



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: May, 19,2021

Filing Date: April 21, 2021
Case No.: 2021-004017LBR
Business Name: Sam's Burgers
Business Address: 618 Broadway Street
Zoning: NCD (BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
Scenic Street Special Sign District
65-A-1 Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0146/004
Applicant: Emad ElShawa
618 Broadway Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Elton Wu - 628-652-7415
Elton.Wu@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Sam's Burgers is a local burger joint located in the North Beach Neighborhood since 1966. Sam's Burgers sells hamburgers with quality ingredients based from their classic recipe. Sam's Burgers was started by Sam ElShawa, located at 618 Broadway Street. Sam ElShawa immigrated to America from Gaza, Palestine with experience as a butcher, so he understands the meat industry and the quality of different meats. Sam worked at the restaurant for the first four years of the business, but eventually passed the business to his nephew, Mike ElShawa. In 1970, Mike ElShawa took over the business and continued to serve the community with burgers. In June 2016, Mike ElShawa died and passed the business to his wife, Marwa ElShawa, and his three sons, Fadi ElShawa, Hani ElShawa, and Emad Shawa. Although Marwa is the official owner of Sam's Burgers, Mike's three sons currently run and maintain the store.

Sam's Burgers prides themselves in serving the community with high quality burgers while still maintaining affordable prices. Sam's Burgers strives to make customers comfortable and create a sense of home. Many

customers will know their aesthetic from the large glowing neon signs at the exterior. They follow their classic recipe to make sure their burgers are high quality. In addition to preserving their burgers recipe, they have actively maintained the interior and exterior of the store to its original design. They accept everyone in open arms from locals to tourists to late-night revelers leaving the local bars and strip clubs. The owners feel that they have a responsibility to be a place where everyone can eat a delicious and affordable meal while experiencing San Francisco.

Besides keeping their original burger recipe throughout the years, Sam's Burgers has remained a continuous business presence in the North Beach community. They participate in most street fairs like the North Beach Festival and is a major attraction spot for major attractions like St. Patrick's Day, New Years Eve, and Santa Con. Sam's Burger utilizes the large counter space to have face to face interactions with customers. The kitchen is placed facing towards the street to allow onlookers to see the cooking in action. They are open 365 days a year and open late nights. They are even open on major holidays to give people a space to celebrate. After the coronavirus pandemic, Sam's Burgers aims to be a part of the revitalizing force behind bringing the neighborhood back. Due to the business location at the nexus of multiple communities, Sam's Burgers serves more than just the North Beach neighborhood; they also serve the Russian Hill neighborhood, Chinatown, and Financial District.

The business is in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the north side of Broadway Street between Stockton Street and Columbus Avenue within the North Beach Survey area (1984). It is within the Scenic Street Special Sign District. It is in the NCD (Neighborhood Commercial District)- Broadway Neighborhood Commercial District and 65-A-1 Height and Bulk District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. When was business founded?

The business was founded in 1966.

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

Yes. Sam's Burgers qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Sam's Burger has operated continuously in San Francisco for 55 years.
- b. Sam's Burger has contributed to the history and identity of the North Beach neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Sam's Burger is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. Is the business associated with a culturally significant art, craft, cuisine, or tradition?

Yes. The business is associated with the hamburger and American cuisine.

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

Famous people who have been patrons include Stephen Curry, Draymond Green, Marshawn Lynch, Too Short, Sean Penn, Metallica, Nicolas Cage, Dave Chappell, Jameis Winston, Keyshia Cole, Boots Riley, Darren McFadden, and Joseph Montana.

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

Yes. The Broadway Street property has been surveyed as part of the North Beach Survey area (1984) and determined eligible for National or California Registers. The exterior signs and facade are well-kept and maintained from 1966. In addition, the interior tables, chairs and counter sustains the same form from 1966.

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

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary, but it is located within the boundaries of the North Beach Historic Survey in 1984.

