

## **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

Historic preservation is the sensitive maintenance, continued use and, where necessary, restoration of older buildings, districts and other properties having historic, architectural, aesthetic, or other special interest or value.

Oakland has an unusually rich array of significant older properties which set it apart from most California cities. The preservation and enhancement of these properties could significantly contribute to Oakland's economy, affordable housing stock, overall image, and quality of life.

Oakland's existing landmark and other historic preservation programs have been inadequate to attain the full range of historic preservation's benefits. Large numbers of historic properties continue to deteriorate, sustain adverse alterations or be destroyed. Further, many of the City's existing historic preservation regulations create unnecessary burdens and uncertainties for property owners and developers.

To address these deficiencies, the Historic Preservation Element provides a broad, multifaceted "Historic Preservation Strategy" that addresses a wide variety of properties and is intended to help revitalize Oakland's districts and neighborhoods and secure other preservation benefits.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT FUNCTION AND STRUCTURE**

#### **Relation to the Oakland General Plan**

The Historic Preservation Element is a component of the Oakland General Plan (formerly the Oakland Comprehensive Plan). The General Plan is the City's primary policy document for land use and related subjects and the basis for all of the City's regulations and programs concerning the physical environment. Within the context of the General Plan, the Historic

Preservation Element sets forth goals, objectives, policies and actions that encourage preservation and enhancement of Oakland's older buildings, districts and other physical environmental features having special historic, cultural, educational, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

#### **Element Organization**

The Historic Preservation Element has six chapters. This chapter serves as an introduction to the Element and presents an overview of Oakland's history and development. Chapter 2 states Oakland's historic preservation goals. These are followed by discussion of the benefits of historic preservation; a brief review of the most significant existing historic preservation and related programs applicable to Oakland; identification of existing program deficiencies; and finally the Element's "Historic Preservation Strategy", which consists of five specific objectives to achieve the goals.

The policies and actions in Chapters 3-6 express the Historic Preservation Strategy in detail and relate to each of its objectives. Chapter 3 establishes mechanisms to identify properties which warrant, or may warrant preservation. Chapter 4 sets forth a system of preservation incentives and protective regulations for specially designated historic properties. Chapter 5 incorporates historic preservation into the full range of City programs and activities. Chapter 6 identifies ways to improve public and City staff awareness and appreciation of significant older properties and increase the level of technical knowledge to facilitate their preservation. Chapter 7 consolidates all of the Element's 66 actions into an "Action Program" to facilitate their implementation.

The objectives, policies, and actions follow a consistent numbering system for ease of reference. The objectives are numbered 1 through 5. Policies have

two-part numbers, where the first part refers to the related objective, and the second part is the policy number under that objective. (e.g. Policy 2.3 is the third policy under Objective 2). Similarly, actions have three-part numbers, the first and second part being the related objective and policy numbers, and the third part being the action number (e.g. Action 2.3.1 is the first action under Policy 2.3).

Certain terms having special meanings in the Element are listed in a "Definitions" section (Appendix A). These terms are capitalized throughout the Element where they are intended to have these meanings.

### **Element Implementation and Future Admendment**

Full implementation of the Element cannot occur until completion of the Action Program. This will probably require a number of years. During this period, existing City practices which may be inconsistent with the Element may continue, pending the Action Program's completion. It is also possible that during the implementation period some of the conditions influencing the Element's proposals may change. Amendment of the Element may therefore be necessary before it is fully implemented. Some of these amendments may occur due to preparation or amendment of other General Plan components, especially the Land Use and Housing Elements, which address subjects closely related to historic preservation.

### **Technical Report**

The Element has a Technical Report which follows the same format as the Element, but in greater detail. The Technical Report has not been adopted by the City Council and thus is not officially part of the General Plan. Its intent is to provide background data and analysis which support the policies and programs in the Element. If any conflicts should exist between the Element and the Technical Report, the Element prevails.

