



Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House  
Name of Property

Santa Clara, 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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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

EDUCATION: education-related

SOCIAL: meeting hall

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

EDUCATION: education-related

SOCIAL: meeting hall

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS

Colonial Revival

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

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco, composite shingle

### 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 Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House was designed by architect John Kennedy Branner in the Colonial Revival style and constructed by contractors George Wagner and Adrian Martinez in 1938. The fraternity-owned building is situated on the west side of Lasuen Mall—a university bicycle and pedestrian path—north of Mayfield Avenue and east of Lagunita Drive on a 0.5-acre portion of a larger parcel on the Stanford University campus in the unincorporated area of Stanford in Santa Clara County. The fraternity house is a three-story side-gabled form with an off-center flat roof and a hipped wing, situated on a raised concrete perimeter foundation. The building is wood-framed and is clad in stucco in a medium dash finish, of which some stucco material is not original to the building. The main side gable form consists of a moderate-pitched hipped roof clad in composite shingles and a brick chimney on the southwest slope of the roof. An off-center flat and hipped wing form extends west of the main side gable form. The roof consists of several shed dormers clad in stucco with composite or wood-shingled roofs. Significant features include a mahogany-paneled door set within a recessed wood panel surround, flanked by double pilasters, and a decorative door crown with an open ogee pediment along the primary façade. The fraternity house retains historical integrity of location, setting, feeling, design, and association. Building code-mandated window replacement and several renovations have resulted in limited integrity of materials and workmanship.

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## **Narrative Description**

The fraternity house is situated on the west side of the southernmost section of Lasuen Mall, on the Stanford University campus within an area known as fraternity row. Lasuen Mall is one of the two original north-south axes that cross the campus. Located east of the Main Quad, Lasuen Mall runs from its most northernmost point at Littlefield Center, east of the Stanford Oval, an open green space with manicured grounds, south through the campus to Mayfield Avenue. Historically, Lasuen Mall continued south past the fraternity house. In the early 1980s, the southern extension of Lasuen Mall was changed from a bicycle and pedestrian path to a vehicle road, known as Mayfield Avenue. Lasuen Mall is a paved path and decomposed granite bike path flanked by mature oak trees, and *Ligustrum japonicum* 'Texanum' evergreen hedges, as well as a range of various plantings.

### **East Façade**

The primary façade consists of the main entrance to the building, accessed from Lasuen Mall, via one of two arched concrete walkways that meet at a central brick patio in front of the building. The brick patio is a rectangular plan with a low brick knee wall that frames the patio, and a central brick stairway providing access to the main entry door. The door is a mahogany wood-paneled door and is set within a recessed entrance within a framed wood-paneled surround and double pilasters topped with a decorative open, ogee pediment and a geometric designed transom. On either side of the entry are two metal sconces that do not appear to be original to the design. The first floor of the building has four replacement eight-light, wooden, French doors with contemporary brass hardware. The French doors are raised approximately two feet above ground level and do not appear to be intended for use as an entry to the building. Each of the doors is flanked by tall wooden shutters designed with a louvered upper and paneled lower. The second floor has eight four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. The roof along the east façade consists of five narrow, hipped roof dormers clad in stucco and composite shingles, each with four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows with wide window trim painted blue. The roof along the east façade has a slight eave overhang with a metal gutter running along the eave and metal downspouts on both the northeast and southeast corners of the façade.

### **South Façade**

The south façade consists of two sections, the south section of the main side gable form and the south section of the hipped wing form, both of which are original to the design. The first floor of the side gable form consists of a projecting single-story, square bay with a fixed, twenty-light, wooden picture window and the second floor contains a two-light, fixed aluminum window. The third floor door is located within a contemporary shed dormer, which replaced two original hipped roof doors in the 1980s, allowing an original window to be refitted with a fire-rated, metal door and the installation of a four-light, fixed, aluminum window and a two-light, fixed, aluminum window to the west of the door. The main side gable form also consists of a metal fire escape, where a portico side entrance was originally located, with two contemporary fire-rated metal doors, one on the second floor and the one on the third floor. Along the first floor of the south façade of the hipped wing form is a hipped roof square projecting bay with five four-over-

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four, double-hung, wood windows. The south elevation also consists of three four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. The second floor consists of two pairs of four-over-four wood windows and one eight-light wood casement window with one lower fixed four-over-four window topped with a hopper window. The window openings along the second floor were all enlarged in the 1980s to accommodate the replacement windows. The third floor consists of two adjacent sections of a shed roof dormer, neither original to the building. The westerly section of the shed dormer consists of two paired windows, including an eight-light casement window with one lower, fixed, four-over-four window topped with a hopper window, and a pair of four-over-four, fixed windows, each topped with a hopper window. The easterly section of the shed dormer consists of a ribbon of four narrow, four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows.

### **West Façade**

The west façade has three sections, the projecting west gable wing with a roof parapet flanked by two extending columns, the west façade of the north section of the main side gable form, and the west façade of the southern section of the main side gable form. The west gable wing is clad in stucco and consists of a metal fire escape, not original to the design. The first floor has two one-over-one, double-hung, wood windows. The second floor has two pairs of double-hung wood windows with a contemporary fire-rated metal door and a one-over-one, double-hung, wood window south of the door. The third floor has a contemporary fire-rated metal door with a one-over-one, double-hung, wood window to the south of the door.

The north section consists of a fixed, four-light window on the first floor and a four-over-four, double-hung, wood window. The first floor of the south section consists of a fire-rated metal door and two pairs of four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. The second floor of the south section consists of a pair of four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows, and two four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. There is a shed dormer along this elevation with a ribbon of eight four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows. Behind the shed dormer is a stucco clad chimney. The windows have wide trim and fascia board painted blue.

### **North Façade**

The north façade consists of the north section of the main gable form and the north section of the projecting gable wing. The north façade consists of a projecting single-story square bay with a fixed, twenty-light, wooden picture window and a roofed porch on the second floor, accessed by a single wood door. The projecting bay provides access to the dining room of the building via wood stairs added in 2006 that lead to a new fire-rated metal door along the west elevation of the side gable form. The projecting bay has a decorative cornice painted blue and the roof of the bay consists of a contemporary metal railing. To the west of the bay along the side gable form are two four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows, one on the first floor and one on the second floor. There is a shed roof dormer with a ribbon of four windows including two eight-light casement windows, and two pairs of windows with a lower, fixed, four-over-four, wood window topped with a four-light, wooden, hopper window.

The first floor of the north section of the projecting gable wing consists of four four-over-four, double-hung, wood windows, two at different heights and one that is smaller, and a glazed and

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wooden door centered within these four windows. The second floor has two lower fixed, four-over-four, wood window topped with a four-light wooden hopper window, and a group of three windows including two with a lower fixed four-over-four wood window topped with a four-light, wooden, hopper window and one wood casement window. Almost the entire length of the third story consists of a shed roof dormer, with a recessed center. The easternmost shed dormer consists of an infilled window, allowing for a vent pipe that runs vertically up the wall and past this wall section, which was likely altered in 2006. The recessed central section consists of a ribbon of four wood windows, including two eight-light casement windows and two lower fixed, four-over-four, wood windows topped with a four-light, wooden, hopper window. The westernmost shed dormer has two pairs of four-over-four wood casement windows. These shed dormers walls are clad in stucco and the roofs are clad in wood shake shingles.

### **Interior**

The building includes approximately twenty private resident rooms and community spaces for cooking, eating, and comradery. The first floor consists of community spaces, including the living room, dining room, hall, reception, terrace, pantry, kitchen, library, and former guest rooms, all original to the layout. While the first floor layout is original, much of the interior material is not original, including a mixture of original and contemporary wooden floors, contemporary stairs, a modern kitchen, updates to the fixtures, removal of the original cladding and mantel on the living room fireplace, and removal of original doors replaced with fire-rated doors. Original features include oversized wood pocket doors consisting of fluted trim, giving the illusion of a solid piece of trim when the doors are fully open, original wood paneling on the walls and the coffered ceiling in the library, a fireplace with a brick firebox lintel with original brown square ceramic tiles, and wooden mantel, and glass and wood bookcases along the north wall. The second floor layout consists of the main residence hallway, a community bathroom, and single and multiple occupancy rooms, originally labeled on the original 1938 second floor drawings as “study rooms.”

### **Alteration History**

The building was renovated in the 1980s and 2006. In the 1980s, in response to updated earthquake building codes, Stanford University mandated the replacement of all the original wood windows. All the original multi-light, double-hung and hopper wood windows were replaced in-kind with new multi-light, double-hung and hopper wood windows. Other 1980s alterations to the exterior included the enclosure of the originally incorporated terrace; the replacement of smaller hipped dormers with wood cladding changed to shed roof dormers with stucco cladding; and the addition of a metal fire escape. Interior changes in the 1980s included the removal of the marble surround on the fireplace, replaced with a modern red brick surround.

