



Architectural
Resources Group

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City of Sunnyvale Historical Context Update Study Issue # CDD-19-04

Prepared for:
City of Sunnyvale
Heritage Preservation
Commission

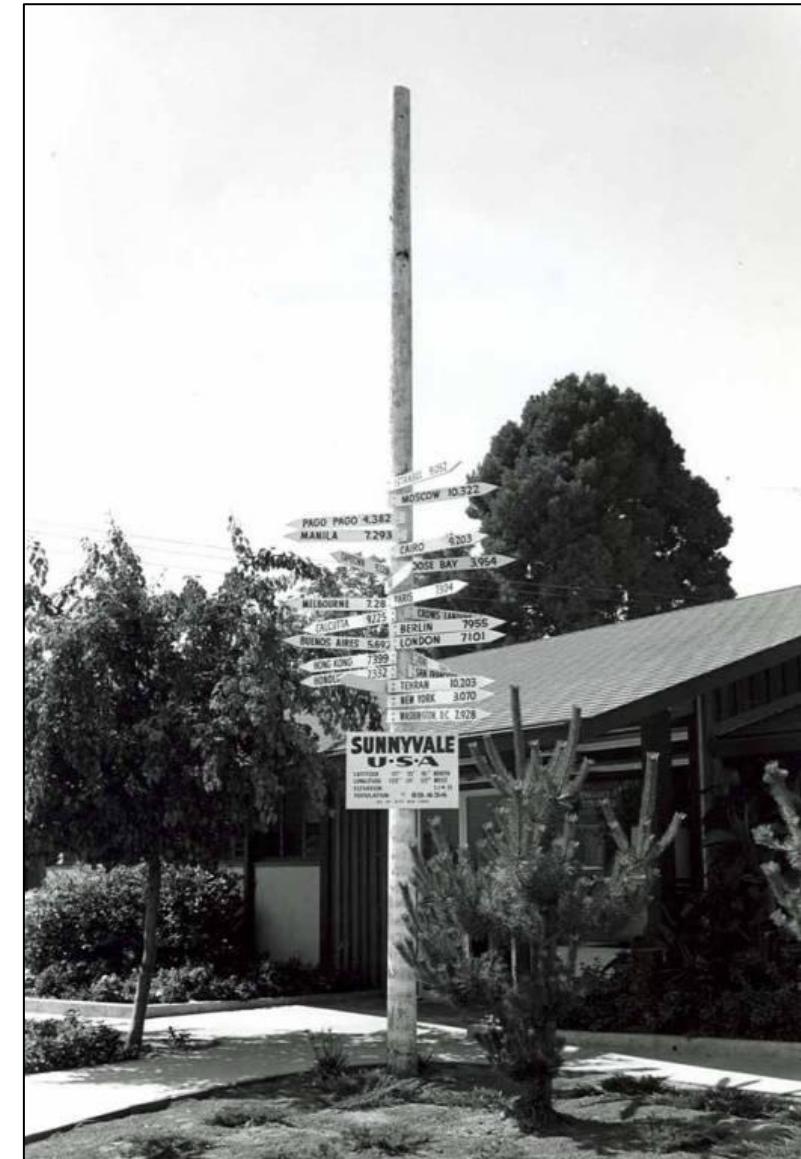
Prepared by:
Architectural Resources
Group

November 5, 2025



Agenda

- Introduction to ARG
- Project Background and Goals
- ARG's Approach to Scope and Timeline
- Draft Context Outline
- Focusing the Study: Questions and Recommendations
- Next Steps





Architectural Resources Group

- Founded in 1980
- 50+ staff
- Planners, Architects, Conservators
- SF, LA, PDX
- 14 Planners
- Staff meets *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards*

ARG's Planning Services

- Historic Resources Surveys and Context Statements
- Historic Resource Documentation (HABS/HAER/HALS)
- On-Call Preservation Planning Consulting Services
- Ordinance Development & Regulatory Review
- Federal, State, and Local Landmark Designations
- Design Guidelines
- Design Review & Secretary's Standards Compliance Assessments
- Historic Structure Reports & Cultural Landscape Reports
- Historic Resource Evaluations and Environmental Compliance under CEQA
- Section 106/NEPA Compliance
- Preservation Plans, Master Plans, and Specific Plans
- Tax Incentives (Tax Credit Certification, Mills Act Contracts)
- Community Workshops, Public Education and Outreach

Project Background

- In 2012, the City adopted the existing Historical Context Statement that documents the historical development of Sunnyvale.
- In 2018, the Heritage Preservation Commission identified the need for an update to the Historical Context Statement to include more thorough information about Asian Americans and other minority groups.
- In 2023, Council approved a budget supplement to cover consultant costs to prepare the update.

Project Goals

- Develop an updated context statement with comprehensive information on the contributions of Asian Americans and other minorities.
- Develop clear eligibility criteria to help identify historically significant properties.
- Identify five local register-eligible properties associated with Asian Americans and other minorities.
- Produce a document than can be used by the general public.

Approach to Scope

Issue: How shall “Asian Americans and other minority groups” be defined in this historic context update?

ARG’s Approach: Focus on racial and ethnic groups that have made underrecognized contributions to Sunnyvale’s history in spite of local, state, or federal laws or regulations that prohibited their full participation in civic society.

Examples: Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese and Japanese American incarceration, Bracero Program, restrictive covenants.

