

Final

501 PRIMROSE ROAD, BURLINGAME, CALIFORNIA

Historic Resource Evaluation

Prepared for
1BCity of Burlingame
Community Development Department

June 2026



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

501 Primrose Road Historic Resource Evaluation

This historic resource evaluation (HRE) documents the historic resource survey and evaluation completed by Environmental Science Associates (ESA) for the property located at 501 Primrose Road (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 029-112-400) in Burlingame, California.

On November 25, 2025, an ESA architectural historian conducted a pedestrian survey of the subject property and immediate vicinity using intensive-level survey methods. The subject property is occupied by the Burlingame City Hall, a historic-age building (i.e., a building that is at least 45 years of age) that has not previously been evaluated for historic or architectural significance and requires evaluation. The architectural resource is documented in the attached California Department of Parks and Recreation Series 523 (DPR 523) form set (**Appendix A**).

ESA recommends the subject property as individually eligible at the local level for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and the City of Burlingame Historic Architectural and Places Resources Register (local register). It appears to be individually eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C and California Register Criterion 3 as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The subject property also appears to be individually eligible for listing under City of Burlingame Criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed. The Burlingame City Hall retains a high degree of integrity. Therefore, the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road would be considered a historical resource for the purposes of environmental review.¹

¹ National Register criteria are not typically considered in evaluations of potential historical resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, the City of Burlingame uses National Register criteria to evaluate architectural resources for eligibility for listing on the local register.

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A. DPR 523 Form Set for 501 Primrose Road

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

ESA has prepared this HRE, which documents the methods and results of the historic resource survey and evaluation completed for the property located at 501 Primrose Road (APN 029-112-400) in Burlingame, California. The subject property contains one historic-age building that requires evaluation.

This HRE documents the existing conditions and history of the subject property to confirm its historic status. The work performed for this HRE consists of a review of property records on file at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) and the City of Burlingame, in-person and online research at various repositories, and an intensive-level built resource survey of the subject property. This HRE was prepared to preliminarily evaluate the potential historical resource at 501 Primrose Road according to the criteria set forth by the National Register, California Register, and the local register.

Subject Property

The 1.16-acre (50,413 square feet) subject property is located in downtown Burlingame, California, approximately 1,000 feet northeast of El Camino Real, 850 feet northwest of Burlingame Avenue, and 600 feet south of California Drive (**Figure 1**). It is occupied by the one- and two-story Burlingame City Hall that was constructed in 1969–1970.



SOURCE: ESA, 2025; USGS, 2025.

D202500704.01 - Burlingame City Hall Historic Resource Evaluation

Figure 1
Location Map of the Subject Property

CHAPTER 2

Regulatory Framework

The following is a summary of the regulatory environment used to assess potential historic resources in California and the City of Burlingame. National Register criteria are not typically considered in evaluations of potential historical resources under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, the City of Burlingame uses National Register criteria to evaluate architectural resources for eligibility for listing on the local register. This HRE applies all three levels of criteria (federal, state, and local) to provide sufficient support for future project planning related to the subject property.

Federal Regulations

National Register of Historic Places

Under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), a property (i.e., district, site, building, structure, or object) is eligible for listing in the National Register if it meets one or more of the following criteria (36 CFR 60.4):

- A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, or
- B. Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, or
- C. Embodies 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 distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, or
- D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting at least one of the four criteria, a property must retain integrity, meaning that it must be able to convey its significance through the retention of seven aspects, or qualities, that in various combinations define integrity:

- *Location*: Place where the historic property was constructed;
- *Design*: Combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure, and style of the property;
- *Setting*: The physical environment of the historic property, inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the buildings;
- *Materials*: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property;
- *Workmanship*: Physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history;

- *Feeling*: The property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time; and
- *Association*: Direct link between an important historic event or person and an historic property.

Although there are exceptions, certain kinds of properties are not usually considered for listing in the National Register. These include religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces and graves, cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years. Resources that are less than 50 years old are generally not considered eligible for the National Register.

State Regulations

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the State’s jurisdiction. Typically, a resource must be more than 50 years old to be considered as a potential historical resource. The OHP advises recordation of any resource 45 years or older, since “there is commonly a five-year lag between resource identification and the date that planning decisions are made.”²

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA, as codified in Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 21000 et seq., is the principal statute governing the environmental review of projects in the state. CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed project would have a significant effect on historical resources, including archaeological resources. The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15064.5(a)) define a historical resource as: (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 (California Register), (2) a resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of PRC Section 5024.1(g); or (3) any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that 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 historically significant, provided the lead agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. In addition, Section 15064.5 (a)(4) states that “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 PRC Section 5020.1(k)), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in PRC Section 5024.1(g)) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in PRC Sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.”

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register is “an authoritative listing and guide to be used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the State and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse

² California Office of Historic Preservation, *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources*, March 1995, 2.

change” (PRC Section 5024.1[a]). The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria (PRC Section 5024.1[b]). Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.

To be eligible for the California Register, a cultural resource must be significant at the local, state, and/or federal level under one or more of the following four criteria:

- **Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California.
- **Criterion 2 (Persons):** Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to history.
- **Criterion 3 (Design/Construction):** Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting at least one of the four criteria, a resource must retain integrity, meaning that it must have the ability to convey its significance through the retention of seven aspects, or qualities, that in various combinations define integrity. Consideration of integrity for California Register eligibility closely follows the seven aspects of integrity that apply to the National Register (listed above), and it generally has a lower threshold. It is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information or specific data.³

The California Register includes resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed in the National Register and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward; and
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Resources Commission for inclusion in the California Register.

Other resources that may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Historical resources assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) rating of 3 through 5 (those properties identified as eligible for listing in the National Register, the California Register, and/or a local jurisdiction register);

³ Codified in *California Code of Regulations*, Title 14, Chapter 11.5, Section 4852(c), accessed December 9, 2025, <https://casetext.com/regulation/california-code-of-regulations/title-14-natural-resources/division-3-department-of-parks-and-recreation/chapter-115-california-register-of-historical-resources/section-4852-types-of-historical-resources-and-criteria-for-listing-in-the-california-register-of-historical-resources>.

- Individual historic resources;
- Historic resources contributing to historic districts; and
- Historic resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as an historic preservation overlay zone.

Local Regulations

City of Burlingame Historic Architectural and Places Resources Register

Burlingame City Code Title 25 (Zoning Ordinance), Article 3, Chapter 25.35, Historic Resources includes a process for recognizing, preserving, and protecting historical resources. Furthermore, Section 25.35.040 establishes the City of Burlingame Historic Architectural and Places Resources Register (local register) as the City's official list of historic architectural resources and historic places. Any properties that are presently included on the California Register and/or the National Register shall automatically be included on the local register.⁴

The criteria for listing in the local register are based on those for the National Register (presented above). In addition to being eligible under one or more of the four National Register criteria, a historic architectural resource must also meet at least two of the following Burlingame-specific criteria:

1. Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.
2. Structures that help retain the characteristics of the town with respect to the immediate surroundings.
3. Structures that contribute to the unique urban quality of a downtown, for properties located within the Downtown Specific Plan.
4. Structures contributing to the architectural continuity of the street.
5. Structures that are identified with an event or person who significantly contributed to the culture and/or development of the City, State, or nation.
6. Structures that represent an architectural type or period and/or represent the design work of known architects, draftsmen, or builders whose efforts have significantly influenced the heritage of the City, State, or nation.
7. Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.
8. Buildings retaining the original integrity of and/or illustrating a given period.
9. Structures unique in design or detail, such as, but not limited to, materials, windows, landscaping, plaster finishes, and architectural innovation.

⁴ Codified in *City of Burlingame Code of Ordinances*, Title 25, Article 3, Chapter 25.35, Section 25.35.050 (b), accessed December 5, 2025, <https://ecode360.com/44514905>.

10. Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years, at the time the determination is made, if they are of exceptional importance.
11. Places that have been visited by a person or persons important to City, State, national, or international history or prehistory.⁵

Current Historic Status

The Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road is not currently listed on the National Register, California Register, or local register. It does not appear to have been previously evaluated for its potential historic significance, and it does not contribute to a known historic district. The subject property is not listed in the Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD) for San Mateo County.⁶

⁵ Codified in *City of Burlingame Code of Ordinances*, Title 25, Article 3, Chapter 25.35, Section 25.35.040 (c), accessed December 5, 2025, <https://ecode360.com/44514865#44514886>.

⁶ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) for San Mateo County*, September 2022, accessed December 5, 2025, <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1068/files/San%20Mateo.csv>.

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CHAPTER 3

Historic Context

Early 20th-Century History of Burlingame

501 Primrose Road is located in the Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan Area. The following history of Burlingame during the early 20th century is an excerpt from the 2008 *Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*.

Burlingame began to grow at the turn of the century following the establishment of the railroad station and post office. In 1901 the city's first two businesses, a combination bank and post office and a grocery store, opened on Burlingame Square. George W. Gates, the city's first station manager and an early postmaster, constructed the drug store and post office on a parcel now adjacent to the Bank of Burlingame on California Drive. Despite this growth, Burlingame Avenue remained a tree-lined dirt road. Only gravel paths meant for pedestrian and bicycle use extended from the avenue and led to open fields cultivated with oats, wheat, and beets.

A new streetcar line complementing the service provided by the Southern Pacific Railroad further spurred development in Burlingame. In 1903 the Market Street Railway established Line 40, which ran south from San Francisco through the peninsula and stimulated growth in Burlingame and other cities in San Mateo County. Development radiated out from Burlingame's railroad station, and additional land was surveyed and subdivided. That same year, the Burlingame Land Company hired Davenport Bromfield to survey and plat an area bounded by Oak Grove Avenue to the north, El Camino Real to the west, Burlingame Avenue to the south, and the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks to the east. Two years later, he subdivided the area on behalf of the company, and it became the city's downtown hub.

Burlingame sustained little damage during the 1906 earthquake and fires; thus, residents from San Francisco quickly moved south to the town and bought hundreds of city lots. The town's population grew from 200 in 1906 to around 1,000 in 1907 as a result of this new settlement. Additionally, several influential social clubs, including the Burlingame Advancement League and the Burlingame Women's Club, were established. Other civic and religious organizations were also established around this time, including the town's first church, the First Baptist Church, in 1906, the first volunteer fire department in 1907, and the first free library in 1908.

In 1908 residents voted to incorporate the Town of Burlingame and elected the first board of trustees and supervisors. By 1910, the neighboring town of Easton, on the former Buri Buri Rancho, was annexed to the town as well. That same year, residents living near the Burlingame Country Club incorporated their own town, Hillsborough, in order to preserve their country setting. Burlingame's town trustees first met in a vacant building on Burlingame Square but soon moved to Weinberg Hall on Lorton Avenue. The trustees occupied the upper story, and other city officials, such as the tax collector and superintendent of streets, occupied the first story. The town retained Charles Peter Weeks,

a noted Bay Area architect, to design the two-story brick city hall [at 237 Park Avenue (**Figure 2**)]. City officials moved into the new building after its completion in 1914 [and occupied it until the completion of the present City Hall at 501 Primrose Road in 1970].

Burlingame experienced explosive growth following its incorporation in 1908, and its population reached over 4,100 residents by 1920. As a result, numerous new businesses were established along Burlingame Avenue, and many new homes were constructed in the surrounding neighborhoods. By the mid-1930s, the city boasted of having over 4,000 single-family homes, 83 apartment buildings, 15 duplexes, and over 250 businesses. The town evolved into a mature city with fire and police departments, a new jail, several newspapers, six elementary schools, and one high school. Over fifty civic, religious, and social organizations had been established to serve the 13,000 residents. Burlingame continued to grow over the twentieth century and [in 2008] has a population of approximately 28,000 residents.⁷



Source: Burlingame Historical Society

Figure 2

First Burlingame City Hall, Undated

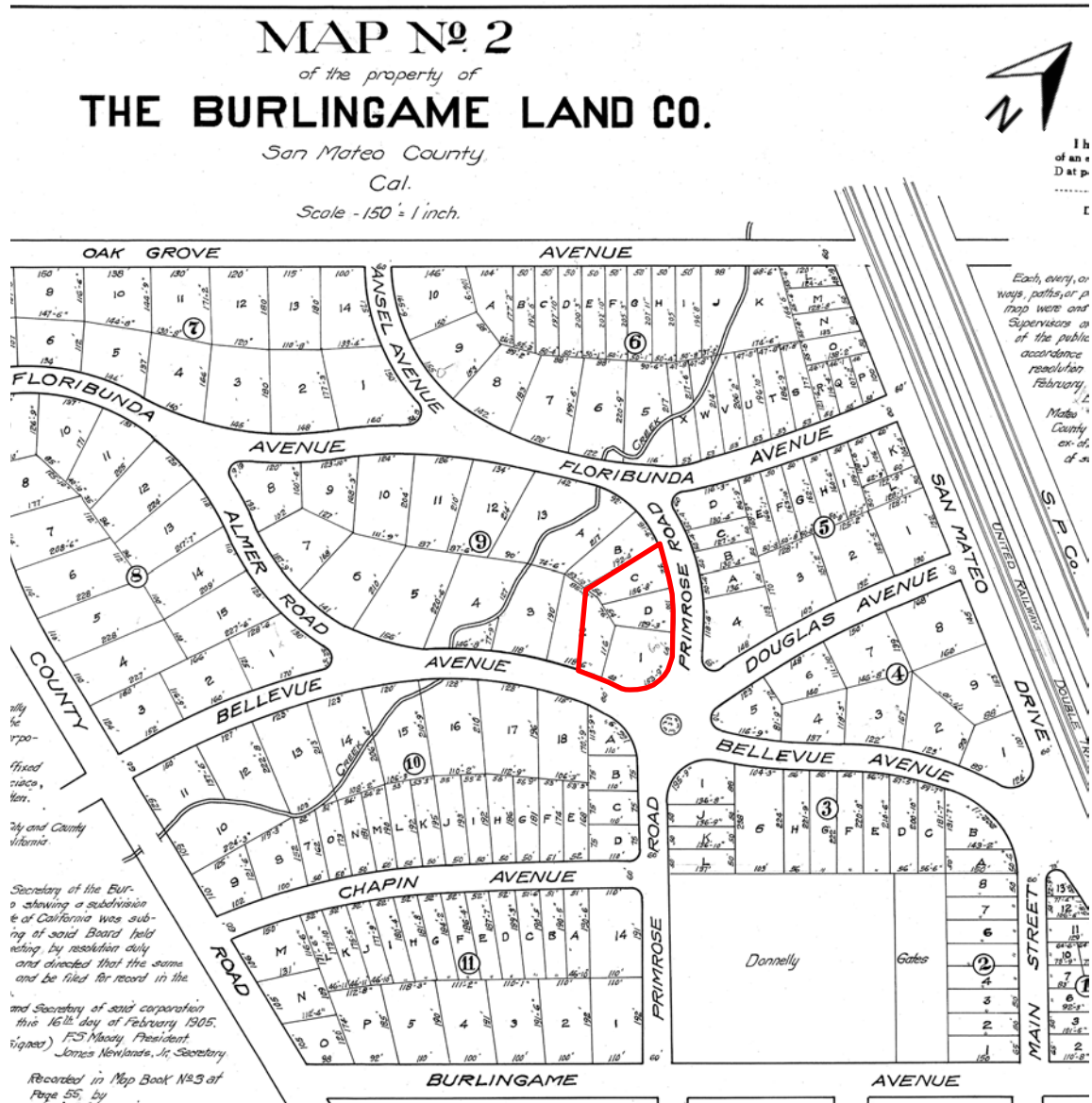
Site History

The subject property was originally platted in 1903 as part of the Burlingame Land Co.'s subdivision and filed by San Mateo County in 1904.⁸ The subdivision map was refined and refiled with the county in

⁷ Carey & Co., *Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, October 6, 2008, 8–9, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://www.burlingame.org/DocumentCenter/View/627/Historic-Resources-Inventory-PDF>.

