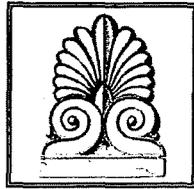


SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND INTENSIVE SURVEY

San Jose, California

October 10, 2006





CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND SURVEY
PHASE II
San Jose, California

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PROJECT REPORT

SUMMARY

This report contains the following six sections: Background, Introduction, Methodology, Intensive Survey Results, Recommendations, and Appendix. The Introduction presents the project's goals, community stakeholders, and report authors. The Methodology describes the key tasks undertaken by the report authors during the preparation of this document. The Reconnaissance Survey Results section consists of statistical data compiled from the reconnaissance survey efforts. The Recommendations section suggests potential future actions based on Carey & Co.'s observations and professional opinions. The Appendix section contains the Context Statement, survey area and district maps, a completed Department of Parks and Recreation 523 D (DPR District) form, completed Department of Parks and Recreation 523 A (DPR Primary Record) and 523 B (DPR Building, Structure, Object) forms for significant properties within the survey area, oral history interview transcripts, and a bibliography.

BACKGROUND

In 2004, Phase I of the Japantown Historic Context Statement and Reconnaissance Survey project was completed. It focused on the identification of potential historic resources in the Japantown neighborhood and resulted in the drafting of a historic context statement as well as the documentation of the physical characteristics of a number of properties in the area. It also proposed the idea of considering San Jose's Japantown as a historic district, both at the local and national level and possibly considering it as a Traditional Cultural Property under the auspices of the National Register of Historic Places. The Phase I undertaking concluded with recommendations for further research and documentation with the goal of historic designation in mind. This document comprises Phase II of the project, which addresses the recommendations of Phase I by refining and elaborating the historic context statement, documenting the historic significance of individual properties in the Japantown neighborhood and more definitively examining the possibilities of historic district designation.

INTRODUCTION

Project Goals

At the request of the City of San Jose, Carey & Co. has prepared this historic context statement and intensive survey for San Jose's Japantown neighborhood. The goal of the project is two-fold: first, to compile a history of the physical and cultural development of San Jose's Japantown and, second, to identify and document historically significant properties located within the neighborhood's boundaries. San Jose's Japantown, as defined by Phase I of this project, consists

of all of the properties between North 1st and North 10th Streets to the west and east and Taylor and Empire Streets to the north and south.

See Appendix B for a map of the survey area.

Community Stakeholders

The San Jose Japantown Historic Context and Intensive Survey undertaking is the result of a strong and successful public-private partnership. Representatives from the following stakeholder organizations worked together to create the project's scope, prepare the Request for Proposals, choose a historical consultant, provide support during the research and survey phases, and give feedback during the writing of the document:

- Japantown Community Congress
- Japantown Business Association
- City of San Jose Historic Landmarks Commission
- City of San Jose Planning Division
- City of San Jose Redevelopment Agency
- California Office of Historic Preservation

Report Authors

Carey & Co. was selected as the historic consultant for Phase I through a competitive proposal process in late 2003 and was selected to complete Phase II based on the experience gained during the first phase. The primary authors of the Phase II report were the following Carey & Co. staff: Hisashi B. Sugaya, Project Manager, and Caitlin Harvey, Architectural Historian. Providing guidance on the issue of Traditional Cultural Property analysis and designation was Thomas F. King, the national expert on cultural resource management and the designation of Traditional Cultural Properties.¹

Legal Basis

The San Jose 2020 General Plan, as amended, is the City's official policy regarding its future character and quality of development. The General Plan refers to the City's preservation goals in two sections. Sections III. Major Strategies: Urban Conservation/Preservation and IV. Goals and Policies outline the City's historic, archeological, and cultural resources policies. The City's historic preservation program is implemented through the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 13.48 of the Municipal Code, which authorizes the City to:

- Establish a Historic Landmarks Commission,
- Maintain a Historic Resources Inventory,
- Preserve historic properties using a Landmark Designation process,
- Require Historic Preservation Permits, and
- Provide financial incentives through Historic Property Contracts.

