



Important Places and City Landmarks

COMMUNITY GUIDE

San Franciscans,

Thank you for supporting the work of the San Francisco Planning Department. In this guide, you will find information about programs and resources that help us navigate change in our city while preserving what is meaningful to our communities.

You will learn how the SF Survey and the Landmark Designation programs assist community advocates and decision-makers in gaining the knowledge needed to make informed land-use decisions and ensure our important places are ready for, and can contribute to, our shared future.

We invite you to explore the resources included in this guide and hope you will join efforts to expand our collective sense of belonging and understanding of our city's history.

Thank you for your contributions,

SF Survey Team
San Francisco Planning Department

About SF Survey

The San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey) is a multi-year program to identify and document places and resources of cultural, historical, and architectural importance to San Francisco's diverse communities. SF Survey brings together efforts to inform the Planning Department's work on land-use decisions, environmental review, building permit applications, landmark designations, and cultural heritage initiatives. SF Survey efforts are guided by collaborations with community partners, historic preservation peers, culture bearers, and community members.

Contact us at:

 CPC.Survey@sfgov.org

 (628) 652-7573

Who decides which places are important and should be preserved for future generations?

Community members, community historians, and knowledge bearers have a central role in identifying and interpreting the places that hold meaning to their communities. The San Francisco Planning Department is tasked with gaining an understanding of the historic, architectural, and cultural associations of buildings and places in our city. To ensure knowledge of what is meaningful to communities guides their work, staff collaborates with community partners, including Cultural Districts, the San Francisco Public Library, and cultural and history advocacy organizations.

How do we learn about important places in our city and their meaning?

San Francisco is a dynamic place, home to diverse communities and a rich network of organizations and institutions engaged in cultural and history advocacy efforts. Knowledge about important places in our city and their meaning is actively shared through public programming, community-led efforts, and archives. Another way we learn about important places is through the Planning Department's SF Survey program and the *Citywide Historic Context Statement*. This information is documented in the SF Cultural Heritage digital platform and San Francisco Property Information Map. Additional efforts to preserve important places include the Landmark Designations Program, the historic resource review process for new projects, and cultural heritage initiatives.

Why do SF Survey efforts matter?

The information gathered through SF Survey facilitates the historic resource review process for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), building permit applications, new development projects and area plans, and guides work on landmark designations. SF Survey efforts support community-led cultural initiatives through partnerships, programming, research, and historic preservation protections and initiatives. For example, the Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples (2041 Larkin Street) was identified as an eligible landmark in the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*. SF Survey partnered with church leadership and congregation members to designate the property and in 2023, the church became the City's 309th landmark.

What are the steps that lead to identifying places of cultural, historical, and architectural importance through the SF Survey program?

- **Step 1: Gather information.** Staff review information in the *Citywide Historic Context Statement*, past documentation and unadopted surveys, the San Francisco Property Information Map (PIM), and Assessor records.
- **Step 2: Conduct fieldwork.** Staff survey buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites with an unknown historic status that were constructed 45 years ago or older (age-eligible). From the public right-of-way, staff take photographs and study building modifications. Local community organizations and the public are informed about ongoing efforts.
- **Step 3: Research and evaluation.** Staff undertake additional research for historic and cultural resources and provide initial evaluations for the places surveyed. Considerations include architectural qualities, as well as associations with important people, organizations, events, or traditions that contribute to our national, state, or local history or cultural heritage. Local community organizations and the public are invited to learn more about SF Survey and share their knowledge.
- **Step 4: Review and adoption of “living” findings.** “Living” findings include the identification of places that appear eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Local community organizations, community partners, community members, senior preservation planners, District Supervisors, and the Historic Preservation Commission are involved in the review of findings. Owners, occupants, and stewards of buildings and sites surveyed are notified and also involved. With community input, the Historic Preservation Commission adopts the findings.

Portal Theatre, December 1925.
(OpenSFHistory / wnp5.50234)



What happens once SF Survey “living” findings are adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission?

SF Survey “living” findings continue to be updated as new information is shared and through community engagement. After the adoption of findings, Planning Department staff:

- Integrates new information in San Francisco Property Information Map and SF Cultural Heritage (public digital resources);
- Updates “living” findings and keeps track of new information shared through active community engagement and public programming opportunities; and
- Recommends places for the local historic register as City Landmarks, through Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code.

What is the Landmark Designations Program?

This program is an effort to locally designate important places as City Landmarks which have been previously identified as historic through the *Citywide Historic Context Statement*, SF Survey, and/or other past survey efforts. The program prioritizes the designation of places which are most vulnerable and have property owner and community support.

What is the process to nominate a City Landmark?

Landmark designations are initiated by the Historic Preservation Commission or the Board of Supervisors. Anyone is welcome to submit a landmark designation application or suggest important places for consideration as San Francisco landmarks. Please contact CPC.Landmarks@sfgov.org with questions.

Where is SF Survey fieldwork happening?

Since 2023, the SF Survey team has prioritized fieldwork in Neighborhood Commercial Districts. In 2025, staff started fieldwork in residential areas, beginning with the Sunset neighborhood. More information on survey phasing and upcoming areas is available here: <https://sfplanning.org/project/citywide-cultural-resources-survey#phasing>.

How can I find out if my business, organization, or home is located in a historic building or district?

To check if your property has been identified as historic, please see this link here: <https://sfplanninggis.org/pim>.

My building or site has been identified as historic. What does this mean, and do I need to take any action?

A historic building or site can continue to be used, maintained, repaired, and adapted. Some changes will require review by a preservation planner to ensure important qualities are preserved. The purpose is to ensure the building or site continues to contribute to our understanding of San Francisco’s history and is shared with future generations. Important places determined as eligible for listing on local, state, and federal historic registers may qualify to apply for preservation incentives. <https://sfplanning.org/preservation-incentives>

How can community members contribute or help advance cultural heritage and historic preservation efforts?

Reading this guide is a great way to show your support for cultural heritage and historic preservation efforts. Informed community members can help advance these efforts by sharing information and connecting staff with local historians and community knowledge bearers.

We invite you to consider the following guiding questions:

- Can you share additional knowledge that could help inform SF Survey?
- Are there other important places missing that should be considered?
- To contribute, please see our online resources on the last page and/or contact staff at: CPC.Survey@sfgov.org, or call (628) 652-7573.

ONLINE RESOURCES

SF Survey



SF Survey includes the development of the *Citywide Historic Context Statement*; Fieldwork, Research, and Evaluation of age-eligible properties; Adoption of “Living” Findings at the Historic Preservation Commission; Community Engagement; and maintaining the SF Cultural Heritage platform.



To learn more about SF Survey efforts, please visit:

<https://sfplanning.org/sfsurvey>

SF Survey Newsletter



To receive news about the program and upcoming events, we invite you to sign up for our newsletter:



<https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/2000646/1960242/>

Community Stories



When you think about the places, people, events, or traditions that are important to you and have shaped your community, what comes to mind?

Everyone has a role in sharing and sustaining culture. Your contributions will help inform SF Survey efforts and enhance our collective sense of belonging and understanding of our city’s history. Upload photos, newspaper clips, audio, and memories to share your story.



You can share by using the Community Stories form here:

<https://sfculturalheritage.org/plugins/community-stories-form>

SF Cultural Heritage



SF Cultural Heritage is San Francisco’s “living” cultural resources inventory.



To learn more about SF Cultural Heritage, please visit:

<https://sfculturalheritage.org>

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