

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 16700

ADOPTING FINDINGS BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION ENACTING A TEMPORARY POLICY REQUIRING MANDATORY DISCRETIONARY REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR DEMOLITION OF RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURES NOT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONAL USE FOR DEMOLITION, AND GOVERNING REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SUCH APPLICATIONS.

Preamble

On May 8, 2003, the Planning Commission heard a review of the policy then in place for Mandatory Discretionary review of those residential demolition applications that were not subject to Conditional Use authorization.

That report suggested that review of residential demolitions be based on the Draft Housing Element of the General Plan, and identified relevant Policies and Objectives.¹ The report described procedures the Department could use in demolition evaluations to bring greater consistency and clarity to the review process.

Staff received direction from the Commission at that hearing to apply some of the recommendations to applications on a trial basis, for an assessment of their efficacy. To that end, staff created a new Discretionary Review Report format for residential demolition applications. The keystone of that report format is a checklist of sixteen criteria.

These Interim criteria have been applied to Residential Demolitions during the past six months, during which time the Commission, staff and the public have been able to observe the utility and the results of the policies. The Department has tracked Commissioners' comments, public testimony, and information from meetings with stakeholders from neighborhood organizations, tenant groups, construction professionals, and Department of Building Inspection (DBI) staff. Planning staff now proposes formal adoption of "A Temporary Residential Demolition Policy."

Following adoption by the Commission a temporary policy, staff would continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the process, and return to the Commission in about six months (approximately May of 2004) with recommendations for adoption of a long-term policy.

On November 6, 2003, the Planning Commission (hereinafter "Commission") conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the temporary Residential Demolition Policy, at which time the Commission reviewed and discussed the findings prepared for its review by the staff of the Planning Department of the City and County of San Francisco (hereinafter "Department"). Keeping the Public Hearing open, the Commission continued this item to December 11, 2003.

On December 11, 2003, the Commission conducted a second duly noticed public hearing on the temporary Residential Demolition Policy, at which time the Commission reviewed and discussed the findings prepared for its review by the staff of the Planning Department of the City and County of San Francisco (hereinafter "Department").

1. These criteria are drawn from Policies and Objectives in the draft of the Housing Element. Revisions to that Element as adopted by the Commission and Board of Supervisors that effect Policies and Objectives relating to removal of dwellings will be incorporated into future proposals for demolition criteria presented to the Commission, prior to adoption of a long-term policy.

After hearing and considering the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and after further considering the written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of the Department staff and other interested parties, the Commission adopted the policy.

RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby adopts said policy based on the following findings:

Findings

Having reviewed all the materials identified in the recitals above and having heard oral testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes and determines as follows:

1. The above recitals are accurate and also constitute findings of this Commission.
2. **Scope Of The Policy:** Under the proposed Temporary Residential Demolition Policy, permit applications to demolish any residential structure, unless Conditional Use authorization is required for demolition approval², are subject to mandatory Discretionary Review (DR) hearings, with the following exceptions: structures determined to be public hazards or structures damaged beyond feasible repair by fire, earthquake, or other act of God to be demolished and replaced in kind, and recommended for demolition by the Director of the Department of Building Inspection are exempt from Mandatory Discretionary Review under this policy.
3. The Department has created a Residential Demolition Application Form. The front of that Form solicits information from the applicant that addresses the project's consistency with the General Plan and its compliance with the Planning Code. It also requires the signature of the Applicant, signifying that the reverse of the form has been read and understood. The reverse side lists submittal requirements, and alludes to criteria that the Commission will consider in its review of the proposal. It refers the Project Sponsor to a new public information handout describing in detail the building soundness determination process. Environmental review of possible historical impacts of demolition is mentioned, and reference is made to a supplemental information sheet that must be completed by owners proposing demolition of structures older than fifty years, as required under the Department's "CEQA Guidelines for Historic Structures."
4. **Policy #1:** *Application: The Commission shall require applicants to complete a residential demolition application similar to the draft in Exhibit 2, modified to reflect policy elements as adopted, and providing information, instructions and references to applicants, including informing them of the requirement for Discretionary Review hearings for approval or denial of the proposed demolitions.*
5. Section 350(c) requires the Planning Department to charge the applicant for time and material costs in excess of basic fees, which for a Discretionary Review request is \$133 (for 1.46 hours of staff time, based on a current rate of \$91.17 per hour). A Discretionary Review Hearing before the Planning Commission on average requires about 20 hours of staff time. The Department cannot

² Demolitions of residences located above the ground floor in NC Districts and the Van Ness S.U.D., and on any floor in C-3 Districts, the North of Market Residential S.U.D., and in many Mixed Use Districts, require Conditional Use Authorization from the Planning Commission, and thus are not subject to the mandatory DR requirement. An April, 1995 Residence Element Program Document entitled "Residential Conversion and Demolition Guidelines" was adopted to address Conditional Use Criteria (see *Exhibit 7.c*). However, the Commission may wish to consider whether the criteria developed for as-of-right applications should also be applied to Conditional Use authorizations, and whether the Program Document criteria should be up-dated following adoption of the Housing Element. Review of Conditional Use authorization related to residential demolitions is not part of the policy presently under consideration.

collect time and materials charges beyond \$532 unless the applicant is provided with an estimate of costs. The Planning Department demolition application shall provide this estimate to the applicant.

6. **Policy #2:** *Fees* The Department shall charge applicants who request residential demolition approval the basic Discretionary Review fees and shall collect time and material fees as warranted. The application form shall advise applicants that they are financially responsible for Department time and materials expended on their application, and that total costs to the applicant for additional staff time shall not exceed \$1,823.40, unless the applicant is provided with a new written estimate of costs prior to commencement of any staff work in excess of 20 hours.
7. The Department intends to designate one or more Staff Planners in each quadrant of Neighborhood Planning as "Demolition Technical Specialists." These Planners will receive detailed training in the demolition policies adopted by the Commission, and will be a resource for the case Planners who would review demolition applications and report to the Commission. General training will be provided to all Neighborhood Planners, so that accurate and consistent information will be available to the public at the Planning Information Center.
8. **Policy #3:** *The Department shall train designated planning staff to administer this policy within each Neighborhood Planning Quadrant.*
9. **Policy #4:** *The Commission shall require case Planners to conduct site visits to residential properties with demolition applications under review. Staff shall, during that visit, assess the scope and accuracy of information provided in the application, including the soundness report, if the applicant contends that the structure proposed for demolition is unsound.*
10. Priority Policy 2 requires the City to "conserve existing housing." This Policy predisposes the Department to discourage residential demolition applications. It is incumbent on the Project Sponsor to provide information that demonstrates conformity of the proposed project with a sufficiency of other *General Plan* policies to outweigh this predisposition.
11. Unless the subject structure is determined to be unsound, consideration of both the existing building and the replacement structure is required to determine *General Plan* conformity. Although technically only the Demolition Permit Application is the subject of the Discretionary Review, information on the new building is required to assess the effects of the project on affordability, number of housing units, neighborhood character, cultural and economic diversity, new family housing opportunities, and impact of the project on renters.
12. To be approved, the project must have undergone review with respect to the California Environmental Quality Act or been determined to be exempt from review, must comply with all Planning Code requirements and must, *on balance*, meet *General Plan* Elements and Objectives to preserve affordable housing, maintain sound housing, protect neighborhood character and diversity, provide adequate rental opportunities, and maximize housing choice.
13. The Department has a Checklist of criteria, delineating the relevant *General Plan* Policies and Objectives. By applying the criteria to the project, the checklist can provide an overview of the project's conformity with the *General Plan*.
14. The criteria in this checklist are phrased so that a "YES" response indicates *General Plan* conformity, a "NO" indicates non-conformity, and "N/A" means the criterion is not applicable to the subject proposal. Where the "N/A" column is gray and without a checkbox, the criterion is deemed to be applicable in all cases.

