the city beyond the war years that extended across the peninsula. San Bruno grew from two square miles of incorporated area to over six square miles of potential homeowners, primarily in the undeveloped western hills. Developers Perry Liebman, George Williams, and Andres Oddstad were among the few who platted and developed the remaining Mills land, in part creating the Crestmoor, Rollingwood, Portola Highlands, and Pacific Heights neighborhoods (Fredericks 2003:8).

Commercial development increased in San Bruno during the 1970s in tandem with the residential and industrial growth. In particular, many small service businesses, including grocery stores, drug stores, theaters, and light industries, increased in the area (Fredericks 2003:8). Larger commercial development followed the rezoning of large lots by private developers, including the Tanforan Shopping Center (now known as The Shops at Tanforan) and the Bayhill Shopping Center. The Bayhill Shopping Center opened in 1974 as the retailing segment of an 80-acre office-hotel-shopping complex at the corner of San Bruno Avenue and I-280 (*San Mateo Times* 1974:24). A. Epstein and Sons from San Bruno was the architect of the project (*San Mateo Times* 1973:57). In the 1970s, the subject property and the Bayhill Shopping Center expanded within a period of increased commercial development that included regional shopping centers on redeveloped large land plots and small service businesses on historically commercial corridors.

In December 1997, the railroad dating to the 1860s was removed, and the BART system was constructed through San Bruno (Fredericks 2003:123). In June 2000, construction began on a BART tunnel for electric trains. In June 2003, the San Bruno BART station commenced operation (Fredericks 2003:124).

3.2 Architectural Context: Regional Shopping Center Property Type

Regional shopping centers are a product of American retail's evolution in the twentieth century. Regional shopping centers are typically plotted on large lots, cater to automotive convenience, and are located near residential areas. The construction of the regional shopping centers generally paralleled residential patterns of suburban sprawl in suburban areas across the country. The historical roots of this property type can be found in nineteenth-century department stores located in urban areas.

The first department stores emerged in nineteenth-century cities as large stores selling a variety of goods in specialty sections. Introducing light, color, and music to traditional dry goods and retail stores, department stores transformed ordinary trade into occasions for pleasure and spectacle, concentrated at big retail stores in urban areas (Howard 2015:6). The construction of ornate department stores began in the late nineteenth-century and continued through the early twentieth century, as retail remained centers of social activity in local communities and a growing middle class with increased spending power shopped more excessively.

By World War I, a national department store industry was in place, comprised of individual merchants, department store executives, and their trade organizations. The development of department stores as major economic drivers and one-stop shops benefited from and helped drive urban growth from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries (Howard 2015:3). In addition, as early as the 1930s, standardization of department stores transformed local retail stores into national chains (large companies with numerous retail locations across the country) with product and aesthetic uniformity (Hardwick 2004:3).

Department stores evolved with the major suburbanization movements that occurred after World War II. Department store popularity helped shift shopping, a reflection of economic prosperity, from downtown cores. (Howard 2015:3). After World War II, retail developments increased in size and scale as malls and urban renewal plans utilized larger areas of land, and retail shopping among middle-class Americans grew exponentially. In the 1950s, suburban growth and the ubiquity of automobiles shifted the seat of economic prosperity from department stores located in urban areas to suburban areas, and the development of the regional shopping center typology began. With the 1956 opening of the Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, the architect Victor Gruen's designs developed the concept of what came to be the suburban mall: indoor, climate-controlled retail "anchored" by department stores and adjacent to a variety of stores. (Gruen's contributions to the property type and role as the subject property's architect are described in more detail below.) Anchor department stores, as they came to be known, were popular national department stores meant to draw their existing consumer base to the regional shopping center (Lange 2022:44). Regional shopping centers of the 1950s and 1960s were characterized by enormous complexes (often 60 or more acres), buildings encircled by parking lots capable of holding anywhere between 3,000 and 8,000 cars, and unorthodox building configurations with stores opening outward toward landscaped, pedestrian walkways (Longstreth 2010:186). Following Gruen's prototype, the

shopping center typology was copied and evolved in suburban areas across the country from the mid-1950s to the 1970s. By the 1970s, the regional shopping center typology was developing into the “mall” with a multi-level, inward-facing enclosed space with an average of two-anchor department stores and a mix of commercial tenants (Comras 2018). As a regional shopping center constructed in the mid-1970s, The Shops at Tanforan is a late example of this regional shopping center type.

