



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* May 4, 2016  
*Case No.:* 2015.007219DES  
*Project Address:* 1345 Ocean Avenue  
*Zoning:* (NCT) Neighborhood Commercial Transit  
*Block/Lot:* 6942/050  
*Property Owner:* Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and  
*The Great Cloud of Witnesses*  
1345 Ocean Avenue  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

1345 Ocean Avenue, known as Ingleside Presbyterian Church, is located on the south east corner of Ocean and Granada avenues, in San Francisco's Ingleside neighborhood. Irregularly shaped in plan, the building is almost rectangular except for following the diagonal of Ocean Avenue and at the northwest corner where it bows to rounded corner. Designed in the Neoclassical style by master architect/developer Joseph Leonard, the two-story-over basement church building was constructed of concrete in 1923. 1345 Ocean Avenue also contains culturally and artistically significant interior "collage-mural," a folk artists environment entitled *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*. Begun in 1980, the collage-mural is a work-in-progress, created by church pastor Reverend Roland Gordon to inspire the community and highlight the accomplishments of African Americans.

The subject building is located towards the middle of the Ocean Avenue Neighborhood Commercial Transit (NCT) District that is characterized by variety of multi-family residential, garages, formula retail, and commercial buildings dating from the 1900s to the 2010s.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is a consideration to initiate landmark designation of 1345 Ocean Avenue, Ingleside Presbyterian Church and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* 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).

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 1345 Ocean Avenue will help to preserve an important architectural resource associated with architect Joseph A. Leonard and an interior artistic resource, a work-in-progress interior folk artists environment dedicated to African American history and role models, created by Reverend Roland Gordon.

## BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

In early 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission added Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, at 1345 Ocean Avenue to its Landmark Designation Work Program – acting on the request of San Francisco Heritage and the church's pastor, Reverend Roland Gordon.

## OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

IF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION ADOPTS A RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY AS AN ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK AT ITS MAY 4, 2016 HEARING AND DIRECTS STAFF TO FINALIZE THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT, A SECOND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION HEARING WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL OF THE DESIGNATION. AT THE

SECOND HEARING, IF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE DESIGNATION, ITS RECOMMENDATION WILL BE SENT BY THE DEPARTMENT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS. 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 that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

There is no known opposition to designation of 1345 Ocean Avenue as an Article 10 landmark. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

## PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

The property owner is Ingleside Presbyterian Church Session, the ruling body of Ingleside Presbyterian Church. On February 25, 2016, Department Staff received a letter from Elder Lillian Hamilton, Clerk of the Session, on behalf of the Session stating their full support for landmark designation of the church and the interior collage-mural. (*Attachment C: Letter of Support*)

## STAFF ANALYSIS

1345 Ocean Avenue provides a tangible connection to the life and work of architect Joseph Leonard who has made significant architectural contributions to the development of San Francisco as well as the artistic contributions that Reverend Roland Gordon's *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* has made to art history. Intangibly, the building highlights the community-focused ethos of the church from its post-Earthquake reconstruction through the present day and the interior collage-mural, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, provides an extraordinary documentation of San Francisco's cultural heritage, specifically African American history. Landmark designation will highlight and celebrate both aspects of the church's significance.

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff based upon the attached draft Landmark Designation Report as well as staff site visits, research, and photography. The draft Landmark Designation Report was prepared pro-bono by Desiree Smith, Deputy Director, San Francisco Heritage, architectural historian Erica Schultz, with assistance, review, and editing conducted by Department preservation staff. All authors meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.

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 outlined below under the Underrepresented Landmark Types, Significance, Integrity, and Conditions Assessment sections below.

## UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES

The proposed landmark designation addresses two previously identified underrepresented landmark types: landmarks significant for cultural associations and landmarks located in geographically underrepresented areas of San Francisco. There are currently four 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); and Marcus Books/Jimbo's Bop City (1212-1716 Fillmore Street). In addition, the Eucalyptus trees at 1661 Octavia Street are landmark trees and "Structures of Merit" due to their association with Mary Ellen Pleasant. In regards to geography, there is currently one landmark in the Ingleside Neighborhood: Leonard/Poole House (90 Cedro Ave.). In nearby Balboa Park, there are two landmarks: Balboa High School (100 Cayuga Avenue) and the San Francisco San Mateo Railroad Company Office Building (2301 San Jose Avenue).

To address underrepresented landmark property types, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regularly scheduled meeting on June 15, 2011, added 16 properties to its Landmark Designation Work Program. Many of these properties are significant for cultural associations such as organized labor, the Works Progress Administration, and ethnic and cultural histories including properties associated with African American, Jewish, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons, institutions, and events. Several properties, including Ingleside Presbyterian Church, are located in underrepresented areas of the City.

