

TREANORHL

550 E. BROKAW ROAD, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA
HISTORIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

DRAFT

AUGUST 4, 2021



Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
3.	METHODOLOGY	3
4.	PROPERTY DESCRIPTION.....	3
5.	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	6
6.	SITE HISTORY.....	6
7.	HISTORIC CONTEXT.....	10
8.	ARCHITECT/BUILDER	15
9.	OCCUPANCY HISTORY	16
10.	REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.....	16
	National Register of Historic Places Criteria.....	16
	California Register of Historical Resources Criteria	17
	City of San Jose Criteria	18
	California Environmental Quality Act	19
11.	SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION	20
	Current Historic Status.....	20
	NRHP/CRHR Evaluation.....	20
	Integrity	22
	San Jose City Landmark Evaluation.....	22
12.	CONCLUSION	24
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	25
	APPENDIX	27



1. INTRODUCTION

David J. Powers & Associates, Inc. has requested TreanorHL to assess the potential historic significance of the property at 550 E. Brokaw Road (APN 237-08-079) in San Jose. The subject property has not been listed on the federal, state, or local inventories. The following report provides an evaluation of the 550 E. Brokaw Road property's potential eligibility to be individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and as a local landmark.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Upon completion of the survey and archival work, the property at 550 E. Brokaw Road does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR, or as a San Jose City Landmark as it was not found to possess sufficient historical significance. Therefore, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property does not appear to be a historic resource as defined by CEQA.

3. METHODOLOGY

TreanorHL conducted a site visit on June 30, 2021 to evaluate the existing conditions, historic features, and architectural significance of the subject property. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic shelter in place order, TreanorHL could not conduct in-person research at local libraries or archives. In order to evaluate the historic significance of the properties, online research was completed including consultation of San Jose City Directories, historical aerials and photographs, newspaper articles, Santa Clara County Assessor's Office data, City of San Jose Public Information Search, and various online repositories. Staff also reviewed relevant documents provided by David J. Powers & Associates.

4. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The subject parcel is at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue, to the north of downtown San Jose. Located on the south side of E. Brokaw Road, the irregularly shaped parcel features a large commercial building to the north surrounded by parking lots. Nimitz Freeway is to the east. The surrounding area consists of a mix of low-rise commercial and industrial buildings.

The two-story commercial building at 550 E. Brokaw Road is roughly rectangular in plan with a flat roof. The northern half of the structure houses the two-story office space while the southern half is a tall one-story retail space. Asphalt parking lots surround the building, the largest being at the rear, south. The north elevation faces E. Brokaw Road. The south elevation, facing the parking lot, is mostly blank, with simple vertical pilasters at regular intervals. Centered on the façade is a projecting, monumental **Mayan** pyramid that forms the entry to the retail space. Two aluminum-sash glazed double doors provide access to the interior. Three pairs of double metal doors with ramps are also on this façade.

The east and west elevations feature one story projections. On both elevations, these projections run across approximately two-thirds of the elevation, from south to north. They feature multiple roll-up garage doors, apparently used for loading. On the east side, the first few bays were dedicated to automobile electronics installation.



The north elevation and approximately one-third each of the east and west elevations are highly fenestrated and feature a centered projection. Each of the two levels feature dark-tinted strip windows, separated by a wide, solid horizontal band. The roof projects out over the windows to form a wide, deep cap. Battered vertical column-brackets, shaped like upside-down "L"s, rise from the ground at regular intervals to support this projecting cap. These verticals organize the facade into bays. The main entry to this side of the building is centered in the projection and consists of glazed metal double doors.

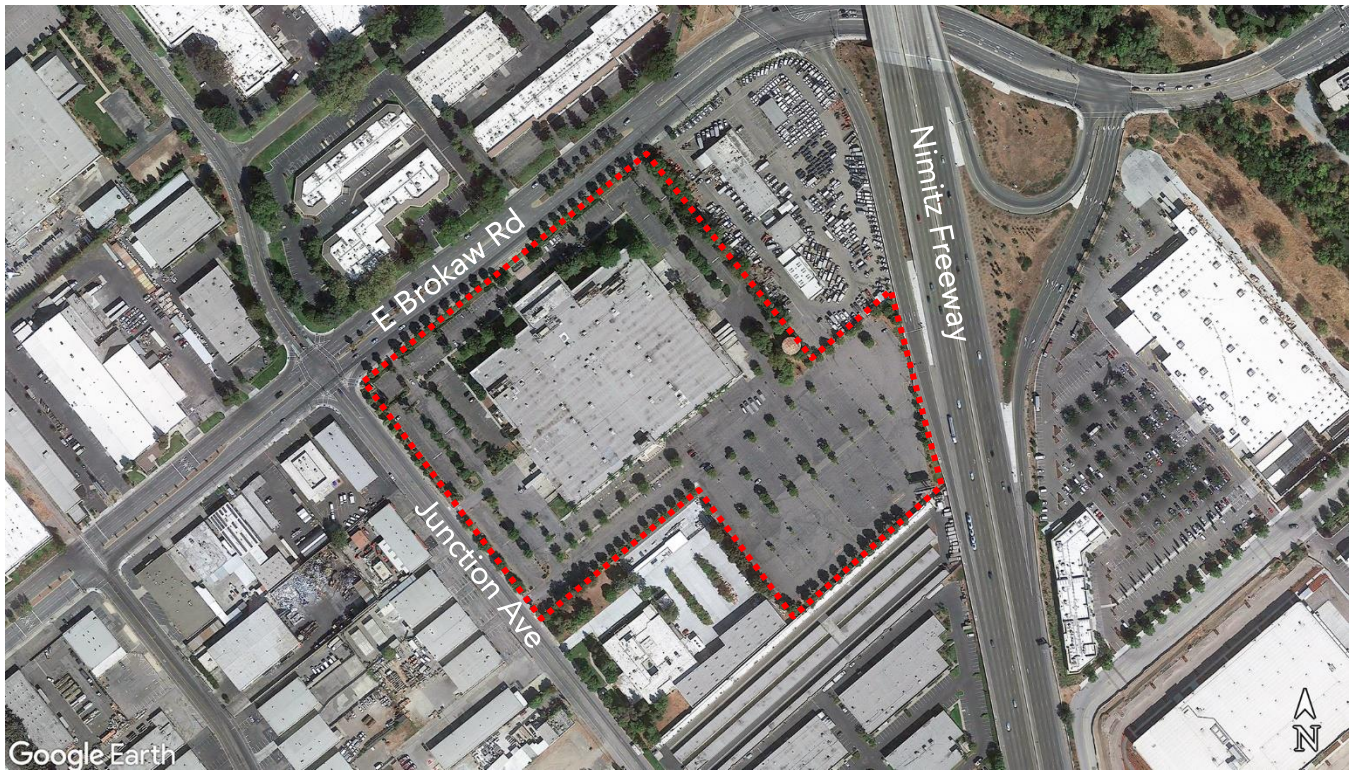


Figure 1. The subject parcel, outlined in dashed red, on the block bounded by E. San Carlos, S. 1st, E. San Salvador, and S. 2nd streets, (Google Earth, imagery date June 2019).



Figure 2. The north façade.



Figure 3. The partial west façade.



Figure 4. The south façade.



Figure 5. The projecting monumental Mayan pyramid on the south façade.

5. ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

Constructed in 1966 and remodeled twice in 1983 and 1995, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property is utilitarian and contemporary in character.

6. SITE HISTORY

According to the aerial photographs, the subject parcels and the surrounding area was agricultural in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The subject parcel was annexed by the City of San Jose in 1955.¹ The first warehouse-like structures on E. Brokaw Road to the west of the subject parcel appeared on the 1960 aerial photograph. Although more buildings at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue had developed by 1968, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area remained primarily agricultural. According to the City of San Jose records, most of the buildings at the intersection were constructed between 1957 and 1981. The surrounding area was largely built out by the early 1980s and its industrial character was well established.

A permit application to construct a one-story warehouse and an office building at 550 E. Brokaw Road for Levi Strauss Co. was filed at the City of San Jose in 1966. It was designed Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners and built by Associated Construction and Engineering Company.² Located to the northwest of the warehouse, the attached office building was roughly T-shaped in plan and had a small footprint.³ The address first appears on the 1969 San Jose city directory as the "Levi Strauss Co. distribution center."⁴ Levi Strauss & Co. was founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, and turned into a clothing business after they created "blue jeans" in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and popularity of jeans and other products lead them to form an International Division, setting up offices and factories throughout Europe and Asia.⁵

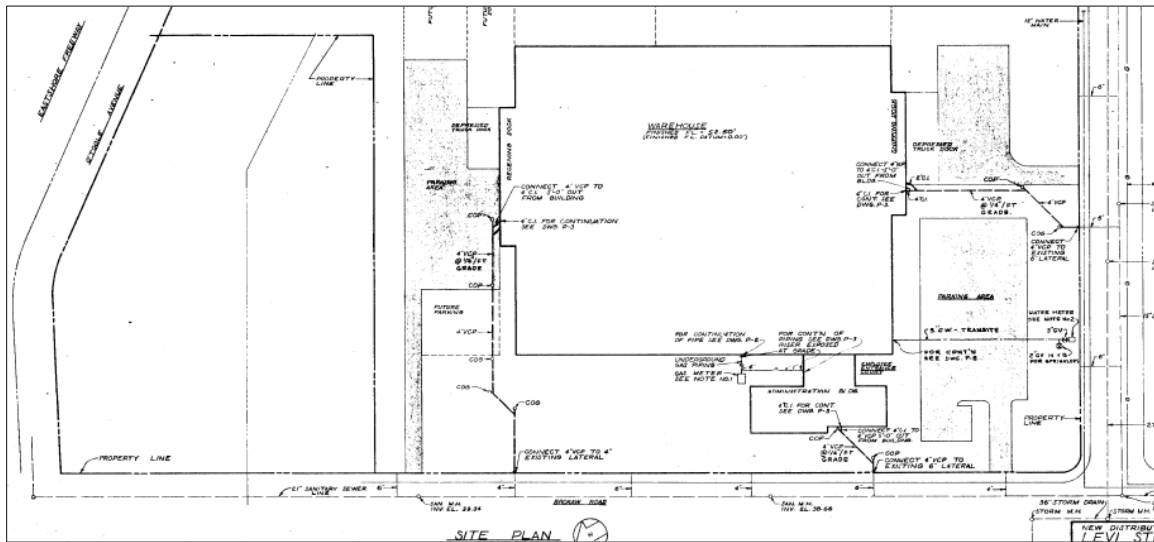


Figure 6. The site plan of the proposed development at 550 E. Brokaw Road, drawings from 1966 (Associated Construction and Engineering Company, *New Distribution Warehouse & Offices for Levi Strauss & Co.*, September 30, 1966).

