



CAREY & CO. | A TreanorHL Company

May 17, 2017

Corn Palace
1142 Dahlia Court
Sunnyvale, California

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

The property associated with the Corn Palace, a vintage farm stand in Sunnyvale, is located on the west side of Lawrence Expressway. The 9-acre lot (APN 213-12-001) is bounded by Dahlia Drive to the north, Lawrence Expressway to the east, Lily Avenue to the south, and Toyon Avenue to the west. The property is not listed on any local, state or national registries. This report is an evaluation of the property's potential eligibility to be listed in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and to be designated as a heritage resource in the City of Sunnyvale per local criteria.

METHODOLOGY

Carey & Co. conducted a site visit in May 2017 to evaluate the existing conditions, historic features, and architectural significance of the properties. Additional research was completed including consultation of the Santa Clara County Clerk Recorders Office, all available building permits, the Sunnyvale Historical Society, the San Jose Public Library History Room Collections, and local newspaper indexes.

This report includes:

- Property Description
- Site History
- Historic Context
- Significance Evaluation
- Bibliography

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The subject property appears eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 1 (Events) as a rare survivor of a family farm in Sunnyvale. Owned and operated by the Francia family since the early 20th century, the land is associated with the agricultural history of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara County. Purchased as an orchard in the 1920s, the property was converted to farmland after World War II and had operated continuously until 2015. The period of significance would begin when the property was acquired by the Francia family in 1926 and would end in 1967, following the 50-year rule. The property retains sufficient integrity to communicate its significance.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Located on the west side of Lawrence Expressway, the 9-acre, 493 feet by 818 feet rectangular lot has two dwellings and three outbuildings at the northeast corner arranged around a courtyard/driveway. A farm stand, the *Corn Palace*, is located at the southeast corner. The rest of the subject lot is farmland, currently not being cultivated. The surrounding neighborhood features residential uses, mostly consisting of detached single-family homes.



Figure 1. Aerial view of the subject lot outlined in red (edited from Google Earth, retrieved April 27, 2017).

The one-story dwelling at 1150 Dahlia Court is roughly square in plan. The wood-frame building has stucco cladding and composition-shingle clad centered gable roof with slight eave overhang. The primary window type is wood-sash in a variety of sizes and operations. The front (east) elevation features a recessed, partial-width entry porch flanked by windows. A secondary (rear) entrance faces east and is sheltered by a small porch with wood square supports. See Figures 2 and 3.

Located to the southwest of the driveway, the one-story dwelling at 1142 Dahlia Court is rectangular in plan. The wood-frame building has wood-shingle cladding and composition-shingle clad front-gable roof with a slight eave overhang. A full-width entry porch with square supports shelters the main entrance, which consists of a glazed door. Notable features include exposed rafters and plain fascia. A one-story structure with a mix of wood cladding and a flat roof is attached to the dwelling on the east side. The overall condition of the building is good. See Figure 4.



Figures 2 and 3. Dwelling at 1150 Dahlia Court.

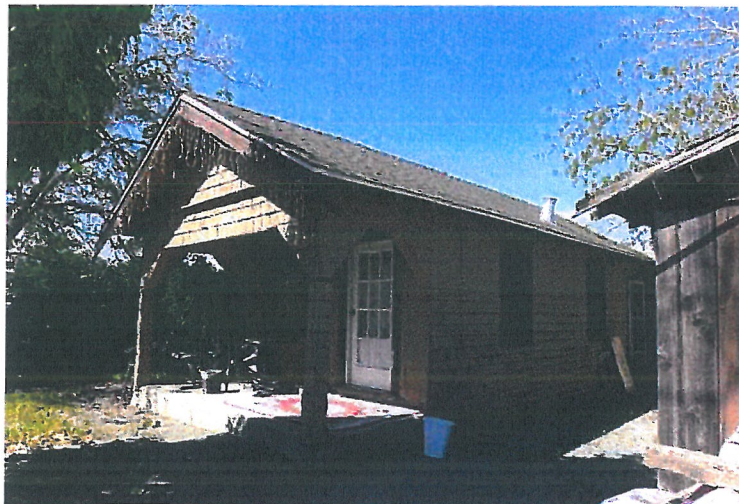


Figure 4. Dwelling at 1142 Dahlia Court.

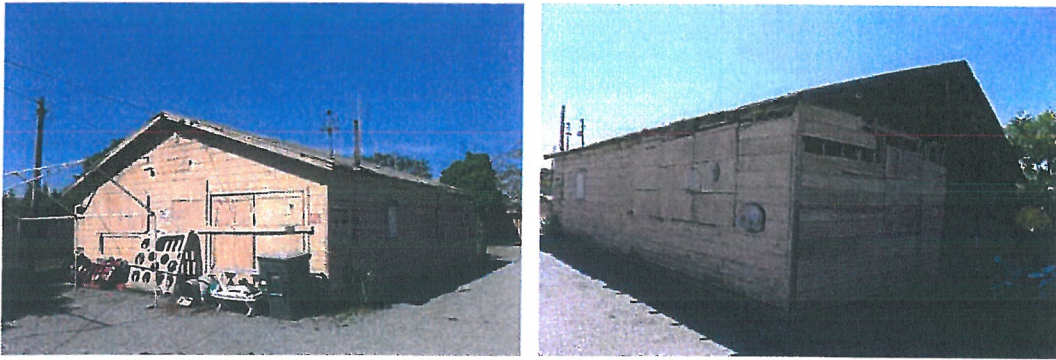


Figure 5. Farmland, looking north from the Corn Palace; Lawrence Expressway is visible on the right.

