

HABS _____ HAER _____ Loc _____ Ser. No. _____
UTM: A 10/58700/4157250 SHL No. _____ NR Status 3
B _____ C _____

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

Centerville Presbyterian Church (88-01-00)

Map Reference Number: E-15

1. Common name: _____

Centerville Presbyterian Church
State Historic Resources Inventory Form
Route 84 Realignment Project
Caltrans Contract 04D186-AL

2. Historic name: Alameda Presbyterian Church

3. Street or rural address: 37218 Fremont Blvd.

City Fremont Ca Zip 94536 County Alameda

4. Parcel number: 501-1426-12

5. Present Owner: Centerville Presbyterian Church Address: 4360 Central Ave.

City Fremont Zip 94536 Ownership is: Public _____ Private

6. Present Use: Gymnasium & Youth Center Original use: Church

DESCRIPTION

7a. Architectural style: Carpenter Gothic Revival

7b. Briefly describe the present physical appearance of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition: The Centerville Presbyterian Church, built in 1855, is a New England Carpenter Gothic Revival style structure surrounded by a cemetery dating from 1858. The one acre cemetery consists of grave plots distributed in a partially obliterated grid pattern aligned with the church. The original Church exists now as it did after the 1868 earthquake; a simple one story wood structure with a gable roof, steeple, and simple Gothic detail at the openings. The spire is a tapered wood octagon topped with a metal arrow weather vane. An octagonal belfry below has pilaster corner boards, gothic arch louvered openings. The roof is asphalt shingle over wood shingles and the siding is horizontal shiplap. The windows are stained glass. The foundation consists of a cobble stone footing with a perimeter wall of hand pressed brick with sandstone infill.

The interior consists of an entry vestibule, a main sanctuary, and an altar, and a choir loft. Finishes include plaster and vertical beaded tongue-and-groove wood wainscoting. The original wood floor is beneath the carpet. Original pews are in the rear of the church and in the choir loft.

The church was originally clad in brick. When the 1868 earthquake damaged the walls the structure was re-clad in redwood. Other modifications to the Church include three additions, dating from 1903, 1947, and circa 1960.



8. Construction date: 1855
Estimated Factual _____

9. Architect unknown

10. Builder Charles B. Tool

11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 250 ft Depth 219 ft
or approx. acreage: 1

12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
Nov. 1988

13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ ^ No longer in existence ___
14. Alterations: Additions in 1903, 1947, and circa 1960.
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densaly built-up ___
 Residential ___ Industrial ___ Commercial ___ Other: Cemetery
16. Threats to site: None known ___ Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___ x
 Public Works project ___ Other: tramatic presentr use, moisture penetration, structural failure.
17. Is the structure: On its original site? ___ x Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
18. Related features: graves from 1859, ornamental curbs and fences

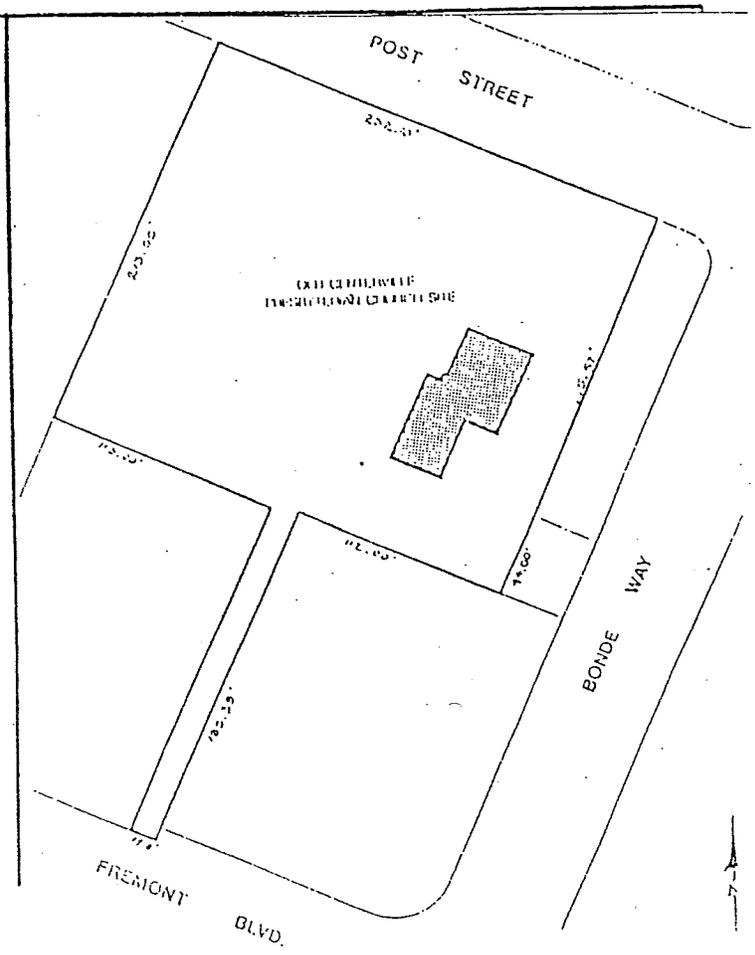
SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)
ARCHITECTURE - The Centerville Presbyterian Church is significant because it embodies distinctive characteristics of the Carpenter Gothic Revival style, and is a very early west coast example. The church remains insitu with its 1858 cemetery and retains its integrity in spite of several additions. It embodies a distinctive method of construction. The steeple is mortise and tenon construction with wood dowels, and no nails present. The foundation consists of cobblestone footing beneath a perimeter sandwich wall panel of sandstone between hand pressed brick. It is the oldest Presbyterian Church remaining insitu in California.
EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT - The Church and Cemetery are significant because they yield important information of the history and settlement of Washington Township in Alameda County. The City of Centerville was settled in 1850 but was incorporated into the new City of Fremont in 1956. Today the Church is one of only six structures remaining from the original settlement, Of the six it is the oldest, most significant and has the most integrity.
RELIGION - The church is associated with the Reverend W.W. Brier (1821 - 1886) a Presbyterian Synodical Missionary who was an important figure in religion, politics, and exploration and settlement. Brier founded the Centerville Church and is buried in the cemetery. He founed over 20 churches in California, and the first Prebyterian Church in the Nevada territory. He was appointed historian of the Synod of Alta California in 1858, and he was the District Secretary of the Board of Home Missions for California and Nevada. Brier was the First Superintendent of Schools for Alameda County.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
 Architecture ___ x Arts & Leisure ___
 Economic/Industrial ___ Exploration/Settlement ___ x
 Government ___ Military ___
 Religion ___ x Social/Education ___

