



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Resource Evaluation Response

Date: June 13, 2018
Case No.: 2016-006782ENV
Project Address: 261 Amber Drive
Zoning: RH-1 (Residential-house, one family)
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 7513/038
Date of Review: 3/21/2017 (Part 1 Historic Resource Evaluation)
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PART I: HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

Buildings and Property Description

The subject property, 261 Amber Drive, is located on a unique parallelogram shaped lot that is approximately 34.5 feet wide and 86.6 feet deep, on the north side of the block between Quartz and Turquoise ways, in the Diamond Heights neighborhood. 261 Amber Drive is located within a RH-1 (Residential-House, one family), and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

The subject property contains a 2-story over garage wood-frame single-family residence constructed in 1964 by Eichler Homes, Inc. with the architect listed as Claude Oakland. The building is located on a steeply upward sloping lot such that the upper level is almost at grade towards the rear of the lot. In plan the building is roughly "L" shaped and features a rear wing which is narrower than the front portion of the building that extends almost the width of the lot. A small courtyard sits in the "L" and also leads to a smaller backyard accessed by an outdoor stairway.

The primary façade facing Amber Drive (south elevation), is composed of two distinct vertical elements, to the east (right) is a vertical rhythm of two projecting balconies stacked above two garage doors while to the west (left) is a narrower solid core.¹ At the ground floor the garage doors are simple solid wood roll up style doors. The balconies extend the entirety of the right vertical element and are themselves solid aside from a thin metal railing at the top of each balcony. A series of aluminum sliding glass doors and fixed windows lead out to the balconies. The building terminates at the roof with the upper balcony overhang supported by exposed roof beams.

Entrance to the subject property is along the west elevation and is accessed via an open stairway. The elevation itself is simply detailed and features two vertical narrow windows located at the solid core, and further back where the building recedes around the courtyard there are a number of aluminum sliding glass windows.

¹ It should be noted that the following is a description of the subject property before substantial exterior alterations took place. These alterations took place sometime between July 2015 and June 2016 and work was performed without the benefit of a building permit.

The north elevation meets the upwards sloping lot and features a series of simple aluminum sliding windows, while the east elevation is built to the lot line and is entirely masked by the adjacent building which mirrors the subject property.

The only permitted exterior alteration was a reroofing permit filed in 2013 to replace the tar-and-gravel roof. Based on visual documentation it appears the garage doors were replaced at some point without the benefit of a building permit. At some point the Thinline wood siding that was the original cladding material for the solid core and portions of the west elevation was replaced with wood shingles to match the balcony. In January, 2016 a permit was filed for the following work, "enclose exterior deck & entry in front, interior remodeling bathrooms & kitchen, electrical & plumbing, added habitable space in bedroom, living room area and entry." Although this permit has not been approved it appears the construction has already begun and exterior materials have been removed.

Pre-Existing Historic Rating / Survey

The subject property is not currently listed in any local, state or national historical register, and has not been included in any qualified historic resource survey adopted by the City of San Francisco. The building is considered a "Category B" (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) property for the purposes of the Planning Department's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review procedures due to its age (constructed in 1964).

Neighborhood Context and Description

According to the San Francisco Property Information Map the subject property is located in the Diamond Heights neighborhood. The name "Diamond Heights" was given to the area comprised of Glen Canyon, Red Rock Hill, Gold Mine Hill, and Fairmount Hill by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in the mid-20th century.² Prior to redevelopment, throughout the 18th and 19th century, the Diamond Heights area was largely undeveloped, rural land. Before the arrival of Spanish missionaries in 1776, the area was home to the Muwekma Ohlone. The Yeluma tribe's Amuctac village was along Islais Creek, which runs through Glen Canyon, closer to the San Francisco Bay.³ After the arrival of the Spanish, the Diamond Heights area became a section of the much larger Rancho San Miguel. The Fairmount Tract was recorded in 1861 and Horner's Addition – a tract that reached the tops of Red Rock and Gold Mine Hills – was recorded in 1863.⁴ The Crocker Estate, which was formed to administer the estate of Charles Crocker, purchased a 166-acre site in 1889; the site included what would become Glen Park playground and a 21-acre area of Gold Mine Hill.⁵

Through the Spanish Mission Period to the mid-20th century, the area has been used for cattle grazing and dairy production.⁶ Although the beginnings of residential urban development appeared in the Fairmount

² The following history of Diamond Heights is largely adapted from the Diamond Heights historic context statement prepared in 2017 as part of a summer internship project.

³ <http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!glen-canyon/c1cvj>

⁴ 1896 Homestead Map from David Rumsey Map Collection. <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>

⁵ "The Hills of San Francisco: Gold Mine Hill has legends...plans." *San Francisco Chronicle*. July 28, 1958. According to this article, the titles for the Crocker Estate's land in Diamond Heights was destroyed in the 1906 Fire and Earthquake and proof of ownership had never been reestablished. However, the Crocker Estate continued to pay taxes on the land and the ownership wasn't challenged. In 1957, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency acquired the land in an out of court settlement after initiating eminent domain proceedings.