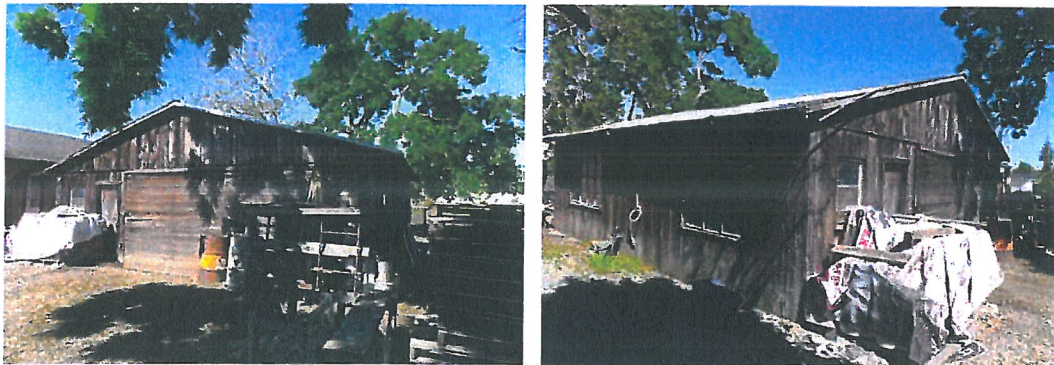
Three outbuildings are located around the driveway. The one-story, wood-frame structures are rectangular in plan and capped by gable roofs. The outbuilding to the south of the driveway has painted, wood drop siding and features a wood double door and multiple wood-sash windows,

all of which were boarded up (Figures 6 and 7). The outbuilding standing at the end of the driveway has vertical wood cladding, double sliding doors, and metal-sash windows (Figures 8 and 9). A third, smaller outbuilding is to the west of the 1150 Dahlia Court dwelling, and is clad in stucco (Figure 10).

The Corn Palace is a one-story, wood-frame farm stand capped with corrugated metal roof. The north and east walls are painted wood panels while the south and west are wire mesh. Two painted signs that read "The CORN PALACE" with colorful corn and fruit drawings face Lincoln Expressway and Lily Avenue (Figures 11 and 12). An asphalt-paved parking lot surrounds the structure (Figure 11). A one-story shed with concrete foundation and horizontal wood siding, and a well is located to the east of the farm stand.



Figures 6 and 7. The outbuilding to the south of the driveway.



Figures 8 and 9. The outbuilding standing at the end of the driveway.



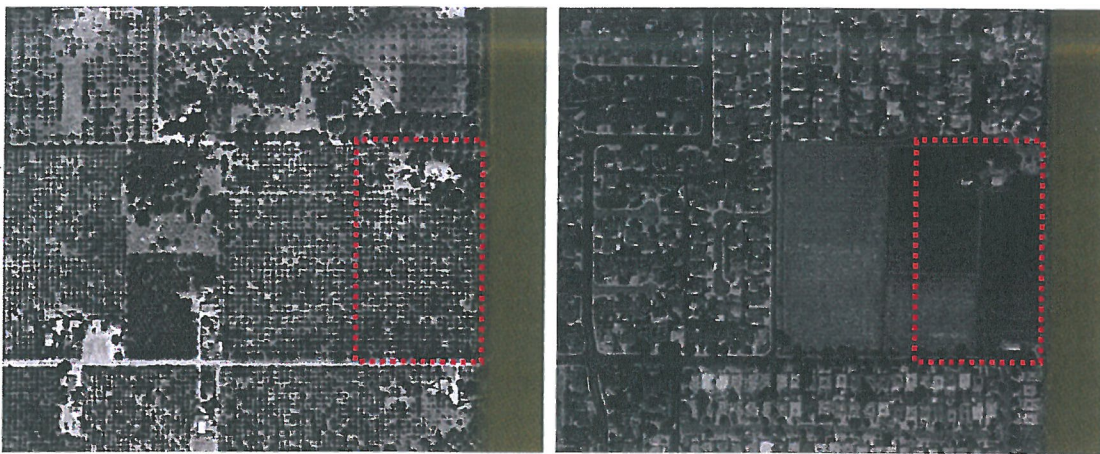
Figure 10. The outbuilding to the west of the 1150 Dahlia Court dwelling.



Figures 11 and 12. The Corn Palace.

SITE HISTORY

Michael Francia purchased the 20-acre land along Lawrence Station Road, the subject lot, in 1926.¹ The 1948 aerial shows a dense orchard at the time with one or two structures on it, surrounded by others. By 1956, the orchard was cleared for open fields, on which the family started to grow produce.² The Francia brothers, Ben and Joe, worked together to grow corn, bell peppers, green peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash. The first residential development also appeared during this time: the single-family houses on the south side of Lily Avenue were constructed and the lots to the southeast towards El Camino Real were developed by the mid-1950s. The dwellings on the subject lot were built in the late 1950s.³ The Corn Palace farm stand was constructed ca. 1965.⁴ The area remained largely agricultural until after the 1960s; however, by 1980, the Francia farm was among the few remaining agricultural parcels in the area. City of Sunnyvale does not have many permits on file for the subject lot: known alterations to the 1142 and 1150 Dahlia Court dwellings include “repair and remodel” in 1989 and 1990 respectively.⁵



Figures 13 and 14. Aerial views of the subject lot in 1948 (left) and 1991 (right). Google Earth, retrieved April 27, 2017.

