

# **HISTORIC RESOURCES REPORT**

## **Evaluating the Eligibility of 76 Oak Drive**

**(APN 024-0-031-150)**

**Ventura County, California**

**For Nomination as a County of Ventura Landmark**

**Prepared**

**for**

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**September 3, 2021**

County of Ventura  
July 25, 2022  
Cultural Heritage Board Meeting  
Item 7a  
Exhibit 2 – Historic Resources Report

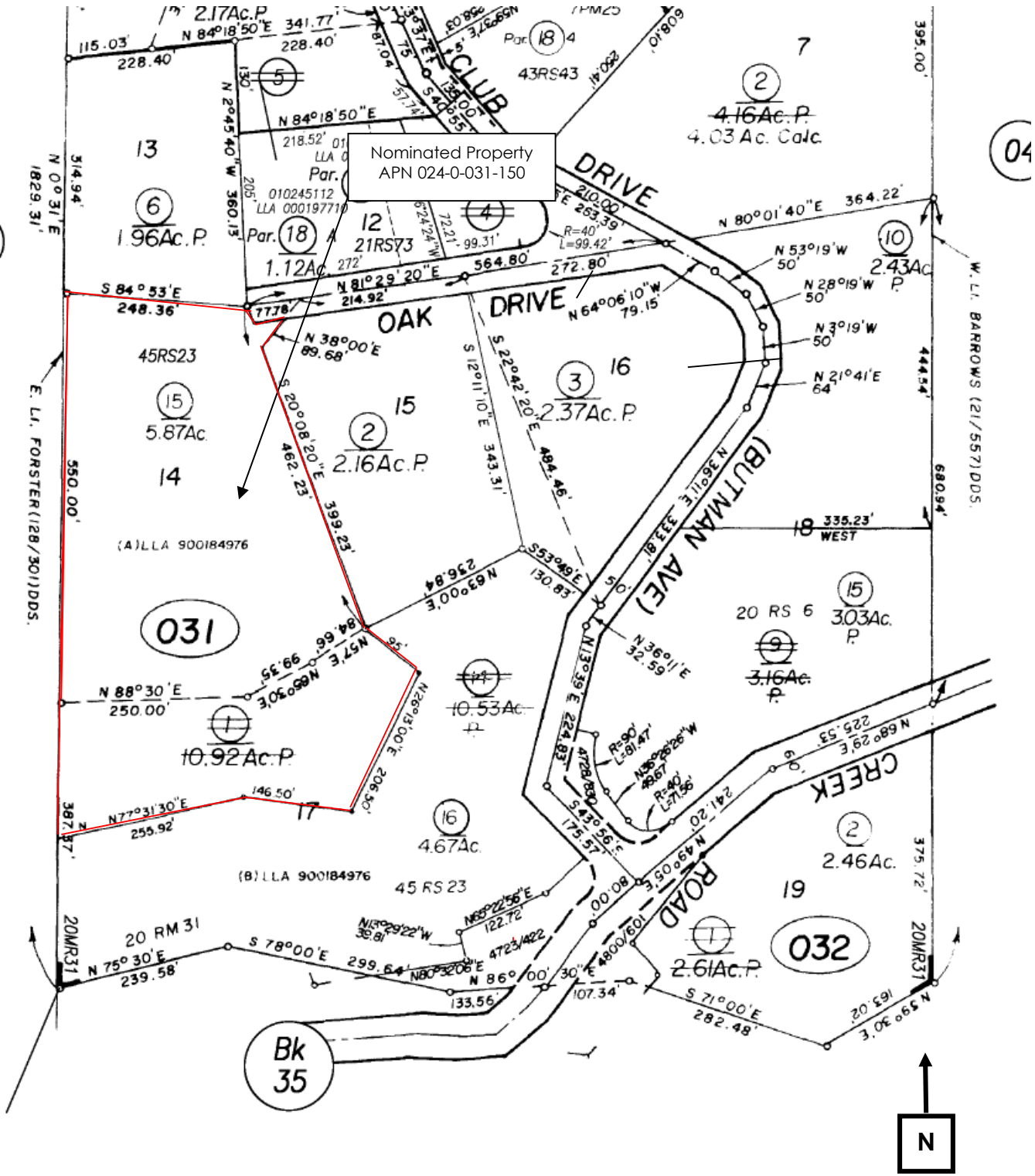
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

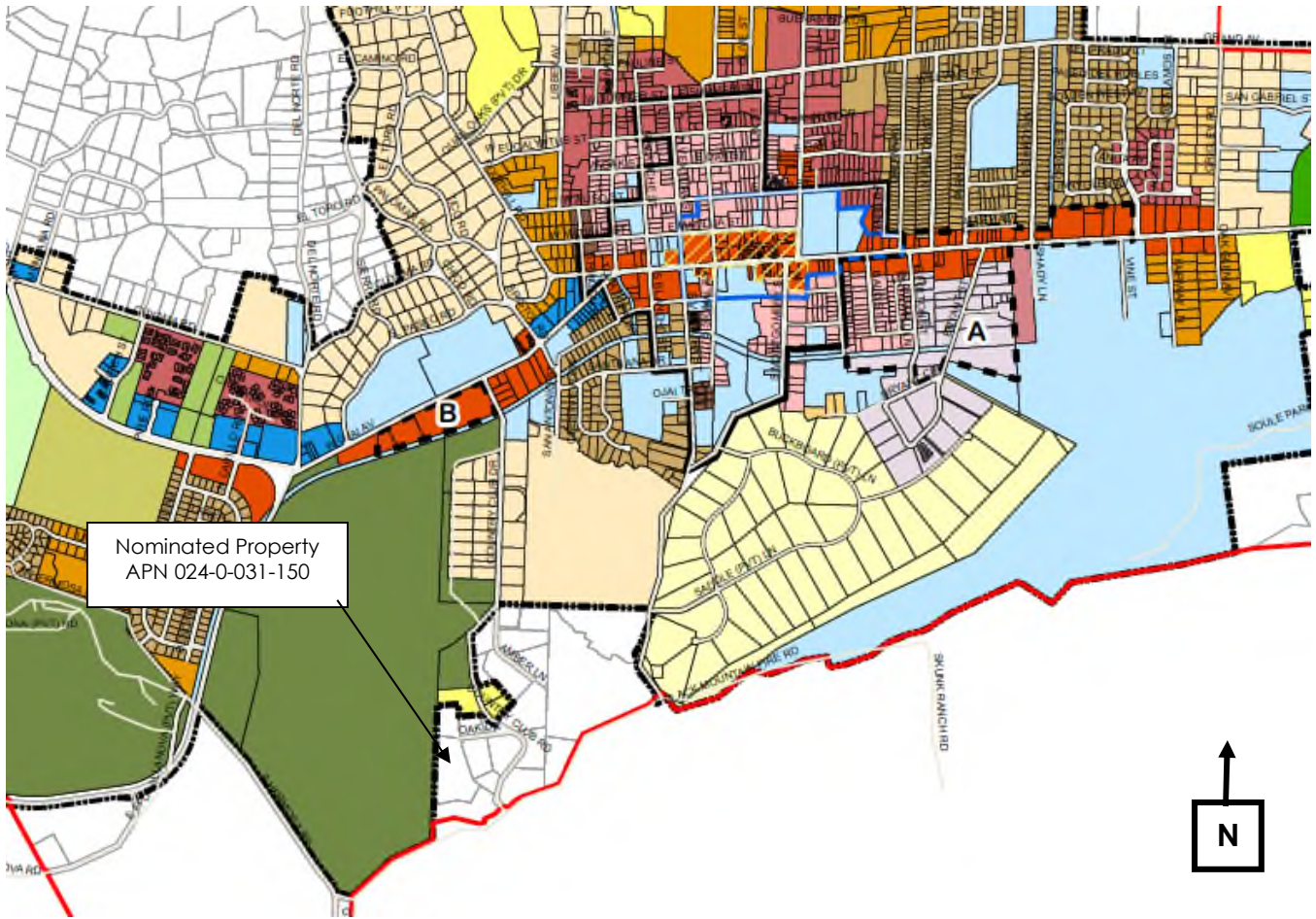
This Historic Resource Report is for a property at 76 Oak Drive (APN 024-0-031-150), Ojai Valley, Ventura County, California (Map 1, Assessor Parcel Map & and Map 2, Map of Ojai, Map 3, Aerial Photograph). The purpose of the study is to provide information to the County of Ventura Planning staff substantiating the property's eligibility for listing as a County of Ventura Landmark. The study meets the requirements for historic property studies and the issuance of a Certificate Of Approval (COA) outlined by the County of Ventura. The study property is located in an unincorporated area of the Ojai Valley, Ventura County, California (see Maps 1 - 3). The property is within the City of Ojai's Sphere of Influence (see Map 3). This report was prepared by Pamela Post, Ph.D. (primary author), and Timothy Hazeltine of Post/Hazeltine Associates is confined to APN 024-0-031-150 which is the location of the nominated property.

(see next page)



Location Map 1 (Assessor Parcel Map)

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**Location Map 2 (City of Ojai Zoning Map depicting Sphere of Influence, red line boundary of the sphere of influence, black dashed line corporate boundary)**



**Location Map 3, Aerial photograph of 76 Oak Drive**

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### Previous Assessments and Designations

The nominated property has not been previously surveyed, nor is it included on the County of Ventura, State of California, or National lists of designated or potential landmarks.

