PAGE&TURNBULL

HALSEY HOUSE
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA
[21130]

PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS
August 30, 2021



Cover image: Theodore and Emma Halsey in the rear courtyard of Halsey House, circa 1924. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of the City of Los Altos for the building at 482 University Avenue (located within APN 175-30-021), historically called the Halsey House. The Halsey House, which is located in the approximately six-acre Redwood Grove, is owned by the City of Los Altos. The property is located along the city boundary of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills to the west. It is reached via an access road on the west side of University Avenue **(Figure 1)**.

Built in 1923 for Theodore Vail Halsey and Emma Wright Halsey by an unknown architect, the Halsey House was used as a single-family residence until 1945. In 1945, the property was sold to the Besseys and was converted into two residential units soon after. In 1974, the property was purchased by the City of Los Altos to serve as a park. At that time, the building was converted to a nature center for educational and recreational programming. In 2008, the building was closed to the public, and since 2008, the Halsey House has been vacant.

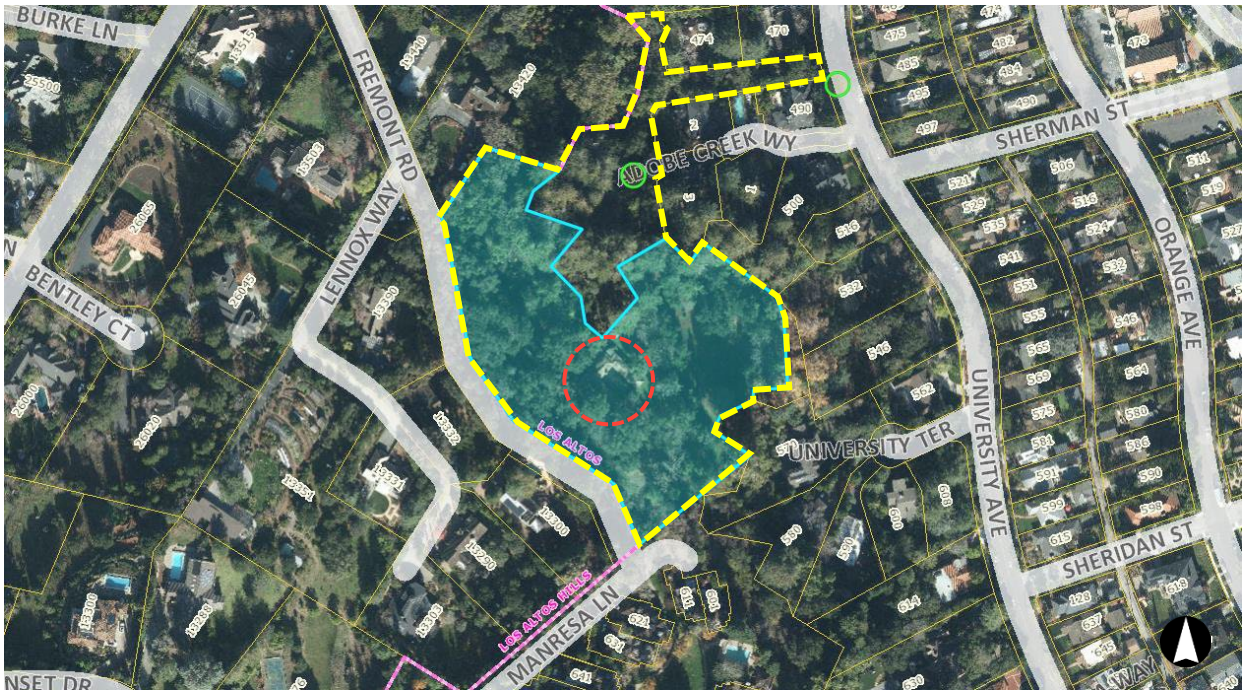


Figure 1: The location of the subject property (shaded blue), with the Halsey House identified by the dashed red circle. The larger area of Redwood Grove and the approximate boundary of the historic property of Halsey House is shown with a dashed yellow line. Source: Santa Clara County SCC Map.

Methodology

This report follows a standard outline for Historic Resource Evaluations (HREs) and provides a summary of the building's current historic status, an architectural description, a historic context for

the development of the Halsey House and Los Altos, and a narrative description of the subsequent changes to the Halsey House since its construction in 1923. This report includes an evaluation of the property's eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources and includes an updated evaluation of the property according to the Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory Criteria for Evaluation.

Page & Turnbull prepared this report using research provided by the City of Los Altos and the Los Altos History Museum, as well as various online sources including Ancestry.com, the California Digital Newspaper Collection, and Newspapers.com. Key primary sources consulted and cited in this report include Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps, City of Los Altos records, historical newspapers, a 2001 oral history with Eugenia Halsey Buss in the collection of the Los Altos History Museum, and historic photographs provided by the Los Altos History Museum and Katherine Halsey Buss. Page & Turnbull also reviewed secondary source material including the *Halsey House Historic Structures Report* completed by Architectural Resources Group (ARG) in 2019, as well as additional reports on the building's material and structural condition, and studies on its reuse.

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a site visit to the Halsey House on June 22, 2021. All photographs within this report were taken at that time, unless otherwise noted.

Summary of Findings

This Historic Resource Evaluation finds that the Halsey House is eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events) at the state level of significance as an excellent example of the residential development patterns of Los Altos and for the establishment of the Redwood Grove, which is a unique property developed by Emma Halsey and her Japanese gardener, Mori, in the 1920s. Page & Turnbull did not find the property significant under Criterion 2 (Persons), Criterion 3 (Design/Architecture), or Criterion 4 (Information Potential).

Additionally, Page & Turnbull reviewed the Halsey House's existing historic status as a City of Los Altos Historic Landmark and found that the building continues to meet the necessary criteria for age and physical integrity, despite the ongoing issues of the building's condition. While Page & Turnbull found the property to be eligible for the California Register under different criteria than it was listed under as a local landmark, Page & Turnbull agrees that the property is a rare or unique example and remains eligible as a Historic Landmark of Los Altos.

The Halsey House was additionally identified as a possible contributor to the University/Orange Historic District during the 1990 architectural survey. This district has never been formally adopted. From an initial review of the University/Orange Historic District, Page & Turnbull believes that the

Halsey House does not fit the overall character of the eligible district due to its secluded location far removed from the street and its unique wooded and semi-rural setting.

II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historic status currently assigned to the Halsey House.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service 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 subject property is not currently listed on the National Register.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

The subject property is not currently listed on the California Register.

California Historical Resource Status Codes

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are listed within the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) and are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of "1" to "7" to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).[1] Properties with a Status Code of "1" or "2" are either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of "3" or "4" appear to be eligible for listing in either register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of "5" have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual

[1] California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), Santa Clara County, updated March 2020.

importance. Properties with a Status Code of "6" are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of "7" means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register, or needs reevaluation.

The subject property is listed in the BERD database for Santa Clara County with a status code of "7N1," assigned during the 1990 survey that led to the establishment of the Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory in 1997.[2] A 7N1 status code means that the property "Needs to be reevaluated (former status code 4) - may become NR eligible with restoration or other specific conditions."[3] The most recent update to the BERD database was in March 2020.

City of Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory (HRI)

The City of Los Altos maintains a Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) that serves as an official list of Historic Resources, designated Historic Landmarks, and designated historic district contributors. For the City of Los Altos, a Historic Resource is defined as "a property or structure that has been determined to be over 50 years old, retains its physical integrity, has historical, architectural, cultural, and/or aesthetic value, and is listed on the HRI."[4] A City of Los Altos Historic Landmark is a Historic Resource that has a higher level of significance (i.e. an outstanding example of design or construction, the first, last or only example of its type, or the location of a highly significant event of local, statewide, or national significance).[5] While the definition of Historic Resources is limited to buildings or structures, Historic Landmarks can also include improvements, natural features, and sites or areas of land, under single or common ownership.[6]

When the Los Altos HRI was first established in 1997, the HRI used the Kalman Scale, a "numerical evaluation system derived from *The Evaluation of Historic Buildings* by Harold Kalman," to quantitatively analyze and rank the significance of potential historic resources.[7] Los Altos used the Kalman scale through 2010.[8]

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[2] While the BERD database does not supply the date of the survey, however, it appears to have been the 1990s Los Altos architectural survey due to the information included in the individual building records in the database. The Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record form (DPR 523A form) and Department of Parks and Recreation Building, Structure, and Object forms (DPR 523B form) completed in 1997 for the HRI stated that the building is a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, but did not provide a status code for the property.

[3] For the status code assigned to the Halsey House refer to: California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), Santa Clara County, updated March 2020; for the meaning of a 7N1 status code, refer to: California State Office of Historic Preservation, "California Historical Resource Status Codes," updated March 2020, 3.

[4] CIRCA: Historic Property Development, *City of Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory*, (October 2012), I-4.

[5] Ibid., I-14.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Adaptations of the method used by Kalman was a common evaluation approach widely used in the late 1970s, prior to the establishment and standardized use of the National Register and California Register criteria for the evaluation of potential historic resources. Ibid., I-2.

[8] Ibid., I-5.

In 2012, the HRI was revised and the criteria for evaluation were aligned with the existing evaluation criteria for both the National Register and California Register. Today, a historic resource for the City of Los Altos is determined through establishing that it meets the age threshold of fifty years, retains its physical integrity, and meets one or more of the criteria for historic significance.[9]

The Halsey House and the larger property of Redwood Grove was listed as a City of Los Altos Historic Landmark in May 1981 and was listed as a Historic Landmark in the HRI when it was established in 1997. During a 1990 historic property survey of Los Altos' historic resources, the Halsey House was analyzed with the Kalman Scale and was given a rating of 95 out of 100 points.

Updated Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record form (DPR 523A form) and Department of Parks and Recreation Building, Structure, and Object forms (DPR 523B form) were completed for the Halsey House in July 2011 as part of the effort to update the HRI. These DPR forms state that the Halsey House was significant for its association with the Halsey family as an important early Los Altos family and as a fine example of the Spanish Eclectic style.[10] The building was also identified as a possible contributor to a proposed University/Orange Historic District. The Halsey House was given an updated Kalman Scale score of 73 and assigned the California Resources Historical Resources Status Codes of 5S1 and 5D2.[11] These status codes mean that the resource is "Individually listed or designated locally" and a "contributor to a multi-component resource that is eligible for local listing or designation," respectively.[12] While the 2011 DPR forms were completed for the building and not the larger property, despite their listing as a single Historic Landmark, the evaluation included mention of the Redwood Grove as "a notable natural landmark within the City of Los Altos."[13]

As noted in the section above (refer to **Existing Historic Status: California Historical Resource Status Codes**), the building currently has a status code of 7N1 in the BERD database that appears to date from the 1990 architectural survey. It appears that the 5S1 and 5D2 status codes from the 2011 HRI update were never submitted to the Northwest Information Center to be recorded in the BERD database.

[9] Ibid., I-11 to I-14.
[10] Circa: Historic Property Development. "Halsey House (Redwood Grove Park). State of California DPR 523A and 523B forms. Completed March 2009.
[11] Although an updated Kalman Scale score was listed on the 2011 DPR forms, the breakdown of the numbers assigned within each category was not included and staff at the City of Los Altos were unable to located this revised Kalman Score analysis at this time.
[12] California State Office of Historic Preservation, "California Historical Resource Status Codes," updated March 2020, 2.
[13] Circa: Historic Property Development. "Halsey House (Redwood Grove Park). State of California DPR 523A and 523B forms. Completed March 2009, 3.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Halsey House is currently vacant and has been boarded up and encircled by chain link fencing. The following description is based on a site visit that included access to the interior of the building to investigate existing windows and doors, a partial tour of the exterior of the building's perimeter wall within the chain-link fencing, as accessible, a view of the rear courtyard from over the south courtyard wall, and a walk of the perimeter of the building outside the chain-link fencing. Historic photographs from the Los Altos History Museum, various plans of the building provided by the City of Los Altos, information included in the 2019 Historic Structure Report by ARG, and photographs from 2003 and circa 2009 that were supplied by the City of Los Altos, were used to verify the building's design and the presence of features that are not currently visible from the exterior.



Figure 2: Bird's-eye view of the Halsey House. Source: Google Maps, 2021.

The Halsey House is a one-story stucco-clad building with a clay tile hipped roof **(Figure 2)**. The building is generally U-shaped and is arranged around a rear courtyard with a courtyard wall that spans the south ends of the east and west wings. Extant original windows consist of a variety of multi-lite wood windows that include asymmetrically divided three-over-one double-hung sash, six-lite casement windows, small four-lite casement windows, some one-over-one double-hung windows, and two pairs of six-lite slider windows (one set of which is now missing). The asymmetrically divided three-over-one double-hung sash are the primary window type of the residence and will be referred to as "typical double-hung windows" throughout this report. Non-historic windows consist of a jalousie window and some fixed single-lite windows. Some of the

existing one-over-one double-hung sash are windows that replaced original three-over-one windows. The building also retains a number of original wood-frame doors that include paired ten-lite fully glazed French doors, which will be referred to as "typical French doors" within this report. These typical French doors are often paired with multi-lite sidelights in either a five-lite or ten-lite configuration.

Primary (North) Façade

The primary façade consists of an entrance porch at the east corner with north- and east-facing walls, the main length of the building along its north side, and the north- and east-facing walls of the 1928-addition located at the west corner of the north façade **(Figure 3)**.[14]



Figure 3: Primary (north) façade of the Halsey House, largely hidden by chain-link fencing. Looking slightly southeast.

The entrance porch at the northeast corner of the building is reached via low concrete steps that are tinted a warm red color and rise to a concrete landing that is square in shape. Within the north-facing wall of the entrance porch are typical French doors with 10-lite sidelights **(Figure 4)**. The east-facing wall contains the primary entrance to the residence that consists of a 15-lite fully glazed, single-leaf door with five-lite sidelights. This entrance door and surround retains its historic hardware including a doorknob, door lock, and doorbell. An original metal wall-mounted lamp is located to the south (left) of the entrance surround, and a small four-lite casement window is located at the south edge of the east-facing wall. A historic wood pergola is located over the

[14] The Halsey House is oriented west of true north, but this report refers to the primary façade as facing north, the rear façade as facing south, etc. In actuality, the entrance porch is aligned to true north.

entrance porch and features decorative profiled ends **(Figure 5)**. Non-historic corrugated plastic is located over the pergola to serve as a roof.



Figure 4: Entrance porch at northeast corner of building. Looking southwest.



Figure 5: Wood pergola and plastic roof over entrance porch at north façade. Looking southwest.



Figure 6: Interior view of French doors that open to north patio along north façade. Looking slightly northwest.

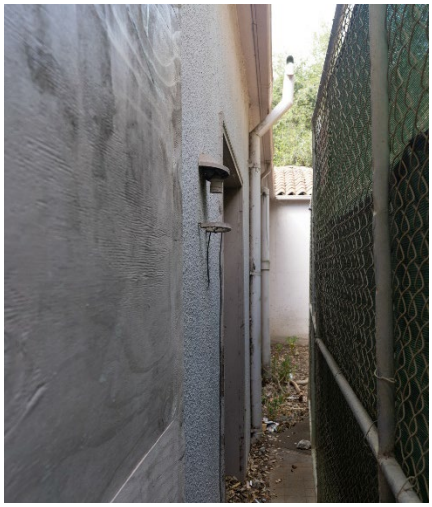


Figure 7: Extant original wall-mounted lamp between French doors at north façade. Looking slightly southwest.

The main length of the north façade features three evenly spaced typical French doors without sidelights that open onto the concrete north patio **(Figure 6)**. Two original wall-mounted lamps (missing their glass covers) are located to either side of the center pair of French doors **(Figure 7)**. Two sets of three windows are located along the west (right) portion of the façade. The east (left) set of three windows consists of replacement windows with fixed glass flanking a center jalousie window, while the west (right) window arrangement consists of three historic six-lite windows that were installed during the erection of the 1928 addition **(Figure 8)**.

