

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Century 21 Theater

Other names/site number: Winchester Theater 21

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)



2. Location

Street & number: 3161 Olsen Drive

City or town: San José State: California County: Santa Clara

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

<p>_____</p> <p>Signature of certifying official/Title: Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	
<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature of commenting official: Date</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Concrete block, steel, plywood, and stucco

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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Century 21 Theater occupies a 2.44-acre parcel located near the intersection of Interstate 280 and Winchester Boulevard in San José, California. The parcel is part of a larger 11.6-acre site comprising an asphalt-paved surface parking lot with four buildings on it: Century 21 Theater, Century 22 Theater, Century 23 Theater, and Flames Coffee Shop. This nomination is only for the Century 21 Theater, the oldest and most intact of the theaters. The Century 21 Theater is a one-story, concrete block, steel-frame, domed building containing an auditorium, lobby/concession area, restrooms, projection rooms, and storage. The shingled dome is parasol-shaped, with scalloped eaves, and it terminates at the top with an antenna-like steel finial. The primary façade faces east and consists of a projecting arcade composed of square piers supporting a painted plywood canopy embellished with zig-zag detailing. The canopy is surmounted by a plain stucco parapet, in front of which is a neon sign reading: "Century 21." The primary entrance is located at the center of the primary façade; it is composed of four pairs of glazed aluminum doors surmounted by transoms. The ticket sales area is located to the right of the main entrance and an aluminum-frame window wall is to the left. Concrete block wing walls extend beyond the main entry area to the left and to the right, enclosing the lobby. The wing walls are embellished with decorative detailing in the form of alternating projecting half-blocks arranged in a grid pattern. The Century 21 Theater is surrounded by mature landscaping consisting of palm trees, pepper trees, and other ornamental plantings. The property retains integrity from its 1964 period of significance.

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Narrative Description

Site

Located on the north side of Olsen Drive, just west of S. Winchester Boulevard, the parcel is level and paved in asphalt. The area surrounding the theater has several planting beds containing trees, shrubs, and ground cover, including palms, juniper, and various mature deciduous trees. Mechanical equipment and a loading dock are screened behind fencing along the west side of the building. The greater part of the larger 11.6-acre property, not included in this nomination, is devoted to surface parking. The Century 22 Theater (built 1966, enlarged after 1975) is located north of the Century 21 Theater and separated from it by a driveway. The Century 23 Theater (built 1968) is located south of the Century 21 Theater, on the opposite side of Olsen Drive. A large neon and backlit sign is located at the entrance to the property, at the intersection of Olsen Drive and S. Winchester Boulevard. The Winchester Mystery House is located to the southeast of the Winchester Theater complex. Flames Coffee Shop, originally built as a Bob's Big Boy restaurant, is located at the northeast corner of the larger property, and Santana Row, a regional shopping center is located on the east side of S. Winchester Boulevard. Several housing tracts and a 1960s trailer park bound the site to the north and to the west.

Exterior

Because the building is circular in plan, the Century 21 Theater does not have traditional conventional façades oriented toward the four cardinal points of the compass. The primary entrance and ticket sales office are housed within a pavilion that faces east toward the parking lot. This pavilion is three bays wide and sheltered beneath a painted plywood canopy that cantilevers out over the sidewalk. The canopy fascia is ornamented with a wood zig-zag design consisting of a repeating pylon shape enclosing painted, plywood shield motifs. The shields are illuminated at night by recessed lighting fixtures. A neon sign spelling "Century 21" is mounted on the roof of the canopy. The underside of the canopy is illuminated by plastic dome-light fixtures. Behind the sign is a curved parapet wall finished in stucco. This element, which articulates the projection room inside the building, is an example of the modernist principle of form following function. The later Century dome theaters on the site do not share this feature.

The left bay of the entry pavilion contains an anodized aluminum storefront consisting of four glazed panels. The center bay contains the primary entrance, which consists of four anodized aluminum, double-leaf doors surmounted by rectangular, inoperable transoms. The right bay of the entry pavilion consists of a pair of glazed anodized aluminum storefronts and the ticket sales kiosk, sheltered beneath a smaller canopy supported by steel pipe columns. The kiosk is paneled in non-historic stone tile. It retains its original ticket sales windows and the back-lit metal sign that displays the names and the times of the movies being shown. To the right of the ticket sales kiosk is the beginning of the decorative concrete block wing wall that extends partway around the north and south sides of the theater. The concrete block wall features a decorative pattern consisting of alternating half-block sections embedded crosswise into the standard stacked bond masonry.

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The decorative concrete block walls enclose the lobby and concession area, returning to the main building approximately one-third of the way around the north and south sides of the building. The rest of the exterior is constructed of standard concrete block laid in stacked bond. More utilitarian than the entry pavilion, the rear two-thirds of the Century 21 Theater is in large part defined by the curved steel ribs that support the domed roof. The ribs create regular structural bays along the lower portion of the walls. Several of these bays contain emergency exits, which each contain pairs of steel hollow-core doors without exterior hardware, presumably to prevent access by non-paying customers. Security cameras and HVAC equipment are located in several of the bays. Two of the rear (west) bays are enclosed behind fencing.

The domed roof of the Century 21 Theater constitutes the majority of the exterior surface area of the building. Defined by the steel ribs that support it, the roof is divided into 20 equal wedge-shaped segments. The lower edge of each wedge is scalloped, recalling the appearance of a mid-century parasol or a merry-go-round. The roof was originally clad in two-toned asphalt/composition shingles. The light shingles paired against a background of darker shingles formed a large starburst pattern at the center of the dome. The roof is now clad in asphalt/composition shingles of a consistent medium gray color. Crowning the top of the roof is a circular parapet that conceals roof-top ventilators. At the center of the circular parapet is a steel finial that resembles a UFO antenna or perhaps the turned wood finials of the nearby Winchester Mystery House.

Interior

The interior of the Century 21 Theater is very simple, consisting of a lobby/concession area at the front (east) side of the building and a large, approximately 1,000-seat auditorium to the rear (west). The lobby is flanked to either side by restrooms: the men's room to the north and the women's room to the south. Gently sloped ramps, also located at the north and south sides of the lobby, provide access to the auditorium.¹ At the rear (west) side of the building are several mechanical, storage, and loading areas. These spaces are all utilitarian in character.

The lobby/concession area was remodeled in 1997. As part of this work, the flooring, wall finishes, and ceilings were replaced with standard off-the-shelf materials available at that time, including carpeting and tile, stone tile wall cladding, glass block detailing, dropped acoustical tile ceilings, and new cabinetry. The lobby/concession area does retain its original layout. The restrooms were also remodeled in 1997.

