

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT 9/10/21

Historic name: Timby House, San Carlos, 1940

Other names/site number: 621 Knoll Drive

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 621 Knoll Drive

City or town: San Carlos State: CA County: San Mateo

Not For Publication: _____ Vicinity: _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> | <p>_____ Date</p> |
| <p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p> | |

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| | |
|---|--|
| In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. | |
| <hr/> Signature of commenting official: | <hr/> Date |
| <hr/> Title : | <hr/> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government |

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:) _____

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|-------------------------|----------------|

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

District

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Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | sites |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | structures |
| <u> </u> | <u> </u> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

California Ranch Style

Bay Area Modern

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Redwood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Private residence built in 1940 for Henry Timby and his family, designed by William Wurster, who worked closely with landscape architect Thomas Church to site the home without damaging mature heritage oaks.¹ An addition (bedroom, bath, study and connecting ramp) was constructed in 1950 in the same style and materials, designed by Theodore Bernardi, Wurster's partner in the firm Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons. One story with partial lower level single family home with carport and detached workshop —2,502 sq. ft. of living area— Exterior: original redwood siding; original side-hung casement and fixed windows, tar and gravel "flat" roof, overhung all around, wood frame construction as replicated to scale in the 1995-96 SF Museum of Modern Art exhibit *An Everyday Modernism: the Houses of William Wurster*; interior walls 4'x8' white pine ¼" thick plywood; floors exposed oak; ceiling panels 4'x8' pressed wood panels; gallery with exposed beams. The workshop, located 25 meters upslope from the house, is rectangular, with flat roof, and sliding ribbon windows on the western and southern walls. The style and materials match those of the house; the builders, following Wurster's drawing, were owner Henry Timby and neighbor Aaron Kalenborn. The two buildings are separated by a pathway that traverses the sloping site past five large, mature oaks (DBH to 50 inches) from the front terrace of the house. The setting is an oak woodland with small prairie of native grasses and forbs on 0.7 acre (30,200+ sq. ft.), with east to

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south to west aspects from near the summit of Knoll Drive at about 200' elevation.³ The property, comprising the one contributing building and heritage oaks, retains historic integrity. There have been few alterations of the original exterior and interior features (detailed below).

Notes

¹ Heritage oaks: (200+ years old) according to Consulting Arborist Barrie D. Coate.

² Additions, Figure 4, Plot Plan inset showing 1940 house sited among oak trees. "The oak trees on the ridge are some of the most beautiful of the California oak species to be seen anywhere." — William Wurster, 1940, "My Favorite Small House," *Our Home* 4, no. 3: pp. 5-7.

³ "High on a knoll in San Carlos, California, stands the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timby. The home is located on a ridge, with a view of the rolling wooded hills to the south and west, and a distant view of San Francisco Bay to the east." — William Wurster, 1940, "My Favorite Small House," *Our Home* 4, no. 3: pp. 5-7.

Narrative Description

A one and two-story wood framed residence, "bi-nuclear" in plan, resting on a concrete foundation. The exterior wall cladding is a rough shiplap redwood stained dark brown. The flat roof has large overhangs to provide shade in summer and light in winter. It is covered with tar paper and gravel. A massive living room fireplace anchors the building to its site. Fenestration is irregular with many wood-framed fixed and side-hung casement windows. The large glass plates used are almost curtain walls in the gallery connecting the bedroom wing with carport below to the main block with kitchen and living area (photo 8 of 10). These large window surfaces afford views to all quarters from the hills to the west to a complete sweep of San Francisco Bay. Wurster's partner, Theodore Bernardi, executed a fine wing addition to the original 1940 house in 1950 that looks and feels like a seamless extension of the original building. Access to the addition is by a second gallery, ramped and with large plate glass (photo 9 of 10). While the house siting takes into account the views available from the 0.7-acre property, it also created a protective barrier from strong west winds. Thomas Church's landscape plan is as simply stated as the house itself. Using the numerous oak trees he added shrubbery and flower beds around a series of well-placed terraces.^{1,2}

There have been few and only minor physical changes to this residence as detailed below, and it consequently retains an exceptionally high level of physical integrity throughout. It has been owned by two generations of a single family who have been sympathetic with Henry Timby, Thomas Church, and William Wurster's original design principles of simplicity and livability.

Changes over 80 years include:

- Front brick, rock-lined stairway realigned soon after construction with a shallower grade from driveway to front entrance.
- 2 kitchen ceiling light fixtures replaced with similar fixtures but of lesser depth.

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- Additional recessed lighting in kitchen under cabinets and above sink.
- New bathroom sink basin and Corian countertop set in original vanity.
- Built-in bookshelves in living room, 57 inches wide to ceiling height, above original built-in cabinets.
- Modern 24x40-inch acoustic tiles replacing original larger preset wood ceiling panels in the smaller treehouse bedroom in 1940 part of house, following water damage from roof leakage.
- Replacement of redwood block pavement on the rear terrace by old used brick and on the front terrace by pebble-concrete with redwood spacers.
- Insulating portions of the interior of the house, removing, refinishing, and replacing original wood wall panels.
- Replacement rain gutters (downspouts are original), aluminum of similar color and design as the original sheet metal gutters.

Location. Original location.

Design. All the Wurster design elements remain intact except for the changes listed above. Interior and exterior elements are original or replaced to original specifications and materials (broken glass panes, rotted windowsills) and stained or painted as in the original design. All cabinet and window hardware and almost all door hardware is original.

Setting. All but one of the original old oaks survive on both lots along with a suite of native to the site plants (shrubs, grasses, and forbs).³ The vegetation at the time of building was grassland/oak savanna in the Knoll Drive region offering expansive views from around the summit. Those views have been transformed by development, remodeling, and maturation of planted trees and shrubs on neighboring properties and surrounding communities, and by the natural recruitment of Coast live oak on the Timby property. View-sheds from the house are now narrowed or filtered through vegetation but remain available from other positions on the property and the surrounding neighborhood along Knoll Drive, a popular walking route. The denser oak woodland has contributed to a welcome sense of privacy in an increasingly urbanized environment and welcome shading and cooling during hot summer days. Breezes remain common over the ridgetop on Knoll Drive.

Application of herbicides and pesticides is avoided. Wildlife is common, in part because the seasonal abundance of acorns, including an avifauna with resident western screech owls along with bats, crickets, and a variety of other urban-adapted animals.

Materials. As mentioned almost all original exterior and interior materials have remained intact since construction. The stains and paints now used are more environmentally friendly.

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Notes

¹ Kent L. Seavey, Timby House DPROHP 523 form, Appendix 1 of *Historical Resource Inventory for San Carlos, CA* (1991)

² "First: We have no summer rain. The hills grow brown and all gardens must be watered. This, of course, forces us into terraces in the Spanish garden tradition, unless we are lavish with water, and water is expensive, for it is often brought from storage in the Sierra hundreds of miles away." William Wurster, California Architecture for Living, *California Monthly*, April 1954, reprinted in Marc Treib, ed., *An Everyday Modernism* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1995): p. 237.

³ A small, beautiful meadow grows at the Timby House. In it bloom native-to-the-site bunch grasses (California brome, blue wild rye, onion grasses), bulbs (soap plant, Ithurriel's spear, blue-eyed grass), and annual and perennial wildflowers (chia, lupines, farewell-to-spring, poppies, California cudweed). Annual bluegrass, hard grass, cranesbill, storksbill, chickweed, burclover, and petty spurge are some of the adversaries that are weeded, others appear as the season progresses. The native plants persist and spread when competition from the more recent, naturalized arrivals is diminished. Almost all the latter group of herbaceous arrivals (mostly from the Mediterranean) became established locally between the 1760s and 1860s. They are as much a part of California as are humans, as are the native California plants. We persuade them to make room for an earlier association, one that has grown together for a few millions of years. Weeding is meditation and is also focused on the many small details of a small piece of ground. Happiness is a south-facing slope, warm in the low rays of the afternoon sun.

