

Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts

Historic District



Identified-Eligible for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places

Historic District Summary
Prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department
July 2013

Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

This historic district summary was prepared as part of the *Sunset District Residential Builders (1925-1950) Historic Context Statement* (context statement) and Sunset District Historic Resource Survey. Refer to the context statement for additional contextual information focused on the social, architectural, and development history of the neighborhood, the role of builders and architects, and the associated framework for evaluation.

Boundary: The identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District (District) is a discontinuous district located in San Francisco's Sunset District neighborhood. The District comprises 94 buildings contained in eight discrete residential tracts.¹ See map.

Period of Significance: The Period of Significance is limited to 1927-1938, the years of construction for each tract.

Historical Resource Status Code: 3D, Eligible for the National Register as a Historic District.

District Eligibility: Architecture (National Register Criterion C).

District Contributors: 92 contributing buildings (98%) and 2 non-contributing buildings (2%).

Summary of Significance

The identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District (District) is significant for its notable and distinctive expressions of the Mediterranean Revival style, which was the dominant residential style in the Sunset District from the late 1920s to early 1930s. Marketed by residential builders as "Spanish" or "Mediterranean," the style reflects an eclectic synthesis of design elements from the Mediterranean region, incorporating Spanish, Mexican, Italian, and Moorish influences. It also referenced California's Spanish Colonial and Missions legacy, applying a specific set of design elements—red Spanish clay tile parapets or coping, stucco exterior cladding, and arched window and door openings—to invoke a romanticized version of the region's history. District buildings display a full expression of the style including complexity of design, expressive massing, and well-articulated façades.

District buildings reflect the unusual plan and massing of tract houses that emerged in the Sunset District beginning in the 1920s. Due to the narrow width of lots, tracts were tightly packed, with no visual separation between houses. Likewise, automobile garages were integrated into the ground story of houses, rather than constructed as a separate detached garage that was typical of other San Francisco Bay Area residential tracts. Living areas were located above the combined ground story garage and basement space. This early merging of automobile and living spaces was unusual for the time and resulted in a uniquely San Franciscan landscape of nearly attached single-family houses with prominent ground-story garages. These smaller-scale houses offered an affordable, well-designed Mediterranean Revival style option for new home buyers. The District also represents three important phases of

¹ The National Park Service's National Register Bulletin No. 15, "How to Apply the Criteria of Evaluation," states that discontinuous districts are justified when two or more definable significant areas are separated by nonsignificant areas. Such districts are "most appropriate where elements are spatially discrete; space between the elements is not related to the significance of the district; and visual continuity is not a factor in the significance."

Sunset District house design, with tracts designed in distinct iterations of the Mediterranean Revival style, including the alternating barrel front which features the Mediterranean Revival style applied to uniform form and massing; a transitional Mediterranean Revival expression of the early 1930s which is applied to new forms and uniform massing; and picturesque mid-1930s Mediterranean Revival clusters applied to diverse forms and massing.

Alternating Barrel Front Mediterranean Revival

The barrel front Mediterranean Revival house displays the characteristic elements of the Mediterranean Revival style—stucco cladding, red Spanish clay tile, and emphasis on arches—within a constrained barrel front façade plan. The barrel front plan refers to a prominent shallow, bowed bay which projects over the garage opening. These buildings were typically constructed in the Sunset District from the mid-1920s until c.1931 and are reflective of the high level of standardization of the earliest residential tracts. Occasionally, houses within these tracts alternated between crenellated and shaped roof parapets. Barrel front tracts often display near identical massing, stair typologies, roof forms, window configuration, and ornamentation set in cohesive blocks. Slight differences and the placement of alternating parapets, muntin detailing, and decorative elements differentiated individual buildings from their immediate neighbors.

Transitional Mediterranean Revival

The transitional expression of Mediterranean Revival tract house design represents a sharp departure from the barrel front house typology that was standard for most Mediterranean Revival houses constructed in the Sunset District from the mid-1920s to c.1931. Its compact, yet expressive design incorporates distinctive elements such as curved stairways with ornamented cheek walls, center towers, ogee arched openings, and well-articulated façade. The transitional expression often featured an asymmetrical double bay configuration, with a center entry portico accessed via a flight of switchback steps. It is a highly expressive, yet short-lived period of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District. The three transitional tracts contained in this District were all constructed in 1931.

