



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Certificate of Appropriateness Case Report

HEARING DATE: MARCH 15, 2017

Filing Date: March 1, 2016
Case No.: 2016-011144COA
Project Address: Filbert Street and Columbus Avenue
Historic Landmark: Washington Square, Landmark Number 226
Zoning: P (Public)
OS Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0102/001
Applicant: San Francisco Recreation and Park Department
30 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102
Staff Contact: Frances McMillen - (415) 575-9076
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

WASHINGTON SQUARE is located on an irregular shaped block bounded by Columbus Avenue, Filbert, Stockton, Union and Powell Streets in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco (Assessor's Block 0102; Lot 001). The subject property is located within the P (Public) Zoning District with an OS (Open Space) Height and Bulk limit. Washington Square was locally designated as San Francisco Landmark No. 226 under Article 10 of the Planning Code in 1999.

Washington Square was established in 1850 and re-designed in 1958 according to a master plan by Douglas Baylis and Francis Joseph McCarthy, both prominent master designers of the Mid-Century Modern period. The 2.26-acre city park includes a large central lawn transected by concrete walking paths, benches, monuments, a playground, and large trees and smaller shrubs and plantings. The playground is located in the northwest corner of the site. A concrete staircase accessing the park from the corner of Filbert and Powell streets was added in 1982.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves:

- replacement of the play equipment and perimeter wall within the footprint of the existing playground;
- repairing the wood benches and repaving the walkways surrounding the playground;
- installing planting bed fencing and stone planting bed and pathway borders;
- removal of the staircase at corner of Powell and Filbert streets; and
- installation of regulatory signage.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

No other actions are required for approval of the associated building permit application.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANNING CODE PROVISIONS

The proposed project complies with all aspects of the Planning Code.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Pursuant to Section 1006.2 of the Planning Code, unless exempt from the Certificate of Appropriateness requirements or delegated to Planning Department Preservation staff through the Administrative Certificate Appropriateness process, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to review any applications for the construction, alteration, removal, or demolition of any designated Landmark for which a City permit is required. Section 1006.6 states that in evaluating a request for a Certificate of Appropriateness for an individual landmark or a contributing building within a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission must find that the proposed work is in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as well as the designating Ordinance and any applicable guidelines, local interpretations, bulletins, related appendices, or other policies.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS

Rehabilitation is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The Rehabilitation Standards provide, in relevant part(s):

Standard 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

The proposed project would retain the subject property's use as a public open space, and would maintain the area's historic character. The new play equipment and playground perimeter wall would be installed within the footprint of the existing playground maintaining the dimensions and configuration of the historic design. The dimensions and design of the pathways surrounding and adjacent to the playground would be maintained. The proposed paving material for the walkways and stone selected for the plant bed and walkway borders is in keeping with the character of the existing park hardscape. The Filbert and Powell streets staircase was installed in 1982 and does not contribute to the character of the site. In keeping with the 1958 design, the area will be replanted. The new perimeter wall, play equipment, and proposed hardscaping will require minimal change to the materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The character of the park as a whole will not be changed as a result of the project.

Standard 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

The historic character of the property would be retained. No distinctive materials, architectural or landscape elements, or spaces that characterize the property would be removed or altered. The playground equipment and the staircase at the corner of Powell and Filbert streets are not historic landscape features and their removal will not impact the site. The historic benches located along the perimeter of the playground will be repaired. The footprint of the playground and the configuration and size of the pathways surrounding and adjacent to the playground will retain their historic dimensions. To protect the park's vegetation post and chain fencing will be installed along a planting bed adjacent to the playground. The fencing is light in character and will not block views or impair the open quality of the landscape. The proposed project will not result in the loss of distinctive materials and will maintain the features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize the landmark.

- Standard 3.** Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

The proposed project involves the installation of new play equipment and a low perimeter wall surrounding the playground, repaving walkways and the installation of planting bed borders and paving edges along existing pathways. Post and chain fencing will be installed along planting beds adjacent to the playground. The new playground equipment is contemporary in character and the proposed fencing and hardscaping will be compatible with the existing paving and park materials. The proposed project will not create a false sense of history and no conjectural features will be added.

- Standard 5.** Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

No distinctive materials, features, finishes, construction or craftsmanship examples would be removed from the historic site or surrounding historic buildings. The playground equipment and staircase to be removed are not character defining features of the site. The staircase was constructed in 1982 and the playground equipment was installed in recent years.

- Standard 9.** New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

The new playground equipment, perimeter wall and hardscaping will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new features are compatible with the park's historic character and materials. The pathway paving and edging material and the cobblestone plant bed borders will be compatible with the existing hardscaping and would not alter character-defining features of the landscape.

Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The playground equipment, perimeter wall, fencing, and hardscaping could be removed in the future without harming the integrity of the landscape. The new playground equipment and perimeter wall maintain the historic footprint of the playground

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

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

STAFF ANALYSIS

As identified in the 1999 Landmark Designation Report, Washington Square's character defining features include:

- the circuitous interior pathways and perimeter sidewalks;
- broad open lawn and plazas;
- planting beds and tree clusters;
- public art, ornamental and sculptural features;
- playground; and wood benches.

Based on the requirements of Article 10 and the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, staff has determined that the proposed work is compatible with the character-defining features of Washington Square, Landmark Number 226.

The new play equipment, playground perimeter wall, fencing, removal of the 1982 staircase, and the new hardscaping would not alter character-defining features of the landscape and could be removed in the future without impacting the integrity of the property. The playground equipment and the staircase at the corner of Filbert and Powell streets are not historic landscape features and their removal would not impact the property. The new playground perimeter wall and play equipment will fit within the footprint and maintain the historic configuration of the playground. The proposed smooth finish playground perimeter wall and the hardscaping, including the paving material for the walkways, the cobblestone walkway borders, and the stone lining the planting beds, is compatible with existing paving and stone found at the park, which is comprised of concrete walkways and smooth finish concrete curbs and rusticated stone planting bed borders. The proposed fencing will not impact views or the open character of the landscape. Staff finds the project consistent with Washington Square's character and that the essential form and integrity of the landmark will be unimpaired by the proposed project. The character defining features of the property, including the wood benches and children's playground, planting beds and pathways, will remain in their historic locations. The historic design and configuration of the playground and walkways will be retained and the new materials, including the finish and texture of the playground perimeter wall, stone planting bed borders and walkway paving, will match the character of the landscape's existing hardscaping.

Materials samples will be available for review at the hearing.

Conditions of Approval

1. *That prior to issuance of Building permits, final materials, including the post and chain fencing, walkway paving material, stone for planting bed borders, and the finish for the playground perimeter wall, will be forwarded for review and approval by Planning Department Preservation Staff.*

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that the proposed project is exempt/excluded from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guideline Sections 15301 (Class One – Minor Alteration) because the project includes a minor alteration of an existing structure that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

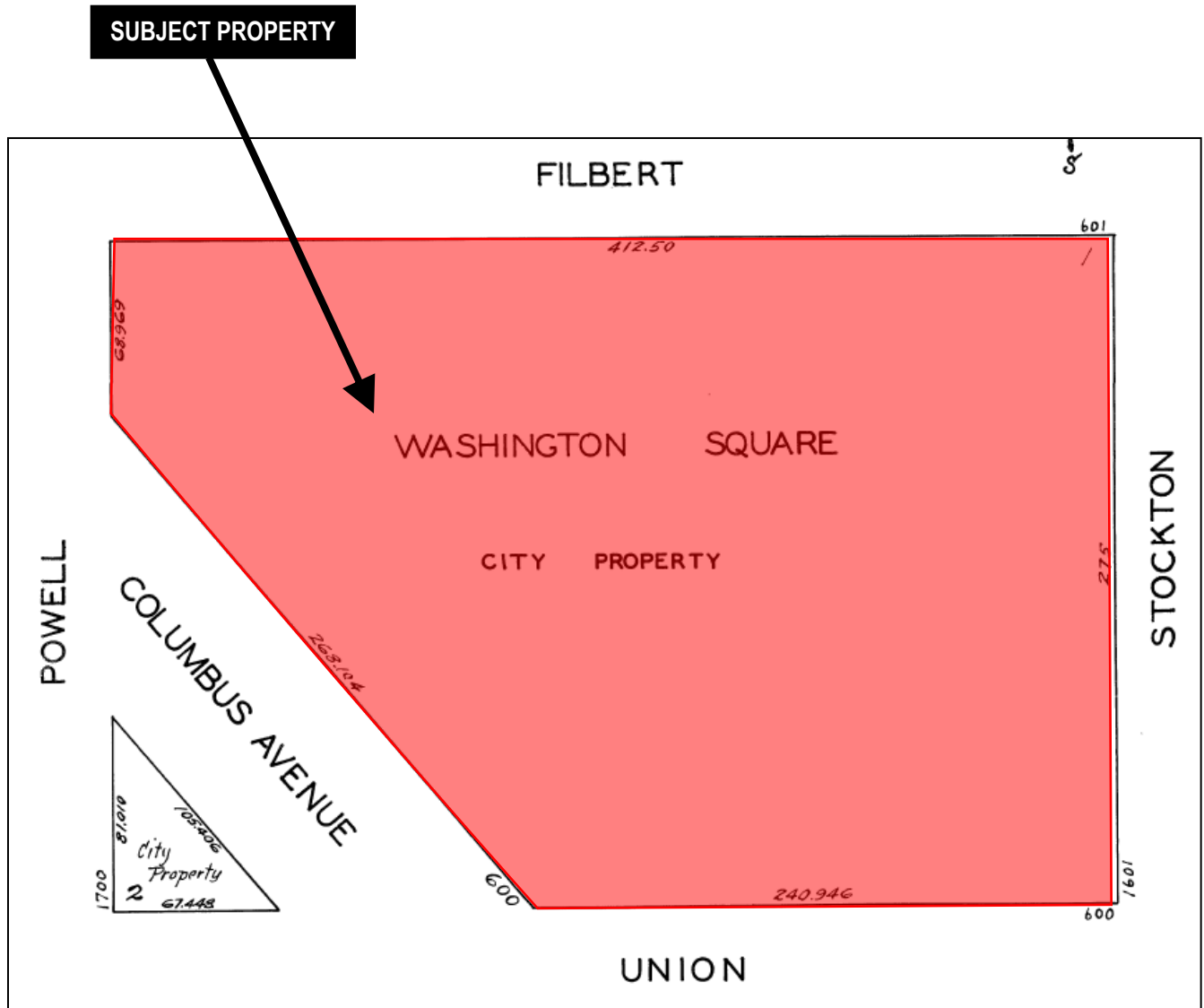
PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Planning Department staff recommends APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS of the proposed project as it appears to meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

ATTACHMENTS

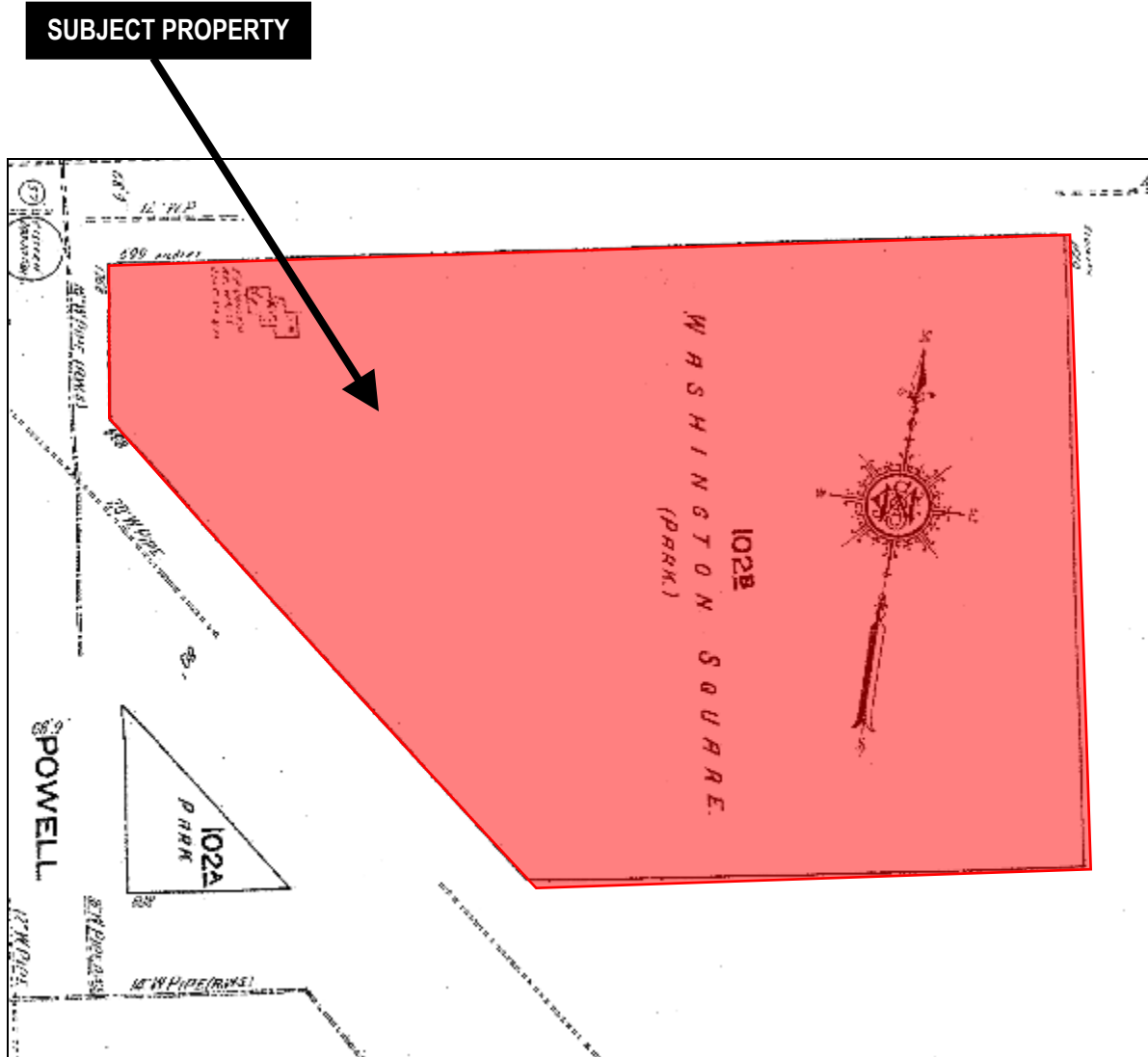
Draft Motion
Parcel Map
1998 Sanborn Map
Plans
Site Photographs
Resolution No. 14879
1999 Landmark Designation Report

Parcel Map



Certificate of Appropriateness Hearing
Case Number 2016.011144COA
Washington Square
Landmark No. 226

Sanborn Map*



*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.