The east facing wall of the 1928 addition has a secondary entrance with a non-historic single-leaf wood replacement door reached by three tinted concrete steps that match the north patio **(Figure 9)**. The north-facing wall of the addition features three typical double-hung windows.



Figure 8: Interior view of jalousie and fixed windows along primary façade. Looking northeast.



Figure 9: Secondary entrance to 1928 addition at west end of primary façade. Looking northwest.

East Façade

The east façade features several window types and one set of doors. From left to right (south to north), openings consist of paired six-lite slider windows, typical French doors, one typical double-hung window, two smaller replacement one-over-one double-hung windows (note, Figure 10 shows the original three-over-one windows at this location in 2003), two typical double-hung windows, and a group of four typical double-hung windows **(Figure 10)**.



Figure 10: East façade of Halsey House in 2003. Source: City of Los Altos.

West Façade

The west façade contains the west- and south-facing walls of the 1928 northwest addition and the west-facing wall of the original portion of the residence **(Figure 11 and Figure 12)**. Along the west-facing wall of the addition, the building features a brick exterior chimney that is centered on the wall and two paired typical double-hung windows to the north (left) of the chimney. The south-facing wall of the addition consists of a single typical double-hung window at its west (left) side, a wood infilled window opening with a wood frame, and a rectilinear horizontal fixed window.



Figure 11: South-facing wall of 1928 addition. Looking north. Source: *Halsey House HSR* by ARG, taken in May 2019.



Figure 12: West façade of original section of residence. Looking slightly southeast. Source: *Halsey House HSR* by ARG, taken in May 2019.

The length of the original section of the building features a number of openings, including one door. From left to right (north to south), these openings consist of a group of three typical double-hung windows, one typical double-hung window, a single-leaf partially glazed wood panel door, a group of three typical double-hung windows, one small four-lite casement window, one typical double-hung window, and two typical double-hung windows.

Rear (South) Façade

The south façade of the Halsey House features the south-facing walls of the east and west wings of the building and the rear wall of the courtyard that spans these two wings **(Figure 13)**. The south facade of the west wing contains a group of three typical double-hung windows centered along this wall **(Figure 14)**. The south wall of the courtyard consists of a tall stucco-clad wall that features one round-arched opening with a wood plank door that is located near the east wing. Along the exterior of this courtyard gate are three semi-circular stone steps that descend to the height of the rear

courtyard, which is slightly below the grade of the property to the rear **(Figure 15)**. The south façade of the east wing features an asymmetrically placed opening that originally featured paired six-lite sliding windows that have since been removed due to damage.



Figure 13: South façade with rear courtyard wall. Looking slightly northwest. Source: HSR by ARG, taken in May 2019.



Figure 14: Interior view of three grouped typical double-hung windows along south façade of west wing. Looking southeast.



Figure 15: Semi-circular steps to gate in south façade of courtyard wall. Looking down and slightly northwest.

Rear Courtyard

The rear courtyard is surrounded by the residence on three sides (north, east, and west) and is enclosed along its south side by a stucco-clad wall with a round-arched gate (refer to description of the **Rear (South) Façade**, above).



Figure 16: View of rear courtyard, looking north. Red dashed outline shows original patio. Yellow dashed outline shows area of concrete infill.



Figure 17: View of original stone paving, fountain, and seating. Looking down and west from top of courtyard wall.

The courtyard features a tinted cement patio at its north end that matches the design of the north patio. The center portion of the courtyard has been infilled with concrete with small planting areas along both the east and west sides **(Figure 16)**. The south portion of the courtyard retains its original stone and concrete paving with low steps and lined planting beds. A small fountain is attached to the south courtyard wall and is flanked by two curved buttresses that are designed to double as benches **(Figure 17)**.



Figure 18: West side of courtyard (east-facing wall), looking northwest.



Figure 19: North and east sides of rear courtyard (south- and west-facing wall). Looking north over rear courtyard wall.

Along the west side of the courtyard, the east-facing wall of the Halsey House features, from south to north (left to right): one typical double-hung window, one ten-lite single-leaf fully glazed door that opens onto a small concrete landing with three steps and a metal railing, two small four-lite casement windows, three separate typical double-hung windows, and a pair of typical French doors that open to a small non-historic concrete landing with three steps **(Figure 18)**.

Along the north side of the courtyard, the south-facing wall of the Halsey House features a centered exterior chimney that is clad in stucco to match the finish of the residence **(Figure 19)**. Two typical French doors with five-lite sidelights are located to either side of the chimney.

Along the east side of the courtyard, the west-facing wall of the Halsey House features, from north to south (left to right): two sets of typical French doors, paired typical double-hung windows, paired one-over-one double-hung windows, one slightly shorter three-over-one double-hung window, and one one-over-one double-hung window **(Figure 19)**.

Site

The Halsey House is located to the south of Adobe Creek and is reached via an access road along the south side of University Avenue **(Figure 20)**. The surrounding property of Redwood Grove Park is marked by mature trees primarily consisting of redwoods and oaks.



Figure 20: Access road at south side of University Avenue. Looking east into the Redwood Grove.



Figure 21: Caretaker's cottage within Redwood Grove Park. Looking northeast.

The only other building on the property is the caretaker's cottage that is located to the northeast of the Halsey House near the access road from University Avenue **(Figure 21)**. A wood flagpole, which appears historic but was installed at an unknown date, is located to the east of the Halsey House **(Figure 22)**. Contemporary benches, picnic tables, trash cans, signage, and non-historic concrete paving have been installed since the property became a city park **(Figure 23)**. A non-historic wood bridge was installed recently over Adobe Creek.



Figure 22: Wood flagpole to the east of Halsey House. Looking south.



Figure 23: Looking south within Redwood Grove Park. Caretaker's cottage at right; non-historic paving and signage visible.

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

Brief History of Los Altos

Prior to European settlement of the Santa Clara Valley, the area of modern Los Altos was inhabited by the Ohlone peoples. As many as 40 permanent villages rimmed the San Francisco Bay, and remnants of an Ohlone village and burial ground have been found in Los Altos through archeological investigation.[15]

European settlement of the Santa Clara Valley began with the establishment of the Franciscan Mission of Santa Clara de Asís in 1777. Spanish colonizers and Franciscan friars established Mission Santa Clara and 20 other California missions to convert local indigenous peoples to Catholicism, expand the Spanish colonial sphere of influence, and establish a colonial society through the mission system. While the system claimed to be based on the voluntary conversion of neophytes, large numbers of Native Americans were forcibly relocated to support the missions, devastating cultural continuity for many communities, and decimating indigenous populations through exposure to disease.[16] Following the Secularization Act of 1833, the missions and the Franciscan order were stripped of their extensive land holdings throughout the state, and the land was awarded by the Mexican government to a number of individuals as rewards for their political or military service, or as personal favors. Two of these land grants, Rancho La Purisima Concepcion and Rancho San Antonio, later became part of the Fremont Township within Santa Clara County in 1851 and include the area of modern Los Altos.[17]

The following brief history of Los Altos' early ranching, orchard, and residential development is excerpted from the Historic Context within the *City of Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory* as revised in April 2011:

> In the early rancho days, much of the Santa Clara Valley was used for cattle grazing. This activity later gave way to wheat and grain fields in the 1860s and 1870s. Mountain View was the principal settlement in the area and grew primarily as a result of the old Mountain View Station, a stage stop located along the San Francisco-San Jose Stage Road. This route today is known as El Camino Real.

[15] The brief development history of Los Altos has largely been summarized from the following source: Circa: Historic Property Development, *City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory Report,* completed for the City of Los Altos, April 2011.
[16] Robert Archibald, "Indian Labor at the California Missions," *The Journal of San Diego History*, Spring 1978, v. 24, no. 2, accessed July 2021, https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1978/april/labor/; Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley, California: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1985), 44-48.
[17] Shirley Eastman, "History of the Los Altos Area" in *Memories of Los Altos*, ed. Joe Salameda (Los Altos: Los Altos Historical Society, 1982).

When the Southern Pacific railroad came through in 1864, the line was located about a mile from Mountain View Station, bypassing what was known as Old Mountain View (near present day Calderon). The "New Mountain View" was officially laid out in 1865 at the present downtown area along Castro Street. Settlement in and around Los Altos area grew as a result of the railroad and Mountain View was the center for all business activity for these early residents. [....]

Many believe that the real beginning of Los Altos start[ed] with the Altos Land Company and acquisition of Sarah Winchester's 100 acres in 1906. This land became what is known today as the downtown triangle.

The earliest account, date[d] August 2, 1906, was found in the *Palo Alto Times* in an article describing the purchase of the 100 acres mentioned above by the Interurban Electrical Railway for a right-of-way. It mentioned the creation of a new town-site to be called "Banks and Braes." Just when the name was changed to Los Altos is unknown, but we do know that the Altos Land Company and the University Land Company were formed in 1907. An October 2, 1913 issue of the *Mayfield News*, however, describes the townsite as being sold again and placed solely into the hands of Paul Shoup and George Herbert, a San Jose fruit packer. The deal is described as one of the most important real estate transactions in Santa Clara County.

With the establishment of the town in 1907 came the beginnings of subdivisions (although a few earlier subdivisions were recorded prior to 1907). [....]

The original town contains the University Avenue neighborhood. This early and very elite neighborhood contains a variety of architectural house types which are unified mainly by the street layout and alleyways. The lot sizes and scales of these homes vary in size greatly; yet there is a continuity of form in the streetscape in most cases. Dates in this area range from 1908 to the 1930s and buildings in many cases are probably architect-designed judging from the styles found, and the social status of people who occupied these buildings. Many of the homes in the district began as summer homes for prominent San Francisco businessmen and their families while others remained year-round living quarters for businessmen who commuted on the train.

[....] By 1911, according to Eastman's history of the town, Los Altos had only fifty homes; by 1913, only thirty-two telephones had been connected. The majority of

> properties in the residential context are homes built in the 1920s and 30s, reflecting the growth of the area.[18]

Although the residential areas of Los Altos continued to grow, particularly as the automobile provided more independent travel options between the towns and rural areas of the Peninsula and the surrounding cities of the Bay Area, the area of Los Altos remained home to a flourishing orchard industry until the post-World War II period. After the war, due to the extreme demand for housing, land became more valuable for development than farming and many of the orchards were closed, sold, and subdivided for residential development. As described by the City of Los Altos in a brief history:

> The town's name gradually spread informally to identify a much larger unincorporated area served by the Los Altos School District formed in 1910, including what is today Los Altos Hills and portions of other neighboring towns.
>
> This larger community's population exploded after World War II, and on December 1, 1952, an expanded Los Altos became the eleventh city in Santa Clara County. As a result of decreased interest in train travel due to the wide adoption of the automobile, the Southern Pacific Railroad, an essential part of the town's founding, ceased operation here in 1964, and its right-of-way became Foothill Expressway.[19]

[18] Circa: Historic Property Development, *City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory Report,* completed for the City of Los Altos, April 2011, II-4 to II-8.
[19] "History of Los Altos," *City of Los Altos,* Accessed July 2021, https://www.losaltosca.gov/community/page/history-los-altos

V. SITE HISTORY

Site Development

Prior to the construction of the Halsey House in 1923, the approximately six acres of land of the future Redwood Grove was the site of a two-bedroom summer cottage owned by William H. and Myra E. Wright, the parents of Emma Wright Halsey. The location, according to Halsey family lore, was found by Emma for her parents, who were looking for a summer get-away along the Peninsula. The Wrights purchased the property in 1912 and constructed a summer cottage, to be used seasonally as "a place in the sunshine" to escape the summer fog of San Francisco.

When Emma Wright married Theodore Vail Halsey in 1915, their marriage took place on the grounds of the Wrights' summer retreat, and the property was given to the newlyweds as a wedding present.[20] The Halseys initially continued to use the Los Altos property seasonally while living in San Francisco, but in 1923 they decided to live in Los Altos permanently and had the existing summer cottage demolished and the Halsey House constructed.

Construction Chronology of the Halsey House

The Halsey House was constructed in 1923 by an unidentified architect or builder. The 1926 fire insurance map by the Sanborn Map Company is the first map to show the original footprint of the residence. As constructed, the residence was U-shaped with the east wing slightly shorter in length than the west wing; the extant northwest addition that was constructed in 1928 for Myra Wright was not yet present **(Figure 24)**. Early Halsey family photographs show the north façade of the residence prior to the construction of the addition and confirm that the north façade originally included the three pairs of French doors and three eight-lite casement windows (now replaced with a jalousie window and two fixed windows) **(Figure 25)**.

[20] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," transcribed interview of Eugenia Halsey Buss (and Robert Buss) by Don McDonald, Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program.

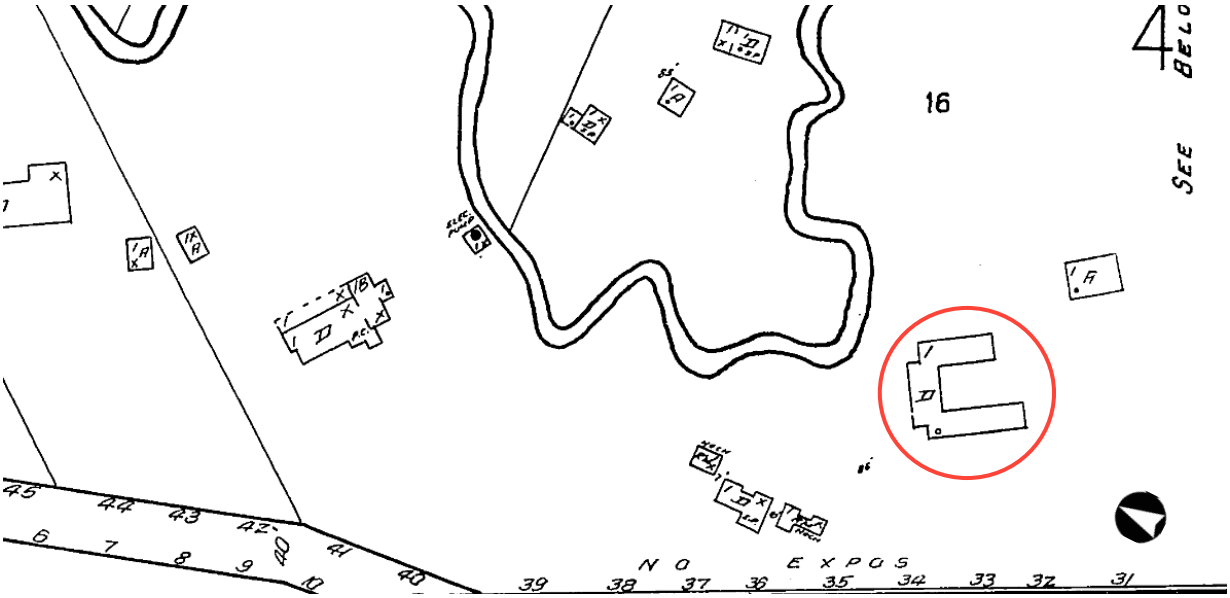


Figure 24: Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map from 1926 showing the subject building's original footprint, circled in red. Source: San Francisco Public Library. Edited by Page & Turnbull.



Figure 25: Two photographs of the Halsey House prior to 1928, showing the original full length of the primary (north) façade which ended just west of the three grouped eight-lite casement windows. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections, courtesy of Katherine Halsey Buss.

In 1928, the northwest addition was constructed to provide a separate apartment with a separate entrance for Emma's mother, Myra Wright.

