



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Executive Summary Building Code Amendment

HEARING DATE: FEBRUARY 4, 2015

Project Name: **Amendments relating to the Building Code – Building Façade Inspection and Maintenance**

Case Number: **2015-000717GEN [Board File No. 141118]**

Initiated by: **Mayor Lee / Introduced October 28, 2014**

Staff Contact: **Pilar LaValley, Preservation
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Reviewed by: **Aaron Starr, Manager of Legislative Affairs
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Recommendation: **Review and comment**

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BUILDING CODE AMENDMENT

The proposed ordinance would amend the Building Code to require: 1) the façades of certain buildings having five or more stories be inspected periodically by a qualified licensed architect or engineer; 2) inspection reports be submitted to the owner and the Department of Building Inspection according to an inspection and reporting schedule; 3) maintenance of the façades be conducted in accordance with an Administrative Bulletin that is based on a national standard; 4) establishing a fee to compensate the Department for review and related evaluation processing; and 5) directing the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward this Ordinance to the California Building Standards Commission upon final passage.

The Way It Is Now:

The Building Code establishes minimum requirements for, among other things, the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of buildings and structures. Chapters 16 and 16A regulate structural design. Over the years, San Francisco has added to Chapter 16 of the California Building Code three additional chapters to implement local programs that reduce earthquake hazards for existing buildings:

- (1) Chapter 16B - Earthquake Hazard Reduction in Unreinforced Masonry Bearing Wall Buildings;
- (2) Chapter 16C - Seismic Strengthening Provisions for Unreinforced Masonry Bearing Wall Buildings; and,
- (3) Chapter 16D - Parapets and Appendages – Retroactive Provisions.

The California Health and Safety Code authorize each municipality to assess the earthquake hazard in its jurisdiction and identify buildings that may be potentially hazardous to life in the event of the earthquake. There is currently no requirement in Building Code Chapter 16 for regular façade inspections and maintenance.

The Way It Would Be:

The proposed Ordinance adds Chapter 16E to the Building Code to require initial inspections, periodic inspections, maintenance, and repair of the façades of buildings¹ that are five or more stories. The requirements of this Ordinance are retroactive and shall apply to buildings erected prior to the Ordinance.

ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Definition of Façade

Under the proposed Ordinance, the façade includes all areas on the exterior of the building except for horizontal roof areas. Specifically, the façade is defined as: all exterior walls, windows, balconies, cornices, parapets, and appurtenances as well as penthouse walls, chimneys, and so forth. It also includes interior walls and appurtenances where such area has been converted from exterior areas by enclosing the area under a roof, skylight, or other covering. The Ordinance also cites the list of additional exterior building elements provided in ASTM² E2270 (Standard Practices for Periodic Inspection of Building Façades for Unsafe Conditions) and includes these additional façade elements in the list of items to be inspected. The ASTM E2270 list of additional façade elements to be inspected is:

- (1) attached equipment such as communications equipment, pipes and ductwork,
- (2) decorative elements such as urns, friezes, balustrades, and attached artwork,
- (3) signs,
- (4) fire escapes,
- (5) flagpoles,
- (6) vertical extensions such as vents,
- (7) lights and other fixtures,
- (8) hanging air conditioners and other devices, and
- (9) other elements that could pose a safety hazard if dislodged.

Façade Inspection Schedule

Each building within the scope of this Ordinance shall be subject to an initial façade inspection with submittal of the first such reports, for buildings constructed prior to 1920, due by December 31, 2018. The complete Initial Inspection Schedule is contained in Table 1603E of the Ordinance. Buildings constructed after January 2, 2002 are exempt from the requirement for an initial inspection. Buildings for which a comprehensive façade inspection and maintenance, restoration, or replacement has been performed in the past 10 years may apply for a waiver from the initial inspection requirement. Notwithstanding the initial inspection schedule, property owners shall be required to provide an inspection report within 30 days of any façade elements exhibiting significant damage or failure due to passage of time or due to an earthquake or other event.

¹ The Ordinance will apply to buildings that are Construction Types I, II, III, and V. These construction types identify building construction by combustibility, or fire-rating, with Type I as least combustible and Type V as most combustible.

² American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) (ASTM International) develops and publishes technical standards.

Administrative Bulletin

According to the Ordinance, façade inspections and maintenance shall be conducted in accordance with procedures to be detailed in an Administrative Bulletin adopted by the Department of Building Inspection. The Administrative Bulletin will utilize ASTM E2770 (Standard Practices for Periodic Inspection of Building Façades for Unsafe Conditions) as a guide to standard inspection processes. Qualifications of the architect or engineer and other inspection details shall be as defined in ASTM E2270 and ASTM E2841 (Standard Guide for Conducting Inspections of Façades for Unsafe Conditions).

