

HISTORIC RESOURCES EVALUATION REPORT

**120 - 130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160 - 180 Sylvester Road
South San Francisco, California**

Prepared for:
Trammell Crow Company

August 2022



145 Sylvester Road, 1957. Source: San Mateo County historical photograph collection made available by the South San Francisco Public Library

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HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

1. Introduction

This historic resource evaluation report provides a review of the potential historic significance of six commercial/industrial warehouse and offices at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue, and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 015-031-170, -180, -060, -070, -140, and -150) in South San Francisco, California. The properties are bound by E. Grand Avenue on the north, Associated Road on the south, Highway 101 on the east, and Gateway Boulevard on the west, with Sylvester Road running north-south through the approximate center of the block in a light industrial portion of the city. Constructed between 1955 and 1961, each of the one-to-two-story warehouses with offices have large footprints and associated parking lots or storage/loading areas.

This historic resources evaluation report is being prepared as part of a project application to redevelop the properties which may require alteration or demolition of the present structures and associated parking lots and storage/loading areas. As redevelopment may alter or demolish buildings constructed more than 45 years ago, which is the minimum age threshold for potential listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, the City of South San Francisco requires an historic resource evaluation of the properties as part of the development permit application. This report is intended to address this requirement.

This report provides an architectural description of each of the properties, a brief history of the City of South San Francisco and the development of the subject properties, and an evaluation of their potential historic significance under the criteria provided by the California Register of Historical Resources. Methodologies used to prepare the report included a pedestrian site survey to photograph and record the properties, as well as historical research completed at the South San Francisco Historical Society, the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, the History Room of the South San Francisco Public Library, and numerous online sources.

This report was prepared by Brad Brewster, Architectural Historian and Preservation Planner with Brewster Historic Preservation. Mr. Brewster has more than 26 years of experience evaluating historic buildings on the West Coast, and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for architectural history. Mr. Brewster's professional resume is provided in **Appendix A**.

The subject properties have not been previously surveyed or evaluated for their potential historical significance. The closest designated historic resource to the subject property is the Bank of South San Francisco, located at the corner of Grand and Linden Avenues, approximately 1,500

feet northwest from the closest of the subject properties. The subject properties are not located within or near a designated historic district.

2. Building and Property Description

The following provides an architectural description of the current elevations, ornamentation, finishes, and visible alterations of the exterior of the properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road in South San Francisco. The property descriptions are based on a pedestrian site survey which occurred in March and July, 2022. Photographs of each of the subject properties and those immediately surrounding them are included below. An aerial map showing the location of each of the properties is provided in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1. Location map. Source: Bing.com

120 E. Grand Avenue

Completed in 1961 with later alterations,¹ the property at 120 E. Grand Avenue is a two-story commercial/industrial warehouse, office, and commercial kitchen structure approximately 16,851 gross square feet in size on an approximately 0.76-acre lot (APN 015-031-170), including an adjacent parking lot to the north. The building has a rectangular plan, a flat roof clad in rolled asphalt, and is constructed of concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation and wood frame floor and roof joists. The north and south elevations are each 120 feet long and contain six bays each approximately 20 feet wide, while the east and west elevations are each 160 feet long and contain eight bays each approximately 20 feet wide. Between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide, with alternating bays exhibiting decorative vertical indentations. The building sits on a raised basement about four feet high, and is about 40 feet tall measured from the ground to the top of the parapet wall which is clad in galvanized metal flashing. The flat roof sits about two feet below the top of the parapet wall.

The primary pedestrian entry is located on the north elevation, about four feet above ground level. The entry is accessed by concrete stairs and a wheelchair ramp with metal handrails on the right-hand side of the elevation. Fenestration on the first floor of this elevation consists of two aluminum frame window-walls comprised of fixed glazing, each containing two aluminum frame commercial doors. This level also contains another window-wall of aluminum frame fixed and awning sash windows, as well as a metal roll-up vehicular door that acts as a front loading bay. It appears this portion of the bay may have been infilled with the vehicular door and concrete or stucco wall area at some point in the past. The window-walls with integrated entrances also appear to be later replacements.

Fenestration on the second floor of this north elevation consist of four rows of aluminum frame fixed, awning, and sliding sash windows. The two rows of windows on the right side of this elevation, directly above the entrances, appear to be more recent replacement units, while those on the left appear to be original. The spandrel area between the first and second floors is painted green, except for the area directly above the entrance on the right-hand side of this elevation which exhibits painted signage; *Max's Kitchen*, placed on a black-and-white checkerboard background. The remainder of this elevation is painted a light grey color.

The west elevation which faces Sylvester Road is about 180 feet long, 40 feet high, and contains eight, 20-foot-wide bays with expressed structural columns between them, as described above. Fenestration on the first floor of this elevation is limited to two pairs of vehicular loading bays on the left-hand side of the elevation, each with shallow concrete awnings above them, a smaller loading bay for trash in the approximate center of the elevation, and a single vehicular loading bay with a smaller pedestrian door on the right-hand side of the elevation, also with a shallow concrete awning above them. All of the loading bays have metal roll-up doors and rubber crash bumpers. The bay on the far right-hand side of this elevation appears to have been in-filled with concrete or stucco wall area, as there is a concrete awning but no loading bay in this area. Like

¹ The San Mateo County Assessor-Recorder assigns the effective year built as '1961' for 120 E. Grand Avenue (APN 015-031-017).

the north elevation, the spandrel area between the first and second floors on this elevation is also painted green, while the remainder of the elevation is painted a light grey color.

The visible portion of the south elevation is comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration, as the majority of this elevation abuts another warehouse at 129 Sylvester Road. The east elevation of this property abuts an adjacent warehouse at 130 E. Grand Avenue, and was not visible to the surveyor, but is likely comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration.

The overall architectural style is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial office, warehouse, and commercial kitchen. Aside from some replacement fenestration on the north elevation and some limited degree of infilled walls on both the north and east elevations, as well as a more contemporary paint scheme, the building appears relatively unchanged from its original construction.



Figure 2. 120 E. Grand Avenue. North and west elevations, view looking southeast from Sylvester Road.



Figure 3. 120 E. Grand Avenue. North elevation, view looking south/southwest from adjacent parking lot.



Figure 4. 120 E. Grand Avenue. Detail view of pedestrian entries on north elevation, view looking south from adjacent parking lot.



Figure 5. 120 E. Grand Avenue. West and partial south elevations, view looking northeast from Sylvester Road. 129 Sylvester Road partially visible on right.



Figure 7. Context view of Comfort Inn & Suites looking north/northwest across E. Grand Avenue from 120 E. Grand Avenue parking lot.



Figure 8. Context view of warehouse across Sylvester Road from 120 E. Grand Avenue parking lot looking southwest

130 E. Grand Avenue

Completed in 1960, the property at 130 E. Grand Avenue is a one-story, high-bay, commercial/industrial warehouse and office structure approximately 19,782 gross square feet in size on an approximately 0.72-acre lot (APN 015-031-180), including an adjacent parking lot to the north. The building is comprised of two components; a large warehouse and an attached office wing. The warehouse component has a rectangular plan, a flat roof clad in rolled asphalt containing ten skylights, and is constructed of concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation and wood frame roof joists. The north and south elevations are each about 130 feet long and contain six bays each approximately 20 feet wide, while the east and west elevations are each about 150 feet long and contain seven bays each approximately 20 feet wide. Between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide. The building sits on a raised, concrete basement about four feet high, and is about 20 feet tall measured from the ground to the top of the parapet wall which is clad in galvanized metal flashing. The flat roof sits about one foot below the top of the parapet wall. Fenestration on the north elevation is limited to a single, metal pedestrian door accessed by a set of concrete stairs with a metal handrailing, as well as three loading bays with metal roll-up doors and rubber crash bumpers. The bay on the left side of this elevation is raised about four feet from the ground, while the other two on the right side are full-sized bays which open at the ground level. The east elevation is comprised primarily of a solid concrete wall with a single, raised loading bay in the approximate center of the elevation. The visible portion of the west elevation is comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration, as the majority of this elevation abuts the warehouse

at 120 E. Grand Avenue. The south elevation of this property abuts another warehouse at 129 Sylvester Road, and was not visible to the surveyor, but is likely comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration.