At some time in the 1930s, an addition was made to the east wing, extending it to be equal in length to the west wing. Early photographs of the rear courtyard show the shorter east wing and the original location of the courtyard gate in the east wall of the courtyard, prior to its relocation to the south wall of the courtyard **(Figure 26 and Figure 27)**. The extension of the east wing added an additional bedroom and bathroom to the residence that were used to house a live-in servant,

variously a maid or a cook.[21] While none of the available photographs of the Halsey House during the Halseys' residency show this addition as completed, it is mentioned within the oral history with Eugenia Buss and in other communications with Halsey descendants.

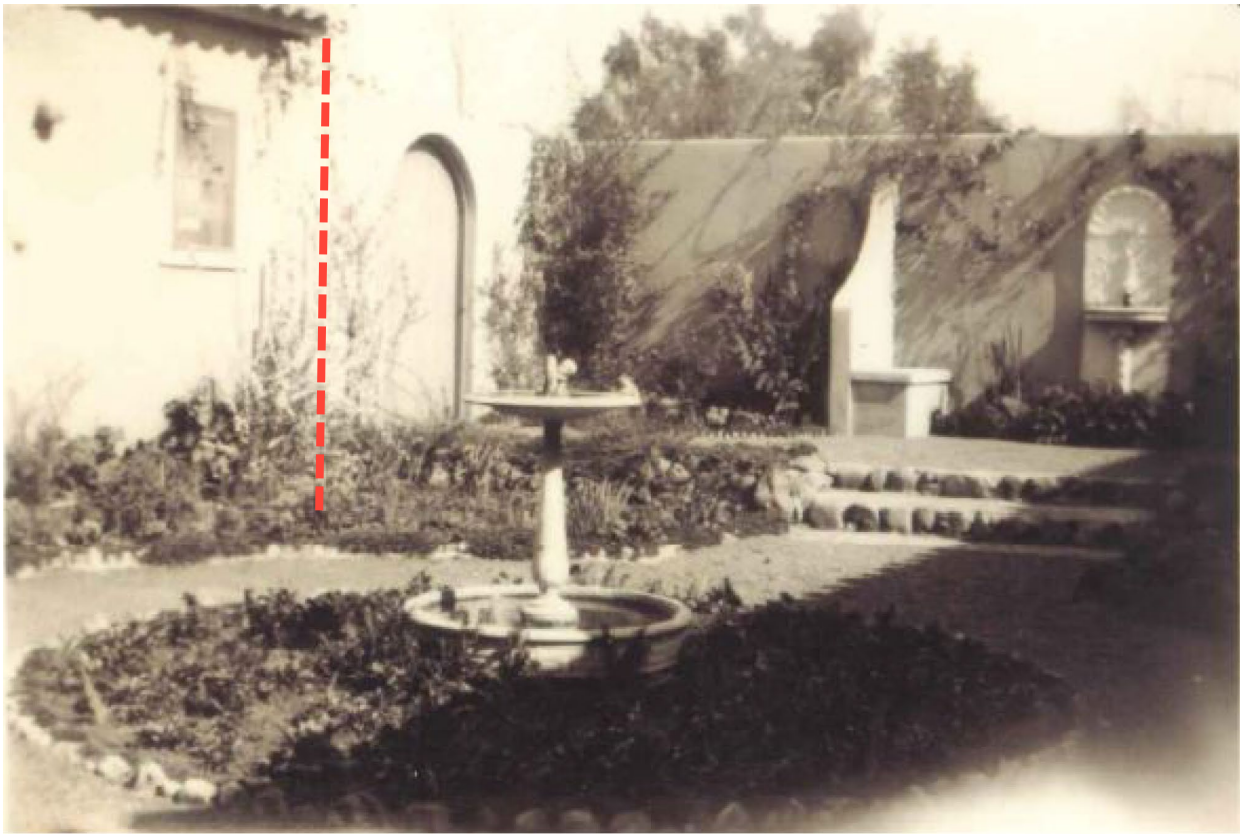


Figure 26: Historic photograph of the courtyard in the late 1920s or early 1930s, showing the original configuration of the east wing and the courtyard wall. The red dashed line indicates the original end of the east wing prior to the construction of an addition at an unknown date likely in the 1930s. Today the round-arched courtyard door is located in the south wall, just left of the bench in this photograph. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

One other alteration known to have been completed during the ownership of the Halsey family is the construction of the wood pergola structure over the entrance porch at the east end of the primary façade. While the entrance porch originally featured a small shed roof over the primary entrance (visible in the left photograph at Figure 25), a photograph from the late 1930s or early 1940s shows the addition of a wood post at the northeast corner of the entrance porch that

[21] Email communication between Katherine Buss and staff of ARG, May 30, 2019. Based on her memories of Halsey family history, Katherine Buss recalls that the family had a live-in cook.

indicates that the pergola was present at this time **(Figure 28)**.[22] The plastic corrugated roofing was added later and is not historic.



Figure 27: Emma Halsey, in the 1920s, at the open courtyard gate in its original location along the east courtyard wall. Looking east into the larger property. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.



Figure 28: Portrait of unidentified women, taken near the creek in front of Halsey House in the late 1930s or early 1940s. The entrance porch of Halsey House is just visible in the background at the far right. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections. Courtesy of Katherine Halsey Buss.

Photographs of the Halsey House's courtyard in the 1920s through the 1940s illustrate the extensive planting of the courtyard completed by Emma Halsey with assistance from her two gardeners, Mori and Yoshio Hongo **(Figure 29, Figure 30, and Figure 31)**. The courtyard retains its original tinted concrete patio at its north end and some of the original stone paving and lining of planting beds at its south end. The benches and a portion of the original fountain are extant along the south courtyard wall. The central circular planting bed and a freestanding fountain that was added during the Halseys' residency have been removed, and a concrete patio was installed in the center of the courtyard prior to 1983.[23]

[22] Date of the photograph is assumed to be the late 1930s to early 1940s based on the clothing of the women in the photograph.
[23] Photographs of planting within the courtyard and painting of the building's courtyard-facing facades in 1983 were provided by Marie Backs to the author.



Figure 29: Theodore and Emma Halsey within rear courtyard of Halsey House in the 1920s. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.



Figure 30: Photograph of the Halsey family and guests on the rear patio of the courtyard, in 1924. Looking north. Note the original balconette at the far left that is no longer extant. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.



Figure 31: Rear courtyard of Halsey House in the late 1930s or early 1940s, showing growth of the garden. Looking slightly northeast. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections. Courtesy of Katherine Halsey Buss.

Alterations that have occurred since Emma Halsey sold the property in 1945 include alterations to the interior and exterior of the Halsey House, as well as changes to the larger property. At some time during the Busseys' ownership, the Halsey House was subdivided into two units and rented out. In 1970, when the property was purchased by Meredith Pearson, each wing of the Halsey House was a separate unit with its own kitchen, and the original living room along the north side of the building was a shared living area for both units.[24] A number of interior alterations had been made prior to 1970, including the installation of a second kitchen and the erection of non-historic partitions in the original living room, entrance hall, and the dining room.

Exterior alterations have been established through observation and a review of historic photographs. These alterations have not changed the existing footprint of the building and are largely limited to the replacement of doors and windows. These alterations include:

- Primary (north) façade:
    - Two fixed windows flanking a metal frame jalousie window were installed to replace three original eight-lite casement windows

[24] Phone conversation between Meredith (Pearson) Phillips and the author on July 22, 2021.

    - Replacement wood frame single-leaf door were installed at the entrance to the 1928 addition
- East façade:
    - Two one-over-one double hung windows were installed to replace original three-over-one windows after 2003 (refer to Figure 10)
- West façade:
    - Single-leaf door was installed at original window location
    - Brick chimney at the west-facing wall of the northwest addition appears to have been reconstructed with contemporary brick
    - Along the south-facing wall of the northwest addition, one original window opening was infilled (frame and sill remain along exterior)
    - Along the south-facing wall of the northwest addition, the easternmost window was replaced with a fixed window
- Courtyard façades:
    - East-facing façade:
        - Original wrought-iron balconette outside French doors was removed and replaced with concrete steps and landing (refer to Figure 30, original balconette visible at far left of photograph)
- Within the courtyard:
    - A non-historic concrete patio was installed prior to 1983[25]
    - The bowl of the fountain at the south courtyard wall was removed prior to 1983[26]

Several non-original partitions are known to have been constructed within the Halsey House prior to 1970. When the City of Los Altos acquired the property in 1974, some non-historic partitions were removed, and others were installed. A comparison between floor plans of the Halsey House by city staff in 1978 show some of these interior changes **(Figure 32 and Figure 33)**. The installation of the acoustic tile and drop ceilings in the original living room appear to have been undertaken after 1974.

[25] Photographs of planting within the courtyard and painting of the building's courtyard-facing facades in 1983 were provided by Marie Backs to the author.
[26] Ibid.

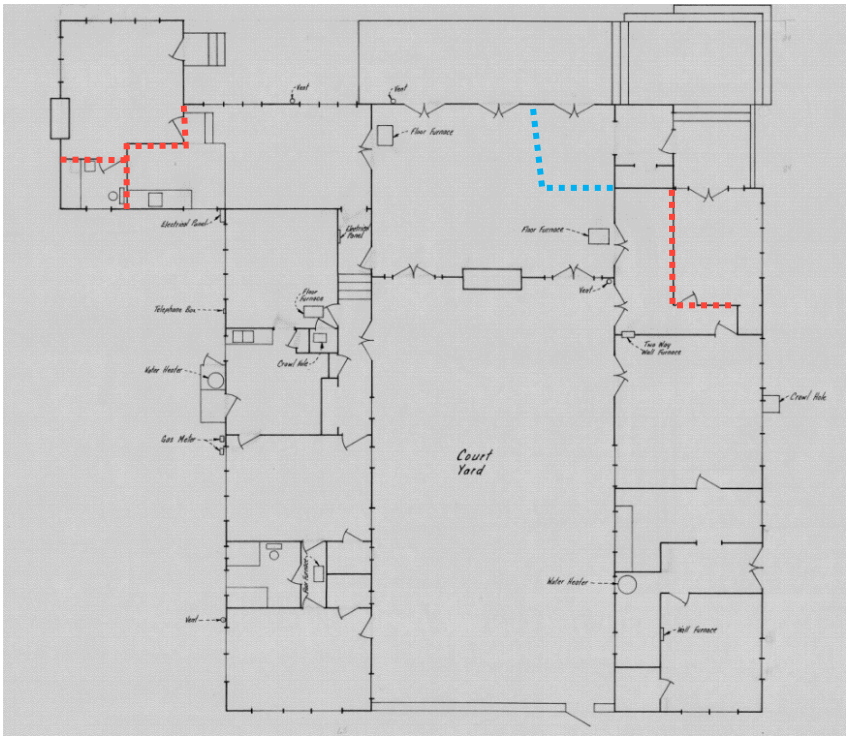


Figure 32: Floor plan of Halsey House circa 1974 through 1978, showing partitions in place at that time. Drawing dated April 1978. Blue dashed line shows additional non-historic partition wall that is known to have been removed between 1974 and 1978 by the City of Los Altos. Red dashed lines show walls that were removed circa 1978 (refer to Figure 33). Source: City of Los Altos.

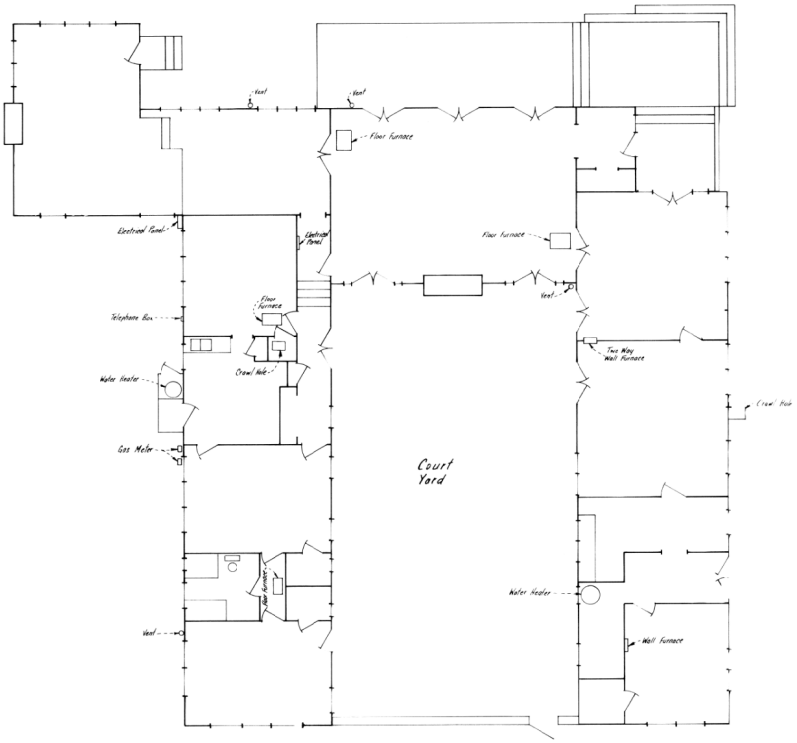


Figure 33: Floor plan of Halsey House, dated April 1978. Shows proposed floor plan after the removal of some partitions (refer to Figure 32). This floor plan is largely accurate to the current floor plan of the building with minor exceptions. Source: City of Los Altos.

Development of the Redwood Grove Landscape and Site

Along with the construction of the Halsey House, in the 1920s the property underwent significant change under the care of Emma Halsey and her gardeners, Mori and Yoshio "Frank" Hongo.[27] The eponymous redwoods of Redwood Grove were transplanted as saplings to the site by Emma and Mori from Emma's paternal grandfather's property along Summit Road in the Santa Cruz Mountains in the early 1920s.[28]

The property was extensively landscaped through the planting of the redwoods, a variety of fruit trees – including apple, pear, apricot, cherry, almond, persimmon, and walnut trees – and the establishment of gardens that included ferns, azaleas, camellias, roses, irises, lavender, wisteria, and rhododendrons.[29] Many of the flowering plants were located either within the rear courtyard or near the Halsey House, while the larger property remained wooded. The areas directly south and west of the house were planted with fruit trees to create a small orchard **(Figure 34)**.



Figure 34: View of the west façade of the residence showing the small orchard at this location, circa 1924. Looking east. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.



Figure 35: Undated photograph showing one of the small wood bridges that crossed the creek. Source: Los Altos History Museum Collections.

[27] Mori is called "Omori" in the oral history with Eugenia Halsey Buss from 2001 but is listed as M. Mori in census records. For the purposes of consistency within this report "Mori" will be used.
[28] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 2.
[29] Ibid, 4.; Helen Buss Halsey, "Map of the Garden and House," provided to staff at ARG via email from Katherine Buss, May 2019.