¹ City of San Jose Public Information Search.

² Building permits via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

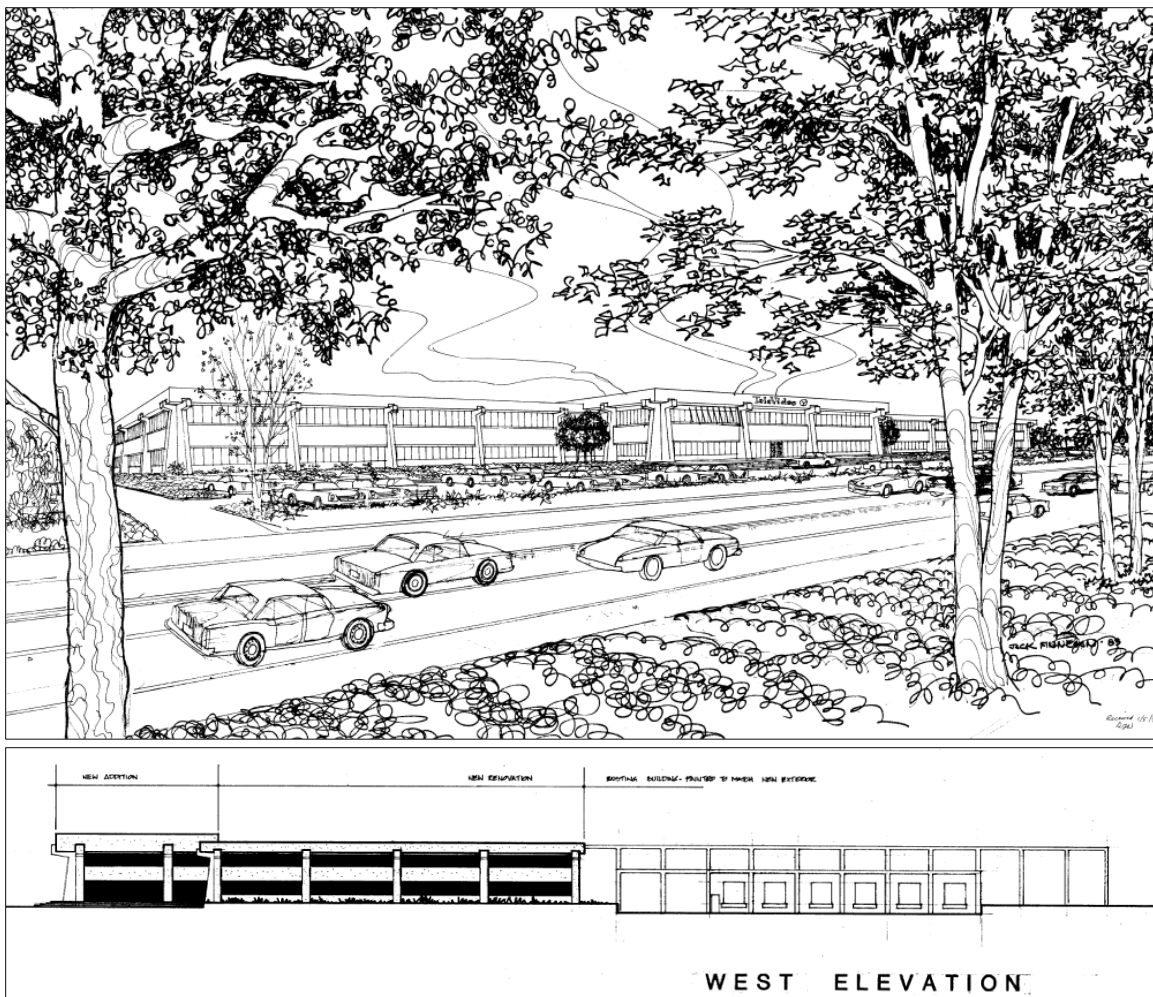
³ Associated Construction and Engineering Company, *New Distribution Warehouse & Offices for Levi Strauss & Co.*, September 30, 1966 via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

⁴ San Jose City Directories.

⁵ "Levi's history," Levi Strauss & Co. website, <https://www.levistrauss.com/levi-history/> (accessed June 28, 2021).

In 1977, Levi Strauss & Co. announced that they were planning to replace the San Jose distribution center with a new facility in Nevada. At the time, the center was employing about 225 people.⁶ According to the city directories, the company stayed at the property until 1979. Tandem Computers, Inc. of Cupertino leased the subject property in 1981 as part of its expansion program; they were listed at this address in the 1982-1983 city directories.⁷

A computer hardware firm, TeleVideo Systems, Inc. purchased the subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road in September 1983. The company had plans developed to improve and renovate the existing building.⁸ A larger, two story office building was constructed to the north of the existing warehouse and the northern half of the warehouse was renovated by Frederiksen Engineering to match the new building.⁹ TeleVideo Systems occupied the building from 1985 to 1995.¹⁰



Figures 7 and 8. The proposed office building and renovation at 550 E. Brokaw Road; the perspective view, top, and the proposed west elevation, bottom (Frederiksen Engineering, *TeleVideo Systems, Inc., 550 East Brokaw*, August 30, 1983).

⁶ "Jeans factory at San Jose due to close," *Times-Advocate*, May 11, 1977.

⁷ *San Francisco Examiner*, August 23, 1981; City of San Jose Public Information Search; San Jose Public Library California Room.

⁸ October 1983 correspondence via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

⁹ Frederiksen Engineering, *TeleVideo Systems, Inc., 550 East Brokaw*, August 30, 1983 via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

¹⁰ Newspapers.com; City of San Jose Public Information Search; San Jose Public Library California Room.

In 1995, Fry's Electronics asked for a \$5 million, no-interest loan from the City of San Jose to open its new store at 550 E. Brokaw Road; the company was also planning to move its headquarters to San Jose.¹¹ After a remodel and construction of the Mayan-themed entrance tower, Fry's Electronics opened the retail store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and the company headquarters moved to the two-story office building in 1998.¹² This store paid "tribute to the first astronomers, the Mayans, with settings from Chichen Itza, complete with a massive temple at the entrance, palm trees between shelves and hidden speakers that play the sounds of birds chirping through the parking lot."¹³ Fry's Electronics announced its bankruptcy and closed all retail stores in 2021, including the one at the subject property.¹⁴



Figure 9. A photograph of the Mayan-themed entrance tower at the subject building from 1997 (*The Mercury News*).

¹¹ "Electronics firm asks San Jose for a loan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 19, 1995.

¹² City of San Jose Public Information Search; *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Mercury News*.

¹³ Jasmine Garnett, "The kitschy history of the Bay Area's themed Fry's Electronics," SFGate, January 4, 2021, <https://www.sfgate.com/essays/article/Remembering-the-Disney-World-of-electronic-stores-15837042.php> (accessed June 24, 2021).

¹⁴ Doug Duran, "Fry's Electronics closes, along with their distinctive themed stores," *The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021.

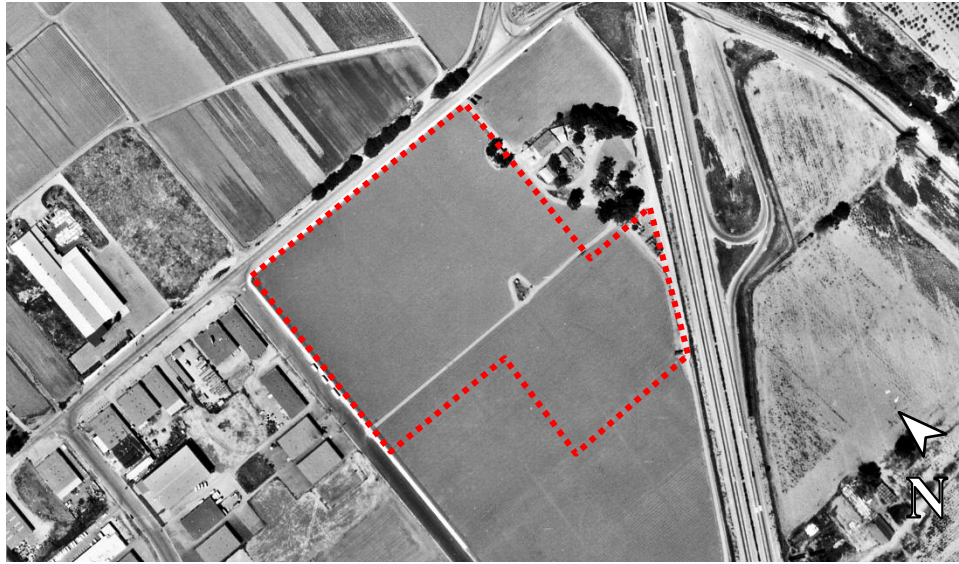


Figure 10. The 1965 aerial photograph, the subject parcel is outlined in dashed red (UCSB Library Geospatial Collection).

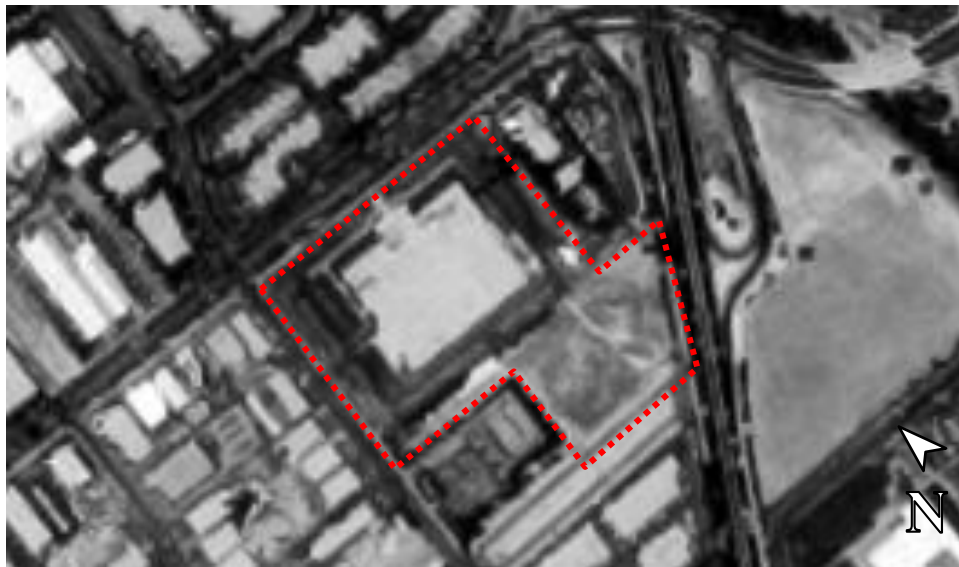


Figure 11. The 1987 aerial photograph, the subject parcel is outlined in dashed red (UCSB Library Geospatial Collection).

