

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Whelan, John A., House DRAFT

Other names/site number: Four Seasons Houses—Winter

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1315 Waller Street

City or town: San Francisco State: California County: San Francisco

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<hr/>	
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<hr/>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<hr/>	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
<hr/>	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: concrete foundation; wood weatherboard

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The John A. Whelan House is a two-story single-family residence on a 2,495 square-foot rectangular lot on the south side of Waller Street between Delmar Street and Masonic Avenue in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, California. The building was constructed in 1896 for shipwright and speculative real estate developer John A. Whelan as part of a row of four similarly designed houses, later known collectively as the Four Seasons Houses. The house at 1315 Waller Street is the easternmost building within the group and is identified as Winter for the applied snowflake centerpiece relief on its front façade. Originally constructed as Whelan's personal family home, the house is a fine example of the Queen Anne architectural style that dominated residential development in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood as it was filling out in the late nineteenth century.

Narrative Description

Overview and Setting

The John A. Whelan House is a two-story building with a raised basement and finished attic. The wood frame building has a rectilinear floorplan with a projecting rear bay at its southeast corner and a steeply pitched front-facing gabled roof with four skylights. Exterior walls are clad with

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wood lap siding above a concrete foundation. Typical windows consist of double-hung wood sashes with molded wood trim and undivided lites.

The front stairs of the building extend to the front lot line. The remaining area between the building's primary façade and the sidewalk is paved entirely with concrete and contains a driveway that leads from the garage to Waller Street. The narrow spaces between the building and the adjacent properties on each side are also paved with concrete. At the rear of the building, the backyard consists of a brick paved patio bordered by low, curving brick planter walls. This planter contains a variety of low plantings and small trees.

Exterior

Primary (Northwest) Façade

The primary façade faces Waller Street and is roughly two bays wide. A raised basement at street level contains a private garage with double wood paneled doors with nine stippled glass panes in the upper half of each door. The doors are set in a segmentally arched surround. To the west of these doors, a single wood panel door is set back from the façade that opens to a walkway at the southwest side of the house. To the east of the garage doors, an exterior staircase provides access to the main entrance on the first story of the building. These stairs feature curled wrought iron railings, concrete and white marble treads and risers, and concrete walls that have been cast to appear as rusticated stone walls. A wood panel door with a slanted top rail, corresponding to the slope of the stairs, is set into the southwest wall of the stairs at street level.

The main entrance is located through an arched opening at the top of the stairs. The opening has a molded wood trim and is supported by paired columns with foliate capitals that rest on rectangular pedestals. The spandrels of the arched opening are decorated with carved wood leaf designs. The entry beyond consists of a wood panel door with three integrated vertical lites, which is flanked by two narrow sidelites. A spherical porch light hangs from the ceiling in front of the door.

To the west of the main entrance, a canted bay window with recessed angled walls, wood sash windows, and wood paneled spandrel panels completes the first story. Attenuated pilasters accent the space between each window sash. The first and second stories are visually separated by ornamental bands with carved wood designs. The bands imitate a classical entablature, consisting of an unadorned architrave, a frieze decorated with foliate scrolls and masks, and a dentilled cornice. Windows at the second story rest on another ornamental wood band, decorated with rectangular wood panels. Fenestration at the second story consists of a canted bay window that spans the width of the façade and has angled side windows recessed beneath the corners of the gable end. A rectangular wood panel carved with a snowflake design is centered between the sashes of the bay window and serves as the primary focal point of the façade. Decoration around the windows matches that of the first story.

The second-story windows support a second, wider entablature, also decorated with foliate scrolls and a cornice with both dentils and block modillions. Curved wood brackets spring from pilasters that frame the snowflake centerpiece to support a projecting balcony in the gable end.

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This balcony has wood railings with spindlework balusters and is framed by attenuated Tuscan columns. The remaining surfaces of the gabled end are decorated with carved leaf designs and feature a dentilled border.

Southeast Façade

The rear, southeast façade has been modified. It is clad with wide, channel rustic wood lap siding and features a projecting one-story bay with a flat roof. Concrete steps at the southwest corner descend to an excavated basement level landing that is paved with concrete. The façade at this level contains a wood panel door with integrated glazing.

At grade, a small set of wood stairs leads up to wood deck on the first story with wood handrails and balusters, as well as a rear entry in the projecting bay. This entry features a wood panel door with an undivided glass lite and wood trim. A rectangular window with an undivided lite is located to the east. The porch wraps around the bay and leads to a set of wood frame double doors at the west end of the first story.

The flat roof of the projecting bay serves as a balcony at the second-story and features a wood railing that matches the railing of the deck below. Fenestration consists of a set of sliding wood frame glass doors at the façade's west end and a second glass door at its east end. From the second-story balcony, a wood staircase ascends to a smaller balcony and a set of sliding wood frame glass doors located in the gable end.

Northeast and Southwest Façades

The northeast façade fully abuts the adjacent house at 1307 Waller Street to the east, while the southwest façade is separated by only a few feet from 1323 Waller Street to the west, thus the façades are not easily visible. The southwest façade of the projecting rear bay is accessible from the backyard. This portion has a wood panel door with integrated glazing and a wood slider window at the basement level, as well as a large undivided awning window at the first story above.

Interior

The interior contains many of its original materials and features. The first story contains a small entrance vestibule that opens to an elaborately carved wood staircase with spindlework balusters, wood panel wainscot, and a brass lamp on the first-floor newel post in the shape of a female figure holding a torch. A front parlor with a salvaged period fireplace is located to the west of the entrance vestibule.¹ A dining room is located behind it at the rear of the house. From the entrance vestibule, a hallway leads past the staircase to a small pantry, bathroom, and kitchen. The second story contains two bedrooms, while the finished attic contains an office and a rear den. Several skylights have been punched through the roof above the interior staircase and at the rear attic snug. Original wood panel doors, door and window trim, picture railings, base trim, and plaster ceiling medallions are intact in many rooms.

¹ The fireplace was acquired from Ohmega Salvage in Berkeley, California, salvaged from another 1890s house.

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Alterations

Although changes have occurred to the property since its completion in 1896, most of the alterations have consisted of work to renovate and restore the house. Permit records, historic photographs, and fire insurance maps indicate that the house remained generally unchanged through the first several decades of the twentieth century. Fire insurance maps produced by the Sanborn Map Company in 1913 are less detailed than those of 1899 but indicate that the basic floorplan, height, and overall form of the subject building remained generally unchanged in the 1910s.² The first major changes to the house are documented in a building permit dated to 1920. The permit describes rebuilding the front stairs in brick to the property line, converting the basement into a private garage, and re-shingling the west side of the roof.³

No other alterations are documented in building permit records for a fifty-year period until the 1970s. In 1974, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors created the Upper Ashbury Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RAP) area, which incorporated the block on which the John A. Whelan house is located. RAP was a financial assistance and code enforcement program designed by the San Francisco Department of City Planning to encourage residential rehabilitation and the conservation of existing building stock in the city's older, deteriorating neighborhoods. Loans were granted to property owners to fund work to bring their buildings into compliance with the City Housing Code.⁴

In 1978, David and Virginia Keller, both aerospace engineers, purchased the house from its previous owner and began renovating it. They hired Paul Duchscherer, head designer of wallpaper design firm Bradbury & Bradbury, to work with them on the project.⁵ Building permits from the late 1970s and early 1980s document that the renovation work was at least partially funded by RAP loans. Permits detail the demolition of interior walls and facades and stabilization of the exterior staircase.⁶ The renovation work also included preserving exterior woodwork, floors and ceilings, and converting the building, which had been subdivided into a three-unit flat, back into a single-family house.⁷

Around the same time, the house's exterior facades, which were primarily painted white, were repainted in varying shades of blue with red, white, yellow, and silver accents. The colorful new paint scheme was inspired by the Colorist Movement, which emerged out of the Counterculture Movement in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s. While the movement began as a manifestation of the Counterculture Movement's celebration of free expression, it quickly became linked to a national movement to preserve deteriorating Victorian architecture as property owners realized the ways in which colorful paint schemes that highlighted the ornate

² Sanborn Map Co., "Insurance Maps of San Francisco, California," Volume 4, 1913.

³ Records of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.

⁴ San Francisco Department of City Planning, "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Rehabilitation Assistance Program for the Upper Ashbury," 1976, 1-6.

