

Chula-Abbey Early Residential Historic District

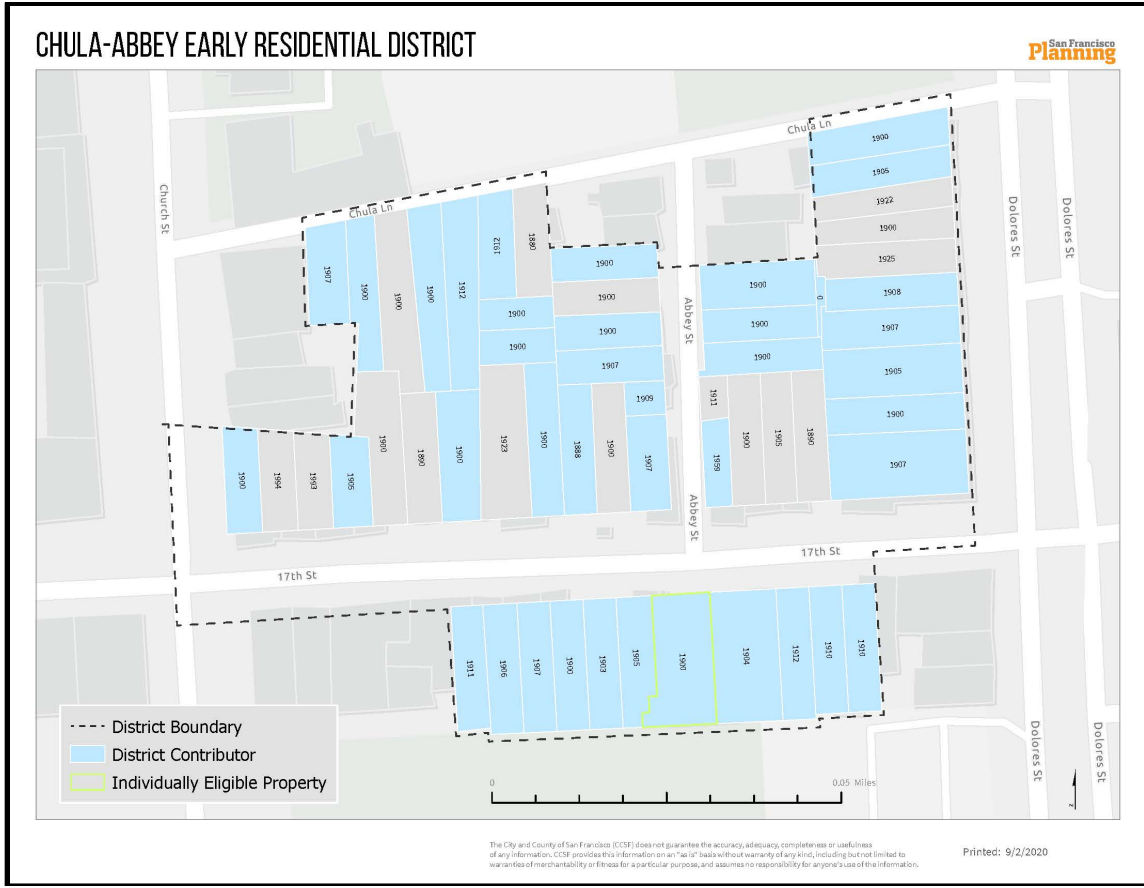
Identified Eligible for Listing in the California Register of Historical Resources



Prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department
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D R A F T

This historic district summary has been compiled as part of an Historic Context Statement development and neighborhood Survey sponsored by the Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association. Contextual information focused on the social, architectural, and development history of the neighborhood can be found in the *Mission Dolores Historic Context Statement*.



Chula-Abbey Early Residential Historic District

The Chula-Abbey Early Residential Historic District is comprised of two blocks centered at the intersection of Chula Lane (formerly Church Street) and Abbey Street (formerly Alemany Street) within the Mission Dolores neighborhood of San Francisco. The Mission Dolores neighborhood is located within the City’s larger Mission District and is generally bounded by Valencia Street to the east, Sanchez Street and Church Street on the west, 20th Street on the south, and Market Street and the Central Freeway on the north. Dolores Street, a wide boulevard that bisects the neighborhood, forms the district’s eastern boundary. Chula Lane is a small side-street running midblock east-west from Dolores and Church streets between 16th Street and 17th Street. Abbey Street runs midblock north-south between Chula Lane and 17th Street and forms the eastern boundary of the district.

- 35 Contributing Properties
- 19 Non-Contributing Properties

Boundary: The boundaries of the Chula-Abbey Historic District is comprised of 58 parcels including those properties on the south side of Chula Lane between its intersections with Church Street and Dolores Street with the exception of a concentration of properties located at the intersection of Chula Lane and Abbey Street. The district also includes properties on both sides of Abbey Street between Chula Lane and 17th Street, properties on the west side of Dolores Street between Chula Lane and 17th Street, and properties on the north side of 17th Street between Dolores and Church streets.

Period of Significance: The Period of Significance is comprised of two periods, 1865-1880 and 1907-1912, the years of construction for contributing properties within the district.

