



MEMO TO THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

May 12, 2021

Case Number: 2020-005897PTA
Project Address: 233 GEARY STREET
Zoning: C-3-R (DOWNTON-RETAIL)

Block/Lot: 0314/001
Project Sponsor: Tuija Catalano
One Bush Street, Suite 600

Staff Contact: Jonathan Vimr – 628-652-7319
Jonathan.Vimr@sfgov.org

Background

The Planning Department requests review and comment before the Architectural Review Committee (ARC) of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) regarding a proposal for the property at 233 Geary Street to complete alterations throughout the exterior of the subject building. This work would go alongside the renovation of the building's interior and conversion of its use to a mix of retail at the basement up to floor three, office at levels four through seven (and then at the existing rooftop penthouse), and 21 residential units occupying floors eight through ten.

Property Description

233 Geary Street is located on the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton streets in the downtown area, with its Geary Street façade directly facing the southeastern edge of Union Square. The square parcel includes approximately 137 feet of frontage along both Geary Street and Stockton; it is fully developed with the subject building.

The current iteration of the building at 233 Geary Street is ten stories in height with a steel frame and white, Vermont marble panel cladding. Completed in 1948 from a design by master architect Timothy Pflueger, it was built as a flagship location for retailer I. Magnin. It is square in plan with a flat roof, regular fenestration, and a prominent parapet. 233 Geary Street is located in the C-3-R (Downtown-Retail) Zoning District and the 80-130-F Height and Bulk District.

The subject historic resource is a Category V (Unrated) building within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District pursuant to the San Francisco Planning Code Article 11. Beyond that, the Historic Preservation Commission added the property to its Landmark Designation Work Program in 2019, and in a

Historic Resource Evaluation Response dated 4/30/2021 the Planning Department identified it as individually eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criteria 1, 2, and 3.

Project Description

In association with conversion of the building's use, the project proposes to renovate the interior and complete various exterior alterations. Specifically, the project includes:

- **Façade Changes.** Exterior changes include modifications to the previously altered ground floor, most significantly expanding and merging the smaller storefront openings and introducing new metal cladding. From there, the project would expand the size of existing windows found above the ground floor and replace them with new frames and structural glazing systems, including single operable lights for windows at the residential levels. Limited portions of marble cladding would need to be removed to accommodate this expansion of fenestration. Finally, a 59'-9" stretch forming the rough middle of the blank but visible western wall would be removed in order to create a new courtyard. Rooftop work is anticipated to have little or no visibility from the surrounding public right-of-way, and in terms of the exterior is largely confined to new roof terracing and an associated screening element.
- **Interior.** The intact women's powder room has been identified as the only remaining character-defining feature at the interior of the building. As currently proposed, the project sponsor plans to remove it from the sixth floor and reincorporate the washroom area (perhaps the most intact and highly concentrated portion of the overall powder room when it comes to historic fabric) at the publicly accessible third floor retail level.
- **Use.** Opened in 1948 as a department store with an entirely retail use, the building most recently included seven levels of retail (including one at the basement) and four of office use. The proposed conversion would result in four levels of retail (retaining that use at the basement), five of office, and a total of 21 dwelling units at levels eight through ten.
- **Option with Added Windows.** Please note that in the Project Sponsor's plans for the ARC hearing they have included multiple slides at the end of the drawings showing a potential, alternative option that would include the addition of new window bays along either side and running along the top of the primary elevations. The Department has NOT analyzed this alternative, and the following analysis is confined solely to the Project Application.

Other Actions Required

Pursuant to Planning Code Section 1111.1, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) shall review the application for a Major Permit to Alter for compliance with Article 11 of the Planning Code, the Secretary of Interior's Standards, and any applicable provisions of the Planning Code at a future date. The project also requires:

- **Conditional Use Authorization** – The proposed office use exceeding 5,000 square feet at the fourth, fifth, and sixth levels requires Conditional Use Authorization.
- **Office Allocation** - As up to 49,999 gross square feet of office space is proposed for to be added to the property, an Office Development Authorizations is required pursuant to Planning Code Section 321.
- **Downtown Project Authorization** – The project requires a Downtown Project Authorization and approval of relevant exceptions pursuant to Section 309 of the Planning Code.

Environmental Review

The proposed project is undergoing environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and a determination will be published prior to a Historic Preservation Commission hearing.

Public/Neighborhood Input

To date, the Department has not received any public comment expressing support of or opposition to the project.

Character Defining Features of the Conservation District

The characteristics and features of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District are outlined in Appendix E to Article 11 of the Planning Code and include:

- **Characteristics of the District:**
 - Early 20th-century commercial retail architecture, built within a 20-year span
 - Small-scaled, light-colored buildings
 - Building heights of predominantly 4-8 stories
 - Pedestrian-friendly streetwall scale
 - Complementary building detailing, colors, materials, massing, and scale
 - Alignments of cornices and belt courses
 - Beaux Arts & Classical Revival style ornament; some Spanish Colonial style ornament
 - Dynamic nature of changing window shop windows
 - The Union Square public open space
- **Massing and Composition:**
 - Continuous streetwall heights with properties built out to the property lines
 - Vertically oriented rectangular massing in a 1:2 or 1:4 ratio
 - Two or three-part vertical compositions
 - Emphasis on the structural bays
 - Articulation which breaks the facades into discreet segments, with emphasis on either end bays or the central bay
 - Corner buildings designed to tie the two block fronts together through the corner treatment
- **Scale:**
 - Bays 20- to 30-feet wide
 - 3-8 story building heights
 - Wider building facades articulated into narrow segments
 - Delineated building base of intimate scale
- **Materials and Colors:**
 - Masonry cladding: terra cotta, brick, stone, and stucco
 - Light or medium earth tones: white, cream, buff, yellow, brown
 - Painted wood and painted metal window sash and ornament
 - Multidimensional wall surfaces with texture and depth to mimic load-bearing masonry
- **Detailing and Ornamentation:**
 - Used to relate buildings to their neighbors
 - Rustication
 - Deep window reveals
 - Varied ornamentation: Classical, Renaissance, Gothic, etc.
 - Arches, columns, pilasters, projecting bracketed cornices, belt courses, lintels and pediments, decorated spandrels

Character Defining Features of the Individual Resource

The subject property is also individually eligible for listing in the CRHR with a period of significance from 1946-1948, spanning the years of Pflueger's overhaul of both the exterior and interior. The individual property's character defining features are summarized as follows:

- Rectilinear, box-like massing
- Mid-rise (10 stories over basement) height
- Curved building corner
- Uniform, largely unarticulated facades
- Flat roof/roofline
- White, Vermont marble cladding
- Black granite at the base of the building and around ground floor openings
- Uniform grid of windows located above the ground level
- Single-light, aluminum framed windows that project from the face of the building
- Double-height entry openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Square display window openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Parapet pierced with rectangular openings
- Interior, sixth floor women's powder room, consisting of:
 - Dark green and cream-colored marble finishes
 - Gold leaf ceiling
 - Three intact, original sinks with marble basin surrounds and brass faucets
 - Brass-framed mirrors
 - Exposed bulb light fixtures
 - Toilet stalls with full-height mirrored doors

Staff Analysis

The Department seeks feedback from the ARC regarding the compatibility of the project with the surrounding conservation district and the subject property. As mentioned above, the following analysis is confined solely to the design seen in the Project Application itself. The option with added windows seen in the Project Sponsor's plans is included for reference and has not been analyzed by Department staff.

Recommendations

Staff is requesting review and comment from the ARC regarding conformity with Appendix E to Article 11 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the proposed project and its effect on the relevant character-defining features of the subject conservation district and individual resource.

- ***Massing and Composition.*** *The overall footprint of the existing building would remain unchanged, but a portion of the visible, blank western wall would be removed and the rigid window grids along the Stockton and Geary street facades would be altered.*
- **Staff Analysis/Recommendation:** Although lacking in any architectural detailing, the blank western elevation does nonetheless contribute to the building's scale and rectilinear, box-like

massing. Staff's preliminary impression is that the solidity of this blank wall would appear to be sufficiently retained given the setback nature and somewhat limited size of the area proposed for removal. And while no new window bays are proposed to be added to the strict fenestration grid along the Geary and Stockton facades, the project would enlarge most all window openings, with the topmost level of windows also having different proportions than those below. Staff requests ARC input on the proposed design's overall sense of massing as well as whether the topmost level of windows should continue to match the size of the window openings below.

- **Scale.** *The building base would continue to be well delineated, though the proposed alterations would eliminate the remainder of the smaller square display windows.*
 - **Staff Analysis/Recommendation:** Staff notes that the ground floor has been modified in the past, with some of these square windows having previously been enlarged to match the size of the larger entry openings. Staff requests ARC input on whether the ground floor retains a sufficient sense of solidity and visual weight, grounding the base of the marble-clad structure without also losing its pedestrian-oriented scale.
- **Materials.** *A portion of marble paneling would be removed to accommodate each of the expanded window and storefront openings, and all of the existing aluminum windows would also be removed. A darker bronze cladding would be added throughout the ground floor, with the projecting frames of the new windows utilizing the same material. While not necessarily represented in current renderings, the historic and existing dark tint of the upper level glazing will be retained.*
 - **Staff Analysis/Recommendation:** Staff finds that the relatively limited reduction in marble panels and use of a dark bronze cladding likely do not risk creating incompatibility with the surrounding district, though Staff retains full judgement until a material sample of the metal has been received and reviewed. In terms of the individual resource, Staff anticipates that any potential project approval would contain a condition to ensure that the marble panels are cut in an exact and appropriate manner with review and approval of the initial examples. Staff requests ARC input regarding the compatibility of bronze cladding for the storefronts and exterior portions of the visible window systems, as well as the appropriateness of removing marble cladding to accommodate expanded fenestration.
- **Detailing and Ornamentation.** *The new windows at the three residential levels (8-10) are proposed to feature a single, operating light at the bottom of each window system. In order to maintain the uniform appearance of single, fixed lights throughout the exterior, a thin mullion is proposed with the intent that it will not be visible from street level. The concept of a single-fixed light that could pivot at the top or bottom was explored but given the size and weight of such a window, as well as the realities of contemporary window products and life safety requirements, such an option may not be feasible.*
 - **Staff Analysis/Recommendation:** Staff finds that, particularly given the proposed expansion of the windows, it is critical to maintain the uniform appearance and strict grid at the Stockton and Geary facades. Staff requests ARC input as to whether discreet operable lights at the three

residential levels are appropriate, and if so whether additional visual studies or other modifications are necessary to demonstrate compatibility.

- *Sixth Floor Powder Room.* Originally built with a lavish, heavily ornamented interior throughout, the remaining character-defining feature at the interior is the women's powder room occupying the southwest corner of the sixth floor. It is currently proposed for wholesale removal from the sixth floor, with the washroom area then reinstalled at the publicly accessible third floor retail level.
- **Staff Analysis/Recommendation:** Staff agrees with the project sponsor that the overall powder room's historic fabric is most concentrated at the washroom area and appreciates the idea of relocating this space to a publicly accessible floor. Staff requests ARC input as to this general approach and whether those portions of the overall powder room that would be permanently removed should be salvaged and/or analyzed as part of an interpretive display or in other media.

Requested Action

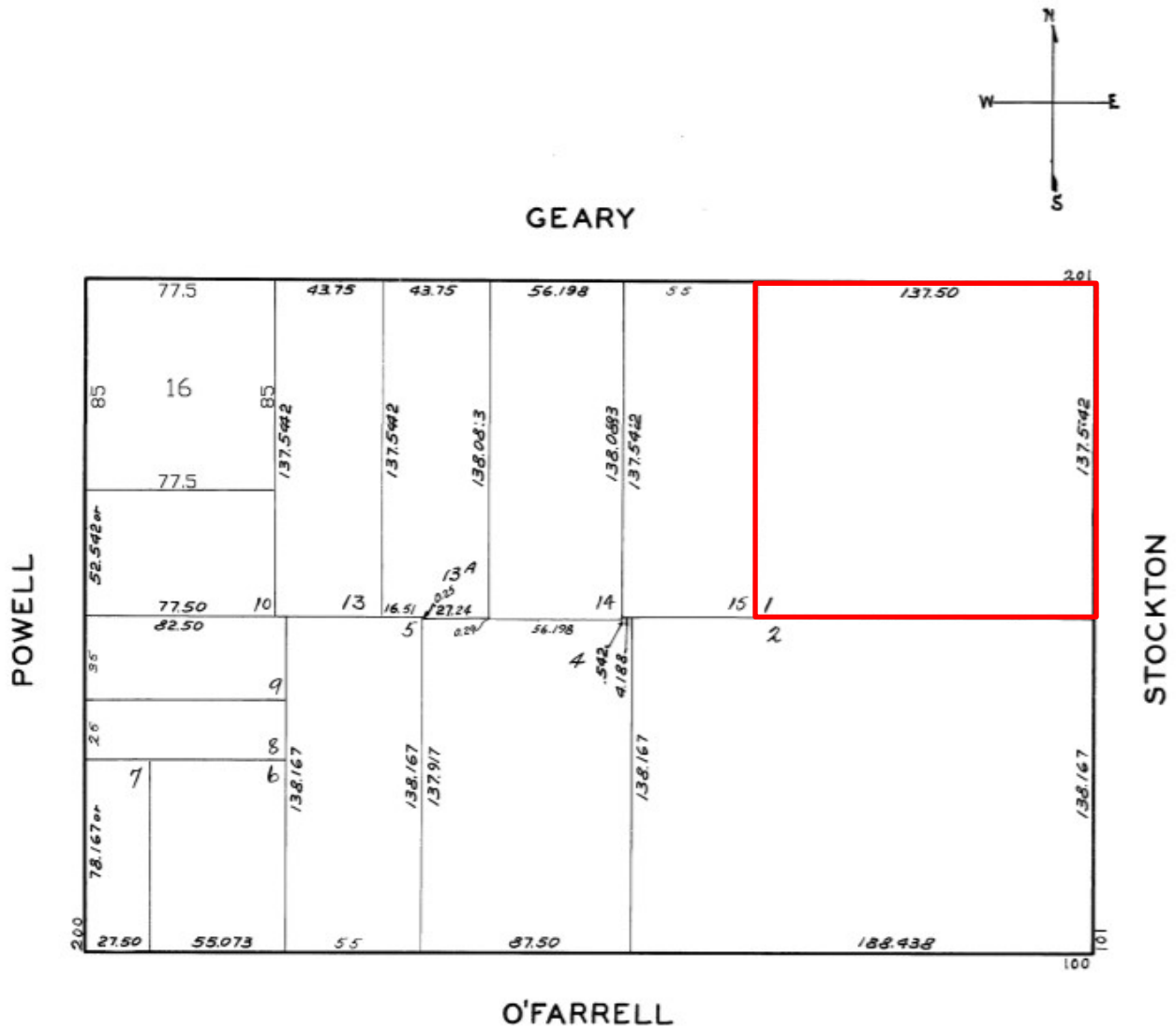
The Department seeks comments on:

- Compatibility of the proposal with the character defining features of the conservation district and subject individually eligible property;
- Recommendations for massing and composition of the proposal;
- Recommendations for scale of the proposal;
- Recommendations for materials of the proposal;
- Recommendation for detailing and ornamentation of the proposal;
- Other project recommendations proposed by staff

Attachments:

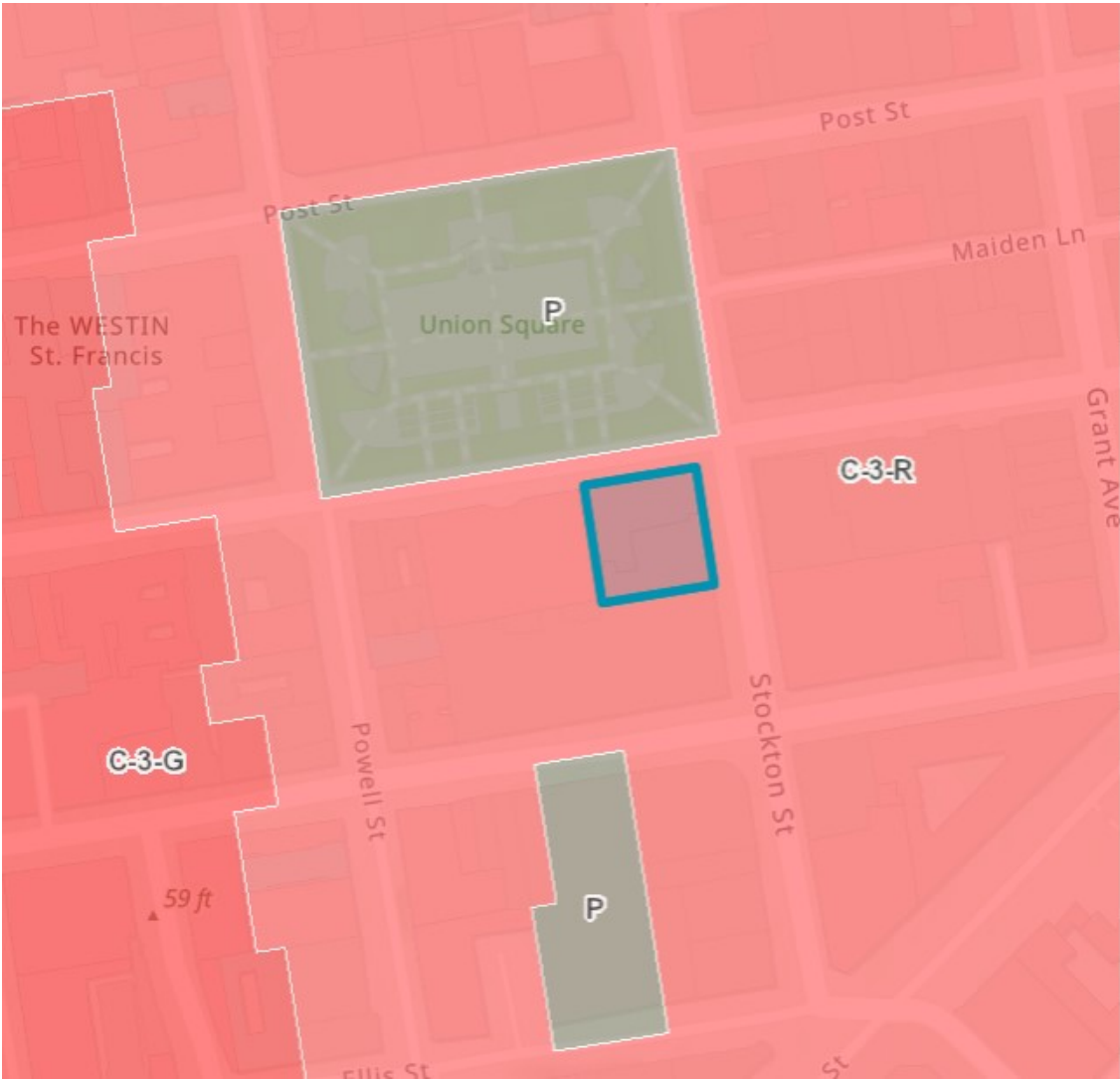
- Exhibits including:
 - Parcel Map
 - Zoning Map
 - Aerial Photo
 - Sanborn Map
 - Exterior Site Photos
- 233 Geary HRER Part 1 issued April 30, 2021
- 233 Geary HRE Part 1, prepared by Left Coast Architectural History (May 2020)
- Designating Ordinance (Appendix E to Article 11)
- Architectural and Conceptual Plans dated May 19, 2021 (including an alternative option with added windows included by the Sponsor for reference)

Parcel Map



Subject property is outlined in red

Zoning Map



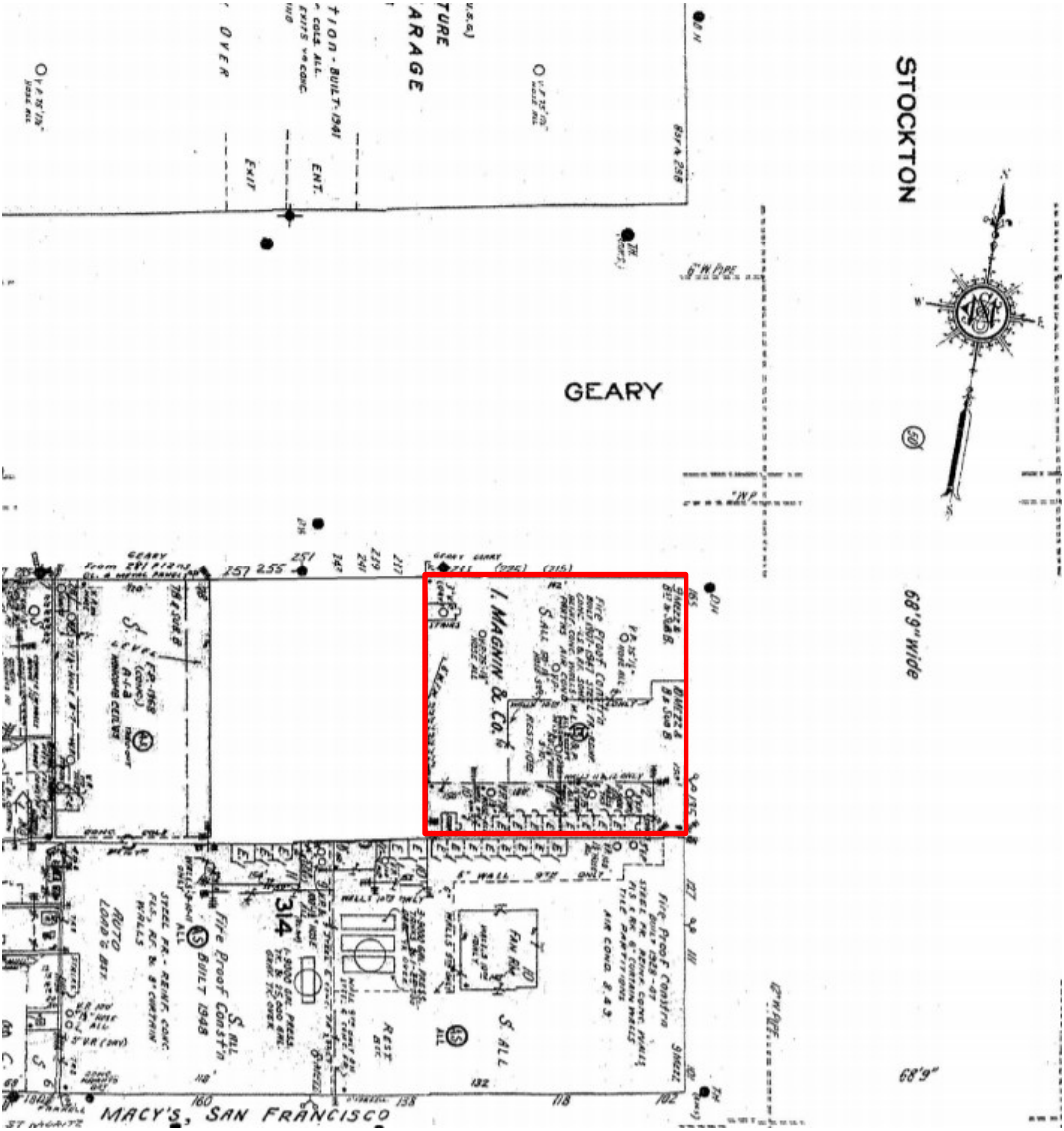
Subject property outlined in blue

Aerial Photo



Subject property outlined in red

Sanborn Map



Subject property outlined in red

Exterior Site Photo



Geary Street façade to the right, Stockton Street façade to the left

Exterior Site Photo



Visible portion of the western elevation, looking southeast from Powell Street



PART I HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION RESPONSE

Record No.: 2020-005897ENV
Project Address: 233 GEARY ST
Zoning: C-3-R DOWNTOWN- RETAIL Zoning District
80-130-F Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0314/001
Staff Contact: Jonathan Vimr – 628-652-7319
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PART I: Historic Resource Evaluation

PROJECT SPONSOR SUBMITTAL

To assist in the evaluation of the proposed project, the Project Sponsor has submitted a:

- Supplemental Information for Historic Resource Determination Form (HRD)
 - Consultant-prepared Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE)
- Prepared by: Left Coast Architectural History, *Historic Resource Evaluation* (May 22, 2020)

Staff consensus with Consultant’s HRE report: Agree Disagree

Additional Comments: Planning Staff generally concurs with Historic Resource Evaluation provided by Left Coast, but differs with the consultant’s finding that the sixth floor powder rooms lacks integrity, and that the property possesses sufficient integrity to convey its significance in association with the post-quake reconstruction and the establishment of Union Square as the epicenter of San Francisco retail. Please see the *CEQA Historic Resource Determination / Next Steps* section prior to filing and submitting a HRER Part II.

BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood: Downtown
Date of Construction: 1948 (current iteration)
Construction Type: Steel-Frame
Architect: Timothy L. Pflueger
Builder: Unknown

Stories: 10-over-basement (with large rooftop penthouse)
Roof Form: Flat
Cladding: White Marble
Primary Façade: Geary Street (North)
Visible Facades: North and East elevations

EXISTING PROPERTY PHOTO / CURRENT CONDITION



Source: 233 Geary Project Application, Architectural Drawings, Sand Hill Property Company and Handel Architects, 2020

PRE-EXISTING HISTORIC RATING / SURVEY

- Category A – Known Historic Resource, per: Inclusion on the Historic Preservation Commission’s Landmark Designation Work Program, located within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District (KMMS)
- Category B – Age Eligible/Historic Status Unknown
- Category C – Not Age Eligible / No Historic Resource Present, per: _____

Adjacent or Nearby Historic Resources: No Yes: KMMS _____

CEQA HISTORICAL RESOURCE(S) EVALUATION

Step A: Significance

Individual Significance	Historic District / Context Significance
<p>Property is individually eligible for inclusion in a California Register under one or more of the following Criteria:</p> <p>Criterion 1 - Event: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 2 - Persons: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 3 - Architecture: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Period of Significance: 1946-1948</p>	<p>Property is eligible for inclusion in a California Register Historic District/Context under one or more of the following Criteria:</p> <p>Criterion 1 - Event: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 2 - Persons: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 3 - Architecture: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Period of Significance: 1906-1930 <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Contributor <input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>

Analysis:

According to the Historic Resource Evaluation, Part 1 ("HRE," dated May 22, 2020), and information accessed by the Planning Department, the subject building at 233 Geary Street is developed with a ten-story, steel-frame, marble panel clad commercial building, the current iteration of which was designed by master architect Timothy L. Pflueger and completed in 1948. Located across the southeast corner of Union Square in the downtown area, the subject building is roughly square in plan, with a flat roof, regular fenestration, and a prominent parapet. Significant known exterior alterations include replacement of the ground level storefronts and an increase to the size of several storefront openings in the 1990s. The interior has been substantially remodeled or otherwise modified through the years, with only the sixth-floor women’s powder room remaining largely intact.

Preservation staff concurs with the HRE's determination that the subject building is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) under Criteria 1, 2, and 3. First home to a two-story commercial structure fronting Stockton Street, Emma G. Butler commissioned its replacement with a nine level masonry structure that broke ground in 1905. Under construction when the 1906 earthquake struck, the Butler Building would survive and reach completion in 1908. Housing the glassware and crockery retailer Nathan-Dohrmann Company, the Butler Building was part of the broader redevelopment of the Union Square area as the retail center of San Francisco and one of the most prominent retail districts in the country. The Nathan-Dohrmann Company moved west to 281 Geary Street in 1944, which conveniently happened to be the same year the I. Magnin department store merged with Bullock’s, a larger chain. Having begun in 1876 as a small clothing shop at Grant Avenue and Geary Street, I. Magnin would retain its name and autonomy through the merger and sought larger, state-the-art quarters for its mid-40s expansion. Its then head, Grover Magnin, originally intended to demolish the Butler Building and replace it with a structure clad in white marble and black granite, but the ongoing wartime steel shortage dictated that the Butler Building be stripped while retaining its structural framework, and subsequently entirely re-clad per the design by architect Timothy Pflueger. Pflueger had by this point established himself as a prominent architect locally and throughout the state, having already designed several other I. Magnin stores across California. Work began in 1946 and would be completed with the building’s opening in January 1948. Touted during construction as one of the most elaborate stores in San Francisco, and also thought to be the city’s first entirely air conditioned building, it was immediately praised for features such as its interior fire escapes, unique elevator vestibule, sound proof changing rooms, and a host of amenities for employees. Though Magnin and Pflueger had input on the interior design and furnishings (Magnin personally designed the crystal chandeliers, for example), Neel D. Parker is credited as the interior designer.

Beginning as the Butler Building in 1907, the subject property appears significant for its association with the broad

pattern of development in San Francisco's Union Square and downtown area. Having only started construction in 1905, completion of the Butler building was part of the overall reconstruction and economic rebound of San Francisco in the years following the 1906 earthquake and fire. Home to the largest crockery and glassware store in the country at the time, this first iteration of 233 Geary was also part of firmly establishing Union Square and the surrounding streets as one of America's premier retail and shopping districts. But while the property has maintained its role as a prominent retail center through the decades, all elements of the Butler Building other than its steel frame were demolished as part of the I. Magnin remodel in the late 1940s. As such the property has lost any ability to convey its significance in association with post-quake reconstruction and the establishment of Union Square as the epicenter of San Francisco retail. Having said that, 233 Geary *does* appear to be a local, distinct representation of the national shift in the character of department stores immediately following World War II. Bouncing back to pre-Depression levels in terms of numbers, the prosperity the nation experienced following the war went hand in hand with Department stores from Los Angeles, to San Francisco, to Chicago and New York being remodeled or newly constructed with contemporary architectural and interior design aesthetics. These aesthetics included the drive for a more opulent, higher end experience. The development of 233 Geary exemplifies this and is therefore significant for its association with broad patterns of local or regional history and is eligible under Criterion 1.

The subject property also appears individually eligible under Criterion 2 for its association with Grover Magnin and the overall Magnin family and business. The Magnin family's roots on both sides can be traced back to Central Europe, specifically to the Netherlands. Isaac Magnin (Moeijen) was born in 1842 in Groningen, a city in the northern Netherlands, the eldest son of a Russian father and Dutch mother.¹ He emigrated to the United States with his parents when he was a child and worked as a travelling merchant throughout Texas and New Mexico as a young adult before enlisting in the army during the Civil War (sources conflict on whether Magnin served in the Confederate or Union Army). After the war's end, the Magnin family returned to Europe, this time to London where Isaac opened an art supply store. Mary Ann Cohen was born in 1848 in Scheveningen, a district of The Hague. She emigrated as a young child with her family, including her father who was a rabbi, to London. While little is known of her early life, many sources note that Mary Ann was only sixteen when she met and married Isaac Magnin in London in October of 1865.² The family had eight children: Samuel, Henrietta, Joseph, Emanuel John, Victor, Lucille, Flora, and Grover (the only Magnin child born in the United States). Isaac and Mary Ann lived in London with their children for approximately ten years, before immigrating to the United States in 1876. The Magnins travelled by ship to California by way of Cape Horn. Upon their arrival, they settled temporarily in Oakland where Isaac took a job as a woodcarver at Solomon Gump's Mirror and Picture Framing Shop in San Francisco at Market & Second Street. While working at Gump's Isaac was tasked with gilding the ceiling of a nearby church. Thinking of her husband's safety and fearful he may hurt himself falling from a scaffold and be unable to work, Mary Ann asked him to quit and offered to find a way for the family to make ends meet.

What originally began this way would grow into the first major American department store established by a woman.³ Mary Ann Magnin set up a small workshop in the family home to sew lingerie for the wealthy women of San Francisco and the Bay Area. Magnin crafted nightgowns, chemise, bridal gowns, and baby clothes, sourcing most of her lace and linen from Europe which gave the Magnin brand the reputation of being high quality and expensive. Mary Ann eventually opened a small store in Oakland to serve her clientele and as the business grew, moved the business from shop to larger shop and her clientele followed. In 1877, the Magnin's opened their first store in San Francisco on Market Street with Mary Ann affectionately naming it "I. Magnin & Company," after her husband, Isaac. Though the store bears Isaac's name, it is important to note that the business was founded by Mary Ann, who took great care and pride in operating the business herself throughout her life even after retirement. The Magnin children

¹ Robert P. Swierenga, *The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 310.

² Robert Hendrickson, *The Grand Emporiums: The Illustrated History of America's Department Stores* (New York, New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 162

³ Hendrickson, 162.

were brought up in the family business with several taking on active roles as they became adults and finished schooling. Sons Emanuel (John), Grover, Sam, and Joseph entered the family business around the turn of the century and would each go on to leave their mark upon the company. Joseph eventually founded his own store after falling in love with an I. Magnin millinery worker named Charlotte “Lottie” Davis, breaking a company policy that forbade family members from dating female workers. The two married and were co-owners of J. Magnin & Co, which marketed itself as a more affordable, accessible alternative to I. Magnin.⁴ Joseph Magnin’s break from the rest of the family allegedly caused a rift that lasted decades.

The Magnin family were among some of the most prominent in San Francisco. Family patriarch Isaac was a member of the Masonic Order in London and rose to the highest rank in the United States. Son Grover Magnin became treasurer of the American Council for Judaism, an anti-Zionist organization during World War II.⁵ Members of the family were upwardly mobile, belonged to the prestigious Temple Emanu-El congregation, and were respected throughout the Bay Area and California. Rabbi Edgar Fogel Magnin, son of Isaac and Mary Ann’s oldest son Samuel, became the spiritual leader of Reform Judaism in Southern California during the mid-twentieth century. Born into the family of department store magnates in 1890, Rabbi Magnin became a well-known lecturer, author, and civic leader in California and his Congregation B’nai B’rith in Los Angeles one of the most influential synagogues in the United States. Rabbi Magnin went on to write columns for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner and the Anglo-Jewish weekly Heritage, as well as serve as an adjunct professor of homiletics at the HUC Jewish Institute of Religion. He also developed a friendship with President Richard Nixon, who asked him to deliver the prayer at his presidential inauguration in 1969.⁶

The Dutch Jewish population in early nineteenth century San Francisco was small and transient, numbering less than one hundred people.⁷ Following the discovery of gold in Northern California in 1848, the city grew immensely and rapidly and within five years had nearly 60,000 residents. By the 1870’s, San Francisco was the city with the second largest Jewish population in the United States with 15,000-18,000 Jewish residents.⁸ Though significant, this number was far below New York City’s Jewish population estimate of 75,000-100,000. The earliest Jewish arrivals in San Francisco came from other places in the United States including Charleston, New Orleans, Saint Louis, and New York City. Most immigrated from German held lands of central Europe, but all nationalities were represented. In the early days, much of the Jewish population of San Francisco celebrated religious services and holidays together, with many new Jewish arrivals meeting for the first time on Rosh Hashanah in 1849. By 1850, the First Hebrew Benevolent Society was established to raise funds resulting in the purchase of two city lots for the city’s first Jewish cemetery. By late 1850, congregations began to separate based on nationality due to differences in beliefs.⁹ The economic life of the Jewish in San Francisco revolved mostly around merchandising in the central financial district. At the top of the new societal hierarchy was an elite group of pioneer German Jewish clothing and dry goods manufacturers, including Levi Strauss. The majority of Jews identified in San Francisco city directories between 1861-1865 were middle class with many listing their occupation as dealers and merchants, salesmen, skilled craftsmen, and bookkeepers. According to Robert P. Swierenga’s *The Forerunners: Dutch Jewry in the North American Diaspora*, the Dutch Jewish population was scattered throughout the city in the early nineteenth century, but by 1880 had congregated near Market Street between Third and Sixth streets.¹⁰

Mary Ann’s role in the business was typical of many Jewish families in the Netherlands. Swierenga further states, “Among the Dutch, only Jews appreciated women’s work and Jewish women alone wished to be business partners

⁴ Hendrickson, 166.

⁵ Swierenga, *The Forerunners*, 311.

⁶ Swierenga, 312.

⁷ Swierenga, 294.

⁸ Swierenga, 294.

⁹ Swierenga, 294.

¹⁰ Swierenga, 296.

even when there was no urgent need.”¹¹ Mary Ann ran her business with efficiency, attention to detail, and an independence that was not recognized in America at the time. The first I. Magnin store in San Francisco was located on Market Street and was one of the first retail stores in the city to display their merchandise in a way that incorporated interior design—with cabinets, showcases, and gilded mirrors. As the business continued to grow, the Magnins established their own buying office in New York City as a way to keep up with the latest fashion trends and stay ahead of competition. Along with much of San Francisco, the 1906 Earthquake and Fire levelled the I. Magnin store on Market Street. The family operated out of their home at 1482 Page Street for a time, until a \$50,000 loan with no interest from I.W. Hellman, president of Wells Fargo enabled them to rebuild. The new headquarters for I. Magnin were located downtown at Grant and Geary and sales rose due to the influx of workers during the city’s reconstruction. Around this time, E. John Magnin took over as head of the company. During his tenure as president of I. Magnin & Co., John resided primarily in New York City, the only head of a Pacific Coast retail chain to do so. Magnin is responsible for discovering many of the great design talents of the century including Jeanne Lanvin, Louis Boularges, Philip Mangone, and Hattie Carnegie. The creation of the “Magnin Woman” aesthetic was born during John Magnin’s reign as well, when the department store held up its reputation as a high quality, white-glove department store.

Though Mary Ann had technically retired from the family business in-store operations, the matriarch conducted daily inspections of the store at 3pm, even while she was confined to a wheelchair. Mary Ann further demonstrated her dedication to the business she built when she continued to make visits to the store in her final days, allegedly by ambulance and stretcher, according to an account written by business historian Milton Moskowitz.¹² Mary Ann only fully retired upon her death at the age of ninety-five in 1943, the last year the store was owned fully by the Magnin family. Following this, the company was absorbed by Bullock’s, though it appears Grover Magnin continued to oversee its operation for at least some time.

During Grover’s time as president of the company it went from a single location to a successful chain across the West Coast and was reputedly among the most luxurious brands of department stores in the country. Grover was key in the remodel of 233 Geary as he hired Pflueger as the architect and would even go on to travel Europe with him in the later 1930s in order gain design insights for I. Magnin stores, particularly this flagship location in San Francisco. Living in the Sant Francis Hotel just across Union Square, he likely had frequent involvement with and oversight of the remodel’s construction in the later 1940s. As such 233 Geary is the I. Magnin most closely associated with Grover Magnin.

As stated in the HRE, Pflueger’s iteration of the building at 233 Geary Street has high architectural merit rising to the level of individual significance and eligibility under Criterion 3. Though related to several other I. Magnin stores along the West Coast, the design is nonetheless distinct from these and avoids any simple stylistic categorization. Exhibiting characteristics from various modernist manners, such as Art Moderne and the International Style, its design stands alone and represents Pflueger’s exploration of new aesthetics as he reached the end of his career and, tragically, life. In contrast to the punched and deeply recessed window openings that were nearly ubiquitous in the area, Pflueger chose to install window systems that sat proud of the building face, both as a design decision and also in an effort to make the structure “pigeon proof.”¹³ Describing the impetus for the design to Herb Caen during its construction, Pflueger quipped that it was “A Piece of Cake” and that “The dimensions were already there—I just filled in the blanks with the best damn marble I ever saw.”¹⁴ Pflueger is widely recognized as a master architect

¹¹ Swierenga, 310.

¹² Swierenga, 310.

¹³ Therese Poletti, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger*, New York, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, p. 218.

¹⁴ Timothy Pflueger to Herb Caen in Bill Van Niekerken, “When San Francisco department store were royalty, I. Magnin was king,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 13, 2019: https://www.sfchronicle.com/chronicle_vault/article/When-San-Francisco-department-stores-were-13606199.php

responsible for some of the Bay Area’s Art Deco and other modernist structures, and is known for his approach to designing both the interior and exterior of many of his projects. While Neel D. Parker lead the interior effort at 233 Geary, Pflueger is believed to have been involved, and this is reflected by the opulent finishes and furnishings found throughout the interior. While much of the lavish interior has been destroyed, there are two spaces that remain intact: the sixth-floor women’s powder room and a dressing salon found on the fourth floor. While some fixtures have been replaced in-kind over the years, the powder room in particular appears virtually untouched and exhibits the elaborate, high style design the building historically had throughout the interior. Associated with a master architect and possessing high artistic merit and the interior and the exterior, 233 Geary is individually eligible under Criterion 3.

The subject building does not embody a rare construction type and therefore is not individually eligible under Criterion 4 as it applies to buildings and structures. (The potential archeological significance of the site is not addressed in this report.)

The subject building is a Category V (Unrated) property located within the locally designated and CRHR-eligible Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Historic District (KMMS). While the designation for KMMS does not include an explicit period of significance, it is apparent that it stretches from roughly 1906-1930. The designation refers to the district as a collection of early twentieth century commercial architecture, the entire area as having been built in less than twenty years following the great quake and fire, and that Union Square had been established as the city’s premier shopping districts by the 1920s. Pflueger’s iteration of 233 Geary is well outside the approximate period of significance. And though its design certainly relates to the character of the early 1900s buildings, it does so in relatively subtle ways while featuring little to no rustication, façade articulation, or revivalist detailing while also being intentionally designed with a rigid grid of windows that project beyond the face of the building. Given its construction date and architectural design the subject property is therefore noncontributory to KMMS, but its subtle relation to the surrounding district allows it to nonetheless maintain general compatibility.

Step B: Integrity

The exterior of the subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted in Step A:

Location:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Setting:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Association:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Feeling:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Design:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Materials:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Workmanship:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

Analysis:

In order to be determined eligible for the CRHR, the subject building must be found to retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance under Criteria 1, 2, and 3. Planning staff concurs with the HRE’s finding that the exterior of the building retains all seven aspects of integrity. Although modifications to the ground level have slightly altered the subject building’s integrity of design and materials, these changes are not sufficient to result in a determination that overall integrity or any single aspect of integrity has been significantly diminished.

Therefore, the subject building retains sufficient integrity at both the exterior and is a historic resource individually eligible for the CRHR under Criteria 1, 2, and 3.

The interior of the subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted in Step A:

Location:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Setting:	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Association:	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Feeling:	<input type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Design:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Materials:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Workmanship:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

Analysis:

Although much of the historic interior has been destroyed, including significant diminishment of the fourth-floor dress salon, the Department finds that the sixth-floor powder room remains largely intact. An isolated, self-contained area with much of its historic materials and features remaining, the powder room continues to convey its character while also serving as a limited, but nonetheless representative example of the splendor historically found throughout the building’s interior. Without the remainder of the building’s interior, this space has lost its integrity of association and perhaps feeling and setting, but it continues to convey all strictly tangible aspects of integrity (materials, design, workmanship) as well as location.

Therefore, the subject building retains sufficient integrity at the exterior and at a single interior space (the sixth-floor powder room) and as previously stated is a historic resource individually eligible for the CRHR under Criteria 1, 2, and 3.

Step C: Character Defining Features

The period of significance is 1948, the year of the completion of Pflueger’s complete overhaul of both the interior and exterior and opening of the building as the flagship I. Magnin store. The subject building’s character-defining features at the exterior that retain enough integrity to convey its significance are:

- Rectilinear, box-like massing
- Mid-rise (10 stories over basement) height
- Curved building corner
- Uniform, largely unarticulated facades
- Flat roof/roofline
- White, Vermont marble cladding
- Black granite at the base and around ground floor openings
- Uniform grid of windows located above the ground level
- Single-light, aluminum framed windows that project from the face of the building
- Double-height entry openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Square display window openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Parapet pierced with rectangular openings

The property’s character-defining features at the interior that retain enough integrity to convey its significance are:

- Sixth floor women’s powder room, consisting of:
 - Dark green and cream-colored marble finishes
 - Gold leaf ceiling
 - Three intact original sinks with marble basin surrounds and brass faucets
 - Brass-framed mirrors
 - Exposed bulb light fixtures
 - Toilet stalls with full height mirrored doors.

CEQA HISTORIC RESOURCE DETERMINATION

- Individually-eligible Historical Resource Present
- Contributor to an eligible Historical District / Contextual Resource Present
- Non-contributor to an eligible Historic District / Context / Cultural District
- No Historical Resource Present


NEXT STEPS

- HRER Part II Review Required
- Historic Design Review Comments provided per Plan Check Letter No. 1 (dated 12/24/2020)
- No further historic resource review, consult:
 - Current Planner
 - Environmental Planner

PART I: Approval

Preservation Team Review Concurred with this Determination.