¹ Adam Burgess, *Lawrence Station Road: an interview of Ben and Joe Francia of the Corn Palace* (video), 2002.

² 1948 and 1956 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).

³ 1956 and 1960 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).

⁴ 1960 and 1968 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).

⁵ One Stop Permit Center, City of Sunnyvale. Permits were found under 1146 Dahlia Court and 150 Dahlia Court addresses.

Benjamin M. (1920-2013) and Joseph Francia (1922-2007) farmed the property for over 50 years with family members. They were born in San Jose to Michael and his wife Serafina, both Italian immigrants, and lived in the San Jose area before moving to Mountain View in the 1930s.⁶ The family owned land at 247 North Whisman Road in Mountain View, on which they lived and operated an orchard. Ben was a dedicated farmer, whose children helped with the farm work.⁷ Joe attended Mountain View High School, and later joined the Army and shipped overseas to fight in World War II during which he was captured and spent several years in German concentration camps. He worked as a mail carrier after the war before returning to the family farms in Mountain View and Sunnyvale where he remained an active orchardist and farmer.⁸

The western half of the farmland was developed by Toll Brothers in 2013 into single-family homes.⁹ It appears as the remaining land was partially cultivated and the produce stand operated until late 2015.¹⁰



Figure 15. Joe and Ben Francia at the Corn Palace, photographs published in 1987 (left) and 1991 (right). Sunnyvale Historical Society at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum.

Chronology

1926	The 20-acre property along Lawrence Station Road was purchased by Michael (Mike) Francia, who lived in San Jose with his family.
1930s	The Francia family moved from San Jose to Mountain View.
1948	Aerial photograph of the site shows orchards and two structures, possibly the larger outbuildings, on the property.
Ca. 1955	The orchard was cleared for farmland.
Ca. 1958	Two dwellings were constructed in the late 1950s.
Ca. 1965	The produce stand, "The Corn Palace," was constructed.

⁶ 1920 and 1940 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com (accessed May 5, 2017).

⁷ "Benjamin Michael Francia Obituary," Legacy.com (published in San Jose Mercury/San Mateo county Times on Nov. 19, 2013), <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/mercurynews/obituary.aspx?pid=168087475> (accessed April 27, 2017).

⁸ "Joseph Francia, local farmer, dies at 84," Mountain View Voice, March 30, 2007, <https://www.mvvoice.com/print/story/2007/03/30/josephfrancialocalfarmerdiesat84> (accessed April 27, 2017).

⁹ City of Sunnyvale, *Fact Sheet: Corn Palace – 1197 Lily Ave.*, August 2016; Santa Clara County Clerk-Recorder, Online Services, <http://scccroservice.org/web/> (accessed April 27, 2017).

¹⁰ Google Maps Street View, November 2015, <https://www.google.com/maps/> (accessed May 9, 2017).

1989-1990	The dwellings at 1142 and 1150 Dahlia Court received repairs.
2007	Joseph Francia died.
2013	Benjamin M. Francia died.
2013	The western half of the farmland was developed by Toll Brothers into single-family homes.

HISTORIC CONTEXT: SUNNYVALE¹¹

Sunnyvale's earlier history and economy was based on agriculture initiated by the Castro and Murphy families in the 1840s. The San Francisco and San Jose Railroad arrived in 1864 with "Lawrence Station" in Santa Clara and "Murphy Station" in what would become Sunnyvale. The railroad provided easy access to the San Francisco market and paved the way for greater settlement and broader agricultural development in the Santa Clara Valley. More farmers came to the Sunnyvale area during the second half of the 19th century.

The city continued to grow through the first decades of the 20th century. The earliest industries arrived in Sunnyvale were Joshua Hendy Iron Works as well as food processing and canning industries. Despite industrial growth, agriculture remained the mainstay of Sunnyvale. During World War I and postwar era Sunnyvale's development pattern started to shape: industrial plants and the railroad ran east-west, the Murphy Avenue business district ran north-south, with single family homes in between. The 1930s' depression did not affect Sunnyvale as adversely since factory workers who lost their jobs were able to find work in agriculture.

World War II brought the business and building boom but also tipped the balance between agriculture and industry. Both high wages and available work created an agricultural labor shortage. Orchards were still profitable but secondary to industrial development. Larger industrial firms moved into the community and Sunnyvale became the industrial economic center of the Peninsula.

By 1950 Sunnyvale's population had grown to about 9,800. Taxes on farmland rose rapidly, making agricultural use impracticable and urging land owners to sell or develop residential subdivisions and shopping centers. The city continued to grow through the 1960s and 1970s, becoming the second largest city in Santa Clara Valley. Transportation corridors and street patterns changed to accommodate steadily increasing automobile traffic while agricultural land was converted to urban uses.

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

Regulatory Framework – State of California Criteria

The California Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Series #6, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, outlines the differences between the federal and state processes. The criteria to be used when establishing the significance of a property for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) are very similar, with emphasis on local and state significance. They are:

¹¹ This section is summarized from James C. Williams, ed., *Images: Sunnyvale's Heritage Resources*, 1988, pages 3-16.

