SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) proposes to demolish three historic on-campus residential buildings known as the “Cal Poly Cottages.” Cal Poly hired Crawford Multari & Clark Associates (CMCA) to conduct the environmental assessment of this proposed project. CMCA, in turn, contracted with JRP Historical Consulting (JRP) to prepare this Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report for the historic residences.

The purpose of this document is to comply with state environmental regulations as they pertain to the protection of historic architectural resources. This study was conducted in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. Under CEQA, the resources in this report have been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code. Cal Poly has also required that the resources be evaluated in accordance with the standards used for evaluating historic resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Therefore, this report also addresses the potential for these resources to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Because the Cal Poly Cottages are located immediately adjacent to one another in a group and share a common history, the three structures have been formally evaluated on a single California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) 523 Form. Construction of “Cottage #2” and “Cottage #3” occurred in 1908-09, while construction of “Cottage #1” occurred in 1910. Each of the structures was designed to facilitate on-campus staff housing, and each maintained this capacity until the late twentieth century, when members of the campus faculty began using the cottages as storage units. In the early 1920s, Cal Poly workmen removed the cottages from their original location on the north side of campus and placed them on the southwest side of campus, where they have since remained. During the removal process, workers modified the cottages to conform to the topography of their new setting; they also added structural elements to the cottages’ rear façades and constructed new garage outbuildings for each residence. Years later, workers modified the cottages once again by demolishing the existing shed-roofed additions and rebuilding larger additions to each cottage. In recent years, Cottage #3 has endured a third addition associated with the expansion of Cal Poly’s daycare program housed in this structure.

The Cal Poly Cottages are of some historical interest because of their age. Although these workers cottages were not central to the core mission of the new university, they comprise three quarters of the surviving structures built during Cal Poly’s first phase of construction, a period lasting from 1903 to 1911 (the Old Power House, like Cottages #2 and #3, dates to 1909). Despite their venerable age, the cottages have been moved from their original sites and no longer retain their spatial and functional connection with the area of the early campus devoted to agricultural, maintenance and operations facilities. None of these three buildings appear to be
associated with the lives of individuals that made significant contributions to the school’s early history. The buildings were constructed in a popular architectural style of the period, but they are modest workers bungalows and not distinctive examples of Craftsman bungalow residences of the era. Nor do they represent the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values. Likewise, the buildings have not, nor are they likely to yield information important to history or prehistory.

The potential period of significance for these resources is based upon their association with the formative years of the Cal Poly campus in the first decade of the twentieth century. Within that context, they were not particularly important buildings as they were added to the planned development at a late date for the utilitarian purpose of housing a groundskeeper and farm foreman. Furthermore, because the cottages have been architecturally modified and removed from their original setting, their ability to convey their potential significance to Cal Poly’s early history has been compromised. This report concludes that the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR), and do not appear to be historical resources for the purposes of CEQA.

**Appendix A** includes three figures showing the project vicinity and location (Figure 1) and site layout (Figure 2). Figure 2 includes map reference numbers for the individual cottages. The DPR 523 Form for the Cal Poly Cottages is attached as **Appendix B**.
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ATTACHMENTS

APPENDIX A: Figures
APPENDIX B: DPR 523 Form
1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Historic Resources Inventory Report is prepared as the historic resources component of an environmental assessment which analyzes the potential environmental effects under CEQA of a proposed undertaking to demolish three buildings on the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus, known generally as the “Cal Poly Cottages.”

1.1. Project Location

The Cal Poly Cottages are located along Campus Way in the southwestern corner of the Cal Poly campus in the City of San Luis Obispo, California. Three campus dormitories, Jespersen Hall, Heron Hall, and Chase Hall, are located approximately 200 feet to the north and northwest of the cottages, while the Orfalea Family & ASI Children’s Center is located approximately 200 feet to the northeast. To the south, the cottages face Cal Poly’s southern boundary with the City of San Luis Obispo (Appendix A, Figures 1 and 2).

1.2. Objectives

The University’s administrators have determined that the poor condition of the Cal Poly Cottages poses a potential safety hazard to the campus community. By demolishing the structures, University administrators aim to eliminate this potential hazard and improve campus safety.

1.3. Description of Setting

The Cal Poly Cottages lie in the southwestern corner of Cal Poly, south of Campus Way, and below a hill that slopes up toward the north and northeast. Historically, the southwestern corner of campus has served as a student’s residential zone, with three prominent student dormitories, a dining hall, student recreational facilities, and a children’s daycare facility located nearby.

1.4. Proposed Site Development

The proposed project involves no new development, only the demolition of the Cal Poly Cottages.
2. RESEARCH AND FIELD METHODS

JRP followed standard methodologies for inventorying and evaluating historic properties. JRP conducted fieldwork at the Cal Poly Cottages site on July 18, 2006, and recorded the salient architectural properties of the buildings and photographed each of them for subsequent description on a DPR-523 form (Appendix B). JRP also conducted research at a variety of San Luis Obispo-area libraries and repositories, including the Robert E. Kennedy Library and Special Collections on campus at Cal Poly, the San Luis Obispo City Library, and the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society Museum. JRP also visited and performed historical research at the California State Library in Sacramento, the California State Archives in Sacramento, and Shields Library on the campus at University of California, Davis.

Once the research and field work was completed, the authors prepared a historic context to address the themes and background of the Cal Poly Cottages and evaluated the structures under NRHP and CRHR criteria on the accompanying DPR 523 form (Appendix B). The pertinent historic themes uncovered by our research are discussed in the historic overview found in Section 3. A detailed description of the three cottages and historical evaluation of the properties are summarized in Sections 4 and 5. Refer to Section 6 for the professional qualifications of the JRP staff who prepared the report, and to the references listed in Section 7 for a complete listing of materials consulted.
3. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

3.1. Early History of San Luis Obispo

In 1772, Father Junipero Serra of Spain arrived in a small inland valley at the foot of the Santa Lucia Mountains in Central California to establish Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, the fifth of twenty-one missions built by Spanish colonists in a chain along the California coastal region. In 1822, the newly independent nation of Mexico annexed the region around San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, and in 1835 the government secularized the Mission and set about transferring much of its acreage to private Mexican citizens, who established ranchos and grazed cattle on the land. In 1848, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, the United States acquired California, and in 1850 the U.S. admitted the territory into the Union as the thirty-first state.

In 1856, the men and women living near the abandoned Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa organized their community as a town under California law, naming it San Luis Obispo. During the early 1860s, a prolonged drought killed most of the region’s cattle, forcing the few remaining Mexican-era rancho owners to sell their lands to American newcomers, who established the region’s first dairy farms. Sheep raising also gained a foothold in the region, while other families established bean, beet, and squash-producing farms. In 1894, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company extended a rail line from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo, and in 1901 the line reached Los Angeles.1 At the turn of the twentieth century, the City of San Luis Obispo boasted a vibrant farming and ranching economy, with daily passenger and freight trains linking the town and its productive hinterlands with California’s two largest consumer markets. The growing city “seemed a perfect choice for the location of a state school.”2

3.2. Early History of Cal Poly

In 1898, a San Luis Obispo journalist named Myron Angel published an editorial in the San Luis Obispo Breeze outlining his plans for a technical training institution in San Luis Obispo. In 1901, the State Legislature and Governor Henry T. Gage agreed to authorize “An Act to Establish the California Polytechnic School,” and in the fall of 1903 the California Polytechnic School at San Luis Obispo welcomed its first incoming class of twenty students. The early campus layout centered around the Administration Building, a 45 x 100-foot, two-story structure designed by Watsonville architect William Henry Weeks. The original campus dormitory, also

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designed by Weeks, flanked the Administration Building and housed approximately thirty students. Both buildings exhibited Mission-Revival style architecture: both featured symmetrical facades, smooth stucco wall surfaces, hipped roofs clad in red tile, and arched porticos topped by shaped Mission dormers. In 1907, the campus added the Household Arts Building, which flanked the Administration Building opposite Dormitory No. 1. In design and construction, the Household Arts Building closely resembled Dormitory No. 1, and as a unit, the Household Arts Building, Administration Building, and Dormitory No. 1 comprised an impressive campus core. The structures served as the hub of Cal Poly’s early administration, and epitomized the architectural composition of the early campus (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A 1929 postcard illustrating Cal Poly’s campus core and its Mission style architecture. Source: *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years* (Robert E. Kennedy Library, 2001), 1.

