



L A N D M A R K S
P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I S S I O N
M E M O R A N D U M

REFERRAL
SEPTEMBER 6, 2012

2024 Durant Avenue & 2025 Channing Way

Project Referral: Use Permit #12-10000017 to demolish an existing church building and construct a new 74-unit student housing complex

I. Application Basics

A. Parties Involved:

- Applicant Dave Johnson/Johnson Lyman Architects, 1375 Locust Street, #202, Walnut Creek, CA 94956
- Property Owner Presbytery of San Francisco, 2024 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

II. Background

On May 4, 2012, the applicant submitted Use Permit #12-10000017 to demolish an existing church building located at 2024 Durant Avenue and construct a six-story, 74-unit student housing complex on 2024 Durant Avenue and 2025 Channing Way. Pursuant to BMC §23C.08.050.C, any application for a Use Permit or AUP to demolish a non-residential building or structure which is 40 or more years old shall be forwarded to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review prior to consideration of the Use Permit or AUP. The LPC may initiate a landmark or structure-of-merit designation or may choose solely to forward to the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) its comments on the application. The ZAB shall consider the recommendations of the LPC in considering its action on the application.

III. Site/Building Description

The property at 2024 Durant Avenue is an L-shaped lot in the middle of its block. It is located on the south side of Durant Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street.

The lot is 130 feet deep, with 89 feet of frontage on Durant Avenue and 123 feet along the rear. The west edge of the property makes a right angled jog between front and rear. The property is occupied by the church, a small garden and street trees in front of the church entrance, and a parking lot in the northeast corner.

IV. Historical Resource Eligibility

A historical evaluation of the property was completed by qualified historical consultant Michael R. Corbett, Architectural Historian, dated August 1, 2012. The report provides information that the reinforced concrete California modern style St. Paul's Presbyterian Church sanctuary and administrative wing were designed by Architect Frederick Confer and constructed in 1947-1948. An educational wing designed by Architect Michel Marx was added in 1960. The building was occupied by branches of the Presbyterian Church until 1992, when the parish was closed and the building was altered to function entirely as offices for the Presbytery. The evaluation concludes that the building does not meet any of the criteria of the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) nor of Berkeley City Landmarks. Please refer to attachment 1 for the historic evaluation.

V. Recommendation

Staff concurs with the conclusion that the property does not appear to meet California Register nor City of Berkeley Landmark criteria and recommends that the LPC take no action with regard to the building pursuant to Section 23C.08.050.C.

Attachments:

1. Historic Resource Evaluation (DPR 523A Primary Record and 523B Building, Structure, and Object Record) by Michael R. Corbett, Architectural Historian

Associate Project Planner: Leslie Mendez, lmendez@ci.berkeley.ca.us (510) 981-7426

Senior Preservation Planner: Sally Zarnowitz, Architect, szarnowitz@cityofberkeley.info (510) 981-7429

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

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____ x
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 41 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church

P1. Other Identifier: Presbyterian Administrative Offices
P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted *a: County Alameda
 and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach Location Map as necessary.)
 *b. USGS 7.5' Quad Oakland West Date 1980 T ___; R ___; ___ 1/4 of ___ 1/4 of Sec ___; M.D. B.M.
 c. Address 2024 Durant Avenue City Berkeley Zip 94704
 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, etc., as appropriate)
 APN: 055-1895-018-04

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

Site

The property at 2024 Durant Avenue is an L-shaped lot in the middle of its block. It is located on the south side of Durant Avenue between Shattuck Avenue and Milvia Street. The lot is 130 feet deep, with 89 feet of frontage on Durant Avenue and 123 feet along the rear. The west edge of the property makes a right angled jog between front and rear.

When St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church was built here in 1948 the area around the property was predominantly occupied by houses, flats, and apartment buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since that time all but a few of the early residential buildings have been replaced by commercial and industrial uses spreading west of Shattuck Avenue and by large multi-unit residential buildings.

see continuation sheet

*P3b Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP16 (Religious Building)

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

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



P5b. Description of Photo:

(View, date, accession #) _____
1 August 2012, Photographer:
Michael Corbett
 *P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic 1948
 Prehistoric Both
Cornerstone

*P7. Owner and Address:

Presbytery of San Francisco
2024 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, California 94704

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

Michael R. Corbett
Architectural Historian
2161 Shattuck Ave #203
Berkeley, California 94704

*P9. Date Recorded:

1 August 2012

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)

Intensive

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

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List)

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Description (continued)

Today, the property is occupied by the church, by a small garden and street trees in front of the church entrance, and by a parking lot in the northeast corner.

Plan

Description of the plan of the building comes from site visits and from plans made for additions and alterations in 1960 (Marx) and 1992 (Sue Associates). The original plans dated 27 August 1947 (Confer) according to a letter in the Building Department (Gossen 1991), could not be found. The 1960 and 1992 plans did not show the original design, but demolition plans provided a general picture of the spaces and a basis for calculating dimensions.

The church building has three components in an irregular T-plan. The sanctuary and administrative wing were built in 1947-1948 and the educational wing was built in 1960. The sanctuary forms the stem of the "T," a telescoping rectangular structure oriented toward Durant Avenue and stretching from a line ten feet from the rear of the property almost to Durant Avenue. The cross-bar of the "T" consists of an administrative or office wing on the east side at the rear of the church, and an educational or Sunday School wing on the west side at the rear of the church.

The interior of each of these three parts has been altered with most alterations made when the use of the building was changed in 1992.

The sanctuary was originally an open rectangular space for 300 people that measured about 64 by 32 feet, with a service area, 15 by 32 feet, at the rear that housed mechanical equipment on the ground levels and a kitchen and organ pipes above it. At the front end of the church was an enclosed entry area or narthex measuring 10 by 24 feet with reception and prayer rooms at the sides. And in front of the narthex is a covered porch measuring 8 by 24 feet.

Each of these three spaces is two stories high. At the south end of the sanctuary was a raised platform for preaching and conducting services.

When the church was altered to function entirely as offices for the Presbytery in 1992, a mezzanine was built around three sides of the sanctuary with deep floor areas at the north and south ends connected by a corridor along the east side. The mezzanine was reached by a stair on the west side. At the north end, partitions created smaller rooms under the mezzanine and on the mezzanine level. A pipe organ has been removed. Also, the platform under the skylight was removed at this time.

