



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

## Historic Resource Evaluation Response

1650 Mission St.  
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*MEA Planner:* Lisa Gibson  
*Project Address:* 208 Dolores Street  
*Block/Lot:* 3557/063  
*Case No.:* 2003.1287E  
*Date of Review:* December 12, 2007  
*Planning Dept. Reviewer:* Sophie Middlebrook  
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**PROPOSED PROJECT**       Demolition       Alteration

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes the demolition of the existing structure on Assessor's Lot 063 on Block 3557, and the construction of a new, four-story addition with thirteen dwelling units and seventeen off-street parking spaces on the north portion of the lot, on the corner of Dolores and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

### PRE-EXISTING HISTORIC RATING / SURVEY

The existing building on the subject property was constructed in 1904 as the rectory for the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church, designed in the same year. The church structure was destroyed by fire in 1993. The subject property, including the church (which no longer stands) was included in both the Here Today Survey, as well as the 1976 Architectural Survey. Although the subject property is not included on the National or the California Registers, its recorded date of construction makes it a "Category B" building for the purposes of CEQA review by the Planning Department.

### HISTORIC DISTRICT / NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The subject property is located on the corner of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Dolores Street, within the Upper Market neighborhood, immediately adjacent to the Mission District on the west side of Dolores Street. The subject property is within an RM-2 (Residential, Mixed, Moderate Density) zoning district and a 40-x height and bulk district.

A range of building types, uses, and architectural styles characterizes the west side of Dolores Street at this location. On the two lots immediately south of the adjacent property are San Francisco Landmarks 67 and 68, known as the Tanforan Cottages, constructed in 1849 and 1851. The two large lots south of the Tanforan Cottages contain infill construction that dates to the 1960's, while the southern portion of the Dolores Street block face has large dwellings constructed in the early twentieth century. The north portion of the subject lot is vacant, and no infill has been constructed on the site of the former church. Buildings constructed in the very early twentieth century characterize the north side of 15<sup>th</sup> Street at this location. It appears that on both Dolores and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets at this location there is a concentration of two- and three-story residential buildings constructed between 1903 and 1911. It appears that the subject property is located within a potential historic district for the purposes of CEQA.

1. **California Register Criteria of Significance:** Note, a building may be an historical resource if it meets any of the California Register criteria listed below. If more information is needed to make such a determination please specify what information is needed. (*This determination for California Register Eligibility is made based on existing data and research provided to the Planning Department by the above named preparer / consultant and other parties. Key pages of report and a photograph of the subject building are attached.*)

Event: or  Yes  No  Unable to determine  
Persons: or  Yes  No  Unable to determine  
Architecture: or  Yes  No  Unable to determine  
Information Potential:  Further investigation recommended.  
District or Context:  Yes, may contribute to a potential district or significant context

If Yes; Period of significance: c. 1903-1911

Notes: Below is an evaluation of the subject property against the criteria for inclusion on the California Register; it appears that the subject property is eligible for the Register.

*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;*

As noted above, the subject property was constructed in 1903-1904 on the same lot and at the same time as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church. The subject property was constructed immediately prior to the 1906 earthquake, and significantly, both the church (no longer extant) and the parsonage (the subject building) survived the earthquake and fires that destroyed much of the city after the earthquake. The subject property is significant due to its association with the Dolores Street fire line, a last barrier before the 1906 fires swept west through the Castro. The draft Historic Resource Evaluation submitted by the project sponsor recounts:

There were tales of heroism, including the defense of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church...As the Reverend Phillip Andreen was arming a *raggle-taggle* citizens' brigade with mops and milk buckets, a neighborhood blacksmith named John Rafferty noticed that - almost miraculously - the hydrant at Twentieth and Church was still working. Deeply fatigued firefighters dragged themselves and their equipment to the scene, and they worked through the night alongside 3,000 volunteers to battle the blaze to a standstill.

The great width of Dolores Street served as a firebreak for the raging inferno, but not surprisingly, flying embers and other blazing debris were dangers to be faced. One report noted that the fire destroyed the front fences of the neighboring Tanforan Cottages at 214 and 220 Dolores Street. Andreen and his parishioners

were certainly very intent in saving their newly constructed parsonage and church.<sup>1</sup>

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

The subject property was constructed as the parsonage and office for the clergy of the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church, constructed at the same time and adjacent to the subject property. As noted above, the church was destroyed by fire in 1993, and the subject building stands as the last remaining physical association with the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran congregation on the site. The draft Historic Resource Evaluation notes, "...this property was among the most prominent in the neighborhood. Emerging at the end of the nineteenth century from what had been a quarter of very mixed uses, this neighborhood became a center for Swedish-Lutheran culture and life within a neighborhood that was also populated by several other European groups."<sup>2</sup> The subject property is significant for its association with the Swedish-Lutheran culture, and specifically with the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church congregation.

