

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL EVALUATION

For 92-98 South Second Street
(APN's 467-22-055)
San José, Santa Clara County
California

For:
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INTRODUCTION

Historical and architectural research and evaluation of the property located at 92-98 South Second Street, San José, was conducted in October 2000 by Franklin Maggi, Architectural Historian and Charlene Duval, Consulting Historian, for the firm of Dill Design Group of Los Gatos, California. Bob Hightower of Barry Swenson Builder requested this report to accompany a proposal to demolish the building, presently vacant, at 92-96 South Second Street (APN 467-22-055). The evaluation of 92-98 South Second is presented in a report form consistent with the City of San José Historic Report Guidelines, and includes the preparation of State of California DPR523 forms and an evaluation rating sheet for the property.

Qualifications

Leslie A. G. Dill, Principal of the firm of Dill Design Group, has a Master of Architecture with a certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Virginia. She is licensed in California as an architect. Franklin Maggi, Architectural Historian is a historical consultant in the field of architecture and urban development, and has a Bachelor of Architecture with an area of concentration of architectural history from the University of California, Berkeley. Charlene Duval is an historian with over 20 years experience in researching and writing about local history. She has a Master's Degree in Social Science from San José State University. Leslie A. G. Dill, Franklin Maggi, and Charlene Duval meet the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities within the respective professions of Historic Architect, Architectural Historian, and Historian in compliance with state and federal environmental laws.

Methodology

Franklin Maggi and Charlene Duval conducted a field survey of the subject property on October 18, 2001. The building and site were examined. Notes on the architecture, characteristic features of the building, and the neighborhood context were made. Photographs were taken of the interiors and exterior of the structure. Architectural descriptions within this report were written based on these notes and photographs. Additional research was undertaken that included visits to major repositories of local historical source material. These repositories included the California Room of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Main Library, the archives at San José History Park, and archives located at San José State University.

This report was prepared utilizing the methodology recommended by the National Park Service, as outlined in Preservation Briefs #17 (Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character), and #35 (Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation).

