

**D1. Historic Name:** Mission Miracle Mile

**D2. Common Name:** Mission Street

**\*D3. Detailed Description** (Discuss overall coherence of the district, its setting, visual characteristics, and minor features. List all elements of district.):

The historic district is located within the retail commercial corridor of Mission Street in the Inner Mission North neighborhood. Contributors to the historic district are buildings that were originally constructed between 1906 and 1927, during the period of reconstruction that followed the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Contributors also include buildings that were expanded, remodeled, and/or improved during the period of commercial modernization from the mid-1920s to approximately 1960. Contributors are one to three stories in height. All buildings contain storefronts that occupy the ground floors. Upper stories contain residential or commercial uses. Contributors vary in building footprints, construction types, and stylistic details. They include mostly wood-frame, single-story stores, and two-story and three-story mixed-use structures, that were erected during the first post-fire decade. They also include larger commercial and apartment buildings that were constructed during the second post-fire decade, and structures that display designs and materials that were applied during the mid-century era of modernization. *(Continued on Page 3.)*

**\*D4. Boundary Description** (Describe limits of district and attach map showing boundary and district elements.):

The boundary of the historic district encompasses a linear area containing all of the properties that are located on the west side of Mission Street between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. *(See map on Page 13.)*

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

The boundary of the historic district contains a coherent grouping of thematic contributors. On Mission Street to the north and south of the historic district, fewer than half of the properties are considered both thematic and intact, and several major intrusions exist. The thematic area does not extend to the east or west beyond Mission Street.

**\*D6. Significance:** **Theme:** Post-Fire Reconstruction; 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Development and Architecture  
**Area:** Inner Mission North, San Francisco

**Period of Significance:** 1906-1927; circa 1925-1960  
**Resources Criteria 1 & 3**

**Applicable Criteria:** California Register of Historical

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

**Criterion 1:** The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1 at the local level, because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history. The historic district is associated with the reconstruction, growth, and development of the American retail economy on Mission Street, which became the largest and most important shopping destination in San Francisco during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, outside of downtown's Union Square. Events include the post-fire physical rebuilding of structures and recovery of commerce that occurred in the Inner Mission North after the 1906 earthquake and fires. Events also include the development of the mid-century "Mission Miracle Mile" shopping district, during which time the stores of Mission Street competed directly with downtown San Francisco for retail business.

**Criterion 3:** The historic district is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3 at the local level, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period, region, and methods of construction, and it possesses high artistic values. The historic district contains commercial and mixed use building types that exhibit designs and styles that represent the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, the historic district reflects the craftsmanship and techniques of the Edwardian-era period of small-scale, wood-frame rebuilding, during which time construction practices transitioned from vernacular and expedient to ornate and substantial. In addition, the historic district is augmented by buildings that are characteristic of later commercial upbuilding, as well as by buildings that display elements that are associated with the "Mission Miracle Mile" era, during which time storefronts and façades were modernized according to innovative designs, materials, and techniques of the mid-century period. *(Continued on Page 14.)*

**\*D7. References** (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.): *(Continued on Page 26.)*

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Matt Weintraub, Preservation Planner

**Date:** April 2011

**Affiliation and Address:** San Francisco Planning Dept., 1650 Mission St, Ste. 400, San Francisco, CA 94103-2479

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Table of Contents for Continuation Sheets

Page Numbers

**\*D3. Detailed Description** *(continued from Page 1)* ..... **3 to 12**

Character-Defining Visual Characteristics .....3

Features and Elements .....4

    Small-Scale Reconstruction .....5

    Large-Scale Infill .....6

    Mid-Century Modernizations .....8

Contributors (including list of properties) .....11

Non-contributors (including list of properties) .....12

**\*D4. Boundary Description** *(continued from Page 1)* ..... **13**

Boundary Map .....13

**\*D6. Significance** *(continued from Page 1)* ..... **14 to 25**

Historical Context .....14

    1906 Earthquake and Fires .....14

    Rebuilding and Up-building .....15

    Rush to Economic Recovery .....17

    Commerce in Good Times, Bad Times .....19

    Mission Miracle Mile .....21

Integrity .....24

**\*D7. References** *(continued from Page 1)* ..... **26 to 27**

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update

**\*D3. Detailed Description (Continued):**



Mission Street in 1944, during a war bond parade. View southwest towards 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4705).*



Mission Street in 2011. View southwest towards 20<sup>th</sup> Street. The commercial buildings that are located here within the historic district are similar to those that are shown in the photograph to the left. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

**Character-Defining Visual Characteristics**

The visual characteristics of the historic district include but may not be limited to the following:

- The urban development pattern of a densely developed retail and transportation corridor, containing small-scale and medium-scale structures with horizontal rooflines at varying levels, that are packed tightly together, abutting each other at the fronts of lots, along both sides of Mission Street.
- The pedestrian-level development pattern of continuous strips of storefronts and commercial spaces, with most ground floors containing small, narrow, and regularly spaced storefronts, including larger buildings that were historically partitioned into multiple storefronts.
- Similarly designed Edwardian-era, narrow, wood-frame structures that include storefronts at the ground floors and dwellings at upper stories, which were mostly built between 1906 and the early 1910s, as well as a few larger and more substantial structures that were built during the 1920s.

