



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

**MEMO**

**DATE:** September 26, 2013  
**TO:** Historic Preservation Commission  
**FROM:** Rich Sucre, Historic Preservation Technical Specialist, (415) 575-9108  
**REVIEWED BY:** Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator, (415) 575-6822  
**RE:** **Review and Approval**  
**340 and 350 Fremont Street Interpretative Display**  
**Case No. 2004.0552E**

1650 Mission St.  
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## BACKGROUND

As part of the Focused Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project at 340-350 Fremont Street (Case No. 2004.0552E), *Mitigation Measure 1c. Permanent Interpretative Exhibit* stated:

To partially offset the cumulative loss to the maritime labor historic context of the existing area, a detailed, high-quality exhibit on maritime worker history in San Francisco, specifically focusing on the period from 1936 to 1966, and on AFL maritime unions and social institutions that located major structures on Rincon Hill during that time, shall be prepared. The exhibit should include historic photographs, archeological and salvage artifacts, and interpretive text on twentieth century strike history and labor life. A labor historian experienced in that field and an architectural historian qualified as per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards shall conduct the research for the exhibit, and design of the exhibit shall be in consultation with a professional exhibit designer and/or public art historian, and with representatives of some of the major surviving maritime unions, especially the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. The exhibit shall be placed on permanent public display in the immediate vicinity of the existing buildings involved in the context, and shall be created with materials suitable to its location (e.g., durable waterproof materials for exterior display). If the Sailors' Union of the Pacific union hall becomes a community center, as envisioned under the Rincon Hill Plan, a public space in the building such as the lobby would be an ideal location to place the exhibit on permanent display. In addition to the permanent exhibit, additional materials for off-site lectures, presentations, or temporary exhibits at other locations, such as the Museum of the City of San Francisco, may be developed. Additionally, the exhibit should include an outdoor public information component in the form of an Interpretive Trail presenting neighborhood history through public interpretive information and photos, such as through the installation of information plaques in the sidewalk (as used for the Barbary Coast walk) and/or on new buildings developed on Rincon Hill, or the installation of informational kiosks (as along the Embarcadero) or some similar approach that would inform the public as to important sites in the history of

maritime labor on Rincon Hill. An accompanying publication should be prepared, drawing upon the area survey and research, presented in one or more accessible formats for public information, made available in electronic form through a website and hardcopy formats available on-site and elsewhere. Plans for implementation of this measure shall be developed by Planning Department staff working with the project sponsor(s) and the qualified professionals noted above prior to the issuance of demolition permits, and the proposal shall be presented to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for review and comment.

This mitigation measure requires approval from the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and needs to occur prior to the demolition of existing structures on the project site.

In January 2009, the Historic Preservation Commission was conveyed as per Charter Section 4.135, and has jurisdiction over the duties and responsibilities of the LPAB.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On June 15, 2006, the San Francisco Planning Commission certified the Focused Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the proposed project at 340-350 Fremont Street (Case No. 2004.0552E). The proposed project includes demolition of two known historical resources and the new construction of a single high-rise residential tower with 332 dwelling units and 332 off-street parking spaces. To address impacts on historical resources, the environmental document outlined mitigation measures for historical resources, including documentation per Historic American Building Survey (HABS) recordation, an area survey, and creation of an on-site interpretative display. Currently, the Project Sponsor has submitted preliminary drafts of the HABS documentation of 340 and 350 Fremont Street and the area survey, which also includes completion of a limited historic resource survey and historic context statement.

As designed by Page & Turnbull and Handel Architects (Project Architects), the interpretative display includes a series of interpretative panels located on the exterior within the mid-block public passage and an interpretative video kiosk located within the interior off of the main public lobby.

On the exterior, the interpretative display would be located along the mid-block public passage and would be demarcated with a 18" by 18" bronze case plaque. The exhibit includes six panels (each measuring approximately 3-ft by 2-ft) located on a corten steel pedestal, and imprinted with images and texts. In terms of content, the exterior interpretative display contains the images and text on the following:

- *Maritime Workers in San Francisco*
- *The Division and Assignment of Shipboard Labor*
- *Union Controlled Hiring Halls*

- *World War II and Escalating Ideological Battles*
- *Construction of AFL Union Halls on Rincon Hill*
- *Industry Changes and an Era of Union Solidarity*

The exterior interpretative exhibit includes a salvaged flagpole, which would be located at the end of the mid-block public passage and mounted with banners of the union crests.