The dictionary gives the etymology of religion as "to bind together." Working in the meadow binds us with Henry and Carolina Timby who preserved the meadow through seventy years of ownership. It binds us with the Lamshin Tribe of the Ohlone who lived in nearby Pulgas Creek, a short walk. It binds us with the earlier forces of development and preservation that has shaped and continues to shape, yin and yang-like, the Peninsula and Santa Clara Valley, including the San Francisco-San Jose Railroad, later consolidated with the Southern Pacific Railroad by Leland Stanford and his partners. The knoll location and the proximity of San Carlos station, built in 1888, was a major reason why Henry and Carolina chose to live in San Carlos, commuting to work in SF on the train and to Palo Alto visiting friends and relatives.

The meadow binds the current residents with the holders of the Mexican land-grant Rancho de las Pulgas, Don José Argüello, and his son Luis Argüello, the first California-born governor of the state. The family adobe was located at the present-day intersection of Magnolia and Cedar streets, just a few blocks away, another short walk. The introduction and spread of Eurasian plants and animals intensified with the growth of cattle ranching associated with the ranchos established following the secularization of the missions, but the process began with the missions themselves: Mission Basilica San Francisco de Asís, also known as Mission Dolores, and Mission Santa Clara de Asís were founded in 1776, the same year Colonel Juan Baptista de Anza camped under El Palo Alto.

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The missions stretched from San Diego to Sonoma. The friars and their soldiers removed the native Americans from the land which would in 60 years or so become the ranchos, later farms and ranches, then subdivisions and urban development where our homes were built. Four-thousand-year-old cultures were destroyed in the wink of an eye, and a new one created. Plant communities created over millennia were altered so rapidly throughout lowland California that botanists debate today over the structure of the pre-European landscape. At Knoll Drive, by weeding some plants and leaving others, one vision of that earlier landscape is promoted. What grows with the Coast live oaks:

Grasses I=introduced; N=native; A=annual; P=perennial

NP, *Bromus carinatus carinatus*, California brome, Feb-Oct. Native to site
NP, *Calamagrostis rubescens*, doesn't bloom
NP, *Danthonia californica* var. *californica*, California wild oatgrass, May-July
NP, *Deschampsia elongata*
IA, *Desmazeria rigida*
NP, *Elymus californicus* (*Hystrix c.*), California bottlebrush grass
NP, *Elymus glaucus glaucus*, blue wildrye, April-June. Native to site
NP, *Festuca californica*, California fescue, March-July
NP, *Festuca idahoensis*, May-June
NP, *Festuca rubra* 'Molate Blue', red fescue
NP, *Melica californica*, California melic, March-June. Native to site
NP, *Melica imperfecta*, small-flowered melic, March-June. Native to site
NP, *Melica torreyana*, Torrey's melic, March-June. Native to site
NP, *Muhlenbergia rigens*, deer grass
NP, *Nassella lepida*, foothill needlegrass, March-June
NP, *Nassella pulchra*, purple needlegrass, March-June
IA, *Poa annua*, annual bluegrass, Feb-
IA, *Vulpia bromoides*, brome fescue, March-May
IA, *Vulpia myuros* var. *myuros*, rattail, Feb.-May
NA, *Vulpis octoflora*, six-weeks fescue, April. Native to site
NA, *Vulpa microstachys* var. *pauciflora*, Pacific fescue, May. Native to site

Forbs:

IP, *Amaranthus*
IA, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, shepherd's purse,
NA, *Cardamine hirsuta*, few-seeded bittercress,
IA, *Cerastium glomeratum*, mouse-eared chickweed, Dec
NP, *Chlorogalum pomeridianum*, soap plant. Native to site
NA, *Claytonia perfoliata*, miner's lettuce. Native to site
IA, *Cotula australis*, Australian cotula
NP, *Dichelostemma capitata*, blue dicks. Native to site
IA, *Erodium cicutarium*, Dec
IA, *Euphorbia peplus*, petty spurge, Dec
IA, *Geranium dissectum*, cut-leaf geranium, Dec
IA, *Geranium molle*, cranesbill, Dec
NA, *Gnaphalium californicum*, California cudweed. Native to site
IA, *Hypochaeris glabra*, smooth cat's ear
NA, *Lupinus bicolor*, miniature lupine. Native to site
NA, *Nemophila spatulata*
NA, *Sagina apetala*, sticky pearlwort
IA, *Senecio vulgaris*
IA, *Soliva sessilis*, common soliva.
IA, *Stellaria media*, common chickweed

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IA, *Trifolium hirtum*

Bryophytes: *Grimia pulinata* (outside kitchen)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- x C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1940-1950

Significant Dates
1940, 1950

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
William Wurster
Thomas Church
Theodore Bernardi

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Timby House is eligible for the National Register at the national level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction known as the California Ranch Style during the second generation of the Bay Area architectural tradition. It represents the work of California master architect William Wurster and landscape architect Thomas Church. The period of significance is 1940-1950, the years of original construction and the addition designed by Theodore Bernardi of the firm of Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons. Henry Timby was a San Francisco Insurance Broker and friend of both William Wurster and Thomas Church. The home is within walking distance of the San Francisco Peninsula commuter train, on which he commuted to San Francisco for work. The house is still in family ownership.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Timby House is an early and excellent example of William Wilson Wurster's "binuclear" residential design and is one of the least altered of Wurster's Bay Area houses. It was selected by Wurster as one of his favorite small houses and employed dual polarities characteristic of what in the postwar period would be termed the binuclear plan.^{1,2} The house totaling only 1,470 sq. ft., was divided into two zones. To the left of the entrance were the owners' bedroom and a guest room; the living room and kitchen occupied the other wing. A gallery connected them — Wurster's "room with no name" — whose dimensions and lack of assigned use allowed for appropriation from either section of the house. The joining of living room and gallery at an

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obtuse angle muted the perceived edges of the rooms and provided a feeling of greater extent.³ The 1950 addition (bedroom, bath, study and windowed gallery) in the same style and materials was designed by Theodore Bernardi, Wurster's partner in the firm Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons.

Original drawings, plans and correspondence related to the work as well as bills and invoices make an impressive body of primary documentation.⁴ The design was well publicized in national architectural magazines including *Architect & Engineer* (1941) and *Architectural Record* (1944). William Wurster (1895-1973) was a major force in architectural education. As Dean of the School of Architecture at U.C. Berkeley he founded its College of Environmental Design. As a practicing architect he made his mark by designing simple, livable houses drawing initially from vernacular building sources for his building vocabulary. These early homes came to be known as the ranch style. His deep concern with proper siting and surrounding landscaping as well as use of simple, unadorned materials were principals that affected architects and architecture in an era of otherwise daring and provocative design.⁵

William Wilson Wurster

William Wurster (1895–1973) has been widely recognized as the foremost proponent of a distinctive Bay Area architectural style. But his ideas extended far beyond California: in practice with the firm Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons and as head of the architecture schools at the University of California, Berkeley, and MIT, Wurster helped to shape an entire generation of architects and city planners. Furthermore, through his partnerships with his wife, city planner Catherine Bauer, and landscape architect Thomas Church, Wurster was intimately involved in the rise of modern city planning and landscape design in the United States. . . . Greatly influenced by the social and economic conditions of the 1930s, Wurster set out to design small houses that offered the same livability as those of greater scale. Later, in response to the post–World War II housing boom, he was involved in the creation of innovative — and affordable — mass-produced dwellings that were distinguished by simplicity and economy yet incorporated diverse human needs. Characterized by the use of simple, unadorned materials, flexible plans, and a keen attention to site, Wurster's work responded to human needs while emphasizing harmony with the environment. His legacy as an architect, teacher, and theorist is especially relevant today, as uncertain economic conditions and social dislocations continue to impact American housing at every level.⁶ Wurster was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1954. Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons received the AIA's third Architecture Firm Award in 1965, and Wurster personally was awarded the AIA Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement in 1969.

