



Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

OAKLAND LANDMARK, S-7/S20 PRESERVATION COMBINING ZONE, AND HERITAGE PROPERTY APPLICATION FORM

This form is for use in requesting the City of Oakland pursuant to its Zoning Regulations to designate a Landmark or Heritage Property or to rezone one or more properties to the S-7 or S-20 Preservation Combining Zone.

1. IDENTIFICATION

- A.** Historic Name: Newsom (Sidney B.) flats (old address 283-285 24th Street)
- B.** and/or Common Name: 323-325 24th Street, Oakland, CA 94612

2. IDENTIFICATION

Street and number: 325 24th Street Zip Code: 94612
 Assessor's Parcel Number: 8-669-2

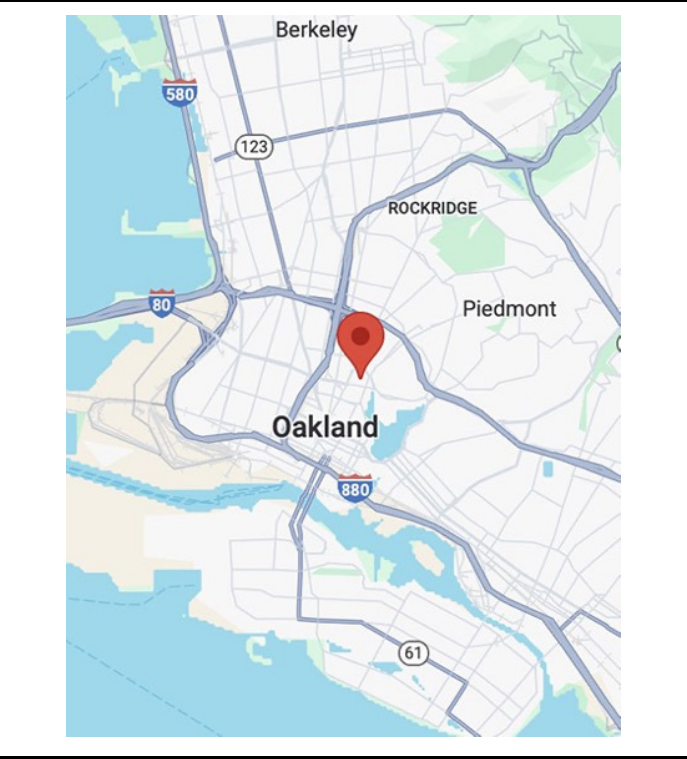
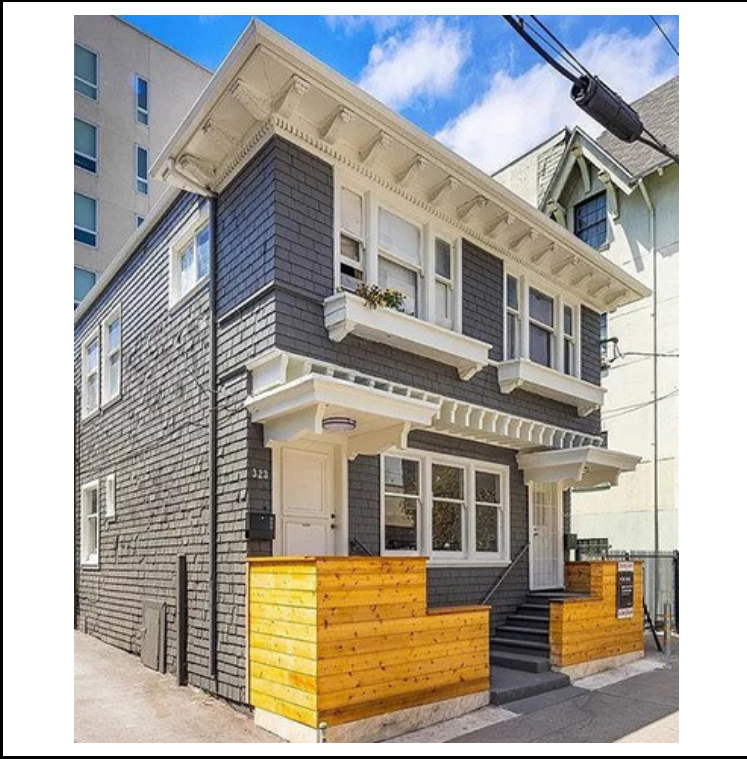
3. OWNER OF PROPERTY

