

HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY
Martha Gardens Historic Residential Neighborhood
San José

Prepared for:
City of San José
Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement
200 East Santa Clara St., Third Floor Tower
San José CA 95113

Attn:
Patrice Shaffer



Prepared by:

ARCHIVES & ARCHITECTURE
Heritage Resource Partners
Franklin Maggi, Preservation Planner
Charlene Duval, Public Historian
Leslie A. G. Dill, Architectural Historian
Jessica Kusz, Consulting Historian
<http://www.archivesandarchitecture.com>

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*photo previous page – Martha (Patty) Reed.

INTRODUCTION

Intent of Report

This report evaluates the potential for establishment of a historic district or conservation area in the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood. This neighborhood, located along South Second and South Third Streets at Martha, East Virginia, and Margaret Streets, southeast of San José's downtown core, is a part of the Spartan Keys Strong Neighborhood Initiative Planning Area. The *Historic District Study* that follows is intended to present research and evaluation of the neighborhood as a place of historic value, and to provide detailed information to facilitate the initiation of designation proceedings if the local community and the San José City Council concur with the recommendations.

Executive Summary

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood developed, within Reed's Addition of San José's Original City, as a mostly single-family residential area between the mid-1870s to about 1940. Although the neighborhood was originally directly linked to the Washington neighborhoods to the west, and the downtown core-area neighborhoods to the north, twentieth-century commercial development along South First Street and construction of Interstate Highway 280 in the 1960s has isolated the neighborhood from the rest of the downtown residential frame. This isolation will soon change as the older industrial area to the east of the neighborhood is transformed to residential use as a part of the Martha Gardens Planned Community.

The neighborhood shares its development pattern with some of the older neighborhoods around San José State University. The character of the neighborhood continues to retain an earlier sense of time and place reflective of residential development in the Original City. The neighborhood, now known as the Martha Gardens historic residential area, remains today as a diverse mix of nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century single-family residences, residences converted to boarding houses and post-World War II multiple-unit apartments. The boundaries of the neighborhood are well defined within the greater downtown area, framed by the freeway, South First Street commercial development, and historic industrial buildings along the now abandoned railroad line. The old industrial sites to the east, however, are presently undergoing redevelopment to residential use under the recently adopted specific plan for the Martha Gardens Planned Community. These changes in land use will in the future re-establish the connection of the study area to other neighborhoods within the Spartan Keys SNI Planning Area.

The neighborhood has a significant concentration of residential structures that contribute to the setting. The neighborhood as a whole would benefit by the designation as a conservation area in order to encourage future development to maintain integrity to the historic nature of the area and to encourage compatible new design to be consistent with the character-defining features of the existing historic landscape.

STUDY AREA MAPS AND BOUNDARIES

Location Map

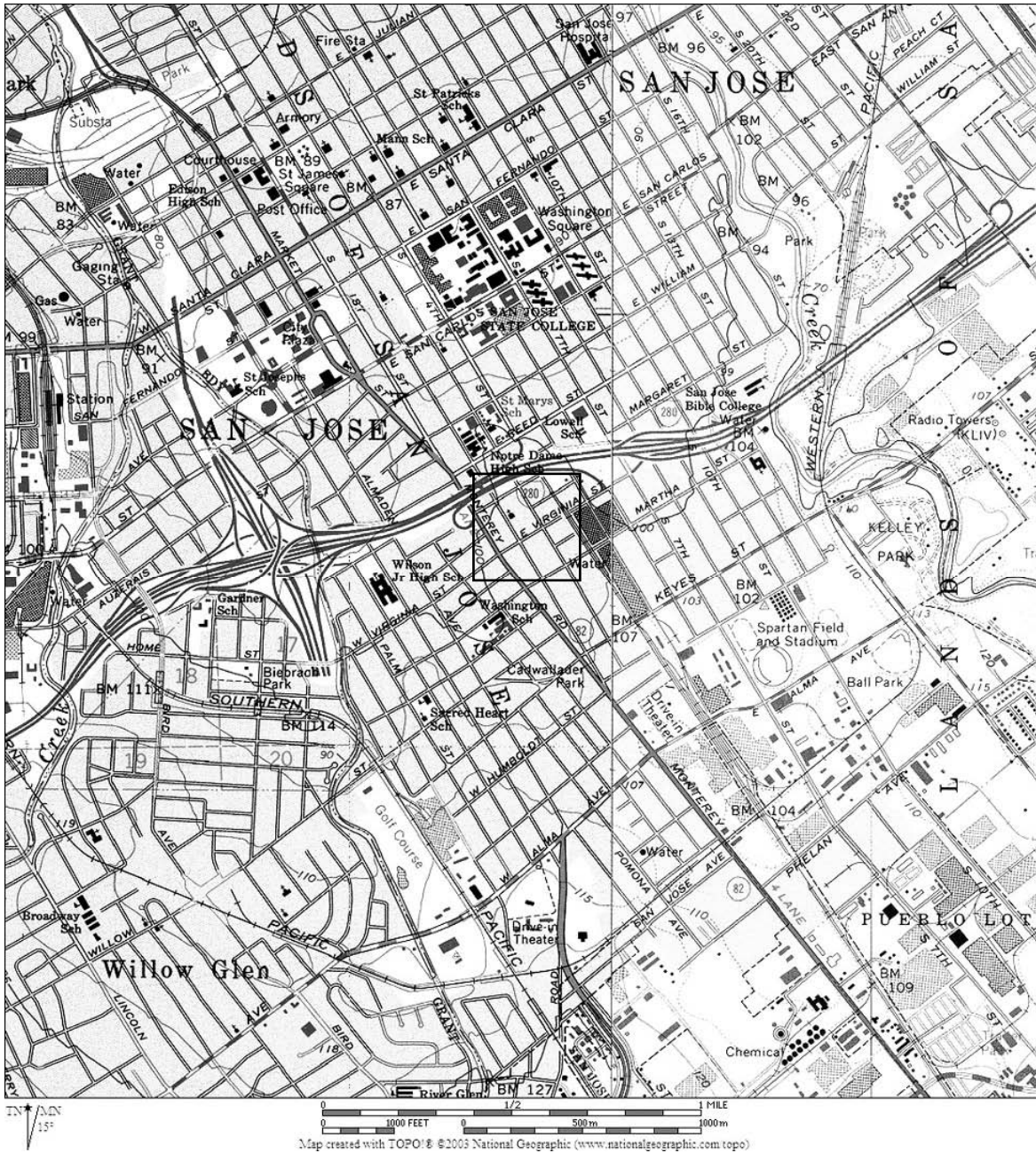
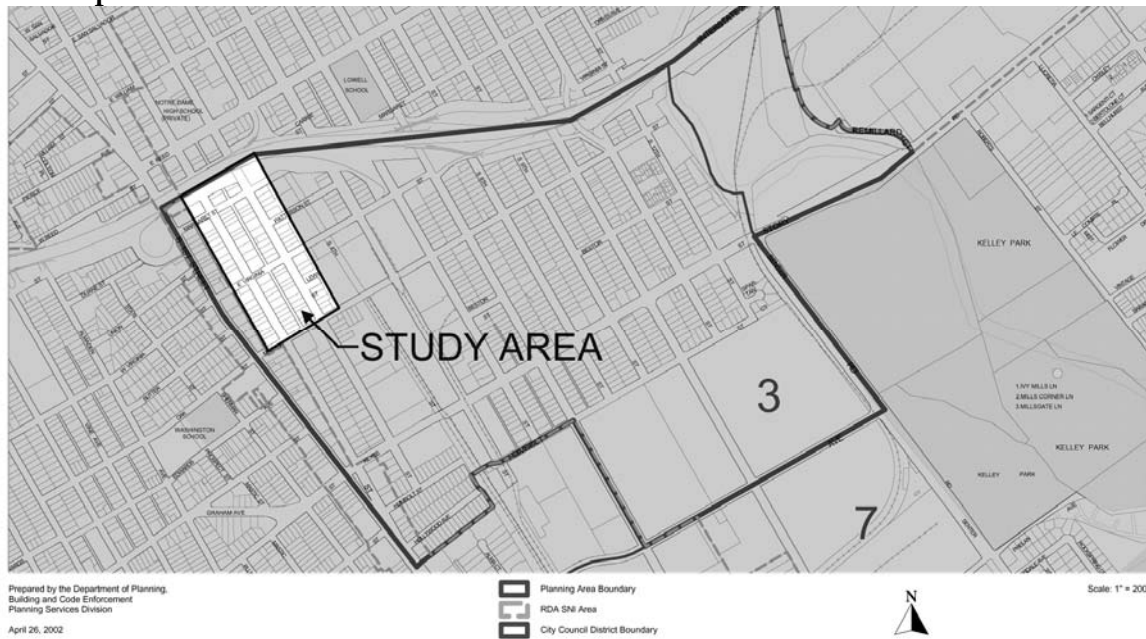


