



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Certificate of Determination Exemption from Environmental Review

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Case No.: 2015-005479ENV
Project Title: **Golden Gate Park Tennis Complex Upgrade Project**
Zoning: P (Public)
Scenic Streets (Special Sign District) SSD
Block/Lot: 1700/001
Project Site Area: 185,000 square feet
Project Sponsor: Daliah Khoury, San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department
(415) 831-6897
Staff Contact: Jenny Delumo – (415) 575-9146, Jenny.delumo@sfgov.org

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project site is an approximately 185,000-square-foot (sf) area within the Golden Gate Park Tennis Complex (tennis complex) located within Golden Gate Park, and operated by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department. The tennis complex is bounded by John F. Kennedy Boulevard to the north, Nancy Pelosi Drive to the east, Bowling Green Drive to the west, and Kezar Drive to the south. The tennis complex consists of 21 tennis courts and an approximately 3,200-gross-square-foot (gsf), one-story tennis clubhouse.

The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department proposes the Golden Gate Park Tennis Complex Upgrade Project. The proposed project would remove the existing 21 tennis courts on the site and install 17 regulation-size tennis courts and one pickleball court, for a total of 18 courts. The proposed project would include demolishing the existing tennis clubhouse and constructing a new one-story, approximately 17-foot tall and 7,500-gsf clubhouse in its place, among other changes.

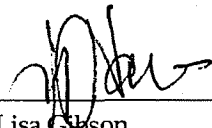
(Continued on next page)

EXEMPT STATUS:

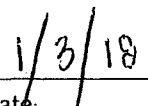
Categorical Exemption, Class 1 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15301) and Class 3 (Guidelines section 15303). See page 4.

DETERMINATION:

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and local requirements.



Lisa Gibson
Environmental Review Officer



Date

cc: Daliah Khoury, Project Sponsor
David Lindsay, Northwest Team Manager
Shelley Caltagirone, Preservation Planner
Supervisor London Breed, District 5 (via Clerk of the Board)

Distribution List
Historic Preservation Distribution List
Virna Byrd, M.D.F.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (continued):*Existing Conditions*

In addition to the tennis courts and clubhouse, the existing site includes three off-street vehicle parking spaces, including one Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible space, fencing, landscaping and trees. The public can currently use the tennis courts between 6:30 a.m. - 10 p.m., 356 days of the year (the tennis complex is currently closed 9 days per year). The project site includes paved-over granite stairs and the decorative side wall coping and bollards that were part of the bandstand complex originally constructed on the site circa 1892, and were later incorporated into the existing tennis court facilities on the project site. Vehicular and pedestrian access to the tennis complex is provided via Nancy Pelosi Drive, and on-street vehicle parking is provided on both sides of the street. A Golden Gate Park shuttle stop is located near the project site at the intersection of Nancy Pelosi Drive and John F. Kennedy Drive.

The tennis courts were constructed between 1901 and 1937 and are a contributor to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District. The clubhouse was completed in 1960 is a contributor to the discontinuous Midcentury Recreation Historic District.

Proposed Project

The new clubhouse would provide approximately 3,400 sf of public space, 750 sf of learning space, 1,000 sf of office/administrative space, 750 sf of space for recreational facilities (i.e., lockers and restrooms), 150 sf of kitchen space, and 600 sf of storage and maintenance space. An approximately 6,100-sf landscaped viewing garden would be established south of the new clubhouse, and would provide additional space for events and social and classroom activities. The proposed project would remove the existing tennis courts and install 17 regulation size tennis courts and one pickleball court, for a total of 18 courts: One of the 18 reconfigured courts would be a sunken feature court located adjacent to the new clubhouse, and would accommodate approximately 230 seated spectators. A new entry plaza would be constructed at the entrance to the tennis complex from Nancy Pelosi Drive. The existing tennis courts cover approximately 121,600 sf of the project site, and the reconfigured tennis courts and pickleball court would be located within the same general area as the existing tennis courts. The project would retain the remaining features of the original 1892 bandstand.

The proposed project would enable the tennis complex to expand its existing programming and establish new programs and events. Existing programming for youth would be expanded to allow an estimated 12 additional participants per day in the youth and middle school tennis league, 1,560 additional participants per year in the half- and full-day tennis camps, and an additional 80 participants per year in the Recreation and Park Department's Tennis and Learning Center Program.

Additional programming and events would include approximately 21,000 hours of evening play, including social mixers (up to 20 people per event) and expanded evening league play (up to 3 additional teams), one one-day charity tournament (up to 200 people), one Club Fun Day event (up to 150 people), two two-day United States Tennis Association events (up to 200 people per day), and an estimated 24 clubhouse rentals (averaging 30 people per rental). Under the proposed project, the public would be able to use the tennis courts 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. 365 days per year. During special events, such as the proposed social mixers, charity tournament, Club Fun Day, United States Tennis Association events, and clubhouse rentals, the tennis complex could be open until 11 p.m.

Approximately 23 trees would be removed from the project site, and approximately 24 new trees would be planted at four locations across the site. Approximately 90 new 20-foot-tall light poles would be installed around the tennis courts to allow for evening tennis games and events (up to 10 p.m.). Additional lighting would be provided for clubhouse operations and pedestrian pathways on the site. A new 10-foot-tall fence would be installed along the perimeter of the tennis courts, clubhouse, and viewing garden. Approximately 5 *class 1* bicycle parking spaces would be installed on the project site. Signage would be provided to identify the building entrances, project donors, and provide usage guidelines.

The project sponsor would retain a professional who meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History to prepare an interpretive display for installation on the project site and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation of the clubhouse building and surrounding context prior to construction of the proposed project. The interpretive display would describe the history and architectural features of the original tennis clubhouse and the overall history and development of the tennis complex. The interpretive display would show which elements of the project site were removed or altered as part of the proposed project and address the original function of the bandstand stairs and their later incorporation into the existing tennis court facilities. The HABS documentation would include a written historical report and photographic documentation of the clubhouse and existing setting. Photographic documentation would include contextual views of the existing tennis courts and associated site features; views of each side of the building and interior views; oblique views of the building; and detailed views of the character-defining features of the tennis courts and clubhouse, including interior features. The sponsor would prepare a photographic key map that would reference all of the views photographed. The original plans for the clubhouse building would also be reproduced and included in the documentation. The historical report would be submitted to the San Francisco Public Library, San Francisco Architectural Heritage, and the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Information Resource System.

Primary access to the project site would continue to be from Nancy Pelosi Drive. The existing off-street parking area would be reconfigured to allow for four vehicle (one net new) parking spaces (including one ADA-accessible space and 1 space for electric vehicle charging). An approximately 48-foot-long pick-up and drop-off zone would be located on Nancy Pelosi Drive just south of the proposed vehicle parking area.

The proposed project would include excavation of approximately 8,000 cubic yards of material to a maximum depth of approximately 7 feet below grade to install a mat slab foundation for the new clubhouse and re-grade the site for the proposed tennis courts and pickleball court.

Project Approvals

The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission would approve the proposed project at a public hearing and the Department of Building Inspection (building department) would issue a building permit for the project.

Approval Action: The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Commission's approval of the proposed project is the approval action for the project. The approval action date establishes the start of the 30-day appeal period for this CEQA exemption determination pursuant to Section 31.04(h) of the San Francisco Administrative Code.

EXEMPT STATUS (continued):

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15301(l), or Class 1(l), provides an exemption from environmental review for the demolition and removal of individual small structures. The project site is the Golden Gate Park tennis complex, which includes the existing, approximately 3,200-sf tennis clubhouse. The proposed project would include the demolition of the tennis clubhouse. Thus, the proposed demolition of this structure satisfies the requirements for exemption under CEQA State Guidelines section 15301(l).

CEQA State Guidelines Section 15303, or Class 3, provides an exemption from environmental review for the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures. The proposed project would demolish the existing tennis clubhouse and construct a new, approximately 7,500-sf, 19-foot-tall clubhouse. The proposed project would also include removing the existing 21 tennis courts on the site and installing 17 regulation-size tennis courts and one pickleball court. Tree removal and replacement, new signage, lighting and landscaping, and one additional off-street vehicle parking space would also be provided as part of the proposed project. Thus, the proposed construction of new tennis complex facilities, including a new one-story clubhouse and tennis and pickleball courts, on the project site satisfies the requirements for exemption under CEQA State Guidelines section 15303.

DISCUSSION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 establishes exceptions to the application of a categorical exemption for a project. None of the established exceptions applies to the proposed project.

Guidelines Section 15300.2, subdivision (b), provides that a categorical exemption shall not be used where the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant. As discussed below under "Cumulative Impacts," there is no possibility of a significant cumulative effect on the environment due to the proposed project.

