



East End

Historic District Plan

Physical Description & Boundaries

The East End Historic District (formerly Capitol Avenue Historic District) is located within Sacramento’s original 1848 street grid and consists of approximately ten city blocks bounded to the west by recent apartment building infill along 17th Street, commercial development to the north along L Street, the railroad tracks along 19th Street to the east, and the former Western Pacific Railroad tracks south of Q Street.

The district contains a well-preserved collection of houses that were constructed in a wide variety of architectural styles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, interspersed with apartment buildings from the same period and more recent infill. A concentration of small commercial buildings clustered along Capitol Avenue at the north end of the district provide additional variety to the district.



Figure 136. Large and elaborate turn-of-the-century houses in a variety of architectural styles line Capitol Avenue.



Figure 137. The Arnold Building, now a restaurant, is one of several One-Part Commercial Block style commercial buildings that are clustered around Capitol Avenue. Infill housing developments (visible in the background) border the district to the north.



Figure 138. A mix of apartment buildings, some dating to the period of significance, are interspersed throughout the district.



Figure 139. Groupings of Victorian-era houses with high basements, such as these Queen Anne houses on 17th Street, are characteristic of the East End Historic District.

Brief Historic Context

The East End Historic District preserves a mixed-use neighborhood within Sacramento's larger Midtown area, located immediately to the east of the State Capitol grounds. Capitol Avenue was laid out as part of the city's original street grid in 1848. Then known as M Street, it was designed to be Sacramento's widest street; while the rest of the city's streets were 80 feet wide, M Street was planned to measure 100 feet across.¹

When Sacramento became California's state capital in 1854, M Street's grand scale made it the ideal location for the state's new State Capitol building, which began construction on the four blocks around M Street between L, N, 10th, and 12th streets in 1860. In 1872, six additional city blocks were added to the east of the State Capitol grounds to create Capitol Park.² Local newspapers declared the 30-acre public park to be "a great ornament" to the city of Sacramento that "would certainly enhance the cash value of the property surrounding it."³

The areas to the east and south of the city's waterfront business district were initially sparsely populated, but in the late nineteenth century, overcrowding and the introduction of modern amenities—such as streetcars, paved streets, and public parks—attracted Sacramentans to begin moving to undeveloped parcels to the east. As the local newspapers predicted, the completion of the State Capitol building and Capitol Park were two such

1 Nathan Hallam, "We Must Give the World Confidence in the Stability and Permanence of the Place: Planning Sacramento's Townsite, 1853-1870," in *River City and Valley Life: An Environmental History of the Sacramento Region*, ed. Christopher J. Castaneda and Lee M.A. Simpson. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 64.

2 Hallam, 69-70.

3 "The City and Capitol Grounds," *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 23, 1874.

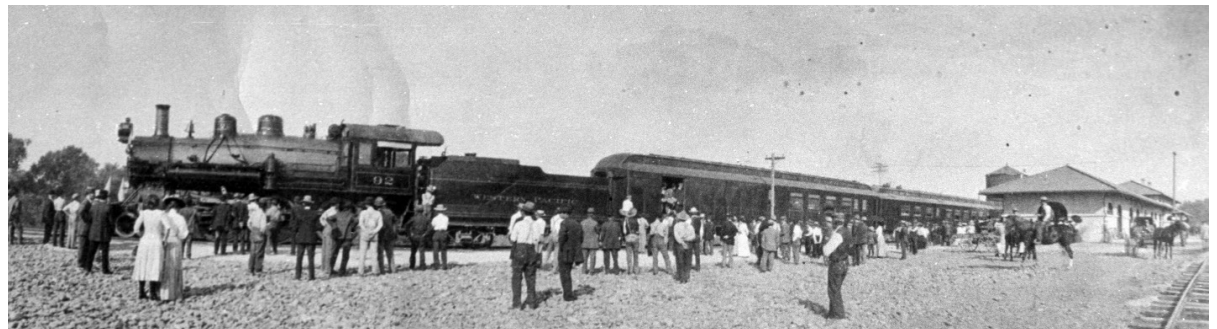


Figure 140. A crowd waits outside a train at the Western Pacific Railroad depot between 19th and 20th streets (1909). Source: California State University, Chico, Meriam Library Special Collections.