### Findings of this Report

#### Significance Findings:

The following buildings, structures, features, and a designed and vernacular landscape features located at 76 Oak Drive (APN 024-0-031-150) are potential historic resources for environmental review (Figure 1):

- House built in 1928 excluding post-1943 alterations, which include a porch off the east elevation of the living room and the attached garage's bay doors; and
- Vernacular and designed landscape features around the house dating to the period of significance (1928 -1943), including sandstone retaining walls, parapets, steps, and a

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water feature off the house's south elevation as they form the setting of the house. The semi-rural character of the property with fields and informal plantings of native and non-native trees is also contributing. Non-historic features, including two garages, a swimming pool, solar array, wall along the east property line, and a vineyard, are excluded as they postdate the period of significance (1928 -1943).

### 3.0 ADMINISTRATIVE SETTING

CEQA Section 15064.5 defines historical resources as follows:

- (1) A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources Commission (State CEQA Guidelines Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.).

There are several ways in which a resource can be listed in the California Register, which are codified under Title 14 CCR, Section 4851.

- A resource can be listed in the California Register by the State Historical Resources Commission.
  - If a resource is listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), it is automatically listed in the California Register.
  - If a resource is a California State Historical Landmark, from No. 770 onward, it is automatically listed in the California Register.
- (2) A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in section 5020.1 (k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements section 5024.1 (g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of the evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.

The requirements set forth in PRC 5024.1 (g) for historical resources surveys are: A resource identified as significant in a historical resource survey may be listed in the California Register if the survey meets all of the following criteria.

- The survey has been or will be included in the State Historic Resources Inventory.
- The survey and the survey documentation were prepared in accordance with office [of Historic Preservation] procedures and requirements.
- The resource is evaluated and determined by the office [of Historic Preservation] to have a significance rating of Category 1 to 5 on DPR Form 523.
- If the survey is five or more years old at the time of its nomination for inclusion in the California Register, the survey is updated to identify historical resources which have become eligible or ineligible due to changed circumstances or further documentation and those which have been demolished or altered in a manner that substantially diminishes the significance of the resource.

- (3) Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered to be a historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.

Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852). The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, is not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or is identified in a historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code sections 5020.1 (j) or 5024.1.

CEQA regulations identify the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as a measure to be used in determinations of whether or not a project of new development or rehabilitation adversely impacts an "historical resource." Section 15064.5(b)(3) states:

"Generally, a project that follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer, shall be considered as mitigated to a level of less than a significant impact on the historical resource."

Section 15064.5(a)(4) of the CEQA Guidelines states:

"The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code), or identified in a historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be a historical resource as defined in Public Resources Code Sections 5020.1 (j) or 5024.1."

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires analysis of impacts that may result from project development. These include impacts to listed or potential historic resources. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mandates that a proposed project's impacts to historic resources be assessed. Historic resources are defined in Public Resource Code as follows:



§5020.1: "Properties listed in, or determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources." In order to be eligible for listing a resource must meet one or more of the following criteria to be eligible for listing: A) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's History and Cultural Heritage. B) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; C) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; and D) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important to history or prehistory."

§5021.1(k): Properties included in "local registers of historic resources." According to Section 5021. k local registers include the following: "a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution. Generally, local registers can be defined as either properties designated as landmarks per local ordinances (or resolutions) or properties included in a survey of historical resources that meets the standards of the Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) for such studies.

The property must meet one or more of the following California Register of Historical Resources Criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage; 2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past; 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or 4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (PRC §5024.1(c)).

By definition, the California Register of Historical Resources also includes all "properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register of Historic Places," and certain specified State Historical Landmarks.

The register also includes properties that have formally been listed in the National Register of Historic Resources or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Properties eligible for listing in the National Register must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for listing:

- A) are associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history;
- B) are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

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

## **County of Ventura Significance Criteria**

### Ordinance 4225, Sec.1365-5, Definition and Designation Criteria for Cultural Heritage Sites

For the purposes of the Ordinance, an improvement, natural feature, or site may become a designated Cultural Heritage Site if it meets the following applicable criteria:

#### a) Landmarks – Satisfy one of the following criteria:

- (1) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history;
- (2) It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Ventura County or its cities, regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- (3) It is associated with the lives of persons important to Ventura County or its cities, California, or national history;
- (4) It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of Ventura County or its cities, California or the nation;
- (5) 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;
- (6) Integrity: Establishes the authenticity of the resource's physical identity by evidence of lack of deterioration and significant survival of the characteristics that existed during its period of importance. This shall be evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

#### b) Sites of Merit satisfy the following criteria:

- (1) Sites of historical, architectural, community, or aesthetic merit which have not been designated as landmarks or points of interest, but which are deserving of special recognition; and
- (2) County-approved surveyed sites with a National Register status code of 5 or above.

#### c) Points of Interest satisfy the following criteria:

- 1) That is a site of a building, structure, or object that no longer exists, but was associated with historic events, important persons or embodied a distinctive character or architectural style; or
- (2) That it has historical significance, but has been altered to the extent that the integrity of the original workmanship, materials, or style has been substantially compromised; or
- (3) That the site of a historic event which has no distinguishable characteristics other than that

a historic event occurred at the site and the site is not of sufficient historical significance to justify the establishment of a landmark.

d) District. Meets the criteria below:

- (1) Possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
- (2) Has precisely mapped and defined exterior boundaries, which requires a description of what lies immediately on the edge of the district to allow rational exclusion of adjoining areas.
- (3) Has at least one of the criteria for significance of Section 1365-5a.1-8.
- (4) Complies with the criteria for integrity contained in Section 1365-5a.6.

The Lead Agency for the project is the County of Ventura. The report meets the requirements of a historical resource survey as outlined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code. Pamela Post, Ph.D., principal investigator, and senior historian, and Timothy Hazeltine prepared this report.

## **4.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The following section of the report provides a historical context for the property.

### **4.1 Regional Context and Historic Themes**

Historic context themes for Ventura County are defined in Section 3 of the County of Ventura Historic Preservation Plan. As detailed below in Section 4.2, the resource's significant historical associations occurred between 1928 and 1943, during the occupancy of the Burnham, Diedrich, and Noble families.

### **4.2 Historical Context (Pre-Contact to 1923)**

The project property is within the area inhabited by the Chumash, a Native American culture group who occupied the area between the southerly end of Monterey County and Malibu. The Ventureño Chumash were a semi-sedentary society with a stratified social order, extensive trade networks, and a maritime adaptation characterized by wood plank canoes and trade with neighboring groups, including those on the Channel Islands. In 1782, Mission San Buenaventura was established by the Spanish government in what is now downtown Ventura. The mission system was intended to Christianize the Chumash and transform them into agriculturists and subjects of the Spanish Empire. During the Spanish era, a tract of land, including the lower reaches of the Ventura River was set aside for the use of the Mission and its inhabitants. Mexico gained its independence on August 24, 1821, when Spain signed the Treaty of Cordoba recognizing Mexico as an independent nation. As a consequence, California passed to Mexican rule.

For 27 years between 1821 to 1848, California was a Mexican territory ruled by a governor appointed by the central government. The most notable development in California during this era was the 1833 secularization of the Franciscan missions by the Mexican. A year later, in August of 1834, the California departmental legislature passed a "Provincial Ordinance for the

Secularization of the Missions of Upper California" to implement secularization in Alta California. The Reglamento envisioned the transformation of approximately half of mission lands, settlements, and goods into self-governing Native American communities with allotments of land for the former neophytes, and lands held in common for grazing. This form of land ownership, which was known as the Ejido system in Mexico, contrasted with the system of private land ownership based on Spanish models, which was known as the haciendo system. Operated in the same manner as landed estates in Spain or Colonial era Mexico, the rancho system in California vested ownership of land and its improvements and agricultural equipment, herds and produce, in private owners who were responsible for providing shelter, tools, and farm animals to their tenants a system similar to the share-cropper system of the post-antebellum South.

Despite the intentions of both the federal and territorial governments, almost no lands or goods were allotted to Native Americans and the lands, assets, and buildings that composed the mission system were, for the most part, granted to Mexican citizens. One of these was Rancho Ojai, an approximately 17,700-acre tract in the Ojai Valley granted by Governor Juan Alvarado to Fernando Tico, a civilian official at Mission San Buenaventura (Fry 1983: 14 – 16). Alvarado built an adobe house near what is now Bryant Street in Ojai (Fry 1983: 15). After the United States acquired California in 1848 as a result of the Mexican-American War. In May of 1853, Tico sold his rancho to Henry Storrow Carnes; just three years later, in 1856, Carnes sold the ranch to Juan Camarillo (Fry 1983: 16). A patent for the ranch was not granted until 1870. Camarillo held onto the ranch until 1864 when he sold it to John Bartlett (Frey 1983: 16). Over the next few years, the ranch changed hands several times before it was Acquired by Thomas A. Scott an east coast capitalist, who hired Thomas Bard to prospect for oil (Fry 1983: 16). Bard would later play a leading role in the development of Ventura County's oil industry and the creation of the Union Oil Company in 1890.

