

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 18 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 1520 Ralston Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County San Mateo

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Mateo, Calif.

Date 1999

*c. Address 1520 Ralston Avenue

City Burlingame

Zip 94010

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone _____, _____ mE/ _____ mN

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number 028-285-050

*P3a. Description:

1520 Ralston Avenue is located on a rectangular-shaped lot of 7,884 square feet on the west side of Ralston Avenue, between El Camino Real and Occidental Avenue (**Figure 1**). The subject property is located in the Burlingame Park neighborhood. Built in 1921-1922, 1520 Ralston Avenue is a 1,910-square-foot one-story wood-frame residence designed in a vernacular style. The rectangular-plan wood shingle-clad building sits on a concrete foundation and features a jerkinhead cross-gable composite-shingle roof. The residence contains one exterior brick chimney at the southwest facade. Unless otherwise noted, windows are multi-lite wood windows of various configurations (fixed, single hung, or casement). Doors are either wood-paneled or feature multi-lite glazing. A concrete driveway with simple brick detailing runs under a wood-shingled shallow archway and continues to a detached garage/recreational room (rec room) at the north corner of the property. The archway is adjacent to the right (north) side of the main residence's primary façade. The backyard includes a pool and a pool shed. (See Continuation Sheet, page 2.)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: N/A

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photo



P5b. Photo: (view and date)

View northwest of the primary (southeast) façade, September 28, 2018.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Sources: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
1921-1922 (Assessor's records; Water tap records)

*P7. Owner and Address:

Ryan and Anna Sterret
1520 Ralston Avenue
Burlingame, CA 94010

*P8. Recorded by:

Page & Turnbull, Inc.
417 Montgomery Street, 8th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104

*P9. Date Recorded:

9/28/2018

*P10. Survey Type:

Intensive

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

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

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***P3a. Description (continued):**

The primary (southeast) façade of 1520 Ralston Avenue looks onto a small front yard and Ralston Avenue beyond (**Figure 2**). The main plane of the primary façade features a fixed multi-lite window framed by multi-lite sidelights and topped with a multi-lite arched transom. A simple wood vent sits above the fixed window. The midpoint of the roofline features a triangular shingled parapet. Multi-lite single-hung windows are located to the left and right of the fixed window; the single-hung windows feature fixed decorative wood shutters and flower boxes supported by decorative brackets. A shingled, rounded-edge half-wall with an inset planter extends from the far south corner of the building (**Figure 3**). An intricate metal vent grille is located beneath the left (south) hung window (**Figure 4**).¹ To the right (north) of the primary façade is a wood-shingled, shallow archway that spans the driveway. The front and back sides of the archway feature three sets of paired brackets (**Figure 5**).²



Figure 1. Aerial photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue. Approximate boundary of subject property outlined in orange.
Source: Google Maps, 2018. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

¹ Matching vents are also located at the northeast and southwest façades, near the building's foundation.

² Based on historic photographs, the brackets formerly supported a pergola structure which was demolished at an unknown date after 1961.

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Figure 2: Primary (southeast) façade of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking northwest. The northeast façade of the building and rear detached garage are visible beyond the driveway archway.



Figure 3: South portion of the primary façade, looking northwest.



Figure 4: Metal vent grille beneath south window.

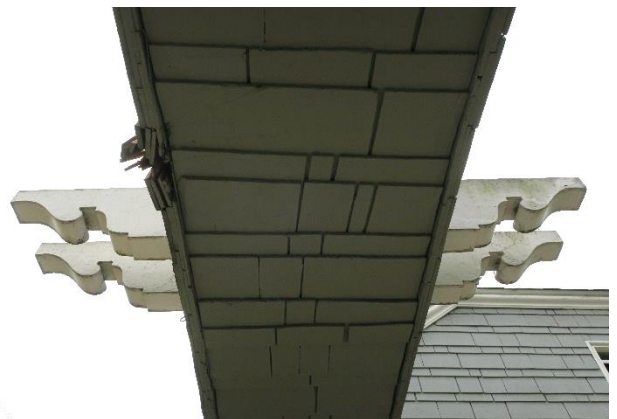


Figure 5: Paired brackets at the front and back sides of the archway.