amenities that brought new residents to the area in the 1870s.⁴ The increase in development in the area toward the end of the nineteenth century coincided with transportation improvements. In 1891, the Street Improvement Company graveled P Street. The group of "enterprising citizens" sought no payment for their work and "made it possible to have many miles of street work done at a reasonable figure."⁵ The following year, construction began on a new streetcar line, which ran down P Street from 3rd Street to 28th Street.⁶ By 1900, an additional line had been constructed along M Street to 28th Street.⁷

Access to streetcar service increased the desirability and accessibility of land east of the Capitol, an area

4 Sacramento Branch of the American Association of University Women, *Vanishing Victorians: A Guide to the Historic Homes of Sacramento* (Sacramento: Fong & Fong Printers and Lithographers, 1973), 47.

5 "Graveling of P Street," *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 25, 1891.

6 "Poles for P Street," *Sacramento Daily Union*, February 9, 1892; "Running on P Street," *Sacramento Daily Union*, April 16, 1892.

7 William Burg, "Sacramento's Streetcar Suburbs, Part 4: East Sacramento and Elmhurst," *Sacramento History* (blog), September 5, 2007, <http://sacramentohistory.blogspot.com/2007/09/sacramentos-streetcar-suburbs-part-4.html>.

which became known as the East End. Sanborn maps show that by 1895, single-family houses filled almost all of the lots in the East End immediately to the east and south of the Capitol.⁸ The predominately residential neighborhood was interspersed with family-owned businesses, such as the East End Cash Store at the corner of 18th and M streets, which featured shopfronts on the first story and residences for the shop owners on the second story.⁹ The Eagle Winery was located on several parcels on 18th Street between P Street and O streets.¹⁰

The arrival of the Western Pacific Railroad in Sacramento in the first decade of the twentieth century further impacted the neighborhood's development. In 1907, the railroad company received the right to build a second set of transcontinental railroad tracks through the city on an 80-foot right-of-way between 19th and 20th streets. Freight service

8 Sanborn Map Company, Sacramento, California [map], vol. 1, 1895.

9 Patricia J. Johnson, "Capitol Corridor: L, M, and N Streets," in *Sacramento's Midtown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 62.

10 Sanborn Map Company, 1895.

began on the new rail line in 1909, and passenger service followed a year later.¹¹

By 1915, many single-family houses on the blocks adjacent to the railroad tracks had been converted into apartments, flats, boarding houses, or housekeeping rooms that could accommodate multiple families. The four blocks between M, O, 17th, and 19th streets alone contained eight houses that had been adapted into housekeeping rooms.¹² Accommodations such as these typically served single men or women who had fallen on hard times financially, but unlike individuals in similar circumstances in the West End, were generally of European descent and born in the United States. Tenants in housekeeping rooms could expect to rent a one- or two-room suite and share a common kitchen and bathroom with the rest of the building's tenants.¹³ The advent of the automobile brought additional changes to the neighborhood. In 1913, the cross-country Lincoln Highway (U.S. Route 40 in California) was completed and included a route through Sacramento that ran down 15th Street and east along M Street.¹⁴ Subsequently, M Street developed into a major transportation route through the city. Garages replaced carriage and livery stables along the alleys, and several automobile-oriented businesses were established in the area.¹⁵ In 1925, the Hudson Essex automobile company built the Arnold Building at the corner of 18th and M streets to serve as a new company dealership. In 1940, M

