

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office
141 S. Taaffe St. and 160 Aries Way
Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, California
(APN #209-07-007)



Prepared for:

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05.04.2018



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*Cover image: Front Façade of Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office
Viewed facing southwest, 2018
(Archives & Architecture)*

Executive Summary

Although over 50 years old, the architectural character and physical features of the Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office building are not distinctive in a way to enable eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources or associated with significant historic patterns or events or with historic personages in a way that meets the California Register of Historical Resources criteria. The building does not meet the criteria for listing on the Sunnyvale Heritage Resources Inventory. The building would not, therefore, be considered an Historic Resource under California Environmental Quality Act. The adjacent building on the property is not 50 years old or of “exceptional importance,” and so not eligible for the California Register.

Demolition of the two buildings on this property and construction of a new building on the site would not have a significant effect on any historic resources under CEQA.

Introduction

The owners of the Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office at 141 S. Taaffe St. are proposing to demolish the 64-year-old building and the adjacent mixed-use building on the property and to build a mixed-use development on the site.

David J. Powers & Associates, Inc. contracted with Archives & Architecture, LLC, to conduct a historic resource survey and evaluation as a part of preparation of documents to be used for the City’s environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

This report, and the attached State of California Department of Parks & Recreation Series 523 Recordation Forms (DPR523 forms), constitute a historical evaluation of the existing building for the purposes of the City’s CEQA review.

Project Description

The property currently contains two existing buildings with multiple businesses addressed on Altair Way, Aries Way, and S. Taaffe Street, but more widely known as 141 S. Taaffe Street (the post office address) and 160 Aries Way (the project application address). The project consists of demolition of these two buildings and construction of a proposed new six-story 103,590-square-foot, mixed-use building on the site, with four levels of below-grade parking. The proposed building will occupy the whole parcel 209-07-007 in the area bounded by S. Taaffe Street, Altair Way, and Aries Way.



Map image courtesy of Santa Clara County Department of the Assessor

Purpose and Methodology of this Study

This document is presented in a report format and addresses the extant buildings on the project site.

Within the DPR523 forms attached to this report are evaluations for historical significance for the property according to criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources, the National Register of Historic Places, and the Sunnyvale Criteria for Evaluation and Nomination of Heritage Resources. The attached DPR523 series forms present property data, a detailed description, historical and architectural context, integrity, and significance, as well as a bibliography containing sources of information.

The site was examined in February 2018 by Leslie Dill. Digital photographs of the exterior of the building and views of the adjacent setting were taken at that time. Photographic documentation is included within the DPR523 forms.

Historical research was conducted by the staff of Archives & Architecture and consisted primarily of review of secondary sources of historical information. The research and historical investigation were prepared utilizing the methodology recommended by the National Park Service, as outlined in Preservation Briefs #17 -*Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character* (1988), and #35 -*Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation* (1994).

Previous Surveys and Historical Status

The buildings on this site are not identified or listed on the City of Sunnyvale Heritage Resources Inventory. As far as our research indicates, they have not been previously recorded as part of any historical survey or review for individual historic significance.

Qualifications of the Consultants

Archives & Architecture, LLC is a partnership of Leslie A.G. Dill, Historic Architect and Architectural Historian, Franklin Maggi, Architectural Historian, and Charlene Duval, Public Historian. The partners of the firm, in addition to associate staff historians, are qualified historical consultants. The firm was founded in 1989 by the late Glory Anne Laffey, Historian, has been constituted in its current form since 2003, and became an LLC in 2008.

The principal author of this report was Leslie A.G. Dill, Architect, who consults in the field of historic architecture and architectural history. Ms. Dill has a Master of Architecture with a Program Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, and is an architect licensed in the State of California.

Ms. Dill is listed as qualified to do this work within the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS), which is operated under authority of the California State Office of Historic Preservation. Leslie Dill meets the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities in compliance with state and federal environmental laws. CHRIS utilizes the criteria of the National Park Service outlined in 36 CFR Part 61.

Policy and Regulatory Context

This report has been prepared to meet applicable regulatory requirements for historic properties (cultural resources) which require the identification and evaluation of cultural resources that could be affected by a project under the California Environmental Quality Act. The property is being evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Resources Code.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires regulatory compliance for projects involving historic resources throughout the state. Under CEQA, public agencies must consider the effects of their actions on historic resources — a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment (Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1).

The CEQA Guidelines define a significant resource as any resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) (see Public Resources Code, Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (a) and (b)).