¹ It is not known precisely how many seats are located in the Century 21 Theater. When the theater originally opened it contained 950 seats. After the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, portions of several rows of seating were removed to accommodate wheelchairs. Since then all of the seats were replaced. Contemporary theater seats are larger than what were originally used in the 1950s and 1960s on account of the expanding girth of the average American. Sources familiar with the theater say that the management increased the number of seats by infilling the area between the seats and the screen.

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Aside from the seating and the carpeting, the interior of the auditorium remains unchanged. The auditorium is very simple, consisting of several concrete tiers divided by metal pipe railings. The tiers are linked by short flights of carpeted stairs illuminated by colored lights. The tiers are terraced, and each terrace is lined by a row of seats. The seats are upholstered in a turquoise color to match the fabric soundproofing that drapes the walls and the lower portion of the dome. Similar to the exterior, the interior of the auditorium is divided into 20 wedge-shaped segments by steel ribs. These ribs meet at a single point at the center of the dome. The area between the ribs is covered in turquoise-colored acoustical tiles which match the soundproofing fabric on the walls. Recessed incandescent lights and ventilators punctuate the dome in a regular pattern. The projection room is located at the east side of the auditorium; its location is indicated by two pairs of glazed openings. Audio speakers are suspended from the ceiling near the projection booths. The west wall of the auditorium is dominated by the large projection screen, which is curved to match the profile of the dome. The lower portion of the north and south walls are punctuated by pairs of steel exit doors that lead outside.

Alterations

There are very few alteration permits on file for the Century 21 Theater property, in part because the subject property was not annexed by San José until 1980. In 1997, the property owner applied for a permit to complete a full Americans with Disabilities Act upgrade of the toilet rooms and install a new snack bar. At some point the roof of the dome, which originally featured a decorative starburst pattern, was re-shingled using gray asphalt shingles of a uniform color. This change was probably made in 1997. The carpeting and the seating within the auditorium was replaced circa 1997 as well.

Integrity

The Century 21 Theater retains all aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location

The Century 21 Theater has never been moved. The property retains integrity of location.

Design

Aside from the lobby/concession area finishes and the starburst shingle pattern on the dome's exterior, the Century 21 Theater has undergone few changes to its original design. The building still retains its original massing and materials and the features that reflect its historic function, technologies, and aesthetics. The property retains integrity of design.

Setting

Aside from its landscaping having matured, the immediate setting of the Century 21 Theater has not changed since 1964. Designed as the first component of a larger multiplex of freestanding domed theaters, the Century 21 Theater was joined by the Century 22 Theater in

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1966 (with post-1975 additions) and the Century 23 Theater in 1968. The rest of the site has remained in use as a surface parking lot serving the theaters and the nearby Flames Coffee Shop. The property retains integrity of setting.

Materials

Aside from the 1990s-era finish materials in the lobby, the vast majority of the original materials used to construct the Century 21 Theater and finish are still present and in good condition. The exterior of the dome has been re-shingled at least once, and the materials used are in-kind with what was originally used. Nearly everything else, including the concrete block and wood-frame and stucco walls, anodized aluminum storefronts and doors, plywood detailing, fabric-covered auditorium walls, and acoustic tile ceilings survive intact. The property retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

Though made primarily of mass-produced materials widely available during the postwar era, the Century 21 Theater does display some elements of handicraft and skilled workmanship, including the decorative concrete block exterior walls, the carefully welded and custom shaped dome ribs, and the custom-fabricated finial atop the dome. These examples of workmanship illustrate the aesthetic and technological values of the postwar/mid-century period, where faith in technology and the future conveyed a sense of optimism and playfulness. The property retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

Precisely because it retains so many of its original materials, design features, and setting, the Century 21 Theater is a physical embodiment of 1960s-era popular culture, when the car was king and movie-going a top national pastime. The Space Age design of the theater, which resembles a geodesic dome or perhaps even a flying saucer, speaks to the fascination that ordinary Americans had with the future, including high technology and space exploration. In addition to the flying saucer motif, the shingled roof of the Century 21 Theater originally bore the outline of a starburst, which along with Sputniks, amoebas, and various other motifs was a popular symbol of the time. The Century 21 Theater retains integrity of feeling.

Association

The Century 21 Theater retains its association with its period in time in American history.

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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.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1964

Significant Dates

1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Raney, Vincent G.

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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 Century 21 Theater is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C at the local level as an early and notable example of a Cinerama-type theater designed by noted Bay Area architect Vincent G. Raney. The period of significance is 1964, the year that the building was completed. Virtually unaltered on its exterior, the Century 21 Theater embodies the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modernist style and suburban roadside architecture popular during the 1960s. It is one of the best-known modernist landmarks in San José, a city that grew from a small agricultural community during the postwar period into America's tenth largest city and the center of high technology for the world. The Century 21 Theater represents a period of optimism and prosperity in a fast-growing city. Cinerama is the name for a patented widescreen projection system that uses three synchronized 35 mm projectors to project images on a curved screen extending 164 degrees. In the United States there are only two theaters currently equipped to show films in Cinerama, the precursor to the wide-screen IMAX projection system of fifty years later. Later, the process was refined so that the Cinerama films could be exhibited with a single-lens projector. The Century 21 Theater in San José joins the locally landmarked Cinerama Dome in Hollywood as one of the best surviving examples of the freestanding dome type theater remaining in California.

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

Historic Context: San José: 1945-1970

At the end of World War II, San José had been transformed from a rural backwater of apricot and cherry orchards into a fast-urbanizing high-tech region. New defense, aviation, and high technology plants had sprung up all over the valley, and housing tracts began creeping into the orchards and foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo Range. The booming industrial sector – with its concomitant growth in suburban housing development – nurtured an expansionist climate in local city government. During the postwar era, San José's city government began its first large-scale planning projects, culminating in 1948 with City Manager O.W. Campbell's *Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan*. Many civic buildings were designed and built under the aegis of this plan. Anthony Peter "Dutch" Hamann was sworn in as Campbell's replacement on March 27, 1950 - the Centennial of San José's incorporation. Appointed by a pro-growth majority on the City Council, Hamann began an aggressive annexation program. Aiming to make San José the commercial and industrial leader of the Bay Area, Hamann annexed 1,419 acres by the end of 1969.² As these lands were annexed their value for development soared and escalating property taxes forced ranchers off their land. In this way

² PAST Consultants, LLC, *Historic Context Statement for San José Modernism*, 27.

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suburbanization became a self-perpetuating cycle, and Hamann's leapfrogging annexations succeeded in pushing the suburban frontier out further and further.

