



604 Milverton Road Los Altos, California Historic Resource Evaluation

Prepared for
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Los Altos, CA



Prepared by
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Innovating Tradition

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Resource Description.....	5
Historical Background / Context	10
Site Evolution and Construction Chronology	19
Evaluation Framework.....	33
Evaluation Findings.....	36
Conclusion	45
References	46
Appendix A: Parcel Map	A
Appendix B: DPR Form	B

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. was contracted by Mike Giovannotto in February of 2022 to prepare this Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) for the property at 604 Milverton Road in Los Altos (**Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4**), historically referred to as the Costello House. This HRE report has been prepared at the request of the City of Los Altos for CEQA compliance in connection with proposed renovation of the subject property. The site and existing structures have been previously evaluated for historical significance and are listed as Historic Resources under the 1997 City of Los Altos' Historic Resources Inventory and revised 2007 Inventory. An updated DPR form will also be included as an appendix to the HRE. The previously written DPR form included both the house and the Costello Barn. Although the barn is not on the subject property the two sites are historically connected.

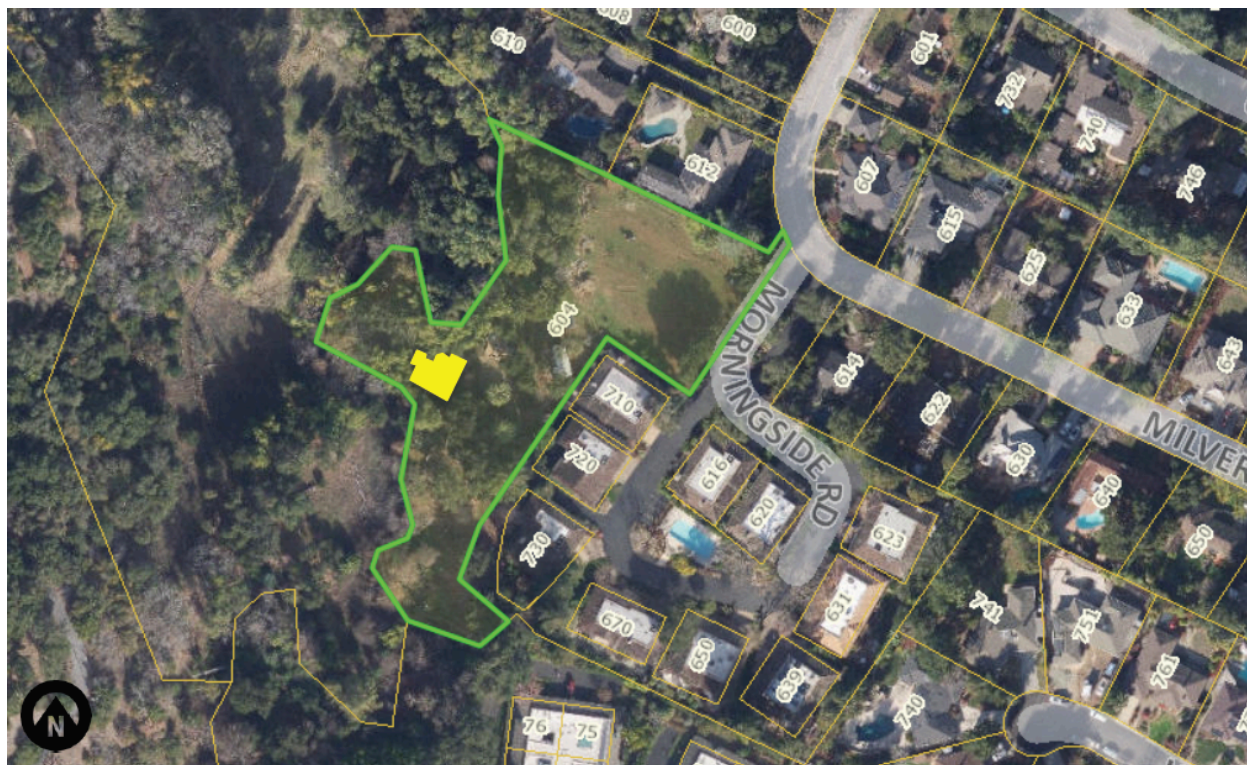


Figure 1: Street map of subject property outlined in green, with Costello House filled in yellow. (Santa Clara County Map, Amended by author.)

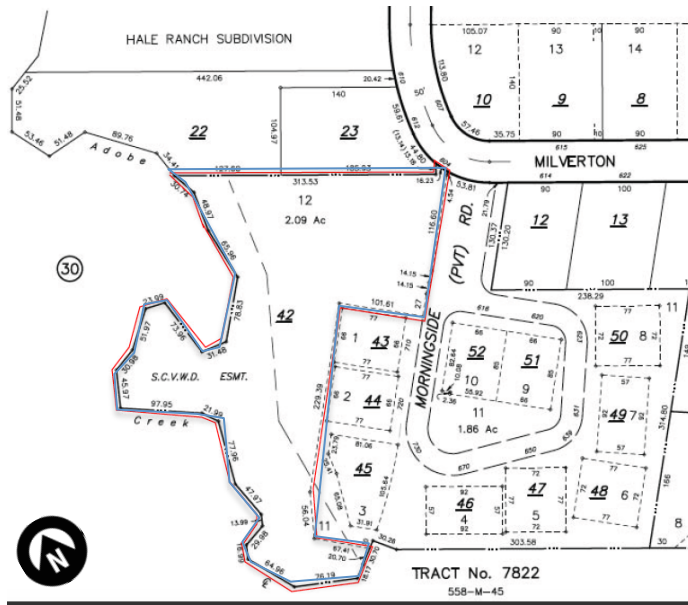


Figure 2: Portion of Santa Clara County Assessor's parcel map with subject property outlined in red (Office of the Assessor, Santa Clara County, 2021-2022. Amended by author.)

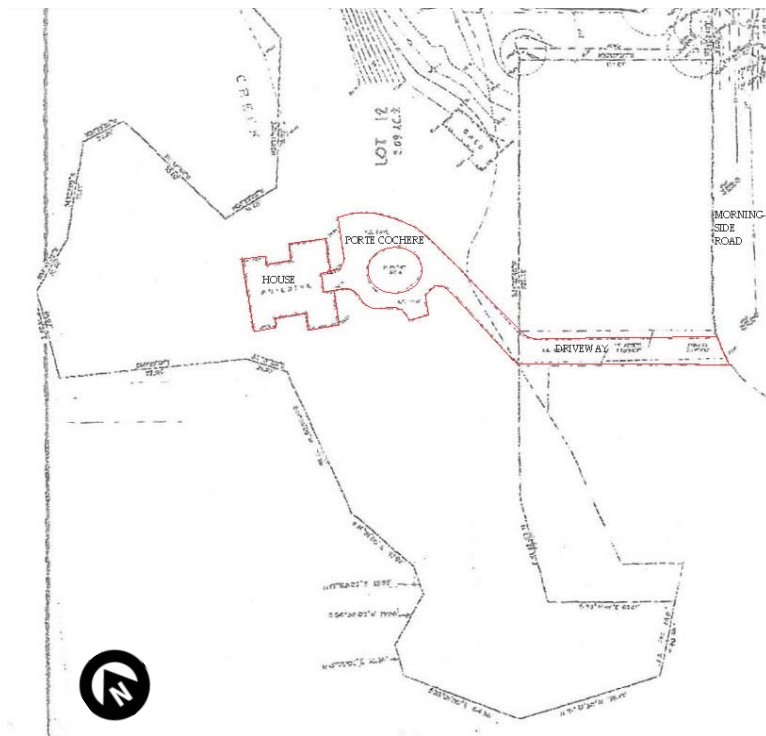


Figure 3: Portion of assessors map, noting house location, driveway, and turn around outlined in red (Office of the Assessor, Santa Clara County, 2021-2022. Amended by author)

The subject property has been evaluated for potential eligibility for listing as a historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as well as the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and has been identified as a potential local historic landmark for the City of Los Altos, during a historic resources inventory in 2011. This HRE will serve to update and expand up on the existing evaluation, including the DPR 523 record.

METHODOLOGY

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. staff conducted a site visit and survey of the property's interior and exterior on May 6, 2022. During this visit, staff documented the building's configuration, architectural elements, landscape features, and setting with photographs and field notes. The Client/ Owner provided the permit history, ownership history, and historic photos for the subject property.

Garavaglia Architecture Inc. also conducted additional archival research on the subject property and surrounding area. The following repositories/ collections were consulted to complete the research process (see References section for complete list of resources).

- Ancestry.com
- California Digital Newspaper Collection
- Newspapers.com
- Online Archive of California
- Library of Congress
- Los Altos History Museum
- Los Altos Town Crier Newspaper
- Santa Clara County Office of the Assessor
- San Francisco Public Library

RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

SITE

The subject property of approximately 2 acres has an abstract geometric shape with irregular boundary lines and is located southwest of University Avenue and west of South El Monte Avenue in Los Altos. The street address is 604 Milverton Road (APN No. 175-19-042), but the driveway access is from Morningside Road. The property contains a residential building known as the Costello House.

South of the Orange/University Historic District was the former Costello agricultural property, including apricot orchards and the Costello Barn, which are historically associated with the Costello House but are not part of this report. The zoning for the current Costello property is unique since it is categorized as a “Planned Community” and will allow only two residential structures on the property, but the lot cannot be subdivided.

There are currently two structures on the property, a house, and a carport. The house and the carport are located near the center of the property, but the house is close to the property lines on the west side and the garage is situated close to the property boundary on the east side. The house is not visible from Morningside Road or from Milverton Road, because it sits below street level, on a grade closer to Adobe Creek. The front facade of the house faces east. The property is in a mostly wooded area and includes a segment Adobe Creek, to the east of the house. A clearing or small agricultural lot is located on the northeast side of the property. The Los Altos Water Department owns undeveloped land along Adobe Creek to the north and south of the subject property, preserving a rural feeling to the view shed surrounding the house.



Figure 4: Looking southwest at the house from the north corner of the parcel at street level. Both mature and recently planted trees obscure the view of the house. (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)

BUILDING

The “H” shaped building is a one story, residential wood framed structure constructed in the Craftsman Bungalow architectural style. The house is approximately 1,637 sq. ft. with two bedrooms, and one bathroom. The walls are made of wood clapboard siding painted an ochre color with white trim. Asphalt shingles cover the unique intersecting gable roof forms.



Figure 5: Looking west at the front facade with apricot carved motif above the front door (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)

Exterior

The house is built on an elevated foundation and the primary facade faces north. Below is a description of the exterior of house going clockwise around the building.

The front of the house faces east and is covered with painted clapboard siding, with two symmetrical projecting gables that frame a central opening with a 25 pane French door with 15 pane sidelights. Above the French door is an arched gable and decorative bargeboard. An apricot and leaf motif is at the top of the arch, and the front entry light appears to hang from the apricot. Above the entry door and behind the entry light is decorative latticework integrated into the siding. The three sets of wood window sashes are mulled together, located under each of the side gables. These operable single-sash under a six-fixed, six-lite half-sash windows appear to be original.

Around the corner to the south façade is a wooden deck overlooking the garage and the creek valley. This is the most open side of the house after the front of the house. The proximity to Adobe Creek puts the house on a sloped lot, where the front of the house is entered at grade; the first floor is almost a full story above grade at the back of the house facing the creek. Family records indicate the wood deck was added to this elevation during the 1985-86 house remodel.



Figure 6: Looking north at the house in the distance, with the creek to the left of the house and the garage to the right. (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)



Figure 7: Looking north at the south facade with deck, and Adobe Creek to the left. (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)



Figure 8: Looking south at the north facade, heavily obstructed by trees. The patio is to the left and Adobe Creek to the right. (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)



Figure 9: Looking east at the west facade, rear of the house. (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)

Interior

The interior of the house, when accessed through the front door, opens into the living room with vaulted ceilings and exposed wood trusses. The bedrooms, deck access, kitchen, and other rooms are all accessed via this central space.

- Original chimney and mantel are located in the living room.
- The living room has a high ceiling with an exposed ceiling revealing exposed wood trusses.
- Kitchen has been updated.
- Hardwood floor in the living room



Figure 10: Looking south inside the living room at the exposed trusses.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Early Inhabitants

The first people to make the Santa Clara Valley their home were the Ohlone, who lived in semi-permanent villages ranging from the Carquinez Strait in the north to Monterey Bay in the south. The valley provided rich foraging and hunting along the many streams and rivers that flow into San Francisco Bay.

With the arrival of the Spanish to the region following Gaspar de Portolá's expedition, life in the valley began to orient toward the Missions and settlements at Santa Clara and San Jose, respectively. Large land grants known as Ranchos were awarded to Spanish settlers who began to raise cattle in large numbers. Cattle ranching remained the Santa Clara Valley's major industry until well into the 19th century, even as Mexican independence and the Mexican American War began to bring changes to the region.

Following the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California became a territory of the United States, then the 31st state in 1850. With the discovery of gold in 1848, California became a draw to thousands of migrants. By the 1850's, either by failing to strike it rich or simply seeking a more reliable form of income, many migrants began to settle in the southern Santa Clara Valley and to grow wheat, which until then had been imported to California. The valley soon became an agricultural center, with small towns springing up along the old Camino Real, which ran north from Monterey.