The California Register of Historical Resources was created to identify resources deemed worthy of preservation and was modeled closely after the National Register of Historic Places. The criteria are nearly identical to those of the National Register, which includes resources of local, state, and regional and/or national levels of significance.

CRITERIA

Under California Code of Regulation Section 4852(b) and Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, an historical resource generally must be greater than 50 years old and must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. It is 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.
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or important creative individual or possesses high artistic values.
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Properties of local significance that have been designated under a local preservation ordinance (local landmarks register or landmark districts) or that have been identified in a local heritage resources inventory may be eligible for listing in the California Register and are presumed to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA unless a preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise (Public Resources Code, Section 5024.1g; California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 4850).

CONCLUSION

Per the evaluation in the attached DPR forms:

Although the building is a recognizable mid-century-modern design, the design is modest in the context of commercial leased storefronts in the City of Sunnyvale and the greater Bay Area. Architecturally it is a functional design, unremarkable in the context of its era and purpose. The materials and finishes consist of simple stucco and brick siding with aluminum windows and signage, commensurate with the building's post-War context. The overall rectilinear form, the relatively common materials, the repetitive

detailing, and other physical aspects of the building are not distinctive or highly artistic examples of the style. Per the Post Office Context, the building is not of significant artistic value, and is not significantly representative of a design found in a Building Designs Brochures published by the USPS later in the decade.

The Post Office building has lost its surrounding physical setting over time, so does not provide visual associations with a pattern of local design. The building does not individually embody associations with the past development of this area of the City of Sunnyvale or the region. The post office building has not made a significant contribution within the thematic context of politics/government, community planning and development, or commerce in the City of Sunnyvale or the region per the *USPS Nationwide Historic Context Study of Postal Facilities Constructed or Occupied Between 1940 and 1971*.

The Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office building is not an Historic Resource under the criteria of the California Register of Historic Resources.

Integrity

California Code of Regulations Section 4852(c) addresses the issue of “integrity” which is necessary for eligibility for the California Register. Integrity is defined 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.” Section 4852(c) provides that historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the criteria for significance defined by 4852(b)(1 through 4), and retain enough of their historic character of appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which a resource is proposed for eligibility. Alterations over time to a resource or historic changes in its use may themselves have historical, cultural, or architectural significance.

CONCLUSION

Although the property retains its location and most of its historic design integrity, such as materials, forms, and mid-century artisanship, no significant associations with the past were found, and the Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office building has lost its historic setting that would perhaps have provided local context for its historic associations.

City of Sunnyvale Preservation Ordinance

The City of Sunnyvale finds that the character and history of the city are reflected in its cultural, historical, and architectural heritage, that these historical and cultural foundations should be preserved as living parts of community life and development to

build an understanding of the city's past so that future generations may have a genuine opportunity to appreciate, enjoy, and understand the rich heritage of the city, that with ever increasing pressures of modernization and urbanization, city landmarks, neighborhoods, and other areas of historical and cultural interest are threatened with demolition, and that pursuant to the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the city of Sunnyvale joins with private concerns, the state of California, and the United States Congress to develop preservation programs and activities to give maximum encouragement to agencies and individuals undertaking preservation of the city's unique architectural, historical, aesthetic, and cultural heritage.

The purpose of the Heritage Preservation Ordinance (Sunnyvale Municipal Code, Title 19, Article 6, Chapter 19.96) is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and

- (1) To safeguard the city's unique cultural heritage as embodied and reflected in the city's architectural history and patterns of cultural development;*
- (2) To encourage and facilitate public knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the city's historic past and unique sense of place and to encourage public participation in identifying heritage resources;*
- (3) To promote the enjoyment, celebration, and use of heritage resources appropriate for the educational, cultural, recreational as well as material needs of people;*
- (4) To preserve diverse architectural styles, patterns of development, and design preferences reflecting phases of the city's history and to encourage complementary contemporary design and construction and inspire a more livable urban environment;*
- (5) To enhance property values and to increase economic and financial benefits to the city and its inhabitants through incentives for preservation;*
- (6) To protect and enhance the city's attraction to tourists and visitors thereby stimulating business and industry;*
- (7) To identify as early as possible and resolve conflicts between the preservation of heritage resources and alternative land uses by integrating the preservation of heritage resources into the comprehensive planning, management and development processes for both public and private property;*
- (8) To conserve valuable material and energy resources by ongoing use and maintenance of the existing built environment;*
- (9) To stabilize neighborhoods through the preservation of heritage resources and establishment of heritage resource districts; and*
- (10) To develop and maintain appropriate settings and environments for heritage resources.*

CRITERIA

To be considered culturally or historically significant at the local level, a resource must be evaluated and found to meet at least one of the thirteen Criteria for nomination of heritage resources defined in Section 19.96.050 of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code. To be a “designated heritage resource,” the property must have been designated by the City of Sunnyvale or by the State of California or federal government (Section 19.96.065(b)), or meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city’s cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic engineering, architectural, or natural history;*
- (b) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;*
- (c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;*
- (d) It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect;*
- (e) It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;*
- (f) It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city of Sunnyvale;*
- (g) It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;*
- (h) It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;*
- (i) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;*
- (j) It is one of the few remaining examples in the city, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historic type or specimen;*
- (k) With respect to a local landmark, it is significant in that the resource materially benefits the historical character of a neighborhood or area, or the resource in its location represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community or city.*
- (l) With respect to a local landmark district, a collective high integrity of the district is essential to the sustained value of the separate individual resources;*
- (m) With respect to a designated landmark and designated landmark district, the heritage resource shall meet Criteria of the National Register of Historical Places, which are incorporated by reference into this chapter.*

CONCLUSION

Of these Criteria, none are found relevant to the Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office Building property at 141 S. Taaffe St., as evaluated in the attached DPR523 series forms (attached). The building, therefore, is not considered an Historic Resource under CEQA based on local eligibility.

Summary of Findings

This survey and study evaluates the potential historic significance of the site and related buildings to determine if the property may be significant under the California Environmental Quality Act, and if so, to determine if the project proposed for the site would or would not have an adverse effect on historic resources.

In considering the potential significance of the property and related building, based on the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, and considering the City's own criteria for designation of heritage resources or districts for listing on the Heritage Resource Inventory, the building on this site identified for this report as the Taaffe Street Sunnyvale Post Office was not found to exhibit individual character or interest in a way that reflects the heritage and cultural development of the city in a significant way under CEQA or under the City's Heritage Preservation ordinance. While the post office building is over 50 years in age, the building's architectural character, physical features, and role in the historic narrative of the City of Sunnyvale and the region are not distinctive in a way to enable eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources or for listing on the Inventory. The building would not be considered an Historic Resource under CEQA. The mixed-use building on the west side of the parcel is not over 50 years old and would not be considered an Historic Resource under CEQA.

Demolition and construction of a new building on this site will not have a significant effect on any historic resources under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Attachment

DPR523 forms

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____
Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 11 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office
P1. Other Identifier: 141 Altair Way, 150 and 160 Aries Way, 143 S. Taaffe St.

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted *a. County Santa Clara
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)
*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Mountain View Date 1999 T 6S ; R 2W; Mount Diablo B.M.
c. Address 141 South Taaffe St. City Sunnyvale Zip 94086
d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S; 585668mE/ 4137219mN
e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
Assessor's Parcel Number: 209-07-007
Southwest corner of South Taaffe Street and Altair Way

*P3a Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The one-story leased post-office building on this property is a commercial/light industrial building of Mid-Century-Modern design. The building is a modest representation of this style, known for its use of modern materials (including concrete, steel, plate glass and, often, stone or brickwork) in unembellished, primarily horizontal compositions. The footprint of the post office building is roughly square, covering the east half of a rectangular parcel that is surrounded by South Taaffe Street, Altair Way, and Aries Way. The building was built in 1954.

The front façade of this building is a straightforward Mid-Century Modern design, with brick and stucco wall finishes. The asymmetrical front elevation faces approximately east, toward South Taaffe Street, and is bordered by a low planter at the city sidewalk. The front façade

(Continued on next page, DPR523L)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP14. Government building; HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

*P4 Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

View facing southwest,
February 2018.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

1954/64
Personal communication/Maps

*P7. Owner and Address:

Andy Kasik, Arrow Realty
150 Aries Way
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

Leslie Dill & Franklin Maggi
Archives & Architecture, LLC
PO Box 1332
San Jose, CA 95109-1332

*P9. Date Recorded: 05/01/2018

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none".)

Archives & Architecture, LLC: Historic Resource Evaluation for 141 S. Taaffe St. and 160 Aries Way, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, California, May 4, 2018.