The visual characteristics of individual contributing properties include but may not be limited to the following:

- Architectural styles and/or types that include: Classical/Roman Revival (columns/pilasters; pediments/porticos; boxed eaves with cornices, dentils, modillions, frieze bands); Beaux Arts (paired columns/pilasters; exuberant façade ornament; roofline balustrades); Mission Revival (wood and/or smooth stucco facing; overhanging eaves at doors/windows; Spanish tile accents; curved parapets); Spanish Colonial Revival (smooth stucco facing; low-pitched roofs covered in Spanish tile; eaves with minimal or no overhang; arched openings); Art Deco (plain smooth façade surfaces; geometric relief; vertical linear elements); 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial (large floor plates; flat façades without bay windows; prominent marquee entrances; plate-glass display windows at ground floors; regular bands of large windows at upper floors; horizontal roofline detail).
- Height, form and massing that varies among individual structures, including: building heights that range from one to three stories; building footprints that range from narrow size to standard size; façades with or without bay windows; structures that may be either vertically or horizontally emphasized by width, fenestration, and/or

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façade detailing; and rooflines that terminate horizontally with various kinds of entablatures and linear raised features, including shaped parapets.

- On buildings constructed during the decade after the fires of 1906, typical materials and features consistent with Edwardian-era commercial and mixed-use designs include: wood cladding (including cove/shiplap siding, flush siding, and/or shingles); brick cladding; stucco as a primary or secondary facing material; bay windows (typically angled; may also be square and/or rounded); wood windows (typically double-hung; may also be casements); wood trim; cast plaster ornament; and heavy cornice lines.
- On buildings constructed during the late 1910s and 1920s, typical materials and features consistent with early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and apartment building designs include: concrete, brick, and/or stucco facing; large horizontal windows with multi-light metal or wood sash; details/ornament in formed concrete, brick, cast plaster, or stucco.
- Storefront designs and materials including: plate-glass windows with wood or metal frames, or “cornerless” (without frames), and which may project out over the supporting bulkheads; bulkheads with decorative grills on air vents, and clad with square ceramic tiles that may be decoratively detailed, or clad in structural glass/ceramic panels that may be non-original; angled, recessed vestibules and/or open outdoor lobbies with marble tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; metal-framed signs/marquees that may or may not be illuminated by individual bulbs or by neon tubes.

#### Features and Elements

The historic district is comprised of a row of one-story, two-story, and three-story commercial/mixed-use buildings. The single-story buildings and the multiple-story buildings are distributed approximately evenly throughout the historic district, such that the row exhibits a mixed character in terms of scale and roofline heights. Nearly all of the buildings occupy narrow lots that are 25 feet or 30 feet wide, as well as a single lot that is 35 feet wide. The two lots that are wider than that, at 50 feet and 60 feet, contain buildings that were constructed in the 1920s, whereas the majority of lots contain contributing buildings were constructed between 1906 and the mid-1910s. Despite the varying heights and types of buildings, the tightly packed arrangement of mostly narrow structures uniformly built out to the fronts of lots, and containing storefronts of similar widths, results in an overall development pattern that is consistent with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial corridor. Overlaid upon this streetscape are the modernizations to some storefronts, façades, signs, and sidewalks that occurred between the 1920s and approximately 1960, which contributed to the physical development of the premier urban retail shopping corridor that became known citywide as the “Mission Miracle Mile”.



West side of Mission Street. View southwest towards 20<sup>th</sup> Street. San Francisco Planning Department.



West side of Mission Street. View northwest towards 19<sup>th</sup> Street. San Francisco Planning Department.

The following sections further describe the features and elements that comprise the historic district, including areas, sites, groupings of structures, individual buildings, and their characteristics.



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*Small-Scale Reconstruction*

The post-fire reconstruction of Mission Street involved intensification of commercial uses. In the weeks and months after the disaster, as soon as the debris was cleared, business owners flooded back to Mission Street in densities that were greater than existed before the fires. Every lot fronting Mission Street was rebuilt with a commercial component, thereby changing the character of the street from a mixed-use streetcar corridor, as it had been before the 1906 disaster, to a continuous shopping strip. A great many of the earliest post-fire commercial buildings on Mission Street consisted only of single-story storefronts with minimal detailing, or storefronts with small shopkeepers dwellings above, which were expediently constructed for merchants who were desperate to be back in business. While most of these very early post-fire buildings were replaced or expanded as the reconstruction of the Inner Mission North progressed, some were maintained, improved, and used throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century.



Grouping of four adjacent commercial buildings, including a mixed-use building, that were constructed in 1906 on the west side of Mission Street, just south of 19<sup>th</sup> street. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

The historic district contains a rare grouping of mostly intact, small-scale commercial buildings that were erected within the first year of post-fire reconstruction. At the northern end of the row stand four structures that were erected only a few weeks or months after the disaster in April 1906. Three of these relief-era commercial buildings were designed as single-story with similar façades that consisted simply of shaped parapets with cornices located above the storefronts. A fourth building followed an Edwardian-era two-story mixed-used plan with bay windows and cornice at the upper story, which was stylistically remodeled with a Spanish Colonial Revival theme in 1927. As the reconstruction transitioned to recovery, these buildings housed staple businesses such as photos, tableware and china, and groceries. By mid-century, they contained mostly apparel stores and a jeweler, which indicated that the retail sector on Mission Street had shifted away from neighborhood goods and services and towards specialized in-demand retail products.