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States; or
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history; or
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.¹²

The CRHR requires the establishment of historic significance before integrity is considered. California's integrity threshold is slightly lower than the federal level. As a result, some resources that are historically significant but do not meet National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) integrity standards may be eligible for listing on the CRHR.¹³

California's list of special considerations is shorter and more lenient than the NRHP. It includes some allowances for moved buildings, structures, or objects, as well as lower requirements for proving the significance of resources that are less than 50 years old and a more elaborate discussion of the eligibility of reconstructed buildings.¹⁴

In addition to separate evaluations for eligibility for the CRHR, the state automatically lists on the CRHR resources that are listed or determined eligible for the NRHP through a complete evaluation process.¹⁵

Integrity

Second, for a property to qualify under the CRHR's Criteria for Evaluation, it must also retain "historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance."¹⁶ While a property's significance relates to its role within a specific historic context, its integrity refers to "a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance."¹⁷ To determine if a property retains the physical characteristics corresponding to its historic context, the NRHP has identified seven aspects of integrity, which the CRHR closely follows:¹⁸

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

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

¹² California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, Technical Assistance Series 6, (Sacramento, 2001), 1.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁵ All State Historical Landmarks from number 770 onward are also automatically listed on the California Register. California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register of Historical Resources: The Listing Process*, Technical Assistance Series 5 (Sacramento, n.d.), 1.

¹⁶ United States Department of the Interior, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin No. 15 (Washington, D.C., 1997), 3.

¹⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.

Materials are 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 is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

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

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹⁹

Since integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established.

Regulatory Framework – Sunnyvale Criteria

The City of Sunnyvale's Municipal Code provides the criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources in Section 19.96.050 of Title 19:

Any improvement, building, portion of buildings, structures, signs, features, sites, scenic areas, views, vistas, places, areas, landscapes, trees, or other natural objects or objects of scientific, aesthetic, educational, political, social, cultural, architectural, or historical significance can be designated a heritage resource by the city council and any area within the city may be designated a heritage resource district by the city council pursuant to provisions of this chapter if it meets the Criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, or one or more of the following:

- (a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic engineering, architectural, or natural history;
- (b) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;
- (c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- (d) It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect;
- (e) It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;
- (f) It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the city of Sunnyvale;
- (g) It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
- (h) It is similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;

¹⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

- (i) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;
- (j) It is one of the few remaining examples in the city, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historic type or specimen;
- (k) With respect to a local landmark, it is significant in that the resource materially benefits the historical character of a neighborhood or area, or the resource in its location represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community or city;
- (l) With respect to a local landmark district, a collective high integrity of the district is essential to the sustained value of the separate individual resources;
- (m) With respect to a designated landmark and designated landmark district, the heritage resource shall meet Criteria of the National Register of Historical Places, which are incorporated by reference into this chapter. (Ord. 262399 § 1; prior zoning code § 19.80.060).²⁰

Evaluation – California Register of Historical Resources

Criterion 1 – Association with significant events

The Corn Palace property is associated with the agricultural history of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara County. Converted from an orchard to a farmland sometime between 1948 and 1956, the property was cultivated continuously by the Francia family until ca. 2015. The property was not the only family farm in the area, nor was it the largest, nor does it appear to have been associated with groundbreaking trends or unique developments in Sunnyvale's or Santa Clara County's farming history. However, it is one of a very few remaining agricultural lands in Sunnyvale, and a rare survivor of a family farm from the period when agriculture dominated the local economy. The farm stand, known as the Corn Palace, may be the last original farm stand in the City of Sunnyvale.²¹

The other two remaining agricultural parcels in Sunnyvale are the ten-acre apricot orchard at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum (570 East Remington Drive) and the three-acre cherry orchard on Mathilda Avenue (at 755 S Mathilda Avenue), both of which are owned by the city:

In 1994, the City of Sunnyvale preserved ten acres of Blenheim apricot trees to celebrate the important contribution of orchards to the early development of the local economy. The orchard was designated as Heritage Orchard Park by the Historical Society in 1997. The ten-acre orchard has about 80 trees per acre for a total of about 800 trees. In addition, the Orchard Heritage Park Interpretive Exhibit (OHPIE) was built in 2001 next to the orchard. [...] The Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum opened next to the orchard in 2008.²²

Another similar land in Sunnyvale would be Full Circle Farm at 1055 Dunford Way, which is an 11-acre farm and educational program founded in 2007. The Santa Clara Unified School District

²⁰ Sunnyvale Municipal Code, 19.96.050. *Criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources*, http://qcode.us/codes/sunnyvale/view.php?topic=19-6-19_96-19_96_050&frames=on (accessed April 27, 2017).

²¹ City of Sunnyvale, *Fact Sheet: Corn Palace – 1197 Lily Ave.*, August 2016.

²² "Orchard Heritage Park," Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum, <http://heritageparkmuseum.org/sample-page/orchard-heritage-park/> (accessed May 3, 2017).

has been leasing the open space adjacent to Peterson Middle School to the non-profit.²³ Although has been functioning as a farm for the last decade, Full Circle Farm was only recently founded and not associated with the history of farming in Sunnyvale.

The relative rarity of this once ubiquitous local property type means that the Corn Palace farm may be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 based on its association with Sunnyvale's agricultural past. The period of significance would begin when the property was acquired by the Francia family in 1926 and would end in 1967, following the 50-year rule since the farm continued to operate as a family farm into the period less than 50 years ago.²⁴

Criterion 2 – Persons

The property was owned and operated by the Francia family since the 1920s. Brothers Ben and Joe were known to the local community but they do not appear to have played a significant role in the development of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, or the state. Therefore, the building does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 – Architecture and Construction

The dwellings and outbuildings on the subject property appear to be of common construction and materials with no notable or special attributes. The buildings fail to be exemplary representatives of an architectural style, works of a master, or architecturally significant in any other respect. Therefore, the property does not appear eligible for listing under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 – Information Potential

Archival research provided no indication that the subject property has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation. Therefore, it does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 4.

