

**HISTORICAL and ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION**  
**Considering the property located at**  
**890 Upland Road**  
**San Mateo County, California**



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**Date Completed:**

**March 13, 2022**

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## **Introduction:**

The following study and evaluation was prepared by Urban Programmers, consultants in the field of historic preservation, at the request of Paul Goswamy, who purchased the property at 890 Upland Road, San Mateo County (APN 058-272-120). The purpose of the study is to provide the San Mateo County Historical Resources Advisory Board with information to consider in making a determination regarding the historic value of the property.

Research was conducted at the San Mateo Historical Museum Archives, the Redwood City Library, and Official Records of San Mateo County. Internet repositories were also used to collect and verify information. Standard research methods were used in gathering information. A site visit was also conducted. Research and preparations of the study were undertaken following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Professional Services.

## **Executive Summary:**

The study investigated the historical context for evaluating the subject property. 1920-1940 was defined as the appropriate period when there was a trend of new subdivisions in response to the desire for summer homes, primarily by San Francisco residents and others looking to get away from the fog banks of the upper Peninsula. This period prior to WWII, was the first suburbanization, albeit part-time residents, to break up some of the large landholdings in the County. Picking up on a failed subdivision plan, Leonard and Holt Company submitted maps for Emerald Lake Hills, including the upper Oak Knoll Manor Subdivision. These became reasonably successful developments that included a lake and plans for a golf course and other amenities. When the new homeowners banded together to purchase the lake property, Leonard and Holt Company moved up the hill, created a new lake, and planned Emerald Hills 2 with proposals for 3000 home sites.

The house at 890 Upland Road was constructed in 1920 on Lot 9, Block 26, Oak Knoll Manor. Originally it appears to have been about 1,000 square feet in a cabin style on the 1.3-acre parcel. The lots in the upper section of the subdivision are located on winding streets, creating irregular sizes and shapes. The subject building is set back from the street with the current entrance on the side. As a result of extensions and extensive alterations, the building has lost the elements of the original "cabin" design. Based on the history, it does not appear the building is associated with a significant person or event of broad significance. The architecture has been compromised, leading to the conclusion that the property is not eligible for San Mateo County Landmark status or for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

