

A P P E N D I X N

CULTURAL RESOURCES DATA



Knapp ARCHITECTS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Memorandum

Date 13 January 2012

Project Terraces of Lafayette, 3233
Deer Hill Road, Lafayette, CA

To Terri McCracken

From Frederic Knapp

Topic Historical Background &
Evaluation

Copied Jill Johnson

Via e-mail

Purpose of Memorandum

This memorandum was prepared at the request of The Planning Center/Design Community & Environment to provide basic historical information and evaluation of whether the subject property is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. It relates historical information provided by the client, augmented by information gathered from local and online repositories. An evaluation of eligibility to the California Register of Historical Resources is the basis of the professional opinion of whether the property is a historical resource.

This document relates to the five buildings at the subject address. Based on the facts that the buildings were moved to the site, and the operation of a gravel quarry at the site, the only reasonable chance that the property contains historical resources would be if the buildings are eligible to the California Register either individually or as a district. This memo addresses that question. It does not consider whether the larger property contains historically significant landscape features. It does not address archaeological resources. These areas of significance appear highly unlikely and in the professional opinion of the preparer, they do not need to be researched and evaluated for the purposes of CEQA.

Methodology

Frederic Knapp, AIA and Jill Johnson¹ conducted a site visit to observe and photograph the buildings. It was possible to enter four buildings: 3233 Deer Hill Road, 3235 Deer Hill Road, the Garage, and the Agricultural Structure. Most of the interior of 3237 Deer Hill Road was visible through the windows. Jill Johnson conducted

¹ Frederic Knapp meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architecture and Historic Architecture; Jill Johnson meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History, Historic Architecture, and Architecture.

research at the Contra Costa County Building Inspection Department, the Contra Assessor, the City of Lafayette, and the Lafayette Historical Society, as well as online resources.

Based on the information presented in this document, the subject buildings were evaluated for eligibility under the California Register of Historic Resources. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 provides that properties eligible to the California Register are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Properties listed in qualifying local registers are also considered historical resources under CEQA. A project that would cause a substantial adverse change to historical resources would have a significant impact. The methodology used for this document first identifies whether the subject properties are eligible to the California Register, and then assesses impacts only if they do appear eligible.

The text of this document was written by Jill Johnson and Frederic Knapp and was edited and compiled by Frederic Knapp.

Current Historical Status

The subject buildings are not listed in any City of Lafayette register. According to the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University (part of the statewide CHRIS information system), they are not listed in any state or federal register.

Description of Site and Buildings

The subject buildings are arrayed around a large, paved cul-de-sac which terminates a paved drive leading southeast from the south side of Deer Hill Road. The site (like much of the larger property) has been graded extensively. While the cul-de-sac and building sites are generally close to flat, the larger site slopes fairly steeply from down from the northwest to the southeast. The subject buildings are ringed by a number of trees; the trees were not observed in detail or assessed for this report.

The five structures on the property are referred to below as the 3233 Deer Hill Road (Lagiss House), 3237 Deer Hill Road (Log-faced Office Building), 3235 Deer Hill Road (House), Garage and Agricultural Structure. All the buildings were moved onto this site from other parcels over a period of time, beginning in 1955 and ending in 1974.

The buildings were arranged in an L-shaped configuration on a man-made plateau that was created by quarrying gravel from the adjacent hillside to the west. The Lagiss House forms the short southern leg of the grouping, facing Deer Hill Road. The other buildings are aligned against the cut in the hillside, also created by quarrying, in the order indicated below with the Log-Faced Office Building situated closest to the Lagiss House.

A curvilinear drive, winds up the hillside from Pleasant Hill Road to the site. Now closed to traffic, it was the original drive serving the site. Perhaps after the widening of 24 and the construction of BART, a new drive was created off Deer Hill Road.