15. **Policy #5:** *The Commission shall endorse the use of a checklist similar to the draft in Exhibit 3 (version 3), modified to reflect policy and criteria as adopted herein.*
16. A primary intent of the General Plan's predisposition to protect existing housing is to conserve affordability. General Plan requirements protecting affordability should not apply to housing at the high end of the price spectrum, which are not affordable. In recognition of this, Criterion 1 of the checklist proposes to exempt the most expensive, least affordable housing from the mandatory DR policy by allowing administrative review of demolitions of the most expensive dwellings.
17. Information on the 80th percentile price, a threshold suggested in the Interim Criteria, was not readily available, but the median, or 50th percentile price is. By multiplying that figure by 1.6, the 80th percentile can be approximated. As of March 2003, the median sales price of a single-family home in The City was about \$720,000. The 80th percentile would equate to an approximate value of \$1,152,000, including land and structures. During review under the "Interim Criteria" (May 8, 2003 to the present), some discussion about the applicability of the average single-family price versus the average dwelling unit price arose, as did the desirability of exempting the high-priced residences from the Mandatory DR policy. Fewer than 4% of the demolition applications received in the last year involved property in this price range.
18. **Policy #6:** *Criterion 1: Affordability: If the combined value of the existing structure and land, based on a credible appraisal conducted within the six months prior to application, is equal to or greater than \$1.2 million for a single family home, \$1.9 million for a two-family home, or \$2.5 million for a three-family home, then the Commission shall not require a Soundness review or a Discretionary Review hearing unless the project does not comply with other Department requirements or unless a member of the public requests a hearing. Proposals to demolish buildings with 4 or more units, regardless of value, are subject to a mandatory hearing.*
19. An average of the ratio of some land-to-structure appraisal values in two of the City's most expensive neighborhoods was used to set the threshold values in the recommendation above. The 80th percentile value of land for single-family homes were then multiplied by a factor to reflect the higher land-value of a parcel zoned for two-family use. The single-family structure value was multiplied a factor reflecting the economy of scale inherent in building two units, with shared roof, foundation, utility access, et al. costs, so that structure cost was less than twice the cost of a single-family home. A similar process was applied to the proposed three-family threshold.
20. **Policy #7:** *The Department shall produce and distribute a public information document entitled "Soundness Report Requirements for Proposed Demolition of Dwellings," similar to the draft in Exhibit 4, modified to reflect policy elements and criteria as adopted herein.*
21. Staff and members of the Commission have expressed a desire to continue the requirement that Soundness Report authors not have a financial interest in the project they are analyzing. That constraint may not have been consistently applied during the Interim period, in part because of the presence of "pipeline" projects, with Soundness Reports already submitted. The following will make the requirement explicit:
22. **Policy #8:** *Soundness Reports are required to be produced by licensed design or construction professionals (architects, engineers, and contractors) or by certified specifiers, construction cost estimators, or physical inspectors. The author of the report must be a disinterested third party at "arm's length" from the project, that is, not involved in its ownership, design or construction. Professionals who prepare such reports must be familiar with the procedures and standards adopted by the Planning Commission, with requirements of the San Francisco Building and*

Housing Codes, and knowledgeable about construction assemblies and processes and their cost. If the Commission rejects a Soundness Report, the Commission may require that any subsequent report for the project submitted to the Department be prepared by a new author meeting the requirements described above, not the original author.

23. The Interim Criteria definition and determination of soundness were an improvement over the previous ones on several levels: replacing Marshall & Swift Construction Costs with simpler and more realistic unit costs was a step forward in determining useful the Replacement Cost estimates; clearly limiting upgrade costs to repairs of initial construction deficiencies for a soundness threshold of 50%, and creating a 75% threshold to address deficiencies from deferred maintenance, have been successful.
24. **Policy #9:** *The soundness factor for a structure shall be the ratio of an upgrade cost (i.e., an estimate to repair habitability deficiencies) to the replacement cost (i.e., the current cost of building a structure the same size as the existing proposed for demolition), expressed as a percent. A building is unsound if its soundness factor using upgrade costs to correct construction deficiencies exceeds 50%, or if its soundness factor using upgrade costs to correct construction deficiencies plus costs to correct deficiencies resulting from deferred maintenance exceeds 75%.*
25. **Policy #10:** *The replacement cost shall be determined as described on Page 1 of the document entitled "Soundness Report Requirements for Proposed Demolition of Dwellings," similar to the draft in Exhibit 4, modified to reflect policy elements and criteria as adopted herein, with construction costs updated at six month intervals to reflect current economic conditions.*
26. **Policy #11:** *The 50% upgrade cost is the sum of costs to correct construction deficiencies affecting habitability, including but not limited to work as so listed in entitled "Soundness Report Requirements for Proposed Demolition of Dwellings," and excluding items so listed as exclusions. The 75% upgrade cost is the sum of costs to correct construction deficiencies and deferred maintenance deficiencies affecting habitability including but not limited to work as so listed in entitled "Soundness Report Requirements for Proposed Demolition of Dwellings," and excluding items so listed as exclusions.*
27. Under direction of the General Plan, the Department is predisposed to disapprove demolition applications of sound buildings. The Project Sponsor must demonstrate that the proposed project is in conformity with a preponderance of other General Plan policies to outweigh this predisposition if the building is sound. On the other hand, a recommendation of approval to the Commission is appropriate if a credible soundness report demonstrates the building is unsound, there is no negative impact on historic resources, and the project otherwise complies with the Planning Code and the Residential Design Guidelines, if applicable.
28. Criteria Numbers 4 and 5 on the Checklist enable the Department to assess the conformity of the property with the General Plan Objective encouraging property to be well-maintained, and by corollary, not to let an Owner's lack of proper maintenance ease the way for an approval to demolish rather than repair poorly maintained property.
29. **Policy #12:** *Criteria 4 & 5: Upkeep Department staff shall determine whether the property is free of a history of serious, continuing code violations and whether the housing been maintained in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition through review of the Parcel Information Database and querying the Housing Inspection and other Divisions of DBI regarding records of violations. Staff shall make a site visit to assess condition of structure and examine the soundness report for items in the upgrade cost indicative of poor maintenance. If the property was a rental, staff shall query*

the Rent Board for any records of "Decrease of Service" complaints or "Failure to Maintain and Repair" complaints.