The northeast façade fronts a driveway that extends along the northeast property boundary. The far left (east) jerkinhead volume features a fixed window flanked by sidelights, framed with wood shutters, and topped with a simple wood vent (**Figure 6**). The primary entrance to the building is located immediately right (west) of the jerkinhead volume. A paneled wood door is located within a recessed vestibule, which is accessed via two brick steps. The vestibule is accentuated with a molded wood portico supported by scrolled brackets (**Figure 7**). To the right of the entrance vestibule is a flat-roofed bow bay containing one glazed door with two hung windows on either side (**Figure 8**).³ The bow bay is topped with wood molding. The cross-gabled portion of the northeast façade features a simple wood vent and two hung windows. Right of the cross-gable is a set of paired hung windows with faux muntins. The right (west) portion of northeast façade is recessed approximately one foot from the main façade and features a tripartite arrangement of casement windows (**Figure 9**). A porch (accessed from the rear façade) is located at the far-right portion of the northeast façade.



Figure 6. East portion of northeast façade, looking west (see Figure 2 for jerkinhead roof peak).



Figure 7. Primary entrance, looking southwest.



Figure 8. Bow bay and cross-gabled volume, looking west.



Figure 9. Northeast façade, looking southeast.

The rear (northwest) façade of 1520 Ralston Avenue features a gable roofline (**Figure 10**). A simple wood vent sits within the gable peak. The left (north) portion of the façade features an open porch accessed via three wood steps, bounded by a wood railing and slender support columns. A full-height fixed window sits adjacent to a wood-frame multi-lite door (**Figure 11**).⁴ The right (south) portion of the façade features two casement windows, each with a single outer shutter. The casement windows and shutters sit beneath a bracket-supported pergola structure.

³ The door does not appear to be currently operable, as there are no extant exterior steps.

⁴ The rear entrance also features a screened door component.

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Figure 10. Rear (northwest) façade, looking southeast.



Figure 11. Rear porch, looking east.

The southwest façade looks onto a narrow side yard and wood privacy fence. The left (west) portion of the façade features a casement window and an oriel window with undivided lites (fixed center lite flanked by casements) (**Figure 12 to Figure 13**). Whereas the midpoint of the northeast façade features a cross-gabled volume, the midpoint of the southwest façade features a jerkinhead volume (beneath which sits the previously described oriel window and a hung window) (**Figure 14**). To the right (east) of the jerkinhead volume is a slightly projecting bay with a tripartite window (fixed center lite with faux muntins, flanked by undivided casements) (**Figure 15**). The far right (east) portion of the façade features an exterior brick chimney (**Figure 16**).



Figure 12. Southwest façade, looking southeast.



Figure 13. Oriel window within jerkinhead roofline, looking southeast.



Figure 14. Hung window within jerkinhead roofline.



Figure 15. Tripartite window within projecting bay, looking east.



Figure 16: Projecting bay and far right (east) portion of the façade, looking north. Source: Google Street View, 2018.

A detached garage/rec room is located at the northwest corner of the subject lot, and a pool shed is located at the west corner of the lot (**Figure 17**). Both gable-roofed structures feature composite shingle roofing material and shingle wood cladding to match the main residence. The southeast façade of the garage features two paneled vinyl roll-up doors. The southwest façade features two shuttered hung windows; two crossed oars are affixed between the windows as decoration (**Figure 18**). The southwest façade of rear rec room (the rear portion of the garage structure) features a terra cotta-tiled open porch with slender support columns (**Figure 19 to Figure 20**). Multi-lite glazed southwest-facing French doors are flanked by hung windows, while a multi-lite glazed door faces northwest and opens to the garage interior. A modest cross-gable above the porch features a simple vent. The northwest and northeast facades of the garage/rec room are not visible. The pool shed features a southeast-facing multi-lite glazed door; remaining facades contain no fenestration (**Figure 21**).

The remaining backyard area accommodates a swimming pool bordered with terra cotta tiles and surrounded by pebbled concrete paving. Wood privacy fences extend across the side and rear property boundaries, and a low picket fence fronts Ralston Avenue. The front yard and a narrow area at the rear of the house features faux turf covering (**Figure 22**). The site landscaping is otherwise limited to a few mature trees, shrubs, wisteria at the rec room porch, and vegetation covering the northeast privacy fence.

