DATE: May 13, 2014
TO: Tracy LaTray and Ralph Marchese, The Marchese Company
FROM: Lisa Gibson, Planning Department
RE: PPA Case No. 2014.0401U for 827-829 Kearny Street

Please find the attached Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) for the address listed above. You may contact the staff contact, Tania Sheyner, at (415) 575-9127 or Tania.Sheyner@sfgov.org, to answer any questions you may have, or to schedule a follow-up meeting.

Lisa Gibson, Senior Planner
Preliminary Project Assessment

Date: May 13, 2014
Case No.: 2014.0401U
Project Address: 827-829 Kearny Street
Block/Lot: 0194/004
Zoning: Chinatown-Community Business (CCB) Use District
Washington Broadway I Special Use District
65-N Height and Bulk District
Project Sponsor: Curtis Chan, The Buddha’s Universal Church
415-982-6116
Staff Contact: Tania Sheyner – (415) 575-9127
Tania.Sheyner@sfgov.org

DISCLAIMERS:

Please be advised that this determination does not constitute an application for development with the Planning Department. It also does not represent a complete review of the proposed project, a project approval of any kind, or in any way supersede any required Planning Department approvals listed below. The Planning Department may provide additional comments regarding the proposed project once the required applications listed below are submitted. While some approvals are granted by the Planning Department, some are at the discretion of other bodies, such as the Planning Commission or Historic Preservation Commission. Additionally, it is likely that the project will require approvals from other City agencies such as the Department of Building Inspection (DBI), Department of Public Works, and others. The information included herein is based on plans and information provided for this assessment and the Planning Code, General Plan, Planning Department policies, and local/state/federal regulations as of the date of this document, all of which are subject to change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project description is based on the Preliminary Project Assessment (PPA) Application submitted on March 14, 2014. If any of the underlying project description details change, then the information in this PPA would need to be re-evaluated.

The project site is a 3,227-square-foot (sf) lot located on the west side of Kearny Street, between Washington and Jackson Streets in the eastern portion of Chinatown. The proposal is to demolish the existing 5,600-square-foot, two-story commercial building (built circa 1922) and construct a new four-story-over-basement, mixed-use building that would take up the majority of the project site. The new building would contain approximately 12,000 sf of space, including approximately 1,800 sf of commercial space, 6,900 sf of institutional space (for use by the Buddha’s Universal Church as an assembly and instructional space), and 3,300 sf of residential uses (a 960-sf lobby on the ground floor and a single 2,300-sf dwelling unit on the fourth floor). No off-street parking spaces would be provided by the project sponsor. The project would require excavation of up to 15 feet below ground surface (bgs) to
accommodate the proposed foundation and basement level. The height of the proposed building would be approximately 50 feet.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The project initially requires the following environmental review. This review may be done in conjunction with the required approvals listed below, but must be completed before any project approval may be granted.

An Environmental Evaluation Application (EEA) is required for the project and may include the following:

1. Historic Review. The proposed project consists of the demolition of a building constructed 50 or more years ago (circa 1922). The existing building on the project site was evaluated in an area-wide historical resources survey as both an individual resource and a contributor and was found ineligible for national, state, or local designation. However, the subject property is located within the Chinatown Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and thus, Planning Department staff will evaluate potential project effects on the district, if any. Please see Preservation Comments on pp. 10-12 for further information. To assist in the analysis of the proposed project, the Department requires a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) report, focused on evaluating impacts of the proposed project on identified historical resource(s), to be prepared by a qualified professional who meets the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards in Historic Architecture or Architectural History. The HRE report should focus on evaluation of the proposed project for conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (Secretary’s Standards), including assessing compatibility of the new design with adjacent buildings, which are contributing resources to the Chinatown Historic District, and with the surrounding historic district. In evaluating the proposed project, the architecture, massing, height, materials, and articulation of the proposed construction should be considered. As noted in the Secretary’s Standards, design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic district. In either case, the new construction should not physically harm any historic fabric or features of contributing resources to the Chinatown Historic District. Additional design comments will be provided upon submittal of the EEA and HRE report.

As the proposed project will construct one new building of 10,000 square feet or more, use of the Historic Resource consultant pool for identification of a preservation consultant to prepare the HRE report is required. The Department will provide the project sponsor with a list of three consultants from the Historic Preservation Consultant Pool. Please contact Tina Tam, Senior Preservation Planner, at (415) 558-6325 to coordinate the selection of a consultant. Prior to commencement of this report, the consultant shall schedule a scoping meeting with the Department preservation staff to discuss the final scope of work for this project.

2. Archeological Study. The project site is located in an archeologically sensitive area. Therefore, the proposed project will require a Preliminary Archeological Review (PAR), which would be conducted in-house by Planning Department staff. This review requires documentation of potential project soils disturbance and the range of appropriate foundation types for the proposed structure. Such information is typically contained within the project’s geotechnical study, which should be submitted
Preliminary Project Assessment

827-829 Kearny Street

with the EEA. The PAR will determine whether or not additional archeological studies will be required as part of the environmental evaluation. Given the project site’s location in an archeologically sensitive area, an Archeological Research, Design, and Treatment Plan or other type of mitigation requirements may be imposed and would be directed by the Department’s archeology staff.

3. **Transportation Impact Study.** The proposed project at 827-829 Kearny Street does not propose any off-street parking spaces or curb cuts. The preliminary trip generation calculations indicate that the project would add less than 10 p.m. peak hour vehicle trips. Based on the Department’s preliminary review, a Transportation Impact Study is not anticipated for the proposed project. At the time of the EEA, the project sponsor should provide additional information regarding the number of employees for the proposed commercial use and additional information regarding the use and programming of the proposed institutional space, including typical weekday p.m. peak hour and daily trips and how many of those trips would be new as compared to the existing institutional uses in the existing and adjacent buildings. In addition, the project sponsor should show any streetscape improvements on project plans. A more complete review will be conducted by the Department once this information is provided.

4. **Air Quality.** The proposed project, which includes the demolition of an existing two-story building and the construction of a new four-story building at a total of approximately 12,000 sf (comprised of one dwelling unit, retail space and assembly and instructional uses), does not exceed the Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s (BAAQMD) construction and/or operational screening levels for criteria air pollutants. Therefore, an analysis of the project’s criteria air pollutant emissions is not likely to be required.

Project-related demolition, excavation, grading and other construction activities may cause wind-blown dust that could contribute particulate matter into the local atmosphere. To reduce construction dust impacts, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a series of amendments to the San Francisco Building and Health Codes referred hereto as the Construction Dust Control Ordinance (Ordinance 176-08, effective July 30, 2008) with the intent of reducing the quantity of dust generated during site preparation, demolition, and construction work in order to protect the health of the general public and of onsite workers, minimize public nuisance complaints, and to avoid orders to stop work by DBI. Pursuant to the Construction Dust Control Ordinance, the proposed project would be required to comply with applicable dust control requirements outlined therein.

In addition, San Francisco has partnered with the BAAQMD to inventory and assess air pollution and exposures from mobile, stationary, and area sources within San Francisco. Areas with poor air quality, termed “Air Pollutant Exposure Zones,” were identified. Land use projects within these Air Pollutant Exposure Zones require special consideration to determine whether the project’s activities would expose sensitive receptors to substantial air pollutant concentrations. Although the proposed project is not within an Air Pollutant Exposure Zone, improvement measures to further reduce potential air quality impacts for the proposed residential uses may be recommended for consideration by City decision makers.
5. **Greenhouse Gases.** *The City and County of San Francisco's Strategies to Address Greenhouse Gas Emissions* presents a comprehensive assessment of policies, programs, and ordinances that represents San Francisco's Qualified Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Strategy. Projects that are consistent with San Francisco's Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy would result in less-than-significant impacts from GHG emissions. In order to facilitate a determination of compliance with San Francisco’s Qualified GHG Reduction Strategy, the Planning Department has prepared a Greenhouse Gas Analysis Compliance Checklist.\(^1\) The project sponsor is required to submit the completed table regarding project compliance with the identified regulations and provide project-level details in the discussion column. This information will be reviewed by the environmental planner during the environmental review process to determine if the project would comply with San Francisco’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy. Projects that do not comply with an ordinance or regulation may be determined to be inconsistent with the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Strategy.

6. **Wind.** The proposed project would involve construction of a building approximately 50 feet in height. The height of the proposed building is not expected to cause adverse ground-level wind speeds resulting from the project. Therefore, a wind analysis study would not likely be required.

7. **Shadow.** The proposed project would result in construction of a building approximately 50 feet in height. Planning Code Section 295 requires that a shadow analysis be performed to determine whether a project has the potential to cast shadow on properties under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Commission. Department staff has prepared a preliminary shadow fan analysis that indicates the project would not cast new shadow on any properties under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department, nor would it cast shadows on any other parks or open spaces (see attached). Therefore, a shadow study would not be required.

8. **Tree Removal.** The Department of Public Works Code Section 8.02-8.11 requires disclosure and protection of landmark, significant, and street trees located on private and public property. Any tree identified in this Disclosure Statement must be shown on the site plans with size of the trunk diameter, tree height, and accurate canopy drip line. Please submit the Tree Planting and Protection Checklist with the EEA and ensure trees are appropriately shown on site plans.\(^2\)

9. **Geology.** The project sponsor is required to prepare a geotechnical investigation to identify the primary geotechnical concerns associated with the proposed project and the site. The geotechnical investigation would identify hazards and recommend minimization measures for potential issues regarding, but not limited to, soil preparation and foundation design. The geotechnical investigation should be submitted with the EEA and to assist in the archaeological review of the project (see Archaeological Resources section above).