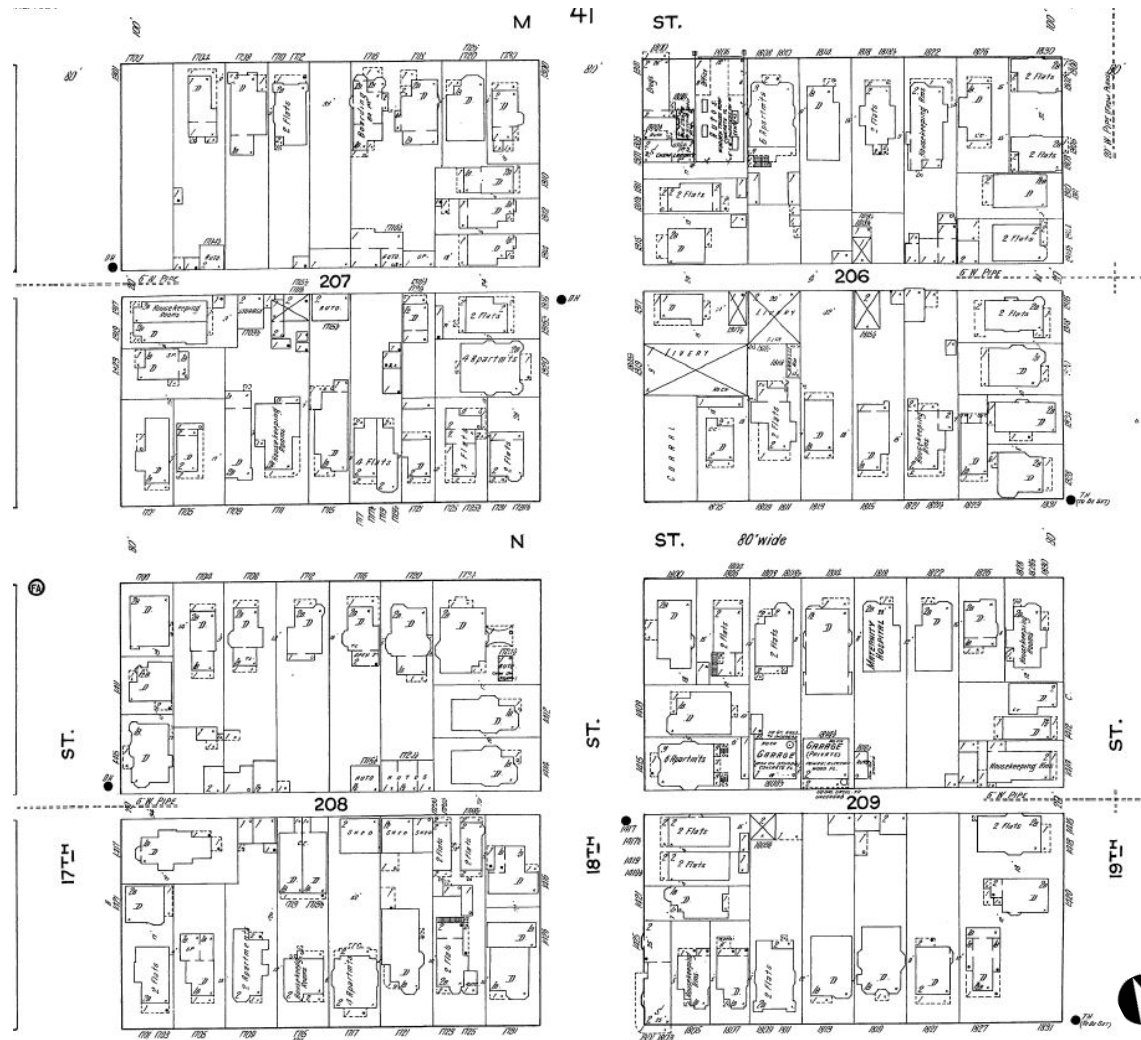


Figure 141. 1915 map by the Sanborn Map Company, showing many of the houses between M, O, 17th, and 19th streets converted into flats, apartments, or housekeeping rooms (1915). Source: Sacramento Public Library, edited by Page & Turnbull.

