

# 68 WILLOW ROAD HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
[24328]

PREPARED FOR  
68 WILLOW OWNER, LLC

October 23, 2024



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## I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of 68 Willow Owner, LLC, to evaluate the potential historic significance of the property at 68 Willow Road in Menlo Park, California (APN 062-423-020), in advance of a proposed development project that would demolish or substantially alter the building, which is over 45 years old. The property is located on the east side of Willow Road between Middlefield Road to the north and Willow Place to the south. It consists of an irregularly shaped two-and-one-half acre parcel containing a 23,400-square-foot commercial office building. A wide circular driveway with surface parking wraps the perimeter of the building (**Figure 1 and Figure 2**). The subject property reflects at least four periods of construction and/or renovation. Architect John Carl Warnecke designed the initial building in 1955 and an expansion on the southwest side in 1957, both in the Mid-Century Modern style. Architect James Foug designed a second expansion in 1979, adding a wing across the front of the primary (west) façade and smaller additions at the building's southwest and northeast corners. Additional changes since 1979 have further modified the appearance of the building.

This report includes a summary of the current historic status for 68 Willow Road, a property description, a summary of Menlo Park's historic context, and the property's site and construction history. Based on this information, the HRE provides an evaluation of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). Menlo Park does not currently have a local historic preservation ordinance or local historic register. However, the project is subject to the Menlo Park Housing Element Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP). This HRE will comply with the applicable measure, MMRP CR-1a, to provide evaluation for eligibility for listing in the National Register and California Register.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> City of Menlo Park, "Chapter 4: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program," in *City of Menlo Park Housing Element Update, Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report* (January 2023), 4-5, accessed online October 17, 2024, <https://menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/community-development/documents/projects/housing-element-update/202301-he-mitigationmonitoring-and-reporting-program.pdf>.



Figure 1: The location of the subject property is outlined in red. Source: Google Earth 2022.  
Edited by Page & Turnbull.



Figure 2: Assessor map showing the location of the subject parcel outlined in red. Source: ParcelQuest.com. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

## Methodology

Page & Turnbull prepared this report using research collected at various local and online repositories. These included ParcelQuest.com for assessor records and ownership information from 1998 to 2024; the Menlo Park Building Department for drawing records pertaining to the 1957 and 1979 building additions; building permit information available through a public information request to the City of Menlo Park Public Records Center; occupant information available through City Directories at the Menlo Park Library; historic newspaper articles available through HistoricNewspapers.com; and historic aerials available through HistoricAerials.com and the University of California at Santa Barbara Libraries' FrameFinder.

Page & Turnbull staff conducted a site visit to 68 Willow Road on September 20, 2024. All photographs within this report were taken at that time, unless otherwise noted.

## Summary of Findings

The property at 68 Willow Road is not currently listed in the National Register or California Register and does not have Menlo Park Historic Site District (H) zoning. This HRE responds to the MMRP CR-1a (Identify Architectural Historic Resources) by providing an evaluation for eligibility on the National

Register and the California Register. The evaluation in this HRE finds that the property is not eligible under any criteria for listing in the National Register or the California Register.

Therefore, the property is not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

## II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historic status currently assigned to the commercial office building at 68 Willow Road.

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that possess historic, architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural significance at the national, state, or local level.

68 Willow Road is not listed in the National Register of Historic Places individually, or as part of a registered historic district.

### California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

68 Willow Road is not listed in the California Register of Historical Resources individually, or as part of a registered historic district.

### California Historical Resource Status Codes

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation are listed within the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) and are assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code (Status Code) of "1" to "7" to establish their historical significance in relation to the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) or California Register of Historical Resources (California Register).<sup>2</sup> Properties with a Status Code of "1" or "2" are either eligible for listing in the California Register or the National Register, or are already listed in one or both of the registers. Properties assigned Status Codes of "3" or "4" appear to be eligible for listing in either

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<sup>2</sup> California State Office of Historic Preservation, Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD), San Mateo County, updated September 2022.

register, but normally require more research to support this rating. Properties assigned a Status Code of "5" have typically been determined to be locally significant or to have contextual importance. Properties with a Status Code of "6" are not eligible for listing in either register. Finally, a Status Code of "7" means that the resource has not been evaluated for the National Register or the California Register or needs reevaluation.

68 Willow Road is not currently listed in the BERD database for San Mateo County with a status code. This means the property has not been formally evaluated using California Historical Resource Status codes in a report submitted to an information center of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) of the California Office of Historic Preservation. The most recent update to the BERD database was in September 2022.

## Menlo Park Historic Site District (H) Zoning

The City of Menlo Park does not maintain a local register of historic resources. However, Chapter 16.54 of the Zoning Ordinance in the City of Menlo Park Municipal Code establishes Historic Site District (H) zoning. Historic Site District Zoning was implemented for the "protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of structures, sites and areas that are reminders of people, events or eras, or which provide significant examples of architectural styles and the physical surroundings in which past generations lived."<sup>3</sup> Chapter 16.54 allows the City Council to designate historic resources or sites for H-zoning, and requires that permits for construction, alteration, removal, or demolition of designated resources be in keeping with the architectural controls in Chapter 16.68.

68 Willow Road does not have Menlo Park Historic Site District (H) zoning.

## Menlo Park Housing Element Update EIR Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP) – Cultural Resources

68 Willow Road was constructed more than 45 years ago and is subject to the Menlo Park Housing Element Update EIR Mitigation MMRP -CR-1a: Identify Architectural Historic Resources. MMRP-CR-1a states that "Prior to any demolition work or significant alterations to any building or structure that is 45 years old or older, the City shall ensure that a qualified architectural historian who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards evaluates the building or structure for eligibility for listing on the National Register, California Register, and for local eligibility."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section 16.54.010, Menlo Park Municipal Code, accessed online October 10, 2024, <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/MenloPark/#!/MenloPark16/MenloPark1654.html#16.54>.

<sup>4</sup> City of Menlo Park, "Chapter 4: Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program," in *City of Menlo Park Housing Element Update, Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report* (January 2023), 4-5.

### III. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property at 68 Willow Road is a irregularly-shaped two-and-one-half acre parcel located on the east side of Willow Road between Middlefield Road and Willow Place. It contains a 23,400-square-foot commercial office building wrapped by a wide circular driveway that also provides areas of surface parking. The office building is located at the center of its flat site, set back from Willow Road and the surrounding driveway behind a lawn planted with areas of mature trees and shrubs. A concrete-paved walkway extends from Willow Road into the north side of the property, providing access from the public sidewalk to the front building entry.

The one-story office building was originally designed in the Mid-Century Modern style with an L-shape footprint. The existing building now has a generally rectangular footprint that incorporates the original 1955 building, and additions constructed in 1957 and 1979, which have resulted in a more generic expression of late twentieth century office commercial Modernism. It has an asymmetrical gable roof with membrane cladding, an area of solar panels on its south-facing slope, and a thick fascia profile with shallow overhanging eaves. The building utilizes a restrained palette of materials including brick veneer for accent walls and wainscoting; redwood for board-and-batten cladding, fascia, and trellises; and commercial window wall and door units with bronze-tinted reflective glass in dark-toned aluminum framing.

