

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

X New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(See Continuation Sheets, pages B-1 to B-2.)

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

Page Numbers**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

E-1 to E-55

(if more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

F. Associated Property Types

F-1 to F-16

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

G. Geographical Data

G-1 to G-2

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

H-1 to H-3

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

I. Major Bibliographical References

I-1 to I-3

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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B. Associated Historic Contexts

This Multiple Property Documentation Form utilizes a geographic-based approach to understanding the historic contexts of the neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California. According to the National Park Service, a geographic-based approach is appropriate when there is a need to know more about historic properties in a particular area, such as when a Certified Local Government (i.e. the City and County of San Francisco) wishes to survey and inventory the resources within its jurisdiction (i.e. within the Mission District). For geographic-based historic contexts, the following may be addressed: the developmental phases in the area's history; the economic, social, and political forces that affected the area's physical form; and factors that gave the area or community its own distinct character separate from that of like or other settlements.¹

The following table summarizes geographic-based historic contexts for identifying and evaluating historic properties within the residential and commercial neighborhood areas of San Francisco's Mission District. These geographic-based historic contexts, or themes, are also organized according to successive periods (defined generally, not precisely, by year dates), which span history from the late 18th century to the mid-20th century. Each historic context/theme is associated with certain property types that developed during the thematic period, of which examples may qualify as historic resources.

Context/Theme	Geographic Area/Sites (general)	Period
Early History: Ohlone, Spanish, and Mexican	Mission Dolores area	pre-1850
U.S. Expansionism and Pioneer Settlement	Southern Mission (south of 20 th Street)* East and west edges of Inner Mission North (east of Shotwell Street /South Van Ness Avenue/Capp Street; west of Dolores Street)* *These areas were not destroyed by the Earthquake and Fires of 1906.	1850-1880
Streetcar Suburbs of the Gilded Age	Southern Mission (south of 20 th Street)* East and west edges of Inner Mission North (east of Shotwell Street /South Van Ness Avenue/Capp Street; west of Dolores Street)* *These areas were not destroyed by the Earthquake and Fires of 1906.	1880-1906
Post-Earthquake and Fire	Inner Mission North (bounded by Market Street to north, 20 th Street to south, Shotwell Street /South Van Ness Avenue/Capp Street to east, and Dolores Street to west)* *This area was destroyed by the Earthquake and Fires of 1906.	1906-1920
Interwar Period: Modernizing the Mission	In-fill sites Commercial corridors (Mission, Valencia, 16 th and 24 th Streets)	1920-1941
World War II and Postwar Period	"Mission Miracle Mile" commercial corridors (Mission, Valencia, 16 th and 24 th Streets)	1941-1960

¹ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1991; rev. 1999), 11.

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Summary of Significance

The Mission District is the oldest settled part of San Francisco – people have continuously inhabited the area for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years – and its built environment uniquely possesses examples of all of San Francisco's development periods. The Mission was one of the first places settled by early peoples: early Native Americans, early Spanish missionaries, early Mexican ranchers, and early American settlers. Through a succession of cultural regimes and overlays of development, the area of the Mission District has always retained individuality within the larger City. In 1968, San Francisco's first City-adopted survey of historic buildings, *Here Today*, stated: "The Mission is the most self-contained of San Francisco's districts, and outer Mission Street is like the main street of a small city. Traditionally, Mission residents have been particularly conscious of their community... [T]he Mission still seems to be a city within the city of San Francisco."²

The Mission District is located in the eastern part of San Francisco, south of Market Street and downtown. The Mission comprises one of the City's largest residential and commercial districts, a collection of interrelated neighborhoods covering approximately 100 square city blocks (excluding the northeast Mission District, a former lagoon that developed as part of the City's large industrial/commercial base.) The Mission District is also known as the Inner Mission, which is differentiated from the area south of Bernal Heights that is referred to as the Outer Mission. The Inner Mission is further divided into the Inner Mission North (or northern Mission), located generally north of 20th Street, and the Inner Mission South (or southern Mission), located generally south of 20th Street. In addition to this simple division, the Mission District is comprised of various interconnected and overlapping neighborhoods that are distinguished by location, uses, building types, and historical development patterns. These neighborhoods include: the Mission Dolores neighborhood in the Inner Mission North; Horner's Addition, located west of Valencia Street; the Mission-Valencia Streets mixed-use corridor; the central Mission District, located between South Van Ness Avenue and Harrison Street; the eastern Mission District, located east of Harrison Street; the Precita Creek area, located south of 24th Street; and the Bernal Gap area in the southeastern corner of the Mission District.

(See Mission District Historic Neighborhoods Reference Map on Page G-2.)

² Junior League of San Francisco, *Here Today: San Francisco's Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1968), 102.

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I. Summary

The historic properties of the neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California, are significant on the local level under National Register Criterion A/California Register Criterion 1 in the thematic areas of Settlement/Migration, Immigration, Community, Commerce, and Government; and under National Register Criterion C/California Register Criterion 3 in the thematic areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. They include properties that date from significant periods of development spanning more than a hundred years, from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century (as well as a single late 1700s property, the Mission Dolores chapel). Resources dating to the second half of the 19th century include some of San Francisco's relatively rare pioneer-era buildings, as well as buildings that represent "Victorian-era" development. Resources dating to the first half of the 20th century are associated with the City's post-earthquake/fire reconstruction, interwar-period neighborhood development, and modernizing of the retail economy.

Properties may also be found to be significant under National Register Criterion B/California Register Criterion 2 if they are associated with the lives of important persons in history. Generally, evaluation of properties under Criterion B/2 is beyond the scope of this Multiple Property Documentation Form, and must occur through individual property research. However, many properties that might be considered to be significant under Criterion B/2 are also identified as being significant under Criteria A/1 and C/3, and therefore do not require additional study to determine historic status. In some cases, properties determined not eligible under Criteria A/1 and C/3 merit further individual property research that may either discover or disprove significance under Criterion B/2.

Properties of an archeological (sub-surface) nature in the Mission District with potential to yield information important in prehistory or history may also be found to be significant under National Register Criterion D/California Register Criterion 4. However, evaluation of archeological properties under Criterion D/4 is beyond the scope of this Multiple Property Documentation Form, and must occur through other property research that involves sub-surface investigation.

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II. Early History: Ohlone, Spanish, and Mexican, pre-1850

Natural Geography

The Mission District occupies a broad valley in the eastern part of the San Francisco Peninsula. The relatively flat valley floor is bounded on three sides by hilly ranges – Potrero Hill to the east, Bernal Heights to the south, and the San Miguel Range to the west – that protect the area from the region's ubiquitous winds and fog. The climate of the Mission is warmer and sunnier than in other parts of San Francisco, which might be fog-bound less than a mile away. In recent geological times, before modern human activity filled in the coastline, a cove of San Francisco Bay extended into the area from the northeast. The cove, Mission Bay, was linked to navigable inland creeks and marshes that penetrated the wide valley, fed by runoff from the nearby hills.

These historic natural conditions for the area – pleasant climate, flat land, sources of fresh water, and waterfront access – played a role in early habitation of the area by Ohlone and later by Europeans and Americans. As well, the Mission valley served as a primary thoroughfare for historic peoples travelling by land, since it was the most convenient way to access the northern tip of the Peninsula (including downtown San Francisco and the Golden Gate) from points south (such as San Jose) before the filling of marshy coastlines and leveling of towering dunes allowed for establishment of other routes in the late 19th century.

Ohlone

People have lived around the San Francisco Bay for thousands of years, perhaps involving several migrations and successions of peoples from around the Pacific Rim. By the late 1700s, dozens of villages ringed the shorelines of San Francisco Bay, and approximately 10,000 people comprising about forty different tribelets lived in the area from San Francisco to Monterey. They spoke similar, but distinct languages that are categorized today as belonging to the Ohlone family, one of several dozen geographically-based linguistic families that characterized California's first peoples. The northern part of the San Francisco Peninsula was located within the Yelamu tribal territory. The Yelamu lived in seasonal villages in and around the sunny, stream-fed valley of today's Mission District.

The Ohlone constructed housing and canoes of reeds and thatch. They caught fish and shellfish in the bay, hunted game in the hills and water fowl in the marshes, and gathered roots, berries, nuts, and greens. Ohlone culture included song, dance, ritual, dress, body art, and weaving; they are not known to have built permanent structures or created written records (although baptism and death records exist from the Spanish mission period). In *The Ohlone Way*, Margolin drew from many available sources of information, each a partial "window" into Ohlone life-ways, and provided this reconstruction:

Before the coming of the Europeans, for hundreds – perhaps thousands – of years, the Ohlones rose before dawn, stood in front of their tule houses, and facing the east shouted words of greeting and encouragement to the rising sun. The men were either naked or dressed in short capes of woven rabbit skin. Their noses were pierced. The women, their faces tattooed, wore skirts made of tule reeds and deer skin. On especially cold mornings the men daubed themselves with mud to keep warm.¹

However, a century after European contact, peoples such as the Ohlone were scarce in California. They were missionized by the Spanish, displaced by the Mexicans, and driven out by the Americans. "Entire cultures were

¹ Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), 4.

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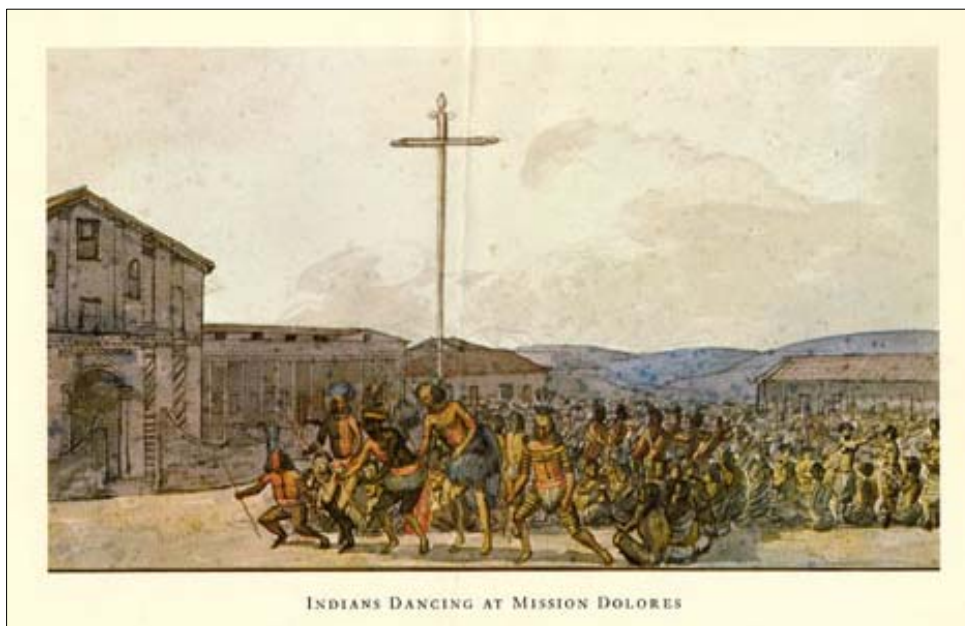
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destroyed in a remarkably short time...In the Bay Area the decline of the Indian population was even more drastic than in California as a whole."² California's "prehistory" was overwhelmed so quickly and entirely by European-descended settlers that U.S. perspectives "have shied away from awarding Indians the status of full participants" in history. According to Mann's *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*: "This criticism applies primarily to historians of North America. South of the Rio Grande, the indigenous influence on colonial and post-colonial society has been celebrated for decades...as would be expected in a place where three-quarters of the population claims some Indian descent."³

Spanish Mission

In 1776, Spain established its northernmost California colony on the San Francisco Peninsula. While a small garrison of soldiers set up a military presidio on the Golden Gate, and settlers scattered about the hills and valleys, Fathers Francisco Palou and Pedro Cambon established Mission San Francisco de Asis (more commonly referred to as Mission Dolores) near a stream and lagoon system at the northern end of the valley that became the Mission District. Within a few years, the Catholic priests had induced over a thousand native "neophytes" to relocate from their villages to the mission settlement, where they were baptized and coerced into farming and ranching. In *The Ohlone Way*, Margolin characterized the Franciscan priests at Mission Dolores as "Utopian visionaries who had come to the New World to set up the perfect Christian community of which the Indians were to be the beneficiaries."⁴

Mission Dolores grew during the 1780s into a small complex of adobe and kilned tile structures around a quadrangle that included dwellings and living quarters, workshops, mills, a granary, storehouses, and washhouses. Low walls delineated pasture lands in and around the surrounding valley. The cornerstone for the all-important permanent chapel was laid in 1782, and it was completed in 1791. Father Junipero Serra visited during its construction. Today, the Mission Dolores chapel stands as a testament to Spanish colonial architecture and neophyte craftsmanship.



"Indians Dancing at Mission Dolores" by Louis Choris (not dated). Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

² Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California: 1985), 30-31.

³ Charles C. Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Vintage Books, 2006), 380-381.

⁴ Malcolm Margolin, *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco-Monterey Bay Area* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1978), 159.

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However, the Dolores settlement was unable to produce valuable agricultural exports for Spain, as did other Bay Area missions that were located in kinder climates and on better soils. The Dolores neophyte population was decimated by diseases, more so even than at other missions and its desertion rate was also high. After reaching its zenith in the 1790s, Mission Dolores declined through the early 1800s, until the new nation of Mexico dissolved it in 1834. At that time, most of the former neophytes departed; some resettled around southern San Francisco Bay, others retreated to California's hilly hinterlands, and a few stayed in private employ as ranch hands or servants.

The California missions ultimately failed to prepare and integrate natives for citizenship within ten years, as proposed by the original mission plan, although neophyte laborers and craftsman contributed much to the Spanish colonial economy. The mission system was the first step in disruptive European contact for California's first peoples, an uneven exchange of cultural values, economic systems, and diseases that intensified during the Mexican and U.S. periods. During the half-century of missionization, "damage to Ohlone life was irrevocable. Basketmaking and other basic crafts were neglected and lost. As different tribelets and cultures mixed together, rituals and dances became muddled, and native languages were dropped in favor of the more generally understood Spanish or in some cases the language of the dominant Indian group at the mission."⁵

Mexican Pueblo

Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, ending the European nation's grasp on California lands and opening it up for foreign trade. Commercial pueblos developed, such as the harbor village of Yerba Buena on a cove of San Francisco Bay in the mid-1830s. The Mexican government also ordered the disbanding of the missions, including Mission Dolores in 1834, and facilitated the commercialization of former mission lands into cattle ranches. The result was a booming hide and tallow industry in the Bay Area, as described in Scott's *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective*:

Almost from the beginning of the Mexican period, rancho and mission became linked with an economic system that stretched all the way around the Horn to soap, candle, and shoe factories in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and other Atlantic seaboard states. Republican Mexico reversed the centuries-old monopolistic trade policies of Spain and opened California ports to ships of all nations. Through the Golden Gate sailed Yankee vessels seeking chiefly hides for the New England leather industry.⁶

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, Mexico divided most of the San Francisco Peninsula, including the hills around the Mission valley, into vast rancho tracts that were granted to Mexican citizens. Other areas, such as the Bay waterfront and most of the Mission valley flatlands, were designated as pueblo lands for common use by citizens. The parish church that was formerly Mission Dolores retained a small tract of land that contained the old chapel and mission complex. Despite its reduction in status, the mission chapel remained at the social and geographic center of Hispanic society, and a ranching village of *Californios* (California-based Mexicans) coalesced around it and along the wagon-roads that met in front of the chapel. The oldest road, El Camino Real, ran south all the way to San Jose; and the newer path, Mission Road, cut east and north to the waterfront and the port of Yerba Buena, where cattle were driven from all over the region.

The *Californios* ranching village in the northern Mission valley, which consisted of about forty adobes and a few wood-framed structures, was home to several prominent Mexican citizens and landowners. These included: Francisco Guerrero, an *alcalde* (mayor) and *juez del campo* (justice of the peace) who owned a tract in the village;

⁵ *Ibid*, 164.

⁶ Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 18.

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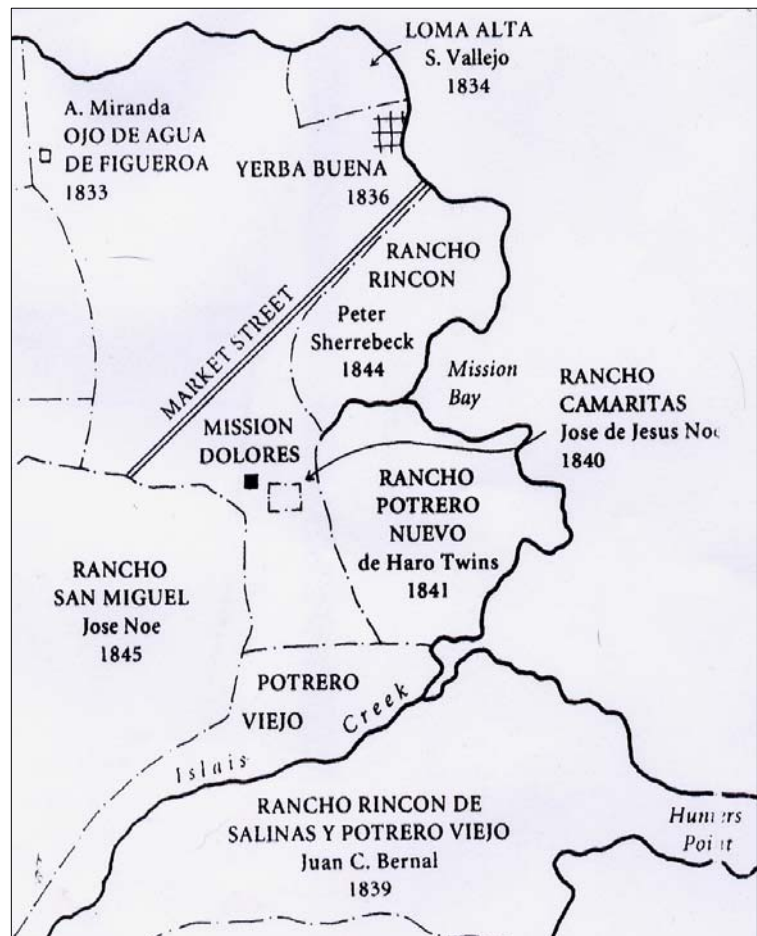
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Francisco de Haro, also an *alcalde*; Jose Bernal, the former mission majordomo; and Candelario Valencia, a presidio soldier. Alexander and Heig's *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* described the *Californios* village and Yerba Buena as separate communities:

For a brief time it was thought that the mission pueblo would outdistance its Yerba Buena neighbor. Efforts to incorporate the Dolores Pueblo failed, however, and it was annexed by San Francisco in 1850. Although they were eventually united, there were distinct early differences between Yerba Buena and the Dolores Pueblo. Yerba Buena was essentially an Anglo town, given over entirely to commerce, while the Dolores Pueblo was predominantly an Hispanic social center. With the old mission church as its nucleus, the pueblo attracted ranchers from all over Northern California. They came to attend baptisms and weddings, or to enjoy family gatherings.⁷

Even the U.S. Navy's capture of San Francisco Bay in 1846, the renaming of Yerba Buena to San Francisco in 1847, and Mexico's ceding of California to the U.S. in 1848 did not fundamentally change the economic and cultural position of the Dolores "pueblo." The *Californios* were supposedly assured of their land ownership rights by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. However, during and after the Gold Rush that began in 1849, the Mission Dolores area was ultimately engulfed and taken over by an influx of "Yankee" settlers and speculators. "Before the close of the Sixties nearly all trace of the Spanish occupation had been effaced. There was still an isolated adobe, but the low walled houses with their red curbed tiles which a few years earlier had marked the Mission Dolores as a place to visit had practically disappeared."⁸



Map of approximate boundaries of Mexican land grants located within San Francisco. Source: James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 36.

⁷ James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 31.

⁸ John P. Young, *San Francisco: A History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis* (The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: San Francisco, 1912), 412, <http://www.archive.org/stream/sanfranciscohist01young/page/n11/mode/2up> (accessed October 13, 2010).

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III. U.S. Expansionism and Pioneer Settlement, 1850-1880

Bonanza Age

The period of U.S. pioneer settlement in San Francisco's Mission District began at the Gold Rush and continued through approximately the first three decades of the City of San Francisco's (and State of California's) existence. During this "bonanza age" of incredible growth and expansion, San Francisco was transformed from a harbor village of a few hundred maritimers, merchants, and craftsmen, into a crowded entrepot teeming with hundreds of thousands of immigrants. The adolescent period of City history was described in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*:

San Francisco, the primary port city and gateway to the mining regions of California, grew rapidly in the 1850s. New mining strikes in landlocked Nevada, along with an expanding local agricultural base, assured San Francisco of a strong economy. By 1860, with a population of 234,000, it dwarfed its nearest rivals and was beginning to establish hegemony over the entire Far West. San Francisco became a great commercial emporium, almost a city-state, commanding lumber and agricultural products from the Pacific Northwest, gold and silver from the interior, and cattle from southern California...By 1880, San Francisco and its surrounding region was the most urbanized area in the West and contained a population of almost 360,000, greater than all other cities in the Far West combined or any single western state outside of California.⁹

The growth of the city during its first three decades prompted agricultural, recreational, and ultimately residential development of the Mission District and expansion of U.S. culture and economics into the area. The period saw the foundations of urbanization laid in the Mission District, located at the periphery of the waterfront-based "instant city." During this time, the Mission District's former village sites and hunting and gathering lands of Native Americans, and the ex-pasture lands of the Spanish mission and the Mexican ranchos, were bought, sold, squatted, cultivated, platted, graded, filled, and built upon by the first generation of intrepid San Franciscans.

Settlers, Squatters, and Swindlers

During the 1850s, the broad valley that became known as the Mission District filled with low-intensity uses such as farms and pastures, scattered homesteads, resorts such as the Willows (located at the former Mission Dolores lagoon), and two racetracks. While most newcomers settled closer to the commercial harbor, where transportation, employment, and shipping were focused, and where the "instant city" came into being, others sought what they saw as open country to the west and south, including the Mission valley and nearby hills. "The ink on this treaty [of Guadalupe Hidalgo] was hardly dry when California was inundated by thousands of Yankee migrants who, under the banner of Manifest Destiny, began helping themselves to the choicest pieces of land. Squatters arrived and settled on land that looked empty; boundaries of Mexican land grants were approximate at best."¹⁰

Clouded and contested land titles resulted. The distinction between settlers and squatters was vague, due in part to the City's Van Ness Ordinances of 1855-56 and "Outside Lands" ordinances of 1866, which granted titles based

⁹ Jeanne Kay Guelke and David Hornbeck, "The Far West, 1840-1920," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 273-274.

¹⁰ James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 38.

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Mission District as shown on the United States Coast Survey map of 1859.