3233 Deer Hill Road (Lagiss House)

Description

This one-story, wood-frame house consists of a living room, dining room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, home office, and entry hall. It measure roughly 55 x 20 ½ feet. The exterior is faced in stucco and the gently-sloped cross gable roof is covered in asphalt shingles. There is a front-gable roof on the left side of the main façade, and a brick chimney near the center of the main roof. The house is site near the largest tree on the site, an oak. The concrete front porch is tucked under the main roof and is screened with a decorative wall of open concrete masonry units.

The windows at the front of the house are of steel, while those at the rear are aluminum. The interior walls are mostly gypsum board or plaster, with knotty pine paneling in the living room and one bedroom. The home office has vertical wood wall paneling and a wood ceiling with boards parallel to each wall meeting in a staggered pattern radiating from the center to the corners. The floors are mostly wood. There is a brick fireplace in the living room.

The assessor's records indicate the house contained a hall, living room, dining room, family room, two bedrooms, a den, kitchen and office with "rustic" walls.

History

According to the county assessor's records, the house was built in 1941. The Lagiss oral history contained in *Voices of Lafayette* indicates it was purchased at county auction for \$1,000 and moved from the corner of Springhill and Pleasant Hills Roads to Lagiss'ss property in 1955. The porch—possibly the block screen or the rear porch—was added in 1959.

3237 Deer Hill Road (Log-faced Office Building)

Description

The footprint of the building is roughly 24 x 21 overall with a 6-foot wrap-around porch almost fully encircling the building. The exterior facing is of peeled, stained "slabs" of wood cut from logs, apparently softwood, which mimics the appearance of a true log building. The gently sloped gable roof has asphalt roofing. The structure appears to be conventional wood (stud) framing. The roof is 1X6-inch tongue-and-groove boards on 2X4 inch rafters spaced at 16 inches on center. The building has large, fixed "picture" windows on three sides. The window sash and frames are wood. There is a plywood skirt on the cripple wall. The interior appears to consist of a large room, a small partitioned from the large one with reed glass, a bathroom, and a closet. The main room has knotty pine on the ceiling and resilient flooring.

The original porch posts were angled, from the outer edge of the porch roof to the base of the walls. Apparently a result of the move, these posts appear to have been removed and replaced with 8-inch round, vertical posts. The louvered rooftop vent, visible in the assessor's photograph, has been removed.

History

The log-faced office building was built on a concrete slab-on-grade for Lagiss's newly-formed real estate business—Contra Costa Realty—in about 1951. It was originally located on Mt. Diablo Boulevard near the Lafayette Cemetery. A large, freestanding neon sign was added adjacent to the road in about 1952. It was moved onto individual footings, raising it a few feet above grade, in or after 1965.

3235 Deer Hill Road (House)

Description

The dimensions of the house are roughly 24 x 30 square feet overall. It consists of a kitchen, living room, dining room, and bathroom. It is wood-frame construction, with a gently sloped asphalt roof in a complex gable configuration which suggests the building was either added to or is composed of two structures which were joined after their initial completion. The windows are of wood and aluminum sash and frames.

History

According to the county assessor's records, the house was built c. 1948.² It was moved to onto piers on this site, probably in 1957. It was the third building relocated to the parcel, after the Lagiss House and garage. The crawl space was enclosed by walls at a later date.

Garage

Description

This building measures approximately 60 x 21-½ feet. It consists of four garage bays with overhead doors, with an added workshop area approximately 20X20 feet next to the House. The open-stud framing has vertical wood board-and-batten exterior facing without other sheathing, resting on the concrete floor slab. The roof is nearly flat. The interior is a single, uninterrupted space.

History

The assessor's records indicate the garage was built in 1955; however the house and garage were moved to the Lagiss property in 1955, so the garage must pre-date 1955. By 1965, the shop addition, visible in the photographs below, was built on the south side of the building.

² The assessor's records appear to indicate two dates of construction; 1930 and 1948.