#### Building Description

##### Primary (North) Façade

The primary (north) façade faces the entry driveway. From east (left) to west (right), it consists of a long section of full-height window wall units divided at regular intervals by prominent mullions, set between a low concrete foundation and a shallow board-and-batten soffit (**Figure 3**). The window wall terminates at a full-height brick veneer panel, obscuring the foundation and soffit. Between the brick veneer panel and the west end of the building, the overall design shifts with the height of the board-and-batten soffit increasing (**Figure 4**). The east (left) side of this section features the recessed main building entry comprising paired glazed entry doors flanked by full-height, fixed single window units. A full-height, fixed single window unit makes up the east (left) side wall and a solid, brick-veneer wall makes up the west (right) side. The entry is approached via a wide, flat concrete walkway between the driveway and the front door. To the west (right) of the front entry, the glazing is square, set between the enlarged soffit above and brick wainscot below. At the far west end of the building volume, the final square window bay is infilled with board-and-batten siding.



Figure 3: East end of the primary (north) façade, view northwest.



Figure 4: West end of the primary (north) façade, view northwest.

## West Façade

The west façade, with its asymmetrical gable roof profile, looks onto a landscaped buffer and Willow Road (**Figure 5, Figure 6, and Figure 7**). It is organized in three parts. The northwest (left) corner of the façade is recessed (**Figure 5**). The west- and north-facing facades in the recessed corner extend the design of the adjacent north façade with square glazing units set between a tall wood soffit and brick wainscot. The open set-back area is covered by a wood trellis. The trellis rafters are oriented from north to south to appear as an extension of the overall gable slope. A long wood beam extends from the end of the north façade to a freestanding rectangular brick pylon at the northwest corner of the complex. This beam supports the north end of the rafters. The edges of the trellis are enclosed with an extension of the roof fascia which integrates its appearance with the overall building form.

The center of the façade is anchored by a rectangular brick column at its north (left) end. The strip of square unit glazing in the recessed corner continues across the façade's extent, set between a projecting brick wainscot with an angled brick cap below and a tall-and deep board-and-batten soffit that fills the gable end above (**Figure 5 and Figure 6**). At the far south (right) end of the façade, the wall steps back and is flat. It features brick wainscot with board-and-batten siding above.

The southwest end of the façade is recessed and has a flat roof, The north (left) wall is a flat plane. Its west half features board-and-batten cladding above brick wainscot and its east half features a single square window unit set between board-and-batten cladding above and brick wainscot below. The east wall is flat brick veneer with square punched windows on its north (left) half and solid veneer on its south (right) half. The open north (left) side of the setback area is covered by a wood stand-alone trellis supported by four square wood posts (**Figure 7**).



Figure 5: North end and center of the west façade, view southwest.



Figure 6: North end and center of west façade, view northeast.



Figure 7: South end of west façade, view northeast.

### South (Rear) Façade

The south (rear) façade looks onto a landscaped buffer between the parking area and driveway. The facade is organized in two parts. Its west (left) end is a brick-veneer clad volume with a flat roof. Three tall rectangular window units and a pair of glazed entry doors are arrayed across its center and east sides (**Figure 8**). The east (right) side of the façade consists, from west (left) to east (right), of an area of full-height board-and-batten cladding and a long section of full-height window wall units divided at regular intervals by prominent mullions, set below a deep overhanging eave with exposed rafter tails. (**Figure 9**).



Figure 8: West end of south façade, view northeast.



Figure 9: East end of south façade, view northwest.

### East Façade

The east façade faces a lawn and paved terrace that act as a buffer between the building and the driveway (**Figure 10**). It has a symmetrical gable roof and features board-and-batten siding. An

addition, with an asymmetrical gable roof and board-and-batten siding, projects from the north end of the façade. The south (left) half of the overall façade features three equally proportioned openings, the opening at the center filled with a tripartite window unit and the flanking openings filled with a center door flanked by fixed vertical window units. The right (north) side of the façade features, from south (left) to north (right) a tripartite window unit, an opening with a glazed door and a sidelight, and the south-facing wall of the addition featuring its own window-wall unit and glazed door (**Figure 11**). The east façade of the projecting addition features a tall four-part window unit and, at its far north end, an attached shed roof utility shed with board-and-batten siding.



Figure 10: South end of east façade, view northwest.



Figure 11: North end of east façade, view northwest.

## Site Features

The office building is situated at the center of a deep lawn planted with areas of mature trees and shrubs. The building and landscape buffer are surrounded by a circular driveway with perimeter parking that provides access from Willow Road at the north corner of the site to three sides of the building with an exit onto Willow Place at the southwest corner of the site (**Figure 12 and Figure 13**). The southeast and south side of the building are enclosed, respectively, behind a curved stucco site wall and a wood-board fence (**Figure 14 and Figure 15**). These enclose a lawn area in front of the south half of the east façade and a paved terrace in front of the north half of the east façade, both used as outdoor lounge and recreation areas for staff (**Figure 16 and Figure 17**).



Figure 12: Main driveway near building entrance, view west.



Figure 13: Driveway and parking area at east end of site, view south.



Figure 14: Parking and site fencing at southeast corner of site, view northwest.



Figure 15: Site wall at northeast corner of site, view southwest.



Figure 16: Lawn area on south side of east façade, view south.



Figure 17: Paved terrace on north side of east façade, view north.

## Surrounding Neighborhood

On the north side of Willow Road, the neighboring properties in the Linfield Oaks neighborhood consist of low-rise single-family houses and multi-family townhouse or apartment buildings (**Figure 18 and Figure 19**). The south side of Willow Road is populated with low-rise office buildings (**Figure 20 and Figure 21**). The older buildings are generally designed in the Mid-Century Modern style while newer buildings reflect Neo-Traditional styles. All construction appears to maintain the height limits, set-backs, and low-ratio of land coverage established by the original Linfield Oaks design guidelines.



Figure 18: 200 Waverly Street, apartments built 1958.



Figure 19: 841 Paulson Circle, single family house built 2008.



Figure 20: 66 Willow Place, office building built ca. 1955.



Figure 21: 64 Willow Place, office building built 2008.

## IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

### Early Menlo Park History

The following historic context for the early development of the city of Menlo Park is excerpted from Chapter 4.4, Cultural Resources, of the *City of Menlo Park Housing Element Update, General Plan Consistency Update, and Zoning Ordinance Amendments Environmental Assessment*.<sup>5</sup>

In 1854 Dennis J. Oliver and Daniel McGlynn purchased 1,700 acres from the Don Jose Dario Arguello family that had legally obtained the title to the land in 1853. Around this time Menlo Park received its official name when Oliver and McGlynn erected an arch with the words "Menlo Park" on it to honor their former home in Menlough, County Galway, Ireland. In 1863, the Southern Pacific Railroad was extended to the community of Menlo Park. In the late 1850s, the road between San Francisco and San Jose was completed. Wealthy families purchased large tracts of land and were more or less self-sufficient, producing their own food. Workers lived within the estate grounds. San Mateo County became independent of San Francisco County in 1856.

