

Burnett Nurse's Home (Burnett Arms)
120 North Howard Street
Fresno
Fresno County
California

HABS
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10-FRES,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CA-2690

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BURNETT NURSES HOME
(Burnett Arms)

Location: 120 North Howard Street, Fresno, Fresno County, California. This building is located on the east side of the street, on the corner of Howard Street and Divisadero Avenue, in downtown Fresno, California.

The Property is described as being Lots 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Irvington Addition as per map thereof recorded in Book 1, Page 70 of Plats, Fresno County Records. Excepting the westerly 23 feet 3 inches, more or less, of said lot 1, appropriated for the widening of Howard Street. And excepting therefrom the south 50 feet thereof as granted to the City of Fresno by deed dated September 15, 1949, from Fresno Community Hospital. Recorded in Book 2806, Page 67 of official records, Document No. 56600.

USGS Fresno Quadrant Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: Zone 11. Easting: 251650
Northing: 4069 840

Present Owner: City of Fresno, Redevelopment Agency

Present Use: This building is unoccupied, but is listed on the City of Fresno register of Cultural Resources. It is also listed on the city's certified Historic Resource Inventory of 1992.

Significance: The 1919, Burnett Nurses Home is one of two remaining structures from the Burnett Sanitarium, the city's first private health care facility. It is an example of the community's desire to create a quality living quarters environment for the nurses at the Burnett School for Nurses students.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Fresno's Hospitals

Fresno's first hospital, the original county hospital was constructed in this area of Fresno, which has become known as Hospital Hill, It derives the name from the fact that this area of downtown Fresno has been associated with health care for well over a century. In 1876 the City of Fresno purchased property for a hospital in this area; when the hospital moved to a different site, the Burnett Sanitarium filled the void. The Sanitarium eventually became Fresno Community Hospital. The affluent were drawn to the area, possibly because of the elevated land and the proximity to the hospital.

In 1897, Mrs. Celia Burnett opened her home in Fresno as a boardinghouse for men who had left their families in search of fortune in the West. Travelers often became ill in the west, and Mrs. Burnett skillfully nursed them back to health. Word of Mrs. Burnett's boardinghouse spread in town, and soon a number of Fresno physicians combined their talents along with Mrs. Burnett. They opened a private, for-profit hospital in the 30-room boardinghouse, at the south east corner of Fulton and Calaveras Streets, in Fresno, California. The doctors involved were J. D. Davidson, J. L. Maupin, W. T. Maupin, George Aiken, and Dwight H. Trowbridge, Sr. Known as the Burnett Sanitarium, the new hospital was incorporated on May 16, 1900.

Five years later, the hospital was moved to a three story building at the corner of Fresno and S Streets, where it operated until 1916. In 1911, another renovation took place at the three story hospital, in an effort to accommodate the health care requirements of the day. In 1916-17, another renovation and construction project created the \$90,000, five-story, Burnett Annex, near the corner of Fresno and S Streets. This building is still in use today at Fresno Community Hospital. The new hospital building would handle 120 patients and was known as one of the most modern facilities of its kind.

Normal operations continued through two World Wars until, in 1945, the Burnett Sanitarium was sold to a non-profit corporation and became Fresno Community Hospital. The new organization immediately began expanding its facilities until 1959, when it opened a new 204 bed, 5-story hospital at the corner of Fresno and

R Streets. By 1972, the hospital had completed construction on a 10-story tower, bringing the capacity of the hospital to 464 beds. Continuing to grow, the name of the hospital was again changed in 1979 to Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center. At nearly the same time, the hospital merged with Clovis Memorial Hospital, a 99-bed acute care facility. In 1982, Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center became affiliated with Sierra Hospital Foundation to form Community Hospitals of Central California.

Sierra Hospital Foundation, a non-profit California corporation, was formed on September 1, 1955 by a group of Fresno residents and physicians. The Foundation developed a 60-bed general medical/surgical hospital on the corner of Dakota and Clark streets, which at the time was the northern edge of our expanding city. This hospital was named Sierra Hospital, and later named Sierra Community Hospital when it joined the Community system.

