

HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE ALMADEN FEED & FUEL  
18950 ALMADEN ROAD  
IN THE CITY OF SAN JOSE

FOR

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BY

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**ABSTRACT**

This historical evaluation was carried out in July of 2005 and June of 2006 for the Almaden Feed and Fuel located at 18950 Almaden Road in the City of San Jose, California. The research focused upon the characteristics of this structure and its contribution to the historic fabric of the City of San Jose. The bar and restaurant as it stands today is a single story vernacular structure. The building appears to have been originally constructed circa the 1880's, with one source placing the construction as far back as the 1860's (Almaden Resident, 2003). The structure is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), or the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory. The structure does not appear eligible for listing in either the CRHR or the NRHP. However, it does appear eligible for listing in the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory as a Structure of Merit. Therefore, recommendations regarding mitigation of the impact of the proposed project are made in the conclusion of this report.

## **LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECT AREA**

The subject area includes the Almaden Feed and Fuel at 18950 Almaden Road in the City of San Jose, County of Santa Clara. On the USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle of Santa Teresa Hills, the Transverse Mercator Grid (UTMG) approximate centerpoint of the project area is 6 02 990mE/41 18 045mN. The elevation is approximately 347 feet MSL. The nearest source of fresh water is an unnamed stream which runs approximately 800 feet southwest of the proposed project area.

The proposed development for the property consists of the demolition of the existing structure to make way for future construction of fourteen single family residences.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The goal of the archival research was to gather data on the structure located at 18950 Almaden Road in the City of San Jose and to evaluate its historical and architectural merit according to guidelines established by the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory, California Register of Historic Resources, and the National Register of Historic Places.

The study was carried out in July of 2005 by staff under the direction of Dr. Robert Cartier, Principal Investigator at A.R.M. Research was conducted using in-house references at Archaeological Resource Management as well as records at the Recorder's Office, the California Assessor's Office, Surveyor's Office of the County of Santa Clara, and the California Room at the Martin Luther King Jr. Main Library in San Jose. Research assistance was provided by Doug Jones.

## **EXISTING CONDITION OF THE STRUCTURE AND ITS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### *Architectural Description*

Overall, the structure is in good condition, although significantly altered from its original form. As it stands today, the structure is a single story vernacular restaurant and bar. The bar consists of a small side-gabled roof portion of the structure. An extending lower side-gabled roofed portion covers the restaurant and kitchen. In addition several flat roofed additions have been made along the front facade. The roof is surfaced with composition shingles. The exterior walls are surfaced with a combination of horizontal and vertical wooden siding with brick cladding along the lower portion of the wall in

some areas, as well as a small area of stucco along the rear wall. At the southern end of the rear façade, a large wooden covered patio has been added to the building. Fenestration throughout the structure consists of modern aluminum frame windows. A slightly raised wooden ramp leads up to the main bar entrance, whereas the restaurant portion of the establishment is accessed through an unadorned entry on the northern façade.

The interior of the structure is in good condition, although significantly altered from its original form. All of the interior was accessible for visual inspection. The southern gabled roof section of the structure encloses the bar. South of the bar itself, the restaurant seating and kitchen areas are housed beneath the extending side-gable extension. The restaurant features hardwood seating booths, with a western themed decorative motif. The more modern flat roofed additions to the front façade of the structure house the bathrooms, as well as storage and utility facilities. Access to the basement is provided through a hatchway in the floor of the kitchen area. Portions of the basement include a foundation of soil cement, characteristic of pre-twentieth century construction. Although some more recent support beams have been added for structural integrity, many of the original heavy timber beams appear to be present.

In addition to the Almaden Feed and Fuel building, a number of pieces of historic farm equipment were present on the property at the time of the initial survey. These pieces of equipment were collected and placed on the property by former owners Evelyn Barnd and Doug Avery. This equipment has since been removed by the current owner.

#### *Modifications Made to the Original Structure*

The structure at 18950 Almaden Road was built in the 1880's based upon visual evaluation and available archival information. On June 22, 2006, the property owner and Mr. John Overmon, a contractor, examined the property. Based on Mr. Overmon's estimations, the original structure, built circa the 1880's, was approximately 780 square feet in size.