The Department believes that 1345 Ocean Avenue meets the established eligibility requirements landmark designation for its high architectural artistic values. The building and mural-collage respectively convey their significance as a representation of the Neoclassical style that was popular in the decades following Chicago's World Columbian Exposition (1893) and for its embodiment as a living Folk Art Environment dedicated to African American history and inspirational role models.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1923, 1345 Ocean Avenue is a church and community center that appears significant for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of type, period, and method of construction and represents the work of local master architect Joseph A. Leonard. Designed in the Neoclassical style, Ingleside Presbyterian Church expresses the distinctive architectural characteristics that were popular in the decades following Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian exposition. When Leonard was chosen as the church's architect, he was already well known in San Francisco and the Bay Area for his residential developments including the Queen Anne "Leonardville," in Alameda, and his Craftsman style "Richmond Heights" and "Ingleside Terraces" residence parks. Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center is one of Leonard's few extant religious structures, one of two known in the city.

Anchoring this section of the Ocean Avenue streetscape, the church's monumentality and unusually strong street presence is commensurate with its original post-Earthquake need to house nine protestant congregations and a community center for the "western Twin Peaks district of the city." When the church was completed, this programmatic need was said to be "different among churches", "offer[ing] to the church world...a new ideal." The church's first pastor chose to build a gymnasium, instead of including a pipe organ, in order to reach out to youth – the same community-oriented philosophy that attracted Reverend Gordon to the church almost sixty years later.

Begun in 1980, the church's interior collage-mural, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, is significant for its high artistic and traditional cultural values that embody the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. As a collage-mural created by the church's pastor, Reverend Roland Gordon,

the artwork makes significant contributions to the study of American Folk Art, African American Muralism, and particularly as a Folk Artists' Environment in San Francisco dedicated to African American history.

The designation report has revealed Reverend Roland Gordon as a not only a pillar of his community, but as a significant, self-taught Folk Artist for his artistic contributions to the study of American Folk Art, African American Folk Art, African American Muralism and Folk Artists' Environments. Among all of these topics, his techniques, subject matter, and inspiration, make *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* an exceedingly rare composition. The overall arrangement across multiple rooms and floors, expansive size that encompasses most of his church's interior, the distinctive choice of media (predominately paper clippings and copies, mixed with painted murals, and found objects) is unparalleled on this scale. Additionally, the creation of constructed themes (such as legacy rooms and rooms dedicated to individual role models), and the mix of contemporary pop-culture icons, combined with San Francisco political leaders, and working-class church family members was initially intended to provide all-inclusive range of role models. In retrospect, those 35 years of role models, now provide a comprehensive view of African American achievements and accomplishments. A work-in-progress since 1980, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* is a rare tribute and the largest, most imaginatively executed Folk Artists' Environment dedicated to religion, culture, African American history, and role models in the country.

#### INTEGRITY

The building retains integrity of association, as it has remained in continual use as a church and community center since its construction. It, likewise, retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship and feeling. Based on review of the building permit history and visual inspection, known exterior alterations are relatively limited in scope and remain subordinate to the building's overall design and ornamentation. Similarly, interior spaces including the entry lobby, most of the meeting rooms and much of the upper stories have experienced few alterations. One major change has been the remodeling of the church sanctuary to include an octagonal dome, redwood details and multi-colored stained glass windows in 1957.

The most impactful change to the building has been *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* collage-mural, which has been applied to much of the plastered/drywalled areas of the church's interior, including the ceilings and some of the interior millwork. Based on visual inspection, the 35-year-old paper-based, mural-collage appears to retain good integrity, though some clippings are peeling or yellowing. Overall, the collage-mural, as an alteration, has gained significance in its own right as a work of art.

#### CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

In March 2015, pro-bono conservators with Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) conducted a conditions assessment on the building and the mural-collage. The exterior and interior were assessed visually through notes and photo documentation. Moisture readings of the interior walls were recorded, analyzed and recommendations for repair were drafted. Any repairs to the building or the mural-collage should follow the recommendations of this report, attached as Appendix B: Existing Conditions Assessment to the Landmark Designation Report.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

### **All exterior elevations, architectural ornament and rooflines of 1345 Ocean Avenue, and identified as:**

- Compound cornice, including the pediment, cornice, frieze, dentils, and molding details.
- Configuration of the symmetrical entry portico: including:
  - six Ionic columns (two central columns flanked on either side by an engaged column and pilasters) three stairways located between the portico's column bases, with terrazzo treads and risers,
  - mosaic tile landing with the word "WELCOME;" and
  - three sets of wood paneled, half-glazed, double-leaf doors with single light transoms above;
  - brass cornerstone located in the column base;
  - three hanging globe-style pendant lights centered above each entry door; and
- Configuration of the bays, pilasters, and corresponding breaks in the entablature across the primary and secondary elevations.
- Wooden cross located between the first and second floors at the curving corner.
- Lettering on the building including:
  - At the front of building the word "INGLESIDE," centered within the portico's pediment; "PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER" is centered within the portico's entablature;
  - "INGLESIDE CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTER," centered in the entablature at the curving corner; and
  - "WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT. II COR. 5:7," centered in the entablature of the first bay on the Granada Avenue façade.
- Fenestration at the primary elevation, including the double-hung wood-sash windows set in wood surrounds.
- Fenestration at the secondary elevation, including:
  - the two sets of wood paneled double-leaf sanctuary exit doors and one single-leaf wood paneled exit door;
  - the configuration of six multi-light, multi-colored glass sanctuary windows at the first and second floor level, divided by a stucco spandrel panel with stucco casings;
  - the configuration of double-hung, wood-sash windows, including those in the last bay above the exit door, that are currently covered in plywood.

### **The character-defining interior features of the building are identified as:**

- Those associated with the 1923 Joseph Leonard architectural design that have historically been accessible to the public, and depicted in the floor plans or photos of the designation report dated May 4, 2016 including:

- The Entry Lobby, including the stairs to the lobby level, main staircase materials and configuration, wood wainscot, paneled doors, and casings with pediments above;
  - The Gymnasium, including its open volume, trusses, skylights, basketball goals, wooden flooring with basketball court markings, light fixtures, and light pendants.
  - The Sanctuary space, including its open volume, the balcony, octagonal dome, supporting wooden knee brackets, redwood coffers, and colored glass skylights, and the configuration and materials of the six-multi-light, multi-colored colored glass windows at the main level and balcony level.
- **The character-defining interior features of the building are those associated with the collage-mural located within the building entitled *The Great Cloud of Witnesses* that have historically been accessible to the public, and depicted in the floor plans or photos the designation report dated March 7, 2016 including:**
    - All wall surfaces, doors, doorways, casings, moldings, ceiling, and ceiling beams covered with paper clippings or posters, framed artwork, objects and painted portraits and lettering. All millwork throughout the church including wood wainscoting, baseboards, and door casings with entablatures, chair rails and picture rails including finishes (painted or stained).
      1. The Reverend Roland Gordon Fellowship Hall
      2. The Michael Jackson Room
      3. The Barack Obama Technology Center
      4. The Mayor Willie Brown Room
      5. Legacy Room I and Legacy Room II
      6. The Nelson Mandela Bathroom.

It should also be noted that all future conservation and stabilization work to the collage-mural shall be guided by the Architectural Resources Group (ARG) *Existing Conditions Assessment and Recommendations Report*, included as Appendix B within the designation report dated, March 7, 2016.

## INTERIOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Because these principal interior spaces are publically-accessible and largely unaltered, except for the addition of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, landmark designation of these interior features is authorized under Section 1004(c) of the Planning code, which states that: (c) The property included in any such designation shall upon designation be subject to the controls and standards set forth in this Article 10. In addition, the said property shall be subject to the following further controls and standards if imposed by the designating ordinance:

- (1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.
- (2) For a privately-owned landmark, review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public. The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction.



## BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The proposed landmark site encompasses the entire lot – Assessor’s Block 6942, Lot 050 – on which the subject building is located.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department’s analysis, 1345 Ocean Avenue is individually eligible for landmark designation, as it retains sufficient integrity to convey its architectural and artistic associations.

Based on the Department’s analysis, 1345 Ocean Avenue, known as Ingleside Presbyterian Church & Community Center and its interior mural-collage, *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*, is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation as a San Francisco as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction – for both architecture and artistry. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the proposed designation of 1345 Ocean Avenue.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed designation of 1345 Ocean Avenue 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 designation, a copy of the motion 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 1004.4). 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 Landmark Designation Report
  - Appendix A: Designated Folk Art Environments and Murals
  - Appendix B: Existing Conditions Assessment prepared by ARG
  - Appendix C: Additional Photos of *The Great Cloud of Witnesses*
- B. Draft Motion initiating designation
- C. Letter in Support of Designation from Ingleside Presbyterian Church Session