During this same period, the downtown area of Menlo Park began to develop along Oak Grove Avenue between the railroad station and El Camino Real. By 1870, twelve buildings situated between the railroad station and El Camino Real in the vicinity of Oak Grove Avenue were constructed, consisting of two general stores, three hotels, livery stables, saloons, and three blacksmith shops. The first store in Menlo Park was on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and El Camino Real.

On March 23, 1874, Menlo Park became the second incorporated City in San Mateo County, although only for a short time. The purpose was to provide a quick way to raise money for road repairs. This incorporation, which included Fair Oaks (later Atherton), and Ravenswood (later East Palo Alto) lasted only until 1876. Churches were founded, schools were opened, and businesses were established. [...]

Menlo Park's population increased slowly until World War I. In 1917, 27,000 soldiers were stationed at Camp Fremont in Menlo Park. The training camp covered

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<sup>5</sup> As noted by the City of Menlo Park, information about historic resources was obtained from the Menlo Park Historical Association, and a Historic Resources Report prepared by Knapp Architects in February 2013. The preparation of the Historic Resources Report included a windshield survey of the opportunity housing sites and a review of the National Register, California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) database, the Historic Property Data File for San Mateo County, the City's 1990 Historic Sites Survey and the Subdivision Maps and/or the 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (updated as late as 1968). Accessed October 11, 2024. [https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/4782/4-4\\_CulturalResource?bidId=](https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/4782/4-4_CulturalResource?bidId=)

approximately 25,000 acres adjacent to [...] and extending south along El Camino Real. Menlo Park's first gas and water services, its first paved streets, and an increase in businesses were a direct result of the transient military population. Following the closure of Camp Fremont in 1919, Menlo Park reverted to a small town with 2,300 residents.

The original Dumbarton Bridge opened in 1927, connecting the South Bay and East Bay. In 1931, the Bayshore Highway (now Highway 101) linked Menlo Park and San Francisco. In 1940, Menlo Park's population was 3,258. World War II brought about many changes in the small town. Between 1943 and 1946 another military installation, Dibble General Hospital, was built on the old Timothy Hopkins estate to care for the thousands of soldiers injured in the South Pacific in World War II. Following World War II, in the 1950s, the hospital campus became the site of the Menlo Park Civic Center, Stanford Research Institute (today's SRI International), and the United States Geological Survey. Today Menlo Park is a suburban residential community with a variety of businesses, including high-tech industries.<sup>6</sup>

## Linfield Oaks Neighborhood

The land between today's Middlefield Road and Caltrain Railroad tracks from Ravenswood Avenue to San Francisquito Creek was first developed in 1864. Capitalist William Eustace Barron purchased the 280 acres and developed them into an estate on the north side of the recently completed Southern Pacific Railroad link between San Francisco and San Jose. In 1871, Milton Slocum Latham, former U.S. Representative, Senator, and Governor of California, purchased the estate, renaming the Barron mansion "Thurlow Lodge." He sold the estate to Mary Francis Sherwood Hopkins, the widow of Central Pacific Railroad co-founder Mark Hopkins, in 1883. She renamed the property Sherwood Hall and gave the property to her adopted son, Timothy Hopkins, and Timothy's wife, Mary C. Hopkins, in 1888. By the early 1890s, the west half of the property had been converted to an income-producing agricultural enterprise, the Sherwood Hall Nursery Company, subsequently renamed the Sunset Seed & Plant Company in 1893.<sup>7</sup> The area of the property occupied by the nursery company was the site of the future Linfield Oaks development. It was roughly depicted on the *Official Map of San Mateo County, California*, published in 1892 (**Figure 22**). The estate remained in the Hopkins family until 1941 when Mary C. Hopkins died, leaving it to Stanford University.

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<sup>6</sup> Chapter 4.4, Cultural Resources, of the City of Menlo Park Housing Element Update, General Plan Consistency Update, and Zoning Ordinance Amendments Environmental Assessment, (City of Menlo Park, CA: 2013).

<sup>7</sup> "Change of Name," *Mendocino Coast Beacon*, December 16, 1893.

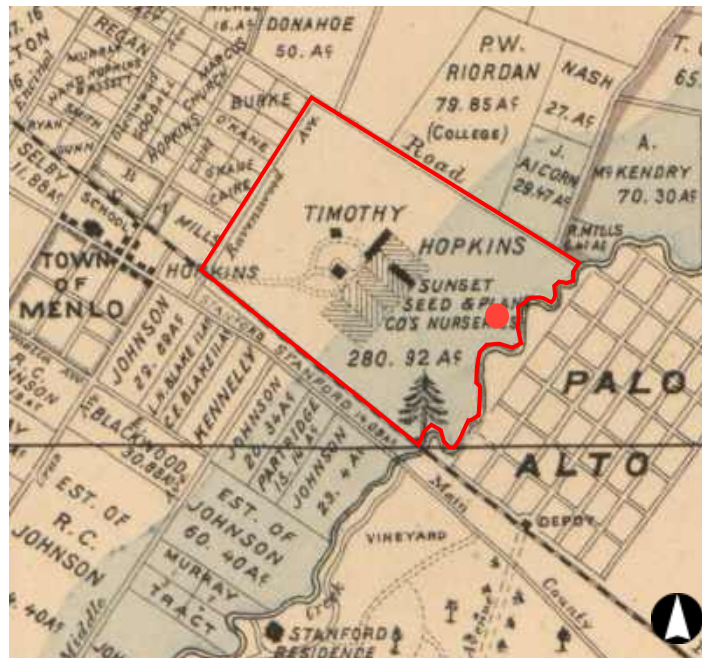


Figure 22: Hopkins' Menlo Park property, outlined in red, showing the Sunset Seed and Plant nursery to the east that would become the site of the Linfield Oaks development. The approximately location of the future 68 Willow Road is indicated with a red dot in the northeast quadrant of the property. Illustrated on the *Official Map of San Mateo County, California*, published in 1892. Source: Library of Congress. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

In 1943, the U.S. War Department acquired approximately 128 acres on the western side of the former Hopkins estate for construction of Palo Alto General Hospital, later Dibble General Hospital. At the conclusion of World War II, Stanford University occupied the northwest section of the acreage between Ravenswood Avenue and A Street. Beginning in 1946 and 1947, the University converted most of the existing military buildings into a student housing complex, known as Stanford Village, and into the initial facilities of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). Between 1955 and 1968, SRI slowly absorbed the Stanford Village housing, converting the area to research activity. In 1948, the City of Menlo Park acquired 26 acres in the southwest section of the acreage, below today's Laurel Street, for construction of a city hall, main library, and Burgess Park (**Figure 23**).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Thurlow Estate Becomes Dribble General Hospital becomes SRI International," Menlo Park City School District, accessed September 27, 2024, [https://district.mpcsd.org/about-mpcsd/history-of-the-district-and-community/history-of-the-menlo-park-city-school-district-our-community/thurlow-estate-becomes-dibble-general-hospital-becomes-sri-international#:~:text=Between%201943%20and%201946%20another,Pacific%20in%20World%20War%20I](https://district.mpcsd.org/about-mpcsd/history-of-the-district-and-community/history-of-the-menlo-park-city-school-district-our-community/thurlow-estate-becomes-dibble-general-hospital-becomes-sri-international#:~:text=Between%201943%20and%201946%20another,Pacific%20in%20World%20War%20I;); "Menlo Park Grew From An Early Farming Community," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), August 3, 1955, 53.



