

## Gottlieb Knopf Block



*East side of York Street between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets.*

Boundaries: Block bounded by York, Hampshire, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets, as well as three adjacent properties

Period of Significance: 1889-1892, 1920-1940

Eligibility: California Register of Historical Resources

Thematic Summary: This block-plus in the far eastern Mission District represents original uniform development with the signature Stick-style row-house cottages of Gottlieb Knopf, a prolific merchant builder in the eastern Mission District. The block contains the largest collection of Knopf buildings known to exist, and includes several that were “modernized” during the 20<sup>th</sup>-century interwar period in keeping with the general form, massing, and layout of Knopf’s row-house designs.

This historic district, comprised of 23 contributors and 30 total properties, is the largest collection of Knopf buildings located in the eastern Mission and perhaps in San Francisco. Knopf constructed nearly every building on the block, as well as properties on surrounding blocks. Knopf was the single most prolific builder

in the east Mission District, with at least 93 buildings in the area attributable to him.

Before the U.S. era, most of the historic district area was occupied by the western, lowland edge of the *Potrero Nuevo*, or “new pasture,” a vast rancho that included all of Potrero Hill. After the U.S. took control of San Francisco, pioneer settler George Treat fenced off the tract by 1850, and thus gained control of the land. By 1870, several other landowners had carved out small pieces of the Potrero Nuevo tract, apparently for the purpose of residential subdivision. However, the majority of the eastern Mission District did not build out until the 1890s, when streetcar line expansions to the area and population growth prompted development. Eventually, electric streetcar lines on nearby Potrero Avenue and Bryant Street (east and west of the subject block) provided convenient access to the area.

According to 1880 and 1900 Census records, Gottlieb Knopf was born in Germany in 1852, and emigrated to the U.S. at the age of 13. In San Francisco City Directories, he was identified throughout the 1880s as a carpenter. However, by 1890 Knopf was listed as an architect with an office at 328 Montgomery Avenue, located on the same block as master architect Thomas John Welsh; and in 1891 he appeared as contractor and builder living at 809 Chestnut Street. On the 1900 Census, he identified himself as a contractor and the owner of 2300 Leavenworth Street where he lived with his wife Anna and two sons, Adolph and Norman. By this time he had also Anglicized his first name to George. In 1909 he appeared in a *San Francisco Chronicle* real estate article as having borrowed \$19,000 for property located at Third Avenue and B Street in the Richmond District, and again in 1914 for selling what appears to be a portion of the same property. Knopf died in 1926 and was buried with his wife at Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland. Despite numerous examples of Knopf’s work in the east Mission District, and his obvious importance in the historical development of the area, no reference for him appears in the index for the *California Architect and Builders News*, nor have any references been found for him in commonly-available reference books concerning San Francisco architecture.

The buildings of this historic district typify Knopf’s work, which almost always consisted of mirrored one-story-over-raised-basement Stick/Eastlake-style single-family cottages, massed with a prominent projecting front bay and a narrow recessed side bay. By mirroring the floor plans of adjacent buildings, Knopf created large light wells between his residences, as well as regular rhythms of massing along the street. The regularity of his technique was so predictable that

*San Francisco Planning Department – South Mission Historic Resources Survey  
Historic District Description*

his work can often be identified on Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps through the building silhouettes alone. Another distinguishing characteristic of Knopf's work was the use of flat roof construction rather than gable roofs, which were far more common during the era. It may be conjectured that the flat-roof design saved materials and money in the building of Knopf's working-class dwellings. Knopf also occasionally constructed Queen Anne-style cottages, as well as multi-story Stick/Eastlake-style mixed-use buildings, typically on corners lots at the edges of his residential developments (such as on the subject block at 2629 19<sup>th</sup> Street). Aside from the impressive collection of intact Knopf buildings on this block, particularly on the east side of York Street, the only other comparable groupings includes a row of three buildings located nearby on the west side of Potrero Avenue between 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets, as well as three buildings on the east side of Hampshire Street between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets.



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Knopf's buildings appear to have been particularly susceptible to alterations, in part because Knopf's prototypical building plans proved adaptable to modernization. Virtually all his cottages have garage insertions, and the vast majority was altered in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with Mediterranean Revival-style influences, such as stucco cladding, bay window reconfiguration, and barrel-tile accents, often the work of local eastern Mission District contractors. In some cases, such as on the subject block, alterations were implemented with design, workmanship, and materials that may be seen as significant modifications to Knopf's originals (and therefore contributors to the historic district), including examples in the Mediterranean Revival style and a single reimagining in Streamline Moderne. Examples of contributing, altered Knopf cottages are found within the historic district on Hampshire, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets.

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Historic District Description*





*West side of York Street between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets.*

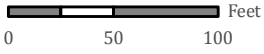




City & County of San Francisco Planning Department  
 Eastern Neighborhoods Mission Area Plan  
 South Mission Historic Resources Survey

**GOTTLIEB KNOPF BLOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
 Eligible for Listing in the California Register

-  Historic District Boundary
-  Historic District Contributor



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San Francisco Planning Department - South Mission Historic Resource Survey  
Property Information Catalog (sorted by Street Address)

Assessor Block-Lot	Address (Low #)	Address (High #)	Street	Attribute Code/Description 1	Attribute Code/Description 2	Year Built	Year Built Source	Primary Record (DPR 532A)	Architectural Style 1	Architectural Style 2	Historic District	CHRS	Listing Type	Resource Eligibility	Notes
4079-034	2605	2605	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1933.
4079-033	2609	2609	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1935.
4079-032	2613	2613	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1935.
4079-031	2617	2617	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1935.
4024-009	2620	2620	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1892	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Streamline Moderne		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1935.
4079-030	2621	2621	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival	None/Altered	Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1937.
4079-029	2625	2625	19TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-028	2629	2629	19TH ST	HP3. Multiple Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CB	Individual & Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-012	2706	2706	20TH ST	HP3. Multiple Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6Z	none	determined not eligible for listing	
4079-013	2710	2710	20TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Garage installed 1922.
4079-014	2716	2716	20TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1930-1931.
4079-015	2720	2720	20TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1939.
4079-016	2726	2726	20TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Garage installed 1922. Façade renovated 1934.
4079-017	2730	2730	20TH ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4078-012	721	721	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1892	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Queen Anne		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf; mirrored with 4078011
4079-002	722	722	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	Architectural est.	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1925.
4078-011	723	723	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1892	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Queen Anne		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf; mirrored with 4078012
4079-003	728	728	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	Architectural est.	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated circa 1925.
4079-004	734	734	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf; identical to 4079006; unusual Moorish design in frieze
4079-005	740	740	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1940.
4079-006	746	746	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf; identical to 4079004; unusual Moorish design in frieze
4079-007	752	752	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1940.
4079-008	758	758	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	Sanborn Co. maps (est.)	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-009	764	764	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Mediterranean Revival	None/Altered	Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1933.
4079-010	770	770	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1889	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf.
4079-011	782	786	HAMPSHIRE ST	HP3. Multiple Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-027	707	707	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-026	709	709	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf. Façade renovated 1937.
4079-025	711	711	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-024	713	713	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	None/Altered		Gottlieb Knopf Block	6L	none	determined not eligible for listing	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-023	715	715	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CB	Individual & Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-022	717	717	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CB	Individual & Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-021	719	719	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CB	Individual & Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-020	721	721	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf
4079-019	723	723	YORK ST	HP2. Single Family Property		1890	SFPUC water tap	Yes	Stick/Eastlake		Gottlieb Knopf Block	3CD	Contributor	California Register	Builder Gottlieb Knopf