11 William Burg, *Sacramento's K Street: Where Our City Was Born* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 62-64.
 12 Sanborn Map Company, Sacramento, California [map], vol. 1, 1915.
 13 Paul Groth, *Living Downtown: The History of Residential Hotels in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 125-126.
 14 "Official Map of the Lincoln Highway," The Lincoln Highway Association, accessed August 8, 2018. <https://www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/map/>.
 15 Sanborn Map Company, 1915.

Street was officially renamed Capitol Avenue as part of a beautification project that sought to transform the city's widest street into the grand thoroughfare to the Capitol building that the city's nineteenth-century planners had originally intended.¹⁶

As automobile ownership increased, many of Sacramento's more affluent residents relocated to newer residential suburbs outside of the central city. The demand for streetcar service declined as a result.¹⁷ In 1939, streetcar service on Line 4 down M Street ended and was replaced by a new bus route.¹⁸

By the 1980s, however, younger generations of Sacramentans had returned to the East End, and the population began to grow for the first time in 30 years.¹⁹ Capitol Avenue emerged as a popular location for restaurants and small commercial businesses. In 2006, the Arnold Building was rehabilitated for use as a restaurant. Its success attracted the development of additional dining and food-related establishments on the immediately surrounding properties.²⁰ In the first decades of the twenty-first century, the blocks adjacent and to the south of Capitol Avenue have presented a vibrant mixture of historic, turn-of-the-century houses that stand side-by-side with restaurants, breweries, and neighborhood stores.

¹⁶ Johnson, 57.

¹⁷ William Burg, *Sacramento's Streetcars* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006), 8.

¹⁸ William D. Bourne, "Sacramento: Part One-Utility to Authority," *Motor Coach Age* 62, no. 1 & 2, January-June 2011, 9.

¹⁹ William Burg, *Sacramento Renaissance: Art, Music, and Activism in California's Capital City* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2013), 135-136.

²⁰ Hillary Louise Johnson, "The Place Maker," *Sactown Magazine*, April-May 2017, <http://www.sactownmag.com/April-May-2017/The-Place-Maker>.

Significance

The Capitol Avenue Streets Historic District was designated for listing on the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources by the City Preservation Commission in 1985 in Ordinance #85-076.

The following table provides a current evaluation of significance under the requirements and considers the factors based on the above historic district context and the 2018 historic district survey. Additionally, this historic district relates to the Railroad Context Statement of the city’s General Plan Technical Background Report.

(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts	
(1) Requirements	
(a)	The East End Historic District meets requirement (a) for listing on the Sacramento Register, because it is a geographically definable area.
(b)(i)	<p>The East End Historic District meets requirement (b)(i) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area that possesses “a significant concentration or continuity of buildings unified by: (A) past events or (B) aesthetically by plan or physical development.”</p> <p>The East End Historic District is significant for its concentration of houses and commercial buildings that were constructed in Sacramento’s East End while the State Capitol grounds were completed in the late nineteenth century and the city continued to expand outward in the early twentieth century. The houses in the district reflect common and popular architectural styles during this period with minimal modern intrusions, while the concentration of commercial buildings along Capitol Avenue (formerly M Street) reflect the street’s evolution into the entrance to the Capitol grounds and a major transportation corridor through the city.</p>
(b)(ii)	<p>The East End Historic District meets requirement (b)(ii) for listing on the Sacramento Register as an area “associated with an event, person, or period significant or important to city history.”</p> <p>The district is associated with the development of new residential neighborhoods to the east of Sacramento’s waterfront business district as a result of the expansion of the city’s streetcar system and introduction of new amenities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The completion of the State Capitol building and Capitol Park on ten blocks of M Street (now Capitol Avenue) in the 1870s were early catalysts for residential development in the East End. The inauguration of streetcar service on M and P streets attracted more residents to the area in the last decades of the nineteenth century, transforming the blocks to the east and south of the State Capitol grounds into a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood. In this respect, the neighborhood’s development also corresponds to broader national trends in which new residential neighborhoods were being established along streetcar lines outside of traditional city centers.</p>
(c)	The East End Historic District meets requirement (c) for listing on the Sacramento Register as it aligns with the goals and purposes of historic preservation in Sacramento, as well as the city’s other goals and policies. Per the Sacramento City Code, the preservation of the district enhances the “city’s economic, cultural and aesthetic standing, its identity and its livability, marketability, and urban character.”