Chapter 4 of the Technical Report is a comprehensive description of existing programs and activities related to historic preservation. It is frequently cited in the Element as a source for further information on subjects which are mentioned only briefly in the Element itself.

## **OVERVIEW OF OAKLAND'S HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

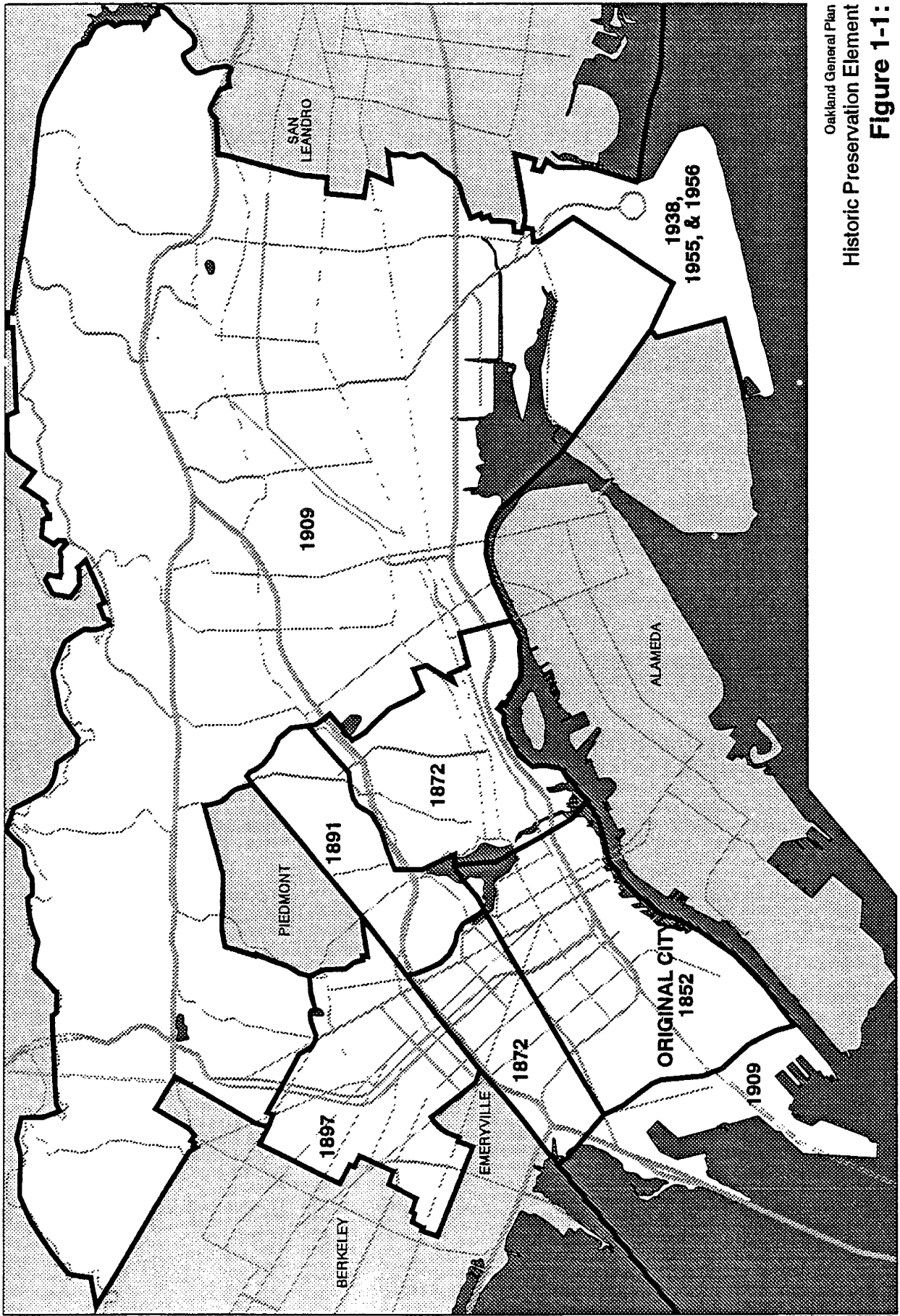
To fully appreciate the need for a strong historic preservation program, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of what is to be preserved. The multicultural diversity that Oakland enjoys today reflects a rich, multicultural history of human habitation extending back thousands of years into prehistoric time, and about 150 years in recorded history. The following sketch of Oakland's history and development will help to put the proposals of the Historic Preservation Element in context.