Picturesque Mediterranean Revival

The District includes several unusual groupings of fully expressed Mediterranean Revival style buildings, which are characterized as “picturesque.” Buildings in these tracts are designed in varying iterations of the Mediterranean Revival style during the final phase of Mediterranean-inspired design in the Sunset District. These tracts display variety through massing, window openings, roof forms, and ornamentation, and are muscular, with well-articulated facades, projecting bays, and a profusion of design elements not found on the typical Sunset District Mediterranean Revival tract house, including Churrigueresque detailing, side-gabled and asymmetrical roof forms, and ornamented transitional side stairways with entry alcoves.

The District’s Period of Significance of Significance, 1927 to 1938, covers the zenith of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District. Into the early 1930s, most Sunset District tracts were designed exclusively in the Mediterranean Revival style.² By the mid-1930s, however, it was rare for builders to design tracts solely in the Mediterranean Revival style and tracts of mixed Period Revival styles, including examples of Tudor Revival, Storybook, and French Provincial, became the dominant mix of exterior façade styles. By the late-1930s, as a result of standardization and mass production, most Sunset District houses were characterized by restrained designs, with less articulation, differentiation, and ornamentation.

The District contains eight discontinuous tracts, with a total of 94 buildings, designed and developed by the master builders Henry Doelger and Claude T. Lindsay as well as smaller-scale builders including Thomas Sullivan, Nels E.

² There are, for example, no residential tracts containing solely Tudor Revival style buildings.

Johnson, Henry Horn and Christian Anderson. Most of the District's tracts are small, containing 10 or fewer buildings.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for detailed contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, builder and architect biographies, stair and entrance typologies, the evolution of the Mediterranean Revival style, and related character-defining features.



Composite of aerial views taken 1937-1938 showing the location of eight tracts that contribute to the Sunset Mediterranean Revival Historic District. Clustered to the north (toward Golden Gate Park) and the south (toward the Parkside District), the tracts are separated by vast, scrubby sand dunes that extend west to the ocean. The Sunset District Historic Resource Survey Area is outlined in black. Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.

District Tracts

The following section provides a brief development overview for each of the District's eight discontinuous tracts.

	Builder	Year Built	# Buildings	Location
1	Christian Anderson	1927-1938	20	31 st Avenue (Judah/Kirkham)
2	Henry Doelger	1930-1931	26	31 st Avenue (Kirkham/Lawton)
3	Henry Doelger	1931	6	32 nd Avenue (Kirkham/Lawton)
4	Thomas Sullivan	1931	8	32 nd Avenue / Rivera Street
5	Nels. E. Johnson	1931	4	30 th Avenue (Rivera/Santiago)
6	Castle Building Co.	1931	4	Rivera Street at 33 rd Avenue
7	C. T. Lindsay	1936	9	31 st Avenue (Quintara/Rivera)
8	Multiple builders	1932-1937	17	32 nd Avenue (Lawton/Moraga)

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District



Tract 1:

Christian Anderson's 31st Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1927-1938

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains 19 buildings located on the east side of 31st Avenue between Judah and Kirkham Streets.

Contributors: 20

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking northeast on 31st Avenue. Source: SF Planning

The Christian Anderson tract of Mediterranean Revival houses on 31st Avenue is significant for its varied examples of the Mediterranean Revival style and the subtle stylistic distinctions that emerged over its seven-year period of construction. The earliest houses, constructed in 1927, drew from popular elements characteristic of the barrel front Mediterranean Revival as built in the Sunset District, notably, the one-story over garage massing, multiple arched window openings, projecting barrel front plan, a tradesmen door located within the deeply recessed garage opening, stucco cladding, and Spanish clay tile accents at the parapet. The buildings appear detached due to the presence of a recessed upper-story entrance accessed from a flight of side stairs. The stair configuration creates modulated space and visual separation between adjacent buildings. Additional detailing expressed on individual buildings includes blind niches or small windows flanking the garage opening, turned wood mullions, denticulated belt courses and cornices, arched detailing above the barrel front bays, projecting faux niches, embossed and applied detailing at the corner crenellations, polychromatic tile stair accents, brackets, and applied ornament such as corbels, cartouches, shields, and medallions. The facades terminate in shallow crenelated, gabled, or shaped parapets topped with Spanish clay tile. The earlier buildings feature a set of five squared or four arched window openings. Later examples feature a larger picture window flanked by smaller windows. Windows are wood sash with patterned muntins. By 1931, Anderson had introduced several key design changes, including cross-gabled roof forms, larger picture windows, and entry arches at the base of the stairs. These design changes presaged the emerging emphasis on a variety of building forms that characterized the Period Revival movement of the early 1930s.