Agriculture

Los Altos is translated to mean "the heights" or "foothill" in Spanish. The following is primarily excerpted is from the 2012 City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory. Some information from "The History of Two Cities", found on the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce website, is also included. Footnotes indicate what was excerpted from the History of Two Cities. All other information is directly taken from the 2012 Inventory Report and not footnoted.

Los Altos comprises a portion of what was the La Purissima Conception Rancho and Rancho San Antonio and later, after the adoption of the State constitution in 1849 and the official creation of Santa Clara County in 1851, a portion of the Fremont Township.¹

In the early rancho days, much of the Santa Clara Valley was used for cattle grazing. This activity later gave way to wheat and grain fields in the 1860s and 1870s. Mountain View was the principal settlement in the area and grew primarily as a result of the old Mountain View Station, a stage stop located along the San Francisco-San Jose Stage Road. This route today is known as El Camino Real.²

When the Southern Pacific railroad came through in 1864, the line was located about a mile from Mountain View Station, bypassing what was known as Old Mountain View (near present day Calderon). The "New Mountain View" was officially laid out in 1865 at the present downtown area along Castro Street. Settlement in and around Los Altos area grew as a result of the railroad and Mountain View was the center for all business activity for these early

¹ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 2: Agriculture 1850 to 1940," *The City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory* (Los Altos, 2012), II-4.

² Ibid.

residents. One early name is that of Charles Berry, who according to Sawyer's *History of Santa Clara County*; was one of the earliest inhabitants of the area, arriving just prior to the railroad. Berry is said to have purchased 15 acres of the Taaffe Ranch and immediately planted it in fruit.³

According to the *Thompson and West Historical Atlas of 1876*, Santa Clara County comprised some 578,850 acres. Nearly half of this was cultivated and included some 170,000 acres of wheat growing alone. The 1890 *Sunshine, Fruit and Flowers* publication of the San Jose Mercury Newspaper describes much of the area north of Mountain View as being planted in wheat fields with the area west and south devoted to orchards. Prior to this time, it appears that most land was used for grain growing; in 1875 some 2,000 acres in the county are listed-as vineyards and wineries.⁴

Other accounts describe the Mountain View area as having some 22 wineries, including that of John Snyder. In 1875, over 182,000 gallons of wine were produced in the county, with an additional 45,000 gallons of brandy the same year. The Snyder Ranch was one of the largest in the area comprising 700 acres. Others include the Campbell Ranch (the present-day Rancho Shopping Center) encompassing 150 acres, the Taaffe Ranch, the Madigan Ranch, and the Emerson Ranch. It is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century, smaller farms began to appear and the large ranches, which were largely in grain, began to give way to smaller subdivisions and orchards.⁵ It is the orchards in the valley that are the emphasis for this agricultural context. The earliest farms predate the official subdivision of the town by Paul Shoup and the Altos Land Company in 1907. These farms were largely aligned economically with the town of Mountain View and along Grant Road.⁶

By 1890, according to *Eastman's History of the Los Altos Area*, smaller ranches were producing as "much as 200 dollars per acre from prunes, apricots, peaches, cherries, pears and other fruits." The properties were lived in year-round by their occupants and represent a phase in this history of the community that emphasizes farming as the means of livelihood. This activity predates the later relocation of San Francisco businessmen and their families to town after 1907. After the official establishment of the town, businesses in Los Altos grew and the beginning of residential subdivisions began to take over the orchard land use.⁷

Orchard Agriculture in Santa Clara County

Orchard Agriculture in California started at the beginning of the 19th Century, brought to the state during the Spanish and Mission periods. By the 1850's, Nurseries are developed in "San Jose, Alameda, Napa, and Stockton. The beginning of the "fruit era" is marked by the 1856 introduction of the "Santa Clara Valley Prune" in San Jose by Louis Pellier, who began selling "five and ten acre lots...for fruit farms."⁸ By the 1870's, California outpaced the rest of the country in orchard-related crops.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., II-12.

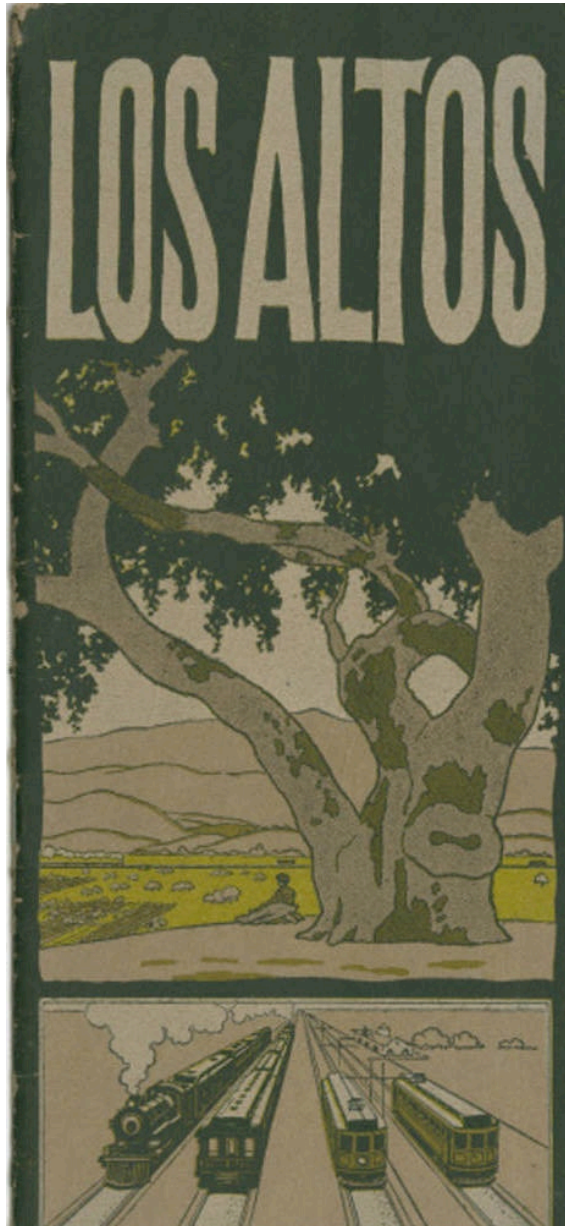


Figure 11: Los Altos -- Loveliest Place on the Peninsula pamphlet, Los Altos Land Company, 1909 (San Jose Public Library)

In 1870-71, Santa Clara County alone had planted 1,107,840 apple trees, in addition to 83,650 peach trees, 75,260 pear trees, 25,890 plum trees, and 20,430 cherry trees. In 1889, California reportedly distributed 780,000 boxes of fruit to various markets.⁹

In 1890's, the Los Altos area hosted many smaller ranches, who

"were producing as 'much as 200 dollars per acre from prunes, apricots, peaches, cherries, pears and other fruits.' The properties were lived in year round by their occupants and represent a phase in this history of the community that emphasizes farming as the means of livelihood. This activity predates the later relocation of San Francisco businessmen and their families to town after 1907."¹⁰

Orchard fruits were generally successful crops, but marketing "marketing the product was fraught with difficulties, particularly in transporting perishable goods to market, until efficient rail service became available."¹¹ As railroad and better packing technologies developed in the early 20th century, a broader variety of fruits, including "persimmons, raisins, apricots, nectarines, quinces, and pomegranates" helped California's orchard industry expand.¹²

Los Altos's development is directly tied to both the agriculture and the railroad, and the ultimate shift away from the expansive orchards. The Los Altos Land Company, in a 1909 advertising pamphlet, used the apricots to encourage people to purchase lots to have a family orchard, likely to supplement money made in San Francisco. By 1922, more established orchards were being subdivided. Costello Acres, just south of the subject property, was a development that advertised itself as having

⁹ California Department of Transportation, *A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Agricultural Properties in California*, Division of Environmental Analysis, California Department of Transportation (Sacramento, 2007), 55.

¹⁰ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 2," *Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory*, II-5.

¹¹ CalTrans, *A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design*, 55.

¹² Ibid.

mature fruit trees on lots while maintaining close proximity to the train station for easy commuting.¹³ The Los Altos economy shifted away from orchards as businesses grew and "residential subdivisions began to take over the orchard land use."¹⁴

Land Development and the Railroad

Change in land ownership by the turn-of-the-century in the Los Altos area began to have an impact on land usage and development. Some 700 acres of the Hale Ranch were sold to the University of Santa Clara as a relocation university site. By 1906, big ranches were sold off in smaller parcels of approximately 40 to 100 acres. Many of these lots were bought by professors from the newly formed Stanford University (1891), according to Eastman's account. Mrs. Winchester, the widow of the Winchester rifle manufacturer, purchased the present site of Los Altos.¹⁵

Los Altos followed the same pattern as other larger cities [where land companies associated with a railroad bought up land in developing, formerly rural areas]. A typical scenario was that of a transportation official privately purchasing large tracts of undeveloped land and then subdividing the land after the development of a transit line. In Los Altos, Southern Pacific president, Paul Shoup, and his brother, Southern Pacific attorney, Guy Shoup, bought a right-of-way from Palo Alto through Los Altos to run a connecting line through Los Gates and points south.¹⁶

On October 19, 1907, the Altos Land Company was incorporated with L. E. Petree as Secretary. The University Land Company was also incorporated on exactly the same day with Petree as Secretary. Paul Shoup served as a director of the Altos Land Company; there is no documentation showing the directors of the

Figure 12: Ad for Costello Acres, *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 5, 1919 (SF Chronicle)

¹³ "Little Farms and Homesites Feature of Costello Acres," *San Francisco Call*, Vol. 105, No. 78, (April 4, 1919): 13.

¹⁴ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 2," *Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory*, II-5.

¹⁵ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 5: Commercial Development 1907 to 1940," *The City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory* (Los Altos, 2012), II-13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II-14.

University Land Company. Both companies had as their objective the layout and subsequent sale of lots in the newly laid out town of Los Altos.¹⁷

Prior to the land company incorporation, the San Jose-Los Gatos Interurban Electric Railway Company had acquired 100 acres of land from Sarah Winchester for the proposed route of the railway and town-site of what was then called "Banks and Braes." The company was shortly thereafter acquired by Southern Pacific's newly created subsidiary known as the Peninsular Railway with the stipulation that the Altos Land Company would lay out the lots for the town-site, and the town name changed to a Los Altos in 1907.¹⁸

The Southern Pacific had already established its line from Mayfield through Los Altos and Saratoga on to the final destination of Santa Cruz. The Peninsular Railway, the suburban electric route, built its line from Mayfield to San Jose. According to McCaleb's *Tracks, Tires, and Wires*, the line was formally dedicated on April 12, 1908 when two Southern Pacific steam trains brought prospective lot buyers to a land sale and barbecue in Los Altos. Regular service was established on April 19, 1908 with five trains per day passing through Los Altos. With the establishment of this regular rail service, more families could move outward into the "country," and many promotional brochures hailed this new lifestyle available to the middle-class. Lot prices ranged from \$400 to \$650 and homes could be built from \$2,000 to \$4,000. This era marks the beginning of small fruit farmers occupying 10-acre lots. With the movement of families to the Los Altos area, comes the development between 1910 and 1930 of many small subdivisions and the establishment of additional roadways. Up until this time, the El Camino Real, San Antonio Road and El Monte Road (Moody Road) served as major routes of transportation.¹⁹

By 1911 there were 50 homes in Los Altos and a few office buildings and stores on Main Street. Twelve steam trains a day stopped at the two-boxcar railway station. The first business in town was Eschenbruecher's Hardware Store, at 316 Main Street, which also housed the post office. Los Altos Water Company, Los Altos Building and Loan, Union Land Company and the railroad company all occupied offices in downtown Los Altos. In 1909, the two-story Shoup Building at Main and Second streets, housed a grocery store downstairs while upstairs one teacher taught all eight grades of the first public school classes in Los Altos.²⁰

As Paul Shoup envisioned, Los Altos grew and prospered. The business community thrived, and orchards gave way to beautiful tree-lined residential streets. Following World War II, Los Altos experienced a boom in home construction and new schools were built in rapid succession to accommodate the expanding student population.²¹

Post World War II

Post-World War II development in the Valley mirrored nationwide trends and the region's population and development increased markedly. It was during this time that the county began to undergo a dramatic shift from its agricultural past to a largely suburban present. The town leaders in Los Altos, fearing annexation by neighboring cities, realized that incorporation was one way to control zoning and development. After a bitter campaign and an incorporation election, Los Altos became Santa Clara County's 11th city on December 1, 1952. The "Valley of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., II-14-15

¹⁹ Ibid., II-15.

²⁰ Los Altos Chamber of Commerce website, "History of Two Cities," Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, <https://www.losaltoschamber.org/history-of-two-cities>.

²¹ Ibid

the Heart's Delight" has since given way to "Silicon Valley," the economic focus now centering largely on technological innovation.²²

Residential Architecture

The following is also excerpted from the 2012 City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory.