Construction Chronology

According to the building permits on file at the City of San Jose, a permit application was filed in 1966 to construct a one-story warehouse and an attached office building to be used as a distribution center for Levi Strauss Co. The structure was designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners and built by Associated Construction and Engineering Company.¹⁵ The building first appears in the 1969 city directory.¹⁶ The one-story office building was removed in 1983 and the two-story office building to the north was constructed. The northern half of the existing warehouse was also renovated to match the new building. Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors, both based in San Jose, worked on the project. In 1995, the building was renovated again for its new owner, Fry's Electronics. A Mayan-themed entrance tower was constructed at the south façade. The building received multiple interior alterations, tenant

¹⁵ Building permits via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

¹⁶ San Jose City Directories.

improvements, as well as mechanical, electrical and plumbing upgrades over time.¹⁷ Below is the construction chronology of exterior work with a list of building permits on file with the City of San Jose and a summary of what the permit work entailed.¹⁸

1966	Permit application to build a one-story warehouse and an office building for Levi Strauss Co. by Associated Construction and Engineering Company and Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners. Permit No. 51381, 51556, 51817
1972	Construct a water tank. Permit No. 73639-V.
1983	Permit application to remove the existing one-story office building and construct a 60' by 124' office building.
1984	Build 2x1 story additions to be occupied as electronic manufacturing, office, warehouse; alter interior of the one-story plus mezzanine building. Permit No. 44103, 42487.
1984	Build two-story addition (shell) to existing building, owner TeleVideo Systems. Permit No. 42807.
1984	Finish two-story building addition, electronics manufacturing, office, warehouse; owner Televideo Systems. Permit No. 27408.
1995	Permit application to remodel the existing building including the new entrance tower. Permit No. B9517518.

7. HISTORIC CONTEXT

The City of San Jose developed around the pueblo of San Jose which was, in the 1790s, between First Street and the *acequia*, a waterway connecting to the Guadalupe River. Many of the structures associated with the pueblo would be located around what today are Market, San Pedro and Santa Clara streets, with pueblo lands extending to St. James Street to the north and to William Street to the south.

*The Early American Period (1846 – 1869)*¹⁹

By the 1850s the commercial district of the growing community centered at the intersection of Market and Santa Clara streets. Surrounding this hub of commerce were agricultural lands to the north and east with residential development extending out from the commercial district.²⁰

San Jose began to draw more residents from the East Coast as well as immigrants from Europe and China in the 1860s. Completed in 1864, the railroad between San Francisco and San Jose accelerated commercial development of the area. The city became part of the national economy by opening new markets for the agricultural and manufacturing production of the surrounding valley. The public and private investment in infrastructure (natural gas service, piped water, and sewers) resulted in a construction boom in the central core—a large number of residential buildings were constructed in the 1860s and 1870s.

The single-family homes built in this era derived from popular Victorian era styles. These were wood frame structures, vertical in massing and typically had steep gable roofs, dormers and wide ornamental porches. By the

¹⁷ Building permits via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

¹⁸ City of San Jose Permit Center.

¹⁹ Unless noted, largely summarized from Winter & Company, *Your Old House: Guide for Preserving San Jose Homes* (August 2003), 13-16.

²⁰ Glory Anne Laffey (Archives & Architecture), *Historical Overview and Context for the City of San Jose* (March 30, 1992), 12-13.

late 1860s, the Italianate style balloon-framed residences became popular, but they were gradually replaced by the modern platform framing methods and the Queen Anne architectural style in the mid-1880s.

Horticultural era (1870 – 1918)²¹

The horticultural potential of the Santa Clara Valley was recognized by the mission fathers who established small orchards and vineyards. By the 1860s, orchards were being set out in East San Jose, Milpitas, and the north valley. In the 1870s increasing residential and business growth led to the shifting of the orchard lands to new communities such as the Willows, Berryessa, Los Gatos, and Saratoga. The 1880s saw orchards expanding into the Campbell, Evergreen, and Edenvale areas. Orchard products, the most popular of which was prunes, dominated agricultural production by the end of the century and fruit production peaked in the 1920s. The canning industry also started in the 1870s in residential San Jose, and the fruit canning and packing industry quickly grew to become the urban counterpart of the valley's orchards.

Commercial growth boomed in the 1880s and steadily grew toward the end of the century. The business district of San Jose moved southward along First Street. A new city hall, the port office, and many large commercial buildings and business blocks were constructed.

Changes in transportation during this period also influenced the development patterns: the first electric streetcar line was built between San Jose and Santa Clara in 1887-1888; trolley lines within the city served multiple neighborhoods; the Interurban Railroad had lines to Saratoga, Campbell, and Los Gatos by 1905; and the Peninsular Railway had lines from San Jose to Palo Alto and Cupertino by 1915.

The first automobiles appeared in the valley in the late 1890s. Several pioneer automobile factories were established in San Jose after 1900. The first experiments in aviation and communications also took place during this period.

Commercial development was also rapid during this period: much of the older housing stock in the downtown was relocated to the edges to make way for commercial and industrial development. The gaps in the urban fabric were filled to meet emerging housing needs.²²

Inter-War Period (1918 – 1945)

After World War I, San Jose entered a period of great prosperity. Three projects were initiated in 1929 that spurred growth: the development of the water conservation program, the connection of the Bayshore Freeway between San Jose and San Francisco, and the establishment of Moffett Field as a Navy dirigible base. During the post-war period, population growth continued to expand urban boundaries, and orchards were replaced with residential developments.²³ During the 1930s, single-family residential subdivisions were designed in a variety of Period Revival styles—most prominent being Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival and Colonial Revival styles.²⁴

By the 1930s the automobile was growing in prominence and the railway ceased to operate. With the growing reliance on the automobile and the development of the suburbs, downtown businesses began to move out of the city center to the suburbs.²⁵

²¹ Unless noted, largely summarized from Laffey, *Historical Overview and Context for the City of San Jose* (March 30, 1992), 8-9.

²² Winter & Company, *Your Old House: Guide for Preserving San Jose Homes* (August 2003), 13-16.

²³ Laffey, *Historical Overview and Context for the City of San Jose* (March 30, 1992), 9.

²⁴ Winter & Company, *Your Old House: Guide for Preserving San Jose Homes* (August 2003), 13-16.

²⁵ Dill Design Group, *Draft Historic Report for the San Carlos Affordable Senior Apartment and Townhome Development*, July 21, 2003, 9.

Industrialization and Urbanization (1945 – 1991)

Soon after World War II, the business community launched an active campaign to attract new non-agricultural industries to Santa Clara County. By the 1960s, Santa Clara County's economic base was dependent upon the electronic and defense industries. Attracted by the increasing job market, the population of the Santa Clara Valley experienced phenomenal growth after 1950.²⁶

Following World War II, modern design dominated new residential development. New industrial jobs attracted many new residents to San Jose which became one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. A.P. "Dutch" Hamann was appointed as City Manager in 1950. Recognizing the city's expansion potential and the changing commercial and industrial base of the Santa Clara Valley, Hamann embarked on an aggressive annexation program to make San Jose the commercial and industrial leader of the region: between 1950 and 1975, the population increased from 95,000 to over 500,000 and the area of the city grew from 17 square miles to over 200 square miles. The residential subdivisions as well as commercial and industrial centers replaced orchards outside the central city core.²⁷ The growth also flooded the city with examples of Modernist civic, industrial, commercial, and religious buildings.²⁸ While the rest of San Jose expanded after 1950, the central city core remained largely intact, leaving a good record of the first century of American development patterns within the greater downtown area.²⁹

Silicon Valley³⁰

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II; however, the employment in the industry began a dramatic rise in the early 1950s due to demands from the U.S. Department of Defense during the Cold War. In 1971, the term "Silicon Valley" was coined by Don C. Hoefler, the editor of *Microelectronics News*; by then, the industry employed approximately 20,000 workers.

Initiated by Professor Frederick Terman of Stanford University, Stanford Industrial Park was created in 1951 to provide high-standard research and development facilities in the electronics field; Stanford Research Park followed in 1954. This development is considered to be among the primary factors in the development of Silicon Valley. The military was the main, if not only, consumer of the electronics industry in the 1950s. Fairchild Semiconductor was established in 1957, the first firm to develop silicon transistors for the defense industry's rigorous needs. In two years, they had become the largest electronics manufacturer in the Santa Clara Valley. As the demand increased, many more businesses were established in the area. By 1980, Santa Clara Valley boasted over 3,000 electronics firms.

The companies that created Silicon Valley innovated in not only products but also in methods of business, specifically venture capitalism and startups. The region became the capital of a lucrative and booming industry that attracted thousands of people to San Jose and neighboring towns. In 1989, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of it.³¹ It led the world in electronics and information technology, which had become the leading industrial sector at the end of 20th century.³²

²⁶ Archives & Architecture, *County of Santa Clara, Historic Context Statement*, December 2004 (Revised February 2012), 46-47.

²⁷ PAST Consultants, *San Jose Modernism, 26-27*; Winter & Company, *Your Old House: Guide for Preserving San Jose Homes* (August 2003), 13-16.

²⁸ PAST Consultants, *San Jose Modernism, 26-27*.

²⁹ Winter & Company, *Your Old House*, 15.

³⁰ Unless noted, largely summarized from PAST Consultants, *San Jose Modernism*, 48-52.

³¹ Tim J. Sturgeon, "Origins of Silicon Valley," *FoundSF*,

https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Origins_of_Silicon_Valley:_The_Development_of_the_Electronics_Industry_in_the_San_Francisco_Bay_Area (accessed July 29, 2021).

³² Richard Walker, "Boom and Bombshell: New Economy Bubble and the Bay Area," *FoundSF*,

https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Boom_and_Bombshell:_New_Economy_Bubble_and_the_Bay_Area (accessed July 29, 2021).

