

THE CARDINAL HOTEL - 235 HAMILTON AVENUE
HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA
[16252A.14]

PREPARED FOR:
CITY OF PALO ALTO



PAGE & TURNBULL

imagining change in historic environments through design, research, and technology

OCTOBER 24, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
METHODOLOGY.....	2
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	3
II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS	3
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	3
CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES.....	3
CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS CODE.....	3
PALO ALTO HISTORIC INVENTORY.....	4
III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION	5
EXTERIOR.....	5
INTERIOR.....	12
SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD	14
IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT	16
PALO ALTO HISTORY	16
UNIVERSITY SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD.....	18
V. CARDINAL HOTEL - SITE HISTORY	19
SITE DEVELOPMENT	19
OWNERSHIP HISTORY.....	22
ARCHITECT: WILLIAM H. WEEKS (1864 -1936)	23
BIRGE M. CLARK (1893 -1989)	24
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF THE CARDINAL HOTEL.....	25
VI. EVALUATION.....	26
CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES.....	26
CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES	28
INTEGRITY.....	29
VII. CONCLUSION	32
VIII. REFERENCES CITED.....	33

I. INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) has been prepared at the request of the City of Palo Alto for the property at 235 Hamilton Avenue (APN 120-26-073), also called the Cardinal Hotel, in the University South neighborhood of Palo Alto. The subject property is located in a CD-C (Downtown Commercial (community)) zoning district with both a ground floor (GF) and pedestrian shopping (P) combining district regulations. The Cardinal Hotel is located on the west side of Hamilton Avenue between Ramona Street and an alley that bisects the block between Ramona Street and Emerson Street. The parcel is nearly square in shape, with a stepped boundary along its northwestern side, approximately 100 feet wide by 104 to 114 feet deep (**Figure 1**). It contains one three-story hotel building with a commercial ground floor, which was designed in 1924 by William H. Weeks with Birge Clarke as supervising architect, and was constructed by a local builder, John Madsen.

The Cardinal Hotel is currently listed as a contributing building of the Ramona Street Architectural District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and therefore also receives the protections of the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). The property is also listed as a contributing building in the Ramona Street Architectural District in the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory.

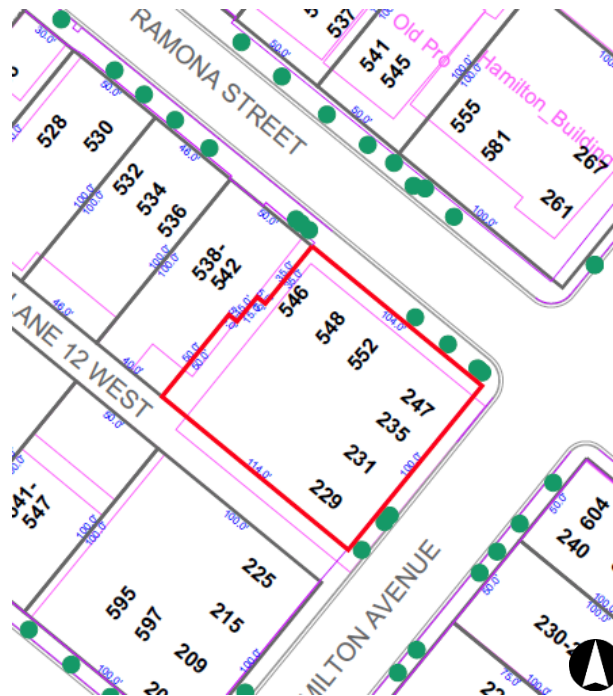


Figure 1. City of Palo Alto parcel map. Subject property indicated by red outline.
Source: City of Palo Alto, Online Parcel Reports, 2019.

METHODOLOGY

This report follows a standard outline used for Historic Resource Evaluation reports, and provides a summary of the current historic status, a building description, and historic context for the Cardinal Hotel building at 235 Hamilton Avenue. The report includes an evaluation of the property's individual eligibility for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources.

Page & Turnbull prepared this report using research collected at various local repositories, including the Palo Alto Development Services and the Palo Alto Historical Association, as well as various online sources including Palo Alto Stanford (PAST) Heritage, Ancestry.com, the California Digital

Newspaper Collection, and Newspapers.com. Key primary sources consulted and cited in this report include Palo Alto building permit applications, city and county directories, and historical newspapers. All photographs in this report were taken by Page & Turnbull during a site visit on September 24, 2019, unless otherwise noted.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This HRE finds that the Cardinal Hotel appears to qualify as an eligible individual historic resource under Criterion 1 and Criterion 3 for the purposes of review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

II. EXISTING HISTORIC STATUS

The following section examines the national, state, and local historical ratings currently assigned to the Cardinal Hotel.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register or NR) 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.

The Cardinal Hotel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a part of the Ramona Street Architectural District, a registered historic district.

CALIFORNIA REGISTER OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register or CR) 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. Properties can 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.

The Cardinal Hotel is listed in the National Register as a contributing property in the Ramona Street Architectural District, and National Register-listed properties are automatically listed in the California Register.

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE STATUS CODE

Properties listed or under review by the State of California Office of Historic Preservation 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 or California Register. 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. A property assigned a Status Code of "3" or "4" appears to be eligible for listing in either register, but normally requires 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, while 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.

The Cardinal Hotel is listed in the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) database with a status code of 1D, which means “Contributor to a district or multiple resource property listed in NR by the Keeper. Listed in the CR.”¹ The most recent update to the CHRIS database for Santa Clara County that lists the status codes was in April 2012.

PALO ALTO HISTORIC INVENTORY

The City of Palo Alto’s Historic Inventory lists noteworthy examples of the work of important individual designers and architectural eras and traditions as well as structures whose background is associated with important events in the history of the city, state, or nation. The inventory is organized under the following four Categories:

- **Category 1:** An “Exceptional Building” of pre-eminent national or state importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of a specific architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the United States. These buildings have had either no exterior modifications or such minor ones that the overall appearance of the building is in its original character.
- **Category 2:** A “Major Building” of regional importance. These buildings are meritorious works of the best architects, outstanding examples of an architectural style, or illustrate stylistic development of architecture in the state or region. A major building may have some exterior modifications, but the original character is retained.
- **Category 3 or 4:** A “Contributing Building” which is a good local example of an architectural style and relates to the character of a neighborhood grouping in scale, materials, proportion or other factors. A contributing building may have had extensive or permanent changes made to the original design, such as inappropriate additions, extensive removal of architectural details, or wooden façades resurfaced in asbestos or stucco.

The Cardinal Hotel is listed in the Palo Alto Historic Inventory as a category 3 building and is identified for its inclusion in the Ramona Street Architectural District.

¹ California Historical Resource Information System (CHRIS), Historic Property Data File for Santa Clara County, Updated April 2012.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

EXTERIOR

The Cardinal Hotel is a three-story hotel building with ground-floor retail. The building was designed in an Italian Renaissance Revival style in 1924 (**Figure 2**). Located on a prominent corner at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Ramona Street, the building has two nearly identical primary façades. The presence of an access road that divides the block between Ramona and Emerson streets provides the Cardinal Hotel with a fully exposed third façade. In plan, the building has a rectangular first story with U-shaped second and third floors that provide light and air to hotel rooms facing this inner lightwell. A skylight in this lightwell provides natural light to the hotel's lobby.

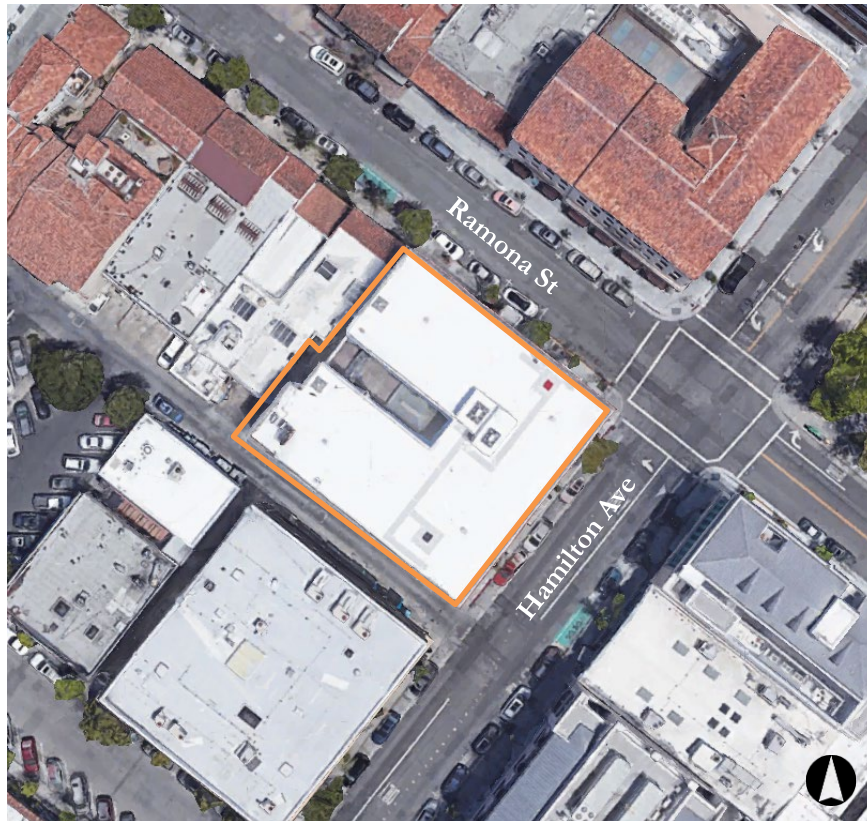


Figure 2: Site plan with approximate location of parcel boundary in orange.