Henry Timby, Thomas Church, and William Wurster

In 1925 Henry E. Timby (1902-1969), an Economics major at Stanford University, took an architecture class, "The art of house design," from Birge Clark, an architect working in Palo Alto

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at the time. His class notes and drawings from the course, Graphic Art 6, Spring 1925, were the only notes he retained from those college years.

Quite possibly Henry, who after graduating from Stanford was living and working in San Francisco, met William Wurster and Thomas Church through mutual friends at the Swedish Applied Arts, an institute run by “Mama” Valborg Gravender. It was an active group of artists and Sierra Club members, somewhat bohemian, and it furthered his interests in architecture, photography, and Sierra Club outings.

Wurster and Church helped Timby and his future wife Carolina Huber locate the perfect building location on the Peninsula near the Southern Pacific San Francisco to San Jose rail line. Family members lived in Palo Alto and work was in San Francisco. They found a large lot just recently platted in San Carlos. It was at the top of a small hill, within walking distance of the town, with views in three directions and lovely old Coast live oaks. It was a challenging site--just the type of thing both Wurster and Church relished, according to Timby.

The house was completed relatively quickly. Henry and Carolina married and moved in by November 1941. WW2 and Operation Torch brought Henry to North Africa a year later. After military service and return to the US, he took up his insurance work in San Francisco and kept up his friendship with Tommy Church and June Meehan (a trusted assistant of the Church team) for the rest of his life. He would often join the group in their office at 402 Jackson Street for a bag lunch get-together, often with a slide show of projects and travels.⁷

Notes

¹ “High on a knoll in San Carlos, California, stands the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timby. The home is located on a ridge, with a view of the rolling wooded hills to the south and west, and a distant view of San Francisco Bay to the east. The oak trees on the ridge are some of the most beautiful of the California oak species to be seen anywhere.” William Wurster, 1940, “My Favorite Small House,” *Our Home* 4, no. 3: pp. 5-7. (Wurster writes about the Timby House, with Roger Sturtevant photos).

² Kent L. Seavey. Organization San Mateo County Historical Assoc. Published in *Historical Resource Inventory for San Carlos, CA* (1991).

³ Marc Treib (1995) William Wilson Wurster: The Feeling of Function, in *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*: p. 44.

⁴ William W. Wurster/Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons Collection, 1922-1974. Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, 230 Wurster Hall #1820, University of California, Berkeley.

⁵ “By the 1950's the California Ranch House had become the dominant style throughout the country. An early example of the form in San Carlos can be found in the A.S. Kalenborn residence at 657 Knoll Drive. Its neighbor at 621 Knoll Dr. was designed by William W. Wurster in 1940. While its forms are indicative of the second generation of the Bay Area architectural tradition, its site planning and use of large window expanses derives in part from Wurster's earlier design style.” *Historical Resource Inventory for San Carlos, CA*, San Mateo County Historical Society, 1991, pp. 64-65. Simple, unadorned materials: “Without frills and furbelows” according to Henry Timby.

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⁶ Excerpted from introductory material of *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*,
University of California Press, 1995.

⁷ Sara Timby, personal reminiscence, August 2021.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- Bricker, Lauren (2009-2010) Western Pragmatists and the Modern American House, *Southern California Quarterly* 91,4: pp. 413-427.
- Church, Thomas (1995) *Gardens are for People*. 3rd ed. Berkeley, California: University of California Press. Chap. 2: The Site Affects Design (views and other considerations).
- Gebhard, David et al (1985) *Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California*. Salt Lake, Peregrine Smith Books. Chapter P-6 San Carlos: p.145.
- Hille, R. Thomas (1994) *Inside the Large Small House: The Residential Design Legacy of William W. Wurster*. N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press.
- *Historical Resource Inventory for San Carlos, CA* (1991). 3 vols, report and 2 appendices. Kent L. Seavey documented the Timby House, 9/10/1991.
- Kahn, Eve (November 1995) The modest modernist. *House Beautiful*: pp. 68-70.
- SFMOMA (11/16/1995 - 02/11/1996) Exhibition: *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*.
- Timby House. Henry Timby & Carolina Timby House; plans, photographs, correspondence. *William W. Wurster/Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons Collection, 1922-1974*. Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, 230 Wurster Hall #1820, University of California, Berkeley.
- Treib, Marc, ed. (1995). *An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster*. San Francisco, California: University of California Press. Exhibition catalog.
- Treib, Marc. ed. (2003) *Thomas Church Landscape Architect: Designing a Modern California Landscape*. San Francisco: William Stout Publishers.
- Wurster, William (April 1954) California Architecture for Living. *California Monthly*, reprinted in Marc Treib, ed. (1995) *An Everyday Modernism*, p. 237.
- Wurster, William (1942) My Favorite Small Home. *Our Home* 4, no. 3: pp. 5-7.
- Wurster, William (1944) For a Warm Climate with Cool Winds. *Architectural Record* 95, no. 2: pp. 64-65. (Wurster writes about the Timby House, with photos).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark

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recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government: San Mateo Society Historical Society, Redwood City
 University: William W. Wurster/Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons Collection, 1922-1974.
Environmental Design Archives, College of Environmental Design, 230 Wurster Hall #1820,
University of California, Berkeley.
 Other
Name of repository: Timby Family records

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 0.7 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.499447 | Longitude: -122.26483 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary includes the entire 0.7-acre property at 621 Knoll Drive, APN 060 094 130 and 140, as recorded in the San Mateo County Recorder's Office.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See Sketch and APN maps.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sara Timby and John Rawlings

organization: _____

street & number: 621 Knoll Dr

city or town: San Carlos

state: California

zip code: 94070

e-mail: rawlings@stanford.edu

telephone: 650 593-3287

date: August 31, 2021

Timby House, San Carlos, 1940
Name of Property

San Mateo, CA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - Location Map
 - Parcel. Map
 - Plot Plan after 1950 addition with Floor Plan Square-Foot Areas
 - Floor Plan 1940

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key to photographs

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
 - Figure 1-4: Wurster (1942) "My Favorite Small House"
 - Figure 5: *An Everyday Modernism* (1940), photos ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, *The Oakland Museum*
 - Figure #6 Elevations of 1940 house
 - Figure #7 Elevations of 1940 house

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Timby House

City or Vicinity: San Carlos

County: San Mateo County

Photographer: Sara Timby

Date Photographed: 8/26/2021

- Photo 1 of 10 Front of house, E facing
- Photo 2 of 10 Front terrace and kitchen, looking SW
- Photo 3 of 10 Partial front elevation E facing, and 1950 addition (right)
- Photo 4 of 10 Gallery windows and utility room looking NW up toward back terrace
- Photo 5 of 10 Back terrace and gallery windows, W-facing
- Photo 6 of 10 South wall, carport and utility room
- Photo 7 of 10 Oak woodland looking N from kitchen
- Photo 8 of 10 Gallery and living room looking S
- Photo 9 of 10 Connecting windowed and ramped gallery of 1950 addition, looking SE
- Photo 10 of 10 Workshop West side