Community has also entered into an agreement with Fresno County to maintain the resources available at the County hospital, assuming responsibility for it and its services. Since the county was likely to close its facility rather than try to maintain it, the agreement was designed to preserve the highly acclaimed Burn Center and Level 1 Trauma Center for the citizens of Fresno and the surrounding communities. Formerly Valley Medical Center, the County hospital was made part of the Community system on October 7, 1996 to become University Medical Center.

The Burnett School of Nursing

The Burnett School of Nursing was started at the turn-of-the-century, with the first graduating class being in 1902. The early day nurses had quarters near the Sanitarium at Fresno and R Streets. By 1919, the Sanitarium began advertising for the recruitment of nurses into their School of Nursing. The school was opened up to young women between 18 and 35, of "good moral character," and in "perfect health."

At this time, the hospital's partners realized they needed space to house the nurses who were attending the school. They had a two story building constructed in a residential neighborhood at 120 Howard Street, at the corner of East Divisadero Avenue. This building was in the form of an apartment building with a blockish

late Second Renaissance Revival architecture. Constructed at a cost of \$65,000 in 1919, it was the largest building in the general vicinity.

The apartment building was used as a nurses home until 1971. In 1972, it was sold to an individual, Wayne Holder, who leased the building out and converted it into a drug rehabilitation center, The Third Floor. The Third Floor purchased the building in 1990. They left the building in 1992 returning in 1993, losing a contract for rehabilitation services with the county. However, in 1993, they returned, operating in it until the building's purchase in May, 1997.

After the Third Floor left the building, a number of traumas took place which left the building in the condition it is in today. A fire in late 1997 caused minor damage. Between May, 1997 and April, 1998, the building was used at least once for training for the Fresno Police Department SWAT team. Further damage occurred to the building, leaving it in the condition it was found in by the investigators for this HABS.

Immediately adjacent to the building, north on Divisadero Avenue, was an earlier commercial building, which caused the unfinished appearance of the rear of the building. It was a one story building used for storage, demolished about 1994. Further north, on the corner of Fresno Street and Divisadero Avenue, was the Brinker Building, which faced Fresno Street. It too was constructed as a store front, and was used for storage until it was torn down about 1990. Both were unreinforced brick buildings.

PART II. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Exterior

The Burnett Nurses Home is a late Second Renaissance Revival building. It has two stories, and is a reinforced steel frame building with hollow-tile infill panels or curtain walls. The building has a full basement, at grade on the north end, but somewhat below grade on the south. A reinforced concrete foundation supports the building. It is designed in a "C" shape, with a 22 foot long inset area at the rear, between a 22 foot long south wing and a 46 foot long north wing. The overall width of the building is 64 feet. The length of the building is 90 feet.

The building's exterior is faced with a smooth concrete finish on the first and second stories, giving it a plain appearance. The basement level has lineal ornamentation with cement finish. This gives the building a longer appearance. The corners of the building are ornamented with rectangular quoins, continuing the lineal appearance of the basement level. There is a very slight entablature with a boxed cornice at the roof line. This continues around the front and sides of the building, wrapping around the rear walls of the wings, approximately two feet.

In the front, the second floor of this building has nine windows. The second story windows are plain, with sill, and double sash. There are no surrounds, or other features present. The first story has the same symmetry, but the location of the third window from the left, is occupied by the plain, wood front door of the building. Over the door hangs a modern aluminum awning. Mounted to the second window from the right end of the front, is an iron rail fire escape.

The basement level, in front, from left to right, has a small double sash window. It is located next to the large, plain, flat-sided, fairly contemporary concrete front porch. This porch is 26 feet long and 9 feet wide, and covers the area where, as part of the normal design, other windows would be located on the basement level. A set of 8 foot wide steps rises from a 6 by 8 foot landing, to the right side of the porch floor. Another set of 2 steps leads from grade to the mid-level landing. A fire plug is located in the middle of the front of the porch wall. The lineal design continues across the front of the building, with five more half-height double sash windows lined up parallel with the upper two story windows.