During the last three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the gradual subdivision of Ojai Valley's ranchos into smaller tracts opened the land for settlement, agriculture, and ranching. The greatest impetus to development in the Ojai Valley was the founding in 1874, of the town of Nordhoff. Named in honor of the writer Charles Nordhoff, who had popularized California through articles and books, including *California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence, a Book for Travelers and Settlers*. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Nordhoff remained a small rural community providing goods and services to Ojai's farms and ranches, which developed as the area's ranchos were subdivided and sold off and public lands became available for homesteading and sale. It was not until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that Nordhoff, which was renamed Ojai in 1917, began to develop into a resort and educational center, mostly due to the efforts of two men, the educator Sherman D. Thacher who founded Thacher School in 1889 and the industrialist Edward Libbey, who in 1914, spearheaded the rebuilding of Ojai's main street in the Mediterranean style.

The opening, in 1923, of the Ojai Valley Inn, located northeast of the nominated property, provided the town with a fashionable resort catering to affluent visitors. Designed by noted California architect Myron Hunt and funded by Edward D. Libbey, the resort included a golf course, club, and resort. Notable estates created during the teens and twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century included Libbey's Spanish Colonial Revival style estate on Foothill Road designed by Myron Hunt (1908), Harrison Sinclair's Mission Revival style estate on Fairview Road, designed by

Mead and Requa (1908-1914), Paul R. Williams' Ford residence, located within the 60 acres developed by John R. Burnham, as well as three Austen Pierpont houses and Wallace Neff's houses in Ojai.

### **4.3 History of Ojai Valley (1923 - 2021)**

The arrival of the Theosophist, Annie Bessant and her protégé, Jiddu Krishnamurti in 1922, as well as the Theosophists' founding of the Krotana Institute of Theosophy in the early 1920s and Krishnamurti's residency at the west end of the valley on McAndrew Road, did much to popularize Ojai as a center for alternative philosophies. Estates and speculative real estate ventures continued to be developed between the early 1920s and the beginning of the Great Depression in late 1929. These included Edward Libby's development of the 500-acre residential Arbolada tract, located northwest of the nominated property, and John Burnham's 1926 development of the 60-acre Country Club Estates subdivision just southeast of the Ojai Valley Inn. Burnham's development included acreage for his residence.

Other residential properties built during this period included William Fairburn's large Shingle Style house at 700 San Antonio Road, historically known as Westways (built 1927). In the ensuing years, the creation of estates in Ojai slowed precipitously as it did in many communities, due in large measure to the Great Depression and the scarcity of labor and material during World War II.

By the early 1950s, California began a period of profound demographic and economic growth as the region's defense-centered economy rapidly expanded. Extensive improvements to Southern California's regional transportation system and the construction of Casitas Dam and Reservoir in 1954, prepared the way for increased development in Ventura County, including the Ojai Valley, by providing a reliable source of water for industrial and residential uses. By the early 1960s, Ojai had become an increasingly popular destination for visitors, retirees, and those seeking cultural, health, educational, and outdoor activities, a status it maintains to the present.

### **4.4 Property Specific History for 76 Oak Drive (1928 - 2021)**

In 1928 construction was completed on *Burnham Hill*, the two-story Spanish Colonial Revival style house designed by architect Harold E. Burket for John and Constance Burnham. The house was built in Country Club Estates, a 60-acre residential subdivision in Ojai developed by owner/developer, John Burnham in 1926. Six acres of the 60-acre subdivision were set aside for the property that would be the location of the Burnham house, which they named *Burnham Hill*. John and Constance, along with their four sons, lived in the house for only two years before moving in 1930, to 300 Tico Road, in Ojai (1930 United States Census). A year later, in 1931, economic reversals, brought on no doubt by the onset of the Great Depression, forced the Burnham's to sell *Burnham Hill* and their interest in Country Club Estates. *Burnham Hill* was purchased by Lawrence and Alta Diedrich, who promptly renamed the property, *Casa Don Alta La Mar*. Soon after, they retained the services of Harold Burket to alter a west-wing bathroom with an entrance from the hallway into *en-suite* bathrooms, an accommodation for their teenage son, Donald, and daughter, Margaret. In addition, they increased the size of the property by another four acres by adding an undeveloped lot they

had purchased earlier that was located adjacent to the former Burnham property.

This 3.53-acre parcel was developed into the L. N. Diedrich BBQ Park as a private recreational area for the family. Included within the private park was a two-bedroom cabin, a “chuckwagon” style kitchen building, two barbeque pits, picnic tables, as well as shuffleboard and badminton courts (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n.p.). Lawrence Diedrich lived in the house for only four years before his death from a stroke in 1935. Alta Diedrich owned the property until 1943 before selling *Casa Don Alta a Mar* to Laura Wells Noble (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n.p.).

In 1943, Laura Nobel, along with her two unmarried daughters, Lorraine, and Grace, purchased the *Casa Don Alta La Mar* estate from Alta Diedrich. After the three women purchased the property, they, like the previous owners, renamed it, this time to Noble Oaks (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.). In addition to the recent purchase of the Ojai property the women also owned a property in Oxnard, *Rancho del Rio*, located at the corner of Vineyard Avenue and Wells Road. Sometime after the purchase of the Ojai property, Laura and her daughters sold *Rancho del Rio* and moved the former caretakers of *Rancho del Rio*, Frank and Josephine Castellano, to their Noble Oaks property. A mobile home was moved to the former L. N. Diedrich BBQ Park and the Castellano's were “given a life estate on the BBQ property” (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.). Laura Noble died July 7, 1958 (*Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 8, 1958: 2). Her two daughters, Lorraine and Grace, continued to live at Noble Oaks until they died in 1988, Lorraine's on January 11<sup>th</sup>, followed by Grace's, three days later, on January 14<sup>th</sup> (Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com). During the ownership of Noble Oaks by Laura Wells and her daughters there appear to have been no major modifications or alterations to the house, which was in considerable disrepair at the time of their deaths.

In 1991, three years after the death of Lorraine and Grace Noble, the property was purchased by Hollywood film director, Tim Burton from the Noble Family Trust. Following his purchase of Noble Oaks, which had fallen into disrepair, Burton set about to restore and renovate the main house and grounds, which had badly deteriorated. Burton hired Fort Hill of Los Angeles to undertake the restoration project, which entailed extensive repairs to the interior and exterior. On the exterior, the plasterwork was largely replaced with new plasterwork matching the original windows, doors, and decorative elements that had deteriorated or been damaged over the years were repaired where possible and replaced in kind if unrepairable. Other changes included the construction of two detached garages. Burton owned the property until 1998 when it was purchased by Michael Greynald, a contractor, and his wife, Nicole Strauss. Greynald and Strauss owned the property only for a year before selling the property to its current owners, John and Mary Cuthbert. The Cuthbert family has owned the property since 1999, continued the restoration of Noble Oaks first initiated by Tim Burton.

## 4.5 Architect

### Harold Escher Burket (1891-1970)

Harold Escher Burket was born in Nebraska on November 11, 1891, to his mother, Julie E. Burket (his father's name is unknown) (Figure 1). In 1893, the Burket family moved to Paso Robles,

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California. Until at least 1910, when Harold was 18, his given name was Harloe. By this time Harold was living in Santa Cruz with his mother, who was listed in the census as head of household, and his sister, Elizabeth, who was four years younger (1910 United States Census). In 1913, after graduating from Watsonville High School, Burket attended the University of California, Berkeley. In 1917, he graduated, and shortly after Burket obtained a position as a draftsman foreman for the Gutleben Brothers in San Francisco (U. S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918). He continued to live in San Francisco for the next three years and by 1920 was working as an estimator (1920 United States Census). Shortly after, Burket moved to Ventura County where he set up an architectural practice. Sometime in the 1920s, he married Isabel Camarillo a member of the county's prominent Camarillo family. Later, Burket briefly set up practice in southern California, with an office in Long Beach, before returning to the Ventura area, where he remained most of his life. During the 1930s, he served as California's state architect.

During World War II, Burket worked as an architect for the Navy, helping to design the Port Hueneme Military Base. During his career, his practice was varied. While the majority of Burket's commissions entailed commercial, ecclesiastical, and institutional projects, he did design residences, as well. One of his early residential commissions was in 1926 when he received the commission to design plans for a housing subdivision in Ojai for developer John Burnham. Among the houses in the development, which Burnham called Country Club Estates, was one designed by Burket for John and Constance Burnham. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style the house (now at 76 Oak Drive) was built in 1928. Among his most notable non-residential commissions were the Ventura High School Auditorium, the Ventura City/County Library, the Community Presbyterian Church, Our Lady of Assumption Church in Ventura, and the design of the jail annex to the Ventura County Government Center. Other commissions included the W.P. Daily house in Camarillo, the Baptist Church in Camarillo, and the Firestone building in Ventura. Like many architects of the era, Burket practiced in a range of styles, including Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and Period Revival. The eclecticism of his commissions is typical of regional architects who strove to be responsive to changing architectural tastes and the needs of their clients. After the death of his wife, Isabel, Burket remarried in 1964 to Margaret Boone. Harold Escher Burket died in Ventura on September 28, 1970 (*Ventura Star Free Press*, September 29, 1970, "Harold Burket Distinguished Architect, Dies").

#### **4.6 The Spanish Colonial Revival Style**

The Spanish Colonial Revival style is one of several Period Revival styles that enjoyed great popularity in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. The Period Revival movement included a diverse range of architectural styles, including Tudor, French Norman, Spanish, Italian Renaissance, American Colonial, and Spanish Colonial styles. In California attempts to develop a regional motif began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Inspired by the remaining examples of Mission period architecture in California and the American Southwest, the Mission Revival style (circa 1895-1915) was an early manifestation of this movement.