The Department is concerned that this Ordinance does not make any provision for buildings designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code; therefore, The Department would like to ensure that the Administrative Bulletin include provisions to address Article 10 and 11 designated buildings. These may include: appropriate professional qualifications for personnel preparing the inspection reports and maintenance recommendations, inspection methods that use the least intrusive or invasive means possible, application of the California Historic Building Code or Historic Best Practices, and/or referral of projects to Planning Preservation staff for review.

The Department would also recommend that the Administrative Bulletin, which will guide façade maintenance, be reviewed and approved by both the Historic Preservation and Building Inspection Commissions.

REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION

The proposed Ordinance is before the Commission so that it may review and comment on legislation pending with the Board of Supervisors that may affect historic resources.

COMMENTS

The Department recommends the following comments for the Commission to consider when reviewing the proposed Ordinance and for the Commission to adopt the attached Draft Resolution relaying these comments to the Board. The Department's proposed recommendations are as follows:

1. Modify the Ordinance to provide specific provisions regarding buildings designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code. To provide adequate provisions for these historic properties, the Department recommends that the Ordinance include:
 - a. Require professional qualifications specific to structural inspection and maintenance of historic buildings.
 - b. Require that inspection methods for historic buildings utilize the least intrusive or invasive means possible.
 - c. Refer to the California Historical Building Code or best practices within the field of historic preservation.
 - d. Specify that proposed maintenance work stemming from required inspections will be referred to Planning Preservation for review.
2. Modify the Ordinance to allow for Historic Preservation Commission and/or Planning Preservation staff review and comment in the development of the Administrative Bulletin.

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Department supports the overall goals of this Ordinance because it has the potential to protect and maintain historic fabric as well as public health and safety. Requiring façade inspections will provide baseline condition information that will be useful during the Department's review of any future exterior rehabilitation projects.

As noted above, the Department has concerns regarding the details of the Ordinance as it pertains to historic buildings, particularly those properties designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code. To address these concerns, the Department recommends the following:

Recommendation 1: Amend Section 1604E. Staff recommends amending this section to include specific provisions for buildings designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code. Specifically, staff recommends that the Ordinance provide the following for such buildings:

- a. Require professional qualifications specific to structural inspection and maintenance of historic buildings.
- b. Require that inspection methods for historic buildings utilize the least intrusive or invasive means possible.
- c. Refer to the California Historical Building Code or best practices within the field of historic preservation in addition to the standards outlined in ASTM E2270 and E2841.
- d. Specify that any proposed maintenance work stemming from required inspections will be referred to Planning Preservation for review.

Recommendation 2: Amend the Ordinance to provide additional information regarding the proposed Administrative Bulletin and to include the Historic Preservation Commission and/or Preservation Planning staff in the development of said Bulletin.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed Ordinance would result in no physical impact on the environment. The proposed amendments are exempt from environmental review under Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines.

PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has not received any public comment regarding the proposed Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION:	Review and comment
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Attachments:

Exhibit A: Draft Historic Preservation Commission Resolution

Exhibit B: Board of Supervisors File No. 141118



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE FEBRUARY 4, 2015

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Recommendation: **Review and comment**

PROVIDING REVIEW AND COMMENT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON A PROPOSED ORDINANCE THAT WOULD AMEND CHAPTER 16 OF THE BUILDING CODE TO REQUIRE THAT: 1) THE FAÇADES OF CERTAIN BUILDINGS HAVING FIVE OR MORE STORIES BE INSPECTED PERIODICALLY BY A QUALIFIED LICENSED ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER; 2) INSPECTION REPORTS BE SUBMITTED TO THE OWNER AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION ACCORDING TO AN INSPECTION AND REPORTING SCHEDULE; 3) MAINTENANCE OF THE FAÇADES BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN THAT IS BASED ON A NATIONAL STANDARD; 4) ESTABLISHING A FEE TO COMPENSATE FOR REVIEW AND RELATED EVALUATION PROCESSING.

WHEREAS, on October 28, 2014 Mayor Lee introduced a proposed Ordinance under Board of Supervisors (hereinafter "Board") File Number 141118, which would amend Chapter 16 of the Building Code to require inspection, reporting, and maintenance of building façades for Class I, II, III, or IV buildings that are five or more stories;

WHEREAS, The Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider the proposed Ordinance on February 4, 2015; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Ordinance has been determined to be categorically exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15060(c)(c) and 15378; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the custodian of records, at 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the proposed Ordinance; and

MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby provides the following comments to the Board of Supervisors on the proposed ordinance.

