

P1. Other Identifier: Koyasan Buddhist Temple, Koyasan Buddhist Church

***P2. Location:** Not for Publication Unrestricted

***a. County** Sacramento

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

***b. USGS 7.5' Quad Date** T; R; ¼ of Sec _____; _____ B.M.

c. Address 1400 U Street **City** Sacramento **Zip** 95818

d. UTM: (give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone _____; _____mE/ _____mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) 009-0146-003-0000, 009-0146-004-0000

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The one-story building has a rectangular plan composed of the front-gabled original volume and a lower, flat-roofed addition to its east. The building is clad in stucco. The main (northwest) façade of the original volume has decorative elements derived from Japanese architecture, including flared gable ends, decorative trim in the gable face, molded fascia board, and a decorative shape atop the gable peak. The main entrance is centered on the original volume. It has wood panel double doors with decorative carvings in the panels and is accessed by a set of concrete steps with a metal handrail at the center. The steps are flanked by decorative Japanese stone lanterns on posts, topped with diminutive gable roofs. The main entrance is sheltered by a small front-gabled entry porch, which replicates at a smaller scale the decorative features of the main gable above it. The raised platform in front of the main façade has a Japanese-style carved wooden balustrade (Rankan). Fenestration on this half of the building consists of multiple-light fixed wood windows that are obscured rather than clear and are in pairs on the main façade. The lower addition has a flat roof with a lower step on the main façade; both levels have a strip of wide rectangular clerestory windows. There is a taller parapet on the northeast elevation. A recessed entrance with a metal door and one sidelight is at the western side of the addition, where it meets the original volume; a small volume that comes all the way to the edge of the roof is flanked by another, wider, shallower recessed portion (continued, p. 3).

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP16, religious building

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



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Photograph 1: 1400 U Street, main (northeast) and northwest elevations, camera facing south, June 15, 2021.

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic Prehistoric Both

c1930, Sacramento County Assessor

***P7. Owner and Address:**

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, address)

Kara Brunzell

Brunzell Historical

1613 B St

Napa, CA 94559

***P9. Date Recorded:** June 15, 2021

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Richmond Grove Neighborhood Historic Context Statement and Historic District Survey.

***Attachments:** NONE 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) _____

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*NRHP Status Code _____

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Northern California Koyasan Temple

B1. Historic Name: None

B2. Common Name: 1400 U Street

B3. Original Use: Italian Christian Church B4. Present Use: Koyasan Buddhist Temple

***B5. Architectural Style:**

***B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alteration, and date of alterations) Original construction, c1930

General repairs, 1945

Rear addition, 1964

Interior remodel, 1971

Social hall and parking lot addition, 1976

Remodel and expansion, 1980

Remodel, 2000

***B7. Moved?** No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

***B8. Related Features:** _____

B9. Architect: unknown. b. Builder: unknown

***B10. Significance: Theme** _____ **Area** Richmond Grove

Period of Significance 1930 - 1980 **Property Type** Religious **Applicable Criteria** A/1/a.1

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

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

***B12. References:**

(See Footnotes)

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** Kara Brunzell

***Date of Evaluation:** June 15, 2021

(This space reserved for official comments.)

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***P3a. Description: (continued):**

Simple wood screens cover the clerestory windows along the recessed portions of the addition's main façade, which occupy most of it. The entrances on both volumes are accessed by an accessible ramp with a decorative wood railing along most of the main façade. There is another metal door at the east end of the main façade. There is a small parking lot behind the temple building.



Photograph 2: Detail, main entrance, main (northeast) elevation, June 15, 2021.



Photograph 3: 1404 and 1400 U Street, southeast and northeast elevations, camera facing southwest, June 15, 2021.

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Photograph 4: Northwest and southwest elevations, camera facing northeast, June 15, 2021.

B10. Significance (continued):

Sacramento

The Nisenan, a branch of the Maidu people, occupied the area near the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers before the arrival of Europeans. Spanish army officer Gabriel Moraga led an expedition to the region in 1808. Moraga named the Sacramento River and retreated, and the Spanish never occupied the region. The first European to permanently settle in the area was John Sutter, a Swiss immigrant who came to California in 1839. After obtaining approval from General Alvarado, the Mexican governor of California, Sutter established his fort in what would become the City of Sacramento. The Mexican government, which was eager to use Sutter as a buffer between its coastal settlements and the Indian groups of the interior, granted him the title to the 44,000 acre rancho he called "New Helvetia" in 1841. By exploiting the local Indians as laborers, Sutter was able to build a moderately successful empire in New Helvetia based on agriculture, hide processing, and trading. Sutter's decision to build a lumber mill near Coloma, however, set in motion a chain of events that destroyed him economically. In January, 1848, the workers found gold near the mill. Sutter tried to keep the discovery a secret, but after a few weeks word began to leak out. Sam Brannan, who operated a rudimentary store at Sutter's Fort, saw a chance to make his fortune by supplying the miners. Filling a bottle with gold, he went to San Francisco and shouted the news in the streets, setting off a gold frenzy.¹