The tract represents a largely unacknowledged aspect of the Sunset District’s development history—the slower-paced speculative building by small-scale builders. Anderson built only a few houses in the tract each year from 1927 to 1933 and halted construction in 1930, the hard-hit first year of the Great Depression.

A Norwegian immigrant, the 27-year-old carpenter moved to San Francisco in 1907, immediately following the devastating earthquake and fire.³ Christian and his brother, Charles, got their start in the building industry during the robust period of construction activity that characterized the reconstruction era.⁴ Christian was later active in the Sunset District in the 1920s through the 1930s. He specialized in the construction of single-family stucco-clad houses, many designed in the Mediterranean Revival and French Provincial styles.⁵ Known examples of his work from 1927 to 1939 are located in the area bounded by 30th and 32nd Avenues between Moraga and Judah Streets.⁶ Anderson’s tracts were typically quite small, consisting of a handful of adjacent houses. The 31st Avenue tract represents the largest and earliest known cluster of his work in the central Sunset District.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood’s development history, the role and influence of small-scale builders, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

³ United States Census of Population and Housing, 1910, 1930.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Aside from four small groupings of houses in the Sunset District, it is not known exactly how many buildings Christian Anderson constructed in San Francisco.

⁶ San Francisco Assessor’s Office. Sales ledgers, Block no. 1822, 1914-1938. More research is needed to determine Christian Anderson’s overall construction activity in the Sunset District.

Tract 2:

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1931

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset District Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains 21 buildings located on the west side of 31st Avenue between Kirkham and Lawton Streets.

Contributors: 21

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking west on 31st Avenue. Source: Google Maps.

Henry Doelger's alternating barrel front Mediterranean Revival tract presages the prolific builder's shift to house designs of greater variety in massing, form, and articulation. The entire block face is designed in alternating roof forms and façade articulation—barrel front and projecting gable—creating a uniform streetscape overlaid with an undulating rhythm. The Depression-era houses feature parapet detailing and a cohesive design rhythm that is largely absent from Doelger's later (late-1930s through the postwar era) residential tract developments. Detailing expressed on individual buildings includes niches, embossed shapes above the windows, Spanish clay tile coping and accents, geometric shaped openings at the entry portico, recessed garage openings in a variety of alternating shapes, turned applied ornament, decorative muntin patterns, wood mullions, and squared and arched window openings, some topped with fanlight transoms. The tract is one of Doelger's earliest developments, constructed prior to his meteoric rise to the ranks of the nation's largest house-builders of the late 1930s. Doelger constructed the tract at the height of the Depression, during an extraordinarily slow period for house sales and the building industry.

Henry Doelger was a master builder, marketer and salesman. His firm dominated the home-building industry in San Francisco in the 1930s and early 1940s. An admirer of Henry Ford, Henry Doelger applied the "Fordist" principles of mass production to the home building industry with impressive results. During his 30-year career, Doelger's firm constructed approximately 11,000 buildings in San Francisco, primarily in the Sunset District.⁷ From 1934 to 1941, he was the largest home builder in the United States, constructing an average of two houses a day and employing 500 people. His specialty was a semi-attached, one-story over garage, single-family house, though he also built a limited

⁷Rob Keil, *Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb* (Daly City, California: Advection Media, 2006). Note, because Doelger destroyed his business records, the exact number of Doelger-built houses in San Francisco is unknown. The 11,000 figure quoted in various publications may overstate his building activity, though it is within the realm of possibility. Doelger assigned a serial number to each of his houses (and possibly, dwelling units). The serial numbers for his Westlake development begin in the 13,000-range, lending some weight to the argument for 11,000 San Francisco houses.

number of duplexes and apartments in the Sunset District. Doelger's architecturally significant buildings—designed in exuberant expressions of Period Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles—were constructed in the early- to mid-1930s. His barrel front phase occurred prior to the mass-production and standardization that characterized the FHA-facilitated construction boom of the late-1930s.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, the role and influence of Henry Doelger, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

Tract 3:

Henry Doelger's 32nd Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1931

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains six buildings located on the east side of 32nd Avenue between Kirkham and Lawton Streets.