The original administrative wing, measuring 36 by 40 feet had a reception room, offices and a library on the first floor. Initial plans for "a five-room apartment for the use of a University pastor on the second floor" (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947) were not realized. By 1992, the second floor was one large space that looked to the north over the parking lot, with three small rooms at the rear.

The educational wing on the west side of the sanctuary was conceived as part of the original building in 1947-1948 as a two-story structure with "a large dining hall, seating 300, on the second floor" (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947). As it was built in 1960, it was a one-story rectangular wing. It measured 41 by 91 feet housing a multi-purpose room, kitchen, nursery, four classrooms, choir room, and a playroom or meetings room, some rooms separated by folding partitions, along a central corridor. There is also a covered walkway along the north side.

In 1967, the west end of the educational wing was removed to make way for construction of "A 44-unit Apartment Building for the Elderly." This removed the choir room, two classrooms, the playroom or meeting room and three of the six full bays of the covered walkway.

Structure and Materials

The original parts of the building — the sanctuary and the administrative wing — are of reinforced concrete construction including roof, floors, and walls, except for the north wall of the sanctuary which is "metal studs with a brick veneer." (Gossen 1991) Between the concrete columns of the sanctuary are infill walls of brick and stained glass.

The administrative wing is distinguished in part from the sanctuary by its plain concrete walls and absence of brick or other decorative features. Its windows are steel casements.

The structure of both the sanctuary and the administrative wing is in a series of concrete bents (possibly moment frames). These are visible inside the sanctuary and inside the main space in the second floor of the administrative wing. In each case, the structural bents support a gable roof. A skylight measuring 12 by 8 feet lit the platform at the south end of the sanctuary.

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Description (continued)

The brick walls of the sanctuary are laid in stacked bond with flush joints. An engineering inspection in 1991 indicated that the brick walls were reinforced and should not be considered unreinforced masonry in relation to Seismic Retrofit requirements of the time. (Gossen 1991)

Gutters, downspouts, light fixtures, and a tall steeple over the rear of the sanctuary are copper, some of them now missing. The front doors and entry area of the sanctuary are wood. The entry porch is supported on steel pipe columns.

The educational wing is similar in stylistic appearance but different in structure and materials from the sanctuary. Its exterior walls are of reinforced concrete blocks that closely resemble the red brick of the sanctuary. Columns along the covered walkway are cement-colored concrete block. The roof is supported by glulam beams. Sliding glass doors along the walkway are in aluminum frames. In the plain concrete block wall at the rear, windows are steel casements.

When the west end of the educational was removed in 1967, a new end wall of red concrete block was built matching the existing walls.

Architecture

At the time it was proposed, newspaper articles described the church as in the "California Colonial Style . . . mingling the simple dignity of Colonial architecture with the warm richness of Spanish tradition." (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947) Apparently this idea changed as subsequent articles dropped references to the Spanish tradition: "The Colonial style of architecture with the California influence has been chosen. (*Berkeley Gazette* 12 June 1948)

In this case, the California influence is Modernism, with the appearance of the building the result of a blending of the Modernist emphasis on the clear expression of structure and materials with references to American architecture of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, commonly referred to as Colonial.

Proponents of Modernism more commonly spoke of their admiration of Gothic architecture than of the architecture of Classical antiquity or of the Renaissance and its aftermath including "Colonial" architecture. Gothic architecture was admired because, the argument went, ornament was not added to structure and a building was beautiful and truthful because it looked like what it was.

The structure of the two parts of the building that were built in 1948 is directly expressed and unadorned, albeit in different ways. The administrative wing is a box whose structure of plain reinforced concrete bents is oriented so that the north wall can be largely glass. The external stair and balcony provide access to the second level and a unifying horizontal counterpoint to the design of the sanctuary. The overhanging roof and the balcony shade the windows of the community room upstairs.

The design of the sanctuary utilizes a similar system of structural bents for different functional and symbolic purposes. Its bents are clearly visible inside and outside as are the infill walls of brick and stained glass. Nothing covers the structure or materials of the building and nothing is added for adornment. The red of the brick and the color and intricacy of the stained glass contrast strongly with the plain concrete of the administrative wing and express the greater symbolic importance of the sanctuary.

At the same time that both sections of the building and their functional relationships are clear expressions of Modernism, the sanctuary is overlain with references to Colonial architecture in both composition and detail. In composition the sanctuary is axial and symmetrical and the rhythm of the exposed columns suggests the regularity of masonry walls and columns. Among details, the porch columns, red brick walls, stained glass windows, and steeple are more-or-less literal features of many Colonial churches.

The educational wing is harmonious with the sanctuary but its structure is different. In place of reinforced concrete bents, the walls are load bearing concrete block faced with a veneer of red brick.

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HRI # _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

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*NRHP Status Code _____

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church

B1. Historic Name: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church/Durant Avenue United Presbyterian Church

B2. Common Name: Presbyterian Administrative Offices

B3. Original Use: church B4. Present Use: offices

*B5. Architectural Style: "California Colonial Style"

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Built 1948; addition of educational wing 1960; removal of portion of educational wing 1967; and remodel interior 1992.

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

*B8. Related Features:
parking lot, garden

B9a. Architect: Frederick L.R. Confer (1948); Michael Marx (1960), Sue Associates (1992) b. Builder: John Branagh

*B10. Significance: Theme _____ Area _____
Period of Significance _____ Property Type _____ Applicable Criteria _____

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

HISTORY

History of the Property

The property at 2024 Durant Avenue is located in a portion of the Barker Tract subdivided into city lots in 1880. Abner J. Lowell, a ship captain, built a house here in 1884. By 1911 this was shown as a two-story wood dwelling, with a 1½ story wood building at the rear of the lot near the southwest corner. At that time the rectangular lot was 130 feet deep and 89 feet across. Heirs of Abner Lowell sold the property to St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church on 9 November 1945. (Donogh)

Meanwhile newspaper articles refer to St. Paul's owning the property around this time: "St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church . . . has purchased as a site for a church building four lots on the south side of Durant Ave. between Shattuck Ave. and Milvia St. with a frontage of 245 feet and a depth of 131 feet at the net price of \$23,125. Plans are being made for the erection soon of the first unit of the church plant at the cost of approximately \$100,000." (*Berkeley Gazette* 4 January 1946; also *Oakland Tribune* 13 December 1945)

see continuation sheet

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) N/A

***B12. References:**

see attached

B13. Remarks:

demolition proposed for new housing

*B14. Evaluator: Michael R. Corbett, Architectural Historian

Date of Evaluation 5 August 2012

See Location Map
(Sketch map with north arrow required)

(This space reserved for official comments.)