⁶ <http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!diamond-heights/c114v>;
https://findery.com/Tramps_of_SF/notes/why-the-cow-on-the-sign-at-the-entrance-to-glen-canyon;
[http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!Elise Beneke Tietz with Cow, 1909/zoom/mainPage/i01206](http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!Elise+Beneke+Tietz+with+Cow,+1909/zoom/mainPage/i01206)

Tract, Horner's Addition, and Crocker Estate's Glen Park Terrace, scattered ranch houses and buildings characterized most of the Rancho San Miguel area. The Good Brothers Dairy operated out of a building in Glen Canyon near the current site of Glenridge Cooperative Nursery until it burned down in the 1930s. Cattle from the nearby Christopher Dairy also grazed in the area around O'Shaughnessy Boulevard, further reinforcing the notion that Glen Canyon and the surrounding hilly terrain of what would be known as Diamond Heights was a pastoral rural setting.⁷

Around the turn of the twentieth century, streetcar suburbs such as Noe Valley and Glen Park were developing on the eastern and southern edges of the Glen Canyon area. The platting of Horner's Addition and the Fairmount Tract were a classic gridiron, which was rational and acceptable for these flatter valley neighborhoods. Historic maps illustrate the continued gridiron platting of hypothetical streets across the hilly topography of Diamond Heights. Just after the turn of the 20th century, Daniel Burnham, the nationally known École des Beaux Arts-trained architect of the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition (1893) and father of the City Beautiful movement, took up residence on the saddle of Twin Peaks in order to design a master plan for San Francisco. The "Burnham Report of 1905" addressed planning of the Diamond Heights area by reimagining the streets as curvilinear roads that worked in concert with the natural topography of the landscape rather than the typical gridiron layout. He also proposed a huge park – at least three times the size of Golden Gate Park – called Merced Park to extend from the Rancho San Miguel area out to the ocean and present-day Lake Merced.

Just the next year, the 1906 Fire and Earthquake devastated the City of San Francisco. Newspaper articles from 1908 suggest that some refugees took up residence in the Glen Canyon area and subsequently significant suburban development took place in Noe Valley and Glen Park – just at the edges of the Diamond Heights area. In the chaos that followed the 1906 Fire and Earthquake, Burnham's 1905 Report was largely forgotten. Diamond Heights was still mostly cow pasture at this time, but a few quarries were also active. Between the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Gary Brothers quarried in San Francisco – including in Telegraph Hill, Corona Heights, and Diamond Heights at the present-day sites of Billy Goat Hill and Douglass Playground. A 1938 aerial map of San Francisco clearly illustrates the rural cow pastures and two quarries that dominate the landscape, as well as the neighborhood development in Noe Valley, Glen Park, Fairmount Heights, and Miraloma Park that form a boundary around the Diamond Heights area. Up until the beginning of the redevelopment project in 1950, the quarries were still extant and two one-acre quarries on Red Rock Hill were still being operated by two paving contractors, the Fay Improvement Company and the Rosenberg Brothers.⁸

Diamond Heights is defined by its steep topography and incredible views which made it ideal for cow pastures, quarries and picnics, but very difficult to build on. The four main natural features that characterize Diamond Heights are: Red Rock Hill (690 feet), Gold Mine Hill (680 feet), Fairmount Hill (540 feet) and Glen Canyon (depths down to approximately 250 feet). Red Rock Hill is named after the Franciscan chert, or "red rock," which was being quarried in the area. Fairmount Hill is so-named for the homestead development that encompassed it the Fairmount Tract. Gold Mine Hill's name seems to be a result of rumors of the discovery of gold on the hill. Rancho San Miguel contained just a few ranch buildings and dirt tracks, but the Fairmount Tract and Horner's Addition were platted out in a gridiron fashion even as they extended into the hilly terrain of Diamond Heights. Although the platting appeared

⁷ <http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!glen-canyon/c1cvj>

⁸ <http://glenparkhistory.wix.com/glenparkhistory#!diamond-heights/c1l4v>

on many historic maps and development had begun in the flatter valley areas, the steep hillsides of Diamond Heights remained largely undeveloped into the beginning of the twentieth century due to the impractical nature of developing up the hillside. Development of Diamond Heights would only take place after the entire neighborhood was designated as an official Redevelopment Area by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was established in 1948 with the legal authority granted by the California Community Redevelopment Act of 1945 in order to address real and perceived conditions of blight through economic redevelopment, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The agency was initially headed by Joseph L. Alioto and later for a brief period was run by Eugene Riordan, but neither individual would impart a lasting legacy on the Redevelopment Agency like the director that would follow them. In 1959, Mayor George Christopher asked M. Justin Herman, a self-proclaimed bureaucrat, to take over as director of the Redevelopment Agency. Herman had previously headed the regional Housing and Home Finance Agency and served as Director of San Francisco Redevelopment Agency until his death in 1971.⁹ Like the concept of redevelopment, Herman has a polarized legacy; proponents of redevelopment saw him as a champion of well-designed public projects and lauded his ability to get things done, whereas his opponents saw him as the embodiment of the racial and economic injustice suffered during "slum removal."¹⁰