Contributors: 6

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking southeast on 32nd Avenue. Source: SF Planning

Henry Doelger's 32nd Avenue tract represents an important stage in Doelger's career as he transitioned from the barrel front form to the expressive, articulated designs that characterize his picturesque Period Revival houses of the early 1930s. This cohesive grouping of exuberant Mediterranean Revival houses features design expression, massing, articulation, and lively ornamentation that is largely absent from Doelger's later (late 1930s through the postwar era) residential tract developments. Detailing expressed on individual buildings includes central entry porticos with punched openings in various shapes, shaped cheek walls, shaped and crenellated parapet forms, a variety of shaped garage openings, decorative turned wood balconettes, center towers, and gothic arched windows. It is one of Doelger's earlier tracts, constructed prior to his meteoric rise to the ranks of the nation's largest house-builders of the late 1930s. Doelger constructed this small tract during an extraordinarily slow period for the home building industry. The tract's generous ornamentation and expressive design is especially remarkable given the Depression-era climate of economic austerity. These design innovations were likely intended to ensure that the tract stood out from Doelger's competitors during a flat period of construction and sales activity.

Henry Doelger was a master builder, marketer and salesman. His firm dominated the home-building industry in San Francisco in the late 1930s and early 1940s. An admirer of Henry Ford, Henry Doelger applied the "Fordist" principles of mass production to the home building industry with impressive results. During his 30-year career, Doelger's firm constructed approximately 11,000 buildings in San Francisco, primarily in the Sunset District.⁸ From

⁸ Rob Keil, *Little Boxes: The Architecture of a Classic Midcentury Suburb* (Daly City, California: Advection Media, 2006). Note, because Doelger destroyed his business records, the exact number of Doelger-built houses in San Francisco is unknown. The 11,000 figure quoted in various publications may overstate his building activity, though it is within the realm of possibility. Doelger assigned a serial number to each of

1934 to 1941, he was the largest home builder in the United States, constructing an average of two houses a day and employing 500 people. His specialty was a semi-attached, one-story over garage, single-family house, though he also built a limited number of duplexes and apartments in the Sunset District. Doelger's architecturally significant buildings—designed in exuberant expressions of Period Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles—were constructed in the early- to mid-1930s. His transitional Mediterranean Revival phase occurred in the early 1930s, prior to the mass-production and standardization that characterized the FHA-facilitated construction boom of the late-1930s.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, the role and influence of Henry Doelger, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

his houses (and possibly, dwelling units). The serial numbers for his Westlake development begin in the 13,000-range, lending some weight to the argument for 11,000 San Francisco houses.

Tract 4:

Thomas Sullivan's Veterans' Tract

Year Built: 1931

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains eight buildings centered on the southeast corner of 32nd Avenue and Rivera Street.

Contributors: 8

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking south on Rivera Street. Source: Bing Maps

This tract is a significant representation of the transitional expression of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District. Its asymmetrical double bay configuration, with a center entry portico accessed via a flight of switchback steps, represents a sharp departure from the barrel front house typology that was standard for most Mediterranean Revival houses constructed in the Sunset District from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. Its compact, yet expressive design incorporates elements such as curved stairways with ornamented cheek walls, center towers, ogee arched openings, and a well-articulated façade that was not typically featured in picturesque Sunset District tracts until the mid-1930s. Several houses display a distinctive squared window bay that terminates with crosshatching at the cornice and is topped with a flat roof. Additional details found on individual houses include embossed shapes and applied ornament, turned balusters, polychromatic tile stair accents, minimally recessed garage openings, paneled garage doors with multi-lights, tradesman entrances beneath the angled stairs rather than within the garage opening, slender arched multi-light casement windows at the prominent bay and squared windows at the secondary bay. The tract was built by Thomas Sullivan, a little-known Sunset District builder, and like many small-scale builders, Sullivan's career and building activities are not well-documented. According to San Francisco City Directories, he lived in the Ingleside Terraces neighborhood and worked as a carpenter from 1924 to 1930. From 1930-1933 he is listed under the "Contractors" section of the directories with an office at 1967 Ocean Avenue. Buildings in the tract share a similar double bay plan as the Nels E. Johnson's tract on 30th Avenue (see Tract 5). Both tracts represent a short-lived highly expressive period of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District.

This tract is also significant for its association with the California Veterans' Welfare Act, the little-known precursor to the Federal Housing Act and GI Bill. Passed in 1921, this state-sponsored legislation created the California Veterans'

Welfare Board (VWB) which provided direct home ownership assistance to veterans of the First World War. The VWB purchased newly constructed houses directly from the builders and then sold these houses to veterans at favorable long-term, government-backed, low-interest loans. The VWB helped increase home ownership for veterans in the years prior to the better-known New Deal-era federal programs that transformed the mortgage and loan industries. According to a review of select San Francisco Assessor's sales ledgers, the VWB typically purchased individual buildings rather than entire residential tracts. The Thomas Sullivan tract had an unusually close association with the VWB—the VWB purchased four of the tract's eight buildings directly from the builder for re-sale to veterans.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, the role and influence of the small-scale builders, the Veterans' Welfare Board, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

Tract 5:

Nels E. Johnson's 30th Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1931

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains four buildings located on the east side of 30th Avenue between Rivera and Santiago Streets.