¹ Tom King has authored several texts specific to this topic including *Places That Count: Traditional Cultural Properties in Cultural Resources Management* and, along with Patricia Parker, National Register Bulletin #38, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties*.

METHODOLOGY

Including the Community in the Process

Because of the strong involvement by both public and private stakeholders, this project includes a large and important community-based component. The authors' goal was to keep the stakeholders informed and invite their help in the preparation of the report documents. In addition to monthly meetings between the authors and the Japantown Survey Committee², Carey & Co. attended the following organized meetings as part of this project:

1. April 8, 2006: Project update presentation to the Japantown Community Congress
2. May 13, 2006: Traditional Cultural Property workshop with Tom King
3. June 9, 2006: Preserving California's Japantowns Symposium
4. October 28, 2006: California Council for the Promotion of History Conference
5. November 1, 2006: City of San Jose Landmarks Commission meeting

Preparing the Historic Context Statement

The historic context statement expands on a draft document produced during Phase I. It uses additional sources and integrates information gathered during property-specific research done for the Building, Structure, Object records. It thusly, expands the scope and detail of the initial context statement, providing an in depth account of the history and culture of San Jose's Japantown and its association to significant national, regional and local events.

See Appendix G for a complete list of sources consulted.

Undertaking the Intensive Survey and Selecting Parcels for DPR 523B Forms

The intensive survey was undertaken using the documentation and findings of Phase I as a foundation. In Phase I, Carey & Co. documented 67 buildings within the survey area on California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resource Primary Record inventory forms (DPR 523A). This resulted physical documentation, which was used to support many of the later historic significance documentation. Property-specific research, however, identified additional properties that possess historic significance and so multiple site visits were made during Phase II so that additional reconnaissance level assessment and photography could be performed. This resulted in 29 additional DPR 523A forms being created and added to the Phase I findings in order to provide complete documentation for every significant property addressed in Phase II.

The completion of California Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resource Building, Structure, Object Record inventory forms (DPR 523B) comprised the major portion of the intensive phase of the survey. For every significant property recorded on a DPR 523A form, a

² The Japantown Survey Committee is composed the following individuals: a representative of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, the Japantown Business Association Executive Director, the Chair of the Historic Landmarks Commission, the Co-Chairs of the Japantown Community Congress Landmarks Committee, and the City of San Jose Historic Preservation Officer.

number of archival sources were consulted to establish a statement of significance. These included city directories from strategically selected years, building permits, deed records, Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, census records, a Japantown property-specific guidemap and notes created by a prominent Japantown resident, and other archival and bibliographic sources. The large number of properties addressed in Phase II required that research be constrained to a defined set of sources and performed in a methodical manner. However, the diversity of information provided by these sources insured that a comprehensive history of each property was produced.

Altogether, the intensive survey resulted in the documentation of 85 historic structures in San Jose's Japantown neighborhood. This includes almost every building in Japantown's commercial core and many cultural buildings, residences and other service or business oriented properties throughout the survey area. These buildings were selected for documentation with the prospect of forming a historic district. A few buildings within the survey area were identified as being individually significant and could possibly be eligible for designation as historic properties in their own right.

While not formally documented on DPR forms, still other properties that were not considered to be "historic" or were unable to be documented in the traditional manner (i.e. those that do not conform to Japantown's Period of Significance, or are no longer represented by extant structures) were taken into consideration for their contribution to the neighborhood's cultural environment which continues to exist. Properties such as this may contribute to a Traditional Cultural Property or Conservation Area overlay.

See the "Recommendations" section of this report for additional information.

See Appendix B for maps indicating the survey area, selected properties and potential district boundaries.

See Appendix D for the DPR District Record.

See Appendix E for the DPR Primary and DPR Building, Structure, Object Record forms.

INTENSIVE SURVEY RESULTS

During Phase I of this project, Carey & Co. visually examined all of the survey area's 468 parcels. A total of 685 buildings, or 1.5 buildings per parcel, were identified and recorded. Well over half of the surveyed parcels were observed as residential, while 20% were identified as having commercial or business uses. (A detailed list of the neighborhood's current building uses, including the number of parcels and the corresponding percentage of total parcels surveyed can be found in the Phase I report.)

