

File No. 92.684L
Howard/26th Street Cottages
3274-3294 26th Street
1487-1499 South Van Ness Avenue
84-96 Virgil Street
Lots 13 and 14 within Assessor's Block 6526

SAN FRANCISCO

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 13559

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Howard/26th Street Cottages at 3274-3294 26th Street, 1487-1499 South Van Ness Avenue, 84-96 Virgil Street, Lots 13 and 14 in Assessor's Block 6526, as Landmark No. 206 pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was heard by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board at its Regular Meeting of May 19, 1993 and said Landmarks Board, after due consideration, has recommended approval of this proposal; and

WHEREAS, The Landmarks Board at its Regular Meeting of May 19, 1993 adopted a Case Report and initiated said Landmark after Public Testimony and Landmarks Board Comments on the above referenced nomination; and

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission, after due notice given held a Public Hearing on August 12, 1993 to consider the proposed designation and the Case Report of said Landmarks Board; and

WHEREAS, This Commission believes that the proposed Landmark has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value; and that the proposed designation would be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes and standards of the said Article 10;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, That this Landmarks Board does hereby recommend APPROVAL of the designation of the Howard/26th Street Cottages, being Lots 13 and 14 within Assessor's Block 6526;

Second, That the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 452 as adopted on May 19, 1993 which Resolution is incorporated herein and made a part thereof as though fully set forth;

Third, That the particular features that should be preserved are those shown in the photographs on file in Department of City Planning Docket No. 92.684L and described in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board's Case Report, in Section A, entitled "Architecture," Subsection No. 5, "Design" and in Section D "Integrity," Subsection No. 13 "Alterations," said photographs and Case Report are incorporated in this designating ordinance as though fully set forth.

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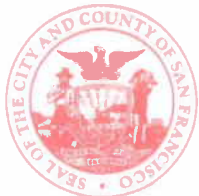
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the proposal for designation, with a copy of this Resolution, to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the City Planning Commission on August 19, 1993.

Linda Avery
Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Boldridge, Levine, Lowenberg, Martin, Prowler and Unobskey
NOES: None
ABSENT: Commissioner Fung
ADOPTED: August 19, 1993

VFM:mj:Howa26th.Res



LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

450 McALLISTER STREET, 4TH FLOOR • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

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FINAL CASE REPORT

DATE: August 12, 1993

HISTORIC BUILDING NAME: Howard/26th Street Cottages

OWNER: Jonathan Bulkley and Philip Ishimaru

ADDRESS: 3274-3294 26th Street
1487-1499 So. Van Ness Avenue
84-96 Virgil Street
(former address 2987-2999 Howard Street)

BLOCK & LOT: 6527/13 and 14

POPULAR BUILDING NAME: Howard/26th Street Cottages

ZONING: RM-1

ORIGINAL USE: Residences

ARCHITECT: Thomas B. Potter and George B. Campbell, Builders

CURRENT USE: Residences

CONSTRUCTION DATE:

STYLE: Craftsman

LANDMARK NO: 206 **LPAB VOTE:** 8-0

NUMBER OF STORIES: 2 plus attic

EXTERIOR MATERIALS: Clinker brick and cedar shingles

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: This building complex is significant as the only example of attached Craftsman row housing in San Francisco. Although row housing was prevalent throughout San Francisco in the late 19th century, most buildings were erected in the Italianate, Stick, or Queen Anne styles. The U.S. Craftsman movement in architecture was inspired by the Arts and Crafts philosophy, which became popular in Great Britain in the late 1800's. The major proponent of this philosophy was William Morris, a well-known artist, writer, designer, and socialist. Promoters of the U.S. Craftsman movement deplored the use of excessive ornamentation such as that employed in typical Victorian-style architecture, and instead embraced the notions of naturalness, hand craftsmanship, and simplicity in building design. Although Craftsman architecture and philosophy became very popular in the East Bay, and especially Berkeley at the turn of the century through organizations such as the Hillside Club, few Craftsman style houses were built in San Francisco before 1910.