Figure 23: 1941 aerial view of the Hopkins Tract showing the site of the future Linfield Oaks development area, outlined in red. The approximate location of the future 68 Willow Road is indicated with a red square. The site of the future Dibble Hospital, Stanford Village, SRI, and City of Menlo Park facilities is outlined in yellow. Flight c-7065, Frame 128, April 17, 1941. Source: University of California, Santa Barbara Libraries' FrameFinder. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

By late 1945, the Claude T. Lindsay Company, San Francisco-based builders and developers, owned the property west of A Street, still known as the Hopkins Tract.<sup>9</sup> The approximately 168 acres were annexed to the city of Menlo Park in 1947 as Linfield Oaks.<sup>10</sup> In 1948 the company's subsidiary, Menlo Homes Incorporated, announced plans to develop the site with 475 single-family houses, multi-family garden apartments, and a shopping center.<sup>11</sup> In 1949, Menlo Homes reserved 40-acres at the north and east edges of the tract for development of a "professional zone".<sup>12</sup> Located along Middlefield Road and the soon to be extended Willow Road, these were to be developed with office buildings for professional, executive, administrative, and research and testing companies.<sup>13</sup> With endorsement from the city, the zone was to require a two-acre minimum lot size, 25- to 35-foot road and street setbacks, a maximum of 40% land coverage, two-story or 30-foot height limits, and off-street parking. Architectural and landscaping plans were to be residential in character to harmonize with surrounding homes and would be subject to city approval.<sup>14</sup> Construction of the residential and

<sup>9</sup> "Name A New Residential City (Display Advertisement)," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), November 19, 1945, 3.

<sup>10</sup> "Menlo Council Gets Hedge Ordinance," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), May 28, 1947.

<sup>11</sup> "\$6 Million In Homes For Hopkins Estate," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), December 28, 1948, 1.

<sup>12</sup> "Menlo Park Planners Air Professional "Dream" Zone," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), February 8, 1949, 2.

<sup>13</sup> "Menlo Park Planners Air Professional "Dream" Zone," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), February 8, 1949, 2.

<sup>14</sup> "MP Planners Name New Chairman," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), February 22, 1949, 2.

office areas commenced between 1948 and 1950. Historic aerial views show that, by 1956, the majority of Linfield Oaks was developed with the exception of a large parcel at the center of the site facing Middlefield Road (**Figure 24**). Construction on that site was completed between 1960 and 1968.



Figure 24: 1956 aerial view of the Hopkins tract with the Linfield Oaks development outlined in red, and the general boundary of the professional zone shaded orange. The location of 68 Willow Road is indicated with a red square. The area occupied by Stanford Village, SRI, and the City of Menlo Park is outlined in yellow. Flight CIV-1956, Frame 9R-70, January 1, 1956. Source: University of California, Santa Barbara Libraries' FrameFinder. Edited by Page & Turnbull.

## Mid-Century Modern Architectural Style

Mid-Century Modern is a generalized term that defines a period of adaptation of the International Style after World War II. The International Style was part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Modern Movement that marked a major shift in architecture. Emphasizing functionalism and rationalism, the International Style was characterized by clear expression of structural forms, smooth wall surfaces, rectilinear shapes, lack of ornament, and extensive use of glass.<sup>15</sup> While forms remain geometric in a Mid-Century Modern building, elements of texture, materiality, and color began to appear. Often, there is a variation of elements based on a region's climate and topography.

<sup>15</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement*, January 12, 2011, page 174.

The resulting wide-ranging architecture from the 1940s into the early 1960s is broadly categorized as Mid-Century Modern and generally consists of less strict interpretations of the International Style. The construction techniques that separate building structure from the envelope or skin, mass-produced materials, expansive glass walls, horizontal orientations, open floor plans, and integrated outdoor spaces became the hallmarks of Mid-Century Modern in California.<sup>16</sup> Simultaneously, landscape architects were experimenting with these same modern materials and forms to further develop the outdoors as habitable room-like spaces and part of the casual, informal California lifestyle.

While closely associated with postwar residential work, Mid-Century Modern lent itself to several different building types, including commercial, educational, civic, and religious buildings and campuses. Many cities in California experienced extensive commercial, residential, and institutional growth in the post-World War II period and many new buildings were designed in the Mid-Century Modern style – including buildings designed by renowned architects or burgeoning young architects, and more modest examples of the style executed by contractors and other builders and developers **(Figure 25 and Figure 26)**.



Figure 25: Sunset Magazine headquarters (1951) at 80 Willow Road, Menlo Park, designed by Cliff May and Thomas Church. Source: Ernest Braun.



Figure 26: IBM Los Gatos Laboratory (1964, since demolished) in San Jose, designed by Hellmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum. Source: HOK.

Some of the common elements often incorporated into Mid-Century Modern buildings include, but are not limited to:<sup>17</sup>

- Strong geometric forms
- Glazed and solid components
- Flat, low-pitch gable, shed, butterfly, folded plate, or barrel vault roofs
- Strong right angles and simple cubic forms

<sup>16</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, page 121.

<sup>17</sup> San Francisco Planning Department, page 189.

- Horizontal bands of windows
- Linear accents
- Sun shading devices such as cantilevered overhangs, brise soleils, perforated screens, gridded screen walls, etc.
- Aluminum floor-to-ceiling or window wall glazing systems
- Atrium or courtyard entries
- Flow of indoor-outdoor spaces.

The building retains the low-pitch roof, and some areas of board-and-batten cladding that were features of the original building's Mid-Century Modern design. Alterations have removed most of the other elements of the style including deep overhanging eaves and extensive areas of window-wall glazing on the primary (west) and north facades. Further, redesign has changed the proportions of glazed and solid components and the materials and shape of the primary west and north facades, replacing flat wall planes with overhanging soffits and projecting masonry wainscot shelves.

## John Carl Warnecke, Architect

John Carl Warnecke (1919 – 2010) was born in Oakland, California. The son of a prominent architect, Carl Ingomar Warnecke, John Carl Warnecke received his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1941, and the following year received his master's degree in architecture from Harvard University. Among his professors at Harvard was the noted architect, Walter Gropius.

After graduation, Warnecke worked as an inspector for the public housing authority in Richmond, California, as well as a draftsman for his father's architectural firm. In 1950, he established his own architectural practice. Among Warnecke's notable early projects was the Mira Vista Elementary School in Richmond, CA (1951), which earned him national recognition.<sup>18</sup> Commissions for other schools followed, including an annex for the White Oaks Elementary School in San Carlos, CA which received an Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects in 1953. Warnecke also received widespread critical praise for the design of a new U.S. embassy in Thailand in 1956. Though never constructed, the embassy design was highly regarded for incorporating traditional Thai architectural elements.<sup>19</sup> In 1958, Warnecke reorganized his practice under the name John Carl Warnecke & Associates and, that same year, was named as an Associate of the National Academy of Design. More commissions followed, including the design of the new corporate offices for the Ampex Corporation (1959) in Redwood City, CA, Campbell Hall at U.C. Berkeley (1959), the Mabel McDowell

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<sup>18</sup> Dennis McLellan, "John Carl Warnecke Dies at 91; Designer of JFK Grave Site," *Los Angeles Times*, April 24, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> The Architects Newspaper, "John Warnecke, Humanist & JFK Designer, 1919-2010," June 3, 2010, <http://archpaper.com/news/articles.asp?id=4590> (accessed January 26, 2023).