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

Yes. Sam's Burgers has been cited and mentioned in multiple articles and blogs like:

- 7X7
- SF Weekly
- Thrillst
- Travel Channel's "The Layover with Anthony Bourdain"
- Hoodline
- The Athletic
- Foursquare
- SF Gate

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 618 Broadway Street (1966 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- none

Recommended by Applicant

- The outdoor neon sign
- The original items on the menu from 1966
- Pictures of significant patrons with their autographs hung on the interior walls
- Photos of historical places in San Francisco as part of the interior decor
- Interior Neon Signs and Past Menus
- Red tables and main wooden countertop
- The interior mural of previous owner Mike ElShawa

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Street facing signage with the Sam's business name, and advertisements

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)
- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: May, 19, 2021

Case No.: 2021-004017LBR
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ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR SAM'S BURGERS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 618 BROADWAY (PRIMARY ADDRESS), BLOCK/LOT 0146/004.

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

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

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

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

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on May 19, 2021, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends** safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Sam's Burgers.

Location

Current Locations:

- 618 Broadway Street (1966 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- none

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- The Outdoor Neon sign
- The original items on the menu from 1966
- Pictures of significant patrons with their autographs
- Photos of Historical Places in San Francisco
- Interior Neon Signs and Past Menus
- Red Tables and Main Wooden Countertop
- The interior mural of previous owner Mike ElShawa
- Street facing Signage with the Business name

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs** its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file to the Office of Small Business May 19, 2021.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: May 19, 2021



Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-009
Business Name: Sam's Burgers
Business Address: 618 Broadway
District: District 3
Applicant: Emad ElShawa, Business Manager
Nomination Letter Date: September 4, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

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

Yes No

618 Broadway from 1966 to Present (55 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: April 21, 2021

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org



September 4, 2020

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

Director Dick-Endrizzi:

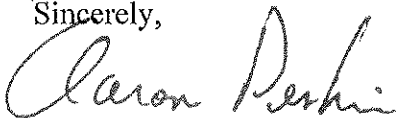
It is my honor and privilege to nominate Sam's Burgers for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Located on the lively Broadway corridor, Sam's Burgers has been in business since 1966 and has served San Francisco's North Beach community seven days a week, 365 days a year until the recent temporary shutdown due to COVID-19. It's a stop for celebrities including Sean Penn, Nicolas Cage, Dave Chappelle, Keyshia Cole and Draymond Green, and was featured on Anthony Bourdain's travel series.

But mostly it's a fixture for neighborhood night owls and clubgoers who order up freshly ground burgers, fried chicken, pizza slices and more at affordable prices well into the wee hours. The Shawa Brothers – Dani, Emad and Fadi – kept the business bustling since the passing of their father, Mike "Pops" Shawa in 2016, and haven't stopped paying employees despite their temporary closure.

I hope for its revival and continued success and hereby recommend it for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aaron Peskin". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Aaron Peskin

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

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

NAME OF BUSINESS:	
Sam's Burgers	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Marwa ElShawa	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
618 Broadway Street San Francisco, Ca. 94133	(415) 860-2020
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address 2724 44th Ave	San Francisco, Ca
	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
	94116
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
www.samsonbroadway.com	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
https://www.facebook.com/Sams-130853690341459/	
TWITTER NAME:	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Emad ElShawa	
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Business Manager (Son)	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
1060864	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	
N/A	

Section Two:

Business Location(s).

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

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
618 Broadway Street San Francisco, Ca. 94133	94133	July 1966
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	July 1966-Present	

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

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

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

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

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

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

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

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

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

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

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

Emad ElShawa

03/26/2021



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

SAM'S BURGERS

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

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

Sam's Burgers ("Sam's") is a burger joint located at 618 Broadway in the North Beach neighborhood. It was established in 1966 by Sam ElShawa and has been owned and operated by Sam's family ever since.