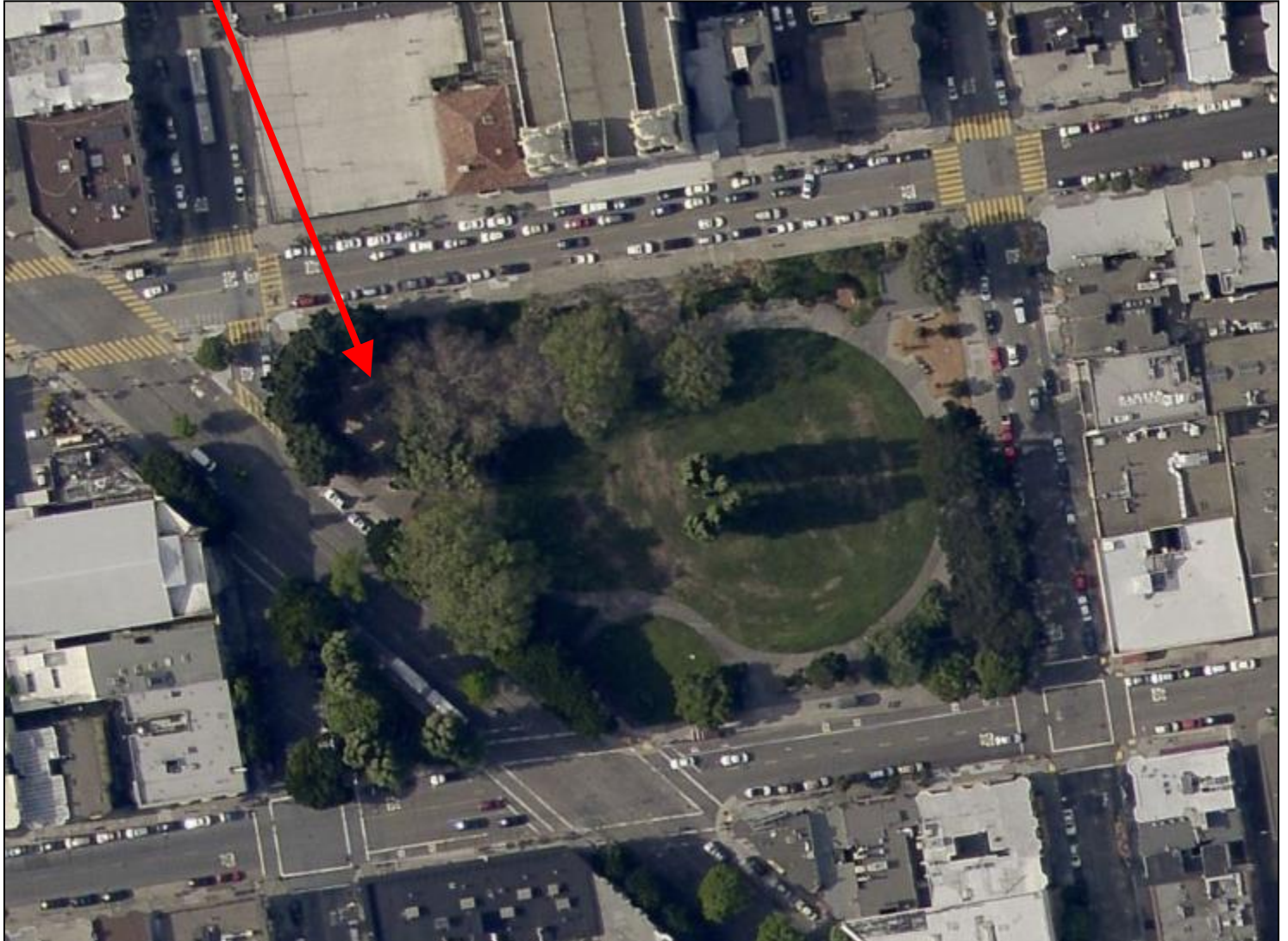
Aerial Photo

SUBJECT PROPERTY

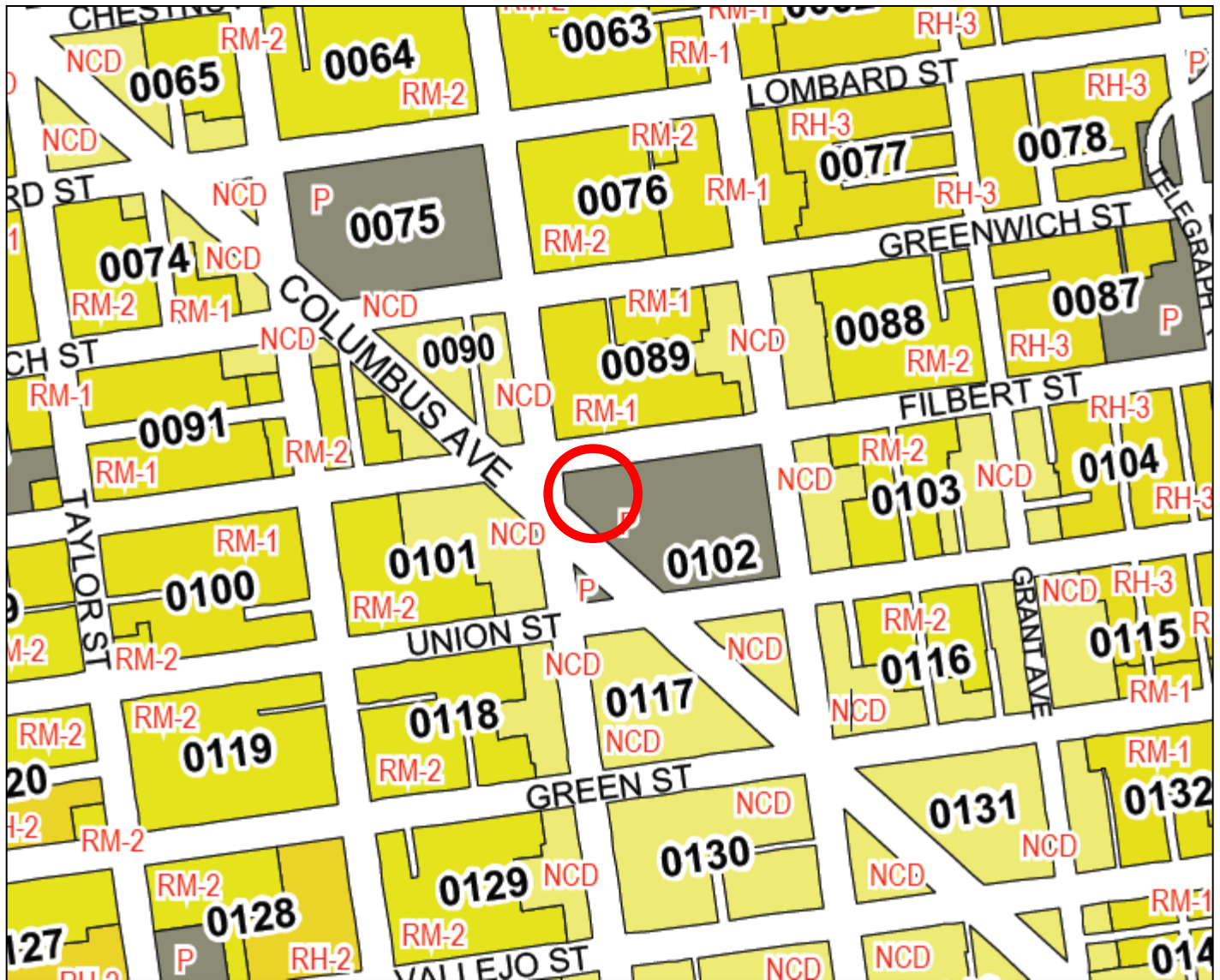


Aerial Photo

PLAYGROUND



Zoning Map



Certificate of Appropriateness Hearing
Case Number 2016-011144COA
Washington Square
Landmark No. 226



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Motion

HEARING DATE: MARCH 15, 2017

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ADOPTING FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR PROPOSED WORK DETERMINED TO BE APPROPRIATE FOR AND CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES OF ARTICLE 10, TO MEET THE STANDARDS OF ARTICLE 10 AND TO MEET THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON LOT 001 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 0102, WITHIN A P (PUBLIC) ZONING DISTRICT AND AN OS (OPEN SPACE) HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2016 Levi Conover of the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department (Project Sponsor) filed an application with the San Francisco Planning Department (hereinafter "Department") for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the play equipment, repair site furnishings and repave walkways located on the subject property at lot 001 in Assessor's Block 0102. The work includes removal and replacement of the existing play equipment and perimeter wall within the footprint of the playground; repair of the benches and repaving the walkways surrounding the playground; the installation of planting bed fencing and stone planting bed and pathway borders; the removal of the staircase at corner of Powell and Filbert streets; and the installation of regulatory signage

WHEREAS, the Project was determined by the Department to be categorically exempt from environmental review. The Historic Preservation Commission (Commission) has reviewed and concurs with said determination.

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2017, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the current project, Case No. 2016-011144COA (Project) for its appropriateness.

WHEREAS, in reviewing the Application, the Commission has had available for its review and consideration case reports, plans, and other materials pertaining to the Project contained in the Department's case files, has reviewed and heard testimony and received materials from interested parties during the public hearing on the Project.

MOVED, that the Commission hereby grants the Certificate of Appropriateness, in conformance with the architectural plans dated December 19, 2016 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case 2016-011144COA based on the following findings:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

1. Material samples for the perimeter wall and repaving material shall be provided to Preservation staff for review and approval prior to the issuance of Building Permit Applications.

FINDINGS

Having reviewed all the materials identified in the recitals above and having heard oral testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are accurate and also constitute findings of the Commission.
2. Findings pursuant to Article 10:

The Historic Preservation Commission has determined that the proposed work is compatible with the character of the landmark as described in the designation report dated April 1999.

- That the proposed project is compatible with the Washington Square, Landmark Number 226 since the project does not affect the design and form of the site.
- That the project would maintain the existing use of the park as a public open space and would maintain the area's historic character.
- That the proposed project maintains and does not alter or destroy the landscape's character-defining features or materials.
- The proposed project meets the requirements of Article 10.
- The proposed project meets the following *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*:

Standard 1.

A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

Standard 2.

The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials

or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

Standard 3.

Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

Standard 5.

Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

Standard 9.

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard 10.

New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

3. **General Plan Compliance.** The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness is, on balance, consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

I. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

THE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT CONCERNS THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ORDER OF THE CITY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

GOALS

The Urban Design Element is concerned both with development and with preservation. It is a concerted effort to recognize the positive attributes of the city, to enhance and conserve those attributes, and to improve the living environment where it is less than satisfactory. The Plan is a definition of quality, a definition based upon human needs.

OBJECTIVE 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

POLICY 1.3

Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.

OBJECTIVE 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

POLICY 2.4

Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 2.5

Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

POLICY 2.7

Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

The goal of a Certificate of Appropriateness is to provide additional oversight for buildings and districts that are architecturally or culturally significant to the City in order to protect the qualities that are associated with that significance.

The proposed project qualifies for a Certificate of Appropriateness and therefore furthers these policies and objectives by maintaining and preserving the character-defining features of Washington Square, Landmark Number 226 for the future enjoyment and education of San Francisco residents and visitors.

4. The proposed project is generally consistent with the eight General Plan priority policies set forth in Section 101.1 in that:

- A) The existing neighborhood-serving retail uses will be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses will be enhanced:

The proposed project involves replacing play equipment, repaving existing pathways, and minor landscape modifications and will not have an impact on any existing neighborhood serving retail use, since there are no retail uses located on the project site.

- B) The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods:

The proposed project will respect the character-defining features of the landmark in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- C) The City's supply of affordable housing will be preserved and enhanced:

The project will not affect the City's affordable housing supply.

- D) The commuter traffic will not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking:

The proposed project will not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking.

- E) A diverse economic base will be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development. And future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors will be enhanced:

The proposed will not have any impact on industrial and service sector jobs.

- F) The City will achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

All construction will be executed in compliance with all applicable construction and safety measures.

- G) That landmark and historic buildings will be preserved:

The proposed project is in conformance with Article 10 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- H) Parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas will be protected from development:

The proposed project will not impact the access to sunlight or vistas for the parks and open space.

5. For these reasons, the proposal overall, is appropriate for and consistent with the purposes of Article 10, meets the standards of Article 10, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, General Plan and Prop M findings of the Planning Code.

DECISION

That based upon the Record, the submissions by the Applicant, the staff of the Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **GRANTS WITH CONDITIONS a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the property located at lot 001 in Assessor's Block 0102 for proposed work in conformance with the renderings and architectural sketches dated December 19, 2016 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2016-011144COA.

APPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF MOTION: The Commission's decision on a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be final unless appealed within thirty (30) days. Any appeal shall be made to the Board of Appeals, unless the proposed project requires Board of Supervisors approval or is appealed to the Board of Supervisors as a conditional use, in which case any appeal shall be made to the Board of Supervisors (see Charter Section 4.135).

Duration of this Certificate of Appropriateness: This Certificate of Appropriateness is issued pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code and is valid for a period of three (3) years from the effective date of approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. The authorization and right vested by virtue of this action shall be deemed void and canceled if, within 3 years of the date of this Motion, a site permit or building permit for the Project has not been secured by Project Sponsor.

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT TO COMMENCE ANY WORK OR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY UNLESS NO BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED. PERMITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION (and any other appropriate agencies) MUST BE SECURED BEFORE WORK IS STARTED OR OCCUPANCY IS CHANGED.

