

P.O. BOX 1137 MAIN POST OFFICE
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94701

TEL. 510-841-2242 FAX. 510-841-7421
9 January 2004

Tim Strohane, Senior Planner
Program Planning, Management & Budget Division
Housing Department
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, California 94704

RECEIVED

JAN 13 2004

CDBG

Re: HUD031003A, Development of Ed Roberts Campus, 3075 Adeline Street,
Ashby Station, South Berkeley

Dear Mr. Strohane:

Thank you for your inquiry concerning the streetcar suburb of Ashby Station in South Berkeley vis.a.vis the proposed development of the Ed Roberts Campus at 3075 Adeline Street, site of the BART parking lot east of the Ashby BART Station, and its Area of Potential Effect (APE). The Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) is well aware of the long-term planning that has been committed to the realization of the Ed Roberts Campus, a memorial to the pioneering work of Berkeley activist Ed Roberts on behalf of the disabled community. It is a momentous boost that the project has been awarded \$6 million in federal Section 108 loan program funds which, in turn, come under obligations pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and, potentially, the National Environmental Protection Act, as well as the California Environmental Quality Act. As planning and design for the Ed Roberts Campus goes forward, BAHA hopes to be of assistance toward ensuring the enhancement and protection of the distinct historic character that defines Ashby Station.

While the South Berkeley neighborhoods visibly reflect their cultural history, beginning from the 19th century in the Lorin district and, more particularly, from the early 20th century in the Ashby Station district, these neighborhoods have remained largely unsurveyed by both BAHA and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

This long standing oversight has unfortunately meant that there has been a cumulative loss of South Berkeley's intrinsic architectural assets in recent years. Now, in an immediate effort to identify the complement of Ashby Station's historic properties, BAHA has utilized its existing Urban Conservation Survey and its archival material, including original tract maps, Sanborn maps, and historic photographs. It is apropos that the APE, bounded by Shattuck Avenue, Ashby Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, and Woolsey Street, is nearly concurrent with the historic boundaries of Mark Ashby's working farmland in 1878 (see illustration #1 of rudimentary survey). This area was at that time outside the southern boundaries of the recently incorporated City of Berkeley. BAHA's archival material, furthermore, substantiates what the built environment within the APE tells us today: that the Ashby Station district was principally developed in response to the streetcar lines traveling through its boundaries, and its architectural neoclassic character set between the years 1900 and 1910.

Please find here a narrative report: "Ashby Station Historic Setting and Rudimentary Survey of Historic Properties within the Proposed Ed Roberts Campus APE." It has been prepared by BAHA members and staff, including Anthony Bruce, Lesley Emmington, Jerry Sulliger, Dale Smith, Erica Cleary, and Adam Cash. BAHA has found the preparation of this report to be educational, hence BAHA looks forward to sharing the Ashby Station "story" with its broad membership. In turn, BAHA urges you to use it as a guide for continuing design discussions that will be necessary if the Ed Roberts Campus is to make a positive environmental contribution to the significant historic fabric of the Ashby Station district.

Sincerely,



Susan Chase, President

Attachment:

Report and Illustrations "Ashby Station Historic Setting and Rudimentary Survey of Historic Properties within the Proposed Ed Roberts Campus APE"
Photo Panorama (7) of Adeline Street, Ashby Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. Way within the APE

cc: Lucinda Woodward, State Historian, California Office of Historic Preservation
Dan Marks, Director, Planning and Development, City of Berkeley
Carrie Olson, Chair, Landmarks Preservation Commission
Erica Cleary, Block Captain, Prince Neighborhood Association

ASHBY STATION

Historic Setting and Rudimentary Survey of Historic Properties within the Proposed Ed Roberts Campus APE

Prepared by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association
January 2004