During the 1920's and 1930's, during the ownership of John and Sunta Calcaterra, several modifications were made to the structure. The basement was excavated in the early 1920's. Also during this period a rear porch was added, as well as the storm door basement entrance. Men and women's privies were added to the north side of the structure. Circa the 1930's a portico was added to the southern end of the structure, over which a raised gabled roof was extended. During the 1930's a portion of the portico was enclosed and three gas pumps were placed beneath it. The gas pumps were later removed.

Additional modifications were made by the Daytons and Evelyn (Blondie) Barnd during the 1980's. The remainder of the portico was enclosed on three sides and the inner wall was removed, extending the bar area. The original privies were removed, and modern restrooms were added to the eastern side of the structure, along with walk-in refrigeration and a storage room. The back porch was enclosed, and an eight foot addition was made to the rear of the building, extending the restaurant and kitchen area. The smoking patio was added to the eastern side of the structure in 2000.

#### *Historical Assessment of the Property*

The first people to inhabit the San Francisco Bay Area were the Ohlone (or Costanoan) Indians. The Ohlone inhabited the San Francisco Bay regions from the Golden Gate south to Monterey. The Ohlone were gatherers and hunters who utilized only the native

flora and fauna with the exception of one domesticate, the dog. Yet, the abundance and high quality of natural resources allowed them to settle in semi-sedentary villages. These villages were widely distributed throughout the Santa Clara Valley, especially along water courses such as the Guadalupe River, which runs within a mile of the proposed project area. The arrival of Europeans by the last quarter of the 18th century was the beginning of the end for the Native American period of history in the Bay Area.

The first Europeans to settle in the San Jose area were the Spanish, who established the *Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe* in 1777 and Mission Santa Clara de Asís, also in 1777. The missions were largely self-sufficient, raising their own crops and cattle with Native American labor. The land that now contains the structure at 18950 Almaden Road was part of the San Jose Pueblo Tract Number Three. Situated first on the Guadalupe River, the Pueblo of San Jose was established to supply provisions for other settlements, religious and military, in California. It is the oldest non-military settlement in the State. When the first town site was found to be in an annual flood area, it was moved farther away from the Guadalupe River around 1797.

During the Mexican period, San Jose was situated in this second location, along Market Street, the main north-south thoroughfare through the Pueblo. Market Plaza, a large open area, was the site of the *mercado*, or public market, as well as events such as horse races and bull and bear fights. At the beginning of the American period, the Pueblo was surveyed by its new owners who laid out blocks in a grid, reflecting the usual pattern of American civic planning. The City of San Jose was incorporated in March of 1850.

According to the maps in Thompson & West's *New Historical Atlas of Santa-Clara County, California (1876)*, the subject parcel is located on land that was originally part of the Rancho de las Capitancillos. This rancho was granted June 16, 1842 to Justo Larios. By 1876 the subject property was a part of the lands of the Quicksilver Mining Company.

Available documentation found for the structure does not give an exact date for construction. However three sources state that the structure was built on the property during the early-to-mid 1880's (Loomis, P. 1956, Almaden Times n. d., Goodman, T. 1989). Visual evaluation of the foundation supports this conclusion (see Architectural Description section of this report). Win-2 data for the subject property states that the structure was built in 1938 however this data is not consistent with any other written source or visual evaluation. According to several printed references, in its earliest years the structure was known as Gilleran's Saloon (Loomis P. 1956, Almaden Times n. d.) or "the Nine Mile Stop" (Goodman, T. 1989). This bar was one of approximately ten that were placed along Almaden Road between San Jose and the New Almaden Mines These saloons provided food and refreshment for people traveling between San Jose and the New Almaden Mines (Loomis P. 1956). Building Permit records are available for the County of Santa Clara only after 1945. Only one permit was found for the subject property, which was issued March 21, 1963 for construction of a neon sign.

Some community sources claim that the structure was also used as a stage coach stop. One article was found which made reference to this, stating that:

*The saloons were said to have been spaced so neither man or horse could become too thirsty before the next one. Each had a watering trough in front and served a free cold lunch. Some also served hot meals. Stagecoaches also stopped to pick up and let off passengers at the saloons (Almaden Times, n. d.)*

This article does not specifically mention the Feed and Fuel structure as a stage coach stop, however it implies that the coaches stopped at each of the saloons along the route. According to Sunshine, Fruit, and Flowers, (San Jose Mercury, 1896), during the 1880's and into the 1890's "...the transportation of freight and passengers to the New Almaden Quicksilver Mines has been under the control of Mr. F. Bohlman." Around 1892 Mr. Bohlman purchased a livery stable on Santa Clara Street in the City of San Jose. He also had interests as a farmer and a butcher. The Feed and Fuel structure is located northwest of what was the Almaden Train Station and directly south of a small watering hole (New Almaden Rail Map). Thus it appears likely that the Feed & Fuel structure may have been a coach stop for passengers transferring to this train line.

