



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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HEARING DATE: December 20, 2017  
CASE NUMBER: 2017-011910DES – Diamond Heights Safety Wall  
TO: Historic Preservation Commission  
FROM: Desiree Smith  
Preservation Planner, 415-575-9093  
REVIEWED BY: Tim Frye  
Historic Preservation Officer, 415-575-6822  
RE: Landmark Recommendation Resolution

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

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On November 1, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution No. 914 to initiate Article 10 landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street, known as the Diamond Heights Safety Wall. Under Article 10, initiation and recommendation are two distinct steps of the landmark designation process which require separate hearings and resolutions.

Attached is a draft **Resolution to Recommend** approval to the Board of Supervisors the designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1. The Planning Department recommends adopting this Resolution.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Resolution  
Draft Designation Ordinance  
Article 10 Landmark Designation Application  
Original Landmark Designation Application submitted by Robert Pullum  
November 1, 2017 Case Report  
Resolution 914



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE DECEMBER 20, 2017

*Case No.:* 2017-011910DES  
*Project :* Diamond Heights Safety Wall  
Recommendation to Board of Supervisors  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

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### RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF WALL AT THE INTERSECTION OF DIAMOND HEIGHTS BOULEVARD AND CLIPPER STREET (AKA DIAMOND HEIGHTS SAFETY WALL), AS LANDMARK NO. XXX

1. WHEREAS, a community-sponsored Application for Article 10 Landmark Designation for the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) was submitted to the Planning Department by Robert Pullum, a member of the public; and
2. WHEREAS, additional research and analysis of the significance of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) was conducted by Department staff Hannah Lise Simonson and reviewed by Department staff Desiree Smith and Tim Frye, all of whom meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November 1, 2017 reviewed Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) pursuant Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated November 1, 2017 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution No. 914; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) conveys its historical and architectural significance for its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, as a notable work of Bay Area artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak, and as a visual landmark – a gateway into the Diamond Heights neighborhood; and
6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) meets two of the Historic Preservation Commission's priorities for designation: the designation of underrepresented Landmark property types including Modernist properties and the designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
8. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of character-defining features, as identified in the community-sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation Application and Department-prepared Case Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
9. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code Sections 101.1 and 302; and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, that historic buildings be preserved; and
10. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on December 20, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: December 20, 2017

DRAFT

1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights  
2 Boulevard and Clipper Street (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall)]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the wall located at the**  
4 **intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel**  
5 **No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), as a Landmark under Article 10 of**  
6 **the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the**  
7 **California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience and**  
8 **welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with**  
9 **the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

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

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

16 Section 1. Findings.

17 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

18 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code  
19 amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality  
20 Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section  
21 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies  
22 for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is  
23 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and is  
24 incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that  
2 the proposed landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights  
3 Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights  
4 Safety Wall) will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare for the reasons set forth  
5 in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, recommending approval  
6 of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board finds that the proposed landmark designation of the wall at the  
8 intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504,  
9 Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan  
10 and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation  
11 Commission Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, recommending approval of the proposed  
12 designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

13 (b) General Findings.

14 (1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San  
15 Francisco, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval,  
16 disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under  
17 the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

18 (2) A community-sponsored Application for Article 10 Landmark Designation for  
19 the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's  
20 Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) was submitted to the Planning  
21 Department by Robert Pullum, a member of the public.

22 (3) The Landmark Designation Case Report was prepared by Planning  
23 Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional  
24 Qualification Standards and the report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the  
25 purposes and standards of Article 10.

1 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November  
2 1, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall's historical  
3 significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated November  
4 1, 2017.

5 (5) On November 1, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission passed  
6 Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, initiating designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond  
7 Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond  
8 Heights Safety Wall) as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the  
9 Planning Code. Such motion is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File \_\_\_\_\_ and  
10 incorporated herein by reference.

11 (6) On \_\_\_\_\_ 2017, after holding a public hearing on the proposed  
12 designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning  
13 Department staff as reflected in the Landmark Designation Case Report dated November 1,  
14 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of the proposed  
15 landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and  
16 Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), in  
17 Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_. Such resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No.  
18 \_\_\_\_\_.

19 (7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the wall at the intersection of  
20 Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka  
21 Diamond Heights Safety Wall) has a special character and special historical, architectural,  
22 and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the  
23 purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code.  
24  
25

1           Section 2. Designation.

2           Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the wall at the intersection of Diamond  
3 Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond  
4 Heights Safety Wall) is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of  
5 the Planning Code.

6  
7           Section 3. Required Data.

8           (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the wall at  
9 the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No.  
10 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), in San Francisco's Diamond Heights  
11 neighborhood.

12           (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and  
13 shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in  
14 Planning Department Case Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_. In brief, the wall at the intersection of  
15 Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka  
16 Diamond Heights Safety Wall) is eligible for local designation under National Register of  
17 Historic Places Criterion A (as it is associated with events that have made a significant  
18 contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and Criterion C (as it embodies distinctive  
19 characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, conveys high artistic values, and is  
20 the work of a master architect). Specifically, designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall  
21 is proper given its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, as a notable  
22 work of Bay Area artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak, and as a visual landmark – a  
23 gateway into the Diamond Heights neighborhood.

24           (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
25 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark

1 Designation Case Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
2 and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set forth.

3 Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or replaced in kind:

4 All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials  
5 of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, identified as:

- 6 (1) Naturally weathered, untreated redwood construction;
- 7 (2) Dimensions of approximately 32' in height and 50' in length;
- 8 (3) Bolts with cast iron washers that articulate joints and act as functional  
9 ornament;
- 10 (4) Round, recessed bolt holes that serve as elements of the geometric  
11 ornament;
- 12 (5) A pattern of solid and void;
- 13 (6) North facing orientation;
- 14 (7) Unpainted concrete abutments that anchor the structure into the ground and  
15 serve the engineering purpose of creating a structurally sound safety wall;
- 16 (8) Angled notches in the redwood posts that serve as geometric ornamentation;
- 17 and
- 18 (9) Open, three-dimensional structure that creates a pedestrian experience "in  
19 the round."

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1 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment.  
2 Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance  
3 unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of  
4 Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

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

By:   
VICTORIA WONG  
Deputy City Attorney

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# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

## Community-Sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation Application

*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Timothy Frye – (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

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<i>Historic Name:</i>	Diamond Heights Safety Wall
<i>Alternate Names:</i>	Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall; Redwood Sculpture
<i>Address:</i>	No address is associated the subject property which is a wall located along Diamond Heights Boulevard at Clipper Street on Block 7504, Lots 11. The closest adjacent property is to the east at 5000 Diamond Heights Blvd. 44 Amber Drive is located on the same parcel as the safety wall (7504/011).
<i>Block/Lot:</i>	7504/011
<i>Zoning:</i>	Block 7504 is zoned RH-2
<i>Year Built:</i>	1968
<i>Architect:</i>	Stefan Alexander Novak
<i>Applicant:</i>	Robert Pullum
<i>Prior Historic Studies:</i>	None
<i>Prior HPC Actions:</i>	None

<p><i>Significance Criteria</i></p>	<p><u>Events</u>: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.</p> <p><u>Architecture/Design</u>: Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and represents the work of a master.</p>
<p><i>Period of Significance</i></p>	<p>The Period of Significance is 1968, corresponding with the year of construction.</p>
<p><i>Statement of Significance</i></p>	<p>The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is significant for its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, which dramatically reshaped the area from largely undeveloped hills to a neighborhood characterized by postwar Modernist master planning, Bay Area regional Modernist design, mixed housing typologies, and expansive views of downtown San Francisco, Glen Canyon, and the Bay. The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is also notable work of Bay Area artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak (b. 1918 – d. 2006). The site-specific work of public art serves a visual landmark – a gateway into Diamond Heights – and captures the aesthetic identity of the neighborhood which is characterized by a uniquely Bay Area regional idiom of Modernist design.</p> <p><b><u>Events</u></b></p> <p><i>Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project</i></p> <p>The construction, architectural design, and location of the subject property are associated with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency’s Diamond Heights redevelopment project, which was active from 1961-1978. Until the 1950s, Diamond Heights had a population of just 374 and was only about 25% developed. Development in Diamond Heights had stalled for many decades due to the gridiron platting that was mapped over very steep topography. The three hills that define Diamond Heights – Red Rock Hill (690 ft.), Gold Mine Hill (680 ft.), Fairmount Hill (540 ft.) – rise steeply above Glen Canyon and the surrounding Noe Valley and Glen Park neighborhoods. After the end of World War II, San Francisco experienced a population boom that resulted in an urban housing shortage. As one of the few remaining large, undeveloped areas in San Francisco not designated as parkland, Diamond Heights was identified as an ideal project location by the newly established San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA).</p> <p>The Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project was, in some ways, quite unique because the project area was largely undeveloped, which resulted in minimal demolition and displacement – unlike other redevelopment projects such as the Western Addition project which resulted in the demolition of historic urban fabric and the displacement of thousands of low-income residents and residents of color. While the Redevelopment Agency had hired</p>

local architect and planner Vernon DeMars to design the master plan for Diamond Heights, it was not until 1961 that the flagship Red Rock Hill competition was announced. The firm San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. won the bid to develop the Red Rock Hill site and selected – from four semi-finalist designs – the site concept by local architecture firm Cohen & Levorsen. (For more information on the Red Rock Hill competition, see the excerpts from the *Diamond Heights Context Statement [Draft]* in the Appendix.)

The kick-off Red Rock Hill Design Competition brought national attention to Diamond Heights within the architecture and planning communities, and was a means of touting high design standards and a commitment to Modernist design and planning. The Diamond Heights project ultimately attracted a number of prominent regional Modernist architects – many of whom would go on to national fame and prominence – including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Arthur Gensler, Joseph Esherick, Joseph Eichler, Charles Warren Callister, and Beverly Willis. Resulting from the unique site conditions, the Vernon DeMars master plan, the involvement of many Modernist architects, and the Redevelopment Agency’s power of design review, Diamond Heights is one of the largest, most cohesive Modernist residential neighborhoods in San Francisco. While much of American urban renewal and redevelopment is associated with the urban “super block,” Diamond Heights is notable for distinctly postwar suburban design elements which were adapted to the small lots and steep topography of the neighborhood site. Diamond Heights balances suburban curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs, and attached garages with denser mixed housing typologies and views of downtown San Francisco. Organized around a “Neighborhood Center” with a commercial shopping area, playground, and school, Diamond Heights was designed to feel like a distinct, small community within the larger city.

*Decorative Safety Wall Competition*

In 1961, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency also conducted the first public auction of lots to developers and individuals. On April 24, 1961, Eichler Homes, Inc., a prolific California merchant builder, purchased 105 lots at auction, including Lots 11-15 on Block 7504 along Amber Drive. Two years later, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Justin Herman, wrote to the Department of Public Works to discuss a plan for a “decorative sculptured wall at the entrance to Diamond Heights.” In July of 1963, Eichler Homes transferred a sliver of land on Block 7504, Lots 11-15, to SFRA through a Deed of Easement for the purposes of construction of what became known as the “safety wall” or “decorative safety wall.” San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. promised a gift of \$40,000 to fund the construction of the safety wall, including payment of the artist fees. The San Francisco Arts Commission also expressed their support for the project, and agreed to participate in the selection of a design; and the Department of Public Works agreed to maintain the safety wall if it was constructed under their

supervision, up to their standards, and then dedicated to the City and County of San Francisco.

A panel of three newspaper art critics, three members of the Red Rock Hill project staff, Clyde Cohen and James Levorsen (the principal architects of Cohen & Levorsen), and Herbert Lembcke, selected five semi-finalists in a design competition for the sculptured safety wall in June 1964. In 1966, Stefan Alexander Novak's design was selected as the winning proposal, but it was not until the end of 1967 that the San Francisco Arts Commission and San Francisco Redevelopment Agency officially approved the selection of Novak's design through official resolutions. The delay in the approval process was likely connected to the financial difficulties that San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. had been experiencing. The firm, which had promised \$40,000 toward the construction of the safety wall and payment of the artist's fees, was forced to sell their interests in the development of the Red Rock Hill site to their partners, General Electric Company, in 1965. By 1967, General Electric agreed to donate the \$40,000 necessary for the safety wall, and construction was able to commence. A Notice of Completion was issued by SFRA on November 27, 1968 and in March of 1969, the City and County of San Francisco accepted a Deed of Easement, taking the land, safety wall, and responsibility of maintenance from SFRA.

*Bay Area Modernist Design*

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is located adjacent to the Red Rock Hill Condominiums, designed by Cohen & Levorsen for the Red Rock Hill competition in a style that bridged the Second Bay Tradition and Midcentury Modern styles. The Second Bay Tradition is a Modernist idiom that infused the rustic, organic influences of the earlier First Bay Tradition with the machine-age materials, form, and massing of Modernism. Second Bay homes often feature large expanses of glass and porches, terraces, or trellises that connected the building with the surrounding natural environment, and are frequently clad in redwood shingle siding. The Red Rock Hill Condominiums also feature cantilevered overhangs and projecting vertical elements that are typical of Midcentury Modern design. Like the Red Rock Hill Condominiums and Bay Region Modernism, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall embodies a hybrid of Modernist design – with heavy emphasis on geometric form and the relationship between solid and void – balanced with a distinctly Bay Area, organic influence in the material choice of untreated redwood.

A visual landmark, acting in part like a "Welcome to..." sign, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall decorative sculpture is emblematic of the larger redevelopment project – its Modernist, geometric aesthetic is befitting of the Modern planning and architecture of Diamond Heights, and it is representative of the cohesive community identity that the Redevelopment Agency sought to create. Urban renewal and redevelopment, implemented by

the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, had a significant impact on the postwar built environment of San Francisco, as well as a dramatic social impact. Not just an installed piece of sculpture, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall is a site-specific work that uniquely addresses a life-safety concern, serves as a visual landmark for the community, and embodies a Bay Area regional Modernist aesthetic associated with the postwar era and the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project specifically.

### Architecture / Design

Stefan Alexander Novak (1918-2006) was a Bay Area architect and artist who taught sculpture in the architecture program at UC Berkeley for seven years, beginning in 1951. Novak was hired on to the faculty by Jacques Schnier immediately after graduating with his MA in architecture from UC Berkeley; while a professor, Novak taught sculpture to the now-famed sculptor Mark di Suvero. Born to a Polish immigrant family in New Jersey, Novak moved to the Bay Area after enlisting and serving in World War II. As a sculptor he often utilized redwood, as in the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, but also worked in cast and welded metals. Other notable public sculptural works of his include the redwood gate sculpture at the Sonoma County Library and "The Structure," a redwood sculpture in Vallejo, CA. His work was exhibited extensively in the Bay Area and beyond, including at the Third Pacific Coast Biennial of Sculpture and Drawings at the de Young Museum (1960), at the San Francisco Art Association Show hosted by the de Young Museum (1955), and in the San Francisco Museum of Art (now the SFMOMA) "Design in the Patio" exhibition (1949). Novak was also selected to represent the United States at the prestigious Biennial Art Exhibition (1955) in Sao Paulo, Brazil. An exhibition of Novak's work in redwood, including models and photographs, was hosted by the California Redwood Association at their 617 Montgomery Street gallery in 1969.