Date: _____

Signature:  _____

Date: 4/30/2021

Elizabeth Gordon-Jonckheer, *Principal Planner*
Northwest Team and Historic Preservation Manager, Current Planning Division

233 Geary Street

Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1

Prepared for:
233 Geary Street Property Owner, LLC

22 May 2020

LEFT COAST ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY



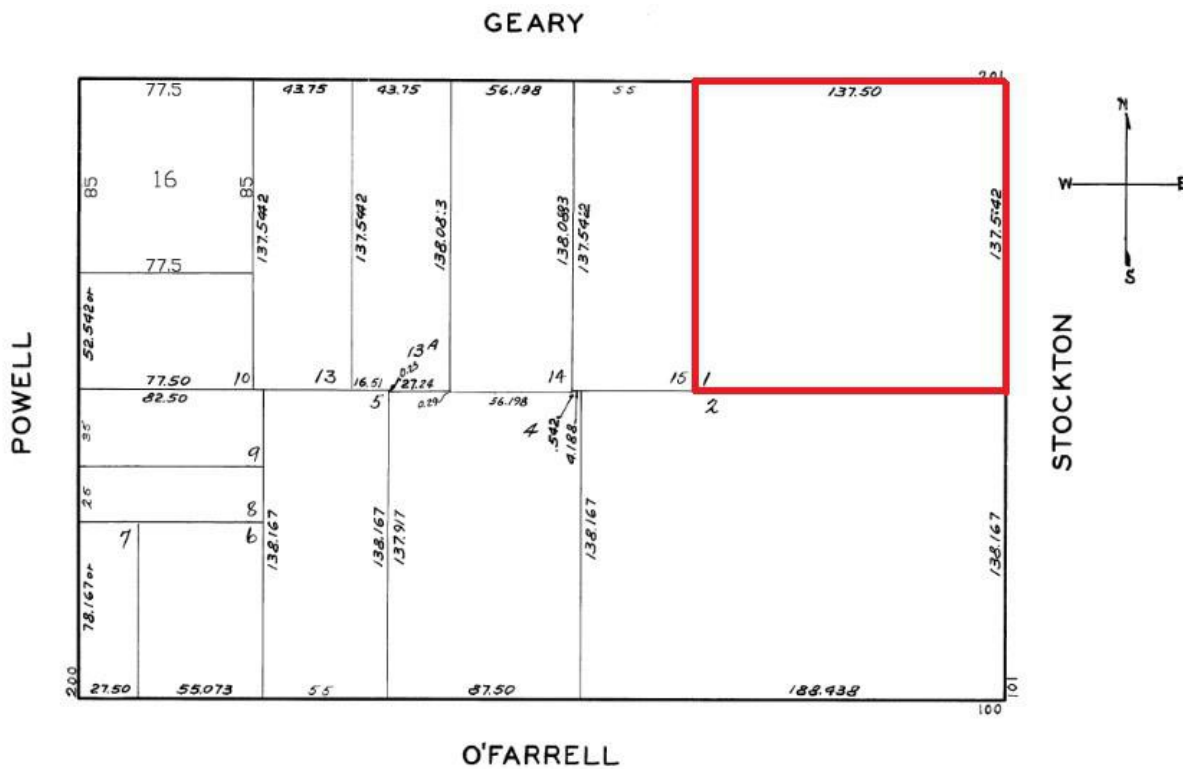
P.O. Box 70415, Richmond, CA. 94807 * (415) 745-1906 * caitlin@leftcoastarchitecturalhistory.com

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INTRODUCTION

This Historic Resource Evaluation was prepared by Caitlin Hibma, architectural historian qualified under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Architectural History, for 233 Geary Street Property Owner, LLC. It pertains to the property at 233 Geary Street (APN: 0314/001) in San Francisco's Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood. The 18,906.25 square foot parcel is located on the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton streets; in zoning district C-3-R (downtown - retail).



San Francisco Assessor's Office Block Map, block 0314. Subject property, lot 001, outlined.

Current Historic Status

The property at 233 Geary Street is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register), nor is it designated locally as a San Francisco Landmark.

The property is, however, located within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District, designated in Article 11 of the San Francisco Planning Code. It is listed as a Category V – Unrated Building (ie: not designated as Significant or Contributory.) Based on this status, the property is designated Category A by the San Francisco Planning Department. This designation indicates that the property qualifies as a historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The property was also documented by the Department of City Planning 1976 Survey and given a survey rating of “3” (on a scale of 0-5 with 5 as the highest rating for architecture).

BUILDING & PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Site

The property at 233 Geary Street is a square lot on the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton streets. The lot has 137.5 feet of street frontage along Geary Street and the same on Stockton Street. The property is situated on flat terrain in a dense commercial district that is characterized primarily by large mid-rise commercial buildings, including department stores and hotels. The public open space of Union Square is located directly to the north of the property, across Geary Street. Geary and Stockton streets are both multi-lane, one-way streets; Geary running west and Stockton running south. Both streets are bordered by broad sidewalks. The subject building fills its lot and abuts neighboring buildings with no open space present on the lot.



Current aerial imagery. Subject property outlined. (Google Maps)

The building is ten stories (two stories within the double-height ground level storefronts), with a penthouse on the roof counting as an eleventh story. It has a square plan, steel frame construction, and a flat roof surrounded by a high parapet wall. The exterior of the building is clad with white marble panels. Windows include metal frame, plate glass, storefront assemblies on the first/second stories and slightly-projecting aluminum sashes with fixed, single-lite configurations in punched openings on the upper stories.

Exterior

Primary (North) Facade

The primary facade faces north onto Geary Street and Union Square beyond. It is flat, rectilinear, and exhibits a strict grid-like pattern of fenestration. A low band of black granite trim runs along the base of the facade, while white marble panels clad the walls above. The first and second stories are occupied by single-height display windows and double-height entrance assemblies.; three large entry assemblies are arranged symmetrically across the facade – left side, center, and right side – with two square display windows in between the entries. All of these openings are surrounded black granite trim that is canted in toward the opening. The left and center entry

assemblies feature dark metal frames, a plate glass storefront window on the left, a recessed fully-glazed double-door on the right, a flat horizontal frieze band above, and a large two-lite clerestory window with an off-center vertical mullion that corresponds to the division between the storefront window and entry vestibule below. The right entry assembly is similar, but features recessed fully-glazed double-doors at the center with storefront windows on either side. The clerestory window has three lites, the mullions corresponding to the divisions of the storefront windows and entry vestibule below. The square display windows in between the entry assemblies are simple single-lite sashes.

The upper stories of the north facade (stories 3-10) are characterized by a strict grid of fenestration that is eight windows across and eight high. The windows of the third and fourth stories have vertical rectangular openings, while the stories above have shorter square openings. All openings are filled with single-lites in aluminum frames that project a few inches from the wall surface.

The flat roofline of the north facade consists of a high parapet wall. The top edge of the wall is pierced by horizontal rectangular openings that create a balustrade appearance. The northeastern corner of the building is rounded and clad by a narrow vertical band of white marble that conforms to the curve.



North facade, looking southeast from Union Square. (Property owner)

East Facade

The east facade of the building faces Stockton Street and is almost identical to the north facade. It is flat, rectilinear, and exhibits a strict grid-like pattern of fenestration. A narrow band of black granite trim runs along the base of the facade, while white marble panels clad the walls above. Like the north facade, the first and second stories exhibit a pattern of three double-height openings arranged symmetrically across the facade – left side, center, and right side – with a pair large square display windows in between. All of the openings are

surrounded black granite trim that is canted in toward the opening. Unlike the north facade, the double height openings do not contain retail entry assemblies, however. The leftmost opening is filled with a utilitarian service entrance assembly that includes a dark metal frame incorporating a recessed flush metal double door on the left, metal panel wall surface at center, and recessed flush metal door on the right with a metal vent to the right of that. Above the doors and at the clerestory level there is black metal paneling. The center and right double-height openings contain storefront window assemblies consisting of dark metal frames, three large plate glass lites, a flat horizontal frieze band above, and three corresponding clerestory lites. The square display windows in between the double-height openings are simple single-lite sashes, as on the north facade.

The upper stories of the east facade (stories 3-10) are characterized by a strict grid of fenestration that is eight windows across and eight high. As on the north facade, the windows of the third and fourth stories have vertical rectangular openings, while the stories above have shorter square openings, and all openings are filled with single-lites in aluminum frames that project a few inches from the wall surface.

The flat roofline of the east facade consists of a high parapet wall. The top edge of the wall is pierced by horizontal rectangular openings that create a balustrade appearance.



East facade, looking southwest from Geary & Stockton streets. (Google Street View)

South Facade

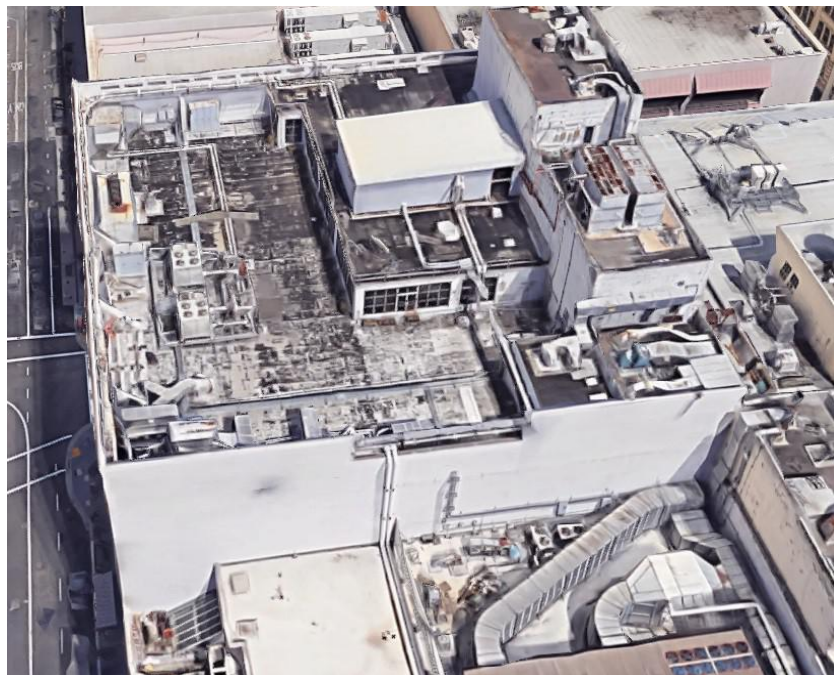
The south facade abuts a neighboring building and is not visible below the tenth story. The wall that rises above the roofline of the neighboring building is flat, unfenestrated, and unadorned. It is clad with stucco. Near the center, it rises an additional one to three stories, comprising the south wall of the eleventh story penthouse and a mechanical penthouse above that. The roofline is unadorned and generally flat, though it steps up asymmetrically to accommodate the penthouses at the center.



Exposed portion of south facade and rooftop, looking north. (Google Maps)

West Facade

The west facade abuts a neighboring building and is not visible below the eighth and ninth stories (neighboring roofline steps down near the front). The wall that rises above the roofline of the neighboring building is flat, unfenestrated, and unadorned. It is clad with stucco. The roofline is unadorned and generally flat, though the parapet steps down at the center to accommodate ductwork.



Exposed portion of west facade and rooftop, looking east. (Google Maps)

Penthouses

The eleventh story penthouse occupies approximately the southeastern quarter of the roof. It is the same height as the parapet wall that surrounds the roof and forms the east and south walls of the penthouse. The north and west facades of the penthouse are copiously fenestrated with large, nearly full-height openings filled with multi-lite, steel sash windows. The penthouse has a flat roof surrounded by a metal railing and has no roofline ornamentation.

A two-story mechanical penthouse is located on top of and to the west of the eleventh story penthouse. It is situated along the south edge of the roof with a low ell extending north on top of the eleventh story penthouse, and one to two-story massing at the southwest corner of the roof. The mechanical penthouse is unfenestrated and unadorned, featuring ductwork and other utilitarian mechanical components attached to its walls and roof.



Eleventh story penthouse, looking southeast. (Property owner)

Noteworthy Interior Spaces

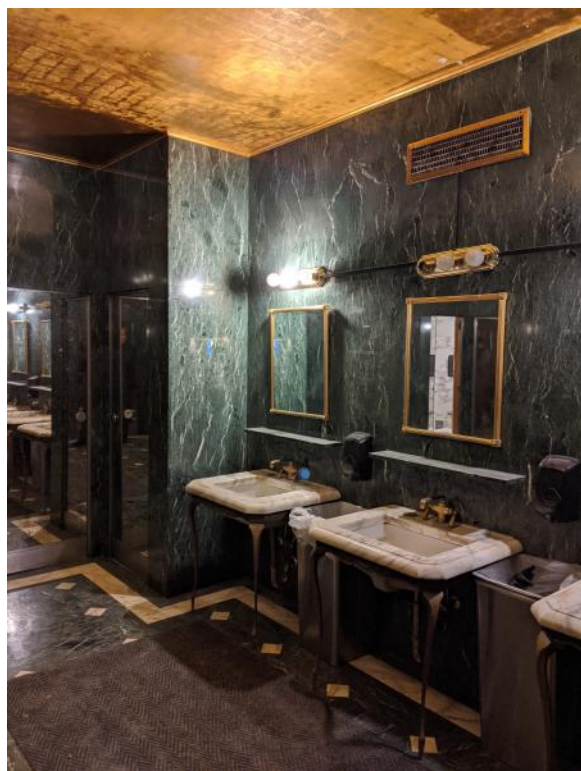
The interior of the building, which has otherwise been extensively altered over the years, features two spaces that are noteworthy for their retention of features original to the building's significant 1946-1948 remodel. These include:

Fourth Floor “Dress Salon”

Located at the center of the fourth floor is an open oval shaped space that was originally a dress salon and is defined by encircling columns and a recessed oval in the ceiling that is adorned with a corresponding band of foliate plaster molding. Low-profile, square, crystal light fixtures, also bearing foliate decorative motifs and with metal air vents at the center, are located at regular intervals along the band of molding, while a brass and crystal chandelier bearing foliate motifs hangs from the ceiling at the center of the oval. Modern recessed can lights have been added to the ceiling. The encircling columns are round, while two columns within the oval are square with curved “fender” panels encasing them.



Dress salon area. (Property owner)



Sixth floor women's restroom interior. (Property owner)

Sixth Floor Women's Restroom

The sixth floor women's restroom is located in the southwest corner of the building and is a square room, located

adjacent to and accessed from a modern restroom. The restroom interior is clad largely with dark green veined marble. The floor features a cream colored marble border and cream colored marble diamond tiles inset at regular intervals throughout the green marble field. Walls are green marble from floor to ceiling and the ceiling is finished with gold leaf. An ornate chandelier with metal framework and crystal drops hangs from a sunburst medallion at the center of the ceiling. Three original sinks are located along one wall and feature marble basin surrounds and brass faucets and cabriole legs. Small green marble shelves and brass-framed mirrors are located above each sink, as are exposed-bulb light fixtures. Toilet stalls along the bathroom's side walls have full-height mirrored doors and their interiors are finished with cream colored veined marble. The toilet fixtures themselves are not original.

[See *Appendix* for additional current images.]

Alterations

The building at 233 Geary Street was originally constructed between 1905 and 1908, then underwent a dramatic remodeling between 1946 and 1948, which supplanted its previous appearance and gave it its current Modernist architectural character. The following chart shows permit records on file with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection and description of other known alterations that affected the building throughout its history. Permits showing minor interior modifications, tenant improvements, and mechanical systems upgrades have been excluded from the chart below, but are included in the appendix. Clarifying notes in brackets are made by author per information received from the current property owner.

Date	Permit #	Scope of Work
10/14/37	30645	New metal framed(?) and plaster partitions for subdivision of rooms... cut opening through exterior brick wall on west elevation at room 817 for new 3x5' window opening. Place steel lintel over opening and install metal frame and wire glass for window. Alteration to conform to present building construction. Owner: Butler Building, 135 Stockton Street. Use: offices.
05/18/39	43020	Wood and glass partitions, room 909. Owner: E. McNear. Use: offices.
12/06/96	810452	Structural upgrade of entire building to comply with section 104(f). [In order to physically connect and open passage between buildings to west and south.]
1996	Architectural drawings	Two new entries added at each side of north and east facades, supplanting two existing square display windows in each location. Most of original interiors removed.
09/05/97	831094	Remodel of 4 th -8 th floor [including opening these floors and sub-basement to communicate with buildings to west and south]. New partitions, mechanical, and electrical. Owner: Federated Macy's. Use: retail/office/restaurant.
11/07/97	836946	Modify existing exit stairs from 3 rd floor to sub-basement. New corridor in sub-basement. Owner: Federated Macy's. Use: retail/office.
11/17/97	837615	Revision to exterior facade and interior core and shell. Owner: Federated Macy's. Use: retail/office/restaurant.
01/30/98	842192	Structural demolition of 1 st mezzanine, third floors for new escalator. Structural framing for escalator opening. Replace existing mezzanine. Owner: Federated Department Stores. Use: Office/retail.

1999	Per owner	First and second floor substantially reconfigured for lease by tenant businesses. Two-story central Geary entrance and two-story cosmetics hall on first floor infilled. Mezzanine space added.
04/07/15	1354013	Demo of non-operational escalator on mezzanine level, structural framing and patching of ceiling on first floor.
06/08/15	1359764	Temporary barricade erected to install new storefront [storefront permitted in 2014, but permit appears to be missing. Possibly refers to center opening on north facade where storefront/entry assembly and glazing was replaced with anodized bronze frame incorporating two double-door entries, center plate glass panel and five tall clerestory lites above.
2006	Per owner	First and second floors and part of sub-basement reconfigured to accommodate current retail tenants.

[See *Appendix* for copies of building permit records.]

Architectural Style

Stylistically, 233 Geary Street is a mixture of Modernist styles and is not easily defined as one particular sub-style within the Modernist category, though it seems to tend toward a general definition of Moderne. Its style has been variously referred to as Stripped Classicism (DCP 1976 Survey), Moderne (SF Planning Property Information Map summary), and Late Moderne (Page & Turnbull Preliminary Assessment Memorandum). The “San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970, Historic Context Statement” does not specifically discuss 233 Geary Street, but would conceivably assign it to the Corporate Modern style. The Art Deco, Art Moderne (also called Streamline Moderne), and International styles also seem to have influenced the building's design.

The fact that the building is essentially a circa 1905-1908 frame meant to support early-20th century commercial style facades, and which was re-skinned in 1946-1948, means that the underlying structure likely had some influence on the exterior facade organization, resulting in features like the double-height first/second story and taller third and fourth story windows. It may have also had some influence on design decisions that otherwise would have pushed the building toward a more definable style.

The Art (or Streamline) Moderne style was popular from about 1930 into the 1940s. The typical version was characterized by smooth wall surfaces, flat roofs, curved corners, and horizontal lines or banding (speed-lines) and decorative elements like flat canopies and balustrades that instilled a horizontal emphasis. This was inspired by the modern transportation-related industrial design of trains, ships, planes, and even automobiles, which had smooth surfaces, curved corners, rounded profiles, and horizontal emphasis that gave the visual impression of aerodynamics and speed. The basic smooth wall surfaces, flat roof, small-radius curved corner, and minimalist parapet balustrade of 233 Geary appeal to this stylistic description, though it could also be said that small exterior details, like canted window trim in contrasting black marble, and the strongly geometric fixtures and bold finishes in the intact interior spaces speak to the even earlier Art Deco character.

The building at 233 Geary dates slightly later than the period of popularity of the Art Moderne style, but in so doing eschews some of the more literal “streamlining” and references the even sleeker International style, which was prevalent in the 1930s, 40s, and onward. The International style exhibited smooth wall surfaces and flat

roofs similar to that of the Art Moderne style, but left off decorative speed-lines, canopies, and balustrades and opted instead for dramatic fenestration, usually in the form of metal sash windows, set flush with the wall plane, in extensive horizontal banks or ribbons. An amalgam of the two styles seems to be demonstrated at 233 Geary Street, which includes the universal smooth - even slick - marble wall surfaces and flat roof, combined with the rounded corners and parapet balustrade of the Art Moderne aesthetic and the dramatic wall-flush metal fenestration of the International style (though not in horizontal ribbons, possibly due to the underlying 1905-1908 structural framework).

To add an additional layer of stylistic nuance, the San Francisco Modern Architecture context statement provides a list of character defining features for the Corporate Modern style, many of which seem to correspond to the features of 233 Geary Street, including a “vertical box form; windows and wall surfaces on the same plane, providing the look of a taut skin; repeating pattern of fenestration; and a seamless façade that often appears sleek and slippery.” In actual examples, Corporate Modern buildings tend toward glass boxes of curtain wall construction, but in description alone, the concept of a box-like form with a “slick skin” formed by windows and wall surfaces on a single plane can be readily applied to 233 Geary Street.

Based on the above, it appears that 233 Geary Street is a somewhat unique example of Modernist design that incorporates a number of mid-20th century Modernist influences. It might most appropriately be describes as a progressed iteration of Art Moderne architecture and is a good example thereof, though somewhat difficult to compare to other examples.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

The subject property is located in the Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood, which is is situated in the northwestern portion of the City of San Francisco and is bounded by Bush Street on the north, Stockton Street on the east, Market Street on the southeast, and Gough Street and Van Ness Avenue on the west. Downtown/Civic Center is bordered by Nob Hill and Chinatown to the North, the Financial District and South of Market to the east and southeast, and Western Addition to the west.¹ The subject property is located on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, and directly across Geary Street from Union Square, a major public plaza that influenced development in the immediate area throughout the years.

The Downtown/Civic Center neighborhood lies near the historic heart of the City of San Francisco and was one of the first areas to be occupied and developed as Europeans settled the tip of the San Francisco peninsula. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, in addition to the religious establishment at Mission Dolores, the small village of Yerba Buena grew up around a cove on the eastern shoreline of the peninsula. The village served as a minor trading center boasting a few hundred residents. In 1839, a few streets were laid out around the plaza (now Portsmouth Square), and settlement began expanding outward as population grew, booming abruptly with the Gold Rush of 1849. That year, an “Official Map of San Francisco” by William M. Eddy showed the street grid extending as far west as Larkin Street and into the South of Market area. It and also called out a “public square” in the current location of Union Square. The following year, 1850, the “public square” was deeded to the City of San Francisco by Colonel John Geary, who stipulated that it be used as a public park.