Other improvements that were made during the Halseys' residence include the construction of a few small wood bridges that crossed over Adobe Creek, which winds through the property, as well as the construction of benches, the lining of planting areas with stone borders, and the construction of a croquet court that was converted into a fenced tennis court at an unknown date **(Figure 35)**.[30]

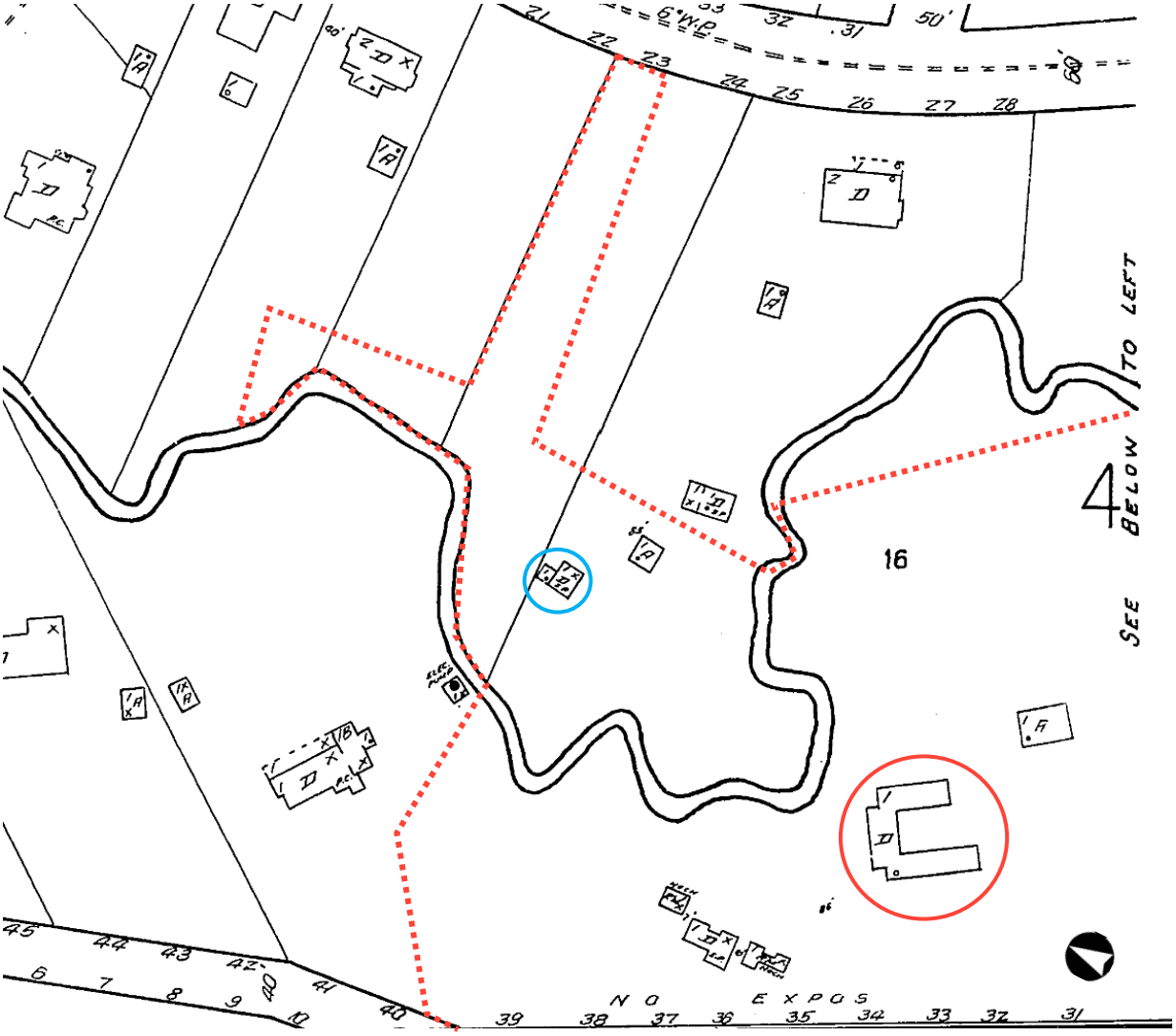


Figure 36: Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map from 1926 showing the approximate boundary of the Halsey property based on the modern property line and the shape of Adobe Creek, shown with a dashed red line. The property continues to the south and west of the area shown. The Halsey House is circled in red. Source: San Francisco Public Library. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

[30] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 4.

Historic photographs of the property show a wood-frame garage building that may have been the automobile garage (no longer extant) located slightly southeast of the residence on the Sanborn Map Company map of 1926 and 1932. The other buildings shown on the 1926 map include the caretaker's cottage (extant though altered), a small dwelling to the west of the Halsey House that may have been used as a cottage for guests (no longer extant), two small buildings with an unidentified use (no longer extant), and an additional garage building (no longer extant) located near the caretaker's cottage **(Figure 36)**.[31]

The caretaker's cottage survives today but has been altered through at least two additions, the replacement of its windows and doors, and other alterations to its original design. An evaluation of the caretaker's cottage is outside the scope of this report.

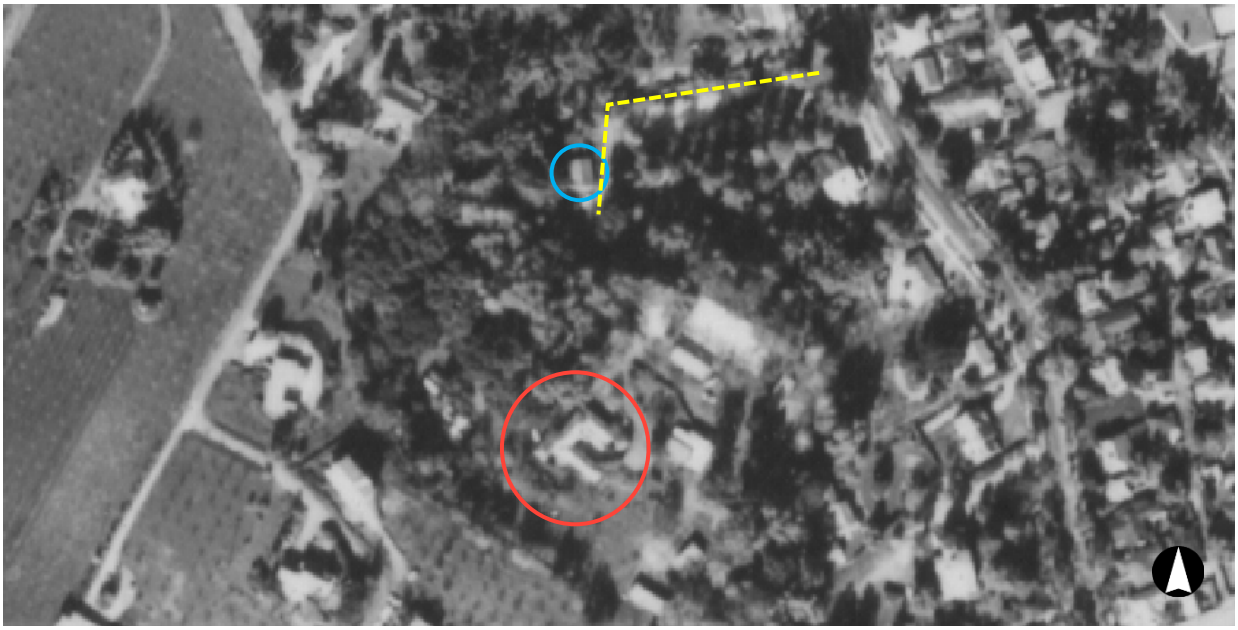


Figure 37: 1963 aerial photograph. Red circle shows location of Halsey House; blue circle shows the location of the extant caretaker's cottage; yellow dashed line shows the access road from University Avenue. Flight: CAS-SCL, Frame: 5-37. Source: UC Santa Barbara, Frame Finder. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Significant changes to the landscape occurred during the ownership of the Besseys from 1945 until 1970. The Besseys constructed between six and ten additional cottages on the property to meet the

[31] Mention of the additional cottage is limited to an annotation on a map of the house and garden as drawn by Helen Buss Halsey. On this hand drawn map, a "small cottage where Aunt Carrie stayed" is marked as having been located west of the Halsey House. Helen Buss Halsey, "Map of the Garden and House," provided to staff at ARG via email from Katherine Buss, May 2019.; Due to the inaccuracy of distances in Sanborn maps and that the property line as shown has been approximated based on the modern property line and the shape of Adobe Creek, the second garage building may be improperly located on the map and associated with the residence located just north of the property line.

needs of the post-World War II housing shortage.[32] Some of these structures are visible in a 1963 aerial photograph of the property **(Figure 37)**.

At the time of Meredith Pearson's purchase of the Redwood Grove and Halsey House, these various cottages and buildings were extant. During the city's ownership of the property and as part of the Redwood Grove's conversion to a public park, the additional cottages constructed by Bessey were removed and only the Halsey House and the caretaker's cottage were retained.

Today, few of the original plantings by Emma Halsey, Mori, and Yoshio Hongo survive, with the exception of the redwood trees planted in the early 1920s. Some individual specimens of fruit trees, flowering trees, and other plants may survive, but the overall impact of the formal landscape has been obscured through the alterations to the property since 1945.

Ownership and Occupancy History

The following tables provide a summary of the ownership and occupancy history of the Halsey House beginning with the year of construction of the residence in 1923. This does not include the purchase of the property in 1912 by William and Myra Wright, or the transfer of ownership between the Wrights and the Halseys in 1915, which predate the construction of the Halsey House.

The owner and occupancy histories were compiled from newspaper articles, city directories, oral histories, and existing documentation for the Halsey House. The County of Santa Clara Office of the Assessor was closed to researchers at the time of this report, and a full history of the deeds of the property was not completed at this time.

Table 2. Owner History for the Halsey House

Date(s)	Owner(s)	Occupation
1923-1943	Theodore Vail Halsey Emma Wright Halsey	Executive, SF Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company Housewife
1943-1945	Emma Wright Halsey	
1945-1970	Edward C. Bessey[33] Rachel M. S. Bessey	
1970-1974	Meredith Pearson	
1974-present	City of Los Altos	

[32] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 18.
[33] The Bessey family are named as the purchasers of the property in all written and oral histories of the Halsey House. Bessey appears to refer to Edward Cushing Bessey and his wife Rachel Miller Shaw Bessey. As the Assessor's office was closed at the time of this report, Page & Turnbull was unable to verify these names through the property's deed records.

Table 3. Occupant History for the Halsey House		
Date(s)	**Occupant(s)**	**Occupation**
1923-1928	Theodore Vail Halsey Emma Wright Halsey Myra Eugenia Halsey (later Buss) Theodore Vail Halsey, Jr. Mori[34]	Executive, SF Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company Housewife Student Student Gardener
1928-1943	Theodore Vail Halsey Emma Wright Halsey Myra E. Halsey (1928-1939)[35] Theodore Vail Halsey, Jr. Myra E. Wright Mori (1930) Katie Laetinen (1930) Vivian Peterson (1940)	Executive, telephone company (various) Housewife Student Student None Gardener Cook Maid
1943-1945	Emma Wright Halsey Myra E. Wright	None None
1945-1970	Unknown [various renters]	N/A
Summer 1970	Meredith Pearson [Pearson family and various renters][36]	Unknown
1970–1974	[Pearson family and various renters][37]	Unknown

Theodore and Emma Halsey received the property as a wedding gift in 1915 from Emma's parents. As described previously (refer to the section, **Site Development**, above), the property was used as a summer home by the Halseys and the Wrights prior to the construction of the Halsey House in 1923. In 1923, the Halseys moved to Los Altos permanently with their two children, Theodore Vail, Jr. and Myra Eugenia (who went by Eugenia as an adult).

[34] As stated previously, Mori is spelled "Omori" in the transcribed oral history with Eugenia Halsey Buss from 2001 but is listed as M. Mori in census records. For the purposes of consistency within this report "Mori" will be used. Exact dates of Mori's residence at Halsey House or on the larger property are unknown, but it is likely that he resided on the property from the early 1920s through the mid- to late-1930s.
[35] Myra Halsey married in 1939 and was not living at the Halsey House by 1940.
[36] Email correspondence between Meredith Phillips and Marie Backs, supplied to the author by Phillips on July 22, 2021.; Phone conversation between Meredith (Pearson) Phillips and the author on July 22, 2021. Other family members residing at the property during this period prefer to remain unnamed.
[37] Ibid.

The Halseys' gardener Mori, a Japanese immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1913, was also a resident on the property in the early 1920s through at least 1930.[38] Mori assisted Emma in the planting of the redwood saplings and the general landscaping of the Halsey property.

In 1928, the Halseys were joined by Emma's mother, Myra Wright, following the death of Emma's father. At the time of the 1930 Federal Census, both Mori and a maid, Katie Laetinen, were listed at the Halsey residence in addition to the Halseys and Myra Wright.[39] It is unclear whether Mori was residing in the caretaker's cottage, as suggested in the oral history, as neither Mori nor Katie Laetinen were listed under a separate dwelling number.[40]

By the time of the 1940 Federal Census, Mori had left the United States to return to Japan and a new gardener, Yoshio (Frank) Hongo, had been hired to work with Emma at the Halsey property.[41] According to the 2001 oral history with Eugenia Halsey Buss, Mori and Yoshio were well acquainted – Yoshio was a gardener at another Los Altos property – and Mori recommended Yoshio to be his replacement.[42]

Yoshio and his wife, Takiyo, lived in the caretaker's cottage with their four children: Yuta, Fumiye, Kazuye, and Hisaye.[43] Yoshio immigrated from Japan in 1912 and returned to Japan to marry Takiyo in 1918. [44] Takiyo came to the United States in 1919. Their four children were born in California. In 1942, the Hongo family was sent to Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming due to the forced internment of Japanese Americans under Executive Order 9066, issued in February 1942.

In 1943, Theodore Halsey passed away. From 1943 until 1945, Emma Halsey and Myra Wright lived at the Halsey House until it was sold to the Bessey family in 1945.[45]

[38] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 1.; United States Federal Census, Santa Clara County, Fremont Township, Precinct 1, 1930.
[39] United States Federal Census, Santa Clara County, Fremont Township, Precinct 1, 1930.
[40] As neither was listed under a separate "dwelling number" within the census records, both have been included in the occupancy table above. The 2001 oral history implies that Mori resided in the caretaker's cottage, which was then "fixed up" for the Hongo family.
[41] Yoshio Hongo went by Frank Hongo and is referred to as Frank within the Eugenia Halsey Buss oral history. "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 3-4.
[42] Ibid.; United States Federal Census, Santa Clara County, Fremont Township, 1930. Yoshio was listed as a gardener in Los Altos in the 1930 census.
[43] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program, 3-4.
[44] "Petition for Naturalization, Yoshio Hongo," July 1953, Accessed via Ancestry.com.
[45] Emma Halsey and Myra Wright moved to Palo Alto in 1945.

The Bessey family appears to refer to Edward C. Bessey and Rachel Miller Shaw Bessey.[46] The Besseys do not appear to have ever resided at the subject property and purchased it as a rental property and development opportunity. Prior to moving to the San Francisco Bay Area, the Besseys resided in San Diego, and Edward Bessey was employed as a pilot for the Trans Ocean airlines.[47] In 1949, Bessey force landed a passenger plane in the Atlantic Ocean just beyond the Shannon, Ireland Airport.[48] During the news coverage of this incident, including the subsequent libel suit brought by Bessey against the airline, Edward Bessey's address was listed variously as Westersfield, Connecticut and Los Altos, California. It appears that Bessey left the airline industry and became an automobile salesman in San Jose in the 1950s and transitioned into real estate by 1962.[49] The Besseys lived in San Jose, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills, but are not known to have ever resided at the Halsey House.

During the Besseys' ownership, the Halsey house was subdivided into two units and several cottages (numbering from six to ten) were constructed on the property in the postwar period and rented out. The identities of individuals who resided at the property during this period have not been identified.[50]

In 1970, the property was purchased by Meredith Pearson (now Phillips), who briefly resided in the Halsey House during the summer of 1970. Pearson's intention for the property was both to save the Redwood Grove from possible development, which was proposed by a developer interested in the property, and to establish a property for communal living with family and friends.[51] Pearson relocated to Palo Alto in late 1970, but during her ownership of the property, several family members and friends continued to reside at the Halsey House and rented the other buildings on the property.[52] Pearson owned the property until it was sold to the City of Los Altos in 1974.

