

Appendix C  
*Historic Resource Evaluation and  
Project Impact Analysis*

ALDERSLY RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
326 MISSION AVENUE  
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION (HRE)  
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA  
[17150]

PREPARED FOR:  
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ALDERSLY RETIREMENT COMMUNITY



PAGE & TURNBULL

imagining change in historic environments through design, research, and technology

DECEMBER 12, 2017

FINAL



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of Gilbert Carrasco at Aldersly Retirement Community to advise proposed master planning efforts at the campus at 326 Mission Avenue (APN 014-054-31), a few blocks east of downtown San Rafael (**Figure 1**). The property consists of residential and administrative buildings, as well as an extensive network of landscaped pedestrian paths and gardens connecting the buildings on the campus. Aldersly opened as a non-profit retirement home in 1921, then known as the “Danish Old People’s Home,” which originally catered only to the elderly Danish populations of the Bay Area, greater California, and Nevada. Aldersly residents were initially housed in an existing Victorian residence on the property, known as the ‘White House,’ but by 1922, funds were raised to commission Petaluma architect Brainerd Jones to design Aldersly’s first new building, a residence “for single men.” Although the campus has evolved significantly over the last century, the property remains in use as a non-profit, Danish-oriented retirement home and continuing care community.



Figure 1. Assessors Map of the subject property, parcel shaded orange.  
Source: Marin County Assessor. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

Today, the Aldersly campus comprises 11 buildings on a single parcel, all named after Danish royal palaces and designed in a variety of styles, reflecting their periods of construction. The proposed campus master plan will also affect two adjacent residential parcels to the northeast, 121 and 123 Union Street, which are evaluated in separate Historic Resource Evaluation reports. The Aldersly parcel is currently zoned as PD (Planned Development), while the two adjacent parcels are zoned R (residential).

None of the individual components of the subject property are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), or San Rafael’s Historic Properties list, nor are they located within the boundaries of any recorded historic district.

## SUMMARY OF HISTORIC EVALUATION FINDINGS

The Aldersly Retirement Community facility consists of residential, administrative, and healthcare institutional buildings, as well as an extensive network of landscaped pedestrian paths, stairs, and gardens, connecting the campus. Aldersly residents were initially housed in an existing Victorian estate on the property, the ‘White House’, but by 1922, funds were raised to expand the campus and construct new residential and infirmary buildings. None of the original buildings of the Aldersly campus remain extant, since the campus has evolved substantially over the last century, including four waves of redevelopment (1940s, 1960s, 1990s, 2004). However, the property remains in use as a non-profit Danish-oriented continuing care community and continues to convey its historic character through its overall composition of spatial volumes; Second Bay Tradition-style buildings; unique integration of buildings, views, landscape, and cultural features; and thoughtfully designed, resident-focused apartments and social spaces.

Aldersly is predominantly comprised of eight residential and administrative buildings, designed by the well-known healthcare institutional architect, Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates, in the Second Bay Tradition style from 1961 to 1968. The oldest extant campus building is the residential Minor Building, which was constructed in 1945 by an unknown architect in a vernacular style with Classical Revival features. Later additions to the campus replaced the original Infirmary and Nursing facilities in the early 1990s, and a contemporary-style Assisted Living Facility was constructed in 2004. While several interior renovations have been made over time to modernize the facilities, and two large building additions have altered and expanded the east side of the campus, these changes have not been found to compromise the property’s overall historic character and integrity. Page & Turnbull finds that the Aldersly property is eligible for significance in the California Register and San Rafael Historic Properties List as a potential historic district for three principal reasons.

First, the property has been found significant for its continued association with events that have made an important contribution to the broad patterns of local and regional history, and the cultural heritage of California. Since its founding, Aldersly has served as a cultural center for Danish-Americans from the Bay Area, greater California, and Nevada. Secondly, the campus’s age-eligible buildings (45 years or older) from the 1961-68 period of development appear to be early exemplary works of Rex Whitaker Allen, one of the region’s most prolific and innovative mid-twentieth century healthcare institutional architects. Additionally, while no one building was found to be individually significant, the Allen-designed buildings collectively exhibit a full expression of the Second Bay Tradition style and each conveys a unique expression of Second Bay Tradition character-defining features. The significance of this potential historic district is further conveyed through this particularly rare grouping of Second Bay Tradition and mixed-use (residential and institutional) buildings in the Bay Area. In addition to the 1960s-era buildings, the Minor Building (1945) would also be considered a contributor, as it is the oldest extant campus building and its brick cladding likely influenced the materiality of Allen’s buildings. The two later additions to the campus (1992 and 2004) would not be considered contributors to this eligible historic district.

Lastly, the integrated connection of Aldersly’s interiors to the surrounding landscape is a character-defining feature of the Second Bay Tradition style and an original intent of Allen’s design to preserve the property’s garden-like setting and prioritize resident comfort by providing more opportunities for circulation, interaction, and respite. While the contributing buildings are the primary components of this eligible historic district, it is the historic relationship of the campus’s buildings with the landscape and site topography, and the resulting cohesive nature of the entire property, which forms the basis of the property’s eligibility for significance as a historic district.

## **SUMMARY OF CEQA FINDINGS**

The subject property has been found eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Places and the San Rafael Historic Properties List, thus qualifying as a historic resource for the purposes of review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The nine age-eligible buildings, inclusive of the campus landscape, are considered eligible for significance as a historic district under California Register Criterion 1 (Event) and Criterion 3 (Architecture), and for inclusion on the San Rafael Historic Properties List.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This report provides architectural and landscape descriptions based on field survey, discusses the property's historic contexts, and examines the current historic status and potential significance of all age-eligible (at least 45 years old) resources, as well as the Aldersly campus as a potential historic district. The report will also assess integrity of the property and outline character-defining features of any identified historic resources. The HRE then includes an evaluation of the property's eligibility for listing in the California Register and San Rafael Historic Properties list.

Page & Turnbull visited the site in early October 2017 to conduct a survey of the campus. This report was prepared using research collected online and at various archives, including Marin County Free Library's Anne T. Kent California Room (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, "Aldersly" file, and San Rafael city directories); the Marin County Assessor's Office; the City of San Rafael Building Division, and the San Francisco Public Library. Page & Turnbull also conducted research via Aldersly staff in the facility's historic archives, who provided historical photographs, maps, and newspaper articles. Other sources explored for this report include [historicaerials.com](http://historicaerials.com), the Online Archive of California, the Internet Archive, [Newspapers.com](http://Newspapers.com), and [Arcat Journals](http://Arcat Journals). Photographs were taken of all buildings and landscape features to document existing conditions on October 4, 2017, unless noted otherwise.

## II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historical ratings currently assigned to the subject property.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

The buildings and features of the subject property are not currently listed in the National Register individually or as part of a registered historic district.<sup>1</sup>

### CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

The buildings and features of the subject property are not currently listed in the California Register individually or as part of a registered historic district.

### SAN RAFAEL HISTORICAL/ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY

San Rafael is the oldest city in Marin County. The City Council adopted a survey of older, architecturally distinctive buildings and structures known as the Historical/Architectural Survey, which includes a list of 305 historical properties around the City, last updated in 1986. Some of these historic buildings have been designated as local landmarks, which are protected by city regulations. The survey was prepared using the California Office of Historic Preservation standards, and specifically the California Register criteria for classification, and properties included on the list are considered potential historic resources warranting preservation.<sup>2</sup>

The buildings and features of the subject property are not in the Historical/Architectural Survey, designated as San Rafael City Landmarks or historic districts. Furthermore, the property does not fall within the boundaries of any locally designated historic districts.

### CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS CODE

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of "1" to "7" to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register or NR) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register or CR). Properties with a Status Code of "1" or "2" are either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National

<sup>1</sup> Office of Historic Preservation, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> San Rafael Historic Properties List. Available at <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/historic-preservation/>  
Accessed October 18, 2017.



Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of “3” or “4” appear to be eligible for listing in either register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of “5” have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual importance. Properties with a Status Code of “6” are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of “7” means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register, or needs reevaluation.

As of 2012, no buildings or features of the subject property appear to have been listed in the California Historic Resources Information System database with any status code.

### III. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Aldersly Retirement Community property occupies the majority of a city block to the northeast of San Rafael's downtown, between Mission Avenue (south), Union Street (east), Belle Avenue (north), and a row of residential properties directly adjacent (west) (**Figure 2**). The block slopes downward from Belle Avenue towards Mission Avenue. The campus consists of 11 total buildings, two of which are connected. The buildings feature a variety of styles and are two to three stories in height. The campus consists of several building types, including residential apartments, a skilled nursing facility, an assisted living facility, administrative office building, and social function spaces, such as dining rooms and lounges. The campus consists of two small on-site resident and staff parking lots, while the majority of visitors park on adjacent side streets. The most recent addition to the campus, the Assisted Living Facility built in 2004, consists of an attached staff and visitors parking garage at the ground level, accessed via Mission Avenue at Union Street. Since its founding, the Aldersly campus has featured extensive gardens and pedestrian pathways, integrated with the built environment, as the primary means of circulation for staff and residents. Though several modifications have been made over time to the campus layout, landscaping, and circulation routes, these features remain central to the aesthetic experience of the institution.

Petaluma-based architect Brainerd Jones designed the first new residential building for the campus ca. 1922 (non-extant), while the oldest extant building is the Minor Building, constructed in 1945. A major re-envisioning of the campus's master plan was undertaken in 1961-68 with the addition of eight new residential buildings designed by San Francisco-based firm Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates in the Second Bay Tradition style. In the early 1990s, two of the early campus buildings were replaced with a new administration building and Skilled Nursing Center (Building K – Hendrix Hall), and in 2004, an Assisted Living facility was constructed at the eastern side of the campus. The current layout of the campus is depicted in a diagram on the following page, and shading indicates construction eras (**Figure 2**).

The campus is generally oriented around the central Administration Building (Building D-Fredensborg) and Skilled Nursing Center (Building K - Hendrix Hall). The Allen-designed rectilinear residential buildings are arranged around these buildings and the adjacent central lawn and entry stairway. For ease of description, the campus buildings are rotated 45 degrees and the closest cardinal directions are used to indicate individual façades and orientations (excepting Buildings I and J, which are already oriented to the cardinal directions). The Allen-designed residential buildings (Buildings A through H) exhibit several common design features, including wood-frame construction, Roman brick veneer cladding, areas of redwood siding, gable roofs with overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, solid wood doors with outer metal screen doors, wood balconies, and pairs of double-hung windows, which likely featured wood frames and sash originally, but appear to have been consistently replaced throughout with vinyl frame and sash, unless indicated otherwise. For the purposes of this report, the full campus site will be referred to as the “subject property.”



Figure 2. Site Context Map. Aldersly property shaded orange.  
Source: Googlemaps, 2017.



Figure 3. Axonometric diagram of Aldersly campus. Orange shading depicts the oldest Minor Building (1945); teal shading indicates mid-century construction (1961-67), purple indicates the Health Center addition (1992); and green indicates the Assisted Living Facility addition (2004).

Source: "Campus Map," Aldersly website <https://aldersly.com/amenities/>

Edited by Page & Turnbull.

### Building A - Amalienborg

Building A (1963) is constructed into an east-adjacent hillside and consists of a single story at the east façade and two stories at the south, west, and north façades. The narrow, rectilinear building features brick veneer cladding throughout and is capped with a gable roof. Angled overhanging eaves extend six to eight feet over the south, north, and west façades. The east and west façade eaves also feature exposed rafter tails. The south end features a floor-to-roof, slightly recessed opening, which contains a paired vinyl-sash casement window at grade and a single pane window that extends from the second level to the underside of the wood-paneled roof soffit. A louvered vent fills the opening between the two glazed portions. The east façade features alternating recessed bays, which contain two unit entries each. Entries open onto a concrete patio with seating, and a wood trellis shelters the southeast portion of the patio (**Figure 4 to Figure 6**).



Figure 4. South façade, looking northwest.



Figure 5. East façade and trellis, looking north.

The north façade of Building A contains an opening in the right-side bay, just west of façade center. The ground story is obscured by vegetation, while the second story contains a pair of typical double-hung windows topped by single-lite glazing, both of which are divided by a wood mullion that extends up to the angled roofline (**Figure 7**). The west façade of the building faces onto a concrete patio and the central lawn. Like the east façade, the west façade contains pairs of unit entry doors (center and right-side bays), which are separated by two pairs of double-hung windows. Second story units feature aligning pairs of windows, as well as wood framed and balustraded balconies. East façade entries feature partial-height narrow sidelites (**Figure 8 to 9**).

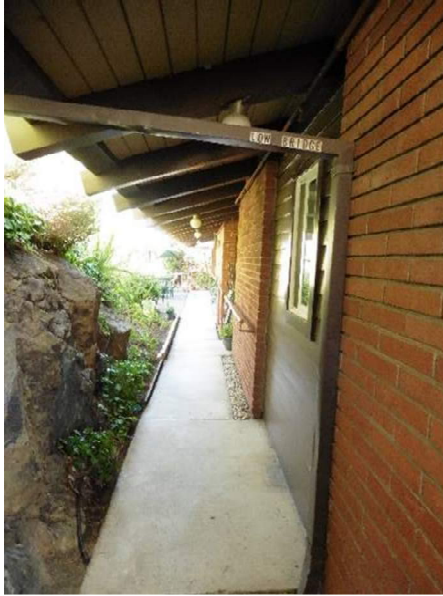


Figure 6. East façade, looking south.



Figure 7. North façade, looking southwest.



Figure 8. West façade, looking south.

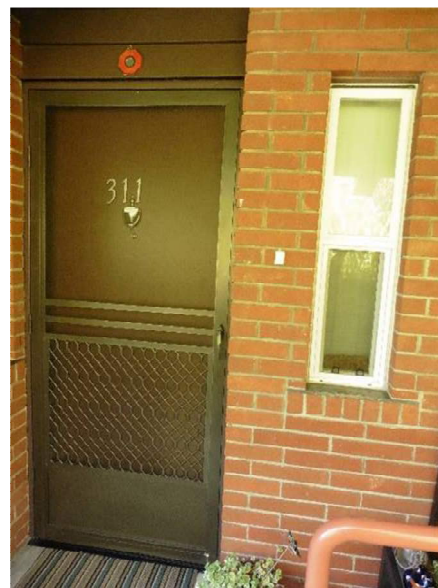


Figure 9. Close-up view of typical unit entry, an entry at the east façade shown.

### Building B - Christiansborg

Building B (1963) is two stories tall and is primarily clad with brick. It features a gable roof and angled overhanging eaves. Similar to Building A, the short ends feature wood-paneled soffits, while the long ends feature wood soffits with exposed rafter tails (**Figure 10 to Figure 13**). The north façade consists of a narrow band of brick at the far left (east) side, while the remaining façade is clad with wood siding. The upper portion of the wood-clad façade contains two vinyl-framed single-lite windows, angled at the top to align with the sloping roof. The center of the ground story contains a pair of standard double-hung windows (**Figure 11**). The west façade of Building B faces the central lawn and is accessed via a half-flight of concrete steps at center. Another flight of stairs enclosed with stone walls accesses the northwest corner of Building B and the east façade of Building A. Similar to

Building A, Building B's west façade contains pairs of unit entries with flush wood doors and flanking double-hung windows. The second story units feature wood balconies, some of which were under repair at the time of the site visit (**Figure 12 to Figure 13**). The east façade was largely obscured by vegetation and close proximity to the property's boundary wall at Belle Avenue, but appeared to feature brick cladding and unit entries similar to Building A's east façade.



Figure 10. Siting of Building B (Building A at left), looking northeast.



Figure 11. North façade, looking east.



Figure 12. West façade (left side), looking east.



Figure 13. West façade (right side), looking east.

### Building C - Sorgenfri

Building C (ca. 1968) is located diagonally across the lawn from Building B. It is built into a hillside and features two stories at the south, west, and north façades, and a single story facing the lawn at the east façade. The building consists of brick veneer cladding throughout and a gable roof with overhanging eaves (rafter tails only at the east and west façades) (**Figure 14 & Figure 15**). The short south end contains no openings or other detailing. The single-story east façade fronts onto a concrete patio and features evenly spaced single unit entries, which are slightly recessed and faced with redwood paneling. Doors are flush wood with an outer metal screen and full-height, metal-framed sidelites at the left side (**Figure 15**). The two-story west façade also fronts onto a concrete patio and a rear lawn. This façade features ground story unit entries with flush wood doors, divided by pairs of typical double-hung windows, which align with windows and doors at the second story.

Second story units open out onto wood-framed balconies with metal balustrades and railings. Unique to this façade, brick partition walls extend from grade to the top of the balconies at each bay division. Pull-down roller shades are also mounted at the edge of the balconies or roof eaves to block the western sun (**Figure 16 to Figure 17**).



Figure 14. South façade, looking northwest.



Figure 15. East façade, looking north.



Figure 16. West façade, viewed facing northeast.



Figure 17. Close-up view of west façade unit entry, looking northeast.

### Building D - Fredensborg

Building D (ca. 1968) consists of two main sections – the left (north) side is residential, while the right (south) side contains administrative offices and social functions, including the Executive Director’s Office (ground floor), Dining Room (second floor), and a TV and Exercise lounge (third floor) (**Figure 2**). The building is constructed on a hillside and features two stories at the north, west, and south sides, and one story at the east side, facing the central lawn. All façades feature brick cladding and both sections are capped with gable roofs. The west façade of the northern section faces a concrete patio and contains wood entry doors at the ground story flanked by pairs of double-hung windows. The second story opens onto a balcony with metal railings, divided by brick partition walls. Instead of windows, vinyl sash sliding doors extend across this portion of the facade (**Figure 18 to Figure 19**). The main entry to the campus is located at the connection between the north and south building sections. The entry features metal-framed fully glazed doors with sidelites. Due to an elevation change, the southern section sits a half-story below the northern section. The entry bay is distinguished by full-height glazing and overhanging eaves with rafter tails at both stories. The second story of the entry bay rises slightly higher than the flanking sections. An awning with exposed rafters shelters the main entry doors (**Figure 20**).



Figure 18. Northern section, west façade, looking southeast.



Figure 19. Close-up view of west façade towards entry bay, looking southeast.



Figure 20. Entry bay of southern section.



Figure 21. Southern section, west façade.



To the right of the entry bay, the southern section of the west façade is divided into two distinct bays by brick partition walls rising from the ground level to the roofline. Each bay features full-height glazing extending across the ground story, divided by metal mullions. The second story cantilevers to the edge of the brick partition walls, forming a concrete awning over the ground story. The second story similarly features full-height glazing, divided by three-over-one lites with metal mullions. An overhanging eave with rafter tails extends over the second story (**Figure 21**).



Figure 22. South façade, looking north.



Figure 23. East façade and alleyway.



Figure 24. Northern section, east façade, looking north.



Figure 25. Northern section, north façade, looking south.

The south façade of Building D features two distinct bays. The left (west) bay is capped with an open gable roof and features a brick-clad alcove at the ground story with bench seating. The second story of the left bay contains two sets of three metal-sash casement windows. The right (east) side bay of the south façade is recessed about ten feet back from the left bay and is capped with an asymmetrical open gable roof with overhanging eaves on the south, east, and north sides. The east-facing portion of the left bay features a metal-sash window at the second story. The right-side bay features tripartite metal-sash windows at the second story with metal-framed clerestories extending to the roofline (**Figure 22**). The ground story of this bay was obscured by vegetation and not easily accessible to photograph. The east façade of Building D's southern section faces an alleyway, is clad with brick, and contains no openings or architectural detailing (**Figure 23**). The northern section's east façade is a half-story higher and is primarily accessed via the perimeter path of the main lawn. The east façade contains slightly recessed, evenly spaced unit entry doors. These flush wood doors open onto a

concrete walkway, which is bounded on the east side by a metal-framed glazed privacy screen (**Figure 24**). The north façade of Building D is clad with brick, and similar to the adjacent north façade of Building C, it contains no openings or architectural detailing. A concrete stair divides the two buildings (**Figure 25**).