I hereby certify that the Historical Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on March 15, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Acting Commission Secretary

AYES: X

NAYS: X

ABSENT: X

ADOPTED: March 15, 2017

SF REC & PARK | WASHINGTON SQUARE PLAYGROUND

SF PLANNING HRE March 15, 2017



A Let'sPlaySF
Playground Project



Supervisor

Aaron Peskin

District 3

Project Manager

Levi Conover

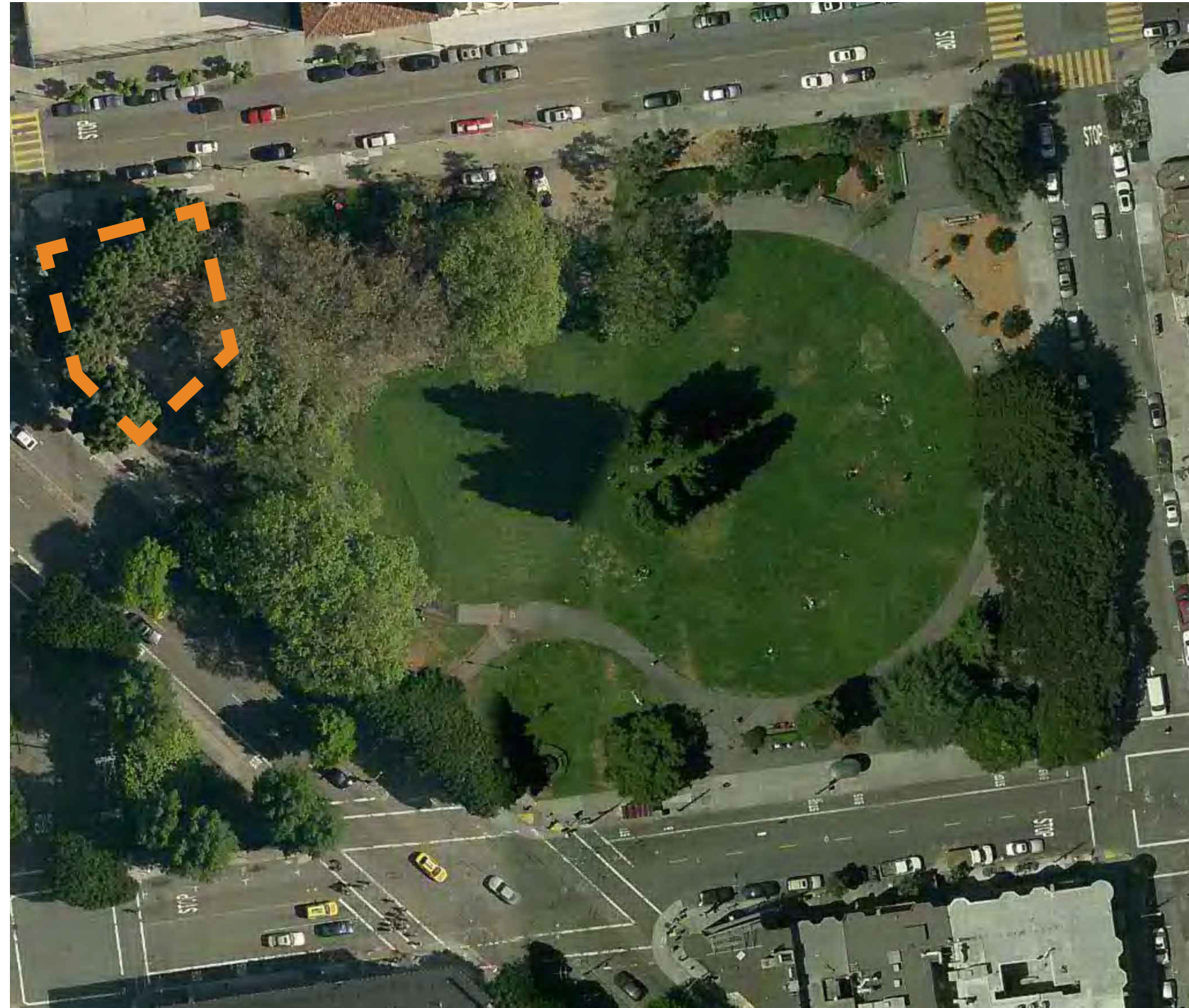
Recreation and Parks Department

Design Team

Lizzy Hirsch, Landscape Architect

Lauren McClure, Design Assistant

San Francisco Public Works

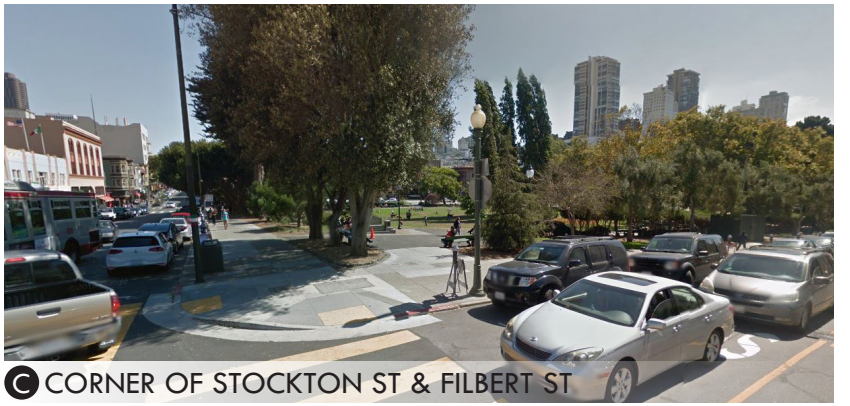




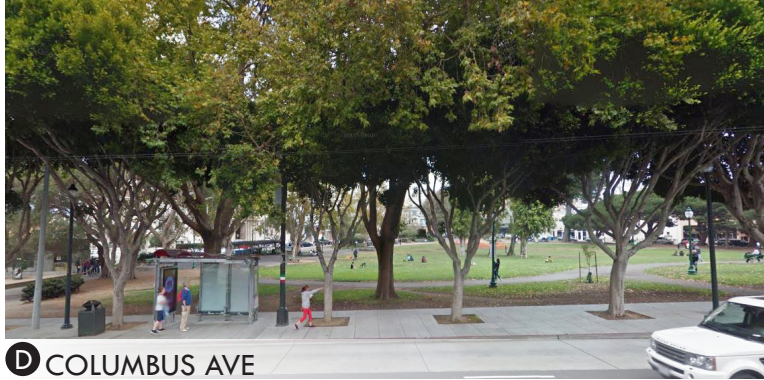
A CORNER OF POWELL ST & FILBERT ST



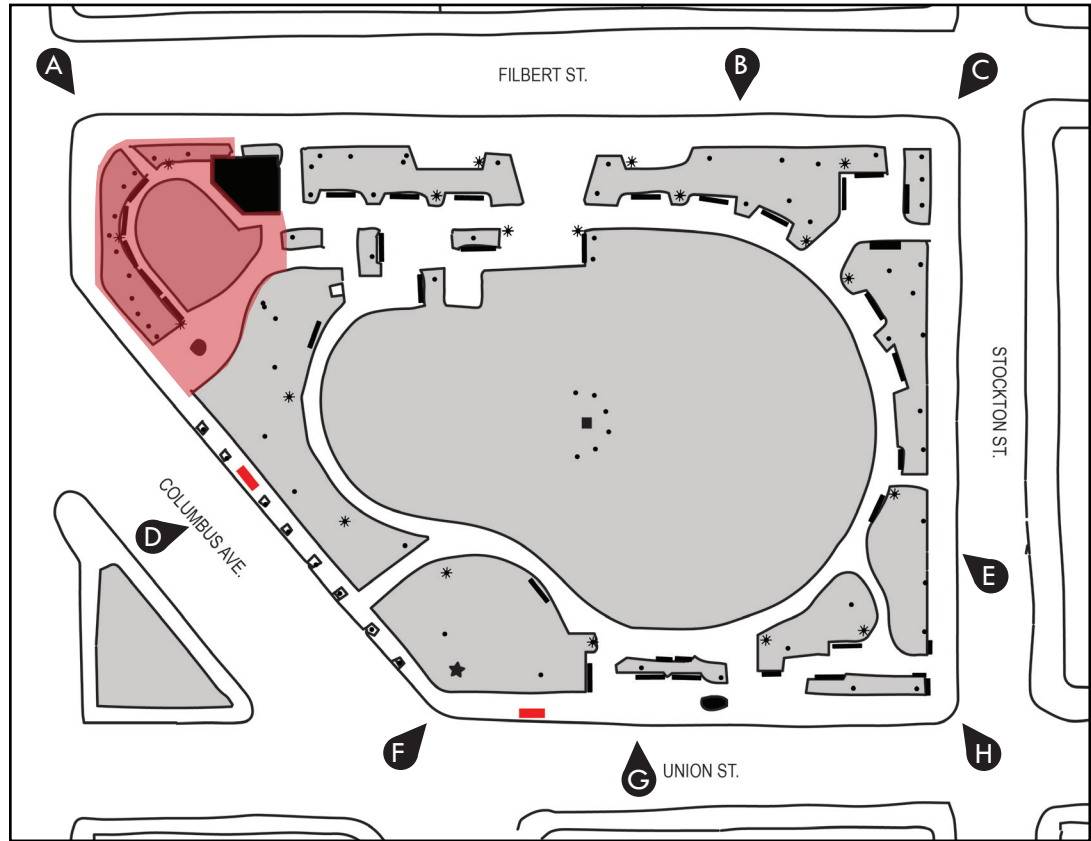
B FILBERT ST



C CORNER OF STOCKTON ST & FILBERT ST



D COLUMBUS AVE



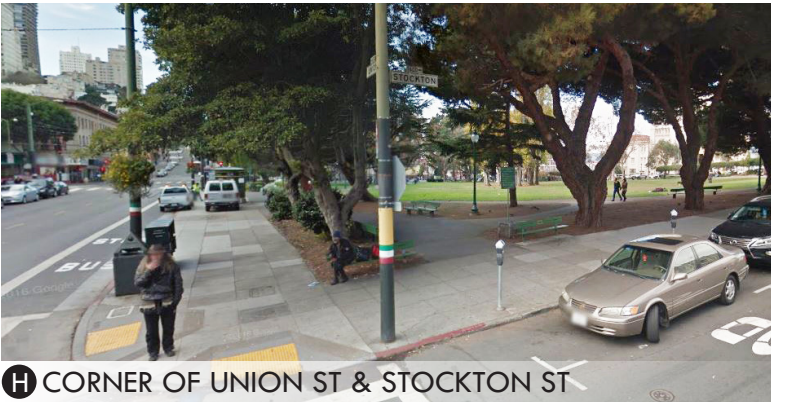
E STOCKTON ST



F CORNER OF COLUMBUS AVE & UNION ST



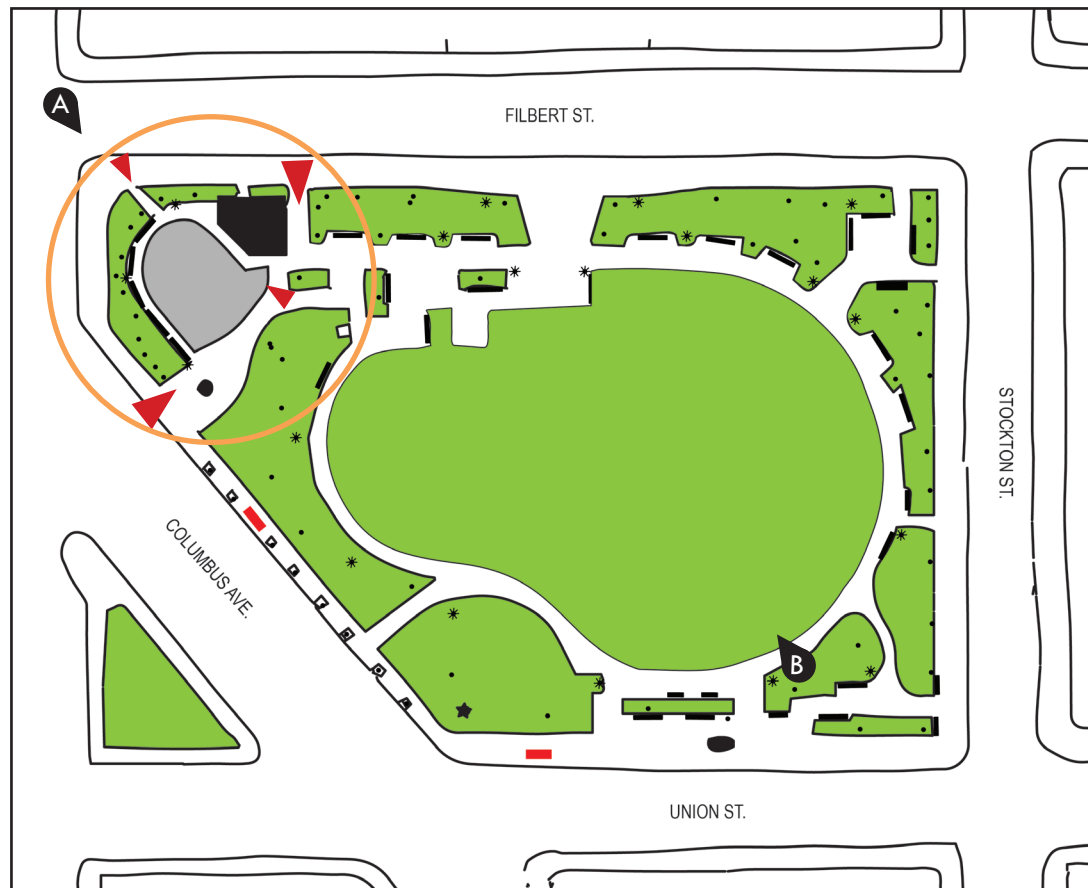
G UNION ST



H CORNER OF UNION ST & STOCKTON ST

PROJECT CONTEXT + PARAMETERS

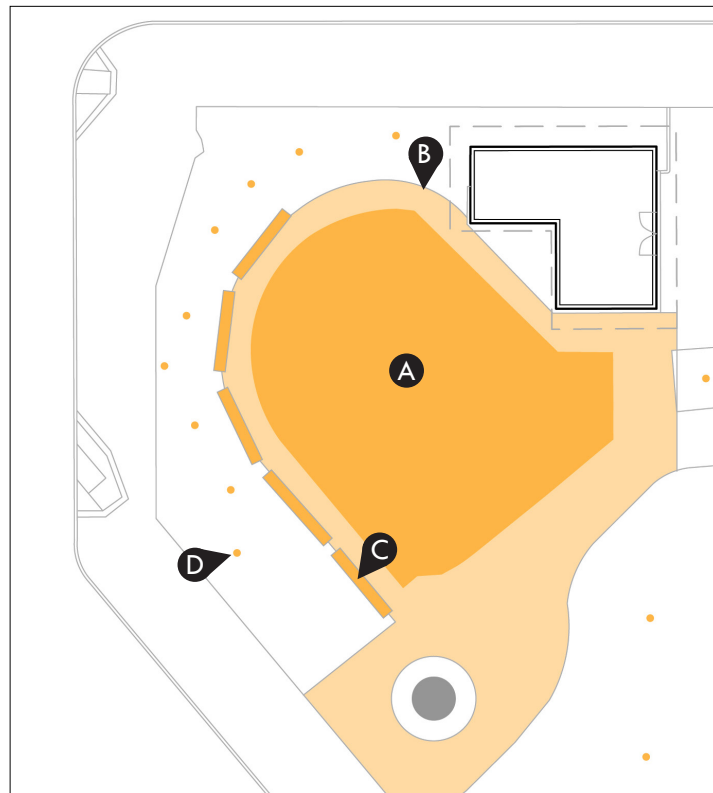
- Playground included in the Washington Square Landmark designation, 1999.
- 1/13th of park area.
- Tucked in shade zone of park.
- Playground footprint to follow current.
- Current playground standards require more space than existing equipment.
- Funds targeted only to playground improvement.
- Benches part of character defining historic fabric.



