



Yamanouchi, Yoshiko, House  
Name of Property

San Mateo, California  
County and State

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object



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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Ranch Style

OTHER: Traditional Japanese

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundations: concrete, wood, stone

Walls: stucco, wood

Roofs: asphalt, copper tile, ceramic tile

Other: earth, wood, brick, stone, concrete

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Yoshiko Yamanouchi House fronts onto East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in a residential neighborhood of San Mateo. The .65-acre property is bounded to the east by neighboring parcels and to the west by South Humboldt Street. U.S. Highway 101 is a tenth of a mile to the east, and East 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, on the north side of the property, provides access to this freeway. The perimeter of the property is enclosed by a combination of wooden fences along the south (front), east, and west sides and a 10-foot-high masonry sound wall along the north (East 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and part of the west (South Humboldt Street) sides. The district includes three buildings, three structures, and three sites, all contributing resources. The Ranch Style house and its associated resources (1957), Japanese style hill-and-pond garden (1958), and the Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden (1968) create an ensemble of designed landscape and architectural features whose character reflects both suburban residential design from the post-World II era and traditional Japanese style architecture and garden design. The Yoshiko Yamanouchi House retains all aspects of historic integrity.

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## Narrative Description

### SETTING

The main entrance to the property is through an arched gateway that aligns with the front door of the house. Other access points into the fenced property include a service gate at the southeast corner of the property, a gate in the wooden fence along the parking area, and two gates in the west-side fence, one of which provides the formal entrance to a Japanese style building and garden (the Katsura Building and Garden) and the second provides a service entrance for maintenance of this building and garden. The only publicly visible portion of the property is a flagstone-paved driveway at the southwest corner of the property (approximately 100 feet by 22 feet) that provides off-street parking and access to the garage.

The Ranch Style house sits on the southern portion of the property. This house has an irregular plan with multiple wings which divide the property into different areas or zones. The Japanese style hill-and-pond garden is located in the southeast corner of the lot immediately adjacent to the front wings of the house. A narrow strip of land extends along the east side of the house and provides a connection between the front and back yards. The wings of the house form a U-shape on the north side and wrap around an outdoor patio and swimming pool. The land behind the house, on the northern portion of the property, contains the Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden. The land along the west side of the house is enclosed by the house and fences and contains a small garden area with a flagstone-paved patio and sidewalk.

Resource descriptions begin with the Ranch Style house and its associated features (entrance gateway and fence, storage room and pumphouse, patio and swimming pool, and west side garden), which were the first resources developed on the property. This is followed by the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden, located in front of the house, which was added to the property in conjunction with the development of the house. Resource descriptions conclude with the three resources—Katsura Building, Katsura Walkway, and Katsura Garden—located on the rear portion of the property, which were developed together.

### HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED RESOURCES

**1. House**  
**1957; Donald H. Brandes, architect**

**One Contributing Building**  
**Photos 1-5; Figures 1-2**

#### *Exterior*

The Ranch Style residence on the southern portion of the property has a driveway on East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue leading to an attached two-car garage below a prominent gently pitched gable roof. The garage—the main section of the house visible from a public right-of-way—is set back about 22 feet from the adjacent sidewalk. The garage has a wooden tilt-up garage door.

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The simply detailed single-family, single-story, wood-frame house has an irregular plan—a U-shape on the north around the swimming pool and an L-shape on the south, formed by the garage extension 32 feet south from the west side of the house, which looks out onto the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden. The house has a combination perimeter concrete and post and pier foundation. The exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco. The composite cross gable/hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The roof has plain eaves. The windows are primarily aluminum sash double hung. Some of the original windows have been replaced with metal frame double-pane windows.

The main public entrance to the house is from the roofed gateway on East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A flagstone covered walkway extends along the east side of the garage wing, with views into the Japanese style garden, continues to three steps which lead up to the entrance porch and double entrance doors. The walkway and porch are recessed below the extended roof eaves of the front gable. The roof has a series of openings directing natural light along the walkway. The double wooden entrance doors lead into the reception area inside.

#### Character Defining Features

- Single story height
- Gently pitched composite cross gable/hip roof
- Smooth stucco exterior
- Aluminum sash double-hung windows

#### *Interior*

The house has a linear plan. Rooms are oriented on an east/west axis with the main hallway or gallery providing access between the different functional zones. Two bedrooms and a bathroom and the master bedroom with a bathroom (originally a “work room” as identified on the original floor plan for the house) are at the east end of the gallery. The living room, dining room, and reception area are in the center of the house adjacent to the south side of the gallery. The kitchen and the family/entertainment room, identified as the “playroom” on the original house floorplan, are at the west end of the gallery. The gallery has extensive glazing on its north side that faces onto the back patio and swimming pool and a sliding glass door provides access into this area.

The front entrance doors open into a main reception area with the living room on the right (east) and the dining room on the left (west); these two rooms are accessed through seven-foot-wide openings. The dining and living rooms have carpeted floors. The other living areas have hardwood floors.

The living room (about 28 by 18 feet) has sliding glass doors on both the north and the south. Two sliding doors (each approximately six feet square) on the north wall of the living room open into the gallery, which in turn has a sliding glass door opening out to the back patio and swimming pool. Wooden shelves, which form screens, flank the two sliding glass doors on the north wall, bringing in more natural light into the living room. A sliding glass door on the south wall of the living room opens onto a raised porch that looks out onto a Japanese style garden and pond, and large fixed pane windows flank this sliding glass door. The east wall in the living

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includes a large fireplace with a travertine marble mantle. Mahogany paneling covers the walls flanking the living room fireplace and the adjacent wall on the south.

Continuing west in the gallery, a door on the south opens into the dining room. Another wooden screen, with a planter fixture, also opens between the gallery and the dining room. The dining room has a built-in stained wood china cabinet for storing flatware, glasses, and linens.

The gallery continues west into the kitchen on the left. A service room, a maid's room, and a bathroom are adjacent to the kitchen on the south. Storage rooms and a laundry room open into the garage on the east.

North of the kitchen, the family/entertainment room is a large free span space (30 by 17 feet) with an exposed beam ceiling. The north wall in the family/entertainment room has a built-in entertainment center for a television and audio system. Two sliding glass doors open from the east side of the family/entertainment room out to the back patio and swimming pool area. A door on the west wall opens to a side patio with a concrete slab covered with flagstone. A separate space recessed into the southwest side of the family/entertainment room is a breakfast room for more casual dining. The brick west wall in this area includes an indoor barbeque and a fireplace.

## **2. Entrance Gateway and Fence 1957; Donald H. Brandes, architect**

**One Contributing Structure  
Photo 6; Figure 1**

The primary entrance to the property is through a formal entrance gateway that is part of the front fence along East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This fence (overall height of 5 feet) connects to the house at the east side of the garage, lines the east side of the driveway, and then turns the corner and extends along the southern perimeter of the property. The fence is constructed of an alternating pattern of a vertical wood boards and three bamboo poles—all of which is topped with a row of wood shakes.

The gateway is located near the western end of the fence and aligns with the front doors of the house. A flagstone walkway leads from the gate to these doors. A double-leaf gate (each leaf is approximately three wide and constructed of vertical 10 inch by 2 inch boards) is mounted between two square, brick piers (6 feet 6 inches tall). A wood post extends from the top of each pier to support a gable roof (covered in redwood shakes) that spans the gate and piers; the overall height of the piers and roof is 10 feet 6 inches. The gate and fence were designed by Donald H. Brandes, architect for the house, and were built in 1957 at the same time as the house. The gate is designed to reference a Japanese style gateway, and a wooden sign—with Japanese calligraphy that can be translated as “fantasy land”—is mounted onto a cross board over the gate.<sup>1</sup> The decorative wood and bamboo fence also references Japanese building forms and materials.

A simple Japanese-inspired landscape frames either side of the entrance gate. This small landscape composition includes a Japanese black pine tree, a weeping form of dwarf deodora

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<sup>1</sup> Translation provided by owner Laura Watanuki.

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cedar, a flowering apricot tree, ornamental stones, and gravel groundcover. The Japanese black pine tree, on the west side of the gateway, was approximately 75 years old when it was planted in 1957 and has been selectively pruned since that time to maintain its height and form.<sup>2</sup>

A double-leaf gate mounted between two brick piers of the same design as the entrance gateway piers, provides a service entrance from East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the southeastern corner of the property.

**3. Storage Room and Pump House** **One Contributing Building**  
**1957; Donald H. Brandes, architect** **Photo 7; Figure 1**

The Storage Room and Pump House is located just east of the house and is accessed via a sidewalk, immediately next to the house, that connects the front and back yards. This building has a rectangular plan (24.5 by 11 feet) and a sloping shed roof covered with tar and gravel. The foundation is a four inch thick concrete slab. The exterior is covered with painted plywood. The west façade has two hinged doors opening into two separate rooms—the storage room (11 by 11 feet) on the north and the pump house on the south (13.5 by 11 feet).

**4. Patio and Swimming Pool** **One Contributing Structure**  
**1957; Donald H. Brandes, architect** **Photos 8-9; Figure 1**

The wings of the house form a U-shape on the north side and wrap around an outdoor patio and swimming pool. Sliding glass doors provide access from the house. The patio is paved with tan-colored concrete; small gray stones are inserted into the expansion joints between the square panels of concrete. The swimming pool (16 feet by 30 feet) in the center of the patio is kidney shaped.

**5. West Side Garden** **One Contributing Site**  
**1957; Donald H. Brandes, architect** **Photo 10; Figure 1**

The land along the west side of the house is fenced on three sides (north, west, and south) and encloses a small garden area with a flagstone-paved patio and sidewalk. The garden includes small plants, trees, and decorative elements—including a small Buddha statue, a Japanese lantern, and rocks—set within a bed of gray-colored gravel. This area provides an outdoor space accessed from doors leading into the kitchen/service area and into an informal dining area of the house.

**6. Japanese Style Hill-and-Pond Garden** **One Contributing Site**  
**1958; Nagao Sakurai, landscape designer** **Photos 11-14; Figure 3**

A Japanese style garden occupies an area roughly 60 feet by 50 feet in the southeast corner of property. This garden area is defined by two wings of the house and the fences along the south

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<sup>2</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.



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and east edges of the property. The garden is a carefully designed naturalistic landscape composition that represents a lake and mountain scene in reduced scale. This Japanese style of garden is sometimes referred to as a hill-and-pond garden. The spatial organization of the garden's design is created by the pond, an island, a hill, and a waterfall. The garden is also intended to symbolize the four seasons and includes features that have been traditionally used in Japan to represent these seasons—the hill and waterfall represent summer; a maple tree whose leaves change to red in the fall represents fall; pine trees represent winter, and flowering cherries symbolize spring.

An irregularly shaped pond whose edges are lined with large uncut stones occupies the central portion of the garden; the pond's overall dimensions are roughly 36 feet long by 25 feet wide. A hill (*tsuki-yama*) and waterfall (*taki*) are located at its eastern end. The natural topography of the site is fairly flat, and the hill was constructed from dirt excavated during construction of the swimming pool.<sup>3</sup> The highest point of the garden is the waterfall that cascades over uncut stones into the pond. At the waterfall's base, a large rock (*te-do-seki*) symbolizes the foundation of the mountain, and a high perpendicularly oriented stone (*shinsuku-seki*) symbolizes the guardian of the garden.<sup>4</sup> An intake pipe at the west end of the pond recirculates water via piping in the pond to the top of the waterfall. The pump for this system is located a few feet northeast of the pond behind the hill.

A small, turtle-shaped island (*kame-shima* or *kame-jima*)—symbolizing longevity—is located in the western portion of the pond. The island is rimmed with uncut stone and has a turtle head stone (*keto-seki*)—a natural rock whose shape resembles a turtle's head—at its east end. Two miniature bridges link the island to the surrounding garden. A low arched bridge (a concrete arch with wood cross-members supporting exposed aggregate panels) connects to the north side, and a flat bridge (constructed of two stone planks each 10 inches wide) connects to the south side. Both bridges are approximately 6 feet long by 2 feet wide.

Stones are used both functionally and aesthetically throughout the garden and were carefully chosen for their size and form. The stones associated with the pond, island, and waterfall are described in the preceding paragraphs. Flat, irregularly shaped stepping stones create a path around the west end and along the northern side of the pond. The ground between these stones is covered with small black and white gravel. Other individual stones have been strategically placed for specific ceremonial or symbolic functions. A large flat stone (uncut, in the general shape of a triangle) located just east of the arched bridge on the northern edge of the pond provides a small viewing platform. Three large stones in the east end of the pond form an arc with the viewing stone. Individual ornamental stones (*keiseki*) have been placed throughout the garden at various locations.

Small Japanese black pine trees (*kuromatsu*) are planted along the southwest, northwest, and northeast edges of the pond. A fourth small pine tree is located on the island. Each of these pine

<sup>3</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Long, "Americans Discover the Pleasures of a Japanese Garden," *The American Home*, September 1962, 43, 68.

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trees have been routinely pruned, by selectively removing the new vegetation or candles, since they were first planted to maintain their form and height in portion to the scale of the garden.

Low shrubs, primarily juniper and dwarf Japanese cedar, and ivy are planted along the edge of the pond. Larger trees and shrubs, including pine trees, oak trees, beech trees, podocarpus shrubs, and pittosporum shrubs, are growing along the southern side of the garden and on the hill. Here the trees have been allowed to grow to their natural height; they help to screen views beyond the garden thereby contributing to the illusion of a self-contained world within the garden.

Objects have been strategically placed to provide accent points within the garden. A stone lion located just to the left of the entrance gateway serves as the guardian for the property. A stone basin (*chozubachi*) for ritualized handwashing sits against the front wall of the house. A broken stone lantern, damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, also sits against this wall. A stone lantern is located on the island. At the base of the hill is a *shishi-odoshi* (deer scare), and a miniature Buddhist temple (made of cast concrete and measuring approximately 36 inches high by 22 inches across). Two stone lanterns are located on the hill. A small Buddha statue sits, hidden by vegetation, in a stone niche next to the waterfall.

The tradition of integrating architecture and landscape that is characteristic of Japanese style gardens is embodied by the proximity of the garden to the house and by views. The garden and house can be viewed immediately upon entering the property at the entrance gateway on East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The entire garden is visible as one proceeds along the covered walkway that leads to the front door of the house. The garden can also be viewed in its entirety from the front windows of the living room and from the covered porch that spans the front (east side) of the living room. The stepping stone path along the west end and north side of the pond and the viewing stone on the northern edge of the pond provide key vantage points for views from within the garden.

An L-shaped bench is attached to two walls in an alcove at the southeast corner of the house. Constructed of wood boards alternating with a bamboo pole in a style similar to the front fence, the bench provides a gathering place for visitors to pause and contemplate. This recessed corner is paved with exposed aggregate concrete. The end of the stepping stone path is integrated into this paved area with four stones set into the exposed aggregate.

#### Character Defining Features

- Biomorphic shaped pond with edges defined by natural stone
- Turtle island and two miniature bridges
- Hill and waterfall
- Stepping stone path along the west and north sides of the pond
- Pruned Japanese black pine trees
- Objects including stone lanterns, stone wash basin, deer scare, miniature Buddhist temple, and ornamental stones (*keiseki*) that provide accents

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## KATSURA BUILDING, WALKWAY, AND GARDEN

These traditional Japanese architectural and designed landscape elements occupy the northern portion of the property.

### 7. Katsura Building 1968

### One Contributing Building Photos 15-23; Figures 5-6

The design for the Katsura Building was inspired by the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto, Japan, which was built over several decades in the seventeenth century by members of the princely Hachijo-no-miya family.<sup>5</sup> Prince Toshihito began the original primary building known as the Old Shoin in the 1620s. The Middle Shoin was added around 1641, after the death of Prince Toshihito in 1629. The expansion of the Imperial Villa in the 1650s under his son Prince Toshitada is known as the New Goten. The Katsura Building at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue is an interpretation and synthesis of these three phases of the Imperial Villa.

In choosing to build a Japanese style building on her property that paid homage to the Imperial Villa, Yoshiko Yamanouchi chose to reference a place that was (and is) widely acknowledged to be one of the most recognizable and influential creations of traditional architecture and landscape in Japan.<sup>6</sup> It is an example of *sukiya*-style architecture, which, as described by architectural professor Mia Locher in her book *Traditional Japanese Architecture: An Exploration of Elements and Forms*, is “often considered to be the epitome of traditional Japanese architecture, the most complete form of its development which best reflects the Japanese culture, environment, and taste.”<sup>7</sup> In this style, the relationship between buildings and gardens is important “with rooms opening up to the gardens or framed views of the gardens designed as part of the important spaces of the buildings.”<sup>8</sup> Buildings are timber frame construction with roofs typically of wood shakes or shingles that emphasize a “quality of softness.”<sup>9</sup> The permanent or fixed exterior walls are plastered with clean white lime plaster or roughly textured mud plaster. Moveable walls, which allow rooms to open to the garden or frame views of the garden, are either sliding wood or paper panels. The sliding paper panels (*shoji*) are used to filter light coming in from the outside. “Floors are covered with *tatami* mats or wood planks and are

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<sup>5</sup> Identified in the nomination as the Katsura Building, *San Mateo Times* newspaper articles about the completion and public opening of the building refer to it as Katsura Detached Villa Replica. The building is more accurately an interpretation of the Katsura Imperial Villa features at a smaller scale suitable for the property. The 1991 Historic Resources Inventory form, prepared by Alan R. Michaelson, referred to it as the “Yamanouchi tea house;” however, the building is more than a tea house. A two-page history of the property prepared by Laura Watanuki, granddaughter of Mrs. Yamanouchi and owner of the property, stated, “the authenticity of this structure was certified by Prime Minister Eisaku Sato and is called Katsura Inn.” The special designation scroll presented by the prime minister to Mrs. Yamanouchi hangs in the Tea Preparation room of the building. Ms. Watanuki refers to the building as the Katsura Villa.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Ponciroli, *Katsura Imperial Villa* (New York: Phaidon Press, Inc., 2005), 71-72.

<sup>7</sup> Mia Locher, *Traditional Japanese Architecture: An Exploration of Elements and Forms* (North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2010), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Locher, *Traditional Japanese Architecture*, 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

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separated from the *engawa*, an indoor-outdoor veranda-like extension of the floor plane that reaches out toward the garden and is shielded by the overhanging eaves.”<sup>10</sup>

### *Exterior*

The Katsura Building has an irregular plan—two joined L-shaped sections—with overall dimensions of approximately 42 feet by 17 feet with various insets and extensions. The building is raised about four feet above grade by round wooden posts set on stone footings, the building’s foundation. The original Imperial Villa was raised up on wooden posts to protect it from flooding and moisture. The wooden framing members are joined by mortise and tenon joints.

The cross composite gable/hipped roof has wide eaves (approximately 3 feet wide) with exposed rafters. The roof is covered with copper-plated tiles handcrafted by Japanese craftsmen,<sup>11</sup> and ornamental clay tiles run along the three main roof ridges. The roof does not have any gutters or downspouts, and water drains directly onto the ground into a rain catch, which is a band of stones that wraps around the perimeters of the Katsura Building and Walkway. The exterior walls are white plaster panels framed by the naturally finished wood of the building’s structural members.

The roof overhangs three verandas on the south side of the building, each of which varies in height and how far they extend out from the main building envelope. These three verandas connect—via sliding wooden rain doors (*amado*) and translucent rice paper screens (*shoji*)—directly to the tea ceremony room, the hallway, and the study, respectively. The hallway veranda, situated between the Old Shoin and New Goten, represents the Music Room veranda from the Middle Shoin in the original Imperial Villa; it has a built-in bench along its east side similar to the one at the Imperial Villa. The study’s veranda is itself enclosed by *amado* and *shoji*, and its deck is half covered with wood and half with *tatami*, the traditional mats used to cover the indoor floors. A fourth veranda is not covered by the roof and is attached, at a slightly lower floor elevation, to the south side of the tea ceremony room veranda; it is known as the Moon Viewing Veranda. The verandas provide an important function in Japanese architecture and landscape design—connecting or integrating the interior space of the building and the external world of the garden. In addition to allowing natural light into the rooms, the *shoji* screens—when open—frame views of the Katsura Garden. The verandas provide for broader, sheltered views of the garden, and the Moon Viewing veranda provides a direct connection via a series of footwear stones from the building to the garden.