In 1952, Hamann's staff prepared a report titled: *Planning San José*. This report outlined recommendations for expanding auto-centered development into the Santa Clara Valley's rural hinterlands. The document explicitly acknowledged the primacy of the automobile in modern planning, rejecting San José's small and antiquated central business district.³ The neighborhood shopping center was identified as the model for future development, and Hamann made building automobile-related infrastructure a top priority for his capital improvement plans. Hamann proposed the construction of several new freeways and the widening of many rural two-lane roads into multi-lane arterial boulevards, called expressways. He also tapped the Federal Aid Highway Acts of 1952 and 1956, making millions of dollars available for highway expansion, including the construction of the Sinclair Freeway (Interstate 280), just south of the future Century 21 Theater site, as well widening Winchester Boulevard (formerly the two-lane Santa Clara-Santa Cruz Road) to six lanes.⁴

Historic Context: Modernism in San José

The huge growth of San José between 1940 and 1969 produced hundreds of modernist buildings of every functional type, including civic, industrial, commercial, and religious. Commercial buildings in particular were representative of the postwar embrace of the automobile, including shopping centers, drive-in restaurants, automobile sales and repair facilities, service stations, and drive-in banks and theaters.⁵ The mushrooming population also propelled the need for professional services, with medical and dental offices often constructed in modernist designs. Modernism was also the most popular choice for most new civic buildings, including schools, fire stations, and libraries, as well as San José's new City Hall and the adjoining joint City/County Civic Center.

San José's rapid centrifugal expansion especially required new retail shopping centers, which blossomed along the numerous arterial roadways, especially near freeway interchanges. Town and Country Village Shopping Center was built on the east side of S. Winchester Boulevard (directly opposite the Century 21 Theater) in the early 1960s. Convenient features for motorists, including off-street parking and drive-through lanes, became key considerations in the location and design of retail developments. Because people traveling in automobiles were moving faster than traditional modes of transportation, many commercial buildings were designed in eye-catching styles that often incorporated imagery depicting Space Age motifs like flying saucers, Sputniks, starbursts, boomerangs, or atoms. The Century 21 Theater, constructed in 1964 near Winchester Boulevard's future interchange with Interstate 280, is one

³ Ibid, 28.

⁴ Ibid., 32.

⁵ Ibid., 42.

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of the foremost examples of this popularized type of modernist commercial architecture in San José.

Historic Context: Site History

The subject property is part of what was historically part of a 66-acre ranch surrounding the Winchester Mystery House.⁶ The Winchester House was developed over a period of 38 years by Sarah Winchester, widow of William Winchester, heir of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. Following the death of their daughter Annie in 1866 and of William Winchester in 1881, Sarah Winchester visited a medium who told her that the spirits of those slain by Winchester rifles were seeking revenge on her family. In 1884, Winchester left New Haven, Connecticut and purchased an orchard with a house on the Santa Clara-Santa Cruz Road (now Winchester Boulevard). Winchester immediately began remodeling the farmhouse and over the next 38 years she built multiple additions. It is rumored that Winchester remodeled the house over 600 times. Addition after addition, including stairs and corridors that went nowhere, were supposedly to confuse the spirits allegedly seeking her demise.⁷

Sarah Winchester died in September 1922 at the age of 82. She left the property to her niece Marion “Daisy” Merriam Marriott, who removed the furniture and put the property up for sale in 1923. Though there was interest in the surrounding plum and apricot orchards, few were interested in the outdated house. Unable to sell it, the Winchester heirs leased the property to John and Mamie Brown. The Browns, who had previously owned an amusement park, saw commercial potential in the mysterious house. The house opened to the public as a museum and roadside attraction in May 1923. It soon became a popular destination for those interested in the occult mysteries of San José’s very own “House of Usher.” In 1931, the Browns purchased the property from the Winchester heirs and subdivided and sold most of the surrounding 66 acres. They kept the 15 acres surrounding the house to serve as a buffer against future development.⁸ This property, which encompasses the Winchester Theater complex – an area bounded by Olin Avenue, S. Winchester Boulevard, I-280, and the San José city limits – continues to belong to the Browns’ heirs, including members of the Farris and Raney families.⁹

The property surrounding the Winchester House remained in agricultural use for decades following Sarah Winchester’s death. By the late 1940s, suburban development was already

⁶ “Winchester Mystery House” is trademarked by the current operator of the property. The nomination references the more historically accurate “Winchester House.”

⁷ Mary Jo Ignoffo, *Captive of the Labyrinth: Sarah L. Winchester, Heiress to the Rifle Fortune* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), 204-209.

⁸ According to an article in the *Fresno Bee*, the owners of Winchester Investments include Edna May Raney of Belmont, Gerard Raney of Redwood City, Ray Farris Sr. of Monte Sereno, Ray Farris II and Sandra Farris of Monte Sereno, and Valerie Bovone of San José. Shannon Barry, “Winchester Mystery House: Historical Landmark Comes to Life for Halloween,” *San Jose Mercury News* (October 22, 2012).

⁹ Jake Batsell, “Ownership of Winchester House is Biggest Mystery; Safety and Privacy keep Owners of San Jose Landmark Quiet,” *Fresno Bee* (June 1, 1997).

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creeping south and west from downtown San José. A 1948 aerial photograph shows the Winchester property surrounded by orchards, though housing tracts are visible just south of Stevens Creek Boulevard. By 1956, the Winchester property was bounded by housing tracts to the north and to the west. Winchester Boulevard was still a two-lane country road on the 1956 aerial, and the subject property was still largely devoted to agriculture, including pasture and orchards, with the Winchester House, its gardens, and barns and outbuildings clustered at the southeast corner of the property (**Figure 1**).

Historic Context: Design and Construction of the Century 21 Theater

In 1963, the Brown heirs entered into an agreement with Raymond “Ray” Syufy to build a theater complex on the undeveloped part of the Winchester property, entering a 50-year lease agreement with Syufy. Syufy was a 44-year-old theater developer who had built a chain of drive-in and traditional sit-down movie theaters across the San Francisco Bay Area.

Raymond Syufy was born in Sacramento in 1920 to Lebanese immigrants, William and Pauline Syufy. He grew up in Berkeley, where he worked in his parents’ grocery store. While Syufy was attending law school at UC Berkeley, his mother learned about a small, unfinished movie theater in Vallejo called The Rita that was for sale. Pauline Syufy mortgaged the family business to buy it “so her son could show her what he could do.” Ray Syufy, who was already working part-time as a theater usher, quit law school to run the new business, which he reopened in 1943. Almost immediately Syufy faced lawsuits from several major movie studios, including Fox and Paramount. They sued him because he was showing first-run films without permission. Syufy decided to fight back, and in 1947, he filed a \$1 million lawsuit against the major Hollywood studios, alleging monopolistic practices in the distribution of motion pictures. Syufy had apparently latched onto the same arguments used in antitrust litigation that the Department of Justice had been pursuing since 1938. Syufy eventually filed nearly a dozen lawsuits against the studios and undoubtedly played a significant part in the court-ordered demise of the “Studio System.” As part of the court decision, the studios were forced to divest themselves of their movie theaters, a boon for independent operators like Syufy.¹⁰

In 1949, sensing the change in post-war America and the migration of people to the newly developing suburbs, Syufy built his first drive-in movie theater in Vallejo, adding it to three other indoor theaters he owned in that city. During the 1950s, Syufy concentrated on drive-ins, building the Geneva and Mission Drive-in Theaters in San Francisco and others in Union City, Cupertino, Burlingame, and Las Vegas.¹¹ In the 1960s, Ray Syufy decided to move into the fast-growing Santa Clara Valley. His first theater in the area, the subject of this nomination, was also

¹⁰ Suzanne Donahue, *American Film Distribution* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1987).

