

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE DESIGNATING 495-497 NORTH 13TH STREET AND 580-584 EAST EMPIRE STREET AS A CITY LANDMARK THAT HAS SPECIAL HISTORICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, CULTURAL, AESTHETIC, OR ENGINEERING INTEREST OR VALUE OF AN HISTORIC NATURE PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 13.48 OF THE SAN JOSE MUNICIPAL CODE

**FILE NO. HL26-005
APN: 249-53-075**

WHEREAS, Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code provides for the designation of structures and/or sites of special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic or engineering interest or value of a historical nature as landmarks by the City Council of the City of San José (“City Council”); and

WHEREAS, San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, subsection A, provides that any historic property can be nominated for designation as a City Landmark by the City Council, the Historic Landmarks Commission, or by application of the owner or the authorized agent of the owner of the property for which designation is requested; and

WHEREAS, the property owner, Lawrence M. Camuso Trust, nominated the historic property for designation as a City Landmark and the Director of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement initiated the procedure pursuant to Section 13.48.110, subsection C, for consideration of such landmark designation for the property located at 495-497 North 13th Street and 580-584 East Empire Street; and

WHEREAS, Section 13.48.110, subsection E, provides that before the City Council may designate any property as a landmark, it shall hold at least one public hearing on such proposed designation, and that before it holds said public hearing, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement shall schedule a public hearing of said

proposed landmark designation before the Historic Landmarks Commission of the City of San José for its consideration and recommendation; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 2026, the Historic Landmarks Commission conducted a public hearing and recommended approval of the designation of 495-497 North 13th Street and 580-584 East Empire Street, as a landmark that has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature and made certain findings with respect thereto; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the City of San José Historic Landmark Nomination File No. HL26-005 upon which such recommendation was made is on file in the Planning Division of the City of San José and available for review at 200 East Santa Clara Street, 3rd Floor, San José, CA, 95113, and on the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement webpage (www.sanjoseca.gov); and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section 13.48.110, subsection F, the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement duly noticed a public hearing on said landmark designation before the City Council for November 10, 2026, or as soon thereafter as said matter could be heard, where the City Council provided all persons a full opportunity to be heard and considered all evidence and testimony presented regarding 495-497 North 13th Street and 580-584 East Empire Street; and

WHEREAS, a legal description of 495-497 North 13th Street and 580-584 East Empire Street is attached as Exhibit "A" and incorporated by reference;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN JOSE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: The foregoing recitals are incorporated into this Resolution.

SECTION 2. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 13.48 of Title 13 of the San José Municipal Code, the Historic Preservation Ordinance, this Council does hereby designate 495-497 North 13th Street and 580-584 East Empire Street as a landmark that has special historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature.

SECTION 3. Said designation is based on landmark significance criterion 1, 3 and 6 outlined in Section 13.48.110 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

- **Criterion 1:** *Its character, interest, or value as part of the local regional, state or national history, heritage, or culture.*

Analysis: M. J. Smith Hardware and Smith Well Drilling was one of several businesses that served San José's horticultural development during the era when the city was known as the Garden City and Valley of Heart's Delight. The corner building, today addressed as 497 North 13th Street, continues to represent this era of early horticultural and business development through its evolution from well-drilling and hardware to plumbing and appliances and, ultimately, a laundromat. The site reflects an unusually sustained pattern of continuous commercial and service use. The corner building has remained in retail or service use for nearly a century, including approximately sixty-five years as a laundromat, while the three related buildings housed commercial tenants for the better part of a century. This continuity, despite changes in businesses and ownership, reflects the neighborhood's changing commercial character while anchoring the corner as a constant point of neighborhood service. The three-building Wm. F. Serpa Plumbing complex is also directly associated with broader themes of local history through its association with William F. Serpa, regional development, and its role as a distinctive historic architectural contributor to the Northside neighborhoods.

- **Criterion 3:** *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the local, regional, state or national culture and history.*

Analysis: The property is identified with William F. Serpa and the long-time home of Wm. F. Serpa Plumbing, which occupied the site for almost half a century. Serpa was a successful business owner and son of Portuguese immigrants who held leadership positions in the Master Plumbers' Association, San Jose Merchant Plumbers Association, Santa Clara County Builders' Exchange, and Santa Clara County Construction Employers Council during periods when San José was the Garden City and Valley of Heart's Delight and Building the Modern City. William and Marie Serpa were also deeply involved in community organizations. Their business, professional, and civic leadership reflects their contributions to San José and the community's Portuguese American history.

- **Criterion 6:** *Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.*

Analysis: The 495-497 North 13th Street buildings embody distinguishing characteristics of the early twentieth-century Mission Revival style and are rare remnants of that aesthetic in greater Santa Clara County. Their prominent stepped-parapet facades present a distinctive architectural image within the Northside neighborhoods of San José's Downtown Frame. Although the facades have been resurfaced and ovolo molding added, these changes are additive and reversible and have not altered the underlying massing, parapet form, or fenestration pattern that define the style.

SECTION 4. The City Clerk is hereby directed to notify those persons designated in San José Municipal Code Section 13.48.110, subsection L, in the manner specified by said

Section and to direct the recordation of a Notice of Granting of this resolution in the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Clara.

ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DISQUALIFIED:

MATT MAHAN
Mayor

ATTEST:

TONI J. TABER, MMC
City Clerk

EXHIBIT "A"

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION
FOR
495-497 NORTH 13TH STREET AND 580-584 EAST EMPIRE STREET
SAN JOSE, CA 95112**

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Portions of Lots 71 and 72, Map of the Marguerite Tract No. 2, recorded March 15, 1907 in Book L, Page 71 of Maps, Records of Santa Clara County, California, described as follows:

BEGINNING at the Northerly corner of said Lot 72; being the point of intersection of the Southeast line of Empire Street with the Southwest line of Thirteenth Street (formerly Twelfth Street); thence along said Southeast line of Empire Street, S. 59° 20' W., 120 feet to a point; thence parallel with said Southwest line of Thirteenth Street, S. 30° 42' 30" E., 61 feet; thence N. 59° 20' E. 4 feet; thence S. 30° 42' 30" E., 30.99 feet to a point on the Southeast line of said Lot 71; thence along said Southeast line N. 59° 20' E., 116 feet to the Easterly corner thereof on the Southwest line of Thirteenth Street; thence along said line N. 30° 42' 30" W., 91.99 feet to the point of beginning; as shown on the Record of Survey recorded December 26, 1967 in Book 231, Page 53 of Maps.