⁸ "Subdivision of the Property of the Burlingame Land Co., San Mateo Co., Cal," 1903, on file at the San Mateo County Assessor, accessed December 8, 2025, https://gis.smcgov.org/gis_exchange/rastermaps/RSMvol003/3-RSM-PG022-BURLINGAME%20LAND%20CO.TIF.

1905 (Figure 3).⁹ Note that the original property lines do not align with the current boundaries of the subject property; rather, three entire parcels (i.e., lots 1, C, and D) and a portion of a fourth parcel (i.e., Lot 2) were originally contained within the modern subject property.¹⁰



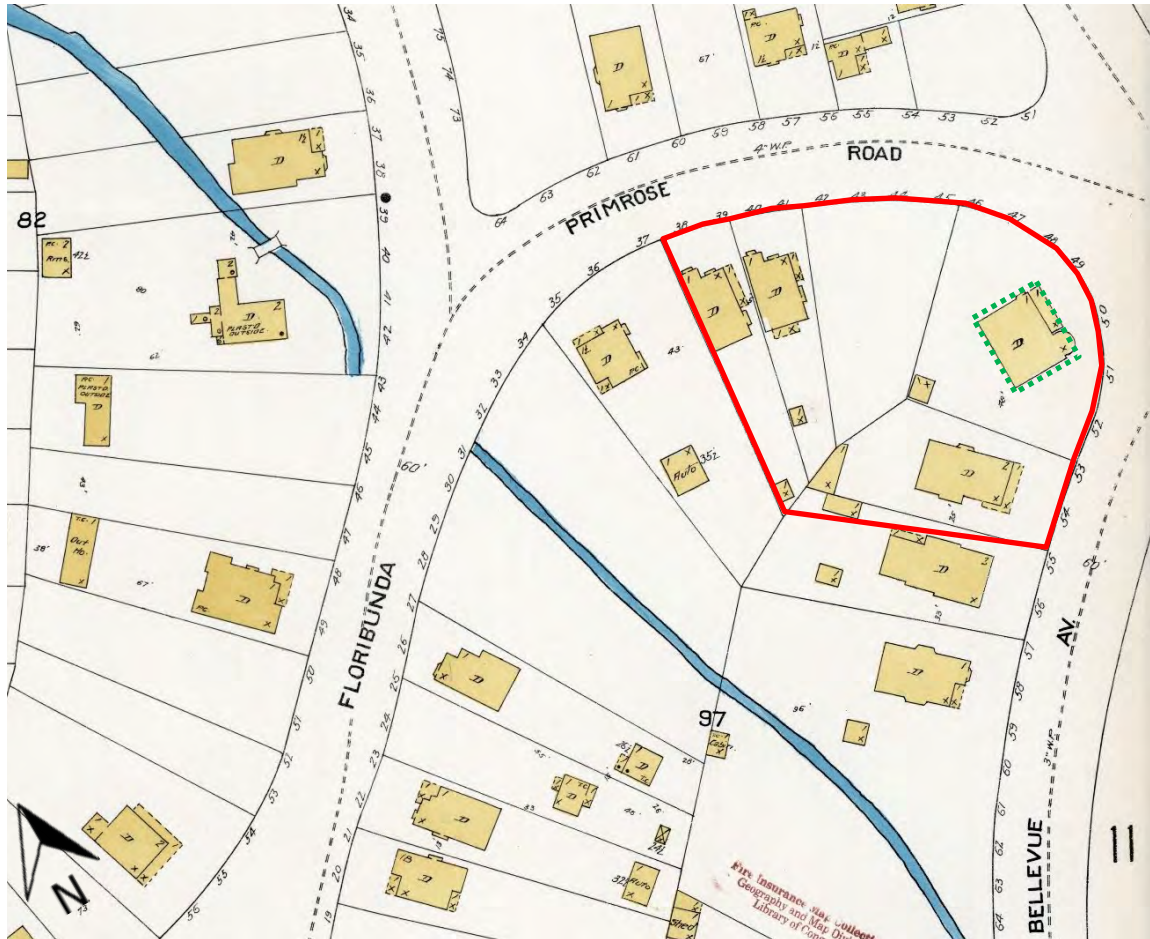
Note: The current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red.
Source: San Mateo County Assessor; edited by ESA

Figure 3
Detail from the Burlingame Land Co. Subdivision Map, 1905

⁹ “Map No. 2 of the Property of the Burlingame Land Co., San Mateo County, Cal.,” 1905, on file at the San Mateo County Assessor, accessed December 8, 2025, https://gis.smcgov.org/gis_exchange/rastermaps/RSMvol003/3-RSM-PG055-BURLINGAME%20LAND%20CO.%20MAP%20NO.%202.TIF.

¹⁰ This is confirmed by the legal description of the subject property: “1.14 ac mol being lots 1 C D & ptn lot 2 block 9 Burlingame Land Co No 2 RSM D/38.” ParcelQuest, accessed December 8, 2025, <http://www.parcelquest.com>.

By 1913, the following buildings were constructed within the modern boundaries of the subject property: two one-story, single-family dwellings addressed as 511 and 517 Primrose Road; a one-story, single-family dwelling variously addressed as 501 Primrose Road and 1400 Bellevue Avenue; and a two-story, single-family dwelling addressed as 1406 Bellevue Avenue (**Figure 4**).¹¹



Note: The approximate current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red. The original location of 501 Primrose Road/1400 Bellevue Avenue is outlined in a dashed green line.

Source: Historical Information Gatherers; edited by ESA

Figure 4

Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, 1913

¹¹ The addresses are not shown on the 1913 Sanborn map, but they are shown on the 1921 Sanborn map.



Note: The current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red. Northeast is up. The relocated building originally addressed as 501 Primrose Road/1400 Bellevue Avenue is outlined in a dashed green line.

Source: UC Santa Barbara Library's FrameFinder; edited by ESA

Figure 5

Aerial Photograph, 1941

Based on a review of historic aerial photographs, all buildings and structures within the modern boundaries of the subject property were razed sometime between April 1960 and August 1966, after which time the site was vacant (**Figure 6**).

The City had outgrown its 1914 City Hall (variously addressed as 267 Park Road and 237 Park Avenue) by the mid-1940s, and the space became more cramped and the building became more deteriorated over the subsequent decades.¹² In early 1962, the Burlingame City Council hired local architect William A. Whifler to prepare plans to renovate the 1914 City Hall and the building at 1240–1260 Howard Avenue (which housed the Burlingame Police Department) as an annex for the City Hall.¹³ The selection of Whifler “was based on a rotation list [of qualified architects] set up by the council [in 1961] in connection

¹² John Morrill, “City Hall: From This to This,” *Burlingame Advance Star*, April 1, 1970, 3A.

¹³ “Burlingame Council Selects Architect,” unknown publication, January 16, 1962, on file at the Burlingame Historical Society.

with awarding city construction projects.”¹⁴ In August 1962, Whifler reported that the 1914 City Hall was structurally unsound as a result of “several remodelings” and “is presently unsafe for public use.”¹⁵ Along with his professional recommendation that City Hall should be rebuilt on another site or else seismically retrofitted immediately, Whifler provided “line drawings of new city offices which could adequately house the city offices, on the present site, with additional parking, at a cost of approximately \$341,550.”¹⁶ Although the scheme was not adopted, Whifler remained involved in the planning for improved civic facilities.

In a general election held in November 1966, the citizens of Burlingame voted in favor of constructing a new City Hall building on the subject property, a site that was recommended by a citizens’ committee.^{17,18} In May 1967, the City purchased the subject property as the future site of a new City Hall building for a cost of \$405,000.¹⁹



Note: The view is facing northeast. The intersection of Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue is visible in the right background.

Source: *Burlingame Advance Star*, February 14, 1969

Figure 6

Bird's-Eye View of the Vacant Future Site of City Hall, 1969

The Burlingame City Council selected three local architects—Whifler, Albert W. Kahl, and Venice T. Howell—to jointly design a new City Hall building. (For more information about the architects, see the Design Professionals section below.) The plans were approved on December 2, 1968, and bids were

¹⁴ “Burlingame Council Selects Architect.”

¹⁵ “‘Tear Down City Hall’ in Burlingame: Remodeling Unwise Says Architect,” *San Mateo Times*, August 3, 1962, 17.

¹⁶ “‘Tear Down City Hall’ in Burlingame: Remodeling Unwise Says Architect.”

¹⁷ “Burlingame Council Oks New City Hall,” *San Mateo Times*, August 16, 1966, 1–2.

¹⁸ “Question Raises Question,” *San Mateo Times*, August 31, 1966, 58.

¹⁹ “City Hall Dedication Program,” April 4, 1970, n.p., on file at the Burlingame Historical Society.

announced the following month.²⁰ Construction began on February 24, 1969, and the completed building was officially dedicated on April 4, 1970 (**Figures 7 and 8**).²¹

In 2004, the City of Burlingame commissioned a facilities master plan study. The document assessed the deficiencies of the conditions of the 33-year-old City Hall building and concluded that it did not meet current building or accessibility needs.²²



Source: Burlingame Historical Society

Figure 7

Cover from the "Special Dedication Edition" of the *Burlingame Advance Star*, April 1, 1970

Ownership and Occupancy History

The Burlingame City Hall (including the building and the property) have been continuously owned and occupied by the City of Burlingame since construction was completed in 1970.

²⁰ "New City Hall Plans Approved in Burlingame," *San Mateo Times*, December 3, 1968, 30.

²¹ "City Hall Dedication Program."

²² Gensler, *Facilities Master Plan Report (Draft)*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, September 2004, 49, on file at the City of Burlingame.



Source: Burlingame Historical Society

Figure 8

Cover from the "Special Dedication Edition" of the *Burlingame Advance Star*, April 1, 1970

Building Permit History

Building permits on file at the City of Burlingame’s Building Division that have been issued and completed (as opposed to cancelled or expired) are listed chronologically in **Table 1**. Note that no building permits predate 2001, and non-building permits (e.g., electrical, plumbing, etc.) are not included in Table 1.

TABLE 1
BUILDING PERMIT HISTORY OF 501 PRIMROSE ROAD

Date	Permit No.	Description of Work
2001	HST-2010021	Tenant improvements in first-floor office space
2005	B05-0030	Office remodel
2008	R08-0053	Install tongue-and-groove roof decking in City Council Chambers and entryway
2010	B10-0285	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades for the staff kitchen
2011	B11-0340	Interior remodel in Finance Department
2017	B16-0451	Remodel of Engineering Department
2018	B17-0437	Interior demolition and construction of second-floor office for Community Development Department. Architect: Nilmeyer & Nilmeyer Assoc.
2019	B19-0363	Addition of interior partitions to city attorney’s office. Architect: KRJ Design Group.
2022	B-22-0563	Interior remodel of the Finance Department

Source: City of Burlingame Building Division

In addition to the abovementioned alterations, 501 Primrose Road has been the subject of several technical studies in recent years. These include a citywide facilities master plan (2004);²³ asbestos studies (2011, 2014, and 2025);^{24,25,26,27,28,29} an electrical study (2012);³⁰ and facilities assessment studies (2013 and 2016).^{31,32}

²³ Gensler, *Facilities Master Plan Report (Draft)*, 2004.

²⁴ C&W Environmental Consulting Inc., “Asbestos Air Sampling Preliminary Report of Findings: Finance Department Above-Ceiling Investigation, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 9401,” prepared for the City of Burlingame, November 2011, on file at the City of Burlingame.

²⁵ C&W Environmental Consulting Inc., “Asbestos Report of Findings: Finance Department/Mail Room Wall Removal, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 9401,” 2011.

²⁶ RestCon Environmental, “City Hall Planning Department 2nd Floor, Asbestos Abatement for Repairing Mechanical System, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 94010,” prepared for the City of Burlingame, July 2014, on file at the City of Burlingame.

²⁷ RestCon Environmental, “City Hall & Council chambers Report regarding Phased Abatement, City Hall, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 94010,” 2014.

²⁸ RestCon Environmental, “Renovation of the Second Floor Public Works, City Hall, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 94010,” prepared for the City of Burlingame, October 2014, on file at the City of Burlingame.

²⁹ CMS Environmental Services, “Background Air Sampling Activities: the City of Burlingame City Hall” (CMS Project No. 2025017), prepared for the City of Burlingame, September 2025, on file at the City of Burlingame.

³⁰ Thermostat Inc., *Arc-Flash Hazard & Short Circuit Analysis Study: 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, California*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, September 2012, on file at the City of Burlingame.

³¹ Forell/Elsesser Engineers Inc., *Burlingame City Hall & Council Chambers Facilities Assessment Study, 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, CA 94010*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, July 2013, on file at the City of Burlingame.

³² Kitchell Facilities Management, *Comprehensive Facility Condition Assessment Report: City Hall*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, August 2016, on file at the City of Burlingame.

Late Modernism, 1960s–1980s

The Burlingame City Hall embodies elements of Late Modernism, which is defined in the *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement* as “a broad, umbrella term that encompasses a variety of expressions of Modernist architecture during a period beginning in the 1960s [through the 1980s] that saw many divergences within and reactions to the orthodoxy of the Modern Movement.”³³ That document summarizes the significance of Late Modernism as follows:

The perceived uniformity and repetitiveness of the International Style and Miesian architecture, and a sense that Modernism had become mundane in its more banal and corporate expressions, caused architects to explore new forms—often characterized by an exaggeration of scale, material, structure, or repetition. As Late Modernism is characterized by varied forms and sub-genres, it can be difficult to define with generalizations. Typically, Late Modern commercial, institutional, and infrastructure buildings are monumental in scale; have sculptural qualities, including strong linear elements, pronounced structural components, or an interplay of planes or geometric volumes, as well as a visual weight to their form and materials... Some of the most iconic buildings in San Francisco [and other cities in the Bay Area] are Late Modernist, or belong to a sub-theme of Late Modernism [i.e., Corporate Late Modernism, Brutalism, New Formalism, or Third Bay Tradition]. Late Modernism is also influenced by local and regional concerns with environmentalism, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, and new urban planning principles.³⁴

The document also provides useful contextual information about buildings that share characteristics of the subject building, specifically institutional buildings.