Elementary School (1960) in Columbus, Indiana, and the Stanford University Post Office and Bookstore (1960) (**Figure 27 and Figure 28**).



Figure 27: Mira Vista School, El Cerrito, CA, John Carl Warnecke, 1951. Source: Mira Vista School.



Figure 28: Stanford University Bookstore, Palo Alto, CA, John Carl Warnecke, 1960. Source: Stanford University Special Collections.

Between 1954 and 1956, the years, surrounding construction of the American Hardware office, the local press covered a number of Warnecke projects in the region. Multiple articles, available through Newspapers.com, indicated that the majority of that work was for educational institutions and included design for the White Oaks School in San Carlos, the Highlands School in Millbrae, the Mira Vista Elementary School and Portola Junior High School in El Cerrito, Capuchino High School in Hillsdale, the De Anza High School in Richmond, the Barrett High School in Hillsdale, and appointment as district architect for the new College of San Mateo. In this same period, the local press covered Warnecke's designs for the Mills Shopping Plaza and the Mark Thomas Inn at Del Monte. The 1956 American Institute of Architects Directory entry for Warnecke listed many of these projects and mentioned buildings for an American Trust Bank in Concord, Hayward Public Library,

and his role as Supervising Architect for Contra Costa Junior College.<sup>20</sup> National architectural magazines viewed through the USModernist Archives (usmodernist.com) and the Columbia University Libraries' Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals published a number of these elementary and high school projects, many of which were also honored with awards. Construction of the American Hardware building did not appear to receive attention in the professional journals, nor did it appear to win any awards. The small amount of local coverage on the project focused on American Hardware's corporate expansion or move to the Linfield Oaks professional zone. Only one of the several articles about the building mentioned the name of the architect.<sup>21</sup>

In his practice, Warnecke "adhered to the Modernist values of emphasizing function and structure but searched for an architecture that respected historic buildings and the natural setting."<sup>22</sup> In 1959, Warnecke's firm was commissioned by the California Department of Parks and Recreation to create a Twenty Year Master Plan for the facilities at Asilomar. In conjunction, Warnecke also designed several new buildings for Asilomar, including a Corporation Service Yard and the Surf & Sand meeting room (1959). These new buildings were honored the following year with a Merit Award from the American Institute of Architects.<sup>23</sup>

Warnecke's greatest notoriety came through his association with the Kennedy family, which began in 1962 when Jacqueline Kennedy persuaded Warnecke to submit plans for new federal office buildings at Lafayette Square in Washington, D.C. Unlike previous designs for the site, Warnecke's plans integrated several historic buildings lining the square with the new buildings. His completed design is frequently cited as an important example of contextual design, as the new office buildings "responded deferentially to the residential structures lining Jackson and Madison Places."<sup>24</sup> Warnecke was also accused of "facadism," because several of the houses were not restorations, but new construction. In response, Warnecke "responded that the designs were simultaneously modern and respectful of the existing historical context—what one contemporary critic termed a 'humanistic' approach."<sup>25</sup> Scholars have also held that Warnecke's approach was strongly influenced by the regional modernism developed by San Francisco Bay Area architects such as William Wurster, who as early as the 1940s had advocated for the preservation of Lafayette Square.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "1956 American Architects Directory," AIA Historical Directory of American Architects Home, accessed October 12, 2024, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory>.

<sup>21</sup> "New Insurance Building," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), March 11, 1955, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Suzanne Stephens, "John Carl Warnecke, Known for Contextualism, Charisma, Dies," *Architectural Record*, April 23, 2010, [http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john\\_carl\\_warnecke.asp](http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john_carl_warnecke.asp) (accessed January 26, 2023)

<sup>23</sup> Asilomar Conference Grounds, *Asilomar The First Fifty Years 1913 - 1963*, (Pacific Grove: Asilomar Conference Grounds, 1963).

<sup>24</sup> Kurt Helfrich, "Modernism for Washington? The Kennedys and the Redesign of Lafayette Square," *Washington History*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 1996), 35.

<sup>25</sup> Kurt Helfrich, "Modernism for Washington? The Kennedys and the Redesign of Lafayette Square," 36.

<sup>26</sup> Kurt Helfrich, "Modernism for Washington? The Kennedys and the Redesign of Lafayette Square," 36.

Warnecke opened an office in Washington, D.C., and in 1963 President Kennedy appointed Warnecke to the United States Commission of Fine Arts. That same year, he was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. Warnecke also worked briefly with President Kennedy on designs for a presidential library, but these were put on hold after John Kennedy's assassination. Warnecke was subsequently commissioned to design the President's grave marker at Arlington Cemetery, which was officially dedicated in 1967.

During this period, Warnecke worked on a number of prominent commissions, including the Master Plan and several buildings for the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD (1965), as well as the Hawaii State Capitol (1965), designed in association with the Hawaiian firm Belt, Lemmon & Lo. Warnecke also designed several buildings for the University of California, Berkeley campus, including McCone Hall (1961), Birge Hall (1964), and the Moffit Undergraduate Library (1970).

In 1967, Warnecke opened an office in New York City, where he employed noted architects Gene Kohn and Bill Pederson. Other branches were opened in Boston, Los Angeles, and Honolulu. By 1977, Warnecke and Associates was regarded as the largest architectural firm in the United States.<sup>27</sup> During this period, some of the firm's more notable commissions included the U.S. embassy in Moscow (1975), the Hart Senate Office Building (1975), and the South Terminal for Logan Airport in Boston (1977). This stage of Warnecke's career is also sometimes associated with Brutalist architectural designs, including the Lauinger Library at Georgetown University (1970), and the AT&T Long Lines Building in New York City (1974). In the 1980s, Warnecke's commissions slowed, and he closed nearly all of his branch offices. Few notable works ensued, although Warnecke continued to receive recognition. In 2001, the Mabel McDowell Elementary School in Columbus, Indiana (designed by Warnecke in 1960), was designated a National Historic Landmark. Though less than fifty years old at the time, the building was considered exceptionally important "as an early example of Modern architecture in Columbus, and as an important example of the contextual work of John Carl Warnecke, a leading architect of the twentieth century."<sup>28</sup>

During the last two decades of his life, Warnecke spent much of his time at his ranch at Healdsburg, CA, where he grew grapes for Sonoma wineries. He also worked on establishing an international retreat and think tank, known as the Warnecke Institute of Design, Art, and Architecture, at the ranch.<sup>29</sup> Warnecke passed away at the age of 91 in May 2010.