⁵ Elaine Louie, "Gutted and Restored, an Ornate 'Winter House' in San Francisco," Mansion Global, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://www.mansionglobal.com/articles/gutted-and-restored-an-ornate-winter-house-in-san-francisco-39740>.

⁶ Records of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.

⁷ Louie.

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architectural details of these houses could increase property values and help revitalize neighborhoods. Although the 1970s-era paint scheme of the John A. Whelan House has since been muted, its predominant blue base shades remain.⁸

In 1993, the front staircase was rebuilt to match those of the other Four Seasons Houses on Waller Street, brick veneer cladding was removed from around the garage, new roofing was installed, and windows on the third floor were replaced in-kind. Subsequent alterations that took place in the 1990s were limited to interior work, including a bathroom remodel and repainting interior walls.

The rear façade has been modified with new siding and alterations to window and door openings. Much of this dates to a renovation project in 2017 during which the rear deck was constructed; kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom areas were remodeled; a second interior staircase was added from the first to the fourth floor; and a fourth-story window and the front garage door were replaced in-kind.

Integrity

The John A. Whelan House retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a single-family house constructed in the Queen Anne style in the late nineteenth century. The building retains all seven aspects of integrity.

Location

The house has not been moved since its construction and retains integrity of location.

Design

The defining design characteristics and features of the house—including its steeply pitched gabled roof, partial width front porch, bay windows, and elaborate exterior woodwork—remain intact. Alterations have primarily taken place at the rear of the building and do not detract from its overall form, massing, and materials. The building, therefore, retains integrity of design.

Setting

The house was originally constructed as part of a row of four similarly designed Queen Anne style houses. The other three houses that complete the row remain in their original locations, preserving the relationship with the grouping of buildings. All other buildings in the immediate vicinity consist of residential buildings constructed during the same time period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, the building retains integrity of setting.

Materials

The house retains the majority of its original materials, including wood siding, windows, doors, and decorative ornamentation. Although some deteriorated features have been replaced at the front façade, these have largely been replaced in-kind and continue the building's historic material palette. Alterations at the rear façade have been more substantial, notably the

⁸ Elizabeth Pomada and Michael Larsen, *Painted Ladies Revisited* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), 10-11, 96.

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replacement of siding and the addition of a new deck, balconies, doors, and windows. Although these features are of a more modern design, they have been completed using wood, consistent with the predominately wood material palette used historically. Thus, the building retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship

Workmanship exhibits elaborate exterior woodwork at its front façade. These original decorative elements remain intact and continue to display the skill of the craftsmen who created them. Thus, the building retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

The overall feeling of the building remains that of a private single-family house carefully designed for a successful middle-class family at the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, the building retains integrity of feeling.

Association

The house is readily recognizable as one constructed in the late nineteenth century during the period in which the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was primarily built out. It also continues to reflect many of the defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style that dominated residential development during this period. Thus, the building retains integrity of association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1896-1906

Significant Dates

1896

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The John A. Whelan House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the peak period of residential development in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood in the late nineteenth century. With its prominent front-facing gabled roof, asymmetrical façade, partial width front porch, canted bay windows, and richly ornamented façade with a distinctive snowflake centerpiece, the building is also eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of the Queen Anne style. The period of significance begins with the building's completion in 1896 and concludes in 1906, the year in which Whelan's period of ownership ended and a period of transition began in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood. An influx of new residents moved into the neighborhood after the 1906 earthquake and new development shifted toward commercial projects.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

Development of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood

The house is located at the south edge of San Francisco's Haight Ashbury neighborhood, the boundaries defined by Fell Street at the north, Divisadero Street at the east, and Stanyan Street at the west. The southern border varies, running along Waller Street, Frederick Street, and Haight Street. The Golden Gate Park Panhandle extends east-west at the northern edge of the Haight Ashbury neighborhood. Buena Vista Park lies near the southeast corner of the neighborhood.

During the Mexican era (1821-1848), the land encompassing the neighborhood was granted to Benito Diaz, owner of the vast Rancho Punta de los Lobos.⁹ Following California's admission to the United States in 1850, Mexican land grantees had to prove that their titles were valid. Diaz failed to demonstrate to the American courts that he had physically occupied his ranch, so in 1854 it reverted to Federal ownership. In 1851, Divisadero Street, the eastern boundary of the present-day Haight Ashbury neighborhood, was established as the western boundary of the City of San Francisco. In 1856, the Outside Lands Committee was organized to gain legal title to county lands within the City's path of expansion and to prepare it for eventual development. The subsequent Outside Lands Ordinances gained title to the western part of San Francisco County, laid out streets, and set aside land for parks, schools, and other public buildings.¹⁰

By the early 1850s, the area came under the control of a handful of individuals who subdivided the land into several large tracts, including the Haraszthy, San Souci, and Middleton Tracts. John

⁹ Buena Vista North Association, "Application for Historic District Status," August 25, 1989, 19.

¹⁰ Buena Vista North Association, 20.

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Middleton came to own the majority of the Haight Ashbury neighborhood. In 1850, he built the first house in the area, the Phelps House (1137 Oak Street, extant). The Middleton Tract passed through several hands before coming into the ownership of rancher Abner Phelps.¹¹

Census records and city directories indicate that the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was used for farming and livestock raising for much of the remainder of the nineteenth century. By the early 1880s, speculators and real estate developers began to show interest in the area due to its relative proximity to urbanized sections of the city as well as its location adjacent to several major parks. Golden Gate Park and Buena Vista Park were created by the Outside Land Ordinances of the late 1860s, partially in response to pressure from landowners in the area who believed the construction of civic amenities such as parks would increase the value of their holdings. After prolonged lobbying by streetcar companies and real estate speculators, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors awarded the Haight Street Cable Car franchise in 1883. Over the next year or so, Haight Street was graded and paved westward beyond Divisadero Street, and the cable car line was constructed down the center of the street.¹²

Real estate speculation in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood picked up dramatically after the opening of the Haight Street Cable Car line. Much of the earliest development was recreational in nature and concentrated near the cable car turnaround at Haight and Stanyan Streets, the primary public entry to Golden Gate Park. The 1889 Sanborn-Perris Map Company fire insurance map shows the Haight Street Cable Car Railroad car houses, several one-story saloons, two restaurants, a store, a workshop and sheds, a number of one- and two-story dwellings, and many vacant lots.

Construction of housing followed the recreation boom during the late 1880s. An article in the October 22, 1889 *Examiner* noted that “following the cable roads... have come street improvements, gas, and water mains, street lights and finally the building of substantial residences.”¹³ By the 1890s, the Haight Ashbury neighborhood had become increasingly popular with developers including Daniel Einstein, the Hinkel Family, the Cox Brothers, Alexander Bailey, R.D. Cranston, and Hugh Keenan.¹⁴ The 1899 Sanborn-Perris fire insurance map show the blocks around the 1896 John A. Whelan House filling in with single-family houses.

Most residences constructed in the area at the turn of the twentieth century consisted of a raised basement/garage, a main floor with a hall and staircase on one side and a front parlor, middle parlor, dining room and kitchen on the other side, and a second floor with three bedrooms and a bathroom.¹⁵ The real estate sections of the local papers carried articles on the progress of development in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood. On March 8, 1896, around the time the John A. Whelan House was completed, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported:

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *San Francisco Real Estate Circular* (June-August 1883).

¹³ Christopher VerPlanck, “The Architecture and Social Structure of the Haight,” *San Francisco Apartment Magazine* (August 2001), accessed November 19, 2019, <http://www.friendsof1800.org/VIEWPOINT/haight.html>.

¹⁴ Buena Vista North Association, 19-20.

¹⁵ VerPlanck.

