

FOR THE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE MATTER OF THE DPR 523abd)
DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR)
A DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY)
TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF)
HISTORIC PLACES, *including*)

EA 06-48460/06-Ker-58-31.7/55.9
OHP Notification No. RA 683.195.737 US
TRIP: Thomas Roads Improvement Program
Proposed West Park Alignment
Centennial Corridor Project

Multiple Contiguous Properties,)

(Supplement to Locally Registered Properties)

for)

THE ASSOCIATED HOMEOWNERS)
OF GREATER WEST PARK,)

**TRANSMITTAL OF JOHN EDWARD
POWELL IN SUPPORT OF THE DPR
523abd DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED
FOR A FORMAL DETERMINATION
OF ELIGIBILITY FOR LISTING IN THE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC
PLACES – AT THE LOCAL LEVEL OF
SIGNIFICANCE – WITH DISTRICT
STATUS UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ACT, 36 CFR §§ 800.1-800.16**

Property Owners in and of the)
County of Kern, including the)
City of Bakersfield, California,)

CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICE OF)
HISTORIC PRESERVATION, et al.,)

Concerned Parties in Common.)
_____)

JOHN EDWARD POWELL transmits:

AMICUS PRESERVATION BRIEF

*Prepared by John Edward Powell, as an independent cultural resource assessment, on behalf of
the Associated Homeowners of Greater West Park, inclusive of
Kern Woods, Garnsey Avenue and Stockdale Manor*

**National Register Eligibility of Historic Building Districts and Public Landscapes
Historic Kern Woods, Garnsey Avenue, Stockdale Manor and Centennial Park
Bakersfield, California
Circa 1940-1970**

Abstract

For well over half a century, three (3) historically distinguished and contiguous residential neighborhoods, located two miles southwest of downtown Bakersfield, California, have reached maturity relatively undisturbed by public encroachment. Initially developed under the professional direction of a nationally and regionally significant group of architects, architectural designers,

2 Abstract (*continued*)

4 civil engineers, master builders, landscape architects, and horticultural designers, these
 6 neighborhoods exemplify three different subdivision planning types, numerous notable variations
 of California Ranch-style architecture, and several distinctive regional traditions in landscaping as
 planned and built responding to Bakersfield’s post-World War II west-side housing boom.

8
 10 The three subject neighborhoods and an associated public park/landscape fall outside the
 geographical scope of Bakersfield’s existing cultural resource surveys of 1984, 1985, 1988, and
 1991, and are not represented in the Bakersfield Register of Historic Places. They have not been
 12 surveyed by the City or mapped by its Historic Preservation Commission for potential inclusion –
 in whole or in part – in its listings of locally designated historic properties and districts. As of 2
 14 July 2009, the subject properties could not be identified by the Southern San Joaquin Valley
 Information Center, further necessitating this independent study and its resulting assessments.

16
 18 This Amicus Preservation Brief (APB) specifically focuses on a distinguished regional
 resource of both pre- and post-World War II California Ranch-style properties now exceeding the
 federally mandated 50-year marker for historic evaluation. The study conforms with current
 20 guidelines corresponding to federal formulae followed during the 1970s, when nationwide a
 generation of American Arts & Crafts and Craftsman Bungalow properties, circa 1910-1925 –
 22 highly prized architectural resources today – met the primary criterion of 50 years in age. Ranch-
 style properties are presently the national resource being accorded the equivalent 50-year review.

24
 26 The independently assembled data enumerated in this APB are provided as a
 neighborhood-sponsored precursor to a comprehensive property-by-property Historic Property
 Survey Report (HPSR) thought forthcoming under the auspices of Caltrans and the Thomas Roads
 28 Improvement Project (TRIP), as mandated by federal law under Section 106 of the National
 Historic Preservation Act, 36 CFR §§ 800.1-800.16.

30
 32 In addition to its substantial annotated resource bibliography, this APB provides an
 invaluable working template cataloguing the requisite qualitative and statistical characteristics of
 Kern Woods, Garnsey Avenue, Stockdale Manor, and Centennial Park to determine their district
 34 eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C of the National
 Register Criteria, at the local level of significance.

36 Professional Note about the Preparer

38
 40 John Edward Powell, A.B., M.A., studied design, art history, and architectural history at
 Stanford University and Stanford-in-Britain. He completed graduate work at Stanford University;
 California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland; and the University of Idaho, Moscow. He
 42 subsequently undertook sabbatical studies at Haystack Mountain School, Deer Isle, Maine. Since
 1977, Powell has worked professionally in the fields of historic preservation and California
 44 architectural history. His formal emphases are architectural biography and the archival
 conservation of architectural records, renderings, and drawings. His research has been recognized
 46 by the National Endowment for the Arts; the California Committee for the Promotion of History; the
 College of Fellows Fund, American Architectural Foundation; the California Council, American
 48 Institute of Architects; and a 2005 Governor’s Award in Historic Preservation.