As the reconstruction progressed, property owners benefited from increased supplies of labor and materials, as well as availability of architects, with which to facilitate the rebuilding. Consequently, buildings constructed only one or more years after the 1906 disaster tended to be larger, more substantial, and/or more elaborate in design. By 1907, the upbuilding of three-story buildings with multiple-family residential floors located above storefronts became common, as did the application of architectural flourishes. These mixed-use buildings followed a typical design that included bilateral arrangements of bay windows and fenestration on street façades, and Edwardian-era ornamentation that spanned a range of Beaux Arts-influenced styles. Within the historic district, examples included: the building constructed in 1907 at 2370 Mission Street, which displayed Classical features such as a rooftop balustrade integrated with the cornice, and a combination of angled and curved bay windows; and the building constructed in 1912 at 2332-2336 Mission Street, which adapted Craftsman and Mission Revival features. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the stores in these buildings sold ladies goods, corsets, millinery, and gifts.

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Mixed-use buildings that were constructed in 1907 (left) and 1912 (right), on the west side of Mission Street at mid-block locations. Views west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

In addition, the construction of economical, single-story commercial buildings continued to occur, even as nearby properties were upbuilt. Though small-scale, these later post-fire small commercial buildings displayed architectural elaboration. For instance, two small structures that were constructed in 1915 at 2356 and 2374 Mission Street, which housed uses such as a bakery/lunch diner, a market, a hardware store, apparel, and optometry, featured upper façades that were decorated with Classical cornices, brackets, shaped parapets, and applied ornament.



Small commercial buildings that were constructed in 1915, on the west side of Mission Street at mid-block locations. Views west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

### Large-Scale Infill

While the standard lots on Mission Street were typically reconstructed with narrow, wood-frame structures, the larger lots that existed provided opportunities for more substantial construction at a greater scale. By the 1920s, the improved economic climate and advances in building practices prompted a third phase of reconstruction that involved the upbuilding of these larger properties. This resulted in multiple-story buildings, many of them reinforced concrete and/or steel frame construction, that were dedicated to commercial uses or that contained apartments stacked above large retail



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floor plates. In many cases, the large commercial ground floors were designed for single uses, such as department stores and/or mixed merchandise stores.

Within the historic district, two larger lots on the west side of Mission Street were upbuilt during the 1920s. In 1926, a reinforced concrete mixed-use apartment building was erected at 2360-2366 Mission Street, at mid-block. It replaced two single-story commercial buildings that were constructed in the aftermath of the 1906 disaster, similar to those that are still extant within the historic district. The construction of apartment buildings such as this indicated the continued growth of the neighborhood's residential population during the post-fire era, when the working classes of the city became consolidated in the Mission District, due in large part to the industrial/commercial reconstruction of the South-of-Market, a former mixed-use neighborhood. This three-story, 14-unit apartment building was designed by Albert W. Burgren, an engineer who had previously designed several residential hotels in San Francisco in partnership with architects, for owner E.J. Lubble. This building's styling was a later example of Classicism that dominated the post-fire reconstruction. Its broad street façade was scored to resemble cut stone blocks, and it was richly dressed in cartouche panels, medallion bands, triglyphs, and a broad denticulated cornice. Other architectural features included the arched residential entrance, wide bay windows, and divided wood casements.



Mixed-use apartment building that was constructed in 1926, on the west side of Mission Street at a mid-block location. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Apartment building façade details and commercial blade sign. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Mixed-use apartment building storefront entrance. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

At the tall ground floor, Siegel's apparel store has occupied a commercial space since at least 1937, when neon tube lettering was added to the store's existing vertical double-faced sign. In 1941, Siegel's store expanded to fill the entire ground floor, and the storefront was unified. Over the years, Siegel's utilized visual merchandising techniques such as neon lettering that announced "For Dad and Lad" to passers-by. More recently, Siegel's installed new display windows, aluminum doors, and stucco fascia to the storefront in 1978, and installed a curved canvas canopy in 1979. The brick bulkheads and water tables, as well as the angled vestibule and the divided transom that is located over the store entrance, may remain intact from the mid-century makeover of the storefront. Siegel's apparel store still occupies the commercial ground floor of the building and still sells men's and boys clothing, as it has in this location on Mission Street for at least 75 years.

The 1920s also saw the construction of multiple-story commercial operations on Mission Street, which reflected the expanding scale and scope of the American retail economy. These buildings utilized large rectangular floor plates and long street frontages (hence requiring large lots) in order to maximize merchandising space during an era of increasing competition among brand-name products and retail businesses. These commercial buildings included multiple stories and internal mezzanines that allowed for additional display areas, storage, manufacturing, and/or offices. They also included exterior design features such as prominent entrances and sign marquees, long rows of large windows, flat exterior wall surfaces, and long clean horizontal rooflines.

