



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Article 11 Initiation Case Report Conservation District Designation HEARING DATE: MAY 2, 2018

Case No. 2017-010156DES
Project: Mint-Mission Conservation District
Re: Initiation of Conservation District Designation;
Change in Article 11 designation
Block/Lot: Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot Nos. 003,
010, 012, 013, 015, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 024,
028, 029, 034, 035, 059, 079, 113, 144; and
Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3725, Lot Nos. 087, 088
Zoning: C-3-G (downtown General)
90-X Height and Bulk District
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is initiation and recommendation to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors the designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District pursuant to Section 1107 of Article 11 of the Planning Code and the change in designation of one (1) property within the district from unrated (Category V) to Category I (Significant); and the change in designation of fifteen (15) properties from no rating to Category IV (Contributory) pursuant to Section 1106 of the Planning Code. Three (3) properties to be included in the district, 66 Mint Street/932 Mission Street (Remedial Loan Association), 14-16 Mint Plaza/54 Mint Street (Haas Candy Factory), and 959-965 Mission Street (California Casket Company), are currently designated and will remain Category I or II (Significant). Three (3) buildings, 12 Mint Street, 942-946 Mission Street, and 956-960 Mission Street, are currently designated and will remain Unrated (Category V). The proposed district contains twenty-two (22) properties, nineteen (19) are Significant or Contributory Buildings which possess substantial overall architectural, aesthetic or historic qualities justifying additional controls to protect and promote those qualities as required in Planning Code Section 1103.

BACKGROUND

The Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey (2013-2014) determined numerous properties as eligible for Article 11 designation. These include the nineteen (19) Significant or Contributing properties located within the proposed Mint-Mission Conservation District. The Planning Department (Department) conducted the survey in order to provide information on the location and distribution of resources within the Central SoMa Plan Area for the purposes of long-range policy planning and for use in permit processing, environmental review, and making recommendations for official nominations to historic

registers. In conjunction with the survey, the Department developed the Central SoMa Historic Context [Statement](#) (2015) in order to provide a framework for consistent, informed evaluations of the area's age-eligible properties that had not been previously surveyed or for which survey information was incomplete.

- The Central SoMa Plan Area is comprised of approximately 28 blocks bounded by Market Street to the north, Townsend Street to the south, Second Street to the east, and Sixth Street to the west.
- The Central SoMa Historic Survey examined a total of 134 parcels within the Central SoMa Plan area that had not been previously surveyed, or for which prior survey information was incomplete. Of these, 72 parcels were not documented, typically because the properties were vacant or not age eligible. A total of 31 properties were determined eligible for the California Register. The Mint-Mission Conservation District was identified through the survey effort.
- Based on the findings of the historic context statement and surveys, the Central SoMa Plan recommends policies that would recognize and protect historic resources. Such policies include protecting Significant and Contributory cultural heritage properties through designation to Article 11 of the Planning Code.
- The Historic Preservation Commission adopted the survey and historic context statement for the Central SoMa Plan on March 16, 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

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

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTIONS

The items before the Historic Preservation Commission are:

- 1) Consideration of initiation of designation the Mint-Mission Conservation District consisting of the following properties:
 - a. 44-48 5th Street, (aka Oakwood Hotel), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 003;
 - b. 12 Mint Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 010;
 - c. 66 Mint Street/932 Mission Street (aka Remedial Loan Association), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 012;
 - d. 936-940 Mission Street (aka Chronicle Hotel), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 013;
 - e. 942-946 Mission Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 015;
 - f. 948 Mission Street (aka Piedmont Hotel/Alkain Hotel), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 017;
 - g. 956-960 Mission Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 018;
 - h. 966 Mission Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 019;
 - i. 968 Mission Street, (aka Toledo Scale Co.) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 020;