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☒ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure and Object Record ☐ Archaeological Record
☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling State Record ☐ Rock Art Record ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List)

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial

Page 2 of 11 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office

*Recorded by Leslie Dill & Franklin Maggi

*Date 05/01/2018 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

is accented on each corner by a very shallow full-height stucco pilaster. Between the pilasters, the wall is divided horizontally into three bands. The base consists of elongated, smooth red brick veneer laid in a Modern stacked bond. The two upper bands are stucco, divided by a shallow, full-width awning that recesses into the façade at the front entry. The aluminum front windows are full-height between the brick and canopy. They consist of a quad unit slightly off-center in the design, one paired unit to the south side of the entrance, and one paired unit toward the north side of the elevation. They feature square-profile, vertical aluminum mullions, and have an operable lower sash covered by screens. The lower sash is approximately 40% of the overall height. Prominent on the upper stucco parapet area is the signage, consisting of individual, san-serif aluminum letters: US POST OFFICE SUNNYVALE CALIFORNIA, along with a plaster bas-relief of an eagle.

The entrance is asymmetrically placed toward the south and recessed within the façade, accessed by three steps. The handrails are galvanized tube steel. To the south, a recent ramp addition provides alternative access. A stucco wall borders the ramp. The wide aluminum front-entrance storefront extends the full height beneath the portico. The entrance is configured as a pair of central doors flanked by door-sized sidelights and topped by a huge 1-lite transom that spans the entire composition, aligning with the top of the brick veneer. A glazed aluminum employee door opens to the north from the landing.

The two side and rear façades are utilitarian. Their construction is reported to be tilt-up concrete. A low parapet conceals a bow roof. The exposed north façade (facing Altair Way) includes multiple stucco or painted concrete bays separated by flush exposed-concrete structural pilasters and no visible coping at the parapet. Centered in each bay is a high, relatively small, aluminum window. Two consist of multi-lite upper sash and a wide 1-lite lower sash with industrial wire glass; two are sliders and might be replacements. Cloth awnings have been recently installed at each window. A concrete ramp and set of steps, flanked by brick planters, provides access to a side entrance; the ramp and steps have tube-steel railings that support an entrance awning that matches the window awnings. The side entrance features recent double doors in white aluminum, with a Victorian-inspired fluted casing with bulls-eye blocks. To the rear (west) of the entrance is an equipment/storage area that includes board posts and braces, some lattice, and some heavily-textured stucco walls. Behind this area, another original aluminum post-office window is partially concealed. The visible portion of the south side wall appears to be all plain stucco with no windows, doors, or seams.

On the west half of the subject parcel, on the former post office parking lot and loading area, is a three-story mixed-use building with offices and living space built in the mid-to-late 1980s. This stucco building is built in an austere late-twentieth-century Mission-Revival style with wood accent trim, arched details at the ground floor entrances, and projecting balconies supported by tapered brackets. The building has storefronts that face both Altair Way and Aries Way. Because this building is not over 50 years in age, no additional description is being provided.

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LOCATION MAP

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial

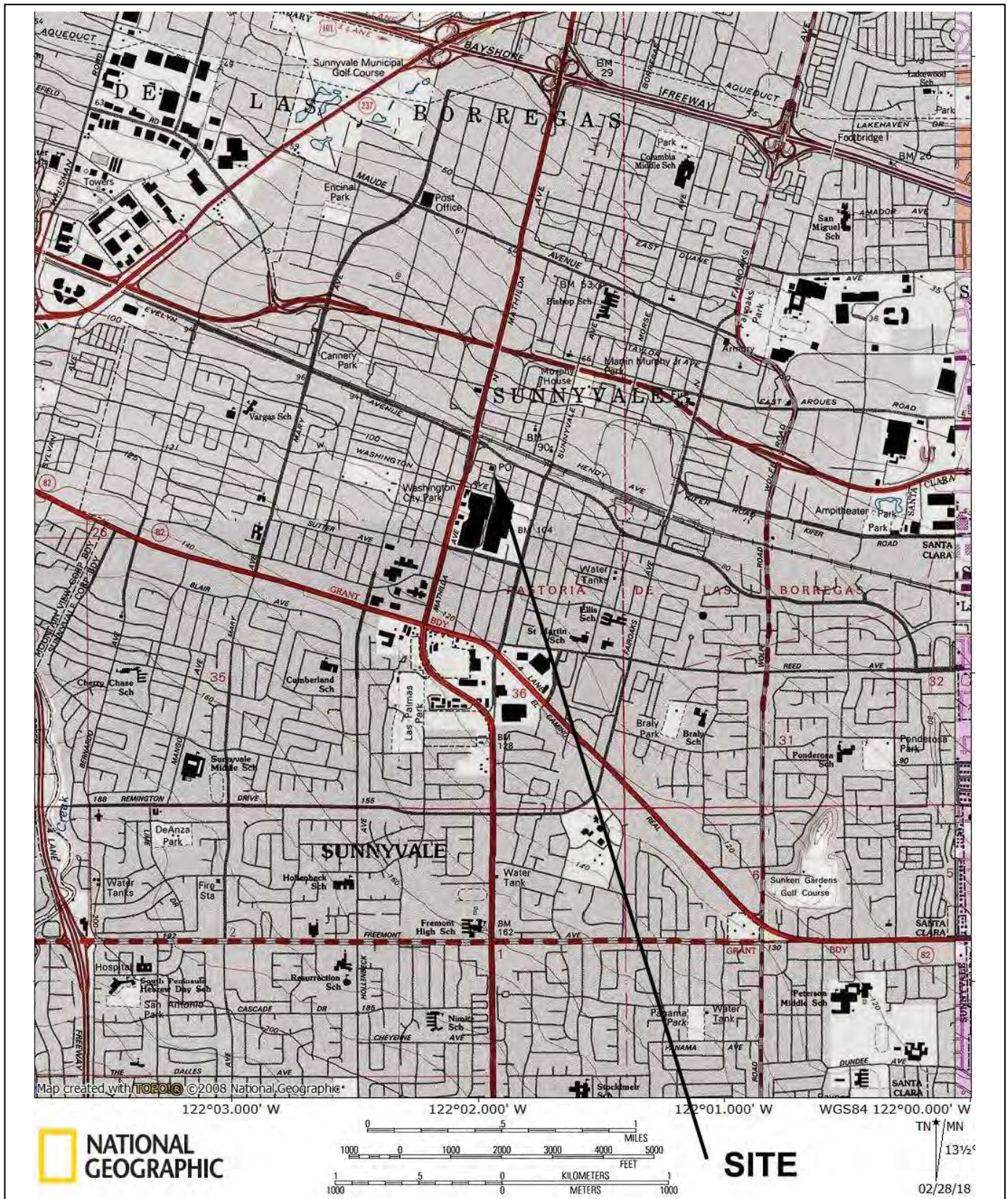
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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office