The Bay Area tech companies were seen as exemplars of business organization for the new era introducing open, diversified, and strategic business models. Silicon Valley became a model for the new type of “industrial districts” featuring interactive firms, flexible specialization, research and development centers, and eternal economies.³³

Fry's Electronics

Fry's Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 as a family venture by three brothers, John, Randy, and David Fry, with Kathryn Kolder as a business partner. The brothers started working in their father's grocery business, Fry's Food Stores.³⁴ Fry's Electronics opened its first store in Sunnyvale in 1985 near the intersection of Oakmead Parkway and Lakeside Drive; the stores used to carry groceries and electronics, aiming to be a one-stop-shop for the area's tech workers.³⁵

Every Fry's store featured its own individual theme: the Wild West in Palo Alto, a Martian landscape in Burbank, the 1893 World's Fair in Fremont, the history of Silicon Valley at Sunnyvale, or Egypt in Campbell. The store at 550 E. Brokaw Road included a Mayan-inspired entrance tower and interior decorations.³⁶ Movie prop designer Eric Christensen, who worked at the Skywalker Arts and Crafts Studio during the early 1980s and helped design George Lucas' ranch, created designs for these stores.³⁷ The stores quickly became “techie heavens” or “quirky go-to places” with a wide selection and low prices.³⁸ A *San Francisco Chronicle* article from 1998 describes the Palo Alto store as “ground zero for geek culture on the Peninsula.”³⁹

...Fry's was so influential in its peak years that executives with tech, consumer electronics, and computer companies beat a path to Fry's headquarters, hoping to get their products sold at the stores. The people behind the products would line up around the block at the corporate offices to try to convince the Fry's executives to place their products on the store shelves [...] They knew that if they got the product into Fry's that it would sell.⁴⁰

Fry's initially catered to engineers and workers in the tech industry of the Silicon Valley. The components they stocked, such as computer processors, memory chips, circuit boards and transistors, could be used by the hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the late 1990s, it was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that couldn't be found anywhere else. According to a *Silicon Valley Business Journal* article, “at its peak in the [1990s] and in the early 2000s, Fry's was kind of the center of Silicon Valley.”⁴¹

In the early 2000s, the chain began to expand its offerings and became a big-box store, never quite regaining the identity that made it a destination in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁴² Ultimately, the company struggled

³³ Richard Walker, “Boom and Bombshell: New Economy Bubble and the Bay Area,” *FoundSF*, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Boom_and_Bombshell:_New_Economy_Bubble_and_the_Bay_Area (accessed July 29, 2021).

³⁴ George Avalos, “Fry's electronics goes out of business permanently, closes all stores,” *The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021.

³⁵ Jasmine Garnett, “The kitschy history of the Bay Area's themed Fry's Electronics,” SFGate, January 4, 2021, <https://www.sfgate.com/essays/article/Remembering-the-Disney-World-of-electronic-stores-15837042.php> (accessed June 24, 2021); City-Data.com and Xweb forums.

³⁶ Jasmine Garnett, “The kitschy history of the Bay Area's themed Fry's Electronics,” SFGate, January 4, 2021, <https://www.sfgate.com/essays/article/Remembering-the-Disney-World-of-electronic-stores-15837042.php> (accessed June 24, 2021).

³⁷ A. Grey Le Cuyer, “Hail, Caesar! Now where are the CD-ROMs?” *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 2020; Jasmine Garnett, “The kitschy history of the Bay Area's themed Fry's Electronics,” SFGate, January 4, 2021, <https://www.sfgate.com/essays/article/Remembering-the-Disney-World-of-electronic-stores-15837042.php> (accessed June 24, 2021).

³⁸ George Avalos, “Fry's electronics goes out of business permanently, closes all stores,” *The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021.

³⁹ Jamie Beckett, “At Fry's, Microsoft gets both jeers and cheers,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1998.

⁴⁰ George Avalos, “Fry's electronics goes out of business permanently, closes all stores,” *The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021.

⁴¹ Troy Wolverton, “Here's why Fry's closure is ‘then end of an era’ for Silicon Valley,” *Silicon Valley Business Journal*, February 24, 2021.

⁴² Chase DeiFeliciano, “‘It was a geek paradise’: Fry's closes its 31 electronics stores,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 2, 2021.

with the demand for online shopping. They also struggled with the industry's shift from the PCs to laptops, tablets, and smartphones since people stopped buying computer parts. The store used to sell software, but it had to downsize that section as well when tech companies switched to online software downloads and subscriptions.⁴³

On an even higher level, Fry's was a physical manifestation of a Silicon Valley that no longer exists. In the age when it was founded and prospered, the iconic products of the Valley were, indeed, products—from Apple desktop computers to HP laser printers to Seagate hard drives. But this century, the area's biggest new successes, such as Google and Facebook, got huge fast because their businesses were entirely cloud-based and free to use. You didn't have to go to Fry's to get them, which severed the tight relationship between the store and the region that gave it birth.⁴⁴

In 2019, it was rumored that Fry's was going out of business. At the time, the company had eight stores in Northern California (including the subject property), nine in Southern California, and 17 stores in other states.⁴⁵ In February 2021, Fry's Electronics announced the permanent closure of all of its stores.⁴⁶ At the time of the closing announcement, Fry's had Bay Area stores in San Jose, Sunnyvale, Fremont, and Concord.⁴⁷



Figures 12 and 13. The Burbank, left, and the Sunnyvale, right, stores (*The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021).



Figures 14 and 15. Interior views of the Woodland Hills store with the Alice in Wonderland themed decorations, left, and a giant figure of a gold panner at the Palo Alto store, right (*The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021).

⁴³ Harry McCracken, "Fry's is dead, and it's taking part of Silicon Valley culture with it," *Fast Company*, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90608025/frys-electronics-closing> (accessed July 29, 2021).

⁴⁴ McCracken, "Fry's is dead," *Fast Company*.

⁴⁵ Levi Sumagaysay, "Fry's Electronics still hanging on, but for how long?" *The Mercury News*, October 6, 2019.

⁴⁶ Jasmine Garnett, "The kitschy history of the Bay Area's themed Fry's Electronics," *SFGate*, February 24, 2021.

⁴⁷ George Avalos, "Fry's electronics goes out of business permanently, closes all stores," *The Mercury News*, February 24, 2021.

8. ARCHITECT/BUILDER

The building at 550 E. Brokaw Road was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and constructed by Planners and Associated Construction and Engineering Company.⁴⁸

The firm **Schubart and Friedman** was established in 1953 by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco. Among many works of the firm are Dominican College Dining Hall in San Rafael (1959), Mount Zion Hospital Master Plan and several buildings on campus in San Francisco (1960s), the remodeling of the downtown headquarters of Levi Strauss & Co. at Pine and Battery streets in San Francisco (1957), Church of St. Louis Bertrand in Oakland (1963), Holy Name of Jesus Church in San Francisco (1964), and many residences in the Bay Area.⁴⁹ The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates.

Henry Schubart, Jr. (1916-2012) was born in New York. He lived in France as a teenager, studied art in Paris and did a yearlong apprenticeship with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. During the Depression, he taught art to children for the Works Progress Administration, then designed exhibitions at the New York World's Fair in 1939. He served as an engineer in the U.S. Maritime Service during World War II. When he settled in the Bay Area in 1948, he worked as an associate at Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons. He partnered with Friedman in 1953, and the firm received national recognition for their work. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle's* architecture critic Alan Temko, he "combined the humanism of Frank Lloyd Wright, the redwood regionalism of the Bay Area style, and profound social integrity in an architecture of rare warmth and civility [...] In his houses and, above all, the campus buildings of Dominican College in Marin, he upheld the best principles of modernism as a fine art and a fulfillment of human needs." He left the firm and moved to Canada in 1968 and worked on residential projects.⁵⁰

Howard A. Friedman (1919-1988) was born in New York and studied at Saunders Technical High School. He worked as a junior drafter in New York at the beginning of his career.

After serving with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during World War II, he returned to San Francisco in 1946, and graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in architecture in 1949. 1953 saw him form a partnership with Henry Schubart. In 1967 that firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. Friedman worked as an architect and planner until 1982. During 35 years of practice, his firm compiled a distinguished record of nationally recognized designs, including a group-living complex at the Jewish Home for the Aged, Mt. Zion Hospital's outpatient clinic, the modernization of Levi Strauss' Valencia Street factory [...] Friedman served as master architect for the south terminal expansion at San Francisco International Airport, where he set an extraordinary precedent in employing and successfully coordinating a wide spectrum of small, local, minority and women-owned design firms. He retired from private practice in 1984. Concurrent with his private practice, in 1966 he became a Lecturer in the Department of Architecture. In 1980 he was appointed Professor, becoming department chair in 1987. With former student Robert DeGoff, he co-authored *Construction Management for Architects, Engineers and Owners*, and *Issues for Seismic Strengthening of Existing Buildings*, with Henry J. Lagorio and Kit M. Wong. In 1971 the American Institute of Architects honored Friedman by electing him a Fellow. He was President of the Northern California Chapter of the AIA; director of the CCAIA [California Council of the American Institute of Architects]; and chair of the State of California Board of Architectural Examiners. In 1989 the CCAIA, the AIA, and the California Council of Architectural Education posthumously awarded him their Excellence in Education Award. Other awards

⁴⁸ Building permits via City of San Jose Public Information Search.

⁴⁹ AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, 1962 American Architects Directory; *San Francisco Chronicle*.

⁵⁰ "Obituaries, Henry Schubart," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 20, 1998; AIA Historical Directory of American Architects, 1962 American Architects Directory.

included the Architectural Record award for interior architecture in conjunction with Gensler & Associates for the Levi Strauss offices in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1980, and the campus' Berkeley Citation, also awarded posthumously.⁵¹

Associated Construction and Engineering Company was established by John L. Chapman and William H. Acheson, both engineers, in 1951. The firm worked on many commercial and industrial buildings in the Bay Area and grew rapidly in the following decades. According to the newspaper articles, it was active until at least the mid-1970s.⁵²

The 1983-1984 project was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors.

9. OCCUPANCY HISTORY

The building at 550 E. Brokaw Road was the Levi Strauss & Co. distribution center from 1969 to 1979 when the company decided to move the center to Nevada.⁵³ Tandem Computers, Inc. of Cupertino leased the former distribution center in 1981 and applied for a permit for interior alterations; they were listed at this address in the 1982-1983 city directories.⁵⁴ A computer hardware firm, TeleVideo Systems, Inc. occupied the building from 1985 to 1995.⁵⁵ Fry's Electronics moved to the property in the 1990s; the retail store opened in 1996 and the corporate headquarters move to the two-story office building in 1998. The retail store closed in 2021.⁵⁶

10. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The regulatory background provided below offers an overview of federal, state and local criteria used to assess historic significance.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria

National Register Bulletin Number 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, describes the Criteria for Evaluation as being composed of two factors. First, the property must be "associated with an important historic context."⁵⁷ The National Register identifies four possible context types, of which at least one must be applicable at the national, state, or local level. As listed under Section 8, "Statement of Significance," of the NRHP Registration Form, these are:

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

⁵¹ "Friedman, Howard A.," U.C. Berkeley Environmental Design Archives, <https://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/friedman-howard> (accessed June 23, 2021).

