



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

APPLICATION: DPR2017-18

AGENDA ITEM: AR-4

PREPARED BY: Sheri Bermejo
Planning Division Manager

MEETING DATE: September 27, 2017

TITLE: Determination of Historic Significance
239 North Alta Vista Avenue

APPLICANT: Todd Bowden, Bowden Development Inc.
212 West Foothill Blvd, Monrovia, CA 91016

REQUEST: Determine the historic significance of a residential building built within the historic period (50 years or older) that is proposed for demolition.

BACKGROUND: The City's demolition review standards are set forth in Chapter 17.10 of the Monrovia Municipal Code and apply to main residential buildings in any zone that are fifty (50) years old or older proposing total demolition or significant alteration or removal of exterior building wall area and/or roof area. The demolition application requires the submittal of either documentation from a historic survey that indicates a California Historical Resource Status (CHRS) code for the subject building and other site data, a historic assessment and determination of CHRS code for the property by a qualified historic preservation consultant, or a written request for an exemption due to obvious lack of historic significance.



The evaluation and determination made by the Historic Preservation Commission is in the form of approval of a DPR Form which includes the assignment of a CHRS code. The determination made by the Commission using the CHRS codes is the first step in the process and will be part of the overall evaluation of the "project" pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The applicant intends to demolish the existing residential building located at 239 North Alta Vista

Avenue for the development of a new single-family dwelling. The subject house was built in 1920, and therefore a determination of historic significance must be made by the Historic Preservation Commission under the demolition review authority of Ordinance 2016-10. Based on the provisions of the code, the applicant hired a qualified consultant to complete the evaluation.

ANALYSIS: The subject site is located on the west side of North Alta Vista Avenue, between West Foothill Boulevard and West Hillcrest Boulevard. A historical evaluation for the property was provided as part of the application and includes a professional historical assessment and DPR Form with background documentation that was prepared by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA), dated September 7, 2017. The assessment is attached as Exhibit "A".

The site is improved with a modest one-and-a-half story single-family residence that is nondescript in style, a detached garage, and a pool. The house totals approximately 1,459 square feet in size and is clad in wood and vinyl clapboard, as well as non-original rock veneer skirting. It has a moderately-pitched, side-gabled roof that is sheathed in composition shingles, as well as a large shed roof dormer that appears to be an addition. There are two entrances on the street facing elevation; one leads into the main living room and the other leads to a bedroom. The evaluation completed by LSA states that the property is in good condition, but has sustained alterations to its original plan, siding, and porch, compromising its architectural integrity. Given that the assessment only provided one picture of the residence, staff included supplemental photos, attached as Exhibit "B", which were taken during a site visit on August 29, 2017. These supplemental photos reveal that the interior of this residence is in poor condition. The photos further document that most of the windows have been replaced with aluminum units that are embellished with non-original decorative shutters.

LSA's online research and review of historic newspaper articles revealed very little information of the previous owners of the property, suggesting that the property is not associated with persons in national, state or local history. Furthermore, information about the architect or builder was not found. This modest vernacular residence is a common property type, and it does not appear to be the work of a notable builder or architect, nor does it display high artistic values. Although, the residence was constructed in 1920 during the height of the City's single-family residential development, its alterations have compromised its ability to convey an association with that period.

The historic assessment also included photos taken during a windshield survey for the purpose of evaluating if the subject property contributes to the significance of a historic area. The windshield survey revealed that many of the other buildings in the area have been altered or are modern, and collectively, do not constitute a potential historic district. Based on the findings of the historical assessment, the applicant's historic consultant determined that the property does not meet any of the criteria for local landmark designation.

RECOMMENDATION: The applicant's consultant determined that the property at 239 North Alta Vista Avenue does not have architectural or known historic value that meets the criteria for local landmark status and is not a contributor to a potential historic district. Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission accept the DPR and assign a CHRS Code of 6Z to the property. If the Commission concurs with this recommendation, then the following motion is appropriate:

Approve the DPR Form with a Status Code of 6Z.



