



SF Histories: Citywide Historic Context Statement

SF Histories (Citywide Historic Context Statement) is a collection of **written research documents** that describes the histories, communities, and architectural patterns that shape San Francisco. These documents are developed by the Planning Department in collaboration with historians, researchers, community partners, cultural practitioners, and knowledge bearers. Community knowledge plays a central role in shaping how stories are included and how places are understood.

SF Histories is a living resource. It builds on earlier research while continuing to grow as new contexts and community input are added. Lived experience, memory, and local knowledge help identify places that may not stand out based on architecture alone but are deeply meaningful to the people connected to them.

What Goes into the Citywide Historic Context Statement

The Citywide Historic Context Statement is made up of many smaller research documents that each focus on a topic, community, time period, building type, or neighborhood. Together, they tell a fuller story of San Francisco's history.

There are four main types of Context Statements:

- **Thematic:** major events and citywide trends
- **Architectural:** building styles and design periods
- **Cultural:** histories of communities and lived experiences
- **Geographic:** development of specific neighborhoods

SF CULTURAL HERITAGE

SF Histories is part of **SF Cultural Heritage**, San Francisco's historic preservation program. It brings together community knowledge, cultural history, and preservation tools to recognize and care for the places and traditions that matter to San Francisco's diverse communities.

SF Histories: Understanding our Shared History

SF Survey: Identifying Historic and Cultural Resources

SF Places: Recognizing Important Places

To learn more about our efforts, scan the QR code or visit our website: sfplanning.org/preservation



What SF Histories DOES

- ✓ Guides what places are identified and evaluated through SF Survey
- ✓ Supports research into a place's potential historic and cultural significance
- ✓ Broadens understanding of history by including stories that may be less visible or less documented
- ✓ Provides a framework for more consistent and informed evaluation

What SF Histories DOES NOT DO

- ✗ Automatically designate or protect a site as a landmark
- ✗ Make final decisions about any individual property
- ✗ Change property rights on their own
- ✗ Require changes to a property or how it is used

Recognizing Intangible Cultural Heritage

Many important histories are **intangible**, such as cultural practices, community traditions, visual and performing arts, activism, language, and everyday gathering. Even when the history is intangible, it often connects to **real places** where community life happened and continues today. Historic Context Statements help recognize:

- The community histories and traditions connected to a place
- The activities that happened there (and why they mattered)
- The cultural meaning of places that may look ordinary from the outside

Get Involved!

This important work is ongoing and collaborative with many ways to get involved. You can:

- Share stories and knowledge about places that matter
- Share photos, flyers, documents, memories, and oral histories
- Participate in outreach and research for statements in progress
- Sign up for updates and future opportunities to contribute

Are you interested in partnering with us?

We are looking to collaborate with community-based organizations, cultural advocacy groups, historic preservation peers, and community knowledge bearers to advance shared goals.

Contact us at:  CPC.Survey@sfgov.org



Photo credit: Wah Mei School

Learn more about our efforts: 



sfplanning.org/project/citywide-historic-context-statement

Share your stories: 



sfculturalheritage.org/plugins/community-stories-form

Subscribe for updates: 



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