As stated earlier, Phase II documented 86 of the total 685 buildings in the survey area using DPR 523B forms. The following percentages show the distribution of current uses among the buildings documented:

Residential	34 parcels	40%
Commercial	39 parcels	46%
Religious	7 parcels	8%
Cultural/Civic	5 parcels	6%

Construction dates for the historically significant properties were gathered from archival research. A high and consistent percentage of construction dates fall between 1900 and 1930, when Japantown shifted from a system of migrant labor to established commerce and was a burgeoning cultural community. The largest number of properties date to the 1940s, with the majority dating to 1940, 1948 and 1949. This reflects patterns created by World War II, including the decline of San Jose's Japanese American community during the years of internment and its later rebirth. A relatively high percentage of construction also occurs in the 1950s, denoting the post-war resettlement era. The following is a chronological list of decades, with the number and corresponding percentage of the documented parcels:

▪ 1880s	1 parcel	1%
▪ 1890s	7 parcels	8%
▪ 1900s	13 parcels	15%
▪ 1910s	11 parcels	13%
▪ 1920s	11 parcels	13%
▪ 1930s	7 parcels	8%
▪ 1940s	20 parcels	24%
▪ 1950s	12 parcels	14%
▪ 1960s	3 parcels	4%

A survey matrix listing all of the individual properties that were documented during the intensive survey and contribute to the statistics above can be found in Appendix C.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our research for the historic context and intensive survey, it is Carey & Co.'s professional opinion that San Jose's Japantown neighborhood contains numerous resources that are significant for the role they played in the city's Japanese American history, for their connection to historically important people, and/or for their architectural distinction. These resources, numbering 86 in all, are documented on DPR 523A and DPR 523B inventory forms (Appendix E). As a group they may qualify for listing as a City of San Jose historic district, a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) historic district and/or a Traditional Cultural Property. Additionally, other special resources may be individually significant and eligible for official designation as San Jose landmarks and/or separate listing on the NRHP.

The following recommendations are intended to aid the community in making decisions about designation priorities and future tasks:

Recommendation One: Pursue historic district nominations at the national and local levels. Of the 85 properties documented on DPR 523 forms, 63 have been included within the boundaries of a potential NRHP Historic District. Using the documentation of these properties, the DPR 523 D

(District) form, and the historic context statement prepared in Phases I and II of this project as a foundation, a NRHP nomination application can be completed and submitted to the California Office of Historic Preservation for prospective listing. Additionally, a total of 70 documented properties have been included within broader boundaries could constitute a potential City of San Jose Landmark Historic District. This local district could also include contributing properties that were not formally documented on DPR 523 forms during Phase II. To undertake a local designation, any additional properties should be identified and documented and nomination at the local level undertaken by means of a City of San Jose Historic Landmark Nomination Form and the guidance of the San Jose Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department.

Recommendation Two: Pursue nomination of properties determined to be individually significant. Among the 85 properties documented, five were identified as being potentially individually significant by this survey. These include the Ken Ying Low Restaurant, Issei Memorial Building, Buddhist Church, Okida Hall, and the Midwifery. Most of these buildings are already listed as City of San Jose Historic Landmarks. Consulting the DPR 523 A and B forms for these buildings, the California Office of Historic Preservation may determine eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. Should any of these buildings be determined eligible, National register nomination applications may be completed and submitted to the California Office of Historic Preservation to commence the formal designation process.

Recommendation Three: Explore the possibility of a City of San Jose Conservation Area. The Japantown neighborhood and surrounding area should be analyzed for a cohesive character that might qualify it for recognition as a Conservation Area. As established by the City of San Jose Historic Preservation Ordinance, it is most likely that a Japantown Conservation Area would be defined by 1) common development patterns, setting, or geography, and 2) history. It would also probably fall under Criterion A, as having a distinctive character conveying a sense of cohesiveness through its design, architecture, setting, materials, or natural features, and its history. If such cohesiveness of character is present in Japantown, designation efforts may be undertaken.

**SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY
San Jose, California**

October 10, 2006

Appendix D:

California Parks and Recreation 523 D (District) Record

State of California The Resources Agency
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
 HRI # _____
 Trinomial _____
 NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
 Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 8 *Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) San Jose Japantown

P1. Other Identifier: _____

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County Santa Clara and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Jose West Date 1999-2003 T ; R ; of of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address _____ City San Jose Zip _____

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10, 59795 mE/ 4134154 mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
 Generally bounded by 6th, Taylor, Empire and 4th streets, with a few properties on Jackson Street to 2nd Street.

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The approximately three block San Jose Japantown district consists of a commercial core and surrounding cultural and residential properties that are associated with San Jose's Japanese-American community, which has been present in the area since as early as the 1890s. A few early buildings remain, but many have been altered, while the presence of numerous intact mid-century buildings attest to the post-World War II resettlement era. Current landscape elements, building uses and the continuing presence of a Japanese-American community in this neighborhood lend significance to the historic ethnic identity of the neighborhood. The district is located north of San Jose's downtown and can be described as an urban area of mixed use. Though traditional Japanese design is not overtly evident in the architecture of the area, the eclectic mix of styles illustrates the various eras and influences of the Japanese-American community.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP36/JA -- Ethnic Minority Property, Japanese American

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #) Corner of Jackson and 6th Sts., 3/20/2006

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Source: Historic Prehistoric

Both
 c. 1890 - present, Context Statement _____

*P7. Owner and Address: N/A

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address) Caitlin Harvey
Carey & Co., Inc.
460 Bush Street
San Francisco, CA. 94108

*P9. Date Recorded: October 10, 2006

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Intensive Survey



*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") Carey & Co. Inc., San Jose Japantown Historic Context and Reconnaissance Survey, September 2004.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): Sketch Map

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) San Jose Japantown

D1. Historic Name: San Jose Japantown

D2. Common Name: San Jose Japantown

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

The San Jose Japantown district is unified by a strong Japanese-American presence that has existed in the area for over a century. Scattered over a ten block area and particularly concentrated in a smaller four block area, the establishment of Japanese-American homes, businesses and cultural sites have created a rich cultural neighborhood. While the ethnicity of the area is not readily identifiable in the architecture, elements of the physical environment do indicate Japanese-American influence and ongoing traditional cultural activities confirm the presence of a well established neighborhood history.

The architecture of Japantown exhibits many years of evolution and use. Few of the original structures from the early settlement era remain and most of those that do have been modified for modern use. Their forms are still evident with careful observation however. The neighborhood is thus a mix of altered early 20th century (see continuation sheet)

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

The boundaries for the potential San Jose Japantown National Register district include the two blocks between Fifth and Sixth Streets, stretching from Taylor Street to Empire Street. They also include the west block faces along Fifth Street between Taylor and Empire Streets. The boundaries also include those properties on both sides (see continuation sheet)

*D5. Boundary Justification:

The boundaries for the San Jose Japantown district include the majority of the historic commercial and cultural properties located in the Japantown neighborhood, as well as a few significant residential properties. The commercial properties can be found primarily along Jackson Street, and the boundaries extend west along Jackson Street (see continuation sheet)

D6. Significance: Theme Cultural Neighborhood Development Area Japantown, San Jose, California

Period of Significance c. 1890 - 1967

Applicable 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.)

A document entitled "San Jose Japantown Historic Context & Intensive Survey" (Carey & Co, 2006) was completed in connection with this district survey and documentation. It includes an extensive historic context statement that should be consulted for a more detailed discussion of the historic significance of San Jose Japantown.