¹¹ Barbara Bladen, “Twin Drive-in Theater,” *San Mateo Times* (June 26, 1965), 12A. “Vallejo Theater Operators Sue Studios, Film Distributors for Million Damages,” *Oakland Tribune* (May 6, 1947). Charles Hurd, “Film Booking Issue Ordered Reopened,” *The New York Times* (May 4, 1948). Obituary: “Raymond Syufy,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 2, 1995).

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his first “Cinerama” dome theater. The name Syufy chose for the theater, “Century 21,” was a reference to the upcoming millennium, or more simply “the future” and everything that it evoked to mid-century Americans, including space travel and other science fiction-inspired ideas of what it meant to be modern.

Syufy hired architect Vincent G. Raney to design his new Century 21 Theater. Raney was related to the owners of the Winchester property through his wife, Edna (née Brown) Raney, daughter of John and Mayme Brown. Raney did not win the commission through his family connections; he had been working with Syufy since at least 1946. Instead, Raney was likely the figure who suggested to his in-laws that they strike a deal with Ray Syufy to develop the undeveloped portion of the Winchester property.

Inspired by the recently completed Cinerama Dome in Hollywood (completed in 1963), Raney’s original design for the Century 21 Theater shows some departures from its counterpart in Southern California, which was as an actual geodesic dome inspired by the work of architect and theorist R. Buckminster Fuller. Instead of multiple pre-cast concrete panels, Raney designed a very simple and smooth hemispherical dome supported by huge, curved steel ribs. Though the original drawings do not seem to have survived, drawings of the Pleasant Hill CineArts Dome (demolished in 2013) show an almost exact twin to the Century 21 Theater. The Pleasant Hill dome did not have an extruded projection room or the distinctive zig-zag molding on the parapet of the Century 21 Theater (**Figure 2**).

Whereas the Hollywood Cinerama Dome gains much of its visual interest by virtue of its multi-faceted geodesic dome, the Century 21 Theater’s dome has a smooth profile because of its simpler construction.¹² Perhaps to make up for its inherent simplicity, Raney designed a huge starburst motif (made of shingles of two contrasting colors) and an antenna-like steel finial mounted to the top of the dome. Combined with the overall shape of the dome, the finial gives the theater the appearance of a flying saucer, a very common Space Age motif during the 1950s and 1960s.¹³ Early renderings of the property show it paired against another Space Age-style business, the Bob’s Big Boy (now Flames Coffee Shop) built at 449 S. Winchester Boulevard. The Bob’s Big Boy signage recalls a rocket ship and the upswept roof resembles an airplane wing (**Figure 3**).

The Century 21 Theater opened for business on November, 24 1964. Advertisements in Bay Area newspapers billed it as “Northern California’s most unusual and luxurious theatre.”¹⁴ Others said that it would usher in “a new era in entertainment.” United Artists’ *It’s a Mad, Mad*,

¹² Los Angeles Department of City Planning, “Designated Historic-Cultural Monuments,” <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/node/45/>

¹³ The finial may also be a subtle reference to the dozens of turned wooden finials on the nearby Winchester House.

¹⁴ “Now....See Cinerama in San Jose,” Advertisement, *Hayward Daily Review* (November 25, 1964).

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Mad, Mad World, which was filmed using the new three-camera Cinerama system, was the first film shown to the public at the Century 21 Theater. Designed as an in-the-round theater, with a large 164 degree screen, the Century 21 Theater was designed to exhibit Cinerama films, a predecessor to IMAX.¹⁵ Early Cinerama films used a three-camera and three-projector system to give the film a three-dimensional quality. Unfortunately they were expensive to film and even more troublesome to project, especially keeping all three projectors in sync.¹⁶ Learning from the problems that faced other early Cinerama theaters, Syufy dispensed with the three-projector system at the Century 21 Theater and substituted a simpler single-lens, 70 mm process in its place. The technology was able to show Cinerama-type films in a similar format as the original, with the viewer feeling as if he or she was physically part of the film.

The Century 21 Theater was the first of three theaters that would eventually become the Winchester Theaters complex. It is not known if they were all originally planned, but as this part of suburban Santa Clara County continued to grow, especially after the completion of Interstate 280, Syufy added additional theaters.¹⁷ In 1966, Syufy Enterprises constructed the Century 22 Theater at 3162 Olin Avenue, just north of the Century 21 Theater. The Century 23 Theater was built next, in 1968, on the south side of Olsen Drive. In contrast to the Century 21 Theater, Century 23 was a split dome, meaning that its interior was divided into two theaters instead of the classic theater-in-the-round format of Century 21. An aerial photograph taken in 1968 shows the property with all three Century theaters completed. The photograph also shows the Bob's Big Boy coffee shop at the northeast corner of the property, a small cluster of oaks between the theaters and the coffee shop, and a remnant orchard between the Century 23 Theater and Interstate 280 (**Figure 4**). During the following years Syufy built additional domes in San José, including Century 24, at 741 S. Winchester Boulevard (also a split dome), in 1968; and Century 25, at 1694 Saratoga Avenue (a split dome), in 1969.¹⁸ Eventually the orchard was removed and the patch of pasture and oaks turned into additional parking, leaving the Winchester House the final remaining vestige of the property's rural heritage. After 1975, the Century 22 Theater was expanded in size with the addition of two smaller domes on its east façade.

Throughout the time that Syufy Enterprises operated the Century 21 Theater it served as a first-run theater. It was unusual and different from other theaters in the area because patrons could reserve their seats in advance of the show. The Century 21 Theater locally premiered dozens of blockbusters, including *Battle of the Bulge* (1966), *Grand Prix* (1967), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Krakatoa, East of Java* (1969), and *Star Wars* (1977).¹⁹ The theater was equipped with a

¹⁵ Michael Coate, "Remembering Cinerama," *Cinema Treasures*:

<http://cinematreasures.org/blog/2012/6/15/remembering-cinerama-part-53-san-jose>

¹⁶ "Preview Opens Hollywood's New Theater," *Los Angeles Times* (November 4, 1963).