The building’s designer created fewer openings on the north façade to reduce traffic noise from the adjacent street. This façade has an almost continuous wall of the plaster panels with wood framing. Three, small aluminum-frame sliding windows, one in the bathroom and two in the kitchen, are part of the original design. Another original sliding window opens into the kitchen on the east end of the building. A larger sliding glass window opens into the tea preparation room. This large sliding glass window and two additional openings on the lower level of the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.

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north façade are covered with bamboo screens which consist of closely spaced, vertical, bamboo poles which resemble those at the Imperial Villa.

#### Character Defining Features

- Cross composite gable/hipped roof covered with copper-plated tiles
- Ornamental clay tiles along the main roof ridges
- Four interconnecting wooden verandas on the south side
- White plaster panels framed by naturally finished wood structural members
- Sliding wood doors (*amado*) and translucent rice paper screens (*shoji*) for the openings on the front façade
- Arched window in the shape of a Japanese comb in the west façade
- Wood posts set on stone footings which raise the floor level approximately four feet above grade

#### *Interior*

The interior is organized into three principal spaces based on rooms in the original Imperial Villa. The tea ceremony room is based on a room in the Old Shoin. The tea preparation room and hallway are based on features in the Middle Shoin. The third room, the study with shelves and a writing table, is based on what was originally the living quarters for Prince Toshitada in the New Goten, later remodeled for a visit by Emperor Gomizuno-o in the late 1650s. Several decorative features, used throughout the interior of the building, reference the originals in the Imperial Villa. These include the Japanese Imperial Crest of the chrysanthemum pattern of the paper on the interior sliding doors (*fusuma*), three different styles of finger catches (moon-shaped, hat-shaped, and one that represents a pine needle) for interior doors, and small metal daffodil ornaments that hide exposed pegs on the railing cross beams. The floors are covered with *tatami* mats. The Katsura Building also includes two modern rooms that were not part of the original Imperial Villa, which meet contemporary needs. These include a kitchen with stove, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, and counter with overhead cabinets and a bathroom with a toilet, *ofuro* (Japanese bath), and a sink. The kitchen and bathroom have wooden floors and wood paneled walls.

Upon entering the building, one proceeds into a hallway with the modern kitchen and bathroom on the right (north side) and the tea ceremony room on the left. Three sliding *shoji* doors open on the left from the hallway into the tea ceremony room with *tatami* mats covering the floor; this room's dimensions are approximately 10 by 12 feet. The tea ceremony room has no furniture or objects on the floor. The main visual focus is the *tokonoma* ("place of beauty") on the left, the east end of the room. This feature is a ceremonial space recessed into the wall with a scroll in its center and a shelf where a flower arrangement of the season is traditionally placed. The west wall of the room has a door panel, that does not open, which symbolizes a connection to the Music Room veranda. The Music Room veranda runs along the west side of the tea ceremony room, accessed from a door in the hallway. Three sliding wood plank doors (*amado*) on the south wall of the tea ceremony room open to a two part veranda for viewing the garden. The first veranda (18 by 9 feet) is below the overhang of the main roof. One steps down to the second

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veranda offset to the east; this veranda, known as the Moon Viewing Veranda, is not shaded by the roof eaves.

The hallway continues west from the tea ceremony room to *shoji* doors opening north to the tea preparation room; the dimensions of this room are approximately 10 by 12 feet. Tea making utensils and tea bowls are stored on shelves (*mizuya*) on the east wall of this room. A silk privacy screen, hung on decorative rod, sits in front of the large window on the north side of the room.

From the west side of the tea preparation area, one enters the study room. This room (12 by 17 feet) is larger than the other two rooms associated with the tea ceremony. It contains a writing desk that runs along a portion of the west wall; this table sits on a low platform which is the width of three *tatami* mats. From the writing table one looks west into the Katsura Garden through an arched window in the shape of a Japanese comb. This area—with the writing desk, raised platform, and window—replicates the Imperial Dias or *Jōdan-no-ma* in the New Goten of the Imperial Villa. The *tatami* mats on the raised platform are bound with a patterned fabric rather than the typical plain black fabric found on the *tatami* mats throughout the rest of the building. This distinction at the Imperial Villa denoted the privileged status of the emperor, for whom the room was created, and was incorporated as part of the reproduction here. Shelves and small cabinets occupy the northwest corner of the study room; this feature is a reproduction of the Katsura Shelving from the Imperial Villa and, like the original, is constructed of eighteen different kinds of wood. A closet for storing futons is to the right side of these shelves, along the north side of the room. The ceiling above the writing desk and the shelves have wooden strips woven into a geometric pattern.

*Shoji* screens on the south side of the study open to an enclosed porch or veranda; this narrow rectangular indoor/outdoor space, which provides a garden viewing area along the front (south) side of the Katsura Building, has a half-wood and half-*tatami* floor, another reference to the original features of the New Goten at the Imperial Villa. The connections between the wood railings along the outer edge of the study room's veranda are covered with two types of small decorative features which replicate those at the Imperial Villa—the Chrysanthemum Seal, which is one of the Imperial seals, and a crest used by the Emperor of Japan and members of the royal family. *Shoji* screens and wood sliding doors (*amado*) enclose the porch.

#### Character Defining Features

- Main rooms connected to a central hallway and opening onto exterior verandas
- White plaster panels framed by naturally finished wood structural members
- Chrysanthemum patterned paper on interior sliding doors (*fusuma*)
- Metal finger catches (moon-shaped, hat-shaped, and pine needle-shaped) for interior doors
- Metal daffodil-shaped ornaments hiding exposed pegs on railing cross beams
- Recessed ceremonial space (*tokonoma* or “place of beauty”) on east wall of Tea Ceremony Room
- Built in shelves (*mizuya*) on east wall of Tea Preparation Room

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- Built-in features in the Study including raised platform, writing desk, and shelves with small cabinets
- Wood floorboards
- Wood board ceiling
- Wood strips woven into a geometric pattern in ceiling above writing desk and shelves/cabinets in Study

## 8. Katsura Walkway 1968

**One Contributing Structure  
Photos 24-25; Figure 6**

A raised walkway (*ryoka*) along the east side of the Katsura Garden provides a connection directly between the house and the Katsura Building. This structure, while not based on a specific portion of the Katsura Imperial Villa, uses materials and construction techniques of traditional Japanese architecture. The walkway is raised four feet off the ground and is covered with a gabled roof supporting hand carved purlins and rafters. The walkway is approximately 65 feet long by six feet wide and is covered with six-inch-wide wood floorboards. The supporting posts are Japanese cypress (*hinoki*) wood hand-worked to a smooth finish using a traditional waterfall method.<sup>12</sup> The roof is covered in hand-plated copper shingles. The raised walkway provides views of the garden and the front of the Katsura Building. At the north end of the walkway and to the east are the Katsura Building's entrance door. Stairs at the north end of the walkway lead to the portion of the garden north of the Katsura Building.

### Character Defining Features

- Gable roof covered with copper plated tiles
- Exposed hand carved purlins and rafters
- Raised walkway (approximately four feet above grade) covered with wood floorboards
- Hand-finished wood supporting posts which extend from the roof to the ground and are set on stone footings

## 9. Katsura Garden 1968; Kodo Matsubara, landscape designer

**One Contributing Site  
Photos 26-29; Figure 6**

The Katsura Garden provides a setting around the Katsura Building and is best understood in its relationship to the building. The intent of the garden's arrangement is to create the illusion of space around the Katsura Building and to provide "a series of small vistas to delight the eye and stir the imagination."<sup>13</sup> Its design includes Japanese style garden features, including ones that reference the garden at the Imperial Villa.

The garden occupies the land north of the house; the Katsura Building sits in the central portion of the garden, approximately 40 feet north of the house. A wood fence extends part of the way along the south side of the garden and partially blocks views of the house to the south. The fence

<sup>12</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Mary Jane Clinton, "The Accomplishment of a Woman's Dream," *San Mateo Times*, 6 June 1968, 13.

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extends along a part of the west side of the garden and helps to hide views of the outer wood fence and masonry sound wall that extend along the west side of the property. The fence consists of stained vertical wood boards with vertical bamboo inserts between every second board and is approximately 6 feet high.

There are two entrance paths into the Katsura environment. The raised Katsura Walkway (*ryoka*) along the east side of the property provides a connection directly from the house to the Katsura Building. The formal entrance into the Katsura Garden (and to the Katsura Building) is from a gate in the fence along South Humboldt Street. A second gate, to the north of the formal entrance, provides service access into the garden. Both gates are constructed of vertical overlapping wood boards that match the fence along South Humboldt Street. A stone path leads from the formal entrance gate through an inner gateway (horizontal wood beam attached to the top of the two wood posts that frame this opening) and along the south side of the garden. The inner gateway is intended to represent the Chu Gateway at the Imperial Villa's garden. The entrance path consists of four different stone patterns, all of which are set into the ground without mortar. From the South Humboldt Street gate to the Chu Gateway, the paving consists of gray stones with a border of white cut granite strips. On the east side of the Chu Gateway, the paving recreates the forty-three cut stones of the Shin Walkway at the Imperial Villa. The next section of the path consists of a loosely arranged row of stepping stones. A walk of stepping stones leads from this section in a diagonal direction to the footwear stones that connect to the Katsura Building's Moon Viewing Veranda. The last section of the entrance path consists of larger stepping stones surrounded by smaller stones and ends at the Katsura Walkway, providing access to it and to the swimming pool and patio.

The roofs of both the Katsura Building and Walkway lack gutters or downspouts, and rainwater drains directly onto the ground into a band of stones—known as a rain catch—which wraps around the base of the Katsura Building's perimeter and along the sides of the Katsura Walkway. In addition to its functional purpose, this rain catch creates an edge to the garden and creates a visible boundary between architecture and landscape. The rain catch is a two-and-a-half-foot-wide strip of stones. Each side of this strip is bordered with a line of cut stones, and black river pebbles infill the area between these borders. White river pebbles pave the ground between the rain catch and the foundation of the Katsura Building.

A planting beds wraps around the outer edges of the garden on its west, north, and east perimeters. Some of the plants in the beds include redwood, coast live oak, Japanese black pine, Japanese maple, plum, magnolia, and purple leaf plum trees, pittosporum, cordyline, podocarpus, bird of paradise, Japanese iris, and ivy.

The planting beds define the edges of the open ground plane that surrounds the south (front), west, and north sides of the Katsura Building. A strip of lawn extends along the eastern edge next to the Katsura Walkway, and the remainder of the ground plane is covered with small tan-colored gravel.



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Thirteen Japanese black pine trees stretch along the south perimeter of the garden and around a part of its west side. They are routinely pruned to limit their growth and to create a form that simulates “mountain twisted trees;” the trees are intended to “represent legendary folklore figures in ancient poems.”<sup>14</sup> Their limited height and picturesque form add to the illusion of space in the garden when viewed from the Katsura Building.

Several Japanese stone lanterns are located in the perimeter beds on the sides of the garden; these include an Oribe style lantern along the south side, a Three Light lantern on the west side, and another Oribe style lantern on the north side.<sup>15</sup> A stone water basin is also located on the north side. Individual ornamental stones (*keiseki*) are set into the ground at various locations near the perimeter of the graveled ground plane and at the edges of the border beds.

#### Character Defining Features

- Open ground plane surrounding the Katsura Building
- Entrance path and its distinctive stone paving patterns
- Five footwear stones that provide a connection to the Moon Viewing Veranda
- Rain catch around the perimeters of the Katsura Building and Walkway
- Pruned Japanese black pines
- Perimeter planting beds with a variety of vegetation
- Objects including several different styles of stone lanterns, a stone wash basin, and ornamental stones (*keiseki*)

## ALTERATIONS

### House and Associated Resources

The house and its associated resources (storage/pump house, swimming pool and patio, entrance gateway, and fence along East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue) remain largely unaltered. The house’s footprint is unaltered and its character defining features remain in place. The house continues to frame the Japanese style garden in the southeast corner of the property. Alterations to the exterior of the house have been limited to reroofing and replacing some of the original untempered sliding glass doors and windows with ones made of safety (tempered) glass. Safety glass panels and doors with the same dimensions as the original untempered glass ones were not available.<sup>16</sup> On the south side of the living room that connects with a covered porch, two original sliding glass doors have been replaced with a combination of one sliding glass door and two fixed window panels. Along the north side of the gallery hallway that connects to the back patio, two original sliding glass doors have been replaced with a combination of one sliding glass door and two fixed window panels. On the short section of the gallery hallway that connects the bedroom wing with the patio, one original fixed panel has been replaced with one sliding glass door and a fixed window panel. These changes have not altered the overall size of the openings. The original moldings around these openings were replaced with new moldings when the replacement

<sup>14</sup> Clinton, “The Accomplishment of a Woman’s Dream,” 13.

<sup>15</sup> Lord Furuta Oribe (1544-1615) designed a style of garden lantern with a square pedestal planted directly into the ground for stability, i.e., it lacks a visible foundation stone; Three Light refers to the three openings in the light box in the shapes of the sun, the moon, and a star (Pylant 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication, March 2023.

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windows and doors were installed. The interior arrangement of the rooms remains unaltered, although a work room in the bedroom wing of the house has been converted to a bathroom. The original interior materials and finishes have had only minor alterations.

The exterior of the storage/pump house is unaltered. The pump, which originally provided well water for the pond and irrigation, is no longer in use. The driveway at the southwest corner of the property was paved with flagstone around 2015. The enclosed garden area on the west side of the house has been altered. The patio and walkways were paved with flagstone circa 2015. Some of the plants, including small trees and a variety of shrubs and perennials, were removed in 2020. At that time, the ground was covered with a bed of gravel and small decorative elements, including a small Buddha statue, a Japanese lantern, and rocks, were added. This area is enclosed on all four sides by the house on the west side and fences on the north, west, and south sides and is not visually, functionally, or stylistically connected to either the Katsura features to the north or the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden at the front of the house. The original fences that run along the perimeters of the property remain on the south, east, and part of the west sides. Around 1959, a section of front fence along East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue was rebuilt to match the original fence after car crashed into it. A sound wall of masonry blocks in a stack bond pattern approximately ten feet high was constructed along part of the west side and across the entire north side of the property in 1995. This wall was constructed as part of the mitigation for the expansion of the East 4<sup>th</sup> Street interchange for U.S. Route 101.

### **Japanese Style Hill-And-Pond Garden**

The conceptual design for the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden—as a microcosm of an idealized naturalistic landscape and a representation of the four seasons—remains unaltered. The overall design, spatial organization, and the key features laid out by the designer, Nagao Sakurai, remain intact. Two of the original stone lanterns—one which was broken when a car crashed into the pond in 1959 and another that was damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake—have been replaced with ones owned by the family and were being used in other parts of the property. One of the broken lanterns sits next to the house. The goldfish and carp in the pond were eventually removed because they were being eaten by herons and were replaced with mosquitofish.

Gradual changes have occurred to the vegetation including the following: (1) replacing the grass around the stepping stones along the northern side of the pond with small black and white gravel; (2) the gradual loss of grass on the narrow strip of land to the south of the pond and on the hill as vegetation grew and shaded the grass; (3) the loss of some trees, most noticeably the cherry trees along the north and south sides of pond and some pruned Japanese black pines along its south side, and (4) the addition of dwarf Japanese maple trees on the south side of the pond.

### **Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden**

The Katsura Building's key exterior features are intact. The building retains the original arrangement of its rooms and hallway, and the interior materials, finishes, and detailing are unaltered. During 1992 and 1993, interior and exterior repairs were made to the Katsura Building by Japanese craftsmen; these repairs included replacing and repairing *shoji* screens; replacing the

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wood rain doors with ones specifically built for the building in Japan;<sup>17</sup> replanking the deck of the Moon Viewing veranda; and repairing and replacing some of the interior wall coverings. All repairs and replacements were done to match original materials. A sliding glass window, covered with a bamboo screen, was added to the north wall in the tea preparation room around 1995 after the sound wall, which runs along the north edge and part of the west side of the property, was built. It was originally a *shoji*-covered opening. There have been no alterations to the Katsura Walkway, and it retains all of its traditional Japanese style architecture features. The Katsura Garden continues to convey the Japanese-style character for this garden setting around the Katsura Building and retains its key features.

Based on a photograph published in the *San Mateo Times*, the original bamboo fence continued all the way along the south edge of the Katsura Garden as a way to create a visual boundary between the Katsura Garden and the house.<sup>18</sup> Five panels of this same style of bamboo fence originally ran along the west side of the garden. The fence blocked views of the house and street from the Katsura Building and contributed to the illusion of a separate world. The original fence constructed of bamboo stalks or poles interlaced with bamboo twigs was made in Japan and was designed to resemble a fence that surrounded the Imperial Villa grounds.<sup>19</sup>

Over time different portions of the original bamboo fence were removed. In 2018, when a Historic Resource Evaluation Report for the property was prepared, only one of the five original fence panels remained extant along the west side of the Katsura Garden, and the other four original fence panels had been removed. Three of the original fence panels along the west side were removed due to deterioration that resulted from traffic and truck vibration impacts and air pollution, and one was removed after it was damaged when a car crashed on the northwest corner of the property. Around 2020, the fence was in such poor condition that the remaining extant panels, the one along the west side of the Katsura and the ones between the swimming pool and Katsura Garden, were removed. Obtaining a replacement fence identical to the original constructed in Japan was not possible.<sup>20</sup> A new wood and bamboo fence of stained vertical wood boards with vertical bamboo inserts between every two boards was built and placed in the same locations as the original fence. The design and materials of the new fence are compatible with the historic character of the garden and reference the fence along the front of the property and the paneling above the bench attached to the southeast corner of the house.

Dwarf Japanese maple and purple-leaf plum trees have been added within the past several years to the border beds; both species of trees are often used in Japanese-style gardens and are compatible with this garden. In 2020, part of the lawn was removed to reduce the garden's water consumption.<sup>21</sup> Gravel was chosen as a replacement material to cover the former lawn area. This expansive bed of gravel retains the same quality of open, simplicity that was present with the

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<sup>17</sup> Laura Watanuki explained in a 1993 interview: "We couldn't find thin wood to replace the rain doors; specs were drawn and doors were hand-crafted in Japan and shipped to the US and installed by a specialist" (Watanuki 1993).

<sup>18</sup> Mary Jane Clinton, "A Visit to the Katsura Replica," *San Mateo Times*, 6 June 1968, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-Oct 2018; Wada, *Katsura Imperial Villa*, 5-7.

<sup>20</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, 13 August 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

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lawn and maintains the Katsura Building as the primary focus of the Katsura complex. A strip of the original lawn remains extant along the east side of the garden next to the Katsura Walkway.

### **INTEGRITY**

Together the resources of the Yoshiko Yamanouchi House constitute a small historic district that retains all aspects of integrity.

### **Location**

The property remains in its original location, its boundaries have not changed, and the locations of key components have not changed. The property retains integrity of location.

### **Design**

The property retains its integrity of design. Character defining features remain and have undergone only minor changes since the end of the period of significance. The resources' design remains unaltered individually, in relationship to each other, and in relationship to the district.

### **Setting**

The setting—a residential neighborhood—remains the same as during the period of significance, and the property retains integrity of setting.

### **Materials**

There have been only minor alterations to the materials used in the buildings and landscape features since their original construction. The property retains integrity of materials.

### **Workmanship**

Evidence of workmanship from craftsmanship related to Japanese style architecture and landscape features is present. Construction techniques from the period of construction are still evident. The property retains integrity of workmanship.

### **Feeling**

Yoshiko Yamanouchi would recognize the property as largely unchanged from the years she lived there, and the feeling continues to be one of a private residence with features that express the Japanese heritage of the owner. The property is enclosed by a combination of privacy fencing and a sound wall. This enclosure enhances the feelings of calmness and serenity associated with the Japanese style designed landscape and architecture. The property retains integrity of feeling.