*Map Name: USGS

*Scale: n.t.s.

*Date of Map: 1999



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Primary #
HRI #

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*NRHP Status Code

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office

B1. Historic Name: United States Postal Service Taaffe Street Post Office

B2. Common Name: United States Postal Service Taaffe Street Post Office

B3. Original use: Federal post office

B4. Present Use: Federal post office

*B5. Architectural Style: Mid-century Modern

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Subject building constructed 1954. Modified for additional offices within original building 1980. Rear mixed-use building constructed on parcel c.1985.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: N/a

Original Location: N/a

*B8. Related Features:

None

B9a Architect:

b. Builder:

*B10. Significance: Theme Government and Public Service Area Downtown Sunnyvale

Period of Significance 1954 Property Type Government Applicable Criteria None

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Taaffe St Post Office with Sunnyvale History and Context

The subject property is two blocks west of the Sunnyvale downtown shopping and dining area on Murphy Avenue and southwest of the Sunnyvale Caltrain Station. This area of Sunnyvale, near the train station, is where the city has its early development.

The central portions of present-day Sunnyvale, including the subject property, lie within what was originally part of the 8,800-acre Rancho Pastoría de las Borregas, granted to Francisco and Inez Castro Estrada in 1842 during the Mexican era. The Borregas rancho covered most of the Sunnyvale - Mountain View area with El Camino Real as its southern boundary. In 1849, the couple's heirs sold half of the rancho to an Irish-born immigrant, Martin Murphy, Jr., who later purchased additional portions of the rancho. Following the construction of the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad through Murphy's property in the 1860s, the area that would become Sunnyvale began to grow. Murphy (Sunnyvale) Station was established, and another (Lawrence Station) was constructed near Murphy's home area of Bayview.

(Continued on next page, DPR523L)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

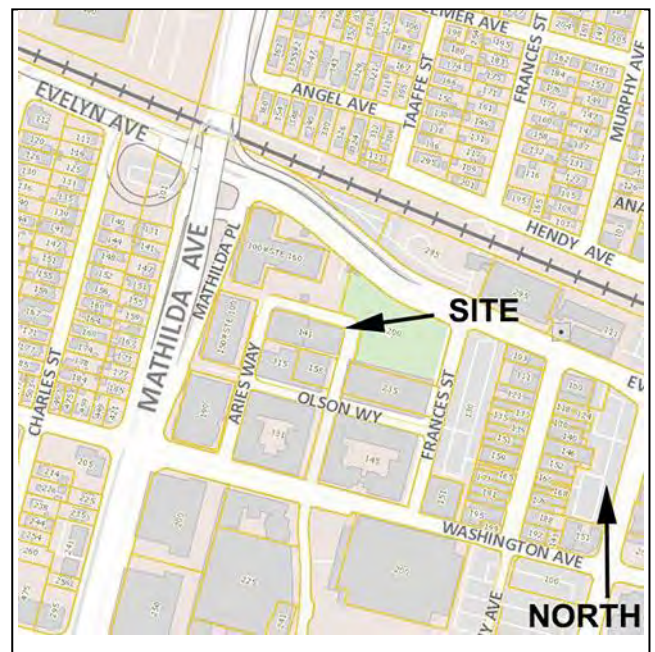
*B12. References:

See Continuation Sheet Page 9.