COMMENTS

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission recommends:

The Historic Preservation Commission supports the overall goal of this Ordinance because it has the potential to protect and maintain historic fabric as well as public health and safety. Requiring façade inspections will provide baseline condition information that will be useful during review of any future exterior rehabilitation projects for Article 10 and 11 buildings.

As noted above, the Commission has concerns regarding the details of the Ordinance as it pertains to historic buildings, particularly those properties designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code. To address these concerns, the Commission recommends:

Recommendation 1: Amend Section 1604E. The Commission recommends amending this section to include specific provisions for buildings designated pursuant to Articles 10 and 11 of the Planning Code. Specifically, the Commission recommends that the Ordinance provide, at minimum, the following provisions for such buildings:

- a. Require professional qualifications specific to structural inspection and maintenance of historic buildings.
- b. Require that inspection methods for historic buildings utilize the least intrusive or invasive means possible.
- c. Refer to the California Historical Building Code or best practices within the field of historic preservation in addition to the standards outlined in ASTM E2270 and E2841.
- d. Specify that any proposed maintenance work stemming from required inspections will be referred to Planning Preservation for review.

Recommendation 2: Amend the Ordinance to provide additional information regarding the proposed Administrative Bulletin and to include the Historic Preservation Commission and/or Preservation Planning staff in development of said Bulletin.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Commission hereby provides comments to the Board on the proposed Ordinance as described in this Resolution.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on February 4, 2015

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: February 4, 2015

1 [Building Code - Building Façade Inspection and Maintenance and Establishing Fee]

2

3 **Ordinance amending the Building Code to require that 1) the façades of certain**
 4 **buildings having five or more stories be inspected periodically by a qualified licensed**
 5 **architect or engineer; 2) inspection reports be submitted to the owner and the**
 6 **Department of Building Inspection according to an inspection and reporting schedule;**
 7 **3) maintenance of the façades be conducted in accordance with an Administrative**
 8 **Bulletin that is based on a national standard; 4) establishing a fee to compensate the**
 9 **Department for review and related evaluation processing; 5) making findings, including**
 10 **environmental findings, and findings under the California Health and Safety Code; and**
 11 **6) directing the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward this Ordinance to the**
 12 **California Building Standards Commission upon final passage.**

13 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
 14 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
 15 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
 16 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
 17 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
 18 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
 19 subsections or parts of tables.

20 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

21 Section 1. General Findings.

22 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
 23 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources
 24 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). The Board of Supervisors hereby affirms this determination.
 25 Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and
 is incorporated herein by reference.

1 (b) The Building Inspection Commission considered this ordinance on _____,
2 2014 at a duly noticed public hearing, pursuant to Charter Section D3.750-5.

3
4 Section 2. Findings under the California Health and Safety Code Sections 17958.7 and
5 18941.5. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the following local conditions apply:

6 (a) In Section 19160 of the California Health and Safety Code, the Legislature
7 declared that because of the generally acknowledged fact that California will experience
8 moderate to severe earthquakes in the foreseeable future, increased efforts to reduce
9 earthquake hazards should be encouraged and supported.

10 (b) Section 19161 of the California Health and Safety Code authorizes each city, city
11 and county, or county to assess the earthquake hazard in its jurisdiction and identify buildings
12 that may be potentially hazardous to life in the event of an earthquake. Section 19161 states
13 that potentially hazardous buildings include those with “exterior parapets or ornamentation
14 that may fall.”

15 (c) The purpose of this ordinance is to promote public safety and welfare by reducing
16 the risk of death or injury that may result from the effects of deterioration on exterior façades
17 of buildings. The inspections required by this ordinance will reduce building damage in
18 earthquakes, contributing to the City’s resiliency goals.

19
20 Section 3. The Building Code is hereby amended by adding Chapter 16E, to read as
21 follows:

22 **Chapter 16E**

23 **BUILDING FACADE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE - RETROACTIVE**

24 **PROVISIONS**

25 **SECTION 1601E – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS AND SCOPE**

1 All façades of buildings of Construction Type I, II, III, or IV which are five or more
2 stories are required to be inspected periodically by a qualified licensed architect or engineer retained
3 by the property owner and the façades maintained in accordance with the criteria and procedures of
4 this Chapter 16E. The requirements of this Chapter are retroactive and shall apply to and include
5 buildings erected prior to the adoption of this Code. Qualifications of the architect or engineer and
6 other inspection details are as defined in ASTM E2270 and ASTM E2841.