Many believe that the real beginning of Los Altos started with the Altos Land Company and acquisition of Sarah Winchester's 100 acres in 1906. This land became what is known today as the downtown triangle.²³

The earliest account, dated August 2, 1906, was found in the *Palo Alto Times* in an article describing the purchase of the 100 acres mentioned above by the Interurban Electrical Railway for a right-of-way. It mentioned the creation of a new town-site to be called "Banks and Braes." Just when the name was changed to Los Altos is unknown, but we do know that the Altos Land Company and the University Land Company were formed in 1907. The October 2, 1913 issue of the *Mayfield News*, however, describes the townsite as being sold again and placed solely into the hands of Paul Shoup and George Herbert, a San Jose fruit packer. The deal is described as one of the most important real estate transactions in Santa Clara County.²⁴

With the establishment of the town in 1907 came the beginnings of subdivisions (although a few earlier subdivisions were recorded prior to 1907). It is with the creation of the new townsite that the context of residential architecture is examined.²⁵

The original town contains the University Avenue neighborhood. This early and very elite neighborhood contains a variety of architectural house types, which are unified mainly by the street layout and alleyways. The lot sizes and scales of these homes vary in size greatly; yet there is a continuity of form in the streetscape in most cases. Dates in this area range from 1908 to the 1930s and buildings in many cases are probably architect-designed judging from the styles found, and the social status of people who occupied these buildings. Many of the homes in the district began as summer homes for prominent San Francisco businessmen and their families while others remained year-round living quarters for businessmen who commuted on the train. An examination of the *Architect and Engineering Record of California* between 1906 and 1930 reveals that many well-known architects worked in the Los Altos area, but little is available that sheds any light on the exact locations of residences or their occupants.²⁶

Local contractor, Claude Taylor (later of Taylor Properties), built several homes in town, including the Mabel Eschenbraeher home. The most well known contractor in town was local orchardist, J. Gilbert Smith, whose residence is the History House Museum on the Civic Center campus. Although the architect is unknown, the Los Altos Country Club is featured on the cover of one issue of the *Architect and Engineering Record*. The residential architecture context, thus, centers mainly on architectural styles popular between 1907 and 1940 (including some not so popular styles).²⁷

²² Ibid.

²³ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 3: Residential Architecture 1907 to 1940," *The City of Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory* (Los Altos, 2012), II-6.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., II-7.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., II-7-8.

By 1911, according to Eastman's history of the town, Los Altos had only fifty homes; by 1913, only thirty-two telephones had been connected. The majority of properties in the residential context are homes built in the 1920s and 30s, reflecting the growth of the area.²⁸

By this period, the central business district had been established, roadways were more complete, and working-class families could afford to move to "the county" and grow a few apricot trees.²⁹

The dominant house types in this category include:³⁰

- Bungalows
- Mission
- Period Revival (Tudor, Colonial, Provincial)
- Prairie
- Italian Villa
- Spanish Colonial Revival

Three districts also appear: the already described University Avenue area, Los Altos Park and Loyola Corners. Los Altos Park was subdivided in December of 1925 and contains a variety of small homes on small lots of a uniform size. The tiny lots and cottages in the Loyola district contain a variety of styles and are also linked together due to the scale and size. Originally known as the Loyola Tract in 1904, the 600-acre area was purchased by the Jesuit Fathers of the University of Santa Clara for the purpose of relocating the college. The area also had a train stop. The financial pledges for the construction of the new school fell through after the San Francisco earthquake in 1906 and a good portion of the land was used for grazing dairy cattle. The official subdivision of Loyola Corners was recorded in 1926 and a group of investors purchased a portion of the land from the Jesuit Fathers for the Los Altos Country Club.³¹

University of Santa Clara was originally called Santa Clara College and acquired 650 acres from Hale's estate after his death. The other subdivisions or tracts from Hale's estate include Boyle, Hooper, Margarita, Miller, Salzen (Later renamed Mora) and Wright.

Architectural Context: Craftsman-Style Bungalow

The bungalow was "the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country... from about 1905 until the early 1920s".³² Bungalows were "an outgrowth of many influences—the Craftsman Style, Japanese architecture...the low adobe dwellings of the Spanish Colonial Style of the Southwest, the open informal planning of the Eastern Shingle Style, shack-like rural cottages, the Swiss chalet, and barn and log cabin construction."³³ The bungalow gained popularity in California and was spread throughout the country through plan books and monthly journals. By the 1910s, the bungalow was favored by housing builders and became ubiquitous, with regional variations such as Chicago's Prairie style-influenced examples, and

²⁸ Ibid., II-8.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 568.

³³ Lester Walker, *American Homes: The Landmark Illustrated Encyclopedia of Domestic Architecture* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2014), 184.

California's Craftsman and Spanish Colonial-influenced examples.³⁴ The term "California Bungalow" is often applied to Craftsman examples of the building type.³⁵ Additional study by the City of Oakland Planning Department has characterized California Bungalow as a distinct subtype, which "shared the small size and low-pitched roof with the Craftsman Bungalow, stucco and horizontality with the Prairie School house, and front porch and exposed rafters with the Brown Shingle [or East Coast Shingle Style]."³⁶

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road is vernacular bungalow type residence designed with elements of the Craftsman architectural style. The Arts and Crafts Movement, which influenced the design of the California Craftsman Bungalow, was based on the theory of honesty and natural beauty of construction and materials. 604 Milverton is somewhat of a hybrid between the Craftsman and Arts & Crafts styles, with elements unique to California bungalows and the aesthetic preferences of the Costello family.

The Craftsman style almost always emphasizes structural elements as an integral part of its design. The style can be austere and usually minimizes decorative features in favor of strength and substance. There is no one single type of Craftsman home, but instead there are almost endless variations.³⁷ Examples of both the more elaborate Craftsman residences and simpler Craftsman bungalows can be found in pattern books and publications such as the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Western Architect*, *House Beautiful*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Architectural Record*, which brought house patterns and floor plans to a national audience. As a result, "the one-story Craftsman house quickly became the most popular and fashionable smaller house in the country." High style interpretations are rare except in California, where most of the landmark examples are concentrated.³⁸

The most prominent element of the overall design is usually its roof, which defines the scale and presence of the house. Most often incorporating a variation of a gabled roof, the triangular gable ends of many bungalows feature substantial wood brackets, sometimes called knee braces, which project under their usually deeply overhanging eaves. Sometimes massive beams are used without brackets and may seem over scaled for their apparent purpose.³⁹ The angle of pitch of the roof is often shallow to emphasize the building's horizontality. Dormers and gable peaks determine the availability of living space on the second floor or attic level; they often contain attic-level windows. The Costello house conforms to the traditions of the Craftsman style roof in massing, pitch, and proportion of the roof and gables, but deviates in that there are no beams, brackets, or knee braces. The ornamentation along the roofline is plain, and the gables are rounded. The carved apricot and leaf motif at the central gable tops the most arched of these front facing gables and all display the influences of the Arts and Crafts style on the Craftsman proportioned bungalow.

³⁴ Ibid., 186.

³⁵ McAlester, *A Field Guide*, 184

³⁶ Helaine Kaplan Prentice and Blair Prentice, *Rehab Right: How to Realize the Full Value of Your Old House*, City of Oakland Planning Department (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1986), 27.

³⁷ Paul Duchscherer and Douglas Keister, *The Bungalow: America's Arts and Crafts Home* (New York: Penguin Books USA Inc.), 38.

³⁸ McAlester, *A Field Guide*, 578.

³⁹ P. Duchscherer and D. Keister, *The Bungalow*, 38.

Shingles or wood clapboard siding were common exterior materials, as were wood doors, wood windows, and wood trim such as fascia along eave ends. The Craftsman variants also featured exposed roof beams and rafter tails. Entrance porches were a predominant feature as well, often executed with stone-clad or pyramidal/tapered columns. Front windows are generally double-hung and placed in groupings of three; the central window larger than the two flanking windows. The upper sash often contains multiple lights, where the lower sash is generally a single light.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ibid., 40.

SITE EVOLUTION AND CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Los Altos did not become an incorporated city until 1952. Any recordation of early rural development exists in a unique limbo between the Santa Clara County Clerk Recorder-Assessor's Office and the City of Los Altos Building Division. As with most rural and agricultural towns, construction permits, and other development documentation from the time prior to City incorporation is mostly non-existent, as the homeowners themselves or laymen generally undertook residential building construction.

The subject property was not present on the 1926 initial or the 1932 update to the Los Altos Sanborn Map, as it lay in the largely rural unincorporated portion of Santa Clara County, north of what was then the Town of Los Altos, west of Palo Alto.

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

Early Rancho and American Settlers

The subject property was once a part of the San Antonio Rancho (Mesa) Spanish Mexican land grant. Juan Prado Mesa was granted on square league named Rancho San Antonia de Padua in 1839 from Governor Alvarado of Mexico. Mesa died in 1845 but his two sons married the daughters of their neighbor Donna Juana Briones de Miranda and expanded their land holdings. Their land holdings were officially awarded in 1859.

Due to the financial burden and debts, the Mesa family sold their land at an executor's sale. George Chase purchased Mesa's land and more. The U.S. government set the boundaries of the land grants after the end of the Spanish-American war and the signing of the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty in 1848.

Joseph P. Hale, an Irishman came to California by way of Mexico and purchased a portion of George Chase's property that eventually a portion would become the Costello's.⁴¹ (**Figure 13**) Hale purchased 400 acres in 1869 and another 1,450 acres in 1886.⁴² This large holding had mostly wheat and cattle ranches.⁴³ The large estate was subdivided after Hale's death in three large pieces: "1,000 acres were sold from 1897 to 1902, and in the latter year the remaining 800 acres were auctioned."⁴⁴ William Costello purchased the northernmost plats, just across from the Winchester Lots in what would become Los Altos.

⁴¹ City of Los Altos, "Section II – Context 2," *Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory*, II-3.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Richard D. Johnson, "Hale Legacy Looms Large in Rancho San Antonio History: Los Altos' Early Roots," *Los Altos Town Crier*, August 8, 2012. https://www.losaltosonline.com/community/hale-legacy-looms-large-in-rancho-san-antonio-history-los-altos-early-roots/article_f1c9ad9c-3452-5509-91e4-7723042a0e0a.html (accessed April 25, 2022).



Figure 13: Map of subdivision of Hale Ranch with Costello property outlined in red (Barry L. Ruderman Map Collection, 1893. Amended by author)

Costello Landholdings in Los Altos

William Costello, a wealthy developer and successful businessman, is mentioned having a ranch in the Freemont town with fruit trees as early as 1896, according to the Costello family.⁴⁵ By all accounts, he lived in San Francisco and owned the farmland. William's name is on the tract parcel map, ca. 1906, where the current holdings are (**Figure 14**).

⁴⁵ David Kornfield to Los Altos City Council, *Morningside Planned Unit Development Plan Amendment for Lot 12*, Los Altos Planning Division Report (City of Los Altos, 2013), 19.



Figure 14: 1906 Los Altos Tract Map, William Costello's approximate holdings outlined in dashed line (Los Altos History museum, amended by author)

Francis J. Costello first appears in the region as early as 1907, where a "F. J. Costello" is listed as owning an automobile in Mountain View.⁴⁶ In 1916, he advertises the sale of livestock in the *Pacific Rural Press* out of Los Altos, suggesting a more permanent residence.⁴⁷

According to Costello Family history, Costello took over an existing apricot farm to be a "gentleman famer." This land included a cottage and a nearby barn.



Figure 15: Undated Costello family photo, looking toward barn with trays of drying apricots (Costello Family and Los Altos Town Meeting Archives)

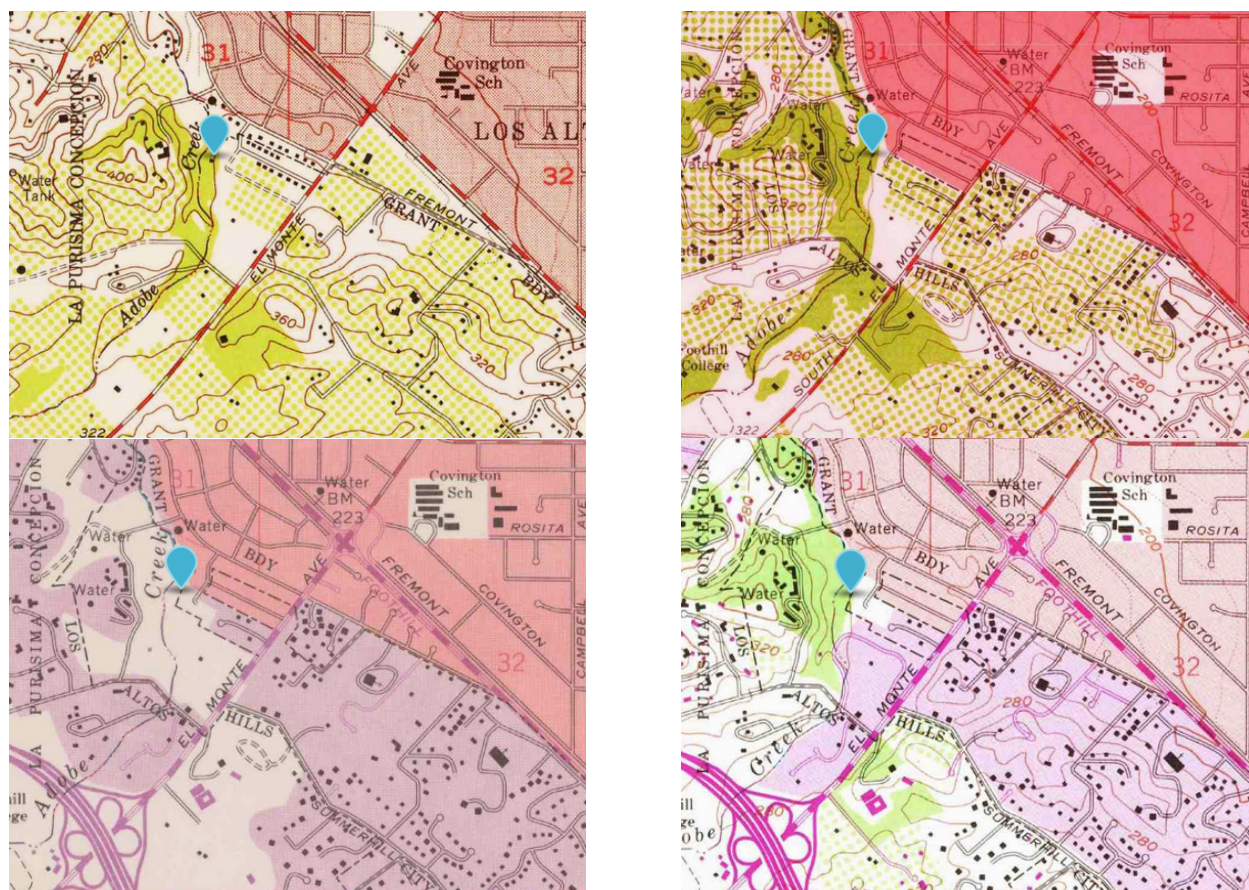
⁴⁶ Charles C. Hoag, "Registered Automobile Owners of California." *San Francisco Blue Book*. San Francisco: Charles C. Hoag, 1908. 536.