#### Building E – Frederiksborg

Building E (1961) is comprised of two rectilinear residential buildings, which are connected by a utility zone, forming an L-shaped configuration. The building is constructed on a hillside such that the east and north façades are single-story and the west and south façades feature two stories, accessed by an exterior concrete stairway at center of the north façade. All façades are clad with brick and the building is capped with angled gable roofs with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails on the north and south ends. The north façade of the long leg of the 'L' features wood-clad openings, containing double-hung windows at the rear of the residential units' second stories. A wood door at the north side accesses the connecting utilities section (**Figure 26 to Figure 27**). The north façade of the short leg features no openings adjacent to the stairway, except a double-hung window topped with a narrow, glazed opening, which extends to the roofline at the top of the stairs.

The ground story of the west façade (short leg of L) features unit entries with flush wood doors and left-adjacent pairs of typical double-hung windows. The ground story entries are accessed via a concrete walkway adjacent to a side yard with seating. The second story features double-hung windows and flush wood doors, which access a wood balcony that extends the length of the second story (**Figure 28**). The south face of the short leg features few openings, including a double-hung window at the second story and a vent centered at the ground story. This facade faces onto a paved concrete yard bounded by a wood fence with a gate (**Figure 29**). The east-facing portion of the L's short leg faces onto the courtyard at the campus main entry, and is comprised of a single story with residential unit and office entries featuring wood doors with narrow sidelites (Director of Sales, Independent Living and Marketing offices).

The south façade of the long leg features two distinct sections: the left (west) side is one story with two administrative office entries that feature flush wood doors with two pairs of metal sash sliding windows. The right (east) side features two stories with residential unit entries (**Figure 30 to Figure 31**). Similar to the west façade, the ground story contains flush wood doors with outer metal screens and adjacent pairs of typical double-hung windows. The second story features a wood balcony, which extends the length of the façade. The far right (east) side of the ground story features a shed-roofed sunroom addition, clad with wood siding. The south façade opens onto a concrete walkway adjacent to the front lawn and garden (**Figure 32, Figure 33, and Figure 34**). The east side of the long leg features a wide opening at façade center, which contains single-lite glazing that extends up to the peak of the open gable (**Figure 35**).



Figure 26. North façade (left side), looking west.



Figure 27. North façade (right side) and utility door, looking west towards stairway.



Figure 28. West façade ground story, looking south below balcony.



Figure 29. South façade of long leg, looking east.



Figure 30. East façade of short leg, looking south.



Figure 31. Single story left side of south façade.



Figure 32. Two-story portion of south façade (left side), looking northwest.



Figure 33. Two-story portion of south façade (right side) and sunroom addition, looking northeast.



Figure 34. Second story of south façade.



Figure 35. East façade of long leg, looking west.

#### Building F - Marselisborg

Building F (1966) is the southernmost of three rectangular residential buildings clustered around the Rose Garden at the southeast portion of the campus. The building is clad with brick and features a gable roof with overhanging eaves and rafter tails at the north and south sides. The short west façade features a slightly recessed opening at center, clad with wood siding, with two typical double-hung windows at the left side (Figure 36). The south façade opens onto a concrete patio and side yard and features standard unit entries at the ground story with left-adjacent pairs of standard double-hung windows. The second story features balconies with wood railings and balusters, which extend the length of each bay (Figure 37). The east side faces the Rose Garden and contains a wood-clad opening at façade center, which mirrors that of the north façade (Figure 38). The north façade is constructed on a slope and features a single story, which is accessed off a concrete pathway and courtyard. This façade appears to feature rear entries to units and a metal railing (Figure 39).



Figure 36. West façade, looking east.



Figure 37. South façade, looking east.



Figure 38. East façade, looking west.



Figure 39. North façade, looking southeast.

#### Building G - Liselund

Building G (1966) is the easternmost building in the cluster of three buildings surrounding the Rose Garden. It is accessed via a half-flight of stairs down from the garden and features a single story capped with a gable roof with overhanging eaves and rafter tails at the east and west sides. The west façade faces the garden and is primarily clad with brick, except at the unit entries, which are clad with wood siding. The flush wood doors are standard with left-adjacent pairs of standard double-hung windows (**Figure 40**). The north façade of the building features brick cladding with no openings or other detailing (**Figure 41**). The east façade fronts onto a parking lot and is the only façade of the Rex Allen-designed campus buildings to feature wood siding instead of brick. Narrow partial-height wood-framed, vinyl-sash windows are evenly spaced along the length of this façade. One partial-height, double-hung window sits at the far right (north) side (**Figure 42**). Like the north façade, Building G's south façade features brick siding and contains no openings or architectural detailing (**Figure 43**).



Figure 40. West façade, looking east.



Figure 41. North façade, looking south.



Figure 42. East façade, looking southwest.



Figure 43. South façade, looking southwest.

#### Building H - Graasten

Building H (1966) is the northernmost building in the cluster of three buildings adjacent to the Assisted Living Facility. It is accessed via ramps from the north side and the concrete paved courtyard at the west side. Similar to Building F, the building is constructed on a slope and features two stories on the west, south, and north sides, and a single story at the north. The building is also capped with a gable roof with overhanging eaves and rafter tails at the north and south sides. The north façade of the building features brick cladding with few openings or other detailing, besides wood-paneled rear entries and utility access doors. The short west end features brick cladding with a wide center opening clad with wood siding, which contains a set of three double-hung wood windows (**Figure 44**). The south façade faces the garden and is primarily clad with brick, except at the unit entry areas, which are clad with wood siding. The second story features sliding fully glazed doors, which open onto wood balconies extending the length of each bay. The rightmost (east) apartment features a dormer addition at the roof level with a pair of west-facing double-hung windows (**Figure 45 to Figure 46**). The east façade faces the parking lot and generally mirrors the design of the west façade, except this façade only contains one double-hung window at the left side of the second story (**Figure 47**).



Figure 44. North and west façades, looking southeast.



Figure 45. South façade, looking northeast.



Figure 46. South façade, looking north.



Figure 47. East façade, looking west.

### Building I - Rosenberg

Building I was built in 2004 and is the most recent addition to the Aldersly campus. The building features reinforced concrete construction and houses the Assisted Living Facility and parking garage. The first floor of the building contains residential apartments, Administration and Marketing offices, and the Director of Health Services and Medical offices. The second floor also houses residential apartments, as well as the Independent Living Activities Director and Assisted Living Activities Coordinator offices. The building features L-shaped massing and ranges from two to three stories in height, connecting to the campus's oldest building (Building J - Minor Building) at the northwest side. Building I features two primary cladding materials: brick at the first and second stories and painted cement plaster at the upper stories (second or third levels). The building is comprised of several sections and is capped with hipped roofs with overhanging eaves, and features exposed rafters, a perimeter stepped cornice, and oversized brackets on the west side. The far left (north) bay of the west façade features a wide, fully glazed, and multi-lite wood door flanked by multi-lite sidelites, sheltered by an awning. The second through fourth bays of the west façade contain evenly spaced, double-hung, and multi-lite windows (which appear to feature vinyl sash, muntins, and six-over-six lites throughout) and diamond-shaped applied cement plaster ornament centered between the windows in the second and fourth bays. The third bay projects out slightly from the main plane of the façade (**Figure 48 to Figure 49**).

The left (west) side of the south façade contains no openings but features three cement plaster diamonds evenly spaced across the second story of this portion of the façade (**Figure 50**). The

center of the south façade features brick at the ground story and multi-lite windows extending to the roofline at the upper story. The right (east) side of the south façade is cantilevered over the ground level, which houses a parking garage. This portion of the façade features cement plaster cladding only. The westernmost bay contains aligned double-hung, multi-lite windows at the second and third stories. An octagonal bay extends the second through the third stories and contains double-hung, multi-lite windows in each face. The third and easternmost bay features balconies at the right-side second and third stories, with concrete columns and metal railings. Two aligned double-hung windows sit at the left of the balconies (Figure 51). The balconies wrap the corner and span across two bays of the east façade (Figure 52).

The east façade is not highly visible, except from the rear yards of adjacent properties. The balconies appear to be accessed by metal doors with windows to the right. The visible portion of the right side of the east façade features brick-clad balconies only at the second story. Both the second and third stories contain evenly spaced double-hung multi-lite windows. The rear north façade of Building I is partially visible from Belle Avenue and the rear yard of 123 Union Street. It features brick cladding primarily at the lower two stories, cement plaster cladding at the third story, and evenly spaced windows. The third bay, however, features a bay window, which extends to the roofline with double-hung multi-lite windows in each face (Figure 53).



Figure 48. West façade at connection, looking northeast.



Figure 49. West façade (southern section), looking southeast.



Figure 50. West façade (southern section) and south façade (western section).



Figure 51. South façade (eastern section).





Figure 52. East façade (southern and center sections), looking west.



Figure 53. East façade (northern section) and rear façade, looking south.

### Building J – Minor Building

The Minor Building is primarily residential, but also houses a Computer Lab. It exhibits a rectilinear layout and features two- and three-story portions. Only the west façade and a section of the north façade are visible, since the south and east façades abut the Assisted Living Facility's north and west façades, respectively. All visible façades feature brick cladding throughout and the building is capped by two hipped roofs over the two- and three-story portions with slightly overhanging eaves and exposed rafters (**Figure 54**). A projecting shed-roofed addition at the north side is clad with wood siding and features a vinyl-sash sliding window at the third story (**Figure 55 to Figure 56**). Though partially obscured by vegetation and the retaining wall at Belle Avenue, the rest of the façade does not appear to contain openings or other detailing.

The far left (north) bay of the west façade features wood-framed, vinyl-sash sliding windows (12-lites each) at the second and third stories with slightly projecting brick sills. These windows wrap the northwest corner and the openings feature ornamental scrolls at the corners (**Figure 56**). The second-to-left-most bay features two similar type windows at the second and third stories and a wood-paneled, partially glazed (nine-lite) door at the ground story, topped with an awning. A narrow double-hung, wood-framed window sits to the right side of this door. The third bay contains the main entry to the Minor Building at the ground story (**Figure 57**). A similar style wood-paneled and partially glazed door with sidelites is recessed within a brick-clad alcove, framed by a decorative brick arch with “Minor” written in raised metal lettering at the top. A metal railing extends from the arch to the doorway (**Figure 58**). A vinyl-sash sliding window sits above the main entryway. The fourth bay of the three-story portion features two sliding windows at the third story, which flank the southwest corner.

The two-story portion of the west façade of the Minor Building features four bays. The leftmost bay contains two sliding windows at the first and second stories, which straddle the two- and three-story portions (**Figure 54**). The second bay features a sliding window at the second story and a narrow, wood-framed window at the ground story. The third bay features a tripartite window (eight-over-one window at center flanked by double-hung windows) at the ground story and no openings at the second story. The rightmost bay, which abuts Building I's north façade, features a recessed single wood-paneled door at the far right and a sliding window at the second story. A square portion to the left of the door appears to have been infilled with a different type of brick and grout (**Figure 59**).



Figure 54. Three-story portion of west façade (northern section), looking northeast.



Figure 55. Three-story portion of northwest corner and west façade, looking south.

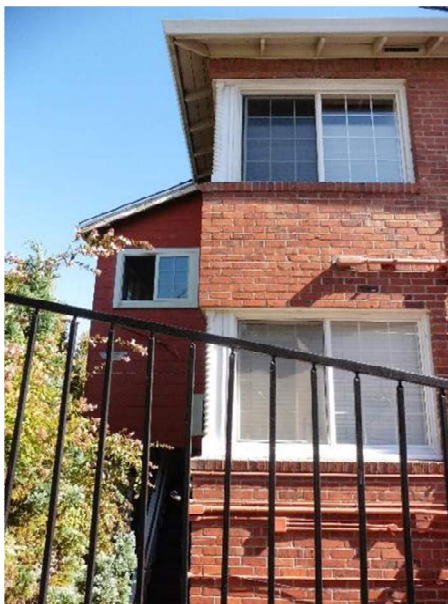


Figure 56. Projecting addition to the north façade, looking east.



Figure 57. West façade, looking towards entries and two-story portion (southern section).



Figure 58. Close-up view of the recessed main entry, looking east.



Figure 59. Close-up view of the west façade, far right bay shown with infilled brick.

### Building K - Kronborg

Building K was built in 1992 and features reinforced concrete construction. On the ground floor, Building K houses the library, beauty salon, laundry, housekeeping, maintenance, the Hendrix Social Hall, and Accounting Office. The second floor contains the Skilled Nursing Facility and Nursing Director's Office. The building is clad throughout with brick and features two stories. It is generally rectilinear in layout and massing, but features several projecting portions. The south façade is accessed primarily via a path and stair from the front circular driveway, and is comprised of four distinct bays. The second and widest bay is an open courtyard at the ground story and provides a covered walkway to the rear of the building and main lawn. The second story is recessed back from the main plane of the façade and contains a fully glazed door that accesses a balcony with horizontal metal railings, which are typical throughout (Figure 60).

The left-side bay features a connecting patio at the ground story with a metal railing that continues from the entry stairway. The patio is accessed via a metal door in the east-facing plane and a full-height, metal-framed window in the south-facing plane. The second story of the left bay features a sliding door and a projecting concrete balcony with metal railing (Figure 61). The third bay features metal-framed fully glazed doors, which access a patio with seating and a ramp. The second story projects a few feet and contains a balcony accessed by a metal-framed door topped with a concrete decorative awning (Figure 62). The fourth and right-most bay of the south façade contains metal-framed, fully glazed doors and a pair of windows at the far-right side. The second story similarly features two balconies, which align with the projecting second story of the third bay. The building is primarily accessed via multi-lite doors off the covered courtyard/passthrough. A half-flight of stairs leads to the lawn and rear of the building, in addition to an elevator at the right side (Figure 63).

The rear façade of Building K contains two distinct sections; the eastern section features a sawtooth plan and is a single-story, constructed on a slope. It is accessed at the rear by a concrete stairway and ramp to a metal-framed glass door in one of the sawtooth façades, and via a rear service entry at the east side (Figure 64). The western section of the north façade is clad with brick and features no openings or other detailing (Figure 65).



Figure 60. South façade and courtyard entry, looking northeast.



Figure 61. West side of the south façade, looking north.



Figure 62. East side of the south façade, looking northwest.



Figure 63. Ground story courtyard/covered passthrough, looking north.



Figure 64. Eastern section of the north façade, looking southwest.

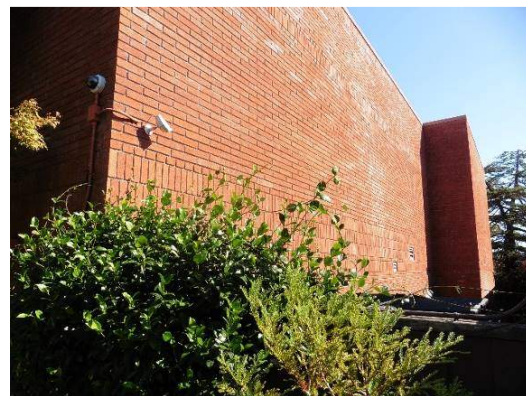


Figure 65. Western section of the north façade, looking south.

## ALDERSLY CAMPUS LANDSCAPE



Figure 66. Pathways leading to Main Stair, looking north toward Administration Building.

### Spatial Arrangement

The Aldersly campus features a wide variety of landscape features, densely integrated with circulation and buildings. There are four principal large green spaces, including the main entry lawn (southwest side); front courtyard, which includes the main stair (center) and flagpole; the rose garden (southeast side); and the central lawn (northwest side) (**Figure 67 to Figure 68**). The remaining landscaped spaces are generally narrow and navigate elevation changes on the site, framing walkways, stairs, and ramps that connect between the campus buildings. Besides the central lawn and unobstructed green space at the main entry (outside Building E), most areas of the campus feature highly defined circulation routes (concrete pathways and stairs with railings), since circulation otherwise would be obstructed by steep changes in grade or dense vegetation. Primary circulation paths break out into adjacent concrete patios with outdoor seating, especially outside of residential building entries (**Figure 69 to Figure 70**).



Figure 67. Paths and landscaped beds at main entrance (distance market at left), looking east.



Figure 68. Main lawn with perimeter pathways, looking northwest.



Figure 69. Gardens and lawn at Main Entry in front of Building E, looking east.



Figure 70. Main lawn perimeter pathways and gardens, looking southeast.

At the center of the campus, the main stair provides access to Building K (Skilled Nursing Building), but originally served as the primary means of access to the campus residence and hospital facilities, located in the White House and adjacent buildings (no longer extant). The two-story brick stairway leads from the circular entry driveway to the eastern side of the campus. “Aldersly” is inscribed in gold metal lettering at the top, and the stair features one concrete landing and low perimeter brick walls and four brick posts topped with concrete planters. The main stair is flanked by densely planted beds with low bushes, ivy, and mature deciduous and conifer trees, which substantially shade the east side of the space (**Figure 71 to Figure 72**). At the top of the stairway, curving ramps bounded with metal railings and stone and concrete low walls lead to the Minor Building and Assisted Living Facility to the north and the residential buildings and Rose Garden to the south. These paths and ramps are flanked by densely planted beds with flowering bushes and low trees (**Figure 73 to Figure 74**).



Figure 71. Entry path to main stairway and Skilled Nursing Building, looking northeast.



Figure 72. Main stairway, looking south towards Building F.



Figure 73. Concrete ramps to Assisted Living Facility, Minor Building, looking northeast.



Figure 74. Ramps to Assisted Living Facility and Rose Garden residences, looking southeast.



Figure 75. Courtyard with flagpole outside Building E, looking southwest.



Figure 76. Concrete patio outside south façade of Assisted Living Facility, looking east.

East of the main stair, the southeast side of the campus is characterized by concrete patios with seating outside of residential buildings and concrete paths circulating around landscape features and gardens, such as the Rose Garden between Buildings F, G, and H (**Figure 75 to Figure 77**). Narrow landscaped pathways and half-flights of stairs connect between these buildings and from the upper level (at flagpoles) down to the visitor parking lot at the southeast corner of the property and main entrance to the Assisted Living Facility. Paths and stairs are typically constructed of aggregate or smooth concrete with metal tube railings throughout (**Figure 78 to Figure 80**). High wood slat fencing extends the length of the south property line at Mission Avenue.



Figure 77. Rose Garden, looking west.



Figure 78. Concrete patio and seating outside Building F, looking southwest.

### Circulation

The various spaces of the campus landscape are linked by dedicated concrete paved walkways and stairways, excepting the brick main stair. Primary vehicular and public pedestrian access to Building D – Fredensborg (Front Office and Dining Room) is provided from Mission Avenue at the southwest side of the property via a paved circular driveway with a few visitor parking spaces (**Figure 79**). Primary vehicular access to the Rosenberg Assisted Living Facility is provided at the southeast corner of the property with a larger visitor parking lot and access to the ground story parking garage in the building (**Figure 80**). No other parking is provided on the property. A rear service entrance is located at the northeast corner of the campus via a metal gate and asphalt-paved ramp between Buildings K (Skilled Nursing Building) and J (Minor Building) (**Figure 81 to Figure 82**). No other gates or doorways obstruct pedestrian access to the various areas of the campus, allowing residents and staff to pass freely between the parts of the landscape and buildings. Secondary circulation routes include concrete pathways and stairs on all sides of the property perimeter. An elevator provides ADA access from the ground level of the Skilled Nursing Building to the main lawn level.