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The whole country about the heights is now thickly covered with homes of conspicuous size, and many of them of costly design. Masonic Avenue is lined with a large number of Eastlake dwellings, where barren sands were a few months ago. Waller Street has been brightened up very recently with several pretty structures. There are more of them on Cole Street and on Frederick Street.¹⁶

The article also described the modern “electric lighting appliances” and “modern styles.” The houses cost \$6,500 to \$8,500 each, a considerable amount of money at the time considering that cottages on Potrero Hill were selling for between \$1,500 and \$3,000 during the same era. Since most of the housing in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was constructed between 1890 and 1910, Queen Anne is the dominant style.¹⁷

The area continued to be popular for recreational amenities that developed in the 1890s, building on the recreational atmosphere that already existed. In 1894, the California Midwinter International Exposition took place in Golden Gate Park, with the construction of a music concourse and the De Young Museum among over 100 other buildings. Two million visitors attended, drawing swarms through the prosperous and diverse Haight Ashbury neighborhood.¹⁸ The Chutes, a family amusement park located at Haight and Shrader Streets, opened in 1895, featuring a roller coaster, shooting gallery, and vaudeville theater among other attractions. The centerpiece of the park was an artificial lake featuring an early version of a log flume ride that gave the park its name. Additional recreational activities in Boynton’s amusement park included an elevated railroad track that traveled through the park, painted panoramas, a merry-go-round, a photo gallery, a “zoological promenade,” an alligator house, a theater, and an exhibition hall called the Darwinian Temple.¹⁹ Around 1900, The Chutes was taken apart and rebuilt further out on Fulton Street, and a lake south of Haight Street was drained. From 1902 onward, the vacated land was developed with commercial buildings and residences.²⁰

The 1900 census reveals that demographics of the Haight Ashbury neighborhood consisted of a conservative middle class, mostly married and with children. There was diversity in nationalities; residents included native-born Americans, Germans, Irish, Swedes, Scots, Swiss, Australians, and French.²¹

On April 18, 1906, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake occurred, followed by three days of fires that decimated 490 city blocks and left half of the city’s 410,000 residents homeless.²² The fires were

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Bob Bragman, “The unknown Midwinter Fair – San Francisco 1894,” SFGate, December 22, 2015, accessed November 21, 2019, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/SF-Midwinter-Fair-that-no-one-knows-about-6713601.php>.

¹⁹ VerPlanck.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Risk Management Solutions, “The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire: Perspectives on a Modern Super Cat,” 2006, 4-5.

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blocked at Van Ness Avenue from burning farther west, and the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was spared.²³ After 1906, the area began to expand with the influx of earthquake refugees, so that within five years there were few large undeveloped parcels of land left in the neighborhood. The infill development that occurred after 1906 was primarily limited to commercial buildings on Haight and Stanyan Streets and three-story flats on the previously empty lots located along subsidiary streets.²⁴

By World War I, nearly ninety percent of the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was developed. There was a neighborhood school, Dudley Stone Grammar School, a public library, a variety of churches, and a nickelodeon. By the 1920s, there were nearly no empty lots. As the building stock began to age in the neighborhood, some owners clad their homes in stucco. By the end of the 1930s, most of the houses were owned by absentee landlords.²⁵

The urban form of the Haight Ashbury neighborhood continued to change during World War II. The single-family homes and residential flats buildings were subdivided into apartments and lodging houses to accommodate war workers. Between 1939 and 1945, the number of housing units in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood practically doubled. In the 1950s, the middle-class residents fled to newer suburbs, and deferred maintenance, which first occurred during the Depression in the 1930s, continued to blight the neighborhood. A small number of new buildings were constructed in the 1950s, large stuccoed apartment buildings built on underutilized lots.²⁶

In the 1950s and 1960s, the confluence of low rents and the neighborhood's Victorian and Edwardian building stock brought beatniks and hippies to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood.²⁷ In the 1960s, the Haight Ashbury neighborhood was one of the national centers of the hippie Counterculture Movement. Hippie culture created alternative beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes that undermined mainstream culture. Hippies experimented with gender equality, communal living, and free love. Hippies were driven by diverse motivations. Some were more political, holding anti-government sentiments and being opposed to the Vietnam War, and many hippies delved into art, religion, and meditation. They were united in their striving to create a counterculture.²⁸ Psychedelic drug use was a major influence in the Counterculture Movement.²⁹ By the late 1960s, the neighborhood had radio station KDIG and the band the Grateful Dead was headquartered at 710 Ashbury Street.³⁰ The hippie movement culminated in the Summer of Love

²³ United States Geological Survey, "Map of San Francisco Showing Burned District," 1907, accessed December 16, 2019, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/bul/0324/plate-56.pdf>.

²⁴ VerPlanck, 19-20.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 241-244.

²⁹ Donald R. Wesson, "Psychedelic Drugs, Hippie Counterculture, Speed and Phenobarbital Treatment of Sedative-Hypnotic Dependence: A Journey to the Haight Ashbury in the Sixties." *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 43, Issue 2 (2011).

³⁰ Ibid.

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in 1967, when 75,000 people gathered in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood.³¹ In the 1970s, the neighborhood went into decline. By the 1980s, the Haight Ashbury's counterculture legacy translated into an allure for homebuyers, and the neighborhood has since become a tourist destination, especially the Haight Street commercial corridor.³²

John A. Whelan (1836-1910)

The house at 1315 Waller Street was constructed for shipwright and speculative real estate developer John Augustus Whelan in 1896, during the peak period of development in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood.³³ Whelan was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1836, the son of Irish immigrants. By 1866, he had moved to San Francisco, California.³⁴ Around 1868, Whelan began working for the North Transportation Company and Oregon Steamship Company, where he was in charge of the shipwrights and joiners department. Given his expertise in the construction and repair of ships, he was selected to testify before the State Assembly about the condition of the steamboat John L. Stephens in 1876.³⁵ One year later, Whelan had left the company and was advertising his services as an independent master shipwright, caulker, and sparmaker with his operations based at the Folsom Street wharf.³⁶

By 1896, Whelan had founded the firm John A. Whelan & Brother with his brother James J. Whelan, also a native of Philadelphia. The firm built and repaired seafaring vessels in the San Francisco harbor and had offices at 250 Spear Street. The book *San Francisco: The Imperial City*, published in 1899, described the company as "prominent among those that have played an active part to bring about the commercial advancement of the city."³⁷ At the turn of the twentieth century, the firm was often contracted to repair ships for branches of the United States military. In 1901, the firm was employed by the Union Iron Works to repair the U.S.S. Pensacola at the U.S. naval training station in San Francisco.³⁸ One year later, the firm was contracted to carry out carpentry and joinery work to repair the United States Army transport ship U.S.A.T. *Crook*.³⁹

In addition to his work as a shipwright, John Whelan was active in real estate development in San Francisco. Newspaper articles are populated with descriptions of properties that he acquired and sold from the 1880s to the early 1900s. On land he had purchased at the corner of Filbert and Larkin Streets, Whelan had built six two-story houses for \$20,000 in 1886, which he subsequently rented out to tenants.⁴⁰ In 1896, he had built the four Queen Anne style houses later

³¹ Anderson, 176.

³² VerPlanck.

³³ Spring Valley Water Company Tap Records, 1861-1930, San Francisco Public Library; Block Books, City and County of San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder.

³⁴ Seventh Ward Register of the City and County of San Francisco, California Great Registers, 1866-1910, FamilySearch.org.

³⁵ *Appendix to the Journals of the Senate and Assembly*, Volume 4 (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1876).

³⁶ Advertisement, *Daily Alta California*, December 17, 1877.

³⁷ *San Francisco: The Imperial City* (San Francisco: Mercantile Illustrating Co., 1899), 175.

³⁸ *Annual Report of the Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair to the Secretary of the Navy* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1900), 116.

³⁹ "Repairs on the Crook Will Cost \$6118.50," *San Francisco Call*, August 29, 1902.

⁴⁰ "Real Estate Market," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1, 1886.