Sam's is a small hole-in-the-wall restaurant clothed in burgundy stools, faded collaged photos of those who've come and gone, and autographs of those that were and are famous among wooden wall paneling. The place hasn't changed a bit since it opened 55 years ago, when it became one of the first fast food burger spots in North Beach.

Sam ElShawa was the first transplant to the United States in his family. He emigrated from Gaza, Palestine. Sam brought the ElShawa family and eventually 50 other family members to San Francisco. The ElShawas were butchers in their home country of Palestine and thus had a keen understanding of the meat industry and what makes a good cut of meat, thus Sam's Burgers was born. Uncle Sam worked for the first 4 years, but eventually decided that the restaurant industry wasn't for him. He later went on to open clothing store in the Mission District.

In 1966, Sam gave his 22-year-old nephew Mike ElShawa his first job, flipping burgers at the small hole in the wall restaurant.

In 1970, Mike took over ownership of Sam's. Starting that year, Mike was often called Sam after his uncle.

On June 13, 2016, nearly 50 years after starting his legacy, Mike ElShawa passed away at the age of 70. He is survived by his wife Marwa and 3 sons, Fadi, Hani, and Emad who still run the business today.

In March 2020, Sam's opened its second location in the Midtown area of Atlanta, GA. "Sam's of San Francisco" was opened to bring a taste of San Francisco to the South.

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

Sam's has not ceased operations in San Francisco since it was founded in 1966. While the pandemic has affected business, which is down over 50% year over year, Sam's has continued to operate as normal, funding the business out-of-pocket when required. Sam's has introduced delivery apps (Uber, Grubhub, DoorDash) to make the business more accessible to anyone not wanting to leave their home, outdoor seating (2 tables in the front of the store), and touchless payment methods. This is all in an effort to ensure that people continue to feel safe when coming to Sam's.

Few neighborhoods have been more negatively affected by the coronavirus pandemic crisis than North Beach. A large number of businesses closed for good, with the both the strip clubs and bars falling victim to reduced foot traffic. For a time, Sam's was one of only three open storefronts on Broadway between Columbus and Stockton streets. Sam's continues to be the only restaurant open seven days a week. This was for the entire year of the pandemic (excluding the one-month shelter-in-place order when the business was forced to close its doors along with everyone else. Until recently, all restaurants on Columbus Avenue closed at least one day a week. Sam's has continued to open, albeit at a loss, to continue to provide a place for the community to have a friendly place to eat.

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

Sam's is a family-owned business. Sam ElShawa opened the business in 1966. His nephew Mike took over shortly thereafter in 1970 and ran it until his passing in 2016. Since then, Mike's wife Marwa (who is the official owner) and 3 sons, Fadi, Hani, and Emad, have run the business.

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

The ownership history of Sam's is as follows:

1966 to 1970:	Sam ElShawa
1970 to 2016:	Mike ElShawa
2016 to Present:	Marwa ElShawa, Fadi ElShawa, Hani ElShawa, and Emad ElShawa (Marwa is the official owner, while the sons run the day-to-day operation of the business)

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

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

The historic resource status of the building at 618 Broadway is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The property appears eligible for National Register (NR) or California Register (CR) through Survey Evaluation

CRITERION 2

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

Sam's has been a part of the North Beach Community since 1966 and has continuously served to anchor the streets of Broadway and Columbus. In an area rich with San Francisco history, Sam's reminds people of the legacy of San Francisco, complete with old artifacts from Candlestick Park and autographs from famous people who have visited.

Sam's is also proud to serve its fellow restaurants. Sam's has become a go-to place for local business owners and restaurant staff alike to come unwind after a long shift. Sam's is proud to be open 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including major holidays).

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

While Sam's very rarely hosts events because of the lack of physical space at its disposal, they do participate in major street fairs such as the North Beach Festival and are a main attraction during major holidays such as St. Patrick's Day, New Year's Eve, Santa Con, etc. Also, with Sam's being open 365 days a year, they are also open on Thanksgiving and Christmas – days when the street is usually closed for business. This allows Sam's to serve as a space where people from the community can come to celebrate these holidays.