The office wing is attached to the northwest corner of the warehouse, and has a rectangular plan, a flat roof with seven skylights clad in rolled asphalt, and is constructed of concrete block walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation with wood frame roof joists. The north elevation is about 36 feet wide while the east and west elevations are about 64 feet long. The office wing is about 12 feet tall measured from the ground to the top of the flat roof. The primary pedestrian entry is located on the north elevation, about two feet above ground level. The entry is accessed by four concrete stairs with metal handrails and a concrete block side wall. Fenestration on this elevation consists of an aluminum frame window-wall comprised of fixed glazing with one integrated aluminum frame commercial door. The remainder of this elevation consists of painted concrete block walls. The flat roof overhangs this elevation by about four feet. The east elevation is comprised of a painted concrete block wall with a row of five fixed and casement-sash windows with concrete sills. The flat roof overhangs this elevation by about four feet. Roof eaves beneath the north and east elevations are enclosed and comprised of painted plywood, with wood fascia board trim. The west elevation of the office wing is constructed entirely of concrete block and is devoid of any fenestration.

The overall architectural style is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial warehouse and office. Aside from a more contemporary paint scheme, the building appears relatively unchanged from its original construction.



Figure 9. 130 E. Grand Avenue. North and east elevations, view looking southwest from E. Grand Avenue



Figure 10. 130 E. Grand Avenue. East and partial north elevations of warehouse, view looking southwest from E. Grand Avenue



Figure 11. 130 E. Grand Avenue. East elevation of office wing, view looking west



Figure 12. 130 E. Grand Avenue. North and east elevations of office wing, view looking southwest



Figure 13. 130 E. Grand Avenue. North elevation of office wing, view looking south



Figure 14. 130 E. Grand Avenue. North and west elevations of office wing, view looking southeast



Figure 15. Context view of Comfort Inn & Suites looking north/northwest across E. Grand Avenue from 130 E. Grand Avenue parking lot.



Figure 16. Context view of PG&E substation looking east/southeast from 130 E. Grand Avenue parking lot.

129 Sylvester Road

Initially built in 1957 with later alterations, the property at 129 Sylvester Road is a single-story, high-bay, industrial/commercial warehouse and office structure approximately 22,000 gross square feet in size on an approximately 0.75-acre lot (APN 015-031-060). The building has a rectangular plan, a flat roof clad in asphalt rolled asphalt, and is constructed of solid concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation with wood frame roof trusses that rest on concrete posts. The north and south elevations are each 200 feet long and contain ten bays each approximately 20 feet wide, while the east and west elevations are each 110 feet long and contain ten bays each approximately 20 feet wide. Between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide. The building is about 16 feet tall measured from the ground to the top of the parapet wall. The flat roof sits about two feet below the top of the parapet wall.

The west or front elevation is divided into two sections; the left section which consists of the pedestrian entry and ribbon windows which illuminate the interior offices, and the right section which consists of a loading area with a sloped loading ramp which access the interior warehouse spaces. The primary pedestrian entry is located near the approximate center of the left section of the west elevation, and is comprised of a single, aluminum frame commercial door with a fixed frame transom window above. Fenestration on this portion of the elevation consists of three sets of replacement aluminum frame ribbon windows, each set with a row of three fixed panes. Brick veneer cladding lies beneath the ribbon windows on this portion of the front elevation. A steel

frame canopy projects about three feet from this front elevation, and runs the length of this section of the building. The remainder of the wall area above the canopy is painted concrete. The right section of the building consists of two vehicular loading bays each with replacement roll-down garage doors and rubber crash bumpers. Like the adjacent elevation, the remainder of this elevation consists entirely of painted concrete. A steel frame canopy projects also about three feet from this front elevation, and runs most of the length of this section of the building.

The building is set back from Sylvester Street by about 40 feet, and within the setback area are two rows of employee parking and loading bays for trucks, separated by a concrete retaining wall and planting strip. A set of concrete steps lead from the upper office/entry area to the lower vehicular loading ramp. The planting strip between the parking/loading area contains a mature Pine tree, while the planting strips adjacent to the pedestrian entry consist of shrubs.

The north and south elevations were not visible to the surveyor as they directly abuts the adjacent properties at 120 E. Grand Avenue and 145 Sylvester Road, respectively. The east or rear of the building was also not visible to the surveyor as it was not accessible. It is assumed these elevations are comprised of solid concrete walls lacking any fenestration.

The overall architectural style is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial office and warehouse. The building appears to be in good overall condition.



Figure 17. West elevation of 129 Sylvester Road looking east across Sylvester Road and immediately south from 120 E. Grand Avenue (partially visible on the left).



Figure 18. West elevation of 129 Sylvester Road looking east showing loading ramp.



Figure 19. Context view of 129 Sylvester Road (partially visible on right) with 120 S. Grand on left, looking northeast.



Figure 20. Context view of 100 S. Grand Avenue and associated storage yard looking west across Sylvester Road from 129 Sylvester Road.

145 Sylvester Road

Initially built in 1957 with later alterations, the property at 145 Sylvester Road is a single-story, high-bay, industrial/commercial warehouse and office structure approximately 40,000 gross square feet in size on an approximately 1-acre lot (APN 015-031-070). The building has a rectangular plan, a double barrel-arched roof clad in asphalt shingles, and is constructed of solid concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation with wood frame roof trusses that rest on concrete posts. The north and south elevations are each 240 feet long and contain ten bays each approximately 24 feet wide, while the east and west elevations are each 165 feet long and contain seven bays each approximately 24 feet wide. Between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide. The building is about 35 feet tall measured from the ground to the apex of the arched roof. The base of the roof sits about two feet below the top of the parapet wall.

The primary pedestrian entry is located on the left side of the west elevation, and is accessed by concrete steps which lead to a recessed entry vestibule clad in brick. The entryway is enframed with a concrete awning and side walls. The entry itself is comprised of an aluminum frame

window-wall with a commercial grade front door flanked by two, fixed-frame sidelights and a wide transom above. To the right of the entry is a row of three aluminum frame windows beneath metal screens. Further to the right of the entry vestibule lies a row of three metal roll-up vehicular doors that acts as a front loading bays. One of the bays appears to have been altered or partially in-filled with concrete or stucco wall area. To the left of the recessed entry vestibule lies a pair of metal frame fixed and sliding windows and one metal frame door.

The building is set back from Sylvester Street by about 25 feet, and within the setback area is a row of employee parking and loading bays for trucks. A narrow planting strip between the parking/loading area and the building contains a variety of mature trees and shrubs. Painted signage directly above the entry reads; *Mina Corporation, Serving America's HVAC Needs Since 1981*.

The south elevation is comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration. This elevation faces a parking lot located further south associated with the adjacent property at 175 Sylvester Road. Much of the north elevation was not visible to the surveyor, as it directly abuts the adjacent property at 129 Sylvester Road. The west or rear of the building was also not visible to the surveyor as it was not accessible. It is assumed these elevations are comprised of solid concrete walls lacking any fenestration.

The overall architectural style is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial office and warehouse. The building appears to be in good overall condition.



Figure 21. 145 Sylvester Road. West and partial north elevations, view looking southeast from Sylvester Road. A portion of 129 Sylvester Road is visible on the left.



Figure 22. 145 Sylvester Road. West and south elevations, view looking northeast from Sylvester Road.



Figure 23. 145 Sylvester Road. Partial west elevation showing recessed entry vestibule, view looking east from Sylvester Road.



Figure 24. 145 Sylvester Road. Interior view of warehouse showing wood frame roof trusses and loading bay, looking east.



Figure 25. Context view of adjacent warehouse at 129 Sylvester Road looking east/southeast across Sylvester Road. 145 Sylvester Road on right.



Figure 26. Context view of adjacent parking lot and warehouse at 175 Sylvester Road looking east across Sylvester Road. 145 Sylvester Road on left.



Figure 27. Context view of adjacent warehouse at 175 Sylvester Road looking southeast across Sylvester Road. 145 Sylvester Road on left out of frame.



Figure 28. Context view looking north from Sylvester Road. 145 Sylvester Road on right.

