

# Historic Context Statement of the Oceanside A Neighborhood of the Sunset District San Francisco

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*1247-49 46th Avenue*

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## I. Historical Context

The name Oceanside  
The limits of Oceanside  
The time frame of Oceanside

The first permanent settlement in the western reaches of San Francisco, other than those of Native Americans, grew gradually in the most inhospitable part of the outside lands near Ocean Beach and was called "Oceanside."

Various archival sources indicate that the Oceanside neighborhood was that portion of the Sunset District lying west of 37th Avenue, between Lincoln Way and Sloat Boulevard, and that the name was used by residents of the area from the early 1900s until about 1930. After the initial development of the Inner Sunset in the 1880s, the Oceanside was the next area of the Sunset to be developed, bypassing the great, sandy expanses of the middle Sunset. Because the Oceanside was geographically isolated, its early history was distinct from that of the rest of the Sunset, and during its first two decades the neighborhood developed its own character and architectural style. Beginning during the mid-1920s and continuing through the mid-1950s, new rowhouse development gradually linked the Oceanside with the rest of the Sunset, and the area, no longer isolated, lost its distinct identity. Its character has been further eroded by the replacement of many of the Oceanside's early houses by new development.

The oldest houses with high integrity, especially small houses and cottages, have the ability to evoke the Oceanside's early years as a weekend beach retreat and Bohemian community. Dwellings dating from the early period of the Oceanside neighborhood's development (1900-1914) are rare survivors, for only about ten percent of those houses that appear on the 1915 Sanborn maps still stand today, have been relatively little altered, and therefore still retain a high degree of integrity.

Many of these dwellings embody historical patterns, events, and people associated with the artistic, literary, and cultural history of San Francisco. Accordingly, by the criteria of the California Register of Historic Places, these houses possess historical significance.

This Historical Context Statement will present the early history of the Oceanside and its distinctive characteristics as a San Francisco neighborhood. In the evaluations of individual houses in this survey, mention will be made of broad patterns of history, and of how the houses relate to these patterns.

## II. Synthesis of Information

### A. THE SUNSET DISTRICT

Before relating the history of the Oceanside, it is useful to discuss the larger Sunset District and its development. The Sunset District is, geographically, one of the largest neighborhoods in San Francisco. It is bounded by Lincoln Way and Golden Gate Park on the north; by Sloat Boulevard and the Lake Merced area on the south; by the Parnassus Heights, Mount Sutro, Forest Hill, and West Portal neighborhoods on the east, and by the Pacific Ocean on the west.

The Sunset District is one of the San Francisco neighborhoods in that is farthest from downtown. It is separated from the central and eastern parts of the city by the San Miguel Hills, a mountainous ridge formed by Mount Sutro, Twin Peaks, and Mount Davidson. Due to its remoteness and its wandering sand dunes, it developed comparatively late in San Francisco's history. One or two dozen Queen-Anne style houses from the 1890s can be found in the Sunset, and many houses and flats exist from the early 20th century. By and large, however, the great bulk of the Sunset was developed later, from the 1920s through the 1950s by merchant builders such as Henry Doelger, Ray Galli, the Gellert Brothers, and others.



*Sand Dunes of the Sunset.*

lakes. For example, there were fourteen native lakes in the 1000 acres of dunes that now make up Golden Gate Park. The Chain of Lakes and Elk Glen Lake are altered remnants of the once large inter-dune lake system. These inter-dune lakes supported a great diversity of wildlife including grizzly bears, mountain lions, grey foxes, and jackrabbits, as well as migrating and resident birds and waterfowl.

### **Topography and Natural History of the Sunset District<sup>1</sup>**

At the edge of the Pacific Ocean, where wind batters the coast in winter and shifts the sand dunes so that nothing but temporary settlement seemed possible, a small portion of what is now called the Sunset District of San Francisco grew up gradually in the midst of a plant community that held the dunes in place.

The sand dunes characteristic of the area which became the Sunset District were either drifting dunes or stabilized dunes. The drifting dunes lacked vegetation, and the sand was blown from west to east by prevailing winds. The stabilized dunes were covered by deeply rooted dune vegetation such as monkey flower, lizard tail, dune tansy, seaside daisy, and San Francisco wallflower, which stopped the dunes from advancing. In protected gullies among the dunes could be found coast live oaks, arroyo willows, wax myrtle, and California buckeyes.

As late as 15,000 years ago, the sea level was 350 feet lower than it is today. The shoreline of the Pacific Ocean was then near the Farallon Islands. As the climate warmed and the glaciers and polar icecaps melted, the sea level rose. The dunes advanced farther inland and eventually extended all the way across the tip of the peninsula on which San Francisco now sits. The advancing sand dammed rivers and creeks, creating many inter-dune ponds and

### **Early Residents of the Sunset**

The first known residents of the Sunset were George Greene (also spelled "Green") and his family, who claimed land around Stern Grove in the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> In the 1860s several dairy ranches and a pair of gunpowder works were established in the Sunset.<sup>3</sup> For these first residents, the availability of large areas of cheap land, and elbow room between neighbors, was more important than proximity to downtown. Many were squatters who claimed land through pre-emption, although their informal titles were ratified by acts of the state legislature in the mid-1860s. The term "Outside Lands," applied to this large undeveloped western part of the future city, was not just a colorful term; it was the legal description of unplatted ex-Rancho lands post 1856.

A few more residents arrived in the 1870s, when Golden Gate Park was developed. Some of the workers who planted trees in the park, and others who worked at grading H Street (now Lincoln Way), chose to settle in the Sunset.

The 1894 Midwinter Fair in Golden Gate Park attracted substantial numbers of residents to the Sunset district for the first time. The main entrance to the fair was via Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way, in today's Inner

Sunset neighborhood. A few businesses were founded at this intersection to cater to fair-goers. Some home-seekers became acquainted with the Sunset district and, by 1900, about 100 houses had been built in the Inner Sunset area according to the 1900 Sanborn maps.<sup>4</sup>

Some historians assume that a real estate speculator named Aurelius E. Buckingham gave the Sunset its name in the 1880s. Others believe that developer Sol Getz may have named the area, or that a group of builders who met one day at the Little Shamrock bar on Lincoln Way and 9th Avenue may have come up with it. According to Angus McFarlane,<sup>5</sup> a group of early residents formed a new community organization in 1895 and one of the members, Gus Fox, came up with the name *Sunset District Improvement Club*. On October 1, 1895, the name "Sunset" appeared for the first time in a newspaper.<sup>6</sup>

In 1889 Carl Larsen, the owner of the Tivoli Café in downtown San Francisco, bought land on 17th Avenue and started a chicken ranch in order to supply his restaurant with fresh eggs. As his business expanded, he kept buying more chickens and land, becoming by the 1920s one of the largest landowners in the district. He lobbied tirelessly for civic improvements and streetcar service to the Sunset, and donated land for city parks.<sup>7</sup>

By 1910, three distinct communities had formed in the Sunset district: the Inner Sunset, Oceanside, and the Parkside. In the vast area between these three neighborhoods, there existed only a few scattered dwellings and a great expanse of sand. Not until the 1920s -1950s was this area filled in and settled.

### **Tracks Laid and Streets Paved**

The development of the Sunset is closely linked to the grading or pavement of streets and construction of public transit. Due to the natural barrier formed by the San Miguel Hills, streets from downtown to the Sunset were routed around the northern and southern

edge of the high ground, skirting the mountains. Around the turn of the century, the Inner Sunset was accessible from downtown only via the Haight District and then by H Street (now Lincoln Way), Parnassus Avenue, and I (Irving) Street. Several dirt roads ran through Golden Gate Park, all the way to Ocean Beach. They connected with the Great Highway which skirted the Sunset along Ocean Beach from H Street to Sloat Boulevard. Prior to the grading of H Street (Lincoln Way) in 1911, residents of Oceanside had to travel along the beach to the Cliff House and then east along either Pt. Lobos or California Street to Downtown San Francisco.<sup>8</sup>

As early as the 1890s, J (Judah) Street had been graded through to the beach, but after a couple of storms the sand dunes had engulfed it. In 1904, residents of the Oceanside neighborhood lobbied the Board of Supervisors to grade and open H Street (Lincoln Way) from the Inner Sunset to Ocean Beach. Factors in favor of H Street included the fact that Golden Gate Park bordered it to the north and the City would thereby be required to pay for a third of the cost as an adjoining landowner. In addition, because the United Railroads Company maintained tracks in the center of the right-of-way, the company would be required to pay another third of the cost.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, it was not until 1911-13 that H Street was paved, connecting the Oceanside with the rest of the city and spurring further development. On the south side of the Sunset, Sloat Boulevard and Ocean Avenue provided access to downtown and to the peninsula via Mission Street.