Past Surveys

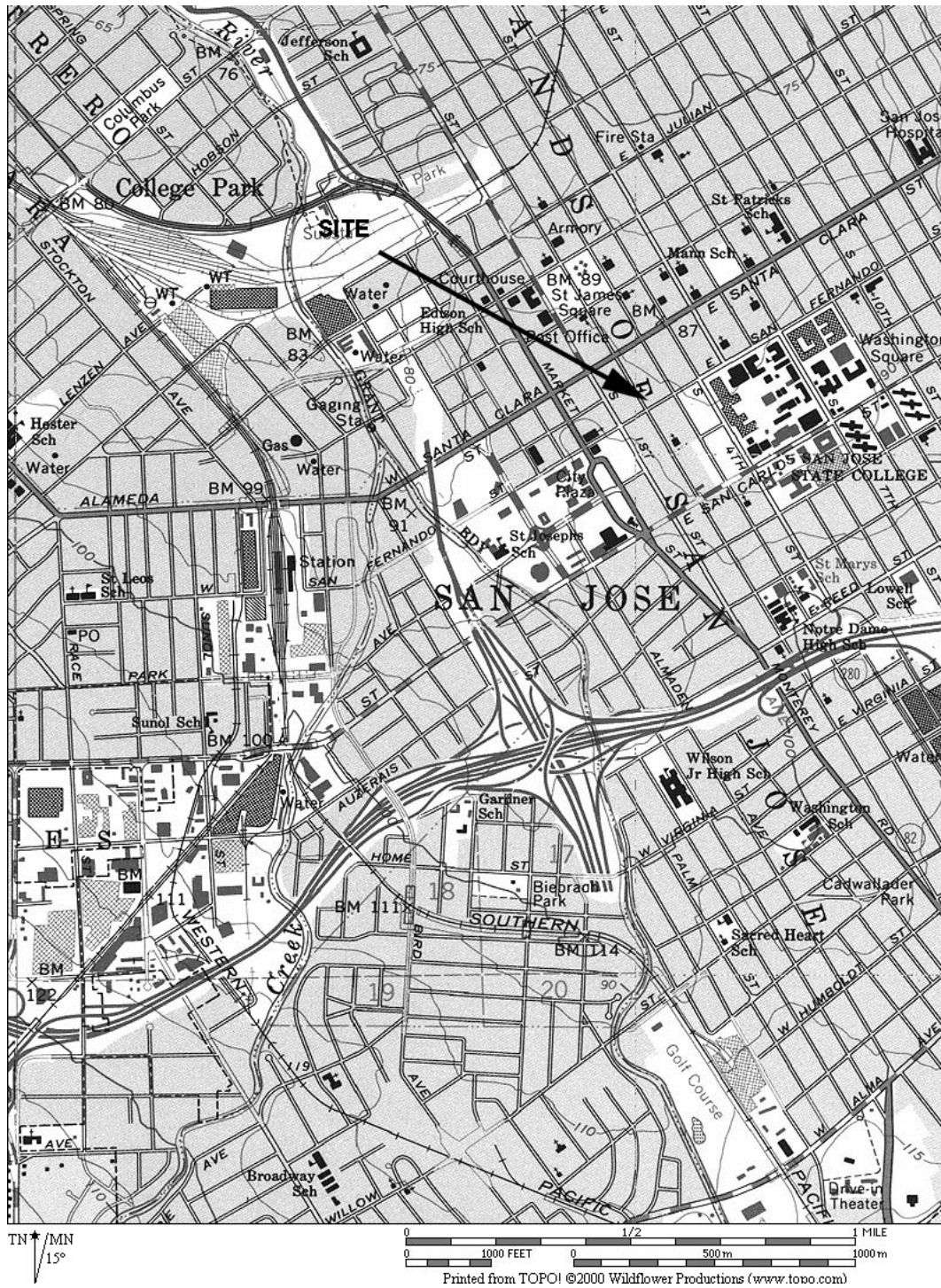
San Jose's downtown historic commercial center was first reviewed for historical significance as a part of survey work in 1979 conducted by the firm of Urban/Rural Conservation (Patricia Leach and William Zavlaris). Their work was performed as a part of planning for the Downtown Transit Mall. The scope included properties in the downtown within the area of effect of the mall project, and was done for the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency. This 1979 study, prepared under the guidelines of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, was reviewed by the Keeper of the National Register. The area bounded by East Santa Clara, East San Fernando, South Third and South First Streets was found to be eligible for the National Register as a local historic district in 1982. In late 1982, Bonnie Bamburg prepared a nomination application for the district, and on May 26, 1983 the district was formally placed on the National Register as the San José Downtown Commercial Historic District.

The actual nomination form, which is the official adopted document for this district designation, has some inconsistencies, particularly pertaining to the property at 92-98 South Second Street. This property is listed as both a Contributor and Non-contributor on two separate lists in this document. The graphic attachment to the nomination includes properties in the district and identifies the property 92-98 as a Non-contributor, however, this graphic has other inconsistencies in specific property designations. It is likely that the intention at that time was that this property would be considered a Non-contributor, as the 1930s remodeling of the 1894 structure would have placed it outside the specified period of significance for the district, which was limited at that time to about 1924. The actual designation within this district is, therefore, not known, although the Office of Historic Preservation lists the property within its Historic Property Data File as a 1D (Listed in National Register as a Contributor to a listed district).

The area was further studied by the Redevelopment Agency of San José in 1983, when a condition study was conducted by John B. Dykstra & Associates. Subsequently, the Agency hired Page, Anderson and Turnbull, Inc. to perform an evaluation of Historic and Architectural Resources in the area. These studies were followed by the adoption of the Century Center Redevelopment Plan in 1985. This redevelopment plan is under consideration for expansion in late 2000, environmental review is in process at the time of preparation of this report.

The subject property is listed in the San José Historic Resources Inventory as CS-NRD (Contributing Structure – National Register District).

Location Map



United States Geological Survey, San José East, 1980 photorevised

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND¹

Historical Context and Overview

On November 29, 1777, Spain formally established the *Pueblo of San José de Guadalupe* as the first civil settlement in Alta California. In the 1790s, due to frequent flooding at the original site near present day Hobson Street, the pueblo was relocated about one mile south to present day downtown San José, developing around what is now known as Plaza de César Chavez. During the period of Spanish colonial rule, the lands east of the *pueblo*, known as the *ejidos*, were used for grazing and agriculture. According to historian Frederick Hall, in 1847 the "plains east of First Street looked quite white with bones of the cattle, which had been slaughtered by the thousands for their hides and tallow" (1871).