¹⁷ The subject property was not annexed to the City of San José until 1980.

¹⁸ Interview with Heather David, author, *Mid-Century by the Bay*, June 1, 2013.

¹⁹ Michael Coate, "Remembering Cinerama," *Cinema Treasures*:

<http://cinematreasures.org/blog/2012/6/15/remembering-cinerama-part-53-san-jose>

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state-of-the-art dual-channel audio system, installed by the Ampex Company, based in nearby Redwood City. Even as freestanding movie theaters began to disappear in the 1970s and 1980s because of competition from multiplexes, and later during the 1990s and 2000s, as Americans began watching more movies at home, Century 21 and its neighboring Century 22 and Century 23 Theaters remained open and prosperous.

Eventually, Syufy's Century Theater chain (named for the Century 21 Theater in San José – the first to bear the Century badge) grew to encompass almost 1,000 screens in five western states. A long-time Sausalito resident and trustee of St. Mary's College in Moraga, Mr. Syufy died in 1995. After Ray Syufy's death, management of the Century Theater chain passed to his sons Joe and Ray Syufy, Jr. By the time they sold the family business to Cinemark USA in 2006, the Century chain operated 78 theaters in the West, with a total of 994 screens.²⁰ As part of the deal the Syufy family retained the Century 21, 22, and 23 Theaters in San José. Ray Syufy's 50-year lease of the property expired in 2013. The Century 21 Theater is currently rented to Guggenheim Entertainment, operating the theater as The Retro Dome.

Historic Context: Movie Theater Design

The earliest motion pictures were projected in a variety of spaces, including town halls, churches, amusement parks, county fair tents, playhouses, and Vaudeville theaters. Most early movies were brief "shorts" – plot-less features designed to show off the capabilities of the new medium. After 1900, storefront theaters or "nickelodeons" became a national craze, opening across the United States. These businesses were typically housed in standard commercial storefronts and were rarely more than a collection of chairs set up in front of a stage, with a curtain separating the "lobby" from the viewing area.

From early on, nickelodeons (so-called because they typically cost a nickel to attend) gained a reputation as uncouth establishments geared toward the lower classes. Upper-class people tended to avoid them, preferring to patronize the so-called "legitimate theater." The first purpose-built movie theater was likely Tally's Electric Theater in Los Angeles, which was built in 1902. This theater and later counterparts showed "picture plays" – dramatized features filmed specifically for movie theaters. Some were shown in Vaudeville houses between live acts, which exposed them to more discerning audiences in the 1910s. One of the first full-length feature films ever made was D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, which opened in 1915.²¹

The movie industry grew tremendously after the First World War, especially during the 1920s as Americans began flocking to increasingly monumental and fantastic "movie palaces" designed by firms like Rapp & Rapp, S. Charles Lee, and others. Between 1914 and 1922, 4,000 new movie theaters opened across the United States. These gilded and often gaudy theaters could oftentimes seat upwards of 2,500 customers. Designed in the Beaux-Arts, Classical Revival, and

²⁰ Tom Abate, "Century Theatre Chain sold to Texas Operator," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 9, 2006).

²¹ David Naylor, *Great American Movie Theaters* (Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1987), 15.

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later Art Deco, Spanish Colonial, Moorish, and Egyptian Revival styles (among others), American movie palaces offered dozens of amenities, including smoking rooms, nurseries, state-of-the-art ventilation and air conditioning, as well as elaborate snack bars and promenade lobbies where people could “see and be seen.” Their exotic styling and high level of architectural finishes created an atmosphere of three-dimensional fantasy to accompany the two-dimensional fantasy on the screen, where regular people could escape the humdrum realities of everyday life.²² By the late 1920s, movie theaters had largely put vaudeville out of business, becoming one of America’s favorite pastimes.

The Depression hit the motion picture industry hard. Construction of new theaters slowed, though many older theaters (some barely more than a decade old) were remodeled in the Art Deco style, in an effort to attract new patrons during tough economic times. In addition, many smaller towns got their own theaters because the urban markets were oversaturated. The advent of sound in 1927 and the arrival of color in the 1930s resulted in an uptick in movie-going. By the mid-to-late 1940s, wartime austerity and changing tastes led to simpler and more utilitarian theaters. In addition, wartime gasoline rationing, which made travel to urban centers more expensive, led to the construction of many neighborhood and small town theaters.²³

Historic Context: Mid-Century Movie Theater Design

Movie theater design was only one of many changes that accompanied the end of World War II. Returning GIs took advantage of subsidized loans to purchase new homes in the suburbs, which builders were all too happy to supply. Federal highways hastened the suburban diaspora away from the city centers. As housing tracts took the places of orchards and farms, developers built auto-oriented shopping centers, banks, and theaters to serve the new residents. The suburban exodus, combined with the popularity of television in the early 1950s, presented major challenges and opportunities to movie theater operators. Entrepreneurs like Ray Syufy responded by building new state-of-the-art theaters in the fast-growing suburbs, including drive-in theaters, shopping center theaters, and dome theaters. Attracted by their futuristic designs, many Americans patronized these new suburban theaters after abandoning the old downtown movie palaces of the 1920s and 1930s. Patrons liked the new theaters because of their convenience, cleanliness, novelty, as well as their increasingly sophisticated sound and projection systems. The use of modernist design idioms for the new suburban theaters – in particular the flying saucer-like dome theaters – catered to the imaginative and forward-thinking mindset of mid-century America, in particular the Santa Clara Valley, where the first high-tech revolution was underway. In contrast to pre-war movie-goers who went to see movies in historicist theaters designed to resemble Rococo palaces or exotic Hindu temples, their post-war counterparts preferred theaters that reflected the culture’s growing interest in

²² Ibid, 217.

²³ Ibid., 15.

