



ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

EXHIBIT C FACT SHEET

Filipino (Tagalog) nagsisimula sa pahina 15

Historic Name:	Mint Mall and Hall
Address:	951-957 Mission Street
Block/ Lot(s):	3725/088
Parcel Area:	12,857.6 sq ft
Zoning:	C-3-S Downtown Support
Year Built:	1916
Architect:	Smith and Stewart
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	Article 11, Category IV (Contributory), Mint-Mission Conservation District 3CD – Central SoMa area Plan; 1976 Architectural Survey
Prior HPC Actions:	None
Significance Criteria:	Criterion A for Cultural Significance, a pattern of events, repeated activities, or historic trends.
Period of Significance:	1981-2002/ongoing Beginning with the opening of the first business and ending after the legal battle to preserve the Mall ended. Ongoing, as the Mall and Hall continue to operate and be occupied.
Statement of Significance:	The Mint Mall is a mixed-use retail and office space located below several residential levels known as the Mint Hall , which contains 116 apartments. The Mint Mall and Hall is a building with long-standing ties to San Francisco's Filipino population and a cornerstone within SOMA Pilipinas, San Francisco's Filipino Cultural Heritage District. The building is significant Under National Register Criteria "A" as a long-standing safe place for immigrants new and old to gather in community, often with shared histories and languages where families can build stability with the support of each other, the businesses housed in the building, and the cultural, educational, entertainment and social activities that comprise an active life. (Continued on Page 2)

Assessment of Integrity:	The Mint Mall retains all aspects of integrity being: in its original location materials on both the interior and exterior from its 1979 installation, workmanship that the interiors are still in good condition; feeling of a small-scale indoor shopping center; and an on-going association with the Filipino community.
Character-Defining Features:	Proposed character-defining features are: Five-story with Mezzanine massing with formal frontage on Mission Street and informal façade on Minna Street. Brick and reinforced concrete construction, On Mission Street, the postmodern storefront with canted terrazzo base and central plinth block. (A) Building massing; (B) Metal storefront and transom; (C) Central plinth block at storefront that spans exterior and interior with interior-mounted round sign with neon reading “Mint Mall” (D) Broad, street-like interior corridors on three levels with a checkered tiled floor, open stair ; (E) At basement level interior, wood “bay window” storefront windows into the common hallway and built-in planters; (F) At street-level interior, wooden cutouts at individual storefronts.

Statement of Significance (Continued from Page 1)

SOMA Pilipinas is home to a vibrant living culture and historic legacy that has shaped the South of Market neighborhood and San Francisco for the last century. Home to thousands of Filipino families and seniors, the district is a gravitational cultural center for Filipinos in California, who comprise the largest and fastest growing Asian-Pacific Islander community in a state where 43% of the U.S. Filipino diaspora resides.¹ A more detailed history of Filipino history in San Francisco can be found in “San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement” by Page & Turnbull completed in March 2013.² This report discusses the Mint Hall and Hall:

One of the most identifiably Filipino establishments in SOMA is the Mint Mall, a mixed-use building at 953 Mission Street that was purchased by the Nocon family in the 1970s. Since that time, the apartments have largely been occupied by newly-arrived Filipino families, while the ground floor commercial space has provided a home for numerous organizations serving the Filipino community.³

¹ “SOMA Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage District,” (n.d.), <https://www.caculturaldistricts.org/soma-pilipinas>, accessed August 14, 2025.

² The context statement can be found on the Planning Department website: https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/central_soma_hrs/SOMA_Filipino_Heritage_HCS_Final_Report-031313.pdf (accessed August 21, 2025)

³ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement* (2013, March 13), 26, https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/central_soma_hrs/SOMA_Filipino_Heritage_HCS_Final_Report-031313.pdf, accessed August 22, 2025.

Site Description

The Mint Mall and Hall at 951-957 Mission Street is a five-story Edwardian/Postmodern style mixed-use (residential over commercial) reinforced concrete building that contains a mezzanine and rectangular floor plan and is clad with scored stucco and topped by a flat roof. The building occupies the entirety of its 12,857.6 square foot lot on the southeast side of Mission Street between Mary and 6th streets.

The primary facade faces northwest onto Mission Street. The first story and mezzanine levels are divided into four bays and have been remodeled in the Postmodern style. The bays have granite dados and are divided by square pilasters with two circular ornaments and an angled capital at the top. The first story and mezzanine levels are separated by bands of stone panels, and the mezzanine level is topped by a frieze of stone panels and an intermediate cornice. The four bays each contain glazed, anodized aluminum-frame storefront assemblies. The second bay from the left is recessed and includes two sets of glass double doors. The band of stone panels above it is curved. The rightmost bay is slightly recessed and includes two, fully-glazed, aluminum-frame pedestrian doors. It also has a curved band of stone panels above.

The mezzanine level of each bay has multi-lite, anodized aluminum-sash windows with fixed and hopper portions. The second through fifth stories are divided into eight bays. The bays on each side are narrower and feature small, one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows. All of the other bays feature pairs of windows of the same type. A metal fire escape spans the right side of second through the fifth stories, with a ladder accessing the roof. The facade terminates in a prominent entablature featuring a paneled frieze with a circular motif, egg-and-dart molding, paired brackets, and a modillioned cornice.

The rear facade faces southeast onto Minna Street and is clad with stucco. The first story features four recessed pedestrian entrances covered with metal security gates and a number of single-lite, fixed windows with very narrow transom lites and metal security bars. A light well spans the second through fifth stories on the left side of the facade, which is otherwise fenestrated with one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash windows. Each story also features two flush wood or metal pedestrian doors that access fire escapes. The facade terminates in a flat unadorned roofline.

The northeast facade faces a parking lot. Two deep, wide light wells alternate with three narrow, shallow light wells and interrupt the facade from the second story to the roofline. Within the light wells and on the left end of the facade are a variety of one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash windows. The facade terminates in a flat, unadorned roofline. The northwest facade abuts a neighboring building and is not visible.

The interior of the Mint Mall (953 Mission) consists of street-level, basement, and mezzanine spaces organized with a central corridor with individual shops to either side. Entering the front of the mall, there is a wide hallway with an open stairway leading down to spaces in the basement and up to a partial mezzanine. A staircase connects the three levels. Altogether, there are approximately 25

individual tenant spaces. A solid plinth spans the exterior and interior through the storefront, and on the interior is mounted a round sign with neon illumination indicating the space as the Mint Mall. The corridor of the street level and basement is designed to imitate individual spaces, with the basement also containing bay windows capped with wooden shingles between the corridor and the interior of individual commercial spaces. All levels have ceramic tile floors. There are shared toilet facilities on the street level and basement. A small commercial space (955 Mission) fronts Mission Street and is not accessible from the interior of the Mall.

The interior of the Mint Hall (957 Mission), the residential side, is not publicly accessible, but contains apartment hotel units organized on the upper four levels.

Transformation of the Building at 951-957 Mission Street: 1916-1981

The building that now houses the Mint Mall and Hall dates to 1916 when it was built as a hotel with more than 250 rooms. By the late 1940s, the residential portion was converted to apartments, currently consisting of 115 apartments and one guest room.⁴ The commercial space was originally several storefronts all facing Mission Street. In the mid-1970s, the Mint Mall and Hall building was known as the Dove Apartments, and the commercial level was occupied by “The Economy Center,” an office furniture store.⁵ The demographics of the Dove Apartments is not known as of this writing, but by the time of the opening of the Philipina Café in the Mint Mall in 1981, a large enough Filipino population was present to support the business.⁶

Building permits from 1978 and 1979 show the beginnings of the transformation of a ground floor that was occupied by larger businesses facing Mission Street and storage spaces below into a mall configuration with interior circulation to smaller spaces accessed from a central wide hallway perpendicular to Mission Street.⁷ In 1979, the owners began the process to create what would become the Mint Mall by expanding commercial occupancy to the basement, and consolidation of the storefronts into a mall setting. With the “Mint Mall Shopping Center” opening in 1981 and its first documented tenant being the “Philipina Café,”⁸ there was an opportunity for building community through a multitude of small businesses and nonprofits convenient to both the residents above and to Filipinos in the neighborhood.

Establishing the Mint Mall and Hall as a “Nerve Center of the Community”

San Francisco and the Bay Area have long been places that people emigrating from the Philippines have come to with intentions of improving their lives and that of their families. Most newcomer families, particularly during the post-1965 wave of Filipino immigration, settled in the South of Market

⁴ San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Report of Residential Record 199706175290, issued June 17, 1997.

⁵ San Francisco Planning Department, 1976 Architectural Quality Survey record for 951 Mission Street. Business signs are shown in an attached photograph. <https://sfplanninggis.org/docs/1976/3725088.PDF>, accessed August 14, 2025.

⁶ Building Permit number 8100596 for the restaurant’s business sign.

⁷ Building Permit numbers 7905861, 70054, 8000941 detail the conversion of the space into a mall configuration.

⁸ Building Permit number 8100596 for the restaurant’s business sign.

neighborhood due to its affordable rents. Although the South of Market has been a “gateway community” for Filipino immigrants to the San Francisco Bay Area since at least the 1960s and 1970s,⁹ the community’s center of gravity has shifted across the neighborhood. According to research conducted by local community historian MC Canlas, Filipino activity in the South of Market during the 1970s was largely concentrated along Howard Street between 8th and 10th. Filipinos residing along Natoma and Minna Streets would congregate at St. Joseph’s Church (1401 Howard) and the Gusaling Pilipino (*Filipino Building*) (1201 Howard), a former organizing hub for artists, community activists, service providers, and residents which is now currently occupied by the Uni-Mart grocery store.¹⁰

Due to the Nocon and Borja families purchasing the Mint Mall (953 Mission) and Delta Hotel (88 6th St), respectively, in the mid-1970s, the center of gravity for the Filipino community in SOMA moved to Mission Street between 5th and 6th.¹¹ The Mint Mall and the Delta Hotel, now known as the Bayanihan House with the ground floor occupied by the Bayanihan Community Center (1010 Mission) form a “plaza” with the nearby St. Patrick’s Church (756 Mission). Canlas drew inspiration for the “plaza” model after the plazas, or *municipios*, that formed the core of Filipino villages built during the Spanish colonial era, organized around the church, *convento*, municipal hall, market, school, and homes of wealthy elites.¹² Similarly, the aforementioned collection of buildings in the South of Market form the plaza for Filipinos residing in the neighborhood, organized around a community center (Bayanihan Community Center), residential space (Mint Hall), church (St. Patrick’s), and retail and non-profit spaces (Mint Mall), with the Bessie Carmichael K-8 School/Filipino Education Center nearby on Harrison St.¹³

Since the 1990s, the Mint Mall has served as a “nerve center” for Filipino arts, culture, commerce, and activism in San Francisco.¹⁴ Filipino residents living in the upper floors of the building, known as the Mint Hall, supported numerous Filipino businesses and non-profits in the Mint Mall retail space. While it is unclear exactly when Filipino tenants began to move into the building, likely soon after the building was purchased by the Nocon family, several of the community members interviewed for this project estimated that the current makeup of residents in the Mint Hall is 90% Filipino, with some Indian, Latine, and white families also living in the building. Due to the chain migration, the majority of Filipino tenants in the Mint Hall are from the province of Pampanga and speak the Kapampangan language, though a sizable group of tenants are of Visayan origin.¹⁵

⁹ SOMA Pilipinas Cultural History, Housing, Economic Sustainability Strategy (CHHESS) Report (2022, September), 42-44, https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/SOMA%20Pilipinas%202023%20CHHESS%20Final%20Report_0.pdf, accessed August 22, 2025.

