



REQUIREMENTS FOR SEAT TWO OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

September 16, 2019

As the leading historic preservation organization in the city, San Francisco Heritage (Heritage) is committed to ensuring that all candidates for the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) meet the minimum professional qualifications set forth in City Charter Section 4.135. Our dedication to the commission's existence, integrity, and its essential role in protecting San Francisco's architectural and cultural legacy is unparalleled. Two current Heritage Board members are former HPC commissioners.

In 2008 Heritage helped craft the charter language that defines the minimum qualifications for nominees to different seats on the commission. The intent of Section 4.135 is to ensure that decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, protection, and preservation of the city's historic resources are made by individuals who meet nationally accepted professional standards.

As stated in the City Charter, each of the two Historical Architect seats on the HPC must be filled by **“licensed architects meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic architecture.”*** These rigorous federal standards require specialized training and a “minimum of two years of full-time professional experience applying the theories, methods, and practices of Historic Architecture that enables professional judgments to be made about the evaluation, documentation, or treatment of historic structures.”

San Francisco Heritage has thoroughly reviewed the qualifications of Lydia So, who has been nominated for one of two seats on the HPC reserved for Historical Architects. We appreciate and thank Ms. So for making herself available to meet with Heritage staff and members of our Board's Projects & Policy Committee. The committee is comprised of individuals representing various preservation-related disciplines, including historic architecture, preservation planning, and architectural history.

During two meetings with Ms. So, Heritage inquired about her familiarity with the HPC, its policies and procedures, and fundamental preservation design standards. Although Ms. So has worked on projects involving historic buildings, she has not appeared before the HPC and has not served in the role of Historical Architect. Heritage does not question Ms. So's passion for the city's historic places, but we cannot verify that she possesses the specialized training and knowledge required to effectively discharge the responsibilities of Seat Two on the commission.

Please understand that our position is not personal but is based entirely on the mandatory requirements of the City Charter and on our organizational responsibility to advocate for the highest-qualified candidates for this commission. While we recognize Ms. So's impressive professional accomplishments and her outstanding commitment to public service as a member of the San Francisco Art Commission, among other community activities, Heritage does not believe that she meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for historic architecture.

There are other qualified individuals available who meet and exceed the minimum professional qualification standards for historic architecture and who would also enhance the diversity of the HPC. Heritage is committed to working closely with the Mayor's office to identify and support such a candidate.

* To review the complete *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards* for historic architecture, see www.nps.gov/history/local-law/gis/html/quals.html.