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).
 Sandoval, The History of Washington Township:
 Wood, The History of Alameda County:
 Hind, Wither Thou Goest: Centerville
 Presbyterian Church Trustee Meetings

22. Date form prepared 11-28-88
 By (name) Alice Ross Carey AIA
 Organization Alice Carey, Architects
 Address: 25 South Park
 City San Francisco 94107
 Phone: (415) 957-0100



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY/EVALUATION FORM

MAP REFERENCE NO. E-15

County - Route - Postmile: () LISTED () DETERMINED ELIGIBLE
ALA 84 6.2/9.0 (x) APPEARS ELIGIBLE () APPEARS INELIGIBLE

IDENTIFICATION

1. **Common Name:** Centerville Presbyterian Church Cemetery
2. **Historic Name:** Centerville Presbyterian Church Cemetery
3. **Street or rural address:** 37218 Fremont Boulevard.
City: Fremont **Zip Code:** 94536 **County:** Alameda
4. **Parcel Number:** 501-1426-12 **Present Owner:** Centerville Presbyterian Church
Address: 4360 Central Avenue **City:** Fremont **Zip Code:** 94536
5. **Ownership is:** () Public (x) Private
6. **Present Use:** vacant **Original Use:** church/cemetery

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. **Architectural Style:** Gothic Revival Church
- 7b. **Briefly describe the present PHYSICAL CONDITION of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:**

This wood-frame Gothic Revival church is on the southwest corner of this square, approximately one acre parcel. With the exception of an area covered with asphalt paving in front of the church, the remainder of this parcel is laid out as a cemetery. Although the church has a Fremont Boulevard address, this parcel is set back about 150 feet from Fremont Boulevard at the corner of two streets created in the 1960s, Oak Street and Bonde Way.

(See Continuation Sheet)

8. **Construction Date:**
1858-cemetery
1869-church
Estimated: () **Factual:** (x)
 9. **Architect:** None
 10. **Builder:** Charles B. Tool
 11. **Approx. property size (in feet)**
Frontage: 252 **Depth:** 220
 12. **Date of enclosed photo(s):**
September 1993
- Photographer:** David Bricker

[Photograph attached to Continuation Sheet]

13. **Condition:** Excellent () Good () Fair () Deteriorated (x)
14. **Alterations:** Church severely damaged by fire
15. **Surroundings:** (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ()
Scattered buildings () Densely built-up (x) Residential ()
Industrial () Commercial (x) Other:
16. **Threats to site:** None known () Private Development () Zoning ()
Vandalism () Public Works Project (x)
Other:
17. **Is the structure:** On its original site? (x) Moved? () Unknown? ()
18. **Related features:** cemetery

SIGNIFICANCE

19. **Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site):**

Alameda Presbyterian Church was founded in June, 1853 after Reverend W.W. Brier held services for several months at John Horner's school house in Centerville. The church was renamed Centerville Presbyterian in 1873. Brier had moved to Centerville in 1852 after starting Presbyterian churches in Marysville (1850) and Grass Valley (1852). He eventually founded 20 Presbyterian churches in California. The Presbyterian congregation in Centerville was the 2nd to be founded in Alameda County (2 months after Oakland's) and the 7th in California. During 1855, Centerville Presbyterian built a brick Gothic Revival church on 2.5 acres donated by George Lloyd, one of the earliest settlers in the area. The church was dedicated January 27, 1856. Brier retired as the minister for Centerville Presbyterian in 1860 when the church had a congregation of about 30.