CRITERIA**A. ARCHITECTURE**

1. **STYLE:** Craftsman. Two separate eight unit buildings with carefully scaled interior courtyard. The subject property is a unique example of Craftsman style architecture employed for multi-unit dwelling which provides a feeling of rusticity to vernacular housing on a busy urban corner.
2. **CONSTRUCTION TYPE/USE CATEGORY:** Wood frame, residential.
3. **CONSTRUCTION DATE:** 1905
4. **ARCHITECT:** Architect unknown. Built by TB Potter Realty Company. Thomas B. Potter, President and George B. Campbell, Sec. Potter and Campbell also had a separate contracting and building business. Thomas B. Potter was a native of Wisconsin, and George B. Campbell, his brother-in-law, was from Hamilton, Canada. They met in Stockton in 1885 when Campbell married Potter's sister Addie. Prior to the founding of the TB Potter Realty Co. in 1904, Campbell was a contractor and builder in Oakland, and later Alameda. According to his grandson, Co. R.P. Campbell, Jr., George B. Campbell had built and owned several houses in Northern California. However, the story goes he could not claim title to the houses after the deeds and records were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. Through the 1890's Potter had been a piano dealer in Oakland, as well as manager of the California Watch Club. In 1900 he and his family moved to Los Angeles where he worked as an advertising agent. In 1904, Thomas B. Potter moved back to San Francisco, founded the TB Potter Realty Co., and gained title to the Reus Tract (part of present-day Visitacion Valley). He also founded the Bay Shore Water Co., to provide water for residents of that subdivision. In 1906, Potter also acquired several miles of coastal property in Half Moon Bay, and developed a subdivision known as Arleta Park, which includes a street called Potter Avenue. After Campbell's death in 1907 Potter began two new real estate ventures from which he would amass a fortune. In Portland, Oregon he became a large real estate developer of a summer resort called Bayocean in Tillamook County. Bayocean was a sand spit which Potter developed into a flourishing resort, complete with a luxury hotel and natatorium. According to an article in the Oregon Daily Journal (11/11/14), Potter sold over 1600 lots in the Bayocean area. Potter also developed the subdivision of Portland known as Arleta, named for his daughter. Simultaneous with his development efforts in Oregon in 1907, Potter marketed and later owned the Marlborough Heights subdivision in Kansas City, MO. In 1910 he became ill and retired to Alameda. He died in 1916.
5. **DESIGN:** These attached Craftsman cottages contain many of the quintessential features of Craftsman architecture, and also many features typical of row housing. Two rows of eight attached two-story single-family dwellings extend along the Eastern and Western boundaries of the merged lots. The residential outdoor space at the rear of each dwelling forms a small, private courtyard area for each unit. The buildings are notable for clinker brick veneer at the ground floor with cedar shingles covering second floor and attic. There

are shallow mullioned bay windows on the second story, eyebrow dormer windows on the third story, and exposed rafters. There is a gambrel roof on the north and south side of each building, and a double high-pitched roof in the center of each building (facing east and west). The buildings contain recessed arched entryways commonly found in 19th century row housing. The variation of roof styles within this group of attached workers' cottages is fairly typical of row housing in cities such as New York and Philadelphia.

The attached cottages at 26th and So. Van Ness are an unusual American example of Craftsman design principles being applied to housing for the urban working class, rather than the suburban middle class. Unlike the parent English Arts and Crafts movement, which espoused a socialist, working-class philosophy, the U.S. Craftsman movement idealized the middle class. According to David Gebhard in California Design 1910, "the cornerstone of the Craftsman movement was a strong belief in a universal middle class which would spread itself out horizontally on the landscape" (p. 113). The canonical Craftsman house, as it was promoted in Stickley's Craftsman magazine, was a single story, detached, middle-class house, preferably located in a suburban or rural setting. Craftsman city houses did exist, but they were generally designed for lots which were surrounded by a garden or wooded area. Few if any immigrant working class families could afford to live in the suburbs, far from the docks and factories where they made their living; nor could they afford the "simple" exquisite hand workmanship that Craftsman houses incorporated. The separate entryways and the carefully scaled interior courtyard of these row houses provided and continue to provide to working people in the inner city the privacy and small open space essential to the Craftsman philosophy of house and home.

6. INTERIOR: Intact in some units. Although this review does not extend to the interior of the dwellings, the following should be noted. One unit, 3294 26th Street, retains most of the original materials and features typical of the Craftsman style of interior design. There is a coffered redwood ceiling in the living room, and original redwood picture frame moldings and wainscotting throughout the unit. There are several built-in redwood pantry drawers and a flour bin between the kitchen and dining room, and additional glass-enclosed built-in cabinets above a gas fireplace surrounded by brick. Finally, there are beautifully crafted redwood doors in all rooms, and mullioned bay windows in the upstairs bedrooms. Each unit has its own enclosed back porch, opening onto a small private yard.