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours

Tier 2 – 120 hours

Tier 3 – 230 hours

Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

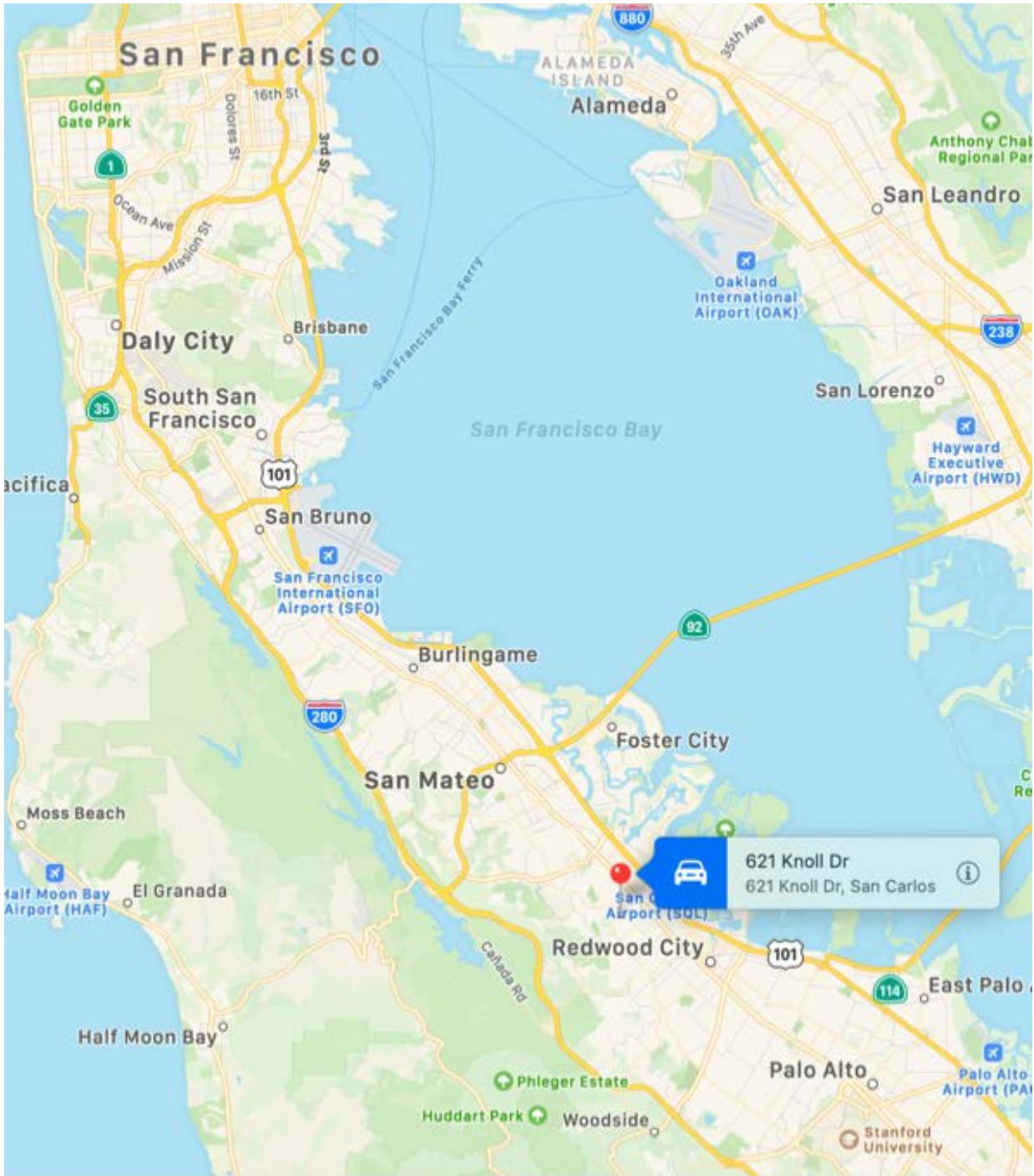
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Location Map