Contributors: 4

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking northeast on 30th Avenue Source: Google Maps

Designed by builder Nels E. Johnson, this small tract is significant for its transitional expression of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District. Its asymmetrical double bay configuration, with a center entry portico accessed via a flight of angled steps, represents a radical departure from the barrel front house plan that was standard for most Mediterranean Revival tract houses constructed in the Sunset District from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. Its compact, yet expressive design incorporates elements—miniature bell towers, ogee arches, and a well-articulated façade—that were not typically incorporated in picturesque Sunset District tracts until a few years later. Detailing expressed on individual buildings includes curved or stepped cheek walls, balusters, bulky turned mullions, divided light wood sash windows, entry porticos, decorative punched openings, and staggered roof and parapet forms. Fenestration consists of arched windows at the prominent bay and squared windows at the recessed, narrow bay. Johnson constructed this small tract amidst a sea of barrel front Mediterranean Revival houses, which was the then-dominant Sunset District house typology and style. North of the subject block was a scrubby expanse of sand dunes largely untouched by development until the late 1930s. Johnson was one of a number of small-scale builders who constructed speculative housing in the Sunset District. He is known to have constructed houses in the Sunset District from 1927 to 1939,⁹ though little else is known of his construction activities. Buildings in the tract share the markedly similar double bay massing as that constructed by Thomas Sullivan, a few blocks away at 32nd Avenue at Rivera Street. Both tracts represent a short-lived, highly expressive period of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District.

⁹ Building permits list N.E. Johnson as the builder/owner of six buildings in the Sunset District in 1927, 1931 (subject tract), and 1939.

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, the role of small-scale builders, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

Tract 6:

Castle Building Company's Tract

Year Built: 1931

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset District Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains four buildings centered on the southwest corner of Rivera Street at 33rd Avenue.

Contributors: 4

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking southwest on 33rd Avenue Source: Google Maps

This small Mediterranean Revival tract is a remarkably early example of the split-level house design. The tract is instantly distinguished from the surrounding blocks due to its unusual split-level plan and represents the earliest cluster of split-level houses known to exist in the Sunset District. Tract houses are set on lots with wider-than-average street frontage (30' compared to the typical 25') which allows for the wider split-level configuration. It was constructed a decade prior to Henry Doelger's split-level tracts in the central Sunset District and several decades before the split-level plan was a widely constructed property type nationwide. In addition to the split-level plan, the tract's houses feature expressive design elements not typically found on Sunset District tract houses including steeply pitched asymmetrical roof forms, a portico landing with punched opening, large picture windows, and mirrored relationship to its immediate neighbor. Additional detailing expressed on individual buildings includes thickly textured stucco, ogee arched windows, polychromatic tile stair accents, shaped cheek walls, and applied ornament. The tract represents a sharp break from the barrel front typology that was standard for most Mediterranean Revival houses constructed in the Sunset District from the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. The innovative design likely made this tract stand out from competitors during the Depression-era period of stalled construction and house sales.

In 1928, a year prior to the stock market crash, Henry Horn of the Castle Building Company purchased a large lot at the corner of 33rd Avenue and Rivera Street. At that time, the land and surrounding blocks were undeveloped sand dunes. Rivera Street was not yet paved (and remained unpaved for many years). Horn subdivided the lot and built four houses in 1931. Each house sold immediately upon completion despite its isolation amidst the sand dunes. Horn

later sold the remaining undeveloped lots. Unlike most builders of that era who relied on purchased blueprints or an in-house draftsman, Horn commissioned an outside architect, Donnell Jaekle, to design this tract.¹⁰

Horn is one of many small-scale builders who constructed speculative housing in the emerging Sunset District neighborhood. Born in 1900 in San Francisco, he worked as a railroad clerk during his late teenage years and early 20s. By the age of 27, he had shifted his focus to real estate and formed the Castle Building Company which was active from 1928 to 1932. Although the Castle Building Company was active for a just a few years, Horn remained in real estate for 40 years, developing both industrial and commercial buildings. During World War II, he led the Office of Price Administration in San Francisco and later served as a member of the San Francisco Board of Realtors. He died in 1970.

¹⁰ Jaekle was an architect of some esteem. San Francisco historian Gary Goss notes that Jaekle was among a handful of architects whose mid-1930s Period Revival houses could be mistaken for the better-known picturesque houses designed by celebrated architect Oliver Rousseau.