30. The Priority Policies codified in Section 101.1(b) require that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is used to evaluate projects for potential impacts to "historical resources."
31. CEQA Guidelines put demolition on the list of actions that constitute a substantial adverse change to an historical resource. If a property that has been determined to be an historical resource were proposed for demolition, preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required.
32. The Department has in place draft "CEQA Review Procedures for Historic Resources," which determine whether the property is an "historical resource" as defined in the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines. To ensure that structures that are historical resources under CEQA are not lost to demolition, applicants wishing to demolish certain structures built more than 50 years ago will submit a supplemental information form prepared by the Department to aid in the environmental determination required under CEQA.
33. **Policy #13:** *Criteria 6a & 6b: Historical Resources: Department staff shall determine early in the review process whether the property is an historic resource under CEQA. To aid in this determination, applicants wishing to demolish structures built more than 50 years ago, but for which the City has no information indicating that the property qualifies as an historical resource, will submit a completed supplemental information form provided by the Department similar to the draft provided in Exhibit 5, to aid in the environmental determination required under CEQA.*
34. For a large segment of SF residents, rental housing is *de facto* a more affordable tenure than for-sale housing. The draft Housing Element recognizes this, and requires restricting the conversion of rental housing to other forms of occupancy, and provides direction for other tenant protections, for which there are no Planning Department mechanisms to implement or control.
35. Rent Control applies to apartment units built prior to 1979 and to single-family homes occupied by current renters prior to 1996. The demolition of such units and construction of new buildings removes the protection of rent control, and thus has a negative effect on housing affordability.
36. The Commission's demolition policy must achieve a balance between the requirements of the General Plan, which protect existing housing and renters' tenures, but which also encourage the development of new housing and ownership opportunities. The Commission shall weigh conservation of rental opportunities against other General Plan Objectives.
37. **Policy #14:** *Criteria 7 & 8: Rental Protection: The Commission shall obtain information about the rental status of the property proposed for demolition, including tenant displacement and loss of rent-controlled housing stock, to weigh against other General Plan Objectives in its review of the demolition, as delineated in the Draft Checklist (Exhibit 3), with any modifications as adopted.*
38. Checklist Criteria 9 and 10 address Priority Policy 101.1(b)(2). Demolition projects by definition do not conserve existing housing, so the answer to Criterion 9 is almost always "NO." Criterion 10 encourages a well-designed replacement structure in preserving or enhancing neighborhood character.
39. Priority Policy 101.1(b)(3) is examined in criteria 11 and 12. Preservation of affordable housing may be achieved in some cases if there are more units built than demolished, making it possible that some of the new units will be as affordable as those lost. To assess this, it is necessary to

compare the sizes of the new units versus the old, as well as the cost. "Enhancing" the supply of affordable housing, as addressed in Criterion 12, requires increasing the number of affordable units, so most projects will not meet this criterion. "Permanently affordable" is interpreted here to mean affordability as defined by the M.O.H, rather than conservation of existing rent or sales value.

40. **Policy #15:** Criteria 9 through 12: Priority Policies: *The Commission shall assess the compliance of the demolition proposal with the Priority Policies as delineated in the Draft Checklist (Exhibit 3), with any modifications as adopted.*
41. The mandatory Discretionary Review of the demolition is triggered by the Demolition Permit application, not by the Building Permit application to construct a replacement building. However, it would be difficult to find the demolition permit in conformity with the General Plan without consideration of the whole project, including the proposed new structure. (E.g., how does a lot with a recently demolished residence but no replacement structure preserve or enhance neighborhood character, or conserve the supply of housing, or create new, quality family housing, or locate in-fill housing on appropriate sites in established neighborhoods?) Further, the Planning Code requires that the replacement building site or building permit be approved prior to issuance of the demolition permit. For these reasons, consideration of the replacement structure shall be a part of the Discretionary Review.
42. **Policy #16:** Criteria 13 and 15: Replacement Structure: *After an existing building is demolished, the replacement structure is built on what is briefly an infill lot. The Commission shall assess underlying zoning, neighborhood character, and surrounding unit density to encourage appropriate in-fill housing on sites in established neighborhoods, and to promote the construction of well-designed housing that preserves or enhances existing neighborhood character in conformity with the General Plan and the Residential Design Guidelines, where applicable. Therefore, the Discretionary Review of projects subject to this policy shall be advertised and noticed to include the permit application for the replacement structure, for the purpose of evaluating compliance of the project with Criteria 14 through 16.*
43. The Draft Housing Element has identified the creation of quality, new family housing as a priority.
44. **Policy #17a:** Criterion 14a: Family Housing: *The Commission shall define "family housing" as dwellings containing at least two bedrooms in use districts allowing three or more units per lot as a principal use, and as dwellings containing at least three bedrooms in use districts allowing two or fewer units per lot as a principal use.*
45. The Draft Housing Element also seeks to increase the availability of units suitable for occupants with supportive housing needs, including disabled and elderly citizens, large households, and other special users.
46. **Policy #17b:** Criterion 14b: Supportive Housing: *The Commission shall consider whether the proposed project increases the availability of supportive housing.*
47. **Policy #18:** Criterion 16: Housing Stock: *The Commission shall assess the effect of the project on San Francisco's housing stock, comparing the proposed and existing number of units, unit sizes, unit mix within a building, and numbers of bedrooms.*
48. **Policy #19:** *The Temporary Policy shall be applied to all residential demolition projects subject to mandatory DR upon which the Commission has not yet acted, until superseded by future long-term controls, with the exception of Recommendation #2, regarding fee recovery. That policy shall*

be applied to applications received after January 1, 2004.

49. **Policy #20:** *Staff shall report to the Commission with an informational presentation approximately 4 months after adoption of the Temporary Policy. The report shall review the cases acted upon in that time period, with an assessment of the efficacy of the Temporary Policy, and for feedback from the Commission and for Public comment. Staff shall return to the Commission approximately 6 months after adoption of the Temporary Policy with a motion to adopt criteria for a long-term Residential Demolition Policy, which upon adoption would supersede this Temporary Policy.*

DECISION

Whereas, based upon the Record, the submissions by the staff of the Planning Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearing, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Planning Commission hereby **adopts** the Temporary Residential Demolition Policy.

I hereby certify that the Planning Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Resolution on December 11, 2003.

Linda Avery
Commission Secretary

AYES: Antonini, Bell, Boyd, Feldstein, Hughes, S. Lee

NOES: (none)

ABSENT: W. Lee

ADOPTED: December 11, 2003



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

City and County of San Francisco

Applicants proposing demolition of a residential structure subject to the Planning Commission Policy requiring mandatory Discretionary Review (a public hearing before the Commission) shall complete and sign the front of this application and shall submit all materials as described on the reverse side. Any existing structure determined to be a public hazard or any residential structure damaged by fire, earthquake, or other act of God to be demolished and replaced in kind and recommended for demolition by the Director of the Department of Building Inspection is exempt from this policy.

RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITION APPLICATION				
Project Address _____		Name _____		
Block / Lot _____		Address _____		
Zoning _____		City, State _____		
Lot Area _____		Phone _____		
#	PROJECT INFORMATION	EXISTING	PROPOSED	NET CHANGE
1	Total number of units			
2	Total number of parking spaces			
3	Total gross habitable square footage			
4	Total number of bedrooms			
5	When was property purchased?			
6	How many units are / will be rentals?			
7	How many bedrooms are / will be rentals?			
8	How many units are subject to rent control?			
9	How many bedrooms are subject to rent control?			
10	How many units are currently vacant?			
11	Was the building subject to the Ellis Act within the last decade?			
12	How many units are / will be Owner-occupied?			

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION ON THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM, INCLUDING THE REQUIRED PAYMENT OF TIME AND MATERIAL FEES FOR THE PROCESSING OF THIS APPLICATION, AND I CERTIFY THAT I WILL PAY ALL PLANNING DEPARTMENT TIME AND MATERIAL COSTS FOR THE DISCRETIONARY REVIEW, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 350(C) AND 352(B) OF THE PLANNING CODE.

PROPERTY OWNER'S SIGNATURE

PRINT NAME

DATE

What to Submit to the Planning Department:

To be considered complete by the Planning Department, a permit application to demolish a residential structure (DBI Application "Form 6") must be accompanied by the following information, in addition to any other requirements imposed by the Department of Building Inspection:

- A SITE SURVEY of existing conditions (prepared, stamped and signed by a licensed civil engineer or land surveyor) showing the property lines, existing subject and adjacent structures, sidewalks, curb cuts, utilities, and topographic information sufficient to determine site slopes and grades, building heights, and other Planning Code site and dimensional requirements.
- A SOUNDNESS REPORT if the Applicant contends that the residence is unsound (see Planning Department Public Handout entitled "Soundness Report Requirements for Proposed Demolition of Residential Buildings").
- HISTORICAL INFORMATION, if applicable: the application for demolition cannot be processed until an environmental determination is made either that the structure is not a potential historical resource under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), or that its removal does not create a significant negative environmental impact, if it is a resource. If the structure is more than fifty years old, the applicant should submit a completed form entitled "Historic Resource Evaluation Request: Supplemental Information for Residential Demolition."
- AN APPRAISAL not older than six months, if the value of the existing structure and land is equal to or greater than \$1.2 million for a single family home, \$1.9 million for a two-family home, or \$2.5 million for a three-family home. Under Planning Commission policy, such residences in this price range, not being affordable housing, are not required to undergo a Discretionary Review hearing unless the project does not comply with other Department requirements or unless a member of the public requests a hearing. Proposals to demolish buildings with 4 or more units, regardless of value, are subject to a mandatory hearing.
- FLOOR PLANS showing the existing number of dwelling units, number of bedrooms, location of kitchens, and square footage of the existing building;
- PHOTOS of the blockfaces on the subject side of the street and across the street, and of the rear facades of the subject and adjacent buildings, and close-up photos of the structure proposed for demolition;
- FINDINGS establishing compliance with the Priority Policies of Section 101.1(b) ("Prop M") of the Planning Code.
- NOTIFICATION MATERIALS as required for RH, RM, and NC Districts [or a Conditional Use Application for residences in C-3 (Downtown Commercial), and N.O.M.R.S.U.D. (North of Market Residential Special Use District), and above the ground floor in NC and the Van Ness S.U.D, and in certain Mixed-Use Districts].
- A separate Building Permit Application (DBI Application "Form 1-2") must be submitted concurrently with the Demolition Permit. The application may be a Building or Site Permit as described in other handouts, with information and drawings sufficient to determine the proposed number of dwelling units, number of bedrooms, location of kitchens, square footage of the proposed building, compliance with parking requirements, and the effect of the project on neighborhood character.

Planning Commission policy requires that Staff conduct a site visit to assess the soundness and condition of the structure proposed for demolition. The Planner assigned to review the Application will contact the Project Sponsor to arrange this site visit.

The Planning Commission requires, prior to its Public Hearing, twenty sets of plans of the existing structure proposed for demolition and of the proposed replacement building in an 11" x 17" format, with all dimensions and notes readable. Please wait to provide these drawing sets until instructed by the case planner to do so, after a hearing date has been established, and the proposed design has received staff support.

Please see the latest *Planning Department Schedule of Application Fees*, under "Commission and Variance Hearing Applications, Mandatory Discretionary Review," for the current charges for this application.

PLEASE NOTE:

The Planning Commission must find that the proposed demolition conforms to certain General Plan Objectives in order to grant approval. See the attached Checklist for a list of criteria related to the General Plan. A credible Soundness Report is essential, if the Applicant is justifying the demolition request on the basis that the subject building is unsound. Without a determination that the dwelling is unsound, the recommendation of approval is harder to make, and in that case, the applicant may be advised to consider a project that alters, rather than demolishes, the existing structure.

RESIDENTIAL DEMOLITION CRITERIA

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES		PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COMPLIANCE		
			N/A	YES	NO
EXISTING VALUE AND SOUNDNESS	1	<p>Is the appraised value of the existing housing at or above \$1.2 million for 1 D.U., \$1.9 million for 2 D.U.s., or \$2.5 million for 3 D.U.s? If so, a hearing is not required under this policy.</p> <p>Buildings with 4 or more D.U.s., regardless of value, are subject to a mandatory hearing.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2	<p>Is the existing housing unsound at the 50% threshold, including only repairs of construction deficiencies in the upgrade cost?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3	<p>Is the existing housing unsound at the 75% threshold, including in the upgrade cost repairs of both construction deficiencies and of maintenance items?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXISTING BUILDING	4	<p>Is the property free of a history of serious, continuing code violations?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	<p>Has the housing been maintained in a decent, safe, and sanitary condition?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6a	<p>Has the property been determined NOT to be an "historical resource" under CEQA?</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6b	<p>If 6a is "NO," has it been determined that removal of the resource will NOT have a substantial adverse impact under CEQA?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES		PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COMPLIANCE		
			N/A	YES	NO
RENTAL PROTECTION	7	Does the project restrict the conversion of rental housing to other forms of tenure or occupancy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8	Does the project sponsor volunteer to restore any units to rent control?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRIORITY POLICIES	9	Does the project conserve existing housing to preserve cultural & economic diversity of our neighborhoods?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10	Does the project conserve neighborhood character to preserve cultural & economic diversity of our neighborhoods?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	11	Does the project protect the affordability of existing housing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12	Does the project increase the number of permanently affordable units?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE	13	Does the project locate in-fill housing on appropriate sites in established neighborhoods?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14 a	Does the project create quality, new family housing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14 b	Does the project create new supportive housing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	15	Does the project promote construction of well-designed housing to enhance existing neighborhood character?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16 a	Does the project increase the number of on-site dwelling units?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16 b	Does the project increase the number of on-site bedrooms?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

City and County of San Francisco 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500 San Francisco, California 94103

SOUNDNESS REPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Applicants proposing demolition of a residential structure subject to the Planning Commission Policy requiring mandatory Discretionary Review (a public hearing before the Commission) shall provide the Planning Department with a Soundness Report prepared in accordance with the requirements described below, if the Applicant is justifying the demolition request on the basis that the subject building is unsound. Without a determination that the dwelling is unsound, the recommendation of approval is harder to make, and in that case, the applicant may be advised to consider a project that alters, rather than demolishes, the existing structure.