- j. 972-976 Mission Street (aka Dohrmann Hotel Supply Company), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 021;
 - k. 980-984 Mission Street, (aka Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. Billiard Table Manufacturing) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 022;
 - l. 986 Mission Street/481 Jessie Street, (aka Hulse Bradford Carpets and Draperies) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 24;
 - m. 471 Jessie Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 28;
 - n. 431 Jessie Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 29;
 - o. 14-16 Mint Plaza/54 Mint Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 34;
 - p. 440-444 Jessie Street, (aka Wobbers Printing and Engraving) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 35;
 - q. 443 Stevenson Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 59;
 - r. 2-4 Mint Plaza, (aka Hale Brother Warehouse and Offices) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 79;
 - s. 10 Mint Plaza, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 113;
 - t. 6-8 Mint Plaza, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 144;
 - u. 959-965 Mission Street, (aka California Casket Company) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3725, Lot No. 087
 - v. 953-957 Mission Street, (aka Ford Apartments/Mint Mall) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3725, Lot No. 088
- 2) Consideration of initiation of change of designation within the Mint-Mission Conservation District of the following property from Category V (Unrated) to Significant (Category I):
- a. 44-48 Fifth Street, (aka Oakwood Hotel), Assessor's Block No. 3704, Lot No. 003
- 3) Consideration of initiation of change of designation within the Mint-Mission Conservation District of the following properties as Contributory (Category IV):
- a. 936-940 Mission Street (aka Chronicle Hotel), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 013;
 - b. 948 Mission Street (aka Piedmont Hotel/Alkain Hotel), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 017;
 - c. 966 Mission Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 019;
 - d. 968 Mission Street, (aka Toledo Scale Co.) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 020;
 - e. 972-976 Mission Street (aka Dohrmann Hotel Supply Company), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 021;
 - f. 980-984 Mission Street, (aka Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. Billiard Table Manufacturing) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 022;
 - g. 986 Mission Street/481 Jessie Street, (aka Hulse Bradford Carpets and Draperies) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 24;
 - h. 471 Jessie Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 28;
 - i. 431 Jessie Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 29;
 - j. 440-444 Jessie Street, (aka Wobbers Printing and Engraving) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 35;
 - k. 443 Stevenson Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 59;

- l. 2-4 Mint Plaza, (aka Hale Brother Warehouse and Offices) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 79;
- m. 10 Mint Plaza, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 113;
- n. 6-8 Mint Plaza, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3704, Lot No. 144;
- o. 953-957 Mission Street, (aka Ford Apartments/Mint Mall) Assessor's Parcel Block No. 3725, Lot No. 088

On each of the items, the HPC may choose to take an action in the form of a resolution. The HPC may approve, modify, or disapprove the initiation of the proposed conservation district designation or change in Article 11 designation.

Alternatively, the Commission may request additional research and information from the Planning Department to justify any of these three actions, and may continue the discussion to a future hearing pending submittal of any additional information the Commission may require.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

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

- On May 2, 2018 the Historic Preservation Commission may initiate and recommend the designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District
- If on May 2, 2018 the Historic Preservation Commission initiates and recommends the designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District Historic, on May 10, 2018 the Planning Commission will provide review and comment on the Mint-Mission Conservation District
- Final actions on the designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District will be undertaken by the Board of Supervisors at a later date

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

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

Central SoMa Historic Context Statement

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

Central SoMa Survey

The Central SoMa Historic Resource Survey (2013-2014) involved gathering baseline property information for all buildings located within the Central SoMa Plan Area that had not been addressed by prior historic resources surveys, and those that had not been previously assigned California Historic

Resource Status Codes (CHRSC). The Central SoMa Historic Survey examined a total of 134 parcels within the Central SoMa Plan Area. Of these, 72 parcels were not documented, typically because the properties were vacant or not age eligible. A total of 31 properties were determined eligible for the California Register.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 11 – Conservation Districts

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

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

ARTICLE 11 – Designation of Buildings

Planning Code Section 1106 authorizes the designation or change of designation of a building through amendment of Appendices A, B, C and D of Article 11. Such designation or change of designation of a building may be initiated by motion of the Board of Supervisors, by resolution of the Planning Commission or the Historic Preservation Commission [former Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board], by application of the owner of the affected property, or by application of any historic preservation organization or group, or by the application of at least 50 registered voters of the City.

Pursuant to Planning Code Section 1106(h), the designation of a building may be changed if changes in Conservation District boundaries warrant such reclassification, or if physical changes to the building warrant such reclassification, or if due to passage of time, the building has become at least 40 years old and, therefore, eligible for reclassification, or if new information makes the building eligible for reclassification.

OWNER NOTIFICATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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

- **March 2014 - The Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey web page** was launched on the Department's website. The web page includes links to the draft Central SoMa Historic Context

Statement, as well as a map illustrating the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey. The website remains active and can be accessed at: <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3964>.