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on physical possession of lands (i.e. squatting). Also, a complex, lengthy, and expensive legal process to confirm Mexican-era titles guaranteed that *Californios* and Yankees alike “suffered mightily at the hands of squatters, speculators, swindlers, and lawyers...The time-consuming process favored wealthy individuals and companies with the resources and legal talent necessary for the long series of procedures and appeals.”¹¹ Intensive development of the Mission District was hampered by private land title disputes as well as by the City’s uncertain title to pueblo lands: the 1851 Charter established the City’s southern boundary at about 20th Street, which encompassed only the northern half of the Mission valley within San Francisco, but the City claimed much more. Scott’s *The San Francisco Bay Area* described the chain of events that finally led to resolution:

In 1852 the City of San Francisco, as successor to the Pueblo of Yerba Buena, had filed a claim before the United States Land Commission for four square leagues of land, to which every pueblo was entitled under the laws of Spain and Mexico...In the meantime, reasonably certain that its title to a good part of the lands within its 1851 charter limits would be upheld, the city sought to come to terms with the squatters...the city enacted an ordinance giving title to those who had been in actual possession of lands [squatters]...The squatter warfare continued [in the Outside Lands], and it was not until the United States District Court, then the Circuit Court, and finally the Congress of the United States acted on the city’s claim to pueblo lands that the thorny issue of land titles was settled, in the 1860’s.”¹²

Treats, Center, and Horner

Among the Gold Rush-era pioneer settlers, several proved very influential to the early physical development of the Mission District and its eventual shift to urbanization (though not all of them realized personal success in doing so). These exemplars of the U.S. pioneer era were: George Treat (1819-1907) and his brother John Treat (?-circa 1880); John Center (c.1816-1908); and John Meirs Horner (1821-1907).

George and John Treat, U.S. army veterans from Maine, landed in San Francisco in 1849 and settled in a remote corner of the southeastern Mission valley, where they lived for many years. As early as 1850 (according to his testimony at a land title appeal hearing in 1865), George Treat built a fence along an old stone wall originally erected by mission neophytes, and thus controlled the Potrero Nuevo tract, including much of the eastern portion of today’s Mission District and Potrero Hill. The Treat brothers grew commercial foodstuffs, raised cattle, and speculated in real estate; they owned very large tracts of land in the Mission District and in the Outside Lands (the Inner Sunset District). George Treat, an ardent Abolitionist and member of the First Committee of Vigilance of San Francisco, also engaged in Western mining enterprises and became a powerful local businessman. A racing aficionado, he built and ran the Pioneer Race Track (the first in San Francisco) in the southern Mission valley in the 1850s. At the end of the decade, George Treat sold the racetrack for residential development, and he likely engineered the passage of the San Francisco-San Jose Railroad through the land. His brother, farmer John Treat, apparently lived in the house that stands today at 1266-1268 Hampshire Street between 24th and 25th Streets in the southeastern Mission from at least the late 1860s (and possibly as early as the 1850s) until the late 19th century.

John Center, “father of the Mission” and “one of the most popular of all the pioneer band,” emigrated with his nephew George from Scotland to San Francisco in 1849. By 1850, John Center was listed in the City Directory as a gardener located at “cor Centre [16th] and Folsom [Streets]” in the Inner Mission North, where he resided for more than a half-century. Center made a small fortune selling Gold Rush-era produce. According to his obituary:

¹¹ Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California: 1985), 98.

¹² Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 43.

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"From that time till the day of his death, he pinned his faith in the Mission district, buying land there at every opportunity. So widespread were his real estate dealings that today there is scarcely an abstract of a lot in the Mission which does not bear his name." By the early 1860s, John Center's occupation was "real estate," and he backed the construction of the San Francisco-San Jose Railroad through the Mission in 1863-64. Center became a full-fledged, late 19th-century capitalist, and his John Center Company influenced development of the Mission District into the 20th century. John Center, "oldest member of the Scotch clans in San Francisco," lived and died in his home (no longer extant) at 2828 16th (formerly Centre) Street, between Shotwell and Folsom.

John Meirs Horner of New Jersey arrived in Yerba Buena in 1846 with a Mormon group. The enterprising Horner quickly became one of California's premier agriculturists, despite being swindled into buying the same land four times and then losing much of it to squatters (according to his own account). His land speculation activities also led him to be a founder of Union City. In 1854, Horner purchased a portion of the Rancho San Miguel, a confirmed title, in the western Mission District, with speculative intent. Horner platted his lands as blocks and lots, named his new streets based on personal and religious influences, and advertised residential property for sale in Horner's Addition. However, Horner's speculation was premature; few of his lots sold, due to hilly terrain, poor access, and economic downturns. Horner lost his entire fortune in the panic of 1857 and was forced to liquidate his land holdings. Horner then retired to Hawaii, while Horner's Addition (including many of his original street names) remained platted and labeled on City Assessor maps, awaiting later development.

Urban Foundations

In 1866, the City's claim to pueblo lands was confirmed and its jurisdictional boundary was finalized far south of the Mission District. The Mission's street grid, adopted by earlier ordinances, became effective. The City also proceeded to confirm hundreds of private land claims to settlers, squatters, and real-estate capitalists (including several claims to John Center) throughout the wide valley in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Consequently, by the end of the decade, the crazy-quilt pattern of farms and resorts was replaced by an urban blueprint of streets, blocks, and lots on the broad valley floor. "Instead of the Mission being a single street with amply spaced houses, in the rear of which cattle grazed in meadows, it had become an indeterminate sort of place practically connected with the more densely inhabited part of the city. There was still plenty of meadowland, but houses were being erected on many streets which were rapidly taking on the shape of



Mission District as shown on map of land ownership in San Francisco from 1870.

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thoroughfares.”¹³

Also at that time, private companies installed omnibus and horse-drawn streetcar lines along several long north-south streets, newly extended and graded, that ran from the downtown waterfront area and into the Mission valley. Lines on (east to west) Folsom, Howard, Mission, and Valencia Streets, equally spaced two blocks apart with intervening parallel streets, formed a transit-rich environment for residential speculation and commercial enterprise in the northern Mission (the Inner Mission North) and in the central portion of the wider southern Mission District.

Meanwhile, homestead associations, such as those that purchased land in Horner's Addition and the Treat Tract, facilitated the conversion of land into individually owned residential lots. Homestead associations were popular in San Francisco in the 1860s as a way for persons of modest means to pool their money and purchase large tracts of land to be subdivided, and for early speculators to acquire groups of lots and even entire blocks for later development. In *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*, Moudon described how homestead associations influenced the building of early San Francisco:

In the 1860s more than 170 homestead associations arose as mediators between the land rich and the population. These corporations played a significant role in making San Francisco a city of small homes. The associations' organizers bought land in large tracts and often carried the financing while recruiting membership. Members paid...until the appropriate amount was accumulated for the members to acquire title to a small lot. Then each member would build his own house.¹⁴

The City's first such organization, the San Francisco Homestead Association, was active in acquiring lands owned by Mission pioneers. The Association acquired George Treat's Pioneer Race Course (approximately twelve city blocks) in the southern Mission District for \$500 an acre in 1859; ten years later, the land was worth \$20,000 an acre.¹⁵ In 1864, the Association purchased another large tract in Horner's Addition in the Inner Mission North.

Early Homes and Neighborhoods

By the late 1860s and early 1870s, home construction was lucrative in the Mission District. Most residential development occurred around the horse-drawn omnibus and streetcar thoroughfares that ran through the Inner Mission North and the central-southern Mission District. The *Real Estate Circular* of February, 1868, proclaimed (without mentioning transit improvements):

An active demand has been noticeable for lots lying within the boundary of 18th, 26th, Valencia, and Castro Streets [Horner's Addition]. This locality is occupied by rolling hills and table land, and heretofore has not been in favor with purchasers...But the perfect nature of its title, the fine view which is obtained from most of the land, and the good drainage which it will have, have lately operated favorably in elevating its prices.

¹³ John P. Young, *San Francisco: A History of the Pacific Coast Metropolis* (The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company: San Francisco, 1912), 412, <http://www.archive.org/stream/sanfranciscohist01youn#page/n11/mode/2up> (accessed October 13, 2010).

¹⁴ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 41.

¹⁵ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 9-10.

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Mission District as shown on the United States Coast Survey map of 1869.

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In 1872, the *Circular* reported further on the area located directly in the heart of the Mission valley, and inclusive of all four major transit lines: "Between Folsom and Guerrero, Eighteenth and Twenty-third, [there are] now about 300 first and second class residences. Many of the former are not surpassed by any in the City." During the 1870s, the *Real Estate Circular* advocated replacement of the horse-drawn streetcars and transit expansion in order to ensure continued residential development.

Construction of single-family dwellings prevailed during the pioneer era. Variations in sizes, styles, and lot layouts reflected a pattern of individualized development, as landowners built according to their own means and needs. Some early dwellings were pre-fabricated houses shipped "around the horn" from the eastern U.S.; some were moved from elsewhere in San Francisco (including the Mission District); and others were ordered from local mills and assembled on site. "From the early 1860s on, building activity was essentially independent of the East Coast. By the 1870s, the originally rather simple constructions were evolving into more sizable buildings...The new structures emerged as products of the local building industry, which continued to use the versatile wood construction with an ever-increasing sophistication."¹⁶

The earliest pioneer residences in the Mission were small, simple, and utilitarian: cottages and farmhouses, with square footprints and gable roofs (with additions, cross-gable), designed in folk-vernacular versions of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and early Italianate-style. The addition of "false-front" façades became popular as a way to disguise traditional gable boxes. "At the end of the 1860s, styles began to change from simple flat façades with a gable roof or concealing cornices to elaborately decorated structures. Bay windows were also used extensively, and more glass and gingerbread were inserted into the façades."¹⁷ Even true Italianate-style "villa" houses and mansions were built, rambling and fully rendered at all elevations. Residential lots in the Mission, particularly larger plots, commonly included outbuildings and structures such as wagon-houses, fuel sheds, wells, tank-houses, barns, stables, and livestock pens.



The Willows resort near Valencia and 18th Streets, 1864. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.



The Mission District apparently near Market Street, 1864. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

In addition to development of single lots, and sometimes two or three lots, by individual landowners, some speculative builders obtained larger tracts, built regular rows of "spec" homes with similar plans and finishes, and sold the finished products. Early row-houses, including attached versions where dwellings shared walls as well as detached versions separated by side yards, followed the popular Italianate-style "town-house" model that

¹⁶ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 42.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 42.

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emphasized vertical front façades with heavy cornices. An early speculative builder, The Real Estate Associates constructed over a hundred houses in the Inner Mission North, filling out several blocks that were eventually bisected by the 1906 firestorm. According to Waldorn and Woodbridge's *Victoria's Legacy*:

Many City homes of the 1870s were the products of The Real Estate Associates (TREA), a development company that built more than one thousand houses before declaring bankruptcy in 1881. An enormous operation for the time, TREA was San Francisco's first major tract builder. According to their claims, from 1870 to 1875 they had produced "more detached homes than any other person or company in the United States in a similar time span."¹⁸

Commerce also developed along established and emerging transportation routes of the Mission District. The earliest commercial strips, the Mission Road (Mission Street) and Centre (16th) Street, which conveyed travelers between downtown and Mission Dolores, featured rowdy, Gold Rush-era resorts and roadhouses. However, as the area's residential character and population grew in the 1860s and 1870s, the commercial base shifted to neighborhood shops, restaurant/saloons, personal services, mechanics, small manufacturers, and the like. In addition to the thoroughfares of Mission and 16th Streets, which carried horse-drawn streetcars, commerce also developed on Valencia Street, which featured a steam-powered railroad. In the southern Mission District, 24th Street emerged as the southernmost route across the valley, providing important east-west access, and it too became a commercial thoroughfare. Located far from downtown shopping districts, the semi-independent pioneer villages of the valley relied on the neighborhood commercial corridors and corner establishments on a daily basis.

Pioneer merchants typically constructed utilitarian, boxy single-story shops and stores with Western "false-front" façades bereft of ornament save perhaps a cornice. Behind the commercial spaces, dwelling units were often built for proprietors or boarders. Multiple-story mixed-use commercial buildings, with merchant and/or boarder housing located in upper stories, were generally more substantial, more ornate, and conformed to residential architectural patterns. Commercial and mixed-use buildings that housed skilled tradesmen, mechanics, and small industries – such as carpenters, blacksmiths, plumbers, dairies, and breweries – included wagon entrances.

During the 1870s, pioneer settlement grew from the heart of the valley toward its southern and eastern edges, and the majority of platted blocks contained one or more buildings by the end of the decade. Also during this time, private property owners provided most of the capital to grade the majority of the Mission District's streets as far south as 24th Street. Still, settlement was uneven, the overall population was sparsely distributed, and many blocks at the valley's periphery, particularly in the far eastern and southern fringes, remained vacant or filled with railroad yards, storage yards, or uses such as tanneries. Also, little or no urban services (such as water, sewers, electricity, or sidewalks) existed in the outlying Mission District. The Mission's semi-rural, low-density pattern of pioneer settlement lingered through the latter 1870s, during which time more extensive urban development was hampered by an economic recession that affected the nation as well as San Francisco.

Social and Cultural Enclaves

San Francisco, the major commercial port of the Pacific and gateway to California, attracted newcomers of all origins and backgrounds. In 1860, at the close of the Gold Rush, half of the city's population was foreign-born; ten years later, foreign-born still comprised nearly half, while those who were a generation or less removed from immigrant stock comprised four-fifths. "In addition to the Chinese, Latin American, and Australian immigrants from around the Pacific rim, Europeans also entered San Francisco in force... The crop failures of 1846 and the

¹⁸ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 13.

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Revolution of 1848 caused many Germans to emigrate to California. The potato famine of the late 1840s in Ireland sparked a massive diaspora from the Emerald Isle..."¹⁹ Consequently, San Francisco's neighborhoods formed as enclaves for diverse ethnic and cultural communities.

Two outlying areas, the Mission District and the Western Addition, developed in parallel as residential suburbs at the outskirts of the city with distinctly different social characteristics. The Western Addition, located north of Market Street and directly accessible from the financial district and downtown shopping district, was "unquestionably middle-class, often upper middle-class, based on family units and home ownership, with family heads often merchants and professionals." The Mission District, on the other hand, located adjacent to the industrial and low-rent residential South-of-Market district, was the province of upwardly mobile working classes, "an area of family units and home ownership, with family heads often skilled workers or small-scale entrepreneurs."²⁰

The differing social characters of these areas also related to differing cultural compositions: in 1880, about half of the Mission District population was Irish-American, while only one or two in ten persons living north of Market Street was Irish. "As San Francisco expanded in the late 1800s, the Irish and other European immigrants tended to move away from the waterfront and settle the burgeoning working-class neighborhoods in and around the Mission District." Irish and German working-class populations comprised the Mission District's largest sector. Godfrey's *Neighborhoods in Transition* described the relative positions of these European ethnic groups in early San Francisco:

The Irish entered near the bottom of the social pyramid, and their gradual ascent served as something of a model for other immigrant groups. Initially, Irish men often worked as laborers and in the construction trades, while the women frequently were domestic servants... In addition to being the city's largest nineteenth-century ethnic group, the Irish were clearly the mostly highly politicized as well... About equal to the Irish in numbers during the late 1800s were San Franciscans of German immigrant stock... The Germans were also inclined to specialize in certain working-class professions: San Francisco's brewery workers, for example, are said to have been mainly German. Like the Irish, Germans tended to settle in working-class neighborhoods of the city.²¹

Among cultural institutions, churches were the most important in providing immigrant communities with social cohesion and continuity. Establishment of churches in the Mission District during the U.S. pioneer era was an early indication of the nature and extent of the area's cultural communities, as explained by Godfrey:

The founding of local churches during this period reflected the mixed social and ethnic character of the neighborhood... Episcopal churches [such as] St. John's (1857)... catered to the Anglo-Saxon middle and upper classes. German and Scandinavian Lutheran settlers set up the first foreign-language churches. The Irish came to dominate the area's Catholic parish churches: Mission Dolores, reactivated as a parish church in the 1850s; [and] St. Peter's, founded on 24th and Florida Streets in 1867...²²

¹⁹ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 60.

²⁰ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 58.

²¹ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 73, 77-79.

²² *Ibid*, 145.

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The founding of St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church by the Irish occurred in the southeastern Mission District, far from the established Inner Mission North neighborhood and the burgeoning middle-class central Mission transit corridors. St. Peter's anchored the growth of the Irish community at the far end of the valley.

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IV. Streetcar Suburbs of the Gilded Age, 1880-1906

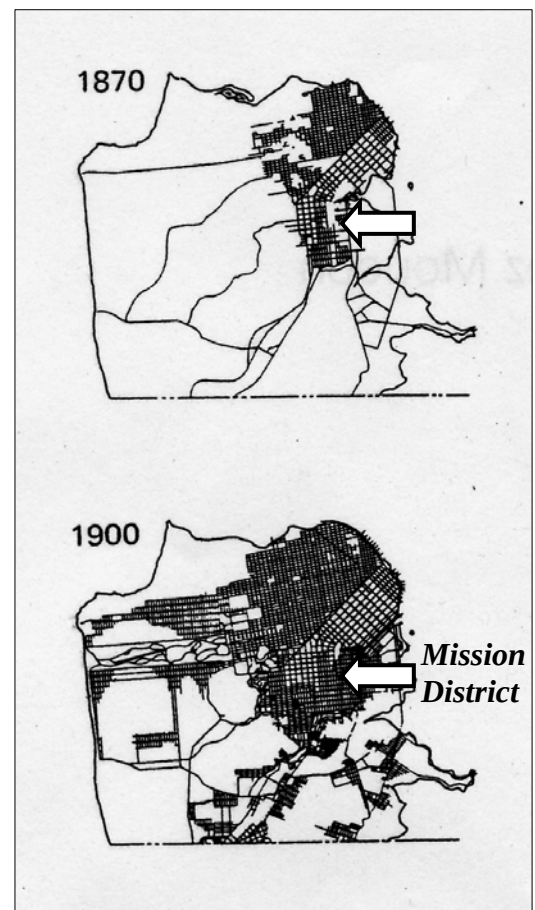
Gilded Age

The transformation of the “instant city,” which in many ways resembled an overgrown frontier town, into a true 19th-century metropolis occurred during approximately the last two decades of the century. During that time, San Francisco’s economy, infrastructure, and demographics came to more closely resemble those of older, established cities located in the eastern U.S. As the nation gradually recovered from the economic panic of 1873, a renewed influx of capital investment, professional classes, labor (both skilled and unskilled), and women and families to San Francisco diversified the city from a regional shipping and manufacturing entrepot into an industrial, financial, and retail center of nationwide importance. In this way, San Francisco joined the league of “Gilded Age” cities of the late 19th century, whose self-generating economic engines were based on modern industry, mass labor, and middle-class consumption.

In *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906*, Berglund explained the complex changes in the physical and cultural geographies of San Francisco during the period:

Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, San Francisco continued to maintain some of the ‘instant city’ traits of the gold rush years as well as the characteristics of the quintessential ‘walking city’ – fairly compact in size, easily navigable on foot, with neighborhoods that combined workplaces and residences, in which its diverse inhabitants had regular, personal, face-to-face encounters. But the city was also in the midst of a transformation into an industrial metropolis – the opposite of a walking city in terms of size, complexity, and social geographies...From the 1880s through 1906 – the year of the earthquake and fire that devastated the city – these economic and demographic trends, hand-in-hand with patterns of increasing spatial and social segregation, continued and developed. Despite cyclic economic highs and lows, manufacturing and commercial enterprises flourished and the city advanced to rank ninth in the nation in terms of both population and industrial output...San Franciscans responded to the increase in the density of settlement that followed population growth by doubling the city’s inhabited area in the 1880s.²³

This process brought the Mission District, an area of patchy and uneven development, entirely into the urban realm. The immigration of professionals, merchants, and working classes to San Francisco’s suburban areas, in conjunction with expanded transit and urban services, spurred the build-out of the Mission District.



Growth of the developed area of San Francisco from 1870 to 1900. Source: Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 24.

²³ Barbara Berglund, *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906* (Topeka: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 12-13.

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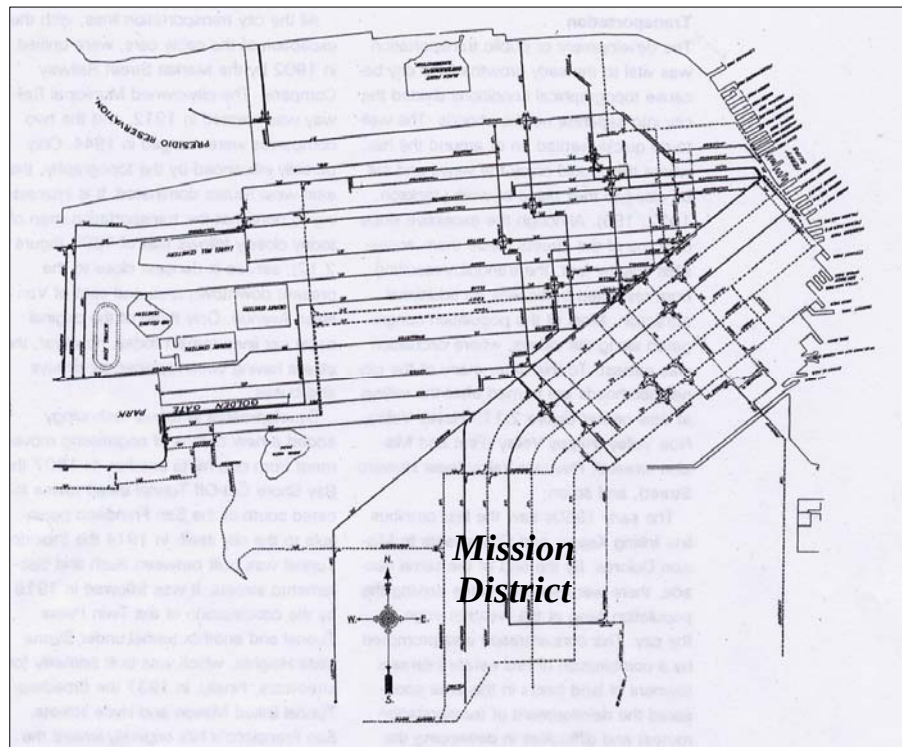
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"The 1880s and 1890s were the definitive decades for house construction, with more than a hundred thousand people moving to the city."²⁴ As occurred in greater San Francisco, the Mission District came to more fully embody aspects of the late 19th-century "Gilded Age": defined social geographies, industrialized infrastructure, and greater attention to orderly, attractive appearances. Yet even with increased connection to, and interaction with, the rest of the city, the Mission's individual identity within the metropolis remained pronounced. "Here in the sheltered mission valley which the padres had chosen as the only habitable spot on the San Francisco peninsula was a world that was more cosmopolitan than any other part of the city."²⁵

Transit for the Masses

Transit expansions and improvements, paid for by commercial operators, played a primary role in the build-out of the Mission District at the end of the 19th century, just as the earlier installation of omnibuses and horse-drawn streetcars facilitated pioneer-era development in the Inner Mission North and the central Mission District. "The gradual extension of the living and working environment of San Francisco south and west into the Mission District and the Western Addition came with, and depended on, the construction of a network of transportation lines that rapidly connected the new areas with the central business district and the city to the suburbs."²⁶ This citywide transit system took shape as new technologies such as cable cars and electrified lines opened up new lands for development, prompting speculation and building activity.