Figure 1: USGS topographic map / San José West / East composite – photo revised 1980

Study Area Boundaries

The study area is generally bounded on the north by Interstate Highway 280, on the east by the rear property lines of the lots on the east side of South Third Street (between South Third Street and the abandoned Southern Pacific Railroad alignment--approximately a continuation of South Fourth Street), on the west by the alley between South First and South Second Streets, and on the south by Martha Street including the three lots at the southeast corner of Martha and South Third Streets that face South Third Street.

SNI Map and Aerial



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Early Settlement

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood consists of properties located southeast of San José's Original City in Reed's Addition. The original city limits of San José, established in 1850, 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. Reed's Addition was incorporated into the City of San José during the first years of San José's *Early American Period* (1846-1869), when the initial city limits were modified to include the surrounding lands of the Original Survey of 1847, south to about Keyes Street, north to about Hedding Street (then Rosa Street) and Berryessa Road, east to Coyote Creek, and west to a line along the west side of the Guadalupe River (*see map next page*).

The *Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe* was the first civil settlement established by Spain in *Alta California* (Upper California). Its primary function was to supplement the crops grown within the Franciscan mission system, and to support the Spanish military garrisons at Monterey and San Francisco. During the *Spanish Colonial Period* (1777-1821), the lands east and south of the pueblo were a part of public lands under the administration of the government. These lands would later be a part of what was known as Pueblo Tract No. 1 following the end of the *Mexican Period* (1822-1846).

During American control of the California territory prior to the 1848 concession of Alta California by Mexico in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, residents in San José began to plan the future city based on the traditional grid pattern found throughout the American West. By 1848, the grid had been formally established, as we know it now, based on the work of pioneer William Campbell and engineer Chester Lyman, and is known as the area of the Original Survey. It extended from Market Street to Eleventh Street, and from what is now called Julian Street on the north to future Reed Street on the south. The completion of these surveys paved the way for future development, traffic flow, land speculation and expansion.

The first attempt to subdivide Pueblo Tract No. 1 was the Hutton Survey in the summer of 1847, shortly after the May adoption of the Campbell Survey by the *junta* (San José's first transitional government after Mexican rule). The Hutton Survey was later contested and ruled invalid by the courts. Historical information related to the eventual disposition of Pueblo Lands remains somewhat obscured, but by 1865, the City of San José through the Commission of the Funded Debt, had cleared title to much of this early distribution of public lands through re-granting of deeds.

1876 Thompson and West Atlas (partial)



1876 Thompson & West Atlas showing the lot pattern of Reed's Addition within the Third Ward. Reed's Homestead can be seen straddling Margaret Street to the left of the railroad.

*James Frazier Reed Sr.
and Margret Keyes Reed*



By 1849, James Frazier Reed Sr. had acquired from Peter Davidson much of the area south of what became Reed Street between First Street (Old Monterey Road) and the Coyote Creek, known as Farm Lot #10. In 1849, he hired civil engineer Norman Bestor to survey his lands. The east-west streets were named, with one exception, for Reed family members: Reed, Margaret (named for Reed's wife Margret), Virginia, Martha, Bestor, and Keyes. The exception, of course, was Bestor.