Institutional Late Modernism and Infrastructure

The distinct heaviness of material and form of Late Modernism is evident in institutional buildings and infrastructure, which include educational and medical complexes, religious institutions, community centers, fire stations, and BART stations. Monumental geometric form and massing are often combined with substantial construction materials such as concrete and brick, with fewer or more deeply recessed windows than earlier expressions of Modernism, and a distinctive interplay between the planes and volumes.

Religious buildings tend toward more Expressionist modes of Late Modernism, characterized by soaring or swooping monumental forms. The sculptural treatment of architecture in America is particularly associated with architect Eero Saarinen...

High-Tech architecture (or High-Tech Structuralism or Structural Expressionism) emerged in the 1970s as an expression of Late Modernism that uses technology, high-tech materials, and systems as the driver of design and seeks to make these features and systems highly visible. The approach was pioneered in Britain by architects such as Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, and others contributed significantly to the style, including Renzo Piano and Santiago Calatrava. The use of space frames, tensile roofs,

³³ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, adopted August 2024, 86.

³⁴ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, adopted August 2024, 86.

and cable structures, and futuristic-looking technology also captured the imagination of the public at Expo '70 in Osaka [Japan]. Notable space frame buildings that were built soon after in the Bay Area include the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (1972, Braccia, De Brer, Heglund) and Concord Pavilion (1975, Frank O. Gehry, Peter Walker). The fullest expression of High-Tech architecture built in [the Bay Area] was the Moscone Convention Center (originally known as the Yerba Buena Convention Center) [in San Francisco], which demonstrates the possibilities of long-span bridge technology applied to building design. Completed in 1982, the Moscone Convention Center was designed by the renowned structural engineer T.Y. Lin, and featured a 250,000-square-foot, column-free underground exhibit hall; in 2019, an expansion of the convention center, including a new three-story building, was completed by SOM with Mark Cavagnero Associates, which retained structural elements of the original building but has completely transformed the look and design. Although full expressions of High-Tech Structuralism are rare within [the Bay Area], architects utilized some of the principles of structural expression to create dynamic works of Late Modernist architecture that clearly articulate their structural systems and use structure as a kind of sculptural expression.³⁵

Character-defining features of Late Modernist architecture include but are not limited to:

- Massing and materials are often visually heavier than earlier Modernism.
- Strong geometric or sculptural forms, including repeating modules or an interplay of planes and volumes, are typical of the massing.
- Flat roofs are common, but other roof forms, including shed, parabolic, and flat-on-hipped, may be used.
- Shed roof forms framed by projecting stucco side parapets are distinctive of Late Modernism.
- Concrete, brick, metal, and concrete or synthetic panels are more common materials for commercial and institutional examples, whereas stucco, wood, and concrete are typical of residential examples.
- Structure or structural components may be pronounced.
- Expressionist and sculptural form, including cantilevered or parabolic roofs, are most closely associated with religious architecture.³⁶

Design Professionals

Below is a list of all known professionals involved with the design and execution of the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road. Brief biographies of the architect and landscape architect follow.

- Architect: Kahl, Howell & Whifler, Burlingame
- Landscape architect: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey, San Francisco
- General contractor: Near-Cal Corporation, San Jose

³⁵ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco Planning Department, adopted August 2024, 83–84

³⁶ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement*, 88.

- Structural engineer: Rinne, Hammond & Peterson, Palo Alto
- Mechanical engineer: Charles & Braun, San Francisco
- Electrical engineer: Marion & Cerbatos, San Francisco³⁷

Kahl, Howell & Whifler, Architect

The architectural firm of Kahl, Howell & Whifler was a partnership among Burlingame architects Albert W. Kahl, Venice T. Howell, and William A. Whifler. The partnership existed only during the design and construction of the Burlingame City Hall, and that was the firm's only completed project. According to Whifler's son, Graeme Whifler, Kahl was the group's spokesperson; indeed, he regularly represented the firm in public settings, as recorded in Burlingame City Council meeting minutes from 1968 to 1971. Whifler was the principal designer and presented his ideas to Kahl for discussion, and Howell was a childhood friend of Whifler's who was periodically hired to assist on Whifler's more complicated projects.³⁸

The selection of Kahl, Howell & Whifler by the City of Burlingame was confirmed in a resolution dated April 1, 1968.³⁹ Although not confirmed by archival research, it seems likely that Whifler was among the selected architects due to the role he played in the early 1960s during the City's plans to renovate the 1914 City Hall.

The Burlingame City Council approved the plans for the new City Hall on December 2, 1968, and bids were announced the following month.⁴⁰ The firm hired Near-Cal Corporation as the general contractor in February 1969, and the completion of all construction was recorded on July 6, 1970.⁴¹

Archival research did not locate original design drawings attributed to Kahl, Howell & Whifler.⁴²

Albert W. Kahl, AIA

Architect Albert W. Kahl (1911–1998) was born in San Francisco. He received his training at the San Francisco Architecture Club, the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and the University of California. Before establishing a sole practitionership in 1946, Kahl was employed by the architecture firms of Albert F. Roller (1929–1945) and Huber & Knapic (1944).⁴³ He was later a partner in the firms of Sharps, Kahl & Brown and Kahl & Davis.⁴⁴

³⁷ "Careful Planning Preceded Move," *San Mateo Times*, April 3, 1970, 6.

³⁸ Graeme Whifler, phone interview with Johanna Kahn (ESA), December 15, 2025.

³⁹ "Resolution No. 28-68," April 1, 1968, on file at the City of Burlingame.

⁴⁰ "New City Hall Plans Approved in Burlingame," *San Mateo Times*, December 3, 1968, 30.

⁴¹ "Resolution No. 63-70," July 6, 1970, on file at the City of Burlingame.

⁴² Original architectural plans for 501 Primrose Road are not on file at the Burlingame Building Division or the Planning Department. They are also not in the possession of Whifler's son, Graeme Whifler.

⁴³ *American Architects Directory*, 1st ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bownker Co. 1956), 285, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20644319/2218721523/Bowker_1956_K.pdf.

⁴⁴ *American Architects Directory*, 2nd ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bownker Co. 1962), 362, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20677106/1962+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20677106/2218754326/Bowker_1962_K.pdf.

An HRE for the Millbrae Serra Convalescent Hospital concluded that “[w]hile Albert W. Kahl may be found to be a master architect, there is little scholarly literature on his career. Certainly he did design some attractive and important public buildings.”⁴⁵ Below is a partial list of Kahl’s completed projects in California.

- 1954: Collaboration with architects Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons for the California State Printing Plant in Sacramento;⁴⁶
- 1951: One-story commercial building for E. Massolo in Millbrae;⁴⁷
- 1951: Medical-dental building for Dr. Theo Poulsen in Orland;⁴⁸
- 1951: Administration building at Willows Airport in Willows;⁴⁹
- 1951: Addition to the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Red Bluff;⁵⁰
- 1952: Corning Memorial Hospital in Tehama County;⁵¹
- 1952: Two-story building for the Millbrae Sanitarium in Millbrae;⁵²
- 1952: Office building for William Volker & Co. in Burlingame;⁵³
- 1952: Factory building for Pacific Screw Products Co. in South San Francisco;⁵⁴
- 1953: St. Joseph’s School in Redding;⁵⁵
- 1954: Woodside Acres Hospital in Redwood City;⁵⁶
- 1954: Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) in Watsonville;⁵⁷
- 1956: Office building in Red Bluff;⁵⁸

⁴⁵ Heritage Resource Consulting, *Historic Resource Evaluation for Two Commercial Buildings in Millbrae, San Mateo County, California: Millbrae Serra Convalescent Hospital (150 Serra Street) and Millbrae Cabinet Shop (190 El Camino Real)*, September 2015, 19, accessed December 8, 2025, https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/MSASP_Final_EIR_Appendices.pdf.

⁴⁶ *American Architects Directory*, 1st ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bownker Co. 1956), 285, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20644319/2218721523/Bowker_1956_K.pdf.

⁴⁷ *Architect and Engineer*, February 1951, 45.

⁴⁸ *Architect and Engineer*, June 1951, 46.

⁴⁹ *Architect and Engineer*, September 1951, 46.

⁵⁰ *Architect and Engineer*, December 1951, 42.

⁵¹ *American Architects Directory*, 1st ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bownker Co. 1956), 285, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20644319/2218721523/Bowker_1956_K.pdf.

⁵² *Architect and Engineer*, February 1952, 44.

⁵³ *Architect and Engineer*, May 1952, 48.

⁵⁴ *Architect and Engineer*, May 1952, 48.

⁵⁵ *American Architects Directory*, 1st ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bownker Co. 1956), 285, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20644319/2218721523/Bowker_1956_K.pdf.

⁵⁶ *American Architects Directory*, 285.

⁵⁷ *American Architects Directory*, 285.

⁵⁸ *Architect and Engineer*, January 1956, 44.

- 1956: One-story annex to the existing courthouse in Willows;⁵⁹
- 1956: Medical office building on San Mateo Drive in San Mateo;⁶⁰
- 1956: Fire station in Vacaville;⁶¹
- 1956: Hospital building for the Pioneer Memorial Hospital District in Escalon;⁶²
- 1956: Millbrae City Hall (**Figure 9**);⁶³
- 1958: Mercy Hospital in Red Bluff;⁶⁴
- 1959: Sierra Hospital in Sonora;⁶⁵
- 1960: Lassen Memorial Hospital in Susanville;⁶⁶
- 1965–1966: Calaveras County Government Center in San Andreas;⁶⁷ and
- Ca. 1977: Alterations and addition to the Mariposa County Jail.⁶⁸



Source: Danny Chan (Google Maps), 2021

Figure 9

Millbrae City Hall designed by Kahl

⁵⁹ *Architect and Engineer*, February 1956, 43.

⁶⁰ *Architect and Engineer*, February 1956, 46–47.

⁶¹ *Architect and Engineer*, March 1956, 46.

⁶² *Architect and Engineer*, June 1956, 48.

⁶³ *Architect and Engineer*, December 1956, 48.

⁶⁴ *American Architects Directory*, 2nd ed., (New York, NY: R.R. Bowker Co. 1962), 362, accessed December 8, 2025, https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20677106/1962+American+Architects+Directory?prevIEW=/20677106/2218754326/Bowker_1962_K.pdf.

⁶⁵ *American Architects Directory*, 362.

⁶⁶ *American Architects Directory*, 362.

⁶⁷ John Deacon, “Calaveras County,” *American Courthouses*, 2013, accessed December 8, 2025, <https://courthouses.co/us-states/states-a-g/california/calaveras-county/>.

⁶⁸ “Mariposa County Resolution No. 77-77,” May 31, 1977, accessed December 8, 2025, https://www.mariposacounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/74318/Resolution_1977-077?bidId=.

Venice T. Howell, AIA

Venice T. Howell (1924–2006) was a self-taught architect.⁶⁹ Archival research revealed very little information about Howell’s life or career, and it does not appear that his body of work has been studied previously. Besides the Burlingame City Hall, which is his best-known work, Howell designed the first addition to the Burlingame Public Library (date unconfirmed);⁷⁰ an office building at 1881 El Camino Real in Burlingame (1965);⁷¹ and a collaboration with William A. Whifler, AIA, for the Tait Auction Studio at 1209 Howard Avenue in Burlingame (1965) (**Figure 10**).⁷²



Note: The building is extant and has been extensively remodeled on the exterior..

Source: Burlingame Historical Society

Figure 10

1209 Howard Avenue in Burlingame designed by Whifler and Howell, 1966

William A. Whifler, AIA

The following biography of William A. Whifler (1926–1984) is an excerpt from the National Register nomination for the William A. Whifler House in Burlingame in which he was established as a master architect:

[...] Beginning in the mid-1950s, and for some 20 years, Whifler’s architectural practice consisted primarily of designing more than a dozen single-family residential buildings located within the mid-Peninsula communities of San Mateo, Burlingame, and

⁶⁹ “Venice T. Howell” (obituary), *San Mateo County Times*, July 6, 2006.

⁷⁰ “Venice T. Howell” (obituary).

⁷¹ “Company Is Formed,” *San Mateo Times*, July 1, 1965, 13.

⁷² “New Auction Studio Sets Open House,” *San Mateo Times*, September 30, 1965, 20.

Hillsborough. The notable exception occurred in 1968, when Whifler, with two other architects of record, designed the City of Burlingame's new City Hall.

Whifler began his studies at Stanford in engineering, only later on moving into architecture. The course content and lasting influence of these two separate, and definitely related fields of study are readily apparent in his architectural solutions. This is especially true in the design and construction of the house at 1544 Drake Avenue that he built for his mother, Clara Whifler, in 1958. [...]

The house at 1544 Drake Avenue epitomizes the distinctive, character defining features that are definitively associated with Modernist architecture: natural integration of indoor spaces with outdoor living areas; floor-to-ceiling glazing for penetration of natural light; an organic melding of wood, glass, steel and masonry; and sizing and shaping of the building to achieve a harmonious union with the site and its setting. Given its extraordinary design and use of building materials, as well as its 1958 date of construction, Whifler's house most likely existed at this point in time as a rare, exemplary expression of Modernist architecture among the mid-Peninsula communities of Burlingame, Hillsborough, and San Mateo. In 1965, The Women's Architectural League and the Northern California Chapter of the A.I.A. featured 1544 Drake Avenue in a local house tour. Reporting on the tour, an article in the Burlingame Advance Star observed: "As further contrast with the large homes [of Hillsborough] is the small, exquisite home of Mrs. Clara Whifler, designed by her architect son, William A. Whifler." [...]

Early Whifler residential projects, completed prior to the Drake Avenue house, began with the house at 20 La Salle Road, Hillsborough, which he designed and built as the family home beginning in 1952. According to Graeme Whifler, "the architect's home underwent eight major alterations and additions that nearly doubled the structure's square footage, and served as experimental canvases for design concepts. Constructed in large part by the architect and his family."

While apprenticing under Oscar Thayer, and prior to obtaining his license on October 8, 1956 as a registered California architect, Whifler completed work on two other early houses: 620 Pullman, Hillsborough, featured in the California Book of Homes in its 1955 issue; and 1280 View Haven, Hillsborough, completed in 1956 and referred to as the "Pentagon" house by Graeme Whifler due to its character defining design and use of two pentagon pods. [...]

In addition to 1544 Drake Avenue and the three early houses just referenced, Whifler completed 10 other known residential projects. The last home that Whifler designed, 240 Glen Aulin, Burlingame, was completed in 1973. Graeme Whifler observed that his father's design for this house was inspired by major cathedrals in Europe, as the floor plan of the house resembles a cross, at the center of which is a circular kitchen. This house remains intact and under original ownership.

A second house that also remains under original ownership [...] was completed circa 1968 and is located at 2180 Forest View, Hillsborough. Graeme Whifler characterized this house as "a gem rich in detail."

The other residential projects attributable to Whifler are located in communities on the San Francisco Peninsula, with the exception of a modest, two-story house located in

Greenbrae, Marin County, and a cabin located on Sardine Lake, near Sierra City in Plumas County, California. [...]

Whifler's one and only non-residential project was the new Burlingame City Hall, completed in April 1970. Whifler and two other architects, Albert W. Kahl, AIA, and Venice T. Howell, AIA, worked jointly in designing and supervising construction of this civic building located at 501 Primrose Avenue. [...] Cost of the new complex was reported in the Burlingame Advance Star as being \$1,245,512.56, a source of some controversy within the community, as the former City Hall, located at 237 Park Avenue [variously addressed as 267 Park Road] and erected in 1914, had reportedly cost only \$25,000.00.