B. HISTORIC CONTEXT

7. PERSONS: These attached Craftsman bungalows, and their lots were owned by several important San Francisco pioneers, architects, society women, real estate moguls, and financiers. In 1853 the lots upon which these buildings stand were part of a large tract of land sold by Robert Dyston to George Treat. The tract included the Pioneer Race Course, built by Alfred Green in 1850; it was the first race course in San Francisco. The race course occupied the area today bounded by Army, 24th Street, Mission and Bryant. Its infield is marked now by Garfield Square. On July 18, 1862 George Treat deeded 15 acres known as the Pioneer Race Court Tract to the S.F. Homestead Union, and the two lots in question, originally part of the race track, were Lots 167 and 168 of this Tract. At some point prior to his death in 1885 Andrew Kohler, the founder of the famous Kohler and Chase music company, bought the lots. After Andrew Kohler's death, the property was

owned by the Kohler and Chase company which was then managed by the surviving partner Quince A. Chase, a pioneer from Freeport, Maine. In 1889 a wagon shed and hay barn stood on the lots, but by 1894 the lots had been cleared. Kohler and Chase never developed the property further, and in June of 1905 sold the lots to the TB Potter Realty Co., who planned "to erect 16 dwellings" (S.F. Chronicle, 7/8/05). At this time, Thomas B. Potter was the owner of the Reis Tract which he purchased from the pioneer Julius C. Reis in 1904. That same year he founded the Bay Shore Water Co. at Leland and San Bruno Avenues to provide water to residents of the Tract. From June until October, 1905, TB Potter Realty sold off lots in the Reis Tract almost every day. Potter named several streets in the Reis Tract after his family: Arleta (Potter's daughter), Campbell (George, his brother-in-law), Cora (his sister Cora Adeline), Harkness (his real estate partner Harkness Chapin in Portland, Oregon), and Raymond (his nephew, Raymond Potter Campbell).

San Francisco water tap records show that the water was turned on in four different Howard (So. Van Ness) and 26th Street locations in October, 1905 by the plumber T. Shieve. During the time of construction George Campbell lived in Alameda, while Thomas B. Potter lived in San Francisco. In late 1906, George B. Campbell purchased the property from the business (TB Potter Realty), and willed it to his wife Addie in August, 1907 when he died. Addie lived with her son Raymond Potter Campbell in San Francisco (but not in the row house property), until he went to West Point in 1913. In 1914 she sold the property to Ada Johnson for \$60,000, and took partial payment for the property by taking title to the Frank S. Johnson residence in San Rafael. At the time, the Mission District property was described as containing "16 handsome modern cottage bungalows" (S.F. Chronicle, 2/14/14). Addie Campbell moved to San Rafael, and one year later, in 1915, Ada Johnson sold the property to William R. Pentz, assistant cashier at the Bank of California, who lived in San Rafael. In 1916, however, Pentz sold it back to Addie Campbell, who again moved to San Francisco, and held on to the property with her son for ten more years until 1926. In the meantime, in 1918, Raymond Potter Campbell, Addie's son, achieved fame by becoming the youngest major in the regular U.S. Army. In 1919, he was Provost Marshal for the American forces in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and was officer of the day for the troops that guarded President Wilson on his visit to Europe. He was only 24 years old at the time. Several years later in 1926, Addie Campbell sold the property once again, this time to James H. Hjul, a Danish-born civil engineer, Samuel Weinstein and William H. Woodfield, Jr., real estate brokers at 315 Montgomery Street in San Francisco. Hjul was a civil engineer who was responsible for a large number of buildings in San Francisco, and "made a contribution to the urban environment in the loft, warehouse, and industrial area south of Market" (Kotas and Pantaleoni). His buildings were described as having a "utilitarian elegance appropriate to their form and location." Some of his buildings in the genre are 1126 Folsom, 1049-53 Howard, and 1245 Divisadero. His residence was 701 Grand Street in Alameda, which is described as "a superb rambling craftsman bungalow designed by its owner" (Wilson, Mark A., A Living Legacy). It was built in 1905, and is still standing.