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2 **Summary of Plates: Illustrations, Photographs, and Maps**

4 *A Selected Sampling of Visual Materials and Documents Available through*
6 *Institutional Archives, Libraries, Private Collections, and Public Records*

- 8 Plate 1 Photographic Aerial Map, Section 35, Township 29 South, Range 27 East
- 10 Plate 2 Tract No. 1800–Sheet No. 2, Kern Woods
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- 14 Plate 4 Tract No. 2483, Kern Woods Extension, Marella Way Curve, Pedestrian Walkway
- 16 Plate 5 Student Architectural Association, Kern County Union High School, 1932
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- 24 Plate 9 Five Star Home No. 2606, *Better Homes & Gardens*
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- 30 Plate 12 Photographic View of Finger Plan Classrooms, Harris Elementary School
- 32 Plate 13 Preliminary Floor Plan, H. Victor Church Residence
- 34 Plate 14 Front Architectural Elevation, A. B. Newby Residence
- 36 Plate 15 Front Architectural Elevation, Charles Hanning Residence
- 38 Plate 16 Front Architectural Elevation for Mobilhome Plan No. 941D
- 40 Plate 17 Newspaper Advertisement, Mobilhome Corporation of America
- 42 Plate 18 Delivery of Mobilhome Dwelling, Mobilhome Corporation of America
- 44 Plate 19 Aerial Photograph, Earl R. Warford Residence
- 46 Plate 20 Photographic View of Front Elevation, Earl R. Warford Residence

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Comparative Summary Statistics for Historic District Consideration

Statistical Formula: To qualify for historic district consideration, a minimum of two-thirds of the properties in a clearly demarcated residential neighborhood or a specific subdivision tract must meet the basic standard of 50 years in age or more.

Minimum Compliance Requirement
— 66²/₃% —

**Kern Woods Historic District, Phase No. 1 (1956)
Kern County Tract No. 1800**

Summary Statistics

1. 2009 — 88.8% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+22.1%) ‡
2. 2010 — 95.2% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+28.5%)

**Kern Woods Historic District, Combined Phases No. 1 and No. 2 (1956-1960)
Kern County Tracts No. 1800 and No. 2483**

Summary Statistics

3. 2009 — 74.6% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+7.9%)
4. 2010 — 83.3% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+16.6%)

**Historic Garnsey Road (1931)
Section 35, Township 29 South, Range 27 East., M. D. B. & M.**

Summary Statistics

5. 2009 — 67.9% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+1.2%)
6. 2010 — 73.5% National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (+6.8%)

**Historic Stockdale Manor (1954)
Sampling from Kern County Tract No. 1753**

Summary Statistics

7. 2009 — 95% ± Potential National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (±28.3%)
8. 2010 — 95% ± Potential National Register District Eligibility Age Compliance (±28.3%)

‡ National Register – National Register of Historic Places, U.S. Department of the Interior

2 **Architectural Integrity and the Guiding “Rule of Thumb”**

4 The seven (7) principal observations applied to properties identified in this Amicus
6 Preservation Brief to assess the affirmative presence of architectural integrity are defined for the
 purposes of this study as follows:

8 *Location* (the property has not been physically relocated from its original site).

10 *Design* (the architectural idiom of the property and/or other distinguishing stylistic
12 characteristics are identifiable, classifiable, and relevant to local, regional, state, or
 national architectural history).

14 *Setting* (the principal views looking toward the property, and the principal views
16 looking away from the property, have not been unduly altered by a loss of neighboring
 structures; or have not been unduly obstructed by man-made forms or radical changes in
18 the natural terrain. Landscapes – both indigenous and ornamental – are expected to
 display anticipated, thus acceptable, growth and maturity. Growth and maturity do not
20 negate considerations of the historic setting, although a loss of landscape may).

22 *Materials* (the property retains a reasonable percentage of its original building
24 product(s) – generally 75% or more – as spelled out in original architectural plans and
 specifications, again subject to acceptable evolutionary changes expected from
 generation to generation).

26 *Workmanship* (the property continues to reflect the prevailing methods, finishes, and
28 standards of construction as originally engineered at the time of its completion).

30 *Feeling* (the property retains reasonable physical suggestions of its original place in
32 time, without necessarily being “locked” in the past, since – once again – all properties
 undergo acceptable evolutionary changes from generation to generation).

34 *Association* (the property retains reasonable but more intuitive suggestions of its context
36 in time, with an ability to evoke an awareness of its era of origin, as well as the significant
 events that defined that era socially, politically, and culturally).

38 Although a property may display aspects of each of these seven (7) components, it is neither
 required nor essential that all seven (7) be absolutely evident concurrently.

40 **“The Rule of Thumb”**

42 The guiding “Rule of Thumb” as applied to establish architectural integrity is as follows:
44 Were the original architect, builder, owner, members of the owner’s family, or immediate neighbors
 to view the property today, would they definitively be able to recognize the property?

46 If so, the basic integrity standard has been met, in spite of any questions regarding material
48 condition, as long as an adverse condition is clearly reversible. The material condition of a property
 (e.g., paint, shingles, masonry, etc., in need of repair) is evaluated separately from integrity.

Summary of National Register Justifications

National Register Criterion C: Kern Woods and Garnsey Avenue

Kern Woods and Garnsey Avenue appear eligible for consideration and potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places as mid-20th century “residential districts,” at the local level of significance under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria. The Districts qualify as follows:

1. They are comprised of a very high percentage of individual properties that will exceed – Kern Woods at 83.3%, and Garnsey Avenue at 73.5% – the two-thirds minimum 50-year compliance requirement by 2010. In 2013, Garnsey Avenue will exceed the minimum 50-year compliance requirement at 81%.
2. They are the collective products of a distinguished group of master builders, architects, and designers who met the needs of middle, upper-middle, and high income homeowners in a geographically isolated semi-rural setting, now semi-urban, following both established and/or accepted architectural controls.
3. They have long been recognized locally as highly desirable residential neighborhoods having unpretentious but well-studied architectural characteristics, mature landscaping, quiet streets, close proximity to the civic center, and excellent schools. They are exemplary of mid-20th century custom-planned and custom-built residential development types that have for over half a century – as maintained by several generations of residents – preserved the long-term objectives of their original design concepts, qualities, and neighborhood values.
4. They substantially meet the required standards of architectural and material integrity, including a horticulturally rich landscaped setting with well established tree-lined arterial vistas.