Name: Ryan Lawrence Chiu Email: lawrence.chiu@live.com
 Street/Number: 325 24th Street Telephone: 510-326-6826
 City: Oakland State: CA Zip Code: 94612

4. APPLICATION FOR

City Landmark Heritage Property S-7 District S-20 District

5. SURVEY RATING	NAME OF SURVEY	DATE	DEPOSITORY
C2+	Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey	09/30/1996	Oakland City Planning Dept.
	(Photo)		(Location Map)



7. DESCRIPTION

A. Resource Type and Use: Present (P) and Historic (H)

Building(s) ___ District ___ Structure ___ Site ___ Object
P/H Residential ___ Commercial ___ Industrial ___ Institutional
___ Other (specify): _____

B. Condition

___ Excellent
 Good

___ Fair
___ Poor

C.

___ Unaltered
 Altered (minimally)

D.

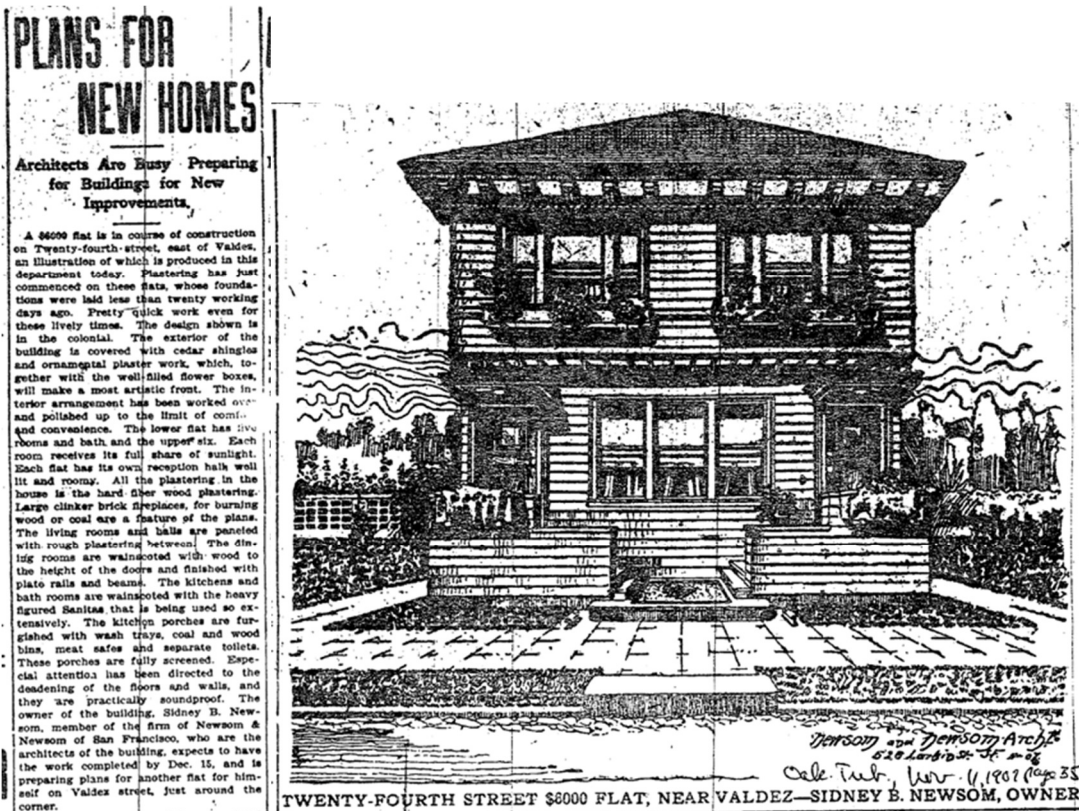
Original Site
___ Moved (Date _____)

E. Style/Type: Shingled Colonial Revival/Flats, Arts + Crafts

F. Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance:

A classic boxed silhouette defines this 1907 shingled duplex, which echoes the spirit of the Bay Area's "First Bay Tradition" while seamlessly blending various period styles, showcasing architect Sidney Newsom's eclectic design sensibilities. Drawing inspiration from the Eastern Shingle Style, renowned for its emphasis on practicality and harmony with the environment, this residence uniquely integrates elements of Roman, Classical/Colonial Revival, and Arts and Crafts aesthetics into its façade, resulting in a distinctive architectural fusion unlike any other.