¹⁰ Filipino American Development Foundation, *SOMA Pilipinas Ethnotour: Exploring the Cultural Assets and Social Heritage of San Francisco in Two Languages – English and Filipino/Tagalog* (San Francisco: Filipino American Development Foundation, 2013), 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹² *Recognizing, Protecting and Memorializing South of Market Filipino Social Heritage District Neighborhood Resources* (2011, July 13), 4-6. https://commissions.sfplanning.org/soma/DRAFT%20SoMa%20Philippines%20SUD_PAL%206_11.pdf, accessed August 22, 2025.

¹³ MC Canlas (2025, February 19), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, interviewers).

¹⁴ *Idem.*

¹⁵ Ester and Nix Guirre (2025, March 17), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, interviewers).

Civic activism is a theme that is strongly represented in the Mint Mall and Hall. Community organizing in the building and by the tenants both of the Mall and the Hall had roots in earlier agitations. For instance, poet and community leader Al Robles taught the lessons he learned from organizing at the International Hotel to younger generations of organizers he encountered at the Mint Mall.¹⁶ The International Hotel, a former “nerve center” for Filipinos in Manilatown that was demolished in 1979 after much struggle and controversy, had storefronts on the ground floor occupied by community organizations like the Asian Community Center (ACC), the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA), Everybody’s Bookstore, the Kearny Street Workshop, and the newspaper *Kalayaan*, with predominantly Filipino residents living in single-resident-occupancy units in the floors above.¹⁷ This history is detailed in the Chester Hartman’s book, *City For Sale*:

“Among the important manifestations of increased consciousness of and militancy around the city’s housing problems was community protection of specific buildings, such as the International Hotel and the Goodman Building. The former, a 150-room residential hotel for elderly Chinese and Filipinos, located at Kearny and Jackson Streets, at the edge between Chinatown and the financial district, was the symbolic and real remnant of the Manilatown community (“*The I-Hotel was the life of the manongs [elder brothers], the life of Filipinos. It was their heart, it was their poetry, it was their song,*” in the words of poet Al Robles), and the threat to destroy it epitomized perfectly the conflict between downtown profit interests and people’s needs. The attack on the I-Hotel produced some of the most dramatic protests and confrontations in the city’s history.”¹⁸

The Mint Mall has provided an opportunity for community-building by offering a great number of small businesses and nonprofits with convenient access for the residents above and throughout the South of Market neighborhood. Three levels containing different size spaces are easily reconfigured to suit the needs of the tenant.

The structural layout and practical uses of the Mint Mall is similar to several other buildings in San Francisco and in the Philippines. Former artistic director of Bindlestiff Studios Allan Manalo said the Mint Mall functioned similarly to many older buildings in Manila constructed in the 1930s and 1940s that have been repurposed as mini-malls, many of them located in the Divisoria shopping district.¹⁹ Angelica Cabande, executive director of the South of Market Community Action Network, compared the Mint Mall to mixed-use buildings often found in the *barangays*²⁰ of the Philippines:

¹⁶ Angelica Cabande, (2024, August 14), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, interviewers).

¹⁷ E. Habal, *San Francisco’s International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 53.

¹⁸ C. Hartman, *City For Sale, The Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 337.

¹⁹ Allan Samson Manalo (2024, November 20), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, interviewers).

²⁰ The term *barangay* is used in the Philippines to describe “a small administrative district forming the most local level of government.”

“In the Philippines, the commercial space is really dedicated for *sari-sari* stores, or corner stores. The only difference with the Mint Mall is it has nonprofit occupants too. But other than that, it's very similar. You live upstairs. You go downstairs. You know everybody or the majority of the people that's in the commercial space. You could hang out there. You could talk to people there in your language.”²¹

Cabande also stated that due to its tight-knit and community-oriented nature, the Mint Mall and Hall functions like a self-contained *barangay* in a single building. Lorenzo Listana, owner of one of the businesses in the basement of the Mint Mall, compared the Mint Mall to two buildings in the Tenderloin: 155 Turk St. (also owned by the Nocon family) and 57 Taylor. Both buildings are occupied by primarily Filipino tenants but do not have Filipino businesses or non-profits in the ground floor commercial spaces as in the Mint Mall.²²

The retail spaces of the Mint Mall have been occupied by many Filipino businesses, non-profits, and art groups. In 1998, Marie Romero moved Arkipelago Books from 6th St to the basement of the Mint Mall. Arkipelago Books is one of the only Filipino specialty bookstores and book publishers in the entire United States.²³ Yaying Borgonia and her brother Boying Tuala opened the New Pilipinas restaurant on the ground floor of the Mint Mall in 1994. They also co-owned the Hair Pro beauty salon.²⁴ Ownership of New Pilipinas restaurant later transferred to their sister Tess Diaz in 2005, who renamed it to JT Restaurant five years later.²⁵ Pablo Gravador, known in the Filipino community as Mang Pol, founded Filipino American Music and Arts Society in 1991 and served as hospitality director for the Likha-Pilipino Folk Ensemble. His daughter also taught voice and piano lessons in the Mint Mall, primarily to tenants living upstairs.²⁶

While they were waiting for the Redevelopment Agency to build out their theatre space on 6th St, Filipino theatre group Bindlestiff Studios shared offices with Arkipelago Books and the Manilatown Heritage Foundation in the basement of the Mint Mall. Bindlestiff Studios frequently held rehearsals and performance workshops in the lower hallway of the Mint Mall. The Filipino theatre group Teatro ng Tanan also occupied space in the basement of the Mint Mall.²⁷ Other non-profits that once held offices within the Mint Mall have included the West Bay Pilipino Multi-Service Center, Pilipino Early Intervention Project, Pilipino AIDS Project, Filipino American Development Foundation, Pilipino Senior

²¹ Cabande, interview for Mint Mall.

²² Lorenzo Listana (2025, April 24), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & D. Woo, interviewers).

²³ C. J. Ferrer, “Her Arkipelago,” *Race, Poverty & the Environment* Volume 21, Number 2 (2017), <https://www.reimaginerpe.org/21-2/ferrer-arkipelago>, accessed August 22, 2025.

²⁴ R. Kim, “HUB IN CRISIS / Evictions Dispersing Filipino American Businesses / Mint Mall on Mission St. Down to 5 Firms Rally Will Publicize Plight,” *SFGate* (2000, December 14), <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/hub-in-crisis-evictions-dispersing-filipino-3236232.php>, accessed August 22, 2025.

²⁵ Tess Diaz (2025, January 22), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, interviewers).

²⁶ Pablo Gravador (2025, April 7), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, interviewers).

²⁷ Manalo, interview for Mint Mall.

Resource Center, and Filipino Community Development Corporation.²⁸ Other businesses housed at one point or currently housed in the Mint Mall include Super Reproductions, Aeroskin Worldwide (a swimwear apparel company), Nida's Hair Salon, Mejia Hair Cutters, ADY Beauty and Barber Shop, and Palm Travel Agency. Interviewees also mentioned there previously being a Chinese medical doctor, a store to buy scrubs and medical uniforms, a shipping business, and a remittance center.²⁹ The Jesus Christ Son of God Christian Church also holds services in the basement of the Mint Mall.³⁰

The residential portion of the building, known as the Mint Hall, has traditionally served as a “stepping stone” for newcomer Filipino immigrants to the San Francisco Bay Area. According to Canlas, most newcomers take advantage of the rent-controlled, affordable housing in the Mint Hall to remit money to their families in the Philippines and save enough money to buy a house in the suburbs of the Bay Area. However, instead of ending their leases for their units in the Mint Hall, these families choose to “pass their rental agreement to the next relative,” allowing them to get their start in San Francisco.³¹ As summarized by Mang Pol, “everybody moves out of the city once they earn their good life, of course. You have to move to a bigger place. That's natural. That's why we come here [to the Mint Hall]. It's our chance to grow up and reach our goals.”³²

The immigration story of Nix Guirre and their mother Ester Guirre is exemplary of many Filipino families that migrate to San Francisco and move into the Mint Hall. Nix says:

“For us, that's where we first got our start. And I remember my mama said, “this is just a temporary place that we are going to be living in.” But then, fifteen years later, we're still there because it's rent controlled. We feel like we're at home. Not just because of the building, like the demographics of the building itself and the businesses around it, but also the SOMA Pilpinas Filipino Cultural Heritage district, with all the events, with Kapwa Gardens just right next door.”³³

The Guirres' unit in the Mint Hall has served as a way for the family to help Nix's siblings settle in San Francisco. Nix's sister and her family lived in their parents' unit for a time until they could find their own housing. Nix says they plan to do the same for their brother and his family:

“We're trying to get him to move here as well. He has two kids and his fiancé. This is the perfect place for them to get started. His fiancée grew up in the rural areas of the Philippines and is not very good at English yet. So I feel like it would be important for

²⁸ Page & Turnbull, 26; Canlas, interview for Mint Mall; Manalo, interview for Mint Mall

²⁹ Jeanne Batallones (2024, September 18), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial, interviewer); Manalo, interview for Mint Mall; Listana, interview for Mint Mall.

³⁰ Gay Nell Parks (2025, August 4), interview for Mint Mall, (Z. Frial, W. Galila & A. Lim, interviewers)

³¹ Canlas, interview for Mint Mall.

³² Gravador, interview for Mint Mall.

³³ E. & N. Guirre, interview for Mint Mall.

her to be able to be surrounded by other Filipinos to speak the same language and help her feel more comfortable as she's trying, as a form of survival, to assimilate, as well as their kids....And of course, Bessie [Carmichael School] is not far at all. They have the Filipino language program. So there's just so many things here that would help new immigrants, just like how we were able to get integrated into our new life in a foreign country.”³⁴

Despite having already bought a house in Manteca with her husband, Ester continues to live in the unit in San Francisco because “she still needs to be here in the city and there's no other place she can really afford but that space there in the Mint Hall.”³⁵ Jeanne Batallones, former executive director of the South of Market Community Action Network, agrees that the Mint Hall is “probably one of the last buildings...where a Filipino family can work downtown and also live downtown.”³⁶

Due to the small size of the units in the Mint Hall, the hallways, walkways, and public entrances become de-facto common spaces. For some this creates a dynamic that is reminiscent of the life that immigrants left behind in the Philippines. As described by Nix Guirre,

“So the moment you walk into the Mint Hall, you'll see elder folks, just kind of sitting by the door because there's not really any common space in the Hall. So that's kind of the lobby... There's a lot of kids just kind of playing down the hall. Specifically on our floor, there are kids who play volleyball, just in front of the elevator. And then sometimes there would be people having drinks, a little bit of karaoke, or they would play some music. You would feel like you're in the streets of the Philippines. Because there's not a space for them to hang out really. So it makes me smile when I see them just making the most of what we have.”³⁷

The small size of the residential units also underscores the benefit of having Filipino businesses located downstairs, such as JT Restaurant. Without a pantry to store food, residents in the Mint Hall “buy just a little bit of vinegar, a little bit of rice, not the whole thing. So the good thing about that is the Filipino grocery survives because they're not purchasing, they're not wholesaling, they're not buying much. That's why if you have those kinds of stores, then you have the Mint Mall. [That is] your market.”³⁸ In fact, Tess Diaz began selling groceries at JT Restaurant during the COVID-19 pandemic, both as an additional source of income and to supply residents upstairs with grocery items.³⁹ This spirit of coming together to help one another exemplifies the Filipino value of *bayanihan*.