The first public transit came to the Sunset neighborhood in 1883, when the Central Pacific Railroad built a steam railroad along H Street (Lincoln Way), from Stanyan Street to Ocean Beach. This route was electrified in 1898 and subsequently operated by the United Railroads Company (a Southern Pacific subsidiary) using standard electric streetcars. From H Street near the Great Highway, the line extended north along the western edge of Golden Gate Park on an elevated trestle to B (now Balboa) Street in the Richmond District. The line also hosted "street sweeping cars,"



*Steam train along H Street.*

that is, electric gondolas that carried “street dirt” (mostly horse manure) to fill in sandy gullies in Golden Gate Park, thus allowing the verdant growth seen there today.

In 1893, a major corporate consolidation of San Francisco's street railways brought together five cable-car lines and most of the city's horse-car lines under the aegis of the Market Street Railway, which, like the later United

Railroads Company, was a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Within the next few years, most of San Francisco's original horse-car lines were converted to electric streetcars. Market Street Railway sold many of the retired horse-car bodies to private individuals. Eventually, many of the car bodies ended up at Ocean Beach, where they were converted to residences, clubhouses, and businesses.

Around 1902, the Market Street Railway started service to the south side of

the Sunset district by establishing the No.12 line which ran from the Ferry Building along Mission Street, Ocean Avenue, and Sloat Boulevard, ending near the beach. In 1907, a cross connection between H Street and Sloat Boulevard was created by the No.17 Line, which ran along 20th Avenue, looped around the just emerging Parkside District, and continued along Sloat Boulevard to the ocean. The developers of the Parkside had heavily



*Car bodies awaiting reuse at what is now 48th Avenue and Judah Street.*



*The Ocean Side House at 2550 Great Highway.*

lobbied for this line which was essential for the growth of that new district.

In 1909, the voters of San Francisco approved a bond issue that marked the beginning of the city-owned Municipal Railway (Muni). Eventually, Muni established several streetcar and bus lines in the Sunset district. The opening of the Twin Peaks Tunnel in 1918 created direct access from downtown to West of Twin Peaks neighborhoods such as St. Francis Wood, Forest Hill, Westwood Park, and Ingleside Terrace with the K and M lines, as well as to the Sunset via the L (Taraval) streetcar line. However, the L line initially ended at 20th Avenue, and it was not until the “Taraval Street Agreement” between United Railroads (the privately owned successor to the Market Street Railway) and Muni that it was extended to 33rd Avenue. The L line became fully operational in early 1923 and went all the way to 46th Avenue.

A second tunnel—the Duboce or Sunset Tunnel, under Buena Vista Park—opened in 1928. The new N line that ran through the tunnel made the commute between the northern part of the Sunset and downtown much faster than the parallel line on Lincoln

Way, which was not as convenient because it required a transfer at Stanyan Street.

“Expansion of Muni to the Sunset was a deliberate act of public policy,” stated Mike Burns, Phillip V. Hoffman, and Rick Laubscher in their article on streetcars in the Sunset. “The investment in tunnels was made knowing Muni’s private competitors couldn’t afford to match it, and would lose competitive advantage.”

## **B. THE OCEANSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD**

### **The Early Oceanside Community**

The first building, and namesake for the future community, was the Ocean Side House,<sup>10</sup> a roadhouse built in 1866 on the Great Highway between what are now Ulloa and Vicente streets. The U. S. Coast Survey map of 1869 shows it surrounded by sand dunes, almost a mile from the nearest building, within an area as isolated as any in San Francisco. It was built by Mr. B.S. Brooks, a land attorney and major landowner in the Sunset who at one point owned 52 blocks of sand dune-covered land near the beach. Convinced that San Francisco’s Ocean Beach was bound to become a lavish seaside resort, Brooks spared no expense on



building the Ocean Side House, borrowing \$40,000 from the Savings and Loan Society to build it. A historic photograph shows that this was a building two stories in height and massive in its footprint, measuring about 155 feet by 115 feet, plus attached wings. A deep, covered porch with Gothic stickwork wrapped around the front of the building.

The Ocean Side House operated more or less continuously for 35 years under a series of proprietors. Brooks lost the Ocean Side House, as well as his 52 acres of beach property, to foreclosure before his death in 1879. Two subsequent owners, Clifton E. Mayne of Los Angeles and George Rayfield of Tucson, Arizona Territory, also had a go but the business hemorrhaged money. In 1902, Rayfield's widow sold the property to Alexander and Ida Russell, who converted it to a residence.<sup>11</sup>

Alexander Russell was a salesman for the Bowers Rubber Company, and later made a living from mining and investments. Ida Russell was known for her interest in Eastern religions. As a result, the Russells became the hosts of Soyen Shaku, a Japanese Zen Buddhist teacher, for nine months in 1905. The lectures he gave on Buddhism in this house may have been the first ever given on a regular basis in the United States. Probably between 1915 and 1919, the Russells built a pagoda south of their house as shown on the 1929 Sanborn Maps. In 1919, after Ida Russell's mysterious death, the main building returned to commercial use as Tait's-at-the-Beach, a popular restaurant and bar. After Tait's closed in 1931 and efforts to revitalize the restaurant were unsuccessful, the building burned in 1940.<sup>12</sup>

Ocean Side House was notable for a number of reasons: it was the first known building in the Oceanside neighborhood; it was the first of several road houses in the area; it played an interesting role in American Buddhist history; and it gave its name to the future Oceanside neighborhood.

### Carville

During the 1890s, a small community began to develop at the western end of the railroad line on H Street, near Ocean Beach. It was known at first as Carville but soon was called Oceanside.

After the Ocean Side House, the next documented dwelling in the Oceanside area was the shack of Col. Charles E. Dailey.<sup>13</sup> Dailey was a Civil War veteran and afterward a government agent in the Arizona Territory, but by 1893 he was in San Francisco and in poor health. In that year, businessman, property owner, and future San Francisco mayor, Adolph Sutro, allowed Dailey to move onto his land at the corner of Lincoln Way and Great Highway. By one report the Colonel lived in an abandoned real estate office; by another, he built his house out of driftwood. Here he lived the last ten years of his life.

By 1895 a cluster of buildings began to form around Dailey's cabin, in the block owned by Adolph Sutro, who was then San Francisco's mayor. Bounded by H Street (Lincoln Way), I (Irving) Street, 48th Avenue, and 49th Avenue (La Playa), this block contained several cast-off horse and cable car bodies that had been sold by the streetcar companies and hauled out to the beach. For \$20 a buyer could have a sturdy streetcar body suitable for any number of reuses. This former rolling stock was adapted by Carville residents in a number of ways, including a women's bicycling clubhouse, an artists' hangout, a vacation cottage for rent, and as permanent residences. Col. Dailey acquired one for use as a refreshment stand and began selling candies, soft drinks, doughnuts, coffee, and cigarettes to beachcombers and bicyclists.

Within a few years, this nascent community spread to other blocks near the ocean. In 1898 the builder Jacob Heyman assembled a number of streetcars into a permanent residence for a client of his. Others followed his example, placing streetcars side-by-side and opening the walls between them, placing them end-to-end to form T-, L-, U-, or even W-shaped houses; and stacking them on top of



each other to make two- and even three-story dwellings. Those who had ambitions as landlords arranged streetcars in neat rows, renting them out. Owners constructed porches and fences to enhance the impression of domesticity and to block the wind-blown sand. If a house was located in a protected hollow amid the dunes, a garden was also possible. If it was located on top of a dune, residents could enjoy a fine view of the ocean, but wind-blown sands swiftly buried any garden. People found that they could have a garden or a view, but not both. Sometimes dwelling exteriors were clad with siding or shingles to disguise their streetcar origins and to protect them from the wind and salt.

In reference to its streetcar origins, the community became known as “Carville,”<sup>14</sup> and attracted a number of residents who enjoyed a “Bohemian” lifestyle. A women’s bicycling club, the Falcons,<sup>15</sup> started with one streetcar as a clubhouse and, when membership increased, added a second. Here the seven married women hosted many social events.<sup>16</sup> Sometimes, reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*,<sup>17</sup> they waded in the ocean, “choosing a moment when the beach is deserted.” Their car, noted the *Chronicle* reporter, “was admirably adapted for entertaining.” Another clubhouse, that of the Fuzzy Bunch, attracted more artists and writers, including the writer Jack London and other notables such as Gelett

Burgess, George Sterling, Ina Coolbrith, and Anna Strunsky.<sup>18</sup>

A few years after Col. Dailey’s death, his refreshment stand became a clubhouse named “La Boheme” for musicians who congregated there. A group of professional men who liked to walk on the beach, the ‘Barefoot Club,’ had a streetcar clubhouse at 46th Avenue and L (Lawton) Street. While the first streetcar houses of 1895 were located near Col. Dailey’s shack on Mayor Sutro’s land, subsequent streetcar houses were built as far south as M (Moraga) Street. All in all, these Carville structures ranged from makeshift to substantial and reflected the unconventional preferences of their Bohemian inhabitants.<sup>19</sup>

The fame of “Carville” was not only spread by local newspapers but was also newsworthy for national publications like *Scientific American*.<sup>20</sup> It was, by all accounts, a singularly eccentric and picturesque place.