National Register Criterion B: Kern Woods and Garnsey Avenue

Secondary social and cultural associations appear applicable under Criterion B of the National Register Criteria at the local level of significance.

National Register Criterion C: Stockdale Manor

Stockdale Manor would appear eligible for further critical evaluation under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria, as representative of the pioneer work of nationally lauded modernists Smith and Williams. At 95% ±, it presently exceeds the two-thirds minimum 50-year compliance requirement, but requires a comprehensive property-by-property integrity assessment.

National Register Criterion B: Stockdale Manor

Secondary social and cultural associations appear applicable under Criterion B of the National Register Criteria at the local level of significance.

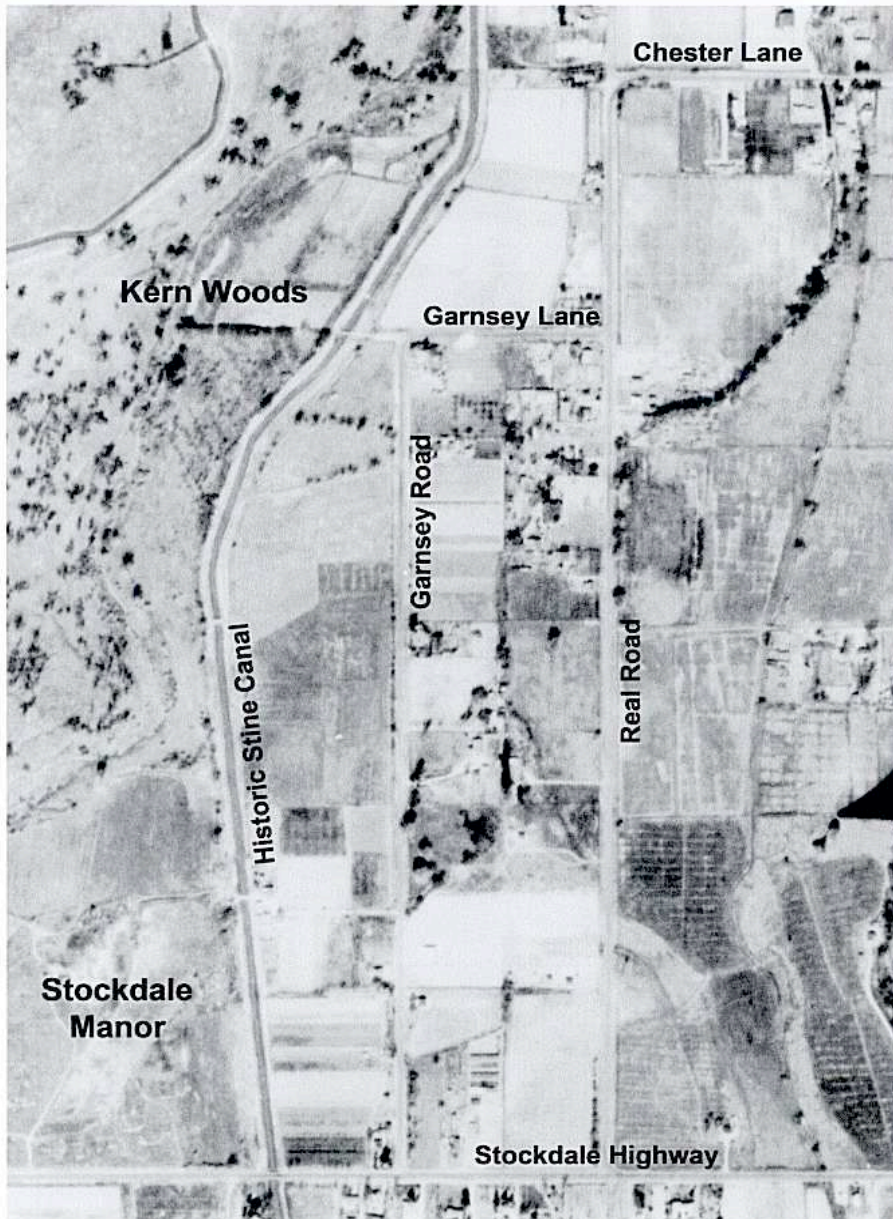
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— Plate 1 —

Photographic Aerial Map

Section 35, Township 29 South, Range 27 East, Bakersfield (Kern County), California

Circa 1946



Source:

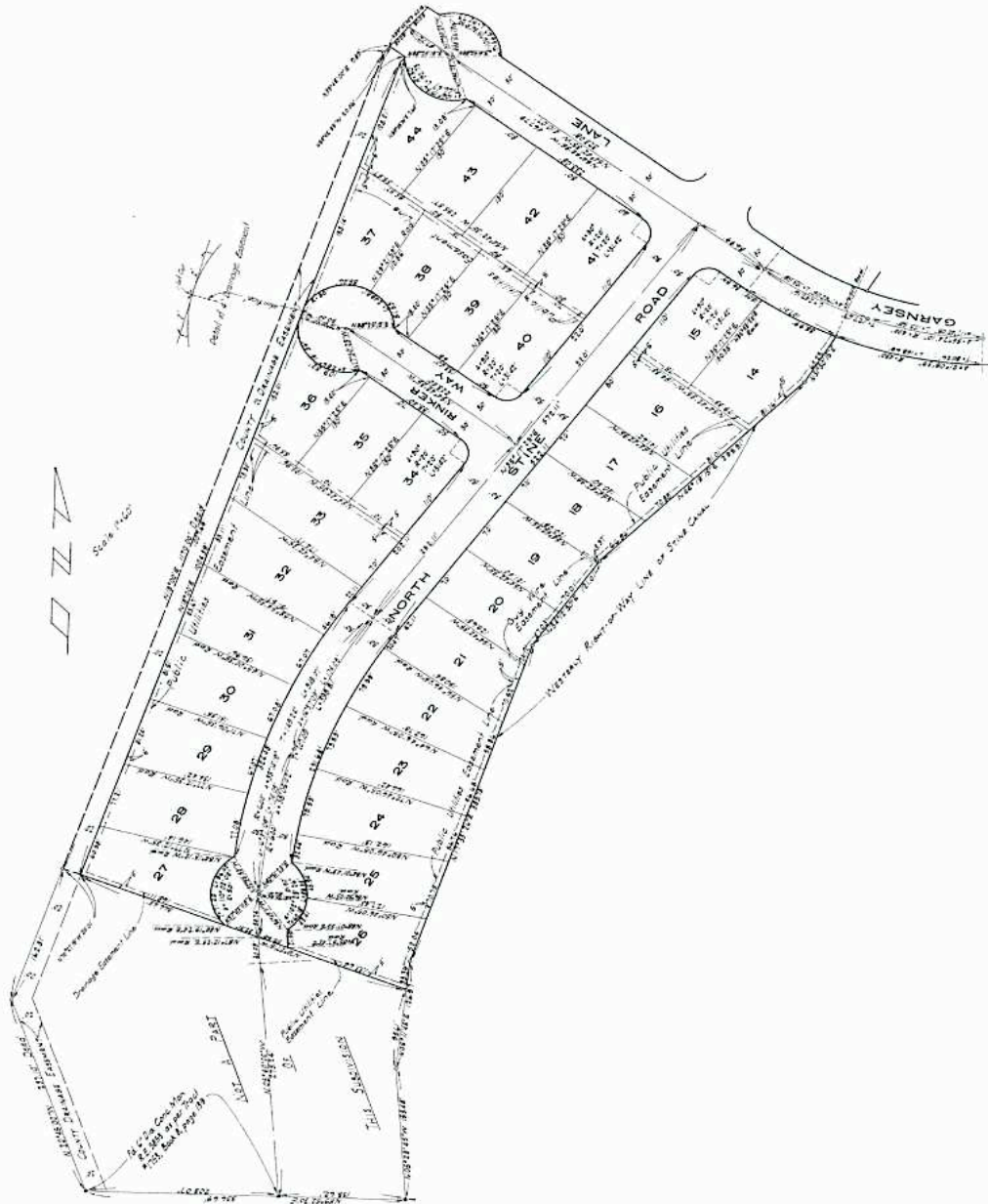
Resource Management Agency, County of Kern

— Plate 2 —

Tract No. 1800 – Sheet No. 2

Kern Woods

1956



Source:

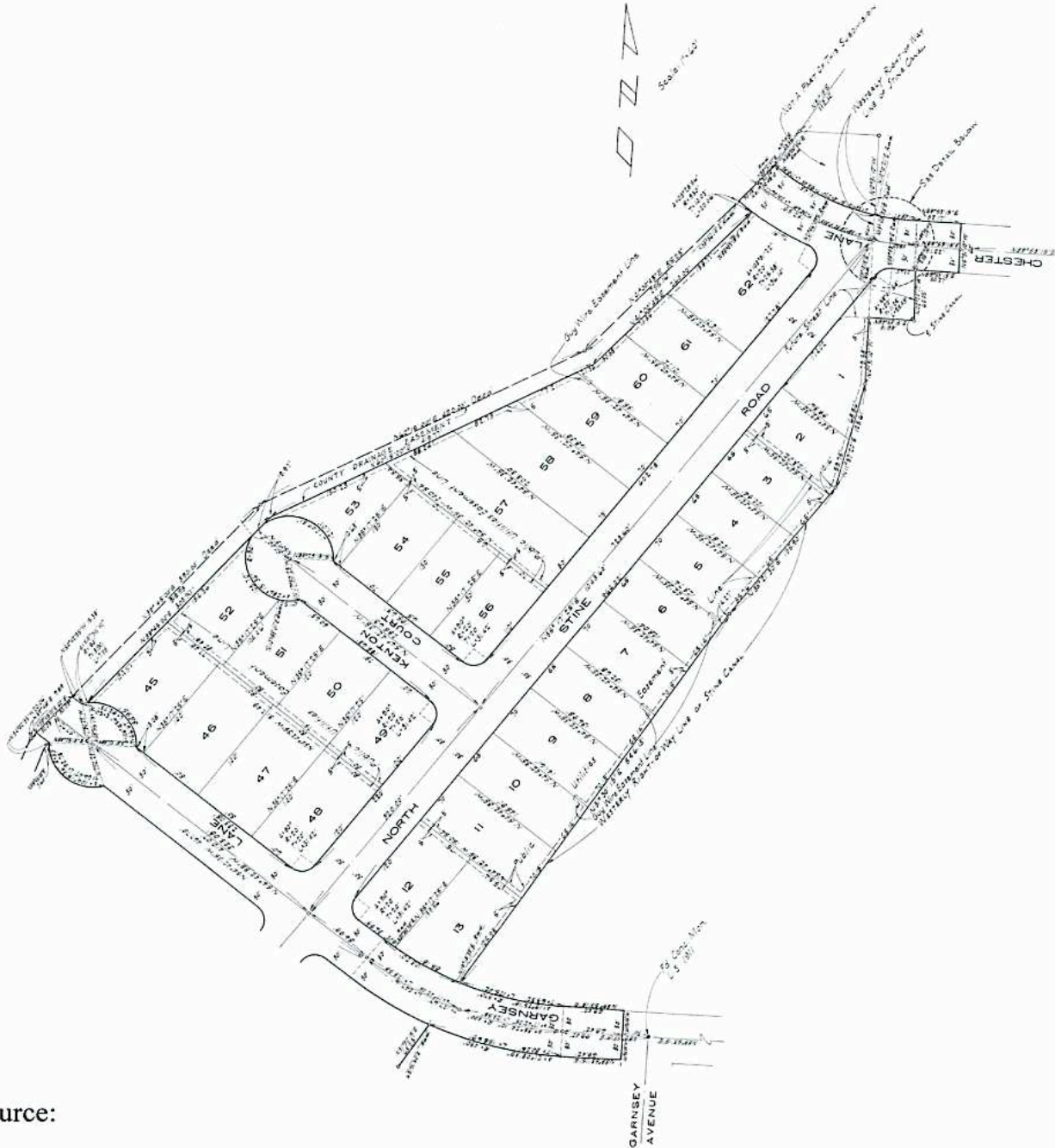
Kern County Recorder, Kern County Hall of Records