³⁴ Idem.

³⁵ Idem.

³⁶ Batallones, interview for Mint Mall.

³⁷ E. & N. Guirre, interview for Mint Mall.

³⁸ Canlas, interview for Mint Mall.

³⁹ Diaz, interview for Mint Mall.

The Mint Mall as a Site of Struggle

The spirit of *bayanihan* was evidenced at the Mint Mall in two key moments when the Filipino community was threatened with displacement. In 1997, the Delta Hotel, owned by the Borja family, caught fire, causing many Filipino World WWII veterans to lose their homes. Hundreds of *veteranos* had migrated to the San Francisco Bay Area following changes to immigration laws that allowed them to naturalize as U.S. citizens. However, due to the 1946 Rescission Act that stripped the *veteranos* of the GI benefits the U.S. government promised them for serving in the U.S. military during WWII (the Philippines was a U.S. colony at the time), many *veteranos* lived in poverty after they migrated, overcrowded in small units in the Delta Hotel and Mint Mall.⁴⁰ Many of the *veteranos* would gather along Powell and Market or in the basement of the Mint Mall, where they would receive medical services from a Chinese doctor.⁴¹ After the Delta Hotel fire, the Mint Mall became a “second home” for the displaced *veteranos*, especially due to the presence of non-profit providers who supplied them with food, clothing, and other services. MC Canlas attributes this moment of *bayanihan* to when the Mint Mall became a vibrant center of the community. The Veterans Equity Task Force was founded by youth, college students, and community organizers to continue to provide services to the *veteranos* and fight for their benefits.⁴² The Task Force was formalized as the Veterans Equity Center, now known as the Bayanihan Equity Center.⁴³

Also in the late 1990s, long-time Filipino residents in the South of Market began to face displacement pressures from the dot-com boom, as did small businesses. According to Batallones, “these startup companies were moving into the neighborhood because it was still largely considered like a multi-use neighborhood [and] affordable.”⁴⁴ Hundreds of low-income tenants were priced out or evicted through the Ellis Act as multi-family properties were redeveloped into live-work lofts to house tech workers, and working-class jobs left the neighborhood as industrial warehouses were converted to office space for tech start-ups.⁴⁵ The SOMA Anti-Displacement (SOMAD) Coalition, which developed into the South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), formed to combat the dramatic loss of homes and businesses that threatened the ability of the Filipino community to stay in the South of Market.⁴⁶

The second key moment came in 2000 when threats of commercial displacement reached the Mint Mall, by then already recognized as a “historic landmark for Filipinos in the South of Market.”⁴⁷ Like the fight to save the I-Hotel before it, the “Save the Mint Mall” campaign galvanized a new wave of activism for the Filipino community. Attempting to capitalize on the dot-com boom, the Nocon family through their commercial leasing agent Meridian Management Group refused to renew leases for Filipino-serving establishments in the Mint Mall to capitalize on high demand for office space to

⁴⁰ Page & Turnbull, 17, 29.

⁴¹ Batallones, interview for Mint Mall.

⁴² Canlas, interview for Mint Mall.

⁴³ SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS Report, 45.

⁴⁴ Batallones, interview for Mint Mall.

⁴⁵ SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS Report, 44.

⁴⁶ Raquel Redondiez (2024, August 28), interview for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, interviewers).

⁴⁷ SOMCAN Fall 2002 newsletter, 2. San Francisco Public Library collection.

support higher-paying dotcom start-ups.⁴⁸ By September 2000, Teatro ng Tanan, Super Reproductions, and a youth-serving non-profit had been served with eviction notices.⁴⁹

The Mint Mall Organizing Committee (MMOC) formed to fight against the further displacement of Filipino spaces like Arkipelago Books, Filipino American Music & Society, and New Filipinas Restaurant from the Mint Mall. Led by Arkipelago Books owner Marie Romero and SOMCAN co-founders Bill Sorro, Jeanne Batallones, and Roy Recio, the MMOC worked with Gen Fujioka of the Asian Law Caucus to challenge the Nocon family and Meridian Management on the grounds that they were violating zoning codes and illegally converting retail space in the Mint Mall to office space. After two years of meetings, rallies, and commission hearings, the MMOC was successful in negotiating long-term leases for the Filipino businesses and non-profits.⁵⁰

Batallones attributes victory at the Mint Mall to the leadership of Marie Romero:

“It's a hard thing if you're a tenant and you're facing eviction, and you're being asked to fight your landlord. She was very courageous in doing it, as somebody who was going to be directly impacted as a tenant. But it was really through her willingness to be the face of the campaign [that] was really important. Because I think the other tenants also wanted to fight the eviction, but they were also very hesitant to, especially when the management was also waving non-negotiation...The whole idea of saving this local bookstore is very symbolic of the types of things that people were fighting during that time. And now things are completely changed because we don't really see bookstores anymore.”⁵¹

The MMOC used an inside/outside strategy to further enhance their advocacy. Raquel Redondiez, who was then a union organizer and member of the SOMA Anti-Displacement Coalition, was hired as a legislative aide for District 6 Supervisor Chris Daly after his election in 2000. As part of the MMOC, Redondiez's role was to call the Zoning Administrator on a weekly basis to urge the department to investigate the illegal conversions in the Mint Mall. Each week she would be told they would look into the matter but there would be no action. However, with the inquiry coming from the District 6 Office and the support of the Supervisor, the Planning department finally began to enforce the law against the illegal conversions.⁵²

Part of the ongoing significance of the Mint Mall to the community today was an idea of Bill Sorro, which was to reclaim the Mint Mall as a center of Filipino community activity by hosting huge Christmas parties there known as “Pasko sa SOMA.” According to Batallones, “that was part of our

⁴⁸ Kim, “HUB IN CRISIS.”

⁴⁹ Kim, “HUB IN CRISIS”; J. H. Lim, “Bookstore Survives Eviction,” *AsianWeek* (October 4, 2001).

⁵⁰ South of Market Community Action Network, “The Mint Mall Committee and the Fight to Preserve the Mint Mall” (2020, September 22), <https://www.somcan.org/newsletter/2020/9/22/the-mint-mall-committee-and-the-fight-to-preserve-the-mint-mall>, accessed August 22, 2025.

⁵¹ Batallones, interview for Mint Mall.

⁵² Redondiez, interview for Mint Mall.

strategy to be like, ‘This is our home. This is our community resource’... to make our presence known to those [dot.com startups] that were moving in and had no relationship to the community at all.”⁵³ The South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN) continued to hold the Pasko sa SOMA parties to celebrate the MMOC’s victory, bring together the various residents and organizations in SOMA, and increase the visibility of the Filipino community. SOMCAN eventually stopped holding the Pasko sa SOMA because it grew too big to be held in the Mint Mall, and the Parol Lantern Festival instead grew into the new annual Christmas celebration for the Filipino community in SOMA.⁵⁴

The Mint Mall as a Space of Creativity and Community-Building

The Mint Mall is uniquely culturally significant as an essential place for the Filipino community in San Francisco and northern California, particularly for artists and other creatives, due to the decades-long establishment of businesses and support networks housed in the Mint Mall and the scarcity of other public open spaces in the South of Market.

As mentioned above, artist groups like Teatro ng Tanan, Filipino American Music and Arts Society, and Likha-Pilipino Folk Ensemble all occupied spaces in the Mint Mall. Filipino theatre group Bindlestiff Studios also had space in the Mint Mall from 2004 to 2011. Bindlestiff Studios currently has a theatre space at 185 6th St, though they were temporarily displaced from 6th St when the SF Redevelopment Agency planned to tear down and redevelop the building. The fight to save Bindlestiff became another key moment in the Filipino community’s fight against displacement in SOMA, and Bindlestiff successfully secured an agreement with the Redevelopment Agency to construct a theatre space in the new building. However, while the space was being built out, Bindlestiff temporarily occupied office space in the Mint Mall, shared with Arkipelago Books and Manilatown Heritage Foundation.⁵⁵

Allan Manalo was artistic director of Bindlestiff Studios during the time they were located in the Mint Mall. He recounted how Bindlestiff Studios would hold rehearsals and workshops in the basement hallway of the Mint Mall, as well as open mics, poetry readings, stand up comedy shows, music concerts, and other performances. Other artists would also utilize the space creatively for photography, music videos, and film.⁵⁶

Manalo was consistently intrigued by the unique physical interior spaces of the Mint Mall, which challenged him as a performing artist:

“I like being creative. I like site specific challenges, where you take an unconventional space, and you try to do something artistic there and stage something artistic...What I liked about the space was its unique structure because of the way the stairs came down. If you go on the street level, there was a mezzanine. They had a balcony and

⁵³ Batallones, interview for Mint Mall.

⁵⁴ Cabande, interview for Mint Mall.

⁵⁵ Manalo, interview for Mint Mall.

⁵⁶ Idem.

these amazing windows. I started to stage theater events there in the hallways. Once we did a play where we utilized the top part and the bottom part.

I remember in the mezzanine level, you go up the stairs, [and] they would have these cafe tables, so people would go there [to] have the coffee. They would have their meetings up there. I would go up there and write at times... You go up there if it's a beautiful day with the sun because the windows were nice. I was writing a play so that we can actually utilize those windows. People would watch a scene happening from across the street and then they would enter the Mall, and the play would continue. It's more kind of an immersive play, but I just couldn't get the funding. So we abandoned the project, but I always had dreams of doing a Hitchcock type of thriller, *Rear Window* kind of thriller, because of the windows were amazing at the Mall."⁵⁷

Aside from artistic and creative ventures, the basement of the Mint Mall has provided space for numerous other uses that contribute to its cultural significance. As mentioned above, a Filipino Christian organization uses the basement hallway each Sunday for church services. The first *parol*-making workshops for the annual Parol Lantern Festival were also held in the hallway.⁵⁸ With the help of Aeroskin Worldwide owner Lorenzo Listana, the Mint Mall Resident Association was able to negotiate with the building owners to dedicate an interior storefront in the basement as a community room, where the MMRA holds meeting, karaoke events, and birthday parties for its members.⁵⁹ As an informal gathering place, the Mint Mall basement was also crucial for the intergenerational transfer of knowledge between Filipino community members. Angelica Cabande remembers hanging out in the basement with other community organizers like Al Robles and Phil Chavez:

"When [Arkipelago Books] was in the basement area, we would have karaoke there after hours in the hallway in the basement level. After community meetings or just hanging out, we would all go downstairs and then we would have karaoke, food, and just stay there till like 10:00 or maybe later too. And that for me was really significant because that's when I learned more about the history of the I-Hotel from Al Robles and...the different [community events] that they would do here in the South of Market."⁶⁰

On the upper floor, JT Restaurant also served as another gathering place in the Mint Mall for the Mint Hall residents and Filipino community at large. According to SOMA Pilipinas executive director Raquel Redondiez, the restaurant has been used for many community gathering, including music performance and political activities: "During election time when Supervisors are running for office, it's been a place where candidates for public office have meet and greets and campaign events...In recent years, during the Philippine elections, this was a site where people had phone banks and

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ A *parol* is a Filipino star-shaped lantern constructed from bamboo that is displayed during the Christmas season; Canlas, interview for Mint Mall.