A part of Reed's lands south of Reed Street to Virginia Street and from First Street to Fifth Street were initially exempted from the subdivision of house lots and was called Reed's Reservation. When the larger area was annexed to the city, it became known as Reed's Addition and included Reed's Reservation.

James Frazier Reed Sr. built his adobe house in the center of the "reservation" at what would now be the intersection of South Fourth and Margaret Streets, an area now under Interstate 280 and a recently constructed housing development.¹

The Reed Family

The Reed family came to California with the Donner Party of 1846-1847. James Frazier Reed Sr. had arrived in California in late-fall 1846, journeying ahead of the Donner Party which subsequently became stranded in the Sierras a month later. He first arrived in Santa Clara, conscripted into the military activities during the Mexican War in January 1847, but was able to return to the Sierras by February as a part of the Second Relief effort. It appears that the Reed family settled temporarily in Santa Clara that year, although James Frazier Reed Sr. was participating in early municipal activities in San José by November. It is not clear when the Reed family moved to San José, but by 1853, his homestead and adobe house are noted within local maps.

James Frazier Reed Sr. was born in 1800 at Co. Armagh, Ireland, and after the death of his father, immigrated to the United States with his mother Martha Frazier Reed. After working in Virginia, he moved to Illinois to pursue his interest in mining, settling in

¹ An explanation of the use of the term "reservation" is not found in historical literature, although was also used in reference to the "City Reservation" of Alum Rock canyon as a future park.

Springfield in 1831. In Springfield, he married Margret Wilson Keyes, who was the daughter of Humphrey Keyes and Sarah (Handley) Keyes in 1814 at Union, Virginia (now West Virginia). At the time of their marriage in 1835, Margret was the widow of Lloyd Carter Backenstoe, and Virginia Elizabeth Backenstoe was her two-year old child.



Virginia Reed Murphy

The Reeds remained in Springfield until 1846, and had four children there, Martha Jane, James Frazier, Jr., Thomas Keyes, and Gershom Francis (who died prior to the California trip). Reed ran several businesses, and began his career in real estate speculation. The story of the family trek with the Donner Party is a subject that can be found in numerous books that chronicle this fateful event. The Reed family survived and settled in San José where two additional children would be born; Charles Cadden, and Willianoski Yount.

Margret's daughter Virginia married pioneer John Marion Murphy in 1850 in San José. John Murphy had come to *Alta California* with his family in the Townsend-Stephens-Murphy Party of 1844. John and Virginia were active in a number of business enterprises in early San José. Virginia became the first woman on the West Coast to engage in the fire insurance business. They had nine children. Virginia lived to age 87, dying in 1921 twenty-one years after her husband John. She was an avid equestrian during her life, and is noted for her memoir, "Across the Plains in the Donner Party." Her memoir, as well as her letters to her cousins during the trek and later letters to historian C.F. McGlashan, are considered important contributions to the understanding of the Donner Party experience.

James and Margret's daughter Martha, born in 1838, was named after the mother of James and went by the nickname "Patty." She married engineer Frank Lewis in 1856, bearing eight children before his death in 1876. During Frank and Martha's first decade of marriage, it is not known where they resided; however, by 1867 acreage near present-day West Alma and Lick Avenues (then Reed Lane) had been transferred from the estate of Margret Reed to Frank Lewis, and may have been the site of their residence during the 1870s.



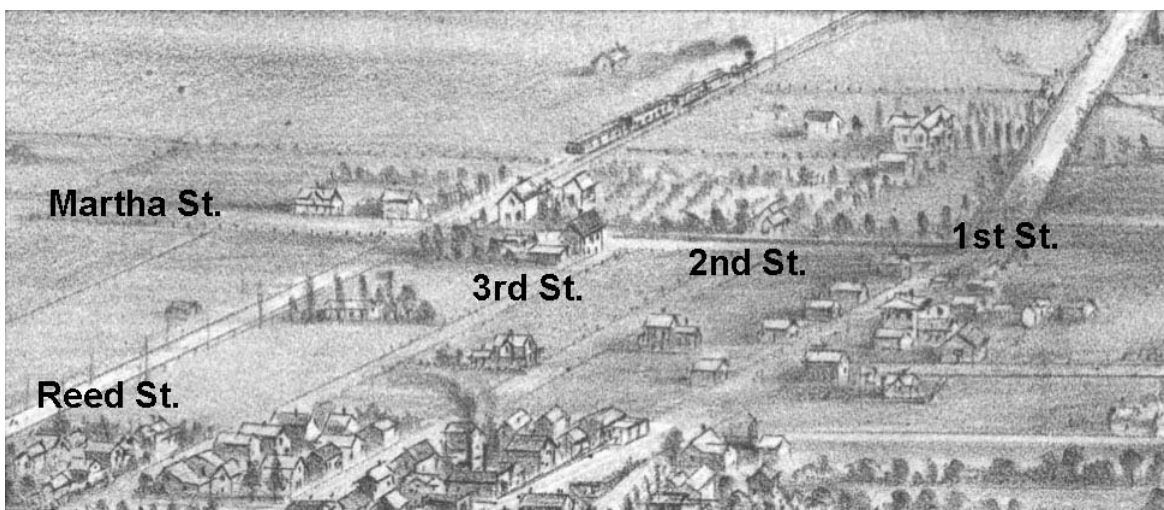
*Patti Reed Lewis in Capitola circa 1920,
from the City of San José archives.
Courtesy of History San José.*

Frank Lewis was a member of the San José Common Council in early San José, and is recognized as a significant personage. He was the engineer of the Lewis Canal, which is what we know today as the Guadalupe River from about Auzerais Street to Curtner Avenue. The canal and reclamation project that drained the swampy areas to the west enabled the eventual agricultural development of the Willows, now known as the Willow Glen area.