### **Basic Development Pattern**

Oakland originated as a series of separate communities which through annexation and urbanization blended together to form the City we know today. Vestiges of most of these communities and their associated building types and architectural styles are still evident. Oakland's history is also intertwined with the history of the major ethnic groups that make up the City's present population. Figure 1-1 shows the boundaries of the original city and subsequent annexations.

### **The Native American Period**

The East Bay's earliest known inhabitants were aboriginals usually called Ohlones, and sometimes Costanoans. Huge shellmounds left by these peoples were once near the mouth of Temescal Creek in Emeryville and on the shores of Brooklyn Basin in what is now the Oakland Estuary. The Spanish word "temescal" refers to sweat houses the Ohlones erected along Temescal Creek and other creeks. The Ohlones inhabited the area which is now Oakland for at least 3,500 years. At the time of Spanish settlement of the area, there were probably four or five Ohlone villages, all traces of which have long since disappeared, but which may exist as archeological sites. Three of these villages are believed to have been located in the vicinity of 51st Street and Telegraph Avenue, Trestle Glen, and Holy Names College. Today's Native American population of Oakland (about 1,800) though small as a percentage, is probably larger than the local Ohlone population ever was.



Oakland General Plan  
 Historic Preservation Element  
**Figure 1-1:**  
**Oakland Annexations 1852 - 1956**  
 February, 1993

Oakland Office of Planning & Building



## **The Spanish-Mexican Period**

The earliest European explorers of the Oakland area were Fages and Crespi (1772) and Anza (1776). The land was part of the rancho of Luis Maria Peralta, granted in 1820, divided in 1842 among his four sons. Oakland is within the shares given to Vicente, Antonio Maria and Ignacio.

The site of the rancho's 1821 adobe hacienda (enlarged in 1840), Oakland's first nonaboriginal dwelling, is at the intersection of 34th Avenue and Paxton Street, overlooking Peralta Creek and is a City-owned archeological site. The hacienda was severely damaged in the 1868 earthquake, but the Italianate house Antonio Maria Peralta built in 1870 to replace it still stands at the site. A small settlement and embarcadero was established along the east side of a slough now occupied by lower 14th Avenue to serve the rancho and import provisions. A plaza used for bullfights and other entertainment was located at what is now San Antonio Park, named for Antonio Maria Peralta's Rancho San Antonio.



*Antonio Maria Peralta House, 2465 34th Avenue. Italianate Victorian, 1870. Last surviving home of Oakland's first non-native settler. Oakland Landmark No. 11. On National Register of Historic Places.*

## **The Beginnings of Urbanization**

The Gold Rush in 1849 and California statehood in 1850 brought miners, lumbermen and businessmen as

well as bankers, speculators and opportunists. Among Oakland's first non-native, non-Hispanic settlers was Moses Chase who camped along the Estuary during the winter of 1850. Robert, William and Edward Patten found him the next summer and the four leased land from Antonio Maria Peralta. Their lumbering operation centered around a wharf across the slough from the Rancho San Antonio embarcadero and formed the beginnings of the town of Clinton, platted in 1852. On the east side of the slough, James LaRue began the town of San Antonio, platted in 1854, with a mercantile operation. At this time, the San Antonio plaza was named Independence Square.

## **The Original City of Oakland**

Also in 1850 came a notorious trio - Edson Adams, Andrew Moon, and Horace Carpentier. West of the Clinton and San Antonio settlements, they squatted on 480 acres of Vicente Peralta's land, and proceeded to sell lots to fellow squatters. The settlement was incorporated in 1852 as the City of Oakland, the name derived from "El Encinal (oak grove) de Temescal" referring to a vast forest of oaks extending from what is now Lake Merritt to San Francisco Bay.