Between 1907 and 1910, Cal Poly’s administrative leaders undertook an ambitious building program. In 1907, the California State Legislature appropriated funds to implement several projects, including the construction of a new dormitory, a creamery, several small shops and sheds, and two employee cottages. Construction of these buildings, however, was delayed due to a bureaucratic statute that delegated the buildings’ planning and design to the State Architect, who worked in the Office of the State Engineer in Sacramento. A year later, in March 1908, campus officials received their building plans, drawn by State Architect George Clinton Sellon and his business partner Charles E. Hemmings, both of San Francisco. The major building, the Boys Dormitory No. 2, continued the tradition of building in a Spanish-Revival style. Later in 1909, as workers put the finishing touches on these projects, Cal Poly secured a second round of appropriations, this time in anticipation of several new works, including a new dining hall, a new

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3 *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years*, 14-21.
5 *The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature* (San Francisco, Calif.: Bancroft-Whitney Company, 1906), 196-198.
6 Smith, 62; *California Blue Book or State Roster, 1907* (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 68, 99.
power plant, several new barns, and a third employee cottage. Workers completed these projects in 1910. The three employee cottages constructed during this period represent the historic cottages recorded in this report.

3.3. Construction of the Cal Poly Cottages

Cal Poly’s administrators lobbied the Legislature for employee cottages because they believed on-campus staff housing for some types of positions would stimulate a more efficient, dependable workforce. “A higher class of men,” wrote school director Leroy Anderson in 1906, “with a corresponding greater efficiency of effort could be secured if the school provided homes for them upon its own grounds.” He added, “a man … near his daily work is a more dependable quantity than a … man who must live one to two miles distant.” Anderson envisioned at least four cottages on campus, with accommodations for the gardener, poultryman, dairymen, and teamsters. Two years later, after securing the Legislative appropriations of 1907 and acquiring Seldon and Hemmings’ architectural plans, campus officials began entertaining bids for construction of the first two campus cottages. On April 15, 1908, they settled on the bid proposed by J. Miano and Son, a San Luis Obispo contracting firm, for $3,846. The crew finished their work in 1909. The location was selected for its proximity to the school’s complex of operations buildings and agricultural and industrial training facilities. The school’s farm foreman, Samuel C. Griffith, and head gardener, Albert D. Sinclair, took up residence in the new cottages, just as school director Anderson had envisioned.

In 1908, as workers were constructing the first two cottages, Cal Poly’s administrators began pressing the State Legislature for more staff housing. That year, the school’s new director, Leroy B. Smith, praised the new accommodations under construction, but lobbied the Legislature for more. “The construction,” wrote Smith, “of cottages upon the grounds for the farm foreman and the head gardener is a step in the right direction … in the near future homes should (also) be provided for the dairymen, teamsters, and possibly one or two other employees.” A year later, the school’s Board of Trustees agreed with Smith, yet balked at the cottages’ expense and

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7 The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 845-849.
9 Third Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the California Polytechnic School Comprising the Reports of the Director and Secretary of the Board, 1906-1908 (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office 1908), 38.
10 Catalogue 1906-7, California Polytechnic School, San Luis Obispo (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 8, 5.
suggested slight changes. “I would,” offered one Board member, “respectfully recommend the erection of a third farm cottage on the general plan of those erected last year. I would suggest, however, that we first advise with the State Architect with a view to securing minor modifications which . . . will give us an entirely satisfactory cottage at less cost than those already erected.” 12 Later that year, the Legislature concurred, and Cal Poly received a $2,300 appropriation for the construction of a third employee cottage. State Architect William D. Coates, Jr. modeled the structure’s design after Sellon’s 1908 plans, and the State Department of Engineering managed the cottage’s construction, which was completed in 1910 using day laborers. 13

By 1911, workers had completed Cal Poly’s first phase of building development, and the campus, as it appeared during its earliest period of history (1903-1920), was fully realized. The school layout during these years adhered to a specific plan: the campus core, comprising the Household Arts Building, Administration Building, and Dormitory No. 1, was located to the west, while the school’s agricultural and industrial training facilities were located to the east. The employee cottages were located to the northeast, near the operations and training facilities where the residents of the cottages worked. To the southwest, Dormitory No. 2 signaled the beginning of a campus residential zone that would fully materialize during the 1920s and 30s (see Figure 2).

3.4. Early 1920s Development

Between 1910 and 1920, the physical makeup of Cal Poly’s campus changed little. The State Legislature appropriated only scant funds to the school, and the school’s administrators refrained from planning any major building projects. Things changed, however, in 1921. The Legislature appropriated nearly $300,000 toward the school, and Cal Poly director Nicholaus Ricciardi implemented a series of campus upgrades. Workers paved the road that led from campus to town, constructed an auto shop, and built a horse barn. They also installed new poultry houses and hog pens. A total of $92,000 was earmarked for “badly needed repairs, improvements, and equipment.” 14 The school instituted a four-year course in printing, and student enrollment increased by twenty-seven percent to 228. 15 This period ushered in Cal Poly’s second phase of

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12 Board of Trustees Meeting at San Francisco, June 16, 1909.
13 Board of Trustees Report, May 14, 1910.
14 Smith, 110.
15 Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years, 31.
Figure 2. 1909 Cal Poly campus map, including Dormitory No. 2 and the Creamery, which at the time were still under construction. The two 1909 employee cottages (circled) are located just north of the training facilities, reflecting Director Anderson’s belief that “a man … near his daily work is a more dependable quantity.”
building development, a period that lasted until 1949, when the school's administration adopted its first facilities master plan to manage the school's explosive postwar growth. Although detailed records of Cal Poly's early 1920s-era building activity have been lost, campus officials likely removed the three staff cottages from their original location on the northeast side of campus to their present location on the southwest side of campus during the 1921-22 building boom. A campus map published during the 1925-26 school years shows the three cottages in their current location, indicating workers must have completed the removal between 1921 and 1925 (see Figure 2); furthermore, because Governor Richardson cut the school's budget in half upon taking office in 1922, it appears the buildings were moved as part of Cal Poly's $92,000 "repairs, improvements, and equipment" appropriation of 1921-22. In the cottages' place, campus workers constructed new poultry houses that bolstered the school's agricultural instruction program. The cottages' new location on the southwest end of campus may have been dictated by their residential nature which was somewhat compatible with area's emergence as the campus's student residential and recreational zone. The area had a boys dormitory (1908) and dining hall (1910) and new student dormitories were added between 1928 and 1931, as well as a sports facility in 1928. After moving the cottages to their new location, workers modified the buildings. They reconfigured the base of the cottages' wood siding to conform to the sloping topography of their new setting, added concrete stoops at the front entrances, added rear shed roof additions, and constructed unattached garages at the rear of each building (Figures 3 and 4).

3.5 Later Development

The cottages remained positioned in the southwestern end of campus for the remainder of the twentieth century, and remained occupied by campus staff until at least the early 1970s, before officials converted the structures into faculty storage facilities. In 1960, George William Cockriel, the school's Chief Security Officer; Arthur Young, the Chief Engineer of the campus power plant; and L. E. McFarland, the school's Chief of Maintenance, resided in Cottages #3, 2, and 1, respectively. In the mid 1960s, workers removed the shed roof additions made in 1921 and added front-gabled additions to the cottages' rear façades. This project resulted in the demolition of the cottages' rear garage outbuildings. In later years, workers added a third addition to Cottage #3, a shed roof extension of the second addition. For years, this structure housed the University's on-campus daycare facility.

