

## **Historic Preservation Fund Committee Activities, October 2016-September 2017**

Report submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission by Robert Cherny on October 18, 2017.

HPFC members (with source of appointment): Mark Ryser, chair (SF Beautiful), Dennis Antenore (San Franciscans for Preservation Planning), Mike Buhler (San Francisco Heritage), Robert Cherny (HPC), Lila Hussain (Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, successor to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency), and G. G. Bland Platt (Board of Supervisors). The position of Mayor's representative is vacant due to the death of Bruce Bonacker. Jonathan Lau of the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development provides crucial staff assistance to the committee.

During the past eleven months, HPFC approved funding for two new projects and conducted oversight for fourteen projects funded earlier of which eight were completed. Initial oversight and review activities have been conducted by the Grant Review Subcommittee, which reports to the full committee on its work. All HPFC members are invited to attend sub-committee meetings, but the regular sub-committee members are Ryser, Cherny, Bland Platt, and Courtney Damkroger, a former member of HPC.

Our usual procedure is that a new proposal is first reviewed by the sub-committee, which usually requests a meeting with the project sponsors to discuss specific aspects of the proposal, often followed by resubmission of the proposal with revisions addressing the sub-committee's concerns. Sometimes the sub-committee requires more than one re-submission. Once the sub-committee approves a proposal, it is then reviewed and discussed by the full committee; once the committee approves, the recommendation goes to the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, which develops contracts and handles financial arrangements. The sub-committee also reviews progress reports on individual projects and works with Planning Department staff on moving completed projects to HPC for approval.

When I last reported to you on November 2, 2016, I told you that there was less than \$200,000 remaining in the fund. In February 2017, we received the welcome news that the HPFC had been credited with the interest on the fund over the past twelve years, in the amount of approximately \$485,000. The current balance is therefore approximately \$620,000. The HPFC is still feeling pressure to complete its work by finding appropriate projects for its remaining funds.

*HPFC projects completed during the past eleven months:*

1. Residence Parks Historic Context Statement (Western Neighborhoods Project). This project is now with the Planning Department.
2. Mission Dolores Neighborhood Survey and National Register District nomination (Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association). HPFC reviewed a draft of the Revised Mission Dolores Neighborhood Historic Context Statement and related survey and accepted it with only a few editorial changes. This documentation was submitted to

the Planning Department for review in December 2016. The MDNA Board is now deciding how to proceed with the National Register district nomination.

3. Eureka Valley Historic Context Statement (Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association). This project is now with the Planning Department.
4. Corbett Heights Historic Context Statement (Corbett Heights Neighbors). This project has been approved by Planning and the HPC.
5. Landmark nominations for George Washington High School.
6. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, and
7. Sunshine School (Heritage). These three school nominations are now with the Planning Department and awaiting HPC approval.
8. Sacred Heart church, rectory, school, and convent complex, National Register Nomination (HPFC initiated). This has been approved by HPC and the State Historical Resources Commission and has been forwarded to the national level.

*New projects (funded during the past eleven months):*

1. Historic Context Statement and survey for the Haight Street commercial corridor, focusing on the events of 1967 (Heritage and Planning Dept.).
2. OpenSF: Digitizing and sharing historical photographs of San Francisco from private collections (Western Neighborhoods Project). Approved funds for the project to continue for another two years past the end of 2017.

*Continuing projects during the past eleven months:*

1. San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement (Heritage). The sub-committee has talked with the new consultant and looks forward to the submission of a draft of this project in the near future.
2. Mission Dolores Neighborhood National Register District nomination (Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association). The MDNA Board is now deciding how to proceed with the National Register district nomination.
3. Ocean Avenue commercial district survey of historic resources, district assessment, and design guidance (Ocean Avenue Association). Met with consultant, reviewed draft.
4. OpenSF: Digitizing and sharing historical photographs of San Francisco from private collections (Western Neighborhoods Project). Met with sponsors, reviewed and approved progress. You can see some of the photos we have funded at <http://opensfhistory.org>.
5. Sacred Heart church, rectory, school, and convent complex, Article 10 Landmark Nomination (HPFC initiated). Now with Planning Department, awaiting action by HPC.
6. San Francisco African American Historic Context Statement (Planning Department). Final draft submitted to Planning Department in January 2015.