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known as the Four Seasons Houses, including his family home at 1315 Waller Street, originally addressed as 1305 Waller Street. In 1890, around the corner, he had built a row of six Stick style houses at 1326-1342 Masonic Avenue.⁴¹

Unlike the other properties he owned, 1315 Waller Street was constructed to be the personal residence of Whelan and his growing family.⁴² Whelan had married his wife Annie (born in New York in 1838) in 1861. Together, the couple had seven children, although only four lived to adulthood. Their eldest, Catherine, was born in Pennsylvania in 1865, while William (1870), Mary (1874), and Isabella (1881) were all born in California.⁴³

The design of the front façade shares marked similarities to houses designed by well-known San Francisco contractors Cranston and Keenan and William Hinkel that survive at 1232 Masonic Avenue and 459 Ashbury Street, respectively. Because San Francisco's city records were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fires, the original permit for the building is not on file with the City, and the name of the architect or builder of the Whelan House remains unknown. It is likely that John Whelan, a shipwright with substantial carpentry experience in his own right, collaborated with an unknown contractor or master carpenter on the design of the house, drawing upon a popular local façade design or pattern book for inspiration.⁴⁴ The 1899 Sanborn-Perris fire insurance map shows the Whelan House as a two-story, wood frame single-family residence over a raised basement. The building had a rectangular floorplan with a rear porch at its southeast corner and a cutaway bay window at its primary façade, facing Waller Street.⁴⁵

The Whelan family continued to live at the house through 1905. After the 1906 earthquake, Whelan sold the property to retired restaurateur Gustav Miersch and his wife, Bertha.⁴⁶ Whelan and his family subsequently moved into a house at 876 Francisco Street, where he died in 1910 at the age of 74.⁴⁷ Whelan's other three houses on Waller Street remained in the family until they were sold in 1912.⁴⁸ In 1924, the John A. Whelan House was deeded to George Watson and remained in the Watson family until 1966. Since the 1960s, the house been owned by five subsequent ownership groups.⁴⁹

The completion of the John A. Whelan House in 1896, by and as the personal home of a shipwright and sometime real estate developer, is representative of the pattern of residential development in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood at its peak in the late nineteenth century. The end of Whelan's period of ownership in 1906 aligns with a period of transition in the neighborhood, as new residents displaced by the 1906 earthquake flooded into the area and new

⁴¹ Spring Valley Water Company Tap Records, 1861-1930, San Francisco Public Library.

⁴² U.S. Federal Census records, Ancestry.com.

⁴³ The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco, "Buena Vista Neighborhood House Tour," 1998, 13-14.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Sanborn-Perris Map Co., "Insurance Maps of San Francisco, California," Volume 4, 1899.

⁴⁶ Deed records, City and County of San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder.

⁴⁷ "Births, Marriages, Deaths," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 28, 1910.

⁴⁸ The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco, 13.

⁴⁹ San Francisco Block Books, City Directories, San Francisco Public Library; Index to the Great Register of Voters, U.S. Federal Census records, Ancestry.com.

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infill projects shifted primarily toward large commercial projects. Although the building has experienced some alterations over the years, it is an exceptional example of the kind of residential development that came to characterize the Haight Ashbury neighborhood and is eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance.

Criterion C: Architecture

Design of the John A. Whelan House

The John A. Whelan House is also eligible at the local level under Criterion C as an excellent example of a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Queen Anne style as applied to a single-family house in the late nineteenth century in San Francisco.

Queen Anne was a popular architectural style among the elite during the Victorian era of the late nineteenth century. First used in England, this style referred back to the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714) when solid, high quality construction methods and craftsmanship were emphasized in the architectural vernacular.⁵⁰ One of the main innovators and architects of this style was Richard Norman Shaw, who popularized the Queen Anne style in England with his half-timber designs and proliferation of built work. American architects introduced this style into the mainstream during the late 1870s. By the 1880s, the Queen Anne style had become the leading architectural style for the Victorian elite and upper-to-middle classes.

The Queen Anne style is characterized by its variety of features and combination of ornamentation. Typical Queen Anne features include steeply pitched roofs, irregular rooflines, towers and turrets, gable projections, cutaway bay windows, asymmetrical compositions, patterned shingle cladding, and swag and garland appliques.⁵¹ The result of this fusion of ornamentation and composition was a highly textured and varied appearance that achieved the elegance and grace desired by the people of this era. Other architectural styles, such as Eastlake and Stick, frequently were combined with Queen Anne to produce asymmetrical and varied compositions.

The John A. Whelan House displays many of the key characteristics of a Queen Anne rowhouse, including a dominant steep gabled roof that faces Waller Street and an asymmetrical composition with a partial width front porch; paired column supports; canted bay windows at the first and second stories; and an abundance of richly patterned wall surfaces that display a mixture of Classical, Gothic, and natural influences. The elaborately adorned house has become a prominent visual landmark, along with the other three Four Seasons Houses, thanks to its playful and expressive decorative theme.

⁵⁰ Lester Walker, *American Shelter* (New York: The Overlook Press, Inc., 1997), 152.

⁵¹ Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 263.

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Conclusion

Built as part of a row of single-family houses on Waller Street by shipwright and speculative real estate developer John A. Whelan in 1896, the John A. Whelan House is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion A as an exceptional representation of the pattern of residential development that characterized San Francisco's Haight Ashbury neighborhood as it was rapidly built out in the late nineteenth century. The house displays a notably exuberant and playful interpretation of the Queen Anne style that dominated development during this period and remains a popular visual landmark in the neighborhood. Despite alterations, primarily to the rear of the building, the house retains all aspects of integrity, and is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C for its embodiment of the defining characteristics of the Queen Anne style.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: City and County of Office of the Assessor-Recorder; City and County of San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Records Management Division; San Francisco Planning; San Francisco Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 37.769075 Longitude: -122.445428

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary corresponds to the legal boundary with City of San Francisco with Assessor Parcel Number 1255-080.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary corresponds to the legal boundary of the parcel on which the building has been located since its construction in 1896.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Clare Flynn, Cultural Resources Planner
organization: Page & Turnbull
street & number: 2401 C Street, Suite B
city or town: Sacramento state: CA zip code: 95816
e-mail flynn@page-turnbull.com
telephone: 916-277-8030
date: December 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: John A. Whelan House
City or Vicinity: San Francisco
County: San Francisco
State: California
Photographer: Page & Turnbull
Date Photographed: November 15, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 16 Four Seasons Houses, John A. Whelan House second house from the left, camera facing southwest

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- 2 of 16 Northwest façade, Whelan House center, camera facing southeast
- 3 of 16 Northwest façade, camera facing southeast
- 4 of 16 Garage and exterior front stairs, camera facing southeast
- 5 of 16 Front porch detail, camera facing southeast
- 6 of 16 Rear, southeast façade, camera facing northwest
- 7 of 16 Steps from backyard to excavated basement level at southeast façade, camera facing northwest
- 8 of 16 Southwest façade, camera facing northwest
- 9 of 16 Basement doors and windows at rear of building, camera facing north
- 10 of 16 Main interior staircase, camera facing southeast
- 11 of 16 Salvaged period fireplace in the living room, camera facing southwest
- 12 of 16 View of the dining room and doors to the backyard from the living room, camera facing southeast
- 13 of 16 Second story bedrooms, camera facing northwest
- 14 of 16 Staircase landing and third story skylight, camera facing north
- 15 of 16 Third story den, camera facing southeast
- 16 of 16 Backyard patio, camera facing southeast

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Figure 1. Location Map. Source: Google Earth, 2019, edited by Page & Turnbull, 2019.