In the outer edges of the Mission valley, where previous development was sparse and population thin, new transit lines provided access to and from the City's major working-class employment centers. A cable car line that ran on 24th and Howard Streets described a wide loop around the southern part of the City, and connected the central and south Mission areas to the industrial waterfront. Electric streetcar lines on Harrison and Bryant Streets ran directly between the eastern Mission and the South-of-Market, a huge area of industries, manufacturing, and commercial plants. On Guerrero Street, in the hilly western edge of the Mission District, the San Mateo Interurban electric streetcar line was installed in 1891. By the mid-1890s, all of the Mission's older



Map of streetcar lines in San Francisco, circa 1895. Source: Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 24.

²⁴ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 41.

²⁵ James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 313.

²⁶ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 30.

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omnibuses and horse-drawn streetcar lines (with the exception of the Potrero Avenue line) were replaced with electric streetcar lines and cable car lines, which greatly improved efficiency. The transit network blanketed the wide valley floor of the working-class Mission District, with all lines running and terminating south of Market Street (while north of Market Street the transit lines that served the upper middle-class Western Addition all connected directly to downtown).

Homebuilders, Big and Small

The late 19th century witnessed renewed building activity in San Francisco, as the population surged and newcomers and established citizens alike increasingly sought to live further from the crowded downtown and South-of-Market areas. "The mid-1880s were boom years for San Francisco; construction started on at least four new buildings each working day. More cable car lines were extended to outlying neighborhoods, creating a flurry of land sales and auctions." The city fanned outward along new transit lines that ran through the Mission District as well as to entirely new outlying neighborhoods to the west and south. The City's building industry grew tremendously to meet the demand for housing. "In the 1880s and 1890s, the two major decades of home construction of the century, more than fifteen hundred individuals were building, moving and remodeling houses in San Francisco!"²⁷

In *Victoria's Legacy*, Waldorn and Woodbridge identified three general groups of late 19th-century homebuilders, in order of importance: contractors; architects; and owner-builders. They ranked contractors, or commercial builders, as most influential based on their demonstrated abilities to mass produce quality products:

While the architectural profession tends to receive the credit for home designs, contractors were actually the most important force in shaping Victorian San Francisco. More than seven hundred were building throughout the City, constructing some individual homes, but most often producing clusters of two or more alike... Contractors were the major builders of the 'suburbs,' as the outlying neighborhoods of the City were then known.²⁸



Mission and 19th Streets, 1886. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.



Howard Street (South Van Ness Avenue), 1886. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

²⁷ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 14, 8.

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Contractors built prolifically in the Mission District, where they found individuals increasingly willing to buy identical, readymade “spec” houses, rather than commission architects to design expensive, personalized dwellings or build their own. Rising costs of land and construction made attached row-houses, which maximized lot coverage and minimized cost and use of materials, more economical. “Row houses, which present a rank of identical façades lined up like soldiers along the street, often consist of several two-story double houses with mirror-image façades and floor plans; sometimes each duplex was squeezed into a 40-foot frontage, leaving just 20 feet for each dwelling. Usually built on speculation by a contractor or building association as a less expensive alternative to the free-standing single-family house, some row houses had common walls, while others were completely separate but touching, with setbacks carefully arranged to admit light to the interior rooms.”²⁹ Despite being mass produced, “spec” housing and row-houses typically used quality materials and displayed high levels of ornamentation.

Perhaps the most important commercial builder in the Mission District during the late 1880s and early 1890s, based on quantity of product and area covered, was Gottlieb T. Knopf (1852-1926). Knopf, a German immigrant and resident of the North Beach neighborhood, identified himself as carpenter in the 1880s. After 1890, Knopf listed his occupation in the City Directory as a builder/contractor with an office on Montgomery Street; he also often Anglicized his first name to George. During this time, Knopf was involved in the row-house development of large tracts of land in the eastern Mission District, where expanded transit lines ran. The Knopf working-class row-houses, which he built in groups as large as entire blocks, epitomized the building type: semi-attached cottages in mirrored arrangements that maximized light well areas, with flat roofs (a departure from traditional gable roofs) that saved on materials and reduced costs. Knopf often punctuated his row-house developments at corner locations with two-story buildings containing storefronts and flats above. In 1906, the downtown firestorm overtook his long-time residence on Leavenworth Street, and he apparently left the City at that time with his family, though he continued to engage in land speculation in San Francisco. Knopf and his wife were laid to rest in prestigious Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland.

Other craftsman contractors, less prolific than Knopf, worked concurrently to build out the eastern Mission District. Alfred Olson (apparently also spelled Olsen on construction permits), a carpenter and builder by occupation, was active in row-house construction in the late 1880s and 1890s. Whereas Knopf built Stick-style cottages almost exclusively, Olson specialized in slightly larger homes designed in the Queen Anne style. During the time that Olson was building small groups of “spec” houses in the Mission District, he lived in various locations in the Mission and South-of-Market areas, including in a Knopf-built row-house at one point. After 1900, the itinerant Olson moved briefly to the Outer Mission and then to Ashbury Heights; and after the 1906 disaster, he appears to have left the city.

Yet another important commercial builder during the period was John Coop, head of the San Francisco Planing Mill. Coop’s homes featured finely detailed, signature millwork characteristic of the Stick/Eastlake and Queen Anne styles that he surely helped to popularize. In addition to richly detailed individual homes and small groupings of row-houses in the Mission and elsewhere in the City, Coop also built his own Mission District residence in 1889, a Queen Anne-style mansion that stands today at 959 South Van Ness Avenue. The construction of the Coop House, situated along former Howard Street, one of the few upper-class neighborhoods located in the 19th-century Mission District, was a testament to the kind of affluence that could be realized in San Francisco’s lucrative building industry during the late 19th century.

In addition to the numerous skilled contractors who plied their trades in house construction and speculation,

²⁸ *Ibid*, 22.

²⁹ James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 288.

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architects contributed their trained perspectives to the cacophony of embellished designs that trumpeted forth in late 19th-century San Francisco. According to Waldhorn and Woodbridge, a quarter of the fifteen hundred builders of the late 19th century were practicing architects, who worked primarily on commission for private individuals or landowners. *Victoria's Legacy* highlighted Mission District-based architect Henry Geilfuss, a professional with working-class orientation:

One of the most productive [architects] was Henry Geilfuss, who came to San Francisco from Germany in 1876, when he was twenty-six. He worked as a draftsman for the first two years, then began his own firm... Geilfuss is credited with several renowned Victorian homes... But Geilfuss was also responsible for hundreds of buildings in all price ranges... A favorite Geilfuss embellishment was a floral corner cover like the one gracing the cottage he built for himself in 1882. The cottage still stands at 811 Treat Avenue in the Mission District...³⁰

Thomas John Welsh (1845-1914) was another immigrant architect who influenced the development of 19th-century San Francisco and the Mission District. Welsh's family emigrated from Australia to San Francisco in 1856. After schooling and brief stints as a draftsman for other firms, the young T.J. Welsh opened his own architecture firm with an office on Montgomery Street in the early 1870s. During his early career, Welsh lived in various locations within the Mission District, including on Folsom Street between 22nd and 23rd Streets, and on 19th Street near Mission Street. By the 1880s, he lived north of Market Street, and by the 1890s, his office and staff of a half-dozen worked in the Flood Building. Although much of Welsh's early work was destroyed in the citywide disaster of 1906, his firm participated in the immense rebuilding efforts. According to biographer P.A. Welsh, the *California Architect and Building Review* of 1889-1891 praised her great grandfather's early background as a carpenter, while also commenting favorably on the general class of carpenter-architects in San Francisco:

Under the instruction and guidance of some of the master builders of his time, [Welsh] early became proficient as a mechanic... Most of the prominent architects now practicing their profession in this city, are those that have first become conversant, in a practical way, with the saw, jack plane, and trowel... Many of our churches owe their architectural beauty to [Welsh's] thoughtful study and skill. Some of the finest monuments and memorial tablets now gracing Cavalry and other cemeteries are the result of his ability. Many of our private dwellings, from the costly mansion to the humble abode of the mechanic, have been planned and erected under the same superintendence.³¹

T.J. Welsh's works in San Francisco and throughout California were voluminous and held in high regard. Consequently, various landowners in the western hilly region of upscale Horner's Addition commissioned Welsh to build individual houses for them in the 1880s. He also designed "spec" housing for real estate developer Baroness Mary E. Von Schroeder on the rural remainder of a large pioneer-era tract that occupied an entire block in the central Mission District between 22nd, 23rd, Capp Streets and South Van Ness Avenue. In 1889, more than two dozen of Welsh's signature Stick-style row-houses were built on the Capp and South Van Ness (formerly Howard) street faces of the block. The Welsh-Von Schroeder development resulted in one of the largest architecturally consistent 19th-century landscapes in the Mission (along with other uniformly-developed blocks by TREA and Gottlieb Knopf).

A third sector of the homebuilding fraternity, owner-builders, were individuals who possessed single lots or

³⁰ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 24-26.

³¹ Patricia Ann Welsh, *Thomas John Welsh, Architect, 1845-1918: A Journey of Discovery* (San Francisco: PAW Productions, 1995 rev.), 18-19.

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handfuls of lots and developed them according to their own whims and means. Waldhorn and Woodbridge provided this description and example:

Owner-builders were the third most important influence on Victorian construction, and several hundred people so described themselves. The majority built only the houses in which they lived, but a few became real estate developers. For example, C.C. O'Donnell hired "daywork" to build five slightly peculiar homes in 1887 for four thousand dollars. Perhaps he also designed them, for the cluster at 1328-1346 York Street in the Inner Mission neighborhood looks like none other in the city!³²

As with many owner-built homes of the period, the actual designer of the five unusual York Street homes in the far southeastern Mission District remains unknown. Dr. Charles C. O'Donnell, former Coroner of the City of San Francisco, probably played a speculative role (not a design role) in their construction. The physician/surgeon also owned other properties in the vicinity of the York Street homes. After they were built, Dr. C.C. O'Donnell lived close by on 25th Street (near the City hospital) for a brief time in the early 1890s, before he moved his residence back to North Beach. Another individual who may have been involved in the design and/or construction of the York Street homes was George W. Fowler, who was listed on the water tap records in 1889 but is otherwise unknown.



Shotwell Street near 20th Street, 1887. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.



Shotwell Street near 20th Street, 1887. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

While owner-builders sometimes imparted individuality of design to their projects, more often than not their houses were indistinguishable from contractor-built "spec" housing, due in large part to availability of standardized house designs, mass-produced materials, and highly skilled labor. In *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*, Moudon explained how individual owner-builders and speculative contractors often achieved the same ends:

³² Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 27.

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... [L]and ownership patterns end up the same despite differences in the development process. Speculators generally sold the houses to private individuals, who then operated and maintained the properties in the same fashion as those initially built by individual owners. House construction did not differ substantially either because similar house forms were used indiscriminately by both private speculators and individual homeowners. Most house forms were derivations or modifications of the semi-detached and the row house, of which there were, of course, different types.³³

In addition to the actual homebuilders – contractors like Knopf, Olson, and Coop; architects such as Geilfuss and Welsh; and owner-builders of which O'Donnell was an example – realtors worked to build out the Mission District. Among these was John Center as well as his nephew George L. Center, who maintained an office and residence in his uncle's house at 16th and Shotwell Streets by the late 1880s. While the Centers were not known as builders, their speculations and investments facilitated development in and around the Mission District.

Decorating the Wooden Boxes

Homebuilders of the late 19th century adapted traditional architecture to San Francisco's pattern of dense settlement, its hilly topography, and its locally available materials. In doing so, they created a city that was familiar to emigrants of eastern U.S. and European origins, yet unique in its application of style and construction methods. The Victorian-era architectural vocabulary took on a local character, as described by Walker in "Classy City: Residential Realms of the Bay Region":

Victorian San Francisco came out looking like nowhere else, even though the architectural styles of the time originated in the East. Partly it was the almost exclusive use of wood in place of brick or stone...But mostly it was the pretensions of the nouveaux arrivées on the naked edge of the continent, who thought nothing of erecting false fronts on their houses to simulate a loftier city and decorating the facades with wild exuberance...³⁴

Initially, San Francisco's pioneer-era builders attempted to recreate in wood the features and appearances of buildings in the eastern U.S. and Europe, where a tradition of brick and stone construction existed. But by the 1880s and 1890s, local architects and builders had expanded the architectural lexicon to suit the abundant and pliable Pacific Coast redwood. In *Victoria's Legacy*, Waldhorn and Woodbridge explained how this resulted in a frenzy of textures and ornament:

The promise of redwood was fulfilled as local millwrights pushed the material to its limits, turning, sawing, carving, pressing and incising...No longer was wood used to mimic stone details or to faithfully reproduce Classical embellishment such as quoins or Corinthian columns. Breaking away from more traditional residential adornments, architects, contractors, and owners could choose from a bewitching assortment of such details as geometric strips, waffles, leaves, drips, holes and sunbursts.³⁵

³³ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 50.

³⁴ Richard Walker, "Classy City: Residential Realms of the Bay Area," 2004 (on-line version revised 2002), http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/ClassCity.pdf (accessed October 13, 2010). Previously published version: "Landscape and City Life: Four Ecologies of Residence in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Ecumene* 2:1 (1995): 33-64.

³⁵ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 14-19.

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Waldhorn and Woodbridge further described how the use of wood as the primary building material in San Francisco influenced the Victorian-era architectural styles that succeeded Italianate in fashionability during the late 19th century:

The most popular house style of the eighties was a vertical-looking rowhouse with a three-sided rectangular bay window, whose ninety-degree angles were much easier to mass-produce than the five-sided bay of the seventies with its complex mitering and molding. The surfaces of the homes of this decade, now called "San Francisco Sticks," were laden with an abundance of wooden enrichment...[The next] decade of building brought a radical change in house style...completely different from the vertical, rectangular-bayed false-gabled rowhouses of the eighties. These "premium" homes had towers and true gabled roofs, with attic space behind them. They featured horizontal lines – plaster garlanding, frieze bands and belt cornices – rather than the vertical lines of the eighties...These structural and decorative elements define the style the today we call the Queen Anne...³⁶

By the turn of the century, Queen Anne and Beaux-Arts-influenced styles had become the favorite choices of architects for high-style creations; related styles such as Eastlake, Shingle, and First Bay Tradition also flourished in the late 19th century. Yet the tried-and-true Italianate style remained a staple of residential design through the 1890s. Contractors continued to mass produce working-class cottages and flats based upon the early (and comparatively cheap) "false-front" Italianate model: simple residential boxes with flat façades and tall parapets, decorated with milled cornices and brackets. These economical, traditional housing solutions did not fall out of favor until the end of the 19th century.

Behind the exuberantly decorated façades, which differed in details from builder to builder and year to year, houses themselves followed standard plans developed to suit San Francisco's long narrow lots. Typical house plans included long corridors running front-to-back with rooms distributed to either side; "public" rooms (such as living rooms) were located at the fronts of houses and "private" rooms (such as bedrooms) were positioned at the backs. "Usually set on a custom-made base that responded to the irregularities of the topography, the Victorian house was basically a predesigned 'box' onto which many additions and adornments could be grafted to suit individual needs and tastes."³⁷ This allowed for great flexibility on the parts of homebuilders in determining final appearances. For instance, "spec" builder Fernando Nelson, who constructed over 4,000 homes including many in the Mission District, often decided on details after houses were already built. "According to his son, Nelson would get an idea, scrawl it on an envelope or paper bag and take it down to the Townley Brothers mill. The details would be produced in great quantities, and Nelson would then have them hauled out to the construction site and nailed onto the houses."³⁸

While single-family home ownership represented the Victorian-era middle class ideal, high demand and rising costs for housing in the late 19th century priced many out. Even as builders such as Gottlieb Knopf produced row after row of small "workingman's" cottages in the eastern Mission District, construction of higher density, multiple-family dwellings increased as well. Two-family residences proliferated as variations on single-family home designs, subdivided either horizontally into flats or vertically into duplexes (in the manner of attached row-houses). Larger multiple-family housing types with three to six units, and in some cases even more, were accomplished by further stacking stories (up to three total) and/or by attaching additional volumes side-by-side,

³⁶ *Ibid*, 14, 19.

³⁷ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 50, 56.

³⁸ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 37.

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often mirrored (no limit). Despite the increased living density and reduced privacy inherent to multiple-family housing, Victorian-era values dictated separate street entrances for individual units, so that each family retained the presentation of a private home from the street. The only exceptions were boarding houses and tenements, which used common street entrances.

Some houses, those of the “Gilded Age” upper classes, and particularly architect-designed homes, stood out from the contractors’ row-houses and the owner-built, catalog-bought creations. Though not typical of the Mission District, quite a few “high-style” deluxe houses and mansions were constructed in certain neighborhoods. These large homes featured individualized (not mass produced) designs, with fully-detailed elevations at all sides, custom-made decorations, and expensive materials such as brick and stone. Still, even these carefully designed and crafted homes of the affluent followed a familiar façade pattern at the street, repeated throughout late 19th century and early 20th century residential architecture: bilateral division, with decorated entrance at one side, one or more bay windows, and capped by a heavily detailed cornice or gable.

Culmination of Victorian-Era Neighborhoods

The full build-out of the Mission District, from a loose confederation of pioneer settlements to a sprawling streetcar suburb that over-spilled the valley’s edges, represented the peak of Victorian-era culture. The Mission shed its semi-rural character and became a class-conscious, family-oriented urban “town,” replete with architecture of the “Gilded Age.” In “Classy City: Residential Realms of the Bay Region,” Walker speculated on the social intentions behind the construction of San Francisco’s late-19th-century elaborate wood façades:

... [T]he Victorian townscape came into being as a full-blown project of modernization by a newly-arrived bourgeoisie seeking to impose their order upon an untamed city...As the social order of the young city settled down into ‘proper’ class structure after the silver and railroad boom of 1860-1873, the bourgeoisie established visual order by installing miles of stately row houses on the model of London terraces. Victorian homes marched over hill and dale...Urbanity, not rusticity, was in fashion...³⁹

The late 19th-century Mission became increasingly uniform in design. Many home owners updated older, pioneer-era dwellings according to newer fashionable styles by applying milled ornament such as hoods, brackets, and stick-work, by installing three-sided bay windows, and/or by expanding buildings and erecting entirely new façades. The booming speculative housing market in the Mission also facilitated the standardization of Victorian-era streetscapes, as explained by Moudon in *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*:

Speculative developments differed from singular properties in the way in which the houses were sited on the land: houses developed speculatively were lined up with the same setback from the street, but individually built properties exhibited varied setbacks according to the owner’s whim. Furthermore, speculative builders usually lined up twenty similar houses in a row, while each individual builder chose and assembled different types of homes.⁴⁰

The installation of Victorian-era visual order was accompanied by the installation of a full urban infrastructure in

³⁹ Richard Walker, “Classy City: Residential Realms of the Bay Area,” 2004 (on-line version revised 2002), http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/ClassCity.pdf (accessed October 13, 2010). Previously published version: “Landscape and City Life: Four Ecologies of Residence in the San Francisco Bay Area,” *Ecumene* 2:1 (1995): 33-64.

⁴⁰ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 50.

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the Mission District during the 1880s and 1890s. Services such as water, sewers, street lamps, wood sidewalks, and macadamized roads expanded into the Mission valley. In 1881, pioneer settler and capitalist John Center bored wells on his property, erected giant water storage tanks, and opened the John Center Water Works, which piped water to nearby residences in the Inner Mission North. The citywide supplier Spring Valley Water Company also increasingly provided service to the Mission, though many private properties retained wells through the turn of the century. New buildings were constructed uniformly closer to the street (and older buildings were moved there), in part to meet standards for utility connections. The last remnants of streams and lagoons were filled as well. At the far southern end of the valley, Precita Creek was converted to a sewer and Army (Cesar Chavez) Street was built on top of it; consequently, the winding rural lane of Serpentine Avenue, which had followed the northern bank of the creek, was mostly abandoned and the land reclaimed for housing.

In addition to housing, commercial development expanded in the Mission District during the late 19th century. Commercial activity intensified along established retail and transit corridors of Mission and Valencia Streets, which ran the entire north-south length of the Mission valley, and 16th and 24th Streets, the primary east-west corridors. These linear shopping districts contained all of the commercial uses that a semi-independent town required: restaurants, breweries, dance and music halls, skating rinks, billiard halls, drugstores, laundries, carpenters, plumbers, blacksmiths, bakeries, dairies, furniture repair, hotels, and undertakers. In addition, corner stores, saloons, and services such as liveries and coal depots were scattered throughout every neighborhood.

Throughout the late 19th century, commercial architecture in the Mission District remained utilitarian. Typical commercial buildings were single-story with flat storefronts and tall, plainly decorated parapets. By the 1890s, retail activity supported construction of large arcade-like buildings for multiple commercial tenants, such as the Mission Market at the busy intersection of Mission and 16th Streets, as well as multiple-story, single-tenant commercial buildings. As the growing demand for housing opened up a rental and boarding market, construction of mixed-use, residential-over-commercial buildings became common. These mixed-use buildings, two to three stories in total with dwelling units located above ground-floor shops, generally followed residential patterns and styles of architecture, except that inclusion of storefronts resulted in subordination of residential entrances, which were prominent features of residential design.

By the turn of the century, the vast Mission District was almost entirely developed as a burg of the San Francisco metropolis, an area united by geography and settlement patterns, yet large enough to contain its own variations and internal divisions. In *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development*, Issel and Cherny provided this summary description of the Mission District during the period:

While the Mission contained many neighborhoods, the area as a whole had a number of unifying characteristics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century... The Mission was an area of single-family and two-family homes, its population density far below the citywide average and much lower than the densely packed South of Market... Narrower residential streets ran between and parallel to these major [streetcar] thoroughfares, where one-, two-, and three-story wooden rowhouses housed one or two families. Businesses catering to the surrounding neighborhoods sprang up on the major thoroughfares, and large wooden churches were scattered at frequent intervals.⁴¹

Sorting and Mixing: Class and Culture

The installation of a modern, citywide transit system, the expansion of the suburban residential realm into the

⁴¹ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 63.