The earthquake and fire of 1906 brought the addition of more streetcar houses to Carville. After the disaster, transit companies converted many of their lines from cable cars to electric streetcars, making much of their old rolling stock surplus. Some people who had lost their homes bought the old cable cars and moved them out to Carville, swelling the number of such residences. By about 1910, the



View of Carville.

community stretched from H Street (Lincoln Way) south to M (Moraga) Street. The community also had an Episcopal church called St. Andrews-by-the-Sea. Consisting of three streetcars, it was located on 47th Avenue near I (Irving) Street.

“After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, refugees made permanent homes in the clubhouses and weekend cottages,” wrote Gibbs Adams in the *Overland Monthly*, a literary magazine of the period.<sup>21</sup> “By 1908, Carville had a population of 2,000, as well as “its own stores, restaurants, churches, hotels, its artistic settlement, its colony of prominent musicians from the city, and best of all, its quaint homes, real yet of almost nominal cost.”

Even before the earthquake, however, it was clear that Carville’s days were numbered. Shortly after 1900, people who were attracted to the outer Sunset built conventional wood frame houses amid the converted streetcars. Residents of these houses had another name for the neighborhood, “Oceanside.” Their houses represented a greater financial investment than did the streetcar houses, and perhaps because of this, they were more likely to lobby for street improvements, utilities, and schools. They regarded the streetcar residences as an embarrassment and an impediment to progress. In contrast to the earlier Bohemian residents who enjoyed the area’s isolation and raffish air, the newcomers embraced “progress” in all its guises. A passage from the realty column in the August 16, 1902 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* summarizes the speculative bent of the realtors and many of their customers:

There is no reason why magnificent villas should not be built there, surrounded by beautiful grounds. The sand is no insurmountable obstacle. It is merely a question of supplying the requisite quantities of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash. . . . The leveling and seeding of these blocks and the grading and macadamizing of the streets within the area must, however, be done simultaneously to render its reclamation completely effective. It is thought that the opening up of Twenty-fourth avenue through

the district and the grading and macadamizing of J Street from Eleventh avenue to the ocean will be the first steps toward utilizing this section of the city for residential purposes.<sup>22</sup>

Although not mentioned in the article quoted above, a primary aim of many of the newcomers was to eliminate the converted car houses in order to raise property values and make way for middle-class tract housing. To this end, in 1913, Alexander Russell, president of the Oceanside Improvement Club, secured the permission of Adolph Sutro’s daughter, Emma Sutro Merritt, to clear away the original cluster of Carville houses on her land at Lincoln Way and the Great Highway. As part of the Fourth of July celebration that year, the group torched the houses and trumpeted: “We have taken the car out of Carville” and “Make clean today by sweeping and burning up the debris of yesterday.”<sup>23</sup>

Many other Carville houses still stood in 1915, but few were left by the end of the 1920s. Today only one house made of streetcars, at 1632 Great Highway, is known to remain. Built in 1908 for Minnie Collins, a notary public and photo-journalist,<sup>24</sup> it consists of two streetcars and one horse car raised to a second story level.

A three-story building at 1415-1417 47th Avenue, which originally belonged to early Carville residents Robert and Ida Fitzgerald, once had streetcars within an upper story, but these were removed when the building was remodeled. As Carville historian Natalie Jahraus Cowan has written, “Today, the observer in the old Oceanside district is tempted to see a streetcar in every long, narrow structure and to imagine lines of them hidden in backyards.”<sup>25</sup> It is unknown, however, whether any exist today other than the one at 1632 Great Highway.

### Earthquake Refugee Shacks

The 1906 earthquake and fire left about two-thirds of the population of San Francisco homeless. With private donations, the Red Cross established a relief fund to build about

5,600 small cottages to house many of the homeless. The cottages were placed in parks and open spaces around the city. There was a camp in the Richmond District but none in the Sunset or Oceanside.

By the end of 1906, the City determined that it would no longer maintain the refugee camps, and made the earthquake refugee cottages available for sale, to be removed to privately owned lots. Since the Sunset had plenty of available lots, dozens of refugee shacks were brought there. Often several of these small cottages, which measured only 10 by 14 or 14 by 18 feet, were combined into one dwelling. Such structures provided modest and affordable housing for many years. For example, four shacks at 4329-4331 Kirkham Street survived until 2005, when the property was proposed to be redeveloped.<sup>26</sup> As a result of a community effort led by Woody LaBounty and volunteers from the Western Neighborhoods Project, the cottages were saved and moved to a temporary location at the Zoo. One of the cottages was restored and went on display in downtown San Francisco for the centennial commemoration of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Several dwellings within the Oceanside neighborhood appear to be made up of at least one earthquake cottage and one that has been confirmed as such is the Nels Hagerup Residence at 1218-24 46th Avenue. Built by an accomplished Norwegian-born stevedore and painter, the dwelling was assembled from two cottages in 1907.

### **The Oceanside Neighborhood Name**

Oceanside was widely used as a neighborhood name from at least 1903 until the 1920s, although the Carville name continued to be used to refer to the informal conglomeration of car houses at the beach. The first school was named the Oceanside Primary School and began instruction in 1903. A newspaper article from October 1903 referred to the neighborhood as “what was once Carville, but is now known by the more dignified title of Oceanside.”<sup>27</sup> The old roadhouse, the Ocean Side House, still stood at Great Highway and Vicente, and it may have inspired the neighborhood name. It is also possible that by

moving into the roadhouse in 1902, Alexander and Ida Russell—well-known in the community by then—promoted the use of the name Oceanside.

The number of businesses that were named “Oceanside” attests to the popularity of the name for the neighborhood. In 1905 the Oceanside Electric Light Company built a plant on 47th Avenue near Kirkham Street. In the same year the *Oceanside and Park News* was operating at 48th Avenue and Judah Street. In 1906 or 1907 the Oceanside Pharmacy, owned by Matilda Burns, opened at the northwest corner of 48th Avenue and Judah.<sup>28</sup> In 1908, the Ocean Side Bakery and Ocean Side Realty Company came to the neighborhood. At about this time Harry D. Rupp named his butcher shop at 1446 48th Avenue the Oceanside Market. From 1909 to 1921 the Oceanside Fuel and Transfer Company provided the neighborhood with hay, grain, wood, and coal, and with storage, and teaming services. The Spring Valley Water Company’s water tower, on 41st Avenue near Lincoln Way, was called the “Oceanside tank” in 1915. Today, only the Oceanside Heating & Furnace Company at 2331 Taraval Street retains the name *Oceanside*.

### **Street Names**

Ever since the Sunset District had been laid out during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the north-south thoroughfares had been numbered avenues (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 49<sup>th</sup>), while the east-west streets were known by the letters of the alphabet, beginning with H Street (Lincoln Way) in the north to X Street in the south. To the annoyance of postal carriers, the South San Francisco district (today’s Bayview-Hunters Point district) used a similar street-naming convention. To avoid confusion, the Street Naming Commission of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted in 1909 to assign new street names to both districts.<sup>29</sup>

In the Sunset District, 1st Avenue became known as Arguello and 49th Avenue became known as La Playa. Meanwhile, H Street was renamed Lincoln Way. Initially the commission intended to change all of the numbered avenues to Spanish names. Although

# The Oceanside in 1915

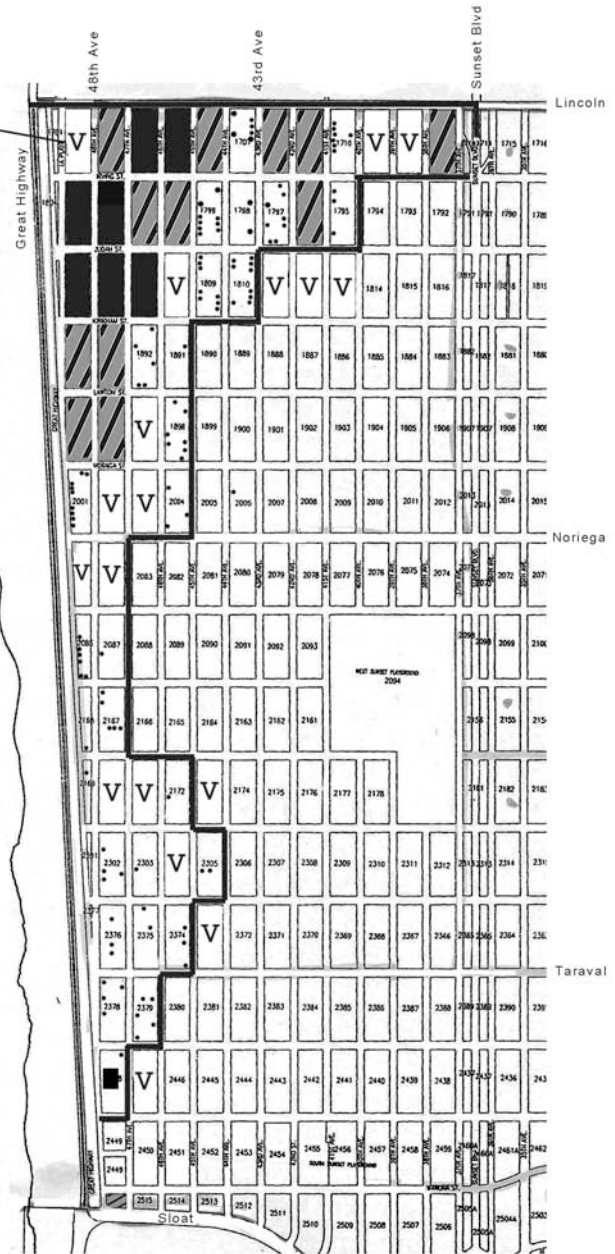
Original location of Carville  
(demolished; site vacant in 1915)