The second story, on the south or right side of the building, four openings are located in a symmetrical placement. Three of these are double sash windows. The opening which is not a window, second opening from the front of the building, has a door with an iron fire escape mounted outside. This leads out of the central hallway of the second floor. An iron ladder leads to the roof of the building, angling toward the front. The two other windows are located to the rear of the fire escape.

The first floor has the same design, but this one allows for four, symmetrically placed double sash windows. The basement level has five of the small double sash windows, three toward the front, and two located toward the rear. The middle-right wall of this side has only the lineal siding.

The north or left side of the building is designed in a different manner from the south. This may be due to the remodeling of the building sometime in the past. The two upper floors of the north side of the building, have 6 double sash windows, symmetrically placed along the side elevation. The basement level design has two half-height double sash windows near the front. Behind these is an alcove, with a set of 2'6" steel doors (double doors). These are clearly much more contemporary than the original doors of the building. Behind these doors, are two more windows. A single wide door, with alcove is located at the rear of this side of the building. The basement openings line up vertically with those of the upper two floors, giving this side the normal symmetry of the Second Renaissance Revival architecture. Otherwise, the side looks like a plain, flat wall, with windows.

The two rear wings of the building have no windows on the back. An interesting feature of these walls is the lack of a finishing coat to the tile infill panels or curtain walls. This is due to the presence of the store building which was located behind this building, prior to its construction. The reinforced steel frame of the Burnett building is clearly visible on these walls. There is a slight pediment at the top, which is actually flashing from the roof.

Inside the wings, a consistent design is present. The center, or main building wall, has two windows north of center, and one south. All three floors have the same pattern. The upper floors have the standard double sash windows, and the basement has the half-height double sash windows. The north and south wings each have six openings on their inside walls. On the north side are located six windows, two on each level. The south wing has the same design, except the rear opening at the basement level has a doorway instead of a window. This is a more contemporary alteration to the building. A set of vents and water pipes run up the rear wall of the building, between the windows. One vent is from the basement boiler, and one is from the first floor kitchen duct work.

Interior

The first and second floors of the Burnett Nurses Home building are consistent in their design. Walls are generally constructed of lath and plaster, except for those of the secondary stairs on the south end of the main hallways. The second, front room from the south end of the first floor has been altered, with a wood frame,

sheet rock wall replacing a formerly existing wall. This particular room measures 20x20 feet.

Each floor has a 5 foot wide central hallway, which runs down the entire center structure. Each floor has another four foot hallway running from front to back in the north wing. Both floors have a hallway running from the doorway of a front, 10x20 foot room, to another doorway of a 10x20 foot room at the rear.

Except as noted, every room was originally designed as individual living quarters, each originally having a sink. Each floor also originally had 6 10x20 foot rooms on the front side of the building. The outside wall of the north wing, has 6, 10x20 rooms. The outside of the south wing, has no rooms. All of this wing's rooms are located on the inside. Each floor has two, 10x20 foot rooms on the inside wall. The rear of the center wing originally had four 10x15 foot rooms, but the southernmost room on both floors has been modified. A stairwell has been added to the south end of the main hallway, removing 5 feet of the front of the room. The dividing wall of the last two rooms has been removed, extending what is now the last room to a measurement of 15x17 feet.

On the first floor, the two south rooms at the rear of the center building have been converted into kitchen facilities. Still present in the northernmost of these rooms, are the sheet metal walls panels and hood for the facility's grill and oven. The Preparation table is located on the west side of this room. The southernmost room has a wall of cabinets on the south side. The added auxiliary stairwell wall is located on the west side of this 15x17 room. The only significant architectural element found in this building is a 2 foot long balustrade, which is located at the south end of the main hallway on the first floor. It leads off of the platform landing at the base of the auxiliary stairway from the second floor.

