

January 18, 2017 – DRAFT

**20785 Baker Road, Castro Valley  
Historic Resources Evaluation**

**Introduction**

The following Historic Resources Evaluation (HRE) was prepared at the property owner's request and for their planning information and use, including for consultation with the County of Alameda.

The subject of this evaluation is a pair of residential buildings and property located in the unincorporated town of Castro Valley, California. The addresses associated with the subject parcel are 20785-20787 Baker Rd. which corresponds to the existing front (eastern) building; and 20803 Baker Rd., which is the existing rear (western) building. While these several addresses apply to this property, and while the property also fronts on Rutledge Rd., herein, the current address – 20785 Baker Rd. – is predominately utilized to refer to the overall property.

The specific purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the existing buildings are or are not potential historic resources per applicable regulations. Towards that end, this effort has been based on a site visit to record property and building characteristics; two visits to Alameda County Public Works to request and review available permit records and planning information; property deed research at the Alameda County Assessor's office; confirmation of available records at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS); plus further historical and architectural research, including a visit to the Hayward Area Historical Society (HAHS). At the County, no planning or building permit records were located for the existing buildings. Also at the County, there were no available planning records re: present on-site historic resources. At the Assessor's office, property deed history was collected, as also summarized herein. And, as confirmed by the NWIC, the subject property is not listed in the State's Historic Property Directory, nor are any others on Baker or Rutledge roads in Castro Valley. Finally, at the HAHS, city directories, aerial photos and maps were generally researched and which are also referenced herein.

**Evaluation Summary**

As detailed herein, this research effort has found minimal information about the subject parcel and its structures so consequently concludes that the subject property and its buildings lack potential historical or historic architectural significance.

The subject property is a rectangular lot (assessor's parcel no. 84A-16-5-9), approx. 82 ft. wide x 300 ft. deep, with frontages on Baker Rd. to the east and Rutledge Rd. to the west. The parcel is subdivided by a fence-line down the middle of its depth, as well as another fence-line across its northern half. The southern half is not segregated from the southward adjoining parcel (figs.1-2).

As the assessor's map indicates, the property was once part of two larger parcels, lots 11 and 12, which were created in 1925 and from which the present parcel was subdivided c1950 (fig.3). Those overall parcels, nos. 11 and 12, were apparently then jointly owned. While no evidence has been found about the remaining existing structures, it appears that a principal residence once stood on the subject or northward adjoining lot on Rutledge Road. From permit and directory listings, the identifiable address of that house was 20718/20720 Rutledge Rd. and which is, per the assessor's map, addresses presently assigned to the adjacent property to the north. The earliest identification of a residence at 20718 Rutledge Road is a 1948 directory listing. That house was subsequently identified in a 1955 electrical permit (under the address 20720). The only other record located for any of the subject or directly associated property addresses dates to 1989 and for the demolition of the 20718 Rutledge Road house. Existing foundations of an older home remain on the Rutledge front of the subject parcel, and which may have been the 20718 Rutledge residence.

As also noted, there is no historical records whatsoever for the other two buildings on this site. No addresses in their range are listed in available street address directories from the mid-20th century. And both existing structures face toward Baker Road, so they were evidently not directly associated with the former Rutledge Rd. house.

Despite its minimal size, the existing front structure is a duplex with two residential units. The rear structure is a single residential unit. Architecturally, both are vernacular cottages. They are set in the middle of the northern half of the lot, with a large front yard on Baker, which today appears to be a large driveway and parking area and/or an equipment yard and about which there is no evidence of either a suburban or agricultural landscape.

In the southern half of the lot is the remains of another multi-part building foundation, directly alongside the cottages yet separated by the internal fence, Those remaining foundations appear to be flat, as if they were once garage or shed structures rather than a residential building. Its footprint also appears to be wider than the southern half of the existing parcel, so was evidently

once associated with that overall lot (no.12). And the remains of another utility structure stand at the southern boundary of lot no.12.

