

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

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI # \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 6 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) San Jose Day Nursery

P1. Other Identifier : None

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted \*a. County Santa Clara  
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad San Jose West Date 1980 photorevised T 7S; R 1E; Mt. Diablo B.M.

c. Address 33 N. Eighth Street City San Jose Zip 95112

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 10s; 598878mE/ 4133199mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

Assessor's Parcel Number: 467-18-086,

west side of N. Eighth Street 137.5 feet north of E. Santa Clara Street.

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

San Jose Day Nursery is a childcare facility located on a large interior urban lot of about half an acre that spans the block between N. Seventh and Eighth Streets 137 feet north of E. Santa Clara Street. Located on the site is a two-story wood frame building, which houses the primary functional aspects of the children's nursery, and an ancillary one-story children's play room along the N. Seventh Street frontage. Between these two buildings is located a large play area containing equipment and other designed activity spaces.

The primary building, constructed in 1936, is Spanish Eclectic in style, and is representative of the latter part of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural movement in California. Many residential buildings were designed in California during the 1920s and 30s within this revival style, the prominence of the building type fading by the beginning of World War II. Other commercial or quasi-commercial buildings, such as that designed for the Day Nursery, also conformed to this style, primarily as a means of giving residential character to non-residential buildings.

(Continued on page 4, DPR523L, continuation sheet)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP15. Education

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



\*P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

View from northeast, 7/9/02

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic  Prehistoric  Both

1936 / CSJ Permit #3870

\*P7. Owner and Address:

San Jose Day Nursery  
33 N. Eighth Street  
San Jose CA 95112

\*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)

F. Maggi / D. Wirt  
Archives & Architecture  
1901 S. Bascom Ave. Ste. 1530  
Campbell, CA 95008

\*P9. Date Recorded: 7/10/02

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)  
Intensive

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none".)

None

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

DPR 523J (1/95)

\*Required information

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BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

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\*NRHP Status Code 3

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder)

**B1. Historic Name:** San Jose Day Nursery  
**B2. Common Name:** San Jose Day Nursery  
**B3. Original use:** Childcare facility **B4. Present Use:** same  
**\*B5. Architectural Style:** Spanish Eclectic  
**\*B6. Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Constructed 1936. A one-story addition enclosed the porch in 1943. One-story ancillary building/play room constructed circa 1950s. Courtyard enclosed 1961; landscaping late 1980s.

**\*B7. Moved?**  No  Yes  Unknown **Date:** **Original Location:** n/a

**\*B8. Related Features:**

Landscaped children's play yard and related facilities, play room along N. Seventh Street property line.

**B9a Architect:** George S. Kocher/designer **b. Builder:** George S. Kocher

**\*B10. Significance: Theme** Government & Public Services **Area** Downtown San Jose Frame

**Period of Significance** 1923-present **Property Type** child care facility **Applicable Criteria** A,B

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

San Jose Day Nursery, a non-profit corporation, constructed the building and related childcare facility at 33 N. Eighth Street in 1936 and has continued to operate the nursery to the present time. The organization was founded in San Jose in 1916 through the initiative of Roxie Dodge, wife of floor finisher Charles R. Dodge, and Ella A. Franzen, wife of janitor Andrew Franzen. They conceived of the idea and appealed to local civic clubs and churches. Mrs. Dodge had begun the drive to establish the nursery in 1914, shortly after her arrival in the area from Los Angeles. At that time, Sisters of Holy Family was the only childcare facility in operation locally, and was at capacity, leaving few options for childcare for working women. Dodge and Franzen joined with former school superintendent Agnes Howe in 1914 to stage a two-week bazaar to promote the concept. Mrs. Nellie Bardwell Thompson, president of the Woman's Civic League, later obtained the league's endorsement and organized a committee to start the project. She secured at no charge the Sarah Cooper Kindergarten building at 254 N. Second Street, then under ownership of the Board of Education. The committee established a foundation, which was endowed with membership dues, donations, and sales of aprons and handiwork. The nursery formally began operation June 1, 1916, with 20 charter directors and a membership of 30. Mrs. Mary A. Miller was the initial matron, and Mrs. Josephine Rand Rogers was the first president.  
(Continued on page 4, DPR523L)