The exterior of the duplex is clad in cedar shingles, likely left natural when first constructed, and now painted in a gray-blue shade. Besides the rear wall, which had its shingles removed due to a fire in 2017, the house appears essentially unchanged from a drawing published in the Oakland Tribune "Plans for New Homes" on November 11, 1907 (see below).



Drawing and article of 325 24th Street from the Oakland Tribune, Nov. 11, 1907, pp. 35



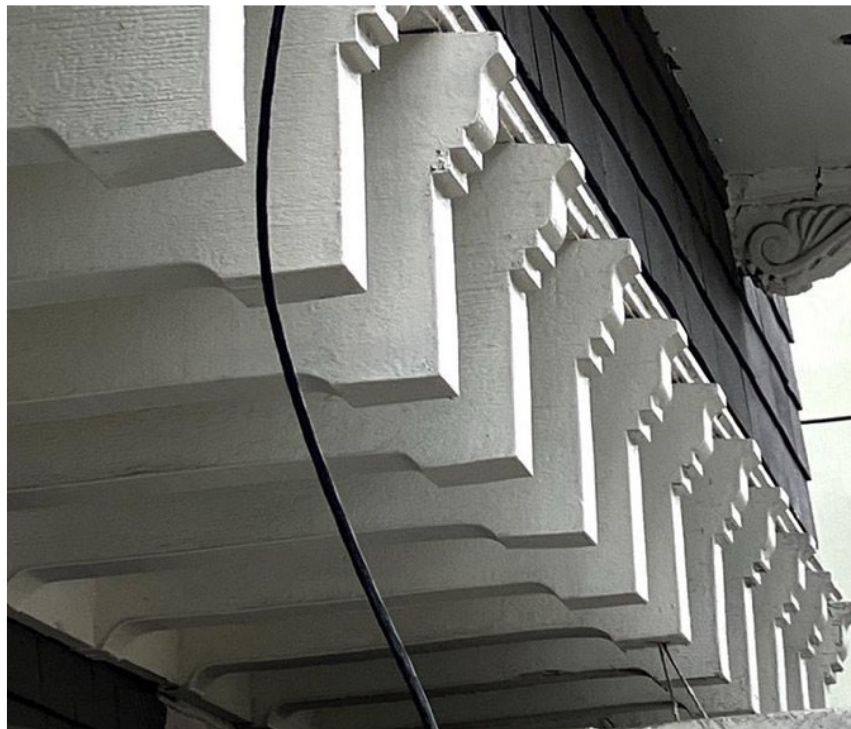
325 24th Street Facade with all Original Windows

The most striking feature is the twin front entrances, one at each corner of the facade. Each doorway is accessed by a small set of stairs wrapped by a low wood wall, originally covered in shingles which were recently removed by the previous owner. Each glazed door and landing are sheltered beneath a prominent overhang. The porch overhangs have neither posts nor brackets as support, and the 1907 drawing indicates that was the original condition.

The Colonial Revival influence is evident in the low-pitched hip roof, wide eaves, and symmetrical façade of the house. Its proximity to neighboring houses is reflected in the eaves and corbels that only extend a few feet from the façade along the sides. Under the front section of the roof are a set of 19 classical ornamental leaf-style corbels made from plaster. Nestled just beneath is a distinct line of dentils which, in conjunction with the corbels, strongly hint at Roman/Neoclassical influences. Between the upper and lower floors, a row of 23 elongated brackets, evenly spaced, demarcates the visual separation between the upper and lower units. The angular geometric shape of these brackets, as well as those under the door overhangs, indicates a nod to the Arts and Crafts style commonly seen in East Bay craftsman/shingled homes and further illustrates the uniquely diverse mix of styles present in this house.



