

**D1. Historic Name:** None

**D2. Common Name:** None

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

This grouping of four bungalow properties forms a unique, suburban post-fire residential enclave within the Inner Mission North. Contributors to the historic district are four houses that were constructed in the fall of 1906, as well as an ancillary building that was constructed in 1910, during the period of physical rebuilding that followed the earthquake and fires of April 1906, which completely destroyed earlier development in the area. Contributors are a grouping of four one-story, wood-frame single-family dwellings (including one that has been converted to a duplex) that exhibit Bungalow architectural styles, and a steel-frame brick automobile garage that is located behind one of the bungalows. The prevailing building typology includes: long, low building plans that conform to lot sizes; façade surfaces and window bays clad in wood shingles that are stained a natural brown; symmetrical and varied fenestration; entrances that are recessed and/or located at the sides; porches and awnings supported by substantial beams and columns; and low-slung hipped roofs with wide overhanging eaves and dormers. Structures are set back from the front property lines, and from each other at the sides (with the exception of a pair of row-houses). Additional site features include: concrete site walls and steps; front yards and landscaping; and the natural topography that rises from north to south, which results in a terracing of structures. *(Continued on Page 3.)*

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

The historic district includes four adjacent lots, containing four primary structures and an ancillary structure, that are located on the west side of Capp Street, between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. *(See map on Page 10.)*

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

The boundary of the historic district contains the coherent, unique grouping of thematic, architecturally consistent properties that are found only in this location, while excluding all non-thematic properties.

**\*D6. Significance:** **Theme:** Post-Fire Rebuilding; Bungalow Architecture **Area:** Inner Mission North, San Francisco  
**Period of Significance:** 1906; 1910 **Applicable Criteria:** National Register of Historic Places Criteria A & C  
(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 A:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level, because it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. The historic district contains buildings that are significant because they are the products of the major rebuilding efforts that occurred within the Inner Mission North and in San Francisco after the earthquake and fires of April 1906. Specifically, the historic district is associated with the rebuilding efforts of an individual, August H. Wilhelm, a contractor who lived at 426 Capp Street, before, during, and after the 1906 disaster. Within a year of the great fires that destroyed his home and the neighboring properties, Wilhelm personally reconstructed his house and two other buildings within the historic district, and he was likely involved with or influenced the reconstruction of the fourth building. This grouping of properties represents a rare instance of reconstruction at a lower scale and density than had existed before the disaster.

*Criterion C:* The historic district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level, because: it embodies distinctive characteristics of type, period, and methods of construction; it possesses high artistic values; and it represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. The historic district exhibits architectural value that is expressive of California's Bungalows at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It includes four excellent, early examples of Bungalows in San Francisco's Mission District that display high quality construction techniques, materials, and craftsmanship, and that are mostly the work of a master builder, August H. Wilhelm. These Bungalows exhibit the influences of preceding styles such as Shingle and Queen Anne, as well as elements of styles that were fully developed later such as Craftsman, Prairie, and Bay Area Tradition. Collectively, they comprise a rare turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> century suburban bungalow grouping in San Francisco. *(Continued on Page 11.)*

**\*D7. References** (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.): *(See Page 17.)*

**\*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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**\*D3. Detailed Description:** *(continued from Page 1)*



The grouping of four bungalows located on the west side of Capp Street, between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. View northwest. San Francisco Planning Department.



The grouping of four bungalows located on the west side of Capp Street, between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. View southwest. San Francisco Planning Department.

Character-Defining Visual Characteristics

The visual characteristics of individual contributing properties, as well as of the overall historic district, include but may not be limited to:

- The low-scale, suburban development pattern that includes two large detached houses that are located flanking two narrower row-houses, on sites that include site walls, front yards, side yards, and sloping topography.
- The eclectic, early 20<sup>th</sup> century Bungalow architectural styles, which selectively draw from historical antecedents such as the Shingle and Queen Anne architectural styles, and which relate to contemporary early 20<sup>th</sup> century styles such as Craftsman, Bay Area Tradition, and Prairie in vernacular forms.
- The consistent designs of buildings that include: one-and-a-half stories in height; approximately equal structural footprints and widths (with the directly adjacent row-houses considered a single mass); low-pitched hipped roofs with overhanging eaves and shed/hipped dormers; cladding of exterior wall surfaces, which may be flat or may exhibit projections such as bay windows, with naturally stained wood shingles; symmetrical fenestration with rectangular, double-hung windows, as well as smaller art-glass windows; entrances located at the sides; porches and awnings supported by substantial beams; and concrete site walls.