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History (continued)

The church established a 21-member Building Committee, nine of whom were women, to manage the development of the property. The chairman was Loyde M. Billman, a long-time employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Committee members included some with occupations that appear relevant to the task: a civil engineer, a carpenter, a real estate agent, an attorney, a bookkeeper, and a credit man at a bank.

The church hired Frederick L.R. Confer, Architect, to design the building and consulted with the Board of American Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh regarding the location of the church and its design. The Board of Missions approved the location and Dr. Archibald K. Stewart, general secretary of the Board conferred with "the three official boards of St. Paul's Church." (*Berkeley Gazette* 4 January 1946)

In addition the church received "the unanimous approval of the Comity Commission of the California Church Council, representing 14 of the major Protestant denominations." (*Berkeley Gazette* 4 January 1946)

An initial proposal was approved by the city: "On December 27 [1945] a committee from Saint Paul's Church met with the City Planning Commission and following the hearing the commission unanimously approved the site for the church and on Jan. 2 the City Council unanimously approved the recommendation of the Planning Commission." (*Berkeley Gazette* 4 January 1946) This proposal was for "a building with seating capacity of 500 to 700 persons." costing \$100,000. (*Oakland Tribune* 3 January 1946)

Financing for the project was arranged "through a building fund campaign and allocations from national denominational leaders." (*Oakland Tribune* 12 January 1946)

Although the newspapers reported that work "will start shortly" (*Oakland Tribune* 3 January 1946) nothing was done, apparently because the money was not raised. Then, over a year later in May 1947, it was reported that three quarters of the revised total amount of \$150,000 was "already pledged or given" and that it was expected that all the money would be available "by dedication day." At this point the proposal had been revised for a smaller sanctuary holding 300 people. The project would consist of a sanctuary, an "administrative unit," and a two-story "educational, social unit." The sanctuary would have a "new pipe organ" donated by H.J. Haney, a Berkeley merchant and member of the church Building Committee. (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947)

At the same time it was announced that "Plans are already drawn for a large sanctuary, a separate edifice to accommodate a congregation to be built later to the east of the other buildings." (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947)

The completed architect's drawings for the project were dated 27 August 1947 (Gossen 1991). But it was a year later when the ground breaking took place for two units . . . the new sanctuary and parish building [administrative wing]." This announcement was accompanied by a presentation drawing of the building as it was built. (*Berkeley Gazette* 12 June 1948) The contractor was John E. Branagh of Piedmont. (*Oakland Tribune* 14 June 1948 and 27 June 1948)

Almost a year later when the building was completed, a photograph was published in the paper showing the sanctuary and administrative wing as they still appear today. The photograph showed the space in the angle between the sanctuary and the administrative wing covered by a lawn with a single tree, possibly an oak, at the east edge. The site of the lawn is a parking lot today, but the photograph appears to show a paved area, probably for parking to the east. (*Berkeley Gazette* 8 April 1949)

By 1950, the presence of an Auto Sales & Service building at the corner of Durant and Shattuck (Sanborn 1950), indicates that plans for a larger church at that site had been abandoned.

Eleven years after completion of the original buildings, plans were prepared for the educational wing that was proposed at earlier stages. These were prepared by a different architect, Michel A. Marx. These plans were scaled down from two stories to one story, but they were designed in the same style as the original. The completed plans were dated 13 May 1960. (Marx) An undated newspaper clipping with a photograph of the completed educational wing showed the covered walkway with seven bays. The chairman of the Building Committee was Alexander Barclay (*Berkeley Gazette* 1960)

In 1966, documents in the Building Department show planning underway for a five-story apartment building for the elderly on the west end of property owned by the church. In July 1967 the Planning Commission approved a division of the property resulting in the L-shaped lot on which the church sits today, and a similarly shaped lot next door to the west. (Gray 1967)

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History (continued)

Before construction began on the new housing, according to plans dated 8 August 1967 (Gaddis 1967), the west end of the educational wing, which sat partially on the new lot, was removed.

In 1992, the church closed and plans were developed to adapt the entire building for use as offices by the Presbytery of San Francisco (Sue Associates 1992): "The Presbytery of San Francisco holds title to the property know as Durant Avenue Presbyterian Church. It is the desire of the Presbytery and the Synod of the Pacific to use the Durant Avenue Presbyterian Church for its corporate offices." (Willette 1992)

To accomplish this change, the head of the Presbytery wrote that it would "require remodeling certain parts of the structure, and a second story addition as well." She also noted, "The facility is debt free and has no outstanding liabilities or unpaid obligations. It is also structurally sound." (Willette 1992)

According to Donald MacInnes, last pastor of the church, the city (the Fine Arts Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council) approved the change in use but stipulated that the remodeling must leave the building looking like a church, leave the stained glass, and leave the garden in front. A search for documents with the precise language of these requirements in files at the Building Department and the Presbytery did not discover anything.

History of the Parish

St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church had its origins in the career of Rev. Francis Shunk Downs (1885-1960). Downs was a nationally prominent Presbyterian minister from the east who came to First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley in 1932. In 1937 he became pastor. After he was dismissed from the Presbytery and from First Presbyterian, he founded St. Paul's in 1945.

