



9 HISTORIC RESOURCES

This section discusses the historic context of the Planning Area, including local history, the context for rating historic resources in Oakland, and details the historic properties and districts in the Planning Area.

9.1 Background

Prehistoric Context¹

The Paleo-Archaic-Emergent cultural sequence developed by David A. Fredrickson is commonly used to interpret the pre-historic occupation of Central California. The sequence consists of three broad periods: the Paleoindian (Paleo) Period (10,000-6000 B.C.); the three-staged Archaic Period, consisting of the Lower Archaic (6000-3000 B.C.), Middle Archaic (3000-500 B.C.), and Upper Archaic (500 B.C.-A.D. 1000); and the Emergent Period (A.D. 1000-1800). The Paleo Period began with the first entry of people into California.

Historically, archaeological excavations along the eastern San Francisco bayshore have focused on shellmounds. Near the Planning Area, a shellmound, CA-ALA-5, was recorded in or near the Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel group around 1910 by archaeologists Nels Nelson and Arnold Pilling. Little is known about this site, including its specific location. There is a general lack of study of prehistoric sites in Oakland, and the prehistory of the city is poorly understood.

The Planning Area is situated within territory occupied by Costanoan (also commonly referred to as Ohlone) language groups. Ohlone territories were comprised of one or more land holding groups that anthropologists refer to as “tribelet.” The tribelet, a nearly universal characteristic throughout native California, consists of a principle village, which was occupied year round, and a series of smaller hamlets and resource gathering and processing locations occupied intermittently or seasonally. Population densities of tribelets ranged between 50 and 500 persons, which were largely determined by the carrying capacity of a tribelet’s territory. According to Randall Milliken, the Huchiun tribelet occupied the Oakland area at the time of Spanish contact.

Oakland City Beginnings²

The Planning Area is within the Rancho San Antonio land grant, which was originally granted to Luis Maria Peralta on August 3, 1820 for his service to the Spanish government. His 43,000-acre rancho included what are now the cities of Oakland, Berkeley,

Alameda, and parts of San Leandro and Piedmont. Peralta’s land grant was confirmed after Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1822, and this title was honored when California entered the Union by treaty in 1848. The City of Oakland was incorporated in 1852, and officially recognized by the state in 1854. The Planning Area is one of the oldest areas of the city.

Oakland grew around its waterfront, with development limited only by the available modes of transportation. Steam ferry service to San Francisco was established in 1850, and by 1869 the first horse-car followed a route from the estuary up Telegraph Avenue to 40th Street. On November 8, 1869, the transcontinental railroad’s first west-bound trip rolled through Oakland along Central Pacific tracks, which terminated at the new 7th Street station. By 1891, Oakland’s first street car ran along Broadway to the City of Berkeley.

Subsequent to the devastation of the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco, numerous refugees lived for months in tents set up in Lakeside Park on the shores of Lake Merritt. The influx of people to Oakland escaping the devastation from across the bay prompted the development of new residential areas in Oakland to accommodate displaced San Francisco residents. Older neighborhoods became more densely populated as new apartment buildings and related growth became part of Oakland’s residential fabric.

Throughout the 20th century, commercial enterprises and industrial development, particularly the Port of Oakland and the Oakland Municipal Airport, played a vital role in Oakland’s growth. During World War II, the Port provided land and facilities to the Army and Navy. By 1943, Oakland had become the largest shipping center on the West Coast and within two decades was the largest container terminal on the West Coast. As suburbs grew outward during the 1950s, the inner core of the City began to decline as residents left for the outlying areas. The perception of Oakland, as with many large cities during the 1960s and 1970s, was that of a neglected urban core with high unemployment, racial tension, and reduced economic opportunity. This trend began to reverse in the 1980s as reinvestment and redevelopment helped to invigorate the City’s image and prospects.

Chinatown

Chinese were the first Asian people to come to Oakland in significant numbers. They came from the Pearl River Delta region of southeast China, lured by the discovery of gold near Sacramento. Some came to Oakland in the 1850s. They lived in at least four different parts of a new and growing Oakland, and were moved from place to place to accommodate the development needs of other private interest and institutions, until they settled at the corner of 8th and Webster Streets either in the late 1860s or 1870s. This corner remains the center of the Oakland Commercial District today.

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire significantly increased Oakland’s Chinese population. While some people returned to San Francisco, thousands of others stayed in Oakland. With a larger resident population, some moved into what is today the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District. Oakland’s Chinatown, while relatively compact and small, thrived during World War II because it was near shipyards that brought in thousands of workers from other states. These workers went to Chinatown for food, haircuts and other personal needs. There were also significant numbers of Japanese and Filipinos who either lived or worked in or near Chinatown in the first half of the 20th century. For instance, a 1940 map developed by Japanese American historians in Oakland indicates a number of Japanese businesses in or near the core of Chinatown, reflecting a significant Japanese business presence. President Roosevelt’s executive order to “relocate” Japanese on the U.S. West Coast in effect eliminated the presence of Japanese businesses and residents in Chinatown and other parts of Oakland during and after 1942. The Japanese population has subsequently been more dispersed.

According to *An Overview of Planning Efforts in Oakland’s Chinatown, 1950-2000*³ (Overview Report), Oakland’s Chinatown substantially grew between the 1880’s and 1960’s. Maps on the next page show the areas that some considered being part of Oakland Chinatown in the 1960’s.



Historic photo of Oakland Chinatown.