- **March 25, 2015 - Public outreach meetings** were held at the SPUR Urban Center to present the draft Central SoMa Historic Context Statement and the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey. In preparation for this meeting, postcards were mailed to the owners of surveyed properties informing them that the draft survey findings were available for review on the project website, and inviting them to attend the outreach meeting at the Spur Urban Center.
- **December 9, 2015** - A second public meeting at the SPUR Urban Center was held to solicit feedback on public benefits, including historic preservation. A postcard was mailed to public on February 29, 2016 in anticipation of the adoption hearing on March 16, 2016.
- **July 2015 - Presentation to SF Heritage** regarding the draft historic context statement and survey findings.
- **October 3, 2014 and January 15, 2014 - Meetings with the Central SoMa Survey Advisory Group** were held to solicit comments and suggestions based on the draft *Central SoMa Historic Context Statement* and the draft findings of the Central SoMa Historic Resources Survey.
- **March 1, 2018, March 29, 2018 and April 12, 2018 - Notification of Historic Preservation Commission initiation hearing** was mailed to property owners.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Since hearing notice was mailed out, the Department has received inquiries from property owners with general questions regarding Article 11 Conservation District designation, Transferable Development Rights (TDR), and the requirements and review process for building alterations and Permits to Alter. The Department received one letter from the owner of 956-960 Mission Street with general questions about designation and suggesting the exclusion of properties on the west side of Mission Street. The owner also expressed concerns over any financial impacts of designation.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT DESIGNATION

The Mint-Mission Conservation District is representative of the post-1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire reconstruction period and the evolution of land use patterns at the northern edge of the South of Market neighborhood dating to the mid-nineteenth century. The district embodies the historic function of the blocks immediately south of Market Street as a transition zone between the large-scale commercial uses along Market Street and the predominately industrial uses to the south. This land use pattern was replicated during the reconstruction of South of Market following the 1906 earthquake and fire.

The district retains a mix of small to mid-scale residential, commercial and industrial buildings reflective of SoMa's role as the center of industrial production in San Francisco and the major supplier of mining equipment, heavy machinery and other goods to the western states during the mid-nineteenth century. Constructed between 1906 and 1930, the district's buildings include several warehouses and industrial lofts, three residential hotels with commercial ground floors, and a former bank. The district is

particularly notable as it is a survivor of the extensive redevelopment of SoMa in the late twentieth century during which much of the building stock from the period when the neighborhood served as the city's industrial and manufacturing center was razed. Other than portions of the New Montgomery-Mission-Second Street Conservation District, there are no other blocks north of Howard Street or east of 6th Street which so strongly retain this historic mix of residential hotels, small-scale commercial buildings, warehouses and manufacturing facilities.

The district encompasses a cohesive concentration of reinforced concrete and brick masonry buildings featuring Classical Revival style design influences. The use of Classical design elements, more so than any other style, typified early 20th century commercial architecture in San Francisco. Common examples of Classical Revival design include the use of corniced rooflines, frequently with brackets or modillions; dentil moldings; applied cast shield or swag ornaments; and arched openings. These design details are frequently strongest on residential and mixed-use buildings, and less pronounced on industrial buildings. The Mint-Mission district is also distinct as most of the buildings are constructed on through-lots and have visible rear elevations.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the HPC adopt a resolution to initiate designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District under Article 11 of the Planning Code.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The designation of the district meets the eligibility requirements for listing on both the California Register of Historical Places and as a San Francisco Article 11 Conservation District.
- The proposed district contains 19 Significant or Contributory Buildings which possesses substantial overall architectural, aesthetic or historic qualities justifying additional controls to protect and promote those qualities as required in Planning Code Section 1103.
- The district is a rare remaining enclave of small to mid-scale residential, commercial and industrial buildings.
- The district encompasses a cohesive concentration of reinforced concrete and brick masonry buildings featuring Classical Revival style design influences.

DOWNTOWN PLAN POLICIES

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

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

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

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

The creation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District advances the basic principles of the Downtown Plan and reinforces the unique sense of place provided by the Conservation District. The designation would preserve areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value by recognizing their cultural and historical value and providing mechanisms for review of proposed alterations as well as incentives for property owners to maintain and preserve their buildings. The designation will require that the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features.

CENTRAL SOMA PLAN POLICIES

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

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

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

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

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

OBJECTIVE 8.6.2: Promote innovative and contextually-appropriate design.

The designation of the Mint-Mission Conservation District, with its historic mix of residential hotels, small-scale commercial buildings, warehouses and manufacturing facilities recognizes and supports the preservation of the industrial history of SoMa. The designation protects "Significant" and "Contributory" cultural heritage properties and prevents demolition or insensitive alterations by requiring that the Planning Department and/or the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed modifications that may have an impact on character-defining features. The Planning Department and Historic Preservation Commission will also review proposed new construction in the district to ensure it is compatible with the character of the district.

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix K to Article 11 Mint-Mission Conservation District
Map of Mint-Mission Conservation District
Designation Ordinance
Resolution to Initiate Designation of Article 11 Conservation District
Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms