

REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Amended in Committee – February 23, 2026)

[Planning Code - Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to allow additional uses as principally or conditionally permitted in Historic Buildings citywide, and make conforming amendments to provisions affected by the foregoing, including zoning control tables; affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; making findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1, and making findings of public necessity, convenience, and general welfare under Planning Code, Section 302

Existing Law

The Planning Code establishes which land uses are permitted, conditionally permitted, or not permitted in each zoning district in San Francisco. The zoning controls are different for each district, with the controls for individual uses typically shown in a comprehensive Zoning Control Table. In some residential, neighborhood commercial, and mixed use districts, additional uses are permitted or conditionally permitted if the subject property is a certain type of Historic Building.

Procedures regarding historic preservation are provided in Article 10 of the Planning Code. Section 310 of the Planning Code specifies that Article 10 has its own procedures, and that the procedures of Article 3 do not apply to Article 10.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance modifies which uses are permitted, conditionally permitted, or not permitted in each zoning district, where the subject property is a Historic Building. Generally, the ordinance makes uses more permissive in Historic Buildings, to encourage and improve the feasibility of projects for adaptive reuse of Historic Buildings, provided certain conditions are met.

In specified Residential Districts (RH, RM, and RTO), when located in a Historic Building, any use that is not permitted in the District, but is permitted or conditionally permitted the ground floor in the NC-1 District, is conditionally permitted. In most Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts (CMUO, MUG, MUO, MUR, SALI, SPD, UMU, WMUG, and WMUO), Downtown Residential Districts (DTR), Commercial Districts (C-2 and C-3), and the Residential Commercial District (RC), all uses are permitted in Historic Buildings. In RED and RED-MX Districts, Arts Activities, Community Facility, Private Community Facility, Public Facility, School, Social Service or Philanthropic Facility, and Trade School uses are permitted in Historic Buildings; Retail Sales and Services uses and Office uses are conditionally permitted, with limited exceptions. In Neighborhood Commercial Districts, Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR) Districts, and all other districts, uses that are conditionally permitted are

permitted in a Historic Building; uses that are not permitted are conditionally permitted in a Historic Building.

Certain uses are excluded from these more permissive zoning controls for Historic Buildings, including Industrial uses other than Agricultural and Beverage Processing 1 and Light Manufacturing, Cannabis Retail uses, Hotel uses, and any use that is also a Formula Retail use. In a specified geographic area in the Mission District, the following additional uses are excluded from the more permissive zoning controls: Adult Business, Adult Sex Venue, Bar, Chair and Foot Massage, Cannabis Retail, Electric Vehicle Charging Location, Fleet Charging, Fringe Financial Service, Gym, Hotel, Laboratory, Life Science, Liquor Store, Massage Establishment, Nighttime Entertainment, Office, Private Community Facility, Restaurant, and Tobacco Paraphernalia Establishment.

Additionally, the Planning Director may authorize any Retail Sales and Service or Entertainment, Arts and Recreation use as a temporary use within any vacant Non-Residential space in a Historic Building. The ordinance includes minor amendments to individual districts' Zoning Control Tables and various other sections to reflect the new, more flexible controls for Historic Buildings.

Procedures regarding historic preservation continue to be provided in Article 10 of the Planning Code. Section 310 of the Planning Code, which confirmed that Article 10 has its own procedures, and that the procedures of Article 3 do not apply to Article 10, is unnecessary and is deleted.

Background Information

The Planning Code defines a Historic Building as a building or structure that meets at least one of the following criteria: 1) is individually designated as a landmark under Article 10; 2) is listed as a contributor to an historic district listed in Article 10, or if the historic district does not list contributors, is determined to be a contributor through historic resource review; 3) is a Significant or Contributory Building under Article 11, with a Category I, II, III or IV rating; 4) has been listed or has been determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources; or, 5) has been listed or has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

This ordinance was originally introduced on September 2, 2025 (Version 1) and was amended by the Land Use and Transportation Committee ("LUTC") on February 23, 2026 (Version 2). Version 1 included an amendment to Section 202.8 regarding PDR replacement space and conditional use authorization; Version 2 removed that amendment. Version 1 excluded Industrial uses other than Agricultural and Beverage Processing 1 and Light Manufacturing from the additional flexibility allowed for Historic Buildings. Version 2 also excludes Cannabis Retail and Hotel uses, and all Formula Retail uses, as well as specified other uses, in a portion of the Mission District.