



# Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

## OAKLAND LANDMARK, S-7/S20 PRESERVATION COMBINING ZONE, AND HERITAGE PROPERTY APPLICATION FORM

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This form is for use in requesting the City of Oakland pursuant to its Zoning Regulations to designate a Landmark or Heritage Property or to rezone one or more properties to the S-7 or S-20 Preservation Combining Zone.

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

Historic Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hermle House \_\_\_\_\_

and/or Common Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. ADDRESS/LOCATION

Street and number: \_\_\_\_\_ 3220 MacArthur Blvd. \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_ 94602 \_\_\_

Assessor's Parcel Number: \_\_\_\_\_ 28-944-18-1 \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: \_\_\_ 3220 MacArthur Blvd LLC \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_ dr.jamie@steppingintowellness.org \_\_\_\_\_

Street/Number: \_\_\_\_\_ 3220 MacArthur Blvd. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ 415-336-4036 \_\_\_\_\_

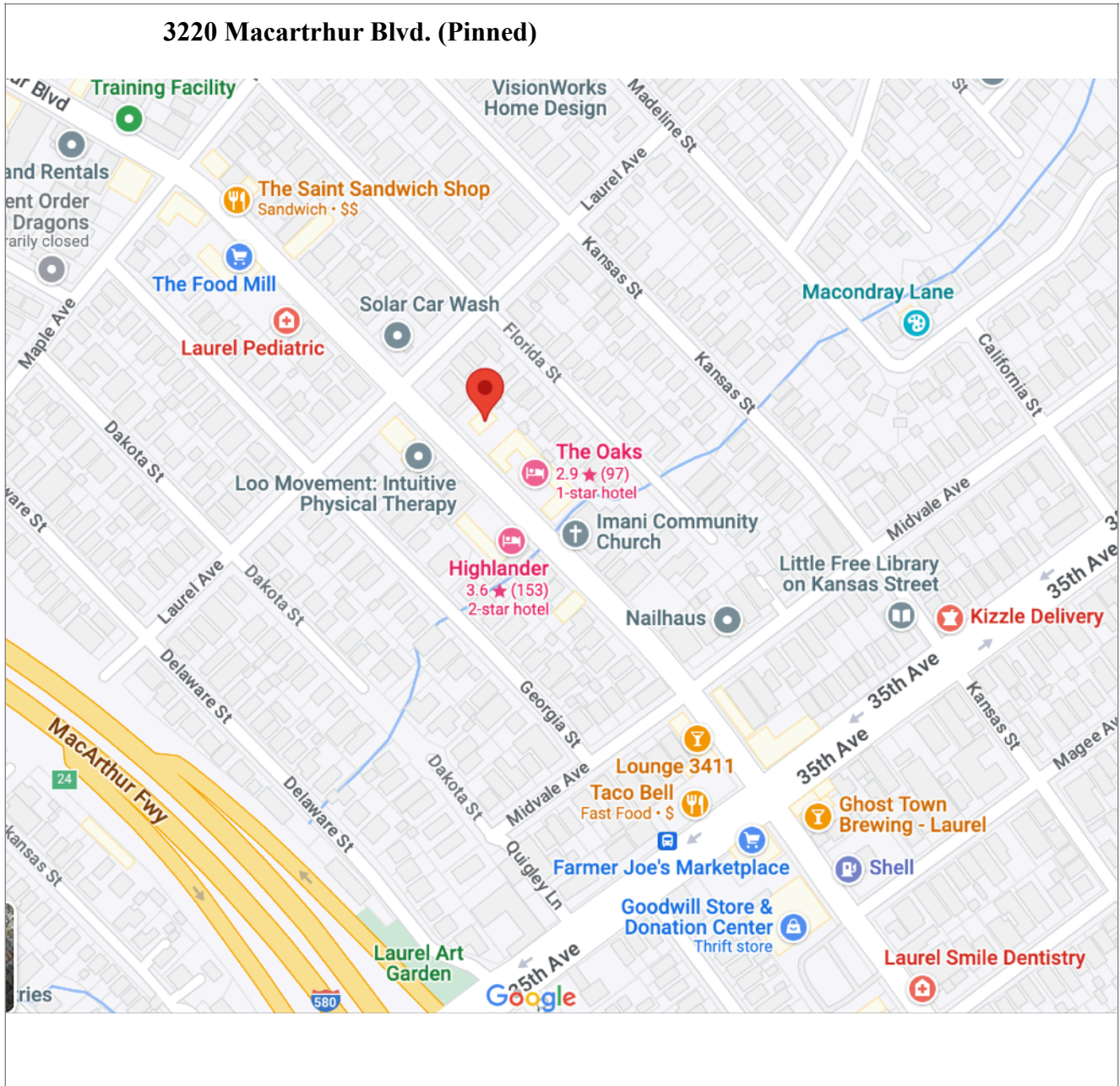
City: \_\_\_\_\_ Oakland \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ CA \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ 94602 \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. APPLICATION FOR

