

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Market-Almaden Conservation Area

D1. Historic Name: Market-Almaden neighborhood **D2. Common Name:** Market-Almaden neighborhood

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

The residential area known as the Market-Almaden neighborhood was historically populated by a large concentration of local German-American residents at the turn of the twentieth century. The existing residential neighborhood remains a visible reminder of this historic residential development pattern within the development of the larger downtown community. It exists today as a small collection of historic houses that have similar architectural character, many of them qualifying individually for the San Jose Historic Resources Inventory based on the quality of design. The neighborhood has the feeling of a distinct place within the larger downtown area, largely due to encroaching new development at its boundaries. It is primarily a single-family residential neighborhood with houses modest in scale, similar in size, and with quality of detail. Contributors to the district include all residential structures constructed prior to 1940 that have maintained a basic level of integrity to their original design.

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

The proposed Market-Almaden Conservation Area encompasses portions of four blocks in the downtown core area. The historic residential properties are bounded as follows:

- Northerly edge - rear of properties on Balbach Street;
- Easterly edge - rear of properties on South Market Street;
- Southerly edge - Interstate 280;
- Westerly edge - South Almaden Avenue.

Within this general area, commercial properties, vacant properties, and properties with extant structures built since 1940 are non-contributing to the proposed conservation area.

***D5. Boundary Justification:**

The district boundaries are defined by the extant of contiguous residential structures in the neighborhood that are framed by commercial uses to the east and Interstate 280 to the south. Residential properties that lie to the west of the district across South Almaden Avenue are not included within the proposed conservation area, as these properties are designated transitional within the adopted Market-Almaden Neighborhood Improvement Plan and will likely be subject to redevelopment. Properties that are adjacent to the Balbach Street right-of-way are also excluded, even though some extant historic buildings exist along this street. While they are consistent with the historical development of the area, they are no longer integrated into the cohesive neighborhood fabric that is evident in the main portions of the district.

***D10. Significance: Theme** Architecture and Shelter **Area** Downtown San Jose
Period of Significance Circa 1880s-1940 **Property Type** Residential **Applicable Criteria** None

(Discuss district's importance in terms of its historical context as defined by theme, period of significance, and geographic scope. Also address the integrity of the district as a whole.)

The Market-Almaden neighborhood is in the southwestern quarter of the original San Jose city limits established in 1850. Although residential development began in the Market-Almaden area as early as the 1850s, it was not until the 1880s that residential development began in earnest. The area was initially occupied by persons of Mexican descent, some of whom had been forced south from their neighborhoods in the old pueblo areas by development pressures. Families with Hispanic surnames were still a recognizable community in this area until the early twentieth century.

A large portion of the area south of downtown and west of Market Street eventually became known as Goosetown, perhaps because of the *acequia* pond and the marshy character of the area, which attracted migrating waterfowl. This area was largely inhabited by new immigrants and members of the lower economic working classes, which is reflected in the small vernacular houses that abound in the area.
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***D7. References:**

See continuation sheet DPR523L, page 4.

***D8. Evaluator:** Franklin Maggi

***Date:** August 4, 2004

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While "Goosetown" has been memorialized locally as an ethnic Italian neighborhood, nationwide the reference has also been associated with nineteenth century German immigrant neighborhoods. The area in the vicinity of the Market-Almaden neighborhood was populated by the 1860s with German and Irish immigrants who purchased *suertes* owned by the earlier pueblo residents. The area south of Viola Avenue, north of West Reed Street, between South Market Street and Almaden Boulevard was largely an ethnic German neighborhood during the years that John Balbach initially subdivided his acreage. Several German businesses were located in or adjacent to this area, including Scherrer and Hartman's Eagle Brewery, Renzel's grocery store (the foundation of Keystone), and Tischer's Soap Works; or major German American business owners lived in the neighborhood, including Balbach and Greeninger, the carriage manufacturers; Dietz and Dittus, the butchers; Gerhard and Broedel, the blacksmiths; Kuchenbeiser, the iron worker; Kocher and Blauer, the jewelers; Biebrach, the baker; Rothermal, the capitalist, etc. The German Turn Verein Hall was located on South First Street, between San Carlos and San Salvador Streets.

Goosetown is best known as the ethnic neighborhood of the Italians from the late 1890s to World War II, and is more generally centered on the larger area from the Market-Almaden neighborhood south to the Cottage Grove area near Alma Street. The exact boundaries of Goosetown are not well defined. Italian immigrants in small numbers were occupying the Market-Almaden area as early as 1870, including Salvatori Landucci, the produce peddler; and Cesar Piatti and F. Pozzo, general merchandise merchants. Caesar Piazzini was one of the earliest Italians in the area, marrying Liberata Cesena, widow of William Fisher after his death. The newly arrived Italians in the 1890s were quick to make Goosetown their own, extending their old River/St. John Streets neighborhood south along the eastern bank of the Guadalupe River to at least Alma Street. This ethnic community soon dominated the area that had previously been primarily occupied by the German and Irish immigrants. Italian businesses in the area included bakeries, best known and still in operation is the Roma Bakery (1911), at the southwest corner of Grant and Almaden Boulevard just to the south of the Market-Almaden neighborhood. As the initial waves of immigration faded, the neighborhood, like other ethnic neighborhoods in the core area was soon to become multi-ethnic as it remains today.

Subdivision History

A number of subdivisions have been created in the Market-Almaden neighborhood since the first formal survey of the city in 1847. The following paragraphs discuss each of the major subdivisions or additions to the City of San José, which will aid in the understanding of chronological development of the neighborhood.