By 1911, Ashby Station, South Berkeley, spanning four blocks east-west along Ashby Avenue, between Shattuck Avenue and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (originally Grove Street), had five electric streetcar lines running through its center and around its perimeter. By then the area was almost entirely built up around the handsome, commanding Webb Block (1905, listed on the State Historic Resources Inventory), with four churches, other commercial buildings, and countless residences built in the popular style-of-the-day: the Colonial Revival. This streetcar suburb, developed principally between 1900 and 1910, remains today a district linked to its historic transportation heyday and unified by its architectural consistency. Although, since 1876, served by a steam train line connecting Oakland with Berkeley, Ashby Station stood nearly "empty" until the advent of the electric streetcar lines. It was then that lots began to "infill" responding to the growing population in the East Bay and, by the turn-of-the-century, Ashby Station was on its way to becoming a classic American streetcar suburb.

Today, Ashby Station is a truly prominent transportation hub, serving the greater San Francisco Bay Region by the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) Richmond Line and Alameda-Contra Costa Transit. While several of the central blocks of the historic Ashby Station district were removed in the 1960s to make way for BART construction, including undergrounding the BART tracks, building the Ashby BART Station, and creating the adjacent parking facilities, a distinct historic context is still visible today within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) surrounding the Ed Roberts Campus project site. Collectively these buildings, both commercial and residential, appear to be even more prominent today as they form the perimeter of a plaza-like open-space of the Ashby BART Station, with early 20th century streetscapes along Adeline Street, Ashby, and Martin Luther King (see seven photo panoramas enclosed). To the east, still within the APE, are Tremont, Essex, Emerson, Prince, and Woolsey streets, all delineating those "quiet side streets, in a grid pattern perpendicular to the electric cable [where the] Colonial Revival houses sprung up" (from *Rehab Right*).

The Ashby brothers, Mark and William, whose name has been perpetuated by Ashby Station, Ashby Avenue (one of Berkeley's longest streets that also serves as State Highway 13), and the Ashby BART Station, migrated to California during the early settlement days of the Gold Rush. They soon purchased some 187 acres for a ranch that was sustained by a tributary of Derby Creek. By 1876, when Mark Ashby had become the title holder for the western portion of the property (see illustration #1), the family farming days were numbered. It was then that California's former governor Leland Stanford and Alameda's former supervisor and real estate developer Francis Kittredge Shattuck succeeded in connecting Oakland to Berkeley by purchasing a right-of-way for a steam train spur line to travel from the main Central Pacific Railway up what is now Stanford Avenue and Adeline Street, crossing through Mark Ashby's property and, finally, to terminate on Shattuck at University

Avenue. By 1911 the Berkeley Branch Railroad steam train became Southern Pacific's suburban electric line known as the Shattuck Line.

With a dream that the unpopulated landscape would someday become a gateway for residential development between Oakland and Berkeley, two station stops were established on the steam train route, the Lorin Station at Adeline and Alcatraz, and the Newbury Station (later to be known as Ashby Station) on Adeline just south of Ashby. The Lorin Station district, often advertised in the local press as "one of the most attractive portions of Oakland's surroundings," began to emerge in the 1880s as a village with its own community of Victorian cottages, a growing commercial center, and a school.

In contrast, Newbury Station, generally defined by Wheeler, Russell, Harper, and Fairview streets, remained relatively undeveloped. Until after 1900 the stop on Adeline was still just a "flag stop" where "you climbed 12 wooden steps to get to the train tracks from street level" (elevated perhaps because of swampy land around a reported "frog pond"). It could be said that Newbury Station was "neither here nor there," too far beyond Oakland and too far from central Berkeley. In fact, its early cluster of 19th century homes and businesses sprang up around the intersection of Shattuck and Ashby where a post office was located, rather than along the steam train route on Adeline. In 1891 when the Newbury Station district was annexed to Berkeley and its name was changed to Ashby Station, the local neighbors gathered at the four corners of Shattuck and Ashby to celebrate.