Latitude: 37.769075

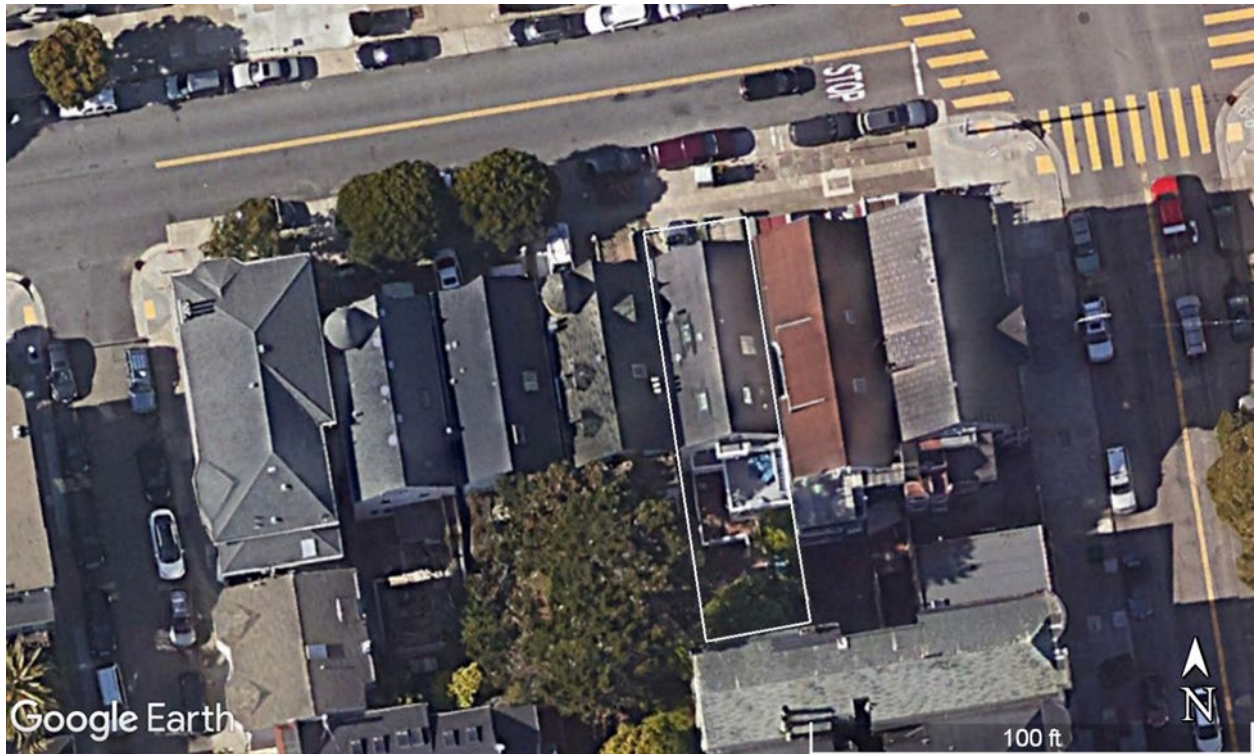
Longitude: -122.445428



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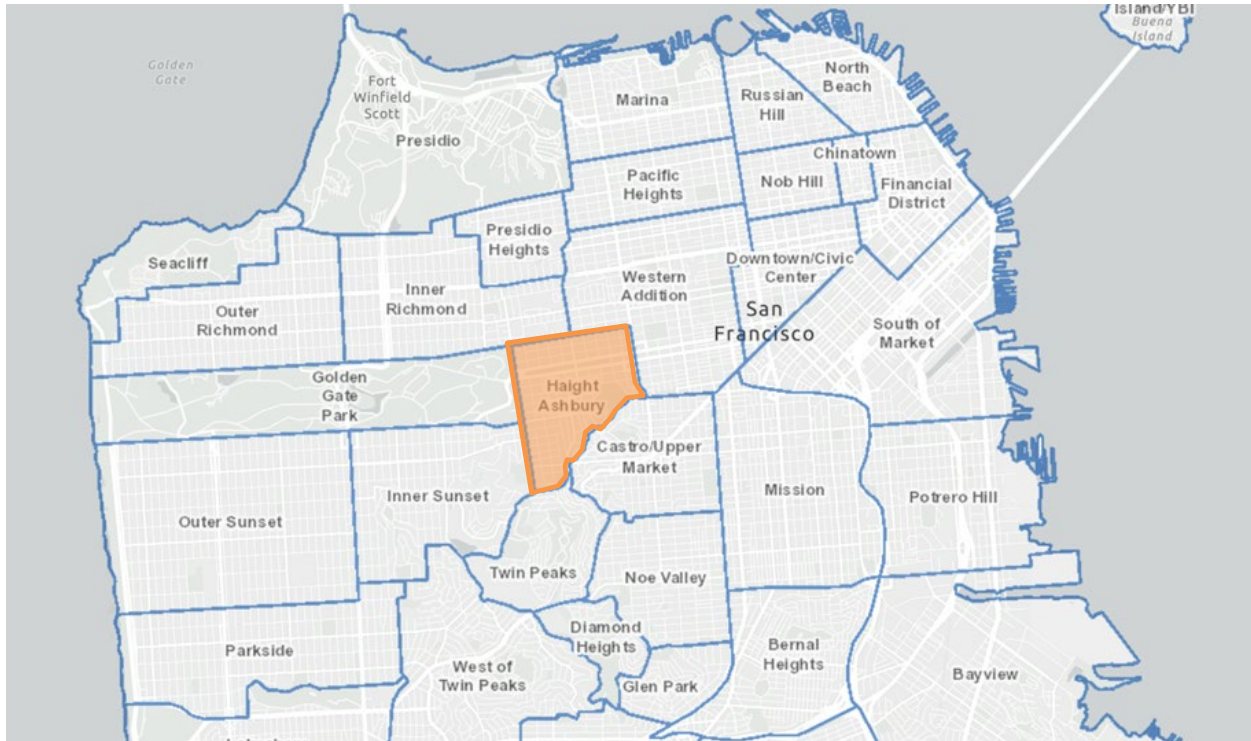
Figure 2. Site Map. Source: Google Earth, 2019. Street labels added by Page & Turnbull.



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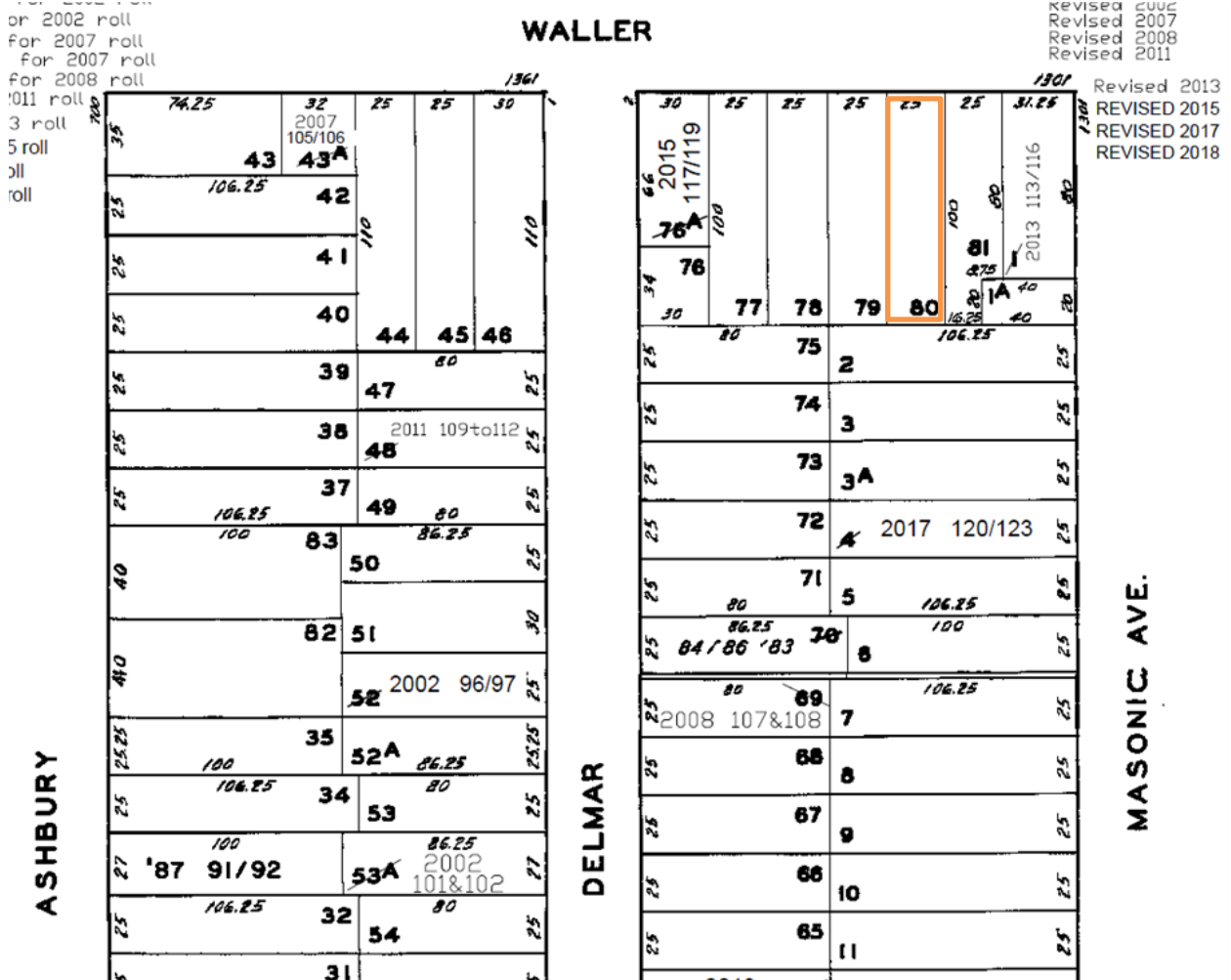
Figure 3. Neighborhood Map. Source: San Francisco Planning, 2019.