A substantial number of large-scale mergers of department store chains took place in the 1980s, following the expansion of department store national chains and the development of the regional shopping center typology. The consolidation of companies coincided with the loss of historic department stores in both small towns and urban centers throughout the late twentieth century. San Francisco and New York are among the few cities that maintained historic central commercial districts with long-standing department stores. Most other downtowns have lost their department stores and have transitioned into leisure and tourism centers. Generally, the number of department stores in urban areas lessened as the number of regional shopping centers in suburban areas rose in the mid-twentieth century. By the late twentieth century, regional shopping centers, like its predecessors, were eclipsed by a new retail building typology in American retail’s evolution: the discount big-box store (Howard 2015:3-4).

3.3 Developer: Hapsmith Company

After a complex turnover of landownership and rejected project proposals and permits, the Hapsmith Company purchased the vacant site that became The Shops at Tanforan. Hap Smith was a well-known Beverly Hills developer and President of the Hapsmith Company. The Shops at Tanforan was the fifth of Hapsmith’s 10 planned major shopping centers in Northern California. Others included Fremont, Santa Clara, Sacramento, and San Jose (*San Mateo Times* 1968b:40). Smith employed the services of architect Victor Gruen and the Ernest W. Hahn Construction Company for contracting work (*San Mateo Times* 1968b:40). The first anchor store to commit was Sears, Roebuck, and Co. (*San Mateo Times* 1968b:40). JCPenny and Emporium department stores were the other two department stores to commit soon after 1970 (*San Mateo Times* 1970:29).

3.4 Architect: Victor Gruen

Victor Gruen (1903-1980) was born Viktor David Grünbaum in Vienna, Austria, and changed his name to Victor David Gruen in late 1938 after emigrating to the United States (Pacific Coast Architecture Database [PCAD] 2023). Victor Gruen’s architectural career in the United States spanned from his arrival in Manhattan in 1938 to his return to Vienna in 1968, consistently traveling between New York, Vienna, and Los Angeles in the interim decades (Hardwick 2004:6). In addition to his architectural career, Gruen published three books regarding design and retail—*Shopping Towns USA* (1960), *The Heart of Our Cities* (1964), and *Centers for the Urban Environment* (1973)— and wrote hundreds of articles and presented numerous speeches on consumerism, architecture, urban planning, and more (Hardwick 2004:5). Gruen’s first architectural commission in the United States was completed in association with architect Morris Ketchum. The project was a design for a new department store for the Lederer Company in New York City and was completed in 1939 (Comras 2018; Heiss 2010). Throughout the 1940s, Gruen partnered with his wife Elsie Krummeck, an interior designer, on retail designs in Los Angeles. The pair designed 11 branches of the California clothing chain Grayson’s, several department stores for R. H. Macy’s, Joseph Magnin,

and Milliron's, and commercial buildings for Tishman (Comras 2018). The office of Gruen-Krummeck dissolved with the couple's divorce in 1951, and Gruen founded his own architecture and planning firm, Victor Gruen Associates, the same year (PCAD 2023).

Following World War II, Gruen and his store modernization theories proliferated across the country and facilitated a new standardization of commercial aesthetics. Gruen's national catalog included large regional shopping centers in suburban areas and, later, ambitious urban renewal projects. The latter projects were in opposition to his earlier work as a result of his distaste for the realities of suburban sprawl and the ubiquitous regional shopping center typology's transformation by developers and various economic and cultural factors (Hardwick 2004:3). In the early 1950s, Gruen designed an open-air shopping center called Northland near Detroit, Michigan. J. L. Hudson, a local, upscale department store chain, developed the shopping center. Northland was designed to be the physical center within surrounding homes, offices, hotels, and stores. J. L. Hudson enforced controls over Gruen's design and quality assurance of an original sculpture installation (Comras 2018).

