



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Case Report

HEARING DATE: JANUARY 18, 2017

Filing Date: December 19, 2016
Case No.: 2017-000093LBR
Business Name: Flax Art & Design
Business Address: Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D
Zoning: P (Public)
40-X and OS Height and Bulk Districts
Block/Lot: 0409/002
Applicant: Howard Flax, Owner
Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D
San Francisco, CA 94123
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
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

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Flax Art & Design is a third generation family-owned art supply store that has served San Francisco since 1938. After having lost virtually all their savings during the Great Depression, Herman and Sylvia Flax left New Jersey for San Francisco to start a new life and opened Flax's Artists Materials on Kearny Street in downtown San Francisco. Now run by Herman and Sylvia's grandchildren, Flax Art & Design (as it has been called since 1991) continues to offer one of the city's largest selections of arts and crafts supplies and materials. Flax Art & Design accomplishes its mission to "inspire creativity" by emphasizing the customer experience with helpful and knowledgeable customer service and a visually interesting presentation of merchandise, leading some to refer to the business as "a candy store for the creative." The business relocated several times – first to another location on Kearny Street, then to Sutter Street, and eventually to its flagship location at 1699 Market Street where it operated for 38 years. After owners of the Market Street property announced plans to construct 162 condos on the site, Flax Art & Design spent a year searching for a new home for its flagship store within the city's boundaries, but ultimately moved to Oakland. Flax Art & Design still maintains a presence within the city, however, through its new Fort Mason Center store. The 5,000 square foot space in Fort Mason Center, located along the city's northern waterfront, continues the business' 79-year history of serving San Francisco students, artists, DIYers, hobbyists, and other creatives. Flax Art & Design also offers a plethora of programs that has helped the business integrate into the larger community. Such programs include: free art classes, hands-on demonstrations, its annual KidsFest, a Live Artist program, publications of artist interviews, and donations to local schools and nonprofits.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1938

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Flax Art & Design qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Flax Art & Design has operated for 79 years.
- ii. Flax Art & Design has contributed to the San Francisco arts community's history and identity by serving as the longest-running local seller of art materials and supplies; providing a memorable experience for artists, students, creatives, and others in need of arts and crafts materials; offering free arts and crafts workshops, classes, festivals, and other events; and by supporting and promoting local artists.
- iii. Flax Art & Design is committed to maintaining the traditions and physical features that define its tradition of selling arts and crafts materials and supplies, and its tradition of supporting and promoting San Francisco's creative communities.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes. The business is associated with the arts and crafts. It sells art and crafts materials and supplies, offers free educational arts programs and events, and promotes local artists through outreach events.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. The business is located in a historic property known as the Old Brook House/Quarters #2, built in 1863 as part of Fort Mason. The building was previously evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance and is considered to be a "Category A Property." It is both individually eligible for listing on the National Register and as a contributor to two National Register and California Register Historic Districts: Black Point Historic District and the Fort Mason Historic Districts.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

Yes. The business is located within two National Register and California Register Historic Districts: the Black Point Historic District and the Fort Mason Historic District.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes, the business has been cited in numerous publications, including but not limited to: San Francisco Magazine, 6/2016, "The Best Place to Shop in SF in 2016"; Bedford Gallery at the

Lescher Center for the Arts BG Blog, 6/2016, "Inspiring Creativity: An Interview with Howard Flax"; San Francisco Magazine, 1/2016, "Flax Art & Design, Like the Artists it Serves, is Decamping to Oakland," by Joe Eskenazi; SF Gat, 1/2016, "Longtime Market Street art supply store Flax moving to Oakland," by J.K. Dineen; San Francisco Chronicle, 8/2016, "Flax art merchant sees forced move as brush with opportunity," by J.K. Dineen; NBC Bay Area news segment, 7/2014, "Longtime San Francisco Art Store Faces Tough Search for New Home," by Joe Rosato Jr.

Flax Art & Design has also been the recipient of a number of awards, including being named "Best Places to Shop in SF" in the category of Hobby-Art Supplies in 2016 by San Francisco Magazine; "Best Arts and Crafts" by Bay Area A-List; "Top 100 Shops in the Bay Area" in 2014 published in SF Chronicle's Style section; "Totally Awesome Artistic Art Supplies" by Red Tricycle in 2012.

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee issued a proclamation declaring August 24, 2013 as Flax Art & Design Day in San Francisco.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D

Recommended by Applicant

- Tradition of providing a wide array of arts and crafts materials and supplies to the community of students, artists, hobbyists, and others
- Carefully thought-out presentation of merchandise
- Quality customer service provided by helpful and knowledgeable staff
- Community outreach events such as: free art classes and hands-on demonstrations, KidsFest, Live Artist program, and artist interviews

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Company logo designed by Louis Danziger, featuring a signature "F" (the Flax "F" is in the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art).

Filing Date: December 19, 2016
Case No.: 2017-000147LBR
Business Name: Rolo San Francisco, Inc.
Business Address: 1301 Howard Street
Zoning: RCD (Regional Commercial)/
55-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3518/001
Applicant: Mark Schultz, President
1301 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Nominated By: Supervisor Scott Wiener, District 8
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Rolo San Francisco, Inc. (“Rolo”) is a local, independent retail establishment selling high-end menswear and unisex fashion. Founded in 1986 by Mark Schultz and Roland Peters (both of whom continue to own the business), Rolo consists of two stores – one on Howard Street at 9th Street in the South of Market area and the other on Market Street between Noe and Castro Streets in the Castro/Upper Market District. The business is known for its collection of local and international fashions and specializes in emerging designers and brands, offering formal wear, business casual, sportswear, and loungewear. Rolo also features its own clothing line and brand. Men’s fashion magazine, *DNR*, named Rolo one of the top “50 Most Influential Men’s Wear Stores,” referring to the store as “ground zero for fresh men’s fashion in the Bay Area.” Recognized in the fashion world, Rolo is a popular destination for tourists who desire items or clothing unique to San Francisco. The business has a local following as well, particularly in the Castro and South of Market neighborhoods where it has operated for 30 years. Rolo has been able to customize its products to the tastes of each neighborhood’s clientele, making each store unique in its retail offerings. Rolo gives back to its community by contributing to charities and sponsoring local sports leagues. It has a history of supporting the LGBTQ community in particular, having participated in a number of LGBTQ-oriented events and fundraisers, catering to a large LGBTQ customer base, and employing a large number of individuals who self-identify as LGBTQ. Rolo has printed t-shirts for Pride Parades and for political demonstrations such as the 1993 pro-LGBTQ rights March on Washington; it has collaborated with NYC-based jewelry designer, David Spada, to distribute “freedom rings” as symbols of LGBT empowerment; and it has managed or sponsored two sports teams in LGBT-oriented sports leagues, including the Gay Softball League and the Gay Basketball League.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1986

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Rolo San Francisco, Inc. qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. Rolo San Francisco, Inc. has operated for 31 years.
- ii. Rolo San Francisco, Inc. has contributed to San Francisco's fashion heritage and to the Castro and the South of Market neighborhoods where its two stores are located. As a local retailer, Rolo has contributed to the city's fashion heritage by selling new, unique, and "up-and-coming" high-end menswear and unisex fashions representative of local and international designers. Its clientele is a mix of locals and visitors who seek authentic, San Francisco-based products as well as other unique fashions from around the globe. Rolo has contributed to the Castro and South of Market neighborhoods where it operates two stores. In the Castro, Rolo has consistently sponsored charity events that benefit the LGBTQ community and has participated in LGBTQ-oriented sports leagues and other social and political events. In the South of Market, Rolo played an important role in revitalizing the neighborhood following the "dot-com bust" of the early 2000's that led to economic depression in the area.
- iii. Rolo San Francisco, Inc. is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its legacy as a local, high-end menswear retailer offering locally and internationally-designed fashions.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

The business is associated with the art of high-end men's fashion, offering locals and visitors a shopping experience unique to San Francisco. It supports local clothing designers and manufacturers in addition to offering a variety of international fashion brands.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Yes. The property at 1301 Howard Street has been previously evaluated by the Planning Department for potential historical significance. The property is considered a "Category A Property" and has been identified as a contributor to the California Register-eligible Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District.

The property at 2351 Market Street is considered a "Category A" historic resource and has been identified as a contributor to the California Register-eligible Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District Extension.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

1301 Howard Street has been identified as a contributor to the California Register-eligible Western SOMA Light Industrial and Residential Historic District.

The property at 2351 Market Street has been identified as a contributor to the California Register-eligible Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District Extension.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. SF Weekly, 1999-2002 & 2006, "Best Ice Cream;" San Francisco Bay Guardian, 07-08/2000, "Best 1950s Time Warp;"

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 1301 Howard Street
- 2351 Market Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Sale of high-end, "up-and-coming" unisex and men's fashion, featuring both international and local designers
- Promotion of local designers and manufacturers
- Product offerings that are customized to the clientele of the neighborhood in which the store is located
- Large window displays

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Locations in the Castro and the South of Market

Filing Date: December 19, 2016
Case No.: 2017-000144LBR
Business Name: Real Food Company
Business Address: 2140 Polk Street
Zoning: NCD (Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial)/
65-A Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0572/018A
Applicant: Stephanie Hong, CEO
2140 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin, District 3
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Real Food Company is an independent small business selling natural, organic, non-GMO, and gourmet foods in the Russian Hill neighborhood since 1976, although the business has operated in other locations since 1969. The three other business locations have since closed. Referred to as an “everyday farmer’s market,” Real Food Company offers natural and locally-sourced foods, including bulk food options, produce, and nutritional supplements to customers of the Russian Hill neighborhood and surrounding areas including Cow Hollow, Nob Hill, and Pacific Heights. The neighborhood market features a natural meat department, non-GMO and organic dairy, artisan cheeses, beer, and wine, and its inventory includes a number of local brands such as Niman Ranch, Guayaki, Nutiva, Amy’s Natural Foods, Alter Eco, and Numi Tea. The business prides itself in serving as an incubator for up-and-coming local, independently-owned food companies. Located in a 1930 commercial building designed in the Mediterranean Revival style, the building that houses Real Food Company features a mostly original storefront, complete with aluminum sash, angled vestibule entry, and transom, as well as historic tile at the bulkhead. Its most prominent architectural feature is its vertically-divided transom with turned mullions and rounded cut corners and applied ornament at the recessed area.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1969

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, Real Food Company qualifies in general for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets the eligibility Criteria; however there are outstanding questions about criterion ii and iii as described below:

- i. Real Food Company has operated for 48 years.

- ii. Real Food Company has served area residents as a walkable option for natural, local, and organic groceries for 48 years, and its historic storefront continues to contribute to the character and identity of the neighborhood. The Legacy Business application provided by Real Food Company, however, lacks specific examples and evidence to demonstrate its significance to the community in the present day (i.e. news articles that speak to the significance of the business itself or its importance to the community, letters of support, etc.). Reviews of the business on social media raise questions about the current quality of products and services provided, and site unusually high costs for food products.
- iii. According to Real Food Company, it is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define its legacy of offering natural, local, and organic groceries to the Russian Hill neighborhood and surrounding areas. While it appears the business provided a high level of service in the past, the documentation provided is lacking information as to whether or not the business has maintained that service in more recent years. Again, staff questions its current ability to maintain a high level of service and offerings due to the numerous negative reviews posted online, suggesting a significant change in features and traditions that define its legacy.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

The business is associated with the tradition of independently-owned, local, walkable food markets and offers natural, organic, and local groceries for neighborhood residents.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

The 1930 property is considered a "Category B Property" for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The building was recently evaluated by the Planning Department as part of its Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Survey, and was found to be individually significant for the architectural design of its storefront; the Survey, however, has not yet been adopted by the City.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

The business' founding owner, Kimball Allen, was mentioned in an article by Carolyn Jones published by SF Gate on 10/29/11 called, "Kimball Allen, opened Kimball's East, dies." This article and an obituary of Kimball Allen mention Real Food Company, but the business is not the subject of the article. No other news articles or publications could be found that discussed Real Food Company.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 2140 Polk Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Tradition of offering of natural and locally-sourced foods, including bulk food options, fresh produce, natural meats, dairy, artisan cheeses, beer, and wine
- Practice of serving as an incubator for up-and-coming local, independently-owned food companies

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Historic storefront, including aluminum sash, angled vestibule entry, and transom, as well as historic tile at the bulkhead
- Vertically-divided transom with turned mullions and rounded cut corners and applied ornament at the recessed area

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Applicant has been nominated as a "Legacy Business" by a member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

Per Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the subject nomination requires review and approval by the Small Business Commission at a public hearing in order to be added to the Legacy Business Registry.

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department has received no public input on the project at the date of this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

Nomination to the Legacy Business Registry does not constitute a "project" requiring environmental review per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The nomination act would not result in any physical alteration to the subject property and could not have an effect on the environment.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission find that the above businesses qualify for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the above listed physical features and traditions as amended by Staff.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution
Legacy Business Application

DS: XXXX



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE JANUARY 18, 2017

Case No.: 2017-000093LBR
Business Name: Flax Art & Design
Business Address: Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D
Zoning: P (Public)
40-X and OS Height and Bulk Districts
Block/Lot: 0409/002
Applicant: Howard Flax, Owner
Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D
San Francisco, CA 94123
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim, District 6
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR FLAX ART & DESIGN, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2 MARINA BOULEVARD BUILDING D (BLOCK/LOT 0643/001).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco's artistic and creative communities; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Flax Art & Design qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Flax Art & Design.

Location (if applicable)

- 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- *Tradition of providing a wide array of arts and crafts materials and supplies to the community of students, artists, hobbyists, and others*
- *Carefully thought-out presentation of merchandise*
- *Quality customer service provided by helpful and knowledgeable staff*
- *Community outreach events such as: free art classes and hands-on demonstrations, KidsFest, Live Artist program, and artist interviews*
- *Company logo designed by Louis Danziger, featuring a signature "F"*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2017-000093LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on January 18, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Resolution No. XXX
January 18, 2017

CASE NO. 2017-000093LBR
2 Marina Boulevard, Building D

ADOPTED:



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE JANUARY 18, 2017

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

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Case No.: 2017-000147LBR
Business Name: Rolo San Francisco, Inc.
Business Address: 1301 Howard Street
Zoning: RCD (Regional Commercial)/
55-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3518/001
Applicant: Mark Schultz, President
1301 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
Nominated By: Supervisor Scott Wiener, District 8
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ROLO SAN FRANCISCO, INC., CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1301 HOWARD STREET (BLOCK/LOT 3518/001).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the history and identity of the South of Market and Castro neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Rolo San Francisco, Inc. qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Rolo San Francisco, Inc..

Location (if applicable)

- 1301 Howard Street
- 2351 Market Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Sale of high-end, "up-and-coming" unisex and men's fashion, featuring both international and local designers
- Promotion of local designers and manufacturers
- Product offerings that are customized to the clientele of the neighborhood in which the store is located
- Large window displays
- Locations in the Castro and the South of Market

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2017-000147LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on January 18, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Resolution No. XXX
January 18, 2016

CASE NO. 2017-000147LBR
1301 Howard Street

ADOPTED:



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE JANUARY 18, 2017

Case No.: 2017-000144LBR
Business Name: Real Food Company
Business Address: 2140 Polk Street
Zoning: NCD (Polk Street Neighborhood Commercial)/
65-A Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0572/018A
Applicant: Stephanie Hong, CEO
2140 Polk Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin, District 3
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith - (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye - (415) 575-6822
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR REAL FOOD COMPANY, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2140 POLK STREET (BLOCK/LOT 0572/018A).

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the Russian Hill neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** that Real Food Company qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Real Food Company.