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16 Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years, 67.
17 1960 Campus directory.
18 As-built plans dated 1963.
19 As-built plans, no date.
Figure 2. 1926 Campus Map with the Cal Poly Cottages circled in their new location.
Figure 3. This early 1930s aerial photo showing the Cal Poly Cottages in their removed location with garage outbuildings and shed roof additions.

Figure 4. A modern photograph illustrating the 1921 modifications to the base of Cottage #3. The top two layers are of original construction; the bottom layer was added in 1921 to conform with the setting’s topography. Workers made similar modifications to Cottages #1 and #2.
4. DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCES

The Cal Poly Cottages comprise three historic residential structures located on campus at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California. The cottages are situated in the southwestern corner of campus, south of Campus Way and north of the Cal Poly’s southern boundary. This region of campus has traditionally served as a student residential and recreational zone. In 1908-1910 one of the earliest boy’s dormitories (No. 2) and a dining hall were located here. By the early 1930s three student dormitories (constructed between 1928 and 1931) were added and sports facilities were located nearby. In contrast to these housing units, the Cal Poly Cottages provided housing for people who worked as employees of the university. The easternmost cottage (Cottage #3) and the middle cottage (Cottage #2) date to 1909, while the westernmost cottage (Cottage #1) dates to 1910. Although Cottages #3 and #2 differ from Cottage #1 in date of construction, architect, and builder, each were moved from their original location to their current setting in the early 1920s, and each have undergone two concurrent rounds of modifications since then.

**Cottage #1**

Cottage #1, the west cottage, dates to 1910. Along with Cottage #2, Cottage #3, and the Old Power Plant, Cottage #1 shares distinction as one of four remaining structure from Cal Poly’s first decade, the campus’ first phase of building development. Cottage #1 was removed from its original location around 1922 and has been modified from its original appearance as a result of an addition to its rear (southeast) side, an extension of its base to fit into the topography of its present location, and a second addition to its rear (southeast) side. Like Cottage #2 and Cottage #3, Cottage #1 once incorporated a small garage outbuilding that was later demolished.

Cottage #1 is a 1,406-square foot one-story Craftsman Bungalow-style single family residential structure. The cottage rests on a rectangular concrete perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame and shingle sided building. Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal wood siding from two different periods of construction, 1910 and 1921, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s removal to its present location. The structure is topped by a normal-pitched, side gabled roof with false beams at gable ends and exposed rafters that extend beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave. The ends of the roof’s fascias are decoratively cut and extend beyond the eaves. The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer positioned above an overhang supported by decoratively-shaped triangular braces covering the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop. Unlike Cottage #2 and #3, the gabled dormer covers an attic vent, not a window. The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, yet the entire northeast end of the structure is suffering from noticeable slippage from the foundation.
The front façade’s fenestration consists of two wood-frame, twelve-pane tripartite casement windows that flank the main entrance. On the structure’s northeast face, two wood frame, four pane casement windows are situated to the right of a replacement aluminum sliding window. The windows are positioned below a gable vent. The cottage’s southwest face is far more complex and features an irregular bay addition with multi-tiered eave overhangs clad in composition shingles and exposed rafter ends. Fenestration consists of a wood-frame, twelve-pane tripartite casement window, an aluminum sliding window on the bay addition, and a vertical vent below the roof gable.

An addition marks the cottage’s rear (southeast) side. The addition has a concrete perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood sided building topped by a low-pitched, shed roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The addition’s rear façade is irregular, and extends from the northeast end as the back entry, which is accessed via a severely damaged wood staircase. The addition’s roof is clad in composition shingles; its fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows.

Cottage #2

Cottage #2, the middle cottage, dates to 1909. Along with Cottage #1, Cottage #3, and the Old Power Plant, Cottage #2 shares distinction as one of four remaining structures from Cal Poly’s first decade, the campus’ first phase of building development. Cottage #2 has been removed from its original location and modified from its original appearance as a result of an addition to its rear (southeast) side, an extension of its base to fit into the topography of its present location, and a second addition to its rear (southeast) side. Like Cottage #1 and Cottage #3, Cottage #2 once incorporated a small garage outbuilding that was later demolished. When first constructed, Cottage #2 appeared identical to Cottage #3, but over time the two structures have acquired unique qualities due to a series of modifications.

Cottage #2 is a 1,462-square foot Craftsman Bungalow-style single-family residential structure. The cottage rests on a rectangular wood perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame and shingle sided building topped by a normal-pitched, side-gabled roof with exposed rafters that extend beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave. Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal, not shingle, in part, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s 1921 removal to its present location. The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer with two fixed gabled dormer windows and shingle siding. Below the dormer, an overhang supported by triangular braces covers the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop. The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, with fenestration consisting of
two wood-frame fixed windows that flank the front door, and two single-hung wood-frame windows with 15/2 wood sash configurations positioned at opposite ends of façade. On the structure’s southwest face, two single-hung wood-frame windows with 9/1 wood sash configurations are positioned beside a smaller single-hung wood-frame window with a 1/1 sash configuration. An air vent is positioned below the roof gable. On the northeast side, fenestration consists of a single-hung wood-frame window with a 9/1 sash configuration and a fixed, wood-frame, single-pane window with replacement jalousie sidelights. These windows are situated to the right of a side door, which is covered by an overhang supported by 4x4 piers and accessed via a concrete block stoop clad in horizontal wood siding. An air vent is positioned below the roof gable.

An addition marks the cottage’s rear (southeast) side. The addition has a wood perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood siding topped by a normal-pitched, front-gabled roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The roof is clad in composition shingles. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows. The addition’s northeast façade incorporates an attached 6’ x 5’ x 3’ wood frame storage closet. The closet’s horizontal wood siding is topped by a shed roof clad in composition shingles that extends beyond the front façade as an open eave with exposed rafters.

Cottage #3

Cottage #3, the east cottage, dates to 1909. Along with Cottage #1, Cottage #2 and the Old Power Plant, Cottage #3 shares distinction as one of four remaining structures from Cal Poly’s first decade, the campus’ first phase of building development. Cottage #3 has been removed from its original location and has been modified from its original appearance as a result of an addition to its rear (southeast) side, an extension of its base to match the topography of its present location, a second addition to its rear (southeast) side, and an extension of the second addition that once facilitated Cal Poly’s on-campus daycare program. Like Cottage #1 and Cottage #2, Cottage #3 once incorporated a small garage outbuilding that was demolished; unlike its neighboring structures, however, Cottage #3’s demolished outbuilding has been replaced with a shed structure of modern construction. When first constructed, Cottage #3 appeared identical to Cottage #2, but over time the two structures have acquired unique qualities due to a series of modifications.

Cottage #3 is a 1,496-square foot, wood frame, Craftsman Bungalow-style single-family residential structure. The cottage rests on a rectangular wood-perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame, shingle sided building topped by a normal-pitched, side-gabled roof with exposed rafters that extends beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave.
Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal, not shingle, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s 1921 removal to its present location. The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer with fixed gabled dormer windows and shingle siding. Below the dormer, an overhang supported by triangular braces covers the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop, which is noticeably unbalanced and sinks as it approaches the front door. The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, with fenestration consisting of two fixed wood-frame windows that flank the front door, and two single-hung wood-frame windows with 15/2 sash configurations positioned at opposite ends of the façade. On the structure’s northeast face, a wood-frame, single-hung window with a 12/2 sash configuration is positioned beside a replacement aluminum sliding sash window. An air vent is positioned below the roof gable. On the structure’s southwest face, an original wood-frame sliding sash window is positioned below a similar gable air vent.

Two additions mark the cottage’s rear (southeast) side. The first addition rests on a wood perimeter foundation supporting a horizontal wood sided structure topped by a normal-pitched, front-gabled roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The roof is clad in composition shingles. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows. The second addition extends out from the northeast face of the first addition. It has a concrete foundation that supports a wood frame and smooth wood sided building topped by a flat roof with open eaves and exposed rafters. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows on the addition’s northeast and southwest façades. This latest addition appears dilapidated; its door is boarded up and its flat roof is sunken in and appears on the verge of collapse.