In keeping with this trend of commercial upbuilding, a large two-story with mezzanine and basement, brick-clad structure was erected in 1927 at the northwest corner of Mission and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. This substantial reinforced concrete, steel-frame

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building was designed to carry the load of two additional stories had that been desired. The building was designed by architect Arthur T. Ehrenpfort for owner Wm. C. Ehrenpfort, though an earlier application for a construction permit, which was cancelled, listed the Granat Bros. as owners. Ehrenpfort's simplified Classical/Renaissance Revival design incorporated elements such as a cornice lined with acroterion, a flat parapet/balustrade, rope molding at the corners, a keystone-arched entrance on 20<sup>th</sup> Street, and wood-frame windows that varied from wide horizontal bands at the mezzanine to rows of narrow windows at the upper story. When construction was completed, the Granat Bros. jewelers took ownership of the building and relocated from their previous site, one block to the north on Mission Street. The Granat Bros. used the lower story for display and sales, and converted the upper story into a jewelry manufacturing workshop. The Granat Bros. jewelry operation anchored this corner location at Mission and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets for several decades. In addition to makers of fine jewelry, the Granats regularly sponsored and organized winning baseball teams in the San Francisco Midwinter League, for which games were played at nearby Recreation Park on Valencia Street.



The Granat Bros. building in 1927. View northwest. San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-6823).



The Granat Bros. jewelry manufacturing shop and store building in 2011, located at the northwest corner of Mission and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets. View northwest. San Francisco Planning Department.

### Mid-Century Modernizations

Along the entire length of Mission Street within the Mission District, a significant pattern of development occurred after the post-fire reconstruction of buildings was completed in the 1920s. This development related to the ever-increasing competition among retailers to sell to consumers who could sift through markets flooded with nationwide brand names and a plethora of goods during postwar periods of general economic prosperity. From approximately the mid-1920s to the 1960s, retailers redefined the visual appearances of their stores and buildings on a fairly regular basis, in order to better display their products and their shopping environments to discriminating shoppers. Many commercial spaces were remodeled several times during the period by one or more occupants in succession.

The modernizations were influenced by designers who were open to using modern materials and to departing from previous design modes. Typical "Visual Front" storefront alterations included: installation of plate-glass windows; widening/deepening of entry vestibules; re-facing of surfaces in modern materials such as ceramic tile, structural glass (e.g., Vitrolite, Carrara Glass), and/or metal panels; installation of tile and/or terrazzo floor paving; and installation of projecting signage. More dramatic "Visual Front" renovations involved the transformation of entire structures into display objects by removal of all façade extrusions such as bay windows, cornices, and/or applied ornament, and replacement with plain wall surfaces, modern cladding materials such as ceramic, structural glass, metal, and/or smooth stucco, and rectangular metal windows.



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\*Date: April 2011

☒ Continuation

☐ Update



The building located at 2326-2330 Mission Street, with "Visual Front" façade and storefront that were installed in the 1930s and 1950s. Views northwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

Within the historic district, several buildings display alterations, modifications, and improvements that related to the period of modern visual merchandising and the "Mission Miracle Mile" shopping district. One building that was originally constructed in 1911 demonstrates the results of a total mid-century makeover. Located at 2326-2330 Mission Street, the building initially followed a typical Edwardian-era design with bay windows at the upper story. In 1934, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century storefront was renovated to include a wide outdoor lobby with angled, corner-less plate-glass display windows, bulkheads clad in structural glass panels, and ceramic tile floor paving with a "Mission" custom signature. In 1952, the transformation of the structure was completed when the bay windows and other extrusions (except for the double-faced blade sign) were removed from the upper story façade and it was re-faced with Vitrolite panels and stucco. The resulting appearance of the commercial building included many of the elements that typified a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century "Visual Front", including the open, glass-filled articulated storefront and the clean lines, blank surfaces, simple square windows of the upper façade, and projecting signage.



The "Visual Front" storefront that was installed circa 1930s at 2356 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The "Visual Front" storefront that was installed in 1959 by the Regal Mfg. Co. at 2376-2380 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

While no other buildings within the historic district were completely transformed by alterations, several other storefronts were modernized according to "Visual Front" principles of commercial retailing. A storefront very similar to that found at 2330 Mission Street was installed within the small shop at 2356 Mission Street, approximately during the 1930s. The storefront included: an outdoor lobby with angled corners; corner-less plate-glass; ceramic tile cladding at bulkheads; and marble tile floor paving. Another small store located at 2376-2380 Mission Street was renovated in 1959 by the Regal Mfg. Co., which installed new windows, bulkheads, doors, and terrazzo floor paving, and they extended the lobby six feet further into the store. This "Visual Front" renovation indicated a shift in modern design away from angles and curves, as found in Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, and towards the rectilinear forms that were associated with International mid-century modernism.

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The adjacent commercial building located at 2386-2388 Mission Street, which was divided into two exceptionally narrow commercial spaces, also contains “Visual Front” modernizations. The southern storefront at 2388 Mission Street was altered in 1931 by L. Salomon with very tall corner-less plate-glass windows that returned at angles into the vestibule, forming a glass corridor/anteroom as an entryway into the store. The height of the northern storefront platform was altered in 1954, and “rustic” was installed to replace stucco, which presumably referred to the installation of brick bulkheads with decorative vents below corner-less plate-glass displays with metal flashing. Another narrow storefront was altered approximately in the 1930s to feature a small outdoor lobby with angled corners, which made efficient use of the limited space. The storefront at 2336 Mission Street also included corner-less plate-glass windows, wood paneled bulkheads, double sash wood doors with border outlines painted onto the glass, and marble tile flooring with the storefront’s street number inlaid at the sidewalk edge.