In 1883 an approximately 292 acre property which included the subject property was owned by Adolphe Eugene Lelievre. On November 9<sup>th</sup> of that year she sold the property to Byron Perington (Book 71 of Deeds, Page 208). Later in 1883, on December 12, the property was again sold to Frederick A. and Eliza. B. Schneider (Book 70 of Deeds, Page 371). The 1890 Official Map of the County of Santa Clara also shows the subject property within the lands of F. A. Schneider. Many later deeds list the property as a portion of the Schneider ranch. On December 1, 1892 Frederick Schneider and his wife Eliza sold the property to the Sully Orchard Company (Book 154 of Deeds, Page 171). At this time the property consisted of 185.23 acres of land. On April 2, 1895 a 5.04 acre portion of the property containing the subject structure was sold to Nicolasa Orosco, wife of Augustine Orosco (Book 179 of Deeds, Page 170). However, according to County of Santa Clara Maps, by 1902 the property was again owned by a member of the Schneider family, Ms. Lida B. Schneider. The 1914 Map of Santa Clara County also lists Ms. Schneider as the property owner in that year.

The next known owners of the property are George L. Cosart and his wife Emma S. Cosart. On December 31, 1921 the Cosarts granted the subject property (and adjoining parcels totaling 48.48 acres) to Mr. G. Calcaterra (aka John Calcaterra) and his wife Sunta (Book 548 of Deeds, Page 158). The Calcaterra's owned the property for over twenty years. During the 1920's the structure was briefly converted into a residence, and occupied by the Joseph family. Mr. Marty Joseph, who was a young boy at the time, recalled digging out the basement for the addition to the structure with shovels and buckets with his brothers, during the early 1920's. At that time, according to Mr. Joseph, the structure was already a "real old building" (Almaden Times, n.d.).

During prohibition the bar became a general store, selling feed, provisions, and other supplies. At the end of prohibition, it reverted back into a bar. Gasoline was also sold here during this period. An unlabeled historic photograph of the structure, dating from this era, shows that at that time gas pumps that were located beneath the portico at the northern end of the structure. The pumps were subsequently removed, and this area enclosed to expand the bar. The large sign on the roof of the structure reads "Gilmore," indicating that the gas station sold Gilmore brand gasoline. A smaller sign says "Hillsview Inn, Wine-Liquor." During the 1930's, the structure may have also operated as a brothel and small casino including slot machines (Almaden Times, n. d.).

Mr. Calcaterra died in 1943, and the property passed to his wife (Book 1147 of Official Records, Page 160). On April 25, 1946 the property was sold to John F. and Dolores L. Hancock, husband and wife (Book 1361 of Official Records, Page 19). The Hancocks owned the property until 1952, at which time it was sold to James A. Santana, and his mother Mary Santana (Book 2393 of Official Records, Page 15). On February 25 1953, the property was granted to Joe Curci (Book 2590 of Official Records, Page 336), however the next day, February 26, he re-deeded the property to James Santana through a deed of trust (Book 2590 of Official Records, Page 337). In 1954, on April 16, the

property was again sold, to David Calcaterra and Florence Mooney (Book 2855 of Official Records, Page 159). During the 1950's the structure was known as Andy's Hillview Inn, however it appears to have never operated as a motel. David Calcaterra's wife, Margery Pfeiffer Calcaterra, is a member of the Pfeiffer family, early pioneers in the Almaden Valley. Her great grandfather Jacob Pfeiffer, originally from Alsace-Lorraine, came to California in 1875 and ran the Graystone Quarry. Many of his descendants have been prominent figures in Almaden (Almaden Times Weekly, 2005).