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Figure 17. Detached garage/rec room (garage volume), looking northwest.



Figure 18. Detached garage/rec room, looking north.



Figure 19. Detached garage/rec room (rec room volume), looking northeast.



Figure 20: Porch with French doors to rec room interior at image left and a single door to garage interior at image center.



Figure 21: Pool and pool shed, looking northwest.



Figure 22: Front yard, looking southwest.

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The subject property is on a flat, irregularly-shaped block bounded by Ralston Avenue, Occidental Avenue, Burlingame Avenue, and El Camino Real, within the Burlingame Park neighborhood south of downtown Burlingame. The neighborhood contains homes built in Craftsman and revival styles, primarily from the 1910s through the 1930s (**Figure 23 to Figure 27**). The residential buildings on the lots to the immediate left (south) and right (north) of 1520 Ralston Avenue were constructed in 1920 and 1913, respectively. Based on the 1921 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map, just over half of the lots on the west block face of Ralston Avenue between El Camino Real and Occidental Avenue were developed by 1921.



Figure 23. 1524 Ralston Avenue, located left (south) of the subject property, built in 1920.



Figure 24. 1516 Ralston Avenue, located right (north) of the subject property, built in 1913.



Figure 25: 1521 Ralston, located directly across from the subject property, built in 1920.



Figure 26. 1515 Ralston Avenue, located across from the subject property, built in 1938.



Figure 27: 1525 Ralston Avenue, located across from the subject property, built in 1920.

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B1. Historic name: 1520 Ralston Avenue

B2. Common name: 1520 Ralston Avenue

B3. Original Use: Single-Family Residence

B4. Present use: Single-Family Residence

*B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular

*B6. Construction History:

According to a 1941 aerial photograph by Fairchild Aerial Surveys, and the 1949 Sanborn map, the original one-story subject building was primarily rectangular in plan with a small bay at the northeast façade and a wider bay at the southwest façade (**Figure 31 to Figure 32, see Continuation Sheets**). A one-story detached garage was located at the far west corner of the lot. Two building permit applications for renovations and improvements to the property are on file for 1520 Ralston Avenue at the Burlingame Community Development Department:

Date	Permit #	Owner	Architect / Contractor	Description
04/03/1967	Illegible	Mr. and Mrs. Watts	Illegible	Proposed rec room, install steps and railing at rear of house. Replace one bedroom window
06/05/1998 ⁵	9800314	Kevin R. and Jennifer A. Helmig	Kendall Peterson / Helmig Construction	Add family room/add bathroom. Add covered porch. Estimated cost of \$10,000

(See Continuation Sheet, page 10.)

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: _____

B9a. Architect: Architect unknown

b. Builder: Builder unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme: N/A Area Burlingame Park

Period of Significance N/A Property Type Single-Family Residential Applicable Criteria N/A

Historic Context:

City of Burlingame

The lands that would become the City of Burlingame were initially part of *Rancho San Mateo*, a Mexican-era land grant given to Cayetano Arena by Governor Pio Pico in 1845. Over the next four decades, the lands passed through the hands of several prominent San Francisco businessmen, including William Howard (purchased 1848) and William C. Ralston (purchased 1856). In 1866, Ralston sold over 1,000 acres to Anson Burlingame, the US Minister to China. Following Burlingame's death in 1870, the land reverted to Ralston and eventually to Ralston's business partner, William Sharon.

Very little formal development occurred during this period, with most of the land used for dairy and stock farm operations. In 1893, William Sharon's trustee, Francis G. Newlands, proposed the development of the Burlingame Country Club as an exclusive semi-rustic destination for wealthy San Franciscans. A railroad depot was constructed in 1894, concurrent with small-scale subdivisions in the vicinity of Burlingame Avenue.

(See Continuation Sheet, page 10.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

*B12. References: See Continuation Sheet, page 14.