In January, 1927 James and Emma Hjul sold their half of the property to the other two owners, Woodfield and Weinstein, and in December of the same year, they sold the property to Charles Campbell. Charles Campbell must have given a mortgage on the property to the pioneer real estate man and financier, Paul Barbieri. Paul Barbieri, a native

of Genoa, Italy, had entered the mining business in 1867 at Jackson in Amador County. He later became a successful commission merchant in San Francisco. He was a director of the Italian American Bank, president of the Italian Building and Loan Association, the Western Addition Club, and the Haight Street Improvement Association. In addition, he was one of the owners of the Montgomery Block. Barbieri died in 1931, and when his estate was settled in 1932, the Craftsman buildings became the property of his wife, Anna Barbieri, and his two daughters, Mrs. Clorinda Trobock and Mrs. Minette Wagner. In 1936, Anna Barbieri died, and her half went to her daughters. Clorinda Trobock owned the property until she died in 1976 at the age of 97, when she bequeathed it to her daughter Beatrice Trobock Craven, her niece Gladys Smith, and her son Melchior Trobock. Clorinda's husband, Bartholomew N. Trobock, was born in Austria and was a commission merchant in San Francisco until his death in 1917. In 1900 he built a house for his family on Taylor Street between Clay and Washington, directly across the street from Lloyd Tevis, president of Wells Fargo Bank. The house burned in the 1906 earthquake, but the family rebuilt a house on the same lot in 1907. After her husband's death Mrs. Trobock moved to the Stanford Court Apartments, and remained there for 32 years until it was converted to a hotel. After her father's death Mrs. Trobock became a director of the Montgomery Block.

In 1980 the property was sold to Jonathan Bulkley and Philip Ishimaru. Jonathan Bulkley is a San Francisco architect who in 1971 as part of the firm Bulkley and Sazevich, designed Friendship Village at Fillmore-McAllister-Webster-Fulton Streets. In 1982 Bulkley and Descamps designed the townhouses at Divisadero and Eddy Streets called Divisadero Heights. Both Jonathan Bulkley and Philip Ishimaru, a graphic artist in San Francisco, own several properties in the Mission, Western Addition, and the Richmond districts. Jonathan Bulkley is an avid preservationist, and owns several landmark properties in Portland, Oregon.

8. EVENTS: None known.

9. PATTERNS: In the earliest days of San Francisco the Mission District was a separate area from the city of Yerba Buena, but the increase in population quickly spilled into the Mission District. In 1863 the San Jose-San Francisco railway opened, and a station was built at 25th and Valencia. In 1870 horsedrawn carriages ran out to 26th and Folsom for the San Francisco recreational grounds, where baseball games were played. At that time the Mission was still considered a distinct, almost suburban area, and it developed its own theaters, zoos, gardens, race tracks, etc.

In addition, in the 1870's a number of wealthy families built their mansions on fashionable Howard Street (So. Van Ness), probably owing to the appeal of the sunny weather and easy transportation to the center of the City. From 1870 to 1900 the population of the Mission grew from 23,000 to 36,000, not because of increase speculation in the area, but rather due to expansion in the City as a whole. Developers began building flats in the area for middle and working class people, and by the late 19th century, the prominent people had moved to other areas of the City with finer views, e.g. Pacific Heights, Nob Hill, etc. The invention of the cable car in 1873 allowed for development of those previously inaccessible hilly areas. The Mission District had become an area for new working-class

immigrants, and unlike thirty years before, changed from a suburban area to a densely populated urban area. According to Chemey, "the Mission around 1900 was predominantly an area of families." More than 95% of the population lived with family members of spouses, among the highest proportions in the entire city. The population was about a quarter foreign-born and three-quarters or more of foreign parentage, with Irish and German the largest groups. Just as the buildings on 26th and Howard were completed the San Francisco Bulletin reported the following in its Sunday Real Estate section (12/24/05), "The Mission is the focal point of speculation in San Francisco...given the contiguity of the factory district, it will become the center of a large and dense population, an ideal district for tenements and retail business...the values are rising."