⁵² "New quarters for Associated," *The Times (San Mateo)*, February 28, 1958; "S.S.F. firm has unique new approach," *The Times (San Mateo)*, October 19, 1967; Newspapers.com.

⁵³ San Jose City Directories; Newspapers.com.

⁵⁴ City of San Jose Public Information Search; *San Francisco Examiner*; San Jose Public Library California Room.

⁵⁵ Newspapers.com; City of San Jose Public Information Search; San Jose Public Library California Room.

⁵⁶ City of San Jose Public Information Search; *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Mercury News*.

⁵⁷ National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, 1997), 3.

- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.⁵⁸

Second, for a property to qualify under the National Register's Criteria for Evaluation, it must also retain "historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance."⁵⁹ 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."⁶⁰ To determine if a property retains the physical characteristics corresponding to its historic context, the National Register has identified seven aspects of integrity:

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...

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.⁶¹

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.⁶²

California Register of Historical Resources 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 CRHR are very similar, with emphasis on local and state significance. They are:

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

⁵⁸ National Park Service, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form, National Register Bulletin 16A* (Washington, DC: United States Department of the Interior, 1997), 75.

⁵⁹ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15*, 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 45.

4. It has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.⁶³

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.⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵

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.⁶⁶

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."⁶⁷ 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."⁶⁸ 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 the seven aspects of integrity identified above under the NRHP Criteria.⁶⁹

City of San Jose Criteria

According to the City of San Jose's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 13.48 of the Municipal Code), a resource qualifies as a City Landmark if it has "special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of an historical nature" and is one of the following resource types:

1. An individual structure or portion thereof;
2. An integrated group of structures on a single lot;
3. A site, or portion thereof; or
4. Any combination thereof. (Sec. 13.48.020.C)

The ordinance defines the term "historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature" as deriving from, based on, or related to any of the following factors:

1. Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state or

⁶³ California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*, Technical Assistance Series 6, (Sacramento, 2001), 1.

⁶⁴ *California Register and National Register: A Comparison*.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁶⁶ 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.

⁶⁷ 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.

⁶⁸ *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 44.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

national history, heritage or culture in a distinctive, significant or important way;

2. Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige:
 - a. Of an architectural style, design or method of construction;
 - b. Of a master architect, builder, artist or craftsman;
 - c. Of high artistic merit;
 - d. The totality of which comprises a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige whose component parts may lack the same attributes;
 - e. That has yielded or is substantially likely to yield information of value about history, architecture, engineering, culture or aesthetics, or that provides for existing and future generations an example of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived or worked; or
 - f. That the construction materials or engineering methods used in the proposed landmark are unusual or significant or uniquely effective.
3. The factor of age alone does not necessarily confer a special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering significance, value or interest upon a structure or site, but it may have such effect if a more distinctive, significant or important example thereof no longer exists.

The Historic Landmarks Commission reviews landmark designations and "shall find that said proposed landmark has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of an historical nature, and that its designation as a landmark conforms with the goals and policies of the general plan. In making such findings, the Commission may consider the following factors, among other relevant factors, with respect to the proposed landmark:

1. Its character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture;
2. Its location as a site of a significant historic event;
3. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history;
4. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of San Jose;
5. Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style;
6. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen;
7. Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of San Jose; and
8. Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique." (Sec. 13.48.110.H)

California Environmental Quality Act

For the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)CEQA (Guidelines Section 15064.5), the term "historical resources" shall include the following:

1. A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section

4850 et.seq.).

2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, as defined in Section 5020.1(k) of the Public Resources Code or identified as significant in an historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code, shall be presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, may be considered to be an historical resource, provided the lead agency's determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be "historically significant" if the resource meets the criteria for listing in the CRHR (Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4800.3) as follows:
 - A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
 - B. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
 - C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
 - D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act)

11. SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

Current Historic Status

The subject property has not previously been identified on any local, state, or national historic resources inventory.

NRHP/CRHR Evaluation

Criterion A/1 – Association with significant events

The warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road was initially constructed in 1966 on a formerly agricultural parcel. The first warehouse-like structures on E. Brokaw Road to the west of the subject parcel appeared on the 1960 aerial photograph. Although more buildings at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue had developed in the following years, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area was still primarily agricultural in 1968. The surrounding area, especially at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue, developed with additional industrial structures in the 1970s and it was fully developed by 1980. The existing office building to the north was added in 1983 and the warehouse was renovated. While indicative of the trend, the subject property is not individually representative of any important patterns of development within the neighborhood or the greater San Jose area; the subject property followed an already established model.

The property was originally constructed as a distribution center for Levi Strauss and Co. and used by the company from 1969 to 1979 when they decided to move the center to Nevada.⁷⁰ Founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, Levi Strauss & Co. turned into a clothing business after the creation of "blue jeans" in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and internationally.

⁷⁰ San Jose City Directories; Newspapers.com.

The subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road does not have any individually significant associations with the establishment or the growth of Levi Strauss & Co.; it was among many commercial and industrial buildings constructed and occupied by the company.

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II, but it significantly grew in the 1950s and named as Silicon Valley in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of this booming industry. The Bay Area tech companies were seen as exemplars of business organization for the new era. The 550 E. Brokaw Road property was briefly used by Tandem Computers in the early 1980s. It was later expanded and renovated in 1983-1984 to be used by Televideo Systems. In the mid-1990s, it was altered by Fry's Electronics to be occupied as their headquarters and their San Jose store. While these companies have been featured in newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of Silicon Valley or the Bay Area in an individually significant way. None of these businesses have achieved significance within the last 50 years and they do not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Fry's Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 and opened their first store in Sunnyvale, initially catering to engineers and workers in the Silicon Valley's tech industry. The components they stocked could be used by the computer hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the mid- to late 1990s, a Fry's Electronics store was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that could not be found anywhere else. By the time they opened the San Jose store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and moved the company headquarters in 1998, they had already established a strong presence in the Bay Area. The subject property is neither the first nor the only standing building associated with the chain. Fry's Electronics has not achieved significance within the last 50 years and it does not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Therefore, the subject property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion A/1.

Criterion B/2 – Persons

No persons of known historical significance appear to have been associated directly with the subject property. Therefore, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion B/2.

Criterion C/3 – Architecture and Construction

Constructed in 1966 as a utilitarian warehouse, the subject property received a contemporary office addition in 1983. It is of common construction and materials with no notable or special attributes, and the structure does not possess high artistic value. The subject property does not embody characteristic features of an architectural style.

The building was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners. Established by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco in 1953, the firm worked on many commercial and residential buildings in the Bay Area. The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. While both Schubart and Friedman were well-known names in the Bay Area, the warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road is a modest industrial building from the mid-20th century and not a prominent project of the firm.

The warehouse was constructed by Associated Construction and Engineering Company in 1966; and the later 1983-1984 remodel was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors. None of the firms appear as masters.

Therefore, the property does not appear eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion C/3.

Criterion D/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. The property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Integrity

The property at 550 E. Brokaw Road retains integrity of location since it has not been moved. The property had been continuously used for commercial purposes until recently, so it retains its integrity of association and feeling. The building received a two-story office addition in 1983-1984, the northern portion of the warehouse was renovated in 1983-1984, and a Mayan-inspired entrance tower was added to the warehouse in 1995. The integrity of design, materials, and workmanship has been compromised. The setting has retained integrity since the suburban industrial character of the area has not changed drastically since the mid- to late 20th century.

San Jose City Landmark Evaluation

1. *Its character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture.*

The subject property does not have a significant character, interest, or value to the mid- to late 20th century development of the neighborhood, San Jose or Silicon Valley. The area was mostly agricultural until the late 1950s when warehouse-like structures started to get constructed at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue. Although more buildings had developed in the following years, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area was still primarily agricultural in 1968. Additional industrial structures were constructed in the 1970s and the area was fully developed by 1980.

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II, but it significantly grew in the 1950s and named as Silicon Valley in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of this booming industry. In the 1980s, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property was used by Tandem Computers and Televideo Systems. In the mid-1990s, it was altered by Fry's Electronics to be occupied as their San Jose store and the company headquarters. While these tech companies have been featured in newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of Silicon Valley or the Bay Area in an individually significant way. None of these businesses have achieved significance recently and they do not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Overall, within the broader context of the San Jose's mid-20th century industrial development, the property does not appear notable. The subject property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 1.

2. *Its location as a site of a significant historic event.*

The property is not linked specifically to any significant historic events. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 2.

3. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history.*

There is no person of significance individually associated with the property. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 3.

4. *Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of San Jose.*

550 E. Brokaw Road was constructed as a Levi Strauss and Co. distribution center in 1966 and used by the company until 1979. Founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, Levi Strauss & Co. turned into a clothing business after the creation of "blue jeans" in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and internationally. The subject property was among many commercial and industrial buildings constructed and occupied by the company.

The subject property was later remodeled and used by three Silicon Valley businesses including Tandem Computers and TeleVideo Systems. While these companies have been featured in newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of San Jose or Silicon Valley in an individually significant way.

Fry's Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 and opened their first store in Sunnyvale, initially catering to engineers and workers in the Silicon Valley's tech industry. The components they stocked could be used by the computer hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the mid- to late 1990s, a Fry's Electronics store was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that could not be found anywhere else. By the time they opened the San Jose store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and moved the company headquarters in 1998, they had already established a strong presence in the Bay Area. The subject property is neither the first nor the only standing building associated with the chain. Fry's Electronics and the subject property do not appear to exemplify the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of San Jose.

Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 4.

5. *Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.*

The subject property does not appear to portray the environment of a group of people in an era of history through its utilitarian and contemporary architectural style. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 5.

6. *Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.*

Constructed in 1966 as a warehouse with a 1983-1984 office addition, the property at 550 E. Brokaw Road does not embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen. As a commercial property with office and retail components, the remodeled structure is among many similar buildings that were completed or remodeled during the mid- to late 20th century. Overall, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 6.

7. *Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of San Jose.*

The building was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners as a utilitarian warehouse with a small office building. Established by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco in 1953, the firm worked on many commercial and residential buildings in the Bay Area. The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. While both Schubart and Friedman were well-known names in the Bay Area, the warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road is a modest industrial building from the mid-20th century and not a prominent project of the firm.