Features and Elements

The historic district is a small, compact suburban residential enclave that is located on Capp Street, a typical residential thoroughfare in the Inner Mission North. It is comprised of a set of four architecturally consistent properties that are thematically related by design and by historical development. The following sections describe the features and elements that comprise the historic district, including areas, sites, groupings of structures, individual buildings, and their characteristics.

*Bungalows at the Edge of the 1906 Fires*

The four properties that comprise the historic district occupy a unique location in the historical record of the 1906 earthquake and fires. While the structures that existed on this site at that time probably withstood the quake, they did not survive the citywide conflagration that arrived at this location days afterward. However, these were the very last

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properties located on this side of the Inner Mission North, as well as some of the last properties in the entire city, to be destroyed by the fires of 1906. After the firestorm destroyed much of the rest of San Francisco, and then burned its way southward into the Mission District along the west sides of Howard Street (South Van Ness Avenue) and Capp Street for an entire day, citizen firefighters finally curbed it and pushed it westward at this exact location. The fires were finally extinguished a few blocks to the west. These actions prevented the firestorm from jumping the designated firebreak at 20<sup>th</sup> Street and continuing south through the Mission District. However, before the critical westward shift was achieved, the firestorm extended just far enough south on the west side of Capp Street to destroy the structures that previously existed on the four properties that are located within the historic district, and to therefore require their reconstruction. Among the last to be destroyed, these properties were also some of the very first in the Inner Mission North to be rebuilt.

At the time of the 1906 disaster, August H. Wilhelm lived at 428 Capp Street, which is the northernmost property located within the historic district. Wilhelm was a prolific building contractor whose name appears on numerous construction permits for properties located within the Mission District during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Wilhelm had moved from a residence on nearby Shotwell Street to his home on Capp Street shortly after 1900. Wilhelm's pre-fire home on Capp Street was a residential flats building that may have originated as a smaller dwelling that Wilhelm expanded horizontally in the back. The pre-fire neighborhood of Capp Street, comprised of similar detached two-story row-houses and flats, was somewhat suburban in character.



August H. Wilhelm (at left) purchasing a new automobile in 1954, while he still lived at 428 Capp Street. *San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library (Historical Photograph Collection Photo Id# AAD-4725).*

In September of 1906, within a few months of the earthquake and fires, contractor Wilhelm filed for City permits to rebuild three of the four lots that are located adjacent to each other within the historic district, including his own residence. Wilhelm listed no architects. In October of 1906, the owner of the southernmost property that is located within the historic district filed to construct a dwelling that was similar in design to Wilhelm's, though it listed a builder other than Wilhelm. However, it is likely that Wilhelm ultimately influenced or was involved with the physical rebuilding of all four of the properties located within the historic district. The reconstruction of these lots as single-family bungalows was not typical of post-fire upbuilding, which generally involved construction of larger multiple-family, multiple-story residential buildings that were located wall-to-wall with each other. These bungalows occupy footprints that are similar to those of the buildings that had existed before the earthquake and fires of 1906, which indicates that elements such as foundations, or partially intact structures, may have been incorporated into their reconstruction.