(See Continuation Sheet)

20. **Main theme of historic resource:** **Location sketch map**
(If more than one is checked,
number in order of importance.) (see APE map)

Architecture () Arts & Leisure ()
Economic/Industrial ()
Exploration/Settlement (1)
Government () Military () Religion (2)
Social/Education ()

21. **Sources:**

(See Continuation Sheet)

22. **Date form Prepared:** December 10, 1993; Revised March, 1994
By: Ward Hill
Organization: Ward Hill
Address: 3124 Octavia Street
City: San Francisco, CA
Zip Code: 94123
Phone: (415) 441-4071

Continuation Sheet 1

Item 7b continued

A parcel with a gas station separates the church property from Fremont Boulevard. The other properties are commercial and auto related uses; a large self-storage facility is across Oak street, east of the church property.

The rectangular plan, wood-frame church (1868) has a steep gable roof, pointed arch window openings and exterior channel rustic siding. There is a church spire with a square base on the roof at the entrance to the church. The foundation is partially made of stone. The church was seriously damaged by a fire in May, 1993. The fire totally destroyed the interior, the stained-glass windows, most of the roof, in addition to structurally undermining the building. Given that the building has been left exposed since the fire, it has been damaged further by wind and rain since May, 1993. The church now has a low level of integrity, and is slated to be demolished in the near future.

To the east and north of the church, the church cemetery is laid out in a series of 20 by 20 foot family or group plots with approximately 5 foot wide paths between them. Since the grounds are now so overgrown with foliage, the paths are not visible in most parts of the cemetery. The cemetery is enclosed by a recently installed 6 foot tall chain link fence. Along the northern edge of the cemetery and the western side of the church, the fence cuts across numerous grave sites. Nine of the plots at the northern edge and along the western face of the church were covered by asphalt paving installed in 1974 (Carey & Company 1988:L-1). According to historic photos, the cemetery was open without trees. A number of the trees on the property appear to very old and were planted in relation to the plots (Carey & Company 1988:L-2).

Records indicate that all but five of the designated plots are occupied. The cemetery's many elaborately carved stone monuments and grave markers are generally in very good condition. As a result of deferred maintenance and neglect, however, some of the grave markers and curbing are being undermined and damaged. The iron fencing around the plots is deteriorated. Some of the plots have also been damaged by erosion (Carey & Company 1988:L-2).

Item 19 continued

Brier eventually became the first school superintendent in Alameda County; he died in Centerville in 1887, and was buried in the Centerville Presbyterian Church cemetery.

When the church cemetery was laid out in 1858, graves from other cemeteries in the area, including a cemetery started by John Horner in 1850, were moved to the Presbyterian cemetery. The Centerville Presbyterian cemetery has gravestones dating back to 1847. The Presbyterian Church appointed Charles Hilton as the first superintendent of the cemetery. During the 19th century, many of the important early settlers in Washington Township were buried in the Presbyterian Church cemetery. In addition to W.W. Brier, significant early settlers buried in the cemetery include:

Ezra Decoto, the first settler and farmer in the Decoto area (now part of Union City) starting in the 1860s and namesake for this area.

Henry Curtner, who moved to the Mission San Jose area in 1852, worked on Lyman Beard's pioneer farm and orchard. Curtner bought up parcels of land south of the mission, eventually forming a 4,000 acre ranch, one of the largest in Washington Township (Sandoval 1985:96). Curtner was one of

Item 19 continued

the earliest settlers in Centerville in 1854 (Sandoval 1985:139).

Garrett Norris, who came to California in 1851, was one of the earliest settlers in Centerville in 1854 (Sandoval 1985:139).

Robert Blacow, who came to California for the gold rush in 1849, moved to Washington Township in 1851, had one of the earliest homesteads (especially noted for its thoroughbred sheep) in the Centerville area (Sandoval 1985:166).

Howard Overacker moved to California for the gold rush in 1851, but quickly became discouraged. In 1851, he also became one of the earliest farmers in Washington Township. Overacker became a successful farmer and businessman; his large house and 260 acre estate near Centerville are pictured in the 1878 *Historical Atlas of Alameda County* (Thompson and West 1878:138).