The warehouse was constructed by Associated Construction and Engineering Company in 1966; and the later 1983-1984 remodel was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors. None of the firms appear as masters.

Overall, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 7.

8. *Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique.*

The property did not make use of architectural innovations, but rather used typical building materials and details of the time. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 8.

Overall, the subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road cannot be considered a historic resource since it does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR or as a City of San Jose Landmark as it does not have significance under any criteria.

12. CONCLUSION

Based on the above evaluation of the property at 550 E. Brokaw Road in reference to the NRHP or CRHR criteria, it does not appear that the subject property possesses sufficient historical significance for listing on either inventory. The property is not associated with the development of San Jose or the Bay Area in an individually significant way. No persons of significance are known to be directly associated with the subject property. The utilitarian warehouse and the contemporary office addition do not embody any distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction. The warehouse was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman, a notable firm based in San Francisco. However, it is a modest structure and does not possess high artistic values. The property is unlikely to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the area.

The subject property also does not appear to be eligible individually as a City of San Jose Landmark as it does not have any significance under local criteria. Therefore, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property does not appear to be a historic resource as defined by CEQA.

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APPENDIX

DPR 523 FORMS

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 17 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 550 E. Brokaw Road

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 550 E. Brokaw Road City San Jose Zip 95112

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 237-08-079

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

The subject parcel is at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue, to the north of downtown San Jose. Located on the south side of E. Brokaw Road, the irregularly shaped parcel features a large commercial building to the north surrounded by parking lots. Nimitz Freeway is to the east. The surrounding area consists of a mix of low-rise commercial and industrial buildings.

The two-story commercial building at 550 E. Brokaw Road is roughly rectangular in plan with a flat roof. The northern half of the structure houses the two-story office space while the southern half is a tall one-story retail space. Asphalt parking lots surround the building, the largest being at the rear, south. The north elevation faces E. Brokaw Road. The south elevation, facing the parking lot, is mostly blank, with simple vertical pilasters at regular intervals. (See Continuation Sheet.)

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 at 550 E. Brokaw Rd.
TreanorHL, June 2021.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic Prehistoric
 Both
1966, building permits

*P7. Owner and Address: _____

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

TreanorHL
460 Bush Street San Francisco, CA

*P9. Date Recorded: Aug 4, 2021

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
Intensive survey

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") TreanorHL, 550 E. Brokaw Road San Jose, CA.
Historic Resources Assessment – Draft, August 4, 2021

*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): _____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 550 E. Brokaw Road *NRHP Status Code _____
Page 2 of 17

B1. Historic Name: Levi Strauss Co. distribution center
B2. Common Name: Fry's San Jose store and headquarters
B3. Original Use: Commercial B4. Present Use: Vacant
*B5. Architectural Style: Utilitarian, contemporary
*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
Constructed in 1966, remodeled in 1983 and 1995. (See Continuation Sheet.)

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

B9a. Architect: Schubart and Friedman b. Builder: Associated Construction and Engineering Company
*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.)

The City of San Jose developed around the pueblo of San Jose which was, in the 1790s, between First Street and the *acequia*, a waterway connecting to the Guadalupe River. Many of the structures associated with the pueblo would be located around what today are Market, San Pedro and Santa Clara streets, with pueblo lands extending to St. James Street to the north and to William Street to the south.

The Early American Period (1846 – 1869)¹

By the 1850s the commercial district of the growing community centered at the intersection of Market and Santa Clara streets. Surrounding this hub of commerce were agricultural lands to the north and east with residential development extending out from the commercial district.²

San Jose began to draw more residents from the East Coast as well as immigrants from Europe and China in the 1860s. Completed in 1864, the railroad between San Francisco and San Jose accelerated commercial development of the area. The city became part of the national economy by opening new markets for the agricultural and manufacturing production of the surrounding valley. The public and private investment in infrastructure (natural gas service, piped water, and sewers) resulted in a construction boom in the central core—a large number of residential buildings were constructed in the 1860s and 1870s. (See Continuation Sheet.)

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

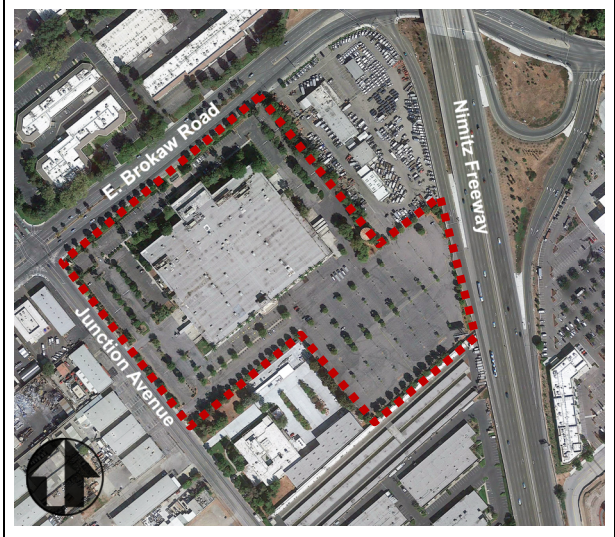
*B12. References:
See Continuation Sheets.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: TreanorHL
*Date of Evaluation: August 4, 2021

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 3 of 17

*P3a. Description, Continued:

Centered on the façade is a projecting, monumental Mayan pyramid that forms the entry to the retail space. Two aluminum-sash glazed double doors provide access to the interior. Three pairs of double metal doors with ramps are also on this façade.

The east and west elevations feature one story projections. On both elevations, these projections run across approximately two-thirds of the elevation, from south to north. They feature multiple roll-up garage doors, apparently used for loading. On the east side, the first few bays were dedicated to automobile electronics installation.

The north elevation and approximately one-third each of the east and west elevations are highly fenestrated and feature a centered projection. Each of the two levels feature dark-tinted strip windows, separated by a wide, solid horizontal band. The roof projects out over the windows to form a wide, deep cap. Battered vertical column-brackets, shaped like upside-down "L"s, rise from the ground at regular intervals to support this projecting cap. These verticals organize the facade into bays. The main entry to this side of the building is centered in the projection and consists of glazed metal double doors.



The north façade.



The partial west façade.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 4 of 17



The projecting monumental Mayan pyramid on the south façade.

***B6. Construction History, Continued:**

According to the aerial photographs, the subject parcels and the surrounding area was agricultural in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The subject parcel was annexed by the City of San Jose in 1955.³ The first warehouse-like structures on E. Brokaw Road to the west of the subject parcel appeared on the 1960 aerial photograph. Although more buildings at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue had developed by 1968, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area remained primarily agricultural. According to the City of San Jose records, most of the buildings at the intersection were constructed between 1957 and 1981. The surrounding area was largely built out by the early 1980s and its industrial character was well established.

A permit application to construct a one-story warehouse and an office building at 550 E. Brokaw Road for Levi Strauss Co. was filed at the City of San Jose in 1966. It was designed Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners and built by Associated Construction and Engineering Company.⁴ Located to the northwest of the warehouse, the attached office building was roughly T-shaped in plan and had a small footprint.⁵ The address first appears on the 1969 San Jose city directory as the “Levi Strauss Co. distribution center.”⁶ Levi Strauss & Co. was founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, and turned into a clothing business after they created “blue jeans” in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and popularity of jeans and other products lead them to form an International Division, setting up offices and factories throughout Europe and Asia.⁷

In 1977, Levi Strauss & Co. announced that they were planning to replace the San Jose distribution center with a new facility in Nevada. At the time, the center was employing about 225 people.⁸ According to the city directories, the company stayed at the property until 1979. Tandem Computers, Inc. of Cupertino leased the subject property in 1981 as part of its expansion program; they were listed at this address in the 1982-1983 city directories.⁹

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 5 of 17

A computer hardware firm, Televideo Systems, Inc. purchased the subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road in September 1983. The company had plans developed to improve and renovate the existing building.¹⁰ A larger, two story office building was constructed to the north of the existing warehouse and the northern half of the warehouse was renovated by Frederiksen Engineering to match the new building.¹¹ TeleVideo Systems occupied the building from 1985 to 1995.¹²

In 1995, Fry's Electronics asked for a \$5 million, no-interest loan from the City of San Jose to open its new store at 550 E. Brokaw Road; the company was also planning to move its headquarters to San Jose.¹³ After a remodel and construction of the Mayan-themed entrance tower, Fry's Electronics opened the retail store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and the company headquarters moved to the two-story office building in 1998.¹⁴ This store paid "tribute to the first astronomers, the Mayans, with settings from Chichen Itza, complete with a massive temple at the entrance, palm trees between shelves and hidden speakers that play the sounds of birds chirping through the parking lot."¹⁵ Fry's Electronics announced its bankruptcy and closed all retail stores in 2021, including the one at the subject property.¹⁶

Construction Chronology

According to the building permits on file at the City of San Jose, a permit application was filed in 1966 to construct a one-story warehouse and an attached office building to be used as a distribution center for Levi Strauss Co. The structure was designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners and built by Associated Construction and Engineering Company.¹⁷ The building first appears in the 1969 city directory.¹⁸ The one-story office building was removed in 1983 and the two-story office building to the north was constructed. The northern half of the existing warehouse was also renovated to match the new building. Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors, both based in San Jose, worked on the project. In 1995, the building was renovated again for its new owner, Fry's Electronics. A Mayan-themed entrance tower was constructed at the south façade. The building received multiple interior alterations, tenant improvements, as well as mechanical, electrical and plumbing upgrades over time.¹⁹ Below is the construction chronology of exterior work with a list of building permits on file with the City of San Jose and a summary of what the permit work entailed.²⁰

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1966 | Permit application to build a one-story warehouse and an office building for Levi Strauss Co. by Associated Construction and Engineering Company and Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners. Permit No. 51381, 51556, 51817 |
| 1972 | Construct a water tank. Permit No. 73639-V. |
| 1983 | Permit application to remove the existing one-story office building and construct a 60' by 124' office building. |
| 1984 | Build 2x1 story additions to be occupied as electronic manufacturing, office, warehouse; alter interior of the one-story plus mezzanine building. Permit No. 44103, 42487. |
| 1984 | Build two-story addition (shell) to existing building, owner TeleVideo Systems. Permit No. 42807. |
| 1984 | Finish two-story building addition, electronics manufacturing, office, warehouse; owner Televideo Systems. Permit No. 27408. |
| 1995 | Permit application to remodel the existing building including the new entrance tower. Permit No. B9517518. |

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 6 of 17

***B10. Significance, Continued:**

The single-family homes built in this era derived from popular Victorian era styles. These were wood frame structures, vertical in massing and typically had steep gable roofs, dormers and wide ornamental porches. By the late 1860s, the Italianate style balloon-framed residences became popular, but they were gradually replaced by the modern platform framing methods and the Queen Anne architectural style in the mid-1880s.