*With the obvious exception of the new Burlingame City Hall, for which Whifler was one of three architects commissioned for the project, Whifler preferred to work on his own for the 20-plus years in which he designed and supervised construction of his residential buildings. According to architect John Lucchesi, a student of Whifler's at the College of San Mateo, and author of several articles regarding Whifler's work, Whifler always desired to work alone, for he liked being a sole practitioner and wanted any mistakes to be his own. Whifler, he recalled, was very sensitive to the importance of light, and especially enjoyed working with materials, with a pronounced interest in welding, putting things together and always wanting to make sure things worked. Lucchesi also observed that Whifler was a very modest and humble designer, never promoting his work or himself. [...]*⁷³

Royston, Hanamoto, Beck, & Abey, Landscape Architect

The landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall is attributed to the prolific San Francisco landscape architecture firm Royston, Hanamoto, Beck, & Abey (RHBA).^{74,75} Archival research did not locate original design drawings attributed to RHBA.⁷⁶

The firm's name changed periodically from the 1950s through the 1970s to reflect the current leadership, and RHBA practiced ca. 1967–1979.⁷⁷ The San Francisco Planning Department considers the founder, Robert Royston (1918–2008), to be a master landscape architect in his own right who was “enormously influential in the development of Modern landscape design in San Francisco” as well as in the greater Bay Area.⁷⁸ More than 60 of Royston's completed projects are listed in the *San Francisco Modern*

⁷³ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for William A. Whifler House (1544 Drake Avenue, Burlingame, CA), prepared by Graeme Whifler, 2016, 13–16, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/0c47aa63-cda2-4a4b-84e2-ca342168b392>.

⁷⁴ “Careful Planning Preceded Move,” *San Mateo Times*, April 3, 1970, 6.

⁷⁵ “Finding Aid for the Robert N. Royston Collection, 1999-12,” Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, accessed December 8, 2025, https://oac.cdlib.org/static_findaids/ark:/13030/kt8b69q7nx.html.

⁷⁶ Original design drawings for 501 Primrose Road are not on file at the Burlingame Building Division or the Planning Department.

⁷⁷ In addition to RHBA, founding principal Robert Royston managed the landscape architecture firms Eckbo, Royston & Williams (ERW, 1945–1958); Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes (RHM, 1958–1962); Royston, Hanamoto, Mayes & Beck (RHMB, 1962–1966); and Royston, Hanamoto Alley & Abbey (RHAA, beginning in 1979). “Inventory of the Robert N. Royston Collection, 1941–1990,” Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, https://oac.cdlib.org/static_findaids/ark:/13030/kt8b69q7nx.html, accessed December 9, 2025.

⁷⁸ Mary Brown. *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935–1970 Historic Context Statement*. Prepared for the San Francisco City and County Planning Department, 2010, 283–284.

Architecture and Landscape Design: 1935–1970 Historic Context Statement. The other partners of RHBA were Asa Hanamoto (1923–2015), H. Eldon Beck (b. 1931), and Kazuo “Kaz” Abey (d. 2019).

Besides the landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall, Royston and his various firms were involved with several other projects in the City of Burlingame including:

- 1958: Hamilton Allen Residence;
- 1958: Burlingame High School;
- 1959: Alcoa Office Building;
- 1960: Garden Apartments for Dale Wolfe;
- 1963: Ralph Battat Residence;
- 1964: L.T. Heard Residence;
- 1965: Thomas A Grodner Residence;
- 1965: Herbert MacFarlane Residence;
- 1965: Sheldon Gross Residence;
- 1967–1970: Bayside Park Additions;
- 1968: Road study;
- 1969: Bayside Park Phase I; and
- 1969: Hyatt Office Building.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ “Finding Aid for the Robert N. Royston Collection.”

CHAPTER 4

Methods and Results

Methodology

Archival Research

Records Search

ESA conducted a records search of the subject property at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California, on December 17, 2025 (NWIC File No. 25-0963). The NWIC maintains the official CHRIS records of previous cultural resources studies and recorded cultural resources for 18 counties, including San Mateo County. The records search covered the subject property (APN 029-112-400) plus a 0.25-mile radius and included a review of previous studies, records, and maps on file at the NWIC; the Built Environment Resources Directory (BERD) for San Mateo County; and summary information from the National Register, Registered California State Landmarks, California Historic Points of Interest, and California Inventory of Historical Resources (March 1976). The purpose of the records search was to determine whether known historic architectural resources have been recorded within the subject property and/or in the immediate vicinity.

The records search identified no previously recorded historic architectural resources within the subject property or in the immediate vicinity. While 10 architectural resources have been recorded within 0.25 miles of the subject property, all are located in close proximity to the major thoroughfares of El Camino Real, Burlingame Avenue, California Avenue, and Carolan Avenue.

The subject building at 501 Primrose Road is not listed in the BERD for San Mateo County. The BERD files provide information, organized by county, regarding non-archaeological resources in the OHP's inventory. The OHP inventory contains information only for cultural resources that have been processed through the office. This includes resources reviewed for eligibility to the National Register and the California Historical Landmarks programs through federal and state environmental compliance laws, and resources nominated under federal and state registration programs.⁸⁰

If a resource does not appear in the BERD, it does not mean the resource is not historically significant. Rather, it merely means the resource has not, to date, been processed through the OHP or that the resource is archaeological in nature and is subject to confidentiality requirements. Recorded resources not

⁸⁰ California Office of Historic Preservation, "Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD)," accessed December 8, 2025, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338.

processed by the OHP may be on file at the appropriate CHRIS Information Center (IC) and available through the IC records search process.⁸¹

Scholarly Research

ESA conducted in-person research at the following archival repositories:

- Burlingame Historical Society and
- City of Burlingame Planning Department.

Review of archival information available online included:

- Results of a public records request from the City of Burlingame;
- Historic aerial photographs available from HistoricAerials.com and UC Santa Barbara Library's FrameFinder database;
- Historic maps (e.g., Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps, USGS topographic quadrangles);
- Historical newspapers and periodicals;
- William Whifler Architect website and a phone interview with his son Graeme Whifler; and
- Other online research (e.g., local histories, Internet Archive, Calisphere, Online Archive of California).

Field Survey

On November 25, 2025, ESA architectural historian Amy Langford, Ph.D., conducted an intensive-level pedestrian survey of 501 Primrose Road. Digital photography was used to document the subject property.

Results and Evaluation

The subject property at 501 Primrose Road contains one historic-age architectural resource. An architectural description of the subject property is provided below. It is followed by a significance evaluation under National Register, California Register, and local register. **Appendix A** provides the California Department of Parks and Recreation Series 523 (DPR 523) form set detailing the findings.

Architectural Description

Setting

The property at 501 Primrose Road is a 1.16-acre (50,413 square feet) parcel at the northwest corner of Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue, and it has been occupied by the Burlingame City Hall since 1970. The park-like east end of the property features a well-maintained lawn with numerous mature trees and shrubs. Hardscaping in this area includes a concrete sidewalk and curved walkways to access the building. Other site features include two styles of benches, one wood picnic table, and low metal light standards.

⁸¹ California Office of Historic Preservation, BERD, accessed December 8, 2025.

An asphalt driveway and surface parking lot are located along the west boundary of the subject property, and several metal lampposts, mature trees, and a chain-link fence separate it from the adjacent parcels.

Exterior

The City Hall is composed of three structurally separate components: the one-story council chamber, the two-story administrative offices, and the one-story lobby that connects the two (**Figure 11**).



Note: All three components of the building are visible: the one-story council chamber (left), the one-story lobby (center), and the two-story administrative offices (right).

Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 11

Burlingame City Hall, View Facing Southwest

Council Chamber

The one-story portion of the subject building has an irregular footprint comprised of the dodecagonal (i.e., 10-sided polygon) city council chamber plus the keystone-shaped caucus room at the southeast end (**Figure 12**). The structure is framed by 10 precast concrete bents with a cast-in-place concrete shear key, and the opposing pairs of bents each form a three-jointed frame. Adjacent bents are joined by a cast-in-place concrete wall above the roofline (**Figure 13**).⁸² The steel-frame roof includes a flat ring covered with gravel around the perimeter of the bents and a 10-sided conical roof covered with standing-seam metal roofing.

The exterior walls are not connected to the concrete structure. They are composed of low segments of concrete masonry units (CMUs) with concave profiles (Figures 12 and 13). Above and between the CMU walls, the walls are glazed with aluminum framing.

The main entrance to the council chamber is via the lobby (described below) and is located on the interior. A concrete ramp with metal handrails leads to an accessible entrance on the northeast side of the council chamber (Figure 11).

⁸² Forell/Elsesser Engineers Inc., *Burlingame City Hall & Council Chambers Facilities Assessment Study*, 5.



Note: The caucus room occupies the small room visible at the far right.
Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 12
Council Chamber, View Facing Northwest



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 13
Details of the Council Chamber, Views Facing East



Lobby

The one-story lobby is rectangular in plan and connects the council chamber and administrative offices (**Figure 14**). The north and south façades are composed of four structural bays delineated by concrete-encased hollow steel posts.⁸³ Between the posts, the walls are glazed with aluminum framing. The third-from-west bay on both façades contains a pair of glazed doors with a fixed transom. The lobby is capped by a flat, steel-frame roof with gravel roofing. The vertical faces of the roof are covered with standing-seam metal.



Note: The administrative offices are visible on the left, and the council chamber is visible on the right.

Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 14

South Façade of the Lobby, View Facing North

Administrative Offices

The two-story portion of the subject building has an arc-shaped footprint and contains the city's administrative offices. It also contains a one-story parking garage below grade.

The primary façade faces east toward the council chamber, and it is composed of 14 structural bays (**Figure 11** and **Figure 15**). The first floor features 12 fixed, two-lite, aluminum-sash windows, and the lobby structure abuts the building at the center of the façade. (The main entrance to the administrative

⁸³ Forell/Elsesser Engineers Inc., *Burlingame City Hall & Council Chambers Facilities Assessment Study*, 5.

offices is via the lobby (described below) and is located on the interior.) The exterior wall is composed of reinforced CMUs, and smooth concrete spandrel panels with simple sills and headers are located above and below the first-floor windows. The second floor features 14 windows. The building is capped by a flat, steel-frame roof with gravel roofing and a deep concrete soffit. The façade terminates in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



Note: The lobby is partially visible on the right.

Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 15

Primary (East) Façade of the Administrative Offices, South End, View Facing Northwest

The rear façade faces west, and it is composed of 14 structural bays. At the center of the first floor is porch that protrudes from the façade (**Figure 16**). The porch is accessed via a concrete ramp and stairs with metal handrails and features a wood pergola supported by posts and low walls constructed of CMUs. The porch includes a rear entrance to the building which is composed of a pair of glazed, aluminum-frame doors with a fixed transom. The porch is flanked by 10 fixed, two-lite, aluminum-sash windows (five to the north and five to the south) (**Figures 17 and 18**). The two outermost bays feature a glazed, aluminum-frame assembly with a single door with a fixed transom flanked by fixed sidelites. The locations of these doors are above grade, and each is accessed via a concrete landing with metal stairs and handrails. The second floor features 12 windows and one louvered, metal vent at the center of the façade. The façade terminates in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 16

Rear (West) Façade of the Administrative Offices, Center, View facing Southeast



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 17

Rear (West) Façade of the Administrative Offices, North End, View facing Southeast



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 18

Rear (West) Façade of the Administrative Offices, South End, View facing East

The side façades face north and south and are nearly identical (**Figure 19**). At the basement level, a concrete ramp with concrete retaining walls provides access to the subterranean parking garage. The garage is accessed by a roll-up metal door and one flush, metal pedestrian door. There is no fenestration on the first floor. The second floor features one protruding window bay with fixed, aluminum-sash lites on three sides and a smooth concrete panel with simple molding at the base. The façades terminate in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



Note: The one-way vehicular entrance to the parking garage is visible in the left photo, and the one-way exit is visible in the right photo.

Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 19

South (Left) and North (Right) Façades of the Administrative Offices

Publicly Accessible Interior Spaces

Lobby

The lobby is characterized by a terrazzo floor, exposed CMU walls, a ceiling coated with acoustical plaster, and pendant and recessed light fixtures (**Figure 20**).



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 20

Interior Views of the Lobby, Facing Northwest (Left) and Southeast (Right)

Council Chamber

The council chamber is characterized by a carpeted floor, glazed and exposed CMU walls, a ceiling coated with acoustical plaster, recessed light fixtures around the perimeter, and a large metal chandelier in the center of the ceiling (**Figure 21**).



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 21

Interior View of the Council Chamber

Hallways

The hallways on the first and second floors are characterized by carpeted floors, painted gypsum board walls, flush and partially glazed wood doors, ceilings coated with acoustical plaster, and recessed light fixtures (**Figure 22**).



Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 22

Interior Views of Hallways on the First Floor (Left) and Second Floor (Right)

Departmental Offices

The departmental offices on the first and second floors are characterized by carpeted floors, painted gypsum board walls, flush and partially glazed wood doors, and dropped ceilings with acoustical panels and recessed fluorescent light fixtures (**Figure 23**).



Note: The Finance and Water departments are shown on the left, and the public counter of the Public Works Department is shown on the right..

Source: ESA, 2025

Figure 23

Interior Views of Departmental Offices

Evaluation

The historic-age architectural resource at 501 Primrose Road is evaluated below for potential historic significance. The resource is evaluated according to National Register Criteria A through D (which is required as part of the evaluation for listing in the local register) and California Register Criteria 1 through 4. An evaluation under local criteria 1 through 11 follows.

Evaluation Under National Register and California Register Criteria

Criteria A/1 (Event)

The building at 501 Primrose Road does not appear to be significantly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or to the cultural heritage of California or the United States. Unlike the first Burlingame City Hall (no longer extant), which was in use from 1914 to 1970 and was directly associated with development in downtown Burlingame during the early 20th century, the subject building was constructed several decades after the downtown area and the city government were well established. Archival research does not indicate that the construction of the subject building in 1968–1970 was part of a larger campaign of civic improvements in Burlingame or San Mateo County. The subject building has been the site of numerous meetings and activities of local government officials and employees over the course of its existence; however it does not appear to have been the site of a specific event(s) marking an important moment in history or a pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of Burlingame, California, or the United States. For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria A/1.

Criteria B/2 (Person)

The building at 501 Primrose Road does not appear to be significantly associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. (Design professionals are discussed separately under Criteria C/3 below.) Numerous politicians and civil servants have worked from the subject building over the course of its existence. On the exterior of the council chamber, there is a plaque inscribed with the names of the six members of the 1970 City Council as well as the city manager.⁸⁴ All of the 1970 City Council members—Irving S. Amstrup (d. 2009), William J. Crosby (d. 1996), William H. Diederichsen (d. 1969), Edward D. George (d. 1970), Charlotte Johnson, and R.D. Martin—had already served, currently served, and/or would later serve as the mayor of Burlingame for one or more one-year terms,⁸⁵ and each was, therefore, objectively important in local government during their respective tenures. With the exception of Amstrup, the same group of City Council members approved the plans in December 1968.⁸⁶ With the exception of Diederichsen and George, the other City Council members were alive and would have been present at the official dedication ceremony held on April 4, 1970.⁸⁷ The City Council (including the mayor) is responsible for making many decisions and overseeing many projects, and it is not apparent that the City Hall building illustrates any individual’s important achievements during their productive life (i.e., reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance). For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria B/2.