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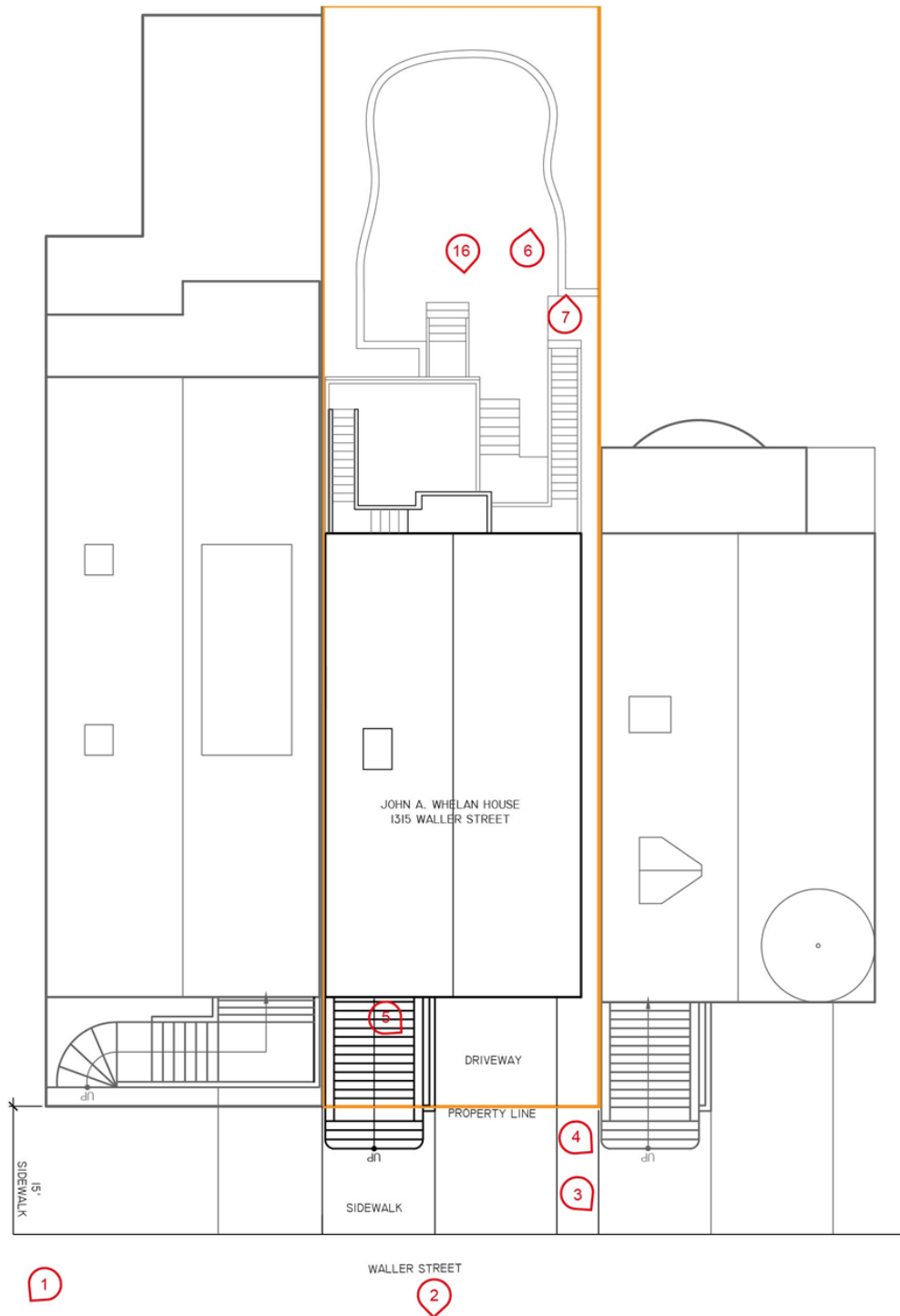
Figure 4. Property Boundary Map. Whelan House outlined in orange. Source: San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, 2019, modified by Page & Turnbull, 2019



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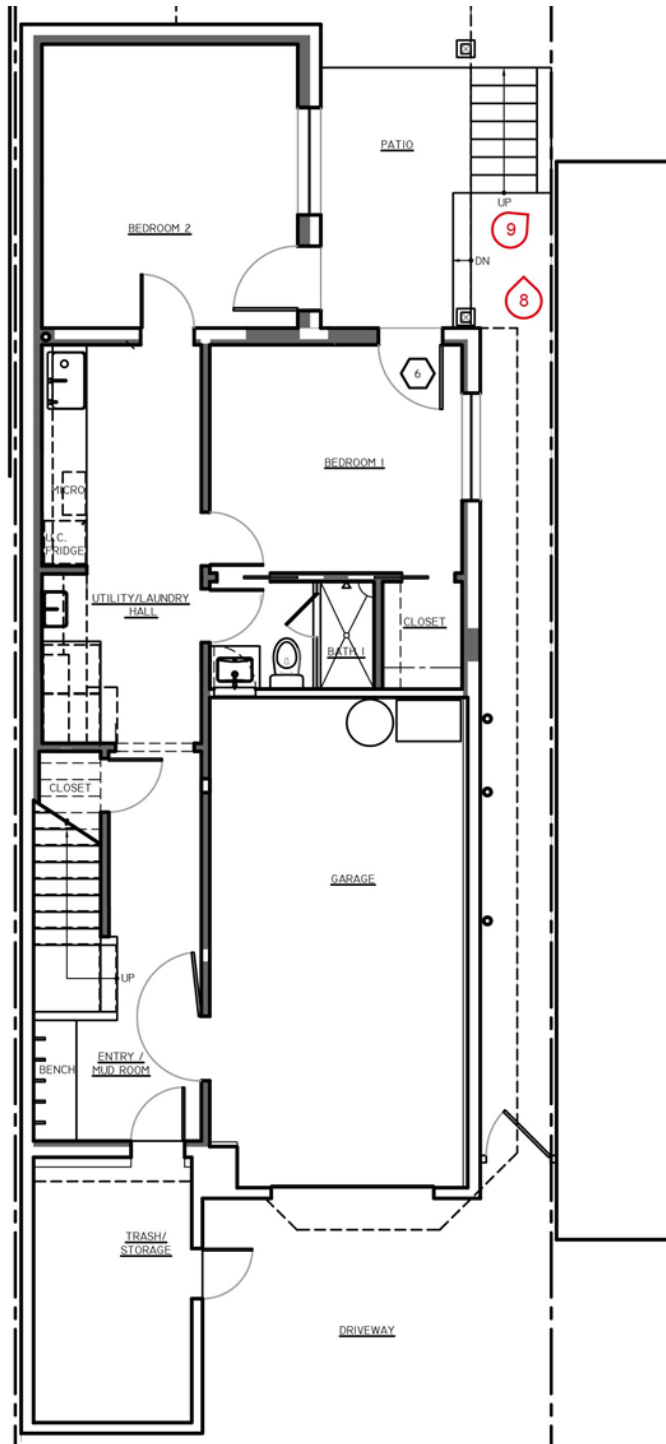
Figure 5. Sketch Map/Photo Key 1 of 5—Exterior