In the northernmost 10x15 room on this side of the building are located the common lavatories for the floor. On each floor, a stairwell opens onto the main hallway, leading upstairs. In the case of the second floor, the stairway leads to the roof. On the first floor, the north wing hallway ends at the east end of the building, with a closet. On the west end, the front stairs steeply descend to the front 3.0' front doorway.

The basement layout is somewhat different than the other two floors. On the north-east side of the building, beneath the north wing, is a large room, 44x40 feet in size. It is located beneath the entire north east end of the building. A stairway which leads up to the first floor is located 30 feet south of the north set of double doors. A sheet rock covered wall then runs from the stairway to a main, central hallway, which runs the length of the main structure, north and south. An 18 inch square concrete and steel post is located in the center of the north wing, supporting the overhead reinforced steel beam.

The west side of the building, at the front of the north wing, has a 22x20 foot room, with double 2.0' wooden doors. The walls of this room are made of the hollow clay tile, which fills the panels or curtain walls of the entire building. The west side, or front of the basement has 6 rooms, including the one just described. The next room to the south, measures 16x20 feet. It appears to have been used as part of the laundry facility of the building. The 10x20 foot room next to it, was another room for the laundry. It still has the original linen-folding tables and shelves. Two more 10x20 foot rooms are located to the south of this room. After these, the end room on this side of the basement, is a 20x20 space, with two steps down from the hallway. It appears to have been the building superintendent's room, as it still has its curtains.

Across from the superintendent's room, is the 40-22 foot commissary room, complete with a big reefer on the south wall. This room has slatted, pallet shelves, low to the ground, on north, east, and the rest of the south wall. Next to the commissary is the boiler or mechanical room, complete with an insulated horizontal tank, on concrete stands. Also in the mechanical room is a steam heating unit and pressure tank.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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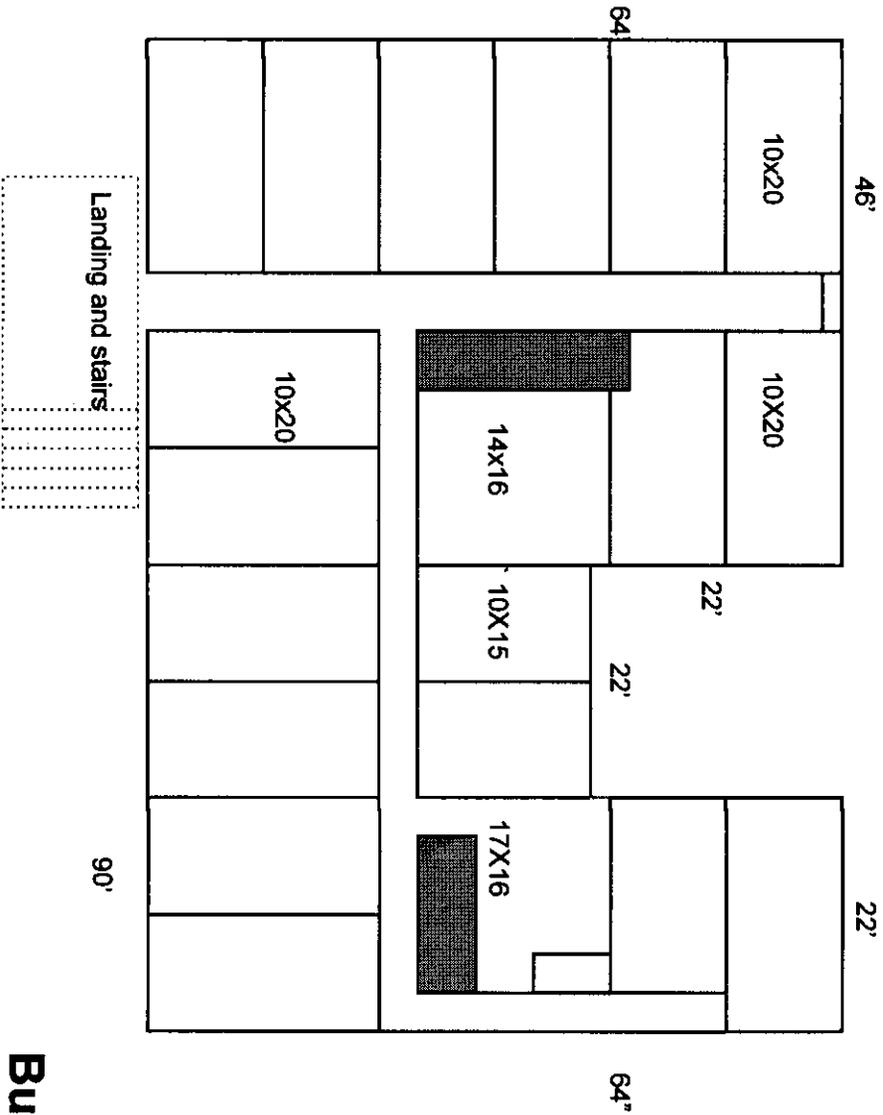
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center project will ultimately create a new 58 acre campus, bounded by Fresno Street on the east, McKenzie Avenue on the north, Diana Street on the west, and Q Street to the southwest. This segment of the project is as a result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Fresno and the California State Historic Preservation Officer, regarding the Fresno Community Hospital and Medical Center Expansion Project, Environmental Assessment No. 96-011.