This early 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow unit exhibits exceptional qualities of planning, design, and craftsmanship, while incorporating varied architectural influences. They are laid out in a symmetrical arrangement that suited the lot sizes as well as the topography, which resulted in a planned, balanced suburban landscape within a compact area. Stylistically, they blended: elements of the Shingle and Queen Anne styles, such as shingle cladding, hipped roofs, hipped and gable dormers, and projecting bay windows; Classical features such as columns and dentil details; Craftsman-style open porch structures; and ground-hugging horizontal lines that referenced the developing Prairie style. This catholic approach to incorporating various stylistic elements fit the patterns of development of the eclectic California Bungalow, and was informed by various localized design innovations that eventually became known as the Bay Area Style. As described by Carole Rifkind in *A Field Guide to American Architecture*:

“Like the Prairie School house, the Bungalow house on the West Coast reflected diverse undercurrents – Arts and Crafts philosophy, the American Stick Style and Shingle Style, Japanese aesthetic principles and



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methods of wood framing. The Bungalow also answered to a mild climate and an informal life-style...It was not spread by architects, but by published builders' plans...In freshly reinterpreted versions of Stick, Shingle, Colonial, and rustic-log-cabin modes, the Bungalow – exported south, north, and east – had enormous vogue in the period from 1900 to 1920...In a far less radical manner [than in Prairie houses], the one- or one-and-half-story Bungalow house of the century's first decade, and as modified later, also attempts to link indoors and outdoors." (Pages 98, 100)

These early 20<sup>th</sup> century California Bungalows also display the features and characteristics that distinguish the structures as artistic and architecturally significant, rather than derivative or "bungaloid" as many later structures were viewed. According to Poppeliers and Chambers in *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture*:

"In the best examples, bungalows display a fine degree of craftsmanship and are constructed of materials left as close as possible to their natural state. Cobblestones, with their rounded shapes prominently displayed [or bricks, which were more commonly used in San Francisco], were laid up in foundations and chimneys; walls, whether frame or shingle, were stained a natural shade of brown; and roofs, with their wide overhangs displaying exposed rafters or knee braces, were often of shingle...[T]he bungalow became the western equivalent of the contemporary Prairie Style (q.v.) then being adopted in the middle sections of the country." (Page 106)



The Wilhelm house located at 426-428 Capp Street in 1976. *San Francisco Planning Department 1976 Architectural Survey.*



The grouping of four bungalows located on the west side of Capp Street, between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets, in 1976. View northwest. *San Francisco Planning Department 1976 Architectural Survey.*

### *The Wilhelm House: 426-428 Capp Street*

The house that is located at 426-428 Capp Street (built 1906), which was August H. Wilhelm's personal residence, is stylistically the most pure version of the California Bungalow of those that are found in his unique grouping on Capp Street. The building is long and rectangular in plan, with flat façade walls that are uninterrupted by bay windows or other extrusions, but that are clad in shingle for tactile richness. It is a low one-and-a-half stories in height, with the attic space contained within a gently sloping hipped roof and shed roof dormer located at the south side. The fenestration consists of double-hung windows that are equally spaced across the façades. A brick chimney rises from the north side of the roof, and the wide overhanging eaves extend into an open porch structure over the entrance area on the south side. The only concession to historical ornament to be found on Wilhelm's home are the Classical columns that support the porch. The house was constructed at the north side of the lot, which is a generous 50 feet wide and 122-½ feet deep, thus leaving open the south side for access. Concrete site walls with blocky piers enclose the front of the property and are used to demarcate separate pathway, driveway, and landscaped areas at the front and south side of the property. With its low, horizontal emphasis, its indoor-outdoor spatial synthesis, and its roof form that hovers above the ground floor, the Wilhelm home displays elements that are found in the California Bungalow and that also evoke the Prairie architectural style, which is related to the Bungalow style.

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In 1910, Wilhelm built a large steel-reinforced, brick "fire-proof" automobile garage across the back of his property. Wilhelm's substantial investment in this ancillary structure occurred during a time when ownership and use of automobiles was not yet common among the American public, but was generally restricted to the wealthy and to aficionados. Establishment of the garage completed the post-fire physical reconstruction of Wilhelm's property into a modern, early 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban residence. For approximately the next half-century, Mr. August H. Wilhelm, who was listed as a working contractor through the 1950s, and his wife Pauline lived at 428 Capp Street in the house and in the neighborhood that he helped to rebuild after the disastrous fires of 1906.