After the death of Frank Lewis, Patty Reed Lewis moved with her children to Santa Cruz, and then Capitola, where she operated a boarding house. She died in 1923 in Capitola and is buried in San José at Oak Hill Cemetery.

Martha Reed Lewis, aka Patty Reed, is an historic personage with national significance. During her lifetime, she, like her sister Virginia, and Eliza Donner Houghton, another local resident, contributed to the documentation and understanding of the Donner Party tragedy. Her account of the preservation of her doll “Dolly” during the desert trek across the Utah salt flats has been extensively memorialized, and is the subject of the recent book by Rachel Laurgaard entitled *Patty Reed’s Doll*. The little wooden figure, four inches in height, was rescued by her from the sand and hidden in her dress when her family was caching their goods along the trail. Patty Reed’s story has been institutionalized nationwide in elementary school curricula, as an important story that helps us to better understand the settlement of the West. The doll presently exists in a museum setting and has been exhibited at the Smithsonian and elsewhere as a rare physical remnant of this important Westward story. It was donated to the Sutter’s Fort Museum in 1946 along with family documents and artifacts that Patty had preserved at her Capitola home.



Bird's Eye View of San José - 1869 (partial). This view, facing southeast, shows the wedge that is now Gore Park. Reed's Homestead is in the center left. In the upper center is the first Home of Benevolence (existing today in Los Gatos as Eastfield Ming Quong) - and the site of San José's first children's day-care center.

James Frazier Reed Sr. acquired extensive real estate holdings during his early years in San José, although within Reed's Addition, actual development of the land occurred slowly at first. Title to most of this land was held by Margret Reed, who died in 1861. In 1869, Reed's Addition was bisected by the railroad alignment of the Santa Clara & Pajaro Valley Railroad that ran down Fourth Street east of and adjacent to his adobe house, with construction starting in early 1868². This railroad line would later become a part of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

The Period of Horticultural Development (1870-1918)

With the construction of the railroad line on Fourth Street in the late 1860s, and the death of James Frazier Reed, Sr. in 1874, the portion of Reed's Addition to the west of Fourth Street began a period of residential development that continued for sixty-five years. During San José's expansion period related to its booming horticultural industries in the later part of the nineteenth century, the area in the southeast quadrant of the Original City became known as the Third Ward, a political subdivision related to district elections of Common Council members.

By 1852, San José's first nurserymen were importing and experimenting with various types of fruit trees, and in the 1860s, orchards were being planted in nearby agricultural areas within reach of the city's core area. With the introduction of the transcontinental railroad connection in 1869 with the construction of the Central Pacific line from San José to Niles, San José was able to become a part of the growing national and world economic network that opened up markets for locally grown agricultural and manufacturing products. Orchards dominated agricultural production by the end of the nineteenth century and fruit production peaked in the 1920s.

The canning industry was first commercialized in San José's Second Ward in 1871, and related industries soon began to appear in the downtown frame areas. Early industrial development located near railroad shipping points, and the railroad lines expanded to serve the outlying areas.

In Reed's Addition, residential development began to occur within the corridor framed by the Southern Pacific right-of-way and First Street as the estate properties of Margret Reed began to be sold off. During the next few decades however, the Fourth Ward to the west of First Street evolved in concert with that of the western portions of Reed's Addition as housing was built to serve the new influx of residents attracted to job opportunities in the horticultural economy.

As can be seen in the bird's eye view on the following page, by 1875, the southern edge of the downtown residential areas were just beginning to creep southward. Some estate homes had begun to appear in the area. In 1878, the two-story Italianate Ross House was constructed at Second and Margaret Streets that is now listed on the National Register of

² The 1870 census shows the Reed and Lewis families residing in Alviso.

Historic Places, although by 1884, the majority of houses along Second and Third Streets were small cottages.

The 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance map also shows the first appearance of railroad related buildings along the Southern Pacific tracks. These buildings were warehouses owned by the railroad, presumably functioning as holding areas for incoming agricultural projects.



Bird's Eye View of San José – 1875 (partial). This view, facing northwest, is the reverse of that on the previous view. The wedge that is now Gore Park can be seen just to the north of East Reed Street. Reed's Homestead is in the lower right corner. The large residence in the foreground is the 1873 house of newspaperman William January that continues to exist today at its original site at 731 South Third St. The two-story house to its left no longer exists.

A period of economic vitality in the late 1880s to early 1890s saw the development of new large houses along South Third Street in a small area that had remained a part of the Reed family holdings. Much of this was re-platted within the unrecorded “Enright Subdivision,” and architect-designed houses, most of them two-stories in height, were constructed. This area remains today as one of the finest small concentrations of residential Queen Anne architecture in the city. This spurt of development was short-lived however, as the Wall Street Panic of 1893 had a deleterious affect on the local economy until the end of the nineteenth century, bringing new construction to a crawl. These Queen Anne houses were designed by prominent local architects such as Francis W. Reid, W. D. Van Siclen, and J. O. McKee.

Trolley lines also facilitated new residential development southward from the city core during the period of horticultural expansion. Samuel Bishop had established the First Street Railway Company at First and Oak Streets adjacent the study area. The line was electrified in 1891 by subsequent owner Jacob Rich. The stables area for the horse-car line became the site of a large car barn and powerhouse that was able to produce 500-volt power for his system of overhead lines. The 1901 Bird's Eye View below shows Rich's large facility just to the west of South First Street. By this time, development along the Southern Pacific tracks had yet to gain traction, and the portions of Reed's Addition to the east of the study area remained mostly undeveloped.



Bird's Eye View of San José – 1901 (partial). This view, facing south, shows most of the study area dense with residential development except for the South Third Street block between Lewis and Virginia Streets.

New residential development in the late-nineteenth century within the study area was also accompanied by a large number of carriage houses constructed to the rear of residences between South Second and South Third Streets along an alleyway that once stretched from Reed to Martha Streets (*see photo at right*). Most of them are one-and-one-half story in height, and many have been demolished and replaced by modern garages. Although the setting in the alleyway itself shows extensive deterioration, the collection as a whole remains a distinctive feature in modern San José.