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

Sam's has been referenced in numerous publications including, but not limited to, the following:

“Obsessed! Bruce Hill, Chef-Owner of Zero Zero, on Burgers”

7x7

April 4, 2011

<https://www.7x7.com/obsessed-bruce-hill-chef-owner-of-zero-zero-on-burgers-1781068729.html>

“Sam's Burger Still Going Strong after 47 Years”

SF Weekly

October 10, 2013

<https://archives.sfweekly.com/foodie/2013/10/10/sams-burger-still-going-strong-after-47->

“16 SF things we're really freaking thankful for”

Thrillist

November 27, 2013

<https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/san-francisco/16-sf-things-we-re-really-freaking-thankful-for>

“The Layover with Anthony Bourdain: San Francisco,” S1 • E8

Travel Channel

Feb 16, 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GT0A9ga7J0>

“RIP: Mike 'Pops' Shawa, Beloved Owner Of North Beach's Sam's”

Hoodline

June 14, 2016

<https://hoodline.com/2016/06/rip-mike-pops-shawa-beloved-owner-of-north-beach-s-sam-s/>

“Sam’s Burgers, Jump Start and Fambrini’s: Highlighting Bay Area small businesses”

The Athletic

Apr 8, 2020

<https://theathletic.com/1720265/2020/04/08/sams-burgers-jump-start-and-fambrinis-highlighting-bay-area-small-businesses/>

“Where to Find the Best Burgers in San Francisco”

Thrillist

May 26, 2020

<https://www.thrillist.com/eat/san-francisco/best-burgers-san-francisco>

“The 15 Best Hole in the Wall Places in San Francisco”

Foursquare

March 29, 2021

<https://foursquare.com/top-places/san-francisco/best-places-hole-in-the-wall>

“How the SF treasure behind one of Anthony Bourdain's favorite burgers in the world survived COVID-19”

SF Gate

March 30, 2021

<https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/SF-Sams-Burgers-North-Beach-Anthony-Bourdain-16059579.php>

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

Sam's was featured on a 2011 episode of Anthony Bourdain's travel series [The Layover](#). The Layover featured world famous chef Anthony Bourdain and followed him as he spent only 24 hours in cities across the country. Sam's was chosen as a "must visit" place if you only had 24 hours in San Francisco. Since his visit in 2011, Sam's still gets tourists from around the world coming to visit Sam's because of the show. Mr. Bourdain also declared Sam's "one of the top 3 burgers in the world" during his visit, a moniker that still stands among locals and tourists alike.

In addition to Anthony Bourdain, Sam's has become a celebrity hot spot, with the likes of Steph Curry, Draymond Green, Marshawn Lynch, Rapper Too Short, Sean Penn, Metallica, Nicholas Cage, Dave Chappell, Jameis Winston, Keyisha Cole, Boots Riley, Darren McFadden, and Joe Montana visiting Sam's and signing the walls over the years.

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

Sam's is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including holidays. The owners feel a deep sense of responsibility to be the place where tourists and locals alike can come anytime a grab a decent, fairly-priced meal to eat, all while experiencing a small taste of San Francisco. Sam's is family operated, and all the present owners were born and raised in San Francisco and enjoy talking with their customers about what makes this city special and how Sam's has survived that test of time.

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

North Beach is a rarity in San Francisco – a neighborhood that manages to be a perennial hit with tourists but also remains beloved by San Franciscans. It's best known as San Francisco's Little Italy, with its high density of check-clothed ristorantes, caffes and Old-World delicatessens. It's also a popular pilgrimage for fans of the Beat movement seeking the old haunts of Kerouac and Ginsberg. However, North Beach is no relic, and it has much to offer beyond pasta and poetry. This vital neighborhood is home to some of the liveliest nightclubs and bars in town.

