State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code
Other Listings
Review Code Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 1 *Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) 55 Polk St.

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted *a. County: San Francisco

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: San Francisco North, Calif. Date: 1956 (rev. 1973)

*c. Address: 55 Polk St. City: San Francisco Zip: 94102

d. UTM: Zone: 10 mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number (Map, Block, Lot): 0814-019

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

55 Polk St. is located on a 60' x 87' lot on the west side of Polk Street, between Fell and Hayes Streets. Built in 1917, 55 Polk St. is a 4-story, brick masonry, 31-unit apartment building designed in the Classical Revival style. The rectangular-plan building, clad in yellow brick, is capped by a flat roof. The foundation is not visible from the street. The primary façade faces east and is 5 bays wide. The first floor features an off-center, recessed main entrance in the fourth bay, fitted with a wood door with sidelights. The entrance is marked on the façade by a shallowly-arched surround with three keystones articulated in brick. The first story has paired, double-hung, one-over-one wood sash in the first, second, fourth and fifth bays with arched openings, segmental arch caps with three keystones. The third bay has two single windows with arched openings, identical sash and segmental arch caps and single keystones. This fenestration pattern continues on the upper three stories. The primary facade terminates in a metal cornice with brackets. Side elevations have shallow light wells centered on the elevations. The rear (west) elevation has an identical fenestration pattern to the façade, but has no decorative elements. The building appears to be in good condition.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) HP3. Multiple Family Property

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5b. Photo: (view and date)
View from northeast
9/6/2006

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: ☒ Historic
1917
SF Assessors Office

*P7. Owner and Address:
Joseph Imbelloni
3260 19th St
San Francisco, CA

*P8. Recorded by:
Page & Turnbull, Inc.
724 Pine Street
San Francisco, CA 94108

*P9. Date Recorded:
9/6/2006

*P10. Survey Type:
Reconnaissance

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none") None

*Attachments: ☒ None ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☐ Continuation Sheet ☐ Building, Structure, and Object Record ☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record ☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (list)

State of California The Resources Agency Primary #
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI No.

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*NRHP Status Code 3CS

Page 1 of 3 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 55 Polk Street

B1. Historic Name 55 Polk Street

B2. Common Name 55 Polk Street

B3. Original Use Multiple Family Property B4. Present Use: Multiple Family Property

* B5. Architectural Style Classical Revival

*B6. Construction History
55 Polk Street was constructed in 1917.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features none

B9a. Architect W. G. Hind . Builder _____

*B10. Significance: Theme 1906 Earthquake and Fire Reconstruction Area: Civic Center

Period of Significance 1906-1929 Property Type Residential Applicable Criteria 3

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

In regard to California Register Criterion 1 (History/Events) this property is considered under the 1906 Earthquake and Fire Reconstruction context of the Historic Context Statement, Market & Octavia Neighborhood Plan Area, since it is both an identified building type (Residential/apartment building) and dates from the Period of Significance (1906-1929) of that context. Based on its appearance, the building is also considered under California Register Criterion 3 (Design/Construction). There is no indication the property is eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Important Persons) or Criterion 4 (Information Potential).

Criterion 1:

55 Polk Street was designed by the architect W. G. Hind and constructed in 1917 for the identified first owner, a doctor named Clyde S. Payne.

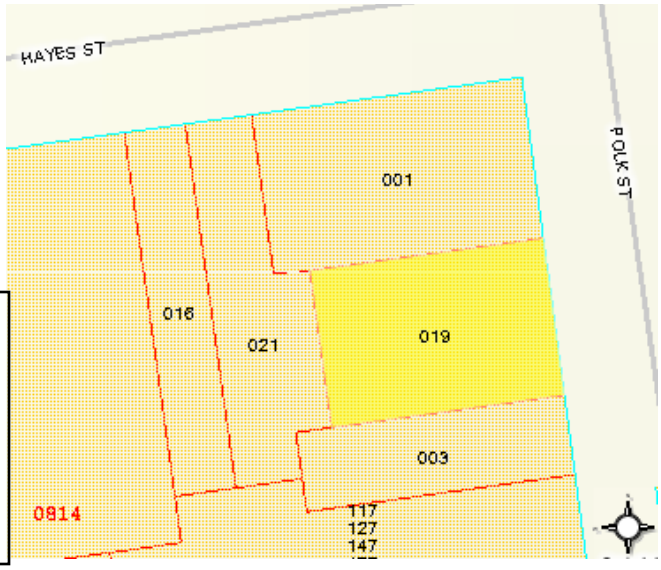
(continued)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP3. Multiple Family Property

*B12. References: Historic Context Statement, Market & Octavia Neighborhood Plan Area, Page & Turnbull, Inc. July 20, 2007