Downs attended Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania and Lafayette College, from which he graduated in 1906. He attended law school at the University of Pennsylvania for a year and then switched to the Princeton Theological Seminary, graduating in 1910. "He did post-graduate work at Johns Hopkins University and received a Doctor of Divinity degree from Lafayette in 1926." (*New York Times* 1960)

According to his obituary in the *New York Times*, "During World War I he served as a special preacher under the international committee of the Young Men's Christian Association." From 1925 to 1932 he "was secretary of the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Board" in New York, and remained as a director until 1944. "During the summer of 1930, Dr. Downs occupied four important pulpits in England and Scotland in a goodwill interchange of ministries between Britain and the United States." He was active in the temperance movement into the 1950s, long serving on the boards of directors of the National Temperance League and its California counterparts. He also "served two terms as chaplain of the National Society, Sons of the American Revolution" and belonged to numerous historical societies. (*New York Times* 1960)

From 1924 to his death in 1960, Downs was a trustee of The Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, a black institution with a Presbyterian seminary. (Lincoln University)

Two years after he came to Berkeley in 1932, Downs published a book, *Two Sermons* (1934). In 1937 he published *The Heart of the Christian Faith*, one of four books published in addition to the winner of the "One Thousand Dollar Prize Contest" of the American Tract Society of New York. According to the *New York Times* "he was also the author of various religious, theological and missionary articles. (*New York Times* 1960)

After 13 years as pastor, early in 1945, Downs was fired for unknown reasons from First Presbyterian and also expelled from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. In the newspaper this was attributed to "a 'split' in the First Presbyterian Church" (*Oakland Tribune* 13 December 1945). When he left First Presbyterian, Downs formed a new church, St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church, advertising in the paper. (*Berkeley Gazette* 31 March 1945). St. Paul's was formed within another Presbyterian body, the United Presbyterian Church in North America. The new church had 200 members at first. They met at the College Women's Club at 2680 Bancroft Way on Sunday mornings; the Sunday school and young people met at the U.C. Bible League at 2620 Bancroft Way. By January 1946, the church had an annual budget of \$10,000, planned to give "about \$3,000 to missions and benevolences" and supported foreign missionaries in Ethiopia. (*Berkeley Gazette* 4 January 1946) Membership rose to 246 in 1947 (*Berkeley Gazette* 20 May 1947), which turned out to be about the largest membership in the church's history followed by a long decline. (MacInnes 2012)

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History (continued)

After his wife, Jane Louise Eckard Downs, died in 1954 (*Oakland Tribune* 2 April 1954), Downs retired as pastor. Robert Gordon Sprawl, President of the University of California, was the principal speaker at a ceremonial dinner at the Claremont Hotel at the time of Downs' retirement. (*Oakland Tribune* 24 April 1955 and 5 May 1955)

Despite his many accolades, Downs is remembered as a long-winded preacher and leader of prayer who was theologically rigid. His departure from First Presbyterian and establishment of St. Paul's, including grandiose plans for a 1,000-seat church, is recalled as a function of a kind of "megalomania" more than principle (Hadsell 2012, MacInnes 2012)

When the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. merged with the United Presbyterian Church in North America in 1958, another smaller Berkeley parish, Knox Presbyterian, merged with St. Paul's at the site of St. Paul's. The two groups didn't mix well. They sat on opposite sides of the aisle. When the two couldn't agree on a name for the merged group, they took the name of the street, becoming Durant Avenue Presbyterian Church. (MacInnes 2012)

Downs was succeeded by Stuart Pratt as pastor. At the time that the educational wing was completed in 1960, the pastor was Rev. John L. Silvius. He was succeeded by O'linn McGuire until 1978. As membership in the church declined, much of the facility was little used. From 1978 to 1992, the pastor was Donald MacInnes who also worked for the Presbytery.

In 1992, with a membership of fewer than twenty, the parish was closed and plans were made to adapt the entire facility for office use by the Presbytery of San Francisco and the Synod. In the years when the Presbytery has been the principle tenant, it has rotated its meetings where issues are discussed and decisions made among different member churches.

DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS

Frederick L.R. Confer, Architect

Frederick L.R. Confer (1903-1970), often listed as Frederick L. Confer was the son of Frederick W. Confer, a successful contractor who served for many years as president of the Berkeley Recreation Commission.

Frederick L. Confer studied architecture at the University of California and graduated in 1928. He began his studies under John Galen Howard and finished in the beginning of the tenure of Warren C. Perry. Confer's education would have been in the Beaux-Arts manner, with little exposure to modernism.

Confer's early work experience is unknown. He joined the AIA in 1941 and was a co-founder of the East Bay AIA in 1947. By 1937, he was practicing on his own designing houses and his work was published in a special edition of *Architectural Forum* on "Domestic Interiors," and in a 1945 book, *Tomorrow's House*. (Nelson & Wright 1945, illus. 176, 203) Confer's best-known work is the 1937 Tao House in Danville for Eugene O'Neill. In 1948, Confer gave a lecture on "Modern Houses" at Mills College. (*Oakland Tribune* 17 March 1948)

While most of Confer's early work was houses for upper middle class clients, he also designed non-residential buildings. An early example is a two-story commercial building at the southwest corner of 18th Street and Telegraph Avenue in Oakland. (*Oakland Tribune* 14 September 1945)

In 1946, Confer was a member of the Board of Architects that designed a proposal for the Oakland Civic Center (*Oakland Tribune* 26 September 1946)

According to a monograph on the architect John Hans Ostwald, from 1947 to 1954, Confer and Ostwald were in partnership where Ostwald "continued his by now extensive residential practice. During this association he designed approximately forty residential projects, many of them in Piedmont. . . Ostwald believed that the house should be fitted to the personality and style of life of its occupants as well as to the nature of its environment. Before and after taking upon himself any commitment to design a residence, he explored the environment and identified himself with his client, and his sensitivity for the human qualities of his clients and the landscape produced harmonious and fulfilling solutions." (Reay and Paret 1975, p. 14)

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History (continued)

Little more is known about this partnership or how the two architects may have worked together or influenced each other. A photograph of the 1948 Andrew House in Piedmont (caption: "Large Country estate. Formality and simplicity of details indicate possible influence of the Confer partnership.") shows brick walls similar to those of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church — large bricks in stacked bond with flush joints. Oswald also was listed as an associate on the design of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church. (Reay and Paret 1975, p. 23, 75)

Although Oswald may have been Confer's partner, it appears that Confer had informal partnership arrangements in the late 1940s and early 1950s that changed from job to job. For example, between 1946 and 1950, various projects listed in the *Architect and Engineer* show Confer in partnership with Oswald; with Ponsford & Price; and most of all with Raymond G. Willis. The earliest project with Willis was announced in September 1947, after plans were completed for St. Paul's but months before construction began. While he had numerous projects with Willis throughout this period, he also worked as Confer, Ponsford & Price in 1947 and 1950 and with Oswald again in 1950. In July 1950 Confer and Oswald began work on a three-story apartment building in Berkeley for Weston Havens.