### **Association**

Yoshiko Yamanouchi's granddaughter Laura Watanuki owns the property. She is dedicated to preserving its association with the life of her grandmother and the post-World War II Japanese American community in San Mateo and to preserving the historic design and fabric of the character defining features of the property. The property retains integrity of association.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: ASIAN (Japanese)  
SOCIAL HISTORY: WOMEN'S HISTORY

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1957-1973

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1965-1968

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Yamanouchi, Yoshiko Hatta

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Brandes, Donald H. (architect)

Sakurai, Nagao (landscape architect)

Matsubara, Kodo (landscape designer)

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Yoshiko Yamanouchi House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and B in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Asian (Japanese) and Social History: Women's History for its association with Yoshiko Yamanouchi, a member of the pioneer *Issei* generation who was a leader in the San Mateo Japanese American community. Her life reflects the significance of the contributions of Japanese American women of the *Issei* generation to the development of this community. Three of the five properties associated with Yoshiko Yamanouchi's life in San Mateo—including the Imperial Laundry, the Blu-White Laundry, and a home at 214 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue—are no longer extant, and her previous home at 120 South Idaho Street no longer retains integrity. The district at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue contains the only extant resources retaining integrity that are associated with Yamanouchi's life in San Mateo. Resources in the district were developed under the direction of Mrs. Yamanouchi and are associated with the latter part of her life after she retired from running her family's laundry business and remained actively engaged in the civic life of the community. The period of significance begins in 1957 when the house at 1007 East 5th Avenue was completed and ends with Yoshiko Yamanouchi's death in 1973. As a property type directly associated with the community leadership of a significant Japanese American individual, the Yoshiko Yamanouchi House meets the *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970* Multiple Property Submission Registration Requirements for Property Types Associated with Prominent Persons in Asian American History and for Property Types Associated with Community Serving Organizations.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The property is significant for its association with the Japanese American community in the San Mateo during the post-World War II era when Japanese Americans worked to meet the era's challenges and opportunities and to rebuild their lives after the disruptions caused by the forced incarceration of the war. During the post war era, Japanese Americans integrated into the dominant culture in San Mateo while at the same time retaining and celebrating their ethnic heritage. The Yoshiko Yamanouchi House, which includes an ensemble of designed landscape and architectural features, represents this dynamic. The residence with its outdoor swimming pool and patio was a reflection of the owner's modern, post-World War II, suburban life in San Mateo while the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden and the Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden complex reflected the owner's knowledge of and dedication to her Japanese heritage.

### **Japanese American Community in San Mateo**

#### Community Establishment and the Early Twentieth Century

The *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970* Multiple Property Documentation Form provides an overview of early Japanese immigration to California.

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In 1639, Japanese emigration was halted beginning more than two centuries of isolation created by the imperial government when they closed the country to protect Japan from European colonialism. In 1853, the U.S. Navy demanded that Japan enter into trade relations and threatened to use force unless Japanese ports were opened. Along with lifting a ban on foreign trade in response, the Japanese government liberalized emigration policies. In 1860, the Kanrin Maru, the first Japanese ship to cross the Pacific, reached San Francisco, the initial port for a diplomatic corps whose mission was to ratify a treaty between Japan and the United States. California has played a defining role in Japanese American history ever since.<sup>22</sup>

In San Mateo County, the first documented arrival of Japanese individuals occurred in January 1872 when the 107 members of a Japanese diplomatic mission, known as the Iwakura Mission, visited the Belmont home of William C. Ralston. This event was part of an extended diplomatic tour between 1871 and 1873 of the dominant western governments that was led by Tomomi Iwakura. The tour “stopped in San Francisco to witness the signing of a contract between Japan and the San Francisco Assaying and Refining Works to refine Japanese gold coins.”<sup>23</sup> Ralston, who was a major owner of the company, invited the delegation to his home.

The first generation of Japanese pioneers—the *Issei*—began to settle in San Mateo County in the decades after the Iwakura Mission. These first residents were generally male laborers who came to fill the demand for cheap labor throughout the United States after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 banned Chinese workers. Student-laborers or *dekasegi-shosei* came “intending to learn English and other useful skills, make their fortunes, and return to Japan... Before classes and in the evening, they provided domestic duties for a family in exchange for lodging, board, and a small monthly wage.”<sup>24</sup> Initially, these men found work—as domestic servants, gardeners, and stable hands—on the residential estates that the wealthy elite in San Francisco constructed on the Peninsula from the 1870s through the early 1900s. Later, in the early 1900s, they also found work in rock quarries, salt refining, the floral industry, and agriculture.<sup>25</sup>

Between 1900 and 1910, the number of Japanese individuals living in San Mateo County rose from “a few pioneers to a population of 358,” and between 1910 and World War II, a distinct and visible Japanese community formed.<sup>26</sup> Between 1900 and 1910, the *Issei* opened businesses—tailor shops, grocery and general merchandise stores, and laundry and dry cleaning establishments—which allowed the patrons to communicate in their native Japanese language while providing food, clothing, and other goods and services that met the preferences of the

<sup>22</sup> National Register of Historic Places, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970*, Multiple Counties, California, National Register #MC100004867, E-32.

<sup>23</sup> Gayle K. Yamada and Dianne Fukami, *Building a Community: the Story of Japanese Americans in San Mateo County* (San Mateo, CA: AACP, Inc., 2003), 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story* (San Mateo, CA: The San Mateo JACL, 1981), preface, 12.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.



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Japanese clientele.<sup>27</sup> The owners of these early businesses played pivotal roles in the establishment of social, cultural, and religious groups which “reflected their ethnic roots as well as their American experience.”<sup>28</sup> Some of the earliest of these groups were the prefecture clubs that connected individuals with others from their home districts in Japan and to the distinct speech, food, and social customs that they shared.<sup>29</sup>

The San Mateo chapter of the Japanese Association of America was formed in 1906; this group provided instruction about American customs, clothing, and social conduct, interpretation services, legal advice, and employment and housing information to new immigrants.<sup>30</sup> The San Mateo Buddhist Temple was established in 1909; this organization provided both spiritual and social connections for the men who were able to come to the services. The group met for many years in the home of Tetsuo Yamanouchi who played a pivotal role in its establishment and served as president. The Buddhist community provided a source of identity—similar to that of the prefecture clubs—that extended beyond the individuals who were able to attend the services. “Some pioneer *Nikkei* who lived in San Mateo during the early 1900s did not directly involve themselves in the activities of the church but nevertheless were considered members. The distance from the Temple, the inconvenience of transportation, and long working house had prevented those other *Nikkei* from coming to regular service and meetings.”<sup>31</sup>

The progression of the development of different organizations over the next several decades illustrates the transition of the Japanese in San Mateo from newly arrived immigrants to an established community. As the *Issei* married and had families, a number of Japanese language schools were established in San Mateo in 1916 and later in other communities in the county. In addition to language, the schools taught Japanese music, literature, art, social customs, and conduct.<sup>32</sup> The San Mateo Buddhist Temple added the Dharma or Sunday school in 1921 to teach children the basics of Buddhism. In 1926, the Young Buddhist Association, a group which assisted with the Sunday school and undertook social and fundraising activities, was formed.<sup>33</sup> Other activities provided connections between the second generation or *Nisei* and included a boys’ athletic league that organized baseball and basketball games between the different Japanese communities, judo and kendo clubs, and scout troops.<sup>34</sup>

Up until World War II, a desire to maintain a separate cultural identity along with the effects of discriminations and racial prejudice “that was both legal and socially acceptable” created a

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>28</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 35.

<sup>29</sup> San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>31</sup> San Mateo Buddhist Temple, *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial in Gratitude 1910-2010* (San Mateo: San Mateo Buddhist Temple, 2010), 26; the term *Nikkei* refers generally to individuals of Japanese ancestry born in the United States, regardless of generation.

<sup>32</sup> San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story*, 36.

<sup>33</sup> San Mateo Buddhist Temple, “History of Young Buddhist Association,” *70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries* (San Mateo: San Mateo Buddhist Temple, c. 1985).

<sup>34</sup> San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story*, 36, 63; Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 35-36.

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distinct and separate Japanese American community in San Mateo.<sup>35</sup> There were laws limiting immigration, citizenship, and property ownership. Japanese American businesses were also the targets of discriminatory practices.<sup>36</sup> *Building A Community: The Story of Japanese Americans in San Mateo County* noted that there was no official “oriental quarter” in San Mateo; “bankers and realtors followed an unwritten rule that no Japanese could buy a house or live outside of the area from Fifth Avenue to Poplar and from El Camino to Bayshore.”<sup>37</sup>

### World War II

When the United States entered World War II, the government instituted a policy of incarceration for individuals of Japanese ancestry at relocation centers throughout the country. People of Japanese ancestry in San Mateo were forcibly removed as part of this policy. The *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader* announced this forced removal with the headline “First of S.M. County Japanese Taken to Concentration Camp Today” on 8 May 1942.<sup>38</sup> By the next day, an article in the newspaper stated that “the last of San Mateo County’s 800 Japanese were evacuated to Tanforan assembly center.”<sup>39</sup> From there, they were taken by train to the Topaz War Relocation Center in Utah where they were incarcerated for the duration of the war.<sup>40</sup>

### Post-World War II Era

*Building Community: The Story of Japanese Americans in San Mateo County* provides a detailed account of the post war period in the chapter “Starting Over: The Early Post-War Years” and relates the varied experiences of different individuals around housing, businesses and jobs, family life, and the lingering psychological effects of the war during this period.<sup>41</sup> After the end of the war, “the Japanese and their families began to come home, not knowing what they would find upon their return.”<sup>42</sup> Their lives had been put on hold for three years, and they had to start over. Houses were often still leased out or homeowners found that their homes had been vandalized and possessions robbed. Rental housing was scarce in San Mateo as it was throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and discrimination was still prevalent. “After housing, the next priority was finding work. Former soldiers looking for work made for a tight job market. Those of Japanese ancestry found it even tougher.”<sup>43</sup>

As the post-war era progressed, the 1950s and 1960s brought a mixture of challenges and opportunities for the Japanese Americans of San Mateo that included discrimination as well as success and a greater integration with the broader community. Restrictive covenants on housing and the practice of limiting the areas where Japanese Americans could rent or buy homes ended.

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<sup>35</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 35.

<sup>36</sup> San Mateo Chapter, Japanese American Citizens League, *1872-1942: A Community Story*, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 41.

<sup>38</sup> “First of S. M. County Japanese Taken to Concentration Camp Today.” [San Mateo] *Times and Daily News Leader*, 8 May 1942, 4.

<sup>39</sup> “Tears, Laughter Mark Japanese Departure.” [San Mateo] *Times and Daily News Leader*, 9 May 1942-05-09, 1 and 2.

<sup>40</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 110-111.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-159.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

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“Japanese Americans in San Mateo began to move away from the ethnic enclaves that had defined their families’ existence prior to World War II,” and there is no longer “a geographically identifiable ‘Japanese’ area in San Mateo.”<sup>44</sup>

A new wave of Japanese immigrants came to San Mateo in the post-war era including the war brides in the 1950s.<sup>45</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s individuals who worked for Japanese corporations located in San Francisco or Silicon Valley began to move to San Mateo. They chose to live in San Mateo because of its suburban character, and “they represented the new Japan, rebuilt after the war, and brought a different feeling to America that the first *Issei* who had arrived nearly a century before.”<sup>46</sup> Many Japanese Americans married outside of their ethnic group, and their families became a part “of an increasingly multicultural, multiracial society as evidenced in San Mateo.”<sup>47</sup> Social and religious organizations, which had provided a source of community and ethnic identity before World War II, continued to play a similar role and to thrive. They often had a broader focus that included other Asian ethnic groups as well as non-Asian individuals. Both the Sturge Presbyterian Church and San Mateo Buddhist Temple, two important religious groups for the Japanese American community, constructed new buildings after the war.<sup>48</sup> The Japanese Language School at the Buddhist Temple and Asian basketball leagues and martial arts classes all continued and “attracted non-Asians as well.”<sup>49</sup>

Japanese Americans in San Mateo began to engage with the community in new ways in the post war era. Their participation in the efforts to seek redress for the incarceration during World War II reflected engagement within civic society. “While redress was a divisive issue nationally among Japanese Americans, those in San Mateo were very cohesive, and the community worked together to raise money for the redress movement. San Mateo played a small, and important, part of the national effort—which slowly gained momentum, acceptance and, finally approval—that culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1988.”<sup>50</sup>

As part of their civic engagement during the post war era, Japanese Americans became actively involved in the creation of Japanese style public gardens that were seen as an expression of a valued heritage while at the same time providing an expression of commitment to their American communities. In San Mateo, the idea of a public Japanese style garden began to take shape in the mid-1950s when a group of Japanese gardeners offered to create a small garden at City Hall. This garden was never built due to a lack of an available space at the building. When the new city hall was built in 1962, part of the grounds were designated for the garden. According to an article in the *San Mateo Times*, “the older generation of Japanese citizens objected to this and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 142, 161.

<sup>45</sup> The term *Shin Issei* is used to refer to the post-World War II immigrants who are generally understood to be a distinct group. *Shin* translates as new (National Register of Historic Places, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970*, E-7).

<sup>46</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 161.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 162-163.

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pointed out that in their lifetime the City Hall had been moved three times and a Japanese garden should be more permanent.”<sup>51</sup>

In 1963, San Mateo entered into a sister city agreement with Toyonaka, Japan, and a garden to honor this alliance was proposed in Central Park. During the post-World War II era, the practice of sister cities developed throughout the United States as an expression of peace and to foster connections between different cultures. “The hope [was] that engagement between the peoples of geographically distant communities might deter the misunderstandings that can lead to conflict.”<sup>52</sup> The first sister city between an American and a Japanese city was established in 1955 between St. Paul, Minnesota and Nagasaki. There are over seventy-five sister city relationships between communities in California and Japan. Often, a Japanese style public garden was created as a tangible expression of this connection. The San Mateo Japanese Garden Koen-Kai, made up of local professional landscape designers and gardeners, was formed to raise funds and to oversee the project of San Mateo’s sister city garden in Central Park, which was designed by Nagao Sakurai.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, this group raised approximately \$12,000 for the project, and members of the organization contributed 6,000 hours of labor to construct the garden. The garden was dedicated on 28 August 1966 before a crowd of approximately 2,500 people.<sup>54</sup>

During the post-World II era, Japanese American individuals also created Japanese style gardens at their own homes as a way to honor and identify with their heritage. The Japanese gardeners and landscape designers of the pre-war era continued to work, and a group of “new *Issei*” designers—like Nagao Sakurai and Kodo Matsubara—arrived from Japan. Post-war gardens ranged from those that still referenced the classical styles of Japanese garden design and focused on authenticity to those that adapted the components of the Japanese style to fit the lifestyles and needs of the times. These gardens for private residences are not well documented in San Mateo. The two gardens at the Yamanouchi House are examples of private post-World War II gardens in San Mateo with an explicit connection to the owner’s Japanese heritage. The Japanese style hill-and-pond garden (1958), designed by Nagao Sakurai, was created to reference the Muromachi period of classical Japanese garden design. The Katsura Garden (1968), designed by Kodo Matsubara, was a contemporary interpretation of the classical elements of Japanese garden design.

The property is significant for its association with the life of Yoshiko Yamanouchi who had a significant role in the history of the Japanese American community in San Mateo during the twentieth century. Born in Japan, Mrs. Yamanouchi spent her entire adult life, after her marriage to Tetsuo Yamanouchi at age 20, in San Mateo. Her life represents the history of the pioneering *Issei* generation of women in San Mateo and their contributions to Japanese American

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<sup>51</sup> Iva Newman, “A Thing of Beauty,” *San Mateo Times*, 27 August 1966, 2A-4A.

<sup>52</sup> Dan Kopf, “Why Do We Have Sister Cities,” *Priceonomics.com*, <https://priceonomics.com/why-do-we-have-sister-cities/>.

<sup>53</sup> “San Mateo Issei, Nisei to Construct \$50,000 Garden in City’s Central Park,” *New Japanese American News*, 16 March 1965, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Newman, “A Thing of Beauty,” 2A-4A; Iva Newman, “5,000 See Japanese Garden After Dedication,” *San Mateo Times*, 29 August 1966, 25.

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community life, businesses, and cultural heritage. Yoshiko Yamanouchi was a pioneer leader in the San Mateo Buddhist Temple where she established and provided ongoing leadership for the Buddhist Sunday School (1923), the Young Buddhist Association (1929), and the Buddhist Women's Association (1932). Although most women of the *Issei* generation did not typically run their family businesses, Mrs. Yamanouchi was the exception and successfully operated of her family's business, the Blu-White Laundry, after her husband's illness and death. The Yoshiko Yamanouchi House—with its Japanese style hill-and-pond garden and Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden complex—exemplifies her lifelong interest in promoting an appreciation of Japanese culture and design. Mrs. Yamanouchi lived at the property from 1958, when she and her family moved into their house, until her death in 1973. During this time, Mrs. Yamanouchi regularly used her home to foster community relationships within the Japanese American community and between it and the broader San Mateo community. The property came to be associated with Mrs. Yamanouchi and her leadership role in the community.

### **History and Contributions of *Issei* Women to Japanese American Community Life**

During the pre-World War II era, the first generation of Japanese American women (the *Issei*) made significant contributions to the foundation of permanent Japanese American communities through their roles in establishing homes and raising children, their roles in establishing community organizations, their work, and in their personal endeavors related to the cultural traditions of their Japanese heritage. The *Issei* women shared a cultural background and life experiences that influenced their contributions and which distinguished them from future generations of Japanese American women. The following historic context focuses on the pre-World War II lives and contributions of the *Issei* women who laid the foundation upon which future generations of community life were built.

#### Overview

The first phase of Japanese immigration to the United States between 1882 and 1907 consisted primarily of men who intended to work, save money, and then return to Japan—what was known as the *dekasegi* (working away from home) ideal.<sup>55</sup> The treaty between the United States and Japan in 1907, known as the Gentlemen's Agreement, effectively ended the immigration of male laborers. Under this agreement, Japan agreed to issue passports only to “workers who had already been in America and the wives and children of workers residing in America.”<sup>56</sup> These restrictions coincided with the aging population of single men who now desired “a more stable, anchored life”<sup>57</sup> as part of the “transition from sojourning to permanent settlement”<sup>58</sup> that occurred within the Japanese immigrant society during this period.

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<sup>55</sup> Mei T. Nakano, *Japanese American Women: Three Generations 1890-1990* (San Francisco: National Japanese American Historical Society, 1990), 25; Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 146.

<sup>56</sup> Tetsuden Kashima, *Buddhism in America: The Social Organization of an Ethnic Religious Institution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 22.

<sup>57</sup> Nakano, *Japanese American Women*, 25.

<sup>58</sup> Ichioka, *The Issei*, 146.

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Under the Gentlemen's Agreement, Japan provided passports to women to immigrate in one of three ways. Wives who had been left behind in Japan were summoned by husbands in the United States; single men returned to arrange a marriage; or women immigrated as part of what came to be known as the picture bride system. Many men could not take the time away from work required for the return to Japan and could not afford the expense of the return trip. Additionally, most men risked the loss of their deferment from Japan's military draft if they remained in Japan for thirty days. The picture bride system addressed these issues through a process that incorporated traditional marriage practices in Japan.<sup>59</sup> Yuji Ichioka explained marriage customs and the picture bride system in *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924*:

In Japan marriage was never an individual matter but always a family affair. Heads of households selected marriage partners for family members through intermediaries or go-betweens. An exchange of photographs sometimes occurred in the screening process, with family genealogy, wealth, education, and health figuring heavily into the selection criteria. In general, the picture bride practice conformed to this marriage custom.... The practice deviated in only one important respect from conventional marriage: bridegrooms were physically absent at the wedding ceremonies.... Still, the practice satisfied all social and legal requirements governing marriage in Japan. Marriages were legal as long as husbands fulfilled a simple bureaucratic condition: they had to enter their brides into their own family registries.... In accordance with this practice, the majority of wives who entered immigrant society between 1920 and 1920 came as picture brides.<sup>60</sup>

During the picture bride era, which extended from 1908 to 1921 when the Japanese government stopped issuing passports for picture brides, more women immigrated to the United States from Japan than men. In 1900, there were only 410 married Japanese American women in the country; by 1910, the number had increased to 5,581; and by 1920, there were over 22,000.<sup>61</sup> This influx of *Issei* women influenced the development of the Japanese American communities.<sup>62</sup>

The women who immigrated (and the men they married) established their families and lived their lives in America based on the traditional Japanese family values they had been raised within. These values were based on a hierarchy of male dominance and privilege in which the collective effort of the family unit (the *ie*) was the principle organizing element of society.<sup>63</sup> These characteristics remained intact within this first generation of Japanese American families and defined women's roles within their immediate families and within Japanese American communities during the pre-World War II era. Within this structure, women had the primary

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 164-165.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>62</sup> Kashima, *Buddhism in America*, 22; National Register of Historic Places, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850-1970*, E-33.

<sup>63</sup> Nakano, *Japanese American Women*, 33.