In addition to oversight on projects in progress, we have also received updates on several completed projects, including the Old Mint (for which we funded a study of the suitability of the structure for use by the California Historical Society) and the Mother's Building at the zoo (for which we funded a study to establish needed repairs to stabilize the restore this historic structure).

*Priorities:*

On May 29, 2015, the HPFC established priorities for self-initiated projects using the remaining Historic Preservation Fund. The top eight priorities were:

1. Great Depression-New Deal Era Historical Context Statement (to focus on architecture and art).
2. Landmark nomination for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.
3. Preservation and digitization of photographs of the city from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
4. Landmark nomination for George Washington High School.
5. Completion of an historic resource survey of the Ocean Avenue commercial district.
6. Landmark nomination for the historic structures and landscaping of the San Francisco Zoo.
7. Landmark nomination for the former Sunshine School, now Hilltop School.
8. National Historic Landmark nomination for Coit Tower.

In addition to those priorities established in Spring 2015, the HPFC also initiated both the Article 10 landmarking and National Register listing for the Sacred Heart church, rectory, school, and convent complex.

Item 1 is nearing completion. Items 2, 4, and 7 are now complete and awaiting HPC consideration. Items 3 and 5 are underway, and we have recently approved funding to extend item 3 for another two years. Regarding item 8, an amendment to the current National Register listing has been submitted to the California Office of Historic Preservation as the first step toward a National Landmark nomination, with funding through a generous private donor instead of HPFC funding. Thus, of our top eight priorities, only item 6 remains without work underway. With the completion of these seven projects, the committee has now begun to establish new priorities. Because we have succeeded with nearly all the priorities we established in Spring 2015 and still have funds available, we are now beginning another round of priority setting. Toward the end, we have recently conferred with the Planning Department regarding the department's Landmark Designation Work Program. And, of course, we continue to welcome proposals from community organizations.

We remain committed to landmarking the historic structures and landscaping of the San Francisco Zoo, specifically the remaining structures from the "Fleishhacker Zoo" built in the 1920s (one of which is the Mother's Building) and the various structures and landscaping built by the WPA in the 1930 (including the Elephant House, the Lion House, the Aviary, Penguin Island, grottoes, and other structures and landscaping), most if not all of which seem to be intact, though a number have been modified and repurposed.

We now assume that, if the remaining funds are allocated sometime during the coming year (2018), our oversight functions will extend another year or so (all currently funded projects are on track to be completed by the end of 2019), and that the committee will then be dissolved. We continue to hope that something like the HPFC will be

reconstituted by the Board of Supervisors, with a reliable source of funding, as a way of assisting local preservation supporters who need funding for specific projects.

HPFC recently created a sub-committee to organize a program that will present the committee's history and accomplishments thus far, with special attention to a few of the projects it has funded. The program is called "Ruins to Redemption: The Historic Preservation Fund Committee," and it will be on Thursday, October 19, at the Metropolitan Club, 640 Sutter Street. The program description reads this way: "Learn how a small band of preservationists held a developer accountable to create the Historic Preservation Fund Committee in 2005; Planning Commission President Rich Hillis will examine the origins, legacy, and future of the HPFC." This program is sponsored by Heritage and the 640 Heritage Preservation Foundation as the annual Alice Carey Memorial Lecture.

In closing, we note the passing of Bruce Bonacker, an original member of HPFC and one who contributed significantly to the committee's work, even while he was battling the cancer that finally took his life. Bruce attended his last HPFC meeting on May 22 and died on August 3 at age of 69.