Evaluation – Sunnyvale Criteria

To be considered significant at the local level, the property must meet at least one of the thirteen criteria for nomination of heritage resources defined in the City of Sunnyvale's Municipal Code Section 19.96.050. Of these criteria, the first ten are relevant to the evaluation of the subject property:

- (a) The subject property reflects the city's agricultural history as a continuously operated family farm from the 1920s to ca. 2015;
- (b) The Francia family is not identified as significant in local, state, or national history, nor is the property associated with significant events;
- (c) The dwellings, outbuildings, and the farm stand does not embody distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- (d) No known builder, designer, or architect is associated with the buildings;

²³ Full Circle Farm Website, <http://fullcirclesunnyvale.org> (accessed May 5, 2017).

²⁴ "Fifty years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period. (Events and activities occurring within the past 50 years must be exceptionally important to be recognized as "historic" and to justify extending a period of significance beyond the limit of 50 years ago.)" United States Department of the Interior, *How to Complete the National Register Form, National Register Bulletin No. 16A* (Washington, D.C., 1997), 42.

- (e) The property does not contribute to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;
- (f) The farm, including the Corn Palace, is recognized among locals, and represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood;
- (g) The dwellings, outbuildings, and the farm stand do not embody elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
- (h) The property is not similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (i) The property does not reflect significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;
- (j) The subject property is a rare example of a family farm in Sunnyvale;

The subject property appears eligible to be listed as a heritage resource on the *City of Sunnyvale's Heritage Resource Inventory* since it meets criteria a, f, and j.

Integrity

The subject property retains integrity of location as it has never been moved from its original location on Lawrence Expressway, formerly known as Lawrence Station Road, in Sunnyvale. Although the integrity of design was compromised by division and sale of the western parcel in 2013, the relationship of the structures and the rest of the farmland is still intact. The integrity of setting has drastically changed since the surrounding orchards and farmlands had been replaced by suburban development over time. As expected, some replacements and alterations to the original materials have occurred since the buildings have been continuously in use. However, the property retains sufficient integrity of materials and workmanship as evidenced by the wood and shingle cladding, as well as the wood- and metal-sash windows. Despite the changes to the setting and the loss of the western half, the property continued to operate as a family farm. In addition, the existing structures' rustic aesthetic and the surrounding farmland continue to convey the feeling of an early to mid-20th century farm. Therefore, the property retains the integrity of feeling and association. Overall, the Corn Palace property retains sufficient integrity to communicate its significance.

CONCLUSION

The Corn Palace property on Lawrence Expressway appears eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 1 (Events) and for listing as a heritage resource on the *City of Sunnyvale's Heritage Resource Inventory*. Associated with the agricultural history of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara County, it is one of a very few remaining agricultural lands in Sunnyvale, and a rare survivor of a family farm from the period when agriculture dominated the local economy. The period of significance would begin when the property was acquired by the Francia family in 1926 and would end in 1967, following the 50-year rule. The property retains sufficient integrity to communicate its significance.

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<https://www.mvvoice.com/print/story/2007/03/30/josephfrancialocalfarmerdiesat84>.
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State of California The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

NRHP Status Code _____

Other
Review Code _____

Reviewer _____

Date _____

Listings _____

Page 1 of 9 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Corn Palace

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

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

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

c. Address 1042-1050 Dahlia Court City Sunnyvale Zip 94087

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

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, decimal degrees, etc., as appropriate) APN 213-12-001

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

Located on the west side of Lawrence Expressway, the 9-acre, 493 feet by 818 feet rectangular lot has two dwellings and three outbuildings at the northeast corner arranged around a courtyard/driveway. A farm stand, the *Corn Palace*, is located at the southeast corner. The rest of the subject lot is farmland, currently not being cultivated. The surrounding neighborhood features residential uses, mostly consisting of detached single-family homes.

The one-story dwelling at 1150 Dahlia Court is roughly square in plan. The wood-frame building has stucco cladding and composition-shingle clad centered gable roof with slight eave overhang. The primary window type is wood-sash in a variety of sizes and operations. The front (east) elevation features a recessed, partial-width entry porch flanked by windows. A secondary (rear) entrance faces east and is sheltered by a small porch with wood square supports.

(See Continuation Sheets.)

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



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

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

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) Looking west to 1150 Dahlia Court and an outbuilding. Carey & Co. 2017.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic Prehistoric Both

1926 - ca. 1965, Aerial photographs

*P7. Owner and Address: _____

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) _____

Carey & Co., Inc.
460 Bush Street San Francisco, CA

*P9. Date Recorded: May 17, 2017

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Intensive survey

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

Carey & Co., Corn Palace, 1142-1050 Dahlia Court Sunnyvale, California, May 2017.