In 2003, “Save the House” fundraising efforts by the House Corporation began, identifying a \$2.5 million fundraising goal.<sup>1</sup> The renovation was spearheaded by John Arrillaga, Stanford Alumni and philanthropist, who provided a substantial contribution to the capital campaign. The renovation plans were developed by the Palo Alto-based architect Cody Anderson Wasney

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<sup>1</sup> “History,” Sigma Chi Fraternity. Alpha Omega Chapter (Stanford University), <https://snaccooperative.org/> (accessed June 21, 2022).

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Architects. The plans included upgrading structural elements, new landscaping, new security features such as fire-rated exterior doors, new flooring, new fascia boards and gutters, and the repainting of the building. Interior changes included removing and replacing original light fixtures, removing the original interior stairs and replacement with contemporary stairs, updated bathrooms, a new kitchen, and individual room upgrades. Although the renovations removed original historic materials, the building retains its original form and overall design.

In 2006, Cody Anderson Wasney Architects completed interior alterations to the building in accordance with policies and programs developed by Stanford University and Santa Clara County, allowing changes to buildings within the Stanford campus to be approved by the university.<sup>2</sup> Based on the 2006 architectural drawings by Cody Anderson Wasney Architects—provided by the Stanford Sigma Chi chapter—first floor renovations included the addition of a covered porch off the north wing, and interior alterations such as changes to the original servant and guest rooms that were converted into student and laundry facilities, changes to the library that was replaced with a chapter room. Updates to the main first floor stairs included carpeted stairs, and new aluminum and wood handrails.

Based on the 2006 architectural drawings, changes to the second floor included closing in the sleeping porch, allowing for additional dorm rooms and renovating a shared bathroom. During the 2006 renovation, the third floor also received significant alterations. The elimination of a third-floor chapter room, where meetings and initiations were once held, allowed changes to the west wing of the building where interior walls were expanded, creating a third floor sleeping porch, new single occupancy rooms, and additional bathrooms. Additional changes to the third floor also included dormer spaces converted to individual study areas, and changes that ensured the building met required life-safety codes.

### **Integrity**

*Location:* The building has never been moved. As such, the fraternity house retains integrity of location.

*Design:* Although some original design elements have changed, the form and overall Colonial Revival style remains. While changes in response to safety requirements and updates to building codes have altered the building's appearance, it has primarily maintained its original design. As such, the fraternity house retains its overall integrity of design.

*Setting:* The setting remains within Lasuen Mall fraternity row on the Stanford University campus, reflecting the fraternal activities and relationships intended when it was constructed in 1938. As such the property retains integrity of setting.

*Materials:* Original materials on the exterior and interior have been removed and replaced. Exterior changes include areas where new stucco material has been applied to the building, shed

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<sup>2</sup> Cody Anderson Wasney Architects.



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dormers clad in stucco with composite or wood shingled roofs replaced original hipped roof dormers, all the original wood windows have been removed and replaced in-kind with wood windows except for two metal windows. Additionally, except for the main front entry door, all the exterior wooden doors have been replaced with wooden French doors, contemporary fire-rated metal doors, and wooden doors. Some original materials remain, such as the wooden shutters and decorative door crown with an open ogee pediment entry along the primary façade. Interior materials have been removed, including the original fireplace surround in the living room, the interior staircase materials, and wood flooring. As such, the property no longer retains integrity of materials.

*Workmanship:* There is evidence of workmanship in the form of the building, the decorative door crown with an open ogee pediment at the primary façade front entry, mahogany door, and the shutters; however, all the windows have all been replaced, the hipped dormers have been removed and replaced with shed dormers adding to the bulk of the roof, original doors have been removed, and some of the original stucco has been removed on the exterior and replaced. Although there are elements of the original workmanship present within the interior of the building—including the wood paneling, library fireplace with ceramic tiles, wooden mantel, glass and wood bookcases, and some original wood flooring—the majority of the original materials within the interior were removed during the 1980s and 2006 renovations. As such, the fraternity house no longer retains integrity of workmanship.

*Feeling:* The Fraternity House continues to function as an active house on Fraternity Row, conveying the feeling of a fraternity, evoking the brotherhood and comradery that was evident in 1938. As such, the Fraternity House retains integrity of feeling.

*Association:* The Fraternity House has been utilized as a student residence and meeting place in continuous operation at Stanford University along fraternity row since 1938. As such, the Fraternity House 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.)

SOCIAL HISTORY: Civil Rights

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

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

**Period of Significance**

1965-1974

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

**Significant Dates**

1965-1966

1974

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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

**Architect/Builder**

Branner, John K.

Wagner, George

Martinez, Adrian

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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 Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the national level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Social History: Civil Rights and Ethnic Heritage: Black for its association with the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that banned racial discrimination in public accommodations and the impact on Blacks at college campuses and fraternities throughout the U.S. The period of significance begins in 1965 when the Chapter extended membership to Kenny Washington, a Black freshman student, thus rejecting Alpha Omega's longstanding mandate of racial exclusion by the national fraternity of Sigma Chi. The Civil Rights Act was tested in 1965, when the Stanford University Sigma Chi chapter's charter was suspended by national headquarters. The action by the national executive committee of the fraternity to suspend the Stanford University Sigma Chi chapter led to the immediate intervention by Stanford administrators, becoming national news, with the U.S. Commission of Education stating that not pledging the Black student violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964.<sup>3</sup> This started a national debate on university campuses and in the federal government on the legality of racial exclusion in public accommodations that lead to eliminating racial preferences in university associations and fraternity admissions. The period of significance closes in 1974 when the Stanford chapter rejoined the national Sigma Chi Fraternity, after the national chapter finally abandoned its discriminatory practices. For its role in the Civil Rights movement on college campuses and influencing fraternities across the country, the Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House meets Criteria Consideration G: Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Last Fifty Years.

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

### **The Civil Rights Movement (1941 to 1963)**

During the 1940s, World War II accelerated social change, as wartime industry and service in the armed forces brought together America's segregated society, helping create a new civil rights agenda at home that forever transformed American life. During this time, Black American migration from the south to the north, where the right to vote was available, encouraged the Democratic and Republican Parties to solicit Black American supporters. Changes in public policy at the federal level augured the end of racial segregation, and civil rights became a national issue for the first time since the Reconstruction era. Although minorities were confined to racially segregated commands or occupations, armed forces combined soldiers and sailors from different ethnicities and races across the nation, forming military units.<sup>4</sup> The defense

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<sup>3</sup> C. L. Tobenson, and Parks, G. S. (Eds.). (2009). *Brothers and sisters: Diversity in college fraternities and sororities*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses.

<sup>4</sup> National Parks Service, "Civil Rights in America – A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites," 2002, Revised 2008.

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industry also created jobs at this time, eventually bringing social and legislative reform. Employers encouraged millions of married women and mothers to work outside the home for the first time, a move for some women that led to postwar employment. Approximately 65,000 Native Americans left their reservations to work in wartime industries and serve in the armed forces. These discriminatory practices resulted in Black Americans threatening to “March on Washington” in 1941, demanding a fair share of jobs and an end to segregation in government departments and the armed forces. This same year, President Roosevelt took action to ban discrimination in defense industries, and to assure compliance, he formed the Federal Employment Practices Committee (FEPC).<sup>5</sup> The formation of the FEPC led to the first legal case centered on civil rights issues regarding equal employment for Hispanics, whose leaders appeared before the FEPC and protested the exclusion of Hispanics, despite their American citizenship, from many war industries.

During the 1950s, educational disparities also figured prominently in the context of American society. In the 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court determined that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional, overturning an 1896 ruling that determined the opposite and allowing integration of races in all levels of education.<sup>6</sup> Despite this monumental decision, integration at Stanford University did not occur until 1962, when seven Black Americans enrolled for the Fall Term.<sup>7</sup>

On June 11, 1963, President Kennedy gave a major address to the nation on the issue of Civil Rights, introducing what eventually became the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to Congress. President Kennedy asked:

If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public; if he cannot send his children to the best public schools available; if he cannot vote for the public officials who represent him; if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place?<sup>8</sup>

### **Civil Rights Act of 1964**

In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in U.S. history, outlawing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It ended the unequal application of voter registration requirements and racial segregation in

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Brown v. Board of Education (1954, 1955),” *History - Brown v. Board of Education Re-enactment*, <https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment> (accessed June 13, 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Roy Johnson, “What It Was Like to Be an African American Freshman in 1962,” *Stanford Magazine*, September 2017. (accessed June 13, 2022).