As the new city boomed and the 1855 Van Ness Ordinance was put into effect, the sand dunes that made up much of the Downtown area were leveled and development occurred around Union Square, which was then an undeveloped open space used for both recreation and less savory activities, like squatting and dumping of refuse. The Van Ness Ordinance attempted to clean up some of the latter and both horse cars and cable car lines were

1 San Francisco Planning Department, Neighborhood Groups Map, <http://www.sf-planning.org/index.aspx?page=1654>

established in the area in the 1870s, encouraging further growth. In the late 1870s, the square, by then dubbed Union Square in support of the North during the Civil War, was formally developed as a public park. Over the next fifty years, a respectable district of mixed residential and commercial uses, scattered with a significant number of churches, developed around Union Square.

In 1903, the Dewey Monument, topped with a Winged Victory sculpture, which now stands at the center of Union Square, was installed to great pomp and circumstance presided over by Theodore Roosevelt. The Saint Francis Hotel was also built on the west side of the square, establishing a major commercial-hospitality presence that prevails in the area today. Only three years later, however; the surrounding Downtown was decimated by earthquake and fire. Buildings in the Union Square area were almost completely destroyed, with only the Saint Francis hotel surviving, though gutted. Union Square became a refugee encampment as the city moved toward recovery.

The Downtown and Union Square areas were not rebuilt as the residential neighborhoods they had been before the disaster. Instead, a commercial emphasis dominated and the Union Square area became known for large department stores, office buildings, and other retail uses, as well as large hotels, like the Saint Francis. Thereafter, the Union Square area persisted as a popular shopping district throughout the early-twentieth century, while the public park at its center was a gathering place, tourist attraction, and around 1930s, the location of the City's annual Christmas tree. Between 1938 and 1942, the underground parking garage that now sits under Union Square was designed and built, resulting in redevelopment of the plaza above. The garage subsequently offered easy access to the Union Square commercial district in the form of increased parking for the ever growing number of people who owned private automobiles. These shoppers brought steady commerce to the department stores and other businesses around the square, which itself, was the site of patriotic displays throughout World War II and hosted many other public events.

In the 1960s, a number of long-lived department stores on Union Square closed and the area began to decline. Loitering and unsavory activities became more prevalent in the park, itself, but the area was eventually saved by a boom that the adjacent Financial District experienced in the 1970s. This stimulated retail and hospitality demands. New department stores replaced many of the old, some even physically, as older buildings were replaced with new edifices. By 1985, the Union Square area boasted one of the largest concentrations of retail square footage in the world and was a huge draw to tourists as well as locals, as it continues to be today.²

PROPERTY HISTORY

The 1894 San Francisco block book indicates that the subject property, in its current dimensions, was owned by Charles C. Butler. The 1880 census lists Butler as a real estate agent. He had a wife, Emma Gates Butler, and two daughters, Leila and Emma. The earliest available Sanborn Fire Insurance map, dating to 1887, shows that the subject parcel was developed with two-story storefronts facing Stockton Street that had rambling accretions at the rear. The property housed a French laundry and a mosaic works, along with presumably other small businesses. By the time of the 1899 Sanborn map, the same storefronts housed a bill posters office, office, French laundry, a dwelling, and an undertaker.

Vital records show that Charles C. Butler died in 1900; however, the 1901 block book continues to show him as owner of the property that year. Handwritten notations on the map (made in 1905 or later) state that ownership of the property was eventually transferred to his wife, Emma G. Butler, and that a 9-story brick building was started

² Nuno, Gregory J., "A History of Union Square," 1993; via http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=A_HISTORY_OF_UNION_SQUARE

on the parcel in June 1905. The Reid Brothers, architects, were commissioned to design the building and were also known for their work on the likes of Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, the Grand Lake theater in Oakland, and in San Francisco, the Call Building, Fairmont Hotel, and Cliff House. Throughout the 1910s, a number of newspaper notices indicated that Emma Butler employed the Reid Brothers on multiple projects developing properties she owned in the downtown area and other neighborhoods, including a commercial store and hall building, post office, garage, and storage building.

Although the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of September 1905 illustrates the lot on the corner of Geary and Stockton as vacant; a newspaper article from June 1905 notes that a contract for construction of the Butler Building had been granted to the American-Hawaiian Engineering & Construction Company and later articles indicate that site work was at least in progress in August and September, when a restraining order was issued against Emma G. Butler and the American-Hawaiian Engineering & Construction Company to stop excavation at the site. The injunction was initiated by the owner of the adjacent lot on Geary Street who claimed that the depth of excavation was excessive and that it was undermining his building, risking its collapse. He also sued for \$9,000 to build an adequate retaining wall to support his building.³ One month later, a water main burst under a steam engine that was excavating the site, toppling the engine into the excavated pit, flooding the area, and again threatening to undermine the neighboring building.⁴



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, September 1905. 233 Geary Street outlined.

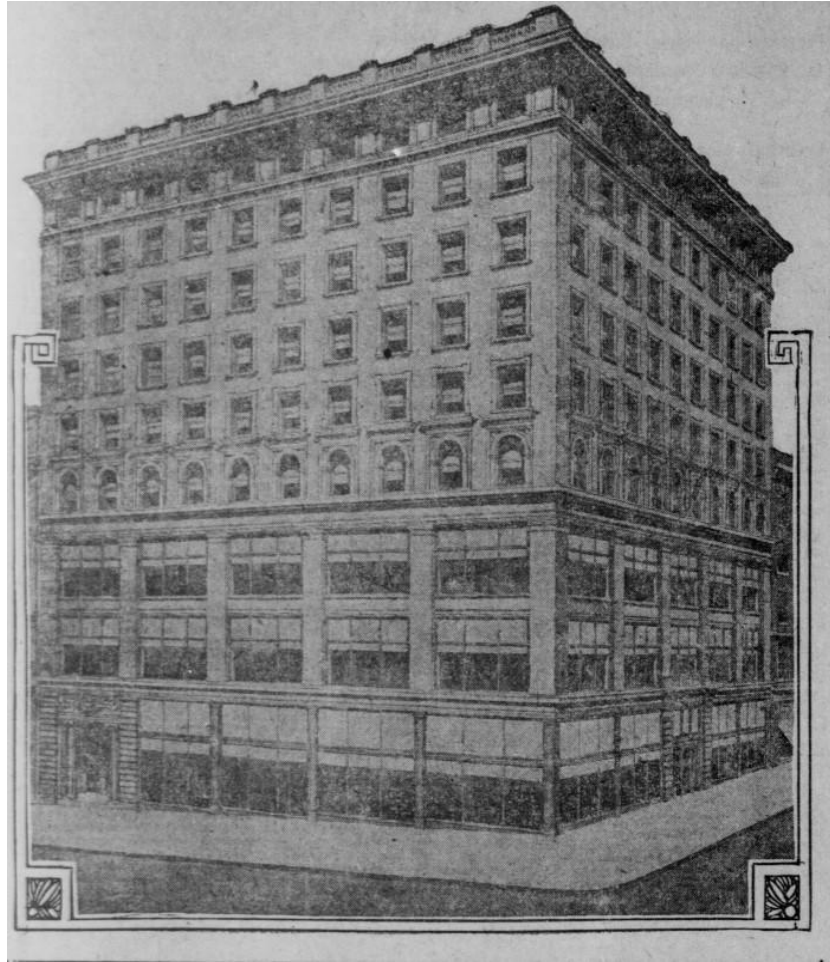
The Butler Building was still under construction in April 1906, when earthquake and fire devastated downtown San Francisco. The partially-completed Butler Building was damaged, but not fully destroyed.⁵ Emma Butler quickly renewed her construction contract with American-Hawaiian Engineering & Construction and the project proceeded until September 1907, when she terminated that contract and employed American-Pacific

3 “Fears excavation may cause building's collapse,” *San Francisco Call*, 13 August 1905.

4 “Recovers \$100,000 from Mrs. Emma Gates Butler,” *San Francisco Call*, 30 June 1905. “Bursting of water main stops work,” *San Francisco Call*, 29 September 1905.

5 “Points out the importance of plan in rebuilding,” *San Francisco Call*, 11 May 1906.

Construction Company to finish the work. A 1909 newspaper article recounted that she felt work was proceeding too slowly. American-Hawaiian Engineering & Construction took her to court and, based on the fact that the company had adequately informed Butler of the “crowded market” and delayed timeline while the city was being reconstructed, they were awarded \$100,000 for the work they had completed.⁶ The judgment was later reversed, however; with Emma Butler winning an appeal to the State Supreme Court.⁷



Butler Building as illustrated in the San Francisco Call, 19 January 1908.

An October 1907 newspaper article described the Butler Building as “... an example of the structures that are to adorn this popular square [Union Square]. The Butler Building is a nine story class A building of the most modern type, designed in the Italian Renaissance style of architecture, the exterior being finished in Colusa sandstone.”⁸ The article noted that the building would be ready for occupancy in February 1908 and an earlier article mentioned that Newman & Levinson, importer and fancy dry goods merchant, planned to be located in the completed building.⁹ However, a somewhat contradictory report from December 1907 stated that the Nathan-Dhormann Company, which sold glassware and crockery, and later, silverware, art goods, and refrigerators, planned to rent three floors in the building starting in mid-January 1908. This was lauded as good news for

6 “Recovers \$100,000 from Mrs. Emma Gates Butler,” *San Francisco Call*, 30 June 1905.

7 “Big judgement reversed,” *San Francisco Call*, 7 January 1913.

8 “Real estate and Building news,” *San Francisco Call*, 12 October 1907.

9 “Downtown sites in big demand,” *San Francisco Call*, 15 January 1907.

establishing the shopping district around Union Square and that both the new building and the Nathan-Dohrmann business would attract other fashionable businesses to the area.¹⁰ Other reports indicate that the upper floors of the building were leased as professional offices, including a number of medical and dental offices. The Red Cross maintained rooms on the fifth floor and the headquarters of the field division of the U.S. General Land Office, as well as offices of the State Board of Medical Examiners and State Board of Pharmacy were located in the building.¹¹

Under the American-Pacific Construction Company, the building was eventually completed in 1908. Articles in the *San Francisco Call* reported that 110,000 square feet of the building would be occupied by the Nathan-Dohrmann Company, which was granted a 17-and-a-half year leased with the option for a five year renewal on floors one through three, part of the fourth, the basement and sub-basement. The company moved into the building incrementally from its former store on Van Ness Avenue and warehouse on Mission Creek; first relocating its wholesale department, then its hotel supply department into the second through fourth floors, and eventually the retail department onto the ground floor. It fully occupied the building by 1909 and consequently became the largest store devoted to glassware and crockery in the country.¹²



Butler Building at left as seen from Union Square, 1912. (OpenSFHistory.org)

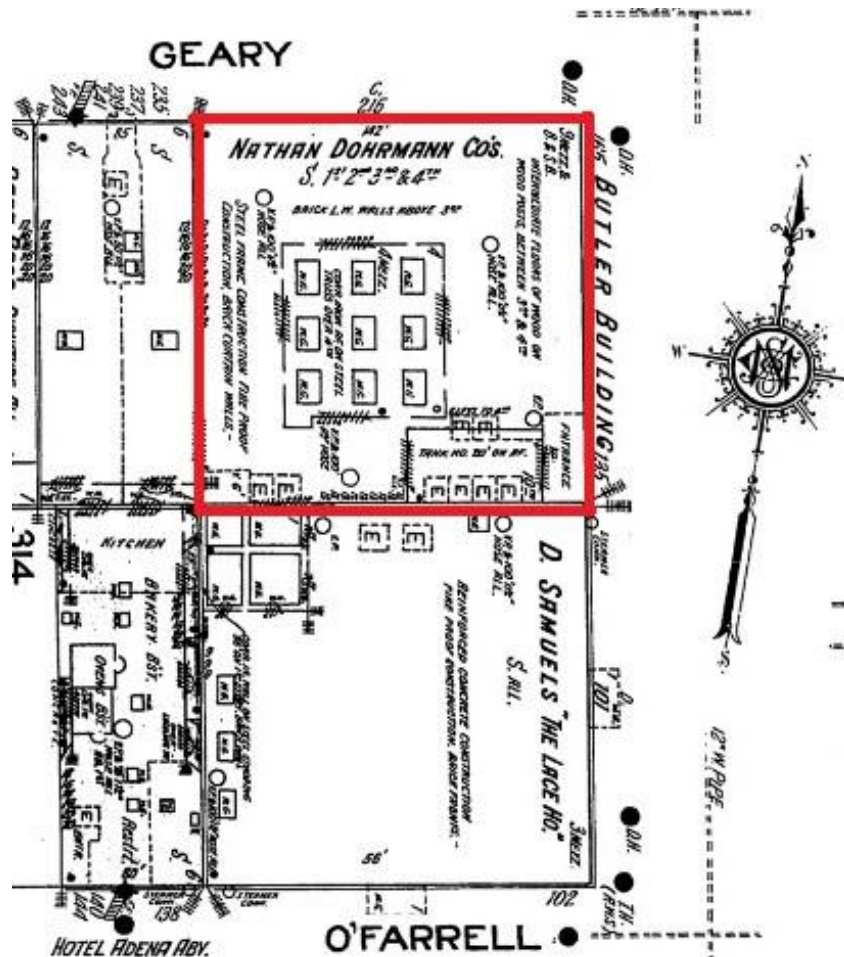
The Nathan-Dohrmann Company continued to be the major tenant in the building for more than three decades, listed at 135 Stockton Street since the building's main entrance was located on its east facade. In 1916, Emma Butler split ownership of the property with her two married daughters; Leila B. Stoddard and Emma B. Breeden. She then died in 1921 and her share of ownership was split between the daughters. In 1938, the Butler daughters

¹⁰ "Real estate and building news," *San Francisco Call*, 21 December 1907.

¹¹ "Dr.s A. Barkan and E.C. Sewall," *San Francisco Call*, 30 April 1908. *San Francisco Call*, 3 May 1908. "Aid for Mexican flood sufferers," *San Francisco Call*, 29 September 1909. "Alleged timber frauds unearthed," *San Francisco Call*, 8 June 1910.

¹² "Real estate deals are preparing for an era of great prosperity," *San Francisco Call*, 18 January 1908. "Nathan-Dohrmann in Butler Block," *San Francisco Call*, 19 January 1908.

began distributing ownership shares to other members of the extended family, starting with Emma Breeden (later McNear)'s son, John N. Breeden. From 1945 until 1984, ownership of the property was distributed among numerous members of the family and possibly others, with individuals gifting and/or selling their full or partial shares to additional people over the years.¹³



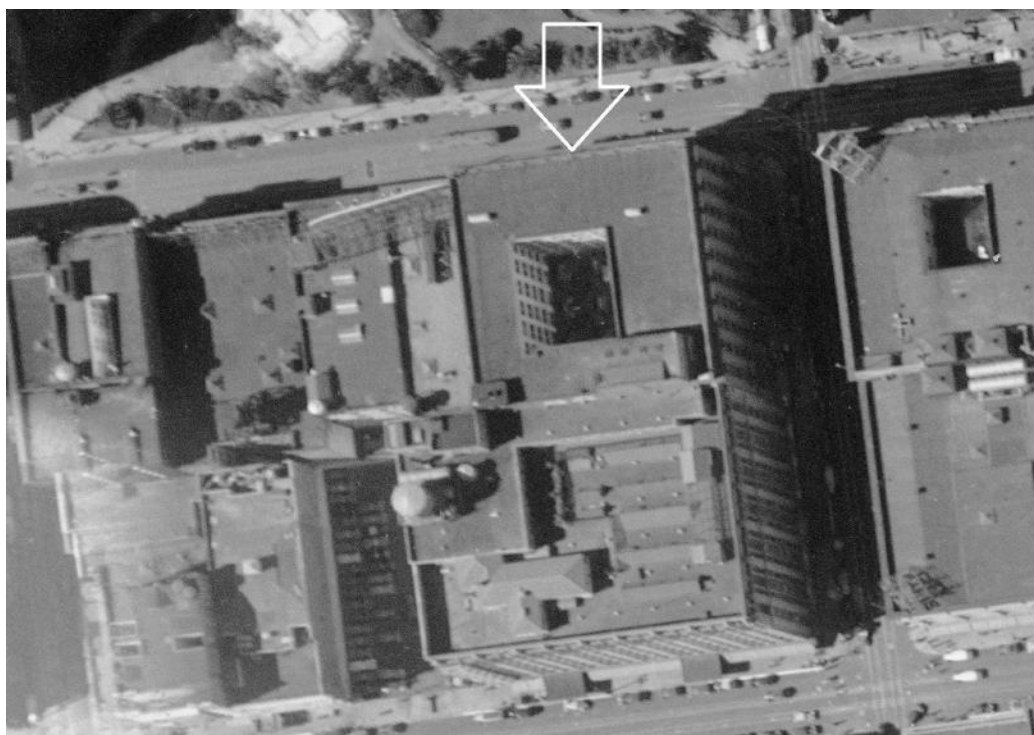
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1913. 233 Geary Street outlined.

City directories show that in 1944 the Nathan-Dohrmann Company moved west on Geary Street (to 281 Geary Street) and became known simply as Dohrman's. The same year, the I. Magnin department store, which had been founded as a small clothing shop in San Francisco in 1876, and was then located on Grant Avenue at Geary Street, merged with the Bullock's department store chain. I. Magnin retained its name and autonomy, but the merger enabled expansion of the brand that resulted in I. Magnin leasing the Butler Building, undertaking a wholesale remodel, and moving to the larger and more modern new premises on Union Square. An October 1944 newspaper article announced the plans for a “nine-story white marble and black granite structure” and noted that “the post-war I. Magnin will be San Francisco's first entirely air conditioned building and will house one of the country's largest specialty shops... devoted entirely to exclusive apparel and accessories.” The article lauded the new project as a vote of confidence in San Francisco's post-war property and growth. It provided a rendering of

¹³ San Francisco Assessor's Office, sales ledgers.



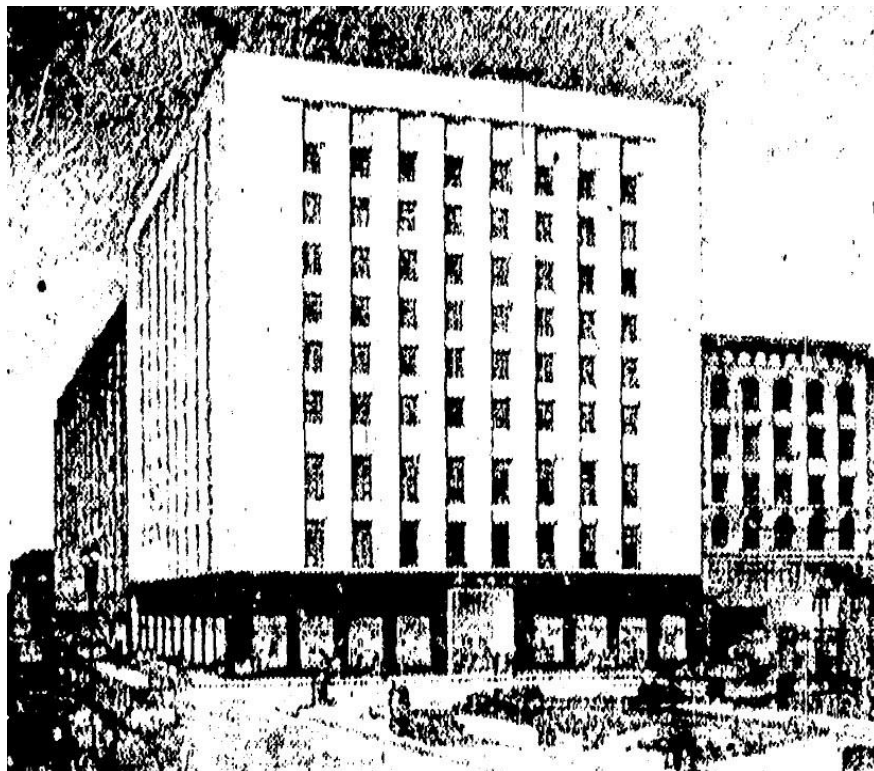
Butler Building 1935. (San Francisco Public Library AAC-7265)



1938 aerial photo. Arrow indicates subject building. (David Rumsey Historical Map Collection)



Butler Building, 1940. (OpenSFHistory.org)



Rendering of proposed Butler Building remodel. (San Francisco Chronicle, 27 October 1944)

the proposed remodel, which was a near match for the final result, although the black granite base was shown extending as high as the second story, vertical insets framed the upper story windows, and there was no parapet balustrade shown.¹⁴ The article implied that an entirely new building would be constructed on the Geary & Stockton site; however, due to wartime steel shortages, the project was eventually revised to retain and reuse the Butler Building's steel frame and re-skin it with marble and plate glass.¹⁵ The constraints of the framework are what resulted in conditions like the taller heights of the third and fourth story windows and perhaps other details that changed from rendering to reality.



Remodeling in progress, November 1946. (Property owner)

With I. Magnin's relocation to 233 Geary Street, it took over the entire building and the professional and medical offices that had been located on the upper floors were displaced. This caused some upset in the local medical and dental field, as the Butler Building had been a major location of such services.¹⁶

Grover Magnin, then head of the I. Magnin chain, retained architect Timothy Pflueger to design the remodel of the Butler Building. He had used Pflueger's services on other I. Magnin stores in California (see *Architect* section below). During construction, the new store was touted as “one of the most elaborate stores in San Francisco,” being nine stories of steel and concrete, topped by employees' quarters, hospital, cafeteria, telephone switchboard, and sun deck. Its plate glass windows, white marble facing, and black granite base and trim were also described. At the time, it was expected to be finished by end of 1947.¹⁷

14 “I. Magnin to have new store,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 October 1944.

15 “When San Francisco department stores were royalty, I. Magnin was king,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 February 2019.

16 “The fight for *lebensraum* in downtown San Francisco,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 September 1947. “Navy expects to vacate Schroth building,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 16 March 1946.

17 “The City's growth,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 September 1947.