Within the interior, the interpretative display consists of a stainless steel video kiosk designed in a similar style as the existing job board located within 350 Fremont Street. The video kiosk would be located within a small viewing room off of the main secured residential lobby, and would contain a 32-in monitor with a looping video presentation of the area's history. The project would include on the exterior and interior wayfinding to direct visitors to the video kiosk. Specifically, the Project Sponsor will annotate the exterior bronze plaque as follows: "For access to additional interior exhibit on the history of Maritime Unions on Rincon Hill, please see concierge at 340 Fremont St Entry Lobby."

#### **STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Department finds the location and content of the interpretative display to be adequate and reflective of the project site and neighborhood's former history and associations with maritime workers, union halls and other social institutions from 1936 to 1966. The location of the exhibit within the interior and exterior allows for public dissemination of the area's history as well as a prominent view of the interpretative display. In addition, the content of the interpretative display accurately reflects the history of the project site and its association with the former maritime unions.

#### **REQUESTED ACTION**

The Department is requesting that the Historic Preservation Commission find the adequacy, content and location of the interpretative display at 340-350 Fremont Street in fulfillment of *Mitigation Measure 1c. Permanent Interpretative Exhibit*, and accurately conveys the history of the surrounding neighborhood's labor associations and the former union halls. Pursuant to the 340-350 Fremont St Focused Environmental Impact Report, the Department seeks approval of the interpretative display to fulfill the requirements of *Mitigation Measure 1c. Permanent Interpretative Exhibit*.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft Resolution
- Exhibits, including Parcel Map, 1998 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Aerial Photograph, and Site Photos
- Interpretative Display and Floor Plan



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2013

*Date:* October 2, 2013  
*Case No.:* **2004.0552E**  
*Project Address:* **340 and 350 Fremont Street**  
*Zoning:* RH-DTR (Rincon Hill Downtown Residential) Zoning District  
85/200-R and 85/250-R Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 3748/006, 007, 008, and 009  
*Project Sponsor:* Handel Architects and Page & Turnbull  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Sucre – (415) 575-9108  
richard.sucre@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator  
[tim.frye@sfgov.org](mailto:tim.frye@sfgov.org)

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ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO HISTORICAL RESOURCES MITIGATION MEASURE 1C. PERMANENT INTERPRETATIVE EXHIBIT OF THE FOCUSED ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED DEMOLITION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION AT 340-350 FREMONT STREET (ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 3748, LOTS 006, 007, 008, AND 009), LOCATED WITHIN RH-DTR (RINCON HILL DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL) ZONING DISTRICT AND A 85/200-R AND 85/250-R HEIGHT AND BULK DISTRICT.

### PREAMBLE

1. On June 15, 2006, the San Francisco Planning Commission certified the Focused Environmental Impact Report for the proposed project at 340-350 Fremont Street (Case No. 2004.0552E). The proposed project includes demolition of two known historical resources at 340 and 350 Fremont Streets, and the new construction of a single, high-rise residential tower with 332 dwelling units and 332 off-street parking spaces.
2. As part of the 340-350 Fremont Street Focused Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) (Case No. 2004.0552E), Mitigation Measure 1C of the Historical Resources stated that the Project Sponsor (Jackson Pacific Ventures) would:

To partially offset the cumulative loss to the maritime labor historic context of the existing area, a detailed, high-quality exhibit on maritime worker history in San Francisco, specifically focusing on the period from 1936 to 1966, and on AFL maritime unions and social institutions that located major structures on Rincon Hill during that time, shall be prepared. The exhibit should include historic photographs, archeological and salvage artifacts, and interpretive text on twentieth century strike history and labor life. A labor historian experienced in that field and an architectural historian qualified as per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards shall conduct the

research for the exhibit, and design of the exhibit shall be in consultation with a professional exhibit designer and/or public art historian, and with representatives of some of the major surviving maritime unions, especially the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. The exhibit shall be placed on permanent public display in the immediate vicinity of the existing buildings involved in the context, and shall be created with materials suitable to its location (e.g., durable waterproof materials for exterior display). If the Sailors' Union of the Pacific union hall becomes a community center, as envisioned under the Rincon Hill Plan, a public space in the building such as the lobby would be an ideal location to place the exhibit on permanent display. In addition to the permanent exhibit, additional materials for off-site lectures, presentations, or temporary exhibits at other locations, such as the Museum of the City of San Francisco, may be developed. Additionally, the exhibit should include an outdoor public information component in the form of an Interpretive Trail presenting neighborhood history through public interpretive information and photos, such as through the installation of information plaques in the sidewalk (as used for the Barbary Coast walk) and/or on new buildings developed on Rincon Hill, or the installation of informational kiosks (as along the Embarcadero) or some similar approach that would inform the public as to important sites in the history of maritime labor on Rincon Hill. An accompanying publication should be prepared, drawing upon the area survey and research, presented in one or more accessible formats for public information, made available in electronic form through a website and hardcopy formats available on-site and elsewhere. Plans for implementation of this measure shall be developed by Planning Department staff working with the project sponsor(s) and the qualified professionals noted above prior to the issuance of demolition permits, and the proposal shall be presented to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for review and comment.