In 1953, Confer formed a lasting partnership with Raymond G. Willis, a 1933 graduate of the University of California, and with Donald W. Anderson. Confer & Willis designed the Alameda County Hall of Justice, the Concord Community Hospital, the Blue Cross Building, and the Contra Costa County Administration Building from 1958 to 1960.

By 1967, Confer was practicing on his own as Frederick L. Confer and Associates. At the time of his death in 1970 he was completing plans for the Pleasant Hill Civic Center Cultural Complex.

Michel A. Marx, Architect

Michel Andre Marx was born in Paris 19 December 1926. He was active as a youth in the French Resistance during World War II, helping over 50 allied airmen shot down over Europe to escape to England. He was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. After the war Marx graduated from the University of Paris and began studies in architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. One of the airmen he had helped offered to put him in touch with Frank Lloyd Wright who sent him a telegram inviting him to come and study architecture. In 1947, Marx arrived in New York where he studied before moving to both of Wright's Taliesin campuses, followed by study in San Francisco. (Marx 2005, p. 5-6)

Marx lived intermittently in San Francisco and Berkeley at various addresses. In 1955 he became a licensed architect in California and a naturalized citizen. He established his own architectural office in 1960.

Not much is known about Marx' practice. The addition of the educational wing to what had become the Durant Avenue United Presbyterian Church in 1960 must have been one of his first projects.

In 1963 he was hired to design a 15-story apartment building at 1555 Lakeside Drive next to the Scottish Rite Temple in Oakland. The building was designed with 81 "split-level" units: "The split level arrangement — giving each apartment its own mezzanine — is achieved by six special corridors not in the same vertical line. A corridor serves two floors, each unit reached either by climbing or descending a short private stairway."

The building was designed "providing residents a view of Lake Merritt to the east and San Francisco to the west." (*Oakland Tribune* 16 May 1963). When it was completed in 1966, Marx stated that this was the first high rise structure in the United States with split level apartments. (*Oakland Tribune* 25 December 1966)

Also in 1966, Marx designed the Everett A. Gladman Memorial Hospital in Oakland, the first specialized psychiatric hospital in the East Bay. According to the *Oakland Tribune* it was designed "in the traditional Wright manner." (Palm 1966)

In 1972, Marx designed the interior of the French Bank of California at 130 Montgomery Street, San Francisco. The principal architectural guidebook of the time called it "A small tour de force interior in the best French white-and-chrome manner." (Gebhard 1985, p. 68)

In 1983, Marx "restored the neglected interior and reinstalled Wright's furnishings" at the famous V.C. Morris store on Maiden Lane, San Francisco. (Woodbridge 2005, p. 6)

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After Marx's house in the Oakland Hills was destroyed in the 1991 firestorm, he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. (Marx 2005, p. 6)

Sue Associates Architecture Planning

Sue Associates, architect of the 1992 adaptation of the church to offices, was established in 1963 by Ed Sue. Sue studied architecture at the University of California at Berkeley and is also an ordained minister in the Presbytery of San Francisco. The firm works primarily in California and throughout Asia where it has designed many large projects in the categories of religious, commercial, residential, and civic architecture. (www.sueassociates.com)

John E. Branagh & Son, Contractors

Both the original 1948 sections of the church and the 1960 addition were built by John E. Branagh and Son, general contractors. According to the company website, "Branagh came to the bay area from Ireland in 1909. He worked throughout northern California for other builders before starting his own company in 1920. After World War II, John's son Charlie joined the company. The company continues today under Charlie's son Tom.

Branagh has built buildings of every sort — banks, office buildings, shopping centers, schools, apartments, churches, and houses. The company still lists St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on its website among projects completed.

Architecture

St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church was designed and built in the context of church architecture in Berkeley and the Bay Area, in the context of post World War II Presbyterian Church architecture, and in the tradition of Presbyterian Church architecture.

Early Presbyterian churches in the United States were simple rectangular spaces oriented toward a central pulpit at one end. The prominence of the pulpit emphasized the importance of the words of the preacher and the words read from the Bible. These churches were white inside, lit by clear glass, and unadorned. Such churches were built in New England in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

In contrast, other denominations built churches with very different characteristics. Quakers built meeting houses that were more square in shape to bring the congregation closer together. And Catholic and Episcopal churches emphasized the hierarchical orientation of the congregation to the priest and the altar in linear spaces; whereas Quakers, Presbyterians, and other protestants rejected ornament, these "liturgical" churches incorporated artwork, stained glass, and images of saints.

Presbyterian churches in the Bay Area include linear churches like Old First in San Francisco (1911) and St. Paul's (1948) in Berkeley as well as more centralized churches like Calvary Presbyterian (1904) in San Francisco and St. John's (1964) on College Avenue in Berkeley (designed by Confer's former partner Ostwald). But the majority follow a hybrid pattern with rectangular linear spaces oriented not to an altar but to a raised lectern for speaking. At the same time, many Presbyterian churches in the 20th century incorporate stained glass.

St. Paul's in Berkeley followed this type. Its clear expression of structure and materials is in the spirit of clarity of early Presbyterian Churches. Its skylight over a raised platform for speaking and reading was likewise of this type.

Berkeley is famous for its innovative church designs, especially First Unitarian Church (1898) by Albert Schweinfurth, First Church of Christ, Scientist (1910) by Bernard Maybeck, and St. John's Presbyterian Church (1908-10) by Julia Morgan. All are examples of the effort by these architects and others to design in response to the particular environment, and are landmarks of the Bay Area Tradition.

