

Appendix G: Cultural Resource Study



holman & ASSOCIATES
Archaeological Consultants

"SINCE THE BEGINNING"

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Vince D'Alo
Aliquot Associates Inc.
1390 S. Main Street Suite 310
Walnut Creek, CA 94610

May 15, 2012

Dear Mr. D'Alo:

RE: CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY OF THE BALL PROPERTY, ALAMO, CONTRA
COSTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

At your request I have completed a cultural resources study of the above referenced project area located at the end of Camille Avenue in Alamo, Contra Costa County, California. No evidence of either historic or prehistoric cultural resources was discovered. This report contains a summary of information gained to date concerning recorded archaeological resources inside the project area and does not contain information regarding to the historic structures or landscape of the property.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project area consists of an approximately 30 acre portion of the over 60 acre Ball property located at the end of Camille Avenue. Located on the Las Trampas U.S.G.S. map, the proposed development area includes the orchard area and flats on the eastern edge of the property, bordered by Camille Lane, Ironwood Place and housing found downslope from the orchards. Proposed development will extend westward uphill into the area currently containing the commercial building on the southwest corner of the property, and the original house and outbuildings built by Walter Arnstein in the early 20th century. These buildings and setting have been evaluated in a separate report by architectural historians and are not the subject of this study. The remainder of the property, extending westwards up the steeply sloped hills, were the subject of a literature review but not a visual inspection due to the extreme slope.

The proposed project consists of the development of single family homes inside the lower parcel according to conceptual plans received by this author.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

An archaeological literature review was conducted by this author in person at the Northwest Information Center (NWIC, file no. 11-0775) on January 24, 2012. There are no recorded archaeological sites nor have there been any formal archaeological studies inside the project area or within a quarter mile of it; there has been one area overview on file, a study entitled "ECOLOGY OF THE PRE-SPANISH SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA", a master's thesis by David Mayfield published in 1978. The only historical archaeological sites are two structures to the east of the Ball property; the Ball House/Arnstein House has never been formally recorded as an historical structure at the NWIC.

Prehistoric archaeological resources for this part of the valley are located primarily along the banks and within the riparian zone of San Ramon Creek, both to the north and south of Danville. Excavations done by archaeologists along the creek drainages have revealed a record of Native American occupation extending back over 4,000 years. The steep hills to the west were utilized primarily for hunting; Las Trampas Park derived its name from the stone walls and other obstructions constructed by the Native Americans for hunting purposes. Archaeological resources in the steeper portions of the hills to the west are limited to rock quarries and possible evidence of the stone enclosures built to channel animals into killing zones; acorns and a variety of plant resources were also obtained from the steeper hill areas, but camp locations are extremely rare, given the relative close proximity of the larger villages located near San Ramon Creek.

FIELD INSPECTION

A visual inspection of the development area was completed by this author on February 3, 2012. A complete visual inspection was completed of the walnut orchards located along the eastern edge of the property, where the hills terminate into the flats which extend to the banks of San Ramon Creek east of Danville Boulevard. All areas on the first rise to the west, the location of the Ball House and the commercial building were also inspected wherever they were flat enough to have contained prehistoric use and/or settlement areas. A seasonal drainage which extends from the western edge of the property down to the entrance to the Ball House (where it has been channelized and placed underground) was also given a more extensive visual inspection.

The soils of the orchard are comprised of a black to brown clay loam containing little to no rock, other than a small amount of rounded quartzite modules and angular siltstone gravels; it is obvious that this area is an alluvial fan. The natural and man-made terraces uphill to the west where the structures are located are of a similar brown to black clay but contain larger amounts of visible gravels of basalt and quartzite.

FINDINGS

No evidence of either historic and/or prehistoric archaeological deposits was found anywhere inside the project borders. The ideal location for Native American settlements—the lower flats containing the existing walnut orchards, showed no evidence of historic trash pits, sheet scatters or filled in wells or privy pits and there was no evidence of Native American use and/or habitation: typical indicators would include evidence of fire (ash, charcoal, fire affected rock and earth), concentrations of bone, stone or fresh water shellfish, and artifacts of these materials.

It is the opinion of this author that future development of the Ball property will have no effect on prehistoric or historic archaeological deposits. There remains a low potential that grading and trenching in the orchard area associated with construction could uncover buried prehistoric deposits. It is the recommendation of this report that all personnel involved in future earthmoving activities be given a training session by a professional archaeological archaeologist to aid them in the identification of potentially significant prehistoric archaeological deposits.

If any of the materials described above in this report are discovered, a professional archaeologist should be contacted to assess the discovery in order to make plans for its evaluation through limited hand excavation to demonstrate its potential for inclusion on the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). If it is determined that a CRHR eligible resource will be disturbed by construction work, a plan for mitigation of impacts to the resource should be submitted to the Contra Costa Community Development Office for approval before any mitigation work takes place.

Mitigation can take the form of additional data retrieval through hand excavation combined with archaeological monitoring of all earthmoving inside the zone of archaeological sensitivity to insure that significant data is recorded and/or removed for analysis before work is allowed to recommence. At the completion of all monitoring activities a report of findings should be submitted to the County for approval and for filing at the NWIC.

Sincerely,



Miley Paul Holman
Holman & Associates