The earliest American survey of the pueblo was done in 1847 by William Campbell, establishing the familiar grid of streets now seen in downtown San José. Chester Lyman formalized this survey the following year. Santa Clara Street became the major east-west thoroughfare. The earliest commercial district was centered on Santa Clara Street at Market Street, moving east to First and Second streets in subsequent years. Each block in the survey was divided into lots, enabling easy parcel identification for property ownership.

The earliest documented development on the block bounded by Second, Third, San Fernando, and Santa Clara Streets, Block 1 Range 3 North (B1R3N), was an adobe dwelling mentioned in a deed in 1851. Facing Second Street about mid-way between Santa Clara and San Fernando Streets, the adobe was located on Lot 6. Sold to Rev. A. M. Winn (or A. L. Wynne) in 1851, the property was in turn sold by Winn in 1853 to Alexander Yoell (Hendry and Bowman 1940). The adobe house, valued at \$2,000 in 1854, shows on the 1884 through 1901 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps as a two-story residence and boarding house. Rev. Winn came to San José in 1851 and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church South. In 1852, he led the small congregation in constructing a brick church on the corner of Second and San Fernando streets, the site that is the subject of this report (Lot 10) (Arbuckle 1985). Alexander Yoell, who occupied Lot 6 after Winn, was a prominent and colorful San José attorney, becoming District Attorney in 1858-1859 (Laffey 1997).

Historical literature also refers to the vicinity of San Fernando and Second Streets as being the location of "Flapjack Hall", a boarding house occupied by a number of members of California's first legislature, the first session held in San José beginning December 15, 1849. Anna Marie "Grandma" Bascom provided boarding services in a rented building in this vicinity during the winter of 1849/1850, probably moving to what is likely the southwest corner of San Fernando and Second by Spring 1850 at the end of the first session (Pierce 1990). The exact location of "Flapjack Hall" was not determined as a part of this historical overview.

By 1857, there were at least nine residences and one church located on B1R3N. During the 1850s and 1860s, much of the property on the block was owned by prominent physicians. Dr. Benjamin Cory, San José's first resident physician, owned Lots 1 and 2. After coming to San José in 1847, Dr. Cory was very active in civic affairs, serving in the State Legislature, four years on the City Council, ten years as County Physician and as a trustee of the State Normal School. After arriving in San José in 1852, Dr. A. J.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, historical information presented in this section was drawn from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, city directories, and tax assessment rolls.

Spencer acquired Lots 3 and 4, residing on Lot 3 during the 1860s and 1870s. Dr. Spencer was also active in civic affairs and served as the director of the County Hospital. Dr. J. C. Cobb resided on the south half of Lot 6 through the 1850s, 60s, and 70s. He mixed his medical career with participation in church and civic affairs and eventually became the president of the San Jose Savings Bank (Munro-Fraser 1881; Arbuckle 1985; Laffey 1997).

In 1868, during a boom period in the downtown, when a number of one- and two-story brick commercial buildings were constructed, Adolf Pfister constructed a brick commercial building, the Pfister Block, at the southeast corner of Second and Santa Clara Streets on Lot 2 (Hall 1871). By 1870, there were at least sixteen residences situated on the block. Located on Second Street were an early volunteer fire station (Empire Engine Company) on Lot 7, Krumb's Brewery on Lot 10, and the brick Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on the subject property. By this time an additional church was built on the block, the German Methodist Episcopal Church was located on Lot 8 facing Third Street, until it disbanded in the late 1930s (Thompson & West 1876, *SJDM* 7/20/1882).

The decade of the 1880s saw additional commercial development surrounding the subject parcel, including the 1884 Odd Fellows Building on the corner of Santa Clara and Third Streets, the Belloli Building at the corner of San Fernando and Third streets, and the Nucleus Hotel, most recently known as San Carlos Hotel until it burned and was demolished in 1994 (Laffey 1997).

A disastrous fire swept through the block in 1892, clearing the southern part of the block and stimulating additional commercial construction. Two one-story commercial buildings replaced the brewery on Lot 7 just south of the present day José Theatre. The two-story Knights of Pythias building was constructed on the north half of Lot 10 in 1893 immediately north of the subject parcel, and a new Methodist Episcopal Church, South was under construction on the subject parcel circa 1894. The Toccoa Block, later known as the Lawrence Hotel, was constructed in 1893 by Judge Lawrence Archer on San Fernando Street to the immediate east of the subject parcel (Laffey and Duval 1997, *SJMH* 3/1/1893).

