



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Motion No. 0179 Permit to Alter MAJOR ALTERATION

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 5, 2012

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Filing Date: October 17, 2012
Case No.: **2012.1320H**
Project Address: **631 HOWARD STREET**
Conservation District: New Montgomery-Mission-Second
Category: Category II (Significant) – Volker Building
Zoning: C-3-O (SD) (Downtown Office (Special Development))
150-S Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 3735/005
Project Sponsor: Robert Remiker
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ADOPTING FINDINGS FOR A PERMIT TO ALTER FOR MAJOR ALTERATIONS TO A CATEGORY II (SIGNIFICANT) BUILDING, INCLUDING REPLACING ROLL UP DOOR WITH EXTERIOR WALL AT REAR ELEVATION AND REMOVAL OF SMALL ROOF PENTHOUSE, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED ON LOT 005 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 3735. THE SUBJECT BUILDING IS WITHIN THE NEW MONTGOMERY-MISSION-SECOND STREET CONSERVATION DISTRICT, THE C-3-O (SD) (DOWNTOWN OFFICE (SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT)) ZONING DISTRICT, AND A 150-S HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT.

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, on October 17, 2012, Robert Remiker on behalf of the property owner ("Applicant") filed an application with the San Francisco Planning Department ("Department") for a Permit to Alter for exterior alterations to remove a roof penthouse, infill window opening at loading dock, install two skylights at loading dock, and to replace a roll up door with a wall at rear elevation, at the subject building located on Lot 005 in Assessor's Block 3735, a Category II (Significant) Building, historically known as the Volker Building, in the New Montgomery-Mission-Second Conservation District.

WHEREAS, the Project was determined by the Department to be categorically exempt from environmental review. The Historic Preservation Commission ("Commission") has reviewed and concurs with said determination.

WHEREAS, on December 5, 2012, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing on the current project, Case No. 2012.1320H ("Project"), for the Permit to Alter.

WHEREAS, in reviewing the application, the Commission has had available for its review and consideration case reports, plans, and other materials pertaining to the Project contained in the Department's case files, and has reviewed and heard testimony and received materials from interested parties during the public hearing on the Project.

MOVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby **APPROVES** the Permit to Alter, in conformance with the architectural plans dated October 16, 2012 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2012.1320H 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 the Commission.
2. Findings pursuant to Article 11:

The Historical Preservation Commission has determined that the proposed work is compatible with the exterior character-defining features of the subject building and meets the requirements of Article 11 of the Planning Code:

- That the proposal respects the character-defining features of the subject building;
- That the architectural character of the subject building will be maintained;
- That work shall be limited to secondary (rear) elevations and the roof;
- That the integrity of distinctive stylistic features and examples of skilled craftsmanship that characterize the building and district shall be preserved; and,
- That all new materials shall be compatible with the historic building and surrounding district.

For these reasons, the proposal overall, is appropriate for and consistent with the purposes of Article 11, meets the standards of Article 1111.6 of the Planning Code and complies with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

3. **General Plan Compliance.** The proposed Certificate of Appropriateness is, on balance, consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

I. URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

THE URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT CONCERNS THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER AND ORDER OF THE CITY, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

GOALS

The Urban Design Element is concerned both with development and with preservation. It is a concerted effort to recognize the positive attributes of the city, to enhance and conserve those attributes, and to improve the living environment where it is less than satisfactory. The Plan is a definition of quality, a definition based upon human needs.

OBJECTIVE 1

EMPHASIS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC PATTERN WHICH GIVES TO THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS AN IMAGE, A SENSE OF PURPOSE, AND A MEANS OF ORIENTATION.

POLICY 1.3

Recognize that buildings, when seen together, produce a total effect that characterizes the city and its districts.

OBJECTIVE 2

CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES WHICH PROVIDE A SENSE OF NATURE, CONTINUITY WITH THE PAST, AND FREEDOM FROM OVERCROWDING.