⁵⁹ E. & N. Guirre, interview for Mint Mall.

⁶⁰ Cabande, interview for Mint Mall.

conducted public education about the Philippine presidential election.”⁶¹ Because she owns one of the few Filipino restaurants in the South of Market, Tess Diaz often receives many newcomer Filipino immigrants who are to be connected with non-profit services:

“This is not only a restaurant. Mostly if they need help, they're gonna go to me, and then I will tell them, “Oh, you need to go right here [to] SOMCAN, SOMA Pilipinas. What do you need? Senior [services]? [You're] going to go to Canon Kip.” But this is the place [where most of] the Filipinos go first. Because they know that this is surrounded by a Filipino community. And Mint Mall, they know that most of the ones who live right here are Filipino. So, wherever you go, when they say Mint Mall, they know Ate Tess is there.”⁶²

As one of the centers of gravity of the Filipino community in San Francisco, the Mint Mall has served as the starting place for not only newcomer Filipino immigrants but many community organizers, non-profit service providers, and arts and culture groups. Contributing to the significance of the building as an official San Francisco landmark, the fight to save the Mint Mall at the turn of the 21st century was one of the pivotal moments that ignited a new wave of Filipino activism in San Francisco. This legacy of organizing eventually led to the creation of the SOMA Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District in 2016. As summarized by Angelica Cabande, “the Mint Mall definitely is a symbol of our efforts of advocacy and organizing and resilience to stopping being displaced and gentrified out of San Francisco. It’s where a lot of things started in our efforts to coordinate and to work together collectively...That spirit of Bayanihan is still there, all of us connecting and organizing together.”⁶³

⁶¹ Redondiez, interview for Mint Mall.

⁶² Diaz, interview for Mint Mall.

⁶³ Cabande, interview for Mint Mall.

Fact Sheet Filipino (Tagalog)

Tandaan: Ang pagsasalin sa Filipino ay draft at hindi pa na-edit para sa katumpakan.

Historic Name:	Mint Mall and Hall
Address:	951-957 Mission Street
Block/ Lot(s):	3725/088
Parcel Area:	12,857.6 sq ft
Zoning:	C-3-S Downtown Support
Year Built:	1916
Architect:	Smith and Stewart
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	Article 11, Category IV (Contributory), Mint-Mission Conservation District 3CD – Central SoMa area Plan; 1976 Architectural Survey
Prior HPC Actions:	None
Pamantayan sa Kahalagahan :	Criterion A para sa Cultural Significance, isang pattern ng mga kaganapan, paulit-ulit na aktibidad, o makasaysayang uso.
Panahon ng Kahalagahan :	1981-2002/ patuloy Simula sa pagbubukas ng unang negosyo at natapos pagkatapos ng ligal na labanan upang mapanatili ang Mall natapos. Patuloy, habang ang Mall at Hall ay patuloy na umaandar at inookupahan.
Pahayag ng Kahalagahan :	Ang Mint Mall ay isang mixed-use espasyo ng tingian at opisina na matatagpuan sa ibaba ng ilang residential level na kilala bilang Mint Hall , na naglalaman ng 116 na apartment. Ang Mint Mall and Hall ay isang gusaling may matagal nang ugnayan sa populasyon ng mga Pilipino ng San Francisco at isang pundasyon sa loob ng SOMA Pilipinas, Filipino Cultural Heritage District ng San Francisco. Ang gusali ay makabuluhan Sa ilalim ng National Register Criteria “A” bilang isang matagal nang ligtas na lugar para sa mga imigrante na bago at matanda na magtitipon sa komunidad, kadalasang may magkabahaging kasaysayan at mga wika kung saan ang mga pamilya ay maaaring bumuo ng katatagan sa suporta ng isa't isa, ang mga negosyong makikita sa gusali, at ang mga kultural, pang-edukasyon, libangan at mga aktibidad sa lipunan na binubuo ng isang aktibong buhay. (Ipinagpatuloy sa Pahina 16)
Pagtatasa ng Integridad :	Pinapanatili ng Mint Mall ang lahat ng aspeto ng pagiging integridad: sa orihinal nitong lokasyon na mga materyales sa parehong interior at exterior mula sa pagkaka-install nito noong 1979, ang pagkakagawa na ang mga interior ay nasa mabuting kondisyon pa rin; pakiramdam ng isang maliit na panloob na shopping center; at isang patuloy na samahan sa pamayanang Pilipino.

Mga Tampok sa Pagtukoy ng Character :	Ang mga iminungkahing tampok na tumutukoy sa karakter ay: Limang palapag na may Mezzanine na may pormal na harapan sa Mission Street at impormal na harapan sa Minna Street. Brick at reinforced concrete construction, Sa Mission Street, ang postmodern storefront na may canted terrazzo base at central plinth block. (A) Building massing; (B) Metal storefront and transom; (C) Central plinth block sa storefront na sumasaklaw sa exterior at interior na may interior-mounted round sign na may neon na nakasulat na "Mint Mall" (D) Malawak, parang kalye na interior corridors sa tatlong palapag na may checkered tiled floor, open stair; (E) Sa loob ng basement level, kahoy na "bay window" na mga storefront window papunta sa karaniwang pasilyo at mga built-in na planter; (F) Sa interior na antas ng kalye, mga ginupit na kahoy sa mga indibidwal na storefront .
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Nagpatuloy ang Statement of Significance:

Ang SOMA Pilipinas ay tahanan ng isang makulay na kultura ng pamumuhay at makasaysayang pamana na humubog sa kapitbahayan ng South of Market at San Francisco noong nakaraang siglo. Tahanan ng libu-libong pamilya at matatandang Pilipino, ang distrito ay isang gravitational cultural center para sa mga Filipino sa California, na binubuo ng pinakamalaki at pinakamabilis na lumalagong komunidad ng Asian-Pacific Islander sa isang estado kung saan naninirahan ang 43% ng U.S. Filipino diaspora.¹ Ang isang mas detalyadong kasaysayan ng kasaysayan ng Filipino sa San Francisco ay makikita sa "San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum in the South State of" 2013.² Tinatalakay ng ulat na ito ang Mint Hall at Hall:

Ang isa sa mga pinakakilalang Filipino establishment sa SOMA ay ang Mint Mall, isang mixed-use na gusali sa 953 Mission Street na binili ng pamilya Nocon noong 1970s. Simula noon, ang mga apartment ay halos inookupahan na ng mga bagong dating na pamilyang Pilipino, habang ang commercial space sa ground floor ay nagbigay ng tahanan para sa maraming organisasyong naglilingkod sa Filipino community.³

¹ "SOMA Pilipinas – Filipino Cultural Heritage District," (n.d.), <https://www.caculturaldistricts.org/soma-pilipinas>, na-access noong Agosto 14, 2025.

² The context statement can be found on the Planning Department website: https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/central_soma_hrs/SOMA_Filipino_Heritage_HCS_Final_Report-031313.pdf (na-access noong Agosto 21, 2025)

³ Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Filipino Heritage Addendum to the South of Market Historic Context Statement* (2013, Marso

Paglalarawan ng Site

Ang Mint Mall and Hall sa 951-957 Mission Street ay isang limang palapag na Edwardian/Postmodern na istilong mixed-use (residential over commercial) reinforced concrete building na naglalaman ng mezzanine at rectangular floor plan at nilagyan ng scored stucco at pinatungan ng isang patag na bubong. Sinasakop ng gusali ang kabuuan ng 12,857.6 square foot lot nito sa timog-silangan na bahagi ng Mission Street sa pagitan ng Mary at 6th streets.

Ang pangunahing harapan ay nakaharap sa hilagang-kanluran papunta sa Mission Street. Ang unang kuwento at mga antas ng mezzanine ay nahahati sa apat na bay at na-remodel sa istilong Postmodern. Ang mga bay ay may granite dados at nahahati sa mga parisukat na pilaster na may dalawang pabilog na burloloy at isang anggulong kapital sa itaas. Ang unang palapag at antas ng mezzanine ay pinaghihiwalay ng mga banda ng mga panel ng bato, at ang antas ng mezzanine ay pinangungunahan ng isang frieze ng mga panel ng bato at isang intermediate cornice. Ang apat na bay bawat isa ay naglalaman ng glazed, anodized aluminum-frame storefront assemblies. Ang pangalawang bay mula sa kaliwa ay recessed at may kasamang dalawang set ng glass double door. Ang banda ng mga panel ng bato sa itaas nito ay hubog. Ang pinakakanang bay ay bahagyang nakaurong at may kasamang dalawa, ganap na glazed, aluminum-frame na pinto ng pedestrian. Mayroon din itong isang hubog na banda ng mga panel ng bato sa itaas.

Ang mezzanine level ng bawat bay ay may multi-lite, anodized aluminum-sash windows na may mga fixed at hopper na bahagi. Ang pangalawa hanggang ikalimang kuwento ay nahahati sa walong bay. Ang mga bay sa bawat panig ay mas makitid at nagtatampok ng maliliit, one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash na mga bintana. Ang lahat ng iba pang mga bay ay nagtatampok ng mga pares ng mga bintana ng parehong uri. Ang isang metal na pagtakas ng apoy ay sumasaklaw sa kanang bahagi ng segundo hanggang sa ikalimang palapag, na may hagdan na papasok sa bubong. Ang facade ay nagtatapos sa isang kilalang entablature na nagtatampok ng paneled frieze na may pabilog na motif, egg-and-dart molding, nakapares na mga bracket, at isang modillioned cornice.

Ang likurang harapan ay nakaharap sa timog-silangan patungo sa Minna Street at nilagyan ng stucco. Nagtatampok ang unang kuwento ng apat na recessed pedestrian entrance na natatakpan ng metal security gate at isang bilang ng single-lite, fixed windows na may napakakitid na transom lite at metal security bar. Ang isang ilaw na balon ay sumasaklaw sa pangalawa hanggang sa ikalimang palapag sa kaliwang bahagi ng harapan, na kung hindi man ay may fenestrated na may one-over-one, double-hung, wood-sash na mga bintana. Nagtatampok din ang bawat kuwento ng dalawang flush na kahoy o metal na pinto ng pedestrian na uma-access sa mga fire escape. Ang harapan ay nagtatapos sa isang patag na walang palamuti na linya ng bubong.