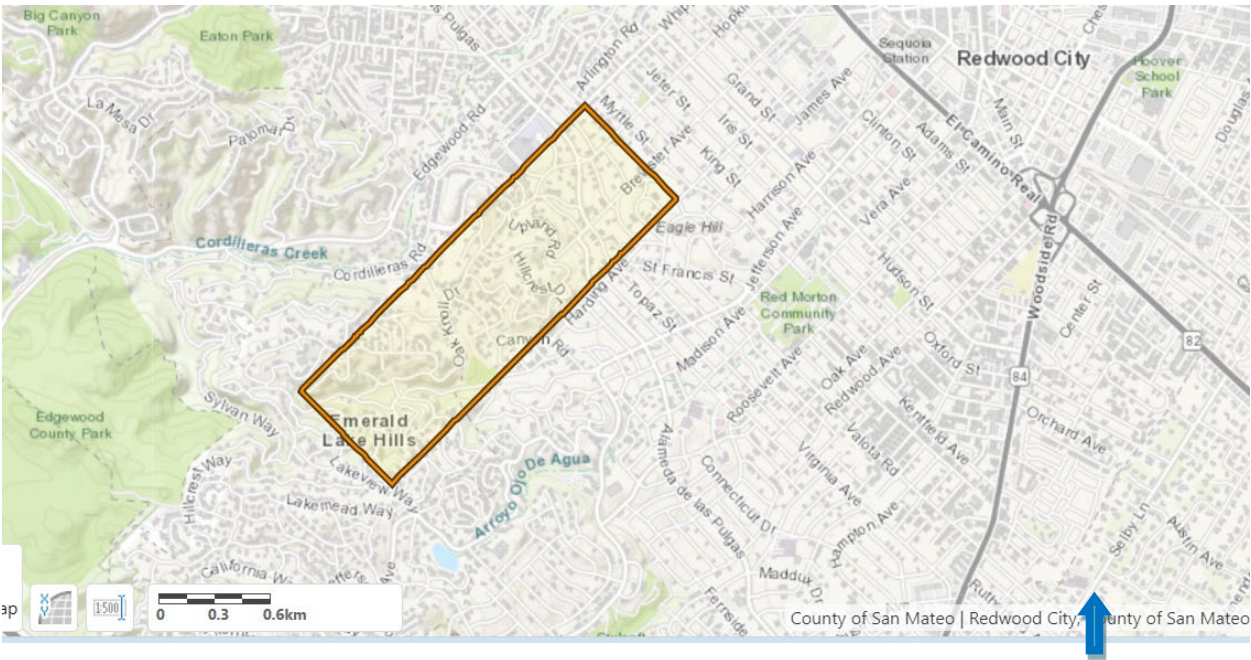


Figure # 1

Subdivision Map of Oak Knoll Manor within the Emerald Hills area.

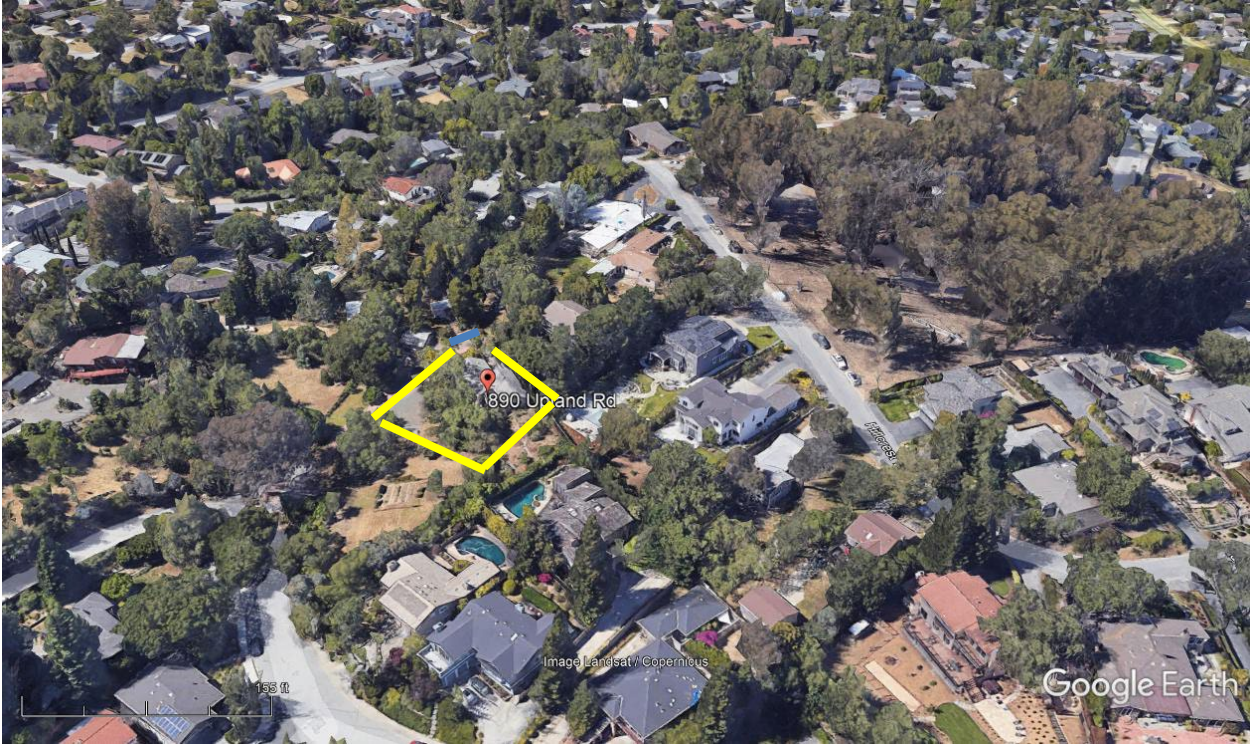


Figure 2 Aerial View of 890 Upland Road, San Mateo County  
Photograph Date: May 2011, Source: Google Earth Pro.