San Jose Japantown was established around 1890 as large numbers of Japanese immigrants came to the Santa Clara Valley seeking agricultural employment. Japantown began as a bachelor community consisting of a population of migrant workers, but by the 1920s had become a diverse community. Homes, businesses and cultural venues were established throughout the neighborhood, providing traditional Japanese goods and cultural activities. The area flourished under this ethnic identity until the outbreak of World War II, when Japanese-Americans were viewed with distrust due the bombing of Pearl Harbor. San Jose Japantown was practically deserted during the war years, when its population was incarcerated in internment camps. Other minorities moved into the neighborhood at that time, but the area remained largely vacant. The Japanese-American population returned once the war was (see continuation sheet)

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

Carey & Co., San Jose Historic Context & Reconnaissance Survey Project, 2004.

*D8. Evaluator: Caitlin Harvey

Date: 10/10/2006

Affiliation and Address: Carey & Co, Inc., 460 Bush Street, San Francisco, CA. 94108

*Recorded by: Caitlin Harvey, Carey & Co. Inc.

*Date: 10/10/2006

Continuation

Update

D3. Detailed Description (cont.)

structures and more intact mid-century structures. These numerous mid-century modern buildings clearly represent the post-World War II resettlement era and are the strongest element of architectural integrity in Japantown.

Aside from architecture though, other design elements are prolific throughout the neighborhood and suggest the presence of a Japanese-American population. One example of this is a predominance of Japanese influenced landscaping in the yards and streetscapes of Japantown. This landscaping is characterized by the incorporation of artistically placed stones and pebbles; sand, gravel or dirt ground covering; sculpted shrubs and small bonsai-like trees; and sculptural elements such as stone lanterns or monuments. These later can be found in particularly good representation in front of the churches and cultural buildings. Certain species of plants, such as cherry trees and other flowering plants, and delicate but gnarled coniferous trees also lend a Japanese aesthetic to the neighborhood.

Contributing to the Japantown streetscape are interpretive elements that have recently been erected to convey the history of Japantown in a more obvious manner. At the intersection of Fifth and Jackson Streets and in a few other locations interpretive plaques relate the history of the area or the building they represent. "Welcome to Japantown" banners along the streets define a thematic neighborhood and other street furniture, particularly that with a Japanese identity, like *Ikoi-no-Ba* (traditional resting places), create a cohesive environment that speaks of cultural identity.

The following is a list of the 66 contributing properties (addresses and identifying name) which have been individually documented within this district:

127 Jackson Street, Wing's Restaurant annex	517 N. 6 th Street, Yamada house
131 Jackson Street, Wing's Restaurant	520 N. 5 th Street, house
140 Jackson Street, Nichi Bei Bussan	529 N. 5 th Street, house
169-171 Jackson Street, Roy's Grocery	529 N. 6 th Street, Kawasaki house
175 Jackson Street, San Jose Tofu	535 N. 5 th Street, Ishikawa house/ JAMsj
175 E. Taylor Street, Onishi house	545 N. 5 th Street, Mineta house
181 E. Taylor Street, Onishi Florist shop	548 N. 5 th Street, Morita house
193 Jackson Street, Gombei Restaurant	565 N. 5 th Street, Kuwabara Hospital/Issei Memorial Bldg.
194-198 Jackson Street, Uchida Travel	565 N. 6 th Street, Soko Hardware
195 E. Taylor Street, Celito Lindo Restaurant	566 N. 5 th Street, Wesley Methodist Church
197 Jackson Street, Roy's Service Station	573 N. 5 th Street, house
201 Jackson Street, Taketa Building	580 N. 5 th Street, Midwifery
205 Jackson Street, Taihei Hotel	587 N. 6 th Street, Okida Hall
208-214 Jackson Street, Hiro's Golf	590 N. 5 th Street, ArtObject Gallery
211 Jackson Street, Kamako Restaurant	599 N. 4 th Street, George's Service Center
221 Jackson Street, Shanghai	601 N. 4 th , Taquiera Corona
223-229 Jackson Street, Kawakami Building	605-607 N. 5 th Street, Hagihara Sewing School
224 Jackson Street, Tsugaru Restaurant	605 N. 6 th Street, Kogura Building annex
230 Jackson Street, Hukilau	609 N 4 th Street, Kamimoto String Instruments
231 Jackson Street, Kogura Gift Store	615-621 N. 6 th Street, Minato Restaurant
231 E. Taylor Street, house	625 N. 6 th Street, Ken Ying Low
240 Jackson Street, Dobashi Market	630 N. 5 th Street, Buddhist Church Gym
245 E. Taylor Street, Santo Market	635 N. 6 th , Filipino Community Center
246-248 Jackson Street, Banana Crepe/Polish	639 N. 5 th Street, Buddhist Church Dharma School
249 Empire Street, house	639 N. 6 th Street, Oriental Christian Center
250 Jackson Street, Kazoo Sushi	649 N. 5 th Street, house
371 Empire Street, house	650 N. 5 th Street, Maruyama house
510 N. 5 th Street, National Printing	651 N. 6 th Street, Prayer Garden Church