13), 26, https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/central_soma_hrs/SOMA_Filipino_Heritage_HCS_Final_Report-031313.pdf, na-access noong Agosto 22, 2025.

Ang hilagang-silangan na harapan ay nakaharap sa isang paradahan. Dalawang malalalim at malalapad na balon ang humalili sa tatlong makitid, mababaw na balon at nakakagambala sa harapan mula sa ikalawang palapag hanggang sa linya ng bubong. Sa loob ng mga light well at sa kaliwang dulo ng facade ay may iba't ibang one-over-one, double-hung, wood sash window. Ang harapan ay nagtatapos sa isang patag, walang palamuti na linya ng bubong. Ang hilagang-kanlurang harapan ay nasa kalapit na gusali at hindi nakikita.

Ang loob ng Mint Mall (953 Mission) ay binubuo ng antas ng kalye, basement, at mezzanine na mga espasyo na nakaayos na may gitnang koridor na may mga indibidwal na tindahan sa magkabilang gilid. Pagpasok sa harap ng mall, may malawak na pasilyo na may bukas na hagdanan patungo sa mga espasyo sa basement at hanggang sa isang bahagyang mezzanine. Ang isang hagdanan ay nag-uugnay sa tatlong antas. Sa kabuuan, mayroong humigit-kumulang 25 indibidwal na espasyo ng nangungupahan. Ang isang solidong plinth ay sumasaklaw sa labas at loob sa harap ng tindahan, at sa loob ay naka-mount ang isang bilog na karatula na may neon illumination na nagpapahiwatig ng espasyo bilang Mint Mall. Ang koridor ng antas ng kalye at basement ay idinisenyo upang gayahin ang mga indibidwal na espasyo, kung saan ang basement ay naglalaman din ng mga bay window na nilagyan ng mga kahoy na shingle sa pagitan ng koridor at sa loob ng mga indibidwal na komersyal na espasyo. Lahat ng antas ay may mga ceramic tile floor. May mga shared toilet facility sa antas ng kalye at basement. Ang isang maliit na komersyal na espasyo (955 Mission) ay nasa harap ng Mission Street at hindi naa-access mula sa loob ng Mall.

Ang interior ng Mint Hall (957 Mission), ang residential side, ay hindi naa-access ng publiko, ngunit naglalaman ng mga apartment hotel unit na nakaayos sa apat na antas sa itaas.

Pagbabago ng Gusali sa 951-957 Mission Street: 1916-1981

Ang gusali na ngayon ay naglalaman ng Mint Mall at Hall ay itinayo noong 1916 nang itayo ito bilang isang hotel na may higit sa 250 mga silid. Sa huling bahagi ng 1940s, ang bahagi ng tirahan ay na-convert sa mga apartment, na kasalukuyang binubuo ng 115 apartment at isang guest room.⁴ Ang commercial space ay orihinal na ilang storefront na lahat ay nakaharap sa Mission Street. Noong kalagitnaan ng dekada 1970, ang gusali ng Mint Mall at Hall ay kilala bilang ang Dove Apartments, at ang antas ng komersyo ay inookupahan ng “The Economy Center,” isang tindahan ng kasangkapan sa opisina.⁵ Ang demograpiko ng Dove Apartments ay hindi kilala sa pagsulat na ito, ngunit sa oras ng pagbubukas ng Philipina Café sa Mint Mall noong 1981, isang sapat na malaking populasyon ng negosyong Pilipino ang naroroon upang suportahan ang populasyon ng negosyong Pilipino.⁶

⁴ San Francisco Department of Building Inspection, Report of Residential Record 199706175290, na inilabas noong Hunyo 17, 1997.

⁵ San Francisco Planning Department, 1976 Architectural Quality Survey record for 951 Mission Street. Ang mga palatandaan ng negosyo ay ipinapakita sa isang kalakip na larawan. <https://sfplanninggis.org/docs/1976/3725088.PDF>, na-access noong Agosto 14, 2025.

⁶ Building Permit number 8100596 para sa business sign ng restaurant.

Ang mga permit sa gusali mula 1978 at 1979 ay nagpapakita ng simula ng pagbabago ng isang ground floor na inookupahan ng mas malalaking negosyo na nakaharap sa Mission Street at mga storage space sa ibaba tungo sa isang configuration ng mall na may interior circulation patungo sa mas maliliit na espasyo na naa-access mula sa isang gitnang malawak na pasilyo na patayo sa Mission Street.⁷ Noong 1979, sinimulan ng mga may-ari ang proseso upang lumikha ng kung ano ang magiging base ng Mint, at ang pagpapalawak ng isang komersyal na mall at maging isang base ng Mint. pagsasama-sama ng mga storefront sa isang setting ng mall. Sa pagbubukas ng “Mint Mall Shopping Center” noong 1981 at ang unang dokumentadong nangungupahan nito ay ang “Philipina Café,”⁸ nagkaroon ng pagkakataon para sa pagbuo ng komunidad sa pamamagitan ng maraming maliliit na negosyo at nonprofit na maginhawa para sa mga residente sa itaas at sa mga Pilipino sa kapitbahayan.

Itinatag ang Mint Mall at Hall bilang isang "Nerve Center of the Community"

Ang San Francisco at ang Bay Area ay matagal nang naging mga lugar kung saan ang mga taong nangingibang bansa mula sa Pilipinas ay may layuning mapabuti ang kanilang buhay at ng kanilang mga pamilya. Karamihan sa mga bagong dating na pamilya, partikular sa panahon ng post-1965 wave ng Filipino immigration, ay nanirahan sa South of Market neighborhood dahil sa abot-kayang renta nito. Bagama't ang South of Market ay naging "gateway community" para sa mga Pilipinong imigrante sa San Francisco Bay Area mula pa noong 1960s at 1970s, ang sentro ng grabidad ng komunidad ay lumipat sa kapitbahayan. Ayon sa pananaliksik na isinagawa ng lokal na istoryador ng komunidad na si MC Canlas, ang aktibidad ng mga Pilipino sa South of Market noong dekada 1970 ay higit na nakakonsentra sa kahabaan ng Howard Street sa pagitan ng 8th at 10th. Ang mga Pilipinong naninirahan sa kahabaan ng Natoma at Minna Streets ay magtitipon sa St. Joseph's Church (1401 Howard) at sa Gusaling Pilipino (Filipino Building) (1201 Howard), isang dating organizing hub para sa mga artista, aktibista sa komunidad, service provider, at residente na kasalukuyang inookupahan ng Uni-Mart grocery store.⁹

Dahil sa pagbili ng mga pamilyang Nocon at Borja ng Mint Mall (953 Mission) at Delta Hotel (88 6th St), ayon sa pagkakasunod-sunod, noong kalagitnaan ng 1970s, ang sentro ng grabidad para sa komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa SOMA ay lumipat sa Mission Street sa pagitan ng 5th at 6th.¹⁰ Ang Mint Mall at ang Delta Hotel, na kilala ngayon bilang Bayanihan House na may ground floor na inookupahan ng Bayanihan Community Center (1010 Mission) ay bumubuo ng isang "plaza" na may kalapit na St. Patrick's Church (756 Mission). Nakuha ni Canlas ang inspirasyon para sa modelong “plaza” pagkatapos ng mga plaza, o municipios, na naging sentro ng mga nayong Pilipino na itinayo noong panahon ng kolonyal na Espanyol, na inorganisa sa paligid ng simbahan, kumbento, bulwagan ng munisipyo, palengke, paaralan, at mga tahanan ng mayayamang elite. (Bayanihan Community

⁷ Building Permit numbers 7905861, 70054, 8000941 ay nagdetalye ng pag-convert ng espasyo sa isang mall configuration.

⁸ Building Permit number 8100596 para sa business sign ng restaurant.

⁹ Filipino American Development Foundation, *SOMA Pilipinas Ethnotour: Exploring the Cultural Assets and Social Heritage of San Francisco in Two Languages – English and Filipino/Tagalog* (San Francisco: Filipino American Development Foundation, 2013), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.

Center), residential space (Mint Hall), church (St. Patrick's), at retail and non-profit space (Mint Mall), kasama ang Bessie Carmichael K-8 School/Filipino Education Center malapit sa Harrison St.¹¹

Mula noong dekada 1990, ang Mint Mall ay nagsilbing “nerve center” para sa sining, kultura, komersiyo, at aktibismo ng Filipino sa San Francisco.¹² Ang mga residenteng Pilipino na nakatira sa itaas na palapag ng gusali, na kilala bilang Mint Hall, ay sumuporta sa maraming negosyo at non-profit na Pilipino sa retail space ng Mint Mall. Bagama't hindi malinaw kung kailan talaga nagsimulang lumipat ang mga Pilipinong nangungupahan sa gusali, malamang pagkatapos mabili ng pamilya Nocon ang gusali, tinantiya ng ilan sa mga miyembro ng komunidad na nakapanayam para sa proyektong ito na ang kasalukuyang komposisyon ng mga residente sa Mint Hall ay 90% Filipino, na may ilang Indian, Latine, at puting pamilya na nakatira din sa gusali. Dahil sa chain migration, ang karamihan ng mga Filipino na nangungupahan sa Mint Hall ay mula sa lalawigan ng Pampanga at nagsasalita ng wikang Kapampangan, kahit na isang malaking grupo ng mga nangungupahan ay nagmula sa Visayan.¹³

Ang aktibismo ng sibiko ay isang tema na malakas na kinakatawan sa Mint Mall at Hall. Ang pag-aayos ng komunidad sa gusali at ng mga nangungupahan pareho ng Mall at Hall ay nag-ugat sa mga naunang kaguluhan. Halimbawa, itinuro ng makata at pinuno ng komunidad na si Al Robles ang mga aral na natutunan niya mula sa pag-oorganisa sa International Hotel sa mga nakababatang henerasyon ng mga organizer na nakatagpo niya sa Mint Mall.¹⁴ Ang International Hotel, isang dating “nerve center” para sa mga Pilipino sa Manilatown na na-demolish noong 1979 pagkatapos ng matinding pakikibaka at kontrobersya, ay nagkaroon ng mga storefront sa ground floor ng organisasyon ng Komunidad ng Asya (tulad ng Chinese Community Association na inookupahan ng Chinese Community Association). (CPA), Everybody's Bookstore, ang Kearny Street Workshop, at ang pahayagang Kalayaan, na karamihan sa mga residenteng Pilipino ay nakatira sa mga single-resident-occupancy unit sa mga palapag sa itaas.¹⁵ Ang kasaysayang ito ay nakadetalye sa aklat ni Chester Hartman, *City For Sale*:

“Kabilang sa mahahalagang pagpapakita ng tumaas na kamalayan at militansya sa paligid ng mga problema sa pabahay ng lungsod ay ang proteksyon ng komunidad sa mga partikular na gusali, tulad ng International Hotel at Goodman Building. Ang dating, isang 150-room residential hotel para sa matatandang Chinese at Filipino, na matatagpuan sa Kearny at Jackson Streets, sa gilid ng Chinatown at financial district, ay ang simboliko at tunay na labi ng pamayanan ng Manilatown (*“Ang I-Hotel ay ang buhay ng mga manong, ang buhay ng mga Pilipino. Ito ang kanilang puso, ito ang kanilang tula, ito ang kanilang kanta,”* sa mga salita ng makata na si Al Robles) at ang banta na sirain ito ay ganap na sumasalamin sa salungatan sa pagitan ng mga interes ng tubo sa

¹¹ MC Canlas (2025, Pebrero 19), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, mga tagapanayam).