160-180 Sylvester Road

Completed between 1955 and 1957, the property at 160-180 Sylvester Road consist of two, single-story, high-bay, industrial/commercial warehouse and office structures separated by a central storage yard. The building at 160 Sylvester Road, completed in 1955, is approximately 20,400 gross square feet in size on an approximately 0.8-acre lot (APN 015-031-150) which includes the adjacent storage yard. The building has a rectangular plan, a double barrel-arched roof clad in rolled asphalt, and is constructed of solid concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation with wood frame roof trusses that rest on concrete posts. The north and south elevations are each 120 feet long and contain six bays each approximately 20 feet wide, while the east and west elevations are each about 170 feet long and contain eight bays each approximately 20 feet wide. Between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide. The building is about 35 feet tall measured from the ground to the apex of the arched roof. The base of the roof sits about two feet below the top of the parapet wall.

The primary pedestrian entry is located on the right side of the east elevation. The entry is comprised of a row of four aluminum frame windows with fixed sashes above a single commercial grade aluminum frame entry door. Vertically-scored T-111 wood siding lies to the right of the entry door and below the row of windows. Above the entry lies a horizontal, wood frame and stucco awning with wood fascia boards. Attached to the awning and centered over the entry is a painted wood sign; *Alan Baker Co.* Fenestration to the right of the entry consist of a row of three aluminum frame windows with fixed and awning sashes. To the left of the entry is a single vehicular loading bay with a metal roll-up door. Other painted signage on the east elevation

states: *Alan Baker Co. Inc., Serving Printed Circuit Manufacturers and the Metal Finishing Industry Since 1955*, and *The Local Flea 160*. The west end of the roof contains painted signage stating: *Alan Baker Co., Electro-Plating and Printed Circuit Equipment Supplies*.

The north and south elevations of 160 Sylvester Road are comprised of solid concrete walls lacking any fenestration. The west elevation contains two vehicular loading bays, each with metal roll-up doors. The vertically expressed structural columns are painted red, while the remainder of the building is painted a light yellow color. A wood frame shed or lean-to with a corrugated metal roofing and siding is attached to a portion of the south elevation of this building, and within the central storage yard. This area is enclosed by a high wood fence with central swinging gates on its eastern and western ends.

The overall architectural style of 160 Sylvester Road is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial office and warehouse. The building appears to be in good overall condition.



Figure 29. 160 Sylvester Road. View of east elevation, looking southwest from Sylvester Rd.



Figure 30. 160 Sylvester Road. View of partial east elevation showing pedestrian entry, looking west from Sylvester Rd.



Figure 31. 160 Sylvester Road. View of partial east elevation showing vehicular entry and painted signage, looking west from Sylvester Rd.



Figure 32. 160 Sylvester Road. View of west and south elevations showing vehicular entries, painted Rooftop signage, and fenced storage yard looking northeast.



Figure 33. Context view looking north/northwest on Sylvester Road. 160 Sylvester Road on left.

Located south of 160 Sylvester Road lies 180 Sylvester Road, separated by the central storage yard formed between the two structures. Completed in 1957, this building is approximately 10,800 gross square feet in size on an approximately 0.36-acre lot (APN 015-031-140). This building is nearly a twin in terms of construction materials and style to 160 Sylvester Road, although its dimensions are smaller at about 90 feet wide on its east and west elevations, and about 120 feet long on its north and south elevations. The bays on all elevations are approximately 20 feet wide, and between each bay and at the corners of the building are expressed structural columns, each about one foot wide. The building has a rectangular plan and a single barrel-arched roof clad in rolled asphalt with eight large skylights (a row of four on each side of the roof), with four central roof vents. Like its adjacent near-twin, this building is also constructed of solid concrete walls supported by a poured concrete slab foundation with wood frame roof trusses that rest on concrete posts. The building is also about 35 feet tall measured from the ground to the apex of the barrel-arched roof, and the base of the roof sits about two feet below the top of the parapet wall.

The primary pedestrian entry is located on the left side of the east elevation, and is comprised of a row of five wood frame windows with fixed and awning sashes above a single commercial grade aluminum frame entry door with a single sidelight. The wall to the left of the entry door is clad in Roman brick, which wraps around the southeast corner of the building. Positioned over the entry and wrapping around the southeast corner is a wood frame and stucco awning with wood fascia boards, some of which are deteriorated. Other fenestration on the right-hand side of the east façade is a single vehicular entry with a metal roll-up door. Located on the wall to the right of the entry is a faded wood sign stating; *Weapon R*. Fenestration on the right-hand side of the south façade includes a row of three wood frame windows with fixed and awning sashes, beneath which lies Roman brick-clad wall area and the wood framed awning above which wraps around the southeast corner. Other fenestration on this façade is limited to a pair of wood frame windows with fixed and awning sashes, and a single, metal frame, pedestrian fire exit door near the left-hand side of the south elevation. Fenestration on the west elevation is limited to a single vehicular entry with a metal roll-up door. The north elevation facing the central storage yard is comprised of a solid concrete wall lacking any fenestration. The building at 180 Sylvester Road has a matching paint scheme to its larger twin at 160 Sylvester Road, in that the vertically expressed structural columns are painted red, while the remainder of the building is painted a light yellow color. The overall architectural style of 180 Sylvester Road is a spare, utilitarian version of Mid-Century Modern architecture, befitting its use as a commercial/industrial office and warehouse. The building appears to be in good overall condition, except for the wood framed awning, which is showing some signs of deterioration.



Figure 34. 180 Sylvester Road. View of south and east elevations, showing primary pedestrian entry.



Figure 35. 180 Sylvester Road. View of east and north elevations, showing primary vehicular entry.



Figure 36. 180 Sylvester Road. View of south and west elevations.



Figure 37. 180 Sylvester Road. View of north and west elevations.



Figure 38. Context view looking south/southwest across Associated Road from 180 Sylvester Road



Figure 39. Context view looking east across Sylvester Road from 180 Sylvester Road

3. Historic Context

History of South San Francisco

Except where noted, the following history of the City of South San Francisco has been excerpted and summarized from a series of historical articles available on the City's website.²

Once the home of the Ohlone Indians, also known as Costanoan, for thousands of years, the area that is currently the Northern Peninsula of San Francisco was part of a 14,000-acre Mexican-era land grant known as *Rancho Buri Buri*, which was granted to Don Jose Antonio Sanchez in 1835. His son and heir, Astro Sanchez, sold over 1,400 acres to Alfred Edmondson in 1853, who resold the same acreage to Charles Lux (1823-1887), an immigrant butcher, in 1856. Lux used the land to graze and fatten cattle before herds were driven to San Francisco via El Camino Real. Lux built his family a beautiful country home on his property and named the area Baden. In 1858, Lux partnered with Henry Miller (1827-1916), another successful immigrant butcher, to buy land and sell beef during the California Gold Rush. The two became wealthy land barons and later organized the Pacific Live Stock Company. In 1890, after Lux's death, his heirs sold the land to Peter Iler of Omaha, who was representing meat packer Gustavus F. Swift. Swift selected South San Francisco as the site of his West Coast stockyard and market place, similar to his operations in Omaha, Nebraska, and Chicago, Illinois.

Swift aligned with several Chicago capitalists and formed two joint stock corporations: South San Francisco Land and Improvement Company, and the Western Meat Company. The Land and Improvement Company attracted other industries and workers to South San Francisco, which led to the city's growth and incorporation on September 19, 1908. Major industries continued to locate in South San Francisco in the 1910s and 1920s, including many new steel foundries and metal production industries, which were built near the new train yards and Bayshore Boulevard (later Airport Boulevard). These included Pacific Coast Steel (later Bethlehem Steel) established in 1910, Shaw Batcher Steel (later United States Steel) in 1913, and Enterprise Foundry in 1914. Other steel production companies included Doak Sheet Metal (1910), Meese and Gottfried Co., makers of elevating and conveying machines (1911), Pacific Car and Equipment, manufacturing train carriages (1911-28), California Curb Bar Co. (1916), American Corrugated Culvert Co. (1916-18), California Iron Works, a scrap yard (1917-29), and Edwards Wire Rope Co. (1916-81).