— Plate 3 —

Tract No. 1800 – Sheet No. 3

Kern Woods

1956



Source:

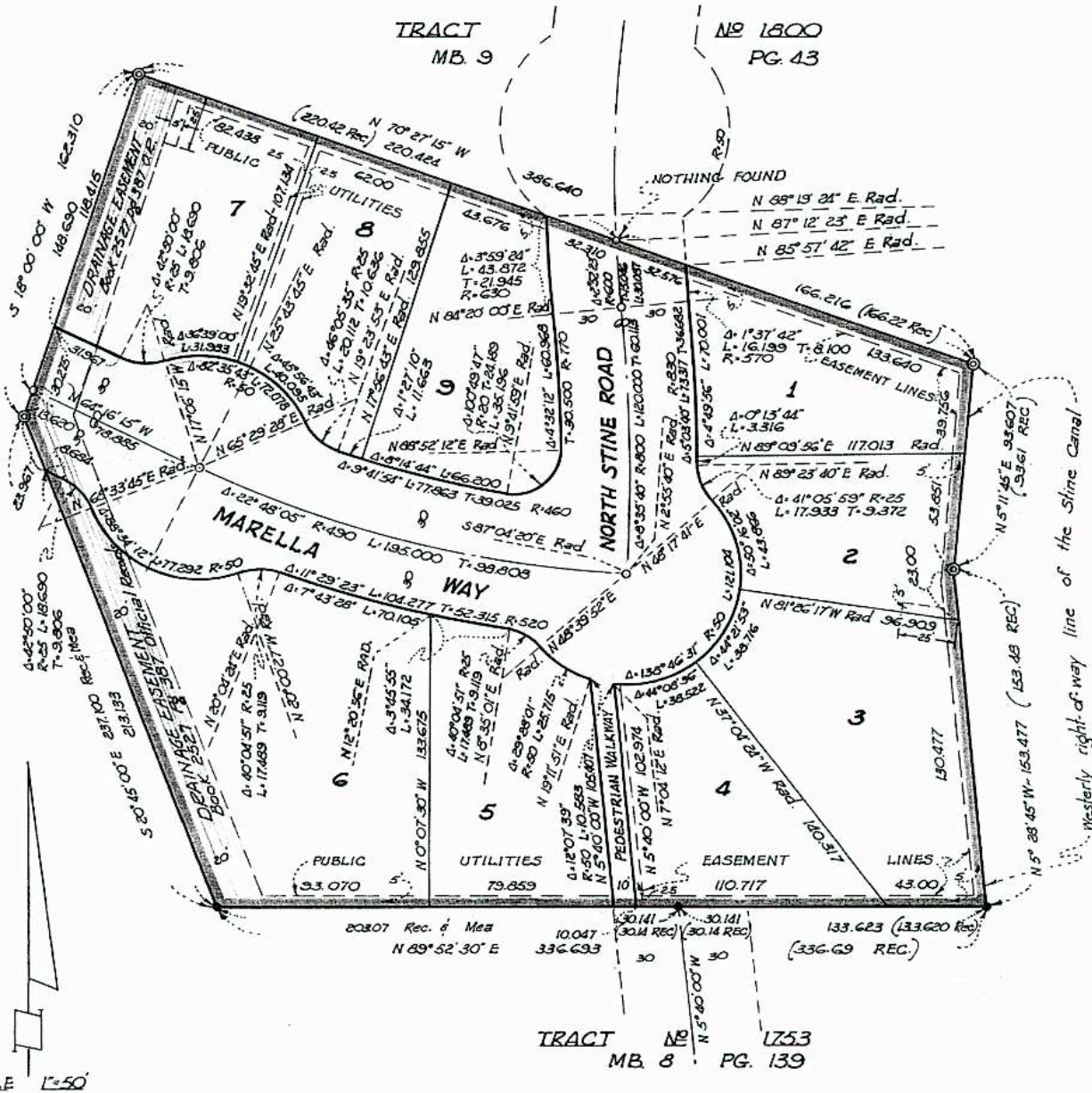
Kern County Recorder, Kern County Hall of Records

— Plate 4 —

Tract No. 2483

Kern Woods Extension – Marella Way Curve – Pedestrian Walkway

1960



Source:

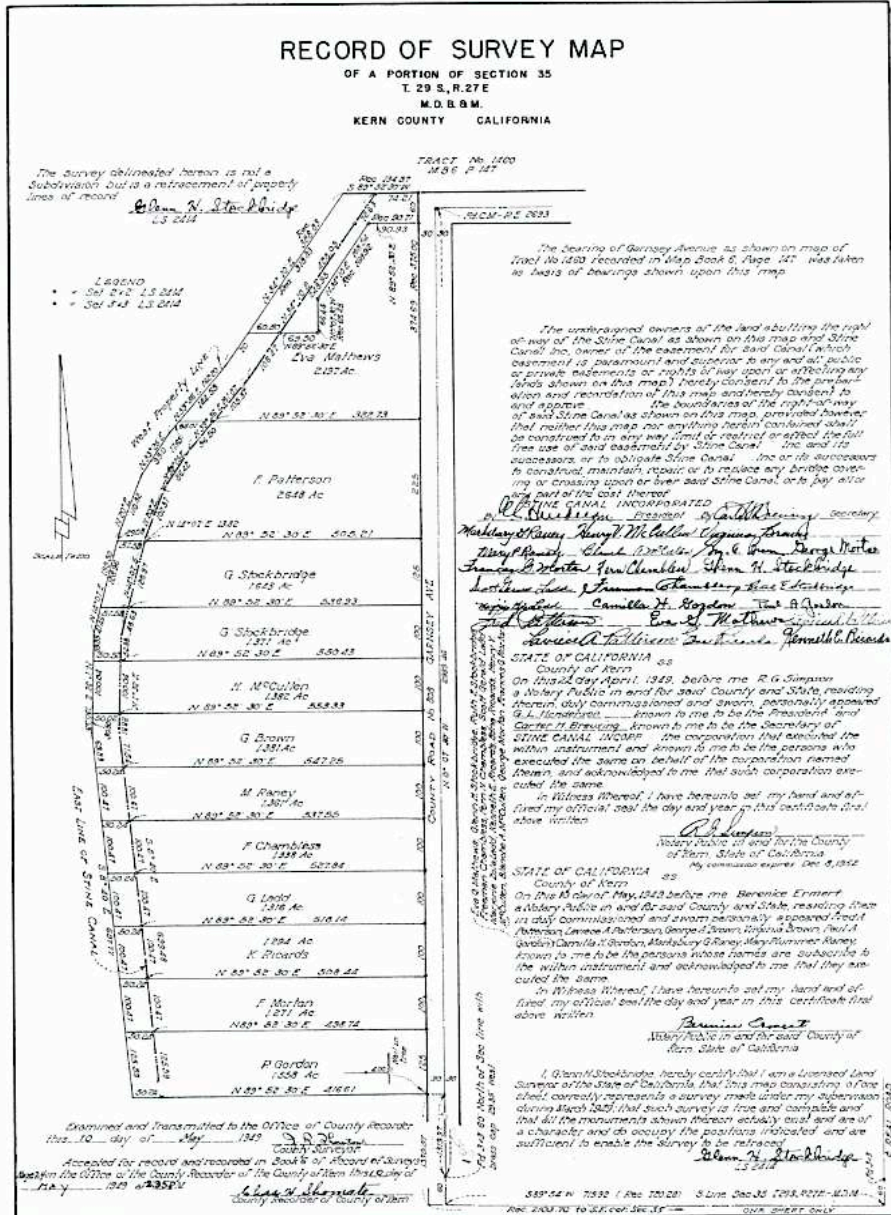
Kern County Recorder, Kern County Hall of Records

— Plate 6 —

Record of Survey Map

Portion of Section 35, T. 29 S., R. 27 E., M. D. B. & M.

1949



Source:

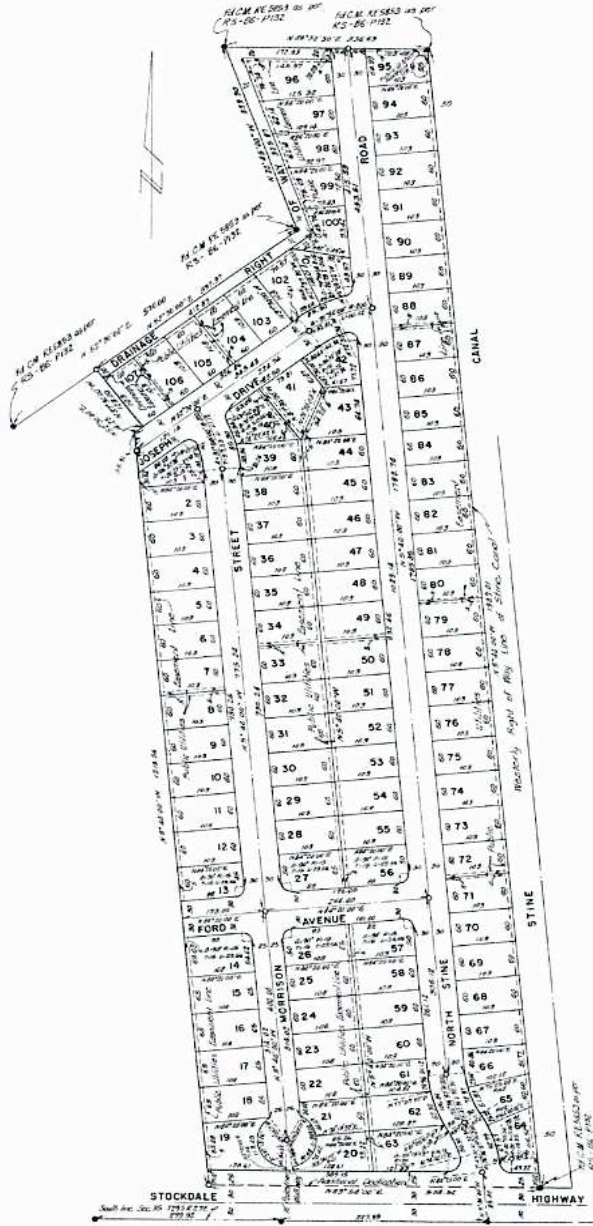
Kern County Recorder, Kern County Hall of Records