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responsibility for caring for the home and raising children. Women were also responsible for maintaining and passing along the everyday aspects of Japanese culture, such as traditions associated with food and behavior norms, as well as those related to literature and arts, such as storytelling, calligraphy, the tea ceremony, flower arranging, poetry writing, and playing Japanese music instruments.<sup>64</sup>

For the *Issei*, the community took the place that the *ie* (the traditional extended family structure) had in Japan,<sup>65</sup> and religious organizations, both Buddhist and Christian, “served a family role, supplying the feeling of group participation that the family provided in Japan.”<sup>66</sup> Buddhist associations often became the first and primary focus within these early communities. In Japan, Buddhist temples were viewed by the community as predominately religious organizations; in America they were places for “social gatherings that preserved ethnicities.”<sup>67</sup> Tetsuden Kashima, in *Buddhism in America: The Social Organization of an Ethnic Religious Institution*, explained that it was often hard to distinguish between the social and religious functions of these Buddhist groups since many community organizations revolved around the Buddhist churches.<sup>68</sup>

Before 1908, Buddhist groups in the United States were focused solely on the needs of *Issei* men. After women arrived and families were established, Buddhist churches began to establish programs that were oriented to the second generation (the *Nisei*) as a way to support the perpetuation of religion practices as well as the preservation of Japanese cultural values and language.<sup>69</sup> The new programs—which included Sunday schools, Young Men’s Buddhist Associations, and women’s societies—were modeled after European and American Christian religious organizations and had been adopted by Buddhists in Japan in the late 1800s and early 1900s. “The Japanese model was resurrected in the United States with the birth of the *Nisei*.”<sup>70</sup>

Women, as the parent with the primary responsibility for children and for maintaining cultural values and traditions, took leadership roles in establishing and running the Sunday schools and Young Buddhist Associations. Women also organized themselves into Buddhist Women’s Associations (*Fujin-Kai*). Their participation and leadership in the women’s associations addressed functional needs of running the church (such as preparing food for services, cleaning facilities, etc.), provided help for needy families, and organized and raised money for activities such as community picnics.<sup>71</sup> The women’s associations became a primary place for women’s social activities and became a cultural home—a rare place where *Issei* women could relax,

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<sup>64</sup> Nakano, *Japanese American Women*, 35 and 48.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>66</sup> Harry H. L. Kitano, *Japanese Americans: The Evolution of a Subculture* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 59.

<sup>67</sup> Tetsuden Kashima, *Buddhism in America: The Social Organization of an Ethnic Religious Institution* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 113.

<sup>68</sup> Kashima, *Buddhism in America*, 20, 36.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

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exchange ideas, and express themselves through creative activities.<sup>72</sup> Japanese American Christian churches had similar programs.<sup>73</sup>

Additionally, *Issei* women were actively involved in the establishment, operation, and teaching in the Japanese language schools. The establishment of these schools were part of the response within the Japanese American community to the issues around *Nisei* education and their dual nationality. In 1912, the Japanese Association of America held a conference in San Francisco for immigrant educators to discuss the role of education for the *Nisei*. They adopted a resolution that stated that the long term goal was to “produce individuals who will be able to stand up for the rights and privileges of Japanese people among Americans. To achieve this we must enroll *Nisei* children in American public schools and have them educated in the same manner as white children. To teach them about Japan and the Japanese language, we must provide supplementary education in Japanese schools.”<sup>74</sup> Individual schools had varying curriculum and generally taught some combination of Japanese language, history, geography, arts, as well as social customs and conduct.”<sup>75</sup> According to Mei Nakano, in *Japanese American Women: Three Generations 1890-1990*, “more than any other organization in the community, women exercised decision making powers in the language school.”<sup>76</sup>

*Issei* women contributed, within the culturally-accepted boundaries of the era, to the Japanese American newspapers that were established in cities and whose readership and influence extended into rural areas. “They wrote short pieces—stories, essays and poetry” that “fit within male publisher’s prejudice of publishing only those women’s manuscripts that were written in ‘flowery language.’”<sup>77</sup> They also became active members of the Kenjinkai, formed initially by men from the same prefecture in Japan.<sup>78</sup>

*Issei* women often worked while simultaneously taking responsibility for the house and children.<sup>79</sup> They typically worked in family-owned businesses or enterprises within the Japanese American community where they could carry out their family responsibilities and where “language difficulties and racial discrimination did not create barriers to employment.”<sup>80</sup> In rural areas, this could mean working alongside their husbands in the fields, packing produce or

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<sup>72</sup> Kashima, *Buddhism in America*, 23; Florence M. Hongo, “Japanese American Historical Overview,” *Strength and Diversity: Japanese American Women, 1865 to 1900, Classroom Study Guide, Intermediate Level* (San Francisco: National Japanese American Historical Society, Inc. 1990), 2.

<sup>73</sup> Tesuden Kashima, in *Buddhism in America*, explained that because the *Nisei* were often more comfortable speaking and writing in English that Buddhist groups adopted English terms that bore a close literal translatability to their Buddhist counterparts. Sunday school, church, minister, etc. became commonly used terms (p. 41). Buddhist groups met on Sunday because that was the day of worship observed by Christian churches and mainstream society recognized this as a day off from work.

<sup>74</sup> Ichioka, *The Issei*, 200.

<sup>75</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 48.

<sup>76</sup> Nakano, *Japanese American Women*, 57.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 36, 43.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.



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flowers, or cooking, cleaning, and laundering for work crews which their husbands oversaw.<sup>81</sup> In urban areas and small towns, such as San Mateo, “women worked alongside their husbands in family-owned enterprises such as laundries, cleaners, small hotels, plant nurseries, and eateries” contributing to the economic success of their family and to the development of their communities.<sup>82</sup>

Domestic work, midwifery, and operating a boarding house were occupational exceptions where *Issei* women worked on their own outside of the family structure. “Domestic work comprised over one-fourth of *Issei* women’s work outside the home in 1920. The work required little training and only the rudiments of spoken English.... It remained one of the mainstays of employment for *Issei* women even after WWII, when many of the women were in their late sixties.”<sup>83</sup> *Issei* midwives delivered babies and provided prenatal and postnatal care to the mothers in their own language and within familiar cultural norms.<sup>84</sup> The *Issei* midwives had trained in Japan and were part of a modern health movement created to save women and babies by eradicating unsafe childbirth practices.<sup>85</sup> Boarding houses, which provided living accommodations for single men, were often run single-handedly by women. The boardinghouses were a key component of the community “where Japanese was spoken, Japanese food [was] served, where behavioral requisites were more or less understood and where an easy, friendly atmosphere prevailed.”<sup>86</sup>

#### Influence of *Issei* Women in San Mateo

*Issei* women were actively involved in the development of the pre-World War II Japanese American community in San Mateo. Churches were focal points for the Japanese community life in San Mateo, and *Issei* women were instrumental in establishing community organizations affiliated with the San Mateo Buddhist Temple (founded in 1909) and the Japanese Christian Church (established in 1924), which later became Sturge Presbyterian Church.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, they helped establish the local Japanese language school in 1916, at least one woman served as a teacher, and after World War II another became the principal. They were leaders in providing extracurricular activities for their children. In more private ways, they raised families and worked in family businesses. Yoshiko Yamanouchi and three of her *Issei* contemporaries have been identified in local histories of San Mateo for their public contributions to the development of the Japanese American community. Details on the life and contributions of Yoshiko Yamanouchi are provided in the following section. Summaries of the contributions of three of her contemporaries are provided below.

Ayako Takahashi arrived in San Mateo with her husband in the late 1920s where they started a home laundry service. Takahashi, a graduate of the Girls’ School of Yokayama, had taught

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>85</sup> Susan L. Smith, *Japanese American Midwives: Culture, Community, and Health Politics, 1880-1950* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>86</sup> Nakano, *Japanese American Women*, 45.

<sup>87</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 38.

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elementary school before her immigration, and she became the teacher at the Japanese language school in nearby Belmont in 1937. After World War II, she was the teacher, and later principal, at the Japanese Language School in San Mateo. Takahashi was also a local news reporter for a Japanese American newspaper in San Francisco, and she held leadership roles within the Japanese Christian community. She was a longtime spokeswoman for the *Issei* Women's Group at the Sturge Presbyterian Church and was appointed as the first woman Elder at the church in 1966. In 1971, she was honored for her contributions and awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure, an award presented by Japanese government to individuals outside Japan who have promoted goodwill between the United States and Japan.<sup>88</sup>

Kamechiyo Takahashi arrived in San Mateo in 1917 to join her husband Genji Takahashi. She had studied midwifery in Japan and became licensed by the State of California to practice midwifery in 1917. California passed legislation in 1917 that required midwives to pass an exam and to register with the state.<sup>89</sup> Takahashi passed the exam with the help of an interpreter who translated the exam for her into Japanese. Her career as a midwife to Japanese American families in San Mateo, both within the city and countywide, extended from 1917 to 1930. Takahashi, who learned to drive a car to facilitate her work—and became the first Japanese American woman in San Mateo to get her driver's license—delivered babies in the home setting and also operated a facility out of her home where she delivered babies and then provided postnatal care for the mother and infant.<sup>90</sup>

Tomoko Yamanoto immigrated to the United States and settled in San Francisco in 1911. She was part of the small group who established the Japanese Christian Church in San Mateo in 1924, and she organized the Blue Jay Club for Japanese American girls in San Mateo in 1926.<sup>91</sup> Yamanoto was a graduate of Tokyo Women's University who had taught school in Japan before immigrating to the United States. A resident of San Francisco, she and her children accompanied her husband Dr. Tatsuo Yamanoto when he provided dental services for Japanese American residents in San Mateo during the weekends. With approximately twenty members, Blue Jay activities included weekly meetings, an annual play written and directed by Mrs. Yamanoto, and camping and fishing trips during the summer.<sup>92</sup> “The Blue Jay club served as a formal organization to which the young local Japanese girls could maintain unity and have a means of

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<sup>88</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “The Order of the Sacred Treasure” and “Ayako Takahashi,” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.; [Sturge Presbyterian Church], *History of Sturge Presbyterian Church (1923-1973)* (Typed manuscript, 1973), n.p.

<sup>89</sup> Smith, *Japanese American Midwives*, 47.

<sup>90</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “Midwifery (Sanbaan),” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.; Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 25-26.

<sup>91</sup> [Sturge Presbyterian Church], *History of Sturge Presbyterian Church (1923-1973)*, n.p.; Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 40.

<sup>92</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “The Blue Jay Club,” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.; Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 45-47; “Mrs. Yamanoto Is Dead,” *Des Moines Tribune*, 16 March 1966, 12.

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expressing creativity.”<sup>93</sup> The Yamanotos moved to Des Moines, Iowa in 1943, and Mrs. Yamanoto died there in 1966.<sup>94</sup>

### History of Yoshiko Yamanouchi in San Mateo

Yoshiko Yamanouchi and her husband Tetsuo were prominent members of the *Issei* pioneer generation. They operated the Imperial Laundry, renamed the Blu-White Laundry after World War II, one of the early Japanese-owned businesses in San Mateo. Each was instrumental in the establishment of several of the Japanese community’s social and religious institutions during the early part of the twentieth century. Mr. Yamanouchi arrived in the United States about ten years before his wife, and a summary of his life in San Mateo provides a context for Mrs. Yamanouchi’s accomplishments and her role in the community.

### *Tetsuo Yamanouchi*

Tetsuo Yamanouchi came to the United States from Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan in 1902. By 1906, Mr. Yamanouchi had moved to San Mateo and was working at a laundry, and in 1909, he opened his own business—Imperial Laundry—at 218 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. During the summer of that same year, he helped to establish the San Mateo Buddhist Temple. This leadership role was a reflection of his involvement in the Japanese community in San Mateo and of his education. He had studied for the Buddhist priesthood in Japan and left his monastic order short of ordination.<sup>95</sup> Mr. Yamanouchi served as spiritual leader to the new group who met in the living room of his house next door to his laundry. Mr. Yamanouchi also served as President of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple for eighteen years and was one of the charter members of its Japanese Language School. In 1933, Mr. Yamanouchi was presented a certificate for distinguished service from the Honwanjii Buddhist Temple in Kyoto, the first time this award had been given to a living person outside of Japan.<sup>96</sup> In 1934, the temple presented Mr. Yamanouchi with an engraved clock in recognition of his many years of service.

He was also a leader in one of the early social organizations—the Japanese American Association of San Mateo County—which helped newly arriving immigrants adjust to their lives in the United States. He was one of the founding members of this group, established in 1906, and also served as its president for eighteen consecutive years. In 1924, Mr. Yamanouchi was presented with a silver trophy by the Japanese American Association of San Mateo County in recognition of his service.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “The Blue Jay Club,” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>94</sup> “Mrs. Yamanoto Is Dead,” *Des Moines Tribune*, 16 March 1966, 12.

<sup>95</sup> Hasuko Yamanouchi Watanuki, in an oral interview conducted by Gayle Yamada in 1998, explained that her father probably left the priesthood because he wanted to be in business, and although he never spoke of this directly, she described his business success as “his silent pride.”

<sup>96</sup> Mrs. Yamanouchi’s obituary, in the *San Mateo Times* (14 August 1973), stated that she was given this award in 1932. (“She was the first American recipient of the highest award for service from the Honjanjii Temple in Kyoto, the Jo-do-Shinsha Sect of Buddhism.”) It is not clear if this is a reference to the same award that was presented to her husband, i.e., if the award was presented to the couple jointly.

<sup>97</sup> Richard H. Nakanishi (Historical Researcher) and Mrs. Shizue Tabata (Assistant), “The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners),” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus* (San Mateo:

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### *Marriage of Tetsuo Yamanouchi and Yoshiko Hatta*

In 1914 and 1915, Mr. Yamanouchi undertook two expensive trips to Japan to find a bride and marry. “In his search to find an appropriate bride [in 1914], he sought the hand of Yoshiko Hatta whose photograph he had seen in the yearbook published by the Soai Koto Jojakko, a girls high school in Osaka. . . . Failing to win her hand during his first visit to Japan, he returned again in 1915 and successfully persuaded her into marriage and to immigrate of America.”<sup>98</sup> His return to Japan to meet his prospective wife in this arranged marriage and then again to accompany her on the return ocean voyage to the United States was unusual for the times. Due to the prohibitive cost of traveling back to Japan, most Japanese men in the United States were not able to make this journey and married their picture brides by proxy. The couple was married from 1915 until Tetsuo’s death in 1936 and had five children—Noriko, Hasuko (mother of the property owner), Hanako, Kyozo, and Akiko.<sup>99</sup>

### Yoshiko Yamanouchi’s Early Years in San Mateo

Yoshiko Hatta (born 12 May 1895) was from Osaka, Japan, and her family was in the brewery business. She was educated in the Buddhist cultural arts and etiquette and graduated from the Soai Koto Jojakko (later the Soai College for Women) in Osaka, a Buddhist-sponsored girls’ high school established by the Honwanji of Kyoto, Japan. This was the headquarters for the branch of Buddhism practiced at the temple in San Mateo. Her granddaughter Laura Watanuki theorized that her grandmother’s education and devotion to Buddhism probably led their respective families to think that she would be a compatible partner for Tetsuo Yamanouchi, who had studied for the Buddhist priesthood. The Hatta family were comfortably well off and were “all well-educated for the time.”<sup>100</sup> Her daughter, Hasuko Yamanouchi Watanuki, thought that her mother’s family was willing to let Yoshiko immigrate with Tetsuo because he was educated and that Yoshiko wanted to “get a new life,” one that was different than what she would have experienced in her homeland.<sup>101</sup>

After her marriage and move to San Mateo, Mrs. Yamanouchi took responsibility for the aspects of family life that were expected within the Japanese American cultural framework of her era. She cared for the couple’s five children and home and supported her husband’s role as a community leader. Mr. Yamanouchi was known within the local Japanese American community for his generosity and willingness to help anyone who was in need. In a 1998 interview, their daughter Hasuko Watanuki remembered that he was often sought out by people who had

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San Mateo Chapter of JACL, 1979), n.p.; Buddhist Churches of America, “San Mateo Buddhist Temple,” *Buddhist Churches of America: A Legacy of the First 100 Year* (San Francisco: Buddhist Churches of America, 1998), 318; [San Mateo Buddhist Temple,] *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial in Gratitude*, 25-26; Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 39; Laura Watanuki, *The Watanuki Family Estate* (Typewritten manuscript, 2018), 1.

<sup>98</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners),” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>99</sup> [San Mateo Buddhist Temple,] *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial in Gratitude*, 46; “Laundry Owner Taken by Death,” *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader*, 8 June 1936, 3; Watanuki, *The Watanuki Family Estate*, 1.

<sup>100</sup> Hasuko (Yamanouchi) Watanuki, Interview by Gayle K. Yamada, audiotape recording (San Mateo, CA, 19 November 1998).

<sup>101</sup> Hasuko (Yamanouchi) Watanuki, Interview by Gayle K. Yamada (1998).

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problems and that their home was a gathering place for the community. Her father typically invited people to their home to eat two or three times a week. Hasuko noted that their eating table at the family home could seat eighteen to twenty people. Mrs. Yamanouchi would cook for and serve all of the guests, with help from the employees at the family's laundry, and would serve the saké she had made herself. Making saké was one of the tasks that *Issei* women mastered as part of their family responsibilities in their new life in the United States. Hasuko said that her father respected her mother because she always met these responsibilities to provide hospitality and "never ran out of drinks."<sup>102</sup>

As part of their responsibility for sustaining cultural values and traditions and as the parent with the primary responsibility for children, women of the *Issei* generation took leadership roles in organizations that supported these aspects of pre-World War II Japanese American community life. Mrs. Yamanouchi was a leader within this aspect of community life in San Mateo. She and her husband "provided the leadership for the founding of the Japanese Language School [in San Mateo] in 1916."<sup>103</sup> Mrs. Yamanouchi became equally as influential as her husband in the local Buddhist community. The history of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, written for the organization's 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, noted that she established and had an ongoing leadership role in a number of groups within the temple. She established the first Buddhist Sunday School in 1923, the Young Buddhist Association in 1929, and the Mothers Guild or Buddhist Women's Association (*Fujin-Kai*) in 1932.<sup>104</sup> She, along with her husband, were recognized for their leadership efforts with the local Buddhist community during its early years. Mrs. Yamanouchi's obituary, in the *San Mateo Times* (14 August 1973), stated that she was given an award from the Honjanjii Temple in Kyoto for her service in 1932. "She was the first American recipient of the highest award for service from the Honjanjii Temple in Kyoto, the Jo-do-Shinsha Sect of Buddhism."<sup>105</sup> Mrs. Yamanouchi was officially honored for her service to the San Mateo Buddhist Temple twice in 1936, once in May (before her husband's death) and once in July (after his death).<sup>106</sup>

Although, Japanese American women often worked alongside their husbands in a family business, Mrs. Yamanouchi did not work in the family's laundry business until after her husband became ill and unable to work in the 1920s. In a 1998 interview, their daughter Hasuko Watanuki theorized that this was because her mother had her own responsibilities around the

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<sup>102</sup> Hasuko (Yamanouchi) Watanuki, Interview by Gayle K. Yamada (1998).

<sup>103</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, "The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners)," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>104</sup> The dates for some of these events are listed differently in the two histories of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple that were reviewed: establishment of the first Buddhist Sunday School is given as 1921 (San Mateo Buddhist Temple 2010:46) and as 1923 (San Mateo Buddhist Temple ca. 1985: "San Mateo Buddhist Sunday School"). The establishment of Young Buddhist Association (YBA) is listed as "unofficially established in a loose fashion" in 1926 and officially established in 1929 (San Mateo Buddhist Temple ca. 1985: "History of the Young Buddhist Association"). In a newspaper article in the *San Mateo Times* (6 June 1968) announcing the completion of the Katsura Building, the dates were listed as Sunday School (1921), YBA (1926), and Women's Association (1931).

<sup>105</sup> Tetsuo Yamanouchi was presented a similar award, and it is not clear if they received these awards separately or jointly as a couple.

<sup>106</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018.

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family and home life that were separate from the business. Hasuko remembered that her mother's life changed after her father became sick. Hasuko noted that it was very challenging for her mother and that she successfully ran the business during this period.<sup>107</sup>

### Tetsuo Yamanouchi's Death

Tetsuo Yamanouchi died on 8 June 1936 at age 58 after an extended illness. A short article in the *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader* announced his death and funeral services at the Sneider & Company mortuary. A history of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, written for the organization's 70<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, provided the following description of his funeral.

