



City of Milpitas

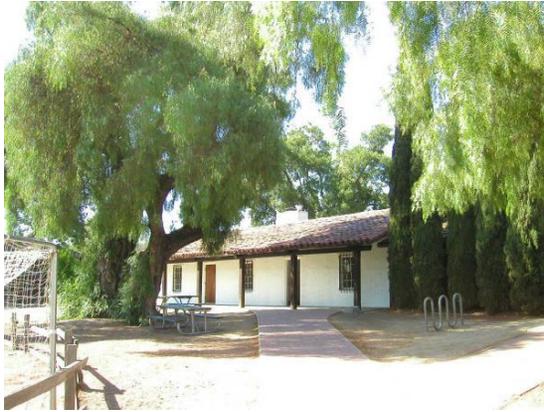
455 EAST CALAVERAS BOULEVARD, MILPITAS, CALIFORNIA 95035-5479

GENERAL INFORMATION: 408-586-3000, www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov

Cultural Resources Register

This is a list of buildings, trees, etc. that are recognized as officially designated Cultural Resources in accordance with the criteria and procedures set forth in the Milpitas Municipal Code, Title XI, Chapter 4.

(All sites are privately owned and within City limits unless otherwise noted; sites are listed in approximate chronological order. An “*” indicates that a more detailed historical report of “summary” for that site is available.)



Jose Higuera Adobe Park

1. Jose Higuera Adobe (1831), 823 Wessex Place, City owned: 823 Wessex Place, City owned:

One of the adobes of the 4994-acre Rancho Los Tularcitos granted to Jose Higuera in 1821 by the last Spanish Governor of California. Jose Higuera was baptized in San Francisco in 1778, was a mayordomo of Mission San Jose during the 1820s, and served as a soldier in the Mexican Army for 20 years. He was Married three times and died in 1845, leaving the rancho to his 19 children.

The Higuera family owned extensive lands and haciendas throughout the Santa Clara Valley. The Higuera Adobe was built in 1828 on the Rancho Los Tularcitos. The adobe was one of five in a complex that served as a waystation for travelers between Mission San Jose and Mission Santa Clara. The rancho was used as a military base and practice ground before the Battle of Santa Clara, and the last major fiesta before the Bear Flag rebellion was held on the grounds.

The Higuera Adobe underwent significant alterations since 1828, but retained essentially the same shape and style as when first built. It was a simple one-story adobe house with end-gabled tile roof which extended to cover front and rear porches, both supported with square posts. The adobe walls were covered with stucco and the interior floor had quarry tile, both 1950 additions. Built as a one-story residence, a second frame story was added in the 1860s and removed during the 1950s restoration. The windows, which were modern, were of six-pane sash, and flank a central entry door. The house was surrounded by numerous trees; peppers, walnuts, figs, cypress, and sycamores. An extensive stand of nopales (cactus) grew in a ravine to the rear of the house.

This site (now a City park) includes the old roadway to the adobe and the olive trees that line it, which were planted about the time of the adobe's construction. The fig trees behind the building were planted by the Higuera family. This building is also listed in the State of California Inventory of Historic Resources and the Santa Clara County Heritage Resources Inventory.

2. Cactus Hedge (est. mid 1830's) north of Higuera Adobe, not in City:

The remains of a 900±foot-long prickly pear cactus hedge that enclosed the 2-acre Higuera Adobe compound on three sides (Calera Creek bounds the complex to the west).



Jose Maria Alviso Adobe

3. Jose Maria Alviso Adobe (1836 or 1837), southeast corner of Calaveras and Piedmont Roads:

The Alviso adobe was built for Jose Maria Alviso, who was granted the 4,457 acre ranch by Governor Jose Castro in 1835. Alviso was one of eight children of Anza colonist Francisco Javier Alviso and Maria Agustina Bojorquez de Alviso, who reached Santa Clara County in 1776. Jose Maria was alcalde of San Jose in 1836, the year the house was built. He lived on the rancho for 17 years with his wife, Juana Francisca de Paula Galindo, and their 7 children. After Alviso's death in 1853, his widow married Jose Urridias, who sold off parcels of the land. Upon the death of Juana Galindo de Urridias in 1885, the land was divided among the heirs. In 1922, Joe Cuciz purchased the adobe and 24 acres in 1922, cleared the land and planted apricot trees. He also restored the house and built a tankhouse, garage and barn.