Gruen's developing vision for the regional shopping center concept in the 1950s was more than just retail stores. He imagined them as mixed-use facilities, with apartments, offices, medical centers, childcare facilities, libraries, and even bomb shelters. In 1952, the Dayton Company commissioned Gruen to build the first indoor, climate-controlled shopping center in Edina, Minnesota. The resulting Southdale Center opened in 1956 and featured a massive center court covered in a skylight and a mix of local stores. The resulting design did not feature the mixed-use ideals of Gruen's theories nor the ornate storefronts and window displays of his early career. Instead, the Southdale Center had an amorphous, boxy massing, only a few exterior windows, and unadorned exterior walls, drawing focus to a pedestrian-focused interior space. Gruen's subsequent malls were mostly based on the Southdale Center design, and features like the center court became a standard feature of the shopping mall building typology (99% Invisible 2015).

During Gruen's active professional decades, retail and commercial architecture evolved substantially. Gruen's designs exploited this commercial environment to draw in customers and keep them in the store for as long as possible, theorizing that the longer a consumer spent entertained in a retail space, the more money they would spend. Thus, Gruen's store designs utilized artificial lights, large windows, and contained displays and opulent facades; Gruen's larger regional shopping center typology included grand fountains, intricate sculptures, and gardens (Hardwick 2004:4).

4.1 NRHP Eligibility

The following section evaluates the property to determine whether it meets the eligibility criteria for listing in the NRHP for the purposes of CEQA review (NPS 1995:2). To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a property must demonstrate significance under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A (Event):** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- **Criterion B (Person):** That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- **Criterion C (Design/Construction):** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- **Criterion D (Information Potential):** That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition, a property must retain integrity to be eligible for listing in the NRHP. Integrity is the measure by which a property is evaluated based on the property's ability to convey its historical significance. To retain integrity, a property must have most of the seven aspects of historic integrity as defined by the NRHP: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, association, and feeling.

4.2 CRHR Eligibility

The following section evaluates the property to determine whether it meets the eligibility criteria for listing in the CRHR for the purposes of CEQA review. These evaluative criteria are closely based on those developed by the NPS for the NRHP. To be eligible for listing in the CRHR, a property must demonstrate significance under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significance contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- **Criterion 2 (Persons):** Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- **Criterion 3 (Design/Construction):** Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources that have yielded, or have the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition, a property must retain integrity to be eligible for listing in the CRHR. Integrity is the measure by which a property is evaluated based on the property's ability to convey its historical significance. To retain integrity, a property must have most of the seven aspects of historic integrity as defined by the NRHP and adopted by the CRHR: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, association, and feeling.

4.2.1 Criterion 1 (Events)

To be considered eligible for listing under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1, The Shops at Tanforan would need to be directly associated with one or more important events in a defined historic context. The Shops at Tanforan does not appear to be associated with any event(s) significant to the twentieth-century history and commercial development of San Bruno, the regional shopping center property type, the evolution of the Tanforan site, or local state, or national history more broadly. Initially constructed between 1970 and 1975, The Shops at Tanforan was one of numerous commercial enterprises in San Bruno and one of at least two regional shopping centers of its kind—including the Bayhill Shopping Center, which had its grand opening in 1974. The Shops at Tanforan was one of 10 planned developments by the Hapsmith Company in Northern California and one of many in a national construction boom of regional shopping centers in the 1960s and 1970s (*San Mateo Times* 1968b:40). The Shops at Tanforan was a ubiquitous example of its building typology, the regional shopping center, which emerged in the post-World War II period. The construction of the regional shopping center property type paralleled residential patterns of suburban sprawl and was common in suburban areas such as San Bruno and across California and the United States. The Bayhill Shopping Center similarly serviced San Bruno within a decade of increased commercial development. Regional shopping centers were notably plotted on large lots, catering to automotive convenience in residential areas. Notably centered around surface-level parking and adjacent to the El Camino Real thoroughfare and residential developments to the east and south, The Shops at Tanforan did not play an important role in the commercial development of San Bruno, nor the region, state, or country. It merely followed established patterns of commercial retail development in the post-World War II era. The Shops at Tanforan appears to represent an unremarkable pattern of commercial lot development that occurred throughout San Bruno, California, and the country in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