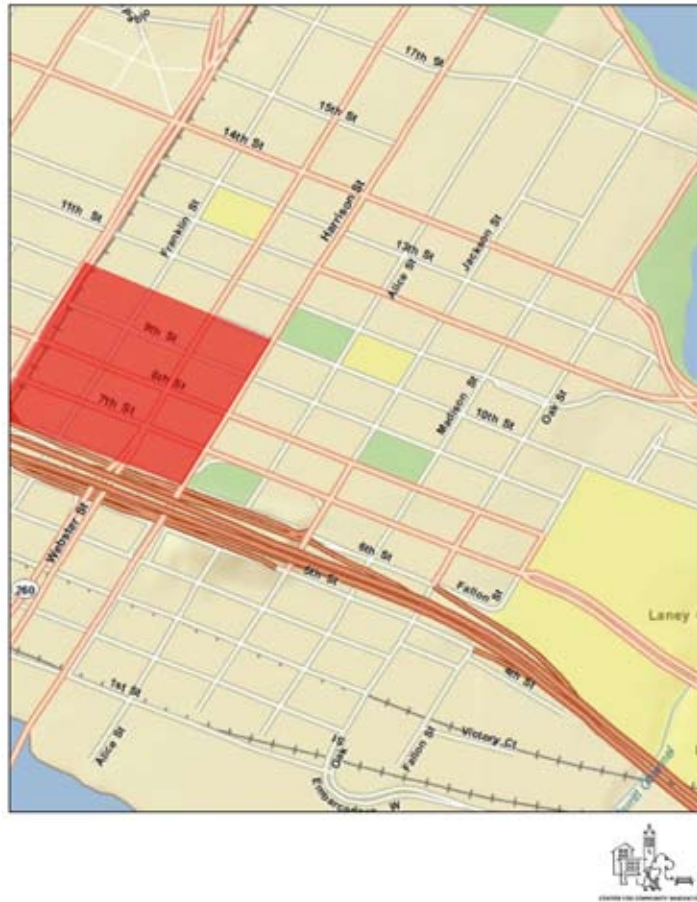
Lyon Moving and Storage Company, now the Asian Resource Center.

¹ The prehistoric context is sourced from: LSA Associates, City of Oakland Measure DD Implementation Project EIR, July 2007.

² LSA Associates, City of Oakland Measure DD Implementation Project EIR, July 2007.

³ Jane Rongerude, Center for Community Innovation, *An Overview of Planning Efforts in Oakland’s Chinatown, 1950-2000*, May 31, 2008.

Oakland's Chinatown - 1882



Immediately east of the Chinatown Commercial District and immediately north of the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District are three blocks with significant history for the Chinatown community. The three blocks are bounded by Jackson Street on the west, 9th Street on the north, Fallon Street on the east, and 8th Street on the south.

The three blocks are part of what was once called the Madison Square area in Oakland's early days in the last half of the 19th century and going into the 20th century. As the young city expanded from its core at the estuary northward along Broadway, the Madison Square area became a desirable residential area for a growing white middle class in the late 19th century and into the early 20th century.

As Oakland continued to grow in the early decades of the 20th century, middle-class white Madison Square area residents

Oakland's Chinatown - 1960



moved further away from the core, giving housing opportunities for a gradually increasing Chinese population that had spiked upwards because the earthquake and fire that devastated San Francisco in 1906 brought over thousands of San Francisco Chinese suddenly displaced. Several thousand of them decided to stay in Oakland, at least doubling Oakland's Chinese population.

For approximately 40 years – the 1920s to the 1960s – Chinese families occupied many, if not, most of residential properties (duplexes, four-plexes, and apartments) on two of those blocks – Jackson to Madison, 8th and 9th; and Oak to Fallon, 8th and 9th. (Madison Square Park was between Madison and Oak, 8th and 9th). A 1951 Sanborn map shows 20 multiple-dwelling residential buildings on those two blocks, along with the Chinese Episcopal Church, the Ming Quong Home for Chinese Girls, and a gasoline station.

Oakland's Chinatown - 1973



The Chinese families and individuals found the location to be convenient because it was immediately east of commercial Chinatown centered at 8th and Webster streets. There were important cultural and social services in commercial Chinatown, such as Chinese schools, family and business associations, and services like barber and herb shops. It was also near Lincoln Elementary School, which educated generations of Chinese children.

By the early 1960s, major public-works projects began to transform the three blocks. The biggest project was the new Bay Area Rapid Transit District, created by the California Legislature in 1957 to provide a fixed-rail mass transit system. BART won voter approval in three Bay Area counties to operate, one of them being Alameda County, which includes Oakland as the county seat.

In 1963, at the urging of Oakland and other East Bay officials, BART decided to permanently locate its operational headquarters, which was in San Francisco on an interim basis, in Oakland. In addition, it drew up plans to open three downtown Oakland stations, one of them underneath the three blocks from Madison to Fallon between 8th and 9th Streets.

Those decisions had deep impact on the property owners, residents, businesses, and cultural institutions on those three blocks. From 1964 to 1966, BART acquired the rights to 24 parcels of property on the three blocks (one was the city-owned Madison Square Park). The acquisition costs ranged widely, from \$10,250 to \$52,750, but many were generally about \$30,000 per parcel.

BART records show that 16 of the parcel owners were Chinese. This ultimately meant the displacement of approximately 75 Chinese households, according to Willard T. Chow, who wrote his Ph.D. dissertation for the University of California at Berkeley in 1974 on Chinese settlement in the East Bay.

The displaced Chinese households, along with other families and residents, spread to other parts of Oakland and beyond. The change was especially difficult for elderly Chinese, who felt comfortable living in close proximity to commercial Chinatown and whose grasp of English was weak or non-existent. Moving away meant an inconvenience and a cultural and linguistic disruption. For the Chinese Episcopal Church that occupied the southwest corner of 9th and Madison Streets, its move to the Oakland hills resulted in a loss of many of its Chinese congregants who stopped attending the church because it was too far away.

The Lake Merritt BART station began construction in the late 1960s and officially opened in 1972. The six-story BART administrative and engineering headquarters building was officially open for business in December of 1971. One significant change was moving Madison Square Park one block to the west (Jackson to Madison between 8th and 9th Streets), giving BART two contiguous blocks to establish its headquarters building and a parking lot (Madison to Fallon between 8th and 9th Streets), and building the Lake Merritt Station underground.

In 2006, the BART headquarters building above the Lake Merritt Station was deemed "at risk" if a major earthquake struck. Subsequently, the six-story building was dismantled in 2009 and operational headquarters moved to the Kaiser complex along Lakeside Drive. That move has provided an opportunity for BART, the City of Oakland, Laney College, and the surrounding community, including Chinatown, to envision redeveloping the three Madison Square blocks.