Guidelines Section 15300.2, subdivision (c), provides that a categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. As discussed below, there is no possibility of a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, subdivision (f), provides that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. For the reasons discussed below under "Historic Resources," there is no possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on a historic resource.

Historical Resources. The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Under CEQA Guidelines section 21084.1, a property may be considered a historic resource if it is "listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources" (California Register). The tennis complex is located within the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District and the clubhouse was constructed in 1960. Based on the location of the project site and the age of the tennis clubhouse, the planning department determined the property is subject to historical resources

review. The following describes the information contained in the consultant-prepared historical resources studies and planning department's determinations.^{1,2}

The clubhouse and tennis courts are not individually eligible for inclusion on the National Register for Historic Places (National Register) or California Register. Two historic districts are applicable to this historical resources evaluation: The Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District and the Midcentury Historic District.

Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District – background

The Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) in 2004 under Criterion A (for recreation and social history) and Criterion C (for landscape architecture).

The original tennis court layout was established in 1937 and the clubhouse was constructed in 1960. The existing layout of the tennis courts match the layout when the courts were established in 1937, which is within the period of significance for the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District (1871-1943). The tennis courts are listed as one of 137 contributing features of the historic district in the National Register nomination. Therefore, the tennis courts are a contributor to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District. The remaining character defining features of the tennis courts include: the overall form and site layout; wooded character of the site, with trees functioning as windbreak; paved surface (the type of material, not the existing material); stone bollards, side wall coping, and stairway; location of two grandstand areas.

The clubhouse is a non-contributor to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District because it was not present during the historic district's period of significance.

Midcentury Recreation Historic District – background

The Midcentury Recreation Historic District is a discontinuous district of modern-era recreational facilities built by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department with municipal bonds. Bond-funded recreational improvements began in the late 1940s and were completed in the early 1960s. The Midcentury Recreation Historic District is eligible for inclusion on the California Register under Criterion 1 (for its association with the postwar bond acts and recreational development) and Criterion 3 (for the district's modern design aesthetic). The character defining features of the Midcentury Recreation Historic District include: the absence of historical ornament; use of new technologies, materials, and methods of construction; angled asymmetry; cantilevered roofs and overhangs; flat or shed roof forms with projecting eave overhangs; use of bright or contrasting colors; projecting vertical elements; brick or stone accents; canted windows; large expanses of windows; stucco siding or vertical wood siding; stacked roman brick veneer; overhanging or projecting trellises; and integrated planters (brick, stone, or concrete).

The Midcentury Modern style was the most common style of architecture built in San Francisco from 1945 to 1965. The Midcentury Recreation Bond Historic District includes a series of clubhouses, pools, recreation centers, and other built resources that share an aesthetic that reflects the Midcentury Modern style. The tennis clubhouse was built in 1960, which is within the period of significance for the

¹ Architectural Resources Group, Inc., *Golden Gate Park Tennis Complex Historic Resource Evaluation*, November 10, 2015. This document (and all other documents cited in this report, unless otherwise noted), is available for review at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA, as part of Case No. 2015-005479ENV.

² San Francisco Planning Department, *Preservation Team Review Form, Golden Gate Park Tennis Facility*, March 21, 2016.

Midcentury Recreation Bond Historic District (1947-1961), and is a contributor to the district. The character defining features of buildings and structures constructed as part of the mid-century expansion of recreational facilities under municipal bonds reflect the features of the Midcentury Modern style. The significance of each district contributor, including the clubhouse, is reflected in its function as a component of the city's recreational network, and in the Modern design elements that combine to visually distinguish these buildings from previous eras of construction within the park system. The general character-defining features of the Midcentury Modern style include: the absence of historical ornament; use of modern materials and construction techniques; angled asymmetry; cantilevered roofs and overhangs; flat or shed roof forms with projecting eave overhangs; use of bright or contrasting colors; projecting vertical elements; brick or stone accents; canted windows; large expanses of windows; stucco siding or vertical wood siding; stacked roman brick veneer; overhanging or projecting trellises; integrated planters (brick, stone, or concrete)

There are 46 original contributors to the Midcentury Recreation Historic District. These contributors are identified by their building/structure type: playgrounds/recreational areas with clubhouses (22 original contributors; 14 contributors remain); pools (7 original contributors; 3 contributors remain); recreation centers (8 original contributors; 3 contributors remain); and other recreation bond improvements/special projects (9 original contributors, 8 contributors remain). Of the 46 original contributors to the district, 28 contributors remain.