10. **Hazardous Materials.** Based on the Preliminary Project Assessment Application, the required excavation is anticipated to be approximately 15 feet bgs to accommodate the proposed foundation and basement level. The project site is located within 100 feet of 850 Kearny Street, a site that

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previously contained an underground storage tank that has since been removed and the site remediated (San Francisco County LOP, Case #10729; this case was closed in 1997). Given the close proximity to the 850 Kearny Street site, hazardous materials may also be present beneath the project site. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) should be prepared and submitted with the EEA to determine the potential for site contamination and the level of exposure risk associated with the project. If any information is uncovered that suggests that subsurface contamination may be present beneath the project site, the proposed project may be subject to Article 22A of the Health Code, also known as the Maher Ordinance, which is administered and overseen by the Department of Public Health (DPH). Planning Department staff would advise the project sponsor whether referral to DPH is required. Pursuant to the Maher Ordinance, DPH staff would review the Phase I ESA and may require soil and/or groundwater sampling and analysis, as well as remediation of any site contamination. These steps are required to be completed prior to the issuance of any building permit.

11. Notification of a Project Receiving Environmental Review. Depending on the level of environmental review, a notice may be required to be sent to occupants of the project site and properties adjacent to the project site, as well as owners of properties within 300 feet of the project site at the initiation of the environmental review process. Please be prepared to provide these mailing labels upon request during the environmental review process.

If the additional analysis outlined above indicates that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the project may qualify for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption, in which case the Planning Department would issue a Certificate of Determination of Exemption from Environmental Review.

If the additional analysis performed after submittal of the Environmental Evaluation Application indicates that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, Planning Department staff would prepare an Initial Study to determine whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is needed. If the Department determines that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, the Department would issue a Preliminary Negative Declaration. If the Department finds that the project would have significant impacts that can be reduced to a less-than-significant level by mitigation measures agreed to by the project sponsor, then the Department would issue a Preliminary Mitigated Negative Declaration.

If the Initial Study process indicates that the project would result in a significant impact that cannot be mitigated to a less than significant level, an EIR will be required to be prepared by an environmental consultant from the Planning Department's environmental consultant pool. The Planning Department would provide more detail to the project sponsor regarding the EIR process should this level of environmental review be required.

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Environmental Evaluation Applications are available in the Planning Department lobby at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, at the Planning Information Center at 1660 Mission Street, and online at www.sfplanning.org.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPROVALS:

The project requires the following Planning Department approvals. These approvals may be reviewed in conjunction with the required environmental review, but may not be granted until after the required environmental review is completed.

1. **Building Permit Application.** A Building Permit Application is required for the demolition of the existing building, preparation of the site, and for the proposed new construction. Building Permit Applications are available at the Department of Building Inspection at 1660 Mission Street.

2. **Conditional Use Authorization.** The proposed project may be required to obtain a Conditional Use (CU) authorization for several proposed features. The Planning Commission must approve a CU Authorization for the proposed use for size exceeding 5,000 square feet in the Chinatown Community Business District (Planning Code Section 121.4, please see Preliminary Project Comment #1). The Planning Commission must also approve a CU authorization for a building exceeding 35 in height in the Chinatown Community Business District and/or a building exceeding bulk requirements as specified for N bulk districts (please see Preliminary Project Comments #11 and #12, respectively). Lastly, the Planning Commission must approve a CU authorization if the proposed retail use is envisioned as a formula retail use (please see Preliminary Project Comments #15).

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTIFICATIONS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Project sponsors are encouraged to conduct public outreach with the surrounding community and neighborhood groups early in the development process. Additionally, many approvals require a public hearing with an associated neighborhood notification. Differing levels of neighborhood notification are mandatory for some or all of the reviews and approvals listed above.

This project sponsor is required to conduct a **Pre-application** meeting with surrounding neighbors and registered neighborhood groups before a development application may be filed with the Planning Department. The Pre-application packet, which includes instructions and template forms, is available at www.sfplanning.org under the “Permits & Zoning” tab. All registered neighborhood group mailing lists are available online at www.sfplanning.org under the “Resource Center” tab.

PRELIMINARY PROJECT COMMENTS:

The following comments address specific Planning Code and other general issues that may significantly impact the proposed project. The project requires the following Planning Department approvals. These approvals may be reviewed in conjunction with the required environmental review, but may not be granted until after the required environmental review is completed. For the purpose of providing these

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comments, the ground floor is considered retail with accessory space for institutional and residential uses above, second and third floors institutional, and the fourth floor is residential.

1. **Gross Floor Area.** Section 121.4 requires a CU authorization for use sizes exceeding 5,000 square feet in the Chinatown Community Business District. The project proposes an "Other Institutional" use size of 6,994 square feet. Therefore, a CU authorization for gross floor area is required.

2. **Rear Yard.** Section 134.1 requires the project to provide a rear yard of at least 25 percent coverage of the lot area at the lowest level occupied for dwelling in the Chinatown Mix Use Districts. The non-covered area requirement may be provided in a location other than the rear yard including balconies and rooftop terraces if the new structure does not significantly impede the access of light and air to adjacent properties, as determined by the Zoning Administrator. The project proposes one dwelling unit on the fourth floor. The lot area is 3,228.50 square feet and thus, the 25 percent rear yard coverage should be minimum 807 square feet. Please show on drawings how the project would meet the rear yard requirement.

3. **Open Space, Residential.** Section 135 requires 48 square feet of open space (private or common) for each dwelling unit. Additionally, any such open spaces must meet the dimensional requirements of Subsections (f) and (g). The Common Housing Deck and balcony on the fourth floor proposed for this project appear to meet the minimum six foot dimension. Please clarify on drawings how the project would meet the open space requirement for residential use, whether it would be private or common, and the proposed location of the designated open space.

4. **Open Space, Non-Residential.** Section 135.1(a) requires, for commercial and institutional development exceeding 10,000 gross square feet in the Chinatown Community Business District, one square foot of open space for every 50 square feet of gross floor area of commercial or institutional space. This project proposes a total of 12,027 square feet of development, of which 8,761 square feet is commercial and institutional space. Therefore, 175 square feet of open space would be required. Per Section 135.1(b), alternative means of satisfying the commercial open space requirement, including an in-lieu fee of $1.50 per gross square foot of floor area devoted to commercial or institutional use, may be paid instead of providing the open space on site. Alternative means require authorization by the Zoning Administrator. Please show on drawings how the project would meet the non-residential open space requirement.

5. **Obstructions.** Section 136(c)(2) requires that balconies shall have 1) a minimum headroom height of 7-1/2 feet, 2) maximum projection of 3 feet when the sidewalk is greater than 9 feet, or 2 feet projection when the sidewalk is 8 feet to the center line of alley, and 3) the maximum length is 15 feet. Please show on drawings how the proposed balconies would comply with requirements in Section 136(c)(2).

6. **Street Trees.** Planning Code Section 138.1 requires one street tree for every 20 feet of frontage for new construction. Thus, a total of two street trees are required for this project. However, no street trees are shown on the plans. Please show on drawings where new street trees would be planted.
7. **Bird Safety.** Section 139 requires that the project meet the Standards for Bird-Safe Buildings. This project does not appear to be located within an Urban Bird Refuge and thus, is only subject to the requirements of Feature-Related Standards. Please show on drawings how the project would meet the feature-related standards for bird safety.

8. **Shadow Analysis.** Section 295 restricts new shadow upon public spaces under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department by any structure exceeding 40 feet, unless the Planning Commission finds the impact to be less than significant. The Planning Department conducted a preliminary shadow fan analysis and determined that the proposed building would not cast any shadow on public space under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department. If the current design is modified, additional analysis may be required to determine if any new shadow is cast on public spaces. Attached is a copy of the preliminary shadow fan analysis conducted by Planning Department staff.

9. **Bicycle Parking.** Planning Code Section 155.2 requires this project to provide secure, weather protected bicycle parking space meeting dimensions set in Zoning Administrator Bulletin No. 9, one per unit, easily accessible to residents and not otherwise used for other purposes. No racks are required. The proposed project contains no bicycle parking. Please show on drawings how the project would meet the bicycle parking requirement.

10. **Diaper Changing Stations.** Planning Code Section 168 requires that a baby diaper-changing accommodations for uses over 5,000 square feet in area. Baby diaper-changing accommodations include one accessible to women, one accessible to men, or a single one accessible to both at each floor level containing restrooms accessible to the public. The proposed project contains no baby diaper-changing accommodations. Please show on drawings how the project would meet the baby diaper-changing stations requirement.

11. **Height.** Planning Code Section 254 requires a CU authorization for any building or structure exceeding 35 feet in height in the Chinatown Community Business District. The project proposes a height of 49 feet. Therefore, a Conditional Use authorization for the proposed building height is required. Height exemptions are found in Section 260. Please show clearly on drawings any proposed structures including but not limited to mechanical equipment and appurtenances, stair and mechanical penthouses, ornamental or other features on the roof and how the project meets the requirements of Section 260.

12. **Bulk.** Planning Code Section 270 limits the bulk of a building above 40 feet of the proposed building to 50 feet in length and 100 feet in diagonal dimension for the N District Symbol. The fourth floor is located above the 40 feet height mark and proposes an 80-foot and 11-inches length and an approximately 86-foot diagonal dimension. Therefore, the length exceeds the length limit for bulk above 40 feet. Please revise the drawings to show how the project would meet the bulk requirements.

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requirements. Bulk exceptions are found in Section 271, which can be obtained through a CU authorization.

13. **Transit Impact Development Fee.** Planning Code Section 411 requires a Transit Impact Development Fee (TIDF) for new construction of non-residential space of at least 800 gross square feet. The TIDF is currently $13.90 per gross square feet for both Retail and Other Institutional economic activity categories. The project proposes both Retail and Other Institutional spaces. Planning Code Section 411.8 exempts non-profit organizations from TIDF except where the non-profit organization is engaging in activities falling under the Retail/Entertainment or Visitor Services economic activity categories. Please show clearly on drawings and gross square foot calculations for the activity categories proposed for this project.