Location (if applicable)

- 2140 Polk Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Tradition of offering of natural and locally-sourced foods, including bulk food options, fresh produce, natural meats, dairy, artisan cheeses, beer, and wine
- Practice of serving as an incubator for up-and-coming local, independently-owned food companies
- Historic storefront, including aluminum sash, angled vestibule entry, and transom, as well as historic tile at the bulkhead
- Vertically-divided transom with turned mullions and rounded cut corners and applied ornament at the recessed area

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations** are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2017-000144LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on January 18, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

Resolution No. XXX
January 18, 2017

CASE NO. 2017-000144LBR
2140 Polk Street

ADOPTED:



**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-049
Business Name: FLAX art & design
Business Address: Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D
District: District 2
Applicant: Howard Flax, President
Nomination Date: December 15, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Jane Kim

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

437 Kearny Street from 1938 to 1951 (13 years)
255 Kearny Street from 1951 to 1966 (15 years)
250 Sutter Street from 1966 to 1981 (15 years)
1699 Market Street from 1978 to 2016 (38 years)
Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Boulevard, Building D from 2015 to Present (2017) (2 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: December 19, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 6



City and County of San Francisco

JANE KIM

金貞妍

December 15, 2016

Regina Dick-Endrizzi, Executive Director
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Flax Art & Design

Dear Regina:

I would like to formally nominate Flax Art & Design as a candidate for the registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco.

Original owners, Herman and Sylvia Flax moved their family west from New Jersey, in 1938, after losing virtually everything in the Great Depression. With \$100, they opened a small art supply store on Kearny Street, in downtown San Francisco. Now a third generation family-owned business, headed by Howard Flax, his sister Leslie Flax Abel and his brother Craig Flax, Flax Art & Supply has a long history of supporting artists and the Bay Area arts community.

In 1955, Herman passed away and his sons, Philip and Jerry, took over the San Francisco business. The SF-based Flax brothers grew close to their customers, becoming well-known for their generous support of struggling artists and the Bay Area arts scene. Their retail store soon drew nationwide attention for its incredible breadth of products, a helpful and knowledgeable staff of artists, designers, and musicians, and its ability to inspire creativity through inventive presentation of merchandise. The store is visited regularly by residents and tourists alike and as the company grew, they settled into their new home at the Goldberg Bowen Building on Sutter Street.

As the advent of desktop publishing forever changed the dynamics of the art supply industry in the 1980s, the company ventured into mail order to broaden its market. With the desire to showcase their broadening selection of materials, the store moved to 1699 Market Street for more than 38 years.

In its 78 years, Flax has partnered with dozens of art organizations, schools, local artists, and the like to offer a platform, as well as support, for a number of worthy causes. Flax helps raise awareness for local non-profits with a rotating art show, highlighting both amateur and professional work. It offers a location for regular, free workshops, as well as promotion of individual artists to showcase their work and engage with the public during its live art program.

Their current store is located in the historic Fort Mason Center for the Arts where they are immersed in the artistic culture and can continue to offer their vast selection of fine art and craft supplies, unique

papers, and gorgeous gifts. Coined as a "candy store for the creative," Flax has become an icon of inspiration and a Bay Area institution.

Their business would be greatly missed by many if they were to go away. I am proud to nominate Flax Art & Supply as a candidate for the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of three stylized, cursive characters that appear to be 'J.K.K.' with dots at the end of each character.

Jane Kim

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
FLAX art & design		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Howard Flax Philip Flax		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
Fort Mason Center 2 Marina Blvd, Building D San Francisco, CA 94123		(415) 530-3510
		EMAIL:
		hf@flaxart.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
http://flaxart.com	https://www.facebook.com/Flaxartdesign	https://www.yelp.com/biz/flax-art-and-design-san-francisco-4

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Howard Flax	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
President	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
Fort Mason Center 2 Marina Blvd, Building D San Francisco, CA 94123	
TELEPHONE:	
(415) 819-9928	
EMAIL:	
hf@flaxart.com	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:
Barbara Lopez (Jane Kim's office)	12/05/2016

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
437 Kearny Street	94108	11/16/1938
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1938-1951	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
255 Kearny Street	94108	Start: 1951
		End: 1966

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
250 Sutter Street	94108	Start: 1966
		End: 1981

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1699 Market Street	94103	Start: 1978
		End: 2016

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Blvd, Building D	94123	Start: 2015
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

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

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Howard Flax 12/02/2016

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:



FLAX ART & DESIGN

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

In the Great Depression, Herman and Sylvia Flax lost virtually everything. In 1938 they moved the family west from New Jersey and with \$100 opened a small art supply store in downtown San Francisco at 437 Kearny Street. Initially the family lived in the store's backroom, but soon they rented an apartment and converted the free space into a custom framing department. Flax's Artists Materials was born and soon rose to success, buoyed by the artists' movement that grew during WWII.

In 1955, Herman passed away at an early age, and upon returning from military service, Herman and Sylvia's youngest son Philip took over the San Francisco business alongside his brother Jerry. The Flax brothers grew close to their customers, becoming well-known for their generous support of struggling artists and the Bay Area arts scene. Their retail store soon drew nationwide attention for its incredible breadth of products, its helpful and knowledgeable staff, and its ability to inspire creativity through inventive presentation of merchandise.

As the company grew, so did their location. In 1966, they settled into a 3-story building in downtown San Francisco at 250 Sutter Street in the Goldberg Bowen Building. A year later Jerry Flax left the company to lead the Electrostatic Printing Corporation, leaving full ownership to Philip. Then in 1981 the Flax store moved to a larger space again, to 1699 Market Street.

As the advent of desktop publishing forever changed the dynamics of the art supply industry in the 1980s, Flax ventured into mail order to broaden its market. During this time, Philip's three children joined the company - Craig, Howard and Leslie - beginning a period that continues with the four family members working together to grow the company. With the desire to recognize their broadening selection of materials, in 1991 the company changed its name from Flax's Artists Materials to FLAX art & design.

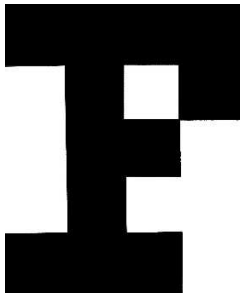
The current [San Francisco store](#) is located in the historical Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture. Flax is located in one of the four warehouse buildings completed in 1915. Before opening in November 2015, false walls, old flooring and decades of clutter were removed to expose the original surfaces, windows and doors. Our store space remodel was the first in FMC to retain the building's character and embrace its status as a historical landmark. Look above our glass storefront and you'll see the hinged canopy-style warehouse door in its full open position. It and the other warehouse doors remain fully operational. The store continues to offer a vast selection of fine art and craft supplies, unique papers, and gifts.



On our [Press page](#) is an article about the need to vacate the Market Street store and the new Fort Mason Center store - <http://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Flax-art-merchant-sees-forced-move-as-brush-with-6476815.php?t=c0c0b3735b00af33be&cmpid=fb-premium>

Timeline

1938 - Flax store opens at 437 Kearny St. (now the driveway of St. Mary's Square garage).



1949 - Harvey Flax (from the LA store) commissions Louis Danziger to create the Flax logo. The Flax 'F' is in the permanent design collection of the Museum of Modern Art.

1951 - SF store moves to 255 Kearny at Bush (after being bought out of the lease at 437 Kearny by the developers who built the St. Mary's Square garage).

1955 - On February 11, Herman Flax passes away. His sons, Jerry and Philip, lead the business.

1956 - Flax Framing opens, a small custom frame shop on the same block as 255 Kearny.

1958 - Flax trivia: Kim Novak visits Flax in the shooting of Hitchcock's Vertigo. The back door of the frame shop provides the lead-in for the scene in the Podesta Baldocchi flower shop.

1959 - Philip Flax opens "Philips," a fine art store at 121 O'Farrell. At this time the other Flax store catered mostly to commercial art needs.

1966 - Jefferson Airplane shoots a photo in front of the Flax sign.

1966 - On October 24th the Flax store and Flax Framing move to 250 Sutter Street. Philips closes, as the Sutter Street store has the space to accommodate both commercial and fine artists.

1978 - Another Flax location opens at 1699 Market, which was initially used for offices, a warehouse and as a discount retail outlet.

1981 - Sutter Street store closes and the Market Street location gets a complete remodel, becoming the primary retail store.



1991 - The warehouse and distribution center (headquarters) move to Brisbane, CA, a major renovation of the Market Street store triples the retail space, and the company changes its name from Flax's Artists Materials to FLAX art & design.

2007 - Flax discontinues mail-order and e-commerce sales channels and brings all operations back to the Market Street store.

2015 - On November 7th Flax opens a new store at the Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture.

2016 - After 38 years on Market Street, the flagship store moved to Downtown Oakland, opening on March 21.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

None

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Yes.

1938 - Herman and Sylvia

1945 – Herman, Sylvia, Philip, Jerry, Lita

1967 – Sylvia, Philip, Lita

1990 – Philip, Howard, Craig, Leslie

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Not applicable.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

After 78 years, Flax gained iconic status in San Francisco, evidenced by this [ABC article](#). That came about not only from longevity, but also from integrating ourselves into the art community by creating a welcoming environment for creative people of all ages and backgrounds.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

In 2013, to celebrate the store's 75 years in business, the business threw a historic party to share the significance of a third generation business while reminiscing with long time customers and staff. Flax enjoyed visits and proclamations by SF Supervisor Scott Weiner and State Senator Mark Leno, and Mayor Ed Lee officially proclaimed August 24, 2013 as Flax Art & Design Day.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

We have a Wikipedia listing here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flax_Art_Supply_Stores. There are 40 references listed.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

No

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Flax hosts dozens of free [Workshops and Events](#) every year. On many Saturday afternoons we offer free classes or hands-on demos on a variety of different art media. For the past 25 years we've held a popular event called KidsFest, a creative arts festival with hands-on activities and art projects. Kids of all ages are welcome and each year we entertain 200-400 attendees.

Our [Live Artist](#) program encourages visual artists to consider, for a few hours, our store as an extension of their studio. We provide them with a prominently located space in the store to set up and create, with the opportunity to present themselves to our customers. We build a permanent webpage on our blog for the event, which we promote through social media and to our 12,000+ eNewsletter list. Similarly, we publish [Artist Interviews](#) of local artists which we then promote. The intent behind these programs is support our customers, demonstrate our commitment and inspire others.

Flax donates to local schools and non-profits, most often in the form of gift cards for auctions. We donate materials to local groups like SCRAP. Each year we collaborate with like-minded arts organizations with an eye toward mutual success. In 2016 we partnered with Art Millennium, Blue Bear School of Music, Magic Theater, ArtSpan, SF Center for the Book and others to help them promote their mission and/or a specific event.

Our weekly eNewsletter contains a Community section. Our website has a [Resources](#) page. We have a blog writer whose focus is local arts events.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

We conducted a survey in 2013 that revealed our customer base to consist of 10% students, 10% professional artists, and 80% everyone else. Weekend DIYers and hobbyists, amateur artists and casual fans of the arts make up most of our community.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

See Criterion 1, f.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

Just like our customers, we are original. Flax cannot be replaced.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

As a company our mission is to inspire creativity. We do that by offering a broad array of product that is attractively presented and backed by customer service. Many customers refer to Flax as a "candy store for the creative," which is music to our ears and proof that we are fulfilling our ideals.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

See answer 'a' above

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

While the 3D elements on the façade of our Market St store grew to define that location, they did not define the business. Instead, with each location we've inhabited our intent was to use the space in a manner true to its character. We've been fortunate to have always occupied spaces of architectural interest, and we honor the design.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Not applicable.



437 Kearny Street, the first FLAX location, 1938



255 Kearny at Bush, 1950



255 Kearny at Bush, interior of 4,200 sq ft. store, 1955



Jefferson Airplane in front of Flax sign at 255 Kearney, 1967



250 Sutter Street, interior, 1967



1699 Market Street, 2012



FLAX art & design

FLAX art & design

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FLAX art & design



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Just Ask!

FLAX

FLAX

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MTN Waterbase

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INCLUDES
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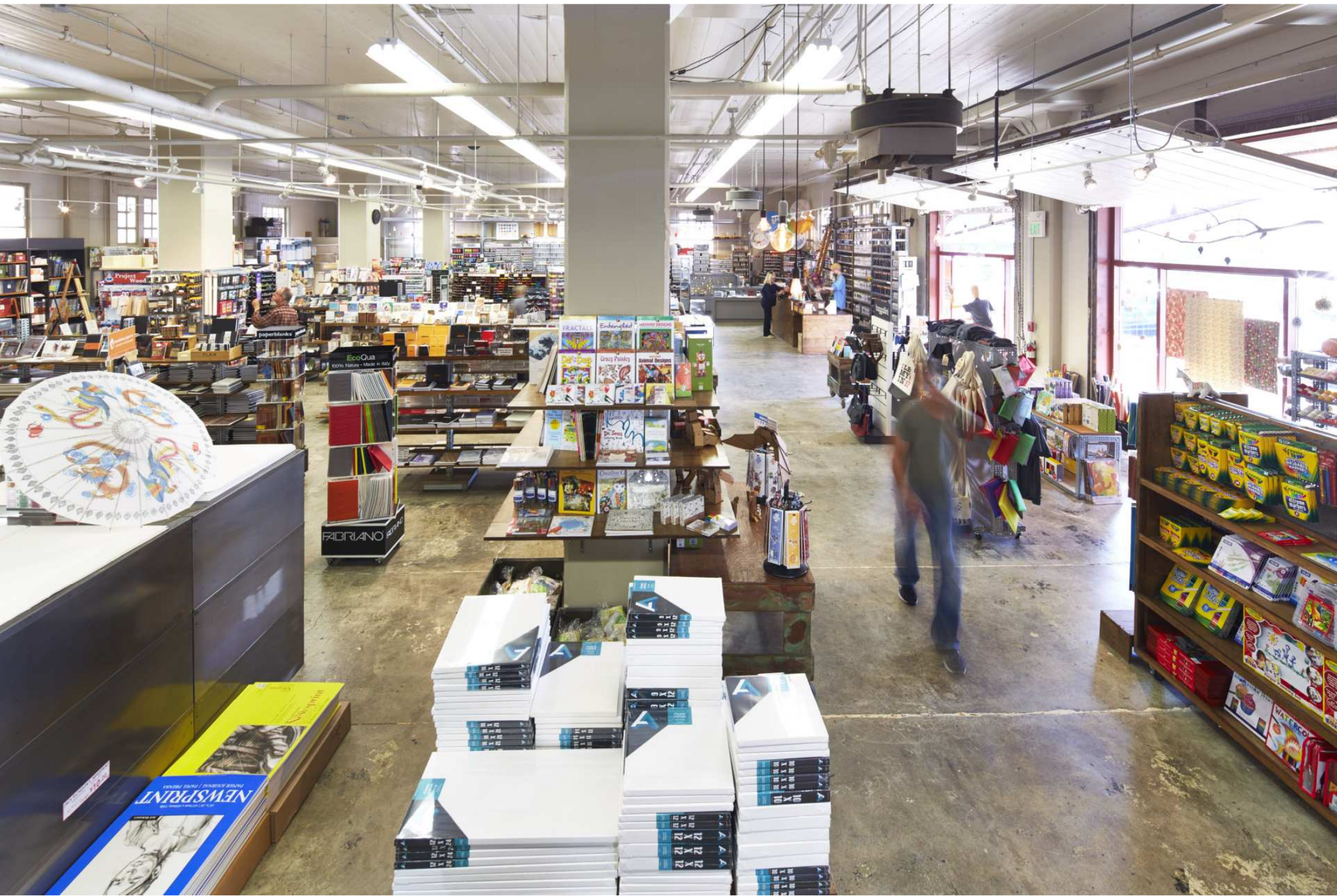
WENBOR
NEWTON

RUBLEVART
ARTS

CHALK
BOARDS

CUREBIT XL
FLAK \$205

Watercolor





Press

News

[San Francisco Magazine](#), The Best Places to Shop in SF in 2016
(FLAX Fort Mason Center store), JUNE 2016

[Bedford Gallery, at the Leshner Center for the Arts](#), BG Blog, *Inspiring Creativity: An Interview with Howard Flax*, JUNE, 2016

[San Francisco Magazine](#), *Flax Art & Design, Like The Artists It Serves, Is Decamping To Oakland*, By Joe Eskenazi, JANUARY, 2016

[SF Gate](#) *Longtime Market Street art supply store Flax moving to Oakland*, By J.K. Dineen, JANUARY, 2016

[San Francisco Chronicle](#), *Flax art merchant sees forced move as brush with opportunity*, By J.K. Dineen, AUGUST, 2015

[NBC Bay Area](#) news segment, *Longtime San Francisco Art Store Faces Tough Search for New Home*, by Joe Rosato Jr., JULY, 2014

Awards



[San Francisco Magazine](#) - Best Places to Shop 2016

FLAX art & design, Fort Mason Center store named **Best Places to Shop in SF** -
Hobby - Art Supplies



[Bay Area A-List](#) - BEST OF 2015

Flax Art & Design named **Best Arts and Crafts** by Bay Area A-List voters



FLAX is among the **Top 100 Shops in the Bay Area**. The list was compiled by 14 Bay Area tastemakers who chose their go-to stores, and published in the SF Chronicle's Style section.