B13. Remarks: Proposed demolition

*B14. Evaluator: Leslie A.G. Dill

*Date of Evaluation: 05/01/2018



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial

Page 5 of 11 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office

*Recorded by Leslie Dill & Franklin Maggi

*Date May 1, 2018 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

In the early American period of California history after the state was admitted to the Union in 1850, Martin Murphy and his wife Mary became successful wheat farmers and cattle ranchers. After their deaths, their vast rancho was divided among their eight children and numerous grandchildren. Most of the early development of the Sunnyvale community took place after 1890 when the heirs of the Murphy's began selling their holdings for businesses and small orchards. The downtown area fell within the 200 acres that a Murphy heir sold to Walter E. Crossman in 1901.

Walter Crossman was a real estate agent and promoter from Wisconsin with a vision of a planned community for this land. In the early 1900s, Crossman began promoting Sunnyvale as the 'City of Destiny.' According to the City of Sunnyvale context statement, "Crossman laid out the City in such a way as to facilitate future physical expansion as well as placate nervous neighbors in Mountain View, Santa Clara and San Jose". He laid out the new town in a grid with streets and one-acre+ lots. Crossman continued into the twentieth century to purchase adjacent land and formed the Sunnyvale Land Company to further his land interests. Although the early post office name for the community had been Encinal, and the community had been known as Murphy, the postal service informed residents that they needed to choose a new name. Sunnyvale was given its current name on March 24, 1901.

Settlement in the vicinity took a big jump about 1904 when the Jubilee Incubator company, a poultry supply manufacturer, located themselves adjacent to the local Southern Pacific railroad line. After the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake, Crossman attracted the Joshua Hendy Iron Works, Goldy Machine Company, Hydro Carbon Company and the Libby, McNeil and Libby Food Processing Plant to the area. These businesses were attracted to Sunnyvale by the availability of affordable land close to the railroad for shipping. The establishment of these industries provided jobs for hundreds of workers. Since all these businesses provided year-round employment, many of the workers could afford to buy a home.

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors granted Sunnyvale separate township status in 1909, and a special local election in 1912 formally incorporated the town. Real estate developers, such as Walter Crossman, had filed survey maps at the end of the nineteenth century. These plats showed subdivisions of small urban lots between El Camino Real and the railroad line. In the early twentieth century, two new schools were completed, a bank and the Volunteer Fire Department created, and growth continued. Still extant three or four blocks from the subject building, and currently used as a restaurant, an earlier brick Post Office building was built at 127 West Washington Ave. in 1917.

Hendy Iron Works served as a catalyst for population growth as wartime production for World War I centered on military needs such as marine engines and armaments. In the 1920s, canneries and poultry farms added to the growth of the city. In the 1930s, the Navy founded the lighter-than-air dirigible base; the National Air Station Sunnyvale (later renamed Moffett Field Naval Air) was commissioned in 1933. Sunnyvale's growth was transformed during World War II with the influx of workers required to increase wartime production such as manufacturing the steam engines which propelled the Liberty ships. Sunnyvale supplied food and equipment to the troops; the Hendy Iron Works was taken over by Westinghouse to support the war effort.

By the end of World War II, the small, primarily agricultural, town of the early twentieth century had been transformed into a key industrial community of the future Silicon Valley. After the war, following a brief recession, cold-war, defense-related industries arrived, capitalizing on the pleasant climate and the Naval Air Station. A Citizens Committee had been formed to hire a new Chamber of Commerce manager to draw new industry to the area. Following Al Spiers appointment in 1946, he brought almost 100 new companies to the area. By 1948, he and the City of Sunnyvale had worked out a five-point development program which included safety, new housing, new industries and businesses, a new post office, and a City recreation program. By the beginning of 1950 the population had grown to 9,900, and during the 1950s Lockheed established their manufacturing facility in Sunnyvale and ultimately became the city's largest employer.

