



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Review and Comment Conservation District Boundary Change HEARING DATE: JUNE 7, 2018

Case No. 2018-002775DES
Project: Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District
55 5th Street, 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street
Re: Initiation of Change in Article 11 Designation and Article 11
Conservation District Boundary Change
Zoning: C-3-R (Downtown Retail)
90-X/160-S Height and Bulk Districts
Block/Lot: 3705/039, 021, 023, 054
Staff Contact: Frances McMillen (415) 575-9076
frances.mcmillen@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Planning Commission is to provide review and comment to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on the change in the boundary of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District to include two (2) additional properties: 55 5th Street (Hotel Lankershim) and 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street (Pickwick Hotel) pursuant to Section 1107 of the Planning Code.

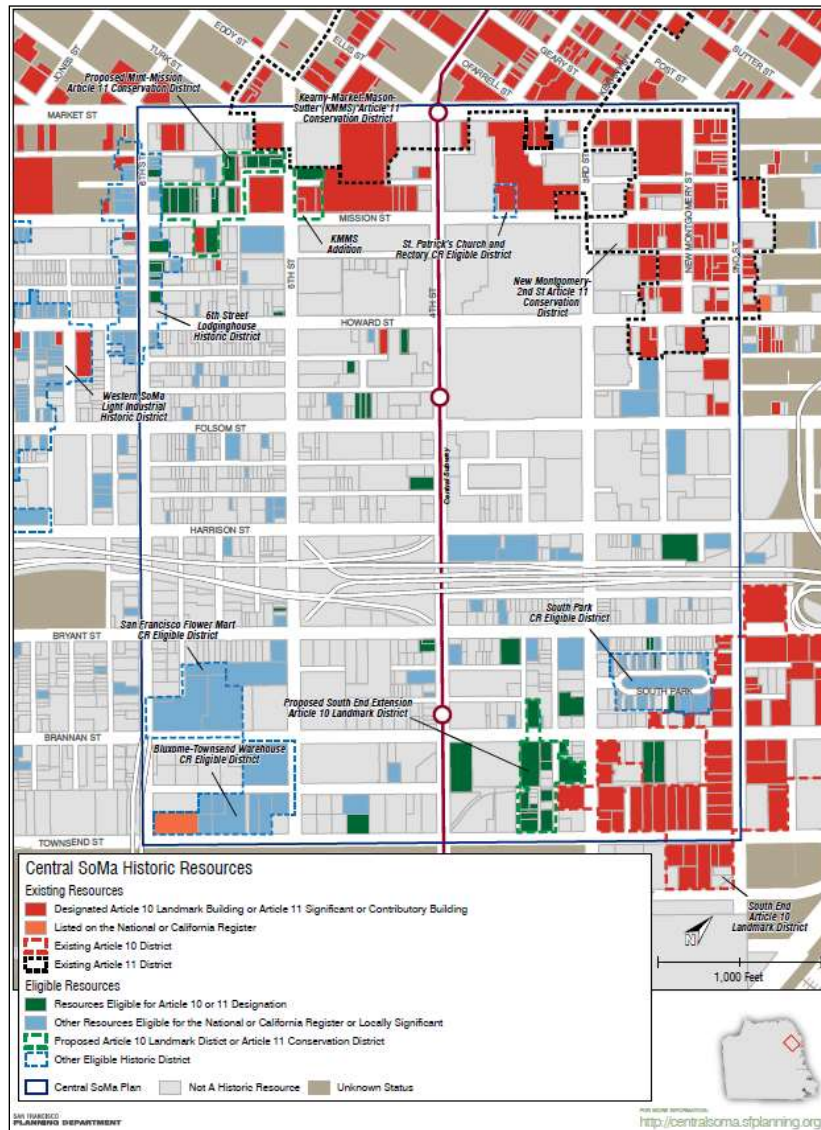
PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey (2013-2014) identified a change in boundary to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District to include: 55 5th Street, 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street. The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District was designated as a conservation district as part of the Downtown Plan in 1985. The Planning Department (Department) conducted the survey in response to the Central SoMa Plan in order to provide information on the location and distribution of resources within the Central SoMa Plan Area for the purposes of long-range policy planning and for use in permit processing, environmental review, and making recommendations for official nominations to historic resource. In conjunction with the survey, the Department developed the [Central SoMa Historic Context Statement](#) (2015) in order to provide a framework for consistent, informed evaluations of the area's age-eligible properties that had not been previously surveyed or for which survey information was incomplete.