Novak's Diamond Heights Safety Wall is part of an urban tradition of development-funded public art as it was funded by a developer in the Diamond Heights redevelopment project, selected through a design competition sponsored by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) and the Arts Commission (SFAC), and was designed specifically for the site and community in Diamond Heights. Standing at the prominent, northern entrance to Diamond Heights off of Portola Drive, the Safety Wall serves as a visual landmark for the Diamond Heights neighborhood. Although the sculpture serves the functional purpose of acting as a barrier for runaway vehicles, the piece was also part of a design competition judged by the San Francisco Arts Commission and community residents, and was ultimately chosen for both its functionality and its "strong bold design statement."

In a SFRA press release dated December 26, 1967, Novak is quoted, saying:

	<p>“The wood wall was conceived as a landmark for the new Diamond Heights community. It was designed to be seen from a distance and to be experienced by the pedestrian walking through it. ... The steep, narrow site accounts, in part for its long, narrow shape in plan. Emphasis on the silhouette of its members arose from the site’s east-west orientation which places the sun behind the wall. Finally, the desire for privacy for the homes below the site led to the development of its ‘wall’ quality.”</p> <p>After its approval, the design for the Safety Wall was used by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency as a graphic in some of their promotional materials, emphasizing the Safety Wall’s intended and realized status as a visual landmark for the Diamond Heights community (see Appendix). The strong geometric forms of the Safety Wall, particularly the way in which it uses orientation and sunlight to create patterns of solid and void, are balanced with the naturally weathered redwood construction. Although the design of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall is primarily geometric abstraction, Novak included dragonfly and flower motifs – symbols of his wife and two daughters.<sup>1</sup> The Safety Wall’s modernistic design with Bay Area regional redwood materials is also reflective of the larger Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project which emphasized modern planning and architecture, and sought to create a spatially and aesthetically cohesive neighborhood – a modern landmark for a modern neighborhood.</p>
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<p><i>Assessment of Integrity</i></p>	<p>The Diamond Heights Safety Wall retains good integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling and association; and overall retains sufficient integrity to express its significance under Criteria 1 and 3. The materials – primarily redwood and metal bolts – were intentionally left untreated so as to weather naturally; as such, the Safety Wall retains integrity of materials, but the condition should be assessed and monitored for structural stability. The prevalence of biological growth may be harmful to the long-term life of the Safety Wall, and obscures the wood texture and grain of the sculpture. Two of the concrete abutments, designed to be raw and unpainted, have been painted; the grey paint is relatively similar and sympathetic to the other raw concrete abutments. At least one instance of incised graffiti is observable at a close range, but overall all sculpture is in good material condition.</p> <p>Maintenance on the Safety Wall and surrounding area has been deferred, resulting in an adverse impact to the integrity of the setting. Novak’s design intention for the Safety Wall was that sunlight would penetrate the sculpture from behind and result in a pattern of solid and void, and unique shadows. The growth of trees behind and adjacent to the Safety Wall over the last decades has obscured the sunlight behind the sculpture, diminishing the intended play of</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Symbolic references of the dragonfly and flower motifs were recounted by Novak’s nephew, Ethan Clifton, in a phone conversation on September 7, 2017.

	<p>light and shadow, but could be remedied with pruning and maintenance of nearby vegetation. The encroachment of the adjacent trees is also potentially physically damaging the Safety Wall.</p>
<p><i>Character-Defining Features</i></p>	<p>Character defining features include the form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redwood construction, 10" x 10" square posts</li> <li>• Entire Safety Wall is approximately 32' high and 50' long</li> <li>• Bolts with cast iron washers articulate joints and act as functional ornament</li> <li>• Round, recessed bolt holes are elements of the geometric ornament</li> <li>• Open, spaced elements create a pattern of solid and void that is enhanced by sun and shadow due to the structure's orientation (primary façade faces north)</li> <li>• Anchored by unpainted concrete abutments, which serve the engineering purpose of creating a structurally sound safety wall</li> <li>• Geometric ornamentation created through angled notches in the redwood posts</li> <li>• Round redwood ornaments with flower and dragonfly motifs</li> <li>• Open, three-dimensional structure creates a pedestrian experience "in the round" - movement around and through the sculpture results in different patterns of overlapping geometric elements</li> <li>• Naturally weathered, untreated redwood</li> </ul>
<p><i>Recommendations</i></p>	<p>While the Diamond Heights Safety Wall retains good integrity of its character-defining features, the structure has been suffering from years of deferred maintenance. As such, a professional experienced in the maintenance and restoration of outdoor sculpture should examine the Safety Wall and make long-term recommendations for its stewardship. While the Safety Wall was intended to weather naturally, excessive biological growth may be detrimental to the structure's condition. Additionally, the Safety Wall should be assessed and monitored for structural stability as adjacent tree limbs have been growing against the sculpture. Pruning and maintenance of nearby vegetation is also recommended to restore the intended effect of sun piercing the voids of the sculpture to highlight its geometry and to create dramatic shadows.</p>

Additional Photos



Primary (north) façade.



Detail of primary (north) façade.



Oblique detail (looking southwest).



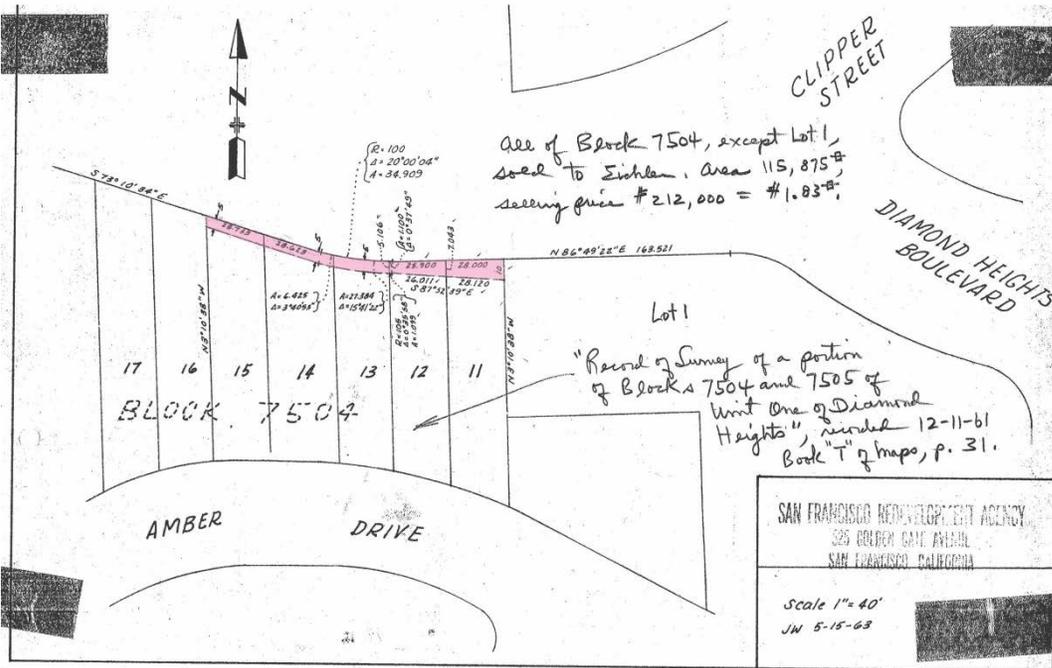
Detail of horizontal "wall" element (looking east).



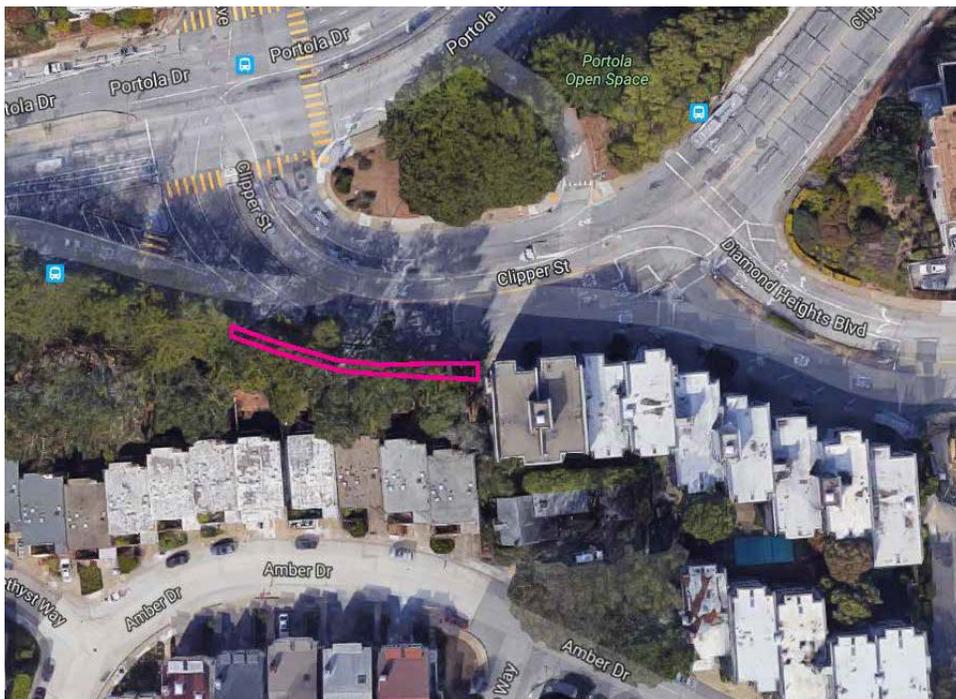
Detail of vertical element.



Physical encroachment of adjacent tree (west).

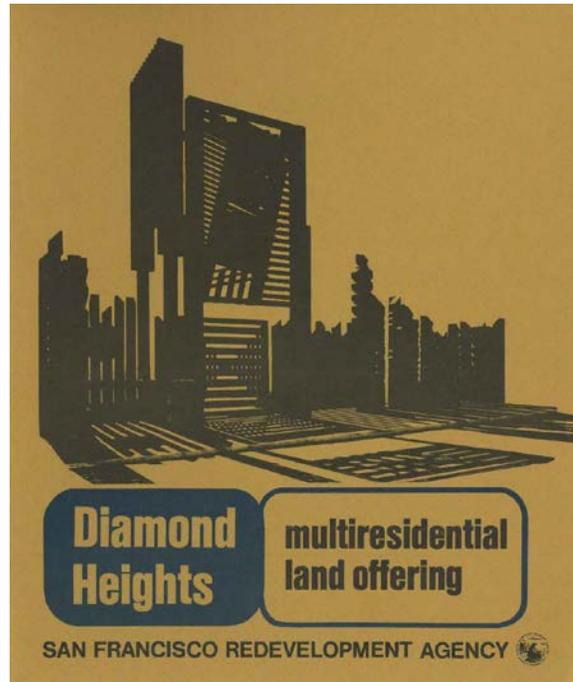


Assessor's Survey Map, Book T, page 31 (dated 5/15/68); subject property highlighted.  
 [SFRA – RED-00985, File 006, DH]



Aerial view with approximate subject property outlined. [Google Maps]

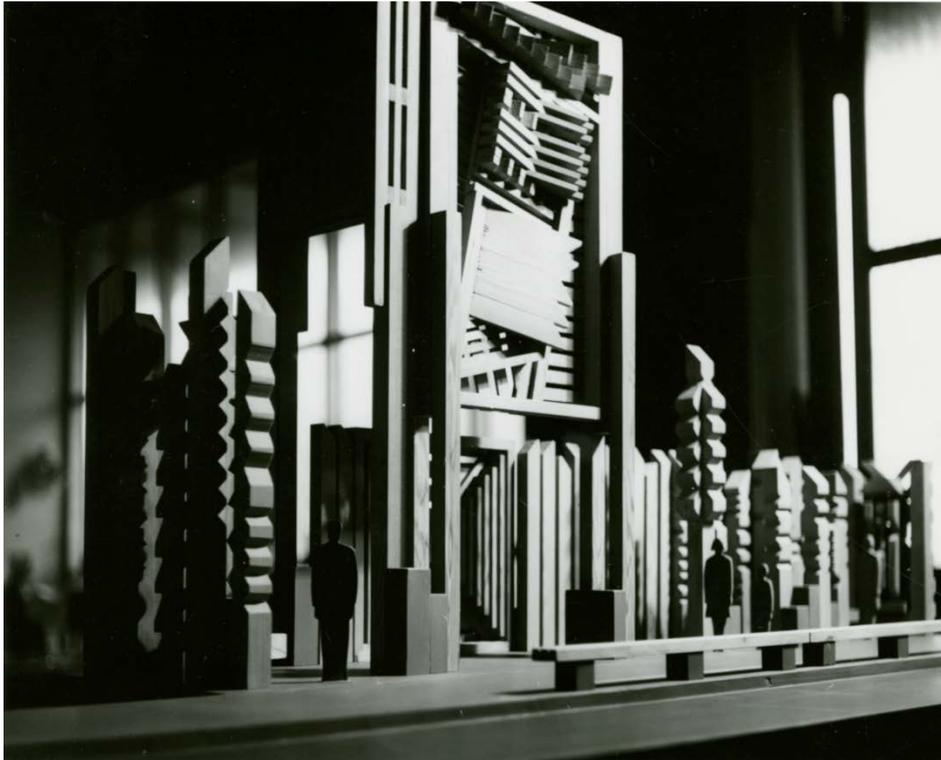
Appendix: Historic Photographs & Archival Documents



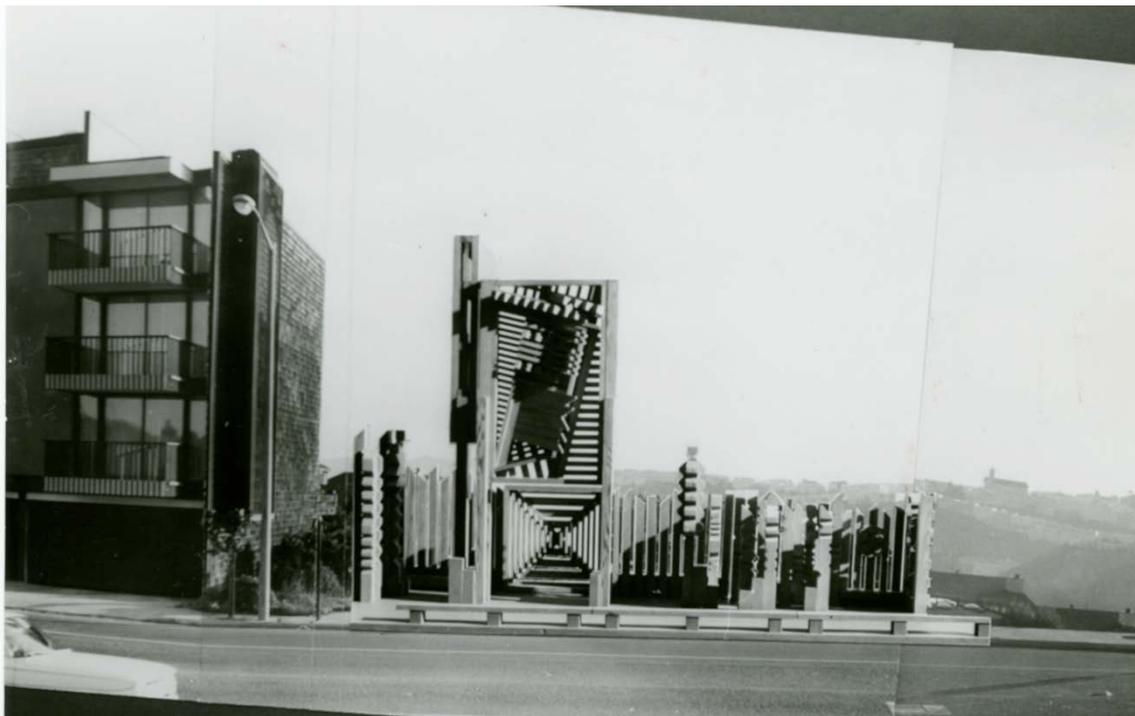
San Francisco Redevelopment Agency brochure, 1969. [SFRA – PLNG-4, File 0750, DH]



Stefan Alexander Novak in front of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, c. 1968. [SFPL – AAZ-0831]



Model of Novak's Safety Wall design, 1967. [SFPL – AAZ-0858]



Collaged photographs of Safety Wall model and surrounding site, 1967. [SFPL – AAZ-0860]



Collaged photograph of Stefan Alexander Novak with his model of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, 1968. [Fang Family San Francisco Examiner Photograph Archive, BANC PIC 2006.029, Carton L078. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.]