7 **SECTION 1602E – DEFINITIONS**

8 In addition to the definitions in Chapter 2 of this Code, the following definition and those
9 contained in ASTM E2270 shall apply for purposes of this Chapter. Where there is a conflict between
10 definitions, the definitions in the San Francisco Building Code shall govern.

11 **Façade.** All areas on the exterior of the building except for horizontal roof areas. The façade
12 includes all exterior walls, windows, balconies, cornices, parapets, and appurtenances. The façade also
13 includes walls supported at the roof level, such as penthouse walls, chimneys, chimneys, and so forth. A
14 façade shall include walls and appurtenances in the interior of a building where such area has been
15 converted from exterior areas by enclosing the area under a roof, skylight, or other covering.

16 **SECTION 1603E – INSPECTION SCHEDULE**

17 **1603E.1 Initial Inspection.** Each building within the scope of this Chapter 16E shall be subject to an
18 initial façade inspection pursuant to Section 1604E. Inspection reports are subject to the requirements
19 of Section 1605E.

20 **Exceptions:**

21 1. Buildings constructed after January 1, 2002 are exempt from requirement for an initial
22 inspection.

23 2. Buildings for which comprehensive façade inspection and maintenance, restoration, or
24 replacement has been performed during the 10 (ten) years preceding the date of the required initial
25 inspection may apply to the Building Official for a waiver of the initial inspection.

Table 1603E

Initial Inspection Schedule

<u>Compliance Tier</u>	<u>Building Construction Completion Date¹</u>	<u>Inspection Report Due Date</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>Building was constructed prior to 1910</u>	<u>December 31, 2018</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Building was constructed between 1911 and 1925</u>	<u>December 31, 2020</u>
<u>3</u>	<u>Building was constructed between 1926 and 1970</u>	<u>December 31, 2022</u>
<u>4</u>	<u>Building was constructed after 1970</u>	<u>December 31, 2024</u>

¹Building construction date refers to the date the Department issued the Certificate of Completion for the original building or other Department documentation showing the date of completion of the original construction, regardless of the dates of any additions or alterations.

1603E.2 Periodic inspection. Each building within the scope of this Chapter 16E shall be subject to a periodic inspection at a frequency of 10 years after the required submittal date of an initial inspection report as outlined in Table 1603E. Buildings exempt from initial inspection pursuant to the Exceptions in Section 1603E.1 shall begin periodic inspections either 30 years from the original construction date or 20 years from the date of waiver of the initial inspection, whichever shall apply.

1603E.3 Inspection in response to damage or failure. Notwithstanding the Initial Inspection Schedule set forth in Table 1603E or the Exceptions to the initial inspection requirements provided in Section 1603E.1, the Department shall require an inspection of building façades to be performed in the following circumstances:

1 1. If façade elements required to be inspected under this Chapter 16E exhibit significant
2 damage or failure, either during the normal passage of time or due to an earthquake or other event,
3 then the property owner is required to obtain an inspection of the areas of damaged or failed elements
4 and related building elements within 30 days.

5 2. The Department shall provide notices to property owners of required inspection of façade
6 elements when the 0.3-second spectral acceleration at the building site, as estimated by the United
7 States Geological Survey, exceeds 0.25 g.

8 **SECTION 1604E – FACADE INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE CRITERIA AND**
9 **PROCEDURES**

10 **1604E.1 Inspection and maintenance procedures.** Inspections and maintenance shall be conducted in
11 accordance with procedures to be detailed in an Administrative Bulletin adopted by the Department
12 based on ASTM E 2270 Standard Practice for Periodic Inspection of Building Façades for Unsafe
13 Conditions and ASTM E2841 Standard Guide for Periodic Inspection of Building Facades for Unsafe
14 Conditions.

15 **1604E.2 Method of inspection.** Inspections may include both general inspection and detailed
16 inspection as detailed in the Administrative Bulletin.

17 **1604E.3 Elements to be included in inspections.** Inspections shall include the façade elements listed
18 in ASTM E 2270 and the following additional elements:

- 19 1. Attached equipment such as communications equipment, pipes and ductwork;
- 20 2. Decorative elements such as urns, friezes, balustrades, and attached artwork;
- 21 3. Signs;
- 22 4. Fire escapes;
- 23 5. Flagpoles;
- 24 6. Vertical extensions such as vents;
- 25 7. Lights and other fixtures;

1 8. Hanging air conditioners and other devices;

2 9. Other elements that could pose a safety hazard if dislodged.

