



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MEMO

DATE: February 6, 2019

TO: Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

FROM: Rebecca Salgado, Preservation Planner, (415) 575-9101

REVIEWED BY: Tim Frye, Historic Preservation Officer, (415) 575-6822

RE: **Review and comment for proposed new construction at the Restroom Building at 900 North Point Street (Landmark No. 30), Case No. 2018-016789COA**

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

BACKGROUND

The Planning Department (Department) requests review and comment before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) regarding a proposal for the partial demolition of the existing Restroom Building attached to the south façade of the Wurster Building within Ghirardelli Square to accommodate a new use for the building consisting of a single family restroom and a retail space. The building, constructed in 2007 at the location of an earlier 1981 addition to the Wurster Building, is a non-contributing element within Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco Landmark No. 30. Ghirardelli Square is designated under Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Ghirardelli Square is City Landmark No. 30, and is located at 900 North Point Street (APN 0452/002-011). The property consists of thirteen buildings and three plazas located on the block bounded by North Point, Larkin, Polk and Beach streets along San Francisco's Northern Waterfront. Ghirardelli Square listed as City Landmark No. 30 in 1970, and was listed in the National Register of Historic Properties in 1982.

The Restroom Building was constructed in 2007, in the location of a 1981 Wurster Building addition that was demolished for the construction of the Restroom Building. The Restroom Building was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board under Certificate of Appropriateness 2006.0749A, and constructed under Building Permit 2007.0713.6733. The Restroom Building is a one-story brick building with a flat roof and no fenestration. It is physically attached to the south façade of the Wurster Building, and interacts with a portion of the Wurster Building's clay-tile roof. The Restroom Building is accessed via a covered walkway that runs adjacent to the north façade of the North Plaza Pavilion. Both the Wurster Building and the North Plaza Pavilion, as well as the plaza areas surrounding the Restroom Building, are contributing features to the landmark site.

Historic Context of City Landmark No. 30

The following historic context is excerpted from the 2016 *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*:
“Ghirardelli Square is an outstanding example of early adaptive re-use in America and has been noted for its synthesis of modern architectural design with historical building fabric.

Originally the site of Pioneer Woolen Mills, the property became the base of operations for chocolate confectioner, Domingo Ghirardelli, in 1893. After the departure of the chocolate factory, Ghirardelli Square was rehabilitated into one of America’s first festival marketplaces in the 1960s, by architects Wurster, Bernardi and Emmons, with Lawrence Halprin as landscape architect. Their work rehabilitated existing buildings and integrated new buildings, while addressing the slope in topography with terraces.

The National Register Nomination lists three periods of significance:

- 1) 1858–1889 (Woolen Mill). Character-defining features for the Woolen Mill include:
 - a. Rectangular form and massing;
 - b. Gable-shaped roof;
 - c. Red brick exterior;
 - d. Timber construction;
 - e. Fenestration pattern;

- 2) 1892–1962 (D. Ghirardelli Chocolate Company). Character-defining features for this period include:
 - a. Rectangular form and massing;
 - b. Red brick exterior;
 - c. Cement plaster accent trim;
 - d. Regular fenestration pattern;
 - e. Original steel and wood windows;
 - f. Timber construction;
 - g. Decorative Entries;
 - h. Crenellated parapets.

- 3) 1962 – 1967 (Ghirardelli Square). Character-features for this period include:
 - a. Red sand-mold brick;
 - b. Steel frame and glass walls;
 - c. Festive lighting;
 - d. Board form concrete walls (landscape);
 - e. Metal Railings;
 - f. Roof forms, including the flat roofs of the pavilion buildings and the deck roof (flat-topped, hipped) of the Wurster Building;
 - g. Clay tile roof of the Wurster Building.”