*Recorded by: Caitlin Harvey, Carey & Co. Inc.

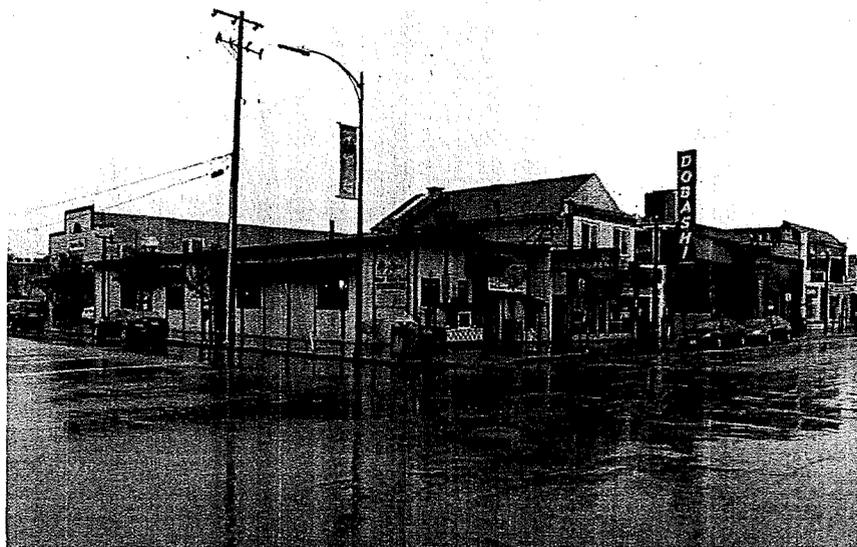
*Date: 10/10/2006

Continuation

Update

655 N. 5th Street, house
655 N. 6th Street, Aikido of Japantown
657 N. 6th Street, commercial structure
659 N. 5th Street, H. Dobashi house
662 N. 5th Street, house

665 N. 5th Street, J. Dobashi house
665 N. 6th Street, Nishioka Fish Market
681 N. 5th Street, house
640 N. 5th Street, Buddhist Church Betsuin
640 N. 5th Street, Buddhist Church Parsonage



Corner of 6th and Jackson Streets, looking south. (Carey & Co., 3/20/2006)



Looking west down Jackson Street from 6th Street. (Carey & Co., 3/20/2006)

*Recorded by: Caitlin Harvey, Carey & Co. Inc.

*Date: 10/10/2006

Continuation

Update

D4. Boundary Discription (cont.)

of Taylor Street between Fifth and Sixth Street and half of the block between Fourth and Fifth Streets. The boundaries extend farther west along Jackson Street to include those properties that face onto Jackson Street, ending at the center of the block face between Third and Fourth Streets.

A potential San Jose City Landmark district would also be comprised of these boundaries, but would extend further west down Jackson Street to include properties up to Second Street. On the north side of Jackson Street, the boundary would be two properties deep to encompass a few additional resources located on Third and Second Streets.

(See DPR 523J and DPR 523K)

D5. Boundary Justification (cont.)

to encompass these resources. A few other commercial properties are also located along Sixth Street and Taylor Street. Other cultural properties, such as churches, performance halls and medical buildings range mostly along Fifth Street, therefore, block faces on either side of Fifth Street are included within the boundaries. A few Japanese-American residences are scattered throughout the area, primarily along Fifth Street. The boundaries are set to encompass the greatest concentration of historically significant properties in Japantown.