The year 1891 was not only important for Ashby Station because it was incorporated into Berkeley, but also because it was during that year that it was linked to the greater East Bay with the two electric streetcar lines laid by the Oakland Consolidated Street Railroad. The Railroad, first established in 1889 as the Oakland-Berkeley Rapid Transit, again with one of its primary investors being Francis Kittredge Shattuck, was planned in anticipation of the big real estate opportunities just-waiting-to-happen across the landscape. As most citizens did not then have either the means, or the property, to maintain a horse and buggy, the coming of the electric streetcar became the dominant force that enabled a dynamic expansion in the East Bay. The growing workforce could now travel conveniently by trolley from the "suburb" — the new residential tracts where hayfields, orchards and frog ponds used to be — to places of work, commerce, or recreation, anywhere in the East Bay or San Francisco.

Beginning in 1891 Ashby Station was served by both the red "car," called the "Shattuck", which came up from Oakland veering at 47th Street to travel along Shattuck, crossing Ashby, to Dwight Way where it turned up Ellsworth Street, then turned north to Allston Way (site of Edwards Stadium), and the blue car, called the "Lorin", which came up the same track from Oakland continuing on 47th to travel along Martin Luther King to Downtown Berkeley at Center Street. (In 1898 these streetcar routes were consolidated to become a part of the future Key System.) Still, it was not until after the turn-of-the-century that the influence of the streetcar stimulated the development of Ashby Station. And, it was not really until after the commencement of the construction of the Webb Building and the San Francisco Great Earthquake and Fire that Ashby Station's lots were filled up with homes of its first generation of families.

The Shattuck and Lorin streetcar lines bordered what are today the east and west boundaries of the APE for the Ed Roberts Campus. In 1891 this area encompassed two of Ashby Station's development tracts, the Newbury and Central Park tracts. Mark Ashby filed the first subdivision map for the Newbury Tract in 1882 (see illustration #2) which created the residential lots bounded by Shattuck, Ashby, Adeline, and Prince streets. His second subdivision, for the two blocks south, bounded by Shattuck, Prince, Adeline, and Woolsey (originally Kent), followed in 1883. The amended map of 1889 for the Newbury Tract (see illustration #3) appears to be true to the lot lines today and is exactly concurrent with the APE east of Adeline to Shattuck. The Central Park subdivision maps, which incorporate the western portion of the APE, were successively amended to reflect changing investment relationships of its very active real estate developer George R. Bailey and property alterations of Martin Luther King for the streetcar line (see illustration #4).

The April 29th, 1896, "Amended Map of Central Park", does not reflect the pivotal change to "Mason Street" that occurred in 1902, joining it with Ashby by physically altering it with a sweeping curve. Nor did anyone foresee that in 1903 the Key System, a major transportation investment company, originally called the San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose Railroad, would run its first suburban train — the "F" Line — between San Francisco and the East Bay along Adeline (see illustration #5). The Sanborn Atlas Insurance Map, 1903, shows, in fact, that, while Ashby Station had begun to "boom" with houses filling the residential lots, there were noticeable big blank spaces on the four corners of Ashby and Adeline. Only three commercial buildings were in existence then, each still in existence today: the Colonial Revival on the west side of Adeline, 2988-92 Adeline; another Colonial Revival on the east side of Adeline, 3025 Adeline; and, the third, a picturesque shop building, 3019 Adeline. These three buildings early defined what was to become a significant commercial district.

It was Christopher Webb of Siskiyou County who had the vision and capital to give the four corners at Ashby and Adeline a central focus and commercial vitality. The handsome Webb Block with its curving facade, was a landmark that distinguished Ashby Station as a place not simply to pass through, but also as a place to live and shop. Designed by Charles W. McCall, who is known for many large Arts and Crafts homes in Oakland and Piedmont, the Webb Block was fashioned in the Mission Revival Style (Permit #296, March 21, 1905) to be complementary in detail and materials to its architectural surroundings of predominately Colonial Revival style shops and residences. (McCall also designed the duplex at 3044 Martin Luther King, within the APE.) Prominent contractor Walter Sorensen, who built the Webb Block, is associated with the building of other structures in the area. Today the historic commercial buildings at Ashby and Adeline give a unique charm to Ashby Station and create an appropriate setting for its cluster of antique shops.