**Key**

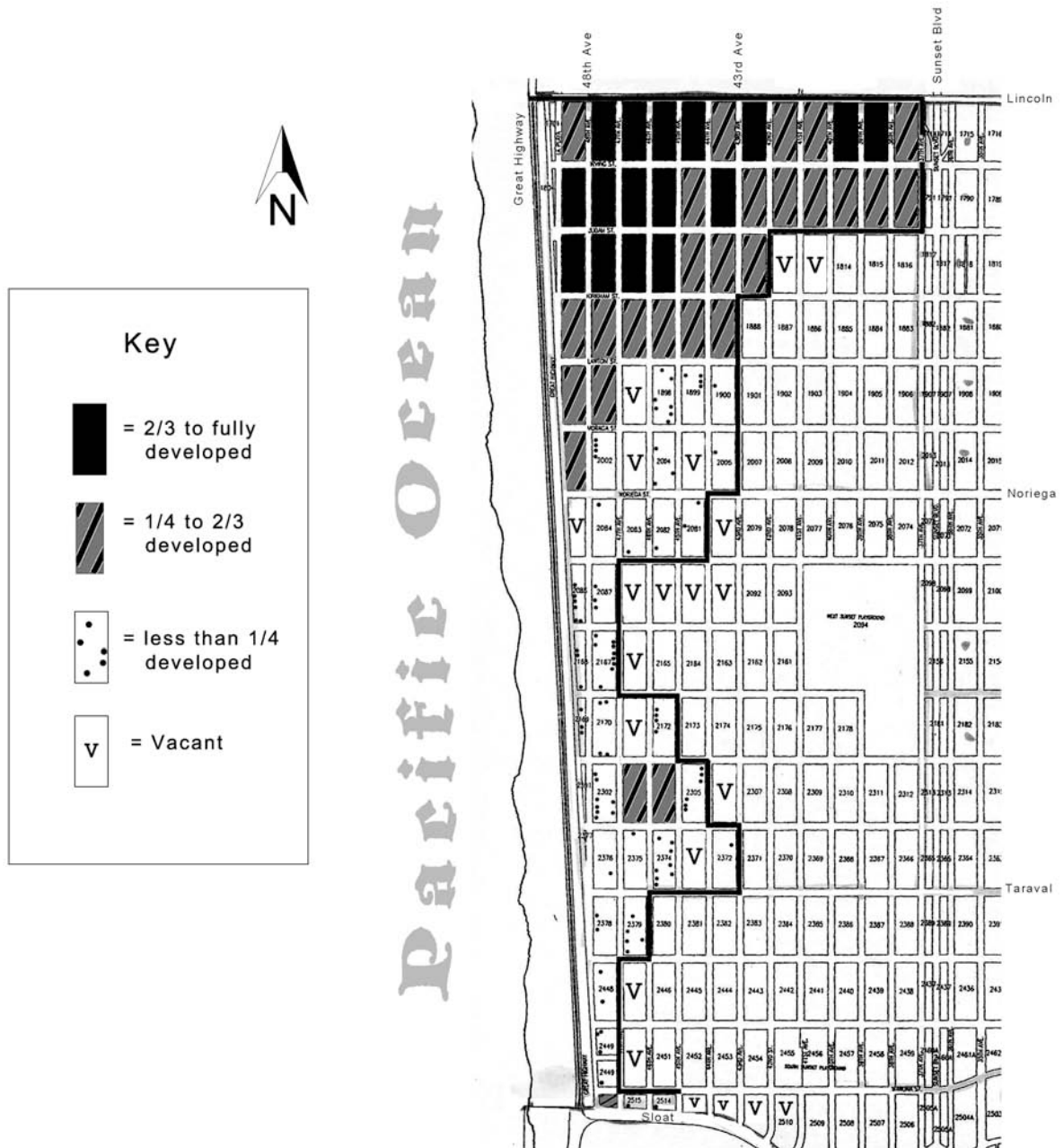
- = 2/3 to fully developed
- = 1/4 to 2/3 developed
- = less than 1/4 developed
- v = Vacant

Pacific Ocean



This map shows the extent of development in 1915.  
 Research by William Kostura from 1915 Sanborn maps.  
 Illustration by S.W. LaBounty.

# The Oceanside in 1929



This map shows the extent of development January 1929.  
Research by William Kostura from 1929 Sanborn maps.  
Illustration by S.W. LaBounty.

approved by the Board of Supervisors, this effort was successfully resisted by residents of the Richmond and Sunset districts, who worried that many of the names were difficult to pronounce and that the western part of the city would become known as "Spanish Town." The commission did end up renaming the east-west streets south of Lincoln Way, preserving the alphabetical arrangement, beginning with Irving (I) Street, Judah (J) Street, Kirkham (K) Street, Lawton (L) Street, Moraga (M) Street, Noriega (N) Street, Ortega (O) Street and Pacheco (P) Street. South of Pacheco was the Parkside District, whose promoters had already assigned the names Quintara, Rivera, Santiago, Taraval, Ulloa, Vicente, Wawona streets. X was changed to Y and became Yporba.<sup>30</sup>

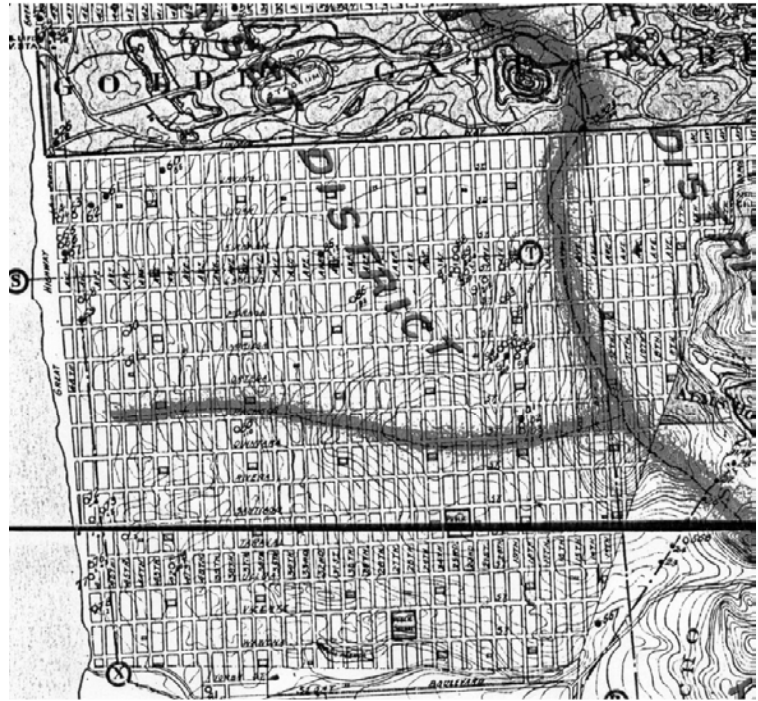
### **Carville Melds with Oceanside**

The boundaries of Oceanside were never formally defined, and for residents of the time, they did not need to be. Those who lived within eight blocks of the beach considered themselves residents of the Oceanside, during a period when hardly a resident could be found between the Oceanside and the Inner Sunset. The 1915 Sanborn map reveals that, even by that year, very few houses could be found from the 20s to the 40s blocks of the avenues.

Today, a number of blocks still have the feel of the transitional period during which Carville became Oceanside—the 1500 block of 45th Avenue, the 1600 block of the Great Highway, and the 1700 block of the Great Highway all contain the informal and vernacular architecture which reflects the range from makeshift and self-built cottages to fully realized Craftsman houses.