Cottage #3 incorporates a modern outbuilding. The structure rests on a concrete perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood sided structure topped by a shed roof clad with composition shingles. The roof extends over the outbuilding’s front façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. Fenestration consists of a wood-frame double-pane casement window and a front door situated asymmetrically on the structure’s front façade.
5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Cal Poly Cottages, located on campus at California Polytechnic State University, were built in 1909 (Cottages #2 and #3) and 1910 (Cottage #1). JRP Historical Consulting prepared this study to comply with applicable sections of CEQA as it pertains to state funded undertakings and their impacts on historic properties. The cottages have been evaluated in accordance with Section 15064.5(a)(2)-(3) of the CEQA Guidelines using the criteria outlined in Section 5024.1 of the California Public Resources Code. At the request of Cal Poly, the report also applies National Register of Historic Places significance criteria in evaluating the cottages. This report concludes that none of the three cottages appear to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP or CRHR, nor do they appear to be historic resources for the purposes of CEQA.

5.1. Evaluation Criteria

JRP evaluated the Cal Poly Cottages under NRHP and CRHR criteria, which are very similar in most respects. The CRHR is modeled after the NRHP, and Office of Historic Preservation's instructions for interpreting and applying the California criteria include directions to use the National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” and other National Register bulletins. Eligibility for listing in either the NHRP or CRHR rests on twin factors of significance and integrity. A property must have both significance and integrity to be considered eligible. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, will overwhelm historical significance a property may possess and render it ineligible. Likewise, a property can have complete integrity, but if it lacks significance, it must also be considered ineligible. A property that is eligible for the NRHP is termed a historic property. A property that is eligible for the NRHP also automatically qualifies as eligible for the CRHR.

Historic significance is judged by applying the NRHP and CRHR criteria. The NRHP criteria are identified as Criteria A through D, while the CRHR denotes the same significance criteria as Criteria 1 through 4. In both cases, properties may be significant for listing on the NRHP or CRHR at the local, state, or national level:

- NRHP Criterion A (CRHR Criterion 1): association with events or trends significant in the broad patterns of our history;

- NRHP Criterion B (CRHR Criterion 2): association with the lives of significant individuals;

- NRHP Criterion C (CRHR Criterion 3): a property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values;

- NRHP Criterion D (CRHR Criterion 4): has yielded, or is likely to yield information important to history or prehistory.  

In addition to meeting one or more of the four eligibility criteria, properties considered for the NRHP and CRHR must also retain integrity. National Register guidelines describe integrity as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.” In other words, the significant physical features of a property must remain intact in order to communicate its significance under one or more of the significance criteria. Seven aspects of integrity are considered: location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. These seven aspects can be roughly grouped into three types of integrity considerations. Location and setting relate to the relationship between the property and its environment. Design, materials, and workmanship, as they apply to historic buildings, relate to construction methods and architectural details. Feeling and association are the least objective of the seven criteria, pertaining to the overall ability of the property to convey a sense of the historical time and place in which it was constructed.

The CRHR definition of integrity is slightly different than that of the NRHP. Integrity is defined 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.” The CRHR further states that eligible resources must “retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance” and it lists the same seven aspects of integrity used to evaluate properties under the NRHP criteria.  

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5.2. **Application of NRHP and CRHR Criteria**

When judged within the context of their potential period of significance – Cal Poly’s first phase of building development, a period lasting from 1903 to 1911 – the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP or CRHR.

The most compelling argument for potential significance of these otherwise unremarkable structures under California Register Criterion 1 (NRHP Criterion A) is that they are rare remaining examples of buildings directly associated with the formative era of the campus. The residential buildings were not part of the central core of campus buildings designed by architect William Henry Weeks, but rather were among a host of smaller buildings erected in the later years of the first development phase to serve more utilitarian purposes, as housing for caretaker staff. Some of the prosaic agricultural training facilities (creamery, barns, and shops) built during this era were key to the educational mission of the university. On the other hand, the employee cottages were convenient, but not central to the mission of the university, and therefore, cannot be interpreted as functionally important structures within the context of the establishment of the university. During the second wave of major campus construction in 1921-22, these buildings were moved across campus to a new location near other residential structures to make room for an expansion of agricultural training facilities. Within the context of early 1920s campus developments, the relocation of the worker’s cottages to the southwestern edge of campus was not an important aspect of the new campus plan. Over the years, these structures remained minor support buildings for grounds-keepers and maintenance staff and were not key components of the program of expansion of agricultural and student facilities in the 1920s, or thereafter. The move from the farm, shops, and operations area to a student housing area compromised the cottages integrity of location, setting and its association with the original campus plan of development.

Under Criterion 2 (NRHP Criterion B), the cottages do not appear to have important or direct associations with the lives of persons important to Cal Poly. Although the structures did accommodate several members of Cal Poly’s early campus staff, available evidence suggests that none of these personnel (farm foreman, grounds keepers and maintenance personnel) made significant contributions to the establishment and success of the school to such a degree that would elevate the status of the structures in which they lived to NRHP or CRHR eligibility.

Under Criterion 3 (NRHP Criterion C), the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor do they represent important works of any master architect. The cottages were designed as modest Craftsman Bungalow residences, an architectural style developed in Southern California during the 1890s.
that, in the following decades, reigned as “the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout
the country.”

The Cal Poly Cottages fail to exhibit any pioneering or innovative qualities that
would set them apart from the myriad of other Craftsman Bungalow residences built in San Luis
Obispo and across Southern California during the early twentieth century. The cottages did not
embody elements of the early campus’ Mission-Revival style architectural composed by
architect William Henry Weeks for the major buildings on campus, nor were these residences
crucial to the plan of development for Cal Poly as an established educational institution of higher
learning for agriculture and mechanical sciences. Instead, the cottages were designed as modest
Craftsman Bungalows, a style borrowed from the residential lexicon of the period, and were
intended as modest residential units for low-level campus employees. In this capacity, they were
originally relegated to the northeast periphery of campus near training and operations facilities
and on the opposite side of a creek, isolated from the core buildings occupied by Cal Poly’s
faculty, administration, and student body. Although the bungalows are rare remaining examples
of a style of construction on the Cal Poly campus that may have been employed only on these
three buildings, the cottages are not important examples of Craftsman residential architecture, or
of building practices of a particular time in history.

As noted above, the cottages do not represent the significant work of a master architect. They
were not designed by William Henry Weeks, the early campus’ chief architect. Rather, they
were designed in the office of the California State Architect, a division of the California State
Department of Engineering. The plans for Cottage #2 and Cottage #3 were produced in 1908 by
George C. Sellon of San Francisco, who held the title of State Architect from 1907 to 1909.
Sellon, a native of Sacramento, was working in San Francisco with his business partner Charles
E. Hemmings when he accepted his governmental appointment, and in two years of civil service
he designed, or helped design (with Hemmings’ assistance), several important state buildings,
including the State Normal School at San Jose (later San Jose State University), the State
Hospital at Agnew, the State Penitentiary at San Quentin, and the Sonoma State Home. The
cottages he designed for Cal Poly were, however, not nearly as significant as these other major
design commissions. In 1909, Sellon returned to private practice, and the title of State Architect
was conferred upon William D. Coates, Jr., who had been working under Frederick H. Meyer in
San Francisco. In 1910, Coates produced the plans for Cottage #1, which resembled Sellon’s
plans of 1908. Like Sellon’s plans, Coates’ plan for Cottage #1 was not a significant example of
Craftsman Bungalow architecture, nor of Coates’ best work as an architect. Coates held the
position of State Architect for two years before leaving Sacramento to work in Fresno with his
business partner, H.B. Traver. Coates and Traver are best remembered for their Fresno-area

24 William L. Willis, History of Sacramento County, California (Los Angeles, Calif.: Historic Record Company,
1913), 828-829.
projects, including the design and plan of the A.G. Wilson home, the Liberty Theater, and Fresno and Hanford High Schools; the duo also won acclaim for their second-place showing in the 1911 San Francisco City Hall design competition. Thus, the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to qualify for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 3 as the work of a master because they are not significant or important examples of Sellon or Coates’ work. The worker’s cottages were designed and executed as modest examples of Craftsman Bungalow-style residences, a popular architectural style in California between 1900 and 1920, and do not embody the characteristics of the architects’ more celebrated buildings.