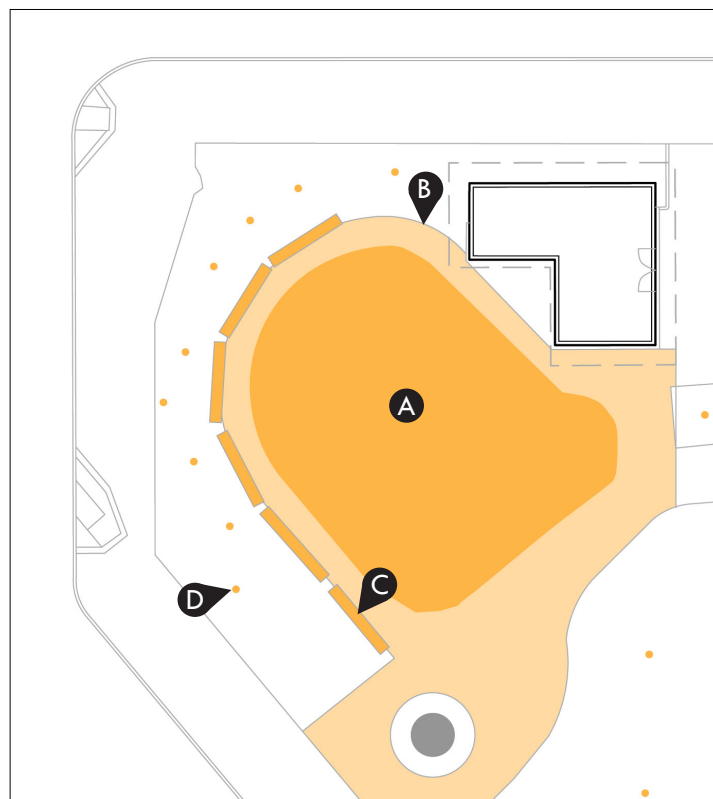
A. Corner of Filbert St. & Powell St.



B. View from Union / Stockton St.



Existing

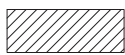


Proposed

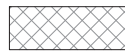
- Legend:**
- A Playground Footprint
 - B Paths
 - C Benches
 - D Trees



PROJECT SCOPE



A Remove non character defining concrete stairs. Built in 1982, and established to be non character-defining in the *Washington Square Convenience Station* HRE by Page and Turnbull, 2013.



B Remove asphalt paving.

C

Refurbish and reposition existing park benches.

D

Canary Pine tree work contingent on final arborist report.

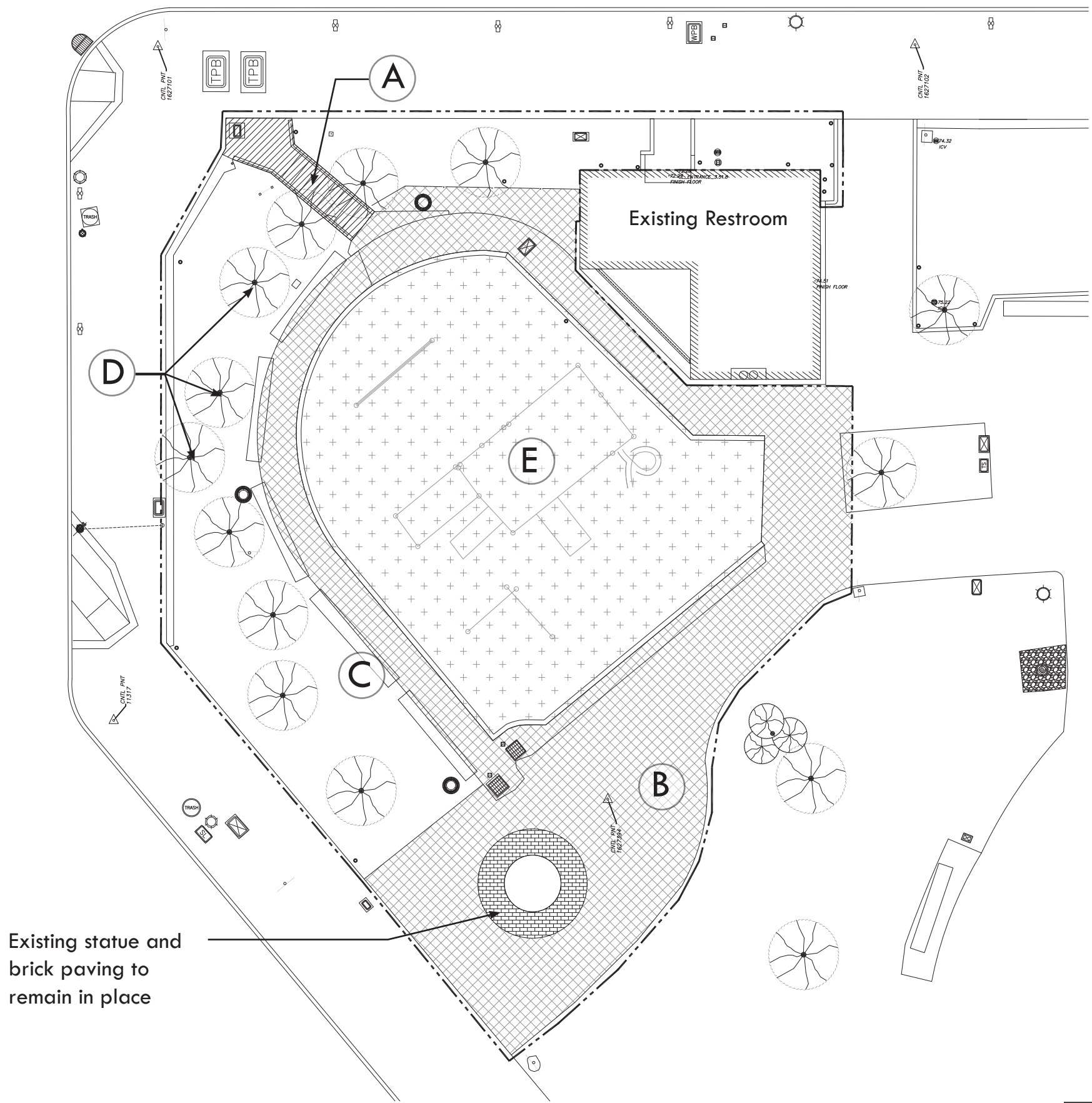


E

Remove existing play equipment, sand and perimeter wall.

Other Work Scope:
- Hazmat of play equipment.

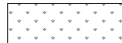

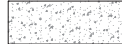
Existing statue and brick paving to remain in place



Existing Site Plan and Limit of Work: NTS

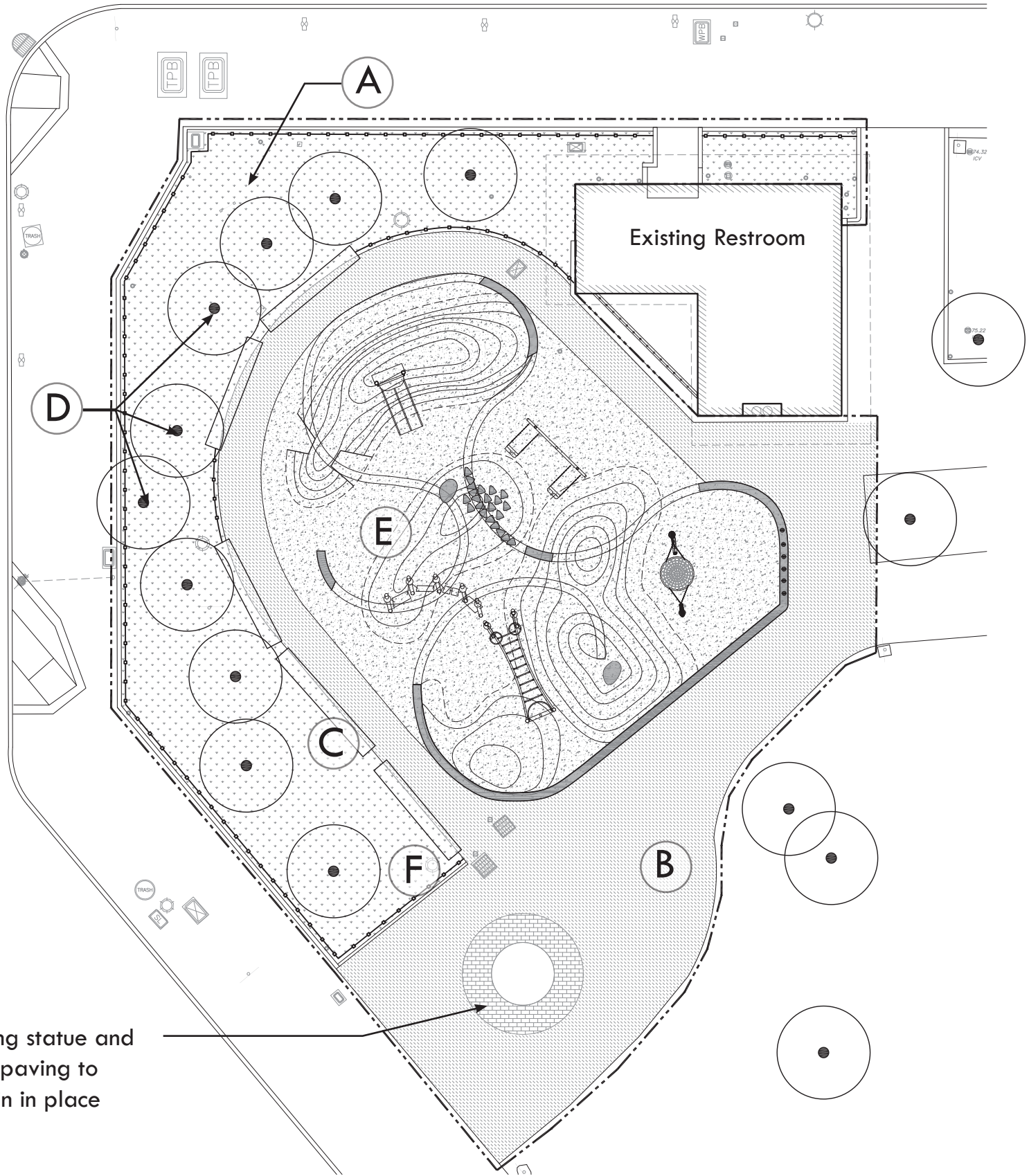
Washington Square Playground | SF Planning HRE | 03.15.17

PROJECT SCOPE

-  A New groundcover plantings.
-  B New colored concrete paving.
- C Refurbish and reposition existing park benches.
- D Canary Pine tree work contingent on final arborist report.
-  E Install new play equipment, rubber play surfacing and perimeter wall.
- F Install new park regulation sign.

Other Work Scope:
- Playground to remain within general existing perimeter.