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science, and space exploration – in large part kicked off by the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the ensuing Space Race.²⁴

Cinerama-type Dome Theaters

In 1952, a young company debuted a new, almost immersive, way to watch movies on a huge curved screen, in the hopes that this new type of experience would lure Americans away from their television sets and back into the movie theaters. The company, Cinerama Inc., named for its proprietary technology, was the result of a 13-year development process by inventor Fred Waller.²⁵ Cinerama was a way to film and exhibit movies using three cameras and three projectors, with the resulting films projected onto a wide, curved screen that made movie patrons feel like they were in the movie. The technology was a precursor to IMAX large-screen films and has a huge cult following among movie buffs. The history of Cinerama was the subject of a 2002 documentary called *Cinerama Adventure*. By the early 1960s, the company was having financial troubles. Its technology was expensive to use and in order to get theaters to participate, Cinerama had to spend its own money to renovate, equip, and install its own equipment in its clients' theaters.²⁶ By early 1963, 63 theaters in the U.S. and 40 abroad had been equipped to show the increasing number of films shot in Cinerama, including the pioneering 1962 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer epic, *How the West Was Won*.²⁷

In February 1963, Cinerama announced plans for what should have been the perfect vehicle for its technology: a theater within a low-cost geodesic dome pioneered by the eccentric architect and inventor, R. Buckminster Fuller. The curved walls of the geodesic dome were ideal for Cinerama and other wide-screen film projection systems because they could be built without any interior columns or beams that would block the view. In addition, geodesic domes were low-cost buildings that could, in theory, be built for roughly half of what a typical movie theater of the 1960s would cost – and, if done correctly, they could be built in 12 to 14 weeks.²⁸ Geodesic domes had already proven their worth; by 1959, more than 1,000 had been erected around the world, and some of the licensees of Fuller's patented design included the U.S. Air Force and the State Department.²⁹

In February 1963, the president of Cinerama, Inc. announced plans for a large geodesic dome theater to be built in the heart of Hollywood, on Sunset Boulevard, near Vine Street. Cinerama had ambitious hopes that 300 of this type would be built across the U.S. as part of a new theater chain owned and operated by the company. Planned and built in fewer than six

²⁴ Howard Thompson, "New Trend in Movies Grows at Suburban Shopping Centers," *New York Times* (March 7, 1964).

²⁵ Cinerama Adventure, Cinerama Pioneer Biographies, "Biography of Fred Waller."
<http://www.cineramaadventure.com/pioneers.htm>

²⁶ "No Happy Ending in Sight for Cinerama," *Los Angeles Times* (December 23, 1964).

²⁷ "Cinerama Backs a New Theater," *New York Times* (February 6, 1963).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "The Breakthrough of Buckminster Fuller," *New York Times* (August 23, 1959).

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months, the Hollywood Cinerama Dome opened to fanfare in November 1963 with Stanley Kramer's *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.³⁰ The theater, 135 feet in diameter with a 51-foot high ceiling, was made of 316 pre-cast concrete panels in 35 different configurations (**Figure 5**). In addition to being the first Cinerama dome, it was also the first theater to showcase the new, less expensive single-lens, 70mm Cinerama projection system that was later used at the Century 21 Theater. The Cinerama Dome in Hollywood, which was designated a Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument in 1998, never showed a film in the original three-camera Cinerama projection mode until after its restoration in 2001.³¹

While Cinerama, Inc. expected that hundreds of geodesic dome theaters would follow the example of Hollywood's Cinerama Dome, most theater developers who built domes during the next decade eschewed the Monohex design patented by Buckminster Fuller. Reasons for this include the fact that many theater chains simply did not want to pay the hefty licensing fees to Fuller or Cinerama, Inc.³² When Ray Syufy decided to open his first dome theater in San José, he opted for the much simpler and cheaper hemispherical dome. Syufy's architect, Vincent Raney, used Cinerama's drawings to develop the plan and general layout of the theater, but in place of the Monohex frame, he substituted steel ribs that converged at the top of the dome, dividing the building into a series of pie-shaped wedges. The Century 21 Theater that opened in 1964 became the prototype for all of the later freestanding Century domes, including 22, 23, 24, 25, and many others throughout the Bay Area.³³

When the Century 21 Theater was completed, domes were thought of as a symbol of the future. At the 1964/1965 World's Fair in New York, which opened in April 1964, several corporate pavilions were built using giant domes as part of their exhibits, where companies like IBM, General Electric, and Eastman Kodak showed corporate promotional videos in their domed theaters. IBM advertised its "People Wall," where "a new kind of living picture entertainment leaps out at you" from 15 screens inside a 90-foot high egg-shaped dome. IBM's theater dome was a collaboration of designers Ray and Charles Eames and architect Eero Saarinen and was one of Saarinen's last works.³⁴

It is not known how many dome theaters still remain in the United States. What is certain is that many have closed and been demolished, bearing the brunt of rising land values and Americans' propensity to consume entertainment at home and on their mobile devices. A sampling of lost dome theaters in California include the Orange Cinedome complex in Orange, which was demolished in 1999; the CineArts complex in Burlingame, closed in 2008; the Cinedome 7 in Newark, closed in 2012; the Cinedome 8 in Napa, also closed in 2012; and the

³⁰ "Domed Theater will be a First," *Los Angeles Times* (October 13, 1963).

³¹ Philip K. Scheuer, "Cinerama and the Cinema Boom in Suburbia," *Los Angeles Times*, (September 29, 1963), "A Hollywood Happy Ending," *Los Angeles Times*, (December 4, 1998).

³² "New Version of Geodesic Dome is Patented," *New York Times* (August 7, 1965).

³³ Frederic A. Sharf, *Suburban America, 1930-1970* (San Francisco: Newbury Press, 2001), 16, and 54.

³⁴ "IBM 'People Wall' Lifts You into a New World of Wonders," *New York Times* (June 29, 1964).

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CineArts Dome in Pleasant Hill, demolished in 2013. Aside from the landmarked Hollywood Cinerama Dome, the Century 21-23 complex may be one of the last examples of its type that remains open.

Historic Context: Vincent G. Raney

Vincent G. Raney, the architect of the Century 21 Theater, was born in Loogootee, Indiana, on October 17, 1905. After stints at the University of Indiana and the University of Arizona, Raney graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in architectural engineering in 1930. Within a year he had moved to San Francisco, taking up residence at 749 Taylor Street. Initially he worked as a freelance draftsman for Frederick J. Reimers and William I. Garren, remaining as a part-time employee there from 1930 until 1936. At the same time he also worked for Masten & Hurd, remaining there from 1934 until 1935. Though Raney opened his own architectural practice as early as 1935, he continued to moonlight for other more established firms during the mid-to-late 1930s, when work was scarce and cobbling together a livelihood as an architect was not easy. In 1935, he married Edna Brown, a native of Canada. Her father was John Brown, an inventor and an entrepreneur who first turned the Winchester House into a roadside attraction in 1923. By 1940, the Raney family lived at 507 Castenada Avenue in San Francisco's prosperous Forest Hills neighborhood. Vincent and Edna had one daughter, Elizabeth Ann (born 1937) and one son, Gerard Eugene (born 1940).³⁵