- The Central SoMa Plan Area is comprised of approximately 28 blocks bounded by Market Street to the north, Townsend Street to the south, Second Street to the east, and Sixth Street to the west.
- The Central SoMa Historic Survey examined a total of 134 parcels within the Central SoMa Plan area that had not been previously surveyed, or for which prior survey information was incomplete. Of these, 72 parcels were not documented, typically because the properties were

vacant or not age eligible. A total of 31 properties were determined eligible for the California Register.

- Based on the findings of the historic context statement and survey, the Central SoMa Plan recommends policies that would recognize and protect historic resources. Such policies include protecting Significant and Contributory cultural heritage properties through designation to Article 11 of the Planning Code.
- The Historic Preservation Commission adopted the survey and historic context statement for the Central SoMa Plan on March 16, 2016.
- The Historic Preservation Commission initiated designation of the boundary change on March 21, 2018.



Central SoMa Plan Historic Resources

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, Article 11 designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTIONS

The item before the Planning Commission is review and comment on the proposed Boundary Change to expand the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District by two (2) properties. Pursuant to Article 11, the Planning Commission is requested to provide review and comment on the proposed Boundary Change to address:

- 1) The consistency of the proposed boundary change with the policies embodied in the General Plan and the priority policies of Section 101.1;
- 2) Identify any amendments to the General Plan necessary to facilitate adoption of the proposed boundary change; and
- 3) Evaluate whether the proposed boundary change would conflict with the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area.

Comments of the Planning Commission shall be conveyed to the Historic Preservation Commission and Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The proposed Conservation District boundary change requires review and action by the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. The following outlines a schedule for such actions:

- On March 21, 2018 the Historic Preservation Commission, initiated and recommended the Boundary Change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Street Conservation District
- On June 7, 2018 the Planning Commission will provide review and comment on the Boundary Change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Street Conservation District
- Final actions on the Boundary Change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Street Conservation District will be undertaken by the Board of Supervisors

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The Historic Preservation Commission initiated and recommended the boundary change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District on March 21, 2018.

The Historic Preservation Commission adopted the Central SoMa survey and historic context statement for the Central SoMa Plan on March 16, 2016.

Central SoMa Historic Context Statement

The Central SoMa Historic Context Statement was developed as part of the Central SoMa Plan effort to provide a historical foundation and framework for consistent evaluations of the area's age-eligible properties. The context statement's study area extended beyond the boundaries of the Central SoMa Plan Area and documented the history of SoMa, including significant themes, design elements, architectural styles, and character-defining features. The study developed significance and integrity thresholds and included analysis of conservation, landmark and historic districts and their relationship to previously undocumented buildings.

Central SoMa Survey

The Central SoMa Historic Resource Survey (2013-2014) involved gathering baseline property information for all buildings located within the Central SoMa Plan Area that had not been addressed by prior historic resources surveys, and those that had not been previously assigned California Historic Resource Status Codes (CHRSC). The Central SoMa Historic Survey examined a total of 134 parcels within the Central SoMa Plan Area. Of these, 72 parcels were not documented, typically because the properties were vacant or not age eligible. A total of 31 properties were determined eligible for the California Register.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 11 – Conservation District Boundary Change

Planning Code Section 1107 authorizes the designation or boundary change of a Conservation District through amendment of Section 1103.1 of Article 11 if they contain "...substantial concentrations of buildings that together create subareas of special architectural and aesthetic importance" (Section 1103). The designation of an area of the C-3 District as a Conservation District or the change of District boundaries may be initiated by motion of the Board of Supervisors, by resolution of the Planning Commission or the Historic Preservation Commission, by application of the owners of greater than 25 percent of the structures in the area proposed for designation, or by any historic preservation organization or group, or upon the verified application of at least 150 registered voters of the City. Once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Planning Commission for review and comment on the designation or boundary change of a Conservation District.

If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation or boundary change, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation or boundary change (Section 1107(d)). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation or boundary change, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal.

OWNER NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The following includes a timeline of the notifications, announcements, and outreach activities that have occurred for the Central SoMa Plan.

- **The Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey web page** was launched on the Department's website in March 2014. The web page includes links to the draft Central SoMa Historic Context Statement, as well as a map illustrating the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey. The website remains active and can be accessed at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3964>.
- **Public outreach meetings** were held at the SPUR Urban Center on:
 - March 25th, 2015, to present the draft Central SoMa Historic Context Statement and the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey. In preparation for this meeting, postcards were mailed to the owners of surveyed properties informing them that the draft survey findings were available for review on the project website, and inviting them to attend the outreach meeting at the Spur Urban Center.
 - A second public meeting at the SPUR Urban Center was held on December 9, 2015 to solicit feedback on public benefits, including historic preservation.
- **A postcard** was mailed to public on February 29, 2016 in anticipation of the adoption hearing on March 16, 2016.
- **Presentation to SF Heritage** regarding the draft historic context statement and survey findings in July 2015.
- **Meetings with the Central SoMa Survey Advisory Group**, on October 3, 2014 and January 15, 2014. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit comments and suggestions based on the draft *Central SoMa Historic Context Statement* and the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey.
- **Notification of Historic Preservation Commission** initiation hearing was mailed to property owners on March 1, 2018.
- **Notification of Planning Commission** review and comment was mailed to all lots within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District on March 30, 2018 and May 18, 2018.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Department has received several telephone calls from property owners with general questions regarding the boundary change and designation process. The Department received a letter expressing support of the boundary change from the District 6 Community Planners. There has been no indication of opposition to the change in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District boundary.

BOUNDARY CHANGE

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District represents a collection of masonry commercial buildings that exhibit a high level of historic architectural integrity. The district consists of multi-bay buildings ranging in height from four to eight stories. Buildings in the district are almost exclusively built to their front property lines and frequently feature two or three-part vertical compositions consisting of a base and a shaft or a base, shaft and capital. Cladding materials consist of terra cotta, brick, stone and stucco primarily in light to medium earth tones. Classical, Renaissance and Gothic detailing can be found on buildings throughout the Conservation District.

55 5th Street, 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street

The height, scale, massing, and design of 55 5th Street, 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street relates to the established historical context and architectural character of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Street Conservation District. The buildings are located directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the District.

55 5th Street (Lankershim Hotel)

Designed by the Reid Brothers, the Lankershim Hotel (55 5th Street) was constructed in 1913 for James B. Lankershim, who had previously constructed another Hotel Lankershim in downtown Los Angeles in 1905. The reinforced concrete frame building is clad in rusticated stucco and features restrained Classical Revival ornamentation. The building retains excellent integrity on the upper floors. The ground floor rustication is not original. The building is currently unrated.

67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street (Pickwick)

The Pickwick Hotel (67-99 5th Street) and garage (898 Mission Street), constructed in 1923, is an excellent example of Gothic Revival style architecture. The base of the eight-story reinforced concrete building is clad in buff-colored terra cotta. The upper stories are clad in brick with terra cotta trim. Gothic Revival Ornament includes statuary niches and pendant tracery on the niche hoods. The garage (898 Mission) is similarly ornamented and is also clad in terra cotta tile and features two arched garage door openings, pilasters projecting above the building's roofline, and punched window openings on the upper level. The building is currently designated Category I (Significant).



The Hotel Lankershim at left, and the Pickwick Hotel at right (Google Maps)

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends adoption of a Boundary Change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District to expand the district to include two (2) additional properties: 55 5th Street and 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street and to make associated changes to the building designation for 55 5th Street from unrated to Category IV (Contributing). The existing Category 1 (Significant) designation for 67-99 5th Street/898 Mission Street will remain.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Boundary Change to the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District is consistent with the objectives and policies embodied in the General Plan, Priority Policies of Section 101.1, the Central SoMa Plan, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area as outlined below.

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establish and require review of permits for consistency with said policies. The proposed designation is consistent with the eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code in that:

1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change will not impact neighborhood-serving retail uses or ownership/employment opportunities in such businesses.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change will encourage conservation and protection of neighborhood character as proposed alterations to exterior features of designated buildings shall be subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission, or as delegated to Planning Department staff by the HPC in accordance with Sections 1110 through 1113 of the Planning Code. The Boundary Change will encourage retention of the district's contributory buildings by providing access to an important financial incentives, namely the Mills Act and Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change will not negatively impact the City's supply of affordable housing.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change will not impede transit service or overburden streets or neighborhood parking.

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change would not impact the diversity of economic activity.