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urban periphery, and the ever-increasing industrialization of the economy led to greater distinction among the city's neighborhoods, including the Mission District. These distinctions were largely class-based. As the city's population grew and diversified, the city's neighborhood separated into middle class, working class, and affluent in typical Victorian-era stratification. In *Neighborhoods in Transition*, Godfrey described the process in relation to the city's geographic expansion:

...[T]he city gradually became internally differentiated in social terms...The development of San Francisco's intricate social geography was tied to the increased sorting of residential areas by class and ethnicity during the late nineteenth century. As the instant city of the Gold Rush evolved into a true metropolis, housing was built outside of the central business district to accommodate the city's burgeoning population...[R]esidential areas tended to become specialized in social terms.⁴²

The large Mission District, semi-independent of the greater city (functionally if not economically), was vast enough that social stratification occurred internally. While the visible presence of working classes in the Mission District, as well as its proximity to the City's other working-class realms, precluded its potential as a high-status area, the population was not uniform, as explained by Issel and Cherny in *San Francisco, 1865-1932*:

[The Mission District] was home to many of the skilled workers employed in the manufacturing areas south of Market or along the bay, as well as home to some businessmen and professionals – those whose businesses were in the Mission, and others who had grown up there or who preferred the area for a variety of reasons. Some Mission District houses were clearly upper middle-class or even upper-class, home to successful merchants, sea captains, politicians, contractors, lawyers, or manufacturers. The dominant tone, however, was working-class.⁴³

Exceptions to the working-class character occurred primarily along the main north-south thoroughfares of the central and eastern Mission District, such as Folsom, Howard, and Guerrero Streets. "Howard street was for several decades one of the smartest addresses in the city."⁴⁴ At the same time, the less prominent east-west numbered streets and the small back-alley streets, located within a few steps of the "mansion rows," were host to solidly working-class habitats. This pattern of socioeconomic enclaves located in close proximity and in parallel to each other was repeated throughout the Mission District, though less so in the eastern Mission District where a more consistently mixed, egalitarian suburban landscape existed.

The population of the Mission District was increasingly comprised of European immigrant stock whose migration followed "the basic southwestward trajectory of Irish settlement" from South-of-Market to outlying neighborhoods such as the Mission District. "As the Mission District was urbanized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, waves of Old World immigrants and their offspring poured into the area, particularly the Irish, Germans, Italians, and Scandinavians."⁴⁵ By 1900, three-fourths of the Mission District population was descended from immigrant parentage, and one-fourth was foreign-born. As these communities grew, they established churches, religious schools, and fraternal halls that focused on maintaining cultural ties to homelands

⁴² Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 63-64.

⁴³ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 65.

⁴⁴ James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 316.

⁴⁵ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 131.

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and traditions, as well as assimilation and socialization. Cultural groups chose traditional Old World architectural styles for churches, such as Gothic, Classical, and Romanesque Revivals.

The Irish were most prominent in church-building. In 1876, the predominantly Irish congregation of Mission Dolores constructed a Gothic Revival-style brick cathedral adjacent to the old Hispanic chapel. The Irish also built the Catholic churches of St. Charles (1887) on Howard and 18th Streets in the Inner Mission North, and St. James (1888) on Guerrero and 23rd Streets in the western Mission, indicative of the geographic extent of Irish influence. However, the southern and eastern areas of the Mission District became the true stronghold of Irish community. In 1886, the burgeoning Irish Catholic population of the southern Mission District supported the construction of St. Peter's cathedral at Florida and 24th Streets to serve the congregation that was established there decades earlier. By the turn of the century, buildings housing a boy's school and a girl's school had joined St. Peter's cathedral and rectory to form a large mid-block complex that was an integral part of the Irish Catholic community.

The Mission's German population grew at a rate nearly equivalent to the Irish. However, dynamics within the German population differed from the Irish, who came to dominate San Francisco politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Godfrey related the internal dynamics of the German population:

Unlike the Irish, however, who generally shared the Catholic religion and a common heritage, the Germans were split into Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish camps, and further fragmented by differences in linguistic dialects and regional customs. Germans thus had less cultural cohesion and political power than did the Irish... Yet the Germans, like the Irish, did form a great number of ethnically based organizations (often along religious lines), such as benevolent societies, social and fraternal groups, and trade unions... [T]he Mission District... became a local bastion of German Catholicism. German Protestant churches, especially Lutheran, proliferated in several neighborhoods.⁴⁶

While German Catholics congregated at St. Anthony's on Army (Cesar Chavez) Street in the far southern Mission District – separate from, but nearby to, the Irish Catholics of St. Peter's – German Protestants staked out the central Mission. Salem's German Church was erected in 1886 at the corner of 22nd and Shotwell Street; less than two blocks to the west, also on 22nd Street, the congregation of St. Johanne's Evangelical constructed a larger church to replace the old one at that location around the turn of the century. In the Inner Mission North, the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church (1904) was built at 15th and Dolores Streets, indicative of the growing Scandinavian population in the Mission Dolores neighborhood and nearby Duboce Park neighborhood.

In addition to churches, fraternal and societal organizations also played important roles in the social and cultural organization of the Mission District. Memberships in fraternal and societal organizations were largely based on shared heritages, on common occupations, and on similar social classes; yet these organizations also provided opportunities for mixing of individuals of divergent backgrounds on the basis of adopted common group identities. Issel and Cherny described the beehive-like social activity of the Mission District around the turn of the century:

Masonic Hall, on Mission between Twenty-second and Twenty-third, was the meeting site not just for the Mission Masonic Lodge and the Order of the Eastern Star, but also for the Knights of Pythias, Native Sons of the Golden West, Order of Chosen Friends, Woodmen of the World, and two varieties of Foresters. Odd Fellows and Workmen met at Fraternal Hall, three blocks up Mission from Masonic Hall. Another Workmen's Lodge met on Twenty-fourth Street, two blocks

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 77-79.

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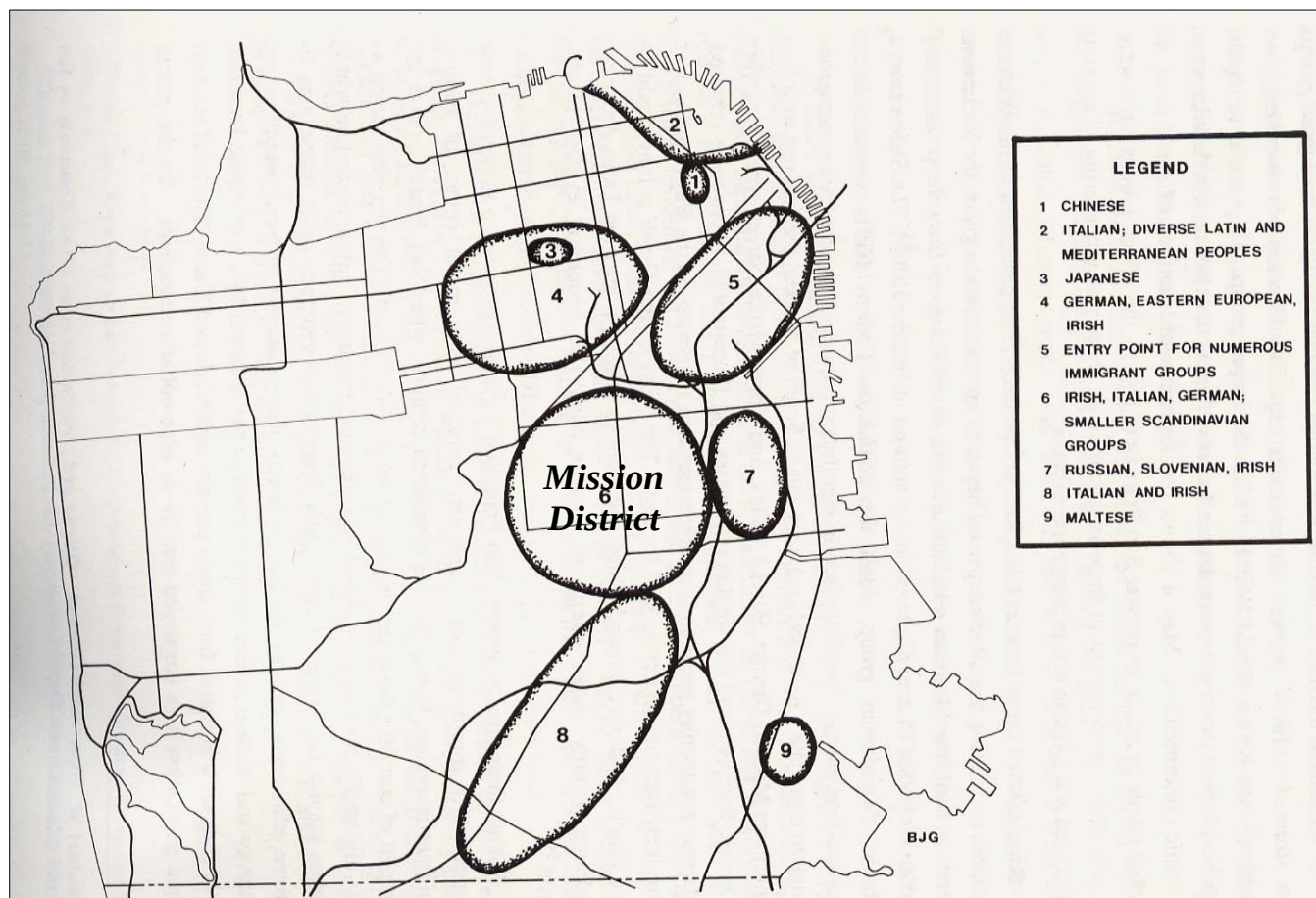
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east of Mission. The Mission *Turn Verein* (gymnastics club) had a hall on Eighteenth near Valencia where the San Francisco *Mannchor* (men's chorus) and, most likely, other German groups met...The churches and lodges near Bartlett Street represent only a few of the social organizations and institutions to be found in the area.⁴⁷



Map of ethnic concentrations located within San Francisco prior to World War II. Source: Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 84.

⁴⁷ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 65.

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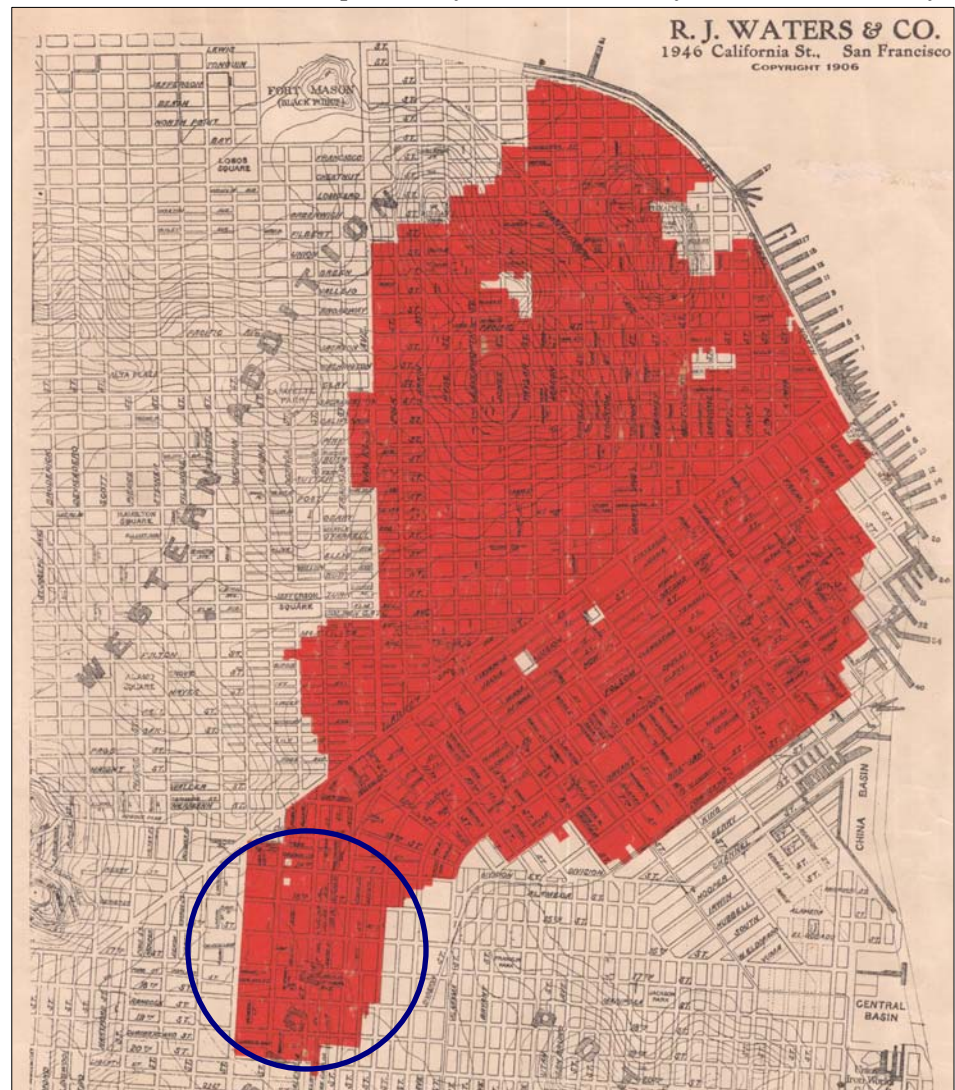
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V. Post-Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1920

1906 Earthquake and Fire

The great earthquake of April 18th, 1906, and the citywide fires that followed, were defining for the Mission District, as for all of San Francisco. While the earthquake itself destroyed mostly brick structures and buildings that stood on filled land, it also started dozens of major fires, most of them in the densely crowded South-of-Market area of tenements and industry. Firefighting was hampered by broken water mains, and the fires spread and merged uncontrolled, feeding on the primarily wood building stock. The ensuing conflagration, whose severity was compounded by numerous tactical errors on the part of city officials and army commanders, utterly consumed four-fifths of San Francisco, including approximately 28,000 buildings, over the next three days. Thousands of lives were lost. "The flames ravaged the financial district, the downtown commercial center, much of the industrial sector, and the city's most densely populated residential neighborhoods north and south of Market. The economic and social core of the west's greatest metropolis was in ruins."⁴⁸

During the second night of disaster, the conflagration moved into the Mission District from the north, where two separate firestorms, the South-of-Market blaze and the Hayes Valley "ham-and-eggs" fire, had combined. As the flames spread through the Inner Mission North, firefighters in charge of protecting the working-class area (including City employees, National Guard, and private citizens – not the Army, which focused its efforts north of Market Street) adopted a containment strategy. They managed to establish and hold eastern and western firebreaks along two



Map of 1906 fire area in San Francisco. The circled area indicates northern portion of the Mission District that was destroyed by fire.

⁴⁸ Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California: 1985), 164.

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wide boulevards, Howard and Dolores Streets, while the wall of flames continued southward and preparations were made in advance for a southern firebreak.

The achievement of the western firebreak along Dolores Street involved an infantry of volunteer citizens and refugees from the Mission Dolores neighborhood. They raided old wells and dairies for liquids, beat back flames with wet blankets, and patrolled rooftops to extinguish sparks and embers in order to prevent the fire from spreading west of Dolores Street. In doing so, they also protected the Mission Dolores chapel, whose sturdy redwood beams and solid construction had ridden out the temblor intact. The timely arrival of additional City firefighters and the discovery of an intact reservoir and hydrant at 20th and Church Streets also proved critical to holding the line at Dolores Street.

On the eastern side of the Inner Mission North, pioneer settler and capitalist John Center was credited with saving the neighborhood. During the late 19th century, Center had built the John Center Water Works, including water tanks with 125,000-gallon capacity located on the blocks bounded by Folsom, Shotwell, 15th and 17th Streets. While the water works functioned as a commercial enterprise, supplying water to nearby residences, John Center's objective was also fire prevention. In 1906, when the South-of-Market fires approached, Center's water works was used successfully to buffer the flames around his home and neighborhood, and to create an eastern firebreak that shifted from Shotwell to Howard to Capp Streets. During the event, John Center's nephew George L. Center directed firefighters and provided knowledge of private water mains.

As the eastern and western lines held, firefighters scrambled to prepare a southern firebreak at 20th Street ahead of the conflagration. Dynamite was used to take down large buildings on the north side of the street, and men and horses pulled others down with ropes. In addition to the hydrant at 20th and Church Streets, water was found in a cistern at 19th and Shotwell Streets. This allowed firefighters to employ a pincer-like attack on the wall of flames and to hold the firebreak at 20th Street. After three days of citywide destruction, the fire's advance was finally halted in the Mission District, though not before approximately 30 blocks in the Mission were leveled (out of a total citywide of more than 500 blocks). Just as the citywide firestorm had wiped out the core of San Francisco, leaving a broken ring of surviving outlying neighborhoods, the Mission District fires had carved out the oldest and most crowded area of the Mission, the Inner Mission North, while leaving untouched neighborhoods to the south, east, and west.

Rebuilding and Upbuilding

The rebuilding of San Francisco in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires was unprecedented in scope and effort. Rebuilding required clearing of approximately four square miles of absolutely devastated urban landscape (involving temporary installation of debris-carrying rail-cars through city neighborhoods), repair of broken utilities, transit lines, and roads, and total replacement of burned structures and neighborhoods. All of this was accomplished and more, without central plan or control, by private citizens, businesses, and city government. In *The Earth Shook, the Sky Burned*, Bronson celebrated the physical reconstruction of the city as a victory for character, efficiency, and technology:

And the job was not only done, but it was done faster and better than anyone thought possible. In three years, almost all of the burned area was rebuilt... In 1909, more than half of America's steel and concrete buildings stood in San Francisco. In three years, the assessed valuation of the City was half again as much as it had been before the fire. Twenty thousand buildings – bigger, stronger, more modern than the 28,000 which went up in smoke – had been finished in that space and time.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ William Bronson, *The Earth Shook, the Sky Burned* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1959), 178-179

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In the burned area of the Inner Mission North, at least 600 buildings were constructed from the summer of 1906 through 1908, which was the peak of rebuilding activity citywide. From 1909 until the beginning of World War I, as building activity gradually tapered off, another 400 or so buildings were erected in the neighborhood. Complete reconstruction of the Inner Mission North took longer than for that of downtown and its nearby residential neighborhoods, due in part to politics and business, which dictated that restoration of the downtown core was highest priority. Also, working-class and/or immigrant citizens experienced difficulties and delays in obtaining insurance claims. In many cases, insurance pay-outs ultimately could not cover costs of rebuilding and owners were forced to sell their properties to speculators and commercial builders. A decade after the fire swept through the neighborhood, there remained more undeveloped and underutilized land in the Inner Mission North than there had been before the fire.

The physical rebuilding of San Francisco and the Inner Mission North involved "upbuilding," a process of constructing larger structures with more units to replace those that had been destroyed. The upbuilding of the Mission was related to a lucrative rental market for permanent housing following the disaster, which prompted rebuilding at higher density. Post-fire residential buildings were taller, bulkier, and covered more of their lots so that front and side yards were reduced or eliminated. In the Inner Mission North, where single-family dwellings and two-family flats had dominated the formerly suburban neighborhood before the fires, the post-fire upbuilding resulted in a mostly three to six-unit housing stock, built cheek-to-jowl and forming solid blocks of urban streetscape. "The housing shortage in the city encouraged the development of increased densities in the Mission...[V]acant lots were developed, often with higher-density flats and apartment buildings, to house refugees from ravaged areas...This lowered the social standing of the district, making it a more strictly working-class area."⁵⁰ Overall, the upbuilding and the greater population density of the Inner Mission North changed the neighborhood character from suburban to urban.

While upbuilding by contractors and individual owners was the rule in the Mission during the post-fire period, there were exceptions. In the first year or so after the disaster, while building materials, labor, and capital were scarce, many owner-builders endeavored to construct small, plain single-family cottages just large enough to provide basic shelter. These small vernacular dwellings were usually intended as temporary housing solutions; many were replaced with larger residential buildings within a few years, while others were retained at the backs of lots and multiple-family housing was constructed in front. More rarely, some property owners in the Inner Mission North bucked the trend of upbuilding and rebuilt permanent, full-size single-family houses, some of them architect-designed, rather than convert their land to rental housing.

The speculative housing market and the post-disaster building boom spilled out into the Victorian-era suburbs that survived the disaster, where land did not have to be cleared of debris or property lines redrawn. These outlying residential neighborhoods, such as the southern Mission and the Inner Mission North neighborhoods to the east and west of the fire zone, accommodated both upbuilding with new residential stock and intensification of older housing stock. In addition to developing vacant lots and subdividing large lots, some property owners moved or demolished smaller, older dwellings and replaced them with larger multiple-family buildings. Locating cottages and houses in backyards, including moving them from the street in order to accommodate upbuilding, was common as well. "In the undestroyed area of the Mission district a fever pitch of activity prevailed. New houses went up; many old ones were remodeled to accommodate more occupants, even though faulty room arrangements and bad lighting and ventilation resulted."⁵¹ In areas of the Mission District that were

⁵⁰ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 146.

⁵¹ Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 111.

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still reaching full build-out at the turn of the century, such as the eastern Mission (east of Harrison Street) and the far southern Mission (south of 24th Street), the post-fire building boom had greater influence on overall neighborhood character.

While post-fire buildings were essentially larger, more crowded versions of the wood boxes that had been built for decades, their façades revealed clear shifts in architectural tastes that occurred around the turn of the century. Post-fire row-house construction uniformly incorporated Beaux-Arts-influenced architecture that emphasized formal classicism over the riotous decoration and textures of the late Victorian era. Post-Victorian-era architecture was described by Alexander and Heig in *San Francisco: Building the Dream City*:

Generally referred to today as 'Edwardian,' these buildings loosely followed the Roman Revival Style popular in the city just before 1906. Completely of frame construction, their first floors are generally given a veneer of yellow or Roman brick. The finer examples have a columned entrance, sometimes with marble steps and paneling, and perhaps leaded, beveled glass in the front door and side panels. Above the first floor are rows of curved bay windows whose large glass panes are also curvilinear, especially at corners. The heavy roof lines are turned out with modillions and cornices, and any stray door or window handsomely ornamented with pilasters and consoles, in the approved Roman Revival style.⁵²

In addition to these more fully developed examples of Edwardian-era architecture, plainer and less expensive versions were built in the Mission. Workingman's Edwardians featured slanted bay windows (rather than curved); plaster cement bases that were cast and scored to resemble masonry; simpler cornice details such as "block" modillions; and largely undecorated wood façades. Waldhorn and Woodbridge's *Victoria's Legacy* provided this alternate description of similar building stock:

Edwardian buildings are two to three stories high with flat roofs and shallow cornices made up of small, flat brackets with rows of molding underneath, usually dentils and egg and dart. The bay windows are the three-sided slanted variety, although buildings on corner lots often have a rounded corner bay. Some Edwardians have exterior stairs forming a series of balconies in the center of the front of the building; apartments in this type of Edwardian were called "Romeo" or "Romeo and Juliet" apartments because of the balconies...⁵³

Within the fire zone, the massive reconstruction effort over a short period of time generated swaths of remarkably consistent, early 20th-century architecture. Stylistic variations occurred, though standard façade layouts and building plans dominated. In addition to Roman Revival-derived architectural styles, other popular styles included: Mission Revival, which substituted classical features for barrel-tile accent and bell-shaped parapets; Craftsman with clinker-brick bases, boxy window bays, and bracketed eaves; and later Queen Anne, which was classically-influenced and featured ornament that was toned down from late 19th-century versions. Some builders expanded the Edwardian-era lexicon by artfully combining features of different styles such as Craftsman and Mission Revival, or Classical Revival with Moorish influence.

Community Resettlement

The fires created between 230,000 and 300,000 refugees, out of a total population of 410,000. For months and

⁵² James Beach Alexander and James Lee Heig, *San Francisco: Building the Dream City* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 2002), 362.

⁵³ Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture* (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978), 205.