During this period, American Marble and Mosaic (1913-43) imported many skilled marble workers for the quarries of Carrara, Italy. These workers joined the growing community of unskilled Italian, French, Portuguese, and Greek workers that had recently come to work in the steel and meat-packing plants.

² *History of the City of South San Francisco*, available online at <https://www.ssf.net/our-city/about-south-san-francisco/history/historical-articles>, Accessed March 3, 2022.

By 1920, the population of South San Francisco had reached 2,420 residents. New housing filled in the area of north Linden Avenue, and Martin School and Siebecker Park were built for those new families. Parkway Terrace was developing along Palm, Magnolia, Commercial, and upper Orange Avenues in the mid-1920's. Orange Avenue Park was built on former marshland, and Magnolia School was completed in 1928 next to earlier elementary school buildings on the corner of Magnolia and Grand Avenues. A new city hall was dedicated in November 1920, and the "Industrial City" sign was whitewashed on Sign Hill in 1923. The present 60-foot concrete letters were constructed in 1929. The Bayshore Highway, which linked San Francisco with San Jose, was completed through South San Francisco between 1924 and 1929, located along the alignment of present-day Airport Boulevard.

The major industries in South San Francisco continued to be meat packing and steel industries during this period. New steel-related industries that were established in the 1920s included Metal & Thermit (1920), Wildbery Bros. Refinery (1920-81), Specialty Wire Co. (1927-30), Michel & Pfeffer Iron Works (1929) and Western Metal Co. (1929). Other new industries included Fontana foods-Macaroni (1922), McClellan Orchids (1926), Barrett Co. (1927), Morrill Ink (1927) Gueren Bros. (1927), and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (1929). By the end of the 1920s, South San Francisco had gained a reputation as a wild town, with gambling, liquor, and prostitution added to the mix of growing residential neighborhoods and expanded industrial businesses.

The Great Depression of the 1930s brought little industrial and residential growth to South San Francisco and across the nation, with many businesses laying off workers. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), started in 1935, and had the most visible effect on South San Francisco. WPA workers made improvements to Orange Park, removed dirt from surrounding hills for San Francisco Airport bay fill, and built a new Post Office on Linden Avenue in the late 1930s. The 1930s also saw the opening of the Baden Kennel Club, a greyhound racing track, which opened in 1933. The track helped many families who had lost work in the factories, but also brought controversy, as some residents were concerned about the betting and criminal element associated with race tracks. By 1937, the state outlawed greyhound racing, and the Baden Kennel Club closed.

South San Francisco entered the 1940s as a small industrial town of over 6,600. A new post office was completed in 1940, and the city established a Parks and Recreation Department in 1941. World War II brought enormous changes to the town and its industries. Some industries changed their production for the war effort. Western Pipe and Steel built ships for the duration, and Swift & Company packed meat for the troops overseas. Other industries cut back production because of wartime shortages. By the mid 1940s the town's population had doubled in size to over 12,000 residents, with an influx of shipyard workers creating a housing shortage. Four government housing projects were built for workers, the largest being Lindenville, housing 4,200 people in 720 units. New subdivisions started with Paradise Valley in the early 1940s, followed by Parkway Terrace, and spreading to the areas surrounding El Camino Real.

By 1950, South San Francisco population had grown to over 19,000 residents, making the 1940s the fastest growth period in the town's history, and transforming it from a small town to a

suburban community. Many new residential subdivisions were added to South San Francisco in the 1950s, which helped to balance the community of industrial and residential areas. The 1950's saw the construction of Highway 101 through South San Francisco, located to the east of and parallel to Bayshore Boulevard/Airport Boulevard, as well as a number of modern industrial parks established further to the east of Highway 101, including freight forwarding, various light industries, and other airport related businesses. Beginning in 1950, Utah Construction Company, with City support, blasted away a 150-foot rock hill and used it as fill to build up hundreds of acres of marshland to the east of Highway 101 in order to develop the new industrial parks (see **Figure 40**).



Figure 40. Filling of former marshlands on the east side of South San Francisco, 1950. The future site of the subject properties are in the approximate center of the image.
Source: City of South San Francisco.

By 1960, the population of South San Francisco had doubled once again to over 38,000 residents, creating a shortage of elementary and high schools for the post-war baby boom. New schools completed in 1961 were Parkway Intermediate School, El Camino High School, Ponderosa Elementary School, and Serra Vista Elementary. In 1966 and 1967, Monte Verde School, Foxridge Elementary School, and Skyline Elementary School all were built. Oyster Point Marina was developed in 1962 as a yacht harbor by Healy Tibbets Construction Company, and the South San Francisco Produce Mart opened next to the Bayshore Freeway that same year.

There was a general slowdown of heavy industrial production in South San Francisco and across the nation during this time. Bethlehem Steel began closing departments and cutting back production, finally ceasing production completely in the 1970s. The old stock yard and Swift meat packing plant also ceased production. Cabot, Cabot, and Forbes Industrial Park was developed on the site of the plant, opening in 1967.

A new era for South San Francisco began in 1976 with the founding of Genentech by venture capitalist Robert Swanson and molecular biologist Dr. Herbert Boyer, earning South San Francisco the title of “Birthplace of Biotechnology,” thus attracting other biotech and pharmaceutical businesses to the area. The city celebrated its centennial in 2008.

History of the Subject Properties

Located east of Highway 101 in South San Francisco’s industrial neighborhood, the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road were constructed between 1955 and 1961 in an area that had been former tidal marshlands adjacent to San Francisco Bay. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of South San Francisco published in 1925 indicates that the areas further to the south and east had already been filled by this time and contained such heavy industrial uses as Pacific Sheet Steel Corporation, a steel mill and galvanizing plant, Grower’s Rice Milling Company, and American Marble and Mosaic Co., a marble cutting and polishing enterprise established in 1913. Other industrial uses in the area included South San Francisco Scrap Metal, a scrap metal yard, Superior Electrocast Foundry Co., a metal foundry, Metal & Thermit Corporation, a metal recovery and welding plant, established in 1920, as well as Wildburg Bros. Smelting and Refining Company, also established in 1920. All of these industrial facilities were interlaced by roads and railroad tracks.³

A review of historic aerial photographs and topographic maps show the former tidal lands south of E. Grand Avenue (formerly Swift Avenue) and east of Highway 101 in the immediate vicinity of the subject properties were filled in the early 1950s to make way for modern industrial parks and other commercial uses, including the subject properties.⁴ **Figure 40**, above, shows the filling of these areas by the Utah Construction Company beginning in 1950.

³ The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps published in 1925 and 1950 show no development on the subject properties or immediate vicinity. As such, these maps are not reproduced in this report.

⁴ Available online at www.Historicaerials.com, Accessed on March 3, 2022.

Presented below are the construction, alteration, and occupation/tenant histories of each of the subject properties, provided in chronological order of construction date.

160-180 Sylvester Road

While approximately four other large-scale warehouses had been built to the south of E. Grand Avenue and west of Sylvester Road by the mid-1950s, the first of the subject properties to be constructed was 160 Sylvester Road, which was built in 1955, followed its near-twin at 180 Sylvester Road in 1957. According to plans and permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, the buildings were designed by San Francisco-based civil engineer, August E. Waegemann, for the owner, Alan Baker, president and CEO of the Alan Baker Company.⁵ A discussion of the life and career of August E. Waegemann is provided in **Section 4. Architects/Designers/Builder**. The buildings were constructed by general contractor, Arthur W. Baum, of San Francisco.