Figure 3 Historic aerial view of the area in 1947. Source Google Earth Pro.

## 2.0 San Mateo County History – Context

890 Upland Road, San Mateo County (APN 057-270-030)

The context in which to understand the property at 890 Upland Road in the Oak Knoll Manor Subdivision begins with the native population who roamed the area. The early occupants of what became San Mateo County were the Coastanoan people, Ohlone subgroup, and individual tribelets who established villages, harvested acorns, and hunted. These stone-age people lived in relative peace with an abundant supply of food found along the shore and in the fields as well as a broad range of game and fowl. The area that contains the subject property was likely open fields of native grasses and does not appear to have been a village site.

The predictable and respectful lifestyle of the native people was interrupted by the Spanish explorers and later Franciscan Monks sent by the King of Spain to colonize Alta California by establishing a chain of Missions along the Pacific Coast. While much can be said about this period, the sad truth is that most of the native people were unable to withstand the European lifestyle and the contagious diseases introduced by the Spanish. Within a short period, most had died.

The first Spanish explorers to travel into what is now San Mateo County were led by Captain Gaspar De Portola, traveling and mapping the area on the orders of Jose de Galves, the Visitor General of New Spain (Mexico). The ambitious Portola envisioned Alta California becoming an extension of Mexico with Franciscan Missions a day's walk apart and the converted "Indians" loyal to the King of Spain. This first exploration of San Mateo County (the Peninsula) found the San Francisco Bay but not the connection to the ocean; thus, the expedition returned to San Diego, where Father Sierra had established the first Mission in California.

By the summer of 1775, explorers covered the East Bay and the San Mateo Coast. In 1776, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza reached the northern tip of the peninsula, where he recognized the military opportunity and established a Presidio (Military Base) and a Mission. Critically important agricultural substations were established on the peninsula to provide food and leather goods to the Mission on Delores Creek and to El Presidio. As part of the plan to colonize the region, the first civil settlement was established at El Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe in 1777. There is no record of any agricultural settlement in the area of the subject property.

The forces in Mexico successfully overthrew the Spanish rule in 1821. While the long-awaited secularization did not occur in an orderly transition of land to "Indians" as had been originally envisioned, the Mexican Governors granted large sections (Ranchos) to soldiers and friends. The largest land grant in San Mateo County was made to Jose Dario Arguello, one of two given to him. The land was given in recognition of his very responsible military career, during which he rose to Interim Governor of California and full Governor of Baja California. His son, Louis Antonio Arguello, followed his father in a military career that was equally illustrious.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Postel, M., *San Mateo County- A Sesquicentennial History*, Star Publishing Co., Belmont, 2007:79.

Louis Antonio Arguello lost his first wife in 1814 and married Maria Soledad Ortega from Santa Barbara in 1822, a year before he was appointed Governor of California - a post he held for three years. After his death in 1830, Maria Arguello petitioned the U.S. Courts for title to the larger rancho but did not apply for the smaller coastal land, El Pilar Rancho. She also moved to the Rancho de las Pulgas, which covered southern San Mateo County between San Mateo Creek and San Francisquito Creek, the bay to the hills; it was originally thought to be larger, but upon receiving the patent in 1850, it turned out to be four square leagues (35,250 acres) divided between Maria (50%), Jose Ramon (25%), and Louis (10%), with the remainder going to the attorney.<sup>2</sup> In 1859, Maria sold her land and moved to Santa Clara. The subject property was part of the Arguello Rancho land grant, although there is no record of the site being developed; at most, it appears to have been used for grazing and remained in wild grasses and oak trees, unaffected by the changes in ownership to Horace Hawes or to Moses Hopkins during the four decades that included substantial developments and political haggles in San Mateo County- an era of lumbering, the coming of regular rail service (1863), the building of Crystal Springs Dam and reservoir, and an era of agricultural development.

