



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

DATE: September 27, 2017
TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Allison Vanderslice, Preservation Planner, (415) 575-9075
REVIEWED BY: Pilar LaValley, Acting Senior Preservation Planner, (415) 575-9084
RE: **Informational Presentation for India Basin Mixed-Use Project**
Case No. 2014-002541ENV

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Attached please find a memorandum prepared by the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) providing information on the India Basin Mixed-Use Project dated September 26, 2017. The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (RPD) and the privately owned real estate development company BUILD proposed a public-private partnership to redevelop approximately 38 acres located along the India Basin shoreline into an integrated network of new public parks, wetland habitat, and a mixed-use urban village. The attached memorandum focuses on one component of the India Basin Mixed-Use Project, the park proposed by RPD at 900 Innes Avenue.

The Planning Department prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate the physical environmental effects of the proposed project. The Draft EIR was published on September 13, 2017. The Draft EIR will be brought to the HPC on October 4, 2017 following an informational presentation on the project by RPD and BUILD. The Architectural Review Committee of the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed proposed preservation alternatives for the EIR at their meeting on September 20, 2017.

There is no requested action by the HPC; the presentation is informational only.



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Memorandum

Date: September 26, 2017

To: San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission

From: Nicole Avril, Project Director, Capital Partnerships, Recreation and Parks Department

Subject: India Basin Mixed-Use Project: India Basin Scow Schooner Boatyard Vernacular Cultural Landscape and the 900 Innes proposed park

Project Overview: History, Goals, Park Features

In 2014, the City acquired the property at 900 Innes, which is adjacent to two exiting parks: India Basin Shoreline Park and India Basin Open Space, and adjacent to 700 Innes, a property owned by the local real estate developer Build Inc. The site was originally a boat building yard, home to the San Francisco Scow Schooner, a flat-bottomed boat made specifically to navigate the shallow waters of the Bay, and remained active as a boat repair yard until the late 90's at which point it housed construction equipment. Because of these activities, it is now considered a brownfield and in need of remediation.

The development of 900 Innes will transform the post-industrial brownfield into 21st-century legacy park in a historic waterfront context, with an emphasis on public access, social equity, waterfront recreation, resiliency to sea level rise, and habitat and wetland restoration and enhancement. Adjoining 900 Innes, both India Basin Shoreline Park and India Basin Open Space will be renovated. The Recreation and Park Department (RPD) and Build Inc are co-sponsors of an EIR that collectively analyzes the redevelopment of the three park properties and the 700 Innes mixed use project.

The designs for both 900 Innes and India Basin Shoreline Park are the result of a two-year public process. Goals for the park spaces include creating gathering spaces for the community, introducing concessions for food and drink, emphasizing and educating the public about the site's history, creating a safe environment with opportunities for play and experiencing the bay, adapting to sea level rise, and connecting the park to the larger neighborhood through physical connections and improved views to and through the park.

The design of 900 Innes includes a rehabilitated Shipwright's Cottage to be used as a welcome and education center with a small café in the lower level, a new concession building selling food and beverages, and the "Shop" building offering programs such as boat building. Traveling from Innes Avenue to the waterfront, the design also includes an ADA-accessible garden walk, a wide aperture connecting the community and developments up the hill to the bay, and clear sightlines and visibility for park users. The park also includes a Class 1 bike path that travels through India Basin Shoreline park and travels to Hunters Point Boulevard, that also constitutes part of the Bay Trail. The wharf on the 900 Innes shoreline will be redesigned to invite greater interaction with the tidal mudflats, and two replacement piers will allow visitors to walk out into the basin. (See Attachment 1, Park Design and Park Rendering)

Park Design and the Boatyard Cultural Landscape

The India Basin Scow Schooner Boatyard Vernacular Cultural Landscape played a prominent role in the design inspiration of the 900 Innes park. The design emphasized retaining the relationship between the Bay and the landscape, including views, routes and access alignments to the water, staging areas, remnants of the boatbuilding industry, and the 1875 Shipwright's Cottage. The 2017 HRE identified over 23 boatyard features, 13 of which are character-defining features of the cultural landscape. The project design will retain 10 of those 13 character-defining features and at least four of the non-character defining features that contribute to the overall boatyard landscape. The attached table lists both contributing and non-contributing features and their role in the project design. (See Attachment 2, Table of Landscape Features)

The three character-defining features that are not retained are: the water fence posts, Boatyard Office building, and tool shed and water tank building. The water fence posts consist of 12 creosote-treated piles adjacent to the India Basin Shoreline Park shoreline. Creosote is a complex mixture of chemicals, many of which are toxic to fish and other marine organisms. As such, resource agencies require the removal of the piles. The project proposes to replace the piles with non-toxic replications if the resource agencies will permit the replacement fill in the Bay required for their installation.

