State of California ☒ The Resources Agency	Primary #	
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	HRI #	
DISTRICT RECORD	Trinomial	

Page 1 of 15 *NRHP Status Code 3CD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District

D1. Historic Name New Wholesale District D2. Common Name: Showplace Square

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

The proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District is a discontiguous historic district consisting of three separate clusters of large heavy timber and steel-frame brick industrial buildings, most of which are designed in the American Commercial style. Cumulatively the district includes 16 buildings constructed between 1894 and 1929 that are located within the boundaries of the Showplace Square survey area, which includes parts of the Potrero and Mission districts as well as the southwest corner of the South of Market Area. The boundaries of the survey area are illustrated in Figure 1. See Continuation Sheet 2 for the remainder of this section.

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

The proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District is a discontiguous district containing 16 buildings in three separate but closely situated sub-districts. The westernmost section of the historic district comprises a cluster of three large buildings along Bryant Street between Division and 15th Streets. The district contributors are listed in Table 1 and non-contributors are listed in Table 2. See Continuation Sheet 5 for the remainder of this section.

*D5. Boundary Justification:

According to National Register Bulletin 15: "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," a discontiguous district is appropriate when the "elements of the district are spatially discrete," when "space between the elements is not related to the significance of the district;" and when "visual continuity is not a factor in the significance."[1] The boundaries of the three components of the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District have been drawn to encompass the most intact concentrations of heavy timber and steel-frame, American Commercial style brick industrial buildings within the Showplace Square survey area (Figure 4). See Continuation Sheet 6 for the remainder of this section.

D6. Significance: Theme Industrial Development: San Francisco Area Showplace Square

Period of Significance 1893-1929 Applicable Criteria 3

(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.)

Summary Statement of Significance

The proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District appears eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Design/Construction) as San Francisco's most important concentration of large heavy timber and steel-frame American Commercial style industrial buildings, most of which date from the period between the 1906 Earthquake and the First World War. The actual period of significance is 1893 to 1929, bracketing the dates of construction of the oldest and the newest district contributors. Although the district does not appear eligible under Criterion 1 (Events) because the emphasis of the district is primarily architectural, it is also significant as the core of San Francisco's "New Wholesale District," a light industrial zone that sprang up in the Mission Bay/north Potrero and Mission districts because of the expanding network of rail lines that connected the area to the Port of San Francisco and the car ferries to the East Bay railheads. Although it began to emerge before the quake, the New Wholesale District blossomed after 1906 as local industries relocated from the congested and largely destroyed South of Market Area to the northern Potrero and Mission districts, where large parcels of open land remained available and three national railroads had installed a superior network of railroad tracks. See Continuation Sheet 7 for the remainder of this section.

*D7. References (Give full citations including the names and addresses of any informants, where possible.): See Continuation Sheet 14.

*D8. Evaluator: Christopher VerPlanck Date: October 22, 2009

Affiliation and Address Kelley & VerPlanck Historical Resources Consulting, LLC

2912 Diamond Street #330, San Francisco, CA 94131

[1] Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1990, rev. 1998), 6.

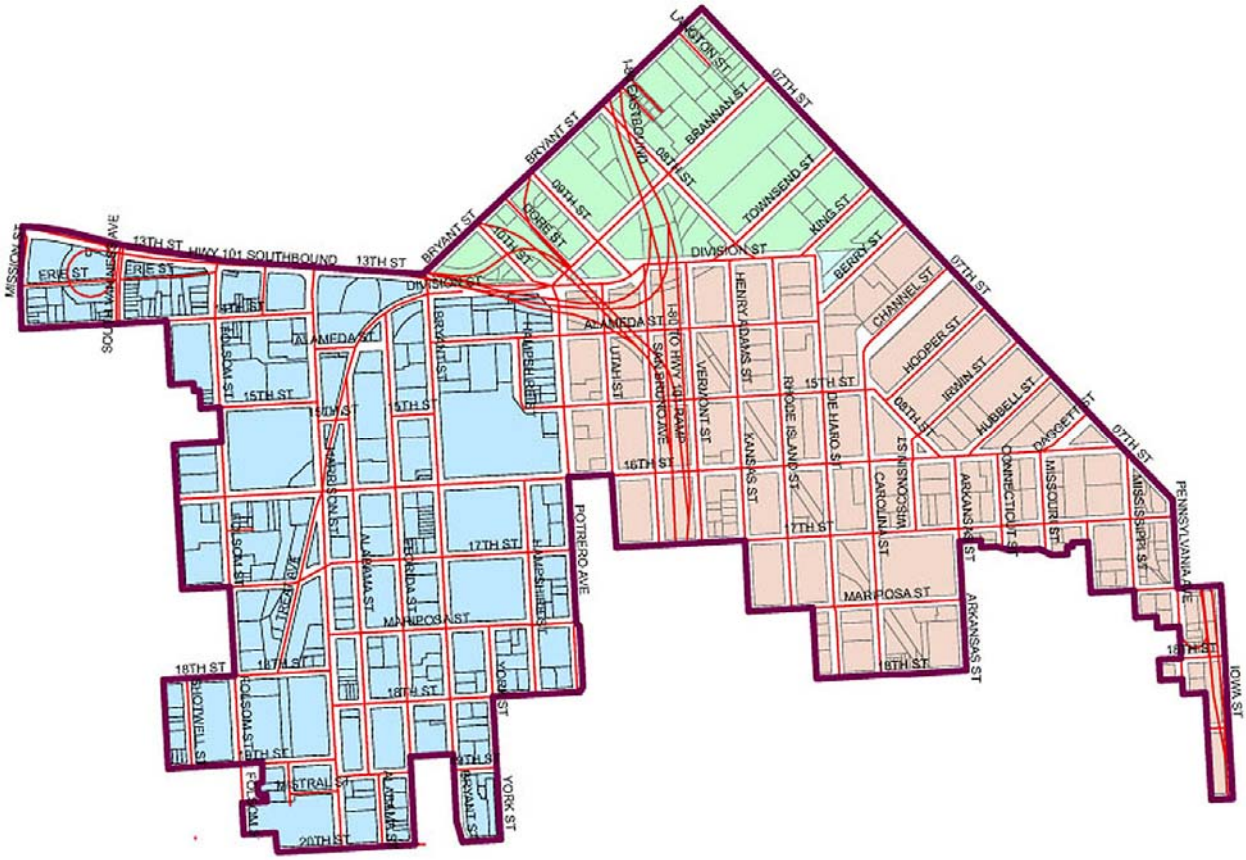

Figure 1. Survey Area boundaries: Mission (blue), Potrero (brown), and South of Market Area (green)
Source: KVP Consulting, LLC