Figure 79. Circular driveway at main entrance, looking northeast.



Figure 80. Parking lot outside Building G and the Assisted Living Facility, looking north.



Figure 81. Perimeter stairway and wood fencing at campus perimeter (northwest side).



Figure 82. Rear side ramp to Belle Avenue, looking north.

### Topography

The landscape of the Aldersly campus is generally characterized by naturally sloping topography towards the south and west, navigated by long concrete-paved stairs and ramps (Figure 83 to Figure 86).



Figure 83. Ramps leading up to Skilled Nursing Building, looking north.



Figure 84. Main staircase, looking northeast.



Figure 85. Stairs at Rose Garden to parking lot, looking southwest.



Figure 86. Concrete stairs connecting campus levels, stairway between Buildings C and D shown, looking east.

### Vegetation

The Aldersly campus has historically prioritized the integration of outdoor space and gardens with its buildings. Despite modifications to the campus layout during renovations in the 1960s and 1990s, the landscape and extensive variety of vegetation have remained essential aspects of the campus experience. The vegetation involves several types of planting schemes, but does not appear particularly specific to distinct programmatic areas, except in the rose garden. The landscape is generally characterized by trees that are visually distinctive as individual elements (i.e., mature specimen trees and conifers), or low trees and bushes repeated in groupings (flowering bushes, hedges and boxwoods), interspersed with low plantings (**Figure 87**). The restrained modernist design aesthetic of the campus buildings contrasts well with the elaborate gardens and abundance of dense, yet maintained, plantings throughout. Besides the parking lot and driveway, there are no open spaces on the campus devoid of vegetation. The perimeter of the campus features a nearly continuous band of high trees and bushes along the sidewalks, especially along Mission Avenue, marking the transition from the surrounding streets. Despite alterations to the campus layout, many of the trees appear mature and have not been affected, especially near the main stair (**Figure 88**).



Figure 87. Gardens and trees at main entry and Danish lanterns.



Figure 88. Mature trees and bushes outside the Administration Building and adjacent to main stairway, looking southwest.

### Structures

As mentioned, the campus landscape is fully integrated with and composed around the residential and institutional buildings and other place-making structures. These features mark the main entry or define seating areas in open landscaped zones. For instance, a wrought-iron arch with gold lettering spelling “Aldersly” is visible from Mission Avenue and located between the circular driveway stone entry gates (Figure 89). A wood-framed trellis sits at the southeast side of the campus adjacent to the Rose Garden, providing a gathering area with shaded seating for residents (Figure 90). Other landscape structures that respond to the changing elevation include concrete and stone retaining walls and raised curbs, which articulate the edges of planted zones and more private residential areas in order to differentiate these spaces from public pedestrian open spaces and walkways that lead around the site. Wood and metal fencing bounds the perimeter of the property on all sides with gates at the northeast, southwest, and southeast corners



Figure 89. Aldersly wrought-iron archway.



Figure 90. Wood-framed trellis adjacent to Rose Garden.

### Views and Vistas

The campus landscape features few uninterrupted views among its spaces and features, due to the density and close proximity of existing vegetation and buildings. The most character-defining of these are the open views across the main lawn towards Mt. Tamalpais to the southwest and over the Rose Garden and fountain from the terrace adjacent to Buildings F and H. The central campus buildings (D and K), which house the social, dining, and health functions, are two of the highest in

elevation on the campus and so assert more visual prominence on the property, as compared with the surrounding smaller-scale residential buildings. Many of the residential buildings are also more visually obstructed as they are constructed into sloping hillsides or feature perimeter planting beds and trees, which screen parts of the residential entry doorways (**Figure 91 to Figure 92**).



Figure 91. View of Mt. Tamalpais as viewed from the stairway adjacent to Buildings A and B.



Figure 92. Rose Garden, as viewed from landing between Buildings F and H.

#### Small-Scale Features

There are a few small-scale features installed around the campus, which are original to its development and connect Aldersly to its Danish origins. A few lanterns from the streets of Copenhagen are placed near the main entry (**Figure 93**). A painted concrete mile marker, indicating the distance from Aldersly to Denmark, is also situated in a garden adjacent to the entry area. The stone gate at the driveway entry is carved to read “Aldersly Danish Home” with the date of the institution’s opening in 1921. Other site features include original concrete flower planters with painted floral detailing, a Danish beer keg, metal railings, wood and metal benches, a flagpole, tables with umbrellas, and freestanding post lighting (**Figure 94 to Figure 96**).



Figure 93. Danish lanterns.



Figure 94. Denmark distance marker.



Figure 95. Inscribed dedication (left side of entry gate).



Figure 96. Inscribed name "Aldersly Danish Home" (right side of entry gate).



Figure 97. Original concrete planters at main stairway.



Figure 98. Danish beer barrel in courtyard of the Building K - Hendrix Hall.

### Surrounding Site Context

Mission Avenue consists of both residential and commercial properties, which are one- to three-stories in height. A three-story apartment building is set back slightly from the street, with a parking lot accessed off Mission Avenue. Several mature trees planted along both sides of Mission Avenue visually separate these buildings from the subject property. A one-story Salvation Army Services Center is located on Mission Avenue, directly across from Aldersly's main entrance. The parcels adjacent on the west side of the subject property contain one and two-story residential buildings, several of which are largely obscured by a high fence and perimeter trees. Union Street and Belle Avenue both feature one and one-and-one-half-story residential properties with slight setbacks from the street and sidewalks, allowing for narrow front yards and driveways. Most residences and the commercial property in the direct vicinity feature vernacular and Craftsman architectural styles. The three-story apartment building south across Mission Avenue features Second Bay Tradition elements. On the east side, Aldersly's Assisted Living Facility directly abuts the rears of the one-story residential parcels on Union Street, divided by a low concrete wall at the property line (Figure 101 to Figure 102).



Figure 99. Union Street, looking northwest.

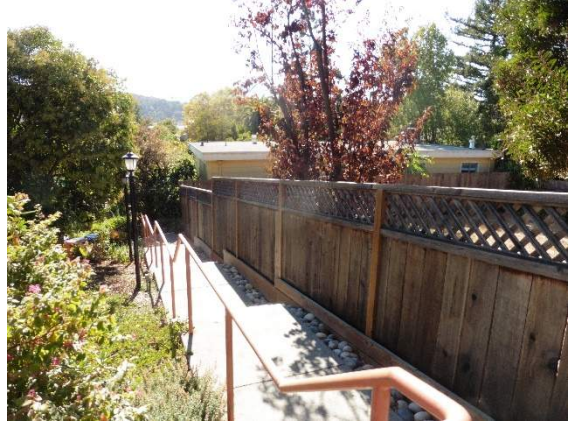


Figure 100. West side property line, looking west.

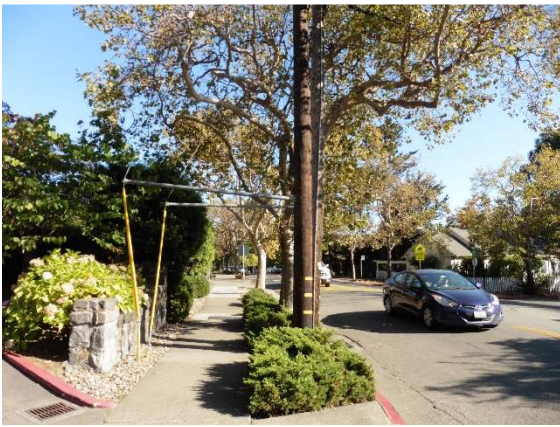


Figure 101. Mission Avenue, looking east.



Figure 102. Union Street, looking west toward Assisted Living Facility.

## IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

### SAN RAFAEL HISTORY

#### Early Settlements

The earliest inhabitants of the San Rafael area were members of the Coast Miwok Indian tribes, whose villages extended from Sausalito north to Bodega Bay.<sup>3</sup> Prior to European contact, native population in the area was relatively low, estimated between 2,000 and 5,000 people across Marin and Sonoma counties.<sup>4</sup> Miwok people organized themselves in small tribelets of about one hundred persons, and sheltered in redwood or tule structures. The Coast Miwok were hunters, gatherers, fishermen, and basket makers, and did not make fabric, pottery, conduct agriculture, or keep domestic animals. Middens or shellmounds, which contain shell, bones, currency, jewelry, tools, and skins have been found in Marin County. The City of San Rafael, known as Nanaguini in the Miwok language, includes 63 known archeological sites associated with historic Native settlements.<sup>5</sup>

First known contact between the Coast Miwok and European explorers happened in 1597 when Sir Francis Drake paused briefly during his north Pacific voyages in what became known as Drakes Bay. Lasting European settlement of the area did not occur until 1817 with the establishment of Mission San Rafael Arcangel, which was located at the present-day intersection of Mission Avenue and A Street. The location was chosen in part because of its consistent mild climate, integral to the mission's intended use as a healing center for natives that had fallen ill at Mission Dolores in San Francisco.<sup>6</sup> Mission San Rafael Arcangel shifted from an "assistencia" to a general-purpose mission in 1822, though full grounds were never built. The mission remained housed in a single building, which contained a hospital, chapel, padre's quarters, and storage.<sup>7</sup>

The population at Mission San Rafael Arcangel reached a peak of 1,051 in 1826, four years after Mexican independence from Spain. The population dropped sharply in the years following the Secularization Act of 1833, and by 1840, there were only 150 natives residing at Mission San Rafael Arcangel. In 1844, the Mexican government granted 22,000 acres of land that had formerly been part of Mission San Rafael Arcangel to Timothy Murphy, a native of Ireland who developed a successful meatpacking and trapping business, and had served as administrator at the Mission since 1837. California became the 31st state in 1850, and San Rafael became the seat of justice of the newly-formed Marin County in 1851. The four townships included Sausalito, Bolinas, San Rafael, and Novato.<sup>8</sup>

#### Nineteenth Century Development

By the mid-1850s, San Rafael had become a bustling community with a stage road that connected it to San Quentin Point and from there, ferry service to the city of San Francisco. Although 48 blocks had been platted in 1850 in the city's nascent "downtown," the main road remained a dusty route used primarily by cattle drivers moving herds out of the hilly pastureland on their way to San

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<sup>3</sup> "Native Americans of San Rafael", The California Missions Resource Center. Available at <http://www.missionscalifornia.com/content/native-americans-san-rafael.html>.

Accessed October 19, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> "Mission San Raphael Arcangel", Church of Saint Raphael & Mission San Raphael Archangel. Available at <http://www.saintraphael.com/Default.aspx?tabid=57>. Accessed October 19, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Tsim D. Schneider, "Shell Mounds of China Camp and Tomales Bay State Parks, Marin County." Available at <http://www.scahome.org/publications/proceedings/Proceedings.21Schneider.pdf>.

Accessed October 19, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> "Mission San Raphael Arcangel," <http://www.saintraphael.com/Default.aspx?tabid=57>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

Francisco and Sacramento markets. Lumber milling and shipping became an important industry in San Rafael, starting with the effort of Isaac Shaver in the mid-1860s. A paper mill helmed by Samuel P. Taylor provided the paper for the area's first newspaper, the *Marin County Journal*, beginning in 1861.<sup>9</sup>

In 1870, the arrival of the San Rafael and San Quentin Point Railroad, followed four years later by the more extensive North Pacific Coast Railroad, had the effect of transforming San Rafael into the transportation, and later, commercial center of Marin County. Extensive investments in the residential future of the city were made by some of San Francisco's leading businessmen, primary amongst which was William T. Coleman. Coleman was a wealthy commission merchant who had made a name for himself at the head of San Francisco's Vigilance Committee in the 1850s. In 1871, Coleman purchased 1100 acres in San Rafael, and hired San Francisco civil engineer Hammond Hall to lay out a subdivision with lots ranging from 1 to 20 acres.<sup>10</sup> To provide these lots with water, he established the Marin County Water Company, and laid out plumbing that came to service most of San Rafael. Coleman also made civic contributions to San Rafael, including funding the construction of a new county courthouse, which when it was completed in 1873, became the first public building to be equipped with gaslights.<sup>11</sup> By 1875, the national magazine *Harper's Weekly* described San Rafael as "The Suburbs of San Francisco."<sup>12</sup> Between 1874 and 1900, the combination of improved transportation and increasingly available residential development saw the population of San Rafael rise from 600 to 2,276.<sup>13</sup>

Due to its consistently temperate climate and relative proximity, Marin County became a popular destination with San Franciscans for weekend and summer getaways. Visitors would take a ferry to Sausalito then catch a train that brought them north to San Rafael and beyond. Resort hotels including the Albion, the Marin Hotel, and the Tamalpais Hotel, were built to serve these visitors. The familiarity and ease of transport led San Rafael by the end of the nineteenth century to become a popular residential choice for both summer and year-round estates for San Francisco's wealthy. Along the city's northern perimeter, several such estates were constructed, including those owned by president of the North Pacific Coast Railroad James Walker (1408 Mission Avenue) and wholesale merchant Michael J. O'Connor (now Foster Hall at Marin Academy.) The city had the full complement of services by the end of the nineteenth century, including public and private schools, retirement homes, recreation clubs, public parks, banks, and hospitals (**Figure 103**). San Rafael became a quiet retreat from urban life, with large homes at the outskirts, a modest business center within the downtown, and a leisurely bucolic pace. One of the early colleges of the City, Dominican University, was founded in 1890 by Catholic nuns who arrived in California during the Gold Rush to educate "new Californians." The college campus remains an active area of San Rafael today.

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<sup>9</sup> Frank Keegan, *San Rafael Marin's Mission City*. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, 1987, pg. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 63.





Figure 103. Early San Rafael downtown, ca. 1900.

Source: *Early San Rafael* (Images of America: California). Marin History, 2008.

#### Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Century Growth

The 1906 earthquake impacted San Rafael, jolting many homes off their foundations and knocking chimneys from rooftops, but most of the city's services and residences remained intact. In 1911, San Rafael's population had reached 5,934, more than twice as large as the surrounding three Marin towns. The town continued to develop steadily in the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1927, the first daily Marin County newspaper, the *San Rafael Independent*, was started in San Rafael. Following World War II in 1946, the county's population hit 8,000, and San Rafael remained the largest of the towns. In 1951, \$62 million in state bonds were approved for construction of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, which opened in 1956, bringing a substantial surge in population and jobs to the city from the East Bay and elsewhere.<sup>14</sup>

During the mid-1960s, filmmaker George Lucas turned to Fourth Street in downtown San Rafael, looking to capture typical teenage "cruisers" for his film *THX1138*.<sup>15</sup> Following Lucas's arrival and the founding of Lucasfilm in San Rafael in 1971, the city became somewhat of a center for the entertainment industry, particularly high-tech and special effects sectors of the business in the 1980s through 2000s. Several other major special effects and video game companies established headquarters in San Rafael throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. In 2005, many of Lucasfilm's operations moved to San Francisco and in recent years, several companies have moved out of the city. In the city's 2010 Census, the population of San Rafael was recorded at 57,713 people, the majority demographics being White (70%) and Hispanic or Latino (30%).<sup>16</sup> Despite significant growth, San Rafael's small downtown continues to convey the spirit of a classic Main Street look and feel.

<sup>14</sup> "Highlights of Marin's History, from 1850-2010." *Marin Independent Journal*. March 2011. Available <http://www.marinij.com/article/zz/20110323/NEWS/110324515> Accessed October 20, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Keremitsis, Eileen. "San Rafael – Lively City of History, Culture." *SF Gate*. September 29, 2011. Available <http://www.sfgate.com/outdoors/urbanoutings/article/San-Rafael-Lively-city-of-history-culture-2303612.php> Accessed October 20, 2017.

<sup>16</sup> "San Rafael." Available [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Rafael,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Rafael,_California) Last edited October 1, 2017. Accessed October 20, 2017.

## DANISH AMERICAN HISTORY

### Early Pioneers

The earliest documented Dane in North America was explorer Vitus Jonassen Bering (1681-1741), who arrived in Alaska in 1741 and discovered the Bering Sea. In the early eighteenth century, Danish immigrants arrived in greater numbers to North America, and Scandinavians, Danes, and Norwegians comprised a significant demographic of the early colonies in New York and New England. Until 1850, most Danes who emigrated to North America were unmarried men. Several were trusted officers in the U.S. Army, such as Hans Christian Febiger, or explorers, including Peter Lassen, who led a group of pioneers from Missouri to California in 1839. The trail established by Lassen was used heavily by the “forty-niners” during the Gold Rush. Considered one of the most important early settlers of California, a National Park in Northern California was later named after him. Between 1820 and 1850, approximately 60 Danes had settled in the United States each year. The first significant early wave consisted primarily of Mormons, who settled in Utah in 1850. A second large wave came in 1864 as a result of the Prussian War, which ceded parts of Denmark to Prussia and Austria. The most substantial Danish emigration occurred in 1882 when 11,618 Danes settled in the United States in several states, including New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. Many of these Danes became farmers and settled along with their families.<sup>17</sup>

### Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Assimilation

According to the Library of Congress, Danish Americans, more so than other Scandinavian Americans, “spread nationwide and comparatively quickly disappeared into the melting pot...the Danes were the least cohesive group and the first to lose consciousness of their origins.”<sup>18</sup> Danish Americans have historically been known to have a higher rate of speaking English, marrying non-Danes, and an eagerness to become naturalized citizens. As a result, the concept of “Danish” national culture was not as widespread in the emigrated Danish communities of the nineteenth century, as compared with other nationalities. Following a wave of European nationalism and class struggles in the late nineteenth century, a more distinctive national cultural personality emerged amongst Danish Americans, and especially a newfound appreciation of Danish literature, including Hans Christian Andersen, and a rich heritage of folklore, art, regional traditions, and food. Traditional Danish cuisine became more widely known in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including kringle (almond pastry), sausages, Danish pastry (“Danish”), and aebleskivers (puffed pancakes), among others.<sup>19</sup>

As Danish communities grew in the early twentieth century, Danish Americans founded civic institutions, retirement homes, churches, and schools, including “folk schools,” which focused more on learning outcomes than grades or diplomas, and were operated during the 1870s and 1930s throughout the U.S. (Solvang was the only location of a folk school in California). A large number of Danish immigrants belonged to the Mormon Church, though the majority of Danish Americans were Lutherans. A handful of Danish-affiliated old age homes were established in the U.S. by the mid-nineteenth century, such as in New York and Chicago. The first Danish American retirement home in California was founded in 1870 in San Francisco. It was common for Danish societies, clubs, and lodges to provide health and social welfare benefits to members of the Danish American community, especially to those who did not receive them from their employers and during

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<sup>17</sup> Nielsen, John Mark and Petersen, Peter L. “Danish Americans.” Available at <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Danish-Americans.html> Accessed October 25, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> “Danes in America – Danish Immigration to America.” Bibliographies & Guides – Local History & Genealogy Reading Room (Library of Congress). Available at [http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib\\_guid/danishamer.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib_guid/danishamer.html) Accessed October 25, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Nielsen, John Mark and Petersen, Peter L. “Danish Americans.” Available at <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Danish-Americans.html> Accessed October 25, 2017.

retirement. Fully funded by local Danish societies and wealthy Danish Americans of the Bay Area, Aldersly Retirement Community was founded in 1921 in San Rafael based on this principle. According to a former Aldersly resident, “Danes are known to be independent and proud and traditionally take care of their elderly.”<sup>20</sup> The concept of senior cohousing, a living arrangement in which multiple individually owned housing units are oriented around a common open area or a common house, originated in Denmark as early as the turn of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> This model of living was potentially an influence for the re-design of the Aldersly campus during the 1960s.