6. That the City achieves the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change would not modify any physical parameters of the Planning Code or other Codes. Seismic upgrades are not limited or subject to additional review as a result of this proposed designation.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

Designation of buildings under Article 11 of the Planning Code will encourage the preservation of character-defining features of buildings within the district for the benefit of future generations. Designation will require that the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission review any proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features of buildings within the district. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

Designation of buildings under Article 11 of the Planning Code encourages preservation of historic buildings through the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program. TDR are units of gross floor area that may be sold or "transferred" from "preservation lots" to "development lots". A preservation lot contains a building with rating of Category I, II, III, or IV, or a Category V building that has been deemed a compatible rehabilitation. TDR enable property owners of historic buildings to sell "excess" TDR units as a financial incentive towards the preservation and maintenance of the historic building.

Designation promotes preservation by qualifying owners of contributing buildings within the district to apply for the Mills Act property tax reduction program. The Mills Act program allows owners of landmarks and buildings that contribute to landmark districts to receive a property tax reduction to offset costs to rehabilitate, restore, or maintain their historic property, such as roof replacement, seismic strengthening, or general maintenance and repair.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development;

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change would not impact or facilitate any development which could have any impact on our parks and open space or their access to sunlight and vistas.

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT Objectives and Policies

The Urban Design Element of the General Plan contains the following relevant objective and policies:

OBJECTIVE 2: CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

- POLICY 2.4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.
- POLICY 2.5: Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.
- POLICY 2.6: Respect the character of older developments nearby in the design of new buildings.
- POLICY 2.7: Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change would preserve areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by recognizing their cultural and historical value and providing mechanisms for review of proposed alterations as well as incentives for property owners to maintain and preserve their buildings. The Boundary Change will require that the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features.

DOWNTOWN PLAN POLICIES

The Downtown Plan of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 12: Conserve resources that provide continuity with San Francisco's past.

POLICY 12.1: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural, or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 12.2: Use care in remodeling significant older buildings to enhance rather than weaken their original character.

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change advances the basic principles of the Downtown Plan and reinforces the unique sense of place provided by the Conservation District. The expansion of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District would preserve areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by recognizing their cultural and historical value and providing mechanisms for review of proposed alterations by the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission as well as incentives for property owners to maintain and preserve their buildings.

CENTRAL SOMA PLAN POLICIES

The properties proposed for designation advance the basic principles and objectives of the Central SoMa Plan. The Central SoMa Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 7.2: Support the preservation, recognition, and wellbeing of the neighborhood's cultural heritage resources.

OBJECTIVE 7.3.2: Support the preservation of buildings and features that reflect the industrial and arts legacy of the neighborhood.

OBJECTIVE 7.4: Prevent demolition of or insensitive alterations to cultural heritage resources in the built environment.

OBJECTIVE 7.4.2: Protect “Significant” and “Contributory” cultural heritage properties through designation to Article 11 of the Planning Code.

OBJECTIVE 8.6.2: Promote innovative and contextually-appropriate design.

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change protects “Significant” and “Contributory” cultural heritage properties and prevents demolition or insensitive alterations by requiring that the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed modifications that may have an impact on a building’s character-defining features. The Planning Department and Historic Preservation Commission will also review proposed new construction in the district to ensure it is compatible with the character of the district.

General Plan Amendments

Identification of any amendments to the General Plan necessary to facilitate adoption of the proposed designation:

No amendments to the General Plan are necessary to facilitate adoption of the proposed designation.

Sustainable Communities Strategy

Evaluation of whether the district would conflict with the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area:

The Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Boundary Change promotes the Sustainable Communities Strategies and related transportation, affordable housing, job creation, environmental protection, and climate change goals. The proposed designation does not appear to be in conflict with the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area, which is a regional blueprint for transportation, housing and land use that is focused on reducing driving and associated greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed designation is consistent with policies regarding transit-oriented growth and sustainability outlined in the General Plan and Central SoMa Plan.

Balancing the new construction envisioned in the Central SoMa Plan with preservation and retention of existing historic buildings addresses sustainability goals as preservation is an inherently sustainable practice. As noted on the National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services web page, and in its publication, “The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Building,” the repair and retrofitting of existing and historic buildings is considered to be the ultimate recycling project. Historic building construction methods and materials often maximized natural sources of heating, lighting and ventilation to respond to local climatic conditions. These original features can function effectively together with any new measures undertaken to further improve energy efficiency and make existing buildings even more sustainable.

ATTACHMENTS

Designation Ordinance
Map of Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District
Draft Planning Commission Resolution
Historic Preservation Commission Resolution 948
Letter from District 6 Community Planners