The original city included what is now downtown and West Oakland up to about 22nd Street (the "Charter Line"). The first official map of Oakland was filed in 1853 for the area roughly bordered by the Estuary, Market Street, 14th Street and the Lake Merritt Channel and established today's pattern of 200 by 300 foot blocks, 80 foot wide streets, and a 110 foot wide main street called Broadway.

The earliest townspeople numbered less than one hundred and clustered around what is now the foot of Broadway, which immediately became the commercial spine. This began the march of "downtown" Oakland up Broadway which has continued to the present day.

Clouded land titles and a lack of street improvements slowed development during the early 1850s, but when a bridge was erected in 1856 over what is now the Lake Merritt Channel, connecting San Antonio and Clinton with Oakland, improved communication and transportation ensured urban progress on the east side of San Francisco Bay. In 1854, ferryboat service to

San Francisco was established. Sometime between 1857 and 1859 Oakland's first brick building (according to old-timers) was erected at the northwest corner of 3rd Street and Broadway. This and five other brick commercial structures from the early 1860s still stand along lower Broadway. These and other early structures were similar to those built in California's other "pioneer" communities such as in the Gold Country. They were generally very simple, sometimes with Classical or Gothic ornament, reflecting the period's prevailing architectural styles. Wood frame residential examples still can be found scattered through the areas of early settlement.



*St. Germain Building (Oenophile Store), 301 Broadway. Simplified "Pioneer" classical, built between 1857 and 1859. One of Oakland's oldest surviving buildings and believed to be Oakland's first brick building.*

Commercial and industrial development naturally centered near the wharves. By 1863, the San Francisco and Oakland Railroad was in operation along Railroad Avenue (now 7th Street), extending from the deep water ferry service at Oakland Point (the portion of West Oakland generally west of Mandela Parkway, formerly Cypress Street) to Broadway. In 1865, the service was extended east to Clinton and San Antonio. The railroad's location stimulated a shift of Oakland's commercial center from below 4th Street to 7th and Broadway. Two commercial buildings from the mid-1860s still survive at the northwest corner of 8th and Broadway as part of the six-block Old Oakland preservation district.

### **The Railroad Boom and Early African American Migration**

The selection of Oakland as the land terminus of the first transcontinental railroad, (Central Pacific, later Southern Pacific) completed in 1869, stimulated a development boom, the population more than tripling from 10,500 in 1870 to 34,555 in 1880. Commercial development continued up Broadway and also up neighboring Washington and Franklin Streets with the erection of elaborate multi-story Victorian brick commercial buildings or "blocks". A concentration of these still stand in the Old Oakland preservation district.

The Central Pacific's decision to locate major service yards at Oakland Point brought large numbers of railroad workers there, and rapid construction of tracts of Italianate Victorian houses beginning about 1875. Many of these houses still survive at "The Point" and are Oakland's largest and most solid surviving concentration of Victorians. The railroad employees included a significant number of African American residents who worked mostly as sleeping car porters (considered an elite occupation within the era's black community) or laborers. Another notable group of residents were San Francisco commuters, attracted by the relatively spacious surroundings and the convenience of the ferry.

### **The City Expands**

In 1872 Oakland annexed the area from about 22nd Street to 36th Street (the "Corporation Line") and the settlements of Clinton, San Antonio and Lynn east of Lake Merritt, which had incorporated in 1870 as the City of Brooklyn. At this time, there was little settlement north and northeast of Lake Merritt. Early development stayed mainly on the flatlands to the west. In 1873, Oakland became the county seat of Alameda County, which it is today. A temporary court house and jail, built in Brooklyn at the northwest corner of East 14th Street and 19th Avenue as part of the annexation agreement, still stand. For years after the annexation Brooklyn, or "East Oakland" as it was often called, continued to retain a somewhat separate identity, including its own quasi-downtown -- a concentration of wood-frame Victorian commercial

buildings around 13th Avenue, East 12th Street and East 14th Street dating from the 1870s to the early 1900s. Portions of this commercial center still exist.