B13. Remarks

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



*B14. Evaluator Kelley & VerPlanck

*Date of Evaluation 5/1/2010

(This space reserved for official comments)

B10: Significance (continued)

According to the 1899 Sanborn map, the block was occupied by two- and three-story dwellings and shops, as well as a boot and shoe factory and a hotel on the corner of Polk and Fell Streets. 55 Polk Street is located in the area that burned in the fire after the 1906 Earthquake. The 1913 Sanborn Map shows that the most of the east half of the block where the building is located was vacant, except for a fire dispatch building on Hayes Street. The 1950 Sanborn map shows the present building containing 32 apartments with adjacent garages and repair shops operated by the nearby California State Automobile Association, the Auto Association headquarters building, the U.S. Navy Clinic, shops, surface parking lots, and gas and oil stations.

What is now the San Francisco Civic Center district was entirely destroyed during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. Planned as early as 1899, the Civic Center project took off in the wake of the publication of the Burnham Plan in 1906, although construction did not really begin until 1910. Outside of the core of public buildings facing Civic Center Plaza, the outlying parts of the Civic Center were developed with a variety of commercial and residential buildings, many of them serving public employees and patrons. To address the growing need for housing in the area, developers erected apartment buildings along Polk, Franklin, and Gough streets, as well as the intersecting east-west streets.

55 Polk Street is an example of an apartment building, a type of building that is widespread in older parts of San Francisco, particularly areas reconstructed after the 1906 Earthquake. Apartment buildings are generally located on a large lot with an arrangement of multiple living units on each floor with access to individual units provided through a central lobby. The majority of apartment buildings constructed at this time were designed in Revival styles, including Classical, Mission, and Spanish Colonial Revival, as well as Craftsman style.

Although 55 Polk Street's Hayes Valley location and apartment building typology express a general association with the 1907 Earthquake and Fire and Reconstruction period of significance, the building's 1917 construction date places it outside of the primary scope of this period and renders it unable to accurately express its association wit this broad pattern of San Francisco history.

Criterion 3:

The architect W. G. Hind was an active apartment building designer in San Francisco in the years following the 1906 Earthquake. Notable buildings by him include the Elliston Apartments (1908) at 677 Ellis Street, Arcadia Apartments (1910) at 522 Hyde Street, and the Larkin-Post Apartment (1916) on Post Street, which was owned, like the building at 55 Polk Street, by Clyde S. Payne.

The Classical Revival style began to emerge in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, particularly in the wake of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The style became popular during the Progressive Era for major public buildings and churches, gradually disseminating down to residential buildings during the first decade of the twentieth century. Characteristics of the Classical Revival style include symmetrical massing and façade arrangement, typically massive scale (for most non-residential buildings), masonry cladding or stucco scored to resemble masonry, and the incorporation of classically inspired elements derived from both Classical Roman and Italian Renaissance architecture, including segmental arched openings, full-height piers and pilasters rendered in one of the classical orders, quoins, prominent door and window hoods, classical entablatures and stringcourses, modillioned cornices, and details such as cartouches or garlands on the spandrels panels and friezes. For public assembly or civic buildings, full classical porticos or domes were often used. In San Francisco, the Civic Center was designed in a monumental Classical Revival style known as the "American Renaissance." 55 Polk Street exhibits characteristics of the Classical Revival style in its yellow brick masonry cladding, entry with wood door and sidelights and a segmental-arched surround, symmetrical fenestration pattern with double-hung wood-sash windows in segmental-arched openings, and metal cornice. Although a modest example of the style, its design is in keeping with the public buildings of the adjoining Civic Center proper.

(continued)

B10: Significance (continued)

55 Polk Street retains sufficient integrity to embody the distinctive characteristics of the Classical Revival type, period and method of construction.

Integrity:

In regard to integrity, 55 Polk Street appears to have undergone no substantial alterations since its construction in 1917. Character-defining features include its height and rectangular massing, yellow brick masonry cladding, entry with wood door and sidelights and a segmental-arched surround, fenestration pattern with double-hung wood-sash windows housed within segmental-arched openings, and bracketed sheet metal cornice. 55 Polk Street retains the following aspects of integrity: location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The setting has been altered with adjacent high rise building and surface parking lots.

Conclusion:

55 Polk Street appears to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 3 (Design/Construction) as a modest but well-preserved example of a Classical Revival apartment building. The building retains sufficient integrity to embody the distinctive characteristics of the Classical Revival type, period and method of construction.

Character Defining Features:

Character-defining features include its yellow brick masonry cladding, entry with wood door and sidelights and segmental-arched surround, symmetrical fenestration pattern with double-hung wood-sash windows in segmental-arched openings, and bracketed sheet metal cornice.