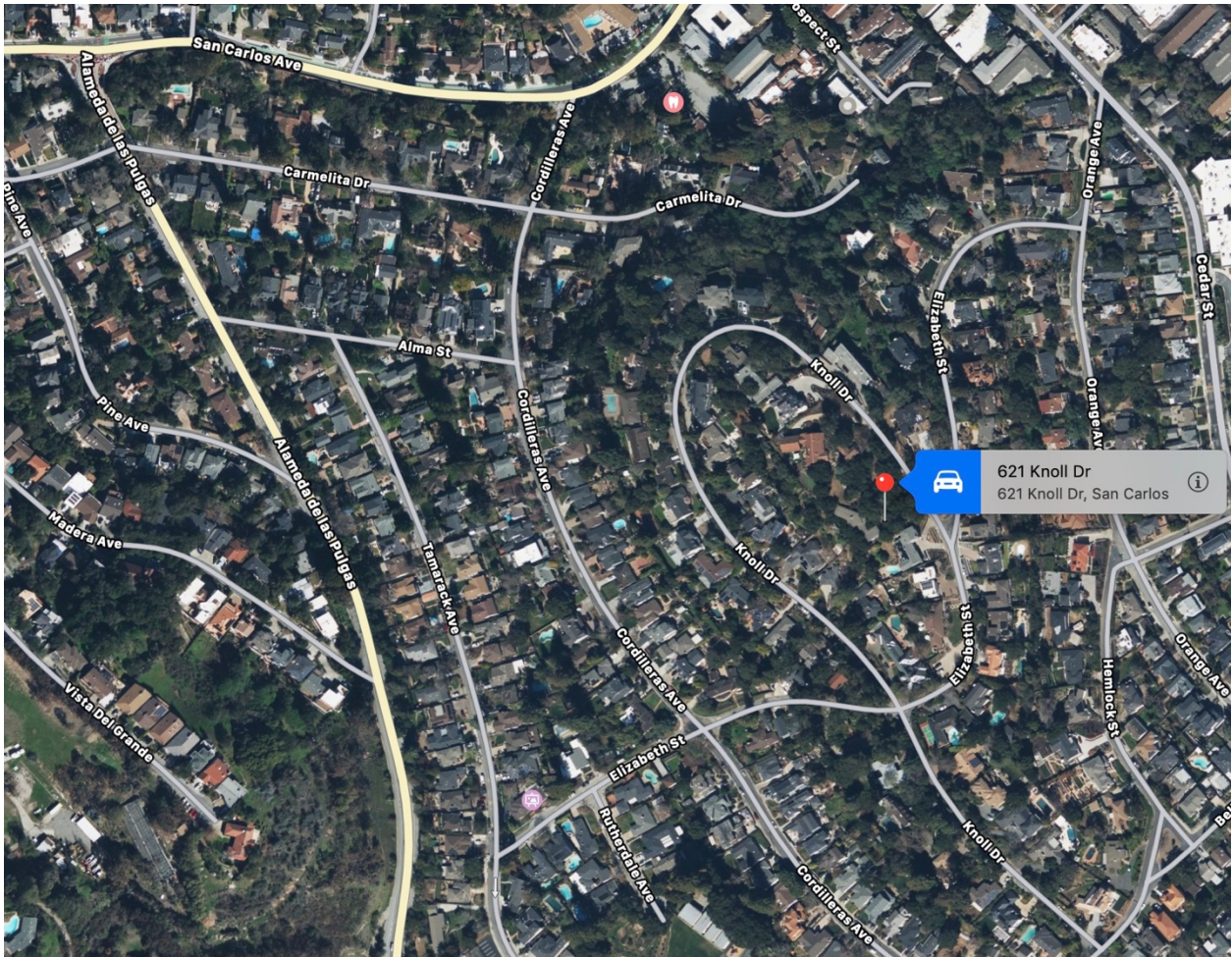


Apple Maps accessed 9/7/2021

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Location Map Detail



Apple Maps accessed 9/7/2021

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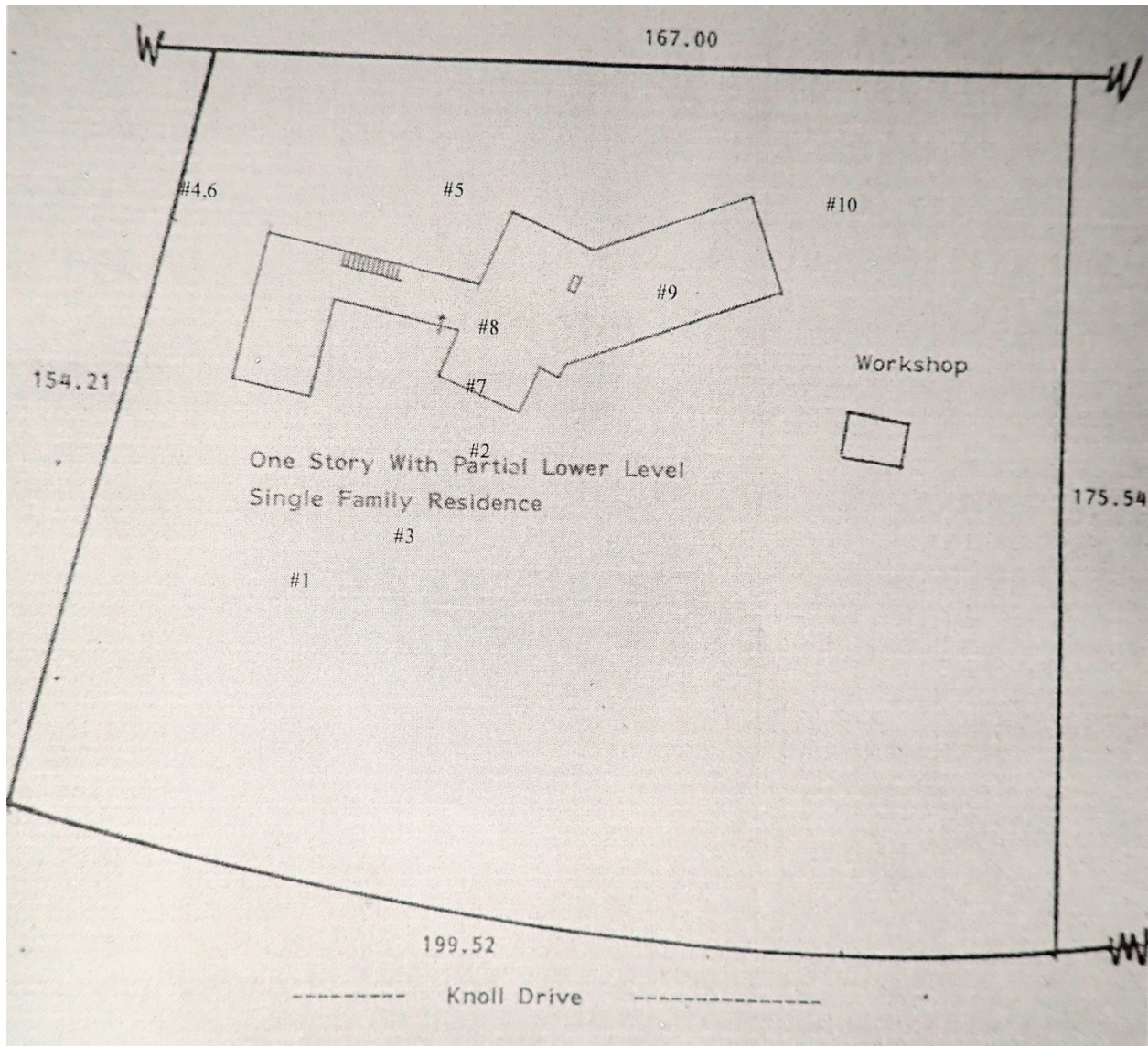
Accessor Parcel Map: Assessor's Parcel Numbers 060 094 130 and 140
LOT15 BLOCK 10 BRITTAN ACRES MAP No. 2. LOT16 BLOCK 10
BRITTAN ACRES MAP No. 2)



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Property Plot Plan after 1950 addition; Photo Key



Floor Plan Square-Foot Areas:

Living

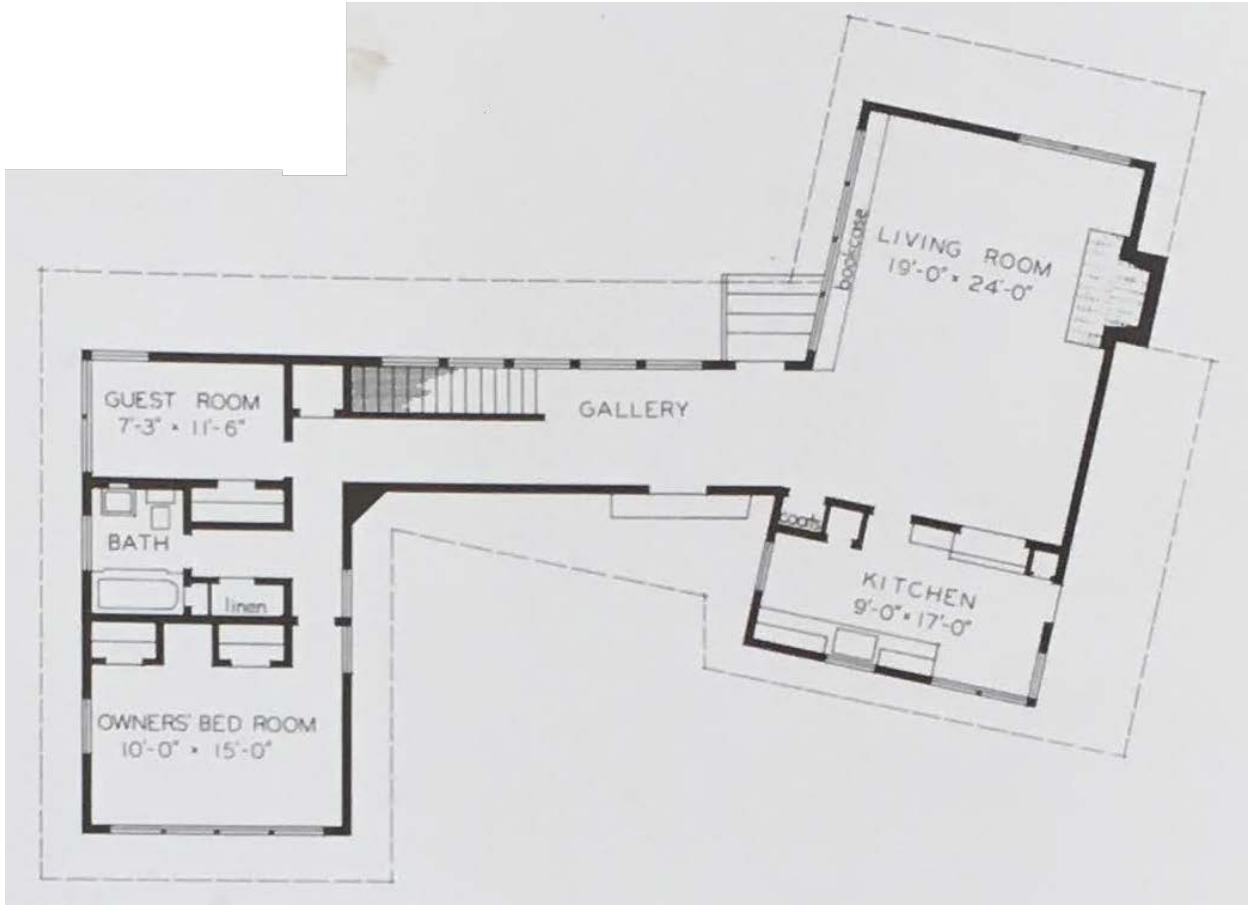
| | |
|----------|------|
| Carport | 301 |
| Workshop | 144 |
| Total | 2947 |