Under Criterion 4 (NRHP Criterion D), the cottages have not yielded, nor are they likely to yield, any information important to history or prehistory.

5.3. Discussion of Integrity

In addition to lacking historical significance, the Cal Poly Cottages no longer retain integrity of design, location, setting, and workmanship, and thus appear ineligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR. In 1921, the Cal Poly Cottages were moved from their original location on the northeast side of campus to their current location near Campus Drive. Under federal guidelines for applying NRHP criteria, “structures that have been moved from their original locations … shall not be considered eligible for the National Register.” In rare instances, moved structures may be considered eligible for the NRHP if they are “significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.” The cottages do not meet these standards, therefore, as moved buildings they do not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

Under California guidelines for applying the California Register criteria, the cottages’ removal alone does not necessarily compromise their eligibility for listing in the CRHR. California environmental regulations state “a moved building, structure, or object … may be listed in the California Register … if the new location is compatible with the original character and use of the historical resource.” However, because the cottages were moved from their original setting on the northeast side of campus adjacent to the facilities in which the residents of the cottages worked to the southwest side of campus in a student housing area, their present setting is not compatible with the original setting.

compatible with their original character and use. Each of the buildings were constructed for the sole purpose of providing a single Cal Poly staff member with a residence located, as Director Anderson stated in 1906, “near his daily work.” The cottages’ removal to the southwest side of campus undermined this original purpose, and thus compromised the integrity of their original location and setting.

Adding to the compromised integrity of setting and location, over the years, workers have modified the Cal Poly Cottages through a series of structural modifications, further compromising their integrity of design and workmanship. In 1921, when the cottages were removed from their original location, workers added a round of structural additions to the cottage’s rear (southeast) façades, modified the base of the cottage’s sides to raise the buildings and conform to the topography of their new location, and constructed rear garage outbuildings. Years later, in the 1960s, workers removed the 1921 additions and garage outbuildings to construct a second round of rear additions. In later years, workers have attached an extension to Cottage #3’s rear addition, further compromising its integrity. Finally, a number of the cottages’ original windows have been replaced with modern aluminum substitutes. Taken together, the cottages’ 1921 relocation and subsequent structural modifications have seriously compromised their integrity of design, setting, location, and workmanship. This compromised integrity, combined with their marginal historic importance within the context of the history and mission of early Cal Poly campus development, renders the cottages ineligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR.

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6. PREPARER’S QUALIFICATIONS

This report was prepared under the direction of Stephen Wee (M.A. in History, University of California, Davis), a principal at JRP with more than 30 years experience conducting these types of studies. Based on his level of education and experience, Mr. Wee qualifies as historian/architectural historian under the United States Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards (as defined in 36 CFR Part 61). Mr. Wee and JRP research assistant Nathan Hallam performed the research and fieldwork and prepared the contextual statement, DPR 523 form, and evaluations for this report. Mr. Hallam holds a B.A. in History from Sonoma State University, and is currently completing his M.A. thesis in Public History from California State University, Sacramento. He has been with JRP since 2005 conducting historic survey and evaluation studies.
7. REFERENCES

Published Sources


*California Blue Book or State Roster, 1907*. Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907.


*The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature*. Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907.


Willis, William L. History of Sacramento County, California. Los Angeles, Calif.: Historic Record Company, 1913.

Unpublished Sources


Minutes of the Board of Trustees. 1909-1910.


Internet Resources


Appendix A: Figures
Figure 1. Project Location and Vicinity

USGS Quadrangle, 7.5-minute topographic series
San Luis Obispo (1965, photorevised 1978)

Figure 2. Site Map

USGS Quadrangle, 7.5-minute topographic series
San Luis Obispo (1965, photorevised 1978)
Appendix B: DPR 523 Form
The Cal Poly Cottages comprise three historic residential structures located on campus at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, California. The cottages are situated in the southwestern corner of campus, south of Campus Way and north of the Cal Poly’s southern boundary. This region of campus has traditionally served as Cal Poly’s residential zone, with three student dormitories located nearby. The easternmost cottage (Cottage #3) and the middle cottage (Cottage #2) date to 1909, while the westernmost cottage (Cottage #1) dates to 1910. Although Cottages #3 and #2 differ from Cottage #1 in date of construction, architect, and builder, each were moved from their original location to their current setting in the early 1920s, and each have undergone two concurrent rounds of modifications since then. (See Continuation Sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2 (Single Family Residence); HP15 (Educational Building)

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo of Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: Historic Prehistoric Both 1909-1910 (Biennial Reports to State)

*P7. Owner and Address: California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo, Calif., 93407

*P8. Recorded by: Nathan Hallam JRP Historical Consulting, 1490 Drew Ave, Suite 110, Davis, CA 95616

*P9. Date Recorded: July 18, 2006

*P10. Survey Type: Intensive

*P11. Report Citation: JRP Historical Consulting, Historical Resource Inventory and Evaluation Report, Cal Poly Cottages, California Polytechnic State University, City of San Luis Obispo, California, August 2006.

*Attachments: Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (list) 

*DPR 523A (1/95)
**State of California – The Resources Agency**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

**Page 2 of 23**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>*NRHP Status Code</th>
<th><strong>6Z</strong></th>
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**Resource Name or #**  
(Assigned by recorder) Cal Poly Cottages

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**B1. Historic Name:** Cal Poly Cottages  
**B2. Common Name:** Cal Poly Cottages  
**B3. Original Use:** Staff Housing  
**B4. Present Use:** Vacant; Campus Storage

**B5. Architectural Style:** Craftsman Bungalow

**B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) 1909 and 1910; See B10, Significance, for alterations

**B7. Moved?** □ No □ Yes □ Unknown  
**Date:** ca. 1921  
**Original Location:** North end of campus

**B8. Related Features:** Outbuildings

**b. Builder:** J. Maino & Son (Cottages #3 and #2); California State Department of Engineering (Cottage #1).

**B10. Significance:**  
**Theme:** Early history of Cal Poly (1903-1920)  
**Area:** n/a  
**Period of Significance:** 1903-1911  
**Property Type:** n/a  
**Applicable Criteria:** n/a  

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Cal Poly Cottages, located on campus at California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly), were built in 1909 (Cottages #2 and #3) and 1910 (Cottage #1). This evaluation concludes that this property does not appear eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), nor does it appear to be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, as detailed below. (See Continuation Sheet)

**B11. Additional Resource Attributes:**  
(List attributes and codes)

**B12. References:** See individual footnotes for references.

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**B13. Remarks:**

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**B14. Evaluator:** Nathan Hallam  
**Date of Evaluation:** July 18, 2006

(This space reserved for official comments.)
Cottage #1

Cottage #1 is a 1,406-square foot Craftsman Bungalow-style single family residential structure (see Photograph 1). The cottage rests on a rectangular concrete perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame and shingle sided building. Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal wood siding from two different periods of construction, 1910 and 1921, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s removal to its present location (see Photograph 2). The structure is topped by a normal-pitched, side gabled roof with false beams at gable ends and exposed rafters that extend beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave. The ends of the roof’s fascias are decoratively cut and extend beyond the eaves. The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer positioned above an overhang supported by decoratively-shaped triangular braces covering the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop. Unlike Cottage #2 and #3, the gabled dormer covers an attic vent, not a window. The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, yet the entire northeast end of the structure is suffering from noticeable slippage from the foundation (see Photograph 3). The front façade’s fenestration consists of two wood-frame, twelve-pane tripartite casement windows that flank the main entrance. On the structure’s northeast face, two wood frame, four pane casement windows are situated to the right of a replacement aluminum sliding window. The windows are positioned below a gable vent. The cottage’s southwest face is far more complex and features an irregular bay addition with multi-tiered eave overhangs clad in composition shingles and exposed rafter ends (see Photograph 4). Fenestration consists of a wood-frame, twelve-pane tripartite casement window, an aluminum sliding window on the bay addition, and a vertical vent below the roof gable.