Agricultural Structure

Description

This tiny structure is the most unusual of the five. Measuring approximately 10X12 feet, it was clearly designed to be readily moved. It has two diagonal steel straps on each of the long sides, terminating just above the roof with an eye in each which would allow attachment of a hook for hoisting. The building rests on large wood skids on each long side; it has no foundation. The wood-frame structure has a glazed door in the short side facing the cul-de-sac; it has no windows. The interior walls and ceiling are covered in particle board; the floor is covered in carpet. The structure shows signs of extensive water intrusion; its soundness is unknown.

History

The shed appears to have been moved on the property, south of the garage, between 1958 and 1965. Its original location is unknown. In 1965 or after, it was moved to the north side of the garage. The Agricultural Structure (also called a portable shed in the assessor's records) was alternately described as 10x12 and 10x16 feet.

Anthony Lagiss

Anthony Gus Lagiss was born in Port Chicago, California, to Gus and Patra Lagiss on February 6, 1921. He was a first generation American, born to parents who immigrated from Greece. He graduated from Mt. Diablo High School, Concord, in 1938 and soon thereafter enrolled in the Merchant Marine. Stationed in Hawaii, Lagiss's vessel ferried troops to locations in the Pacific theater and the wounded to Australia for treatment.³

After leaving the Merchant Marine in 1948, he returned to Port Chicago to reside with his mother. He worked briefly for Captain Sanford, one of two real estate brokers in the Lafayette area during the late 1940s.⁴ He was licensed as a realtor in March 1949 and opened his own firm—Contra Costa Realty—later that year. In 1951, he relocated his business to a log faced building he had built on Mt. Diablo Boulevard near the Lafayette Cemetery, now on the subject site and known as 3237 Deer Hill Road.

In 1949, Lagiss submitted a commercial zoning application for his property on the west side of Pleasant Hill Road across from Acalanes High School. Initially denied, the application was ultimately approved:

The relationship between the owner of this property and the Improvement Association was always strained. Having assembled a number of parcels in a location he considered suitable for business use, Mr. Lagiss believed strongly that this should be allowed. The Association consistently supported the principle that there should not be satellite shopping centers. Today, this property, now grown to 22 acres, remains grossly under-utilized and a potential land use problem for the city.⁵

³ *Voices of Lafayette*, 170.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B504B32C9-C432-447D-A671-DD24EFA5036B%7D&DE=%7B0D17D9E7-7C13-43A6-BF79-220DCF0BE166%7D.

Lagiss acquired over 20 acres on Deer Hill and Pleasant Hill Roads in 1948 or 1949. The property was briefly used for quarrying gravel during the early 1950s or thereabouts; this was the first of several times the property was used for quarrying gravel. In 1955, Lagiss purchased a house at county auction for \$1,000 and had the house moved from the corner of Springhill and Pleasant Hills Roads to his acreage farther south the following year. (This is the Lagiss House now on the subject site at 3233 Deer Hill Road.) He subsequently relocated from Port Chicago to the Lafayette house.⁶

Although Lagiss was a developer and investor, according to his daughter his main trade was as a real estate agent, representing buyers and sellers of property.⁷ His real estate business also consisted of selling and developing properties, largely in the Lafayette vicinity but as far afield as Alta Mont Pass and Pittsburg.⁸ Perhaps the bulk of his business consisted of home sales in Los Palos, Happy Valley and Monte Gardens on Willow Pass Road in Concord, but he brokered the Lafayette Lucky Store and Bank of American branch transactions and service station development throughout eastern Contra Costa County. The latter was his specialty.⁹ According to his daughter, a significant portion of his income stemmed from condemnation of his property for construction of highways and Bart.¹⁰

In the late 1940s-1950, Lagiss's Mt. Diablo Boulevard office lot was condemned for expansion of State Route 24 and BART. His 1950 request for rezoning of frontage on Pleasant Hill Road, across from Acalanes High School, was denied.¹¹ Lagiss's office building was moved to his Deer Hill and Pleasant Hill Road property in 1965 or thereafter.

Lagiss managed John Mejedly's campaign for District Attorney in 1958. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and possibly on its board for an unknown period of time.