Criteria C/3 (Design/Construction)

The building at 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values.

⁸⁴ The plaque is misleading because one of the 1970 City Council members died in 1969 and another died in January 1970.

⁸⁵ “Mayor Progression,” City of Burlingame, accessed December 9, 2025, <https://burlingame.org/166/Mayor-Progression>.

⁸⁶ Minutes for the regular meeting of the Burlingame City Council, December 2, 1968, on file at the City of Burlingame.

⁸⁷ “City Hall Dedication Program.”

The history of Burlingame since the end of World War II does not appear to have been studied previously in depth, and the 2008 *Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan* focused exclusively on buildings constructed before 1960 (i.e., before the period of Late Modernism began in the 1960s).⁸⁸ Archival research identified few contemporary examples of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, namely the Mills Estates neighborhood that contains approximately 100 single-family residences constructed by famed developer Joseph Eichler in the mid-1960s and a single-family residence at 240 Glen Aulin designed by William A. Whifler in 1973.^{89,90} Not only is the Burlingame City Hall a prominent building and the symbol of city government, it also embodies several of the distinctive characteristics commonly associated with Late-Modernist architecture, namely its heavy massing relative to earlier Modernist styles; strong geometric forms; combination of flat and low-pitched roof forms; use of common materials for institutional buildings, namely concrete, brick, metal, and concrete panels; and exposed concrete structure with pronounced structural components. It is ESA's opinion that the City Hall building contains enough of the period's distinctive characteristics to be considered a true representative of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame. Furthermore, because of the high quality of its design and the relative scarcity of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, the subject building also possesses high artistic values (i.e., it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal).

Local architects Albert W. Kahl, Venice T. Howell, and William A. Whifler formed a partnership that existed from 1968 to 1970, i.e., only during the design and construction of the Burlingame City Hall, and it was the firm's only complete project. According to the recollections of Whifler's son and ESA's review of Burlingame City Council meeting minutes, Kahl was likely the firm's spokesperson. He was also the partner with the most experience designing civic and institutional buildings throughout Northern California (including the Millbrae City Hall in 1956). Although not explicitly documented, Whifler was likely the firm's principal designer and presented his ideas to Kahl for discussion, and Howell was a childhood friend of Whifler's who was periodically hired to assist on Whifler's more complicated projects.⁹¹ As noted under Design Professionals above, Whifler was previously identified as a master architect in his own right, and Kahl was previously identified as a potential master architect (due to a lack of scholarly literature about his career, which remains the case at this writing). Compared to his two partners, Howell was a relatively obscure and unprolific architect, and he would not qualify as a master. The firm of Kahl, Howell & Whifler was composed of multiple locally prominent architects at the zeniths of their respective careers (i.e., Whifler and Kahl) who were commissioned to design a highly visible and symbolic building for the City of Burlingame. For Whifler specifically, the design of the Burlingame City Hall was unique because it represents a departure from both his career as a sole practitioner and as a designer of residential buildings exclusively.⁹² The Burlingame City Hall, therefore, expresses a particular phase in the development of Whifler's career and appears to possess significance as the work of a master.

⁸⁸ Carey & Co., *Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*.

⁸⁹ "Burlingame Eichler Overview," Eichler Homes for Sale, 2023, accessed December 15, 2025, <https://www.eichlerhomesforsale.com/burlingame>.

⁹⁰ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for William A. Whifler House (1544 Drake Avenue, Burlingame, CA), 15.

⁹¹ Graeme Whifler, phone interview with Johanna Kahn (ESA), December 15, 2025.

⁹² National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for William A. Whifler House (1544 Drake Avenue, Burlingame, CA), 16.

The landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall is attributed to RHBA; the San Francisco Planning Department considers its founder, Robert Royston, as an individual to be a master landscape architect.⁹³ A review of the preliminary list of projects for Royston's various firms confirms that they completed over a dozen projects in Burlingame between ca. 1958 and ca. 1969 (and likely later). In terms of design, the landscape design of the Burlingame City Hall property does not stand out as particularly important or representative in Royston's oeuvre.

For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed.

Criteria D/4 (Information Potential)

While most often applied to archaeological districts and sites, Criteria D/4 can also apply to buildings, structures, and objects that contain important information. For these types of properties to be eligible under Criteria D/4, they themselves must be, or must have been, the principal source of the important information, and the information must be considered important. The subject property at 501 Primrose Road was constructed of standard materials and using common techniques, and it is, therefore, representative of civic architecture built throughout the United States ca. 1970. The site was first improved in the early 20th century, and multiple buildings were razed prior to construction of the subject building. There is no evidence to suggest that the Burlingame City Hall would yield significant information that would expand our current knowledge or theories of city hall design, methods of construction, or other information that is not already known. As such, it does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria D/4.

Historic District Considerations

National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, defines a district as “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”⁹⁴ The Burlingame City Hall is not part of an eligible or adopted historic district. It is located in a neighborhood characterized by single-family residences constructed during the 1920s–1950s (some of which have been converted into offices), mid-century apartment buildings, and late-20th-century infill development. The only other civic building in the vicinity is the 1931 Burlingame Public Library at 480 Primrose Road that predates the construction of the City Hall by nearly 40 years. The City Hall does not appear to have been constructed as part of a larger campaign of civic improvements in Burlingame or San Mateo County. For these reasons, the subject building does not appear to contribute to a known or potential historic district.

⁹³ Mary Brown. *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement*. Prepared for the San Francisco City and County Planning Department, 2010, 283–284.

⁹⁴ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1997, 5, accessed December 15, 2025, www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

Character-Defining Features

The Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 with a period of significance of 1969–1970. Character-defining features include (but may not be limited to):

- Massing composed of three structurally separate components: the one-story council chamber, the two-story administrative offices, and the one-story lobby that connects the two;
- Massing with strong geometric/sculptural forms, including repeating modules and an interplay of planes and volumes;
- Siting on a corner lot with frontage on Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue;
- General layout of the site plan, including the location of the building in the center of the site with a small park surrounding the council chamber and a paved parking lot along the west property line;
- Materials palette composed primarily of precast concrete forms, CMUs, expanses of glazed walls; and metal roofing;
- Flat roofs and low-pitched roof forms;
- Pronounced structure or structural components; and
- Symmetry of the building in both plan and elevation.

Integrity

Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity as shown by the survival of characteristics that existed during the period of significance. For a resource to be eligible for the National Register and/or California Register, it must possess significance under one or more criteria and also retain enough integrity to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A resource that does not retain sufficient integrity to meet the National Register criteria may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

As discussed above, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed. According to the National Park Service,

A property significant under [Criteria C/3] must retain those physical features that characterize the type, period, or method of construction that the property represents. Retention of design, workmanship, and materials will usually be more important than location, setting, feeling, and association. Location and setting will be important, however, for those properties whose design is a reflection of their immediate environment (such as designed landscapes and bridges).⁹⁵

⁹⁵ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1997, 48, accessed December 15, 2025, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

The subject building occupies the site on which it was originally constructed, and it therefore **retains integrity of location**.

According to San Mateo County Assessor data, the neighborhood in which the Burlingame City Hall is located was largely redeveloped in subsequent decades.⁹⁶ Approximately 46 percent of buildings in the immediate vicinity are contemporary with or predate the subject building, and approximately 43 percent were constructed ca. 1982–2006.⁹⁷ However, all of the nearest buildings on the subject block as well as those on the block immediately to the south either predate or are contemporary with the construction of the City Hall. Additionally, the original landscape design, while slightly modified since 1970, continues to convey its original character and, consequently, the setting of the subject building. For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road **retains integrity of setting**.

Despite having undergone some documented alterations and repairs over time, the subject building remains very similar to its original appearance in terms of site design, architectural design, materials, and workmanship. Overall, 501 Primrose Road **retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship**.

As discussed above, the subject building is not significantly associated with any important events or people. Therefore, **it does not retain integrity of association**.

Lastly, the subject building embodies the “physical features that, taken together, convey the property’s historic character” as a Late-Modernist center of local government with landscaped areas and surface parking constructed in 1969–1970.⁹⁸ As such, 501 Primrose Road **retains integrity of feeling**.

Overall, the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road retains a high degree of integrity.

Evaluation Under Local Criteria

For a resource to be eligible for listing in the local register, it must possess significance under one or more of the four National Register criteria and under at least two of the 11 Burlingame-specific criteria. As discussed above, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level. The following analysis concludes that the subject building also meets local criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Criterion 1: Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.

The Burlingame City Hall is a visually prominent building located at a major intersection in Downtown Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: Structures that help retain the characteristics of the town with respect to the immediate surroundings.

The design of the Burlingame City Hall is consistent with the generally low-rise, mixed-use character of Downtown Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 2.

⁹⁶ “Year Built” data for 28 surrounding properties, ParcelQuest, accessed December 15, 2025, <http://www.parcelquest.com>.

⁹⁷ No construction dates are available for approximately 11 percent of the buildings in the immediate vicinity.

⁹⁸ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 45.

Criterion 3: Structures that contribute to the unique urban quality of a downtown, for properties located within the Downtown Specific Plan.

The Burlingame City Hall represents the heart of local civic activities, and many communities have built their city halls in or near downtown areas. Because city halls are a common feature of downtown areas, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: Structures contributing to the architectural continuity of the street.

In some ways, the Burlingame City Hall contributes to the architectural continuity of the streetscape, e.g., the one- and two-story massing. However, it seems likely that the design of the subject building was not intended to be a continuation of the architectural character of streetscape because it was meant to represent an important and modern center of civic activity. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road does not meet City of Burlingame Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: Structures that are identified with an event or person who significantly contributed to the culture and/or development of the City, State, or nation.

As discussed under Criteria A/1 and B/2 above, the Burlingame City Hall is not significantly associated with an important event or person. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road does not meet City of Burlingame Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: Structures that represent an architectural type or period and/or represent the design work of known architects, draftsmen, or builders whose efforts have significantly influenced the heritage of the City, State, or nation.

The Burlingame City Hall represents an architectural type (i.e., a city hall or civic center), a period of architecture (i.e., the Late Modernist era), and the design work of William A. Whifler, a master architect who practiced in Burlingame. Whifler's design of the subject building had an objectively significant influence on the heritage of Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 6.

Criterion 7: Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.

The Burlingame City Hall illustrates the development of local government. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 7.

Criterion 8: Buildings retaining the original integrity of and/or illustrating a given period.

As discussed under the detailed integrity assessment above, the Burlingame City Hall retains a high degree of integrity overall. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 8.

Criterion 9: Structures unique in design or detail, such as, but not limited to, materials, windows, landscaping, plaster finishes, and architectural innovation.

As discussed under Criteria C/3 above, the Burlingame City Hall contains enough of the period's distinctive characteristics to be considered a true representative of Late-Modernist architecture, of which there are few contemporary examples in Burlingame. In this sense, the design of the Burlingame City Hall appears to be relatively unique. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 9.

Criterion 10: Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years, at the time the determination is made, if they are of exceptional importance.

At this writing, the Burlingame City Hall is 56 years old. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 10.

Criterion 11: Places that have been visited by a person or persons important to City, State, national, or international history or prehistory.

ESA's research did not specifically seek to identify important visitors to the Burlingame City Hall, although the City may be aware of such a person or people.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Based on a site survey, archival research, and analysis, ESA recommends the subject property at 501 Primrose Road as individually eligible at the local level for listing in the National Register, California Register, and local register. It appears to be individually eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C and California Register Criterion 3 as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The City Hall also appears to be individually eligible for listing under City of Burlingame Criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed. The Burlingame City Hall retains a high degree of integrity. Therefore the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road would be considered a historical resource for the purposes of environmental review.

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CHAPTER 6

Preparers' Qualifications

The author of this HRE is ESA Senior Architectural Historian Johanna Kahn, M.Ar.H. ESA Senior Architectural Historian Amy Langford, Ph.D., conducted the pedestrian survey and provided research support. ESA Senior Architectural Historian Becky Urbano, M.S., provided technical review and quality assurance. All contributors exceed the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for Architectural History.

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CHAPTER 7

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Appendix A
**DPR 523 Form Set for
501 Primrose Road**

State of California — The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary
 HRI #
 Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
 Review Code Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 24 *Resource Name or #: 501 Primrose Road

P1. Other Identifier: Burlingame City Hall

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

- *a. County: San Mateo
- *b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Mateo Date 2021 T 4S; R 4W; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; Mount Diablo B.M.
- c. Address: 501 Primrose Road City: Burlingame Zip: 94010
- d. UTM: Zone 10S, 557333.37 mE/4159387.89 mN; NAD 83 (approximate center of subject building)
- e. Other Locational Data: Occupies assessor parcel number (APN) 029-112-400.

*P3a. Description: The property at 501 Primrose Road is a 1.16-acre (50,413 square feet) parcel at the northwest corner of Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue, and it has been occupied by the Burlingame City Hall since 1970. The park-like east end of the property features a well-maintained lawn with numerous mature trees and shrubs. Hardscaping in this area includes a concrete sidewalk and curved walkways to access the building. Other site features include two styles of benches, one wood picnic table, and low metal light standards. An asphalt driveway and surface parking lot are located along the west boundary of the subject property, and several metal lampposts, mature trees, and a chain-link fence separate it from the adjacent parcels.

Exterior

The City Hall is composed of three structurally separate components: the one-story council chamber, the two-story administrative offices, and the one-story lobby that connects the two. These are described separately below.

Council Chamber

The one-story portion of the subject building has an irregular footprint comprised of the dodecagonal (i.e., 10-sided polygon) city council chamber plus the keystone-shaped caucus room at the southeast end. The structure is framed by 10 precast concrete bents with a cast-in-place concrete shear key, and the opposing pairs of bents each form a three-jointed frame. Adjacent bents are joined by a cast-in-place concrete wall above the roofline.¹ The steel-frame roof includes a flat ring covered with gravel around the perimeter of the bents and a 10-sided conical roof covered with standing-seam metal roofing. (Continued on page 3)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP14. Government building

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: Overview of Burlingame City Hall, facing north from Bellevue Avenue. Source: ESA, 2025.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:
 Historic Prehistoric Both
 1969–1970; “City Hall Dedication Program,” April 4, 1970, on file at Burlingame Historical Society.

*P7. Owner and Address:
 City of Burlingame
 501 Primrose Road
 Burlingame, CA 94010

P8. Recorded by:
 Amy Langford, ESA
 1901 Harrison Street, Suite 1300
 Oakland, CA 94612

*P9. Date Recorded: November 25, 2025

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: Environmental Science Associates (ESA). *Historic Resource Evaluation for 501 Primrose Road, Burlingame, California*. Prepared for the City of Burlingame Community Development Department. June 2026.