From 1974 until 2008, the Halsey House was open to the public for various public programs including as a small museum and an educational center. Since 2008, the building has been vacant

[46] "Rachel Miller Shaw Bessey," *Los Altos Town Crier,* February 8, 2012, Accessed July 27, 2021, https://www.losaltosonline.com/people/obituaries/rachel-miller-shaw-bessey/article_0f19701f-f092-59ac-b987-a91c08119d8c.html
[47] City Directories, San Diego and Coronado.; Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, various, 1947-1949. Accessed via Ancestry.com.
[48] The plane had reportedly run out of gas due to a number of mistakes made by the navigator of the flight. "Atlantic Airliner Toll Drops to 8," *The Fresno Bee,* August 17, 1949.; "Air Lines Sued for $200,000 by Pilot in Crash," *Oakland Tribune,* April 12, 1950.
[49] Various city directories from 1952 to 1968, including San Jose, Palo Alto, and Mountain View.
[50] City and county directories are unavailable for this period. Initial research was not able to establish the residents of either the cottages (all demolished) or the main house.
[51] Email correspondence between Meredith Phillips and Marie Backs, supplied to the author by Phillips on July 22, 2021.
[52] Phone conversation between Meredith (Pearson) Phillips and the author on July 22, 2021.

and closed to the public due to health and safety concerns. Today, the building is boarded up and encircled by fencing in an effort to keep out vandals.

SELECT OWNER AND OCCUPANT BIOGRAPHIES

Theodore Vail Halsey (1873–1943)

Theodore Vail Halsey was born in 1873 in Minnesota. His family moved to California in 1882 and resided in San Jose. Various family members of Theodore Halsey were involved in the development and implementation of the telephone and telegraph systems, and Halsey pursued a career in the telephone and telegraph industries.

For many years, Halsey was an executive of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company of San Francisco and was charged with bribery in a large graft case against telephone company executives. After a series of guilty verdicts for other executives charged in the case, Halsey was acquitted and was widely believed by the press to have been used as a scapegoat by "higher-ups" in their attempt to escape prosecution.[53] The various court cases lasted from 1907 to 1912.

Halsey was an executive of the Telephone Investment Company and was also the first president of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company beginning in 1928. Halsey had been involved with introducing and developing the telephone system in the Philippines as early as 1906. Halsey did have a personal office/library within the residence (located in the original northwest corner of the building), however, Halsey family history does not indicate that he held important meetings or used this office to conduct significant business that related to his professional accomplishments.[54]

In the 1930s, Halsey established Delta Properties Inc. to farm and improve tracts held in the area of the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. Halsey was later joined by his son, Theodore Halsey, Jr., in this business venture.

Halsey was married twice. His first marriage, circa 1900, was to Jessie L. Sabin (formerly Mrs. Stephen Fiddler), who passed away circa 1914.[55] In 1915, Theodore Halsey married Emma Wright in

[53] "Glass Must Stand Trial," *Oroville Daily Register,* July 24, 1912.; "Theo. V. Halsey Will Wed Miss Emma Wright," *The San Francisco Examiner,* June 16, 1915.
[54] This office/library appears to have been located where the original grouping of three eight-lite casement windows were located. After the construction of the 1928 addition, a hallway led from Myra Wright's rooms through this office area to reach the living room. General location of Theodore's office/library is shown on Helen Buss Halsey's "Map of the Garden and House," provided to staff at ARG via email from Katherine Buss, May 2019.; recollections of the hallway between the study and Myra's rooms are related in an email from Katherine Buss to staff at ARG, May 30, 2019.
[55] "Theodore V. Halsey Weds [Emma] Minerva Wright," *Oakland Tribune,* June 16, 1915.; United States Federal Census, San Francisco County, 1910.

Los Altos at the subject property. They had two children (refer to **Ownership and Occupancy History**, above).

Halsey appears to have suffered from poor health for many years. He was hospitalized and believed to be "on his death bed" during his 1907 trial and suffered a stroke in 1936.[56] Halsey passed away in 1943.

Emma Minerva Wright Halsey (1880–1975)

Emma Wright was born in 1880 to William H. and Myra E. (née Quinby) Wright. William Wright's parents were considered California pioneers, who settled in California in 1869 and established a ranch along Summit Road in the Santa Cruz mountains.[57] William Wright was president of the San Jose Fruit Packing Company, and later worked as a contractor in the dredging business. Myra Wright was born to the Quinby family, for whom Quinby Road in San Jose is named, and worked as a schoolteacher prior to her marriage to William Wright.[58]

The Wrights moved to San Francisco in 1900. In 1912, when Emma was in her early 30s, she found the future Halsey House property when her father asked her to locate a property along the Peninsula to serve as the Wrights' summer home.

In 1915, Emma married Theodore Vail Halsey. No announcement was made of their engagement.[59] Emma was an avid gardener, and the choice to relocate to Los Altos in 1923, with their two young children, gave her the opportunity to garden extensively. As related by Halsey family descendants, the Halseys' bedroom at Halsey House opened to the courtyard, and Emma was known to rise early and garden in the courtyard before other family members had risen.[60]

Following Theodore Halsey's death in 1943, and the forced internment of the Hongo family at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, Emma sold the Halsey House and property. She and her mother moved to Palo Alto. Emma is reported to have found the house and grounds too lonely and isolated for only herself and Myra.[61] Emma Wright Halsey passed away in 1975 in Palo Alto.

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[56] "Halsey's Story is 'Cooked Up,'" *The Fresno Morning Republican,* October 12, 1907.
[57] H.S. Foote, ed., *Pen Pictures From The Garden of the World or Santa Clara County, California. Illustrated.*, (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1888), 302.
[58] "Mira [sic] Wright was a Pioneer Resident," *Los Gatos Times-Saratoga Observer,* October 13, 1944.
[59] "Theodore V. Halsey Weds [Emma] Minerva Wright," *Oakland Tribune,* June 16, 1915.
[60] Email correspondence between Katherine Buss and staff of ARG, May 2019.
[61] "Eugenia Halsey Buss Interview, August 23, 2001," Los Altos History Museum, Oral History Program.

The Design of the Halsey House

The Halsey House was designed in a modest Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1923 and was expanded with two early additions in 1928 and the 1930s.

Historically rooted in the building traditions of early Spanish and Mexican settlers of California and other Spanish colonies, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was popular in California and the rest of the Southwest from the early 1900s to the 1930s, with variations on the style remaining popular today. Earlier Hispanic Revival styles were rooted in regional interpretations of traditional Spanish, Native American, and Mexican design and construction techniques, which were indigenous to California. Not as ornate as its earlier Mexican prototypes, the Mission Revival style in the 1910s was characterized by low-pitched or flat roofs (often composed of thatch, terracotta tile or tar), thick masonry walls of adobe brick or stucco, multiple doorways, deeply recessed openings with multi-lite windows, arcades/colonnades, sculpted parapets resembling the typical espadaña (belfry), and red clay tile roofs. The Mission Revival style was popular in California and much of the Southwest because it was derived from indigenous prototypes.

By the 1920s, the Mission Revival style in California was joined by the more elaborate Mediterranean and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Making use of terracotta tile gable roofs, thick masonry walls, plaster finishes, wrought iron grilles, balconies, and smaller fenestration openings, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was popular for commercial buildings, institutions, apartments, and single-family residences. In California, the Spanish Colonial Revival style came into prominence after the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915 and remained popular into the 1930s, when the Great Depression, and then World War II, had a chilling effect on construction.[62]

The Halsey House illustrates some of the common features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style through its material palette of clay tile roofing, lightly colored stucco cladding, and multi-lite windows and doors with wood sash, but lacks the decorative detailing that is common to the high-style examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Decorative detailing that is typical of the style generally includes the integration of stucco grilles, the presence of metal features including lamps, window grilles, and balcony railings, an emphasis around primary entrances through the presence of carved wood doors, spiraled columns, carved stonework, or decorative tiles, and the use of unpainted wood elements.[63] As originally designed, the Halsey House incorporated one balconette along the inner courtyard (since removed) and several simple metal lamps that are partially extant.

[62] San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 18 – Residential and Commercial Architectural Periods and Styles in San Francisco* (January 2003).
[63] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses,* Second Edition (New York: Knopf, 2018), 520-534.

Other decorative elements were limited to the inclusion of the fountain along the south wall of the rear courtyard.

The integration of interior and exterior spaces, as seen at Halsey House through the use of French doors and courtyards, is an element of the Spanish Colonial Revival style but also demonstrates a regional preference for taking advantage of California's temperate climate. The open design of the Halsey House's living spaces, emphasizing the relationship of the landscape and the outdoors with the interior, is a vernacular interpretation of the style that was likely a particular request of the Halseys during the design of the building.



Figure 38: Example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Los Altos at 10 Pasa Robles Avenue. Source: Redfin.com.



Figure 39: St. Nicholas Church in Los Altos, an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Source: St. Nicholas Church.

Overall, the Halsey House has a cohesive design that is unified through its limited material palette and its use of numerous multi-lite windows and doors that intimately relate the building to its site. However, the building is not a high-style example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. An extensive comparative survey of other local examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style was not undertaken for this report, but a brief review of the other properties included in the Los Altos HRI identified several other Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings in Los Altos, including six residential properties, two religious properties, and one commercial property **(Figure 38 and Figure 39)**.[64] Of these nine additional properties that are local examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, two

[64] The other properties listed in the HRI were all constructed in the early decades of the twentieth century, and include: 10 Pasa Robles Avenue, 52 Almond Avenue, 211 Yerba Buena Avenue, 90 Cody Lane (early Los Altos apartment building), 388-398 Main Street, 571 Cherry Avenue, 566 S. El Monte Road, the Jesuit Retreat House at 662 University Avenue, 350 Main Street, and St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Church at 473 Lincoln Avenue.

properties were also designated city Historic Landmarks.[65] The presence of other local examples of the style illustrates that the Halsey House is not a rare example of the style in Los Altos.



Figure 40: Pettigrew House at 1336 Cowper Street, Palo Alto. Listed in the National Register in 1980 for its architecture. Source: Google StreetView.



Figure 41: Dunker House at 420 Maple Street, Palo Alto. Listed in the National Register in 1982 for its architecture. Source: National Park Service.

Additionally, within the larger region, the Spanish Colonial Revival style is well represented with high style examples in nearby cities like Palo Alto, Mountain View, Hillsborough, and San Jose **(Figure 40 and Figure 41)**. As such, the Halsey House is a good example of a vernacular interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style but is not a high style or rare example of the style. As the architect or builder of the residence remains unidentified at this time, the Halsey House would not be considered significant for its association with an architect or builder.

[65] The two local Historic Landmarks are 388-398 Main Street (commercial, built circa 1909) and 571 Cherry Avenue (residential, built circa 1925).

VI. EVALUATION

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.
In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- **Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant 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 (Architecture):** 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 or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

The following section examines the eligibility of the Halsey House for individual listing in the California Register.

CRITERION 1 (EVENTS)

The site of the Halsey House and the Redwood Grove was first developed in 1912 with a summer cottage to provide a sunny summer retreat for the Wright family when they sought to escape the fog of San Francisco. This was a typical use of early residential properties in the Los Altos area and along the Peninsula.

In the 1920s, as schools, businesses, and institutions were adequately developed to support the year-round living of middle- and upper-class residents who were looking to move out of San Francisco, the property at Redwood Grove became an appealing location for the Halsey family to settle permanently. In 1923, the previous summer cottage was demolished and the Halsey House was constructed. The young Halsey children attended nearby schools, and the well-established commuter train allowed Theodore Halsey to easily travel to and from his office in San Francisco. Emma Halsey was most involved with the development of the property itself, and established the gardens, orchards, and redwood grove. Emma's gardening and landscaping at the Halsey House, with the assistance of her Japanese gardeners, Mori and Yoshio (Frank) Hongo, reflected the increasing residential use of the area but retained the rural feeling of the many orchards that still characterized Los Altos in the early twentieth century.

Many of the residences that were established in Los Altos during this period were located in the University/Orange area and developed as freestanding single-family homes that faced the street on small parcels of land. The Halsey House and property was developed in 1923 in the style of a more rural property and was sited to complement the existing topography, creek, and trees, including several mature oaks. Today, the property remains a rare example of an early Los Altos summer retreat that was developed into a permanent residential property at a time when Los Altos saw considerable growth in year-round residential properties. Although the Halsey House was developed as a permanent residence, it retained its rural character through the interests of its owners and the planting of many redwood trees that today define Redwood Grove Park. While most of the landscape planted by Emma, Mori, and Yoshio – including the many fruit trees and flowering plants surrounding the residence and within the rear courtyard – is no longer extant, the surviving oak trees, numerous redwoods, and the presence of Adobe Creek remain and convey the historic setting of the residence.

The Halsey House and the Redwood Grove is an excellent example of early residential patterns of Los Altos, and the establishment of Redwood Grove is a unique property developed by Emma Halsey and her Japanese gardeners in the 1920s. Therefore, the Halsey House and the Redwood Grove appear to be individually eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events), with a period of significance from the construction of the Halsey House in 1923 through the end of Emma Halsey's ownership of the property in 1945.

CRITERION 2 (PERSONS)

The Halsey House was constructed for Theodore and Emma Halsey in 1923 to serve as their permanent family home in Los Altos. Theodore lived at the house until his death in 1943, and Emma sold the house and property two years later in 1945. She passed away in the 1970s while residing in

Palo Alto. Following the Halseys' ownership, the property was owned by Edward and Rachel Bessey, who rented the property to a number of currently unidentified residents. The house was briefly owner-occupied for a period of a few months in 1970 by Meredith Pearson. Since the property was purchased by the city in 1974, it has been used as a museum and educational center, but was closed to the public in 2008 and has been vacant since that date.

Theodore Vail Halsey, Sr. had a successful career in the telephone industry and held executive positions at the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, the Telephone Investment Company, and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT). These professional accomplishments, however, are more closely associated with the locations of Halsey's work, particularly with regard to the PLDT's work in the Philippines, and not his family home. While he had a personal office/library within the residence (located in the original northwest corner of the building), research has not indicated that Halsey entertained professional colleagues, or held important business meetings at the Halsey House that would identify it as significant in relation to Theodore Halsey's professional accomplishments. Therefore, the Halsey House is not significant for its associate with Theodore Halsey under Criterion 2.

Emma Wright Halsey is the individual most closely associated with the subject building and the property, as she first located the property for her parents to purchase in 1912, was married on the property in 1915, lived at the Halsey House from 1923 to 1945, and transformed the site through her gardening work with the assistance of gardeners Mori and Yoshio Hongo. Little is known about the personal accomplishments of Emma Halsey beyond her gardening at the Halsey House. Research has not identified Emma Halsey as a gardener or landscape designer of any additional properties beyond her own, and the Halsey House and Redwood Grove would therefore not be considered as part of a larger body of work. Thus, Emma Halsey's contributions to the Halsey House are tied to the development of the property itself and the accomplishment of creating the Redwood Grove, which is more clearly represented through Criterion 1 (Events). She did not otherwise contribute to local, state, or national history such that she should be considered a historically significant person. The Halsey House and landscape are not individually eligible for their association with Emma Halsey under Criterion 2.

The Halsey House and Redwood Grove are also related to the professional careers of both Mori and Yoshio Hongo, who were employed as gardeners by Emma and Theodore Halsey and resided on the property during their periods of employment. Both Mori and Yoshio were born in Japan and immigrated to the United States where they found work as orchard farmers and gardeners. Mori was hired by the Halseys in the early 1920s and was involved in the initial planting of the redwoods on the property and the early landscaping of the property. Mori retired in the 1930s and recommended Yoshio "Frank" Hongo as his replacement. Yoshio, who was already employed as a

gardener in Los Altos, had also previously worked in the fruit orchards of the Los Altos area. Yoshio and his family resided in the caretaker's cottage until 1942, when they were forcibly relocated by the United States Government to Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. Both men played important roles in the creation and maintenance of Redwood Grove, but their individual contributions to the creation of the property do not rise to a level of importance such that they would be considered significant at the local, state, or national level for the property to be eligible under Criterion 2 for its association with either man as an individual. Much like Emma Halsey, their contributions to the property are better represented through Criterion 1 (Events).