For the page featuring FLAX, click on this link to a pdf: [Top 100 shops](#).



Totally Awesome Artistic Art Supplies

Red Tricycle's Awesome Awards honor kid friendly brands, products and services as recognized by the Red Tricycle Community.

Red Tricycle is a mom-focused community that helps parents have more fun with their kids. For these awards Moms nominated their picks, then the top nominees and Red Tricycle's editorial team picked the finalists for each category.

Our goal at FLAX is to inspire creativity, and we work hard to present a wide selection of arts and craft supplies for kids to express their imagination through thoughtful play. We are proud to share this award with you.

Video

http://22708.cdx.c.ooyala.com/lha21qeTqJkG4YD2oPYpB19BY8DLGhJa/DOcJ-FxaFrRg4gtDEwOjEzYzowazumG4?_=fyp4undmef4tnon2buik9

Press Contact

Carolyn Mendle-Smith

carolyn@flaxart.com

415-801-2258

The Best Places to Shop in SF in 2016

San Francisco magazine | June 24, 2016

Lifetime-lasting shoes, affordable (but impeccable) suits, unkillable plants, and the rest of the best swag in the city.

HOBBY

Art Supplies: Flax

2 Marina Blvd. (near Laguna St.), 415-530-3510

Although its long-standing Market Street location closed earlier this year, Flax's Fort Mason outpost is no less packed. Its diminished size is a virtue—it avoids the overwhelming mazelike quality of its Oakland sister store, but there's something for professionals, teachers, kids, and crafty types, from pipe cleaners and marker sets to color-coded rows of paint by Gamblin, Windsor & Newton, Liquitex, and Golden. Every size sketchbook imaginable is displayed alongside paintbrushes, illustration markers, and colored pencils. The store is well stocked with necessary tools—gaffer tape, canvases, X-Acto knives—and playful surprises like vibrant hand-silk-screened paper from Japan and miniature architectural models of trees, flowers, and people.

Inspiring Creativity: An Interview with Howard Flax

Posted by BG Staff // June 23rd, 2016

We're thrilled to partner with [FLAX art & design](#) for our upcoming workshop **Drawing with a Blade** with artist [Crystal Wagner](#). The legendary art supply store has a fascinating history: Herman Flax opened his first FLAX art & design store in SF in 1938, on the heels of the Great Depression. His brothers had already established their own art supply stores in NY and LA. Herman's grandson, **Howard Flax**, is now FLAX's President, part of a third generation to own and operate the family business. Below, a conversation with Howard on art, working with family, and the company's recent move to Oakland.



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

FLAX art & design has been a treasured presence in the SF art scene for nearly 80 years, and your flagship store just moved to Oakland. The change has sparked lots of dialogue about the flight and plight of artists in the Bay Area, but you've had a store in Oakland before and your extended family also operates supply stores in other art hubs like Chicago and Atlanta. What major changes have you seen among artists and art-led industries, both in and outside the Bay Area?

Among artists and art-oriented industries we have not noticed a significant change over the years. The overriding tenor is typically affordable art supplies in a supportive economy. The latter can be challenging. The biggest change we've seen is "Art is In." With the rise of Pinterest, Etsy, DIY and the Maker Movement for example, creativity in any form is really being celebrated. More people than ever realize they can be an artist!

What new opportunities do you see for FLAX since it's moved to Oakland?

Oakland and the East Bay are so excited that we are [excited]. We very much underestimated the need for an art supply store here. The greatest opportunity I see, and it is well underway, is to integrate Flax into the arts community. The strength and sincerity of the arts community, both individuals and organizations, has been overwhelming. Everyone wants to collaborate and help each other be successful. I love that. We are building lasting relationships to hopefully position Flax in the center of this amazing art scene.

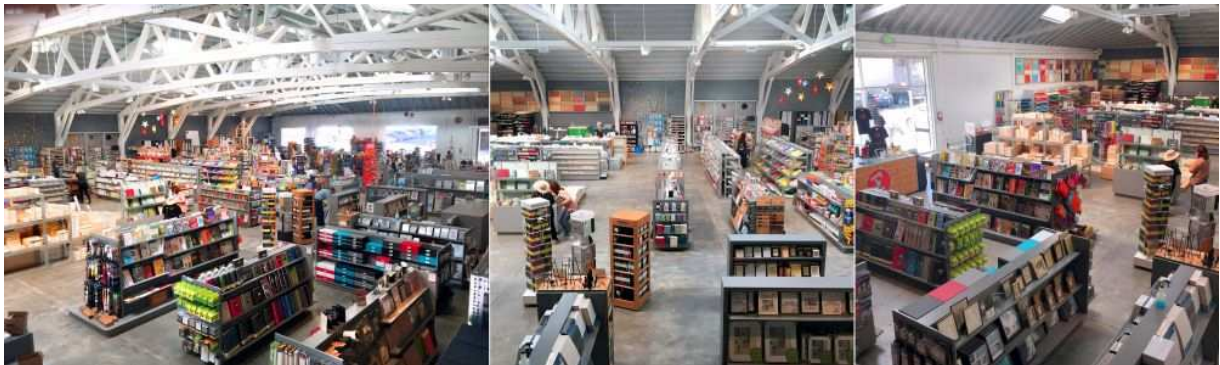


Photo: www.flaxart.com

FLAX has been a family-owned business from the beginning. Was it always assumed you'd take over? Any fond or tough memories growing up and working for an institution like FLAX?

Growing up, my father gave my brother and sister and me a wide berth to decide upon our path. Nevertheless, soon after college we all found ourselves in the family business. This was when we had the dynamic mail-order business and there were many roles to fill. It was a great time to learn and grow. It doesn't often work this way, but yes, it was assumed that I would take over

after my siblings and I settled in and discovered what we wanted in a career. Fond memories – that’s easy, getting to work with my dad all these years. He’s been a great mentor and loving supporter. And I’m lucky to add that he’s still involved. My brother and sister are too! It’s a true family-run business.

Most of your employees are artists and musicians. How has the company adapted to respond to their needs?

Our employees are our greatest asset. The length of tenure runs as long as 40+ years. Really! We haven’t adapted in any way, we’ve just always treated our employees with respect.

Are you an artist yourself? Anyone else in the family?

My parents are artists, and my kids are too. I think that attribute skips a generation.

You’ve done a tremendous mail-order business in the past and were an early adopter for online sales in 1998, making Internet Retailer’s Top 500 list in 2005. Yet a few years later you halted e-commerce efforts to focus on brick and mortar. In an era of online sales, what went into those decisions?

That’s a long story, but fundamentally the mail order business was not profitable anymore, and the infrastructure we’d built to support that and the eCommerce business was too big without all the revenue cylinders firing. So we circled the wagons around the retail stores, which has always been our core strength. Our new eCommerce site is growing and this year we’ll be committing further resources to further its success.

Your stores are huge, with a cornucopia of options for artists and hobbyists of all types, including items for casual customers like home décor and picture frames. What are your biggest challenges in today’s retail market? What areas of the market do you see growing or shrinking?

Having opened one and moved another store in just the past seven months, our biggest challenge is letting our customers know of these changes. We know that once we get them in the store, the experience will bring them back. The market is always evolving, as we must. Demand for photo albums continues to shrink to no one’s surprise in the digital age, while Urban Art has been the fastest growing category for a few years. Spray paint has become a legitimate art medium, particularly with the new water-based formulas designed for indoor use.

Your company motto is “Paint Draw Craft,” an appeal to the individual artist rather than the commercial art supply market, along with new programs like the in-store workshops and Live Artist program. How did this shift in focus come about, and what are your future plans in these areas?

Experience. We have to provide our customers with an inspiring *experience*. Our future plans involve building relationships, holding more events and becoming an integrated component of the East Bay’s arts community. Our goal is to *Inspire Creativity*.

Now for some gossip – any fun stories to share of famous people shopping at the store? Did your dad get Kim Novak’s autograph when filming *Vertigo*?

78 years is a long time to be in business. I know a lot of famous names have come through the doors. My favorites would be:

Ansel Adams – he bought a lot of Strathmore paper from us, and it arrived warped. We made good on it and my father received in return three prints – beautiful photographs I grew up with.

Jefferson Airplane – that photo came to our attention from a friend who received an email from Spotify. How does such a cool iconic image stay out of sight for almost 50 years?



Photo: Jefferson Airplane in front of Flax sign at 255 Kearney, 1967 / www.flaxart.com

This workshop is an exciting opportunity to meet Crystal + learn her techniques for making stunning stencils that can be used in a variety of applications, including printmaking, sculpture, and painting! Many thanks to Howard for the interview.

Drawing with a Blade

Saturday, June 25, 3-5pm

\$90, Ages 16+

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San Francisco magazine

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5

Flax Art & Design, Like the Artists It Serves, Is Decamping to Oakland

Joe Eskenazi | Photo: Joe Eskenazi | January 4, 2016

Planned condo tower dooms 78-year-old San Francisco business's headquarters—but Oakland reels it in with \$99K (or more) to sweeten the deal.



Flax's future Oakland home at 15th and MLK, a stone's throw from City Hall.

On a rainy December morning, the cavernous future home of the Flax Art & Design store in downtown Oakland is bathed in soft light and feels like the grand old art salon of the Parisian Académie. A workman spreads mortar on the former garage's concrete floors with a two-by-four, while two guys in hazmat suits perched atop a scissor-lift blast paint high into the rafters. The arching, cantilevered ceilings are around 30 feet tall, pierced by a dozen skylights. Yes, this will be a fine place to hawk vast quantities of art supplies. And yet...

"Everyone wanted us to stay in San Francisco," says company chief executive officer Howard Flax, 54, shortly before giving *San Francisco* the first media tour of the new locale. "Including us!" interrupts Craig Flax, his 53-year-old brother. True, Howard nods, but in Oakland, he's happy to say, "we got everything we wanted." Craig interjects again: "Except that we're not in San Francisco."

True again. [Flax's San Francisco outpost \(http://flaxart.com/\)](http://flaxart.com/) was established in 1938 by Howard and Craig's grandfather, Herman, who had a feeling that the art-supply business was a viable way to profit during the Great Depression. His bet paid off. At its peak in the mid 2000s, the canvas and easel empire moved 10 million catalogs annually. But what worked during the Great Depression isn't clicking as well during this Great Boom. The store deftly pivoted to noncommercial clientele after losing 90 percent of its 1980s-era business to desktop publishing home computers. That took finesse. But you can't finesse your way out of the landlords wanting to [drop a condo on top of you \(http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/S-F-development-boom-swallows-up-historic-family-5792378.php\)](http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/S-F-development-boom-swallows-up-historic-family-5792378.php). Thirty-seven years after Howard's father, Philip, sealed a handshake deal with the owners of the former Hermann Safe Company site to lease their 27,000-square-foot facility, the current landowners of the hulking Valencia and Market site have decided that they'd be better off with a residential tower on the spot, likely with a swank restaurant on the ground floor. So third-generation CEO Howard Flax is taking the company across the bay, perhaps as soon as February, retracing the migration of so many of their priced-out paintbrush-wielding customers over the last decades.

The store's moving sale will commence later this month, but the Flaxes aren't given to moping about their displacement. When life serves them lemons, they are inclined to see them as *Still Life with Ingredients for Lemonade*. Perhaps a move to Oakland will all be for the best, they say. After all, a sprawling art-supply emporium needs a lot of space, and many of the sites in San Francisco that Howard Flax would have desired were never a possibility because they're zoned for businesses engaged in production, distribution, and repair (PDR) services—selling art supplies doesn't cut it. Meanwhile, properly zoned spots in SoMa, Dogpatch, and the Bayview fell through.

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And so, after nearly two years of fruitless searching for a San Francisco home, Flax closed on the Oakland site in a matter of weeks, sealing the deal in September. Shaking his head, Howard marvels, "It was so easy!"—something that nobody ever says about land deals in San Francisco. But Oakland made the decision a no-brainer for the Flaxes. Keira Williams, a retail specialist in [Oakland's Department of Economic & Workforce Development](http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/oi/CityAdministration/d/EconomicDevelopment/index.htm) (<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/Government/oi/CityAdministration/d/EconomicDevelopment/index.htm>), supplied Flax management with a list of potential properties—including, she says, the one they eventually settled upon—as well as demographic information (namely, the frequently bandied-about—but never actually verified—claim that Oakland boasts the most artists per capita in the nation).

Many of those artists, one can assume, were at one time based in San Francisco. So are many of the Oakland businesses that now cater to them—some of which relocated in response to parodic San Francisco prices and/or Oakland municipal enticements: Flax, for example, was promised \$99,000 in Oakland public funding for site improvement and may snare up to \$30,000 more for facade improvements. Every time he talked with Oakland city officials, Howard Flax notes, "the amount of money to lure Flax to Oakland grew."

Not every Flax employee will be making the journey east, however. The Oakland store's 14,500 square feet, along with the 5,000-odd square foot San Francisco outpost Flax opened at Fort Mason in November add up to only 70 percent of the floor space that the Flaxes enjoyed at their Market Street site. Howard believes he will have to jettison 10 to 15 workers—along with Manny, [the giant artist mannequin](http://uptownalmanac.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-post-width/public/images-on-cdn/flax-art-and-design-dysonstarr.jpg?tok=eBEf3bYM) (<http://uptownalmanac.com/sites/default/files/styles/full-post-width/public/images-on-cdn/flax-art-and-design-dysonstarr.jpg?tok=eBEf3bYM>), and his kayak-size pen and paintbrush, which dominate the facade of the San Francisco store. They're just too damn big.

"Maybe," posits Craig Flax, "[the guy who has the Doggie Diner heads](https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/211888480/doggie-diner-makeover)" (<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/211888480/doggie-diner-makeover>) would want them."

Originally published in the February issue of San Francisco

Have feedback? Email us at letterssf@sanfransmag.com (<mailto:letterssf@sanfransmag.com>)

Email Joe Eskenazi at jeskenazi@modernluxury.com (<mailto:jeskenazi@modernluxury.com>)

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SFGATE

Longtime Market Street art supply store Flax moving to Oakland

By **J.K. Dineen**

Updated 7:43 pm, Tuesday, January 5, 2016

Before deciding to move to downtown Oakland, the longtime San Francisco art supply store Flax scoured the city for a new location.

It toured warehouses and former auto repair shops in the Mission District and on the central waterfront. It looked at the vacant Fresh & Easy grocery store in the Bayview and a former O'Reilly Auto Parts on Mission at Cesar Chavez.

But nothing quite worked. Some places were too small; others offered little or no parking. Still others were isolated and lacked access to public transit. Several of the best options were zoned "PDR" — production, distribution and repair — and would have required a six-month process to gain planning approvals.

With its store at Market and Valencia streets closing this month, Flax didn't have the luxury of time.

"We exhausted every possibility we could in San Francisco, but it didn't work out," said Howard Flax, the store's third-generation owner.

So the store is shifting its main operation to Oakland, where it will take 14,500 square feet at 1501 Martin Luther King Way, a former automotive repair shop and indoor soccer facility on the outskirts of downtown. The store will open in February.

Flax, with its signature retro, tilted-letter sign, has anchored the corner of Market and Valencia for 37 years. But it's being forced from that location because the building will

be razed to make way for 162 condominiums, part of a housing boom that is transforming Market Street from Powell Street all the way to the Castro. The move is sure to bolster the argument that Oakland's arts scene is benefiting from San Francisco's astronomical rents and a development boom that is swallowing up land and warehouses across the city.