The irregular boundaries of the survey area encompass 736 acres comprising 550 individual properties containing approximately 526 buildings. The survey area boundaries, devised by Planning Department staff, are roughly defined by Shotwell and Mission streets to the west, the Central Freeway (U.S. Highway 101) and Bryant Street to the north, 7th Street and U.S. Interstate 280 to the east, and the residential sectors of the Potrero and Mission districts to the south. The survey area also contains a small section of the South of Market Area bounded by 7th, Bryant, and Division streets.

The Showplace Square survey area, which encompasses the proposed discontiguous Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District, is located at the intersection of three separate street grids, ranging from the diagonal streets of the South of Market Area's "100 Vara" grid in the northeast to the orthogonal blocks of the Potrero and Mission subdivisions to the southeast and southwest, respectively. The intersection of these three grids is not easily resolved, resulting in idiosyncratic block and street configurations that create complicated building sites wherever they meet. Railway alignments, which in many cases bisect entire blocks, further complicate the street and lot line patterns of the survey area and the three components of the historic district.

The survey area is generally level; its western portion occupies the northeastern corner of what was historically the Mission Valley, a formerly rural area bisected by the meandering course of Mission Creek. Much of the northeastern portion of the survey area was once either part of the Mission Creek floodplain or Mission Bay, a now-filled cove that historically separated the South of Market Area from the Potrero District. East of the Bayshore Freeway the gradient of the survey area rises steadily uphill from what was Mission Bay southward toward the crest of Potrero Hill.

The survey area contains only two public parks: Franklin Square, a landscaped Edwardian era park bounded by 16th, Hampshire,

17th, and Bryant streets; and Jackson Playground, a level tract containing baseball fields, a playground, and a Mission Revival style clubhouse. Aside from these two parks and some landscaped freeway verges, the entire survey area is urbanized.

Although a handful of pre-1906 resources exist within the area, most of the survey area was developed after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. The area's level terrain, large intact landholdings, and proximity to rail lines and port facilities made it an ideal location for industrial uses, including manufacturing, warehousing, and railroad facilities. Three enclaves of large and medium-sized heavy-timber brick warehouses define the character of the central portion of the survey area. These clusters are recorded in this District form as the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District. Another 16 individual brick industrial buildings are distributed throughout the wider survey area. The almost equal dispersal of brick industrial buildings across the survey area was guided by the historic network of railroad tracks, spurs, and sidings that formerly connected area industries to the freight depots of the Southern Pacific, Western Pacific, and Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe rail depots.

Description

Developed primarily between 1906 and 1918 – although the period of significance extends back to 1894 and forward to 1929 to capture chronological outliers – the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District is highly cohesive in regard to building typology, scale, massing, materials, architectural style, and relationship to the street. Most are heavy timber-frame, iron, or steel-framed buildings with load-bearing brick perimeter walls. In regard to their structural system, most display the characteristics of what is popularly known either as "mill" or "slow-burning" construction. Pioneered in England and developed further in the design and construction of textile mills in New England during the mid-nineteenth century, the theory behind slow burning construction is that the vulnerability of internal wood framing can be minimized by using oversized posts and beams. Although these large wood structural members might catch fire, because of their massive dimensions they would only char around the edges, preserving the structural integrity of the building and leaving ample time for the building to be evacuated and the fire to be extinguished.

By the 1890s, slow-burning mill construction was generally recognized as the superior structural method for industrial buildings in the United States. Because they were resistant to fire, heavy timber-frame (and increasingly iron and steel-frame) brick industrial buildings obtained better insurance rates from insurance companies.[2] However, in San Francisco and the rest of California, unreinforced masonry construction was never as popular as in the East or the Midwest, due in large part to concerns about its vulnerability to earthquakes. Although brick was used to build warehouses and commercial buildings in San Francisco as early as the 1850s, masonry industrial buildings only became widespread for a short time following the 1906 Earthquake, when advances in technology made brick construction safer and a better alternative to entirely wood construction, which became essentially uninsurable during the post-quake period.[3] However, concerns over brick's vulnerability to earthquakes persisted in California. By the World War I era, advances in concrete construction ensured the almost wholesale displacement of brick as the preferred material for industrial buildings in the state. Brick industrial buildings are consequently relatively rare in the city outside of the Northeast Waterfront and South End warehouse districts and a few scattered concentrations in the Mission and Potrero districts.