Who prepares the Soundness Report? Soundness Reports are required to be produced by licensed design or construction professionals (architects, engineers, and contractors) or by certified specifiers, construction cost estimators or physical inspectors. The author of the report must be a disinterested third party at "arm's length" from the project, that is, not involved in its ownership, design or construction. Professionals who prepare such reports must be familiar with the demolition standards and procedures adopted by the Planning Commission and requirements of the San Francisco Building and Housing Codes, and knowledgeable about construction assemblies and processes and their cost.

How is Soundness defined? "Soundness" is an economic measure of the feasibility of repairing a sub-standard dwelling. It compares an estimate of construction-repair cost called the Upgrade Cost to an estimate called the Replacement Cost.

Replacement Cost is defined as the current cost to construct dwellings exactly like the size of those proposed for demolition. The Department has adopted the following unit costs:

For all occupied, finished spaces	\$200.00	x existing square footage
For unfinished space with flat ceiling & > 7'-6" of headroom (e.g., basements, garages)	\$80.00	x existing square footage
For unfinished space with sloping ceiling & > 5'-0" of headroom (e.g., attic space below pitched roof)	\$25.00	x existing square footage
For non-occupiable space without legal headroom (e.g., 30" high crawl space below raised floor)	\$0.00	
For site work (e.g., walks, driveways, landscaping, retaining walls not part of the building foundation, etc.)	\$0.00	

Upgrade Cost is an estimate of the cost to make the existing house "safe and habitable," that is, the cost to bring a sub-standard dwelling into compliance with the minimum standards of the Housing Code and with the Building Code in effect at the time of its construction, with certain retroactive life-safety exceptions.

Note that programmatic shortcomings of the existing house have no bearing on the soundness report. Costs to add floor space in a rear addition, to increase headroom in a basement or attic, to install granite countertops, etc., cannot be included, nor can certain "soft costs" and site improvements listed below. Bringing the structure into compliance with *current* seismic requirements of the Building Code is not an allowable expense, even though it may be prudent for the homeowner or desirable for the public good, or even if required by the Building Code for the scope of repair work. Routine, repetitive maintenance costs must also be excluded. Contractor's profit and overhead and permit costs may be included, but Architects' and Engineers' design fees, and allowances for construction contingencies may not.

Minimum habitability standards* for One- and Two-Family Dwellings as summarized below should also be used a guide to what may and may not be included in upgrade Costs. Authors of Soundness Reports need to be focused on the concept that "Soundness" is an economic measure, based on the Housing Code, not an issue of structural compliance with the Building Code. Further, they need to distinguish costs to upgrade elements that were original

* Taken from a Memo dated May 7, 2003, provided by Laurence Kornfield, Chief Building Inspector, DBI.

construction deficiencies from those elements needing repair due to deferred maintenance, as explained below.

Soundness Determination: The Planning Commission has adopted a policy that a residential building is considered *unsound* if the cost to upgrade construction deficiencies exceeds 50% of the replacement cost.

If the soundness report cannot support that finding, the next step is to calculate a second upgrade cost, including the costs calculated for the 50% upgrade, and also adding in the cost of any necessary habitability repairs attributable to lack of maintenance. For example, if a significant roof leak went unrepaired for a sufficient length of time to cause mildewed gypsum board and rotted structural members, their repair could be included in this upgrade, if it is certain and demonstrable that the leak was the cause. If this second upgrade cost exceeds 75%, then the dwelling is determined to be unsound.

Just because a building component or system is not pristine or modern does not justify its replacement, as long as it meets required functional standards and is not a hazard. For example, **rusted ductwork** on a heating system that can maintain the temperature requirement detailed below does not justify replacement of the heating system. The presence of **knob and tube wiring**, unless unequivocally documented as a hazard, does not justify replacement of the electrical service with conduit or Romex. The cost to replace a pull-out **fuse box** that is not a hazard with a new circuit breaker panel cannot be included as an upgrade expense, even if it is part of the proposed work.

Further examples: **Flashing**, replacement of roof flashing, step flashing, coping, gravel stops, diverters, etc should be excluded, because these items can be replaced as part of the re-roofing process, and in that sense are maintenance items. Replacement of corroded galvanized sheet metal head flashing over doors and windows might be allowed at the 75% level if it is clear that the corrosion resulted from lack of painting or other improper maintenance. **Windows:** the Building Code requires that windows, like all elements of structure, be maintained and repaired. Replacement of windows meeting the code requirements at the time of their installation cannot be included in upgrade costs. E.g., replacing single-glazed windows installed in 1972, before Title 24 energy requirements, with double-glazed, energy efficient windows, would not be an allowed upgrade cost. Repair of leaky or aged windows may be included at the 75% threshold to the extent that it is demonstrable that the repair is necessitated by poor maintenance. **Stairs:** Removal and replacement of existing stairs without legal headroom can be included (at the 50% level) only if the stairs are a means of egress **required** by the Building Code. If the stairs are not part of a required exit system, but for example provide access to a basement or garage, their replacement to meet current headroom requirements or rise and run ratios cannot be included. Wooden exterior stairs have a finite life, and their periodic replacement is considered a maintenance issue. Only if it can be documented that improper construction led to the early loss of the stairs could their replacement be included in upgrade costs for soundness determination.

For general guidelines, see the descriptions in the three lists below: Also note that in general, the code requires that buildings be maintained in accordance with the codes in effect at the time or their original construction, although the Housing Code does incorporate a number of retroactive standards, which require upgrades to maintain minimum standards of safety and habitability. Below is an excerpt of basic minimum standards for housing habitability as detailed in the 2001 San Francisco Housing Code. These 2001 San Francisco Housing Code standards reflect those in the State of California Health and Safety Code. Please note that standards of housing habitability are minimum standards. Some of the concepts addressed in these standards are not detailed, and can only be determined upon review of specific cases by competent professional persons. Please note that additional standards apply to dwelling units within apartment buildings, hotels, or other specialized facilities.

WORK THAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE UPGRADE COST ESTIMATE FOR THE 50% THRESHOLD:
(Include costs to correct original construction deficiencies that affect habitability, NOT deferred maintenance items or programmatic requirements of the project.)