The area east of Sixth Street is not included within the district boundaries due to major redevelopment in that area leading to a lack of historic structures and a shift to commercial use and apartment housing that creates a detectable change in environment. Historically, this area was also dominated by a different use. Though some Japanese businesses existed on the east side of Sixth Street, the area was the location of canneries and heavy manufacturing plants. The properties facing Taylor Street, a more major thoroughfare than Jackson or Empire Streets, is more commercial oriented and the included area possesses some Japanese-American businesses and residences. The area to the west of Fourth Street, including the east block face of Fourth Street, are not included within the boundaries due to the purely residential use of that area, which does not correspond to the mixed commercial, residential and cultural uses in the core of Japantown. In addition, the ratio of significant resources to non-significant resources in that area is small and the significant resources are widely dispersed, not lending themselves to a cohesive, densely concentrated district.

D6. Significance (cont.)

over and worked to reestablish their community. At this time the streetscapes of Japantown changed as new houses and commercial buildings were constructed and many older structures were remodeled. Many families that had lived in Japantown before the war returned to their homes and existing businesses were reopened. The Japanese-American community thrived once more and continues to project its cultural identity on the neighborhood today. The date of 1967 was selected as the end of the period of significance, because it marks the election of Norman Mineta as Mayor of San Jose. He was the first Asian American to hold a prominent political position and symbolizes Japanese-Americans becoming part of mainstream American society. This end date also makes it possible to include many post-war developments that affected Japantown, such as the passing of the McCarren Bill in 1952 and the repealing of the alien land laws in 1956, which reopened immigration from Japan and finally allowed Japanese Americans to own property, respectively. The overriding theme of significance for the Japantown district is Cultural Neighborhood Development, though many other themes (from the City of San Jose Planning Department's "Historic Themes for the City of San Jose" chart¹) apply to the district. These include: Architecture & Shelter; Agriculture; Commerce; Religion and Education; and Social, Arts and Recreation. Together these themes contribute to the overall depiction of the development of a community. The growth of San Jose 's

¹ Laffey, Glory Ann (Archives & Architecture), City of San Jose Survey Handbook, San Jose: Planning Department of the City of San Jose, 1992.

*Recorded by: Caitlin Harvey, Carey & Co. Inc.