This view of the east side of South Third Street from Patterson Street looking southeast shows one of the finest small collections of Queen Anne Victorian houses in the city. The residence in the foreground was designed by W. D. Van Siclén for physician James Brownlee and constructed in 1891. Van Siclén also designed the adjacent house the same year for realtor Ephraim Abbott.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw renewed industrial development associated with the canning industry and a period of residential growth as World War I approached, although the 1906 Earthquake and another 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 being established in East San José, Burbank, Westside, and Willow Glen. Most of the infill development in the study area during this period is associated with this worker-class housing; these houses are recognizable as small Craftsman or Neoclassical cottages.

This period also saw the exploitation of land along the Southern Pacific tracks. The Peterson-Kartschoke Brick Co. built a large plant south of the study area near Keyes and South Third Streets (later to become Gladding Bros. Manufacturing Co. Clay Products), and a similar use was located across the tracks (Pacific Coast Pottery and Terra Cotta). Other construction-related uses were also in the vicinity, including Ransome Crummey Co. Asphalt Plant, a concrete pipe and block manufacturer, a wood post supplier and another contractors' supply house.

Agriculture-related uses quickly filled the space along the tracks; one of the first was a bottling plant for Rainer at South Fourth and Virginia Streets. It was established by German immigrant Charles J. Vath; he had come to San José in 1901 and was the proprietor of this agency of Ranier. The beer was brewed elsewhere and brought to the plant by rail. During prohibition, Vath kept the plant in operation by bottling soft drinks. He built his house near the plant at South Third and Virginia Streets, an exquisite design by local architect William Klinkert.

Near Martha and South Fifth Streets, American Can Company constructed a large manufacturing facility, and to the north four canneries were in operation by 1915: Richardson & Robbins', J. F. Pyle & Sons (later to be Barron-Gray), O. A. Harlan & Co., and Figprune Cereal Co. The area would eventually also be home to canneries or related uses such as California Prune & Apricot Growers Association Plant No. 17, The Shaw Family Inc. Fruit Cannery, and H. V. Lorentz Barrels.

Although the study area remained residential in character, during this period the first non-residential use appeared – the Blake Bros Electrical Fixture Shop at 730 South Second St. (*see photo at right*). Constructed in 1911 for use as a lighting fixture showroom, this unique building with its Egyptian Revival façade was later used by Rancadore & Alameda until the mortuary was moved to the renovated house at South Second and Martha Streets. By 1950, the Pentecostal Church of God was located in this building.



Interwar Period (1918-1945)

After World War I, San José entered a period of great prosperity, with population growth continuing through the twenties as the city expanded outward. A few remaining vacant parcels in the study area were built out during this period, and some houses were relocated into the area on other vacant parcels. The neighborhood, now more working-class oriented with a large number of rentals, began to be more distinct as a place, as commercial development replaced older housing that had been built along South First Street during the nineteenth century.

In 1928, Paul Cambiano, who had acquired the Blake Bros Lighting Fixtures company in 1919, built his new Art Fixture Shop at the northeast corner of South Second and Virginia Streets (*see photo lower right*). A rare non-residential use in the neighborhood, it was designed by Herman Krause and is a unique Churrigueresque design in the Spanish Eclectic style, now occupied by the Neptune Society. Cambiano had built his house in the neighborhood in 1923 just to the north of his future shop at 755 South Second St., a Spanish Eclectic design by architect Charles McKenzie.



Detail view of the entry to the Art Fixture Shop (now Neptune Society), located at the northeast corner of South Second and Virginia Streets.

In 1935, the railroad line for the Southern Pacific Coast Division was moved from Fourth Street to the west side of the downtown, a 4.5-mile line relocation. The relocation removed the many hazards associated with a railroad line through the middle of the downtown, transforming the old mainline into an industrial spur accessed from the south.

In 1929, zoning was introduced in San José, and although it had little effect during the Depression, it set the stage for later multifamily development, as the city planners targeted the older areas in the Original City for future high-density housing. The 1929 zoning had set a policy direction for the long-term transformation of the residential areas in the downtown frame. Suburban growth in the 1920s enabled by the automobile resulted in most new single-family housing construction taking place outside the original city limits. The aging housing stock in the downtown frame was not appealing to young families seeking a new house with modern amenities. The adoption of the zoning code and the City's first land use map clarified the City's intent to replace the old housing stock with high-density development in the old residential areas. By the end of the Depression, the study area saw its first multifamily housing complex constructed, the Art Moderne 5-plex at 767-771 South Second St. built by designer/builder Howard S. Waltz (see below).



5-plex at 767-771 South Second St. Original windows have been replaced with vinyl inserts.

Industrialization and Urbanization (1945-1991)

Soon after World War II, a new reformist City Council and aggressive business leaders launched a campaign to attract new non-agricultural related industries to San José. While the cannery-related businesses to the east of the study area continued on for a number of decades after World War II, the neighborhood, in concert with other older residential neighborhoods in the downtown frame began to experience higher transient residential uses and the construction on new multifamily apartment buildings on the remaining vacant lots or on properties where older nineteenth century houses were demolished. The first post-war apartment complex in the study area was an 8-unit two-story apartment complex at 732 South Third Street, soon followed by a number of others. The largest and last of these was the 16-unit building constructed by owner/contractor Signey Margales at 751 South Second Street (see photo at right). Many of the larger two-story nineteenth century homes, were converted to multifamily rentals during this period. This conversion process was also occurring in the areas around San José State College and in the Hensley neighborhood north of the downtown.



The construction of Interstate 280 in the 1960s had the effect of separating the study area from the residential neighborhoods to the north. Demolition occurred between 1966 and 1968, and freeway construction was completed by 1972. Introduction of one-way couplets, feeding these freeway entrances increased traffic and speed on these streets, decreasing the desirability of the area as a residential neighborhood.