Most of the contributing buildings within the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District are designed in the American Commercial style, a mode of design and construction applied to commercial and manufacturing buildings throughout the United States between 1890 and 1930. The style, commonly thought to have originated in Chicago, is principally characterized by an emphasis on utility, durability, and flexibility. With an internal heavy timber, iron, or steel frame, the exterior volume is always brick, with punched window and door openings and minimal ornament. In the proposed historic district, the walls of the contributors are brick (commonly laid in five-course American bond) and straight with 90 degree corners, although in some cases the existence of mid-block railroad rights-of-way and spur tracks have resulted in eccentrically shaped parcels and irregular building footprints, such as the J.I. Case Threshing Company building at 200 Rhode Island Street or the Schlessinger & Bender winery at 1616 16th Street. The roofs of the contributors are generally flat and the exterior articulation derived primarily from the rhythmically punched fenestration pattern, which is typically either a regular grid of evenly spaced individual window openings or bands of two, three, or four windows divided by pilasters or extruded brick piers. The window openings are either rectangular or capped by segmental arches and contain either wood or steel sashes divided into square lights by wood or steel muntins.[4]

The façades of district contributors are usually divided into horizontal sections consisting of a base, shaft, and capital – in emulation of Italian Renaissance villas and commercial buildings. The base is usually the location of the primary public entrance and on secondary elevations, vehicular loading docks or integral rail freight bays. The shaft typically contains two or more undifferentiated floors expressed on the exterior as a grid of punched double-hung wood or steel casement windows. The capital is most often an attic story differentiated from the rest of the façade by an intermediate cornice and capped by a corbelled brick frieze and/or sheet metal cornice. Ornamentation typically consists of simplified Renaissance-Baroque motifs expressed in corbelled or molded brick. More elaborate district contributors are embellished with granite, terra cotta, or inlaid tile ornament. Typical decorative motifs include corbelled brick arches with brick or stone or terra cotta keystones, molded brick quoins, molded brick or carved stone door and window casings and hoods, brick stringcourses and pilasters, corbelled brick friezes, and corbelled brick or sheet metal cornices.

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[2] Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 127-9.

[3] Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006), 165-6.

[4] Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969, rev. ed 1988), 183-4.

Two of the most characteristic examples of the American Commercial style in the proposed district including the Abel Hosmer warehouse at 212 Utah Street (Figure 2) and the Pacific Implement Co. building at 131 Henry Adams Street (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Abel Hosmer warehouse at 212 Utah Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 3. Pacific Implement Co. building at 131 Henry Adams Street
Source: KVP Consulting

Contributors to the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District are mostly massed as rectangular cubic volumes, although there are several irregularly massed buildings, including the J.I. Case Threshing Co. warehouse at 200 Rhode Island Street, which is built to fit a triangular parcel bisected by the Western Pacific railroad right of way. All 16 contributors have flat roofs except for the R. N. Nason & Co. building at 198 Utah Street, which has a gable roof concealed behind a stepped parapet. The contributors range in height from one to five-stories. All occupy the entire parcel and have frontage on at least two streets, allowing loading and unloading of freight to occur on less-congested alleys or back streets, several of which had tracks running along them like Rhode Island Street. Most of the district contributors were designed with access to nearby railroad tracks either directly on adjoining streets like the Dunham Carrigan & Hayden warehouse or more commonly via spur tracks and/or sidings. While most of the tracks are now gone, their former presence is attested to by the presence of integral freight bays and external loading docks on many buildings, abandoned rail sidings – frequently configured in a diagonal or arc-shaped footprint – and the occasional exposed tracks.

Although the use of most of the district contributors has changed from manufacturing and warehousing to office, wholesale, or residential use, their interior plans remain largely intact behind temporary partition walls. Originally, all district contributors would have had largely open floor plans, with offices for management clustered on the first floor level along the primary street façade. The offices would feature higher-quality finish materials such as wood floors, plaster walls, built-in wood casework, and plaster or suspended cast tin ceilings. In contrast, the work areas located behind the offices and on the upper floors would have been entirely utilitarian in character, with exposed brick walls, concrete or wood floors, and exposed heavy timber frame or steel framing. Equipment such as rolling fire doors were used to enclose loading docks and other openings and freight elevators would have been used to convey goods within the building.

*D4. Boundary Description (continued)

Contributors to the proposed district are listed in Table 1 below and include the Market Street Railway powerhouse at 1401 Bryant Street, the Continental Banking Company plant at 1525 Bryant Street, and the Friedman & Co. Furniture Company warehouse at 1590 Bryant Street. The middle section contains seven district contributors centered on the intersection of 15th and Utah streets. Contributors include the San Francisco Salt Refinery/Stauffer Chemical Company building at 550 15th Street, the R. N. Nason Company buildings at 151 Potrero Avenue and 198 Utah Street, the Abel Hosmer Co. warehouse at 212 Utah Street, the Westinghouse Electric Co. building at 225 Potrero Avenue, the Forderer Cornice Co. plant at 255 Potrero Avenue, and the E.W. Bennett and Co. warehouse at 2000 16th Street. The easternmost concentration consists of six buildings centered on the intersection of 15th and Kansas streets. This section, which is the largest and most intact of the three, includes several of the most individually distinguished buildings within the district, including the Dunham Carrigan & Hayden Co. warehouse at 1 Henry Adams Street, a trio of three nearly identical warehouses built by the San Francisco Development Company on the block bounded by Alameda, Rhode Island, 15th, and Henry Adams streets, the J.I. Case Threshing Co. warehouse at 200 Rhode Island Street, and the Schlessinger & Bender winery at 1616 16th Street. Although several properties contain non-contributing additions that postdate the period of significance, there are only two individual properties that are non-contributors to the proposed district; these are listed in Table 2 below. The boundaries of the proposed district are illustrated in Figure 4 below.