Period of Significance: 1872-1939

The period of significance for the East End Historic District begins with the expansion of the State Capitol grounds in 1872 to create Capitol Park, an act that created a new public park that attracted residents to the area, and concludes with the end of streetcar service on M Street in 1939.

Property Types from the Period of Significance

- Residential
- Commercial

Architectural Styles from the Period of Significance

- National
- Italianate
- Stick/Eastlake
- Queen Anne
- Shingle
- Folk Victorian
- Colonial Revival
- Classical Revival
- Classic Box
- Tudor
- French Eclectic
- Beaux Arts
- Italian Renaissance
- Mission
- Spanish Revival
- Monterey
- Classic Box
- Prairie
- Craftsman
- Minimal Traditional
- Vernacular
- Landscape
- Commercial Styles:
 - One-Part Commercial Block
 - Two-Part Commercial Block

(B) Listing on the Sacramento Register – Historic districts	
(2) Factors to be considered	
(a)	Factor (2)(a) states that “a historic district should have integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association.” The East End Historic District retains sufficient integrity to meet this factor for consideration as a historic district.
(b)	Factor (2)(b) states that “the collective historic value of the buildings and structures in a historic district taken together may be greater than the historic value of each individual building or structure.” The East End Historic District meets this factor because its buildings and structures represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose collective historic value is greater when taken as a whole.

Character-Defining Features

Element	Character of Historic District
Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominately single-family residences, some of which have been converted into multi-family units, mixed with small apartment and commercial buildings • Parking and auxiliary uses located along the alleys • Commercial buildings concentrated on Capitol Avenue and at street intersections • Commercial uses located on publicly-accessible first stories with some commercial or residential use on upper stories
Mass & Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some diversity of building height and massing, but most buildings are typically one- to three-stories tall • Delta-style high basement buildings with raised first story • Varying parcel widths, resulting in some variety of building widths • Larger, more elaborate buildings often located on street corners
Cladding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominately wood siding, typically narrow or wide-width channel rustic siding, two- or three-lap siding, or shingles, often of varying shapes and patterns on gabled ends • Brick or clinker brick foundations, column bases, and chimneys
Roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predominately prominent hipped or front-facing gabled roofs, often with dormers; some cross-gabled • Some with balconies, roof decks, or turrets • Commercial buildings with square or stepped parapets • Brick chimneys
Entries & Doors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delta-style configuration with staircases leading to primary entrances above a high basement • Paneled wood doors, often with a transom above, or integrated glazing • Commercial buildings typically have corner entrances when located at street intersections • Wood or terrazzo steps
Windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood-frame double-hung windows, some grouped • Front- and side-facing bay windows; some box bays • Some stained-glass windows, especially on transoms over primary entrances
Porches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent full- or half-width porches

Element	Character of Historic District
Ornamentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixture of details and ornamentation reflect the variety of architectural styles in the district • Moldings along porch eaves • Italianate and Queen Anne details, including incised brackets under roof eaves; slender, and turned porch posts and balusters • Classical Revival details, including fluted square columns and pilasters, modified Ionic columns, and dentils along cornice • Craftsman details, including exposed rafter and purlin tails, wood braces, and/or tapered square columns
Property Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many lots with small front yards • Low fences in front of many houses, mostly wood picket or wrought iron with brick piers
Streetscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varying setback of ten-20 feet from sidewalk to primary street-facing building façade, allowing for green space in front of buildings; further variation between those with stairs extending to the sidewalk and others that are setback further • Rows of mature, evenly spaced, deciduous street trees—most often elm, sycamore, palm, and walnut trees—planted in a parking strip • Some surviving granite street curbs • Evidence of removed hitching posts in the form of L-shaped concrete strips next to the street curb • General lack of driveways on east-west streets, but slightly more frequent on north-south streets

Boundaries & Location

The following map shows the boundaries and location of the East End Historic District.