The subject building is clad in stucco and features a largely rectangular and flat façade under a flat roof with a denticulated box cornice topped with clay tile. The Ramona Street (northeast) and Hamilton Avenue (southeast) façades are nearly identical; on the ground floor, festooned terra cotta pilasters with vintage car motifs are placed at the building's corners and flank the entrances to the hotel. The building originally included seven stores and a dining room for the hotel on the ground floor. Today the dining room has been converted to an additional storefront and the commercial spaces have been rearranged internally, with the removal of partitions, creating four restaurant and commercial spaces.

Storefronts consist of bulkheads, glass storefront windows, and recessed entrances, and feature a band of transom windows over the storefronts. Entrances to the hotel are centrally located on both primary façades and are marked by recessed entrances under metal marquees. Upper stories consist of regular fenestration; windows are paired vertically in articulated surrounds with decorative spandrel panels containing shields located between second- and third-story windows.

A neon three-sided blade sign reading “Cardinal Hotel” is positioned vertically along the upper two stories at the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Ramona Street (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3: Primary facade (left) and secondary facade (right), looking west

Hamilton Avenue (Southeast) Façade

The southeast façade of the Cardinal Hotel faces Hamilton Avenue and the upper floors are symmetrical along a vertical axis (**Figure 4**). Arranged into eight bays, each end bay is given more visual prominence with additional decoration over the window enframements. Cast concrete details of curving vines, rosettes, and cherubs holding a shield are contained in the frieze panel of the cornice, with three-dimensional contoured foliate panels ending in decorative brackets flanking the window enframements. These vertically paired windows are also highlighted through the placement of wrought iron Juliet balconies over the storefront cornice between the ground and second floors. On the upper stories the original four-over-two double-hung wood sash have been replaced with modern one-over-one metal hung sash, while the original paired 10-lite wood casement windows are extant in each decorative end bay.

The center two bays are paired through the placement of additional scrolled foliate decoration in the frieze panel, the placement of a balcony across the windows in the center two bays, and the presence of the ground floor main entrance, which features a large metal marquee. On the third story, a cartouche is placed prominently along the centerline of the façade.

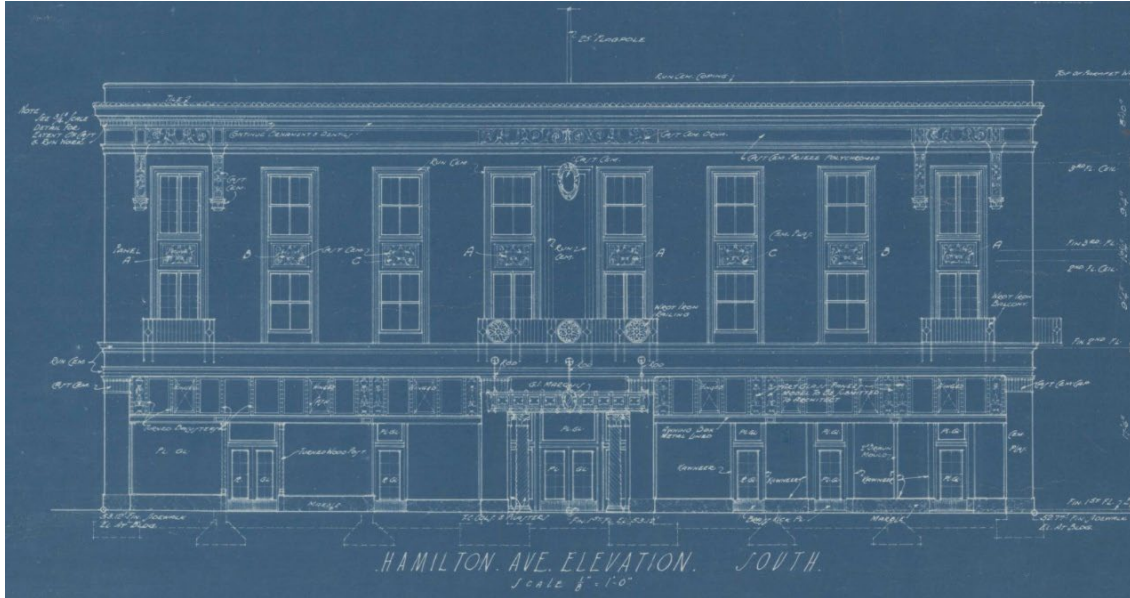


Figure 4: Blueprints of the Hamilton Avenue (southeast) elevation, 1924. Source: Birge Clark Architectural Papers, Stanford Digital Repository



Figure 5: Hamilton Avenue (southeast) façade, looking north. Note that first bay of the southwest façade along the access road is designed to match the primary façades.

Ground-floor storefronts are defined by a rhythm of bulkheads, glass storefront windows, recessed entrances, and a band of transom windows with groupings of fixed lites, operable transom-sash, and fixed art glass, separated by mullions with an applied engaged turned post, over the storefronts. The hotel's original dining room, located at the far left (south) of the façade, has attenuated colonnettes framing the entrance. Storefronts to the right (north) of the hotel entrance have been combined into a restaurant space and the area of the transom windows has been covered with a canvas awning over metal framing. The primary entrance to this business is located at the right of the façade with a non-original recessed corner entrance. A second entrance, in the third bay from the right, is in its original location but with non-original material.

The main entrance to the hotel is recessed and set between paired spiral Corinthian columns in the Roman style with adjacent unfluted Corinthian pilasters (**Figure 6 and 7**). A neon sign is mounted in the opening to the entrance vestibule. The entrance vestibule features paneled stone walls and a frieze panel of festoons. Unevenly divided double-leaf glass-paneled wood doors are set within a larger wall of transom-sash and fixed windows.



Figure 6: Primary facade, main entrance to hotel.



Figure 7: Detail, main entrance to hotel.

Ramona Street (Northeast) Façade

The northeast façade of the Cardinal Hotel is nearly identical to the primary façade, with its decorative end bays, but is not entirely symmetrical, with nine bays instead of eight (**Figure 8**). The second bay from the east (or left) contains two smaller windows on each story – with no decorative enframing – and a fire escape with an access ladder to the roof. On this façade, the original four-over-two double-hung wood sash have been replaced with modern metal hung sash, while the original paired 10-lite wood casement windows are extant in each decorative end bay. The original paired 10-lite wood casement windows are extant in each decorative end bay.

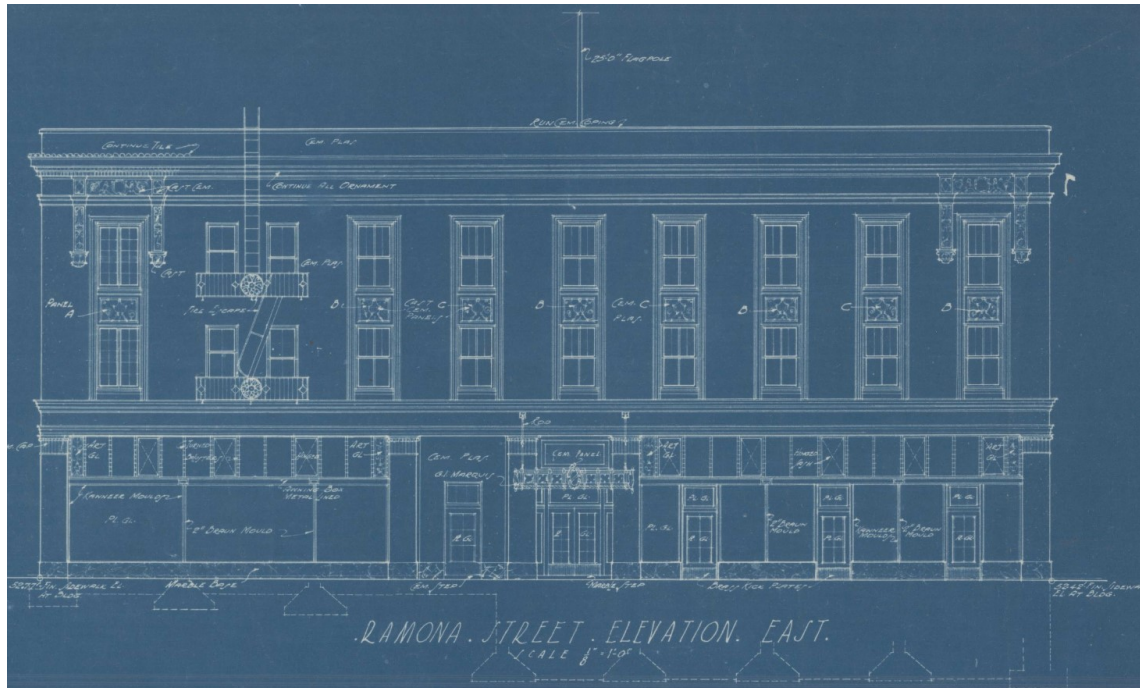


Figure 8. Blueprints of the secondary façade elevation, 1924. Source: Birge Clark Architectural Papers, Stanford Digital Repository.