### **Well Water and Piped Water**

During the early days in Carville and Oceanside, people made do with water from wells, roads of sand, and lanterns instead of electric lights. By 1904, however, the population of the neighborhood was



Section of "Map of the City and County of San Francisco showing the Location of Wells," prepared by M. J. Bartell, Hydraulic Eng. under the direction of M. M. O'Shaughnessy, City Eng., May, 1913, source: San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library  
Small squares indicate the wells; the shaded lines are water main routes.

sufficiently large to induce the Spring Valley Water Company to begin laying water mains through the neighborhood. The result was an immediate population explosion. Eighty-four lots were connected with water in 1904, and another ninety-one were connected the following year.<sup>31</sup> The largest numbers of these were on streets closest to the ocean and to Golden Gate Park—the area corresponding to what had been known as Carville. Meanwhile, the streets east of 46th Avenue and south of Moraga were much less populous, many because most streets remained ungraded and infrastructure scanty. While some of these connections were for houses that already stood in 1904, the vast majority were for new houses. Since many lots contained more than one house (as evident from Sanborn maps of Blocks 1703, 1704, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1805, 1894, 1895, 1896, just to name a few examples) and since some houses probably continued to use well water, it is safe to say that over 200 houses stood in Oceanside by the end of 1905.

Because of the earthquake and fire of 1906, more people moved to Oceanside, and the community continued to grow, until by 1908, Oceanside had a population of 2,000 people.<sup>32</sup>



*A surviving water tower behind house at 1468 47th Avenue.*

A city map from 1913 (above) shows the location of water wells and the underground supply line that piped water via Pacheco Street and Quintara Street almost to the beach. Although the Spring Valley Water Company's water tower on 41st Avenue near Lincoln Way no longer exists, a few individual well houses remain, notably one at 2274-45th Avenue, and a water tower at 1468-47th Avenue.

Proper sewage treatment was also necessary if the Oceanside neighborhood was going to grow. When there were only a few dozen people living in Carville, sewage was typically disposed of in latrines dug into the sand dunes or in leach fields. As the number of houses in the area grew after the 1906 Earthquake, it was discovered that sewage was leaking into the

underground aquifers that people depended on for drinking water. In addition, sewage began leaking into a pool in Golden Gate Park at 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Way. In response to these unsanitary conditions, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution in March 1910 to build a new sewer line from 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Vicente Street to 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kirkham Street. This line would join the existing line recently completed on Lincoln Way, providing sewer connections to most of the houses in the more densely populated sections of the Oceanside neighborhood.<sup>33</sup> However, the reality was that the connection of the two sewers took several more years, as evidenced by a request from the Oceanside Neighborhood Club to build a temporary septic tank on Lincoln Way in 1912.<sup>34</sup>

### **Other Improvements and Neighborhood Amenities**

Sol Getz and Sons, a realty firm, was responsible for some of Oceanside's early growth, beginning in 1902 when they bought a block of land and graded it flat. Sol Getz continued to buy, grade, and sell Oceanside lots for many years. The firm opened a branch office at 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Way and promoted the Oceanside from there. In later years, Jules Getz recalled that most prospective home-buyers who drove their buggies out to look over the empty lots "would scoff at us and tell us to peddle our sand somewhere else." Getz and Sons encouraged the building of streetcar houses and "any kind of building" in the early years, "just to get someone out there."<sup>35</sup>

Because subsurface water was plentiful in the area, the most challenging aspect of developing property in the Oceanside neighborhood was the presence of large sand dunes. Understanding that the grading of streets, blocks, and lots would be essential to selling property in the area, Sol Getz would frequently hire teams to level large tracts of land that he had purchased. In June 1903, Getz hired Edward Malley to grade two blocks bounded by 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue, H Street (Lincoln Way), 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and I (Irving) Street.<sup>36</sup>



After grading a block, it appears that Getz would lease the level lots to prospective buyers on favorable terms with the understanding that the occupant would build on the property within a specified period of time. Once the property was developed, Getz typically sold it to his former tenant within the year. In this way it appears that Getz oversaw the urbanization of much of the northwestern corner of the Oceanside neighborhood. Of the 60 individual properties studied in depth during Part Two/Phase Two of the Oceanside Survey, over one-third had been owned at one time by Sol Getz, and in most cases Getz appears to have been instrumental in developing the lot. In some cases, such as 1224 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue (which was built for Getz's son, Jules), it appears that Sol Getz may have actually developed the property himself. The Saturday Real estate sections of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Call* throughout the first decade and a half of the twentieth century contain hundreds of listings for properties bought and sold by Sol Getz's company, Sol Getz & Son Real Estate.

In addition to the real estate speculators, neighborhood "improvement" clubs played a major role in boosting the Oceanside neighborhood. The main purpose of these clubs was to lobby the City and private transit and utility providers to extend service and improve infrastructure in the neighborhood. Other related functions included the elimination of nuisances such as crime and blight and publicizing the district to residents citywide with the hope of increasing property values. The first such club formed in 1903.<sup>37</sup> City directories first list an Oceanside Improvement Club in 1909. The various improvement clubs changed names, merged with, or succeeded one another. There was an Oceanside Promotion Association in 1910-1911, an Oceanside Improvement Association in 1911-1913, an Oceanside Club in 1914-1916, an Oceanside Improvement Club in 1918, and the Oceanside Community Council in the 1920s.

They met in the Oceanside Hall at 1315 48<sup>th</sup> Avenue (extant—converted to a dwelling) during 1909-1923 and in the Oceanside

Community Hall at 4131 Kirkham during 1924-1930 (extant but heavily remodeled). The same general goals inspired them all: to bring sewage lines and electric streetlights to the area, to grade and pave the streets, to build a firehouse, to improve school facilities, and to increase police protection. When the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was being planned in 1911, the Promotion Association lobbied for it to be built in Golden Gate Park, close to the neighborhood, hoping it would increase property values and compel the City to improve infrastructure.<sup>38</sup>

Devised as a measure to enhance the value of the Oceanside and Golden Gate Park as the site of the upcoming world's fair, the Oceanside Improvement Club lobbied the City to construct the Great Highway from the Beach Chalet south to Sloat Boulevard in 1910. The work entailed grading away the sand dunes that occupied the ground between the right-of-way and Ocean Beach and the construction of a concrete retaining wall and multi-lane parkway consisting of vehicle lanes, a commercial street, foot paths, and landscaped medians.<sup>39</sup>

Although the Oceanside Improvement Association and associated neighborhood groups favored the construction of the Panama Pacific International Exposition in their neighborhood, they were adamantly opposed to the expansion in the number of seaside resorts along the Great Highway. Opposing existing establishments almost as fiercely as proposed roadhouses, saloons, and dance halls, local residents blamed such establishments for the proliferation of crime, noise, and unseemly behavior on the beach.<sup>40</sup>

The Oceanside Improvement Association was also concerned with beautification efforts. Well aware that shifting sand dunes presented a huge obstacle to the literal stability of their community, the association led a campaign to plant trees throughout the neighborhood, beginning with a shipment of 1,400 palms and shrubs planted in April 1910.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of 1912, the Oceanside Improvement Association had accomplished much, but a significant amount of work remained. Association president Alexander Russell created a series of committees to address the following areas where infrastructure was still lagging behind residential development: street lighting, water supply and pressure, sewage, transit, and improved access to Golden Gate Park. In addition to securing promises by the City to erect more light standards and by the Spring Valley Water Company to provide a larger inlet pipe to improve water pressure, the association had made it a top priority to lobby the City to extend the new Municipal Railway Geary line through Golden Gate Park to Lincoln Way to provide an alternative to the

extortionate and ever-unpopular Market Street Railway.<sup>42</sup> Much of the lobbying by the Oceanside Improvement Association was evidently effective because by the end of 1913, Geary Street Muni cars were running to the beach, Lincoln Way was paved from end-to-end for vehicular traffic, and additional improvements to the Great Highway were anticipated.<sup>43</sup>

The membership of the Oceanside Improvement Association was limited to men. Aware that there was much to be done and annoyed by their exclusion, Oceanside women founded their own association in 1913.<sup>44</sup> Initially called the Oceanside Women's Club, it soon split into two feuding factions, one of which was named the Campbellites (probably



*Aerial view of the Oceanside, looking east.*

a reference to the Disciples of Christ Church, known for being morally rigorous and strict). This group felt that the morals of the neighborhood were entirely too loose (largely as a result of the road houses and dance halls on the beach) and should be cleaned up. The other faction, the anti-Campbellites, disagreed with this view.

The first school in Oceanside was founded in 1903 and met beneath a grocery store on 48th Avenue. In 1908, a large, new Oceanside Primary School was built on 43rd Avenue, between Irving and Judah. Two stories and a basement in height, and covered with wooden shingles, it was a substantial addition to the neighborhood. This school building was demolished and rebuilt in 1913; the name was subsequently changed to the Francis Scott Key School. In the late 1910s or early 1920s, a large, wooden half-timbered Francis Scott Key School Annex, its first story clad in 12-inch wide redwood planks, was built at 1351 42nd Avenue, and still exists today.

Churches were also established in the Oceanside. In addition to the before-mentioned Episcopal Church St. Andrews-by-the-Sea in Carville, the first permanent church was probably St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on Kirkham Street between 46th and 47th Avenue. The brown shingled building was dedicated on September 9, 1906, and was soon expanded with a gymnasium named the Oceanside Boys Club which offered a much needed recreational service for youth. The growth of the congregation necessitated a new facility and, in 1923, the new church with an adjoining gym was built at the corner of 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Judah Street where it still stands today. The new church was designed by Thomas A. Cuthbertson.