The Wilhelm house located at 426-428 Capp Street. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Porch details of the Wilhelm house located at 426-428 Capp Street. View northwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*

*The Wilhelm Twin Cottages: 432 & 436 Capp Street*

Concurrent with the post-fire reconstruction of his personal residence, August H. Wilhelm built the adjacent twin cottages that are located directly to the south of his own house. At the time of his applications for permits to construct the cottages, Pauline Wilhelm (wife of August H.) owned the lot at 436 Capp Street, while H.P. Spreckels (apparently related to sugar magnate Claus Spreckels, whose mansion was located nearby) owned the lot at 432 Capp Street. At 20 feet wide, these lots were less than half the width of the larger lots that were located to either side, and prior to the 1906 disaster they contained two very narrow attached row-house dwellings.



The Wilhelm twin cottages located at 438-440 Capp Street. View west. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



The Wilhelm twin cottages located at 438-440 Capp Street. View southwest. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



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Contractor Wilhelm designed and constructed identical twin Bungalows (built 1906) that efficiently and comfortably occupy the narrow lots. The long, low structures give the appearance from the front of attached row-houses with touching side walls. However, the placement of the recessed porches, and the use of partial setbacks on the south sides of the buildings behind the front sections, ensure that the main structures of the buildings actually touch for only a short length, and they also maintain some distance from the neighboring properties. Naturally stained wood shingles and hipped roofs on these small cottages match the cladding and forms of the Wilhelm residence. The properties are further unified by the line of concrete site walls with blocky piers and gates that extends from Wilhelm's personal property to the cottages at the sidewalk's edge, and define front yard landscape areas. At the front façades, wide three-sided bay windows terminate in gabled dormers with denticulated border trim, next to deeply recessed covered porches. The use of these Classically decorated, gabled bay windows was in keeping with popular Edwardian-era styles as well as with established Bungalow forms such as Shingle and Queen Anne. In 1931, Wilhelm inserted an automobile garage into the bungalow at 436 Capp Street, which his wife Pauline still owned. This historic alteration, the second of two garage constructions/installations that Wilhelm completed within the Bungalow grouping (including his own detached backyard garage), apparently resulted in a slight raising of the cottage in its original location.

*The Robins House: 438-440 Capp Street*

In October of 1906, shortly after August H. Wilhelm began the post-fire reconstruction of his own house and the adjacent row-houses, the owner of the property that is currently known as 438-440 Capp Street applied for a permit to rebuild on the site. The owner, Mrs. R. Robins, resided at nearby 513 Capp Street, and she may have been a speculative owner who never lived at the site. On her permit application, Mrs. Robins listed a builder whose name appears to be Chester Veehols (or similar), with a Mission District address of 819 Valencia Street. However, based on the building's obvious architectural similarities to Wilhelm's works, it may be surmised that the design of the Robins house was influenced by the three Wilhelm buildings that are located directly to the north, construction of which began weeks before reconstruction of the Robins house was initiated. It is also possible that Wilhelm had a direct hand in the development of the Robins house, based on its strong association to the other buildings in the grouping and its relationship to the overall design of the suburban enclave.



The Robins house located at 438-440 Capp Street. View northwest. San Francisco Planning Department.



Front façade of the Robins house located at 438-440 Capp Street. View northwest. San Francisco Planning Department.

This building that is located at 438-440 Capp Street (built 1906) occupies a lot that is nearly as large as Wilhelm's personal property, 45 feet wide. The form, massing, and placement of the Robins house on its lot is a close match to that of the Wilhelm home, and it provides a balance to the south end of this grouping of four bungalows that includes the smaller twin cottages in the middle. The Robins house is distinguished by its elevation, which apparently reflects

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the natural topography of the area, and which also indicates that this lot was not graded down either before or after the 1906 disaster. The dwelling, built on a concrete foundation, is raised up several feet on natural terrain that is supported at the front of the property by brick site walls with curved corners and stucco surfacing that is etched to resemble stone blocks. Mature trees and lush landscaping surround the structure in raised beds and accentuate the rustic setting and character of the property.