Tract 7:

Claude T. Lindsay's 31st Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1936

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains nine buildings located on the east side of 31st Avenue between Quintara and Rivera Streets.

Contributors: 9

Non-Contributors: 0



View looking northeast on 31st Avenue Source: SF Planning

The 31st Avenue tract is significant as an example of master builder Claude T. Lindsay's fully expressed and well-articulated Mediterranean Revival residential tract development in the Sunset District. The tract's nine buildings are designed in varying iterations of the Mediterranean Revival style and represent a late phase for Lindsay (and Sunset builders generally) of residential tracts designed in a single style rather than myriad interspersed Period Revival styles. Tract buildings display variety through massing, window openings, roof forms, and ornamentation. The buildings are muscular, with projecting bays, and a profusion of design elements not found on the typical Sunset District Mediterranean Revival tract house. Detailing expressed on individual buildings includes Churrigueresque ornamentation, miniature towers, niches, quoined entryways, sculpted verge boards, turned wood balconettes, bulky wood mullions, prominent chimney stacks, side-gabled and asymmetrical roof forms, and ornamented alcoves of transitional side entryways. Wood sash windows feature multi-light casements set in arched or squared surrounds.

Claude T. Lindsay was a prolific Sunset District builder in the 1930s and later developed larger-scale planned communities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. The 31st Avenue tract is representative of his early work, and it is also part of the final wave of Mediterranean Revival design in the Sunset District. Claude and his brother Boyd (also a Sunset District builder) started out as carpenters for their family's real-estate/construction firm. By 1937, Claude had opened a sales office at 820 Taraval Street in the Sunset District. He was known for constructing single houses or small clusters rather than larger, full block developments. In the postwar era, the Lindsay brothers expanded their geographic reach to include the larger Bay Area and expanded operations into the supply side of the construction industry, acquiring the New Colma Mill and Lumber Company with yards and mills located in Daly City, Decoto, Montrose,

Forest Hills, Auburn, Nevada City, Georgetown, and Reno (Nevada).¹¹ In the 1950s, Claude was an active developer in Menlo Park, responsible for developing single-family residential tracts, apartment housing, and commercial buildings.¹² In 1955, he began construction of his signature “Lifetime Homes”—billed as affordable three bedrooms, two baths single-family houses—in Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose.¹³

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood’s development history, the role and influence of the Claude T. Lindsay, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

¹¹ “OPA Charges Black Market in Lumber; Sues for \$1,000,000” *San Francisco Examiner*, August 29, 1946.

¹² “Plans for 475 Homes Drawn,” *San Francisco Examiner*, December 29, 1946 and “Zoning Feud in Menlo Park,” *San Francisco Examiner*, August 21, 1955.

¹³ “Real Estate Review: Farm,” *San Francisco Examiner*, January 18, 1955.

Tract 8:

Various Builders' 32nd Avenue Tract

Year Built: 1932-1937

This contributing tract to the identified-eligible Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District contains 17 buildings located on the east side of 32nd Avenue between Lawton and Moraga Streets.

Contributors: 16

Non-Contributors: 1



View looking northeast on 32nd Avenue

Source: SF Planning

The 32nd Avenue Mediterranean Revival tract is an unusual grouping of fully expressed Mediterranean Revival style buildings constructed by multiple builders. Tract buildings are designed in varying iterations of the Mediterranean Revival style as expressed by six separate builders, including Christian Anderson, Fred Reuter, Lawrence Costello, Frank Nelson, O.E. Mittelstaedt, and the Standard Building Company. The buildings display a broad range of popular Mediterranean design elements and massing and several buildings reflect the strong influence of Spanish Colonial Revival design, including Churrigueresque details and facades that mimic the thick adobe walls of the Spanish Colonial era. Several entry typologies are represented including the transitional side stair with semi-enclosed alcove. The tract also contains early 1930s representations of the Mediterranean Revival style, which are characterized by asymmetrical bays and centered entrances accessed via angled stairways. Additional detailing as expressed on individual buildings includes towers, muscular chimney stacks, crenellated parapets, machicolation, arched and chamfered openings, recessed quatrefoils, and applied ornaments such as cartouches.

It is rare to find such varied and expressive versions of the Mediterranean Revival style. It is also unusual that all six builders chose to build solely in the Mediterranean Revival style (with one exception), rather than the then-dominant

mixing of Period Revival styles.¹⁴

Refer to the *Sunset District Residential Builders 1925-1950 Historic Context Statement* for additional contextual information regarding the neighborhood's development history, the role and influence of small-scale builders, the evolution of Mediterranean Revival design and building typologies, and related character-defining features.

