



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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HEARING DATE: August 16, 2017  
CASE NUMBERS: 2017-004024DES – 1399 McAllister Street  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Desiree Smith  
Preservation Planner, 415-575-9093  
REVIEWED BY: Tim Frye  
Historic Preservation Officer, 415-575-6822  
RE: Landmark Recommendation Resolution

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On July 19, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution No. 883 to initiate Article 10 landmark designation of 1399 McAllister Street, known as Third Baptist Church Complex. Under Article 10, initiation and recommendation are two distinct steps of the landmark designation process which require separate hearings and resolutions.

Attached is a draft Resolution to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors the designation of 1399 McAllister Street as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1. The Planning Department (Department) recommends adopting this Resolution.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Resolution  
Draft Designation Ordinance  
Draft Landmark Designation Report  
July 19, 2017 Case Report  
Resolution 883



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* July 19, 2017  
*Case No.:* 2017-004024DES  
*Project Address:* 1399 McAllister Street  
*Zoning:* (RM-1) Residential-Mixed, Low Density  
*Block/Lot:* 0778/013  
*Property Owner:* Third Baptist Church  
1399 McAllister Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Third Baptist Church Complex (APN 0778/013) is located at the southeast corner of Pierce and McAllister Streets in the Western Addition neighborhood of San Francisco. Third Baptist Church, founded in 1852 as the First Colored Baptist Church of San Francisco, was the first African American Baptist congregation formed west of the Rocky Mountains and remained the only black Baptist church in San Francisco through the early 1940s. The congregation's current church building – the subject property – was constructed for the congregation beginning in 1952. It is located within an RM-1 (Residential-Mixed, Low Density) zone and a 40-X bulk and height district.

The Third Baptist Church Complex consists of two buildings, including a main church building in which the sanctuary is located, and an auxiliary building that houses administration offices, a gymnasium, educational, and assembly uses. The site also includes a prominent, detached bell tower fronting McAllister Street and a parking lot located at the northeast corner of the parcel. Third Baptist Church commissioned architect, William F. Gunnison, to design the sanctuary and bell tower in 1952. The administration/gymnasium building was built in 1956 as an addition, designed by architect, Alfred W. Johnson. In 1959, an ornamental cross was added to the top of the bell tower. Both buildings are of frame construction, rectangular in plan, and clad in stucco. The attached draft Landmark Designation Report contains a detailed description of the complex, including descriptions of interior features, on page 3.

The subject property is located within the Alamo Square Landmark District, adopted in 1984 and significant "as a continuum of distinguished residential architecture by distinguished architects spanning the period from the 1870s to the 1920s." The district contains primarily Victorian (pre-1900) and Edwardian (c. 1900-1910) residential structures, with the Victorians including Italianates of the 1870s and early 1880s, San Francisco Stick of the 1880s, and ornate Queen Anne's of the 1890s. There are also a number of early 20<sup>th</sup> century apartment buildings located on prominent corners; apartment buildings represented the only new

construction in the area during the period from 1912 to 1934. Most structures are two or three stories in height, although some of the apartment buildings go up to six stories in height. Alamo Square Park is one block to the south of Third Baptist Church. Although Third Baptist Church is included in the Landmark District, it is only mentioned briefly a few times in the document and its particular history is not captured in the district nomination.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of the Third Baptist Church Complex as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

## 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).

## GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

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. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. 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.

## SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 - GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 - Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of Third Baptist Church will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its associations with San Francisco's African American community and local civil rights leader, Reverend Frederick Douglas Haynes, Sr., as

well as architecturally significant as an important representative example of ecclesiastical architecture in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood.

## **BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS**

Third Baptist Church was added to the Landmark Designation Work Program on August 16, 2016.

## **OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED**

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its July 17, 2017 hearing, the item will again be considered by the Commission at a future hearing. During this subsequent hearing, the Commission will decide whether to forward the item to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation supportive of designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

## **APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS**

### **ARTICLE 10**

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 1004.3 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 and 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.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

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.

Section 1004.4 states that 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.

## ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

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.

## PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department is not aware of any opposition to the landmark designation of 1399 McAllister Street. Staff has received one letter in support of the landmark designation.

## PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

The property owner is Third Baptist Church, whose leadership supports the property's designation as an Article 10 Landmark. Pastor of Third Baptist Church, Dr. Reverend Amos C. Brown, requested that the designation be prioritized in the Department's Landmark Designation Work Program earlier this year. Since that time, staff has carried out site visits and met with Reverend Brown and other church leaders to discuss the landmark designation process and important elements that should be covered in the designation report.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is explained in the attached Landmark Designation Report.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Third Baptist Church, a flagship church within San Francisco's African American community, appears eligible for local designation under National Register of Historic Places Criteria A, B, and C for the role it has played in the social, economic, and political advancement of African Americans in San Francisco under the guidance of civil rights leader, Reverend Frederick Douglas Haynes, Sr.; and as a rare and notable example of post-war ecclesiastical architecture in San Francisco's Western Addition neighborhood.

#### UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES

The proposed landmark designation addresses two previously identified underrepresented landmark types: landmarks significant for cultural associations and landmarks associated with the Modern Age (1935-1970).

There are currently five San Francisco landmarks specifically related to African American history: the Madame C. J. Walker House (2066 Pine St.); Leonard/Poole House (90 Cedro Ave.); Sam Jordan's Bar (4004-4006 Third Street); Marcus Books/Jimbo's Bop City (1212-1716 Fillmore Street); and Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* (1345 Ocean Ave.). In addition, the Eucalyptus trees at 1661 Octavia Street are landmark trees and "Structures of Merit" due to their association with Mary Ellen Pleasant.

Less than 5% of Landmark buildings were constructed after 1930, resulting in few designated buildings designed in a modern or vernacular style. Some examples of Landmarks representing modern or vernacular styles include the Cowell House (171 San Marcos Avenue), V.C. Morris Gift Shop (140 Maiden Lane), Cathedral School for Boys, part of the Grace Cathedral Close Landmark designation (1051 Taylor Street), Rincon Annex Post Office (101-199 Mission Street), and the Crown-Zellerback Building (1 Bush Street/523 Market Street).

#### INTEGRITY

The Third Baptist Church Complex maintains a high level of physical integrity. See attached Landmark Designation Report for further analysis.

#### CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Exterior and interior character-defining features of the bell tower, church building, and administrative/gymnasium building are identified in the attached Landmark Designation Report beginning on page 22.

#### BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The proposed landmark site encompasses Assessor's Block 0778, Lot 013 – on which the subject property is located.

#### PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department's analysis, the Third Baptist Church Complex is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its association with events that are significantly associated with San Francisco's social, ethnic, and civil rights history, as well as a representative example of ecclesiastical architecture in the Western Addition. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the proposed designation of **1399 McAllister** as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed initiation of the Third Baptist Church Complex as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the initiation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and

**Landmark Designation Initiation**  
**July 19, 2017**

**Case Number 2017-004024DES**  
**Third Baptist Church Complex; 1399 McAllister Street**

may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). 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 1004.5).

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Draft Resolution initiating designation
- B. Draft Landmark Designation Report
- C. Draft Landmark Ordinance
- D. Letters of Support