From top to bottom: Eave corbels, dentils, flower box, flower box corbel, cantilever brackets, door overhang



Cantilever Brackets



325 24th Street Current Facade with new Vinyl Windows and new flower box corbels

Two sets of three double-hung windows adorn the upper floor's facade, their symmetry emphasizing the balanced design of the building. Planter boxes with decorative corbels under the upper windows add visual interest and natural beauty to the facade. The lower unit showcases another set of three double-hung windows positioned centrally between the two entrances, thereby contributing to the overall symmetry of the house yet also revealing that it is upper and lower flats, not side by side mirror-image units. Due to their lack of functionality and repairability, the original wood windows, which featured decorative accents around the frames, were recently replaced with vinyl windows. Additionally, the original leaf style corbels under flower boxes were all replaced due to the collapse of one of the corbels. The image above shows the current state of the façade with vinyl windows and new flower box corbels.

The fully shingled east side of the house terminates at a split staircase wrapping around the southeast corner and leading to the upper unit's rear entrance. A complete replacement of this staircase was undertaken earlier this year to adhere to code requirements, necessitated by the absence of a landing at the entrance. Unpainted cedar shingles were selected to clad the newly constructed section of the rear wall supporting the staircase.

On the west side, a second entrance for the lower unit is positioned at the southwest corner, accentuated by cornices adorning two windows that protrude from the facade. The rear of the house almost abuts the neighboring building (Alta Waverly – 2302 Valdez), allowing only a narrow alleyway. As mentioned earlier, the entire rear wall remains without shingles due to damage from a fire in 2017. This wall now consists of newly installed vertical wood planks.



East side (left) and west side (right) of house



Rear (south side) of house with newly constructed rear staircase walls clad in shingles

8. SIGNIFICANCE

A. **Construction date(s):** 1907

B. **Architect/Builder/Designer:** Sidney Newsom (architect), Newsom & Newsom (architect), S.A. Norman (builder)

C. **Statement of Significance** (*include summary statement of significance as first paragraph*):

Summary Statement:

This application for heritage property status for 325 24th Street in Oakland's Northgate-Waverly district highlights its significance as a relic of the city's architectural past. Designed in 1907 by Sidney Newsom, scion of the renowned Newsom architectural lineage, this duplex reflects the family's distinctive approach to design, marked by a blend of functionality and sometimes eccentrically skewed historical references. Unlike the flamboyant Victorian style, Sidney's design embraces practicality and understated elegance, while hinting at a transition towards the Craftsman style. Situated amidst a district undergoing rapid modernization, the house stands as one of the few remaining structures from the early 20th century, embodying the area's social, cultural, and commercial heritage. The ongoing remodel of the upper floor into two separate units aligns with the city's goal of creatively repurposing historic buildings in the Broadway-Valdez district to meet contemporary needs while preserving their historic character.

Full Statement of Significance:

Amidst the towering high rises of Oakland's Northgate-Waverly district, 325 24th Street stands as a reminder of a bygone era steeped in the City's rich history. Its period architecture presents a striking juxtaposition against the modern landscape that surrounds it. Designed in 1907 by Sidney Newsom, the son of renowned architect Samuel Newsom, nephew of Joseph Cather Newsom, and brother and frequent business partner of Noble Newsom, 325 24th Street embodies the Newsom family's distinct approach to residential design. The Newsom family line, which includes California Governor Gavin Newsom, played a pivotal role in shaping the architectural landscape of the East Bay. Born in 1877, Sidney trained under his father's tutelage and became highly influenced by his experiences in New York and Europe. Sidney brought a unique vision to his designs characterized by a blend of functionality, historical references, and an emphasis on integration with the surrounding neighborhood. His architectural prowess was honed during his tenure at Newsom & Newsom, the celebrated firm founded by his father and uncle which built numerous iconic structures across California, including the illustrious Carson Mansion in Eureka.



Carson Mansion in Eureka

Throughout his career, Sidney's architectural visions graced the pages of *Architect & Engineer* magazine, showcasing his versatility and innovative spirit. Initially contributing to classical revival styles, Sidney's designs evolved to embrace the distinctive aesthetics of California Mission and Spanish Revival, leaving an indelible mark on the residential landscapes of Piedmont and Berkeley.