While the Mission Revival Style achieved some degree of popularity, it did not achieve a high degree of stylistic prominence in California. It was not until Bertram Goodhue designed a scheme for the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Diego (1913-1915) that a new style, based

largely on Spanish Colonial and Mexican antecedents, would gain widespread popularity. Providentially, it was during this time that some regions in California, particularly southern California, experience an expansion of their residential neighborhoods. This growth provided opportunities for architects and designers, such as George Washington Smith, Edwards and Plunkett, Roland Sauter, James Osborne Craig, Winsor Soule, Carlton Winslow, Wallace Neff, and Reginald Johnson, to design buildings in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in the years between the late teens and the late 1930s. Attributes of the Spanish Colonial Revival style include, among others: 1) use of vernacular materials, such as plaster, stucco, wood, and terra cotta; 2) classically inspired ornamental detailing, ranging from the simple to the ornate; 3) the emphasis on broad uninterrupted wall surfaces, punctuated by careful use of openings (fenestration was generally asymmetrical; 4) an emphasis on the interplay of cubic volume (this interplay was not only picturesque; it emphasized the hierarchical division between the house's utilitarian service areas, and the private and public areas, meant for the use of the family and its guests). The style gained additional impetus in Ojai when architects, such as Wallace Neff and Harold Burket and developers, such as Edward Libby and John Burnham, promoted the Spanish Colonial Revival style as an appropriate architectural motif for the community.

#### **4.7 Owners of 76 Oak Drive**

##### John Burnham (1895-1952) and Constance Burnham (1898-1967) (First owners)

John DuBois Burnham (1895-1952) was born on February 25, 1895, in West New Brighton, New York to parents John Bird Burnham and Henrietta DuBois. By 1904 John and his parents had moved to Essex, New York, where John's sister, Hilda (1896-1907) was born. Nine years later, in 1904, John's brother Koert (1904 - 1992) was born in Essex, New York (Descendants of Peter Jay Family Tree; ancestry.com). Little is known of John's early childhood, other than he continued to live in Essex, New York during his formative years. By 1918 John was working as an electrician for the Bouquet Electric Power Company in Essex, New York (U. S., WW I Draft Registration Card, 1917-1918). On August 17, 1918, John married Constance Baldwin Fairchild (1898-1967) in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. A year later, in 1919, Constance gave birth to a son, John Fairchild Burnham in Essex. By 1920 John and Constance had moved to New Jersey, where their second son, William, was born (Descendants of Peter Jay Family Tree; ancestry.com) (Figure 2). By 1922 John and his family had moved to California, settling initially in Santa Barbara, where John worked as a real estate agent in the office of H. G. Chase Real Estate. In that year they lived at 1631 Paterna Road on the Riviera ( Post/Hazeltine Associates 2021 & 1922 Santa Barbara City Directory). In 1923 and 1924 the Burnham's are listed as living on Ocean Vista Avenue, north of San Leandro Lane in Montecito (1923-1924 Santa Barbara City Directories, including Montecito; there is no 1925 directory for Santa Barbara/Montecito online). They continued to live in Santa Barbara until at least 1924 and most likely 1925, the year that their third son, David Burnham, was born in Santa Barbara.

Sometime between 1925 and 1926 the Burnham's moved to the Ojai Valley and purchased the Matilija Canyon Ranch, where for a brief period, they became ranchers (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n.p.). Shortly after, they sold the ranch and with the proceeds from its sale, purchased 60 acres in the Ojai Valley that John Burnham intended to develop as a residential subdivision (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n.p.) (Figures 3 & 4). Called the



Country Club Estates, the subdivision was developed in 1926 on land adjacent to the Ojai Inn and Country Club. In planning the new subdivision Burnham engaged the services of his friend, architect Harold E. Burket, as well as that of Austen Pierpont, as a second consultant to help Burket oversee the planning of the subdivision, as well as approving the architectural plans submitted by prospective buyers (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n.p.). The Burnham's soon after commissioned Burket to design a large, commodious two-story house for them in the subdivision. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style the house was completed in 1928. The Burnham's, however, would only live in their new home, which they called, *Burnham Hill*, for two years. By 1930, they had moved to a house at 300 Tico Road in the nearby Arbolada housing tract, developed by Edward Libby in the early 1920s. A year later, in 1931, John and Constance were forced to sell *Burnham Hill*, along with their interest in Country Club Estates (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.). This reversal of fortune was brought about by the onset of the Great Depression two years earlier. 1931 also marked the birth in Ojai of John and Constance's fourth son, Frederick (1931-2017). By 1935, the Burnham family had moved to North Hollywood (1940 United States Census). Two years later, they were still living in North Hollywood at 6234 Morella Avenue, (U. S. City Directories, 1822-1995; for the year 1937). In 1940, the Burnham's moved again, this time to Pasadena where John Burnham worked as a real estate agent (1940 United States Census). In 1942 John's occupation was listed as self-employed and the address of his employment was at the R. E. Insurance Company in Los Angeles (WWII Draft Registration Card, 1942). John and Constance Burnham continued to live in Pasadena and South Pasadena until John's death on August 1, 1952, at the age of 57, followed by Constance's death 15 years later, in 1967 (U. S. Find A Grave Index, the 1600s to Current).

#### Lawrence N. Diedrich (1896-1935) and Alta Diedrich (1894-1945) (Second owners)

Lawrence N. Diedrich was born in Bloomington, Illinois on August 30, 1896, to parents Nicolas John Diedrich and Elizabeth Catherine Diedrich. Lawrence Diedrich continued to live in Illinois until moving to California in 1907 (*Ventura County Star and the Ventura Daily Post and Weekly Democrat*, November 22, 1935). By 1910, Lawrence had moved to Oxnard. A year later, in 1911, he had met and married Alta Everall Argue. Born in Riverside, California, Alta moved with her parents to Oxnard when a young child, before marrying Lawrence at the age of 17. In 1913 Lawrence and Alta became the parents of a son, Donald. Two years later, they had a daughter, Margaret (DDaybell Family Tree; ancestry.com). In 1917, Lawrence was working as a machinist for the Dunn Manufacturing Company in Oxnard. Lawrence rose rapidly in his occupation and by 1918 he had established his own business, an automotive parts store in Oxnard (U. S., WW I Draft Registration Card, 1917-1918; *Ventura County Star and the Ventura Daily Post and Weekly Democrat*, November 22, 1935). In 1930 the Diedrich's were living in Ventura. A year later, in 1931, they purchased the Burnham house in Ojai (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.). By 1934 Lawrence was the owner of four automotive parts stores, L. N. Automotive Parts, located in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Ventura. Lawrence Diedrich died on November 21, 1935. Alta continued to own the *Casa Don Alta La Mar* estate until 1943 when it was sold to Laura Wells Noble. At some point, between the death of her husband in 1935 and 1943, Alta left her Ojai home and began to live with her children, alternating between her son's house in Ventura, and her daughter's house in Washington, D. C. Alta Diedrich died in Ventura in February 1945, at the age of 50 (*Ventura County Star and the Ventura Daily Post and Weekly Democrat*, February 12, 1945).

### Laura Wells Noble and Daughters, Lorraine, and Grace Noble (Third Owners)

Laura Wells Noble (1877-1958) was born Laura Althea Wells on September 12, 1877, in Illinois (California, U. S., Death Index, 1940-1977). By 1897 she had moved to San Bernardino, California where shortly after she married Frederick (Fred) Noble, born September 14, 1877, in San Bernardino County (Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com). A year later, Laura gave birth to a daughter, Lorraine Emily, born March 9, 1898, in California (mostly likely in San Bernardino) and two years later to a second daughter, Clara Grace, born August 9, 1900, in Hueneme, California (Figure 5). At this time Frederick Noble was working as a "helper chemist." (1900 United States Census; Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com; *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 9, 1958: 2). By 1910 the family had moved to Colorado where Noble worked in the Arkansas Valley for the American Beet Sugar Company (1910 United States Census). Seven years later, in 1917, they returned to California where they settled initially in Ventura, where at the time Frederick was working as the manager of the American Beet Sugar Company in Oxnard (U. S., World War I Draft Registration Card, 1917-1918). By 1920, the Nobles had moved to Oxnard where Frederick was employed as the superintendent of the Oxnard Sugar Beet Factory (Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com). During the next 20 years, the Noble's moved from Oxnard to Ventura and then back to Oxnard. In 1926, Frederick was president of the Colonia Realty Company in Oxnard (1926 Oxnard City Directory). By 1930, Frederick Noble was operating a ranch on the Oxnard Plain. He remained a farmer until his death in Santa Barbara on June 21, 1941 (Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com; (U. S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-to Current). Two years later, in 1943, Laura Noble, along with her two unmarried daughters, Lorraine and Grace, purchased the *Casa Don Alta La Mar* estate from Alta Diedrich. After the three women purchased the property, they, like the previous owners, renamed it, this time to Noble Oaks (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.).