- *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):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # 501 Primrose Road
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*NRHP Status Code 3S, 3CS, 5S3

- B1. Historic Name: Burlingame City Hall
B2. Common Name: Burlingame City Hall
B3. Original Use: City hall
B4. Present Use: City hall

*B5. **Architectural Style:** Late Modernism

*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations) Constructed between February 1969 and April 1970. Unspecified tenant improvements in first-floor office in 2001 (permit no. HST-2010021). Unspecified office remodel in 2005 (permit no. B05-0030). Tongue-and-groove roof decking installed at city council chamber and entryway in 2008 (permit no. R08-0053). Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades in the staff kitchen in 2010 (permit no. B10-0285). Interior remodel of the Finance Department in 2011 (permit no. B11-0340). Interior remodel of the Engineering Department in 2017 (permit no. B16-0451). Interior demolition and construction of second-floor office for the Community Development Department in 2018 (permit no. B17-0437). Addition of interior partitions in City Attorney's Office in 2019 (permit no. B19-0363). Interior remodel of the Finance Department in 2022 (permit no. B-22-0563).

*B7. **Moved?** No Yes Unknown **Date:** N/A **Original Location:** N/A

*B8. **Related Features:** None

B9a. **Architect:** Kahl, Howell & Whifler

b. **Builder:** Near-Cal Corporation

*B10. **Significance: Theme** Late-Modernist architecture

Area Burlingame, CA

Period of Significance 1969–1970 **Property Type** Civic **Applicable Criteria** C/3 and City of Burlingame Criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Summary

Based on a site survey, archival research, and analysis, ESA recommends the subject property at 501 Primrose Road as individually eligible at the local level for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), and the City of Burlingame Historic Architectural and Places Resources Register (local register). It appears to be individually eligible for listing under National Register Criterion C and California Register Criterion 3 as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The City Hall also appears to be individually eligible for listing under City of Burlingame Criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed. The Burlingame City Hall retains a high degree of integrity. Therefore the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road would be considered a historical resource for the purposes of environmental review. (Continued on page 9)

B11. **Additional Resource Attributes:** None

*B12. **References:** See endnotes.

B13. **Remarks:**

*B14. **Evaluator:** Johanna Kahn/ESA

***Date of Evaluation:** June 2026



*Recorded by: Johanna Kahn/ESA

*Date: June 2026

Continuation

Update

*P3a. Description: (Continued from page 1)

The exterior walls are not connected to the concrete structure. They are composed of low segments of concrete masonry units (CMUs) with concave profiles. Above and between the CMU walls, the walls are glazed with aluminum framing.

The main entrance to the council chamber is via the lobby (described below) and is located on the interior. A concrete ramp with metal handrails leads to an accessible entrance on the northeast side of the council chamber.



Council chamber, view facing northwest. The caucus room occupies the small room visible at the far right. Source: ESA, 2025.



Details of the council chamber, views facing east. Source: ESA, 2025.

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Continuation

Update

Lobby

The one-story lobby is rectangular in plan and connects the council chamber and administrative offices. The north and south façades are composed of four structural bays delineated by concrete-encased hollow steel posts.² Between the posts, the walls are glazed with aluminum framing. The third-from-west bay on both façades contains a pair of glazed doors with a fixed transom. The lobby is capped by a flat, steel-frame roof with gravel roofing. The vertical faces of the roof are covered with standing-seam metal.



South façade of the lobby, view facing north. The administrative offices are visible on the left, and the council chamber is visible on the right. Source: ESA, 2025.

Administrative Offices

The two-story portion of the subject building has an arc-shaped footprint and contains the city's administrative offices. It also contains a one-story parking garage below grade.

The primary façade faces east toward the council chamber, and it is composed of 14 structural bays. The first floor features 12 fixed, two-lite, aluminum-sash windows, and the lobby structure abuts the building at the center of the façade. (The main entrance to the administrative offices is via the lobby [described below] and is located on the interior.) The exterior wall is composed of reinforced CMUs, and smooth concrete spandrel panels with simple sills and headers are located above and below the first-floor windows. The second floor features 14 windows. The building is capped by a flat, steel-frame roof with gravel roofing and a deep concrete soffit. The façade terminates in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



Primary (east) façade of the administrative offices, south end, view facing northwest. The lobby is partially visible on the right.
Source: ESA, 2025.

The rear façade faces west, and it is composed of 14 structural bays. At the center of the first floor is porch that protrudes from the façade. The porch is accessed via a concrete ramp and stairs with metal handrails and features a wood pergola supported by posts and low walls constructed of CMUs. The porch includes a rear entrance to the building which is composed of a pair of glazed, aluminum-frame doors with a fixed transom. The porch is flanked by 10 fixed, two-lite, aluminum-sash windows (five to the north and five to the south). The two outermost bays feature a glazed, aluminum-frame assembly with a single door with a fixed transom flanked by fixed sidelites. The locations of these doors are above grade, and each is accessed via a concrete landing with metal stairs and handrails. The second floor features 12 windows and one louvered, metal vent at the center of the façade. The façade terminates in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



Rear (west) façade of the administrative offices, center, view facing southeast. Source: ESA, 2025.



Rear (west) façade of the administrative offices, north end, view facing southeast. Source: ESA, 2025.



Rear (west) façade of the administrative offices, south end, view facing east. Source: ESA, 2025.

The side façades face north and south and are nearly identical. At the basement level, a concrete ramp with concrete retaining walls provides access to the subterranean parking garage. The garage is accessed by a roll-up metal door and one flush, metal pedestrian door. There is no fenestration on the first floor. The second floor features one protruding window bay with fixed, aluminum-sash lites on three sides and a smooth concrete panel with simple molding at the base. The façades terminate in the vertical face of the roof that is covered with standing-seam metal.



South (left) and north (right) façades of the administrative offices. The one-way vehicular entrance to the parking garage is visible in the left photo, and the one-way exit is visible in the right photo. Source: ESA, 2025.

Publicly Accessible Interior Spaces

Lobby

The lobby is characterized by a terrazzo floor, exposed CMU walls, a ceiling coated with acoustical plaster, and pendant and recessed light fixtures.

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Interior views of the lobby, facing northwest (left) and southeast (right). Source: ESA, 2025.

Council Chamber

The council chamber is characterized by a carpeted floor, glazed and exposed CMU walls, a ceiling coated with acoustical plaster, recessed light fixtures around the perimeter, and a large metal chandelier in the center of the ceiling.



Interior view of the council chamber. Source: ESA, 2025.

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Hallways

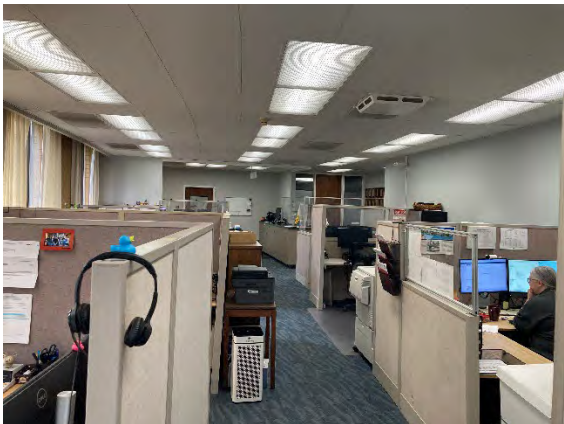
The hallways on the first and second floors are characterized by carpeted floors, painted gypsum board walls, flush and partially glazed wood doors, ceilings coated with acoustical plaster, and recessed light fixtures.



Interior views of hallways on the first floor (left) and second floor (right). Source: ESA, 2025.

Departmental Offices

The departmental offices on the first and second floors are characterized by carpeted floors, painted gypsum board walls, flush and partially glazed wood doors, and dropped ceilings with acoustical panels and recessed fluorescent light fixtures.



Interior views of the departmental offices. The Finance and Water departments are shown on the left, and the public counter of the Public Works Department is shown on the right. Source: ESA, 2025.

*B10. Significance: (Continued from page 2)

Historic Context

Site History

The subject property was originally platted in 1903 as part of the Burlingame Land Co.'s subdivision and filed by San Mateo County in 1904.³ The subdivision map was refined and refiled with the county in 1905.⁴ Note that the original property lines do not align with the current boundaries of the subject property; rather, three entire parcels (i.e., lots 1, C, and D) and a portion of a fourth parcel (i.e., Lot 2) were originally contained within the modern subject property.⁵

By 1913, the following buildings were constructed within the modern boundaries of the subject property: two one-story, single-family dwellings addressed as 511 and 517 Primrose Road; a one-story, single-family dwelling variously addressed as 501 Primrose Road and 1400 Bellevue Avenue; and a two-story, single-family dwelling addressed as 1406 Bellevue Avenue.⁶

Based on a review of historic aerial photographs, all buildings and structures within the modern boundaries of the subject property were razed sometime between April 1960 and August 1966, after which time the site was vacant.

The City had outgrown its 1914 City Hall (variously addressed as 267 Park Road and 237 Park Avenue) by the mid-1940s, and the space became more cramped and the building became more deteriorated over the subsequent decades.⁷ In early

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1962, the Burlingame City Council hired local architect William A. Whifler to prepare plans to renovate the 1914 City Hall and the building at 1240–1260 Howard Avenue (which housed the Burlingame Police Department) as an annex for the City Hall.⁸ The selection of Whifler “was based on a rotation list [of qualified architects] set up by the council [in 1961] in connection with awarding city construction projects.”⁹ In August 1962, Whifler reported that the 1914 City Hall was structurally unsound as a result of “several remodelings” and “is presently unsafe for public use.”¹⁰ Along with his professional recommendation that City Hall should be rebuilt on another site or else seismically retrofitted immediately, Whifler provided “line drawings of new city offices which could adequately house the city offices, on the present site, with additional parking, at a cost of approximately \$341,550.”¹¹ Although the scheme was not adopted, Whifler remained involved in the planning for improved civic facilities.

In a general election held in November 1966, the citizens of Burlingame voted in favor of constructing a new City Hall building on the subject property, a site that was recommended by a citizens’ committee.^{12,13} In May 1967, the City purchased the subject property as the future site of a new City Hall building for a cost of \$405,000.¹⁴

The Burlingame City Council selected three local architects—Whifler, Albert W. Kahl, and Venice T. Howell—to jointly design a new City Hall building. The plans were approved on December 2, 1968, and bids were announced the following month.¹⁵ Construction began on February 24, 1969, and the completed building was officially dedicated on April 4, 1970.¹⁶

In 2004, the City of Burlingame commissioned a facilities master plan study. The document assessed the deficiencies of the conditions of the 33-year-old City Hall building and concluded that it did not meet current building or accessibility needs.¹⁷

MAP No. 2
of the property of
THE BURLINGAME LAND CO.
San Mateo County
Cal.
 Scale - 150' = 1 inch.

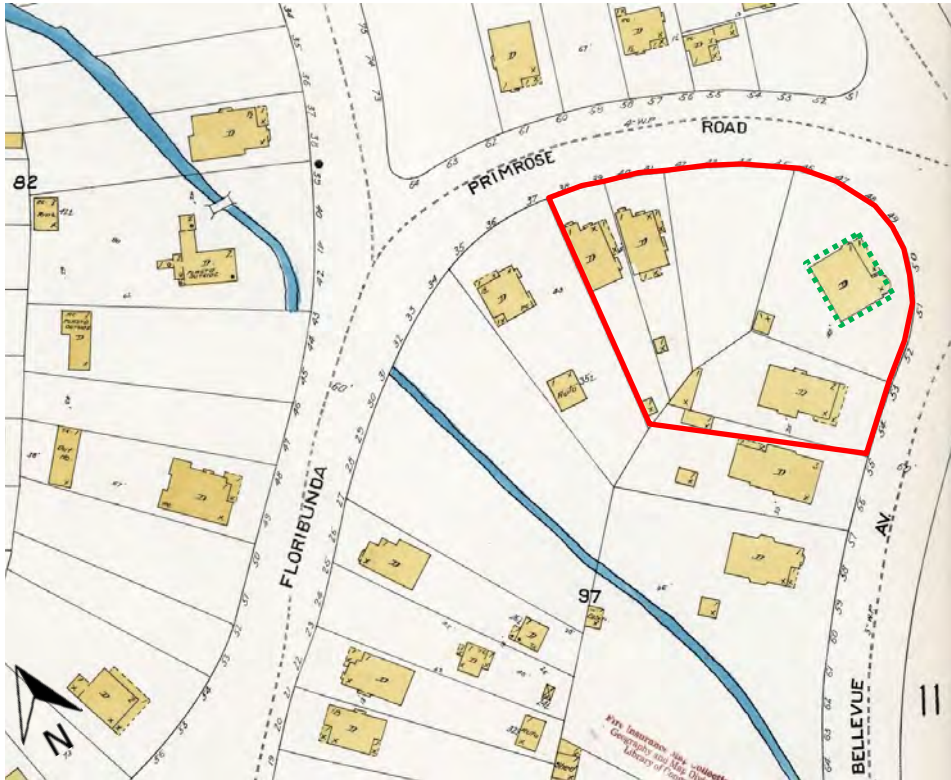


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Detail from the Burlingame Land Co. Subdivision Map, 1905. The current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red.
 Source: San Mateo County Assessor; edited by ESA.



Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map, 1913. The approximate current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red. The original location of 501 Primrose Road/1400 Bellevue Avenue is outlined in a dashed green line. Source: Historical Information Gatherers; edited by ESA.



Aerial Photograph, 1941. The current boundaries of the subject property are shown in red. Northeast is up. The relocated building originally addressed as 501 Primrose Road/1400 Bellevue Avenue is outlined in a dashed green line. Source: UC Santa Barbara Library's FrameFinder; edited by ESA.

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Continuation

Update



Bird's-Eye View of the Vacant Future Site of City Hall, 1969. The view is facing northeast. The intersection of Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue is visible in the right background. Source: *Burlingame Advance Star*, February 14, 1969.



Cover from the "Special Dedication Edition" of the *Burlingame Advance Star*, April 1, 1970. Source: Burlingame Historical Society.

Ownership and Occupancy History

The Burlingame City Hall (including the building and the property) have been continuously owned and occupied by the City of Burlingame since construction was completed in 1970.

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Continuation

Update

Building Permit History

Building permits on file at the City of Burlingame's Building Division that have been issued and completed (as opposed to cancelled or expired) are listed chronologically in the table below. Note that no building permits predate 2001, and non-building permits (e.g., electrical, plumbing, etc.) are not included in the table below.