Given this general information, while the overall disposition of lots 11 and 12 has not been researched, it may be concluded that these two lots were under conjoined ownership and use in the 1940 to 1960 period, with lot 11 housing residential uses and lot 12 commercial use.

Additionally, the only identifiable occupant of the subject property may have been Henry J. Matoza Jr., who was listed as the owner of the house at 20718 Rutledge Road in the 1948 and 1952 directories and in a 1955 building permit. In the directories, Matoza was additionally listed as a partner in a family construction company. And in a number of City of Hayward road work contracts from the 1950s, Rose & Matoza Construction Co. was listed at the address 20830 Rutledge Rd., an address which corresponds with the overall lot no.12 and with the remnant structures thereon.

Historically, at approximately one-half acre in size, the subject parcel was once a very small piece of a 500 acre property originally acquired by James Harvey Strowbridge in 1869.<sup>1</sup> Strowbridge's land was known as Laurel Farm. Per a contemporaneous news article, "Strowbridge was the man who had charge of all of the grading and tunnel building of the Central Pacific Railroad when it was built over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He was for many years superintendent of construction on the road and had the care of all of the tracks, grades and tunnels of the line. In 1892 he retired from the company to his farm in Castro Valley."<sup>2</sup>

In 1884, Strowbridge subdivided his Laurel Farm. The subject parcel was, at that time, a piece of the 13.2 acre lot no.24, and the 1884 auction map identifies its purchaser as S. Hemingway (fig.4). No information has been found for Hemingway or for the disposition of lot no.24 in his time of ownership.

Though the Alameda County Assessor records the date of one or both of the existing cottages as 1925, the overall property from which the subject parcel was further subdivided was mapped in April 1925 and auctioned in October of that year.<sup>3</sup> That subdivision was the Baker Vista Tract and was created by Frank E. and Ada B. Baker (fig.5). No deed records have, at this juncture, been located for the sale of property to the Bakers. In the 1920 U.S. census, Frank E. and Ada

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<sup>1</sup> Lorge, Phelps and Weston; *Images of America: Castro Valley*. Arcadia Publishing, 2005, pp.16-17.

<sup>2</sup> "J.H. Strowbridge is Out of All Danger," San Francisco Call, 10 Sept.1901, p11.

<sup>2</sup> "J.H. Strowbridge is Out of All Danger," San Francisco Call, 10 Sept.1901, p11.

<sup>3</sup> "A Subdivision at Auction," Oakland Tribune, Oct. 23, 1925, p43.

B. Baker were residents of the state of Nevada. In the 1925 Hayward City directory, the Baker's residence was listed on D Street in Hayward. In the 1930 U.S. census, the Baker's residence was again listed in the state of Nevada and, in 1940, Ada B. Baker was listed as a widow in residence with, presumably, one of her sons in San Jose, California.

The two larger lots (nos. 11 and 12) from which the subject parcel was later created were not individually sold by Ada Baker until February of 1940, in a deed of trust with John R. and Clara Rose. Moreover, in the one historic aerial photo that provides an overview of the Castro Valley area, dated 1939, while lacking resolution, no structures are visible on the subject property, though small adjoining structures are visible (fig.6).

In 1946, a portion of lot no.11, which constitutes the northern half of the subject property, was deeded to Matoza by his in-laws, John R. and Clara Rose, whose daughter, Antonia, was Matoza's spouse. And in 1954, the remainder of the property was deeded to the Matozas by the Roses.