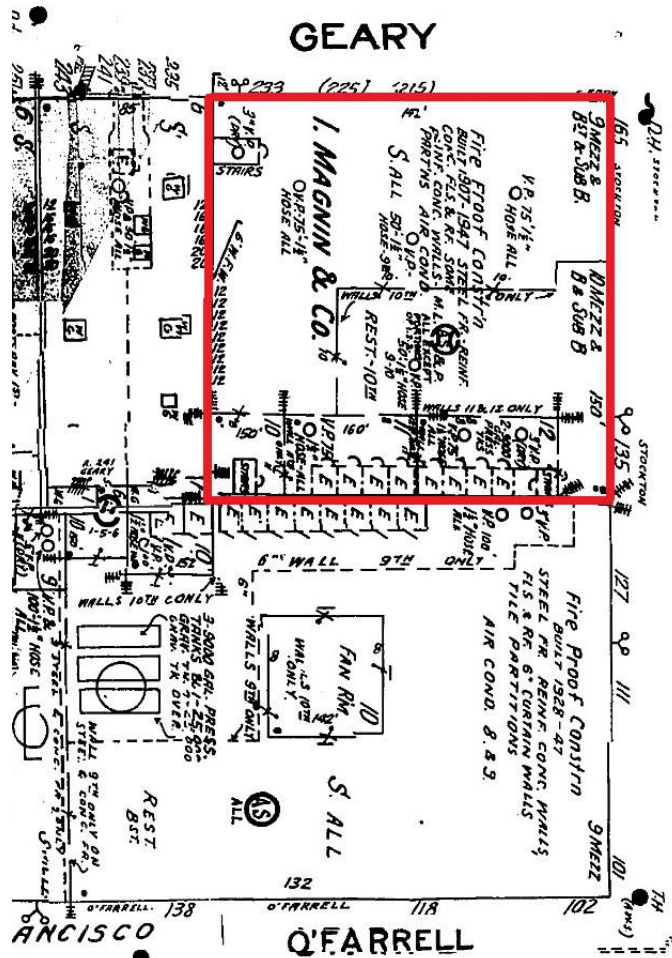
Newly completed in 1947. (SFPL AAC-7098)



Upon completion of remodeling, 1948. (Property owner)



1948 aerial, 233 Geary Street at top right of block. (David Rumsey Historical Map Collection)



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1950. 233 Geary Street outlined.

On 15 January 1948, the remodeled building was slated to open within days. An article reporting a preview tour of the building extensively described the building's cutting-edge amenities like a special elevator vestibule, air conditioning that maintained a constant 72-degrees, sound-proof fitting rooms, workrooms with non-shadow-casting lights, a seven bed hospital facility, sun deck, lounges and a restaurant for employees, and interior fire escapes. The eighth through tenth stories and the eleventh story penthouse were for both the work and leisure of I. Magnin staff, while the lower seven full floors of retail space included crystal, jewelry, shoes, millinery, negligee and boudoir, furs, dresses and gowns, girls clothing, sports and toy departments, plus a gift shop and beauty salon. Interior design was by Neel D. Parker of San Francisco and featured luxury finishes like marble floors and wall paneling, bronze and nickle-silver trim, oak veneer, leather wall coverings, gold and silver-leafed ceilings, dyed-to-match rugs and carpeting, satin and silk upholstered period furniture, antique mirrors, and chandeliers of carved Honduran mahogany and crystal by Orrefores. A featured space was the first floor Mural Room that featured five murals painted on glass by French artist Max Ingrand.¹⁸ Upon its opening, legendary humorist and *Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen commented that the “new I. Magnin monument at Geary and Stockton is so magnifico (was it really ever the dingy old Bulter Building?)”¹⁹

18 “A chic palace is previewed: I. Magnin dwells in marble halls,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 15 January 1948,

19 Herb Caen, “It’s News to Me,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 17 January 1948.



One of the dress salons, ca. 1948. (Property owner)



233 Geary Street from Union Square, 1960s. (Property owner)



233 Geary Street from Union Square, 1970s. (Property owner)

I. Magnin enjoyed many years of retail success in the building and became a venerable retail landmark anchoring the southeast corner of Union Square. The company celebrated its centennial anniversary in 1976 and a few years later, in the early 1980s, undertook an interior remodeling of the store to freshen and modernize it. So concerned were customers about the retention of the store's luxurious interiors that a newspaper column titled "135 Stockton" ran in the *San Francisco Chronicle* during the project to keep the public abreast of happenings at the store, both in regard to the remodeling project as well as retail offerings and events. In 1981, the column noted that over the following three years the store would gain new escalators, an expanded men's department, a food complex (including a European-style cafe and a confectionery shop), and a new floor to house these amenities. It was assured that the "style and quality that bespeak I. Magnin and San Francisco would remain intact." It was noted that compatible materials like marble, glass, and wood, would be used and that the existing concept of shops within a shop would be maintained with new designer boutiques added to the mezzanine.²⁰ A later column assured that noteworthy features like dress salons and chandeliers were being preserved, while finishes like paint and carpeting were being refreshed in current colors, furniture reupholstered, and lighting added. Outside, sidewalks were replaced to stop water leaking into the basement level men's department.

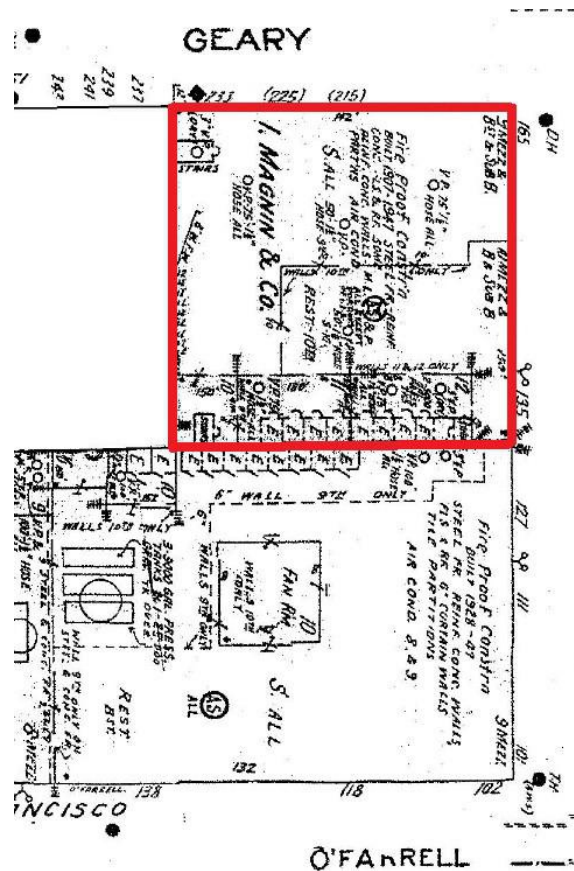
Shortly following the extensive remodel, the I. Magnin building was purchased by RREEF Funds, which appears to have been associated with Macy's department store.²¹ I. Magnin continued to operate as such until 1995, when Macy's (most prominently located in the building to the west on Geary Street and also owning the building to the south along Stockton), closed I. Magnin and expanded into the building at 233 Geary Street. It did this by joining the three buildings structurally and opening the walls between the adjacent buildings to west and south

²⁰ "135 Stockton: Join the Restoration," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 July 1981.

²¹ San Francisco Assessor's Office, sales ledgers. "Some real estate highlight events in the S.F. Bay Area," *San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle*, 22 April 1984.



233 Geary Street from Union Square, 1970s. (Property owner)



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, ca. 1995. 233 Geary Street outlined.

on floors four through eight, and at the sub-basement level. The work also included adding two additional entrances (supplanting the outer two square display windows) on both the Geary and Stockton facades, removing the majority of the original interiors, and creating office space on floors eight and up. Macy's expanded its retail space into the lower floors. Later, in 1999, the first floor and second floors were reconfigured to be leased out to other retailers, which by 2006 included the current tenants Louis Vuitton and Loro Piana.

Chain of Title & Occupancy

Dates	Owner	Occupants
<i>Pre-1894 – ca.1901</i>	C.C. Butler	vacant
<i>ca.1901 - 09/29/16</i>	Emma G. Butler	<i>ca.1901 – 1908: vacant/under construction</i>
<i>09/26/16 – 3/24/22</i>	Emma G. Butler, Leila B. Stoddard and Emma B. Breeden (1/3 share each)	
<i>3/24/22 – 3/7/38</i>	Leila B. Stoddard and Emma B. McNear (½ each, upon death of Emma Butler)	<i>1908 - 1944: Nathan-Dohrmann Company and various professional/medical offices</i>
<i>3/7/38 – 10/30/45</i>	Leila B. Stoddard, Emma B. McNear, and John N. Breeden	
<i>10/30/45 – 4/3/84</i>	John N. Breeden, et al.	<i>1948 – 1994: I. Magnin</i>
<i>04/03/84 – 2/2/96</i>	RREEF USA Fund-III Inc. (for Macy's)	<i>1994 – 2019: Macy's, Louis Vuitton, Loro Piana</i>
<i>02/02/96 – Jan. 2019</i>	Macy's Primary Real Estate Inc.	
<i>Jan. 2019 – present</i>	Sand Hill Property Company	<i>Present: Louis Vuitton, Loro Piana</i>

ARCHITECT

The building at 233 Geary Street was designed by architect Timothy Pflueger. Timothy Ludwig Pflueger (1892-1946) was a San Francisco native, born and raised in the Mission District. His architectural career began around 1910 with an apprenticeship in the San Francisco office of architect James R. Miller. In 1917, he left the Bay Area for Washington D.C., where he had a brief stint as an architect for the United States Government, but returned in 1920 to take a role as the partner of his former mentor, Miller. The firm of Miller & Pflueger became a prominent and prolific Bay Area architectural practice, specializing in office buildings, schools, and theaters, including prominent projects such as the Castro Theater (1922), Pacific Telephone Building (1925; tallest skyscraper west of the Mississippi and the first high-rise in San Francisco), Alhambra Theater (1926), Roosevelt Junior High School (1928), the Medical-Dental Office Building at 450 Sutter Street (1929), the Pacific Stock Exchange (1930), and the Paramount Theater in Oakland (1931).²² All of these buildings were exuberant examples of the Art Deco style and Miller & Pflueger became known as a leading designer in the popular aesthetic.

James Miller retired in 1937, leaving Pflueger to practice independently for the remainder of his career. Building on his experience designing in the Art Deco style, his work became known for Modernist styling and cutting-edge technical design. He participated in large public projects known for their modern and Moderne influence; serving

²² Blake Green, "Landmarks that Timothy Pflueger Built," *The San Francisco Chronicle* (14 April 1986).

as a consulting architect on the design of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and sitting on the Board of Architects for the 1939-1940 Golden Gate International Exposition.²³ He was also known for the comprehensiveness of his designs, which addressed not just exterior, but interior, design and reflected Pflueger's interest in art and decorative arts. He served as chair and director of the the San Francisco Art Association in the early 1930s and maintained relationships with a number of local architects, including the likes of Diego Rivera, whose work he tried to integrate into his own, often in the form of murals.²⁴

Timothy Pflueger suffered a heart attack in 1946. His untimely death came at the age of 54, while his career was still very active. The subject building at 233 Geary Street was under construction at the time. A few years earlier in 1938, Pflueger had traveled to Paris, Venice, and Milan with Grover Magnin, head of the I. Magnin department store chain, to observe and collect ideas from French and Italian department stores. Ultimately, Pflueger was more inspired by the Art Deco design of the ship they sailed on, the *Queen Mary*, than the stores they visited in Europe. He did develop ideas about the organization of department store space, however; including the concept of separate boutique spaces within the larger store. Pflueger's role with Magnin's chain began shortly after their journey with the interior design of the 1939 I. Magnin store in Los Angeles and continued with a number of other projects that included the wholesale remodel of the Butler Building on San Francisco Union Square. At his death, the store was still being remodeled. Work done to complete the project was overseen by Milton Pflueger, Timothy Pflueger's brother, who had joined him in practice in the 1930s.²⁵ Pflueger's design of the San Francisco store strongly influenced the facade of the Seattle I. Magnin store (1954), which was designed by Welton D. Becket & Associates and Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson.²⁶

CALIFORNIA REGISTER SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) is an inventory of significant architectural, archaeological, and historical resources in the State of California. In order for a property to be eligible for listing in the California Register, it must be found significant under one or more of the following criteria.

- *Criterion 1 (Events)*: Resources that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
- *Criterion 2 (Persons)*: Resources that are associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
- *Criterion 3 (Architecture)*: Resources that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.
- *Criterion 4 (Information Potential)*: Resources or sites that have yielded or have the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.²⁷

23 Timothy Keegan, "The Art of Timothy Pflueger," *The Argonaut*. 17:2 (Winter 2006).

24 "Timothy Pflueger: Art, Art Deco and More," *Heritage Newsletter*. (Winter 1981).

25 Wikipedia: Timothy L. Pflueger; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_L._Pflueger

26 Pacific Architecture Database (PCAD), "Magnin, I., Department Store, Union Square, San Francisco, CA.," <http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/2165/>

27 California Office of Historic Preservation, *Technical Assistant Series No. 7, How to Nominate a Resource to the California Register of Historic Resources* (Sacramento, CA: California Office of State Publishing, 4 September 2001) 11.

The following evaluates the subject property's eligibility as an individually significant resource at the state level:

Criterion 1 (Event)

The building at 233 Geary Street appears to be significantly associated with historical events and patterns of development significant to the history of San Francisco and the State of California such that it rises to a level of individual significance and eligibility. The building, in its original iteration, was begun in 1905 and damaged by the 1906 earthquake, which impacted the development of downtown San Francisco in dramatic ways. Its construction continued immediately following the disaster and was completed in 1908. Although it was begun before the earthquake, the building can be counted as a significant contributing element in the reconstruction and economic revitalization of the city post-quake. It then housed the country's largest crockery and glassware merchants, a definite attraction for San Francisco and Bay Area shoppers during the early 20th century. The building was remodeled in 1946-1948, immediately following World War II and, similar to the post-quake period, represented a resurgence of the economy and social and cultural confidence after the war. It then housed the flagship store of one of San Francisco's oldest businesses and the West Coast's most venerable and luxurious department store chains. Throughout its history, the building has been a major anchor of Union Square retail, representing the establishment and persistence of the neighborhood as a significant retail center of San Francisco and the epicenter of the City's department store commerce.

Based on the above contribution to historically significant city development, the property appears to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 (Persons)

The building at 233 Geary Street appears to have been associated with a person important to the history of San Francisco and the State of California such that it rises to a level of individual significance and eligibility. From the time it was remodeled in 1946-1948, the building served as the I. Magnin flagship store in the city where the I. Magnin company was originally founded. At the time, the company was overseen by the founder's son, Grover Magnin. During his time as president of the company, Grover Magnin took the business from a single-store operation to a hugely successful West Coast chain and elevated it in the ranks of American department stores, earning it a reputation as one of the most luxurious. Grover Magnin was instrumental in the design of the building's remodel, hiring Timothy Pflueger and even traveling to Europe with him to gather design ideas and fixtures for I. Magnin stores and especially the San Francisco flagship. He oversaw construction from his apartment in the Saint Francis Hotel across Union Square and very likely maintained a strong presence at that particular store on a daily basis. He is, subsequently, most closely associated with the San Francisco store of all of those in the I. Magnin chain.

Based on this association with a significant historic figure, the property appears to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3 (Architecture/Design)

The building at 233 Geary Street exhibits high architectural merit that raises it to a level of individual significance and eligibility. Its exterior is a unique example of Modernist design that incorporates a number of mid-20th century Modernist influences, but can most appropriately be describes as a progressed iteration of Art Moderne architecture. Being somewhat unique it is difficult to compare to other examples, but in that respect stands alone and avoids being rote. The building easily demonstrates that it is a pure and original design by an architect who was known for exercising creativity and progressiveness in his designs. In addition, the interior of the building originally exhibited extravagant interior design imposed by the 1946-1949 remodel. The interiors were expressive of the I.Magnin brand's luxury reputation and exceeded the interior design of most other

departments stores in it lavish materials and their artistic applications. It was designed by the same architect and involved the artistry of local and international artists and designers. The interior of the building would likely also be considered significant were it still intact.

Architect Timothy Pflueger was responsible for the design of the building's 1946-1948 remodel and its current appearance. Pflueger was one of San Francisco and the Bay Area's best known architects from the 1920s through the 1940s and designed some of the Bay Area's most significant Art Deco and Modernist edifices, including many publicly prominent buildings like schools, theaters, and major downtown office buildings. He was known for his cutting-edge modern design and his somewhat uncommon holistic approach to both interior and exterior design, which were evident at 233 Geary Street. The building was one of Pflueger's last projects before his death. Done late in his career, it shows a culmination of earlier Modernist familiarity along with exploration into new and progressive aesthetics that created a strikingly modern design, as well as his attention to interior design which resulted in a store known for its lavish finishes and furnishings. Timothy Pflueger certainly qualifies as a “master” architect and the subject building is a prime example of his work.

Based on both high artistic merit and associations with a master architect, the property appears to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 (Information Potential)

Criterion 4 is typically concerned with archaeological investigation. Where buildings or architectural elements are concerned, it typically relates to rare construction types, of which 233 Geary Street is not an example.

The property does not appear to be eligible for individual listing in the California Register under Criterion 4.

Integrity

In order to qualify for listing in the California Register, a property must possess significance under one of the aforementioned criteria *and* have historic integrity. The building at 233 Geary Street appears to be significant under three criteria, which connect its significance most strongly to the period after it was remodeled to serve as the I. Magnin flagship store in 1946-1948. Evaluation of integrity to that period of significance follows:

- **Location:** The building retains integrity of location, having never been moved from its current site on the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton streets. The building interior lacks integrity of location as it has been largely reconfigured and no longer demonstrates the original organization or location of spaces.
- **Setting:** The building retains integrity of setting, continuing to be situated in the urban retail district that surrounds Union Square, accompanied by numerous other large department stores and commercial/retail buildings, as well as large hotels and smaller retail, dining, and entertainment establishments. The building's interior lacks integrity of setting, as it has been almost entirely has been remodeled and even intact spaces called out as noteworthy no longer sit within the context of a Moderne department store interior.
- **Materials:** The building retains integrity of materials, as the exterior of the building has changed little since the 1946-1948 remodel and its character defining white marble, black granite, and metal-frame plate glass windows are all intact. The integrity of materials on the building's interior has been lost, however; as every vestige of the Moderne décor, aside from a restroom and dress salon area, has been removed from the building.

- **Design:** The building retains integrity of design, as the exterior of the building has changed little since the 1946-1948 remodel and continues to exhibit the noteworthy materials and features and overall intent of Timothy Pflueger's original progressive Moderne design. The integrity of the interior design has been lost, however; as every vestige of the Moderne décor, spatial organization, and functional intent of the building, aside from a restroom and dress salon area, has been removed.
- **Workmanship:** The building retains integrity of workmanship, because materials and features have changed little and, thus, the workmanship represented in their treatment and application to the building has been retained. The integrity of the interior workmanship has been lost, however; as every vestige of the Moderne décor, including finishes and furnishings and their application, has been removed.
- **Feeling:** The building retains integrity of feeling as a mid-century department store in an urban retail district that was designed in a Modernist style which represents the prosperous and progressive era following World War II. The interior of the building has lost integrity of feeling, however; as almost nothing of the Moderne interior design remains and the current interior feels like a generic early 21st century department store.
- **Association:** The building retains integrity of association with its roll as a major department store anchoring the Union Square shopping district simply through its physical presence and architectural character. Its expression of ties to significant person Grover Magnin are loose, but may be considered present in the design of the building itself, with which Magnin was closely involved. It also exhibits the striking and somewhat undefinable Moderne architecture that supports strong association with both avant-guard Modernist design and Timothy Pflueger, an architect who was well known for such design. On the other hand, loss of almost all interior features dating to 1946-1948 results in the building's interior lacking integrity of association with the building's role as a mid-20th century luxury department store, association with Grover Magnin's chain , and as high-style interior design by a master architect.

The integrity analysis above indicates that the building possess sufficient integrity to uphold its historic significance, except in regard to the interior, which has been so altered that it no longer retains integrity. Although two interior spaces remain intact as vestiges of the lavish 1946-1948 Moderne style remodeling, they stand without context within a building that conveys no indication of its former interior appearance. Although the women's restroom and dress salon spaces themselves have retained integrity (the restroom more so than the dress salon), they would probably not have been considered the most noteworthy spaces when the interior was intact and, currently, cannot sufficiently convey the significance of the high-style décor or Timothy Pflueger's artistic intent on their own.

Character Defining Features

As the term suggests, Character Defining Features are the essential physical aspects of a building that exemplify its historic materials and determine its structural and aesthetic identity. Character Defining Features are the critical elements of a building's design that, if removed, would negate the building's ability to represent its historic associations and period of significance.

The Character Defining Features of 233 Geary Street are:

Exterior:

- Rectilinear box-like massing

- Mid-rise height
- Flat non-articulated facades
- Flat roof/roofline
- White marble cladding
- Black granite trim at base and around first story openings
- Uniform grid-like pattern of punched window openings on upper stories
- Single-lite windows in metal frames that project from the facade on upper stories
- Double-height entry openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed on first story
- Square display window openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed on first story
- Parapet pierced with rectangular openings

Interior:

Because the interior of the building retains no integrity, it does not bear any character defining features. The dress salon and women's restroom that are the only remaining vestiges of the 1946-1948 remodel are not considered character defining, because their context is absent and they are relatively small and anomalous features in their current setting that they are incapable of adequately defining the interior character of the building as it was in 1946-1948.

CONCLUSION

The building at 233 Geary Street bears no individual historic designations to the National Register, California Register, or as a San Francisco Landmark, but it is located within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District and is listed as a Category V – Unrated Building. This evaluation according to the significance criteria of the California Register finds that it is associated with important historical events, in the form of significant city development patterns; a significant historical figure, Grover Magnin; and that it has high architectural merit and is a good example of work by a master architect, in the form of a progressive Moderne design by Timothy Pflueger. Significance under three criteria and its retention of integrity would appear to make it individually eligible for the California Register and would qualify it as a historic resource under the California Environmental Quality Act.

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APPENDIX:
Additional Current Images



View of lower stories, northeast corner and along north facade.



Left side of first/second stories, north facade.



Right side of first/second stories, north facade.



Center entry, north facade.



Left service entrance and two display windows, east facade.



Detail of canted black granite trim around openings.



Detail of rounded northeast corner.



Detail of upper story windows showing projecting metal frames.



Detail of parapet wall from roof.



View west along Geary Street, from Geary & Stockton intersection.