An addition marks the cottage’s rear (southeast) side (see Photograph 5). The addition has a concrete perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood sided building topped by a low-pitched, shed roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The addition’s rear façade is irregular, and extends from the northeast end as the back entry, which is accessed via a severely damaged wood staircase. The addition’s roof is clad in composition shingles; its fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows.

Cottage #2

Cottage #2 is a 1,462-square foot Craftsman Bungalow-style single-family residential structure (see Photograph 6). The cottage rests on a rectangular wood perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame and shingle sided building topped by a normal-pitched, side-gabled roof with exposed rafters that extend beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave. Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal, not shingle, in part, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s 1921 removal to its present location (see Photograph 7). The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer with two fixed gabled dormer windows and shingle siding (see Photograph 8). Below the dormer, an overhang supported by triangular braces covers the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop. The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, with fenestration consisting of two wood-frame fixed windows that flank the front door, and two single-hung wood-frame windows with 15/2 wood sash configurations positioned at opposite ends of façade. On the structure’s southwest face, two single-hung wood-frame windows with 9/1 wood sash configurations are positioned beside a smaller single-hung wood-frame window with a 1/1 sash configuration (see Photograph 9). An air vent is positioned below the...
roof gable. On the northeast side, fenestration consists of a single-hung wood-frame window with a 9/1 sash configuration and a fixed, wood-frame, single-pane window with replacement jalousie sidelights. These windows are situated to the right of a side door, which is covered by an overhang supported by 4x4 piers and accessed via a concrete block stoop clad in horizontal wood siding (see Photograph 10). An air vent is positioned below the roof gable.

An addition marks the cottage’s rear (southeast) side (see Photograph 11). The addition has a wood perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood siding topped by a normal-pitched, front-gabled roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The roof is clad in composition shingles. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows. The addition’s northeast façade incorporates an attached 6’ x 5’ x 3’ wood frame storage closet. The closet’s horizontal wood siding is topped by a shed roof clad in composition shingles that extends beyond the front façade as an open eave with exposed rafters.

Cottage #3

Cottage #3 is a 1,496-square foot, wood frame, Craftsman Bungalow-style single-family residential structure (see Photograph 12). The cottage rests on a rectangular wood-perimeter foundation. The foundation supports a wood frame, shingle sided building topped by a normal-pitched, side-gabled roof with exposed rafters that extends beyond the cottage’s front façade as an open eave. Around the structure’s base, the siding is horizontal, not shingle, a result of modifications associated with the cottage’s 1921 removal to its present location (Photograph 13). The roof is clad in composition shingles and features a shed dormer with fixed gabled dormer windows and shingle siding. Below the dormer, an overhang supported by triangular braces covers the cottage’s front doorway and concrete block stoop, which is noticeably unbalanced and sinks as it approaches the front door (see Photograph 14). The cottage’s front face is symmetrical, with fenestration consisting of two fixed wood-frame windows that flank the front door, and two single-hung wood-frame windows with 15/2 sash configurations positioned at opposite ends of the façade. On the structure’s northeast face, a wood-frame, single-hung window with a 12/2 sash configuration is positioned beside a replacement aluminum sliding sash window. An air vent is positioned below the roof gable. On the structure’s southwest face, an original wood-frame sliding sash window is positioned below a similar gable air vent.

Two additions mark the cottage’s rear (southeast) side. The first addition rests on a wood perimeter foundation supporting a horizontal wood sided structure topped by a normal-pitched, front-gabled roof that extends beyond the rear façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. The roof is clad in composition shingles. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows. The second addition extends out from the northeast face of the first addition (see Photograph 15). This structure originally served as an on-campus daycare facility, and resulted in the chain-link fence that encircles the cottage’s northeast and rear yards. The second addition has a concrete foundation that supports a wood frame and a smooth wood sided building topped by a flat roof with open eaves and exposed rafters. Fenestration consists of aluminum sliding windows on the addition’s northeast and southwest façades. This latest addition appears dilapidated; its door is boarded up and its flat roof is sunken in and appears on the verge of collapse (see Photograph 16).
Cottage #3 incorporates a modern outbuilding (see Photograph 17). The structure rests on a concrete perimeter foundation that supports a wood frame and horizontal wood sided structure topped by a shed roof clad with composition shingles. The roof extends over the outbuilding’s front façade as an open eave with exposed rafters. Fenestration consists of a wood-frame double-pane casement window and a front door situated asymmetrically on the structure’s front façade.
Historic Context

In 1772, Father Junipero Serra of Spain arrived in a small inland valley at the foot of the Santa Lucia Mountains in Central California to establish Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, the fifth of twenty-one missions built by Spanish colonists in a chain along the California coastal region. In 1822, the newly independent nation of Mexico annexed the region around San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, and in 1835 the government secularized the Mission and set about transferring much of its acreage to private Mexican citizens, who established ranchos and grazed cattle on the land. In 1848, at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, the United States acquired California, and in 1850 the U.S. admitted the territory into the Union as the thirty-first state.

In 1856, the men and women living near the abandoned Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa organized their community as a town under California law, naming it San Luis Obispo. During the early 1860s, a prolonged drought killed most of the region’s cattle, forcing the few remaining Mexican-era rancho owners to sell their lands to American newcomers, who established the region’s first dairy farms. Sheep raising also gained a foothold in the region, while other families established bean, beet, and squash-producing farms. In 1894, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company extended a rail line from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo, and in 1901 the line reached Los Angeles. At the turn of the twentieth century, the City of San Luis Obispo boasted a vibrant farming and ranching economy, with daily passenger and freight trains linking the town and its productive hinterlands with California’s two largest consumer markets. The growing city “seemed a perfect choice for the location of a state school.”

The Early History of Cal Poly

In 1898, a San Luis Obispo journalist named Myron Angel published an editorial in the San Luis Obispo Breeze outlining his plans for a technical training institution in San Luis Obispo. In 1901, the State Legislature and Governor Henry T. Gage agreed to authorize “An Act to Establish the California Polytechnic School,” and in the fall of 1903 the California Polytechnic School at San Luis Obispo welcomed its first incoming class of twenty students. The early campus layout centered around the Administration Building, a 45 x 100-foot, two-story structure designed by Watsonville architect William Henry Weeks. The original campus dormitory, also designed by Weeks, flanked the Administration Building and housed approximately thirty students. Both buildings exhibited Mission-Revival style architecture: both featured symmetrical facades, smooth stucco wall surfaces, hipped roofs clad in red tile, and arched porticos topped by shaped Mission dormers. In 1907, the campus added the Household Arts Building, which flanked the Administration Building opposite Dormitory No. 1. In design and construction, the Household Arts Building closely resembled Dormitory No. 1, and as a unit, the Household Arts Building, Administration Building, and Dormitory No. 1 comprised an impressive campus core.

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3 Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years, 14-21.
structures served as the hub of Cal Poly’s early administration, and epitomized the architectural composition of the early campus (see Photograph 18).