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed in 1931 at 2388 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed circa 1954 at 2386 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The “Visual Front” storefront that was installed circa 1930s at 2336 Mission Street. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

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**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #  
HRI#  
Trinomial

Page 11 of 27

\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept. \*Date: April 2011 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

Contributors

Contributors to the historic district qualify for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CD" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation"), according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. In addition, several contributors appear to be individually significant historic and/or architectural properties, and therefore qualify for assignment of CHRSC of "3CB" ("Appears eligible for CR both individually and as a contributor to a CR eligible historic district through survey evaluation").

The following list includes information for the **13 contributing properties** located within the historic district:

Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2304	3596002	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2310	3596003	Commercial, 2-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2316-2318	3596004	Commercial, 2-story	Mediterranean Eclectic	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2320-2322	3596125	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2326-2330	3596006	Commercial, 2-story (Mission Thrift)	Commercial Modern	1911	3CB
Mission Street	2332-2336	3596007	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Craftsman/Mission Revival)	1912	3CD
Mission Street	2356	3596011	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1915	3CB
Mission Street	2360-2366	3596012	Mixed-use, residential/commercial (Siegel's)	Edwardian (Classical Revival)	1926	3CB
Mission Street	2370	3596014	Mixed-use, residential/commercial	Edwardian (Craftsman)	1907	3CD
Mission Street	2374	3596015	Commercial, 1-story	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1915	3CD
Mission Street	2376-2380	3596016	Commercial, 1-story	Modern	1934	3CD
Mission Street	2386-2388	3596119	Commercial, 1-story	Modern	1906	3CD
Mission Street	2390	3596019	Commercial, 3-story (Granat Bros. jewelers)	Classical Revival/20th Century Commercial	1927	3CD



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

Page 12 of 27

\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.

\*Date: April 2011

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

Non-contributors

The historic district contains non-contributors that were constructed during the historic district's period of significance, but that have undergone physical alterations (often cumulative) that negatively affect the ability of the properties to convey historical and/or architectural significance. These properties are assigned CHRSC of "6L" ("Determined ineligible for local listing or designation through local government review process; may warrant special consideration in local planning") , according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8. The historic district also contains non-contributors that were constructed after the historic district's period of significance, and that are not known to be associated with any historical events, persons, or architecture that may be considered significant, and are therefore assigned CHRSC of "6Z" ("Found ineligible for NR [National Register of Historic Places], CR or Local designation through survey evaluation"). Generally, non-contributors are found to be compatible with the scale, massing, and uses that characterize the historic district, which retains overall integrity.

The following list includes information for **4 non-contributing, non-historic properties** located within the historic district:

Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Mission Street	2300	3596001	Commercial, 1-story	Moderne (Altered)	1937	6L
Mission Street	2338	3596008	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1929	6Z
Mission Street	2344	3596009	Commercial, 1-story	None (altered)	1912	6Z
Mission Street	2352	3596010	Commercial, 2-story	None (altered)	1910	6Z

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**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #  
HRI#  
Trinomial

Page 13 of 27

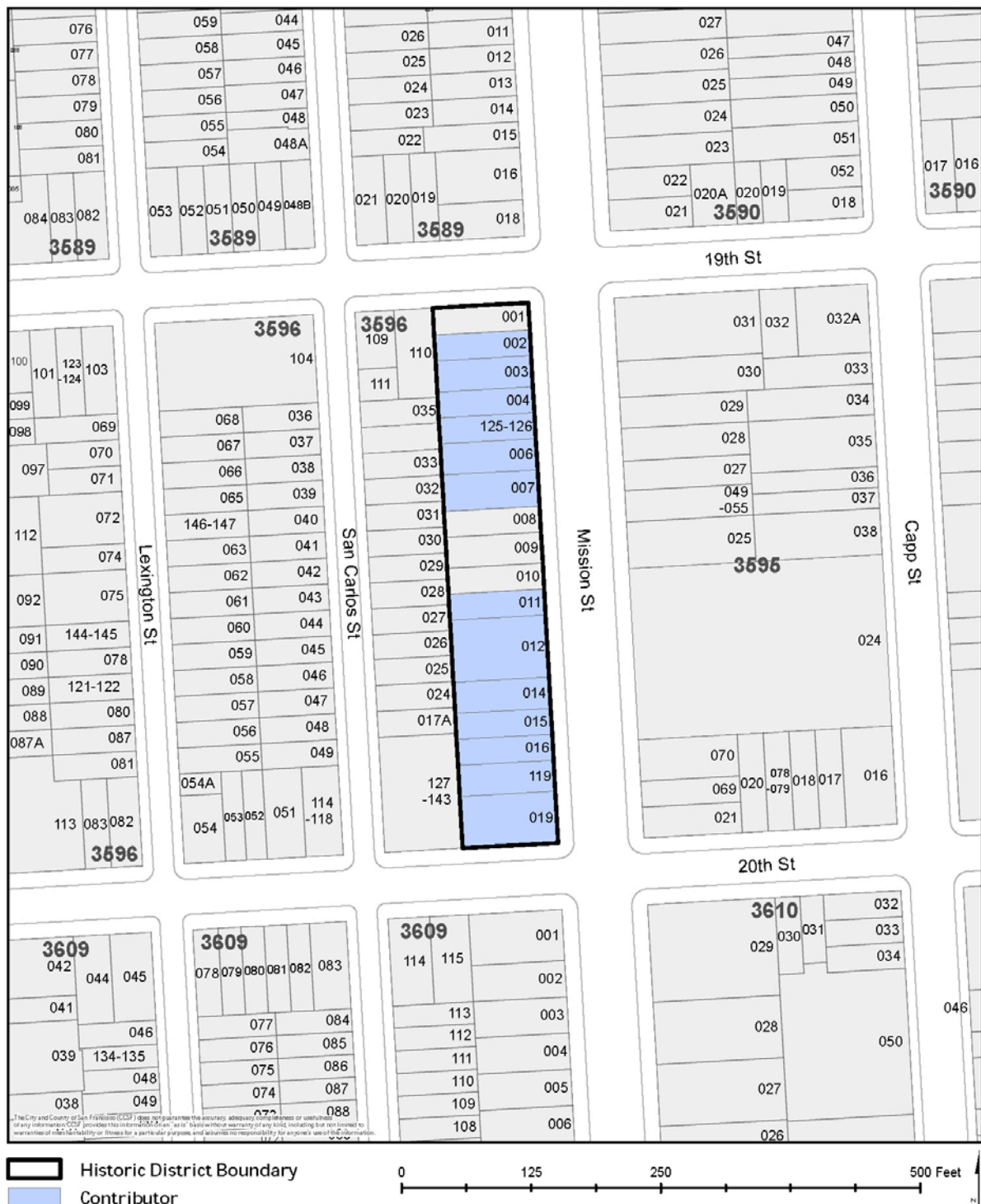
\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