On February 22, 1972 the property was sold by David Calcaterra and his wife Margery to Torkel A. and Jackie Trondsen, husband and wife (Book 9710 of Official Records, Page 528 and Page 529). In 1975 the bar is listed under the name "The Circus Room" in the Polk Directory of the City of San Jose, it appears also to have briefly gone under the name "The Wagon Wheel." After the death of Torkel Trondsen, on August 14, 1980 the property was sold to Cleveland A. Dayton and his wife Shirley I. Dayton (Book F503 of Official Records, Page 503). The property is again sold on February 29, 1984, to Evelyn (aka Blondie) A. Barnd and Doug F. Avery (Book I346 of Official Records, Page 414). By 1985 the bar and restaurant are listed under their current name, the Almaden Feed and Fuel. Evelyn Barnd, in cooperation with a number of different partners, retained ownership of the property until July 11, 2000, at which time the property was purchased by the current owners, Jon D. Carson and R. Jennifer (Assessors Document #15306519).

The Almaden Feed & Fuel has served as an important community hub for the Almaden Area. Several community groups, including the Clampers Society, Almaden Search and Rescue, the Almaden Valley Realtors association, and the Vietnam Veterans Bikers club have used the restaurant and bar for their meetings and events.

## **HISTORIC EVALUATION**

### *City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory*

The City of San Jose's Historic Preservation Ordinance defines structures of historical value based on any of the following factors:

1. Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state, or national history, heritage, or culture in a distinctive, significant, or important way;
2. Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige:
  - a. Of an architectural style, design or method of construction;
  - b. Of a master architect, builder, artist, or craftsman;
  - c. Of high artistic merit;
  - d. The totality of which comprises a distinctive, significant, or important work or vestige whose component parts may lack the same attributes;
  - e. That has yielded or is substantially likely to yield information of value about history, architecture, engineering, culture, or aesthetics, or that provides for existing and future generations an example of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived or worked; or
  - f. That the construction materials or engineering methods used in the proposed landmark are unusual or significant or uniquely effective.
3. The factor of age alone does not necessarily confer a special historical, architectural, cultural aesthetic, or engineering significance, value or interest upon a structure or site, but it may have such effect if a more distinctive,

significant or important example thereof no longer exists.

#### The City of San Jose Historic Resource inventory Hierarchy of Significance

<i>Evaluation Tally Sheet Total</i>	<i>Category of Significance</i>
67-134	<u>Candidate City Landmark</u>
33-66	<u>Structure of merit</u>
33-66	<u>Contributing Structure</u>
0-32	<u>Non-Contributing Structure</u>
0-32	<u>Non-Significant Structure</u>

According to Loomis, the subject structure was one of the last constructed in a series of approximately 10 Saloons that lined the route from San Jose to the Almaden Quicksilver Mining Company. It is also the only one of these structures to remain standing. Thus, the property at 18950 Almaden Road can be considered loosely connected with the Almaden Quicksilver Mining Company, an organization of primary importance to the history of the City of San Jose and the State of California. The subject structure housed Gilleran's Saloon during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Loomis, P. 1956, Almaden Times n. d.). In addition, the structure is associated with transportation patterns. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the structure may have been a stage stop along the route to the Almaden Mines. In the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the structure also served as a gas station, linking it to the expanding importance of the automobile. Thus the period of significance for this structure stretches from the 1880's to the 1950's. However, the structure has also been significantly altered from its original form, with several additions which changed the overall character and massing of the building. This lack of integrity has compromised the ability of the structure to communicate its significance, and largely separated it from its historic fabric. The Almaden Feed & Fuel received a point total of 50.73 on the City of San Jose's Historic Resource Evaluation. This score identifies the building as a Structure of Merit.

#### *California Register of Historic Resources Criteria*

A cultural resource is considered "significant" if it qualifies as eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). Properties that are eligible for listing in the CRHR must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Association 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. Association with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
3. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or representing the work of a master, or possessing high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

A property may be automatically listed in the CRHR if it is formally determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Properties that are formally determined eligible for the NRHP are those that are designated as such through one of the federal preservation programs administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation (i.e., the National Register, Tax Certification, and Section 106 review of federal undertakings).

The CRHR interprets the integrity of a cultural resource based upon its physical authenticity. An historic cultural resource must retain its historic character or appearance and thus be recognizable as an historic resource. Integrity is evaluated by examining the subject's location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. If the subject has retained these qualities, it may be said to have integrity. It is possible that a cultural resource may not retain sufficient integrity to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places yet still be eligible for listing in the CRHR. If a cultural resource retains the potential to convey significant historical/scientific data, it may be said to retain sufficient integrity for potential listing in the CRHR.