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

The exterior protruding sign that lights up the street, the exterior window that faces the grill outward for passers-by to watch as food is being prepared, the interior pictures of customers and celebrities who have visited for the past 55 years, and the red stools and wooden countertop and walls that have not changed since Sam's was opened are all things that are culturally significant and have become associated with the business. Furthermore, the plaque on the wall showcasing the City and County of San Francisco's tribute to Mike ElShawa, as well as Anthony Bourdain's signature from the day he visited, are also heavily associated with the business.

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

The ElShawa Family has become synonymous with Sam's. Many locals remember the days of Mike flipping burgers in the windows and conversations they had with him. Customers also got to know the family, including Mike's three sons – Fadi, Hani, and Emad – who do everything they can to keep the memory of their father within the community alive and well. Sam's would like to be part of the revitalizing force behind bring the neighborhood back better than ever after the coronavirus pandemic, all while keeping those quintessential San Francisco qualities alive. If the business were to shut down, the North Beach neighborhood and San Francisco as a whole would lose a restaurant that has not only kept within its walls the memories of what made San Francisco what it is, but has served as a pillar for the community in times of both economic stability and stress.

CRITERION 3

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

Sam's strives to be an affordable, no frills, high quality place to eat. What makes Sam's special is the feeling of home. It is not your typical hamburger place. The counter seating, which takes up the majority of the interior of the store, allows customers to have a front row seat to the action, all while striking a conversation with employees that have been with Sam's for many years. The kitchen faces the street with a large glass showcase that allow passersby to witness the cook in action, and the large exterior neon sign lights up the street and is visible from blocks away. But perhaps nothing is more recognizable than the inside walls of the store – neon signs light up walls, autographs of famous people who have eaten at Sam's line up the upper walls, and pictures of locals who have visited take up a large part of the entrance. Sam's also still has the original menus from when they opened in 1966. Sam's has never been modernized and that's the way they want it to stay. It should remain a place that people can come to get a taste of San Francisco across generations.

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

Sam's has not changed since its inception. The menu remains the same, the décor remains constant, and the family-friendly environment and affordable pricing remains a cornerstone of how the business is run. The outdoor signage has also not been updated, as this is a quintessential part of the neighborhood. Sam's also remains committed to using the highest quality ingredients, the same recipes, and same family service the restaurant's customers have come to expect for the last 55 years.

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

Sam's maintains all signage originally added to the store when it opened. On the outside, there is a large neon sign that protrudes outward from the building that has continued to light the street for 55 years, and an outward facing kitchen that allows tourists and locals alike to watch as food is being prepared.

On the interior, all the walls remain in near original form. Sam's has maintained the original menus from 1966; photos of customers line the entrance to remind people of locals who frequented the restaurant; neon signs continue to light the interior; and autographs and photos of old-time San Francisco remain a theme throughout. The tables and main counter also remain in original form. In the center of the restaurant, a mural of Mike Shawa takes up large portions of the wall to remind all new customers of the hard work he put in maintaining the qualities of the business that is still maintained today.

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

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a restaurant for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application.



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SAM'S BURGERS

SAM'S CHEESEBURGER
SAM'S DOUBLE CHEESE
SAM'S TRIPLE CHEESE
(BACON)

HOT DOG
POLISH SAUSAGE
ONION RINGS
FRENCH FRIES
CORN DOG





CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

SELLER'S PERMIT

ACCOUNT NUMBER

10-79

SR BH 19-661110

THIS PERMIT DOES NOT AUTHORIZE THE HOLDER TO ENGAGE IN ANY BUSINESS CONTRARY TO LAWS REGULATING THE BUSINESS OF TO POSSESS OR OPERATE ANY ILLEGAL DEVICE.