9.2 Context for Historic Resources in Oakland

Oakland General Plan Historic Preservation Element

The Historic Preservation Element (HPE) of the Oakland General Plan presents goals, policies, and objectives that guide historic preservation efforts in Oakland. The City has adopted these policies because it believes historic preservation offers many important benefits such as urban revitalization, employment opportunities, cost-effective affordable housing, economic development opportunities, community identity and image, and educational, cultural, and artistic values.

Based on a citywide preliminary architectural inventory completed by the Planning Department’s Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, pre-1945 properties have been assigned a significance rating of A, B, C, D, or E and assigned a number (1, 2, or 3) which indicates its district status. The ranking system indicates a property’s status as a historical resource and identifies those properties warranting special consideration in the planning process and is described in Table 9.1.

HPE policies define the criteria for legal significance that must be met by a resource before it is listed in Oakland’s local register of historical resources, and would, therefore, be considered a historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Local, State and federal regulations determine types of historic resources and the regulations that apply to those resources. Local, State and federal historic resources sometimes overlap, but not in all cases. CEQA requires analysis of impacts to historic resources in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a project.

In Oakland, under CEQA (clarified in court after 1998), buildings of Level A or B, or Areas of Primary Importance (defined in Table 9.1), should not be demolished. Only by completing a full EIR and putting it to the City Council to decide, can such a demolition occur. For demolition to occur, the City council must make a statement of overriding considerations. Moreover, buildings that are rated as Level C or contribute to a primary or secondary district must be studied to ensure the final historic rating and all rules that apply.

Local Register of Historic Resources

The Local Register of Historic Resources includes Designated Historic Properties (City landmarks and districts, as well as properties designated under State and Federal programs) plus the most important Potential Designated Historic Properties (those that have existing ratings of A or B or are in Areas of Primary Importance). Under certain circumstances, demolition or incompatible alteration of these properties cannot be carried out unless an EIR demonstrates that there are no feasible preservation alternatives and identifies mitigations to make up for loss of a historic resource., or the City Council makes a statement of overriding considerations.

Designated Historic Properties (DHPs)

For properties with official City designations – landmarks, preservation districts, and Heritage Properties – the Element lays out a series of regulations. Regulations on DHPs include:

- Design Review of exterior changes by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and its staff.
- Demolition, removal, and alteration
- Landmarks and district contributors are permitted only as provided in the Element.
- Demolition, removal, and major alteration
- Landmarks and Heritage Properties can be postponed for 60 to 240 days.

Incentives for DHPs include:

- Streamlined permit procedures and fee waivers
- Financial assistance
 - City of Oakland Commercial Property Façade and Tenant Improvement Program which offers free architectural assistance and 50% matching grants that can be used to rehabilitate historic façades
 - Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program
 - Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Priority for financial assistance
- Wider range of permitted uses
- Use of State Historical Building Code

TABLE 9.1: CITY OF OAKLAND HISTORIC RESOURCE RATING SYSTEM

RATING LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
A: Properties of Highest Importance	This designation applies to the most outstanding properties, considered clearly eligible for individual National Register and City Landmark designation. Such properties consist of outstanding examples of an important style, type, or convention, or intimately associated with a person, organization, event, or historical pattern of extreme importance at the local level or of major importance at the state or national level.
B: Properties of Major Importance	These are properties of major historical or architectural value but not sufficiently important to be rated “A.” Most are considered individually eligible for the National Register, but some may be marginal candidates. All are considered eligible for City Landmark designation and consist of especially fine examples of an important type, style, or convention, or intimately associates with a person, organization, event, or historical pattern of major importance at the local level or of moderate importance at the state or national level.
C: Properties of Secondary Importance	These are properties that have sufficient visual/architectural or historical value to warrant recognition but do not appear individually eligible for the National Register. Some may be eligible as City Landmarks and are superior or visually important examples of a particular type, style, or convention, and include most pre-1906 properties
D: Properties of Minor Importance	These are properties which are not individually distinctive but are typical or representative examples of an important type, style, convention, or historical pattern. The great majority of pre-1946 properties are in this category.
E, F, or *: Properties of No Particular Interest.	Properties that are less than 45 years old or modernized.
DISTRICT STATUS	DESCRIPTION
1: Area of Primary Importance (API)	A property in an Area of Primary Importance (API) or National Register quality district. An API is a historically or visually cohesive area or property group identified by the OCHS which usually contains a high proportion of individual properties with ratings of “C” or higher.
2: Area of Secondary Importance (ASI)	A property in an Area of Secondary Importance (ASI) or a district of local significance. An ASI is similar to an API except that an ASI does not appear eligible for the National Register.
3: Not in a District	A property not within a historic district.
Note: Properties with ratings of “C” or higher or are contributors to or potential contributors to an API or ASI are considered Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHP) that may warrant consideration for preservation by the City.	

Source: City of Oakland, Measure DD Implementation Project EIR, G: Cultural Resources, July, 2007.

Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs)

The City considers any property that has at least a contingency rating of C (“secondary importance”) or contributes or potentially contributes to a primary or secondary district to “warrant consideration for possible preservation.” If they are not already designated, all properties meeting these minimum significance thresholds are called Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs).

Regulations on PDHPs include:

- Demolition or significant changes to the exterior of a PDHP are subject to review and postponement.
- Staff may require modification of a project to protect those features, and incentives for DHP status.
- The Landmarks Board may consider Heritage Property designation, which could delay demolition.
- Design review for highest rated PDHPs and may require environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act/CEQA. Demolition or major alteration may necessitate an EIR.
- Design review will require the project to be of equal or better design quality and compatible with neighborhood character.
- PDHPs that are to be demolished must be offered free for moving.

Findings and Requirements for the Demolition of Historic Resources

The City has proposed citywide requirements for the demolition of Designated or Potentially Designated Historic Properties, developed based on demolition policies in the HPE.

