



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.

### What is SF Survey?

The SF Survey brings together interconnected efforts that inform the Planning Department's work on land-use decisions, landmark designations and cultural heritage initiatives. These efforts are guided by collaborations with community partners, historic preservation peers, culture bearers, and community members, to ensure knowledge of what is meaningful to communities guides the work of the Planning Department.

SF Survey includes the development of Historic Context Statements; Fieldwork, Research, and Evaluation of age-eligible properties; Adoption of Findings at the Historic Preservation Commission; and maintaining the SF Cultural Heritage digital site.

### Why is SF Survey needed?

*To plan for our shared futures.* San Francisco is a culturally layered and dynamic place. Preservation efforts like SF Survey help communities hold conversations on how to navigate change while keeping what is meaningful for the benefit of existing and future generations.

*To acknowledge the past.* The Planning Department and the historic preservation profession have been responsible for assessing the cultural and historical "value" of places. In the past, these "expert" driven evaluations and processes have excluded American Indian, Black, and other communities of color, resulting in a narrow and incomplete approach to the interpretation and preservation of what is collectively valued and protected. SF Survey is an effort to expand our collective sense of belonging and understanding of the City's history by better reflecting the diverse histories and values of San Francisco's communities.

### What are the goals of SF Survey?

SF Survey efforts *support community-led cultural initiatives* through partnerships, programming, research, and historic preservation protections and incentives.

The information gathered through SF Survey will *facilitate the historic review process* for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), building permit applications, new development projects and area plans.

### What is included in SF Survey Fieldwork efforts?

The Planning Department is tasked with surveying tangible aspects of our environment such as buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites that were constructed more than 45 years ago (age-eligible). Landscapes, archeological resources, public works of art, or flora such as trees are other examples of what may be included in surveys. Intangible aspects may also be included. Oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, festivals, and traditional crafts are often tied directly to buildings or sites and play an important role in sustaining and transmitting knowledge across generations.

### What are the anticipated outcomes for communities?

Outcomes can include policy recommendations, for example, policies to incentivize businesses, protect community spaces, and interpret significant sites whether the physical fabric of a building exists or has been lost. Properties determined as eligible for listing on local, state, and federal historic registers may qualify to apply for preservation incentives.

New tools emerging from SF Survey will support the work of community history advocates and City planners, enabling them to identify, document, recognize, and protect historic resources that hold meaning to San

Francisco's communities. These "living" tools are publicly accessible and will be updated as research progresses and new information is shared. For instance, the *SF Cultural Heritage* site hosts information on the historic resource status for age-eligible properties and links to relevant research, Historic Context Statements, information received through *Community Stories*, and other community-led initiatives like the Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategies (CHHESS) reports.

### Who decides which places and resources are historic and should be preserved for future generations?

The Department is tasked with evaluating the historic significance of buildings, structures, objects, districts and sites. These evaluations are guided by the Citywide Historic Context Statement (a growing body of work), and informed by the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service, and the California Register of Historical Resources. Draft evaluations of surveyed properties are proposed by Planning staff and shared with communities and the Historic Preservation Commission for review and input. Community members, community historians and knowledge bearers have a central role in identifying and interpreting the resources that hold meaning to their communities. To reach communities, advance shared goals, and align knowledge-sharing patterns, Department staff is collaborating with community partners, including local library branches, Cultural Districts, and community-led cultural and history advocacy organizations.

### What is the process to nominate a local Landmark?

The Planning Department conducts historic and cultural resource surveys to identify significant properties, but the Planning Code does not allow the Planning Department to initiate official designation of resources for listing as a local Landmark. Official designations may primarily be initiated by the Historic Preservation Commission or the Board of Supervisors. Property owners and community members are welcome to advocate for official designation by contacting the SF Survey team.

## Community Stories

**Everyone has a role in sharing and sustaining culture.**

We invite you to join this effort by sharing photos, memories, and/or histories that you feel are important to the story of your community, neighborhood, and/or San Francisco. Your stories will inform SF Survey Findings and enhance our collective sense of belonging and understanding of the City's history.

You can share by using the Community Stories form <https://sf-culturalheritage.org/plugins/community-stories-form>



Or contact us at:  
[CPC.Survey@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.Survey@sfgov.org) or (628) 652-7573

### Helpful Resources

SF Survey webpage: <https://sfplanning.org/sfsurvey>  
SF Cultural Heritage site: <https://sf-culturalheritage.org>

For information on the Planning Department's Preservation Programs, incentives, and evaluations please visit: <https://sfplanning.org/preservation>

### SF Survey Podcasts

Learn more about SF Survey and related efforts by tuning in to your favorite podcasts:

Western Neighborhood Project:  
<https://www.outsidelands.org/podcast/>

### SF Survey Languages

三藩市全市文化資源調查 (SF Survey) 正在進行中! 中文詢問請電 (628)652-7550.

iEl estudio de los recursos culturales de la ciudad de San Francisco (SF Survey) ya comenzó! Para información en Español llamar al (628) 652-7550.

Ang Survey sa mga Mapagkukunang Pangkultura ng San Francisco (Ang SF Survey) ay parating na! Para sa impormasyon sa Filipino tumawag sa (628) 652-7550.