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 7, 2017

To: Todd Bowden
Bowden Development, Inc.

FROM: Elisa Bechtel, MLitt
LSA Associates, Inc.

SUBJECT: 239 North Alta Vista Avenue, City of Monrovia, Los Angeles County, California (LSA Project No. BOW1702)

LSA has completed the evaluation of 239 North Alta Vista Avenue in the City of Monrovia. In summary, the single-family residence does not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) or the local landmark criteria and is not a “historical resource” for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Additional information is provided below and in the attached documentation.

METHODS

On August 23, 2017, LSA conducted an intensive-level historic resources survey of the property. During the survey, digital photographs were taken of the visible elevations, character-defining features, and context views. Detailed notes regarding the architectural features and integrity were made and a windshield survey of the surrounding area was completed to determine the condition of the current setting. Additional context photos of the street were provided by the Client, Bowden Development Inc. and are attached to this memorandum.

Archival research on the history and development of the property and surrounding area was undertaken to determine the construction, use, and ownership history of the building, as well as important themes in history that may have been associated with the property. Both primary and secondary sources of information such as building permits, historic maps and photographs, newspaper articles, and written histories of Monrovia were utilized in this endeavor.

LSA evaluated one historic-period (50 years of age or older) building (a primary residence with its associated, detached garage) for significance in accordance with the California Register, as well as the local ordinance and its landmark criteria. Results of the aforementioned efforts were documented on State of California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms.

RESULTS

Archival research indicates that the property is associated with Monrovia's pre-World War II suburban development boom. The residence was constructed in 1900, followed by an unspecified improvement to the property in 1920.

Residential development in the period between 1886-1940 cemented Monrovia as a single-family residential community and provided the foundation for the city's layout and built environment as they exist today. The residence was constructed in 1920 at a time when the City's development of single-family properties was at its height, however, alterations have compromised its ability to convey an association with that period. Therefore this altered, single-family property is unimportant and insignificant.

For these reasons, the property does not meet any of the California Register or local criteria. A more detailed history and the complete evaluation can be found in the attached DPR forms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing information, the property does not qualify as a "historical resource" as defined by CEQA. Therefore, the City of Monrovia may reach a finding of No Impact regarding historic-period built environment resources.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this information.

Attachments: DPR Forms and Context Photos from Windshield Survey.

CONTEXT PHOTOS FROM WINDSHIELD SURVEY



Left: 122 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the southeast; right: 153 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the southwest (9/6/17).



Left: 181 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the northwest; right: 234 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the southeast (9/6/17).



Left: 269 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the northwest; right: 270 North Alta Vista Avenue, view to the southeast (9/6/17).

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code 6Z

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 6 Resource Name or #: 239 North Alta Vista Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: _____

***P2. Location:** Not for Publication Unrestricted ***a. County:** Los Angeles and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)
***b. USGS 7.5' Quad:** Mt. Wilson, CA **Date:** 1961 PR 1988 **T** 1N; **R** 11W; **S.B.B.M.**
c. Address: 239 North Alta Vista Avenue **City:** Monrovia **Zip:** 91016
d. UTM: Zone: 11; _____ mE/ _____ mN (G.P.S.)
e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) APN: 8504-007-003

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)
This modest, one-and-a-half-story, vernacular residence is located on North Alta Vista Avenue in a residential neighborhood. It has an irregular plan and is oriented to the east. The exterior walls are clad in wood and vinyl clapboard with some non-original rock veneer skirting. The house is surmounted by a moderately-pitched, side-gabled roof sheathed in composition shingles; it has a large shed roof dormer (possibly an addition) and moderate eaves. The large dormer includes a trio of windows flanked by non-original, decorative shutters; two of the windows are boarded up with the third is set with a wood-framed, multi-paned casement window. The east-facing asymmetrical façade features a full-width, raised porch sheltered beneath the extended eave. There is a large, wood-framed, fixed window surmounted by a multi-paned, fixed transom and flanked by non-original, decorative shutters. There are two entrances: an east-facing, single door and a southeast-facing, single door. Both doors are wood and glass and are fitted with wood and mesh screen doors. There is a large bay window that projects forward onto the porch; this appears to be an alteration and originally was most likely set farther back before being bumped out to its current location. The property also includes a detached garage, a pool, and mature trees and shrubs. The property is in good condition, but has sustained alterations to its plan, siding, fenestration, and porch, compromising its integrity. Furthermore, it is a common property type and nondescript in style.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP2- Single-family residence