It was one of the largest funerals of a Japanese American ever held in San Mateo at this time, and Mr. Kyusuke Yamaguchi President of the Sturge Presbyterian Church gave a moving eulogy. He emphatically substantiated the outstanding leadership, influence, and respect that Mr. Yamanouchi commanded during his life time.<sup>108</sup>

His granddaughter Laura Watanuki remembers being told that after the funeral the number of mourners were so large that police cars led the procession from San Mateo to the Japanese cemetery in Colma where he was buried.<sup>109</sup>

### Yoshiko Yamanouchi's Later Life

After her husband's death, Mrs. Yamanouchi made the decision to run the laundry herself. She operated it successfully until her retirement after the family returned to San Mateo at the end of World War II. In this aspect of her life, Mrs. Yamanouchi stepped outside of the typical role for a woman of the *Issei* generation. According to an interview with her daughter Hasuko Yamanouchi Watanuki, "it was unusual in those times for the wife to take over a business when the husband died, but Mrs. Yamanouchi was determined that the laundry would go on."<sup>110</sup> Hasuko noted that as a sign of her determination and commitment to the business, Mrs. Yamanouchi put her office desk at the front of the store so she could greet customers and so they could see that she was the running the business.<sup>111</sup> Her granddaughter Laura Watanuki described Mrs. Yamanouchi as being a very determined person who had a very good business sense.<sup>112</sup> In 1940, the laundry moved from its original location on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue to a new facility at 46 B Street North to make way for a new California Automobile Association building.<sup>113</sup> According to an article in the *San Mateo Times*, the need to move "inspired Mrs. Yamanouchi, the owner, to build

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<sup>107</sup> Hasuko (Yamanouchi) Watanuki, Interview by Gayle K. Yamada, audiotape recording, San Mateo, California, 19 November 1998.

<sup>108</sup> [San Mateo Buddhist Temple], *70<sup>th</sup> [and] 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries*, ([San Mateo, CA: San Mateo Buddhist Temple, ca. 1985), 2.

<sup>109</sup> "Laundry Owner Taken by Death," *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader*, 8 June 1936, 3; Watanuki, personal communication, 2018.

<sup>110</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 19-20.

<sup>111</sup> Hasuko (Yamanouchi) Watanuki, Interview by Gayle K. Yamada, 1998.

<sup>112</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, 23 June 2018.

<sup>113</sup> "Imperial Laundry to move to B Street," *San Mateo Times*, 18 May 1940, 10.

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a new plant that would lead in the peninsula parade of progress.”<sup>114</sup> The article described the new building, designed by William H. Rowe and built by Hugh H. MacDonald, as “pleasingly modern, white with glass front and blue tile trim” and noted that it included “all the latest, modern cleaning facilities.”<sup>115</sup> Another article a few days later, noted that 1,500 people had attended the grand opening on Saturday night and that “hundreds of floral decorations decked the modern building as Mrs. T. Yamauchi [sic], proprietor, personally welcomed the guests.”<sup>116</sup> Richard Nakanishi and Shizue Tabata, in *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, wrote that “the future of the new establishment seemed as bright as the lights emitted by the novel fluorescent lamps. But by the year’s end, World War II came along and dimmed the lights and the normal progress of the business.”<sup>117</sup>

During World War II, the family was incarcerated in Topaz, Utah and “American friends leased their business and operated it during the war.”<sup>118</sup> The family returned to San Mateo after the war, and Hasuko and Masashi Max Watanuki—Mrs. Yamanouchi’s daughter and son-in-law—took over the day-to-day operation of the business.<sup>119</sup> In 1946, the name was changed to the Blu-White Laundry “because the connotation of the word ‘imperial’ brought to mind images of imperial Japan which may have been perceived as negative.”<sup>120</sup> The new name likely came from the appearance of the building, which was painted white and had blue tile trim.

In the mid-1950s, Mrs. Yamanouchi purchased property at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue with the intention to build a new home. Mrs. Yamanouchi lived with her daughter and son-in-law with her name listed on building permits as the owner. Mrs. Yamanouchi constructed the Ranch Style residence and Japanese style garden at the new property, and the family moved into their new home in early 1958.<sup>121</sup>

After her retirement from the family laundry business, Mrs. Yamanouchi continued her civic activities. She remained active in the Buddhist church and regularly attended national Buddhist women’s conventions. In her role as one of the civic and business leaders in the Japanese American community, Mrs. Yamanouchi was regularly asked to be one of the people who greeted Japanese dignitaries when they arrived at the San Francisco airport.<sup>122</sup> She had used her previous homes to entertain important Japanese guests visiting San Mateo, and she continued this

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<sup>114</sup> “Imperial Laundry Opens Fine New Home on B St.,” *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader*, 19 July 1940, 12.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> “Crowd Present at Laundry Opening,” *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader*, 22 July 1940, 10.

<sup>117</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, “The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners),” *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>118</sup> “And Island of Calm Comes True for Widow of Buddhist Priest,” *Los Angeles Times*, 11 August 1968, B.

<sup>119</sup> Hasuko and Masashi Max Watanuki were married in Utah during the war, on 3 February 1945 (Watanuki 2018-07-13).

<sup>120</sup> Yamada and Fukami, *Building a Community*, 24 and FN24). A legal notice in the *San Mateo Times and Daily News Leader* (13 April 1946) announced the name change.

<sup>121</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018.

<sup>122</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, March 2023.

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practice in her new home at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.<sup>123</sup> She regularly used her new home to foster community relationships both within the Japanese American community and between it and the broader San Mateo community. The house and its Japanese style hill-and-pond garden were a setting that reflected the era and Mrs. Yamanouchi's values. The residence was a reflection of modern post-World War II suburban life in California. The furnishings within the house and the garden reflected Mrs. Yamanouchi's knowledge of and dedication to traditional Japanese culture. Laura Watanuki remembers her grandmother hosting numerous formal Japanese dinners in the dining room of their new home. She once held a dinner at her home for the presidents of the three Japanese banks in the Bay Area; these three men had never all been together at the same time until this dinner.

In 1963, she hosted the San Francisco Garden Club and Ikebana International as part of the preparations for the first joint spring flower show held by the two groups. When a sister city affiliation was established between San Mateo and Toyonaka, Japan in 1963, Mrs. Yamanouchi hosted the city councils of the two cities during the Japanese delegation's first visit to San Mateo.<sup>124</sup> The mayor of San Mateo requested that Mrs. Yamanouchi host this event because her home, with its Japanese style hill-and-pond garden, was one of the few "Japanese sites" in San Mateo, and he wanted to share it with the delegation from Toyonaka.<sup>125</sup> (In 2013, her granddaughter Laura Watanuki hosted the two groups on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the sister city alliance). In 1964, Mrs. Yamanouchi hosted Japanese Prime Minister Eisako Satō and his wife.<sup>126</sup>

During the mid-1960s, Mrs. Yamanouchi added the Katsura complex—a traditional Japanese style building, a connecting walkway structure, and the garden setting—to the land behind the family home. The building was modeled on the Katsura Imperial Villa in Japan and was built using traditional materials and techniques by Japanese craftsmen. The addition of the Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden were an extension of Mrs. Yamanouchi's formal education in Japan and her personal interests in traditional Japanese culture. Some of the decorative features in the family's house and the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden in front of the home reflected her knowledge of traditional Japanese art and aesthetics. The Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden also reflected these aspects of her life. Additionally, the complex was a reflection of her role in the community and

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<sup>123</sup> Two examples were noted in the local *San Mateo Times* newspaper. In 1950, Mrs. Yamanouchi hosted Miss Ichimaru, a popular Japanese star of stage, screen and radio and her entourage who traveling though the country on a good will tour (24 May 1950, 14). Then in 1951, she hosted Taksukichiu Horikawa, a prominent leader of the United World Federation in Japan when he visited San Mateo as part of a tour of the "western hemisphere" that included the west coast and New York in the United States and Brazil and Argentina in South American (17 August 1951, 9). Mrs. Yamanouchi was one of the Japanese American community who were regularly asked to greet Japanese dignitaries at the San Francisco airport when they arrived for visits (Watanuki 2023).

<sup>124</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, "San Mateo Sister City – Toyonaka, Japan," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>125</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication, March 2023.

<sup>126</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018 and 13 August 2022.



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her intention to use the Katsura Building to foster a greater connection and understanding between different cultures within San Mateo.<sup>127</sup>

Based on her statements at various times during this period, Mrs. Yamanouchi had long hoped to construct a building that reflected and honored her heritage. She had done this previously with the Japanese style garden in the front yard of the property, a garden seen only by members of her family or those visiting the family's house. While the Katsura Building was intended for her family's private use, she also envisioned it having a more public civic role. In a newspaper article in the *San Mateo Times* written to describe the recently completed Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden, Mrs. Yamanouchi explained that "she had always hoped that she would be able to bring a portion of Japan's heritage of beauty—a beauty that is easier to understand if actually seen—to the community which had been so good to her family."<sup>128</sup> In another *San Mateo Times* article, Mrs. Yamanouchi stated that she viewed the Katsura Building and its garden setting as a "symbol of her lifelong desire to 'provide a bridge of understanding and appreciation of the centuries old heritage of beauty cherished by all American citizens of Japanese ancestry.'"<sup>129</sup>

Asian art historian Kendall H. Brown has noted that Japanese style gardens and buildings "have been utilized as long-term cultural ambassadors" between Japan and the United States since the late nineteenth century.<sup>130</sup> Specific to the post-World War II era, the practice of sister cities developed throughout the United States as an expression of peace and to foster connections between different cultures. The creation of Japanese style gardens, which generally included some type of traditional building or structure, were constructed during the post-World War II era as a symbol of this relationship. San Mateo had dedicated a Japanese style garden, with a granite pagoda and tea house, in Central Park in June 1966 to honor its sister city alliance with Toyonaka, Japan. The Katsura complex was created by Yoshiko Yamanouchi, with the assistance of her daughter and son-in-law Hasuko and Masashi Max Watanuki, within this era of goodwill and hope in San Mateo. Mrs. Yamanouchi was not alone in her intent to use the cultural heritage of her native country as bridge to her adopted one. What is unusual with regard to the Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden is that this effort and expense were all undertaken by one family as a personal endeavor.

The completion of the Katsura complex in 1968 was reported in local newspapers, the Japanese American press, and the *Los Angeles Times*.<sup>131</sup> The family invited 300 guests from the Japanese American community to view the new Katsura complex on 2 June 1968, and 500 additional

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<sup>127</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018 and 13 August 2022; Watanuki, "The Watanuki Estate," 2018.

<sup>128</sup> Clinton, "The Accomplishment of a Woman's Dream," 13.

<sup>129</sup> "AAUW Sponsors Katsura Viewing," *San Mateo Times*, 1968-09-12, 10.

<sup>130</sup> Kendall H. Brown, *Japanese-Style Gardens of the Pacific West Coast* (New York: Rizzoli, 1999), 12.

<sup>131</sup> Mary Jane Clinton, "A Visit To A Katsura Replica." *San Mateo Times*, 6 June 1968, 6 and 11 (text) and 12 (photos); Mary Jane Clinton, "The Accomplishment of a Woman's Dream" *San Mateo Times*, 6 June 1968, 13; Virginia McMurty, "Buddhist Priest Widow's Dream Comes True," [Burlingame] *Advance-Star* (12 June 1968), 17; "SM Matron Builds Exact Replica of Famed Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto: 300 Guest Invited to First Public Showing of Palatial Structure," *Hokubei Mainichi* (North American Daily) (4 June 1968), 1; "An Island of Calm Comes True for Widow of Buddhist Priest, *Los Angeles Times* (11 August 1968), B.

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guests were invited for a viewing the next week on 9 June.<sup>132</sup> Articles in the *San Mateo Times* and Burlingame *Advance-Star* included detailed descriptions of Mrs. Yamanouchi's endeavor and multiple photographs of the new building, walkway, and garden. The first public event at the Katsura Building was on 25 September 1968 when the family hosted a viewing to raise funds for the scholarship that had been established by the San Mateo Branch of the American Association of University Women. Several kimono-clad hostesses greeted visitors, provided a brief talk, and then led a tour of the building and garden.<sup>133</sup>

A second benefit was held soon thereafter for the Buddhist Seminary in Berkeley.<sup>134</sup> Over the next few years additional public events, tea ceremonies, and an annual retreat for a "Far Eastern study group" from the University of California Berkeley were held.<sup>135</sup> According to Laura Watanuki, after her grandmother died in 1973, the family stopped hosting public events. Ms. Watanuki continues to hold private events and tea ceremonies at the Katsura Building.<sup>136</sup>

Yoshiko Yamanouchi died in San Mateo on 10 August 1973 after a short illness. Her obituary in the *San Mateo Times* listed the Katsura Building as one of her accomplishments.

She provided the leadership for the construction in San Mateo by her immediate family of a replica of the Japanese Imperial Villa of Kyoto, commonly referred to as the Katsura Villa. The villa—viewed by hundreds of persons since its opening in 1967 [sic]—was constructed to foster greater understanding between the East and West. The villa has also served as a center for charitable events.<sup>137</sup>

The obituary also described her as a "pioneer San Mateo businesswoman and Japanese community leader" and noted that she was a member of the Board of Directors of the Japanese Benevolent Society and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California. She was also a member of the Japan Society and Japanese American Society.<sup>138</sup> In honor of her lifelong interest in higher education, a scholarship had been established in her name in 1969 by the San Mateo Branch of the American Association of University Women.<sup>139</sup> In 1974, Mrs. Yamanouchi was posthumously awarded the Order of the Precious Crown, a commendation conferred to people who have rendered distinguished service to Japan in various fields, by the Emperor of Japan.<sup>140</sup> The award was accepted by her daughter Hasuko Yamanouchi Watanuki at the Japanese Consulate Office in San

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<sup>132</sup> "SM Matron Builds Exact Replica of Famed Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto..." *Hokubei Mainichi* (North American Daily) (4 June 1968), 1; "Buddhist Priest Widow's Dream Comes True," [Burlingame] *Advance-Star* (12 June 1968), 17.

<sup>133</sup> "AAUW Sponsors Katsura Viewing." *San Mateo Times*, 12 September 1968, 10.

<sup>134</sup> Clinton, "A Visit To A Katsura Replica," 6.

<sup>135</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, "The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners)," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>136</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018.

<sup>137</sup> "S.M. Buddhist Leader Dies; Rites Scheduled Thursday," *San Mateo Times*, 14 August 1973, 31.

<sup>138</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018.

<sup>139</sup> "AAUW Grants Awarded," *San Mateo Times*, 27 May 1969, 13.

<sup>140</sup> Laura Watanuki, Email communication with the Japan Information and Cultural Center, Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, 9 August 2022.

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Francisco.<sup>141</sup> Three decades after her death, Mrs. Yamanouchi's importance to the local Japanese American community was acknowledged once again when the San Mateo Buddhist Temple hosted a dinner in 2007 to honor her at the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the San Mateo Buddhist Women's Association. In 2008, the organization's centennial anniversary book was dedicated to Yoshiko Yamanouchi and her husband Tetsuo.<sup>142</sup> In their short biography of Mrs. Yamanouchi in *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California*, Richard Nakanishi and Shizue Tabata summarized Mrs. Yamanouchi's life and influence within the local Japanese American community, "educated and knowledgeable, she exercised leadership and decisiveness in business, politics, and cultural pursuits."<sup>143</sup>

## Chronology of Development

### Ranch Style House and Associated Resources (1956-1958)

Yoshiko Yamanouchi purchased the property at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the mid-1950s with the intention to construct a new house for herself and her daughter Hasuko Watanuki's family; Mrs. Yamanouchi lived with her daughter, son-in-law Masashi Max Watanuki, and granddaughters Laura and Pamela Watanuki. The property consisted of three lots totaling approximately .65 acres. The largest of the three lots (APN 033-137-040) fronted onto East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and two smaller lots (APN 033-137-050 and APN 033-137-060) bordered a portion of the north side of this lot and fronted onto East 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.<sup>144</sup> She hired architect Donald H. Brandes of San Carlos to design a Ranch Style house; no date was shown on the plans for the house.<sup>145</sup>

Brandes also designed or specified several other features including an entrance gate, flagstone entrance sidewalk, and fence for the front of the property; a kidney-shaped swimming pool and concrete patio located behind (north) the house; a concrete patio and sidewalk on the west side of the house; and a two-room shed on the east side (one room provided storage and the other contained a pump which provided well water for the landscape). He also specified that a simple "grape stake" fence was to be built along the east, north, and west edges of the property, creating an enclosed landscape around the house. With a few minor exceptions, these features were built as shown on Brandes's plans. A "Lily Pond" shown next to the south side of the swimming pool was not built, and the footprint of the concrete patio behind the house was somewhat different than what was shown on the plans. Construction on the house began in the fall of 1956 and was

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<sup>141</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, 13 August 2022.

<sup>142</sup> [San Mateo Buddhist Temple,] *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial in Gratitude*, 4; Watanuki, personal communication, March 2023.

<sup>143</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, "The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners)," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

<sup>144</sup> Based on the building permits, there was a house (one story with wood shingles) and shed on the two lots that fronted onto East 4th Avenue at the time Mrs. Yamanouchi purchased the property. Mrs. Yamanouchi applied for a permit to "demolish shed" (on APN 033-137-050) in 1956, soon after she purchased the property. She applied for a permit to "demolish existing dwelling" (APN 033-137-060) in 1963.

<sup>145</sup> Research was conducted on Brandes, no additional information was found on his training or other projects.

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completed in late 1957.<sup>146</sup> Laura Watanuki remembers the family moving into the house in early 1958.<sup>147</sup>

#### Japanese Style Pond-and-Hill Garden (1956-1958)

During this same period, Mrs. Yamanouchi began the process of developing a Japanese style garden in front (south) of the house. The “Roof and Plot Plan” in Brandes’ set of plans for the house showed the location and shape of a pond indicating that Mrs. Yamanouchi had conceived of the garden when the house was being designed. Brandes noted on this plan that this feature was not included in his contract. The concept or inspiration for the garden’s design came from a pen and ink drawing done by Mrs. Yamanouchi in 1956. She then hired landscape architect Nagao Sakurai to take her ideas and create the garden.<sup>148</sup>

Sakurai was “one of the leading post-war designers of Japanese gardens in the United States at a time when Japanese culture was beginning to regain acceptance after World War II.”<sup>149</sup> Sakurai (1896-1973) was born in Japan and trained in landscape architecture at the Imperial University of Japan. He was the chief gardener at the Imperial Palace gardens in Tokyo for twenty years. His introduction to the United States came in the late 1930s when he designed the Japanese garden exhibits for the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco and the New York World Fair. His position at the Imperial Palace gardens and his work at the two World Fairs enhanced his credentials as an expert in Japanese gardens when he moved to the United States in the early 1950s and settled in Berkeley. The majority of his work was located on the West Coast. He specialized in creating gardens that referenced a classical period of Japanese garden design known as the Muromachi period that had extended from the mid-fourteenth to late sixteenth centuries.<sup>150</sup>

The Muromachi classical period in Japanese history was an economic and artistically innovative period in Japan and roughly paralleled the time of the Renaissance in Europe. Muromachi refers to the name of the Kyoto district where the ruling clan’s headquarters were located. Key artistic developments during this period included Noh theater, the Japanese tea ceremony, and the

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<sup>146</sup> Building Permit No. 30456 was issued for the house on 24 August 1956; Building Permit No. 30596 was issued for the swimming pool on 25 September 1956; and Building Permit No. 31046 was issued for the fence on 22 January 1957. J.M. Lovell of Redwood City was the contractor for the house and fence; Paddock Engineering Company of San Mateo was the contractor for the swimming pool.

<sup>147</sup> Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.

<sup>148</sup> No plans are known to survive of Sakurai’s design. The article “American Home Magazine Features Japanese Garden” in the *New Japanese American News* (12 June 1962, 2) confirmed that Sakurai built the garden and described him as specializing in gardens in the Muromachi period design of Japanese Gardens. Laura Watanuki remembers meeting Sakurai Sensei when he was constructing the garden. Nothing is known about the workers who did the construction and planting. Sakurai probably oversaw and directed the work as it was being done.

<sup>149</sup> The Cultural Landscape Foundation, *Nagao Sakurai*, <https://tclf.org/pioneer/nagao-sakurai>.