The Alan Baker Company was founded in 1952 and became a leading supplier to the electroplating and metal finishing industries on the West Coast. In the 1970s with the birth of the printed circuit industry and the rise of Silicon Valley, the Alan Baker Company under the direction of David Baker, became a leading supplier of equipment, chemistry, capitol, and financing in this growing industry. While Silicon Valley is no longer home to most of the world's printed circuit board manufacturing, the Alan Baker Company continues as a supplier to the metal finishing, plating and printed circuit board industries to Silicon Valley and the East Bay.⁶

Little is known about the life or career of Alan Baker, other than he was born in Massachusetts in 1910, and by 1935, he had moved to San Francisco. Baker served as an officer in the Navy during WWII, and in 1944, he married Evelyn (1918-1984) at the former US Navy base on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay. The couple had three children; David, Diana, and Barbara, all of whom were born in California in the 1940s. The family lived on Union Street and Jackson Street in San Francisco, while the Alan Baker Company was headquartered at 10 Bluxome Street in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood. Alan and Evelyn Baker separated in 1954 and divorced in 1964, after which Alan moved to Atherton, California, where he died in 1995 at the age of 84.^{7 8 9}

Aside from the Alan Baker Company, other businesses associated with 160-180 Sylvester Road include Hunt-Spiller Manufacturing (1958) and Mueller Brass Company (1965).¹⁰ More recently, an auto parts supplier named Weapon R Competition Products leased the building at 180 Sylvester Road, specifically, beginning around 2014. The Local Flea, a retailer of used home

⁵ August E. Waegemann, C.E., *Warehouse Building for Mr. Alan Baker*, [plans, elevations, and details], October 31, 1956. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁶ The Alan Baker Company, *History*, available online at <http://www.alanbaker.com/Info.html>, Accessed March 3, 2022.

⁷ *Alan B. Baker*, available online at www.Ancestry.com, Accessed March 4, 2022.

⁸ "A. Baker Sued for Divorce," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 25, 1964.

⁹ "Baker, Alan" [funeral notice], *San Francisco Examiner*, May 25, 1995.

¹⁰ City of South San Francisco Phone Books, 1955 – 1990, *160-180 Sylvester Road*, available at the History Room of the City of South San Francisco Public Library, March 4, 2022.

furnishings, leased in the northern half of 160 Sylvester Road, specifically, from approximately 2020 to the present.

A limited number of building permits were available from the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco for 160-180 Sylvester Road.¹¹ Provided here for additional context, these include:

- In 1956, a building permit to construct a 10,276-sq.-ft. warehouse at 180 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$35,000 for Alan Baker Co. by Arthur W. Baum, general contractor. Inspections completed in 1957.¹²
- In 1965, a building permit to erect a 10-foot high fence at the front and rear and a 16-ft by 40-ft. shed for storage at 160 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$1,000 for Alan Baker Co. by Arthur A. Louie, Inc.¹³
- In 1965, a building permit to establish interior partitions for additional office areas at 160 Sylvester Road a cost of \$3,000 for Alan Baker Co. by Arthur A. Louie, Inc.¹⁴
- In 1966, a building permit for interior partitions (22' x 16' testing room) at 180 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$3,000 for Hunt-Spiller Co. (tenant) by owner¹⁵
- In 1966, a building permit for interior office partitions (28' x 26' office addition) at 180 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$3,650 for Hunt-Spiller Co. (tenant) by owner¹⁶
- In 1983, a building permit to reroof 180 Sylvester Road for Alan Baker Co. at a cost of \$8,849 by Humbert Roofing, Inc.¹⁷
- In 1988, a building permit to reroof 160 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$40,000 by Star Roofing Co.¹⁸

¹¹ About five other permits were granted for plumbing, electrical, and gas improvements to both properties in the 1960s through the 1990s, and are not detailed here. All permits are on file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹² Building Permit #00395, 'Warehouse Building for Mr. Alan Baker,' October 31, 1956. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹³ Building Permit #07504, 'Erect fence,' October 1, 1965. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹⁴ Building Permit #07505, 'Interior partitions for additional office areas,' October 1, 1956. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹⁵ Building Permit #07889, 'Interior partitions (testing room),' June 5, 1966. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹⁶ Building Permit #07840, 'Interior partitions (office addition),' June 1, 1966. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹⁷ Building Permit #83-462, 'Reroofing,' November 27, 1983. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

¹⁸ Building Permit #88-479, 'Reroofing,' June 26, 1988. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

129 Sylvester Road

In the same year that 180 Sylvester Road was completed in 1957, as well as the adjacent building at 145 Sylvester Road (see discussion below), the property at 129 Sylvester Avenue was also completed. According to plans and permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, the building was designed by San Francisco architect, J. Francis Ward, and built by Associated Construction and Engineering as an office and warehouse for owner De Martini Trust for lessee Thermoid Co.¹⁹ A discussion of the life and career of architect J. Francis Ward is provided in **Section 4. Architects/Designers/Builder**

The building's first tenant, the Thermoid Co., was founded in 1881 by Frank A. and Allen MacGowan in Trenton, New Jersey. The company manufactured and distributed brake linings, tires, and industrial hoses, and was headquartered in Trenton, New Jersey (1881-1958), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1958-1988), Bellefontaine, Ohio (1988-1999) and Dublin, Ohio (1999-present). In 1958, the company was acquired by the H.K. Porter and consolidated with its Quaker Rubber division, renamed the Thermoid division. In 1967, manufacturing was moved from Trenton to Bellefontaine, Ohio. A new company, HBD Industries, Inc., was spun off from H. K. Porter in 1988 and acquired the Thermoid division.²⁰

Several building, electrical, and plumbing permits were available from the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco for 129 Sylvester Road which were granted between 1957 and 1995. Provided here for additional context, these include:

- In 1957, a building permit was granted to construct a 22,000-sq.-ft. 'tilt-up' concrete warehouse and office at 129 Sylvester Road at a cost of \$115,000 for lessee Thermoid Co. by Associated Construction and Engineering, general contractor. Inspections were completed in November, 1957.²¹
- In 1959, a sign permit was granted to erect a 15'X30' roof sign for lessee Thermoid Co. by contractor QRS Neon Co.²²
- In 1967, a building permit was granted for relocating interior office partitions and associated electrical work for lessee J.H. Coffman & Son (based next door at 145 Sylvester Road).²³
- In 1972, an electrical permit was granted to lessee Yaley Enterprises.²⁴

¹⁹ J. Francis Ward, architect, *Warehouse and Office Building for Thermoid Co.*, [129 Sylvester Road; plans, elevations, and details], March 6, 1957. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

²⁰ HBD Industry History, available online at <https://www.hbdindustries.com/our-history/>. Accessed July 26, 2022.

²¹ Building Permit #00657, 'Office/Warehouse Building for De Martini Trust,' April 30 1957. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

²² Sign Permit #02065, '15'x30' roof sign for Thermoid Co.,' March 4, 1959. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022. This sign no longer exists.

²³ Building Permit #08728, 'relocated office partitions and electrical work,' March 20, 1967. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

- In 1989, a plumbing permit was granted to lessee Gabrielson & Co. for some plumbing work by Tromborg Royal Plumbing and Heating of Daly City.²⁵
- In 1995, a building permit was granted to owner L.J. DeMartini for lessee Central Business Forms for various tenant improvements for interior office space, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and sprinklers at a cost of \$36,000. The architect was William Douglas with Interform, Designers of Commercial Interiors, of San Ramon, and the contractor was Stevelle Construction Co. of Emeryville.²⁶ The replacement aluminum frame ribbon windows and roll-up garage doors on the front elevation were installed under this permit.

In summary, several industrial businesses have been associated with 129 Sylvester Road since it was completed in 1957, including Thermoid Co. (1957 - 59), J.H. Coffman & Son (1967), Yaley Enterprises (1972), Gabrielson & Co. (1989), and Central Business Forms (1995). More recently, the building has been occupied by Electrical Exhibition Services, Inc.

145 Sylvester Road

In the same year that the buildings at 129 and 180 Sylvester Road were completed in 1957, the property at 145 Sylvester Avenue was also completed. According to plans and permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, the building was designed by San Francisco architect, J. Francis Ward, with structural engineer, George H. Jennings, as an office and warehouse for the J.H. Coffman & Son Co.²⁷ It is unknown which contracting firm built the property as no original building permits are on file with the City of South San Francisco. A photo of the front of building taken in 1957 is provided in **Figure 41**, on the following page.

The J.H. Coffman & Son Company was a Los Angeles-based manufacturer and distributor supporting the metal industries which operated in California from the late-1950s to the early 1990s. In 1962, a ‘merchandising area addition’ consisting of an internal addition to a supply room was designed by civil engineer, Val Schaaf, with drawings by Irving Caster for the J.H. Coffman & Co.²⁸ In 1967, a building permit was granted for unspecified alterations to the warehouse that were designed by Associated Engineering and Construction Co. of South San Francisco for the J.H. Coffman & Co.²⁹ Other building permits include interior alterations to fire

²⁴ Electrical Permit #14742, ‘electrical work,’ August 13, 1972. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

²⁵ Plumbing Permit #89-823 ‘plumbing work’ for Gabrielson & Co., December 5, 1989. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

²⁶ Building Permit #95-321, ‘tenant improvements,’ March 20, 1995. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed July 25, 2022.