*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): _____

State of California The Resources Agency Primary # _____
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI# _____
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Corn Palace *NRHP Status Code _____
 Page 2 of 9

B1. Historic Name: Corn Palace
 B2. Common Name: Corn Palace
 B3. Original Use: Farm house an outbuildings, farmland B4. Present Use: Residence and outbuildings
 *B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 The outbuildings were constructed pre-1948, two dwellings ca. 1958, the farm stand ca. 1965. The dwellings received repairs and remodels in 1989-1990.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____
 *B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown
 *B10. Significance: Theme Agriculture Area Sunnyvale
 Period of Significance. 1926 - 1967 Property Type Farm Applicable Criteria 1
 (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Michael Francia purchased the 20-acre land along Lawrence Station Road, the subject lot, in 1926.¹ The 1948 aerial shows a dense orchard at the time with one or two structures on it, surrounded by others. By 1956, the orchard was cleared for open fields, on which the family started to grow produce.² The Francia brothers, Ben and Joe, worked together to grow corn, bell peppers, green peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squash. The first residential development also appeared during this time: the single-family houses on the south side of Lily Avenue were constructed and the lots to the southeast towards El Camino Real were developed by the mid-1950s. The dwellings on the subject lot were built in the late 1950s.³ The Corn Palace farm stand was constructed ca. 1965.⁴ The area remained largely agricultural until after the 1960s; however, by 1980, the Francia farm was the among the few remaining agricultural parcels in the area. City of Sunnyvale does not have many permits on file for the subject lot: known alterations to the 1142 and 1150 Dahlia Court dwellings include “repair and remodel” in 1989 and 1990 respectively.⁵

Benjamin M. (1920-2013) and Joseph Francia (1922-2007) farmed the property for over 50 years with family members. They were born in San Jose to Michael and his wife Serafina, both Italian immigrants, and lived in the San Jose area before moving to Mountain View in the 1930s.⁶ (See Continuation Sheet.)

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

*B12. References:
 See Continuation Sheets.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Carey & Co., Inc.
 *Date of Evaluation: May 17, 2017

(This space reserved for official comments.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 3 of 9

*P3a. Description, Continued:

Located to the southwest of the driveway, the one-story dwelling at 1142 Dahlia Court is rectangular in plan. The wood-frame building has wood-shingle cladding and composition-shingle clad front-gable roof with a slight eave overhang. A full-width entry porch with square supports shelters the main entrance, which consists of a glazed door. Notable features include exposed rafters and plain fascia. A one-story structure with a mix of wood cladding and a flat roof is attached to the dwelling on the east side. The overall condition of the building is good.

Three outbuildings are located around the driveway. The one-story, wood-frame structures are rectangular in plan and capped by gable roofs. The outbuilding to the south of the driveway has painted, wood drop siding and features a wood double door and multiple wood-sash windows, all of which were boarded up. The outbuilding standing at the end of the driveway has vertical wood cladding, double sliding doors, and metal-sash windows. A third, smaller outbuilding is to the west of the 1150 Dahlia Court dwelling, and is clad in stucco.

The Corn Palace is a one-story, wood-frame farm stand capped with corrugated metal roof. The north and east walls are painted wood panels while the south and west are wire mesh. Two painted signs that read "The CORN PALACE" with colorful corn and fruit drawings face Lincoln Expressway and Lily Avenue. An asphalt-paved parking lot surrounds the structure. A one-story shed with concrete foundation and horizontal wood siding, and a well is located to the east of the farm stand.

*B10. Significance, Continued:

The family owned land at 247 North Whisman Road in Mountain View, on which they lived and operated an orchard. Ben was a dedicated farmer, whose children helped with the farm work.⁷ Joe attended Mountain View High School, and later joined the Army and shipped overseas to fight in World War II during which he was captured and spent several years in German concentration camps. He worked as a mail carrier after the war before returning to the family farms in Mountain View and Sunnyvale where he remained an active orchardist and farmer.⁸

The western half of the farmland was developed by Toll Brothers in 2013 into single-family homes.⁹ It appears as the remaining land was partially cultivated and the farm stand operated until late 2015.¹⁰

Historic Context: Sunnyvale¹¹

Sunnyvale's earlier history and economy was based on agriculture initiated by the Castro and Murphy families in the 1840s. The San Francisco and San Jose Railroad arrived in 1864 with "Lawrence Station" in Santa Clara and "Murphy Station" in what would become Sunnyvale. The railroad provided easy access to the San Francisco market and paved the way for greater settlement and broader agricultural development in the Santa Clara Valley. More farmers came to the Sunnyvale area during the second half of the 19th century.

The city continued to grow through the first decades of the 20th century. The earliest industries arrived in Sunnyvale were Joshua Hendy Iron Works as well as food processing and canning industries. Despite industrial growth, agriculture remained the mainstay of Sunnyvale. During World War I and postwar era Sunnyvale's development pattern started to shape: industrial plants and the railroad ran east-west, the

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 4 of 9

***B10. Significance, Continued:**

Murphy Avenue business district ran north-south, with single family homes in between. The 1930s' depression did not affect Sunnyvale as adversely since factory workers who lost their jobs were able to find work in agriculture.

World War II brought the business and building boom but also tipped the balance between agriculture and industry. Both high wages and available work created an agricultural labor shortage. Orchards were still profitable but secondary to industrial development. Larger industrial firms moved into the community and Sunnyvale became the industrial economic center of the Peninsula.

By 1950 Sunnyvale's population had grown to about 9,800. Taxes on farmland rose rapidly, making agricultural use impracticable and urging land owners to sell or develop residential subdivisions and shopping centers. The city continued to grow through the 1960s and 1970s, becoming the second largest city in Santa Clara Valley. Transportation corridors and street patterns changed to accommodate steadily increasing automobile traffic while agricultural land was converted to urban uses.