14. **Signage, Awnings, Canopies and Marquees.** Planning Code Section 607.2 provides regulations for proposed signage in Mixed Use Districts. Planning Code Section 136.2 provides regulations for proposed awnings, canopies, and marquees in Mixed Use Districts. Signs on canopies, roof signs, and video signs are not permitted in this District. Please show on drawings how the project would comply with both Planning Code Sections 607.2 and 136.2 for proposed signage, awnings, canopies, and marquees.

15. **Formula Retail.** Planning Code Section 803.6 requires a Conditional Use authorization for formula retail uses in the Chinatown Commercial Business District. The project proposes a retail use at the ground floor. Please show clearly on the permit and drawings the proposed tenant for this project.

16. **Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative Area.** The property is located within the Mayor’s Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative Area. For more information, please see [http://www.oewd.org/lIN.aspx](http://www.oewd.org/lIN.aspx)

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN COMMENTS:**

The following comments address preliminary design issues that may significantly impact the proposed project:

**Architecture.** Overall the architecture should strike a good balance between a contemporary design and an historic context. New buildings should be differentiated from and compatible with the surrounding historic district. With some augmentation, this building has the potential to accomplish that. The following comments are intended to provide guidance in the architectural design of the new building:

a. Raise the height of ground floor in order to offer both a more gracious ground floor height, and to approximate alignments with horizontal features of adjacent buildings. See further comments under Composition and Style in Preservation Comments below.

b. Provide a stronger definition of the base including a uniform pattern of openings, an architectural style that is in keeping with the patterns found in the surrounding district. See further comments under Storefront in Preservation Comments below.

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c. Consider a means of creating stronger vertical definition and hierarchy among the parts of the façade. The Planning Department suggests extending the solid ends to the roofline. See further comments under Fenestration Pattern in Preservation Comments below.

d. Provide a stronger definition of the roof termination. The sectional detail of the light monitor starts to create a contemporary cornice, but should extend the entire width of the façade, and ideally be projected forward to property line. See further comments under Composition and Style in Preservation Comments below.

e. Give special design attention to the balcony railings. Please clarify the role of the railing like elements below the balcony floor lines. See further comments pertaining to balcony railings under Composition and Style in Preservation Comments below.

f. Materiality: Durable materials such as stone cladding or masonry would be more appropriate in this context, and should be scaled to reference the scale of other materials of the district. See comments under Materials and Color in Preservation Comments below for materials and colors that are characteristic of the surrounding Historic District.

PRESERVATION COMMENTS:

1. General. The subject property is a two-story building constructed by Builder Moller and De Luca in 1922 and altered after 1945. The building is not an historic resource; however, it is located within the Chinatown National Register Historic District. Therefore, any proposed new construction at this location shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing of the historic district to protect the integrity and character of its environment.

2. Composition and Style. The proposed building design is not consistent in composition and style with the existing buildings in the Chinatown Historic District. Existing buildings are typically two-part Edwardian brick buildings with neo-classical architectural ornamentation sharing a horizontal belt course that separates the traditional ground floor storefronts and mezzanine levels from the regimented pattern of window openings and classical cornice above. The ground floor should be greater in height to be consistent with the base of the surrounding buildings. The Department recommends the sponsor strengthen horizontal elements above the ground floor and at the fourth floor base by providing some projection so that they are more prominent than other horizontal elements on the building. The Department also recommends the sponsor provide a projecting cornice with simplified details so that the top of the building is defined. Finally, balconies are characteristic of the historic district, however usually only at the top-floors which augments the cornice. The project proposes balconies at the second, third, and fourth floor levels. The proposed balcony on the second floor does not appear to be consistent with the character of the historic district and should be removed. Instead, windows at this level would be appropriate. Additionally, proposed railings appear very utilitarian and do not reference the building or the surrounding district. The Department recommends incorporating the proposed ornamental screen design at handrails.

3. Storefront. The new building should incorporate a traditional storefront at the ground floor with typical elements such as transparent glazing at transoms, large display windows, solid bulk heads at base, and framed doors with transoms above located at a recessed entryway. Storefronts should have a coated finish such as a powder-coated, painted, or kynar finish. The overall ground floor
height should also be taller than the floors above, for consistency with bases found in surrounding buildings in the Chinatown Historic District. Currently, the proposed design has four entrances, including an emergency exit door and two gates flanking a central storefront entrance. The ground floor plan on Sheet A-2 shows that the two gates lead to the same space which appears redundant. Please consolidate and provide only one gate and make the side exit door part of the overall storefront system. Additionally, there are three stand-alone posts located outside the exterior face of the primary façade, which is not characteristic of the historic district. The storefront should be pulled closer towards the street and the storefront entrance should be recessed. Posts should be incorporated into the overall building design as architectural elements and not be stand-alone features. The storefront system should align with the recommendations set forth in the Department’s Design Standards for Storefronts for Article 11 Conservation Districts (Draft November 2012), which is the standard for buildings in historic districts (see attached).

4. **Materials.** Masonry construction with brick as the primary material and painted sheet metal at cornices are materials characteristic of the Chinatown Historic District. The project proposes vertical wood paneling as the primary material which is not characteristic or compatible with the historic district. The new building should draw from the masonry material and texture typical of the Chinatown Historic District. For example, use of a contemporary masonry material such as a terra cotta rain shield or other composite material could be considered. In application plans, please call out all materials, textures, and color of finishes for gates and the storefront system proposed for the new building.

5. **Fenestration pattern.** The proposed fenestration pattern does not complement the surrounding buildings, which have a regimented pattern of window openings. Openings above street level are typically vertical in shape, framed with lintels and moldings, and slightly recessed which provides some shadows. Doors are differentiated from windows in that they extend to the ground, except at the uppermost floor where doors are larger and more prominent since, historically, shrines were typically located on this level. The new proposed openings appear horizontal in shape mainly due to the double leaf of doors and adjacent side lights, extend the full height of each level, and have a pattern of centrally located doors and side lights. The new building should have a pattern more consistent with the Chinatown Historic District with punched openings that are vertical in shape with some recess. Proposed openings should be broken up with pilasters or other architectural elements. Windows and doors should not extend the full height of walls and instead should be solid above and below to provide the proportion and articulation found in the surrounding historic district. Please show clearly on drawings the material and finish of all window and door elements, and ornamental screened openings.

6. **Color.** Color is a strong component of the Chinatown Historic District. The color palette includes bright hues of red, yellow, green, blue and white, with some gold. The new building should be a color that is consistent with the surrounding historic district.

7. **Stair and Elevator Penthouse.** The project proposes a penthouse that extends above the roof, as shown in the exterior elevation and building section. Please clarify if this penthouse would be for the elevator and/or stair. Please provide a roof plan showing the penthouse, dimensions for the setback,
and any proposed use on the roof. Additionally, it is unclear from the drawings what the roof element above the cornice located near the front of the building with low overhanging eaves is. Drawings show conflicting information, with the building section showing a skylight and the front elevation showing glazed openings facing the street. Please clarify the function of this roof element. Please provide sight lines, renderings or a photo montage showing what the proposed penthouse and roof element looks like from across the street and along the street to determine its visibility.

8. **Signage.** The project proposes signage at the building façade. Please provide details for all proposed signage including calling out proposed materials and finishes. Please clarify if any awnings, canopies, or marquees are proposed for this project. All signage, awnings, canopies, marquees are to have a coated finish such as a powder-coated, painted, or kynar finish and shall not be a reflective metal finish. Signs on canopies are not permitted. Refer to the Department’s Signs Guidelines (November 2012) for recommendations (see attached).

**PRELIMINARY PROJECT ASSESSMENT EXPIRATION:**

This Preliminary Project Assessment is valid for a period of **18 months**. An Environmental Evaluation, Conditional Use Authorization, or Building Permit Application, as listed above, must be submitted no later than **November 14, 2015**. Otherwise, this determination is considered expired and a new Preliminary Project Assessment is required. Such applications and plans must be generally consistent with those found in this Preliminary Project Assessment.

Enclosures: Preliminary Shadow Fan Analysis  
Department’s Design Standards for Storefronts for Article 11 Conservation Districts  
Department’s Signs Guidelines

cc: Ralph Marchese, Owner’s Representative  
Kelly Wong, Current Planning  
Alexis Smith, Citywide Planning and Analysis  
David Winslow, Citywide Planning and Analysis  
Jerry Robbins, MTA  
Jerry Sanguinetti, DPW
Title: Shadow Fan - 827-829 Kearny Street - Case No. 2014.0401U
Comments: Modeled at 49 feet (proposed building height).
Printed: 17 April, 2014 (Kelly Wong, Current Planning)

The City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) does not guarantee the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or usefulness of any information. CCSF provides this information on an "as is" basis without warranty of any kind, including but not limited to warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, and assumes no responsibility for anyone's use of the information.
Design Standards for Storefronts
for Article 11 Conservation Districts

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DESIGN STANDARDS
INTRODUCTION

The San Francisco Conservation Districts make up some of the most important commercial centers for visitors and residents in San Francisco. The vitality of the Districts' streetscapes are dependent on the existence and the success of storefront businesses. In response to changing marketing and advertising strategies designed to draw customers in, storefronts are the most commonly altered architectural feature in commercial buildings. The purpose of these standards is to protect and enhance the character of the Districts by encouraging storefront designs that allow tenants to successfully convey their image and products, compliment the public realm, and respect the architectural features of the district. While Article 11 of the Planning Code provides basic design requirements, all ground level alterations proposed for buildings that have been identified as significant or contributory (Categories I - IV), or buildings located within any Article 11 Conservation District are subject to additional review pursuant to Section 1111.6 of the Planning Code. The following standards are meant to supplement relevant sections of Article 11 in order to provide additional guidance for tenants, property owners, and the general public for the rehabilitation of existing or the installation of new storefronts within the Conservation Districts. These standards may be used as a guide for other similar Conservation Districts where no specific information is given within Sections 6 and 7 of the applicable Conservation District Appendices.