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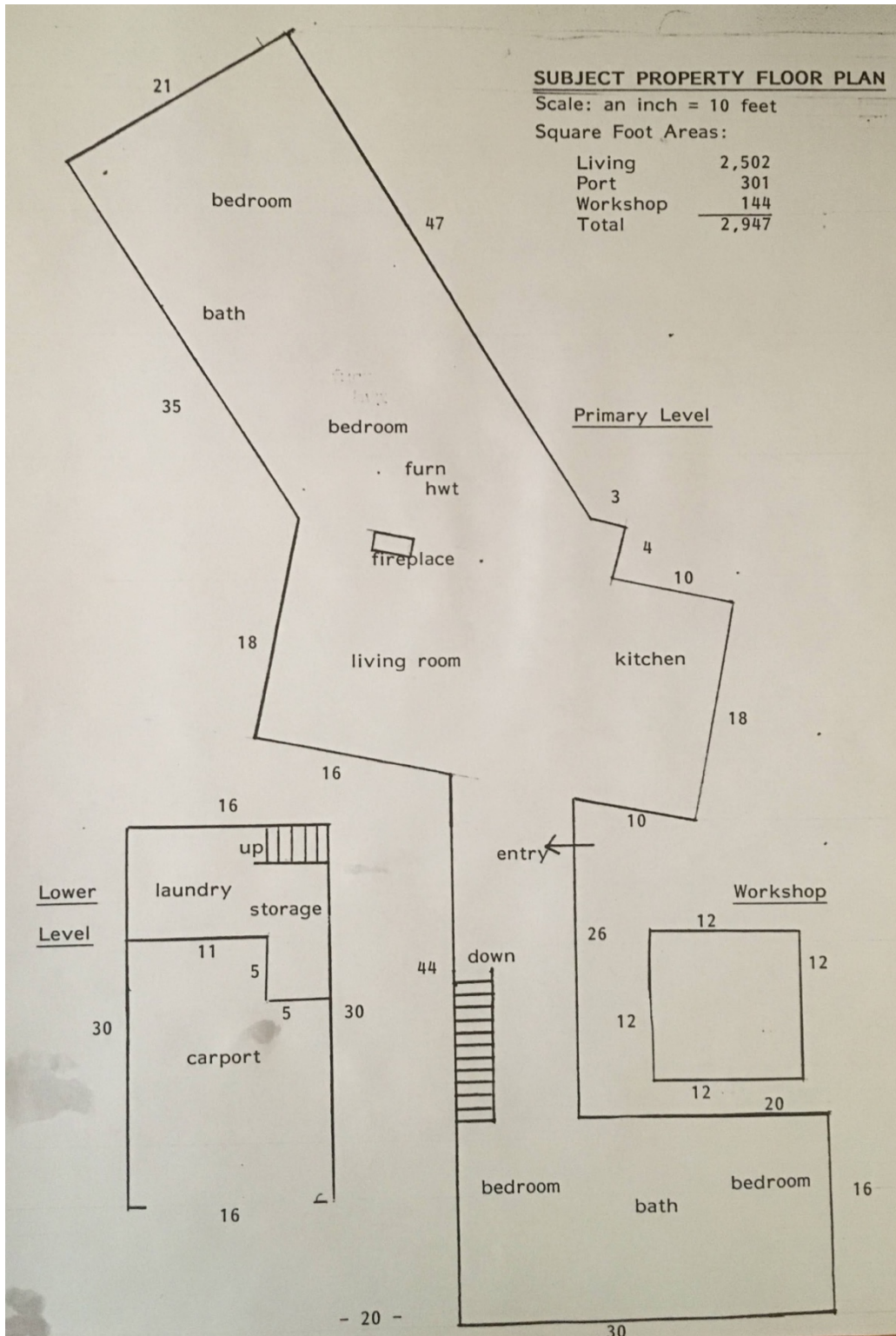
Figure 1. Floor Plan 1940



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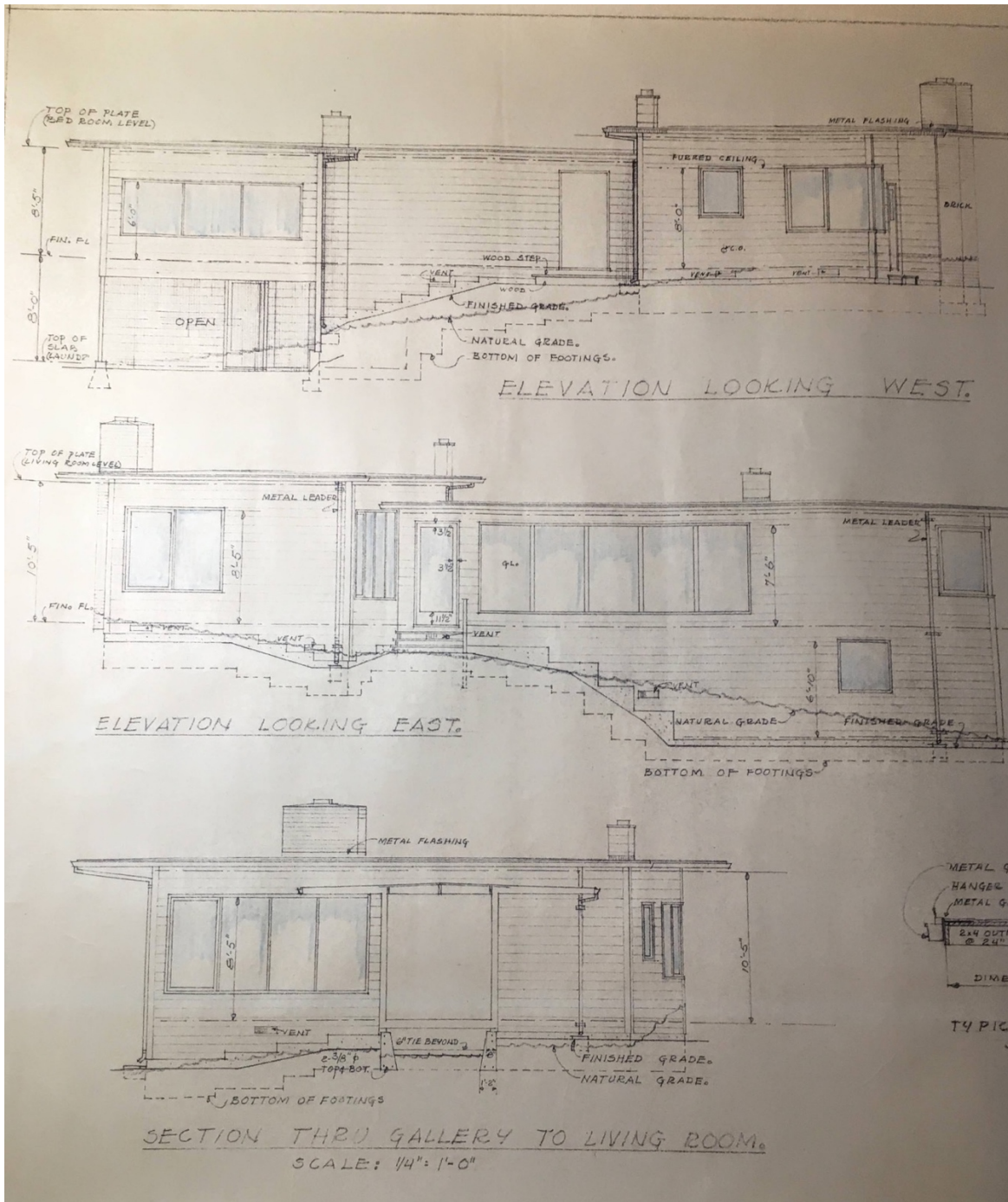
Figure 2. Floor Plan after 1950 Addition