As a result of damage from the 1868 earthquake, the walls of the 1856 church were demolished, and a wood-frame church (extant today) was built on the old foundations. This building was used for religious services for the longest continuous period by a Presbyterian congregation in California.

After World War II, the increase in the congregation's size to over 300 forced the church to move and to build a larger sanctuary in Fremont at 4360 Central Avenue in 1956. Since 1956, the old Centerville church on Fremont Boulevard has been leased to a series of different congregations, and most recently it housed a youth center called "Young Life". A major fire on May 12, 1993 gutted the church's interior and undermined the building's wood-frame structure. The building's continued exposure to wind and rain has damaged it further since the fire. Centerville Presbyterian Church plans to demolish the damaged church building, and sell the property to a Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church wants to build a new church on the site of the old Presbyterian church, and has agreed to restore and maintain the old cemetery (Rev. J. Roberts, 1994)

The Centerville Presbyterian church building does not appear to be eligible for the National Register because damage from the recent fire, and subsequent exposure to the elements since the fire, has severely compromised its integrity. Although the church cemetery has suffered from deferred maintenance and neglect, it was not damaged by the church fire. Overall, the cemetery still retains a good level of integrity. The major monuments and grave markers are generally in good to excellent condition, even though the grounds have not been kept up. Based on historic photographs, the cemetery has always had a simple design, i.e. grid of plots and paths, without any landscaping per se and thus could be easily restored. A few older trees, obviously planted in relation to the plots, have survived, and they contribute to the cemetery's historic character. The 1974 paving over of nine graves, a very small percentage of the several hundred in the cemetery, has only slightly diminished the cemetery's integrity. These nine graves were at the outer perimeter of the cemetery, and it is likely that they did not have monuments (Rev. J. Roberts, 1994).

Item 19 continued

The Centerville Presbyterian Church cemetery is the earliest surviving Protestant cemetery in Washington Township, and it is the oldest surviving cemetery except for the one located at Mission San Jose. The Presbyterian cemetery is also the only historic property surviving from the period of the early settlement (1850s) of Centerville, one of the three earliest towns in Washington Township. All of the other sites and structures related to the Centerville's 19th century origins have been destroyed by the town's extensive redevelopment since World War II. Based on a field inspection of the cemetery, approximately 80% of the grave stones date from the 1860s to the mid-1870s. This estimate of the number of early graves is consistent with burial dates noted in the cemetery register in the archives of the Centerville Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church cemetery apparently was largely filled by the 1880s when a later cemetery opened in the Irvington area (Weed 1994).

In conclusion, the Centerville Presbyterian Church cemetery appears to be individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its significant associations with the early settlement and settlers of Centerville, a town that played an important role in the early history of Washington Township and Alameda County. The cemetery's eligibility is on the basis of its age, and its association with a very early period in this area's settlement. This basis is consistent with National Register Criteria Consideration D regarding cemeteries (see National Register Bulletin 15:34-35; National Register Bulletin 41:10, 16). The cemetery's period of significance is from 1858 to the mid-1870s, the period of Centerville's early settlement and of most of the burials in the cemetery. The eligible area is the assessor's parcel. The area of eligibility includes the site of the church because the cemetery's design in relation to the church is an important feature of its historic significance. The eligible area also includes the paved driveway on the west of the church because the aforementioned graves in this area have not been disinterred, and consequently are still part of the historic cemetery. The paved area is also part of the original parcel donated to the church in 1853.

The Centerville Presbyterian Church and cemetery is listed in the California Inventory of Historic Resources (CAL/OHP 1976). The 1974 Fremont Historic Resource Inventory identified the Centerville Presbyterian church and cemetery as appearing to be individually eligible for the National Register. An updated (1988) Historic Resource Inventory form (DPR 523) for the Centerville Presbyterian church and cemetery also indicated that this property appeared to be eligible for the National Register (both forms are attached). Centerville Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyterian Church cemetery, are each listed on the City of Fremont's list of Primary Historic Resources.

NOTE: In March, 1994 the steeple was removed for future use and the church was demolished.

Item 21 continued

SOURCES

Discussion with Cecilia Weed, President, Washington Township Historical Society, March 10, 1994.

Discussion with the Reverend Frank Roberts, Centerville Presbyterian Church, March 11, 1994.

Register for the Centerville Presbyterian Church cemetery, on file in the church archives, Fremont, California.

Continuation Sheet 4

Item 21 continued

Discussion with John Robert, Landscape Architect, March 9, 1994. Mr. Roberts developed a restoration plan for the cemetery in the 1988 Historic Structures Report on Centerville Presbyterian Church.