Diamond Heights was initially designated as a redevelopment area in 1950 and a revised plan with a smaller project boundary "Area B-1" was adopted in 1952. After delay due to the court battle over the definition of "blight" in *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency v. Hayes*, the site was cleared and prepared for disposition and development which began in 1961. The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area was "fiscally closed out" on September 27, 1978, but some construction continued until 1983.¹¹ Prior to redevelopment, Diamond Heights had a population of just 374. After the completion of 1804 regular market rate housing units and 458 "low to moderate income" housing units during redevelopment, the population grew to 7,300.¹² In addition to the 2,263 new housing units, the project also included 70 "retention-rehabilitation" units, which were the homes that existed before redevelopment and were allowed to remain on condition of meeting the design, health and safety requirements of the redevelopment plan.¹³

Redesigning new streets was perhaps the core, underlying project in Diamond Heights. The economic dislocation and disuse of the area due to gridiron streets allowed the area to be classified as blighted, and the new curvilinear streets exemplified the suburban, picturesque residential neighborhood as first imagined by Daniel Burnham and brought to life by Vernon DeMars. The Diamond Heights area was so named for the hilly terminus of Diamond Street and inspired the names of the new streets in Red Rock and Gold Mine Hills. The major thoroughfare Veteran Boulevard was renamed Diamond Heights Boulevard. East of Diamond Heights Boulevard the older streets incorporated into the project area mostly

⁹ Habert, David. "Fifty Years of Redevelopment." *SPUR Urbanist* (March 1, 1999). <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-03-01/fifty-years-redevelopment>

¹⁰ Hartman, Chester. *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.; Miller, Paul T. *The Postwar Struggle for Civil Rights: African Americans in San Francisco, 1945-1975*. Studies in African American History and Culture. New York: Routledge, 2009.

¹¹ San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. *Redevelopment Program '92-93'*, 89.

¹² Ibid, 91.

¹³ Ibid, 91.

retained their historic names. West of Diamond Heights Boulevard, the new streets are all named after jewels and minerals – Topaz, Amber, Amethyst, Carnelian, Quartz, Turquoise, Jade, Cameo – or geological formations – Ora and Crag; appropriately, all these new streets were named to reflect the ambition of the Redevelopment Project Area to create a cohesive neighborhood with a distinct identity.¹⁴

Since the Redevelopment Agency wanted to maintain tight control over the sale, development, and construction of Diamond Heights to ensure success and non-speculation, they also developed a phased development schedule. The Agency's three stage plan broke the development area down into smaller geographic areas: Stage 1 was the northern area around Gold Mine Hill, including the Neighborhood Center, Stage 2 was the southeastern area around Fairmount Hill and small select portions of Gold Mine Hill, and Stage 3 was primarily Gold Mine Hill. Each stage was further broken down into the same timeline: acquisition, relocation, demolition, site improvement, and disposition. This phased system not only allowed the Agency to set targeted goals, but it meant that they could concentrate their efforts and regulate their revenue stream. Disposition, or the sale of parcels to developers and individuals, provided the Agency with revenue to spend on the next phase of development. Additionally, with this staged plan houses wouldn't sit empty and people could move in and start to form a community. Although the three stage plan was delayed for a number of years due to the *Redevelopment Agency vs. Hayes* court case, analysis of construction dates throughout Diamond Heights suggests that development of the Project Area adhered to a three pronged development approach.

After the initial site preparation and regrading, development began in Diamond Heights in 1961 with the announcement of the Red Rock Hill Competition and the first auction of parcels of land to developers and individuals on May 9, 1961. Stage 1 of development was focused on Red Rock Hill, located at the northernmost section of Diamond Heights.¹⁵ During this stage about 250 single-family residential units were completed or under construction, most of the Neighborhood Center commercial spaces were completed, along with two of the three churches within the Project Area. The Diamond Heights Fire Station on Fairmount Hill was also constructed during this first phase of development.

The initial emphasis on construction of the Neighborhood Center was an effort to establish a core and community hub for new residents, and to define the suburban-like character of the development. Development of the Red Rock Hill area west of Duncan Street in the short, approximately three year, timeframe was possible because most of the residences were constructed by merchant builders who were experienced at mass-producing housing tracts. By working on larger tracts of houses, construction crews had the space to work with minimal concern for disturbing neighbors. After these Red Rock Hill tracts were constructed, developers began to see the return on their investment as houses sold relatively quickly.

Major players during Stage 1 included Eichler Homes, Inc., Galli Construction Co., Alvin Corporation, and San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. Eichler, Galli, and Alvin Corporation constructed detached and semi-detached single family homes, duplexes, and townhouses along the secondary streets of Red Rock Hill overlooking Glen Canyon. San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. was responsible for the development of the commercial sites at the Neighborhood Center and the first condominiums on Red Rock Hill. Some

¹⁴ Cameo is a piece of jewelry. Ora is the Old English for ore. Crag refers to the rocky outcrop at the intersection of the cul-de-sac and Diamond Heights Boulevard.

¹⁵ Additionally, fewer than fifteen individual family residences were developed on Fairmount Hill to the south.

merchant builders and developers, such as Galli Construction Co., B.R.B. Homes, and Alvin Corporation (later called Hayman Brothers) would reinvest in the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project by developing large sections of Gold Mine Hill.

