

# **SAN FRANCISCO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**



## **Meeting Minutes**

### **REMOTE HEARING**

via video and teleconferencing

**Wednesday, May 19, 2021**

**11:30 a.m.**

## **Architectural Review Committee Meeting**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** BLACK, PEARLMAN, SO  
**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY COMMISSIONER PEARLMAN AT 11:40 AM**

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:** Jonathan Vimr, Michelle Taylor, Jonas P. Ionin – Commission Secretary

### **SPEAKER KEY:**

- + indicates a speaker in support of an item;
- indicates a speaker in opposition to an item; and
- = indicates a neutral speaker or a speaker who did not indicate support or opposition.

### **A. COMMITTEE MATTERS**

1. Committee Comments & Questions

\* Election of a Committee Chair

SPEAKERS: None  
ACTIONS: Committee Chair – Jonathan Pearlman  
AYES: Black, Pearlman, So

**Commissioner Pearlman:**

I do have one disclosure. I met with the team for 233 Geary Street and had discussions with the project sponsor about the project.

**B. REGULAR**

2. [2020-005897PTA](#) (J. VIMR: (628) 652-7319)  
233 GEARY STREET – Located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Geary and Stockton streets, Block 0314, Lot 001 (District 3). **Review and Comment** by the Architectural Review Committee regarding the proposal to convert the I. Magnin building to a mix of retail, office, and 21 residential units, and to complete associated exterior alterations such as ground floor modifications, expansion of the existing window openings, and removal of a portion of the blank, western elevation. The subject property is located in the C-3-R (Downtown-Retail) Zoning District and 65-X Height and Bulk District.  
*Preliminary Recommendation: Review and Comment*

SPEAKERS: = Jon Vimr – Staff report  
+ Jason Chan – Project sponsor  
+ Glenn Moscalvo – Project sponsor  
ACTION: Reviewed and Commented

**ARC Comments**

No members of the ARC were concerned with the limited removal of a portion of the blank western elevation, with each of them then providing recommendations and highlighting a variety of other items that merit further consideration or revisions.

Commissioner Black noted that the large metal panels seen at the ground floor detracted from the building's architectural identity, and further that while it may be possible to design the operable lights at the upper levels of windows such that they are almost invisible, if such an approach was taken these window lights could be very visually intrusive. A darker finish for the mullions was recommended as one method of reducing their visibility. Commissioner Black also stated that enlarging the topmost level of windows relative to those below messed with the geometry of the building and that the proposal in general was not quite there yet. The women's sixth floor powder room was noted as an asset to the building and for future tenants, and that at a minimum the washroom area should be preserved as is iconic for this era of department stores and served an important civic function well beyond being just a restroom.

Commissioner So concurred on the significance of the powder room and asked that whatever can be done to preserve it should be pursued. In commenting on the use of a new metal cladding for various elements throughout the design, she noted that while the canopies and entries were well balanced, they appeared overly distinct from the

historic/existing conditions. Part of this could have been due to the use of bronze, which may not be an appropriate material and at this stage was not obvious as a material historically found on the building. Commissioner So inquired as to whether the metal cladding proposed for the ground level would be flat and uniform or have some degree of ornamentation and detailing. This was recommended as something to explore further if the ground floor moved forward as proposed. She also indicated that the metal cladding must have an appropriate color and should not be glossy or otherwise representative of luxury brands. The alternative design schemes shown by the sponsor were particularly highlighted as erring in this regard, with the treatment shown at the top level of the alternative design representing a ubiquitous gesture by the project architect rather than something tied to the subject building and its history.

Commissioner Pearlman began by reflecting on the building's original design, which featured a central portal with smaller openings flanking outwards to create a linear plinth. Making the new storefronts a bit narrower was recommended in light of this and to better maintain the solidity and massing of the building. He agreed that the color of the metal was important to get right, and that it needed to trend darker. As to questions around the windows, Commissioner Pearlman remarked that having an operable light may not be an issue with a mullion that is fine enough to not be noticeable, though the design of this was crucial and the darker the finish for the mullion the better. The taller, topmost level of windows appeared compatible to Commissioner Pearlman, with the massing not being diminished and the façade still reading as a strong wide marble frame around a grid of windows. Neither of the alternative design proposals presented by the sponsor were appropriate.

3. [2021-004293COA](#) (M. TAYLOR: (628) 652-7352)  
55 HAGIWARA TEA GARDEN DRIVE – Located between John F. Kennedy Drive, Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and Music Concourse Drive, Lot 001 in Assessor's Block 1700 (District 1, District 5). **Review and Comment** by the Architectural Review Committee regarding the proposal to install illuminated letters on the frieze of the Spreckels Temple of Music. The temporary installation will be removed after two years. The subject property is located in the P (Public) Zoning District and OS Height and Bulk District.  
*Preliminary Recommendation: Review and Comment*

SPEAKERS: = Michelle Taylor – Staff presentation  
+ Ben Davis – Project sponsors  
ACTION: Reviewed and Commented

#### **ARC Comments**

Staff is requesting review and comment from the ARC regarding conformity with Article 10 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the proposed project and its effect on the character-defining features of the subject historic landmark.

1) Overall Form and Continuity *The Music Concourse is significant as public space for art and performance. The installation is contemporary in design and does not include any architectural details that create a sense of false historicism.*

- ARC Comments. Commissioners were divided on the overall appropriateness of the proposed project. Commissioner So voiced full support for the installation including location, message, materials, and methods of attachment. Commissioners Black and Pearlman supported materials and methods of attachment but found the proposed project to be inappropriate and incongruous with the building. Both Commissioners Black and Pearlman, supported the message and intent behind the installation but felt that its location lacked a connection to site. Commissioner Pearlman further suggested that the project sponsor explore relocating the message somewhere else in the Music Concourse. Commissioner Pearlman stated that any letters attached to the bandshell, regardless of message, would be inappropriate. He also voiced some concern regarding the temporary nature of the installation, that projects have the potential to become permanent.

2) Scale and Proportion *The proposed dimensions of the illuminated text are 4' tall and 36' 5" wide; the profile depth of the letters is 3".*

- ARC Comments. Commissioners did not speak directly to the scale of the installation, and instead focused on the overall appropriateness of the piece. See item #1.

3) Materials *The letters will be powder-coated aluminum halo-lit channel letters.*

- ARC Comments Commissioners So and Black supported the use of halo-lit letters as opposed to face-lit letters, which the artist proposed in a previous iteration of the design.

4) Detail *The proposed project scope includes installation of a metal raceway and anchorage bolts secured into the mortar joints of the bandshell's frieze. The ¼" diameter anchorage bolts are appropriately sized to the width of the mortar joints so as to avoid damage to the Colusa sandstone exterior.*

- ARC Comments. Commissioners agreed that the proposed method of anchorage into mortar joints is an acceptable technical approach. Commissioners supported the commitment of the project sponsor to employ an experienced masonry specialist to perform the work and restore the building at the close of the installation.

ADJOURNMENT 12:41 PM  
ADOPTED AUGUST 4, 2021