<sup>8</sup> John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, “Radio and Television Report to the American People on Civil Rights, June 11, 1963” <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/civil-rights-radio-and-television-report-19630611> (accessed June 11, 2022).

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schools, workplaces, and facilities that served the public (public accommodations). Initially, the powers given to enforce the act were weak; they were supplemented in later years.<sup>9</sup>

### **Larger Setting – Stanford University Campus**

The Stanford University campus is within the unincorporated city known as “Stanford” in Santa Clara County. Stanford is unique among the unincorporated cities on the San Francisco peninsula because its creation is directly associated with the university’s development and its founders, Leland and Jane Lathrop Stanford. In 1876, Leland Stanford purchased the 650-acre Gordon Estate for a country home and began the development of his Palo Alto Stock Farm for trotting horses.<sup>10</sup> By this time, Stanford had already succeeded as a merchant, Governor of California during the Civil War (1861-1865), and President of the Central Pacific Railroad (later part of the Southern Pacific). In 1884, while traveling in Italy, Stanford’s 16-year-old son, Leland, Jr., was stricken with typhoid fever and died. From this point forward, Leland and Jane committed their fortune and time to the building of the Leland Stanford Junior University, later Stanford University. In 1885, Leland and Jane Stanford executed a deed of trust conveying their entire farm and other lands to a board of trustees for the university’s founding. The deed stipulated that the land they conveyed to the university could not be sold, and the campus still carries the nickname “The Farm.” Leland Stanford later bought the adjoining properties, totaling 8,180 acres, and added them to the trust.

The university campus was planned and designed in collaboration with Frederick Law Olmsted, the foremost landscape architect of the time and the architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. It resulted in California Mission-inspired local sandstone buildings with red-tiled roofs surrounding a cloistered quadrangle with the Memorial Church building as its focus. During the development of the university campus, some of the areas that surrounded the campus were also developed to house faculty members and students. As part of the university development, the original 115-million-gallon reservoir (later known as Lagunita Lake), built by Leland Stanford in the 1870s to supply water to grow crops on the Palo Alto Stock Farm, served as a focal point of student life where campus traditions were later hosted. After six years of planning and building, the construction of Leland Stanford Junior University began in 1887, and four years later, on October 1, 1891, the university opened its doors. The New York newspaper, the *Mail and Express*, predicted that Stanford professors would “lecture in marble halls to empty benches” was quickly disproved as the free university soon attracted many students.<sup>11</sup> The first student body consisted of 555 men and women, and by the second year, the original faculty of fifteen was expanded to forty-nine. The university’s first president was David Starr Jordan, a graduate of Cornell University, who left his post as President of Indiana University to join Leland

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<sup>9</sup> Congress asserted its authority to legislate via several different parts of the Constitution, principally its power to regulate interstate commerce, its duty to guarantee all citizens equal protection of the laws through the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, and its duty to protect voting rights under the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

<sup>10</sup> The 650-acre Gordon Estate was owned by George Gordon, an English man, who built the country home and property that Leland purchased to become the Palo Alto Stock Farm; Stanford University, “Stanford Facts,” <https://facts.stanford.edu/about/lands/> (accessed May 22, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> David Starr Jordan, “Stanford University and Its Position,” *The San Francisco Call*, December 18, 1898, 12. Newspapers.com (accessed November 14, 2022)

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Stanford Junior University. At this time, the 8,180-acre campus, including the university campus and housing developed for the professors and their families and students, was located within six different governmental jurisdictions, including unincorporated Santa Clara County.

As the number of students attending the university grew, the need to house teachers and students increased. As such, in addition to the housing within the land owned by Leland Stanford, he also decided that faculty and students could be housed in nearby towns. However, Leland Stanford wanted a town free of saloons, prevalent in the nearby cities of Menlo Park and Mayfield. By the late 1880s, Leland Stanford, along with Timothy Hopkins—the son of Mark Hopkins, one of the Central Pacific Railroad’s Big Four—began to acquire and survey land that would form the foundation of a new town called Palo Alto.<sup>12</sup> The development of Palo Alto was unique because it got its start due to the building and development of the Leland Stanford Junior College, and city services, housing, and transportation were all developed in support of the university.<sup>13</sup> When Leland Stanford died in 1893, his estate went into probate, and the university’s future became uncertain for a brief period. Then in 1894, Palo Alto was incorporated, and by 1898, Stanford’s estate was released from probate, and Jane Stanford gave over \$11 million to the university trustees to continue the legacy Stanford created.<sup>14</sup>

From Stanford University’s earliest days, its founders and trustees envisioned faculty and student residences on campus. However, during the university’s early development, much of the on-campus housing was postponed, as important academic buildings were given first priority. After Leland Stanford’s death, Jane Stanford struggled to keep his vision alive, stating in 1897 to the Board of Trustees, “It is desirable, so far as may be, that Faculty and students should reside in the University grounds...” and recommended that lots continue to be leased in the earliest housing developments of Alvarado Row, Salvatierra Street, and Lasuen Mall.<sup>15</sup> When Jane died in 1905, she left complete control of Stanford University to the Board of Trustees. Sixty percent of the 8,180-acre campus, including the Fraternity House, is within the unincorporated area of Stanford.

### **Founding of Sigma Chi Fraternity**

Sigma Chi was founded in 1855 by seven members, Benjamin Piatt Runkle, Thomas Cowan Bell, William Lewis Lockwood, Isaac M. Jordan, Daniel William Cooper, Franklin Howard Scobey, and James Parks Caldwell when one of twelve members of the Delta Kappa Epsilon (DeKe) chapter at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio looked for the support of his brothers in his pursuit to be elected to the office of poet in one of the school’s literary societies and was denied

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<sup>12</sup> The Big Four was the name of the famous and influential businessmen, philanthropists, and railroad tycoons who built the Central Pacific Railroad.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Staiger, In-person communication with the archivist at the Palo Alto Historical Association, by Stacey De Shazo, September 29, 2017. At the time of this conversation, Steve Staiger was the City of Palo Alto Historian.

<sup>14</sup> Stanford University, “Stanford Facts,” <https://facts.stanford.edu/about/lands/> (accessed June 2, 2022).

<sup>15</sup> Palo Alto Stanford Heritage, *Stanford's San Juan Hill*, <https://www.pastheritage.org/HHTByYear/HHT2004.html> (accessed June 1, 2022).

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when four of the twelve DeKe members declined to cast votes for their brother.<sup>16</sup> This action was perceived by over half of the members as a lack of allegiance to the DeKe brothers, causing a deep rift among the DeKes, who felt the candidate deserved their votes on merit, loyalty to a brother, or both. After much discord, the friction caused the expulsion of the DeKe members Runkle, Bell, Jordan, Cooper, Scobey, and Caldwell. The six members then joined with businessman Lockwood, who, though not a member of DeKe, joined the six former members and is credited with setting up the general plan of Sigma Chi Fraternity, much of which continues.<sup>17</sup>

### **Sigma Chi Fraternity and Civil Rights**

The Sigma Chi fraternity was an organization with a “white clause,” adopted by the organization in 1870. The term was used to refer to a racially restrictive membership clause, formal (de jur) or implied (de facto), restricting fraternity membership to white men.<sup>18</sup> In 1954, during a fraternity business meeting, the idea of removing the white clause was discussed, though this discussion did not change much within the fraternity, as many members were not in favor of opening membership to non-whites. One fraternity delegate, Bruce Bower, from Illinois stated:

...a lot of us feel that if we strike out our “white clause” altogether and... if it so happened that a Negro was pledged in one of the Fraternities in the North, it would harm.... It would be very harmful to Southern Chapters in the South, not that they’d get kicked off campus, but the Southern boys would be hesitant to join Delta Chi down South.<sup>19</sup>

In 1959, Acting Grand Consul Richard S. Doyle, from his State of Sigma Chi address at the Grand Chapter, stated:

For the first time, fraternities generally are finding themselves subject to criticism. We are all aware of the problem respecting standards of membership. Sigma Chi Fraternity is a close fraternal organization entitled to exercise its fundamental American right to select its members in accordance with its own high standards, which right is not to be confused with civil rights under the federal Constitution.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Sigma Chi, “Sigma Chi Founding,” <https://sigmachi.org/history/our-history/sigma-chi-founding/> (accessed June 12, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ryan P. Barone, (2014) "White Clauses in Two Historically White Fraternities: Documenting the Past & Exploring Future Implications," Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1, Article 6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25774/q5q7-bw84>.

<sup>19</sup> Ryan P. Barone, (2014) "White Clauses in Two Historically White Fraternities: Documenting the Past & Exploring Future Implications," Oracle: The Research Journal of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors: Vol. 9 : Iss. 1, Article 6. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25774/q5q7-bw84>

<sup>20</sup> Douglas Richard Carlson, *History of Sigma Chi Fraternity – 1955 to 1980* (Sigma Chi Fraternity, 1990) [https://sigmachi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reduced\\_Carlson-History-of-Sigma-Chi-1955-1980.pdf](https://sigmachi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reduced_Carlson-History-of-Sigma-Chi-1955-1980.pdf) (accessed June 12, 2022).