Sidney and Noble Newsom's designs published in Architect and Engineer Magazine Oct 1921 (left) and Oct 1924 (right)



Sidney and Noble Newsom's designs (cont.) from Oct 1921 Architect and Engineer Magazine

Trained in New York at Parrish and Schroder, Sidney honed his craft under various Eastern offices, enriching his understanding of architectural principles and techniques ⁹. His passion for exploration led him on a transformative round-the-world trip in 1911-12, where he developed a profound appreciation for French architecture, which would shape his future endeavors. He also reportedly absorbed historic European styles during and after service in World War I.

**OAKLAND ARCHITECT RETURNS
FROM TRIP AROUND WORLD**

**Sidney Newsom Is
Home After Long
Journey**

AFTER a six months' tour during which he completely circled the globe, Sidney Newsom, of 227 Twenty-fourth street, a well-known local architect and prominent member of the local lodge of Elks, returned on the Hamburg-American line steamer Cleveland recently. Newsom's principal object in the trip was to study the advances in architectural work throughout the land but the journey was also made for pleasure and nearly every place of interest and importance was visited.

"I found, however," remarked Newsom, "that America is fully up-to-date in all respects and in most cases far ahead of European cities. Germany is perhaps first in point of beautiful streets and architecture, and of course, owing to the age of the country the cities have been laid out in more compact and symmetrical form.

"I have become convinced of the necessity of America maintaining a powerful army and navy, for it is evident that Japan is ready at a moment's notice to precipitate trouble if it dared. Lack of money is, I verily believe, the only thing that holds them back. France and Germany are at dagger's points all the time and a Frenchman of some prominence with whom I talked in Paris told me that France was ready for Germany any time. We have the money, now, even if Germany has the far force," he remarked. They have not forgotten Alsace and Lorraine, you know."



**SIDNEY NEWSOM,
Feeding Pigeons at Cathedral of St.
Mark at Venice.**

of the woman without living up to the bargain. In the waterfront districts of Canton thousands live on little boats. The girl babies are allowed to run freely about and if they fall overboard no effort is made to rescue them. The boys, however, are tethered out

Article from Oakland Enquirer, February 1912, p. 6

Sidney's homes seamlessly blended into their surroundings, exuding charm and sophistication without ostentation, catering to affluent clientele seeking understated luxury. Despite facing challenges during the tumultuous times of the Great Depression, Sidney's dedication to excellence endured. His architectural designs became integral parts of middle and upper class neighborhoods, leaving an enduring legacy in the East Bay.

Tragically, Sidney's life was cut short in 1942, succumbing to a cerebral hemorrhage at age 65. However, his contributions to California architecture continue to be celebrated, his homes standing as enduring symbols of timeless beauty and architectural excellence, a testament to his enduring legacy in the annals of architectural history.

325 24th Street was designed by Newsom & Newsom, with Sidney as the principal architect according to the Oakland Tribune. Moreover, Sidney and his family lived in the house from its completion in 1907 until 1911, when they moved next door to 319 24th Street, a quadplex also built by Newsom in 1908. In 1910, construction finished on a 38-unit residential apartment building located on the other side of 325 24th Street at 2346 Valdez Street. This marked the final Newsom building in the district. Referred to as the Newsom Apartments, the 1910 building, along with 319 and 325 24th Street,