Ground-floor storefronts are defined by the same storefront system and decoration as applied to the Hamilton Avenue façade. Storefronts to the left (east) of the hotel entrance have been combined into a restaurant space and the transom windows have been covered with a canvas awning over metal framing. The primary entrance to this business is located at the left edge of the façade (also accessible from Hamilton Avenue) with a non-original recessed corner entrance (**Figure 9**). Storefronts to the right of the hotel entrance are largely intact with some replacement of materials. A canvas awning with metal frame extends across all three storefronts. A barber pole over the entrance to the first storefront at the right of the hotel entrance is believed to date to the opening of the hotel.²

² Palo Alto Historical Association. Inventory of Historic Buildings Files.



Figure 9: Ramona Street (northeast) façade, at corner of Hamilton Avenue, facing southwest.



Figure 10: Secondary entrance to the Cardinal Hotel, facing southwest.

The secondary entrance to the hotel lobby is recessed under a decorative metal marquee with neon signs mounted on each side (**Figure 10**). A marble step and tiled entrance vestibule leads to double-leaf glass-paneled wood doors with a paneled wood and glass surround. A wrought iron lamp hangs in the vestibule. The adjacent bay to this recessed entrance contains a modern service door with a partially infilled transom with vent, set into a plain stucco wall.

Southwest Façade

The southwest façade faces an access road that bisects the block between Emerson and Ramona streets. The first bay of the southwest façade (from the right or southernmost corner) is designed to match the decorative end bays of the primary street façades, completing the design from an oblique view looking north along Hamilton Avenue (**Figure 5**). This decorative bay retains its original paired 10-lite wood casement windows. The remaining eight bays of the southwest façade are utilitarian in design, clad in textured stucco with projecting stuccoed sills under regularly spaced windows. Metal vents with metal screening are located under first-story windows in the third and fourth bays from the rear of the building. A fire escape in the second bay from the south corner (towards Hamilton Avenue) includes an access ladder to the roof (**Figure 11 and 12**).

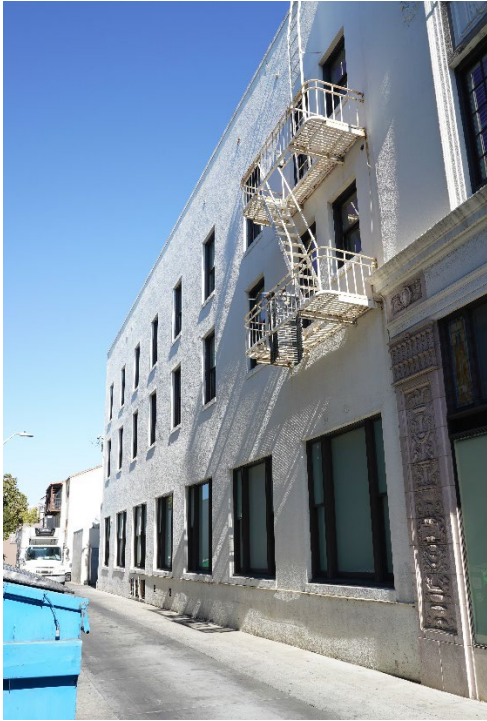


Figure 11. Side (southwest) façade, looking north.



Figure 12: Ground floor, first bay of side (southwest) façade, looking north.

Northwest Façade

The northwest façade is largely obscured by the adjacent building at 538-542 Ramona Street (**Figure 13**). The rear wall of the Cardinal Hotel is clad in textured stucco and window openings feature projecting sills. A portion of this façade is visible from Ramona Street, above the adjacent building, and neon lettering with a painted background for the Cardinal Hotel has been mounted on this wall (**Figure 14**). On the back corner of the lot, a single-leaf, round-arched wood door is set in a stucco wall, providing delivery access to the rear of the hotel (**Figure 15**).



Figure 13. Northwest façade, looking east. Source: Bing Maps, 2019.



Figure 14: Northwest facade visible above adjacent building, looking south.



Figure 15: Northwest facade, looking east.

INTERIOR

The Cardinal Hotel's first floor lobby and lounge is a large rectangular space with wide hallways that extend to both the primary entrance along Hamilton Avenue and the secondary entrance at Ramona Street (**Figure 16**). A wood check-in desk for hotel guests fills the southwest corner of the rectangular lobby and lounge, and an open staircase to the second floor is located in the southeast corner.

This interior space features original mosaic tile flooring with decorative edging, textured stucco walls, a box-beam ceiling, a fireplace under a large shield, and columns and pilasters with rams' head capitals and spiral colonnettes (**Figure 17 and 18**). The Arts and Crafts aesthetic of the space is highlighted by the original Batchelder Tile Company fireplace and the wrought iron lamps, chandeliers, and sconces by Santa Cruz metal craftsman John Otter, known as 'Otter the Lampmaker.'³

³ Ernest A. Batchelder was an art tile artist involved in the American Arts and Crafts movement; the dark brown tile fireplace at the Cardinal Hotel is intended to resemble a carved wood fireplace at first glance. For a source on Otter the Lampmaker, see: "Santa Cruz Firm Executes Contract for Lighting Fixtures Which Will Grace Palo Alto's Hotel Cardinal," *Santa Cruz Evening News*, November 15, 1924, 4.

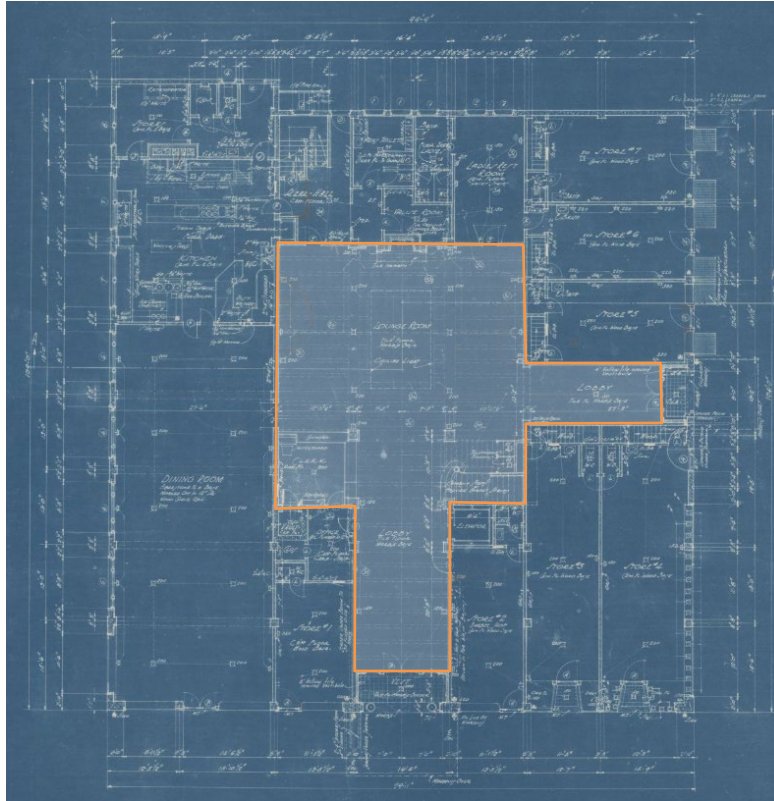


Figure 16: Plan of first floor; lobby and lounge outlined in orange.
Source: Birge Clark Architectural Papers, Stanford Digital
Repository. Outline added by Page & Turnbull, 2019.



Figure 17: Lobby and lounge, 1924. Source: Palo Alto Historical Association.



Figure 18: Existing conditions. Lobby and lounge.

SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD

Developed as part of a group of eight buildings planned and constructed from 1924 to 1938 (now the Ramona Street Architectural District), the Cardinal Hotel is meant to be viewed within its immediate context of contemporary commercial structures (Figure 19). These structures along the 500 block of Ramona Street are characterized by their stucco façades, with a muted color palette and wrought iron and clay tile, their pedestrian-oriented storefronts, and a height of one to four stories (Figure 20 and 21).