<https://archive.org/details/sanfranciscoblue08sanf/page/536/mode/2up?q=%22F+J+Costello%22>.

⁴⁷ "Livestock Directory: Swine," *Pacific Rural Press*, Vol. 104, No. 14 (September 30, 1922): 359.

In 1919, Francis Costello advertised “Costello Acres” in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which was subdivided prior to 1917. Lots were advertised as having a variety of fruit trees already established, as a way for the new families to supplement money made commuting into the City. Homes on the development were still being constructed as late as 1928, which “sat on half an acre landscaped with 22 apricot trees.”⁴⁸

Costello eventually went on to be one of the founding members of the Apricot Growers’ Association in San Jose in 1932.⁴⁹ In aerial footage from 1939 (**Figure 17**), the large areas of evenly spaced trees note the presence of an extensive orchard. The orchards were slowly dismantled between 1953 and 1969, at the end of the trees’ lifetimes. The incorporation of Los Altos in 1952 also spurred local development. USGS maps (**Figure 16**) and aerial footage show the changing makeup of the Costello orchards and the piecemeal development of their larger parcel.



⁴⁸ Robin Chapman, “Santa Clara Valley Lives: ‘Superior fruit’ – apricot sales reap reward,” *Los Altos Town Crier*, August 8, 2018. https://www.losaltosonline.com/community/santa-clara-valley-lives-superior-fruit-apricot-sales-reap-reward/article_fdcc96b7-3a3f-5c0d-b8b1-997c13f50af9.html (accessed April 25, 2022).

⁴⁹ “Apricot Growers to Organize Unit,” *Oakland Tribune*, Vol. 116, No. 110, (April 19, 1932): 10.

Figure 16: USGS Maps, subject property noted by blue arrow. (Top Row, Left 1953, Right 1961. Bottom row, Left 1969, right 1980.) (USGS Cupertino, Calif., 15' Quadrangle, cropped by author)

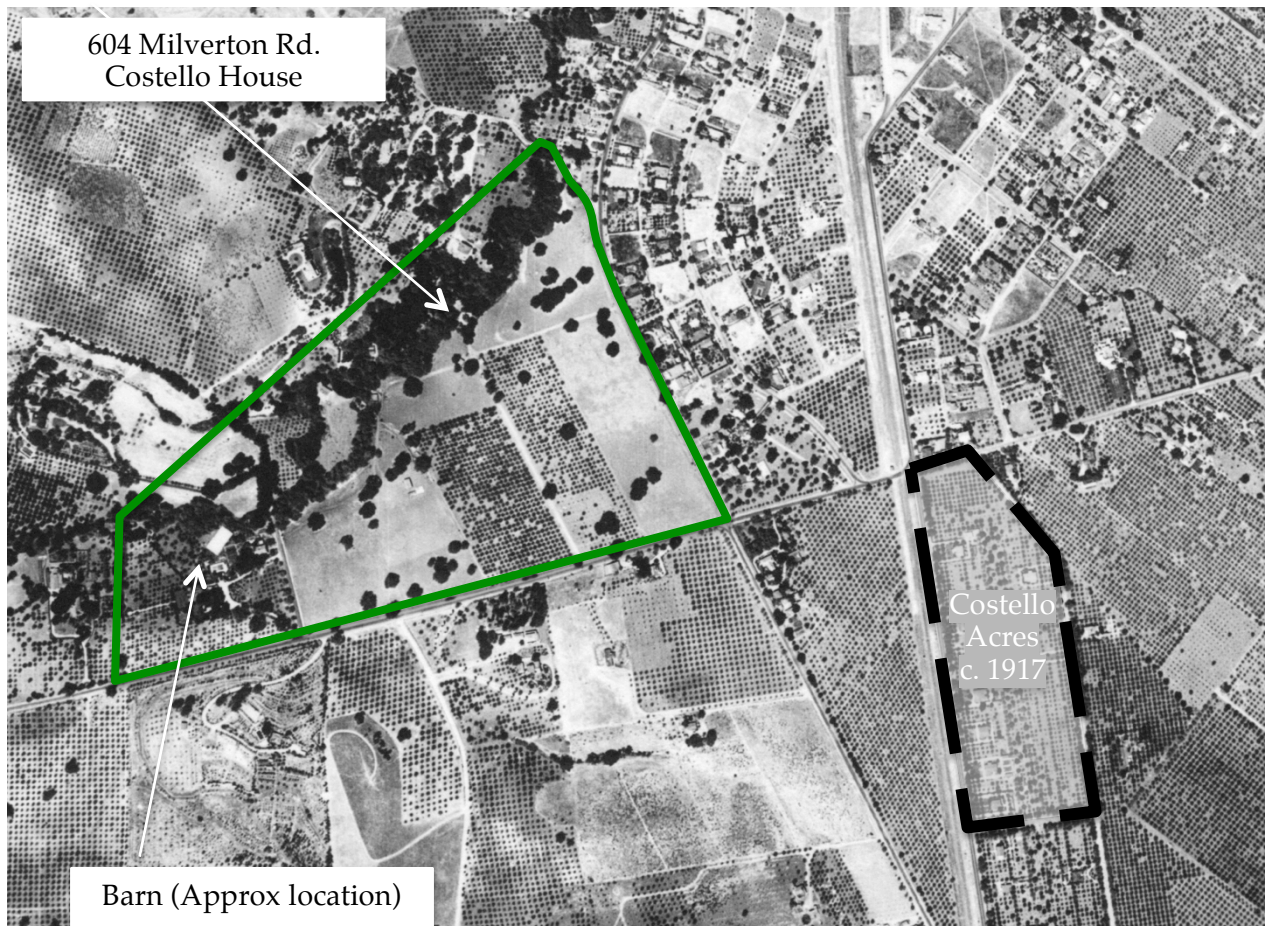


Figure 17: Flight C-5750 frame 286-9, 1939. Approximate Costello Property boundary outlined in Green. (UCSB Frame Finder, Amended by Author)



Figure 18: Aerial view of Los Altos, looking at tree-lined Adobe Creek and apricot orchards, c. 1938. (From the collection of the Los Altos History Museum, amended by author)



Figure 19: USGS Survey aerial map, 1948. Approximate Costello Property boundary outlined in Green. Costello House location noted. (USGS and Google Earth, Amended by author)

By 1965, Woodstock Lane appears on aerial maps with homes filling in where the orchards were finishing their lifecycles.



Figure 20: 1965 Aerial image showing completed Woodstock Lane, outlined with white dashed line. Approximate Costello Property boundary outlined in green. Flight CAS_65_130, Frame 4-144 (UCSB Frame finder, amended by author)

In 1969, the Costellos sold off a parcel near O’Keefe Lane, on the southern border of their property. This land became the Creekside Oaks development. In 1970, relics of the Ohlone were unearthed during excavation work.

The major find locally occurred in 1970, when the remains of an Ohlone village and burial ground were uncovered just across O’Keefe Lane, on the Los Altos side of the boundary on the property of Mrs. Lucile Costello, which had been acquired by Edwin C. Johnsen for condominium development. With permission from Mrs. Costello and Johnsen, a “dig” and archeological study was undertaken by a team from Foothill College...⁵⁰

Creekside Oaks is currently a gated community of condominiums built between 1969-1972.⁵¹

⁵⁰ City of Los Altos, “Section II – Context 2,” *Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory*, II-3.

⁵¹ Kristi Foxgrover, “Creekside Oaks Homeowners Association: Common Questions,” Christie’s International Real Estate Sereno website, foxgrover.com/developments.

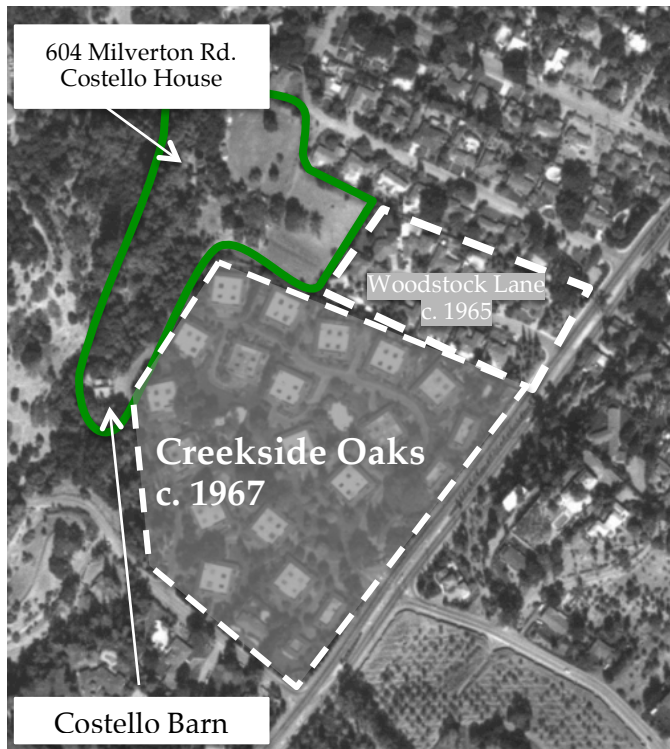


Figure 21: Cropped portion of Flight GS_VEZR, Frame 1-106, 1980. Approximate Costello Property boundary c. 1980 outlined in green. Creekside Oaks and Woodstock Lane parcels outlined with white dashed lines and labeled. (UCSB Frame Finder, amended by Author)

The most recently developed area is the Morningside housing development. This parcel, around 5 acres, was the space between the original house and South El Monte Avenue, where orchard just outside the house had been. Morningside was constructed in 1985. Selling off this remaining bit of land created the current 2-acre lot.

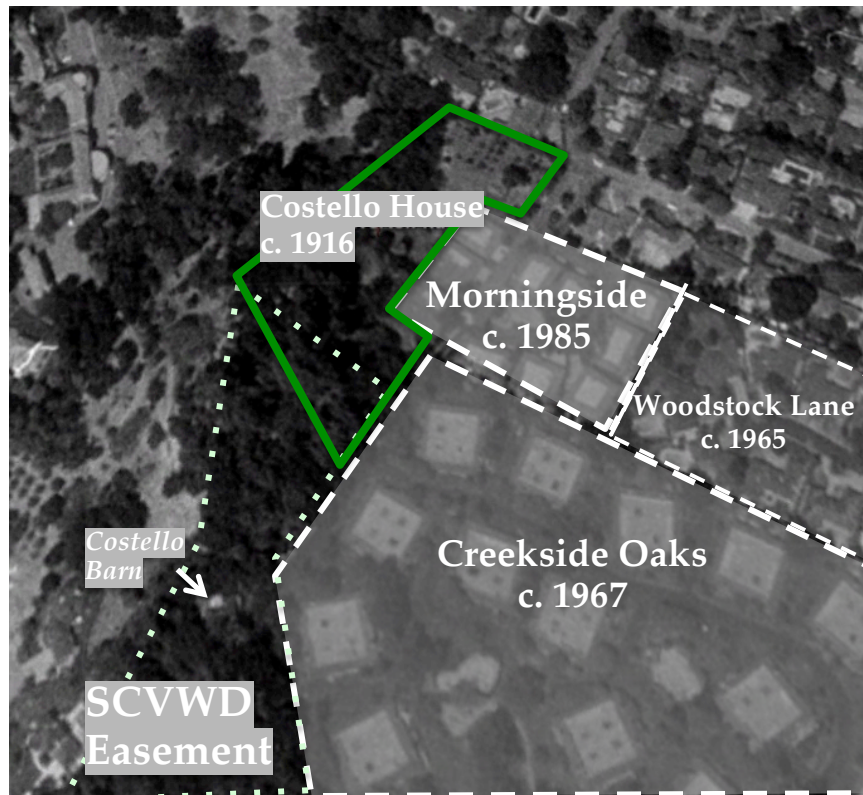


Figure 22. Aerial imagery, USGS Survey 1991 via Google Earth. Developed Parcels labeled and outlined with white dashed lines around approximate boundaries. SCVWD outlined with dotted line. Costello barn location noted. Green outline shows approximate Costello property boundary c. 1991. (USGS Aerial Survey, Google Earth, Amended by Author)

After the passing of Frank J. Costello Jr. in 1992, the family wanted to sell the half of the 2-acre parcel (**Figure 2** and **Appendix A**) at 604 Milverton Road and keep a portion with the Costello House but local zoning prohibited this action due to density restrictions.⁵²

⁵² Cassandra Feliciano, "Homeowner Seeks to Sell Local Historical Property." *Los Altos Town Crier*, September 15, 2010. https://www.losaltosonline.com/archives/homeowner-seeks-to-sell-local-historical-property/article_99e0f5b1-113c-56fb-a605-6320b92f3fd0.html (accessed April 25, 2022).

CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

Building permit record for the subject property document alterations listed on permits to 1985. Prior to 1985, available historic photographs, aerial photographs and information gathered from Mark Costello, who is the current keeper of the Costello oral history the property's construction chronology. Only the subject building at the site (the Costello family house) was documented during GA's site visit in May 2022. The carport is not historic and the Costello family barn, although extant, is not located on the 2-acre parcel that is the focus of this report.

According to Mark Costello, Francis J. Costello, Sr.'s grandson, the house was built in 1916. It is not known exactly when or how Francis acquired the 25 acres from his brother William. There was a small caption from a 1917 journal article that stated Francisco J. Costello had plans prepared by William E. Higgins for sixty bungalows to be erected on his property in Los Altos.⁵³ Higgins and Wolfe were partners at this time and they designed many well-known buildings and multiple residences in the Bay Area. Additional research is required to determine the location of these homes, but they coincide with development and the sale of lots at Costello Acres, which is just northeast of the Costello House.⁵⁴

The house is constructed around an older, smaller cottage at its core. The original roof beams and shingles are visible in the attic. However, the current configuration dates to a 1910's Craftsman cottage, where the two wings were constructed around the smaller cottage.



Figure 23: Costello Family photograph of original cottage (Costello Family and Los Altos town meeting archives, 2013)

The materials suggest it may have been pre-fabricated by timber framers in California and assembled on site by local finishing carpenters, but it is not a Sear's catalog kit house. The

⁵³ The American Architect, "Building News: California – Los Altos," *The American Architect*, Vol. CXII (August 1917): 8.

⁵⁴ Contractors' and Dealers' Association of California, "Completion Notices: Santa Clara County," *Building & Engineering News*, Vol. 17, Pt.1 (January-June 1917): 764.

curved gables speak to a more elaborated and custom design and construction than a simple cottage.



Figure 24: Picture of original cottage's roof inside the attic of the Costello House (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)

The following table lists building permit records based on archival information and from documentation on file at the Santa Clara County Building Division for the subject property.

Construction Chronology Table

Date	Owner	Alteration
1869	Joseph P. Hale b. ca. 1836 in Ireland	Hale purchases 400 acres of Rancho San Antonio from Chase
1870	Thomas & Ann Wright	Hale's Irish relatives brought over from Ireland to supervise ranch
1886	Joseph P. Hale	Hale purchases additional 1,450 acres from Chase
1896	Likely William Costello	Purchased land from original Hale Ranch and added lots 2-5
c.1916	Francis J. Costello, Sr.	House constructed according to descendent Mark Costello (grandson)
1917	Francis J. Costello, Sr.	Sixty bungalows were designed by William E. Higgins to be constructed on Francis John Costello, Sr. property in Los Altos, development of Costello Acres, just southeast of Los Altos Train station

Date	Owner	Alteration
1920's	Francis J. Costello, Sr.	Advertisements and reports of construction at Costello Acres
4/16/1971	Francis J. Costello, Jr.	Approval for the formation of condominiums to be built along Morningside Road, 10 residential lots. Being a portion of Lots 4 & 5 of Hale Ranch
1972	Francis J. Costello, Jr.	Creekside Oaks Condominiums
1985	Francis J. Costello, Jr.	Morningside Housing development is built consisting of 10 homes on 5 acres
08/20/03	Mark Costello	Demolition of garage Permit #2003-642970

Recent Changes to Building

The following changes to the property have occurred over time, based upon the information provided by Mark Costello.

- Demolition of garage
- Deck addition
- New carport construction
- Kitchen remodel
- Reroofing

OWNERSHIP/OCCUPANT HISTORY

Ownership and occupancy history for the subject building was researched from the Santa Clara County Assessors Office and compiled from the U.S. Census data, oral interview with Mark C. Costello, and property title information from the client.

Review of census records resulted in limited information regarding past occupants.

The Costello House was built, in its current form, on the property around 1916. Prior to that, the land was incorporated into much larger farms owned by the Hale and Wright families. The Costello House's construction, and the Costello family's development activities in Los Altos throughout their collective ownership, is representative of the transition of Los Altos from a primarily agricultural area to a residential community.

The children of Frank J. Costello, Jr. and Barbara Muriel Costello owned the house between 1992-2013. Since Frank Jr.'s death in 1992, the house has been mostly rented to occupants, who could not be identified through archival research.

Ownership/Occupant History

Date Range	Owner	Occupant	Notes
1869	Joseph P. Hale b. circa 1836 in Ireland	Hale never lived on the ranch but lives in San Francisco	Hale purchases 400 acres of Rancho San Antonio from George Chase
1876	Joseph P. Hale	Unknown	
1886	Joseph P. Hale	Unknown	Hale purchases additional 1,450 acres from Chase
1889	Joseph P. Hale	Thomas (b. 1897) & Ann Feeney Wright (b. 1852) and eight children	Hale's Irish relatives brought over from Ireland to supervise ranch; Hale builds a house and barn
1890	Joseph P. Hale	Thomas & Ann Wright	
1893	Mrs. Ann Wright	Thomas & Ann Wright	Joseph P. Hale dies; Hale's living relative Ann Wright inherits 92 acres of Hale's estate (subject property); many court battles over Hale's estate
1900	Mrs. Ann Wright	Ann Wright and seven children lived on the property (1900 census)	
c. 1905	Richard W. Costello (William)	Unknown	William is the president of O'Connor, Mofatt & Co. and purchases 25 acres (lots 4, 5 of Hale property)

Date Range	Owner	Occupant	Notes
c. 1910	Francis John Costello, Sr. (Frank)	Unknown	Francis is the treasurer of O'Connor, Mofatt & Co. and acquires the property from his brother (William)
c. 1916	Francis John Costello, Sr. (1882-1967) and Lucille Gertrude Petzinger (1897-1974)	House constructed and apricot orchards planted; occupied by farm laborers	Secondary residence for Frank and Lucille who live in San Francisco
July, 1945	Frank, Sr. & Lucille Costello	Frank, Sr. and Lucille Costello reside more permanently in Los Altos house	R. H. Macy Co. acquires O'Connor, Mofatt & Co.; Frank and Lucille move to Los Altos and is their residence according to 1945 directory
November 27, 1948	Frank, Sr. & Lucille Costello	Frank, Sr. & Lucille Costello	Frank Jr. marries Barbara M. Gowing
1967	Francis John Costello, Jr. (1920-1972) and Barbara Muriel Gowing Costello (1925-2007)	Lucille Costello (Frank Sr.'s spouse); Barbara (Frank Jr.'s spouse) and children reside at the house	Frank, Sr. dies; and the apricot orchard is near the end of its productive life
1992	Barbara Costello	Barbara Costello	Mark's father, Frank Costello Jr. dies in 1992
1992-2007	Barbara Costello	Barbara's son, Mark C. Costello rents out house	After Mark's father's death the house is rented for 8 years
1993	Barbara Costello	Renters	Public records list four residences or Barbara outside of Los Altos
2007	Mark C. Costello and three siblings inherit property after death of their mother, Barbara	Mark Costello	Barbara Costello dies on May 30, 2007
2013	Mike Giovannotto	Mike Giovannotto	Mark Costello sells the property to M. Giovannotto

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's master inventory of known historic resources. It is administered by the National Parks Service (NPS) in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The National Register includes listings of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts possessing historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local levels. The National Register criteria and associated definitions are outlined in the National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. The following is quoted from National Register Bulletin 15:

Criteria

Generally, resources (structures, sites, buildings, districts, and objects) over 50 years of age can be listed in the National Register provided that they meet the evaluative criteria described below. Resources can be listed individually in the National Register or as contributors to an historic district. The National Register criteria are as follows:

- A. Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history;
- B. Resources that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. Resources that have yielded or may likely yield information important in prehistory or history.

THE CALIFORNIA REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) is the official list of properties, structures, districts, and objects significant at the local, state, or national level. California Register properties must have significance under one of the four following criteria and must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and convey the reasons for their significance (i.e. retain integrity). The California Register utilizes the same seven aspects of integrity as the National Register. Properties that are eligible for the National Register are automatically eligible for the California Register. Properties that do not meet the threshold for the National Register may meet the California Register criteria.

- 1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- 2. Associated with the lives of persons important to the local, California or national history

3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value; or
4. Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

CRHR criteria are similar to National Register of Historic Places criteria, and are tied to CEQA, so any resource that meets the above criteria, and retains a sufficient level of historic integrity, is considered an historical resource under CEQA.

HISTORIC INTEGRITY

When evaluating a resource for the NRHP or CRHR, one must evaluate and clearly state the significance of that resource to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. A resource may be considered individually eligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR if it meets one or more of the above listed criteria for significance and it possesses historic integrity. Historic properties must retain sufficient historic integrity to convey their significance. The following seven aspects define historic integrity:

- Location. The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design. The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting. The physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials. The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship. The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling. A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association. The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

To retain historic integrity, a resource should possess several of the above-mentioned aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is essential for a resource to convey its significance. Comparisons with similar properties should also be considered when evaluating integrity as it may be important in deciding what physical features are essential to reflect the significance of a historic context. If a property is determined to not be eligible or individual listing on the NRHP or CRHR, then it will not be evaluated for historic integrity.

CITY OF LOS ALTOS HISTORIC PRESERVATION CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Under municipal code 12.44.040 - Criteria for designation, a structure, property or object may be eligible for designation as a historic resource or historic landmark, if it/they satisfy each of the three criteria listed below:

A. Age. A structure or property should be more than fifty (50) years in age. (Exceptions can be made to this rule if the building(s) or site(s) is/are truly remarkable for some reason - such as being associated with an outstanding architect, personage, usage or event).

B. Determination of Integrity. A structure or property should retain sufficient historic integrity in most of the following areas:

1. Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property.
2. Setting: The physical environment of a historic property.
3. Materials: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
4. Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
5. Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

C. Historic Significance. A structure or property should be clearly associated with one or more of the following areas of significance:

1. Event: Associated with a single significant event or a pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;
2. Person/People: Associated with the lives of persons important to the local, California or national history;
3. Architecture/Design: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value; or
4. Archaeology: Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP) / CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES (CRHR)

This section uses the historic information discussed above to evaluate the property at 604 Milverton Road in Los Altos for historic significance. The CRHR uses generally the same guidelines as the NRHP (developed by the National Park Service); as such, selected language from those guidelines will be quoted below to help clarify the evaluation discussion.

To be potentially eligible for *individual* listing on the NRHP/CRHR, a structure must usually be more than 50 years old, must have historic significance, and must retain its physical integrity. The subject building at 604 Milverton Road was constructed in 1916 and therefore meets the age requirement. In terms of historic significance, the NRHP/CRHR evaluates a resource based on the following four criteria:

Criterion A/1: Event

As stated by the National Park Service (NPS), this criterion “recognizes properties associated with single events, such as the founding of a town, or with a pattern of events, repeated activities, or historic trends, such as the gradual rise of a port city’s prominence in trade and commerce.”⁵⁵ When considering a property for significance under this criterion, the associated event or trends “must clearly be important within the associated context: settlement, in the case of the town, or development of a maritime economy, in the case of the port city...Moreover, the property must have an important association with the event or historic trends”⁵⁶

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road, Los Altos, is one of the few remaining properties that convey the agricultural origins of Los Altos prior to its development into a primarily residential suburban community. The apricot and leaf carving above the front door symbolize this agricultural association. Further, the story of the Costello Family is integrated into the conversion of Los Altos’s transition from an apricot-farming region to a suburban community.

This association with the broad story of Los Altos as a community makes the subject property eligible for the NRHP or the CRHR under Criterion A/1.