In 1967, Lagiss applied for a temporary quarry permit to provide gravel from the hillside to provide a gravel base for road construction. Opposed by nearby residents who objected to the dust, truck traffic and scarification of the landscape the quarrying would cause, the quarrying did not occur because of delays in obtaining its approval. It had occurred at this location on a number of occasions in the past.¹²

During the past few decades, if not longer, Lagiss rented office space in the buildings on the property¹³ and rented a portion of the property for seasonal Christmas tree sales. The Lagiss House never served as Lagiss's place of business, according to his daughter.

⁶ Ibid, 171.

⁷ Dettmer, Anna Maria. Telephone conversation with Frederic Knapp, December 2011.

⁸ Ray Peters, January 5, 2012.

⁹ Ibid, 171-172.

¹⁰ Dettmer, ibid.

¹¹ http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B504B32C9-C432-447D-A671-DD24EFA5036B%7D&DE=%7B05718AF6-BD5A-4083-AC47-94C1022461EB%7D.

¹² http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B504B32C9-C432-447D-A671-DD24EFA5036B%7D&DE=%7B8C3E8ADA-D6F3-41B7-B01A-C2B5997BBD9A%7D.

¹³ Ray Peters, January 5, 2012.

Lagiss married Anna J. Stavrides on September 5, 1965 and later divorced. Ownership of the Deer Hill and Pleasant Hill Road property was transferred to his daughter in about 2006. Lagiss died on September 16, 2007, at the age of 86.

The California Register

Modeled on the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register is the state's primary inventory of buildings, sites, structures, and objects which are historically significant. The register is administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation, a unit of State Parks within the Resources Agency of the State of California. To be eligible to the California Register, a property must be significant under at least one of the following criteria:

- 1 Association with important events
- 2 Association with important persons
- 3 Design or construction
- 4 Information potential (usually archaeological) – excluded from this document

There are two "property types" for which the subject buildings could qualify: either individually, or as a group – known as a historic district.

A property which is significant must also retain historical integrity. Historical integrity is retention of physical characteristics from the period of time for which the property is significant which allow it to convey its association with its area of significance. Integrity is determined holistically, but is evaluated under seven aspects:

Location	Whether it is in its original location or a similar one
Setting	Whether the surrounding topography, landscape, and buildings allow an understanding of the original significance
Feeling	Whether the property conveys character and overall qualities it originally had
Association	Whether the property retains the relationships it originally had to its area of significance
Materials	Whether the property retains the important materials from its past
Design	Whether the property continues to convey its important historic design traits
Workmanship	Whether original details and techniques which define the property survive

Assessment of Eligibility

Significance

Criterion 1

None of the individual buildings, nor the group, are associated with events significant to local, state, or national history. Although their current condition results from developments which are significant (e.g. agricultural

history, development of the City of Lafayette, development of freeways and Bart, the real estate industry), none of them has an important association with any of these, nor does any of them convey an understanding of the significant event itself.

Criterion 2

The only person with which the site is association strongly is Anthony Lagiss. While Lagiss may be significant to the history of Lafayette, research for this report has not located sufficient data to support such a conclusion. But it appears Lagiss would be significant for his association with real estate if at all, and it is known that he did not conduct his real estate business on the subject site. The residence of an important person is significant only if the actions which made that person important occurred at the residence. For this reason, it is clear the subject buildings are not significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3

While the buildings are more than 50 years old, none of them exhibits unusual construction techniques or high artistic values as required for eligibility under Criterion 3. The Lagiss House is typical of California houses of the mid-20th Century, but is not a rare prototype exhibiting a pure combination of traits which characterize its era. The Log-faced Office Building has an exterior material of some interest, but this factor alone is not sufficient to qualify under Criterion 3. The Agricultural Structure is unusual – but on a sizeable ranch there are typically a variety of special-purpose buildings and structures at least this unusual. Taken alone, any one of them would be eligible under Criterion 3 only if it exhibited rare and unusual materials or design which are absent in this case. The other two buildings are relatively commonplace.