The Craftsman units on 26th and Howard were probably rented as soon as they became available in 1906. Since the southern part of the Mission was spared in the earthquake and fire, and since there was an enormous demand for housing, there is no reason to believe that the buildings were not occupied in 1906. According to the 1910 Census, the average number of residents per unit was four, and all units were occupied by families except one. Almost all occupants were born in the U.S., but only three out of seventeen adults were born to U.S. citizens. There was no predominant ethnic group; parents of residents came from England, Australia, Germany, Ireland, and Italy. Professions included railroad clerk, policeman, machinist, seamstress in a shirt factory, theater usher, sheet iron worker in pipe line company, teamster with draying company, accountant with the gas and electric company, etc. None of the wives had a profession outside the home. The first available records for the buildings were published in 1907. Voter registration records and City Directories show that in 1907 the Swett family lived in the unit at 3294 26th Street (corner Howard). Helen Swett, a divorced mother of four, was born in California, and so were her children. However, her mother and father were both born in Italy. Her oldest son worked as a machinist in an elevator company, her next oldest son as a shipping clerk in a flour mill, and her youngest son as an electrician in a piano house. Her daughter was a stenographer in an insurance company. In addition to her four children, Helen Swett provided rooms for two lodgers: John Wilson, an engineer in a marine company, born in Scotland and William Schafer, a musician in a band who was born in Germany. Other original residents include John J. Mullin and his family at 2991 Howard. Mullin was born in New Jersey but his mother and father were from Ireland. He worked as a policeman, and lived in the unit with his wife and three sons. The two older sons worked as a tinner for a can company and a stenographer for the railroad.

In 1905 when the units were erected residents had several choices of convenient transportation. There were street cars which stopped at Howard and 26th, Mission and 26th, Folsom and 26th, and Valencia and 26th. Blue collar workers had easy access to the waterfront, foundries, breweries, and warehouses. Although we now think of 26th and So. Van Ness as being the core of the Mission, until the 1920's the area around Howard and 26th Street was referred to as the "Outer Mission District." In fact, Howard Street was not extended from 26th to Army until December, 1923. In the 1920's and 1930's the Mission had special status as a working class neighborhood, and even had its own special accent. Outside of work there was never any real need to leave the neighborhood, since Mission Street was a major shopping area in San Francisco.

After World War II the Mission became predominantly Latino. However, the City directory of 1953 indicates only one family out of 16 as Latino in the two buildings. An interview with Lorraine Godfrey, who lived with her husband Wallace at 84 Virgil from 1948-1953, reveals that in the early 1950's the units were inhabited exclusively by families. At that time professions included truck driver for Bob Ostrow meats, baker for Blum's, meatcutter, seaman, office secretary, insurance salesman for AAA, policeman, shipping clerk, etc. Mrs. Godfrey asserts that So. Van Ness and 26th was "a very nice neighborhood", where she could leave the windows open, and walk at night down Mission Street. There was a strong sense of community in the units. Today, residents of the building are still employed in blue-collar trades, and the sense of community is still there.

C. PHYSICAL CONTEXT

10. CONTINUITY: These Craftsman cottages are important in establishing the character and scale of the area through their consistent street frontages on South Van Ness Avenue and Virgil Street.
11. SETTING: The two brick and shingle-sheathed buildings which frame the enclosed narrow courtyard constitute a type of housing project which is more private and serene than a modern-day apartment complex. In addition, the cottages with Virgil Street addresses are unusual in that they face onto a small alley. This affords resident children their own private playing yard, and provides an additional sense of community in that the residents share an almost private street. Most Mission District apartment buildings have only their back entrances on alleys.
12. Visual Significance: These attached Craftsman houses are prominent in that they are situated directly on a busy corner of So. Van Ness Avenue and 26th Streets, and can be easily seen from the 26th Street bus line.

D. INTEGRITY

13. ALTERATIONS: Exterior completely original except for replacement of redwood shingles on roof with composition slate shingles in 1927 and then in 1980 replacement of simple redwood shingles with patterned cedar shingles. Interiors retain much of original Craftsman molding and detailing.

E. THREATS TO SITE: NONE KNOWN (X) PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT () ZONING ()
VANDALISM () PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT () OTHER ()

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK: No
NATIONAL REGISTER: Appears Eligible (VM)
CALIFORNIA STATE REGISTER: No
HERE TODAY: Not Listed
HERITAGE SURVEYS: Not Listed
DCP 1976 SURVEY: Rated "4"
OTHER:
BIBLIOGRAPHY: See Appendix I

PREPARED BY:

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Based upon the Draft Case Report/
Background Information provided by:
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DATE:

August 12, 1993

VFM:mj:Howa26th.Cas

LOCATION SKETCH MAP