BUILDING PERMIT HISTORY OF 501 PRIMROSE ROAD

Date	Permit No.	Description of Work
2001	HST-2010021	Tenant improvements in first-floor office space
2005	B05-0030	Office remodel
2008	R08-0053	Install tongue-and-groove roof decking in City Council Chambers and entryway
2010	B10-0285	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades for the staff kitchen
2011	B11-0340	Interior remodel in Finance Department
2017	B16-0451	Remodel of Engineering Department
2018	B17-0437	Interior demolition and construction of second-floor office for Community Development Department. Architect: Nilmeyer & Nilmeyer Assoc.
2019	B19-0363	Addition of interior partitions to city attorney's office. Architect: KRJ Design Group.
2022	B-22-0563	Interior remodel of the Finance Department

Source: City of Burlingame Building Division

In addition to the abovementioned alterations, 501 Primrose Road has been the subject of several technical studies in recent years. These include a citywide facilities master plan (2004);¹⁸ asbestos studies (2011, 2014, and 2025);^{19,20,21,22,23,24} an electrical study (2012);²⁵ and facilities assessment studies (2013 and 2016).^{26,27}

Architectural Context

Late Modernism, 1960s–1980s

The Burlingame City Hall embodies elements of Late Modernism, which is defined in the *San Francisco Modern and Postmodern Architectural Styles 1960–2000 Citywide Historic Context Statement* as “a broad, umbrella term that encompasses a variety of expressions of Modernist architecture during a period beginning in the 1960s [through the 1980s] that saw many divergences within and reactions to the orthodoxy of the Modern Movement.”²⁸ That document summarizes the significance of Late Modernism as follows:

The perceived uniformity and repetitiveness of the International Style and Miesian architecture, and a sense that Modernism had become mundane in its more banal and corporate expressions, caused architects to explore new forms—often characterized by an exaggeration of scale, material, structure, or repetition. As Late Modernism is characterized by varied forms and sub-genres, it can be difficult to define with generalizations. Typically, Late Modern commercial, institutional, and infrastructure buildings are monumental in scale; have sculptural qualities, including strong linear elements, pronounced structural components, or an interplay of planes or geometric volumes, as well as a visual weight to their form and materials... Some of the most iconic buildings in San Francisco [and other cities in the Bay Area] are Late Modernist, or belong to a sub-theme of Late Modernism [i.e., Corporate Late Modernism, Brutalism, New Formalism, or Third Bay Tradition]. Late Modernism is also influenced by local and regional concerns with environmentalism, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, and new urban planning principles.²⁹

The document also provides useful contextual information about buildings that share characteristics of the subject building, specifically institutional buildings.

The distinct heaviness of material and form of Late Modernism is evident in institutional buildings and infrastructure, which include educational and medical complexes, religious institutions, community centers, fire stations, and BART stations. Monumental geometric form and massing are often combined with substantial construction materials such as concrete and brick, with fewer or more deeply recessed windows than earlier expressions of Modernism, and a distinctive interplay between the planes and volumes.

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Continuation

Update

Religious buildings tend toward more Expressionist modes of Late Modernism, characterized by soaring or swooping monumental forms. The sculptural treatment of architecture in America is particularly associated with architect Eero Saarinen...

High-Tech architecture (or High-Tech Structuralism or Structural Expressionism) emerged in the 1970s as an expression of Late Modernism that uses technology, high-tech materials, and systems as the driver of design and seeks to make these features and systems highly visible. The approach was pioneered in Britain by architects such as Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, and others contributed significantly to the style, including Renzo Piano and Santiago Calatrava. The use of space frames, tensile roofs, and cable structures, and futuristic-looking technology also captured the imagination of the public at Expo '70 in Osaka [Japan]. Notable space frame buildings that were built soon after in the Bay Area include the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (1972, Braccia, De Brer, Heglund) and Concord Pavilion (1975, Frank O. Gehry, Peter Walker). The fullest expression of High-Tech architecture built in [the Bay Area] was the Moscone Convention Center (originally known as the Yerba Buena Convention Center) [in San Francisco], which demonstrates the possibilities of long-span bridge technology applied to building design. Completed in 1982, the Moscone Convention Center was designed by the renowned structural engineer T.Y. Lin, and featured a 250,000-square-foot, column-free underground exhibit hall; in 2019, an expansion of the convention center, including a new three-story building, was completed by SOM with Mark Cavagnero Associates, which retained structural elements of the original building but has completely transformed the look and design. Although full expressions of High-Tech Structuralism are rare within [the Bay Area], architects utilized some of the principles of structural expression to create dynamic works of Late Modernist architecture that clearly articulate their structural systems and use structure as a kind of sculptural expression.³⁰

Character-defining features of Late Modernist architecture include but are not limited to:

- Massing and materials are often visually heavier than earlier Modernism.
- Strong geometric or sculptural forms, including repeating modules or an interplay of planes and volumes, are typical of the massing.
- Flat roofs are common, but other roof forms, including shed, parabolic, and flat-on-hipped, may be used.
- Shed roof forms framed by projecting stucco side parapets are distinctive of Late Modernism.
- Concrete, brick, metal, and concrete or synthetic panels are more common materials for commercial and institutional examples, whereas stucco, wood, and concrete are typical of residential examples.
- Structure or structural components may be pronounced.
- Expressionist and sculptural form, including cantilevered or parabolic roofs, are most closely associated with religious architecture.³¹

Design Professionals

Below is a list of all known professionals involved with the design and execution of the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road. Brief biographies of the architect and landscape architect follow.

- Architect: Kahl, Howell & Whifler, Burlingame
- Landscape architect: Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey, San Francisco
- General contractor: Near-Cal Corporation, San Jose
- Structural engineer: Rinne, Hammond & Peterson, Palo Alto
- Mechanical engineer: Charles & Braun, San Francisco
- Electrical engineer: Marion & Cerbatos, San Francisco³²

Kahl, Howell & Whifler, Architect

The architectural firm of Kahl, Howell & Whifler was a partnership among Burlingame architects Albert W. Kahl, Venice T. Howell, and William A. Whifler. The partnership existed only during the design and construction of the Burlingame City Hall, and that was the firm's only completed project. According to Whifler's son, Graeme Whifler, Kahl was the group's spokesperson; indeed, he regularly represented the firm in public settings, as recorded in Burlingame City Council meeting minutes from 1968 to 1971. Whifler was the principal designer and presented his ideas to Kahl for discussion, and Howell was a childhood friend of Whifler's who was periodically hired to assist on Whifler's more complicated projects.³³

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*Date: June 2026

Continuation

Update

The selection of Kahl, Howell & Whifler by the City of Burlingame was confirmed in a resolution dated April 1, 1968.³⁴ Although not confirmed by archival research, it seems likely that Whifler was among the selected architects due to the role he played in the early 1960s during the City's plans to renovate the 1914 City Hall.

The Burlingame City Council approved the plans for the new City Hall on December 2, 1968, and bids were announced the following month.³⁵ The firm hired Near-Cal Corporation as the general contractor in February 1969, and the completion of all construction was recorded on July 6, 1970.³⁶

Archival research did not locate original design drawings attributed to Kahl, Howell & Whifler.³⁷

Albert W. Kahl, AIA

Architect Albert W. Kahl (1911–1998) was born in San Francisco. He received his training at the San Francisco Architecture Club, the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and the University of California. Before establishing a sole practitionership in 1946, Kahl was employed by the architecture firms of Albert F. Roller (1929–1945) and Huber & Knapic (1944).³⁸ He was later a partner in the firms of Sharps, Kahl & Brown and Kahl & Davis.³⁹

An HRE for the Millbrae Serra Convalescent Hospital concluded that “[w]hile Albert W. Kahl may be found to be a master architect, there is little scholarly literature on his career. Certainly he did design some attractive and important public buildings.”⁴⁰ Below is a partial list of Kahl's completed projects in California.

- 1954: Collaboration with architects Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons for the California State Printing Plant in Sacramento;⁴¹
- 1951: One-story commercial building for E. Massolo in Millbrae;⁴²
- 1951: Medical-dental building for Dr. Theo Poulsen in Orland;⁴³
- 1951: Administration building at Willows Airport in Willows;⁴⁴
- 1951: Addition to the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Red Bluff;⁴⁵
- 1952: Corning Memorial Hospital in Tehama County;⁴⁶
- 1952: Two-story building for the Millbrae Sanitarium in Millbrae;⁴⁷
- 1952: Office building for William Volker & Co. in Burlingame;⁴⁸
- 1952: Factory building for Pacific Screw Products Co. in South San Francisco;⁴⁹
- 1953: St. Joseph's School in Redding;⁵⁰
- 1954: Woodside Acres Hospital in Redwood City;⁵¹
- 1954: Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Watsonville;⁵²
- 1956: Office building in Red Bluff;⁵³
- 1956: One-story annex to the existing courthouse in Willows;⁵⁴
- 1956: Medical office building on San Mateo Drive in San Mateo;⁵⁵
- 1956: Fire station in Vacaville;⁵⁶
- 1956: Hospital building for the Pioneer Memorial Hospital District in Escalon;⁵⁷
- 1956: Millbrae City Hall;⁵⁸
- 1958: Mercy Hospital in Red Bluff;⁵⁹
- 1959: Sierra Hospital in Sonoma;⁶⁰
- 1960: Lassen Memorial Hospital in Susanville;⁶¹
- 1965–1966: Calaveras County Government Center in San Andreas;⁶² and
- Ca. 1977: Alterations and addition to the Mariposa County Jail.⁶³

Venice T. Howell, AIA

Venice T. Howell (1924–2006) was a self-taught architect.⁶⁴ Archival research revealed very little information about Howell's life or career, and it does not appear that his body of work has been studied previously. Besides the Burlingame City Hall, which is his best-known work, Howell designed the first addition to the Burlingame Public Library (date unconfirmed),⁶⁵ an office building at 1881 El Camino Real in Burlingame (1965),⁶⁶ and a collaboration with William A. Whifler, AIA, for the Tait Auction Studio at 1209 Howard Avenue in Burlingame (1965).⁶⁷

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*Date: June 2026

Continuation

Update

William A. Whifler, AIA

The following biography of William A. Whifler (1926–1984) is an excerpt from the National Register nomination for the William A. Whifler House in Burlingame in which he was established as a master architect:

[...] Beginning in the mid-1950s, and for some 20 years, Whifler's architectural practice consisted primarily of designing more than a dozen single-family residential buildings located within the mid-Peninsula communities of San Mateo, Burlingame, and Hillsborough. The notable exception occurred in 1968, when Whifler, with two other architects of record, designed the City of Burlingame's new City Hall.

Whifler began his studies at Stanford in engineering, only later on moving into architecture. The course content and lasting influence of these two separate, and definitely related fields of study are readily apparent in his architectural solutions. This is especially true in the design and construction of the house at 1544 Drake Avenue that he built for his mother, Clara Whifler, in 1958. [...]

The house at 1544 Drake Avenue epitomizes the distinctive, character defining features that are definitively associated with Modernist architecture: natural integration of indoor spaces with outdoor living areas; floor-to-ceiling glazing for penetration of natural light; an organic melding of wood, glass, steel and masonry; and sizing and shaping of the building to achieve a harmonious union with the site and its setting. Given its extraordinary design and use of building materials, as well as its 1958 date of construction, Whifler's house most likely existed at this point in time as a rare, exemplary expression of Modernist architecture among the mid-Peninsula communities of Burlingame, Hillsborough, and San Mateo. In 1965, The Women's Architectural League and the Northern California Chapter of the A.I.A. featured 1544 Drake Avenue in a local house tour. Reporting on the tour, an article in the Burlingame Advance Star observed: "As further contrast with the large homes [of Hillsborough] is the small, exquisite home of Mrs. Clara Whifler, designed by her architect son, William A. Whifler." [...]

Early Whifler residential projects, completed prior to the Drake Avenue house, began with the house at 20 La Salle Road, Hillsborough, which he designed and built as the family home beginning in 1952. According to Graeme Whifler, "the architect's home underwent eight major alterations and additions that nearly doubled the structure's square footage, and served as experimental canvases for design concepts. Constructed in large part by the architect and his family."

While apprenticing under Oscar Thayer, and prior to obtaining his license on October 8, 1956 as a registered California architect, Whifler completed work on two other early houses: 620 Pullman, Hillsborough, featured in the California Book of Homes in its 1955 issue; and 1280 View Haven, Hillsborough, completed in 1956 and referred to as the "Pentagon" house by Graeme Whifler due to its character defining design and use of two pentagon pods. [...]

In addition to 1544 Drake Avenue and the three early houses just referenced, Whifler completed 10 other known residential projects. The last home that Whifler designed, 240 Glen Aulin, Burlingame, was completed in 1973. Graeme Whifler observed that his father's design for this house was inspired by major cathedrals in Europe, as the floor plan of the house resembles a cross, at the center of which is a circular kitchen. This house remains intact and under original ownership.

A second house that also remains under original ownership [...] was completed circa 1968 and is located at 2180 Forest View, Hillsborough. Graeme Whifler characterized this house as "a gem rich in detail."

The other residential projects attributable to Whifler are located in communities on the San Francisco Peninsula, with the exception of a modest, two-story house located in Greenbrae, Marin County, and a cabin located on Sardine Lake, near Sierra City in Plumas County, California. [...]

Whifler's one and only non-residential project was the new Burlingame City Hall, completed in April 1970. Whifler and two other architects, Albert W. Kahl, AIA, and Venice T. Howell, AIA, worked jointly in designing and supervising construction of this civic building located at 501 Primrose Avenue. [...] Cost of the new complex was reported in the Burlingame Advance Star as being \$1,245,512.56, a source of some controversy within the community, as the former City Hall, located at 237 Park Avenue [variously addressed as 267 Park Road] and erected in 1914, had reportedly cost only \$25,000.00.

With the obvious exception of the new Burlingame City Hall, for which Whifler was one of three architects commissioned for the project, Whifler preferred to work on his own for the 20-plus years in which he designed and supervised construction of his residential buildings. According to architect John Lucchesi, a student of Whifler's at the College of San Mateo, and author of several articles regarding Whifler's work, Whifler always desired to work alone, for he liked being a sole practitioner and wanted any mistakes to be his own. Whifler, he recalled, was very sensitive to the importance of light, and especially enjoyed working

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with materials, with a pronounced interest in welding, putting things together and always wanting to make sure things worked. Lucchesi also observed that Whifler was a very modest and humble designer, never promoting his work or himself. [...] ⁶⁸

Royston, Hanamoto, Beck, & Abey, Landscape Architect

The landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall is attributed to the prolific San Francisco landscape architecture firm Royston, Hanamoto, Beck, & Abey (RHBA).^{69,70} Archival research did not locate original design drawings attributed to RHBA.⁷¹

The firm's name changed periodically from the 1950s through the 1970s to reflect the current leadership, and RHBA practiced ca. 1967–1979.⁷² The San Francisco Planning Department considers the founder, Robert Royston (1918–2008), to be a master landscape architect in his own right who was “enormously influential in the development of Modern landscape design in San Francisco” as well as in the greater Bay Area.⁷³ More than 60 of Royston's completed projects are listed in the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design: 1935–1970 Historic Context Statement*. The other partners of RHBA were Asa Hanamoto (1923–2015), H. Eldon Beck (b. 1931), and Kazuo “Kaz” Abey (d. 2019).