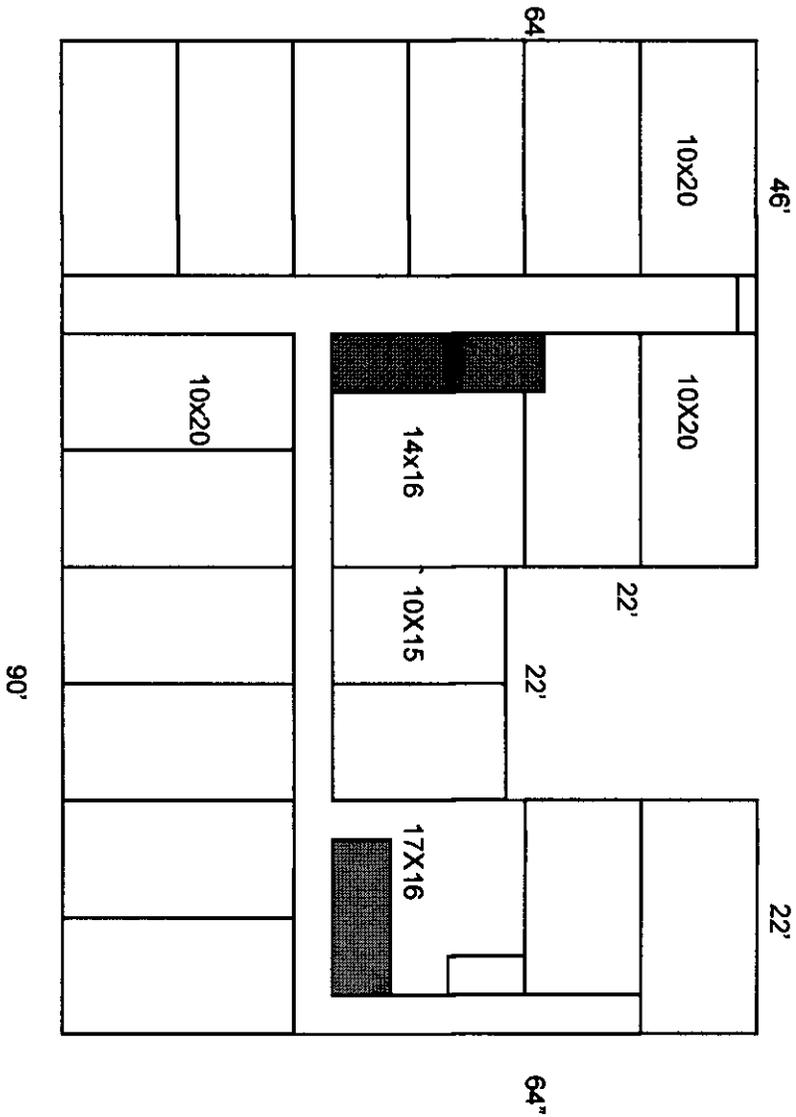
Demolition of the building and clearing of the lot is necessary as part of the project. On behalf of the City of Fresno, Redevelopment Department, Vintage Resources conducted a cultural resources investigation of the Burnett Nurses Home at 120 North Howard Street, Fresno, California. The purpose of the study was to discover, document, evaluate, and describe the cultural and historic resource value of the property. Mr. Christopher D. Brewer, M.A. conducted the study and prepared the report. Mr. Richard L. Milhorn B. A., prepared the photographic documentation of the property. The final draft of this report was completed on April 30, 1998.