2016 Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines

In November of 2016, Jamestown, L.P. and Page & Turnbull finalized design guidelines for Ghirardelli Square with assistance and support from the San Francisco Planning Department. The *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines* are intended to provide guidance on compatible exterior alterations at Ghirardelli Square, to inform exterior changes and design approaches as well as express the owners' intentions for future alterations. Recommendations in the design guidelines address many aspects of the site, from tenant signs to paving materials, and their application is intended to reduce the use of inappropriate and incompatible materials, remove physical and visual clutter throughout the site by providing consistent and effective wayfinding and tenant signage, improve circulation and accessibility, and protect and preserve original features and fabric and the historic character of Ghirardelli Square. The consistent application of these guidelines is also intended to simplify the review and approval process for projects that require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

For this project, the following sections of the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines* were consulted: Building storefronts and window walls (pp. 15–18); Exterior building and site finishes and materials (pp. 23–30); Landscape and plant materials (53–68); and Analysis of Significant Features for the Wurster Building (pp. 80–81) and the Pavilions (pp. 82–83). These sections of the design guidelines are included as attachments to this memo.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes the partial demolition of the south and east facades, as well as the roof, of the existing Restroom Building and the construction of new south and east facades largely following the existing building's footprint and a new flat roof matching the height of the existing roof to accommodate a new use for the building consisting of a single family restroom and a retail space. The new retail space will have a bay extending into the existing planter located at the south façade of the Restroom Building, which is a contributing feature of the landmark site. This planter was initially constructed as part of the 1960s-era renovations of Ghirardelli Square, although portions of the planter's south and east sides were reconstructed when the Restroom Building was built in 2007.

The family restroom and retail storage portions of the rebuilt building will have an appearance similar to the existing Restroom Building, with brick cladding and no fenestration. The retail portion of the building will consist of aluminum-framed glazed display windows with a continuous horizontal mullion aligning with the top of the entrance door and even vertical mullion spacing, matching the finish, details, dimensions, and configuration of other storefronts installed in the landmark site to align with the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*. The retail entrance will be located at the east façade of the building, and this façade will have a projecting metal canopy that references the projecting roof eaves of the adjacent Pavilion buildings. The building will have a flat roof with simple detailing, to be compatible with the flat roofs of the Pavilion buildings. The historic planter, which currently has plantings that are incompatible with the historic landscape design, will receive a new plant species, Australian Bluebell Creepers, which are included in the list of compatible plantings in the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

The proposed project is being brought to the ARC for review and comment prior to review by the HPC of a request for Certificates of Appropriateness pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project will undergo environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to hearing before the HPC.

PUBLIC/NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

To date, the Department has not received any public comment about the proposed project.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The Department seeks feedback from the ARC on the design, materiality, and relationship to setting for the proposed redesign of the Restroom Building to the subject property as defined by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Secretary's Standards) and Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code.

Staff reviewed the compatibility of the proposal for conformance with:

- The Secretary's Standards;
- Article 10 of the Planning Code;
- Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines;

For efficiency, the Department is reviewing the proposal under Secretary's Standards unless the designating Ordinance or Appendix to Article 10 includes specific standards. The Department would like the ARC to consider the following information:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Standard #2

The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the property will be avoided.

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 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards: Department staff will undertake a complete analysis of the proposed project per the applicable Standards as part of the environmental review and the subsequent Certificate of Appropriateness. In addition, Department staff will undertake additional analysis of the proposed project per the standards outlined in Article 10 of the Planning Code, specifically to assess the project's conformance to the guidelines for new construction and compatibility with the landmark site.

Overall Form and Continuity: The form of the building, consisting roughly of two offset rectangles in plan with a projecting bay at the larger rectangle, is compatible with the form of contributing buildings within the landmark site, especially the adjacent 1960s-era buildings, which have more complex footprints and forms than the generally rectangular Ghirardelli-era factory buildings. The new building's simple, flat roof will reference the more prominent flat roof of the adjacent North Plaza Pavilion, while also setting it apart from the Wurster Building that it is physically connected to, which has a hip-roof perimeter clad with terra cotta tiles. The differentiation between these two roofs will allow the new building to read as a later addition to the landmark site, avoiding a sense of false historicism.

Recommendation: Staff believes that the proposed work appears to be compatible with the overall form and continuity of the subject property, and asks for clarification on whether or not the Architectural Review Committee concurs with staff's assessment.