*Francis Scott Key School Annex.*

### **III. Property Types** **Makeshift Houses, Family Houses,** **Vacation Houses**

Many houses built in the Carville/Oceanside period are cottage-type buildings. However, there were also a few large single-family residences and apartment buildings. Some houses were built at the front of a lot, and some were built at the back of a lot. Sometimes two houses were built on the same lot, one at the front and one at the rear. This pattern can still be seen in some of the outermost blocks and particularly in Block 1895, bounded by Great Highway, Lawton Street, 48th Avenue, and Moraga Street.

Almost all of the houses built in the early Carville/Oceanside period were small, low in height, and built of materials that could stand up to conditions imposed by the environment of wind, fog, and salt. Even the makeshift houses that were constructed around the shells of discarded horse cars and trolley cars, as described above, appeared as cottages covered in shingles.

### Roadhouses, Bars, and Restaurants

In addition to residences of various classes, shops, a school, a church, a movie theater, and clubs, the Oceanside was home to roadhouses, restaurants, and saloons as well. The Ocean Side House was the first of these, preceding other by many years. As access to the rest of the city improved after the turn of the century, many other roadhouses, dance halls, and saloons began to open along the beach, often much to the consternation of neighborhood residents. There were three liquor establishments in 1901, five in 1910, and seven in 1914. During the 1920s, Prohibition was in effect, so an establishment could not advertise that it served liquor, but since it was remote, the Oceanside may have been a favored location for restaurants that skirted the strictest interpretations of the law. The 1929 Sanborn insurance map (four years before the repeal of Prohibition) shows ten buildings containing thirteen restaurants in the Oceanside, although it says nothing about what they served.

Some of the roadhouses, saloons, and restaurants were large and attracted a clientele from throughout San Francisco. The first of the famous roadhouses was Ocean Side House, as mentioned earlier. "Shorty Roberts" or



*Commercial architecture in the Oceanside: 3655 Vicente Street.*

Dominic F. Roberts in full, was the first "Shorty", who owned one of the three saloons in 1901. About 1909, he built a large establishment at 2200 Great Highway. It still stood in 1929, and was by that time operated by his sons Richard (the second "Shorty") and Wilfred. The business never really ended, and there is still a Roberts Motel on Sloat Boulevard, founded by the same family.

Another famous restaurant was Tait's-at-the-Beach, located from 1919 to 1931 in the former Ocean Side House. It was owned by John Tait, who was already renowned as manager of the Tait-Zink restaurant and night club downtown. For Tait's-at-the-Beach, he purchased many of the Asian artworks and furnishings which Ida and Alexander Russell had once used to create an elegant atmosphere at their house. Tait's restaurant was very popular, surviving Prohibition but succumbing to the Depression.



*Commercial architecture in the Oceanside: 50 Cutler Street.*

Other large establishments were Sandy McNaughton's The Breakers (later known as The Crest), at 1534 Great Highway (extant but heavily remodeled); Hopkins' Restaurant and Saloon, at 1938 Great Highway (demolished); Dibble's at 2400 Great Highway (demolished); and the Lodge, a roadhouse and dance hall at 1300-1304 La Playa (demolished). The latter was a multi-story structure, suggesting that one could stay the night as well as dance, drink, and dine, a point that might have been of special concern to the Campbellites.<sup>45</sup> Also two stories in height were restaurant buildings at 50 Cutler (extant) and 3655 Vicente (extant). The former is Spanish in style and made of reinforced-concrete, while the latter is made of hollow clay tile, with a clay tile roof overhanging wooden balconies. Both were built before 1928, and still stand today.

### **Residential Architecture of the 1900s-1910s**

The houses in Oceanside varied widely in appearance, ranging in size from the tiniest cottages, of which there were many, to rather large houses of one-and-one-half to two stories, of which there were about a dozen. A few buildings were built as flats, duplexes, or multi-story apartments, but the great majority was single-family houses. As stated above, sometimes two or more houses were built on the same lot. The most common pattern was for one house to be located behind another, but sometimes houses could be found side-by-side on a single lot. Three or four houses on a single lot also occurred. In one case, eight houses were built on a fifty-foot wide lot that stretched through Block 1895 from Great Highway to 48th Avenue. One of these was a former streetcar, and the rest were small, wood-framed cottages. When multiple houses were built on one lot, most or all of them were occupied by renters. One of the most active developers of multiple speculative rental cottages was a woman named Ida Cambridge who, among other projects, erected a cluster of six, nearly identical cottages on three lots on the west side of 48th Avenue between Irving and Judah streets (1343-1353 48th Avenue) in 1914. In this way Oceanside was much like Carville. Some of the frame dwellings were

even smaller than the residences made out of former streetcars.

Among the Oceanside houses that still stand today and pre-date 1920, one architectural theme predominates: the use of wooden shingles to cover the exterior of the house. Weather conditions are harsh at the ocean's edge, over time breaking down conventional materials such as wood, paint, and metal. Shingles, however, can stand up to the wind and salt air without paint, commonly survive 80 or more years without replacement, and grow more attractive as they weather. The simplest example of the shingled cottage type is a small, pitched or hipped-roof building with an integral porch—cheap to build—which can be added to over time. This non-stylistic cottage type merges practicality with the picturesque. Such houses were studied and celebrated in the East by A.J. Downing. Later, the hand-built, economical cottage type became rendered in the Arts and Crafts style, often called the Craftsman Style. These small cottages are once again desirable today and in



*Example of the Shingle Style: Detail of Theodore Henn house, 1468 47th Avenue*

demand for those who want to live at the edge of the City, close to the sound and smell of the ocean, and away from the noises and crowding of the central city.

Wooden shingles had also been used to cover the exterior of many streetcar houses, giving the neighborhood a rustic as well as bohemian flavor. The use of shingles was a motif that connected the Carville and Oceanside eras. Shingles were common on both small and large houses. In 1908 a San Francisco *Chronicle* reporter, Emmett M. O'Brien,<sup>46</sup> wrote of the "diminutive cottage and the two-story pretentious home, all a-shingle," that were supplanting the streetcar houses. This description is accurate for most of the Oceanside houses with high integrity that still stand today.

### **Architectural Styles of Residential Structures**

Shingled houses in the Oceanside can be classified as "Shingle style," "Craftsman style," or "Shingled Colonial Revival style." The Shingle style uses shingles to wrap around corners and form a continuous, fluid surface. Ornamentation is minimal in these houses,

and visual interest is created by the use of curved surfaces such as eyebrow dormers and flared eaves. Sometimes the shingles vary in size and pattern. While uncommon in the Oceanside, there are two notable examples of this style. One is the two-story, Theodore Henn house at 1468 47th Avenue (ca. 1901). It is also the oldest known house in the Oceanside area.<sup>47</sup> The Dennis Sullivan house at 1984 Great Highway (1905), built for the city's fire chief, is also a fine example.

The "Craftsman style" derived from the Arts and Crafts style and is noted for carved wooden ornament such as at the ends of exposed beams and on rafter tails. A fine example of this style still stands at 4641 Lincoln Way, and a complete row of fifteen Craftsman houses are found on the 1200 block of 42nd Avenue. This row was built by Alonzo Harrington between 1911 and 1913. Another good example is the row of 18 Craftsman rowhouses on the 1200 block of 37th Avenue, constructed by Lincoln U. Grant between 1912 and 1913.



*Examples of Craftsman Style: 1231, 1227, 1223 42nd Avenue*



The third style that employs wooden shingles is the “Shingled Colonial Revival style.” These are one-story houses, sometimes with hipped roofs that extend forward to cover a full-width front porch. Most have a hipped-roof dormer projecting from the middle of the roof. The form of these houses is derived from the Colonial Revival style, but they lack the classical ornament common to that style. Instead of ornament, they employ wooden shingles to give the house texture. Shingled Colonial Revival houses are the most common type of shingled house in the Oceanside, and they are quite rare elsewhere in San Francisco, although a few exist in the East Bay.<sup>48</sup>

Other styles that can be found in the Oceanside are the Classical Revival, with its columns, pilasters, pediments, and layered window moldings, and the pure Colonial Revival. These styles are very common elsewhere in San Francisco but are less so in the Oceanside. A very fine example of the Classical Revival in Oceanside is the Joseph Keith residence at 1648 Great Highway (1908).