<sup>150</sup> The Cultural Landscape Foundation, *Nagao Sakurai*; “Top Landscape Architect Will Appear Here,” *Sausalito News*, 8 May 1956. Several articles in *New Japanese American News* refer to Sakurai’s expertise and projects including “Rickshaws from Japan to be Used in World Travel Congress Hall in S. F.” (2 November 1954, 2), “Issei, Nisei Study Possible Japanese Garden” (1 December 1954, 1), “Golden Gate Teahouse Lease Extended; Way Cleared for \$40,000 Rebuilding (14 October 1959)” *Sacramento Japanese to Building Garden Based on Fairy Tale Figure Urushimotoro* (30 August 1961), “Observation [on Guiberson Garden]” (12 June 1962, 1 and 2).

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development of the *shoin* style of architecture. Gardens became smaller during this period, while retaining many of the same elements—ponds, islands, bridges, and waterfalls—as larger and more elaborate gardens of preceding eras.<sup>151</sup> Marc Trieb, in his essay on the Muromachi Period in *A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto*, noted that these gardens had no clear axes and “nothing seemed planned although in fact, everything had been meticulously conceived and executed. The human hand was so underplayed in its final form, to the viewer the garden appeared natural.”<sup>152</sup>

At the Yamanouchi property, Sakurai created a hill-and-pond style garden. The key features of this garden included an irregularly shaped pond with a small hill and waterfall at its eastern end and a small turtle-shaped island with two miniature bridges at its western end. The topography of the property was fairly flat, and the artificial hill was created from the dirt excavated in the construction of the swimming pool.<sup>153</sup> A stepping stone path provided controlled movement through the west end and north side of the garden. Authentic Japanese artifacts—including stone lanterns, a *shishi-odoshi* (deer scare), and a stone basin for ritualized hand-washing—were imported from Japan and placed at key locations throughout the garden. Carp and goldfish were imported from Japan and flown to San Mateo by airplane in special containers to place in the pond.<sup>154</sup> The exact date the garden was completed is not known, but it was finished around 1958, at the same time as the house. It was listed as a “Japanese Pagoda Type Gardens” in the city’s “Housing Report (Housing Survey No. A-885)” for the property prepared on 4 March 1958.

Within a few years after its construction, the garden was recognized as an exceptional example of Japanese style garden design. It was one of five gardens featured in the article “Americans Discover the Pleasures of a Japanese Garden” in the September 1962 issue of *The American Home* magazine.<sup>155</sup> This article is important for the photographs that showed the garden and because it provided an explanation of the concept for the garden. The article described the garden as “authentically characteristic of the Muromachi period of Japanese garden design”<sup>156</sup> and as a hill-and-pond type garden.<sup>157</sup> The article explained that the Yamanouchi garden was meant to represent the four seasons of the year—the hill and waterfall represented summer, the foliage of a maple tree represented fall, pine trees represented winter, and flowering cherry trees represented spring.<sup>158</sup> The article went on to explain that:

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<sup>151</sup> “Types of Gardens,” Japan-Guide.com, 2011, [https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2099\\_types.html](https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2099_types.html).

<sup>152</sup> Marc Trieb, *A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto, Revised Edition* (Tokyo, London, and New York: Kodansha International, Ltd. and Kodansha America, Inc., 2003), 25.

<sup>153</sup> Laura Watanuki, personal communication with Denise Bradley, May-October 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Long, “America Discovers the Pleasures of a Japanese Garden,” 42.

<sup>155</sup> Books and magazine articles during this era provided examples of how to adapt Japanese design to the individual home and garden and helped to popularize “Japanese” as a style of garden. Two issues of *House Beautiful* (August and September 1960) were devoted entirely to this subject—the first to educating the public on Japanese aesthetics in architecture and gardens and the second on how to adapt expressions of Japanese design to fit the modern home and lifestyle. *Sunset Magazine*, the foremost regional magazine on the West Coast, had numerous articles on the subject. *The American Home* magazine article was an example of an East Coast publication doing the same.

<sup>156</sup> Long, “America Discovers the Pleasures of a Japanese Garden,” 43.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

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Each rock has a special meaning, each fountain and ornament a specific function, each point of interest a purpose.... Among the highlights of the garden are a flat, fan-shaped stone, kutsunugi-seki, for changing footwear; an oval one, yugy-seki, for your belongings; a stone water basin, chozu-bachi, for cleansing the hands.... The highest point of the garden is the waterfall. At its base, the large rock, to-do-seki, symbolizes the foundation of the mountain and the high perpendicular stone, shensuku-seki, the guardian of the garden.<sup>159</sup>

#### Katsura Building, Walkway, and Garden (1965-1968)

In the mid-1960s, Mrs. Yamanouchi, with the support and assistance of her daughter and son-in-law Hasuko and Masashi Max Watanuki, began preparations for the addition of a small Japanese style building that she had long hoped to build.<sup>160</sup> This building was located approximately forty feet north of the family's residence. No construction plans survive for the building, its elevated walkway, or the garden that was created around it. The consciously designed five-room building combined an adaptation of exterior architecture and interior features that referenced the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto, Japan, with limited modern features (a modern kitchen and bathroom) and modern utilities (plumbing, electricity, and a sewer connection). The Katsura Building featured materials and construction techniques that were authentic to a traditional Japanese style building. A *San Mateo Times* article explained that "neither the traditional woods nor the craftsmen familiar with the ancient Japanese post and beam construction were available in this county. Consequently, the basic materials came from Japan and it was completed by a combination of Japanese and local craftsmen."<sup>161</sup> Specifically, the wood for the Katsura Building was cut and prepared in Kyoto and shipped in crates to the United States where Japanese craftsmen, who came from Japan specifically for this project, constructed the building on the Yamanouchi property in San Mateo.<sup>162</sup>

The interior appearance of three of the rooms—the tea ceremony room, tea preparation room, and study—were also faithful to a traditional Japanese style building and were designed to reference those in the original Katsura Imperial Villa. Planning and construction spanned several years: a building permit was issued in 1965, the construction time including the preparatory work in Japan and onsite construction took almost two years, and the building was completed by early June 1968 when the family held receptions for invited guests on 2 and 9 June 1968.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 43, 68.

<sup>160</sup> "AAUW Sponsors Katsura Viewing," *San Mateo Times*, 12 September 1968, 10.

<sup>161</sup> Clinton, "The Accomplishment of a Woman's Dreams," 13.

<sup>162</sup> "SM Matron Builds Exact Replica of Famed Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto," *Hokubei Mainichi* (4 June 1968), 1; "An 'Island of Calm' Comes True for Widow of Buddhist Priest," *Los Angeles Times* (11 August 1968), B; Alice Phillips, "After 1400 years and 3 ½ Sips—A New Tranquility," *Burlingame Advance-Star* (8 January 1972), 10 and 30.

<sup>163</sup> Mrs. Yamanouchi was issued a permit (Permit No. 42227) to "demolish [the] existing dwelling" on the northeastern lot (APN 033-137-060) in 1963; this house was separated from the family's house and yard by a wooden fence along the boundary line between the lots; this is the general location where the Katsura Building was constructed. On 5 October 1965, Mrs. Yamanouchi was issued Building Permit No. 45021 to "erect accessory" which appears to refer to the Katsura Building and Walkway. Mrs. Yamanouchi was listed as the contractor/builder on this permit; the foundation was inspected on 2 July 1965; and final inspection was on 21 December 1966. Different newspaper articles gave different time frames for the construction process. An article in *Hokubei Mainichi* (4 June 1968, 1) stated that it had taken six months for the seven Japanese carpenters to assemble the building. An

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By choosing the Katsura Imperial Villa as the model, Mrs. Yamanouchi chose one of the world's most recognizable and influential creations of traditional Japanese architecture and landscape. The Katsura Building is not strictly a replica, although local newspaper articles from the late 1960s repeatedly refer to it as the "Katsura Villa Replica." Rather, the building is an interpretation of the style, materials, and details of several phases of the original Katsura Imperial Villa, built over several decades in the seventeenth century by members of the princely Hachijo-no-miya family. The original Katsura Imperial Villa was not a year-round residence. It was "constructed mainly for moon-viewing, flower appreciation, the tea ceremony, the enjoyment of cool summer evenings and for exhibitions of various skills."<sup>164</sup> Similarly, the Katsura Building on the Yamanouchi-Watanuki property "was not arranged as a residence for utilitarian year-round habitation. Instead it was to provide space for social activities, such as the practice of calligraphy, the reading of poetry, the viewing of nature, and most importantly, the observance of the tea ceremony."<sup>165</sup>

A long covered walkway, also referencing traditional Japanese architecture, was built to link the family's house to the Katsura Building, and a Japanese style garden was added around the building to provide an appropriate setting.<sup>166</sup> Mrs. Yamanouchi commissioned architect and garden designer Kodo Matsubara to design the garden. Matsubara (1919-2017) was born in Tokyo and was educated in Japan.<sup>167</sup> As part of his formal design training, he prepared his university thesis on the Katsura Imperial Villa.<sup>168</sup> He immigrated to the United States in 1947, and after arriving in San Francisco, he moved to Fresno where his cousin lived. He "soon began building gardens for residents of Fresno" and became known as an "authority on Japanese 'sukiya' style architecture," which was the style in which the Katsura Imperial Villa was constructed.<sup>169</sup> By the mid-1960s when he worked with Mrs. Yamanouchi on the Katsura project, Matsubara had an established design practice focused within central California. His knowledge of the Katsura Imperial Villa and his expertise in both Japanese architecture and

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article in the *Los Angeles Times* (11 August 1968, B) said that "the Japanese worked 18 months with American carpenters and other craftsman to complete the structure." An article in the *San Mateo Times* (6 June 1968, 13) said that "it took 18 months to complete." "SM Matron Builds Exact Replica of Famed Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto," *Hokubei Mainichi* (4 June 1968), 1; Virginia McMurtry, "Buddhist Priest Widow's Dream Come [sic] True," *The [Burlingame] Advance-Star*, 12 June 1968, 17.

<sup>164</sup> Kunihei Wada, *Katsura Imperial Villa, Third Edition* (Osaka, Japan: Hoikusha Publishing Co., Ltd., 1967), 40.

<sup>165</sup> Alan R. Michelson, *Yamanouchi Tea House* (Historic Resources Inventory Form prepared for Lamphier and Associates, 16 May 1991).

<sup>166</sup> The focus of contemporary newspaper articles was on the Katsura Building. The Katsura Walkway, which was constructed of traditional materials using traditional techniques, was likely also constructed using wood cut and prepared in Japan that was then assembled by Japanese craftsmen at the Yamanouchi property.

<sup>167</sup> Gary Hongo, *A Master Creator*, SLO Buddhist Temple, [https://slobuddhisttemple.org/0517\\_005.htm](https://slobuddhisttemple.org/0517_005.htm); "Kodo Matsubara [Death Notice]," *The Tribune* (San Luis Obispo), 6 April 2017, p. 4A.

<sup>168</sup> "SM Matron Builds Exact Replica of Framed Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto," *Hokubei Mainichi*, 4 June 1968, 1. The newspaper article does not provide enough information to determine if Matsubara was involved in the development and construction of the Katsura Building and Walkway.

<sup>169</sup> Gary Hongo, *A Master Creator*; "Japan' Topic of Hollywood Adult School Lecture," *New Japanese American News*, 4 March 1959, 1.

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garden design likely contributed to Yoshiko Yamanouchi's decision to engage his services in designing the Katsura Garden.

The garden consisted of a lawn that wrapped around the south (front), west, and north sides of the Katsura Building. Narrow planting beds—with a variety of trees, shrubs, and several Japanese lanterns—lined the perimeters of the lawn. The Katsura Building's verandas and front windows looked out onto the lawn and a row of Japanese black pine trees which lined the south side of the garden and which had been selectively pruned to create a form that simulated "mountain twisted trees."<sup>170</sup> These pine trees had been planted prior to the construction of the Katsura Building "in anticipation of the building of the replica" as part of Mrs. Yamanouchi's long-term vision for this space behind the family's residence.<sup>171</sup> As was the case with the Katsura Building, the garden contained several features that were consciously designed to reference the gardens of the Imperial Villa including an entrance gateway and the stone paving patterns of the entrance path.

The Katsura Garden was different in several ways from the earlier hill-and-pond style garden in the southeastern portion of the property. While the hill-and-pond style garden had been laid out following the principles of design associated with a Muromachi period garden, the Katsura Garden did not strictly adhere to any one style of Japanese garden design. Rather it took elements that were typically associated with Japanese style gardens and created a modern garden that provided an appropriate setting for the traditional Japanese style building that Mrs. Yamanouchi was adding.<sup>172</sup> Its large expanse of open lawn (that reflected the aesthetic principle of *yohaku-no-bi* or the beauty of blank or empty space) with only minimal vertical elements (the Japanese black pines) heightened the sense of space in front of the Katsura Building and kept the focus on it as the one entered the garden either from the Chu Gateway or along the Katsura Walkway.

### Properties Associated with the Life of Yoshiko Yamanouchi

Three of the five properties associated with Yoshiko Yamanouchi's life in San Mateo are no longer extant, and one of the five no longer retains integrity. The original building for the Imperial Laundry at 218 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, where Mrs. Yamanouchi worked when she took over the reins of the family business after her husband's death, was demolished around 1940 to make way for the construction of a new California Automobile Association building.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> In an article in the *Hanford Sentinel* (8 July 2011), the Katsura Garden's designer Kodo Matsubara described the difference between his work and a garden designed along classical Japanese garden principles in this way: "My work is freer, and I have more area to work with and fewer restrictions"

([https://hanfordsentinel.com/ontap/arts/kings-art-center-s-outdoor-feature-is-symbol-of-friendship/article\\_7f346740-a8ba-11e0-8064-001cc4c03286.html](https://hanfordsentinel.com/ontap/arts/kings-art-center-s-outdoor-feature-is-symbol-of-friendship/article_7f346740-a8ba-11e0-8064-001cc4c03286.html)).

<sup>173</sup> "Imperial Laundry to move to B Street, *San Mateo Times*, 18 May 1940, 10.



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The second building for the laundry (known as the Blu-White Laundry after World War II), which was built by Mrs. Yamanouchi and opened in 1940 at 80 B Street, is no longer extant.<sup>174</sup> The family continued to operate the laundry at 80 B Street into the late 1970s,<sup>175</sup> and at some point, the business was leased to a tenant. Then the building was vacant for a period of time before it was torn down for the construction of a grocery store.<sup>176</sup>

Mrs. Yamanouchi's home at 214 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue —where she lived when she established the Buddhist Sunday School (1923), Young Buddhist Association (1929), and the Buddhist Women's Association (*Fujin-Kai*) (1932)—is no longer extant; it was demolished in 1940 to accommodate the extension of Ellsworth Avenue from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.<sup>177</sup>

Mrs. Yamanouchi lived at 120 South Idaho Street from the late 1930s until 1958, when she moved to the house at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Multiple additions have been made to the house at 120 South Idaho Street since 1958, and the property no longer retains its integrity in relationship to the period when Mrs. Yamanouchi lived there.

The district at 1007 East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue contains the only extant resources with integrity that are associated with Mrs. Yamanouchi's life and significance in San Mateo. Resources in the district, which include an ensemble of designed landscape and architectural resources, were developed under the direction of Mrs. Yamanouchi and are associated with the latter part of her life after she retired from the day-to-day operations of the laundry business and remained actively engaged in the civic life of the community.

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<sup>174</sup> Street address was listed as 46 B Street in newspapers in 1940, later as 80 B Street, then 80 North B Street.

<sup>175</sup> Richard H. Nakanishi (Historical Researcher) and Mrs. Shizue Tabata (Assistant), "The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners)," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus* (San Mateo: San Mateo Chapter of JACL, 1979), n.p.

<sup>176</sup> Watanuki, personal communication, May-October 2018 and 13 August 2022.

<sup>177</sup> Nakanishi and Tabata, "The Imperial Laundry (Blu-White Laundry and Cleaners)," *A History of the Japanese in San Mateo County, California: A Syllabus*, n.p.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Private Collection of Laura Watanuki and San Mateo County  
Historical Association Archives

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** less than one acre

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### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.568701 Longitude: -122.314913

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary encompasses Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 033-137-040, 033-137-050, and 033-137-060. The boundary begins at the southwestern corner of APN Parcel 033-137-40. It continues eastward for 150 feet.-The boundary then turns northwestward to follow the parcel's boundary for 112.92 feet. It then turns westward to follow the boundary for APN 033-137-40 for 50 feet. It then turns northwestward to follow the boundary for APN 033-137-060 for 112.92 feet. It then turns eastward for 100 feet along the boundaries for APN 033-137-060 and APN 033-137-050. At that point, the boundary turns southeastward to follow the boundaries for APN 033-137-050 and -33-137-040 for 225.84 feet.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The district includes the three parcels (APN 033-137-040, APN 033-137-050, and APN 033-137-060) purchased by Yoshiko Yamanouchi in the mid-1950s for her new residence. The boundary follows the exterior property line of the three combined parcels and includes all the resources developed by Mrs. Yamanouchi.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Denise Bradley, Landscape Historian, and Ward Hill, Architectural Historian

organization: Denise Bradley Cultural Landscapes

street & number: 1388 Haight Street, No. 79

city or town: San Francisco state: CA zip code: 94117

e-mail: [sfodab@hotmail.com](mailto:sfodab@hotmail.com)

telephone: (415) 751-2604

date: November 2022; Revised December 2022; Revised June 2023

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Yoshiko Yamanouchi House  
City or Vicinity: San Mateo  
County: San Mateo County  
State: California  
Photographer: Denise Bradley  
Date Photographed: 13 August 2022 (Photos 1-4, 7-12, 14-25, and 28-29)  
11 March 2023 (Photos 5-6, 13, and 26-27)

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 29 View of house from East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue; camera facing north
- 2 of 29 Front of house and Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing west
- 3 of 29 Covered walkway that leads to the house's front door; camera facing northwest
- 4 of 29 Built-in bench for contemplating the garden in the niche at the southeast corner of the house; camera facing southwest
- 5 of 29 Back of house with swimming pool and patio; camera facing south
- 6 of 29 Entrance Gateway; camera facing southeast toward East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- 7 of 29 Storage Room and Pump House to the east of house; camera facing east
- 8 of 29 Swimming pool and concrete patio at the back of the house; camera facing east
- 9 of 29 Wood deck at the northwest corner of patio; camera facing northwest
- 10 of 29 Small garden with flagstone paving on the west side of the house; camera facing west
- 11 of 29 View of front of house in relationship to Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing north
- 12 of 29 Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing northeast

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- 13 of 29 Waterfall and hill at east end of Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing east
- 14 of 29 Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing south
- 15 of 29 Front façade and west end of Katsura Building; camera facing north
- 16 of 29 View of Katsura Building's verandas from Katsura Walkway; camera facing west
- 17 of 29 Back façade and west end of Katsura Building; camera facing east
- 18 of 29 Katsura Building's Tea Ceremony Room; camera facing east
- 19 of 29 View from Tea Ceremony Room to hallway and Tea Preparation Room, Imperial chrysanthemum crest on sliding door panel (*fusuma*); camera facing west
- 20 of 29 Katsura Building's Tea Preparation Room with view toward shelves (*mizuya*) for storing tea ceremony utensils; camera facing east
- 21 of 29 Katsura Building's Study with raised platform (*jodan-no-ma*), Japanese comb-shaped window, and shelves; camera facing northwest
- 22 of 29 Enclosed veranda, with sliding wood rain doors (*amado*) and shoji screens, that connects to the Katsura Building's Study; camera facing southwest
- 23 of 29 Kitchen in Katsura Building; camera facing north
- 24 of 29 Katsura Walkway with Moon Viewing Veranda in foreground; camera facing east
- 25 of 29 Katsura Walkway's framing and deck; camera facing southeast
- 26 of 29 Chu Gateway at the main entrance into the Katsura Garden; camera facing northeast
- 27 of 29 Different paving patterns for path along south side of Katsura Garden; camera facing north
- 28 of 29 Overview of Katsura Garden; camera facing east
- 29 of 29 Water drains directly into the rain catch which wraps around the perimeter of the Katsura Building and Walkway; camera facing west