View south along Stockton Street, from Geary & Stockton intersection.

APPENDIX E TO ARTICLE 11

KEARNY-MARKET-MASON-SUTTER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sec. 1. | Findings and Purposes. |
| Sec. 2. | Designation. |
| Sec. 3. | Location and Boundaries. |
| Sec. 4. | Relation to City Planning Code. |
| Sec. 5. | Justification. |
| Sec. 6. | Features. |
| Sec. 7. | Standards and Guidelines for Review of New Construction and Certain Alterations. |
| Sec. 8. | TDR: Eligibility of Category V Buildings. |

SEC. 1. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

It is hereby found that the area known and described in this Appendix as the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Street area is a Subarea within the C-3 District that possesses concentrations of buildings that together create a subarea of architectural and environmental quality and importance which contributes to the beauty and attractiveness of the City. It is further found that the area meets the standards for designation of a Conservation District as set forth in Section 1103 of Article 11 and that the designation of said area as a Conservation District will be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of Article 11 of the City Planning Code.

This designation is intended to promote the health, safety, prosperity and welfare of the people of the City through the effectuation of the purposes set forth in Section 1101 of Article 11 and the maintenance of the scale and character of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter area by:

- (a) The protection and preservation of the basic characteristics and salient architectural details of structures insofar as these characteristics and details are compatible with the Conservation District;
- (b) Providing scope for the continuing vitality of the District through private renewal and architectural creativity, within appropriate controls and standards. It is intended to foster a climate in which the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter District may continue as the prime Bay Area retail district and a center for tourists from around the country and the world;
- (c) The maintenance of an identity separate from the financial district by maintaining the relatively small scale and sunlit sidewalks and open spaces.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION.

Pursuant to Section 1103.1 of Article 11, of the City Planning Code (Part II, Chapter II of the San Francisco Municipal Code), the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter area is hereby designated as a Conservation District.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

SEC. 3. LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES.

The location and boundaries of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District shall be as designated on the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District Map, as amended, the¹ which is on file with the

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 180726, which Map is hereby incorporated herein as though fully set forth and a facsimile of which is reproduced herein below.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85; amended by Ord. [259-18](#), File No. 180726, App. 11/2/2018, Eff. 12/3/2018)

CODIFICATION NOTE

1. So in Ord. [259-18](#).

SEC. 4. RELATION TO CITY PLANNING CODE.

(a) Article 11 of the City Planning Code is the basic law governing preservation of buildings and districts of architectural importance in the C-3 District of the City and County of San Francisco. This Appendix is subject to and in addition to the provisions thereof.

(b) Except as may be specifically provided to the contrary in this Code, nothing in this Appendix shall supersede, impair or modify any City Planning Code provisions applicable to property in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District, including, but not limited to, regulations controlling uses, height, bulk, coverage, floor area ratio, required open space, off-street parking, and signs.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

SEC. 5. JUSTIFICATION.

The characteristics of the Conservation District justifying its designation are as follows:

(a) **History of the District.** Since the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter District covers a large area, individual streets within the district have had unique histories which have often changed dramatically over time. Maiden Lane (originally called Morton Street) was once the site of numerous houses of prostitution. Yet, after the fire and the opening of nearby department stores the renamed Union Square Avenue became the service entrance for those stores. In time, restaurants and retail stores opened, paving the way for the emergence of Maiden Lane as an exclusive retail address. Similarly, before the earthquake Powell Street, home to many theaters and restaurants, was known as the "uptown tenderloin." In the 1920's, the opening of numerous hotels and retail stores led to a gradual change of character on the street.

These changing land-use patterns were in part determined by the movement of high-quality retail stores. Throughout the years, the closing or movement of larger department stores has often provided new space for smaller stores, and has strongly influenced their locations. The best known stores of the retail district were located on Kearny Street in the 1870's and 1880's. The growth of the City, due in part to the introduction of cable car service, led to the movement of the retail district towards both Market Street and the Grant Avenue/Union Square area. Beginning in the 1880's, department stores such as the Emporium and Hale Brothers opened large stores on Market Street. However, the large width of Market Street and its distance from high income residential neighborhoods on Nob Hill hindered its further development as a high class retail district. By the 1920's, Market Street had become San Francisco's family shopping street.

The prominence of the Grant Avenue/Union Square retail area as an exclusive shopping district was assured when I. Magnin (originally on Third Street) moved from Market Street to the corner of Grant Avenue and Geary Street. The location of the City of Paris at the corner of Geary and Stockton Streets across from Union Square firmly established Union Square as the most desirable location in the retail district. I. Magnin eventually moved to a building across from Union Square and O'Connor Moffat (now Macys) located at the corner of Geary and Stockton Streets. A side effect of the development of Union Square as a retail district was the displacement of many medical and dental offices by beauty parlors and restaurants catering to the new retail trade. Since the 1920's, Lower Grant Avenue and the Union Square area have been the City's premier shopping district.

Concurrent with the development of Grant Avenue/Union Square as a retail district were the relocations of the hotel and theater districts. By the 1890's, the theater district relocated from Bush Street (between Grant and Kearny) to the area west of Union Square. Whereas hotels were once clustered at the intersection of Montgomery and Market Streets, after the 1906 Fire most hotels also moved to the area west of Union Square.

The establishment of the St. Francis Hotel on the west side of the square was a major impetus to the hotel relocation. Before the fire, this area had been the site of many household goods establishments.

(b) **Basic Nature of the District.** The pattern of development is one of small-scaled, light-colored buildings predominantly four to eight stories in height. The height and scale provide for a streetscape which is attractive to the pedestrian because of the comfortable scale and sunlit sidewalks. This dense area is the heart of San Francisco's retail and tourist sectors, containing a concentration of fine shops, department stores, theaters, hotels, and restaurants. As such, it is one of the main attractions to tourists from around the country and world, as well as the prime retail district in the Bay Area. The District is further defined by the location of Union Square in its heart. This square is, in many ways, the premier public open space in the City, as well as a primary public forum.

(c) **Architectural Character.** The character of the area is determined by the many fine quality structures, among the best in the City, and supported by a number of contributory buildings. Since the entire area was built in less than 20 years, and the major portion in less than 10 years, buildings were constructed in similar styles and structural technology. Perhaps even more importantly, architects were of like backgrounds, schooled in the classical Beaux Arts tradition.

In addition to their individual architectural features, the scale and design of buildings in the district related very well with neighboring buildings, streets and open spaces. This effect was achieved in large part by the alignment of cornice and belt course lines. The buildings used compatible detailing, colors, materials, massing, and scale. Ornament was derived from Classical, Renaissance, Gothic and Romanesque sources. In a limited number of examples, ornament was developed from early Spanish Colonial models.

(d) **Uniqueness and Location.** The District's character, although it has many buildings of recent vintage, is largely intact. It is one of the few homogeneous collections of early Twentieth Century commercial architecture of its type in the United States. At the time of designation in 1985, this District included 324 buildings, 114 of which were identified as architecturally significant and 140 as contributory. Only 98 buildings were not rated. Subsequent amendments to the District and reclassification of individual buildings have resulted in a greater concentration of architecturally significant properties. Union Square, an integral part of the District, is a unique resource and ranks with the finest open spaces in the country. The area is centrally located and easily accessible to the Financial District, Nob Hill, the Tenderloin, and the South of Market, as well as outlying districts of the City. The Powell Street Cable Car lines is a unique feature which relates the area to the entire northeastern quadrant of the City and attracts tourists to the area.

(e) **Visual and Functional Unity.** The character of the area is determined by a series of buildings whose compositions and use of materials and ornament are complementary, as well as by the regular street pattern which creates interesting views and vistas down the streets. Within the District, several subareas increase the variety and complexity of the District while retaining its essential architectural character.

(f) **Dynamic Continuity.** The District is the center of San Francisco's retail market and is constantly responding to new trends and needs. The area has seen the recent opening of two major department stores and, in addition, many new small stores. Indeed, much of the pedestrian interest so important to the District is a result of the ever-changing shop windows and stores.

(g) **Benefits to the City and its Residents.** The District provides a wide range of benefits to both the City and its residents. Much of the retailing area's vitality is attributable to its physical character. The mix of shops and unique buildings is not duplicated in suburban shopping malls, and, because of this, the area attracts shoppers from around the Bay Area. The District is a prime destination for tourists and is therefore an important part of San Francisco's image. The prevailing architectural character is an important legacy from the Beaux Arts tradition and contains many fine examples of commercial architecture.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85; amended by Ord. [259-18](#), File No. 180726, App. 11/2/2018, Eff. 12/3/2018)

SEC. 6. FEATURES.

The exterior architectural features of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District are as follows:

(a) **Massing and Composition.** The compositions of the building facades reflect the different architectural functions of the building. For the most part, building facades in the district are two- or three-part vertical compositions consisting either of a base and a shaft, or a base, a shaft and a capital. In more elaborate designs, transitional stories create a stacked composition, but the design effect is similar.

In addition, the facade of a building is often divided into bays expressing the structure (commonly steel and reinforced concrete) beneath the facade. This was accomplished through fenestration, structural articulation or other detailing which serves to break the facade into discrete segments. A common compositional device in the District is an emphasis placed upon either the end bays or the central bay.

The massing of the structures is usually a simple vertically oriented rectangle with a ratio of width to height generally from 1:2 to 1:4. This vertically oriented massing is an important characteristic of the District. In addition, continuous streetwall heights are a characteristic of most blockfronts.

Almost without exception, the buildings in the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District are built to the front property line and occupy the entire site. Where buildings have not followed this rule, they do not adequately enclose the street. The massing of structures often reflects unique or prominent site characteristics. Corner buildings often have rounded corner bays to express the special requirements of the site and to tie its two blockfronts together.

(b) **Scale.** The buildings are of small to medium scale. The bay width is generally from 20 feet to 30 feet. Heights generally range from four to eight stories on lots 40 feet to 80 feet wide, although a number of taller buildings exist. The wider frontages are often broken up by articulation of the facade, making the buildings appear narrower. The base is generally delineated from the rest of the building giving the District an intimate scale at the street.

(c) **Materials and Colors.** Buildings are usually clad in masonry materials over a supporting structure. The cladding materials include terra cotta, brick, stone and stucco. Wood, metal and metal panels are not facade materials, although painted wood and metal are sometimes used for window sash and ornament.

The materials are generally colored light or medium earth tones, including white, cream, buff, yellow, and brown. Individual buildings generally use a few different tones of one color.

To express the mass and weight of the structure, masonry materials are used on multidimensional wall surfaces with texture and depth, which simulates the qualities necessary to support the weight of a load-bearing wall.

(d) **Detailing and Ornamentation.** This area has been the heart of the retail district since it was reconstructed after the fire. Buildings use the expression of texture and depth on masonry material (e.g., rustication, deep window reveals) to simulate the appearance of load-bearing walls. The buildings are not constructed in a single style, but with ornament drawn from a variety of historical sources, primarily Classical and Renaissance. Gothic detailing is also well represented. Popular details include, arches, columns, pilasters, projecting bracketed cornices, multiple belt-courses, elaborate lintels and pediments, and decorated spandrels. Details were used to relate buildings to their neighbors by repeating and varying the ornament used in the surrounding structures.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

SEC. 7. STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF NEW CONSTRUCTION AND CERTAIN ALTERATIONS.

(a) All construction of new buildings and all major alterations, which are subject to the provisions of Sections 1110, 1111 through 1111.6 and 1113, shall be compatible with the District in general with respect to the building's composition and massing, scale, materials and colors, and detailing and ornamentation, including those features described in Section 6 of this Appendix. Emphasis shall be placed on compatibility with those buildings in the area in which the new or altered building is located. In the case of major alterations, only those building characteristics that are affected by the proposed alteration shall be considered in assessing compatibility. Signs on buildings in conservation districts are subject to the provisions of Section 1111.7.

The foregoing standards do not require, or even encourage, new buildings to imitate the styles of the past. Rather, they require the new to be compatible with the old. The determination of compatibility shall be made in accordance with the provisions of Section 309.

(b) The guidelines in this Subsection are to be used in assessing compatibility.

(1) **Composition and Massing.** Although the District is quite large and contains a wide variety of building forms, new construction should maintain its essential character by relating to the prevailing height, mass, proportions, rhythm and composition of existing Significant and Contributory Buildings. The height and massing of new buildings should not alter the traditional scale of existing buildings, streets and open spaces. In addition to the consideration of sunlight access for the street, an appropriate streetwall height is established by reference to the prevailing height of the buildings on the block and especially that of adjacent buildings. If the adjacent buildings are of a significantly different height than the rest of the buildings on the block, then the prevailing height of buildings on the block should be used as a guide. A setback at the streetwall height can permit additional height above the setback without breaking the continuity of the street wall.

Most existing buildings are built to the property or street line. This pattern, except in the case of carefully selected open spaces, should not be broken since it could damage the continuity of building rhythms and the definitions of streets.

The standard proportions of new buildings should be established by the prevailing streetwall height and width of lots. To ensure that an established set of proportions is maintained, it is necessary to break up the facades of new buildings into smaller sections that relate to those existing proportions. The use of smaller bays and multiple entrances are two ways of relating the rhythm of a new building with those of historic buildings.

The design of a new structure should repeat the prevailing pattern of two- and three-part vertical compositions. A base element is necessary to define the pedestrian environment. This division of a building allows flexibility in the design of the ground story while encouraging a uniform treatment of the upper stories.

(2) **Scale.** A major influence on scale is the degree to which the total facade plane is broken into smaller parts (by detailing, fenestration, bay widths) which relate to human scale. While department stores and hotels are of a medium scale, the traditional pattern for the District has consisted of small scale buildings. The existing scale of the buildings in the vicinity should be maintained. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, including: a consistent use of size and complexity of detailing in regards to surrounding buildings, continuance of existing bay widths, maintenance of an existing streetwall height, and incorporation of a base element (of similar height) to maintain the pedestrian environment. Large wall surfaces, which increase a building's scale, should be broken up through the use of detailing and textural variation.

Existing fenestration (windows, entrances) rhythms and proportions which have been established by lot width or bay width should be repeated in new structures. The spacing and size of window openings should follow the sequence set by Significant and Contributory structures. Large glass areas should be broken up by mullions so that the scale of glazed areas is compatible with that of neighboring buildings. Casement and double-hung windows should be used where possible.

(3) **Materials and Colors.** The use of like materials can relate two buildings of obviously different eras and styles. Similarly, the use of materials that appear similar (such as substituting concrete for stone) can link two disparate structures, or harmonize the appearance of a new structure with the architectural character of a conservation district. The preferred surface materials for this district are brick, stone, and concrete (simulated to look like terra cotta or stone).

The texture of surfaces can be treated in a manner so as to emphasize the bearing function of the material, as is done in rustication on historic buildings.

Traditional light colors should be used in order to blend in with the character of the district. Dissimilar buildings may be made more compatible by using similar or harmonious colors, and to a lesser extent, by using similar textures.

(4) **Detailing and Ornamentation.** A new building should relate to the surrounding area by picking up elements from surrounding buildings and repeating them or developing them for new purposes. Since the District has one of the largest collections of finely ornamented buildings in the City, these buildings should serve as references for new buildings. Detailing of a similar shape and placement can be used without directly copying historical ornament. The new structure should incorporate prevailing cornice lines or belt courses and may also use a modern vernacular instead of that of the original model.

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

SEC. 8. TDR: ELIGIBILITY OF CATEGORY V BUILDINGS.

Category V Buildings in that portion of the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District which is in the C-3-0 Use District as shown on Sectional Map 1 of the Zoning Map are eligible for the transfer of TDR as provided in Section 1109(c).

(Added Ord. 414-85, App. 9/17/85)

KEARNY-MARKET-MASON-SUTTER CONSERVATION DISTRICT





233 GEARY STREET

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

May 19, 2021

SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECTURAL
REVIEW COMMITTEE

Sand Hill Property Company

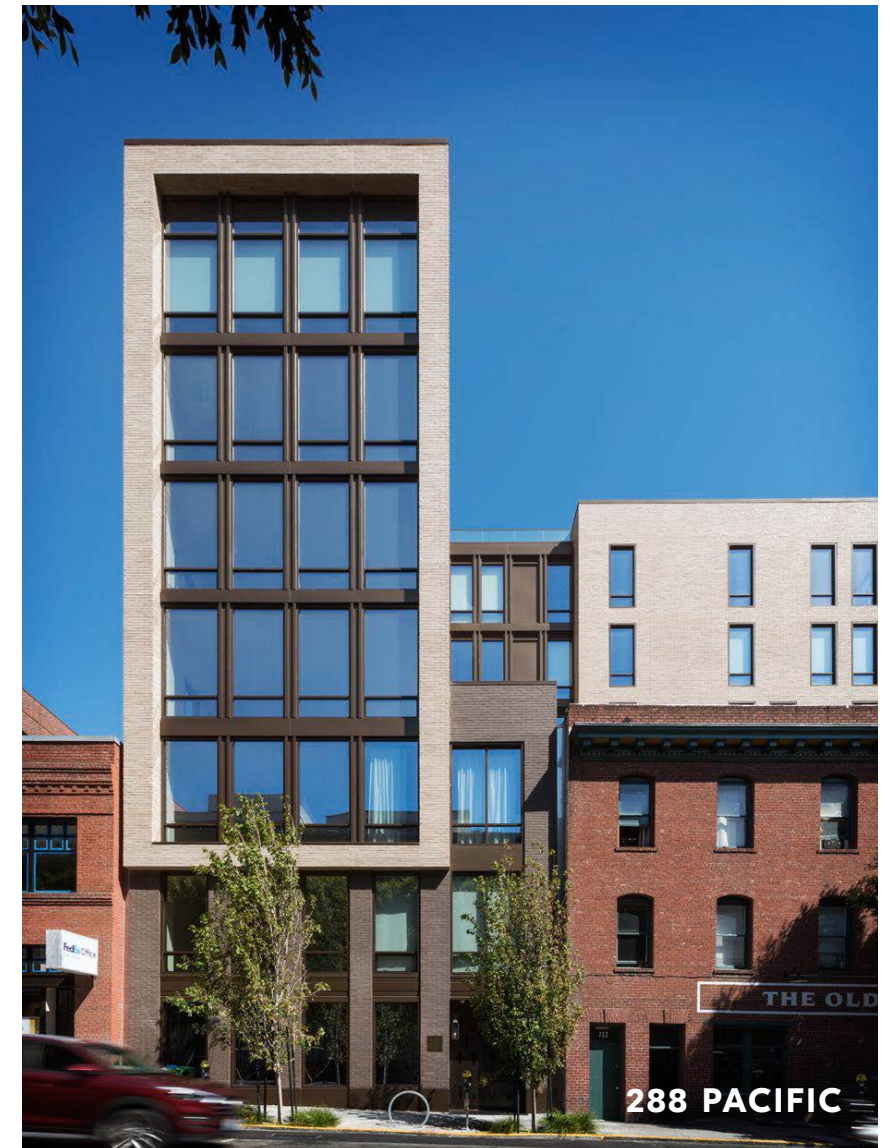
HANDEL ARCHITECTS LLP

MEETING AGENDA

1. Project Team Introductions
2. Project Summary
3. Review of Existing Building
4. Proposed Scheme
5. Alternate Scheme
6. Next Steps

HANDEL ARCHITECTS
SAN FRANCISCO

- 1001 VAN NESS
- 120 HAWTHORNE
- 1601 MISSION
- 288 PACIFIC
- 301 MISSION
- 340 FREMONT
- 36 TEHAMA
- 360 5TH
- 450 HAYES
- 531 BRYANT
- 570 JESSIE
- 950 TENNESSEE
- BLU RESIDENCES
- FOUR SEASONS 706 MISSION
- FOUR SEASONS HOTEL & RESIDENCES
- KONRAD ON THE PARK
- MURANO
- NEMA
- NOVE
- PIER 70 PARCEL K NORTH
- ROWAN
- SERIF & THE LINE HOTEL
- SONY METREON
- THE OAK
- THE PACIFIC
- UNION HOUSE



PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3 Floors and 21 New Residential Units
- 4 floors of office, consisting of approximately 49,900 SF of new area and including retention of existing corporate office space
- 3+ floors of retail, including retention of existing ground floor tenants
- No parking; loading served by existing loading dock/access below Macy's
- Entitlement applications: Downtown 309 Review, Conditional Use, Office Allocation, Permit to Alter

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

Current Historic Status:

- Within the Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District
- Article 11 Category V – Unrated Building

California Register Evaluation (Planning Department HRER Part 1, April 30, 2021):

- Significant under three criteria:
- Criterion 1 (Events): local, distinct representation of the national shift in the character of department stores immediately following World War II
- Criterion 2 (Persons): associated with Grover Magnin and the overall Magnin family and business. Grover Magnin was also instrumental in the design of the building's remodel;
- Criterion 3 (Architecture): possesses high architectural merit as a progressive Art Moderne and International Style design by master architect Timothy Pflueger.
- Period of significance identified as 1948, the year of completion of Pflueger's complete remodel of both the interior and exterior and opening of the building as the flagship I. Magnin store
- Exterior retains integrity to the period of significance, interior mostly does not.

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

Exterior Character-Defining Features:

- Rectilinear, box-like massing
- Mid-rise (10 stories over basement) height
- Curved building corner
- Uniform, largely unarticulated facades
- Flat roof/roofline
- White, Vermont marble cladding
- Black granite at the base and around ground floor openings
- Uniform grid of windows located above the ground level
- Single-light, aluminum framed windows that project from the face of the building
- Double-height entry openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Square display window openings, uniformly and symmetrically placed at the ground floor
- Parapet pierced with rectangular openings

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION SUMMARY

Interior Character-Defining Features:

- Sixth floor women's powder room, consisting of:
 - Dark green and cream-colored marble finishes
 - Gold leaf ceiling
 - Three intact original sinks with marble basin surrounds and brass faucets
 - Brass-framed mirrors
 - Exposed bulb light fixtures
 - Toilet stalls with full height mirrored doors.

PROJECT SITE CONTEXT



STREET VIEWS OF EXISTING BUILDING



View 1: From Stockton looking south



View 2: From Geary



View 3: From Stockton looking north



View 4: From Union Square looking south



View 5: Along Geary



View 6: Along Geary



View 6: From Market & Geary

ADAPTIVE REUSE EVOLUTION



Circa 1905, the Beaux Arts style mixed-use "Butler Building" supported medical offices and commercial retail uses.