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**\*D4. Boundary Description (Continued):**

Boundary Map

Properties are labeled with Assessor block numbers and lot numbers for identification purposes.



## CONTINUATION SHEET

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### \*D6. Significance (Continued):

The historic district, a significant and distinguishable entity, qualifies for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3CS" ("Appears eligible for CR [California Register of Historical Resources] as an individual property through survey evaluation") according to the California State Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #8.

#### Historical Context

After the Inner Mission North was destroyed by the earthquake and fires of April 1906, the reconstruction of the neighborhood involved three phases. The initial "relief" phase, which ended in 1908, was characterized by small ad hoc cottages and shacks that provided immediate, temporary shelter for the desperate refugee population, and by hastily erected shops and stands that were critical in providing for the flows of common goods and services, as well as cash, that helped to sustain the area's refugee population. The second phase of "rebuilding" involved the construction of permanent replacement structures, which in some instances began immediately after the 1906 fires, and in other instances continued well into the 1910s. During the final phase of post-fire "recovery" that extended into the 1920s, the permanent resettlement of uprooted populations in rebuilt neighborhoods such as the Inner Mission North was finally achieved, and the commercial corridors of 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Valencia Street witnessed growth, improvement, and prosperity.

Within the historic district, which is part of the most urbanized area of the Inner Mission North, only a very few small, plain commercial buildings remain intact from the early "relief" era. Most of the extant commercial, residential, and mixed-use buildings represent the permanent "rebuilding" period, during which substantial multiple-story structures were erected to replace either destroyed buildings and/or the earliest temporary structures. Also represented are buildings that were constructed after the initial wave of rebuilding, during the extended post-fire "recovery" period, which included physical development related to the ongoing reestablishment and expansion of commerce continued within the retail corridors.

The historical context of the 1906 earthquake and the post-fire period of rebuilding and recovery in the Inner Mission North is further established in the following sections, which is largely excerpted from the San Francisco Planning Department's National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (NPS Form 10-900-b), *Historic Neighborhoods of the Mission District, San Francisco, California*, which was adopted by San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. 93 on November 17, 2010.

#### *1906 Earthquake and Fire*

The great earthquake of April 18<sup>th</sup>, 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."

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.



\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update



Valencia Street lay in ruins one day after the 1906 earthquake. View north towards 18<sup>th</sup> Street. When this photograph was taken, the firestorm was visibly approaching from the north, and apparently it had already reached the next block. All of the buildings shown in this photograph burned within hours, as seen in the photograph to the right. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3549).*



Valencia Street in the aftermath of the 1906 earthquake and fires. View north from approximately the same location as in the photograph to the left. There was total destruction of structures, roads, transit lines, and utility lines. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAC-3252).*