Very few Oceanside houses were designed by architects. Instead, the designers were the builders, carpenters, and contractors. It seems that many carpenters moved to the Oceanside in 1904, attracted by the sudden boom, and built their own houses in addition to houses for others. Some of the builders active in the 1900s-1910s were Peter Leonard, Lawson Fenn, Clarence Judson, Carl Wengard, Alonzo Harrington, Lincoln U. Grant, William W. Thayer, Carl Carlsen, Walter Percival, and James L. Smith. Each of these men lived in the Oceanside or elsewhere in the Sunset, and built attractive houses that still stand today. Except perhaps for Harrington, none of these can be considered a major builder. Most built houses one or two at a time, instead of in rows or tracts. As mentioned earlier, only two long rows constructed before 1915 can be found in the Oceanside, the row of fifteen Craftsman houses on the 1200 block of 42nd Avenue, between Lincoln and Irving, built during the years of 1911-1913 by Harrington and Lincoln U. Grant’s row of 18 rowhouses on the 1200



*Example of the Shingled Colonial Revival Style  
1231-33 47th Avenue*

block of 37th Avenue. Of the former, all are largely intact, with new owners reversing previous inappropriate modernizations and restoring elements such as windows, doors, and building details that had been lost.<sup>49</sup> Several other clusters of four houses or more still stand from those built in the Oceanside before 1915, among them the row of six in the 1200 block of 41st Avenue and the row of five in the 1600 block of the Great Highway. In general, large-scale residential development did not really take off in the Oceanside neighborhood until the mid-1920s.

Whatever the style, houses from the 1900s-1910s in the Oceanside are few in number. Although a trend for preservation of the best examples is on the rise, a large number were demolished when older houses were underappreciated in the 1950s through the 1990s. Of the 549 residential buildings that stood in Oceanside in 1915,<sup>50</sup> by some counts only about fifty or sixty houses, or 10% of what once stood here in 1915, remain with high integrity. Even these have, as a rule, undergone some alterations. Nearly all have replacement front steps, and most have had garages inserted into the basement level.





Example of the Classical Revival Style: Joseph Keith House, 1647 Great Highway

Another sixty or so houses have undergone greater alterations but still retain enough integrity to be identifiable as houses from the early period.

### Fading of the Oceanside as the New Sunset Emerges

At the beginning of the 1920s, large areas of the Oceanside still remained undeveloped. But from that decade through the 1950s, the empty spaces were gradually filled in with stucco-clad houses, most of which were built in rows by speculative builders such as Oscar Heyman, the Rousseau and Gellert Brothers, and Henry Doelger. In contrast to the wood-based, freestanding, simplified Craftsman aesthetic of many of the earlier Carville/Oceanside houses, the speculative dwellings of the 1920s onward tended to be erected in rows of nearly identical rowhouses with Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial Revival, Period Revival, or Moderne stylistic features.

The 1920s through the 1950s were also the decades that the middle Sunset filled in with stucco-clad houses, joining the Oceanside neighborhood and the Inner Sunset and blurring Oceanside's visible boundary. In terms of appearance, these later houses represent a sharp break with the houses of the 1900s to 1920s.

The name *Oceanside* seems also to have faded from use during the 1920s. One improvement club, and the hall in which it met, used the name

"Oceanside" during the 1920s, but only one business, Oceanside Heating and Furnaces, used the name after 1921. The last year that the Oceanside Community Hall was listed in city directories, 1930, could be considered the last year the Oceanside was a distinct community.<sup>51</sup> As one resident commented in 1947, "Now it's not Carville or Oceanside, but the Sunset, an integral part of San Francisco." If the blocks west of 40th Avenue had their own name after 1930, it was simply the "outer Sunset" or "out at the Beach."

## IV. SPEAK's Goals and Priorities of the Oceanside Survey

### Goals

Goal #1: to inventory, for eventual adoption by the City and County of San Francisco or State of California, the existing residential structures associated with the formation and expansion of the Oceanside settlement of San Francisco; determine the timeframe of Oceanside neighborhood; enumerate and describe the residential types (such as vacation houses, converted streetcars, permanent residential cottages), the structures associated with them (wells and water towers, for example); and describe the buildings' architectural forms and styles. Part One of the survey was limited by financial constraints to approximately twenty residential buildings with no more than 1800 square feet in area; in Part Two, remaining buildings will be surveyed.

Goal #2: to evaluate the significance of these sites and the persons and events associated with the small residential structures of Oceanside and document them using California Register criteria in a context statement and on DPR forms.

Goal #3: to explore whether the potential for a discontinuous historic district exists or whether individual buildings qualify as "historic resources" under CEQA. Whether or not a discontinuous district is pursued by the buildings' owners, the goal of the inventory is to delineate the location of historic resources in the Oceanside district; to prepare maps that locate the buildings showing the greatest intensity of extant buildings; and to describe the overall historic context that contributes to the district's character, for use by the Planning Department and the public.

Goal #4: to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of this generally vernacular residential type by creating booklets that illustrate and explain the history and appearance of the former Oceanside area; to support the creation of self-guided or guided walking tours highlighting the best examples of original extant buildings that remain; and to celebrate the origins of the Oceanside settlement with presentations at civic events from time to time, using the photographs, text, and maps prepared for the study.

Goal #5: to advance to Part Two of the inventory and perform the same research of additional buildings and, when more funds are available, to pursue Part Three.

### Priorities

Priority #1: to perform the above goals more or less in the sequence listed;

Priority #2: to inform City officials of the importance of sensitive alterations and new contextual construction in the Oceanside district;

Priority #3: to determine whether the simple cottage residence found in this study area exemplifies a modern definition of "small house character" as well, and whether it has possible significance as an affordable housing type today.

## V. Methodology

### Part One (William Kostura)

#### Outline

1. Describe pre-European development setting of the western lands.
2. Examine Sanborn maps of 1915 and 1929.
3. Conduct walking field visits to all blocks to see what remains today and take photographs that will comprise an overall reconnaissance study of historic resources.
4. Determine integrity of these survivors.
5. Identify uses, architectural style, materials.
6. Photograph buildings that retain highest integrity.
7. Find similar buildings in the area that do not appear in the 1915 Sanborn map, indicating they were later than 1915.
8. Conduct archival research to determine history of each building, to establish date of construction, builder, and original owners and occupants, using records such as water hookups, sales ledgers, published building contracts, and city directories.
9. Set forth criteria for inclusion of buildings in the survey of the Oceanside.
10. Determine the period of significance.

### Description of Methodology

As mentioned above, archival research showed that the Sunset District west of 40th Avenue was a distinct neighborhood known as the Oceanside from the early 1900s to about 1930. A number of tasks were performed to identify the oldest and most architecturally intact houses within this area. First, the earliest Sanborn map for the Oceanside area was examined. It dates from 1915 and covers blocks west of 40th Avenue that had been built upon by that year. A field survey was performed to determine whether each house on the 1915 Sanborn map still stands, and whether it retains architectural integrity. This survey also revealed that a large proportion of the surviving houses have a rustic quality, i.e., they are clad in wooden shingles or possess Craftsman-style decorative features. Another common theme was the one-story Colonial Revival style house, many of which are shingled, and many of which have full-width front porches. Those that are shingled can be considered an architectural type distinct to the Oceanside area.

Of the houses that appear on the 1915 Sanborn map, photographs were taken of many extant buildings that retain the highest integrity. Photos were also taken of similar-looking houses that are not shown on the Sanborn map; research later showed that these were built shortly after 1915. It became clear that shingled, Craftsman, and

Colonial Revival style houses in the Oceanside date from the period 1900-1920, whereas stucco-clad houses, as a rule, date from the 1920s and later.

Archival research was performed on most houses with high integrity from the 1900s and 1910s. These sources revealed the date of construction of each house, the builder of most of the houses, and the owners and occupants from the time of construction through about 1930. That year was considered to be the end of the Period of Significance, as the Oceanside name was rarely used after then.

For the most part, houses from the 1920s were not considered for evaluation in this Part One of the survey. One reason is that the use of the term "Oceanside" was winding down during this decade. Thus, houses from the 1920s cannot be said to represent the origins of the Oceanside neighborhood, or, for that matter, of the Sunset District. Finally, most houses from this decade look similar to innumerable stucco houses elsewhere in San Francisco, and therefore lack distinction.

Houses from the 1930s on post-date the Oceanside period. While it is possible that some of them may possess historic significance, these were not researched or investigated in this study.

## Part Two (Kelley and VerPlanck)

Kelley and VerPlanck LLC (KVP) contracted with SPEAK/SAHRIC in July 2008 and Chris VerPlanck began working on Part Two/Phase One, which consisted of creating a survey application and a field survey methodology which was used to inventory every property within the survey area boundaries with a recorded construction date of 1924 or earlier. Most of the houses built before 1925 were erected individually or as part of small clusters, in contrast to the speculative rowhouse product erected by merchant builders beginning in the mid-1920s. More than 500 properties were surveyed within the survey area, which was expanded from the area considered in Part One to include the 1200 blocks from 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The field survey work made use of Geographical Information System (GIS) software loaded onto handheld devices to synchronize the photographs and survey notes with Standard Assessor Parcel Data. Following the completion of the fieldwork, KVP prepared official California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 A (Primary) forms for 511 individual properties. These forms include basic information about each property, including a description and a photograph. These A forms were presented to the Historic Preservation Fund Committee in February 2009.

