

Ser. No. _____
HABS _____ HAER _____ Loc. X _____ SHL No. _____ NR Status 5/SD
UTM: A 10/62724174096511 C _____
B _____ D _____

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Theater Angels Building
2. Historic name: Willey House
3. Street or rural address: 140 Fifth Street
City Gilroy Zip 95020 County Santa Clara
4. Parcel number: 79900723
5. Present Owner: Theater Angels Art Address: P.O. Box 1640
City Gilroy Zip 95020 Ownership is: Public _____ Private X
6. Present Use: Community Center Original use: Residence

DESCRIPTION

- 7a. Architectural style: Folk Victorian/Classic Revival
- 7b. Briefly describe the present *physical appearance* of the site or structure and describe any major alterations from its original condition:

A simple two story front gable structure c. 1859 of rectangular shape. 1890's alterations include a large veranda porch and one story additions on the side and back. Windows are two over two double hung with a 10 pane door leading from the second story onto the porch roof. The fenestration including the front door, is symmetrical in three openings on each floor. The structure is sheathed in weather-board siding with narrow shiplap construction used on the porch balustrade. The style is Pioneer with hints of Greek Revival in the roof shape, flat surface detail, vertical fenestration, and structural massing. The wrap around porch is supported by simple squared pillars of wood. The basic form of the structure is repeated on other sites along 5th Street. The landscaping is exceptional with a wide variety of mature plants, especially the large trees. A more recent addition of a picket fence is keeping in character with the other buildings along 5th Street.



8. Construction date:
Estimated 1859 Factual _____
9. Architect Unknown
10. Builder Unknown
11. Approx. property size (in feet)
Frontage 75 Depth 150
or approx. acreage _____
12. Date(s) of enclosed photograph(s)
Mar. 1986

8652-12

13. Condition: Excellent ___ Good Fair ___ Deteriorated ___ No longer in existence ___
14. Alterations: Addition to rear circa 1895
15. Surroundings: (Check more than one if necessary) Open land ___ Scattered buildings ___ Densely built-up
Residential Industrial ___ Commercial ___ Other: _____
16. Threats to site: None known Private development ___ Zoning ___ Vandalism ___
Public Works project ___ Other: _____
17. Is the structure: On its original site? Moved? ___ Unknown? ___
18. Related features: _____

SIGNIFICANCE

19. Briefly state historical and/or architectural importance (include dates, events, and persons associated with the site.)

James K. Rule was the founder of the Gilroy Christian Church. His home at 140 Fifth Street was probably built at the same time as the church itself, in 1857. Rule's daughter, Eliza Rule Wentz, and her husband, Christian Wentz, inherited the house in 1882 on the death of her father. Judge Howard Willey purchased the house in 1893 and made several additions to it. Judge Willey arrived with his family in Gilroy in 1876, when he was 38 years old. On his arrival in Gilroy, Mr. Willey worked for some years in the general merchandise store of his brother-in-law, H.W. Briggs. He was elected Justice of the Peace of Gilroy Township in 1883. He served as a judge for 36 years, as well as Deputy County Clerk for Santa Clara County and as a special correspondent for the San Jose Mercury. Judge Willey did much to beautify his home town of Gilroy. His love of nature and floriculture led him to support city beautifications. He planted large gardens both at his own home and on plots around the town. He referred to his house as "Floral Home". Judge Willey died at home in April 1919. The house remained in the Willey family until 1973 when it was purchased by the Theatre Angels Art League. It was opened as a cultural center in 1974.

20. Main theme of the historic resource: (If more than one is checked, number in order of importance.)
Architecture 1 Arts & Leisure _____
Economic/Industrial 4 Exploration/Settlement _____
Government 3 Military _____
Religion 2 Social/Education _____

21. Sources (List books, documents, surveys, personal interviews and their dates).

A FIELD GUIDE TO AMERICAN HOUSES,
McAlister
Assesment Rolls
Gilroy Museum Files- Rule, Willey

22. Date form prepared April 1988
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