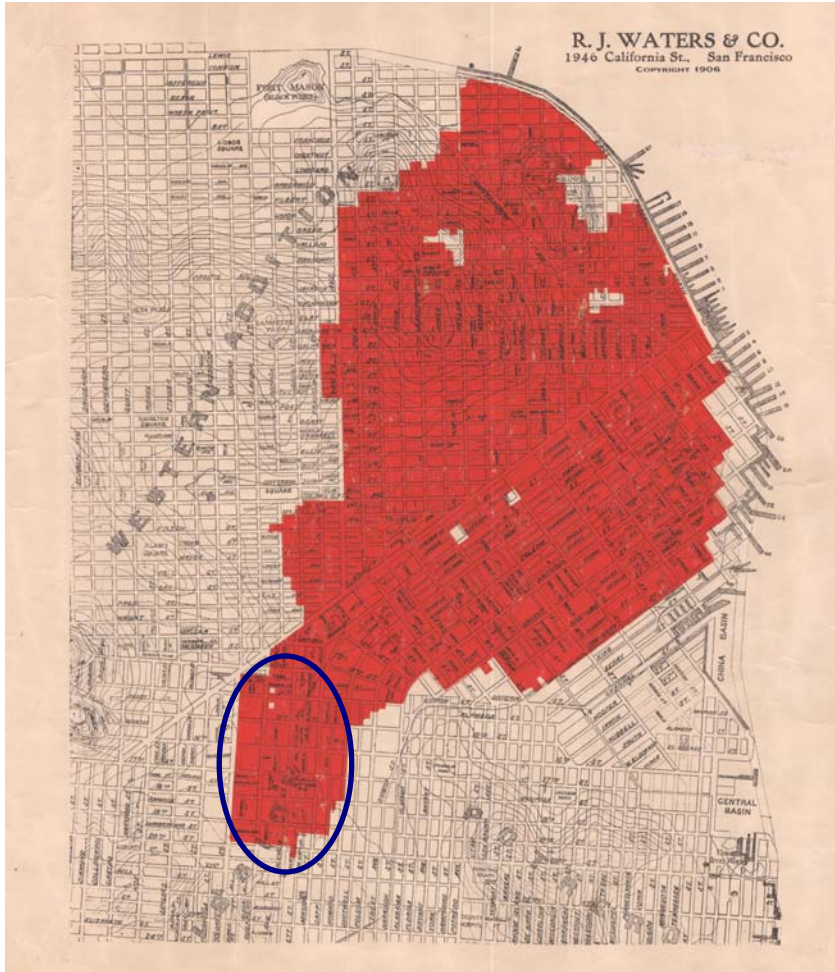
### *Rebuilding and Up-building*

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.” (Pages 178-179)

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.

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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. Overall, the upbuilding and the greater population density of the Inner Mission North changed the neighborhood character from suburban to urban, as indicated by Godfrey in *Neighborhoods in Transition*: “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.” (Page 146)

Map of San Francisco by R.J. Waters & Co. (1906), showing the vast area (shaded) that was destroyed by the firestorm of 1906, and that was reconstructed in phases during the years and decades that followed. The outlined area indicates the northern portion of the Mission District that was destroyed by fires and that was rebuilt. Residential reconstruction in the Inner Mission North was mostly completed during the 1910s, while reconstruction of the Mission District’s commercial corridors continued through the 1920s.

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.

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



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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." (Page 362)

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; cast stone bases rather than brick; simple cornice details such as "block" modillions; and fewer façade details. 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..." (Page 205)



Guerrero Street in 1928. View north towards 14<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-3941).*



Valencia Street in 1927. View south towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. All of the buildings that appear in the photograph were constructed to replace properties destroyed in the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5930).*

Within the fire zone, the massive reconstruction effort over a short period of time generated swaths of remarkably consistent, early 20<sup>th</sup>-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 Spanish tile accents 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 19<sup>th</sup>-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.

#### *Rush to Economic Recovery*

When the Inner Mission North was cleared of fire debris in the weeks and months that followed the disaster, businesses and merchants flooded back to the established commercial corridors of Mission and Valencia Streets (north of 20<sup>th</sup> Street) and 16<sup>th</sup> Street. As transit lines were restored through the Mission District and residential populations grew, commerce responded. According to Scott in *The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective*: "The



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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.” (Pages 111-112) 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 16<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> Street juncture. Furniture stores also proliferated on Mission Street, with nine located on the block between 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets.



Mission Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1935. View southwest. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4590).*



Valencia Street at 16<sup>th</sup> Street in 1949. View northeast towards 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The commercial corridors were reconstructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, following the 1906 fires. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-5926).*

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 16<sup>th</sup> Street in the Inner Mission North (rebuilt after the fire) and 24<sup>th</sup> 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 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. North of 16<sup>th</sup> 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.

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

# CONTINUATION SHEET

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept. \*Date: April 2011 ☒ Continuation ☐ Update

provided diverse streams of rental income. As in the 19<sup>th</sup>-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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 the unpublished draft of *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.'" (Page 3)

## *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. 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.

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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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", according to Heller in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*.

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

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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 desire.” (Page 8)



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1924. View northwest. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4630).*



Mission Street, north of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1936. View north. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4667).*

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, 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 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. According to Hooper’s *San Francisco’s Mission District*. “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



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

Page 21 of 27

\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update

an orchestra and one could spend the afternoon seeing a ‘chapter’ (part of a serial), a vaudeville act, an a feature film – all for 10¢.” (Page 8)

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 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. In *Ordinary Storefronts of the Twentieth Century: Articulating the Lines between Shoppers and Retailers*, Groth explained: “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.” (Page 6)

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. In efforts to counter the trend of suburbanization, Mission District merchants ramped up their promotions. The Mission Merchants Association promoted Mission Street, from 16<sup>th</sup> 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, called “Dollar Days”, which attracted citywide and regional crowds. 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 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, also benefitted from the promotions and activity, as did side-spurs of retail strips on other east-west numbered streets.