Still, following the construction of the Webb Block, Ashby Station was to be crossed by two additional streetcar lines! In 1908 the Key System ran another "city car line" — the Ashby Avenue Line, or the "Dinky" — from San Pablo up Ashby to curve around the Webb Block at Ashby and Adeline and continued on to the Claremont Hotel. In 1911 Southern Pacific added a new city car line — the Ellsworth Line that began at Adeline and Woolsey, then called the "Woolsey Junction," where it ran up Woolsey, crossed Shattuck and proceeded north on Ellsworth.

So it was that by 1911, Ashby Station had become that “gateway” of homes and community life that had been envisioned in 1876. BAHA’s Ashby Station District Survey Map (see illustration #6), using the 1950 Sanborn Atlas Insurance Map as a base, shows the number of residential, commercial, and institutional structures remaining from the neighborhood’s period of significance, roughly 1900 to 1910. The map not only highlights these structures, but shows also the remaining 19th Century structures linked to the districts’ earliest development and identifies other noteworthy structures built later within the first half of the 20th Century. There is a repeating pattern along the streets of the district of the three Colonial Revival residential types — 2-story Colonial Revival, Colonial Revival Cottage, and High-Peaked Colonial Revival — with most retaining their traditional open front yard setbacks. The brief period that the Colonial Revival style was popular in the East Bay almost exactly coincides with the period of significance of the development of Ashby Station. It is also important to note the scarcity on the map, but historic importance, of the Victorian homes that formed the beginnings of the district. The later contributing noteworthy structures include such buildings as: the South Berkeley Library (James W. Plachek, 1925), corner of Martin Luther King and Woolsey; the Hansel and Gretel style Hull Mortuary complex (Slocomb and Tuttle, 1922,1928) listed on the State Resources Inventory, 3049-3051 Adeline; and the Swedenborgian Community Church, 3061 Adeline.

This rudimentary survey suggests that the Ashby Station district, including the APE for the Ed Roberts Campus, could be potentially eligible for an historic district nomination to the National Register of Historic Places and, furthermore, it supports the necessity to proceed with the planning and design of the Ed Roberts Campus with sensitivity to its existing historic surroundings.

Sources:

Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, Archives

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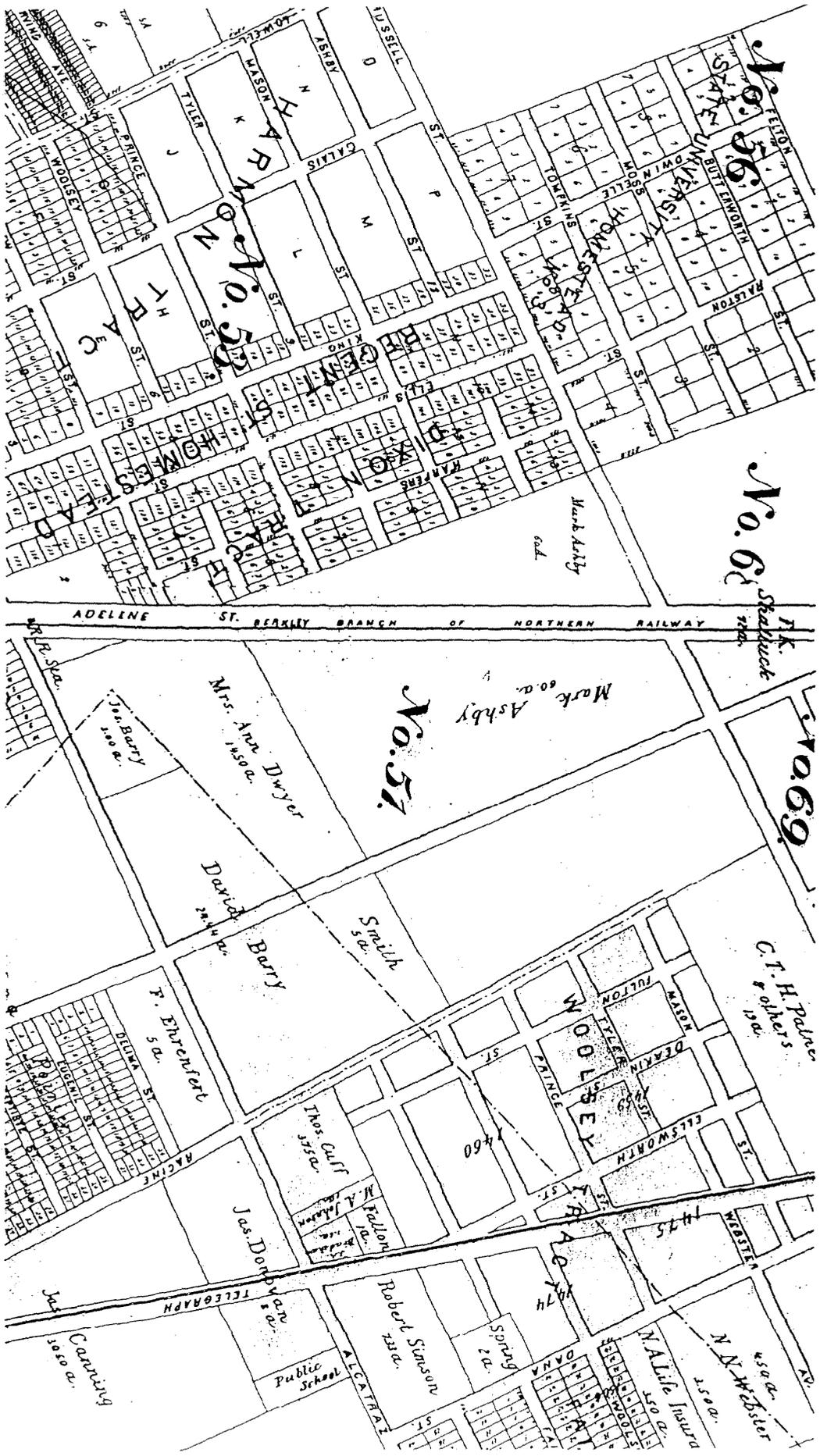


Illustration 1

A Portion of
the
NEWBURY TRACT,

In Plot 51
Peralta Rancho,
Oakland Township.