Horticultural era (1870 – 1918)²¹

The horticultural potential of the Santa Clara Valley was recognized by the mission fathers who established small orchards and vineyards. By the 1860s, orchards were being set out in East San Jose, Milpitas, and the north valley. In the 1870s increasing residential and business growth led to the shifting of the orchard lands to new communities such as the Willows, Berryessa, Los Gatos, and Saratoga. The 1880s saw orchards expanding into the Campbell, Evergreen, and Edenvale areas. Orchard products, the most popular of which was prunes, dominated agricultural production by the end of the century and fruit production peaked in the 1920s. The canning industry also started in the 1870s in residential San Jose, and the fruit canning and packing industry quickly grew to become the urban counterpart of the valley's orchards.

Commercial growth boomed in the 1880s and steadily grew toward the end of the century. The business district of San Jose moved southward along First Street. A new city hall, the port office, and many large commercial buildings and business blocks were constructed.

Changes in transportation during this period also influenced the development patterns: the first electric streetcar line was built between San Jose and Santa Clara in 1887-1888; trolley lines within the city served multiple neighborhoods; the Interurban Railroad had lines to Saratoga, Campbell, and Los Gatos by 1905; and the Peninsular Railway had lines from San Jose to Palo Alto and Cupertino by 1915.

The first automobiles appeared in the valley in the late 1890s. Several pioneer automobile factories were established in San Jose after 1900. The first experiments in aviation and communications also took place during this period.

Commercial development was also rapid during this period: much of the older housing stock in the downtown was relocated to the edges to make way for commercial and industrial development. The gaps in the urban fabric were filled to meet emerging housing needs.²²

Inter-War Period (1918 – 1945)

After World War I, San Jose entered a period of great prosperity. Three projects were initiated in 1929 that spurred growth: the development of the water conservation program, the connection of the Bayshore Freeway between San Jose and San Francisco, and the establishment of Moffett Field as a Navy dirigible base. During the post-war period, population growth continued to expand urban boundaries, and orchards were replaced with residential developments.²³ During the 1930s, single-family residential subdivisions were designed in a variety of Period Revival styles—most prominent being Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival and Colonial Revival styles.²⁴

By the 1930s the automobile was growing in prominence and the railway ceased to operate. With the growing reliance on the automobile and the development of the suburbs, downtown businesses began to

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 7 of 17

move out of the city center to the suburbs.²⁵

Industrialization and Urbanization (1945 – 1991)

Soon after World War II, the business community launched an active campaign to attract new non-agricultural industries to Santa Clara County. By the 1960s, Santa Clara County's economic base was dependent upon the electronic and defense industries. Attracted by the increasing job market, the population of the Santa Clara Valley experienced phenomenal growth after 1950.²⁶

Following World War II, modern design dominated new residential development. New industrial jobs attracted many new residents to San Jose which became one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. A.P. "Dutch" Hamann was appointed as City Manager in 1950. Recognizing the city's expansion potential and the changing commercial and industrial base of the Santa Clara Valley, Hamann embarked on an aggressive annexation program to make San Jose the commercial and industrial leader of the region: between 1950 and 1975, the population increased from 95,000 to over 500,000 and the area of the city grew from 17 square miles to over 200 square miles. The residential subdivisions as well as commercial and industrial centers replaced orchards outside the central city core.²⁷ The growth also flooded the city with examples of Modernist civic, industrial, commercial, and religious buildings.²⁸ While the rest of San Jose expanded after 1950, the central city core remained largely intact, leaving a good record of the first century of American development patterns within the greater downtown area.²⁹

Silicon Valley³⁰

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II; however, the employment in the industry began a dramatic rise in the early 1950s due to demands from the U.S. Department of Defense during the Cold War. In 1971, the term "Silicon Valley" was coined by Don C. Hoefler, the editor of *Microelectronics News*; by then, the industry employed approximately 20,000 workers.

Initiated by Professor Frederick Terman of Stanford University, Stanford Industrial Park was created in 1951 to provide high-standard research and development facilities in the electronics field; Stanford Research Park followed in 1954. This development is considered to be among the primary factors in the development of Silicon Valley. The military was the main, if not only, consumer of the electronics industry in the 1950s. Fairchild Semiconductor was established in 1957, the first firm to develop silicon transistors for the defense industry's rigorous needs. In two years, they had become the largest electronics manufacturer in the Santa Clara Valley. As the demand increased, many more businesses were established in the area. By 1980, Santa Clara Valley boasted over 3,000 electronics firms.

The companies that created Silicon Valley innovated in not only products but also in methods of business, specifically venture capitalism and startups. The region became the capital of a lucrative and booming industry that attracted thousands of people to San Jose and neighboring towns. In 1989, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of it.³¹ It led the world in electronics and information technology, which had become the leading industrial sector at the end of 20th century.³²

The Bay Area tech companies were seen as exemplars of business organization for the new era introducing open, diversified, and strategic business models. Silicon Valley became a model for the new type of "industrial districts" featuring interactive firms, flexible specialization, research and development centers, and eternal economies.³³

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 8 of 17

Fry's Electronics

Fry's Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 as a family venture by three brothers, John, Randy, and David Fry, with Kathryn Kolder as a business partner. The brothers started working in their father's grocery business, Fry's Food Stores.³⁴ Fry's Electronics opened its first store in Sunnyvale in 1985 near the intersection of Oakmead Parkway and Lakeside Drive; the stores used to carry groceries and electronics, aiming to be a one-stop-shop for the area's tech workers.³⁵

Every Fry's store featured its own individual theme: the Wild West in Palo Alto, a Martian landscape in Burbank, the 1893 World's Fair in Fremont, the history of Silicon Valley at Sunnyvale, or Egypt in Campbell. The store at 550 E. Brokaw Road included a Mayan-inspired entrance tower and interior decorations.³⁶ Movie prop designer Eric Christensen, who worked at the Skywalker Arts and Crafts Studio during the early 1980s and helped design George Lucas' ranch, created designs for these stores.³⁷ The stores quickly became "techie heavens" or "quirky go-to places" with a wide selection and low prices.³⁸ A *San Francisco Chronicle* article from 1998 describes the Palo Alto store as "ground zero for geek culture on the Peninsula."³⁹

...Fry's was so influential in its peak years that executives with tech, consumer electronics, and computer companies beat a path to Fry's headquarters, hoping to get their products sold at the stores. The people behind the products would line up around the block at the corporate offices to try to convince the Fry's executives to place their products on the store shelves [...] They knew that if they got the product into Fry's that it would sell.⁴⁰

Fry's initially catered to engineers and workers in the tech industry of the Silicon Valley. The components they stocked, such as computer processors, memory chips, circuit boards and transistors, could be used by the hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the late 1990s, it was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that couldn't be found anywhere else. According to a *Silicon Valley Business Journal* article, "at its peak in the [1990s] and in the early 2000s, Fry's was kind of the center of Silicon Valley."⁴¹

In the early 2000s, the chain began to expand its offerings and became a big-box store, never quite regaining the identity that made it a destination in the late 1980s and early 1990s.⁴² Ultimately, the company struggled with the demand for online shopping. They also struggled with the industry's shift from the PCs to laptops, tablets, and smartphones since people stopped buying computer parts. The store used to sell software, but it had to downsize that section as well when tech companies switched to online software downloads and subscriptions.⁴³

On an even higher level, Fry's was a physical manifestation of a Silicon Valley that no longer exists. In the age when it was founded and prospered, the iconic products of the Valley were, indeed, products—from Apple desktop computers to HP laser printers to Seagate hard drives. But this century, the area's biggest new successes, such as Google and Facebook, got huge fast because their businesses were entirely cloud-based and free to use. You didn't have to go to Fry's to get them, which severed the tight relationship between the store and the region that gave it birth.⁴⁴

In 2019, it was rumored that Fry's was going out of business. At the time, the company had eight stores in

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 9 of 17

Northern California (including the subject property), nine in Southern California, and 17 stores in other states.⁴⁵ In February 2021, Fry's Electronics announced the permanent closure of all of its stores.⁴⁶ At the time of the closing announcement, Fry's had Bay Area stores in San Jose, Sunnyvale, Fremont, and Concord.⁴⁷

Architect/Builder

The building at 550 E. Brokaw Road was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and constructed by Planners and Associated Construction and Engineering Company.⁴⁸

The firm Schubart and Friedman was established in 1953 by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco. Among many works of the firm are Dominican College Dining Hall in San Rafael (1959), Mount Zion Hospital Master Plan and several buildings on campus in San Francisco (1960s), the remodeling of the downtown headquarters of Levi Strauss & Co. at Pine and Battery streets in San Francisco (1957), Church of St. Louis Bertrand in Oakland (1963), Holy Name of Jesus Church in San Francisco (1964), and many residences in the Bay Area.⁴⁹ The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates.

Henry Schubart, Jr. (1916-2012) was born in New York. He lived in France as a teenager, studied art in Paris and did a yearlong apprenticeship with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin. During the Depression, he taught art to children for the Works Progress Administration, then designed exhibitions at the New York World's Fair in 1939. He served as an engineer in the U.S. Maritime Service during World War II. When he settled in the Bay Area in 1948, he worked as an associate at Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons. He partnered with Friedman in 1953, and the firm received national recognition for their work. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle's* architecture critic Alan Temko, he "combined the humanism of Frank Lloyd Wright, the redwood regionalism of the Bay Area style, and profound social integrity in an architecture of rare warmth and civility [...] In his houses and, above all, the campus buildings of Dominican College in Marin, he upheld the best principles of modernism as a fine art and a fulfillment of human needs." He left the firm and moved to Canada in 1968 and worked on residential projects.⁵⁰

Howard A. Friedman (1919-1988) was born in New York and studied at Saunders Technical High School. He worked as a junior drafter in New York at the beginning of his career.