***P4. Resources Present:** Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



See Continuation Sheet

P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Façade, view to the west (8/23/17).

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** Historic Prehistoric Both
1900, 1920 (Los Angeles County Assessor)

***P7. Owner and Address:**
Unknown

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)
Elisa Bechtel, MLitt
Casey Tibbet, M.A.
LSA Associates, Inc.
1500 Iowa Avenue, Suite 200
Riverside, CA 92507

***P9. Date Recorded:**
August 2017

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe)
Intensive-level CEQA compliance

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") None.

***Attachments:** NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 239 North Alta Vista Avenue

B1. Historic Name: _____

B2. Common Name: _____

B3. Original Use: Single-family residence **B4. Present Use:** Single-family residence

***B5. Architectural Style:** vernacular

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

1920- No original building permits were found, but original build date confirmed by country assessor information.

1923- Building permit issued to J.H. Howard for unspecified work on garage.

1965- Electrical permit issued to owner Kent Cathcart.

1968- Building permit issued to owner Richard Harrison for construction of pool.

1979- Building permit issued to owner Wilda S. Saylor for garage construction.

1983- Building permit issued to owner Wilda S. Saylor for installation of vinyl siding.

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

***B8. Related Features:**

B9a. Architect: Unknown **b. Builder:** Unknown

***B10. Significance: Theme:** Residential Development **Area:** City of Monrovia

Period of Significance: 1900-1920 **Property Type:** Multiple family property **Applicable Criteria:** NA

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

This modest, vernacular, single-family residence has been altered and there is no indication that it is associated with important events or people. Therefore, it does not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or the local ordinance.

Historic Context: Originally owned by the San Gabriel Mission and then a part of Rancho Santa Anita, the land that includes present-day Monrovia was deeded to Scottish immigrant Hugo Reid in 1839. Reid would be the first to make a modern impact on the land, raising cattle and building the first structure (Jimenez 2008). After a succession of owners, in 1875 Elias J. "Lucky" Baldwin purchased the land, along with much of the surrounding area. Baldwin began erecting buildings and cultivating the land for farming, ranching, and orchards. In 1885, the main line of the Santa Fe Railroad, in which Baldwin was a stockholder, was opened through the ranch, making it practical to subdivide part of the land into a town site. Around this time Baldwin sold several hundred acres of what would become Monrovia to William N. and C.O. Monroe, Edward F. Spense, Judge John D. Bicknell, and James F. Crank (ibid.). A town site was laid out in early 1886 and the City of Monrovia was incorporated on December 8, 1887 (ibid.).

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the city's population boomed as numerous additions, tracts, and subdivisions expanded the original township boundaries until the City began to resemble suburban residential community it is today (ibid.). Craftsman, Revival, and "kit homes" dominated the development aesthetic during this period (ibid.). With the end of WWII and the return of thousands of veterans, Monrovia and the greater Los Angeles area saw an enormous explosion in the development of affordable housing. Much of this development took the architectural vocabulary of the pre-war years and combined it into simplified styles suitable for mass developments and small-scale apartments (City of Los Angeles 2011). In increasingly suburban Monrovia, popular residential architectural styles included Minimal Traditional and the various Ranch styles. Demographic and social changes in the 1960s led to major changes in the housing market. The children of the postwar baby boom began to reach adulthood in the mid-1960s, and the number of young adults increased rapidly for more than a decade thereafter, as those born in the later 1940s through the 1950s reached maturity. These young adults generally married and had children later than their counterparts in the 1950s, and were less likely to wait until marriage to leave their parents' households. The result was a surge in single-person households. *See Continuation Sheet*

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

Refer to Location Map

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

***B12. References:** *See Continuation Sheet*

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** Elisa Bechtel, MLitt, LSA Associates, Inc., 1500 Iowa Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside, CA 92507

***Date of Evaluation:** August 2017

(This space reserved for official comments.)