The neighborhood, now known as the Martha Gardens historic residential area, remains today as a diverse mix of 19th century and early twentieth century single-family residences, residences converted to boarding houses and post-World War II multiple-unit residences. The boundaries of the neighborhood are now well defined within the greater downtown area, framed and isolated by the freeway, South First Street commercial development, and historic industrial buildings along the now abandoned Southern Pacific railroad line. The old industrial sites to the east however are presently undergoing redevelopment to residential use under the recently adopted specific plan for the Martha Gardens Planned Community, which in the future will re-establish the connection of the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood to other neighborhoods within the Spartan Keys SNI Planning Area.

THE CONTEXT OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The California State Historical Resources Commission has identified nine general themes covering the entire range of California's diverse cultural heritage. These themes are Aboriginal, Architecture, Arts/Leisure, Economic/Industrial, Exploration/Settlement, Government, Military, Religion, and Social/Education. Using these broad California themes as a guide, specific themes for the historical development of San José have been developed. In this study of the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood, although the San José themes of Manufacturing/ Industry and Communication/ Transportation have a secondary relationship to the development of the area, the primary theme associated with this area is Architecture and Shelter. The following section places this theme within the development of greater San José.

General Residential Development Patterns

Residential building methods evolved quickly in San José during the early boom period of the Gold Rush. Early sawmills established by William Campbell and Zachariah Jones in the Santa Cruz Mountains targeted the coastal redwoods that became the raw material for most residential building construction in San José for the next half century. During the early years of the twentieth century, concerns about preservation of the remaining old growth coastal redwoods redirected the timber industry to Douglas fir as the principal construction material in house building. Most of the wood construction material in the Martha neighborhood utilizes redwood as the principle building material.

Housing growth during the *Early American Period (1846-1869)* in San José was aided with an expansion of mills in the foothills and new production equipment that allowed for faster, larger, and less labor-intensive milling techniques. Channel-rustic siding was the preferred cladding of choice for residential construction from the mid-1860s to the late 1880s, and is found on the earliest houses in the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood, specifically on Italianate-style residences and some earlier Victorian-era houses, as well as some of the earliest vernacular structures in the City. Italianate houses feature blocky proportions, corner quoins, and Italianate brackets at their eave lines (*see photo at right*). Some have gable ends with eave returns, but others have flat roofs or are falsefronts. Windows and doors of Italianate buildings are often topped by deep hoods. Balloon framing was



prevalent at that time, remaining in use throughout the 1880s until it was gradually replaced by the modern platform framing method that began to be used in the late 1880s and through the 1890s, especially for the complex, often multi-story houses of the Victorian era.

Victorian architecture refers to designs roughly associated with the period of the reign of Queen Victoria of Great Britain—approximately the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Within this catchphrase are a number of specific styles that have



some commonality and some differences. Generally, the common traits include a sense of verticality expressed in the proportions of the massing, trim, and windows and doors. Asymmetry is also an attribute of Victorian architecture; in particular, most houses from this era have asymmetrical towers, bay windows, gables, porches, cantilevers and other projecting objects that interrupt the basic, underlying house form. Much of this era of design focuses on elaborate decorative elements such as brackets, spindlework, Eastlake carved trim, complex shingled window surrounds, etc. The various styles are built of frame construction. Two styles of Victorian-era design are found in the study area: Queen Anne (*see photo above right*) and Shingle.

Queen Anne houses and cottages are present in both stylistically clear and vernacular forms. Queen Anne houses typically feature asymmetrical façades with a combination of hipped roofs and decorative gables, as well as angled bay windows and turrets. The style is well known for ornate trim, including scroll-cut brackets and decorative window surrounds. Porches on Queen Anne houses usually project from the building mass and feature turned columns and additional ornate trim. Local Queen Anne cottages have traditional hipped main blocks with a single, projecting gable, often accenting front-facing angled bay windows; these cottages have less ornate trimwork, but still include some porch brackets and other delicate features.

Shingle-style houses are recognized by their broad, gabled forms—often multiple stories or half-stories are protected by the same gabled roof (*see photo at right*). Shingle-style walls have cantilevers, bays, and eyebrow forms that are frequently shingled to cover these complex articulations. The shingles can be cut and laid in patterns that represent traditional stonework details, such as keystones and quoins. Shingle-style houses often include Neoclassical-style



porch columns, window casings, and heavy brackets and dentils.

Residential construction slowed briefly near the turn of the twentieth century, although during this period the budding Arts and Crafts movement found proponents among vernacular house builders. Craftsman-style houses typified the trend, with horizontal forms and heavy trim, but equally noteworthy during this period in San José was the evolution and development of the Neoclassical bungalow (see photo at right).



Houses built during the early twentieth century have a horizontal orientation that is often highlighted by long porch beams, broad eaves, and ribbons of windows. A majority of these houses are one story, Craftsman-style houses, and include a variety of features that set them off from other styles: knee braces at their gable ends, outlookers, massive porch posts and/or truncated posts that rest on solid, sided porch railings, exposed rafter tails and other expressions of joinery, and wide front doors, as well as double-hung and casement windows with horizontal proportions (see photo lower right). Neoclassical houses have similar proportions and use similar materials, including tri-bevel teardrop siding; however, their distinctive features include the small hipped or gabled dormers at their standard hipped roofs that also sometimes have forward-facing gabled pediments. These houses have Tuscan or other classical turned porch columns and solid porch railing, and a great many have recessed porches and shallow angled bay windows tucked under boxed eaves. They can be further recognized by their and false-beveled teardrop siding.

Over time, Craftsman-style houses began to take on new exterior detailing reminiscent of historic and international examples, and in the 1920s-1930s, the Eclectic Revival or Period Revival style became characteristic of both residential and non-residential construction. Such styles as Spanish Eclectic became popular. Even very modest residences included Eclectic Revival detailing, such as Spanish tile roofs, raised and inset plaster ornament, arched porches and arched picture windows, and shaped buttresses.

Architectural significance is identified when a building distinctly represents a particular style or building type. In the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood, there is a predominant representation of houses in a limited variety of styles, and the structures that illustrate this pattern are significant for their contributions to the overall character of their surroundings.