During the first quarter of the 1900s, the lure of warm summer weather began a trend for fog-bound San Franciscans seeking summer residences in San Mateo County. Throughout the hills, in areas that became Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton and Western Redwood City, subdivisions were recorded for large estates and small cabins. During this era, Emerald Hills was first recorded as the name for a subdivision promoted by George Irvine in 1920.<sup>3</sup> The property was acquired by Charles Henry Holt. Holt was orphaned as a young child and reared by his stepfather, Cleveland Dam, a pioneer in business in Alameda County. Charles attended school in Oakland. After graduating from high school in 1902, he went to work for Anglo-London Paris Bank as an exchange clerk before resigning in 1913 to establish his own real estate company, C. H. Holt Realty Company. In 1922, the firm expanded with the partnership of George Leonard, operating as Leonard & Holt Company. The company was one of the largest in the field of real estate subdivisions working in San Francisco, Burlingame, Tamalpais Valley, The Cascades at Fairfax, and Redwood City – including the property known as Emerald Hills.<sup>4</sup> The company expanded the lake, and typical of the “resort” developments happening in Los Altos, Woodside, and even on the coast, they constructed a golf course and clubhouse which they marketed to fog-weary San Franciscans by sending busses to bring them to the “country” for picnics and recreation on the weekends. The style of architecture selected was a variant of Spanish Colonial Revival, a style that was very popular in California during the 1920s. In fact, it was promoted by Southern Pacific Railroad through their promotional magazine *Sunset* as the style best suited for the State.<sup>5</sup>

The development of the Highlands of Emerald Lake contained several subdivisions, including the Oak Knoll Manor, which preceded several of the Emerald Lake and Emerald Lake Hills developments. Emerald Lake Hills 1, or Lower Emerald Hills, was the first to be developed and sold reasonably well. In 1927, the owners established Emerald Lake Country Club, a mutual benefit corporation, and purchased

<sup>2</sup> Fredricks, Donald, the Daily Journal, The Arguellos and Rancho del las Pulgas, August 4, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The Land Under the Lodge, [www.emeraldlake.com/history.html](http://www.emeraldlake.com/history.html).

<sup>4</sup> Millard, Bailey, "The San Francisco Bay Region" Vol. 3, page 217-218, The American Historical Society, Inc., 1924.

<sup>5</sup> Urban Programmers, *Remodeling in Downtown Los Gatos California*, 1989.

the lake with plans for adding stables, a bar, laundry, hospital, and undertaker, amenities which were never developed. Without control of the attraction and amenity to spur sales, the subdivision sales appeared to slump.

The Leonard and Holt Company moved their development to the upper hills, where they dammed a creek and constructed a second lake. Here they proposed 3000 home sites around Emerald Lake Hills 2.

Following WWII, the Bay Area experienced a population explosion. The educational opportunities brought veterans with the GI Bill to study at Stanford University, the University of California, State Colleges, and community colleges. Often these returning students brought families with them and needed housing. At the same time, the new “high-tech” companies that started during the war were adapting to more general products and were hiring from all over the world. Established subdivisions were again recognized as attractive places for families who wanted a more rural or rustic lifestyle.

### 2.1. 890 Upland Road History:

The subject property is part of the 2000 acres sold by William Carey Jones to Horace Hawes in 1857. Hawes constructed a house (currently the location of Sequoia High School) and named the land Redwood Fran.<sup>6</sup> Prior to moving to San Mateo County, he lived in San Francisco, where he held a number of civic positions, including being the California Assemblymember who introduced the Consolidation Act, which created the City and County of San Francisco (1856). The remaining land to the south became San Mateo County(1857). After his death in 1872, the land was distributed to his two children and wife. The subject parcel was part of that sold to Moses Hopkins C. 1880. Moses was the brother of Mark Hopkins (Big Four investors in the Central Pacific Railroad, Mark Hopkins, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Porter Huntington). During this period, the area may have been used for grazing, particularly as cattle were moved from the coast to the rails or slaughterhouses in the north county and

for the thoroughbred horses raised by Moses Hopkins. In 1902, the 2000 acres were sold to cement magnate William J. Dingee, who remodeled the house and created Dingee Park. The 1906 earthquake destroyed the house and structures on the site. The next owner was San Francisco Architect, Albert Pissis, and his wife, Georgia.<sup>7</sup> No structures were constructed on the subject lot, and there is no visible evidence of past owners prior to 1920, when the land was further subdivided.