Existing statue and brick paving to remain in place





Site Plan Diagram_{NTS} N↑



Perspective Sketch



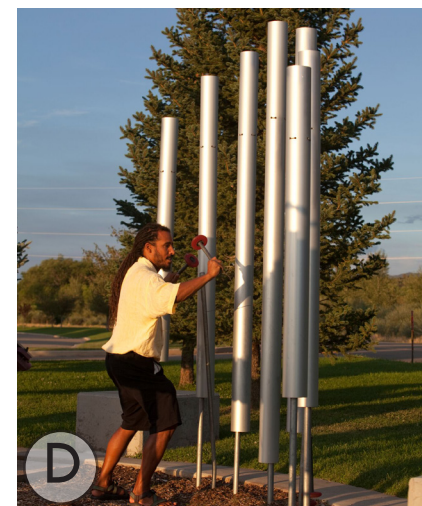
A
Slide



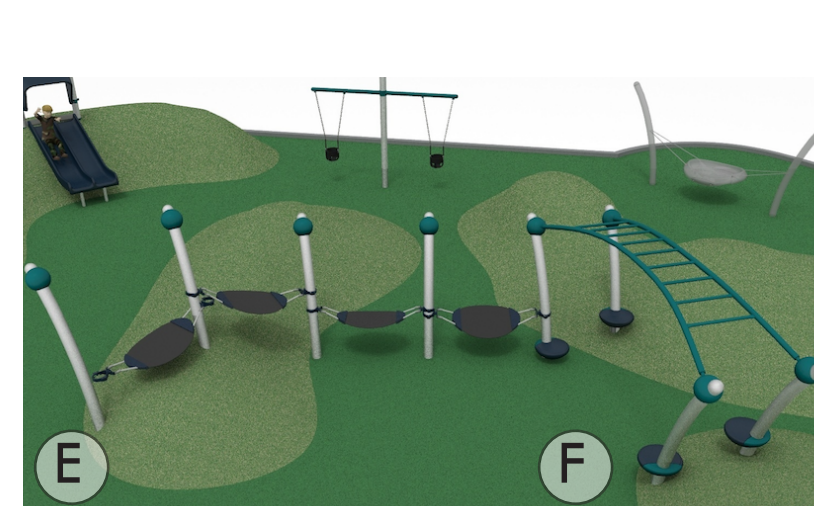
B
Tot Swing



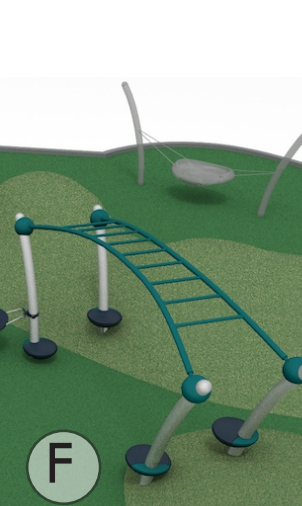
C
Nest Swing



D
Chimes



E
Cushion Perch



F
Monkey Bars

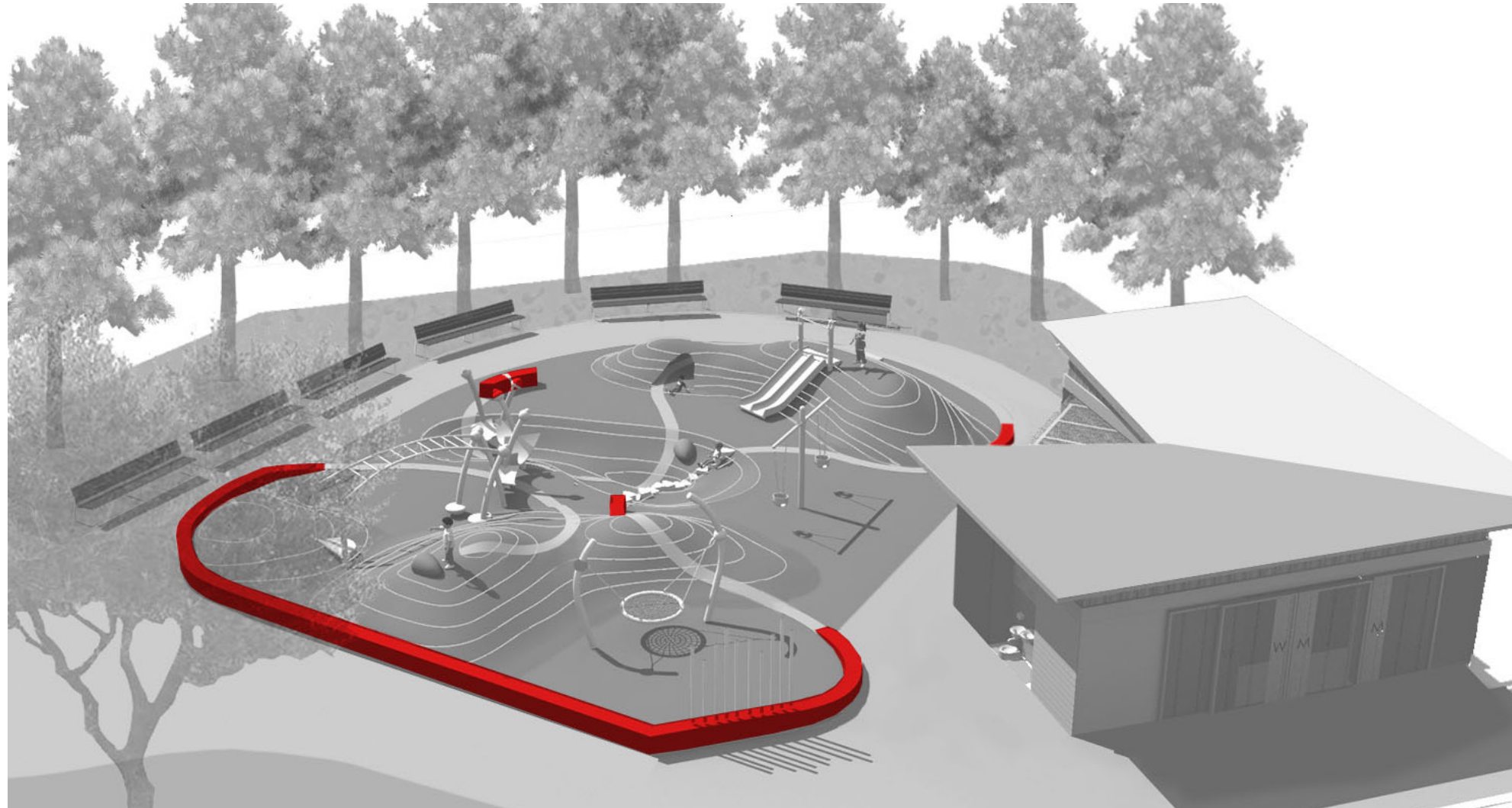


G
Tunnel

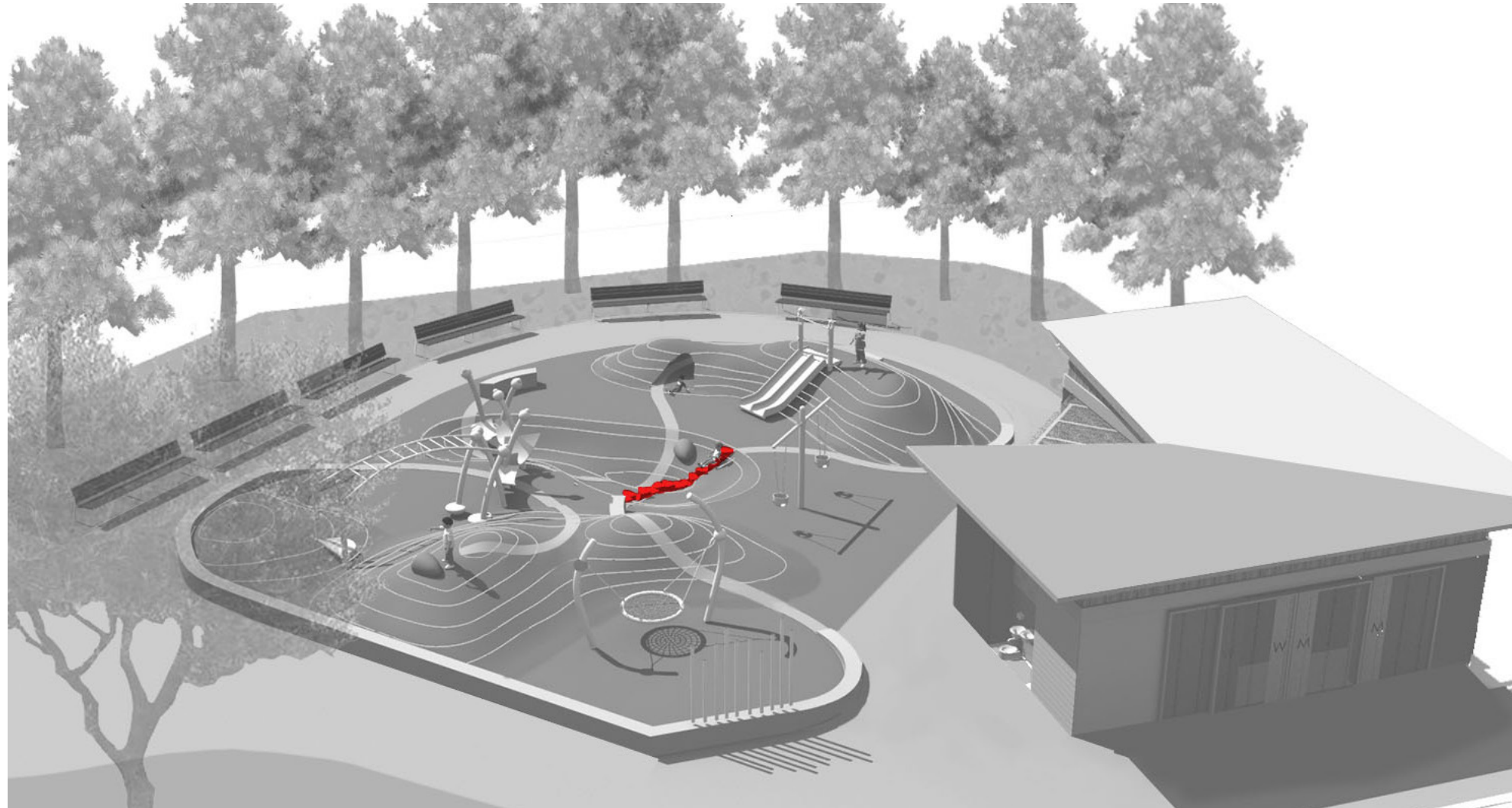
note: refer to material palette for colors



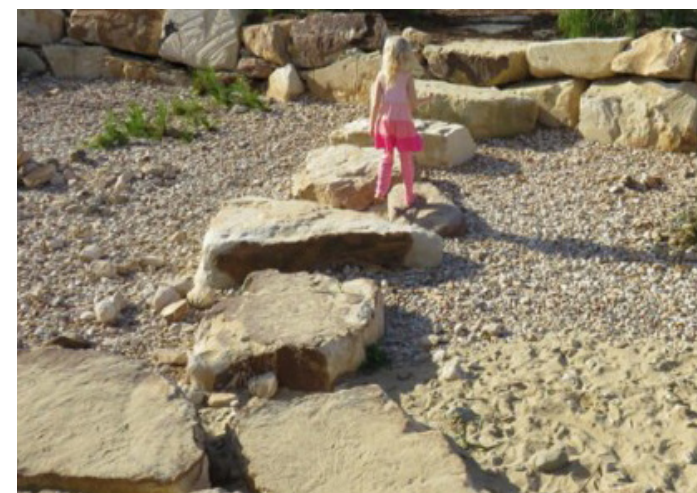
Perspective Sketch



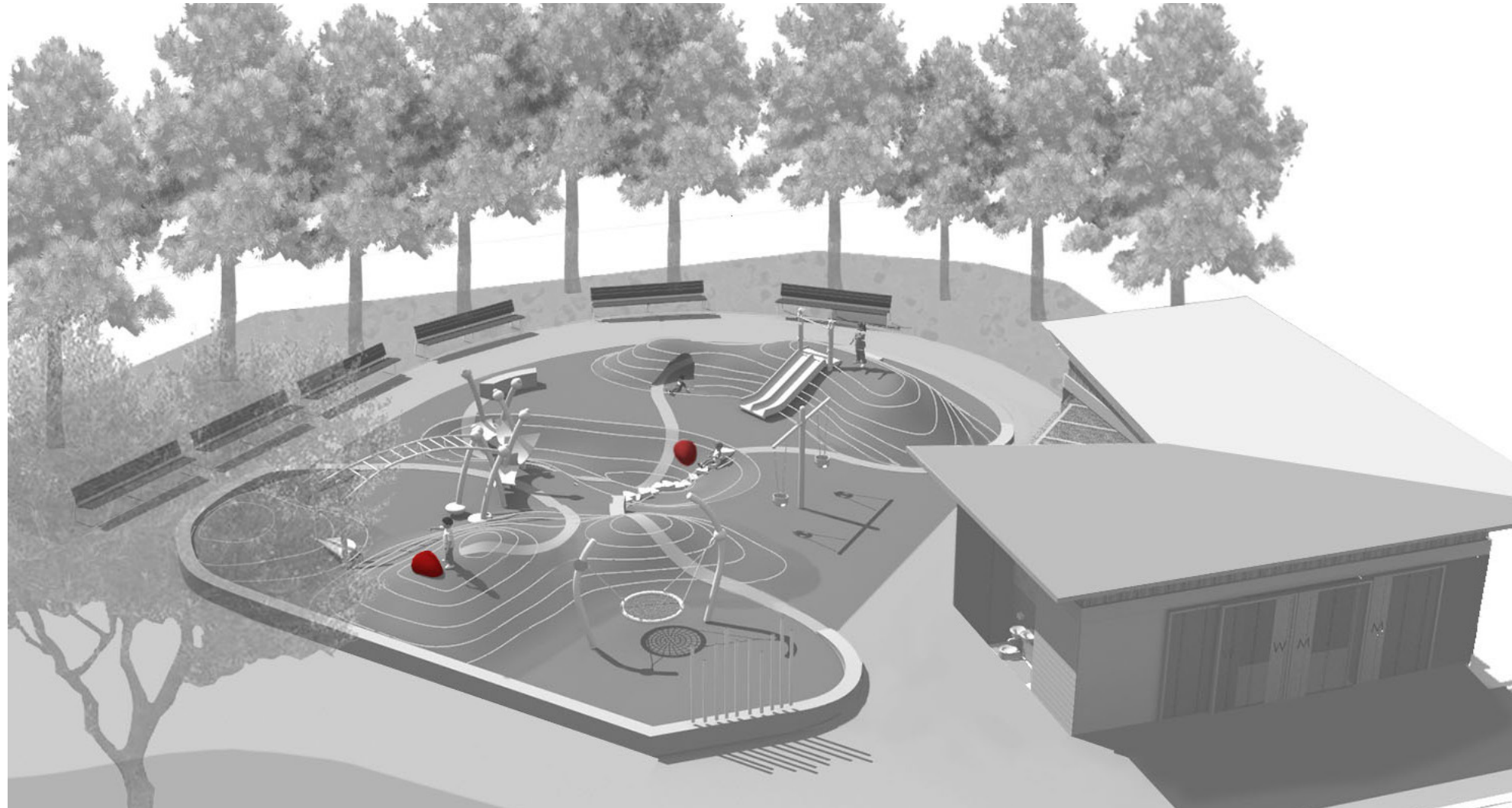
Concrete Wall



Formed Concrete: Base Contract



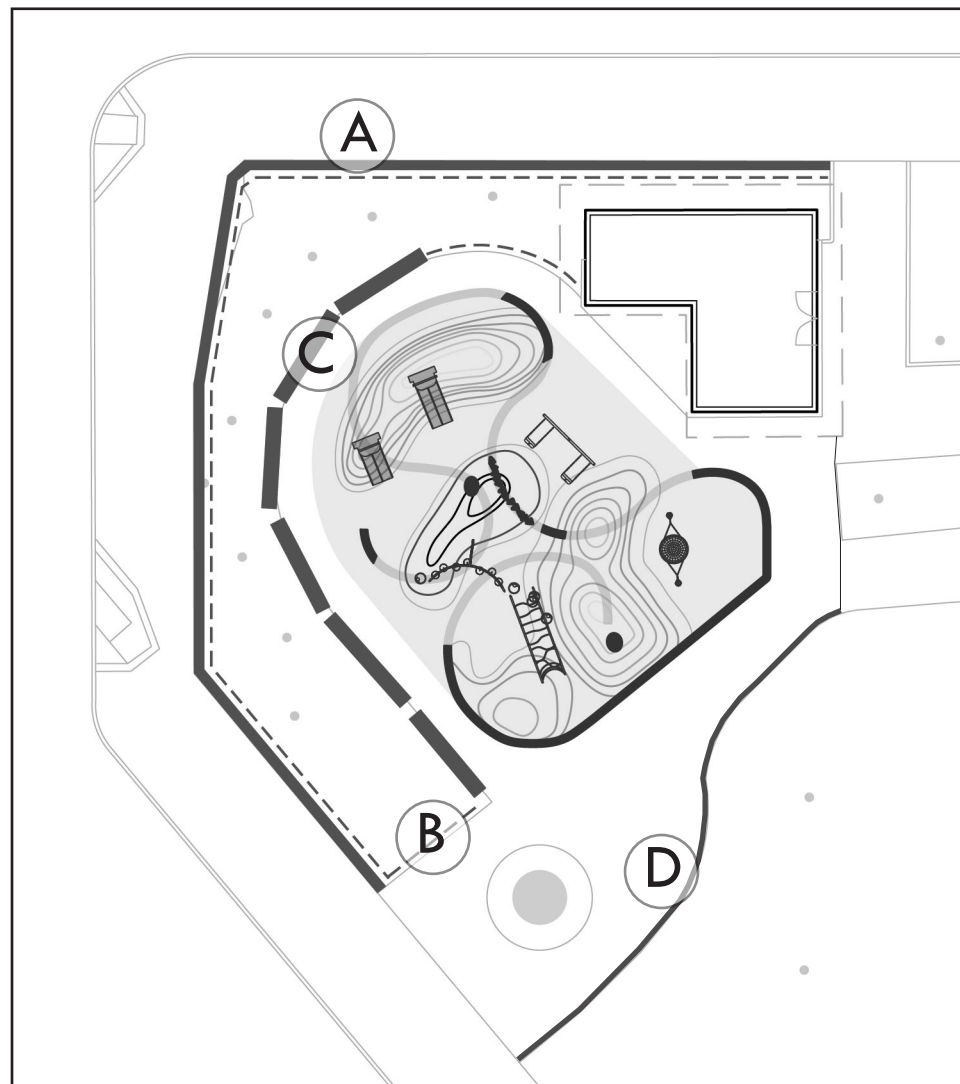
Stone: Upgrade



Concrete Boulders: Base Contract



Custom Feature: Upgrade



Site Plan_ NTS



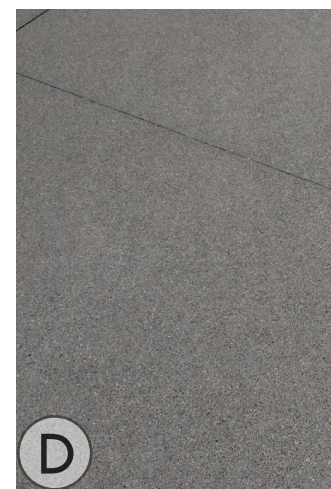
Planting Edge at Sidewalk



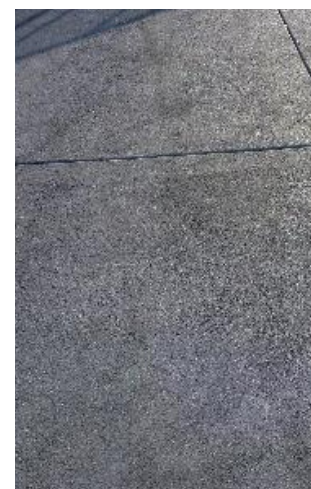
Plant Protection Fence



Historic Bench
refurbish as needed



Paving: Base
waterjet concrete



Upgrade
pervious concrete



Paving Edge
cobble pavers



Play Equipment
light neutral color



Rubber Surfacing: (material image)
+color samples

Accent	Base1	Base2
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Key Notes:

- (A) .080" Aluminum Sign Panel

(B) 1/4" x 4" Pan Head Bolt Through Face of Sign Panel.
Top Surface Painted to Match Adjacent Color & Finish

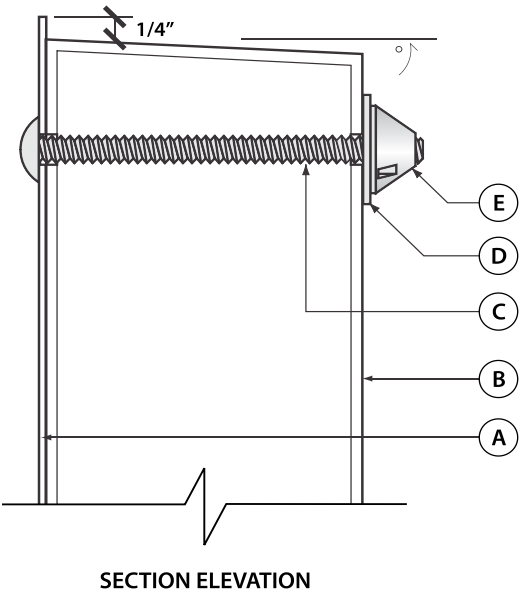
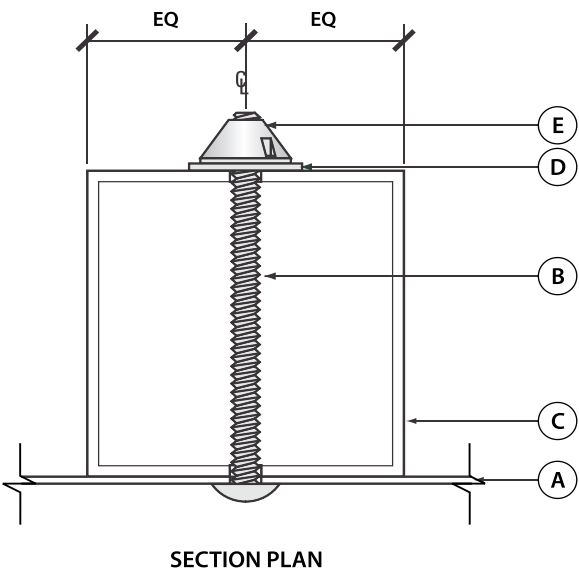
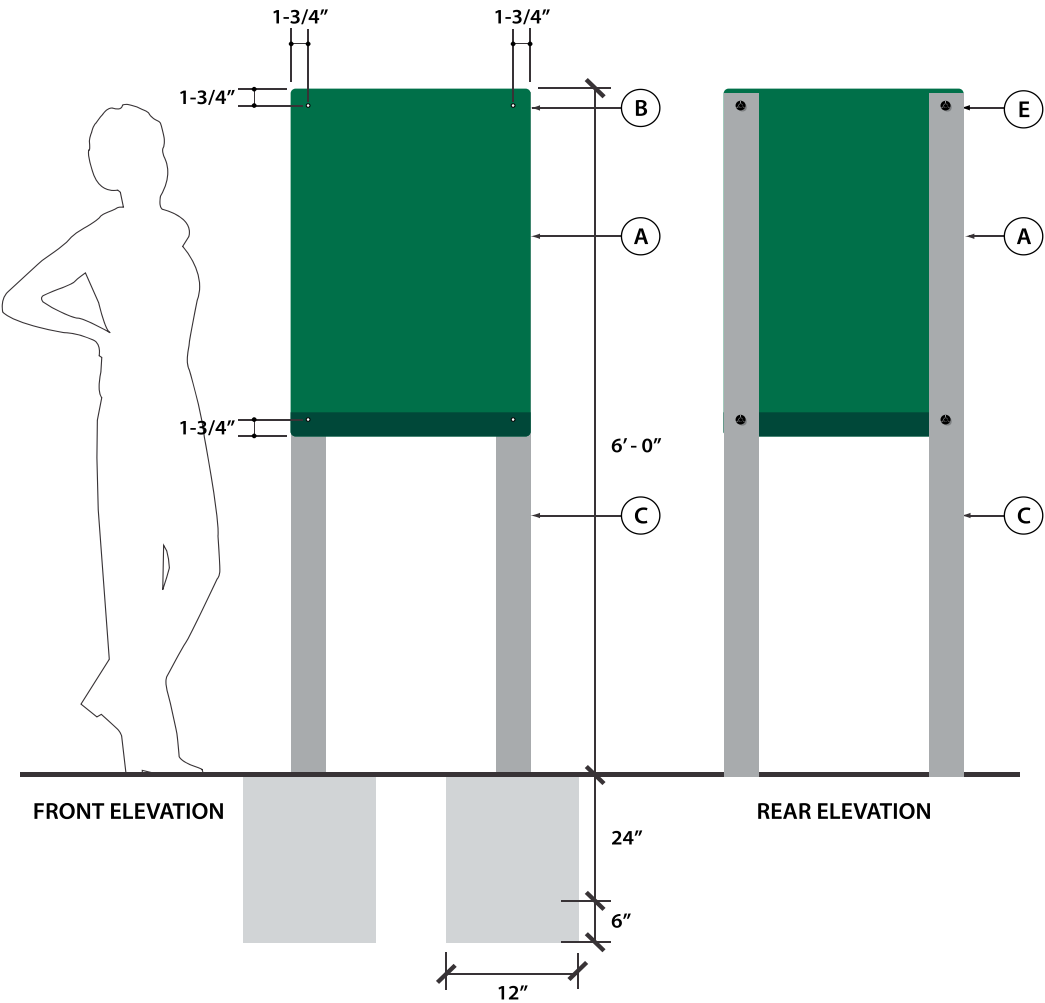
(C) 3-1/2" Square Galvanized Steel Post
with Cap, Powdercoated C3
- (D) Stainless Steel Washer

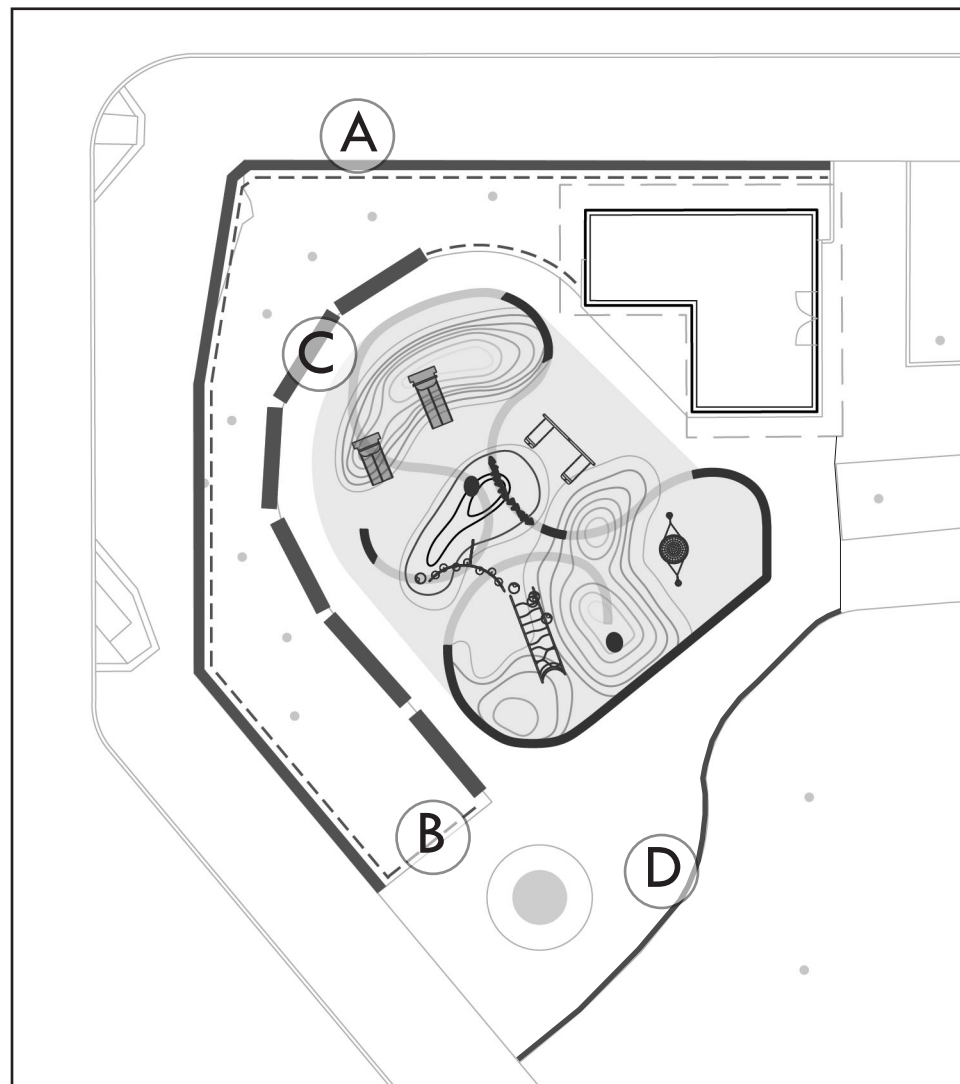
(E) Tamper-Proof Nut

Function:

No Post Signs Are to be Installed Directly on Sidewalks, Paths or Trails.

No Signs Are to be Within 2'-0" of a Designated Bike Path.





Site Plan_ NTS



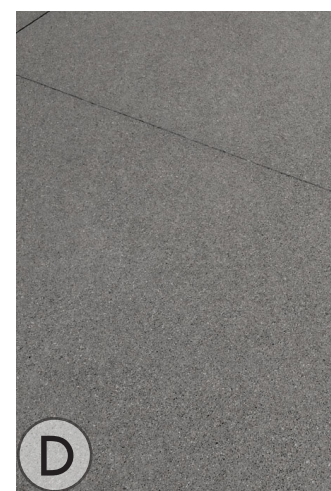
Planting Edge at Sidewalk



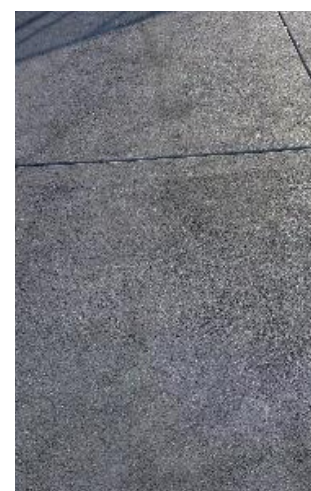
Plant Protection Fence



Historic Bench
refurbish as needed



Paving: Base
waterjet concrete



Upgrade
pervious concrete



Paving Edge
cobble pavers



File Number: 990140

Date Passed:

Resolution urging the Planning Department, Planning Commission, Arts Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board to expeditiously designate Washington Square a landmark.

February 1, 1999 Board of Supervisors - SEVERED FROM FOR ADOPTION WITHOUT
 COMMITTEE REFERENCE AGENDA

February 1, 1999 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
 Ayes: 10 - Amador, Bierman, Bercerril, Brown, Katz, Kaufman, Lewis, Newsom,
 Yaki Yee
 Absent: 1 - Teng

RECEIVED

MAR 04 1999

CITY & COUNTY OF SF
 OFFICE OF CITY CLERK

1 [Landmarking of Washington Square]
 2 URGING THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT, PLANNING COMMISSION, ARTS
 3 COMMISSION, RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION, AND THE LANDMARKS
 4 PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD TO EXPEDITIOUSLY DESIGNATE WASHINGTON
 5 SQUARE A LANDMARK

6 WHEREAS, Washington Square is one of San Francisco's oldest and most beloved
 7 parks, and,

8 WHEREAS, In 1847 Washington Square was one of 3 blocks identified as public
 9 squares, and,

10 WHEREAS, Washington Square was subsequently set aside as public open space and has
 11 remained that way for over 150 years, and,

12 WHEREAS, Washington Square is associated with important events in local and state
 13 history, and,

14 WHEREAS, Washington Square is significant for its overall design, and also because it
 15 contains historically significant public art, and,

16 WHEREAS, Washington Square makes an important contribution to the character of
 17 the North Beach Neighborhood, and,

18 WHEREAS, SAN Francisco civic organizations have taken a keen interest in
 19 improvement and protection of the park; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors does hereby urge the Planning
 21 Department, Planning Commission, Arts Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission,
 22 and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board to expeditiously designate Washington
 23 Square a landmark.
 24
 25

Supervisors Yee, Bercerril



SAN FRANCISCO

PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 14879

ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO AN APPROVAL OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF WASHINGTON SQUARE AS LANDMARK NO. 226.

1. **WHEREAS**, On October 21, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) established its landmark designation work program for fiscal year 1998-1999. Ten sites were chosen to have Landmark designation reports developed and brought to the Landmarks Board for consideration of landmark designation. Included on that list was Washington Square; and
2. On November 8, 1998 the Telegraph Hill Dwellers requested that the Landmarks Board consider initiating landmark designation of Washington Square Park; and
3. On February 1, 1999, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 84-99 "urging the Planning Department, Planning Commission, Arts Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board to expeditiously designate Washington Square a Landmark;" and
4. On March 15, 1999, the Civic Design Review Committee of the Art Commission adopted a motion in support of the landmark designation of Washington Square; and
5. On April 15, 1999, the Recreation and Park Commission adopted a motion in support of the landmark designation of Washington Square; and
6. On April 21, 1999, the Landmarks Board held a public hearing and adopted Landmarks Board Resolution No. 512 initiating landmark designation and recommending that the Planning Commission approve the designation of Washington Square as City Landmark No. 226; and
7. A draft Washington Square Landmark Designation Report, prepared by Kate Nichol, was reviewed by the Landmarks Board at its regular meeting of April 21, 1999, and such documentation was considered a final Washington Square Landmark Designation Report by the Landmarks Board; and
8. The Landmarks Board, in considering landmark designation of Washington Square, employed the "Kalman Methodology" rating criteria, modified for special application to landscape features. The Landmarks Board made the following rating determinations for Washington Square: Five of ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Excellent" - Age, Relation to Historic Events, Relation to Historic Patterns, Character/Continuity/Setting, and Visual Significance. Four of ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Very Good" - Use, Design, Designers, and Relation to Historic Persons. One of Ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Good/Very Good" - Integrity; and
9. Concurrent with this proposed Washington Square landmark designation is proposed a text amendment to Article 10 that will provide for Certificate of Appropriateness approval of alterations to City-owned parks, squares, plazas or gardens on a landmark site, where the designating ordinance identifies the alterations that require such approval. This text amendment will enable the implementation of the "Procedures for Alterations to Washington Square" that are proposed for incorporation into the Washington Square designation ordinance; and

10. The Planning Department developed these procedures in consultation with Recreation and Park Department staff, Art Commission staff, and the Telegraph Hill Dwellers. The purpose of these procedures is to identify the types of work to Washington Square requiring Certificate of Appropriateness approval, prior to commencement of work, pursuant to Planning Code Section 1006. It is intended that the Certificate of Appropriateness review process be reserved for alterations that may significantly affect the special historic character of Washington Square, for the purposes of Article 10. It is not intended that work undertaken in the ordinary maintenance and management of Washington Square, or in the interest of public safety, be subject to review under Article 10; and
11. The Planning Commission reviewed this case and all supporting documents and heard testimony in a regularly scheduled, duly noticed public hearing on September 9, 1999; and
12. The Planning Commission concurs with the findings and recommendation of the Landmarks Board as set forth in Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 512; and
13. The Planning Commission finds that the subject property met the criteria for landmark designation set forth in Planning Code Section 1004 (a)(1) having a "special character or special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest or value;" and
14. The Planning Commission finds that the Washington Square Landmark Designation Report describes the location and boundaries of the landmark site, describes the characteristics of the landmark or historic district which justify its designation, and describes the particular features that should be preserved meeting the requirements of Planning Code Section 1004(b). It is fully incorporated into this resolution by reference; and
15. The "Procedures for Review of Alterations to Washington Square" are proposed for incorporation into the designation ordinance pursuant to proposed, amended Planning Code, Section 1004(c)(3). Such procedures are fully incorporated into this resolution by reference.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission hereby **approves** the landmark designation of Washington Square as Landmark No. 226, pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.3, limited to and comprising all of Lots 1 and 2 in Assessor's Block 102; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution of Approval be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was **ADOPTED** by the Planning Commission on September 9, 1999.