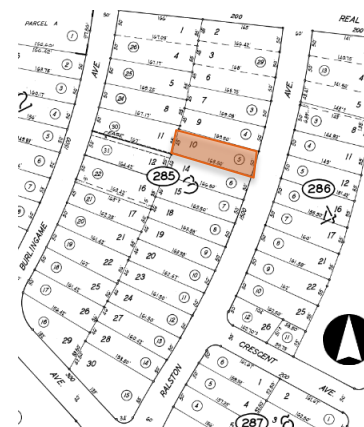
B13. Remarks: None

*B14. Evaluator: Katherine Wallace, Page & Turnbull, Inc.

*Date of Evaluation: September 28, 2018

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Source: San Mateo County Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder, 2018. Property highlighted in orange. Modified by Page & Turnbull.



⁵ This issued permit expired without a final inspection; however, the work appears to have completed.

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***B6. Construction History (continued):**

1520 Ralston Avenue appears to have always been clad in wood shingles, and the triangular parapet and jerkinhead roof forms appear original. Building permit applications indicate that in 1967, a recreation room was constructed, steps and a railing were added at the rear of the house, and one bedroom window was replaced. Research did not indicate if the rec room was constructed simultaneously with the garage structure. In 1998, an addition and a covered porch were constructed at the rear of the building; the permit application indicated the addition would accommodate a family room and would add a bathroom. In addition to these permitted projects, additional alterations have occurred at the property. Historic maps, photographs and physical observation indicate alterations including but not limited to: the demolition of a garage at the far west corner of the property at an unknown date after 1949; the removal of casement windows at the southeast façade and replacement with hung windows (flanking the central fixed window); the addition of a door within the bow bay at the northeast façade; the removal of the driveway pergola structure; and the installation of a swimming pool. According to real estate photographs, the swimming pool was installed by at least 1958, and the pergola at the driveway archway was extant until at least 1961. In 1995, minutes from a Planning Commission meeting state: "Requested of Planning Commission special permit to build two story detached garage with recreation room and toilet. Kevin and Jennifer Helmig (property owners), James D. Valenti (designer)." ⁶ Although the note indicates a two-story garage/rec room building was desired, the remodeled building remained one story.

A 2008 newspaper article discussed the work of property owner Kevin Helmig, a contractor who "took a 'typical' 1921, two bedroom, one bathroom bungalow, and expanded to the rear, adding a family room and master suite. What had been a small kitchen now shared space with the family room, becoming an open eat-in space." ⁷ The article also noted "the remodeled guest house...includes a bathroom and a large multi-purpose room with a wet bar." ⁸ The article appears to be referencing the work done under permit 9800314 in 1998.

***B10. Significance (continued):**

During this time, El Camino Real acted as a de facto dividing line between large country estates to the west and the small village of Burlingame to the east. The latter developed almost exclusively to serve the needs of the wealthy estate owners. Burlingame began to develop in earnest with the arrival of an electric streetcar line between San Mateo and San Francisco in 1903. However, the 1906 earthquake and fires had a far more dramatic impact on the area. Hundreds of San Franciscans who had lost their homes began relocating to Burlingame, which boomed with the construction of new residences and businesses. Over the next two years, the village's population grew from 200 to 1,000. In 1908, Burlingame incorporated as a city, and in 1910, annexed the north adjacent town of Easton. The following year, the Burlingame Country Club area was also annexed to the City. By 1920, Burlingame's population had increased to 4,107. ⁹

Burlingame Park Neighborhood

The subject property was constructed in the Burlingame Park neighborhood, one of three subdivisions (including Burlingame Heights and Glenwood Park) created from lands that were part of the San Mateo Rancho. William C. Ralston, having reacquired the property following Burlingame's death, began to develop plans for a residential park in this area as early as 1873. Initially, Ralston hired William Hammond Hall to draw up a plan for an exclusive residential development to be called Burlingame Park.