District

Under the California Register Criteria, a collection of buildings which do not qualify individually can be eligible as a group if they meet one of the Criteria collectively. In the case of these five buildings, the interrelationship that ties them is simply that Anthony Lagiss acquired them and sited them together. This does not constitute or relate to a historically significant event; it is not associated with an important person (this property and specifically these buildings did not make Lagiss important historically); and the grouping itself is a straightforward development project instead of a significant site design or planning exercise.

Integrity

While historical integrity cannot be assessed for a property unless it is significant, it is worth noting that the five individual buildings all appear to have lost important aspects of integrity in being moved.

Conclusion

The five buildings were originally constructed elsewhere in Lafayette at least 50 years ago. Each of them exhibits materials, and in some cases designs, associated with the period in which they were built. Anthony Lagiss owned the site and moved the buildings there. None of the buildings meets California Register Criteria 1, 2, or 3. For this reason, the subject buildings are not eligible to the California Register individually or as a

3233 Deer Hill Road, Lafayette, CA

group. Therefore, they are not historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. Alteration, moving, or demolition of the five subject buildings would not cause a significant impact under CEQA.

3233 Deer Hill Road, Lafayette, CA

Bibliography

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Contra Costa County. Office of Assessor. Retired Residential Building Record.

Lafayette Historical Society, Lafayette, CA. *Proposed Pleasant Hill Road Interchange with Rapid Transit in the Median Strip*. Undated Drawing.

Sullivan, Julie. *Voices of Lafayette*. Lafayette, CA: Big Hat Press, 2009.

US Social Security Death Index.

US Census, 1930.

Historic Photographs



View of the house, during or after 1965. This photograph shows the house before the crawl space was enclosed, the double, single-light doors were replaced by a single, fixed sheet of glass and an awning was installed over the north windows. The shed on the south was removed and replaced by the existing open porch. (Contra Costa County. Office of Assessor.)



View of the log-faced office building on its original Mt. Diablo Boulevard site, before c. 1965. The building appears to be built on a concrete slab-on-grade and, when moved, raised onto individual footings. Note the angled braces supporting the porch roof, the full-light door, picture windows, vent at the roof's apex and freestanding neon sign. (Contra Costa County. Office of Assessor.)



View of the site, c. 1970s. Note the drive was extended to Deer Hill Road by this date and the lack of trees surrounding the auto court. (Contra Costa County. Office of Assessor.)

Current Photographs

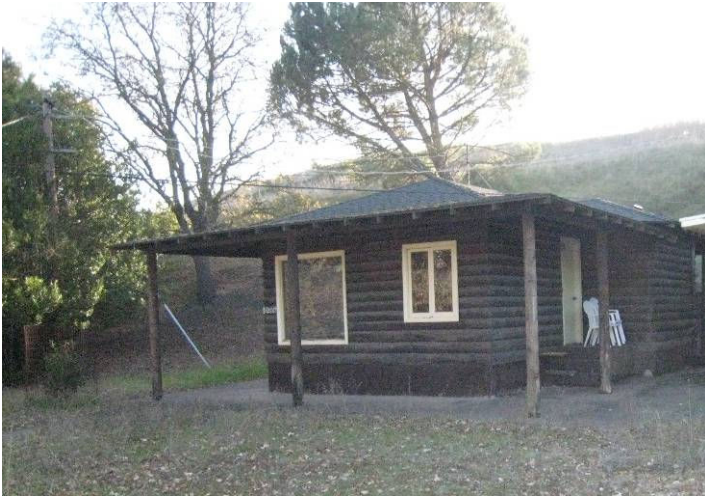


3233 Deer Hill Road (Lagiss House), front and side elevation
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011



Lagiss House, living room
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011

3233 Deer Hill Road, Lafayette, CA



3237 Deer Hill Road (Log-faced Office Building), front elevation
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011



3235 Deer Hill Road (House), front elevation
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011



Garage, front and side elevations
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011



Agricultural Structure, front and side elevations
Photograph by Jill Johnson, 2011