POLICY 2.4

Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

POLICY 2.5

Use care in remodeling of older buildings, in order to enhance rather than weaken the original character of such buildings.

POLICY 2.7

Recognize and protect outstanding and unique areas that contribute in an extraordinary degree to San Francisco's visual form and character.

The goal of a Permit to Alter is to provide additional oversight for buildings and districts that are architecturally or culturally significant to the City in order to protect the qualities that are associated with that significance.

The proposed project qualifies for a Permit to Alter and therefore furthers these policies and objectives by maintaining and preserving the character-defining features of the subject building and/or Conservation District for the future enjoyment and education of San Francisco residents and visitors.

4. The proposed project is generally consistent with the eight General Plan priority policies set forth in Section 101.1 in that:
 - A) The existing neighborhood-serving retail uses will be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses will be enhanced:

The proposed project is for tenant improvements associated with new and future office tenants. Introduction of new office tenants will likely enhance opportunities for neighborhood serving retail uses in the surrounding area.

- B) The existing housing and neighborhood character will be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods:

The proposed project will strengthen neighborhood character by respecting the character-defining features of the Category II (Significant) building in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- C) The City's supply of affordable housing will be preserved and enhanced:

The project will not affect the affordable housing supply as the project is related to office space only.

- D) The commuter traffic will not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking:

The proposed project will not result in commuter traffic impeding MUNI transit service or overburdening the streets or neighborhood parking. It will provide sufficient off-street parking for the proposed use.

- E) A diverse economic base will be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development. And future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors will be enhanced:

The proposal will maintain the existing office uses.

- F) The City will achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake.

Preparedness against injury and loss of life in an earthquake is improved by the proposed work. The work will eliminate unsafe conditions at the site and all construction will be executed in compliance with all applicable construction and safety measures.

- G) That landmark and historic buildings will be preserved:

The proposed project is in conformance with Article 11 of the Planning Code and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

- H) Parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas will be protected from development:

The proposed project will not impact the access to sunlight or vistas for the parks and open space.

5. For these reasons, the proposal overall, appears to meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and the provisions of Article 11 of the Planning Code regarding Major Alterations to Category II (Significant) buildings.

DECISION

That based upon the Record, the submissions by the Applicant, the staff of the Department and other interested parties, the oral testimony presented to this Commission at the public hearings, and all other written materials submitted by all parties, the Commission hereby **GRANTS a Permit to Alter** for the property located at Lot 005 in Assessor's Block 3735 for proposed work in conformance with the architectural plans dated October 16, 2012 and labeled Exhibit A on file in the docket for Case No. 2012.1320H.

APPEAL AND EFFECTIVE DATE OF MOTION: The Commission's decision on a Permit to Alter shall be final unless appealed within thirty (30) days after the date of this Motion. Any appeal shall be made to the Board of Appeals, unless the proposed project requires Board of Supervisors approval or is appealed to the Board of Supervisors as a conditional use, in which case any appeal shall be made to the Board of Supervisors (see Charter Section 4.135). For further information, please contact the Board of Appeals in person at 1650 Mission Street, (Room 304) or call (415) 575-6880.

Duration of this Permit to Alter: This Permit to Alter is issued pursuant to Article 11 of the Planning Code and is valid for a period of three (3) years from the effective date of approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. The authorization and right vested by virtue of this action shall be deemed void and canceled if, within 3 years of the date of this Motion, a site permit or building permit for the Project has not been secured by Project Sponsor.

THIS IS NOT A PERMIT TO COMMENCE ANY WORK OR CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY UNLESS NO BUILDING PERMIT IS REQUIRED. PERMITS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION (and any other appropriate agencies) MUST BE SECURED BEFORE WORK IS STARTED OR OCCUPANCY IS CHANGED.

I hereby certify that the Historical Preservation Commission ADOPTED the foregoing Motion on December 5, 2012.

Jonas P. Ionin
Acting Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Chase, Damkroger, Hasz, Johns, and Martinez

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Matsuda and Wolfram

ADOPTED: December 5, 2012