### **Development of Outlying Areas**

Further east, an area called Fruit Vale (sic) developed (including the present Dimond district) around the fruit orchards of the Lewelling and Rhoda families and others. Some of the farmland became estates of wealthy individuals. Large Victorian houses surrounded by spacious, richly landscaped grounds lined East 14th Street and Fruitvale Avenue. Industries and warehouses also located in Fruit Vale, and in Brooklyn, along the waterfront and railroad. A major employer was the California Cotton Mills (1884), near 23rd Avenue below East 12th Street, portions of which still exist. It supported and was supported by a Victorian working class neighborhood whose largest surviving section is the area now called North Kennedy Tract or "Jingletown", below East 11th Street between 23rd and 29th Avenues.

Still further east, railroad stops and stations helped spawn settlements which became Melrose, Fitchburg and Elmhurst. Development of Elmhurst accelerated in the 1890's when a "new town" was laid out following construction of the Oakland, San Leandro and Hayward (sic) Railroad's electric railway and construction of the roundhouse and power plant at East 14th Street and 96th Avenue.

To the north, a telegraph line connecting Oakland to Sacramento was strung in the early 1860s, giving its route the name Telegraph Road and later Telegraph Avenue. The intersection of this road and Temescal Creek was already the center of a small settlement related to Vicente Peralta's nearby hacienda (and possibly the site of an Ohlone village). Construction of a horsecar line in 1873 along Telegraph Road to the University of California's new Berkeley campus (originally founded in Oakland by the Rev. Henry Durant as the College of California in 1860) stimulated further development in the area, by now called Temescal. One of the early buildings, the "Brick House Block", built about 1872 still stands on the east side of Telegraph Avenue in the Temescal business district.

Further north and to the west, the opening of a commuter branch of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1878 along newly built Stanford Avenue (named after Leland Stanford one of the railroad's "Big Four" owners) stimulated development around the railroad's Golden Gate station at the intersection of Stanford Avenue and San Pablo "Road". Among the developers (or "capitalists" as they were then called) attracted to the area was Charles A. Klinkner who began development of a town he called Klinknerville. Several of Klinkner's distinctive Victorian houses can still be found along 59th Street east of San Pablo Avenue. In 1890, the residents successfully petitioned to change the name of the Klinknerville post office to Golden Gate, which became the popular name of the surrounding area.

Other outlying areas began to build up around such recreational attractions as Shellmound Park (Emeryville), Blair's Gardens (Piedmont), the Tubbs Hotel (East Oakland), and Idora Park (North Oakland).

### **The Original City Flourishes**

Meanwhile, Oakland itself continued to grow, with an impressive Victorian City Hall built at the head of Washington Street (at 14th Street) in 1871 and multi-story commercial buildings extending up Broadway beyond 14th Street by 1880. Washington Street became the main shopping street, with such retail firms as the H.C. Capwell Company (1889), while Broadway had banks and theaters.

### **Chinatown is Permanently Established**

Oakland's Chinatown existed at its present location, centered at 8th and Webster Streets, by the late 1870s. Since the 1850s, Oakland had had Chinatowns at various other locations, but they were repeatedly forced to move due to the anti-Chinese sentiment of the period. Most Oakland Chinese at this time were factory workers, laborers, and shrimp fisherman, but some entrepreneurs were able to establish over 60 laundries in Oakland by the 1880s, as well as stores and restaurants serving primarily Chinese customers. Following the 1906 earthquake and San Francisco fire,

about 2,000 refugees settled in Chinatown tripling the population and greatly increasing the geographic area.

### **Oakland Moves North**

In 1891, Oakland annexed what are now the Adams Point, Rose Garden, Lakeshore, Trestle Glen and Glenview neighborhoods. In 1897, most of what is now North Oakland was annexed, including Temescal and Golden Gate. In 1900 the population was 66,960.