No.	APN	Address	Name	Construction Date	Architect	Existing Status Code	KVP Status Code(s)
1	3904002	1401 Bryant St.	Market St. Railway Powerhouse	1893		None	3CB
2	3910001	2 Henry Adams St.	Dunham Carrigan & Hayden Co. warehouse	1915	Leo J. Devlin	None	3CB
3	3915001	101 Henry Adams St.	John Hoey and Co. warehouse	1906	Meyers & Ward	None	3CB
4	3915003	131 Henry Adams St.	Pacific Implement Co. warehous	1906	Meyers & Ward	None	3CB
5	3915004	298 15th St.	General Electric Co. warehouse	1906	Meyers & Ward	None	3CD
6	3918010	550 15th St.	San Francisco Salt Refinery	1906		None	3CD
7	3919004	151 Potrero Avenue	R.N. Nason & Co. paint factory	Ca. 1915		None	3CD
8	3919005	198 Utah St.	R.N. Nason and Co.	1906	Rainey & Phillips contractor	7N	3CD
9	3922A001 & 3900A002	1525 Bryant Street	Continental Baking Co.	1928 & 1929		None	3CB
10	3923005	1590 Bryant St.	M. Friedman & Co. warehouse	1907		None	3CD
11	3932001	201 Potrero/200-208-212 Utah St.	Abel Hosmer Co. warehouse	1911	E.P. Antonovich	None	3CB
12	3932006	255 Potrero Ave/260 Utah St/2012 16th St.	Forderer Cornice Works	1924		None	3CD
13	3932010	2000 16th St.	E. W. Bennett Co. warehouse	1907	Muller, Leonard, Murray & Rainey contractors	None	3CD
14	3932016	225 Potrero Ave.	Westinghouse Electric Supply Co	1922		None	3CD
15	3936001	200 Rhode Island St	J. I. Case Threshing Co.	1912	G. Albert Lansburgh	None	3CB
16	3936003	1616 16th St./235-299 Kansas St.	Schlessinger & Bender winery	1912	G. Albert Lansburgh	3S	3CD

Table 1-Contributors to the Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District

No	APN	Address	Name	Construction Date	Architect	Existing Status Code	KVP Status Code(s)
1	3915002	101 Henry Adams St.	San Francisco Design Center	1975	Unknown	None	6Z
2	3936002	1616 16th St.	None	N/A	None	None	6Z

Table 2-Non-contributors to the Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District

*D5. Boundary Justification (continued)

KVP decided that a discontiguous historic district was appropriate in this case because with the notable exceptions of the three geographically concentrated sub-districts, American Commercial style brick industrial buildings are generally dispersed throughout the survey area, often among different building and structural types. The determining factor behind their locations vary, but for most of the contributors, access to trail transit was the most important determining factor.

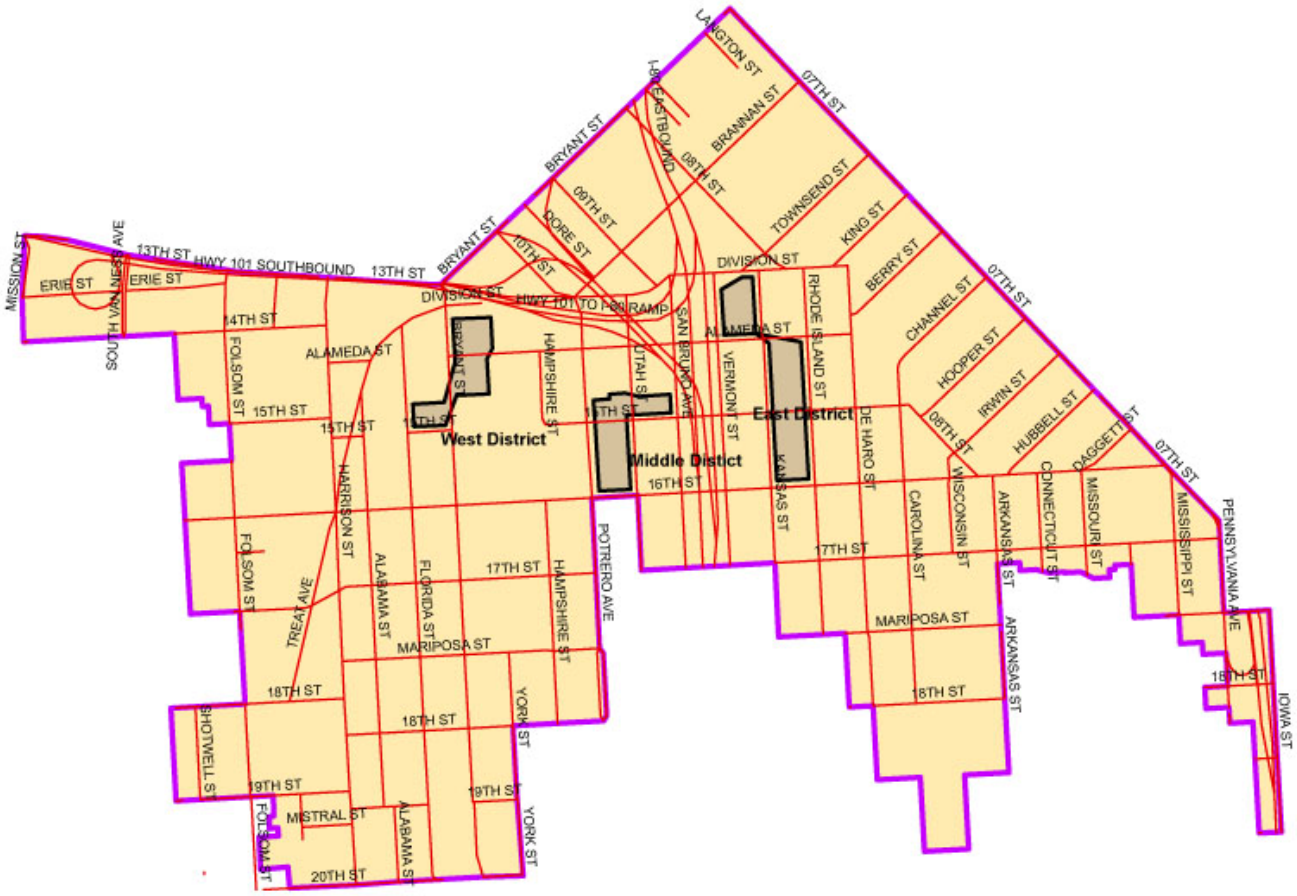

Figure 4. Location of contributors to the proposed discontiguous Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District
Source: KVP Consulting

D6. Significance (continued)