**B11. Additional Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP38. Women's Property

**\*B12. References:**

*San Jose Mercury/News*  
History of Day Nursery is Told. 3/21/1922  
Breaking Ground for Day Nursery. 5/5/1936  
Early history of Day Nursery in S.J. Recalled. 5/10/36  
Day Nursery Adds a New Ingredient. 6/17/1962  
Kocher, George S. Obituary. February 25, 1988  
San Jose Day Nursery. *History of the San Jose Day Nursery 1916-1950.* 1950  
Sawyer, Eugene. *History of Santa Clara County.* 1922

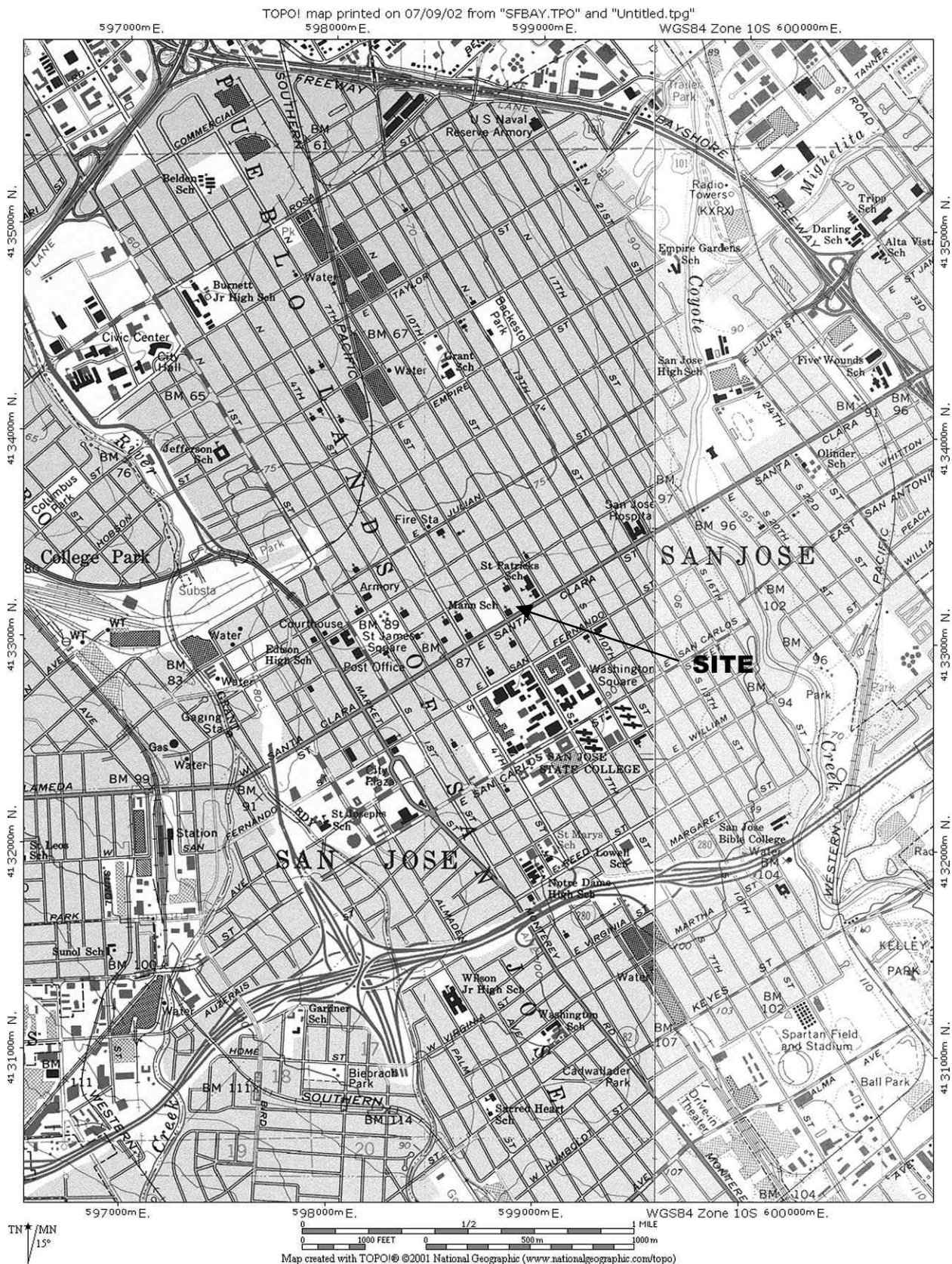
**B13. Remarks:** Proposed renovation

**\*B14. Evaluator:** Franklin Maggi

**\*Date of Evaluation:** 7/10/2002

(This space reserved for official comments.)

