



October 29, 2025

Ms. Angela Calvillo, Clerk
Honorable Mayor Lurie
Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: **Transmittal of Planning Department Case Number 2025-008758PCA:**
Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings
Board File No. 250886

Planning Commission Action: Adopted a Recommendation for Approval

Dear Ms. Calvillo and Mayor Lurie,

On October 15, 2025 and October 23, 2025, the Historic Preservation and the Planning Commission, respectively, conducted duly noticed public hearings at regularly scheduled meetings to consider the proposed Ordinance, introduced by Mayor Lurie. The proposed ordinance would amend the Planning Code to allow additional uses as principally or conditionally permitted in Historic Buildings citywide, exempt Historic Buildings in certain Eastern Neighborhood Plan Areas from Conditional Use authorization otherwise required to remove Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR), Institutional Community, and Arts Activities uses, and from providing replacement space for such uses, make conforming amendments to provisions affected by the foregoing, including zoning control tables. At the hearings, both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission each adopted a recommendation for approval.

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

Please find attached documents relating to the actions of the Commissions. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Starr

Manager of Legislative Affairs

cc: Andrea Ruiz-Esquide, Deputy City Attorney
Adam Thongsavat, Office of Mayor Lurie
John Carroll, Office of the Clerk of the Board

ATTACHMENTS :

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution
Planning Commission Resolution
Planning Department Executive Summary



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1491

HEARING DATE: October 15, 2025

Project Name: Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings
Case Number: 2025-008758PCA [Board File No. 250886]
Initiated by: Mayor Lurie / Introduced September 2, 2025
Staff Contact: Lisa Gluckshtein, Legislative Affairs
aaron.starr@sfgov.org, 628-652-7533
Reviewed by: Richard Sucre, Deputy Director, Current Planning Division
richard.sucre@sfgov.org, 628.652.7364

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND THE PLANNING CODE TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL USES AS PRINCIPALLY OR CONDITIONALLY PERMITTED IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS CITYWIDE, EXEMPT HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN CERTAIN EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AREAS FROM CONDITIONAL USE AUTHORIZATION OTHERWISE REQUIRED TO REMOVE PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND REPAIR (PDR), INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY, AND ARTS ACTIVITIES USES, AND FROM PROVIDING REPLACEMENT SPACE FOR SUCH USES; AFFIRMING THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT’S DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT; MAKING FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN, AND THE EIGHT PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE, SECTION 101.1; AND MAKING FINDINGS OF PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE, AND WELFARE UNDER PLANNING CODE, SECTION 302.

WHEREAS, on September 2, 2025 Mayor Lurie introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter “Board”) File Number 250886, which would amend various existing Planning Code provisions and create a new Section 202.11 to make uses more permissive in Historic Buildings to improve the feasibility of projects for adaptive reuse, provided certain conditions are met;

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on October 15, 2025; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15378 and 15060(c); and

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the Custodian of Records, at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare require the proposed amendment; and

MOVED, that the Commission hereby adopts a **recommendation for approval** of the proposed ordinance. The Commission's proposed recommendation(s) is/are as follows:

Findings

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

The Commission finds that the Ordinance's allowance of greater use flexibility and other benefits to Historic Buildings supports their adaptive reuse and activation. This will help to ensure that Historic Buildings do not remain vacant and are instead actively used, maintained, and preserved instead of falling into dereliction. The Ordinance also corrects the piecemeal nature of current use flexibility provisions and their variable standards, simplifying the Planning Code and providing a consistent approach around eligibility and process for all Historic Buildings citywide.

General Plan Compliance

The proposed Ordinance is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1

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.

By offering greater use flexibility to Historic Buildings, this Ordinance promotes their activation, maintenance, and continued preservation.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 2

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE A SOUND AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE AND FISCAL STRUCTURE FOR THE CITY.

Policy 2.1

Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the city.

OBJECTIVE 4

IMPROVE THE VIABILITY OF EXISTING INDUSTRY IN THE CITY, THE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, AND THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CITY AS A LOCATION FOR NEW INDUSTRY.

Policy 4.1

Maintain and enhance a favorable business climate in the city.

The proposed Ordinance allows new commercial activity and other uses in Historic Buildings. This added commercial activity will help maintain a favorable business climate in San Francisco as it adds to the number of spaces available for new uses and activates new spaces that contribute to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of the City.