Dynamic of sun and shadow through the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, 1968. [Fang Family San Francisco Examiner Photograph Archive, BANC PIC 2006.029, Carton L078. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.]



Artist Stefan Alexander Novak talking to unidentified person in front of the Safety Wall, 1968.  
[Fang Family San Francisco Examiner Photograph Archive, BANC PIC 2006.029, Carton L078. Courtesy  
of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.]



Prominent vertical element of the Safety Wall on a foggy day, c. 1968. [SFPL – AAZ-0857]



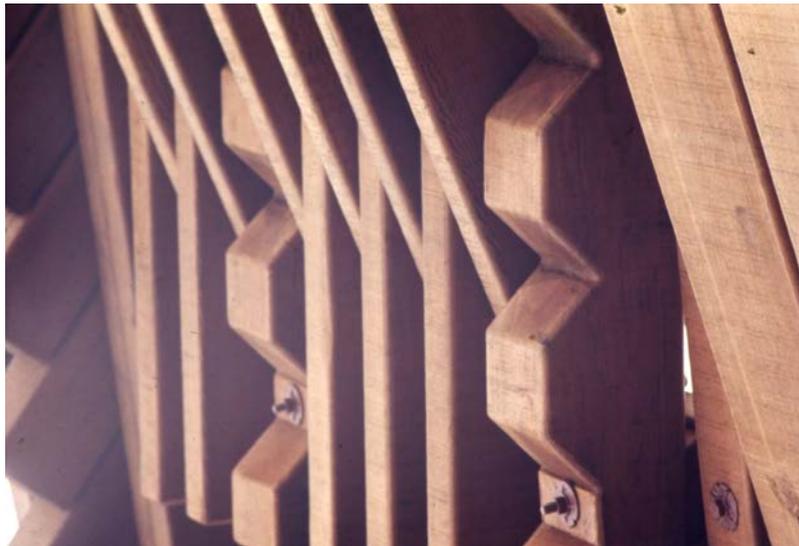
Newly constructed Diamond Heights Safety Wall, c. 1968. [SFPL – AAZ-0854]



Diamond Heights Safety Wall (looking east) with Cohen & Levorsen-designed Red Rock Hill condominiums behind, c. 1968. [SFPL – AAZ-0856]



Contact sheet of photographs of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, c. 1968.  
[SFPL – AAZ-0861]



Detail of geometrically notched redwood elements and metal bolts, c. 1968. [SFPL – AAZ-0855]

Photograph of Novak's home and studio; a model of another design iteration of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall sits in the window. [Photographer: Jeremiah O. Bragstad; published in Fracchia, Charles A., *Converted Into Houses* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 66.]



Photograph of Novak's home and studio; photographs of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall hang on the wall. [Photographer: Jeremiah O. Bragstad; published in Fracchia, Charles A., *Converted Into Houses* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 68.]

# The Sculptured Wall For Red Rock Hill

Five Bay Area sculptors have been selected to compete in the design of a safety retaining wall on Red Rock Hill in the Diamond Heights project, director M. Justin Herman of the Redevelopment Agency, announced yesterday.

The sculptured wall is intended to give visual attractiveness as well as safety to the entrance to Diamond Heights. It will be located along a 146-foot strip of land near the intersection of Portola drive and Clipper street.

Competing for its final design will be Richard O'Hanlon, Win Ng, Stephen Novak, Emmy Lou Packard, and Jack Hoag. They were selected by a panel of three art critics, Arthur Bloomfield, Alexander Fried, and Alfred Frankenstein; and three members of the Red Rock project staff, Clyde Cohen,

James Leversen, and Herbert Lembcke.

Each sculpture will receive an award of \$1000. In addition, the winning design will receive a cash bonus of \$4000, making a total of \$5000 for the winner.

The competition and construction of the wall were made possible by a \$40,000 grant from the developers of Red Rock Hill, where a 1000-unit apartment and shopping complex is now under construction.

The winning design will be chosen in September.

NOW -  
Venetian  
Room

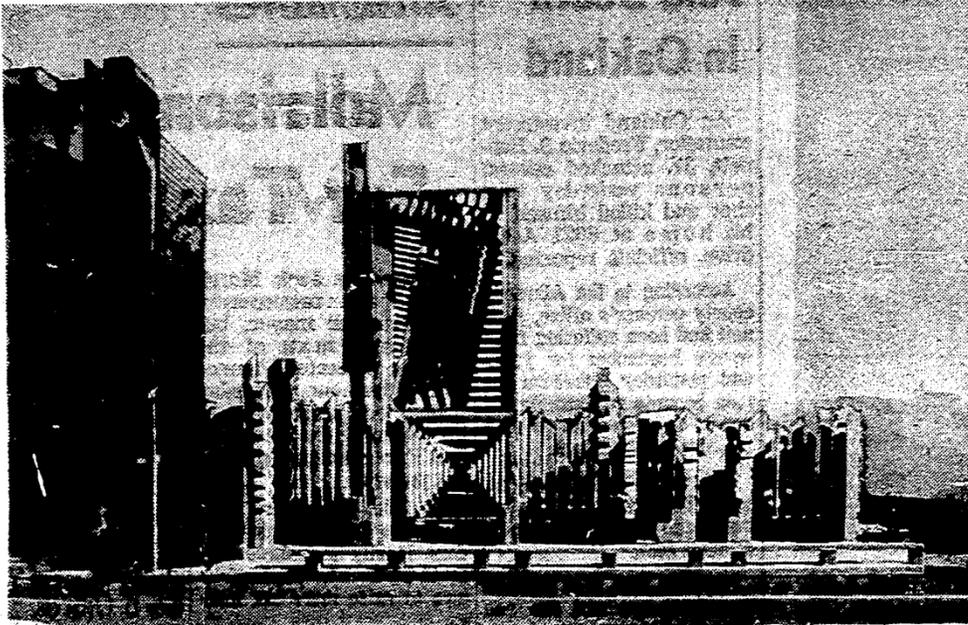
NANCY WILSON  
DANCING BENIE HECKSCHER'S  
ORCHESTRA

THE FAMOUS  
*Fairmont* DC 2-8800  
San Francisco

SHOW TIMES - 9:30 P.M. AND 12

"The Sculptured Wall For Red Rock Hill," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 10, 1964.

4 *San Francisco Chronicle* ☆☆ Wed., Dec. 27, 1967



Stefan Novak's wall—"a strong, bold design statement"

## Red Rock's Wall

By Alfred Frankenstein

Stefan Novak's design for a monumental wood sculpture to be erected on Red Rock Hill was approved yesterday by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

The work will be erected early next year on the south side of Clipper street at the intersection of that street with Portola drive and Diamond Heights boulevard.

The design won a competition juried by the art critics of San Francisco's daily newspapers a year and a half ago, but construction has been delayed for financial reasons.

Now, however, the General Electric Company, developers of the Red Rock Hill portion of the Diamond Heights renewal area, has put up \$40,000 to cover costs. The work is as much as it is a piece of sculpture. It is an abstraction of red-

wood timbers, some of them 36 feet high. Its base will be cast in concrete, and a heavy wooden rail will run its entire length. It will be 60 feet long.

The idea arose from the necessity of providing a safety wall on a sharp curve at the intersection of several streets. But this safety wall is also to be, in terms of the Redevelopment Agency's specification, "the introductory visual element to the Diamond Heights Redevelopment area." It had to be "a strong, bold design statement" related to its environment and providing a safety barrier for homes down-slope from the site.

Novak is a Berkeley sculptor and architect who has exhibited widely in the Bay Region and in the East.

Alfred Frankenstein, "Red Rock's Wall," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 27, 1967.

## Sculpture With a Purpose

# City Getting New Kind of Wall

By ALEXANDER FRIED

A wall, as everyone knows, can be an enclosure, a barrier, a windbreak, a partition, a defense.

In Old China, the Great Wall kept the foreigner out. In East Berlin, the wall keeps an enslaved population in.

In the simple-minded stage play of Shakespeare's "rude mechanicals," during "A Midsummer Night's Dream," a "man, with lime and roughcast, doth represent Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder."

★ ★ ★  
NOW IN THE DIAMOND HEIGHTS area, at Portola Drive along the way between upper Market and the beach, San Francisco will soon possess a rare, new kind of wall.

To the public eye, it will be as much a decorative sculpture as a wall, or more so. To house-holders living down the slope behind the wall's 60-foot length, it will be a guard against cars that might otherwise swerve off the curved street, and slam into their bedrooms.

As an art critic, I had some advisory function, together with fellow jurors, in selecting the wall. I believe it will become one of the art sights of the City.

The wall-sculpture will be an open-work construction of redwood timbers, posts and carved elements, of irregular height up to 36 feet. Now that the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and other authorities have approved it, sculptor Stefan Novak is building it.

★ ★ ★  
AS A PUBLIC aesthetic service, the General Electric Co. — developer of the Red Rock Hill part of the Diamond Heights renewal — has committed \$40,000 to pay for it.

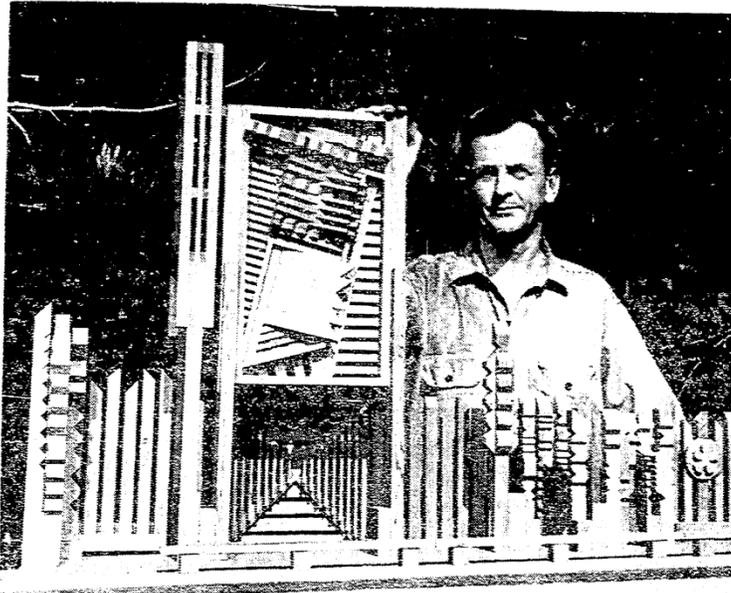
The sum will cover Novak's fee and the costs of building and materials. It won't make him rich. He is both a sculptor and an architect, lives in Berkeley and has a more than local reputation.

Let me tell you how the wall plan came about.

It was started by the Redevelopment Agency, which makes use of artistic adornment in all its projects. The Agency formed an advisory panel of three newspaper critics (including Arthur Bloomfield and Alfred Frankenstein), an Agency representative and two earlier Red Rock Hill architect-developers.

★ ★ ★  
FROM THE START, the project took a special but standard form of art competition. The panel, in lengthy meetings, used its judgment and knowledge to choose to think up all Bay Area artists whose record indicated they might design an effective wall-sculpture.

The artists, of various style and medium,



Stefan Novak examines a model of his extraordinary prizewinning wall-sculpture, soon to be built at an entry to Diamond Heights.

Below, the wall as San Franciscans will see it amid a broad local cityscape

dia, were picked as finalists. Each received a fee for submitting his own safety-wall model. Finalists were Richard O'Hanlon, Win Ng, Novak, Emmy Lou Packard and Jack Hoag.

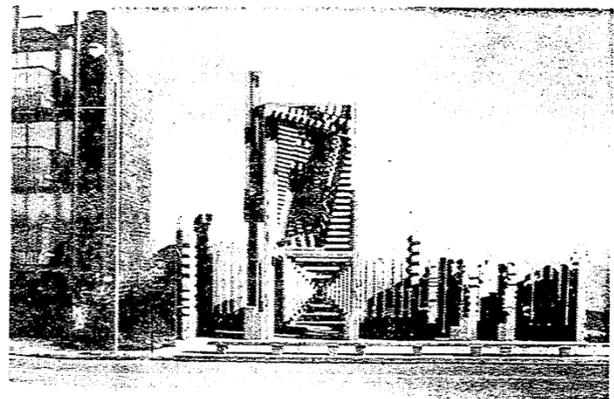
While all five proposals were interesting, two seemed outstanding. One was a "plan for a powerful, inventive, functional and stone wall. It dropped out of the list when estimates indicated it would cost too much.

Novak, on the initiative of architects and artists, Novak's construction undoubtedly will be a "strong, bold statement." It is a viewpoint design of rhythmic patterns, straightness and variety — upright, horizontal, diagonal; and geometric, but with interplays of organic wood forms.