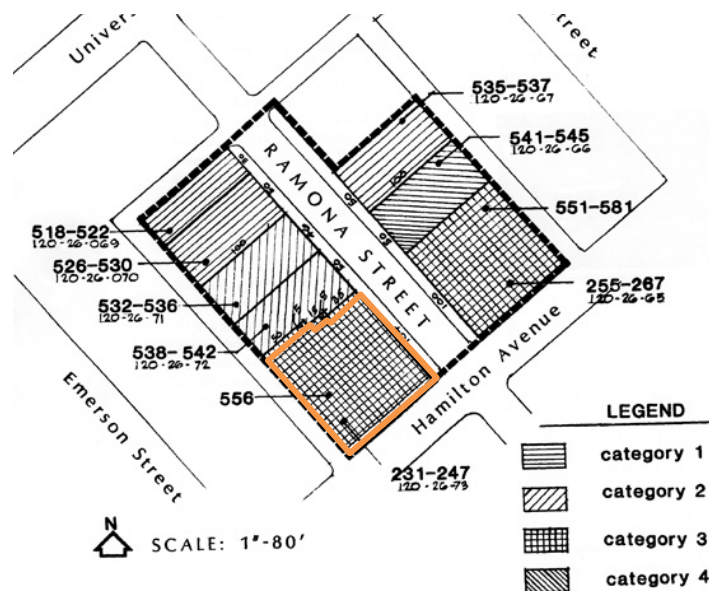


Figure 19: Ramona Street Architectural District, diagram from National Register nomination of 1985, altered by Page & Turnbull, 2019.



Figure 20: South side of Ramona Street (#518-542), northwest wall of Cardinal Hotel at left, looking south. Source: CAW Architects.

New construction located across Hamilton Avenue maintains a similar height and massing as the Cardinal Hotel and its contemporary buildings, such as the adjacent Downing Block constructed in 1909 (**Figure 22 and 23**).



Figure 21: Intersection of Ramona Street (left) and Hamilton Avenue (right); Medico-Dental building at corner (within the Ramona Street District), looking north. Source: Google Maps, 2019.



Figure 22: South side of Hamilton Avenue, looking southwest. Source: Google Maps, 2019.



Figure 23: North side of Hamilton Avenue, building adjacent to Cardinal Hotel (right). Source: Google Maps, 2019.



Figure 24: Palo Alto City Hall, located diagonally across from the Cardinal Hotel. Source: Google maps.

In the 1960s, the demolition of buildings diagonally across the intersection from the Cardinal Hotel for the construction of the Palo Alto Civic Center and City Hall resulted in an open plaza along Hamilton Avenue that has given the Cardinal Hotel more visual prominence (**Figure 24**).

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

PALO ALTO HISTORY

The earliest known settlement of the Palo Alto area was by the Ohlone people. The region was colonized in 1769 as part of Alta California. The Spanish and Mexican governments carved the area into large ranchos which contained portions of land that became Palo Alto including *Rancho Corte Madera*, *Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas*, *Rancho Rincon de San Francisquito*, and *Rancho Riconada del Arroyo de San Francisquito*.⁴ These land grants were honored in the cession of California to the United States, but parcels were subdivided and sold throughout the nineteenth century.

The current city of Palo Alto contains the former township of Mayfield, which was located just southwest of Alma Street, and was established in 1855 (**Figure 25**). Starting in 1876, the railroad magnate and California politician Leland Stanford began to purchase land in the area for his country estate, and in 1882 he purchased an additional 1,000 acres adjacent to Mayfield for his horse farm.⁵ Stanford's vast holdings became known as the Palo Alto Stock Farm. On March 9, 1885, Stanford University was founded on land of the Palo Alto Stock Farm through an endowment act by the California Assembly and Senate.

Originally looking to connect Stanford University as a part of the already established town of Mayfield, Stanford asked residents of Mayfield to make the town a temperance town. Their refusal in 1886 caused Stanford to found the town of Palo Alto with aid from his friend, Timothy Hopkins of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Hopkins purchased and subdivided 740 acres of private land, that was known initially as University Park (or the Hopkins Tract).⁶ This land was bounded by the San Francisquito Creek to the north and the railroad tracks and Stanford University campus to the south. A new train stop was created along University Avenue and the new town flourished in its close

⁴ Ward Winslow and Palo Alto Historical Association, *Palo Alto: A Centennial History* (Palo Alto, CA: Palo Alto Historical Association, 1993), 12-17.

⁵ Ibid, 35.

⁶ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030* (adopted by City Council, November 13, 2017), 16, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62915>.

connection with the university. University Park, under its new name of Palo Alto, was incorporated in 1894.

In its early years, Palo Alto was a temperance town where no alcohol could be served. The residents were mostly middle and working class, with a pocket of University professors clustered in the neighborhood deemed Professorville. The development of a local streetcar in 1906, and the interurban railway to San Jose in 1910, facilitated access to jobs outside the city and to the University, encouraging more people to move to Palo Alto.⁷ In July 1925, Mayfield was officially annexed and consolidated into the city of Palo Alto.⁸

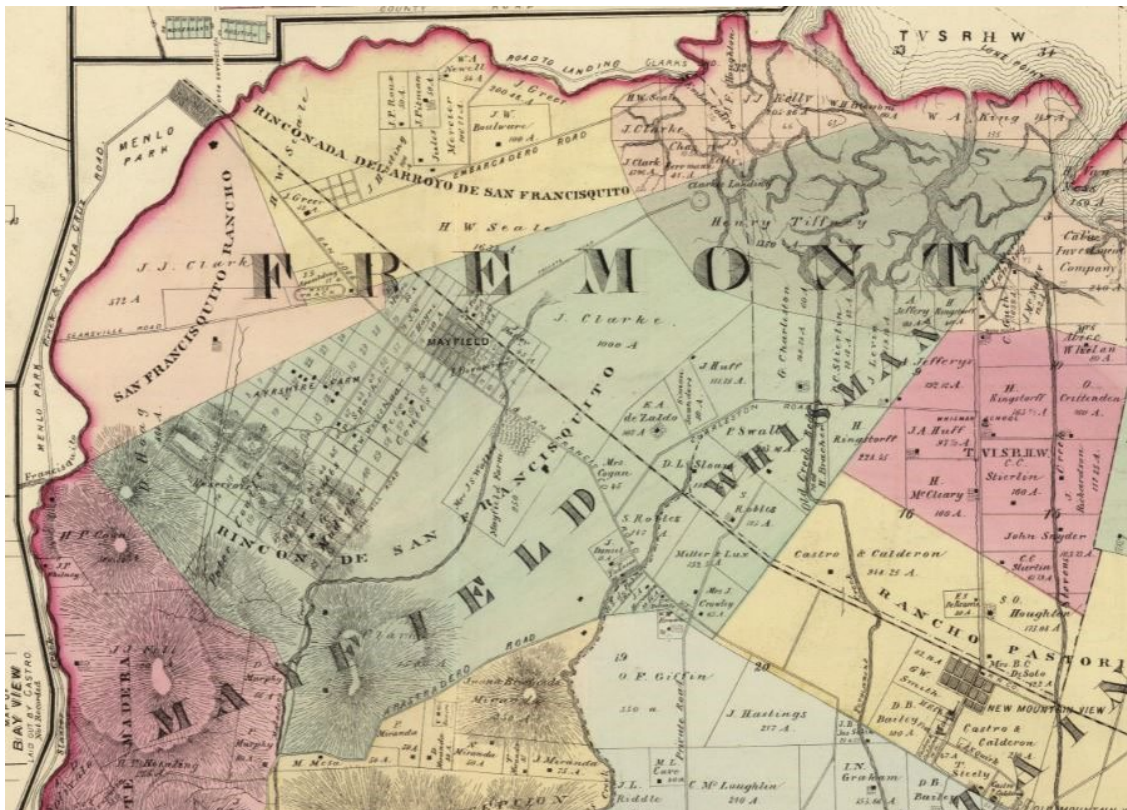


Figure 25. Detail view of “Santa Clara County Map Number One” by Thompson & West, 1876.
Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

Like the rest of the nation, Palo Alto suffered through the Great Depression in the 1930s and did not grow substantially. World War II brought an influx of military personnel and their families to the Peninsula; accordingly, Palo Alto saw rapid growth following the war as many families who had been stationed on the Peninsula by the military, or who worked in associated industries, chose to stay. Palo Alto’s population more than doubled from 16,774 in 1940 to 52,287 in 1960.⁹

Palo Alto’s city center greatly expanded in the late 1940s and 1950s, gathering parcels that would house new offices and light industrial uses and lead the city away from its “college town” reputation. Palo Alto annexed a vast area of mostly undeveloped land between 1959 and 1968. This area, west of the Foothill Expressway, has remained protected open space. Small annexations continued into the

⁷ Dames & Moore, “Final Survey Report – Palo Alto Historical Survey Update: August 1997- 2000,” 1-4.

⁸ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030*, 16.

⁹ “City of Palo Alto, Santa Clara County,” Bay Area Census, accessed August 27, 2019, <http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/PaloAlto50.htm>.