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years, people lived in makeshift camps and in official relief housing in the city's squares and parks. By 1908, the refugee population had largely transitioned to permanent residential building stock in rebuilt neighborhoods, and the relief camps closed. However, many people found it impractical, impossible, or undesirable to return to their original homes or neighborhoods, which were not the same as before the disaster, physically or culturally. Fradkin explained that a citywide restructuring in socioeconomics took place during the post-fire rebuilding period:

San Francisco became more stratified – physically, socially, and economically. Inequities made this worse, as a study of the reconstruction process pointed out: “At one end of the spectrum, upper-class districts and individuals stabilized rapidly, whereas unskilled workers at the low end of the spectrum were still in motion five years after the disaster...” Higher-income housing moved westward into the unburned district. Lower-income housing, when it eventually became available, was pushed further south. After the earthquake, the physical gap between the rich and the poor and the distance traveled for blue collar workers from home to job became greater.⁵⁴

The Mission District ultimately absorbed many of the South-of-Market refugees, whose original neighborhoods ceased to exist when the South-of-Market was rebuilt almost exclusively as industrial and commercial amidst consideration of stricter fire codes for the area. The influx of newcomers, which followed a well-established pattern of migration from South-of-Market to the Mission, reinforced the blue-collar image and identity of the area. “After the destruction of 1906 (which spared much of the Mission), the area became even more working-class and more Irish as families left South of Market and followed Mission Street south. For the next thirty years or so, until World War II, many Mission residents were consciously Irish, often consciously working class, and very conscious of being residents of the ‘Mish.’”⁵⁵ The post-fire mass migration of people from South-of-Market to the Mission swelled the ranks of existing ethnic communities in the Mission and reinforced the area's Old World cultural character while also crowding it. “By 1910 the population of the Mission District exceeded 50,000, reaching about its present level. One-third of the Mission's 1910 population was foreign-born, including 3,800 Irish, 3,200 Germans, and over 1,000 Italians, Swedes, and English.”⁵⁶

The post-fire relocation and consolidation of ethnic and religious communities in the Mission District supported the rapid rebuilding of churches, religious schools, youth clubs, and fraternal halls, even as individual families and citizens faced formidable hardships. While some community institutions were rebuilt on pre-fire sites, a general westward and southward shifting of sites occurred, as South-of-Market institutions migrated into the Mission, and institutions that originated within the burned area of the Inner Mission North moved out to the surviving fringe areas. The identities of post-fire cultural and community institutions located within the Mission District indicated a complex social realm. They included: the Knights of Pythias “castle hall” at Valencia and McCoppin Streets; the labor-oriented Tiv Hall on Albion Street near 16th; the First Swedish Baptist Church on 17th Street near Valencia Street; the Mission Turner Hall (German *Turn Verein*) on 18th Street near Valencia; B'nai David Synagogue on 19th Street near Valencia; German Savings & Loan Society Bank at Mission and 21st Streets; and the Hebrew Home for the Aged and Disabled at 21st and Howard Streets.

Perhaps of greatest historical importance was the reconstruction of the Roman Catholic institutional complex around the Mission Dolores chapel. While the tiny 18th-century church survived the 1906 disaster unscathed, the

⁵⁴ Philip L. Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 226-227.

⁵⁵ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 65-66.

⁵⁶ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 146.

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adjacent 19th-century brick cathedral was toppled by the earthquake, and the Notre Dame School across the street was dynamited to create a firebreak. Notre Dame School was rebuilt in 1907, but it was not until 1918 that the Mission Dolores Basilica was constructed to replace the cathedral (the same year that a renovation of the Mission Dolores chapel was completed by master architect Willis Polk).

In the southeastern Mission District, long a stronghold for Irish community and an area that was upbuilt considerably during the post-fire period, the influence of St. Peter's church grew even greater. Around 1900, Father Peter C. Yorke, the "consecrated thunderbolt" himself, had been installed to lead St. Peter's. Yorke was an Irish immigrant, like many of the city's Catholic priests, and he was an outspoken champion of the working classes, organized labor, and Catholicism. Yorke was further distinguished by his holding of advanced degrees and his appointment as a University of California regent. The populist priest thrived in the Mission District. He worked tirelessly for refugee rights and assistance during the post-fire rebuilding period, opposing business interests with charges of elitism. Through his work in St. Peter's church and schools, Father Yorke guided the Mission-based Irish community until his death on Palm Sunday in 1925.

The consolidation of the city's working classes to the Mission District, and Yorke's role as an agitator for labor activism, had the effect of increasing the area's role in organized labor, including establishment of union halls. Following the up-and-down struggles of organized labor in the late 19th century, conditions during the post-fire period favored unions and San Francisco became "Labor's City," according to Issel and Cherny in *San Francisco, 1865-1932*:

Both the "open shop" and "law and order" took a back seat among businessmen after the earthquake and fire of April 1906. In the rush to rebuild, many San Francisco employers agreed to wage increases and improvements in working conditions as a necessary part of maintaining and expanding their work forces. By one estimate, union scales advanced 20 percent in the year following the earthquake...The years from 1907 to the outbreak of war in Europe brought stable times for the city's labor movement with few major conflicts and no strong open-shop campaign among the city's employers. By World War I, San Francisco had acquired a reputation as the most unionized city in the nation: a "closed-shop city."⁵⁷

Rush to Economic Recovery

In the southern Mission District, which avoided destruction in the fires of 1906, the surviving 19th-century commercial corridors of Mission and Valencia Streets (south of 20th Street) and 24th Street became the city's lifeblood in the early post-fire period (as did the Western Addition's Fillmore Street, north of Market Street). These intact commercial and transit corridors provided shopping and business to a city that suddenly lacked a downtown. When the Inner Mission North was cleared of fire debris in the weeks and months that followed the disaster, businesses and merchants flooded back there as well, to the established commercial corridors of Mission and Valencia



Mission National Bank on 16th Street, 1906. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

⁵⁷ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 91.

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Streets (north of 20th Street) and 16th Street. As transit lines were restored through the Mission District and residential populations grew, commerce responded. "The intersection of Mission and Twenty-second streets, a transfer point for the Twin Peaks and Potrero districts, became the hub of a new retail center. Shopping areas also sprang up at Valencia and Sixteenth streets and at Twenty-ninth and Church streets."⁵⁸ By the mid-1910s, the Mission's miles-long, uninterrupted network of retailing and services, spanning the entire valley north-south and east-west, was not only restored, but expanded and intensified above pre-fire levels.

In particular, the primary commercial strip of Mission Street, which attracted a citywide crowd as well as neighborhood residents, was reconstructed as a continuous corridor of storefronts between 16th and 25th Streets, which involved the raising of existing dwellings and storefront additions in the southern Mission District. Mission Street feature a multitude of businesses ranging from billiards and bowling to a "Japanese store," as well as department stores such as Lippman Bros. (established while the downtown flagship store was rebuilt) and theaters such as the New Mission, the Majestic, the Peoples, the Wigwam, and the Grand, all located within two blocks of the important 22nd Street juncture. Furniture stores also proliferated on Mission Street, with nine located on the block between 18th and 19th Streets.

Valencia Street, a commercial corridor running parallel to Mission Street to the west, was designated in 1907 as part of the Victory Highway, an early automobile route that predated the Lincoln Highway. While Valencia Street contained some entertainment and neighborhood commerce, the street also served as a service corridor with connection to the San Jose Road. Valencia contained a Levi Strauss clothing factory, auto service garages, dairies, sheet metal works, a macaroni factory, and undertakers. The east-west neighborhood commercial thoroughfares of 16th Street in the Inner Mission North (rebuilt after the fire) and 24th Street in the southern Mission (upbuilt after the fire) intersected with Mission and Valencia Streets and completed the district-wide commercial network. Small retail strips branched off of Mission and Valencia Streets on other east-west numbered streets as well, such as 22nd Street. North of 16th Street, in the area located closest to the South-of-Market, the Mission District received the overflow of post-fire industrial and commercial development; uses such as wood planing, cement works, marble works, and lithography intermixed with enclaves of multiple-family flats and residential hotels.



16th and Valencia Streets, 1918. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

As with residential construction, post-fire commercial construction progressed from small, utilitarian wood structures, usually minimally adorned, to larger and more substantial buildings as capital, labor, and materials became increasingly available. Over time, many of the earliest and smallest post-fire commercial buildings were replaced, while others were retained. The influence of Classical architectural style was apparent in commercial façades decorated with pilasters, entablatures, and applied ornament. By the 1910s, construction in brick was more common, as were commercial buildings with larger footprints (often partitioned into multiple units) and two or three stories tall. Large mixed-use buildings proliferated,

with multiple residential units located above storefronts; though more expensive to construct, they

⁵⁸ Mel Scott, *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), 111-112.

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provided diverse streams of rental income. As in the 19th-century, mixed-use buildings conformed closely to patterns and styles of residential construction except for the insertion of storefronts at the ground floor. Residential hotels were also found in the commercial corridors of the Inner Mission North, including on 16th Street and the nearby blocks of Valencia and Mission Streets.

The post-fire rebuilding period coincided with nascent innovations in storefront design during the first decades of the 20th century. Development of structural plate-glass facilitated window displays and storefronts consisting of wide panes of glass set above low bulkheads paneled in wood or clad in tile. Another innovation involved recessing storefront entrances, in part to meet codes for sidewalk access, but also to create niches in flat storefronts. In *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained the retailer's reasoning behind the design:

The only indentations were doors – small diagonal-sided “vestibules” – so labeled in architectural plans...These vestibules extended the shop's display space. They also let customers get out of the flow of foot traffic, and spend more time looking. Then, ideally, they overcome what retailers call “threshold resistance” and get potential shoppers inside the store. As one commentator put it in 1903, “The easily tempted customers...find themselves, literally, in the shop before they are aware.”⁵⁹

City Beautiful Movement

The physical and psychic void that was left behind in San Francisco by the 1906 disaster provided impetus for advancement of the nationwide reform movement known as the City Beautiful. The movement was launched in the U.S. at the 1893 Chicago world's fair by the “White City” exhibits, which emphasized the Beaux-Arts design school of Classicism, order, and central planning. The Chicago fair, designed under the supervision of architect Daniel Burnham, “signified a shift in taste from Victorian eclecticism to Roman grandeur...At the turn of the century, that lesson in what U.S. cities *might* become with proper planning and patronage became known as the City Beautiful movement...”⁶⁰ In San Francisco, the City Beautiful movement and Daniel Burnham found support among the city's progressive elite, who connected the physical image of San Francisco with its social well-being and economic health. San Francisco's wealthy progressives organized in order to address the “beautification” of the increasingly cluttered, layered 19th-century city, as described by Issel and Cherny:

The force of the “City Beautiful” movement struck San Francisco between the late 1890s and the 1910s when James Phelan and the Association for the Improvement and Adornment of San Francisco worked to implement their belief that the redesign of the city's physical environment would increase social harmony and enhance San Francisco's prosperity and growth. Phelan believed that San Francisco needed statues, monuments, parks, parkways, great plazas at the focal points of grand boulevards, and stately public buildings in the Beaux Arts style...⁶¹

In 1900, Mayor Phelan and a group of self-styled “progressive citizens” backed a new City Charter with provisions that enabled local government to advance the City Beautiful movement. The new Charter increased mayoral authority, allowed municipal indebtedness for public projects, provided direction for urban

⁵⁹ Paul Groth, *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers* (2005), 3. (Unpublished draft. Courtesy of the author.)

⁶⁰ Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 144-145.

⁶¹ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 109.

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development, and expanded the powers of the Board of Park Commissioners. Phelan then left the mayor's office and privately commissioned Daniel Burnham to develop a far-reaching City Beautiful plan for San Francisco, which was completed in 1905. However, the 1906 disaster and the expedient post-fire rebuilding process doomed the grand visions of a centrally planned City Beautiful in San Francisco, for reasons made clear in this engineer's blunt correspondence from the early post-fire period:

The distant observer will ask why, with virgin ground before it, the city did not cut avenues, widen streets, and build nothing but incombustible buildings. Such comment is most superficial. The city had suffered from the greatest fire in history. Most of her industries were wiped out of existence, all business buildings were destroyed, goods burned, streets wrecked and filled with debris, sewers broken, the water supply badly crippled, and the transportation system destroyed. Comment on civic responsibility, in the face of such conditions, is mere froth.⁶²

Property and business owners were intent on reestablishing property lines and obtaining insurance payments, not on embarking on a complicated program of adjusting streets and property lines. Burnham's City Beautiful plan for San Francisco was shelved, with the exception of the construction of the Civic Center (in a different location than Burnham had envisioned). Still, the City Beautiful movement and Phelan's reforms influenced the individual works of government, private institutions, businesses, and citizens. The City Beautiful movement reemerged from a decade of earthquake and fire, citywide labor conflicts, and corruption scandals and graft trials, as a guiding light for San Francisco's rise from ashes and rebirth as an early 20th century metropolis.

The first aspect of the Mission District to benefit from the City Beautiful movement and Phelan's reforms was its park system. In the 19th century, the only public park located in the Mission was Garfield Square, a single block of mostly unimproved grounds established in 1882 deep in the southeastern Mission. The paucity of open spaces in and around the densely populated, family-oriented Mission led to a citizen-led initiative for a "rationalistic" activity-oriented park that "fostered social coherence and deterred crime among the poor and ethnic populations in densely built neighborhoods." As related by Young in *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930*:

Early in 1903, more than 1,000 property owners from the southern reaches of the city banded together as the Mission Park Association to work for the passage of bonds for a local park. They succeeded in adding to the September 1903 ballot a measure to purchase a piece of land that had been the site of two Jewish cemeteries, bounded by Dolores, Church, Eighteenth, and Twentieth Streets. It passed with 73.9 percent of the vote to become Mission (now Mission Dolores) Park. Fourteen acres in extent, the rationalistic grounds included elaborate plantings, terraces, two tennis courts, a wading pool, and an athletic field by 1924.⁶³

At the time of the 1906 disaster, Mission Park was undergoing improvements. During and after the citywide fires, it filled with thousands of refugees, who occupied hundreds of Army-built cottages until the relief camp was closed in 1908. At the behest of the citizen-led Mission Park Association, major improvements to Mission Park commenced again, and the landscaping, activity areas, and construction were mostly in place by the mid-1910s. Also, two blocks away, Mission Baths (now Mission Pool) opened in 1916 as the City's only outdoor public pool.

The same 1903 ballot that included the Mission Park bonds included a number of other open space improvement bonds, including one that funded "the transformation of Dolores Street into a palm-lined boulevard." This new parkway was designed in conjunction with Mission Park, to which it ran adjacent, as a "rationalistic"

⁶² Philip L. Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 243.

⁶³ Terence Young, *Building San Francisco's Parks, 1850-1930* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 185.

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improvement adapted to the urban environment (not a “romantic” recreation of nature in the city). Young explained the design intention of Dolores Street:

One of the new parkways, Dolores Street, departed from the existing design traditions. About two miles in length, it extended from Mission Park to Market Street and south from the park to Guerrero and San Jose Avenues...[N]either vegetation nor foot paths for the unhurried traveler bracketed the roadway. Instead it was a simple thoroughfare bisected by “a palm shaded esplanade or alameda.” The commissioners imagined Dolores Street would be an “arboreal and horticultural beauty,” but more importantly they wanted it also to be the location for the display of the many “memorial monuments” that were causing traffic congestion along Market Street.⁶⁴

As with Mission Park, the beautification of Dolores Street was underway when the 1906 disaster struck – during which time Dolores Street served as a firebreak – and resumed some time thereafter. By around 1910, Dolores Street’s round-ended center medians were planted with palm trees, and the road was bituminized and extended from Market Street to San Jose Avenue. Although most of the memorial monuments were never moved from Market Street to Dolores Street, and it never became the “great outdoor art exhibit of San Francisco” that the Park Commissioners had intended, the broad boulevard was graced with the installation of a “mission bell” monument in front of the Mission Dolores chapel. The mission bell was one of several placed along California’s historic El Camino Real as an early promotion for automobile tourism.

In addition to the Mission District’s park system, the design principles of the City Beautiful movement influenced building architecture. Beaux-Arts-designed structures appeared shortly before the turn of the century – for instance, the first Mission High School was built in the Italian Renaissance architectural style in 1898 – they became more prevalent in the Mission during the post-fire, post-Victorian era. The process of rebuilding provided government, cultural organizations, and commercial enterprise with opportunities to recast their architectural identities in Classical Revival, Romanesque Revival, and Italian Renaissance architectural styles, and occasionally Beaux-Arts proper (the most elaborate and expensive style). The architectural movement was abetted by increased availability of brick and stone, and by innovations in reinforced concrete construction.

One of the most impressive examples of Classical commercial architecture, the Mission National Bank, resulted directly from post-fire rebuilding in the Inner Mission North. An earlier Mission National Bank building at the same location was destroyed by fire in 1906, and a semi-permanent structure was hastily rebuilt on the ruins as one of the first businesses to regain operation. In 1908, completion of a permanent reinforced concrete, Greek Revival-style edifice on the site represented a significant investment in the reconstructed neighborhood and its presence exuded confidence and stability. Later, in the 1920s, other reinforced concrete banks designed in Classical Revival styles were constructed on Mission and Valencia Streets in the southern Mission District.

San Diego’s Panama-California Exposition of 1915 introduced the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and announced a regional shift in tastes to “Mediterranean” flavor in California and the southwestern U.S. These regional styles influenced later examples of City Beautiful design in San Francisco. Rather than conforming entirely to the Beaux-Arts vocabulary of Classicism, many large and stately buildings erected after 1915 incorporated Spanish Baroque, Moorish, and Islamic ornament. For instance, the Mission Branch Library located at 24th and Bartlett Streets, built in 1915 under the “Carnegie grant” program that supported munificent construction of reading institutions in cities and towns nationwide, combined Italian Renaissance and Spanish Eclectic architectural styles to achieve a City Beautiful icon.

Another government building of the period, the clinker-brick fortress-like California National Guard Armory and

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 192.

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Arsenal completed in 1914 at Mission and 14th Streets, underscored the capacity of architecture to influence society, a tenet of the City Beautiful. However, while the Armory's design espoused order and formality, the result was counter to "beauty" as espoused by Beaux-Arts. The Armory "was an overt symbol of military power in San Francisco...Built at the northern entrance to the Mission District, a neighborhood known for its radical politics and union activism, the meaning of the Armory could not have been clearer."⁶⁵ The federal government's intention in placing the Armory in the reconstructed Inner Mission North was a somewhat direct response to the violent 1907 Carmen's strike that had erupted just a few blocks away.

Rolph, Exposition, and War

The latter part of the post-fire period began the reign of Mayor James Rolph, a native son and lifelong resident of the Mission District. "Sunny Jim" Rolph was born to a wage-earning immigrant family and he died a millionaire, a successful banker and shipper. Rolph earned much popular good will by establishing the private Mission Relief Association in his barn and feeding thousands of refugees immediately after the 1906 fires. Rolph further distinguished himself as president of the Merchants' Exchange, trustee and organizer of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Shipowners' Association (until the organization supported the open shop against labor activists), and president of the Mission Promotion Association. Rolph and other Mission politicians formed the powerful Mission Promotion Association in the aftermath of the 1906 disaster in order to lobby for better schools, libraries, streets and infrastructure, fire and police protection, parks and transit.

Following a string of corrupt, ineffective, and interim mayors in the early 20th century, "Sunny Jim" provided San Francisco with active, nonpartisan municipal leadership from 1912 to 1931. In the spirit of Phelan's 1900 City Charter, which enabled city government to direct urban development, Rolph quickly accomplished several major post-fire physical improvement projects for San Francisco between 1912 and 1916, before local and global conflicts arose. Issel and Cherny described Rolph's early successes:

Within a short time, Rolph initiated construction of a magnificent city hall and Civic Center, inaugurated the nation's first municipally owned streetcar system, launched the Hetch Hetchy project, and presided over the Panama Pacific International Exposition. While Rolph was very much at the center of all these, as initiator or energetic booster, his drive and enthusiasm failed to survive the Preparedness Day parade bombing, the war, and the labor strife that came in its wake.⁶⁶

San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915, which Rolph championed and campaigned on, was first proposed in 1904 as a way to boost the local economy. But in the post-fire period, the Exposition took on new meaning for a city seeking unity and wholeness as well as economic revitalization. After a long period of reconstruction that involved periods of martial law, refugee strife, and chaotic social restructuring, "the official return of San Francisco to normalcy was celebrated at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915." Fradkin explained the motivation of Rolph and other fair boosters:

The idea [of a world's fair] lay dormant until 1909 when, according to a history of world's fairs, it became "part of a program of economic recovery, reflecting anxieties produced by earthquake, fire, and graft trials of the intervening years"... [A] public spectacle on a large scale could divert the attention of local citizens from the woeful events of the immediate past and promote San

⁶⁵ Page & Turnbull, *Mission Street Armory, San Francisco, California, Historic Resource Evaluation, Revised Draft* (San Francisco, 2006), 39.

⁶⁶ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Politics, Power, and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 210.

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Francisco and California business enterprises to the world.⁶⁷

Under Mayor Rolph's enthusiastic direction, citywide preparations for the Exposition proceeded apace, which included creation of the fair site on filled land. The Exposition itself generated tourism, investment, and development by promoting and showcasing the upbuilt, modernized downtown, which was unique in the nation. Yet despite the forward-thinking nature of the Exposition, the overall mood of San Francisco's citizens and visitors alike was nostalgic in the wake of the long (and ongoing) reconstruction effort and recent international events. "The pastel-tinged world's fair was the last collective expression of the naïve optimism of nineteenth-century America. The early stages of World War I were being fought in Europe. For one flickering moment sandwiched between a domestic tragedy and a world war there was brightness."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Philip L. Fradkin, *The Great Earthquake and Firestorms of 1906: How San Francisco Nearly Destroyed Itself* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 341.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 343.

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VI. Interwar Period: Modernizing the Mission, 1920-1941

Growth Between Wars

In the period between World War I and World War II, as the automobile revolution took hold and new building technologies were explored, the last major surge of residential construction occurred in the Mission District. As well, commercial development progressed during a period of rapid growth in the American retail economy; and new public schools were built to serve the largest population of children ever to live in the City. In *Neighborhoods in Transition*, Godfrey explained the social and cultural environment that thrived in the Mission at that time:

The Mission District became chiefly an area of secondary ethnic settlement, a place to establish familial roots after immigrants had already arrived in the city...The Mission District remained a stable working-class neighborhood during the interwar period, inhabited for the most part by increasingly acculturated European ethnic groups whose children intermingled in school and often intermarried. The development of a characteristic local accent in the "Mish," sometimes compared to Brooklynese, reflected the area's relative stability. A long-time resident recalled in these terms the tightly knit, highly localized basis of community life in the interwar Mission District..."Our neighborhood was our world...Our church and school were only a few blocks away and nearby Mission Street offered complete shopping and entertainment...There was an overpowering sense of continuity."⁶⁹

While established families and communities of the interwar Mission District experienced stable internal growth, the city's population continued to grow from external sources. European and Asian immigration were sharply curtailed after World War I. "This did not end immigration to California, however. Increasing numbers of Mexicans replaced earlier arrivals from Europe and Asia in the California labor market. Immigration from the Philippines, then an American territory exempted from the Asian Exclusion Law, also took up the slack."⁷⁰ In addition to foreign immigration, California's population grew from migrations of U.S. northerners and easterners to the Sun Belt regions. The Sun Belt migrations were facilitated by increased mobility and communications nationwide, as well as by development of a 20th-century culture of leisure. "Of all the migration streams of the interwar period, the migration to the sun seems best to capture the zeitgeist of the 1920s and 1930s...where people moved less for economic improvement or religious principle than for reasons that were largely hedonistic...For most migrants, a new beginning meant the San Francisco Bay area or the Los Angeles plain."⁷¹ Many newcomers to San Francisco invariably gravitated to the Mission District, a large, centrally located residential area with rents consistently lower than the city average and a history of emigration.