Criterion B/2: Individuals

This criterion applies to properties associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented. The NPS defines significant persons as “individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The criterion is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate (rather than commemorate) a person’s important achievements. The persons associated with the property must be individually significant within a historic context.” The NPS also specifies that these properties “are usually those associated with a person’s productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources staff, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” *National Register Bulletin*, no. 15 (1990: revised for internet 1995).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The house at 604 Milverton Road was originally a secondary home for Francis J. Costello, Sr. and his family. Eventually the house became the family home and was later occupied by his descendants. The adjoining property did have some apricot orchards but are no longer extant. There are other family farms with larger apricot farm productions in Santa Clara County that better represent the apricot growing industry compared to the Costello family orchard production.

Based on the research conducted on the area's history a reasonable likelihood does not exist that additional information will identify any other historically significant person associated with the subject property. Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. does not find 604 Milverton Road to be eligible for consideration for the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion B/2 and any level associated with individuals.

Criterion C/3: Design and Construction

Under this criterion, properties may be eligible if they "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, ...represent the work of a master, ...possess high artistic values, or...represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction."⁵⁸

According to the NPS, " 'Type, period, or method of construction' refers to the way certain properties are related to one another by cultural tradition or function, by dates of construction or style, or by choice or availability of materials and technology. A structure is eligible as a specimen of its type or period of construction if it is an important example (within its context) of building practices of a particular time in history."⁵⁹

The subject building embodies the distinct characteristics of California Bungalow style of architecture.

The character defining features include:

- Intersecting gable roof forms
- Center rounded gable flanked by two bowed gables at the front façade
- Original window groupings of three on front facade with multiple lites over one
- French style entry door with lites and side-lites
- Apricot carving on bargeboard
- Open eaves at roof edges
- Wood clapboard siding
- Historic oak tree
- Long driveway approach to the house

Based on the research and assessment on the design and construction of the 604 Milverton Rd, it does appear that the Costello House is a good example of California Bungalow style of architecture it most closely represents; and therefore Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. does find the

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

Costello House to be eligible for consideration for the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion C/3 at any level.

Criterion D/4: Information Potential

Archival research and physical investigation of the site focused on the above ground resource only. Therefore, no informed determination could be made regarding the property's eligibility for the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion D/4.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The Costello House was found to be potentially significant under criteria C/3 for Design. As such, individual features of the building have been identified that define the historic character of the building and property. Assessment of various features is done according to a prioritized evaluation system. Once the character-defining features have been identified, each is assigned a priority rating to create a sense of the relative historical importance of these spaces and features. A rating scale of "*Premier-Important-Contributing-Non-Contributing*" is used. In general, this system allows for the analysis of the structure as a whole to guide what types of work should be done, and where such work could be completed with the least damage to the historic integrity of the resource.

The character-defining features of the residence and property, the Costello House at 604 Milverton Road, Los Altos, include:

Premier

- Intersecting gable roof forms
- Center rounded gable flanked by two bowed gables at the front facade
- Original window groupings of three on front facade with multiple lites over one
- French style entry door with side lites
- Apricot carving on bargeboard

Important

- Open eaves at roof edges
- Wood clapboard siding
- Historic oak trees
- Wooded creek side setting

Contributing

- Long driveway approach to the house
- SCVWD land easement connecting the house property to the Costello barn property

Non-Contributing

- Carport/garage
- Modern wood deck addition on south façade
- Additional sheds and outbuildings on property
- Adjacent homes on Morningside Drive

HISTORIC INTEGRITY, NRHP/CRHR

The evaluation of historic significance is a two-step process. First, the historic significance of the property must be established. If the property appears to possess historic significance, then a determination of its physical integrity is conducted; that is, its authenticity as evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance from the construction until the death of Francis John Costello, Sr. (1916-1967).

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road does appear to be historically significant, and is eligible under any NRHP or CRHR Criteria A/1 and C/3. To provide a complete assessment of the subject property, the seven aspects of integrity are nonetheless addressed. The subject building and property at 604 Milverton Road, known historically as The Costello House, has been found to be potentially significant, and as such will be evaluated for its integrity.

Location:

The Costello House has not been moved. Therefore, it retains its integrity of location.

Design:

The Costello House most closely resembles the California Bungalow style of architecture. According to Frank Costello, Sr.'s grandson (Mark Costello), the house was prefabricated off-site, delivered via rail, and assembled by a craftsman on site. There are carpenter's marks on the roof beams that speak to this initial construction. There are any unique treatments, such as the intersecting gable roof, front facade grouped windows and the carved bargeboard that contribute to its distinct style. Alterations to the original design have not significantly reduced the features typical of this style of architecture, except for the enclosure of the front porch and the deck added to the south facade. This addition occurred in 1985-86 and beyond the period of significance. The building retains the same massing with its rectangular "I" shape form, gable roof forms and exterior facades. Most of the window fenestrations, window wood frames, and wood sills have been left intact.

Overall, the form, interior layout, structure and style are intact and features of Craftsman Bungalow style of architecture; therefore, 604 Milverton Road does retain integrity of design.

Setting:

The landscaping and setting surrounding The Costello House has been altered considerably since 1916 when the house was constructed. Originally this part of Los Altos was primarily an agricultural town and has now developed into a dense suburban city, as is evident by comparing the aerial photographs. The City of Los Altos was incorporated in 1952 and thus the major transformation of Los Altos began. Much of the surrounding area consisted of orchards and farmlands in 1940's. The lot has been reduced from its original size and the neighborhood has changed as well. The property's former apricot orchards are no longer extant with new residential lots. The open space just off of Milverton Road was never a part of the active orcharding area.

The Costello House does not retain integrity of setting.

Materials:

The Costello House retains many elements of its original materials, including the wood clapboard siding, masonry chimney, window fenestrations, wood window frames, wood sills, and wood roof framing. Most of the wood elements were made of redwood. The intersecting gable roof forms are original. The central gable roof has two bowed gables on each side with curved bargeboards and open eaves. The original grouped windows of three on the front facade fenestrations, wood frames and wood sills have been left intact. The rear porch addition alters the original scale and proportion of the house but this addition is on a secondary facade and occurred in 1985-86, outside of the period of significance.

The Costello House retains the integrity of the majority of its building materials; therefore, 604 Milverton Road does retain integrity of materials.

Workmanship:

The Costello House appears as it did following the expansion from a simple cottage, built c.1910 to the creek side c.1916 building as it appears today to include curved gables and a carved apricot motif over the door. The Costello House retains the integrity of the workmanship of the early 20th Century craftspeople that built it. Therefore, the Costello House does retain integrity of Workmanship.

Feeling:

The Costello House as it appears today was built c.1916 by its historic owner, Francis Costello in the California Bungalow-style house. Costello was a "Gentleman farmer," and the Costello House's mix of simple farm house and a later elaborated and luxurious customized home. The viewshed and setting are similar to its historic physical context.

The Costello House, with its California Bungalow style and features reflect a period of "gentlemen farmers," a romantic view of rural landscape and the interaction of labor and leisure for wealthy orchard owners in Los Altos. Therefore, the Costello House does retain integrity of Feeling.

Association:

The Costello House, as a rural home was developed as part of an early 20th century agricultural property, and has not retained its association as such. It can no longer convey this relationship to an observer but is currently more clearly associated with a suburban development of single-family homes. The house, built over 106 years ago when the original 25-acre property had a 9-acre apricot orchard has been subdivided and the orchard trees are no longer extant. The subject property was built at a time when there were various sized ranches, orchards, and some smaller agricultural ventures.

The Costello House, no longer retains any integrity of association with the apricot orchard, even though the lot is large and has extensive wooded areas. Any visual connection with the historically associated orchard has been lost by degradation of the apricot trees, natural overgrowth, subsequent infill, and development.

Historic Integrity Summary

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road retains five aspects of integrity – Location, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, but lacks integrity of Setting and Association. Therefore, it

retains enough overall Historic Integrity remain eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources at any level.

CITY OF LOS ALTOS HISTORIC RESOURCES EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Under municipal code 12.44.040 - Criteria for designation, a structure, property or object may be eligible for designation as a historic resource or historic landmark, if it/they satisfy each of the three criteria listed below:

A. Age. A structure or property should be more than fifty (50) years in age.

The Costello House was first constructed in the early 1910's, and moved to its current location in 1916. Therefore, it does meet this criterion.

B. Determination of Integrity. A structure or property should retain sufficient historic integrity in most of the following areas:

1. Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property.

604 Milverton Road most closely resembles the California Bungalow style of architecture.. There are any unique treatments, such as the intersecting gable roof, front facade grouped windows and the carved bargeboard that contribute to its distinct style. Alterations to the original design have not significantly reduced the features typical of this style of architecture, except for the enclosure of the front porch and the deck added to the south facade. This addition occurred in 1985-86 and beyond the period of significance. The building retains the same massing with its rectangular "I" shape form, gable roof forms and exterior facades. Most of the window fenestrations, window wood frames, and wood sills have been left intact.

Overall, the form, interior layout, structure and style are intact and features of Craftsman Bungalow style of architecture; therefore, 604 Milverton Road does retain integrity of design.

2. Setting: The physical environment of a historic property.

The landscaping and setting surrounding The Costello House has been altered considerably since 1916 when the house was constructed. Originally this part of Los Altos was primarily an agricultural town and has now developed into a dense suburban city, as is evident by comparing the aerial photographs. The City of Los Altos was incorporated in 1952 and thus the major transformation of Los Altos began. Much of the surrounding area consisted of orchards and farmlands in 1940's. The lot has been reduced from its original size and the neighborhood has changed as well. The property's former apricot orchards are no longer extant with new residential lots. The open space just off of Milverton Road was never a part of the active orcharding area.

The Costello House does not retain integrity of setting.

3. Materials: The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The Costello House retains many elements of its original materials, including the wood clapboard siding, masonry chimney, window fenestrations, wood window frames, wood sills, and wood roof framing. Most of the wood elements were made of redwood. The intersecting gable roof forms are original. The central gable roof has two bowed gables on each side with curved bargeboards and open eaves. The original grouped windows of three on the front facade fenestrations, wood frames and wood sills have been left intact. The rear porch addition alters the original scale and proportion of the house but this addition is on a secondary facade and occurred in 1985-86, outside of the period of significance.

The Costello House retains the integrity of the majority of its building materials; therefore, 604 Milverton Road retains integrity of its materials.

4. Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

The Costello House retains the exterior physical evidence of the early 20th Century in its bungalow with Arts and Crafts elements. The original redwood roof beams, carved apricot detail and curved beams show the craft and care of the early 20th century people who built and elaborated the building.

Therefore, the Costello House retains its integrity of workmanship.

5. Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

The heavily wooded creek-side create the sense that the Costello House is a hidden away California Bungalow surrounded by nature, and reminiscent of the feeling prevalent in Los Altos agricultural lands in the early 20th century. The Costello House's California Bungalow style, curved gables, and Apricot motif, combined with its shaded creek-side position give it a feeling of privacy, despite nearby neighbors.

The Costello House retains a feeling of the Interwar period in Los Altos, a time when wealthy people from San Francisco moved to rural areas to have more land and grow crops. The Costello House still has some indicators of this culture and historical moment, therefore, does retain integrity of feeling.

C. Historic Significance. A structure or property should be clearly associated with one or more of the following areas of significance:

1. Event: Associated with a single significant event or a pattern of events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of local or regional history, or cultural heritage of California or the United States;

The Costello House is significant for its association with the development of the town of Los

Altos, from the early 20th century as an apricot-farming mecca to the residential community it is today.

Therefore, Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. does find this property eligible for its association with the broad story of Los Altos as a community makes the subject property eligible for the Los Altos

2. Person/People: Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;

The Costello House was originally a secondary home for Francis J. Costello, Sr. and his family. Eventually the house became the family home and was later occupied by his descendants. Although the Costello family are associated with changes in land use in Los Altos, they were otherwise not significant persons. There are other more prominent persons who owned larger apricot farms in Santa Clara County that better represent the apricot growing industry compared to the Costello family.

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. does not find 604 Milverton Road is associated with the lives of significant people.

3. Architecture/Design: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a design-type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic value;

The Costello House is also a distinctive type of California Bungalow, with unique characteristics of both the Craftsman and Arts & Crafts style. Therefore, it is historically significant for its architecture and design.

4. Archaeology: Yields important information about prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Archival research and physical investigation of the site focused on the above ground resource only for the purposes of evaluating the Costello House. Therefore, no informed determination could be made regarding the property's potential for archaeological resource. However, it is important to note that there have been Ohlone archeological resources located on former Costello land just downstream of the house along the Adobe Creek, therefore there is the potential for additional archeological resources a the Costello House. An archeological investigation was not part of the scope of this report.

In order to be eligible for the Los Altos Historic Inventory, the Costello House needs to satisfy each of the three above criteria. The Costello House meets all three (Age, Integrity, and Historic Significance) criteria. It retains integrity of Design, Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling. It does not retain integrity of setting. It is historically significant for Events and Architecture/Design. The Costello House is significant for its association with the shift in development in Los Altos from extensive agricultural land to a residential community over the course of the 20th century.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the subject property at 604 Milverton Road, historically called the Costello House, was built in 1916 as a residential farm property does display a level of historical significance and integrity that would qualify it for listing as a historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places, on the California Register of Historical Places, as a local City of Los Altos Landmark at the local level. The Costello House is significant for its architecture, as a fine example of vernacular California Bungalow with a mixture of Craftsman and Arts & Crafts design elements. It is also significant for its association with the overall development pattern of Los Altos and the South Bay region for its transition from a large apricot farming property to single family residential suburban properties.