- Building Permit Application cost
- providing room dimensions at a minimum of 70 sq. ft. for any habitable room
- providing at least one electrical outlet in each habitable room and 2 electrical outlets in each kitchen
- providing at least one switched electrical light in any room where there is running water
- correcting lack of flashing or proper weather protection if not originally installed
- installing adequate weather protection and ventilation to prevent dampness in habitable rooms if not originally constructed
- provision of garbage and rubbish storage and removal facilities if not originally constructed (storage in garage is permitted)

- eliminating structural **hazards** in foundation due to structural inadequacies
- eliminating structural **hazards** in flooring or floor supports, such as defective members, or flooring or supports of insufficient size to safely carry the imposed loads.
- correcting vertical walls or partitions which lean or are buckled due to defective materials or which are insufficient in size to carry loads.
- eliminating structural **hazards** in ceilings, roofs, or other horizontal members, such as sagging or splitting, due to defective materials, or insufficient size.
- eliminating structural **hazards** in fireplaces and chimneys, such as listing, bulging or settlement due to defective materials or due to insufficient size or strength.
- upgrading electrical wiring which does not conform to the regulations **in effect at the time of installation**
- upgrading plumbing materials and fixtures that were not installed in accordance with regulations **in effect at the time of installation**
- providing exiting in accordance with the code **in effect at the time of construction**.
- correction of improper roof, surface or sub-surface drainage if not originally installed
- correction of structural pest infestation (termites, beetles, dry rot, etc.) to extent attributable to original construction deficiencies (e.g., insufficient earth-wood separation)
- Contractor's profit & overhead, not to exceed 18% of construction subtotal, **if unit costs used for repair items do not include p & o**

WORK THAT COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE UPGRADE COST ESTIMATE FOR THE 75% THRESHOLD:
(Include costs to correct habitability deficiencies resulting from deferred maintenance)

- repair of fire-resistive construction and fire protection systems **if required at the time of construction**, including plaster and sheet rock where fire separation is required, and smoke detectors, fire sprinklers, and fire alarms **when required**.
- wood and metal decks, balconies, landings, guardrails, fire escapes and other exterior features free from hazardous dry rot, deterioration, decay or improper alteration
- Repairs as needed to provide at least one **properly operating** water closet, lavatory, and bathtub or shower.
- repair of a kitchen sink not operating properly
- provision of kitchen appliances, when provided by the owner, in good working condition, **excluding minor damage**.
- repair **if needed** of water heated to provide a minimum temperature of 105° and a maximum of 120°, with at least 8 gallons of hot water storage
- both hot and cold running water to plumbing fixtures
- repair to a sewage connection disposal system, **if not working**
- repair heating facilities that allow the maintenance of a temperature of 70° in habitable rooms, **if not working**
- repair ventilation equipment, such as bathroom fans, where operable windows are not provided, **if not working**
- provision of operable windows in habitable rooms (certain exception apply)
- repair of electrical wiring **if not maintained in a safe condition**.
- repair of plumbing materials and fixtures **if not maintained** in good condition.
- correcting vertical walls or partitions which lean or are buckled due to deterioration
- eliminating structural **hazards** in ceilings, roofs, or other horizontal members due to deterioration
- eliminating structural **hazards** in fireplaces and chimneys, such as listing, bulging or settlement due to deterioration

- eliminating chronic, severe mold and mildew.
- repairing proper weather protection, including exterior coverings such as paint and roof coverings and windows and doors due to lack of maintenance
- repairing deteriorated, crumbling or loose plaster, gypboard, and floor finishes due to faulty, poorly maintained weather protection
- Contractor's profit & overhead, not to exceed 18% of construction subtotal, **if unit costs used for repair items do not include profit & overhead**

WORK THAT MUST BE EXCLUDED FROM THE UPGRADE COST ESTIMATE FOR BOTH THE 50% & THE 75% THRESHOLDS: (Although these elements may be required, prudent, or desirable, the costs associated with them are not included in upgrade estimates.)

- Architects' fees, Engineers' fees, and other design fees
- construction contingency allowance
- addition of floor space, or increasing headroom, or other programmatic requirements that are not required habitability standards as part of the original dwelling
- interior and exterior painting except to assemblies required to be repaired or replaced under habitability standards
- adding electrical receptacles to kitchens that already have at least two, or to other rooms that have at least one
- installation of a higher capacity electrical service, unless the existing is a **hazard**
- finish upgrades, such as new cabinetry, countertops, tile or stonework
- routine re-roofing except to assemblies required to be repaired or replaced under habitability standards
- site work, such as repairs to walkways, drives, decks on grade, and retaining walls not part of the building foundation
- landscape and irrigation work
- removal of fire hazards, such as a buildup of combustible waste and vegetation.
- removal of accumulation of weeds, vegetation, trash, junk, debris, garbage, stagnant water, combustible materials, stored paint, and similar conditions
- elimination of insect, vermin or rodent infestation
- other routine, repetitive maintenance costs

What constitutes a "hazard?" For the purposes of Soundness Reports, the Department shall define "hazard" in the following way: *"All buildings, structures, property, or parts thereof, regulated by the Planning Code, that are structurally unsafe or not provided with adequate egress, or that constitute a fire hazard, or are otherwise dangerous to human life, safety, or health of the occupants or the occupants of adjacent properties or the public, are for the purpose of this policy, defined as hazardous."*

What should be in the Soundness Report? The Soundness Report should begin with a thorough description of the building in question: its age, size (e.g., footprint area, height, number of stories, habitable square footage), roof form (e.g., flat, hip, gable), roofing material (built-up, single ply, roll, tile, composition shingle), construction type (e.g., wood frame, unreinforced masonry, masonry with seismic upgrade, steel frame), foundation and floor system (e.g., spread footing, pier and grade beam, raised floor, slab-on-grade), exterior siding (e.g., stucco, horizontal wood siding, vinyl, plywood, curtain wall), interior wall finish (e.g., gypsum board, plaster), and a description of repairs, maintenance, and any remodeling or additions. Documentation supporting the previous should be included in an appendix, using copies of the building permit history of the building.

Next, the Replacement Cost should be calculated using the methodology described above. Both the 50% threshold and the 75% threshold should be computed and noted.

The 50% Upgrade Cost should be described next, with line item descriptions of each element qualifying for upgrade (those due to initial construction deficiencies), followed by the unit cost, the unit multiplier, and the total cost for that element. If the sum of these cost items does not exceed 50% of the Replacement Cost, then a 75% Upgrade Cost

can be detailed, including the previous upgrade items and adding in costs for repair of qualifying items deteriorated due to deferred maintenance, presented in a similar format.

Generalities and assertions unsupported by professional, detailed justification, or by photographic evidence or other documentation will undermine the essential credibility of the report. Replacement of many structural assemblies and mechanical systems is justified only if the existing elements are **hazards**. Careful and thorough demonstration of the hazardous condition is required, to justify including the replacement in an upgrade cost estimate.

Copies of any pest report, if such repair work is needed, and any other documentation supporting the conclusions of the soundness report, should be provided. Pest control work should be carefully analyzed to determine which portions of work and cost are applicable to the 50% threshold and which to the 75% threshold.

Clear and well-labeled photographs of the façade, and close-ups that document elements needing upgrade work, are essential to support assertions that the elements in question qualify for inclusion in the upgrade cost.

A **factual** summary of the findings is a useful conclusion to the document.

How will the Planning Commission decide whether to approve the demolition application? The General Plan guides the orderly development of San Francisco. It instructs the Department to discourage the demolition of sound housing. If the Soundness Report is credible and demonstrates that the dwelling in question is not sound, the Department will probably recommend to the Commission that it approve the demolition.

Because a finding that a building is unsound makes approval of the demolition more probable, and because some costs included in the soundness report represent a subjective professional judgment, there may be a temptation to inflate the upgrade cost estimate, by including costs of elements that do not require repair under the Housing Code, or by exaggerating the cost of repairs, or by suggesting seismic or other structural upgrades beyond the scope of habitability requirements. Resist this temptation. Presentation to the Planning Commission of soundness reports with inflated upgrade costs or low replacement costs have led to denial of the related demolition permits.

If the house is determined to be sound, then the project must comply with a preponderance of other General Plan Policies and Objectives for the Commission to approve the demolition. Such policies may include the provision of new family housing, adding units to the City's housing stock, proposing a high quality design for the replacement building that preserves and enhances the character of the neighborhood, or providing affordable rental or ownership opportunities.

The Case Planner will advise the applicant prior to the hearing date whether the Department will recommend approval of the demolition application to the Planning Commission, based on the project's overall conformity with the General Plan. (See Checklist of Criteria on The Planning Department's Residential Demolition Application Form

If the proposed demolition is denied due to historical, environmental, or General Plan considerations, the project sponsor may choose to modify the proposal to retain significant elements of the existing building and thereby to expand or remodel the building under an alteration permit, and withdraw the demolition application.

Supplemental Information Form for Historical Resource Evaluation

Demolition or Alteration

Proposed project is: Demolition (DBI form 6) or Alteration (DBI form 3/8)

Please be complete in your responses to the questions on this form. Submittal of incomplete or inaccurate information will result in an additional request for information from you and potentially delay your project. If you have problems in completing this form, we would recommend that you consult with a qualified historic preservation professional.

Address: _____

Block No. _____ Lot No. _____

Date of Construction: _____ check one: Actual Estimated

▪ Source for date, or basis for estimate: _____

Architectural Style: _____

Architect & Builder: _____

Original Owner: _____

Subsequent Owners (dates of ownership): _____

Historic Name: _____ Common Name: _____

Original and subsequent Uses: _____

Has the building been moved? If yes, provide date: _____

▪ Original Location: _____

ON A SEPARATE SHEET(S), PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Property Description / Construction History

- Provide a written description of the property, describing its architectural form, features, materials, setting, and related structures
- Provide a written description of all alterations to the property. Attach copies of all available buildings permits.
- Provide current photographs showing all facades, architectural details, site features, adjacent buildings, the subject block face, and facing buildings
- Provide historic photographs, if available

History

- Provide a written description of the history of the property, including any association with significant events or persons. See attached Preservation Bulletin No. 22, *How to Document a Building's History* for assistance.
- For reference, check for neighborhood and/or city-wide historic context statements. Some contexts are available at the Planning Department, alongside the Landmark and Historic District files.

- A chain of title can identify persons associated with a property, and city directories can identify if the owners were residents of the building, and what their occupation was. When cross-referenced with the Biographical catalog of notable San Franciscans at the Main Library's 6th Floor History room, this research can provide further valuable information.

Other Information

- Attach available documents that may provide information that will help to determine whether the property is or is not an historic resource such as historic Sanborn Maps, drawings, newspaper articles and publications.

Historic Survey Information:

The Property is (mark all that apply):

- _____ Constructed prior to 1913 (reconstruction following the 1906 Earthquake & Fire)
- _____ Listed in the 1976 Architectural Survey & more than 50 years old
- _____ Listed in the 1968 Junior League Survey (the basis for *Here Today*)
- _____ Listed in a San Francisco Architectural Heritage Survey & more than 50 years old
- _____ Listed in the Unreinforced Masonry Building (UMB) Survey
- _____ General Plan Referenced Building
- _____ National Register and California Register Status Code of 7
- _____ Listed in the North Beach Survey, Local Survey Codes 4, 5, or 6
- _____ Is there an existing, proposed or potential historic district in the immediate vicinity to which the subject building would be a contributor?
- _____ Other Informational Survey
 - Name of Survey _____
- _____ Other, please list. _____

If you have been referred to MEA by staff, please enter name: _____

Building Permit number (if any) _____

Form prepared by: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

What sources did you use to compile this information? Please list; use additional sheet(s) if necessary. _____

HOW TO DOCUMENT A BUILDING'S HISTORY

In order to complete the environmental evaluation of proposed project, the Planning Department will, in certain cases, request additional information from the project sponsor. One such request could be for information regarding aspects of certain properties that may have historical significance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), either as an historical resource in and of itself or as a contributor to an existing or proposed historic district.

CEQA historic criteria are based on eligibility for the California Register. To be eligible for the California Register, a property must be significant in at least one of the following areas:

1. 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.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

As an example, if a building was constructed prior to the 1906 earthquake or is a building that was recognized during the Planning Department's 1976 Architectural Survey, you as the project sponsor will most likely receive a form entitled *Historical Resource Evaluation – Request for Information* from the Planning Department. Some project sponsors prefer to hire an outside consultant to complete this work, however, it is also possible that the needed research can be done by the project sponsors themselves.

Outlined below are some of the steps required to do research and a partial listing of the local resources available to applicants/project sponsors. An appendix to this document lists General Reference Sources. These steps and resources can substantially aid individuals and interested parties preparing the responses to a request for additional information

Please be aware that over time the address or Block and Lot for a property may have changed. So before you begin your search, please obtain all address(es) and lot(s)/block(s) that have been used for your property.

1. **Start at the beginning.**

In 1906, most official San Francisco documents were lost to fire. The Water Department, now a part of the PUC was able to preserve their records. This department located at 1155 Market Street is a place to check the original Water Tap turn-on applications which list the date of connections to buildings. These records may reveal the original owner, architect/builder and date of construction. Because the records are fragile and not readily available, it is suggested that researchers use the microfiche of these records at the San Francisco Main Library. (You can take Muni or BART to the Civic Center Station.)

2. **Building Permits**

The Department of Building Inspection (DBI) Records Management Division maintains building permits, post 1906 earthquake and fire, on microfiche for the City. Research on building permit history on microfiche can be requested from in the Microfilm Section of the Department of Building Inspection at 1660 Mission Street, First Floor at (415) 558-6080.

The Housing Inspection Services (HIS) located at 1660 Mission Street, 6th Floor of the DBI at (415) 558-6220 maintains housing inspection records of all apartment buildings and hotels in the City.

3. Sales Records

The City and County of San Francisco, Office of the Assessor-Recorder at City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, has records about owners and the actual room counts of buildings as well as information about the estimated date of construction. Sales ledgers from 1906 to 1990 and Block books from 1913-1976 are on microfiche. McEnery cases from 1906-c.1913. Building contract notices to the general record, as well as building completion notices to the general record, extant from 1906 to the present may be helpful. Deeds of property transactions located in an Index of Real Estate Transfers from 1906 to the present, as well as Map Books from 1846 to the present, Subdivision and Homestead Maps from 1850 to the present are also available for review. All of these resources can be of use in the research and documentation process.

4. Primary Research

The San Francisco History Room and other departments of the main branch of the Public Library are excellent resources for primary research on a potential historic structure. Reference materials include:

- San Francisco Block Books; Handy Block Books of San Francisco, Municipal Reports;
- Business Directories: the California and Architect and Building News (1897 to 1900), and John Synder's Index; the Architect and Engineer (1905 to 1945), the Gary Goss Index (1905 to 1928); Western Architecture and Engineering (1945 to 1961).
- Real Estate Circulars: the Daily Pacific Builder; the California Builder; Edwards Abstracts (1906 to 1977).
- San Francisco, Our Society Blue Books (1890-1931),
- Index to the Great Register of Voter Records, (1900 to 1928).