After miners began to arrive at Sutter's Fort, which was near both the head of navigation for the Sacramento River and the mining district, Brannan needed more space for expanded operations, and began looking for a location close to the river. When Sutterville, which was the best townsite in the area, could not be secured, he moved his store to Sutter's Embarcadero (at the foot of modern K Street), despite the fact that the site was already leased to a ferry operation. Proximity to the navigable waters of the Sacramento and a dry winter in 1848 – 49 allowed the gold field speculators to ignore the great drawback of the site: its position in the flood plain. When the debt-ridden Sutter turned his property over to his son, Brannan took further advantage of the situation and pressured the Sutter heir to subdivide New Helvetia into lots that could be sold off to satisfy creditors, including Brannan himself. John Sutter, Jr. hired surveyors to lay out the street grid in late 1848, and they platted an enormous area that stretched three miles east of the Sacramento and south to the American, giving

¹ Mildred B. Hoover, Hero E. Rensch, Ethel G. Rensch, and William N. Abeloe, revised Douglas E. Kyle, *Historic Spots In California, Fourth Edition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 143; *Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California: Illustrated* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1891), 193 – 194; Steven M. Avella, *Sacramento, Indomitable City* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 23.

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the east-west streets letter names and numbering the north-south streets. Before lots went on sale in January 1849, twelve buildings were already clustered around the embarcadero.²

1850 was a turbulent year for the embryonic city, as fortune seekers poured into the area and real estate values skyrocketed. In early 1850, Sacramento experienced the first in the string of devastating floods that have plagued the city. Another first came in March, when Biglow constructed the first of many levees and averted a second inundation. The human tide flooding into Sacramento led squatters to begin building dwellings on property to which Sutter and others held title, and the newcomers soon formed the Sacramento City Settlers Association to contest existing landholdings. The controversy devolved into violence, resulting in two deaths and mayor Hardin Bigelow suffering gunshot wounds. And as the Squatters' Riots wound down, Sacramento was rocked by its first epidemic, a cholera outbreak. Sacramento's strategic position near navigable waterways and the goldfields outweighed the locale's deficiencies, and in 1854, the state capital was permanently established here. California's first successful rail line was the Sacramento Valley Railroad, which ran from Sacramento to Folsom and opened in 1856. The transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, making Sacramento a hub for shipping products from both mines and agriculture and spurring a substantial increase in travel to the city. By 1910, the Southern Pacific Railroad provided a third of Sacramento's employment.³

As Sacramento matured from a frontier tent encampment to a permanent city, it became clear that the flood of 1850 was not an isolated event. Flooding occurred in 1852, and in 1853, a flood cut the city off from the mining region it served. The winter of 1861 – 1862 was a particularly devastating flood season. Flood waters overtopped levees and houses were swept away through levee breaks. The early floods brought with them discussions of abandoning Sacramento for Suttersville's higher ground. By 1862, however, it was clear that Brannan's decision to build near the embarcadero and speculators' subsequent investments in Sacramento would not be easily abandoned. Sacramento's merchant class had invested so much in local real estate that to switch locations would be economically devastating, so they repeatedly battled floodwaters rather than relocating. Beginning in 1862, Sacramento undertook a series of flood control projects that were considerably more ambitious than initial attempts to build levees. Civic leaders raised streets just east of the Sacramento River, and rechanneled the mouth of the American River. Another flood devastated Sacramento in 1878, prompting creation of the first comprehensive flood control plan for the Sacramento Valley in 1880. In 1956, a dam was completed at Folsom, which has been credited with saving Sacramento from heavy flooding since; it has been improved repeatedly, most recently in 2008.⁴

Extensive irrigation development in the Sacramento Valley began around 1905, shaping the landscape along with the agriculture industry in what was still largely an agricultural area. Public, institutional, and domestic construction in Sacramento boomed after World War I. Mather's reopening and the opening of McClellan Air Base in 1936, followed by the Signal Air Depot in 1942, created new employment opportunities for Depression-weary Sacramentans. While the population of the city had gradually expanded for decades, it began to grow geographically after World War II, annexing surrounding areas. Sacramento tripled in size between 1946 and 1965. Today, Sacramento's population is over 490,000 and the city occupies around 98 square miles.⁵

1400 U Street

The building at 1400 U Street was likely constructed around 1930 to serve as the Italian Christian Church (also called the Pentecostal Church in its early years of use). The Italian Christian Church in the United States emerged from the Italian Pentecostal movement and was founded in Chicago in 1907 before spreading around the country. Reverend Russell P. Palminteri (1901-1970) immigrated from Italy

² Avella, 30 – 32; Eifler, 48 – 49.