See next page



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\*Resource Name of # (Assigned by recorder) San Jose Day Nursery

\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi / Diana Wirt

\*Date 7/10/02

Continuation  Update

*(Continued from DPR523a, Section P3a.)*

The two-story volume of the front of the structure adjacent to Eighth Street is L-shaped with the main entry within a notch along the right side of the façade. This portion of the building contains an entry hall with staircase, schoolrooms and meeting spaces, as well as administration areas. The front door is through an arched opening, the original wood door with large glass panel still remaining. The entry patio is surrounded by a stucco-clad wall, a mission tile covered feature rising above the main opening, and a small arched "children's" entry set to the right (not original to the building). The roof is hipped on all sides except the rear, and covered with mission tiles. The roofing extends over open rafter-tails and is framed with gutters.

The rear portion of the building is one-story in height and contains a large activity space. An additional activity space is located to the south of this room, which was created with an addition to this area in the 1940s. The original openings between these two rooms remains, but are covered over with furring on the addition side.

Metal casement windows punctuate the rough-textured stucco exterior. These openings vary from simple couplets to semi-arched casements. A building protrusion at the rear is gabled and its fenestration larger and more institutional, but matches the metal sash of the rest of the building.

The ancillary playroom building is vernacular in style, and frames a designed play area, which fills the space between the two buildings. The buildings and site, although subject to intense use over the last 79 years, remains in a well maintained state.

*(Continued from DPR523b, Section B10.)*

The first location operated both day and night, but the facility was short lived, as an afternoon fire damaged the building. By 1918, the day nursery was temporarily located in a building at 518 S. Second Street. By 1919, the use had been moved to 165 Devine Street in a building that had previously been occupied by the Washburn School, a private academy, where it remained until 1923. At the new Devine Street site, operations converted to day only, and in March of 1922 the Day Nursery was formally incorporated. Prior to its move to the present site, Mrs. A. Nettie Pew had become matron. Mrs. Pew, a native of Minnesota, had previously run a nursery at Hunt Bros. Cannery in Campbell from 1914-1921. Later, affectionately referred to as Aunt Nettie, she remained as superintendent through the building program until 1941, her successor being Mildred F. McMurry.

Early support for the development of the day nursery came from District 2 county supervisor Albert Lester Hubbard, who saw the service as a means of helping single mothers find work and be self-supportive, while avoiding becoming dependents of the county. Occurring during World War I, establishment of the nursery coincided with similar initiatives nationwide related to working women. Although Santa Clara County may not have been as supportive as desired early on, an influential board of directors provided strong leadership during the 1920s and secured the present property. The 1922 grant deed for the N. Seventh Street property lists the trustees as William G. Alexander (a prominent banker and President of the Keystone Company, who served on numerous civic organizations and was a president of the statewide YMCA), Leonard D. Edwards (Manager of San Jose Abstract and Title), Abbie S. Borchers (wife of Borchers Bros. Manager Roberty Borchers), Kate Fehren (wife of real estate and insurance broker Fred Fehren), and Susan Hablutzel (wife of Dr. Hablutzel) (Book 556 of Deeds page 508). The vacant lot cost \$3250. (It was deeded to San Jose Day Nursery in 1932.) An existing Victorian era residential building, which had been located at Santa Clara and Eighth Street, owned by the Fikes family, was bought at auction for \$1340, and relocated to the Seventh Street site and renovated for the nursery. The Day Nursery officially began operations at the present site on October 18, 1923. In 1926, title to the east half of the present site was obtained for \$7000, largely through the personal efforts of Edith Alexander. Edith Alexander had been the first to envision the present facility. She remained in a leadership capacity to bring the project to completion, the groundbreaking taking place May 5, 1936 and the formal dedication occurring December 10th of that same year. The building committee also included Abbie Borchers, Cornelia Ahlman (wife of City Treasurer and Bank of America South First Street Branch manager Harold Ahlman), and Mrs. Orrie C. Boomer. William G. Alexander (Edith's husband), President of the Board of Trustees, conducted the dedication ceremonies to an audience of 300 supporters. *(continued next page)*