### **Growth and Expansion After the 1906 Earthquake**

The 1906 earthquake and San Francisco fire generated a major population increase and development boom which continued to the 1930s. In 1909, most of the remainder of what is now Oakland was annexed, including the entire hill area and Fruitvale, Melrose, Elmhurst and the rest of the area between Brooklyn and San Leandro. This increased Oakland's area from 22.9 to 60.25 square miles. In 1910 Oakland's population reached 150,174, more than double the 1900 level.

The first several years of the post-earthquake boom resulted in almost total development of North Oakland, the previously unbuilt residential sections of West Oakland and parts of East Oakland, with Colonial Revival and shingled or stuccoed Arts and Crafts houses. Several dozen of the latter were designed by the well-known Oakland-born architect Julia Morgan.

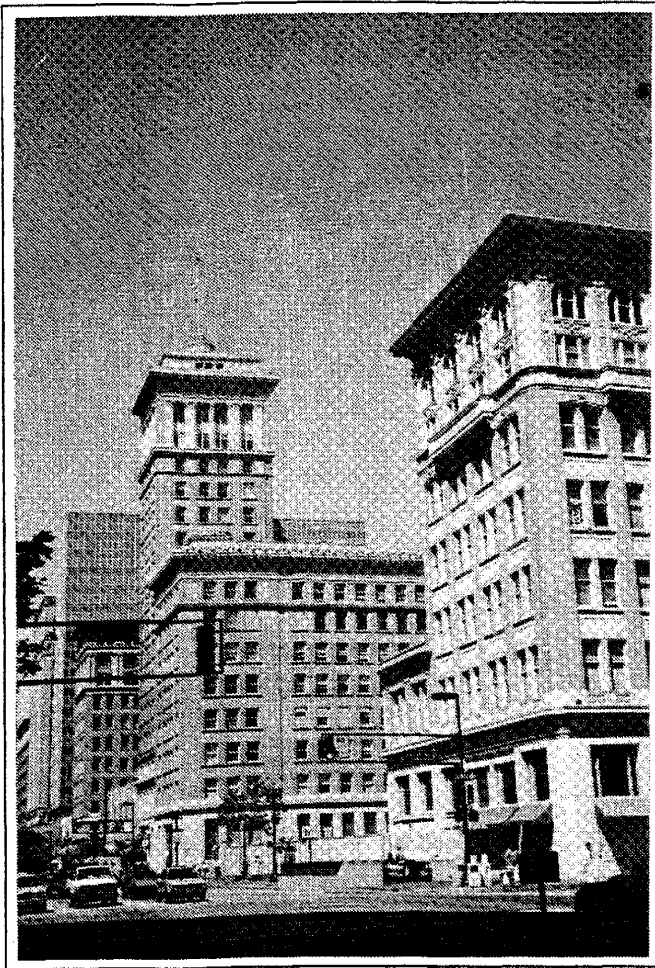
Much of this development was led by such "capitalists" as Francis Marion "Borax" Smith, who by 1903 consolidated most of the independent streetcar and electric train lines into the Key Route, ancestor of today's Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District. Smith formed a huge development company called the Realty Syndicate which bought up vast tracts of land, including what is now Piedmont Pines and other portions of the Oakland Hills, and then extended streetcar lines into these areas to promote development. As part of this strategy, Smith in 1906 began construction of the Claremont Hotel, designed by one of Oakland's leading early 20th century architects, Charles Dickey, as a resort attraction to demonstrate to potential residents the accessibility of

his holdings from San Francisco via ferry, train and streetcar. Smith's headquarters, the Realty Syndicate Building, still stands at 1440 Broadway. Smith lost control of the Realty Syndicate in 1913, but the company continued as Oakland's leading development firm until it failed following the 1929 stock market crash. It was responsible for such distinctive developments in the 1910s and '20s as Idora Park, Havenscourt Boulevard and palatial Spanish-style houses in Piedmont Pines.