This mitigation measure requires approval from the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and needs to occur prior to demolition.

In January 2009, the Historic Preservation Commission was conveyed as per Charter Section 4.135, and has jurisdiction over the duties and responsibilities of the LPAB.

3. On October 2, 2013, the Department presented the proposed interpretative display to the Historic Preservation Commission for review and approval. The Commission's comments on the adequacy, content and location of the interpretative display would be forwarded to the Environmental Review Officer for confirmation of compliance with Historical Resources Mitigation Measure 1c-Permanent Interpretative Exhibit of the 340-350 Fremont Street Focused Environmental Impact Report.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the proposed interpretative display for 340-350 Fremont Streets, on Lot 006, 007, 008, and 009 in Assessor's Block 3748, and this Commission finds the interpretative display is in fulfillment of Historical Resources Mitigation Measure 1c. Permanent Interpretative Exhibit of the 340-350 Fremont Street Focused Environmental Impact Report and has provided the following comments:

■

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Recording Secretary to transmit this Resolution, and other pertinent materials in the Case File No. 2004.0552E to the Environmental Review Officer (ERO).

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was **ADOPTED** by the Historic Preservation Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on October 2, 2013.

Jonas P. Ionin  
Acting Commission Secretary

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: October 2, 2013

# Parcel Map

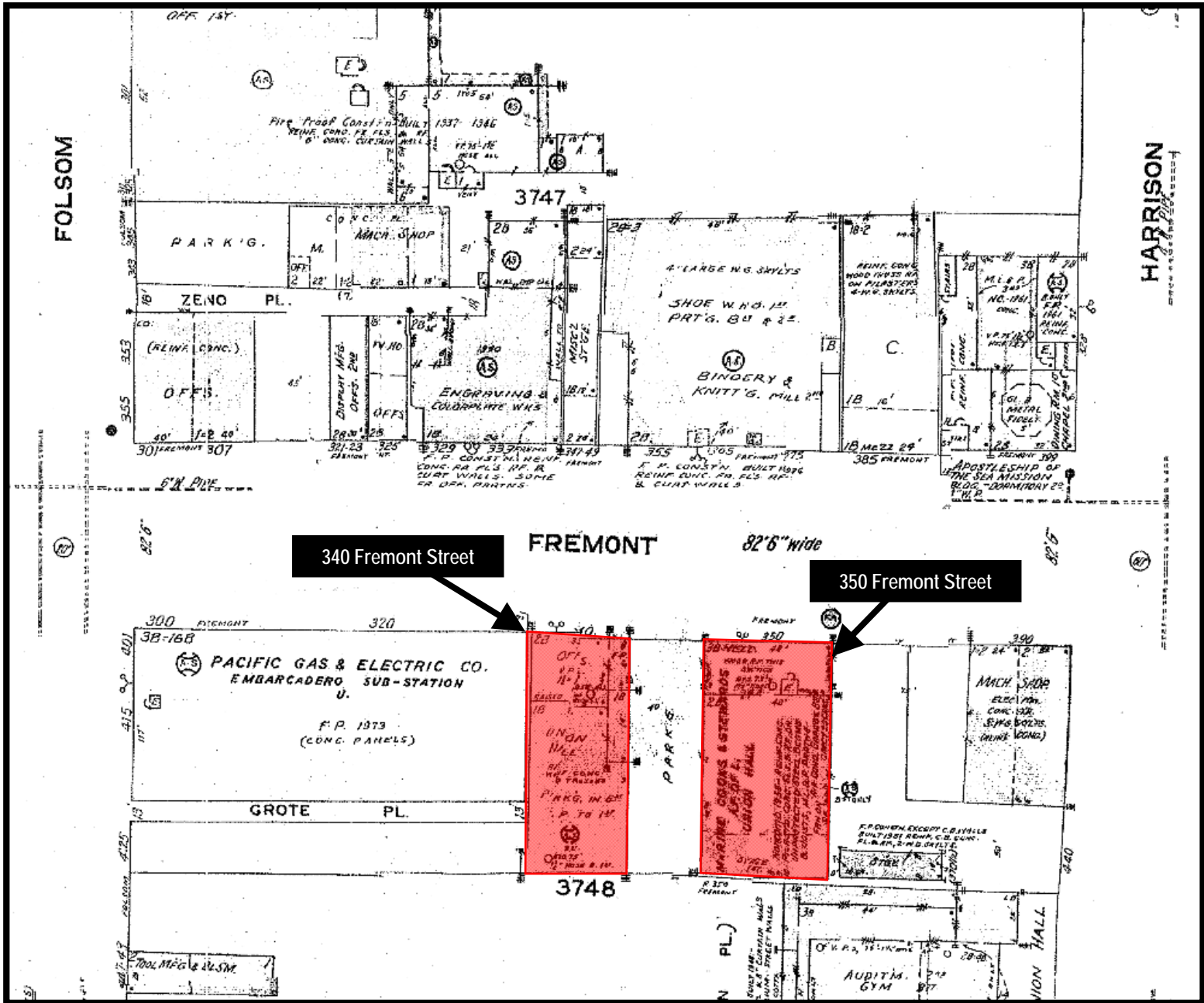


**SUBJECT PROPERTY**



Review and Approval-Interpretative Display  
Case Number 2004.0552E  
340-350 Fremont Street

# Sanborn Map\*



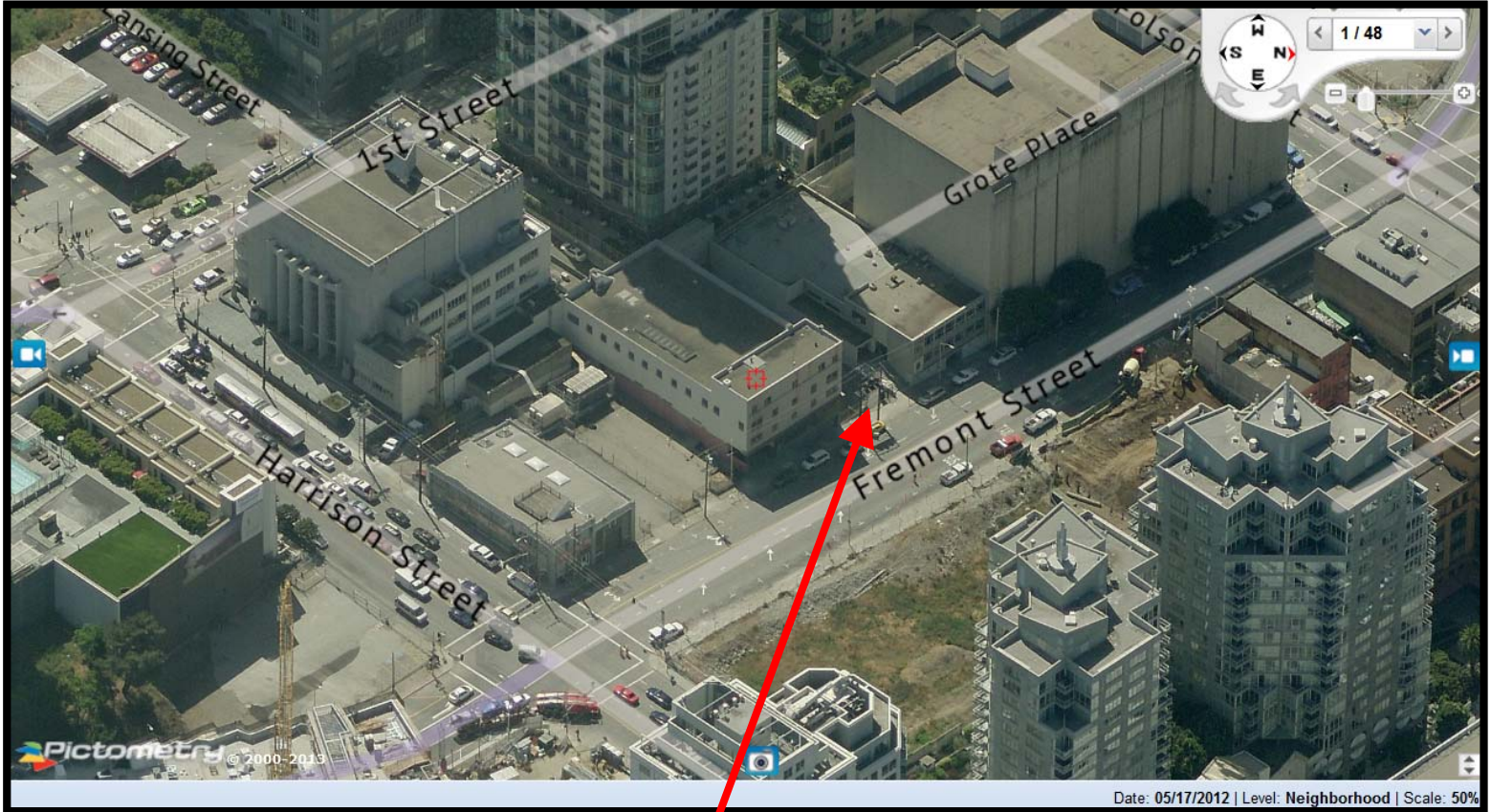
\*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.