Sam's
Menzer M. Shawa
618 Broadway
San Francisco, CA 94133

IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SALES AND USE TAX LAW TO ENGAGE IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING TANGIBLE PERSONAL PROPERTY AT THE ABOVE LOCATION

STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

THIS PERMIT IS VALID UNTIL REVOKED OR CANCELLED BUT IS NOT TRANSFERABLE

Not valid at any other address

BT-442-R REV. 7 (4-78)



DISPLAY CONSPICUOUSLY AT THE PLACE OF BUSINESS FOR WHICH ISSUED

<https://hoodline.com/2018/01/inside-sam-s-north-beach-s-late-night-burger-mecca/>



Inside 'Sam's,' North Beach's Late-Night Burger Mecca



Photo: Alisa Scerrato/Hoodline

By [Alisa Scerrato](#)

Published on January 30, 2018.

Mike "Pops" Shawa, the late owner of [Sam's Pizza & Hamburgers](#) in North Beach, [passed away in 2016](#), but after more than 50 years in business, the restaurant is still going strong.

Thanks to Shawa, who obtained a zoning variance to stay open an hour later in 1997, the spot is usually bustling until 3am.

Referred to by locals as a neighborhood fixture and a home away from home, the restaurant, which opened in 1966, was featured on [a 2011 episode of Anthony Bourdain's travel series](#) and has been visited by celebrities like Sean Penn, Nicolas Cage, Dave Chappelle, Keyshia Cole and Draymond Green.



Photo: John K./[Yelp](#)

"Many stars, actors, ballplayers loved my father and how he treated them," said Fadi Shawa, who now runs the business with his brothers, Emad and Dani. "No matter who you were, everyone would be treated the same."

When the elder Shawa passed away, [chef Tim Luym](#) of Buffalo Theory described him as "the ambassador of Broadway."

Sam's renowned burger isn't fancy, but it's fresh and affordable. Using meat that's freshly ground in-house and sesame-seed buns that are delivered daily, the eatery charges \$7.50 for a 1/2 lb. cheeseburger, and \$5.50 for a 1/4-pound single.



Photo: Brandi V./[Yelp](#)

French fries, fried chicken, shrimp, fish and chips and hot dogs and pizza slices round out the menu; Sam's serves beer, wine and soda, and all purchases are cash-only.

"I can truly tell you my dad poured his soul into each and every last burger," said Shawa, adding that his father's values still inform how he and his brothers run the business.

"Service with a smile!" And the customer is always right, even when they are drunk and wrong," he added, laughing.



Mike "Pops" Shawa passed away in 2016. | Photo: Sam's Burgers/[Facebook](#)

The Shawa brothers are opening three more Sam's locations in the Atlanta area—one outpost is already under construction, and the other two should be open by summer.

They've also recently opened a coffee shop there called [Caffeine Atlanta](#).

As far as the future, Shawa said the restaurant owes its longevity to loyal customers. As a result, no changes are in the works.



Fadi Shawa, (left) with Shaquille O'Neal at Caffeine Atlanta. | **Photo: Fadi Shawa**

"From 'RIP Ed Lee' to Aaron Peskin and his staff to the North Beach Police Department, to the poets and artists that North Beach is known for, the neighborhood will always continue to flourish," said Shawa.

"Not because of Sam's, but because of the special relationship that we have with the community and that the community has with Sam's."

Sam's Pizza and Hamburgers (618 Broadway between Grant and Stockton) is open from 4pm to 3am.

SFGATE

How the SF treasure behind one of Anthony Bourdain's favorite burgers in the world survived COVID-19

Grant Marek, SFGATE March 30, 2021



Emad ElShawa stands in front of Sam's, a North Beach institution his dad ran for 50 years.
Patricia Chang/Special to SFGATE

*"I just wanna dance with somebody.
I wanna feel the heat with somebody."*

My throat is hoarse and fingertips are tingling as I stumble out of Chinatown's Bow Bow Cocktails on a warm San Francisco night — the words from Whitney Houston's seminal 1987 classic still ringing in my head after a sweaty all-night karaoke affair with friends.