The Alviso house is built of adobe, with walls three foot thick. The lower story has a plaster coating while the second has clapboard siding over the adobe. The building has a hip roof which extends to cover the two-story porch on three sides. There is an X-braced railing with center diamonds on the upper story porch and the lower story has square support posts. The central front entry doors have two glass panels above wooden panels. There are French doors on the lower story and six-over-six pane sash on the upper, all with wooden shutters. There are three rooms on each floor. A Craftsman style kitchen addition was made to the rear of the house in the 1920s. It has a hip roof with exposed rafters, lap siding, and double-pane sash windows. A two-story tankhouse and a long garage, with two doors and three bays, are located to the north of the house. Both were built in the 1920s, as was a vertical board shed. The yard is planted with cedars, sycamore, olive, loquat, and olive trees and there is a walnut orchard to the rear of the house.

This adobe was once the ranch house of the hacienda and is one of the original 4 adobes constructed. It is a two-story building with the ground floor being adobe and the second floor is wood construction. This building is also listed in the State of California 1976 Inventory of Historic Resources and the 1979 Santa Clara County Heritage Resource Inventory.



Milpitas Hotel

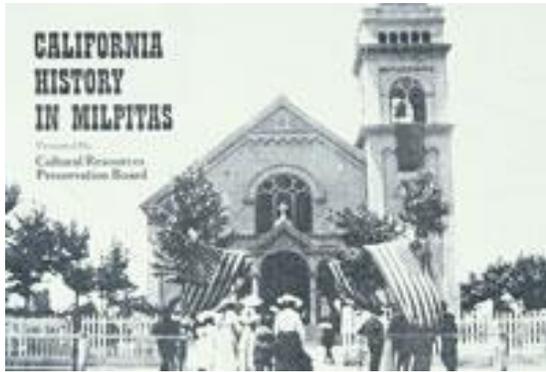
4. Site of Milpitas Hotel (1857) and “Fat Boy” Restaurant (1924): 147 South Main Street:
Site of the first hotel built in Milpitas, which burned down in 1910. The “Fat Boy” Restaurant that was later built on this site was part of one of the first fast-order restaurant chains in California.

5. Bellew-McCarthy Ranchstead Site (circa. 1861), east side of Coyote Creek and south of Highway 237:

The Bellew House, along with its barns and other out buildings, was a good example of a mid-19th to early-20th-Century farm complex. For a more detailed description of those buildings and the history of the typical “yeoman” ranch families that lived and worked on this site, please also refer to the “Architectural and Historical Assessment of the Bellew-McCarthy Ranch” by Michael Corbett.

- *6. Shaughnessy-Murphy Ranchstead (circa. 1861), east side of Coyote Creek and south of Highway 237:

The Shaughnessy-Murphy House, along with its barns and other out buildings, constitutes a good example of a mid-19th- to early-20th-Century farm complex. For a more detailed description of these buildings and the history of the typical “yeoman” ranch families that lived and worked on this site, please also refer to the “Architectural and Historical Assessment of the Shaughnessy-Murphy Ranch” by Michael Corbett. Note that most of these ranch buildings are in the Coyote Creek right of way and will have to be removed when construction of the approved flood control project for the creek commences. Due to the fact that no single building in this complex is considered to be significant (rather, it is the functional grouping of these buildings that is significant) and it is impractical to move these buildings to an alternative site, no attempts to preserve these buildings will be made.



