

2.2.12 Capitol Historic District



Ordinance # 85-076
July 30, 1985
Updated by Ordinance #: 2019-052
December 10, 2019

Updated May 2020

SACRAMENTO REGISTER OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Capitol Historic District

Sacramento was chosen as the state capital of California in 1854 because of its central location, accessibility by steamships traveling up the Sacramento River, and the availability of accommodations for state legislators. In order to lure the capital to Sacramento amid fierce competition from other cities, the Sacramento City Council offered the state a public plaza on the block between I, J, 9th, and 10th streets (now Cesar Chavez Park) to serve as the site for the new State Capitol building. A lack of funding and lawsuits over the legality of the arrangement prevented the capitol from being constructed on the plaza, forcing the City to identify a new site for the building. In 1860, a new, four-block site, bounded by L, N, 10th, and 12th streets, was deeded to the state for the construction of the state capitol. The new site was advantageously located two blocks away from the city's business district and centered on M Street (later renamed Capitol Avenue), the city's widest street.

Groundbreaking for the California State Capitol building, designed by architect Reuben Clark, took place in 1860. The Classical Revival style building was designed to house the chambers of the state's legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Construction progressed slowly because of funding and supply shortages during the Civil War and devastating floods during the winter of 1861-1862, which required the building's foundation to be raised by six feet. Government activity began in the new building in 1869, although the building wasn't finally declared complete until 1874.

In the meantime, the Board of State Capitol Commissioners, which had been created to oversee the project, decided that the Capitol grounds should be expanded to create a suitably grand and parklike setting for the new capitol building. The resulting Capitol Park would occupy ten city blocks between L, N, 10th, and 15th streets. The commissioners first acquired the block between L, N, 14th, and 15th streets in 1870 to serve as the site for the future governor's mansion and then began the process of acquiring the remaining five blocks to the east of the Capitol. The last block became part of Capitol Park in 1872. The governor's mansion was completed on the northeast corner of the park as planned; however, no governor ever lived there, because legislators refused to fund decorations or furnishings for it. The building was converted into the State Printing Office and later demolished in the 1920s.

The landscaping of Capitol Park proceeded through the 1870s. By the end of the decade, its lawns were considered to be "unsurpassed in the State," and were "the subject of praise by all strangers visiting the State's property." The park was planted with 800 trees and flowering shrubs and designed in a typical Victorian style, with lanes laid out between beds of annual flowers and an elliptical carriage drive between the Capitol building, State Printing Office, and the Agricultural Pavilion, which was built on the southeast corner of the park in 1884 as an exhibition hall for the annual state fair. Surviving English elm and California fan palms that were planted along the carriage path preserve its route through the present-day park.

The period of significance for the Capitol Historic District begins with the start of construction on the State Capitol building in 1860, includes the construction of the Capitol building's East Annex in 1951, and ends with the completion of the Veterans Affairs building at 1227 O Street in 1957.

Architectural Styles: Classical Revival, Neoclassical, Beaux Arts, Italian Renaissance, Streamline Moderne, Late Moderne