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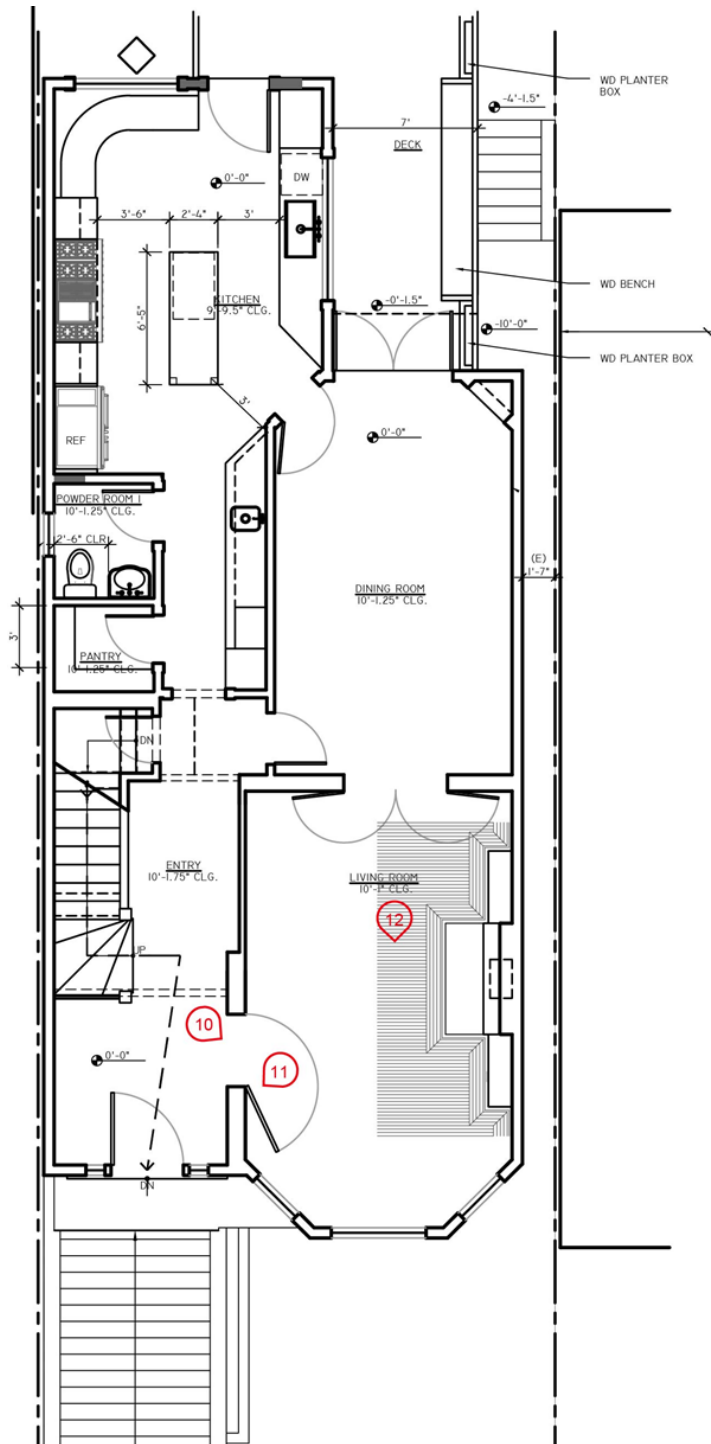
Figure 6. Sketch Map/Photo Key 2 of 5—Basement



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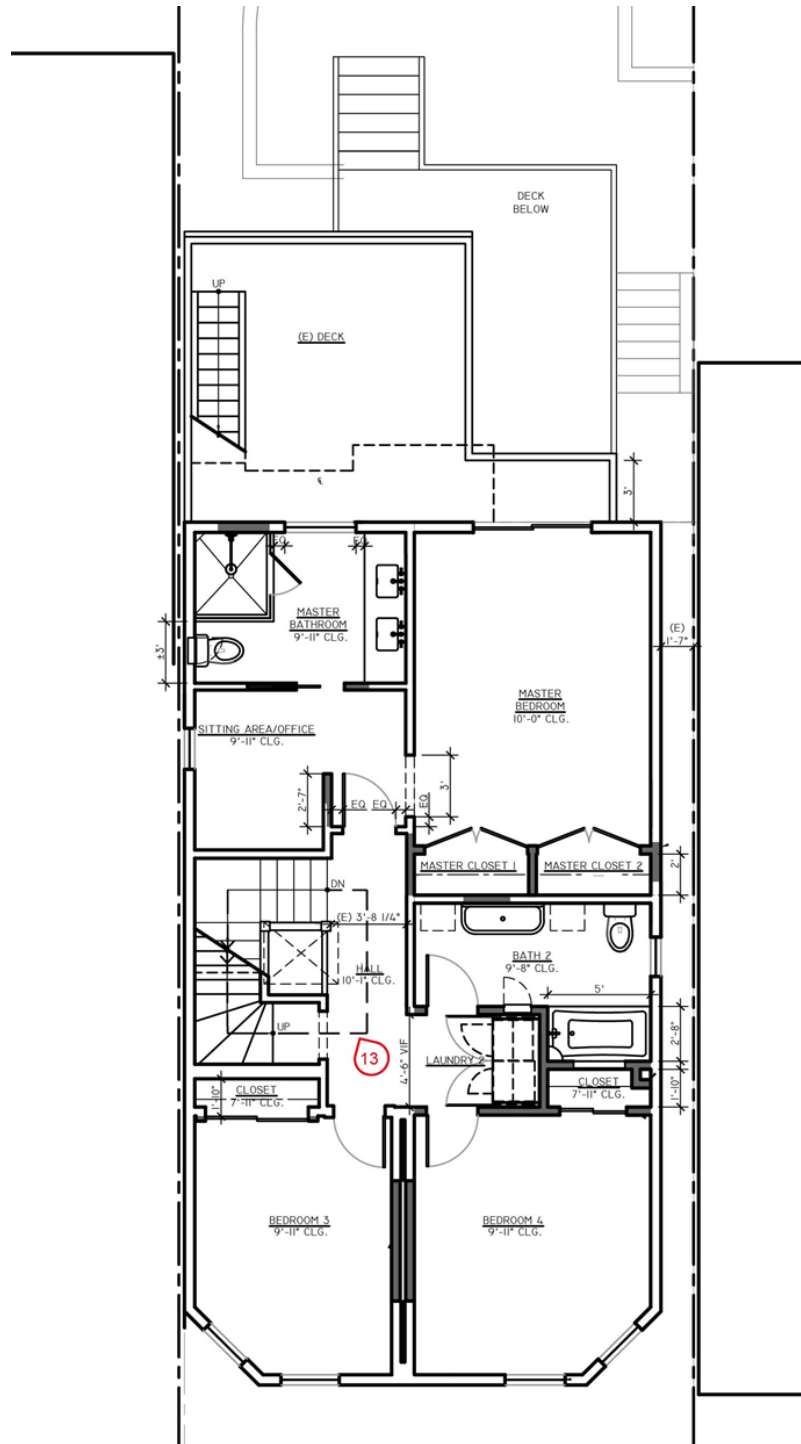
Figure 7. Sketch Map/Photo Key 3 of 5—First Floor