Existing plus Project Impacts

The department evaluated the proposed project using the criteria set forth by the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (secretary's standards). As described below, some aspects of the proposed project are not consistent with the secretary's standards, but overall the project would not cause a substantial adverse impact to the California Register-eligible Midcentury Recreation Historic District or the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District such that the significance of these historic districts would be materially impaired.

The Golden Gate Park tennis complex would continue to be used as it was historically, resulting in minimal changes to the components of the tennis complex that constitute its role as a contributor to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District. The proposed layout for the tennis courts and pickleball court adheres to the historic court form, orientation, and layout with as few modifications as possible to meet present day tennis court technical standards and provide accessible access to all courts. The court locations and materials have changed over time, and the proposed project would retain their approximate placement and material character while improving the facility for its intended and historical use. These features contribute to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District, and they would continue to retain integrity that reflects the 1937 tennis court configuration. Thus, the proposed alterations to the tennis courts would not result in significant impacts on the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District.

Although the demolition of the clubhouse would remove one of the contributing elements of the California Register-eligible Midcentury Recreation Historic District, this would not demolish or materially alter in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of the historic district that convey its historical significance, and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register. The character-defining features of the Midcentury Recreation Historic District would continue to be represented in the collection of buildings that comprise the historic district. These physical characteristics are generally

shared features of the contributing buildings that convey their collective association with the Midcentury Modern style and their recreational use. The majority of the original sites, structures, and buildings that contribute to the historic district would remain intact. Within the clubhouse category of contributors, with demolition of the clubhouse 13 out of an original 22 contributors would remain. Due to the scattered geography of the discontinuous district, the loss of one contributor would not cause a visual impact to the Midcentury Recreation Historic District. Thus, the collection of contributors to the historic district in the clubhouse category would continue to represent a strong collection of Midcentury Modern recreational facilities. Therefore, the demolition of the clubhouse would not result in a significant adverse impact as the Midcentury Recreation Historic District as the district would retain sufficient integrity to qualify for listing on the California Register.

The proposed new clubhouse would be designed in a contemporary style that is compatible but differentiated from the historic features of Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District and the California Register eligible-Midcentury Recreational Historic District. The new building would be distinguished from the early 20th century buildings that contribute to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District without detracting from the park's setting. The contemporary style of the building would have certain features (lack of ornamentation, modern construction techniques, angled asymmetry, cantilevered shed roof, and large expanses of windows) that reference and complement the Midcentury Recreational Historic District buildings. The materials proposed for the new clubhouse would be generally compatible with the site. The new clubhouse would be oriented on the project site in a similar manner as the existing clubhouse; would not be sized in way that overwhelms the project site; and would generally be minimally visible from other areas of Golden Gate Park due to heavy tree cover surrounding the project site. Thus, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Therefore, the proposed new construction would result in less-than-significant impacts on the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District and the Midcentury Recreational Historic District.

Furthermore, the proposed project would install an interpretive display on the project site and would conduct HABS written and photographic documentation, as described above under Project Description. These project features would further reduce the project's less-than-significant impact on historical resources.

Biological Resources. The proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances with regards to biological resources. The project site is located in Golden Gate Park, an urban park within the limits of San Francisco. In San Francisco, public parks and recreation facilities are routinely maintained, repaired, upgraded, or programmed. The project sponsor, the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, has undertaken maintenance, repair, landscaping, and new construction projects within Golden Gate Park in the past. These past projects include, among others, the remodeling of the Stow Lake Boat House,³ renovation and maintenance of pedestrian paths and a playground,⁴ implementation of the Golden Gate Park Forestry Program's Tree Abatement and Pruning project, the demolition of a nursery in the San Francisco Botanical Gardens and construction of a new

³ Planning Department Case No. 2011.0138E

⁴ Planning Department Case No. 2011.1070E

nursery on the site,⁵ and the construction of a new café adjacent to the California Academy of Science building.⁶

The project site consists of hardscape (tennis courts and walking paths), the tennis clubhouse, and landscape areas. The proposed project would remove the existing clubhouse and tennis courts and construct a new clubhouse, tennis courts, and a pickleball court within the same footprint as the existing facilities; remove 23 existing trees and plant 24 new trees in other locations across the project site; and establish an approximately 6,100-sf landscaped viewing garden just south of the new clubhouse. The proposed work is not unusual for a public recreation facility within an urban park.