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<sup>27</sup> Suzanne Stephens, "John Carl Warnecke, Known for Contextualism, Charisma, Dies," *Architectural Record*, April 23, 2010, [http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john\\_carl\\_warnecke.asp](http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john_carl_warnecke.asp) (accessed January 26, 2023)

<sup>28</sup> National Park Service, National Historic Landmark nomination for the Mabel McDowell Elementary School,

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne Stephens, "John Carl Warnecke, Known for Contextualism, Charisma, Dies," *Architectural Record*, April 23, 2010, [http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john\\_carl\\_warnecke.asp](http://archrecord.construction.com/news/daily/archives/2010/100423john_carl_warnecke.asp) (accessed October 10, 2024)

## V. SITE HISTORY

Between 1950 and 1956, nine major organizations built on multi-acre “garden-office” parcels in the professional zone. These included Allstate Insurance Company (1950), Lane Publishing (Sunset Magazine, 1951), Magna Engineering (home power tool makers, 1951), American Insurance Company (1952), the United States Geological Survey (1953), Prudential Insurance Company (insurance and mortgage loan divisions, 1953), A. C. Neilsen Company (television market analytics, 1954), American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company (1955), and Pacific Telephone and Telegraph (1956).<sup>30</sup> The businesses provided tax revenue unaccompanied by the smog or noise of industry and provided hundreds of new jobs in a city that had grown from 3,000 residents in 1942 to 25,000 in 1957.<sup>31</sup> Over the course of development, local newspaper articles reported that the concept for an administrative professional building zone -- with contemporary buildings, wide lawns, and spacious off street parking -- was a new idea in west-coast land planning receiving nationwide attention.<sup>32</sup>

The American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company (American Hardware) was the eighth of nine companies to locate in the Linfield Oaks professional zone.

### Construction Chronology

In January 1955, American Hardware announced construction of its new headquarters. It would be located on a two-and-one-half- acre site on Willow Drive next door to the A. C. Neilsen Company building.<sup>33</sup> The 10,000-square foot office was to be wood-frame, one-story, “ranch-type construction” using brick, wood, and glass. John Carl Warnecke was the architect, and the general contractor was Haas and Haynie (**Figure 29**).<sup>34</sup>

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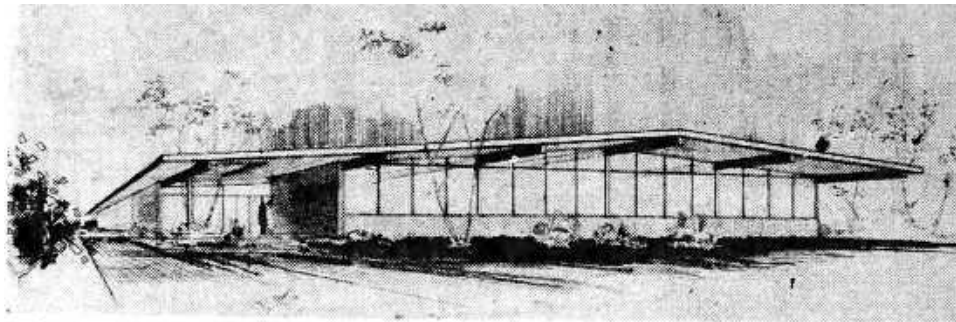
<sup>30</sup> “Menlo Park Grew From and Early Farming Community,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), August 3, 1955, 53; “Office Building In Garden Style Has Won Acceptance,” *Stockton Evening and Sunday Record* (Stockton, CA), December 5, 1997, 28.

<sup>31</sup> “Menlo Park Grew From and Early Farming Community,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), August 3, 1955, 53; “Charles Burgess Dies at 52 in Palo Alto,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), June 17, 1957, 2.

<sup>32</sup> “Menlo Park Planners Air Professional “Dream” Zone,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), February 8, 1949, 2.; “Again May Rezone Linfield Tract,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), December 15, 1949, 17; “Insurance Co. Plans Huge Menlo Park Office,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), February 10, 1950, 8; “Groundbreaking Set Tomorrow At 10AM At MP for Insurance Firm Headquarters,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), June 1, 1950; “Menlo Park Grew From and Early Farming Community,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), August 3, 1955, 53.

<sup>33</sup> “Agreement Set on MP Building,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), January 7, 1955, 2.

<sup>34</sup> “New Building OK at Menlo,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), March 9, 1955: “New Insurance Building,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), March 11, 1955, 3.

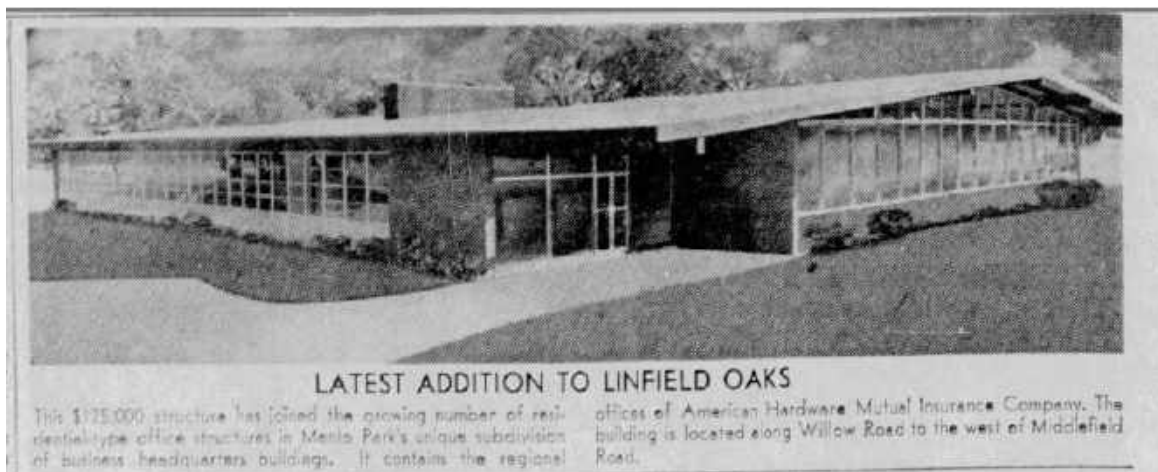


**NEW INSURANCE BUILDING** — Architect's drawing shows design of modern office building at Linfield Oaks, Menlo Park, to be occupied by Pacific Branch of Hardware Mutual Insurance Company of Minnesota. The one-story structure will be of brick, wood and

glass. Haas and Haynie are the general contractors on the project. John Carl Warnecke is the architect. Ground for building, which is expected to be completed by July, was broken this week.

Figure 29: Rendering of the planned Hardware Mutual Insurance Company of Minnesota (sic), the only article to mention the name of the architect. Source: "New Insurance Building," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), March 11, 1955, 3.

The headquarters opened on August 24, 1955.<sup>35</sup> A photograph published at completion showed a one-story building with a low-pitch asymmetrical gable roof, overhanging eaves, visible purlins, and a prominent recessed entry at the north end of the west facade (**Figure 30**).<sup>36</sup> The north and west façades featured expanses of clear multi-lite glazing in light-toned framing above a low wainscot base. On the west facade, the window system extended into the upper gable.