MISSION AREA PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1.1

STRENGTHEN THE MISSION'S EXISTING MIXED USE CHARACTER, WHILE MAINTAINING THE NEIGHBORHOOD AS A PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

Policy 1.1.2

Revise land use controls in portions of the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone outside the core industrial area to create new mixed use areas, allowing mixed income housing as a principal use, as well as limited amounts of retail, office, and research and development uses, while protecting against the wholesale displacement of PDR uses.

The proposed Ordinance supports the mixed use character of the Mission District. The loosened use permissions apply exclusively to Historic Buildings, rather than the Mission District as a whole, ensuring that it will only allow for incremental changes to the mix of uses and will not result in the wholesale displacement of PDR uses in the northeast Mission.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

PROMOTE AN URBAN FORM THAT REINFORCES THE MISSION'S DISTINCTIVE PLACE IN THE CITY'S LARGER FORM AND STRENGTHENS ITS PHYSICAL FABRIC AND CHARACTER

Policy 3.1.9

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.

CENTRAL SOMA AREA PLAN

OBJECTIVE 7.5

SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR THE REHABILITATION AND MAINTENANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE PROPERTIES

POLICY 7.5.5

Encourage the use of existing strategies and incentives that facilitate the preservation and rehabilitation of designated cultural heritage properties.

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

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.

The Ordinance will support the historic preservation goals articulated in the above objectives and policies from the Mission, Central SoMa, and Downtown Area Plans. By ensuring that Historic Buildings remain viable for new tenants and new uses, the Ordinance will help to ensure that these buildings remain activated, maintained, and preserved as part of the City's cultural and architectural heritage.

Planning Code Section 101 Findings

The proposed amendments to the Planning Code are 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 proposed Ordinance would not have a negative effect on neighborhood serving retail uses and will not have a negative effect on opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of neighborhood-serving retail.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not have a negative effect on housing or neighborhood character.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's supply of affordable housing.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the 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;

While the proposed would allow for some office uses in a select few existing industrial buildings with historic designations, the proposed Ordinance would not cause significant displacement of the industrial or service sectors due to office development, and future opportunities for resident employment or ownership in these sectors would not be impaired.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's Landmarks and historic buildings and would instead encourage their continued preservation.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas.

Planning Code Section 302 Findings.

The Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the Planning Code as set forth in Section 302.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby ADOPTS A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL of the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on October 15, 2025.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

Jonas P Ionin

Digitally signed by Jonas P Ionin
Date: 2025.10.23 12:43:07 -07'00'

AYES: Cox, Tsern Strang, Baroni, Baldauf, Vergara, Foley, Matsuda
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ADOPTED: October 15, 2025



PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21853

HEARING DATE: October 23, 2025

Project Name: Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings
Case Number: 2025-008758PCA [Board File No. 250886]
Initiated by: Mayor Lurie / Introduced September 2, 2025
Staff Contact: Lisa Gluckstein, Legislative Affairs
Lisa.gluckstein@sfgov.org 628-652-7533475

RESOLUTION ADOPTING A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND THE PLANNING CODE TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL USES AS PRINCIPALLY OR CONDITIONALLY PERMITTED IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS CITYWIDE, EXEMPT HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN CERTAIN EASTERN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN AREAS FROM CONDITIONAL USE AUTHORIZATION OTHERWISE REQUIRED TO REMOVE PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, AND REPAIR (PDR), INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNITY, AND ARTS ACTIVITIES USES, AND FROM PROVIDING REPLACEMENT SPACE FOR SUCH USES; AFFIRMING THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT’S DETERMINATION UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT; MAKING FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN, AND THE EIGHT PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE, SECTION 101.1; AND MAKING FINDINGS OF PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE, AND WELFARE UNDER PLANNING CODE, SECTION 302.

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WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on October 15, 2025 and adopted a recommendation for approval; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on October 23, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15378 and 15060(c); and

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

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Planning Code Section 101 Findings

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overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.

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

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on City's preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

7. That the landmarks and historic buildings be preserved;

The proposed Ordinance would not have an adverse effect on the City's Landmarks and historic buildings and would instead encourage their continued preservation.

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

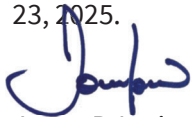
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Planning Code Section 302 Findings.

The Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the Planning Code as set forth in Section 302.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby ADOPTS A RECOMMENDATION FOR APPROVAL of the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on October 23, 2025.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

Jonas P Ionin

Digitally signed by Jonas P Ionin
Date: 2025.10.24 09:44:37 -07'00'

AYES: Campbell, McGarry, Braun, Imperial, So
NOES: Williams, Moore
ABSENT: None
ADOPTED: October 23, 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLANNING CODE TEXT AMENDMENT

HEARING DATE: October 15, 2025 (HPC)

90-Day Deadline: December 1, 2025

Project Name: Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings
Case Number: 2025-008758PCA [Board File No. 250886]
Initiated by: Mayor / Introduced September 2, 2025
Staff Contact: Lisa Gluckstein
Lisa.Gluckstein@sfgov.org, 628-652-7475
Reviewed by: Richard Sucre, Deputy Director, Current Planning Division
richard.sucre@sfgov.org, 628.652.7364
Environmental Review: Not a Project Under CEQA

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt a Recommendation for Approval

Planning Code Amendment

The proposed Ordinance amends the Planning Code to allow additional uses as principally or conditionally permitted in Historic Buildings citywide, exempt Historic Buildings in certain Eastern Neighborhood Plan Areas from Conditional Use authorization otherwise required to remove Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR), Institutional Community, and Arts Activities uses, and from providing replacement space for such uses. The proposed Ordinance would also make conforming amendments to provisions affected by the foregoing, including zoning control tables.

The Way It Is Now:

Currently, the Planning Code offers certain historic properties additional use flexibility in a limited number of districts through three separate programs with varying eligibility and approval criteria.

Table 1: Existing Use Flexibility Programs

	Districts	Use Flexibility	Eligible Buildings	Approval Requirements
1	Residential Districts (RH, RM, RTO, RTO-M) (Sec. 186.3)	<u>Conditionally permits</u> any use permitted on the ground floor in the NC-1 district	Article 10 Landmarks only.	[none described]
2	Folsom Street NCT and RC Districts (Sec. 703.9)	<u>Principally permits</u> Non-Retail Professional Service, Retail Professional Service, Community Facility, Private Community Facility, Social Service and Philanthropic Facility, Financial Service, Gym, Limited Financial Service, Health Service, Personal Service, and Instructional Service; <u>conditionally permits</u> Nighttime Entertainment on the third floor and above (except principally permitted at St. Joseph's Church).	Article 10 Landmarks, Article 11 significant buildings or contributors, and buildings listed on or eligible for the state or federal historic register.	<u>Feasibility determination:</u> The Zoning Administrator, with advice from the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), must determine that the proposed use would enhance the feasibility of preserving the building. <u>HPC Review:</u> The HPC must review the project for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. <u>Historic Building Maintenance Plan:</u> The sponsor must submit a maintenance plan for the building.
3	Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts* (Sec. 803.9)	CMUO, MUG, MUR, MUO, UMU, RH-DTR, and SPD Districts: <u>Principally permits</u> all uses except for Nighttime Entertainment. WMUG: <u>Principally permits</u> Office uses. RED and RED-MX Districts: <u>Principally permits</u> Arts Activities, Community Facility, Private Community Facility, Public Facility, School, Social Service or Philanthropic Facility, and Trade School uses; <u>conditionally permits</u> Retail Sales and Services uses and Office Uses; may not contain Nighttime Entertainment or Adult Business uses.	CMUO, MUG, MUR, MUO, UMU, RH-DTR, and SPD Districts: Article 10 Landmarks and buildings listed on or eligible for the California Register. WMUG, RED, and RED-MX Districts: Article 10 Landmarks, Article 11 significant buildings or contributors, and buildings <i>individually</i> listed on or eligible for the California Register.	<u>Feasibility determination</u> and <u>HPC Review</u> , as described for Folsom Street NCT and RC Districts, above.

***PDR Replacement Exemption:** In Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use districts, exemptions from protected Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR), Institutional Community, or Arts Activity space replacement requirements apply only to Landmarks or buildings listed on the National Historic Register of July 1, 2016 that convert no more than 50% of such protected space up to 49,999 square feet, or up to 75% of such protected space if the property owners offer below-market-rate leasing of the remaining space.