State of California - The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

Page 3 of 6 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) 239 North Alta Vista Avenue
*Recorded by LSA Associates, Inc. *Date: August 2017 Continuation Update

P5a. Photo or Drawing: (continued from page 1)



Garage and residence southern elevation, view to the northwest (8/23/17).

***B10. Significance.** (continued from page 2) This substantial increase in the number of childless adults translated into an increased demand for apartments as an alternative to houses. While some of the multifamily housing constructed during the boom period consisted of urban high-rises, including urban renewal projects, much of it took the form of low-rise, garden apartment complexes in suburban areas. These typically consisted of multiple two-story buildings with separate, common parking shelters. Today, Monrovia offers a variety of residential types from single-family houses to duplexes to apartments and condominiums.

People Associated with this Property. No original building permits were found; therefore, the original owner, architect, and builder are unknown. Historic city directories list John A. and Alice Finke as residents in 1923 through 1924. Information found using Ancestry.com listed the Finkes as former residents of Alhambra (Ancestry.com var.). John Finke's occupation is listed as auto operator; no additional information was found on the couple (ibid.). Salesman Myron D. Jenks and his wife Elsie J. resided at the address from 1927 to 1928 (ibid.). M.D. Hill is listed at the address starting in 1930 until at least 1937, followed by Lyle and Goldie Foote in 1939; no additional information on Hill or the Footes was found (ibid.). Beginning in 1944, Harley E. Beeghly, a painter, and his wife Martha resided at 239 North Alta Vista until 1958; no additional information was found on them (ibid.). There was no return in 1959 followed by a fairly quick succession of residents: Mrs. Isabella Brideau (1961), Jeanette Griffin (1963-1965), Professor Kent S. Cathcart (1966-1967). No pertinent information was found on any of these residents.

Significance Evaluation. In compliance with CEQA, this property is being evaluated under the California Register criteria and local landmark criteria.

California Register Criterion 1 - 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. Residential development in the 1886-1940 period cemented Monrovia as a single-family residential community and provided the foundation for the city's layout and built environment as they exist today (Jimenez 2008). This residence was constructed in 1900 at a time when the City's development of single-family properties was at its height. The oldest aerial photograph found dates to 1952 and by that time much of the surrounding area was developed with what appear to be single-family homes on small lots with some larger lots of groves still extant (Historicaerials.com). Between 1980 and 1994, historic aerials reveal that the area has a much higher density, but still primarily single-family homes on small lots (ibid.). Because it pre-dates the boom in tract house construction associated with demographic changes in the 1960s and the postwar demand for single-person housing, it is not associated with or representative of that trend. Within the historic context of prewar and postwar housing development from 1945-1973, this modest, altered single-family residence is unimportant and insignificant.

California Register Criterion 2 - Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history. As discussed above, online research and a review of historic newspaper articles revealed very little information for the owners/residents. This absence of information tends to suggest that the property is not associated with persons important in national, state, or local history.

See Continuation Sheet

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

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*Recorded by LSA Associates, Inc. *Date: August 2017 Continuation Update

California Register Criterion 3 - Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values. This very modest vernacular residence is a common property type, does not appear to be the work of a master, and does not possess high artistic values or convey a particular architectural style. It has sustained alterations that have compromised its architectural integrity. No information was found on the architect or builder.

California Register Criterion 4 - Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation. The property was constructed using common materials and construction practices. It does not have the potential to yield information important to the history or prehistory of the local area, California, or the nation.