Supplements loss

"I'm heartbroken that they are leaving the city," said Supervisor Scott Wiener, whose district borders Flax's current location. "Flax is one of the most unique and interesting businesses around. I'm not an artist, but I just loved walking through there and feeling the energy."

The store isn't leaving the city completely, however. In November, Flax opened a 5,000-square-foot store at the Fort Mason Center. Flax said that store — which caters mostly to the art students, actors, musicians and workers who staff the many cultural nonprofits at that waterfront arts campus — has been busy.

But for the main store, Flax said he was drawn to the 1922 Oakland building's architectural features — soaring ceilings and an exposed truss system — and its location in an up-and-coming neighborhood.

"There is drama in the interior space that spoke to us and played into the decision," he said. "The Martin Luther King building had more of a wow factor than our current building on Market Street."

The Oakland building is a block or two from the cafes and restaurants popping up in the neighborhood, but there are plans to develop housing across the street.

"In some respects, it's not unlike when we moved to Market Street 37 years ago," he said. "It's a little pioneering."

The city of Oakland also offered Flax a \$99,000 grant for interior improvements, and the property owner received \$30,000 for facade improvements, according to Brian Kendall, who works on downtown development for the city of Oakland. Flax is also eligible for grant money to help pay for signage.

Downtown ‘anchor’

“What is great about this is that it’s a couple of blocks off the main drag. It will be a great anchor for that area, which doesn’t have a lot of retail,” Kendall said.

Of the San Francisco sites, only the Fresh & Easy store in the Bayview would have been eligible for public grant money because of its location. “They were very interested in having us as tenants, but we felt it was a bit too far out of our market,” Flax said.

Todd Rufo, who heads San Francisco’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, said he was happy that Flax was able to plant a flag at Fort Mason and that his office spent more than a year working to find Flax a new headquarters in the city.

“Unfortunately, we just weren’t able to find the site that fit their unique needs for a space that mirrored the facility on Market Street,” he said.

Much-needed retail

For Oakland, which does not have nearly as strong a retail base as San Francisco, the arrival of Flax could be a watershed event. While 300 restaurants, bars and cafes have opened in greater downtown Oakland since 2004, very little of the new business has been retail, Kendall added.

“Flax is a perfect use for downtown,” he said. “And art supplies is a niche that has not been met at all.”

Flax will help attract shoppers back to downtown Oakland, said Keira Williams, a retail specialist for the city.

“For many years, Oakland has not been the retail powerhouse it should be for a city its size,” she said. “Flax is a destination that will add a lot of strength. ... It’s a name with great brand recognition. It will bring people to Oakland, and hopefully they will stay awhile and discover the other things that are here.”



Image 1 of 7

An athletic artist's manikin dribbles a basketball at the Flax art supply store at Valencia and Market streets in San Francisco, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016. Flax is being forced out of its longtime San Francisco location to make room for a 162-unit residential development.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle



Image 2 of 7

Anne Hayes (left) and her daughter Cassi browse through drawers of art paper at the Flax art supply store at Valencia and Market streets in San Francisco, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle



Image 3 of 7

Construction workers prepare a former automotive repair shop to become the Flax store's new home in Oakland.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle

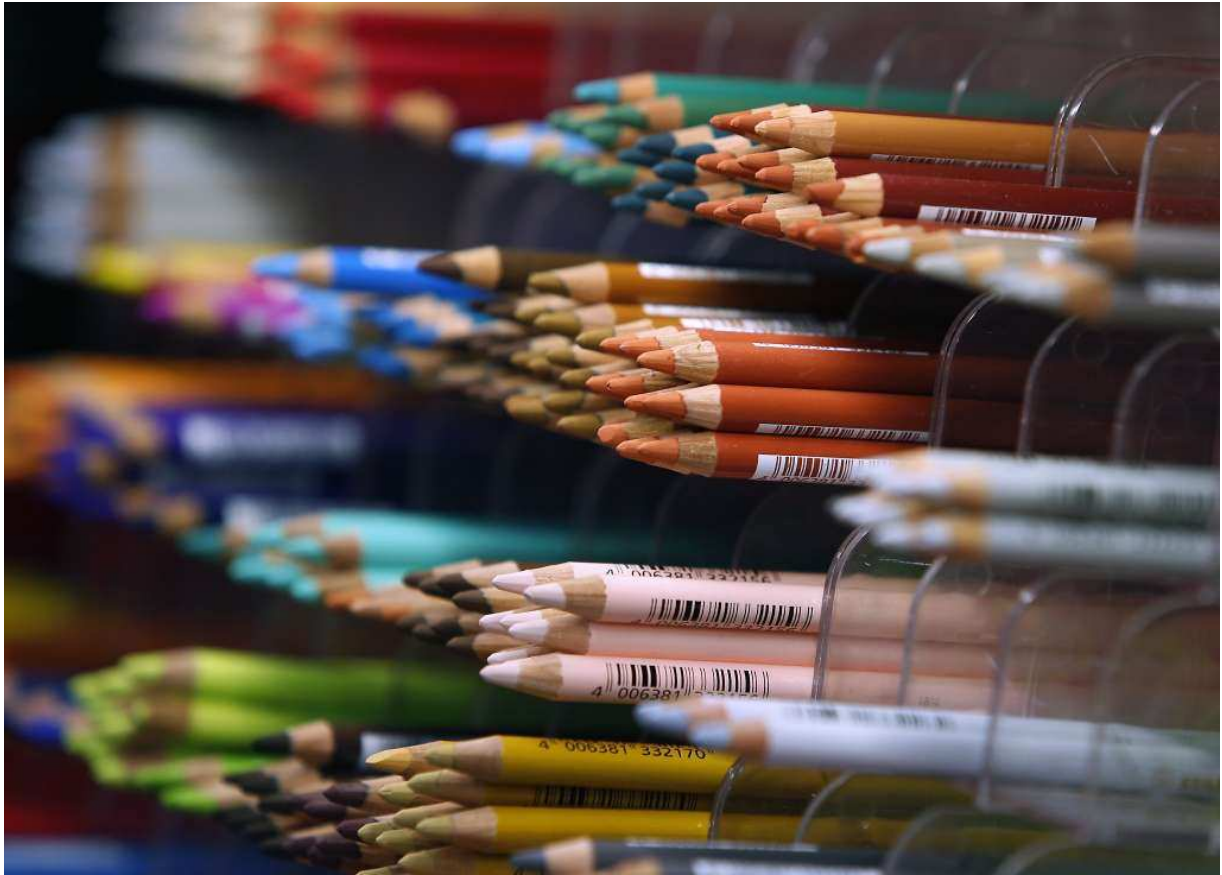


Image 4 of 7

Pencils are organized by color at the Flax art supply store at Valencia and Market streets in San Francisco, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle



Image 5 of 7

Cassi Hayes (left) shops for textured paper with her mother Anne at the Flax art supply store at Valencia and Market streets in San Francisco, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle



Image 6 of 7

Construction workers are preparing a former auto repair shop for the new home of the Flax art supply store in Oakland, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle



Image 7 of 7

The Flax art supply store at Valencia and Market streets is seen in San Francisco, Calif. on Tuesday, Jan. 5, 2016.

Photo: Paul Chinn, The Chronicle

J.K. Dineen is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: jdineen@sfchronicle.com

Twitter: [@sfjdkdineen](https://twitter.com/sfjdkdineen)

San Francisco Chronicle

Flax art merchant sees forced move as brush with opportunity

By J.K. Dineen

August 31, 2015 Updated: August 31, 2015 6:31pm



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Howard Flax stands at the site of his new arts and crafts store in Fort Mason in San Francisco, California, on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2015.

Nobody in San Francisco was pleased when news broke last year that a condo development would replace the idiosyncratic Flax art supply store that for decades has anchored the corner of Valencia and Market streets.

Flax, with its signature retro tilted-letter sign, was exactly the kind of family-owned business that made San Francisco special, people said. Was nothing sacred? Were there any local institutions that would survive the march of luxurious housing developers through the city's central neighborhoods?

But interestingly, there was one person who didn't join the chorus of complaint. That was Howard Flax, the store's third-generation owner.

"It's a cliché, but indeed with change comes opportunity," Flax said. "I sincerely believe that to be true."

A year later, Flax is busier than ever. He's gearing up for the final holiday season at the Market Street store — it closes in mid-February to make way for the 162 housing units — while working on opening not one but three new stores.

Several stores planned

Flax is gearing up for a mid-October opening of a 5,000-square-foot store in Building D of Fort Mason, a venture that will cater to the art students, actors, musicians and workers who staff the many cultural nonprofits that fill the campus. Meanwhile, Flax is in negotiations for other spaces — one in the city that would be similar in size to the 20,000-square-foot Market Street store and possibly a second somewhere else in the Bay Area.

"I have a number of different opportunities in the pipeline, none of which would have come to light unless we had been forced to move," said Flax,

whose college-student daughter, Jackie, recently became the fourth generation of family employed at the store.

On a recent afternoon, Flax was out at Fort Mason touring his new space and talking to the arts groups that he expects will be his customers. Flax will occupy space that was previously part of the Mexican Museum and at one point housed the Whole Earth Catalog bookstore. The space has five roll-up doors left over from its days as an Army barrack, two of which will be replaced with glass storefronts. On nice days, the doors will be opened and the arts merchandise will spill out onto the walkway in front of the building.



Photo: Connor Radnovich, The Chronicle

Howard Flax assembles an easel outside the space where his new arts and crafts store will be located in Fort Mason in San Francisco, California, on Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2015.

“Urban art, spray paint will be along this wall,” he said, walking through the space. “That’s a growing category. And then color will line that wall. Canvas

and easels and board and paper over there. In the middle will be pads, drawing, sculpting, modeling, and here gifts, picture frames, stationery, crafting, rubber stamps and stickers.”

Fort Mason, 13 acres between Aquatic Park and the Marina, is more of a destination than a place people happen to walk or bike or drive by. It is home to the City College of San Francisco arts campus, as well as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery, the Long Now Foundation museum, Readers Bookstore, Cowell Theater, BATS Improv, Blue Bear School of Music, the Magic Theatre and other groups. The San Francisco Art Institute is to open a facility there in 2017.

“Super-stoked,” said Blue Bear administrator Richelle Cullen when asked about Flax moving in. “Most of us are artists and musicians, and we like to buy art supplies. We are going to spend all our money downstairs.”

Inspirational location

At the Magic Theater, Flax ran into Director Ellen Richard, who said, “It will be nice to have a supplier downstairs when we need things for props or costumes, or paints for scenery.”

“In terms of props and scenery, let me know what you need,” Flax told her. “If it’s not something we carry now, we can get it.”

One nice thing about Fort Mason is that it’s a lot prettier than gritty central Market Street. There are boats and seabirds, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the ever-changing bay. So Flax plans to rent out easels and painting supplies to visitors or plein-air enthusiasts who want to capture the scenery without lugging around a bunch of equipment.

“Someone strolls down to the end of Pier 2 with an easel, and they can while away three hours, no problem,” said Flax.

In cases where people or stores have to move, the developer is usually cast as the villain. But Flax emphasizes that the people at Presidio Development Partners, which will build the condos on the current Flax site on Market Street, have been his biggest advocates, working their real estate connections to help him find all three new locations.

“Making sure Howard has a new home has been at the top of our list of most important goals on that site,” said Mark Conroe, who heads up the development group. “As San Francisco residents, we like Flax as much as the next guys. They are an important S.F. institution.”

J.K. Dineen is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: jdineen@sfchronicle.com Twitter: @sfjkdineen



Longtime San Francisco Art Store Faces Tough Search for New Home

By Joe Rosato Jr.

You hear it all the time these days: artists getting displaced as landlords jack-up the rent or sell out to developers, taking advantage of San Francisco's soaring economy.

Howard Flax hears the stories all the time, from his customers.

"San Francisco is changing," he said, from the bustling floor of Flax Art and Design Store, the art supply store his grandfather Herman Flax founded in 1938.

His grandfather had a soft spot for the struggling artists.

"There was always a fair amount of bartering and credit," Flax said, before dashing off to help a wayward customer.

But now, Flax finds his family-run art store in the same tight spot as some of his customers. When the store's lease is up at the end of 2015, it'll have to make way for another gleaming tower of condos.

Flax, who along with his brother and sister are the third generation to run the business, is now getting a taste of the grim reality other home shoppers in the city are discovering. After a recent trip to scout locations in the city, Flax was a bit shellshocked.

"We have a tremendous space here," Flax said eyeing the cavernous building which boasts a light-filled room devoted to fine paper. "Finding 20,000 of retail space in San Francisco is going to be difficult."

Inside the paper room, which holds among others, handmade sheets of paper from India, clerk Calvin Clark sympathized with the dilemma facing his employer.

"I teach art and all my students moved to the East Bay or away," Clark said. "Which means now I don't have any students."

Author and poet Neeli Cherkovski hovered over a counter, eyeing the fine quill pens he uses to etch his poetry in a notebook tucked under his arm.

“This is all part of the gentrification of the city,” Cherkovski said. “Everything is getting shuffled and a lot of people are getting shuffled out.”

The store's location at the corner of Market and Valencia is the third for the company, which moved to Sutter Street after opening on Kearney.

Flax held no sour grapes for his landlord, who he says gave plenty of notice of the store's pending ouster. He noted the store will remain where it is for another 16 months, supplying paper, paints and photo books to the public.

He also displayed a quiet confidence, rare among the newly displaced these days.

“We're going to be here another 75 years,” Flax said. “If I have anything to do with it.”

Published at 3:29 PM PDT on Jul 23, 2014 | Updated at 7:23 PM PDT on Jul 23, 2014

Source: [Longtime San Francisco Art Store Faces Tough Search for New Home | NBC Bay Area](http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Longtime-San-Francisco-Art-Store-Looking-for-New-Home-268352842.html#ixzz4TKPEM0vR)
<http://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/Longtime-San-Francisco-Art-Store-Looking-for-New-Home-268352842.html#ixzz4TKPEM0vR>

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Proclamation

City and County of San Francisco

WHEREAS, the City and County of San Francisco traditionally recognizes the achievements of notable, local businesses, and the dedicated work of Flax Art & Design represents our City at its best; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1938 as a family-owned business by Herman Flax, Flax Art & Design has a proven history of supporting artists and the Bay Area arts community by providing an incredible breadth of products, priding itself on its helpful and knowledgeable staff, and inspiring creativity through its innovative presentation of merchandise; and

WHEREAS, Flax Art & Design is now under the family's third generation of leadership, brother and sister Howard Flax and Leslie Flax Abel, who are continuing the tradition of excellence and exceptional service; and

WHEREAS, centrally located on Market Street, Flax Art & Design holds 20,000 square feet of art supplies and continues to supply residents and tourists from around the world to established professionals and serious art students to weekend enthusiasts and dedicated hobbyists; and

WHEREAS, Flax Art & Design is San Francisco's oldest locally-run supplier of quality materials for creative people, and has become an icon of creative inspiration for the last 75 years; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that I, Edwin M. Lee, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, in recognition and celebration of this San Francisco institution's special 75th anniversary, do hereby proclaim August 24, 2013 as...

FLAX ART & DESIGN DAY

in San Francisco!



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin M. Lee".

Edwin M. Lee
Mayor



**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2015-16-027
Business Name: Rolo San Francisco, Inc.
Business Address: 1301 Howard St.
District: District 6
Applicant: Mark Schultz, President
Nomination Date: April 6, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Scott Wiener

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

535 Castro Street from 1986 to 2002 (16 years)
1301 Howard Street from 1987 to Present (2017) (30 years)
450 Castro Street from 1988 to 2003 (15 years)
2351 Market Street from 1992 to Present (2017) (25 years)
25 Stockton Street from 1996 to 2003 (7 years)
1235 Howard Street from 2003 to 2008 (5 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: December 19, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 8



City and County of San Francisco

SCOTT WIENER
威善高

April 6, 2016

Re: Nomination of ROLO to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Regina Dick Endrizzi:

I'm writing to nominate ROLO for the Legacy Business Registry. Established in 1986, DNR magazine has named ROLO one of the most influential men's clothing stores in the U.S. Offering an eclectic selection of European and U.S. brands, ROLO always has been focused on brand cultivation and curation.