FLOORPLAN SECOND FLOOR



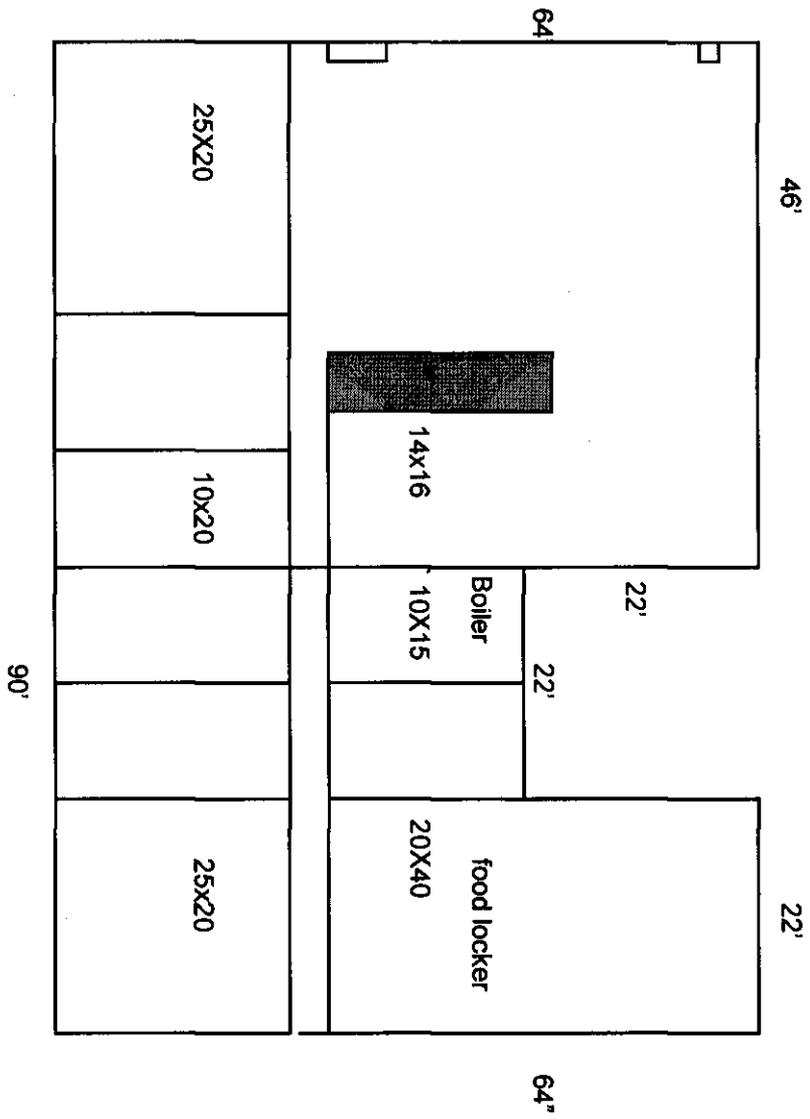
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FLOORPLAN THIRD FLOOR



Burnett Nurses Home
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FLOORPLAN BASEMENT



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