The subject property is located within Stage 1, which was largely developed by Joseph Eichler and Galli Homes and took place along Amber Drive, Amethyst Way, Turquoise Way and up to the intersection of Duncan Street and Diamond Heights Boulevard. The subject property was one of a number of different housing types developed by Eichler that were all designed by Claude Oakland for Diamond Heights. The Plan U-1, the model name of the subject property, was utilized along with model U-3 (a one-story over garage version of U-1), for steeply upward sloping lots along Amber Drive and both types feature prominent street-facing balconies to take advantage of the views afforded by the existing topography. Oftentimes these two models were constructed in mirrored pairs so as to function as duplexes sharing a party wall. Models L-2 and L-3 were located along the northern edge of Amethyst Way and Amber Drive and feature a two-story massing setback behind a single-car garage and adjacent open courtyard. Oakland also designed model D-1 for downward sloping lots along the south side of Amber Drive, the eastern edge of Cameo Way, and along a portion of Duncan Street. While Model D-1 was still two stories it was built into the landscape so as to maintain the view for neighboring properties across the street.

CEQA Historical Resource(s) Evaluation

Step A: Significance

Under CEQA section 21084.1, a property qualifies as a historic resource if it is "listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources." The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources or not included in a local register of historical resources, shall not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may qualify as a historical resource under CEQA.

Individual	Historic District/Context
Property is individually eligible for inclusion in a California Register under one or more of the following Criteria:	Property is eligible for inclusion in a California Register Historic District/Context under one or more of the following Criteria:
Criterion 1 - Event: ☐ Yes ☒ No	Criterion 1 - Event: ☒ Yes ☐ No
Criterion 2 - Persons: ☐ Yes ☒ No	Criterion 2 - Persons: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Criterion 3 - Architecture: ☐ Yes ☒ No	Criterion 3 - Architecture: ☒ Yes ☐ No
Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: ☐ Yes ☒ No	Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: ☐ Yes ☒ No
Period of Significance: n/a	Period of Significance: 1962-1965 ☒ Contributor ☐ Non-Contributor

Based on the information provided in the Historical Resource Evaluation prepared by Garavalia Architecture (dated March 21, 2017), and information found in the Planning Department files, Planning staff find that the subject building is located within Diamond Heights Stage 1 historic district eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 as an important component of the larger Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area that had a major impact on San Francisco's built environment, and Criterion 3 as a cohesive large scale tract development of Modern residences developed by some of San

Francisco's most important architects and developers. The period of significance is 1962-1965 and reflects the general construction period of Stage 1 of the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area.

Criterion 1: It 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.

To be eligible under the event criterion, the building cannot merely be associated with historic events or trends, but must have a specific association to be considered significant. Staff finds that the subject property is not individually eligible for its association with the development of Diamond Heights as it was one of many tract houses erected in the immediate neighborhood as part of Stage 1 of the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area and is not individually distinguishable in that regard. The subject property was not the first building to be developed on the block and it cannot be established that it would be individually eligible for its associations with the broad pattern of local or regional history.

However, the subject property is located within a California Register-eligible historic district. The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area is associated with redevelopment in San Francisco that had a major impact on the built and cultural landscape of San Francisco in the mid-20th century. The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area was one of the first projects initiated by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and was somewhat unique in that it involved development of previously undeveloped land rather than "slum" removal that took place as part of other redevelopment projects throughout the city. "Redevelopment" and "urban renewal" were planning theories based on Modernist ideals of design and planning that were put into practice by redevelopment agencies nationwide and had a significant effect on most major metropolitan areas. In the 1960s and 1970s, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency greatly altered the urban landscape of San Francisco with major redevelopment projects such as the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area. Diamond Heights is part of this important mid-20th century legacy during which major urban changes were driven by this local government agency.

The district boundaries encompass the residential development that took place during the first phase of development known as Stage 1. The boundary of the historic district encompasses the single-family homes located along Amethyst, Cameo, Quartz, and Turquoise ways, along with those along Amber Drive and the south side of a select portion of Duncan Street. Also included within the historic district are the multi-family condos located between Red Rock Way and Diamond Heights Boulevard that were constructed as part of Stage 1. Although the historic district could potentially be extended to include other parts of the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Area, Stage 1 represents a discrete period of the first phase of residential development within Diamond Heights that is also centered within a specific geographic boundary. The boundaries of the historic district are also formed by the surrounding topography and location of neighboring institutional buildings constructed as part of Stage 1.

It is therefore determined that the subject property is not individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 1 however it is a contributor to an eligible historic district.

Criterion 2: It is associated with the lives of persons important in our local, regional or national past.

None of the owners or occupants have been identified as being important to local, regional, or national history. The house has been in the same family since it was originally constructed in 1964. In 1966 it was purchased by Jack Poy Wong and Alice Toy Wong. Jack was a corporate lawyer and Alice was a licensed nutritionist. The Wongs raised two children, Jackson and Shelley, in the house and it is currently still

owned by the Alice Wong Family trust. There do not appear to be any significant associations with any of the owners or occupants and the subject property.