The New Wholesale District remained San Francisco's most important light industrial/warehousing district until after the Second World War when industrialists began leaving the city in search of large parcels of undeveloped land, improved freeway and rail access, and jurisdictions less friendly to organized labor.The district appears eligible under Criterion 3 for its intact concentrations of post-1906, American Commercial style brick industrial buildings. The Showplace Square area is conspicuous within the city and the wider Bay Area region for its inventory of architecturally distinctive brick industrial buildings that loom above their generally lower-scale and less architecturally distinguished surroundings. Many of the district contributors are well-known by sight to due to their proximity to the elevated Bayshore/James Lick and Central freeways. Although located in three non-contiguous enclaves, the three sections lay within close proximity to each other and the district contributors are conspicuous as a group because of their large size and materials palette that is noticeably different from their surroundings. Encompassing a period that spans three decades, the contributors to this district not only display the pattern of features common to this particular class of resources, but also the evolution of this class from the heavy, almost monolithic appearance of the earlier representatives of the type toward the lighter and more expansive later examples that take full advantage of lighter steel-framing. This type of structure is more commonly encountered within the urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest, making this collection of heavy timber and steel-frame brick buildings even more distinctive within its local context of San Francisco.

Historic Context

An extensive historic context describing the development of the entire Showplace Square survey area is contained in the accompanying Showplace Square Survey Context Statement. This District Form explores the development of only the most characteristic building type within the survey area: the heavy timber and steel-frame, American Commercial-style, brick industrial building.

Figure 5. Baker & Hamilton warehouse
Source: KVP Consulting

Although there is one district contributor within the proposed historic district that predates 1906 (the Market Street Railway powerhouse), the vast majority (15) were built between 1906 and 1929, a period coinciding with the heyday of brick construction in San Francisco. Brick construction was certainly not uncommon in San Francisco before 1906 – especially for commercial buildings within the downtown fire limits – but its application to industrial structures on the outskirts of the city had long been hampered by technological challenges restricting the efficiency of taller brick structures, the scarcity (and resulting expense) of good local sources of clay and lime, and a local predilection toward frame construction – partly due to concerns over the vulnerability of brick buildings to earthquakes. However, even before the quake, there was an increasing interest among local industrialists to relocate beyond the confines of the crowded, cramped and flammable South of Market Area, San Francisco's first industrial district. The first to do so was the Pacific Hardware & Steel Company, which decided to abandon its rented quarters at 2nd and Mission streets and construct a massive brick warehouse at the intersection of 7th and Townsend streets. Completed in 1905, the building (now known as the Baker & Hamilton Building) was the first significant heavy timber-frame brick warehouse structure completed in the Showplace Square survey area (Figure 5). Although it is not located within the proposed historic district, the building heralded the beginning of San Francisco's "New Wholesale District" south of Mission Bay, where large tracts of land with good rail access could be had for a fraction of the price of land in the South of Market Area.[5]

The 1906 Earthquake dramatically highlighted the susceptibility of frame construction to fire. Although it was known that brick was vulnerable to seismic forces, advances in engineering – especially the substitution of steel framing for wood and the incorporation of seismic reinforcement measures – increasingly made masonry construction feasible. In addition, the use of stronger and lighter-weight steel framing allowed for brick buildings with thinner exterior walls, fewer internal walls, and greater open spans, freeing up additional floor space for manufacturing and warehousing goods. This factor, combined with the widespread use of freight elevators, made brick increasingly attractive as a building material for industrial buildings. Furthermore, insurance company guidelines increasingly required the substitution of masonry for risky frame construction, especially in San Francisco's industrial districts.[6]

[5] "Pioneer Business Building in New Wholesale Section," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 31, 1904)
[6] Stephen Tobriner, *Bracing for Disaster: Earthquake-Resistant Architecture and Engineering in San Francisco, 1838-1933* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006), 200-3.

Prior to the 1906 Earthquake, the South of Market Area was San Francisco's most important industrial district, although it had become increasingly unsuitable for such uses due to its indiscriminate mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential structures within close proximity to each other. In addition, over the last half of the nineteenth century, many of the once-large parcels of the South of Market Area had been carved up into small house lots that were completely inappropriate for modern industrial plants. Capping it all was the almost entire destruction of the district by the fires that followed the 1906 Earthquake, leaving hundreds of blocks filled with charred rubble. Although industrialists attempted to extend the fire limits into the South of Market Area after the quake to prevent the reconstruction of wood-frame buildings, this effort failed. In the absence of knowing how the area would be rebuilt many industrialists simply decided to look elsewhere, either to outlying parts of San Francisco or outside of the city entirely.[7]

For industrialists who wished to remain in San Francisco, the most suitable areas for industrial expansion included the Potrero District's Central Waterfront area, Bayview-Hunters Point, and especially the northern portion of the Mission and Potrero districts where large parcels of undeveloped land with rail access were still available and where housing and other incompatible building types had not infiltrated to any significant degree. Rail access was one of the area's most positive attributes. Ever since it had acquired much of Mission Bay in the late 1860s the Central Pacific (later the Southern Pacific) Railroad had filled its formerly submerged holdings, creating large unsubdivided parcels with rail access. The area's rail network improved after 1900 when the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe (AT &SF) Railroad arrived in San Francisco. The AT & SF bought several large tracts of vacant land in the vicinity of Mission Bay and the Central Waterfront and began building a network of tracks to serve their holdings. Not far behind was the Western Pacific Railroad, which arrived in San Francisco in 1905. All three railroads bought large landholdings, built freight and passenger depots, and over time installed a network of main line and spur tracks to link their depots with the bayside car ferry terminals that connected San Francisco with the East Bay railheads.