Carey & Company, Architecture. Historic Structures Report, Centerville Presbyterian Church, Fremont, California; Unpublished November, 1988 report prepared for the Fremont Community Development Department.

History of Centerville Presbyterian Church. Manuscript in the church archives, Fremont, California.

Lloyd Boles, "Fremont Cemetery Has Tales to Tell of the Pioneer Days," Oakland Tribune, p. 5.

"Church to Celebrate Ninetieth Anniversary," Oakland Tribune, June 1, 1943, p. 9.

John Pachtner, "Church provides excerpt from past," The Argus, November 4, 1969; and "Centerville church's colorful past," The Daily Review, November 5, 1969.

"Centerville Church Observes 95th Anniversary Tomorrow". Unidentified newspaper article in the Gladys Williamson Collection, Fremont Library, local history archives.

Mrs. George W. Wright, A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church of Centerville - Its Foundation and Early Years. Unpublished manuscript in the Fremont Library local history archives.

Sharon LaMarche, "Old church serene in hubbub," The Argus, April 30, 1972, p. 4.

M. W. Mead, History of Alameda County, 1883, pgs. 827-829.

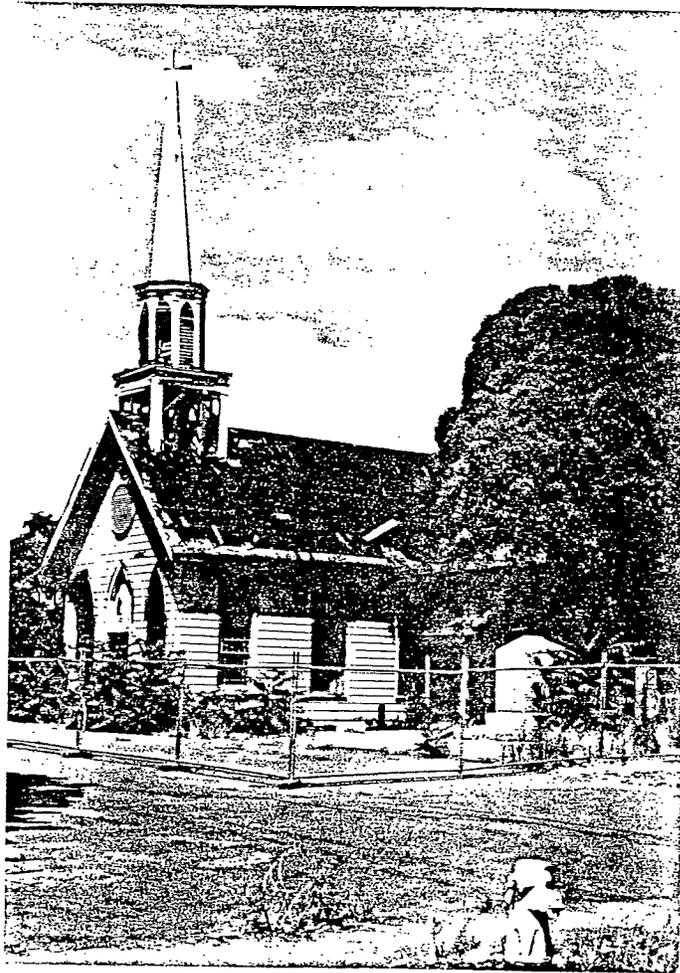
Sandoval, John, The History of Washington Township, 1985.

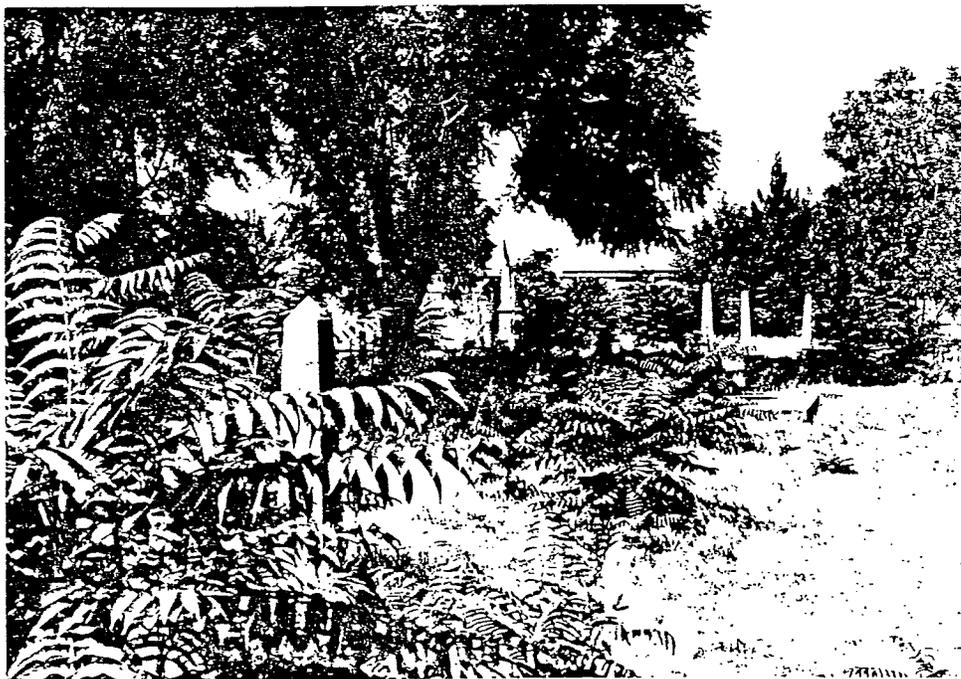
The Country Club of Washington Township, History of Washington Township, 1905, 2nd edition, 1950, pgs. 90-96.

