

DATE: July 29, 2005

TO: Historic District Commission

FROM: Community Development Department

SUBJECT: **The nomination of the original St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and Cemetery at 1100 Natoma Street to the Cultural Resource Inventory List**

BACKGROUND

On November 5, 1998, the Folsom City Council approved the 'Historic Preservation Master Plan.' This document established goals and objectives for historic preservation within the City of Folsom, identified a process for the listing of locally significant historic sites and structures, and authorized the Historic District Commission to determine the eligibility of sites nominated for listing. The master plan also specifies that properties that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources are automatically eligible for local listing.

NOMINATION

The Community Development Department has received a request for the listing of the original St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and Cemetery at 1100 Natoma Street as a locally significant historical site. The submitted registration form was prepared by the Heritage Preservation League of Folsom. Based on the previous listing of this property in the 'Historic Preservation Master Plan', staff has determined that the church and cemetery site is automatically eligible for listing and a decision by the Historic District Commission will not be required.

CRITERIA FOR LISTING

The Historic Preservation Master Plan specifies criteria for listing a resource in the City's Cultural Resources Inventory:

- 1) Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- 2) Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 3) Property embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or construction method, or represent the work of a creative individual; or
- 4) Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in Folsom's prehistory or history.

In addition to being eligible for listing, the original Catholic Church in Folsom meets all the criteria for listing as established by the Historic Preservation Master Plan. St. John the Baptist parish was founded in 1856 as a mission. The parish was commissioned by Archbishop Joseph Alemany of San Francisco to serve the gold miners that were occupying the American River valley from Folsom to Auburn and the Consumnes River area from Michigan Bar to Slough House. In 1857, the archbishop purchased land in Folsom, and the following year St. John the Baptist Catholic Church was built by Father John Quinn from St. Rose's parish in Sacramento. In 1959, Father Joseph Gallagher, became the first pastor of Folsom.

The oldest marker in the St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery adjacent to the church building, documents the passing of Michael McGaughran on August 16, 1857. Most of the early grave markers

commemorate Irish and Portuguese immigrants. Several graves from the nineteenth century, specify that the deceased was a 'Native of California.'

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

The St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and Cemetery property is largely unchanged from its original design. Based on the location of the property in the Historic District of Folsom, the surrounding street system was established in 1855, with the first map of Folsom (the Theodore Judah map). The streets remain narrow and sidewalks have not been installed along the frontage of the church property.

For over 100 years (from 1857 to 1958), regular church services were held at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church. Today, the church building and cemetery grounds are used for religious ceremonies and celebrations. The pioneer-style church is the oldest church in Folsom and among the oldest parish churches in the Sacramento Diocese as well as in the west. In 2007, the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento is planning to celebrate 150 years of continuous use of the first church and cemetery in the St. John the Baptist Parish.

LISTING

Based on the previous historic listings of the St. John the Baptist Catholic Church and Cemetery, staff has included the property with the list of cultural resources eligible for the Cultural Resource Inventory list. Because the property owner (the Roman Catholic Church of Sacramento) has no objections to the actual listing, staff will include the property with the Cultural Resource Inventory. The Community Development Department maintains two sets of records regarding cultural resources listed by the City. A complete description of the historical and cultural resources, including maps and photos are available to historical institutions and researchers. Information about archeological resources is excluded from the public information binder that is available at the planning counter.

PROPERTY OWNER

A representative of St. John the Baptist Church at Montrose Drive has contacted staff and expressed support for the local recognition of the historic church and cemetery property. The church representative will attend the staff presentation at the Historic District Commission meeting on August 3, 2005.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. The Nomination Package

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION ACTION

No action is required by the Historic District Commission.



St. John the Baptist
Catholic Church & Cemetery

Circa 1857



St. John the Baptist
Catholic Church & Cemetery



August
2004

St. John the Baptist Catholic Cemetery
August 2004