The continued demand for housing in the densely settled Mission District, an area that was already substantially rebuilt and upbuilt during the post-fire period, led to an "in-fill" pattern of residential development during the 1920s and 1930s. This in-fill development pattern involved the removal of existing development from underutilized sites and speculative build-out according to 20th-century patterns of development. Many in-fill sites were commercial enterprises that became obsolete or incompatible with modernizing neighborhoods including: lumber yards, planing mills, marble works, wrecking yards, dairies, liveries, tanneries, factories and warehouses.

⁶⁹ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 146-147.

⁷⁰ Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California: 1985), 155.

⁷¹ Peirce Lewis, "America between the Wars: The Engineering of a New Geography," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 404-405.

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Property owners sold these commercial sites at the ends of their usefulness to realtors and contractors, who cleared them and converted them into profitable 20th-century housing. Other in-fill sites were lower-density residential properties, such as Victorian-era estates, rental row-houses, and lots with small post-fire cottages, whose owners initiated modernization and intensification.

Development of in-fill sites in the Mission District occurred primarily in two phases during the interwar period that coincided with nationwide patterns of residential construction. The first phase occurred in the 1920s, while the economy rebounded from World War I and an unprecedented quantity of housing was built in the U.S., spurred on by war-related population migrations and increased demand from lack of construction during wartime. The second phase occurred in the late 1930s and up to World War II, when commercial builders parlayed the low, Depression-era costs of property, materials, and labor into new housing whose construction and sale contributed to the nation's economic recovery.

In the Mission District, an area located equally proximate to downtown as to outlying suburbs, a duality existed in the speculative development market during the interwar period. On the one hand, increasing population pressures and advances in building technology prompted construction of rental apartment buildings for long-term profits, which was also as in keeping with historic patterns of urbanization and increasing densification. On the other hand, the suburban tradition in the Mission District was strong, as was the demand for single-family dwellings, and individual home sales provided builders with greater short-term profits. Ultimately, the Mission District took on both higher-density apartment buildings and lower-density suburban tract homes during the period of in-fill development.

Apartment Living

In the 19th-century Mission District, higher-density housing types for middle-class and working-class families resembled single-family homes in certain ways that ensured that Victorian-era propriety was maintained. Multiple-family housing included such features as divisions into row-houses and duplexes, full-floor units (flats), and separate street entrances for individual units. Multiple-unit-per-floor residential buildings, and those with common entrances, including boarding houses, residential hotels, and tenements such as were found along Mission and Valencia Streets by the turn of the century, were stigmatized as lower-class, though many contained stable populations of working-class families in addition to single men and the poor.

Nonetheless, housing densities gradually increased as demand and costs rose. By the turn of the century, the proliferation of "Romeo and Juliet" (or "Romeo") flats in the Mission District indicated the direction of change in dwelling types. These structures, apparently built only in San Francisco, represented innovative solutions to the problem of Victorian-era high-density housing. "Romeo" flats consisted of buildings with long, narrow units stacked vertically and in laterally mirrored arrangements. Though nearly as dense as modern apartment buildings, "Romeo" flats featured open-air stairwells centrally located on front façades that visually separated the side-by-side volumes, and that made individual unit entrances visible from street views. By 1905, tenement-style complexes such as Bryant Terrace (2230-2240 Bryant Street) were also viable. Bryant Terrace consisted of two long dormitory-style buildings facing each other, each three stories tall and each containing eight separate ground-level entrances and 24 "flats" (three stacked flats per entrance).

The post-fire housing crisis resulted in even greater intensification of building stock. Greater numbers of "Romeo" flats were built, including many with enclosed central stairwells that did not make apparent the existence of individual units and that presented the appearance of collective housing. In the Inner Mission North, in the heart of area that was rebuilt, a very few multiple-family dwellings with common street entrances resembling apartment buildings were constructed during the post-fire period, such as along 18th Street. These early apartment buildings, with their high levels of Classical embellishment and reasonably sized units, were

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clearly distinguished from tenements and boarding houses; examples included 12 Oakwood Street (built 1908), and 3484 and 3490-98 18th Street, a related pair (built 1909 and 1911). But as a general rule, the “upbuilding” of the family-oriented Mission District during the post-fire period occurred with stacked flats that retained separate street entrances.

However, in the early 1900s, advances in building technology and changes in the social mosaic of the city resulted in greater practicality of apartment living for urbanites increasingly finding themselves priced out of lower-density housing types. An expanded population of renters in American cities gravitated to the anonymity of apartment living as well. According to Ford in *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs*:

The development of automatic self-service elevators meant that the number of people needed to run even a tall building diminished. In Victorian times, an elevator required not only operators but a full-time engineer to keep the apparatus working. Smaller families and greater numbers of clerical workers in cities meant that design innovations such as the ‘studio’ apartment could be introduced without the slum connotation that single-room living once had...During the 1920s, housing became less gender- and race-specific...By the 1920s, some men had evolved to the point of being able to live on their own in real apartments. Conversely, working women began to occupy ‘bachelorette’ pads.”⁷²

The apartment building emerged as the signature housing type for the American metropolis in the 1920s, during which time the number of new apartments constructed eclipsed the number of single-family homes constructed. Apartment building plans organized units compactly around central elevators and stairwells in truly collective structures that departed from the linear corridor-oriented designs of Victorian/Edwardian-era multiple-family housing. In addition to the reorganization of units and increased densities within structures, apartment buildings utilized lots differently than earlier house-based multiple-family dwelling types, as described by Moudon in *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco*:

The new collective forms of the 1920s remained, as did their Victorian counterparts, tied their lot and dependent on it for both size and configuration. Yet the relationship between apartment buildings and lots differed from that of single-family dwellings and flats in several ways. First, the land coverage was more intense and buildings easily reached four to six stories...Second, the increased coverage requirements forced all buildings to be attached and, consequently, all side yards to disappear. Third, buildings were in most cases located on the property line at the street to ensure a backyard despite the bulky forms.⁷³

In the Mission District, where in-fill sites were limited by developed surroundings, apartment buildings followed the front-loaded lot layout, with structures occupying maximum street frontages and leaving open only rear yard area. Some occupied double-wide lots, but standard lots allowed for construction of apartment buildings as well, particularly at corner locations. A very few courtyard apartments (“U”-shaped complexes with semi-enclosed interior gardens) were shoehorned into the densely settled area, such as at 1637 15th Street (built 1925), west of Mission Street; though popular in southern California, courtyard apartments did not prove optimal for San Francisco’s dense settlement patterns and cooler climate.

From the exterior, apartment buildings presented singular blocks of stacked floors with flat rooflines, dominated

⁷² Larry R. Ford, *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 206.

⁷³ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 103,108.

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by regular rows of large windows, which revealed the identical nature of interior residential spaces. Multiple-window arrangements and divided lights became common design elements, and bay windows remained ubiquitous. Ground floors were characterized by grand common entrances centrally located on primary façades, sometimes flanked by commercial storefronts and/or automobile garages, which could also be found on secondary elevations of corner properties. With a few exceptions, Mission District apartment buildings did not approach the scale or level of architectural elaboration that were displayed by apartment buildings in downtown neighborhoods. Most were three or four stories of wood-frame construction with stucco-facing and applied ornament. A very few steel-frame and reinforced concrete apartment buildings, five to seven stories tall with highly embellished façades, were erected near Market Street in the northern Mission District and along the urbanized Mission-Valencia Streets corridor. For instance, the steel-frame, brick-clad, seven-story, 54-unit apartment building at 3440 25th Street, located at the corner of Bartlett Street between Mission and Valencia Streets, was built in 1932 as an example of Gothic-Revival-influenced Art Deco architecture.

The adornment of apartment building blocks during the interwar period reflected the transitions of popular architectural styles at the time. Edwardian-era influence resulted in apartment buildings with tripartite, base-shaft-capital arrangements and Classical features such as arched entries, Roman entablatures, and cast plaster ornament; examples included 3321 17th Street between Mission and Valencia Streets (built 1925) and 260 San Jose Avenue between 24th and 25th Streets (built 1928). Early on, Craftsman architectural style was employed as well, such as with a related pair of apartment buildings located at 3219 23rd Street (built 1916) and 3201 23rd Street (built 1922) at South Van Ness Avenue; they featured brick bases, rafter-like brackets, and broad eaves. Later, regional styles such as Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival became apparent on apartment buildings such as at 16 Linda Street, between 18th and 19th Street (parallel to Guerrero Street); this stucco-faced, barrel-tile-accented building replaced a coffin factory on the alley-street. By the 1930s, Art Deco architectural style was in vogue and widely used, including on the matching pair of apartment buildings at 1301 York Street (built 1933) and 2875 25th Street (built 1937).

Greater numbers of apartment buildings were erected in the Inner Mission North where the post-fire rebuilding had left behind obsolete commercial sites as well as some undeveloped remnants, and in the far southeastern corner of the Mission District, the Precita Creek neighborhood, on blocks reclaimed from large tanneries and factories that operated until the early 20th century. However, apartment buildings were also constructed throughout the Mission District, in almost every neighborhood where in-fill potential existed. Most apartment buildings were singularly built. Some related pairs of apartment buildings were constructed on in-fill sites that accommodated them, which were typically lots at corner locations. These included identical mirrored pairs as well as pairs of apartment buildings with uniform heights and architectural treatments, but with differing lot coverage and orientations, that were constructed several years apart on phased in-fill sites. A few particularly large in-fill sites were built out as groupings of apartment buildings, such as along 18th Street west of Valencia Street, where planing mills and wrecking yards were converted to metropolitan housing. Many apartment buildings were solely the expedient works of speculative builders using mass-produced materials and commonly available plans; others demonstrated higher levels of craftsmanship by skilled designer-builders; and some apartment buildings displayed the trained hands of architects (known and unknown).

Tract Housing and Entrepreneurial Vernacular

At the same time that construction of higher-density apartment buildings characterized housing patterns in U.S. cities, the development of vast tracts of lower-density, automobile-oriented housing came to define suburban landscapes throughout the nation. The widespread popularity and availability of personal automobiles, coupled with the creation of regional road infrastructures, opened up entirely new areas around cities for mass production of homes. In San Francisco, development of the western and southern reaches of the city resulted from, and responded to, the demand for automobile-oriented suburbs, even though mass transit was also

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expanded to these outer areas of the City during the interwar period. However, the compact peninsular geography of San Francisco, its historically dense settlement patterns, and the costs of land and housing precluded large, low-density suburbs with single-family homes, detached garages, and wide yards. In *Golden Gate Metropolis*, Wollenberg describes how the City's tract builders adapted to circumstances in meeting consumers' needs:

Nevertheless, after World War I most San Franciscans, like most other Californians, aspired to a single-family home and a car. Builders met this demand by designing a unique two-story wooden row house. The bottom story was devoted to a garage, storage, and perhaps a spare room. The living quarters were on the second story, often divided into a five-room floor plan. Each house had a small, rectangular backyard, and perhaps a patch of greenery in the front. The builder might also add another story to the basic plan, to produce a duplex. The fronts of the houses were decorated with stucco to conform to whatever architectural appearance was desired...It allowed San Francisco to build a large stock of single-family dwellings and conform to California's typical high rate of automobile ownership, while still retaining the city's traditional dense settlement pattern.⁷⁴

The development of early-20th-century automobile suburbs, and of San Francisco's unique stucco-faced tract homes with built-in first-story garages, represented the creation of a "vernacular," or a "commonplace fabric of architectural forms that evolve within a context of local needs and conditions," created by those with "debt to local traditions and circumstances rather than to the benefits of professional training."⁷⁵ In other words, automobile suburbs in all their variations resulted from innovators who came up with practical solutions, functionally and aesthetically, to 20th-century design problems; and builders held themselves accountable only to the tastes of the homebuyers. Builders of interwar-era suburbs responded to such diverse cultural inputs as motion picture sets, travel tourism, and popular nostalgia for colonial American and European designs. In "America between the Wars: The Engineering of a New Geography," Lewis described post-Victorian-era homes and homebuyers:

Settlers in the new suburbs could choose from a large fixed menu of styles, collectively termed "period houses of the 1920s." All period houses did not look alike, but all of them evoked the supposed architectural spirit of some far-off place or time from the vaguely historic but always picturesque past. One set of styles came putatively from the American tradition, bearing such names as "Colonial," "Federal," Cape Cod," or "Williamsburg." Another set of styles evoked picturesque Europe: neo-Tudor with imitation half-timbering and imitation leaded windows, Dutch Colonial with gambrel roofs, and a variety of "Hispanic" or Mission-style houses...Since period houses and bungalows both came in various forms, they could be set down next to one another in any of innumerable combinations. The result was not single style but rather a special mixture of styles that distinguished the automobile suburb of the 1920s.⁷⁶

The primary engineers in the development of interwar-era housing tracts, which were much more expansive (and expensive) than 19th-century rowhouse tracts, were those who could successfully balance the economics of

⁷⁴ Charles Wollenberg, *Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California: 1985), 215-216.

⁷⁵ Carolyn S. Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 2-3.

⁷⁶ Peirce Lewis, "America between the Wars: The Engineering of a New Geography," in *North America: The Historical Geography of a Changing Continent*, ed. Thomas F. McIlwraith and Edward K. Muller (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 404.

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massive land acquisitions, construction, marketing and sales, as well as the popular aesthetics of home design. Invariably, this placed real-estate developers at the center of the homebuilding industry in the early 20th century. Indeed, according to Loeb in *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s*, real-estate developers were the "entrepreneurs" who guided the development of interwar-era automobile suburb "vernacular":

[A]lthough there were roles for building-craftsmen and architects, the primary shapers of these projects were real-estate developers...Not only did realtors organize and manage a construction process; they also integrated aspects of existing suburban projects with contemporary views about housing that were being expressed and promoted by a network of early-twentieth-century housing professionals with which they were associated...*Entrepreneurial vernacular*, then, describes, the residential pattern that realtors negotiated by means of their patronage of building-craftsmen and architects, their association with a network of other housing professionals, their knowledge of the housing field, and the new organizational skills they brought to the process of urban development.⁷⁷

Mission District in-fill sites provided opportunities for suburban tract developers to apply their entrepreneurial skills in the urban environment, where there was great demand for low-density housing, and where their products could serve as advertisements to urban-dwellers for outlying suburban tracts. The largest in-fill sites, occupying significant portions of city blocks, allowed developers to mix housing types and to design new streets. The results were enclaves of interwar-era housing that were contextual to the surrounding Mission District.

In the Inner Mission North, two of the largest and most representative interwar-era housing tracts displayed the entrepreneurial synthesis of architects, marketers, and urban design professionals. The tracts were built as bookends to the period – one developed immediately after World War I, and the other developed immediately prior to World War II. In the first example, the Thompson sisters subdivided their grandfather's Victorian-era estate and built out the Hidalgo Terrace development, located on the east side of Dolores Street between 14th and 15th Streets, from 1919 to 1925. Hidalgo Terrace was designed as a suburban cul-de-sac lined with single-family homes with integrated garages, displaying Spanish Colonial, Mission Revival, and Craftsman architectural influences. In addition, Hidalgo Terrace contained a pair of three-story apartment buildings on Dolores Street at the gateway to the cul-de-sac, which provided contextual urban character as well as long-term rental income to the owners.

The second representative example of an entrepreneurial vernacular interwar-era housing tract occurred on the block located north of 19th Street between Guerrero and Lapidge Streets. There, a shuttered dairy operation from the post-fire period was demolished and the in-fill site was rebuilt as speculative housing between 1939 and 1941. The resulting housing tract featured a row of three-story flats on the north side of 19th Street, where the former dairy's street frontage was located. The tract also included single-family homes at the interior of the block flanking Linda Street, a narrow north-south alley that was extended to 19th Street as a result of the housing development. At the intersection of 19th and Linda Streets, the "hinge" of the housing tract, the speculative project was anchored by a three-story corner apartment building. This project employed Period Revival and Art Deco architectural styles in the designs of the single-family homes and flats, as well as Moderne architectural style for the apartment building.

In the far southeastern Mission District, a third example of residential tract development epitomized the kind of uniform housing tracts that were being constructed in the outlying suburbs of the city. In 1922 and 1923, most of the block of York Street between 26th and Cesar Chavez Streets was built out with identical rows of stucco-faced

⁷⁷ Carolyn S. Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 4-6.

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row-houses with integrated garages, varying only slightly in their roofline treatments. This development, indistinguishable from hundreds of other similar tracts throughout the city, demonstrated little innovation in architectural design or urban layout. While it contributed to the area's stock of single-family homes, the York Street housing tract did not so much adapt the entrepreneurial vernacular to the Mission District as it did replicate suburban development from elsewhere.

By no means were all interwar-era dwellings the results of large speculative tract developments. Many in-fill sites in the Mission District were small properties owned by individual citizens who found it desirable to build modern, automobile-oriented residences. The smaller in-fill sites resulted in singlets and small groupings of stucco-faced row-houses with ground-floor garages, mostly derived from developer tract housing. Architectural styles of individual interwar-era dwellings also drew from the entrepreneurial vernacular; stylistic influences included primarily Period Revivals in the 1920s, and Art Deco and Streamline Moderne in the 1930s. Occasional architect-designed homes were built on speculation or on custom order.

The majority of interwar-era housing in the Mission, the City, and the nation was constructed during the building boom of the 1920s. However, some homebuilding also occurred even during the 1930s, as speculators took advantage of the availability of architects, the low costs of labor, and the large stockpiles of unused building materials. These later projects extended residential patterns of the earlier interwar era, as indicated by Ford in *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs*:

From a stylistic and technological standpoint, middle-class housing in the 1930s represented a gradual continuation of the trends begun earlier. As construction picked up a bit in the late 1930s, those who could afford to buy a new house often found a very good value. Since so few builders were working and since the price of materials had plummeted, houses tended to be very well-built...The year 1938 may rank with 1912 as one of the best for well-built houses in America.⁷⁸

Commerce in Good Times, Bad Times

In the 1920s, the U.S. economy boomed as the nation rebounded from its wartime footing and production turned from military goods to consumer goods. The economy was also vivified by wartime advances in manufacturing and transportation, and by migrations of labor forces to industrial cities. The revived economy flooded the nation's markets with goods, and retailers increasingly vied for the attentions of consumers, who had more purchasing choices than ever before. "After winning the Great War, a virtually unscathed United States emerged as the world's leading industrial and commercial giant. While Europe was rebuilding, America was retooling for the massive onslaught of consumerism."⁷⁹

During this time, Mission Street, one of the City's oldest and longest retail strips, as well as the other streetcar-oriented commercial corridors of the Mission District, competed directly with San Francisco's downtown for consumer dollars, as well as with other neighborhood shopping districts. "In the American city, two major trends began to work at cross-purposes with regard to the creation [and growth] of streetcar-oriented commercial strips: the construction of bigger buildings downtown and the overextension of the strip."⁸⁰ Automobile travel for the

⁷⁸ Larry R. Ford, *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 157.

⁷⁹ Steven Heller, "Style Suggestion for a Modern American Storefront," in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, ed. Jim Heimann (Hong Kong: TASCHEN, 2007), 9.

⁸⁰ Carolyn S. Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 231.

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masses also threatened the viability of the Mission District's commercial corridors, which dated to the 19th century. However, the high population density of the Mission District, the long-established nature of its shopping strips, and its convenient location between downtown and outlying suburbs allowed the area's commercial corridors to grow and develop during the 20th century.

Mission District merchants found themselves in an era of increasing competition and proliferating brand names, "the greatest onslaught of consumerism ever." During the interwar period, the Mission Merchants Association promoted shopping on Mission Street, between 16th and Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, with stamp books that included coupons for participating merchants, advertisements, and classified business directories. In addition to joining promotional associations, individual merchants kept pace with competition and with consumer expectations by installing modern, innovative storefronts that became outdoor shopping "rooms." Previously, retailers of the early 20th century had installed elaborate, moveable displays behind plate-glass windows as a visual merchandizing technique. However, the consideration of storefronts themselves as mechanisms for visual merchandizing, and the resulting experimentation of forms, materials, and technology originated with "a marketing concept proffered during the 1920s commercial boom: that dramatic display was essential in capturing hearts, minds, and pocketbooks."⁸¹

Correspondingly, commercial architects of the interwar period redesigned traditional storefronts of the Mission District with consumer marketing in mind. Designers lengthened the small, rectangular entry vestibules into mini-corridors, or "arcades," by pushing the entry doors inward toward the shop's interior, while also lengthening the adjacent window displays. These storefront arcades lured pedestrians from their pass-bys, into brightly lit spaces where they could continue admiring wares out of the crowds, eventually finding themselves closer to a shop's interior (and its cash register) than the street. Deep arcades also proved suitable for installation in the narrow, subdivided retail slots within commercial buildings that characterized the period.

Commercial designers also experimented with the shapes of the entry arcades. During the 1920s, Art Deco architectural style inspired wedge-shaped and zigzag-shaped entrances with "corner-less" plate-glass windows (no mullions). In the 1930s, curvilinear ("waterfall") arcades were popular, inspired by the Streamline Moderne architectural style. These variegated geometries created pockets along the sides of the arcades that allowed consumers to gather and "window-shop," out of the way of the path of travel but visible to passers-by. By the 1940s, storefront entrances had widened into boxy "lobbies" that essentially served as large, outdoor display rooms, where pedestrians could move about at leisure. Storefront details often included: geometric terrazzo paving that extended from public sidewalks to shop interiors, often customized with merchant signatures; windows displays that projected into space over bulkheads; and materials such as structural glass, ceramic tile, and metal trim uses as both interior and exterior cladding. In *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, Heller explains how these storefront design innovations fundamentally changed commercial streetscapes:

The quintessential storefront was not designed merely as a showroom where merchandise was mechanically arranged and formulaically displayed. Instead, this brightly lit transformative space was conceived as a majestic platform, like a proscenium stage, where products would enthrall through all manner of arresting performances. Product displays veritably beckoned the audience to come onstage or backstage, and instead of ovations, the audience was encouraged to consume. As the storefront evolved over time, from simple window dressing to grand fourth wall, elaborate tableau framed by lush architectural details heightened the viewers' anticipation – and desire⁸²

⁸¹ Steven Heller, "Style Suggestion for a Modern American Storefront," in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, ed. Jim Heimann (Hong Kong: TASCHEN, 2007), 7.