State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial

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*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Taaffe St Sunnyvale Post Office

*Recorded by Leslie Dill & Franklin Maggi

*Date 05/01/2018 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

The 1950s and 1960s were the biggest periods of growth (both population-wise and land-wise) for the community, resulting in a 1960 population of 52,900 and a 1970 population of 96,000.

The subject building was constructed during a post-World-War-II boom, as the city's population multiplied by a factor of five before 1960. According to the *USPS Nationwide Historic Context Study of Postal Facilities Constructed or Occupied Between 1940 and 1971*, relatively few post office facilities were built in the mid-1950s, but many were built after 1959. Sanborn maps and aerial views show that the site was previously a trucking company warehouse, set at the back (west) of the lot (East Dunne Drayage, as late as 1948). The tornado of 1951 appears to have passed through this block, causing damage to roofs, and possibly affecting the business on this parcel prior to the post office.

Now located on the southwest corner of South Taaffe Street and Altair Way, the subject post office building was originally set near the center of a block in a mixed commercial and residential area of downtown Sunnyvale. In the 1950s and early 60s, the post office operation spanned the block between Taaffe Street and Aries Way. A driveway on the north side of the building led to a large parking/loading area to the west.

As the downtown area was redeveloped under the "Encina Urban Renewal Plan" in the late 1960s, much of the surrounding neighborhood to the north of the post office was turned into parking and the former driveway was incorporated into a small cross street, now Altair Way. On the south half of the subject block, as well as on three blocks to the south and east, the Town & Country Village shopping center was built in the late 1960s.

The defense era gave way to the high-tech era when the microprocessor was introduced in 1971. The population in 1980 was 106,700; 1990 was 117,200, and 2000 was 131,760 while the downtown area remained in flux. The next and most recent era was related to the internet, with technology companies locating in large campuses within Sunnyvale city limits and undertaking research and development for this newest industry.

In the late 1970s, as traditional downtown retail areas lost appeal around the United States, the enclosed Sunnyvale Town Center Mall was built to the south of Town & Country Village. Both these shopping centers had some success over time and have closed while the Murphy Street Historic District faltered in the 1960s and 70s, then regained business at the end of the twentieth century.

In the last decade, the shopping center areas to the south of the post office have been altered with new construction. To south and east, on the former Town & Country site, are multi-story stucco apartment complexes, including on the south half of the block where the post office is located. On the blocks to the north and west are six-story glass-curtain-wall commercial and office buildings. Diagonally across the street from the post office is a park that covers an underground parking lot. The low-scale residential and modest commercial setting of the building has been altered.

Post Office Context

After the 2011 USPS closures of many post offices, "The National Trust for Historic Preservation named America's Historic U.S. Post Office Buildings to its list of endangered buildings in 2012." In 2012, *USPS Nationwide Historic Context Study of Postal Facilities Constructed or Occupied Between 1940 and 1971* (Nationwide Post Office Context) was prepared, outlining criteria for historic significance at a National level.

According to the Nationwide Post Office Context, modern design was adopted by the postal service in the mid-to-late 1950s:

"The federal government was slower in adopting Modern architecture than the private sector. By the early 1960s, the influence of federal modernism began to be felt at the national scale, due in part to the Post Office Department's extensive building program that commenced in 1959. During the late 1950s and 1960s, a period during which the Post Office Department dramatically increased its number of facilities (primarily through the

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lease purchase program), postal buildings were almost exclusively constructed according to the Modern predilections of the period."

A National Park Service Bulletin: "How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices" (Bulletin), along with the Nationwide Post Office Context, provides the background to evaluate the property within national criteria. According to the Bulletin, "With the Public Buildings Act of 1949, the Office of the Supervising Architect increasingly relied on private architectural firms to carry out public building designs. The Office continued, however, to provide standard designs and guidelines for post office buildings, although the nature of those buildings changed remarkably after World War II. Post offices became prominent examples of the architectural tenet "form follows function." Postmaster General Arthur Summerfield desired utilitarian post office designs with no extraneous frills..." The post office created standardization manuals at the end of the 1950s; the post office designs that embody the 1959 book and later are considered significant. The buildings created privately in the 1950s for lease by the post office do not fit these criteria.

Post Offices identified as significant under the Nationwide Post Office Context include "PWA" (AKA, WPA) examples of Colonial Revival, Stripped Classicism, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Mission Revival. Also significant are Modern buildings based on the Post Office Department's Building Designs brochures, and post office buildings with integral art, such as murals.