Proposed required findings and submittals to demolish properties vary based on the type of historic resource, categorized by:

- Individual Local Register Properties that are outside an S-7 zone, S-20 zone, or an API;
- Local Register Properties that Contribute to a Historic District (a S-7 zone, S-20 zone, or an API); and
- Findings for “C” rated buildings and ASI contributors.

In general the required findings for local register properties ensure that the existing property either has no reasonable use or cannot generate a reasonable economic return and the project replacing it will, or that the property constitutes a hazard and is economically infeasible to rehabilitate; that it is infeasible to incorporate the building into the proposed development; and that the design quality of the replacement project is equal or superior to the existing building and is compatible with and contributes to and/ or enhances the character of the preservation district if applicable.

Similarly, proposed required findings for “C” rated buildings and ASI contributors generally require that the proposed project is of high design quality and compatible with the character of the neighborhood, or that public benefits of the project outweigh the benefit of retaining the structure, or that it is infeasible to incorporate the historic building into the proposed development.

9.3 Historic Properties in the Planning Area

There are several historic properties in the Planning Area, as shown in Figures 9.1 and 9.2. Figure 9.1 shows all of the historic and potentially historic properties, including Buildings of Level A-D and areas of both primary and secondary importance. Figure 9.2 shows only priority historic resources, ones that are Level A or B, or areas of Primary Resources. These are ones that are believed to be significant under CEQA purposes, and could not be demolished unless there is a significant overriding consideration.

Landmarks

Landmark buildings in the Focus Area are the highest level of historic designation. These include:

- The Kaiser Convention Center;
- Lincoln Park;
- Oakland Hotel;
- The Post Office;
- The Oakland Museum of California;
- 801-33 Harrison Street (originally the Hebern Electric Code Co. Factory & Office Building); and
- The Chinese Presbyterian Church at 265-73 8th Street.



Kaiser Convention Center.



Kaiser Convention Center.



Lincoln Park.



Oakland Hotel.



Post Office.



Oakland Museum of California.



801-33 Harrison Street.



The Chinese Presbyterian Church.

Historic Districts

The eight Areas of Primary Importance (historic districts that include A, B, and C historic resources) are:

- Chinatown Commercial District
- 7th Street Harrison Square Residential District
- King
- Real Estate Union Houses
- Lakeside Apartment District
- Coit
- Downtown District
- Lake Merritt District

A and B Rate Buildings

The other A and B rated buildings are:

- 817 Alice Street (A)
- 100 9th Street (A)
- 825 Jackson Street (A)
- 1300 Webster Street / 340 - 348 13th Street (B)
- 94 9th Street (B)
- 1125 - 1127 Webster Street (B)
- 272 - 274 14th Street (B)
- 816 Alice Street (B)
- 1435 1st Avenue (B)
- 142 9th Street (B)
- 1569 Jackson Street (B)
- 164 - 168 11th Street (B)
- 1029 Oak Street (B)



Chinatown Commercial District.



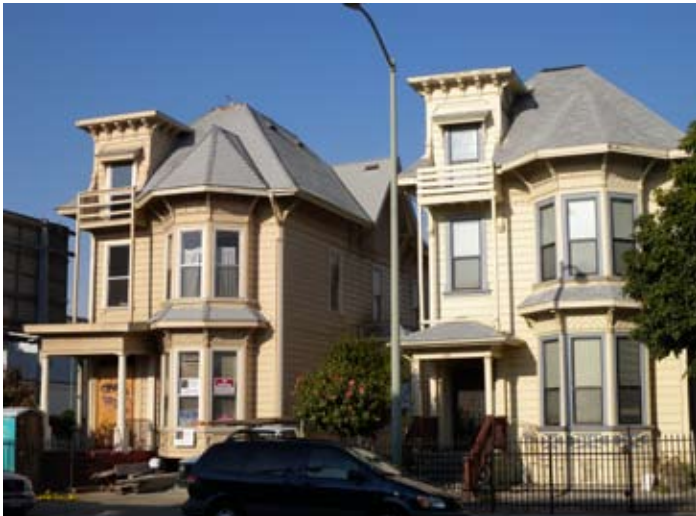
King District.



Coit District.



7th Street Harrison Square Residential District.



Real Estate Union Houses.



Downtown District.