Local Landmark Criterion 1 - Identifies with persons or events significant in local, regional, state, or national history. As discussed above under California Register Criterion 2, it does not appear that anyone associated with the residence during the historic period is significant in history.

Local Landmark Criterion 2 - Is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer, or architect. As discussed above under California Register Criterion 3, no information was found on the architect or builder.

Local Landmark Criterion 3 - Contributes to the significance of a historic area, being geographically definable area possessing a concentration of not less than 50% of historic or architecturally related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically by physical layout or development. At the time of this evaluation, the City has not identified the location of the subject property as a potential historic district. A brief windshield survey of the surrounding area revealed that many of the other buildings in the area have been altered or are modern and collectively do not constitute a potential historic district.

Local Landmark Criterion 4 - Embodies one or more distinctive characteristics of style, type, period, design, materials, detail, or craftsmanship. As discussed above under California Register Criterion 3, the residence is a very modest example of a common property type, does not possess high artistic values, and is not a particularly good or significant representation of the style. It has sustained alterations to its plan, siding, fenestration, and porch, therefore compromising its architectural integrity. Therefore, it is not significant under this criterion.

Local Landmark Criterion 5 - Has a unique location or physical character or represents an established and familiar visual feature of neighborhood, community, or city. Due to its mature and overgrown landscaping that obscures its visibility, as well as its modest and ordinary character and location, this property does not meet this criterion.

Local Landmark Criterion 6 - Incorporates elements that help preserve and protect a historic place or area of historic interest in the city. As discussed under Local Landmark Criteria 3 and 4, the property nor the surrounding area retain integrity of setting, materials, design, workmanship, or feeling, and, therefore, do not add to, nor are associated with, a historic place or area of historic interest.

Local Landmark Criterion 7 - Has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. As discussed above under California Register Criterion 4, the property does not have the potential to yield information important to the history or prehistory of the local area, California, or the nation due to its age and construction using common materials and construction practices.

*B12. References: (continued from page 2)

Ancestry.com

Var. A variety of records were accessed online in August 2017 at: <http://home.ancestry.com/>. These include city directories, voter registration records, and United States Census Data.

Architectural Resources Group

2016 "City of Arcadia Citywide Historic Context Statement." Accessed online at: <https://www.arcadiaca.gov/government/city-departments/development-services/historic-preservation>

City of Monrovia

Var. Building permits for 239 North Alta Vista Avenue. On file at the City of Monrovia Building and Safety Division.

See Continuation Sheet

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____

HRI # _____

Trinomial _____

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*Recorded by LSA Associates, Inc. *Date: August 2017 Continuation Update

City of Los Angeles

2011 Jefferson Park HPOZ Preservation Plan, City of Los Angeles. Accessed in 2012 online at:
[http://preservation.lacity.org/files/Jefferson%20Park%20\(Small%20File\)%20PP.pdf](http://preservation.lacity.org/files/Jefferson%20Park%20(Small%20File)%20PP.pdf)

Jimenez, Craig

2008 "Wild Rose Tract Historic District Historic Context and Survey." Accessed online in August 2017 at:
http://www.cityofmonrovia.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/community_development/page/1457/wildrose_historic_context.pdf

Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor

n.d. Property information accessed online in August 2016 at:
http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/GVH_2_2/Index.html?configBase=http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/PAIS/viewers/PAIS_hv/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default

State of California - Resource Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LOCATION MAP