This range of information is all that is presently known about the subject property. Based thereon, a former house at 20718 Rutledge Road may have been what remains today in the form of foundations on the western front of the subject parcel, though the history of that house is not known. At this juncture, the origins of the existing cottages are unknown, neither do they convey any evidence of their origins. Though they presently appear to be workers' housing that may have been associated with a former use of the site, whether that was their purpose is not known. In fact, at this juncture, it is unclear what the use of the subject land was subsequent to 1886, when it was originally subdivided from the farmland of J.H. Strowbridge, and again subsequent to 1925, when it was subdivided as the Baker Vista Tract. The 1939 aerial suggests agriculture, which is a safe assumption, given the Castro Valley context. Yet it is otherwise unknown what the agriculture consisted of. By the 1950s, in addition to the residential portion of the parcel on Rutledge, the property and its southern adjoiner may have been associated with a construction company. Thus, the remains of the building on the southern half may have been equipment garages and/or sheds, and the workers' housing and its large front yard may have been a part of the construction company's use.

### **Historic Context**

Given the lack of information, as it is not directly related to any specific agricultural, industrial, commercial or residential context, there is at present no specifically identifiable historic context relative to the subject property.

## **Summary Descriptions**

Architecturally, these two cottages are similar in age and in form. They are small, vernacular cottages, the front (20785-20787) a duplex and the rear a single residential unit. A small front yard at the rear cottage stands between and separates the two buildings with a narrow pathway down the north side of the front cottage accessing the rear. The front of the lot is an open and unpaved drive and parking area that is shared by all three units. Both cottages are wood frame with horizontal wood board siding in a v-groove pattern and side-gabled roofs with composition shingle roofing. Ornamentation is limited to a few sets of wood window shutters, one at the front and several at the rear cottage. Otherwise, these vernacular cottages are basic architectural forms without any distinctive characteristics.

The front cottage (figs.7-11) is a larger building – its volume raised upon a high crawl space, and with a higher pitched roof – than the rear. Its symmetrical arrangement of openings gives evidence that it was originally a duplex. The exterior of its crawl space level is sided with wood shingles. At its front is an open entry porch with steps, all of wood construction and from which the two units are entered in side-by-side doorways. This cottage is symmetrical except for a small appendage under a shed roof at its south side, which appears to be an enclosed porch. Its windows are all aluminum, likely having replaced wood windows at some juncture. Its entry doors are both wood with aluminum screen doors at the outside.

The rear cottage (figs.12-14) is small and low, without exterior evidence of a crawl space and with a low-pitched roof. Its entry door and porch are centered at the front (east), flanked by windows. Its windows are wood. This cottage also has a small south side appendage under a shed roof. Its rear backs up to a fence separating the east and west halves of the subject parcel's northern half.

## **Associated Persons**

The persons associated with the property in the course of the 20th century were Frank E. and Ada B. Baker, c1925-1940; John R. and Clara Rose, 1940-1954; and Henry J., Jr. and Antonia Rose Matoza, 1946-c1965. Thereafter, other members of the John R. and Clara Rose family were deeded the property and one of whom, Priscilla J. Rose Mays, owned the property until recently. What is known about these persons is that, per census records and directory listings, Frank E. Baker was a “garage man”; and both John R. Rose and Henry J. Matoza were construction contractors.

## Architects and Builders

There are no identified architects or builders associated with the subject buildings.

## Evaluation

The subject property and buildings are not identified historic resources, as they are not identified in the State historic resource inventory or records,<sup>4</sup> and as they are not identified as Landmarks or Contributing Buildings or Structures of Merit in the Alameda County Register of Historic Resources.<sup>5</sup> The subject property and buildings have therefore not previously been evaluated for historic resource eligibility. In order to address the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) specific to historic resources, the current effort has been requested and is intended to provide such requisite historic resource evaluation. The following evaluates the subject property and buildings using the California Register (CR) evaluation criteria,<sup>6</sup> listing each criterion followed by an evaluation statement based on the details reported herein. This evaluation additionally addresses the criteria for listing on the Alameda County Register (ACR),<sup>7</sup> which are equivalent and parallel to the CR criteria.

To be eligible for listing on the CR (or ACR), a resource must be historically 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.*

There are no identifiable events of historic importance associated with this private property and its residential buildings. Consequently, the subject property and buildings do not meet CR criterion 1 (or ACR criterion a).