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The Civil Rights Movement brought to light discriminatory practices within public accommodations in many areas of American society, including universities and associations, such as fraternities, criticized for their lack of inclusion of non-white members. In 1961, the national organization of the Sigma Chi fraternity removed the white clause that specifically referred to whites only. Though the clause referring to white membership was removed, other procedures were put in place, to continue the prevention of initiating non-white men.<sup>21</sup> These new obstructionist procedures were put to the test in 1965.

By the early 1960s, Sigma Chi Fraternity was widespread, with one hundred and forty-one chapters on college campuses throughout the U.S. and over eighty-two thousand members, who were all white.<sup>22</sup> Despite its national membership and the removal of the white clause in 1961, as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the fraternity remained racially exclusive to whites only.<sup>23</sup> Officially, the constitution of Sigma Chi was amended in 1963. Thus, on paper, the fraternity appeared inclusive; however, an implicit rule against people of color remained.<sup>24</sup> This unofficial rule allowed the preclusion of membership for anyone “likely to be considered personally unacceptable as a brother by any chapter or any member anywhere.”<sup>25</sup> Proposed pledges had to follow new procedures that required Sigma Chi chapters to submit to the Sigma Chi national headquarters a form consisting of the pledge’s name, family nationality, religion, accompanied by a personal photograph. The Grand Council of Sigma Chi Fraternity maintained the authority to reject any application they deemed incompatible with its mission.<sup>26</sup> According to *The Magazine of Sigma Chi*, the “fraternity laws also required unanimous approval of pledges by chapter members and General Fraternity Executive Committee members.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, at this time, Sigma Chi Fraternity sought to continue to limit membership to whites only.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, implementation of the law remained slow, particularly in public accommodations, as contention in both public and private schools remained high. In 1964, faculty and administrators at Stanford University met to look at ways of providing equality to Blacks and other disadvantaged minority groups not only on campus but in society as a whole.<sup>28</sup> This same year, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Stanford University in the Stanford Memorial Auditorium. In 1965, the Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House at Stanford University invited the membership of Stanford student Kenny Washington, a Black freshman, the first chapter in the fraternity’s history to reject Alpha Omega’s longstanding mandate of racial exclusion by the all-white Sigma Chi fraternity. Although pledge bids from the Alpha Omega Chapter were sent out to prospective members in March 1965, the year leading up to the bid consisted of threats by the national fraternity and protests against the restrictions led by

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<sup>21</sup> Sigma Chi Fraternity. (n.d.), *The “white clause”* <https://sigmach.org/history/our-history/members/> (accessed January 29, 2023).

<sup>22</sup> Mike Antonucci, “What They Stood For,” *Stanford Magazine*, (March/April 2014), 46.

<sup>23</sup> “Stanford Fraternity That Pledged Negro Fights Suspension,” *New York Times*, April 14, 1965, 27.

<sup>24</sup> John Poppy, “What Happens When Sigma Chi Pledges a Negro,” *Look Magazine*, (July 27, 1965) 40.

<sup>25</sup> John Poppy, “What Happens When Sigma Chi Pledges a Negro,” *Look Magazine*, (July 27, 1965) 40.

<sup>26</sup> Fred Yoder, “Ripped Apart: The Battle to Integrate Sigma Chi,” *The Magazine of Sigma Chi*, Winter 1991, 6.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Richard W. Lyman, *Stanford in Turmoil*, “The Martin Luther King Jr. Crisis,” January 2009, 68-89.

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the Alpha Omega chapter.<sup>29</sup> The Stanford chapter—with the support of the University—continued to fight against the national fraternity’s restriction and even brought in alumni for counsel through a 1964 letter, which warned of the looming crisis and threats regarding the induction of minorities.<sup>30</sup>

According to *The Stanford Daily*, the chapter sent out six hundred letters, and of the one hundred and fifty replies, one hundred and twenty-five supported the Chapter’s move to open up initiations to Black students.<sup>31</sup> While this letter inspired action from some alumni, they received correspondence from the national president of the fraternity claiming further action would result in the suspension of the Stanford chapter.<sup>32</sup> The national fraternity, meanwhile, insisted that this threat of suspension was provoked by the overt insubordination and slovenliness of the Stanford chapter, rather than discrimination against individuals.<sup>33</sup> Despite the turmoil, the Stanford Alpha Omega chapter informed national Sigma Chi officials in February 1965 that “it intended to rush prospective members on a nondiscriminatory basis.”<sup>34</sup> With this warning, when pledge bids went out in March, the Stanford Chapter included a bid to Kenny Washington, who accepted the invitation on April 3, 1965, establishing the first known instance of a Black student’s pledge to a chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity.<sup>35</sup> The act of pledging a Black student tested both the obstructionist procedures held by national Sigma Chi officials and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned racial discrimination in public accommodations.

Despite the potential illegality of Black exclusion in public accommodations, on April 10, 1965, Stanford’s Sigma Chi chapter’s charter was suspended by national headquarters. Although the press did not initially report on the news of the membership of Washington to Sigma Chi, once the Stanford chapter received the notice of suspension on April 10, 1965, from Sigma Chi’s National Executive Committee, effective April 2, 1965, national news broke about the suspension.<sup>36</sup> Due to the timing of this suspension, the chapter and its supporters understood the suspension was due to the inclusion of a Black student in the fraternity. Although the national fraternity maintained that the suspension was in direct response to the lack of respect the Stanford chapter had consistently shown, seen as “contemptuous of the fraternity and its ritual and forms of fraternal procedure.”<sup>37</sup> The chapter responded vigorously, with the chapter’s president, Gary Kerns, stating, “we will not give up the pledge to stay in the national, but we intend to try to convince the nation that we should stay affiliated.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Poppy, 40.

<sup>30</sup> Antonucci, 46.

<sup>31</sup> Jim Hauser, “National Suspends Sigma Chi: Negro Pledge to Remain; Chapter to Appeal Ruling,” *The Stanford Daily*, April 13, 1965, Vol. 147, No. 35, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Poppy, 40.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Antonucci, 46.

<sup>35</sup> “Stanford Fraternity That Pledged Negro Fights Suspension,” *New York Times*, April 14, 1965, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Antonucci, 46.

<sup>37</sup> Yoder, 7.

<sup>38</sup> Hauser, 1.

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On April 14, 1965, the *New York Times* published an article, “The Stanford University Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity has pledged a Negro to membership and has been suspended by the national organization.”<sup>39</sup> The chapter’s actions made national news in an already tumultuous time, defying the national fraternity officials while standing against racial discrimination. During this time, Sigma Chi Fraternity Stanford chapter president Frank Olrich was unflinching in the earliest stages of the Sigma Chi confrontation. Shortly afterward, Stanford University, which already had explicit non-discrimination policies in place, issued a statement of support for the Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity, citing the chapter’s year-long correspondence with the national fraternity as a goodwill attempt by the Stanford chapter to maintain its affiliation, while respectfully impacting change.<sup>40</sup> Few members of the Stanford chapter understood at the time the reaction that their actions would inspire. Even Kenny Washington stated, “I had no idea when I accepted the bid that all this would happen... it was a very short-sighted move on the nation’s part, considering the events of the last three or four years in civil rights, the mood of the country, especially the mood of college campuses right now.”<sup>41</sup> Soon after the published response from Washington, a national debate was sparked on the legal and social ramifications of discrimination within the national fraternity of the Sigma Chi, as well as other fraternities on college campuses across the U.S.<sup>42</sup>

The “Stanford situation,” as it was sometimes referred to, fueled the national debate on racial exclusion in public accommodations in colleges and fraternities, a debate that played out in newspapers, in Congress, and on university campuses across the country.<sup>43</sup> The act by the Sigma Chi Chapter, in direct disobedience of the national fraternity, highlighted the importance of the Civil Rights of 1964 and the discriminatory practices within fraternities on college campuses. Subsequent reactions included discussions by college administrators and Congress on the potential denial of federal funds to colleges supporting discriminatory practices. As such, universities throughout the U.S. were confronted with the understanding that they must end discrimination by individual fraternity chapters or lose federal funding.

The act of pledging a Black student to Stanford’s Sigma Chi Chapter brought to the forefront the discriminatory practices of the college fraternities and highlighted the continued unlawful discrimination of Black people within public accommodations. In July 1965, only a few months after the fraternity’s suspension in April, there was congressional participation and debate on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. regarding Stanford’s Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi and fraternity practices of racial exclusion. The congressional debate was led by Stanford alumnus Montana Senator Lee Metcalf. Senator Metcalf assisted the chapter by pushing for federal intervention, on the grounds of discrimination in violation of Title VI, the Civil Rights Act of

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<sup>39</sup> *New York Times*, 27.