Between 1907 and 1910, Cal Poly’s administrative leaders undertook an ambitious building program. In 1907, the California State Legislature appropriated funds to implement several projects, including the construction of a new dormitory, a creamery, several small shops and sheds, and two employee cottages. Construction of these buildings, however, was delayed due to a bureaucratic statute that delegated the buildings’ planning and design to the State Architect, who worked in the Office of the State Engineer in Sacramento. A year later, in March 1908, campus officials received their building plans, drawn by State Architect George Clinton Sellon and his business partner Charles E. Hemmings, both of San Francisco. The major building, the Boys Dormitory No. 2, continued the tradition of building in a Spanish-Revival style. Later in 1909, as workers put the finishing touches on these projects, Cal Poly secured a second round of appropriations, this time in anticipation of several new works, including a new dining hall, a new power plant, several new barns, and a third employee cottage. Workers completed these projects in 1910. The three employee cottages constructed during this period represent the historic cottages recorded in this report.

Construction of the Cal Poly Cottages

Cal Poly’s administrators lobbied the Legislature for employee cottages because they believed on-campus staff housing for some types of positions would stimulate a more efficient, dependable workforce. “A higher class of men,” wrote school director Leroy Anderson in 1906, “with a corresponding greater efficiency of effort could be secured if the school provided homes for them upon its own grounds.” He added, “a man … near his daily work is a more dependable quantity than a … man who must live one to two miles distant.” Anderson envisioned at least four cottages on campus, with accommodations for the gardener, poultryman, dairyman, and teamsters. Two years later, after securing the Legislative appropriations of 1907 and acquiring Sellon and Hemmings’ architectural plans, campus officials began entertaining bids for construction of the first two campus cottages. On April 15, 1908, they settled on the bid proposed by J. Maino and Son, a San Luis Obispo contracting firm, for $3,846. The crew finished their work in 1909. The location was selected for its proximity to the school’s complex of operations buildings and agricultural and industrial training facilities. The school’s farm foreman, Samuel C. Griffith, and head gardener, Albert D. Sinclair, took up residence in the new cottages, just as school director Anderson had envisioned.

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5 The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Sixth Legislature (San Francisco, Calif.: Bancroft-Whitney Company, 1906), 196-198.
6 Smith, 62; California Blue Book or State Roster, 1907 (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 68, 99.
7 The Statutes of California and Amendments to the Codes Passed at the Extra Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 845-849.
9 Third Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the California Polytechnic School Comprising the Reports of the Director and Secretary of the Board, 1906-1908 (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office 1908), 38.
10 Catalogue 1906-7, California Polytechnic School, San Luis Obispo (Sacramento, Calif.: California State Printing Office, 1907), 8, 5.
In 1908, as workers were constructing the first two cottages, Cal Poly’s administrators began pressing the State Legislature for more staff housing. That year, the school’s new director, Leroy B. Smith, praised the new accommodations under construction, but lobbied the Legislature for more. “The construction,” wrote Smith, “of cottages upon the grounds for the farm foreman and the head gardener is a step in the right direction … in the near future homes should (also) be provided for the dairymen, teamsters, and possibly one or two other employees.”11 A year later, the school’s Board of Trustees agreed with Smith, yet balked at the cottages’ expense and suggested slight changes. “I would,” offered one Board member, “respectfully recommend the erection of a third farm cottage on the general plan of those erected last year. I would suggest, however, that we first advise with the State Architect with a view to securing minor modifications which … will give us an entirely satisfactory cottage at less cost than those already erected.”12 Later that year, the Legislature concurred, and Cal Poly received a $2,300 appropriation for the construction of a third employee cottage. State Architect William D. Coates, Jr. modeled the structure’s design after Sellon’s 1908 plans, and the State Department of Engineering managed the cottage’s construction, which was completed in 1910 using day laborers.13

By 1911, workers had completed Cal Poly’s first phase of building development, and the campus, as it appeared during its earliest period of history (1903-1920), was fully realized. The school layout during these years adhered to a specific plan: the campus core, comprising the Household Arts Building, Administration Building, and Dormitory No. 1, was located to the west, while the school’s agricultural and industrial training facilities were located to the east. The employee cottages were located to the northeast, near the operations and training facilities where the residents of the cottages worked. To the southwest, Dormitory No. 2 signaled the beginning of a campus residential zone that would fully materialize during the 1920s and 30s (see Photograph 19).

Early 1920s Development

Between 1910 and 1920, the physical makeup of Cal Poly’s campus changed little. The State Legislature appropriated only scant funds to the school, and the school’s administrators refrained from planning any major building projects. Things changed, however, in 1921. The Legislature appropriated nearly $300,000 toward the school, and Cal Poly director Nicholas Ricciardi implemented a series of campus upgrades. Workers paved the road that led from campus to town, constructed an auto shop, and built a horse barn. They also installed new poultry houses and hog pens. A total of $92,000 was earmarked for “badly needed repairs, improvements, and equipment.”14 The school instituted a four-year course in printing, and student enrollment increased by twenty-seven percent to 228.15 This period ushered in Cal Poly’s second phase of building development, a period that lasted until 1949, when the school’s administration adopted its first facilities master plan to manage the school’s explosive postwar growth.16

12 Board of Trustees Meeting at San Francisco, June 16, 1909.
13 Board of Trustees Report, May 14, 1910.
14 Smith, 110.
15 Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years, 31.
16 Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years, 67.
Although detailed records of Cal Poly’s early 1920s-era building activity have been lost, campus officials likely removed the three staff cottages from their original location on the northeast side of campus to their present location on the southwest side of campus during the 1921-22 building boom. A campus map published during the 1925-26 school years shows the three cottages in their current location, indicating workers must have completed the removal between 1921 and 1925 (see Photograph 20); furthermore, because Governor Richardson cut the school’s budget in half upon taking office in 1922, it appears the buildings were moved as part of Cal Poly’s $92,000 “repairs, improvements, and equipment” appropriation of 1921-22. In the cottages’ place, campus workers constructed new poultry houses that bolstered the school’s agricultural instruction program. The cottages’ new location on the southwest end of campus may have been dictated by their residential nature which was somewhat compatible with area’s emergence as the campus’s student residential and recreational zone. The area had a boys dormitory (1908) and dining hall (1910) and new student dormitories were added between 1928 and 1931, as well as a sports facility in 1928. After moving the cottages to their new location, workers modified the buildings. They reconfigured the base of the cottages’ wood siding to conform to the sloping topography of their new setting, added concrete stoops at the front entrances, added rear shed roof additions, and constructed unattached garages at the rear of each building (see Photographs 21 and 13).

Later Development

The cottages remained positioned in the southwestern end of campus for the remainder of the twentieth century, and remained occupied by campus staff until at least the early 1970s, before officials converted the structures into faculty storage facilities. In 1960, George William Cockriel, the school’s Chief Security Officer; Arthur Young, the Chief Engineer of the campus power plant; and L. E. McFarland, the school’s Chief of Maintenance, resided in Cottages #3, 2, and 1, respectively. In the mid 1960s, workers removed the shed roof additions made in 1921 and added front-gabled additions to the cottages’ rear façades. This project resulted in the demolition of the cottages’ rear garage outbuildings. In later years, workers added a third addition to Cottage #3, a shed roof extension of the second addition. For years, this structure housed the University’s on-campus daycare facility.

Discussion of Significance

Significance Statement

When judged within the context of their potential period of significance – Cal Poly’s first phase of building development, a period lasting from 1903 to 1911 – the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP or CRHR.

The most compelling argument for potential significance of these otherwise unremarkable structures under California Register Criterion 1 (NRHP Criterion A) is that they are rare remaining examples of buildings directly associated with the
formative era of the campus. The residential buildings were not part of the central core of campus buildings designed by architect William Henry Weeks, but rather were among a host of smaller buildings erected in the later years of the first development phase to serve more utilitarian purposes, as housing for caretaker staff. Some of the prosaic agricultural training facilities (creamery, barns, and shops) built during this era were key to the educational mission of the university. On the other hand, the employee cottages were convenient, but not central to the mission of the university, and therefore, cannot be interpreted as functionally important structures within the context of the establishment of the university. During the second wave of major campus construction in 1921-22, these buildings were moved across campus to a new location near other residential structures to make room for an expansion of agricultural training facilities. Within the context of early 1920s campus developments, the relocation of the worker’s cottages to the southwestern edge of campus was not an important aspect of the new campus plan. Over the years, these structures remained minor support buildings for grounds-keepers and maintenance staff and were not key components of the program of expansion of agricultural and student facilities in the 1920s, or thereafter. The move from the farm, shops, and operations area to a student housing area compromised the cottages integrity of location, setting and its association with the original campus plan of development.