Other resources include:

- Historic Photographs;
- Newspapers & Indexes (San Francisco Call Index 1893-1903, San Francisco Newspaper Index 1904-1950, San Francisco Chronicle Index 1950-current);
- Biographical Index Cards;
- Here Today: Junior League research files;
- Anne Bloomfield's description of How to Work with the 1906-1913 Sales ledgers, located in the Office of the Assessor-Recorder;
- City Landmark and District Case Reports and context statements;
- Water Department Tap Records which are on microfiche.

The San Francisco Main Library also has a collection of Census Records (1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930) and City Directories that are located on the sixth floor San Francisco History Room and City Archives.

Other sources for information include:

The National Archives
1000 Commodore Drive
San Bruno CA
(650) 876-9001

Rare Books and Family Histories
Sutro Library of the California State Library
San Francisco State University
(415) 731-4477

The Labor Archives
Sutro Library of the California State Library
San Francisco State University
(415) 564-4010

Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley
(510) 642-3781
Documents Collection
College of Environmental Design,
Wurster Hall, Room 232
University of California at Berkeley
(510) 642-5124

San Francisco Architectural Heritage
2007 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 441-3000

5. Sanborn Maps

Find and copy (or trace) or print from microfilm the earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Map that shows evidence of the building's existence. Sanborn Maps show block by block what buildings were built at various times throughout the City's history. The 1886-1893, 1899-1900 and 1913-1914 Sanborn Maps are available in the San Francisco History Room of the Main Library in Civic Center. Sanborn Maps are also located within the Office of the Assessor-Recorder located at 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place. The California Historical Society Library located at 678 Mission Street has an extensive collection on San Francisco and California history and artifacts including San Francisco Sanborn Maps. (Please note that the CHS Library is open on Wednesdays only from 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., by appointment).

6. Cultural Resources Database and Existing Survey Information

The Planning Department maintains a Cultural Resources Database. It is integrated into the land use database of the City and contains existing survey information for the City. This database can assist applicants/project sponsors with some background material relevant to a potential historic building. The database contains summary information for all the designated individual City Landmarks as well the Historic Districts listed in Article 10 of the Planning Code. Some 435 individual buildings as well as six Conservation Districts that were designated as part of the Downtown Plan (Article 11) of the Planning Code are also listed. Buildings designated under other Area Plans of the General Plan of the City and County of San Francisco such as the South of Market, Chinatown, Rincon Hill and the Van Ness Area Plans are listed. Architectural resources contained in the Planning Department's 1976 Citywide Survey (which identified over 10,000 buildings citywide) and the Board of Supervisors adopted book entitled Here Today (which contains survey information on over 2,500 buildings) are also listed. A thematic study of Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (UMBs) that identified approximately

2,000 buildings, (many of which were determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places) are summarized in the Cultural Resources database. Access to the database can be obtained on the public computer at the Planning Information Counter at 1660 Mission Street on the first floor.

To date, approximately 3,500 buildings in San Francisco have been listed in or have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The State Office of Historic Preservation maintains and updates periodically the California Register of Historical Resources and the National Register of Historic Places listings. The Northwest Information Center located at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park; CA. (707-664-2494) can provide applicants/project sponsors with information on California Register and National Register listings for the City and County of San Francisco.

Finally, a resource that appears in one or more of the above mentioned surveys might indicate that it is a potential landmark or a contributory building in an historic district. When a designation is being considered, existing survey information will be considered as one component in the overall evaluation of the resource. Lack of existing survey information does not mean the resource is not significant; it simply means that the resource or area has not been surveyed.

Many of the City's existing adopted surveys are now ten to thirty years old and are not standardized in terms of their format and content. A review, update and evaluation of the City's cultural resources are underway and will take many years to complete. In general, the Northeastern quadrant of the City has the most survey work, much of which recognized pre-1930s buildings.

As a general rule, resources that are considered historical for purposes of CEQA should be at least fifty years of age. National Register of Historic Places utilizes the fifty-year rule as a reasonable span of time that makes the professional evaluation of the resource feasible. In recent years, many properties in San Francisco have achieved significance due to the passage of time, (i.e. they are now fifty years of age or older).

Research and evaluation on these undesignated resources may indicate that these properties are, in fact, landmark sites or contributory buildings to historic districts. Many resources that are now fifty years of age or older may be significant on local, state or national levels. A thorough understanding of the architectural, historical, physical context of the resource and its integrity is essential in the evaluation of a resource that is either considered "exceptionally significant" (i.e., less than fifty years) or is now more fifty years of age and has not be surveyed.

GENERAL REFERENCE SOURCES

A Companion to California by James D. Hart, Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, Second Edition, 1987.

A Field Guide to American Houses by Virginia and Lee McAlester, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.

Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California by David Gebhard, Roger Montgomery, Robert Winter, John Woodbridge and Sally Woodbridge, Salt Lake City, Peregrine Smith Books, 1985.

Here Today, San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. Text by Roger Olmsted and T. H. Watkins, San Francisco, CA., Chronicle Books, 1968.

Historic City Directories and Census Records are located on the 5th Floor of the San Francisco Main Library, Civic Center.

"How to Research Your San Francisco Building" by Jean Kortum, former Landmarks Board President and Member, Copyright 1992, Revised 1993 (Available at the Planning Department).

"How to Complete the National Register Registration Form," National Register Bulletin No. 16A (Available at the U.S. Government Printing Office, San Francisco, CA).

"How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form," National Register Bulletin No. 16B (Available at the U.S. Government Printing Office, San Francisco, CA).

In the Victorian Style, Text by Randolph Delehanty, San Francisco, CA., Chronicle Books, 1991.

"Regulations for the Nomination of Properties to the California Register of Historical Resources", Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento, CA, May 31, 1996.

"Researching an Historic Property", National Register Bulletin No. 39 (Available at the U.S. Government Printing Office, San Francisco, CA).

The Ultimate Guide, San Francisco, San Francisco, CA., Chronicle Books, 1989.

Splendid Survivors, San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage. Prepared by Charles Hall Page and Associates, Inc., for the Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, California Living Books, 1978.

Street Address File, Biographical Index Cards, Landmark Case Reports and Historic Photographs are located in the San Francisco History Room, 6th Floor of the Main Library, Civic Center.

WEB SITES OF INTEREST

Planning Department Homepage

<http://www.sfgov.org/planning>

California Office of Historic Preservation

<http://www.ohp.cal-parks.ca.gov>

California DPR 523 Forms

<http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/chris/publicat.html>

National Register Homepage

<http://www.cr.nps.gov>

National Register Bulletins

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrpubs.html>

San Francisco Public Library – History Center

<http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/librarylocations/sfhistory/sfbuilding.htm>

(This information was compiled from various Planning Departments Preservation Bulletins published January, 2003)