Vincent Raney, who specialized in commercial projects, designed many roadside works, including over 600 service stations and dozens of movie theaters and shopping centers. He also designed industrial buildings and churches and schools, including several high-profile commissions for the Catholic Church.³⁶ One of his first commissions was the Round House Restaurant (1938), a circular restaurant designed in the Streamline Moderne style next to the southern approach to the Golden Gate Bridge. Several of his better-known commissions for the Catholic Church include Saint Ann's Chapel in Palo Alto (1951), which was commissioned by Clare Booth Luce; Holy Cross School in Mountain View (1957); and Notre Dame College in Belmont (1961). He also designed the Eitel-McCullough Office Building and Factory in San Carlos (1960).³⁷ Raney designed 40 or more movie theaters, including traditional urban neighborhood theaters, drive-ins, and shopping center theaters. Most were built between the 1940s and the 1970s, including several for Ray Syufy's fast-growing theater empire, including the Art Deco style Bal Theatre in San Leandro (1946); the Kuhio Theater in Honolulu (1946); the El Rey Theater in Vallejo (1949); the 49er Drive-In Theatre in Del Paso Heights, California (1950); the Burlingame Drive-In in Burlingame (1965); the Capitol 6 Drive-In in San José (1971); and the Scottsdale 6 Drive-In in Scottsdale, Arizona (1977). Nearly all of his theaters have either been

³⁵ Pacific Coast Architecture Database, "Vincent Gerard Raney."

<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/architects/4537/>

Frederic A. Sharf, "Suburban America, 1930-1970 (Newbury Press, 2001), 13.

³⁶ Obituary: "Vincent G. Raney," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 8, 2002).

³⁷ Pacific Coast Architecture Database, "Vincent Gerard Raney."

<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/architects/4537/>

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closed or demolished. Later in his career the theaters for Syufy Enterprises were the mainstay of Raney's practice, which he maintained through the mid-1990s. He closed his office soon after Ray Syufy's death in 1995. Vincent Raney died in 2002 at the age of 96.³⁸

Eligibility Summary

The Century 21 Theater in San José is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C in the Area of Design/Construction at the local level, as a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type (suburban dome theater) and period (1960s). The period of significance is 1964, the building's original date of construction. The building is eligible as a distinctive and increasingly rare building type, as well as a symbol of its era and its place – mid-century San José – an emerging hub of aerospace and high technology, where innovative Space Age architecture was appreciated. The theater, the first in owner Ray Syufy's Century Theater chain, represents the transition from the early three-projector Cinerama projection system to the more reliable and easy-to-screen 70 mm process. A predecessor of the IMAX projection system, the 70 mm projection method, in combination with the wide, curved screen, allowed moviegoers to feel as if they were part of the film. Unlike many other dome theaters built to show Cinerama, the Century 21 Theater was never subdivided into smaller auditoriums; indeed, it remains one of the largest theater interiors in Northern California. As a freestanding suburban theater, the Century 21 Theater also represents the evolution from the downtown movie palaces of the pre-World War II period and the shopping center and multiplex theaters of the 1970s and 1980s. Because of its prominent location, the Century 21 Theater remains one of the more notable surviving examples of mid-century commercial architecture in San José. Its bold finial-capped dome, looking like a flying saucer about to take off, remains easily visible from Interstate 280. Its Space Age design was clearly intended to catch the eye of motorists traveling at a high rate of speed through the ever-changing suburban landscape of the post-World War II Santa Clara Valley. Unlike many of its contemporaries, the Century 21 Theater made it to the twenty-first century, a rarity in a city obsessed with the future.

³⁸ Frederic A. Sharf, "Suburban America, 1930-1970 (Newbury Press, 2001), 16.

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<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/architect/architects/4537/>, Web. Accessed May 28, 2013.

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: Santa Clara County Assessor's Office

San Francisco Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.44 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.319255

Longitude: -121.952344

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927

or

NAD 1983

1. Zone:

Easting:

Northing:

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

The proposed boundary encompasses a 2.44-acre parcel, which is part of a larger landholding encompassed by Olin Avenue to the north, S. Winchester Boulevard to the east, I-280 to the south, and the San José city limits to the west. The site proposed for listing in the National Register encompasses only the Century 21 Theater and its immediate setting as defined by the boundaries of assessor parcel 303-40-010.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The proposed boundaries encompass only assessor parcel number 303-40-010, which includes the Century 21 Theater, the oldest and most intact of all three surviving dome theaters on the larger property. The rest of the site was excluded from this nomination because of eligibility and integrity concerns – the Century 22 Dome was built in 1966 and expanded with two additional domed auditoriums after 1975. The Century 23 dome was built in 1968.

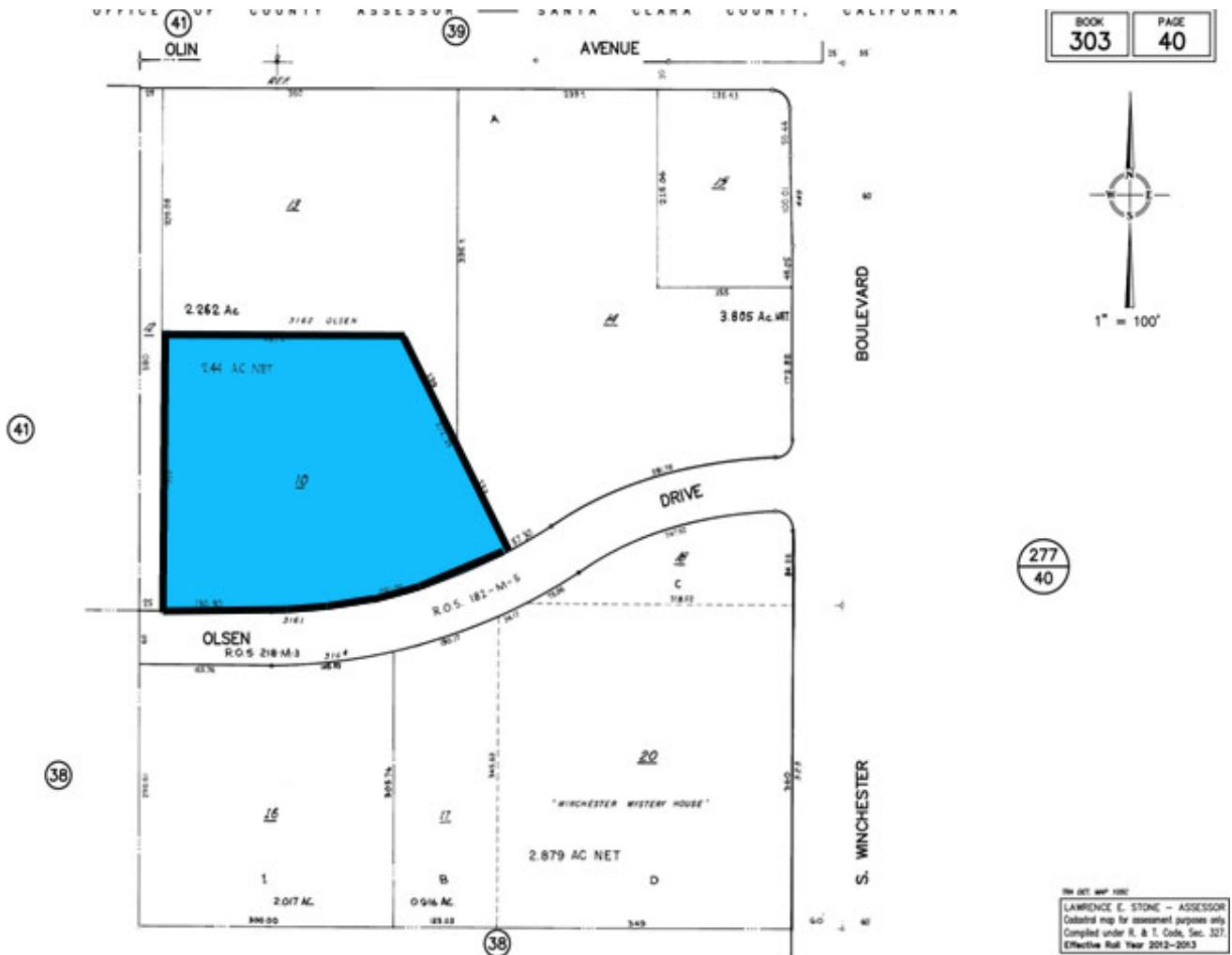
11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Christopher P. VerPlanck
organization: DoCoMoMo Northern California Chapter
street & number: P.O. Box 29226
city or town: San Francisco state: California zip code: 94129-0226
e-mail chris@verplanckconsulting.com
telephone: (415) 391-7486
date: June 2013; Revised January 2014