In addition to the recent purchase of the Ojai property the women also owned a property in Oxnard, *Rancho del Rio*, located at the corner of Vineyard Avenue and Wells Road. Sometime after the purchase of the Ojai property Laura and her daughters sold *Rancho del Rio* and moved the former caretakers of *Rancho del Rio*, Frank and Josephine Castellano, to their Noble Oaks property. A mobile home was installed on what had been the former L. N. Diedrich BBQ Park and the Castellano's were "given a life estate on the BBQ property" (Mary St. Amer Cuthbert, March 2021: n. p.). Laura Noble died in her house on Oak Drive on July 7, 1958. She was laid out in front of the living room fireplace. Among the notables attending her wake was Adolfo Camarillo. A good friend of Fred and Laura's, he had once given Fred a prize Camarillo White horse. Both Adolfo and Fred were fellow members of *Los Rancheros Vistadores*, along with Harold Burket who also owned a Camarillo White (*Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 8, 1958: 2). Her two daughters, Lorraine and Grace, continued to live at Noble Oaks until they died in 1988, Lorraine's on January 11<sup>th</sup>, followed by Grace's, three days later, on January 14<sup>th</sup>. Both women were graduates of the University of Southern California, Subsequently, Lorraine taught chemistry in Santa Paula and wrote a textbook on the subject, while Grace taught elementary school in Oxnard (Pennington Family Tree; ancestry.com). During the later tenure of the Noble family, the house and property appear to have been in a considerable state of disrepair as documented by photographs taken in 1988 (Figures 6 – 13). In 1991, the Noble Oaks estate was sold to Hollywood film director, Tim Burton.

## Tim Burton, Michael Greynald and Nicole Strauss and John and Mary Cuthbert

Tim Burton purchased Noble Oaks in 1991. Just before his purchase, the property had been divided into two parcels with one portion, encompassing the original six-acre boundary lines of the former Burnham property (this included the main house), and the other, a 3.53-acre property encompassing the L. N. Diedrich BBQ Park that had been given to Frank and Josephine in life tenancy by Laura Noble and her daughters. Following his purchase of Noble Oaks Burton set about to restore and renovate the main house, which over the years had deteriorated. Burton hired Fort Hill of Los Angeles to undertake the restoration project. Burton continued to own the property until 1998 when it was purchased by Michael Greynald, a contractor, and his wife, Nicole Strauss. Greynald and Strass owned the property only for a year before selling the property to its current owners, John, and Mary Cuthbert. The Cuthbert family, who have owned the property since 1999. continued the restoration of Noble Oaks first initiated by Tim Burton.

### Tim Burton

Timothy Walter Burton is an American film director, producer, writer, and artist. He was born on August 25, 1958, in Burbank, California where he spent his early childhood. His youthful interest in drawing led to his eventual enrollment at the California Institute of Arts, where he majored in animation. Following his graduation, in 1980, he obtained a position as an apprentice animator at Walt Disney Studios. It was not long, however, before Burton decided to become a filmmaker. After making a series of short films, including the horror featurette movie, *Frankenweenie* (1984), Burton directed his first feature film, *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*, in 1985. The film proved to be a box office success setting in motion Burton's successful career as one of Hollywood's most innovative and experimental film directors. In 1988, Burton began to direct a series of critically acclaimed "gothic"-inspired fantasy and horror films, including *Beetlejuice* (1988), *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), *Ed Wood* (1994), *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), *Corpse Bride* (2005), *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), and *Frankenweenie* (feature film 2012). Burton also worked in other film genres, such as the superhero films *Batman* (1989) and *Batman Returns* (1992); the sci-fi film *Planet of the Apes* (2001); the fantasy-drama *Big Fish* (2003); the musical adventure film *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005); and the fantasy films, *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2016). In addition to his career as a film director, Burton wrote and illustrated several books on poetry and the arts. Recognition of his film work included receiving an Emmy Award and a Golden Globe Award, as well as nominations for two Academy Awards and three BAFTA Awards (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim\\_Burton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Burton)).

## **5.0 DESCRIPTION OF NOMINATED PROPERTY**

The project property is accessed via a driveway extending off of the south side of Oak Drive to a motor court located off the house's west elevation. The nominated property is delineated by Oak Drive to its north and private parcels to its south, east, and west (see Maps 1 - 3):

## Buildings

- House built in 1928;
- Garage building (built circa-1990s); and
- 2<sup>nd</sup> garage (built circa-1990s).

## Hardscape Features

- Open courtyard off the house's entrance façade including its low plastered wall, native oak tree, and a bedrock mortar (north elevation);
- Motor court off the house's east elevation, excluding interlocking pavers; and
- Informal sandstone terraces, retaining walls, steps, and parapets located off the house's south elevation;
- Water feature on the rear terrace off the south side of the house including a water feature; and
- Terrace off the west side of the house.

## Plantings/Landscape Features

- Large specimen trees, including native oaks adjacent to the house; and
- Informal landscaping including stands of native oaks extending across the property.

## **5.1 Description of Resources**

### **5.1.1 House with attached Two-Bay Garage**

Constructed in 1928, the house is a two-story wood-frame building with a partial basement level set on a continuous concrete foundation (Photograph 1). The house is composed of a central wing with a two-story volume flanked on either end by one-story wings with an attached three-car garage off its east elevation. The house's one and two-story wings, informal layout, and varied ridgelines are characteristic of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. Facing towards Oak Drive, the north elevation is the house's entrance façade, the east elevation is the garage/service wing, the rear elevation opening onto informal terraces for entertaining, and the west elevation housing the family bedrooms with expansive views towards the west end of the Ojai Valley. Exterior walls are clad in plaster, the roof is covered in c-shaped terra cotta tiles and fenestration is composed of wood casement and fixed windows. Chimneys feature plaster and terra cotta elements. Architectural embellishments, including wrought metal and wood grilles, wood lintels, wood plank shutters with wrought iron shutter dogs, and decorative tilework are characteristic features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

### North Elevation (entrance facade)

The entrance façade faces toward Oak Road. This elevation has an irregular u-shaped configuration composed of a two-story wing with a complex side and front gable roof, flanked on either end by projecting one-story wings capped by a front gable or shed roofs (Photographs 2 – 5a). A low parapet style plastered wall with brick coping and piers capped

by spheres, linking the one-story wings, form an informal entry court with brick pathways, turf, a bedrock mortar that the house was built around, and a large native oak tree. A paneled wood door near the west end of the two-story element is the main entry. It features a plastered surround with reductive Classical style moldings. On its east side, the entry door is flanked by a multi-light casement window covered by a wood grille with turned spindles supporting a plastered hood. This window provides light to the dining room. This window is flanked on its east by a wood window covered by a plastered grille. The east end of the two-story wing features a shallow projection capped by a front gable. Its fenestration is composed of a small square window on the first floor and a paired, arcuated, multi-light window flanked by wood plank shutters on the second floor. Second-floor fenestration is composed of a series of multi-light casement windows of varying dimensions, all flanked by wood plank shutters.

A one-story wing housing a two-bay garage flanks the east end of the elevation (see Photograph 5). It features a shed roof with circular terra cotta vents and a multi-light casement window on its west elevation. Fenestration is composed of multi-light wood casements of varying dimensions, with wood plank shutters and multi-light with wood paneling at their base. A one-story wing at the west end of the elevation is capped by a front gable roof. On the east wall of this wing, fenestration is composed of two wood windows covered by plastered grilles, a small square window, and paired multi-light casements flanked by wood plank shutters (see Photograph 4).

#### South Elevation (rear elevation)

This elevation has an irregular T-shaped configuration with a projecting wing near its west end (Photographs 6 – 13). The slightly recessed east end of the elevation is composed of a one-story, shed-roofed wing housing an attached garage flanked on its west by a two-story component capped by a side gable roof. The easterly end of this element houses service rooms on the first floor and bedrooms on the second floor. The elevation's gable-roofed, one-story wing with decorative vent, houses the residence's living room, which is flanked on its east by a raised, shed-roofed porch supported by square wood posts. The porch shelters French doors flanking a window. The living room's fenestration is composed of a large single-light window with wood paneling at its base. The west end of the elevation has an irregular footprint with varied fenestration composed of multi-light wood casements with wood-paneled bases, multi-light French doors opening onto a wrought-iron balcony. A basement level, extending beneath the porch to near the west end of the elevation, features a glazed wood panel door, square multi-light casement windows with shutters, and wood frame windows covered by plastered grilles. The easterly portion of the elevation features a divided-light window with a horizontal emphasis with a plastered hood providing light to the kitchen on the first floor and a variety of wood casement windows with divided lights, some with wood plank shutters on the first and second floors. A shallow porch with a shed roof located off the east end of the kitchen shelters a service entrance into the house.

#### East Elevation

This elevation, which is composed of the attached garage's two bay doors flanked by a wood panel door and a flush panel door at its south end (Photograph 15). The existing paneled wood doors, installed in the 1990s replaced metal doors. The recessed second floor has a

front-facing gable with an ornamented vent. Its fenestration is composed of multi-light casement windows of varying dimensions.

### West Elevation

This elevation has an irregular footprint composed of the house's two-story main block flanked on its north by a one-story wing (Photographs 16 -18). Roof types include side, front, and shed-style roofs. The recessed south end of the elevation features a plastered chimney while the projecting section of the elevation features a raised terrace surrounded by a metal railing. Steps lead down from the terrace to a stone-paved patio. Fenestration is varied with multi-light wood windows with paneled bases, multi-light French doors with paneled bases and larger multi-light windows capped by a wood lintel.

### Building Chronology, Alteration, and Modifications

The house was built in 1928. A review of photographs taken in 1988, indicates several alterations were made to the house before 1988 (Please see Section 8 for photographs taken in 1988). These include:

- Alterations were made to the house by Harold Burket for the Diedrich family;
- The attached garage's bay doors, which were likely wood, were replaced with metal units;
- The porch off the living room's south elevation is an original feature, which was covered by an awning. The awning was replaced by a pergola during the Burton renovation, and eventually was replaced by the current tile roof; and
- At some point, what appears to have been a sleeping room at the southwest corner of the house, was modified when glazing was installed.