ROLO currently operates two brick-and-mortar stores in San Francisco, and would benefit greatly from being a part of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry. I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Wiener".

Scott Wiener
Member, San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
Rolo San Francisco, Inc.		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Mark Schultz, President Roland Peters, Vice President		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
1301 Howard St. San Francisco, CA 94103		((415))431-4545
		EMAIL:
		mark@rolo.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
www.rolo.com		

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Mark Schultz	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
President	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
2351 Market St. San Francisco, CA 94114	
TELEPHONE:	
(415)861-1999	
EMAIL:	
mark@rolo.com	

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0957077	C1833326

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:
Scott Wiener	April 6, 2016

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
535 Castro Street	94114	1986
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1986-2002 (Rolo on Castro 1986-1995; Rolo Undercover 1992-2002)	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1301 Howard Street	94103	Start: 1987
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
450 Castro Street	94114	Start: 1988
		End: 2003

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2351 Market Street	94114	Start: 1992
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
25 Stockton Street	94102	Start: 1996
		End: 2003

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1235 Howard Street	94103	Start: 2003
		End: 2008

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

Legacy Business Registry Application – Rolo

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Rolo San Francisco opened on February 1, 1986 after purchasing a closing business called *Steps*, located at 535 Castro Street. Rolo was located here until 1995, while also opening a second location in San Francisco at 1301 Howard Street in January 1987.

Throughout the years, there have been several outlet locations in San Francisco. At its height, Rolo had eight locations within the City and employed 50 people at these stores. With the challenges of maintaining the locations, ever-increasing rents and economic downtown, Rolo has downsized yet still maintains two locations in San Francisco. Rolo currently has two stores in San Francisco; Rolo on Market at 2351 Market Street, and Rolo SoMa, still at the 1301 Howard Street location.

Rolo opened its doors in the Castro District in the wake of the AIDS epidemic which decimated the neighborhood. Amid the boarded up windows and shops, the new store shined as a beacon of hope and progress for a community traumatized by the deadly disease and has since remained in the Castro. Rolo was also greatly affected by the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, as its three locations at the time were heavily damaged. All three stores were boarded up and cleared of merchandise due to looting. In 2000, a large economic downturn in Japan brought trouble once again to Rolo. As an internationally desired San Francisco-based brand, many Japanese tourists are customers of Rolo. Lastly, the 2008 economic downturn hit Rolo hard as people had less expendable income to purchase the high end clothing sold at Rolo. Despite these hardships, Rolo has persevered and adjusted its business model in order to survive.

Rolo's merchandise has always featured work from up-and-coming designers as well as a European unisex concept that caters to a wide variety of sizes and personal preferences, and a wide range of vendors that varies from more formalwear, business casual, sportswear, loungewear, and everyday use.

Rolo has maintained a community presence in both SoMa and the Upper Market/Castro District over the past 30 years, and hopes to maintain that presence despite heavy development in the Western SoMa neighborhood.

b. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Rolo is not a family-owned business.

c. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

Since its inception, Rolo has been a 50/50 partnership between friends and owners Mark Schultz and Roland Peters. Roland Peters was employed at the closing store *Steps* and approached Mark Schultz about purchasing the business and starting one of their own. With \$10,000, Mark and Roland purchased the business and started Rolo.

Currently, Mark and Roland are still the owners and manage both locations. Mark, originally from Chicago, and Roland, originally from Austria, are both on location 7 days a week managing the business.

d. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

Rolo in the SoMa District is located at the corner of Howard and 9th streets. Rolo in the Castro is located in a very highly trafficked commercial corridor between Noe and Castro streets on a stretch of Market Street that has always been a small business commercial corridor. The Castro building was constructed in the 1920s.

Both properties are considered "Category A" properties by the Planning Department, indicating that historic resources are present.

CRITERION 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

Rolo has maintained a presence in the SoMa and the Castro and has contributed greatly to these communities. Rolo on Market Street is located in the heart of the Castro district and has contributed greatly to the LGBT community for which it is known for. Rolo has sponsored many events over the decades that benefit the LGBT community such as charity events. In the days before the internet and events such as the Pride Parade were formalized, Rolo helped with the LGBT movement by printing T-shirts and collaborating with prominent figures in the LGBT community. David Spada, a jewelry designer based in New York City, partnered with Rolo in distributing "freedom rings" in San Francisco, a symbol of LGBT empowerment. Rolo also printed T-shirts to support the March on Washington, a large pro-LGBT rights political rally that took place on April 25, 1993. Rolo has printed and distributed T-shirts carrying pro-LGBT

themes throughout the years being in the Castro District of San Francisco and at the epicenter of the West Coast LGBT community.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

Over the past 30 years, Rolo has been a large contributor to the San Francisco Gay Softball and Basketball Leagues. Rolo also had a team in the Gay Softball League in which Mark played and managed the team in some years. In the Gay Basketball League, Rolo was a key sponsor of the Rockdogs Basketball Team. Rolo has also sponsored other LGBT-oriented sports leagues and teams throughout the years as well.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Rolo has been mentioned in numerous business publications, mostly Menswear magazines. In 2006, Rolo was listed as the 20th most influential menswear store in the United States by DNR Magazine. Another trade publication that Rolo has been featured in is Sportswear International with a full page write up. Rolo has also had a full page feature in the local San Francisco Chronicle newspaper.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Rolo has been visited and acknowledged by many significant figures over the past 30 years. In 2003, then-Mayor Willie Brown honored Rolo by presenting them with a letter stating that Rolo played a key role in turning around the SoMa neighborhood from the downturn of the dot com bust. Other significant San Franciscan customers of Rolo include Scott Weiner and former mayor Frank Jordan. Rolo has also been visited by local celebrities Danielle Steele and Robin Williams, and not-so-local celebrities such as Simon LeBon of Duran Duran, Boy George, Cameron Diaz, Whoopie Goldberg, and RuPaul.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Over the years in both the SoMa and Castro districts, Rolo has contributed to the communities it has been located in. Being in the Castro, Rolo has made monetary contributions to locally-based LGBT groups as well as sponsored and cosponsored events in the neighborhood. As the Castro is the epicenter of the LGBT community in San Francisco, Rolo has been a key supporter of its community by hiring from within and supporting organizations that help to further causes close to the community. This is in part due to Rolo's continued presence over the last 30 years in the Castro District and its dedication to maintaining a comfortable atmosphere for its employees. Throughout its history, around 90% of Rolo's staff has been from the LGBT community.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

Both Rolo locations draw patrons from both the communities that they reside in as well as the tourist community. The summer months see a large increase in tourists looking to shop at locally-owned retailers. Rolo's tourist clientele ranges from Europeans, New Yorkers, and Japanese tourists. As a forward fashion store, Rolo offers a unique selection that is not found at chain retailers, which makes it a popular retail destination for people visiting San Francisco. During the winter months, the local population are the main clients at Rolo. At the Market Street location, residents of the Castro District frequent the store, while at the SoMa location, the clientele is more of a hipster brand, as well as young tech workers coming from the Mid-Market area.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

The buildings housing both of the Rolo stores are classified as "Category A" properties by the Planning Department, indicating that historic resources are present.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

Rolo is unique in many aspects, and this is reflective of the community that it serves. Rolo has hired many LGBT employees representing the communities in which they are located. If Rolo were to close, the neighborhood and city would lose a local source of hiring from an often-marginalized community. Rolo is also a brand that is well known in the menswear industry and is a brand unique to the city of San Francisco. The city would lose a brand that was created here and is a destination for those seeking unique fashion. Lastly, Rolo has always maintained a clean, healthy, and friendly retail environment at all of its locations, which has encouraged surrounding businesses to upkeep their images and storefronts as well. Rolo sets the examples in these commercial districts for neighboring as well as incoming retailers.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Rolo promotes higher end menswear and fashion encompassing men of all ages. They offer international fashion to its local and tourist clientele. Rolo offers a unique product that is difficult to find elsewhere, and provides clothing on a local level that is internationally renowned. The business also promotes clothing that is locally manufactured and combines them with products sourced from all different areas of the world.

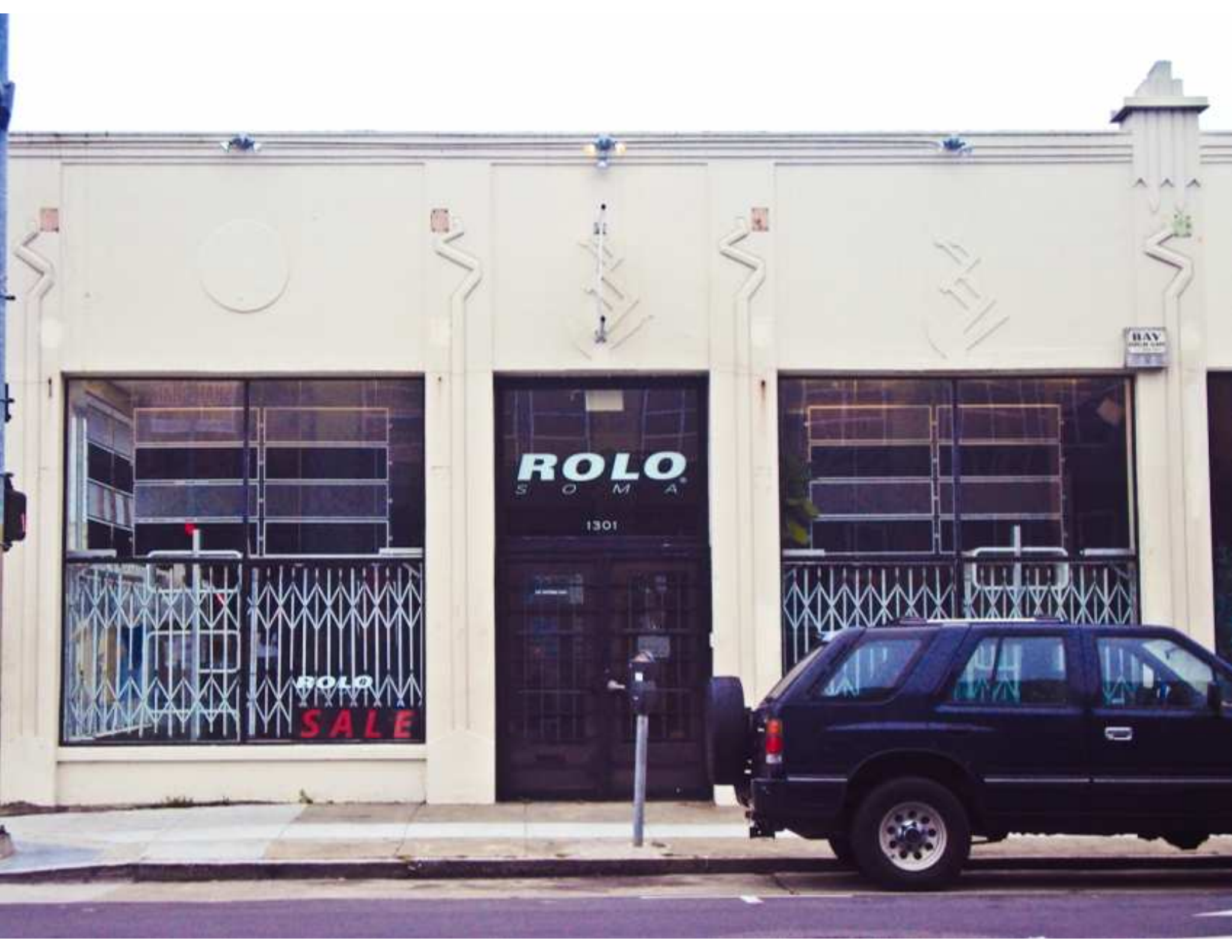
b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

As an independent retailer, Rolo caters to the local populations at both of its stores by offering a unique selection to the community in which it resides. Rolo is known for blending products made locally and from around the world under one roof and bringing together many different fashions. The retail model is unique to San Francisco in that the clothing mix is eclectic and unique. Since there have been clothes there have been clothing retailers, however Rolo exemplifies the trade by combining fashions from a wide variety of sources and housing them in two convenient stores in San Francisco.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

As a San Francisco-based retailer, Rolo is always mindful of maintaining an exterior that is reflective of the beauty of San Francisco. The image that the business presents a clean exterior and interior, with large window displays that bring about a favorable image to the storefronts. The stores are inviting, warm and well-lit, which brings people in from the street to shop and discover new fashions. This helps to inspire neighboring businesses to maintain and keep up their spaces as well. These practices have inspired and attracted other businesses to the area surrounding its store as well, especially the Castro location. As a result of Rolo's image, Elly Coffee Shop and Le Chantel Bakery have opened adjacent to Rolo, helping to build a more vital, walkable, and vibrant commercial corridor on Market Street. Throughout its history, Rolo has promoted a positive business approach and image throughout even the harshest of times in San Francisco and will for many years to come.

Pictures from the SoMa Location



ROLO
S O M A

1301

ROLO
SALE

HAY

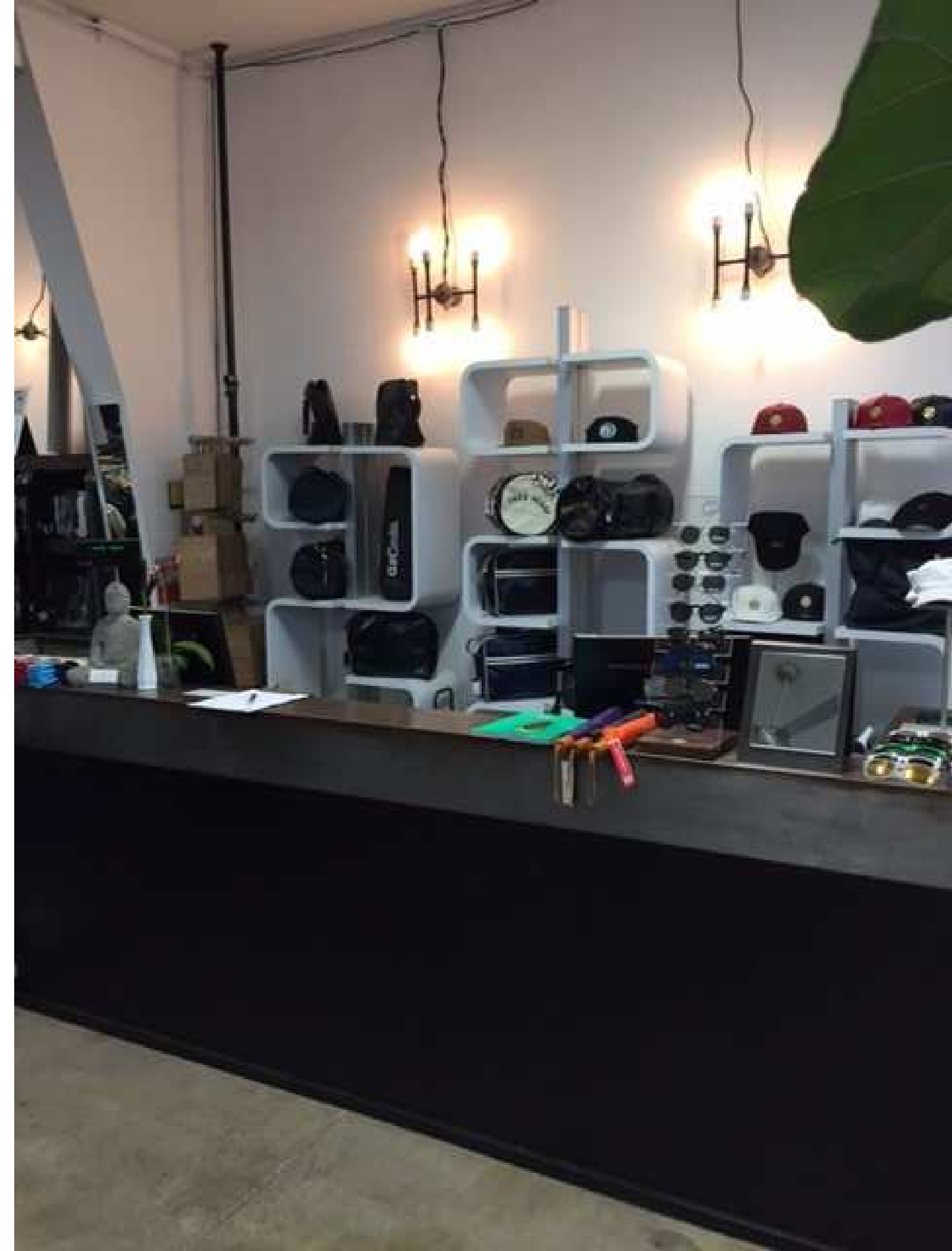


ROLO
S O M A

1301

G-STAR
L.A.M. 2000





Pictures from the Castro Location

ROLO ON MARKET





BE
nAM
Vud
G-ST
AW
Her
life/alter/chem
FRED PERRY
FIDELITY
UNDEFEATED
ETON

ROLO
SAN FRANCISCO
EST. 1986

OPENING HOURS
MON - SAT 11:00 - 7:00
SUNDAY 12:00 - 6:00

\$29
MADE IN U.S.A.