Historical Resource Status Code - District: 3CD, Eligible for California Register of Historical Resources as a contributor to a California Register Historic District through survey evaluation.

District Eligibility: Criterion 1 (Events)- District is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

Criterion 3 (Architecture)- District embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

District Contributors: 35 contributing properties (65%) and 19 non-contributing properties (35%)

Contributing Properties

3615-3619 17th Street
3620-3624 17th Street
3621 17th Street
3623-3625 17th Street
3634-3638 17th Street
3639 17th Street
3640 17th Street
3643-3647 17th Street
3650 17th Street
3653 17th Street
3656 17th Street
3657-3661 17th Street
3663-3665 17th Street
3666 17th Street
3667-3669 17th Street
3680-3682 17th Street
3696-3698 17th Street
23-27 Abbey Street
28-32 Abbey Street
31 Abbey Street
34-40 Abbey Street
37 Abbey Street
23-27 Abbey Street
51 Chula Lane

Non-Contributing Properties

3626 17th Street
3627-3633 17th Street
3630-3632 17th Street
3646 17th Street
3649-3651 17th Street
3658-3664 17th Street
3670-3674 17th Street
3676-3686 17th Street
3684-3688 17th Street
3690-92-94 17th Street
13-19 Abbey Street
16-18 Abbey Street
22-24 Abbey Street
41-43 Abbey Street
49 Chula Lane
73 Chula Lane
366 Dolores Street
354-356 Dolores Street
358-360 Dolores Street

61 Chula Lane
67 Chula Lane
75-77 Chula Lane
81-83 Chula Lane
344 Dolores Street
348-352 Dolores Street
368-370 Dolores Street
372-376 Dolores Street
378-384 Dolores Street
386-390 Dolores Street
392-398 Dolores Street

Historical Resource Status Code-Individual: 3CB, 2 contributing buildings were also found to be eligible for individual listing on the California Register of Historical Resources through survey evaluation under Criterion 3 (Architecture).

Individual Eligibility: N/A

Summary of Significance

The Chula-Abbey Early Residential Historic District is significant as a representative collection of residential buildings associated with the “Early Neighborhood Development” theme within the Mission Dolores neighborhood, defined in the *Mission Dolores Neighborhood Context Statement* as 1864-1906.¹ The district is also significant under the “1906 Earthquake and Reconstruction” theme defined as 1906-1915.² Eligible properties within the Chula-Abbey Historic District were constructed between 1865-1880 with some properties dating from the post-1906 Earthquake and Fire reconstruction era. This collection of buildings represents the early small-scale residential and agricultural development patterns of the Mission Dolores neighborhood and its associated architectural styles and building typologies as well as construction methods and residential architecture indicative of the post-1906 reconstruction period.

The neighborhood was originally platted into large city blocks in the 1850s and lay within a vital transportation corridor. *El Camino Real*, also known as the Old San Jose Road and/or the old Mission Road, ran along the western side of the valley near what is now partly covered by Dolores Street and was commemorated as California Historical Landmark No. 784. The road connected the southern peninsula to the Mission and Presidio and formed the northeast boundary of the Rancho San Miguel during the Mexican period. It continued to be an important transportation route throughout the late nineteenth century. By the 1860s, farmers established a number of large commercial garden plots and nurseries along this corridor and sold their goods to the residents in the urban core.³ Street grading had also begun in the

¹ *Mission Dolores Historic Context Statement*, 2020, 29.

² *Ibid.*, 43.

³ Judith Taylor and Harry Morton Butterfield, *Tangible Memories: Californians and Their Gardens, 1800-1950* (Philadelphia, 2003).

district by the 1860s, and the city's first streetcar line extended along Valencia Street to 25th Street in 1863, which the San Francisco-San Jose railroad line bought later that year.⁴

With this, the Mission Dolores neighborhood became denser in population. During this decade the population of the 11th Ward, which encompassed the neighborhood, rose from 3,000 in 1860 to 23,000 in 1870.⁵ By the 1870s, much of the larger Mission District west of Mission Street was well populated with residential buildings, while comparatively much of the land west of Dolores Street remained not as densely developed.⁶ Photographs and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps dating from the 1880s reveal most development concentrated around the site of the Mission Dolores complex and becoming less dense moving outward. Chula Lane was historically known as Church Lane until at least 1914 and formed the southern boundary of the Mission Dolores cemetery.⁷

The earliest Sanborn Map of Assessor Block 3566 was published in 1889 and shows eight properties on the south side of Church Lane. The subject block at the time was densely developed with single-family residences and some ancillary structures, a few stores along Dolores Street, as well as a wood and coal yard, windmill, and water tanks to serve the neighborhood.⁸ The block south of 17th Street appears less dense with residential development and contains some industrial and commercial use. By 1899, much of the industrial uses in proximity to Church Lane have been replaced by housing with some vacant lots still available on the subject block. The 1914 Sanborn shows the street name changes of Church Lane (Chula Lane) and Alemany Street (Abbey Street) and indicates all previously constructed properties are extant with some new infill construction on vacant lots including the property at 61 Chula Lane. A small one-story structure appears on the lot currently occupied by 51 Chula Lane with no address. The lot was previously occupied by a stable that was demolished to allow for the current property to be constructed.⁹