The post-earthquake development boom defined much of downtown Oakland as it is known today and resulted in most of Oakland's notable early 20th century skyscrapers. The first of these, the Union Bank Building (now the Unity Building at 1300 Broadway) was erected in 1904-05, but others quickly followed after the 1906 earthquake. These included the First National Bank of Oakland Building (now the Broadway Building) in 1907-8, the first two phases of the Oakland Bank of Savings Building (now part of 1200-1212 Broadway) in 1907 and 1909, the Security Bank Building (now 1100 Broadway) in 1911-12, the Oakland Hotel in 1910-12, and the Federal Realty Building (now Cathedral Building) in 1913-14. The most conspicuous was the existing 343 foot high City Hall (1911-14), the first city hall in the country designed as a skyscraper. Other important buildings were Kahn's Department Store (now the Rotunda) in 1912-13 and a new and enlarged H. C. Capwell Company store at 14th and Clay.

All of these buildings were designed in the Beaux Arts derivative style typical of most large, early 20th century commercial buildings. Oakland was now transformed from a large town to a true city, with the downtown focus at 14th and Broadway.





*Early 20th Century Beaux Arts skyscrapers on east side of Broadway above 11th Street. Right to left: Security Bank Building, 1911-12; Oakland Bank of Savings Building, 1909 and 1922-3; and Union Bank Building, 1904-5. Part of Downtown Oakland District, eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.*

Influenced by the "City Beautiful Movement", the post-earthquake period was also an era of major civic improvements under the leadership of Mayor Frank Mott (1905-1915). In addition to the new City Hall, these included the Civic Auditorium (now Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center), new fire stations and related facilities, and acquisition and development of Lakeside, Mosswood, DeFremery and Oak Glen Parks and various other park improvements.

### **Industrial Development in the Early 1900s**

Of major significance, Oakland regained control of the waterfront in 1910 after over half a century of litigation resulting from the manipulations of Horace Carpentier. This cleared the way for port development.

During the 1900s, 1910s and 1920s, a strategic geographical position, the extensive rail network and the expanding port made Oakland one of the West Coast's leading industrial and warehousing centers. These activities became especially prominent in East Oakland, which boasted several automobile assembly plants. Oakland was thus called the "Detroit of the West". One of these plants, the Durant Motor Company, still exists, converted to other uses, on East 14th Street at the San Leandro border. The most conspicuous monument to this era is the Mutual Stores tower and warehouse complex on East 14th Street, designed in a Beaux Arts Spanish Renaissance style and one of the Bay Area's leading examples of the City Beautiful Movement's concept of dressing-up utilitarian structures with historicist ornament. Mutual Stores was a pioneering grocery chain, later absorbed by Safeway, whose modest 1929 original building still serves as world headquarters at 4th and Jackson Streets.

### **Residential Planned Communities**

The City Beautiful Movement was expressed residentially by several "planned communities" with architectural design controls, street trees, ornamental pylons framing street entries and sometimes underground utilities. Examples include the Lakeshore Homes area (Trestle Glen and Longridge Roads and neighboring streets), laid out by the Olmsted Brothers; Claremont Pines off Broadway Terrace; and Oak Lawn Manor along portions of Ross and Ivanhoe Streets in Rockridge. These were mostly developed in the 1920s and are dominated by the Tudor, Norman and Mediterranean styles popular at that time.

Working class developments reflecting planned community influence and using miniaturized versions of the same types of houses include Idora Park in North Oakland, and, in Central East Oakland, Picardy



Drive and the "Court of All Nations" on Holly Street and neighboring streets east of 73rd Avenue. These last two were developed by R. C. Hillen who styled himself as a builder of "modest mansions" and are within the vast housing tracts of East Oakland built to accommodate the auto and factory workers.