\_\_\_ City Landmark    \_\_\_X\_\_\_ Heritage Property    \_\_\_ S-7 District    \_\_\_ S-20 District

5. SURVEY RATING: C3B+?, NAME OF SURVEY: Citywide Preliminary Survey, DATE: Conducted between 1980s-1990s, DEPOSITORY:

Current Google Map image of 3220 Macarthur (Lower Dimond Area is the current neighborhood designation)



**Hermle House (Billboard at right was removed in 2023) Redfin Realty Photo**



**1. DESCRIPTION**

**A. Resource Type and Use: Present (P) and Historic (H)**

Building(s)      \_\_\_\_\_ District      \_\_\_\_\_ Structure      \_\_\_\_\_ Site      \_\_\_\_\_ Object  
 HP Residential      \_\_\_\_\_ Commercial      \_\_\_\_\_ Industrial      \_\_\_\_\_ Institutional  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Condition:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent      \_\_\_\_\_ Fair  
 Good      \_\_\_\_\_ Poor

**C. Alterations:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Unaltered  
 Altered

**D. Site**

Original Site  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Moved (Date \_\_\_\_\_)

Alteration: ADA ramp and wheelchair lift at entry.

**E. Style/Type:** \_\_\_\_\_ Queen Anne Victorian \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance:**

The two story home at 3220 Macarthur Blvd. stands on a triple lot (9,900 sq. ft.) which gently slopes Southeast towards Peralta Creek. Originally the house was built on a parcel of sixteen lots, a quarter of the block, about 40,000 sq ft. Present lot is about a quarter of the original Hermle property. The orchard on the west side of the grounds, contains over a dozen exotic fruit trees. Consistent with this nod to the area’s agricultural beginnings, the home is a unique historic oasis among the more modern architectural examples on Macarthur. 3220 is a rare remaining example of an asymmetrical Queen Anne Victorian cottage in the Upper Dimond Neighborhood. This style lasted from about 1880 to the early 1900’s. This home was deemed unusually large and early for the neighborhood by the OCHS survey record of 1998. Some of the details that place this home squarely in the Queen Anne lineage are the wooden finials which cap all three gable ends (NW, SE and SW {street facing} directions). The gable end facing Macarthur, has a dentil archway and boasts fish Scale shingles surround its window. The intricate details pointing in the Northwest and Southeast directions (non-street facing sides) indicate that the home was visible from these directions, as well as the street, before the neighborhood filled in with other structures.

While this house clings to its Victorian roots, there are certain aspects that reference Roman and Greek culture, so prevalent in the Classic Box architecture of the colonial revival. The Classic Box style went quickly in and out of fashion from 1893 (started by the Columbian Exposition in Chicago) to about 1910. This classical influence is displayed by the portico entrance that is supported by intricate square fluted columns, topped with cornice capitals. Behind these columns (and within the portico) are indented coffered panels thoughtfully placed around the large entry doors. The smaller of the two doors was added by a previous owner to turn the building into a duplex. The second floor displays ionic window columns with alternating wooden corbels and turned wood dentils on its curb facing pediment.

These elaborate details are a lasting example of quality and workmanship, that is scarce in the Upper Dimond. The roof is steeply pitched (12 over 12) and has dormers facing Northwest and Southeast. The home is set back from Macarthur Boulevard by about 33’. The grade of the land and surrounding area naturally slopes toward Peralta creek, and the front yard also has a 3 foot downward camber towards Macarthur. This elevation change

from the street effectively sets the building up to tower over the viewer to proudly pronounce its grandeur. I cannot wait to see how adorning the details of this ornate home with classic victorian colors, will underscore its presence in the neighborhood. We're hoping this pride in ownership and respect for the historical significance of these rare homes catches on!