Hall's early plan was never realized, but work began on the residential development in the 1890s under Francis Newlands. Newlands commissioned Hall's cousin, Richard Pindell Hammond, Jr., to draw up a new plan for the subdivision. The plan "centered on a communal country club and featured winding tree-lined roads, ample lots, and polo fields for the residents." ¹⁰ The land was subdivided, and the streets were laid out in May 1905 by Davenport Bromfield and Antoine Borel. The residential neighborhood is located in close proximity to the Burlingame Country Club and the neighborhood was officially annexed to the City of Burlingame in 1911. ¹¹

Burlingame Park, Burlingame Heights, and Glenwood Park were the earliest planned residential developments in Burlingame and were subsequently followed by Burlingame Terrace, Burlingame Grove, Burlingame Villa Park, and Easton. Burlingame Park is bounded by County Road to the north; Burlingame Park, Crescent, and Barroilhet avenues to the east; Pepper Avenue to the south; and Bellevue Avenue to the west. Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps indicate that Burlingame Park developed over a period of about 50 years. Modest residences were constructed within the subdivision in the early years. The town of Burlingame experienced a residential building boom in the early 1920s and the majority of residences within the neighborhood were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s. 1520 Ralston Avenue, constructed in 1921-1922, was among the primary wave of development in the neighborhood. Today, the neighborhood represents the progressive development of the subdivision from the

⁶ The Burlingame Historical Society holds the note card with the provided text. Although the source is not documented, Burlingame Historical Society archivist Jennifer Pfaff believes the note likely references Planning Commission minutes.

⁷ Larry Rosen, "Burlingame Park bungalow goes beyond 'normal,'" Peninsula Real Estate Ads, *San Francisco Examiner*, September 14, 2008.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Joanne Garrison, *Burlingame: Centennial 1908-2008* (Burlingame, CA: Burlingame Historical Society, 2007).

¹⁰ Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 94.

¹¹ Diane Condon-Wirgler, "Burlingame Park, Burlingame Heights, Glenwood Park," (Burlingame, CA: Burlingame Historical Society, ca. 2004).

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time it was first laid out in 1905, through the early twentieth century building boom, to the present day. In terms of architecture, most of the homes in the neighborhood are some variation of Craftsman or various revival styles (often altered).

1520 Ralston Avenue

Although no new construction permit application for 1520 Ralston Avenue is on file at the Burlingame Community Development Department, San Mateo County Assessor records date the building to 1921. A water tap record dated March 31, 1922 indicates the date the building was connected to the municipal water system on that date. Because 1520 Ralston was not depicted on the 1921 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map, the building was likely not completed until late in 1921, or early 1922 (**Figure 30**). Based on Sanborn maps, aerial photographs, and real estate advertisements, the building footprint was expanded in 1967 and again in 1998. All four facades of the building have been altered.

Owner and Occupant History

1520 Ralston Avenue was constructed in 1921-1922 for original owners Harold E. Casey (1889-1964) and Angela E Casey (1892-1981). Harold Casey was a road contractor who owned his own business, H.E. Casey Co. The company operated as producers and dealers of crushed rock, gravel, and sand.¹² Nelson T. Stacy, a secretary at Jasper Stacy Co., owned the subject property after the Caseys between the years 1927 and 1935. Burlingame city directories indicate the property was next owned by police officer Irving B. Smith from 1936 to 1939. Subsequent individuals listed in city directories are not indicated as property owners; they may have been rental tenants or owners who were not recorded properly. J. Leroy Mathias and his wife, Lottie B., resided at 1520 Ralston Avenue in the year 1940. Paul L. Harvey and his wife, Hazel, lived at the property in 1941 and 1942. Nelson T. Stacy, formerly recorded as a property owner of 1520 Ralston, was listed again as an occupant alongside his wife, Florence, from 1943 to 1946.¹³ He appears to have changed professional roles since his time at Jasper Stacy Co., and was since listed as a Builder, a Construction Engineer, and a General Controller. Following Nelson and Florence's period of residency, all subsequent residents of 1520 Ralston Avenue were listed as property owners. Most of these later owners owned the property for a period of less than ten years. William and Mabel Watts were the exception and owned the property from 1963 to 1994.