Jonas Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Theoharis, Antenore, Chinchilla, Joe, Martin, Richardson

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Mills

ADOPTED: September 9, 1999

SAN FRANCISCO

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

RESOLUTION #512

ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO AN INITIATION OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION AND A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL OF THE LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF WASHINGTON SQUARE.

1. On October 21, 1998, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) established its Landmark Designation Work Program for fiscal year 1998-1999. Ten sites were chosen to have Landmark Designation Reports developed and brought to the Landmarks Board for review and comment, and consideration of initiation of landmark designation. Included on that list was Washington Square.
2. On November 8, 1997 the Telegraph Hill Dwellers requested that the Landmarks Board consider initiating landmark designation of Washington Square Park.
3. On February 1, 1999, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 84-99 "urging the Planning Department, Planning Commission, Arts Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board to expeditiously designate Washington Square a Landmark."
4. On March 15, 1999, the Civic Design Review Committee of the Art Commission adopted a motion in support of the landmark designation of Washington Square.
5. On April 15, 1999, the Recreation and Park Commission adopted a motion in support of the landmark designation of Washington Square.
6. A draft Washington Square Landmark Designation Report, prepared by Kate Nichol, was reviewed by the Landmarks Board at its regular meeting of April 21, 1999, and such documentation was considered a final Washington Square Landmark Designation Report by the Landmarks Board.
7. The Landmarks Board, in considering landmark designation of Washington Square employed the "Kalman Methodology" rating criteria, modified for special application to landscape features. After reviewing recommendations on the ratings for the modified criteria in the draft Washington Square Designation Report at its regular meeting on April 21, 1999, the Landmarks Board made the following rating determinations for Washington Square: Five of ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Excellent" - Age, Relation to Historic Events, Relation to Historic Patterns, Character/Continuity/Setting, and Visual Significance. Four of ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Very Good" - Use, Design, Designers, and Relation to Historic Persons. One of Ten modified Kalman criteria received a rating of "Good/Very Good" - Integrity.
8. A "Policy Regarding the Types of Alterations to Washington Square Requiring Certificate of Appropriateness Authorization" was reviewed and adopted by the Landmarks Board at its regular meeting of April 21, 1999, and is proposed for incorporation into the landmark designation. Such policy clarifies the types of alterations in Washington Square that would require a Landmarks

Board hearing and Certificate of Appropriateness authorization before commencement of the work. It is intended by this Policy that the Certificate of Appropriateness regulatory process be reserved only for major changes to the Square that may significantly affect its special historic character as described in the Washington Square Landmark Designation Report. It is not the intent of this policy to regulate work undertaken in the ordinary maintenance and management of the Square or its fixtures.

9. The Landmarks Board has reviewed documents and correspondence from the elected officials, other City departments, neighborhood residents, community organizations, and received oral testimony on matters relevant to the proposed landmark designation, in a duly noticed Public Hearing on April 21, 1999.

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hereby initiates landmark designation of Washington Square, in Assessor's Block 102, Lots 1 and 2 as Landmark No. 226, pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hereby recommends that the Planning Commission approve the landmark designation of Washington Square, in Assessor's Block 102, Lots 1 and 2 as Landmark No. 226, pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board hereby directs its Recording Secretary to transmit this Resolution, the Washington Square Landmark Designation Report, the "Policy Regarding the Types of Alterations to Washington Square Requiring Certificate of Appropriateness Authorization," and other pertinent materials in the Case file 98.270L to the Planning Commission.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on April 21, 1999.

Andrea Green
Recording Secretary

AYES:	Members Dearman, Finwall, Kelly, Kotas, Levitt, Magrane, Reidy, Shatara
NOES:	None
ABSENT:	Member Ho-Belli
ADOPTED:	April 21, 1999

**WASHINGTON SQUARE:
FINAL LANDMARK DESIGNATION CASE REPORT
CASE NO. 1998.270L**

APRIL 1999

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1. SUMMARY

1.1 Identifying Information/Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Action

HISTORIC AND POPULAR NAME: Washington Square

OWNER: City and County of San Francisco

LOCATION: Block 102, bounded by Union, Filbert, Stockton, Powell Streets

ZONING: Public (Open Space)

ORIGINAL AND CURRENT USE: Public Park

DATE ESTABLISHED: January 3, 1850

LANDMARK NO: 226

LPAB VOTE: 8-0; 1 absent

1.2 Statement of Significance

Washington Square is one of San Francisco's oldest and most beloved parks. Dedicated as public open space even before the incorporation of the City of San Francisco, it remained a tranquil, natural oasis as the City sprang up around it. In pre-Gold Rush California, Juana Briones, one of California's noteworthy pioneers, grew vegetables on this land. In 1847, when Jasper O'Farrell was commissioned to lay out the city's streets, he identified three city blocks as public squares, including the city block which later became known as Washington Square. In 1849, William Eddy re-surveyed the City and published a widely distributed map showing the public squares. In 1850, the sites were set aside for the public by John W. Geary.

Washington Square is associated with important events in local and state history. The park was given its name during the fervently patriotic years leading up to the Civil War and was the site of Fourth of July ceremonies. In 1906-7, 600 earthquake refugees were sheltered in the park. As a public park, Washington Square has hosted many special events, such as Fourth of July and Columbus Day celebrations, the start of the annual Blessing of the Fishing Fleet procession, and the North Beach Festival. The park is home to historically significant public art which recalls facets of California history--a granite block placed in 1869 as a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Station; the Ben Franklin Statue, moved to the park in 1904, originally erected on Market Street in 1879 as a water fountain by temperance activist Henry G. Cogswell; a bronze sculpture of a man drinking water, crouched next to an artificial pond, a gentle reminder of the streams which once ran nearby; and the Volunteer Firemen Memorial, in honor of the Volunteer Fire Department of 1849-1866.

San Francisco civic organizations have taken a keen interest in improvement and protection of the park. While the park's plantings and layout have undergone changes, neighborhood organizations have guarded the essential qualities of Washington Square. Thus, after almost 150 years, Washington Square is the only one of San Francisco's three original parks that has not been made into a roof top for an underground parking garage. As it has for well over a century, Washington Square continues to serve as a green oasis as well as a cultural focal

point for San Francisco's lively North Beach. Its continuing natural condition makes it highly significant as an historic resource within a densely urbanized area.

1.3 Kalman Methodology

The Planning Department and the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) apply the Kalman Methodology criteria, modified for use in San Francisco, in the identification and evaluation of cultural resources. This methodology is organized by four broad topics--architecture, historic context, physical context, and integrity--which are then further broken down into subcategories. This Designation Report contains ratings (noted in parentheses) based on the Kalman criteria. However, because this methodology was developed primarily for the evaluation of buildings, some interpretation was necessary for application to an outdoor landscaped space.

2. ARCHITECTURE

2.1. Use Category

Washington Square is significant as an urban park which has been in continuous public use since the mid 19th century (Rating: VG, Good Example.)

Washington Square was mapped as a public square in 1847 and developed to its current state over a hundred year period. Until the 1860's, the Square, adjacent to neighborhood cemeteries, lay neglected, an unofficial waste dump for the city. Although the Square was used for public events in the early 1860's, few physical improvements were made. By 1872, with the help of neighborhood boosters, the adjacent cemeteries were removed, the user-defined cross pattern of paths was improved with gravel, and some landscaping was planted. By the 1880's, Washington Square (il Giardino, the garden, as it was called) was the central social gathering place for the Italian community of North Beach. By the turn of the century, Washington Square was well-established as an informal, bucolic open space with scattered groves of trees. Ample seating could be found on the long benches placed on the sides of each major walkway.

A noteworthy aspect of Washington Square's use has been the active involvement of neighborhood groups in the park's improvement. In the 1950's, Washington Square was re-landscaped through a project initiated by the Committee for the Beautification of Washington Square, a coalition that included the Columbus Civic Club, Italian Federation of California, Italian Welfare Society, North Beach Merchants and Boosters, North Beach Lions, Church of Saints Peter and Paul, Salesian Boys Club, Telegraph Hill Dwellers, Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association, and The Misses Marini. In the 1960's, neighborhood activists successfully protected the park from a proposal to transform it into the roof of an underground parking garage. In the early 1990's, the Committee for the Illumination of Washington Square ensured that the park had adequate and attractive lighting. Many individuals have initiated plantings, new benches, and fund-raising for needed repairs or improvements.

For almost 150 years, Washington Square has been used as a village green, the civic center of North Beach. The park's major recreational uses in the 19th century--strolling, enjoyment of the outdoors, informal play and socializing--continue today.

2.2 Age

Washington Square is one of San Francisco's oldest parks. (Rating: E, established before April 1906.)

Washington Square was identified in Jasper O'Farrell's survey of 1847 and William Eddy's resurvey of 1849. On January 3, 1850, it was deeded to the Town of San Francisco by the town's alcalde, John W. Geary. Its establishment as a public open space predated the formal incorporation of the City of San Francisco and the admission of California into the Union. When Washington Square was established, the setting aside of public open space was still a rarity in urban America. The major American parks movement did not begin until the second half of the 19th century and generally produced parks located on the outskirts rather than in the heart of the city. Thus, Washington Square represents a very early American era of urban public open space.

2.3 Design

Washington Square is significant not only for its overall design, but also because it contains historically significant public art. (Rating: VG, Very Good)

2.3.1 In terms of American park design, Washington Square Park represents a 19th century pattern and scale of public open space. Its overall dimensions (a rectangular city block), perimeter promenade, and landscaping are in the tradition of a 19th century American town square or village green. A symmetrical path system formed the park's overall design for its first one hundred years. The symmetrical pattern was established by pedestrians taking the most direct routes across the square. Later, the dirt and gravel paths were paved, resulting in the appearance of a formal Beaux-Arts design. The park featured several large lawn areas and informal groups of shade trees.

In 1957, at the request of the Committee for the Beautification of Washington Square (a coalition of neighborhood organizations), the park was redesigned by Lawrence Halprin and Douglas Baylis. The 1957 design featured a circuitous walking path, a large lawn area, tree clusters, and children's playgrounds. According to Halprin, this free-form design "encourages vigorous participation in a wide range of activities." (Halprin: *Choreography of Gardens*.) Clusters of evergreen and deciduous trees act as screens to wind and heat, while offering a soft transition to the surrounding buildings. The strategic arrangement of benches and expanse of pavement on the Filbert Street side of the park defined a plaza in front of the district's main architectural focal point, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul.

More than twenty years later, in the early 1990's, another group of neighbors, the Committee to Illuminate Washington Square, worked with a design team to create a new lighting plan for Washington Square. The lighting plan, which has been implemented, features "up-lights" that subtly illuminate the tree canopies from the ground below and replica lamp posts within the park that are similar to traditional street lamp posts on Filbert Street.

The small triangular area bounded by Columbus, Union, Filbert, and Powell was part of the original Public Square, but was cut off from the main park by the construction of Columbus Avenue (originally named Montgomery Avenue) in the 1870's. This part of Washington Square Park has featured the Drinking Man sculpture at the edge of a pond since 1905. The concrete bench on the Powell Street side is visible in photographs dating from the early 1920's. The triangle was dedicated as "Marini Plaza" in 1952. It features art works which honor the Italian presence in North Beach: a sculpture depicting Frank Marini, a well-known benefactor of the North Beach community, and a fountain bird bath, which was a gift to San Francisco from its sister city, Assisi, Italy. The triangle was not affected by the 1957 redesign of the main park.

2.3.2 Washington Square is home to several historically significant pieces of public art.

A simple granite block was placed as a **Survey Marker** in 1869 by Dr. George Davidson (the surveyor and prominent natural scientist for whom Mount Davidson is named) of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Latitude and longitude were carved on the survey monument in 1937. The monument reads: "U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, Astronomical & Telegraphic Longitude Station, Washington Square, 1869-1880; Latitude: 37.47'59"n, Longitude: 122.24'37" W."

The **Benjamin Franklin Statue** was erected in 1879 on Market and Kearny Streets by temperance activist Henry Cogswell and moved to the park in 1904. The statue originally was a drinking fountain intended to provide an alternative to San Francisco's many bars. Instead, the fountain was used by earthquake refugees in 1906. A time capsule was placed in the statue in 1879 and opened by North Beach neighbors in the park in 1979; participants in the 1979 event placed objects in another time capsule in the statue, to be opened in the year 2079.

The **Drinking Man** statue, a bronze figure of a man crouching on large granite boulders next to a pond, was donated to the City by the artist, Park Commissioner M. Earl Cummings, in 1905. The San Francisco Chronicle announced, "Sculptor's Art to Adorn Square--Park Commissioners to Give Work of Art to Breathing Space in City's North End" and described the crouched figure with "head bent forward...eagerly drinking of water from his firmly clasped and scooped hands." The model who posed in Paris for "the Drinking Man" was the same person who posed for the famed "St. John the Baptist" by Rodin.

The **Volunteer Firemen Memorial**, created by Haig Patigian in 1932, is a tribute to San Francisco's Volunteer Fire Department of 1849-1866. The sculpture, which stands 14 feet tall in the northwest section of the Square, depicts three firemen, one holding a supine woman, one kneeling with a hose and one pointing with an outstretched arm. While the monument was originally intended to be erected on Telegraph Hill, next to Coit Tower, Patigian, in a letter to the President of the Art Commission, said that an "appropriate location from the start was to have the monument erected in that section of the city which embraced the early settlement so frequently ravaged by fire." The Memorial evokes images of North Beach during the City's early eras of fire-prone wooden buildings.

2.4 Designers

Washington Square is associated with prominent designers and artists. (Rating: VG, of considerable importance.)