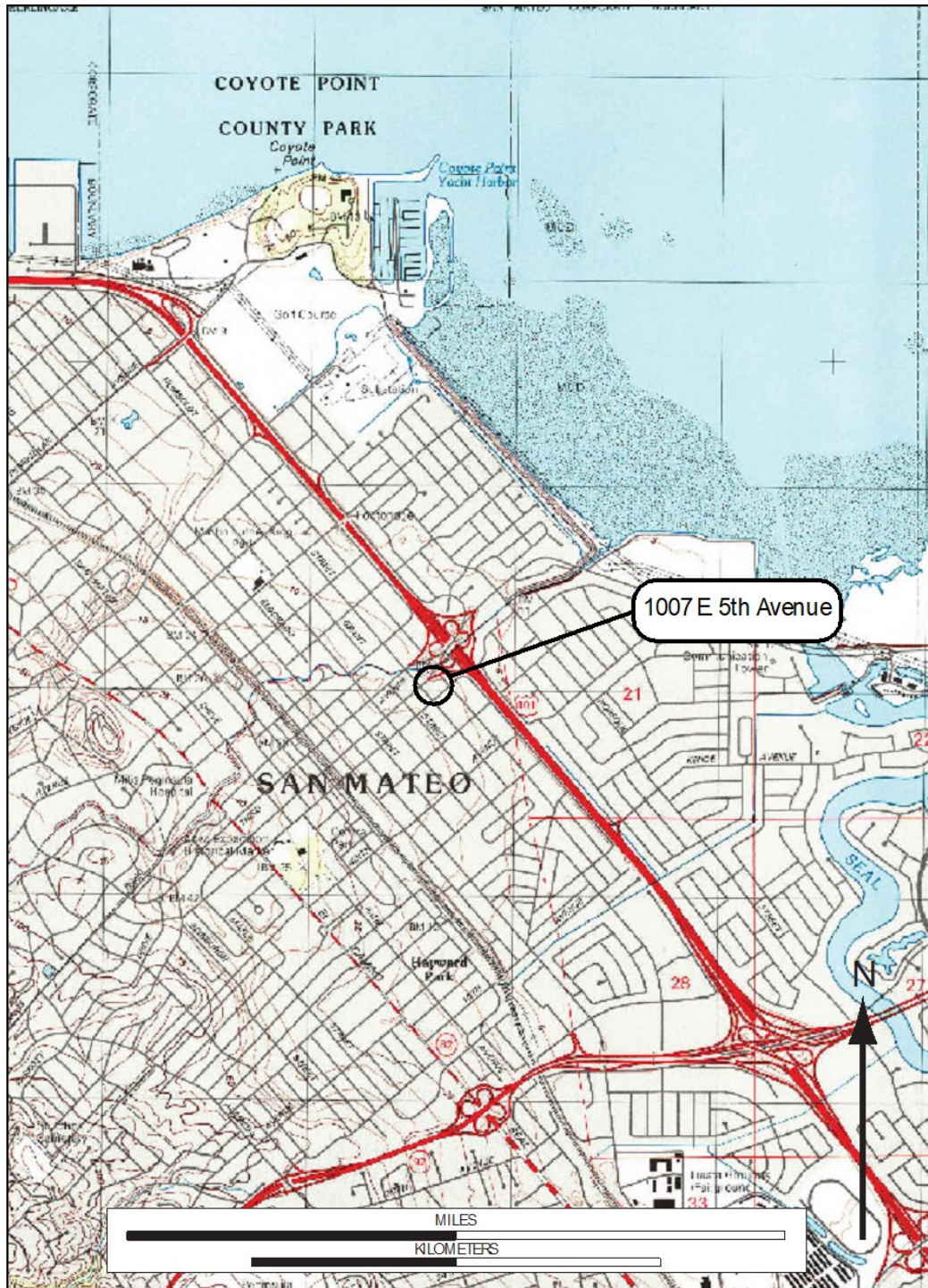
Yamanouchi, Yoshiko, House  
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### Location Map

Latitude: 37.568701

Longitude: -122.314913

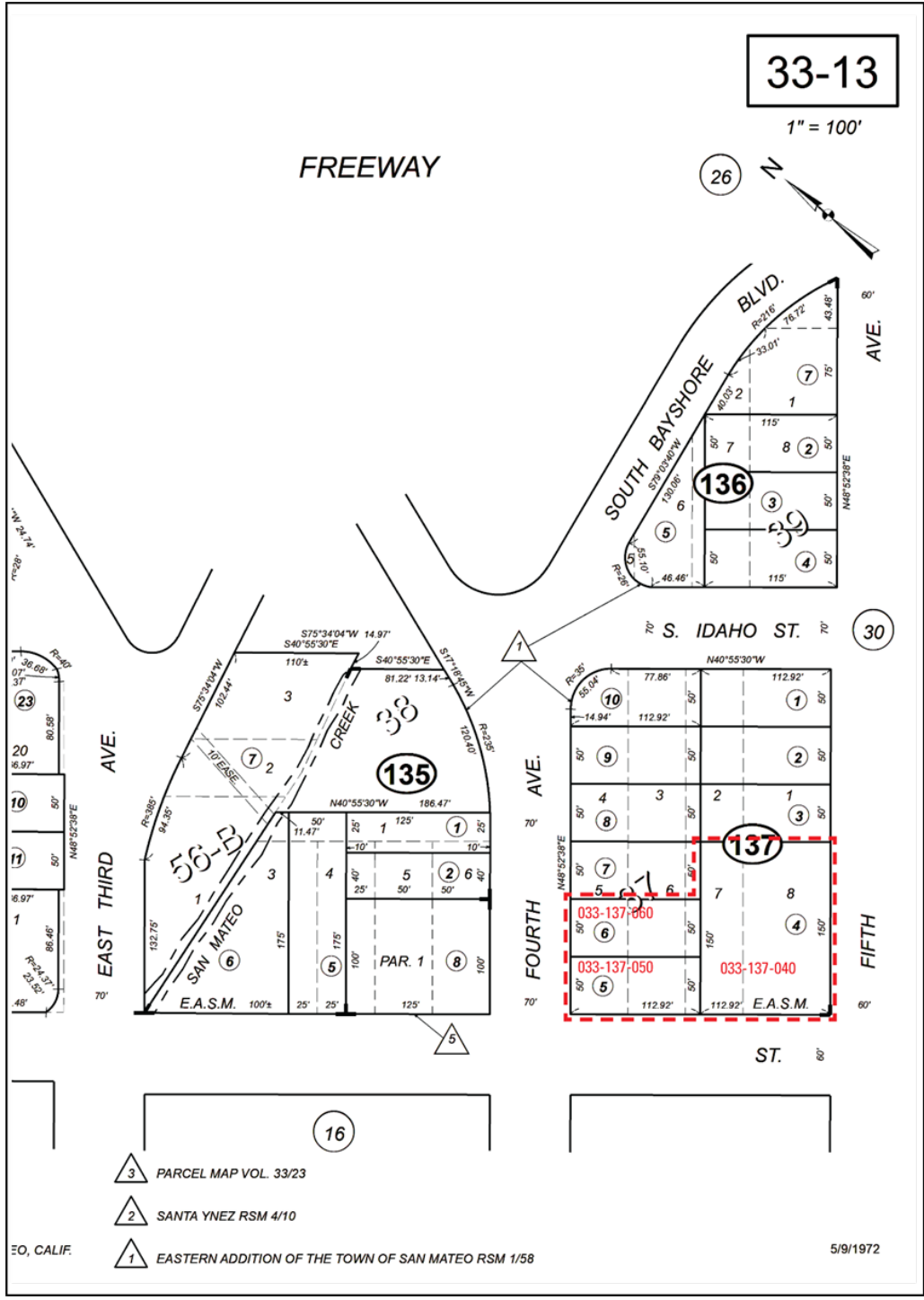


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**San Mateo County Assessor's Map**

Assessor's parcels outlined in red; map annotated by Denise Bradley



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### Boundary Map

Google Earth 2020 map annotated by Denise Bradley



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### Sketch Map

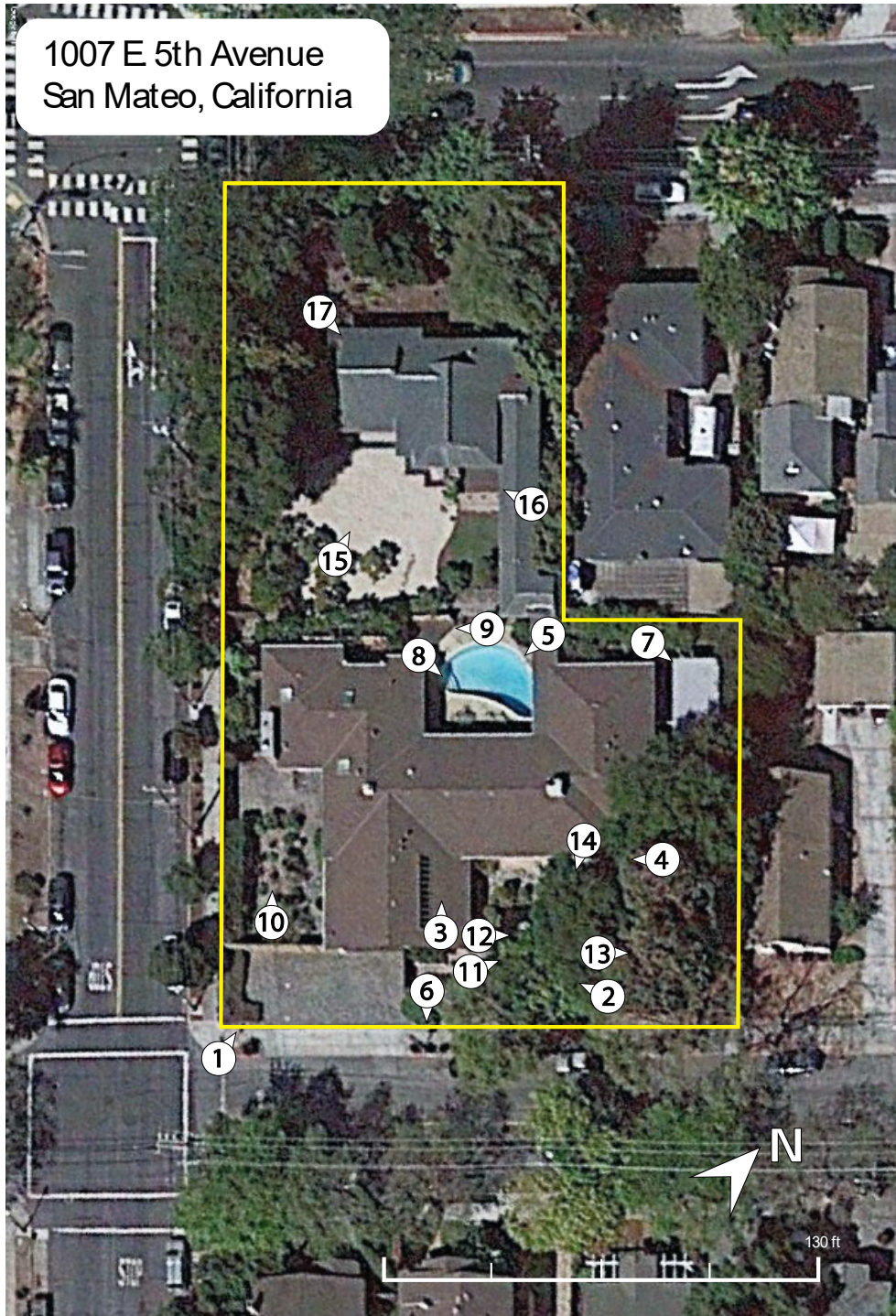
Google Earth 2020 map annotated by Denise Bradley



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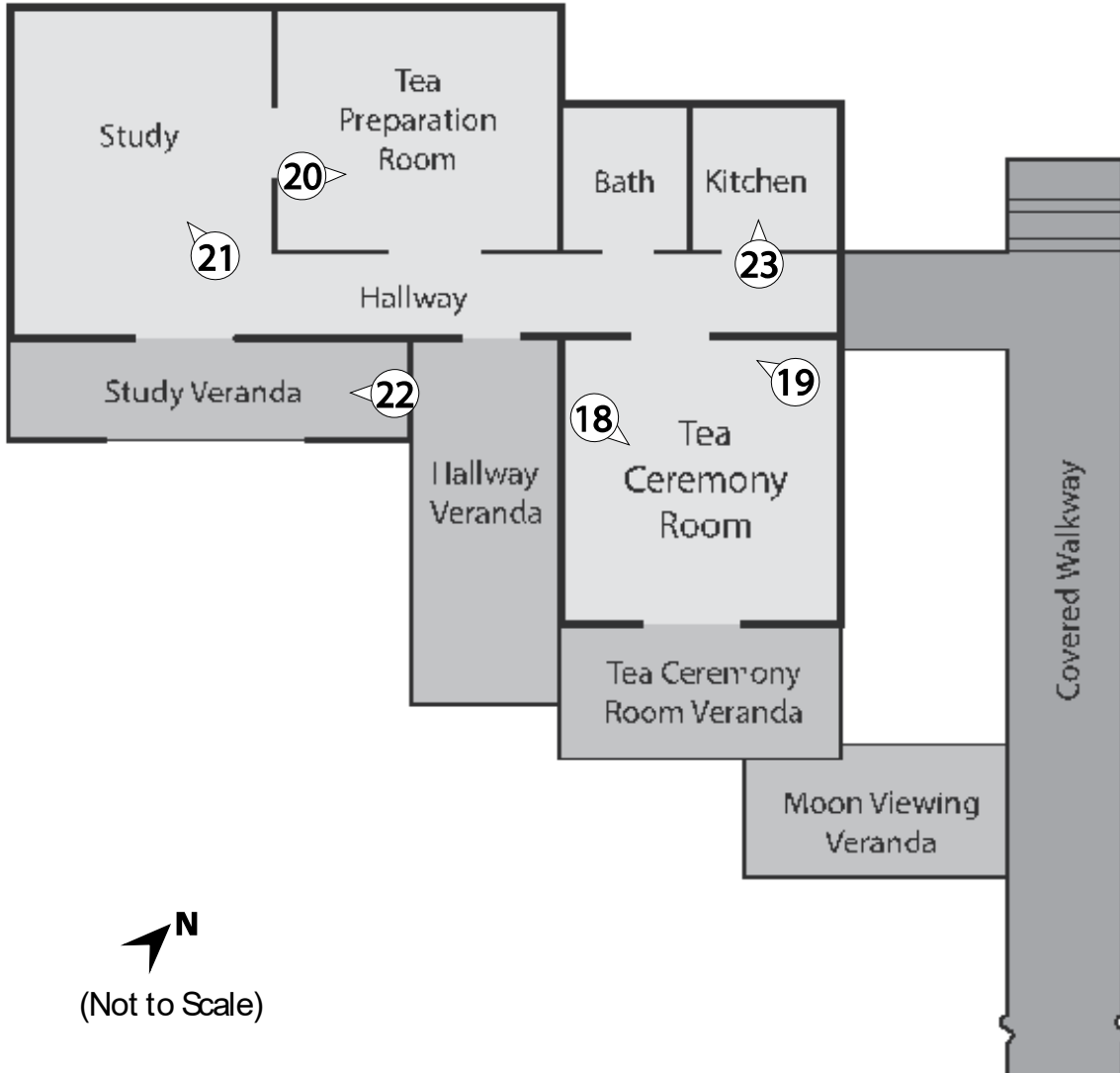
Photo Key 1 of 3



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**Photo Key 2 of 3**





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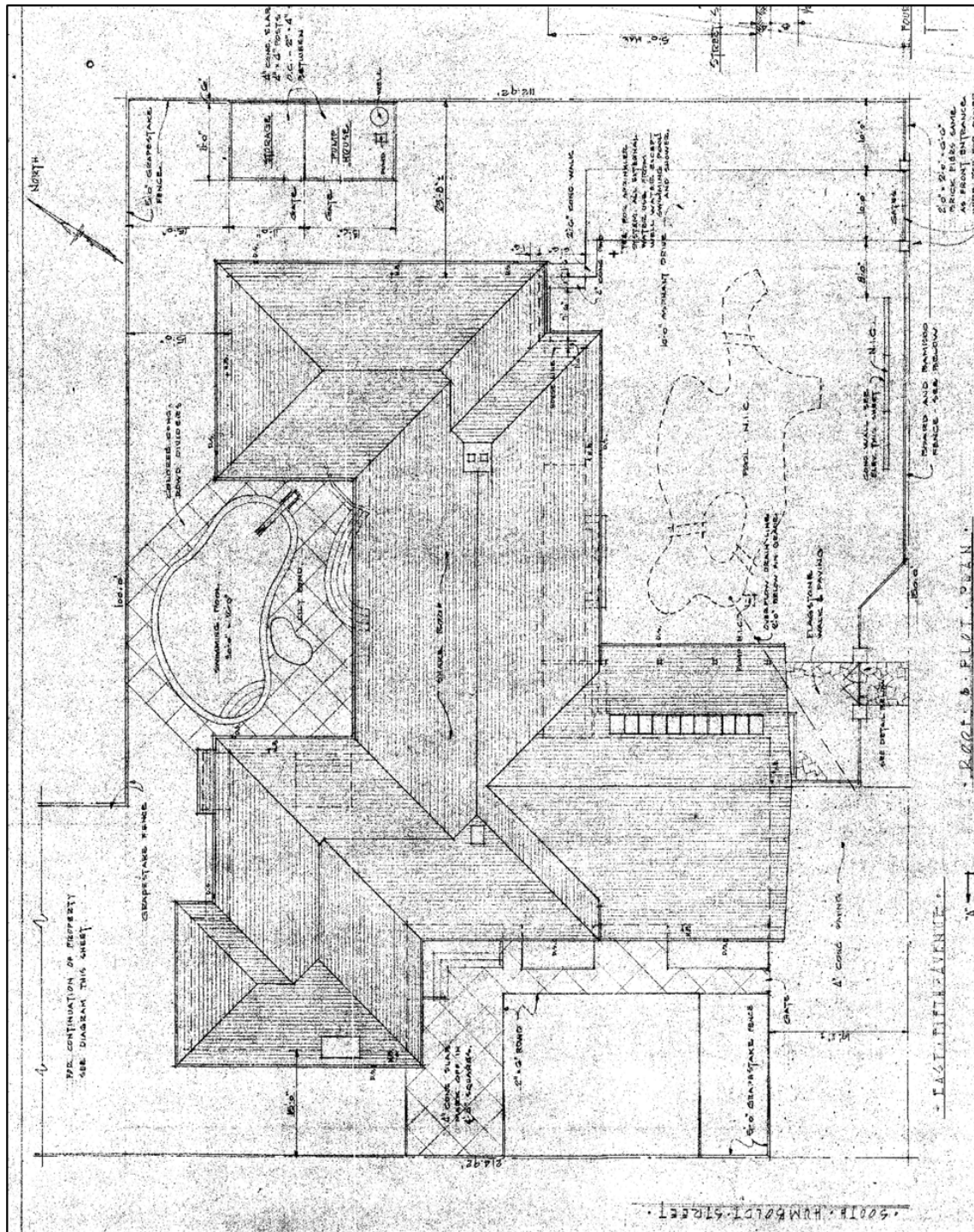
Photo Key 3 of 3