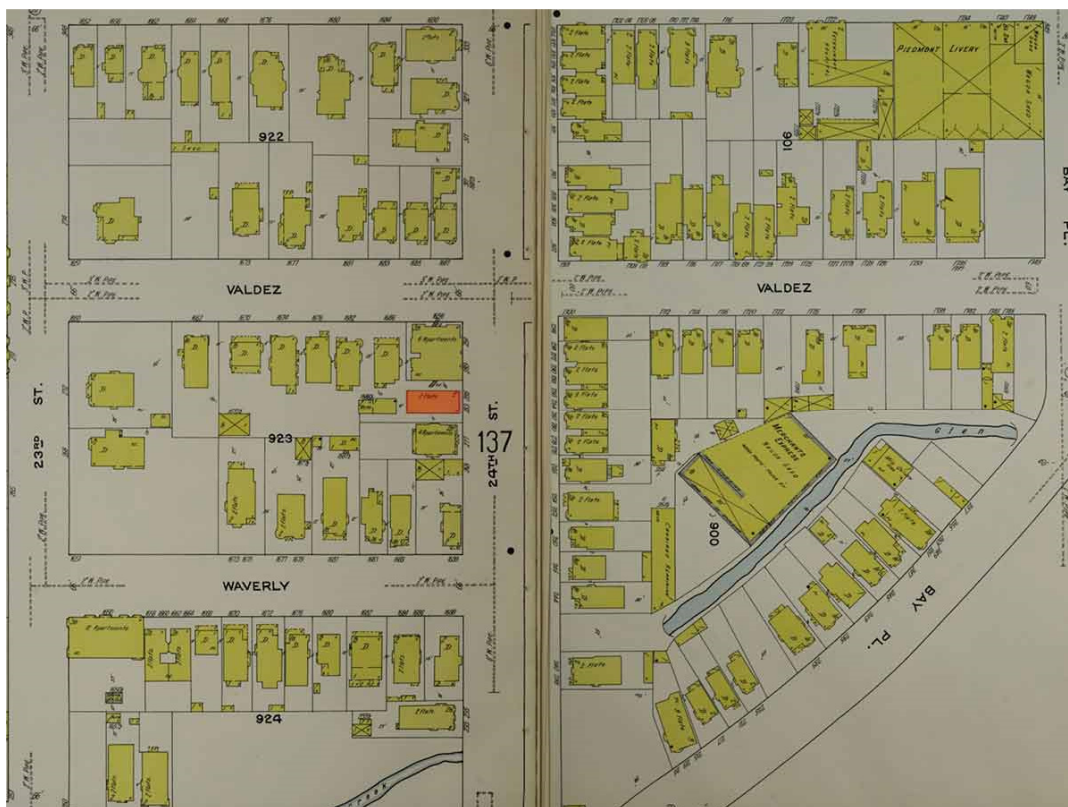
accommodated many members of the Newsom family, forming a rare cluster of familial presence among these three historic structures.



Current photos of cluster of three Newsom buildings (319 24th St, 325 24th St, 2456 Valdez St)

325 24th Street, designed as a duplex with distinct units on each floor, stands as a prime example of Sidney Newsom’s architectural philosophy which emphasized functionality with an eclectic blend of styles from a variety of time periods. Unlike his father's famously flamboyant Victorian houses and mannered Mission Revivals, Sidney Newsom’s design eschews excessive ornamentation. The twin entrances, each with a small set of stairs and a prominent overhang, deliver symmetry akin to Colonial Revivals, and can be seen to emphasize functional living over opulence. A touch of visual interest is maintained with decorative corbels and brackets throughout the façade which reference both Neoclassical and Arts & Crafts styles. This focus on practicality aligns with the changing tastes of the early 20th century, where the exuberance of the Victorian era gave way to a more subdued understated elegance. Intriguingly, 325 24th Street doesn't fully embrace the Craftsman style, for which some of Sidney Newsom's later works are known. It lacks the strong horizontal lines and deep eaves that are hallmarks of the Craftsman. These wide-ranging influences showcase the architect’s love of exploring and integrating a variety of styles and time periods into his design vocabulary.