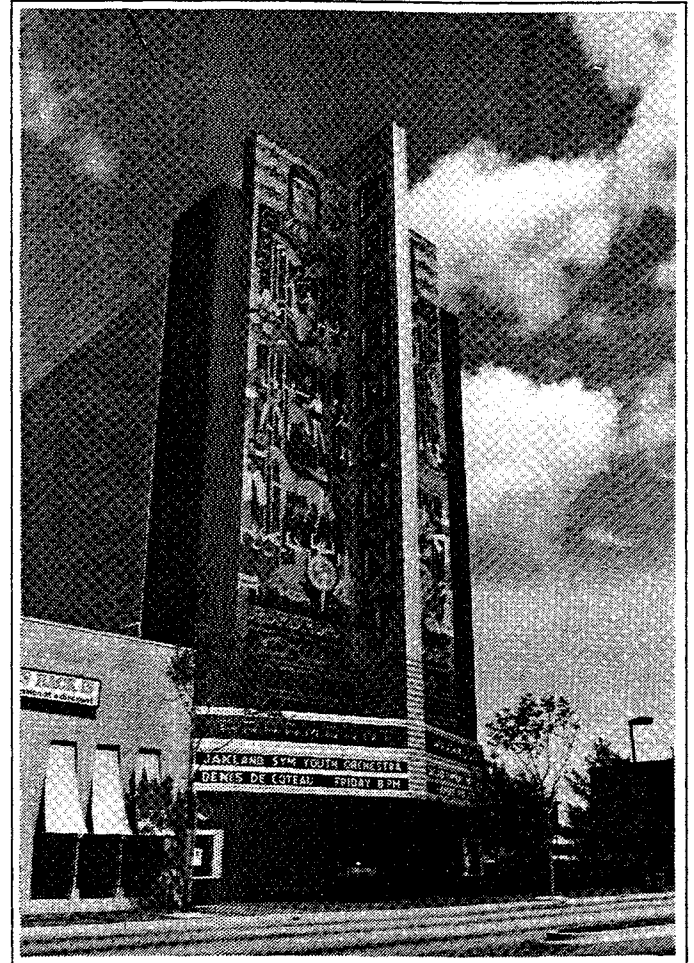
### "Downtown" moves "Uptown"

In the late 1920s, the H. C. Capwell Company merged with Taft and Pennoyer and relocated its department store to 20th and Broadway where it remains today, greatly remodeled, as part of the Emporium chain. This, coupled with the 1927-8 construction of the huge, East Indian style Fox Oakland Theater, marked yet another shift "uptown" of downtown Oakland's focus, and stimulated the development of most of Oakland's Art Deco monuments, including I. Magnin's, the Oakland Floral Depot, Paramount Theater and the former Breuner's Furniture Store. It also initiated a slow deterioration of the 14th and Broadway area, which accelerated after the completion of Kaiser Center next to Lake Merritt in 1958 and the resulting migration of banks and high-rent offices.

### World War II to the Present

Like most other parts of the country, Oakland stagnated during the 1930s, but it became a major shipbuilding center in World War II. During this time Oakland's small, but long established African American community, living mostly in West Oakland, increased about five fold with the migration of shipyard workers from the south. The 1945 special census showed Oakland's population at its all-time peak of 405,301.

After World War II, the proliferation of the automobile, freeway construction and resulting suburbanization led to a decline of Oakland and other older central cities. Major portions of Oakland's historic fabric were destroyed by freeway construction and redevelopment, especially in West Oakland and downtown. However, new buildings in modernist styles were developed and some are now becoming old enough to be appreciated for their historic or architectural value. Examples include the 1956-59



*Paramount Theater, 2025 Broadway. One of the country's major Art Deco monuments, 1931. Oakland Landmark No. 9, State Historical Landmark, and National Historic Landmark.*

First Western Bank Building (now 1330 Broadway) which was the first International Style skyscraper on the west coast, and the 1969 Oakland Museum, a much admired example of the New Brutalist style which resembles a massive piece of landscaped sculpture more than a building.

Many of Oakland's most significant historic buildings were seriously damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake of October 17, 1989, which has contributed to bringing historic preservation to the forefront of City policy.

F-HP82 4NHPCOL1.CB