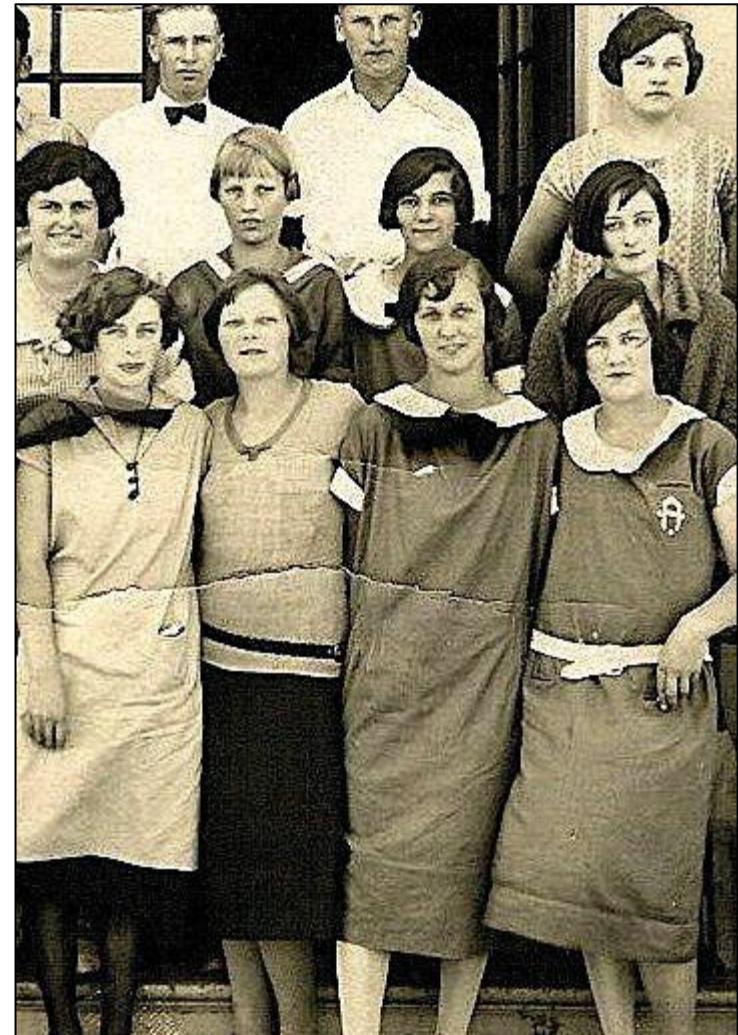


Approach to Scope

Issue: The Context update also seeks to identify and recognize the contributions of national and ethnic groups that did *not* face the same barriers to inclusion.

ARG's Approach: Communities of strong national or cultural identity shall be the focus of a secondary research effort, included in narrative or vignette form, providing high-level familiarity with these groups' history.

Examples: Swedish settlers, Yugoslavian community.



Approach to Timeline

Issue: The Context must focus on a bounded timeframe that adequately captures the contributions of Asian Americans and other minorities to the history and development of Sunnyvale.

ARG's Approach: The Context update will cover a timeframe that starts in 1850 and ends in 1990, when the H-1B visa program initiated demographic change in Sunnyvale.

Note: An overview of the demographic changes in Sunnyvale after 1990 will also be included, with suggestions for future study.



Approach to Timeline

Issue: Asian Americans and other minority numbers changed rapidly after 1990, making Sunnyvale a “majority minority” community. Why stop at 1990?

ARG’s Approach: California Register guidelines state that a scholarly perspective must exist on properties and/or themes from the recent past, a.k.a. less than 50 years ago.

Note: An overview of the demographic changes in Sunnyvale after 1990 will also be included, with suggestions for future study.



Historical Context Statement Update Outline

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Local Regulatory Framework**
- 3. Early Sunnyvale Development, 1850–1910: Minority Settlement in a Global and Regional Context**
 - a. Early economic development: agriculture, canning, and industry
 - b. Arrival of Asian laborers, including push and pull factors
 - c. Formation of additional ethnic communities (i.e., Portuguese, Italian, Yugoslavian, others)
 - d. Segregated conditions for minority residents

Historical Context Statement Update Outline

4. Community Formation for Minority Groups in Sunnyvale, 1910–1942

- a. Review of groups present during this era and laws and regulations prohibiting full participation in civic society
- b. Japanese farming and land ownership
- c. Chinese community formation
- d. Portuguese community formation
- e. African Americans in Sunnyvale
- f. Segregated and/or integrated conditions for minority residents
- g. Emergence of industry in Sunnyvale and ethnic group participation in the labor force

Historical Context Statement Update Outline

5. World War II Rupture, 1941–1945

- a. Japanese and Japanese American incarceration
- b. Interviews of Sunnyvale community members impacted by federal incarceration
- c. Impacts on agriculture and industry

6. Post-World War II Growth and Community Shifts, 1945–1990

- a. Japanese and Japanese American return
- b. Continued agricultural production
- c. Shift to electronics industry
- d. Ongoing/shifting conditions of segregation for minority residents

Historical Context Statement Update Outline

- 7. Sunnyvale at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century**
 - a. H1-B visa program and subsequent shift in demographics
 - b. Suggestions for further study
- 8. Associated Property Types**
- 9. Evaluation Criteria**
- 10. Recommended Properties – 5 eligible local landmarks**
- 11. Conclusion**



Focusing the Study: Questions and Recommendations



Focusing the Study: Questions

- Should the identification of potential resources allow for flexibility in physical integrity?
- If a property has been demolished, are there other opportunities to recognize the site's importance?
- How can the City recognize contributions when there is no physical site or building that can be designated?
- Does the HPC have feedback on the scope, timeline, and themes ARG had developed?

Next Steps

- Community meeting
- Administrative Draft of the Context update
 - Historic context
 - Associated property types
 - Evaluation criteria for significance and integrity
 - Preliminary list of recommended properties for historic listing
 - Public hearings with the HPC and City Council

Thank you!