Review and Approval-Interpretative Display  
 Case Number 2004.052E  
 340-350 Fremont Street





# Aerial Photo

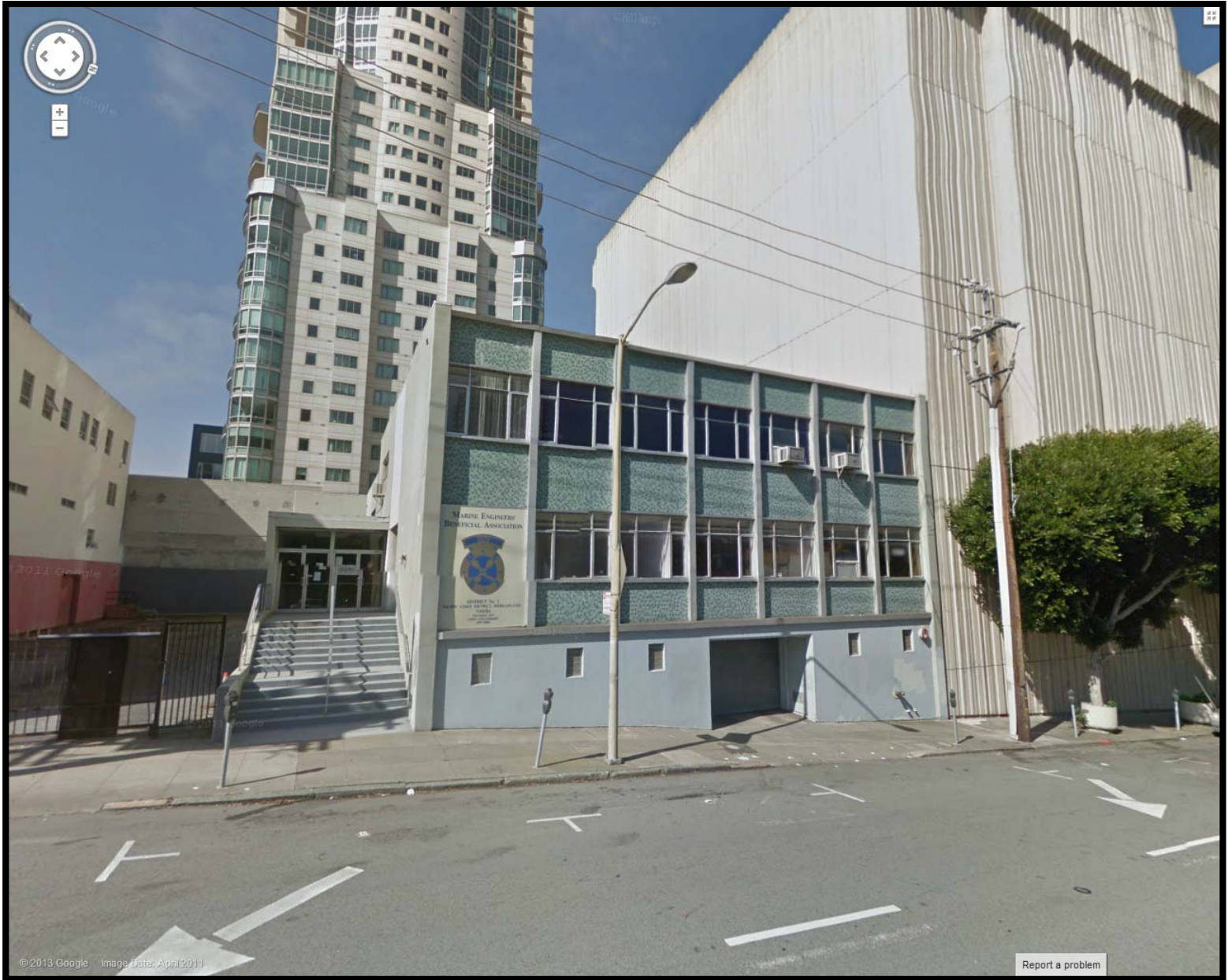


**PROJECT SITE**



Review and Approval-Interpretative Display  
Case Number 2004.0552E  
340-350 Fremont Street

# Site Photo



340 Fremont Street (Source: Google Maps, April 2011)

Review and Approval-Interpretative Display  
Case Number 2004.0552E  
340-350 Fremont Street

# Site Photo



350 Fremont Street (Source: Google Maps, April 2011)

Review and Approval-Interpretative Display  
Case Number 2004.0552E  
340-350 Fremont Street



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# 340 FREMONT

HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE DISPLAY | OCTOBER 2, 2013

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 Equity Residential  
**ROSSLUTHIN** creative  
HANDEL ARCHITECTS LLP  
**PAGE & TURNBULL**