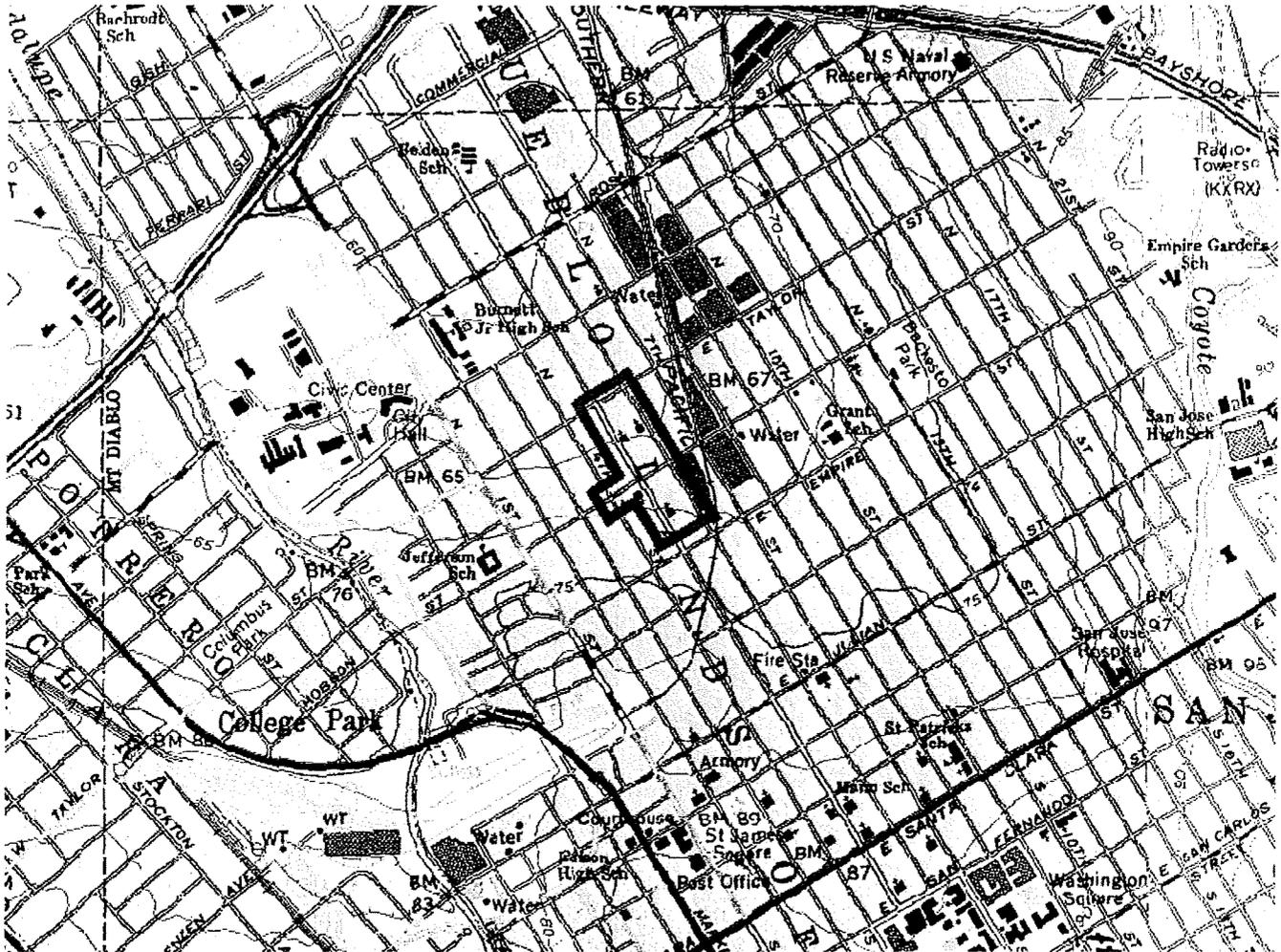
*Date: 10/10/2006

Continuation

Update

Japantown, from a transient agricultural community to an established cultural enclave encompasses such activities as building, cultivating land, establishing businesses, practicing religion, founding schools, participating in cultural customs and creating social organizations. In addition, each of these sub themes has the added facet of cultural identity; each one illustrating an aspect of Japanese American tradition. Therefore, Cultural Neighborhood Development as a theme is a catch-all that implies all the aspects named above with particular Japanese American cultural emphasis.

San Jose's Japantown is one of only three intact Japantown communities remaining in California, the others being in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Of these three, it is probably one of the best preserved, having gone untouched by the massive redevelopment that modernized most of Los Angeles and San Francisco's Japantowns. Neither of these other two Japantowns is officially recognized as a historic neighborhood or district. Though San Jose Japantown consists primarily of mid-century buildings and remodels, it retains a good deal of integrity to that period and retains vestiges of earlier eras as well. Its integrity of location is excellent, as the area has been a Japantown since the late 1800s. The integrity of design, materials and workmanship of many of the buildings has been compromised, however in many cases the alterations lend to the history of the place. The early 20th-century buildings that have been remodeled display a mixture of early and modern forms that speak of the constant change going on in the community and particularly the interruption and rebirth of Japantown caused by World War II. Changes in more modern buildings indicates the continued use of the neighborhood by a population that has retained and reused structures in the heart of their ethnic community rather than move elsewhere to construct new facilities. The integrity of feeling, association and setting is excellent. The area has retained the variety of uses that contribute to the sense that it is a self-sufficient community and the visual qualities of low-rise commercial buildings interspersed with houses continue to convey the traits of an earlier time and less crowded urban environment. Japanese-American businesses, architecture and landscape features identify the area as a distinct cultural community.



San Jose Japantown district defined in blue.