²⁷ J. Francis Ward, architect, *Office and Warehouse for J.H. Coffman & Son*, [plans, elevations, and details], April 30, 1957. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

²⁸ Val Schaaf, C.E., drawn by Irving Caster, *Remodel for J.H. Coffman & Co.*, January 30, 1962. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

²⁹ Building Permit #80722, ‘Alterations to Warehouse and Office Building for J.H. Coffman,’ March 14, 1967. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

sprinklers for Yaley Enterprises, granted in 1983, and roof openings and wall bracing for Paragon Wax by Dominquez Associates of South San Francisco, granted in 1987.³⁰



Figure 41. Photo of New Plant, 1957. Source: San Mateo County historical photograph collection made available by the South San Francisco Public Library.

Aside from the J.H. Coffman & Son Company, other industrial businesses associated with the building included the Mennen Co. of California (1958 – 1971), Carter Products, Inc. (1962 – 1971), Yaley Enterprises (1971 – 1998), Paragon Wax Refining Co. (1984 – 1992), and the Mina Corporation (1981 – present), a parts and equipment supplier for the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning industry.³¹

120 E. Grand Avenue

The subject property at 120 E. Grand Avenue was completed in 1961, and contained such businesses as Victorylite Candle Co. (1961), Commercial Packaging Corp. (1965 – 1980), National Steel Construction Co. (1964 – 1965), Ariston Airline Catering (1986), Ogden Allied Gateway or Ogden Allied Aviation Services (1988 – 1991), and Max's Kitchen (c.1995 – present).³²

As no original building permits or plans for this property are known to exist at the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, it is unknown which architecture or engineering firm designed it, or which contractor built it. However, a review of building plans and permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco provided the following information about the various alterations and owners or tenants of the building between 1961 and 2001:

³⁰ Building Permits #83-190 and #87-227, City of South San Francisco. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³¹ City of South San Francisco Phone Books, 1955 – 1990, *145 Sylvester Road*, available at the History Room of the City of South San Francisco Public Library, March 4, 2022.

³² City of South San Francisco Phone Books, 1955 – 1990, *120 E. Grand Avenue*, available at the History Room of the City of South San Francisco Public Library, March 4, 2022.

- In 1961, a building permit was granted to the building owner, R.M. Cole of Davis, CA, for alterations to the interior of the building to provide additional office and warehouse areas for tenant, Victorylite Candle Co., at a cost of \$13,000. The contractor was Johnson & Mape Construction Co. of Santa Cruz.³³
- In 1986, a building permit was granted to building owner Ariston Airline Catering for alterations to interior partitions, structural supports, a ramp, and restroom modifications at a cost of \$100,000. The architect was Melvin R. Hill Inc. of Campbell, CA, with contractor Caraway Contracting of Mountain View.³⁴
- Between 1988 and 1991, four plumbing and mechanical permits were granted to building owner Ogden Allied Aviation Services or Ogden Allied Gateway for various alterations to the building's support infrastructure.³⁵
- In 1989, a building permit was granted to building owner Ogden Allied Aviation Services for new rooftop HVAC units, new industrial ovens, grease hood exhausts, and water heaters, designed by Book & Flannery, Architects and Engineers, of South San Francisco.³⁶
- In 1990, a building permit was granted to building owner Ogden Allied Gateway to expand the production and oven room, relocate dishwashers, alter stairways and loading docks, designed by Book & Flannery, Architects and Engineers, of South San Francisco, with contractors Morris Daley, Inc. of Burlingame, CA.³⁷
- In 1996, a building permit was granted to the building owner, Dennis Berkowitz, for new interior offices, hallways, and wall divisions on the second floor at a cost of \$50,000 for Max's Kitchen, designed by Avanessian Associates Architects of South San Francisco.³⁸
- In 1999, a plumbing and mechanical permit was granted to Max's Kitchen for unspecified alterations by contractor Rudi Menzel of San Francisco.³⁹
- In 2001, a plumbing and mechanical permit was granted to Max's Kitchen for alterations to the refrigeration units by Apex Refrigeration.⁴⁰

³³ Building Permit #03823, 'Alterations to Interior of Building,' June 1, 1961. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁴ Building Permit #86-196, 'Alterations of Interior,' May 30, 1986. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁵ Plumbing & Mechanical Permits (#PM86-496, #PM880355, #PM89-056, and #PM90-229). On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁶ Building Permit #89-234, 'Structural Calculations for Ogden Allied Services,' June 1, 1989. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁷ Building Permit #90-176, 'Expand Production & Oven Room for Ogden Allied Gateway,' February 15, 1990. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁸ Building Permit #96-297, 'Proposed Alterations to Max's Kitchen,' March 12, 1996. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

³⁹ Plumbing & Mechanical Permit #PM99-140. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

In summary, the building at 120 E. Gateway Boulevard has been used by a number of owners and tenants since its construction 1961 primarily in support of the commercial food production and packaging industries, including those involved in airline catering (likely associated with nearby San Francisco International Airport), and within the last 26 years, as a commercial kitchen and offices for Max's Kitchen, now known as Max's Bakery & Kitchen or Max's Commissary. This family-run company has been in business for over 40 years supporting the restaurant industry by providing wholesale food products, co-packing, and custom foods for large scale food production.⁴¹

130 E. Grand Avenue

The subject property at 120 E. Grand Avenue was permitted in 1959 and completed in 1960. According to permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, the building was designed by San Francisco-based engineering firm of Simpson, Stratta & Associates, and built by general contractor Associated Construction & Engineering Co. of South San Francisco. The building was built for owner Robert M. Dole of Davis, California, to house the Dayton Tire & Rubber Co.⁴²

A review of building permits on file with the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco provided the following information about the various alterations and owners or tenants of the building between 1959-60 and 2005:

- In 1959, a building permit was granted to building owner, R.M. Cole of Davis, CA, to erect a 19,787 sq. ft. concrete 'tilt-up' warehouse for lessee Dayton Tire & Rubber Co. at a cost of \$106,000. The designer was Simpson, Stratta & Associates, engineers, of San Francisco, and built by Associated Construction Co. of South San Francisco. Final inspection completed July 21, 1960.⁴³
- In 1959, a sign permit was granted to the building owner to erect a 17' by 17' neon sign for Dayton Tire & Rubber Co., by QRS Sign Co. of San Francisco.⁴⁴
- In 1975, a gas/mechanical permit was granted to owner Davis N. Mallory for D.N. Mallory Distributor, Inc. by Atlas Heating and Ventilation Co. ⁴⁵
- In 1981, a building permit was granted to owners Mr. & Mrs. Davis N. Mallory of Burlingame for a reroofing job for Current Enterprises, Inc. at a cost of \$17,063.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Plumbing & Mechanical Permit #PM01-337. November 27, 2001. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴¹ Max's Bakery & Kitchen, *About Us* available online at <https://maxskitchensf.com/>, Accessed March 3, 2022.

⁴² Building Permit #02486, 'New construction for a 19,787 concrete tilt-up warehouse,' August 5, 1959. Final inspection July 21, 1960. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Building Permit #02682, '17' by 17' sign on roof' November 4, 1959. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴⁵ Building Permit #18567, 'gas/mechanical permit for Atlas Heating & Ventilation Co.,' October 20, 1975. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

- In 1991, a building permit was granted to owner Richard Siefert for a reroofing job at a cost of \$6,720.⁴⁷
- In 1999, a building permit was granted to owner Richard Siefert for a reroofing job at a cost of \$48,000.⁴⁸
- In 2005, a permit was granted to the building owner, owner Eric Black, to install photovoltaic system on the roof of the building for Resources for Reading by Cobalt Power Systems. A second permit was granted the same year to construct landings at the exterior stairs and office for ADA purposes.⁴⁹

In summary, the building at 130 E. Gateway Boulevard has been used by a number of owners and tenants since its completion in 1960, first as a tire distribution warehouse for Dayton Tire & Rubber Co., then as warehouse for auto distributors and ignitions for D.N. Mallory Distributor, Inc. in the 1970s, and for the same use for Current Enterprises, Inc. in the early 1980s. Beginning in the early 1990s, it was used as a warehouse for Resources for Reading, and educational supply company. The building is currently owned by Prologis, Inc., and is unoccupied.