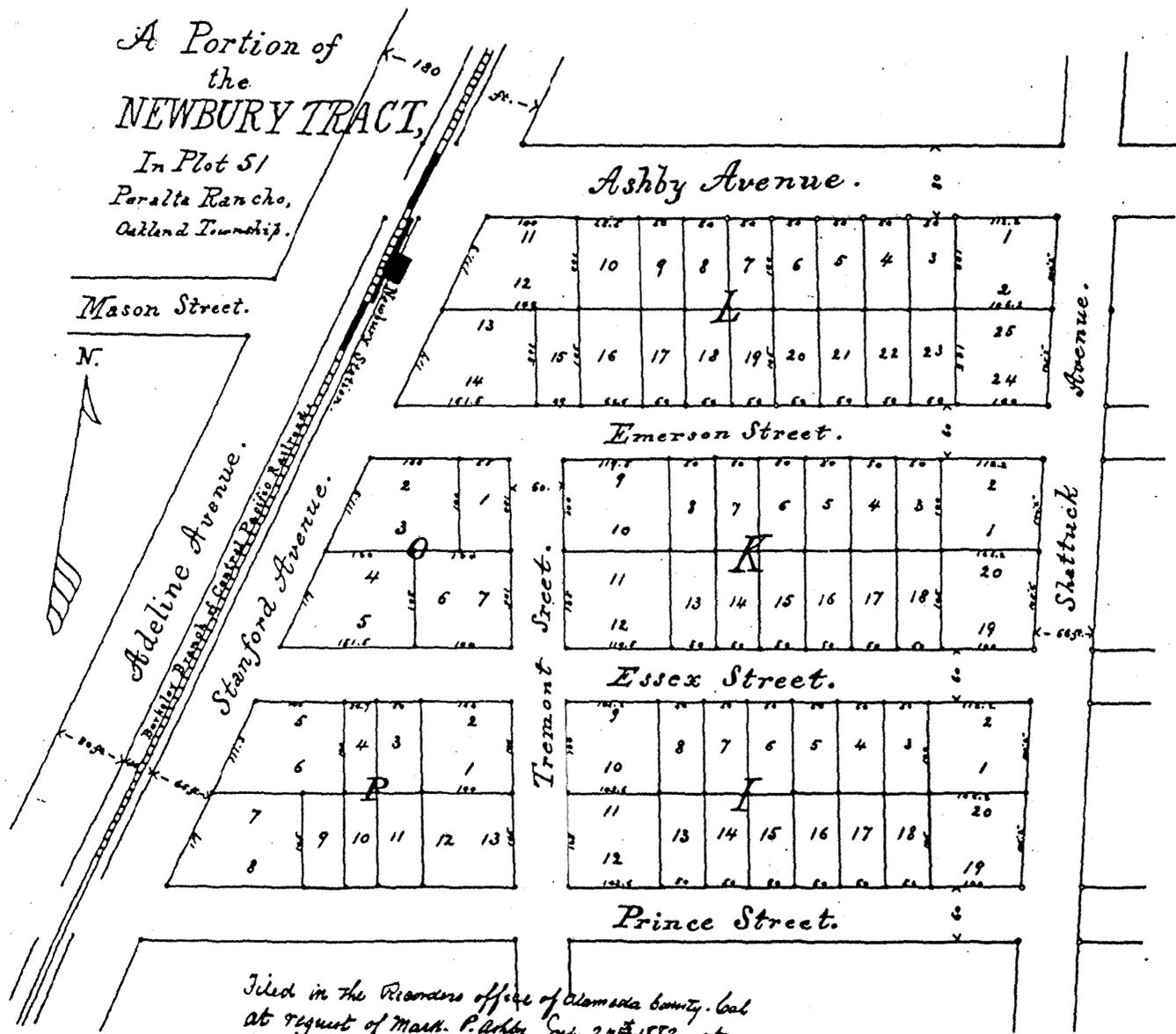


Illustration 2

Filed in the Recorder's office of Alameda County, Cal
at request of Mark P. Ashby, July 20th 1852. at
10 mins past 4, 02. P.M.
P. R. Borcia Co Recorder
By Geo. W. Burns Deputy.

AMENDED MAP
of the
NEWBURY TRACT.

in Plot No. 51
of Rancho Y & D. Perilla.
Surveyed by Geo. L. Madsen, C.E.
Ch. Surveyor.

Scale, 100 feet to an inch.