At the same time, Berkeley has numerous fine churches of more conventional design including Knox Presbyterian (1908), Park Congregational (1912), St. Joseph the Worker (1907), Trinity Methodist (1928), and St. Marks Episcopal (1901). Because Berkeley is an older city, fully built up before World War II, it has relatively few newer churches. Notable exceptions include St. John's Presbyterian (1964) and Newman Hall (1967).

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After World War II, the Bay Area expanded rapidly to suburban areas, enabled in part by the new infrastructure of the automobile. Houses, shopping centers, and churches were three basic components of this movement. As part of this, the Presbytery of San Francisco built 30 new churches in the years after World War II. (Nielsen 2012) Most of these were in suburbs. Only a few, like St. Paul's in Berkeley, were in the older parts of the Bay Area. Thus, the context for understanding St. Paul's is largely in the suburbs.

Some of these new churches were built by architects as part of a general practice. Frederick Confer, for example is not known to have designed any other churches. Others were designed by architects who made a specialty of church architecture.

The work of Vincent Raney (1905-2001) a contemporary of Confer illustrated 13 churches in his firm's promotional publication for the years immediately after the war. Raney's work illustrates the full spectrum of tensions at the time between Modernism and traditional approaches to imagery. Some of his churches were strictly modern, some were traditional in appearance. Most balanced the two approaches.

EVALUATION

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)

Criterion 1. History. The property is not significant under Criterion 1. The congregation and its first leader, Francis S. Downs, have a history that is intertwined with that of First Presbyterian Church in the beginning. The relationship of the two churches and the subsequent independent existence of St. Paul's are a minor sideshow in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. Membership in St. Paul's was at its highest about the time the church building was completed in 1948, and after that declined slowly until it closed. Grandiose plans for its expansion were never realized.

Criterion 2. Persons. The property is not significant under Criterion 2. Francis S. Downs was well-known nationally in the Presbyterian Church. However, his association with St. Paul's was not successful beyond the construction of the building. Following the guidelines in *National Register Bulletin 15*, other properties associated with Downs' accomplishments earlier in his life, such as his leadership of the Presbyterian Foreign Missions Board in New York, may be significant under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3. Architecture. St. Paul's is not significant under Criterion 3. It is a typical example of its type in the Bay Area for the period after World War II. There are many other examples of the type. Although there are few examples of the period in Berkeley, the type is not significant here in the context of many outstanding examples of church architecture.

The building is an example of the work of Confer and Ostwald, architects well-known in that period for their design of houses. The building is the only known church by Confer, but his work is not significant for its churches.

Ostwald later designed the well-regarded St. John's Presbyterian Church of 1964 on College Avenue. St. Paul's does not have an important place in the work of the partnership or of either architect.

Berkeley City Landmarks Criteria

1. Architectural Merit:

a. Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region.

The property is one of many postwar churches in the Bay Area. In Berkeley there are many churches of outstanding architectural design. This is a typical example of its type.

b. Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or examples of the more notable works or the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder;

The church is among many of its type and period and is not a prototype. It is an example of a type that is not significant in the work of its principle architect, Confer.

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c. Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.

This building is in a block with a mix of other building types, styles, and scales.

2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic development of the City;

The congregation and its first leader, Francis S. Downs, have a history that is intertwined with that of First Presbyterian Church in the beginning. The relationship of the two churches and the subsequent independent existence of St. Paul's are a minor sideshow in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. Membership in St. Paul's was at its highest about the time the church building was completed in 1948, and after that declined slowly until it closed. Grandiose plans for its expansion were never realized.

3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force.

Not applicable.

4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military.

The congregation and its first leader, Francis S. Downs, have a history that is intertwined with that of First Presbyterian Church in the beginning. The relationship of the two churches and the subsequent independent existence of St. Paul's are a minor sideshow in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. Membership in St. Paul's was at its highest about the time the church building was completed in 1948, and after that declined slowly until it closed. Grandiose plans for its expansion were never realized.

5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section .470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.

Not applicable.

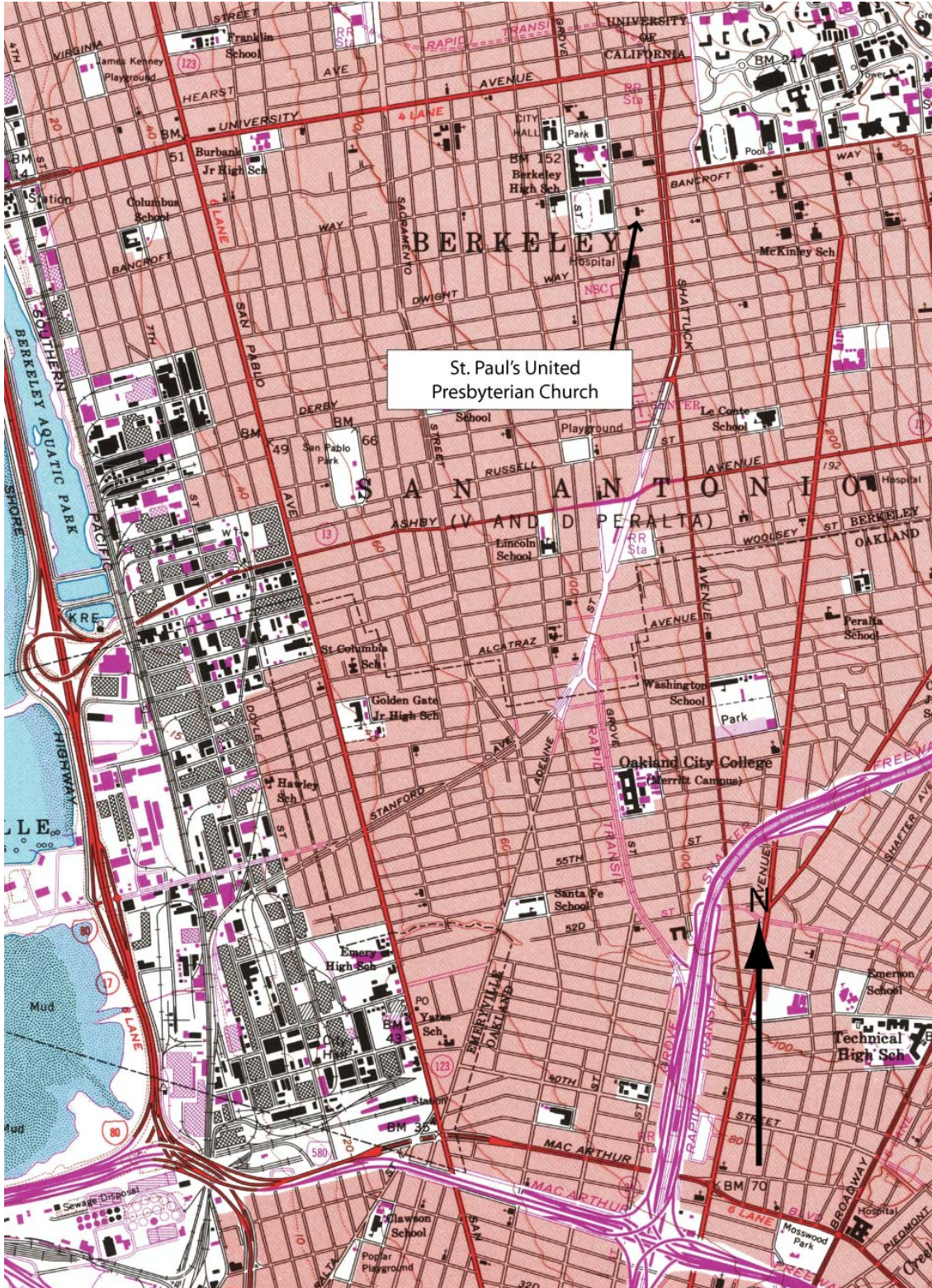
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The building at 2024 Durant Avenue, Berkeley does not meet the criteria of the CRHR nor of Berkeley City Landmarks.