1970s, contributing to the discontinuous footprint of the city today. Palo Alto remains closely tied to Stanford University; it is the largest employer in the city. The technology industry dominates other sectors of business, as is the case with most cities within Silicon Valley. Palo Alto consciously maintains its high proportion of open space to development and the suburban feeling and scale of its architecture.¹⁰

UNIVERSITY SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD

The current University South neighborhood is located in the southern portion of the original University Park tract platted by Timothy Hopkins. It was the core part of the early city, along with today's Downtown North neighborhood (located northwest of University Avenue, Downtown North is the main commercial corridor within the original core of Palo Alto). University South contains the residential and commercial areas that lay southeast of University Avenue, although it does not encompass Professorville, the residential neighborhood closely associated with early Stanford faculty members and their families. As a result, the neighborhood is U-shaped, bounded by University Avenue at the northwest, Alma Street and the railroad tracks at the south, and Middlefield Road at the northeast. The southeast boundary follows Embarcadero Road but steps northwest to Addison Avenue, so as to exclude Professorville.

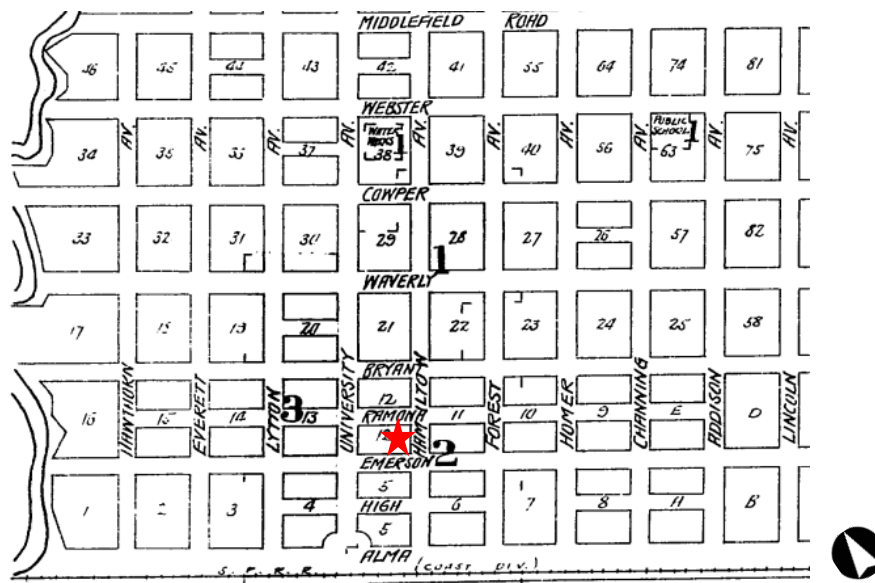


Figure 26. 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. map of Palo Alto showing the street layout within the core of the city. The future location of the subject property is marked by the red star.

Source: Digital Sanborn Maps, San Francisco Public Library

The 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map illustrates that stores were located along University Avenue, and were particularly concentrated at its southwestern end, near the railroad, where a large lumberyard stood (**Figure 26**). Residences were scattered along the street just east and west of University Avenue on Hamilton and Lytton Avenues. A few churches, hotels, and boarding houses also stood among many vacant lots. Contemporary newspapers called the homes that housed artisans and merchants in this area “neat cottages”—which stood in contrast to the houses occupied by Stanford faculty members, located to the southeast in what is today the Professorville neighborhood.

¹⁰ City of Palo Alto, *Comprehensive Plan 2030*, 11-20.

Some grander homes for more affluent residents were sprinkled throughout the current-day University South neighborhood.¹¹

By 1901, Palo Alto had grown beyond its original core. Houses filled in the lots on the blocks around the railroad, while scattered residential development extended up to and beyond Middlefield Road. Institutions, such as schools and Palo Alto's first public library, had been built in the area. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the University South neighborhood appears to have been built out with one- and two-story residences, but as the downtown commercial area prospered and expanded, University South became a desirable location for the growth of Palo Alto's commercial interests.¹²

The work of the Palo Alto Improvement Company in the 1920s and 1930s aimed to support this growing commercial identity and the company worked to build several commercial structures south of University Avenue. Their projects concentrated on Ramona Street between University and Hamilton avenues and today are recognized as the Ramona Street Architectural District.¹³ The Cardinal Hotel was the first property to be built within this context and was seen as filling a critical need in the Palo Alto business community. The few hotel and boarding house options previously available in Palo Alto had been located near the train and were not considered comfortable or attractive for a longer stay. Providing a high-end commercial hotel was intended to attract businessmen not only to the University South neighborhood, but to Palo Alto in general.

The creation of a large lobby and a dining hall were intended to allow the Cardinal Hotel to fill a role as a social space for the community. This was largely successful, and the Cardinal Hotel became a popular gathering place, hosting a variety of lectures, dances, events, and dinners for Palo Alto's citizens.¹⁴

Many properties containing early residences in the University South neighborhood have gradually been redeveloped for commercial and institutional uses, as well as into multi-unit residential buildings. The neighborhood currently transitions from commercial and civic tenants concentrated along the University Avenue corridor toward the less dense character of adjacent residential neighborhoods.

V. CARDINAL HOTEL - SITE HISTORY

SITE DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the erection of the present building, this lot contained three small wood-frame buildings that were associated with Horabin Fuel and Feed.¹⁵ This coal and wood lot, run by W. O. Horabin, had been located on the corner of Ramona Street and Hamilton Avenue since at least 1911, but the buildings on the site dated to c. 1904.¹⁶ In 1921, Horabin purchased the lot from the Downing estate,

¹¹ Palo Alto AAUW, ...*Gone Tomorrow?* "Neat Cottages" and "Handsome Residences" (Palo Alto: American Association of University Women, 1971, revised 1986) 5.

¹² The 1924 Sanborn Map shows a variety of uses including a mixture of dwellings, stores, institutional, and light industrial uses.

¹³ "Ramona Street Architectural District." Palo Alto Stanford Heritage. Accessed October 2019. <https://www.pastheritage.org/inv/invR/RamonaStreet%20AD.html>

¹⁴ "John Philip Souza Honored at Dinner," *Santa Cruz News*, November 7, 1928, 6; "Palo Alto Hotel to Open Saturday," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 9, 1924, 13.

¹⁵ "Horabin Acquires Business Corner." *Palo Alto Times*. December 1, 1921.

¹⁶ Two of the three wood buildings are present on the 1904 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, with the third added by the 1908 map.

with the intention of ultimately moving his coal yard and then improving the lot with the construction of commercial buildings.¹⁷

By October of 1923, announcements for the erection of a “first class commercial hotel” had been announced to the public, and the incorporation of the Palo Alto Hotel Improvement Company – for the sole purpose of funding and completing the project – occurred soon after.¹⁸ The Palo Alto Hotel Improvement Company was associated with the similarly named Palo Alto Improvement Company, which was responsible for the construction of several commercial and mixed-use buildings in this northwest portion of the University South neighborhood, including many of the buildings within the locally- and NR-listed Ramona Street Architectural District. The Palo Alto Improvement Company sought to secure the commercial growth of University South and the availability of a first-class hotel building near the downtown was considered essential.

Based on the building permit index record on file at the Palo Alto Historical Association – and corroborated by contemporary newspaper coverage and a December 1924 Sanborn Fire Insurance map – the Cardinal Hotel, at 235 Hamilton Avenue, was constructed in 1924. The building was designed by William H. Weeks, a prominent California architect based in San Francisco, and the supervising architect for the project was Birge Clark, a highly significant architect for the city of Palo Alto. The builder of the property was John Madsen, a local general contractor.

Construction Chronology

The following table provides a timeline of construction activity at the Cardinal Hotel, based on building permit applications on file with Palo Alto Development Services:

Permit #	Date	Owner	Architect/ Contractor	Description
A 23972	9/19/1964	B. C. Dahl	Acme Glass Company	Replacement of storefront windows (247 Hamilton)
A 27149	11/27/1967	Cardinal Coffee Shop	Cardinal Coffee Shop	Install Partition (247 Hamilton)
A 28178	2/19/1969	Cardinal Coffee Shop	Cardinal Coffee Shop	Install two archways in existing wall to permit use of adjoining portico of building (247 Hamilton)
A 28731	10/17/1969	Bjarne Dahl	Hans Stavn	Store front remodel, new glass and door (546 Ramona)
A 29128	5/8/1970	Bjarne Dahl	Andrew Helm	Cover upper portion of wood window frame with plywood (247 Hamilton)
A 32745	1/14/1974	Bjarne Dahl	Hans Stavan	Remodeling of entry way [at corner, remove doorway] (247 Hamilton)
A 34451	5/28/1975	Bjarne Dahl	Allsberry Sheet Metal	Repair Marquee
A 37342	5/9/1977	Bjarne Dahl & Bjarne Dahl Jr.	Dick Friedlander	Remodel store front and minor interior alterations (247 Hamilton)

¹⁷ “Horabin Acquires Business Corner.” 1921.