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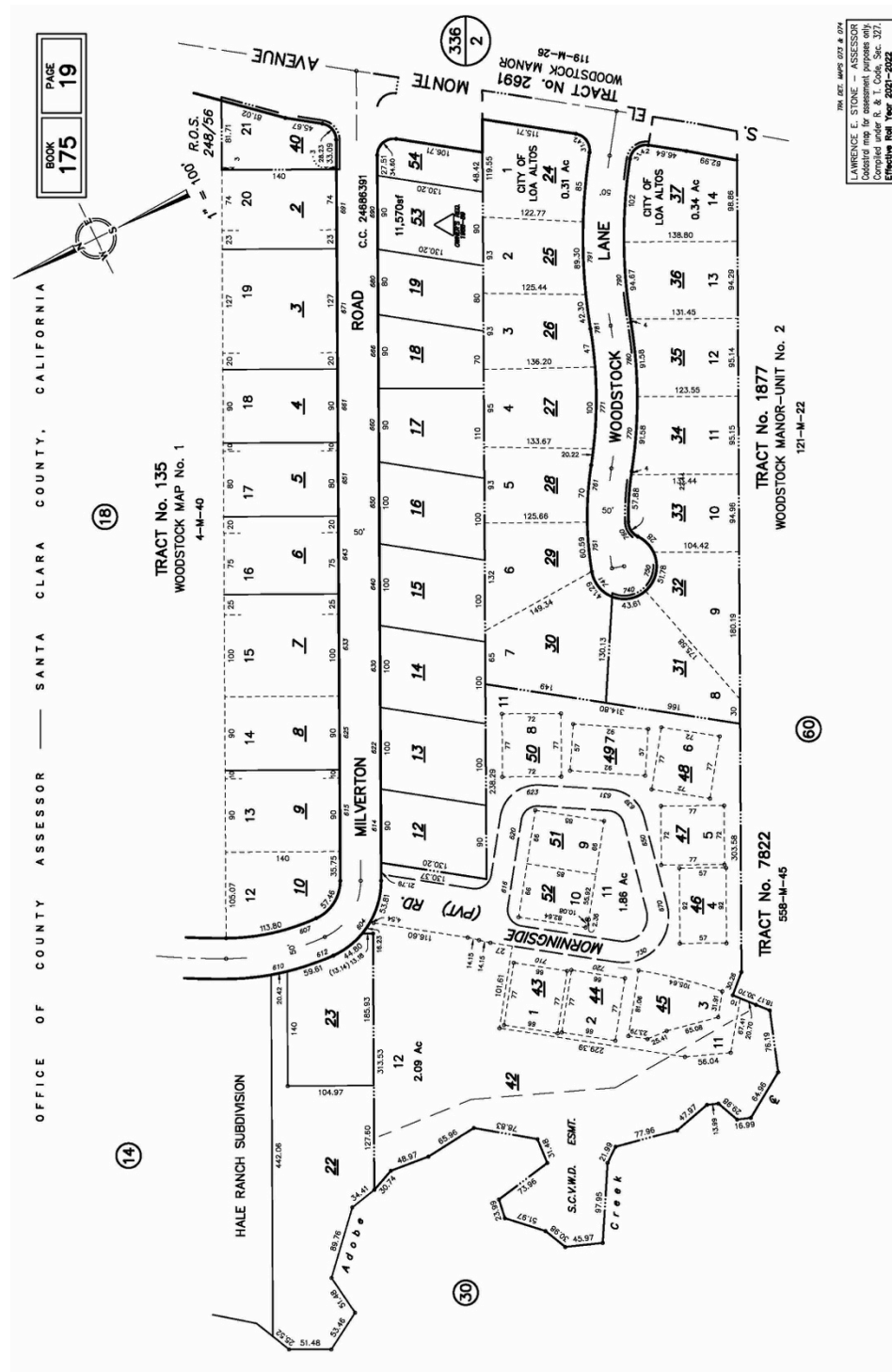
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APPENDIX A: PARCEL MAP



APPENDIX B: DPR FORM

[DPR form updated and attached]

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 10 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Costello House, 604 Milverton Road

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*a. County Santa Clara County and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad Cupertino Date 2021 T ; R ; of of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address 604 Milverton Road City Los Altos Zip 94022

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10S, 578137.07 mE/ 4136176.10 mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate) APN 175-19-042. Accessed via Morningside Road

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

604 Milverton is an "H" shaped, one-story wood-framed Craftsman Bungalow, built around a 1916 cottage. It has a carved wood ornament above the main door depicting an apricot. The original cottage was built for Frank Costello on an apricot orchard he took over from a family member. The property is in a mostly wooded area and includes a segment Adobe Creek, to the east of the house. A clearing or small agricultural lot is located on the northeast side of the property. The Los Altos Water Department owns undeveloped land along Adobe Creek to the north and south of the subject property, preserving a rural feeling to the view shed surrounding the house. The Costello House appears today as it did during the period when Frank Costello operated his own orchard and started subdividing his land, parlaying Los Altos's association with apricots to sell lots in a subdivision called "Costello Acres" nearby. The house retains many original wood windows and wood decorative features such as rafter tails and curved window eaves.
See page 3 for continued description.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2

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

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) _____

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source:

☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

1916 – Mark Costello, former owner

*P7. Owner and Address:

Michael Giovannotto,
604 Milverton Road, Los Altos, CA

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Hannah Goldman & Lauren Golden,
Arch. Historians

Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.
582 Market #1800, San Francisco, CA

*P9. Date Recorded: May 6, 2022

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Historical Resource Evaluation

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



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

City of Los Altos, Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory Update and Evaluation Report. Circa, 2008, see full Citation list on page 7

*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☒ Location 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): _____

STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Costello House, 604 Milverton*NRHP Status Code 7Page 2 of 10B1. Historic Name: Costello House B2. Common Name: _____B3. Original Use: Single Family Residence associated with Orchard B4. Present Use: Single Family Residence*B5. Architectural Style: Craftsman Bungalow

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

The house is constructed around an older, smaller cottage at its core. The original roof beams and shingles are visible in the attic. However, the current configuration dates to a 1910's Craftsman cottage, where the two wings were constructed around the smaller cottage. Continued on page 4.

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

*B8. Related Features:

The Costello House site features a dense and forested site, a creek, and an open field on the northeast edge of the property. The main house sits in the center of the irregularly shaped site and has a round driveway. There are two temporary sheds and a carport. See continuation, page 5.

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown*B10. Significance: Theme Orchard Agriculture and Property Development Area Los Altos, CaliforniaPeriod of Significance 1916 Property Type Single Family Residence Applicable Criteria A, C

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

The subject property at 604 Milverton Road, historically called the Costello House, was built in 1916 as a residential farm property does display a level of historical significance and integrity that would qualify it for listing as a historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places, on the California Register of Historical Places, as a local City of Los Altos Landmark at the local level. The Costello House is significant for its architecture, as a fine example of vernacular California Bungalow with a mixture of Craftsman and Arts & Crafts design elements. It is also significant for its association with the overall development pattern of Los Altos and the South Bay region for its transition from a large apricot farming property to single family residential suburban properties.

For Continued significance, see page 5.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

City of Los Altos, *Los Altos Historic Resources Inventory Update and Evaluation Report*. Circa, 2008, see full Citation list on page 7

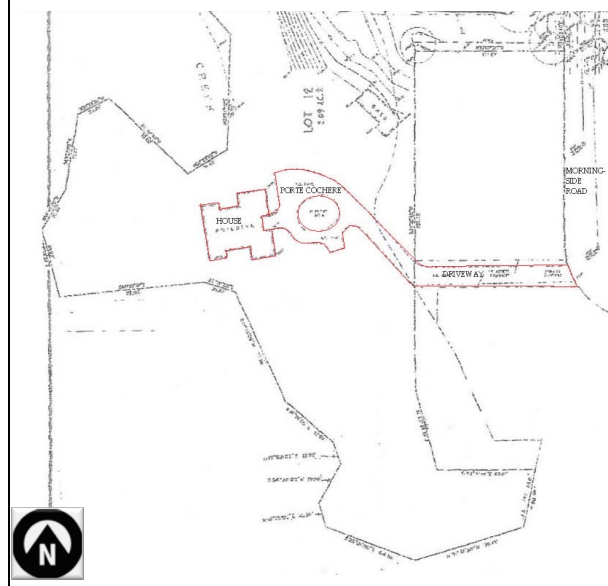
B13. Remarks:

This property was assessed as a part of the 2011 Los Altos Survey. In that DPR form, The Costello House and Barn was found to be historic for Criteria A and C. A was for agriculture, and the barn was included as a main feature of the agricultural association. However, upon reevaluation, the house and land itself was determined to convey the agricultural history of the property, without the presence of the barn.

*B14. Evaluator: Lauren Golden and Hannah Goldman,
Garavaglia Architecture, Inc.*Date of Evaluation: May 6, 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: _____

Page 3 of 10

*P3a. Description (Continued)

The subject property of approximately 2 acres has an abstract geometric shape with irregular boundary lines and is located southwest of University Avenue and west of South El Monte Avenue in Los Altos. The street address is 604 Milverton Road (APN No. 175-19-042), but the driveway access is from Morningside Road. The property contains a residential building known as the Costello House.

South of the Orange/University Historic District was the former Costello agricultural property, including apricot orchards and the Costello Barn, which are historically associated with the Costello House but are not part of this report.

There are currently two structures on the property, a house, and a carport. The house and the carport are located near the center of the property, but the house is close to the property lines on the west side and the garage is situated close to the property boundary on the east side. The house is not visible from Morningside Road or from Milverton Road, because it sits below street level, on a grade closer to Adobe Creek. The front facade of the house faces east. The property is in a mostly wooded area and includes a segment Adobe Creek, to the east of the house. A clearing or small agricultural lot is located on the northeast side of the property. The Los Altos Water Department owns undeveloped land along Adobe Creek to the north and south of the subject property, preserving a rural feeling to the view shed surrounding the house.

BUILDING

The "H" shaped building is a one story, residential wood framed structure constructed in the Craftsman Bungalow architectural style. The house is approximately 1,637 sq. ft. with two bedrooms, and one bathroom. The walls are made of wood clapboard siding painted an ochre color with white trim. Asphalt shingles cover the unique intersecting gable roof forms.

Exterior

The house is built on an elevated foundation and the primary facade faces north. Below is a description of the exterior of house going clockwise around the building.

The front of the house faces east and is covered with painted clapboard siding, with two symmetrical projecting gables that frame a central opening with a 25 pane French door with 15 pane sidelights. Above the French door is an arched gable and decorative bargeboard. An apricot and leaf motif is at the top of the arch, and the front entry light appears to hang from the apricot. Above the entry door and behind the entry light is decorative lattice work integrated into the siding. The three sets of wood window sashes are mulled together, located under each of the side gables. These operable single sash under a six fixed, six lite half sash appear to be original.

Around the corner to the south façade is a wooden deck overlooking the garage and the creek valley. This is the most open side of the house after the front of the house. The proximity to Adobe Creek puts the house on a sloped lot, where the front of the house is entered at grade, the first floor is almost a full story above grade at the back of the house facing the creek. Family records indicate the wood deck was added to this elevation during the 1985-86 house remodel.

Interior

The interior of the house, when accessed through the front door, opens into the living room with vaulted ceilings and exposed wood trusses. The bedrooms, deck access, kitchen, and other rooms are all accessed via this central space.

- Original chimney and mantel are located in the living room.
- The living room has a high ceiling with an exposed ceiling revealing exposed wood trusses.
- Kitchen has been updated.
- Hardwood floor in the living room

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: _____

Page 4 of 10

***B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)** **CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY**

Building permit record for the subject property document alterations listed on permits to 1985. Prior to 1985, available historic photographs, aerial photographs and information gathered from Mark Costello, who is the current keeper of the Costello oral history the property's construction chronology. Only the subject building at the site (the Costello family house) was documented during GA's site visit in May 2022. The carport is not historic and the Costello family barn, although extant, is not located on the 2-acre parcel that is the focus of this report.

According to Mark Costello, Francis J. Costello, Sr.'s grandson, the house was built in 1916. It is not known exactly when or how Francis acquired the 25 acres from his brother William. In 1917, Costello subdivided the land to make Costello Acres, a subdivision located across the railroad and El Monte Road from the subject property. This was the beginning of the Costello family's development push. Over the decades, the original Costello acreage was carved down to the single 2-acre lot containing the original Costello house.

The house is constructed around an older, smaller cottage at its core. The original roof beams and shingles are visible in the attic. However, the current configuration dates to a 1910's Craftsman cottage, where the two wings were constructed around the smaller cottage.



Figure 1 (Left): Costello Family photograph of original cottage (Costello Family and Los Altos town meeting archives, 2013)



Figure 2 (Right): Picture of original cottage's roof inside the attic of the Costello House (Garavaglia Architecture, 2022)

The materials suggest it may have been pre-fabricated by timber framers in California and assembled on site by local finishing carpenters, but it is not a Sear's catalog kit house. The curved gables speak to a more elaborated and custom design and construction than a simple cottage.