To view the statuses of individual properties as contributing or non-contributing resources to the historic district, refer to the Sacramento Register of Historic and Cultural Resources.

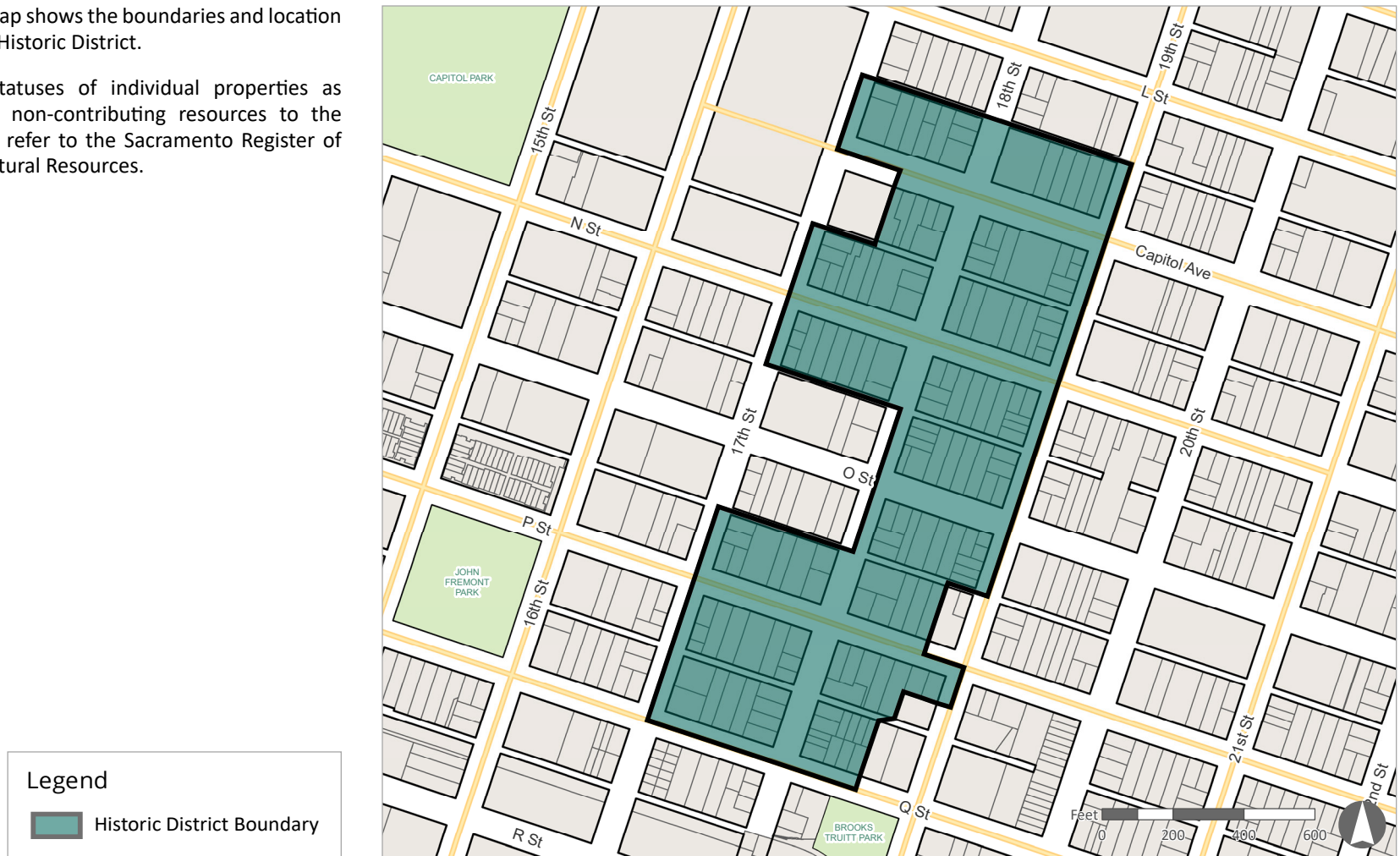


Figure 142. Map of the East End Historic District. Source: City of Sacramento and Page & Turnbull, 2019.