This large one-and-a-half story house is clad in rectangular wood shingles with natural staining, and is capped by a low-slung hipped roof, which matches the general Bungalow vocabulary of the known Wilhelm structures. It features a variety of window forms that are symmetrically placed around its exterior wall and roof surfaces that include: subtly projecting square bay windows at the corners of the front façade; angled bay windows and/or curved surfaces at side elevations; smaller art-glass accent windows; and hipped dormers above the eaves; all of which are unified by the simple roof form and shingle cladding. Like the Wilhelm residence, the primary façade is characterized by flat exterior wall surfaces, regularly spaced windows, and a low overhanging eave, with the main entrance apparently located at the south side of the house. A brick chimney projects above the central attic dormer at the front façade. With its unbroken shingled fascia, complex exterior walls surfaces, hipped roofs and dormers, and low horizontal emphasis, this house displays elements of the Shingle architectural style in a simplified Bungalow format. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the interior of the long Robins house was subdivided from a single-family dwelling into a duplex, with a unit at the front and a unit at the back, which apparently did not involve any exterior modifications.



South side of the Robins house located at 438-440 Capp Street. View north. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



Roof detail at the south side of the Robins house located at 438-440 Capp Street. View northeast. *San Francisco Planning Department.*



**CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Contributors

Contributors to the historic district qualify for assignment of California Historical Resource Status Code (CHRSC) of "3D" ("Appears eligible for NR [National Register of Historic Places] as a contributor to a NR 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 "3B" ("Appears eligible for NR both individually and as a contributor to a NR eligible historic district through survey evaluation").

The following list includes information for the **5 contributing properties** located within the historic district:

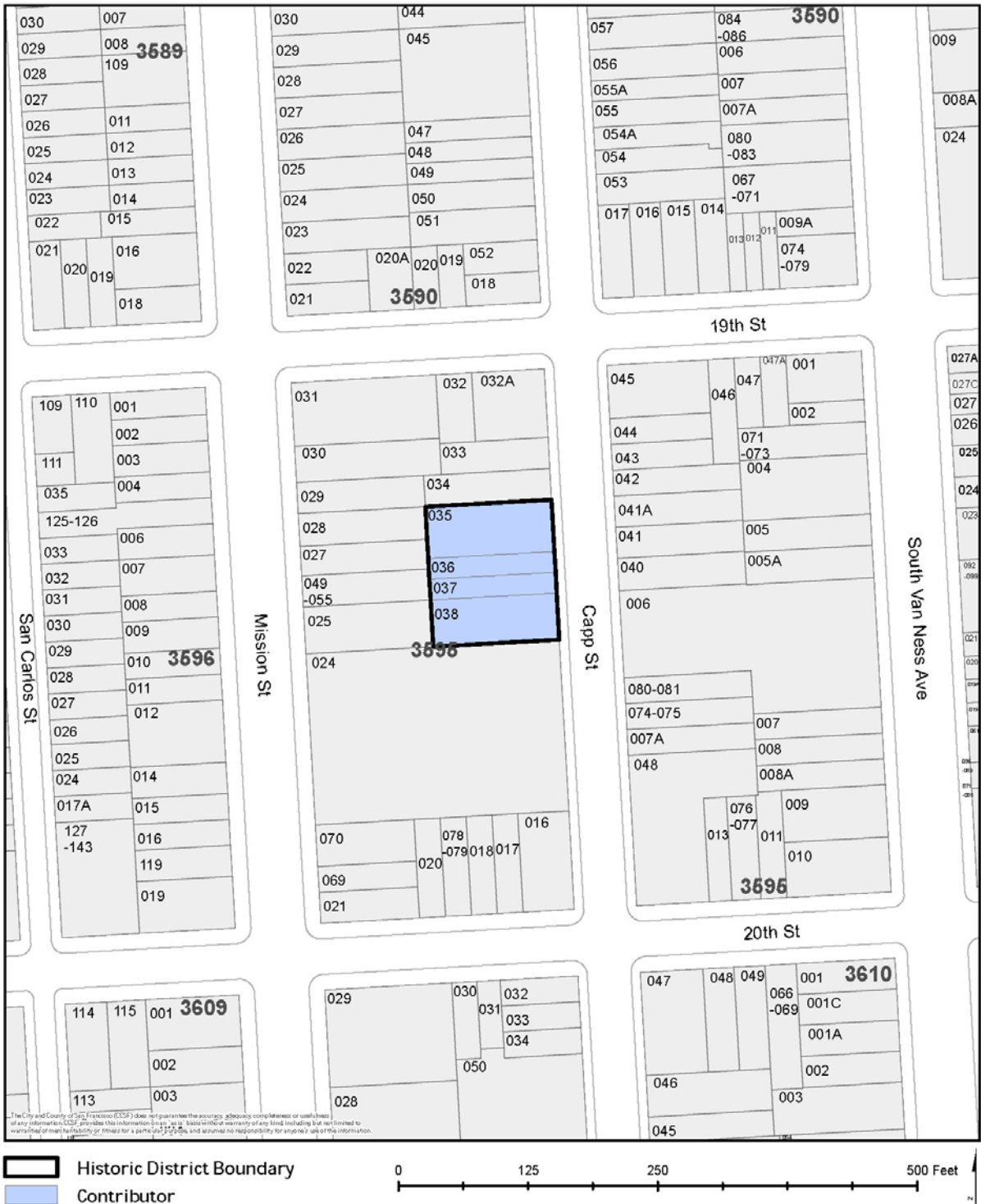
Street Name	Address	Assessor Parcel Number	Property Type	Architectural Style	Construction Date	Individual CHRSC
Capp Street	426-428	3595/035	Single-family property (August H. Wilhelm House)	Bungalow (Craftsman/Prairie)	1906	3B
Capp Street	426-428	3595/035	Ancillary building (automobile garage)	Vernacular	1910	3D
Capp Street	432	3595/036	Single-family property	Bungalow (Edwardian)	1906	3B
Capp Street	436	3595/037	Single-family property	Bungalow (Edwardian)	1906	3B
Capp Street	438-440	3595/038	Single-family property	Bungalow (Shingle)	1906	3B