William Watts worked as a salesman of electrical fixtures and passed away in 1986. Mabel, born in London in 1906, began writing children's books in 1950 and became a successful author who published nearly four dozen books, some of which were printed in foreign languages and even translated into Braille.¹⁴ Mabel Watts' books were largely based on her experiences as a child moving around in England and Canada. Materials (either full typescripts, galleys, and/or dustjackets) for at least eight books are held by the de Grummond Collection at the McCain Library and Archives at the University of Southern Mississippi.¹⁵ The de Grummond collection includes: *Dozens of Cousins* (1950); *Henrietta and the Hat* (published in *Humpty Dumpty Magazine* in 1953, published as a book in 1962); *Everyone Waits* (1959); *Something for You, Something for Me* (1960); *Read Aloud Horse Stories* (1961); *Weeks and Weeks* (1962); *The Boy Who Listened to Everyone* (1963); *The King and the Whirlybird* (1969); and *Yin Sun and the Lucky Dragon* (1969).¹⁶ After Watts wrote *Dozens of Cousins* in 1950, her next five books were authored under the pseudonym Patricia Lynn. Mabel was listed in *Who's Who in American Women* and had books displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art¹⁷. Mabel and William had three children: Patricia, Robert, and Stan. Patricia Watts Babcock gained a percentage of ownership in the Ralston Avenue property at an unknown date between 1980 and 1994, when Mabel died and the property was put back on the market.

More recent owners include John and Linda Coll, Jennifer Ann (nee Coll) and Kevin Helmig, Daniel and Alexandra Spyker, LLC FRE470, and Thomas and Barbara Tracy. Kevin Helmig, President of Helmig Construction, appears to have undertaken a major renovation of the property in 1998.

The following table outlines the ownership and occupancy history of 1520 Ralston Avenue, compiled from Burlingame city directories, Ancestry.com, and City of Burlingame Ownership Cards on file at the Burlingame Historical Society:

¹² Burlingame city directories available at the Burlingame Public Library.

¹³ It is possible that city directories inaccurately indicated owner vs. renter status and that Nelson Stacy in fact owned the property for the full period and rented it out to various tenants.

¹⁴ "Books by Mabel Watts." Good Reads. Accessed October 15, 2108, https://www.goodreads.com/author/list/152902.Mabel_Watts

¹⁵ Watts personally donated materials to the de Grummond Collection; research did not uncover a connection to Mississippi.

¹⁶ "Mabel Watts Papers," de Grummond Collection (collection number DG1032), McCain Library and Archives, University of Southern Mississippi. http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/degrum/public_html/html/research/findaids/watts.htm

¹⁷ "Mabel Watts," *San Mateo Times*, October 6, 1994.

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Years of Ownership/Occupation ¹⁸	Name(s) of Owners (known owners in bold) and Tenants	Occupation (if listed)
1922-1926	H. E. Casey (Angela E.)	Road Contractor; H.E. Casey Co. (producers of and dealers in crushed rock, gravel and sand)
1927-1935	Nelson T. Stacy (Florence)	Secretary at Jasper Stacy Co.
1936-1939	Irving B. Smith	Officer
1940	J. Leroy Mathias (Lottie B.)	Civil Engineer
1941-1942	Paul L. Harvey (Hazel)	Assistant Director of the American Red Cross
1943-1946	Nelson T. Stacy (Florence)	General Controller
1947-1956	Herbert H. Plath (Elsie J.)	Nurseryman
1958-1962	Edwin C. Welch, Jr. (Nancy)	Engineer at Bethlehem Shipyard
1963-1980	William Watts (Mabel)	Salesman of Electrical Fixtures
Unknown-11/29/1994	Patricia Watts Babcock Trust; William and Mabel Watts Trust	
11/29/1994 – 9/26/1995	Jennifer Ann Coll; John W. Coll; Linda M. Coll; Kevin Robert Helmig	Kevin: President of Helmig Construction
9/26/1995 – 06/06/2003	Jennifer Ann Helmig (nee Coll); Kevin Robert Helmig	Jennifer: Burlingame Cabinet Company
06/06/2003 – 07/18/2005	Daniel A. Spyker; Alexandra M. Spyker	N/A
07/18/2005 – 10/15/2008	Daniel A. Spyker Trust; Mary Alexandra Spyker Trust; Daniel A. Spyker and Mary Alexandra Spyker Trust	N/A
10/15/2008 – 12/05/2008	FRE 470 LLC	N/A
12/05/2008 – Present	FRE 470 LLC; Thomas Tracy; Barbara D. Tracy	N/A

Evaluation:

The property at 1520 Ralston Avenue is not currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). The building does not appear in the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) as of 2012, indicating that no record of previous survey or evaluation is on file with the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). The City of Burlingame does not currently have a register of historic properties beyond the Downtown Specific Plan Draft Inventory of Historic Resources (on which the subject property is not listed). Therefore, the property is not listed locally.¹⁹

Criterion A/1 (Events)

1520 Ralston Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A or in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events) for its association with any events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States. The residence was constructed in 1921-1922, during the primary wave of development of Burlingame Park. The subject property is not the earliest on the subject block, nor does its construction appear to be related to subsequent development in the area. Thus, the property does not appear to rise to a level of significance necessary to be individually eligible for the National Register or California Register under Criterion A/1.

