



LANDMARK DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: MAY 4, 2022

Record No.: 2021-004841DES
Project Address: City Cemetery
Zoning: P - PUBLIC
OS Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1313/029
Project Sponsor: SF Planning Department
49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400
San Francisco, CA 94103
Property Owner: City and County of San Francisco
Recreation and Parks Department
30 Van Ness Avenue, Third Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson – 628-652-7354, Shannon.Ferguson@sfgov.org
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Recommendation: Recommend Landmark Designation to the Board of Supervisors

Property Description

City Cemetery at Lincoln Park is situated in the northwest corner of the city between 33rd Avenue, Clement Street, Fort Miley VA Medical Center, and the Golden Gate. Primary uses of the park are golfing on its 18-hole course and visits to the museum operated by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. Lincoln Park also has a clubhouse associated with the golf course, playground, picnic tables, walking paths, and view benches. Public art, commemorative installations, some interpretive signage, maintenance structures, and parking lots are also on the grounds of Lincoln Park. Before the establishment of Lincoln Park in 1909, its land was part of a 200-acre municipal burial ground commonly known as City Cemetery.

Project Description

The HPC is requested to make a Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors regarding Article 10 landmark designation of Lincoln Park (City Cemetery) under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1. The pending Landmark designation was initiated by the Board of Supervisors.

On April 20, 2021, Supervisor Chan introduced a proposed Resolution under Board of Supervisors File No. 210426 to initiate Landmark designation of City Cemetery, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 1313, Lot No. 029. On July 26, 2021, the Board of Supervisors at its Land Use and Transportation Committee meeting recommended unanimously to Recommend to the full Board of Supervisors approval of the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation. On July 27, 2021, the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to adopt the Resolution to initiate Landmark Designation, and on August 4, 2021, with the Mayor's signature, Resolution No. 374-21 became effective.

Compliance with Planning Code

Article 10 of the Planning Code

The executive summary and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation and archeological staff, who meet the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualifications. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for eligibility as an individual landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code. The justification for its inclusion is explained in detail in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, and briefly in this Executive Summary.

Significance: City Cemetery is a significant historical resource because it represents an early incarnation of social safety nets related to burial of the dead for socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations of San Franciscans in the late nineteenth century; its establishment on the margins of the city and its closure are associated with shifting attitudes regarding cemeteries in urban spaces during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the extant Kong Chow funerary structure and Ladies' Seamen's Friends Society obelisk both embody distinctive characteristics of late 19th century funerary design and practice and; the buried remnants of the cemetery including human remains have yielded and are likely to yield information important to the history of the city.

The period of significance is 1868 – 1909. The Board of Supervisors' Committee on Outside Lands designed the land for cemetery purposes in 1868. City Cemetery was actively used for burial between 1870 and the turn of the century. The land was transferred to the Park Commission in July 1909.

Underrepresented Landmark Types: The proposed landmark designation meets three of the Historic Preservation Commission's four priority areas for designation: property types that are underrepresented among the City's designated landmarks; property types associated with under-represented social and/or cultural groups; and property types in underrepresented geographies in the city.

Integrity: Although the cemetery land was converted to Lincoln Park in the early twentieth century, the cemetery retains integrity to convey the historical and cultural significance of City Cemetery. City Cemetery retains integrity of location, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. It retains limited integrity for design.

Character-Defining Features: Exterior and interior character-defining features of City Cemetery are identified in the attached Landmark Designation Fact Sheet on Page 2.

Boundaries of the Landmark: The City Cemetery landmark encompasses APN 1313/029, which is bounded by the north side of the Clement Street right of way (southern boundary), the San Francisco VA Center and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (western boundary), the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (northern boundary), and the east side of blocks 1312, 1392, 1401 as well as the western terminus of California Street (eastern boundary).

General Plan

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

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

Policy 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.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Planning Code Section 101.1 – establishes the Eight Priority Policies and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the Eight Priority Policies, and furthers Policy Number 7, which states that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

Landmark Designation Procedures

Action by Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Article 10 of the Planning Code

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.2 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the proposed designation recommendation, 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 (Section 1004.3).

If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.4).

Public / Neighborhood Input

Several emails and letters in support of the landmark designation were submitted to the Board of Supervisors during the Board review of the initiation to designate Lincoln Park (City Cemetery). These letters are available for review in Board File No. 210426. To date, staff has received one letter from the public regarding the landmark designation (see attachment).

Property owner input

On April 25, 2021, the Department sent mailed notice to the property owner regarding the landmark designation recommendation hearing scheduled for May 4, 2022. Planning staff met with property owner representatives of Recreation and Park Department on December 15, 2021, to discuss the pending landmark designation, specifically regarding character-defining features and the level of required review for any future repair and maintenance projects at the subject property.

Issues & Other Considerations

No COA shall be required for soil disturbing actions pursuant to and consistent with the Standard Construction Measures (SCMs) adopted by SFRPD on December 17, 2019. Per the SCMs, SFRP will screen all projects that will include soil disturbance to assess whether cultural resources are or may be present and could be affected, in coordination with San Francisco Planning Environmental Planning (EP) staff as detailed in the SCMs (see attachments). No archeological review is required for a project that will not entail soil disturbance. If required, SFRP will complete Part 1 of the SFRPD Preliminary Archeological Checklist (PAC) and submit the PAC to Planning for review. Planning staff will then determine the type of archeological investigation needed to ensure appropriate archeological treatment during the proposed project activities. As detailed in the SCMs, archeological investigations may include archeological monitoring, archeological testing, and archeological data recovery. The SCMs also include provisions for consultation with descendent communities and public interpretation if significant archeological features are encountered.

Environmental Review Status

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

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission recommend to the Board of Supervisors landmark designation of Lincoln Park for its significance as the site of the former City Cemetery – the resting place of socially, ethnically, and culturally diverse populations of San Franciscans that have made contributions to the broad patterns of our history; its closure and partial removal of the cemetery reflects changing attitudes and behavior around the disposal and respect for the dead across the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the extant Kong Chow temple and Ladies’ Seaman’s Friends Society obelisk both embody distinctive characteristics of nineteenth-century funerary design and practice. Lastly, City Cemetery is a significant archeological site with remnants of the cemetery, including human remains, with the potential to yield information important to the history of the city and the people who built it.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution Recommending Landmark Designation
Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 374-21 Initiating Landmark Designation
Draft Landmark Designation Ordinance
Standard Construction Measures
Landmark Designation Fact Sheet
Maps and Context Images
Public Correspondence