FINANCIAL  
DISTRICT:  
COMMERCIAL

SAN FRANCISCO BAY



RINCON  
PARK

TRANSBAY  
PARK

TRANSBAY TERMINAL

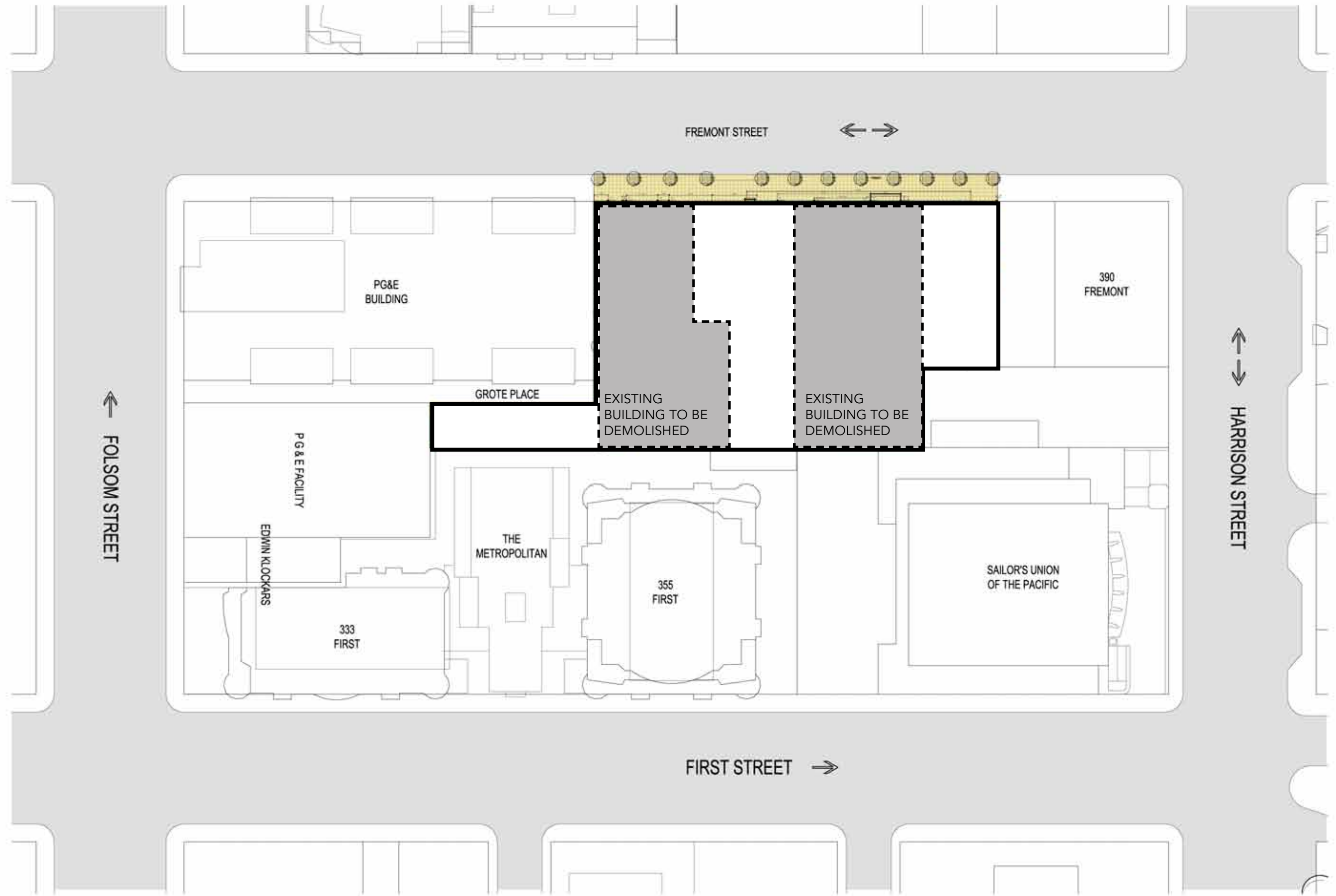
CLEMENTINA ALLEY

340 FREMONT ST.

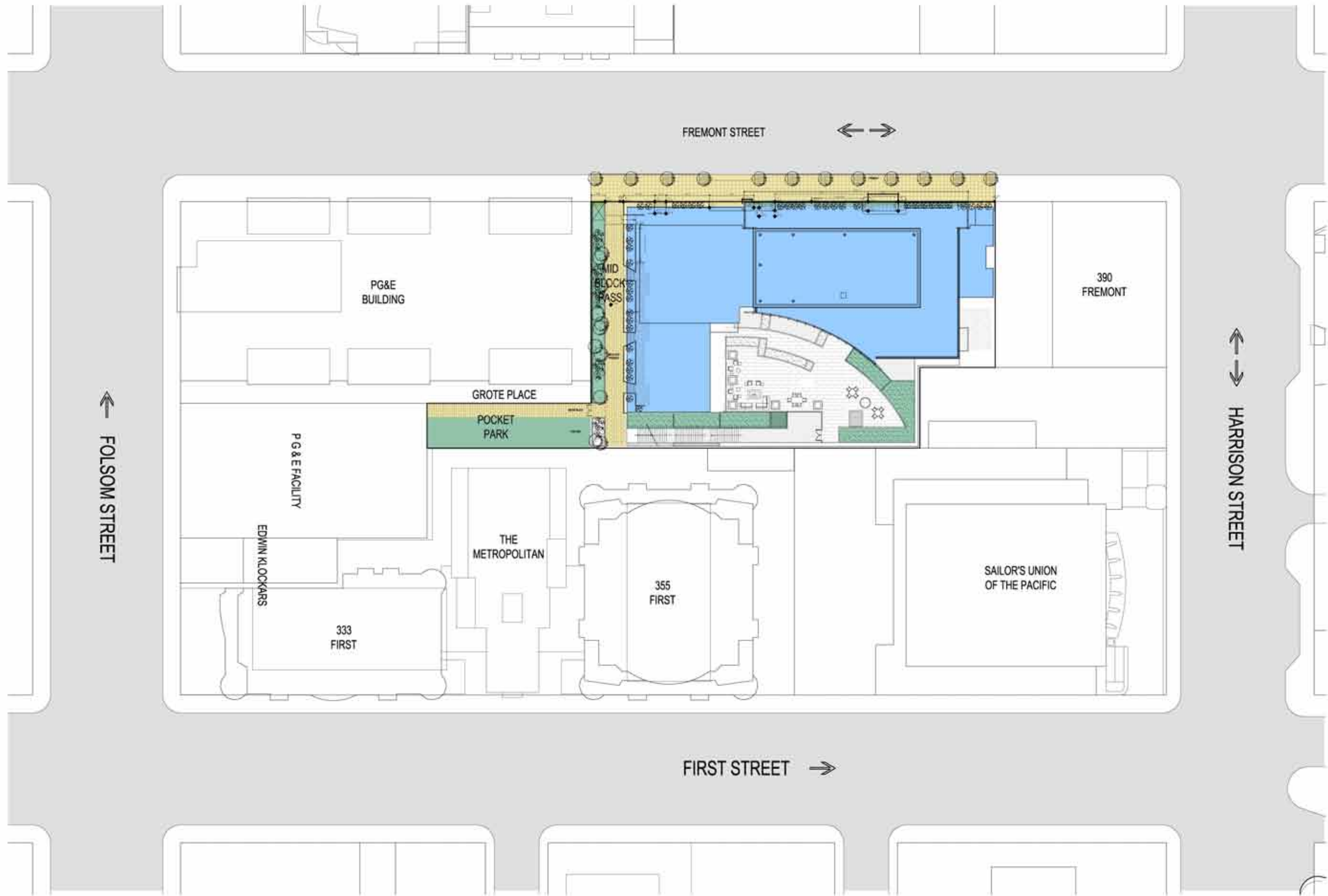