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

Boundary Map

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



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**\*D6. Significance:** (continued from Page 1)

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

The California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Bulletin #6 indicates that properties that are determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historical Places (National Register) are also eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register). According to Bulletin #6, the National Register and the California Register are extremely similar because the California Register was consciously designed on the model of the National Register. Therefore, the historic district and its contributors are also determined eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 (which is approximately equivalent to National Register Criterion A) 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. Also, the historic district and its contributors are determined eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (which is approximately equivalent to National Register Criterion C) at the local level, because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period, region, and methods of construction, and it possesses high artistic values.

Historical Context

After the Inner Mission North was destroyed by the earthquake and fires of April 1906, the initial "relief" phase, which extended into 1908, was characterized by small ad hoc cottages and shacks that provided immediate, temporary shelter for the desperate refugee population. The second phase of "rebuilding" involved the construction of permanent replacement structures, which in some instances began immediately after the 1906 disaster, and in other instances continued well into the 1910s. Within the historic district, which is part of the most urbanized area of the Inner Mission North, only a very few small, plain buildings remain intact from the early "relief" era. Most of the extant 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.

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."

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



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

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



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).*

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

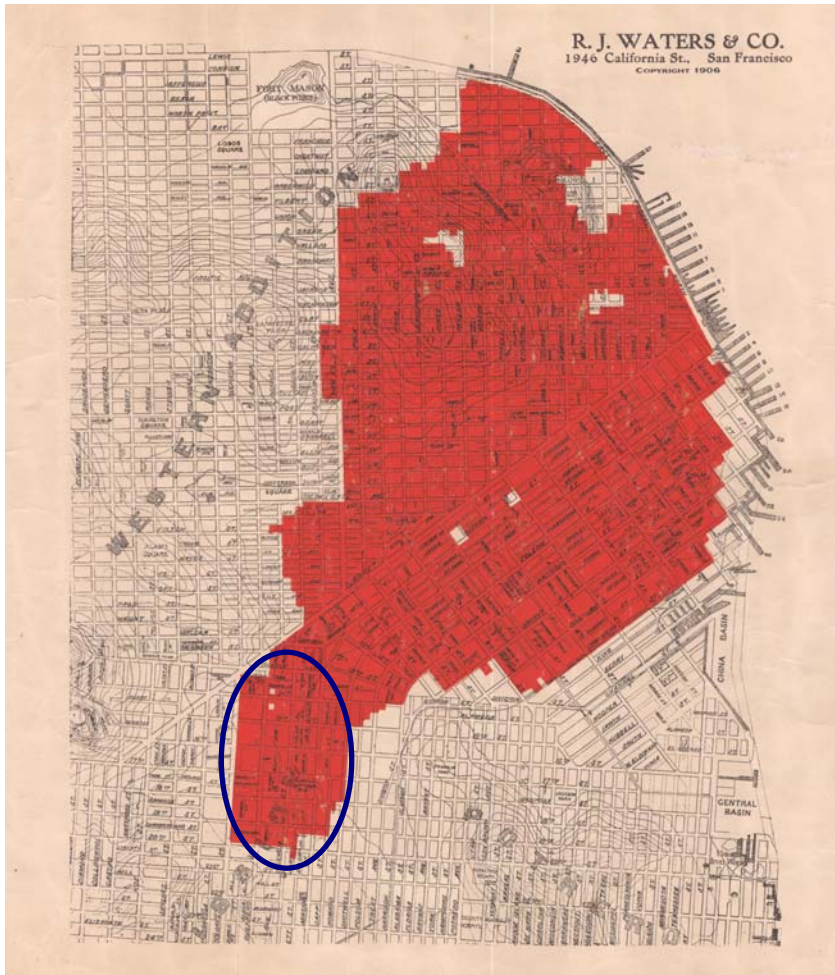
As the eastern and western lines held, firefighters scrambled to prepare a southern firebreak at 20<sup>th</sup> Street ahead of the conflagration. Dynamite was used to take down large buildings on the north side of the street, and men and horses pulled others down with ropes. In addition to the hydrant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

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*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.

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

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.