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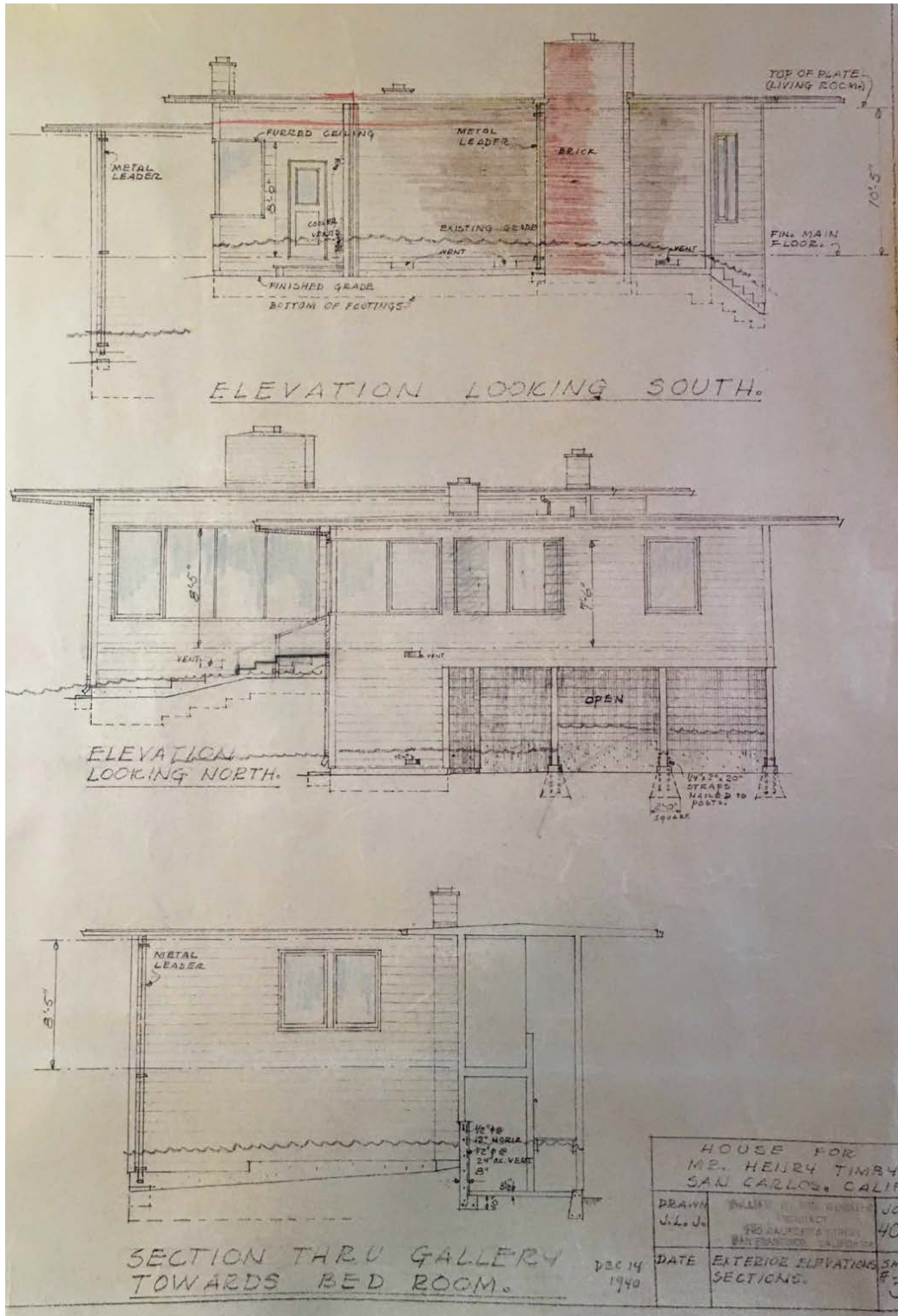
Figure 3. Elevation Looking East and West, 1940



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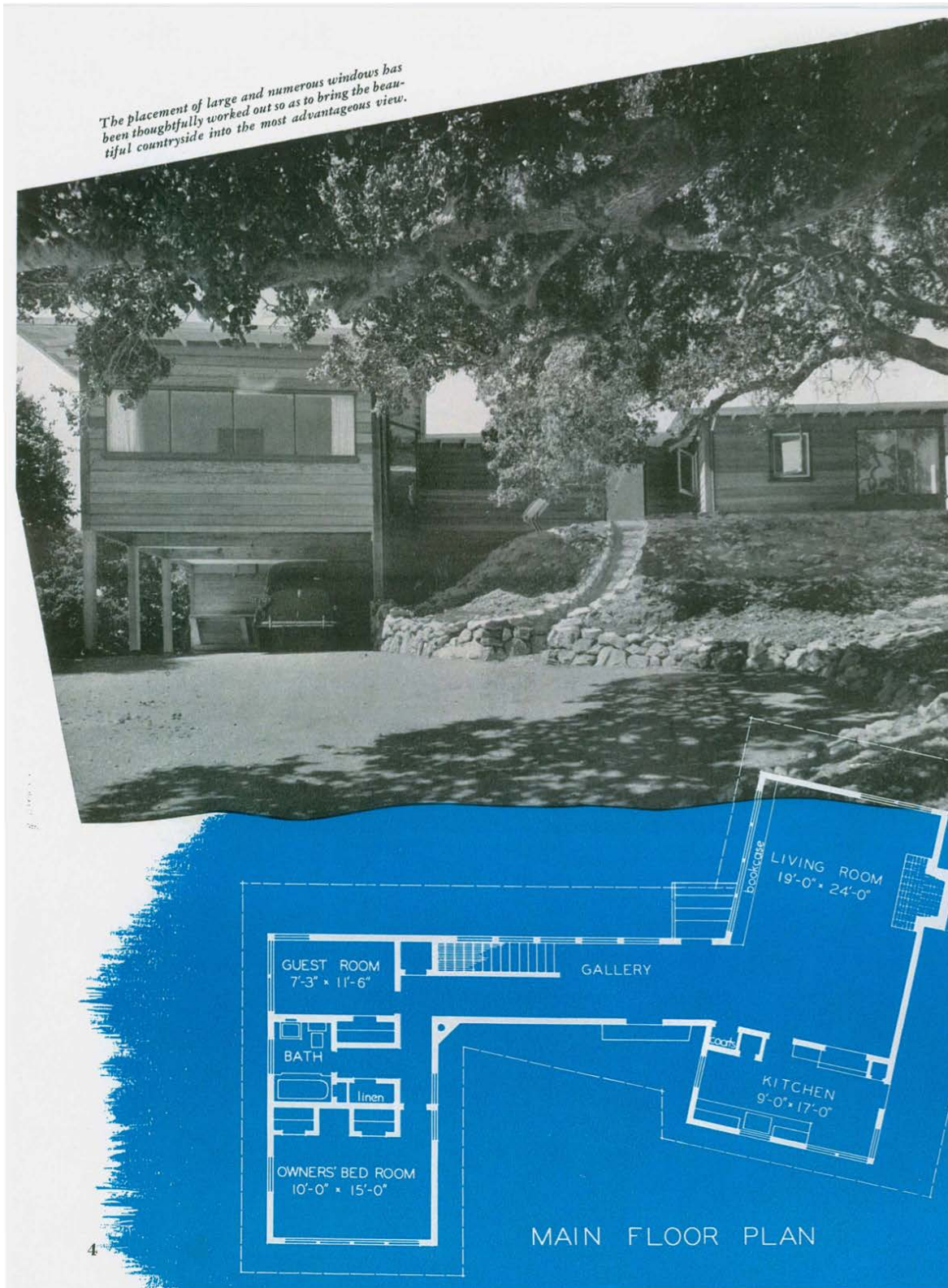
Figure 4. Elevation Looking South and North, 1940



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Figure 5. Front Elevation & Floor Plan, 1940 ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, The Oakland Museum



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Figure 6. Gallery and Living Room Exterior, 1940 ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, The Oakland Museum

My FAVORITE

Small Home

by
WILLIAM WILSON WURSTER

High on a knoll, just a few miles south of San Francisco, in San Carlos, California, stands the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Timby. The house is located on a ridge, with a view of the rolling wooded hills to the south and west, and a distant view of San Francisco Bay to the east. The oak trees on this ridge are some of the most beautiful of the California live oak species to be seen anywhere.

Probably the outstanding characteristic of this California functional home is the definite separation of the living-cooking-dining portion from the sleeping quarters. A long but spacious gallery extends from the living room to the bedrooms and the bath, and imparts an atmosphere of spaciousness to this modest size house.

The living room, measuring twenty-four by nineteen feet, is graced by a large fireplace, built of common brick, and extending in an unbroken line from the

One needs but to glance at the exterior views of this functional house to see that thorough efficiency is the keynote of its design.