Besides the landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall, Royston and his various firms were involved with several other projects in the City of Burlingame including:

- 1958: Hamilton Allen Residence;
- 1958: Burlingame High School;
- 1959: Alcoa Office Building;
- 1960: Garden Apartments for Dale Wolfe;
- 1963: Ralph Battat Residence;
- 1964: L.T. Heard Residence;
- 1965: Thomas A Grodner Residence;
- 1965: Herbert MacFarlane Residence;
- 1965: Sheldon Gross Residence;
- 1967–1970: Bayside Park Additions;
- 1968: Road study;
- 1969: Bayside Park Phase I; and
- 1969: Hyatt Office Building.⁷⁴

Evaluation

The historic-age architectural resource at 501 Primrose Road is evaluated below for potential historic significance. The resource is evaluated according to National Register Criteria A through D (which is required as part of the evaluation for listing in the local register) and California Register Criteria 1 through 4. An evaluation under local criteria 1 through 11 follows.

Evaluation Under National Register and California Register Criteria

Criteria A/1 (Event)

The building at 501 Primrose Road does not appear to be significantly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or to the cultural heritage of California or the United States. Unlike the first Burlingame City Hall (no longer extant), which was in use from 1914 to 1970 and was directly associated with development in downtown Burlingame during the early 20th century, the subject building was constructed several decades after the downtown area and the city government were well established. Archival research does not indicate that the construction of the subject building in 1968–1970 was part of a larger campaign of civic improvements in Burlingame or San Mateo County. The subject building has been the site of numerous meetings and activities of local government officials and employees over the course of its existence; however it does not appear to have been the site of a specific event(s) marking an important moment in history or a pattern of events or a historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of Burlingame, California, or the United States. For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria A/1.

Criteria B/2 (Person)

The building at 501 Primrose Road does not appear to be significantly associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. (Design professionals are discussed separately under Criteria C/3 below.) Numerous politicians and civil servants have

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worked from the subject building over the course of its existence. On the exterior of the council chamber, there is a plaque inscribed with the names of the six members of the 1970 City Council as well as the city manager.⁷⁵ All of the 1970 City Council members—Irving S. Amstrup (d. 2009), William J. Crosby (d. 1996), William H. Diederichsen (d. 1969), Edward D. George (d. 1970), Charlotte Johnson, and R.D. Martin—had already served, currently served, and/or would later serve as the mayor of Burlingame for one or more one-year terms,⁷⁶ and each was, therefore, objectively important in local government during their respective tenures. With the exception of Amstrup, the same group of City Council members approved the plans in December 1968.⁷⁷ With the exception of Diederichsen and George, the other City Council members were alive and would have been present at the official dedication ceremony held on April 4, 1970.⁷⁸ The City Council (including the mayor) is responsible for making many decisions and overseeing many projects, and it is not apparent that the City Hall building illustrates any individual's important achievements during their productive life (i.e., reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance). For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria B/2.

Criteria C/3 (Design/Construction)

The building at 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values.

The history of Burlingame since the end of World War II does not appear to have been studied previously in depth, and the 2008 Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan focused exclusively on buildings constructed before 1960 (i.e., before the period of Late Modernism began in the 1960s).⁷⁹ Archival research identified few contemporary examples of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, namely the Mills Estates neighborhood that contains approximately 100 single-family residences constructed by famed developer Joseph Eichler in the mid-1960s and a single-family residence at 240 Glen Aulin designed by William A. Whifler in 1973.^{80,81} Not only is the Burlingame City Hall a prominent building and the symbol of city government, it also embodies several of the distinctive characteristics commonly associated with Late-Modernist architecture, namely its heavy massing relative to earlier Modernist styles; strong geometric forms; combination of flat and low-pitched roof forms; use of common materials for institutional buildings, namely concrete, brick, metal, and concrete panels; and exposed concrete structure with pronounced structural components. It is ESA's opinion that the City Hall building contains enough of the period's distinctive characteristics to be considered a true representative of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame. Furthermore, because of the high quality of its design and the relative scarcity of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, the subject building also possesses high artistic values (i.e., it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal).

Local architects Albert W. Kahl, Venice T. Howell, and William A. Whifler formed a partnership that existed from 1968 to 1970, i.e., only during the design and construction of the Burlingame City Hall, and it was the firm's only complete project. According to the recollections of Whifler's son and ESA's review of Burlingame City Council meeting minutes, Kahl was likely the firm's spokesperson. He was also the partner with the most experience designing civic and institutional buildings throughout Northern California (including the Millbrae City Hall in 1956). Although not explicitly documented, Whifler was likely the firm's principal designer and presented his ideas to Kahl for discussion, and Howell was a childhood friend of Whifler's who was periodically hired to assist on Whifler's more complicated projects.⁸² As noted under Design Professionals above, Whifler was previously identified as a master architect in his own right, and Kahl was previously identified as a potential master architect (due to a lack of scholarly literature about his career, which remains the case at this writing). Compared to his two partners, Howell was a relatively obscure and unprolific architect, and he would not qualify as a master. The firm of Kahl, Howell & Whifler was composed of multiple locally prominent architects at the zeniths of their respective careers (i.e., Whifler and Kahl) who were commissioned to design a highly visible and symbolic building for the City of Burlingame. For Whifler specifically, the design of the Burlingame City Hall was unique because it represents a departure from both his career as a sole practitioner and as a designer of residential buildings exclusively.⁸³ The Burlingame City Hall, therefore, expresses a particular phase in the development of Whifler's career and appears to possess significance as the work of a master.

The landscape design for the Burlingame City Hall is attributed to RHBA; the San Francisco Planning Department considers its founder, Robert Royston, as an individual to be a master landscape architect.⁸⁴ A review of the preliminary list of projects for Royston's various firms confirms that they completed over a dozen projects in Burlingame between ca. 1958 and ca. 1969 (and likely later). In terms of design, the landscape design of the Burlingame City Hall property does not stand out as particularly important or representative in Royston's oeuvre.

For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed.

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Criteria D/4 (Information Potential)

While most often applied to archaeological districts and sites, Criteria D/4 can also apply to buildings, structures, and objects that contain important information. For these types of properties to be eligible under Criteria D/4, they themselves must be, or must have been, the principal source of the important information, and the information must be considered important. The subject property at 501 Primrose Road was constructed of standard materials and using common techniques, and it is, therefore, representative of civic architecture built throughout the United States ca. 1970. The site was first improved in the early 20th century, and multiple buildings were razed prior to construction of the subject building. There is no evidence to suggest that the Burlingame City Hall would yield significant information that would expand our current knowledge or theories of city hall design, methods of construction, or other information that is not already known. As such, it does not appear to possess individual significance under Criteria D/4.

Historic District Considerations

National Register Bulletin: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, defines a district as “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”⁸⁵ The Burlingame City Hall is not part of an eligible or adopted historic district. It is located in a neighborhood characterized by single-family residences constructed during the 1920s–1950s (some of which have been converted into offices), mid-century apartment buildings, and late-20th-century infill development. The only other civic building in the vicinity is the 1931 Burlingame Public Library at 480 Primrose Road that predates the construction of the City Hall by nearly 40 years. The City Hall does not appear to have been constructed as part of a larger campaign of civic improvements in Burlingame or San Mateo County. For these reasons, the subject building does not appear to contribute to a known or potential historic district.

Character-Defining Features

The Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 with a period of significance of 1969–1970. Character-defining features include (but may not be limited to):

- Massing composed of three structurally separate components: the one-story council chamber, the two-story administrative offices, and the one-story lobby that connects the two;
- Massing with strong geometric/sculptural forms, including repeating modules and an interplay of planes and volumes;
- Siting on a corner lot with frontage on Primrose Road and Bellevue Avenue;
- General layout of the site plan, including the location of the building in the center of the site with a small park surrounding the council chamber and a paved parking lot along the west property line;
- Materials palette composed primarily of precast concrete forms, CMUs, expanses of glazed walls; and metal roofing;
- Flat roofs and low-pitched roof forms;
- Pronounced structure or structural components; and
- Symmetry of the building in both plan and elevation.

Integrity

Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity as shown by the survival of characteristics that existed during the period of significance. For a resource to be eligible for the National Register and/or California Register, it must possess significance under one or more criteria and also retain enough integrity to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A resource that does not retain sufficient integrity to meet the National Register criteria may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.

As discussed above, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level as an important example of Late-Modernist architecture in Burlingame, as the only non-residential project designed by master architect William A. Whifler, and as a work that possesses high artistic values in the context of contemporary architecture in Burlingame. The period of significance is 1969–1970, the years the building was constructed. According to the National Park Service,

A property significant under [Criteria C/3] must retain those physical features that characterize the type, period, or method of construction that the property represents. Retention of design, workmanship, and materials will usually be more important than location, setting, feeling, and association. Location and setting will be important, however, for those properties whose design is a reflection of their immediate environment (such as designed landscapes and bridges).⁸⁶

The subject building occupies the site on which it was originally constructed, and it therefore retains integrity of location.

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According to San Mateo County Assessor data, the neighborhood in which the Burlingame City Hall is located was largely redeveloped in subsequent decades.⁸⁷ Approximately 46 percent of buildings in the immediate vicinity are contemporary with or predate the subject building, and approximately 43 percent were constructed ca. 1982–2006.⁸⁸ However, all of the nearest buildings on the subject block as well as those on the block immediately to the south either predate or are contemporary with the construction of the City Hall. Additionally, the original landscape design, while slightly modified since 1970, continues to convey its original character and, consequently, the setting of the subject building. For these reasons, 501 Primrose Road retains integrity of setting.

Despite having undergone some documented alterations and repairs over time, the subject building remains very similar to its original appearance in terms of site design, architectural design, materials, and workmanship. Overall, 501 Primrose Road retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.

As discussed above, the subject building is not significantly associated with any important events or people. Therefore, it does not retain integrity of association.

Lastly, the subject building embodies the “physical features that, taken together, convey the property’s historic character” as a Late-Modernist center of local government with landscaped areas and surface parking constructed in 1969–1970.⁸⁹ As such, 501 Primrose Road retains integrity of feeling.

Overall, the Burlingame City Hall at 501 Primrose Road retains a high degree of integrity.

Evaluation Under Local Criteria

For a resource to be eligible for listing in the local register, it must possess significance under one or more of the four National Register criteria and under at least two of the 11 Burlingame-specific criteria. As discussed above, 501 Primrose Road appears to possess individual significance under Criteria C/3 at the local level. The following analysis concludes that the subject building also meets local criteria 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Criterion 1: Buildings, structures, or places that are important key focal or pivotal points in the visual quality or character of an area, neighborhood, or survey district.

The Burlingame City Hall is a visually prominent building located at a major intersection in Downtown Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: Structures that help retain the characteristics of the town with respect to the immediate surroundings.

The design of the Burlingame City Hall is consistent with the generally low-rise, mixed-use character of Downtown Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: Structures that contribute to the unique urban quality of a downtown, for properties located within the Downtown Specific Plan.

The Burlingame City Hall represents the heart of local civic activities, and many communities have built their city halls in or near downtown areas. Because city halls are a common feature of downtown areas, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: Structures contributing to the architectural continuity of the street.

In some ways, the Burlingame City Hall contributes to the architectural continuity of the streetscape, e.g., the one- and two-story massing. However, it seems likely that the design of the subject building was not intended to be a continuation of the architectural character of streetscape because it was meant to represent an important and modern center of civic activity. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road does not meet City of Burlingame Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: Structures that are identified with an event or person who significantly contributed to the culture and/or development of the City, State, or nation.

As discussed under Criteria A/1 and B/2 above, the Burlingame City Hall is not significantly associated with an important event or person. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road does not meet City of Burlingame Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: Structures that represent an architectural type or period and/or represent the design work of known architects, draftsmen, or builders whose efforts have significantly influenced the heritage of the City, State, or nation.

The Burlingame City Hall represents an architectural type (i.e., a city hall or civic center), a period of architecture (i.e., the Late Modernist era), and the design work of William A. Whifler, a master architect who practiced in Burlingame. Whifler’s design of the subject building had an objectively significant influence on the heritage of Burlingame. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 6.

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Criterion 7: Structures that illustrate the development of California locally and regionally.

The Burlingame City Hall illustrates the development of local government. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 7.

Criterion 8: Buildings retaining the original integrity of and/or illustrating a given period.

As discussed under the detailed integrity assessment above, the Burlingame City Hall retains a high degree of integrity overall. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 8.

Criterion 9: Structures unique in design or detail, such as, but not limited to, materials, windows, landscaping, plaster finishes, and architectural innovation.

As discussed under Criteria C/3 above, the Burlingame City Hall contains enough of the period's distinctive characteristics to be considered a true representative of Late-Modernist architecture, of which there are few contemporary examples in Burlingame. In this sense, the design of the Burlingame City Hall appears to be relatively unique. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 9.

Criterion 10: Structures that are at least 50 years old or properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years, at the time the determination is made, if they are of exceptional importance.

At this writing, the Burlingame City Hall is 55 years old. Therefore, 501 Primrose Road meets City of Burlingame Criterion 10.

Criterion 11: Places that have been visited by a person or persons important to City, State, national, or international history or prehistory.

ESA's research did not specifically seek to identify important visitors to the Burlingame City Hall, although the City may be aware of such a person or people.

***B12. References:** (Continued from page 2)

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⁷² In addition to RHBA, founding principal Robert Royston managed the landscape architecture firms Eckbo, Royston & Williams (ERW, 1945–1958); Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes (RHM, 1958–1962); Royston, Hanamoto, Mayes & Beck (RHMB, 1962–1966); and Royston, Hanamoto Alley & Abbey (RHAA, beginning in 1979). “Inventory of the Robert N. Royston Collection, 1941–1990,” Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, https://oac.cdlib.org/static_findaids/ark:/13030/kt8b69q7nx.html, accessed December 9, 2025.

⁷³ Mary Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935–1970 Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the San Francisco City and County Planning Department, 2010, 283–284.

⁷⁴ “Finding Aid for the Robert N. Royston Collection.”

⁷⁵ The plaque is misleading because one of the 1970 City Council members died in 1969 and another died in January 1970.

⁷⁶ “Mayor Progression,” City of Burlingame, accessed December 9, 2025, <https://burlingame.org/166/Mayor-Progression>.

⁷⁷ Minutes for the regular meeting of the Burlingame City Council, December 2, 1968, on file at the City of Burlingame.

⁷⁸ “City Hall Dedication Program.”

⁷⁹ Carey & Co., *Inventory of Historic Resources: Burlingame Downtown Specific Plan*, prepared for the City of Burlingame, October 6, 2008, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://www.burlingame.org/DocumentCenter/View/627/Historic-Resources-Inventory-PDF>.

⁸⁰ “Burlingame Eichler Overview,” Eichler Homes for Sale, 2023, accessed December 15, 2025, <https://www.eichlerhomesforsale.com/burlingame>.

⁸¹ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for William A. Whifler House (1544 Drake Avenue, Burlingame, CA), 15.

⁸² Graeme Whifler, phone interview with Johanna Kahn (ESA), December 15, 2025.

⁸³ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for William A. Whifler House (1544 Drake Avenue, Burlingame, CA), 16.

⁸⁴ Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design*, 283–284.

⁸⁵ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1997, 5, accessed December 15, 2025, www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

⁸⁶ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 48.

⁸⁷ “Year Built” data for 28 surrounding properties, ParcelQuest, accessed December 15, 2025, <http://www.parcelquest.com>.

⁸⁸ No construction dates are available for approximately 11 percent of the buildings in the immediate vicinity.

⁸⁹ National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 45.