PLANNING BACKGROUND

Martha Gardens Historic Residential Neighborhood Planning Background

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood in San José is a part of the larger Spartan Keys residential area, located southeast of San Jose’s downtown core area. Consisting primarily of single-family homes, many of which have been converted to multifamily use, this collection of about 90 properties provides examples of historic construction within the larger downtown frame. Originally a traditional neighborhood of houses constructed over a relatively broad period of time, the area was historically part of a larger district of similar residential properties that extended to the central commercial district. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the neighborhood had been sandwiched between the industrial district that flanks the Southern Pacific Railroad (SPR) alignment to the east and the commercial strip to the west, which follows South First Street as it leads to Monterey Road; San Jose’s historic southern gateway route. After the construction of Interstate Highway 280 in the 1960s/1970s, the two-block area south of the highway became isolated as a residential pocket. With the subsequent introduction of one-way streets through the downtown from Humboldt Street on the south to Taylor Street on the north, the heavily traveled transportation corridors have contributed to changes in the character of this residential neighborhood.

In the late 1990s, the City of San José began an effort to plan for the future of the industrial properties along the SPR alignments. In the Spartan Keyes area, the plan, first called the East Gardner Specific Plan, evolved into the Martha Gardens Planned Community when adopted by the San Jose City Council as a part of the General Plan in 2002.

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood is located within the Spartan Keyes Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) planning area. This *Historic District Study* is being conducted as a part of a number of neighborhood improvement initiatives originating out of the SNI planning committee. San José’s Strong Neighborhoods Initiative includes 19 planning areas. The SNI is a partnership of the City of San José, its Redevelopment Agency, community residents, and business and property owners - to improve neighborhood conditions, enhance community safety, facilitate community services and strengthen neighborhood associations. The City, the Redevelopment Agency, and the community are presently working collaboratively to achieve the future vision for each SNI area by implementing the recommended actions and priorities established in each of the SNI areas' neighborhood improvement plans.

This *Historic District Study* was prepared to explore the establishment of an historic district or conservation area within the Martha Gardens historic residential area as described within the Martha Gardens Specific Plan. The Spartan Keyes SNI Implementation Plan laid the groundwork for this Specific Plan.

The Spartan Keyes planning area is a mix of residential, commercial and light industrial land uses. Most of the housing consists of single-family dwellings built prior to the 1920s; however, in the 1930s the City zoned the majority of the area for light industrial and high density residential. As a result, established residential neighborhoods such as the Martha Gardens historic residential area have been impacted in the past by small-scale industrial and service uses, auto sales, auto repair centers, and high-density infill housing on small lots. According to planning reports, the incompatible mix of existing land uses contributes to low property values, especially considering the neighborhood's proximity to Downtown, transit and other urban amenities.

Over time, the Spartan Keyes neighborhood, under the Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Improvement Plan, will become more pedestrian- and transit-oriented, with community-focused commercial corridors, and well-lit, tree-lined streets. Existing residential areas will be protected and enhanced. Light industrial and auto service land uses will be phased out and replaced with development that complements adjacent homes. On-street parking will be preserved for residents. Sensitive infill development will increase the diversity of the resident population, offering housing opportunities for seniors and residents with a variety of income levels.

The vibrant and growing downtown presents challenges to the revitalization and long-term viability of the Spartan Keyes neighborhoods. The Spartan Keyes Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC) has indicated an interest in establishing a historic district or building conservation areas, such as the Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood, as a means of preserving the unique residential character of the area. It is the intention that any future proceedings initiated towards historic district designation will originate from this neighborhood planning process.

San José Policy Framework

The City of San José has adopted goals meant to promote a greater sense of historic awareness and community identity and to enhance the quality of urban living through preservation of historically and archaeologically significant structures, sites, districts and artifacts. San José 2020 General Plan goals and policies on cultural resources include a specific Policy #4 pertaining to historic districts:

Areas with a concentration of historically and/or architecturally significant sites or structures should be considered for preservation through the creation of Historic Preservation Districts.

The mechanism for implementation of the historic district policy is defined within the City's ordinance on historical preservation within Chapter 13.48 of the Municipal Code. Conservation Areas, which are listed and defined within the City's Historic Resources Inventory, are "established to provide a designation tool to recognize as well as to preserve and enhance the character of qualifying neighborhoods" according to the ordinance, as amended April 6, 2004.

In year 2000, the City Council adopted an ordinance amending the Zoning Code to include discretionary review of certain single-family house permits. These permits are required for residential remodeling and new construction when maximum height or floor area ratios are exceeded, or when the property is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory, or in a Conservation Area, but not a designated City Landmark or located in a City Landmark District.

San José Historic Districts and Conservation Areas

The creation of locally designated historic districts is intended to discourage unregulated and insensitive change to definable areas that possess an historical continuity of time, place, and pattern of development. In the recent past, since adoption of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the National Register of Historic Places has been the principal vehicle for the creation of historic districts in America. The U. S. Department of the Interior has established criteria for determining the significance of historic properties, based on the ability of a building, site, structures, districts, or objects to convey the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. These properties must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and convey an important aspect of the history of the nation. A National Register district is any area of a community that has been determined by the Keeper of the National Register to be of national historical significance based on National Register criteria. The major function of this federal process, however, is to help identify historic resources and to use this information as a federal planning tool. Within Section 106 of the NHPA, any federal undertaking must consider the effects of a project on properties that are designated as contributors to a designated National Register district. Properties so designated are also eligible for certain federal tax credits, and in California, listing on the National Register also by definition defines properties as part of the California Register of Historical Resources.

A local historic district is similar to a National Register district in that local districts also identify historically and architecturally significant buildings, but this recognition can be based on locally developed, rather than nationally established criteria and policies. Local significance, attitudes, and contemporary events affect what a community views as important. Local designation also can provide greater protection for local resources, as is the goal under the City of San José Historic Preservation Ordinance. Through locally implemented design-review processes, changes to historic resources can be regulated in a sympathetic way to protect and reinforce the historic character of the district.