Circa 1996, the building became absorbed within the multi-building Macy's city block complex, with multiple retail tenant spaces at the ground floor.

Circa 1946, the heavily remodelled building transformed into the single-use, I. Magnin department store, with new exterior facades.

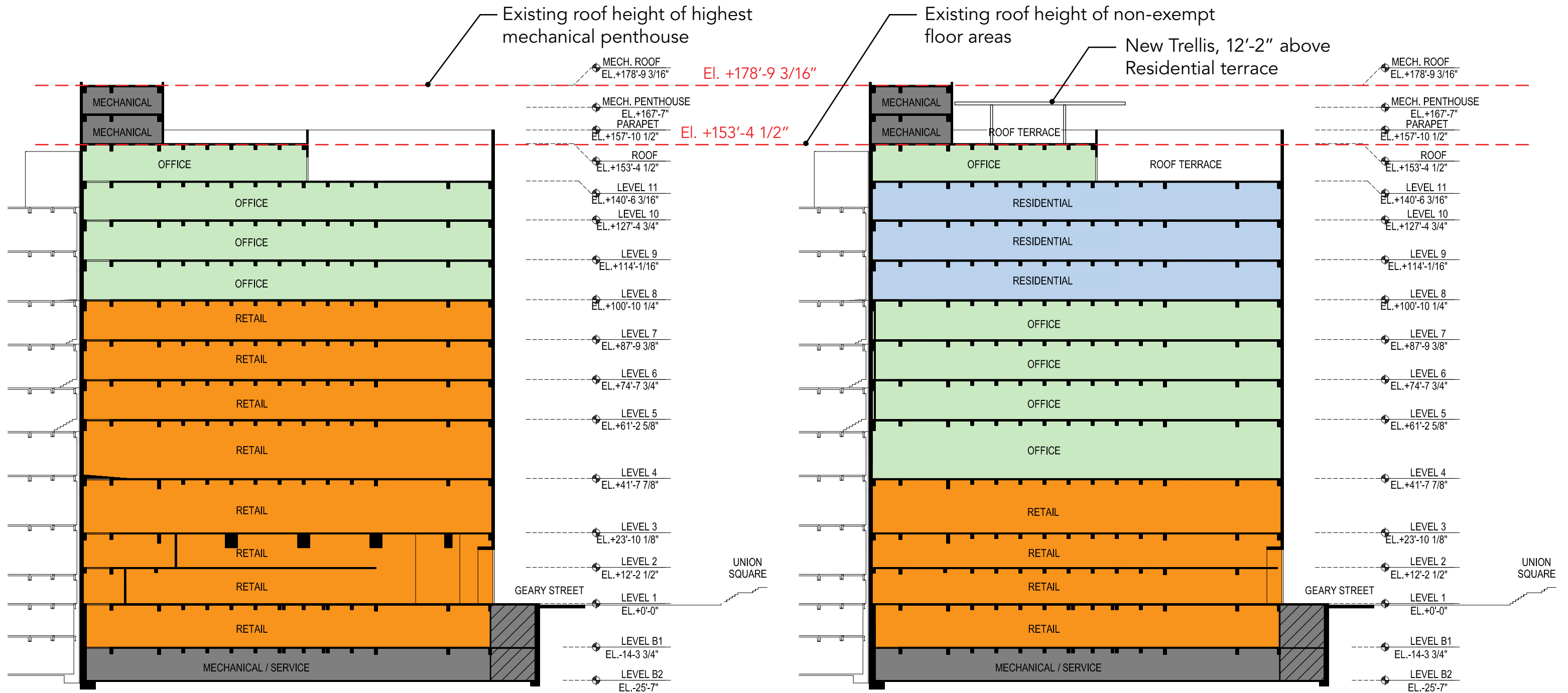


Proposed Future, Sand Hill Property Company proposes a mixed-use development incorporating retail, office and residential uses.



LAND USE & BUILDING HEIGHT DIAGRAM

Existing and Proposed Building Section Looking West



Existing

Multi-tenant, single-use department store

Proposed

Multi-tenant, mixed-use building

NORTH ELEVATION - GEARY STREET

Existing and Proposed



Existing

Proposed

NORTH ELEVATION - ENLARGED



MASTER SIGN PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALIZED AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO CURRENT REVIEW BY ARC/HPC. MASTER SIGN PROGRAM PROPOSAL WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AT A LATER TIME.

PROPOSED GEARY STREET STOREFRONT FACADE

View from Union Square and Central Subway Station Exit



MASTER SIGN PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALIZED AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO CURRENT REVIEW BY ARC/HPC. MASTER SIGN PROGRAM PROPOSAL WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AT A LATER TIME.

EAST ELEVATION - STOCKTON STREET

Existing and Proposed



EAST ELEVATION - ENLARGED

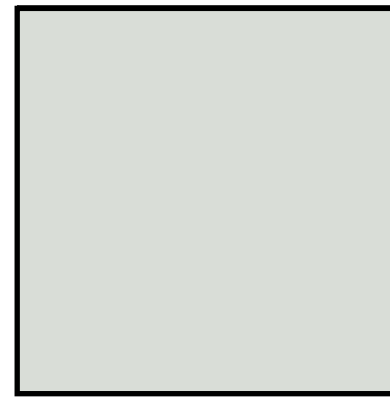


MASTER SIGN PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALIZED AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO CURRENT REVIEW BY ARC/HPC. MASTER SIGN PROGRAM PROPOSAL WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AT A LATER TIME.