<sup>40</sup> “Stanford Backs Fraternity Unit: It Advises Other Colleges of Dispute Over Negro,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1965, 16.

<sup>41</sup> Poppy, 40.

<sup>42</sup> “Applicability of Civil Rights Act of 1964 to Colleges and Universities with Fraternities which Practice *de facto* Segregation,” *Congressional Record – Senate*, July 9, 1965, 16189-16190.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*; “Education in Review from Sigma Chi to Rights,” *The State and the Columbia Record*, Columbia South Carolina, June 27, 1965; “Stanford Backs Sigma Chi House in Racial Dispute,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, April 1965; “World of Education Still Quaking,” *The High Point Enterprise*, June 1965.

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1964.<sup>44</sup> This method was suggested by the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Francis Keppel, who believed that in order to incentivize change, federal funding and grants must be withheld from institutions that persisted in segregation.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Metcalf sought to demonstrate that the national fraternity was discriminating against the Alpha Omega Chapter for its induction of a Black member and was actively defying Title VI. As set forth in the Congressional Record of July 9, 1965, Senator Metcalf continued to push on the issue. He introduced letters from Sigma Chi defending their suspension of Alpha Omega, as well as from a fraternity alumnus and member of the U. S. military in support of the end to fraternity discrimination and editorials supporting the need to end such discrimination from the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, which cited the suspension of the chapter (June 21-27, 1965), and the *Nashville Banner* (June 24, 1965).<sup>46</sup>

Sigma Chi chapter fraternities at Brown and Yale Universities and the University of North Carolina also challenged the national organization of Sigma Chi, pledging Black students. Each time, Sigma Chi headquarters evoked the “socially acceptable” clause to avoid initiating Black students despite the earlier removal of the white clause and their denial that Stanford’s suspension was not discriminatory. Although all Black pledges by other Sigma Chi chapters were denied membership—appearing to be in direct violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—the national fraternity of Sigma Chi was able to avoid compliance through a membership clause that stated members must be “socially acceptable.”<sup>47</sup> The national chapter continued to maintain that their suspension of the Stanford Chapter had nothing to do with discrimination against Washington or the Chapter’s desire for more inclusivity.

The suspension of Sigma Chi Fraternity at Stanford University also brought Washington’s home state of Colorado into the spotlight, attracting the attention of a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado at Boulder. The Board recommended that Sigma Chi’s action in its Stanford chapter indicated that the fraternity was actively violating a resolution adopted by the University’s Board of Regents in 1956, whereby fraternities practicing racial or religious discrimination in Colorado were to be placed on probation. The Regents subsequently ordered the Beta Mu (Colorado) chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity to produce evidence to the contrary. The Beta Mu chapter mainly remained silent during the Regents hearing, producing the only evidence available—chiefly letters written by the chief executive officer of the national Sigma Chi Fraternity and others directly concerned with the Stanford incident, the Regents concluded that chapters of Sigma Chi were compelled to practice racial discrimination. In a stance against discrimination based on race, the Regents of the University of Colorado placed the Beta Mu chapter of the Sigma Chi on probation, including loss of rushing and pledging privileges, until it complied with the 1956 resolution.

Following an unsuccessful attempt by Beta Mu to have the Regents lift the probation, the fraternity brought an action seeking injunctive relief from the penalty, plus a declaratory

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<sup>44</sup> “Stanford Backs Fraternity Unit.”

<sup>45</sup> “Sanctions Against Campus Racism,” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, June 23, 1965, 36.

<sup>46</sup> “Applicability of Civil Rights Act of 1964 to Colleges and Universities with Fraternities which Practice *de facto* Segregation,” *Congressional Record – Senate*, July 9, 1965, 16189-16190.

<sup>47</sup> C. L. Tobenson, and Parks, G. S. (eds.), *Brothers and sisters*.

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judgment that the Regents had exceeded their authority and that their actions were unconstitutional and void. In *Sigma Chi Fraternity v. Regents of the University of Colorado*, a three-judge district court denied relief, holding that the Regents acted within the scope of their authority and that there was no violation of the fraternity's constitutional rights to freedom of association or procedural due process.<sup>48</sup> The fraternity's argument was grounded primarily in allegations that enforcement of the 1956 resolution resulted in an unconstitutional abridgment of the group's right to freedom of association. This right has received judicial recognition chiefly in *NAACP v. Alabama*.

In April 1966, the Alpha Omega Chapter at Stanford was reinstated into the national fraternity, after Washington's grade point average had dropped, preventing him from maintaining his membership with the fraternity. At the time, Dean of Students H. Donald Winbigler noted the reinstatement came at time when, "the Chapter has no Negro pledges who meet the academic requirements for initiation into the Fraternity."<sup>49</sup> This news was also published in a *New York Times* article that attributed the academic failing of Washington as the catalyst for the reconciliation, as members had to maintain a certain grade point average in order to remain an active member.<sup>50</sup> While this may have seemed like the end to a year of trouble, less than six months after the chapter's reinstatement, on November 10, 1966, the Stanford fraternity separated itself from the national fraternity and became an independent fraternity house.<sup>51</sup> In so doing, Alpha Omega upended the chapter's most basic bond with older alumni and in some ways shattered its identity. The chapter sacrificed the national organizational brotherhood and fellowship on behalf of integration.

After Stanford's Alpha Omega Chapter severed ties from the national fraternity in 1966, other chapters followed their lead, occasionally at the behest of the universities, which cited the discrimination clause of Sigma Chi's constitution as not in alignment with the values of the university.<sup>52</sup> Many schools began investigations into discrimination that would violate Title VI, and Harvard published an article in *The Crimson*, which assured the public, as well as the community, that they were in strict compliance with Title VI.<sup>53</sup> Further instances of the ripple effect of Alpha Omega's stand include the dismantling of racial exclusion on the University of Michigan's campus, citing Alpha Omega's stand as a catalyst for the Michigan Inter-fraternity Council's resolution outlawing discrimination.<sup>54</sup> The Lafayette College (Pennsylvania) Chapter planned to withdraw from the national fraternity if they were not allowed to pledge a student of Oriental ancestry.<sup>55</sup> The Cornell University Chapter voted to withdraw from the national fraternity based on disagreement with the nation's policy for membership selection.<sup>56</sup> What began as a simple pledge bid to an interested student sparked debate and change throughout the

<sup>48</sup> Thomas E. Blackwell, "How Civil Rights Act Affects Fraternities," *College and Univ. Bus.* 53 (Dec. 1966).

<sup>49</sup> "Sigma Chi Unit at Stanford Reinstated After a Year," *New York Times*, April 13, 1966, 19.

<sup>50</sup> "Stanford Sigma Chi Quits National Unit On Race Bias Issue," *New York Times*, November 11, 1966, 48

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> "Brown U. Tells Sigma Chi To Sever National Ties," *New York Times*, October 26, 1965, 28.

<sup>53</sup> "Club Bias May Cost College Govt. Funds," *Harvard Crimson*, July 12, 1965.

<sup>54</sup> "Stanford Fraternity That Pledged Negro Fights Suspension."

<sup>55</sup> "Sigma Chi Chapter May Bolt," *New York Times*, January 18, 1966, 11.

<sup>56</sup> "Cornell Sigma Chi Drops Affiliation," *New York Times*, April 10, 1966, 8.

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country, with national implications that affected thousands of fraternity chapters and millions of alumni members in the U.S. In April 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. returned to the Stanford University campus, speaking to the students and faculty. His speech focused on racism, civil rights in American society, and that there are “two Americas.” Discussing public accommodations and segregation, he stated, “it is much easier to integrate a public park than it is to make genuine quality integrated education a reality.”<sup>57</sup>

By late 1969, some major fraternities had changed their restrictive rules, most allowing chapters to initiate Blacks and other minority students. Sigma Chi remained a holdout. After much internal debate throughout the 1960s, in 1970, the fraternity finally stopped requiring the collection of demographic information on new members, essentially avoiding the race issue and passively allowing men of color into the organization. In 1971, the national Sigma Chi Fraternity officially revised its constitution and fraternity rules. According to the 1991 Winter edition of *The Magazine of Sigma Chi*, the 1971 changes removed the language regarding “likely to be considered personally unaccepted as a brother...” and revoked the veto power of the Executive Committee and Grand Council members regarding the acceptance of candidates.<sup>58</sup> This decision instantly ensured that Title VI was respected and eliminated the possibility of discrimination.