After serving with the U.S. Navy in the Pacific during World War II, he returned to San Francisco in 1946, and graduated from U.C. Berkeley with a degree in architecture in 1949. 1953 saw him form a partnership with Henry Schubart. In 1967 that firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. Friedman worked as an architect and planner until 1982. During 35 years of practice, his firm compiled a distinguished record of nationally recognized designs, including a group-living complex at the Jewish Home for the Aged, Mt. Zion Hospital's outpatient clinic, the modernization of Levi Strauss' Valencia Street factory [...] Friedman served as master architect for the south terminal expansion at San Francisco International Airport, where he set an extraordinary precedent in employing and successfully coordinating a wide spectrum of small, local, minority and women-owned design firms. He retired from private practice in 1984. Concurrent with his private practice, in 1966 he became a Lecturer in the Department of Architecture. In 1980 he was appointed Professor, becoming department chair in 1987. With former student Robert DeGoff, he co-authored *Construction Management for Architects, Engineers and Owners*, and *Issues for Seismic Strengthening of Existing Buildings*, with Henry J. Lagorio and Kit M. Wong. In 1971 the American

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 10 of 17

Institute of Architects honored Friedman by electing him a Fellow. He was President of the Northern California Chapter of the AIA; director of the CCAIA [California Council of the American Institute of Architects]; and chair of the State of California Board of Architectural Examiners. In 1989 the CCAIA, the AIA, and the California Council of Architectural Education posthumously awarded him their Excellence in Education Award. Other awards included the Architectural Record award for interior architecture in conjunction with Gensler & Associates for the Levi Strauss offices in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1980, and the campus' Berkeley Citation, also awarded posthumously.⁵¹

Associated Construction and Engineering Company was established by John L. Chapman and William H. Acheson, both engineers, in 1951. The firm worked on many commercial and industrial buildings in the Bay Area and grew rapidly in the following decades. According to the newspaper articles, it was active until at least the mid-1970s.⁵²

The 1983-1984 project was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors.

Architectural Style

Constructed in 1966 and remodeled twice in 1983 and 1995, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property is utilitarian and contemporary in character.

Occupants

The building at 550 E. Brokaw Road was the Levi Strauss & Co. distribution center from 1969 to 1979 when the company decided to move the center to Nevada.⁵³ Tandem Computers, Inc. of Cupertino leased the former distribution center in 1981 and applied for a permit for interior alterations; they were listed at this address in the 1982-1983 city directories.⁵⁴ A computer hardware firm, TeleVideo Systems, Inc. occupied the building from 1985 to 1995.⁵⁵ Fry's Electronics moved to the property in the 1990s; the retail store opened in 1996 and the corporate headquarters move to the two-story office building in 1998. The retail store closed in 2021.⁵⁶

Current Historic Status

The subject property has not previously been identified on any local, state, or national historic resources inventory.

Significance Evaluation – National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) & California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) Evaluation⁵⁷

Criterion A/1 – Association with significant events

The warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road was initially constructed in 1966 on a formerly agricultural parcel. The first warehouse-like structures on E. Brokaw Road to the west of the subject parcel appeared on the 1960 aerial photograph. Although more buildings at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue had developed in the following years, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area was still primarily agricultural in 1968. The surrounding area, especially at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue, developed with additional industrial structures in the 1970s and it was fully developed by 1980. The existing office building to the north was added in 1983 and the warehouse was renovated. While indicative of the trend, the subject property is not individually representative of any

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 11 of 17

important patterns of development within the neighborhood or the greater San Jose area; the subject property followed an already established model.

The property was originally constructed as a distribution center for Levi Strauss and Co. and used by the company from 1969 to 1979 when they decided to move the center to Nevada.⁵⁸ Founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, Levi Strauss & Co. turned into a clothing business after the creation of “blue jeans” in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and internationally. The subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road does not have any individually significant associations with the establishment or the growth of Levi Strauss & Co.; it was among many commercial and industrial buildings constructed and occupied by the company.

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II, but it significantly grew in the 1950s and named as Silicon Valley in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of this booming industry. The Bay Area tech companies were seen as exemplars of business organization for the new era. The 550 E. Brokaw Road property was briefly used by Tandem Computers in the early 1980s. It was later expanded and renovated in 1983-1984 to be used by Televideo Systems. In the mid-1990s, it was altered by Fry’s Electronics to be occupied as their headquarters and their San Jose store. While these companies have been featured in newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of Silicon Valley or the Bay Area in an individually significant way. None of these businesses have achieved significance within the last 50 years and they do not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Fry’s Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 and opened their first store in Sunnyvale, initially catering to engineers and workers in the Silicon Valley’s tech industry. The components they stocked could be used by the computer hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the mid- to late 1990s, a Fry’s Electronics store was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that could not be found anywhere else. By the time they opened the San Jose store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and moved the company headquarters in 1998, they had already established a strong presence in the Bay Area. The subject property is neither the first nor the only standing building associated with the chain. Fry’s Electronics has not achieved significance within the last 50 years and it does not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Therefore, the subject property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion A/1.

Criterion B/2 – Persons

No persons of known historical significance appear to have been associated with the subject property. Therefore, the property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion B/2.

Criterion C/3 – Architecture and Construction

Constructed in 1966 as a utilitarian warehouse, the subject property received a contemporary office addition in 1983. It is of common construction and materials with no notable or special attributes, and the structure does not possess high artistic value. The subject property does not embody characteristic

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 12 of 17

features of an architectural style.

The building was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners. Established by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco in 1953, the firm worked on many commercial and residential buildings in the Bay Area. The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. While both Schubart and Friedman were well-known names in the Bay Area, the warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road is a modest industrial building from the mid-20th century and not a prominent project of the firm.

The warehouse was constructed by Associated Construction and Engineering Company in 1966; and the later 1983-1984 remodel was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors. None of the firms appear as masters.

Therefore, the property does not appear eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion C/3.

Criterion D/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. The property does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP or CRHR under Criterion D/4.

Integrity

The property at 550 E. Brokaw Road retains integrity of location since it has not been moved. The property had been continuously used for commercial purposes until recently, so it retains its integrity of association and feeling. The building received a two-story office addition in 1983-1984, the northern portion of the warehouse was renovated in 1983-1984, and a Mayan-inspired entrance tower was added to the warehouse in 1995. The integrity of design, materials, and workmanship has been compromised. The setting has retained integrity since the suburban industrial character of the area has not changed drastically since the mid- to late 20th century.

San Jose City Landmark Evaluation

1. Its character, interest or value as part of the local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture.

The subject property does not have a significant character, interest, or value to the mid- to late 20th century development of the neighborhood, San Jose or Silicon Valley. The area was mostly agricultural until the late 1950s when warehouse-like structures started to get constructed at the intersection of E. Brokaw Road and Junction Avenue. Although more buildings had developed in the following years, including the subject building at 550 E. Brokaw; the area was still primarily agricultural in 1968. Additional industrial structures were constructed in the 1970s and the area was fully developed by 1980.

The Santa Clara Valley electronics industry was established before World War II, but it significantly grew in the 1950s and named as Silicon Valley in the early 1970s. In the 1980s, electronics was the largest manufacturing industry in the United States and Silicon Valley was the center of this booming industry. In the 1980s, the 550 E. Brokaw Road property was used by Tandem Computers and Televideo Systems. In the mid-1990s, it was altered by Fry's Electronics to be occupied as their San Jose store and the company headquarters. While these tech companies have been featured in

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 13 of 17

newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of Silicon Valley or the Bay Area in an individually significant way. None of these businesses have achieved significance recently and they do not appear to be of exceptional importance.

Overall, within the broader context of the San Jose's mid-20th century industrial development, the property does not appear notable. The subject property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 1.

2. *Its location as a site of a significant historic event.*
The property is not linked specifically to any significant historic events. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 2.
3. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history.*
There is no person of significance individually associated with the property. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 3.
4. *Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of San Jose.*
550 E. Brokaw Road was constructed as a Levi Strauss and Co. distribution center in 1966 and used by the company until 1979. Founded in San Francisco in 1853 as a dry goods business, Levi Strauss & Co. turned into a clothing business after the creation of "blue jeans" in 1873. By the 1960s, the company was already well-established in the United States and internationally. The subject property was among many commercial and industrial buildings constructed and occupied by the company.

The subject property was later remodeled and used by three Silicon Valley businesses including Tandem Computers and TeleVideo Systems. While these companies have been featured in newspapers and magazines of the period as well-known Silicon Valley businesses, they are not individually associated with the development of San Jose or Silicon Valley in an individually significant way.

Fry's Electronics was founded in Silicon Valley in 1985 and opened their first store in Sunnyvale, initially catering to engineers and workers in the Silicon Valley's tech industry. The components they stocked could be used by the computer hobbyist or aspiring entrepreneurs for their own projects. By the mid- to late 1990s, a Fry's Electronics store was the place to go to find cutting-edge tech devices that could not be found anywhere else. By the time they opened the San Jose store at 550 E. Brokaw Road in 1996 and moved the company headquarters in 1998, they had already established a strong presence in the Bay Area. The subject property is neither the first nor the only standing building associated with the chain. Fry's Electronics and the subject property do not appear to exemplify the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of San Jose.

Therefore, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 4.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 14 of 17

5. *Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.*

The subject property does not appear to portray the environment of a group of people in an era of history through its utilitarian and contemporary architectural style. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 5.

6. *Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.*

Constructed in 1966 as a warehouse with a 1983-1984 office addition, the property at 550 E. Brokaw Road does not embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen. As a commercial property with office and retail components, the remodeled structure is among many similar buildings that were completed or remodeled during the mid- to late 20th century. Overall, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 6.

7. *Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the City of San Jose.*

The building was originally designed by Schubart and Friedman Consulting Architects and Planners as a utilitarian warehouse with a small office building. Established by Henry Schubart, Jr. and Howard A. Friedman in San Francisco in 1953, the firm worked on many commercial and residential buildings in the Bay Area. The firm was active until 1967, after which Schubart moved to Canada and the firm became Howard A. Friedman and Associates. While both Schubart and Friedman were well-known names in the Bay Area, the warehouse at 550 E. Brokaw Road is a modest industrial building from the mid-20th century and not a prominent project of the firm.

The warehouse was constructed by Associated Construction and Engineering Company in 1966; and the later 1983-1984 remodel was carried out by Porter-Jensen-Hansen-Manzagol Architects and MAI General Contractors. None of the firms appear as masters.

Overall, the property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 7.

8. *Its embodiment of elements of architectural or engineering design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant architectural innovation or which is unique.*

The property did not make use of architectural innovations, but rather used typical building materials and details of the time. The property does not appear to be eligible as a City Landmark under Criterion 8.

In conclusion, the subject property at 550 E. Brokaw Road cannot be considered a historic resource since it does not appear individually eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR or as a City of San Jose Landmark as it does not have significance under any criteria.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 15 of 17

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: 550 E. Brokaw Road

Page 16 of 17

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Page 17 of 17

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