¹⁴ One of the tract's 17 buildings was designed in the French Provincial style. It is the tract's sole non-contributor to the District.

Character-Defining Features

The eight tracts comprising the identified-eligible Sunset Mediterranean Revival Historic District (District) display massing, articulation, setbacks, fenestration, stair typologies, and architectural details distinctive to each tract. The District's significance is reflected through the cohesive massing, articulation, form, setback, and stylistic elements of each tract set within a Mediterranean Revival design vocabulary. The following section details the District's character-defining features as a whole. Refer to the tract summaries for an overview of character-defining features associated with a specific tract.

Character-Defining Features

- One-story over garage massing with deeply recessed garage openings or slightly recessed garage openings
- Split-level typology
- Articulated massing, with projecting or shallow barrel front bays
- A variety of stair and entry configurations
 - Straight side stair typology, some with entry arch
 - Transitional side stair typology
- A variety of roof forms and parapets, primarily side-gabled, forward-gabled, cross-gabled and crenellated
 - Roofs and roofline are topped with red Spanish clay tiles
- A variety of wood-sash windows and openings
 - Most houses feature arched openings, though squared openings are also common
 - Prominent windows are often casements with decorative muntin patterns at the upper portion
 - Casement windows set in squared surrounds are often topped with transoms
- Double-hinged wood garage doors, often with paneling or applied ornament
- Wood paneled tradesmen door located within the garage opening or beneath the stairs
- Wood entry doors, occasionally arched and/or partially glazed
- Smooth or textured stucco exterior cladding
- Design elements associated with specific tracts and individual buildings (see listing of tracts above)
- Uniform landscape features
 - Uniform front yard setbacks of approximately 10'
 - Concrete driveways and walkways are often scored in a freeform pattern
 - Many tracts featured strips of lawns and landscaping adjacent to the house

Integrity

The District retains sufficient integrity with which to convey its significance. District contributors possess integrity in terms of material, design and workmanship, particularly when compared to buildings found outside of the District. The majority of District buildings retain a high level of original building features such as stucco exterior cladding, stair and entry configuration, recessed garage openings, roof form, and expressive ornamentation. Most of the historic double-hinged garage doors have been replaced with contemporary roll-up garage doors, though the deeply recessed garage openings are maintained. Replacement of the historic divided light wood-sash windows is also common. Few horizontal or vertical additions are visible from the public right-of-way. District contributors also retain integrity of feeling, setting, location, and association. Contributors remain single-family, are sited at their original location, and are surrounded by tracts of similarly scaled single-family houses.

Recommendations

As part of the *Sunset District Residential Builders Historic Context Statement, 1925-1950* and Sunset District Historic Resource Survey project, the discontinuous Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District (District) was identified as eligible for listing in the National Register. As such, the District is considered an eligible historic district for the purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). At this time, the Department does not propose to formally pursue listing of the identified-eligible District on the National Register or listing as a local Article 10 landmark district. In the future, property owners and/or the Historic Preservation Commission may choose to consider pursuing local landmark district designation for specific tracts within the District.

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Appendix

Tract Maps and Photographs



Christian Anderson Tract
Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 20






Christian Anderson's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1823042	1418 31st Ave.		3D
1823041	1422 31st Ave.		3D
1823040	1426 31st Ave.		3D
1823039	1430 31st Ave.		3D
1823038	1434 31st Ave.		3D

Christian Anderson's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1823037	1438 31st Ave.		3D
1823036	1442 31st Ave.		3D
1823035	1446 31st Ave.		3D
1823034	1450 31st Ave.		3D
1823033	1454 31st Ave.		3D

Christian Anderson's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1823032	1458 31st Ave.		3D
1823031	1462 31st Ave.		3D
1823030	1466 31st Ave.		3D
1823029	1468 31st Ave.		3D
1823028	1474 31st Ave.		3D

Christian Anderson's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1823027	1478 31st Ave.		3B
1823026	1482 31st Ave.		3B
1823025	1486 31st Ave.		3B
1823024	1490 31st Ave.		3B
1823023	1494 31st Ave.		3D








Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract

Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 26

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877051	2731 Kirkham St.		3D
1877052	2727 Kirkham St.		3D
1877001	2701 Kirkham St.		3D
1877002	1507 31st Ave.		3D
1877003	1511 31st Ave.		3D

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877004	1515 31st Ave.		3D
1877005	1519 31st Ave.		3D
1877006	1523 31st Ave.		3D
1877007	1527 31st Ave.		3D
1877008	1531 31st Ave.		3D