*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 was designed by August Nordin, a Swedish immigrant with strong ties to the San Francisco Swedish-American community. Nordin also served as the architect for the adjacent church building. According to the obituary for Nordin in the January, 1936 edition of *The Architect and Engineer*, Nordin design over 300 buildings, many of them notable commercial and residential structures in San Francisco including the Swedish American Hall at 2174 Market Street, the Goodall Flats on Fulton Street, 100 Carl Street, 425 Cabrillo Street, the Whiteside Apartments (150 Franklin Street), the Cristobol Apartments (750 O'Farrell Street), the Altamont Hotel (3028 16<sup>th</sup> Street), and the building in which the Buena Vista Café is located, on the corner of Beach and Hyde Streets. Nordin is known to have designed two church buildings: the now destroyed Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Ebenezer Church originally located adjacent to the subject building on the subject property, and the Trinity English Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is still standing at 722 South Van Ness Avenue, south of 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The subject property is significant for its association with the architecture of August Nordin, a notable San Francisco architect.

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

It does not appear that the subject property is likely to yield information important to a better understanding of prehistory or history.

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<sup>1</sup> Lerner and Associates, "Draft Historic Resource Evaluation," November, 2004, Page 17. Available in the docket for Case Number 2003.1287E at the San Francisco Planning Department.

<sup>2</sup> Lerner and Associates, "Draft Historic Resource Evaluation," November, 2004, Page 4. Available in the docket for Case Number 2003.1287E at the San Francisco Planning Department.

2. **Integrity** is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register criteria, but it also must have integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted above:

**Location:**  Retains  Lacks  
**Association:**  Retains  Lacks  
**Design:**  Retains  Lacks  
**Workmanship:**  Retains  Lacks

**Setting:**  Retains  Lacks  
**Feeling:**  Retains  Lacks  
**Materials:**  Retains  Lacks

Notes:

It appears that much of the street facing exterior elevation of the subject property remains intact. The three and one-half story, wood-framed residential building with a hipped roof was designed in a modified Colonial Revival style. Distinctive façade elements such as the "Gothic-style Venetian" arches applied under the cornice remain, as does the half-domed entry hood over the recessed porch entrance. Original wood window sashes remain on the façade, as does the yellow brick that was used to construct the walls that flank the entry stairs. The single glass door and fixed single sash sidelights remain intact, as well as the applied cartouche decorative feature over the window above the porch. Pilasters that appear to be original also flank the window centered over the porch.

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3. **Determination** Whether the property is an "historical resource" for purposes of CEQA

No Resource Present ( Go to 6. below )

Historical Resource Present ( Continue to 4. )

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4. If the property appears to be an historical resource, whether the proposed project is consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards or if any proposed modifications would materially impair the resource (i.e. alter in an adverse manner those physical characteristics which justify the property's inclusion in any registry to which it belongs).

The project appears to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. ( Go to 6. below )

Optional:  See explanation below of how the project meets standards.

The project is NOT consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and is a significant impact as proposed. ( Continue to 5. if the project is an alteration )

Demolition is not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, and constitutes a significant adverse impact to the historic resource.

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5. Character-defining features of the building to be retained or respected in order to avoid a significant adverse effect by the project, presently or cumulatively, as modifications to the project

to reduce or avoid impacts. Please recommend conditions of approval that may be desirable to mitigate the project's adverse effects.

As noted above, demolition is not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Demolition by nature is considered a significant adverse impact.

To bring the impact of the proposed project to a level that is less than significant the original historic material, massing, and form of the subject building needs to be retained and restored. Where historic material has been damaged due to fire and neglect, historic features should be reconstructed in a manner consistent with the *Standards*. Revising the proposal in the following manner may bring the impact to a level that is less than significant:

1. Much of the subject building should be preserved, including the scale and form of the original detached subject building.
2. The north-facing exterior wall of the subject property should be retained and visible, perhaps by recessing the south side of the proposed addition in order to provide a deep view from Dolores Street of the original exterior north wall and the character-defining brick walls that flank the entrance stairs.
3. The hipped roof form of the existing structure should be retained, as well as a significant portion of the exterior walls of the north and south elevations.
4. A condition assessment should be conducted on the front building elevation, and any details that are in poor condition should be repaired or replaced in-kind, in a manner consistent with applicable *Standards*.
5. Documentation of the existing structure should be provided in the form of drawings that meet the standards of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS). HABS level drawings should be provided for each of the existing exterior elevations, as well as the proposed sections and detailed drawings that illustrate how the new addition will meet the historic structure.

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6. Whether the proposed project may have an adverse effect on off-site historical resources, such as adjacent historic properties.

Yes     No     Unable to determine

Notes: The subject property is located in a potential historic district, and is a contributor to the potential historic district. Much of the proposed infill construction appears to be compatible with the surrounding area; however, preservation of the free-standing, detached form of the subject building should be included in the proposal.

**PRESERVATION COORDINATOR REVIEW**

Signature:   
Mark Luellen, *Preservation Coordinator*

Date: 12-13-07

**CC:**

Sonya Banks, *Recording Secretary*, Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board  
Virnaliza Byrd / Historic Resource Impact Review File

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