Being wood, it will relate to the neighborhood and houses. Being a network construction, it will not block out the landscape around it, but form a spaced, unimpeded view into the landscape.

★ ★ ★  
HIS SIZE WILL make it a "restful" wall, that will cause accidents by hiding the passing, to have too long a look at it as they drive by. But if they are in fact, says Novak, they will be able to walk within it.

Some of the questions that were asked



identification and choice for artists will be made. Friends in Diamond Heights are to be asked to submit their ideas to the panel.

Some people will ask why, if it is a wall, the construction should be so high and complicated. The actual safety part of it, of course, is its solid base. The rest, sculpturally, thus to be a tower of fantasy — a visual event.

It promises to be handsome, individual, imaginative — a beauty spot on the San Francisco hills.

My commitments would be all the sponsor's concerned for conceiving it. Instead of setting out a plain, low rim of concrete that would give the strip of land behind it the look of any old vacant lot.

Alexander Fried, "Sculpture With a Purpose: City Getting New Kind of Wall," *S.F. Sunday Examiner & Chronicle*, March 3, 1968.

## Diamond Heights Car Safety Wall Is Up

A new San Francisco landmark — the great Diamond Heights redevelopment area's sculptured safety wall to keep out runaway cars — has been installed, the redevelopment agency announced yesterday.

The wall, a creation by sculptor Stefan Alexander Novak, is a 60 by 30 foot structure made of redwood imbedded in a base of cast concrete at the junction of Portola drive, Clipper street and Diamond Heights boulevard.

The \$41,000 wall, which will be formally dedicated early in 1969, and which Novak says will give pedestrians walking through it an "esthetic experience," was the winning entry in a design contest in 1966.

"Diamond Heights Car Safety Wall Is Up," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 22, 1968.



Flyer for an exhibition of Novak's work, including photographs and models of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, at the California Redwood Association Gallery.

[SFRA – PLNG-4, File 0750, DH]

STEFAN ALEXANDER NOVAK

design for a sculptured wall

The concept for this safety wall arose both from the project's program requirements and from the characteristics of the site. The most significant requirement was to create a wall that was to be seen primarily from a moving vehicle. This requirement had the strongest influence on the structure developed, for it suggested the use of height. After inspection of the site both by automobile and on foot, it became evident that the structure must visually appear to rise above the hills looming in the background in order to be silhouetted against the sky, thereby distinguishing the structure from lower level interferences, such as on-coming traffic. To achieve this effect, a minimum height of 25 to 30 feet was established.

Since the structure was so high, an open structure seemed necessary for several reasons. The main aspect of the structure is its north face; therefore, the primary position of the sun would be behind it. If the structure were solid, its main aspect would be in shadow. To eliminate this condition the structure was opened to allow the sunlight to articulate it through lights and darks, thus creating a silhouette that could be seen from a distance.

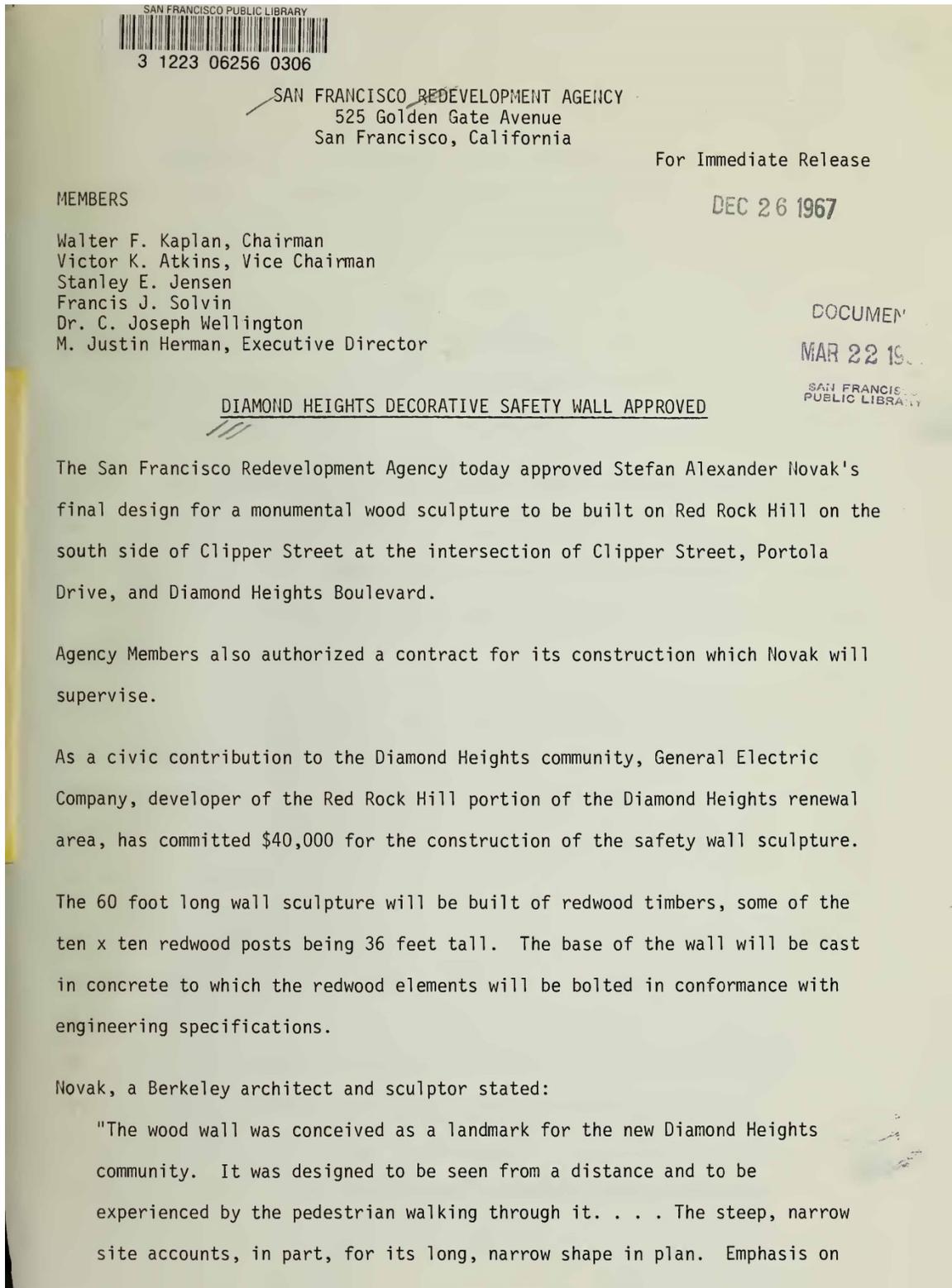
The open structure could also be developed in depth, creating for the moving viewer an ever-changing aspect of overlapping forms. In this manner it was possible to achieve a total image "in the round" to be viewed from all angles - from below, from behind, from the ends, and even from the inside.

In addition to the visual advantages of the open structure, there was also the advantage of lessening the wind load which would be a problem in a solid structure of this height.

The structure is of Douglas Fir bolted together and placed on concrete abutments which will reflect the impact of an uncontrolled vehicle. Wood was chosen because it is sympathetic with the adjacent residential structures and also because it lends itself to prefabrication and, therefore, to ease of construction. The heavy timbers would require no maintenance and would weather gracefully. Bolted connections were used since they are the most direct means for making a joint. The use of these bolts with large cast iron washers also serves to articulate the joints and acts as functional ornament.

My response to the bold directness of heavy timber structures - such as docks, warehouses, and trestles - has probably been the strongest influence in this work.

Page from booklet "5 artists' concepts of a design for a sculptured wall on Red Rock Hill Diamond Heights," San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (October 2, 1964).  
[SFRA - PLNG-4, File 0750, DH]



"Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall Approved," San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Press Release (December 26, 1967), page 1. [SFPL - 729.5 Sa52d]

-2-

the silhouette of its members arose from the site's east-west orientation which places the sun behind the wall. Finally, the desire for privacy for the homes below the site led to the development of its 'wall' quality."

The basic design problem was to create a safety wall as protection from traffic occurring at the sharp curve of the intersection of several streets. Novak resolved this through the use of a heavy wood rail at the curb and through the strong wall construction itself, with the members bolted to concrete abutments.

In August 1966, Stefan Novak's design proposal was selected as the winner in the Redevelopment Agency's competition for the design of a Diamond Heights decorative safety wall. It was to be built on an easement deeded by Eichler Homes on a steep slope adjoining the northerly boundaries of homes constructed by Eichler.

The Agency's selection of Novak was made with the understanding that he would work with General Electric Company, developers of Red Rock Hill and donors of the funds (\$40,000) for the construction of the sculpture, and the Agency to develop his design concept to meet the objectives of the various parties whose approval was required.

The original competition requirements stipulated that the safety wall, being the introductory visual element to Diamond Heights Redevelopment Area, should be a strong bold design statement; it should also relate to its environment, the sloping site, adjacent buildings and streets, and provide a safety barrier against runaway automobiles for those homes down-slope from the site.

Novak's final design has already received approval from the San Francisco Art Commission as well as from residents of the Diamond Heights Community.

E N D

"Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall Approved," San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, Press Release (December 26, 1967), page 2. [SFPL - 729.5 Sa52d]

Release from



California Redwood Association

617 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, California 94111

392-7880

FOR RELEASE: AT WILL

PHOTOS AND MODELS OF ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE ON VIEW

Photographs and models of the Diamond Heights safety wall and other works of architect and sculptor Stefan Novak will be exhibited at the California Redwood Association, 617 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, from January 9 to February 7. Gallery hours are from 9 to 5 Mondays through Fridays, admission is free.

The safety wall, a 30-foot redwood structure which stands at the junction of Portola Drive, Clipper Street and Diamond Heights Boulevard, was commissioned by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and is destined to become a new San Francisco landmark. Photographs of fabrication and construction are included in the exhibit, as well as a scale model and photographic studies of the finished project.

Novak, whose work has been exhibited in major museums both here and abroad, has completed a variety of architectural sculpture commissions, including a sun screen for NASA at the Manned Spacecraft Center, Houston, Texas. The current exhibit features his work in redwood, including a sculpture wall for the Santa Rosa Public Library and a 24-foot construction for the Mira Vista Project, Vallejo, California, commissioned by the City of Vallejo Redevelopment Agency. Other local works include a bronze relief for Standard Oil Company of California's 555 Market Street building, and a redwood and aluminum screen at Brush-Slocumb Company, 465 California Street, San Francisco. He is currently

(more)



*Write our Publicity Department for additional materials, including photos, for special features.*

"Photos and models of architectural sculpture on view," California Redwood Association, Press Release (January 3, 1969), page 1. [SFRA - PLNG-4, File 0750, DH]

Add One

working on a redwood screen for the Council Chamber, Santa Rosa City Hall,  
for the City of Santa Rosa.

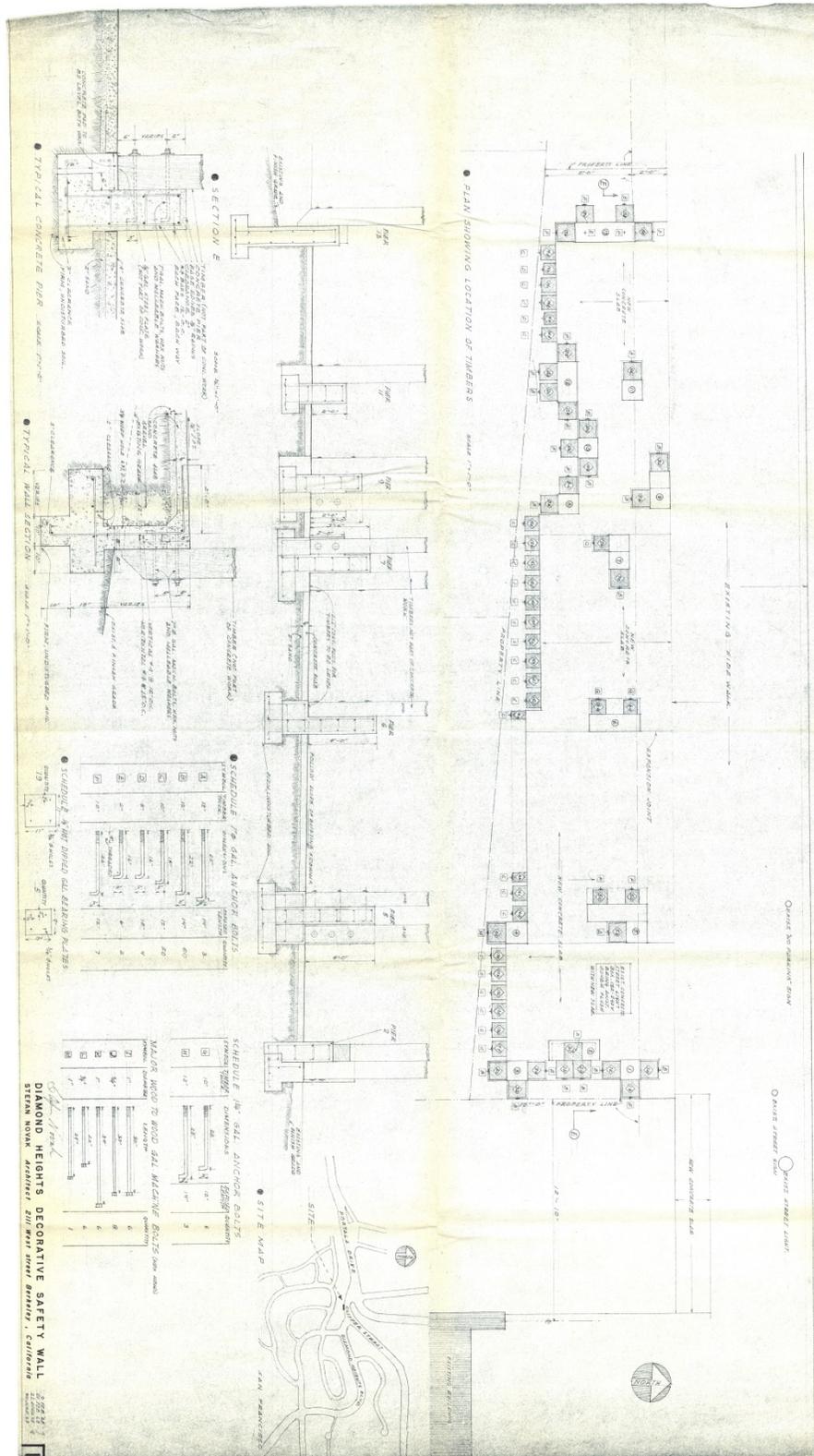
Novak's studio is in Berkeley, California. For seven years he was Assistant  
Professor in Sculpture at U. C.'s Department of Architecture. He has also  
taught and lectured in a number of other institutions, and has served on  
innumerable sculpture juries. In 1955 his work was chosen to represent  
the United States in the Third Biennial Art Exhibition, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

All photographs are by Jeremiah O. Bragstad, San Francisco.

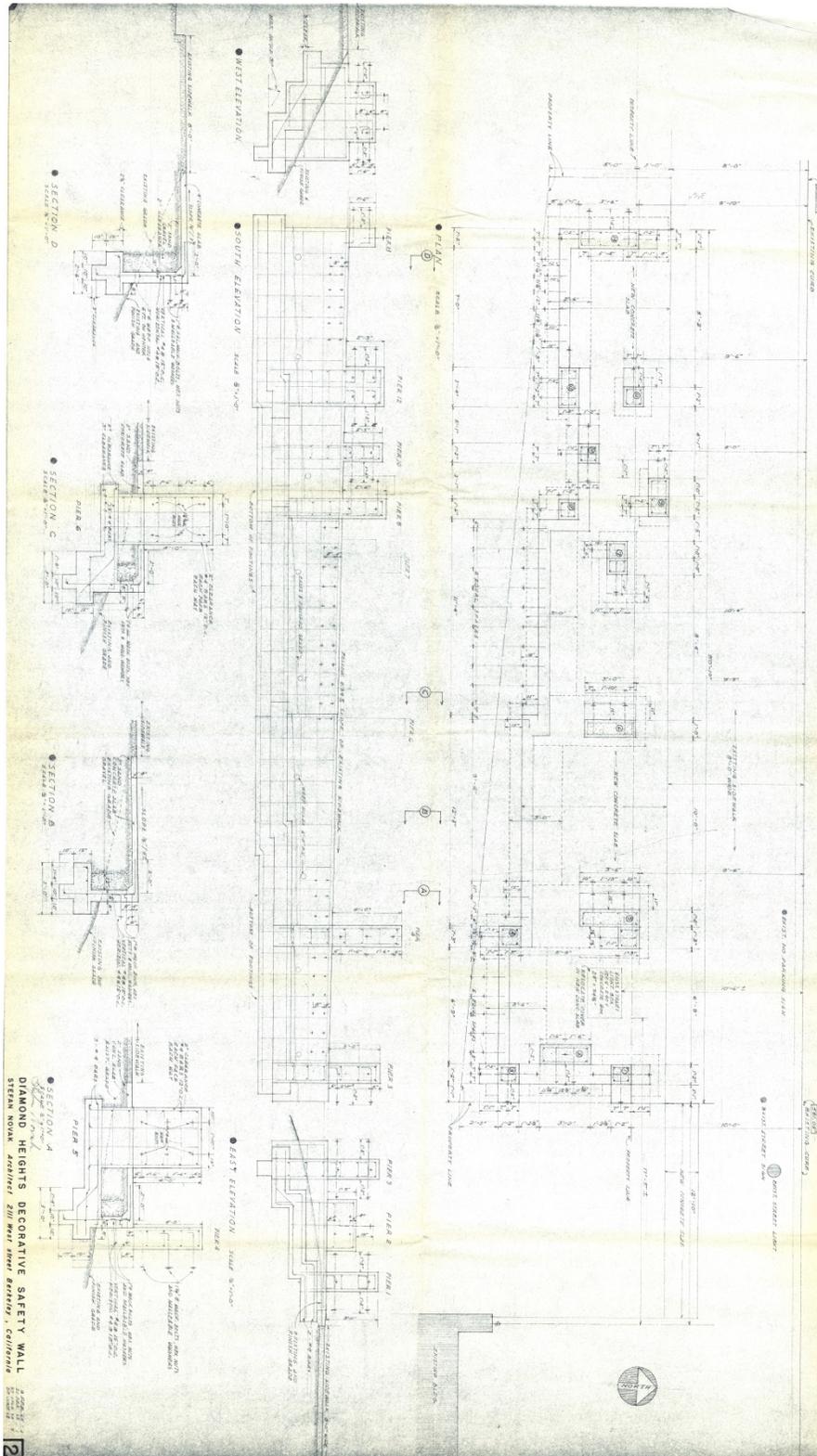
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January 3, 1969  
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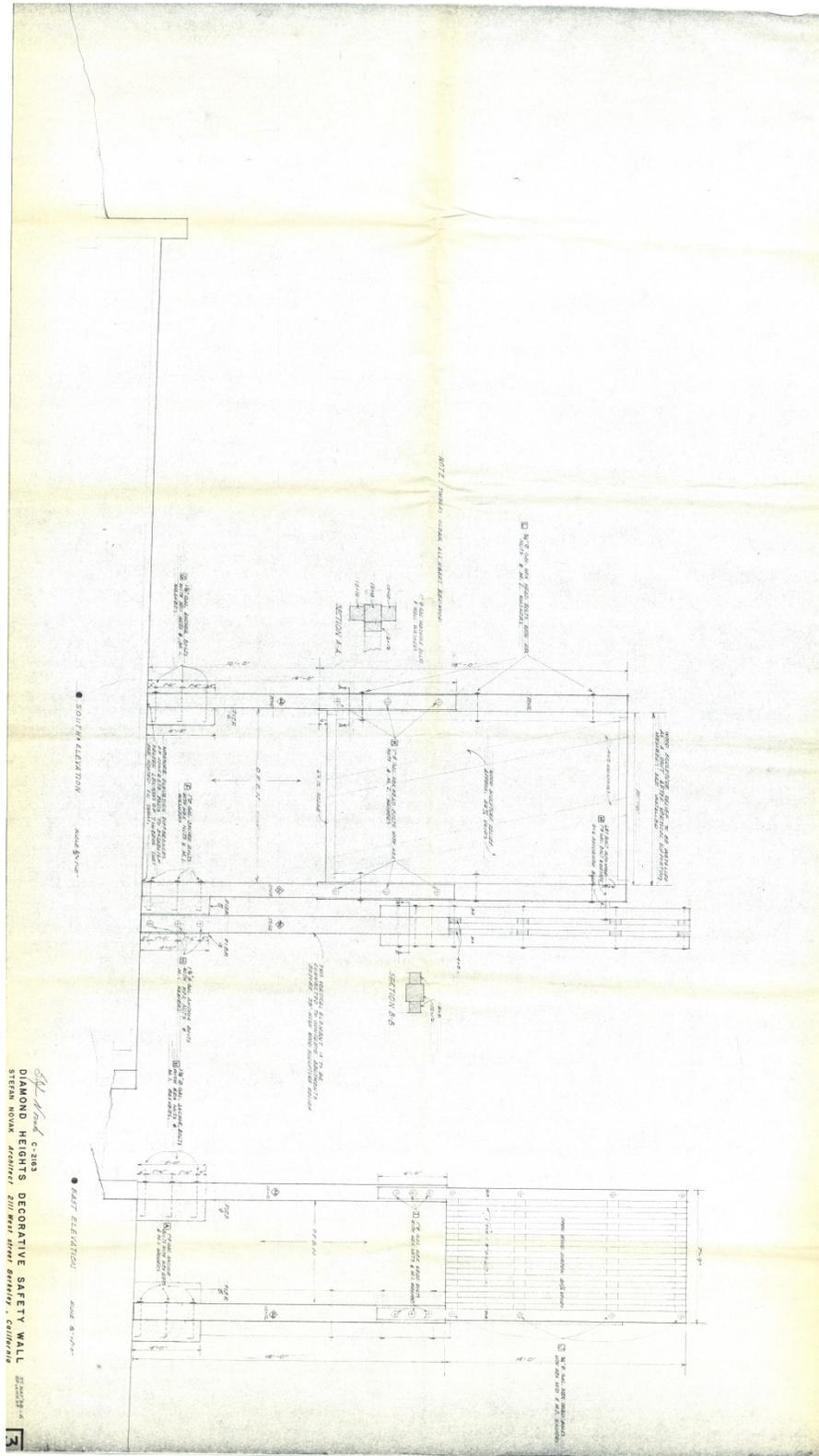
"Photos and models of architectural sculpture on view," California Redwood Association,  
Press Release (January 3, 1969), page 2. [SFRA - PLNG-4, File 0750, DH]



Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall architectural drawings by Stefan Alexander Novak, Sheet 1. [SFRA – RED-00985, File 006, DH]



Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall architectural drawings by Stefan Alexander Novak, Sheet 2. [SFRA – RED-00985, File 006, DH]



Diamond Heights Decorative Safety Wall architectural drawings by Stefan Alexander Novak, Sheet 3. [SFRA – RED-00985, File 006, DH]

### *Diamond Heights Safety Wall Timeline*

1950 – Survey area for Diamond Heights project is designated by the Board of Supervisors.

1951 – Vernon DeMars is contracted to design the Diamond Heights Master Plan.

1954 – *Redevelopment Agency v. Hayes* rules in favor of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), allowing the agency to move forward on the Diamond Heights project.

1961 – Red Rock Hill competition announced; first auction of land to developers/individuals; construction begins.

1961, April 24 – Eichler Homes, Inc. purchases 105 lots at the SFRA real estate auction, including Block 7504, Lots 11-15.

1963, April 15 – Justin Herman, Executive Director of SFRA, writes to the Director of Public Works about the plan to host a design competition for a “decorative sculptured wall at the entrance to Diamond Heights.”

1963, May 20 – Block 7504, Lots 11-15 are surveyed for an easement for the purposes of the safety wall.

1963, July 9 – Resolution No. 85-63 passed authorizing the acceptance of a Deed of Easement from Eichler Homes, Inc. (dated June 28, 1963) by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

1963, July 23 – Resolution No. 87-63 authorizing and approving privately financed program for design, construction and public dedication of a wall near the Clipper Street entrance to Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project Area B-1.

- Notes that San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. (who won the bid to develop the Red Rock Hill competition site) has agreed to donate up to \$40,000 toward the design and construction of the wall.
- San Francisco Art Commission expresses support for the safety wall sculpture design competition.
- Department of Public Works (DPW) states that if the wall is constructed under its supervision and up to its standards *and* dedicated to/accepted by the City and County of San Francisco, then DPW would maintain the wall thereafter “without expense to adjoining properties.”

1963, October 7 – Resolution No. 583-63 approving Redevelopment Agency’s program for design of a wall near the Clipper Street entrance to the Diamond Heights Approved Redevelopment Project Area B-1, passed by the Board of Supervisors.

1964, February 4 – Letter from Justin Herman, Executive Director of SFRA, to Norman Smith, VP of San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. (a private development firm) discussing the promised donation of \$40,000 for the safety wall.

- Notes that SFRA has “received the clearances necessary” to proceed with creating the Diamond Heights Safety Wall Advisory Panel, consisting of newspaper art critics Arthur Bloomfield, Alfred Frankenstein, and Alexander Fried.
- Notes that the San Francisco Art Commission adopted Resolution No. 8312-1963-S “commending San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. and the Redevelopment Agency for their efforts towards the construction of a Decorative Safety Wall in Diamond Heights.”

**1964, June 10** – *San Francisco Chronicle* announces that five semi-finalists have been selected in the design competition for the safety wall: Richard O’Hanlon, Win Ng, Stefan Novak, Emmy Lou Packard, and Jack Hoag.

- Notes that the panel consisted of 3 art critics (Arthur Bloomfield, Alexander Fried, and Alfred Frankenstein), 3 members of the Red Rock project staff, Clyde Cohen and James Levorsen (winning architects of the Red Rock Hill competition, and designers of the adjacent property), and Herbert Lembcke.

**1964, October 2** – SFRA publishes a dossier on the five semi-finalists entitled “5 artists’ concepts of a design for a sculptured wall on Red Rock Hill Diamond Heights.”

**1965** – San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc., experiencing financial difficulties, and sold their interests in the Red Rock Hill competition site development to their partner General Electric (at this stage they had only completed construction of the Neighborhood Center commercial area); General Electric developed townhouses on a 10.5 acre portion of the original Red Rock Hill site in accordance with the design from architects Cohen & Levorsen. The rest of the site was auctioned off and developed in 1972 by Ring Brothers based on a new design by Arthur Gensler and Joseph Esherick.

**1965, February 19** – Internal memo to Justin Herman, Executive Director of SFRA, from his special assistant notes that although the easement from Eichler homes was a “perpetual easement,” there was a clause stipulating that if the wall was not constructed within three years, the land would revert back to the adjoining properties. This memo advises action since one half of this three year period has past.

**1966** – Novak’s design is selected from the five semi-finalists.

**1967, December 4** – Resolution No. 9175-1967-S adopted – San Francisco Art Commission approves Novak’s design.

**1967, December 26** – Resolution No. 180-67 approving the Stefan Alexander Novak design for the decorative safety wall in the Diamond Heights approved Redevelopment Project Area B-1; SFRA approves the same Novak design and authorizes construction of the wall.

**1967, December 27** – Art critic Alfred Frankenstein (who was on the safety wall advisory panel) announces in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that SFRA approved Stefan Novak’s design “for a monumental wood sculpture” on Dec 26, 1967.

- Notes that Novak’s design was selected from the five semi-finalists “a year and a half ago, but construction has been delayed for financial reasons.”
- General Electric Company, who took over the development of the Red Rock Hill project site from San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. (who bowed out due to financial difficulties), would donate the \$40,000 needed for the construction of the wall and payment to the artist.

**1968, November 21** – Department of Building Inspection issues Certificate of Final Completion for the Safety Wall.

**1968, November 22** – *San Francisco Chronicle* announces that the Safety Wall is completed and will be dedicated in early 1969.

**1968, November 26** – Resolution No. 215-68 Approving contractor’s completion of Decorative Safety Wall in the Diamond Heights Approved Project Area B-1, and authorizing the Executive Director to dedicate and convey such wall to the City and County of San Francisco.

**1968, November 27** – A “Notice of Completion” is signed by Acting Executive Director of SFRA, E. Glenn Isaacson.

**1969, January 23** – Easement Deed signed transferring the Safety Wall and the portion of Blocks 7504, Lots 11-15 originally deeded from Eichler to SFRA, over to the City and County of San Francisco.

**1969, March 27** – Resolution No. 203-69 (approved by the Board of Supervisors) authorizing acceptance of an easement deed for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall.

**1978** – Diamond Heights project is fiscally closed out by SFRA.

*Note:* Timeline was compiled by Planning Department staff using archival documents from the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (archives are managed by the successor agency, the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure). Scans of archival documents, including high resolution scans of the architectural drawings, are available in the case docket 2017-011910DES.

