



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Context Statement Case Report Adoption of African American Historic Context Statement

HEARING DATE: MAY 4, 2016

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Date: April 27, 2016
Case Number: 2013.0384U
Project: ***African American Citywide Historic Context Statement***
Staff Contact: Susan Parks – (415) 575-9101
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Reviewed by: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
Tim.Frye@sfgov.org
Recommendation: Adoption

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is consideration to adopt the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement (AAHCS)*. The document was written by Tim Kelly Consulting, VerPlank Historic Consulting, Alfred Williams Consultancy, and Planning Department Staff with partial funding provided by through the Historic Preservation Fund Committee.

The *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* documents Black experiences in San Francisco from the City's early development through the present day. The report presents historical background on the following major time periods: Pioneers of African Descent in Alta California; African Americans in San Francisco 1849-1905; African Americans in the New Century 1906-1940; Growth and Transformation during World War II; African Americans in Postwar San Francisco 1946-1960; Redevelopment Demolishes the Fillmore District; Struggle for City Rights and Equality 1960-1980; and lastly, the Black Exodus from San Francisco 1980-2014.

Particular attention is given to the following themes: Patterns of Migration and Settlement; Employment Trends; Education; Development of Residential Enclaves and Housing Patterns; Formation of Religious, Fraternal, Social Organizations; Commercial Development; Civil Rights; Impacts of Redevelopment; and Artistic and Cultural Contributions.

The AAHCS was developed in order to provide the framework for consistent, informed evaluations of San Francisco's African American-related buildings, sites and places and links specific property types to identified themes, geographic patterns, and time periods. It defines an evaluative framework for significance, criteria considerations and integrity thresholds. This detailed information will provide future surveyors with a consistent framework within which to contextually identify, interpret and evaluate individual properties and historic districts.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Planning Department creates historic context statements as planning tools to gather data and identify

historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and historic districts. The Department's survey activities, including adopted materials and findings, are reported to the California Office of Historic Preservation through the Federal Certified Local Government Program, and conform to State and Federal standards. National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historic Resources criteria are used to evaluate properties.

Begun in March 2013, the project builds upon existing San Francisco African American scholarship, including that of Dr. Albert Broussard, Sue Bailey Thurman, Delilah Beasley, John Templeton, and others. Additional research was conducted at repositories such as the African American Historical and Cultural Society, the San Francisco Public Library, and the City of San Francisco. To inform the document and provide firsthand accounts of community life, the consultants, with the help of Department interns, conducted oral history interviews. In order to create the most accurate description of the African American experience and a thorough description of San Francisco's development history, the Planning Department created a Citizens Advisory Group consisting of community historians, activists, and planning professionals. The Department hosted community events where participants were able to share their stories and experiences, including a kick-off event in October 2013, followed by two more open house-style events in April 2014.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The community outreach and engagement plan for the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was outlined, organized, and led by the project consultants and Department Staff. The plan consisted of multiple strategies intended to announce the project to diverse African-American communities across San Francisco, including various alternative outreach methods, to enlist assistance in providing stories, ideas, and material for the context statement.

To further inform the document and provide firsthand accounts of community life, Consultants and Department interns conducted 10 oral history interviews with community members. Five of those oral histories have been transcribed and included as an appendix to the context statement. At each community event, staff and the consultants provided opportunities for community members to share stories and participate in group discussions.

The following details the notifications, announcements, and outreach activities that occurred. Please note that there are no regulations, policies or procedures for public notification for consideration or adoption of historic context statements beyond standard hearing notice.

Outreach and engagement efforts included:

- **The establishment of a project email address** for community members to contact Consultant Alfred Williams.
- **Creation of a project webpage**, in collaboration with and hosted by the Planning Department, where information, updates, and the draft historic context statement were continually posted. The project website can be viewed at <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=3552> (*Attachment C: Department Webpage and Mailings*)

- **Creation of a Brochure and Fact Sheet** that was used as a handout at community events. (*Attachment D: Outreach Materials*)
- **Alternative outreach methods.** Staff created an African American Historic Context Statement page on Historypin, a website that encourages users to “pin” their photos to an interactive map of the city. Staff partnered with the Mayor’s Office of Innovation, to use their “Mindmixer” platform, to create a discussion page. Staff planned to ask questions, lead and facilitate the discussion, and encourage an online conversation between community events. As part of the platform, a start and end date along with prizes are required. A partnership was formed national oral history non-profit StoryCorps. Due to lack of interest, none of these methods were implemented. Consultants also provided and staffed a hotline phone number.

Community Workshops

Consultants and the Planning Department conducted three community events across the City.

- **October 9, 2013**, the first community event was held at the African American Art and Cultural Center. Community members were invited to share their personal histories, family stories, photos and memories for incorporation into the context statement. Planners were available to help document these stories, via cameras, scanners, and other means. A representative from StoryCorp was available to answer questions, and the Department hoped to solicit 10 to 20 volunteer participants. It should be noted, at this time the Department presented the project as “The African American History Project,” hoping it would attract more participants and that the project would live on in other capacities, such as interpretive exhibits.

Approximately 80 people attended the event. Many people were positive, interested in the event and appreciative that the study was being undertaken. However many others voiced a number of concerns over the creation of the document, the lack of African Americans on the project team, and felt that they had not been consulted about the creation of the project.

- **April 24, 2014**, the second, open-house style event was held at the Bayview Library to update the community on the progress of the context statement and to hear more of the personal stories and experiences of African Americans life in San Francisco.
- **April 29, 2014**, the third, open-house style event was held at Ingleside Presbyterian Church to update the community on the progress of the context statement and to hear more of the personal stories and experiences of African Americans life in San Francisco.

PROJECT DELAYS

It should also be noted that two issues occurred over the course of developing the context statement that delayed the expected delivery date.

- **In response to public comment**, Staff and the Consultants decided to revise the community outreach strategy. Consultants continued to write the context statement, while staff regrouped and worked to address the following issues raised at the kick-off event. In response to the concern about the lack of African Americans on the project team, Staff worked with the Supervisors' offices to identify potential participants for the new "Citizens Advisory Group". The group was created to include allowing local African American historians to opportunity to review and comment on the document; replacing the original Peer Review Committee, that was comprised solely of preservation professionals. Staff also secured funding from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee to fund two internships for one undergraduate and one graduate student students studying African American or Ethnic Studies. Staff also used the HPFCs funding to pay stipends to the new Citizens Advisory Group members, and to host two additional community events in historically African American neighborhoods – the Bayview and Ingleside. These efforts took place from October 2013 to April 2014, when the project was re-presented to the public.
- **By December 2014, the Consultants had exhausted two rounds of funding** from the HPFC. Staff provided comments to the Consultants, which could not be addressed due to the lack of funding. (*Attachment F: HPFC and Planning Comments to Consultants*) Staff took over the document and completed it in-house. From January 2015 to December 2015 Staff revised, edited, added content and photos to the document and transcribed the oral history interviews. The Final Draft Historic Context Statement was posted to the website for public review in January 2016.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was guided and supported by the Citizens Advisory Group of the following individuals:

- **Carson Anderson**, Architectural Historian
- **Mike Buhler**, Executive Director of San Francisco Architectural Heritage and member of the Historic Preservation Fund Committee
- **Lance Burton**, San Francisco Black history expert and owner of Planet Fillmore Communications
- **Dr. Robert Cherny**, retired Professor Emeritus of History at San Francisco State University and a member of the Historic Preservation Fund Committee
- **Daniel Landry**, community activist
- **Rick Moss**, Chief Curator of the African American Museum and Library at the Oakland Public Library
- **Alise Vincent**, community activist, Outreach Coordinator for Hunters Point Shipyard Citizen's Advisory Committee and owner of Vincent Alise Consulting

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The project was partially funded (through the initial two rounds of funding) by the Historic Preservation Fund Committee (HPFC), who established periodic progress reviews with the Consultants. Planning

Department Staff serve as technical advisors to the HPFC. The following list details the project's milestones with the HPFC, Consultants, and Planning Department.

- **February 2013:** HPFC awarded funding to consultants.
- **Fall 2013:** Department launched project website.
- **September 2013 – April 2014:** Staff provided support by organizing community events and community events and securing Staff as volunteers at each of the three community events.
- **October 2013:** At the first community event, the public voiced a number of concerns, including staffing, the lack of local historians on the project and notification of the potential for the project. After this, the Department put future outreach efforts on hold until a new outreach strategy could be devised.
- **November 2013:** Department Staff devised a new outreach strategy that would respond to the public's concerns, including;
 - Meeting with Supervisors to determine community activists and historians who might be interested in serving on the newly formed Citizens Advisory Group, (formerly the Peer Review Committee).
 - Staff created two internship positions open to students in ethnic studies programs across the Bay Area.
 - Staff decided scheduled two events later in the Spring.
- **January 2014:** Department Staff requested additional funding from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee in order to fund the internship positions and stipends for the Citizens Advisory Group.
- **January 2014:** Consultants continue writing the context statement as outreach strategies change.
- **March 2014:** Department hires and creates work plan for interns. Management is shared between the Consultants and Staff.
- **April 2014:** Department and Consultants host two open-house style events in the Bayview and Ingleside neighborhoods.
- **April – May 2014:** Interns conduct oral history interviews with consultants and technical assistance from Department Staff.
- **August 2014:** Staff holds Citizens Advisory Group Meeting.
- **August 2014:** HPFC and Department reviewed the final draft document from Consultants.
- **January – December 2015:** Planning Department assumes responsibility to expand the document. (*Attachment F: HPFC and Planning Comments to Consultants*). Staff provides the HPFC with an update on the document; and begins in-house work to add photos, details, additional , content and transcribed oral history interviews.
- **January 2016:** Final Draft is posted to the Department's website and stakeholders are notified of the February 17, 2016 hearing date.

- **February 2016:** Public Comment period ends. Staff received 1 comment letter prior to the closing date. Prior to the Final Draft being issued, Staff received 1 letter of support from Alise Vincent, a member of the Citizens Advisory Group. (*See Attachment I: Public Comment Letters*)
- **February 11, 2016:** Mr. Al Williams, President of the African American Historical and Cultural Society and project consultant submitted a letter to the HPC requesting that the hearing be continued until at least the first hearing in May to give his organization and the community time to review the document.
- **March 7, 2016:** Staff met with Mr. Williams to discuss the organizations progress and methodology for reviewing the document and discussed a new hearing date for May 4, 2016.
- **April 24, 2016:** Mr. Williams met with members of the African American Historical and Cultural Society to discuss the document in anticipation of adoption.

Note: Staff re-opened public comment at the time of Mr. William's first letter to the HPC through to the publication date for the HPC's packets (April 26, 2016) and it was noted that letters could be accepted by Staff until the hearing date and distributed to the HPC at its hearing.

Throughout the duration of this project, Department Staff have worked with the consultants and the HPFC to review the historic context statement; hosted the project website and maintained updates; assisted with the development of the recommendations chapter; posting the final draft to the website, making it available at the Public Information Center, and distributing it via an email "e-blast" to those parties on the Department's Historic Preservation mailing list. (*Attachment C: Webpage and Mailings*) Staff also answered public comments and media requests regarding the document and the adoption process and coordinated the project team and materials in anticipation of the adoption hearing

Media Coverage:

Media coverage includes the following articles and press releases, presented from the earliest to the most recent (*Attachment F: Media Coverage*):

- **San Francisco Planning Department Press Release**, "African American History Project Open House," April 16, 2014.
- **Socketsite**, "Recognizing and Preserving San Francisco's African American History," January 14, 2016.
- **Socketsite**, "Willie Mays had a Hard Time Buying a House in San Francisco," January 15, 2016.
- **Lower Polk Neighbors**, "City Publishes African American Citywide Historic Context Statement," January 16, 2016.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Approximately 80 people attended the first community event in October 2013; approximately 20 people attended each of the two community events in April 2014.

Following the document's posting to the website and subsequent media alerts, 1 stakeholder submitted comment letters (*See Attachment I: Public Comment Letters*) to the Department to provide support for the adoption, but requested additional information regarding her family be included.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Historic context statements are exempt under Class 6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 15306, *Information Collection* of the CEQA Guidelines states the following: “Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environment resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted or funded.”

RECOMMENDATIONS AS OUTLINED IN THE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

The *African American Historic Context Statement* includes the following list of recommendations intended to inform decision-makers and community members about possible next steps to protect and interpret African American-related properties in San Francisco.

- **Complete a Historic Resource Survey of African American sites in San Francisco** resulting in a comprehensive list of properties with important ties to San Francisco’s African American communities. A survey would record and evaluate in detail historic properties identified in the context statement, locate additional historic properties, and create the framework for landmarking at the local, state, and national levels.

- **Designate City, State and National Landmarks**

At the time of this report, no properties in the City of San Francisco have been listed in the National Register for their association with African American culture or history. Four City Landmarks have been designated for their African American associations, those are: Leonard Poole House (90 Cedro Way); Marcus Books/Jimbo’s Bob City (1712-1716 Fillmore Street); and Sam Jordan’s Bar (4004-4006 Third Street); and the Madame C.J. Walker House (2066 Pine Street).

The Consultants’ recommendations, though not all-inclusive, contain a list of 52 properties that appear eligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or as a City Landmark for their association with African American history. A selection includes: The Fellowship of All Peoples Church, 2041 Larkin Street; the Pullman Hotel, 236 Townsend Street; the Residence of Terry Francois at 1608 10th Avenue.

- **Designate City Landmark Districts and/or National Register Historic Districts**

The city’s historically African American neighborhoods of the Bayview, Wester Addition, and Ingleside hold clusters of extant resources that are worthy of further study in order to determine boundaries and periods of significance for potential historic districts. Further study of thematic, rather than geographic, districts are recommended. For instance, a citywide discontinuous district of African American churches or buildings associated with African American literary contributions.

- **Create plaques and interpretive exhibits at historic sites**

It is recommended that the City create interpretive exhibits, educational tours, and youth educational programs to better demonstrate the history of the African American community. In instances where a historic property associated with an important person, event, or institution is gone; the City could install a historical plaque or interpretive display with text and images that

provide a valuable and instructive experience. In cases where preservation of a building or site is not feasible, interpretation and educational projects may serve as mitigations for demolition.

- **Honor intangible heritage and legacy businesses**

It is recommended that more African American businesses be added to this program to gain exposure through Heritage's Legacy program and the City's Legacy Business Registry.

- **Create African American Heritage Corridor Special Use Districts**

The intent of a Special Use District is to help protect cultural character by requiring Planning Commission approval for many retail uses in the neighborhood. SUDs can protect the cultural character of a community by requiring a conditional use authorization from the Planning Commission for any change in use, which determine that the proposed land use is compatible with the cultural and historic integrity, neighborhood character, development pattern, and design aesthetic of the neighborhood.

For example, when the Japantown Special Use District was established in 2006, one key component of that project was the development of a Social Heritage Inventory, which lists the important intangible aspects of the neighborhood.

- **Implement Invest in Neighborhoods in African American Heritage Corridors**

Invest in Neighborhoods (IIN), through the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development is a program designed to foster job creation and economic development in neighborhood commercial districts. The program provides assistance to business owners in order to promote neighborhood revitalization. This could assist with the preservation of social heritage in African American cultural heritage corridors.

- **Access to Financial Incentives for Designated Historic properties.**

If African American sites were designated, more property owners would be able to take advantage of incentives such as the Mills Act Historical Property Contract, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, Façade Easements, the ability to use the California Historic Building Code.

DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

The *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was researched and written by Consultants Tim Kelley and Christopher VerPlank, who meet the Secretary of the Interior Professional Qualifications Standards. Review and oversight was provided by Dr. Albert Broussard. Planning Department Staff Jonathan Lammers and Susan Parks researched and wrote sections of the document and, along with Mary Brown and Historic Preservation Officer, Tim Frye, provided technical support for the outline, methodology and recommendations. Department Staff meet the Secretary of the Interiors Qualification Standards. Additional support was provided the Survey Advisors Group and the Historic Preservation Fund Committee.

The Department believes that the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* methodology and findings are consistent with the standards as set forth by the California Office of Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior. A full description of the methodology, recommendations, and findings can be found in the document.

ACTION REQUIRED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Planning Department requests the Historic Preservation Commission to adopt, modify or disapprove the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*.

DEPARTMENT STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Department Staff recommend adoption of the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* on the basis that;

- the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was prepared by qualified historians in accordance prepared by qualified historians in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and State Office of Historic Preservation Recordation Manual as outlined in Resolution No. 527 of June 7, 2000, adopted by the previous San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.
- the Citizens Advisory Group and Historic Preservation Fund Committee reviewed the Consultants' Final Draft *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* for accuracy and adequacy. The HPFC concurred with the Departments comments and agreed to release the document to Staff to finalize.
- Planning Department staff reviewed the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* for accuracy and adequacy as an evaluative framework for historic and cultural resource surveys and individual property evaluations.
- at a future hearing, Department Staff and the Historic Preservation Commission will discuss and prioritize properties identified in the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* for inclusion on the Landmark Designation Work Program.
- at a future hearing, Department Staff and the Cultural Heritage Assets Committee will discuss and prioritize the complete list of recommendations as outlined in the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* for inclusion on the work program.

RECOMMENDATION: Adoption

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Historic Preservation Commission Motion
- Attachment B: *Draft African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*
- Attachment C: Department Webpage and Mailings
- Attachment D: Outreach Materials
- Attachment E: Media Coverage
- Attachment F: HPFC and Department Comments
- Attachment G: Public Comment Letters



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. xxxx

HEARING DATE: MAY 4, 2016

Hearing Date: May 4, 2016
Case Number: 2013.0834U
Staff Contact: Susan Parks - (415) 575-9101
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ADOPTION OF THE "AFRICAN AMERICAN CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT"

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, that the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was prepared by qualified historians in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and State Office of Historic Preservation Recordation Manual as outlined in Resolution No. 527 of June 7, 2000, adopted by the previous San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board.

WHEREAS, the Methodology for recording and evaluating historic resources contained in the Office of Historic Preservation publication Instructions for Recording Historical Resources of March 1995 and future editions of that publication is based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and National Register of Historic Places Criteria cited therein.

WHEREAS, that the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* was reviewed by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission for accuracy and adequacy and was adopted by the San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission at a public meeting agendized for this purpose.

WHEREAS, that a copy of the duly adopted *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* will be maintained in the Planning Department Preservation Library and on the Planning Department's website.

WHEREAS, that future Landmark and Historic District Designation Reports and Nominations and Structures of Merit Nominations may demonstrate historic significance by reference to the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*.

WHEREAS, that in the future, in evaluating identified properties, historic significance may be demonstrated by reference to the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*.

WHEREAS, that the Planning Department will further refine the document and make technical edits as required to finalize the document.

WHEREAS, Department Staff will further recognize the history and significance of African American-related buildings, places, and sites in San Francisco's preservation planning work, including cultural resource surveys and evaluation of properties or districts for potential local, state or national historic designation, as well as to address any comments of the Commission and the public resulting from the public hearing and any further comments of the staff of the Office of Historic Preservation.

THEREFORE BE IT MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby adopts the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* and directs Staff to bring recommendations to a future hearing as part of the HPC's review and prioritization of its work program.

THEREFORE BE IT MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby adopts the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* and directs Staff to bring recommendations to a future hearing as part of the Cultural Heritage Assets Committee's review and prioritization of its work program.

BE IT FURTHER MOVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit a copy of the adopted *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* and this Motion No. xxx, to the State Office of Historic Preservation and the San Francisco Public Library for reference.

I hereby certify that the Historic Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on May 4, 2016.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED:



S A N F R A N C I S C O

African American Historical & Cultural Society

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February 11, 2016

Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Frye:

The San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society (the Society) requests that the proposed adoption of the African American Citywide Historic Context Statement (the AAHCS) by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) be postponed until at least the HPC's first meeting in April 2016.

This request is based in part on the following:

1. The Planning Department received a draft of the AAHCS more than a year ago.
2. The Society and other segments of the African American community were not asked for input on proposed revisions.
3. The Final Draft of the 296 page AAHCS was only made available for public comment from January 13 through February 8, 2016.
4. The comment period occurred at a time when many African Americans were engaged in preparing for the Martin Luther King Holiday, the Society's annual Black History Month Kickoff at City Hall and other events of major significance.
5. Given the size of the AAHCS and the demands of the events mentioned above on the Society's volunteers, the Society and its members have not had the time to meaningfully review the AAHCS.
6. Significant segments of the African American community, or the general public for that matter, may not be aware of the existence of the AAHCS or the proposal to adopt it.

We believe the requested postponement is appropriate and reasonable. It will afford the Society, the African American community and other San Franciscans time to review and provide meaningful comments on this very important document.

Thank you for your consideration.

Al Williams, President

-CC: Andrew Wolfram, Commission President
Tim Kelley
Christopher VerPlanck, Principal



SAN FRANCISCO

*African American
Historical & Cultural Society*

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March 17, 2016

Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Frye:

Thank you for supporting the San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society (the Society) requests that the proposed adoption of the African American Citywide Historic Context Statement (the AAHCS) by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) be postponed until at least the HPC's first meeting in April 2016.

Due to the press of other matters, the Society has not been able to complete all of the outreach we want to pursue in time for a hearing in April. Therefore it is requested that the HPC's consideration of the AAHCS be postponed until its second meeting in May 2016 or thereafter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Al Williams, President

-CC: Andrew Wolfram, Commission President
Tim Kelley
Christopher VerPlanck, Principal



S A N F R A N C I S C O

African American Historical & Cultural Society

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April 26, 2016

San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission
Mr. Andrew Wolfram
Commission President

**Re: African American Citywide Context Statement
Commission Meeting May 4, 2016**

Dear President Wolfram and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for extending the comment period to allow more time for the San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society (the Society) and others to review and comment on the final draft of the African American Citywide Context Statement (the Context Statement).

At the Society's Annual Meeting on April 24, 2016, the Context Statement was discussed at great length and I was authorized to convey to your Commission the Society's general support for the Context Statement along with some of our specific comments and observations on portions of it.

The Society commends the Commission, Planning Department staff and the authors of the Context Statement for the depth and scope of the coverage of the African American experience in San Francisco reflected in the Context Statement. In a very real sense the goal of the Context Statement "...to assist the City to identify and evaluate individual properties and other historic resources associated with San Francisco's African American community" parallels the mission of the Society. As such, our comments, suggestions and observations are intended to enhance the factual accuracy of the Context Statement along with its basic structural design and thematic thrust. To facilitate the consideration and review of the Society's comments, suggestions, corrections, etc., we summarize them in the attachment entitled: *The Society's Comments on the African American Citywide Historic Context Statement*.

Representatives of the Society will attend the Commission meeting on May 4, 2016. We expect to have received additional feedback from our members and other by then. Therefore, we respectfully request that time be allotted on your agenda for the Society to present additional comments and suggestions and to address any questions Commissioners may have.

The Society used the extended comment period to review the Context Statement and encouraged others to do the same. Our efforts to publicize the document was met with a combination of great interest and concern that many African American are not aware of the Context Statement. It was suggested that the Commission make an effort to obtain additional

input by holding a public meeting in an area of the City that has a significant African American population. A meeting of this type could produce information and insights that might strengthen the Context Statement. A second suggestion was that the Context Statement should be updated periodically as additional information is collected.

The Society believes the Context Statement makes an important contribution towards documenting the presence of people of African descent in and their contributions to the City and County of San Francisco. We look forward to continuing to improve the Context Statement's accuracy and utility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Williams', followed by a long horizontal line.

Al Williams,
President

Cc: San Francisco African American Historical & Cultural Society Board of Directors
San Francisco Planning Department
Tim Kelley Consulting
VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting
Alfred Williams Consultancy, LLC



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African American Historical & Cultural Society

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SAN FRANCISCO AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SOCIETY'S COMMENTS ON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

REGARDING DR. HOWARD THURMAN:

Table of Contents-Pages 4 and 109: We believe the correct inscription is: "*Dr. Howard Thurman and The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples...*"

Also at p.109: In the sentence that begins with "*Another noteworthy church...*" the correct identification of the church should be *The Church for the Fellowship All Peoples.*"

At p.110: The correct identification is "*The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples.*"

At pages 120&186: The correct title is "*The Church for the Fellowship of All Peoples.*"

Regarding the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center at p.64 and top of p.65: We believe it is a serious omission not to note that the Booker T. Washington Community Center building has been demolished in order to build a state-of-the-art community center and low-income housing erected on the same site.

At p. 90: We find this assertion by the authors quite intriguing, but also lacking in rigorous analytical augmenting: "*Once a tiny minority without any political influence the city's Black population assumed the characteristics of an increasingly confident and economically well-rounded community...*"; how did this "tiny minority" achieve a condition of an "economically well-rounded" without "any political influence"?

At pages 93-98: The authors properly acknowledge the significant impact of the public housing program in the African American ascendancy in San Francisco; however, no mention is made of the role played by African Americans in the administration and policy-making positions in the public housing program: Rev. Hamilton Boswell was, we believe, the first African American to be appointed to the Commission of the San Francisco Housing Authority, and eventually went on to become the first African American chairman of that Commission. Also, not widely known outside of the African American community in San Francisco, is that in the late 1970s an all African American team of developers became the first African Americans to build a public housing

development in San Francisco. Also, in the 1970s, Walter Scott was made the first African American executive director of the SFHA.

Page Two

At pages 99-111: the authors rightly note a number of African American professionals who achieved excellence in their craft despite being excluded because of race from participating in the larger more lucrative areas; we would add to this list these: Joe Williams, Ben James and Cliff Jeffers (attorneys), and Welton Flynn (accounting).

At p. 107 re James Stratten: To his list of accolades noted, we think it's noteworthy that he was also appointed to the San Francisco Board of Education.

At pages 108-111: We commend the authors for the coverage and treatment of the role the African American churches and their ministers in the development of the African American community in San Francisco; however, we do feel that treatment of Third Baptist Church is much too brief; and the coverage of Jones Methodist (p.109) fails to mention the large and significant role of its long-time pastor, Hamilton Boswell.

The documents also doesn't mention other African American ministers and churches that made major contributions like Rev. Victor Medearis at Double Rock Baptist Church in the Bayview Hunters Point area.

At page 125: We believe characterizing the much-regarded ILWU as "*a traditionally left-wing union...*" is a needless distracting assertion, which besmirches its historic role as being welcoming to African Americans in search of decent paying jobs in a Jim Crow dominated job market.

At page 133: The characterization of W.E.B. Dubois seriously and profoundly improperly defines his historic significance in the eyes of African Americans, and we believe, also in most of America; he was more than a "famed writer"—his *The Souls of Black Folks* is a work of canonical significance without parallel; his *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* is widely considered as having started the re-evaluation of the Reconstruction era in American historical scholarship; he was one of the co-founders of the NAACP, and serve as its leader and editor of the influential *Crisis* during the critical years of the African American struggle against Jim Crowism—all of this, and a great deal more constitutes his legacy before he joined the Communist Party in America in 1961

At page 185: The correct title is "First A.M. E. Zion Church"

At page 190: The correct title is "First A.M. E. Zion Church"
The correct title is "San Francisco Athenaeum and Literary Association"

Re: African American Citywide Historic Context Statement

Comments:

This report is interesting reading but needs to be revised to be more inclusive, detailed and accurate.

Purpose as stated in Summary Introduction: "Historic context statement to assist the City to identify and evaluate individual properties and other historic resources associated with in Francisco's African American community.....This Historic Content statement has been written to acknowledge the many significant contributions that African American have made in San Francisco's economic and cultural sectors, as well as to its *built (?)* environment, taking pains to recognize individual properties and districts associated with important individuals and groups."

If the real purpose is to acknowledge contributions of African Americans to San Francisco then the purpose is only partially fulfilled, for many contributions and persons are missing.

The African American historian, John Templeton, a San Franciscan, is not listed as a contributor or consultant, yet he is probably the most knowledgeable of all of us of our history, frequently doing tours of San Francisco landmarks. Would you like his contact information?

As you indicated, the public will view this missive as a history. If so, this history needs to be expanded and corrected. The report is rife with inaccurate statements and spellings.

I am glad you are circulating this draft before publishing, for hopefully, it can be rewritten to be representative of the Planning Department.

Some changes needing to be made:

Table of Contents : E. African-Americans in Postwar San Francisco 1946-1960 - Missing:

Ministers and Churches: There are 3 churches which started in SF the same year:

Third Baptist, First AME Zion and Bethel AME. , all now 164 years old.

The name of First AME Zion is listed incorrectly

Third Baptist is not listed

Bethel AME is not listed. Page 120 lists it as established in 1969 – completely incorrect; should say – "relocated", It was established in 1852

Page 108: There is no paragraph written about Bethel AME Church, a pioneer in community housing, having started the cooperative Freedom Homes West and now operating Fellowship Manor (senior housing), Prince Hall Apartments, Thomas Paine Housing and Laurel Gardens, all in the Western Addition....or of the ministry of the churches in housing, feeding, employment, etc.

Page 129 G. Struggle for Civil Rights and Equality 1960-1980 - Missing:

Civic Organizations

SF Human Rights Commission

African American Historical Society
SF Black Chamber of Commerce
The Links, Inc.
Black Sororities and Fraternities

Women's Organizations (National Council of Negro Women,
San Francisco Business and Professional Women, Inc.,
Black Women for Political Action, etc.)

Education: no mention of school desegregation, Josephine Cole as first Black teacher, school principals, Burl Toler and Maxwell Gillette as firsts in adult education, etc

VIII. Appendix A: Oral History Interviews.

Recommend you reconsider publishing these. Have not read all, but having read the interview with Mrs. Doris Ward, I request this not be included. Ms. Ward's health is failing, as seen in her inability to remember; names are spelled incorrectly – i.e, Ilene should be Aileen, Nola should be Enola. Please do not embarrass her by including Nicole Jones's and Tim Kelley's interview.

If you must include an interview with Assessor Ward I recommend you to review the Story Corps interview done at MOAD a few years ago and now at the Smithsonian.