Evaluation – California Register of Historical Resources¹²

Criterion 1 – Events: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

The Corn Palace property is associated with the agricultural history of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara County. Converted from an orchard to a farmland sometime between 1948 and 1956, the property was cultivated continuously by the Francia family until ca. 2015. The property was not the only family farm in the area, nor was it the largest, nor does it appear to have been associated with groundbreaking trends or unique developments in Sunnyvale's or Santa Clara County's farming history. However, it is one of a very few remaining agricultural lands in Sunnyvale, and a rare survivor of a family farm from the period when agriculture dominated the local economy. The farm stand, known as the Corn Palace, may be the last original farm stand in the City of Sunnyvale.¹³

The other two remaining agricultural parcels in Sunnyvale are the ten-acre apricot orchard at the Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum (570 East Remington Drive) and the three-acre cherry orchard on Mathilda Avenue (at 755 S Mathilda Avenue), both of which are owned by the city:

In 1994, the City of Sunnyvale preserved ten acres of Blenheim apricot trees to celebrate the important contribution of orchards to the early development of the local economy. The orchard was designated as Heritage Orchard Park by the Historical Society in 1997. The ten-acre orchard has about 80 trees per acre for a total of about 800 trees. In addition, the Orchard Heritage Park Interpretive Exhibit (OHPIE) was built in 2001 next to the orchard. [...] The Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum opened next to the orchard in 2008.¹⁴

Another similar land in Sunnyvale would be Full Circle Farm at 1055 Dunford Way, which is an 11-acre farm and educational program founded in 2007. The Santa Clara Unified School District has been leasing the open space adjacent to Peterson Middle School to the non-profit.¹⁵ Although has been functioning as a farm for the last decade, Full Circle Farm was only recently founded and not associated with the history of farming in Sunnyvale.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 5 of 9

*B10. Significance, Continued:

The relative rarity of this once ubiquitous local property type means that the Corn Palace farm may be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1 based on its association with Sunnyvale's agricultural past. The period of significance would begin when the property was acquired by the Francia family in 1926 and would end in 1967, following the 50-year rule since the farm continued to operate as a family farm into the period less than 50 years ago.¹⁶

Criterion 2 – Persons: It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.

The property was owned and operated by the Francia family since the 1920s. Brothers Ben and Joe were known to the local community but they do not appear to have played a significant role in the development of Sunnyvale, Santa Clara County, or the state. Therefore, the building does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 – Architecture and Construction: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

The dwellings and outbuildings on the subject property appear to be of common construction and materials with no notable or special attributes. The buildings fail to be exemplary representatives of an architectural style, works of a master, or architecturally significant in any other respect. Therefore, the property does not appear eligible for listing under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 – Information Potential: It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Archival research provided no indication that the subject property has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation. Therefore, the subject property does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 4.

Evaluation – Sunnyvale Criteria¹⁷

To be considered significant at the local level, the property must meet at least one of the thirteen criteria for nomination of heritage resources defined in the City of Sunnyvale's Municipal Code Section 19.96.050. Of these criteria, the first ten are relevant to the evaluation of the subject property:

- (a) The subject property reflects the city's agricultural history as a continuously operated family farm from the 1920s to ca. 2015;
- (b) The Francia family is not identified as significant in local, state, or national history, nor is the property associated with significant events;
- (c) The dwellings, outbuildings, and the farm stand does not embody distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- (d) No known builder, designer, or architect is associated with the buildings;

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 6 of 9

*B10. Significance, Continued:

- (e) The property does not contribute to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically or by plan or physical development;
- (f) The farm stand, including the Corn Palace, is recognized among locals, and represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood;
- (g) The dwellings, outbuildings, and the farm stand do not embody elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represents a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation;
- (h) The property is not similar to other distinctive properties, sites, areas, or objects based on a historic, cultural, or architectural motif;
- (i) The property does not reflect significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning;
- (j) The subject property is a rare example of a family farm in Sunnyvale;

The subject property appears eligible to be listed as a heritage resource on the *City of Sunnyvale's Heritage Resource Inventory* since it meets criteria a, f, and j.

Integrity

The subject property retains integrity of location as it has never been moved from its original location on Lawrence Expressway, formerly known as Lawrence Station Road, in Sunnyvale. Although the integrity of design was compromised by division and sale of the western parcel in 2013, the relationship of the structures and the rest of the farmland is still intact. The integrity of setting has drastically changed since the surrounding orchards and farmlands had been replaced by suburban development over time. As expected, some replacements and alterations to the original materials have occurred since the buildings have been continuously in use. However, the property retains sufficient integrity of materials and workmanship as evidenced by the wood and shingle cladding, as well as the wood- and metal-sash windows. Despite the changes to the setting and the loss of the western half, the property continued to operate as a family farm. In addition, the existing structures' rustic aesthetic and the surrounding farmland continue to convey the feeling of an early to mid-20th century farm. Therefore, the property retains the integrity of feeling and association. Overall, the Corn Palace property retains sufficient integrity to communicate its significance.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 7 of 9

*B12. References (Endnotes):