In 1974, after operating as an independent fraternity since late 1966, the Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity was reunited with its parent fraternity. Members of the Stanford Chapter fought from 1965 to 1974 to ensure that their chapter became inclusive to all races and was opened to all applicants, initially risking their fraternal ties with the national organization and to ensure there was no discrimination in public accommodations allowed within the fraternity. Their efforts sparked change across the country, for other chapters of Sigma Chi, other fraternities, and universities throughout the U.S. Thus, the chapter and its members’ actions served as a catalyst for the implementation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 public accommodations in college campuses, fighting for genuine equality in education. As part of a 2014 article in *Stanford Magazine*, Douglas Carlson, a past grand consul for Sigma Chi Fraternity, acknowledged that without the actions of the Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity in 1965, the fraternity would have remained obstinate, stating, “I would say those students and Ken Washington helped cause the fraternity to change years sooner than it would have otherwise.”<sup>59</sup> He also stated that their refusal to back down from their convictions in 1965 and their decision to sever ties with the national fraternity in 1966 inspired debate and brought awareness to the actual discrimination that the laws inspired.<sup>60</sup> Since 1974, Sigma Chi Fraternity has ensured an inclusive brotherhood, accepting Blacks and all minorities into their fraternities on all college campuses. This change is evidenced within the 1995 pledge of Stanford freshman Tiger Woods for the Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity, considered for membership without any pushback from the national fraternity.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Stanford University, “Martin Luther King, Jr. visits Stanford (1967)”, YouTube video, <https://youtu.be/cYK9xGALPrU> (accessed February 1, 2023).

<sup>58</sup> Yoder, 8.

<sup>59</sup> Antonucci, 49.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Jeff Benedict and Armen Keteyian, “Rich Friends,” *Tiger Woods* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2018), 94.

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The actions taken by the Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity in 1965 to invite the membership of a Black student to the fraternity was the catalyst that helped in the elimination of racial preferences in university associations and fraternity admissions. Prompted by Alpha Omega's ground-breaking rejection of the racial exclusion mandated by the national fraternity, which led to the eventual severance of all relations between the Stanford chapter and the national organization, the fraternity house is associated with an important event in the implementation of Black American civil rights. influencing fraternities on college campuses throughout the U.S., addressing racial inequalities that violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi at Stanford University spoke out against an injustice and fought to include Black students in their brotherhood, standing up for civil rights. They also stood against longstanding institutional discrimination and remained steadfast in their convictions, bringing about a greater effect that spread nationwide and changed fraternity constitutions.

In a 2002 *Stanford Report* story, Kenny Washington, stated,

I'll tell you the part that I appreciate. It's the sacrifice by the white Sigma Chis, who wanted so much to be part of their national fraternity. They in fact sacrificed being embraced by the national fraternity on behalf of integrating. And I've come to respect and honor those guys because they are the ones who really sacrificed that organizational brotherhood and fellowship.<sup>62</sup>

### **John Kennedy Branner, Architect**

Architect John Kennedy Branner (1886-1968) designed the Colonial Revival building in 1938. Branner was born in 1886 in Bloomington, Indiana, where his father John Casper Branner received his Ph.D. in geology and taught (1885-1891) at the University of Indiana. In 1891, John C. Branner was appointed Professor and Chair of the Department of Geology at the newly opened Stanford University. The family moved to a house constructed for the family at 13 Alvarado Row in Stanford. In 1912, John K. Branner completed his degree in architecture at Columbia University, and upon graduation, he traveled throughout Europe from 1912 to 1913, which appears to have significantly influenced his formative designs. In 1913, passionate about the Stanford University campus architecture, he pleaded with the Board of Trustees to hire a distinguished architect to design the new Main Library. In 1913, John C. Branner was appointed President of Stanford University. In 1917, John K. Branner started an architectural practice San Francisco at 519 California Street, where he specialized in residential architectural design. He partnered with Clarence A. Tantau, a prominent San Francisco architect who specialized in Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, also favored by Branner during this time. While Branner worked in San Francisco, he lived at his family home at 13 Alvarado Row. In 1925, Branner moved his office to 251 Kearney Street in San Francisco, and by 1942, his office was located at 210 Post Street in San Francisco's Union Square neighborhood.

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<sup>62</sup> "What They Stood For," *Stanford Magazine* (March/April 2014) <https://stanfordmag.org/contents/what-they-stood-for> (accessed July 2, 2022).

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John K. Branner specialized in residential architectural design for forty-six years. He designed the former Stanford Stadium (no longer extant), several houses in the historic San Juan Hill neighborhood, and several fraternity houses on the Stanford University campus between 1909 and 1936. Several of his campus houses are brown shingle buildings, often classified as California Craftsman or First Bay Tradition. He also worked in the Mediterranean style, popular at the time. Some of Branner's house designs are similar to those designed by Birge Clark, another respected Palo Alto and campus architect, known for his Spanish period-styled buildings.

### **Builder: George Wagner**

The Stanford Sigma Chi Fraternity House was constructed by George Wagner (1881-1982), who owned George Wagner Company (aka George Wagner Construction Company), a San Francisco-based building contracting company. Wagner was born in San Francisco and graduated from Lowell High School in 1899. He was a founding member of the San Francisco Architectural Club in 1901, and after the 1906 earthquake and fires devastated much of the city, he joined the booming construction industry to help rebuild.<sup>63</sup> In 1915, Wagner received his certificate to practice architecture in the State of California, and during this time, he founded the George Wagner Construction Company, often working with the San Francisco-based architectural firm Bakewell & Brown.<sup>64</sup> He was also one of Stanford University's building contractors during the early twentieth century, constructing several buildings on the Stanford University campus, including the Stanford Auditorium, Cubberley Education Building, Stanford Women's Gymnasium, Hoover Library, and the Fraternity House. Based on building permits, Wagner completed construction of the fraternity house with builder Adrian Martinez.<sup>65</sup> Under the George Wagner Construction Company, Wagner and Martinez constructed several other buildings and renovations within the Stanford University campus between 1923 and 1940.<sup>66</sup> In 1942, Wagner and Martinez formed the construction company of Wagner & Martinez.<sup>67</sup>

### **Adrian Martinez**

Adrian Martinez was born in Guatemala and immigrated to California in 1919. He was married to Christine Sartoris in 1929, and they had one daughter, also named Christine. In 1923, he began working for the George Wagner Construction Company in San Francisco, until 1942, when he started the firm Wagner & Martinez with George Wagner. The new construction firm was also based out of San Francisco, and over the next decade, the firm continued to work on projects for Stanford University, including renovation of the Stanford Administration Building, as a new Law School, with built-in furnishings.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Page & Turnbull, Department of Parks & Recreation 523 District Record: South End Historic District Addition, June 2009.

<sup>64</sup> PCAD, "Wagner, George, Construction Company" <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/firm/4594/> (accessed June 29, 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Newspapers.com, "Building Permits," *The Daily Palo Alto Times*, June 3, 1938.

<sup>66</sup> Newspapers.com, "Building Permits," *The Daily Palo Alto Times*, June 3, 1938; Page & Turnbull, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> Newspapers.com, "A. Martinez, Bay Area Builder Dies," *The Peninsula Times Tribune*, February 5, 1972.

<sup>68</sup> Newspapers.com, "Stanford Law School to use administration building," *The Peninsula Times Tribune*, July 19, 1948.



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### **Conclusion**

The Fraternity House represents the continued challenges faced by Black Americans after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and how the Stanford chapter confronted the discriminatory practices in public accommodations within Sigma Chi Fraternity. While the chapter first made headlines due to its inclusion of Washington in their fraternity in 1965, the following years demonstrated their resolve, as they faced suspension by the Sigma Chi national headquarters and separation from their fraternal connections. For the nine years following their decision, the chapter faced scrutiny that played out in newspapers across the country. While this fueled the chapter's negative relationship with the national organization, Stanford's Sigma Chi chapter was resolved, inspiring university chapters throughout the country, including Cornell University and Brown University, to withdraw from their national affiliation with Sigma Chi.<sup>69</sup> In 1974, the chapter regained its affiliation with the national fraternity, without compromising its inclusivity. Through the commitment of the Alpha Omega Chapter, fraternities across the country were inspired to open their enrollment to Black students, who, while legally allowed to enter post-1965, were seldom extended the respect.

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<sup>69</sup> "Cornell Sigma Chi Drops Affiliation," *New York Times*, April 10, 1966, 8.

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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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Stanford Sigma Chi Chapter

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

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than one acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.422855

Longitude: -122.169541

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

Bounded by Lasuen Mall to the east, Mayfield Avenue to the south, Lagunita Drive to the west, and Storey House (544 Lasuen Mall) to the north. The property is located on the Stanford University campus in the unincorporated area of Stanford in Santa Clara County.