Alterations to the house since during the late 1990s:

- The house's wood shutters, which were severely deteriorated or missing, were replaced to match the originals;
- Exterior plasterwork was largely replaced to match the originals;
- Windows and doors were repaired where feasible. No-repairable windows were replaced in-kind to match the originals;
- The interior was rehabilitated with extensive alterations confined to the basement, bathrooms, and service rooms such as the kitchen; and
- Roof tiles were retained where feasible, replacement tiles matched the originals in form and appearance.

### Interior

The interior arrangement of the house features a division into public, family, and service elements a common feature of upscale homes built between the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the late 1940s (Figures 19 – 30). Finishes in public rooms, which include an entrance hall, living room, and dining room feature wood or tile floors, plastered walls, Spanish Revival style heating vents, and coffered or beamed ceilings, also in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

Tilework in the entry hall features a pattern of red, buff-yellow, and embellished tiles. Embellished tiles, which emulate Mayan motifs, may have been manufactured by the Batchelder Tile Company in Los Angeles. Other tilework was manufactured by Malibu Potteries. The entry hall's ceiling features exposed wood beams. The living room is accessed via a short flight of steps from the entry hall. It features an exposed Mediterranean-style wood truss ceiling, hardwood floors, and a plastered fireplace surrounded with a cast-stone mantel and tilework from the Batchelder Tile Company. The dining room features a polychromatic wood ceiling with shallow coffers.

The service rooms which feature wood floors were extensively remodeled in the 1990s and no longer convey their original appearance. Most of the bathrooms have also been remodeled with some fixtures replaced, tilework, and cabinetry largely replaced. Bedrooms retain, for the most part, their original configuration with wood floors, plastered walls, and ceilings. Except for the public rooms, trim work, such as baseboards, appear to have been replaced. Original doors, for the most part, appear to have survived or been replaced in-kind. The basement was extensively remodeled in the 1990s and no longer conveys its original appearance or finishes.

### **5.1.2 Detached Two-Bay Garage (east garage) (see Photograph 1)**

A one-story wood frame garage with plastered walls and a side gable terra cotta tile roof with flush eaves is located southeast of the house. Two bays, covered by metal doors, are located on the west elevation (Figure 31). A shallow projection off its south end is covered by a tiled roof. Fenestration is composed of multi-light wood casement with circular vents with ornamental covers set below the peaks of the gable roof.

#### Building Chronology, Alterations, and Modifications

A precise construction date for this building could not be determined. It is possible the building was constructed around circa-1928 when the house was built.

### **5.1.3 Second Detached Two-Bay Garage (Located northeast of the house) (west garage) (see Photograph 1)**

This is a one-story stucco-clad wood frame two-bay garage located northeast of the house (Figure 32). The building is capped by a gable roof with terra cotta tiles and flush eaves.

#### Chronology and Alterations and Modifications

The building was built in the 1990s.

### **5.1.4 Landscape and Hardscape**

The project property is located off Oak Drive, a dead-end street off the west side of Country Club Drive. The study parcel is characterized by steeply sloping hillsides vegetated with native oaks, smaller native trees, and plants with non-native plants near the house. A vineyard planted within the last twenty years is located southwest side of the house

(Photographs 33 – 39 and see Photograph 1). The extent and character of native plant habitats have been affected and modified by human activity, such as ranching, agriculture, and development, beginning in 1782 with the foundation of Mission San Buenaventura in Ventura. The development pattern in the vicinity of the study parcel is characterized by residential lots intermixed with larger parcels, some of which are developed with single-family houses while others are cultivated fields or orchards. The Ojai Valley Inn with its extensive grounds, buildings, and golf course is located northwest of the house. The nominated property shares a 700-foot property line with the Ojai Valley Inn (see Figure 3).

The project property features remnants of an informally designed landscape around the house composed of sandstone retaining walls, steps, parapets, brick, and interlocking pavers and an ornamental water feature and stone and concrete barbeque of the house's south elevation. The remainder of the property is a vernacular rural landscape composed of turf, trees, and informal plantings.

### Existing Conditions

A driveway, paved with interlocking pavers, extends from Oak Drive to the house's entrance façade with its circles around a planter bed (see Photograph 1). At its west end, an extension of the driveway paved with interlocking pavers leads to a motor court extending from the house's east elevation to the detached garage. The rear of the house opens onto a series of shallow terraces with brick, stone, or interlocking pavers which provide views to the west. An ornamental raised water feature aligned with the living room's picture window is the rear garden's most notable ornamental feature. The remainder of the property features a scattering of trees and fields. A vineyard and solar array are located, southwest of the house.

### Chronology, Alteration, and Modifications

- The rear garden's stonework terraces, retaining walls, parapets, steps, barbeque, and water feature date to the period of significance (1928 -1943). Interlocking pavers, some of the brick paving, and all of the plantings except for large specimen trees and larger native oaks appear to postdate the period of significance.

## **6.0 SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION**

As noted above, the study property has not been previously evaluated for the presence of historic resources. Therefore, the following section of the report evaluates the property's potential architectural and historical significance and its potential eligibility for listing as a historic resource at the County of Ventura, State, and National levels. The period of significance is defined as years between 1928 when the Spanish Colonial Revival style house was built for John and Constance Burnham to the design of Harold Burket and 1943, which encompasses the occupancy of the Lawrence and Alta Diedrich, the second owners of the property, who commissioned Burket to make minor alterations to the house. This period encompasses the occupancy of the original owners and the period when Burket altered the house and the heyday of the Spanish Colonial Revival style.



## 6.1.1 National Register and California Register of Historical Resources

### National Register

#### Criterion A

*It is associated with events that made significant contributions in our past;*

The study property meets Criterion A because it has a direct association with John Burnham, the creator of the surrounding housing tract, whose real estate venture and creation of the house, which has a direct association with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century development of Ojai. The house, which represents the work of Harold Burket, who made significant contributions to Ventura County's 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage meets Criterion A because of its association with this notable architect.

#### Criterion B

*It is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;*

John Burnham can be considered historically significant at the local level because of his contribution to local development through his creation of the Country Club Drive subdivision. Therefore, the property meets Criterion B because of its association with John Burnham.

#### Criterion C

*It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, architectural style, or methods of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable collection whose individual components may lack distinction;*

The house embodies the character-defining features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and represents an important example of this subtype of the Period Revival style in Ventura County. Therefore, the house meets Criterion C.

The house is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a subtype of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Period Revival movement. The house also embodies additional significance at the local level as an early and rare high style example of this architectural type in Ventura County.

#### Criterion D

*It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history;*

The application of Criterion D, which refers to archaeological deposits, is beyond the purview of this report.

## California Register of Historical Resources

The study property meets the following California Register of Historical Resources Criteria:

Criterion 1 (associated with broad patterns of local history) is met because the property's development as a residential estate by John Burnham has a direct association with the history of estate development, a characteristic feature of Ojai's development between circa-1900 and circa 1940. It was during this era that several estates with architect-designed houses were built in Ojai Valley. Therefore, the nominated property meets Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 (is associated with the lives of persons important in our past)

This criterion is met because the property's development as a residential estate by John Burnham has a direct association with the history of estate development, a characteristic feature of Ojai's development between circa-1900 and circa 1940. It was during this era that several estates with architect-designed houses were built in Ojai Valley. Therefore, the nominated property meets Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values)

This criterion is met because the house is an exemplar of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a characteristic subtype of the Period Revival movement that constitutes a signature style in California and Ventura County dating to the late 1920s, a period when the Period Revival movement enjoyed popularity. The house, with its three-part plan and use of period-appropriate detailing, exhibits a higher degree of fidelity to its construction era. Therefore, the house, which is an important example of its architectural style in Ventura County, meets Criterion 3.

Standard 4 (has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history)

The application of this criterion, which refers to the archaeological deposits, is beyond the purview of this report.

### **6.1.2 County of Ventura Significance Criteria**

#### Landmark Criteria

The following criteria, based solely on the National Register of Historic Places guidelines, are used to determine the eligibility of an improvement, natural feature, or site for Ventura County landmark designation:

- 1. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history.*
- 2. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Ventura County or its cities, regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.*

Post/Hazeltine Associates  
County of Ventura Landmark Nomination Report  
76 Oak Drive, Ojai Valley, Ventura County, California  
September 3, 2021

3. *It is associated with lives of persons important to Ventura County or its cities, California, or national history.*
4. *It has yielded or has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of Ventura County or its cities, California, or the nation.*
5. *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.*
6. *Integrity.*

*Establish the authenticity of the resource's physical identity by evidence of lack of deterioration and significant survival of the characteristics that existed during its period of importance. This shall be evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.*

*Criteria 1: It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the County's social, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history.*

The house at 76 Oak Drive is an exemplar of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. A popular style, particularly in southern California, houses of this type were built in the thousands for the middle, upper-middle-class, and upper class at the height of the style's early 20<sup>th</sup> century popularity, between circa-1920 and circa-1940. The house at 76 Oak Drive, built in 1928, is an example of a more simplified interpretation of an upper-middle-class version of the style. Large in scale and massing the house's decorative and construction details, are defined by its simple detailing, including its smooth-sided stucco walls and austere, handcrafted details, such as wood-planked shutters held in place by wrought iron shutter dogs, windows covered with turned wood spindles, a simply-turned wrought iron balcony and a roof covered with traditional c-shaped terra cotta tiles. Therefore, because the house at 76 Oak Drive, is an almost intact and elegant interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, a style that helped solidify the identity of one of southern California's most popular regional motifs, the property at 76 Oak Drive meets Criteria 1.