3 **1604E.4 Elements exempt from inspections.** Inspection is not required for the following conditions:

4 1. Walls with 36 inches of adjacent walls on the same or adjoining properties unless the space
5 between the walls is accessible by means of a door;

6 2. Walls and appurtenances within exterior courts and yards enclosed by walls on all sides and
7 where the bottom of the court is on grade, unless there is direct access to the court by means of a door.

8 **1605E. INSPECTION REPORTS**

9 The licensed architect or engineer performing any inspection required by this Chapter 16E
10 shall prepare an inspection report in conformity with Section 1604E and the Administrative Bulletin
11 adopted by the Department. The architect or engineer shall submit a copy of the inspection report to
12 both the property owner and the Department within the time required by Table 1603E, provided,
13 however, that the architect or engineer shall report any unsafe conditions to the Department
14 immediately notwithstanding the deadline in Table 1603E.

15 Within 60 days of receipt of an inspection report, the Department shall confirm receipt of the
16 report, provide review comments, if any, and confirm timelines and other requirements for maintenance
17 actions and subsequent inspections.

18 **1606E. FEES**

19 The Standard Hourly Rates set forth in Table 1A-D shall be charged to compensate the
20 Department for inspection report review, evaluation, and processing related to implementation and
21 enforcement of this Chapter 16E.

22
23 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
24 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
25

1 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
2 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

3
4 Section 5. Directions to the Clerk. The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors is hereby
5 directed to forward a copy of this ordinance to the California Building Standards Commission
6 upon final passage.

7
8 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
9 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

10 By: JUDITH A. BOYAJIAN
11 Deputy City Attorney

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LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Building Code - Building Façade Inspection and Maintenance and Establishing Fee]

Ordinance amending the Building Code to require that 1) the façades of certain buildings having five or more stories be inspected periodically by a qualified licensed architect or engineer; 2) inspection reports be submitted to the owner and the Department of Building Inspection according to an inspection and reporting schedule; 3) maintenance of the façades be conducted in accordance with an Administrative Bulletin that is based on a national standard; 4) establishing a fee to compensate the Department for review and related evaluation processing; 5) making findings, including environmental findings, and findings under the California Health and Safety Code; and 6) directing the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward this Ordinance to the California Building Standards Commission upon final passage.

Existing Law

The Building Code establishes minimum requirements for, among other things, the construction, alteration, repair, and maintenance of buildings and structures. Chapters 16 and 16A regulate structural design.

Over the years, San Francisco has added to Chapter 16 of the California Building Code three additional chapters to implement local programs that reduce earthquake hazards for existing buildings: (1) Chapter 16B - Earthquake Hazard Reduction in Unreinforced Masonry Bearing Wall Buildings, (2) Chapter 16C - Seismic Strengthening Provisions for Unreinforced Masonry Bearing Wall Buildings, and (3) Chapter 16D - Parapets and Appendages – Retroactive Provisions.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance adds Chapter 16E to the Building Code to require initial inspections, periodic inspections, maintenance, and repair of the façades of buildings of Construction Type I, II, III, or IV that are five or more stories. The Director of the Department of Building Inspection may waive the initial inspection for buildings constructed after January 1, 2002 and buildings for which comprehensive façade inspection and maintenance, restoration, or replacement has been performed during the ten years preceding the date of the required initial inspection.

The façade includes all areas on the exterior of the building except for horizontal roof areas, specifically: all exterior walls, windows, balconies, cornices, parapets, and other appurtenances. It also includes interior walls and appurtenances where such area has been converted from exterior areas by enclosing the area under a roof, skylight, or other covering.

ASTM E 2270 Standard Practices for Periodic Inspection of Building Façades for Unsafe Conditions lists the elements that are to be periodically inspected. Additional elements to be inspected are: (1) attached equipment such as communications equipment, pipes and ductwork, (2) decorative elements such as urns, friezes, balustrades, and attached artwork, (3) signs, (4) fire escapes, (5) flagpoles, (6) vertical extensions such as vents, (7) lights and other fixtures, (8) hanging air conditioners and other devices, and (9) other elements that could pose a safety hazard if dislodged.

Background Information

Section 19161 of the California Health and Safety Code authorizes each city, city and county or county to assess the earthquake hazard in its jurisdiction and identify buildings that may be potentially hazardous to life in the event of an earthquake. Section 19161 states that potentially hazardous buildings include those with “exterior parapets or ornamentation that may fall.” The stated purpose of this ordinance is to reduce the risk of death or injury that may result from the effects of deterioration on exterior façades of buildings by requiring periodic inspections, maintenance, and repair of the façades and certain elements that could pose a safety hazard if dislodged.

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