Aside from the Halsey family, later owners of the Halsey House lived at the residence either only briefly or not at all, and are therefore not significantly associated with the house such that it would be significant for their personal or professional accomplishments. The other occupants of the Halsey House, from 1945 until 1974, rented the property for unknown periods of time, and their identities are largely unknown. Archival research did not uncover any significant personal achievements connected with the subject building.

Therefore, the Halsey House does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons).

CRITERION 3 (DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE)

The Halsey House was constructed in 1923 and was designed by an unknown architect. The building was expanded through two early additions, including a 1928 addition to the northwest corner of the building and the extension of the east wing at an unknown date, possibly in the early 1930s. Both additions were designed to blend with the existing style and design of the building and matched the exterior finish, clay tile roofing, and existing wood sash multi-lite windows and doors of the 1923 residence. The building was designed in a modest Spanish Colonial Revival style and demonstrates characteristics of the style through its stucco cladding, hipped clay tile roof, low one-story massing arranged around a private courtyard with bench seating and a fountain, and extensive use of multi-lite windows and doors. Detailing is largely limited to the scored and tinted cement patios, stone paving of the courtyard, and some metal features, including original door and lamp fixtures. Overall, the building lacks the decorative features that are typical of both modest and high-style examples of the style, such as decorative plasterwork, tile, or exposed wood elements. The Halsey House is not the only example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Los Altos, and nine other properties designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style are listed in the Los Altos HRI. Therefore, the Halsey House would not be considered a rare example. Additionally, within the larger region of the San Francisco Peninsula and South Bay, the Spanish Colonial Revival style is well represented, with fine examples in nearby cities like Palo Alto, Mountain View, Hillsborough, and San Jose.

As such, the Halsey House is an example of a simple interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style but is not a high style or rare example of the style such that it would be individually significant for its architecture. It does not represent distinctive methods of construction or craftsmanship. As the architect or builder of the residence remains unidentified, the Halsey House is not considered significant for its association with a master architect or builder. Therefore, the Halsey House does not appear to be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3 (Design/Architecture).

The residence was initially set within a planned landscape of flowering plants, hedges, ferns, and fruit trees, with built landscape elements including stone-lined planting beds, wood benches, and wood bridges over Adobe Creek, which was developed by Emma Halsey with her gardeners. While the oak trees, redwoods, and Adobe Creek survive today and characterize the setting of the Halsey House, the majority of the designed plantings of the landscape have been removed since Emma Halsey sold the property in 1945. Therefore, the landscape of the Halsey House would not be considered significant as a formally designed landscape designed by Emma Halsey. The Redwood Grove as a natural landscape is therefore more clearly significant under Criterion 1 (Events) and would not be considered individually significant under Criterion 3 for its landscape design.

CRITERION 4 (INFORMATION POTENTIAL)

The "potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of California" typically relates to archeological resources, rather than built resources.[66] When California Register Criterion 4 (Information Potential) does relate to built resources, it is relevant for cases when the building itself is the principal source of important construction-related information. The analysis of the Halsey House for eligibility under Criterion 4 is beyond the scope of this report.

Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in any local, state, or national historic register, a property or landscape must possess significance under at least one evaluative criterion as described above and retain integrity. Integrity is defined by the California Office of Historic Preservation as "the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance," or more simply defined by the National Park Service as "the ability of a property to convey its significance."[67]

[66] California State Office of Historic Preservation. *Technical Assistance Bulletin No. 7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources*. Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, (September 4, 2001), 11.
[67] Ibid.

In order to evaluate whether the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, Page & Turnbull used established integrity standards outlined by the *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Seven variables, or aspects, that define integrity are used to evaluate a resource's integrity—location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[68] A property must possess most, or all, of these aspects in order to retain overall integrity. If a property does not retain integrity, it can no longer convey its significance and is therefore not eligible for listing in local, state, or national registers.

The seven aspects that define integrity are defined as follows:

> Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred;
>
> Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s);
>
> Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property;
>
> Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form the historic property;
>
> Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;
>
> Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time; and
>
> Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and the historic property.

LOCATION

The Halsey House and property retains integrity of location. The building has remained situated at its location of original construction since 1923 and the overall property has retained its location and its approximate size.

[68] U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995), 44.

SETTING

The Halsey House retains integrity of setting. The building was erected within a large, six-acre piece of land and was sited to take advantage of the landscape and the curve of Adobe Creek. Early in the property's history, Emma Halsey and Mori, her gardener, planted many redwood saplings to complement the existing oak trees on the property. The landscaping work by Emma was continued into the early 1940s with the assistance of Yoshio Hongo, following Mori's retirement. These redwoods remain today and have grown to maturity. The Halsey House therefore retains its wooded and natural setting.

DESIGN

The Halsey House retains integrity of design. The building has undergone several alterations to both its exterior and interior; however, it retains its overall form, massing, and materials and is recognizable as a modest example of a 1920s Spanish Colonial Revival style residence. The building retains its one-story form organized around a private rear courtyard, and its use of stucco cladding and clay-tile hipped roofs demonstrate the typical materials of the style. While lacking the more ornate features of the style including decorative plasterwork, tile, and exposed wood elements, the building features a large number of multi-lite windows and French doors that illustrate the porous relationship between the interior and exterior spaces of the building. Alterations to the massing and footprint of the building were undertaken during the ownership of the Halsey family and are considered historic. The original design of the building remains intact, and the materials, decoration, craftsmanship, and massing of the building have remained largely unchanged with the exception of some replacement windows and doors since 1945, when Emma Halsey sold the property. Therefore, the building retains integrity of design.

MATERIALS

The Halsey House retains integrity of materials. While the condition of the building is currently poor, the Halsey House does retain a high degree of original materials including its stucco cladding, clay tile roof, multi-lite windows and doors, and some metal features including original hardware and portions of lighting fixtures. Other features that remain include the rear courtyard wall with its fountain, benches, and round-arched door, the stone patio within the courtyard, stone semi-circular steps outside the rear courtyard door, and the tinted concrete patios along the entrance porch, north façade, and rear courtyard.

WORKMANSHIP

The Halsey House retains integrity of workmanship. The Halsey House is a wood-frame building with stucco cladding and a clay tile hipped roof. The building is modest, with few decorative details, and the workmanship of the building is most clearly demonstrated through the simplicity of its detailing that provides a unified feeling to the design of the building. The consistent stucco cladding and clay tile roofing, the presence of multi-lite wood sash windows and doors, and the detailing of the scored and tinted concrete patios and metal features, including original door and lamp fixtures, demonstrate the workmanship of this 1920s residence.

FEELING

The Halsey House retains integrity of feeling. The building retains the feeling of an early 1920s residence that was intended to serve as a year-round home for the Halsey family and was set within a wooded, lush landscape along Adobe Creek. The property retains its semi-rural feeling through its wooded setting that is removed from the main public right-of-way on University Avenue.

ASSOCIATION

The Halsey House retains integrity of association. The building is significant for its residential development history and the development of Redwood Grove in the early 1920s by Emma Halsey and Mori. These associations continue to be represented through the retention of the residence's architectural characteristics that date to the time of Emma Halsey's period of residence and the retention of the property's landscape and the redwood trees that were transplanted to the site by Emma and Mori in the early 1920s.

Therefore, the Halsey House retains all seven aspects of integrity such that it conveys its significance under Criterion 1 (Events) of the California Register, with a period of significance from 1929-1945.

Character-Defining Features

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

The character-defining features of the Halsey House consist of those features which date to the building's period of significance from 1923 to 1945 under Criterion 1, for the Halsey House as an excellent example of the changing residential development of Los Altos and for its direct connection to the establishment of the wooded property that is now Redwood Grove Park. The character-defining features of the Halsey House include the original features, materials, and design elements of the building and landscape as completed in 1923 and any alterations undertaken during Emma Halsey's period of residence, which ended when she sold the property in 1945. These features include, but are not limited to:

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF THE HALSEY HOUSE

- Overall form and massing of the building (low, horizontal emphasis)
- Clay tile clad hipped roof
- Stucco cladding along exterior with a textured finish
- Original multi-lite wood sash windows, including three-over-one double-hung windows with ogee lugs, four-lite wood casement windows, six-lite wood casement windows, and six-lite wood sash slider windows
- Multi-light glazed French doors
- Multi-light sidelights flanking doors at the entrance porch and along south-facing wall of rear courtyard
- Tinted and stamped concrete at front entry porch and terrace
- Enclosed rear courtyard with tinted and stamped concrete patio at north end, built-in bench seating, fountain, and stone patio with steps at south end, and concrete stairs and metal railing at south end of west wing
- Original chimney with stucco cladding along south-facing wall of courtyard
- South courtyard wall with round arched wood plank door
- Semi-circular stone stairs along exterior of courtyard door in south courtyard wall
- Extant original metal fixtures including portions of original lamps and original door hardware at primary entrance

INTERIOR FEATURES OF THE HALSEY HOUSE

- Original brick and tile fireplaces
- Original wood floors
- Plaster walls and ceilings
- Original wood panel doors
- Original hardware and wood trim of doors and windows
- Original wood baseboards and picture molding

SITE

- Residence located deep within the approximately six-acre parcel and not visible from University Avenue
- Natural setting including:
    - Mature redwood trees
    - Mature oak trees
    - Adobe Creek
- Additional fruit trees, flowering trees, and plantings that appear to date from the period of significance

Los Altos Historic Landmark and Historic Resource Criteria

The City of Los Altos has adopted a similar evaluation framework for the evaluation of historic resources as the California Register and the National Register. For a property to be a historic resource, it must be over fifty years of age, retain its physical integrity, and have historical significance related to historic events, persons, architecture and design, or archaeological significance.[69] These four areas of significance are nearly identical to the California Register's Criteria 1 through 4.

In order to be a City of Los Altos Historic Landmark, the resource must additionally have either a heightened level of significance or be a rare example of its type.

Halsey House as a Designated Historic Landmark

As discussed previously (refer to **Existing Historic Status**), the Halsey House and the Redwood Grove property is a designated Historic Landmark. The property was first listed in 1981, and subsequent architectural surveys have established that the residence was identified as significant for its association with the Halsey family and as a good example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, and that the Redwood Grove is considered a unique natural landscape of Los Altos. Due to the existing condition of the building and the length of time since the Halsey House was previously evaluated, Page & Turnbull was asked to reevaluate the Halsey House to determine if it remains a Los Altos Historic Landmark.

As mentioned earlier, in 2012, the HRI was revised and the criteria for evaluation were aligned with the existing evaluation criteria for both the National Register and California Register. Today, a historic resource for the City of Los Altos is determined through establishing that it meets the age

[69] CIRCA: Historic Property Development, *City of Los Altos Historic Resource Inventory*, (October 2012), I-13.

threshold of fifty years, retains its physical integrity, and meets one or more of the criteria for historic significance.[70]

The Halsey House is nearly a century old at the time of this report and meets the age threshold as a historic resource. In addition, while the condition of the building is poor overall due to environmental damage and vandalism, the building retains over 50 percent of its original materials, form, and character-defining features, which is the threshold for physical integrity as established in the Los Altos HRI.[71] Overall, as discussed in the previous section (refer to **Integrity**), the Halsey House retains a high level of integrity such that it continues to meet the requirements for listing as a Historic Landmark. Lastly, as discussed above in the California Register evaluation section, the Halsey House is significant in association with important local events.

As stated by the Los Altos Preservation Ordinance, in order to be a Historic Landmark, a resource must also possess "special historical, cultural, archeological, scientific, architectural or aesthetic interest or value as part of the heritage or history of the city, the county, the state or the nation." [72] While the specific criterion for significance that is discussed within this report (association with important patterns of local development) differs from the previously identified criteria for significance (an association with persons and rare architectural design), the property clearly continues to represent a rare or unique property. The writing of a property-specific Historic Resource Evaluation, in contrast to the previous findings that were documented as part of a larger architectural survey, allowed for in-depth study of the resource that uncovered additional information. This targeted study supports a more nuanced narrative of the building and property's development and incorporates the individual actions of Emma Halsey as an aspect of that significance. The Halsey House and Redwood Grove continue to express a special historical and aesthetic value to the City of Los Altos through its unique development and setting, and therefore the building and the larger property of the Redwood Grove continues to meet the requirements for listing as a City of Los Altos Historic Landmark.

Halsey House as a Contributor to a Possible Historic District

The Halsey House was identified as a possible contributor to the University/Orange Historic District during the 1990 architectural survey. This district has never been formally adopted and Page & Turnbull recommends an updated survey of the proposed historic district to determine whether renovations, rehabilitations, and new construction since the 2012 revised HRI was issued have impacted the overall physical integrity of the possible district.

[70] Ibid., I-11 to I-14.
[71] Ibid., I-12.
[72] Los Altos Municipal Code, Chapter 12.44 – Historic Preservation. Article 2. 12.44.070 - Historic landmark designation.

From an initial review of the possible University/Orange Historic District, Page & Turnbull believes that the Halsey House does not fit the overall character of the potential historic district. The characteristics of the possible historic district include: a unified street layout with alleyways, continuity of the overall streetscape despite a large variety of lot size and scale, a period of construction from 1908 to 1930, and a significant number of architect-designed residences that are representative of the typical styles of the period.[73] While constructed within the period of development of the possible district, the other characteristics that identify the Halsey House and Redwood Grove as a unique property that meets the criteria as a local landmark and California Register-eligible property, are some of the same characteristics that identify it as distinct from the typical patterns of the University/Orange Historic District. The Halsey House and Redwood Grove has a unique wooded and semi-rural setting that is far removed from the street, and while constructed for an upper-class family, the residence lacks the architectural pedigree of many of the other architect-designed residences of the potential historic district. Therefore, it does not appear to be a potential contributor to the possible historic district.

[73] Ibid., II-6 to II-7.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Halsey House was erected in 1923 as a single-family residence for Theodore and Emma Halsey by an unknown architect or builder. Located on a large, approximately six-acre, parcel of land, the Halsey House is set within a wooded landscape along Adobe Creek. The building was constructed in a modest Spanish Colonial Revival style that consists of a one-story building arranged around a rear courtyard. The building features stucco cladding, a clay tile hipped roof, and a large number of multi-lite windows and doors that create a porous relationship between the interior of the residence and the exterior landscape of the Redwood Grove and the rear courtyard.

Page & Turnbull found the Halsey House and Redwood Grove eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events) at the state level of significance as an excellent example of the residential development patterns of Los Altos and for the establishment of the Redwood Grove, which is a unique property developed initially by Emma Halsey and her Japanese gardener, Mori, in the early 1920s. Under Criterion 1, the building and property have a period of significance from 1923 to 1945, beginning with the construction of the residence and ending with the sale of the property by Emma Halsey. Page & Turnbull did not find the property significant under Criterion 2 (Persons), Criterion 3 (Design/Architecture), or Criterion 4 (Information Potential). The building retains a high level of integrity as many of the original materials and design features are extant, and the form and massing of the building have remained largely unchanged despite interior alterations and the replacement of some doors and windows. While a large portion of the planned landscape and courtyard garden have been lost, the property retains its unique wooded setting that was developed in the early 1920s.

The subject building and the larger property of Redwood Grove Park have been a listed Los Altos Historic Landmark since 1981 and continue to retain adequate physical integrity to remain a listed Historic Landmark Resources despite the recent deterioration caused by vandalism and environmental conditions.