³ William L. Willis, *History of Sacramento with Biographical Sketches* (Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1913), 105 – 106, 183; Lewis, 203; Hoover, 147; Orsi, 12 – 17; William Burg, *Sacramento: Then and Now* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 7; "Timeline," Sacramento History Online: Historic Sacramento Photograph and Document Archive, 2001 – 2004, accessed 13 June 2018, https://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources_timeline.html.

⁴ Lewis, 199; "Sacramento Area Flood History," The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, 2008, accessed 13 June 2018, <http://www.safca.org/history.html>; Eifler, 54.

⁵ "Essay: Sacramento Valley Agriculture," Sacramento History Online: Historic Sacramento Photograph and Document Archive, 2001 – 2004, accessed 13 June 2018, https://www.sacramentohistory.org/resources_essay.html; Avella, 90, 104 – 105; "Fire Department: History," City of Sacramento, 2013 – 2017, accessed 13 June 2018, <https://www.cityofsacramento.org/Fire/About/History>; "Visitors: Demographics," City of Sacramento, 2013 – 2017, accessed 13 June 2018, <http://www.cityofsacramento.org/Visitors/Demographics>.

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around 1930 and served as minister for the Italian Christian Church for 35 years, likely encompassing the Church's entire tenure at the U Street building. By 1970 the Church was no longer using the building, and it was sold to a Buddhist organization.⁶

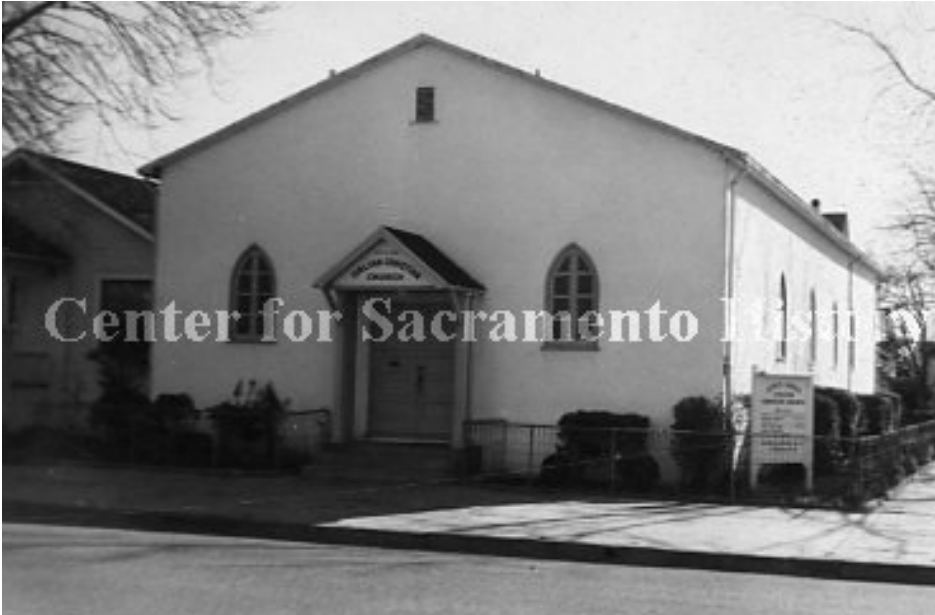


Figure 1: Italian Christian Church, 1951, Frank Christy, *Center for Sacramento History*.



Figure 2: Italian Christian Church, 1951, Frank Christy, *Center for Sacramento History*.

⁶ Sacramento County Assessor; "Our History," The Christian Church of North America, 2022, Washington, accessed 1 April 2022, <https://ccnafamily.org/our-history/>; Sacramento City Directory, 1937; "Rev. Russell P. Palminteri," *Sacramento Bee*, 25 March 1970.

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Northern California Koyasan Temple

In 1920 Toshie Yamamoto, Sakuma Shimada, and Eiju Nakashima founded the Sacramento Daishiko at Yamamoto's Sacramento farmhouse. A Daishiko is an official group of followers of Koyasan Shingon Buddhism, a sect of esoteric Buddhism founded in 804 by Kōbō Daishi that has become one of the major schools of Japanese Buddhism. In 1939, the Sacramento Daishiko built the Rikeiji Temple in West Sacramento and moved there, where they began using the names Rikeiji and Yolo Daishiko. Hatsuno Sunahara founded the Perkins Daishiko (also called the Sunahara Daishiko) in East Sacramento in 1940. The Rikeiji Daishiko and Perkins Daishiko merged to form the Koyasan Buddhist Church in 1970 and acquired the building at 1400 U Street. The new Koyasan Buddhist Church was led by Reverend Eishun Shigetoshi, who served as minister from 1969 to 1976, and president Kenkichi Kurosawa. Taisen Miyata became minister in 1977.⁷



Figure 3: Members of the Northern California Koyasan Buddhist Church in front of church building, April 19, 1979, *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division*.