Therefore the subject property is not eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

The subject property is representative of the types of Modernist architecture found in Diamond Heights and was designed and developed by Joseph Eichler and Claude Oakland, two individuals known for bringing Modern architecture to the masses in California. In Diamond Heights the pair worked to transform their suburban housing typology of low-scale detached single-family homes that Eichler had successfully developed throughout the Bay Area to meet the unique demands of a more dense housing typology necessary in the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area. Although Eichler did not have a background in architecture, he hired top modern architecture firms of the day to produce efficient Modern residential architecture that could be developed on an industrial scale.

On the West Coast, Joseph Eichler and his company Eichler Homes, Inc. rose to prominence as a merchant builder with a niche market of high-style tract houses. Unlike most merchant builders, Eichler hired progressive architects to design his houses. Although he sacrificed some profit by hiring these architects, Eichler became well-known and respected for the quality and contemporary design of his suburban developments. Eichler also hired landscape architects such as Thomas Church and Sasaki, Walker & Associates to design surrounding outdoor features. After an uninspiring career in the egg and butter business, Eichler made his way in to the housing business in his late 40s with no prior experience in design or construction. Many people advised Eichler against Modernist design because they believed it wouldn't sell, but Eichler is perhaps the only large-scale merchant builder to have successfully merged mass-produced housing and regional high-Modernism for middle class consumption.¹⁶ Eichler built over 11,000 houses in California, primarily in the Bay Area between 1949 and his death in 1974.

Eichler hired progressive architects whose careers included nationally renowned work. Eichler began his foray in Modernist design working with Claude Oakland, who at the time was working in the firm of Anshen + Allen and is responsible for the design of many of Eichler's suburban developments. Eichler also worked with Los Angeles-based architect A. Quincy Jones and his firm Jones & Emmons. Later on in his career, Eichler collaborated with Tibor Fescs from the office of Neill Smith Architects on the luxury Summit Tower in Russian Hill.¹⁷ While Diamond Heights was a tract development of single-family homes similar to his earlier work down the Peninsula (albeit on a much hillier terrain), his later San Francisco projects were his first attempt at high-density urban construction and led to his eventual downfall. These later urban projects were constructed amidst the social turmoil of the 1960s, a declining

¹⁶ This point is well-argued by Paul Adamson in his article on Eichler; Adamson, Paul. "California Modernism and the Eichler homes." *The Journal of Architecture* 6, no. 1 (2001):1-25. DOI: 10.1080/13602360010024804. Roger Montgomery, a 20th century Bay Area architecture critic also praised Eichler for this particular accomplishment in his 1976 essay; Montgomery Roger. "Mass Producing Bay Area Architecture." *Bay Area Houses*. Edited by Sally Woodbridge. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976. 229-264.

¹⁷ The Geneva Terraces and Towers in Visitacion Valley were demolished in 1998, but all the other San Francisco buildings constructed by Eichler remain extant. For more on Eichler and Oakland's San Francisco work outside of Diamond Heights see: Brown, *San Francisco Modern Context Statement*, 129-32.

population due to suburban flight, and a depressed rental market, and thus directly contributed to the eventual bankruptcy of Eichler Homes, Inc. in 1966.

While Claude Oakland's professional career is closely tied with that of Eichler's, he was also affiliated with other well-known architects. Oakland received his B.S. in Architecture at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1941 and served on the U.S. Navy's Construction Battalion from 1943 to 1946.¹⁸ During his time in the Navy he met Bruce Goff, a friend and disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright. After the war Goff convinced Oakland to follow him to work in his newly established office in Berkeley rather than continuing his education at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. By 1950 Oakland was working in Anshen + Allen's office and it was there that the working relationship between Eichler and Oakland was formed. Although Oakland worked in Anshen + Allen's firm for ten years, he sought independence from the firm in 1960 when he established his own architectural practice (taking Eichler as one of his main clients). While Oakland's firm was responsible for numerous low scale suburban style single family tract homes developed by Eichler, he also worked to design the larger scale apartment buildings such as the Laguna Heights apartments in the Western Addition and the Geneva Terrace Apartments in Visitacion Valley. While Claude Oakland is largely credited with the designs his firm turned out, his firm would not have been successful without the partnership of his longtime business associate and friend Kinji Imada. Imada started out as a staff architect in Oakland's firm but was made partner in 1977 and was largely responsible for the attention to detail required to execute the Modern residential designs on a mass scale in an efficient and economical manner.¹⁹ While the firm worked on other projects in the Bay Area, they are largely known for their close collaboration with Joseph Eichler in bringing Modern residential architecture to the masses throughout the Bay Area and California.

Eichler's homes in Diamond Heights are unique for a number of reasons: the Diamond Heights project was Eichler's first project in a dense urban environment, this was his only single-family residential project in an urban environment, and Oakland's design of the houses are uniquely adapted to the unusually hilly terrain and small urban lots. Eichler hired Claude Oakland to design six floor plans for the 104 single-family houses he built in Diamond Heights. Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes collaborated with Oakland to design the landscaping of these tracts.