The Way It Would Be:

This Ordinance would allow Historic Buildings citywide to benefit from additional use flexibility and consolidate these allowances into a single program. It would create a consistent standard for building eligibility and applicable approval process. The types of uses permitted would still vary by zoning district based on the characteristics of each particular district. It would also apply the exemption from PDR replacement requirements to all Historic Buildings subject to this program in the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts.

Table 2: Proposed Use Flexibility Program (Section 202.11)
Eligible Buildings
The ordinance would apply to any Historic Building, as already defined in the Planning Code, including any building: • Individually designated as a landmark under Article 10; • Listed as a contributor to an historic district listed in Article 10, or if the historic district does not list contributors, is determined to be a contributor through historic resource review; • That is a Significant or Contributory Building under Article 11, with a Category I, II, III or IV rating; <u>or</u> • Listed or has been determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places.
Approval Requirements
Any eligible buildings are subject to the following approval process: • <u>Director approval</u>: Any project that is subject to more flexible use controls per this Ordinance (e.g., changes from NP to C, or C to P) must obtain a Planning Director determination that allowing the Use will enhance the feasibility of adaptive reuse of the Historic Building. • <u>Department review</u>: Department staff must determine that the project complies with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and any applicable provisions of the Planning Code. • <u>HPC Review</u>: While the Ordinance does not require HPC review, Department staff will consult with the HPC to receive guidance as appropriate on a project-specific basis. (table continued on the next page)

Benefits for Historic Buildings		
In addition to use flexibility provisions (below), the Ordinance allows the following: • <u>Use size limit waivers</u>: In all districts, except for Neighborhood Commercial Districts and Neighborhood Commercial Transit Districts, no Non-Residential Use Size limits shall apply. • <u>Temporary use extension</u>: Temporary Uses may be authorized by the Planning Director for an initial period of six years, with the possibility of a six-year extension. • <u>PDR replacement exemption</u>: In Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use districts, exemptions from protected Production, Distribution, and Repair (PDR), Institutional Community, or Arts Activity space replacement requirements would apply to any Historic Building eligible for the program described above.		
	District	Use Flexibility
1	Residential Districts (RH, RM, RTO, RTO-M)	<u>Conditionally permits</u> any use permitted on the ground floor in the NC-1 district (<i>no change</i>)
2	Folsom Street NCT and RC Districts	<i>[Folsom Street NCT controls collapsed under Neighborhood Commercial Controls, #5 below; RC controls changed to allow all uses, #4 below]</i>
3	Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts*	CMUO, MUG, MUR, MUO, SPD, UMU, and WMUG Districts: <u>Principally permits</u> all uses. RED and RED-MX Districts: <u>Principally permits</u> Arts Activities, Community Facility, Private Community Facility, Public Facility, School, Social Service or Philanthropic Facility, and Trade School uses; <u>conditionally permits</u> Retail Sales and Services uses and Office Uses; may not contain Nighttime Entertainment or Adult Business uses (<i>no change</i>).
4	Commercial Districts (C-2, C-3), RC, and DTR Districts	<u>Principally permits</u> all uses.
5	Neighborhood Commercial (all NCs and NCTs) and all other districts	<u>Principally permits</u> all uses that are conditionally permitted in that district <u>Conditionally permits</u> all uses that are not permitted in that district

Background

Protections for Historic Buildings

This Ordinance would *not* change the local, state, and federal regulations that are intended to protect the character-defining features and/or which govern a Historic Building. At the local level, exterior work will

continue to require either a Certificate of Appropriateness for Article 10 Landmarks, or a Permit to Alter for Article 11 Significant or Contributory Buildings. As a matter of state law, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires most discretionary permit approvals to provide an analysis of any significant impacts to historic resources. All of these requirements would continue to apply to projects subject to this Ordinance.

Further, the Ordinance requires all projects to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. These standards do not permit the demolition of Historic Buildings. In addition, these Standards mandate compatible new construction and/or modification of a Historic Building in a manner that preserves the character-defining features.

PDR Replacement Requirements

Proposition X (2016) places limitations on the conversion of Production, Distribution, and Repair, Institutional Community, or Arts Activity uses in the Eastern Neighborhoods Plan Areas. This includes requiring a Conditional Use Authorization for projects that propose the conversion of such uses and requiring the replacement of such uses in the same building according to replacement ratios that vary by district. These limitations are intended to help the city retain PDR, arts and community spaces in transitioning industrial neighborhoods.