National Register Bulletin 15 (1991), How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

National Register Bulletin 41 (1992), Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places.

Continuation Sheet 5







1426

RANCHO POTRERO DE LOS CERRITOS (T. Pacheco & A. Alviso) (Pat. Bk. A Pg. 70)

EX MISSION SAN JOSE (Case 1-6-15)

P.M. 3734 137/13

P.M. 1542 (Bk. 84 Pg. 71)

P.M. 3169 116/63

P.M. 3562 131/56

P.M. 4079 143/1

1425

Scale: 1" = 100'

MORaine ST.

THORNTON

AVENUE

CO. RD. 8053

POST ST.

STREET

MORaine

1816

4-7-88 RC
6-01-92 DW
10-28-92 DW

499

CO. RD. 397

BOULEVARD

SUR. 99

SUR. 99

SUR. 96

SUR. 97

BONDE WAY

SUR. 95

WALTON

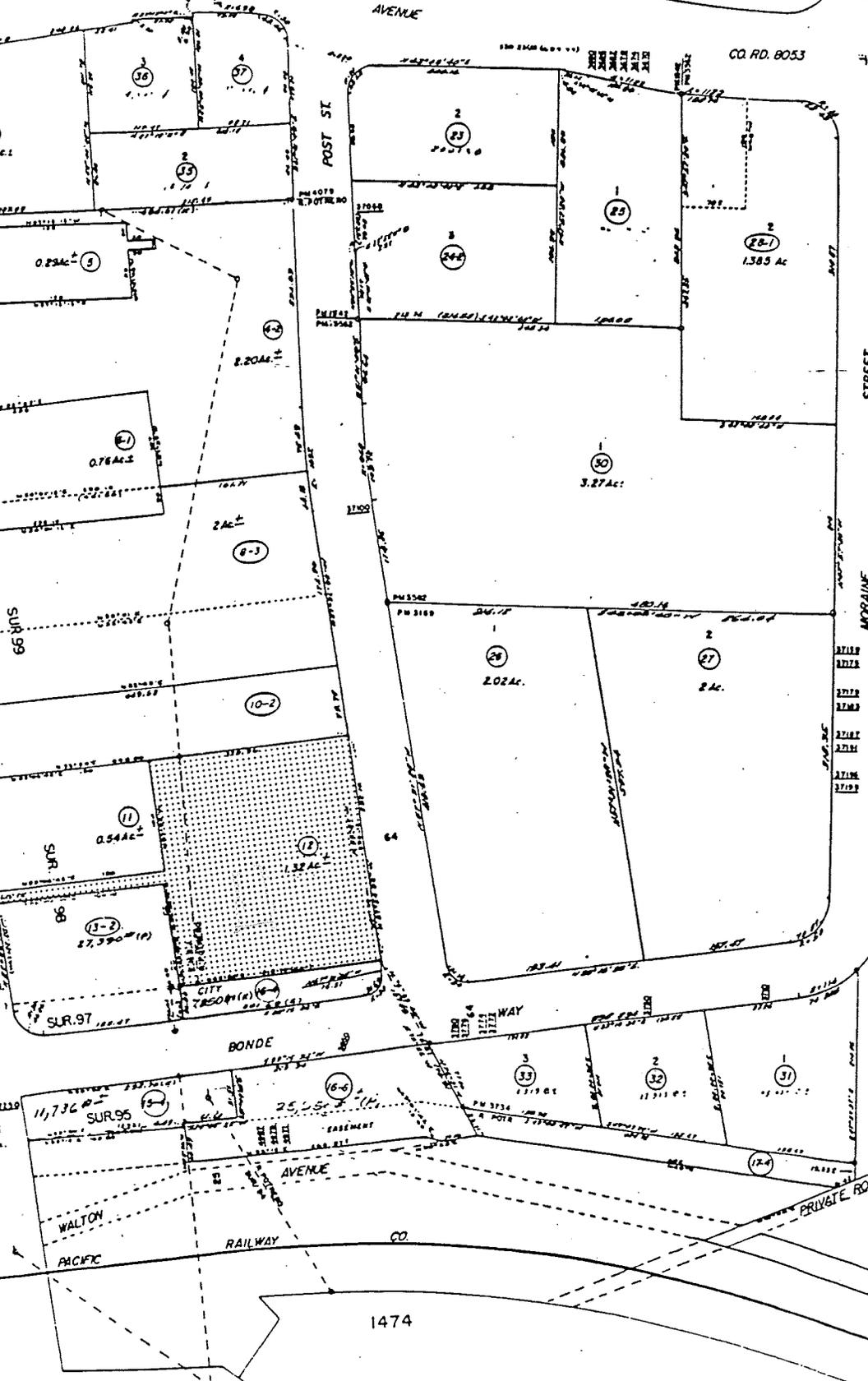
PACIFIC

CENTRAL

PERALTA BLVD.

ACM 31

499



1474

Reference: R/W Map (Bk. 73 Pg 57), R/S 592(11/19)

HPN 37

C HUTCHES

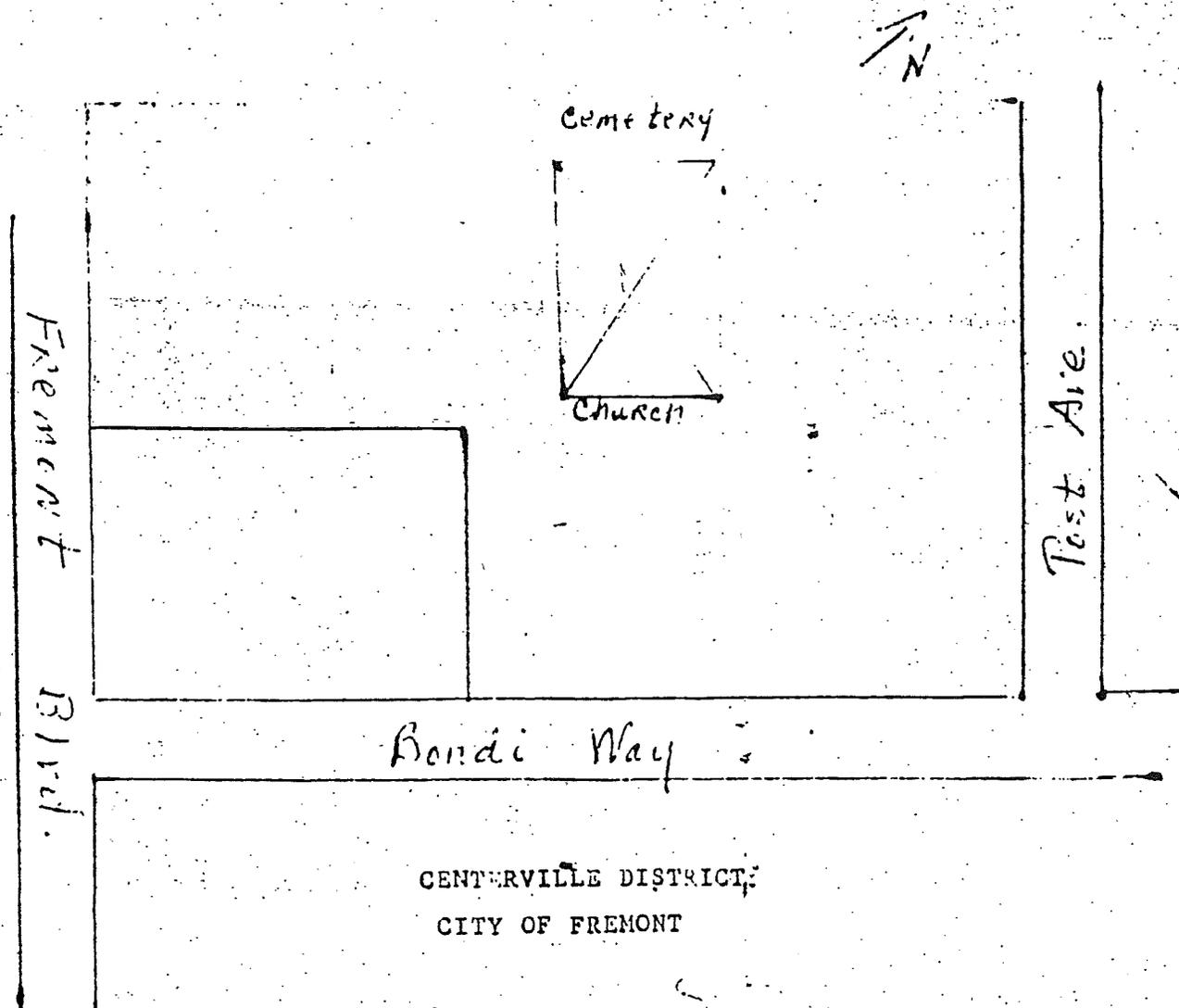
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Site _____
(State Use Only)