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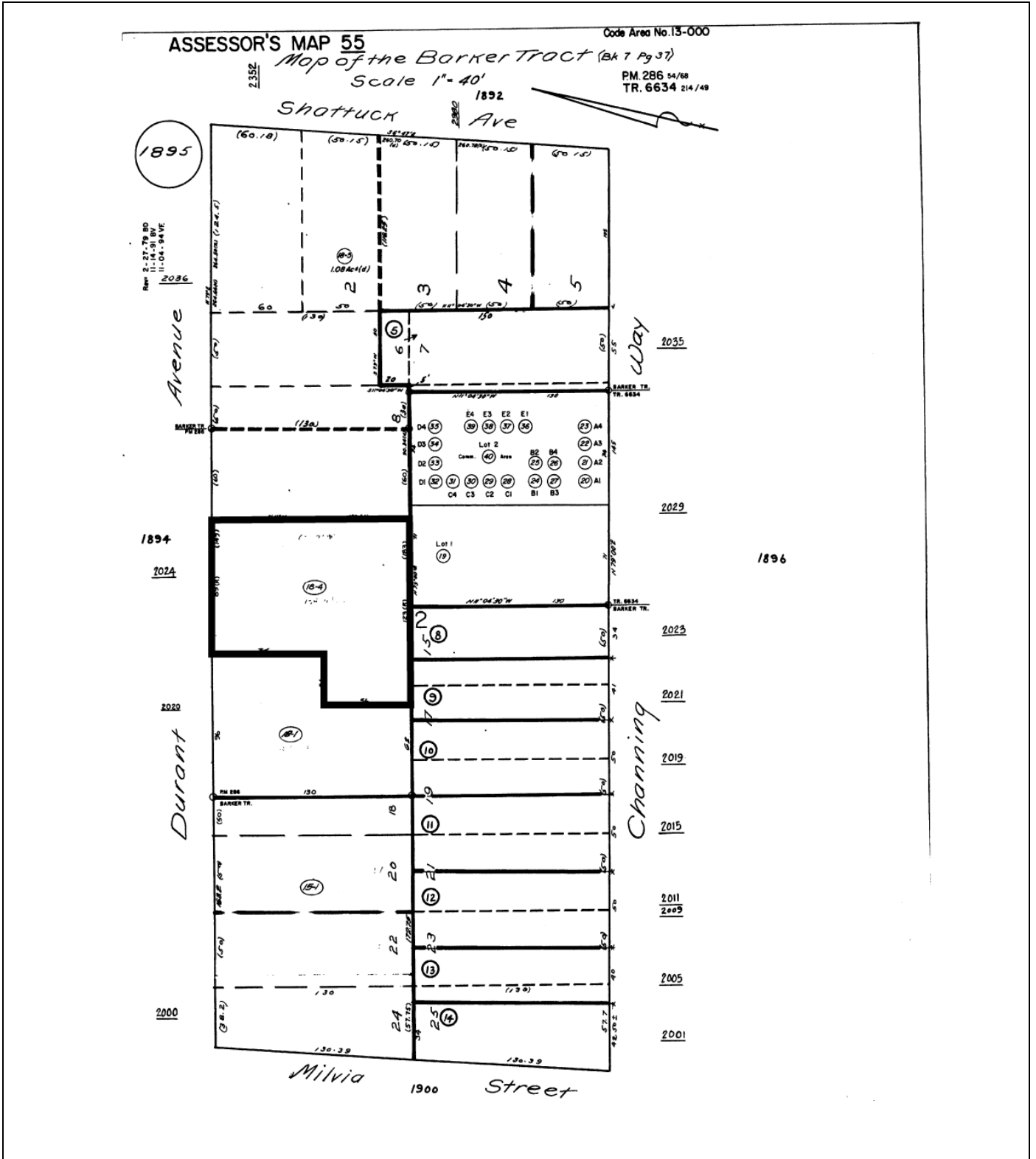
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1) View from Durant Avenue. Trees block building. View south.



2) View from sidewalk through trees. View south.

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3) Front garden. View south.



4) 1948 building: Administration wing (left); Sanctuary (right). View south.

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5) Sanctuary perspective. View south.

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6) Sanctuary entrance porch. View south.

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7) Sanctuary east side. View west.

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8) Sanctuary west side. View south.

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9) Sanctuary east wall detail. View west.