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877009	1535 31st Ave.		3D
1877010	1539 31st Ave.		3D
1877011	1543 31st Ave.		3D
1877012	1547 31st Ave.		3D
1877013	1551 31st Ave.		3D


Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877014	1555 31st Ave.		3D
1877015	1559 31st Ave.		3D
1877016	1563 31st Ave.		3D
1877017	1567 31st Ave.		3D
1877018	1571 31st Ave.		3D

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877019	1575 31st Ave.		3D
1877020	1579 31st Ave.		3D
1877021	1583 31st Ave.		3D
1877022	1587 31st Ave.		3D
1877023	1591 31st Ave.		3D

Henry Doelger's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District




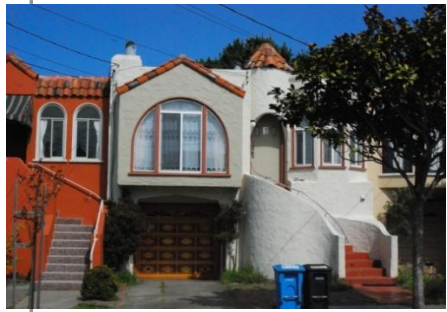

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1877024	2500 Lawton St.		3D




Doelger's 32nd Avenue Tract
Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 6

Doelger's 32nd Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRS
1877049	1506 32nd Ave.		3D
1877048	1510 32nd Ave.		3D
1877047	1514 32nd Ave.		3D
1877046	1518 32nd Ave.		3B
1877045	1522 32nd Ave.		3B

Doelger's 32nd Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District






APN	Address	Photograph	CHRS
1877044	1526 32nd Ave.		3B



Thomas Sullivan Tract Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 8

Thomas Sullivan's Veterans' Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
2318036	2125 Rivera St.		3D
2318035	2131 Rivera St.		3B
2318034	2200 32nd Ave.		3D
2318033	2206 32nd Ave.		3D
2318032	2210 32nd Ave.		3D

Thomas Sullivan's Veterans' Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District




APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
2318031	2214 32nd Ave.		3D
2318030	2218 32nd Ave.		3D
2318029	2222 32nd Ave.		3D



Nels E. Johnson
Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 4

Nels E. Johnson's 30th Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photo	CHRSC
2320003O	2266 30th Ave.		3D
2320003P	2270 30th Ave.		3D
2320003Q	2274 30th Ave.		3D
2320003A	2278 30th Ave.		3D



Castle Building Company Tract
 Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
 Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 4

Castle Building Company's Split-Level Tract

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photo	CHRSC
2316001	2201 33rd Ave		3D
2316001A	2207 33rd Ave		3D
2316001N	2331 Rivera St		3D
2316001O	2325 Rivera St		3D



C.T Lindsay Tract
Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District

 Contributor - 9

Claude T. Lindsay's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photo	CHRSC
2187013I	2162 31st Ave.		3D
2187013H	2166 31st Ave.		3D
2187013G	2170 31st Ave.		3D
2187013F	2174 31st Ave.		3B
2187013E	2178 31st Ave.		3D

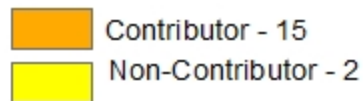
Claude T. Lindsay's 31st Avenue Tract
Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photo	CHRSC
2187013D	2182 31st Ave.		3D
2187013C	2186 31st Ave.		3B
2187013B	2190 31st Ave.		3B
2187013A	2198 31st Ave.		3D



Multiple Builders Tract

Identified Eligible Mediterranean Revival
Tracts Historic District








32nd Avenue Mediterranean Revival Tract

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1912003	1626 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002M	1630 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002L	1634 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002K	1638 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002J	1642 32nd Ave.		3D

32nd Avenue Mediterranean Revival Tract

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRS
1912002I	1646 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002E	1650 32nd Ave.		3B
1912002O	1654 32nd Ave.		3B
1912002D	1658 32nd Ave.		3B
1912002P	1662 32nd Ave.		3B

32nd Avenue Mediterranean Revival Tract

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRS
1912002C	1666 32nd Ave.		3B
1912002Q	1670 32nd Ave.		3B
1912002B	1674 32nd Ave.		6Z
1912002A	1678 32nd Ave.		3D
1912002H	1682 32nd Ave.		3D

32nd Avenue Mediterranean Revival Tract

Mediterranean Revival Tracts Historic District

APN	Address	Photograph	CHRSC
1912002N	1686 32nd Ave.		6Z
1912002G	1690 32nd Ave.		3B