— Plate 7 —

Tract No. 1753

Stockdale Manor

1954



Source:

Kern County Recorder, Kern County Hall of Records

— Plate 10 —

Assessor's Map No. 20-01

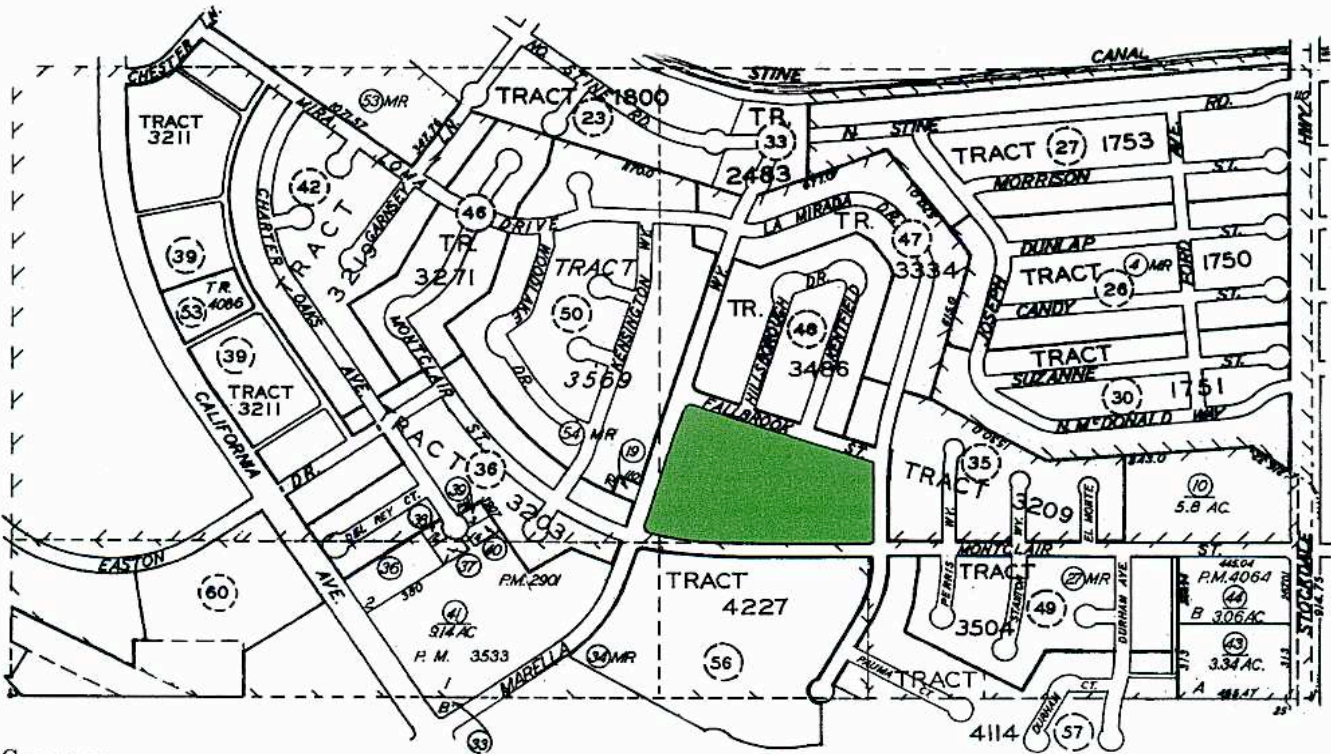
Revised 2004

Centennial Park

8.96 Acres

William Grant Brown, Frank Fabbri, James Dale Hawley, and William Jing
Landscape Architecture, Ornamental Horticultural Design and Civil Engineering

1969-1970



Source:

Office of the Assessor, County of Kern

Annotated Resource Bibliography

Note from the compiler: A sampling of representative obituaries has been selected for National Register of Historic Places Criterion B considerations. These have been cited and their narrative accounts abridged for their applicable biographical data. Any references to academic matriculation, as recounted by the original authors of the obituaries, may warrant state consultants to procure further corroboration. This may be done by contacting transcript and records offices at the individual colleges and universities listed. FERPA guidelines, restrictions, and access fees may apply, and vary from campus to campus, including out-sourcing fees and charges that are now more commonly assessed by outside contract service providers.

Abrams, Ned, H., Architect, FAIA., California No. C-697. *Architectural Plans for Residence 941D*. Prepared for Mobilhome Corporation of America, Bakersfield, California, 15 September 1950.

Note: Ned H. Abrams, FAIA, was also registered to practice architecture in Arizona, #1344; Illinois, #3326; Michigan, #6761; Nevada, #29; Oregon, #375; Utah, #150; Washington, #TL533; and was certified by NCARB, #1027.

Builder's set courtesy of the Construction Set Archives of the former Isotherm Company, Inc., Bakersfield, Fresno, Modesto, and Santa Barbara.

Advertisement. "Before You Buy, See Kern Woods—An Architecturally Controlled Subdivision." *Bakersfield Californian*, 7 July 1956, 27.

Advertisement. "By Popular Demand, Gala Grand Opening 2nd Unique Unit! Stockdale Manor 'Designed for Total Living'." *Bakersfield Californian*, 5 March 1955, 7.