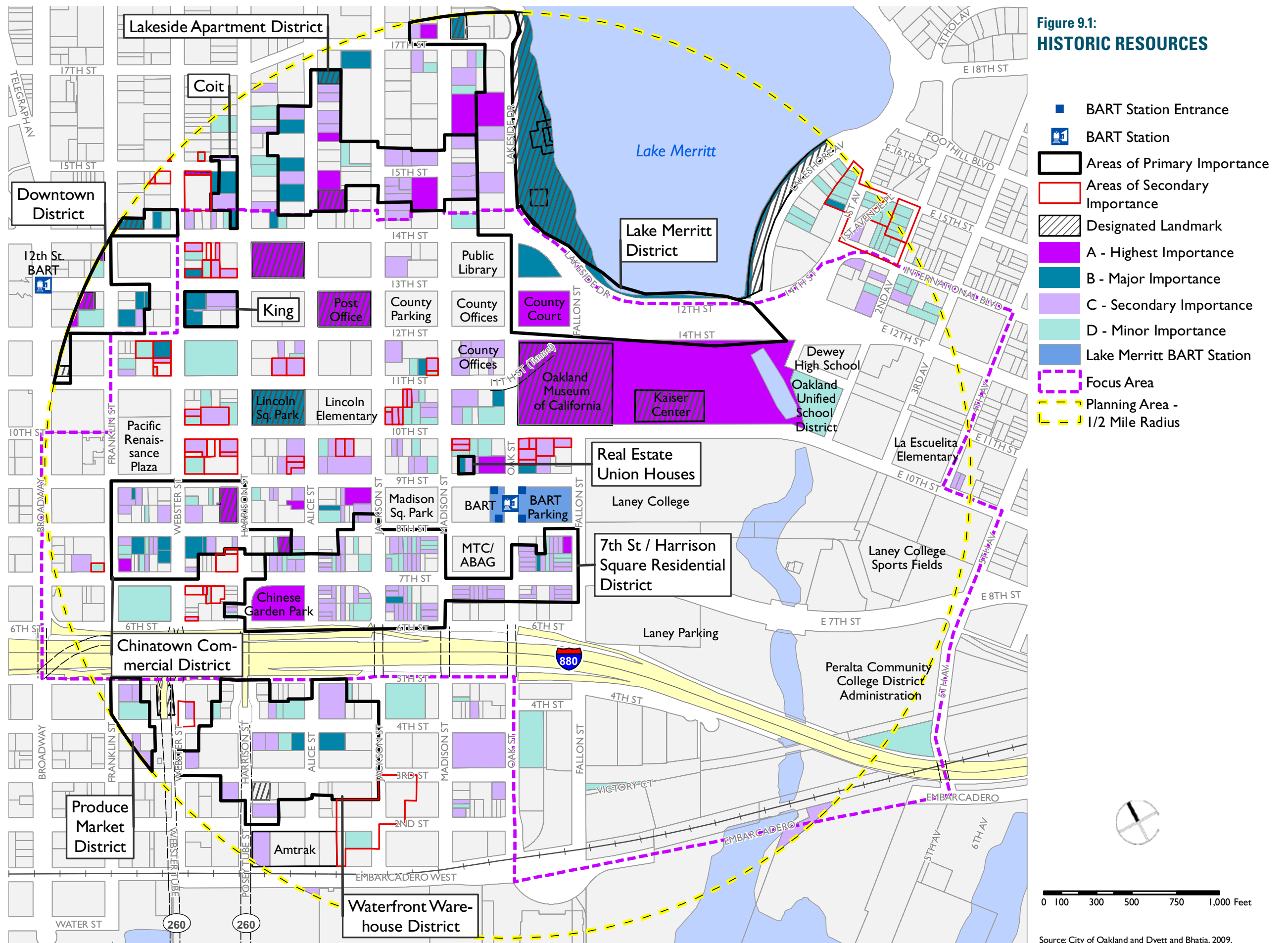
King District.



Lakeside Apartment District.



Lake Merritt District.



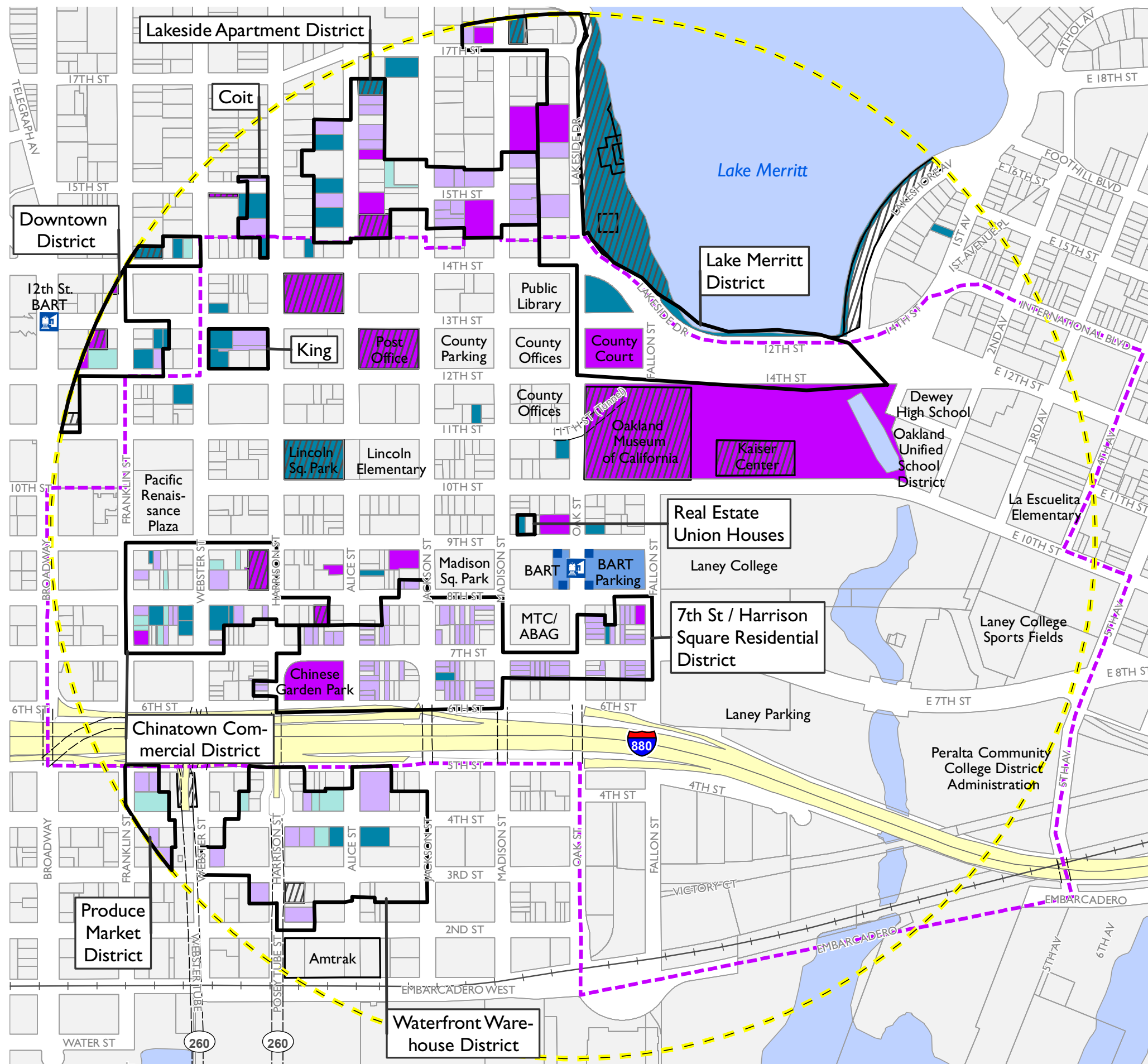
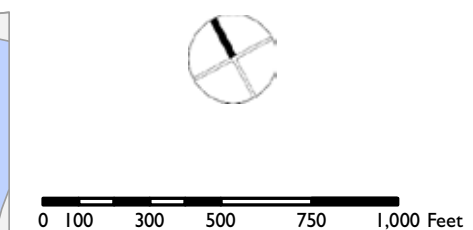


Figure 9.2:
PRIORITY HISTORIC RESOURCES

- BART Station Entrance
- BART Station
- Areas of Primary Importance
- ▨ Designated Landmark
- A - Highest Importance
- B - Major Importance
- C - Secondary Importance, Contributes to API
- D - Minor Importance, Contributes to API
- Focus Area
- Planning Area - 1/2 Mile Radius



Source: City of Oakland and Dyett and Bhatia, 2009.