STONE - WHITE VERMONT MARBLE

TO MATCH HISTORIC STONE
COLOR: IMPERIAL DANBY



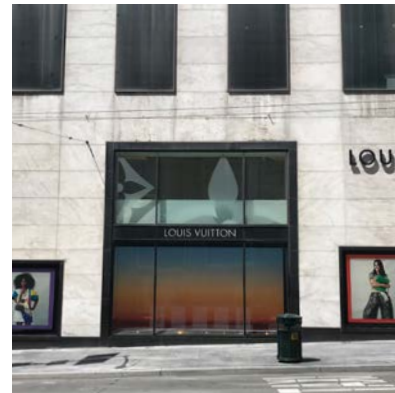
GLASS - RETAIL

COLOR: LOW IRON, ULTRA CLEAR
MFR: GUARDIAN OR SIMILAR



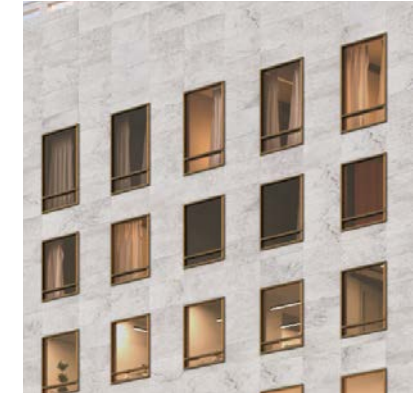
STONE - BLACK GRANITE

TO MATCH HISTORIC STONE
COLOR: ANDES BLACK



GLASS - OFFICE & RESIDENTIAL

COLOR: SUPERNEUTRAL 68 ON CLEAR GLASS
MFR: GUARDIAN OR SIMILAR



METAL - MULLIONS & PANELS

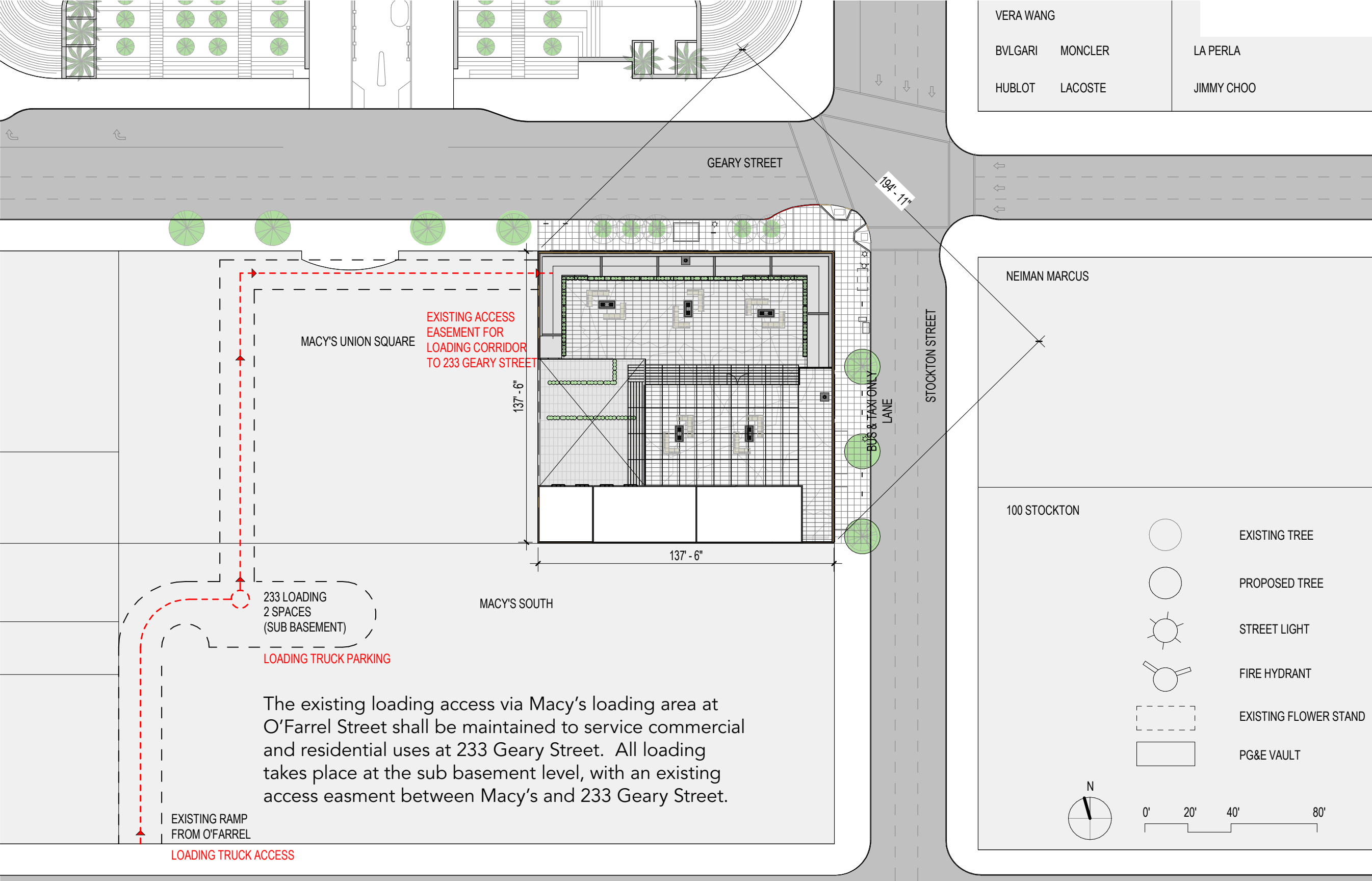
COLOR: BRONZE, MEDIUM STATUARY



MATERIAL BOARD

233 GEARY STREET

PROPOSED ROOF SITE PLAN & LOADING ACCESS

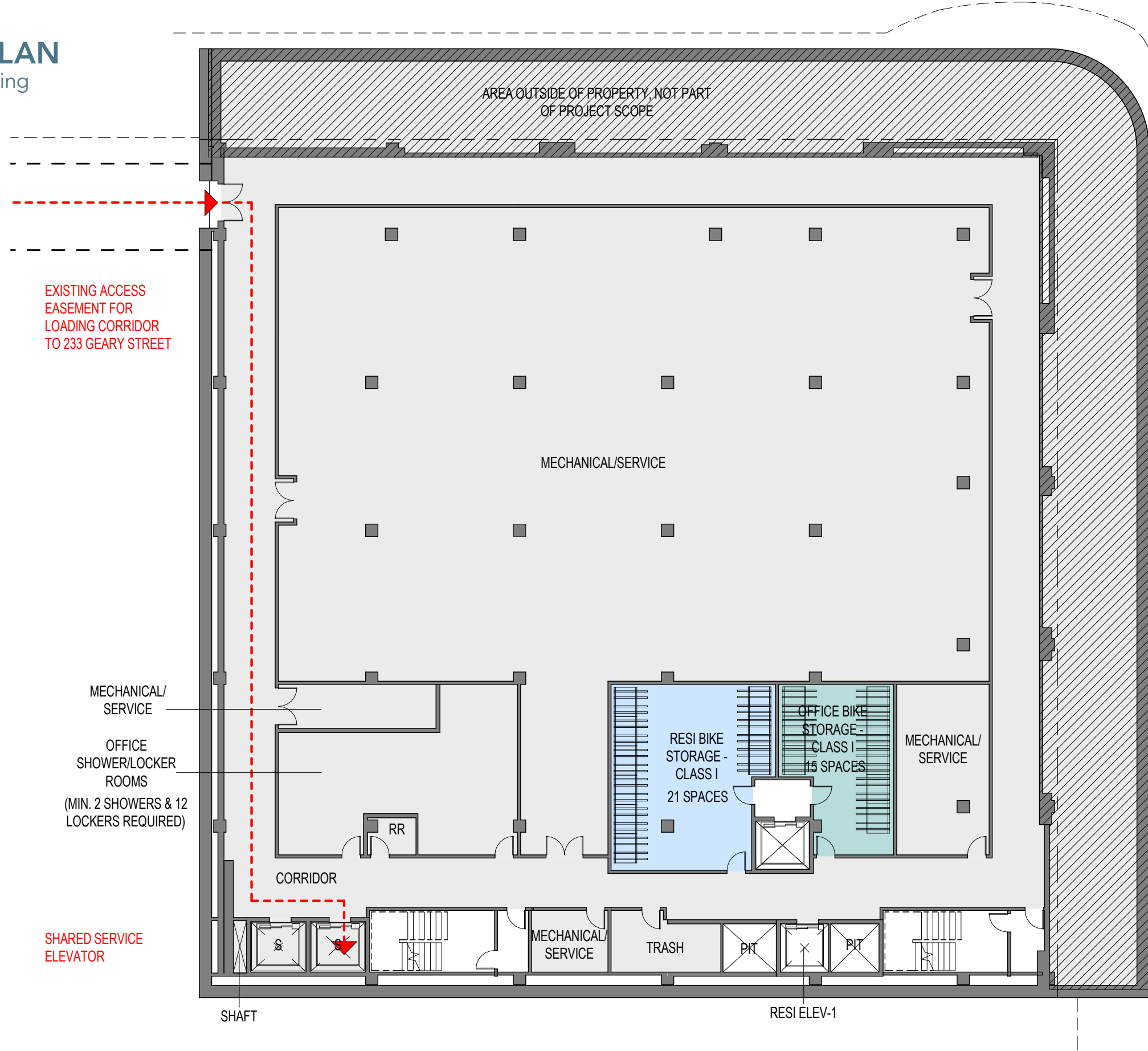


PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR SITE PLAN



LEVEL B2 PLAN

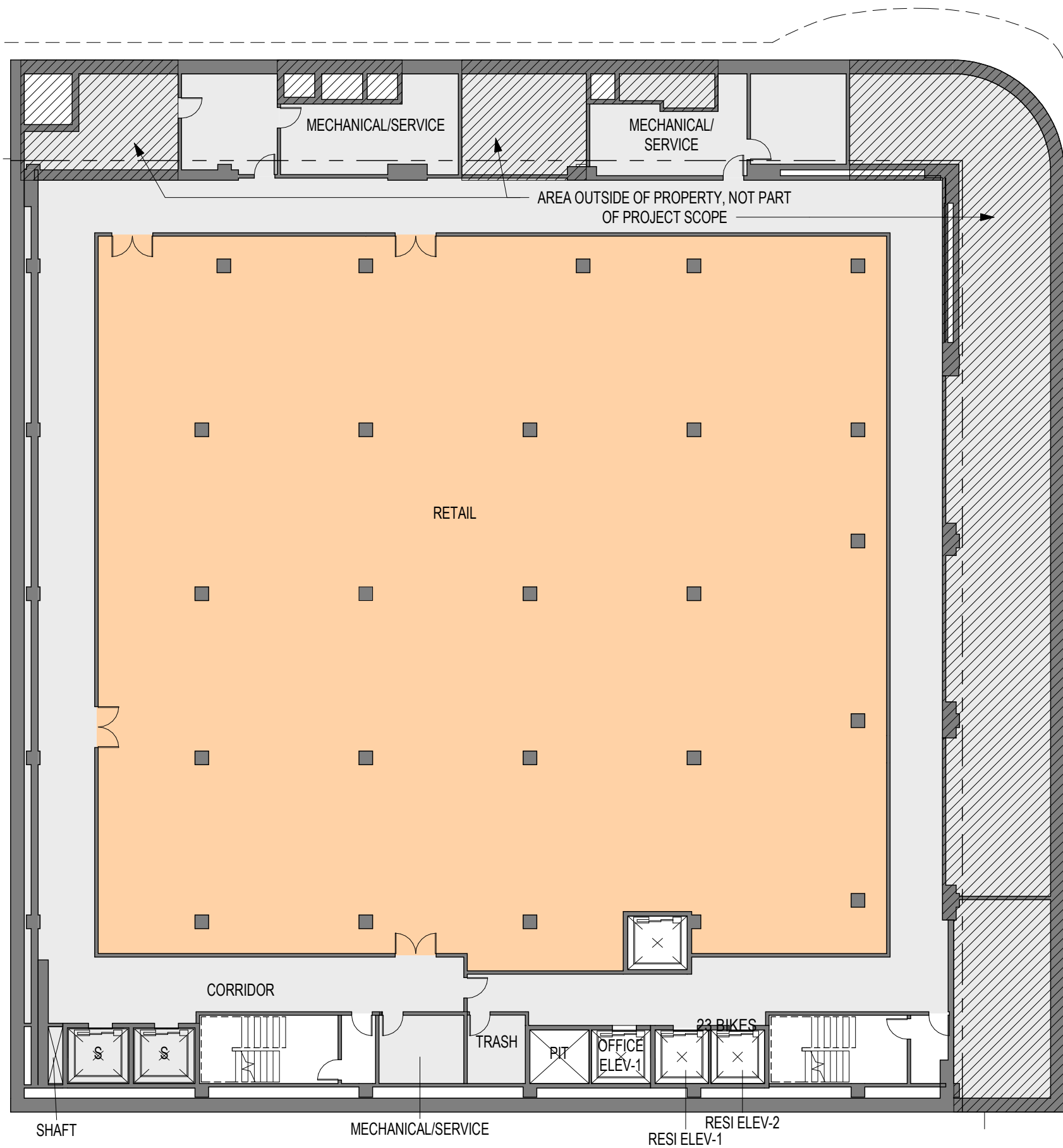
Mechanical, Loading



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL B1 PLAN

Retail Level, Bike Storage & Lockers



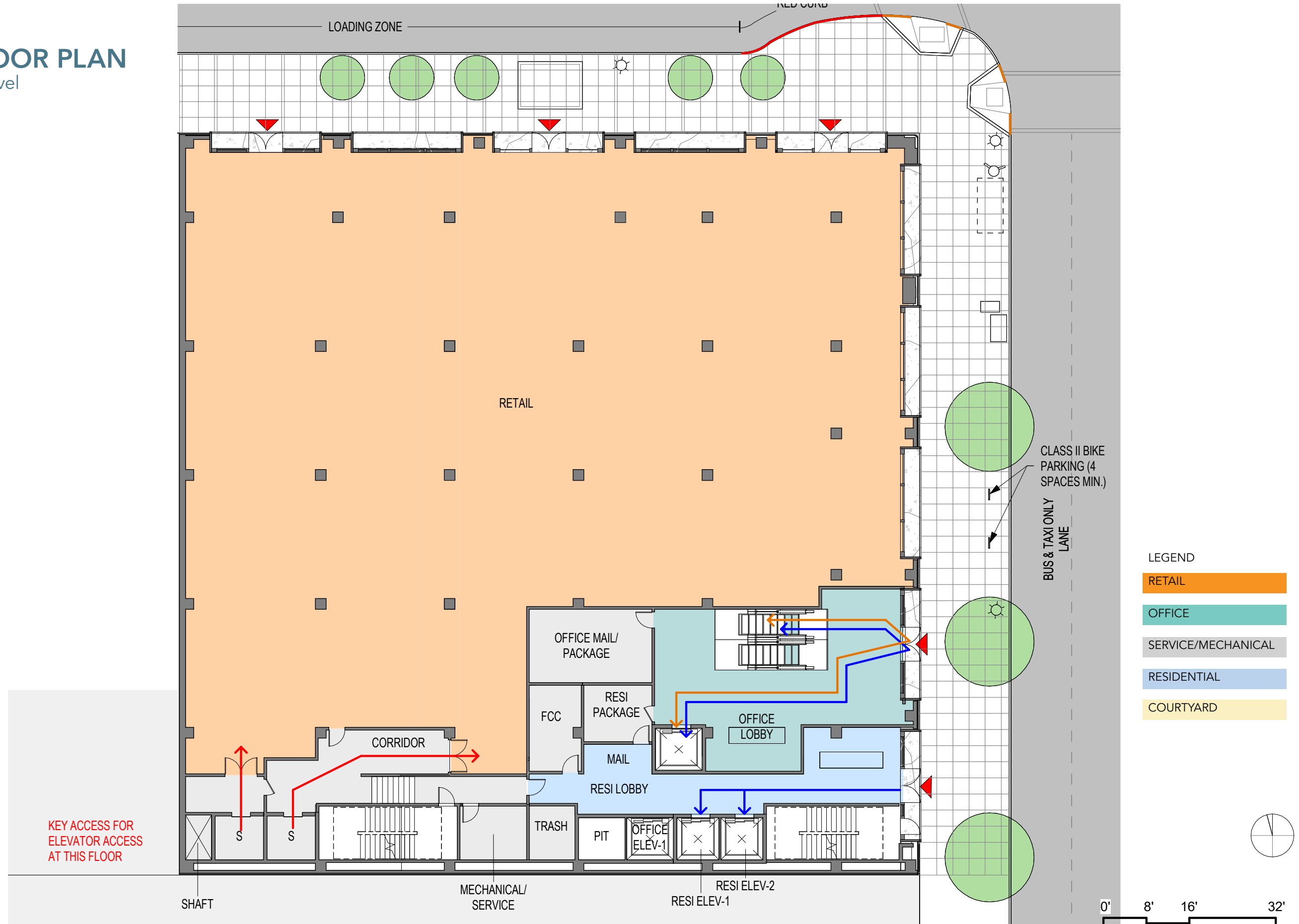
LEGEND

- RETAIL
- OFFICE
- SERVICE/MECHANICAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- COURTYARD

*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL 1 FLOOR PLAN

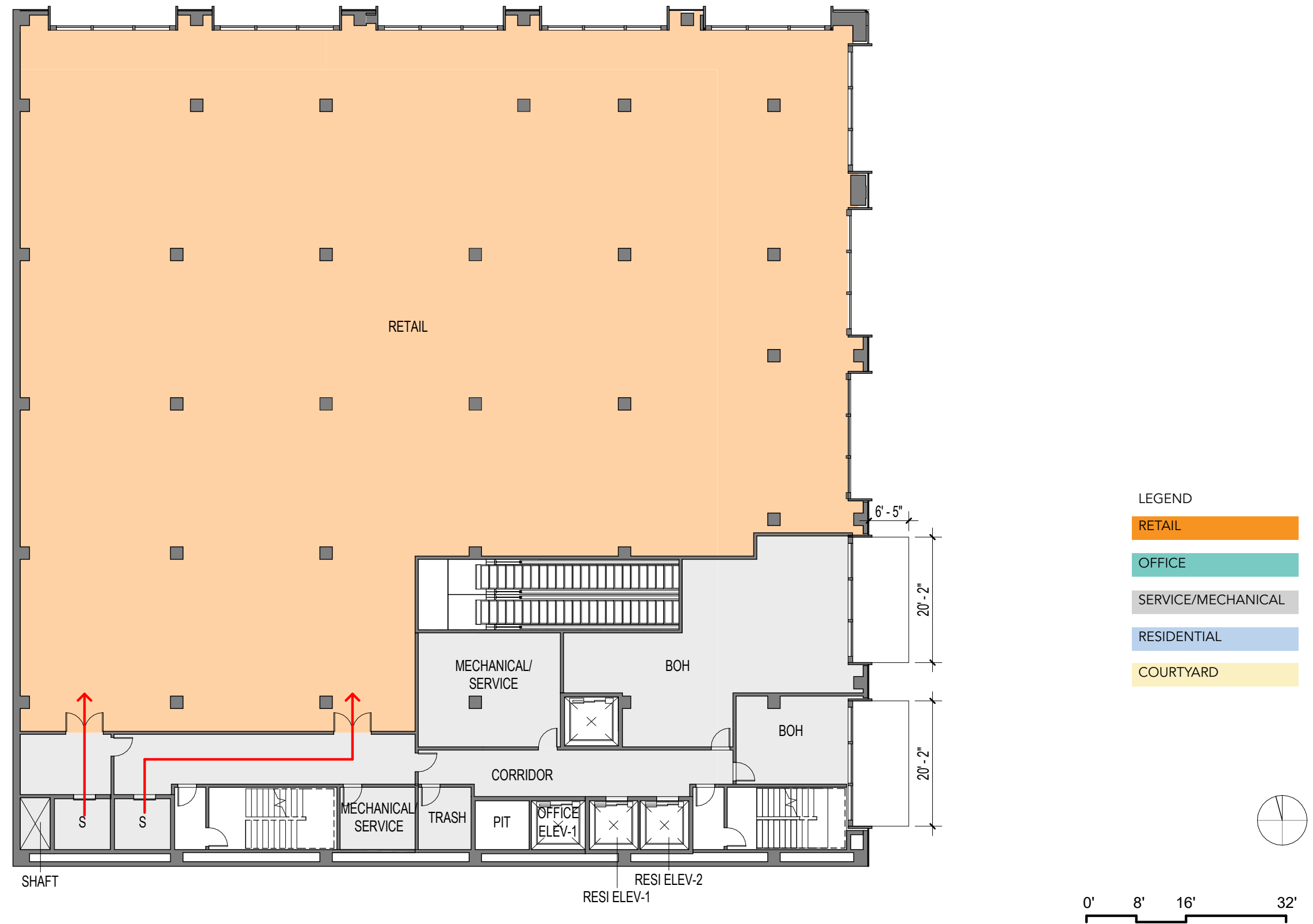
Retail & Lobby Level



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL 2 FLOOR PLAN

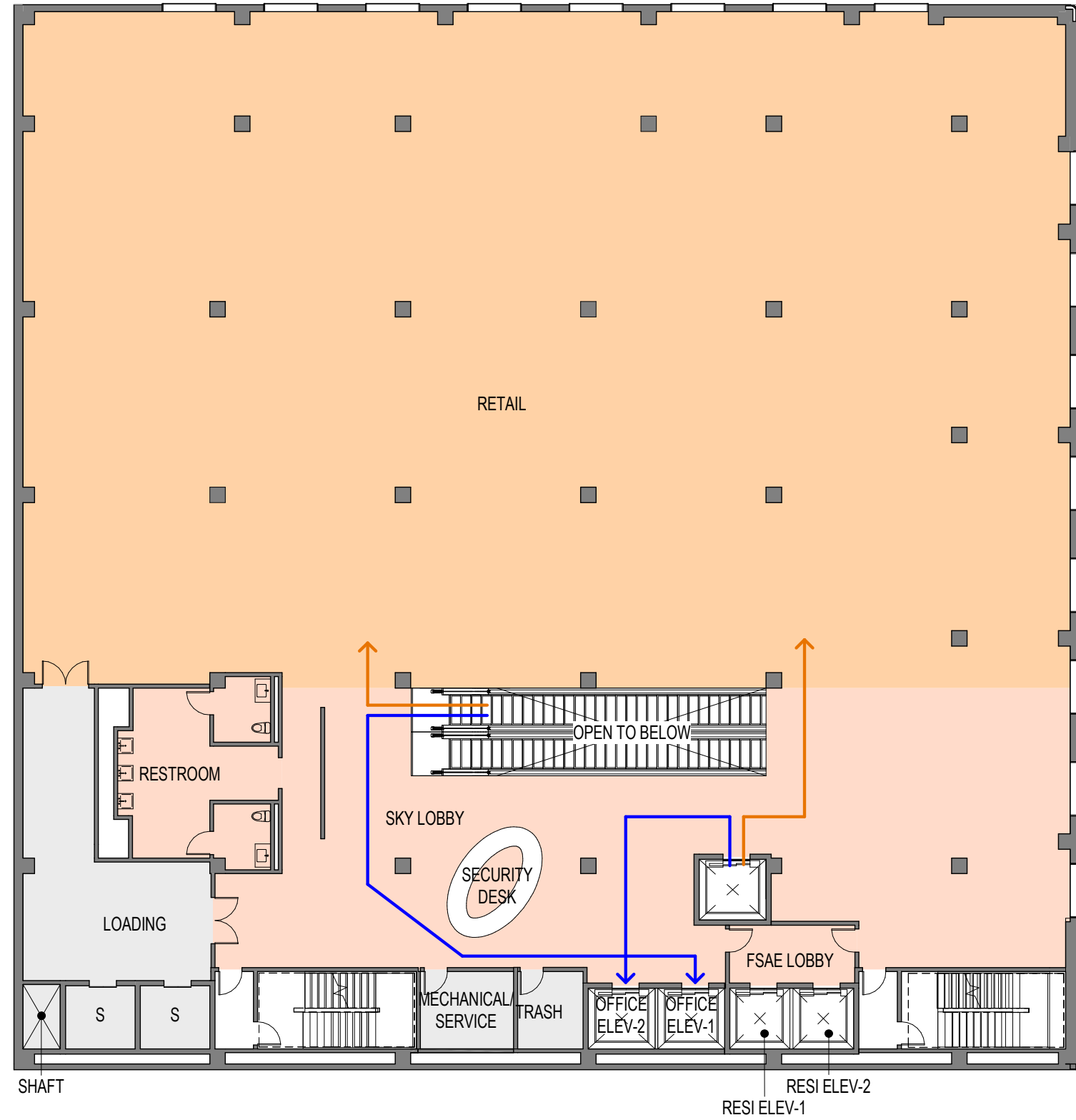
Retail



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

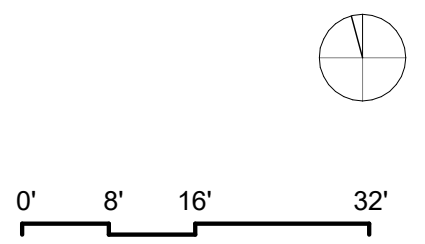
LEVEL 3 FLOOR PLAN

Retail



LEGEND

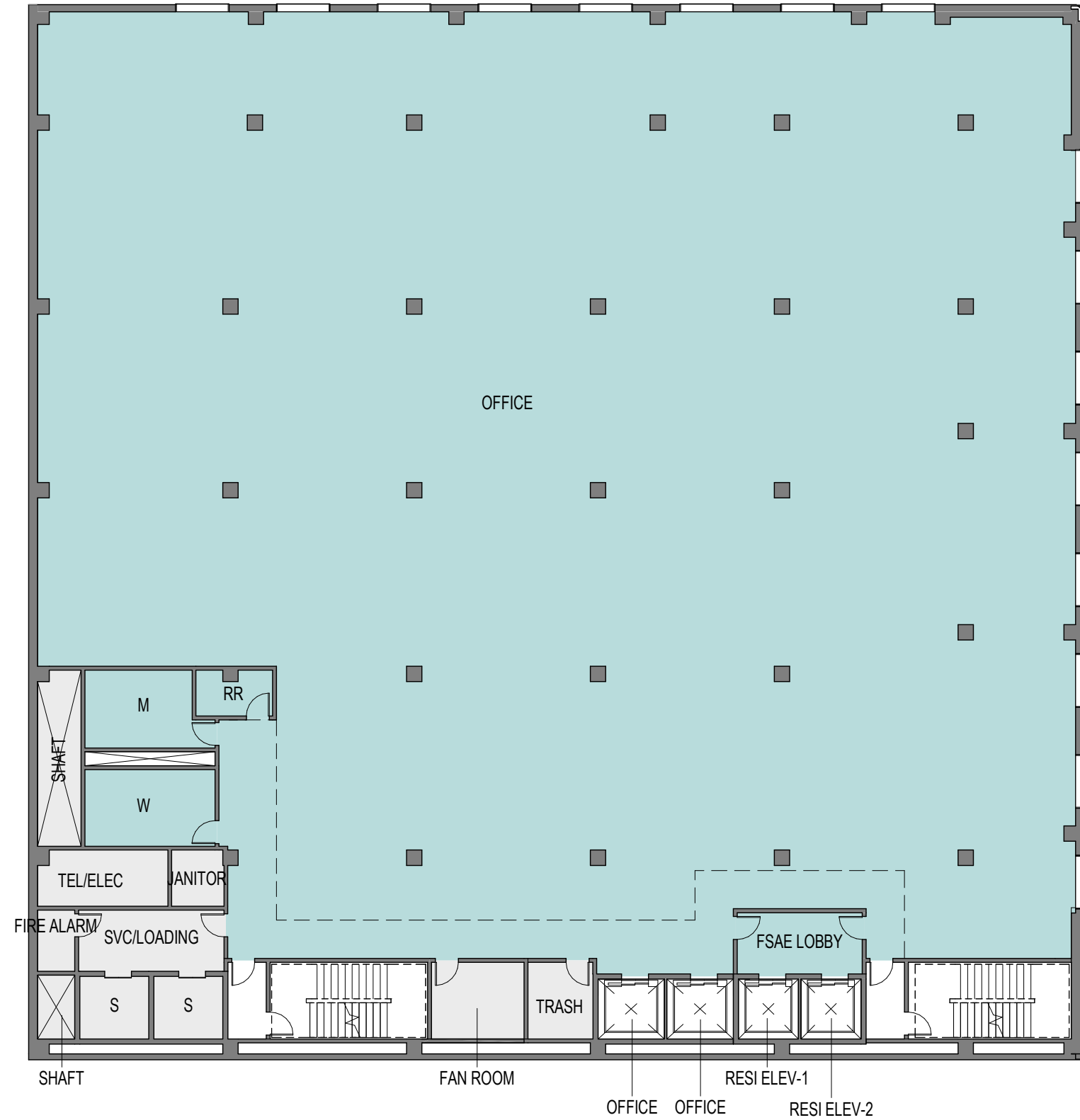
- RETAIL
- OFFICE
- SERVICE/MECHANICAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- COURTYARD



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

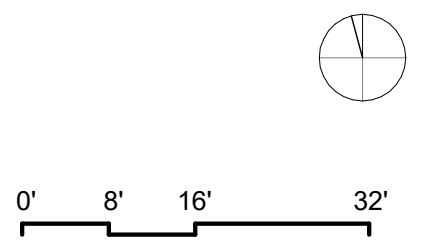
LEVEL 4-7 FLOOR PLAN

Office



LEGEND

- RETAIL (orange)
- OFFICE (teal)
- SERVICE/MECHANICAL (grey)
- RESIDENTIAL (blue)
- COURTYARD (yellow)



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL 8 FLOOR PLAN

Residential



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL 9 & 10 FLOOR PLAN

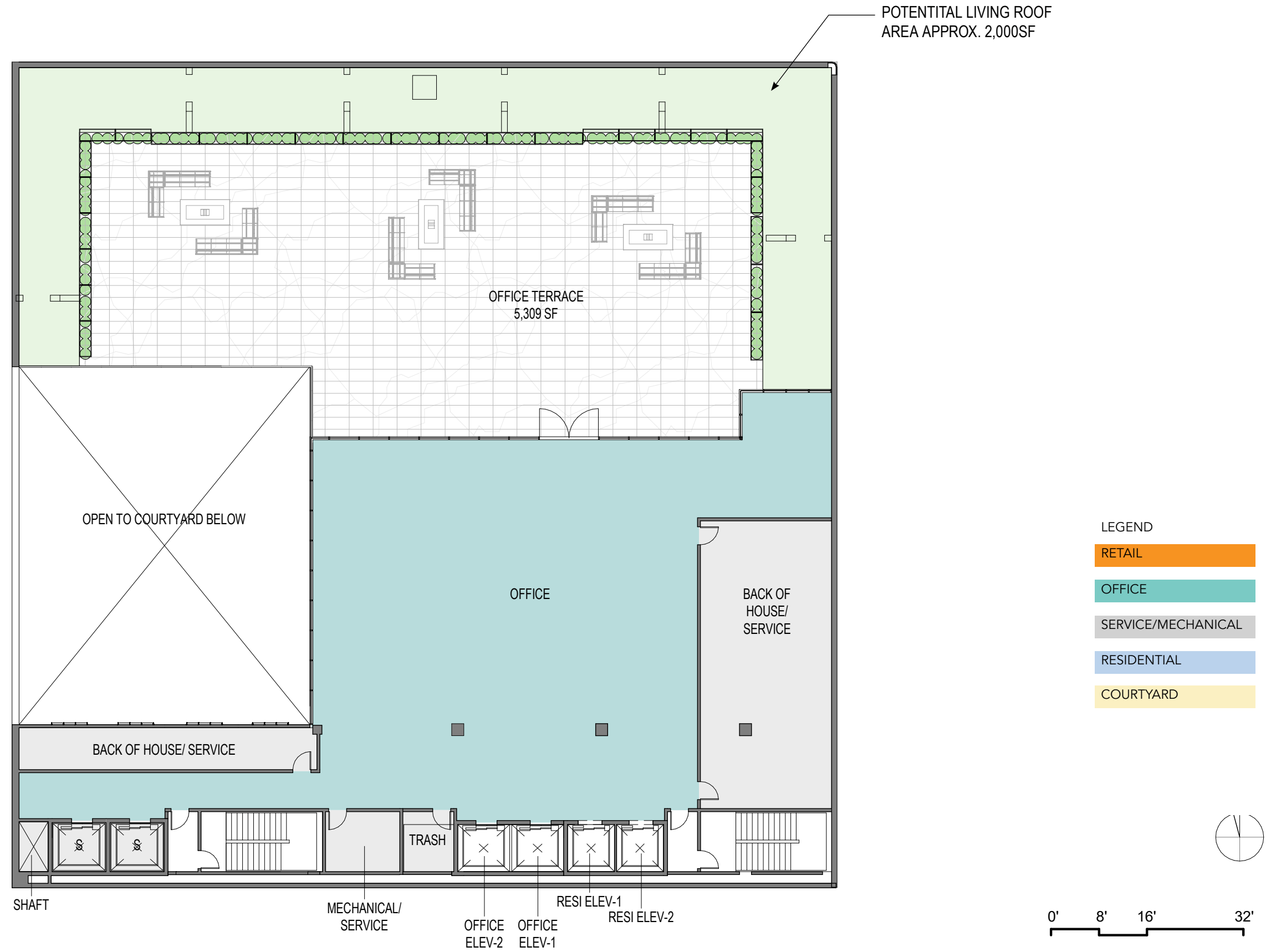
Residential



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

LEVEL 11 FLOOR PLAN

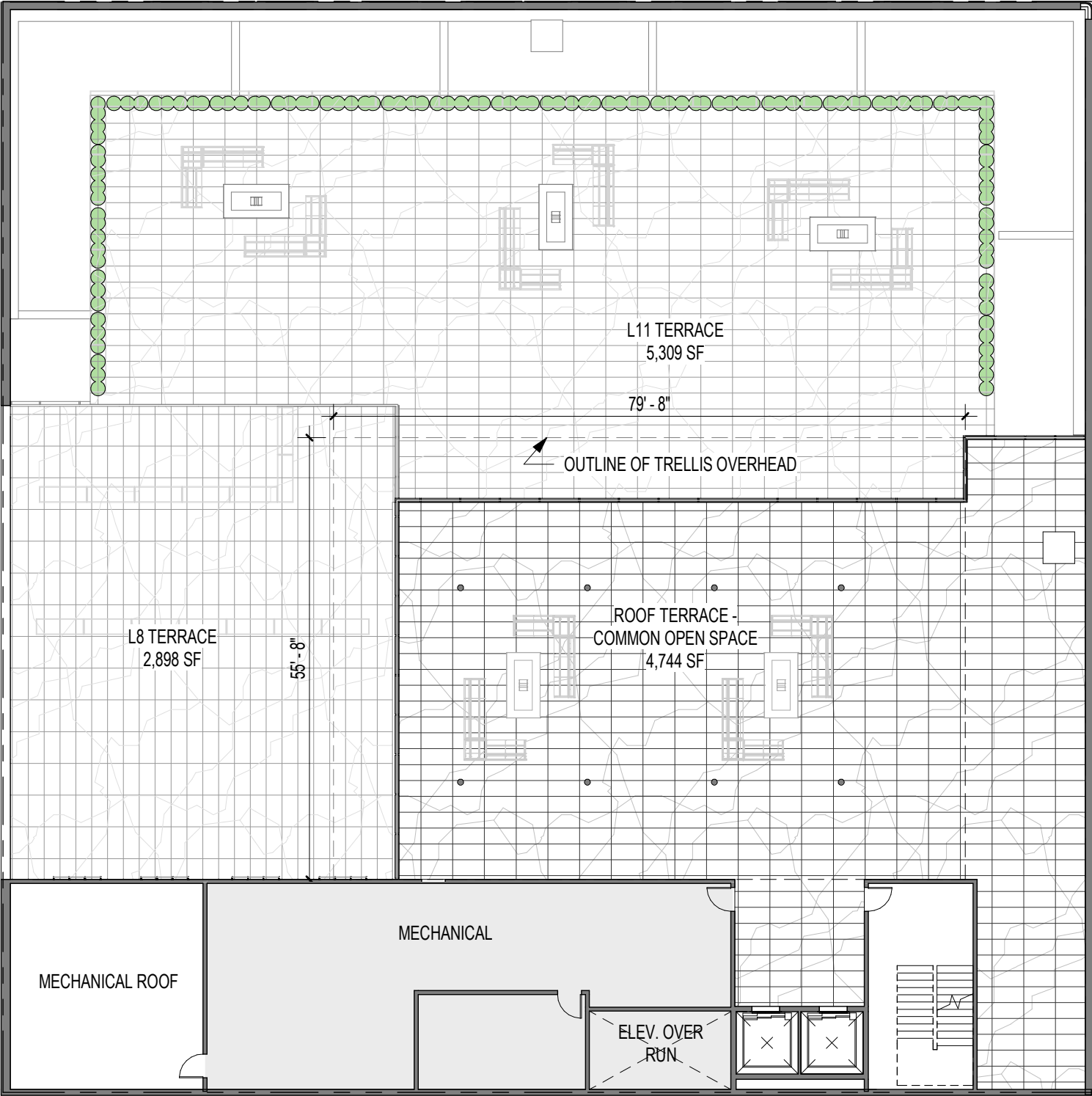
Office & Office Terrace



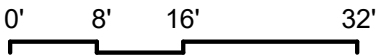
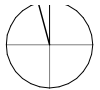
*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

ROOF PLAN

Outdoor Roof Terrace



- LEGEND
- RETAIL
 - OFFICE
 - SERVICE/MECHANICAL
 - RESIDENTIAL
 - COURTYARD



*Square footages provided on plans are gross estimates only.

PROPOSED VIEW FROM STOCKTON STREET



Existing Condition



Project Application Proposal

MASTER SIGN PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BEEN FINALIZED AND IS NOT SUBJECT TO CURRENT REVIEW BY ARC/HPC. MASTER SIGN PROGRAM PROPOSAL WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW AT A LATER TIME.

PROPOSED VIEW FROM UNION SQUARE PLAZA



Existing Condition



Project Application Proposal

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EXISTING ROOFSCAPE



PROPOSED ROOFSCAPE



ALTERNATE SCHEME - GEARY STREET ELEVATION



Project Application Revision
(Geary Street)



Option with Added Windows
(Geary Street)

ALTERNATE SCHEME - PROPOSED VIEW FROM UNION SQUARE PLAZA



Project Application Revision



Option with Added Windows

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ALTERNATE SCHEME - PROPOSED VIEW FROM STOCKTON STREET



Project Application Revision



Option with Added Windows

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LOUIS VUITTON

LOUIS VUITTON

LOUIS VUITTON

Sephora

MACY'S

General Factory

European Bar

UNION SQUARE MARKET STREET STATION

UNION SQUARE
SAN FRANCISCO
STARTS HERE

MACY'S

Geary