Under Criterion 2 (NRHP Criterion B), the cottages do not appear to have important or direct associations with the lives of persons important to Cal Poly. Although the structures did accommodate several members of Cal Poly’s early campus staff, available evidence suggests that none of these personnel (farm foreman, grounds keepers and maintenance personnel) made significant contributions to the establishment and success of the school to such a degree that would elevate the status of the structures in which they lived to NRHP or CRHR eligibility.

Under Criterion 3 (NRHP Criterion C), the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor do they represent important works of any master architect. The cottages were designed as modest Craftsman Bungalow residences, an architectural style developed in Southern California during the 1890s that, in the following decades, reigned as “the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the country.” The Cal Poly Cottages fail to exhibit any pioneering or innovative qualities that would set them apart from the myriad of other Craftsman Bungalow residences built in San Luis Obispo and across Southern California during the early twentieth century. The cottages did not embody elements of the early campus’ Mission-Revival style architectural composed by architect William Henry Weeks for the major buildings on campus, nor were these residences crucial to the plan of development for Cal Poly as an established educational institution of higher learning for agriculture and mechanical sciences. Instead, the cottages were designed as modest Craftsman Bungalows, a style borrowed from the residential lexicon of the period, and were intended as modest residential units for low-level campus employees. In this capacity, they were originally relegated to the northeast periphery of campus near training and operations facilities and on the opposite side of a creek, isolated from the core buildings occupied by Cal Poly’s faculty, administration, and student body. Although the bungalows are rare remaining examples of a style of construction on the Cal Poly campus that may have been employed only on these three buildings, the cottages are not important examples of Craftsman residential architecture, or of building practices of a particular time in history.

As noted above, the cottages do not represent the significant work of a master architect. They were not designed by William Henry Weeks, the early campus’ chief architect. Rather, they were designed in the office of the California State Architect, a division of the California State Department of Engineering. The plans for Cottage #2 and Cottage #3 were produced in 1908 by George C. Sellon of San Francisco, who held the title of State Architect from 1907 to 1909. Sellon, a native of Sacramento, was working in San Francisco with his business partner Charles E. Hemmings when he accepted his governmental appointment, and in two years of civil service he designed, or helped design (with Hemmings’ assistance), several important state buildings, including the State Normal School at San Jose (later San Jose State University), the State Hospital at Agnew, the State Penitentiary at San Quentin, and the Sonoma State Home.21 The cottages he designed for Cal Poly were, however, not nearly as significant as these other major design commissions. In 1909, Sellon returned to private practice, and the title of State Architect was conferred upon William D. Coates, Jr., who had been working under Frederick H. Meyer in San Francisco. In 1910, Coates produced the plans for Cottage #1, which resembled Sellon’s plans of 1908. Like Sellon’s plans, Coates’ plan for Cottage #1 was not a significant example of Craftsman Bungalow architecture, nor of Coates’ best work as an architect. Coates held the position of State Architect for two years before leaving Sacramento to work in Fresno with his business partner, H.B. Traver. Coates and Traver are best remembered for their Fresno-area projects, including the design and plan of the A.G. Wilson home, the Liberty Theater, and Fresno and Hanford High Schools; the duo also won acclaim for their second-place showing in the 1911 San Francisco City Hall design competition.22 Thus, the Cal Poly Cottages do not appear to qualify for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 3 as the work of a master because they are not significant or important examples of Sellon or Coates’ work. The worker’s cottages were designed and executed as modest examples of Craftsman Bungalow-style residences, a popular architectural style in California between 1900 and 1920, and do not embody the characteristics of the architects’ more celebrated buildings.

Under Criterion 4 (NRHP Criterion D), the cottages have not yielded, nor are they likely to yield, any information important to history or prehistory.

**Integrity Considerations**

In addition to lacking historical significance, the Cal Poly Cottages no longer retain integrity of design, location, setting, and workmanship, and thus appear ineligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR. In 1921, the Cal Poly Cottages were moved from their original location on the northeast side of campus to their current location near Campus Drive. Under federal guidelines for applying NRHP criteria, “structures that have been moved from their original locations ... shall not be considered eligible for the National Register.” In rare instances, moved structures may be considered eligible for the NRHP if they are “significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.”23 The cottages do not meet these standards, therefore, as moved buildings they do not appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

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Under California guidelines for applying the California Register criteria, the cottages’ removal alone does not necessarily compromise their eligibility for listing in the CRHR. California environmental regulations state “a moved building, structure, or object ... may be listed in the California Register ... if the new location is compatible with the original character and use of the historical resource.” However, because the cottages were moved from their original setting on the northeast side of campus adjacent to the facilities in which the residents of the cottages worked to the southwest side of campus in a student housing area, their present setting is not compatible with their original character and use. Each of the buildings were constructed for the sole purpose of providing a single Cal Poly staff member with a residence located, as Director Anderson stated in 1906, “near his daily work.” The cottages’ removal to the southwest side of campus undermined this original purpose, and thus compromised the integrity of their original location and setting.

Adding to the compromised integrity of setting and location, over the years, workers have modified the Cal Poly Cottages through a series of structural modifications, further compromising their integrity of design and workmanship. In 1921, when the cottages were removed from their original location, workers added a round of structural additions to the cottage’s rear (southeast) façades, modified the base of the cottage’s sides to raise the buildings and conform to the topography of their new location, and constructed rear garage outbuildings. Years later, in the 1960s, workers removed the 1921 additions and garage outbuildings to construct a second round of rear additions. In later years, workers have attached an extension to Cottage #3’s rear addition, further compromising its integrity. Finally, a number of the cottages’ original windows have been replaced with modern aluminum substitutes. Taken together, the cottages’ 1921 relocation and subsequent structural modifications have seriously compromised their integrity of design, setting, location, and workmanship. This compromised integrity, combined with their marginal historic importance within the context of the history and mission of early Cal Poly campus development, renders the cottages ineligible for listing in the NRHP or CRHR.


*NRHP Status Code 6Z
*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Cal Poly Cottages

*Required Information
Photographs:


Photograph 2. Horizontal siding along the base of Cottage #1. Camera facing southeast.
Photographs:

**Photograph 3.** Cottage #1. Camera facing southwest.

**Photograph 4.** Cottage #1’s bay extension. Camera facing southeast.
Photographs:

Photograph 5. The rear addition of Cottage #1. Camera facing northwest.

Photographs:

Photograph 7. The horizontal siding at the base of Cottage #2. Camera facing southeast.

Photographs:


Photographs:

Photograph 11. Cottage #2’s rear addition and attached shed. Camera facing west.

Photographs:

Photograph 13. The bottom layer of Cottage #3’s horizontal siding, a result of the structure’s 1921 removal. Camera facing southeast.

Photographs:

**Photograph 15.** Cottage #3’s two rear additions. Camera facing northwest.

**Photograph 16.** Cottage #3’s daycare facility extension. Camera facing southwest.
Photographs:

Photograph 17. The shed outbuilding behind Cottage #3. Camera facing southeast.

Photograph 19. 1909 Cal Poly campus map, including Dormitory No. 2 and the Creamery, which at the time were still under construction. The two 1909 employee cottages (circled) are located just north of the training facilities, reflecting Director Anderson's belief that "a man ... near his daily work is a more dependable quantity."
Photographs:

Photograph 20. 1926 Campus Map with the Cal Poly Cottages circled in their new location.

Photograph 21. This early 1930s aerial photo showing the Cal Poly Cottages in their removed location with garage outbuildings and shed roof additions.