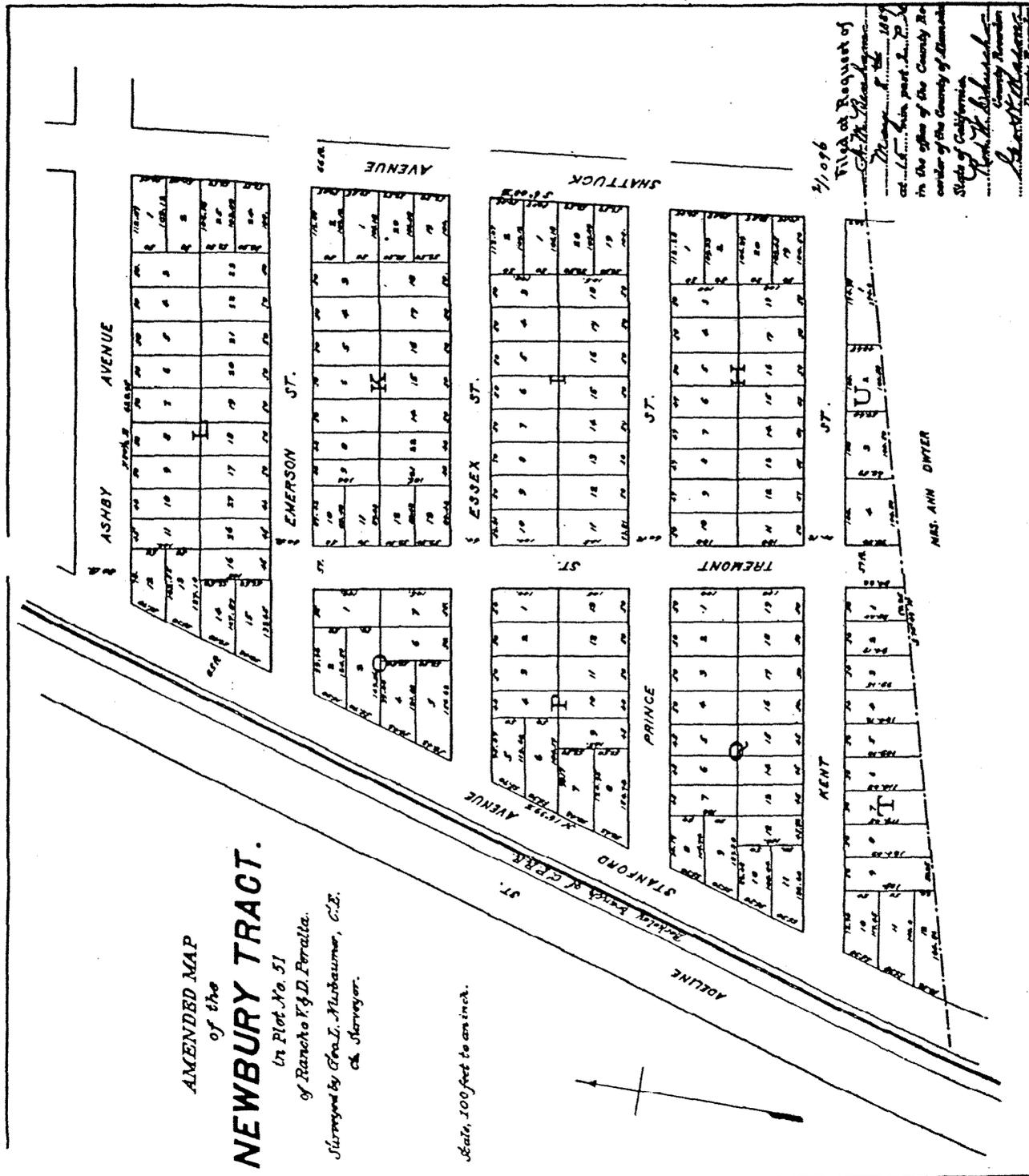
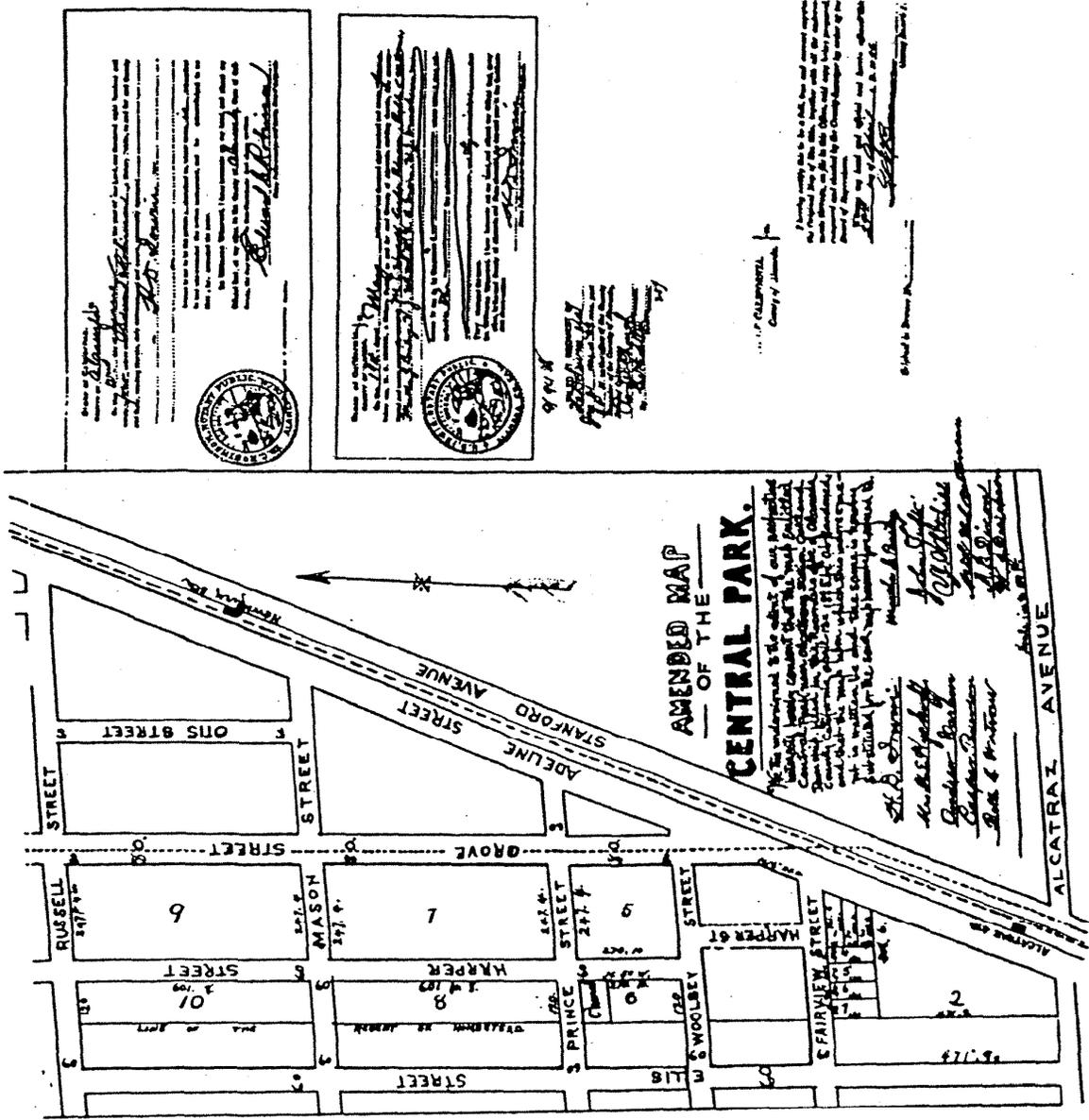


Illustration 3

11111



... of the City of San Francisco, California, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing map is a true and correct copy of the original map as filed in the office of the City Engineer, and that the same has been approved by the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco, California, on this 14th day of June, 1914.

Edmund J. McQuinn
City Engineer

... of the City of San Francisco, California, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing map is a true and correct copy of the original map as filed in the office of the City Engineer, and that the same has been approved by the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco, California, on this 14th day of June, 1914.

Edmund J. McQuinn
City Engineer

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...

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AMENDED MAP
OF THE
CENTRAL PARK.

The undersigned, in the name of the City of San Francisco, California, do hereby certify that the within and foregoing map is a true and correct copy of the original map as filed in the office of the City Engineer, and that the same has been approved by the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco, California, on this 14th day of June, 1914.

Edmund J. McQuinn
City Engineer
John S. Goff
City Engineer
John S. Goff
City Engineer
John S. Goff
City Engineer

ALCATRAZ AVENUE

Illustration 4

Ashby Station District Survey

based on the Sanborn Atlas of 1950



Typical Colonial Revival House Types from the Period of Significance



2-Story Colonial Revival



Colonial Revival Cottage



High-peaked Colonial Revival