**LATEST ADDITION TO LINFIELD OAKS**

This \$175,000 structure has joined the growing number of residential-type office structures in Menlo Park's unique subdivision of business headquarters buildings. It contains the regional

offices of American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company. The building is located along Willow Road to the west of Middlefield Road.

Figure 30: 1955 photo of the recently completed American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company headquarters showing the north (left) and west (right) facades. Source: "Latest Addition to Linfield Oaks," *Peninsula Times Tribune* (Palo Alto, CA), August 31, 1955, 14.

<sup>35</sup> "Newest Menlo Park Office to Employ 100," *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), August 25, 1955, 12.

<sup>36</sup> "Latest Addition To Linfield Oaks," *Peninsula Times Tribune* (Palo Alto, CA), August 31, 1955, 14.

Between 1955 and 1979, the building was expanded twice (**Figure 31**). In 1957, American Hardware announced a \$100,000 expansion to the site headquarters in “the same style of architecture – modern with a liberal use of glass”.<sup>37</sup> Also designed by Warnecke’s firm and built by Haas and Haynie, the project added 7,000-square-feet to the south and east sides of the building and developed outdoor parking along the south side of the complex. Drawings reviewed at the Menlo Park Building Department show that the addition used the design vocabulary and materials of the original building: brick veneer, redwood board-and-batten siding, and both wood casing and steel sash window systems. On the previously windowless board-and-batten south façade, Warnecke inserted a long band of clerestory-height windows and, at the east end of the façade, introduced tall, fixed windows and glazed doors. The new east façade consisted of board and batten siding with three punched window openings across the center of the facade featuring fixed multi-lite steel-sash units, and what appear to have been tall, fixed window units and sliding glass doors at the north end of the façade.



Figure 31: Aerial view showing area of original 1955 construction, shaded red, area of the 1957 addition, shaded blue, and areas of the 1979 additions, shaded yellow. Source: Google Earth 2022.  
Edited by Page & Turnbull.

<sup>37</sup> “Insurance Co. Set To Start Construction,” *Redwood City Tribune* (Redwood City, CA), October 9, 1957, 18; “Expansion Feature Of 1957 for MP,” *Redwood City Tribune*, December 25, 1957, 17.

In 1979, James Foug and Associates expanded the building with additions to the west façade and at the southwest and northeast corners. Drawings reviewed at the Menlo Park Building Department show that Foug's work significantly changed the appearance of the building.

Foug's design built an approximately 40' x 100' addition on the west side of the building in front of the west facade designed by Warnecke. The new facade introduced a dramatically different appearance to the building when viewed from Willow Road and the main driveway. It extended the west end of the north façade and relocated the building's main entry from its original position at the northwest corner of the complex to the side of the building at the north façade. The new west façade reduced glazing to a strip of bronze-tinted reflective glass in dark-toned framing inset between a projecting brick wainscot with an angled cap and a tall, deep board-and-batten soffit. Instead of the flat plane of the original west wall with its distinctive expanse of clear divided-lite glass, light-toned framing, and overhanging eaves, the new design was both darker and more opaque. The project also added a trellis at the northwest corner of the new façade and a trellis and setback brick-clad addition at the southwest corner west façade, the latter extending the perceived width of the overall structure. The southwest addition also added to the building length at the west end of the south facade.

On the east façade, Foug appears to have enlarged Warnecke's pavilion at the far north end of the building.

It appears that Foug also reroofed the building with a new system, increasing the thickness of the roof profile, reducing the depth of overhanging eaves, and eliminating the purlins that had been visible at the gable ends on the original design.

Based on a comparison of the 1979 drawings with visual inspection, changes after 1979 include additional replacement of fenestration throughout the building with bronze-tinted reflective glass in dark-toned aluminum frames, and construction of a stucco wall at the northeast end of the terrace.

The following table provides the timeline of construction activity recorded on the few permits available through the City of Menlo Park Public Records Center and on drawing records for the 1957 and 1979 expansions available for viewing through the Menlo Park Building Department. Building permits for interior alterations and cancelled and expired permits are not included.

TABLE 1. PERMIT HISTORY FOR 68 WILLOW ROAD.

Date Filed	Permit App. #	Owner	Contractor	Work
April 1, 1955	4091	American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co.	Haas & Haynie	Construction of new office building, \$118,000 (John Carl Warnecke, Architect)
August 11, 1957		American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co.	Haas & Haynie	Addition to the southeast corner of the building (John Carl Warnecke, Architect)
1979		American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co.	<i>Unknown</i>	Addition to the west and east facades (James Foug & Associates, Architect)
March 30, 2006	06-433	Scott Hassan	Marin Solar	Installation of roof mounted 30kw solar PV system.

## Ownership and Occupant History

The following table provides a summary of the ownership and occupancy history 68 Willow Road, beginning with the year of construction, compiled from city directories and from, building permit applications, and sales records available through Parcel Quest.

TABLE 2. OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPANT HISTORY FOR 68 WILLOW ROAD.

Date(s)	Owner(s)	Known Occupant(s)
1955 - ca.1980	American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co.	American Hardware Mutual Insurance Co.
ca.1980-1998	<i>Unknown</i>	Price Waterhouse Tech Centre (1988-ca.2007)
1998-2004	Willow Place Associates	Price Waterhouse Tech Centre (1988-ca.2007)
2005-2019	Willow Place Investments, LLC	Willow Garage (ca.2009)
2020	68 Willow Owner, LLC	Robinhood
Present	68 Willow Owner, LLC	<i>Unknown</i>

## AMERICAN HARDWARE MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

American Hardware Mutual Life Insurance Company was established in 1899 as Retail Hardware Dealers Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Minnesota.<sup>38</sup> Initially, it provided insurance to a consortium of Minnesota and then mid-western hardware dealers before becoming a general insurer in national markets. In 2011 the company was renamed Motorists Commercial Mutual Insurance Company.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company," Bloomberg, accessed October 9, 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.com/profile/company/10502Z:US>.

<sup>39</sup> "The Motorists Insurance Group Affiliate Rebranded as Motorists Commercial Mutual," Insurance Journal Magazine, June 30, 2011.

## VI. EVALUATION

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is the nation's most comprehensive inventory of historic resources. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service and includes districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation at the national, state, or local level. Typically, properties over fifty years of age may be eligible for listing in the National Register if they meet any one of the four significance criteria and if they retain sufficient historic integrity to convey that significance. However, properties under fifty years of age may be determined eligible if it can be demonstrated that they are of "exceptional importance." Other criteria considerations apply to cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed buildings, and properties primarily commemorative in nature. National Register criteria are defined in depth in *National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The National Register has four basic criteria under which a property may be considered eligible for listing. It can be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- **Criterion A (Events):** Properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- **Criterion B (Person):** Properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- **Criterion C (Architecture):** Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction; and
- **Criterion D (Information Potential):** Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

A property may be considered significant on a national, state, or local level to American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture.

## California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register. Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- **Criterion 1 (Events):** Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- **Criterion 2 (Persons):** Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- **Criterion 3 (Architecture):** Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- **Criterion 4 (Information Potential):** Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.<sup>40</sup>

The following section examines the eligibility of 68 Willow Road for individual listing in the National Register and the California Register.