Therefore, the Halsey House and Redwood Grove is a historic resource, both as a listed local Historic Landmark, and as an individual resource that is eligible for listing on the California Register under Criterion 1.

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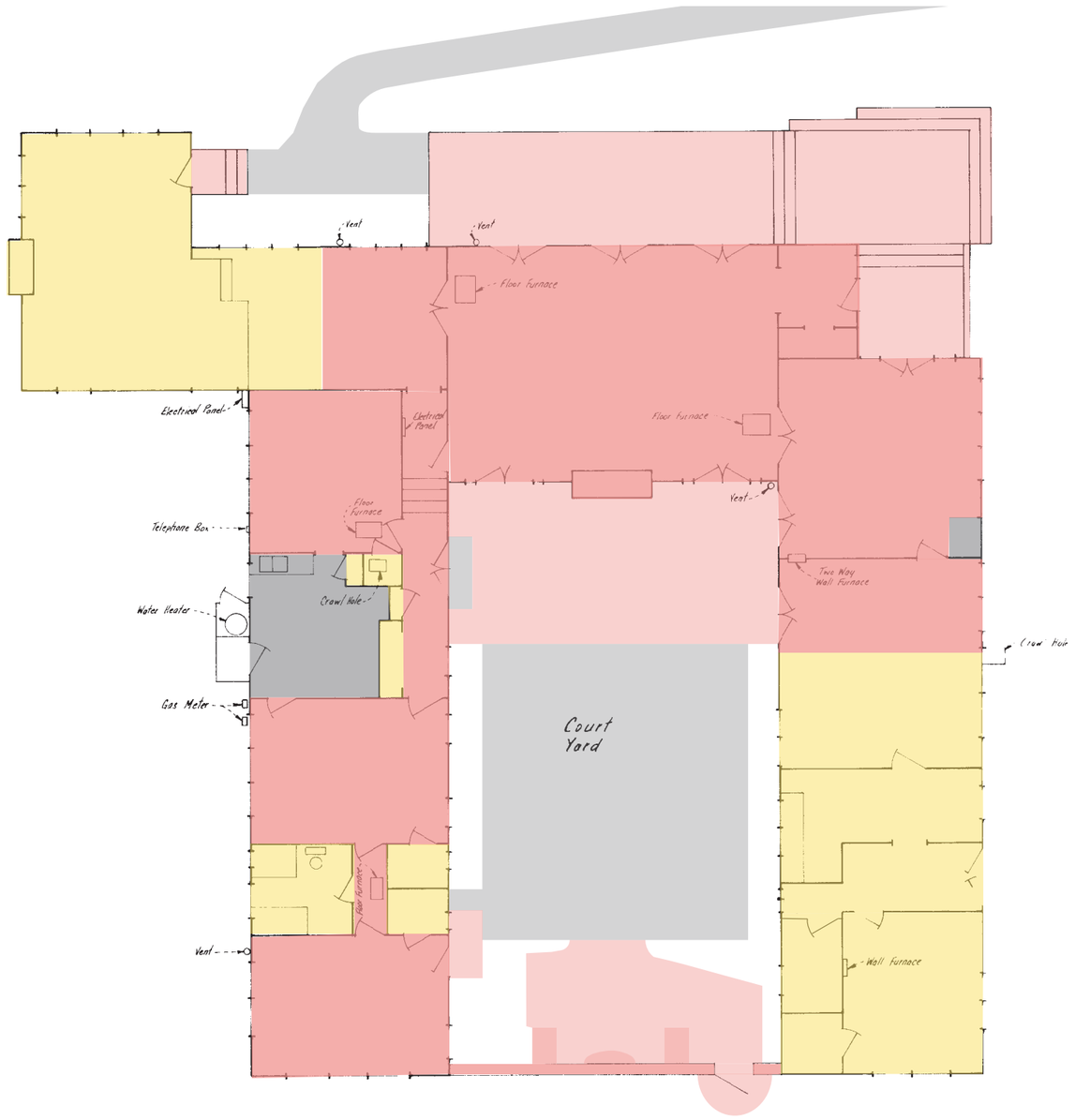
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IX. APPENDIX

Significance and Chronology Diagrams of the Halsey House



CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANT/HISTORIC
Features or spaces that date to the period of significance (1923-1945) and are the most historically significant components of the building.

CONTRIBUTING
Features or spaces that date to the period of significance (1923-1945) and are characterized by a lesser degree of significance (such as service spaces, closets, etc.) or are slightly altered or replaced elements. They cumulatively contribute to the overall historic character of the building.

NON-CONTRIBUTING
Features or spaces that were constructed after the period of significance (post-1945), have been significantly altered, or do not contribute to the overall historic character of the building. These features are not considered historic.

Plan North



Notes:
Lighter hues of significance categories show built features of the courtyard and landscape.

White space within diagrams denotes planting and dirt areas without built features.

Significance Diagrams

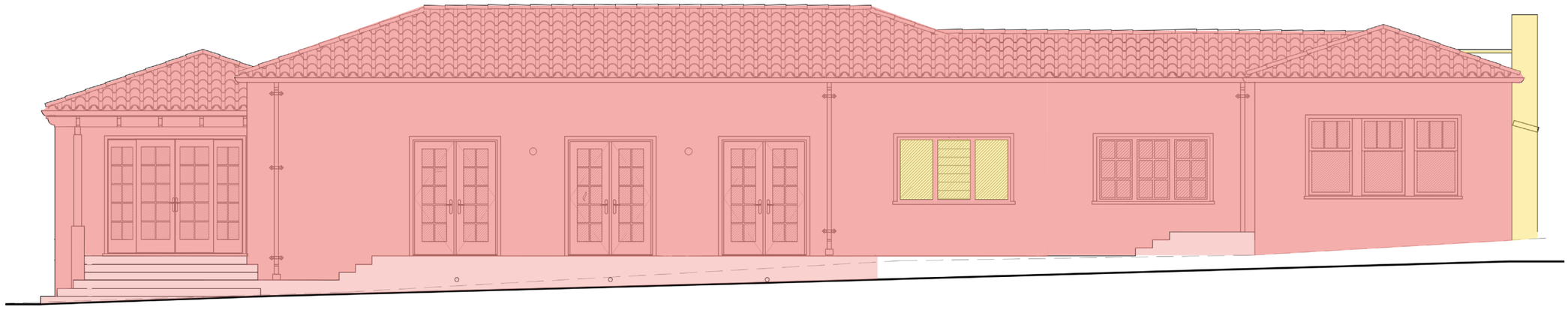
Base drawings: Floor plan dated April 1978 provided by the City of Los Altos. Minor revisions were made by Page & Turnbull to reflect the existing building in 2021. Drawings are not to scale and may contain some inaccuracies.

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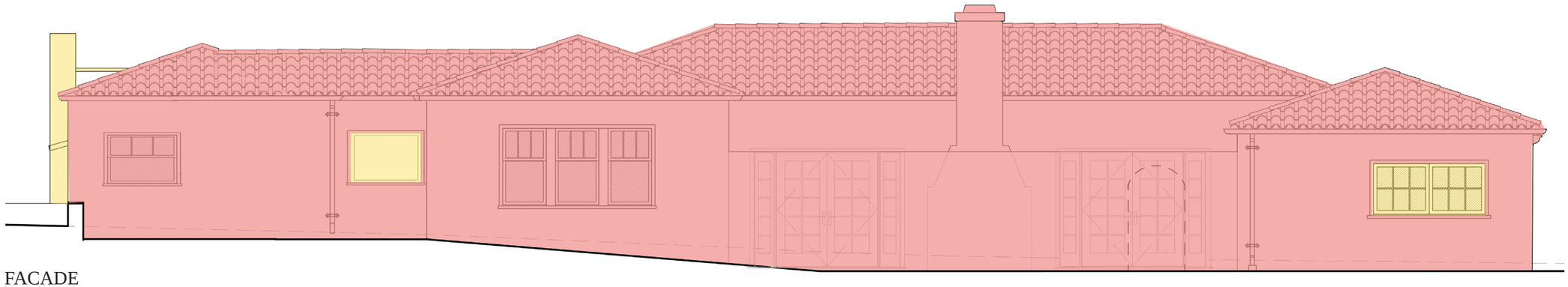
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CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

- SIGNIFICANT/HISTORIC
- CONTRIBUTING
- NON-CONTRIBUTING



PRIMARY (NORTH) FACADE



SOUTH FACADE

Significance Diagrams

Base drawings based on the 2015 proposed project drawings by M. Sandoval Architects, altered to reflect the existing building by Page & Turnbull, 2021. Drawings are not to scale and may contain some inaccuracies.

HALSEY HOUSE - LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

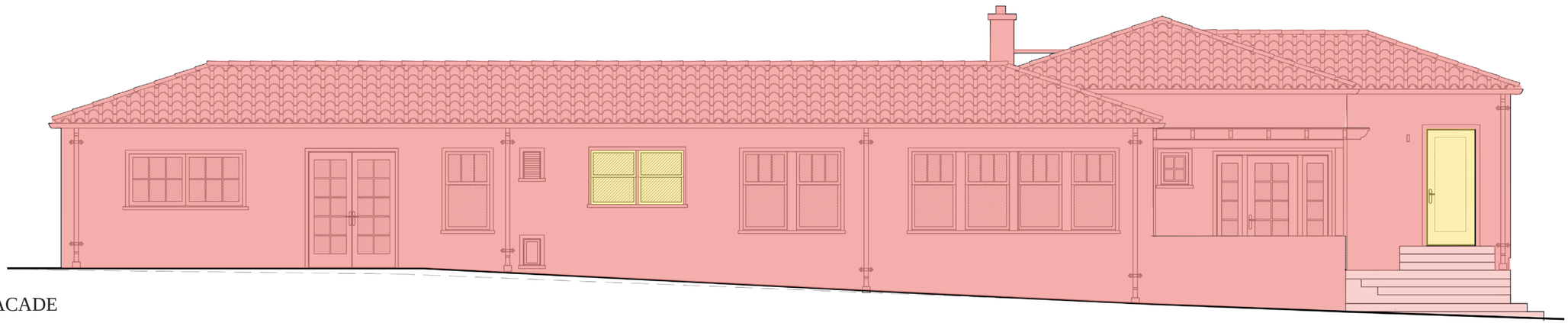
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CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

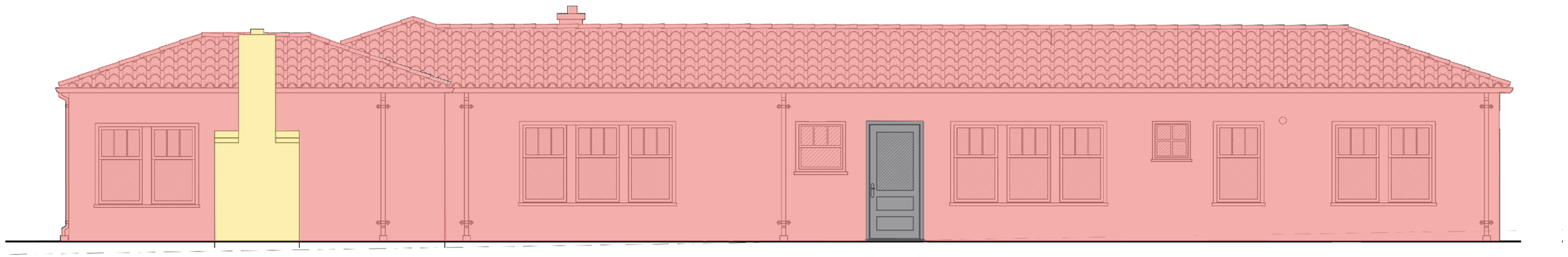
SIGNIFICANT/HISTORIC

CONTRIBUTING

NON-CONTRIBUTING



EAST FACADE



WEST FACADE

Significance Diagrams

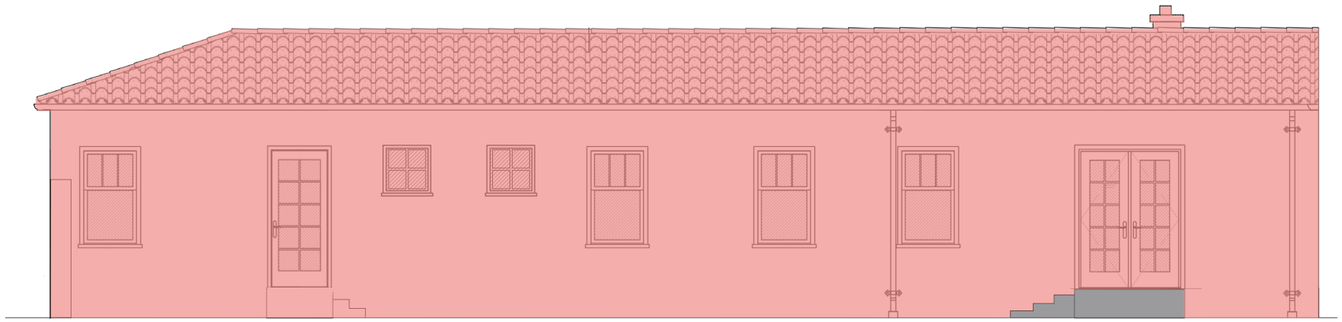
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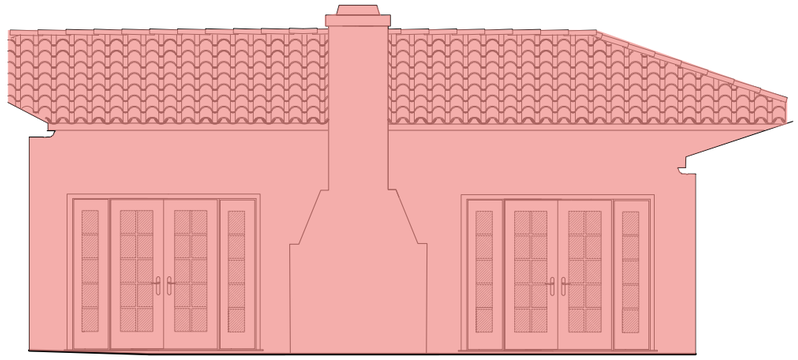
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CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

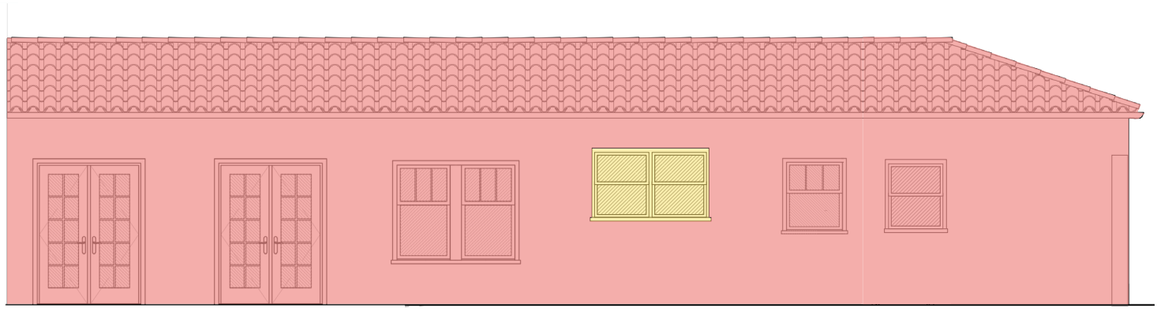
- SIGNIFICANT/HISTORIC
- CONTRIBUTING
- NON-CONTRIBUTING