EIR Alternatives: Explorations of the Boatyard Office and Tool Shed Buildings

The project proposes the removal of two of the three buildings within the cultural landscape: the Boatyard Office building and the tools shed and water tank building. The project would retain and restore to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards the third building, the Shipwright's Cottage. The DEIR alternatives discuss options for retention of these buildings in whole or in part. The RPD design team explored options for preserving these buildings, but ultimately determined that retention of the buildings would not meet the project goals.

Boatyard Office building. The roughly 286 square foot building has been abandoned for several decades, and suffered considerable damage from fire and partial collapse. (See Attachment 3, Boatyard Office building photos). Based on this damage, the RPD design team anticipates reconstruction of all or part of the structure, rather than reuse of original materials, would be

necessary. The team explored three different use scenarios and four different building designs. Possible uses include a small “warming hut” space to enjoy food and drink, a children’s play structure, or a “folly,” which is to say a design features for observation within the landscape but no function or use.

From an operational perspective, all prospective uses present a challenge because the building would be unmonitored, un-programmed, and inactive much of the time and thus will both be a target for vandalism as well as present safety issues. From a design perspective, the very low height of the interior (ranging from 6’ to 6’5”) would be challenging to repurpose, and this height combined with the elevated floor level of the existing building present significant physical challenge to making the structure ADA-accessible.

Tools shed and water tank building. The roughly 940 square foot building is partially collapsed and the poor condition of the building materials and the light-weight nature of the original post and beam framing are such that reconstruction of the structure would be required. (See attachment 4, Tool Shed photos). The design team determined that a frame-only structure is the only way to achieve the appropriate grade for the proposed ADA-compliant garden walk from Innes Ave. as the proposed path travels through the building’s current location.

The proposed ADA-compliant path will raise the grade between the front and the back of the existing shed footprint such that the new grade would be approximately six feet up the back wall of the shed. If the design maintains the existing shed concrete footprint elevation, this would require a retaining wall at the back of the building that could create a trough like effect on the floor of the building. The grade of the floor of the existing building is lower than that of the ADA path, and the path cannot be brought down to the grade of the building floor without complete redesign that likely would not achieving ADA-compliance. Additionally, the building creates a visual obstacle from both Innes Ave. and for users of the pathway by obstructing the view to the bay from Innes and the creating of safety concerns along the path.

The design team considered reconstructing an interpretive structure from the new elevation of the proposed ADA path but felt that it would not represent the building’s function and character within the landscape if the rear shed wall of the interpretive structure was reduced by six feet relative to the existing structure. Additionally, the primary experience of park users entering from Innes would from the back-side of the Shed as it was historically oriented towards the Bay. The team felt an open-frame interpretive structure would not effectively retain that relationship with the Bay and the surrounding historic staging area and circulation paths.

Conclusion

The 900 Innes concept plan was designed without the inclusion of the Boatyard Office and tool shed buildings in order to prioritize:

1. ADA access from Griffith to the waterfront, and the safety of ADA path users as they exit the path into the class-one bicycle lane;
2. The wide aperture connecting the community, especially the housing development up the hill, to the park and bay; and
3. Clear sightlines and visibility from the street, along the path and to the water, in order to maximize park user safety.