The second phase of the project consisted of documenting and evaluating a subset of properties culled from the 511 DPR 523 A forms. KVP documented the properties on DPR 523 B (Building, Structure, & Object) forms. In cooperation with SPEAK/SAHRIC, VerPlanck developed six criteria for selecting B form candidates. Numerical values were

assigned to each criterion ranging from 1 to 3 points. The criteria for the Oceanside Survey are as follows:

Criterion 1: Does the property contain a building or structure that is clearly architecturally significant: i.e.; does it rise above the general level of the surrounding properties in regard to its construction, detailing, stylistic vocabulary? If so, add 3 points.

Criterion 2: Does the property contain an example of an unusual building or structural type: i.e.; earthquake refugee shack, Carville house, tank house, commercial building, etcetera? If so, add 2 points.

Criterion 3: Does the property contain a building or structure that predates the 1906 Earthquake? If so, add 2 points.

Does it contain a building or structure that predates the First World War (1914)? If so, add 1.5 points.

Criterion 4: Does the property contain a building or structure that is an example of a recurring type in the Oceanside Survey Area: i.e.; is it a one-story, hipped-roof cottage, side-facing gable-roofed Dutch Colonial cottage, Craftsman row house, etcetera? If so, add 1 point.

Criterion 5: Does the property contain a building that occupies less than 50 percent of the lot's square footage, making it vulnerable to redevelopment? If so, add 1 point.

Criterion 6: Does the property contain a building or structure that retains a high level of integrity? If so, add 1.5 points.

After criteria were applied, the scores were totaled. A top-scoring property could potentially garner a maximum of 10.5 points. All properties that scored 6.5 or higher were selected to receive additional documentation, yielding a total of 60 properties. Kelley & VerPlanck conducted in-depth research of these properties at local government repositories and libraries in advance of preparing 523 B forms.

Upon completion of the DPR 523 B forms for all 60 properties, Kelley & VerPlanck prepared DPR 523 D (District) forms for five potential historic districts identified during the field survey. These districts contain a total of 48 properties.

The DPR 523 B and D forms were completed in November 2009, reviewed by SPEAK, and revised and finalized in February 2010.

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## VIII. Notes

<sup>1</sup> This section is based on information provided by Greg Gaar, August 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Among the earlier articles on the Greens are those by George and Emilia Hodel, *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 5, 1932), 7. and George W. Kemper, *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 15, 1940), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Hubbard, Anita Day, "Cities Within a City: The Sunset." V. 1, pp. 33-51. Typescript of a series of articles on San Francisco neighborhoods from the *San Francisco Bulletin*, at the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library. The series on the Sunset was published in the *Bulletin* during September 1-8, 1924.

<sup>4</sup> William Kostura's count of houses in the Inner Sunset is based on 1900 Sanborn Maps.

<sup>5</sup> McFarlane, Angus, "How the Sunset became 'The Sunset,'" Western Neighborhoods Project Newsletter (Spring 2005), 2, 6, and 7, <http://www.outsidelands.org/sunset-name.php> and Newsletter (Winter 2007), 1-3.

<sup>6</sup> *San Francisco Call* (September 1, 1895), 12.

<sup>7</sup> Hubbard, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> "To Open Road to the Beach," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 3, 1904), 9.

<sup>9</sup> "To Open Road to the Beach," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 3, 1904), 9.

<sup>10</sup> The Ocean Side House is listed in city directories beginning in 1867, and is mentioned in "Local Intelligence," *Alta California* (May 23, 1868), 1.

Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1981, 169 discusses the Russells, who are also listed in city directories. Steve "Woody" LaBounty, "Tait's-at-the-Beach: The House of Mystery," Western Neighborhoods Project Newsletter (August 2003) discusses the general history of this building.

<sup>11</sup> "Oceanside House, Better Known as 'Brooks' Folly,' Is Sold," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 19, 1901), 24.

<sup>12</sup> "Tait's-at-the-Beach, S.F. Landmark, Goes Down in Flames," *San Francisco News* (December 2, 1940), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Older, Cora M. "People who live in cars." *San Francisco Bulletin* (July 11, 1896), 9; "Man Who Lives Among Skeletons." *San Francisco Sunday Call* (January 5, 1902), Section 5, p.1; "Roar of Waves Is His Requiem," *Daily Morning Call* (October 15, 1903), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Cowan, Natalie Jahraus, "Carville: San Francisco's Oceanside Bohemia," *California History* (Winter 1978-79) is the major secondary treatise on Carville. For the shapes and distribution of streetcar houses see the 1915 Sanborn map.

<sup>15</sup> Gilliams, Leslie, "Cartown," *Strand* (XXII, November 1901), 575.

<sup>16</sup> "Bohemia in a Horse Car," *San Francisco Call* (March 15, 1908), magazine section, 3.

<sup>17</sup> "Quaint village of condemned street railway cars on the ocean beach," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 4, 1896), Sunday magazine, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Cowan, op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Reese, Jennifer. "Streetcar Suburbs," *Preservation* (January-February 1999).

<sup>20</sup> "Methods of Utilizing Old Street Cars," *Scientific American* (LXXXIV, June 29, 1901), 409.

<sup>21</sup> Adams, Gibbs, "A City of Cars," *Overland Monthly* (LII, November 1908), 399.

<sup>22</sup> "Half Million in Realty Sales Closes the Week," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 16, 1902), 7.

<sup>23</sup> "Burn the Car Out of Carville," *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 6, 1913), 38.

<sup>24</sup> Gerald D. Adams, "A streetcar named home," *San Francisco Examiner* (January 20, 1998), 1 shows photographs and a schematic plan of the second floor interior. Tap records at the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, give the date of construction and first owner. See also Herb Caen's column, *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 10, 1983).

<sup>25</sup> Cowan, op. cit., p. 319

<sup>26</sup> Nolte, Carl. "Cottages Looking for a Home," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 2, 2002) <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2002/12/02/BA72910.DTL>; Sullivan, Kathleen. "Sunset Quake Shacks Hauled to Rehab," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 11, 2005), <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=%2Fc%2Fa%2F2005%2F03%2F11%2FWBGA8BLOMV1.DTL>; Western Neighborhoods Project website, 4329 and 4331 Kirkham Street, [http://www.outsidelands.org/kirkham\\_shacks.php](http://www.outsidelands.org/kirkham_shacks.php)

<sup>27</sup> "Roar of Waves Is His Requiem," *Daily Morning Call* (October 15, 1903), 3.

<sup>28</sup> This business lasted about a decade. The building still stands but has been altered.

**Notes (continued)**

<sup>29</sup> “Finally Adopt Street Names,” *San Francisco Call* (December 7, 1909).

<sup>30</sup> John Freeman, “Street Naming Controversy—1909,” *Encyclopedia of San Francisco—A Project of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society*, <http://www.sfhistoryencyclopedia.com/articles/s/streetNaming.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Tap records of the Spring Valley Water Company, microfilm, San Francisco History Room, San Francisco Public Library.

<sup>32</sup> Adams, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> “To Rush Work on New Sewer,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 2, 1910), 9.

<sup>34</sup> “Sunset District Growing Apace,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 15, 1912), 11.

<sup>35</sup> Jane Sudekum. “Peddle Your Land Somewhere Else,” *San Francisco News* (April 10, 1947), 13.

<sup>36</sup> “Midsummer Investments in City and Rural Realty,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1903), 13.

<sup>37</sup> Cowan, op. cit., 316.

<sup>38</sup> “Oceanside Out for Exposition,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 21, 1910), 5.

<sup>39</sup> “Ocean Boulevard Plans Progress,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 26, 1910), 9.

<sup>40</sup> “Entertainment at Oceanside,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 6, 1910), 9.

<sup>41</sup> “Hetch-Hetchy Mass Meeting,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 15, 1910), 9.

<sup>42</sup> “Oceanside Women Want Betterments,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 13, 1912), 5.

<sup>43</sup> “Improvements Assured Oceanside District,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 12, 1913), 15.

<sup>44</sup> “Oceanside Women Want Betterments,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 13, 1912), 5.

<sup>45</sup> This building was converted to apartments, and doubled in size, before 1929. It still stands.

<sup>46</sup> O’Brien, Emmet M. “Passing of Carville,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 15, 1908), 12.

<sup>47</sup> The oldest, that is, except for a Stick-Eastlake style Victorian cottage at 1575 48th Avenue. That house was moved to this lot from an unknown location in 1924.

<sup>48</sup> Shingled Colonial Revival houses are also reminiscent of French Colonial style houses that were built in Louisiana in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and of 19th century British-built bungalows in India. No evidence has emerged; however, that Oceanside builders were familiar with these styles, and could have been influenced by them.

<sup>49</sup> Houses at 1231 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 1255 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue were recently restored to original conditions.

<sup>50</sup> William Kostura’s count of houses is based on the 1915 Sanborn maps, which are the earliest available for this area.

<sup>51</sup> There was an Oceanside Riding Club, presided over by Mrs. Grace Hamilton from her home, 1370 48th Avenue, during 1930-1933. As far as is known, this is the last time that the name Oceanside was used to denote a business, group, or institution.