¹⁸ “Structure to be Built on Hamilton Avenue.” *Palo Alto Times*. October 24, 1923.

030568	3/10/2003	Bjarne Dahl	Stout Roofing of California	Overlay BUR with Carlisle Single Ply roof membrane
16PLN-00122	4/5/2016	Bjarne Dahl & Marianne E., Trustee	Helena Barrios Vincent	Remove canopy; replace non-historic single pane storefront windows (three); new front door

Permits prior to 1964 were not found on file at the Palo Alto Development Center. Alterations that are not indicated by the available permit history include the removal of the original flagpoles, the repainting of the façade, and the replacement of all original four-over-two double-hung wood-sash with one-over-one metal-sash windows. The window replacements are known to have occurred after 1985.¹⁹

When the façade was repainted, both the three-dimensional details of the window enframements and the flat façade were painted the same color, removing some of the differentiation supplied by the original color palette (**Figure 27**). Archival sources provide a clue as to the original color palette, and state that the body of the building was Italian Sienna with wood trim and sash painted Exposition Green. Mention of the terra cotta having a “peacock blue” background is not apparent from historic photographs.²⁰



Figure 27: Cardinal Hotel, ca. 1930s. Note contrasting façade colors on Ramona Street façade.
Source: Palo Alto Historical Society Photograph Collection

On the interior of the Cardinal Hotel, alterations to the lobby occurred at an unknown date and include the loss of the painted decoration on the box beam ceiling – which has been painted in white and cream colors – and the addition of a staircase in the north corner. The new staircase, which is

¹⁹ See photographs included in: National Register of Historic Places, *Ramona Street Architectural District*, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California, National Register #86000592.

²⁰ Records on file at PAHA cite the December 12, 1924 *Palo Alto Times*, which had a special section on the opening of the hotel; Palo Alto Historical Association. Inventory of Historic Buildings Files.

visible in a 1985 photograph, resulted in the removal of a shield within an inscribed arch over the right doorway along the northwest wall.²¹

Some of these changes on both the exterior and the interior may date to 1950, when the owners undertook a \$50,000 rehabilitation and reopened the hotel as the “New Cardinal Hotel.”²²

Available building permit applications at Palo Alto Development Services indicate that the most substantial changes have occurred in the ground floor commercial spaces, and include several window and door replacements, as well as the combination of the original seven commercial spaces into four. Many of these alterations were in-kind, and the rhythm of the storefronts have remained largely unaltered with two exceptions. The first, the addition of a storefront in the place of the original hotel dining room (at the far left of the Hamilton Street façade) occurred in 1940, with the opening of an antique shop in this space.²³ The second alteration to make a permanent change on the ground floor occurred in 1974 with the remodeling of the storefront at the corner of Hamilton Avenue and Ramona Street. This permit, #A32745, included the removal of two entrance doors, one along each façade, in order to create a recessed corner entrance that is extant today.

With the internal combination of storefront spaces, only one of the original storefront entrances has been removed, and the organization of the ground floor commercial façade, consisting of bulkheads, display windows, and a ribbon of storefront transom windows above, has remained largely intact.

OWNERSHIP HISTORY

The ownership history has been gathered from available documentation in historic newspapers, from permits at the Palo Alto Development Services, and from notes in the Palo Alto Historical Association’s Historic Architecture Inventory files. Due to the common practice of hotel managers operating a hotel business as a lease from the owner of the building, a number of people associated with the building are not in fact owners of the Cardinal Hotel.

When first planned, the site was a project of the Palo Alto Improvement Co., which wanted to establish a commercial hotel to help anchor the growing commercial uses of the University South neighborhood. The Palo Alto Hotel Improvement Company was formed in November 1923 for the sole purpose of building the Cardinal Hotel, and not even a year after its completion, the building was sold to Leila R. Wishon and her son, Frank R. Wishon, of Los Angeles.²⁴

Frank Wishon (1900-1984) was already a hotel operator at the Hotel Lankershim in Los Angeles and was involved in some capacity – likely a part owner – of the Hotel Montgomery in San José.²⁵ His mother, Leila Rountree Wishon (1878-1955), had remarried after being widowed in 1911, and her second husband was William Wallace Whitecotton (1886-1933), whose family was involved in a

²¹ This alteration occurred prior to 1985. See: National Register of Historic Places, *Ramona Street Architectural District*, Palo Alto, Santa Clara County, California, National Register #86000592.

²² Information held at Palo Alto Historical Association in the Building Permit Index Files references this rehabilitation and cites the *Palo Alto Times*, May 17, 1950.

²³ Palo Alto Historical Association. Inventory of Historic Buildings Files.

²⁴ For the creation of the Palo Alto Hotel Improvement Company, see: “Hotel Corporation Papers are Filed,” *Palo Alto Times*, November 5, 1923. For the sale to Wishon, see: “Angelino in Hotel Deal,” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1925, 4.

²⁵ United States Federal Census, 1940; “Angelino in Hotel Deal,” *The Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1925, 4.

number of hotel ventures in California.²⁶ Whitecotton was the owner of the Shattuck Hotel in Berkeley, which while it was under his ownership (1918-1942) was called the Whitecotton Hotel.

It is likely that the Wishons and Whitecottons remained owners until sometime during the Great Depression when the Cardinal Hotel was foreclosed on and ended up in the hands of Bank of America.²⁷ In 1940, the hotel passed to Ward Company, a business based in Palo Alto, but in 1944 the property was sold to Dahl and Benedict of Los Altos.²⁸ Dahl and Benedict appear to have been Bjarne Cato Dahl and George G. and Sigrid M. Benedict.²⁹

Bjarne Cato Dahl (1897 -1989) appears to have been a significant architect in Hawaii. Dahl got his start in the office of Julia Morgan and went to Honolulu to supervise the construction of Morgan's YWCA building. He chose to stay in Hawaii and became the head architect of the Territorial Public Works Department before forming a firm, Dahl & Conrad, with Connie Conrad in 1935.³⁰ Due to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Dahls sent their son Bjarne Dahl, Jr. back to California. For a short time, Bjarne Dahl, Jr., who was only 12 years old, lived with Julia Morgan.³¹

The Dahls relocated to Los Altos towards the end of World War II and became involved with the Cardinal Hotel. George and Sigrid Benedict appear to have been friends from Hawaii – or possibly relatives – who also relocated at this time. In 1950, under the ownership of Dahl and Benedict, the hotel underwent a \$50,000 rehabilitation and was reopened as the “New Cardinal Hotel.”³² The Dahl family, now the third generation, still owns the Cardinal Hotel. The son of Bjarne Cato Dahl, Bjarne B. Dahl owned the hotel until his death in 2009. He was involved in the daily operation of the Cardinal Hotel and was also a well-known restorer of harpsichords and antique pianos.³³ His son, Stephan Dahl owns the hotel today.

ARCHITECT: WILLIAM H. WEEKS (1864 -1936)

William H. Weeks was a prolific California architect, particularly known for his designs of libraries and schools. His schools were particularly well regarded for their ability to balance the safety and comfort of children. Believed to have completed projects in over 160 cities across California, he also had commissions in Nevada and Oregon.

Born in 1864 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada, William Weeks got his start in architecture working with his father, a builder and designer. Apparently never formally trained, Weeks opened an architecture office in 1894 in Watsonville, California after being hired to build a Christian Church in that city. A number of commissions for houses in Watsonville followed, and

²⁶ “Personal,” *The Hotel World: The Hotel World and Travelers Journal*, (Chicago: The Hotel World Interests, Inc.) February 1921, v. 92, n. 6, 31; “Dr. Whitecotton Dies at Age of 70,” *Oakland Tribune*, December 18, 1968, 15.

²⁷ Palo Alto Historical Association. Inventory of Historic Buildings Files.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bjarne C. Dahl was an architect. He first worked for Julia Morgan to supervise the construction of her YWCA building in Hawaii. He then maintained a firm Dahl & Conrad, in Hawaii. “Congratulations: Bjarne Cato Dahl,” *The Honolulu Advertiser*, May 25, 1940, 7.

³⁰ Dean Sakamoto, et al, editors. *Hawaiian Modernism: The Architecture of Vladimir Ossipoff*, Honolulu : Honolulu Academy of Arts ; New Haven : in association with Yale University Press, 2007, 40.

³¹ Susan Riess, ed. *The Julia Morgan Architectural History Project, Volume II*, University of California, Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 1976. 145-155.

³² Palo Alto Historical Association. Building Permit Index Files.