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. 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 on Mission Street; these early examples proved influential to the postwar generation of commercial designers. As Heller conveys in *Shop America: Midcentury Storefront Design 1938-1950*: “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.” (Pages 11-12)

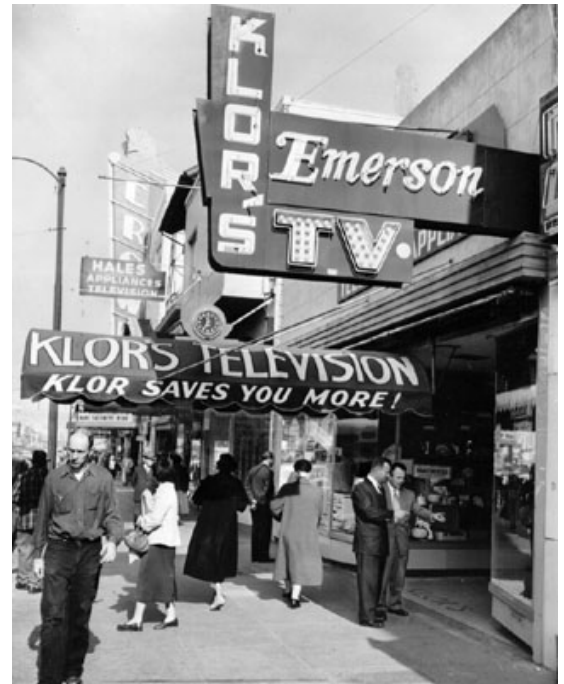
Mid-century retail designs (which were pioneered decades earlier in Paris, New York and Los Angeles) departed radically from earlier commercial traditions by treating entire building façades as display objects. Elements and materials that originated as interior or storefront features, such as structural glass, extruded metal trim, and spotlight illumination, were applied to the exteriors of façades. Solid, horizontal or tilted awnings were installed over storefronts,

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update

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, as related by Heller in *Shop America*: “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.” (Page 11) 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.



Mission Street at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, 1944. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4691).*



Mission Street near 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, 1954. View northeast. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAB-4707).*

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, which Heller described in *Shop America*: “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.’” (Page 12) 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

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Page 23 of 27

\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update

visually semi-private realm, but a place where shoppers as well as goods are on full, public view.”  
(Page 11)

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, 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 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 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, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets, which relied to a greater degree on stable clientele of local residents specialized customers. Still, individual merchants and commercial building owners throughout the Mission District, including “pop” establishments such as record stores, salons, and fast-food restaurants were compelled to design or redesign according to postwar fashions. Also, the rise of International architectural style influenced construction of nearly all kinds of properties during the postwar period, including residences, apartments, office buildings, and churches.

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

Page 24 of 27

\*Resource Name or # Mission Miracle Mile 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Streets Historic District

\*Recorded by: Matt Weintraub, San Francisco Planning Dept.      \*Date: April 2011      ☒ Continuation      ☐ Update

Integrity

The historic district and its contributing properties retain integrity of historic physical condition such that they convey relationships to the historic period of significance. Few alterations have occurred to contributing properties within the historic district. Contributors retain most or all of the aspects of integrity, as discussed further in the following analysis.

*Location*

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. Contributors are located on the sites of properties that were destroyed by the earthquake and fires of 1906. Contributors were either constructed at those locations or, in some cases, moved to those locations during the post-fire reconstruction, which is also an important facet of the post-fire era. Therefore, integrity of location is retained.

*Design*

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Contributors exhibit architectural designs that are closely associated with Edwardian-era development patterns and the period of post-fire reconstruction. Contributors includes characteristics such as styles, spatial arrangements, proportion, scale, ornamentation and materials that relate to each other in ways that reflect historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. Some contributors have experienced alterations to design that have achieved significance in their own right. For the historic district as a whole, design includes the way in which buildings, sites, and structures are related, including the spatial relationships between buildings, the visual rhythms in streetscapes, and the layouts of walkways and roads. Therefore, integrity of design is retained.

*Setting*

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, and it refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. Contributors exist in the same basic physical conditions under which they were built and functioned, including: topography; block and lot layout; street design; neighborhood composition of commercial retail corridors and residential enclaves; relationships between buildings; and relationship of the historic district to nearby areas. Therefore, integrity of setting is retained.

*Materials*

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Contributors retain the majority of exterior, visible materials that were used to in the historic construction, ornamentation, and/or improvement of buildings during the period of significance. Some contributors have experienced alterations to materials that have achieved significance in their own right. Therefore, integrity of materials is retained.

*Workmanship*

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. Contributors display evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing and/or altering buildings, as expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes, as well as in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. The workmanship of contributors furnishes evidence of the technology of crafts, illustrates the aesthetic principles of the historic period, and reveals individual, local, regional, and national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. Therefore, integrity of workmanship is retained.

*Feeling*

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time, which results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. Contributors retain



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Page 25 of 27

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historic design, materials, workmanship, and setting that cumulatively relate the feeling of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, integrity of feeling is retained.

*Association*

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Contributors retains association by virtue of being located in the place where the significant historic events and activities of post-fire reconstruction occurred, and by virtue of being sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Therefore, integrity of association is retained.

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**\*D7. References:** *(Continued from Page 1)*

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**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Page 27 of 27

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