At the time of Aldersly’s founding, the Danish-American communities of northern California were centered primarily in San Francisco and Petaluma, based on research about early staff, residents, and commissioned architects and contractors. Likely, San Rafael was chosen as it provided a quiet and spacious site for the development of the home, proximal but removed from the city, and conveniently located between San Francisco, Petaluma, and the surrounding towns in Marin and Sonoma counties, where the majority of northern California Danes resided. Today, Chicago and Racine claim to be the home to the largest number of Danish Americans in individual cities. However, according to the 2010 United States Census, California has the highest population of Danish Americans (207,030), followed by Utah (144,713), with the highest population center in California being Solvang, near Santa Barbara. Today, several Danish clubs and societies host cultural and social events in Northern California, including the Danish Club of San Francisco, the Danish Soldiers Club of northern California in Petaluma, the Danish Society, and the Danish American Chamber of Commerce.<sup>22</sup> In Southern California, Solvang remains the hub of Danish cultural activity. The town was founded in 1911 on almost 9,000 acres by a group of Danes who had traveled from the Midwest seeking a milder climate to establish a new Danish colony. Today, the city has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Southern California, as it remains home to several Danish bakeries, museums, restaurants, shops, and architecture, which exhibit a traditional Danish style and atmosphere (**Figure 104**).<sup>23</sup>



Figure 104. Downtown Solvang, Main Street. Source: Wikipedia.org

<sup>20</sup> Gardner, Dorothy. “A Bit of Denmark in Marin County.” *Marin Living*, July 20, 1974.

<sup>21</sup> “Retirement Community.” Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retirement\\_community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retirement_community) Accessed November 21, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Danish American Heritage Society. Available at <http://www.danishheritage.org/danish-links.html> Accessed December 2017.

<sup>23</sup> “Solvang, California.” Available [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solvang,\\_California](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solvang,_California) Accessed October 25, 2017.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF NURSING HOMES

The concept of ‘retirement’ in its current form is a relatively new phenomenon brought about by changing social and economic conditions and social reform legislation. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when agriculture dominated the American economy, elderly farmers were likely to be employed as long as they remained healthy. During the Industrial Revolution, the elderly had fewer work opportunities in factories in the growing industrialized cities. The lack of jobs forced the elderly into poverty and to live in almshouses or other charitable institutions, along with orphans and the mentally ill. During the late nineteenth century, welfare workers saw a direct relationship between old age and poverty and advocated for separate institutionalization of the impoverished elderly from other homeless people. These separate institutions were like communal “homes” that provided cheap, efficient care and attended to residents who were not only destitute, but likely infirm as well.<sup>24</sup>

As public institutions for the lower-class elderly were established during the late-nineteenth century, the middle-class began to open separate homes for their elderly. As a result, many private nursing homes were founded around this time period, while almshouses continued to serve as the last refuge for the destitute and elderly poor. By the turn-of-the-century, most of the residents in nursing homes were white, middle-class women or men, who had paid to enter. Many men’s or women’s homes in the U.S. only accepted ‘respectable’ people, who had come from middle to upper-class backgrounds and were used to certain lifestyle comforts. One of the first old-age homes for women was opened in 1817 in Philadelphia, the Indigent Widows’ and Single Women’s Society. The women at the Society were provided private rooms and meals were taken at a general table meant to ensure a feeling of family unity. Once admitted, they were given a one-year probationary period and expected to donate their labor, sewing, knitting and quilting to help raise money for the institution.<sup>25</sup>

Many of the earliest nursing homes in the Bay Area were started by ethnic or religious organizations to house their elderly, including the Danish Old Age Home in San Francisco (1870), the University Mound Old Ladies’ Home in San Francisco (1896), the Hebrew Home for the Aged and Disabled (Jewish Home San Francisco) in 1923, Aldersly Danish Old Age Home in San Rafael in 1921, and the Christian Science Benevolent Association on the Pacific Coast in 1930.<sup>26</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were many nursing homes in every large American city.<sup>27</sup> Despite the changing perception of hospitals and nursing homes in the U.S. during the early twentieth century, the use of multiple-bed wards persisted into the 1940s-50s. In 1910, the Superintendent of the Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City developed a plan with only 26 beds that were connected vertically by floor to conserve land and reduce travel distances for nurses. He also was one of the first to implement private patient rooms. The Beajon Hospital in France (1935) was one of the earliest multi-story facilities with 16-bed wards and private rooms as well. In 1955, the Montefiore Hospital in New York City (1955) exhibited a unique layout with patient room modules, each containing two to four bed wards and one private room sharing two toilets. However, it was not until the 1960s that hospital and nursing home design dramatically shifted to smaller-size, more residential-style wings, or even private or double patient rooms with centralized nursing stations.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, “Landmark Designation Report, University Mound Old Ladies’ Home, 350 University Street,” May 20, 2015, pg. 20-1.

<sup>25</sup> Haber, Carole, *Beyond Sixty-Five: The Dilemma of Old Age in America’s Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> “The History of Hospitals and Wards.” March 11, 2010. Available at <https://www.healthcaredesignmagazine.com/architecture/history-hospitals-and-wards/>. Accessed November 27, 2017.

In the U.S., many of the earliest innovations in postwar nursing home and elderly cohousing design were built in California. One such facility was designed by Ramberg and Lowrey Architects, known as Capistrano-by-the-Sea in Dana Point (1965-67), and which is still in use as a drug rehabilitation facility. This was one of the earliest examples of a nursing home designed with residential wings, a central nursing unit, and strong connections between interior and exterior spaces on its coastal hillside site. Another early facility was Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates' Sequoia Health Center nursing home in Portola Valley, California (1965-67), which was designed in association with John S. Bolles (**Figure 105**). This 230-bedroom hillside campus was another early example of a conventional nursing home, which also provided extended care services and independence for its residents in single and two-bed residential units with private bathrooms and covered walkways to all shared facilities.<sup>29</sup>

During the postwar period and the amendments to the Social Security Act in 1954 and 1965, elderly residents were granted federal support for their care in nursing homes.<sup>30</sup> In 1965, the passing of Medicare and Medicaid provided additional motivation for the growth and improvement of nursing homes (public and private), including the incorporation of continuing care facilities, which grew rapidly after this turning point. By 1979, 79 percent of all institutionalized elderly people resided in commercially-run nursing homes. By 2000, nursing homes had become a billion-dollar industry, largely funded by Medicaid, Medicare and out-of-pocket expenses.<sup>31</sup> The industry continues to expand and evolve today.

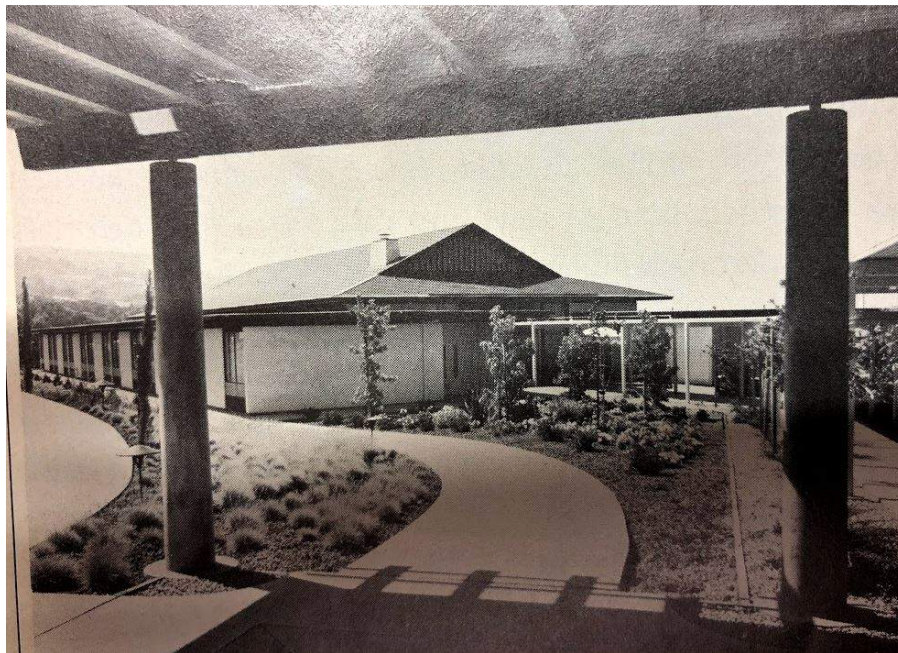


Figure 105. Sequoia Health Center, Portola Valley, California, 1965-67.  
Source: *Architectural Record*, October 1967.

<sup>29</sup> Verderber, David J. Fine. *Healthcare Architecture in an Era of Radical Transformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

<sup>30</sup> "The History of Nursing Homes." *FATE: Foundation Aiding the Elderly*. <http://www.4fate.org/history.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Haber, Carole, *Beyond Sixty-Five: The Dilemma of Old Age in America's Past*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

## V. PROJECT SITE HISTORY

### ALDERSLY CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

#### Founding and Early Growth

The founders of Aldersly, a nonprofit retirement community, purchased the subject property from George D. Shearer, a wealthy local landowner, in 1921. The community was established on December 11, 1921 as a “Danish Home for Old People,” specifically for the Danish American elderly of northern California and Nevada. The first board of directors was named in 1920, and included James Madison, J.F. Otto, Mrs. Niels Larsen, and C.J. Klitgaard. Carl Plow was named the first manager of the home and remained there until 1925. Originally the residents of the community were housed in a two-story, wood-framed Victorian mansion referred to as the “White House” on the one-acre property, known formerly as the Schlosser Estate. The property adjoined a golf course on the northwest side, and was described as “beautifully located with plenty of woods nearby with an unobstructed view of the bay.”<sup>32 33</sup> Other buildings that existed at the time of purchase included barns, garages, and outbuildings, all recorded as being in good condition. The sale to the Aldersly Corporation included all of the existing furniture, fittings, and tools of the estate. By the end of 1921, nearly \$32,000 in funds were procured for a new building, largely due to gifts from the local Societies Dania and Danner, wealthy local residents, as well as remaining revenue from the Danish exhibition at the San Francisco Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in 1915. Initial plans for the property involved eventually expanding to two acres.<sup>34</sup>

Esteemed Petaluma residential architect Brainerd Jones and Petaluma contractor H. P. Vogensen Construction Co. were hired to design and build a larger “modern” institution for single men.<sup>35 36</sup> Brainerd Jones (1869-1945) was a leading northern California architect during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. As one of very few architects working in Petaluma at the turn of the century, Jones received plenty of commissions for local work, and later regional work, such as Aldersly. He is credited with designing the majority of “nice buildings” in Petaluma and over 80 percent of the buildings in the city’s historic core.<sup>37</sup> Jones’s buildings are also described as “varying in style, well-built, sophisticated, and surprising...He designed for what the client wanted, so everything is not a cookie-cutter Brainerd,” remarked Connie Hammerman, president of the Petaluma Woman’s Club.<sup>38</sup> An early description of Jones’s building for Aldersly noted construction of brick, 84’x 38’, and was located to the rear of the White House.<sup>39</sup> Two additional buildings were constructed on the campus and completed in 1923, which were also possibly designed by Jones (all non-extant) (**Figure 106**).

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<sup>32</sup> “C. Plow Named Manager of Danish Home.” *Petaluma Daily Morning Courier*. October 20, 1921. Pg. 3. Available at Newspapers.com Accessed October 10, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> “Danish Old Peoples’ Home Goes to San Rafael.” *The Petaluma Argus-Courier*. September 24, 1921. Pg. 5. Available at Newspapers.com Accessed October 10, 2017.

<sup>34</sup> “Home Dedicated for Danish People.” *Marin Journal*. Vol. LX, No. 50. December 15, 1921.

<sup>35</sup> “Brainerd Jones of Petaluma – New Building to House Single Men.” *The Petaluma Argus-Courier*. November 26, 1921, pg. 1. Available at Newspapers.com Accessed October 10, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> “Plans Drawn by Architect Jones.” *Petaluma Daily Morning Courier*. February 1, 1921. Pg. 2. Available Newspapers.com Accessed October 10, 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Weinstein, Dave. “The man who built Petaluma.” *SFGate*. February 18, 2006. Available at <http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/The-man-who-built-Petaluma-Brainerd-Jones-2522848.php> Accessed October 20, 2017.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> “Vogensen Construction Co. Gets Contract.” *Petaluma Daily Morning Courier*. July 12, 1922. Pg. 2. Available Newspapers.com Accessed October 25, 2017.

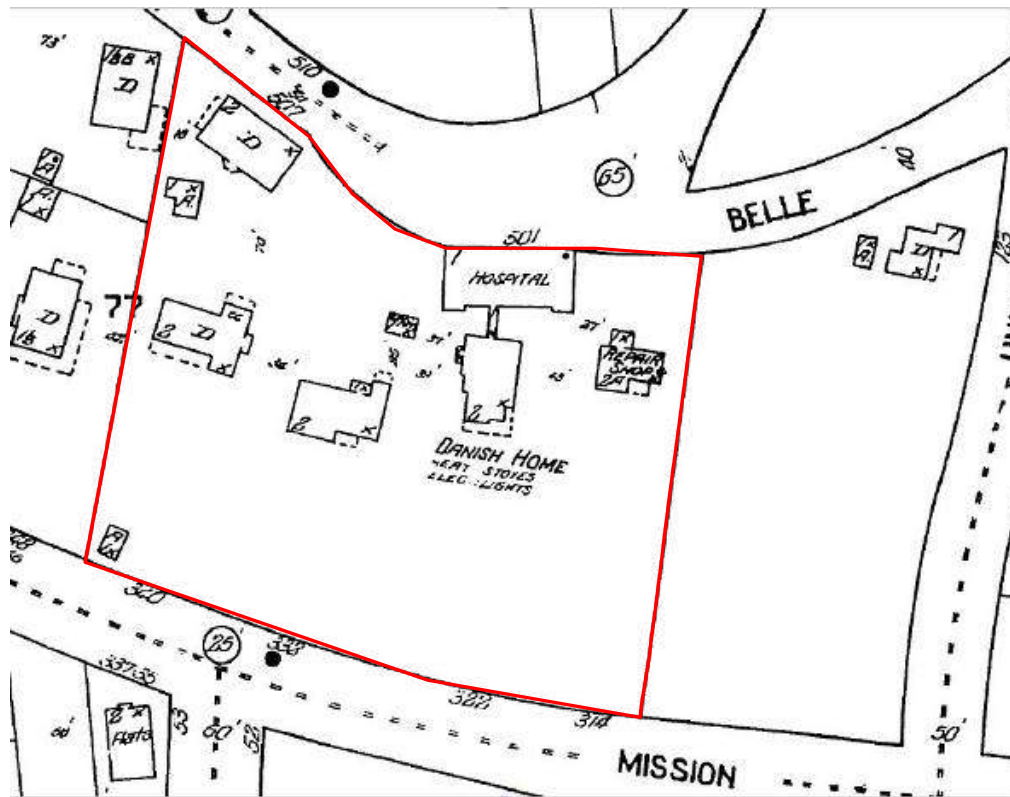


Figure 106. Sanborn map, Sheet 31, 1924. Jones additions shaded orange. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

In 1923 and 1924, Aldersly continued to grow, and two extant residences on the subject property (the Gunn and Foster properties) were also converted for residential use. By 1936, the campus comprised of six total buildings, which included Jones's residential building and the original Infirmary/Nursing Facility (1929, no longer extant), also potentially designed by Jones, east-adjacent to the White House (Figure 107).<sup>40</sup> The architectural historian, Everett Hendricks, described the property at that time as being beautiful with views to the south and east of the San Rafael Valley. The campus was accessed, as today, by a circular driveway lined with palms, shrubs, and flowers. A weathervane, a common feature in Denmark, greeted visitors to the campus upon arrival. The weathervane has since been removed. At the foot of the weathervane, the concrete mile marker, which still remains at the entrance, portrayed the Danish coat of arms and the same inscription it features today: "7174 Miles to Denmark." However, the marker also included a description of the weathervane, which had been displayed at the PPIE in San Francisco in 1915. Hendricks explained that "Aldersly" was chosen as the name for the community since it means "A shade for old age" in Danish. Within a few years, Aldersly had attracted the attention of Danish Americans throughout California and Nevada, and became the "centerpiece of Danish American activities in the San Francisco Bay Area...a time when local farmers regularly sent boxes of fruits and vegetables, and when everyone contributed to Aldersly's success – chipping in to polish silver, set tables, garden, or wash pots and pans."<sup>41</sup> Annual Danish festivals, including the Tivoli Danish-American Food and Music Festival in September, drew families to Aldersly from all over California beginning in 1946, and has contributed to the rich cultural heritage of Marin County and the greater Bay Area.

<sup>40</sup> Hendricks, Everett. Marin County: Historical Point of Interest - "Danish Home." Included in Federal Writer's Project- Division of the Worker's Progress Administration (WPA). February 14, 1936.

<sup>41</sup> "A Century of Memories." *Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News*, Pg. 3, 2003.



Figure 107. Original Infirmary (no longer extant), 1929. Source: Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News, Pg. 3, 2003.



Figure 108. Dedication of the Minor Building, 1945. Source: Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News, Pg. 3, 2003.

### Mid-Century Re-Envisioning and Expansion

Women were admitted to Aldersly beginning in the 1930s. In 1939, Aldersly gained international attention from Denmark with the visit of King Frederick IX and Queen Ingrid. Following the Great Depression and Second World War, Aldersly raised funds to construct a two-story brick building in 1944-45 on the former site of a chicken coup. This building housed a social hall on the ground floor and 18 residential apartments on the second floor, and was described as featuring “many modern conveniences.”<sup>42</sup> The architect of this building was not noted in building permits or newspaper articles. The building was opened with a dedication ceremony in 1945, and was named for Robert Minor, a Danish-born sea captain and successful merchant, who had donated funds (**Figure 108**). Today, the Minor Building is the oldest extant building on the campus and was renovated in 2009-10 to include several modern features, including a resident computer room.

At the time of Hendrick’s account in 1946, 55 men and women resided at the home, and requirements for admission included being both of Danish descent and at least 65 years old. Residents of the home paid what they could, but their stays were otherwise fully funded by local Danish societies and estates.<sup>43</sup> By 1946, only three of the original directors remained on the Aldersly Board: President C.J. Klitgaard and Directors Margaret Kohler and Hilda Nelson.<sup>44</sup> The early 1950s saw several additions constructed on the eastern side of the campus by local contractor Chris Pederson, which included an eight-room 3,000 square-foot residential building and garage, a 700 square-foot residence (1951), and an existing garage converted to residential apartments (1952).<sup>45</sup> These buildings are no longer extant, since they were replaced by the Assisted Living Facility in 2004, but are visible in the following campus historic aerial photograph from 1952 (**Figure 109 to Figure 110**). The original residential and institutional buildings of the campus and circular driveway entry off Mission Avenue (no longer extant) are visible in photographs taken in 1948, ca. 1955, and the late 1960s (**Figure 112 to Figure 113**). It appears that the original main entry to the campus was through an engraved stone gate (donated by James Madison), leading to a circular driveway, which connected to a second and larger circular drive and the entry stair to the White House. This main entrance off Mission Avenue has since been infilled with a stone wall, though the gate pillars remain, with plantings and driveway entries on each side (**Figure 114**).

<sup>42</sup> “Danish Home Now Has New 18-Room Building.” *San Anselmo Herald*. Pg. 8. September 20, 1945.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 2.