- ¹ Adam Burgess, *Lawrence Station Road: an interview of Ben and Joe Francia of the Corn Palace* (video), 2002.
- ² 1948 and 1956 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- ³ 1956 and 1960 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- ⁴ 1960 and 1968 Aerials, *Historical Aerials by NETRonline*, <https://www.historicaerials.com> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- ⁵ One Stop Permit Center, City of Sunnyvale. Permits were found under 1146 Dahlia Court and 150 Dahlia Court addresses.
- ⁶ 1920 and 1940 United States Federal Census, Ancestry.com (accessed May 5, 2017).
- ⁷ "Benjamin Michael Francia Obituary," Legacy.com (published in San Jose Mercury/San Mateo county Times on Nov. 19, 2013), <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/mercurynews/obituary.aspx?pid=168087475> (accessed April 27, 2017).
- ⁸ "Joseph Francia, local farmer, dies at 84," Mountain View Voice, March 30, 2007, <https://www.mvvoice.com/print/story/2007/03/30/josephfrancialocalfarmerdiesat84> (accessed April 27, 2017).
- ⁹ City of Sunnyvale, *Fact Sheet: Corn Palace – 1197 Lily Ave.*, August 2016; Santa Clara County Clerk-Recorder, Online Services, <http://scccroselselfservice.org/web/> (accessed April 27, 2017).
- ¹⁰ Google Maps Street View, November 2015, <https://www.google.com/maps/> (accessed May 9, 2017).
- ¹¹ This section is summarized from James C. Williams, ed., *Images: Sunnyvale's Heritage Resources*, 1988, pages 3-16.
- ¹² National Park Service, National Register Bulletin: How to apply the National Register criteria for evaluation, page 75 https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm (accessed April 26, 2017); California Office of Historic Preservation, California Register and National Register: A Comparison, Technical Assistance Series 6 (Sacramento, 2001), page 1.
- ¹³ City of Sunnyvale, *Fact Sheet: Corn Palace – 1197 Lily Ave.*, August 2016.
- ¹⁴ "Orchard Heritage Park," Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum, <http://heritageparkmuseum.org/sample-page/orchard-heritage-park/> (accessed May 3, 2017).
- ¹⁵ Full Circle Farm Website, <http://fullcirclesunnyvale.org> (accessed May 5, 2017).
- ¹⁶ "Fifty years ago is used as the closing date for periods of significance where activities begun historically continued to have importance and no more specific date can be defined to end the historic period. (Events and activities occurring within the past 50 years must be exceptionally important to be recognized as "historic" and to justify extending a period of significance beyond the limit of 50 years ago.)" United States Department of the Interior, *How to Complete the National Register Form, National Register Bulletin No. 16A* (Washington, D.C., 1997), 42.
- ¹⁷ Sunnyvale Municipal Code, 19.96.050. *Criteria for evaluation and nomination of heritage resources*, http://qcode.us/codes/sunnyvale/view.php?topic=19-6-19_96-19_96_050&frames=on (accessed April 27, 2017).

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Com Palace

Page 8 of 9

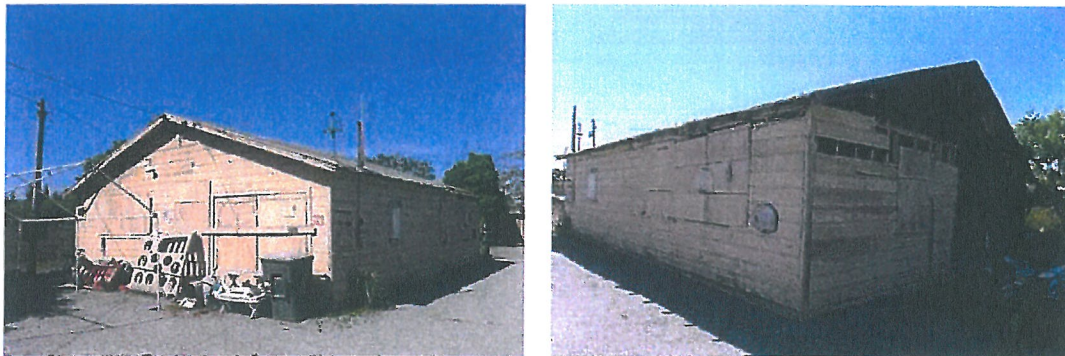
***Photographs:**



Figures 1 and 2. Dwelling at 1150 Dahlia Court.



Figure 3. Dwelling at 1142 Dahlia Court.



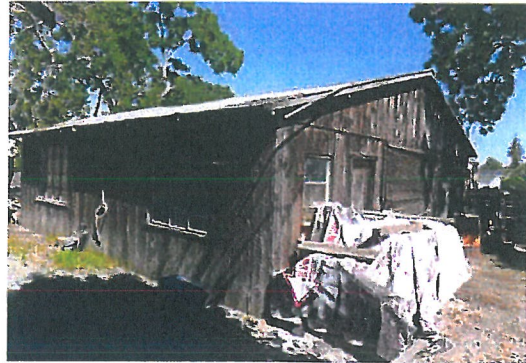
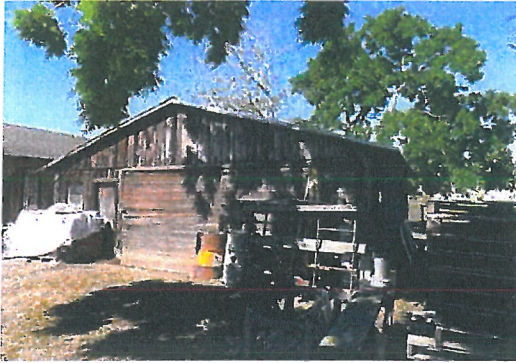
Figures 4 and 5. The outbuilding to the south of the driveway.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Corn Palace

Page 9 of 9

***Photographs, Continued:**



Figures 6 and 7. The outbuilding standing at the end of the driveway.



Figure 8. The outbuilding to the west of the 1150 Dahlia Court dwelling.



Figures 9 and 10. The Corn Palace.