Landscape architects **Lawrence Halprin** and **Douglas Baylis** redesigned Washington Square in 1957. Lawrence Halprin, a landscape architect in San Francisco since 1945, was nominated in 1953 by Time Magazine and San Francisco Chamber of Commerce as "One of San Francisco's leaders of Tomorrow," and became nationally and internationally renowned for his "choreography of gardens" theory, designing places to "determine the movement of the people in them." Washington Square is an early predecessor to Halprin's numerous works, including Levi's Plaza, Embarcadero Plaza and Fountain, Ghirardelli Square, and Hallidie Plaza, in San Francisco, as well as his works outside of San Francisco, including Seattle Freeway Park, Washington; FDR Memorial, Washington D.C.; Lovejoy Plaza, Oregon; and parks in Italy and Jerusalem.

Haig Patigian, sculptor of the Volunteer Firemen Memorial, was a member of the San Francisco community from 1899 until his death in 1950 and was a prominent figure nationally in

the arts. Within San Francisco, his works include the General Pershing Statue in Golden Gate Park, the "Liberty" bas relief on the Security Pacific National Bank's main Grant Avenue facade, decorative panels on the Bohemian Club, and interior art work at 300 Montgomery Street (originally American National Bank).

3. HISTORIC CONTEXT

3.1 Persons

Washington Square has been associated with people who have made significant contributions to the community, state, and nation. (Rating: VG, person of primary importance loosely connected or person of secondary importance intimately connected.)

Juana Briones (1802-1889), a pioneer and humanitarian who was one of the most noteworthy figures in pre-Gold Rush San Francisco (Yerba Buena), built an adobe house in 1836 on the Northeast corner of Powell and Filbert Streets. Here she had a small farm that included the land which later became known as Washington Square. Briones grew vegetables, raised cattle and sold produce and milk to ship crews in the harbor. Indications are that she lived in North Beach from 1836 to 1847. Aside from her marketing skills, Briones was revered for her skills as a healer, mid-wife and long-term provider of care. Briones also offered assistance to sick and deserting sailors, hiding them in her loft and transporting them to the East Bay. Briones purchased a ranch in Santa Clara in 1844, but did not sell her North Beach home until 1858. The **Juana Briones California State Historical Marker** was placed in Washington Square in 1997 to honor this pioneer settler. Although the connection of Juana Briones to Washington Square is significant, the exact location of the plaque is not particularly significant, especially since there is no evidence that she used the location of the plaque for her vegetable garden.

John White Geary, who was the Town of San Francisco's alcalde (which means magistrate or mayor, in Spanish), set aside the land for Portsmouth, Union and Washington Squares in 1850, months before the City's incorporation. Shortly after, he became the City of San Francisco's first mayor. Later, he served terms as governor of Kansas and Pennsylvania.

In the 1850's **Dr. Henry Cogswell** settled in San Francisco and established his dentistry practice. His dentistry practice and real estate dealings Cogswell a prosperous man. As a strong advocate of the temperance movement in a city full of bars, When Cogswell donated the Ben Franklin Fountain to San Francisco in 1879, it was Cogswell's intention to "supply San Francisco with one fountain for every 100 saloons." In 1904 the Ben Franklin Fountain was relocated to Washington Square from its original site at Market and Kearny Streets. Of all the statues Cogswell donated to San Francisco, Ben Franklin is the only one that remains today. In addition to being active in the temperance movement, Cogswell founded a college that bears his name.

Lillie Hitchcock Coit, an unconventional but beloved socialite, was made an honorary member of her favorite Knickerbocker Volunteer Fire Company No. 5 in 1863 for her help in fighting a fire on Telegraph Hill. Upon her death in 1929, Lillie Coit donated two-thirds of her fortune to the Universities of California and Maryland, and the remaining \$118,000 for the beautification of the city she loved so much. Her gift's effect on the City's landscape was dramatic, resulting in construction of Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill and the Volunteer Fire Department monument in Washington Square.

3.2 Events

Washington Square is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the community, state, and nation. (Rating: E, patterns of primary importance intimately connected with the resource.)

During the Civil War era, San Francisco gave names to Washington and Union Squares that expressed the City's loyalty to the North and the prevailing patriotic fervor. Washington Square was the location of enthusiastic Fourth of July celebrations.

Washington Square provided essential refuge for those made homeless by the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. For a year after the catastrophe, over 600 refugees lived in Washington Square Park.

Washington Square has been the traditional location for many community events, festivals, political rallies, concerts and other social and cultural activities. The procession for the Blessing of the Fishing Fleet, on the first Sunday after October 1, commences in Church of Saints Peter and Paul and proceeds down Columbus Avenue, past reviewing stands in Washington Square. During the Columbus Day parade and pageant, thousands of people follow the procession from the Civic Center into Washington Square, where they receive High Mass. In addition, the North Beach Festival and the San Francisco Mime Troupe performances are annual events held in the park. The Square has been used as a "village green" by residents of the North Beach neighborhood for many years.

In 1979, hundreds of citizens turned out to Washington Square to witness the opening of a time capsule planted in the base of Ben Franklin during its construction in 1879. An inscription on the Ben Franklin statue reads "P.O. Box with mementos for the historical society in 1979. From H.D.C." The 1979 crowd placed mementos of their own into two plastic tubes and sealed them back into Ben Franklin for the citizens of San Francisco 2079, when the next time capsule will be opened in Washington Square.

3.3 Patterns

(Rating: E, Patterns of primary importance intimately connected with the resource.)

Washington Square is associated with and illustrative of broad patterns of the City's cultural, socio-political, and physical development. The Square represents a land use transition unique to 19th century California, in which garden plots and corrals of early Spanish and Mexican settlers became logical sites for public open space under American rule. It was reserved as unbuilt land in the 1840's, probably because the water drainage from surrounding hills made it more suitable for use as a garden than as a building site. In pre-Gold Rush California, the site was part of a natural swale, draining water from the surrounding hills into streams which ran north to the Bay. The natural irrigation may explain why Juana Briones, one of California's noteworthy pioneers, grew vegetables on this land.

When Washington Square was set aside as public open space in the mid-19th century, it was a far-sighted civic decision that predated San Francisco's rise to national prominence and the building boom that was to occur in the second half of the 19th century.

The Square is a setting for recreational and civic activities by the many different ethnic groups--from annual Columbus Day events to daily Tai Chi practice. Thus, Washington Square has been central to the City's cultural development.

4. PHYSICAL CONTEXT

4.1 . Character/Continuity/Setting

Washington Square makes important contributions to the character of the North Beach Neighborhood. (Rating: E, Of particular importance in establishing the character of a distinguished area)

Washington Square is nestled within a hollow between Telegraph and Russian Hills, a green valley which serves as a visual counterpoint to the hilltops. The park offers panoramic views of Coit Tower, downtown buildings (notably the Transamerica Building) and the residences on the hills.

The park is central to the North Beach neighborhood and is often called the "heart" of North Beach. Three-story buildings, with two floors of living quarters or office over ground floor restaurants and shops, predominate on the park's periphery. Placid, flat, and green, the park serves as the front yard for the Church of Saints Peter and Paul (constructed 1922-24). With its solid Italianesque design and its twin spires rising 190 feet from ground level, the church both anchors the park and provides a dramatic architectural focus for the North Beach District.

4.2 Visual Significance

Washington Square is significant as a visual landmark to the neighborhood, city, and region. (Rating: E, A place which may be taken as a symbol for the city or region as a whole.)

Washington Square is very visible from public viewing points and private residences on Telegraph and Russian Hills and from many downtown buildings. It is a soft space, a lush green lawn protected by peripheral clusters of trees, which provides visual relief from the densely built surroundings.

Washington Square is a place that expresses the identity of San Francisco. It is the quintessential urban park: a lush green square, set against a backdrop of small to medium-scale historic buildings, in a thriving multi-cultural community. Pictures of the Square, especially with backgrounds featuring Coit Tower on Telegraph Hill, the downtown Transamerica Pyramid building, or the twin towers of Saints Peter and Paul, are instantly recognizable as San Francisco.

5. INTEGRITY

Although Washington Square has undergone design changes throughout its 150 year history, for at least the last century it has maintained the character-defining features which have made it the tranquil, green oasis treasured by San Franciscans. (Rating: G/VG, Alterations which do not destroy overall character.)

5.1 Overall Park Design

The primary features that make Washington Square a "green oasis" are its high ratio of "soft" area (plantings/landscape) to "hard" area (paving/structures), its generous lawns, and its large scale shade trees.

Section 8.3 of this report contains site plans and photographs which show how the park's overall design has changed over time. (The sidewalks are considered to be part of the park, since they form a perimeter "promenade" and are integral to the park's functioning.) The 1849 survey map designated the entire rectangular city block as a "public square." In the 1870's, the construction of Columbus (originally Montgomery) Avenue separated a small triangle (now known as "Marini Plaza") from the main part of the park.

The layout of the Marini Plaza's landscaped area has changed little since the installation of the Drinking Man sculpture in 1905. However, the construction of diagonal parking spaces on the Powell Street side has resulted in the sidewalk being narrowed to 5' wide, with an effective width of less than 3' due to telephone poles and other obstructions.

The earliest available site plan showing the main part of Washington Square dates from 1949. The 1949 site plan shows a symmetrical path layout which had been the park's overall design for many years. Fortunately for Washington Square, the use of nearby North Beach Playground (constructed in 1910) for active recreation had satisfied the demand for paved play areas in the neighborhood. In 1949, the landscaped area was approximately 67% of the total area bounded by the roadways of Columbus Avenue, Filbert, Stockton, and Union Streets. The park was divided into several large grassy areas.

The 1957 redesign reduced the landscaped area to approximately 59% of the total area. Although the 1957 redesign transformed the layout of the main part of Washington Square, and the planted area was somewhat reduced, important qualities of the park were preserved and enhanced. The designers changed the path system, but retained a high ratio of planted area, a generous central lawn, and large scale trees. The park's perimeter sidewalk continued to function as a "promenade" much as it did at the turn of the century. The designers also preserved or planted large scale perimeter trees which buffer the lawn area from the street and accentuate the park's position in the bowl-shaped valley between Telegraph and Russian Hills.

In the 1960's, a major political battle was fought over the integrity of Washington Square, when neighborhood activists rebuffed an attempt to transform Washington Square into a roof for an underground parking garage. In an article in Cry California Quarterly (Winter 1966-67), Mel Wax expressed how the garage proposal would damage the park, writing: "Parks and garages do not mix well...Trees--big trees--can't grow...on a garage roof. Underground garages need extensive ventilation systems that protrude above park surfaces. They demand massive entrances and exits. They breed traffic and smells, not tranquility." Although the Board of Supervisors narrowly approved the 535-car garage, Mayor John F. Shelley vetoed the ordinance in October 1966. A second proposal for an underground garage was defeated two years later. Of San Francisco's original three public squares, today Washington Square is the only one which has not been transformed into a roof for underground parking. It retains an authenticity of place which adds to its significance.

The park changed very little between 1957 and 1971, the date of the most recent overall site plan for Washington Square. Between 1971 and the present, there also have been few modifications. The modifications to the paved areas have consisted of paving around the Volunteer Firemen Memorial, construction of stairs at the corner of Columbus Avenue and Filbert Streets, and the installation of the Juana Briones bench and an additional asphalt pad for a park bench on the Stockton Street side.

Overall, "the present landscape...is so sympathetic to its surroundings and to the activities of the square that it seems as though it had always existed" (noted by Sally and John Woodbridge in their book, San Francisco Architecture).

5.1 Public Art

Major pieces of public art have been an enduring feature of Washington Square; they have stayed in their original locations as the park underwent transformations. The Ben Franklin has characteristic of San Francisco Franklin Statue and Volunteer Firemen Monument in their original locations, and did not touch the small triangular park space known as "Marini Plaza."

6. **THREATS TO SITE:** NONE () DEVELOPMENT () ZONING () VANDALISM (X)
PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT (X) OTHER ()

7. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS:

Representation in Existing Surveys indicated by "X" or "Yes" below: National: () State: (X) Local: (X) California State Register: Yes Here Today: Heritage Surveys: DCP 1976 Survey: Yes Other:
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8. FIGURES (pages 10 - 26)

- 8.1 Property Maps
- 8.2 Historical Photographs
- 8.3 Overall Park Design - site plans and photographs
- 8.4 Current Photographs

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9.3 Dates submitted

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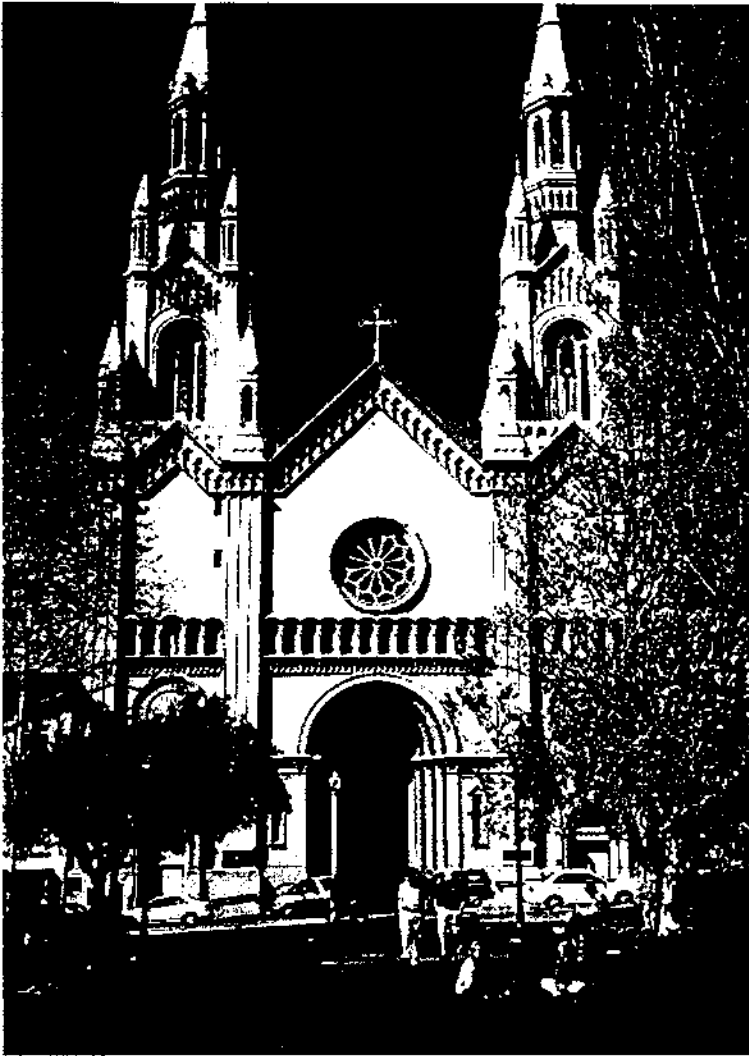
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8.4 Current Photographs



Washington Square, 1999:
View north towards Church of
Saints Peter and Paul.

Washington
Square,
1999: View
east towards
Telegraph
Hill.