### Archival Repositories

#### San Francisco Public Library – History Center

*San Francisco Chronicle* (Newsbank)

SFH 371 Diamond Heights, Box 1, Folder 6, Architectural Renderings, 1952-1966

SFH 371 Diamond Heights, Box 1, Folder 26, Architecture & Housing 1965-1985

SFH 371 Diamond Heights, Box 1, Folder 32

#### San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (now, Office of Community Investment & Infrastructure)

ARC-01099, File 004 (Decorative Safety Wall), DH

FAA-00253, File 021 (Novak, Stefan Alexander), DH

FAA-00253, File 035 (Novak, Stefan), DH

PLNG-4 0750, (Redevelopment Plans & General Information), DH [on-site box]

RED-00985, File 006 (Decorative Wall s/s Eichler), DH

#### University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library

Fang Family San Francisco Examiner Photograph Archive, BANC PIC 2006.029, Carton L078.

## Stage 1 | Red Rock Hill Design Competition

On February 24, 1961 the Agency announced the “Red Rock Hill Competition.” This national architecture competition attracted the eye of the professional design world to Diamond Heights. Through this competition the Agency touted their own high design standards and advertised their innovative approach to leverage national media coverage; the competition was announced in the AIA’s national newsletter the four finalists were written up in *Western Architect & Engineer* and *Progressive Architecture*.<sup>77</sup> While independent design review was already mandated for all projects, such high profile design competitions for larger projects had the dual benefit of positive media coverage and attracting architectural excellence. The competition guidelines stipulated that the design for the 22-acre Red Rock Hill site was to include 900 units, in keeping with DeMars master plan. Since Red Rock Hill is the highest point within Diamond Heights, this is where DeMars proposed apartment towers surrounded by a mix of smaller townhouses and detached residences; concentrating apartment towers on only the top of the highest hill would preserve view-sheds throughout the area.

In order to “elevate the urban design consequences of the redevelopment process,” the competition submissions were initially evaluated blind by an Architectural Advisory Panel, rather than members of the Redevelopment Agency.<sup>78</sup> William J. Watson, AIA, was retained as the “Professional Advisor for the Competition.”<sup>79</sup> The Architectural Advisory Panel was made up of well-known and respected local architects and developers including: John Carl Warneke, AIA, Ernest J. Kump, FAIA, Don Burkholder, Gerson Bakar, and Stanford B. Weiss.<sup>80</sup> The panel evaluated all submissions on their aesthetic qualities, relationship to the site topography, accommodation of practical resident needs, potential costs of construction, and potential sale value.

A prize of \$1000 was awarded to ten semi-finalists after the panel reviewed ninety submissions in June of 1962. Of the ten semi-finalists, eight were from California and six from the Bay Area; the list included a number of notable local architects, including Mario J. Ciampi.<sup>81</sup> After further review and minor alterations in consultation with the Redevelopment Agency and the Professional Advisor, the selections were further narrowed down to four finalists. The Agency auctioned the Red Rock Hill site to the highest bidding developer under the condition that they would pick one of the four final designs and hire the winning architects to carry out the project.

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<sup>77</sup> “Four Imaginative Proposals For San Francisco Redevelopment.” *Progressive Architecture* 42, no. 8. (August 1961): 37.

“Four Chosen For Red Rock Hill Project.” *Western Architect & Engineer*. August 1961.

Additionally, architecture critic Carl Feiss wrote a very favorable review of the Diamond Heights master plan in an article about nationwide redevelopment projects in *Progressive Architecture*. Later, a number of Diamond Heights developments were recognized in popular national publications such as *House & Home*.

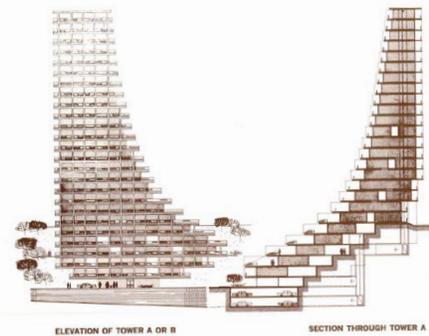
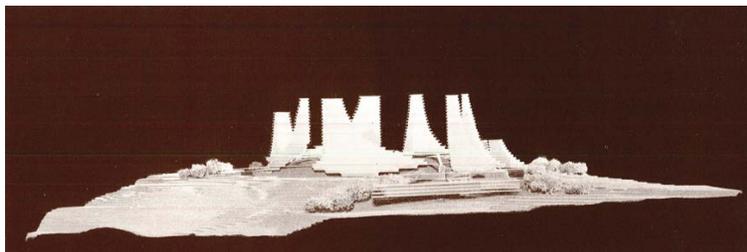
<sup>78</sup> San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. *Architectural Advisory Panel Evaluation Report: Diamond Heights Red Rock Hill Competition*. (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. June 30, 1962): 2.

<sup>79</sup> William Watson’s firm, Rockrise & Watson would go on to design the Diamond Heights Fire Station in 1963.

<sup>80</sup> Although Joseph Eichler was listed as an advisor in the competition announcement, he was replaced by Weiss by the time of submission review. Without a list of all competition entries, it is impossible to know whether Eichler dropped out as an advisor due to a conflict of interest or, perhaps, simply because he was too busy.

<sup>81</sup> Although the proposal from Reid, Rockwell, Banwell & Tarics with Rai Y. Okamoto and Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes was not ultimately selected by developers, Reid & Tarics would go on to design the Diamond Heights High School and Royston, Hanamoto & Mayes would ultimately do the landscape and site design for the Diamond Heights Neighborhood Center.

San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. – headed by Irvin Khan and Norman Smith – won the bid for Red Rock Hill Development on October 24, 1961 and selected the design by San Francisco firm, Cohen & Levorsen.<sup>82</sup> San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. was presented with a document containing the four finalists' projects, which included biographies and credentials of the designers, a narrative description of each project, photographs of 3D models, site plans, section and elevation drawings, perspective drawings, and a table with data on the number of proposed units and "FHA room count."<sup>83</sup> Compared to the beautifully plastic forms of Lubicz-Nycz, Karfo, Ciampi, and Reiter's design, Cohen & Levorsen's proposal of 340 low-rise apartment units and 650 high-rise tower apartments was certainly not the most architecturally adventurous of the final designs. However, their proposal did include the highest number of total units and FHA rooms, which would be attractive to a developer, and strong relationship topography and San Francisco aesthetic tradition. Cohen & Levorsen collaborated with noted Bay Area architects Eckbo, Dean & Williams who designed the streetscape and communal areas. Cohen & Levorsen's perspective drawings show a chain of apartments, rising and falling in height, seeming to reference the natural topography of Red Rock Hill.<sup>84</sup> The apartments have strong vertical lines and wooden shingles which reflect the Bay Regional Tradition. The Architectural Advisory Panel praised



Three-dimensional model, section and elevation drawings of one of four semi-finalist designs for the Red Rock Hill Competition. This design was submitted by Mario J. Ciampi, FAIA; Paul Reiter, AIA; Jan Lubicz-Nycz, ARIBA; and John Karfo.  
(Developer Guide Statement: *Diamond Heights Red Rock Hill Competition*. San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Archives.)



Elevation perspective from the Cohen & Levorsen proposal for Red Rock Hill which was eventually selected for construction by developers.  
(Developer Guide Statement: *Diamond Heights Red Rock Hill Competition*. San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Archives.)

<sup>82</sup> San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. was a private development firm, not to be confused with the public government agency – San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA).

<sup>83</sup> The FHA uses room counts for appraisal purposes; the room count includes all rooms, not just bedrooms.

<sup>84</sup> In the "Developer Guide Statement: *Diamond Heights Red Rock Hill Competition*" – which presented the four finalists to the Red Rock Hill developer – Eckbo, Dean & Williams are listed as the landscape architects for the winning Cohen & Levorsen project. Also listed on a brochure. They were not mentioned in the summary of the 10 semi-finalists.

Cohen & Levorsen's design for its relationship to the natural topography of the site, its economic and structural efficiency, a good ratio of garden apartments to tower apartments, and – importantly – excellent exploitation of "a diversity of vistas."<sup>85</sup>

San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. also won the contract to develop the Neighborhood Center between Red Rock and Gold Mine Hills. Construction on both the shopping center and Red Rock Hill housing development began in 1962. San Francisco Redevelopers, Inc. was forced to stop work on both the first phase of Red Rock Hill Development and the Neighborhood Center in 1964 due to financial troubles; according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the shopping center was only 85-90% complete, the Diamond Heights Boulevard townhouses were 60% complete, and construction of high-rise towers had yet to begin.<sup>86</sup> Irvin Kahn cited slow sales of completed Red Rock townhouses as a cause of the developers' financial woes. By the time the developers had reworked their financing and resumed construction two months later, the plans for five high-rise towers had already been reduced to three or four, and the Red Rock Hill development saga would last through all three stages of Diamond Heights development.<sup>87</sup>



Cohen & Levorsen designed Red Rock Hill Condos on Diamond Heights Boulevard, which were completed in 1963 to 1964.  
(Photo: c. 1960s. San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection)

<sup>85</sup> San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. *Architectural Advisory Panel Evaluation Report*, 28.

<sup>86</sup> "Financing 'reworked': Diamond Heights work resumed." *San Francisco Chronicle*. December 16, 1964.

<sup>87</sup> "Financing 'reworked': Diamond Heights work resumed." *San Francisco Chronicle*. December 16, 1964.



Photographs of Cohen & Levenson's Red Rock Hills Condos. (Photo: c. 1960s. San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection – SFRA Diamond Heights.)

too. The three stage plan was delayed for a number of years due to the *Redevelopment Agency v. Hayes* court case, but once development began it closely followed the initial planning.

Although this plan was efficient and certainly financially necessary, it did mean, for example, that the residents in the Stage 1 area had to put up with all the noise and commotion of the construction occurring in the Stage 2 area.<sup>76</sup> The dynamic between the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and new Diamond Heights residents also naturally evolved over the course of the project. While there were only a few residents on the outskirts during the beginning of the project, by the close of the project in the 70s there were thousands of residents with vested interest in the development of the area; by the second stage of development in the 1960s, the Diamond Heights Community Association had formed and developed a working relationship with the Redevelopment Agency.



Map of Red Rock Hill project area within the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Area from *Developer Guide Statement: Diamond Heights Red Rock Hill Competition*. (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Archives.)

<sup>76</sup> Neighborhood Association letters about trucks and noise and trash. [SFRA Archives]



**SAN FRANCISCO  
PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

## APPLICATION FOR

# Historic Landmark Designation

Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street  
Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA  
94103-9425

T: 415.558.6378  
F: 415.558.6409

Landmark designation is authorized by Section 1004 of the San Francisco Planning Code. The designation process includes a review of the Landmark Designation Application by the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission. Final approval is made by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

## PRESERVING SAN FRANCISCO HISTORY

Since 1967, San Francisco's Historic Preservation Program has helped preserve important facets of the city's history. The list of designated city landmarks and landmark districts includes iconic architectural masterpieces, monuments to historic events, and places associated with cultural and social movements that have defined our city. However, there are still many more untold stories to celebrate through landmark designation.

## PROPERTIES ELIGIBLE FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Most San Francisco landmarks are buildings. But a landmark can also be a structure, site, feature or area of special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest. Collections of properties can also be designated as landmark districts.

Landmarks can be significant for a variety of reasons. The criteria are based on those used by the National Register of Historic Places. They include:

- Properties significant for their association with historic events, including the city's social and cultural history
- Properties significant for their association with a person or group important to the history of the city, state or country
- Properties significant for their architecture or design
- Properties that are valued as visual landmarks, or that have special character or meaning to the city and its residents
- Collections of properties or features that are linked by history, plan, aesthetics or physical development.

## INCENTIVES FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Landmark designation recognizes the property as a significant element of San Francisco history. There are also various incentives, including the following:

- Eligibility for the Mills Act program, which can result in property tax reduction
- Eligibility to use the California Historical Building Code
- Eligibility for land use incentives under the San Francisco Planning Code
- Eligibility to display a plaque regarding the building's landmark status

## HOW TO APPLY TO DESIGNATE A LANDMARK

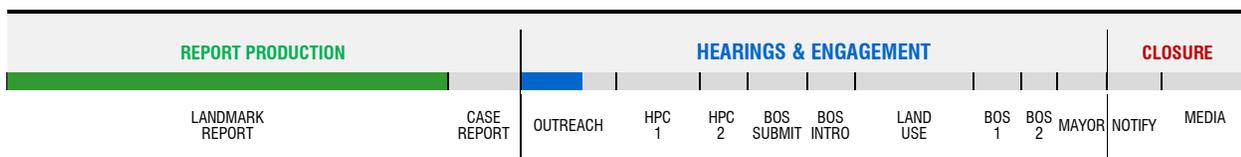
Any member of the public may nominate a property for landmark designation. The application must contain supporting historic, architectural and/or cultural documentation. More information about the Planning Department's Historic Preservation program can also be found here:

<http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1825>

## THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION PROCESS

The landmark designation process is a multi-step process. This includes the following:

1. Set a preliminary application review meeting with Planning Department Preservation staff. The meeting will focus on reviewing the draft designation application. Preservation staff can provide advice for improving the application, including any additional research which may be needed.
2. Submit the completed final application for review. Once it is determined to be complete, Preservation staff will place the application on the agenda for a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) hearing.
3. During the hearing, the HPC will hear public testimony and determine if the property meets the criteria for landmark designation. If so, the Commission will vote to initiate landmark designation and schedule a follow-up hearing.
4. If the landmark designation is for a district, the Planning Commission will provide its review and comment on the proposed designation prior to the HPC making a final recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.
5. At the second hearing, the HPC will hear public testimony and vote on whether to recommend landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors.
6. An HPC recommendation supporting landmark designation will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors and will be heard by its Land Use and Economic Development Committee. This is a public hearing where the owner(s) and members of the public can offer testimony.
7. The Land Use and Economic Development Committee will forward its recommendation on the designation to the full Board of Supervisors for a first reading. The Board of Supervisors will vote on the designation. A majority of Supervisors must vote in favor of the landmark designation for it to be approved. This is a public hearing, although no public testimony will be heard.
8. At a following Board of Supervisors hearing the proposed designation will have a second reading. This is a public hearing, although no public testimony will be heard. If the majority of Supervisors remain in favor of the landmark designation, the designating ordinance is sent to the Mayor for final signature.



## COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Please fill out all of the sections of the application. Use the checklist at the end of this application to ensure that all required materials are included. If more space is needed, please feel free to attach additional sheets as necessary. If you are unsure how to answer any of the questions, please contact Planning Department preservation staff.