³³ “Bjarne Dahl.” *Palo Alto Online* [obituaries]. <https://www.paloaltoonline.com/obituaries/memorials/bjarne-dahl?o=1338>

with the success of his firm, Weeks opened another office in Salinas in 1897. He was immediately hired by industrialist Claus Spreckels to build several structures for his Spreckels Sugar Factory.³⁴

A San Francisco office was opened in 1905, fortuitously positioning his business to assist in the rebuilding projects that followed the wreckage of the 1906 earthquake and fire. In 1924, Weeks took his son Harold into the firm, renaming it Weeks & Weeks, and soon after opened branches in Oakland (1924) and San José (1926).³⁵

William Weeks designed many residential properties, courthouses, hotels, and churches, but is primarily associated with designing schools and libraries across California. While his libraries and municipal buildings tended towards a Classical aesthetic, he was adept in working in many styles and sought to build contextually. An issue of the *Architect & Engineer of California* in 1915 was dedicated to the work of Weeks. The selection of works included in this issue show buildings primarily with classical features including columns, pilasters, and modillioned cornices, but examples of his work in the Mission, Spanish, and Gothic revival styles are also included. The included article on Weeks' practice states that in the first 18 years of his practice he had completed over a thousand buildings, with thirty to forty buildings under construction at any time.³⁶

William Weeks passed away suddenly of a heart attack in 1936 at the age of 72.³⁷ The firm was left to his son, Harold Weeks.

BIRGE M. CLARK (1893 -1989)

Birge M. Clark is considered the most influential architect in Palo Alto's history. Clark was active during much of the twentieth century and was a proponent of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which he called "Early California." His prolific output, which included a variety of commercial, residential and industrial buildings, and his stylistic consistency greatly contributed to Palo Alto's current character.

Birge Clark was born April 16, 1893 in San Francisco. His father, Arthur B. Clark, had moved the family west the year before from Syracuse, New York to take a position as the first chairman of the Art and Architecture Department at Stanford University.³⁸ Birge Clark received his formal training first in art and engineering at Stanford (Class of 1914), and then with a graduate degree in architecture from Columbia University in 1917. His first commission in 1919 was for the Lou Henry Hoover House on the Stanford campus.

Clark played a major role in the creation of Palo Alto during the boom times of the 1920s. During this phase of the city's development, Clark not only designed many Spanish Colonial Revival houses in the recently annexed residential neighborhoods, but he also designed many of the commercial blocks and government buildings that were gradually replacing the Victorian-era structures in the downtown shopping area.

Well-known non-residential commissions of Clark's include the former Palo Alto Police and Fire Station at 450 Bryant Street (now the Palo Alto Senior Center) (1927), the Post Office at 380

³⁴ Betty Lewis, *W. H. Weeks, Architect*. Fresno, CA: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1989, 7.

³⁵ Lewis, 33-34.

³⁶ B.J.S. Cahill, "The Works of Mr. William H. Weeks, Architect." *Architect & Engineer [of California]*. San Francisco, vol. 41, no. 2. May 1915, 49.

³⁷ Lewis, 41.

³⁸ Peter Gauvin, "Arthur B. Clark (1866-1949), *Palo Alto Centennial* (October 21, 1994).

Hamilton Avenue (1932), the Lucie Stern Community Center at 1305 Middlefield Road (1932) and many of the buildings within the Ramona Street Architectural District (1920s).³⁹

Clark taught architecture at Stanford from 1950 until 1972. In 1980, he joined the Palo Alto Historic Resources Board. In 1984, Clark retired from active participation in his firm Clark, Stromquist & Sandstrom and on April 30, 1989, he died at the age of 96. All told, Birge Clark designed approximately 450 buildings in the Bay Area. Many of his buildings have been listed in local registers and the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE OF THE CARDINAL HOTEL

The Italian Renaissance style, sometimes referred to as the Italian Renaissance Revival or Renaissance Revival style, emerged in cities across the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century in response to popular architectural styles of the Victorian period. Much of the architecture of the Victorian era was dominated by free-flowing, picturesque styles—such as Gothic Revival, Shingle, and Queen Anne—that were inspired by medieval European precedents.⁴⁰ In contrast, and as its name suggests, the Italian Renaissance style sought a return to the more formal architectural aesthetics of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods in France and Italy, which had in turn developed out of a rebirth of interest in the Classical civilizations of Greece and Rome in Florence in the fifteenth century. In this respect, the Italian Renaissance style was part of a long line of artistic and intellectual movements that were rooted in the art and architecture of Classical Greece and Rome.⁴¹

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, commercial, institutional, and residential buildings across the United States were designed in the Italian Renaissance style. As early as the 1880s the work of McKim, Mead & White in New York City – particularly their highly publicized Villard Houses (1882-1885) – popularized the Renaissance Revival style, and examples of the style in the United States proliferated in architectural publications of the era. Additionally, developments in photography helped to ensure that architects were familiar with accurate depictions of Roman antiquity, and these images were also widely circulated. However, it was the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago that captured the imagination of America. The Columbian Exposition's classically inspired "White City" was visited by nearly 26 million people in only 6 months and played a major role in reviving interest in classical architecture. This preference for classical ornament and planning principles defined the design sensibilities of America at the turn of the century. The style steadily declined in popularity through the 1930s, as the Great Depression enveloped the country and interests in modern architectural styles grew.⁴²

Common characteristics of the Italian Renaissance style include the following:

- Entrances accented by classical columns or pilasters
- Flat, symmetrical façades
- Walls constructed of or clad with stone, stucco, or brick (generally stone-colored)
- Horizontal bands of brick or stone string courses to visually separate floors

³⁹ Peter Gauvin, "Birge Clark (1893-1989)," *Palo Alto Centennial* (May 25, 1994).

⁴⁰ Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commissions, "Italian Renaissance Revival Style, 1890-1930," Pennsylvania Architectural Field Guide, accessed July 8, 2019, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/architecture/styles/italian-renaissance.html>.

⁴¹ "Italian Renaissance," Architectural Styles of America and Europe, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://architecturestyles.org/italian-renaissance/>.

⁴² Virginia Savage McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. Revised Edition. New York: Knopf, 2015, 498.

- Classical decorative motifs including cartouches, shields, garlands, and foliate running patterns
- Expression of the piano nobile, with visual prominence of the second floor.
- Low-pitched hipped roofs or flat roofs, occasionally decorated with clay tile

The Cardinal Hotel depicts a number of features of the Italian Renaissance Revival style in its overall design, particularly the use of flat symmetrical primary façades under a flat roof, as well as the inclusion of classical features and motifs such as foliated and festooned decorative panels and pilasters, and a variety of cartouches. The façade is clearly organized with horizontal elements that delineate the upper stories from the ground floor. The use of a wide wrought iron balcony on the second story creates a similar visual prominence to a more traditional piano nobile.

While the Cardinal Hotel is largely Italian Renaissance Revival in style, the use of stucco in place of stone allows the building to blend with the other buildings of the Ramona Street Architectural District, and illustrates the ability of the architect to incorporate local materials and regional styles in order to contextualize his designs.

The collaboration between Weeks, who was skilled in a number of styles, and Birge Clark, whose career would be defined by his use of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, is particularly evident in the building's lobby. The interior of the Cardinal Hotel is generally Spanish Colonial Revival with its dark colors, tile, textured walls, and box-beamed ceilings, but the inclusion of the work of local craftsmen illustrates the influence of the American Arts and Crafts movement. An interest in craft and workmanship in the 1910s and 1920s was the result of fears that industrialization was endangering craftsmanship. The choice to include the work of regional craftsmen at the Batchelder Tile Company and Otter the Lampmaker's studio, reflected the contemporary values around craft and the idea that the inclusion of such craftsmanship could define a comfortable space for relaxation and recreation.

VI. EVALUATION

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.

The following section examines the eligibility of the Cardinal Hotel for individual listing in the California Register:

Criterion 1 (Events)

The Cardinal Hotel appears to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (Events). Built as a first-class hotel in 1924, the Cardinal Hotel was meant to attract additional business not only to the University South neighborhood, but also to greater Palo Alto. Seen as filling a long-standing need for increased hotel accommodations – particularly at the high end of the hostelry – the Cardinal Hotel provided comfortable accommodations as well as space for social events for the citizens of Palo Alto. Within the recognized Ramona Street Architectural District, the Cardinal Hotel is also notable for the fact that it was the first building constructed, with six of the seven other contributing buildings built by 1929 (the building at 535-537 Ramona Street was not built until 1938). As the first building within this new commercial development, the Cardinal Hotel played an important role in cementing the commercial development of the University South neighborhood. The Cardinal Hotel's lobby became a popular gathering place for Palo Alto citizens and visitors, and held dances, events, lectures, and dinners, particularly before the Great Depression.

Therefore, the Cardinal Hotel does appear to be individually eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 (Persons)

The Cardinal Hotel does not appear to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Persons). The subject building was developed by a group of businessmen with other commercial interests in Palo Alto. Soon after construction, the building was sold to Leila Wishon and her son Frank Wishon. Frank Wishon was already involved in the hotel industry at both the Hotel Lankershim in Los Angeles and the Hotel Montgomery in San José, prior to their purchase of the Hotel Cardinal. Leila Wishon primarily lived in Los Angeles, spending little time at the Cardinal Hotel, and beyond her partial ownership of the subject property, appears to have been more involved in the hotel industry through her second marriage to William Wallace Whitecotton. While Whitecotton may be a significant figure in the hotel industry of early twentieth century California, he is more closely associated with other properties, namely the Shattuck Hotel, and there is little evidence of his involvement in the Cardinal Hotel.