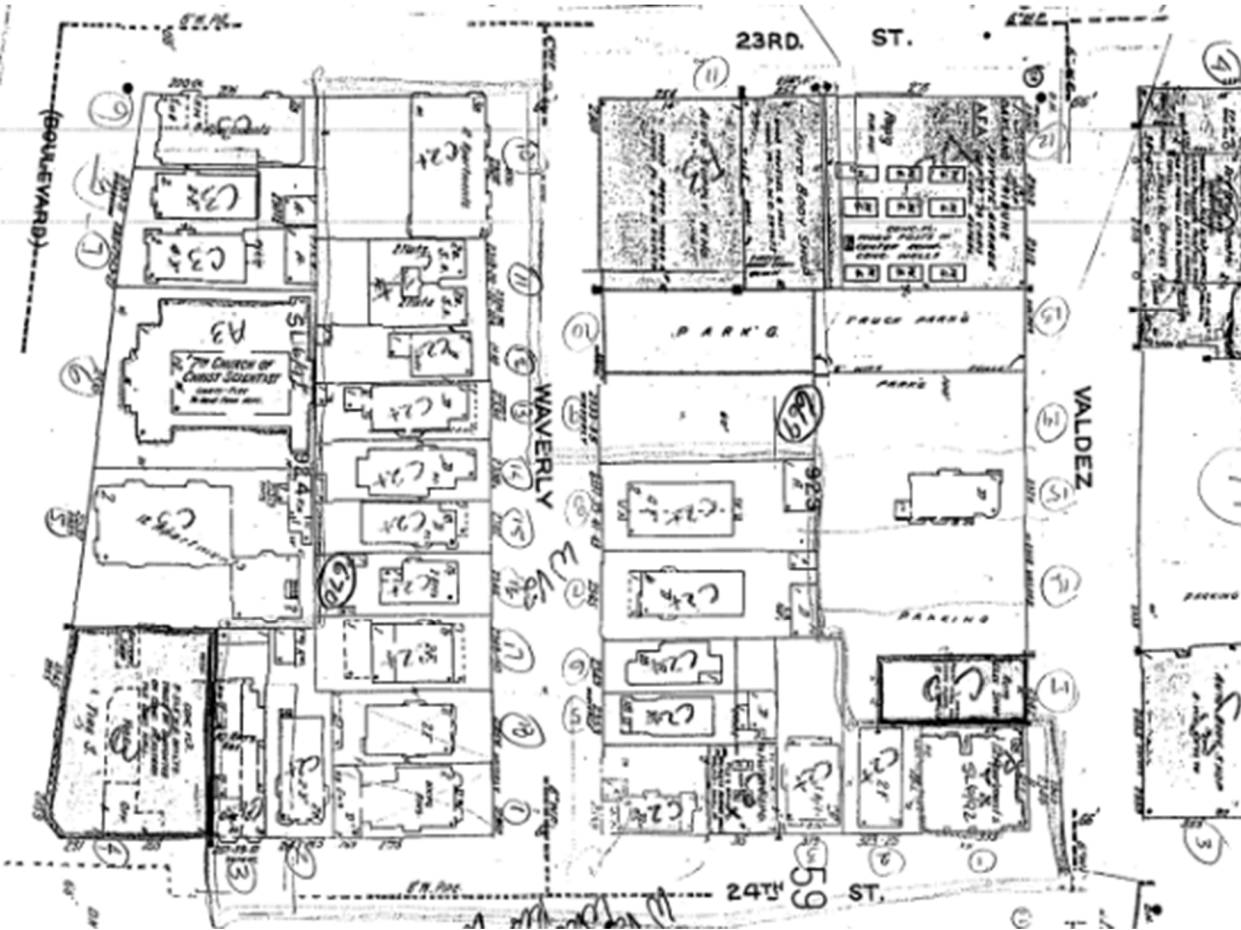
The surrounding Northgate-Waverly District offers further context for the house. Once filled with extensive residential accommodations, this centrally located region has undergone significant transformation over the last century. Originally a marshy environment with creeks flowing into the head of the lake causing a stall in initial development, the lakeside area experienced a residential housing boom following the arrival of the Key System streetcar in 1903 and San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. As depicted in the 1911 Sanborn Map below, the neighborhood became densely populated with duplexes and single-family dwellings.



Sanborn Map from 1911 of Northgate-Waverly District (325 24th Street near center)

In the following decades, a significant portion of this housing was razed amid the economic prosperity that followed World War II, and subsequently during Oakland’s redevelopment era of the 60s through the 80s, in order to facilitate the construction of expansive multifamily complexes, commercial high-rises, and office buildings.