Large-scale commercial development continued in the first years of the twentieth century. Major damage occurred to many of these large brick buildings during the 1906 Earthquake, including the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A number of buildings in the immediate vicinity were rebuilt in the years immediately following 1906. The building on the subject property was sold by the church in 1907 and became known as the Blanchard Building, becoming the home of Heald Business College for many years (Laffey and Duval 1997).

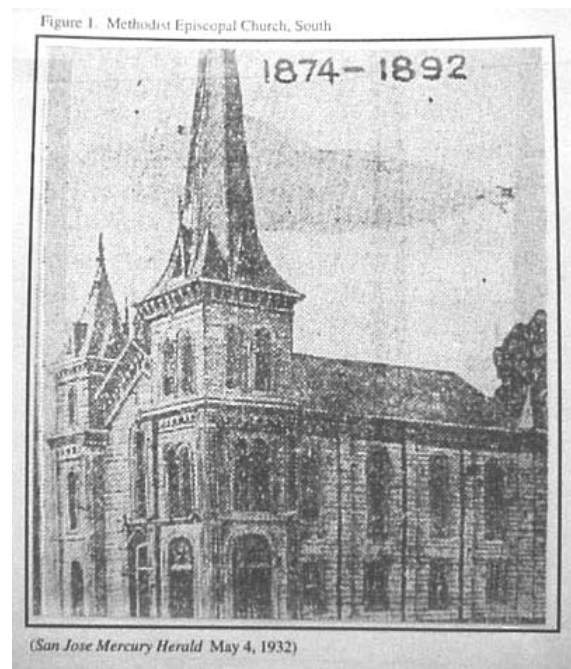
Some smaller scale construction on the block occurred during the twentieth century. One-story concrete commercial and industrial buildings were added on South Third Street, Costa Hall was constructed immediately to the south of the Odd Fellows Building, and the New Century Block was expanded. These buildings and the one-story brick buildings south of the José Theatre were recently demolished. Two other brick buildings were demolished in recent times due to major fire damage.

By the mid-1930s, development of the block had stabilized. Utilization of the commercial storefronts began to wane. Downtown façade modernization began in the 1920s to a small degree, and in 1936, a Depression Era program managed by the Federal Housing Administration brought investment into the area along South Second Street by upgrading existing commercial building infrastructure. While successful for a time, the decline of the downtown as a whole after 1950 resulted in a long term decline in the viability of these buildings in the latter half of the twentieth century, although the storefronts have continued to be occupied by a diverse mix of uses until recent times.

Property History 92-98 South Second Street

The northeast corner of Second and San Fernando streets was identified in C. S. Lyman's 1848 survey of San José as Lot 10 of Block 1 Range 3 North. The south half of Lot 10 was acquired by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1852. Nationally, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was begun by a faction that broke away from the main Methodist denomination in 1844, in support of the South and their stand on slavery. With Reverend A. L. Wynne as pastor, the San José church had been organized in May 1851. Founding families included many of San José's prominent pioneers from the southern states, including Dr. and Mrs. L. H. Bascom, Edward Pyle, and Marcus Williams (*SJMH* 5/4/1932).

The congregation originally conducted church services in California's first statehouse building on Market Street. A new brick church was constructed on the subject property at the corner of Second and San Fernando streets in 1852; the dedication occurred on October 17 of that year (Hall 1871). This church measured 36 x 50 feet in size. In April of 1853, the Pacific Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held its first annual meeting in the building, with Bishop Joshua A. Soule presiding. Soule had been the author of the "Constitution of American Methodism," and was a nationally known figure (Arbuckle 1986). The earthquake of 1868 damaged this structure, and in 1874, the brick building was torn down and replaced by a larger two-story wooden building (see newspaper photo this page). This building was burned to the ground in a fire on July 3, 1892, that leveled most of a two block area. Following the fire, the church was housed temporarily in two locations, the last being the Knights of Pythias building to the immediate north of the subject site.



By 1892, this area had been incorporated into the downtown business district. About 1894, a new brick building was under construction on this site by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Instead of rebuilding a typical church building on this corner, the forward-looking congregation constructed a dual-use, two-and-a-half-story brick commercial and church building (see photo next page). The church occupied the second floor by 1896, and the ground floor of the building was occupied by retail stores with their rents going to the church revenue. In 1906, the church was once again homeless due to damages that the building sustained during the 1906 Earthquake. While the building was being repaired, the church held services in the Jewish Synagogue located down the street at South Second and East San Antonio Streets.