The remains of the late Moses Hopkins, who died in San Francisco in February, were brought to this city Thursday and placed in the elegant Hopkins vault in the City Cemetery beside the remains of Mark and Samuel Hopkins. The elegant metallic casket containing the body was inclosed in a hermetically-sealed lead-lined case. The widow of the deceased, Edward Hopkins and Mr. Gove accompanied the remains to this city in a special car. At the vault Rev. Dr. Mackenzie of San Francisco read a brief funeral service.

Sacramento Daily Union, 7 May 1892.

Constructed c. 1920, the “country cabin” was a second home for Zerah Y. Howard and Florence Carthew Howard, who purchased the property in 1919. Zerah Yates Howard was born in San Francisco in 1876, and it appears he was educated locally. A resident of San Francisco in 1896, he was a clerk living at 120

<sup>6</sup> San Francisco Call, Death at Redwood City, August 29, 1895.

<sup>7</sup> History of Sequoia High School, <https://sequoiasalumniassoc.org/about/sequoia-campus-history.php>.



Palm Avenue- a family residence he maintained until the 1930s<sup>8</sup>. His career progressed to a purchasing agent (shipping) for the Hakalau Plantation Corporation in the 1920s.<sup>9</sup> By 1927, Zerah is listed in the Voter Registration records as living in Redwood City (likely on Upton Road). The 1928-30 Voter Rolls show him living on Upland Road, and within a year, he retired. However, he went back to work as the Vice President of Welch and Company. In 1933 he applied for membership in the Sons of the Revolution and was accepted. The couple was active in civic and social activities including the IOOF Lodge. He passed away on December 24, 1942. The property was transferred to Florence in February 1944. Florence was born in England in 1874 and became a naturalized American Citizen. The San Mateo newspapers carried many articles describing social and religious activities where Florence participated. She continued to live in the house on Upland Road and worked at the Redwood Medical Clinic for several years. She passed away in 1968.

The next owners of the property were Guy Collingwood and Georgina B. Collingwood, who owned the property until selling it in 1974 to Robert Eugene Roller and Gail Nadine Roller.<sup>10</sup>

Robert and Gail Roller were police officers in San Mateo. Gail was the first female officer to be hired in San Mateo. Prior to being accepted in San Mateo, she was a "meter maid" for two years and had worked with the San Mateo County Sheriff and spent two years in the Oakland Police Department.<sup>11</sup> In 1976, when she became pregnant, the Police Department fired her. She appealed to the City Council to be reinstated, but her appeal was denied. A suit in U.S. District Court<sup>12</sup> found that although disabled male officers were given inside positions, she was not eligible, and thus, she was not discriminated against due to pregnancy. She then filed a suit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.<sup>13</sup> The couple divorced in 1979. It appears Gail continued to live in the house until 1984 when it was sold to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza.<sup>14</sup> Robert Roller continued as a San Mateo Police officer.<sup>15</sup>

When the Casazza's purchased the property, Marco was employed as an electrician, a position he held until he retired.<sup>16</sup> The property was sold in 2022.

### 3.0 Description of the property and buildings:

**3.1 Setting:** The property is located at the bend in Upland Road with the house set back from the street. A small cottage and shed are on the property. Landscaping is primarily trees with many fruit

<sup>8</sup> San Francisco City Directories, 1896-1930.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Deed from Guy Collingwood and Georgina B. Collingwood to Robert Eugene Roller and Gail Nadine Roller, recorded 5/16/1974, Book 6615, Official Records, page 298.