As the Sacramento Daishikos were growing, Shingon Buddhism grew in Northern California, and a number of other Daishikos were founded around the state. In 1980, a remodel and expansion of the Koyasan Buddhist Church at 1400 U Street was completed, and the location was officially elevated by the Koyasan headquarters in Japan to the Northern California Koyasan Temple, making it the area's headquarters for Koyasan Shingon Buddhism. The Temple was renovated again in 2000.⁸

⁷ "About Us: History," Northern California Koyasan Temple, Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, Sacramento, CA, <https://nckoyasan.org/history/>, accessed March 1, 2022; "Koyasan Shingon Tenchi-ji: Establishing a Daishiko," Rev. Eijun Bill Eidson, Tenchi-ji Temple, 1999, <http://www.koyasan.org/KoyasanNA/tenchiji/daishiko.html>, accessed March 1, 2022; "About Us: Welcome Message," Northern California Koyasan Temple, Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, Sacramento, CA, <https://nckoyasan.org/about-us/>, accessed March 1, 2022; Northern California Koyasan Temple, brochure, c.1980s.

⁸ "About Us: History," Northern California Koyasan Temple, Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, Sacramento, CA, <https://nckoyasan.org/history/>, accessed March 1, 2022; "About Us: Welcome Message," Northern California Koyasan Temple, Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, Sacramento, CA, <https://nckoyasan.org/about-us/>, accessed March 1, 2022.

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Figure 4: Northern California Koyasan Temple, c1980s, D. Tateishi.



Figure 5: Main Shrine Hall, c1980s, D. Tateishi.

Evaluation:

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) require that a significance criterion from A-D or 1-4 (respectively) be met for a resource to be eligible. The Sacramento Register has six criteria based on the NRHP and CRHR criteria.

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Criterion A/1/a.i: The Northern California Koyasan Temple is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The building's use, first as an Italian Christian Church and then as a Japanese Buddhist Temple, is an important record of the ethnic and cultural history of the Richmond Grove Neighborhood, and reflects the cultural patterns of the City of Sacramento's history. It is significantly associated with the history of Northern California's Japanese community, the history of Koyasan Shingon Buddhism in Northern California, and the ethnic history of Sacramento and Richmond Grove. The building's continuous use as a church has meant that it has reflected the neighborhood's ethnic and cultural character since its establishment; its history of transition from an Italian Christian to Japanese Buddhist church conveys Richmond Grove's cultural history. The property is recommended eligible to the NRHP, CRHR, and Sacramento register under Criterion A/1/a.i.

Criterion B/2/a.ii: The property is not associated with the life of persons important to our history. Research did not reveal any significant impacts made on local history by any clergy or congregants of either the Italian Christian Church or the Northern California Koyasan Temple. The property is recommended not eligible to the NRHP, CRHR, or Sacramento register under Criterion B/2/a.ii.

Criterion C/3/a.iii-v: The Northern California Koyasan Temple is not significant for its architecture. The original Italian Christian Church building was an unremarkable example of a neighborhood church building. While the building acquired interesting and distinctive architectural features during its conversion to a Buddhist temple, these changes occurred outside the historic period and have not yet reached sufficient age to merit consideration. For these reasons, the property is not eligible to the NRHP, CRHR or Sacramento register for its architecture.

Criterion D/4/a.vi: In rare instances, buildings themselves can serve as sources of important information about historic construction materials or technologies and be significant under Criterion D/4/a.vi. The Northern California Koyasan Temple is an example of a well-understood type of construction and does not appear to be a principal source of important information in this regard.

Historic integrity is defined as the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during its historic period. There are seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Loss of integrity, if sufficiently great, overwhelms significance, rendering a property ineligible for historic listing. The Northern California Koyasan Temple has not been moved and therefore retains integrity of location. The composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the building have not been altered. The building's integrity of materials and workmanship is evident in the survival of original exterior details. The property retains sufficient significant physical characteristics from its original construction and historic conversion to a Buddhist temple to convey its historic qualities and therefore retains integrity of feeling. Continued use as a religious institution and presence of the physical features that convey its original architectural characteristics allow it to convey integrity of association. Therefore, the building conveys its historic significance through all seven aspects of integrity.

The property is recommended eligible for listing on the NRHP, CRHR, and Sacramento Register and qualifies as a historical resource under CEQA.