### CRITERION A/1 (EVENTS)

The property at 68 Willow Road does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion A/1 for association with any event significant to national or state history. The building was constructed in 1955 to accommodate American Hardware

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<sup>40</sup> California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin No. 7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources* (Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, September 4, 2001), 11.

Mutual Insurance Company as it moved from offices from San Francisco to Menlo Park. This relocation was part of a nationwide post-World War II trend that saw many companies leave traditional downtowns for suburban locations. In Menlo Park, the American Hardware building was one of nine major organizations that located on multi-acre “garden-office” parcels in the new Linfield Oaks professional zone between 1950 and 1956. While Linfield Oaks as a development and the concept of mixing office with residential construction were both new, the American Hardware project was the eighth of the buildings to build in the professional zone. The subject property was not the catalyst for the concept or development of Linfield Oaks and its design followed established guidelines. It is not individually significant in the history of suburban office development in general or to the build out of Linfield Oaks.<sup>41</sup> Further, research did not indicate that any event of importance associated with the American Hardware company or the insurance industry at-large occurred at the building.

Therefore, 68 Willow Road is not individually eligible under Criterion A/1.

#### CRITERION B/2 (PERSONS)

The property at 68 Willow Road does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register or California Register under Criterion B/2 for association with any persons significant to national or state history. Research did not indicate that any individuals associated with American Hardware or with later occupant companies, or the companies themselves, at the Menlo Park location had notable impacts on local, state or national history.

Therefore, 68 Willow Road is not individually eligible under Criterion B/2.

#### CRITERION C/3 (ARCHITECTURE)

The property at 68 Willow Road was designed in the Mid-Century Modern style by architect of merit John Carl Warnecke to fit into the scale and residential requirements of the Linfield Oaks development. At completion in 1955, the building conveyed both a Warnecke design and his philosophy of contextualism, harmonizing with the scale, forms, materials, and landscapes of the adjacent office buildings and residences. Further, it exhibited the geometric form, overhanging eaves, extensive areas of glazing, and simple composition and materials associated with the Bay Area’s regional version of Mid-Century Modernism.

Extensive changes to the building in 1957, 1979, and after, however, have obscured Warnecke’s original design and changed its appearance so that it is now a generic and undistinctive expression

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<sup>41</sup> Evaluation of Linfield Oaks as a potential historic district was not part of this Historic Resource Evaluation.

of late twentieth century Modernism, rather than its original Mid-Century Modern style. Most significant were changes to the west and north facades. A 40-foot deep by 100-foot long addition across the west façade by architect James Foug in 1979, plus an addition at the southwest corner, obliterated Warnecke's original design for what was, then, the primary façade and main building entry. The change removed the original brick-veneer wainscot, clear glass divided-lite glazing set in light-toned framing, reduced the depth of the overhanging eaves, and eliminated the visible purlins. It added 40-feet to the west end of the north façade and situated the front door at the juncture between the original building and the new addition. The new design introduced a strip of bronze-tinted reflective-glass windows in dark-toned aluminum frames on the north and west sides of the new façade and, on the west façade, set the windows between a projecting brick wainscot base with an angled cap and a tall and deep projecting soffit. These changes transformed the original wall proportion as well as the sense of lightness, transparency, and flatness that had characterized the original building. Changes after 1979 appear to have replaced all the original fenestration on other parts of the building, further diminishing the original design concept and style.

The American Hardware building was built in a period of great productivity for John Carl Warnecke, years when his work for educational and civic institutions was being widely published and awarded. With the exception of his 1956 unbuilt design for a new U.S. Embassy in Thailand, few of Warnecke's commercial or office buildings were published or honored in the mid-1950s. The design for the American Hardware building appears to have received no publicity beyond several construction announcements in the local press and no awards. Warnecke did not include the building in his 1956 American Institute of Architects Directory entry listing significant recent projects. The building appears to have been a minor commission in this decade and in his overall oeuvre.

The extant building no longer represents John Carl Warnecke's original design. Further, alterations have changed the material palette, proportions, and details of the original building so that it no longer conveys the characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern Style. Finally, the building was not a significant example of Warnecke's innovative work at the time it was built or now.

Therefore, 68 Willow Road is not individually eligible under Criterion C/3.

#### CRITERION D/4 (INFORMATION POTENTIAL)

The "potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of California" typically relates to archeological resources, rather than built resources. When California Register Criterion 4 (Information Potential) does relate to built resources, it is relevant for cases when the building itself is the principal source of important construction-related information. The property does not appear to be eligible under Criterion 4 as a principal source of important construction-related information.

Page & Turnbull's evaluation of this property was limited to age-eligible resources above ground and did not involve survey or evaluation of the subject property for the purposes of archaeological information.

## Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in any local, state, or national historic register, a property or landscape must possess significance under at least one evaluative criterion as described above and retain integrity. Integrity is defined by the California Office of Historic Preservation as “the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance,” or more simply defined by the National Park Service as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”<sup>42</sup>

In order to evaluate whether the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, Page & Turnbull used established integrity standards outlined by the *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Seven variables, or aspects, that define integrity are used to evaluate a resource’s integrity—location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property must possess most, or all, of these aspects in order to retain overall integrity. If a property does not retain integrity, it can no longer convey its significance and is therefore not eligible for listing in local, state, or national registers.

As the subject building does not appear to be individually significant under any of the above listed criteria, a separate analysis of the property’s historic integrity is not included in this report. Note that changes to the design and materials of the building were included in the significance discussion under Criterion C/3 (Architecture).

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<sup>42</sup> California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Series No. 7: How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historical Resources* (Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, September 4, 2001), 11; and National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 44.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The commercial office building at 68 Willow Road was built in 1955 for the American Hardware Mutual Insurance Company. It was part of the Linfield Oaks development that merged single- and multi-family residential construction with a perimeter professional zone for office buildings. The project was built during the period of post-World War II suburbanization and land development in Menlo Park. The building was the eighth of nine office buildings constructed in the professional zone and was not a catalyst for the development of Linfield Oaks or for the low-rise style of building required by the city's design guidelines. Research did not identify any exceptional events or historical patterns, or notable people or corporations who influenced or made significant contributions to their respective industries at the local, regional, or state level, associated with the building. The building, as originally designed and constructed, was not an exemplary work of architect of merit John Carl Warnecke. Subsequent extensive alterations and additions obscured his original design and eliminated most of the building's original Mid-Century Modern features.

As such, the property at 68 Willow Road does not meet any of the four significance criteria for individual listing in the National Register or the California Register. Therefore, the property is not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

This report responds to the MMRP CR-1a (Identify Architectural Historic Resources) by providing an evaluation for eligibility on the National Register and the California Register.

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## **IX. APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A – Preparer Qualifications**

This Historic Resource Evaluation was prepared by Page & Turnbull of San Francisco, California. Page & Turnbull staff responsible for this report include Christina Dikas, Principal-in-charge; Hannah Simonson, Cultural Resources Planner, project manager; Stacy Kozakavich, Cultural Resources Planner, QA/QC; and Stephanie Hodal, Cultural Resources Planner, primary author. All meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards for Historic Architecture, Architectural History, or History.



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