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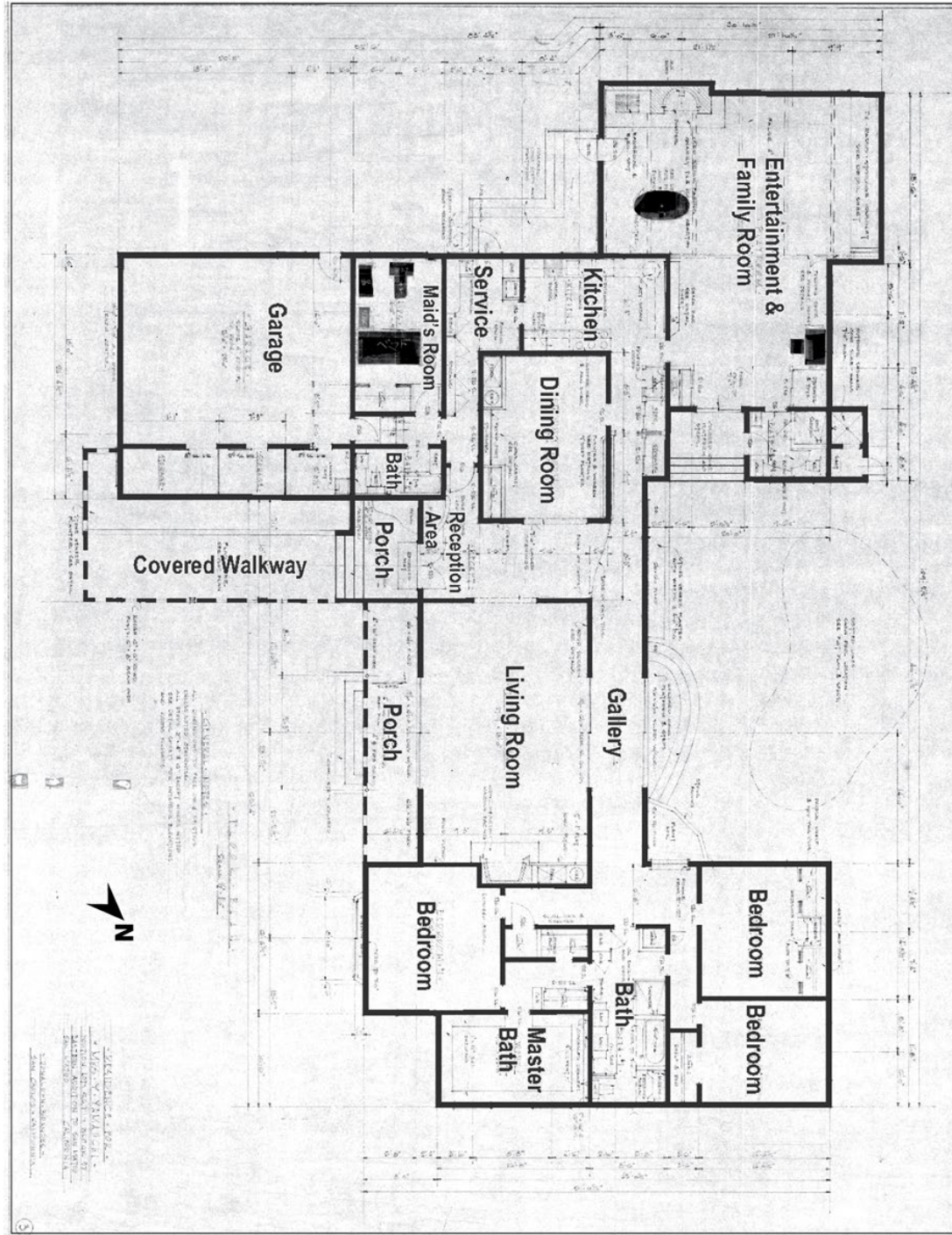
Figure 1 Property plot plan, circa 1956, from set of plans prepared by Donald H. Brandes



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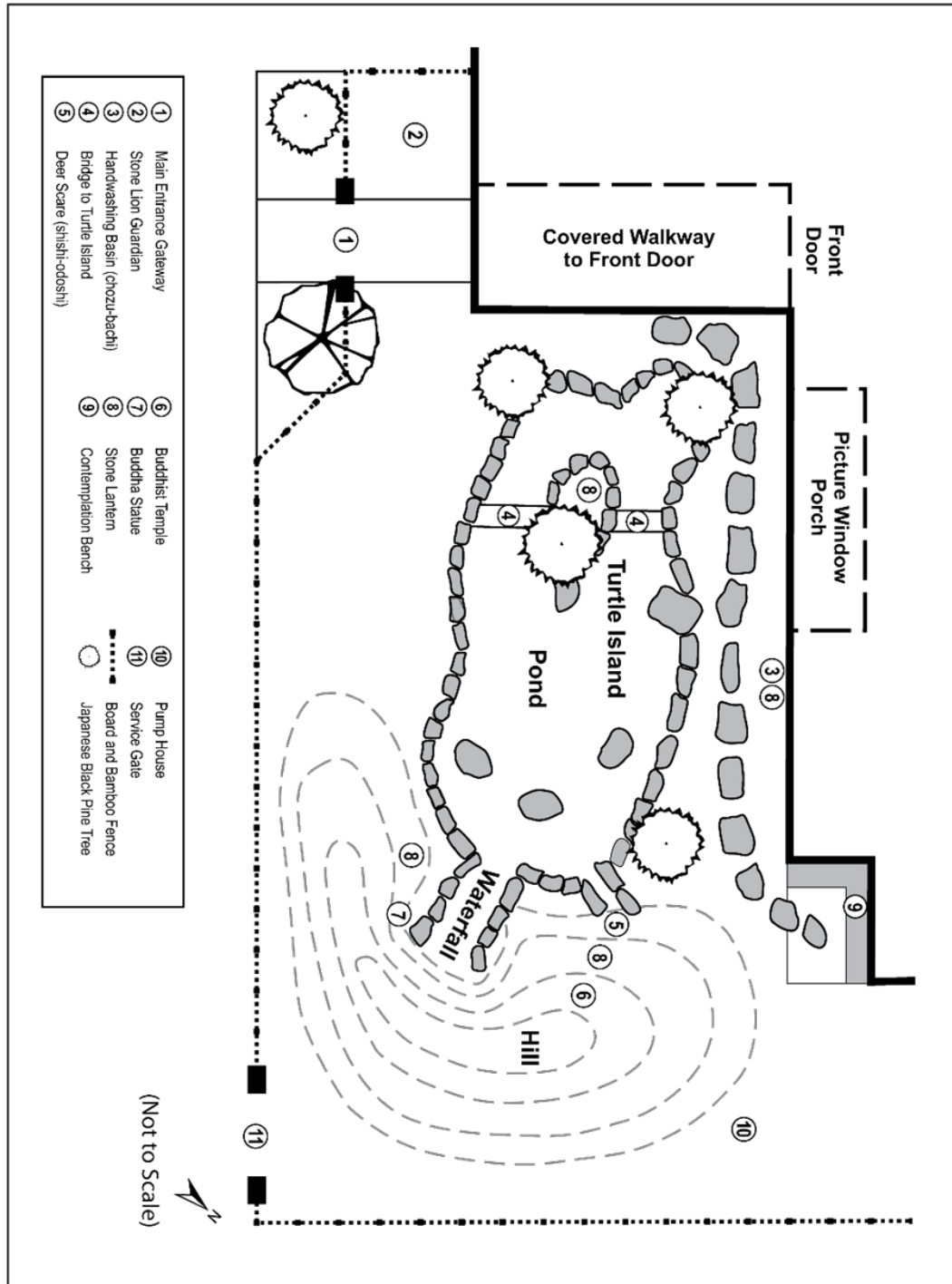
Figure 2 House floorplan by Donald H. Brandes circa 1956, annotated by Denise Bradley



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**Figure 3** Japanese Style Hill-and-Pond Garden Sketch Plan, 2022, Denise Bradley



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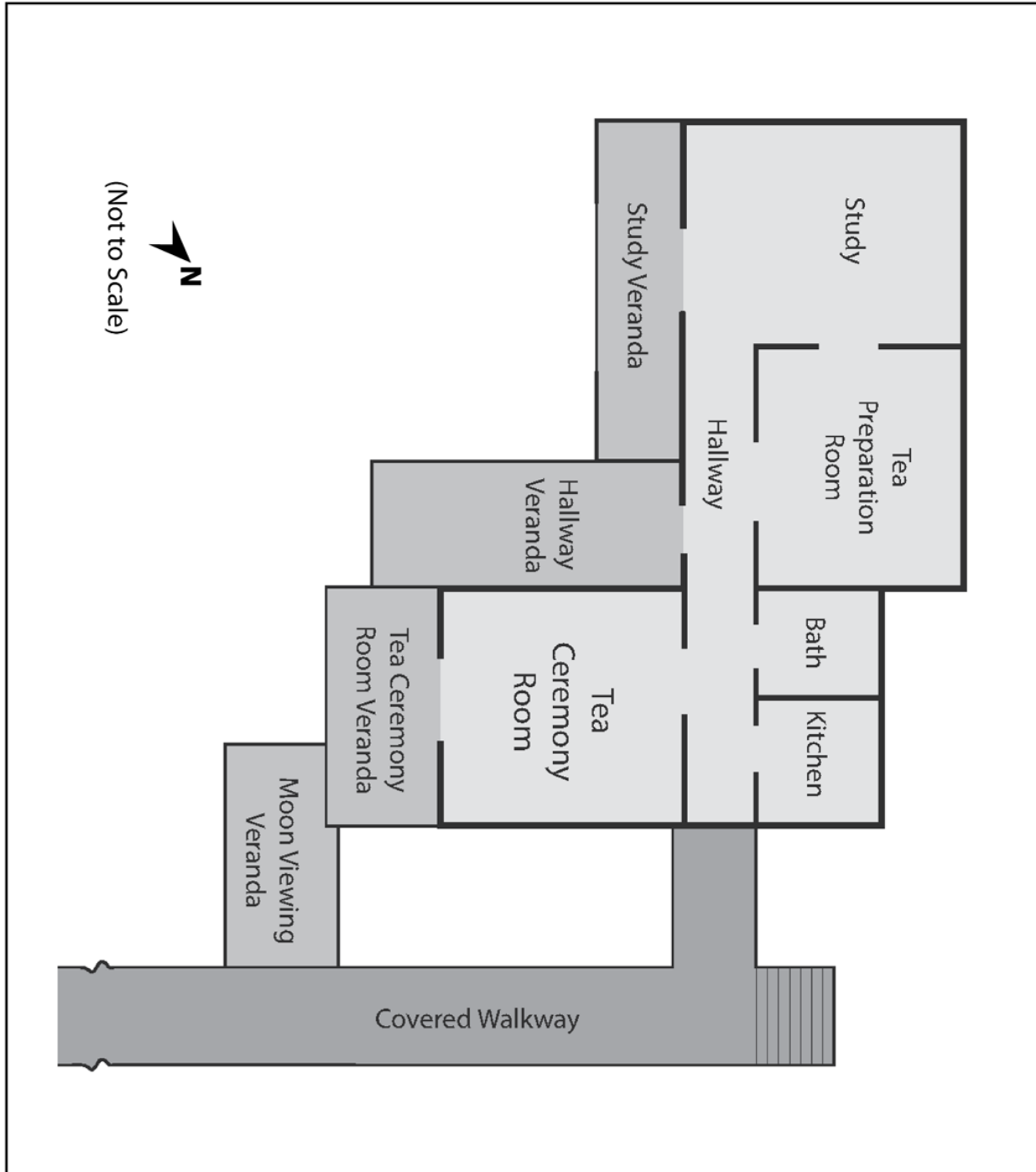
**Figure 4** Drawing of a Muromachi Period garden by Yoshiko Yamanouchi, inspiration for her Japanese style hill-and-pond garden, 1956; Collection of Laura Watanuki



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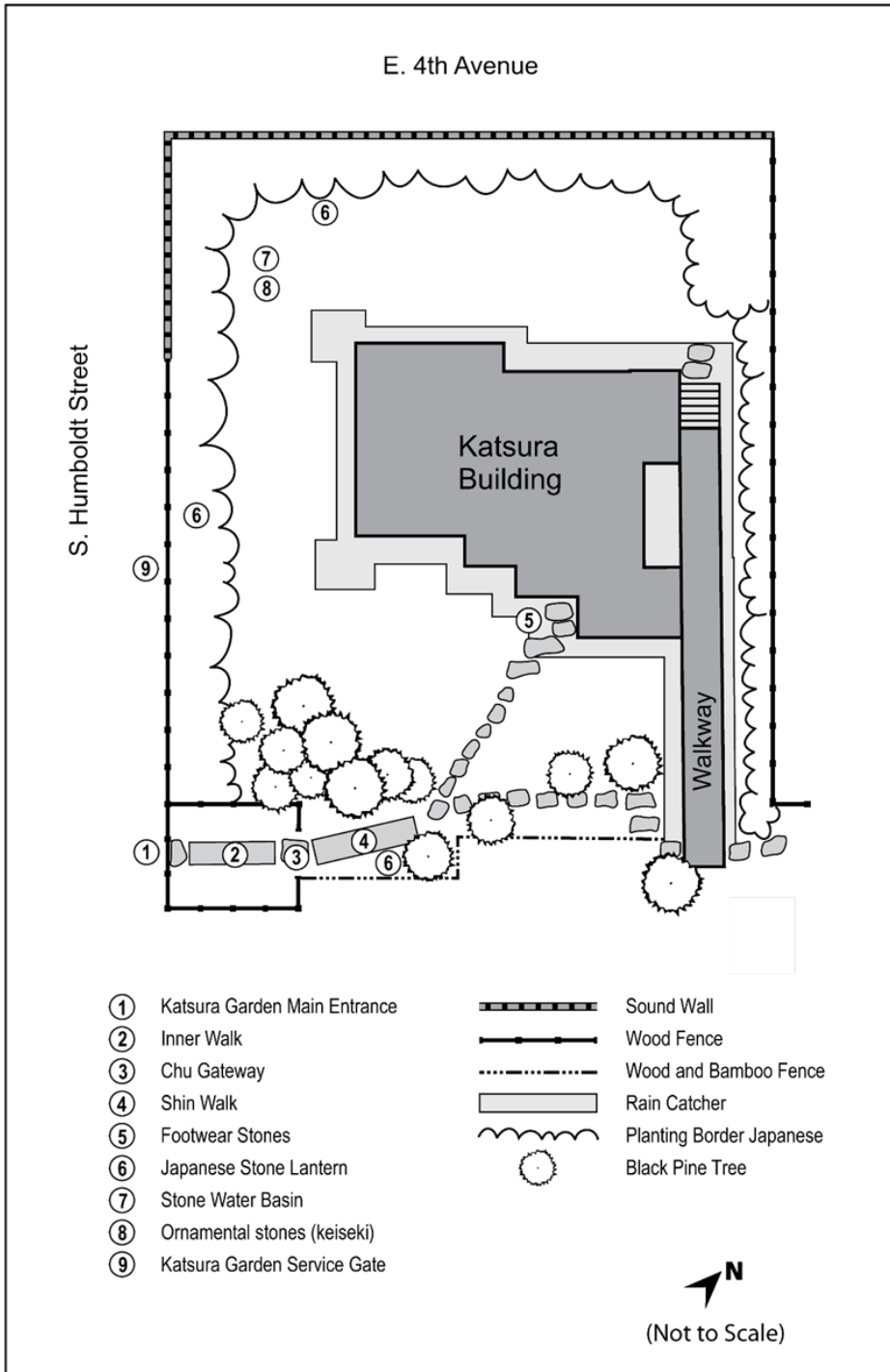
**Figure 5** Katsura Building Floor Plan, 2022, Ward Hill



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**Figure 6** Katsura Garden Sketch Plan, 2022, Denise Bradley



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**Figure 7** Yoshiko Yamanouchi; Dedication, *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial Book*



**Figure 8** Tetsuo Yamanouchi; Dedication, *San Mateo Buddhist Temple Centennial Book*





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**Figure 9** Yoshiko Yamanouchi (standing left) hosted members of the San Francisco Garden Club and Ikebana International in the Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; *San Mateo Times*, 15 March 1963; Photo from Collection of Laura Watanuki



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**Figure 10** Yoshiko Yamanouchi (second from right) hosted an event celebrating the sister city relationship between San Mateo and Toyonaka, Osaka Prefecture, Japan, 1963; Collection of Laura Watanuki



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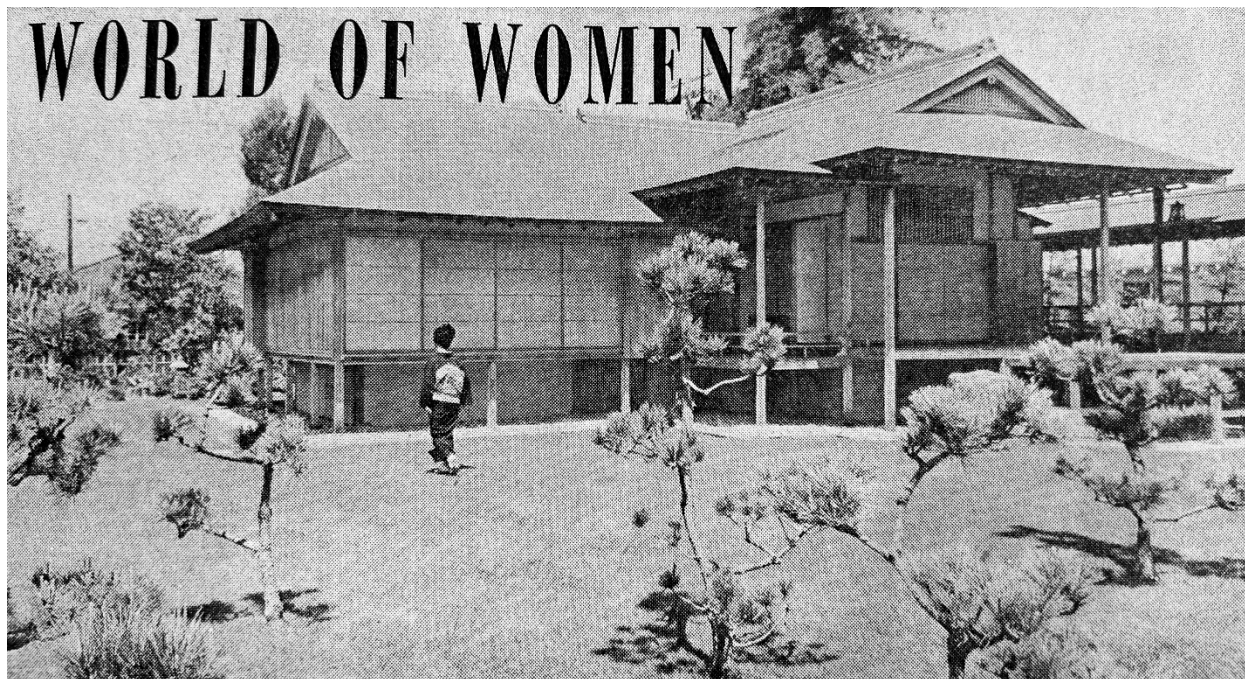
**Figure 11** Yoshiko Yamanouchi (standing behind chair) hosted Prime Minister Eisaku Satō and his wife, 1964; Collection of Laura Watanuki



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**Figure 12** Yoshiko Yamanouchi walking in the garden front of Katsura Building; this photograph appeared in articles in the *San Mateo Times* (6 June 1968) and *Los Angeles Times* (11 August 1968); Collection of Laura Watanuki



**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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**Photo 1** View of house from East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue; camera facing north



**Photo 2** Front of house and Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing west



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**Photo 3** Covered walkway that leads to the house's front door; camera facing northwest



**Photo 4** Built-in bench for contemplating the garden in the niche at the southeast corner of the house; camera facing southwest



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**Photo 5** Back of house with swimming pool and patio; camera facing south



**Photo 6** Entrance Gateway; camera facing southeast toward East 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue



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**Photo 7** Storage Room and Pump House to the east of house; camera facing east



**Photo 8** Swimming pool and concrete patio at the back of the house; camera facing east





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**Photo 9** Wood deck at the northwest corner of patio; camera facing northwest



**Photo 10** Small garden with flagstone paving on the west side of the house; camera facing west



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**Photo 11** View of front of house in relationship to Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing north



**Photo 12** Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing northeast



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**Photo 13** Waterfall and hill at east end of Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing east



**Photo 14** Japanese style hill-and-pond garden; camera facing south



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**Photo 15** Front façade and west end of Katsura Building; camera facing north



**Photo 16** View of Katsura Building's verandas from Katsura Walkway; camera facing west



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**Photo 17** Back façade and west end of Katsura Building; camera facing east



**Photo 18** Katsura Building's Tea Ceremony Room; camera facing east



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**Photo 19** View from Tea Ceremony Room to hallway and Tea Preparation Room, Imperial chrysanthemum crest on sliding door panel (*fusuma*); camera facing west



**Photo 20** Katsura Building's Tea Preparation Room with view toward shelves (*mizuya*) for storing tea ceremony utensils; camera facing east



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**Photo 21** Katsura Building's Study with raised platform (*jodan-no-ma*), Japanese comb-shaped window, and shelves; camera facing northwest



**Photo 22** Enclosed veranda, with sliding wood rain doors (*amado*) and shoji screens, that connects to the Katsura Building's Study; camera facing southwest



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**Photo 23** Kitchen in Katsura Building; camera facing north



**Photo 24** Katsura Walkway with Moon Viewing Veranda in foreground; camera facing east





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**Photo 25** Katsura Walkway's framing and deck; camera facing southeast



**Photo 26** Chu Gateway at the main entrance into the Katsura Garden; camera facing northeast



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**Photo 27** Different paving patterns for path along south side of Katsura Garden; camera facing north



**Photo 28** Overview of Katsura Garden; camera facing east



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**Photo 29** Water drains directly into the rain catch which wraps around the perimeter of the Katsura Building and Walkway; camera facing west