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

Boundary encompasses the 0.5-acre portion of 16.9-acre Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 142-07-082 leased from Stanford University for use by Alpha Omega Chapter of Sigma Chi Fraternity.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Stacey De Shazo, MA; Nicole LaRochelle, MS; and John P. Martin

organization: Evans & De Shazo, Inc.

street & number: 1141 Gravenstein Highway S

city or town: Sebastopol state: CA zip code: 95472

e-mail: [stacey@evans-deshazo.com](mailto:stacey@evans-deshazo.com)

telephone: (707) 823-7400

date: July 2022; Revised December 2022, February 2023, April 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.)

### 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: Alpha Omega Chapter Sigma Chi Fraternity House  
City or Vicinity: Stanford  
County: Santa Clara  
State: California  
Photographer: Stacey De Shazo  
Date Photographed: May 20, 2022

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

- 1 of 19 East façade, camera facing northwest
- 2 of 19 South wing of east façade, camera facing west
- 3 of 19 Main entry on east façade, camera facing west
- 4 of 19 East Façade and north façade, camera facing southwest
- 5 of 19 East wing of north façade, camera facing south
- 6 of 19 Shed window on east wing of north façade, camera facing south
- 7 of 19 West wing of north façade, camera facing southwest
- 8 of 19 North façade and west façade, camera facing southeast

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- 9 of 19 West façade, camera facing east
- 10 of 19 West façade and south wing of west façade, camera facing northeast
- 11 of 19 Bay window on west wing of south façade, camera facing northwest
- 12 of 19 Second floor window on the south wing of west façade, camera facing north
- 13 of 19 South wing of west façade, camera facing east
- 14 of 19 Updated main stairs, camera facing west
- 15 of 19 Hallway to wood-paneled room
- 16 of 19 Wood paneled room, with original finishes
- 17 of 19 Original pocket door with fluted trim
- 18 of 19 Dining room, located in the north wing, facing southeast
- 19 of 19 Study area in dormer

**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

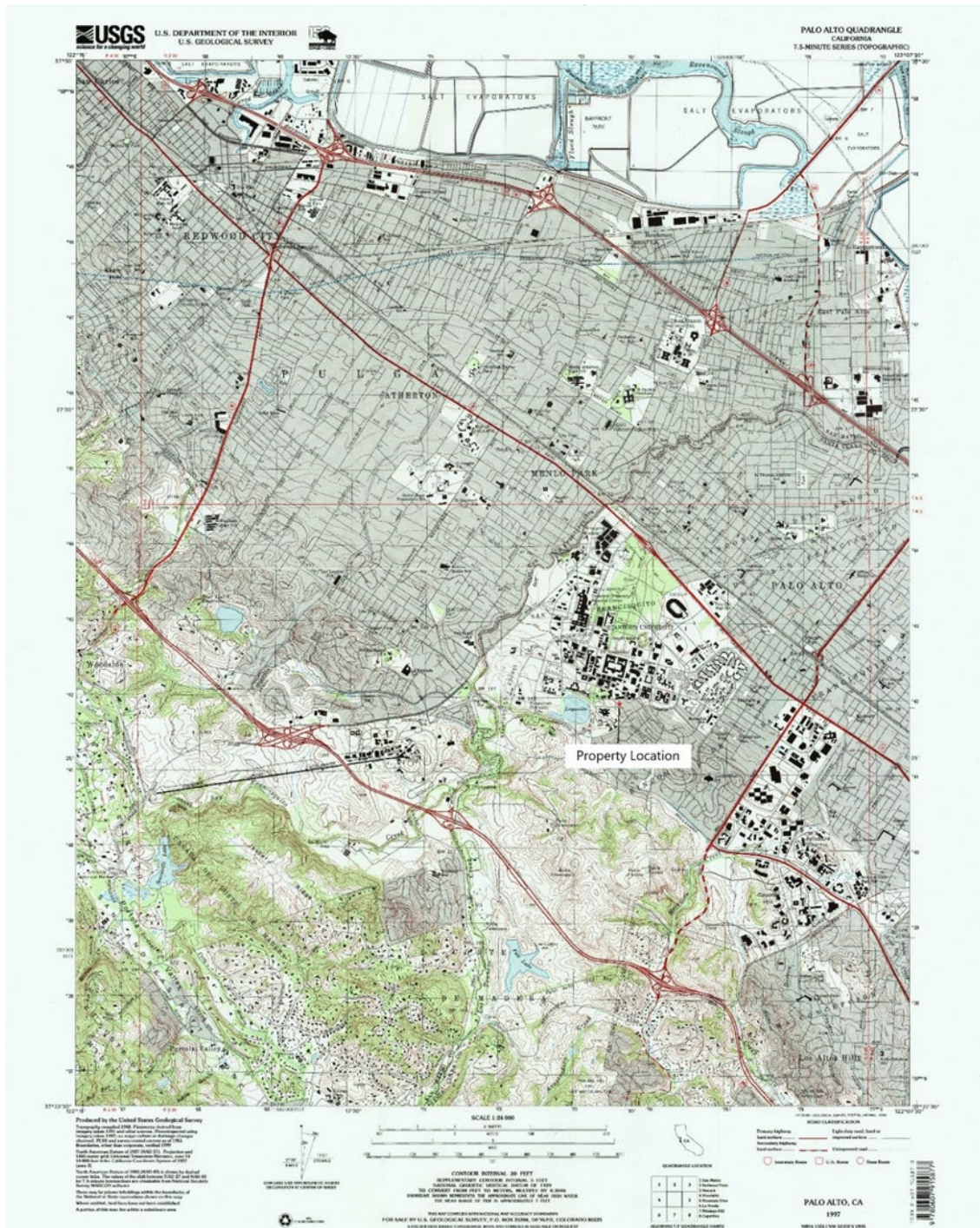
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201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