In 1907, the church property was sold to member and attorney, Hiram A. Blanchard, and became known as the Blanchard Building. The proceeds from the sale of the property went toward the purchase of land on the corner of Second and San Carlos Streets where the new church, St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was erected in 1909 (*SJMH* 5/4/1932). The church merged with the downtown Centella



1907 view from the southwest / Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History collection.

Church on June 1, 1956. Both of their buildings were disposed of after construction of their new building at South Tenth and East San Salvador Streets.

Sometime after Blanchard purchased the property, Heald Business College moved into the building, and shortly thereafter, sometime between 1907 and 1909, Hiram Blanchard expanded the building, creating a full third story (see photo next page). By 1909, the property had been acquired by Edith M. Blanchard, wife of Hiram's brother, Marcus Blanchard. Born in Illinois in 1877, Edith Blanchard came to California in 1884. She attended San José Normal School and became a teacher until her marriage in 1901 to Marcus Blanchard, who was a prosperous San José real estate developer and insurance agent. She appears to have owned the building into the 1930s, probably in 1932 when Marcus Blanchard's real estate office moved out of the building. Edith was a devout Methodist and a life long member of St. Paul's Church. On her 90th birthday, she paid off the church's mortgage and gave money for construction of a new administrative wing. Edith died in San José in 1986 at the age of 109 (SJM 12/20/86).

In 1907, under the direction of the leadership of John W. Nixon, Heald Business College consolidated with San José Business College and the Pacific Coast Business College. They initially were located in the adjacent building to the north, 86 South Second Street. By 1907, the new organization occupied the upstairs of the Blanchard Building at 92 South Second Street. Heald Business College was established in



Circa 1909 view from the southwest / from Dick Barrett's 1977 *A Century of Service: San Jose's 100 Year Old Business Firms, Organizations and Institutions*.

San Francisco in 1863 by Edward Payson Heald and had branches throughout central California by the early years of the twentieth century. By 1915, the school occupied 15,000 square feet of floor space and had an enrollment of 300 students (Davis 1915; Sawyer 1922; Barrett 1976). The school stayed at 92 South Second until 1929 when it moved to 10 Notre Dame Street.

Since 1895, numerous business offices and retail shops were located in the first floor of the building. Between 1895 and 1915, Morehead's Pharmacy and subsequently Morehead and West Drug Company occupied the ground floor corner storefront, 98 South Second Street. The Gold Nugget Butter Company was at 96 South Second Street from 1909 to 1917. That company eventually merged with Crystal Creamery, becoming the Crystal and Gold Butter Creamery, and moved its operations to East Santa Clara Street at Seventh Street, where it remained until the 1970s. Marcus Blanchard had a real estate and investment office at 94 South Second Street from 1926 to 1932.

In 1927, the Southern Pacific Company depot office and the Railway Express Agency depot located their offices at #98, which was heralded by the Second Street Merchant's Association as indicative of the revitalization of Second Street. Other improvements to the street included façade renovations of many of the buildings (*SJMH* 5/21/1927). Southern Pacific's offices remained at 98 South Second Street until 1936.

In 1936, the building was remodeled, then owned and occupied by California Western State Life Insurance Company. This work was done as part of the façade improvement program called “Modernize for Profit,” a campaign promoted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), the Builders’ Exchange, the Merchants’ Association, local contractors, P.G.&E. and others during this period. Low interest, long-term loans for façade modernization were available to property owners and tenants under the Federal Housing Act (*San Jose Mercury Herald* 4/26/1936, 6/7/1936). The subject building was one of the first modernization projects of this program (*San Jose Mercury Herald* June 7, 1936). The upper two stories of the building were removed, and the façade was renovated in a design characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style. The architect for the remodeling was George Sellon, and the contractor was W. W. Caldwell (Building Permit #3956 6/1/1936).