¹² Idem.

¹³ Ester at Nix Guirre (2025, Marso 17), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, mga tagapanayam).

¹⁴ Angelica Cabande, (2024, Agosto 14), panayam for Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, mga tagapanayam).

¹⁵ E. Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 53.

downtown at mga pangangailangan ng mga tao. Ang pag-atake sa I-Hotel ay nagbunga ng ilan sa mga pinaka-dramatikong protesta at komprontasyon sa kasaysayan ng lungsod.”¹⁶

Nagbigay ang Mint Mall ng pagkakataon para sa pagbuo ng komunidad sa pamamagitan ng pag-aalok ng malaking bilang ng maliliit na negosyo at nonprofit na may maginhawang access para sa mga residente sa itaas at sa buong kapitbahayan ng South of Market. Ang tatlong antas na naglalaman ng iba't ibang laki ng mga puwang ay madaling i-configure upang umangkop sa mga pangangailangan ng nangungupahan.

Ang structural layout at praktikal na paggamit ng Mint Mall ay katulad ng ilang iba pang mga gusali sa San Francisco at sa Pilipinas. Ang dating artistikong direktor ng Bindlestiff Studios na si Allan Manalo ay nagsabi na ang Mint Mall ay gumagana nang katulad ng maraming mga lumang gusali sa Maynila na itinayo noong 1930s at 1940s na muling ginawang mini-malls, na marami sa mga ito ay matatagpuan sa Divisoria shopping district.¹⁷ Si Angelica Cabande, executive director ng South of Market Community Action Network, ay inihambing ang Mint Mall sa mga mixed-use na gusali na kadalasang matatagpuan sa barangay¹⁸ ng Pilipinas:

“Sa Pilipinas, ang commercial space ay talagang nakalaan para sa sari-sari stores, o corner stores. Ang pagkakaiba lang sa Mint Mall ay mayroon din itong mga nonprofit na nakatira. Ngunit maliban doon, ito ay halos kapareho. Sa taas ka nakatira. Bumaba ka na. Kilala mo ang lahat o ang karamihan ng mga tao na nasa commercial space. Maaari kang tumambay doon. Maaari kang makipag-usap sa mga tao doon sa iyong wika.”¹⁹

Ipinahayag din ni Cabande na dahil sa pagiging mahigpit at nakatuon sa komunidad, ang Mint Mall at Hall ay gumagana bilang isang self-contained na barangay sa isang gusali. Si Lorenzo Listana, may-ari ng isa sa mga negosyo sa basement ng Mint Mall, ay inihambing ang Mint Mall sa dalawang gusali sa Tenderloin: 155 Turk St. (pag-aari din ng pamilya Nocon) at 57 Taylor. Ang parehong mga gusali ay inookupahan ng mga pangunahing Pilipinong nangungupahan ngunit walang mga negosyong Pilipino o non-profit sa mga komersyal na espasyo sa ground floor tulad ng sa Mint Mall.²⁰

Ang mga retail space ng Mint Mall ay inookupahan ng maraming Pilipinong negosyo, non-profit, at art group. Noong 1998, inilipat ni Marie Romero ang Arkipelago Books mula 6th St patungo sa basement ng Mint Mall. Ang Arkipelago Books ay isa sa nag-iisang Filipino specialty bookstore at book publisher sa buong United States.²¹ Binuksan ni Yaying Borgonia at ng kanyang kapatid na si Boying Tuala ang

¹⁶ C. Hartman, *City For Sale, The Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 337.

¹⁷ Allan Samson Manalo (2024, Nobyembre 20), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, mga tagapanayam).

¹⁸ Ang terminong barangay ay ginagamit sa Pilipinas upang ilarawan ang "isang maliit na distritong administratibo na bumubuo sa pinaka-lokal na antas ng pamahalaan."

¹⁹ Cabande, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

²⁰ Lorenzo Listana (2025, Abril 24), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & D. Woo, mga tagapanayam).

²¹ C. J. Ferrer, "Her Arkipelago," *Race, Poverty & the Environment* Volume 21, Number 2 (2017),

New Pilipinas restaurant sa ground floor ng Mint Mall noong 1994. Sila rin ang nagmamay-ari ng Hair Pro beauty salon.²² Ang pagmamay-ari ng New Pilipinas restaurant kalaunan ay inilipat sa kanilang kapatid na si Tess Diaz noong 2005, na pinalitan ang pangalan nito sa JT Restaurant makalipas ang limang taon.²³ Si Pablo Gravador, na kilala sa pamayanang Pilipino bilang Mang Pol, ay nagtatag ng Filipino American Music and Arts Society noong 1991 at nagsilbi bilang hospitality director para sa Likha-Pilipino Folk Ensemble. Ang kanyang anak na babae ay nagturo din ng mga lesson sa boses at piano sa Mint Mall, pangunahin sa mga nangungupahan na nakatira sa itaas.²⁴

Habang hinihintay nila ang Redevelopment Agency na magtayo ng kanilang theater space sa 6th St, ang Filipino theater group na Bindlestiff Studios ay nagbahagi ng mga opisina sa Arkipelago Books at Manilatown Heritage Foundation sa basement ng Mint Mall. Ang Bindlestiff Studios ay madalas na nagdaraos ng mga rehearsal at performance workshop sa ibabang pasilyo ng Mint Mall. Sinakop din ng Filipino theater group na Teatro ng Tanan ang espasyo sa basement ng Mint Mall.²⁵ Ang iba pang mga non-profit na dating nag-opisina sa loob ng Mint Mall ay kinabibilangan ng West Bay Pilipino Multi-Service Center, Pilipino Early Intervention Project, Pilipino AIDS Project, Filipino American Development Foundation, Pilipino Senior Resource Center, at Filipino Community Development Corporation.²⁶ Iba pang mga negosyong nasa isang punto o kasalukuyang nilalangoy ng Mint. kumpanya ng damit), Nida's Hair Salon, Mejia Hair Cutters, ADY Beauty and Barber Shop, at Palm Travel Agency. Binanggit din ng mga nakapanayam na dati ay isang Chinese medical doctor, isang tindahan na pambili ng mga scrub at medical uniform, isang shipping business, at isang remittance center.²⁷ Ang Jesus Christ Son of God Christian Church ay nagsasagawa rin ng mga serbisyo sa basement ng Mint Mall.²⁸

Ang residential na bahagi ng gusali, na kilala bilang Mint Hall, ay tradisyonal na nagsisilbing "stepping stone" para sa mga bagong dating na Pilipinong imigrante sa San Francisco Bay Area. Ayon kay Canlas, karamihan sa mga bagong dating ay sinasamantala ang renta-controlled, abot-kayang pabahay sa Mint Hall para magpadala ng pera sa kanilang mga pamilya sa Pilipinas at makaipon ng sapat na pera para makabili ng bahay sa mga suburb ng Bay Area. Gayunpaman, sa halip na tapusin ang kanilang pag-upa para sa kanilang mga unit sa Mint Hall, pinipili ng mga pamilyang ito na "ipasa ang kanilang kasunduan sa pagrenta sa susunod na kamag-anak," na nagpapahintulot sa kanila na

<https://www.reimaginepe.org/21-2/ferrer-arkipelago>, na-access noong Agosto 22, 2025.

²² R. Kim, "HUB IN CRISIS / Evictions Dispersing Filipino American Businesses / Mint Mall on Mission St. Down to 5 Firms Rally Will Publicize Plight," *SFGate* (2000, Disyembre 14), <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/hub-in-crisis-evictions-dispersing-filipino-3236232.php>, na-access noong Agosto 22, 2025.

²³ Tess Diaz (2025, Enero 22), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, mga tagapanayam).

²⁴ Pablo Gravador (2025, Abril 7), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & W. Galila, mga tagapanayam).

²⁵ Manalo, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

²⁶ Page & Turnbull, 26; Canlas, panayam para sa Mint Mall; Manalo, panayam para sa Mint Mall

²⁷ Jeanne Batallones (2024, Septyembre 18), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial, tagapanayam); Manalo, panayam para sa Mint Mall; Listana, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

²⁸ Gay Nell Parks (2025, August 4), interview for Mint Mall, (Z. Frial, W. Galila & A. Lim, interviewers)

magsimula sa San Francisco.²⁹ Gaya ng pagbubuod ni Mang Pol, "lahat ng tao ay lilipat sa labas ng lungsod kapag nakuha na nila ang kanilang magandang buhay, siyempre. Kailangan mong lumipat sa isang mas malaking lugar. Natural lang iyon. Kaya nga tayo ay umabot dito."³⁰

Ang kuwento ng imigrasyon ni Nix Guirre at ng kanilang ina na si Ester Guirre ay halimbawa ng maraming pamilyang Pilipino na lumipat sa San Francisco at lumipat sa Mint Hall. Sabi ni Nix:

"Para sa amin, doon kami unang nagsimula. At naaalala ko ang sinabi ng aking mama, "ito ay pansamantalang lugar lamang na aming titirhan." But then, fifteen years later, nandoon pa rin kami kasi rent controlled. Para kaming nasa bahay. Hindi lang dahil sa gusali, tulad ng demograpiko ng gusali mismo at ng mga negosyo sa paligid nito, kundi pati na rin sa distrito ng SOMA Pilpinas Filipino Cultural Heritage, kasama ang lahat ng mga kaganapan, kung saan ang Kapwa Gardens ay nasa tabi lamang."³¹

Ang unit ng Guirres sa Mint Hall ay nagsilbing paraan para matulungan ng pamilya ang mga kapatid ni Nix na manirahan sa San Francisco. Ang kapatid na babae ni Nix at ang kanyang pamilya ay nanirahan sa unit ng kanilang mga magulang nang ilang panahon hanggang sa makahanap sila ng sarili nilang tirahan. Sinabi ni Nix na plano nilang gawin din ito para sa kanilang kapatid at sa kanyang pamilya:

"Sinisikap naming ilipat siya dito. Mayroon siyang dalawang anak at ang kanyang kasintahan. Ito ang perpektong lugar para makapagsimula sila. Ang kanyang kasintahang babae ay lumaki sa mga rural na lugar ng Pilipinas at hindi pa masyadong magaling sa Ingles. Kaya pakiramdam ko ay magiging mahalaga para sa kanya na mapalibutan siya ng iba pang mga Pilipino upang magsalita ng parehong wika at tulungan siyang maging mas komportable habang sinusubukan niya, bilang isang paraan ng kaligtasan, upang ma-assimilate, pati na rin ang kanilang mga anak....At siyempre, ang Bessie [Carmichael School] ay hindi malayo sa lahat. Mayroon silang programa sa wikang Filipino. Kaya napakaraming bagay dito na makakatulong sa mga bagong imigrante, tulad ng kung paano tayo nakasama sa ating bagong buhay sa ibang bansa."³²

Sa kabila ng nakabili na ng bahay sa Manteca kasama ang kanyang asawa, si Ester ay patuloy na naninirahan sa unit sa San Francisco dahil "kailangan pa rin niyang narito sa lungsod at walang ibang lugar na talagang kayang bilhin kundi ang espasyo doon sa Mint Hall."³³ Si Jeanne Batallones, dating executive director ng South of Market Community Action Network, ay sumang-ayon na ang Mint Hall

²⁹ Canlas, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³⁰ Gravador, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³¹ E. & N. Guirre, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³² Idem.