Suertes Subdivisions - Although within the city limits by 1850, the neighborhood was not included in the first American surveys of 1847 and 1848, but were included on the Bestor map of the pueblo surveyed in 1849. At this time, the area was land that had been earlier divided into *suertes* or garden plots during the pueblo period. Several *suertes* remained in their early configurations established under Mexican authority and still owned by Hispanic owners, and others had been acquired by recent American settlers. At the time of the Bestor survey, Market Street was realigned slightly east of its original location, cutting through a portion of the Reed Addition to the east. These lands were gradually subdivided beginning in the 1850s.

John Balbach Lots - In 1863, John Reed surveyed a portion of the property of John Balbach that was located on the north and south sides of Balbach Street between Market Street and Orchard Avenue (now Almaden Avenue). Originally, this was the Sepulveda *suerte*. He subdivided the parcel into 16 lots in 1867, of which ten were on the south side of the street in the Market-Almaden SNI Planning Area. The lots were about 50 varas square and included two narrow lots facing Market Street. The lots were further subdivided later on an individual basis for residential use. Few houses remain from the early subdivision, and the Balbach Street frontage now contains a mix of uses and is presently in transition. Early residents in the area were predominantly German immigrants or of German descent.

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Cesena Addition - The Cesena Addition is located west of Market Street and bounded by the historic alignment of Canoas Creek on the west, Colfax Street on the north (West Reed Street) and Grant Street on the south. Francisco Cesena was the owner of the property in 1849, and the property was subdivided in 1870. The Cesena subdivision was well developed by the 1880s; however, the area was bisected roughly along the alignment of Grant Street when Interstate 280 was constructed. Extant properties dating from the 1880s to 1930s remain on the south side of West Reed Street.

Balbach Addition No. 2 - Formerly owned by Issac Branham, John Balbach purchased this area in the 1850s and located his home site on Market Street. In 1888, this tract was subdivided and called Balbach Addition No. 2. Located on the north side of Pierce Avenue and the east side of Orchard Street (now Almaden Avenue), the subdivision consisted of eighteen lots in addition to the home and business site of John Balbach at the northwest corner of Market Street and Pierce Avenue. The residential development in this area dates to the late 1880s to the early 1920s, with the exception of some newer homes built in the recent past.

Herrmann & Pierce Addition - The 18-lot Herrmann & Pierce Addition lies on the south side of Pierce Avenue between Market Street and the alignment of the old Canoas Creek bed, which crossed Pierce Avenue about 160 feet west of Almaden Avenue (previously Orchard Street) (Herrmann Bros. 1888b). This subdivision consists of the *suerte* previously owned by Pedro Cepeda; his adobe was located at the southwest corner of Market Street and Pierce Avenue. The residential development in this area dates to the late 1880s to the early 1920s.

Baltz and Hendey Subdivisions - These two small subdivisions on both sides of West William Street were surveyed by H. Dittrick in 1889.

Mrs. Mary Scheller tract - The area to the southwest of the historic Canoas Creek alignment that is presently located in the southwest corner of the Market-Almaden SNI Planning Area is a part of historic Gulnac's Island. It was included in the real estate holdings of Christian Freyschlag by 1853, who retained ownership of the property until the mid-1860s when it was sold to Louis Scheller. Scheller had the area surveyed sometime prior to 1876, and the area became known as the Scheller Addition or Schellers Island. By 1884, Sanborn maps show that some home sites had developed along Orchard Street. In 1899, Scheller's widow Mary had the area re-surveyed, then known as the Scheller Island Tract and the Mary A. Scheller Tract, most of which is now within Interstate 280 right-of-way.

The Market-Almaden neighborhood has a clear historical architectural character, but does not appear to adequately represent the historic pattern of development in the area to the level of significance required by the Historic District definition in the City of San José Historic Preservation ordinance. The contemporary residential neighborhood no longer is representative of the larger historic ethnic German or Italian neighborhoods that were nearby, and the mix of historic architecture is too diverse to clearly convey a specific and definable period of development within the larger evolution of the city.

Although the neighborhood boundaries are clearly understandable, the boundaries are defined by modern development and are not associated with the overall patterns of development of the neighborhood and its historical significance. The historic residential neighborhood once extended over a larger area to the north, west, and south. In some ways, the encircling of the neighborhood by the convention center, Interstate 280, and the expanded Almaden Boulevard, creates a modern frame around the remaining historic resources that establishes the area's identifiable geographical character.

The Market-Almaden neighborhood has a geographically definable area of urban character and possesses an identifiable character embodied primarily in its pre-1940 residential architecture; thus, the area meets the definition of an area eligible to be a San José Conservation Area. The residential neighborhood was generally developed between the 1880s and about 1940, and has remained largely unchanged over the last 70 years except for two residential infill projects that occurred in the last ten years. The area also is in the public consciousness as an aesthetically pleasing concentration of historic architecture, bound by definable limits of physical development. The existing commercial area along Market Street, as well as encroaching development on the other three sides of the neighborhood have created definable limits to the area that, through contrast, enhance its sense as a historic place.

*Recorded by Franklin Maggi

*Date August 4, 2004 Continuation Update

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Anonymous

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1889a Map of the Baltz Subdivision. Santa Clara County Recorded Map D:111.

1889b Map of the Henley Subdivision in the City of San José. Santa Clara County Recorded Map D:133.

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