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### Location Map

1997 USGS Quadrangle Map – Palo Alto, CA

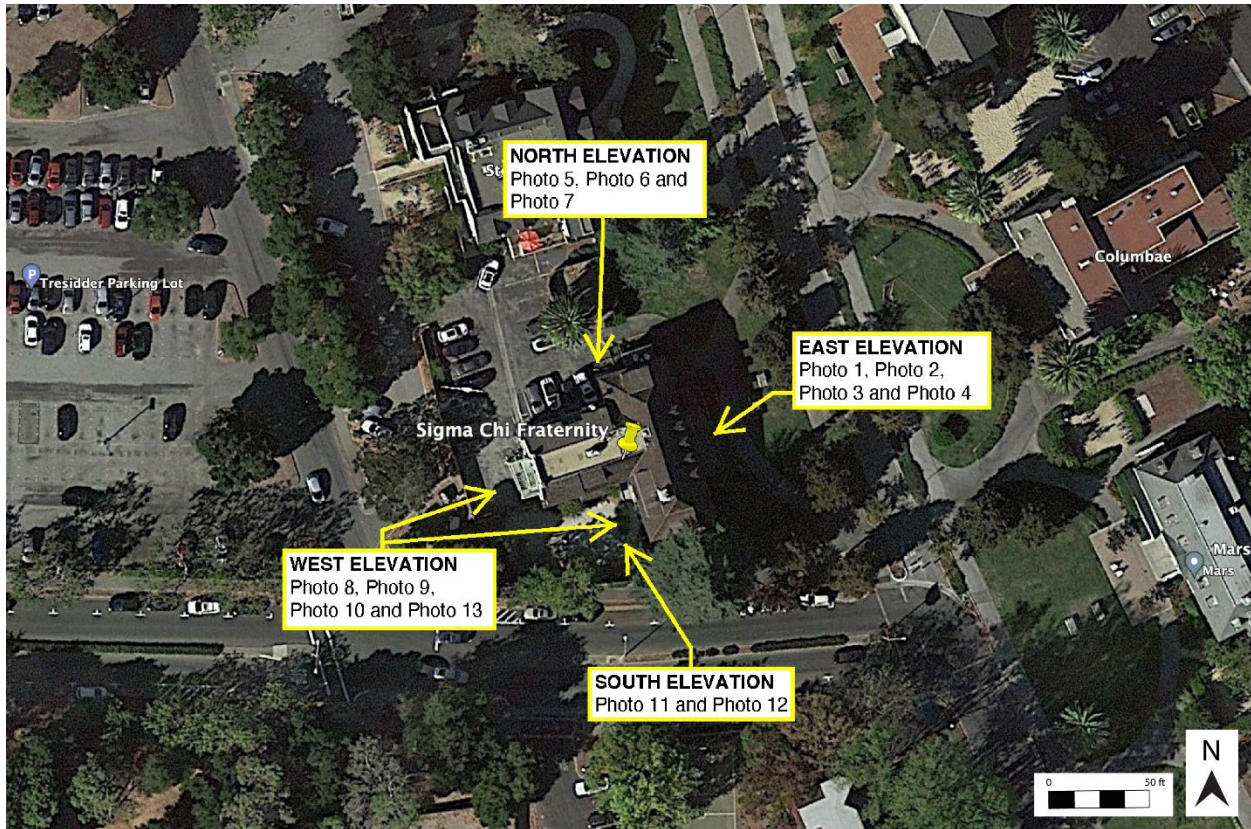




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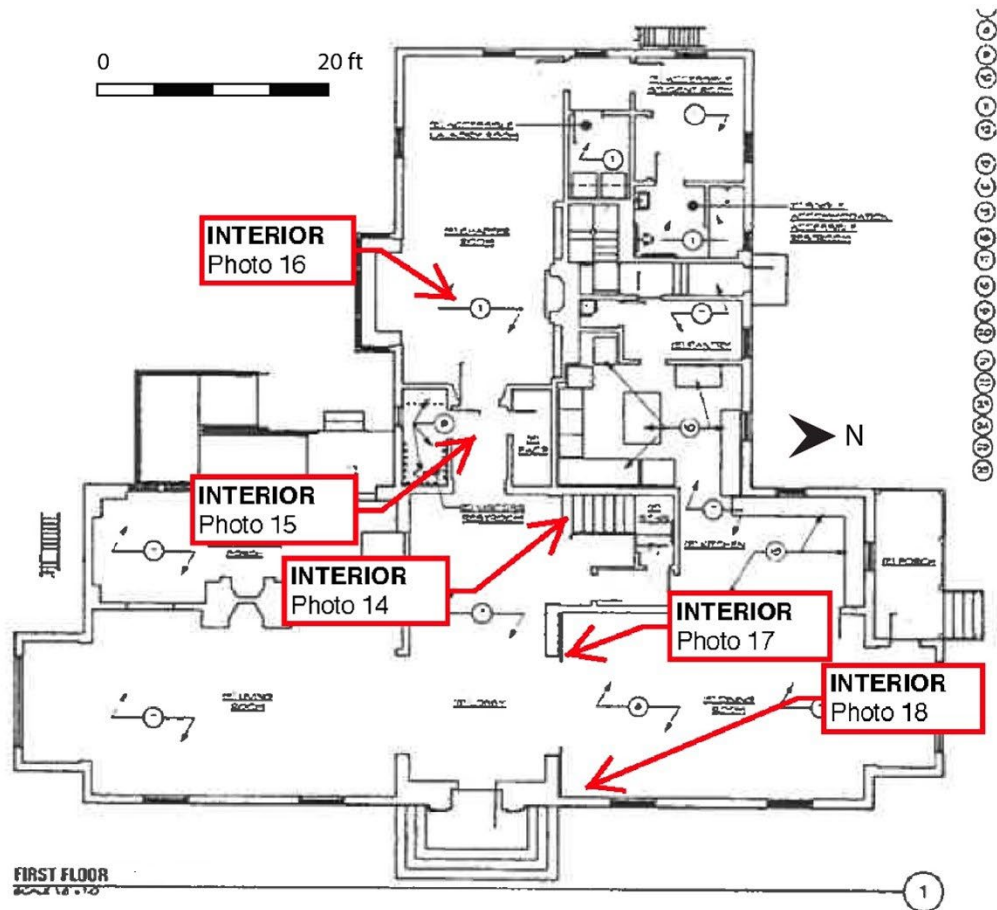
**Sketch Map/Photo Key 1 of 3—EXTERIOR**



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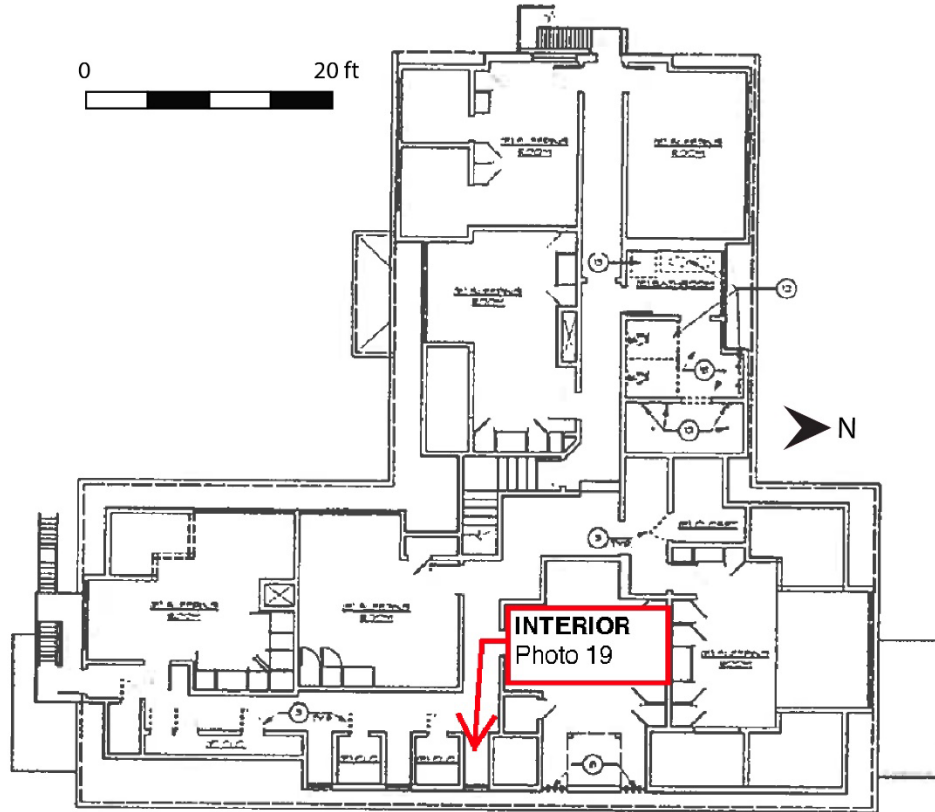
**Sketch Map/Photo Key 2 of 3—INTERIOR**



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**Sketch Map/Photo Key 3 of 3—INTERIOR**



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**Figure 1** Kenny Washington and Sigma Chi Fraternity brothers, 1965; Jim Marshall Photography



**Figure 2** Kenny Washington at an antiwar protest on the Stanford University campus, May 20, 1966; Chuck Painter/Stanford News Service



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**Photo 1** East façade, camera facing northwest



**Photo 2** South wing of east façade, camera facing west



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**Photo 3** Main entry on east façade, camera facing west



**Photo 4** East and north façades, camera facing southwest



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**Photo 5** East wing of north façade, camera facing south



**Photo 6** Shed window on east wing of north façade, camera facing south



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**Photo 7** West wing of north façade, camera facing southwest



**Photo 8** North façade and west façade, camera facing southeast





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**Photo 9** West façade, camera facing east



**Photo 10** West façade and south wing of west façade, camera facing northeast



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**Photo 11** Bay window on west wing of south façade, camera facing northwest



**Photo 12** Second floor window on the south wing of west façade, camera facing north



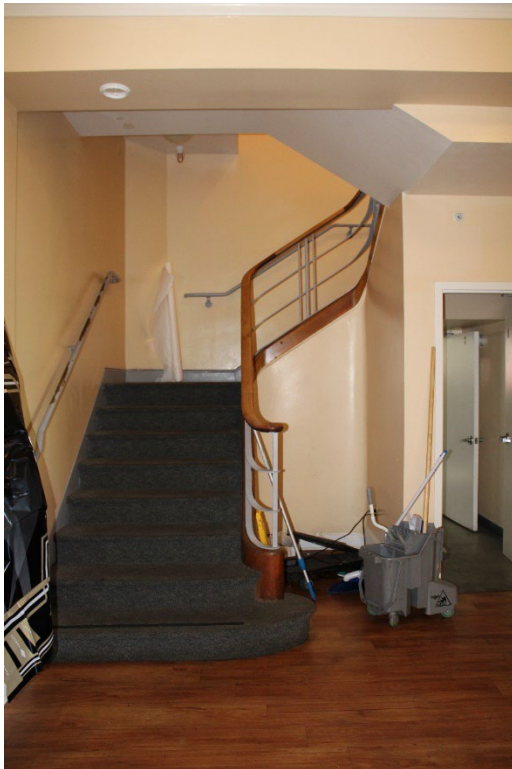
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**Photo 13** South wing of west façade, camera facing east



**Photo 14** Updated main stairs, camera facing west



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**Photo 15** Hallway to wood-paneled room



**Photo 16** Wood paneled room, with original finishes



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**Photo 17** Original pocket door with fluted trim



**Photo 18** Dining room, located in the north wing, facing southeast



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**Photo 19** Study area in dormer