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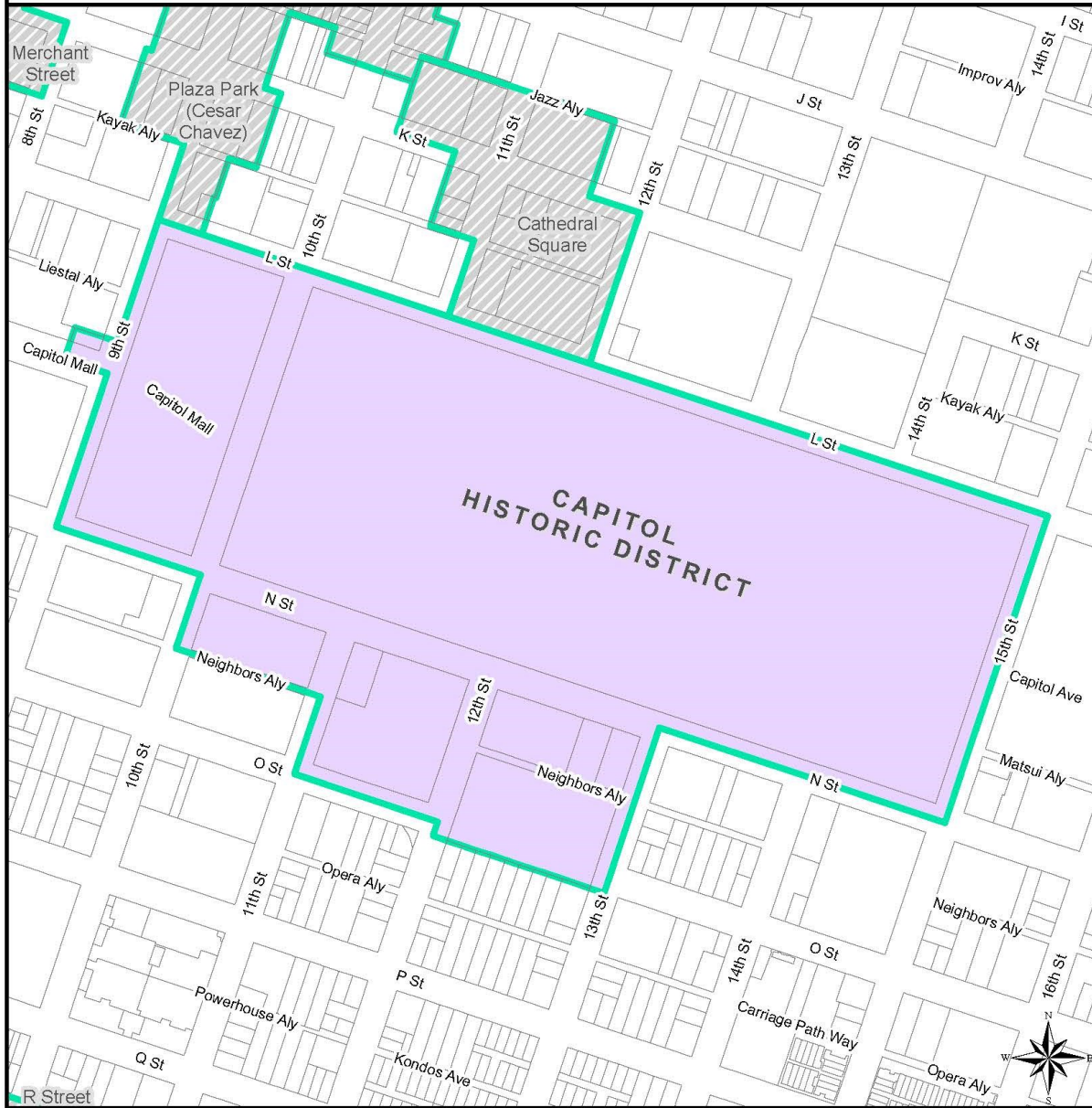
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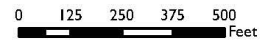
City of Sacramento Historic Resources



Geographic Information System

Capitol Historic District

Ordinance # 85-076 July 30th, 1985
Boundaries Revised: Ordinance # 2019-0052 December 10th, 2019



- Parcel
- Capitol
- Other Historic District

SACRAMENTO REGISTER OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Contributing (C) and Non-Contributing (NC) Resources

Street Address	Parcel Number	C/NC
1416 13TH ST	006-0222-028	Non-Contributing
915 CAPITOL MALL	006-0161-001	Contributing
CAPITOL MALL	006-0155-010	Non-Contributing
1010 L ST	006-0162-001	Contributing
1020 N ST	006-0213-001	Contributing
1100 N ST	006-0215-001	Contributing
1120 N ST	006-0215-002	Contributing
1220 N ST	006-0222-026	Contributing
1228 N ST	006-0222-027	Non-Contributing
1215 O ST	006-0222-025	Contributing

Note: Addresses of properties may not be all the addresses associated with the property; address shown reflect the address assigned to the parcel by the Sacramento County Recorder's Office.