9.4 Historic Districts and Review of Current Conditions

Lake Merritt District

When the Oakland Main Library on 125 14th Street was formally evaluated in the Inventory back in the 1980s it was individually rated *a (too recent to rate, potentially A when old enough). On the point-system evaluation, it received a 62 on a scale where 40 is an A, “highest importance.” It was built in 1949-50, so it is now well past the 50-year requirement and appears eligible for National Register and City Landmark status, although it has never been nominated. In addition, now that it is 50years old, it could be considered a contributor to the Lake Merritt District.

Chinatown Commercial District

According to the 1985 Historic Resources Inventory of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey the Chinatown Commercial District is a historic area that consists of mostly four-square blocks which meet at the historic center of Oakland’s Chinatown, 8th and Webster Streets, plus a “panhandle” extending east for less than one block. Borders of the district are Franklin Street on the west, 9th Street on the north, Harrison Street on the east, and 7th Street on the south.

Most of the buildings in the district are small in scale and similar in their early 20th-century commercial styles, according to the 1985 City inventory. Uses generally are retail and commercial on the ground floor, with residential or offices, including Chinese associations, on the upper floors, plus two Christian churches. The area is characterized by high density and lively sidewalk activity. It draws not only residents, but also workers from nearby downtown office buildings, including the City Hall area, as well as Chinese and other Asians from Oakland and other East Bay communities.

The 1985 inventory said that the new buildings in the district were constructed to participate in the established Chinatown activities. The same architectural and façade features crop up in remodelings done in the 1960s and 1970s. The 1985 inventory indicated that when these newer buildings reach a historically eligible age (50 years), they too could be rated contributors to the next generation Chinatown Commercial District.

It should be noted that some of the newer buildings in the Planning Area are occupied by organizations and institutions that provide essential and important cultural resources, such as affordable health care in different Asian languages, guidance and education for new immigrants, affordable housing services for low and moderate income immigrants, and traditional and contemporary cultural arts. These fundamental cultural uses of newer buildings (such as the Asian Resource Center, Pacific Renaissance Plaza, and Asian Health Services among others) should be considered as important to the community’s history and sustainability and should be equally considered when planning for the future growth of the neighborhood. These resources are described in detail in Chapter 8.

The city’s 1985 Historic Resources Inventory rated 29 buildings in the district as contributors. Many of them have two or more addresses. In many cases, some of the addresses are for street-level businesses; other addresses lead to second-story offices, association halls, or residences.

The inventory rated three district buildings as Highest Importance historic resources and as primary contributors to the district. They are:

- 801-33 Harrison Street: Originally the Hebern Electric Code Co. Factory & Office Building constructed in 1922-23, it later became the Lyon Moving and Storage Company building. The East Bay Asian Local Development Corp. acquired it and began a large-scale renovation in 1979-1980, turning it into the Asian Resource Center, which has its main entrances at 310 8th Street and 317 9th Street. “For its architecture the Hebern Building appears eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places; for its architecture, its historic use by Frank H. Yick, Chinatown’s so-called all-purpose mechanic, and its present focus of Asian activities, the building is a primary contributor to the Chinatown Commercial District,” the 1985 city inventory said. This building has been designated as a landmark.
- 265-73 8th Street: The Chinese Presbyterian Church was built in 1927 and an annex was added in 1957-58. The city’s 1985 inventory said, “The Chinese Presbyterian Church appears eligible for listing on the National Register

of Historic Places as a fine Arts-and-Crafts treatment of a Romanesque Revival theme, as the best local example of early 20th century Christian missionary work in the Chinese community and as a major community center continuing its historic occupancy. It is also an anchor and primary contributor in the Chinatown Commercial District.” This building has been designated as a landmark.

- 700-10 Franklin Street: Historically known as the Pekin Low Café Building constructed in 1924, today it is the Legendary Palace Restaurant. “Architecturally, the building is distinguished for its especially lavish use of Chinese architectural motifs, making it one of the most striking visual landmarks within Oakland Chinatown. It is the district’s only pre-1950 building to use Chinese motifs as a tourist attraction. For its architecture and activities, the Pekin Low building is a primary contributor to the Chinatown Commercial District. It appears eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places,” the city’s 1985 inventory stated.

As for the district’s historical and architectural importance, the city’s 1985 inventory said it appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, events and architecture, and under category G, exceptional importance. The events are the countless actions that have made this district the East Bay’s focus of continuous Chinese residential, institutional, and commercial occupation ever since the city of Oakland relocated Chinatown to 8th and Webster Streets in the late 1860s or 1870s.

The exceptional importance of the Chinatown Commercial District is that Oakland has the only historic urban Chinatown surviving in California outside San Francisco. As a group of small-scale early 20th-century commercial structures, the district is rare for an inner city. This is so in light of the historical fact that anti-Chinese agitation and violence destroyed or greatly diminished other Chinatowns in cities like Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Jose, and Stockton.



700-10 Franklin Street.



801-33 Harrison Street.



265-73 8th Street.

Buildings for Reconsideration in the Chinatown Commercial District

Since the city’s 1985 Historic Resources Inventory was published, there have been significant changes in some of the buildings rated as contributors to the district. A few of the buildings so rated no longer exist. Others have become old enough to win recognition as a legitimate historic resource. Moreover, at least two structures currently outside the district’s 1985 boundaries deserve consideration for their historic or cultural importance and expansion of the boundaries of the district.