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

As summarized above, the extant property and buildings have no potential importance based on an association to any persons. Therefore, the subject properties and buildings do not meet CR criterion 2 (or ACR criterion b).

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<sup>4</sup> Per NWIC correspondence addressed to the author, dated 1/5/2017 and 1/6/2017.

<sup>5</sup> See Alameda County Community Development Agency correspondence and supporting documentation re: "An Ordinance Adding Thirteen Properties to the Alameda County Register of Historic Resources," dated May 28, 2014, including Exhibit A and appendices summarizing Alameda County Register properties.

<sup>6</sup> California Register Of Historical Resources Criteria for Designation @ohp.parks.ca.gov.

<sup>7</sup> Alameda County Zoning Ordinance, Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 17.62, Sections 17.62.050 (Alameda County Register) and 17.62.060 (Alameda County Register 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.*

As detailed above, the subject buildings are small and very basic vernacular cottages without any distinctive character or characteristics.

As also noted, no original architects or engineers have been identified.

Lastly, the buildings have no potential artistic value.

As the subject buildings do not embody distinctive stylistic or architectural characteristics or methodologies, or represent the work of a master, or possess artistic value, then the subject property and buildings do not meet CR Criterion 3 (or ACR criteria c, d or e).

- 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.*

The property and structures at 20785 Baker Rd. in Castro Valley, Alameda County have not yielded and do not appear to have the potential to yield any important prehistoric or historic information. Therefore, relative to the subject of this evaluation – potential historic resources – the subject properties do not meet CR Criterion 4 (or ACR criterion f).

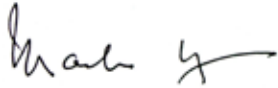
### **Summation**

In sum, the dearth of information about the subject property and its extant structures together with the minor character of the existing residential buildings combine to draw the clear conclusion that there is no identifiable cultural or historical significance associated with the subject property and its remaining structures.

With respect to any potential historic grouping or district, none presently exist. And given the lack of ability to identify an applicable historic context, the subject property and buildings do not relate to or associate with adjoining and outlying properties, which are a broad mix of uses and types (figs.14-19). The subject property therefore also lacks any potential contributory relationship to any potential future historic district.

Altogether, the existing property and buildings at 20785 Baker Rd. in Alameda County's Castro Valley do not meet any criteria for listing on the CR or ACR, so therefore have no historic resource potential.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Hulbert", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Hulbert  
*Preservation Architect &  
Historic Resources Consultant*

attached: Professional Quals., p8; figs.1-19, pp.9-17; MH resume

### **Professional Qualifications**

With more than thirty years as a professional historical consultant, preservation planner, historical architect and architect, the author's experience includes numerous historic architectural, historic resource and project evaluations, along with extensive preservation and rehabilitation consultation work. The author exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Professional Qualifications for historical architecture and architecture; is listed by the State of California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) as a qualified historical architect and historic preservation consultant; holds a Certificate in Architectural Conservation from UNESCO's International Centre for the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) in Rome, Italy; and has held a license to practice architecture in California since 1989. For additional detail, please see attached resume.





Fig.1 – 20785 Baker Rd. (bounding box) – Location aerial (google earth, 2016, north is up)



Fig.2 – 20785 Baker Rd. (bounding box) – Site aerial (google earth, 2016, north is up)