*Criterion 2: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Ventura County or its cities, regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.*

The property at 76 Oak Drive does not have a direct link with a specific historic event important to interpreting California or local history. Therefore, the property at 76 Oak Drive does not meet Criterion 2.

*Criterion 3: It is associated with lives of persons important to Ventura County or its cities, California, or national history.*

The original owner of the property at 76 Oak Drive, John Burnham, was important for his contribution to the early residential development of the Ojai Valley. As one of the first developers of a planned, residential subdivisions, Country Club Estates (1926), Burnham along with another visionary, Edward Libby, helped to cultivate the suburban development of Ojai Valley. Like many of the speculative subdivision tracts being built throughout Southern California during the nation's building boom of the 1920s, Burnham's planned development was an important component of Ojai Valley's housing development. Therefore, because the

house at 76 Oak Drive has a direct association with, John Burnham, the original owner of the property, who during his life contributed significantly to the architectural heritage of the County of Ventura, the property at 76 Oak Drive meets Criterion 3.

*Criterion 4: It has yielded or has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of Ventura County or its cities, California, or the nation.*

The application of this criterion to archaeological reports is beyond the purview of this report.

*Criterion 5: 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.*

Harold E. Burket designed the house at 76 Oak Drive in Ojai in 1928. Harold E. Burket was an architect who contributed significantly to the architectural heritage of southern California, and in particular, the County of Ventura. His successful career spanned over a four-decade period, from circa-1925 until he died in 1970. Like many architects, particularly during the pre-World War II era, he was required to be flexible in his ability to respond to the period's architectural eclecticism. Burket's skill enabled him to practice in a diverse range of styles, including, among others, Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and Spanish Colonial Revival. One of Burket's earliest and largest commissions was the planning in 1926 of Country Club Estates, a 60-acre residential subdivision in Ojai, for developer, John D. Burnham. In addition to Country Club Estates, and the design of the John Burnham house (located in the Country Club Estates) one of Burket's other known residential commissions was the W.P. Daily house in Camarillo. During his career, Burket's primary body of work was non-residential commissions, including designs for civic, institutional, and ecclesiastical buildings. His legacy can be seen in such projects as the Ventura High School Auditorium, the Ventura City/County Library, the Firestone building in Ventura, the jail annex to the Ventura County Government Center, the Community Presbyterian Church of Ventura, Our Lady of Assumption Church, Ventura, and the Baptist Church in Camarillo. Therefore, because the house represents the work of a master architect and possess high artistic values (See Criterion 1) the property at 76 Oak Drive meets Criterion 5.

*Criterion 6: Integrity. Establish the authenticity of the resource's physical identity by evidence of lack of deterioration and significant survival of the characteristics that existed during its period of importance. This shall be evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.*

The house at 76 Oak Drive is an example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Designed by architect Harold E. Burket in 1928, it is an almost intact exemplar of a house designed for the consumption of the upper middle classes. While large in scale and massing it is simple in its detailing and exhibits a more restrained decorative palette. Handcrafted details can be seen in its wood-planked shutters held in place by wrought iron shutter dogs, windows covered with turned wood spindles, a hand-wrought iron balcony, and a roof covered with traditional, c-shaped terra cotta tiles. The house remains in its original location and continues to retain almost all of its original construction materials, including siding, fenestration, and roof cladding, as well as those design elements that exhibit the skilled, handcrafted workmanship typical of the period. Therefore, because the house at 76 Oak Drive, is an almost intact example of its architectural style, the property at 76 Oak Drive meets Criterion 6.

### District Criteria:

*(1) Possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.*

The property encompasses a main residence designed by Harold Burket with associated landscape and hardscape features linked by a common development history and aesthetic. These include the property's semi-rural setting, topography characterized by hills, steep slopes providing views to the north, south, east, and west, extensive fields, clusters of trees including native oaks, and hardscape improvements to the rear of the house composed of cobblestone retaining walls, steps, parapets, and an ornamental pond as well as flagstone paving composed of informal terraces off the rear of the house. This concentration of features, forming the semi-rural setting of the house, contributes to the resource's ability to convey a strong sense of time and place associated with its period of significance (1928 -1943), which encompasses the occupancy of the Burnham and Dieterich families.

*(2) Has precisely mapped and defined exterior boundaries, which requires a description of what lies immediately on the edge of the district to allow rational exclusion of adjoining areas.*

The boundary of the nominated property is identified as 76 Oak Drive (APN 024-0-031-150), by Figure 1 of this report. The nomination does not include adjacent parcels to the east, which were part of the original estate but subsequently divided off as separate legal parcels. The boundary encompasses the main portion of the original grounds with the house and its associated landscape and hardscape features. Abutting properties are single-family properties that maintain the semi-rural character that characterized the property during the period of significance (1928 – 1943). They do not encompass buildings designed by Harold Burket.

*(3) Has at least one of the criteria for significance of Section 1365-5a.1-8.*

As noted above, the cluster of features, including a house built in 192 and its associated hardscape and landscape features and the surrounding semi-rural landscape meet criteria 1, 2, 5, and 6 as they compose a single resource united by a common history and aesthetic.

*(4) Complies with the criteria for integrity contained in Section 1365-5a.6.*

As detailed above under the application of the County's landmark criteria, identified resources, including the house, hardscape features, and associated semi-rural landscape retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to convey their historic appearance and associations.

## **6.2 Summary Statement of Significance**

The study property maintains sufficient integrity to convey its association with the Burham and Noble families and exemplifies the architectural contributions of Harold Burket to the architectural heritage of Ventura County. Therefore, the property is eligible for listing in the

National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Places, and as a Ventura County Landmark. Therefore, the following buildings, structures, and features, and landscape features which compose an identifiable cluster of historically related features (a historic district) are significant historic resources for environmental review. Please note the detached garages and existing driveway and motor court paving are non-contributing.

Contributors include:

#### House (1928)

Exterior Character-Defining Features include:

- Existing footprint (Section 8, Photograph 1);
- Picturesque asymmetrical massing (Section 8, Photographs 1 – 18);
- Plastered exterior (Section 8, Photographs 2 – 18);
- Vents composed of sections of circular terra cotta pipes or square or triangular terra cotta elements (Section 8, Photographs 2, 5, 10, 12, 13, & 15);
- Complex gable and shed roof with its c-shaped terra cotta roofing tiles and flush eaves (Section 8, Photographs 1 – 6);
- Plastered chimneys with terra cotta or plastered caps (Section 8, Photograph 5);
- Paneled wood front door (north elevation) and its plastered surround (Section 8, Photographs 4 & 5);
- Secondary exterior doors including multi-light wood panel types and plank types, some with wood headers (Section 8, Photographs 6 - 8, 11, 14 - 16, & 18);
- Fenestration composed of multi-light and single wood casement and fixed windows, some embellished with wood plank shutters with metal hardware. This includes wood window headers (Section 8, Photographs 2 – 18);
- Plastered window grilles on the north and south elevations (Section 8, Photographs 3, 4, 7, and 10 – 12);
- Wood grilles (Section 8, Photographs 5 & 9). The former location of a grille on the south elevation, proposed for replication by the owners, is depicted on Photograph 9);
- Wrought-iron balconies (Section 8, Photographs 6, 13, & 14); and
- Wrought iron railings (Section 8, Photograph 16).

Interior Character-Defining Features include:

- Overall floor plan on the first and second floors;
- Wood floors in living room, dining room, hallways, and bedrooms (Section 8, Photographs 22a, 22b, 25, 27, 28, 28a, & 28c);
- Tiled floors at staircase landing (Section 8, Photograph 29);
- Interior window and door casework; (Section 8, Photographs 22b, 22c, 24, - 28d)
- Plastered walls and wood baseboards (Section 8, Photographs 19 – 29);
- Wood panel doors (Section 8, Photograph 28a);
- Plastered ceilings (Section 8, Photographs 19 – 29);
- Entry hall with its wood beam ceiling, paneled door with its hardware, tiled floors, and metal wall register covers (Section 8, Photographs 19 -29);
- Living room including its wood truss open ceiling, wood window and door lintels, arched

- opening and tiled steps from the entry hall, metal wall registers, fireplace, fireplace surround and mantel, and tiled hearth (Section 8, Photographs 22a – 22c);
- Dining Room with its wood floors, polychromatic coffered ceiling, and tiled window casing (Section 8, Photographs 23 – 25);
- Kitchen floor. Please note cabinetry and counters are not original and the layout of the kitchen has been modified (Section 8, Photograph 26);
- First floor master bedroom bathroom with its tilework (Section 8, Photograph 28d);
- First floor master bedroom with its niche and flanking cupboards (Section 8, Section 28c);
- Stairs (Section 8, Photographs 26a, 28b & 29);and
- Former screened sleeping porch and its wood paneled walls (Section 8, Photograph 27).

#### Hardscape and Landscape Features and Setting,

- Sandstone retaining walls, parapets, steps, barbeque, and ornamental water feature, located off the south side (rear) of the house, as well as the plastered wall and entrance court off the north side of the house (estimated construction date between circa-1928 and the early 1930s) (Section 8, Photographs 34 – 38);
- Entrance court and its hardscape features including a bedrock mortar and native oak tree (bedrock mortar likely predates European settlement). The entry court is composed of paving and a low parapet wall, likely dating to the construction of the house (Section 8, Photographs 1 - 5); and
- The overall pattern of the surrounding landscape is composed of trees and open space whose overall form dates between the late 1920s and late 1940s with later alterations such as a solar array and vineyard installed within the last 30 years (Section 8, Photographs 1, 33 - 39).