Sellon is known as California’s first State Architect. Initiating the position in 1906, under his authority, the design and construction of the local Agnews State Hospital was executed. A street on the remaining campus currently bears his name in memory of his role in the construction of the facility. He was State Architect for only a short time, soon forming his own firm by 1909. Over the next half a century, he designed many public and private buildings throughout Northern California, and his firm continues to exist today as Lionakis Beaumont Design Group, who, by their own accounting, are the largest architectural firm in Sacramento. Sellon was the architect of twelve county courthouses in California, and designed San Quentin prison. By the late 1930s, he had become versed in the Streamline, or Art Moderne style, examples by him exist in Nevada County, West Sacramento, and Oakland.

In subsequent years, the storefronts and retail spaces were further modified. Between 1937 and the 1960s, various establishments occupied the retail spaces, including clothing stores, a business equipment store, a barbershop, a restaurant, a bookstore, and a finance company.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The building at 92-98 South Second Street is a one-story unreinforced brick masonry structure with an unfinished full second floor (or attic). Originally constructed shortly after the two brick buildings to the east and north, it shares common party walls with these earlier 1892 structures at the interior property lines. The perimeter of the subject building along the street frontages is also brick above the storefronts.



92-98 South Second Street / view from the west / F.Maggi, October 2001

The original building had a first floor brick façade along the East San Fernando Street frontage, which was modified sometime in the 1920s or 1930s with the installation of glass storefronts. In 1936, the third level, previously added to the building circa 1907/1909, was completely removed from the building. This deconstruction also included the removal of the cantilevered corner of the building, which had originally been the base of a turret in the pre-1909 configuration. The 1936 project included the removal of the roof and the floor structure of the third level. A new flat roof was constructed within the space of the earlier second level. The upper wall of this earlier second story now functions as a parapet above the plane of the roof. Evidence of the earlier second-story window openings can be found in the present unfinished attic. These openings were filled with brick as a part of the renovation. The original second level wood flooring, associated with the earlier circa 1894 building, appears to still exist in this attic. The upper facades are currently finished in smooth stucco that wraps the building at the corner, presenting a continuous curved surface. This surface is divided horizontally into four equally spaced sections. The north and east ends of the three seams are embellished with metal convex button-shaped ornaments. Some signage is also located in this upper façade. Dividing the storefront level from the upper parapet area is a metal watertable that counterflashes the storefront area.



View of upper façade from interior, showing bricked window openings from earlier building / F.Maggi, Oct. 2001

The original transom area of the South Second Street façade has been covered or replaced with flat stucco-covered panels, and the columns finished in tile. The storefront added to the East San Fernando Street façade matches the design of the remodeled storefronts on South Second Street. It was not determined if the original transom windows and columns remain extant within the current building.

Interior view at second level showing sign on south wall of 82-90 South Second Street / F.Maggi, Oct. 2001

The original canvas canopy and frame have been removed, and a thin horizontal metal canopy has been added, set in from the north corner and continuing along South Second Street where it wraps the building on the corner. This canopy is hung from the wall and supported by metal braces which suspend the structure from the watertable.



The original arched entry to the upstairs area at the north corner of the building has been removed and an aluminum entryway leads to a small retail space. The other storefronts are a mix of 1920s or 1930s tile base and frame, and aluminum window mullions have replaced much of the earlier fenestration in recent times. A door at the east corner of the East San Fernando Street façade leads to a service corridor at the rear of the building.



View of parapet of East San Fernando Street wall, viewed from the northeast / F.Maggi, Oct. 2001

The interior of the building consists of five retail spaces that have all been finished with gypsum wallboard as a part of contemporary renovation efforts. The rear of these spaces is not well defined; the changing functional needs of the tenants, appears to have led to many small changes. A small concrete-lined basement is located near the southeast corner of the building. The remainder of the building appears to be built at grade. Two internal stairways lead to the upper level, and a small mezzanine is located



within the San Fernando Street storefront.

Typical interior, corner storefront viewed from the east / F.Maggi, Oct. 2001

The building has been vacant for a while and is in a state of disrepair internally. Some of the tile on the East San Fernando Street frontage is damaged, but otherwise the building appears to be representative of its 1936 renovation. No visual evidence exists that would associate this building with its pre-1936 history.