### Please submit the completed application to:

San Francisco Planning Department  
 Attn: Landmark Designation Application  
 1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
 San Francisco, CA 94103-9425

# Historic Landmark Designation **Application**

## 1. Current Owner / Applicant Information

Date:

PROPERTY OWNER'S NAME:	
PROPERTY OWNER'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	EMAIL:

APPLICANT'S NAME:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS ABOVE
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	EMAIL:

CONTACT FOR PROJECT INFORMATION:	
	<input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS ABOVE
ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
	EMAIL:

## 2. Location of the Proposed Landmark

STREET ADDRESS OF PROJECT:	ZIP CODE:
CROSS STREETS:	

ASSESSORS BLOCK/LOT:	LOT DIMENSIONS:	LOT AREA (SQ FT):	ZONING DISTRICT:	HEIGHT/BULK DISTRICT:
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OTHER ADDRESS / HISTORIC ADDRESS: ( if applicable )	ZIP CODE:
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## 3. Property Information

HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY (IF APPLICABLE)	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:	SOURCE FOR DATE OF CONSTRUCTION:
	<input type="checkbox"/> ACTUAL YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> ESTIMATED YEAR	

ARCHITECT OR BUILDER:	ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	
SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR ARCHITECT OR BUILDER	HISTORIC USE	PRESENT USE

PROPERTY INCLUDED IN A PRIOR HISTORIC SURVEY?	SURVEY NAME:	SURVEY RATING:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No ...		

#### 4. Statement of Significance

The proposed landmark is significant for the following reason(s). Please check all that apply:

- It is associated with significant events or patterns, or reflects important aspects of social or cultural history
- It is associated with a person or persons important to our history
- It is significant for its architecture or design, or is a notable work of a master builder, designer or architect
- It is valued as a visual landmark, or has special character or meaning to the city and its residents
- It contains archaeological deposits that have the potential to yield important information about history or prehistory

Please summarize why the property or district should be designated a San Francisco Landmark. Whenever possible, include footnotes or a list of references that support the statement of significance. Copies of historic photographs, articles or other sources that directly relate to the property should also be attached.

#### 5. Property / Architecture Description

Please provide a detailed description of the exterior of the building and any associated buildings on the property. This includes the building's shape, number of stories, architectural style and materials. For example, is the building clad with wood, brick or stucco? What materials are the windows and exterior doors made of? Please be sure to include descriptions of the non-publicly visible portions of the building. Attach photographs of the property, including the rear facade.

#### 6. Neighborhood or District Description

Please provide a narrative describing the buildings both adjacent to, and across the street from, the subject property. This includes describing their architectural styles, number of stories, exterior materials (e.g., wood or stucco cladding) and landscape features, if any. Attach representative photographs.

If the application is for a landmark district, please provide similar information describing the architectural character of the district. Also be sure to include a map outlining the boundaries of the district, as well as a list of all properties including their addresses, block and lot numbers, and dates of construction. This information may be gathered using the San Francisco Property Information Map, available here: <http://ec2-50-17-237-182.compute-1.amazonaws.com/PIM/>

## 7. Building Permits and History of Alterations

Please list all building permits from the date of construction to present. Be sure to include any alterations or additions to the building. These include changes such as window replacement, construction of a new garage, or installation of roof dormers. Also attach photocopies of building permits. Copies of building permits are available from the Department of Building Inspection, 1660 Mission Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor (<http://sfdbi.org/record-request-form>).

*\*\*Note: Do not complete this section if the application is for a landmark district*

PERMIT:	DATE:	DESCRIPTION OF WORK:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

Please describe any additional alterations that are not included in this table. For example, have any obvious changes been made to the property for which no building permit record is available?

## 8. Ownership History Table

Please list all owners of the property from the date of construction to present. Building ownership may be researched at the San Francisco Assessor-Recorder's Office, located at City Hall, Room 190.

*\*Note: Do not complete this section if the application is for a landmark district*

OWNER:	DATES (FROM – TO):	NAME(S):	OCCUPATION:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

If the property is significant for its association with a person important to history, please be sure to expand on this information in Section 9.

## 9. Occupant History Table

Please list occupants of the property (if different from the owners) from the date of construction to present. It is not necessary to list the occupants for each year. A sample of every five to seven years (e.g, 1910, 1917, 1923, etc.) is sufficient. For multi-unit buildings, please use a representative sampling of occupants. A chronological list of San Francisco city directories from 1850 – 1982 is available online. Choosing the “IA” link will take you to a scan of the original document:

<http://www.sfgenealogy.com/sf/sfdatadir.htm>

Beginning with the year 1953, a “reverse directory” is available at the back of each volume, allowing you to look up a specific address to see the occupants.

*\*Note: Do not complete this section if the application is for a landmark district*

OCCUP:	DATES (FROM – TO):	NAME(S):	OCCUPATION:
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

If the property is significant for having been used by an occupant, group or tenant important to history, please expand on this information below.

## 10. Public Information Release

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I understand that submitted documents will become public records under the California Public Records Act, and that these documents will be made available upon request to members of the public for inspection and copying.
- I acknowledge that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.

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Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

# Submittal Checklist

Use the checklist below to ensure that all required materials are included with your application.

CHECKLIST:	REQUIRED MATERIALS:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photographs of subject property, including the front, rear and visible side facades
<input type="checkbox"/>	Description of the subject property (Section 5)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighborhood description (Section 6) with photos of adjacent properties and properties across the street
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building permit history (Section 7), with copies of all permits
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ownership history (Section 8)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Occupant history (Section 9)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic photographs, if available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Original building drawings, if available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other documentation related to the history of the property, such as newspaper articles or other references



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* November 1, 2017  
*Case No.:* 2017-011910DES  
*Project Address:* No address is associated with the subject property; the Diamond Heights Safety Wall is located on the south side of Diamond Heights Boulevard at Clipper Street near Portola Drive on Block 7504, Lots 011-015; the nearest address is 5000 Diamond Heights Boulevard, located to the east of the structure  
*Zoning:* RH-2  
*Block/Lots:* 7504/011-015  
*Property Owner:* City Property  
25 Van Ness Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
*Staff Contact:* Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093  
desiree.smith@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

1650 Mission St.  
Suite 400  
San Francisco,  
CA 94103-2479

Reception:  
**415.558.6378**

Fax:  
**415.558.6409**

Planning  
Information:  
**415.558.6377**

### PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is a large, outdoor, wooden sculpture located on the south side of Diamond Heights Boulevard at Clipper Street near Portola Drive in the Diamond Heights neighborhood. The site-specific work of public art was designed by Bay Area artist and architect, Stefan Alexander Novak (1918-2006), for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency as part of its Diamond Heights redevelopment project. It was constructed in 1968. Acting in part as a gateway sign, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall serves as a visual landmark for the surrounding residential neighborhood.

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is located adjacent to the Red Rock Hill Condominiums, designed by Cohen & Levorsen for the Red Rock Hill competition in a style that bridged the Second Bay Tradition and Midcentury Modern styles. Like the Red Rock Hill Condominiums and Bay Region Modernism, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall embodies a hybrid of Modernist design balanced with a distinctly Bay Area, organic influence in the material choice of untreated redwood.

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is located within the RH-2 (Residential-House, Two Family) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of a Community-Sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation Application for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, which is located on the south side of Diamond Heights Boulevard at Clipper Street near Portola

Drive on Block 7504, Lots 011-015 as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

## GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

- OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.
- POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

## SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, as a notable work of local master artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak (1918-2006), and as a visual landmark and gateway into the Diamond Heights neighborhood.

## BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The Community-Sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation Application was prepared and submitted by Robert Pullum on May 1, 2017. Additional research was conducted by Planning Department Historic Preservation Intern, Hannah Lee Simonson, under the supervision of Department Staff, Desiree Smith and Tim Frye. The final draft of the landmark designation fact sheet was completed by the Department in October 2017.

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate Article 10 landmark designation of the subject property, the item will be considered again by the Historic Preservation Commission at a subsequent hearing. At that time the Historic Preservation Commission may adopt a resolution recommending that the Board of Supervisors support the designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

## **APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS**

### **ARTICLE 10**

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

### **ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA**

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that

are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### **PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**

There is no known public or neighborhood opposition to designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Block 7504, Lots 011-015 as an Article 10 landmark. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

### **PROPERTY OWNER INPUT**

The property owner is the City and County of San Francisco.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff. The Department has determined that the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Block 7504, Lots 011-015 meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification inclusion is outlined below under the Significance and Integrity sections of this case report.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE**

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is significant for its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, which dramatically reshaped the area from largely undeveloped hills to a neighborhood characterized by postwar Modernist master planning, Bay Area regional Modernist design, mixed housing typologies, and expansive views of downtown San Francisco, Glen Canyon, and the Bay. The Diamond Heights Safety Wall is also notable work of Bay Area artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak (b. 1918 – d. 2006). The site-specific work of public art serves a visual landmark – a gateway into Diamond Heights – and captures the aesthetic identity of the neighborhood which is characterized by a uniquely Bay Area regional idiom of Modernist design.

#### **INTEGRITY**

The Diamond Heights Safety Wall retains good integrity of location, design, workmanship, feeling and association; and overall retains sufficient integrity to express its significance under Criteria 1 and 3. The materials – primarily redwood and metal bolts – were intentionally left untreated so as to weather naturally; as such, the Safety Wall retains integrity of materials, but the condition should be assessed and monitored for structural stability. The prevalence of biological growth may be harmful to the long-term life of the Safety Wall, and obscures the wood texture and grain of the sculpture. Two of the concrete abutments, designed to be raw and unpainted, have been painted; the grey paint is relatively similar and sympathetic to the other raw concrete abutments. At least one instance of incised graffiti is observable at a close range, but overall all sculpture is in good material condition.

Maintenance on the Safety Wall and surrounding area has been deferred, resulting in slightly diminished integrity of setting. Novak's design intention for the Safety Wall was that sunlight would penetrate the sculpture from behind and result in a pattern of solid and void, and unique shadows. The growth of trees behind and adjacent to the Safety Wall over the last decades has obscured the sunlight behind the sculpture, diminishing the intended play of light and shadow, but could be remedied with pruning and maintenance of nearby vegetation. The encroachment of the adjacent trees is also potentially physically damaging the Safety Wall.

#### CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Staff recommends the character-defining features include the massing, form, structure, architectural ornament and materials identified as:

- Entire Safety Wall is approximately 32' high and 50' long
- Redwood construction, 10" x 10" square posts
- Naturally weathered, untreated redwood
- Bolts with cast iron washers articulate joints and act as functional ornament
- Round, recessed bolt holes are elements of the geometric ornament
- Open, spaced elements create a pattern of solid and void that is enhanced by sun and shadow due to the structure's orientation (primary façade faces north)
- Anchored by unpainted concrete abutments, which serve the engineering purpose of creating a structurally sound safety wall
- Geometric ornamentation created through angled notches in the redwood posts
- Round redwood ornaments with flower and dragonfly motifs
- Open, three-dimensional structure creates a pedestrian experience "in the round" - movement around and through the sculpture results in different patterns of overlapping geometric elements

#### BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

Encompassing all of and limited to Lots 011-015 on the Assessor's Block 7504 on the south side of Diamond Heights Boulevard at Clipper Street near Portola Drive.

#### PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department's analysis, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall located on Block 7504, Lots 011-015 meet the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history and embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and represents the work of a master.

The subject property also meets two of the Historic Preservation Commission's priorities for designation which include:

1. *The designation of buildings of Modern design*  
The subject structure captures the aesthetic identity of its surrounding neighborhood which is characterized by a uniquely Bay Area regional idiom of Modernist design.
2. *The designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas*  
The subject property is located in an area that is geographically underrepresented in landmark buildings. There are no designated landmarks in the Diamond Heights neighborhood.

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission initiate Article 10 Landmark designation for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall as the subject property meets the eligibility requirements for Article 10 designation; meets two of the Historic Preservation Commission's priorities for designation; and is a Community-Sponsored Landmark Designation Application.

Under Article 10, The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval or approval with modifications of the proposed initiation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall landmark designation. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves initiation, a second hearing will be held to consider whether or not to recommend the landmark designation to the Board of Supervisors. A copy of the motion of recommendation is then transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which will hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. Landmark Designation Fact Sheet
- B. Historic Landmark Designation Application prepared by Robert Pullum
- C. Letters of support

## Letters in Support of Landmark Designation for Diamond Heights Safety Wall

### Organizations:

- Diamond Heights Community Association
- Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project
- Sunnyside Neighborhood Association

### Individuals:

- Carl Arnetzen
- John Priola
- Allison Arieff
- Michael and Patricia Busk
- David Bogandoff and Judith Presley
- Rebecca Coolidge
- Catherine Dunham
- James Feldman
- Karen Kerner
- Bridgette Karen Pimental-Shanmugam
- Brynna McNulty
- Marina Nelson
- Michael Rice
- Sharon Nadeu
- Evelyn Rose



Diamond Heights Community Association, PO Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

**Officers**

**President**  
Betsy Eddy

**Vice President**  
Mike Kramer

**Treasurer**  
Patrick Carroll

**Board of Directors**  
Cliff Detz  
Bob Dockendorff  
Annette Lewis  
Dave Marin  
Jeanette Oliver  
Betty Peskin  
Bob Pullum  
Lee Ann Prifti  
Annie Shynebaugh

Sept. 17, 2017

**Re: Support for Landmark Status for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall in Diamond Heights**

Dear Mr. Wolfram and Commissioners,

The Diamond Heights Community Association Board requests that your Commission designate the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork is very important to Diamond Heights' history since it was designed and created by Stefan Novak in 1968 to serve as the entrance for the new Diamond Heights model neighborhood development. We are concerned about the current condition of the sculpture and want to secure analysis and preservation of it as soon as possible.

Landmark status would help our Board with our goals to seek funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist and the sculpture's place in San Francisco history. We want to ensure that this magnificent and very large sculpture will be maintained for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration of landmark status for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall.

Best regards,

Betsy Eddy,  
Diamond Heights Community Association, President

cc: Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer  
Bob Pullum, DHCA Board Member

DHCA website: [www.dhcasf.org](http://www.dhcasf.org). Email: [dhcasf@gmail.com](mailto:dhcasf@gmail.com)

## GLEN PARK NEIGHBORHOODS HISTORY PROJECT

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*Rediscovering our Neighborhoods' Histories — Documenting our Living Histories — Sharing our Histories with Others*  
*Glen Canyon, Glen Canyon Park, Sunnyside, Fairmount Heights, and Diamond Heights in San Francisco's Old Rancho San Miguel*

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October 24, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Landmark Designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall

Dear President Wolfram and Commissioners,

Founded in 2014, the *Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project* is dedicated to the rediscovery and preservation of the histories of our neighborhoods, located immediately south of Twin Peaks in a portion of the old Rancho San Miguel. Our neighborhoods – Glen Park, Glen Canyon Park, Sunnyside, Fairmount Heights, and Diamond Heights – are rich with historic events, ranging from prehistory to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment. For our work, we were the recipient of the *Walter G. Jebe, Sr. Neighborhood Award* from the *San Francisco History Association* in 2016.

We support designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Boulevard as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark and ask for your approval. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and a commemorative plaque honoring the artist, Stefan Novak. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history.