Furthermore, the proposed tree removal and landscaping is subject to the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, California Endangered Species Act, and California Fish and Game Code. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) states that without a permit issued by the U.S. Department of the Interior, it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, or kill any migratory bird. The act protects the majority of migratory bird species, and their active nests, eggs, and young. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), established in 1984, prohibits the take of endangered and threatened species. Section 2090 of the CESA requires state agencies to comply with regulations for protection and recovery of endangered species and to promote conservation of these species. Regarding rare plant species, the CESA defers to the California Native Plant Protection Act of 1977, which prohibits importing into California, taking, and selling rare and endangered plants. Under section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code, it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by the code. Section 3503.3 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits take, possession, or destruction of any birds in the orders Falconiformes (hawks) or Strigiformes (owls), or of their nests and eggs. The proposed project would be required to comply with all local, state, and federal laws regarding birds, bats and other wildlife. Adherence to these laws ensures the project would not substantially affect biological resources.

Based on the foregoing, the proposed project does not have the potential to cause a significant effect on biological resources due to unusual circumstances.

Aesthetics. The proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances with regards to aesthetics. The proposed new one-story clubhouse would be of a similar height and in the same location as the existing clubhouse. Buildings of varying heights can be found within Golden Gate Park. In addition, the proposed project would not substantially alter the layout and orientation of the site, which has been used as a tennis facility since circa 1913. Up to 90 new 20-foot-tall light poles with LED lamps would be added around the tennis courts to allow for evening tennis games and events, and additional lighting would be provided for clubhouse operations and along pedestrian pathways on the site. However, lighting around tennis courts and pedestrian pathways is a typical feature of this type of recreational facility. For example, the tennis courts at the Glen Canyon Park, Hayes Valley Playground, Margaret S. Hayward Playground, and other tennis facilities in San Francisco have light poles with lamps of a similar height to what is proposed for the project site.

Furthermore, the proposed project would be subject to the City's Green Building Code, which requires all newly constructed non-residential buildings to design interior and exterior lighting such that zero direct-beam illumination leaves the building site, except for emergency lighting and lighting required for

⁵ Planning Department Case No. 2012.0541

⁶ Planning Department Case No. 2013.0925E

nighttime activity. In addition, the proposed project would be subject to and would comply with San Francisco Planning Code section 139, which establishes guidelines aimed at limiting glare from proposed buildings, and the San Francisco Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings which requires that new structures do not create a substantial source of glare.

For the reasons described above, the proposed project does not have the potential to cause a significant effect on aesthetics due to unusual circumstances.

Cumulative Impacts. There is no possibility of a significant cumulative effect on the environment due to the proposed project for the following reasons.

The geographic context for evaluation of cumulative impacts to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District and the Midcentury Recreation Historic District is proposed projects that would demolish or alter a contributor to these historic districts. The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department has submitted applications to the planning department to demolish the J.P. Lang Softball Field bleachers and renovate the Rossi Pool building. Both properties are contributors to the Midcentury Recreation Historic District. With the proposed demolitions of Golden Gate Park Tennis Clubhouse and the J.P. Lang Softball Field bleachers, a total of 26 contributors to the historic district would remain intact (approximately 57 percent of the original district's contributors). The J.P. Lang Softball Field bleachers fall within the "other recreation bond improvements/special projects" category. Demolition of the bleachers would reduce the number of contributors to that grouping to 7 out of a total of 9, which would leave approximately 78 percent of contributors in that category. Thus, the majority of historic district contributors would remain for both the overall number of contributors (26 of 46 original contributors) and with regards to contributors within the other recreation bond improvements/special projects category (7 of 9 original contributors).

Moreover, all of the character-defining features of the Midcentury Recreation Historic District that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the California Register would continue to be represented in the collection of buildings that comprise the historic district. These physical characteristics are generally shared features of the contributing buildings that convey their collective association with the Midcentury Modern style and their recreational use.

The cumulative projects are not contributors to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District, and there are no known reasonably foreseeable projects that would include demolition or alteration to a contributor to this historic district. Thus, cumulative development projects could not combine with the proposed project to result in cumulative impacts to the Golden Gate Park National Register Historic District.

Therefore, no cumulative impacts to historical resources would occur.

Conclusion. The proposed project satisfies the criteria for exemption under the above-cited classification(s). In addition, none of the CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption applies to the proposed project. For the above reasons, the proposed project is appropriately exempt from environmental review.