Seeking to increase the value of their holdings, each of the three major railroads in the Showplace Square survey area offered to lease land to displaced industrialists in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake. To sweeten the deal, the railroads also built temporary corrugated steel structures for lease to interested parties. For companies interested in building permanent structures, the railroads and other private land holders entered into long-term leases or sold the land outright to industrialists interested in doing business in the area. Within months of the 1906 Earthquake, several real estate developers had begun building permanent speculative structures to house a variety of manufacturing and wholesale distributors dealing in furniture, hardware, and machinery; as well as food and beverage processing companies, soft goods makers like clothing and mattresses, and makers of chemicals and other industrial processes.[8]

Figure 6. Kansas Street warehouses
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 7. J.L. Case Threshing Co.
Source: KVP Consulting

[7] Ibid.
[8] "Western Pacific Awards Contract for New Depot," *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 13. 1909), 16.

Figure 8. M. Friedman & Co. warehouse
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 9. Schlessinger & Bender winery
Source: KVP Consulting

One of the earliest major projects completed within the proposed historic district is a trio of identical brick warehouses completed in 1906 at 101 and 131 Henry Adams (Kansas) streets and 298 15th Street. Designed by the San Francisco architectural firm of Meyers & Ward, these three warehouses were actually commissioned in 1905 by the San Francisco Development Company but not completed until after the earthquake (Figure 6). Built on a large tract encompassing an entire block with rail access on Rhode Island Street, these warehouses were soon occupied by several local and national companies, including two hardware wholesalers, a mattress factory, and a national electrical supply company.

Construction of new buildings continued apace throughout the post-quake reconstruction period of 1906-1913. In addition to speculative buildings, individual companies – many burned out of the South of Market Area – began constructing brick industrial buildings within the survey area. In need of large floor plates to store bulky goods and convenient access to rail spurs, most of these companies erected large multi-story brick structures with integral rail sidings or spurs. One of the largest and most architecturally distinctive buildings within the proposed historic district is the J.I. Case Threshing Co. complex (1912) at 200 Rhode Island Street (Figure 7). Designed by famed San Francisco-based architect J. Albert Lansburgh, the five-story warehouse housed a wholesale hardware company specializing in farm equipment. Another example, designed in a more traditional Renaissance-Baroque style is the Friedman & Co. Furniture Company warehouse (1907) at 1590 Bryant Street (Figure 8). This building, constructed of brick with a heavy timber frame, is the westernmost contributor to the district. Although it did not have its own rail spur, it was located within two blocks of the Southern Pacific's Mission freight depot.

In addition to hardware and furniture wholesalers, the historic district contains several buildings built as food or beverage-processing plants. These range from the supremely utilitarian San Francisco Salt Refinery (1908) at 550 15th Street to the architecturally elaborate Schlessinger & Bender Winery at 1616 16th Street. Designed by G. Albert Lansburgh, the Schlessinger & Bender complex is notable for its prominent curved corner entry and elaborate polychromatic brickwork laid in Flemish bond and detailed with terra cotta and tile work (Figure 9).

Figure 10. R.N. Nason Paint Co. building
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 11. E.W. Bennett Chemical Co. building
Source: KVP Consulting

The post-quake reconstruction period also witnessed the construction of smaller and less prominent American Commercial-style brick buildings on less valuable lots located at the periphery of the spur track network that historically tied the survey area together. One of the best examples in the historic district is the small brick shop that predated the rest of the large R. N. Nason paint company complex at 198 Utah Street (ca. 1907) (Figure 10). Others are only one-story in height and appear that to have

been designed to be added on to. Examples of this latter type in the proposed historic district include the E.W. Bennett Chemical Company building (1907) at 2000 16th Street (Figure 11).

Figure 12. Dunham Carrigan & Hayden warehouse
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 13. R.N. Nason Paint Co. factory
Source: KVP Consulting

Following the end of the post-quake reconstruction period in 1913, there was a brief period in which construction slowed within the Showplace Square survey area, reviving with the building boom that preceded the First World War. American Commercial-style brick buildings continued to be constructed during this period, although reinforced-concrete "daylight frame" structures were gaining in popularity. Examples of World War I-era brick buildings within the proposed historic district include the massive Dunham Carrigan & Hayden Company warehouse (1915) at 2 Henry Adams (Kansas) Street (Figure 12). This building, which occupies an entire block bounded by Division, Kansas, Alameda, and Vermont streets, was designed by Leo J. Devlin for use as a wholesale hardware warehouse. Its northern section is curved to accommodate spur tracks belonging to the Southern Pacific Railroad. In addition, a private siding running up the east side of Vermont Street served a loading dock on the west side of the building. Another major American Commercial style warehouse built during World War I is the R.N. Nason Paint Company factory at 151 Potrero Avenue (Figure 13). Although the two buildings feature heavy timber-framing, the Dunham Carrigan & Hayden warehouse and the R.N. Nason Paint Company factory both feature relatively large window openings and thinner walls, which suggest the use of steel to augment the structural system. In fact, the latter building has large rectangular window openings filled with steel industrial sash, a feature characteristic of the concrete daylight frame buildings of the post-World War I era.

Construction within the survey area slowed again for a few years after World War I, resuming again in the early 1920s with the nationwide 1920s-era building boom. Although several American Commercial-style brick buildings were completed during the 1920s, by this time reinforced-concrete had become the preferred material of choice within the survey area. Later examples within the proposed historic district include the Westinghouse Electric Supply Co. warehouse (1922) at 225 Potrero Avenue and the Forderer Cornice Works Co. building (1924) at 255 Potrero Avenue (Figure 14). The latter building was one of the last buildings in the survey area constructed with a heavy timber frame and load-bearing brick walls, hallmarks of the American Commercial style. Brick continued to be used in the survey area even after the demise of the American Commercial style and the survey area contains one late transitional example that merges concrete and brick construction techniques into one building, the Continental Baking Company building at 1525 Bryant Street (1928-29) (Figure 15). Constructed at the end of the 1920s building boom and designed in a transitional style merging elements of the American Commercial and the Renaissance Revival styles, the bakery features a concrete frame with brick exterior cladding. Despite its sophisticated concrete structural system, the building's exterior retains the rhythmic punched windows and heavy mural qualities of the heavy timber-frame buildings that preceded it. This building is the newest contributor to the Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District.