William Wilson Wurster, although located in San Francisco, California, enjoys a fine nationwide reputation for designing homes that meet with consistently high satisfaction. We are indeed fortunate in having Mr. Wurster select for us a home which proves the point that a home can be functional, attractive and yet within a very modest budget.

floor to the ceiling. Directly across from the fireplace are four wide plate glass windows giving a wonderful view of the rolling hills to the south. Two additional windows on the southwest side of the room offer another delightful view.

Keystone of Simplicity

Simplicity was the governing keynote in the design of the living room. It was decreed that there would be no frills or furbelows, but every touch that would add to relaxation and comfort was to be included. Across from the fireplace, under the windows, two rows of built-in book cases were constructed.

With the improvements now being offered by manufacturers of building materials, it is possible to obtain beautiful,

5

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Figure 7. Living Room 1940 ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, The Oakland Museum



modern panelled wall effects similar to those in the Timby's home, at surprisingly low cost. Of course, for the duration, construction work of this type is restricted. Yet often your local lumber dealer will be able to explain how various vitally necessary re-modeling jobs can be done, within the limits of the allowance set up by the War Production Board.

The setting of this home lent itself to the rather unusual room arrangement. Located on a high ridge, with ample room, there was no necessity for skimping on space. The house stands quite well back on the property, as you will note, and affords an easy grade for the driveway and space for parking.

The arrangement of having the living-cooking-dining part of the house in a separate wing from the sleeping room section, with the connecting gallery, re-

sulted in a desirable placement as to view and trees and also afforded a pleasant separation between the quiet and the noisy areas. At the same time the unusual angles in the layout give protection from the occasional strong breezes which sweep over the hill-top.

In order to make for convenient living, with a minimum amount of housework, and at the same time fit a limited budget, the dining room was omitted. Eating space was provided in the rather commodious kitchen, which measures nine feet by seventeen feet, and has windows on three sides, assuring an ample supply of sunlight during the day. In the event of more formal meals, there is plenty of room for a dining table at the end of the spacious living room.

Directly at the far end of the gallery is the guest room, 7 feet 3 inches by 11

For a house well within the low cost bracket there is a delightful feeling of ample spaciousness. Simplicity is the word, leaving the rooms uncluttered.

feet 6 inches in size. Its three large windows offer delightful views of rolling, wooded country, and assure of good cross-ventilation for comfort. Inasmuch as the house stands on a high knoll, there is always a fine flow of fresh air.

The owner's bedroom is on the northeast side of the wing. It is 10 feet by 15 feet in size, with windows on three sides. Practically the entire northeast wall consists of four large windows. Between the two bedrooms, off a connecting corridor is the bath.

The house is of wood construction, using natural redwood siding for the exterior, with barn-red for the trim. Its broad overhanging eaves not only add protection and shade but also add to

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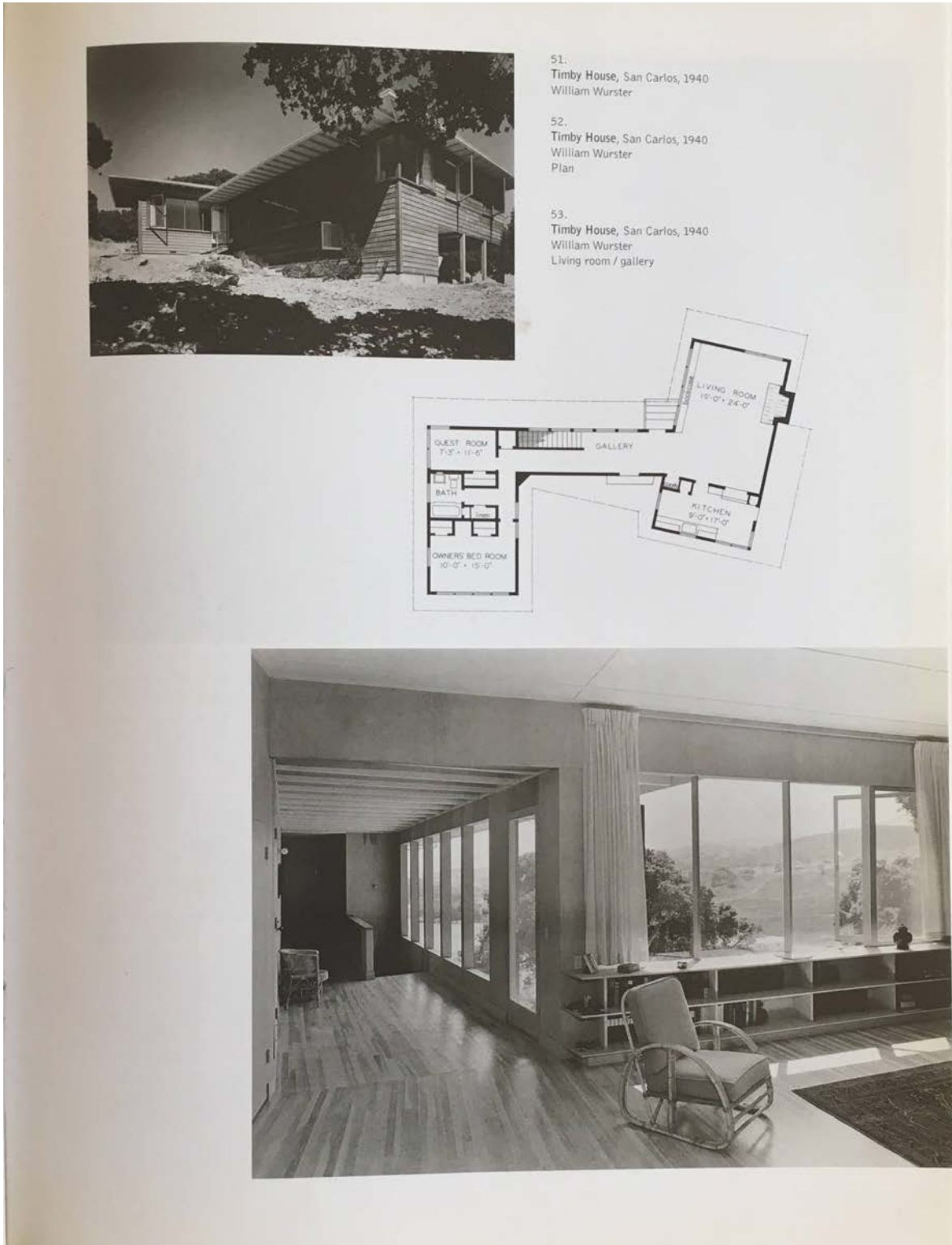
Figure 8. Gallery and Living Room Interior, 1940 ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, The Oakland Museum



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Figure 9. *An Everyday Modernism*, photos ©Roger Sturtevant Collection, The Oakland Museum



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Photo 1 of 10. Front elevation, east side of house



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Photo 2 of 10. Front terrace and kitchen, looking SW



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Photo 3 of 10. Partial front elevation E facing, and 1950 addition (right)



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Photo 4 of 10. Gallery windows and utility room looking NW up toward back terrace



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Photo 5 of 10. Back terrace and western side of gallery



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Photo 6 of 10. South wall right with carport and utility room on lower level; west wall in dappled light



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Photo 7 of 10. Oak woodland looking N from kitchen



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Photo 8 of 10. Gallery and living room looking S-SW



"The interior is wrapped in plywood, brown-orange sheets of subtly varying grains." Kahn (1995) *The modest modernist*, p. 70.

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Photo #9 of 10 Connecting windowed and ramped gallery of 1950 addition, looking SE



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Photo 10 of 10. Workshop W side



"First: We have no summer rain. The hills grow brown and all gardens must be watered. This, of course, forces us into terraces in the Spanish garden tradition, unless we are lavish with water, and water is expensive, for it is often brought from storage in the Sierra hundreds of miles away." William Wurster (April 1954) *California Architecture for Living, California Monthly*.