District-Specific Standards & Criteria

Design Principle

Projects in the Capitol Avenue District shall minimize impacts to the integrity of contributing properties and the overall district.

Rationale

The East End Historic District contains a mixture of moderately scaled single- and multi-family residential buildings, alley commercial uses, and commercial buildings which exhibit varying architectural styles, proportions, massings, and landscaping. New development on the perimeter of the historic district and on 18th Streets highlights the need to protect the remaining historic character of this district. At its northern end, Capitol Avenue provides a variety of uses and a direct visual connection to the Capitol. The district also contains a number of neighborhood-serving corner store retail uses.

In addition to the Standards & Criteria Common to Sacramento's Historic Districts in Section 1, the following district-specific standards and criteria apply when planning a project in the East End Historic District.

1. Rehabilitation of Contributing Resources

- 1.1 Protect carved, turned, or shaped wood treatments that are important features to the architectural style.
- 1.2 Avoid painting or applying new finishes on historically unpainted exterior masonry.
- 1.3 Maintain, preserve, and, where necessary, repair and restore historic elements associated with the Delta style of residential architecture, especially historic staircases, porches, and doors.



Figure 143. Many of the buildings in the district feature elaborate, decorative exterior features that contribute to the visual richness of the district.

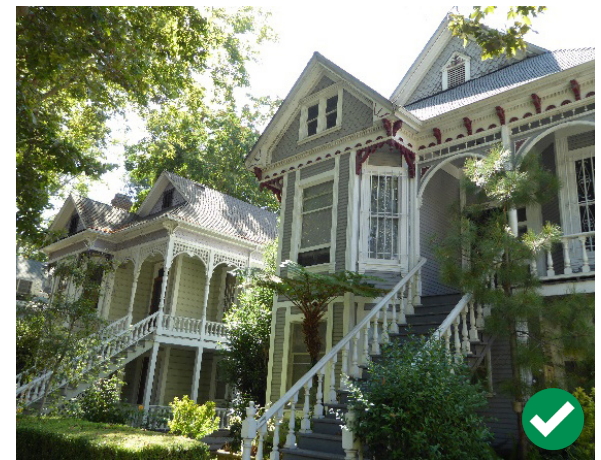


Figure 144. Many blocks contain groupings of Delta-style buildings.

2. Additions & Accessory Structures for Contributing Resources

- 2.1 Avoid additions that make contributing buildings constructed in horizontally massed or box shape architectural styles, such as Prairie or Classic Box, more vertical or that make vertically massed Victorian-era buildings more horizontal.
- 2.2 Avoid additions that cause a contributing building's height to exceed 150% of its historic height.
- Use step backs to maintain the existing street façade height.

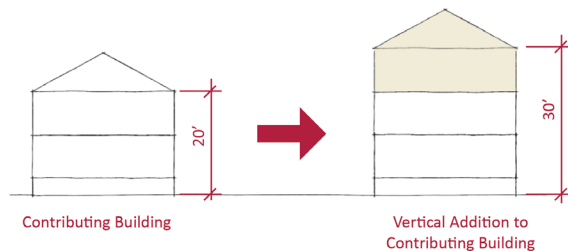


Figure 145. Additions should not cause a building's height to exceed 150% of its historic height.

3. New (Infill) Construction & Alterations to Non-Contributing Resources

- 3.1 Design new buildings with massing, scale, and proportions that are be compatible with those of contributing buildings on the same block.
- The height of new buildings should be no more than 150% of the height of surrounding contributing buildings.
 - Where additional height is considered along Capitol Avenue, reference the existing façade heights of existing historic contributors within the same block.