The information within this document is divided into topics based on each storefront component. Each component is outlined to address materials, design, finishes, proportion and location. All subsections are meant to provide clear and understandable instructions based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and to meet the purposes of Article 11. There are also images to serve as examples and to better express the intent of the standards.

The Planning Department acknowledges that national retailers prefer uniform branding programs for all outlets. The unique character of the Conservation Districts may require further refinement of storefront components, materials, merchandising displays, etc., to be found in conformance with these standards.

Conformance with these standards authorizes the Planning Department to administratively approve ground floor permit applications when confined to the area within the piers and lintels of the opening as stated in Article 11 of the Planning Code. Please note that these Conservation District Standards will be used by the Planning Department to evaluate all permit applications and while only those proposals that meet the standards will be approved, the Department will review all proposals on a case-by-case basis. All storefront design related to a Major Alteration, as defined by Section 1111.11, may be subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission.
STOREFRONT COMPONENTS

Existing historic storefronts in the Conservation Districts date from the late 19th to early 20th century. There are a number of elements that make up the architectural features of a historic storefront. The repetition of these features creates a visual unity on the street that should be preserved. Collectively, they establish a sense of place, provide a "human scale" and add rich detail to the public realm.

ANATOMY OF A FACADE

Typical Features Include:

**Belt Cornice:** A projecting, horizontal molding, similar to a cornice, separating parts of a façade, especially used to delineate the first and second floors.

**Bulkhead:** The low paneled base of a storefront bay that supports the glazing and elevates merchandise for pedestrian viewing.

**Façade Materiales:** Original exterior cladding, typically brick, wood or stone provide a sense of permanence, scale and texture and often convey the work of skilled craftsmen.

**Glazing:** The large panes of clear glass within the storefront bay where goods and services are displayed and supported by the bulkhead and framed by the piers.

**Lintel:** The horizontal structural element that spans above the storefront bays to support the weight of the upper façade.

**Mullion:** The vertical element that separates window units or storefront glazing; typically not a structural support for the building.

**Muntin:** The small molding or bar that separates the individual panes of a multi-paned window, such as in a transom.

**Pier:** The vertical structural or decorative elements, also known as a column, which supports and/or frames the glazing.

**Storefront Bay:** Defined by the height of the lintel and separated by piers, a storefront bay is composed of bulkhead, glazing, transom, and entry.

**Transom:** The small, operable or inoperable framed windows above the glazing and below the lintel that filter light into the ground floor space; sometimes sheltered by awnings.
COURSE OF ACTION

Determining the appropriate course of action depends upon the overall integrity, or how much historic storefront components remain at the ground level. The integrity should be taken into consideration before determining the best approach for rehabilitation. While there is no hard-and-fast rule that can be stated, it is important that a deliberate, thoughtful process be employed in which the following questions are answered:

What are the characteristics of the base of the building?

The storefront may be intact, modified or contemporary. If many or all of the historic elements are missing, a simplified new interpretation of those elements may be appropriate. On the other hand, if the building is 95% intact, with only the bulkhead missing and information about the original design is available, then an accurate reconstruction would be preferred.

What are the characteristics of nearby or adjacent storefronts?

If the storefront is one of three similar all in a row, and one of the three retain its historic details, then reconstruction of the altered storefronts would be a preferred option. Another more flexible option would be a rehabilitation based on a simplified design, as long as typical storefront components are incorporated into the design.

What is the significance of the property?

Sometimes previous alterations to historic buildings acquire significance of their own. These historically significant alterations should be preserved.
The rehabilitation project above preserved historic elements, such as the terra cotta tiles and cast iron framework. However, many other historic elements were missing, such as the transom windows and storefront pier material, were reconstructed based on historic documentation. It is common to use more than one approach in a rehabilitation project.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Storefront Standards for the Conservation Districts are based on general recommendations that apply to rehabilitation. Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property’s historic character.

In order to be compatible with historic storefronts, new storefronts should follow the standards set out in this document, which provide for flexibility in design review. Designing new features to be subordinate to historic features creates a balance of new and old, allowing features to be seen as products of their own time, yet be compatible with remaining historic elements of the facade. The most successfully rehabilitated storefronts combine contemporary design with sensitivity to the historic storefront components.

Preserve
Preserve the storefront’s historic style, form, materials, proportions, and configuration when it is intact. Distinguish between historic materials and inappropriate past interventions. Do not remove, obscure, or damage historic character-defining features.

Repair
Repair historic features that are damaged based on adequate evidence using identical or similar materials that convey the same form, design, and overall visual appearance as the historic feature in terms of details, finish, and color. Repair is preferred over replacement.

Replace
When repair is not possible, replacement of the original design based on historic documentation or physical evidence is preferred. Do not reconstruct details from speculation that could give a false impression of the history of the building. If evidence is missing, consider a simplified interpretation of historic elements. Also, consider the retention of previously-installed compatible alterations.
STOREFRONT EVALUATION

HISTORIC VS. ALTERED

To help determine if you have a historic storefront, look for the following storefront characteristics that are typically shared among commercial architecture of this period.

Buildings undergo alterations over time. To determine how a historic storefront design has been altered over time, notice the location of the glazing, bay, cornice, and entrances on the existing building to provide clues.

Historic Storefronts

- Bulkheads: Primarily rectangular in design, of frame, natural stone or tile construction, and often with raised patterns.
- Glazing: Merchants in the early 20th century relied on extensive window displays to advertise their goods and the installation of large sheets of plate glass provided maximum exposure.
- Large Central or Corner Entrances: Many commercial buildings historically had large central or corner entrances of single or double doors.
- Transoms: Over the display windows and entrances were transom windows, usually made of clear, textured, leaded, or stained glass, allowing light into the building and additional areas of signage and display.
- Cast Iron Pilasters: To support the weight of the masonry above the storefront, decorative cast iron columns or masonry piers were often added.

Altered Storefronts

- Glazing: If the display windows have small panes rather than very large panes of glass, they have most likely been replaced.
- Bay: If there is irregular spacing among the bays where a storefront pier does not align with the upper facade piers, it is most likely a non-historic storefront.
- Beltcourse: If the beltcourse or watertable is not visible or has been removed, or if the lintel is not defined within the storefront, the height has likely been altered.
- Entrances: If the building entrance is no longer in the historic location or made of contemporary materials, it has been replaced.
FAÇADE & STREET WALL

Historically, storefronts were integrated into the overall façade design, with the same treatment used for all tenant spaces within a structure. However, as tenants have modified their individual sections of the storefront, the overall design intent of some buildings has become lost. The storefront and upper façade should create a single architectural image by aligning architectural framework within the design and using similar cladding materials. The following recommendations supplement Article 11.

Materials

Buildings within Conservation Districts are traditionally clad in masonry materials, which include terra cotta, brick, natural stone, and smooth or scored stucco, over a supporting structure. If historic material is discovered when the existing cladding is removed, Department Preservation Staff must be notified immediately. If significant historic features remain, it must be retained and the storefront approvals may be changed to reflect this new condition. Storefronts with no remaining historic architectural components may be re-clad or replaced with new modern materials when no historic fabric remains. If replacement material is necessary, use materials that are compatible in texture and physical makeup.

RECOMMENDED:

- Cladding Materials: Utilize traditional building materials: Terra cotta, brick, simulated or natural stone and scored stucco convey permanence and should be used when architecturally appropriate. New brick should match the color and type of historic brickwork. Particular attention should be paid to the point at which different materials join together. These ‘edges’ should be clean and organized.

- Color: The number of exterior colors should be limited to different tones of one color. Choice of colors should be determined by the nature of the building’s historic character, and colors of building elements should relate to each other. Traditional materials are generally colored light or medium earth tones, including white, cream, buff, yellow, and brown. (See Section 6 related Appendices in Article 11 Districts).

- Texture: Smooth and painted with a satin or flat finish.

- Vandalism Precaution: Quick, consistent and complete removal of graffiti discourages “tagging.” Surfaces treated with antigraffiti clear coatings resist penetration of graffiti and simplifies graffiti removal, while not altering the natural surface appearance. Antigraffiti clear coatings also protect against weathering and environmental-related stains, contributing to a well-maintained appearance.

- Durability & Maintenance: Materials used near sidewalks and adjacent to building entrances should be highly durable and easily maintained.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Cladding Materials: Although painted wood and metal are sometimes used for window sashes, bulkheads and ornament; decorative concrete block, applied false-brick veneer, vinyl or aluminum siding, cedar shakes, textured plywood, EFIS materials and plastic are not appropriate for use on buildings within the Districts.

- Obstruction of Historic Building Materials: Do not cover, damage or remove historic building materials.
These three storefronts have been individually designed and altered. They neither relate to each other nor the historic building materials. This application is discouraged.

The building above contains multiple storefronts that have a consistent alignment and composition. This creates a cohesive facade while maintaining storefront distinction.

The street wall to the left lacks horizontal alignment and a cohesive composition, which results in a disconnected overall appearance.

The horizontal features of the three commercial businesses to the left are aligned. Each storefront relates to the others which results in a cohesive street wall.
Design

The configuration of a storefront façade refers to the relationship between, and general proportions of, various storefront infill components, such as door location, setback, bulkhead, display window dimensions, transom windows, historic materials and details. Together the storefront design provides clarity and lends interest to the façade, which maintains the interest of pedestrians.

RECOMMENDED:

- Alignment: Alignment of horizontal features on building façades is one of the strongest characteristics of the street and should be preserved. Typical elements to keep in alignment with others in the block include: window moldings, top of display windows and belt cornices. This helps reinforce the visual harmony of the district.

- Setback: Most storefronts extend right up to the sidewalk, known as "zero setback," resulting in a consistent street wall.

- Composition: The wall-to-window ratio; storefront height; window spacing, height, and type; roof and cornice forms; materials and texture should present a visually-balanced composition, complementary to adjacent storefronts to provide a sense of cohesiveness in the district without strict uniformity.

- Simplified Interpretation: Where a historic storefront is missing, and no evidence of its character exists, a simplified interpretation is appropriate. Take cues from building patterns, scale, and proportions of nearby buildings and storefronts. An alternative storefront design must continue to convey the characteristics of typical historic storefronts in the Conservation Districts.

- Storefront Distinction: A single building containing multiple storefronts should distinguish each storefront, while maintaining building unity. Separate buildings should remain visually distinct. See Interim Storefront Solutions, "Storefront Rehabilitation Program" in this document.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Color: Inappropriate colors include fluorescents, bright primary hues and black as an overall façade color.

- Blank Walls: If visible from a public way, blank walls should be softened by incorporating painted signage, artistic murals and, where possible, fenestration is encouraged.

- Exact Replication: Infill construction should clearly be contemporary and not be exact historic reproductions that could confuse an observer.

These buildings have no ground level setbacks, which creates a defined street wall and edge. The horizontal elements are consistently aligned along each building and the entire street wall relates to create a cohesive block.

This storefront has undergone a number of inappropriate alterations. The most obvious, black paint, provides too much contrast with the street wall and is discouraged.
CORNER LOTS

Many buildings on corner lots exhibit special features that emphasize the corner and add accent to both intersecting streets, providing visual interest to pedestrians.

RECOMMENDED:
- Emphasis of Corner Lot: Corner entrances, storefront windows, and displays that extend along both street façades are examples of elements that emphasize corner lot locations and are encouraged.
- Windows: Where entrances are not located at the corner, storefront windows should turn the corner. There should be one or two storefront windows on each side of the building, this draws the interest of the pedestrian.

STOREFRONT BAY

The individual storefront bay is defined by the height of the lintel and separated by piers. Appropriate alignment and proportions of the storefront bay are critical in creating a unified appearance within the district.

RECOMMENDED:
- Alignment of Storefront: Within a single storefront, windows should be consistent in height and design with storefront doors to create a cohesive appearance; however, slight variations in alignment can add visual interest.
- Piers: Piers at the sides of a storefront should be visible and match the upper façade. If historic piers exist under the modern cladding, the historic piers should be uncovered, repaired and left exposed. If historic piers do not exist under the modern cladding, new piers should replicate the historic materials in terms of details, finish, color and overall visual appearance.
- Design Modifications: When making modifications, treat and design the piers and lintel as a single architectural component. The lintel establishes the top of the storefront bay, visually separating it from the upper floors.
- Storefront Infill: Typically composed of the bulkhead, glazing, transom, and entry. Keeping these components within the historic bay minimizes visual discontinuity.
- Proportion: Maintain proper proportions of the storefront bay. Typically, the glazing extends from the bulkhead to the lintel and between the piers.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Alignment: Major deviations in the alignment of a storefront and between adjacent buildings disrupt the visual continuity of the street and should be avoided.
- **Obstruction**: Elements such as signs and awnings that obscure the spacing of the bays and/or the elements that define those bays should be avoided.

- **Size**: Any enlargement or reduction in the size of the storefront opening, such as infill with opaque or solid materials, should be avoided.

**ENTRANCES**

Typically, historic buildings have an entrance to each storefront in addition to one main entrance to upper floors, opening directly onto the sidewalk. A service door may also exist for access to building systems.

**Primary Storefront Entry**

Traditionally, storefront entrance doors were made with full-height glass framed in wood or metal, with a transom window often set directly above the door. The entries are typically recessed 2'-6" to 6' from the sidewalk, which allows protection from the rain and wind, creates additional display frontage, and the repetition of recessed entries provides a rhythm of defined commercial spaces that helps establish a sense of scale and identifies business entrances. The recessed areas are paved with mosaic tiles, terrazzo, or patterned concrete. Historically, these paved areas within the recess were viewed as an opportunity for the business name, typically in mosaic tile or inlaid metal letters. The ceilings of recessed areas were finished with stucco or wood panels.
RECOMMENDED:

- Preservation: Retention of the historic door and entry system, whether recessed or flush with the public walk, is encouraged.

- Maintain Historic Position: The depth and configuration of storefront entrances should be maintained. Where applicable, do not infill a historic recessed theatre entrance (partially or completely).

- Replacement Doors: If an entrance is missing, a new entrance may be reconstructed with historic documentation. If using a new compatible design, it should be based upon the traditional design elements. Aluminum or bronze doors can be made more compatible by being painted a dark color, and by selecting a design in the proportions of the historic door.

- Preservation and ADA Compliance: Entries must comply with the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Preserve historically significant doors and reuse if possible. Qualified historic buildings may use the alternative provisions of the California Historical Building Code (CHBC) to preserve significant historic features when upgrading buildings. If preservation is not an option, replace with a new door of the same design that is compatible with the storefront’s style and material.

- Design: Differentiate the primary entrance from the secondary access to upper floors by maintaining each entry within its own bay. Entries should be clearly marked, provide a sense of welcome and easy passage. They should be located on the front of buildings.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Reconstruction: Avoid recreating designs based on conjecture rather than clear documentation.

- New Entrances: Do not locate new entrances on a primary façade where it would alter or change the position of the piers and function of the historic primary entrance.

These contemporary entry doors have been located within the historic storefront. Original cast iron elements such as columns, bulkheads and the prism glass transoms have been restored. This treatment is recommended.

This historic storefront entrance includes a traditional door made primarily of glass and framed in bronze.
Secondary Entry

The main building door, giving access to upper floors, is similar in appearance, but less impressive than the storefront door.

RECOMMENDED:
- Loading and Building Service Entrances: May be glazed or solid doors and should be located on the side or rear of buildings, whenever possible, or shared with other adjacent businesses. When not possible, they should be located away from corners or street intersections and away from main entrances and primary storefront displays.
- Maintain Position: Recessed storefront entrances should be maintained. Where an entry is not recessed, maintain it in its historic position, where possible.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Non-Use: Do not seal secondary doors shut in an irreversible manner. Any work that is done must be reversible so that the door can be used at a later time, if necessary.

Door Materials

RECOMMENDED:
- Predominant Glazing: All primary entrance doors should be predominantly glazed with a painted wood or brushed metal frame.
- Door Frame: Wider metal frames are generally encouraged over narrow frames.
- Door Features: Maintain features that are important to the character of the historic door, including the door, door frame, threshold, glass panes, paneling, hardware, detailing transoms and flanking side lights.
- Historic Design: If historic design is not known, use a wood-framed or metal-framed glass door in a traditional design.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Door Frame: Avoid unfinished aluminum or stainless steel frames.
BULKHEAD

In the Conservation Districts, storefront display windows were traditionally placed upon a one to two foot high solid base, also called a bulkhead. The bulkhead serves two functions: it raises a window display closer to eye level, to take advantage of the line of vision and to more effectively showcase merchandise to better capture the attention of the pedestrian; and it acts as a kickplate, that, compared to glazing, can better withstand the impact of window shoppers’ shoes.

RECOMMENDED:
- Preservation: Restore historic bulkhead finishes, where they remain. Contact Planning Department Staff to obtain more information on specific treatments recommendations for various finishes.
- Materials: Historic bulkheads are typically made of painted wood, decorative metal, small ceramic tiles, or masonry. Replacements should match or be compatible with such materials. Wood or metal bulkheads should be articulated with paneling or molding.
- Height: The storefront bulkhead should be a consistent height and appearance with the historic one that exists on the building. Depending on topography and where physical or documentary evidence is unavailable, the bulkhead should generally be between 18” and 24”.
- Consistency: If a portion of the historic bulkhead exists, the new portions of the bulkhead should match.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Materials: Corrugated aluminum, shingles, artificial siding, plywood, EIFS, and clear or unfinished aluminum are not permitted.

ABOVE RIGHT: The replacement tilework that makes up the bulkhead should match the historic materials which have been preserved on the pier to its right.

ABOVE LEFT: The preservation of historic elements, such as this decorative bulkhead is encouraged.

BELOW LEFT: This simple storefront has retained the original marble bulkhead, entry door surround and transom. This is encouraged.
STOREFRONT DISPLAY WINDOWS

The storefront display windows within the Conservation Districts typically consist of large panes of plate glass set in metal or wood frames with the primary purpose of allowing passersby to see goods or services available inside. The historic metal framing systems have a particularly narrow profile in comparison to modern aluminum storefront framing systems. Vertical framing elements were sometimes omitted at the entry recess corners, with just a butt-joint between the two panes of glass. Most storefront display windows have been altered or replaced.

RECOMMENDED:

- Preservation: The functional and decorative features, such as the historic frame, sash, muntins, mullions, glazing, and sills of a historic window should be preserved.
- Materials: The storefront should be transparent by use of clear glass in doors and storefront areas allowing visibility into and out of the store to create an engaging and dynamic retail environment.
- Mullion Profile: Mullions separate individual panes of a window and should be as narrow and as limited in number as possible to maximize visibility into interior activity and merchandising. The mullion profile should be a darkly painted wood or a dark colored pre-finished or painted metal.
- Blocked-out Windows: Large pane glazing should be reintroduced if the historic glazing is no longer intact.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Materials: Vinyl, plastic, clear or unfinished aluminum, and other reflective materials are not permitted.
- Broken or Boarded Windows: These negatively impact businesses and the district and should be fixed in a timely manner.
- Plexiglas: Replacement materials instead of glass should be avoided.

A pre-finished aluminum storefront frame was installed flush with the face of the cast iron pier, which flattens the profile and reduces the dominant role of certain architectural features. The pictured storefront framing system is much wider than what was used historically and, therefore, should be avoided. This new storefront has large expanses of glazing that were inspired by historic drawings of the building.
TRANSOMS

Operable Windows: Sliding, hinged or folding windows are discouraged because of the number of divisions they create within an opening – this minimizes visibility between interior and exterior activities when windows are closed. However, operable windows designed with very limited divisions and large glazing similar to traditional ground floor storefronts will be considered.

Recessed Window: The window glazing should not be deeply recessed in the window frame, as this was not done historically and does not convey a period effect.

RECOMMENDED:
- Frame Materials: The transom frame above the entrance doors and display windows should match the material and finish of the storefront.
- Replacement Glass: If the historic transom glass is missing and no physical or documentary evidence exists, install new glass, and ensure that it is a consistent size and configuration. Clear glass is encouraged; however, translucent or patterned glass is also compatible. Consider the use of operable transom windows while installing new or reconstructed transoms.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Blocked-out Windows: Avoid blocked-out transom windows. If the transom must be blocked, retain the glass, but consider using a translucent finish to retain the historic design intent and storefront proportions.
BUILDING SYSTEMS

RECOMMENDED:

- Location: A building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems should be located in an interior room or a rooftop mechanical penthouse. When exterior installation is required, systems should be located on a non-visible façade away from public view.

- Concealment: If exterior equipment cannot be located on a non-visible façade, efforts should be taken to minimize their visual impact by covering with a decorative metal grille. A grille in combination with an awning may be used where appropriate.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Location: When located on a visible exterior façade, the building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems should not obscure or remove historic architectural features or enlarge the openings or framework.

- Concealment: Use of an awning to cover a building's mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems provides only partial concealment and systems will remain visible to pedestrians.

The decorative architectural grills below have been installed to conceal mechanical intake and exhaust louvres. The grills have been incorporated into the storefront design. This treatment is recommended.

The open security grates below are installed on the interior so that when open, all mechanisms are concealed, which is encouraged. They also allow merchandise to be viewed even when the store is closed.
SECURITY

Many security measures create the impression that the retail area is unsafe, particularly when gates are rolled down and locked. This does not contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment and it ultimately hurts business. A series of rolled-down, solid metal security doors present a long, featureless façade at the sidewalk, which is unsightly and generally out of character with the architecture of buildings within the Districts. Transparent security doors provide the same level of security as solid grates, and allow lighted window displays to be seen at night, accommodating both design and security considerations.

RECOMMENDED:
- Security Door Design: Security doors should be installed on the inside of the storefront, with the housing mechanisms and guide rails concealed. They can be hidden behind an architectural element, tucked into a framed pocket opening, mounted on the interior, or mounted high enough above the glazing system so as to remain unseen from the sidewalk.

- Grilles: The use of open or mesh grilles is encouraged because they have less impact on historic features. Grilles should be made of decorative metal in a configuration that is suitable for the scale and design of the entrance. They can also be simple metal grilles that are fully concealed when open.

NOT RECOMMENDED:
- Security Door Design: Scissor-type security gates, solid roll-down grates and permanent metal bars installed either on the inside or outside of windows are discouraged.
- Exterior Security Doors: Security door housing should not be mounted to storefront exteriors; this contributes to the clutter on the exterior and can damage and obscure architectural features.

LEFT: When an external security grate is installed, its operational mechanism should be hidden from view. When fully retracted, the security grate should be concealed within the facade or behind the cladding.

RIGHT: The external roll-down security grate has its housing mechanism clearly in view from the street, which is discouraged.
SEISMIC UPGRADES

Seismic strength within buildings is achieved through the reinforcement of structural elements. Steel braced frames are added to resist lateral loads arising from winds or earthquakes.

RECOMMENDED:

- Location: A braced frame should be placed within the exterior wall (between the exterior masonry and the interior finish). Diagonal structural braces should be located within the interior space, setback from ground floor display windows.

- Structural Design: Different configurations can be utilized to minimize their effect on the existing architecture. Utilizing moment frames can minimize the effect on the existing architecture if properly designed to conform to the historic opening sizes.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

- Location: For historic buildings, exterior applications of bracing are not appropriate. Braces penetrating the exterior of the storefront or placed within the storefront display area should be avoided.

- Structural Design: Reinforced seismic walls should not enclose storefront openings.

Reference Material:

The Preservation Committee of the American Institute of Architects San Francisco Chapter prepared the Architectural Design Guide for Exterior Treatments of Unreinforced Masonry Buildings during Seismic Retrofit, November 1991, for the San Francisco Planning Department, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the City Planning Commission to assist in the application and review of seismic upgrade methods.

The seismic bracing is clearly visible and detracts from the historic facade. This application is discouraged.
INTERIM STOREFRONT SOLUTIONS

Some of the design standards may take more time and money to implement than others. In the interim, building owners of vacant storefronts and tenants during renovation can take some simple measures that can serve as place holders until permanent rehabilitation occurs at the storefront.

RECOMMENDED:

- Cleaning and Painting: These simple solutions offer dramatic improvements to a façade. This provides a well-maintained appearance and ensures a long life for many traditional façade materials.

- Protect against vandalism and graffiti: Apply a removable clear acrylic shielding to the glazing and treat façade materials with an anti-graffiti coating.

- San Francisco Article 11 Conservation Districts Signs & Awnings Standards: Comply with the recommendations detailed in these standards.

- Storefront Rehabilitation Program: For buildings with multiple tenant storefronts that have been subjected to inconsistent alterations over the years, consider a long-term plan that will serve as a guide for current and future tenants to better create visual continuity among all of the building's storefronts. Please contact the Department Preservation Staff for consultation.

- San Francisco's "Art in Storefronts" Program: This innovative program temporarily places original art installations by San Francisco artists in vacant storefront windows to reinvigorate neighborhoods and commercial corridors while engaging local artists. Art in Storefronts is a pilot program in collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Triple Base Gallery.

The "Everything is OK" installation by artists, Christopher Simmons and Tim Belonax, fills a vacant storefront on Market Street.

For more information:

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GENERAL MERCHANDISING REQUIREMENTS

Acknowledging that store branding and identification often extends beyond the application of signage and awnings to the exterior of a tenant building, the purpose of these requirements is to give the Planning Department, owners and tenants a tool to ensure that tenant spaces remain transparent to the exterior, contribute to the activity of the public realm, and do not evolve into de facto sign boards for tenants.

Planning Department approval is granted provided that the following storefront transparency requirements are applied to the ground-floor and sometimes the 2nd floor windows where applicable:

- All windows must be of clear glass.
- Any translucent, opaque films, or adhesive signage applied to or installed directly behind storefront glass should not exceed one-third of the glass area.
- Any shelving, counter, or partitions over 3’ in height must be setback a minimum of 10’ from the inside face of the storefront glass or must be 75% open and transparent.
- All signage applied to or installed directly behind storefront glass should not exceed one-third of the glass area.
- Solid roll-down security doors should not be installed on either the exterior of the building or behind any storefront openings.
- Blinds, shades, or curtains are not allowed at the ground-floor level open and transparent.

ABOVE: The large glass with jewelry display windows highlights merchandise, while allowing visibility into the store, which is encouraged.

CENTER: The large pane of glass combined with movable mannequins below allow clear visibility into the store, which is encouraged.

BELOW: The translucent shelving that supports this window shoe display increases visibility from the street, which is encouraged.
Typical movable window display items such as mannequins, small display podiums, and merchandise that permit clear visibility into the interior of the tenant space are permitted and encouraged.

The Planning Department is authorized to grant on a case-by-case basis flexibility from the requirements cited above in order to respond to site-specific constraints or for the exceptional projects that demonstrate to create a positive pedestrian experience.

Retail establishments that meet the definition of a department store as defined in this document are exempt from the visual merchandising requirements of this document except at the following storefront locations within the building:

- All customer entrances and the storefront windows at the ground and 2nd floor immediately adjacent to those entrances.
- All storefront corner windows at the ground and 2nd floor located at an intersection and on both street elevations.

The Planning Department acknowledges the unique factors and the historic tradition associated with visual merchandising of large department stores due to their size, location, and variety of merchandise. In addition, the transformation of department store windows, such as during holidays, holds as much historic significance as the buildings in which they occupy.

For the purposes of this document a department store is defined as a single retail establishment located within a building that provides XXXXX square feet devoted to the sale of a wide range of durable goods and at the same time offering the choice of multiple merchandise lines, at variable price points, in all product categories.
REFERENCES

1. Applications for Permits to Alter, City and County of San Francisco Municipal Planning Code, Article 11, Section 1111: http://www.municode.com/Resources/gateway.asp?pid=14139&sid=5


3. How to Document a Building’s History, San Francisco Planning Department Preservation Bulletin 16, Appendix E


5. Kearny-Mason-Mason-Sutter Signs & Awnings Standards

6. The National Park Service Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation: http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standards.htm


FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call or visit the San Francisco Planning Department

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GENERAL PLANNING INFORMATION

Introduction

The San Francisco General Plan sets forth a comprehensive set of policies that intend to guide, control, and regulate growth and development. Zoning law which implements these principles are codified in the San Francisco Planning Code in order to promote and protect public health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, convenience and general welfare of San Francisco and its residents. Sign controls are found predominately in Article 6 of the Planning Code and exist for the following reason:

- To safeguard and enhance property values in residential, commercial and industrial areas.
- To protect public investment in and the character and dignity of public buildings.
- To protect open spaces and thoroughfares.
- To protect the distinctive appearance of San Francisco due to its unique geography, topography, street patterns, skyline and architectural features.
- To provide an environment that promotes the development of business in the City.
- To encourage sound practices and lessen objectionable effects in respect to size and placement of signs.
- To aid in the attraction of tourists and other visitors who are so important to the economy of the City and County.
- To reduce hazards to motorists and pedestrians traveling on the public way, and thereby to promote the public health, safety and welfare.

In order to accomplish the purposes stated above, a permit is required to install, replace, reconstruct, expand, intensify, or relocate any sign unless it is specifically exempted from the regulations. Signs must conform to the provisions set forth in Article 6 and other applicable sections of the Planning Code.
Sign Definitions

Definition of a Sign

A sign is defined as any structure, part thereof, or device or inscription which is located upon, attached to, or painted, projected or represented on any land or right-of-way, or on the outside of any building or structure including an awning, canopy, marquee or similar appendage, or affixed to the glass on the outside or inside of a window so as to be seen from the outside of the building, and which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, symbol, device, light, trademark, or other representation used as, or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, attention-arrester, direction, warning, or designation by or of any person, firm, group, organization, place, commodity, product, service, business, profession, enterprise or industry.

Business Sign

A sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service, industry or other activity which is sold, offered, or conducted, other than incidentally, on the premises upon which such sign is located, or to which it is affixed.

Identifying Sign

An identifying sign is a sign for a use listed in Article 2 of the Planning Code as either a principal or a conditional use permitted in an R District, regardless of the district in which the use itself may be located. Such sign serves to tell only the name, address and lawful use of the premises upon which the sign is located, or to which it is affixed. A bulletin board of a public, charitable or religious institution, used to display announcements relative to meetings to be held on the premises, shall be deemed an identifying sign.

General Advertising Sign

A General Advertising Sign is a sign, legally erected prior to the effective date of Section 611 of the Planning Code, which directs attention to a business, commodity, industry or other activity which is sold, offered or conducted elsewhere than on the premises upon which sign is located, or to which it is affixed, and which is sold, offered or conducted on such premises only incidentally if at all.

No new general advertising signs shall be permitted at any location within the City and County of San Francisco as of March 5, 2002, when voters approved Proposition G.
Automobile Service Stations

There are special standards for automobile service stations. Generally, two oil company signs are permitted per site with varying height and area determined by proximity to a property line and the zoning district the property is located in.

Nonconforming Sign

If a sign was lawfully installed but no longer conforms to the requirements of the Planning Code, it may continue to remain but cannot be replaced, intensified, or expanded in any way except to conform to current standards. A change in copy of a nonconforming sign is only allowed if it is for the same business, otherwise it would be considered a new sign and would need to be made conforming. A nonconforming sign that is voluntarily removed may not be replaced. However, if a sign is destroyed by fire or other calamity it may be replaced subject to the criteria set forth in Sections 181(d) and 188(b) of the Planning Code.
Sign Types

Wall Sign

A sign painted directly on the wall or placed flat against a building wall with its copy parallel to the wall to which it is attached and not protruding more than the thickness of the sign cabinet. The sign cabinet can not be thicker than necessary to accommodate the electrical box. This is thought to be no more than one foot. One must show such necessity to provide an electrical box thicker than one foot.

A window sign could be a wall sign if the wall is completely made of glass. Typically wall signs are located above the storefront transom. Wall signs consisting of individual letters mounted to the building facade are encouraged; large, opaque sign panels behind individual letters are discouraged.

Wall signs should be centered on horizontal surfaces, within bays or over storefront openings and should not extend above, below, or beyond the storefront the related business occupies.

Projecting Sign

A projecting business sign extends beyond a street property line or a building setback line. A sign placed flat against a wall of a building parallel to a street or alley shall not be deemed to project for purposes of this definition. A sign on an awning, canopy or marquee shall be deemed to project to the extent that such sign extends beyond a street property line or a building setback line.

Sign on Awnings or Marquees

A sign on an awning or marquee is another type of a projecting sign. Awnings, canopies and marquees are defined in Article 7 of the Planning Code, and regulated by Section 136.1 of the same code, and they may not be allowed in certain zoning districts.

A sign on an awning, canopy or marquee shall be considered to project to the extent that such sign extends beyond a street property line or a building setback line. Since awnings and marquees have many faces, all sign copy on each face shall be computed within one rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, or any figure of similar character depicted on the surface of the face of the awning or marquee.
Window Sign

A sign painted directly on the surface of a window glass or placed in front of or behind the surface of a window glass. Generally frontages with active uses that are not residential or PDR must be fenestrated with transparent windows and doorways for no less than 60 percent of the street frontage at the ground level and allow visibility to the inside of the building. The installation of any window sign must comply with these transparency requirements.

Freestanding Sign

A freestanding sign is supported by columns or post and in no part supported by a building. Height limitations for freestanding signs vary by zoning district. Freestanding signs for automobile service stations have separate and distinct regulations from other freestanding business signs.

Roof Sign

A sign or any portion thereof erected or painted on or over the roof covering any portion of a building, and either supported on the roof or on an independent structural frame or sign tower, or located on the side or roof of a penthouse, roof tank, roof shed, elevator housing or other roof structure.
The character of signs and other features projecting from buildings are an important part of the visual appeal of a street and the general quality and economic stability of neighborhoods. Opportunities exist to relate these signs and projections more effectively to street design and building design.

Physical characteristics of signs set them apart. Whether signs are directly illuminated, indirectly illuminated, nonilluminated, projecting, single or multiple, at the appropriate height or contained in the adequate area, the physical features set signs apart not only from each other, but also from where they are or not allowed.

Methods and Standards of Illumination

- Signs should appear to be indirectly illuminated.
- Text logos should be individually illuminated.
- Lighting conduits should be internal and not visible.
- Signs should have an opaque background that does not transmit light with the text and logos individually illuminated.
- There should be no flash or display animation, or moving text on a sign.
- In order to reduce the depth and profile of a sign, the transformer should be located in a remote location and not housed within the sign itself.
- A sign may also be reduced in profile or depth by using a light emitting diodes ("LED") method of illumination. For more information on LED lighting, please contact your sign contractor.

Nonilluminated Sign

A sign which is not illuminated, either directly or indirectly.

Indirectly Illuminated Sign

A sign illuminated with a light directed primarily toward such sign and so shielded that no direct rays from the light are visible elsewhere than on the lot where said illumination occurs. If not effectively so shielded, such sign shall be deemed to be a directly illuminated sign.

Directly Illuminated Sign

A sign designed to give forth artificial light directly (or through transparent or translucent material) from a source of light within such sign, including but not limited to neon and exposed lamp signs.
How to Measure Signs

Area of a Sign

The entire area within a single continuous rectangular perimeter formed by extending lines around the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, including any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such sign from the background against which it is placed; excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which such sign is placed but including any sign tower. Where a sign has two or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in determining the area of the sign, except that where two such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two feet from one another, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area of one face if the two faces are of equal area, or as the area of the larger face if the two faces are of unequal area.

Height of a Sign

The vertical distance from the uppermost point used in measuring the area of a sign to the ground immediately below such point or to the level of the upper surface of the nearest curb of a street, alley or highway (other than a structurally elevated roadway), whichever measurement permits the greater elevation of the sign.

Projection

The horizontal distance by which the furthermost point used in measuring the area of a sign extends beyond a street property line or a building setback line. A sign placed flat against a wall of a building parallel to a street or alley shall not be deemed to project for purposes of this definition. A sign on an awning, canopy or marquee shall be deemed to project to the extent that such sign extends beyond a street property line or a building setback line.
Vintage Signs, Signs on Historic Buildings & Signs in Historic Districts

Signs proposed for installation on historical, architectural and aesthetic landmarks, as well as in any historic or conservation district are subject to specialized review concerning design, materials, placement and number, and methods of illumination and attachment. Sign permits in historic districts must be accompanied by an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness Application and sign permits in conservation districts must be accompanied by a Minor Permit to Alter Application.

A historic sign is a sign which depicts a land use, a business activity, a public activity, a social activity or historical figure or an activity or use that recalls the City’s historic past, as permitted by Sections 303 and 608.14 of the Planning Code.

A historic sign district is a specific geographic area depicted on the Zoning Map of the City and County of San Francisco, pursuant to Section 302 of this Code, within which historic signs may be permitted by Conditional Use authorization by the Planning Commission pursuant to Sections 303 and 608.14 of the Planning Code.

Vintage Signs

Signs which depict in text or graphic form a particular residential, business, cultural, economic, recreational, or other valued resource which is deemed by the Planning Commission to be a cultural artifact that contributes to the visual identity and historic character of a City neighborhood can be designated and shall be considered a vintage sign and allowed to be restored, reconstructed, maintained and technologically improved on a property by Conditional Use authorization of the Planning Commission.
Historic Movie Theater Projecting Sign

A Historic Movie Theater Sign is a projecting business sign attached to a Qualified Movie Theater, as defined in Section 188(e)(1) of the Planning Code. Such signs are typically characterized by (i) perpendicularity to the primary facade of the building, (ii) fixed display of the name of the establishment, often in large lettering descending vertically throughout the length of the sign; (iii) a narrow width that extends for a majority of the vertical distance of a building's facade, typically terminating at or slightly above the roofline, and (iv) an overall scale and nature such that the sign comprises a significant and character defining architectural feature of the building to which it is attached.

Historic Movie Theater Marquee Sign

A Historic Movie Theater Marquee Sign is a marquee, as defined in Section 790.58, attached to a Qualified Movie Theater, as defined in Section 188(e)(1).
Signs within Article 11 Conservation Districts

Introduction

Signs are a vital part of all Downtown businesses. They serve as markers and create individual identities for businesses. Storefront signs are often the most common feature to be modified.

Article 11 of the Planning Code is the basic law governing preservation of buildings and districts architectural importance in the C-3 Districts (mostly downtown) of San Francisco.

These following standards are based on the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and are meant to provide tenants and property owners with clear design guidance for all new commercial signs. Conformance with these standards authorizes the Department to administratively approve signage without a Historic Preservation Commission public hearing. Please note that the Sign Standards will be used by the Department to evaluate all new sign permit applications and while only those proposals that meet the standards will be approved, the Department will review all proposals on a case-by-case basis.

The information within this document is divided into general requirements for all signs and those requirements that are specific to each type. The general requirements address materials, methods of attachments, and methods of illumination. Additional requirements by sign type are outlined to address size, number, and location. All subsections are meant to provide clear instructions to meet the minimum requirements of this document. There are also images to serve as examples and to better express the intent of the standards.
Requirements for Signs within Article 11 Conservation Districts

General Requirements

- Signs may not extend beyond the width of the storefront opening.
- Signage, painted on glass doors, windows, and transoms, where the sign does not exceed 25% of the glazed area, is permitted.
- Non-illuminated letters or logos may be pin-mounted into the masonry if it is mounted into the mortar joints.
- Reduce the depth of signs, by placing the transformer in a remote location and not housed within the sign itself.
- Signs may be pin-mounted on a thin raceway that is mounted flat and horizontally within the signband or spandrel.
- Signs that are located on the inside of a storefront should be setback a minimum of 6" from the display glass.
- Small identification signs or plaques for second and third story tenants installed adjacent to the ground floor entrances are permitted.

Not Permitted

- General advertising signs and banners;
- Internally illuminated box signs with glass or plastic lenses;
- Internally illuminated fabric signs or awnings, and flashing signs;
- Moving signs, strobe lights, or signs that project an image on a surface;
- Signage above the architectural base of the building;

Sign Permits

- Business signs may be permitted as of right, or with conditions depending on the zoning districts and depending on their features such as type, area, number, material, illumination, animation, etc.
- In conservation districts a sign permit must be accompanied by a Minor Permit to Alter Application. (Article 11)
- In historic districts, a sign permit must be accompanied by an Administrative Certificate of Appropriateness Application. (Article 10)
Number and Placement of Signs

- Scale of signs and placement on the building shall be appropriate to the elements of the building and historic applications.
- One sign per ground floor tenant may be permitted.
- In buildings with more than one ground floor commercial tenant, one sign per establishment is permitted.
- The placement of the sign shall be in close proximity to the establishment that is identified on the sign.
- A ground floor establishment with a corner storefront may have one sign on each building façade.
- Upper story establishments are allowed to have one sign adjacent to the building entrance.

Materials

- Signs shall be constructed of durable high-quality materials that retain their characteristics within a high-traffic area over time.
- Materials shall be compatible with the color, craftsmanship, and finishes associated with the district. Glossy or highly reflective surfaces will not be approved.

Method of Attachment

- All signs shall be attached in a manner that avoids damaging or obscuring any of the character-defining features associated with the subject building.
- For non-terra cotta masonry buildings, signs shall be anchored through mortar joints or attached to the jamb of a non-historic storefront system.
- Under no circumstances shall a sign be anchored to any cast iron or terra cotta elements of a building.
• Signs shall be attached in a manner that allows for their removal without adversely impacting the exterior of the subject building.

• The visibility of conduit and raceways associated with a sign shall be minimized; however, if raceways must be exposed, they should be finished to match the facade or integrated into the overall design of the sign.

Methods of Illumination

• All signs shall appear to be indirectly illuminated or externally illuminated such as by installing an external fixture to illuminate the sign or by using a reverse channel halo-lit means of illumination.

• All signs shall have an opaque background that does not transmit light and text. Logos shall be individually illuminated.

• Unless a sign has been determined to be of historic significance, no sign or awning should flash or display animation or moving text.

• In order to reduce the depth and profile of a sign, the transformer should be located in a remote location and not housed within the sign itself.

• A sign may also be reduced in profile or depth by using a light emitting diode (LED) method of illumination. For more information on LED lighting please contact your sign contractor.

• All conduit required for all new signage must be concealed and may never be attached or left exposed on the face of the building, the sign structure, or the sign itself.

Example of an indirectly lit sign with a shallow profile.
Projecting Signs

When used incorrectly, blade signs create visual clutter, overwhelm pedestrians and drivers with visual stimulation, and obscure or damage architectural details of the building. The standards below detail the various sizes and locations that generally respect the character of the district. All proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Size and Placement

- Scale of signs and placement on the building shall be appropriate to the elements of the building and historic applications.
- Signs shall relate to the character-defining features of the building.
- Signs near the base of the building shall relate to the pedestrian scale.
- Signs shall not extend above the roof line.
- Covering, altering or obscuring architectural details or window openings shall be avoided.
- Projecting signs shall be located on or immediately adjacent to the storefronts corresponding to the business and shall not extend below, above, or across other storefronts or along a frontage associated with a different use.

Location

- Projecting signs may not be located above the window sill of the first residential floor of a building, nor shall any portion of a sign be located at a height above the lintel of the corresponding storefront, unless it has been determined by the Planning Department Preservation Staff or the Historic Preservation Commission that an alternate location is acceptable in order to avoid obscuring or adversely impacting the character-defining features of the subject building.
- Signs shall be located in an area that does not obscure any of the building’s character-defining features.
- Important factors to be considered are:
  - The amount of linear street frontage occupied by the business
  - The overall character-defining features of the building
  - The width of the sidewalk
  - The number of adjacent existing and potential establishments within the subject building
  - The floor-to-ceiling height of the commercial space visible from the public right-of-way.

LEFT: These overscaled signs overpower the building and the storefront. This excessive application of signs is discouraged.

RIGHT: The blade sign is attached according to the standards; it is anchored through the mortar joints, avoiding damage to the masonry.
Wall Signs

Wall signs are commonly comprised of signboards or individual die-cut letters that run parallel to the facade of a building. Often paired with a blade sign, wall signs have increased in size and number throughout the districts. Today, there are a number of examples throughout the city where wall signs appear at an overwhelming scale and blanket significant architectural details. When used correctly, wall signs express individuality, attract customers, and respect the architectural features of the building. The standards below detail the various sizes and locations that generally respect the character of the district. In general, the size of wall signs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Size and Placement

- Scale of signs and placement on the building shall be appropriate to the elements of the building and historic applications. Wall signs consisting of individual letters mounted to the facade are encouraged.
- Large opaque sign panels behind individual letters are discouraged.
- Wall signs covering, altering, or obscuring architectural details or window openings should be avoided.
- Wall signs that obscure, cover, damage, or alter architectural elements such as friezes, lintels, spandrels, and historic sign bands will not be approved.
- Wall signs shall be located at a height that relates to a pedestrian scale.
- Wall signs shall be centered on horizontal surfaces, within bays or over storefront openings and shall not extend above, below, or beyond the storefront the related business occupies.
- Wall signs shall maintain a physical separation between all tenant signage so that it is clear which signs relate directly to the respective business.

Location

- Wall signs shall be located in an area that does not obscure any of the character-defining features associated with the subject building.
- The location of wall signs allowed for any one establishment will be based on the following factors:
  - The amount of linear street frontage occupied by the business;
  - The cumulative number and location of business signs attached to the subject building, including all existing and proposed signage.

This wall sign is centered on the storefront, scaled proportionally to sign band and does not alter any character-defining features. This treatment is recommended.
Sign Permits

Permits
Certain kinds of signs that do not require a permit are listed in Section 603 and the following list below:

1) Unless otherwise prohibited, a sign painted or repainted on a door or window in an NC, C, or M district.

2) Ordinary maintenance and minor repairs which do not involve replacement, alteration, reconstruction, relocation, intensification or expansion of the sign.

3) Temporary sale or lease signs, temporary signs of persons and firms connected with work on buildings under actual construction or alteration, and temporary business signs.

4) A mere change of copy on a sign the customary use of which involves frequent and periodic changes of copy (i.e. theater marquee). A change in copy for all other signs (including a change of business name), change from general advertising to business sign, and any increase in sign area shall constitute a new sign and require a permit.

A permit is needed to install, place, replace, reconstruct or relocate, expand, change business sign copy; intensify in illumination or other aspect; or expand in area or dimension for all signs. Sometimes a permit may not be required under the Building Code (i.e. painted non-illuminated or projecting signs up to 2.5 square feet) but is still required to be reviewed under the Planning Code.

Permit Application
When a permit is required for a sign, a permit should be filed with the Central Permit Bureau of the Department of Building Inspection together with a permit fee and the completed permit application shall be accompanied by construction documents that include the following:

- A plot plan that shows the location of the proposed sign as well as all other existing signs on the site and their dimensions. The length of the business frontage along the public right-of-way and sidewalk should be indicated.

- Scaled front and lateral elevation drawings of the building with the sign including the dimensions, materials, and any other required details of construction as necessary depending on sign type.

- Detailed drawings of the proposed sign copy.

- Photographs of the entire subject site.

Your application to install or alter a sign will not be reviewed if any of the above listed materials are missing.

Nothing in the sign regulations shall be deemed to permit any use of property that is otherwise prohibited by the Planning Code, or to permit any sign that is prohibited by the regulations of any special sign district or the standards or procedures of any Redevelopment Plan or any other Code or legal restriction.

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