⁸² *Ibid*, 8.

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Beyond storefronts, commercial architects of the interwar period in the Mission District were influenced by a variety of popular architectural styles. For instance, smaller wood-frame commercial and mixed-use buildings drew from the “entrepreneurial vernacular” designs of Period Revival and Modernism that were also used in residential construction. Meanwhile, larger and more substantial brick and reinforced concrete commercial buildings, including large apartment buildings with ground-floor storefronts, tended to utilize Classical styles in the 1920s. Commercial tastes trended towards Modernism as well, with Art Deco architectural style popular in the 1920s and Streamline Moderne in the 1930s. Among the most impressive examples of Modernist architecture were the Streamline Moderne remodel of the older commercial building at 2205 Mission Street with iron enamel panels, rounded corners, and a marquee/tower sign, and the Moderne renovation/expansion of the mixed-use Mission Masonic Temple with ceramic veneer, speed lines, and iconic decoration. These fully rendered Modernist examples presaged the kind of commercial development that dominated in the post-World War II period.

Unlike housing construction during the interwar period, which was mostly “in-fill” to existing residential building stock, interwar-era commercial development resulted in significant changes and additions to the Victoria/Edwardian-era shopping corridors of the Mission District. Commercial modernization resulted in the renovation, expansion, and/or complete replacement of many structures on Mission Street, as well as on Valencia, 16th and 24th Streets, according to the popular fashions and marketing strategies. These included theaters, most of which had been converted from live shows to motion pictures, and that provided important recreation to Mission District residents even during the bad times: “Life continued [during the Depression] with simple pleasures. Neighborhood movie houses were a big draw on Saturdays. At the El Capitan on Mission Street, there was an orchestra and one could spend the afternoon seeing a ‘chapter’ (part of a serial), a vaudeville act, and a feature film – all for 10¢.”⁸³

During the 1920s, storefront modernization was privately fueled by the booming retail economy. However, when the economy crashed during the early 1930s, the newly-created Federal Housing Administration (FHA) promoted a “Modernize Main Street” campaign and established a “Modernization Credit Plan” that provided low-interest private loans for renovations of existing storefronts. The federal government and the building trades industry, which backed the program and participated in it, intended to stimulate construction as well as retail activity. The program was active from 1934 to 1943, during which time many San Francisco merchants obtained government-insured loans and modernized their commercial storefronts.



Mission and 22nd Streets, 1924. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.



Mission and 22nd Streets, 1936. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

⁸³ Bernadette C. Hooper, *San Francisco's Mission District* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 8.

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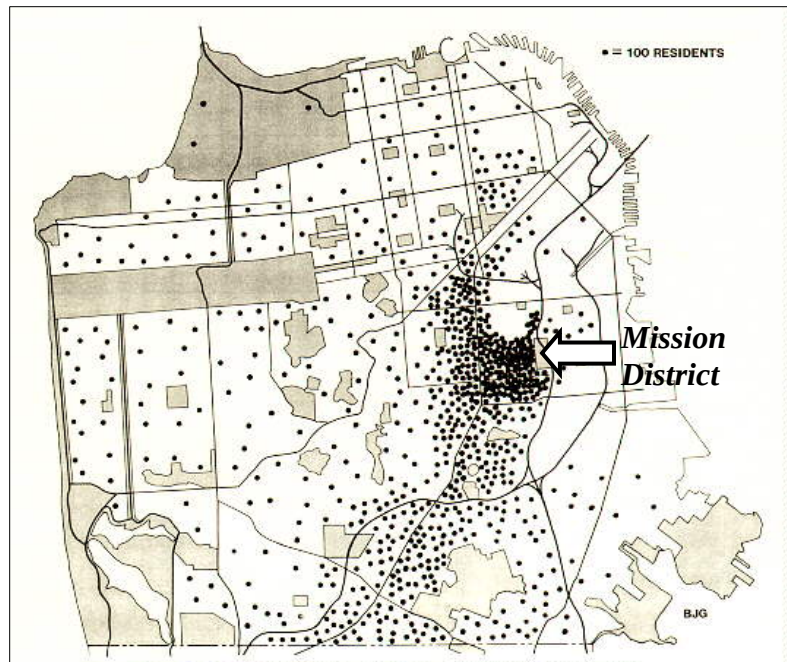
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VII. World War II and Postwar Period, 1941-1960

Latino Settlement and Community

By the time of World War II, the physical development of the Mission District's residential neighborhoods was mostly complete. Postwar-era infill, where it occurred, proceeded along much the same lines of development as during the interwar period, including construction of apartment buildings and medium-density, automobile-integrated row-houses. But for the most part, the Mission District's building stock consisted of aging 19th-century and early 20th-century wood-frame residences that were increasingly subdivided into greater numbers of rental units, as descendants of the original settler families migrated to the suburbs. "By the beginning of World War II, the Mission District had experienced a steady downward filtration of the housing stock and was ready for a process of ethnic succession."⁸⁴

Major changes in the social composition of San Francisco's oldest residential neighborhoods were wrought during World War II and the postwar period, including in the Mission District. Population shifts during the war resulted from military conscription of existing residents, migration of wartime workers from the eastern and southern U.S., and Japanese internment. Many of these wartime population shifts resulted in permanent relocations. After the war, the inexorable movement of established middle-class families from older residential neighborhoods to automobile-oriented suburbs accelerated. "World War II marked a historic watershed for San Francisco: only the Gold Rush, and arguably the earthquake and fire, had greater impacts on the cultural landscape...World War II unleashed forces that ultimately served both to erode a number of older white ethnic communities...and to create many of San Francisco's contemporary minority communities."⁸⁵



Distribution of Latino population in San Francisco, 1980. Source: Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 114.

The postwar Mission District experienced a historic shift in cultural composition and character. Over time, Latino families, businesses, religious congregations, and social organizations moved into the Mission District, replacing earlier residents and establishments that had relocated to newer suburbs. The Latino population of the postwar Mission District included mostly Mexicans, as well as Central and South Americans, and Caribbeans; later, an influx of Nicaraguans and El Salvadorans occurred. Unlike in other older residential neighborhoods of San Francisco, where the transition from "Old World" European to minority ethnic populations proceeded rapidly, the changes in the Mission District were more gradual, more predictable, and followed traditional patterns of

⁸⁴ Brian J. Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 148.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 94.

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sociocultural migration in San Francisco. "Like other immigrant groups before them – such as the Irish, German, Scandinavians – Latin Americans began during the interwar period to move southwestward from the South-of-Market area, following the street grid into the Mission District, clustering initially in the North Mission."⁸⁶

The numbers of residents of the Mission District with Spanish surnames increased from 11% of the total population in 1950, to 23% in 1960, and to 45% in 1970. Within the Mission District, Latino migration followed a north-to-south geographic pattern. Initially, newcomers gravitated to the Inner Mission North's greater quantity of rental flats, and 16th Street became the first commercial strip in the Mission District with a concentration of Latino restaurants, bakeries, specialty shops and a church in the 1940s. As Latino families and communities became established, they moved southward into the Mission District's vast stock of Victorian-era single-family homes. Eventually, the southern and eastern areas of the Mission District became solidly Latino neighborhoods, as described by Godfrey in *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities*:

Twenty-fourth Street in the Mission Core has become the banner street...St. Peter's Catholic Church, at 24th and Florida streets, now has an overwhelmingly Spanish-speaking congregation and is a more important religious congregation than the traditional national church in North Beach. Local businesses also reflect the population of the surrounding *barrio* streets. As opposed to the higher-rent properties on Mission Street, where national chain stores and larger commercial operations predominate, the businesses on 24th Street are smaller, more often family run, and highly ethnic in character...The most common businesses have been restaurants, grocery stores, and specialty shops...At least 50 major public murals have been painted in the area since the 1970s, inspired by Latin American muralists and emphasizing the Hispanic presence...⁸⁷

Mission Miracle Mile

The U.S. experienced an economic boom in the period after World War II that was even more intense than the economic expansion that occurred after the First World War. Following the long Depression of the 1930s and several years of wartime rationing and production, a torrent of pent-up consumerism swept through the economic landscape. The postwar consumer economy was fueled by unprecedented growth and prosperity for the American middle classes. "Retail spending surged from 1945 to 1955, spurred by higher populations, saved-up war wages, salaries that had effectively doubled, and the formation of millions of new households and their suburban homes... [T]he generation that came of age in the U.S. after World War II was, arguably, the richest age cohort of humans in the history of the earth."⁸⁸

However, the changing geographies of postwar communities challenged the vitality of older urban shopping districts, such as the Mission District's commercial corridors. As established residents increasingly left the area for outlying suburbs, the historic customer base for local businesses diminished. The dominance of automobiles, the need for parking, and the development of exurban options for shopping and services worked against the success of urban retail districts. "Beginning in the late 1940s and gaining momentum in the 1950s to the 1970s, downtown retailing lost momentum. No new department stores opened in most downtowns after World War II, and additions and expansions essentially stopped during the 1950s... Shopping centers were the new rage."⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 148.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 155-156.

⁸⁸ Paul Groth, *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers* (2005), 6. (Unpublished draft. Courtesy of the author.)

⁸⁹ Larry R. Ford, *Cities and Buildings: Skyscrapers, Skid Rows, and Suburbs* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University

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In efforts to counter the trend of suburbanization, Mission District merchants ramped up their promotions. The Mission Merchants Association promoted Mission Street, from 16th to Army (Cesar Chavez) Streets, as the "Mission Miracle Mile," similar to other "miracle mile" shopping district in U.S. cities (including Southern California, where they originated) but the only one in San Francisco. The Merchants Association also organized the installation of seasonal holiday decorations (typically "Mission bells") as well as district-wide promotional sales. "Dollar Days were very popular on Mission Street...Shoppers crowded over 400 district stores to take advantage of bargains during the twice-yearly sale. Locals referred to shopping on that street as 'going down Mission.'"⁹⁰ While the Mission Miracle Mile in strict definition was limited to Mission Street, which received the greatest share of consumer activity, the parallel corridor of Valencia Street, and the intersecting retail strips of 16th and 24th Streets, also benefitted from the promotions and activity, as did side-spurs of retail strips on other east-west numbered streets.



Mission and 22nd Streets, 1924. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.



Mission Street near 23rd Street, 1936. Courtesy of the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection.

As they did in the interwar years, merchants also turned to innovative storefront architecture as a way to attract customers and generate business. Postwar renovations, often involving wholesale alterations to storefronts and façades of older commercial buildings, represented a last-ditch attempt by business owners to maintain the urban shopping districts as vital and thriving. "In some cities, stores and storefronts from 1945 to 1955 were the last major retail investments in the downtown."⁹¹ Even though Americans were slower to accept truly "modern" storefront innovations than were Europeans, who set the pace, the postwar period finally saw widespread acceptance of commercial Modernism and a reduction of interest in architectural historicism. In the Mission District, this trend was noticeable by the late 1930s when large, fully rendered Moderne designs were constructed

Press, 1994), 110.

⁹⁰ Bernadette C. Hooper, *San Francisco's Mission District* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 107

⁹¹ Paul Groth, *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers* (2005), 6. (Unpublished draft. Courtesy of the author.)

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on Mission Street; these early examples proved influential to the postwar generation of commercial designers. "Store designs had to evoke otherworldliness to transform the ordinary into an unparalleled experience...When the post-World War II building boom began, the need for more stylish stores increased, and these contemporary retail portals came to define standardized marketing aesthetics."⁹²

Mid-century retail designs (which were pioneered decades earlier in Paris, New York and Los Angeles) departed radically from earlier commercial traditions by treating entire building façades as display objects. Elements and materials that originated as interior or storefront features, such as structural glass, extruded metal trim, and spotlight illumination, were applied to the exteriors of façades. Solid, horizontal or tilted awnings were installed over storefronts, often supporting freestanding metal sign letters. Above that, historic building materials and features were covered by modern metal screens, ceramic tile panels, or plain stucco walls with projecting geometric signage. Upper stories (where present) often contained ribbon windows with flat trim. For individual storefront designs, the degree of distinction and the level of detail depended on its source. "While individual architects created their own iterations of the dominant style, which included store names made of large Gothic letters, glass-block surfaces, and cantilevered marquees, various American glass manufacturers and construction companies serving retail entrepreneurs offered subtle alterations on a typical layout."⁹³ When making storefront upgrades, Mission District merchants typically chose from among the various designs that were commercially available; less frequently they employed architects for custom renovations.

While storefront designers of the earlier interwar period experimented with various entry shapes, such as vestibules, arcades, and lobbies, which blurred the thresholds between street spaces and shop spaces – in fact, they created entirely new, nebulous spaces between streets and shops – mid-century commercial architects attempted to eliminate the thresholds altogether. They accomplished this through "visual front" or "open-front" designs that provided maximum exposure of goods for small shops that competed for street presence in dense retail environments. "Modern storefronts were dedicated to certain principles of visibility. One typical catalog's sales pitch noted, 'Vision begins at the bulkhead and continues up to the ceiling,' to give the customer a sense of monumentality even in a store that has 'narrow frontage or a middle-of-the-block location.'"⁹⁴ Open-front storefronts were first used by large mixed-merchandise stores, such as department stores and grocery stores, and soon became the modern standard. In his lecture *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth identified the significance of the open-front design:

In general, the completely transparent front, adopted in the post-World War II decades, was the most important shift in ordinary storefronts in the entire twentieth century. This form became known as the "open-front," or "see-through" shop window. With an "open-front shop," the whole store becomes a window display. The lines between street, sidewalk, and store are merged. The store is no longer a visually semi-private realm, but a place where shoppers as well as goods are on full, public view.⁹⁵

Open-front storefronts were constructed with tall plate-glass windows as the predominant element, often set at angles tilted out over the street; bulkheads were minimized or eliminated altogether. The window-walls, without intervening product displays, provided unobstructed views into shop interiors, where the full scope of affordable treasures within could be grasped. Earlier open-front window-walls were setback at diagonals from the sidewalk,

⁹² Steven Heller, "Style Suggestion for a Modern American Storefront," in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*, ed. Jim Heimann (Hong Kong: TASCHEN, 2007), 11-12.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 11.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

⁹⁵ Paul Groth, *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers* (2005), 11. (Unpublished draft. Courtesy of the author.)

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and were intended as “scoops” to draw pedestrians inward towards entrances. Eventually, as visibility became the premium and needs for merchandise space trumped attempts to physically direct pedestrians, window-walls were brought forward parallel to the sidewalk, such that only invisible glass separated pedestrians from goods.

Mission Street, the “Miracle Mile,” became a hotbed for mid-century design renovations. In particular, storefront modernization was focused on the Mission Street blocks located between approximately 21st and 23rd Streets, where a concentration of theaters, department stores, jewelers, appliance stores, and the Masonic Temple comprised the heart of the “mile.” Postwar commercial renovations were less common, but nonetheless occurred, on other commercial strips, such as Valencia, 16th, and 24th Streets, which relied to a greater degree on a stable clientele of local residents and customers seeking specialized goods and services. Still, individual merchants and commercial building owners throughout the Mission District, including “pop culture” establishments such as record stores, salons, and fast-food restaurants, were compelled to renovate or build anew according to postwar fashions. Also, the rise of the International architectural style influenced construction of nearly all kinds of properties during the postwar period, including residences, apartments, office buildings, and churches.

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I. General Eligibility Requirements for Historic Register Listings

The following eligibility requirements for listing on historic registers were developed specifically for evaluating properties located in the residential and commercial neighborhoods of San Francisco's Mission District. Requirements for determining the eligibility of properties, including evaluation of significance and assessment of integrity and its aspects, are based on established criteria and standards of the National Park Service and the California State Office of Historic Preservation, and application of the eligibility requirements was informed by an area-wide field survey and comparative analysis of properties, as well by a fully developed historic context statement. The survey and comparative analysis supplied a detailed understanding of architectural styles, distributions of property types and periods of construction, and conditions of properties within the area.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places ("National Register") is the official list of recognized properties of national, State, or local significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture, and worthy of preservation. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation define the scope of the National Register; they identify the range of resources and kinds of significance that will qualify properties for listing in the National Register. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.¹

National Register-eligible properties are demonstrated to be *exceptional* examples of the period and place. Within San Francisco's Mission District, National Register-eligible possess features that convey historical origins, associations, character, designs, and styles (if style is present) in ways that are unique and/or superior in comparison to other properties. These include unusual and/or fully realized designs associated with period and place; rare property types that are important representations of period and place; and properties with specific, unique historical associations to period and place. National Register-eligible groupings of properties (districts) are demonstrated to collectively convey significance that is greater than that of individual properties (which may or may not be individually significant).

National Register-eligible properties retain *all* aspects of integrity. Within San Francisco's Mission District, National Register-eligible properties retain location (which may include historic relocation), design, feeling and association to the fullest extent. Minor changes to materials, workmanship, and/or setting (including the subject site and the immediate surroundings) may occur, provided that each aspect remains intact, and provided that design, feeling, and association are not affected. National Register-eligible groupings of properties (districts)

¹ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1991; rev. 1999), 1-2.

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collectively retain all aspects of integrity, including location, design, feeling, and association to the fullest extent, though contributing properties may vary as to individual retention of aspects.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historical Resources ("California Register") is an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change. Historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the following California Register criteria and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.²

California Register-eligible properties include National Register-eligible properties, as well as properties that may not be exceptional examples but that are *distinctive* examples of the period and place. Within San Francisco's Mission District, California Register-eligible properties possess features that convey historic origins, associations, character, designs, and styles (if style is present) more so than the vast majority of other properties (with the exception of National Register-eligible properties). These include usual and/or standard designs associated with period and place; common property types that are important representations of period and place; and properties with general historical associations to period and place. Properties that lack the unusual, rare, and/or unique nature required to be National Register-eligible may be California Register-eligible. California Register-eligible groupings of properties (districts) are demonstrated to collectively convey significance that is greater than that of individual properties (which may or may not be individually significant).

California Register-eligible properties retain *all or almost all* aspects of integrity. Within San Francisco's Mission District, location of California Register-eligible properties may be altered, provided that relocation from a historic site was necessary in order to preserve the property, and provided that the relocated site is compatible with the historic character and use in terms of orientation, setting, and general environment.³ Minor changes to materials, workmanship, and/or setting (including the subject site and the immediate surroundings) may occur, provided that each aspect remains mostly intact, and provided that design, feeling, and association are also retained. Properties that lack sufficient integrity required to be National Register-eligible may be California Register-eligible.⁴ California Register-eligible groupings of properties (districts) collectively retain all or almost all aspects of integrity, most importantly design, feeling, and association, though contributing properties may vary as to

² California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #10, California State Law and Historic Preservation* (2005), 67.

³ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistance Bulletin #6, California Register and National Register: A Comparison* (2006), 3. (Currently being revised by the California Office of Historic Preservation.)

⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

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individual retention of aspects.

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II. Early History: Ohlone, Spanish, and Mexican, pre-1850

Location and Distribution of Resources

The only extant, Hispanic-era (pre-1850) building located in the Mission District is the Mission Dolores chapel, which stands on the west side of Dolores Street south of 16th Street, adjacent to a small cemetery that contains both Hispanic-era and U.S.-era remains. Other Hispanic-era buildings and structures were clustered around the site of the Dolores chapel, and individual dwellings were located in various places in and around the Mission valley. However, these structures were generally small, unsubstantial adobe and/or lightly framed wood structures, and most disappeared within the first few generations of U.S. settlement. Those still remaining in the Mission at the end of the 19th century, such as along 16th Street, were removed by fire in 1906 or by new construction shortly thereafter.

The chapel of Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores), a substantial adobe and redwood-beam structure, was erected and decorated by mission neophytes under the direction of Father Palou between 1782 and 1791, and it was faithfully restored by Willis Polk in 1915-16. The mission chapel, recognized as a cultural landmark throughout its existence, provides the only intact architectural link in San Francisco to the cultures that preceded the U.S. in California, including the Ohlone (post-contact), the Spanish, and the Mexicans. The only other extant building in San Francisco known to have pre-U.S. origins is the Officers Club at the Presidio, which incorporated a portion of the old Spanish command post structure. The Mission Dolores chapel property is San Francisco Landmark No. 1 as well as California State Historical Landmark No. 327.

Geographic aspects of the pre-U.S. era other than buildings and structures influenced later development of the Mission District. The oldest roads in the region, El Camino Real and the Mission Road, set the routes for modern thoroughfares such as Dolores, Valencia, Mission, and 16th Streets. The Mexican-era land grant to the Dolores parish church facilitated the conversion of the former mission complex into a modern grouping of Catholic churches, schools, and institutions at the site of the original mission settlement. Also, the Mexican-era rancho grants in the Mission valley became the basis for long-lasting divisions of property, some of which were perpetuated as irregular lot lines and street alignments (such as Chula Lane, which borders the Mission Dolores chapel property) in the otherwise orderly pattern of rectangular blocks in the Mission District.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores)

- Chapel
- Cemetery

Archeological

- Native American
- Hispanic

Resource Eligibility Requirements

In general, resource eligibility requirements do not apply, as only a single historic structure is known to be associated with the pre-1850 period. However, any extant structure that dates to the period, regardless of condition, should be considered a historic resource, given the extreme rarity and importance of such a property.

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III. U.S Expansionism and Pioneer Settlement, 1850-1880

Location and Distribution of Resources

Buildings and structures of the U.S. pioneer era (1850-1880), generally rare in San Francisco, are fairly well represented in portions of the Mission District. This phenomenon is largely due to the Mission District's location at the outer edge of the "instant city" and its distance from the downtown core. While downtown San Francisco (and the majority of the City's pioneer-era building stock) was utterly destroyed in the fires of 1906 – as well as the Inner Mission North with exceptions of blocks east of Shotwell/Howard/Capp Streets and west of Dolores Street – the three-day firestorm was finally halted in the Mission before it could spread south of 20th Street. Thus the Mission's remaining pioneer-era building stock emerged from the catastrophe as much rarer and with magnified importance in connection to the earliest period of U.S. settlement in San Francisco.

In the Inner Mission North (approximately north of 20th Street), some extant pioneer-era building stock is found on either sides of the 1906 firebreaks. West of Dolores Street, within the Mission Dolores neighborhood, stand the two Tanforan Cottages, which were possibly shipped "around-the-horn" and erected in 1853-54; the neighborhood also contains a small enclave of 1860s-70s dwellings on alleys located directly south of the mission chapel property, as well as individual pioneer-era dwellings scattered throughout. In the eastern part of the Inner Mission North, extant pioneer building stock is located in the early transit corridor of Folsom-Howard (South Van Ness Avenue) Streets, inclusive of parallel residential streets Shotwell and Capp, and east-west numbered streets.