EVALUATION FOR SIGNIFICANCE

Three sets of criteria are utilized in evaluating the potential historical and architectural significance of structures and sites within the City of San José. The first set of criteria used is defined by the National Register of Historic Places, which was established by the National Park Service. The California State Historical Resources Commission developed the second set of criteria used, for the California Register of Historical Resources. Lastly, properties are evaluated according to City of San José Historic Evaluation Criteria, which is based on San Jose's Historic Preservation Ordinance and general plan policies

National Register of Historic Places

To meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places, a building, site, or object must have architectural and historical integrity, and satisfy at least one of the following conditions:

- Criteria A it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Criteria B it is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- Criteria C it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Criteria D it has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

California Register of Historical Resources

In order for a resource to be eligible for the California Register of Historical Resources, a building, site or object must meet three standards of review:

1. A property must be significant at the local, state or national level, under one or more of the following criteria:
 - It is associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history and cultural heritage of California and the United States.
 - It is associated with the lives of persons important to the nation or California's past.
 - It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
 - It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the State or the Nation.
2. The resource must retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic property, and to convey the reason for its significance; and
3. It is fifty years old or older (except for rare cases of structures of exceptional significance).

Resources already listed, or determined eligible for the National Register, or California Historic Landmarks #770 or higher are also, by definition, eligible for the California Register. A property is automatically eligible for the register if it has been listed under any state, national or local historic resource criteria, unless the preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise.

City of San José

Under the City of San José criteria, structures of historical value are defined within the Historic Preservation Ordinance and are evaluated according to the following:

1. Identification or association with persons, eras or events that have contributed to local, regional, state or national history, heritage or culture in a distinctive, significant or important way;
2. Identification as, or association with, a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige:
 - a. of an architectural style, design or method construction;
of a master architect, builder, artist or craftsman;
of high artistic merit;
 - b. the totality of which comprises a distinctive, significant or important work or vestige whose component parts may lack the same attributes;
 - c. that has yielded or is substantially likely to yield information of value about history, architecture, engineering, culture or aesthetics, or that provides for existing and future generations an example of the physical surrounds in which past generation lived or worked;
 - d. or that the construction materials or engineering methods used in the proposed landmark are unusual or significant or uniquely effective.

Additionally, the City of San José uses an evaluation rating system based on the work of Harold Kalman of Canada, originally prepared for Parks Canada. Potential historic resources are given a numerical rating system according to a question and answer sheet (last updated October 1998) and included within the Historic Report Guidelines. These ratings then are tested against thresholds established by the Historic Landmarks Commission as follows:

67-134 points	Candidate City Landmark
33-66	Structure of Merit
33-66	Contributing structure to a historic district
0-32	Non-significant

While these rating numbers provide benchmarks of levels of significance, the determination of eligibility as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit must be tested against the criteria detailed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, as listed above. The Historic Landmarks Commission is responsible for adding and deleting specific properties from the Historic Resources Inventory, and the San José City Council is the final authority for designation of City Landmarks.

Evaluation

The building and site were evaluated for historical significance based on age, integrity, historical association, and architectural value. The building, and the renovation associated with its current configuration, meets the minimum 50-year old threshold of both the National and California criteria.

Buildings and sites associated with the lives of persons that provided value to their community, where the remembrances of those personages and their contributions to society, important to local, state or national history, are potentially eligible for the National, California and/or local registers. The building is associated with the history of the local Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Although this church was

founded early in the history of the American period in San José, and a number of prominent pioneers were members of this church, the organization is not known for significant contributions within San José or to the history of the region. Historic significance for a religious property cannot be established for National Register eligibility on the merits of a religious doctrine but must be viewed in purely secular terms. Religious associations can be considered if they are part of a cultural group whose activities are significant in areas broader than religious history, but in the case of the building at 92-98 South Second Street, this case cannot be made.

Persons associated with the building, including members of the Blanchard family, are remembered for their involvement in local real estate development and their contributions to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but they are not known for specific contributions to society that are important to local, state or national history. The linkage of personages from the Valley's past with extant structures is not in itself adequate to make a case for eligibility. These persons must also be identified in the historical record for their specific contributions. The case for historical significance based on the early owners of this building cannot be made.

The building, in its original configuration, built after 1893, was a significant Victorian era design and had high artistic values. This building configuration was lost in the 1906 Earthquake. The later renovation and addition that created the three-story building from circa 1907 to 1936 was of lesser architectural value, as the design was a compromise with an earlier style.