23

2251

ROLO

SAN FRANCISCO
EST. 1986

OPENING HOURS
MON-SAT 11 AM - 7 PM
SUNDAY 12:30 - 6 PM

Kiehl's

(MALIN+GOETZ)

Anthony

ESTAB





ROLL O' N R A M A E

3211

LOFT CERTIFICATES
\$25 Gift Certificate
\$50 Gift Certificate
\$100 Gift Certificate

BUY SELL TRADE

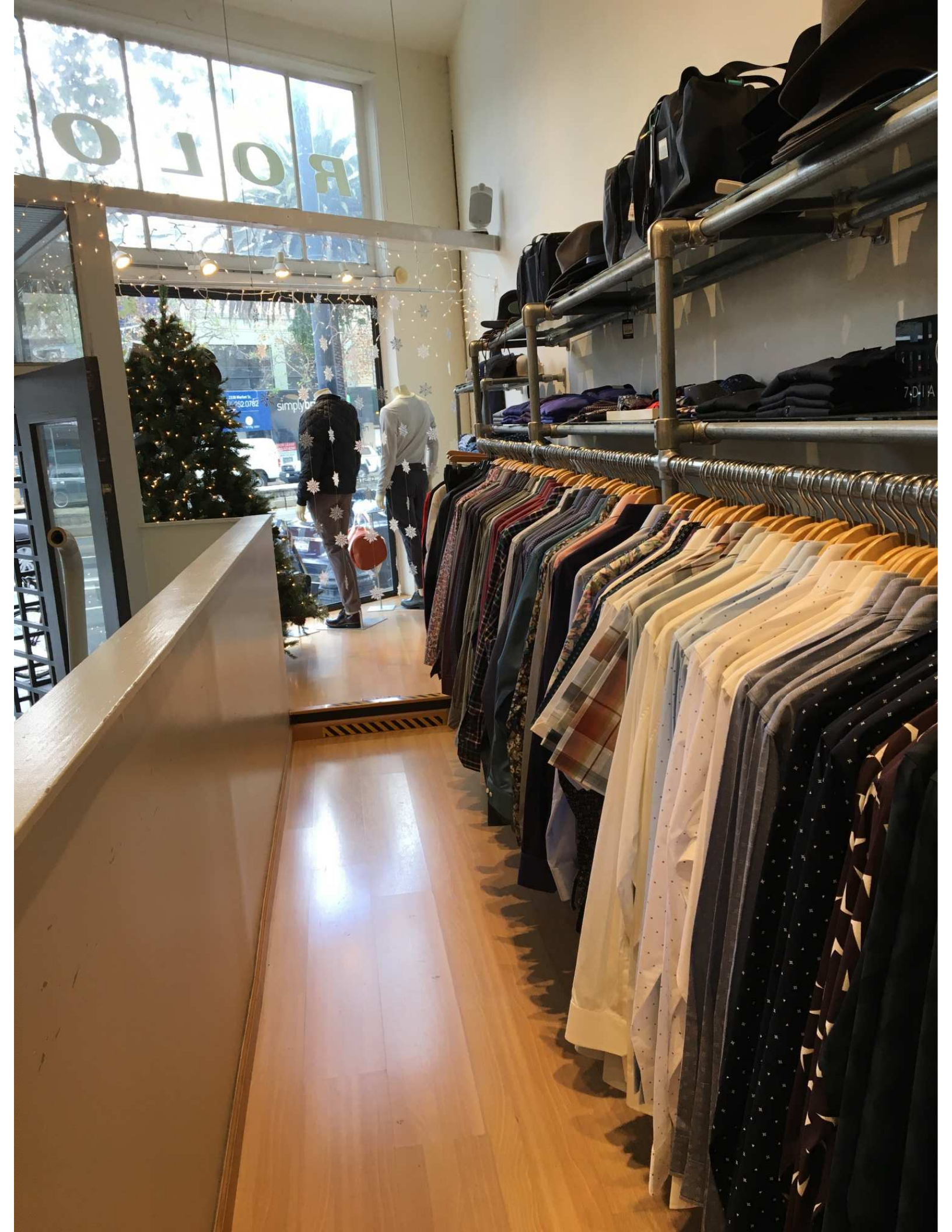
MARKET FRENCHMEN

569 230









Two Friends fashion a winning concept with local chain Rolo

Xander Lau, Chronicle Staff Writer

Published 4:00 am, Sunday, September 1, 2002



Chronicle / Chris Stewart

Photo: CHRIS STEWART

Roland Peters dresses the window of the Market Street Rolo shop with the latest fall fashions. He is co-owner of Rolo, a hip men and women's boutique in SF. BY CHRIS STEWART/THE CHRONICLE

At a glance, Rolo co-owners Mark Schultz and Roland Peters may seem like an odd couple.

The all-American Schultz is tall, athletic and bronzed, with a reserved personality and a businesslike demeanor. Peters, who hails from Austria, is shorter and stockier, and a pro at using his expressive persona to showcase his keen European fashion sense.

Together, they have successfully have etched Rolo onto the San Francisco fashion map as a key destination for the new and now since 1986. A local independent retail fashion chain, it has achieved cult status among San Francisco's male fashion set.

One benefit of being an independent retailer is that there is always room to play around with new brands and designers. They take particular pride in discovering and showcasing the work of up-and-coming local designers.

One such find is Nice Collective, a brand that has become renowned for combining urban, industrial elegance with complex construction. NC, as it's affectionately called, will feature its fall collection in the prestigious Parisian fashion emporium Colette.

And even though comparisons have been drawn between Colette and Rolo for their ability to seamlessly blend high and low culture, the Rolo owners are gradually moving away from trendy clothing and focusing on clothes that have good aesthetics and clean lines. This will be evident in the earth tones, cable-knit sweaters, scarves and black pants that will pervade their stores this fall. It's all about layers and texture.

It seems that opposites do attract, at least professionally. Schultz and Peters met in the early '80s when Schultz managed a Haight Street clothing store where Peters also worked. The two were instantly drawn to each other's differences. Schultz admired his European counterpart's taste and style, while Peters gravitated toward the American for his retail knowledge and business savvy.

They put their heads together and came up with a vision to start a boutique that promoted the European unisex concept, where men and women shop in the same store for crossover styles.

In 1986, they saw their vision materialize into a small store at 535 Castro St., where they focused on European-inspired jeans and casual pants, which continue to be a big draw among Rolo customers.

Now both 45, the friends have watched their single store bloom into five Rolo destinations across the city -- three in the Castro and two in SoMa -- all with their own identities ranging from urban street wear and modern classics to avant-garde designer.

The Rolo name, Peters says, originates from his nickname and is symbolic of rolling forward.

Rolo is among only three stores in the world to sell the Levi's Premium test division's Offender jeans. Marketed as "offensively low," the straight-legged jeans are the lowest-cut men's jeans on the market.

In the retail fashion world, Peters explains, you're never in the now -- it's all about looking ahead and taking risks. One such gamble will be the vintage reissues of '80s Nike sneakers that Rolo plans to roll out and sell for spring 2003.

"I love Adidas and Reebok sneakers," said Peters. "But they're becoming mainstream and played out; it's time to try something new."

Schultz is the more cautious and calculating of the two, the brains behind the operation. He is the one who works around the clock to make sure that the budget is balanced and Rolo's finances are healthy. Peters tackles the creative and merchandising aspect. He is almost obsessive when it comes to getting the windows and visuals right for all new merchandise. "It's like cooking," he says. "Buying the ingredients is one thing, but making the meal is another; it is more difficult to explain a new line to salespeople and get them to display it in the right way."

They describe Rolo as a gallery that features a mix of threads that ideally belong in every modern man or woman's wardrobe. Their vision for beautiful clothing may be a result of the fact that they are not loud, brash dressers. Most of the time, they wear T-shirts and jeans because they are either working in the office or on the go. But they do value quality in the form of a nice leather jacket or a vintage blazer.

And as they prepare for the spring 2003 retail season, things get hectic -- both men put in 50-hour weeks. There are fashion shows to attend, phones ringing off the hook and appointments around the country, if not internationally, to meet with vendors.

"The drum starts beating louder and louder every six months as each new buying season approaches," said Schultz. "We are inundated with having to look at new merchandise and picking out which vendors we want to see again; it's an ongoing process that never ends."

Peters seems to thrive on the buzz and electricity of the new buying season; he can live, speak, and breathe only Rolo during an interview. And as Schultz ventures off to a sporting event after a hard day's work, he muses that Peters' wife and 1-year-old son never get to see him.

Despite their success, the duo remain firmly rooted in the ground -- harboring no dreams of a fantasy world that includes style and fame.

"We don't need 800 stores nationwide with \$300 million in sales to make us happy," said Schultz. "Our ambition is to be successful and have really cool clothes for cool people."

KENNETH COLE: Takes Brands Upmarket, Sportswear In-House

DNFR

DEFINING MEN'S FASHION \$10

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2006

AMERICA'S 50 MOST INFLUENTIAL MEN'S WEAR STORES



#BXNQXGH *****CAR-RT LOT**C-030
#NR0738239# CONT

118



An **EXCLUSIVE SURVEY** of the top retailers shaping today's fashion trends—as ranked by the vendor community

Brazil's Alexandre Herchovitch remains one of the store's top-selling brands, as does Britain's Topman.) Other brands that are selling well in the store include Patrik Ervell, Kim Jones, Acne Jeans, United Bamboo and Band of Outsiders. Leon and Lim—who met at U.C. Berkeley and previously worked corporate jobs at Burberry and Bally, respectively—also operate a multi-line showroom and wholesale an Opening Ceremony collection of their own designs.

20. ROLO

Location: San Francisco
Owners: Roland Peters and Mark Schultz

Ever since it first opened on Castro Street 20 years ago, Rolo has been ground zero for fresh men's fashion in the Bay Area. Though the original location is no longer around, Roland Peters and Mark Schultz have colonized chic neighborhoods in San Francisco with a chain of three boutiques, each with its own bent on premium sportswear. In its Market Street store, Rolo serves



a 30-something customer with dressy, European collections like Comme des Garçons and Filippa K, as well as a significant array of men's grooming products. The SoMa store has a more youthful edge, offering 20-somethings labels like Trovata, Nice Collective and Adam Kimmel. Owners Roland Peters and Mark Schultz pride themselves on cultivating the very newest brands, and to that end they've added lines like Oeltjenbruns, Loden Dager, and Mike & Chris to their already eclectic label stable. Next up: e-commerce.

21. LISA KLINE

Locations: Los Angeles, Malibu and Beverly Hills, Calif.

Owner: Lisa Kline

Lisa Kline practically laid the cornerstone of the Robertson Boulevard retail circuit when she opened her eponymous boutique there back in 1995. Now she's juggling three doors on that street alone (men's, women's and kids') as well as Malibu (men's), and just-opened Beverly Hills (women's) boutiques, plus a booming e-commerce business. In August she and her husband, Robert Bryson, moved their



ing 60 to 80 of-the-moment apparel brands (strong sellers include Salvage, Chip & Pepper, Meltin' Pot, Modern Amusement, Original Penguin, Trovata, Splendid, Ever and Doe) in a wide range of sizes—plenty of XLs and XXLs on these shelves—Kline serves up private-label, button-front wovens and boxer shorts. And Kline is poised to keep growing her retail footprint—she recently inked a lease to open at the under-construction, high-end Bel Mare retail complex in Newport Beach, Calif., sometime in the summer of 2008. Until then, she plans to focus on making her Robertson retail cluster the impulse-purchase equivalent of a block party, by launching bimonthly trunk shows for the guys and fun events (think storybook reading and face-painting) for the kids, making her troika of stores a one-stop must-shop.

22. GARYS

Location: Newport Beach, Calif.
Owners: Dick Braeger, John Braeger and Kari Braeger

A bastion of good taste in Orange County, Calif., Garys was founded by Gary Wasserman in 1966, with Dick Braeger joining him as a partner in 1969. Braeger bought out Wasserman's share in 1982, and today Braeger and his son and



daughter are co-owners of this company known for its quality product, service and breadth of merchandise. With more than 200 styles of shoes, it's also known for its footwear selection. The 20,000-square-foot flagship store is located in Newport Beach's Fashion Island. The company also operates a Garys Cole Haan shop, five Garys Island stores, Garys Island Home, Garys Studio, two Garys Per

lines include Brioni, Canali, Stitch's, John Varvatos, Etro and Paul & Shark. Garys plans to expand its flagship by 2008.

23. JAKE

Location: Chicago
Owners: Lance Lawson and Jim Wetzel

Named for Jake Ryan, Molly Ringwald's dreamy object of affection in '80s teen classic *Sixteen Candles*, this dual-gender boutique has become a main-



stay in Chicago retailing. Jake's mix of established and eclectic designer goods has been long in demand in Chicago, a town notoriously short on stylish apparel options for guys. For the Midwestern urbanite, hard-to-find labels like Steven Alan, Ksubi and Rogues Gallery have won much praise at Jake, providing fashionable options without creating fashion victims. As a result, in two short years Lawson and Wetzel have extended their reach beyond a single storefront in the chic Southport neighborhood to a second boutique in Chicago's Gold Coast. By March of next year the enterprising owners will have a Jake trifecta with a shop on the North Shore.

24. BILL HALLMAN

Location: Atlanta
Owner: Bill Hallman

Bill Hallman is the boutique guru in Atlanta. Known as a fashion leader, Hallman opened his first store in 1990 in the Highlands area where three of his four stores are still located. Bill Hallman Original is comprised of separate men's and women's stores that



are connected by a passageway. Bill Hallman Flaunt, in Little Five Points, is what Hallman calls "a starter-kit store" for the high school and college crowds, who later graduate to the Highlands stores. Among Hallman's top-selling brands are Paul Smith, John Varvatos, NSF knits, Nudie Jeans and Nobody skinny jeans. His latest venture is with Alternative Apparel, an Atlanta-based T-shirt company. That store opened in March, and Hallman and Alternative Apparel plan to open stores in Los Angeles and Miami in spring 2007. The stores attract customers through parties and fashion shows, promoting local designers, and by combining music, art, fashion and entertainment.

25. NORDSTROM

Location: 99 full-line stores around the country
Owners: Shares are listed on the NYSE

Nordstrom and service are just about synonymous. This influential retailer, which started life in 1901 as a shoe store (apparel was added in the 1960s), was opened by Swedish immigrant John W. Nordstrom and his friend Carl Wallin. The retailer enjoys a rich tradition of offering quality, value, selection and service to its customers, and Pete Nordstrom, president



of merchandising, is keeping up his ancestor's tradition. To improve its designer business, Nordstrom bought a majority interest in Jeffrey last year and brought Jeffrey Kalinsky on board as director of designer merchandising. Men's brands at Nordstrom include Ben Sherman, Ike Behar, AG Adriano Goldschmied, Indigo Palms, Theory, The North Face and Joseph Abboud. Currently, Nordstrom has 99 full-line stores and plans to open number 100 next summer in Natick, Mass.

26. E STREET DENIM

Locations: Highland Park, Ill., and Lake Geneva, Wis.