The period of significance for the proposed historic district ends in 1929, the date of construction of its most recent contributor. Construction nosedived after the Stock Market Crash in 1929. By the time private construction revived during the mid-1930s reinforced-concrete had fully displaced unreinforced masonry, relegating brick to an applied decorative material frequently used either as a veneer or as a decorative detail. As concrete became the dominant material for new construction in the survey area, the design of industrial buildings became thoroughly transformed. The new material facilitated large clear span interior spaces and allowed large sections of the exterior to be devoted to window openings. Furthermore, concrete is a plastic material better – well-suited to ornamental effects. In contrast to brick, which required skilled labor to render ornament, relatively unskilled laborers could use molds to create bold exterior detailing relatively easily and inexpensively, as evidenced by the profusion of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne style industrial buildings of the 1930s and 1940s.

Figure 14. Forderer Cornice Co. building
Source: KVP Consulting

Figure 15. Continental Baking Co.
Source: KVP Consulting

As explained in more detail in the accompanying Historic Context Statement, the Showplace Square survey area continued to serve as San Francisco's primary manufacturing and wholesale district through the Second War. After a brief period of growth following the war, the survey area began to decline after 1950 as long-term industries began moving out of the city in search of cheaper land, lower wages, and better freeway access. Nevertheless, in comparison with the South of Market Area and other older industrial districts, the Showplace Square survey area contained larger and more modern industrial buildings with decent access to both rail and highway networks. Accordingly, economic studies carried out by the San Francisco Planning Department suggest that the survey area de-industrialized at a slower pace than the rest of the city, retaining some industries – in particular food-processing, light warehousing/distribution, and repair – until the present day.

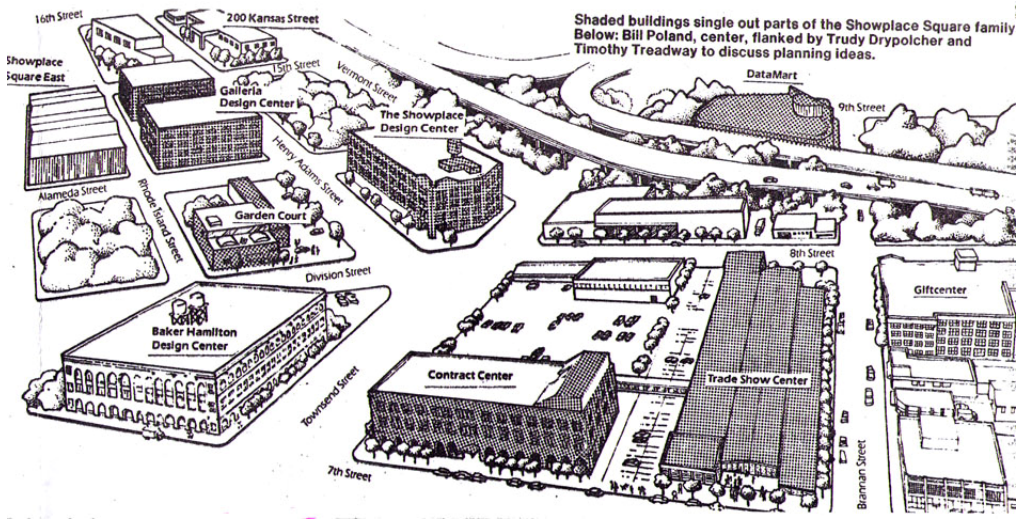

Figure 16. Diagram of Showplace Square
Source: San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle (May 22, 1983)

During the late 1970s, the core of the survey area (including the proposed historic district) – an area roughly bounded by 7th, Bryant, 16th, De Haro, and King streets – became substantially transformed after Henry Adams, businessman and president of the Western Merchandise Mart, bought his first warehouse in the area for use as a design center/showroom. This building, the Dunham Carrigan & Hayden warehouse at 2 Kansas Street, became the first of several large brick warehouses and factories that would be purchased and transformed into interior design and building trade showrooms, wholesale markets, and other allied industries in the Showplace Square survey area during the 1970s. By 1980, the industrial zone of the northern Potrero and Mission districts had achieved critical mass as the epicenter of San Francisco's interior design community (previously located in Jackson Square), earning the area its current nickname of Showplace Square. By 1985 most of the large brick American Commercial-style brick warehouses in the survey area had been adaptively reused for this new industry, with new buildings housing allied businesses going up on empty parcels around the core of the area (Figure 16). Although the dotcom boom made inroads into the Showplace Square area with internet company office space and "live-work" lofts, the area remains the center of San Francisco's interior design/wholesale furnishings trade.

Significance

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. Resources can be listed in the California Register through a number of methods. State Historical Landmarks and National Register-eligible properties are automatically listed in the California Register.[9] Properties can also be nominated to the California Register by local governments, private organizations, or citizens. This includes properties identified in historical resource surveys with Status Codes of "1" to "5," and resources designated as local landmarks through city or county ordinances. The evaluative criteria used by the California Register for determining eligibility are closely based on those developed by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places.

In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria:

- *Criterion 1 (Events)*: Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- *Criterion 2 (Persons)*: Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- *Criterion 3 (Architecture)*: Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- *Criterion 4 (Information Potential)*: Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

As discussed above, the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District appears eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 (Design/Construction). Under Criterion 3, the discontiguous district appears eligible as San Francisco's largest and most important concentration of heavy timber and steel-frame American Commercial style industrial buildings, most of which date from the period between the 1906 Earthquake and the First World War. The period of significance actually spans the years 1893 to 1929 to pick up the few heavy-timber and steel-frame brick buildings constructed before the 1906 Earthquake and after the First World War.