The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area is associated with Modernist architecture and design – especially regional idioms of Modernist design including Second Bay and Third Bay styles and regional California expressions of Midcentury modern – which came into popularity after World War II and into the 1970s. The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area demonstrates the work of master builders and merchant builders working in regional Modernist styles. The planning and development of the area is tied to Modernist theories of design, which is also exhibited in the architecture. Regional Modernist styles included the Second and Third Bay Traditions, as well as particularly California and San Francisco takes on Midcentury Modern design – which often included Japanese influences and ranch style plans.

¹⁸ "San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement", (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning Department, January 12, 2011), 256-257. The following biography of Oakland is adapted from this source unless otherwise noted.

¹⁹ Dave Weinstein, "Remembering the Serene Architect Kinji Imada – a quiet presence who made sure the Eichlers got built," Eichlernetwork.com, <http://www.eichlernetwork.com/article/memorial-architect-kinji-imada-1927-2005?page=0,1>. Accessed October 25, 2017.

The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area is the only Modernist neighborhood in San Francisco and contains the highest concentration of Modernist residential resources in the city.

Although the subject property was developed by a prominent developer and was designed by a well-known master architect, it was not a singular design and was one of many identical homes developed by Eichler and designed by Oakland. Therefore the subject property is not individually eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3 but is a district contributor to the Diamond Heights Stage 1 historic district as a tract home designed by Claude Oakland and developed by Joseph Eichler.

Criterion 4: It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Based upon a review of information in the Departments records, the subject property is not significant under Criterion 4, which is typically associated with archaeological resources. The building is unlikely to yield information important to history, such as evidence of unique building materials or methods.

It is therefore determined that 261 Amber Drive is not eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 4. This assessment does not address archeological resources.

Step B: Integrity

To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register of Historical Resources criteria, but it also must have integrity. Integrity is defined as "the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's period of significance." Historic integrity enables a property to illustrate significant aspects of its past. All seven qualities do not need to be present as long the overall sense of past time and place is evident.

The subject property retains integrity from the period of significance noted in Step A:

Location:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks	Setting:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks
Association:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks	Feeling:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks
Design:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks	Materials:	☐ Retains	☒ Lacks
Workmanship:	☒ Retains	☐ Lacks			

The Diamond Heights Stage 1 historic district retains sufficient integrity such that it is able to convey its importance from the period of significance. The vast majority of the homes were constructed between the years 1962-1965 as part of the redevelopment project and only a few houses were constructed prior to redevelopment. While some other homes have seen alterations such that they would no longer contribute to the historic district, for the most part alterations have been limited to easily reversible alterations such as the replacement of garage doors and windows. Contributors to the historic district are those properties constructed between the years 1962-1965 that retain sufficient integrity to convey their significance as Modern tract houses built as part of Stage 1 of the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area.

261 Amber Drive would retain sufficient integrity prior to the most recent unpermitted work such that it is able to convey its significance as a Modernist tract home designed by Claude Oakland for Joseph Eichler as part of the Stage 1 Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area. Previous alterations were minimal and included minor siding alterations and a roof replacement that did not modify the general shape or form of the building in any way. Larger circulation patterns of the site and fenestration were not removed or altered.

Step C: Character Defining Features

If the subject property has been determined to have significance and retains integrity, please list the character-defining features of the building(s) and/or property. A property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity in order to avoid significant adverse impacts to the resource. These essential features are those that define both why a property is significant and when it was significant, and without which a property can no longer be identified as being associated with its significance.

Character-defining features of the 1 Diamond Heights Stage 1 historic district include:

- Unique topography of landscape formed by the regrading of Red Rock Hill
- Curvilinear streets that correspond to the hilly topography of Diamond Heights
- Scale and massing of low scale single-family homes and taller duplexes that privilege viewsheds (taller buildings on upward sloping lots, low scale buildings on downward sloping lots)
- Variety of Modern and Late Modern architectural styles developed by different developers and architects (the majority of the houses were developed by Eichler and Galli Homes)
- Use of repetitive floorplans (either paired or mirrored to break up the rhythm along the street)
- Shallow unfenced front yards with minimal planting areas around driveways
- Use of Modern construction materials such as simple wood and shingle siding, aluminum sliding windows, and simple canopy-style wood garage doors.

Character-defining features of 261 Amber Street (Claude Oakland-designed Model U-1 Home) include:

- Steeply upward sloping topography of lot
- Mirrored pair composition of units
- 3 story asymmetrical massing of balconies and core
- Projecting double balconies
- Monumental exposed demising wall between mirrored units
- Recessed side entrance accessed via open stairways
- Floor to ceiling aluminum frame sliding glass doors and fixed windows on upper two stories at the balcony area
- Ground floor double garages with solid wood canopy-style doors
- Overhanging eave with exposed roof beams at upper balcony
- Siding material of painted thin vertical beveled redwood siding, and balconies clad in unpainted cedar shingles

The other tract homes within the historic district would have different character-defining features depending on the different model types and developer. Although further research would be necessary to determine the character-defining features for all resources within the identified district, the following character-defining features have been identified for two of the more numerous models developed by Eichler Homes, Inc.:

Models L-2 and L-3 (Developed by Eichler Homes, Inc. and designed by Claude Oakland)

- Two-story massing with projecting garage and side courtyard located at front of property
- Flat roof
- Narrow three part aluminum-frame windows (most of which form a unique triangular bay window)
- Thin vertical redwood siding on visible elevations

- Garage doors of simple solid wood canopy-style doors with adjacent sidelight, solid courtyard entrance doors with sidelight
- Unpainted CMU courtyard wall

Model D-1 (Developed by Eichler Home, Inc. and designed by Claude Oakland)

- Stepped two-story massing with garage and trellised courtyard located at front of property
- Flat roof with projecting eaves and exposed roof beams at upper level
- Thin vertical redwood siding on visible elevations and aluminum frame windows
- Large glazed opening revealing double height foyer
- Garage doors of simple solid wood canopy style, solid courtyard entrance doors with sidelight
- Sidelights framing location of courtyard

CEQA Historic Resource Determination

- ☒ Historical Resource Present
- ☐ Individually-eligible Resource
- ☒ Contributor to an eligible Historic District
- ☐ Non-contributor to an eligible Historic District

☐ No Historical Resource Present

PART I: SENIOR PRESERVATION PLANNER REVIEW

Signature: 
Pilar LaValley, Acting Principal Preservation Planner

Date: 6/13/18

cc: Sylvia Jimenez, SW Planner, Current Planning
Rachna Rachna, Enforcement Planner



261 Amber Drive, view N of primary façade (south elevation), prior to unpermitted exterior alterations that took place between July 2015 and June 2016, (Google street view)



261 Amber Drive, view N of primary façade (south elevation), at is appears today, (Google maps)



View SE of Amber Drive, south of the intersection at Quartz Way (SF Planning).



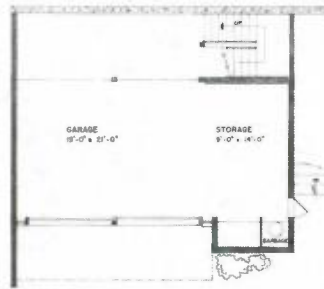
View NE of Amethyst Way, west of the intersection at Amber Drive (SF Planning).

FOUR BEDROOMS...TWO AND A HALF BATHS....MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM....

PLAN U-1

CLAUDE OAKLAND
ARCHITECT

AREA ANALYSIS	
FIRST FLOOR	882 Square feet
SECOND FLOOR	960 Square feet
TOTAL LIVING AREA	1842 Square feet
BALCONIES	284 Square feet
STORAGE and HEATING	60 Square feet
GARAGE and STORAGE	650 Square feet
ENTRANCE COURT	270 Square feet
TOTAL	3226 Square feet



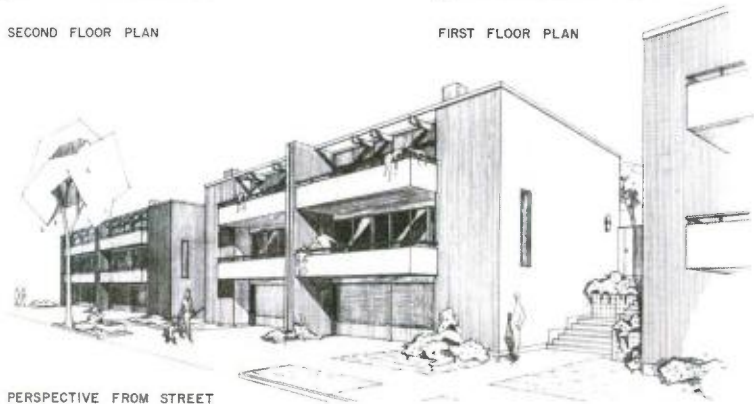
GARAGE LEVEL PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