As late as the 1980s, the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey found a solid turn-of-the-century residential neighborhood on Waverly and 24th, bordered by Harrison and Valdez, and identified it as the “Waverly Residential District”, a small but potentially historic district amid this modern landscape. The survey acknowledged a total of 19 buildings, including 325 24th Street, comprising primarily of residential structures along with two commercial and two industrial buildings. Since the 1980s, when the survey was completed, five of these structures have been demolished, reducing the total count to just 14 buildings. Other notable developments in the vicinity include the Kaiser Center (1960) and the Ordway Building (1970), with the latter retaining its status today as the tallest skyscraper in Oakland.



Drawing of Waverly Residential District from the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (1984)



Current Map of Neighborhood (taken from Apple Maps)

In 2014, acknowledging the significance of this region, the City of Oakland introduced the Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan (BVDSP) to revitalize the locality with an extensive array of mixed-use development. This initiative led to the emergence of brand-new apartments, retail outlets, and office structures surrounding 325 24th Street. Characterized by sleek materials like glass, steel, and stone, this new architecture stands in stark contrast to the period styles of the early 1900s. Just across Waverly Street, one of Oakland’s largest mixed-use projects, situated at 2359 Harrison Street, is currently under construction, further shaping the evolving landscape of the neighborhood.



Current Photos of Waverly Residential District with ongoing construction



Broadway-Valdez Plan from City of Oakland

325 24th Street lies within the boundaries of the newly formed Broadway-Valdez planning district, designed to encourage new mixed-use development in the neighborhood. One of the primary goals of the Broadway-Valdez District Specific Plan, as published by the City (<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/broadway-valdez-district-specific-plan>), is the “creative reuse of historic buildings that maintains a link to the area’s social, cultural and commercial heritage.” Preserving the historic character of 325 24th Street is thereby crucial in fulfilling this objective, particularly given its status as one of the few remaining turn-of-the-century structures within the Broadway-Valdez Specific Plan.

The upper floor of 325 24th Street is currently being split into two separate units, providing much-needed additional housing to the area. This not only aligns with the City's goal of creatively reusing historic buildings but also ensures that the house continues to serve the community in a meaningful way. During the renovation process, care is being taken to use materials and styles that preserve the

historic character of the house whenever possible, maintaining a tangible connection to the City’s architectural past while meeting modern housing needs. Beyond showcasing the enduring charm of shingled and Classical Revival styles emblematic of the East Bay, 325 24th Street has significant ties to the storied Newsom lineage whose influence has reverberated throughout California’s architectural history. Being part of a rare continuous group of three buildings in the area that were both designed and occupied by the Newsoms, the house serves as a significant reminder of Oakland’s rich cultural legacy.

Securing a Heritage Property designation and becoming eligible for Mills Act incentives would further enhance the preservation efforts for 325 24th Street, aligning with Oakland's broader goals of safeguarding the area’s architectural heritage and promoting sustainable urban development. This designation would contribute to the ongoing revitalization of the Broadway-Valdez district, fostering a sense of pride and appreciation for the city's historic fabric.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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4. Gebhard, D. (1982). Newsom, Samuel, and Newsom, Joseph Cather. In Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects (Vol. 3, pp. 292-298).
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7. McCallon, J. J. (2023). Residential Architecture in the East Bay.
8. Michelson, A. Newsom and Newsom, Architects. Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD), Built Environments Library, University of Washington.
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11. Oakland Enquirer. (1912, February 7). p. 6.
12. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. (1911-1912). Oakland, Alameda County, California.
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14. Wilson, M. A., & Lee, M. (1987). A Living Legacy: Historic Architecture of the East Bay.

10. FORM PREPARED BY

Name: Ryan Lawrence Chiu

Date: 04/29/2024

Address: 325 24th Street Telephone: 510-326-6826

City/Town: Oakland State: CA Zip: 94618

Email: lawrence.chiu@live.com

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DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY

1/10/2020

rev.

A. Accepted by: _____ Date: _____

B. Action by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

(1) ___Recommended ___Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

Date: _____ Resolution number: _____

(2) ___Designated as Heritage Property Date: _____

C. Action by City Planning Commission Date: _____

___Recommended ___Not recommended for Landmark/ S-7/S-20 designation

D. Action by City Council Date: _____

___Designated: Ordinance No: _____ ___Not Designated