The properties along Chula Lane between Church Street and Abbey Street are a linear grouping of smaller scale dwellings that stand out amongst the many larger row-houses and flats that comprise much of the rest of the neighborhood. The low-scale, freestanding buildings indicate intentions by the builders and residents over time (from the late nineteenth century through the turn-of-the-century) to maintain a less urban setting on Chula (formerly Church) Lane which is located directly south of the historic Mission Dolores parcel, away from the more heavily-travelled corridors of the neighborhood. In addition, these modest cottage buildings suggest a historic working-class character, and may also be associated with a specific cultural or ethnic population that originally formed an enclave. The 1894 Block Book and city directory research indicates residents of the subject block included German, Irish, and English working-class families.¹⁰ Occupations include an expressman, teamster, and land developer.

The period of development following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire within the Mission Dolores neighborhood is characterized by an increase in multi-family development, particularly with the construction of apartment

⁴ Godfrey, *Neighborhoods in Transition*, 144.

⁵ The 11th Ward was a political division within the city governing City/County elections and representation. It encompassed most of the Mission District. San Francisco Planning Department, "Inner Mission North 1853-1943 Context Statement, 2005," 21.

⁶ Map of the City of San Francisco, 1874.

⁷ The 1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show this street name change.

⁸ 1889 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol 3., 69.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Handy Block Book of San Francisco*, Hicks-Judd Company, 1894, 409.

buildings and flats in various architectural styles including Edwardian, Classical Revival, and Queen Anne.¹¹ Though much of the Mission Dolores neighborhood survived undamaged from the 1906 Earthquake and resulting fires, reconstruction efforts spurred development in the neighborhood as population again increased.¹² As the larger Mission area grew in population, long sought-after neighborhood improvements, including transportation networks, roadwork, the creation of public parks, and beautification measures were all realized.¹³

Character-Defining Features

Buildings within the Eligible Chula-Abbey Historic District share common features that contribute to the overall architectural significance of the District. Early lot sizes range from 23'-30'x 31'-142', an indicator of their early subdivision as properties constructed post-1906 within the neighborhood display more uniform, larger lot sizes. Buildings retain a uniform front setback despite the variation in lot sizes with some properties containing larger private rear yards. The District is comprised of both single-family and multi-family buildings of a variety of architectural styles including vernacular, Italianate, Classical Revival, and Queen Anne.



67 Chula Lane



23-27 Abbey Street



75-77 Chula Lane

Single-Family Early Residential


Properties dating from the “Early Neighborhood Development 1864-1906” period are unified by their common form, massing, and materiality that are representative of the early residential and agricultural

¹¹ *Mission Dolores Historic Context Statement*, 2020, 43.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

development of the Mission Dolores neighborhood. Character-defining features of the properties within the district dating from this period include:

- Small, one-story over- integrated garage or two-story massing
- Horizontal wood siding
- Front-facing gable roof or flat front with Italianate style parapet roof form
- Original wood double-hung windows with ogee lugs Architectural ornament including brackets, applied columns, decorative wood shingles, and façade ornamentation referencing a specific architectural style 
- Front setback/ location on lot in reference to street
- Central or offset primary entrance



368-370 Dolores Street



3643-3647 17th Street

Multi-Family Reconstruction Residential

Properties dating from the “1906 Earthquake and Reconstruction 1906-1915” period are unified by their larger scale, form, and massing to meet the growing population of the Mission Dolores neighborhood. Character-defining features of the properties within the district dating from this period include:

- Two or three-story over-integrated garage or three-story massing
- Horizontal painted wood
- Front-facing gable roof or projecting cornice
- Original wood double-hung windows with ogee lugs
- Single or paired projecting bay(s) at front facade
- Front setback/location on lot in reference to street

- Offset entrance with original stair configuration

Integrity

Contributing buildings within the Chula-Abbey Historic District have maintained a high-level of integrity overall. While some buildings may exhibit less integrity, they may be included in the District if form is primarily intact, and most original features have been retained. Compatible minor alterations or additions do not impair the building's ability to convey its significance. Please see the *Mission Dolores Historic Context Statement* for more information on assessing integrity. A lower threshold for integrity was applied to these properties and other small vernacular cottages dating from the early development period of the Mission Dolores neighborhood due to their rarity and relationship to the early development of the neighborhood.

District contributors possess their original building form and most original features including wood siding, expressive millwork, applied ornamentation, and roof forms. Most houses have retained their original windows, but some have seen replacements within existing openings. Non-contributing properties were assigned this status due to removal and replacement of original cladding, incompatible insertion of garages, and removal of all or most architectural ornamentation.

Property Inventory

See attached survey spreadsheet.

Bibliography

1874 Map of the City of San Francisco.

1899 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, vol 3.

1914 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Handy Block Book of San Francisco, Hicks-Judd Company, 1894.

Godfrey, Brian. *Neighborhoods in Transition: The Making of San Francisco's Ethnic and Nonconformist Communities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

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