

**D1. Historic Name:** North Willow Glen **D2. Common Name:** North Willow Glen

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

The North Willow Glen historic residential neighborhood developed as a single-family residential area between the mid-1880s and the mid-1950s. Originally located within portions of the Gardner Annexation and the Town of Willow Glen - southwest of the central core area of San José - it is now a portion of the larger Greater Gardner neighborhoods. During the *Early American Period (1846-1869)*, the area was mostly undeveloped, most of it consisting of undrained swamp land. Most of the single-family residential buildings in this neighborhood were constructed during the expansion of greater San José's residential neighborhoods in the downtown frame and beyond during the *Period of Horticultural Expansion (1870-1918)* and the *Interwar Period (1919-1945)*.

The neighborhood shares its development pattern with other older neighborhoods in the nearby downtown frame and old Willow Glen; however, this particular residential area has had less conversion to multi-family uses than other central-city neighborhoods, similar to the Willow Glen neighborhoods to the south and west. The neighborhood as a whole is now distinct within the larger city due to its architectural character. It retains an intact visual unity of similarly massed small houses with period detailing, and continues to represent an earlier sense of time and place, reflective of residential development between 1885 and 1955 in San José.

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

The North Willow Glen historic residential neighborhood is generally bounded on the north by the right-of-way of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, on the east by Delmas Avenue, on the south by Willow Street, and on the west by Bird Avenue, and excluding the property at the northeast corner of Willow and Bird Streets (see boundary map next page).

**\*D5. Boundary Justification:**

The North Willow Glen historic residential neighborhood is a visually distinct area within its greater vicinity. It consists of residential buildings constructed within the northern portion of the Town of Willow Glen and the southern portion of the Gardner Annexation of the City of San José. Most of the properties within the neighborhood were developed for residential use within a specified period, 1885-1955, and have form and detailing reflective of the period. It has strong neighborhood associations that contribute to the understanding of this historic place that is visually cohesive within the context of the downtown residential frame and the neighborhoods of Willow Glen.

This historic residential neighborhood is located in the southwest portions of the city's Greater Gardner Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) Planning Area. This planning area encompasses the neighborhoods south of Interstate 280 between the Guadalupe River, Willow Street and Bird Avenue and including a small neighborhood known as Gregory Plaza west of Bird Avenue. Most of the properties within this planning area are small-lot residential properties, with a limited mix of commercial properties. Most of the residential development occurred during the first half of the twentieth century.

**\*D10. Significance:** **Theme** Architecture and Shelter **Area** Portion of Greater Gardner SNI area

**Period of Significance** 1885-1955 **Property Type** Residential **Applicable Criteria** None

(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.)

(See page 3, Continuation Sheet)

**\*B12. References:**

Archives & Architecture, *Historic Context Survey, Greater Gardner Neighborhoods*, San José, last updated March 10, 2019.

**\*D8. Evaluator:** Franklin Maggi, Architectural Historian

**\*Date:** 3/10/2019

**Affiliation and Address:** Archives & Architecture, PO Box 1332, San José, CA 95109



NORTH WILLOW GLEN CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY MAP (NOT TO SCALE)

*(Continued from page 1 Section D10)*

The North Willow Glen residential neighborhood derives its importance from being an intact representation of urban development with identifiable attributes embodied by its single-family residential architecture, pattern of development, and continued historic residential setting. The neighborhood is understandable within the historic periods of San Jose's Horticultural Expansion years, Interwar Period, and first years after World War II. During this time, the San José urban frame grew due to the establishment and evolution of Santa Clara Valley as an agricultural region - known worldwide for its orchard products. The period of significance begins about 1885, following the establishment of title to this area to owners that had acquired the land during the Mexican Period or by property transfers during the Early American Period, and extends to shortly after the end of World War II, when the neighborhood completed its build-out. Historically, the neighborhood illustrates San Jose's growth beyond the southwest boundaries of the Original City for almost a century.

The North Willow Glen residential neighborhood consists of properties located within a series of "tracts" southwest of the boundaries of San Jose's Original City of 1850. The city limits of San José were the result of a number of surveys that occurred in the late 1840s that created the greater downtown frame as we know it today.

With the acquisition of properties by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company through the larger Gardner Annexation during the first decades of the twentieth century, the portion of the Gardner neighborhoods south of the railroad right-of-way stabilized as a distinct neighborhood place during a period of residential development that continued until after World War II.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw renewed industrial development associated with the local dry-pack and canning industry and a period of residential growth as World War I approached, although the 1906 Earthquake and a Wall Street crash in 1907 tempered the vitality of the local economy. With new immigrants flowing into the area to work in the orchards and canneries, most of the remaining undeveloped land within the Original City filled with working-class homes, and new tracts were established in areas such as the Gardner Annexation as well as East San José, Burbank, Westside, and greater Willow Glen. Much of the development in the North Willow Glen neighborhood during this period is associated with this worker-class housing related to agricultural work centers to the north and east.

During and after the Interwar Period, San José entered a period of great prosperity, with population growth accelerating as the city expanded outward. A few remaining vacant parcels in the neighborhood were built out during this period. The neighborhood, now clearly working-class oriented, began to be more distinct as a place.

The neighborhood, now known as the North Willow Glen historic residential area, remains today as a diverse mix of 19th century and early twentieth century single-family residences. The boundaries of the neighborhood are well defined within the greater downtown frame, and the neighborhood has a unity of historic character that is recognizable within the city as a whole.

#### EVALUATION AND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Under San J José City Ordinance 27113, "conservation area" means a geographically definable area of urban or rural character with identifiable attributes embodied by: (1) architecture, urban design, development patterns, setting, or geography; and (2) history.

*(Continued on next page)*

*(Continued from previous page)*

The properties within the North Willow Glen residential neighborhood constitute a conservation area that meets the criteria for such designation as defined within the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, having the integrity and visual sense of a historic place. Although there are some properties within the proposed conservation area that do not contribute to the historic fabric of the neighborhood, the neighborhood possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The proposed conservation area's streetscapes of primarily twentieth century National, Queen Anne, Neoclassical, Craftsman, Spanish Revival, and Minimal Traditional cottages, and the area's similarity of scale and setbacks that, along with mature landscaping, provide a cohesive setting for the houses, convey a clear historical association with the development of the neighborhood.

The proposed North Willow Glen Conservation Area is recognizable in the present as an aesthetically pleasing concentration of historic residential architecture, physically surrounded by boundaries defined by changes in neighborhood development. This district has a sense of historical continuity within the public consciousness.

Findings for designation can be made under Ordinance 27113 based upon:

- its representation of a comprehensive pattern of historic development within an area historically known as the Gardner Annexation to the southwest of the Original City;
- its association with residential development during the period 1885-1955; and
- its embodiment, within the boundaries of the neighborhood, of architectural styles that represent the breadth of design of the period.

The North Willow Glen historic residential neighborhood as a place presents a unique and distinct experience of the visual aspects of neighborhood life in a community for most of the historic period during which it was developed. The neighborhood maintains a fairly high level of physical integrity to its evolution. Although there have been some changes to certain properties within the neighborhood as owners continue to renovate their buildings over time, most of these changes have not had an intrusive impact on the overall historic fabric of the neighborhood as a whole.