Criterion B/2 (Persons)

1520 Ralston Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion B or the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons). Original owners Harold and Angela Casey do not appear to have made contributions to local, state, or national history such that they would be found significant under Criterion B/2. Mabel Watts, a prominent children's book author, published her first book in 1950, 14 years before moving to 1520 Ralston Avenue. Although she continued writing while living at the subject property, it appears as though she achieved professional success well over a decade before living at 1520 Ralston Avenue. Thus, the subject property does not appear to best represent her significance as a respected author. Additional owners and occupants do not appear to have made contributions to local, state, or national history such that they would be found significant under Criterion B/2. Therefore, research indicates that 1520 Ralston Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing under Criterion B/2 (Persons).

¹⁸ Years of ownership and occupation are approximate based on Burlingame city directories, public records available through Ancestry.com, and City of Burlingame Ownership Cards on file at the Burlingame Historical Society. These records do not always specify the exact date of purchase or occupation. For the purpose of this table, only the known years of ownership or occupation are included.

¹⁹ Carey & Company, "Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan," October 6, 2008.

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Criterion C/3 (Architecture)

1520 Ralston Avenue does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C or the California Register under Criterion 3 (Architecture). The residence at 1520 Ralston Avenue was built in 1921-1922. Any architect, builder or landscape architect that may have been responsible for the design of 1520 Ralston Avenue was not uncovered during the course of research. According to Sanborn Map Company fire insurance maps and the earliest available photographs (from 1958 and 1961), the residence and surrounding landscape do not appear to embody the distinctive characteristics of any particular style and can best be categorized as vernacular. The building has undergone multiple alterations and no longer retains its original footprint or roofline. A number of original windows have been replaced throughout the years, and new openings have been inserted. Furthermore, the original garage was demolished, a swimming pool was installed by 1958, and a new recreational room/garage structure was constructed by 1967. Thus, the property does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C or the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion D/4 (Information Potential)

The "potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of California" typically relates to archeological resources, rather than built resources. When National Register Criterion D/California Register Criterion 4 (Information Potential) does relate to built resources, it is for cases when the building itself is the principal source of important construction-related information. The analysis of the property at 1520 Ralston Avenue for eligibility under Criterion D/4 is beyond the scope of this report.

Conclusion

The residence at 1520 Ralston Avenue was constructed in 1921-1922 within the Burlingame Park neighborhood. The subject property was not found to be significant for any 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 or any significant persons. The architect, builder, and/or landscape architect of the property are unknown. Available map and photographic evidence indicates the building and its surrounding landscape do not appear to embody the distinctive characteristics of any particular style and can best be categorized as vernacular. Furthermore, the residence has been significantly altered and expanded overtime. As such, the California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "6Z" has been assigned to the property, meaning that it was "Found ineligible for NR, CR or Local designation through survey evaluation."²⁰

This conclusion does not address whether the building would qualify as a contributor to a potential historic district. A cursory inspection of the surrounding area of Burlingame Park reveals a high concentration of early-twentieth-century residences that warrant further study. However, additional research and evaluation of the Burlingame Park neighborhood as a whole would need to be conducted to verify the neighborhood's eligibility as a historic district.

²⁰ California State Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, "Technical Assistance Bulletin #8: User's Guide to the California Historical Resource Status Codes & Historical Resource Inventory Directory" (Sacramento, November 2004), 5.