The Planning Code currently exempts a narrow subset of projects in historic buildings from PDR replacement requirements: buildings listed on the National Historic Register as of July 1, 2016 that convert no more than 50% of a property's PDR, Institutional Community, or Arts Activities space, subject to a 25% bonus for the below-market-rate rental or sale of the remaining PDR, Institutional Community, or Arts Activities space.

Issues and Considerations

Flexibility Encourages the Use and Preservation of Historic Buildings

Through the existing use flexibility programs discussed above, the Planning Code already recognizes that offering additional use flexibility to buildings subject to historic protections is a tool "for support[ing] the economic viability of buildings of historic importance." Historic Buildings are subject to additional protections under Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code and/or CEQA that restrict renovations and alterations to character-defining features. This means that Historic Buildings are often more constrained in the type of uses and businesses that they can accommodate compared to non-historic buildings by virtue of the fact that the physical form of a Historic Building is less flexible. To counterbalance the physical limitations that apply to historic properties, the Ordinance offers Historic Buildings greater use flexibility to support their economic viability and continued preservation.

The Ordinance operates under the same logic of the existing historic building flexibility programs mentioned above, applying it to Historic Properties citywide under a unified set of eligibility and process criteria. As such, this Ordinance would correct the piecemeal approach to use flexibility by expanding its scope while simplifying the Planning Code programs that implement this concept.

To counterbalance the physical limitations that apply to historic properties, the Ordinance offers Historic Buildings greater use flexibility to support their economic viability and continued preservation.

Examples of Change of Use Projects in Historic Buildings

Several projects have undertaken the kind of conversions targeted by the proposed and existing use flexibility programs:

St. Joseph's Church - 1401 Howard St. (RCD)

The long entitlement history of St. Joseph's Church reflects the complexity of the various use flexibility programs and the need for flexibility in Historic Buildings:

- In 2012, the Article 10 Landmark St. Joseph's Church originally received a Certificate of Appropriateness and a CUA to undergo seismic upgrades and convert the church into office, retail, and assembly space, using a Landmarks use flexibility program in place at the time under Section 803.9 (which has since been updated).
- In 2015, the project sought re-entitlement due to Eastern Neighborhoods Planning Code changes, using the Section 703.9 program applicable to Landmarks in the Folsom Street NCT and RCD. Under Section 703.9, the project did not require a CUA that would otherwise have applied for an office use. However, a CUA was still required due to use size limits applicable within the RCD.
- In 2019, the City adopted legislation to provide greater flexibility in the Folsom NCT and RCD by principally permitting Arts Activities uses and conditionally permitting Nighttime Entertainment in Landmark buildings, *except* at St. Joseph's Church, where Nighttime Entertainment is principally permitted. The building now operates as a arts activities, events, and nighttime entertainment space.

Gregangelo Museum - 225 San Leandro Way (RH-1-D)

In 2024, the Gregangelo Museum, a museum space and artist collective operated out of a restored Mediterranean Revival style house, received an Article 10 Landmark designation. This allowed the Gregangelo Museum to benefit from the Section 186.3 use flexibility program to conditionally permit a General Entertainment use.

Sacred Heart Church and Parish Complex (aka Church of 8 Wheels) - 554 Fillmore St (RM-1)

The Sacred Heart Church and Parish Complex received an Article 10 Landmark designation in 2024. In 2024, it received a four-year Temporary Use Authorization for Church of 8 Wheels' entertainment, arts, and recreational events.

572 7th St (UMU)

In 2012, the Art Moderne industrial building located at 572 7th Street was individually listed on the California Register of Historic Places. In 2013, The project used the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use flexibility provisions under Section 803.9 to permit an office use on the ground floor, which is otherwise not permitted in the UMU district.

Iglesia de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe/Our Lady of Guadalupe Church - 906 Broadway (RM-2)

The church was originally designated as an Article 10 Landmark in 1993, and the designation was amended in 2019 to recognize its interior features. On October 2, 2025, the property sought a CUA from the Planning Commission to authorize a change of use under Section 186.3 to convert the vacant church to a General Entertainment event space focused on daytime and evening events.