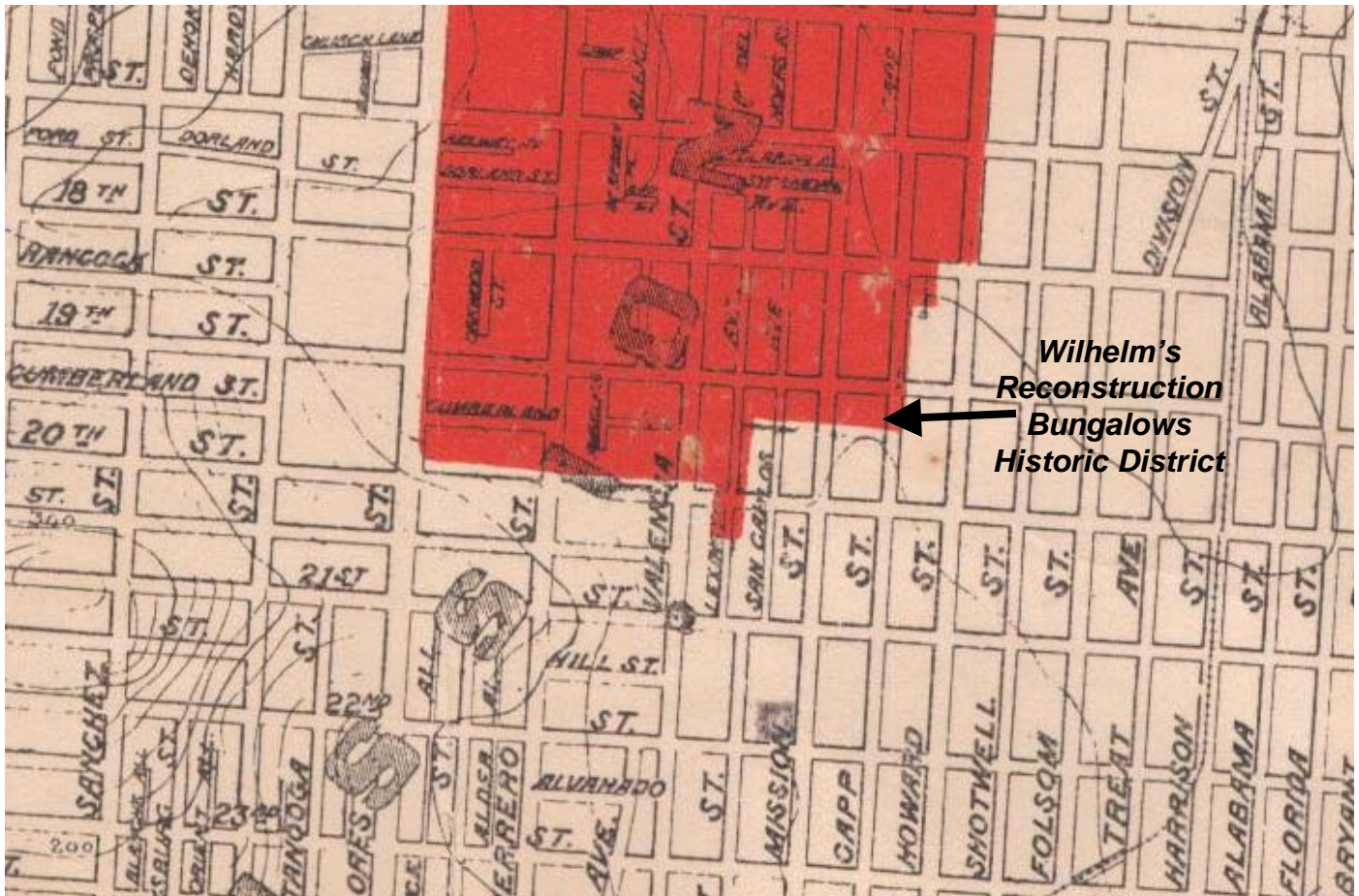
single-family dwellings and two-family flats had dominated the formerly suburban neighborhood before the fires, the post-



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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)

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



Detail of map of San Francisco by R.J. Waters & Co. (1906), showing the portion of the Inner Mission North (shaded) that was destroyed by the firestorm of 1906. The arrow indicates the location of the historic district on the west side of Capp Street south of 19<sup>th</sup> Street. The properties that are located within the historic district were the southernmost, and apparently last, properties on Capp Street to be destroyed by the firestorm before it was curbed by firefighters and shifted westward, where it was ultimately extinguished a few blocks away.



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### 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 where they were originally constructed shortly after the earthquake and fires of 1906, which destroyed the structures that previously occupied the sites. 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, spatial arrangements, proportions, scale, ornamentation and materials that relate to each other aesthetically and that are closely associated with California Bungalows that were constructed during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the formative period for the property type. Contributors includes characteristics such as: long, low building plans that conform to lot sizes; façade surfaces and window bays clad in wood shingles that are stained a natural brown; symmetrical and varied fenestration; entrances that are recessed and/or located at the sides; porches and awnings supported by substantial beams and columns; low-slung hipped roofs with wide overhanging eaves and dormers; and decorative features that were influenced by Shingle, Queen Anne, and Classical architectural styles, which were contemporary with early California Bungalows. For the historic district as a whole, design includes: the detached single-family house pattern (including the twin row-houses, which touch wall-to-wall for only a small portion of their depths); concrete site walls and steps; front yards and landscaping; and the natural topography that rises from north to south, which results in a terracing of structures. 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 a semi-suburban residential street; 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 in the historic construction, ornamentation, and/or improvement of buildings during the period of significance. 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, staining, turning, and joinery. Therefore, integrity of workmanship is retained.

### *Feeling*

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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 historic design, materials, workmanship, and setting that cumulatively relate the feeling of early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential architecture in California. 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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