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) 51-55 Webster 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 Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted *a. County: San Francisco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: 51-55 Webster St. City: San Francisco Zip: 94117

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

e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number (Map, Block, Lot): 0868-007

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

51-55 Webster St. is located on a 1,947 square foot corner lot on the west side of Webster Street, between Hermann and Germania Streets. Built circa 1885, 51-55 Webster Street is a three-story, wood-frame, multiple-family building designed in the Italianate style and contains two or more units. The rectangular-plan building, clad in scored concrete simulating masonry block, is capped by a flat roof. The primary façade faces east along Webster Street and is two bays wide. The first story features a chamfered bay window in the left bay and a recessed, arched entryway in the right bay accessed via a quarter turn staircase that begins in the raised basement story below. The entrance contains a recessed wood door with molded surround and transom. The upper story contains a chafered bay window in the left bay and a single window in the right bay directly above the entryway below. The secondary façade is three bays wide and faces south along Hermann St. The raised basement story features a garage entryway containing a paneled door in each bay. The upper two stories are characterized by a chamfered central bay window with and a single window in the far left bay. Both façades terminate in an entablature featuring brackets and a cornice. All windows feature wood, arched, one-over-one sashes with molded surrounds. The building appears to be in good condition but has been stripped and altered.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) HP3: Multiple family property

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

P5a. Photo

P5b. Photo: (view and date)
View from east
8/28/2006

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: ☒ Historic
1900; rev. date ca. 1885
Sanborn Fire Insurance Co.

*P7. Owner and Address:
Harry Arlo Nimmo Revoc Trust
51 Potomac St.
San Francisco, CA

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

*P9. Date Recorded:
8/28/2006

*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 6L

 *Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) 51-55 Webster Street

B1. Historic Name 51-55 Webster Street

B2. Common Name 51-55 Webster Street

B3. Original Use Single Family Residence B4. Present Use: Multiple Family Residence

* B5. Architectural Style Italianate

*B6. Construction History

51-55 Webster was constructed in 1876. Alterations include scored stucco cladding, entry, and added garage openings on secondary elevation.

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

*B8. Related Features none

B9a. Architect unknown . Builder unknown (likely owner)

*B10. Significance: Theme Gilded Age of Merchant Builders Area: Lower Haight

Period of Significance 1870-1906 Property Type Residential/Single Family Applicable Criteria n/a

(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 Gilded Age of Merchant Builders context of the Historic Context Statement, Market & Octavia Neighborhood Plan Area, since it is both an identified building type (Residential/Single Family Dwelling(modified)) and dates from the Period of Significance (1870-1906) of that context. There is no indication the property is eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 (Important Persons), Criterion 3 (Design/Construction), or Criterion 4 (Information Potential).

Criterion 1:

51-55 Webster Street was constructed in 1876, likely by the first owner, a plumber and gasfitter named Jonathan Gray. Research has identified no known architect. Gray was a partner in the plumbing and gasfitting firm Sutherland & Gray. Water Records show that Gray applied for tap service on April 6, 1876. In the 1880 Census, Gray resided here with his wife Margaret and five children. The 1900 census shows the property occupied by renters. (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

*B14. Evaluator Kelley & VerPlanck

*Date of Evaluation 5/1/2010

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)

(This space reserved for official comments)

B10: Significance (continued)

The 1901 Block Book gives the owner as Henry Crowell. 1906 and 1909 Block Books indicate that the property was owned by Gus and L. Leger and the 1910 Census lists Edwin Meyers, secretary of a fraternal organization, and George Fitzgerald, a coal engineer, as renters. The 1936 City Directory lists Samuel Lee at this address. The 1940 City Directory lists Miss L. Lutes here. In 1953 the City Directory lists Christian Thoralson and Lester Bradley, a wholesalesman with Baxter Trading.

The 1893 and 1899 Sanborn maps describe the original single family residence as divided into three flats. The 1950 Sanborn Map continues to describe this building as a two-story over basement containing three flats. The building was constructed as a single family dwelling and is now used as residential flats.

Laid out in 1856 as part of the Western Addition, the area known today as the Lower Haight began to develop during the early 1880s after cable car service opened along Haight Street. The majority of the section of the Lower Haight within the Survey Area was not built up until the late 1890s when the City ceded the northern half of Duboce Park to a plaintiff in a lawsuit, who then subsequently subdivided and developed the area. 51-55 Webster appears to be one of the earliest extant buildings constructed in this area. With its 1876 construction date, Lower Haight location, and building typology, the building clearly expresses an association with a broad pattern of San Francisco history.

Integrity:

51-55 Webster Street has undergone several alterations since construction, including the circa 1893 reconfiguration from a single family dwelling to a multi-unit residential building containing three flats. Additional alterations include recladding with scored stucco, a two-story shed-roof addition at the rear of the building, and the insertion of four garages in the first story of the Hermann Street facade. It appears likely that the building was raised to accommodate these garages, which also required alteration of the entry stair to a quarter turn pattern. The building retains integrity of location, setting, association, and feeling. It retains partial integrity of design due to the reconfiguration from a single family dwelling to flats, the insertion of garages, the raising of the building, the rear addition and the alteration of the stairs. The building also retains only partial integrity of materials and workmanship, due to the stucco recladding.

Conclusion:

51-55 Webster Street does not appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources or local designation under any criterion due to its loss of integrity. However, it is a fairly well-preserved early example of a single-family dwelling (modified) constructed in the Lower Haight area during the Gilded Age Merchant Builders period of significance. Of special note is the 1876 construction date, which places this building as one of the first in an area that experienced rapid residential development in the decades following its construction. Additionally, the reconfiguration of the building from a single family dwelling to flats occurred prior to 1893, giving these alterations ample time to gain historic significance. Despite reduced integrity due to facade and design alterations, the building retains sufficient character defining features to merit special consideration in local planning.

Character Defining Features:

Character defining features include rectangular massing, recessed entrance with two glazed wood doors with transoms and molded surrounds, double height canted bays at both street facades featuring arched, one-over-one wood sash windows with molded surrounds, entablature and bracketed cornice.