<sup>44</sup> “Aldersly’s History.” Available at [https://aldersly.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/fall\\_2011.pdf](https://aldersly.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/fall_2011.pdf) Accessed November 3, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> “Addition.” *Daily Independent Journal*. Pg. 1. May 5, 1952.





Figure 109. Aerial photograph, 1946. Original Infirmary (1929) shaded in yellow, the Minor Building (1945 and extant) shaded in blue.  
Source: Historicaerials.com



Figure 110. Aerial photograph, 1952. Original Infirmary (1929) shaded in yellow, the Minor Building (1945 and extant) shaded in blue, and early 1950s additions shaded in green.  
Source: Historicaerials.com



Figure 111. Aerial photograph, 1948.  
Source: Petaluma Historical Museum.



Figure 112. Original circular driveway, White House (at center), Infirmary (at right), and an early residential building (at left). None remain extant.  
Source: Marin County Library, postcard ca. 1967.



Figure 113. Original entry to Aldersly, ca. 1955.  
Source: *Modern San Rafael: 1940-2000*, pg. 105.



Figure 114. Current stone wall and pillars at Aldersly entry, 2017.

Alterations to existing buildings continued into the late 1950s to modernize the facilities, including installing sprinkler systems, new exits, ramps, stairs, replacement windows, and more spacious bathrooms and closets. In 1960, to celebrate Aldersly's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the King and Queen of Denmark visited the campus for a second time (**Figure 116**). In 1961, a complete re-envisioning effort for the campus began. San Francisco-based firm Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates, well known for their work in the healthcare institutional sector, was hired to design a new campus master plan for a "complete rebuilding of the home."<sup>46</sup> A concept sketch of Allen's master plan, with Peter Rounds as associate architect, also included designs for alterations to the existing campus landscape (**Figure 115**). The first executed building of Allen's master plan was Building E (Frederiksborg), which was dedicated in 1962 (**Figure 117**). The proposed redevelopment was generally met with praise at the local Planning Commission hearing; however, one comment suggested that more than the proposed 25 parking spaces should be provided on site. Allen countered that the landscaping and garden aesthetic of the property were original and the "home wanted to keep as much in lawn and shrubbery as possible." Instead, he suggested that it would be possible, if the need arose, to convert some lawn for parking spaces at a later point.<sup>47</sup>

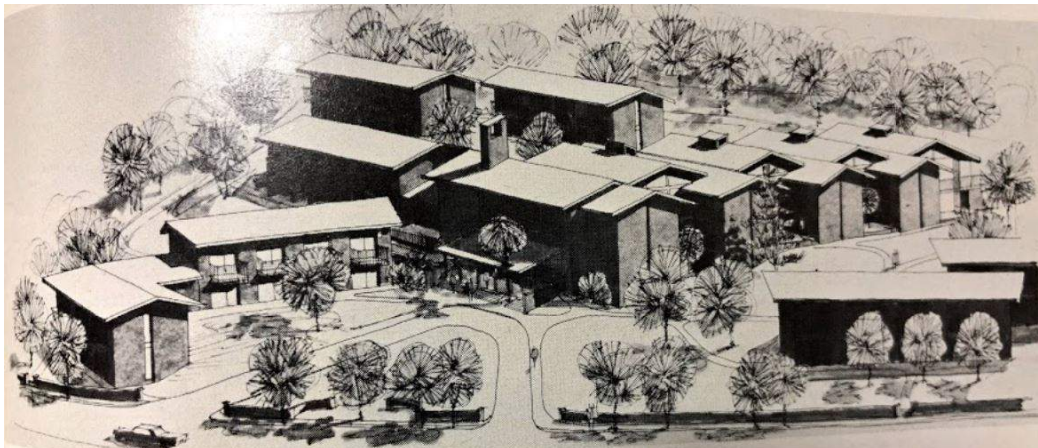
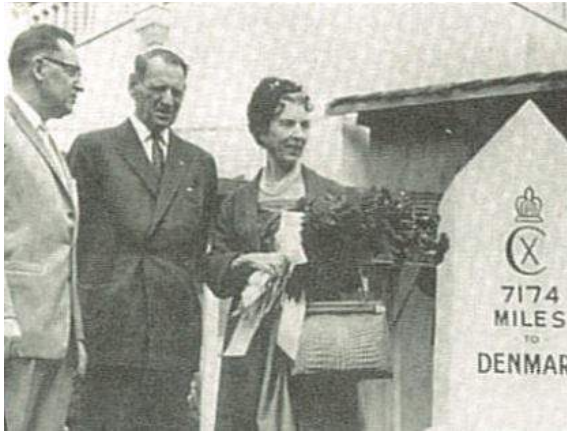


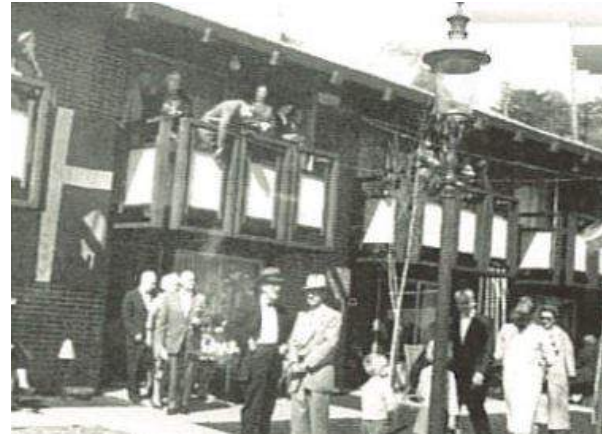
Figure 115. Sketch of Aldersly master plan, Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates, ca. 1960.  
Source: *Architectural Record*, Oct. 1967.

<sup>46</sup> "Planners Pass Aldersly Buildings Proposal." *Daily Independent Journal*. Pg. 13. March 29, 1961.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 116. King Frederick IX and Queen Ingrid's second visit in 1960.**  
Source: Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News, Pg. 3, 2003.



**Figure 117. Dedication of Building D (Frederiksborg), 1962.** Source: Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News, Pg. 3, 2003.

Two years later, Building A (Amalienborg) and Building B (Christianborg) were added, replacing former picnic grounds. By 1966, three additional buildings, Building G (Liselund), Building H (Graasten), and Building F (Marselisborg) were completed. In 1968, Building C (Sorgenfri) and Building D (Fredensborg) were dedicated. Fredensborg originally housed the administrative offices, kitchen, dining hall, lounge, library, hair salon, laundry room, and maintenance offices. Over this nine-year period, Allen's designs were realized, and the campus was filled with new residents and staff. By the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1971, Aldersly's campus was comprised of 60 modern garden apartments connected by covered walkways; most units included a garden patio or private balcony with views of Mt. Tamalpais. The facility housed 100 residents in 12 total buildings, and integrated landscape features on three acres of property (**Figure 118 to Figure 121**). In 1976, an article in *Marin Living* mentioned that residents at that time paid a minimum entrance fee of \$6,000 to live in a garden apartment and \$300 per month for services, including three meals a day, housecleaning, linens, infirmary and nursing care.<sup>48</sup>

Each apartment came equipped with an intercom system, and when a resident did not appear to a meal without notice, the staff immediately went to check on his or her apartment. Garden apartments, which were furnished by the residents, ranged from a one-room studio with a large bath to a two-bedroom apartment, available for a higher cost, which included a large bedroom, guest bedroom, bathroom, large living room, and fully equipped kitchen and dining area. Birthdays of residents were celebrated with festive Danish cakes, and annual holidays were observed with smorgasbords, and aquavit and beer, two of Scandinavia's favorite beverages. Residents typically would gather for Danish coffee and pastry daily at 2pm in individual apartments or social halls. For long-time resident, Mrs. Christine Lorentzen, 95, a Denmark native, life at Aldersly "was a party... [in the evenings], the energetic former dressmaker plays cards with her friends and enjoys sandwiches, cocktails, or beer."<sup>49</sup> These activities, along with writing articles for a Danish newspaper, kept her mentally and physically active. Another resident, Mrs. Frieda Rasmussen, described how much she enjoyed the lack of restrictions on the campus and could freely garden and drive her own car (**Figure 122 to Figure 123**).<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Gardner, Dorothy. "Aldersly Residents Retain Their Zest for the Good Life." *Marin Living*. Pg. M3. July 20, 1974.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Few substantial exterior alterations appear to have been made to Allen's buildings in the intervening years, based on site observations and building permits, except for replacement balcony railings with wood and metal balusters, replacement of metal sash windows and sliding doors with vinyl sash, and the addition of metal outer screen doors throughout. An aerial photograph of the campus in 1974 portrays the campus layout at that time, including the older buildings (top right of photograph), surrounded on the south and west sides by Allen's new residential and administrative buildings, a reconfigured circular entry driveway, new pathways, stairways, plantings, and other landscape features (**Figure 124**). A third visit by Denmark's royalty took place in 1976 with Queen Margrethe II and Henrik, Prince of Denmark.



**Figure 118. Frederiksborg (Building E), looking northwest.**  
Source: Aldersly postcard, ca. 1968.



**Figure 119. Frederiksborg (E) and Fredensborg (D) behind, looking northeast. Weathervane at left.**  
Source: Aldersly postcard, ca. 1968.



**Figure 120. Christiansborg (B) and Amalienborg (A) at left.** Source: Aldersly postcard, ca. 1968.



**Figure 121. Amalienborg (A) at left and Christiansborg (B) at right.**  
Source: Aldersly postcard, ca. 1968.



Figure 122. Typical garden apartment interior.  
Source: *Architectural Record*, Oct. 1967.



Figure 123. Danish costume in the Dining Hall used at holidays and parties.  
Source: *Marin Living*, pg. M3, 1974.

Figure 124. Aldersly campus aerial photograph, 1975.  
Source: Aldersly Retirement Home brochure, 1975.

#### Redevelopment and Modernization in the 1980s through 2000s

By the late-1970s, Aldersly had begun admitting residents of all ethnic backgrounds, though many cultural activities continued to revolve around Danish traditions. In 1987, Aldersly announced plans for campus expansion, including a new 20-bed nursing facility and launched a campaign to raise funds for a \$2 million dollar building to replace the 70-year old 13-bed infirmary.<sup>51</sup> As plans developed, Building D (Kronberg Health Facility) was planned to replace the two oldest buildings on the campus, including the White House and rear residence. The new building would house a state of the art Nursing Facility, as well as a new Hendrix Hall Multipurpose Room, Accounting Offices and Housekeeping Services, and was approved for construction in April 1989 (**Figure 125**). Though the architect is not listed, the hired contractor was Petaluma-based Christensen and Foster. The Community Center/Skilled Nursing Facility, Hendrix Hall, was completed in 1992. In addition to the new facility, major interior modifications to residential apartments were undertaken in the early 1990s, likely also including a small ground story extension at the southeast corner of Building A (Amalienborg). Other modifications included new kitchens, enlarged bathrooms, new carpets, and

<sup>51</sup> "San Rafael Aged & Aging." Newspaper unknown. September 3, 1987.  
December 12, 2017

draperies.<sup>52</sup> In 1997, the administrative offices and lobby of Building D (Fredensborg) were renovated and expanded, altering the exterior façade of the main entry, but preserving the extensive glazing and original style of awnings. In 2010, both the Health Facility and Hendrix Hall were completely refurbished.

Although the practice of assisted living and continuing care had been established at Aldersly since its founding, the Board of Directors determined that the campus required its own modern Assisted Living Facility to remain competitive as a destination and model for senior living. In 2002, the White House (last of the extant 1920s-era buildings) and older residential buildings at the east side of the property were demolished to make way for the new 23,000 square-foot Building I (Rosenborg Assisted Living Facility), designed by DFD Architects, which integrates a parking garage, 30 residential apartments, and connects to the Minor Building via an interior bridge (**Figure 126**). Rosenborg is three stories tall and abuts the residential parcels to the east along Union Street.



**Figure 125. Schematic illustration of the New Health Center/Skilled Nursing Building, 1989.**  
Source: *World of Aldersly*, Spring 1989.



**Figure 126. Demolition of Infirmiry, ca. 2002.**  
Source: Petaluma Historical Museum.

Today Aldersly Retirement Community consists of 56 independent living apartments, 30 assisted living apartments, and a 20-bed health facility, allowing it to be a fully licensed continuing care institution. The community has remained successful largely due to its culture of innovation and focus on improving the resident experience. Early director and contractor Chris Pedersen described the legacy of Aldersly in 2003: “Regardless of what the future holds, Aldersly will remain a landmark with a touch of the Old World, faithful to its noble purpose, maintaining a caring and comfortable shelter for the elderly.”<sup>53</sup>

## CONSTRUCTION CHRONOLOGY

The following timeline describes major exterior construction activities at the Aldersly campus, based on building permits on file with the San Rafael Planning Department and historic newspaper articles. The buildings on the campus have experienced numerous interior improvements to update interior apartment layouts and finishes, and has undergone repeated mechanical and systems upgrades. Permits related to interior alterations or upgrades were not included. Relevant permits for exterior and site alterations are listed below; however, in most cases, the specific building(s) affected by the proposed work was not indicated. Bolded dates indicate a substantial addition or alteration to the campus. The owner during all alterations was the Aldersly Retirement Community.

<sup>52</sup> Wayne, Joan. “Aldersly Takes on a New Face.” *The World of Aldersly*. October 1991.

<sup>53</sup> “A Century of Memories.” *Aldersly Garden Retirement Community News*, Pg. 3, 2003.

**Aldersly Retirement Community (326 Mission Avenue)**

Date	Permit Number	Architect/ Contractor	Scope of Alterations
1944-45	-	Unknown	Addition of the Minor Building
July 1944	-	n/a	Inspection: Description of work – “installing additional plumb/elec., changing doors to serve single rooms with closets, altering layout to make 5 separate rooms with wash basins per room, new reading room in basement (likely in main “White House”)
Oct. 1948	6906	-	Add to (e) storage room for \$900
Apr. 1949	7139	-	Add to (e) 9x12 and 5x8 cottages
Mar. 1951	8149	Chris Pederson	New 700sf residence A (cottage) with concrete foundation, stucco exterior, plaster interior, asphalt shingle roof
Mar. 1952	8623	Chris Pederson	Garage converted to residential apartments
Aug. 1953	9232	Chris Pederson	Change garage to office (stucco/brick)
Aug. 1956	1628	Chris Pederson	Erect concrete retaining wall and remove existing foundation
Oct. 1956	1839	-	Install sprinkler system, new exits, enclosure of boiler room of 1 fire wall, new ramps and stairs and other minor fire requirements
June 1957	2717	-	2 full bathrooms, 2 closets, old partitions to be removed and windows replaced 14 rooms, 7 units
July 1961	65	Rex Whitaker Allen/John A. Nelson	New two-story building – 6,808sf to contain 18 rooms (16 living units) for \$125,000
Apr 1963	807	-	Door swings in direction of egress and new platform steps and risers and exterior remodeling
Sept. 1963	280	C.D. Madison, Inc.	Demolition permit for single-family dwelling
Sept. 1963	329	Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates/Weisenberg Construction, Inc.	Original building permit for two-story building with 41 rooms for \$72,000
Oct. 1965	1074	Rex Whitaker Allen	7 units, meeting room, driveway removal
Dec. 1968	4361	Rex Whitaker Allen	19 Efficiency apartments, dining room, kitchen
Aug. 1969	5531	Viking Automatic Spr.	Automatic sprinkler system
Nov. 1976	7913	M & B Sabraw	Fire repair
Feb. 1977	8198	Stewart Lindaver	Addition to one living unit
Oct. 1985	22732	-	Reroofing of Minor Building
Apr. 1987	25490	-	Reroofing of Rosenberg House
Feb. 1988	27595	Morris Roofing Co.	Reroofing of Carmelita, Trelleborg
1989	-	Christiansen & Foster	Addition of a new Nursing Facility, Hendrix Hall Multipurpose Room, residential remodeling and addition of a

Date	Permit Number	Architect/ Contractor	Scope of Alterations
			ground story extension at Building A
June 1993	36788	Callarmoy Associates	Cellar removal, block wall, footing
March 1994	38012	Womble Roofing, Inc.	Reroofing with tar and gravel
Sept. 1997	44083	James McDonald & Assoc.	Interior remodeling, addition of a sunroom and expansion of lobby and administrative offices at Building D (Fredensborg)
Aug. 1998	45645	Booth & Little, Inc.	Remove existing tile roofing. Replace membrane and reinstall tile
Oct. 1998	46505	James McDonald & Assoc.	Addition of ground story sunroom at Building E (Frederiksborg)
Oct. 2001	B0110-062	Booth & Little, Inc.	Reroofing with fiberglass shingles
May 2002	B0205-021	DFD Architects	Demolition of 4 buildings on existing campus
<b>Apr. 2003</b>	B0303-060	DFD Architects	New 23,000sf assisted living center
May 2003	B0305-092	-	Termite repair
Apr. 2004	B0404-156	-	Termite repair, stud replacement, plumbing & electrical

## NOTABLE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Since its founding in 1921 to the present, the Aldersly Retirement Community has been owned by the non-profit organization Aldersly, Inc. Given the significant amount of turnover of residents over the past century and the institution's privacy regulations, long-term residents were not extensively researched for the purposes of this report. While several people with notable careers have resided at Aldersly, just a couple biographies available in public accounts or obituaries have been included of a resident, donor, and a founding staff member.

### Christian Mortensen

Thomas Peter Thorvald Kristian Ferdinand Mortensen (1882-1998) was known as Christian Mortensen in his adult life and was a Danish-American supercentenarian. Mortensen died at the age of 115, only 252 days shy of becoming the world's longest living male at that time.<sup>54</sup> Mortensen was born in Denmark in a small village and worked as a tailor's apprentice and later as a farmhand. Mortensen emigrated to the United States in 1903 and settled in Chicago. He only married once, for ten years, and had no children. After working several trades, including as a restaurateur and factory worker, Mortensen retired near Galveston Bay, Texas. He did not move to Aldersly until the age of 96. Towards the end of his life, Mortensen's mind remained fairly intact, though he had gone nearly blind. On his 115<sup>th</sup> birthday at Aldersly, Mortensen's advice for a long life included "Friends, a good cigar, drinking lots of good water, no alcohol, staying positive and lots of singing..."<sup>55</sup>

### Christian J. 'C.J.' Klitgaard

Klitgaard lived with his family in Alameda and was one of the original founders of Aldersly in 1921. He served as a Trustee for several years in the Danish Society Danner and as one of the longest serving Presidents of the Board of Aldersly from 1928-1946, ending his term after its 25<sup>th</sup> year.

<sup>54</sup> A Japanese man, Jiroemon Kimura, has since surpassed this age in 2012.

<sup>55</sup> "Christian Mortensen, 115, Among Oldest". Available <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/03/us/christian-mortensen-115-among-oldest.html> Accessed November 3, 2017.



During the visit of the Danish Prince Frederick, King and Queen in 1954, Klitgaard was decorated with the “Order of Dannebrog” for his founding of Aldersly.<sup>56</sup>

### Captain Robert C. Minor

Captain Robert Minor was born in Denmark 1854 and emigrated to California around the turn-of-the-century, settling in Alameda by 1922. Captain Minor was an early pioneer of the West coast shipping industries in San Francisco, and prior to 1890, a superintendent of Alaskan canneries, specifically the Alaska Packers’ Association. Minor also served as a commander of several of the early steam schooners guarding the Pacific coast. He was the president of the California Stevedore and Ballast Company and was a member of the Master Mariners’ Benevolent Association, Oak Grove Lodge No. 215, Oakland Commandery Knights Templar and Islam Temple of the Shrine. Minor was an active member of the local Danish community in the Bay Area and was the donor and namesake of the Aldersly campus’s Minor Building, dedicated in 1945. Minor retired by 1930 in Alameda where he lived with his wife, Hansine Minor, and daughter, Viola, until his death at the age of 73 in 1934.<sup>57</sup>

## ARCHITECT

### Rex Whitaker Allen

Rex Whitaker Allen was born in 1914 in San Francisco, California to physician Lewis Whitaker and his wife, Maude Rex Allen. Allen grew up in New England and attended Harvard University for undergraduate studies. He also pursued his Master’s degree in Architecture (1936-39) at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, where he studied with world-renowned architect, Walter Gropius. Allen’s interest in hospital design began early in his career, potentially influenced by his father’s career as a surgeon. Following school, Allen worked at several large New York design firms, several of which specialized in healthcare design, including Research and Planning Associates (1939-42), Camloc Fastener Corporation (1942-45), and the office of notable hospital architect and planner, Isadore Rosenfield (1945-48). In 1949, Allen returned to his hometown of San Francisco and married Ruth Allen, nee Batchelor. He began working with Blanchard and Maher Architects (1949-52) and established his own private practice, Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates, in 1953 in San Francisco.<sup>58</sup>

Allen is widely acclaimed for his work in the Bay Area’s hospital and nursing home sector from 1953 through his retirement in 1987. Allen’s firm designed more than 100 hospitals and nursing homes, known for their large community rooms, spacious and comfortable lounges, and patient-centric design features. More than 10 of these projects received national design awards. His son, Mark, described his father as “a form-follows-function kind of guy,” and his style of design as never wanting to “make a big, showy statement. He was always looking at things from the patient’s point of view, trying to make a patient in a hospital feel less like a number.”<sup>59</sup> Allen joined in a partnership with architect Hugh Stubbins in 1968 and formed the Rex Allen Partnership in 1971. From 1976-1985, he worked with co-Principals Drever and Mark Lechowski. The firm evolved into Rex Allen & Associates in later years.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> “Europe Intrigues Local Folk” *Oakland Tribune*. June 27, 1954. Pg. 83.

<sup>57</sup> “Funeral Held for Capt. Minor” *Oakland Tribune*. February 15, 1934.

<sup>58</sup> Rubenstein, Steve. “Service set for architect Rex Whitaker Allen.” *SFGate*. May 17, 2008.

<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Service-set-for-architect-Rex-Whitaker-Allen-3283991.php> Accessed October 20, 2017.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> “Rex Whitaker Allen (Architect).” PCAD Available at <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/1222/>

Accessed October 20, 2017.

In the Bay Area, Allen is most known for his designs of the French Hospital (now Kaiser French Campus), St. Francis Hospital in San Francisco, Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, Highland Hospital in Oakland, Sequoia Health Center in Portola Valley, the Lawton House in San Francisco, and Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz (**Figure 127 to Figure 128**). His designs of nursing homes and retirement communities were known for their residential design aesthetic and focus on comfort and the occupants' flexible use of interior space. Allen's signature projects featured open and bright social gathering spaces as central design features, and his firm pioneered the technique of utilizing interstitial space to conceal noisy machinery and utilities from patients. Allen also contributed to the development of the patient semi-private 'duo room' (patient rooms separated by movable partitions), as well as the 'nurse server', a centralized nurse's station on individual floors.<sup>61</sup> Both were still relatively new space planning practices in hospitals and nursing homes during the postwar period. Allen's patient and resident-focused approach during the 1950s-1960s had notable impacts on the evolution of healthcare and nursing home design.<sup>62</sup>



**Figure 127. Dominican Hospital, Santa Cruz (1967). Source: Wikipedia.org.**



**Figure 128. Lawton House, San Francisco (1965-67). Source: Google Earth, 2017.**

Although healthcare design and planning were the main specialties of Allen's firm, the practice also designed industrial plants, laboratories, educational facilities, banks, and offices in a variety of architectural styles. Allen was active in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) from early in his career through retirement, serving for several periods as elected Secretary of the Northern California chapter. He served as vice president of the AIA from 1964-66, president from 1969-70, and served on numerous other boards of national architectural and healthcare-related associations. Allen was an AIA Fellow and received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American College of Healthcare Architects. He authored "The Hospital Planning Handbook" in 1976, one of the first comprehensive manuals to hospital design and space planning, in addition to countless articles for both architectural and medical journals. Though more of a hobby, Allen enjoyed working on family vacation homes, including his own in Stinson Beach and Jenner on the Sonoma coast. He married three times, but was married to his third wife, Bettie Allen, for 36 years, with whom he had four children: Mark, Alexandra, Frances, and Susan. From 1987 through the mid-2000s, Allen offered consultation services as a health facility planner in California, Oregon, Brazil, Guam, and Seoul. Following a brief illness, Rex Whitaker Allen died at the age of 93 in Portland, Oregon, in 2008.<sup>63</sup> A biography of Aldersly's original architect Brainerd Jones is not included, as none of his buildings remain extant on the campus.

<sup>61</sup> Verderber, David J. Fine. *Healthcare Architecture in an Era of Radical Transformation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

<sup>62</sup> "Rex Whitaker Allen." *San Francisco Chronicle*. May, 17, 2008. Available at <https://www.geni.com/people/Rex-Whitaker-Allen/6000000041217141981> Accessed October 20, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

### Second Bay Tradition

The following information is paraphrased from the City of San Francisco's *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement* (2011). The information below is not San Francisco-specific, but rather, describes general characteristics of the Second Bay Tradition style (1937-ca. 1964), which can be applied to buildings in San Rafael.

The Second Bay Tradition is a unique Modern vernacular architectural style that originated in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area, one of the only dominant regional styles to emerge from the Bay region. The style is characterized by a rustic and woodsy aesthetic (inspired by the First Bay Tradition architects, such as Bernard Maybeck and Julia Morgan), merged with a clearly modern sensibility, featuring sleek lines, functional designs, and rectilinear forms, which is associated with European Modernism. The style is particularly associated with the architects Gardner Dailey, William Merchant, Henry Hill, and William Wurster. As it developed, the style fused the design philosophies of the Arts and Crafts and International Style movements to create a new style, which was pervasive in the Bay Area by the 1950s-60s.<sup>64</sup> Overall, the Second Bay Tradition places an emphasis on natural and traditional building materials, which in addition to wood include brick, stone, stucco, and plaster. Often simple in appearance and form, Second Bay buildings are often “highly complex,” playing off “sophisticated spatial arrangements, surfaces, and details,” and associated with custom architects, rather than builder tracts (Joseph Eichler was a notable exception, since he employed well-known modern architects).<sup>65</sup> While many Second Bay Tradition architects were based in San Francisco, most of their defining buildings were located in the surrounding suburban towns. Institutional buildings were also designed in the style, but were less common, and most are no longer extant (**Figure 129 to Figure 132**). The defined period of significance of the Second Bay Tradition style is 1937 through c. 1964, overlapping on the latter end with the emergence of the more whimsical and cubist Third Bay Tradition Style. Other interchangeable names of the style include Bay Region Style, Second Bay Region Tradition, and Bay Region Modern.<sup>66</sup>

Although Second Bay Tradition buildings do not have a standardized look, character-defining features of the style include:<sup>67</sup>

- Simple vernacular appearance
- Brick or wood cladding (often stained or painted)
- Large expanses of glass
- Overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails
- Flat, low-pitched, or canted roofs
- Small-scale and rectilinear emphasis on volume
- Flexible interior floor plans
- Integration with the landscape and natural environment
- Emphasis on indoor-outdoor living spaces (often including rear and side yards)
- Redwood construction
- Private Modern style gardens designed by landscape architects
- Common landscape features include pergolas, atria, and trellises

<sup>64</sup> Weinstein, Dave; Svendsen, Linda *Signature architects of the San Francisco Bay area*. Gibbs Smith, 2006. Pg. 100.

<sup>65</sup> “Style: Second Bay Tradition.” San Francisco Modernism Historic Context Statement. Pg. 172. Available at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/sfmod.pdf> Accessed October 26, 2017.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 172.



Figure 129. 3655 Clay Street,  
William Wurster, 1942.  
Source: Mary Brown, SF Planning Department.



Figure 130. 2000 Kirkham Street in the Sunset  
District, Albert Richards, 1950.  
Source: Matt Weintraub, 2009.



Figure 131. Clarendon Elementary School,  
Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, 1960.  
Source: San Francisco Public Library.



Figure 132. Convalescent home at 2704 California  
Street, Wurster, Bernardi, and Emmons, 1961.  
Source: San Francisco Public Library.

## VI. EVALUATION

### CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES AND SAN RAFAEL

#### HISTORIC PROPERTIES LIST

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are also used for evaluation of properties for inclusion on the San Rafael Historic Properties list. These criteria are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register and San Rafael Historic Properties List, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- *Criterion 1 (Events):* Resources that are 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.
- *Criterion 2 (Persons):* Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- *Criterion 3 (Architecture):* Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- *Criterion 4 (Information Potential):* Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

The following section examines the eligibility of the subject property for individual listing in the California Register and San Rafael Historic Properties List:

#### Criterion 1 (Events)

Aldersly Retirement Community appears to be individually significant under Criterion 1 (Events) as a property that is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local and regional history, and the cultural heritage of California. Beginning in 1921, Aldersly has served as a destination and “shelter”, as its name indicates, for retired Danish-Americans from California and Nevada, as well as a cultural center for Danish-Americans of all ages in Northern California. A benevolent group of Danes originally established Aldersly as a non-profit retirement community to serve the rapidly growing Danish-American community at that time, but also with the aim to revive fading Danish cultural traditions amongst the younger generations. Danish antiques and memorabilia integrated in the design of the campus celebrate Denmark’s history, and annual Danish celebrations are held annually on the grounds. While the largest Danish population in California originally settled in Southern California, particularly in the town of Solvang in 1911, Aldersly has served as an important cultural anchor for the Danish-American communities of Northern California and Nevada.

Known to be socially minded and to respect and care for their elderly, Danes of California clubs and lodges have historically provided benefits to Danish-Americans, who did not receive them from their employers. Since its founding, Aldersly has similarly offered these services and 24-hour medical care, in addition to room and board, to their residents. This was a relatively unknown and forward-looking practice for American nursing homes at the time it was established. Unlike many nursing homes of the early to mid-twentieth century, Aldersly was also known to offer a comfortable, socially inclusive, and residential-style atmosphere, focused on improving the lives of its elderly residents. While the institution historically catered to Danish-Americans, people of all ethnic backgrounds have been welcomed and have been part of the community since the late-1970s. While Aldersly remains an important cultural institution, other Danish clubs and societies exist today in northern California, which appear to serve a similar social and cultural role as Aldersly.

Thus, the period of significance for Aldersly under Criterion 1 (Event) spans from 1921 when the institution was founded to 1980, encompassing all major periods of the institution's influence as a unique cultural institution for northern California's Danish-American communities.

### Criterion 2 (Persons)

Aldersly Retirement Community originally opened as a "Danish Old Age Home" and since 2004, has evolved into a full-service retirement and continuing care community, inclusive of on-site nursing care and an assisted living facility. Despite the somewhat short-term nature of residency or nursing care at the community, several residents have lived on the property for several decades, including one of the longest living men at that time, Christian Mortensen. Mortensen lived at Aldersly from age 96 to 115, or 19 years. Nevertheless, while it is possible that past residents at Aldersly were important to local, California, or national history during their lives and careers, the institution's program as a retirement community limits the potential for direct associative relationships with past residents' careers or life achievements before Aldersly that would be required for the property to be considered significant under Criterion 2 (Persons). Several past directors of Aldersly were longstanding members of the Danish American community, the Aldersly Board of Directors, and were influential in the institution's early organization and evolution, such as C.J. Klitgaard. Captain Robert Minor was also involved in the Danish-American community and contributed financially to the institution; however, the dedicated Minor Building was otherwise not directly associated with Captain Minor, since it was constructed more than a decade after his death. While Aldersly as an organization is significant for its cultural contributions, the age-eligible buildings do not appear to have significance for their association with any one specifically significant person. Although several people were important to the campus's development and active, engaged figures in the local Danish-American community, their associated achievements at Aldersly do not appear to rise to a level that would be considered significant under Criterion 2.

### Criterion 3 (Architecture)

Page & Turnbull finds that the subject property appears significant under Criterion 3 (Architecture) for three primary reasons. First, the campus's age-eligible buildings from the 1961-68 period of development appear to be early exemplary works in Rex Whitaker Allen's extensive and varied design portfolio, as one of the region's most prolific mid-twentieth century healthcare institutional architects. Allen established a healthcare design practice in San Francisco in 1953 and is widely acclaimed for his work in the Bay Area's hospital and nursing home sector for nearly four decades. He is recognized as one of the first to promote a less institutional and more residential approach to the design of hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living institutions. His architectural philosophy placed an emphasis on designing to improve elderly patient comfort, independent mobility, and well-being, including the incorporation of large community rooms; spacious and quiet apartments, lounges and dining facilities; interstitial spaces to hide mechanical equipment; covered exterior

‘corridors’, and accessible integrated design features. Allen authored “The Hospital Planning Handbook” in 1976, which remains one of the most comprehensive early manuals for healthcare design and spatial planning for nursing homes. Many resident accounts of life at Aldersly beginning in the 1960s remark about the comfort of the campus’s facilities, its spacious and well-lit apartments and social halls, as well as an appreciation of the beauty of the integrated landscape. Although several of Allen’s hospitals still exist in the Bay Area and nationally, only a few nursing homes or extended care facilities appear to remain extant, including the Sequoia Health Center in Portola Valley (1965-67) and the Lawton Healthcare Center in San Francisco (1966-67). Besides the Sequoia Health Center, it does not appear that other similar-scale and hybrid institutional/residential campuses like Aldersly exist, especially as earlier examples of this typology. Therefore, the Aldersly campus, inclusive of the surrounding landscape, appears eligible under Criterion 3 for its association with this regionally significant architect, and as a particularly notable contribution to Allen’s canon of work in the healthcare institutional design sector.

Secondly, while no one age-eligible building appears to be individually significant, the Allen-designed buildings collectively exhibit a full expression of the Second Bay Tradition style. As a whole, these buildings employ a standardized vocabulary of Second Bay design features, and each conveys a unique formal expression of those combined elements. Specifically, the buildings all appear to retain original cladding materials (primarily Roman brick with deliberate vertical linear interruptions of painted redwood siding); consistent unit entryway and balcony configurations; extensive fenestration and custom glazing; dialogue with the surrounding landscape and topographical conditions; and simple rectilinear volumes and canted roof forms. Few substantial alterations to these defining features were noted in building permits or site observations, except for window replacements with vinyl sash throughout and reroofing. The oldest building on the campus, the Minor Building, was constructed in 1945 and exhibits elements of the Classical Revival style. The Minor Building also appears relatively unaltered, retaining several original features (brick cladding, overhanging eaves with rafter tails, monumental entry arch, scroll detailing, and multi-lite windows). Though brick is a less common cladding material of the Second Bay Tradition style, the brick of the Minor Building likely inspired Allen’s use of brick for the residential buildings in the 1960s.

Since the Second Bay Tradition style was typically applied to architect-designed individual buildings located in developed residential neighborhoods, it is particularly rare to find a grouping of Second Bay Tradition buildings that appear eligible as contributors to a potential historic district, as opposed to eligible as individual properties. Other similar groupings of Second Bay Tradition buildings exist in San Francisco (residences on Raycliff Terrace, Normandie Terrace, Forest Hills, Twin Peaks, and the 3000 block of Pacific Heights); however, these clusters are comprised of privately owned residences, instead of associated buildings on a campus such as Aldersly. Non-residential Second Bay Tradition buildings are rare, and the best examples of the style’s non-residential buildings have been demolished or substantially altered.<sup>68</sup> Thus, it appears that the Allen-designed buildings form a uniquely cohesive and contiguous grouping, which also retains the majority of their character-defining features. Notable character-defining features include: the simple vernacular appearance, brick and wood cladding, large expanses of glass, overhanging eaves and rafter tails, canted roofs, rectilinear massing, and emphasis on indoor-outdoor experience. Furthermore, these buildings represent a rare expression of the Second Bay Tradition style in the form of a hybrid residential and institutional building typology. Within this context, these buildings appear to be contributors to a potentially eligible historic district. While the Second Bay Tradition buildings are considered the primary components of the eligible property, the Minor Building (1945) would also be considered a

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<sup>68</sup> “Style: Second Bay Tradition.” San Francisco Modernism Historic Context Statement. Pg. 178. Available at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/sfmod.pdf> Accessed October 26, 2017.

contributor, as it likely influenced the materiality of Allen’s buildings. The two later additions to the campus (1992 and 2004) would not be considered contributors to this eligible district. Thirdly, although the campus landscape is not particularly modern in its aesthetic or composition, the interconnected nature of all campus buildings to the surrounding site is clearly evident and a character-defining feature of the Second Bay Tradition style. Designed features of the landscape that convey this sense of integration include the network of covered walkways, curving and sloping pedestrian pathways, ramps, continuous metal railings, single-run stairs, respect to the existing site topography, densely planted vegetation around all buildings, side yards and lawns with seating, and second story balconies throughout. Allen’s attention to the comfort of residents inside his buildings clearly extends outside the buildings as well, by allowing the landscape to provide more opportunities for circulation, interaction, and respite. While the age-eligible buildings are primary contributors to this eligible historic district, it is the historic relationship of the campus’s buildings with the landscape, its evolution over time, and the resulting cohesive nature of the entire property, which forms the basis of the property’s eligibility for significance as a historic district. Thus, Aldersly appears to qualify for significance under Criterion 3 (Architecture) as a historic district. The period of significance for the property under this Criterion spans from 1945 to 1968, marking the construction of the Minor Building through the period of Rex Whitaker Allen’s master planning of the Aldersly campus.

#### Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

The subject property not evaluated for significance under Criterion 4 (Information Potential). This criterion primarily applies to properties that may contain archeological resources and is beyond the scope of this report.

## INTEGRITY

In addition to qualifying for listing under at least one of the California Register criteria, a property must be shown to have sufficient historic integrity to be considered a historical resource. The concept of integrity is essential to identifying the important physical characteristics of historical resources and hence, in evaluating adverse changes to them. Integrity is defined as “the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance.”<sup>69</sup> The process of determining integrity is similar for both the California Register and the National Register. The same seven variables or aspects that define integrity—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association—are used to evaluate a resource’s eligibility for listing in the California Register and the National Register. According to the *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, these seven characteristics are defined as follows:

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed.
- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.
- *Setting* addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).
- *Materials* refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.
- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

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<sup>69</sup> California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistant Series No. 7, How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historic Resources* (Sacramento, CA: California Office of State Publishing, September 2001) 11  
December 12, 2017



- *Feeling* is the 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.

Location: The subject property retains integrity of location, as it has not been moved from its original site since it was initially constructed.

Setting: The property's surrounding environment has not changed substantially to an extent that would compromise integrity of setting. The adjacent blocks on the west, south, and east sides have historically been zoned as residential and consist of one and two-story residential buildings, several of which appear to predate the mid-century development of the subject property. A golf course originally existed to the north of the site, but the area has since been converted to residential use as well. While the setting of Aldersly has been altered with each new wave of campus development, there has been a consistent concerted effort to preserve the predominance of the site's natural topography, pedestrian-centric circulation, landscape features and their integration with the built environment. As a result, the subject property has been found to retain integrity of setting.

Design: There have been several phases of design development of the Aldersly campus. If evaluating integrity of the original design of the campus, the property would be found to have compromised integrity of design. However, since the holistic redevelopment of the campus in the mid-1960s, the property has maintained its overall character and appearance for over 50 years, and thus could be said to have acquired historic significance in its own right. If evaluating the integrity of this campus, it can be said that the subject property's buildings and landscape retain their design features and visual effects that characterized them when they were planned and constructed. The overall massing, materiality, fenestration patterns, and integration with the site and environment are character-defining features of the Second Bay Tradition and have not been substantially altered.

The surrounding campus landscape has experienced two major additions of buildings on the east side of the property. On the whole, these alterations have maintained the natural aesthetic of the campus, original circulation features (circular driveway and main entry stair), and integration of landscape and topographic features with the buildings. This includes planted perimeter pathways, ramps and stairs; landscaped side and rear yards; lush gardens and mature trees; open lawns, and outdoor seating. Nonetheless, the two more recent and large architectural additions have affected the design integrity of the eastern portion of the site and campus landscape by removing extant buildings and portions of the original landscape. Therefore, Aldersly has been found to partially retain integrity of design.

Materials: The materials that have characterized the campus's buildings since the 1940s (beginning with the construction of the Minor Building through Allen's brick-clad buildings of the 1960s), have remained unaltered since their construction. These buildings continue to be defined by their original exterior materials: brick siding; wood roof eaves, rafter tails, doors, balconies, and portions of wood siding; extensive linear glazing; and concrete patios. Thus, the property was determined to retain overall integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The workmanship of buildings designed by Brainerd Jones and others, which originally characterized the property, is no longer extant. Yet, the workmanship which has defined the buildings and landscape features since the 1960s appears to remain largely intact. All components retain evidence of their original construction techniques: simplistic yet refined architectural volumes and detailing; carefully constructed and grouted brick, smooth-finished wood paneling, and angled

glazing of the Allen-designed buildings; and various carefully paved or planted spaces throughout the landscape. The property therefore retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The historic feeling of the subject property as a garden retirement community, with both residential and institutional components, is maintained through the interrelationships between the campus buildings and surrounding integrated landscape. The more prominent administration building and community center at the center of the site convey the original spatial and programmatic intent of the campus, with satellite residential and healthcare facilities surrounding these central buildings and supporting the use of one another. The extensive network of pedestrian circulation routes, gardens, and Danish memorabilia and artifacts are also essential components of the landscape that maintain its original intent as a pleasant and welcoming retirement community, celebrating its Danish heritage. The property therefore retains integrity of feeling.

Association: Given that the property is still used as it was originally, despite alterations to certain component elements, it retains a direct link to the original retirement community design scheme and programmatic goals of Aldersly. The residential buildings, administrative offices, Nursing and Assisted Living facilities, social gathering spaces, and integrated landscape were designed for the specific goals of enriching the senior residents' daily experience, provided services, and connection with nature, which are still present at the site. The subject property continues to convey the ideals of resident- and patient-centric design pioneered by Allen's practice in the 1960s. The property therefore retains integrity of association.

In summary, Page & Turnbull finds that Aldersly retains sufficient overall integrity such that the property continues to convey its historic appearance and eligibility for significance as a historic district.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

For a property to be eligible for national, state, or local designation under one of the significance criteria, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. To be eligible, a property must clearly retain enough of those characteristics, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Character-defining features can be expressed in terms of form, proportion, structure, plan, style, materials, and ornamentation. The following character-defining features have been identified for the eligible components of the subject property:

### Overall Formal, Spatial, and Visual Relationships of the Historic District

- Spatial integration and interdependency of campus buildings, circulation, and topography
- Composition of site with administrative, nursing, and community services at center surrounded by residential buildings (independent and assisted living)
- Contrast between densely planted, mature vegetation and gardens with open lawns
- Views and circulation around the residential buildings and main lawn

### Second Bay Tradition Buildings

- Simple and modest vernacular appearance
- Wood-framed construction and redwood siding
- Roman brick cladding with linear openings clad with wood siding (painted)
- Large expanses of angled vertically oriented glazing
- Overhanging eaves with wood-paneled soffits and exposed rafter tails
- Low-pitched, canted roofs
- Small-scale and rectilinear emphasis on volume

- Emphasis on indoor-outdoor living spaces
- Landscape features, including pergola, arch, covered outdoor walkway, and trellis

**Campus Landscape**

- Concrete mile marker, displayed in garden near main entry
- Rose garden and fountain
- Paved circulation paths and ramps with metal railings
- Circular driveway main entry off of Mission Avenue
- Mature trees at campus perimeter and adjacent to Main Stair
- Brick main stair with brass lettering, planters and floral carvings
- Main lawn and views across
- Front lawn of Frederiksborg
- Varied site topography
- Stone entry gate pillars and inscriptions at Mission Avenue

A map of the Aldersly campus indicates the age-eligible buildings and landscape features that are considered to be “contributing” (1945 and 1961-68) and “non-contributing” (1992 and 2004) to the property’s overall historic significance as a potentially eligible historic district (**Appendix**).

## VII. CONCLUSION

The Aldersly Retirement Community facility consists of residential, administrative, and healthcare institutional buildings, as well as an extensive network of landscaped, pedestrian paths, stairs, and gardens, connecting the campus. Aldersly opened as a non-profit retirement community in 1921, then known as the “Danish Old People’s Home,” which originally catered to the elderly Danish populations of the Bay Area, greater California and Nevada. Aldersly residents were initially housed in an existing Victorian residence on the property, known as the ‘White House’, but by 1922, funds were raised to expand the campus and construct new residential and infirmary buildings. Although the campus has evolved substantially over the last century, including four periods of redevelopment, the property remains in use as a non-profit retirement home, continuing care community, and cultural center for the Bay Area’s Danish-American community. The property is characterized by its overall spatial volumes and composition; unique integration of buildings, views, landscape, and cultural features; and thoughtfully designed, resident-focused apartments, social spaces, and circulation.

The campus is predominantly comprised of eight residential and administrative buildings, designed by Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates in the Second Bay Tradition style (1961-1968). The oldest extant building is the Minor Building, which was constructed in 1945 (architect unknown). Later additions replaced the original Infirmary and Nursing facilities in the early 1990s, and an Assisted Living Facility was constructed in 2004. While several interior modifications have been made over time to modernize the facilities, and two large building additions have altered and expanded the east side of campus, these changes have not been found to compromise the property’s overall historic character and integrity, and thus potential for eligibility as a historic district. As a result, the subject property appears eligible for listing in the California Register under Criteria 1 and 3, inclusion in the San Rafael Historic Properties List, and thus qualifies as a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA review.

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## **IX. APPENDIX**

Historic Significance Diagram: Contributors and Non-Contributors to a Potential Historic District



**LEGEND OF BUILDINGS**

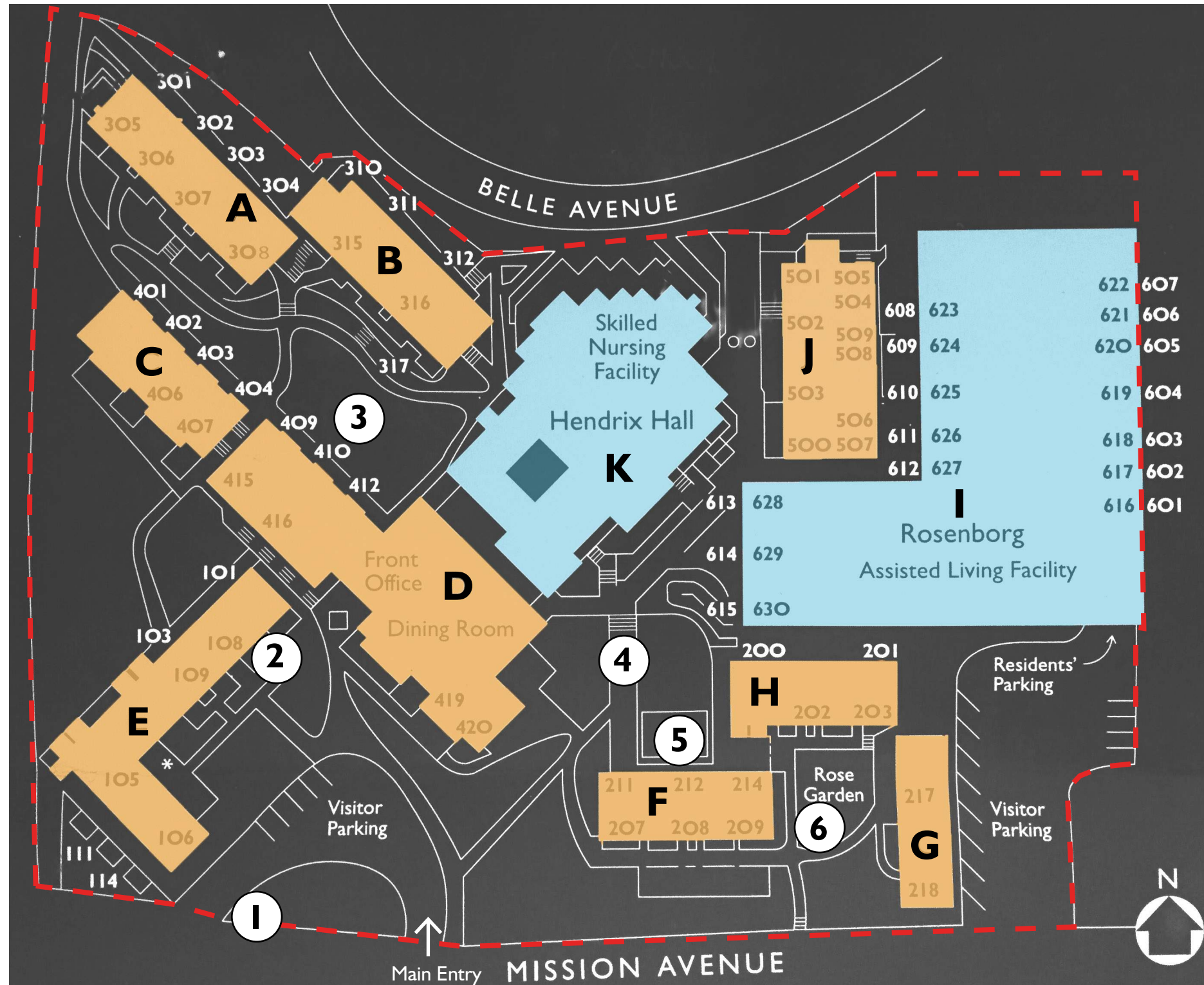
- A-H** 1961-68 Second Bay Tradition Buildings (Rex Whitaker Allen)
- I** 2004 Assisted Living Facility
- J** 1945 Minor Building
- K** 1992 Health Center/ Nursing Facility

**CONTRIBUTING FEATURES**

- 1** Entry gate inscriptions
- 2** Main entrance with milemarker and lanterns
- 3** Central lawn and views
- 4** Main stair
- 5** Flagpole
- 6** Rose garden

**CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- PRIMARY CONTRIBUTING**  
Delineates buildings/features that date to the Periods of Significance (POS) and are the most historically significant components of the property
- NON-CONTRIBUTING**  
Delineates buildings/features that were constructed after the POS
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY**



Historic Significance Diagram

DECEMBER 2017



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ALDERSLY RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN -  
PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACT ANALYSIS

SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA  
[P17150A]

PREPARED FOR ALDERSLY RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
DECEMBER 21, 2020  
FINAL





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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Proposed Project Impact Analysis has been prepared for the proposed Aldersly Retirement Community Redevelopment Plan. The proposed project includes the Aldersly Retirement Community property that stretches between Belle Avenue on the north and Mission Avenue on the south and is located a few blocks east of downtown San Rafael. The site contains twelve residential and administrative buildings, built between 1945 and 2004, and a number of landscape features including pedestrian paths and gardens.

The Aldersly Retirement Community site was evaluated with a Historic Resource Evaluation prepared by Page & Turnbull in December 2017 to determine the property's eligibility for the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) and the San Rafael Historic Properties list.<sup>1</sup> At the time, the site reviewed for the Historic Resource Evaluation did not include a small section in the southeast corner that contains the building at 308 Mission Avenue.<sup>2</sup> This property was the subject of an Historic Resource Evaluation in October 2020, prepared by Page & Turnbull, that did find that the circa 1942 building at 308 Mission Avenue was not individually eligible as a historic resource for the California Register or the San Rafael Historic Properties list.

The 2017 Historic Resource Evaluation determined that the Aldersly Retirement Community property is eligible for listing as a historic district in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture). The district is eligible under Criterion 1 for its significance as a unique cultural institution for the Northern California Danish-American community, with a period of significance from 1921 to 1980. Under Criterion 3, while no one building was found to be individually significant, the buildings collectively form a district that is eligible for its architecture in three ways: first, for its collection of 1961-1968 buildings by master architect Rex Whitaker Allen, who is known for his mid-century healthcare institutional designs; second, as a collection of buildings that demonstrate the full expression of the Second Bay Tradition style; and third, for its integration of landscape features and building interiors as defined by the Second Bay Tradition and the site's intention as a comfortable retreat and a place for the interaction of its residents and community. As stated in the 2017 Historic Resource Evaluation, "while the historic buildings are the primary components of the eligible historic district, it is the historic relationship of the campus's buildings with the landscape and site topography, and the resulting cohesive nature of the entire property, which forms the basis of the property's eligibility for

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Resource Evaluations were also completed in November 2017 for two adjacent properties to the east of the Aldersly campus: 121 Union Street and 123 Union Street. These HREs were completed to inform the Aldersly Retirement Community Redevelopment Plan in its early stages. Neither building was found to be individually eligible for the California Register nor for listing on the San Rafael Historic Properties list.

<sup>2</sup> Page & Turnbull, *308 Mission Avenue Historic Resource Evaluation*, October 2020.

significance as a historic district.”<sup>3</sup> The property is also eligible for the San Rafael Historic Properties list.

The proposed redevelopment project includes demolition or alteration of buildings and landscape features which are contributors to and character-defining features of the California Register-eligible historic district, and construction of three new buildings, including two independent living buildings and one service building that will connect two existing non-contributing buildings.

## Methodology

This report includes a summary of the status of the property’s current historic district contributors per Page & Turnbull’s December 2017 Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE), and lists the character-defining features of the eligible historic district. Based on the finding of historic significance in Page & Turnbull’s 2017 HRE, the subject property is a historic resource for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the proposed project must be evaluated for potential impacts to the historic resource according to CEQA definitions. The project analysis is based on proposed project drawings and renderings dated May 29, 2020, which were provided to Page & Turnbull by Perkins Eastman on August 17, 2020.

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<sup>3</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Aldersly Retirement Community, 326 Mission Avenue: Historic Resource Evaluation*, December 2017



## II. SUMMARY OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

### Contributing Historic Resources to the Eligible Historic District

Buildings on the Aldersly Retirement Community property range from one to three stories in height and were constructed from 1945 (Building J – Minor Building) to 2004 (Building I – Rosenborg). The Aldersly Retirement Community was established in 1921 as a non-profit retirement community for Danish-Americans and sought to serve as a cultural center to celebrate Danish history and cultural traditions.<sup>4</sup> Early buildings on the property, including a Victorian-era mansion, other converted residential buildings, and two 1923 brick buildings designed by local architect Brainerd Jones, were demolished in the mid-twentieth century. The Minor building is the oldest extant building on the Aldersly grounds and was constructed by an unknown architect as a social hall and residence with 18 apartments. The existing campus largely dates to the 1961 master plan for the campus that was designed by Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates. From 1961 to 1968, eight of the existing buildings were constructed (Buildings A through H), creating the cohesive Second Bay Tradition style of the campus that makes the property significant under Criterion 3 (architecture). The remaining three buildings on the current Aldersly campus include the 1992 Building K (Kronborg), the 2004 Building I (Rosenborg), and the building at 308 Mission Avenue, which was constructed as a 1952 residential building. 308 Mission Avenue is located outside the boundary of the eligible Aldersly historic district as it was not a part of the Aldersly campus during the campus' periods of significance.

In addition to the buildings on the Aldersly campus, the eligible historic district contains landscape features, including paths and gardens, and decorative elements such as the mile marker, stone gate pillars, fountain, etc. that illustrate the original and continued approach of creating a garden aesthetic that is a retreat for Aldersly's residents. The word Aldersly translates to "a shade for old age" in Danish and demonstrates the community's longstanding identity as a garden retreat. While some landscape features were called out as character-defining features and are therefore of primary significance to the historic district, a number of other features date to the historic district's period of significance (1921–1980), and are considered contributing features that, while of secondary importance, support the historic significance of the district.

Table 1, which follows, lists the buildings and landscape features of the Aldersly property and defines whether they are contributing or non-contributing elements of the eligible historic district.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For a full discussion of the history of Aldersly refer to "Section V. Project Site History" within: Page & Turnbull, *Aldersly Retirement Community HRE*.

<sup>5</sup> For further clarity on which features are contributing please refer to both the Character-Defining Features listed below and the Appendix which shows a map of contributing features (both buildings and landscape features).

TABLE 1. CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES OF THE ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICT.			
Building/Feature	Type	Date Built	Contributing?
Building A – Amalienborg	Building	1963	Yes
Building B – Christiansborg	Building	1963	Yes
Building C – Sorgenfri	Building	Ca. 1968	Yes
Building D – Fredensborg	Building	Ca. 1968	Yes
Building E – Fredericksborg	Building	1961	Yes
Building F – Marselisborg	Building	1966	Yes
Building G – Liselund	Building	1966	Yes
Building H – Graasten	Building	1966	Yes
Building I – Rosenborg	Building	2004	No
Building J – Minor Building	Building	1945	Yes
Building K – Kronborg	Building	1992	No
Entry gate and inscriptions	Landscape Feature		Yes
Main entrance with milemarker and lanterns	Landscape Feature		Yes
Central lawn and views	Landscape Feature		Yes
Main stair	Landscape Feature		Yes
Flagpole	Landscape Feature		Yes
Rose Garden	Landscape Feature		Yes

## Character-Defining Features

For a property to be eligible for national, state, or local designation under one of the significance criteria, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. To be eligible, a property must clearly retain enough of those characteristics, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Character-defining features can be expressed in terms of form, proportion, structure, plan, style, materials, and ornamentation. The following character-defining features have been identified for the eligible components of the subject property:<sup>6</sup>

### Overall Formal, Spatial, and Visual Relationships of the Historic District

- Spatial integration and interdependency of extant campus buildings, circulation, and topography
- Composition of site with extant administrative, nursing, and community services at center surrounded by residential buildings (independent and assisted living)
- Contrast between densely planted, mature vegetation and gardens with open lawns
- Views and circulation around the 1945 and 1960s residential buildings and main lawn

<sup>6</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Aldersly Retirement Community HRE*, 62-63.

### 1960s Second Bay Tradition Buildings

- Simple and modest vernacular appearance
- Wood-framed construction and redwood siding
- Roman brick cladding with linear openings clad with wood siding (painted)
- Large expanses of angled vertically oriented glazing
- Overhanging eaves with wood-paneled soffits and exposed rafter tails
- Low-pitched, canted roofs
- Small-scale and rectilinear emphasis on volume
- Emphasis on indoor-outdoor living spaces
- Landscape features, including pergola, arch, covered outdoor walkway, and trellis

### Campus Landscape

- Concrete mile marker, displayed in garden near main entry
- Rose garden and fountain
- Paved circulation paths and ramps with metal railings
- Circular driveway main entry off Mission Avenue
- Mature trees at campus perimeter and adjacent to Main Stair
- Brick main stair with brass lettering, planters, and floral carvings
- Main lawn and views across it
- Front lawn of Frederiksborg (Building E)
- Varied site topography
- Stone entry gate pillars and inscriptions at Mission Avenue

A map of the Aldersly campus, which was included in the 2017 HRE, indicates the age-eligible buildings and landscape features that are considered to be “contributing” and “non-contributing” to the property as an eligible historic district and is included as an appendix. Many of the contributing features correspond to the list of character-defining features above. As explained earlier, contributing features that are not listed as character-defining – namely the flagpole and lanterns at the entrance – are of secondary importance, but were erected during the period of significance and support the historic significance of the district.

### III. CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is state legislation (Pub. Res. Code §21000 et seq.) that provides for the development and maintenance of a high-quality environment for the present-day and future through the identification of significant environmental effects.<sup>7</sup> CEQA applies to “projects” proposed to be undertaken or requiring approval from state or local government agencies. “Projects” are defined as “activities which have the potential to have a physical impact on the environment and may include the enactment of zoning ordinances, the issuance of conditional use permits and the approval of tentative subdivision maps.”<sup>8</sup> Historic and cultural resources are considered to be part of the environment. In general, the lead agency must complete the environmental review process as required by CEQA. In the case of the proposed Aldersly Retirement Community Redevelopment Plan, the City of San Rafael will act as the lead agency.

In completing an analysis of a project under CEQA, it must first be determined if the project site possesses a historical resource. A site may qualify as a historical resource if it falls within at least one of four categories listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).<sup>9</sup> The four categories are:

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 on the California Register of Historical Resources (Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4852).

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<sup>7</sup> California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), *California Legislative Information*, accessed September 15, 2020, [http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&division=13.&title=&part=&chapter=&article=](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&division=13.&title=&part=&chapter=&article=)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

4. The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, not included in a local register of historical resources (pursuant to section 5020.1(k) of the Pub. Resources Code), or identified in an historical resources survey (meeting the criteria in section 5024.1(g) of the Pub. Resources Code) does not preclude a lead agency from determining that the resource may be an historical resource as defined in Pub. Resources Code sections 5020.1(j) or 5024.1.

In general, a resource that meets any of the four criteria listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a) is considered to be a historical resource unless “the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that the resource is not historically or culturally significant.”<sup>10</sup>

## Threshold for Substantial Adverse Change

According to CEQA, a “project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.”<sup>11</sup> Substantial adverse change is defined as: “physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historic resource would be materially impaired.”<sup>12</sup> The historic significance of an historical resource is materially impaired when a project “demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of an historical resource that convey its historical significance” and that justify or account for its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the California Register.<sup>13</sup> Thus, a project may cause an adverse change in a historic resource but still not have a significant effect on the environment as defined by CEQA as long as the impact of the change on the historic resource is determined to be less than significant, negligible, neutral, or even beneficial.

In other words, a project may have an impact on a historic resource, and that impact may or may not impair the resource’s eligibility for inclusion in the California Register. If an identified impact would result in a resource that is no longer able to convey its historic significance and is therefore no longer eligible for listing in the California Register, then it would be considered a significant effect.

In addition, according to Section 15126.4(b)(1) of the Public Resources Code (CEQA), if a project adheres to the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (the Standards), the project’s impact “will generally be considered mitigated below the level of a significance and thus is not significant.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Pub. Res. Code SS5024.1, Title 14 CCR, Section 4850 et seq.

<sup>11</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b).

<sup>12</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(1).

<sup>13</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15064.5(b)(2).

<sup>14</sup> CEQA Guidelines subsection 15126.4(b)(1); See Grimmer, Anne E. *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic*

## IV. ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED PROJECT IMPACTS

This section analyzes the project-specific impacts of the proposed Aldersly Redevelopment Plan on the environment, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The following analysis describes the proposed project, assesses its impacts on the eligible historic district, and identifies any cumulative impacts.

### Proposed Project Description

The proposed project consists of a phased redevelopment of the site that will construct three new buildings and expand two existing buildings. Construction of the project as proposed would require demolition of existing buildings and landscape features as shown in Table 2, below.

TABLE 2. PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO CONTRIBUTING HISTORICAL RESOURCES OF THE ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICT.		
Note: Buildings and features to be entirely demolished or removed are shaded gray.		
BUILDING/FEATURE	TYPE	PROPOSED ALTERATION
Building A - Amalienborg	Building	Demolished
Building B - Christiansborg	Building	Retained and expanded
Building C - Sorgenfri	Building	Demolished
Building D - Fredensborg	Building	Retained
Building E - Fredericksborg	Building	Partially retained; Partially demolished
Building F - Marselisborg	Building	Demolished
Building G - Liselund	Building	Demolished
Building H - Graasten	Building	Demolished
Building J - Minor Building	Building	Demolished
Entry gate and inscriptions	Landscape Feature	Retained in part
Main entrance (at front lawn of Fredriksborg) with milemarker and lanterns	Landscape Feature	Altered and milemarker and lanterns relocated
Circular driveway	Landscape Feature	Altered
Central lawn and views	Landscape Feature	Largely retained <sup>15</sup>
Main stair	Landscape Feature	Retained, new stairs added

*Buildings.* U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.: 2017. September 15, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Footprint of the lawn is largely retained with alterations to the northern edge. The retention of existing views is unclear without renderings of the proposed Western Building.

TABLE 2. PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO CONTRIBUTING HISTORICAL RESOURCES OF THE ELIGIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICT.		
Note: Buildings and features to be entirely demolished or removed are shaded gray.		
BUILDING/FEATURE	TYPE	PROPOSED ALTERATION
Flagpole	Landscape Feature	Relocated
Rose Garden with fountain	Landscape Feature	Relocated
Paved circulation paths with metal handrail	Landscape Feature	Removed
Mature Trees at Campus Perimeter	Landscape Feature	Many to be removed along interior of Mission Avenue wall

New buildings include the Mission Avenue Independent Living building, the Western Building, and a service building that connects Rosenberg (Building I) and Kronborg (Building K). The Mission Avenue Independent Living building will contain 35 units over four stories with 57,210 square feet total; the building will be located on the site of the existing Marselisborg (Building F), Liselund (Building G) and Graasten (Building H) buildings, and will require the removal and relocation of the Rose Garden (which is located between the three buildings), and the removal and relocation of the flagpole, located directly north of Merselisborg (Building F). The Western Building will contain 15 independent living units over two floors, with a total of 21,850 square feet. It will replace the existing Amalienborg (Building A) and Sorgenfri (Building B) buildings, and will infill a portion of the northwest corner of the central lawn along the northwest of the campus. The service building that connects Rosenberg (Building I) and Kronborg (Building K) will be a single story and will be located in a portion of the property currently occupied by the Minor building (Building J).

The two existing buildings that will be enlarged are Christiansborg (Building B), which will expand four units and renovate two units, and Frederiksborg (Building E), which will renovate four existing units and demolish and rebuild four additional units.

The building at 308 Mission Avenue will be demolished and the area of the building will be used for surface parking. Additional parking added to the site includes the eight spaces of surface parking at the 308 Mission Avenue location, five spaces of surface parking at the main entrance, four spaces in the expanded portion of Frederiksborg (Building E), and nine spaces in the new Mission Avenue Independent Living building.

Other proposed changes to the site include the redesign of the entrance to Aldersly, the expansion of the existing circular driveway, the removal of trees along the Mission Avenue perimeter, and the redesign of the main entrance area in front of Fredriksborg (Building E). The current plan set does not specify details of the redesign, but additional communications with the project team have

confirmed that a number of historic features will be relocated, including the milemarker, lanterns, flagpole, and the rose bushes from the Rose Garden.<sup>16</sup> Locations for these historic features have not yet been determined. Circulation features, which are character-defining features of the eligible historic district, will also be altered. The paved circulation paths with metal handrails will be removed and replaced to meet accessibility requirements, and the brick main stair will be expanded with additional steps to meet the proposed grade change. The historic features of the main steps – metal lettering, planters, and brick material – will be retained. All landscape features of the Aldersly campus that are contributing features of the eligible historic district will be altered in some way, either through relocation, removal, or alteration.

## Impact on the Eligible Aldersly Historic District

In order to determine the impacts to the eligible historic district, the proposed changes must be examined for their impacts on the site's significance under both California Register Criteria 1 and 3, as the two criteria for which the site is significant.

In regard to Criterion 1 (Events), the site was found to have a period of significance from 1921 to 1980, encompassing all major periods of the institution's influence as a unique cultural institution for the Northern California Danish-American community. Aldersly was established to provide a destination and shelter for its elderly residents, with its comfortable residential-style atmosphere, and aimed to revive Danish cultural traditions through integrating Danish antiques and memorabilia, hosting events and visiting dignitaries, and serving as a locus of the Danish-American community. Built features of the Aldersly campus that relate to its significance under Criterion 1 include Danish memorabilia and markers of the campus' founding, in addition to the landscape features and buildings that define its residential-style atmosphere. Character-defining features which relate to this criterion include those that support the overall formal, spatial, and visual relationships of the historic district.

The eligible historic district was found to have a period of significance of 1945-1968 under Criterion 3, which relates to the architecture and design of the campus. Through its eligibility under Criterion 3, the campus' Second Bay Tradition style buildings are contributors to the district and their stylistic features are listed as character-defining features. The Minor Building (1945) is also a contributor to the historic district as the building's design influenced the materiality of the 1961 master plan by Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates. As specified in the 2017 HRE, the Second Bay Tradition buildings of the Aldersly campus are significant not as individual buildings, but as a cohesive group that "collectively exhibit a full expression of the Second Bay Tradition style."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Email communications with project team on September 17, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Page & Turnbull, *Aldersly Retirement Community HRE*, 59.



The proposed project anticipates demolition of six of the nine contributing buildings to the eligible historic district. Of the six buildings to be demolished, five are 1961-1968 Second Bay Tradition buildings; the sixth building to be demolished is the Minor Building. Two of the three remaining Allen-designed Second Bay Tradition buildings will be altered through their expansion, and the remaining building (Fredensborg – Building D) will be attached to the new Mission Avenue building at its south façade. The proposed demolitions and alterations will erase the architectural significance of the campus' Second Bay Tradition designed 1961 master plan and will significantly alter its overall spatial relationship of a series of small residential buildings set within a cohesive landscape. The construction of the three new buildings will require the removal and relocation of some landscape features – including the Rose Garden and fountain – and will infill some of the green space of the existing campus, including a corner of the central lawn. All landscape features of the Aldersly campus that are contributing features of the eligible historic district will be altered in some way, either through relocation, removal, or alteration.

Due to the proposed demolition of most contributing buildings and the alteration and relocation of most landscape features as part of the project, the eligible historic district would lose its historic integrity and ability to convey its significance. These alterations would cause a significant adverse change that would result in the loss of California Register eligibility of the Aldersly Retirement Community as a historic district, and therefore the impact on the historic district would be **significant and unavoidable**.

Because the demolition of contributing buildings and changes to landscape features would lead to a loss of California Register eligibility of the Aldersly campus as a historic district, the compatibility or incompatibility of proposed new construction and alterations proposed for the remaining buildings is irrelevant. Additionally, while the project proposes to relocate some character-defining features and contributing elements of the landscape, preserving some aspects of the existing landscape features and design will not lessen the project's impact on the historic district.

## Cumulative Impacts

The California Environmental Quality Act defines cumulative impacts as follows:

“Cumulative impacts” refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects. The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from

individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.<sup>18</sup>

The analysis should determine the impact of the related projects and consider the cumulative impacts of the proposed and related projects as they relate to the population of resources that would remain.

All buildings, structures, and landscape features on the Aldersly campus have been evaluated for their historic eligibility in Page & Turnbull's 2017 Historic Resource Evaluation and considered in this Proposed Project Impact Analysis Report. There are no known additional projects that would increase the impacts on the historic resources on the site.

A review of the City of San Rafael Planning Division's Major Planning Projects found only the proposed installation of a small wireless communication facility along the public right-of-way at 304 Mission Avenue to be located near the subject property. The installation of an antenna on top of an existing utility pole – increasing the height from 29 feet to 39 feet – would not impact the Aldersly campus such that it would cause cumulative impacts for the resource.<sup>19</sup>

## Summary of Proposed Project Impacts

The proposed project for the Aldersly Retirement Community will have a significant and unavoidable adverse impact on historic resources with the anticipated demolition of six contributing buildings, demolition of various character-defining and contributing landscape features, and overall changes to the formal, spatial, and visual relationships that define the eligible historic district. The demolition of the majority of the district's contributing buildings would impair the ability of the site to be able to communicate its historic significance, and while some historic features of the landscape are proposed to be retained or relocated, their preservation would not lessen the impact of the project on the district, and the site would no longer be eligible as a potential historic district.

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<sup>18</sup> CEQA Guidelines, Article 20, Subsection 15355.

<sup>19</sup> Beacon Development, *304 Mission Avenue Project Description*. City of San Rafael Planning Division. Accessed September 15, 2020. <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/304-mission/>

## V. CONCLUSION

The Aldersly Retirement Community campus was evaluated in December 2017 by Page & Turnbull and determined to be eligible for listing as a historic district in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture). The Aldersly campus is eligible under Criterion 1 for its history as a unique cultural institution for the Northern California Danish-American community, and under Criterion 3 for its cohesive collection of Second Bay Tradition buildings as envisioned by a 1961 master plan by Rex Whitaker Allen & Associates, and its integration of landscape and built resources that reflects both Second Bay Tradition design and the ideals of Aldersly – which means “a shade for old age” – as a comfortable retreat for its residents. Additionally, Page & Turnbull found that the Aldersly campus is eligible for the San Rafael Historic Properties List.

Based on the 2017 HRE, the Aldersly campus, including eight buildings which are contributors to the Aldersly Historic District, as well as a number of landscape features that are contributors to the district, should be considered a historical resource under CEQA.

This Proposed Project Impact Analysis Report finds that the Aldersly Retirement Community Redevelopment Project would cause a significant and unavoidable impact on the Aldersly Retirement Community Historic District. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be required as the next step in the CEQA process. While the demolition of a historic resource cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, the EIR may study project alternatives and include historic resource mitigation measures to offset the loss of the historic resource.

## VI. REFERENCES

Beacon Development, *304 Mission Avenue Project Description*. City of San Rafael Planning Division. Accessed September 15, 2020. <https://www.cityofsanrafael.org/304-mission/>

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), *California Legislative Information*, accessed September 15, 2020, [http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&division=13.&title=&part=&chapter=&article=](http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayexpandedbranch.xhtml?tocCode=PRC&division=13.&title=&part=&chapter=&article=)

Grimmer, Anne E. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, Washington, D.C.: 2017. Accessed June 23, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf>

Page & Turnbull, *121 Union Street: Historic Resource Evaluation*, November 2017.

Page & Turnbull, *123 Union Street: Historic Resource Evaluation*, November 2017.

Page & Turnbull, *Aldersly Retirement Community, 326 Mission Avenue: Historic Resource Evaluation*, December 2017.

## **VII. APPENDIX**

Historic Significance Diagram: Contributors and Non-Contributors to the Eligible Historic District

**LEGEND OF BUILDINGS**

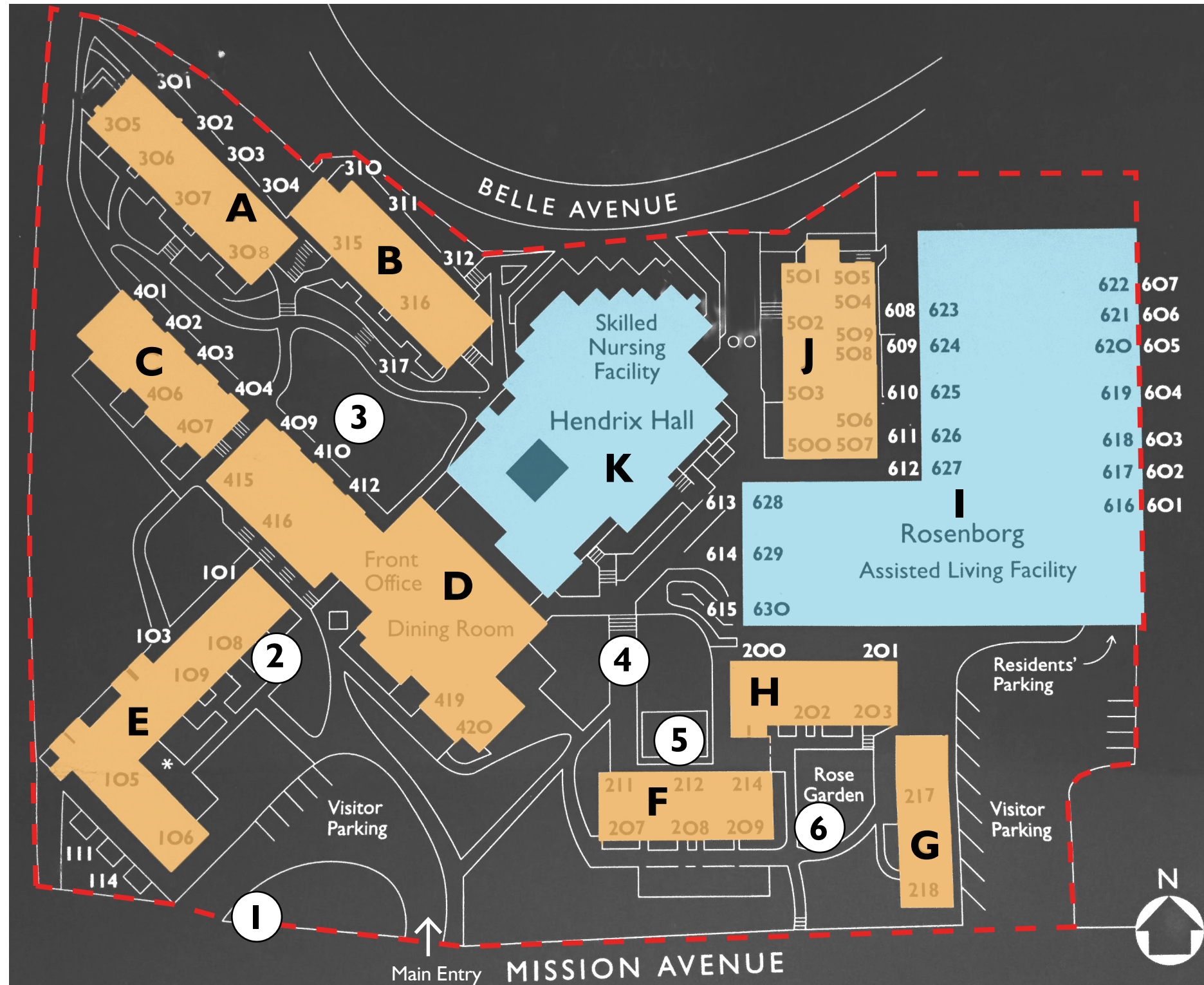
- A-H** 1961-68 Second Bay Tradition Buildings (Rex Whitaker Allen)
- I** 2004 Assisted Living Facility
- J** 1945 Minor Building
- K** 1992 Health Center/ Nursing Facility

**CONTRIBUTING FEATURES**

- 1** Entry gate inscriptions
- 2** Main entrance with milemarker and lanterns
- 3** Central lawn and views
- 4** Main stair
- 5** Flagpole
- 6** Rose garden

**CATEGORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- PRIMARY CONTRIBUTING**  
Delineates buildings/features that date to the Periods of Significance (POS) and are the most historically significant components of the property
- NON-CONTRIBUTING**  
Delineates buildings/features that were constructed after the POS
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY**



Historic Significance Diagram

DECEMBER 2017





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