Owner: Thomas George

"The name has nothing to do with



**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-040
Business Name: Real Food Company
Business Address: 2140 Polk Street
District: District 3
Applicant: Stephanie Hong, CEO
Nomination Date: November 7, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years? X Yes No

1023 Stanyan Street from 1969 to 2002 (33 years)
3939 24th Street from 1970 to 2002 (32 years)
2140 Polk Street from 1976-Present (2017) (41 years)
3060 Fillmore Street from 1997-2016 (19 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community? X Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: December 19, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program



Member, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

AARON PESKIN
佩斯金 市參事

November 7, 2016

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Director Dick-Endrizzi:

I hereby nominate Real Food Company, an emblem of San Francisco values at the intersection of the independent small business community and natural, organic food culture.

Since opening its first store on Carl Street in 1969, Real Food Company has opened stores on Polk Street in District 3 and in the Fillmore. For nearly 50 years, Real Food has championed issues that inure to the benefit of our City's independent small business community. Testament to its ingenuity, its commitment to providing organic and natural produce predates the mainstreaming of those concepts by decades. Real Food's local roots help maintain its status as a favorite of its surrounding communities.

For the foregoing reasons, I am proud to support Real Food Company's inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry and hope for the ongoing success of its Polk Street and other locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aaron P. L." in a stylized, cursive script.

Aaron Peskin

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
VPSF Inc., dba Real Food Company		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Grace Hong and Stephanie Hong		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
2140 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109		415 673-7420
		EMAIL:
		shong@realfoodco.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
www.realfoodco.com	realfoodcompany	real-food-co-san-francisco

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Stephanie Hong	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
CEO	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
2140 Polk Street, San Francisco, CA 94109	
TELEPHONE:	
415 518-3451	
EMAIL:	
shong@realfoodco.com	

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0363571	68-0502716

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1023 Stanyan Street	94117	1969
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1969-2002 (Purchased by Nutraceutical)	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
3939 24th Street	94114	Start: 1970 End: 2002 (Purchased by Nutraceutical)

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2140 Polk Street	94109	Start: 1976 End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
3060 Fillmore Street	94123	Start: 1997 End: 2016

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

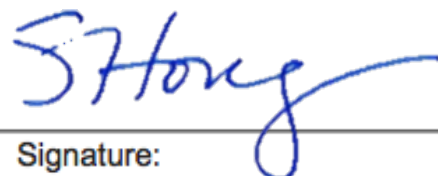
In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

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

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

Stephanie Hong

11/01/2016



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

Historical Narrative

Criterion 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Real Food Company has been in operation since 1969 and has been continuously serving the Russian Hill neighborhood at 2140 Polk Street since 1976. Its Polk Street location is in a densely populated commercial and residential area is just a short walk from thousands of San Francisco residents. At Real Food Company, people can shop for natural and locally-sourced foods or stop by to grab a quick lunch.

Legendary San Francisco Jazz club owner Kimball Allen and his wife Jane were the original owners of Real Food Company. Mr. Allen became interested in natural foods in the late 1960s and opened the first Real Food Company at 1023 Stanyan Street. That store was very successful being among the first to offer a wide array of bulk foods and high-quality produce. It quickly led to an additional branch on 24th Street and soon after on Polk Street. A Real Food Company store opened in Sausalito circa 1980. Stores also opened in San Rafael and Emeryville. By the 1990s, Real Food Company was a Bay Area destination for natural foods, and a fourth San Francisco store opened on Fillmore Street in 1997.

Mr. Allen was a problem solver, a creative genius, an inventor and an entrepreneur. He developed the first coin operated laundromat and soon had a small chain of laundromats in San Francisco. In addition to Real Food Company, Mr. Kimball opened the Noe Valley Bar and Grill in the 1970s, another restaurant in 1980 called Kimball's which was next to the Opera House on Grove Street, a jazz club called Kimball's East in Emeryville in 1989 and Kimball's Carnival nightclub with an adjacent pool hall and sports bar in Jack London Square.

When Mr. Allen wanted to retire, entrepreneur Stephen Hong - an established natural foods merchant - heard about the stores through his contacts in the industry. Mr. Hong and his family were eager to purchase Real Food Company and continue its legacy in San Francisco.

In the 1960s Stephen Hong, living in Hong Kong, dreamed of America. He saved his earnings and purchased a ticket to America, traveling by boat and arriving in San Francisco to begin his new life. Mr. Hong moved to Southern California where he met and married Grace. In the 1970s, he started learning about healthy living and studied about natural foods and supplements, which completely changed his life. Mr. Hong wanted to share his newly-gained knowledge with the community and committed himself to opening health food stores. Through the '80s and '90s, he was the second largest retailer of natural products on the West Coast.

When Mr. Hong learned about the opportunity to expand into San Francisco by acquiring the existing Real Food Company stores, he jumped at the chance.

In 2002, Kimball Allen sold the Polk Street and Fillmore Street stores to Stephen Hong and three of the Real Food Company stores to Nutraceutical International Corporation of Park City, Utah, through its subsidiary Fresh Organics, Inc.

The Hong's raised their two children Stephanie and Elvis along their side as they served the community in their two stores. The children always had a brilliant smile to share with customers and were always eager to help. As the family grew, so did the passion for offering specialty wellness-inspired products. Stephanie has a personal passion to support local growers and food makers, and hand-selects products for the business. It was a very smooth transition for Stephanie to take the reins of the Real Food Company as a second-generation co-owner as her parents aged.

In 2016, the 3060 Fillmore Street location closed abruptly due to the current landlords wanting to sell the property. The Real Food Company store at 2140 Polk Street is the sole remaining store from the original 1969 operation.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

The Real Food Company has been in operations in San Francisco for 47 years without any break in operations.

c. Is the business a family owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Kimball and Jane Allen were the original owners of Real Food Company. They opened the first store in 1969 and had seven stores in the Bay Area within three decades.

In 2002, the Allens sold two of the Real Food Company stores to Stephen Hong and three of the stores to Nutraceutical International Corporation of Park City, Utah.

Stephen Hong's daughter Stephanie Hong has since taken the reins of the Real Food Company as a second-generation co-owner.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family owned business.

The Real Food Company has had two owners. The founding owner was Kimball and Jane Allen from 1969 to 2002, and the current owner is the family of Stephen Hong.

The Real Food Company started in 1969 with its first store at Stanyan & Carl, right off the N-Judah line (where it remains today as Fresh Organics, Inc.). They added a second location on

24th St in Noe Valley in 1970, a third on Polk Street in 1976 and a fourth in Sausalito circa 1980. Their fifth and sixth stores were in San Rafael and Emeryville. The seventh store opened on Fillmore Street in 1997.

On March 1, 2002, Nutraceutical International Corporation of Park City, Utah, through its subsidiary Fresh Organics, Inc., acquired three of the Bay Area Real Food Company stores (Cole Valley, Noe Valley and Sausalito). Nutraceutical is one of the country's largest marketers and manufacturers of quality-brand nutritional supplements sold to health and natural food stores. They also own Thom's Natural Foods in The Richmond District.

Both the Nutraceutical ownership (for the Stanyan Street store) and the Stephen Hong ownership use the Real Food Company name as a DBA. Nutraceutical's other DBA is Fresh Organics, as their original stated plan was to change the name from Real Food Company to Fresh Organics.

This Legacy Business Registry application follows the lineage of Stephen Hong's two stores, of which only the store at 2140 Polk Street remains. This application also reports the Real Food Company stores owned by Nutraceutical as having closed in 2002 even though the stores themselves remained open at the time. The reported "closures" represent their closures as Real Food Company stores.

e. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

None known.

Criterion 2

a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.

The City of San Francisco has long been known for attracting people from all different cultures from around the world. Following the hippie movement in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s, people were very interested in living healthier lives. San Francisco remained the home of many of those involved in the movement. As they began to settle down to raise children, they found that Real Food Company was a wonderful place and support the growing neighborhood.

The beautiful storefront at Real Food Company enables pedestrians to peer into the store and see a bounty of beautiful produce. The business attracts people to come and sit at the bistro tables on the sidewalk after grabbing a sandwich inside. As a community meeting place in the neighborhood, Real Food Company is an important part of the culture of community.

Real Food Company features a 100% organic produce selection that customers see as soon as they enter the store. Known as an "everyday farmer's market," it has had a reputation for

providing fresh, local and organic produce throughout the year. There is a natural meat department at the back of the store. There is also a wide variety of non-GMO and organic groceries, as well as a selection of non-GMO and organic dairy, artisan cheeses, beer and wine.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the City, or the business industry?

The Real Food Company is proud to be an incubator for small locally owned, independent brands. Many now-established natural foods brands were once young companies who got their start inside of its doors.

Real Food Company has been a brand incubator to local brands such as Niman Ranch, Guayaki, Nutiva, Amy's Natural Foods, Alter Eco, Numi Tea and many other national natural brands. Many of the businesses did customer demonstrations and promoted their businesses within the Real Food Company store when they were just start-ups. Real Food Company continues to focus on independently owned food companies and local artisan food producers to this day.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, historical documents?

None known.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

The original owner of Real Food Company, Kimball Allen, was a significant person in San Francisco and the Bay Area.

Mr. Allen developed the first coin operated laundromat. It was such a novel concept that he had to hire an attendant with a white uniform just to explain the concept and the use of the equipment. He soon had a small chain of laundromats in San Francisco. He never stopped inventing and later he developed and patented a coin operated shoe shine machine which he manufactured himself.

In the late '60s, Mr. Allen became interested in the natural food business, and he opened the Real Food Company store on Sanyan Street. This became the first of a small chain of stores that he and his wife Jane, owned and operated.

Kimball and Jane Allen also opened the Noe Valley Bar and Grill, which was known both for its food and the carved redwood decor that Mr. Allen designed and did much of the crafting himself. They followed with another restaurant called Kimball's which was next to the Opera House on Grove Street. Besides serving the patrons and staff of the arts, the restaurant became famous as a jazz club. They also opened Café Allegro next door to the restaurant. In 1989, he and Jane opened Kimball's East in Emeryville where many of the great names in jazz played.

When he was in his 80s, Mr. Allen opened Kimball's Carnival night club with an adjacent pool hall and sports bar in Jack London Square.

Mr. Allen is mostly known for his significant contribution with his "Kimball's East" business. His famous jazz club has been described as the hallmark of music presentation for the Bay Area in a splendid supper club setting. It has hosted such musical luminaries as Max Roach, Stanley Turrentine, Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalis, Bobby Blue Bland, Maceo Parker, Nancy Wilson, Peabo Bryson and Eartha Kitt. Dizzy Gillespie gave one of his final performances there.

e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

The Hong family quickly became involved with the communities served by the stores he purchased.

The commitment of the Real Food Company to the community is to provide healthy food and products and to share knowledge about healthy living. As a part of the vetting process for products, vendors are screened to have the shared mission for a sustainable food system. Co-owner Stephanie Hong interviews vendors and selects those that are local and offer non-GMO, organic, and sustainable products that people will enjoy. Real Food Company is proud to be the platform where many small businesses get their start. In fact, there are waiting lists for companies who desire to get their product into our store so they can share healthy-living with San Francisco.

The Real Food Company is also committed to the community by taking part in local San Francisco organizations. For many years, the store has been active with the Russian Hill Community Association, Russian Hill Neighbors, Middle Polk Neighborhood Association and the Polk District Merchants Association.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

All of the districts of San Francisco come together in the beautiful community that Real Food Company calls home. The business is fortunate to be in the corner of the Russian Hill neighborhood and is able to serve residents in that district as well as attracting customers from surrounding areas such as Cow Hollow, Nob Hill and Pacific Heights. The customers represent every walk of life that enjoy shopping for a wellness-inspired life.

As a part of the love for wellness that second generation co-owner Stephanie Hong holds, Real Food Company seeks to share the knowledge for supporting a better food system. This means educating the public about non-GMO products and what "healthy food" really means. Regular events that are offered in the community include nutritional talks, product demonstrations, fine food tasting and wine pairing events.

Russian Hill has always been a community of prestigious citizens and influencers. Many current and former residents of Russian Hill have benefited from shopping at Real Food Company and learning about natural foods and healthy living by shopping there.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/ object/or interior?

The building that Real Food Company populates is a 1930s commercial site. The building has changed very little over the years and occupies a great location in the middle of the block. The store is adorned with lovely tiles along the sidewalk, bright storefront windows and an awning that spans the width of the business.

The store's interior is eclectic, warm and welcoming. The bright fruit stands are the first thing customers see as they walk through the doors. Customers are known to be attracted to the store for the wonderful selection of meats and the ease of quick shopping. The building offers a bright setting with wide-open skylights.

h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

The Real Food Company is a neighborhood institution and many people that want good healthy food would miss having a convenient, friendly independently owned store right down the street from them if it were to close. The neighborhood has lost the sister store of Real Food Company on Fillmore Street, and the community has offered a huge outreach of support. Residents who desire to live a healthy and natural life will not have a store within walking distance if the store closed and will be required to drive out of the neighborhood in search of natural products.

The store is located in a multi-use neighborhood and has many complimentary stores nearby such as coffee shops, bakeries, restaurants and boutiques. Because Real Food Company attracts a lot of foot traffic, these other stores would suffer with the loss of our business.

Criterion 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Real Food Company is unique in the community because it offers products that are special and unique along with thousands of regular staple items. A shopper can find products like milk, eggs and butter along with handmade bagels, specialty coffees and many wellness selections. Shoppers get personal assistance in selecting vitamins and natural healing products. Real Food Company promotes the sense of community and has been the launch pad for many local brands. Vendors come knowing that their product will be presented to the San Franciscans who are very passionate for healthy living.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

When Stephen Hong acquired the Real Food Company, he brought to it his personal touch and belief in building a better food system. The company commits to its customers to bring together fine items such as locally grown produce, nearby bakeries, coffee roasters, nutritional products and local specialty favorites. The commitment from Stephen passed down to the next generation and continues with his daughter Stephanie who hand selects the products for the store. The business maintains the traditions that belong to the store by bringing to the neighborhood products they have loved for many years.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.). Does the building occupied by the business relate to the immediate neighborhood?

The business has a welcoming storefront with an array of windows completely across the front. The windows are bordered with old tile to the ground making it a beautiful spot to sit for a meal. The sign announcing the Real Food Company across our building establishes our history of the community with its beautiful patina. We have maintained the 1930s feel of the store and have no plans to make changes to the architectural details.



*Real Food
Company*

Natural & Gourmet Foods • San Francisco Est 1969

THE REAL FOOD CO.

The Real Food Company

Twentyone Forty Polk Street

NEW STORE HOURS
11am to 9pm Monday thru Sat/Lab

SUPPLEMENTS & BODY CARE

LOCAL ORGANIC PRODUCE

MEAT & POULTRY

BEER, WINE, & CHEESE

BACKSTAGE
HAIR SALON

PLUMBING AND GEOMETRICS



Natural & Gourmet Foods - San Francisco Est. 1969

THE REAL FOOD CO.

The Real Food Company

Twenty-one Forty Polk Street

SUPPLEMENTS & BODY CARE

LOCAL ORGANIC PRODUCTS

MEAT, FISH & POULTRY

BEER, WINE & CIGARETTES





Natural & Gourmet Foods • San Francisco Est 1969

REAL FOOD Co.

The Real Food Company

Twenty-one Forty Park Street

BACKSTAGE
HAIR SALON

DOW WOW
BELOW

DOW WOW
BELOW

DOW WOW
BELOW

OPENING SOON
New to Park Street this October

ORGANIC & RAW FOOD

NEW ORGANIC PRODUCTS

REAL FOOD & BEVERAGES

Natural & Gourmet Foods San Francisco Est. 1969

THE REAL FOOD CO.