³³ Idem.

ay “malamang na isa sa mga huling gusali...kung saan ang isang pamilyang Pilipino ay maaaring magtrabaho sa downtown at manirahan din sa downtown.”³⁴

Dahil sa maliit na sukat ng mga unit sa Mint Hall, ang mga pasilyo, walkway, at pampublikong pasukan ay nagiging de-facto common space. Para sa ilan, lumilikha ito ng isang dinamika na nagpapaalala sa buhay na iniwan ng mga imigrante sa Pilipinas. Gaya ng inilarawan ni Nix Guirre,

“Kaya sa sandaling pumasok ka sa Mint Hall, makikita mo ang mga matatandang tao, nakaupo lang sa tabi ng pinto dahil wala talagang common space sa Hall. Kaya ganyan ang lobby...Maraming bata na naglalaro lang sa hall. Partikular sa floor namin, may mga batang naglalaro ng volleyball, sa harap lang ng elevator. At kung minsan may mga taong maglalaro ng musika, o kaya'y may mga taong gustong tumugtog ng musika nasa lansangan ka ng Pilipinas Dahil walang puwang para tumambay talaga sila.”³⁵

Ang maliit na sukat ng mga residential unit ay binibigyang-diin din ang pakinabang ng pagkakaroon ng mga negosyong Pilipino na matatagpuan sa ibaba, tulad ng JT Restaurant. Kung walang pantry para mag-imbak ng pagkain, ang mga residente sa Mint Hall ay “bumili lang ng kaunting suka, kaunting bigas, hindi ng buo. Kaya ang maganda diyan ay nabubuhay ang mga Pilipinong grocery dahil hindi sila namimili, hindi sila namamakyaw, hindi sila bumibili ng marami. Kaya kung mayroon kang mga ganoong uri ng mga tindahan, pagkatapos ay mayroon kang Mint Mall. Yan ang market mo”³⁶ Sa katunayan, si Tess Diaz ay nagsimulang magbenta ng mga grocery sa JT Restaurant sa panahon ng pandemya ng COVID-19, kapwa bilang karagdang pinagkukunan ng kita at upang matustusan ang mga residente sa itaas ng mga grocery item.³⁷ Ang diwang ito ng pagsasama-sama upang tumulong sa isa't isa ay nagpapakita ng kahalagahan ng Pilipino sa bayanihan.

Ang Mint Mall bilang Lugar ng Pakikibaka

Ang diwa ng bayanihan ay napatunayan sa Mint Mall sa dalawang mahahalagang sandali nang ang pamayanang Pilipino ay pinagbantaan ng paglilipat. Noong 1997, ang Delta Hotel, na pag-aari ng pamilya Borja, ay nasunog, na naging sanhi ng maraming Filipino World WWII veterans na nawalan ng tirahan. Daan-daang beterano ang lumipat sa San Francisco Bay Area kasunod ng mga pagbabago sa mga batas sa imigrasyon na nagpapahintulot sa kanila na maging natural bilang mga mamamayan ng U.S. Gayunpaman, dahil sa 1946 Rescission Act na nagtanggag sa mga beterano ng mga benepisyo ng GI na ipinangako ng gobyerno ng US sa kanila para sa paglilingkod sa militar ng U.S. noong WWII (ang Pilipinas ay isang kolonya ng U.S. noong panahong iyon), maraming beterano ang nabuhay sa kahirapan pagkatapos nilang lumipat, siksikan sa maliliit na unit sa Delta Hotel at Ma Mintny sa baseng Mall.³⁸ Mint Mall, kung saan sila ay tatanggap ng mga serbisyong medikal mula sa

³⁴ Batallones, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³⁵ E. & N. Guirre, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³⁶ Canlas, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³⁷ Diaz, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

³⁸ Page & Turnbull, 17, 29.

isang Tsino na doktor.³⁹ Matapos ang sunog sa Delta Hotel, ang Mint Mall ay naging isang "pangalawang tahanan" para sa mga lumikas na beterano, lalo na dahil sa pagkakaroon ng mga non-profit na provider na nagsusuplay sa kanila ng pagkain, damit, at iba pang serbisyo. Iniuugnay ni MC Canlas ang sandaling ito ng bayanihan nang ang Mint Mall ay naging masiglang sentro ng komunidad. Ang Veterans Equity Task Force ay itinatag ng mga kabataan, mga mag-aaral sa kolehiyo, at mga community organizer upang patuloy na magbigay ng mga serbisyo sa mga beterano at ipaglaban ang kanilang mga benepisyo.⁴⁰ Ang Task Force ay pormal na ginawa bilang Veterans Equity Center, na kilala ngayon bilang Bayanihan Equity Center.⁴¹

Gayundin noong huling bahagi ng dekada 1990, ang mga matagal nang Pilipinong residente sa South of Market ay nagsimulang harapin ang mga panggigipit sa paglilipat mula sa dot-com boom, gayundin ang mga maliliit na negosyo. Ayon kay Batallones, "ang mga startup na kumpanyang ito ay lumilipat sa kapitbahayan dahil ito ay itinuturing pa rin na isang multi-use na kapitbahayan [at] abot-kaya."⁴² Daan-daang mga nangungupahan na mababa ang kita ang napresyuhan o pinaalis sa pamamagitan ng Ellis Act dahil ang mga multi-family na ari-arian ay muling binuo sa mga live-work loft upang matirhan ng mga tech na manggagawa, at ang mga trabahong pang-industriya ay inilipat sa opisina ng mga kagamitan sa opisina. mga start-up.⁴³ Ang SOMA Anti-Displacement (SOMAD) Coalition, na naging South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), ay nabuo upang labanan ang malaking pagkawala ng mga tahanan at negosyo na nagbabanta sa kakayahan ng Filipino community na manatili sa South of Market.⁴⁴

Ang ikalawang mahalagang sandali ay dumating noong 2000 nang ang mga banta ng komersyal na displacement ay umabot sa Mint Mall, na noon ay kinikilala na bilang isang "makasaysayang palatandaan para sa mga Pilipino sa South of Market."⁴⁵ ulad ng laban upang iligtas ang I-Hotel bago nito, ang kampanyang "Save the Mint Mall" ay nagpasigla ng isang bagong alon ng aktibismo para sa komunidad ng mga Pilipino. Sa pagsisikap na pakinabangan ang dot-com boom, ang pamilya Nocon sa pamamagitan ng kanilang commercial leasing agent Meridian Management Group ay tumanggi na mag-renew ng mga lease para sa mga Filipino-serving establishment sa Mint Mall para mapakinabangan ang mataas na demand para sa espasyo ng opisina para suportahan ang mas mataas na suweldong mga start-up ng dotcom.⁴⁶ Pagsapit ng Setyembre 2000, ang Teatro ng Tanan, Super Reproductions, at isang youth-serving non-profit ay nabigyan na ng mga abiso sa pagpapaalis.⁴⁷

³⁹ Batallones, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁴⁰ Canlas, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁴¹ SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS Report, 45.

⁴² Batallones, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁴³ SOMA Pilipinas CHHESS Report, 44.

⁴⁴ Raquel Redondiez (2024, Agosto 28), panayam para sa Mint Mall (Z. Frial & M. Corrette, mga tagapanayam).

⁴⁵ SOMCAN Fall 2002 newsletter, 2. San Francisco Public Library collection.

⁴⁶ Kim, "HUB IN CRISIS."

⁴⁷ Kim, "HUB IN CRISIS"; J. H. Lim, "Bookstore Survives Eviction," *AsianWeek* (Oktubre 4, 2001).

Binuo ang Mint Mall Organizing Committee (MMOC) upang labanan ang higit pang paglilipat ng mga Filipino space tulad ng Arkipelago Books, Filipino American Music & Society, at New Filipinas Restaurant mula sa Mint Mall. Sa pangunguna ng may-ari ng Arkipelago Books na si Marie Romero at mga co-founder ng SOMCAN na sina Bill Sorro, Jeanne Batallones, at Roy Recio, nakipagtulungan ang MMOC kay Gen Fujioka ng Asian Law Caucus para hamunin ang pamilya Nocon at Meridian Management sa kadahilanang nilalabag nila ang mga zoning code at ilegal na ginagawang espasyo ng opisina ang espasyo ng tingian sa Mint Mall. Pagkatapos ng dalawang taong pagpupulong, rally, at pagdinig ng komisyon, naging matagumpay ang MMOC sa pakikipagnegosasyon sa mga pangmatagalang pag-upa para sa mga negosyo at non-profit na Pilipino.⁴⁸

Iniugnay ni Batallones ang tagumpay sa Mint Mall sa pamumuno ni Marie Romero:

“Mahirap kung nangungupahan ka at napapalayas ka, at hinihiling sa iyo na labanan ang iyong panginoong maylupa. She was very courageous in doing it, as somebody who was going to be directly impacted as a tenant. But it was really through her willingness to be face of the campaign [that] is really important. Kasi I think yung ibang nangungupahan, gusto rin niyang labanan yung mga nangungupahan, lalo na yung mga nangungupahan. Kumakaway din ang management ng non-negotiation...Ang buong ideya ng pag-save sa lokal na tindahan ng libro ay napakasimbolo ng mga uri ng mga bagay na pinag-aawayan ng mga tao noong panahong iyon.”⁴⁹

Gumamit ang MMOC ng diskarte sa loob/labas upang higit na mapahusay ang kanilang adbokasiya. Si Raquel Redondiez, na noon ay isang organisador ng unyon at miyembro ng SOMA Anti-Displacement Coalition, ay tinanggap bilang legislative aide para sa Supervisor ng Distrito 6 na si Chris Daly pagkatapos ng kanyang halalan noong 2000. Bilang bahagi ng MMOC, ang tungkulin ni Redondiez ay tawagan ang Zoning Administrator sa lingguhang batayan upang himukin ang iligal na pagbabalik-loob sa departamento na mag-imbetiga sa Mall. Bawat linggo ay sasabihin sa kanya na titingnan nila ang bagay ngunit walang aksyon. Gayunpaman, sa pagtatanong na nagmumula sa Opisina ng Distrito 6 at sa suporta ng Supervisor, sa wakas ay nagsimulang ipatupad ng departamento ng Pagpapalano ang batas laban sa mga ilegal na conversion.⁵⁰

Bahagi ng patuloy na kahalagahan ng Mint Mall sa komunidad ngayon ay ang ideya ni Bill Sorro, na muling bawiin ang Mint Mall bilang sentro ng aktibidad ng komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa pamamagitan ng pagdaraos ng malalaking Christmas party doon na kilala bilang “Pasko sa SOMA.” Ayon kay Batallones, “ito ay bahagi ng aming diskarte upang maging tulad ng, 'Ito ang aming tahanan. Ito ang aming mapagkukunan ng komunidad'... upang ipaalam ang aming presensya sa mga [dot.com startups] na lumipat at walang kaugnayan sa komunidad.”⁵¹ Ang South of Market

⁴⁸ South of Market Community Action Network, “The Mint Mall Committee and the Fight to Preserve the Mint Mall” (2020, Setyembre 22), <https://www.somcan.org/newsletter/2020/9/22/the-mint-mall-committee-and-the-fight-to-preserve-the-mint-mall>, na-access noong Agosto 22, 2025.