Scale and Proportion: The existing landmark site contains buildings ranging in height from one story to four stories. The new construction will be located at the northern end of the landmark site. The contributing buildings adjacent to the proposed project, including the Wurster Building and the North Plaza Pavilion, are one story tall at the plaza level. The proposed one-story, mixed-use building is therefore in keeping with the surrounding context. The building's overall height will sit below that of the adjacent landmark buildings, although the new building is proposed to maintain the existing Restroom Building's relationship to the Wurster Building's roof, which has resulted in a disruption in the roofline at the contributing building. The footprint of the new construction will be smaller than the footprint of the adjacent contributing buildings, allowing it to appear subordinate to the adjacent contributing buildings. The building will be set slightly back from the covered walkway that runs between the new building and the North Plaza Pavilion, and this historic element will not be altered or obscured by the new construction.

Recommendation: Generally, the Department finds that the proposed scale and proportion of the new construction will be compatible with that of the landmark. However, in order to remedy rather than perpetuate an existing incompatible condition that exists at the Restroom Building where this building interacts with the Wurster Building, the Department recommends that the roofline of the new building be lowered or redesigned to allow the continuous line of the Wurster Building's roof eave to be restored and new terra

cotta tiles to be installed where they had previously been removed. This action will also allow the new building to more strongly read as subordinate new construction at the south facade of the Wurster Building. This change would also allow the project to further meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards by creating a more easily reversible condition should the structure be removed in the future.

Fenestration: The fenestration found at the existing landmark differs by the era in which each building was constructed. The 1960s-era modifications to the Ghirardelli Square site, including the Wurster Building and the North Plaza Pavilion that are adjacent to the proposed project, are characterized by having steel-frame and glass window walls. The proposed fenestration of the new construction will consist of aluminum-framed glazed display windows with a continuous horizontal mullion aligning with the top of the entrance door and even vertical mullion spacing that reference the character-defining fenestration of the 1960s-era buildings at Ghirardelli Square, especially the Pavilion buildings. The new fenestration will align with the finish, details, dimensions, and configuration of other storefronts installed in the landmark site to align with the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*. The Department believes that the project's overall fenestration is differentiated yet compatible with the adjacent landmark with regard to design, materials, and orientation.

Recommendation: Staff believes that the proposed work appears to be compatible with the fenestration found at the subject property, and asks for clarification on whether or not the Architectural Review Committee concurs with staff's assessment.

Materials: The materials associated with the 1960s-era modifications and new construction at Ghirardelli Square include red sand mold brick, metal storefronts, board-formed concrete, and cement plaster, according to the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*. The proposed materials of the new construction will be brick at the restroom and retail storage portions of the building, and metal storefronts at the retail portion topped with a horizontal metal band around the flat roof. The proposed materials for the new construction are generally compatible with the landmark site and align with the recommended materials in the design guidelines. In addition, the project will include the replacement of incompatible plantings in the existing historic planter attached to the new construction with plantings recommended in the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*, while maintaining the character-defining concrete walls of the planter. This will bring the planter into further conformance with the contributing landscape features of the landmark site.

Recommendation: Generally, the Department finds that the proposed materials of the new construction will be compatible with that of the landmark. However, in order to remedy rather than perpetuate an existing incompatible condition that exists at the Restroom Building, the Department recommends that the brick portions of the new construction utilize a brick that is closer in texture and finish to the sand-mold brick found at the Wurster Building, rather than using a brick matching the existing brick at the Restroom Building, which is different from the historic Wurster Building brick in both texture and finish, as proposed.

REQUESTED ACTION

The Department seeks comments on:

- The project recommendations proposed by staff;
- The compatibility of the project with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards;
- The compatibility of the project with Article 10 of the Planning Code
- The compatibility of the project with the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*

ATTACHMENTS

- Ghirardelli Square, Landmark No. 30, Designating Ordinance
- Ghirardelli Square National Register Nomination
- Relevant Excerpts from the *Ghirardelli Square Design Guidelines*
- Relevant Excerpts from Certificate of Appropriateness 2006.0749A, which allowed for the construction of the Restroom Building
- Project Sponsor Submittal, entitled "Certificate of Appropriateness Appendix: Repurposed Restrooms"