The Dahl family has owned the Cardinal Hotel for the longest period of its history. Bjarne Dahl, Sr. was an architect and supervised the construction of Julia Morgan's YWCA building in Honolulu, Hawaii. He then maintained an architecture firm (Dahl & Conrad) in Hawaii, before moving to Los Altos. While Bjarne Cato Dahl appears to be a significant regional architect, his body of professional work is more appropriately associated with Hawaii and not the Cardinal Hotel or Palo Alto. Additionally, Bjarne B. Dahl, Jr's achievements in the restoration of harpsichords and antique pianos does not relate to the subject building. Thus, the Cardinal Hotel does not appear to be individually eligible for the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture)

The Cardinal Hotel appears to be individually eligible under Criterion 3 (Architecture) as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The Cardinal Hotel is significant as the work of a notable California architect, William H. Weeks, and demonstrates his considerable range in design and style. The building's Italian Renaissance Revival style façade is a well-balanced and detailed design that while presenting a sophisticated understanding of the style, is modest enough to blend with the surrounding buildings and demonstrates Weeks' skill.

The building is additionally significant for its design as a collaboration between Weeks and a young Birge Clark. It is unknown how much collaboration on design occurred between Weeks and Clark, but many of the building's more Spanish Colonial Revival features are believed to be Clark's additions, as the Spanish Colonial Revival would become his signature style. Birge Clark would go on to build the majority of buildings now included in the Ramona Street Architectural District over the next five years. His work on the Cardinal Hotel was an important accomplishment in his early career that helped to shape this 1920s commercial development and the visual identity of University South.

The lobby of the Cardinal Hotel is significant for its architecture as an example of a 1920s interior reflective of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The contemporary focus on craftsmanship is evident in the inclusion of decorative tile flooring, the Batchelder tile fireplace, and the wrought iron lamps by Otter the Lampmaker. The box beam ceiling is also a common feature of the Art and Crafts movement.

Therefore, the Cardinal Hotel does appear to be individually eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

The Cardinal Hotel does not appear to be individually eligible under Criterion 4 as a building that has the potential to provide information important to the prehistory or history of the City of Palo Alto, state, or nation. It does not feature construction or material types, or embody engineering practices that would, with additional study, provide important 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.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the Cardinal Hotel is 1924, corresponding to the year of the building's construction.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

For a property to be eligible for national or state designation under criteria related to type, period, or method of construction, the essential physical features (or character-defining features) that enable the property to convey its historic identity must be evident. These distinctive character-defining features are the physical traits that commonly recur in property types and/or architectural styles. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction, and these features must also retain a sufficient degree of integrity. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.

The character-defining features of the Cardinal Hotel include, but are not limited to:

Exterior, upper stories

- Symmetry of the street façades
- Material palette of stucco, terra cotta, wrought iron, and clay tile
- Decorative end bays with cast concrete surrounds of foliate Renaissance detail
- 10-lite wood casement windows in end bays and in paired central bays on Hamilton Avenue façade
- 10-lite wood casement windows in paired central bays on Hamilton Avenue façade
- Spandrel panels with shields between windows on second and third stories along both primary façades
- Horizontal bandcourse to visually separate ground floor commercial uses from the hotel uses in the second and third floors
- Centrally placed cartouche on third story of Hamilton Avenue façade
- Wrought iron Juliet balconies along Hamilton Avenue façade
- Denticulated box cornice with clay tile
- Flat roof

Exterior, ground floor

- Recessed entrances for access to the hotel lobby on both Hamilton Avenue and Ramona Street
- Hamilton Avenue entrance accented by classical spiral Corinthian columns and pilasters
- Metal marquees over hotel entrances
- Organization and rhythm of storefronts with bulkhead, display windows, recessed entrances, and transom windows
- Storefront transom windows arranged with fixed-sash, operable transoms, and fixed art glass, separated by mullions with an applied engaged turned post
- Foliated terra cotta pilasters with vintage car motifs

Interior, lobby

- Batchelder Tile Company fireplace
- Box beamed ceiling
- Decorative tile flooring
- Lighting fixtures by Otis the Lampmaker
- Columns with rams' head capitals and spiraled applied colonnettes
- Skylight
- Textured walls
- Three-dimensional shield over fireplace
- Open interior volume with wide halls to primary and secondary entrances

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."⁴³

In order to evaluate whether the Cardinal Hotel retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance, Page & Turnbull used established integrity standards outlined by the *National Register Bulletin: 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 stand up under 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.

The seven aspects that define integrity are defined as follows:

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed.

Setting addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure, and style of the property.

Materials refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

Location

The Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of location as it has remained in its original location.

Setting

The Cardinal Hotel substantially retains integrity of setting. The Cardinal Hotel is closely associated with its neighboring buildings along the 500 Block of Ramona Street. These buildings, which are contributing buildings with the Cardinal Hotel in the Ramona Street Architectural District, are substantially unaltered and share a primary period of development and significance with the subject building. The construction of new buildings across Hamilton Avenue have maintained a compatible height and massing and do not impact the general character of the commercial corridor immediately adjacent to the Cardinal Hotel. The construction of the Palo Alto Civic Center and City Hall across the intersection from the subject building is the most noticeable change to the immediate setting, but the creation of a public plaza and park at this corner has only increased the prominence of the

⁴³ 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; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995) 44.

Cardinal Hotel and the 500 block of Ramona Street. Therefore, the Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of setting.

Design

The Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of design. The subject property has undergone minimal alteration since its construction in 1924. The building's massing and overall form have remained unchanged. Alterations to the building's fenestration include the replacement of the building's four-over-two double-hung wood-sash windows with modern one-over-one hung metal sash. Changes to the colors of the façade have occurred but are reversible. Additionally, alterations to the building's ground floor include the internal rearrangement (or combination) of commercial units and the replacement of storefront windows and doors, however the rhythm of openings remains largely intact. Thus, these alterations do not negatively impact the building's overall design.

The original design of the interior lobby and lounge remains substantially intact, and those minimal alterations that have occurred have been respectful of the materials, decoration, craftsmanship, and massing of this important interior space. Therefore, the subject building retains integrity of design.

Materials

The Cardinal Hotel substantially retains integrity of materials. The subject property has undergone minimal alterations since its original construction in 1924. While replacements have been made to windows, doors, and storefronts, the other materials of the façade including the stucco finish, the terra cotta pilasters, cast concrete decorative elements, and the metal balconies and marquees, have remained intact. On the interior, original features and materials are largely intact. Where replacement has been necessary, such as the use of gold paint in place of gold leaf, the impact has been minimal. The replacement of storefront windows and doors has effected the largest change in original material; however, alterations have been in kind and the large glass display windows that characterize the façade remain extant. These minor alterations do not detract from the overall character or design of the building, the Cardinal Hotel substantially retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

The Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of workmanship. Many of the material choices and design elements that are characteristic of the building's period of development and Italian Renaissance Revival style have been retained to a high degree. The building's interior lobby remains highly intact in regard to workmanship and is a significant example of the craftsmanship of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The restoration of the wrought iron lamps, tile flooring, and interior finishes has been sensitive and had maintained original features.

Feeling

The Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of feeling. The property was originally designed for use as a hotel with commercial space along the ground floor and has been continually used as such since its opening in 1924. The building's location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship have been retained, enabling the building to convey the overall feeling of a 1920s Italian Renaissance Revival hotel.

Association

The Cardinal Hotel retains integrity of association. It retains a high level of integrity and is able to convey its association with the commercialization of the University South neighborhood, the growing profile of Palo Alto's downtown in the 1920s, and its Italian Renaissance Revival design as an important collaboration between William H. Weeks and Birge Clark.

Therefore, the Cardinal Hotel retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity such that it conveys its significance under Criterion 1 (Events) and Criterion 3 (Architecture) of the California Register, with a period of significance of 1924-1938.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Cardinal Hotel at 235 Hamilton Avenue appears to be individually eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1 and 3. The property was already found significant as a contributing building within a historic district, but the building is additionally significant for its role as a commercial hotel developed to anchor the commercial corridor on Ramona Street that was only just taking shape in 1924. The building was the first to be completed as part of the larger work by the Palo Alto Development Company, and the Cardinal Hotel became an important social and recreational space for Palo Alto in addition to providing commercial uses. For its role in the development of Palo Alto and the University South neighborhood, the building is significant under Criterion 1. The building is also significant as the work of a prolific California architect, William H. Weeks, and is an important early project in the career of Birge Clark, Palo Alto's most important architect. For the importance of its architects, as well as its refined Italian Renaissance Revival façade and Arts and Crafts interior, the Cardinal Hotel is significant under Criterion 3. The Cardinal Hotel at 235 Hamilton Avenue is therefore a historic resource for the purposes of CEQA review.

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