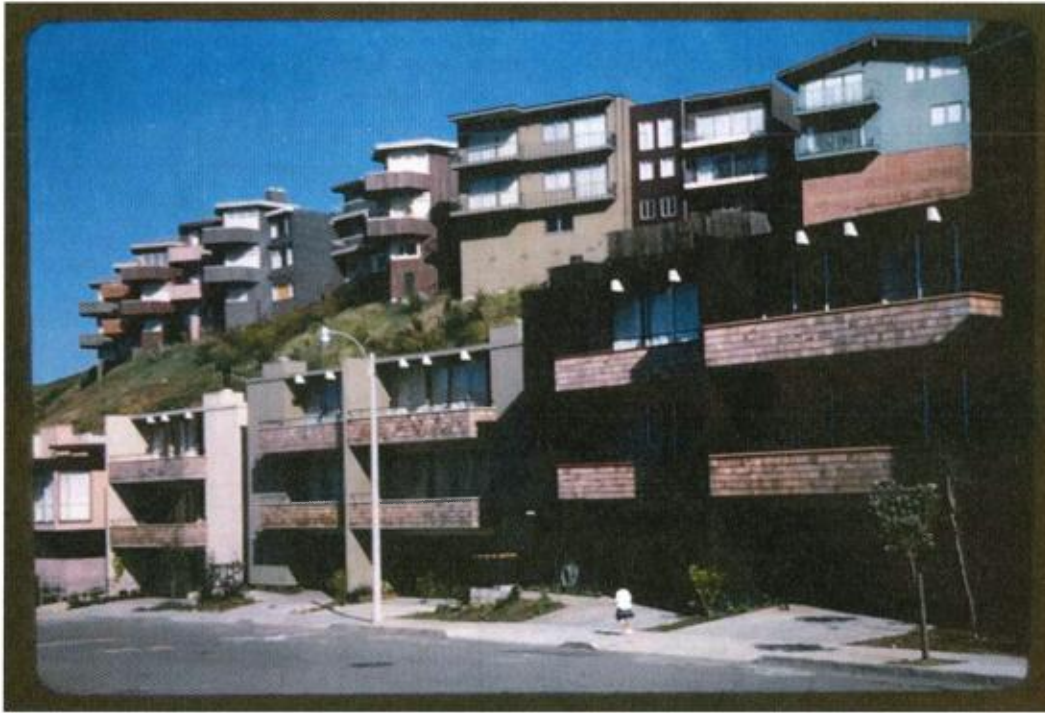


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

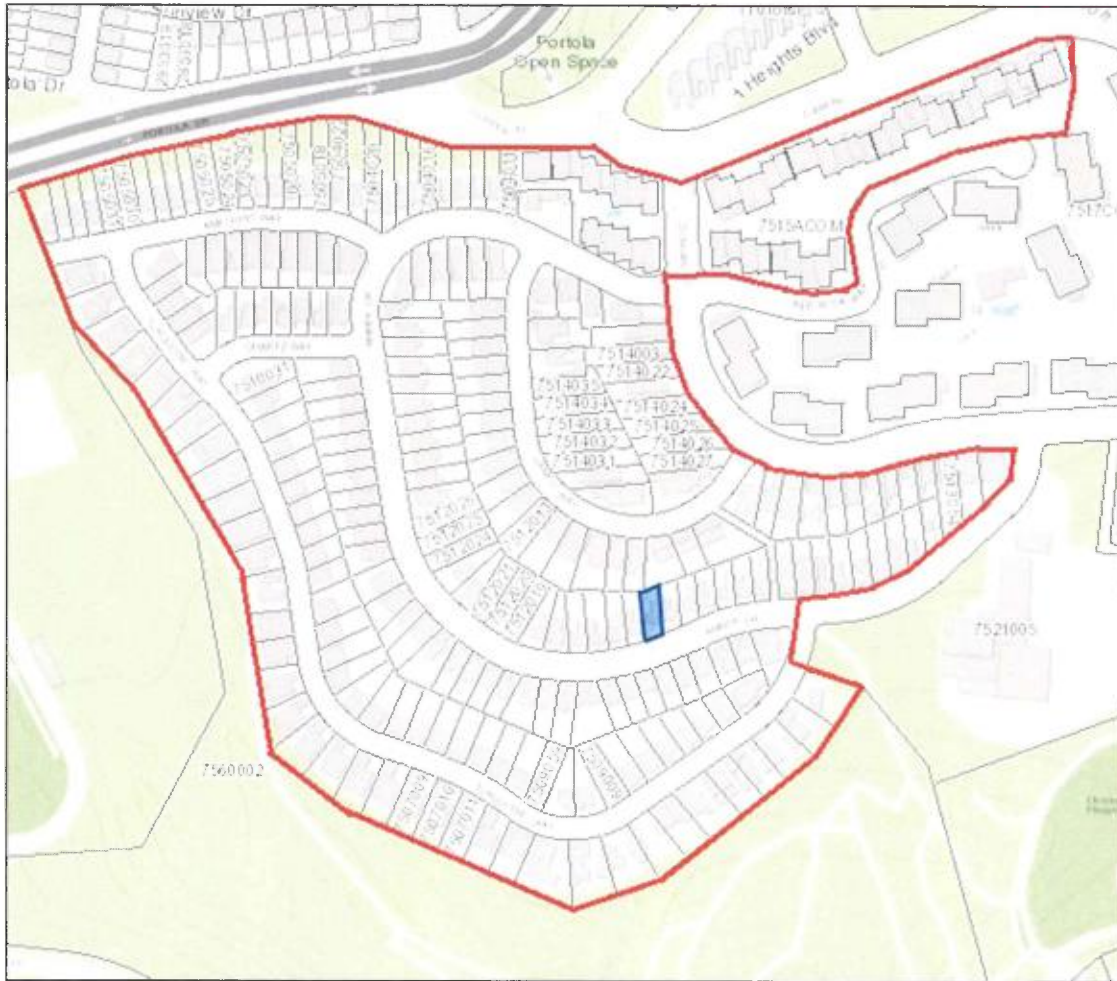


PERSPECTIVE FROM STREET

Floorplan and rendering of Claude Oakland-designed Model U-1 single-family homes for the Eichler tracts in the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area (Retrieved from the personal collection of Bob Pullum).



Historic photo of completed U-1 homes on Amber Drive taken circa 1960s. (Color slide: c. 1960s, San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection – SFRA Diamond Heights)



Drive), is highlighted in blue.