<sup>11</sup> San Mateo Woman Police Officer, *The Times (San Mateo)*, page 20, October 2, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> *Roller v. City of San Mateo*, 399 F. Supp. 358 (N.D. Cal. 1975).

<sup>13</sup> *Pregnancy Leave Appeal, Policewoman Overruled*, *The Times (San Mateo)*, June 11, 1975.

<sup>14</sup> Deed Gail Nadine Roller to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza, recorded 3/30/1984, Series #1984-033938.

<sup>15</sup> Deed from Gail Nadine Roller to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza, recorded 3/30/1984, Series #1984-033938.

<sup>16</sup> Deed from Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza Trustees, recorded 2/3/2011, Series #2011-014595.

trees, Fuyu and Hachiya persimmon, mulberry, Santa Rosa Plum, pluot, Fuji Apples, pears, figs, tangerine, pomegranate, loquat, apricots, and Concord Grapes.



Aerial View of the property and house showing the two sections of the house. Source Google Earth Pro.

**3.2 House:** The building is an irregular form with two rectangular sections, one in front and to the side of the other. Originally a “cabin” style building, it has been enlarged and altered, reflecting a Craftsman vernacular style throughout the additions. The side rear section steps up the slightly sloping site. The building has many recycled elements, including art glass windows. The end facing the street is a gable with the garage under the living space. The garage has double-hinged doors in panel style with three-over-three panes in the top section. A similar six-pane window is on the side. The second story has a pair of similar windows and a single one offset in the wall. All windows have plain board frames. Siding on the lower level is vertical board with horizontal in the upper section. The roof has a plain fascia with exposed rafters beneath and knee braces in the peak and at each end of the wall. The side of the garage element is similar, with multi-pane windows and a single door. A path leads to the main entrance that is set back on the side atop a stair where a former porch has been enclosed, and the entry door is now flush with the wall. The façade is open lattice panels at the ground level and solid panels above, with five nine-pane windows extending the length of the wall beneath the header. On the other side of the building, a large deck has been added to blend the two sections together. The building wall has a wide French-style door, a single door, and a multi-pane window off the deck. Art glass, flowering windows c. 1950 are grouped along a former porch and are the most interesting aspects of the design.



Photograph 1 890 Upton Road  
View: Front end of the building facing the street and side façade. This appears to be the older section.



Photograph 2 890 Upton Road View: Side Façade



Photograph 3 890 Upton Road. The living room shows the remodeling and inclusion of paired art glass windows, stone behind the wood stove and on the floor to raise the stove.



Photograph 4 890 Upton Road New raised Side deck and remodeled side of the house.



Photograph 5 890 Upton Road - Rear and side of the building, showing the elevation change in the two sections.



Photograph 6 890 Upton Road  
Second level remodeled roof with skylights.



Photograph 7 890 Upton Road – Rear of the house, showing the back of the side addition.

In summary, the building is in good condition and has been extensively altered by the addition of non-original materials, replacing the windows with art glass from a different period as well as various other modifications that have changed the character of the original design.

**Small house:** The small house is a vernacular form wood frame, side-facing gable style building c. 1970 (no permits were found).

## 4.0 Evaluation of Significance:

For purposes of this study, the criteria used to evaluate the significance of potential historical resources is that of the California Register of Historical Resources and the San Mateo County Criteria for the Designation of County Historic Landmarks and Historic Districts (Section 7732).

### 4.1 The San Mateo County Criteria contains five categories:

7732.1 It exemplifies or reflects elements of the County's cultural, Social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering or architectural history; or

7732.2 It has special aesthetic or artistic interests or values; or

7732.3 It is identified with persons or events significant in local, State or national history; or

7732.4 It embodies distinctive architectural characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials of craftsmanship; or

7732.5 It is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect.

While the categories do not specifically address the integrity of a historic resource, it is necessary to first consider integrity to evaluate potential resources. The California Register of Historical Resources defines integrity as the majority of seven aspects: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. A resource must be able to communicate the reason for its significance.