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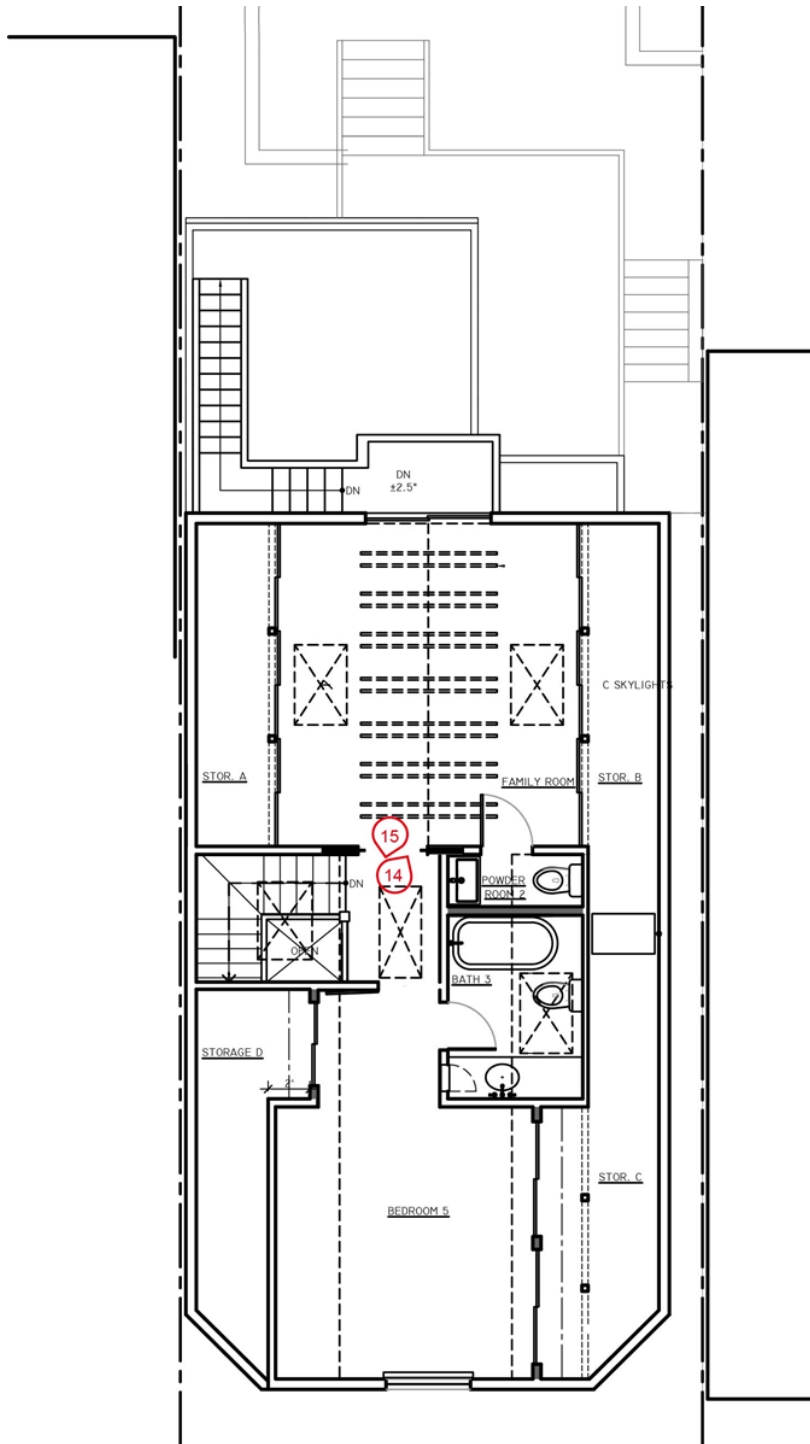
Figure 8. Sketch Map/Photo Key 4 of 5—Second Floor



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Figure 9. Sketch Map/Photo Key 5 of 5—Third Floor



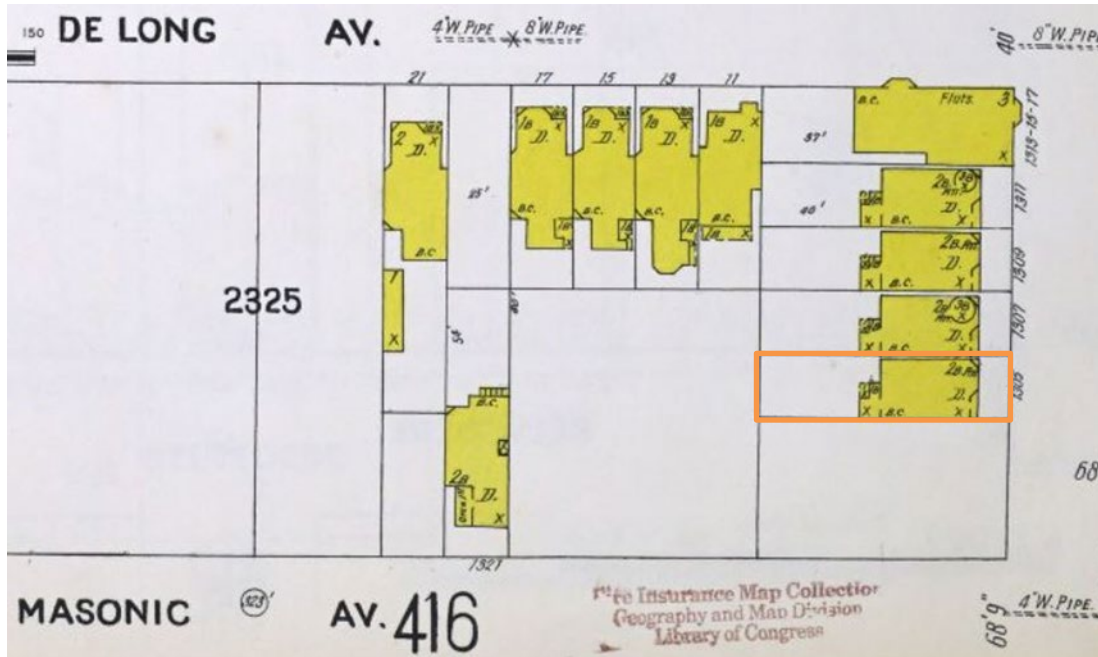
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Figure 10. Golden Gate Park Panhandle from Buena Vista Park, view north, 1882. Very little development had taken place before the establishment of the Haight Street Railroad in 1883. Source: FoundSF



Figure 11. 1899 Sanborn-Perris Map Company fire insurance map. John A. Whelan House outlined in orange. Source: Library of Congress, modified by Page & Turnbull



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Figure 12. 1913 Sanborn Map Company fire insurance map. John A. Whelan House outlined in orange. Source: Library of Congress, modified by Page & Turnbull

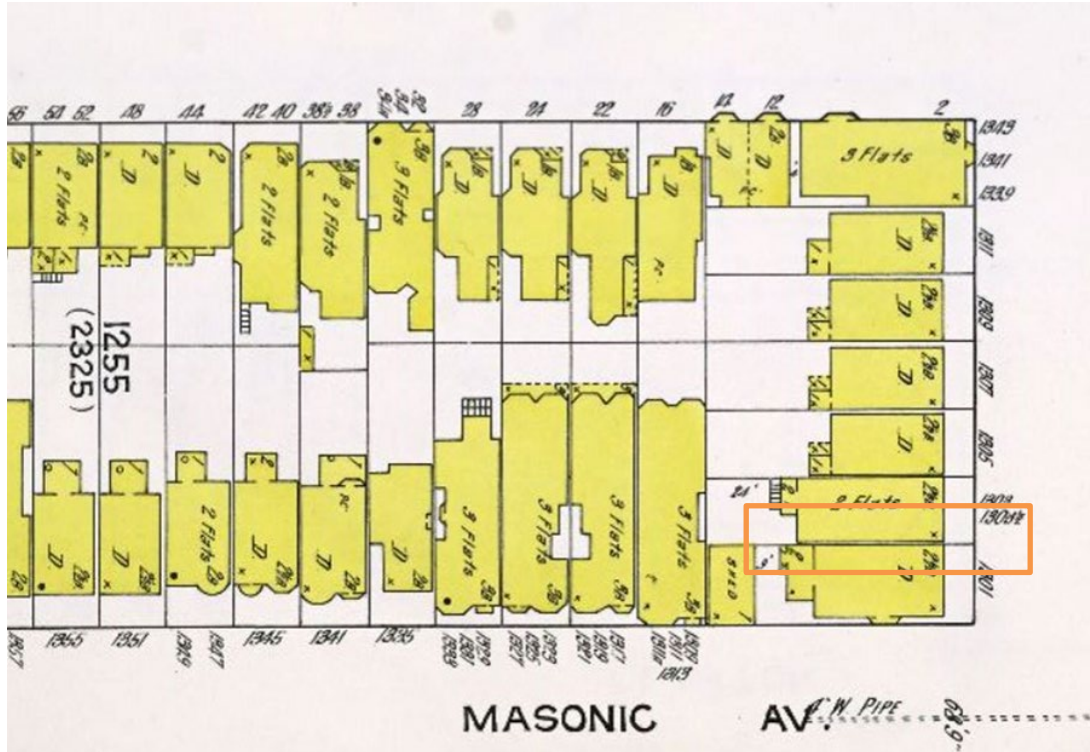


Figure 13. Masonic Avenue and Waller Street, 1937, Whelan House visible far right. Source: OpenSFHistory.org



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Figure 14. Four Seasons Houses at 1315-1343 Waller Street, Whelan House is the third house from the left, behind utility pole. Source: San Francisco Department of City Planning, Architectural Survey Form, 1976



Figure 15. Before restoration, n.d. Source: Duchscherer and Keister, 173.



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Figure 16. Whelan House, third from left, after renovation as one of San Francisco's Painted Ladies. Source: *Peninsula Living Newspaper*, 1979



Figure 17. Paint scheme post-restoration, circa 1989. Source: Pomada and Larsen, 96.