The primary significance of the proposed historic district is its embodiment of the characteristics of a particular type, period, region, and method of construction, in this case San Francisco's largest and best-preserved inventory of American Commercial-style heavy timber and steel-frame warehouses and factories. Designed by a range of architects and engineers – some prominent and others less so – the contributors to the district vary in size and the degree of exterior detailing, often commensurate with the value of the properties. Although brick industrial buildings are fairly evenly distributed throughout the survey area, several clusters emerge, forming the three components of the proposed discontiguous historic district. The largest of these clusters is the area popularly known as Showplace Square East, a cluster of six large brick warehouses located east of the Bayshore/James Lick Freeway between Division and 16th streets. For the purposes of this District form, it is called the East Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District. Another smaller and more diffuse cluster of larger brick buildings, popularly known as Showplace Square West, is centered on the intersection of 15th Street and Potrero Avenue, west of the freeway. This L-shaped district contains six contributors and for the purpose of this District form it is called the Central Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Warehouse and Factory District. The third cluster is a grouping of three large brick industrial buildings centered on the intersection of Alameda and Bryant streets. This cluster, which contains the oldest building in the district (the Market Street Railway powerhouse) and the newest (Continental Baking Company), is located in the northeast Mission District.

Similar to brick American Commercial style industrial buildings throughout the survey area, the contributors to the potential district were built with two major variables in mind: 1) the existence of prior large landholdings and, 2) access to rail lines. These factors appear to have been the most important determining factors in the location of these buildings, which typically represent a greater investment in materials and construction than other types of construction during this era. The availability of rail access was probably the most important factor and the web-like coverage of tracks across the Showplace Square survey area probably accounts for the dispersed nature of brick American Commercial style industrial buildings. The only areas where they reach a high enough density to qualify them for listing as historic districts occurs where the rail network was the most compact.

Although each of the 16 contributors to the proposed historic district may vary in regard to size and elaboration, they share the following character-defining features: heavy timber or steel-framing, exterior brick construction – typically American common bond, granite or molded brick water tables, heights ranging from one to seven stories, grid-like arrangement of punched window

[9] National Register-eligible properties include properties that have been listed on the National Register and properties that have formally been found eligible for listing.

openings with either flat lintels or segmental arched headers, a classic tripartite façade arrangement consisting of base, shaft, and capital; flat or gable roofs; wood double-hung or steel casement windows; and corbelled brick or concrete or terra cotta ornament – including door and window surrounds, stringcourses, quoins, window arches, friezes, and cornices. The interiors of the contributors were not formally surveyed as part of this District form but an informal inventory of interiors reveal that approximately two-thirds of the contributors have been converted to non-industrial uses such as offices, showrooms, or residential.

Although there are other concentrations of heavy timber and steel-frame brick industrial buildings in San Francisco, in particular the Northeast Waterfront Historic District, the South End Historic District, and the Dogpatch Historic district, the Showplace Square survey area contains the largest and best-preserved inventory of the type, albeit not as concentrated as the other districts mentioned above. The proposed historic district also possesses some of the best individual examples in the city in regard to architectural significance, with several major architect-designed warehouses and factories by well-known local architects such as G. Albert Lansburgh and Meyers & Ward.

As mentioned above, American Commercial style heavy timber-frame brick industrial buildings are rare in California, remaining more popular in the cities of the East Coast and Midwest, where heavy industry played a proportionally larger role in the economy and where earthquakes were not as much of a risk. Furthermore, outside a few older urban centers, California's industrial infrastructure did not really blossom until the 1910s and 1920s, by which time reinforced-concrete and corrugated steel had become ascendant.

Although several contributors to the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District appear individually eligible for listing in the California Register, the decision to nominate them together as a discontiguous district is based in large part on their collective visual prominence within the Showplace Square survey area. Despite being distributed throughout the area, their imposing size and visual character is paramount – especially when seen from Potrero Hill or at eye level from the Bayshore Freeway – imparting a distinctive early twentieth-century industrial character to this section of the city. There are few equivalent concentrations of similar buildings elsewhere in San Francisco or California that retain the degree of significance an integrity as the proposed historic district.

Integrity

Once a resource has been identified as being potentially eligible for listing in the California Register, its historic integrity must be evaluated. The California Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. These aspects are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. In order to be determined eligible for listing, these aspects must closely relate to the resource's significance and must be intact. These aspects are defined as follows:

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed.
- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the form, plans, space, structure and style of the property.
- *Setting* addresses the physical environment of the historic property inclusive of the landscape and spatial relationships of the building(s).
- *Materials* refer to the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the historic property.
- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history.
- *Feeling* is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

The process of determining integrity is similar for both the California Register and the National Register, although there is a critical distinction between the two registers, and that is the degree of integrity that a property can retain and still be considered eligible for listing. According to the California Office of Historic Preservation:

> *It is possible that historical resources may not retain sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register, but they may still be eligible for listing in the California Register. A resource that has lost its historic character or appearance may still have sufficient integrity for the California Register if it maintains the potential to yield significant or historical information or specific data.*

Built of durable materials and having mostly been adaptively reused in a compatible manner, the contributors to the proposed Showplace Square Heavy Timber and Steel-frame Brick Warehouse and Factory District retain a very high degree of integrity. Alterations, where they have been performed, have typically occurred within the interiors. Furthermore, several buildings have acquired additions, although these are typically small and built on secondary elevations. Several contributors have had their windows replaced but for the most part they have either been replaced in kind or replaced with new windows that replicate the existing fenestration pattern. Given their lack of formal historic status, it is surprising that more exterior alterations have not occurred. Perhaps one reason is that many of the buildings appear to have been consistently well-maintained and given their current use, there has been no need to change their exterior envelopes. Furthermore, in addition to their large uninterrupted floor plates and ample parking, one of the factors that attracted Henry Adams and his colleagues to the area was the historic character of the large brick industrial buildings. Regardless of the reasons, the proposed historic district retains the following aspects of integrity: location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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