Also, in doing some removal of rotten wood, we've found that the home is clad with horizontal redwood v-channel siding. The Palladian windows have all been replaced from the originals, but with low quality double paned aluminum sashed versions that wold be great to replace. While the building is generally in good condition, it naturally requires a robust maintenance program on the exterior to tend to rotting trim and some of the casements among other things. The building appears to have undergone minor exterior alterations since its construction between 1901 and 1902.

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE

A. Construction date(s): 1901

B. Architect/Builder/Designer: Conrad Hermle

C. **Statement of Significance (include summary statement of significance as first paragraph):**

3220 MacArthur Blvd stands alone on one of the few undivided triple lots in the Upper Dimond. It is a rare example of an original large Queen Anne Victorian, remaining in the area from its supposed construction between 1901 and 1902. While a 100 foot lot for a single house was common in the early 1900s, it is now almost unheard of to see such space preserved in modern day Oakland. Nothing for many blocks even remotely offers a key to Oakland's distant past as does the Hermle House. The home is one of a kind, harkens back to Oakland's beginnings and is worth preserving.

It may be hard to imagine how rural this location was despite being only a few blocks from what is now the MacArthur and 35th Ave. intersection. The nearest hub of activity at the time of its construction, was nearly a mile away in the growing Dimond district at Fruitvale Ave. Meanwhile, reading about the area surrounding 3220 before 1920, (part of Laurel Grove Park), mostly revealed facts about chickens and plowing up acres of land along the future thoroughfare to grow potatoes, onions and beans.

Understanding how this section of MacArthur Boulevard/Hopkins Street, in the Lower Dimond district became the bustling area that it is today, we'd have to go back to a time when it wasn't even part of Oakland. This area of Alameda County was formed in 1856 and was named after the ship (the Brooklyn) that brought Mormon settlers to the area in 1846. So named Brooklyn Township, it was an area of agricultural importance due to the lack of fog and produced grapes, currants, blackberries, and pears. Some of these fruits are still grown at 3220 MacArthur as one of the three lots still supports an orchard.

The property was part of the open swath of land first owned by Antonio Maria Peralta where he grazed cattle. The land was later sold to George Washington Adams and then to Sidney L. Johnson in 1868-69. In August of 1900 the land was bought by developer Joseph Westall, subdivided by civil engineer Sidney George E. Fogg and developed and sold by real estate developer Henry Z Jones into a neighborhood for development. The development was called "Laurel Grove Park" and consisted of 20 full blocks of 25' lots from present-day School to Kansas and Maple to Midvale streets.

In looking at the block books, both pre and post Brooklyn Township Annexation, we noticed a \$250 value added to the land, appearing at 3220 between 1901 and 1902. Dennis Evanosky, author of "History Is All around Us : Oakland's Laurel District.", is almost certain that the structure built was a speculative home to showcase the newly subdivided Laurel Grove Park. Evanosky sites the following evidence... 1) At the time, a street car line ran down Hopkins and stopped at Fruitvale Boulevard. yet there was probably an expectation that the line would continue down Hopkins street to 35th, making 3220 an ideal location for showing off a model home. 2) The size of the home as seen today was unusual for the neighborhood, especially since there's no evidence it was built for anyone in particular. Still, the latest date for a Queen Anne Victorian is generally considered to be around 1910, so the building was likely built to the point we see today, between 1901 and 1910. 3) There were no other homes for about a block in each direction, so a spec home would have been a

great way to lead people out into the edges beyond what had been inhabited at the time. 4) When I shared indications of the build quality (specifically around balloon framing of the walls and the haphazard construction of the foundation). Evansky commented that this was consistent with homes that were created for show.

We really don't know what was constructed by 1901. \$250 would be worth about \$9k today, adjusting for inflation. This isn't a reasonable price for a home of this size and grandeur. We will continue to pursue the origins of this beautiful home, and we may never know what the earliest versions of this construction looked like or when the Queen Anne was finally erected.