So fabulous the first unit of 107 homes sold out in record time! So exciting you'll say, "Here's tomorrow's home today! ... An entirely new concept of California indoor-outdoor living!" Planned for sun orientation, you get the sun you wish ... the shade you need. See the delightfully different covered social terraces ... the shimmering wall of glass

606 North Stine Road: Priced at \$17,950. Built by Randall E. Presley

618 North Stine Road: Priced at \$23,550. Built by Jack Westerman

Advertisement. "Kern Woods, An Architecturally Controlled Subdivision." *Bakersfield Californian*, 16 June 1956, 27.

Advertisement. "Kern Woods, Secluded yet Close to Town." *Bakersfield Californian*, 30 June 1956, 29.

Advertisement. "Look at Every Inch! Inside, Outside, Every Inch Designed for Total Living! Stockdale Manor." *Bakersfield Californian*, 28 May 1955, 5.

Appendix A

**CALIFORNIA
HISTORICAL
RESOURCES
INFORMATION
SYSTEM**



**FRESNO
KERN
KINGS
MADERA
TULARE**

Southern San Joaquin Valley
Information Center
California State University, Bakersfield
9001 Stockdale Highway
31 MW
Bakersfield, California 93311-1022
(661) 654-2289 FAX (661) 654-2415
E-mail: ssjvic@csub.edu

John Edward Powell, A.B., M.A.
Archetectural Historian
512 North Stine Road
Bakersfield, CA 93309-1183

July 2, 2009

RE: Request for Historical Evaluation Reports in the City of Bakersfield, CA.

Mr. Powell,

The five (5) reports sent to you on June 23, 2009 (concerning the following areas: Bike Path and SP Bridge, Amtrak Station, Garces Circle, Buena Vista & Old River, and Lane Additions to Hwy 99) are all the reports we have on file for Historic Property Evaluations in the Bakersfield area, sans those specified in your request letter. We do not have any additional information for the specific areas in which you expressed interest (Historic Garnsey Road, Historic Kern Woods, Historic Stockdale Manor, and Historic Centennial Park). If you have any further questions or concerns in this matter, feel free to contact our office.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Celeste M. Thomson".

Celeste M. Thomson
Admin. Support Assist. II

Appendix B



June 16, 2009

John Edward Powell, A.B., M.A.
Architectural Historian
512 North Stine Road
Bakersfield, CA 93309-1183

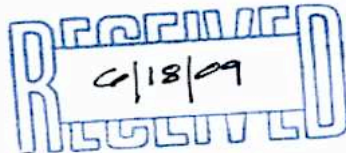
Dear Mr. Powell,

In response to your May 22, 2009 letter, I can verify that the surveys dated June 1984, June 1985, December 1988 and June 1991 completed by Chris Brewer are the only surveys undertaken by the City of Bakersfield. No surveys supersede or supplement these surveys.

Please call if you have questions.

Sincerely,


Donna Barnes
Development Associate



City of Bakersfield • Economic and Community Development Department
1600 Truxtun Avenue • Suite 300 • Bakersfield • California 93301
(661) 326-3765 • Fax (661) 328-1548 • TDD (661) 324-3631

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Appendix C



Kern County Historical Society

Gilbert Gia, President

Post Office Box 141 • Bakersfield, CA 93302-0141

Phone: (661) 872-1480 • <http://www.kchistoricalociety.org/>

October 7, 2009

John Edward Powell
512 North Stine Road
Bakersfield, CA 93309-1183

Dear Mr. Powell:

The Kern County Historical Society board agrees with you that the continuing destruction of historic Bakersfield structures must be brought under control.

Our understanding is that the City of Bakersfield and the County of Kern do not have comprehensive, current historic building surveys for the three neighborhoods you identify in the West Park neighborhood: Kern Woods, Garnsey Avenue, and Stockdale Manor.

We share in your concern for these and other unsurveyed neighborhoods vulnerable to destruction and which are significant to the history of regional architecture in California. Representative of other potentially vulnerable local neighbors are Skyline Park above Alta Vista Drive, La Cresta Heights near Garces High School, and Primavera Park near East Bakersfield High School, the latter subdivision once known as the Hollywood of Bakersfield.

You are correct that under current economic conditions local governments are hard-pressed to fund professional surveys, and we agree that residents of endangered neighborhoods must be proactive whenever their homes, buildings, and histories are threatened by calls for modernization.



Gilbert Gia

Amicus Preservation Brief Concurrence

**National Register Eligibility of Historic Building Districts and Public Landscapes
Historic Kern Woods, Garnsey Avenue, Stockdale Manor and Centennial Park
Bakersfield, California
Circa 1940-1970**

For the further reference of the State Office of Historic Preservation and any other reviewing agencies, I have attached a true and correct copy of my curriculum vitae (Appendix D, pp. 171-173). Furthermore, any data omissions or transcription errors – in a document of this scope – are wholly unintentional, and may be attributed to me alone.

John Edward Powell

Agency Receipt and Comment

Received by: Title Date

Reviewed by: Title Date

Concurrence by: Title Date

Written comments pending submission of determination to the State Historic Preservation Office:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

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6
8 THE PRELIMINARY HISTORIC ASSESSMENTS
IN THIS DOCUMENT
10 HAVE BEEN COMPLETED IN MEMORY OF

12 NANCY PHIPPS WILDER POWELL
1921-2009

14 WHO DAILY TOOK HER WALK
16 THROUGHOUT THE WEST PARK NEIGHBORHOOD
ON HER WAY TO CENTENNIAL PARK

18 SHE WAS KNOWN AND ADMIRER BY HER NEIGHBORS
20 YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE
FOR HER APPRECIATION OF THE OUTDOORS
22 AND HER DEDICATION TO WALKING FOR
PLEASURE AND GOOD HEALTH