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Historic Maps and Drawings:

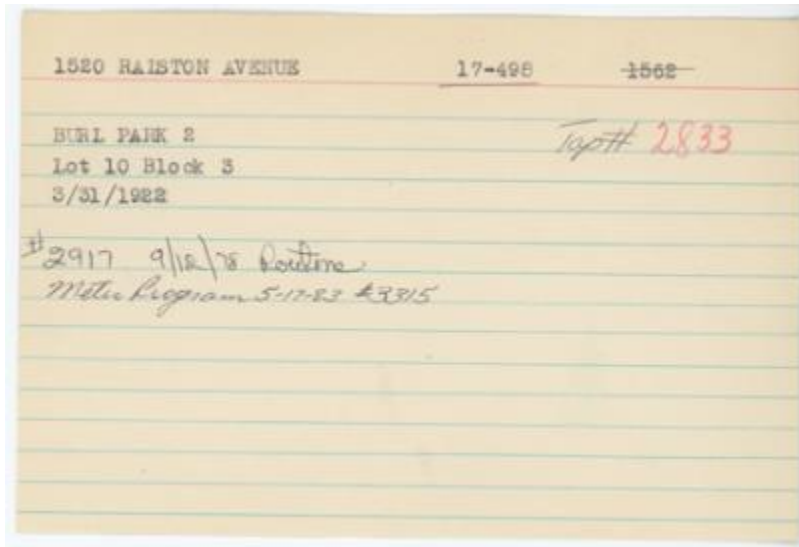


Figure 28. Water tap record for 1520 Ralston Avenue. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.



Figure 29. Assessor's Map, County of San Mateo, Calif., Burlingame Hills. Subject property shaded orange. Source: San Mateo County Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder Property Maps Portal. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

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Figure 30. 1921 Sanborn fire insurance map. Subject property boundary shaded orange.
Source: San Francisco Public Library. Edited by Page & Turnbull.



Figure 31: 1520 Ralston Avenue, aerial view (1941). Subject property boundary shaded orange. A former detached garage (demolished between 1949 and 1958) is visible at the far west property corner.
Source: Aerial photograph of Burlingame, Flight C-6660, Frame 355, Fairchild Aerial Surveys, March 22, 1941.

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Figure 32: 1949 Sanborn fire insurance map. Subject property boundary shaded orange.
Source: San Francisco Public Library. Edited by Page & Turnbull.



Figure 33: 1958 photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking northwest. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.



Figure 34: 1958 photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking southeast. Burlingame Historical Society.

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Figure 35: 1961 photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking northwest. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.

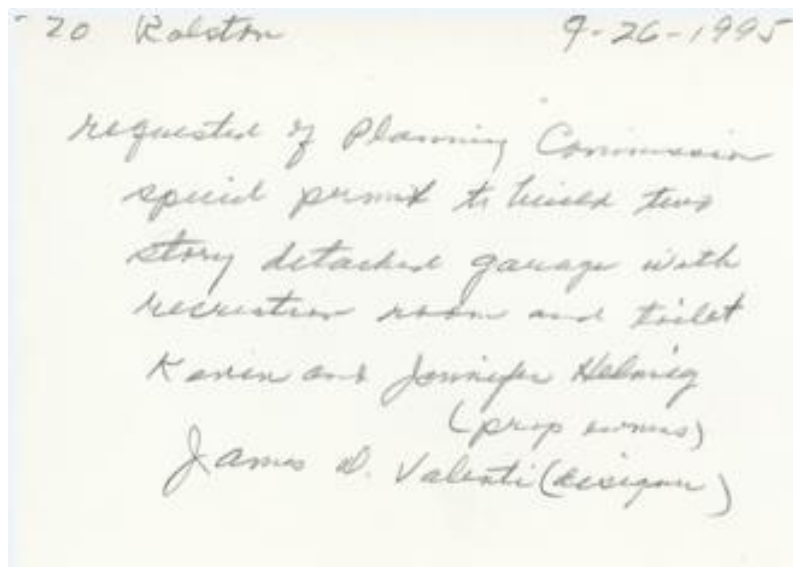


Figure 36: 1995 Planning Commission Meeting Minute notes.²¹ Source: Burlingame Historical Society.



Figure 37: 2003 photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking northwest. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.



Figure 38: 2003 photograph of 1520 Ralston Avenue, looking east. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.

²¹ The source of this notecard is not documented, but Burlingame Historical Society archivist Jennifer Pfaff believes the note likely references Planning Commission minutes.