The Shops at Tanforan site has a complex history and was developed with other uses before the current regional shopping center was constructed. The site was previously the Tanforan Racetrack, with use as a racetrack, aviation event space, Japanese-American assembly or detention center during World War II, and naval base. The current site does not reflect these historic uses. Instead, The Shops at Tanforan was constructed in a complete redevelopment of the site in the 1960s and 1970s that removed all physical remnants of the site's history. In the past 20 years, memorials and statues have been installed around the site boundaries to reflect this history and are therefore not historic age. Thus, The Shops at Tanforan does not appear to be associated with or a contributor to important single events, patterns of events, repeated activities, or historic trends in local, state, or national history; instead, it appears to have contributed to the everyday community and commercial life after redevelopment in the 1970s. As such, The Shops at Tanforan does not appear significant under NRHP/CRHR Criterion A/1.

4.2.2 Criterion 2 (Persons)

To be considered eligible for listing under NRHP/CRHR Criterion B/2, The Shops at Tanforan would need to be directly associated with the productive life of a person considered historically significant at the local, state, or national level and the place where that person performed the work for which they are best known. The shopping center has a broad and unremarkable association with local community life and economic patterns through a series of revolving tenants with food and general commercial storefronts. Through the range of tenants, no associations were made to rise to a level of significance as most were one among many locations of regional or national companies. Newspaper research and similar online repositories yielded no evidence of persons or events within previous tenant businesses exclusively associated with The Shops at Tanforan. Finally, no evidence suggests that the building housed activities that allowed a particular owner, tenant, or employee to achieve the historical significance that the shopping center would best convey. As a result, The Shops at Tanforan is not associated with the lives of persons important in our past and, therefore, does not appear significant under NRHP/CRHR Criterion B/2.

4.2.3 Criterion 3 (Design/Construction)

To be considered eligible for listing under NRHP/CRHR Criterion C/3, The Shops at Tanforan would need to meet at least one of the following requirements: embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic value; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Each requirement is addressed below.

The Shops at Tanforan does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction. The Shops at Tanforan's original design and layout are generic to the regional shopping center building typology of its period. These feature a large complex of a primary building encircled by parking lots, irregular building configurations with stores opening outward toward landscaped, pedestrian walkways, an enclosed, multi-level space, three anchor department stores, and a mix of commercial tenants. The Shops at Tanforan was one of many regional shopping centers built in the middle of a period of commercial development in suburban areas in the generic form and aesthetics of regional shopping centers. It was neither the first nor the most representative of a new building typology. Gruen's Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, was the first property to embody the regional shopping center typology and established the characteristics of the type as a commercial development that united retailers and department stores within one development located in a suburban enclave. In contrast, The Shops at Tanforan reflect a local and undistinguished example of a ubiquitous building typology constructed in the mid-twentieth century.

Furthermore, The Shops at Tanforan does not represent the work of a master design professional or important creative individual, according to NPS and CRHR standards, respectively. The NPS defines this standard in the following manner.

A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his or her work, or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft (National Park Service 1995:20).

Victor Gruen qualifies as a master who is noted for his contributions to the development of regional shopping centers in the mid-twentieth century; however, The Shops at Tanforan is not representative of Gruen's work (Los Angeles Conservancy 2023). Gruen designed numerous retail projects across the country, many in California, from individual storefront designs to large shopping center developments. The Shops at Tanforan's construction in the 1970s was late in Gruen's architectural career in the United States and was neither preeminent nor innovative among his designs. Instead, The Shops at Tanforan post-date his notable shopping developments of the 1950s and 1960s, including the revolutionizing 1956 Southdale Center design that influenced the shopping center typology. The Shops at Tanforan was constructed two decades after the building typology's formation, features its typical form and features, and has undergone substantial alterations and corporate branding due to tenant turnover. Lastly, The Shops at Tanforan is a ubiquitous design among Gruen's other commercial enterprises of the 1970s, which include offices, banks, and urban planning designs that were a departure from his regional shopping center designs from the 1950s and 1960s. Therefore, The Shops at Tanforan does not reflect an important phrase in the master's career or a particular idea or theme in his or her craft, nor does it appear significant as an example of the work of master architect Victor Gruen.