⁴⁹ Batallones, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵⁰ Redondiez, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵¹ Batallones, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

Community Action Network (SOMCAN) ay patuloy na nagdaos ng Pasko sa SOMA na partido upang ipagdiwang ang visibility ng mga residente ng SOMA at, pagsama-samahin ang samahan ng MMOC ng mga residente ng SOMA at, pagsama-samahin ang samahan ng mga residente ng SOMA at, pagsama-samahin ng MMOC. pamayanan. Kalaunan ay tumigil ang SOMCAN sa pagdaraos ng Pasko sa SOMA dahil masyado itong lumaki para idaos sa Mint Mall, at ang Parol Lantern Festival sa halip ay naging bagong taunang pagdiriwang ng Pasko para sa komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa SOMA.⁵²

Ang Mint Mall bilang Lugar ng Pagkamalikhain at Pagbuo ng Komunidad

Ang Mint Mall ay kakaiba sa kultura bilang isang mahalagang lugar para sa komunidad ng mga Pilipino sa San Francisco at hilagang California, lalo na para sa mga artista at iba pang mga creative, dahil sa ilang dekada na pagtatatag ng mga negosyo at mga network ng suporta na makikita sa Mint Mall at ang kakulangan ng iba pang mga pampublikong bukas na espasyo sa South of Market.

Gaya ng nabanggit sa itaas, ang mga grupo ng artista tulad ng Teatro ng Tanan, Filipino American Music and Arts Society, at Likha-Pilipino Folk Ensemble ay lahat ay inookupahan ang mga espasyo sa Mint Mall. Nagkaroon din ng espasyo ang Filipino theater group na Bindlestiff Studios sa Mint Mall mula 2004 hanggang 2011. Ang Bindlestiff Studios ay kasalukuyang mayroong espasyo sa teatro sa 185 6th St, bagama't sila ay pansamantalang inilipat mula sa 6th St noong binalak ng SF Redevelopment Agency na gibain at muling i-develop ang gusali. Ang paglaban para iligtas si Bindlestiff ay naging isa pang mahalagang sandali sa pakikipaglaban ng komunidad ng Filipino laban sa displacement sa SOMA, at matagumpay na nakakuha ng kasunduan si Bindlestiff sa Redevelopment Agency para magtayo ng isang espasyo sa teatro sa bagong gusali. Gayunpaman, habang itinatayo ang espasyo, pansamantalang inokupa ni Bindlestiff ang espasyo ng opisina sa Mint Mall, na ibinahagi sa Arkipelago Books at Manilatown Heritage Foundation.⁵³

Si Allan Manalo ay artistic director ng Bindlestiff Studios noong sila ay matatagpuan sa Mint Mall. Ikinuwento niya kung paano magsasagawa ang Bindlestiff Studios ng rehearsals at workshops sa basement hallway ng Mint Mall, gayundin ang mga open mic, poetry reading, stand up comedy show, music concert, at iba pang performances. Malikhaing gagamitin ng ibang mga artista ang espasyo para sa photography, music video, at pelikula.⁵⁴

Patuloy na naiintriga si Manalo sa mga kakaibang pisikal na interior space ng Mint Mall, na humamon sa kanya bilang isang gumaganap na artist:

“Gusto ko ang pagiging malikhain. Gusto ko ang mga partikular na hamon sa site, kung saan kumuha ka ng hindi kinaugalian na espasyo, at sinusubukan mong gumawa ng isang bagay na masining doon at magtanghal ng isang bagay na masining...Ang

⁵² Cabande, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵³ Manalo, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵⁴ Idem.

nagustuhan ko sa espasyo ay ang kakaibang istraktura nito dahil sa paraan ng pagbaba ng hagdan. Kung pupunta ka sa antas ng kalye, mayroong isang mezzanine. May balkonahe sila at ang mga kamangha-manghang bintanang ito. Mayroon silang balkonahe at ang mga kamangha-manghang bintana. Nagsimula akong magtanghal ng mga kaganapan sa teatro doon sa mga pasilyo. Sa sandaling gumawa kami ng isang play kung saan ginamit namin ang itaas na bahagi at ang ilalim na bahagi.

Naaalala ko sa antas ng mezzanine, umakyat ka sa hagdan, [at] magkakaroon sila ng mga cafe table na ito, kaya ang mga tao ay pumunta doon [upang] magkape. Doon sana sila magpupulong. Pupunta ako doon at magsusulat minsan...Pumunta ka doon kung maganda ang araw na may araw dahil maganda ang mga bintana. Nagsusulat ako ng isang dula para magamit talaga namin ang mga bintanang iyon. Ang mga tao ay nanonood ng isang eksena na nangyayari mula sa kabilang kalye at pagkatapos ay papasok sila sa Mall, at ang dula ay magpapatuloy. Ito ay mas uri ng isang nakaka-engganyong paglalaro, ngunit hindi ko lang makuha ang pondo. Kaya tinalikuran namin ang proyekto, pero lagi akong nangangarap na gumawa ng Hitchcock type of thriller, Rear Window kind of thriller, dahil nakakamangha ang mga bintana sa Mall.⁵⁵

Bukod sa artistikong at malikhaing pakikipagsapalaran, ang basement ng Mint Mall ay nagbigay ng espasyo para sa maraming iba pang gamit na nakakatulong sa kultural na kahalagahan nito. Gaya ng nabanggit sa itaas, ginagamit ng isang Filipino Christian organization ang basement hallway tuwing Linggo para sa mga serbisyo sa simbahan. Ang mga unang parol-making workshop para sa taunang Parol Lantern Festival ay ginanap din sa hallway.⁵⁶ Sa tulong ng Aeroskin Worldwide na may-ari na si Lorenzo Listana, ang Mint Mall Resident Association ay nagawang makipag-ayos sa mga may-ari ng gusali upang italaga ang isang interior storefront sa basement bilang isang community room, kung saan ang MMRA ay nagdaos ng pagpupulong, mga karaoke event, at mga birthday party para sa mga miyembro nito.⁵⁷ Bilang isang impormal na lugar ng pagtitipon, ang basement ng Mint Mall ay mahalaga din para sa intergenerational transfer ng kaalaman sa pagitan ng mga miyembro ng komunidad na Pilipino. Naaalala ni Angelica Cabande ang pagtambay sa basement kasama ang iba pang mga organizer ng komunidad tulad nina Al Robles at Phil Chavez:

“Noong nasa basement area ang [Arkipelago Books], magkakaroon kami ng karaoke doon pagkatapos ng mga oras sa hallway sa basement level. Pagkatapos ng mga pagpupulong sa komunidad o pagtambay lang, lahat kami ay bumaba at pagkatapos ay magkakaroon kami ng karaoke, pagkain, at manatili lamang doon hanggang tulad ng 10:00 o marahil mamaya din. At iyon para sa akin ay talagang makabuluhan dahil doon ko nalaman ang higit pa tungkol sa kasaysayan ng I-Hotel mula sa Al Robles

⁵⁵ Idem.

⁵⁶ Ang parol ay isang Filipino na hugis bituin na parol na gawa sa kawayan na ipinapakita sa panahon ng Pasko; Canlas, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵⁷ E. & N. Guirre, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

at...sa iba't ibang [mga kaganapan sa komunidad] na gagawin nila dito sa South of Market.”⁵⁸

Sa itaas na palapag, ang JT Restaurant ay nagsilbing isa pang lugar ng pagtitipon sa Mint Mall para sa mga residente ng Mint Hall at Filipino community sa pangkalahatan. Ayon kay SOMA Pilipinas executive director Raquel Redondiez, ang restaurant ay ginamit para sa maraming community gathering, kabilang ang music performance at political activities: “Sa panahon ng halalan kung kailan ang mga Supervisor ay tumatakbo para sa opisina, ito ay isang lugar kung saan ang mga kandidato para sa pampublikong opisina ay nagkikita at nagpupulong at mga kaganapan sa pangangampanya...Nitong mga nakaraang taon, sa panahon ng halalan sa Pilipinas, ito ay isang site kung saan kakaunti ang mga tao ay nagkaroon ng mga bangko ng telepono at nagsagawa ng pampublikong edukasyon sa isang presidente ng Pilipinas.”⁵⁹ Dahil nagmamay-ari siya ng isa sa iilang restaurant na Filipino sa South of Market, madalas na nakakatanggap si Tess Diaz ng maraming bagong dating na Filipino immigrant na dapat konektado sa mga non-profit na serbisyo:

“Ito ay hindi lamang isang restawran. Mostly if they need help, they're gonna go to me, and then I will tell them, " Oh, kailangan mong pumunta dito mismo [sa] SOMCAN, SOMA Pilipinas. Ano ang kailangan mo? Senior [mga serbisyo]? [Ikaw ay] pupunta sa Canon Kip." Pero ito ang lugar [kung saan nauuna ang karamihan sa] mga Pilipino. Dahil alam nilang napapaligiran ito ng isang Filipino community. At Mint Mall, alam nila na karamihan sa mga nakatira dito mismo ay Pilipino. So, kahit saan ka pumunta, kapag sinabi nilang Mint Mall, alam nilang andun si Ate Tess.”⁶⁰

Bilang isa sa mga center of gravity ng Filipino community sa San Francisco, ang Mint Mall ay nagsilbing panimulang lugar para hindi lamang sa mga bagong dating na Pilipinong imigrante kundi sa maraming community organizers, non-profit service providers, at arts and culture groups. Nag-aambag sa kahalagahan ng gusali bilang opisyal na landmark ng San Francisco, ang laban upang iligtas ang Mint Mall sa pagpasok ng ika-21 siglo ay isa sa mga mahahalagang sandali na nagpasiklab ng bagong alon ng aktibismong Pilipino sa San Francisco. Ang pamana ng pag-oorganisa na ito kalaunan ay humantong sa paglikha ng SOMA Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District noong 2016. Gaya ng buod ni Angelica Cabande, "ang Mint Mall ay tiyak na simbolo ng aming mga pagsisikap ng adbokasiya at pag-oorganisa at katatagan upang ihinto ang pagiging displaced at gentrified sa labas ng San Francisco. Doon nagsimula ang maraming bagay sa ating pagsisikap na mag-coordinate at magtulungan nang sama-sama...Nandiyan pa rin ang diwa ng Bayanihan, lahat tayo ay nag-uugnay at nag-oorganisa nang sama-sama.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Cabande, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁵⁹ Redondiez, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁶⁰ Diaz, panayam para sa Mint Mall.

⁶¹ Cabande, panayam para sa Mint Mall.