Tenderloin Museum/Cadillac Hotel - 398 Eddy St (RC-4)

The Cadillac Hotel was designated as a Article 10 Individual Landmark in 1984. It is also a contributor to the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District (designated in 2009), listed on the state and national historic registers. The Tenderloin Museum, a non-profit museum that celebrates the rich history of the Tenderloin, is a current tenant of the Cadillac Hotel. The Museum is currently proposing an expansion within existing Cadillac Hotel space for a total use size of over 13,000 square feet. Currently, the RC-4 district requires a CUA for non-residential uses of 6,000 SF. If passed, the proposed Ordinance would allow the Museum expansion to proceed without requiring a CUA.

Easing PDR Replacement Requirements

PDR, Institutional Community, and Arts Activity replacement requirements place significant constraints on the use of Historic Buildings. The PDR replacement requirements contemplate new development projects that add significant net-new square footage and thus are better enabled to reserve a portion of that new square footage for protected PDR uses. However, in Historic Buildings, where regulatory protections limit the expansion of the building envelope and creation of new square footage, these PDR protections make it practically impossible to establish a new use in Historic Buildings with prior PDR, Institutional Community, or Arts Activities uses.

These PDR replacement protections apply In Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts, where the use profile has changed from one with predominantly PDR uses to a mixed-use character. Further, the City, via the Eastern Neighborhoods Plans, has prioritized PDR Districts (as opposed to the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use districts at issue here) for maintaining PDR uses. Allowing Historic Buildings greater flexibility with respect to PDR replacement requirements recognizes the physical constraints on accommodating PDR replacement space in such buildings supporting uses that will remain compatible with mixed-use neighborhoods.

Simplifying Code Requirements

The three existing use flexibility programs that apply in Residential Districts, Folsom Street NCT and RCD, and Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use Districts all have different criteria and process requirements that create complexity for Department implementation and confusion for potential project applicants. Even within the Eastern Neighborhoods Mixed Use District program (Section 803.9), building eligibility varies across specific zoning districts. Creating a unified set of eligibility and process standards across all districts simplifies Department implementation, improves Code legibility, and reflects good-government reforms that prioritize clarity and predictability.

General Plan Compliance

The Department finds that the proposed Ordinance is consistent with the General Plan. Urban Design Element Policy 2.4 is to “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.” By offering greater use flexibility to Historic Buildings, this Ordinance promotes their activation, maintenance, and continued preservation. Commerce and Industry Element Policy 2.1 is to “Seek to retain existing commercial and industrial activity and to attract new such activity to the city” and Policy 4.1 is to “Maintain and enhance a favorable business climate in the city.” The Ordinance’s approach to offering greater flexibility in certain buildings will help encourage commercial and industrial activity and allow businesses to occupy spaces that were formerly not available to them.

Racial and Social Equity Analysis

Understanding the potential benefits, burdens and the opportunities to advance racial and social equity that the proposed Ordinance provides is part of the Department’s Racial and Social Equity Action Plan. This is also consistent with the Mayor’s Citywide Strategic Initiatives for equity and accountability, the Planning and Historic Preservation Commissions’ 2020 Equity Resolutions, and with the Office of Racial Equity mandates, which requires all Departments to conduct this analysis.

The Ordinance prioritizes the activation of vacant and underutilized historic buildings across the City, including in Cultural Districts and Priority Equity Geographies. These changes will help to ensure that Historic Buildings do not fall into disuse and dereliction and limit the adverse impacts on communities that results from vacant buildings, especially vacancies larger buildings that adversely impact entire city blocks. To further understand the impacts of this Ordinance, the Department can monitor the types of new uses that occupy Historic Buildings using the proposed provisions and monitor changes in surrounding communities to ensuring that any economic benefits are broadly distributed.

Implementation

The Department has determined that this ordinance will not impact our current implementation procedures.

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the Commission ***adopt a recommendation for approval*** of the proposed Ordinance and adopt the attached Draft Resolution to that effect.

Basis for Recommendation

The Department finds that the Ordinance’s allowance of greater use flexibility and other benefits to Historic Buildings supports their adaptive reuse and activation. This will help to ensure that Historic Buildings do not remain vacant and are instead actively used, maintained, and preserved instead of falling into dereliction. The Ordinance also corrects the piecemeal nature of current use flexibility provisions and their variable standards, simplifying the Planning Code and providing a consistent approach around eligibility and process for all Historic Buildings citywide.

Required Commission Action

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may adopt a recommendation of approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications.

Environmental Review

The proposed amendments are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2) and 15378 because they do not result in a physical change in the environment.

Public Comment

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit A: Draft Historic Preservation Commission Resolution
Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. 250886