The Shops at Tanforan is also associated with Hap Smith and the Hapsmith Company, who facilitated the construction of The Shops at Tanforan throughout the early 1970s. The Shops at Tanforan was the fifth of Beverly Hills developer Hap Smith's 10 planned major shopping centers in Northern California, including Fremont, Santa Clara, Sacramento, and San Jose (*San Mateo Times* 1968b:40). However, research has revealed no evidence that Smith executed historically significant or innovative shopping center design, business development, or operations that are best represented by The Shops at Tanforan. Despite its association with Smith's expansion of regional shopping center development into Northern California in the mid-to-late twentieth century, The Shops at Tanforan is an undistinguished example of Smith's work. Moreover, it is a ubiquitous example of Smith's work in rapid shopping center construction with a standard design and business model of the shopping center building typology of its time.

The possession of high artistic values refers to a property's articulation of a particular concept of design so fully that it expresses an aesthetic ideal (NPS 1995:20). In accordance with the regional shopping center building typology, The Shops at Tanforan comprises a large, generic massing with exterior-facing stores with changing tenants and public entrances. The form is utilitarian, and the design lacks a specific style or ornamentation beyond cladding and attached signage to differentiate stores with recognizable national branding, including Barnes & Noble, Target, and Petco. Thus, the form is indistinguishable, and the aesthetics are generic and change with tenancy, thus nullifying an aesthetic ideal and high artistic value. Similarly, The Shops at Tanforan do not represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, which is generally applied to districts. As such, The Shops at Tanforan does not appear significant under NRHP/CRHR Criterion C/3.

4.2.4 Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

To be considered eligible for listing under NRHP/CRHR Criterion D/4, The Shops at Tanforan would need to have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. The Shops at Tanforan is a typical example of the regional shopping center building typology contextualized within a developmental history that is well documented in historical sources, photographs, and other existing documentation. Therefore, there is a low probability that this

resource would fill any data gaps not already contained in the historical record. The Shops at Tanforan does not appear to be significant as a source, or likely source, of important historical information on the history of San Bruno or California, and it does not appear likely to yield important information about historic construction methods, materials, or technologies. Moreover, the lack of historical significance described in the application of CRHR Criteria 1, 2, and 3 above supports a conclusion that this built-environment resource is not likely to yield information important to history. For this reason, The Shops at Tanforan is not significant under Criterion 4.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

The subject property, The Shops at Tanforan, is not individually eligible for listing in the CRHR because it does not meet any of the applicable eligibility criteria. No evidence suggests that the surrounding shopping complex would qualify as a historic district such that The Shops at Tanforan would be a contributor to a historic district. As such, The Shops at Tanforan is not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

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Chapter 7

Preparers' Qualifications

Christine Cruie is a senior historic preservation specialist with 24 years of specialized experience in architectural history, historic preservation, and architectural conservation. She meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for architectural history and history. Ms. Cruie's work has focused on CEQA, NEPA, and NRHP Section 106 cultural resources assessments throughout the mid-Atlantic states and California. She holds a bachelor's degree in classical archaeology and anthropology from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.

Nicole Felicetti is an architectural historian with 5 years of professional experience in architecture, architectural history, and cultural resources management and interpretation. She meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for architectural history. Ms. Felicetti's work has focused on CEQA and NRHP Section 106 cultural resources assessments and analysis of project impacts. She is experienced in writing Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 form sets for a variety of California built-environment property types, technical reports, and historic context statements. Ms. Felicetti holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Kentucky and a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.

Appendix A

Department of Parks and Recreation 523 Form