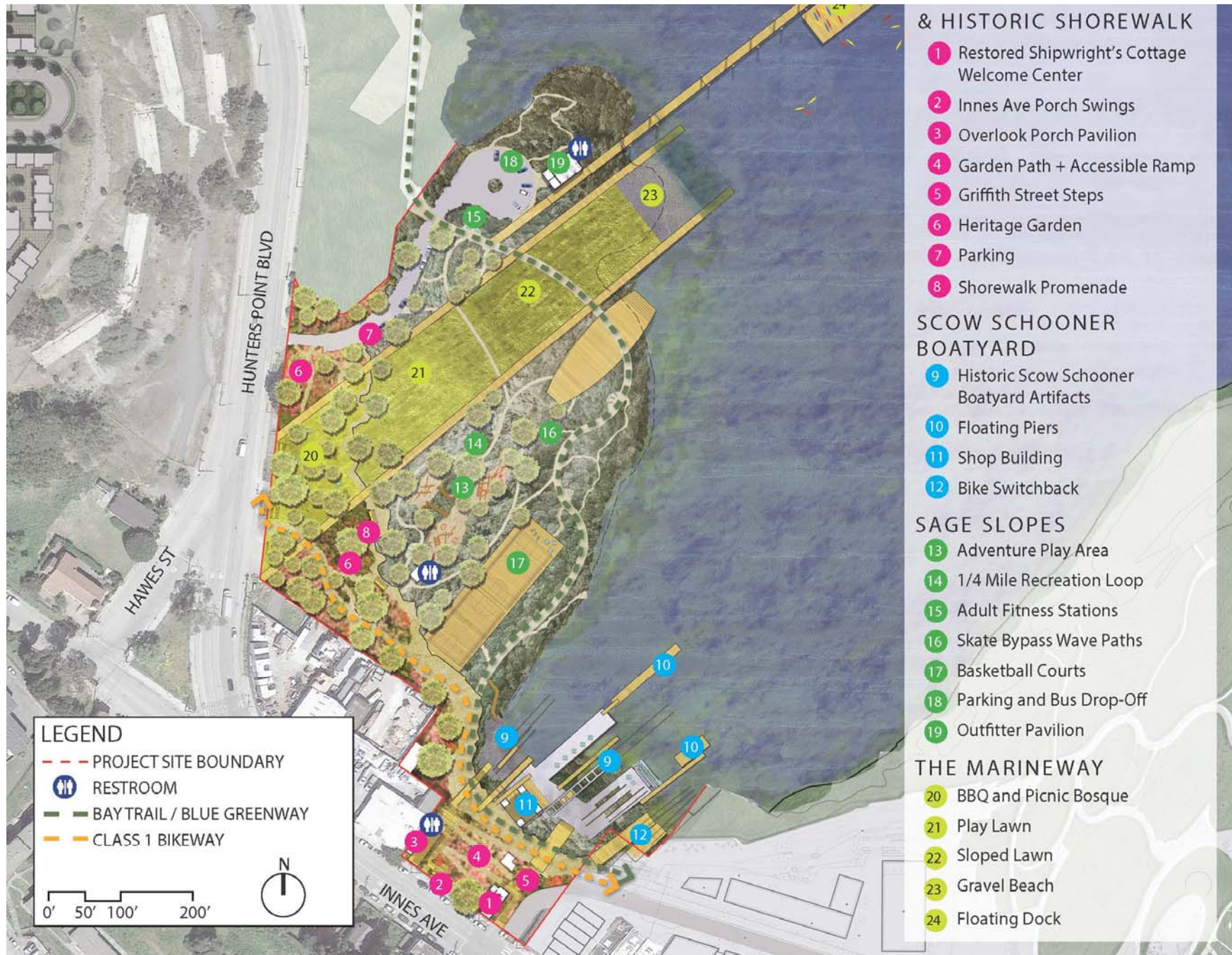
The department has numerous goals for the project, including a safe and inviting environment that follows best practices for successful maintenance. The department feels inclusion of the buildings that are difficult to activate and thus a target for vandalism, or that create “blind spots” for park users and thus compromise safety, do not support this project goal.

Furthermore, the inclusion of these buildings precludes the Department’s goal of creating a seamless entry experience that highlights both the cultural and natural landscape and maintains sightlines to the waterfront. Finally, the department aims to create an ADA-accessible pathway providing waterfront access through a pleasant garden entry pathway, an important feature of the design given the limited accessible waterfront access in the historically underserved Southeastern part of the City.

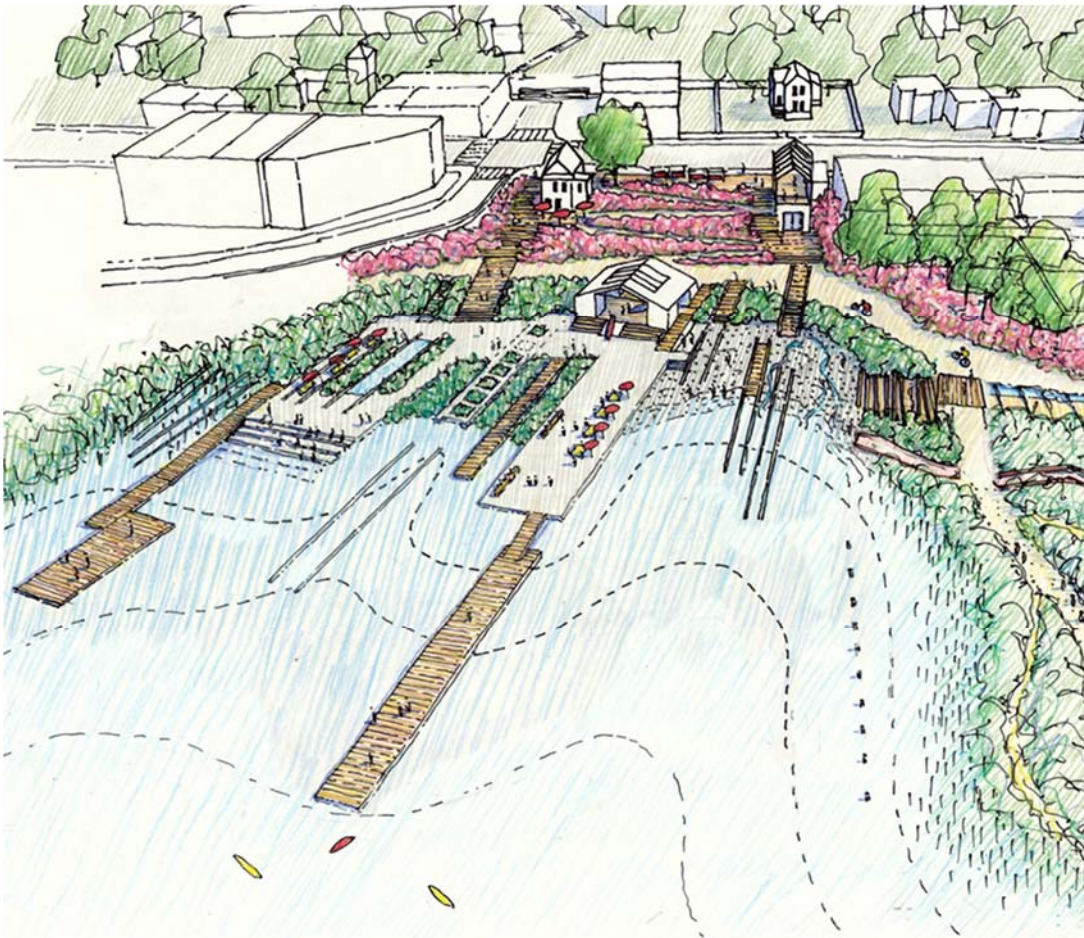
Attachments:

1. Park Design and Park Renderings
2. Table of Landscape Features
3. Boatyard Office building pictures
4. Tool shed and water tank building pictures

Attachment 1, Park Design and Park Renderings



Attachment 1, Park Design and Park Renderings



Attachment 2, Table of Landscape Features

Project Impacts on Character-Defining and Non-Character Defining features of the India Basin Scow Schooner Boatyard Vernacular Cultural Landscape

Number in HRE and Name of Feature	Year Constructed	Character-Defining Y/N	In park design
1. India Basin/San Francisco Bay	N/A	Yes	Yes, shoreline retained
2. Griffith Street right-of-way	Pre-1935	Yes	Altered, portion reoriented
3. Path between Griffith Street and west marine ways	Pre-1935	Yes	Yes, retained
4. West storage and staging yard	1979-1989	No	No, replaced with enhanced shoreline
5. Historic storage and staging yard	Pre-1935	Yes	Yes, retained
6. West marine way tracks	Pre-1935	Yes	Yes, wood elements replaced, metal elements retained
7. East marine way tracks	1938-1946	No	No, removed in parts for remediation
8. Poured concrete ramp surfaces at east and west marine ways	c. 1940s	No	No, removed in parts for remediation
9. Central construction way ramp and marine way foundation	1959-1969 (ramp); 1997-2005 (foundation)	No	Partially retained depending on final project design
10. Circulation routes and water access at marine ways	Pre-1900	Yes	Yes, routes and access alignment retained
11. Blacksmith and machine shop	1938-1946	No	Yes, makers shop on same footprint
12. Paint shop and compressor house	1938-1946	No	No, removed
13. Boatyard office building	1919-1935	Yes	No, demolished depending on final project design
14. Tool shed and water tank building	Prior to 1900	Yes	No, demolished, may be replaced with interpretive structure
15. Shipwright's Cottage	c. 1875	Yes	Yes, rehabilitated to SOI standards
16. Storage building	1979-1989	No	No, replaced with storage shed on footprint
17. Concrete wharf	1989-1997	No	Yes, retained
18. Modern dock	c. 1980s	No	Yes, replaced
19. East outfitting dock	1938-1946	No	Yes, replaced
20. Steel road undergirding	1938-1946	No	No, removed
21. Water fence posts	Pre-1935	Yes	No, removed, may be replaced
22. Sewer standpipe	Unknown (does not appear age-eligible)	No	No, removed

<i>Number in HRE and Name of Feature</i>	<i>Year Constructed</i>	<i>Character-Defining Y/N</i>	<i>In park design</i>
<i>23. Hunters Point Ship Graveyard (archeological)</i>	<i>c. 1920s-1930s</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes, retained. Piles may be installed to support park features</i>
<i>Construction debris throughout site</i>	<i>c. 2000s</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No, removed</i>
<i>Views east towards San Francisco Bay and the East Bay hills</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes, views retained</i>
<i>Gradual slope from Innes Avenue to India Basin</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes, slope retained, site regraded</i>

Notes: c.= circa; N/A=not applicable; Green = contributing feature retained; Red = contributing feature not retained
Source: September 13, 2017 DEIR and RPD

Attachment 3, Boatyard Office building pictures



Attachment 3, Boatyard Office building pictures



Attachment 4, Tool shed and water tank building pictures



Attachment 4, Tool shed and water tank building pictures



Attachment 4, Tool shed and water tank building pictures



Attachment 4, Tool shed and water tank building pictures