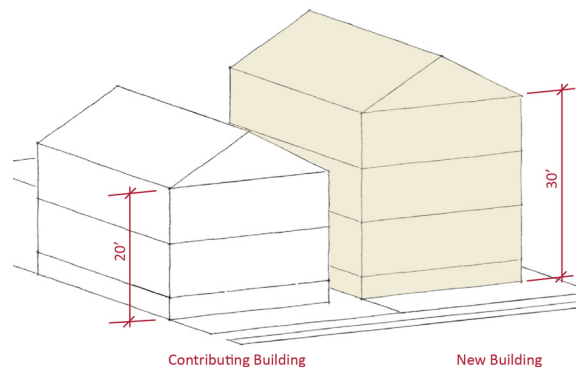


Figure 146. The height of new buildings should be no more than 150% of the height of surrounding contributing buildings.

- Consider using step backs for taller buildings to maintain the existing street façade height of adjacent contributing buildings.
- 3.2 Avoid placing garage doors along the primary street façade.
- 3.3 Use window openings that are compatible in scale and materials to those of adjacent contributing buildings.
- 3.4 Draw inspiration for the design of multi-family residential properties from contributing multi-family residential properties in the district.
- 3.5 Draw inspiration for the design of new commercial or mixed-use properties from contributing commercial or mixed-use properties in the district.



Figure 147. The height, massing, and materials of the building on the left are incompatible with the historic buildings on the right.

3.6 Consider providing covered front porches or entries at new infill development to preserve the historic district’s visual pattern of porches.

4. Site Features, Streetscape, & Landscaping

- 4.1 Preserve and maintain historic fences, especially historic wrought iron fences.
 - Where only a foundation or piers survive, restore the fence to be compatible with the historic, removed fence, or surrounding historic fences.
- 4.2 Avoid creating new curb cuts on lettered streets in the historic district.
 - Locate parking and service access along alleys, and use landscaping features to screen it from the public right-of-way, wherever possible.

4.3 Design new signage and lighting that is compatible with the scale, vertical massing, materials, and street-level orientation of historic signage in the district.



Figure 148. This infill building at 1813 Capitol Avenue is set back to align with the historic house on the right and has a height and material palette that compliments the neighboring contributing resources.



Figure 149. Although the district’s contributing buildings exhibit a variety of architectural styles, shapes, and heights, similar setbacks and use of materials visually tie them together.

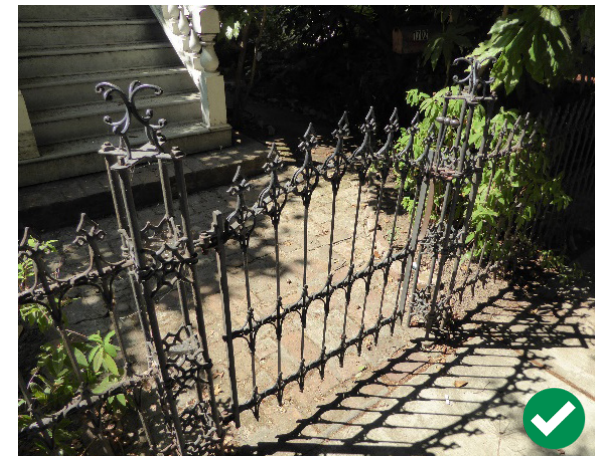


Figure 150. An original wrought iron fence at a property in the East End Historic District.

5. Alley Infill

- 5.1 On a typical unsplit parcel, set back alley infill buildings a minimum of 30 feet from the primary building on the parcel. If a parcel is split, set back alley infill buildings a minimum of 15 feet from the lot split.
- 5.2 Aim to locate alley infill so that it is a minimum of 10 feet from contributing buildings on adjacent parcels.
- 5.3 The height of alley infill should be no more than 150% of the height of surrounding contributing buildings.



Figure 151. The scale, materials, and placement of this new sign is compatible with the character of the historic building.