On behalf of the Advisory Council of the Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project, we thank you in advance for your consideration in this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,



Evelyn Rose, PharmD  
Project Director and Founder  
31 Mizpah Street  
San Francisco, CA 94131



Sunnyside Neighborhood Association

Stephen Martinpinto  
President  
Sunnyside Neighborhood Association  
PO Box 27615  
San Francisco CA 94127  
Sunnyside.President@gmail.com  
(760) 271-1877

October 23, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Wolfram and Commissioners,

Sunnyside Neighborhood Association was established 1974 to represent the residents of this neighborhood and to foster local community work and quality of life.

The officers of the association wholeheartedly support the efforts of Diamond Heights Community Association to have the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. designated as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark.

The artwork has served as the widely recognized gateway to Diamond Heights neighborhood for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate these improvements and help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Martinpinto  
President

Ken Hollenbeck  
Member-at-Large

Pauline Levinson  
Vice-president

Amy O'Hair  
Secretary

Carl M. Arntzen  
44 Amber Drive  
San Francisco, California 94131-1624

October 25, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Community-Sponsored Article 10 Landmark Designation  
Application for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall

The safety wall serves as a visual welcoming landmark to Diamond Heights and has important cultural and architectural value as discussed in the application because of its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project which dramatically reshaped the area from undeveloped hills into a successful neighborhood.

I have lived at 44 Amber Drive since 1980. 44 and 48 Amber are directly below the wall. Anytime I need to give directions to someone on how to get to our home, I simply have to mention that we are below the wall because it is such a well-recognized landmark. It is not simply a wall, but an extremely unique architectural landmark symbolic of Diamond Heights. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's important place in San Francisco history.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carl M. Arntzen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carl M. Arntzen

October 20, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Commissioners,

Please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,  
John Priola  
324 Surrey Street

from: **allison arieff** <aja@modernhouse.com>

date: Sun, Oct 22, 2017 at 4:49 PM

subject: letter of support

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
[1650 Mission Street, Suite 400](#)  
[San Francisco, CA 94103](#)

Dear Mr. Wolfram and Commissioners,

I am writing to request that you approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history. Our city is changing — and changing fast. While certainly not every artifact or building of the past should be saved this sculpture should be. It is of significant historical and aesthetic importance and deserves preservation.

Thanks for your consideration.

Best regards,

Allison Arieff  
Design writer, *The New York Times*  
Editorial Director, SPUR  
Longtime Glen Park resident

From: Michael Busk, mbusk.for@att.net

October 23, 2017

Dear Mr. Wolfram and Commissioners,

We enthusiastically encourage you to grant landmark status to the Stefan Novak "Redwood Sculpture." For forty years we have lived in the same house in Diamond Heights and driven or walked by this piece, which bids us a creative and interesting day as we leave and welcomes us back as we return.

Of the numerous other reasons why it should be officially recognized as the landmark that it is, three for us have prominence –or maybe four.

One, it is a clear, gentle but insistent product of the Sixties, as are we, as is this exceptional neighborhood: Peace, Love, and Joy.

Two, it is tree, actually the quintessential tree of our part of the world, tree that declares that this nature-infused neighborhood has way more trees than houses, tree that is the sentinel and guardian and bulwark of the grand canyon of San Francisco.

Three, it is a complex art piece that is simple, always rewarding another glance another day, typifying to young and old that the more you look, the more you see.

Finally, could anyone with a soul fail to raise to eminence a landmark whose nickname –perhaps even its official name– is "Safety Wall."

Peace, Love, Joy,

Patricia and Michael Busk

October 23, 2017

From: David Bogdanoff and Judith Presley

dbogdanoff@jps.net

The San Francisco Historical Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
San Francisco, California

We herein request landmark status for the Diamond Heights Safety Wall at Portola Drive in Diamond Heights.

We request this landmark status to facilitate the preservation of this artwork which is an illustration of the 1960s development of Diamond Heights.

Sincerely,

David Bogdanoff & Judith Presley  
Glen Park Residents for 30 years

From: Rebecca Coolidge, beccacool@gmail.com

October 22, 2017

Dear Historic Preservation Commission Staff:

Please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The Safety Wall is beautiful and unique, and more people will be able to learn about its historic context.

Please help preserve the Safety Wall and provide it City Landmark designation!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Coolidge

October 23, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
[1650 Mission Street, Suite 400](#)  
[San Francisco, CA 94103](#)

To whom it concerns:

As a 10 year resident of Diamond Heights, I am writing to request that you please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The sculpture/artwork/safety wall has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights since it's inception some 50 years ago and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will help facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and a commemorative plaque. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's unique place in San Francisco history for generations to come.

Thank you kindly for your assistance in this valuable public safety, architectural and historic matter.

Sincerely,

Catherine Dunham  
[catherine2064@gmail.com](mailto:catherine2064@gmail.com)

From: James Feldman, jfeldman1952@gmail.com

October 24, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department

A wonderful piece of sculpture stands guard over the Diamond heights community, a community that is increasingly being recognized in San Francisco for its unique mid-century architectural style.

This work of art was incorporated into the original plan of the district at the district's very inception 50 years ago. Built with a grant from General Electric, it functioned both as a safety wall and a welcoming entry to the neighborhood.

This sculpture and safety wall is now in need of restoration and preservation, and so:

Please approve the designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. Landmark status will help facilitate obtaining the necessary funding for the restoration needed to preserve the sculpture's important place in San Francisco history.

Karen Kerner  
karenekerner@gmail.com

October 21, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
[1650 Mission Street, Suite 400](#)  
[San Francisco, CA 94103](#)

Dear Commissioners:

I am a long time resident of the Glen Park/Diamond Heights area of San Francisco. I am writing to ask that you approve the designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall (Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Boulevard) as an Article 10 landmark. The beautiful redwood structure has been a beacon of welcome (and an important safety barrier) to the Diamond Heights neighborhood for fifty years, but it is now in need of preservation and restoration. With landmark status, the necessary work can be funded. Thank you in advance for your help in preserving this important landmark.

Sincerely,

Karen Kerner  
[297 Addison Street](#)  
[San Francisco, CA 94131](#)

Brigette Karen Pimentel-Shanmugam  
bridgettekaren@gmail.com

October 21, 2017

Dear City of San Francisco,

As a Diamond Heights property owner and resident of San Francisco, I highly recommend the city support our cause to have the Redwood Sculpture on Portola Drive designated a historical landmark. Just last week as I was walking my newly adopted rescue dog, passed by the Redwood Sculpture and was wondering about the history and the artist that created this piece of art. I admired the structure and was wondering how nice it would be at night if it was illuminate and possibly cleaned up a bit. I had no background on when it was erected until I read that Diamond Heights Community was petitioning to have this piece considered as a historic landmark.

As a native San Franciscan that has lived in the Richmond, Mission and Bernal Heights hoods I can tell you that my community in Diamond Heights is very involved and truly cares about the area and the people living in our hood. We do not have a lot of landmarks that are significant to the hood and this Redwood sculpture seems quite appropriate as our gateway into the Diamond Heights community. We do not have the clout of Presidio Heights or Pac Heights with its painted ladies and amazing Presidio park, however we are a group of residents that cares about the community and this icon serves as a structure that encapsulates the " new city development of the early 70's with our condos, single family homes and apartments that are meant to be affordable to families". The structure is really the only public piece of art that can connects us back to the emergence of this newly developed community.

Thank you for you consideration and please come visit us.

Sincerely,  
Brigette Karen Pimentel-Shanmugam  
125 Topaz Way  
SF Ca 94131

From: mcbryнна@gmail.com

October 22, 2017

Dear Historic Preservation Commission Staff:

Please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The Safety Wall is one of my most favorite art installations in San Francisco! It's beautiful and unique, and in learning about the context in which it was built it definitely sounds worthy of City Landmark status. I hope it achieves this status so others can learn about it and the Safety Wall can get the stewardship it needs.

Please help preserve the Safety Wall!

Sincerely,

Bryнна McNulty

From: Marina Nelson, thelaw@gmail.com

October 21, 2017

Dear commissioners, Please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting, and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history and also serves as a unique barrier from cars in case of accident.

**Michael Rice**, mrice100@sbcglobal.net

October 22, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

I am happy to support designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. As the department and commission have recognized in recent years, Mid-Century architecture and design are important and often threatened resources. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting, and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist. Glen Park and Diamond Heights have notable resources of this period, such as the Glen Park BART Station and Fire Station 26. The Safety Wall is part of this character.

Thank you,

Michael Rice  
Past President, Glen Park Association  
(for identification only)

November 1, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

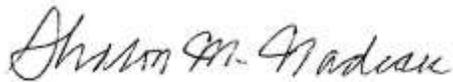
Re: Landmark Designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall

Dear President Wolfram and Commissioners,

Please approve designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Blvd. as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark. The artwork has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for 50 years and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will facilitate obtaining funding for restoration, nighttime lighting and for a commemorative plaque honoring the artist. Landmark status will help preserve the sculpture's place in San Francisco history.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon M. Nadeau".

Sharon Nadeau  
31 Mizpah Street  
San Francisco, CA 94131

November 1, 2017

Andrew Wolfram and Commissioners  
Historic Preservation Commission  
San Francisco Planning Department  
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Landmark Designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall

Dear President Wolfram and Commissioners,

Art can be found throughout the San Francisco landscape, from monuments depicting historic figures and events, to the long-standing Hearts in San Francisco project, to Cupid's Span along the Embarcadero. While all are attractive to the eye, none incorporate function in the artistic design.

Crafted nearly 50 years ago in 1968, the Diamond Heights Safety Wall serves both art *and* function. Constructed entirely of redwood by Stefan Novak, it reflects the natural history of the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Its form is a Modernist design that signals approaching visitors they are about to enter a region whose architecture is something quite different from that found elsewhere in San Francisco. In function, not only can it be enjoyed by pedestrians walking within the structure, but it also serves as a safety barrier, protecting the homes behind it from any vehicular mishaps at Portola Drive and Clipper Street. Quite a novel concept.

As a historian of our district, I support designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall on Portola Drive at Diamond Heights Boulevard as an Article 10 San Francisco Landmark and ask for your approval. It has served as the gateway to Diamond Heights for half a century and is now in need of preservation and restoration. Landmark status will help preserve this sculpture's place in the history of San Francisco.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Evelyn Rose". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

Evelyn Rose, PharmD  
Chief Tramping Office, Tramps of San Francisco (History Blog)  
Project Director and Founder, Glen Park Neighborhoods History Project  
31 Mizpah Street  
San Francisco, CA 94131

1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - Wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights  
2 Boulevard and Clipper Street (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall)]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the wall located at the**  
4 **intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel**  
5 **No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), as a Landmark under Article 10 of**  
6 **the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the**  
7 **California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience and**  
8 **welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with**  
9 **the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.**

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

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

16 Section 1. Findings.

17 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

18 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code  
19 amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality  
20 Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section  
21 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies  
22 for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is  
23 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. \_\_\_\_\_ and is  
24 incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that  
2 the proposed landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights  
3 Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights  
4 Safety Wall) will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare for the reasons set forth  
5 in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, recommending approval  
6 of the proposed designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board finds that the proposed landmark designation of the wall at the  
8 intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504,  
9 Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan  
10 and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation  
11 Commission Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, recommending approval of the proposed  
12 designation, which is incorporated herein by reference.

13 (b) General Findings.

14 (1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the Charter of the City and County of San  
15 Francisco, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval,  
16 disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under  
17 the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

18 (2) A community-sponsored Application for Article 10 Landmark Designation for  
19 the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's  
20 Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall) was submitted to the Planning  
21 Department by Robert Pullum, a member of the public.

22 (3) The Landmark Designation Case Report was prepared by Planning  
23 Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional  
24 Qualification Standards and the report was reviewed for accuracy and conformance with the  
25 purposes and standards of Article 10.

1 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of November  
2 1, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall's historical  
3 significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated November  
4 1, 2017.

5 (5) On November 1, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission passed  
6 Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_, initiating designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond  
7 Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond  
8 Heights Safety Wall) as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the  
9 Planning Code. Such motion is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File \_\_\_\_\_ and  
10 incorporated herein by reference.

11 (6) On \_\_\_\_\_ 2017, after holding a public hearing on the proposed  
12 designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning  
13 Department staff as reflected in the Landmark Designation Case Report dated November 1,  
14 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of the proposed  
15 landmark designation of the wall at the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and  
16 Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), in  
17 Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_. Such resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No.  
18 \_\_\_\_\_.

19 (7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the wall at the intersection of  
20 Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka  
21 Diamond Heights Safety Wall) has a special character and special historical, architectural,  
22 and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the  
23 purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code.  
24  
25

1           Section 2. Designation.

2           Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the wall at the intersection of Diamond  
3 Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond  
4 Heights Safety Wall) is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of  
5 the Planning Code.

6  
7           Section 3. Required Data.

8           (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the wall at  
9 the intersection of Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No.  
10 7504, Lot 011 (aka Diamond Heights Safety Wall), in San Francisco's Diamond Heights  
11 neighborhood.

12           (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and  
13 shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in  
14 Planning Department Case Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_. In brief, the wall at the intersection of  
15 Diamond Heights Boulevard and Clipper Street on Assessor's Parcel No. 7504, Lot 011 (aka  
16 Diamond Heights Safety Wall) is eligible for local designation under National Register of  
17 Historic Places Criterion A (as it is associated with events that have made a significant  
18 contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and Criterion C (as it embodies distinctive  
19 characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, conveys high artistic values, and is  
20 the work of a master architect). Specifically, designation of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall  
21 is proper given its association with the Diamond Heights Redevelopment Project, as a notable  
22 work of Bay Area artist and architect Stefan Alexander Novak, and as a visual landmark – a  
23 gateway into the Diamond Heights neighborhood.

24           (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined  
25 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark

1 Designation Case Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
2 and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set forth.

3 Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or replaced in kind:

4 All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, architectural ornament and materials  
5 of the Diamond Heights Safety Wall, identified as:

- 6 (1) Naturally weathered, untreated redwood construction;
- 7 (2) Dimensions of approximately 32' in height and 50' in length;
- 8 (3) Bolts with cast iron washers that articulate joints and act as functional  
9 ornament;
- 10 (4) Round, recessed bolt holes that serve as elements of the geometric  
11 ornament;
- 12 (5) A pattern of solid and void;
- 13 (6) North facing orientation;
- 14 (7) Unpainted concrete abutments that anchor the structure into the ground and  
15 serve the engineering purpose of creating a structurally sound safety wall;
- 16 (8) Angled notches in the redwood posts that serve as geometric ornamentation;  
17 and
- 18 (9) Open, three-dimensional structure that creates a pedestrian experience "in  
19 the round."

20 //  
21 //  
22 //  
23 //  
24 //  
25 //

1 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment.  
2 Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance  
3 unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of  
4 Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

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

By:  for  
VICTORIA WONG  
Deputy City Attorney

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