Laurel Grove Park sat in between what is now the Dimond and the Laurel districts. The streets running parallel to the now MacArthur Blvd. were named by Fogg after the states of the union. MacArthur was originally named Idaho street. Later Idaho street was named Hopkins street after Caspar Thomas Hopkins and then MacArthur blvd after General Douglas MacArthur in 1942, which was also part of highway 50 prior to the 580 freeway.

In 1903, the records show that Joseph Westall sold lots 1-12 & 53-56 of Block M (the northwest quarter of the block) to Conrad Hermle and his wife Therese for \$10. Conrad and Therese moved from Iowa into the new giant Queen Anne Victorian on lots 53-56, virtually how as it appears today. The Hermle's were part of an intrepid cohort of German pioneers who settled this quickly developing area of East Oakland. The number of German beer gardens proliferated. Early block books show the entire block between Hopkins and Florida street and from Laurel to Midvale as owned by only a few families, one of those being the Hermles.

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire sent many San Franciscans to the East bay. Many of these transplants settled in Oakland. In December of 1909, Oakland finally annexed Brooklyn Township in the hopes of turning the area into a great commercial and manufacturing center. The following year the Oakland Traction Company laid track for the # 10 streetcar along Hopkins (today's MacArthur) and in doing so, connected East Oakland to downtown and brought commerce to the area.

The Hermle House was near the end of the Key Line that terminated at 35th Ave. The home's proximity to 35th's intersection, makes it the only original residence that remains near that extinct Key Line terminal. Parts of the Hermle property were sold and developed with bungalows and commercial uses from the mid-1920s, but the present parcel, though only a quarter of the original Hermle land, retains the once rural character.

Conrad and Teresa eventually passed the Hermle House to their children, Amelia and Edith who lived there until Amelia died in 1948 and in 1949 Edith moved down MacArthur to Altenheim (German for Elders home) to live out the rest of her days with other German Americans.

The effort we would put into keeping this historic home vibrant would not only be a joy for us, but I can say cathartic for the people of the neighborhood as well. I spoke to many neighbors in the nearby Laurel neighborhood as the beautiful façade and marquee of the Laurel theater was ripped down to make way for a cinderblock-clad dialysis center. Watching this desecration was absolutely gut wrenching for myself and many others. As a native to Oakland, I can say that residents here find joy in witnessing architecturally significant structures preserved as a means to vicarious pride in well built construction. Maintaining these bygone aesthetic standards also facilitates cultural investment and a precedent that positively informs Oakland's future artistic endeavors.

## **9. SOURCES / BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

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Oakland Telephone Directory, Alphabetically under Hermle, The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company,  
January 1950

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10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Peter Erwin and Jamie Bender \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Title (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Homeowner(s) \_\_\_\_\_ 3220 Macarthur LLC \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 6/27/23 \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 3247 Sylvan Ave. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: 415-336-4036 \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town: Oakland State: CA Zip: 94602 Email: dr.jamie@steppingintowellness.org

**DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY**

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1/10/2020

A. Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

B. Action by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ Recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Resolution number: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ Designated as Heritage Property Date: \_\_\_\_\_

C. Action by City Planning Commission Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

D. Action by City Council Date: \_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_ Designated: Ordinance No: \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ Not Designated

**View Across MacArthur Blvd, 1957 (Realtor Card from Irene Kirk)**

**Shows house before second door was added. Windows on the bottom floor have been changed but the top floor and attic have not.**

(MET 313) (378)

Location 3220 MacArthur Blvd	Zone Bus	Price \$ 35,000.
Between: .....	Size Mac 110 x 90	
Improvements: 2 story frame rustic house (old)	<del>OCT 4 - 1957 CANCELLED</del>	
Owner: List: Sam	Contour: slight upslope	
Loans: Clear	Utilities: all	
Terms: \$15,000	Taxes: \$210.	
Note: Loan	Listed by: 6-13-57	
Exchange: may	Date: 11-1-57	



(Diagram and Legal Description on Reverse Side)

**View Across MacArthur Blvd. 2023**  
**Original windows on top floor with original detail**



**Front Facing MacArthur Blvd**

**Note square fluted columns, topped with cornice capitals and the nod to the Roman and Greek architecture in the pillars**



**Front Facing Gable**

**Note fish scale shingles, radial wood dentils on the pediment, pointed wooden finial, and ionic wood columns.**



**Entry.**

**Note portico entrance with indented coffered panels around the large entry doors (left side door was an addition at some point)**