EAST-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD



SOUTH-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD



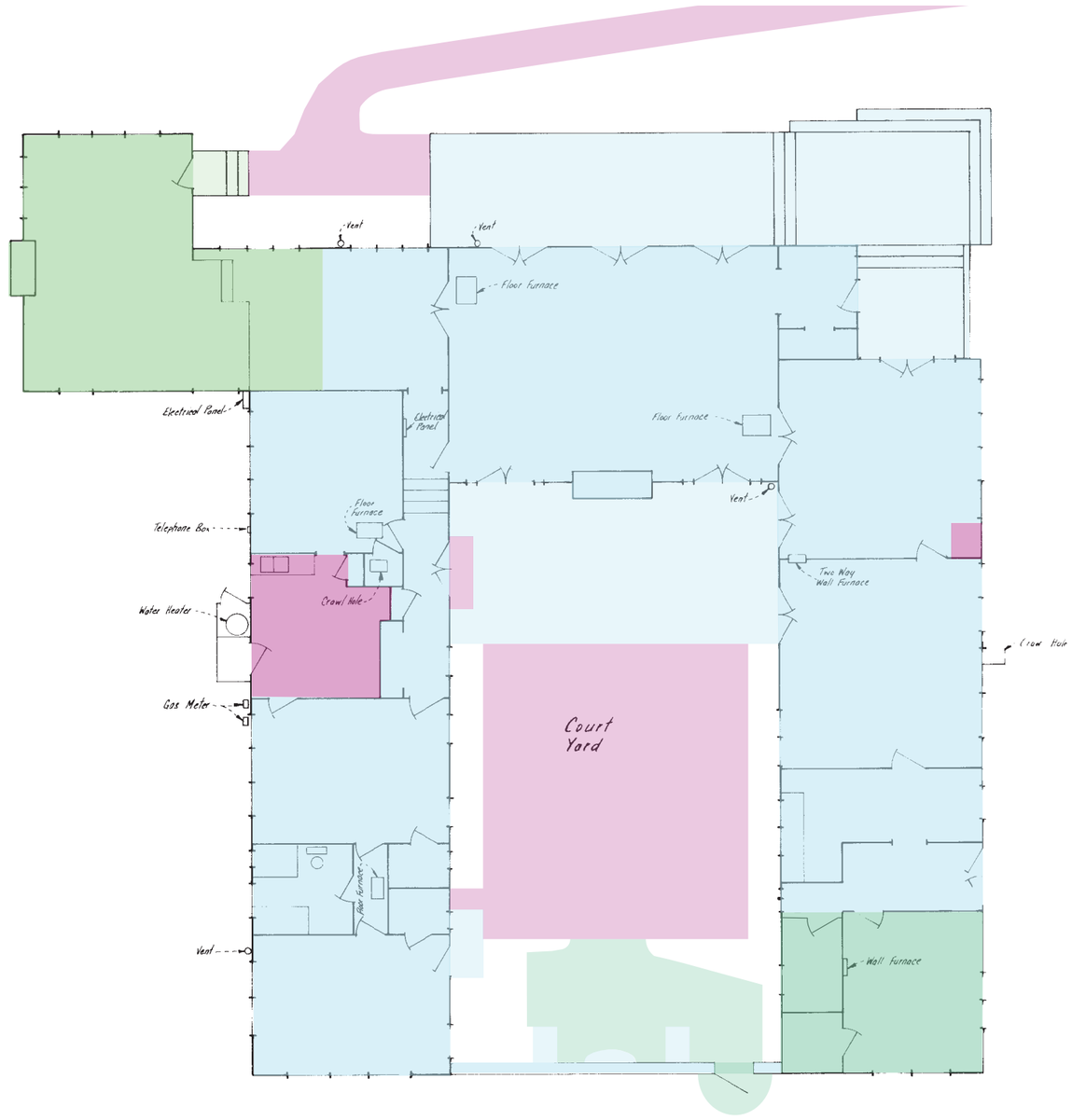
WEST-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD

Significance Diagrams

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CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

ORIGINAL 1923 CONSTRUCTION

Features that date to the original construction of the residence in 1923.

ALTERATIONS BY THE HALSEY FAMILY

Early alterations and additions to the Halsey House were completed by the Halsey family in 1928 and at an unknown date circa the 1930s.

- 1928 Addition
- Circa 1930s Addition/Alterations

ALTERATIONS POST-1945

Alterations that have taken place since the end of the Halsey family's ownership of the house and the period of significance.

Plan North

Notes:
Lighter hues of chronology categories show built features of the courtyard and landscape.

White space within diagrams denotes planting areas and dirt areas without built features.

Construction Chronology Diagrams

Base drawings: Floor plan dated April 1978 provided by the City of Los Altos. Minor revisions were made by Page & Turnbull to reflect the existing building in 2021. Drawings are not to scale and may contain some inaccuracies.

HALSEY HOUSE - LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

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BUILDING CHRONOLOGY

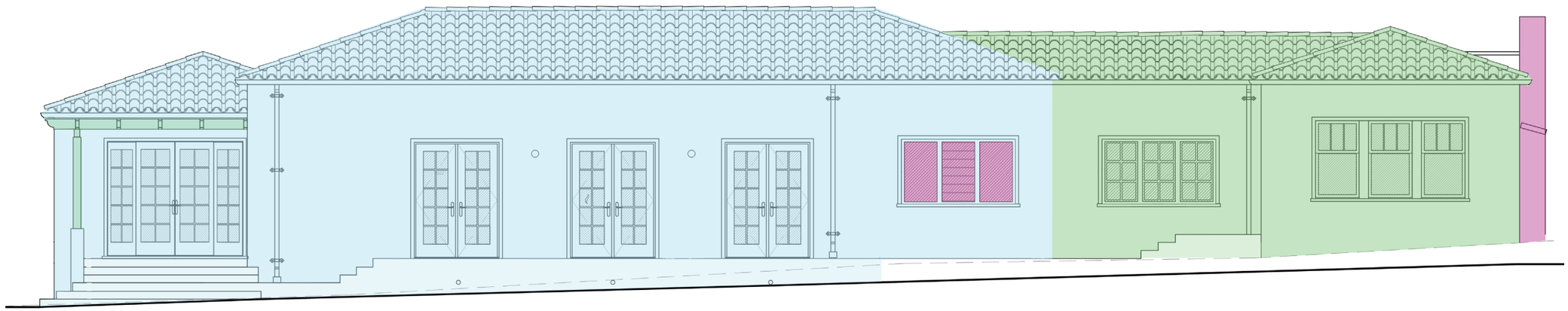
ORIGINAL 1923 CONSTRUCTION

ALTERATIONS BY THE HALSEY FAMILY

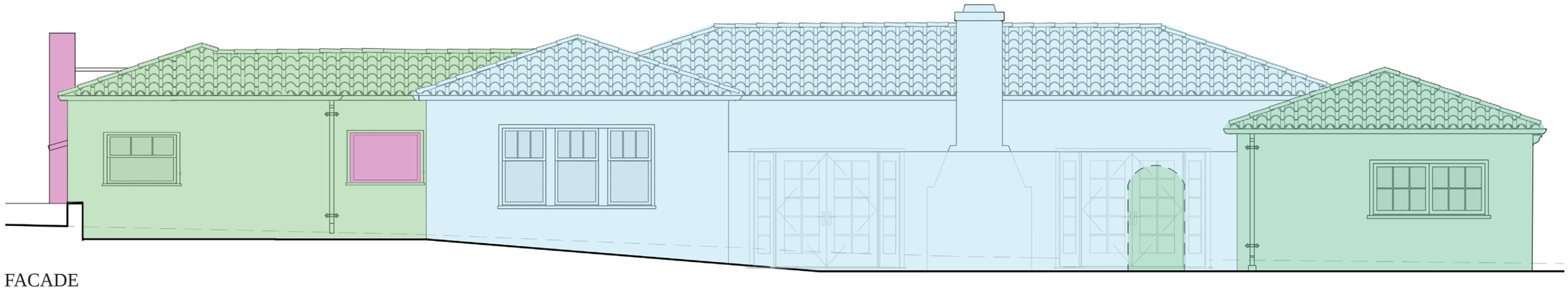
1928 Addition

Early Additions/Alterations (circa 1930s)

ALTERATIONS POST-1945



PRIMARY (NORTH) FACADE



SOUTH FACADE

Construction Chronology Diagrams

Base drawings based on the 2015 proposed project drawings by M. Sandoval Architects, altered to reflect the existing building by Page & Turnbull, 2021. Drawings are not to scale and may contain some inaccuracies.

HALSEY HOUSE - LOS ALTOS, CALIFORNIA

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BUILDING CHRONOLOGY

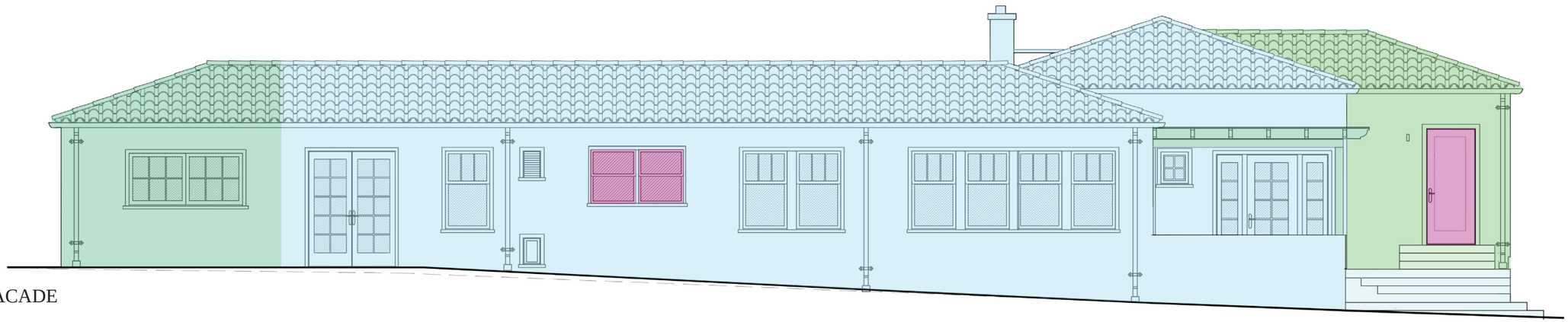
ORIGINAL 1923 CONSTRUCTION

ALTERATIONS BY THE HALSEY FAMILY

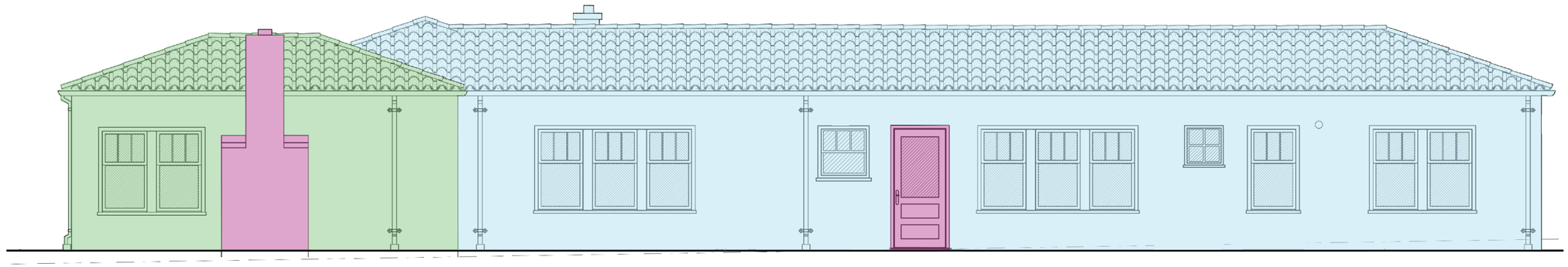
1928 Addition

Early Additions/Alterations (circa 1930s)

ALTERATIONS POST-1945



EAST FACADE



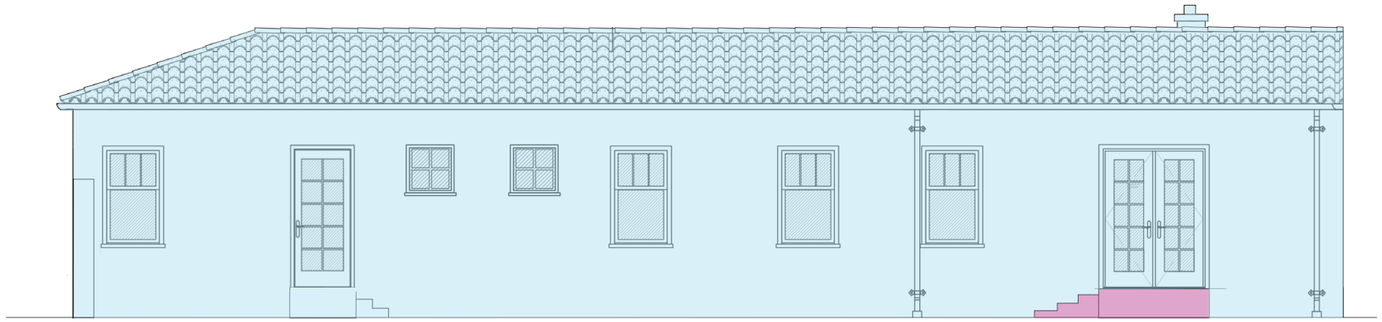
WEST FACADE

Construction Chronology Diagrams

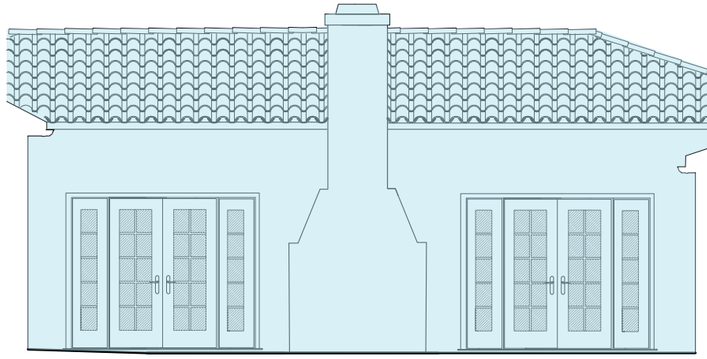
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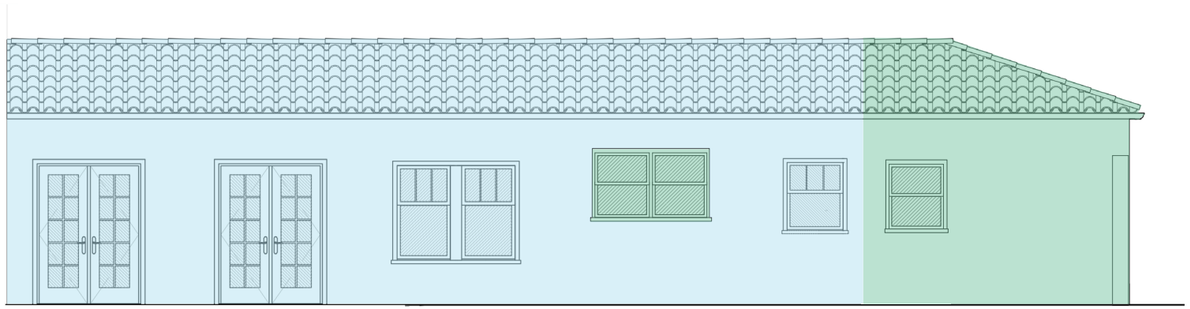
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EAST-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD



SOUTH-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD



WEST-FACING WALL OF REAR COURTYARD

BUILDING CHRONOLOGY

ORIGINAL 1923 CONSTRUCTION

ALTERATIONS BY THE HALSEY FAMILY

1928 Addition

Early Additions/Alterations (circa 1930s)

ALTERATIONS POST-1945

Construction Chronology Diagrams

Base drawings based on the 2015 proposed project drawings by M. Sandoval Architects, altered to reflect the existing building by Page & Turnbull, 2021. Drawings are not to scale and may contain some inaccuracies.

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