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Continuation  Update

(Section B10. continued)

Walter L. Bachrodt, Superintendent of Schools, provided the address. The groundbreaking shovel was handled by 87-year old Mrs. Marie H. Herrmann, an early organizer of the day nursery and wife of the late civil engineer and surveyor A. T. Herrmann, and Mrs. Alexander. Susanna C. Hablutzel (who was a daughter of pioneer physician Benjamin Cory along with her sister Edith Alexander) was President of the Board of Directors at the time of dedication. Also speaking was San Jose City Manager Charles B. Goodwin, Judge Percy O'Connor, and contractor George S. Kocher. A special tribute was paid to local developer T. S. Montgomery, who was cited for numerous gifts to the Day Nursery. At the time of the dedication of the building, daily attendance was 75 children ages 1-10. Primary operating support came from the Community Chest.

The directors (and later Junior Board and auxiliary) had begun a fund-raising program in earnest in the early 1920s, both for the operational support of the facility and for the future building program. From about 1923 on, the Mercury Herald was regularly covering social fund-raising efforts of the organization, which staged teas, theatrical performances, garden tours, and fashion shows. Edith Alexander also led a direct-mail campaign to garner financial donations and bequeaths from her friends and associates, an effort that was memorialized by a poem by her sister Susan at the building dedication. The fund-raising program has continued into the present, with well-known events such as the annual Willow Glen Lifestyles House Tour.

The design and construction of the present 1936 building at 33 N. Eighth Street was under direction of contractor George Smout Kocher and cost \$35,000 (Permit #3870). Kocher, a native of San Jose, born in 1897, had a long career in the region as a designer/contractor, later moving to Saratoga where he was a civic leader. Following the construction of the new building in 1936, the earlier building fronting on N. Seventh Street was used for a time as a music school, and then demolished in 1944. In 1943, a one-story addition was constructed on the south side of the building. This work done by E. A. Hathaway (Permit #1937A.) By 1951, the Day Nursery was using the full property to Seventh Street and had constructed an ancillary building, called the Alexander Play House, along the southern property line. By the 1950s, the facility was licensed for a maximum of 115 children, and had a yearly day usage of over 23,000 children/days. By 1961, a larger playroom had been constructed along the westerly property line, adjacent to N. Seventh Street. In 1962, a courtyard was added, designed by landscape architect McDonald Smith. In the late 1980s, a playground renovation took place, designed by Candice Stein and funded by the Cowell Foundation, which was dedicated in 1992. At the present time, the City of San Jose has issued a permit under Planning Adjustment AD02-01-044 to renovate the interior. Some exterior renovations will also take place, including the provision of handicapped access facilities and replacement of the fenestration with insulating glass.

San Jose Day Nursery is not listed on any national, state, or local registers as an historical resource. The property is significant for its association with the historic patterns related to the early evolution of children's daycare facilities and more specifically issues related to working women. The present building reflects in a tangible way this association, it both appearing and functioning as originally conceived by the early organizers of the Day Nursery, and it continues to meet the needs of the community as was originally intended. Minor additions and alterations that have taken place in the past have been compatible with the ability of the historic resource to convey the feeling of the original facility. It retains a high level of integrity to its original construction.

The property is also significant because of its association with numerous individuals who have contributed to the evolution and management of the facility, their contributions spanning from the first occupation of the property in 1923 to the present time. Many of these people are prominent for reasons other than the Day Nursery, but gave their time, energy, and financial resources to help further the greater good of the community. The great majority of them, however, are recognized in the broader community for their contributions to this institution, and its continued existence remains a reflection of their personal contributions to society.

For the reasons stated above, San Jose Day Nursery would appear to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B.

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\*Recorded by Franklin Maggi / Diana Wirt

\*Date 6/10/2002  Continuation  Update



View of rear of building / F.Maggi, July 9, 2002



View of play area looking southwest towards playroom / F.Maggi, July 9, 2002