The property at 890 Upland Road is associated with the 1920-1940 period of expansion and industrialization that swept the Bay Area after WWI. The wealth of the early 1920s led to a trend for summer homes for San Franciscans who came down the peninsula to escape the summer fog and chill of San Francisco. Subdivisions of large and small parcels were recorded, some with recreational amenities, others just a small lot for a cabin. The subject property was part of this trend in the Oak Knoll Manor subdivision, which had 3000 home sites. The style and design were originally basic wood frame in a vernacular style, with board siding window of multi-pane sash. Since the original construction, the building has had extensive alterations. From the exterior, the original design is present only on two sides of the front element of the building. Original materials in the roof, brackets design, and materials of the buildings and property have been compromised, negatively affecting the integrity.

The property does not exemplify elements of the County's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history. It is a remnant of a recreational subdivision of second homes that was not successful. Developments of this type were conceived for lower Emerald Hills and the nearby communities where the summer weather was warmer than in San Francisco (7732.1).

The main house is a mix of elements and materials, including the addition of art glass windows. However, it does not exceed to the level of special aesthetic or artistic interests or values (7732.2).

The property was part of the trend for subdivisions of second homes that occurred after WWI. This association is within a broad category of real estate subdivisions in the 1920s and is not directly associated with persons or events that were significant in local, State, or national history (7732.3).

As stated above, the main building on the property does not embody distinctive architectural characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction and is not a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials of craftsmanship. The vernacular design of the original structure has been extensively altered by different materials and systems, leaving only a section of the original (7732.4).

The architect was not identified; however, the alterations to the building have so changed the original design that the architect can no longer be identified with the building (7732.5).

In summary, the property at 890 Upland Road, when compared to the criteria of San Mateo County, does not appear to meet the level of original design or significant associations required to be recommended for a County Landmark.

#### **4. 2. California Register of Historical Resources:**

The criteria for listing historical resources in the California Register of Historical Resources are consistent with those for listing resources in the National Register of Historic Places but have been modified for state use in order to include a range of historical resources that better reflect the history of California. The California Register eligibility or listing is the threshold for CEQA to consider a resource significant. A historical resource must retain integrity and 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 possesses high artistic values; or
4. It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

In addition, the resource must retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic property and to convey the reason for its significance. The subject property has diminished integrity due to the alterations.

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.*

The single-family residence is not associated with an event that contributed significantly to local or regional history or cultural heritage.

Criteria 2. *It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history*

The history of the property does not show a direct and significant association with persons



important to the history of San Mateo County, the State of California, or the nation.

Criteria 3. *It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.*

The subject building represents a vernacular style that has been modified with additions and alterations. The building does not exhibit significant characteristics that possess high artistic style or values that would be important to the local history or to the State. Thus, the property does not appear eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criteria 3.

Criteria 4. *It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nations.*

During the excavation and development for residential use, the native soils have been disturbed to construct foundations for the house, driveway, and small orchard. It is unlikely that significant information important to prehistory or history would be found on this site.

The property at 890 Upland Road does not meet the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources.

## 5. Sources Consulted:

Repositories used and persons consulted include:

Redwood City Library  
San Mateo Historical Museum (Archives)  
San Mateo County Official Records, Redwood City  
San Mateo County Official Records  
U.S. Census Records  
San Mateo Times (Archives)

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#### DEEDS:

1. Deed from Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza Trustees, recorded 2/3/2011, Series #2011-014595.
2. Deed from Gail Nadine Roller to Marco A. Casazza and Janice Casazza, recorded 3/30/1984, Series #1984-033938. (Gail divorced in 1979).
3. Deed from Guy Collingwood and Georgina B. Collingwood to Robert Eugene Roller and Gail Nadine Roller, recorded 5/16/1974, Book 6615, Official Records, page 298.
4. Deed out of the Estate of Zerah Y. Howard, deceased, to Florence Carthew Howard, recorded 2/5/1944, Book 1105, Official Records, page 61.
5. Deed of Trust executed by Zerah Y. Howard and Florence C. Howard in 1927.

Periodicals are listed in the footnotes.