4. Architects/Designers/Builders

The building at 160-180 Sylvester Road was designed in 1955-56 by San Francisco-based civil engineer, August E. Waagemann. Waagemann was born in 1919 in San Francisco and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1942. By 1945 he was married to Barbara Waagemann, and was working as a draftsman for CBE while living in San Francisco. In 1950, the couple had a son, August E. Waagemann, Jr. Waagemann became a licensed civil engineer in the early 1950s, and wrote an engineering training manual in 1956. The couple moved to San Mateo by the mid-1960s, and Waagemann died in 1994 at the age of 75.⁵⁰ Aside from designing the warehouses at 160-180 Sylvester Road in 1955-56, little else is known about the life or career of August E. Waagemann beyond what is provided above.

The buildings at 129 and 145 Sylvester Road were both designed in 1957 by San Francisco architect, J. Francis Ward. Ward was born in New Zealand in 1898, and immigrated to San Francisco around 1920 to study architecture. In 1923 he married Helen Hirsch (1897 – 1984), and in 1925, the couple had a daughter, Helen Frances Ward. In 1922, Ward joined the well-known California architect Albert L. Farr (1871 – 1947) as an associate architect, and formed the architecture firm of Farr and Ward. In 1929, Ward became a naturalized citizen of the U.S. In

⁴⁶ Building Permit #81-334, 'Reroofing' June 1, 1981. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴⁷ Building Permit #91-439, 'Reroofing' May 13, 1991. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴⁸ Building Permit #99-666, 'Reroofing' May 19, 1999. On file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁴⁹ Building Permit #BO6-0087 'Photovoltaic System for Resources for Reading,' July 6, 2005, and Building Permit #BO4-2039, 'Construct landings at exterior stairs and office,' August 1, 2005. Both are on file with the City of South San Francisco Building Division. Accessed March 1, 2022.

⁵⁰ *August Ernest Waagemann*, available online at: www.Ancstry.com. Accessed March 3, 2022.

1930, Farr and Ward designed the remodeling of the historic, c.1883 Aetna Springs Resort in Pope Valley, California, as well as a Spanish Revival style home in the St. Francis Wood neighborhood of San Francisco. In 1942, Ward became associated with the architect John S. Bolles (1905 – 1983) and formed the firm of Ward and Bolles Architects, which was active until 1954.⁵¹ The architectural team designed a Modern house in 1954 in Marin County that was unbuilt. By 1955, Ward had formed his own architecture firm of J. Francis Ward, Architects, and was active until about 1965. In 1958, Ward designed a proposed riding academy in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park which also unbuilt. Ward died in San Francisco in 1970 at the age of 72.⁵² ⁵³Aside from designing the warehouse/offices at 129 and 145 Sylvester Road and the other abovementioned buildings, little else is known about the career of J. Francis Ward beyond what is provided here.

Internal alterations to the property at 145 Sylvester Road were designed in 1962 by civil engineer, Val Schaaf, of Redwood City, with drawings by Irving Caster of San Mateo. Very little is known about the life and work of civil engineer, Val Schaaf. However, there exists some limited biographical information about Irving Caster who prepared the drawings for the interior alterations. Caster was a San Mateo-based architectural designer and draftsman who was born in Saint Louis, Missouri in 1914 and attended Saint Louis University where he studied architectural design and drafting. In 1940, he was married to Maxine Epstein (1916 - 1976), and the couple lived first in Beverly Hills before settling in San Mateo County around 1945. By 1952, the couple was residing in Burlingame, and Caster identified himself as an 'architectural designer and draftsman' working in his own firm located at 126 West 25th Avenue in downtown San Mateo. By the mid-1960s, Irving and Maxine Caster were residents of Menlo Park. Maxine died in 1976, and Irving remarried in 1985 at the age of 70. Irving Caster died in 1992 at the age of 77. Both Irving and Maxine Caster are buried in the Salem Memorial Park and Garden, a Jewish cemetery in Colma, California.⁵⁴

Aside from designing the interior alterations to 145 Sylvester Road in 1962, Caster also designed the Art Deco-style façade of the *Carlos Club* at 612 El Camino Real in San Carlos in 1947, the Modern-style *Broadway Market* at 959 El Camino Real in Millbrae in 1952, the Modern-style *Hillsdale Inn* at 477 East Hillsdale Boulevard in San Mateo in 1962, and a Modern-style residence in Menlo Park in 1965 (likely his own).⁵⁵ It appears that Caster was most active as a San Mateo-based designer and draftsman between the mid-1940s and the mid-1960s, and worked in the Art Deco/Art Moderne and Modern architectural styles that were popular during the period.

As no original building permits or plans for the building at 120 E. Grand Avenue could be located at the Building Division of the City of South San Francisco, it is unknown which architecture or engineering firm designed it, or which contractor built it.

⁵¹ Ward became a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1944.

⁵² *Joseph Francis Ward and Farr and Ward*, available online at <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/person/678/>, Accessed March 3, 2022.

⁵³ *Joseph Francis Ward*, available online at: www.Ancestry.com, Accessed March 3, 2022.

⁵⁴ *Irving Caster*, available online at: www.Ancestry.com, Accessed March 3, 2021.

⁵⁵ *The Architectural Index for 1965*, published by Irvin J. Bell, Architect, 1965.

The building at 130 E. Grand Avenue was designed in 1959 by the San Francisco-based structural engineering firm of Simpson, Stratta & Associates, and built by general contractor Associated Construction & Engineering Co. of South San Francisco. Little is known about the firm Simpson, Stratta & Associates, other than it was founded in 1952 by Albert T. Simpson (1923-1976) and James L. Stratta (1920-1994), who designed or were involved with the design of a handful of other buildings in Northern California including a plating facility for Fairchild Semiconductor in Mountain View in the late 1950s, a wastewater treatment plant in Sunnyvale in the early 1960s, and the Del Monte Shopping Center in Monterey in the late 1960s. The firm ceased to operate after 1978.⁵⁶

5. California Register Significance Evaluation

The following provides an evaluation of the subject property for its potential individual significance for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) by applying criteria A/1 through D/4.

Evaluation of Individual Significance

Criterion A/1 (Associations with Historic Events)

There is little information found as a result of this HRE to indicate that the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145 and 160-180 Sylvester Road in the City of South San Francisco 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 from an individual standpoint. Originally built between 1955 and 1961 as six separate, one-to-two-story industrial/commercial office and warehouse buildings, they were constructed during a period of rapid industrial and commercial growth of the City of South San Francisco in the post-war period (1945 – 1970), and as the tidal marshes on the east side of the City were filled beginning in 1950 to make way for modern industrial parks, including the subject properties and those immediately surrounding them.

While these buildings and the light-industrial businesses contained within them certainly contributed to the economy of the City of South San Francisco, they would be considered a more typical reflection of industrial and commercial growth in the City and the Bay Area in general, rather than ones that would be considered historically significant on an individual level. There is little information to indicate that the manufacturing, sales, or distribution of industrial products or services at the subject properties would be considered uniquely important in the commercial or economic history of the City of South San Francisco, the Bay Area region, or the State of California. Rather, the construction and long-term operation of these businesses appear to be more typical of industrial and commercial development in this location near Highway 101 and the San Francisco International Airport during the post-war period. Finally, none of the businesses located within any of the subject properties are specifically mentioned in the written histories of

⁵⁶ *Simpson, Stratta & Associates*, available online at <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/firm/5987/>, Accessed March 25, 2022.

provided by the City of South San Francisco, the City of South San Francisco General Plan, or is identified as one of the City's landmarks or historical sites. For these reasons, none of the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Ave. and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Rd. are eligible for listing under Criterion A/1 as individually historic resources.