In the southern Mission District (approximately south of 20th Street), where the 1906 fires did not reach, the greatest numbers of extant pioneer-era buildings are found. Buildings from the 1860s-70s, and groupings of buildings, are intermixed with later 19th-century buildings to form "Victorian-era" streetscapes. Pioneer-era building stock is concentrated around early transportation routes: the San Jose Road corridor (Bartlett, Valencia, San Jose Avenue, Guerrero Streets); the central Mission valley transit corridor (Folsom, Shotwell, Howard, Capp Streets); and the eastern Mission area between 22nd and 24th Streets (including Alabama, Florida, and York Streets). While the former two areas reflected early middle-class and upper middle-class suburbs, with many large homes and detached town-houses, the latter area indicated mixed-class and working-class neighborhoods, with smaller homes, cottages, and attached row-houses. As well as residences, a few pioneer-era commercial buildings are scattered throughout the area, including on Mission Street. However, no churches or other cultural institutions built before the 1880s are known to remain in the Mission District.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Residential

- Cottages (single-story)
- Farmhouses (two-story with gable roof)
- Town-houses (with parapet)
- Row-houses (attached/detached)
- "Villa" houses/mansions
- Boarding/hotels/mixed-use (residential-over-commercial)

Commercial

- Single-story
- Mixed-use (residential-over-commercial)

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Outbuildings

- Barns/stables
- Wagon-houses
- Tank-house towers

Architectural Styles

- Greek Revival
- Gothic Revival
- Italianate
- Railroad/National vernacular

Resource Eligibility Requirements

In evaluating pioneer-era building stock, due consideration is given to vernacular examples and “organic” designs, as well as to examples of high-style architecture, that reflect the Mission District’s “bonanza age.” In addition to architecture that was imported from the eastern U.S., literally and figuratively, the appearance of many of the earliest structures was influenced by limited building materials, availability of skilled builders, and necessity for expedient construction. Even as local mills, carpenters, and architects began to use standardized building practices and materials, and to produce more elaborate structures, the “homesteading” nature of many of the Mission’s residents, often working-class immigrants, translated into smaller, plainer dwellings. In many cases, the initial small cottages served as “starter” homes, which were expanded, upgraded, and decorated in later stages. Therefore, to the extent that alterations have maintained the original forms, massing, entrance and fenestration patterns, material types, and levels of workmanship of pioneer-era residences, some changes to original fabric and building site can occur and still allow for historic character to be preserved, especially with vernacular properties that lacked true architectural style.

In assessing integrity of individual properties, the following aspects and features specifically relate to properties of the U.S. pioneer settlement period:

- Location – original location (including relocation on the same site) or relocation from another site that occurred historically, provided that the relocation maintained appropriate site orientation
- Design – building shape, height, number of stories; fenestration/entrance openings and patterns; window/entrance trim; roofline and cornice/gable features; style (if present)
- Materials – wood cladding (clapboard siding, cove siding, board-and-batten); wood doors (glazed /paneled); wood windows (double-hung, 4-light sash); wood trim and detail
- Workmanship (related to common alterations) – re-cladding; window/door replacement; changes to fenestration/entrance openings (including addition of projecting bay windows); horizontal side/rear additions
- Setting – front/side yards; pre-automobile street orientation; outbuildings; scale/character of adjacent properties

See also Appendices for more information on location, distribution, and types of identified historic resources and historic districts.

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IV. Streetcar Suburbs of the Gilded Age, 1880-1906

Location and Distribution of Resources

Buildings and structures of the Mission District's "Gilded Age" of streetcar suburb development (1880-1906) comprise the majority of its building stock located approximately south of 20th Street. The southern Mission District is one of only a few areas within San Francisco that retains 19th-century building stock and intact Victorian-era streetscapes. Most of Victorian-era San Francisco was utterly destroyed in the fires of 1906 – including the Inner Mission North area with exceptions of blocks east of Shotwell/Howard/Capp Streets and west of Dolores Street – before the three-day firestorm was finally halted at 20th Street in the Mission District. The remaining Victorian-era neighborhoods of San Francisco, which now occupy a minority of the city's area and comprise a minority of its total building stock, are important elements of historic San Francisco. "The old city of San Francisco is indelibly marked by its legacy of Victorian homes, some 10,000 in number, lying in a grand arc around the City's burnt-out core of 1906, the date when the earth shook and Victorian building came to an abrupt end. The self-conscious urbanity of the late 19th century is vital to San Francisco's feeling of being a true city."⁵

In the southern Mission District (approximately south of 20th Street), where the 1906 fires did not reach, the greatest numbers of "Gilded Age" buildings are found. Buildings from the 1880s, 1890s, and turn-of-the-century period are intermixed with earlier pioneer-era buildings to form "Victorian-era" streetscapes. Where pioneer neighborhoods were already established, in the central Mission's oldest transit corridors, the later 19th-century building stock still accounts for about half of the total. In areas where pioneer settlement was thin or nonexistent, such as in the eastern and southern Mission, "Gilded Age" building stock is predominant. In a continuation of earlier development patterns, the western and central neighborhoods of the Mission contained the majority of the middle-class and upper middle-class housing, while the eastern and southern Mission neighborhoods were more solidly middle-class and lower middle-class, with smaller homes, cottages, and attached row-houses. The major retail corridors of Mission, Valencia, 16th, and 24th Streets contain 19th-century commercial and mixed-use building stock, though much of it has been altered or replaced over time. Victorian-era churches and other cultural institutions are located along major thoroughfares and at prominent neighborhood corners.

In the Inner Mission North (approximately north of 20th Street), pre-fire building stock is found only on either sides of the 1906 firebreaks. West of Dolores Street, the Mission Dolores neighborhood consists primarily of buildings constructed between approximately 1880 and 1906, following the neighborhood's extended period as a rural agricultural area. East of the firebreak of Shotwell-Howard (South Van Ness Avenue)-Capp Streets, in the central Mission area, extant pockets of Victorian-era development represent the northern portion of the Folsom-Howard Streets streetcar suburb corridor of the "Gilded Age," which is more intact south of 20th Street.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Residential

- Cottages (single-story)
- Row-houses (attached/detached)
- Individual houses (owner-built and/or architect-designed)
- Mansions

⁵ Richard Walker, "Classy City: Residential Realms of the Bay Area," 2004 (on-line version revised 2002), http://geography.berkeley.edu/PeopleHistory/faculty/R_Walker/ClassCity.pdf (accessed October 13, 2010). Previously published version: "Landscape and City Life: Four Ecologies of Residence in the San Francisco Bay Area," *Ecumene* 2:1 (1995): 33-64.

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- Multi-family flats and duplexes, triplexes, etc.
- Boarding/hotels/mixed-use (residential-over-commercial)

Commercial

- Single-story shops
- Mixed-use buildings (residential-over-commercial)
- Arcades (multiple-unit/multiple-story)
- Manufacturing/warehouses
- Liveries/stables

Institutions

- Churches
- Schools
- Fraternal halls

Outbuildings

- Barns/stables
- Wagon-houses
- Depots

Architectural Styles

- Italianate (later)
- Stick (and Eastlake)
- Queen Anne (and Shingle)
- Classical Revival

Resource Eligibility Requirements

In evaluating late 19th-century building stock, particular attention is paid to retention and conveyance of architectural style (though not necessarily "high style"), which was an important component of most "Gilded Age" design. In this regard, later 19th-century building stock differed from earlier pioneer-era building stock, which was often vernacular in appearance and construction. Therefore, retention of key decorative and stylistic features that were original to the designs of late 19th-century buildings is important for consideration of historic status, including for owner-built and contractor-built homes as well as for architect-designed examples. For buildings that were designed without a premium on stylistic detail or character, such as modest dwellings, commercial buildings, and outbuildings, greater attention should be paid to retention of materials and workmanship as character-defining features. Although the historic designs of most late 19th-century cultural institutions such as churches incorporated style in important ways, consideration may still be given to those institutions that may not retain a majority of stylistic features but that still exhibit singular historic character through form, massing, materials, location and setting.

In assessing integrity of individual properties, the following aspects and features specifically relate to property types of the period of Gilded Age streetcar suburbs:

- Location – original location (including relocation on the same site) or relocation from another site that occurred historically, provided that the relocation maintained appropriate site orientation

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- Design – building shape, height, number of stories; fenestration/entrance openings and patterns; window/entrance trim; roofline and cornice/gable features; style (typically present)
- Materials – wood cladding (cove siding, flush siding); wood doors (glazed /paneled); wood windows (double-hung; attic casements); wood trim and detail; applied cast plaster ornament; brick base (occasional)
- Workmanship (related to common alterations) – re-cladding; window/door replacement; changes to fenestration/entrance openings (including addition of units); horizontal side/rear additions; storefront additions/insertions; automobile garage insertions
- Setting – front/side yards; pre-automobile street orientation; scale/character of adjacent properties (especially row-houses)

See also Appendices for more information on location, distribution, and types of identified historic resources and historic districts.

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V. Post-Earthquake and Fire, 1906-1920

Location and Distribution of Resources

The location and distribution of post-fire-era buildings within the Mission District is sharply defined by the historical events of the disaster. Within the area of the Inner Mission North that burned in 1906 (as well as isolated areas of filled marshland that were damaged by the earthquake), bounded by Market Street to north, 20th Street to south, Shotwell Street/South Van Ness Avenue/Capp Street to east, and Dolores Street to west, the building stock consists almost entirely of structures erected in the decade after the disaster. These buildings and landscapes erected to replace those that were destroyed within the fire area represent not only typical structures of the period, but also physical manifestations of the events of the post-fire rebuilding as it occurred in the Mission District. For the most part, post-fire construction resulted in uniformly designed multiple-family dwellings; higher-density buildings are found along commercial corridors, and single-family dwellings are interspersed among larger buildings on residential blocks.

The areas of the Mission District that were not destroyed in 1906 also contain post-fire building stock, including the Inner Mission North east of Shotwell/Howard/Capp Streets and west of Dolores Street, and the southern Mission District south of 20th Street. However, in these areas the "reconstruction" building stock consists of a minority of structures scattered throughout the earlier Victoria-era neighborhoods. These included properties with existing structures and open front lots or back lots that were built out with additional buildings. Post-fire era buildings erected outside of the fire zone during the peak of reconstruction, within two or three years of the 1906 disaster, are also associated with the intense efforts to supply the city's refugees with housing.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Residential

- Cottages (refugee housing)
- Multi-family flats and apartments
- Residential hotels
- Mixed use (residential-over-commercial)
- Houses

Commercial

- Single-story
- Mixed-use (residential-over-commercial)
- Manufacturing/light industrial plant

Institutions

- Churches
- Hospitals
- Fraternal halls
- Social organizations
- Military

Public Open Space/Recreation

- Parks
- Facility buildings (pools, clubhouses, etc.)

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- Monuments
- Street medians

Architectural Styles

- Refugee/reconstruction vernacular
- Classical Revival
- Mission Revival
- Moorish
- Craftsman
- Beaux-Arts
- Romanesque Revival

Resource Eligibility Requirements

In evaluating post-fire-era building stock, greatest historical association is applied to those actually located within areas destroyed by the earthquake and fires of 1906, the Inner Mission North, as well as those constructed outside of the fire zone during the peak of the reconstruction, approximately before 1910. As with pioneer-era building stock, many of the earliest post-fire properties were vernacular structures with little ornamentation or concession to style. To the extent that alterations have maintained the original forms, massing, entrance and fenestration patterns, material types, and levels of workmanship of early post-fire-era residences, some changes to original fabric and building site can occur and still allow for historic character to be preserved, especially with vernacular properties that lacked true architectural style. As construction progressed during the post-fire period, architectural styles and embellishments again became important design considerations. Therefore, retention of key decorative and stylistic features that were original to the designs of Edwardian-era buildings is important for consideration of historic status, including for owner-built and contractor-built homes as well as for architect-designed examples. Although the historic designs of most early 20th-century cultural institutions such as churches and fraternal halls incorporated style in important ways, consideration may still be given to those institutions that may not retain a majority of stylistic features but that still exhibit singular historic character through form, massing, materials, location and setting.

In assessing integrity of individual properties, the following aspects and features specifically relate to property types of the post-fire era:

- Design – building shape, height, number of stories; fenestration/entrance openings and patterns; window/entrance trim; façade detail; roofline and cornice/gable features; style (not always present in early reconstruction)
- Materials – wood cladding (flush siding, cove siding, clapboard-panel siding); rusticated stucco base (common); brick base (occasional); wood doors (glazed/paneled); wood windows (double-hung, casement, Palladian/Chicago-style arrangements); plate-glass windows and hexagonal tile paving (commercial only); wood trim and detail; applied cast plaster ornament
- Workmanship (related to common alterations) – re-cladding; window/door replacement; automobile garage insertions; fenestration/entrance openings and patterns
- Setting – pre-automobile street orientation; scale/character of adjacent properties; uniform/consistent streetscape (typical)

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See also Appendices for more information on location, distribution, and types of identified historic resources and historic districts.

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VI. Interwar Period: Modernizing the Mission, 1920-1941

Location and Distribution of Resources

Consistent with the “in-fill” pattern of development that prevailed during the period, buildings constructed during the interwar era are scattered throughout the neighborhoods of the Mission District. Certain locations contain greater concentrations of interwar-era buildings – such as along the commercial corridors, next to the railroad right-of-way, and at the outer edges of the Mission District – but overall, there is no pattern to their distributions other than the locations and sizes of the in-fill sites themselves, which occurred on almost every block.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Residential

- Apartments
- Tract housing

Commercial

- Small (one- to two-story)
- Large (three- to four-story)
- Mixed-use (apartments)
- Theaters
- Storefronts

Schools

Architectural Styles

- Renaissance Revival
- Craftsman
- Spanish Eclectic
- Art Deco
- Streamline Moderne
- Exotic Revival
- Fairytale/Storybook (commercial)
- “Entrepreneurial vernacular”

Resource Eligibility Requirements

In evaluating interwar-era building stock, particular attention should be paid to architectural styles, which were important elements of period design. However, “styles” of the period consisted not only of works designed by professionally trained architects, but also of the “entrepreneurial vernacular” that came to characterize buildings of the era. Therefore, retention of key decorative and stylistic features that were original to the designs of interwar-era buildings is important for consideration of historic status, including for owner-built and contractor-built homes as well as for architect-designed examples. Also important to the designs of interwar-era properties are retention of original entrance and fenestrations patterns, including automobile entrances and/or storefronts, which distinguish buildings of the era from earlier Victorian-era and Edwardian-era row-house developments. As well, significant individual examples of interwar-era residential design should demonstrate a particular

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quality of rarity or uniqueness in design, while significant groupings of properties should also demonstrate urban design and planning principles of the period. Significant commercial properties should demonstrate intact storefronts of the period; most buildings should also demonstrate an overall integrated commercial design, though some properties may qualify based solely on unique, unusual, or representative storefront design.

In assessing integrity of individual properties, the following aspects and features specifically relate to property types of the interwar period:

- Design – building shape, height, number of stories; fenestration/entrance openings and patterns (including automobile garage); window/entrance trim; façade detail; roofline and cornice features; style (may be “entrepreneurial vernacular” and not high-style); storefront shape and elements
- Materials – stucco cladding (smooth, pebbled, brushed); brick/stone/aggregate veneer base (common); wood doors (glazed/solid); wood windows (double-hung, casement, tripartite); wood trim and detail; cast plaster ornament; multi-hued tile cladding and terrazzo paving (commercial only)
- Workmanship (related to common alterations) – recladding; window/door replacement (including automobile garage); storefront renovation within older buildings
- Setting – automobile orientation; scale/character of adjacent properties (especially tract housing); uniform/consistent streetscape (especially tract housing)

See also Appendices for more information on location, distribution, and types of identified historic resources and historic districts.

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VII. World War II and Postwar Period, 1941-1960

Location and Distribution of Resources

While very little new construction occurred during the postwar period, a great deal of exterior renovation/remodeling activity swept through the Mission District's commercial corridors, including the "Mission Miracle Mile" of Mission Street primarily, as well as Valencia, 16th and 24th Streets to lesser degrees. Other properties constructed (or renovated) during the period, including residential, office, and institutions are scattered very thinly throughout the Mission District.

Summary of Property Types and Sub-types

Commercial Storefronts and Street Façades

- "Open-front"
- Mid-century commercial

Architectural Styles

- Streamline Moderne (late)
- International
- Googie

Resource Eligibility Requirements

Postwar-era commercial architecture primarily involved the application of mid-century materials and design principles in ways that emphasized "modern" qualities, as well as that provided visibility and functional access to shop interiors. The most thoughtful designs also involved customized features, such as specialized signage or terrazzo paving with merchant signature. Therefore, the significance of any particular mid-century commercial design relies heavily upon the existence of nearly all of the materials, features, and elements that originally characterized the "modernity" of the postwar design. This is true for entire buildings that were designed (or redesigned) according to postwar-era Modernist principles, as well as for previously existing buildings with modernized storefronts and intact historical architecture (though the latter may qualify solely on the basis of historical architecture and/or associations, rather than on the basis of postwar commercial design). Most buildings should also demonstrate an overall integrated commercial design, though some properties may qualify based solely on unique, unusual, or representative storefront design.

See also Appendices for more information on location, distribution, and types of identified historic resources and historic districts.

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G. Geographical Data

For the purposes of this historical property documentation, the historic neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California, are generally bounded by: Market Street and Duboce Avenue to the north; Cesar Chavez Street to the south; Folsom Street and Potrero Avenue to the east (transition at 20th Street); and Sanchez and Guerrero Streets to the west (transition at 20th Street). The boundary is intended to indicate a general thematic area and should not be used as a strict delineation of historical contexts. Properties not located within the boundary, but located adjacent to or near the boundary and demonstrating thematic connection, may be evaluated according to the historical contexts that are identified in this historical property documentation. Likewise, properties located within the boundary may be evaluated according to historical contexts for which they demonstrate a thematic connection, which may or may not be identified in this historical property documentation.

(See Mission District Historic Neighborhoods Reference Map on next page.)

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Mission District Historic Neighborhoods Reference Map



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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

I. Historic Context Statements

Development of the historic contexts contained in this Multiple Property Documentation form utilized four separate historic context statements that pertain to the Mission District and that have been previously adopted by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission or the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. These context statements are:

- *City within a City: Historic Context Statement for San Francisco's Mission District* (2007), produced by the Department and adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on December 5, 2007. This context statement covers the entire residential/commercial neighborhood area of the Mission District. The context statement will be updated by the Department to incorporate the findings of the South Mission Historic Resources Survey.
- *Inner Mission North 1853-1943 Context Statement, 2005*, produced by the Department and adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on March 15, 2006. This context statement covers the northern portion of the Mission District.
- *Historic Context Statement, Market & Octavia Area Plan Historic Resource Survey* (2007), produced by the Department and adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on December 19, 2007. This context statement covers parts of the northern portion of the Mission District as well as several other neighborhoods bordering the mid-Market Street area.
- "Historic Context" in *Revised Mission Dolores Neighborhood Survey* (2009), produced by the Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association and adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission on March 17, 2010. This context statement covers the neighborhood surrounding Mission Dolores.

Development of historic contexts also involved research and synthesis of information from sources included in the Bibliography.

II. Field Survey

The field survey involved gathering baseline property information for all buildings located within the South Mission survey area. The field survey information was stored in a Survey Inventory database that includes many of the same information fields that are found on California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Records (DPR 523A forms), such as:

- Photography,
- Year built,
- Source for year built,
- Property type classification,
- Architectural style or type.

The Survey Inventory database also includes additional information fields not found on Primary Records that are

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pertinent to resource identification and evaluation. These information fields include:

- Level of retention of historic features, materials, and character,
- Notes indicating property development history, former land uses, historic and cultural associations, and other special property conditions that may be present.

In addition to creation of the Survey Inventory database, the field survey included completion of 2,099 California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Records (DPR 523A forms) that document approximately 2,117 buildings (including several Primary Records that document multiple semi-attached buildings and multiple detached buildings on single lots). Primary Records were completed using the same property information that was gathered and stored in the Survey Inventory database, as well as written architectural descriptions. Completion of Primary Records was prioritized for three general categories of properties located within the survey area:

- 1) Properties with underlying zoning or land-use controls that changed significantly under the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plan;
- 2) properties located along Mission, Valencia, and 24th Streets;
- 3) properties visibly retaining a high degree of exterior historic materials, features, and character.

III. Resource Evaluation

Resource evaluation involved completion of all components of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation ("MPD") form (NPS Form 10-900-b) that provides a contextual framework for multiple-property resource evaluation of Mission District neighborhood properties. The MPD contextual framework allows for comparative analysis of properties and areas, using the information contained in the Survey Inventory, against the thematic contexts and resource eligibility requirements outlined in the MPD form. The resulting identification of individual historic resources and historic districts located within the survey area was documented on appendices that are attached to the MPD form for the Mission District, as well as in the Survey Inventory.

The MPD form and appendices are substitutes for individual California Department of Parks and Recreation Building, Structure, and Object Records (DPR 523B forms) and District Records (DPR 523D forms), which are otherwise required in order to provide complete survey documentation in California. According to the National Park Service's National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (1999) ("NPS Bulletin"), which is attached: "The Multiple Property Documentation Form streamlines the method of organizing information collected in surveys and research for registration and preservation planning purposes. The form facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations." The California Office of Historic Preservation accepts resource evaluations that are completed using established documentation formats of the National Register of Historic Places.

Completion and adoption of the MPD form does not result in properties being listed on the National Register of Historic Places (or the California Register of Historical Resources). Completion and adoption of the MPD form results in determinations of eligibility of buildings and areas for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the NPS Bulletin: "The Multiple Property Documentation Form is a cover document and not a nomination in its own right, but serves as a basis for evaluating the National Register eligibility of related properties. It may be used to nominate and register thematically-related historic properties simultaneously or to establish the registration requirements for properties that may be nominated in the future. The nomination of each building, site, district, structure, or object within a thematic group is made on the National Register

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Registration Form (NPS 10-900).” In addition to determinations of eligibility of properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the completed MPD form for the Mission District included determinations of eligibility of properties for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. These evaluations were accomplished by referencing the California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #6, *California Register and National Register: A Comparison (for purposes of determining eligibility for the California Register)* (2006), which is attached. The bulletin is currently being revised by the California Office of Historic Preservation.

The MPD context-based methodology provides several different approaches for conducting surveys based on the nature of historic properties, the purpose or need for evaluating and managing historic properties, and the informed judgment of the documentation preparer. These MPD approaches include: thematic (for properties associated by topic); chronologically-based (for a particular period of time); and geographically-based (for a particular area). The completed MPD form for the Mission District utilizes a geographic-based approach for identifying and evaluating resources located within the survey area. According to the NPS Bulletin: “If there is a need to know more about properties in a particular area, such as when a Certified Local Government [e.g. the City and County of San Francisco] wishes to survey and inventory the resources within its jurisdiction [e.g. within the Mission District], then a geographically-based approach would be appropriate. A geographically-based historic context may be at the scale of a community, town, city, county, State, region, nation, or physiographic area and may treat all or some of the themes and periods in a given area...For geographically based historic contexts, the following may be addressed: the developmental phases in the area's history; the economic, social, and political forces that affected the area's physical form, and factors that gave the community or area its own distinct character separate from that of like or other settlements.” The completed MPD form for the Mission District also identifies chronological periods of development within the geographically-based approach.

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