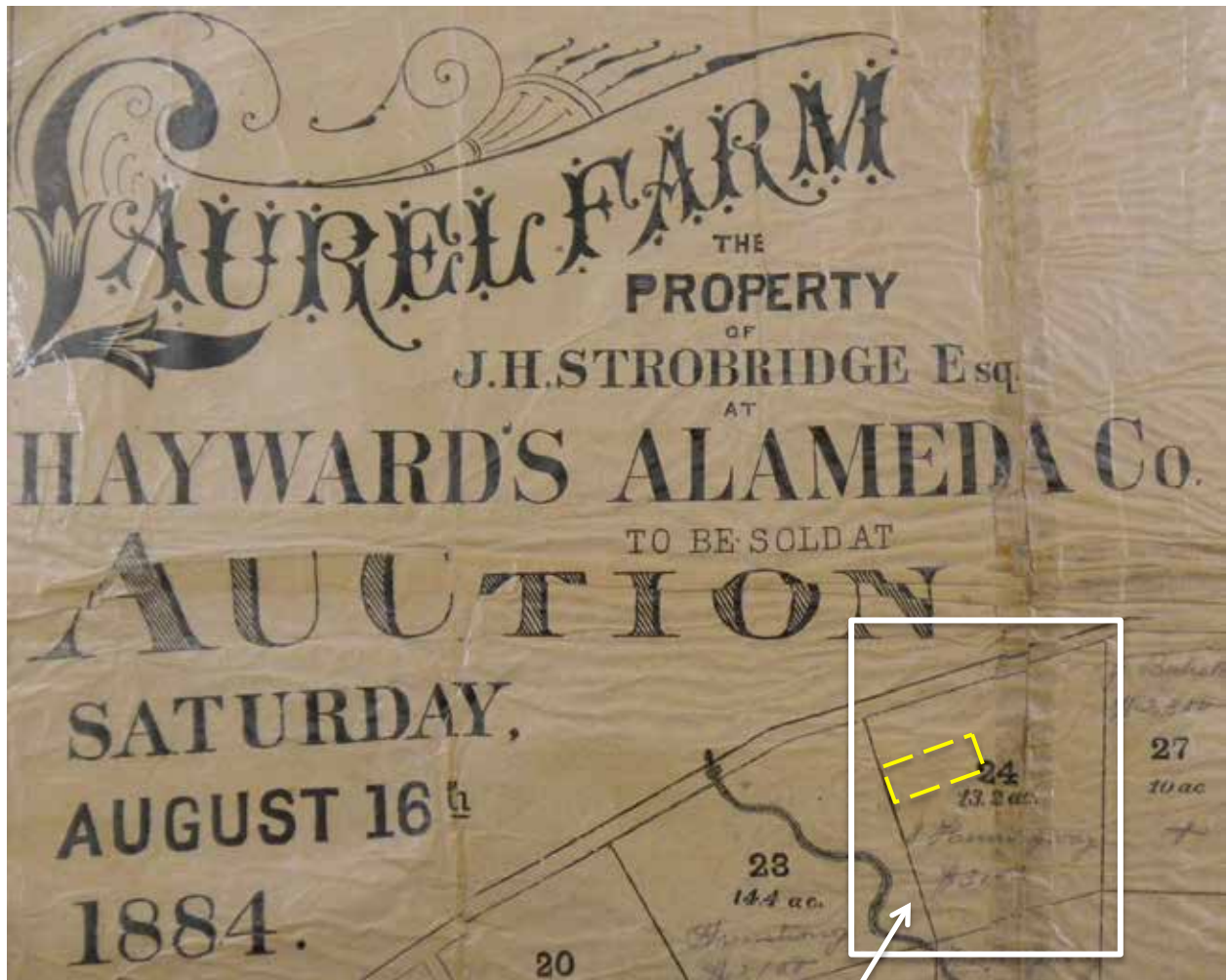


Fig.4 – Vicinity of 20785 Baker Rd. (future, bounding box approx.) – 1884 subdivision map (north is up)  
(courtesy Hayward Area Historical Society)