Old St. John's Church

*7. Old St. John's Church Site (since 1870), 279 South Main Street:

A small frame chapel with stucco exterior coating, the St. John's Chapel has a gable roof with Mission style parapet. The front entry has modern double doors with an arched window above. There are two modern stained glass windows on each side of the building and two in the nave. The interior ceiling is arched and made of tongue and groove. Modern board and batten wainscoting has been installed around the sides. The nave has a sloping tongue and groove ceiling and a small altar.

It is the oldest church in Milpitas. The site of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, established in 1870, the church property includes a modern church, a 1923 social hall, and this small chapel in addition to other support facilities. The two large palm trees that have been planted in 1901 in front of the second St. John's church building. The chapel appears to have been constructed about 1910, at a time when the church was known as the Portuguese Roman Catholic Church because families from the Azores made up the largest proportion of parishioners. It was used as a chapel when first built, then for storage, and recently restored to its original use. First located to the rear of the church lot, the building was moved to its present site ca. 1968.

8. Curtner House (a.k.a. Weller Estate, 1900) and surrounding grounds and structures, east of terminus of London Drive, not in City:

A two-story house with hipped roof, overhanging eaves, and projecting towers, the Curtner/Weller house was a superb example of the Italian Renaissance style. Symmetrical in shape, the house had octagonal roofed bays on both the north and south corners of the front façade. Wide brick entry stairs led to a glass front door. A multi-foil window was centrally located above the entryway, which was supported by large circular posts. The windows were of single-pane sash. A porch, supported by round posts, was on the south side of the house and had multiple casement windows on the upper story. The extensive grounds were beautifully landscaped with palms, fruit trees, shrubs, and lawn.

The Curtner/Weller house was built on the original Higuera homestead, 295 acres of which was purchased in 1881 by pioneer Henry Curtner. A few years later Curtner divided the land between his children and his son William and bride May Weller built a honeymoon cottage there. In need of larger quarters, Curtner hired an architect named Binder to design the 14-room, wood-paneled house in 1900, acting as his own contractor. William Curtner was a cattleman, bank director, and produce farmer. Many of the Portuguese families who came to the Milpitas area from the Azores during the 1880s got their start working for Curtner and eventually purchased individual farms from his vast acreage. The house was built on the site of an ancient Costanoan village and during construction numbers burials and artifacts were uncovered. This building is also listed in the 1979 Santa Clara County Heritage Resources Inventory.



Milpitas Grammar School

9. Milpitas Grammar School (now Senior Center, 1915), 160 North Main Street,
City owned:

The original Milpitas Grammar School is superb example of the Neoclassical style. The central front façade has a pedimented portico supported by Ionic columns. The raking cornice has dentils, as does the corning above the columns and over the central front doors. The building is square in shape, with a central open courtyard surrounded by classrooms. Wide concrete steps lead to the central paneled entry doors topped with a pediment. The doors are flanked by two multi-paned windows topped with cornices, and two single-pane sash windows on either side. The central portion of the building is flanked by symmetrical bays, each with three multi-pane windows and lentils supported by brackets. The building is constructed of wood, with stucco siding. Except for some interior changes, the school is in original condition.

The Milpitas Grammar School was completed in June 1916, to replace the first one, built in 1856 and burned in 1912. It served as City Hall between 1956 and 1969, then as a community Center, and now as a Senior Center. As the only Neoclassical public building in Milpitas, and as an outstanding example of that architectural style, the Grammar School is architecturally significant.



Campbell's Corners

10. Smith's Corners (a.k.a. Campell's Corners est. 1900-10), 167 S. Main Street:

Campbell's Corners saloon is a one-story cross-gabled Craftsman building with recessed porches on the north and east sides. The roof is supported by knee braces and there are multi-pane windows flanked by louvres in the gable ends. The porch is supported by large, square stone posts and the southerly portion of the west façade porch has been enclosed and is faced with glass brick. The siding is stucco and half-timber. Double glass and panel doors, with a transom above, are placed on the diagonal on the northeast corner. South of the entry doors is a large window with smaller panes above, while the remainder of the windows are of single-pane sash. Plaster medallions, a newer addition, course around the building above the porch.