**Southeast Side**

**Note that some of the same intricate details like wooden columns and finials are reproduced on the sides of the home, as this was the first within a block of it's nearest structure and could be seen from three sides.**





**Southeast Gable**



**Northwest Side**

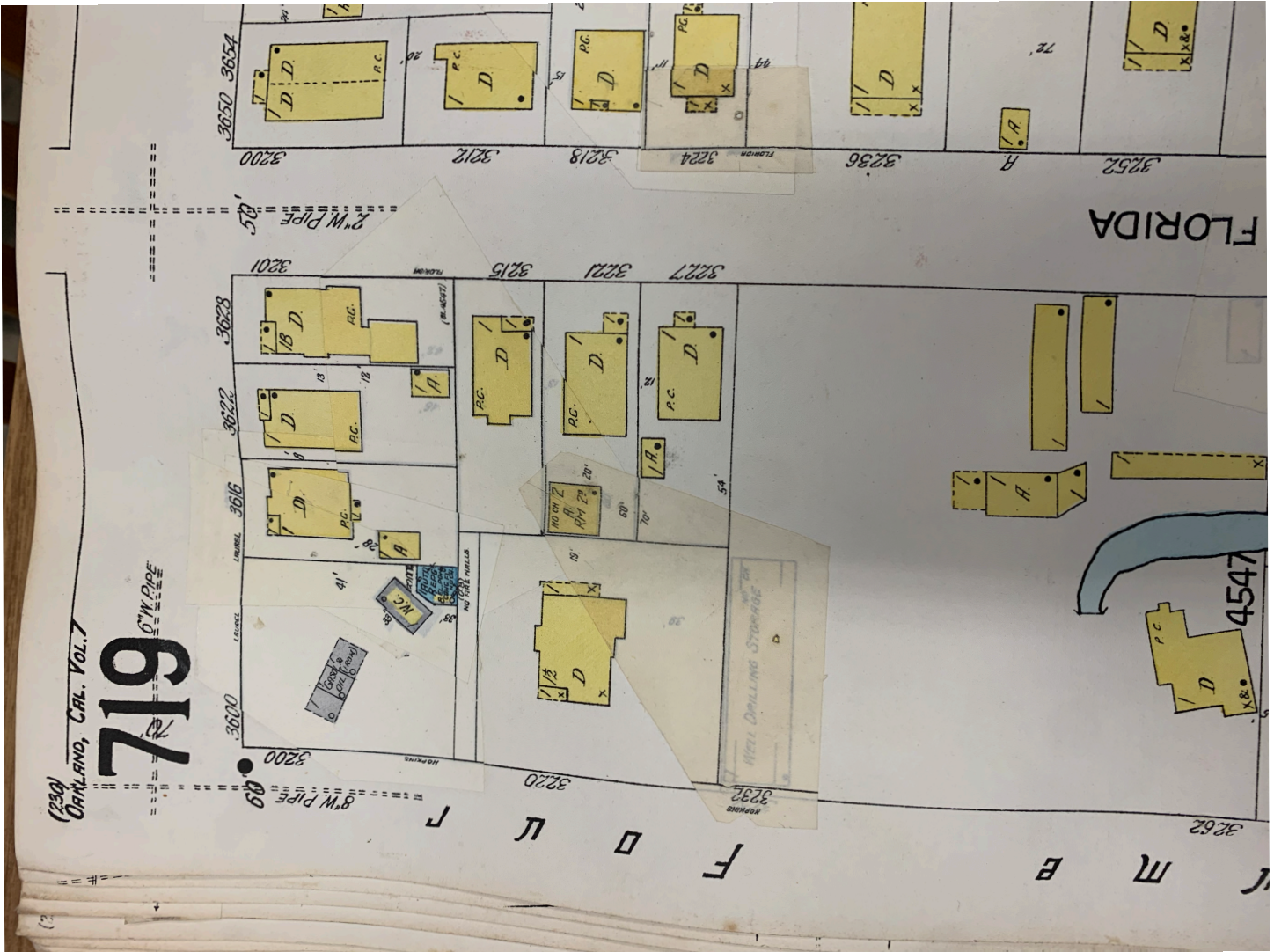


**Northwest Gable**

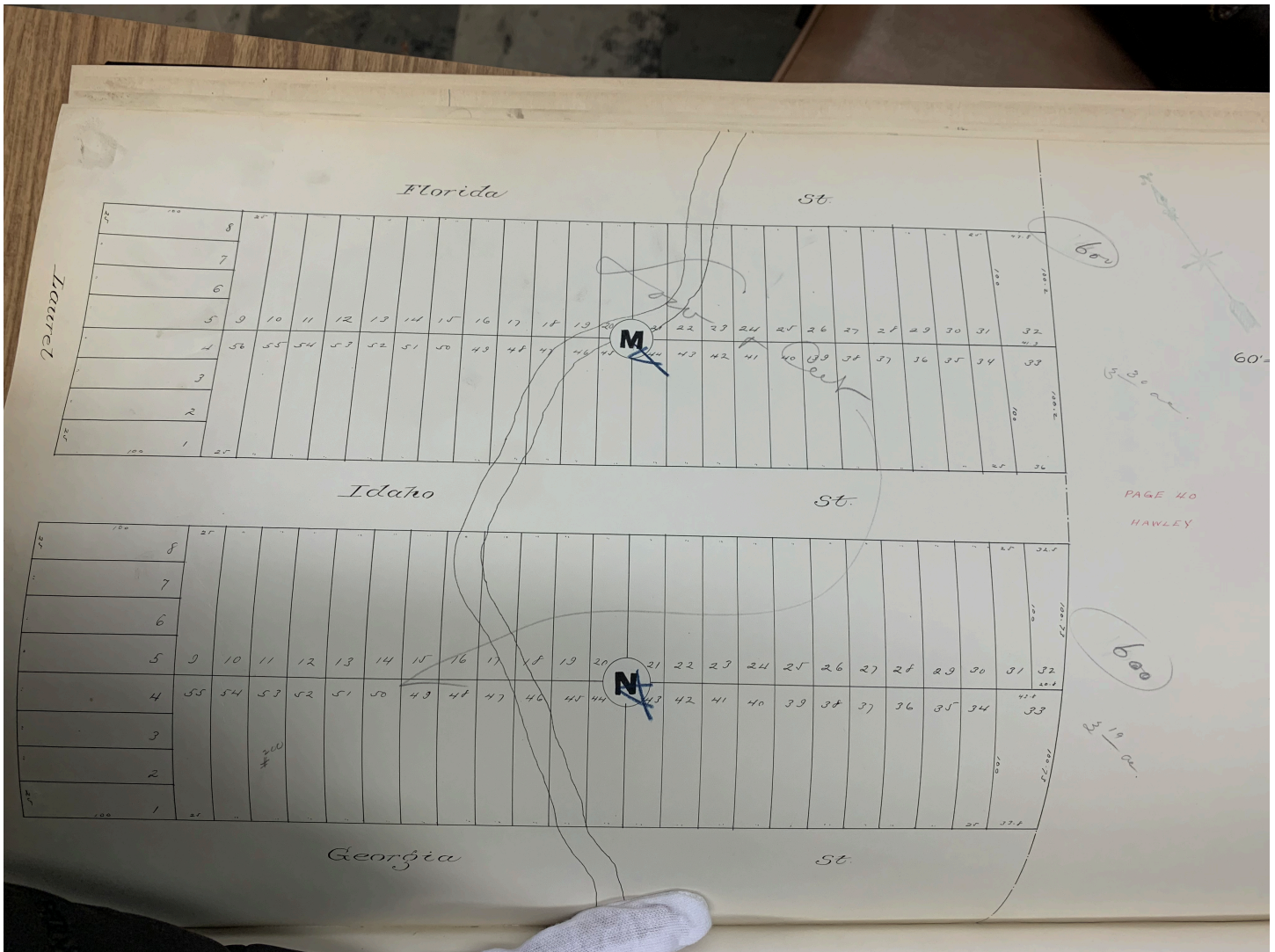




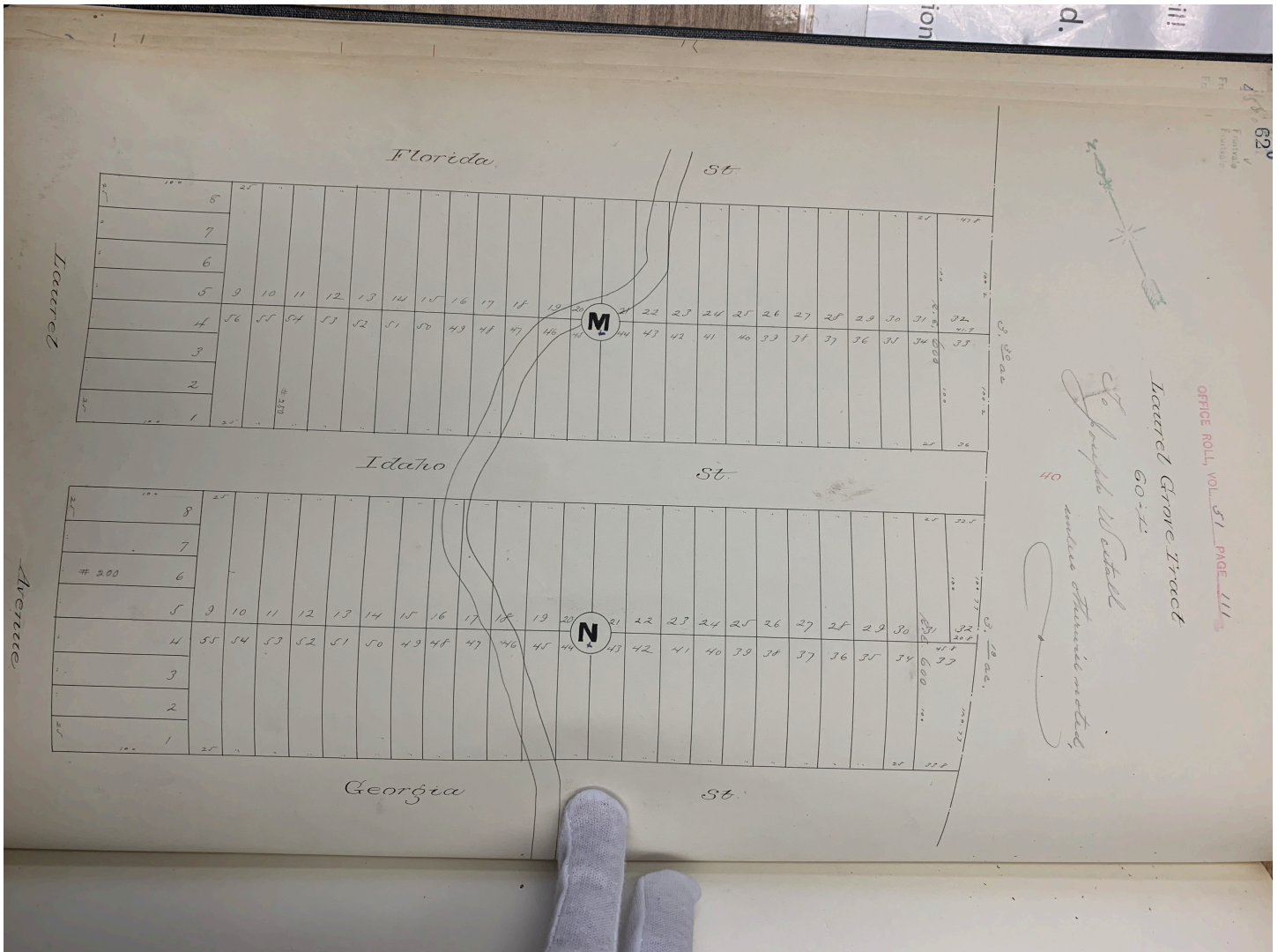
1926 Sanborn Maps. Translucent paper to cover the well drilling next door and an adjustment to the rear neighbors out building. House described as 1 1/2 stories, creek still partly open at 3262



**Block Book 1901. No indication of value on lots 54-56 at the Idaho/Laurel intersection.  
There was no house present on future Hermle property. 25-foot lots**