The structure at 18950 Almaden Road is not currently listed on the California Register of Historic resources. In addition, the Almaden Feed and Fuel does not currently appear to be eligible for listing in this register. The structure is associated with events and persons of historical importance, however these associations are compromised by a lack of architectural integrity. Thus it does not appear that the structure is potentially eligible for inclusion in the CRHR under criteria 1 and 2. The structure does not embody the characteristic elements of any style or method of construction, and does not possess high artistic values, therefore it does not appear to be potentially eligible under criterion 3. Finally, the structure does not appear to have the potential to yield important information about the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation, and so does not appear to qualify as potentially eligible under criterion 4.

#### *National Register Criteria*

The National Register of Historic Places was first established in 1966, with major revisions in 1976. The register is set forth in 36 CFR 60 which establishes the responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO), standards for their staffs and review boards, and describes the statewide survey and planning process for historic preservation. Within this regulation guidelines are set forth concerning the National Register of Historic Places (36 CFR 60.6). In addition, further regulations are found in 36 CFR 63-66, 800, and Bulletin 15 which define procedures for determination of eligibility, identification of historic properties, recovery, reporting, and protection procedures.

The National Register of Historic Places was established to recognize resources associated with the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the country's history and heritage. Guidelines were designed for Federal and State agencies in nominating cultural resources to the National Register. These guidelines are based upon integrity and significance of the resource. Integrity applies to specific items such as location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture is present in resources that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- a. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history;
- b. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

- c. that embody distinctive characteristics of type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
- d. that have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Integrity is defined in Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service 1982) as:

the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. If a property's retains the physical characteristics it possessed in the past then it has the capacity to convey association with historical patterns or persons, architectural or engineering design and technology, or information about a culture or peoples.

There are also seven aspects of integrity which are used. These aspects are:

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. location  | 5. workmanship |
| 2. design    | 6. feeling     |
| 3. setting   | 7. association |
| 4. materials |                |

The structure at 18950 Almaden Road is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and does not appear to be eligible for listing under any of the criteria above. The structure is not closely enough associated with persons or events of historical significance to qualify as potentially eligible for inclusion under criteria A or B as listed above. The workmanship and feeling of the structure are not particularly noteworthy, nor does the structure embody the characteristics of any type, period, or method of construction, thus it does not appear to potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP under criterion C. Additionally, the Almaden Feed and Fuel does not appear to potentially yield information important in prehistory or history, and does not appear to qualify as potentially eligible for listing in this register under criteria D.

The structure at 18950 Almaden Road is also lacking in architectural integrity. Several additions have been made to the structure, greatly altering its appearance and massing. The surrounding neighborhood has also largely lost its historic character. Thus although the structure retains its original location and associations, the design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling of the structure have all been heavily compromised.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The structure at 18950 Almaden Road as it stands today is a single story vernacular structure in good condition. The building appears to have been originally constructed in the 1880's, with some sources placing the construction as far back as the 1860's. However, subsequent modifications made to the structure have compromised its architectural integrity. The structure is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the California Register of Historic Resources, or the San Jose Historical Resources Inventory. The structure does not currently appear eligible for listing in either the CRHR or the NRHP. It received a point score of 50.73 on the City of

San Jose Historic Evaluation form, and does appear eligible for listing in the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory as a Structure of Merit.

The proposed project calls for the demolition of the existing structure, and construction of thirteen single family residences as well as associated utilities, access, and landscaping. Thus it is determined that the proposed project will impact an historic resource under the criteria of the City of San Jose Historic Resources Inventory. Alternative recommendations are offered below:

- a. No project alternative: the Almaden Feed & Fuel structure will remain in its current location, and no new construction will take place on the property.
- b. Modification of the proposed project to integrate the existing structure: proposed project plans will be changed in order to allow the Almaden Feed and Fuel structure to remain in place.
- c. Relocation of the Almaden Feed & Fuel structure to another location within the subject property: the Almaden Feed & Fuel will be relocated within the property and the proposed construction plans will be modified accordingly.
- d. Photodocumentation of the Almaden Feed & Fuel: creation of a formal photographic record of the structure prior to its demolition. (Photodocumentation alone is not considered an adequate mitigation for demolition according to CEQA.)
- e. Construction of the proposed project as currently designed: demolition of the Almaden Feed & Fuel and construction of the thirteen residences as currently planned.

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