Recent Changes to Building

The following changes to the property have occurred over time, based on the information provided by Mark Costello.

- Demolition of garage
- Deck addition
- New carport construction
- Kitchen remodel
- Reroofing

OWNERSHIP/OCCUPANT HISTORY

The Costello House was built, in its current form, on the property around 1916. Prior to that, the land was incorporated into much larger farms owned by the Hale and Wright families. The Costello House's construction, and the Costello family's development activities in Los Altos throughout their collective ownership, is representative of the transition of Los Altos from a primarily agricultural area to a residential community.

The children of Frank J. Costello, Jr. and Barbara Muriel Costello owned the house between 1992-2013. Since Frank
DPR 523L (9/2013)

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: _____

Page 5 of 10

Jr.'s death in 1992, the house has been mostly rented to occupants, who could not be identified through archival research.

In 2007, the Costello siblings inherited the house after the death of their mother. After some attempts to subdivide the property, they sold it to Mike Giovanotto in 2013.

*B8. Related Features:

Historically, a barn had been a part of the broader Costello Orchard land and management. However, that barn is no longer a part of the property line of 604 Milverton

*B10. Significance:

Theme Orchard Agriculture and Property Development Area Los Altos, California
Period of Significance 1916 Property Type Single Family Residence Applicable Criteria
A, C (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Site Development History – Costello Landholdings in Los Altos

William Costello, a wealthy developer and successful businessman, is mentioned having a ranch in the Freemont town with fruit trees as early as 1896, according to the Costello family.¹ By all accounts, he lived in San Francisco and owned the farmland. William's name is on the tract parcel map, ca. 1906, where the current holdings are.

Francis J. Costello first appears in the region as early as 1907.² In 1916, he advertises the sale of livestock in the *Pacific Rural Press* out of Los Altos, suggesting a more permanent residence.³ According to Costello Family history, Costello took over an existing apricot farm to be a "gentleman famer." This land included a cottage and a nearby barn, as well as established orchards and fruit drying space close to the railroad, which had been established in the area in the 1860's, but the line transitioned to more regular commuter service in 1908.

In 1919, Francis Costello advertised "Costello Acres" in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which was subdivided prior to 1917. Lots were advertised as having a variety of mature fruit trees already established, as a way for the new families to supplement money made commuting into the City. Homes on the development were still being constructed as late as 1928, which "sat on half an acre landscaped with 22 apricot trees."⁴

Costello eventually went on to be one of the founding members of the Apricot Growers' Association in San Jose in 1932⁵. In aerial footage from 1939, the large areas of evenly spaced trees note the presence of an extensive orchard. The orchards were slowly dismantled between 1953 and 1969, at the end of the trees' lifetimes. The incorporation of Los Altos in 1952 also spurred local development. USGS maps and aerial footage show the changing makeup of the Costello orchards and the piecemeal subdivision and development the initial larger Costello parcel.

Agriculture in Los Altos

Los Altos's development is directly tied to both the agriculture and the railroad, and the ultimate shift away from the expansive orchards. Orchard Agriculture in California started at the beginning of the 19th Century, brought to the state during the Spanish and Mission periods. With the discovery of gold in 1848, California became a draw to thousands of migrants. By the 1850's, either by failing to strike it rich or simply seeking a more reliable form of income, many migrants began to settle in the southern Santa Clara Valley and to grow wheat, which until then had been imported to California. The valley soon became an agricultural center, with small towns springing up along the

¹ Morningside Planned Unit Development Plan Amendment for Lot 12 Report, 2013. Page 19.

² <https://archive.org/details/sanfranciscoblue08sanf/page/536/mode/2up?q=%22F+J+Costello%22>

³ *Pacific Rural Press*, Volume 104, Number 14, 30 September 1922

⁴ Chapman, Robin. "Santa Clara Valley Lives: 'Superior fruit' – apricot sales reap reward". *Los Altos Town Crier*, August 8, 2018.

⁵ *Oakland Tribune*, Volume 116, Number 110, 19 April 1932

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: _____

Page 6 of 10

old Camino Real, which ran north from Monterey. Around this time, Nurseries are developed in "San Jose, Alameda, Napa, and Stockton. The beginning of the "fruit era" is marked by the 1856 introduction of the "Santa Clara Valley Prune" in San Jose by Louis Pellier, who began selling "five to ten acre lots for fruit farms."⁶ By the 1870's, California outpaced the rest of the country in orchard-related crops.

In 1890's, the Los Altos area hosted many smaller ranches, who

"were producing as "much as 200 dollars per acre from prunes, apricots, peaches, cherries, pears and other fruits." The properties were lived in year round by their occupants and represent a phase in this history of the community that emphasizes farming as the means of livelihood. This activity predates the later relocation of San Francisco businessmen and their families to town after 1907."⁷

Orchard fruits were generally successful crops, but marketing "marketing the product was fraught with difficulties, particularly in transporting perishable goods to market, until efficient rail service became available."⁸ As railroad and better packing technologies developed in the early 20th century, a broader variety of fruits, including "persimmons, raisins, apricots, nectarines, quinces, and pomegranates" helped California's orchard industry expand.⁹ The Los Altos Land Company, used apricots to encourage people to purchase lots to have a family orchard, to supplement money made in San Francisco. By 1922, more established orchards were being subdivided. Costello Acres, just south of the subject property, was a development that advertised itself as having mature fruit trees on lots while maintaining close proximity to the train station for easy commuting.¹⁰ The Los Altos economy shifted away from orchards as businesses grew and "residential subdivisions began to take over the orchard land use."¹¹

World War II and the Post-War Period

World War II spelled the end of many orchards in Los Altos, as many of the people capable of working the land were sent to the War effort. As a result, many of the productive orchards in the area were neglected during this period, resulting in the overall end of life of the fruit-producing trees around the 1950's.

After World War II, "development in the Valley mirrored nationwide trends and the region's population and development increased markedly. It was during this time that the county began to undergo a dramatic shift from its agricultural past to a largely suburban present."¹² Los Altos was formally incorporated in 1952, as a way to control zoning and development in the face of increased development in the Post-War era.

Architectural Context: Craftsman-Style Bungalow

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road is vernacular bungalow type residence designed with elements of the Craftsman architectural style. The Arts and Crafts Movement, which influenced the design of the California Craftsman Bungalow, was based on the theory of honesty and natural beauty of construction and materials. 604 Milverton is somewhat of a hybrid between the Craftsman and Arts & Crafts styles, with elements unique to California bungalows and the aesthetic preferences of the Costello family.

Criteria Evaluation

This association with the broad story of Los Altos as a community makes the subject property eligible for the NRHP or the CRHR under Criterion A/1.

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road, Los Altos, is one of the few remaining properties that convey the agricultural origins of Los Altos prior to its development into a primarily residential suburban community. The apricot and leaf carving above the front door symbolize this agricultural association. Further, the story of the Costello Family is integrated into the conversion of Los Altos's transition from an apricot-farming region to a suburban community.

⁶ pg II-12, survey

⁷ Section II, pg 5, Los Altos Survey

⁸ *A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Agricultural Properties in California* / Prepared by the California Dept. of Transportation, [Division of Environmental Analysis]. Sacramento, Calif: California Dept. of Transportation, 2007. Pg 55.

⁹ Caltrans Agricultural Properties Context, pg 55

¹⁰ *San Francisco Call*, Volume 105, Number 78, 4 April 1919

¹¹ Section II, pg 5, Los Altos Survey

¹² Los Altos Chamber of Commerce website: [History of Two Cities - Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, CA](#). Accessed 8/9/2021

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: _____

Page 7 of 10

Based on the research and assessment on the design and construction of the 604 Milverton Rd, it does appear that the Costello House is a good example of California Bungalow style of architecture it most closely represents; and therefore Garavaglia Architecture, Inc. does find the Costello House to be eligible for consideration for the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion C/3 at any level.

The character defining features include:

- Intersecting gable roof forms
- Center rounded gable flanked by two bowed gables at the front façade
- Original window groupings of three on front facade with multiple lites over one
- French style entry door with lites and side lites
- Apricot carving on bargeboard
- Open eaves at roof edges
- Wood clapboard siding
- Historic oak tree
- Long driveway approach to the house

Historic Integrity Summary

The Costello House at 604 Milverton Road retains five aspects of integrity – Location, Design, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling but lacks integrity of Setting and Association. Therefore, it retains enough overall Historic Integrity remain eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources at any level.

*P11. Report Citation (Continued):

*B12. References:

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Page 8 of 10

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State of California C The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
SKETCH MAP

Primary #
HRI#
Trinomial

Page 9 of 10

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Costello House

*Drawn by: U.S. Geological Survey, Amended by Author

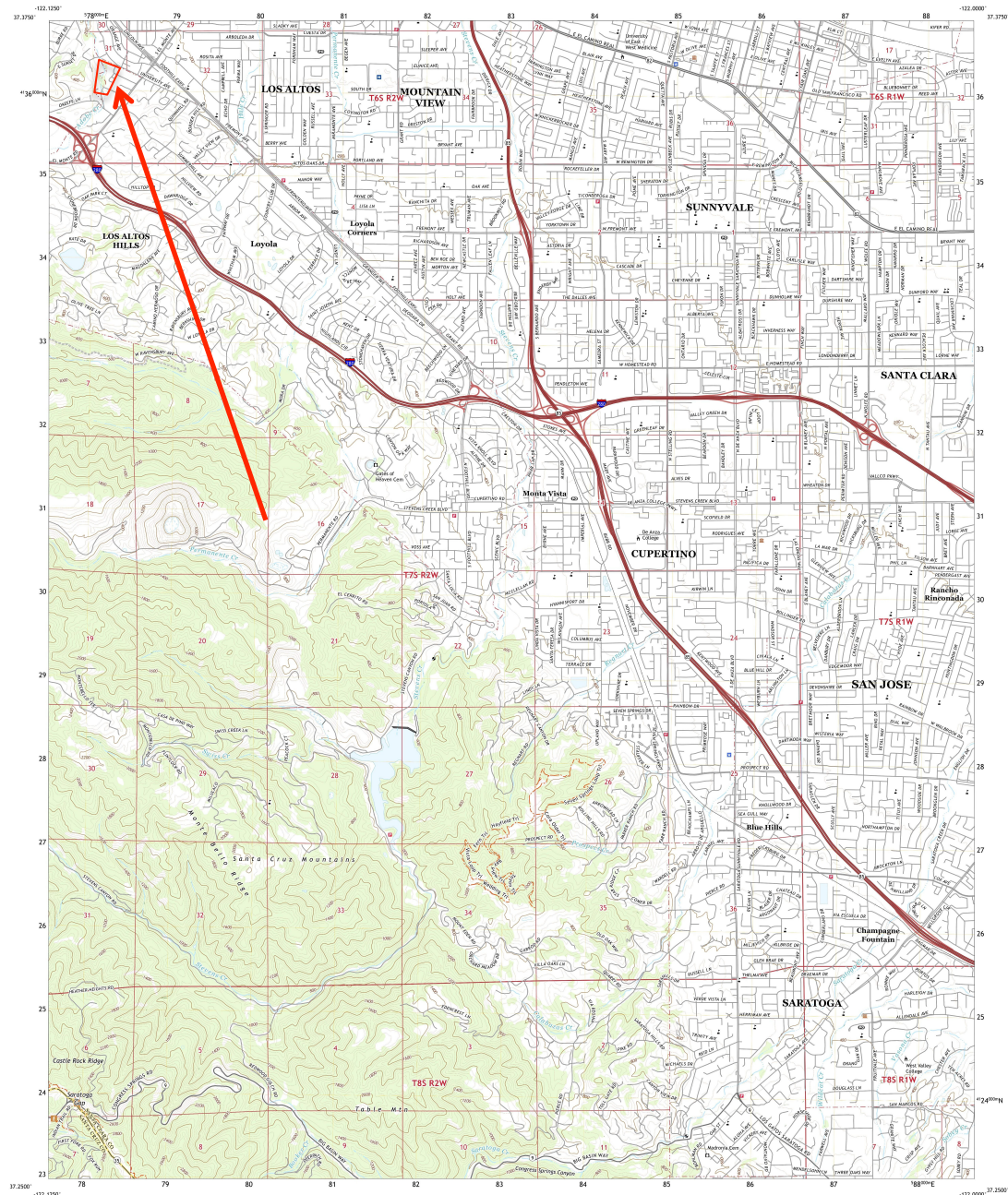
*Date of map: 2021



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



CUPERTINO QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983
This map is not a legal document. Boundary lines for
governmental units are shown. Other boundaries shown
are for general reference only.

Scale: 1:24,000
Horizontal: May 2020
Vertical: May 2020



SCALE 1:24,000
0 0.5 1 2
1000 500 0 500 1000
0 0.5 1 2
1000 500 0 500 1000
FEET METERS
CUPERTINO QUADRANGLE
NORTH AMERICAN DATUM OF 1983
This map was produced in conformance with the
National Geospatial Program of the U.S. Topographic Standard.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Expressway
Secondary Road
Tertiary
Interstate Route
Local Road
Local Connector
State Route

CUPERTINO, CA
2021

State of California C The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
SKETCH MAP

Primary #
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Page 10 of 10

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Costello House

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*Date of map: 2021