Integrity and Character-Defining Features

The property retains much of its historical integrity as per the National Register's seven aspects of integrity, with the major changes being in the setting. The Sunnyvale Post Office maintains its location on the east half of its original lot although the street pattern was altered around it in the 1970s and the rear (west) half of the parcel has been developed. It is surrounded by an area of downtown Sunnyvale that has altered considerable over time since the building's construction, including recent adjacent construction or park development on all surrounding blocks. The loss of setting has a considerable impact on the building's integrity; the post office building is a one-story commercial façade, with no surrounding, related suburban/commercial streetscape, and the north side elevation, intended to front on a commercial driveway, now is a primary street façade. The building does have integrity with its Mid-Century-Modern design and materials, including its horizontal front façade composition of brick, stucco, metal awning, and aluminum windows. The remainder of the building is comprised of non-distinctive concrete materials and modern manufacturing. The building's original character-defining materials and design have been preserved, including asymmetrical front façade with horizontal, stacked-brick base, horizontal stucco walls and full-width awning, full-height aluminum windows between the brick and canopy, sans-serif aluminum letter sign, and plaster bas-relief of a USPS eagle. The building retains its mid-twentieth-century form, scale, and feeling and continues, through its location and design, to illustrate basic associations with minor patterns of development in Sunnyvale. Primarily because of the surrounding changes in setting, the building is easily identifiable as an older building within the greater downtown area; it appears as an anomaly.

The historic elements of the building appear in very good condition.

The other building on the parcel is not distinctive architecturally with respect to its age, and its design integrity is not in question.

Evaluation - California Register (1-4) and National Register (A-D) Criteria

Criterion 1 and A: The post office building has lost its surrounding physical setting over time, so does not provide visual associations with a pattern of local design. The building does not individually embody associations with the past development of this area

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of the City of Sunnyvale or the region. The post office building has not made a significant contribution within the thematic context of politics/government, community planning and development, or commerce in the City of Sunnyvale or the region per the *USPS Nationwide Historic Context Study of Postal Facilities Constructed or Occupied Between 1940 and 1971*.

Criterion 2 and B: Research for this study did not uncover associations with significant personages at a local, regional, or state level. Associations with significant personages are not considered within the National Register Context for Post Offices.

Criterion 3 and C: Although the building is a recognizable mid-century-modern design, the design is modest in the context of commercial leased storefronts in the City of Sunnyvale and the greater Bay Area. Architecturally it is a functional design, unremarkable in the context of its era and purpose. The materials and finishes consist of simple stucco and brick siding with aluminum windows and signage, commensurate with the building's post-War context. The overall rectilinear form, the relatively common materials, the repetitive detailing, and other physical aspects of the building are not distinctive or highly artistic examples of the style. Per the Post Office Context, the building is not of significant artistic value, and is not significantly representative of a design found in a Building Designs Brochures published by the USPS later in the decade.

Criterion 4 and D: The building is not expected to provide historical information.

Evaluation – Sunnyvale criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources

"Any improvement, building, portion of buildings, structures, signs, features, sites, scenic areas, views, vistas, places, areas, landscapes, trees, or other natural objects or objects of scientific, aesthetic, educational, political, social, cultural, architectural, or historical significance can be designated a heritage resource by the city council and any area within the city may be designated a heritage resource district by the city council pursuant to provisions of this chapter if it meets the Criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, or one or more of... [twelve criteria]." Evaluation shows that the building is not significant in the City of Sunnyvale, according to the City's criteria, as follows:

The building does not reflect a special element of the city's cultural, social, economic, or architectural history (a). It is not identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history (b). Although it does embody elements of a style and era, it does not represent distinctive artistic characteristics of that style (c). The architect was not identified; the work cannot be identified as representative of the work of a notable designer (d). The building does not contribute to an historic area or thematic grouping of properties, as new development has changed the setting of the building over time, and there is no thematic post office or light-industrial/commercial context significant in Sunnyvale (e). The building is not an established or familiar visual feature (f). The building design, materials, details, and artisanship are not significant in the context of regional or local Modern design (g). The post office is not significantly similar to other distinctive properties; it does not represent a contributor to a thematic context or motif (h). It is not associated with a specific era of growth, a transportation node, or a distinctive example of park or community planning (i). It is not a distinguished type or specimen of building (j). It is not an identified local landmark with familiarity in the city or community (k). It is not associated with a local landmark district (l). It does not meet the criteria of the National or California Registers.

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Detail facing west of main entrance. February, 2018



View looking west of south elevation. February 2018.

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View facing east of side entrance on north side elevation. February, 2018.



View facing southeast of north side rear utility area. February, 2018.