I need a burger and know just where to go.

Sam's opened in 1966 on Broadway, a block from the east end of the Broadway tunnel, at the intersection of Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Chinatown and North Beach.

Patricia Chang/Special to SFGATE

Sam's opened in 1966 on Broadway, a block from the east end of the Broadway tunnel, at the intersection of Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Chinatown and North Beach.

I had my first burger there in 2010, minutes after wandering out of Bow Bow and a couple of years before a tipsy Anthony Bourdain would drop by Sam's in a 2012 episode of Travel Channel's "The Layover" to declare their burger one of his "top three in the world."

"That is a good motherf—kin' burger," reads a note in the San Francisco institution signed by the late Bourdain.

And it really is. Crisply grilled sesame-seeded buns hug two patties (always get the double), with perfectly melted cheese, shredded lettuce, tomato, red onion, ketchup and mayo — the whole thing is an exercise in juicy ingredient harmony that pairs really perfectly with an essential San Francisco experience. It's hard to knock a deliciously simple burger you can get until 4 a.m. in a tiny hole-in-the-wall 20-seater at the epicenter of four fantastic S.F. drinking neighborhoods.

Mike ElShawa served me that burger, and the burgers of every other person who sat at one of his ketchup-red stools for 50 years before his passing in 2016.

"My dad worked extremely hard to build what we had," says Emad ElShawa — Mike's youngest of three sons — who took over day-to-day operations when his father died. "We had a front row seat to how hard he worked. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year, until 3 or 4 in the morning, 12 hours a day — it was a grind. We saw him an hour before we went to school when we were kids, and as soon as we were old enough to go to North Beach, we'd go and spend as



much time there as we could to see dad. The only vacation he took was in 1998 when he had a heart attack. That was it.”

Emad ElShawa was born and raised in San Francisco and watched his father give his life to North Beach for 26 years, which is evidenced by both the stories he tells about his dad, and the fact that — as the only brother still living in San Francisco — he took over the business in 2016 while also juggling a full-time tech exec job at Fundbox.

He refused to give up his dad’s legacy.

“The amount of respect from people who still come in to this day and say ‘I remember your dad,’ whether it’s cops, or San Francisco supervisors, or just people in the neighborhood — they all come in and say, ‘We miss your dad.’”

I miss Mike.

The thing about him is he wasn’t a guy who everyone in the neighborhood missed — he was a guy everyone in the *city* missed. San Francisco issued a dedication upon his death, which now hangs in the 55-year-old restaurant. Mike was the heartbeat of Sam’s, which

has always had this really special mix of industry folks getting off shift (and some of the hungry people they were just serving last call to), people in the neighborhood who needed an a.m. burger, and all kinds of wild cards from the Broadway strip club scene.

Sam’s roster of celebrity diners rivals that of any of the city’s Michelin-starred superpowers: Sean Penn, Too \$hort, Draymond Green, Nicolas Cage, Marshawn Lynch, Dave Chappelle, Jameis Winston, Keyshia Cole, Boots Riley, Darren McFadden, and the list goes on.

There’s a reason Mission Chinese’s Danny Bowien took Bourdain to Sam’s almost a decade ago. Yes, because it’s open late, but also because everyone loved Mike.

"I started going there when I worked at Bar Crudo, I was slicing fish there, and Mike Selvera used to take me to Sam's on our break," Bowien says via phone. "It was a tradition to go there late when I was still drinking and get Bud Lights. I got to know Mike before he died, that whole family is so great. It felt special to be part of that.