### **6.3 Additional Designation Standards**

Under Section 1365-5 et seq, all the following standards must be met before a site becomes a designated Cultural Heritage Site:

*a. It shall have historic, aesthetic, or special character or interest for the general public, and not be limited in interest to a special group of persons;*

Section 6.2 of this report concludes the property meets Criteria 1, 3, and 5 making it eligible for listing as a County of Ventura Landmark. The significance of the nominated resource is of interest to the general public as the property has direct associations with persons important to Ventura County's history and the architectural heritage of the community.

*b. Its designation shall not require the expenditure by the County of Ventura of any amount of money not commensurate with the value of the object to be preserved; and*

Designation of the nominated property, which is privately owned, would not require expenditures by the County of Ventura, not commensurate with the significance of the resource.

*c. Its designation shall not infringe upon the rights of a private owner thereof to make any and all reasonable uses thereof which are not in conflict with the purposes of this Article.*

The designation of the resource is requested by the property owner and designation would not infringe on their or futures owners' use of the property.

## **7.0 SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACTS**

The current study finds the house and its setting at 76 Oak Drive (APN 024-0-031-150)), which encompass a Spanish Colonial Revival style house built to the design of Harold Burket, a historically significant regional architect for the Burnham family in 1928, meets multiple criteria for listing as a Ventura County Landmark that is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, the National Register of Historic Places. The nominated property is depicted on Location Map 1 as APN 024-0-031-150. Therefore, this report recommends the issuance of a Certificate of Approval (COA) for the proposed nomination of the property.



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## 8.0 FIGURES & PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1, Harold Escher Burket (1917)



**Figure 2, John Burnham, (age one), mother, Henrietta Burnham and Rose van L. (Photo, 1895)**



**Figure 3, John DuBois Burnham (Left) (Circa-1915)**



Figure 4, John and Constance Burnham (Circa-1925)



Figure 5, Laura, Lorraine, and Clara Noble circa-mid-1900s (Cuthbert)



**Figure 6, Façade of house (north elevation) in 1988**





**Figure 7, Rear elevation (south elevation) of house in 1988**



**Figure 8, East elevation of house with attached garage wing in 1988**



**Figure 9, East elevation of house with detail of second floor in 1988**



**Figure 10, Interior, looking from entry hall into living room in 1988**



Figure 11, Interior, dining room in 1988



Figure 12, Interior, kitchen in 1988



13, Interior, bathroom in 1988

**SECTION 8 PHOTOGRAPHS**



**Photograph 1, Aerial photograph depicting existing improvements (Google Earth)**



**Photograph 2, North Elevation with entry courtyard, existing conditions, looking southeast**





**Photograph 3, Center Section of North Elevation with entry courtyard, existing conditions, looking south**



**Photograph 4, West side of the North Elevation, existing conditions, looking southwest**



**Photograph 5, North Elevation, east end of the elevation, existing conditions, looking southeast**



**Photograph 5a, North Elevation, east end of the elevation, existing conditions, looking southeast**



**Photograph 6, South Elevation, rear of house, existing conditions, looking northwest**



**Photograph 7, South Elevation, rear of house, east end of the elevation, existing conditions, looking north**



**Photograph 8, South Elevation, rear of house, existing conditions, looking northwest**



**Photograph 9, South Elevation, detail of kitchen window, looking northeast (original wood spindle grille will be restored by owner)**





**Photograph 10, South Elevation, rear of house, existing conditions, looking northwest**



Photograph 11, South Elevation, rear of house, detail of basement entry, looking north



**Photograph 12, South Elevation, rear of house, detail of living room window and basement windows, existing conditions, looking northwest**



**Photograph 13, South Elevation, detail of the west end of the elevation, existing conditions, looking northwest**



**Photograph 14, South Elevation, near west end of elevation, detail of balcony, existing conditions, looking north**



**Photograph 15, East Elevation, garage bays attached to house, existing conditions, looking southwest**



**Photograph 16, West Elevation, north end, existing conditions, looking east**



**Photograph 17, West Elevation, central section of elevation, existing conditions, looking east**





Photograph 18, West Elevation, south end of elevation, existing conditions, looking north



**Photograph 19, Entry Hall, existing conditions, looking north**



**Photograph 20, Entry Hall, detail of stairs to living room, existing conditions. Tilework by Ernest Allan Batchelder and Malibu Potteries**



**Photograph 21, Entry Hall, detail of Mayan inspired tilework by Ernest Allan Batchelder**



Photograph 22, Entry Hall, detail of Mayan inspired tilework by Ernest Allen Batchelder



**Photograph 22a, Looking from living room towards entry hall**



**Photograph 22b, Living room, detail of fireplace with tilework by Ernest Allan Batchelder**



**Photograph 22c, Living room, detail of open truss ceiling**





**Photograph 23, Dining Room**



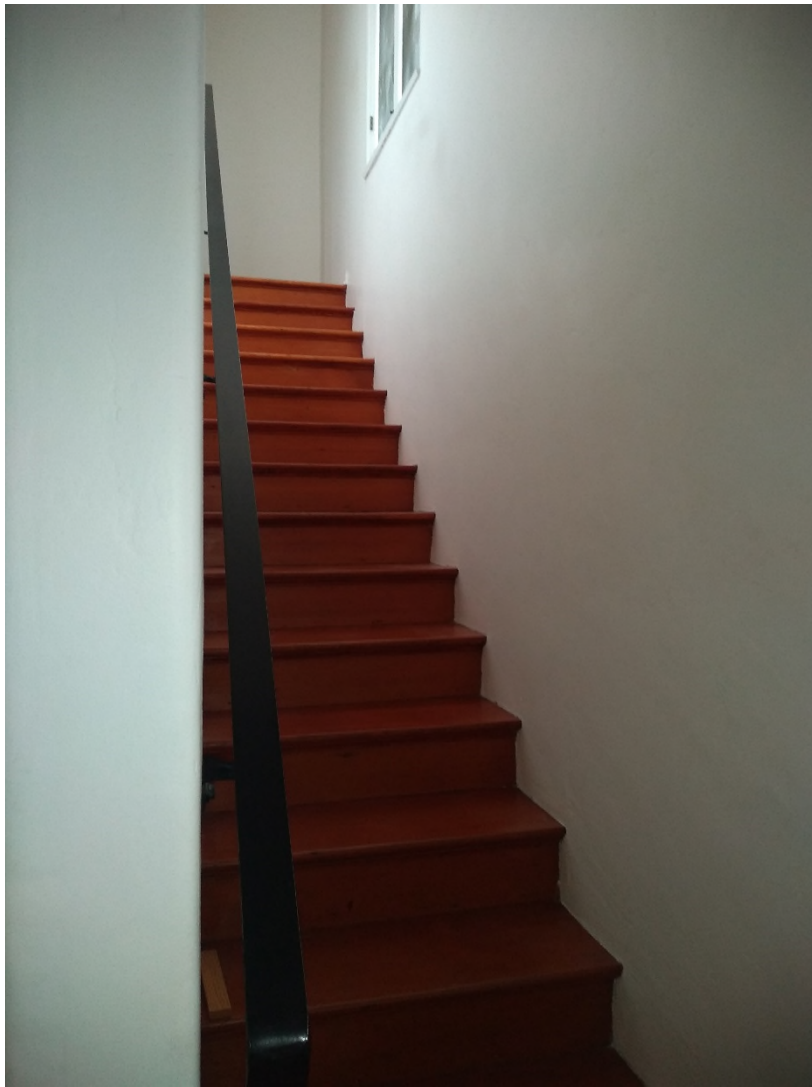
**Photograph 24, Dining Room Ceiling**



**Photograph 25, Detail of Dining Room fenestration**



**Photograph 26, Kitchen, existing conditions**



**Photograph 26a, Backstairs for servants to Second Floor**



**Photograph 27, First Floor, former sleeping porch at southwest corner of house, existing conditions**



**Photograph 28, First floor office at northwest corner of house, existing conditions**



**Photograph 28a, First floor hallway, existing conditions**





**Photograph 28b, Stairway to second floor, existing conditions**



**Photograph 28c, Second floor bedroom, existing conditions**



**Photograph 28d, Original first floor master bedroom bathroom, existing conditions**



**Photograph 29, Stairs to basement level, existing conditions**



**Photograph 30, Basement level, existing conditions**



**Photograph 31, Two Bay Garage (east garage), north and west elevations, looking southeast, existing conditions**



**Photograph 32, Second Garage (west garage), south and west elevations, looking northeast, existing conditions**



Photograph 33, Looking west from house towards stone retaining wall, existing conditions





**Photograph 34, Rear Terrace, ornamental water feature, existing conditions, looking south**



**Photograph 35, Rear Terrace, Barbeque and Ornamental Water Feature, existing conditions, looking southeast**



**Photograph 36, Rear Terrace, detail of parapet and brick paving, existing conditions, looking south**



**Photograph 37, Rear Terrace, detail of paving and retaining wall on right, existing conditions, looking east**



**Photograph 38, Swimming Pool Terrace, existing conditions, looking south**



**Photograph 39, Sloping terrain off the rear terrace, existing conditions, looking southwest**

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