Primary # _____
 HRI # _____
 Trinomial _____

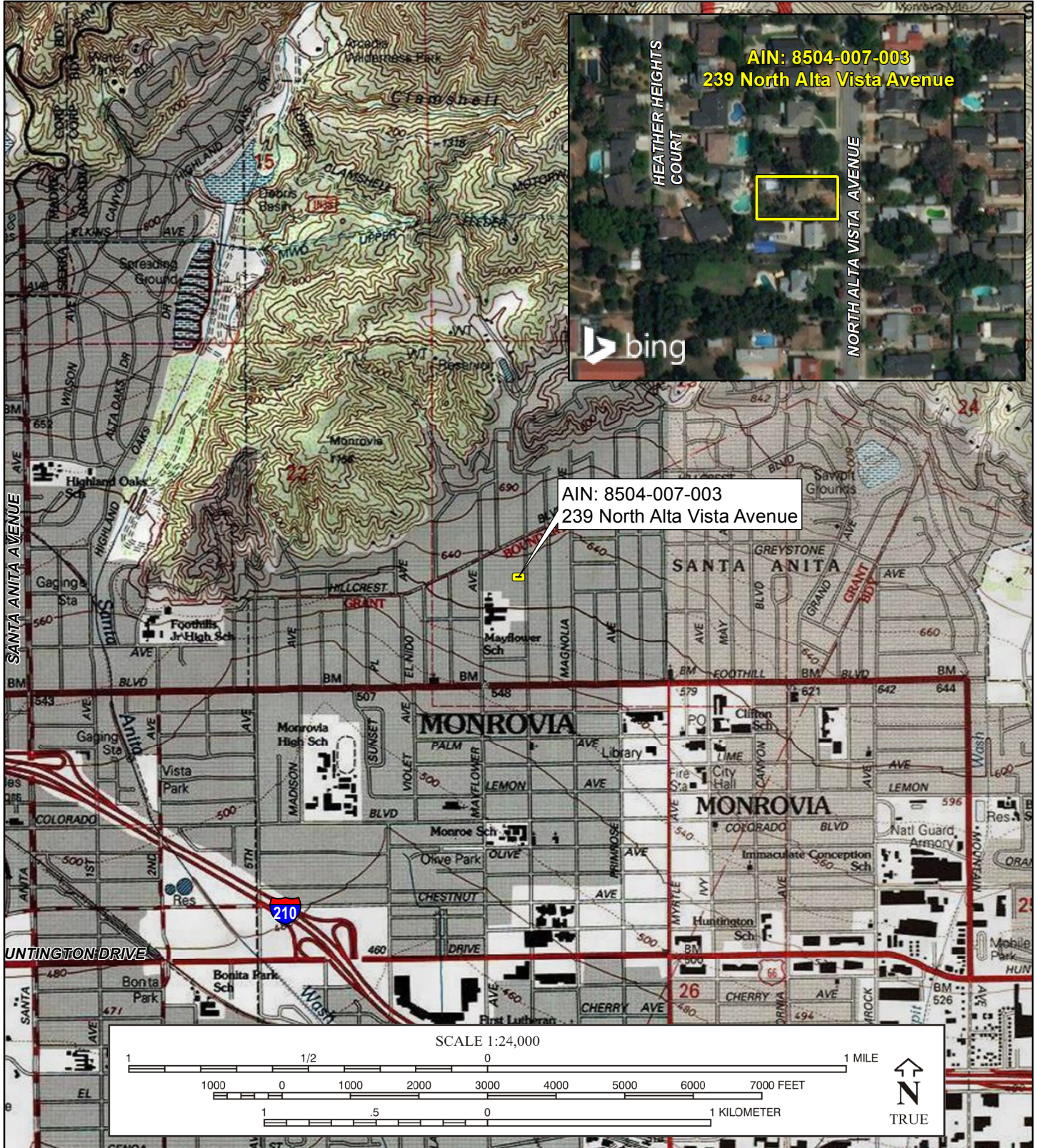




EXHIBIT "B"

Supplemental Photos

239 North Alta Vista Avenue



FRONT - EAST ELEVATION



CLOSE-UP OF DORMER



**CLOSE-UP OF ROCK VENEER
SKIRTING**



REAR - WEST ELEVATION



SIDE - SOUTH ELEVATION



SIDE - NORTH ELEVATION



PHOTO OF INTERIOR



PHOTO OF INTERIOR