"But it was a weird night, I had never met Bourdain or anything, and I haven't drunk in years, but that was one of the best drinking nights. It was like meeting your hero. I remember his producers just said where are you taking him and I said I'm going to take him to Chinatown, so we went to LiPo Lounge, and Mr. Bings and then Sam's at the end of the night. I was very drunk at the time, I squirted mustard all over his arm — it was very surreal, the night went too perfectly. Everywhere we went he was so blown away. When I said we were going to Sam's Burgers he just said 'Great.' He never said 'no,' his producer said 'We have to go to next place, we have to go,' and people would be outside and say they wanted to take a picture with him, and he'd take a picture with anybody who asked. To this day it's one of the only places, when I come back to San Francisco, I always go there. I go to Turtle Tower, do lunch at Shalimar, and then do Sam's. To me, it reminds me of people who love going to sushi bars, where you get to hang out with the chef, talk shop — that was always the best part, talking to Mike, talking to one of the brothers."

Now, five years after Mike's death, Sam's is as much a memorial to Mike ElShawa as it is a magical late-night burger counter. In addition to a black-and-white photo of Mike behind the counter with a cigarette in his mouth and a Styrofoam cup in his hand, there are also plenty of homages to Sam's late owner — from

charcoal drawings to oil paintings — hanging on the walls, all gifted by customers who miss Mike, too.

Sam's has closed three times in its history: for a couple days after Mike's aforementioned heart attack in 1998, for three days after Mike's death in 2016 and for an unprecedented month after San Francisco issued a shelter-in-place order on March 17, 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic.

They opened for takeout after the month was up, and added delivery apps and eased their cash-only policy. There isn't an app you won't find Sam's on anymore. Emad says it was their only source of revenue the first three months after they reopened.

"People have known us to be kind of old school — we still hang on to a lot of stuff that makes Sam's the cool place to be, the things that transported people to 1960," he says. "We're not used to us being on delivery apps or taking credit cards."

They also went from a staff of four with three full-time employees to a staff of four where no one was full-time. They made 40% less in 2020 than they did in 2019. Their hours went from "until 4 a.m." to "until 11 p.m. only on weekends." And an absent international



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BURGERS

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Sam's
Burgers
TOP THREE IN THE WORLD
— ANTHONY BOURDAIN



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landlord who doesn't live in S.F. meant they didn't get the same rent relief that a lot of old school businesses who've survived did.

“San Francisco was transforming before the pandemic, and the pandemic made it 10 times harder to survive if you were a historic San Francisco place,” Emad says. “People who have come in, and just say, ‘I really hope you can make it through this. You’re one of the few places left that remind us of original old school S.F.’ Especially as you kind of hear about a place like the Cliff House that’s been around for 125 years — when places like that shut down, it really gives people a scare.”

Sam’s, though, has been buoyed by their neighbors, and by the ElShawas' pocketbooks, as Emad continues to work at both the restaurant and Fundbox.

“Parts of the business are not profitable, and we’ve been funding it out of pocket when it’s not,” Emad says. “It means that much to us, to myself, my older brothers (Hani and Fadi), to my mom (Marwa) — it’s really important to us to pay out of pocket to keep Sam’s alive, to keep it in the neighborhood, and to contribute to the rejuvenation of San Francisco.”

“I really think San Francisco will be back to better than before, and if we have to pay to contribute to that and keep dad’s legacy alive, then so be it.”

Sam's Burgers is located at 618 Broadway in North Beach. They're currently open 12pm-10pm on weekdays, and 12pm-11pm on weekends.

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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June 15, 2016

Fadi Shawa and Family
Attention: Alistair Monroe
11 San Antonio Place, No. 6
San Francisco, CA 94133

Dear Shawa Family:

This is to inform you that upon a motion made by Supervisor Aaron Peskin, the Board of Supervisors adjourned its regular meeting of June 14, 2016, out of respect to the memory of Mike Shawa.

The members of the Board, with a profound sense of civic and personal loss, are conscious of the many fine qualities of heart and mind which distinguished and brought justifiable appreciation to Mr. Shawa.

The Supervisors realize that mere words can mean so little to you at a time such as this, but they do want you and the members of your family to know of their deep sympathy and heartfelt condolence.

Sincerely,

Peggy Nevin

for Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