The 1936 remodeling deconstructed the building, creating a new façade and functional arrangement. This façade design was designed by George Sellon, and was part of the "Modernize for Profit" effort in the downtown promulgated by the Federal Housing Administration, and is one of San Jose's first organized efforts at core area regeneration. This type of program would not appear again until the later phases of redevelopment activity sponsored by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of San José. Façade improvement programs would gain increasing importance in the core area in the early 1990s as earlier site clearance programs were supplemented with other programs that encourage renovation of existing building stock. The remodeling of 92-98 South Second Street was specifically identified in a newspaper article at that time as one of the first eight of a large number of projects in planning or underway as of Spring 1936. This program promoted modern design as a key to other renovation needs that could be used to stimulate commercial activity in the core. The design for this building was radical for the time, as modernism had just been introduced into the United States as a major movement in the early 1930s. Although building designers had begun to react to historicism in design earlier in the century, façade renovations in San Jose's core area in the 1920s and early 1930s had been more classically inspired in form, the subtle reduction in ornamentation was still focused on Renaissance features, followed by the then emerging Art Deco forms. The Moderne style of the façade of 92-98 South Second Street is the earliest recognized example of this change in direction, but is also one of a number of buildings remodeled at this time that are characterized by abstract compositions created with new stucco coated building envelopes. The storefront has less integrity with the 1936 design; the window mullions added in recent times. However, the canopy and tile surface of these storefronts are original to this design and are a part of the design. Because the current color of the upper façade is inconsistent with the color tones of the remainder of the building, the design does not read well as a unified composition.

This Moderne design, although it has significance within the history of the downtown core area in the 1930s, falls outside the period of significance considered within the historic context prepared for the National Register Downtown Commercial Historic District when adopted eighteen years ago. Although not clear from the reference documents of this district nomination, the building is probably a Non-

contributor to this district as originally conceived and adopted. The design is not significant at the National or California level as a significant representative of the development of modern buildings the United States or California. However, it has local significance and represents early development of this type in the city.

Under the City of San José Evaluation Rating Criteria, based on the analysis in this report, the building would rate 62.582. A rating such as this would indicate that the building would meet the threshold for continued listing on the San José Historic Resources Inventory as a Structure of Merit. The building, as previously noted, would not appear to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historic Resources for individual listing. The building had been identified, as early as 1979 by Urban/Rural Conservation as having significance within the downtown core as a representative of the introduction of modern buildings in the area. Downtown buildings outside the area of the adopted National Register district were surveyed as a part of the Downtown Historic Resources Inventory Update Year 2000, and it was determined that a number of locally significant buildings surround the National Register district and constitute a potential expansion of the boundaries of the district. The subject building at 92-98 South Second Street would probably be a contributor to an expanded district of buildings in the core area with a period of significance that is extended to the mid 1950s, when the downtown began a period of decline.

Potential Impacts

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a “project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment.” In this context, a historic resource is one that is listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.

The California Environmental Quality Act identifies demolition of historic structures as a significant impact on the environment, and modification of historic resources as potentially having significant impacts on the environment. In defining “historic,” the structure must be on or be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a California State Landmark above #770, a California Point of Historic Interest or be listed or eligible for listing on a local register. The threshold for significance, for listing on a local register to be eligible for the California Register, must be established through a public process and can be quantitative or qualitative. In San José, “local register” is defined by the Planning Director as designated or eligibility for designation as a local landmark structure and/or site, or, as a contributor to a local landmark district.

The project being considered for the parcel in which the building at 92-98 South Second Street is located includes demolition of this structure. The building is currently listed as a Contributor to the National Register Downtown Commercial Historic District, although this listing may be in error. If it were determined that in fact it is a Contributor in this district, then demolition would constitute a significant effect on the environment as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act. Because it is believed that this is not the case, and that the building was listed in error, then clarification of this status of the building as it is viewed within existing environmental laws would resolve the current inconsistency in its status.

The building, however, is locally significant within the history of the downtown core in an expanded period of historical significance through the early 1950s. The building would appear to be potentially a contributor to a local district if established, with boundaries as recommended in the Downtown Historic

Resources Inventory Year 2000, as accepted by the San José City Council in the early summer of 2001. Presently, the City of San José has not designated the area within the boundaries of the National Register Downtown Commercial Historic District as a local landmark district. If the City were to initiate proceedings of a local landmark district, and include the subject property as a contributor within that district, then adoption of this designation would place the building on a “local register” as defined the criteria of the California Register of Historic Resources. Demolition, or significant alteration to the structure at 92-98 South Second Street would then constitute a significant effect on the environment.

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