2. Common Name CENTERVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
3. Location Fremont Blvd. & Bondi Way, Fremont (Centerville District)
4. Date of Inventory May 1974
5. Status: Occupied Unoccupied _____ Preservation Work in Progress _____
6. Accessible to Public: Yes, Restricted Yes, Unrestricted _____ Not Accessible to Public _____
7. Owner of Property: Name Centerville Presbyterian Church, 4360 Central Avenue
City Fremont State California Zip 94536 Phone _____
8. Approximate Acreage _____ or Approximate Lot Size 250 x 250
9. Representation in existing historic or prehistoric survey (see instructions): Yes No _____ Unknown _____
Name of Survey Fremont Historical Resources PHR B-3
10. Depository for Records: Name City of Fremont
Address 39700 Civic Center Dr. City Fremont State California Unknown _____
11. Representation on current Historic Landmark Registry programs: Yes _____ No _____ Unknown
Which Program _____
12. Description (multiple choice): Altered _____ Unaltered Condition Excellent Good _____ Fair _____
Deteriorated _____ Ruins _____ Unexposed (archeological site) _____
13. Briefly describe the present and original physical appearance of site or structure and note any major alterations:
Original 1853 brick building duplicated after earthquake of 1868 in Gothic wood structure. Attached manse and Sunday school with cemetery. Present structure and cemetery intact and in continuous use.
14. Event of Historical Importance: None _____ Local State _____ National _____ Unknown _____ Describe briefly
(see instructions for architectural exceptions):
Oldest Protestant church in Alameda County - built in 1853.
15. Person of historical importance: Name Rev. W. W. Brier - formed congregation.
Local State _____ National _____ Unknown _____ None _____
See Bancroft Library, U. C. Berkeley
16. Statement of Significance: The finest and purest example of New England style shiplap with Gothic style windows and doorways. It is adjacent to the cemetery in which members of many early Washington Township pioneers are buried.
17. Documents and Books (bibliography): History of Washington Township; History of Alameda County, Wood; The Centennial Year Book of Alameda County, Halley
18. Photographs of site or structure: Yes No _____ (see instructions)

19. Sketch map:

In the space below, draw a sketch map showing the location of the site or structure being inventoried. Label streets and roads and show the distance from the nearest major intersection. Add an arrow to show north on the map.



Mission Peak

20. Form prepared by: Name Heritage Foundation Address P O Box 3405
 City Fremont Phone 656-1591 Organization Washington Township Historical Resources Inventory Committee

THE FOLLOWING (21-26) ARE FOR STRUCTURES ONLY.

Rebuilt Oct. 21, 1868 after earthquake

21. Date of Construction 1853 Factual Estimated Unknown
 Architect Unknown X Builder Charles B. Tool Unknown
22. Basic historic use of structure (see instructions): Religious Services
23. Basic present use of structure (see instructions): Meeting place for "Young World" group.
24. Is structure on original site? Yes No Unknown
25. Present Environment and Threat of Destruction (see instructions)
 Secure Threatened Unknown
26. Area of structure at ground level: Width 20 ft Length 40 ft Unknown
 L-shaped

1 2
(State Use Only)

3 4 5 6 7

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY Key Information

This page of the form is designed for computer programming of key information. There will be some duplication of material from the first page.

9. Historic Name

C E N T E R V I L L E P R Y S B Y T E R I A N C H.
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

10. City, town or rural postal area

F R E M O N T
32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49

Card Number

1
80

11. Street or rural address

F R E M O N T & B O N D I W A Y
50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69

32. Public Ownership (Agency)

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

33. Private Ownership

X
28

34. Item of Interest

Site Object Structure
29 30 31
BLDG
(X)

35. Type

Historic Prehistoric
X 32 33

36. Period

Month Year to Month Year
10 18 53 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

Numbers 37 - 39 are for State Use Only.

37. Geographic Coordinates

Latitude Longitude
46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54

38. Era

Indian Hispanic American
56 57 58
(X)

Card Number

2
80

39. Interpretation

Religion Theme
F +
8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

Subtheme
24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39

Element
E
40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55

Subelement
56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71

Card Number

3
80

UTMA 10/58770/4157250
CENTRAL
MAY