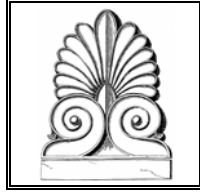


SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND INTENSIVE SURVEY

San Jose, California

October 10, 2006





CAREY & CO. INC.
ARCHITECTURE

**SAN JOSE JAPANTOWN HISTORIC CONTEXT AND SURVEY
PHASE II
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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.