Food Company

Twenty-one Fo

S & BODY CARE

LOCAL ORGANIC PRODUCE

MEAT & POULTRY

BEER, WINE

at & Gourmet Foods

San Francisco Est. 1969

THE

REAL

FOOD

The Real Food Company

SUPPLEMENTS & BODY CARE

LOCAL ORGANIC PRODUCE

California Certified Organic Farmers

GRAB & GO

The Real Food Company

Natural & Gourmet Food

THE

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Twenty-one Fo

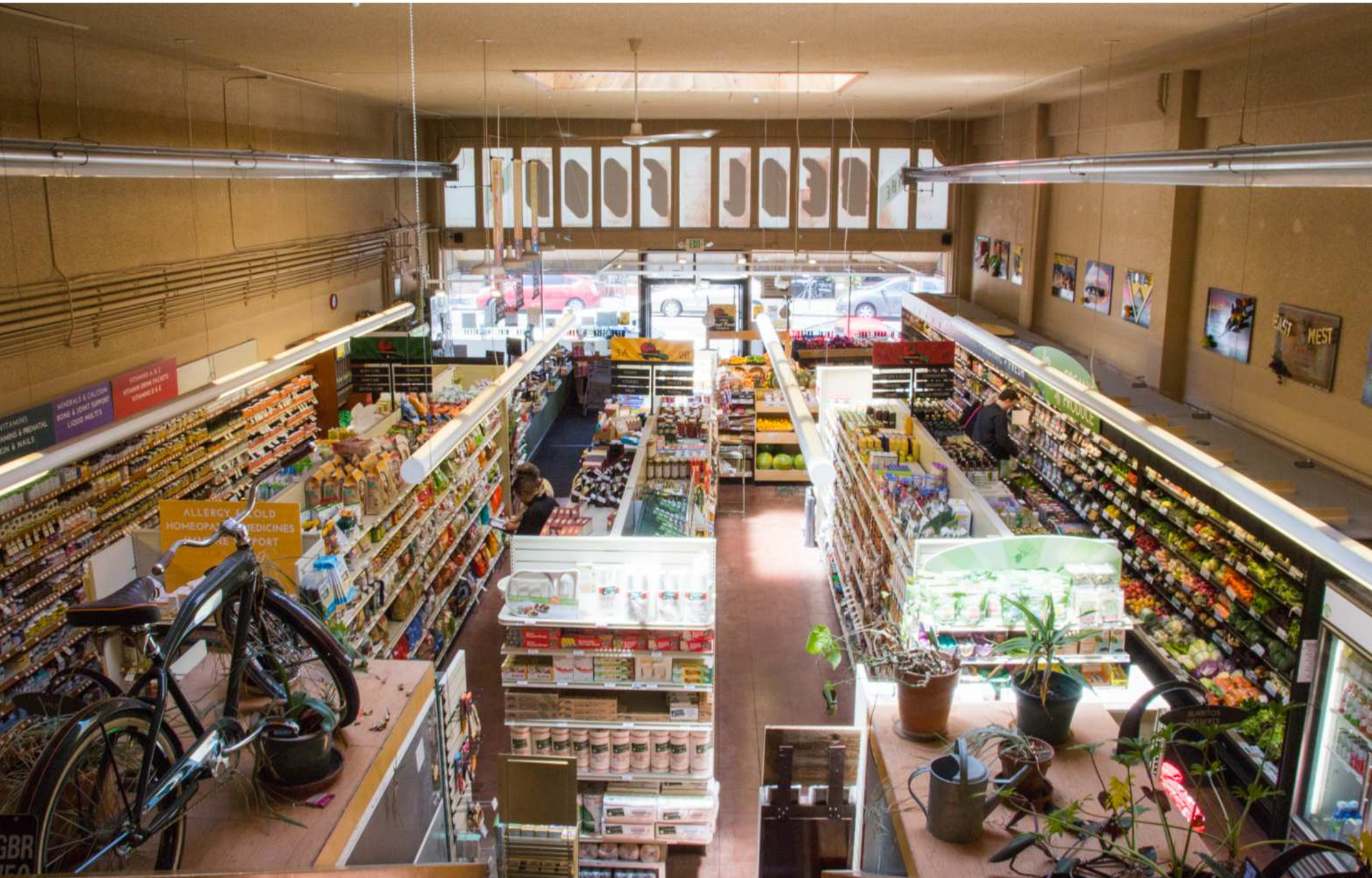


MEAT, FISH, & POULTRY

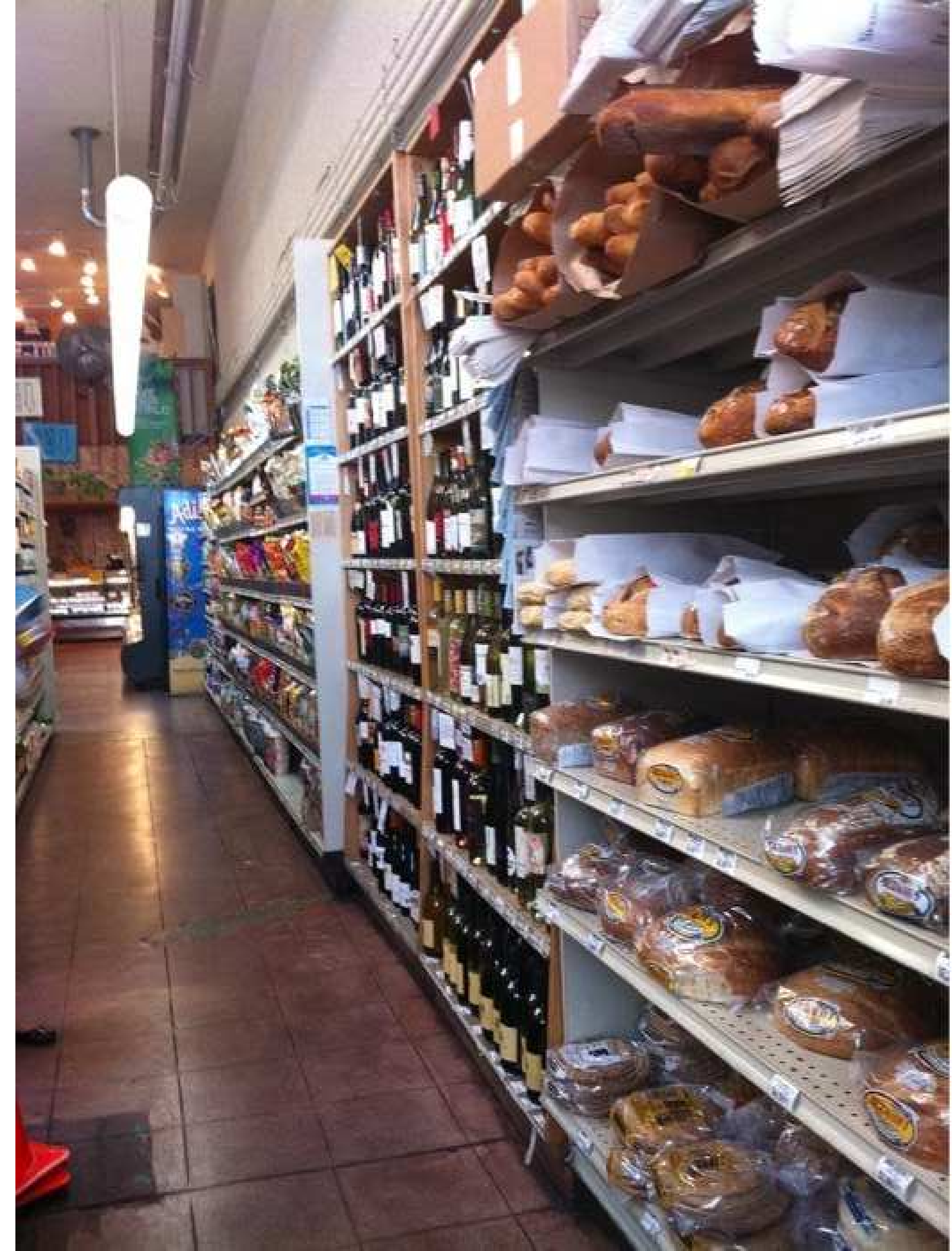
BEER, WINE, & CHEESE

CLOSED











ORGANIC
Red Leaf Lettuce
USDA 94075
\$1.49
CNCU

ORGANIC
Butter Red Lettuce
93098
\$1.99
CNCU

ORGANIC
Green Leaf Lettuce
\$1.49
CNCU

ORGANIC
Lemon Grass
\$1.99
CNCU

ORGANIC
Butter Lettuce
\$1.49
CNCU

Real PRODUCE

Locally Grown

Real Food Company

Real Food Company



GET YOUR
FLOWERS
HERE!



THE RAW

WFL & FOODS

Real Food Company

GRAB & GO

LOCAL & ORGANIC

MADE FRESH DAILY IN OUR KITCHEN

FOR CATERING INFORMATION CALL 415.567.6900

100% GMO FREE!



GRAB & GO





2016
MEMBER FAVORITE
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Hey Real Foodies!
Check out our bi-weekly Flyer! Many of your favorite products are on sale!

STORE HOURS
8 am - 9 pm

MEAT, FISH & VEGETABLES

Smoking only
1) at the curb, or
2) if no curb,
at least 15 ft. from
exits, entrances,
operable windows, and vents

— COME IN COSTUME — GAMES
STORES INCLUDE:
— Bryan's Grocery
— Hedo Soy — La Mediterranée
— Thorough Bread & Pastry
— You!

Marlo's
bake shop

WWW.REALFOODCO.COM

Marlo's
BANANA BREAD
A COOKIE & A BISCOIT
WALK INTO A BAR...
'SOFT-BAKED'
BISCOIT IS WHAT
GENTLEMEN WHEN THEY

SPECIAL
\$4.49

Marlo's
Soft-Baked
BISCOIT
Brownie

Marlo's
Soft-Baked
BISCOIT
ORIGINAL

Marlo's
Soft-Baked
BISCOIT
Coffee Cake

Marlo's
Soft-Baked
BISCOIT
Pumpkin Pie

Marlo's
Soft-Baked
BISCOIT
Banana Bread

Soft-Baked Biscotti

Soft-Baked Biscotti

Soft-Baked Biscotti

Soft-Baked Biscotti

Kimball Allen

Obituary



Kimball W Allen
9-29-19 to 9-17-11

Kimball Allen died in peace at home on September 17, just short of his 92nd birthday. He was born and raised in Burlington, Kansas and loved to tell stories of his childhood there.

Kimball was a bright and witty young man, but not especially motivated as a student. He dropped out of school after the 6th grade in the midst of the dust bowl and the depression and ventured west to San Francisco, a city he came to love dearly. He was able to find work as a Western Union messenger, a "gofer" with a gold mining company, and iron worker in the Martinolich ship yard.

During WWII he served in the 5th Army Marine Ship Repair Company and spent most of his time during the war in New Guinea and as part of the occupying force in Japan.

Returning from the war, Kimball and a partner purchased a 105 foot surplus boat, named it the Allen-Cody and started a shark fishing enterprise for the Vitamin A content of the liver which was in demand at that time.

Kimball was a problem solver, a creative genius and an inventor. He developed the first coin operated laundry mat. It was such a novel concept that he had to hire an attendant with a white uniform just to explain the concept and the use of the equipment. He soon had a small chain of laundry mats in San Francisco. He never stopped inventing and later he developed and patented a coin operated shoe shine machine which he manufactured himself.

In the late 60's, Kimball became interested in the natural food business, and he opened the Stanyan Street Natural Food Store. This became the first of a small chain of stores still well known as "The Real Food Company", which he and his wife Jane, owned and operated until 2003.

Kimball and Jane also opened the Noe Valley Bar and Grill in the mid 70's which was known both for its food and the carved redwood decor that Kimball designed and did much of the crafting himself.

They followed with another restaurant in 1980 called Kimball's which was next to the Opera House on Grove Street. Besides serving the patrons and staff of the arts, the restaurant became famous as a jazz club. They also opened Caf Allegro next door to the restaurant. In 1989 he and Jane opened Kimball's East in Emeryville where many of the great names in jazz played, including Herbie Hancock, Wynton Marsalis and Dizzy Gillespie among others.

In his 80's he opened Kimball's Carnival night club with an adjacent pool hall and sports bar in Jack London Square.

Into his 90's, Kimball continued to develop new ideas. Kimball always followed his curiosity wherever it led him. He remained brilliant and focused on his latest project up to the time of his passing.

Kimball is survived by his beloved wife of 35 years, Jane Annan Allen, sister Jeanice Pokorny, daughter Annilee Allen, devoted grandsons; Donald Shannon, Patrick Shannon, and Cheyenne Woods and their spouses, Alisa, Katie and Kim, and great grandchildren, Makayla, Hunter, Colton, and Shana. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Kim Allen and his sister, Ruth.

His family and friends will forever remember Kimball for his curious nature, his amazing sense of humor, his charm, his intellect and his integrity.

A remembrance gathering will take place. Friends interested in attending are asked to contact the family at friend.kimball@yahoo.com.

Published in San Francisco Chronicle from Sept. 22 to Sept. 25, 2011

Kimball Allen, opened Kimball's East, dies

Carolyn Jones, Chronicle Staff Writer

Published 4:00 am, Saturday, October 29, 2011



Photo: Jane Allen, Courtesy

Kimball Allen, founder of Kimball's East nightclub and the first laundromat in San Francisco, died Sept. 17, 2011.

Kimball Allen, whose business acumen brought the Bay Area such notable enterprises as a world-class jazz club and one of its first Laundromats, died of kidney failure Sept. 17 in Mill Valley. He was 91.

In his seven-decade career, Mr. Allen ran everything from a shark fishing business to a popular chain of health food stores. But he was best known for opening Kimball's East in Emeryville.

"When it was hot, Kimball's East was one of the best jazz clubs in the world," said John Faraola, who worked as box office manager there in the 1990s. "I don't think Kimball was much of a music guy himself, but what he really enjoyed was creating situations where other people could enjoy themselves."

Mr. Allen left his home in rural Kansas at age 16 to escape the Dust Bowl and landed in San Francisco, where his first job was as a Western Union bicycle messenger.

"He was paid 10 cents per telegram. He thought that was a phenomenal job because he got to wear a uniform *and* ride a bicycle," said Mr. Allen's wife, Jane Allen.

Mr. Allen served in the Army during World War II, repairing boats in the Pacific. When the war ended, he stayed overseas, starting a shark fishing business with friends that took him around the world. At that time, sharks were used as a source of vitamin A, although the business floundered when synthetic vitamin A was invented.

He returned to San Francisco and opened a Laundromat on 24th Street. Customers were so flummoxed by the concept, he hired a uniformed assistant to demonstrate the coin-operated washers and dryers.

In the late 1960s, Mr. Allen became interested in natural foods and, with his wife, opened the Real Food Co. on Stanyan Street. The store, which was among the first to offer a wide array of bulk foods and high-quality produce, quickly led to branches in Noe Valley, Polk Street and Sausalito. In its heyday, the chain had seven stores throughout the Bay Area.

One place he did not open a store, though, was Palo Alto.

"We were going to open a store there, but there was a little mom-and-pop store nearby and he knew we'd put them out of business. So he changed his mind," his wife said. "He had a good head for business, but he also had a lot of integrity."

Mr. Allen owned several restaurants, as well, including Noe Valley Bar and Grill and Kimball's, next to the Opera House on Van Ness Avenue. The problem at Kimball's, though, was that customers would clear out by 8 p.m. every night for opera performances, so Mr. Allen decided to bring in live music to attract late-night diners.

The format was such a success that Mr. Allen in 1989 opened Kimball's East, a spacious, 400-seat club with top-of-the-line acoustics and sound system. Herbie Hancock played opening night, Wynton Marsalis and his brothers were regulars, and Dizzy Gillespie gave one of his final performances there.

"For a period of time, you could hear all the great jazz musicians there," said Jesse Hamlin, jazz critic for The Chronicle. "Stan Getz, Freddie Hubbard, Lionel Hampton. ... They all played there."

Louisa Spier, a former publicist for Kimball's who now works for the San Francisco Symphony, described Mr. Allen as the consummate adventurer.

"He was a risk-taker, a gambler," she said. "You have to be to run a nightclub well. He was this sweet, grandfatherly man, but he was also a tough guy, very salt-of-the-earth."

Mr. Allen was working on new business ideas until his death, his wife said. His latest plans included a pingpong palace, an indoor flea market, dog day care and a new nightclub.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Allen is survived by a daughter, Annilee Allen of Clearlake; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. A daughter, Kim Allen, predeceased him.

Services will be private. The family prefers donations to any local food bank.