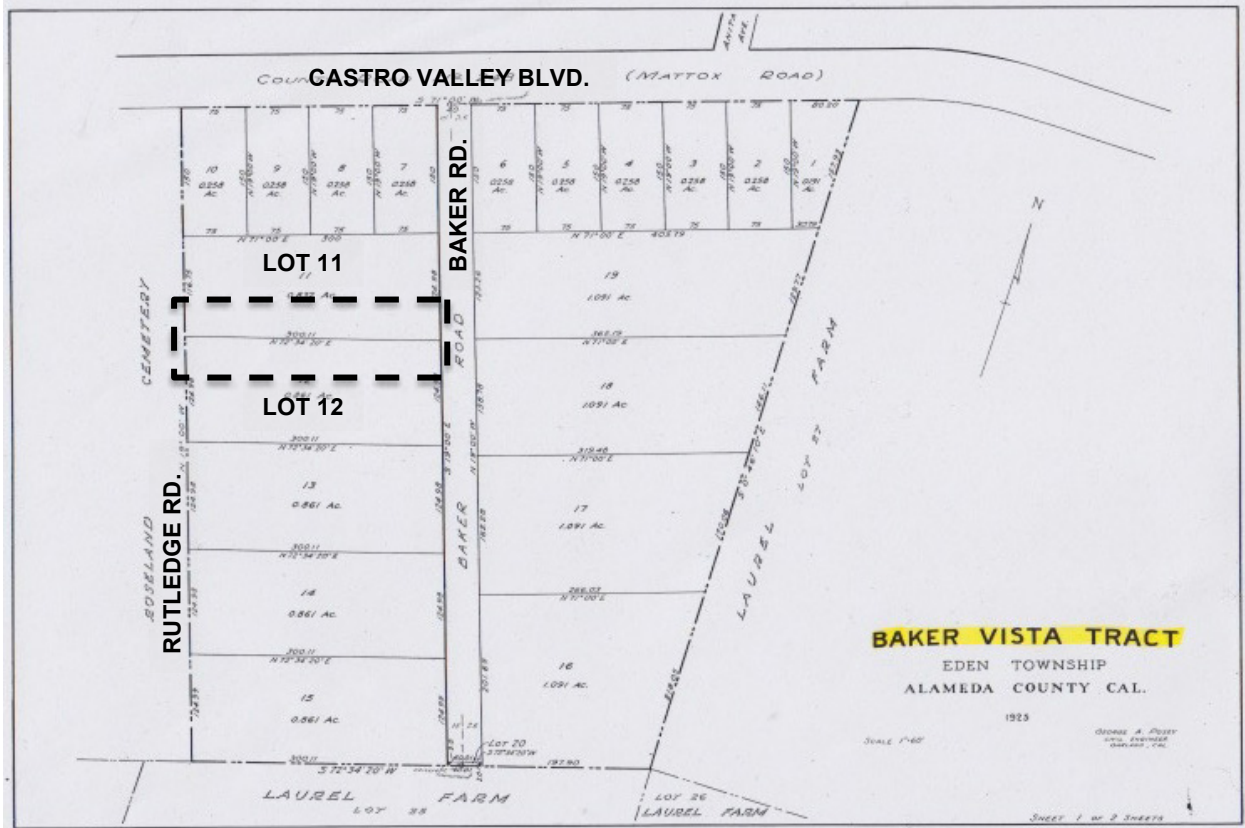


Fig.5 – 20785 Baker Rd. (future, bounding box approx.) – 1925 Baker Vista Tract Map



Fig.6 – 20785 Baker Rd. (future, bounding box approx.) – 1939 aerial photo (north is up, with current street names added - courtesy Hayward Area Historical Society)



Fig.7 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Front (east) of front cottage (looking west)



Fig.8 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Front of front cottage (looking northwest)



Figs.9-10 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Front cottage, south side (at left) and north side (at right, looking west)



Fig.11 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Rear of front cottage (looking northeast)



Fig.12 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Front of rear cottage (looking west)



Fig.13 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Front of rear cottage (looking west)



Fig.14 – 20785 Baker Rd. – View of property from Baker Rd. w/front cottage at right  
(google streetview, looking west)



Fig.15 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Rear of property from Rutledge Rd. w/rear cottage at center  
(google streetview, looking east)





Fig.16-19 – 20785 Baker Rd. – Context views of neighboring properties