Built in the mid-1900s by John F. Smith at the intersection of the Alviso-Milpitas Road with the Oakland Highway, Campbell's Corners was known for most of its life as Smith's Corners. A favorite watering place at this busy intersection, the saloon catered to both resident and traveler alike. The corner has been the site of a saloon since Milpitas first became a community in the mid-1800s. In 1893 it was known as the Goodwin Hotel and after that burned, Smith rebuilt on the same site. During Prohibition the saloon sold soft drinks, but reverted to its former use immediately after repeal.



Dr. Smith's House

11. Dr. Smith's House (a.k.a. DeVries Home, 1915), 163 North Main Street:

A high-style example of the Prairie style of architecture, the Dr. Smith house has a low-pitched roof with widely overhanging eaves. The one-story front porch is supported by massive square posts, as the small porch on the north side. The upper story has tall casement windows with small panes in a geometric pattern. The windows on the lower story have large central panes surrounded by small panes. The central front entry door, reached via concrete steps and porch, is multi-paned and has multi-paned sidelights. The well-groomed grounds have lawns with cedar, willow and palm trees, as well as shrubbery.

Built by Dr. Renselaer J. Smith, the second doctor to set up practice in Milpitas. Smith came to the town from Redlands in 1904, succeeding Dr. William Wilson. As a fine example of high-style Prairie architecture, The Dr. Smith house is unique in Milpitas. It embodies the best elements of the style that originated in Chicago and was popular for a brief period between 1905 and 1915. It served as both his residence and medical office. The home was purchased by the DeVries family in 1950, who still live there.



Winsor Blacksmith Shop

12. Winsor Blacksmith Shop (circa. 1920), 112 North Main Street:

The Winsor Blacksmith Shop has a low-pitched front gable roof with exposed rafters and a simple-pedimented false front. There is California Rustic siding on the front façade, with vertical tongue and groove on the sides and rear walls. A one-and-one-half story tank house is attached to the southeast corner of the rear of the building. The front façade is composed of two large, vertical-board sliding doors with three multi-paned industrial windows between and on either side. The south side of the building has a large sliding door and multi-pane windows.

The Winsor family settled in Milpitas in 1863. The Winsor Blacksmith Shop was built by Tom and George Winsor, descendants of pioneer Milpitas settlers John and Catherine Winsor, in the 1920s. They provided blacksmithing services for the village and the travelers on the Oakland Road. The building was listed on the 1930 Sanborn map as “Blacksmith and Wood Works”, so presumably they were also engaged in woodworking. The building was demolished in 2006 to make space for the Milpitas Public Library.

13. Barber House Site (1920), 3365 Barber Lane: The house was demolished at an unknown date.



Elmwood Correctional Facility

14. O’Toole Elms Site: (est. 1860-1870), 701 S. Abel Street: The O’Toole Elms site was a farmland of more than 100 acres and was the location of John O’Toole’s four-story Victorian mansion. John O’Toole planted the elms for this driveway connecting to the mansion. On the farmland, O’Toole grew produce, hay, and raised race horses. However, the O’Toole family faced a series of misfortunes and had to move. The property was sold to James Boyd in 1883. The site became a topic for the press, when it was bought from Boyd in 1884 by the Santa Clara County for \$24,000 to use as an almshouse for the poor and elderly citizens. It was described as the “poorhouse in a palace,” because it also housed low-risk prisoners. In 1957, after the almshouse operation was relocated, the site was turned over to the sheriff’s department. The site was renamed Elmwood, and a jail was constructed over the demolished mansion. However, on the Elmwood Jail property, one small structure from the original O’Toole mansion remains and is being used as the Elmwood Chapel. Currently, part of the property is being used by an auto dealership and another part used for constructing new housing developments.



Winsor Tank House

15. Winsor Tank House: (circa. 1920), 112 North Main Street: The Winsor Tank House was used as a source of water for blacksmithing by the Winsor brothers. Although the building was demolished in 2006, the Winsor Tank House survived and was relocated. Its current location is at the south entrance of the Milpitas Public Library.