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Sketch Map



Map showing location of the Century 21 Theater
Source: Santa Clara County; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

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Additional Information



**Figure 1. 1956 aerial showing the future location of the Century 21 Theater; north is up
Source: Historic Aerials**

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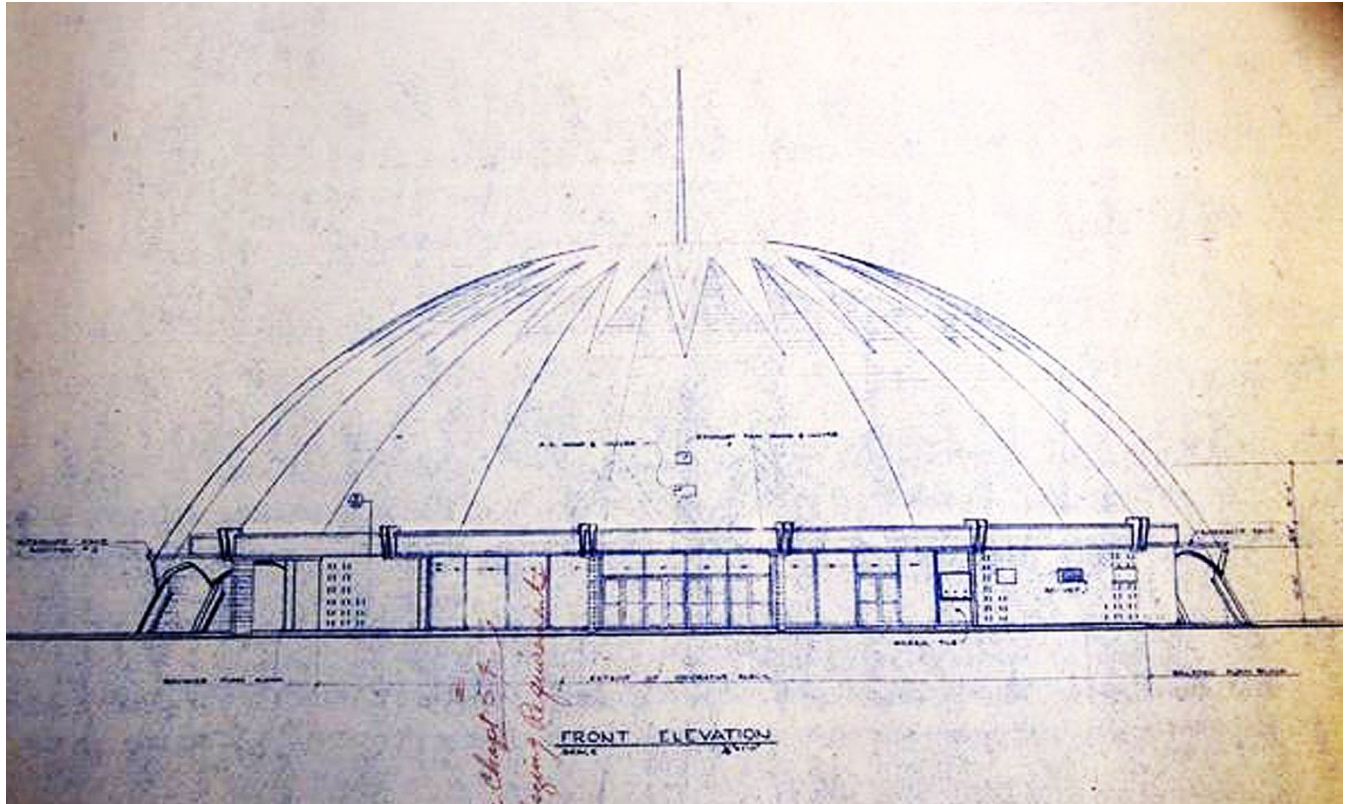


Figure 2. Original east elevation of the CineArts Dome in Pleasant Hill
Source: Collection of Heather David

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**Figure 3. Bob's Big Boy, c. 1965
with the Century 21 Theater in the background**

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**Figure 4. 1968 aerial photograph showing the Winchester Theater complex; north is up
Source: Historic Aerials**

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Figure 5. Opening of the Hollywood Cinerama Dome, 1963
Source: Los Angeles Public Library

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Photograph Log

Name of Property: Century 21 Theater
City: San José
County: Santa Clara
State: California
Name of Photographer: Christopher VerPlanck
Date of Photographs: June 6, 2013
Location of Original Digital Files: 57 Post Street, Suite 512, San Francisco, California
94104
Number of Photographs: 10

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0001
Sign, camera facing south

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0002
Overall perspective, camera facing west

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0003
East façade, camera facing northwest

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0004
Main entrance, camera facing west

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0005
Detail of concrete block walls, camera facing south

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0006
North façade, camera facing south

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0007
Detail of steel rib, camera facing south

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0008
Detail of finial, camera facing northeast

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0009
Auditorium and screen, camera facing northwest

CA_Santa Clara County_Century 21 Theater_0010
Dome, camera facing east