San José has three locally designated residential historic districts: the Hensley Historic District located north of downtown, the River Street Historic District, located on West Julian Street near the Guadalupe River, and the Reed City Landmark Historic District, south of San José State University. The River Street Historic District structures were originally residential, but most have been converted to commercial use. The Hensley District is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the only such residential district in San José with this status.

Conservation areas are used as a planning tool throughout the country in order to preserve and enhance neighborhood character in places that have cohesiveness or distinctive character. Use of this form of neighborhood district designation is often of value when the targeted area might not technically merit consideration as an historic district due to a lack of a unified contextual theme or when the level of aesthetic continuity of sites is inadequate. In some cases, historic district designation is not supported by area property owners but a conservation area designation might be preferred.

Within San José are a number of designated conservation areas. Three of these, Naglee Park, Palm Haven, and Shasta/Hanchett (Hanchett and Hester Park), were identified in the early 1980s as conservation areas. In 2004, the San José City Council adopted a detailed enabling ordinance for the conservation area designation process, and in late 2004, the City Council approved its first designation, the Market-Almaden Conservation Area within the Market-Almaden SNI.

Conservation areas represent a particular period of design or architectural style. Significance is derived from a grouping of structures viewed as a whole rather than from the importance of an individual building. The historic character of these areas reflects development patterns of growth in the city, and the areas are specifically defined in terms of their physical boundaries.

SIGNIFICANCE ANALYSIS OF MARTHA GARDENS HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The Martha Gardens historic residential area is a historic single-family residential neighborhood with a development history that spans from the mid-1870s to about 1940. The buildings are both vernacular and architect-designed in type, with a large number of structures associated with prominent architects from the end of the nineteenth century that can be found within the neighborhood.

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood has a geographically definable area of urban character and possesses a concentration and continuity of sites and buildings that are unified by their contemporary boundaries. The residential neighborhood has remained largely unchanged over the last 70 years except for a residential infill project that is presently under construction. Portions of the area are in the public consciousness as an aesthetically pleasing concentration of historic architecture, particularly along South Third Street. The existing commercial area along South First Street, Interstate Highway 280, and new development on the other two sides of the neighborhood have created definable limits to the area that now enhance its sense as a neighborhood place with a sense of history.

The neighborhood, as a place, presents a unique and distinct experience of visual aspects of urban life in San José from the late nineteenth century that continues to exist in

contemporary times. The architecture and construction methods evident within the fabric of the existing neighborhood provide a cohesive setting and sense of historic development. The neighborhood maintains a good level of physical integrity to its period of significance, with limited intrusions into the urban fabric by contemporary structures.

The neighborhood meets the criteria for listing as a conservation area. While portions of the neighborhood meet the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or designation as a local landmark district, the area as a whole is too diverse in its representative architecture to qualify for historic district status. This diverse architecture however has historic value within the context of greater San José, and the sense of cohesiveness that has evolved over time through its urban fabric, physical setting, and preservation of original construction materials meets the criteria for designation as a conservation area:

- It has clear and understandable boundaries that accentuate its sense of community,
- It has fairly consistent lot sizes with reasonably consistent setbacks,
- The predominant vernacular historic single-family residences are of a homogeneous scale and massing,
- The neighborhood buildings, although of different styles, are from a definable period of significance – mid-1870s to 1940,
- There is a concentration of historic buildings dating from the period of development,
- The present built environment as a whole represents the period of development through the retention of original exterior materials, building form, streetscape rhythm, and setting,
- Recent changes – to individual houses as well as to lots – have not adversely affected the scale and massing of the rhythm of the neighborhood,
- Adequate documentation exists to allow the creating of detailed design guidelines, based on the historic precedents including setbacks, materials, heights, numbers of floors, FAR, etc., and

Proposed Conservation Area Boundaries

The Martha Gardens historic residential neighborhood is generally bounded on the north by Interstate Highway 280, on the east by the property lines of the abandoned Southern Pacific Railroad alignment (approximately a continuation of Fourth Street), on the west by the alley between First and Second Streets, and on the south by Martha Street. More specifically, the boundaries are as noted on page 5.

Within this general area, commercial properties, vacant properties, historic properties that lack integrity to their original construction, and properties with extant structures built since 1940 would be considered as non-contributing.

REPORT BACKGROUND

Methodology of Context Statements

Historic resource surveys link resources to their associated historic contexts. To evaluate buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts for historical significance, a statement of context must first be defined. An historic context statement establishes the background chronology and themes of a specified area. In doing so, it describes the significant characteristics and patterns of that area's history and cultural development. The context statement for the Martha Gardens historic residential area defines a specific historic period and theme relevant to understanding the history of the study area. It focuses after 1769, when Euro-Americans first entered the region with the intent of establishing permanent settlement. The methodology for creating a historic context statement consists of five steps:

- Identify the concept, relevant time period and geographical limits of the study area
- Review existing contemporary information such as past surveys, recorded information about the study area on file at the local, state and national level
- Perform original research using available primary and secondary sources of information
- Synthesize the historical information gathered into a written narrative
- Define existing property types within the study area and group them based on shared physical and/or associative characteristics. These property types should be understood by character-defining features associated with extant resources, patterns of development, and a statement of current conditions and the levels of integrity necessary for a resource to be a contributor to a significant historic pattern of development.

Related Documents

As a part of this study, individual properties within the study area were researched, described, and evaluated within DPR523 forms, the standard recording format used throughout the State of California. The forms indicate the historic status of these properties and indicate whether or not they contribute to the proposed conservation area.

Qualifications of the Consultants

This report was prepared by the firm of Archives & Architecture: Heritage Resource Partners. Contributing to the historic context study, as well as the related individual property evaluations were historians Franklin Maggi, Leslie A. G. Dill, Charlene Duval, and Jessica Kusz. All of the contributors meet the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities within their respective fields of Historian and/or Architectural Historian in compliance with state and federal environmental laws. The criteria are outlined in 36 CFR Part 61.

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