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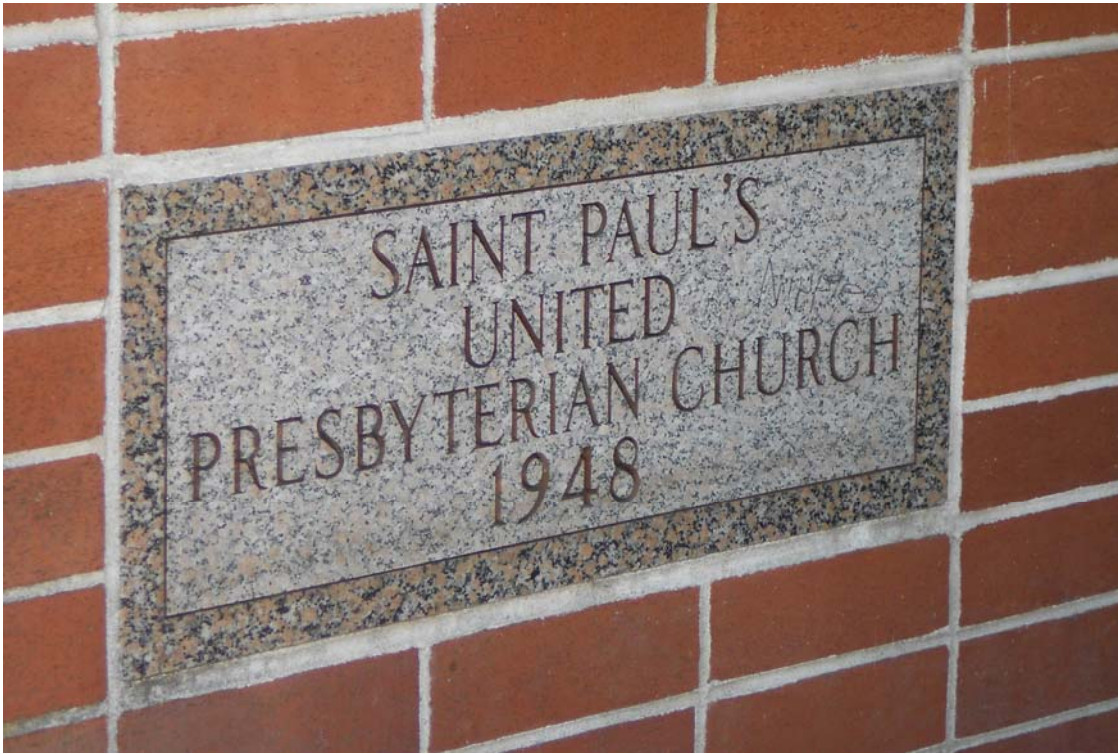
10) Sanctuary porch end narthex. View west.

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11) Sanctuary cornerstone. View south.

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12) Sanctuary entry with wood door area and hanging lamp. View west.

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13) Sanctuary copper steeple. View southwest.

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14) Sanctuary exterior copper fixture. View east.



15) Sanctuary interior. View south.

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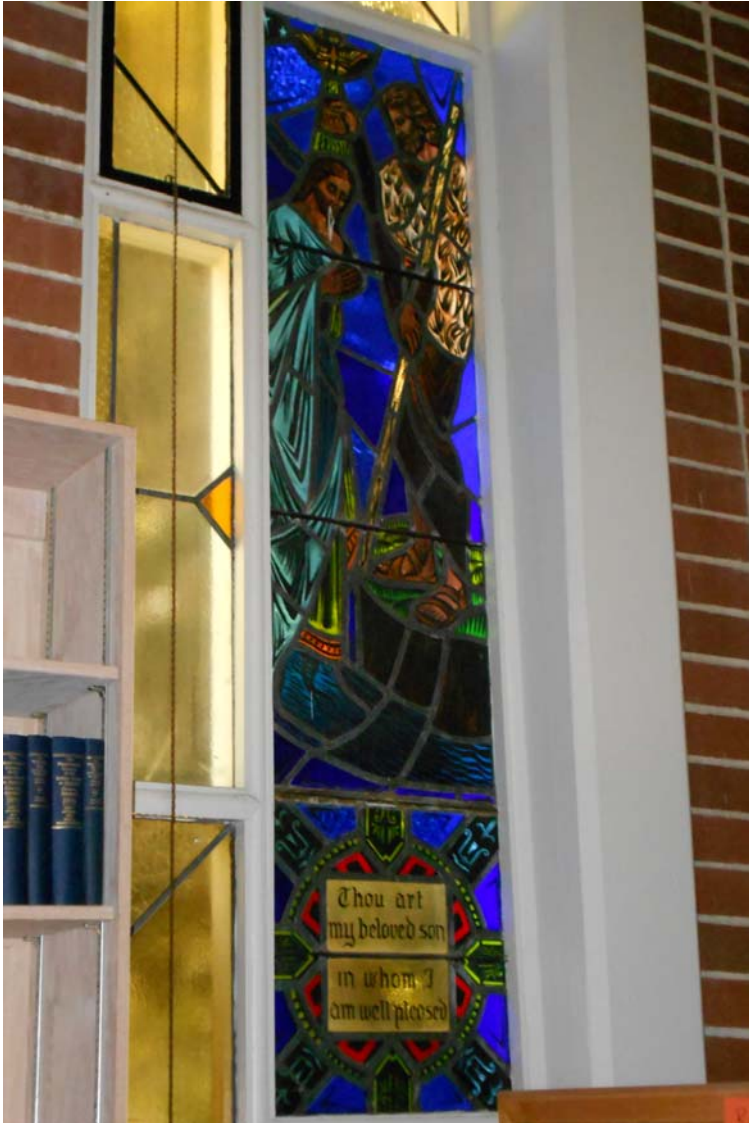
16) Sanctuary interior. View west.

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17) Sanctuary interior stained glass. View west.

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18) Administration wing. View south.



19) Administration wing. View south.

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20) Administration wing rear wall. View west.

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21) Administration wing side wall. View north.

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22) Administration wing second floor front. View west.

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23) Administration wing. Second floor front. View east.



24) Administration wing. Second floor interior. View east.



25) Educational wing perspective. View southeast.

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26) Educational wing rear wall. View west.

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27) Educational wing north wall. View south.

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28) Educational wing covered walkway. View east.

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29) Educational wing covered walkway. View west.



30) Educational wing west wall. View southeast.

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