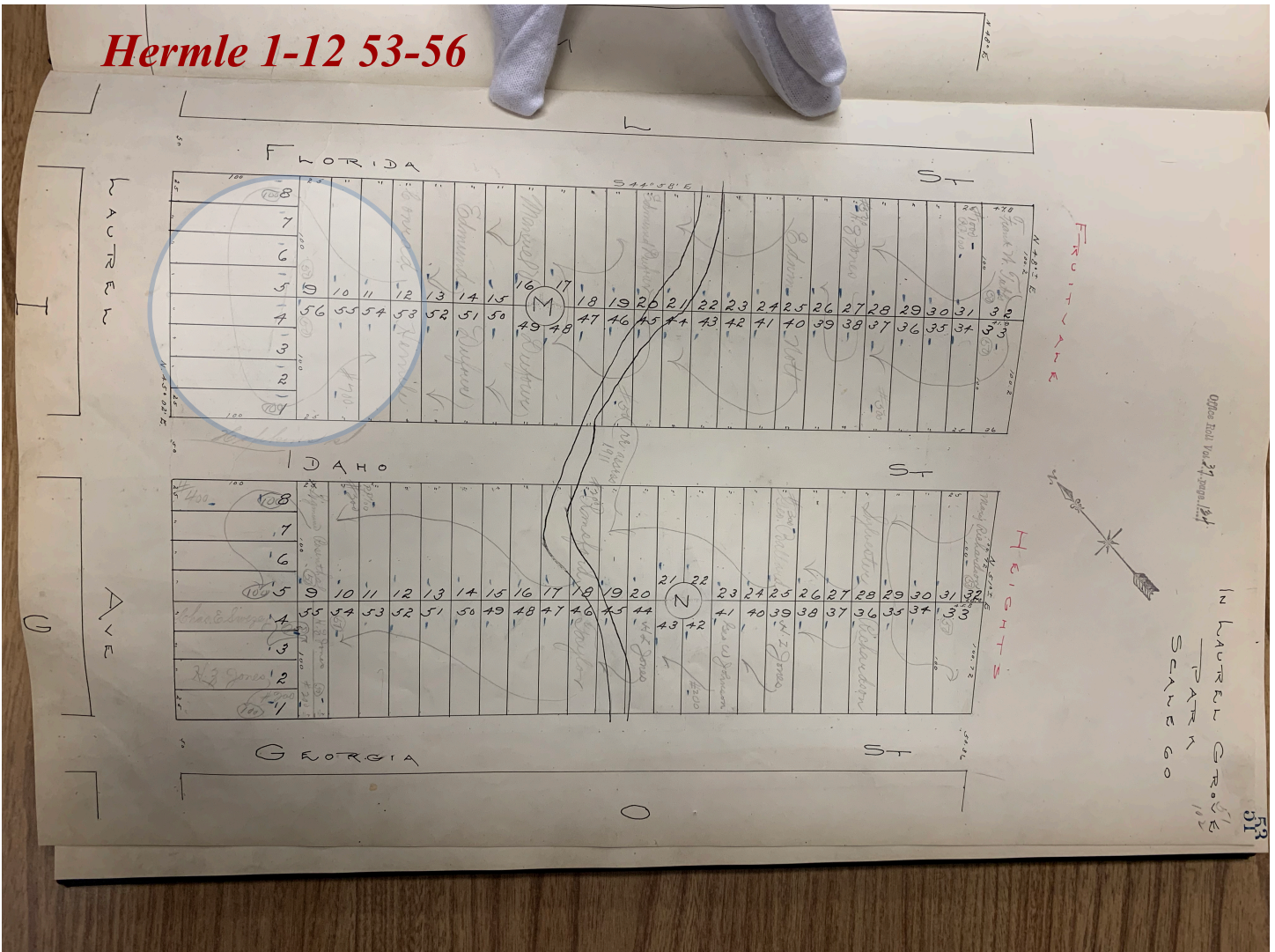


**Block Book 1902. Home value on lot 54 at the Idaho/Laurel intersection.**  
**Improvement assessed at \$250 - low assessment, possibly under construction or previous structure**  
**Last block book available until 1910 after annexation to Oakland**



Block Book 1910 (showing lots 1-12 & 53-56 owned by Conrad Hermle)  
House assessed at \$700

**Hermle 1-12 53-56**







**Block Book 1923-24 (ownership goes to children of Conrad and Therese)  
House still assessed at \$700; blocks beginning to develop at smaller scale**