Here are major significant changes in the district’s “contributor” buildings, some now older and potentially eligible to be historic, and others that no longer exist. There are also two outside the district that warrant consideration for recognition for their historic or cultural contributions. Also attached is a map of these in Figure 9.3.

- 1. 9th and Harrison. The Oakland Chinese Community Center, northwest corner of 9th and Harrison Streets: Constructed in the early 1950s, this building, outside the current district boundaries, has Chinese architectural touches and **is a potential historic resource and a candidate to be a contributor to the district because of its 50-year age**, architecture and its long service as an educational and cultural institution for the Chinese community.
- 2. 331-33 9th Street: The old Stagnaro Art Glass Works Building **no longer exists**. A relatively new structure now houses the New Oakland Pharmacy. This new building therefore no longer qualifies as a historic contributor to the district.
- 3. 374-76 8th Street: Known as the Bing Kong Tong Building when the tong began occupying it in 1953, this is the second whole building in the district (after 700-10 Franklin Street) that looks obviously “Chinese.” **It could be eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places now that it is over 50 years old.**

- 4. 800-18 Webster Street: The Hotel Sherman building underwent a complete makeover from 1985 to 1988, according to city permit documents. The 1985-1988 makeover, costing more than \$1 million, incorporated parts of a 1906-1909 building that was the Hotel Sherman (which had been modernized in 1938). It became the Lantern Restaurant. In the mid-1990s, it had another makeover, when Asian Health Services acquired the building and made it its primary medical clinic that serves a low-income Asian immigrant community from all over Oakland. Because of this essential service to the community, this building is a major cultural contributor to the district and beyond.
- 5. 315-21 8th Street: The Chinese Community Methodist Church was constructed in 1952, with an addition in 1968. Its design interprets Chinese architectural themes, and the church has a history of aiding Chinese immigrants (as do other Chinatown Christian churches). **It is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places since it is now over 50 years old**, and could be considered as a primary historic contributor, similar to the Chinese Presbyterian Church (see above listing of the district’s three primary contributors).



9th and Harrison.



374-76 8th Street.



331-33 9th Street.



800-18 Webster Street.



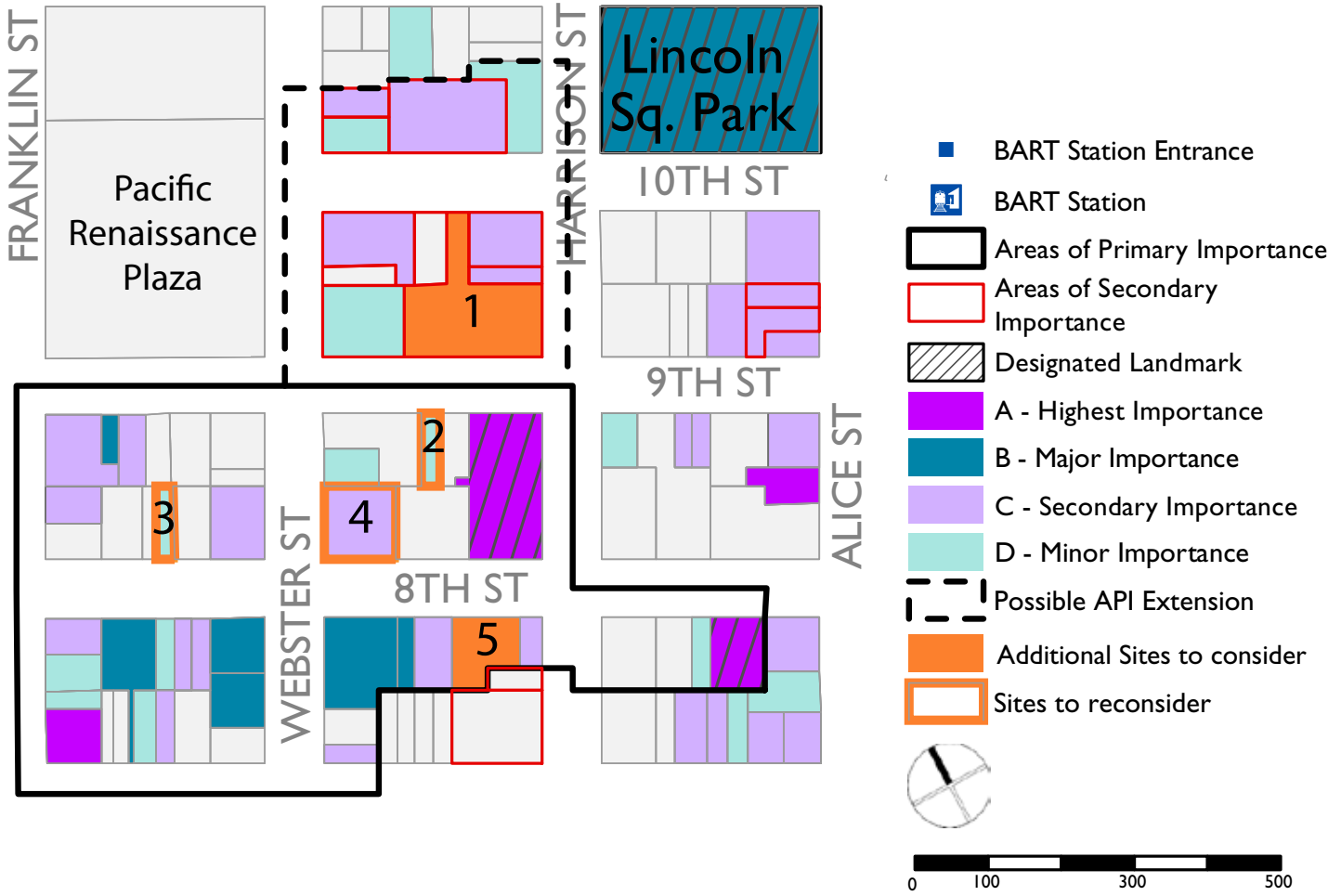
315-21 8th Street.

Consideration of Expanding the Chinatown Commercial District – 1.5 blocks

Since the City’s 1985 Historic Resources Inventory was published, there have been changes in the Chinatown commercial core that warrant consideration for redrawing and expanding the Chinatown Commercial District’s boundaries as defined 25 years ago by the city. Therefore, in addition to the specific sites that warrant reconsideration, an extension of the API is worth considering, to encompass the Areas of Secondary Importance relevant to Chinatown located between Webster and Harrison and including the buildings on the north side of 10th Street. A historic designation process would be a separate process than the Station Area Plan.

- In 1996, the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey published a study of what it called the Chinatown Support District adjacent to the east of the Chinatown Commercial District. It rated this support district an area of secondary importance, compared with the Chinatown Commercial District, which is an area of primary importance. It also said 10 of the support district’s 21 properties contribute to the district’s significance, but these buildings are rated either C (secondary importance) or D (minor importance).
- In the subsequent two-and-one-half decades since the city drew the boundaries of the Chinatown Commercial District, Chinatown businesses have expanded and developed on both the north and south sides of 10th Street between Webster and Harrison Streets, as recognized by the 1996 city report on the Chinatown Support District.
- This growth of retail and commercial activity in older buildings (that have been remodeled in some cases) is compelling evidence for the city to consider redrawing the boundaries of the Chinatown Commercial District to include the areas shown in Figure 9.3. A study needs to be conducted of the age and architectural features of structures and buildings in the streets proposed to be included in an expanded district to determine if all or some merit ranking as historic contributors.

Figure 9.3:
SITES TO RECONSIDER IN THE CHINATOWN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT



Source: City of Oakland and Dyett and Bhatia, 2009.

7th Street/Harrison Square Residential Historic District

According to the 1985 Historic Resources Inventory of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District consists of the properties along five blocks of 7th Street and the cross streets from Harrison to Fallon streets, extending in some places to 8th Street and 6th Street. It is almost entirely housing and one city park. Part of the northern boundary of the district is across from Madison Park and the two blocks owned by BART.

Most of the buildings appear to be one- or two-family dwellings. They are detached one- or two-story wood frame structures set back from the sidewalk line. The 1985 inventory said the most numerous building type, about one fourth of the total, is the Queen Anne cottage. This has a main story, with raised basement and usually an attic under a gable or hip-and-gable roof.

Other styles prevalent in the district are the Queen Anne house (similar to the cottage but taller) and the Colonial Revival house or cottage (more sedate and more classical in ornamentation, with fewer contrasts, greater symmetry, allusions to 18th century American designs such as clapboard siding, slender turned balustrades and shouldered window surrounds).

The original buildings have been changed. For instance, most now contain more units than originally. Many garages have been inserted under projecting bay windows. Except for the intrusions of a dozen industrial buildings and another dozen modern apartment buildings, the district is unified in scale, apparent density, use and relationship of buildings to lots.

The city's 1985 inventory said the district appears eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a surviving area of middle and lower-middle-class housing constructed largely between 1889 and 1910. Two-thirds of the district's features – or 79 structures – are historic contributors in the district. More – some 18 houses – could contribute, if restored, the 1985 inventory said.

The city's 1985 inventory rated two sites as historic resources of highest importance and primary historic contributors:

- Harrison Square, once known as Harrison Railroad Park, 600-98 Harrison Street (the block bounded by Harrison, Alice, 6th and 7th Streets): According to the city's 1985 inventory, Harrison Square appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It is a link to Oakland's pioneer days. A map made in 1853 for the city's founders distinctly showed Harrison Square, by name, in its present location.
- 51 8th Street: Called the Lougee-Baumgartner House, it was constructed in 1890-91, and, according to a 1983 Historic Resources Inventory of the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, "is among Oakland's most elaborate and most intact surviving large Queen Anne residences, distinguished by its richly varied forms, ornamentation and surface treatments."

The district began as a residential area and continues largely so to this day. Most of the original owners were artisans, small businessmen, or railroad employees, and many of them lived in the district. The district is part of a larger area once called Madison Square. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Madison Square area was a desirable housing area for the white middle-class population of Oakland.

As Oakland expanded to the north and east, other areas further from the city's original core became more desirable. The gradual departure of the white middle-class to newer, more desirable areas provided opportunities for Chinese residents to move into what is now the 7th Street/Harrison Square Residential District.

Chinese began living in the district's houses in the early 20th century, after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire and in the decades following. Some Chinese families had to move when public projects like the Nimitz Freeway, BART, and the Association of Bay Area Governments Building, and a lesser extent Laney College and the Oakland Museum of California took over blocks adjacent to the district.

The heavy demand for housing in the district that began in the 1970s and 1980s followed the influx of Chinese and other Asian immigrants to Oakland. These new immigrants and refugees were attracted by the proximity of shops and services in the Chinatown Commercial District immediately to the northwest.

A walking tour of the district in January 2010 found almost all of the houses rated as historic contributors to the district contributors to be intact and apparently occupied. Only one or two were visibly unoccupied and/or boarded up. However, several houses appear to be poorly maintained and several are identified as substandard housing by the Alameda County Assessor's office. This is particularly true for homes closest to I-880, such as along Sixth Street. This indicates that proximity to the freeway results in additional wear on historic properties, and that homeowners and/or landlords may have limited financial resources for maintenance of the properties.

Other Districts

Other APIs in the Focus Area include the King District and the Real Estate Union Houses, both of which are relatively small. These two smaller districts are still intact, and there is no reason to change them. The King building on 12th Street was recently renovated.

Contextual Development

One key issue to be addressed in the Station Area Plan will be how to best marry new transit oriented development with the preservation of multiple historic resources. While opportunity sites identified within this report are not identified historic resources, they may be adjacent to historic resources or within a historic district. Attention to key design features will help to ensure that new development is compatible with the rich historic context of the Planning Area.



51 8th Street.

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