Criterion B/2 (Associations with Historic Persons)

There is little information found as a result of this HRE to indicate that the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road are directly associated with persons important to local or state history. The property at 160-180 Sylvester Road is associated with Alan Baker, president and CEO of the Alan Baker Company, which supplied electro-plating and other equipment for the printed circuit board industries in the Bay Area and elsewhere on the West Coast beginning in 1955. While the business has been in the long-term ownership of Baker family for many decades, Alan Baker himself, who lived from 1910-1994 and resided in San Francisco and Atherton, would not be considered uniquely important to local or state history.

The warehouse and office building at 129 Sylvester Road was initially associated with the Thermoid Company, then a New Jersey-based manufacturer and distributor of industrial rubber products, and later the J.H. Coffman & Son Company, a Los Angeles-based manufacturer and distributor supporting the metal industries, as well as a variety of smaller, light-industrial companies, including Yaley Enterprises, Gabrielson & Co., and Central Business Forms. The building is more associated closely with these companies than any one individual or business owner who would be considered uniquely important to local or state history.

Similarly, the warehouse and office building at 145 Sylvester Road was initially associated with the J.H. Coffman & Son Company, and more recently the Mina Corporation, an HVAC supply company, as well as a variety of smaller, light-industrial companies, including Mennen Co., Carter Products, Inc., Yaley Enterprises, and Paragon Wax Refining Co. The building is more associated closely with these companies than any one individual or business owner who would be considered uniquely important to local or state history.

The warehouse and office building at 120 E. Grand Avenue is associated with a variety of companies which supported the commercial food preparation and packaging industries from the late-1950s to the present, rather than any one individual or business owner who would be considered uniquely important to local or state history. Finally, the warehouse and office building at 130 E. Grand Avenue is associated with at least three companies involved in the automotive parts warehousing and distribution industries from the early 1960s to the 1980s, as well as an educational supply business beginning in the 1990s, and is not associated with any one individual or business owner who would be considered important to local or state history. For these reasons, the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 145-160-180 Sylvester Road would not be considered eligible for listing under Criterion B/2 as individual resources.

Criterion C/3 (Architecture and Design/Association with Master Designers)

There is little information found as a result of this HRE to indicate that any of the properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road would be individually significant for their architecture, as expressed by intact stylistic features, forms, or construction methods. All of the subject properties were completed between 1955 and 1961 in relatively spare, utilitarian versions of Mid-Century Modern architecture, exhibited by their barrel arched or flat roof forms, regularly-spaced bays with expressed structural columns rendered in concrete, aluminum frame window-walls with commercial-grade doors at their entries, their rectilinear, geometric forms, their use of modern materials such as concrete, metal, and glass, as well as an overall lack of architectural embellishment. The buildings would not be considered the *embodiment* of this style of architecture, but rather a more typical or standard application of the style for industrial/commercial warehouse and office buildings constructed during the post-war period in the City of South San Francisco and the Bay Area in general.

All of the buildings show some degree of alteration to their fenestration and other wall openings, especially the property at 120 E. Grand Avenue, exhibited by the replacement fenestration on the north elevation, and the in-filling of some of the loading bays on the west elevation. As no records exist of this building's original construction in 1961, it is unknown whether it was designed by a particularly well-known or prolific 'master' architect or engineer.

The property at 130 E. Grand Avenue was designed in 1959-60 by San Francisco-based structural engineering firm Simpson, Stratta & Associates, who designed or contributed to the design of a handful of other commercial and industrial buildings in Northern California between approximately 1952 and 1978, but are not especially well-known or prolific 'master' designers to the extent that this building, in particular, would be considered individually eligible for listing under this criteria.

The properties at 129 and 145 Sylvester Road were designed in 1957 by San Francisco architect, J. Francis Ward (1898-1970) as two of his later commissions, with internal alterations of 145 Sylvester Road, specifically, drawn in 1962 by San Mateo-based architectural designer, Irving Caster (1914-1992). While both of these designers had some degree of professional recognition when their businesses were active in the middle of the twentieth century, neither of these individuals would be considered especially well-known or prolific 'master' designers to the extent that these buildings, in particular, would be considered individually eligible for listing under this criteria.

The property at 160-180 Sylvester Road was designed in 1955-56 by San Francisco-based civil engineer, August E. Waegemann (1919 – 1994), whose life and professional work is relatively obscure, and would not be considered an especially well-known or prolific 'master' designer to the extent that this building, in particular, would be considered individually eligible for listing under this criteria.

For the reasons stated above, the properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road would not be considered individually eligible for listing under Criterion C/3.

Criterion D/4 (Information Potential)

Criterion D/4 refers to a property's information and research potential in terms of its historic or prehistoric values. Although this topic is beyond the scope of this report, there is no information found as a result of this HRE to indicate that the subject property would yield information important to history or prehistory, or is an example of a particularly rare construction type. All of the subject properties were constructed atop imported, graded, and compacted rock fill placed many feet above historic marshlands, and as such, the subsurface materials are not the type of geologic forms considered particularly sensitive for the existence of buried and unrecorded historic or prehistoric resources. For these reasons, the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 145-160-180 Sylvester Road would not be considered eligible for listing under Criterion D/4 as individual resources.

6. Conclusion

Although the subject properties at 120-130 E. Grand Avenue and 129, 145, and 160-180 Sylvester Road meet the minimum age threshold for potential eligibility, none of them are recommended individually eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources because they do not meet any of the criteria required for a finding of individual historic significance. Because these buildings would not meet the definition of 'historical resources,' their potential alteration or demolition under a future redevelopment scenario would not be considered a significant impact under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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APPENDIX A

Preparer's Qualifications

W. Brad Brewster

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SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Brewster Historic Preservation, San Francisco, CA
Principal and Founder

January 2017 - Present

- Consulting architectural historian and preservation planner, preparing historic architectural evaluations and multi-property surveys under CEQA and NEPA/Section 106 for public and private clients in the Bay Area.

Environmental Science Associates (ESA), San Francisco, CA
Senior Architectural Historian, Manager

September 2004- August 2016

- ESA's Senior Architectural Historian and Manager within the Bay Area Cultural Resources Group
- Specializing in historic architectural resource surveys and evaluations under CEQA and NEPA/Section 106
- HABS/HAER documentation specialist
- Significant marketing goals and management responsibilities

Carey & Co. Inc., Architects, San Francisco, CA
Senior Project Manager, Preservation Planning

February 2003 – September 2004

- Senior Project Manager for historic preservation products under CEQA and NEPA
- Specializing in historic building surveys and evaluations, as well as cultural resource sections under CEQA and NEPA/Section 106
- Experience with implementing mitigation measures, such as historic documentation (HABS/HAER) and public interpretation efforts
- Experience managing architects, architectural historians and materials conservators
- Significant marketing responsibilities

EIP Associates, San Francisco, CA
Senior Project Manager, Environmental Planning

March 2001 - February 2003

- Senior Project Manager for environmental review documents under CEQA and NEPA
- Specializing in EIRs for large and complex urban in-fill projects in San Francisco and the Bay Area
- Experienced in managing large project teams with numerous subconsultants and accelerated schedules
- Specific expertise in historic-architectural resources
- Extensive marketing experience, including managing and writing proposals, attending interviews

EDAW, Inc. San Francisco, CA and Seattle, WA
Project Manager, Environmental Planning

July 1996 – January 2001

- Managed numerous EIRs under CEQA for various municipalities and private developers, as well as EISs under NEPA for various federal agencies (DoD, BLM, FERC, etc.)
- Specializing in historic architectural resource surveys and management/treatment plans, Section 106 review
- Directly involved with proposal writing and other major marketing efforts

W. Brad Brewster

The Bentley Company, Moffett Field, CA
Environmental Planner

March 1993 – June 1994

- Contract Planner for NASA Ames Research Center (now NASA Research Park) at the former Moffett Naval Air Station
- Co-author of the *Moffett Field Comprehensive Use Plan* to guide NASA development at Moffett Field

Brady and Associates (now LSA), Berkeley, CA
Environmental Planner

July 1992 – March 1993

- Contributed significantly to numerous Initial Studies and EIRs for California cities and counties
- Wrote various general plan elements for California communities

EDUCATION

1994- 1996	Master of Urban Design and Planning, with Certificates in Urban Design and Historic Preservation, University of Washington, Seattle, WA
1987-1992	Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA

AFFILIATIONS

California Preservation Foundation (CPF)
National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP)
Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)