THE EMBARCADERO

RINCON HILL:  
RESIDENTIAL



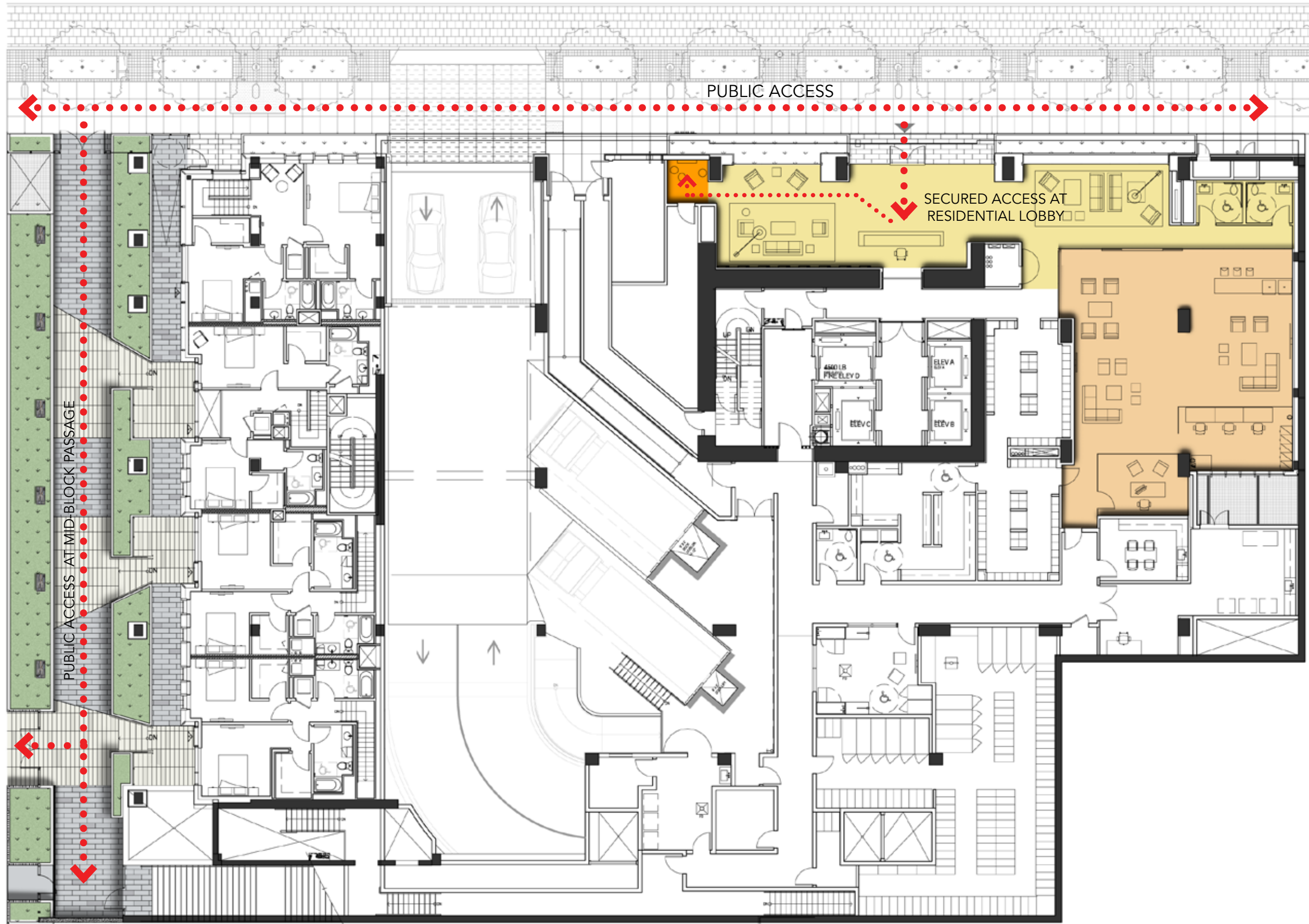


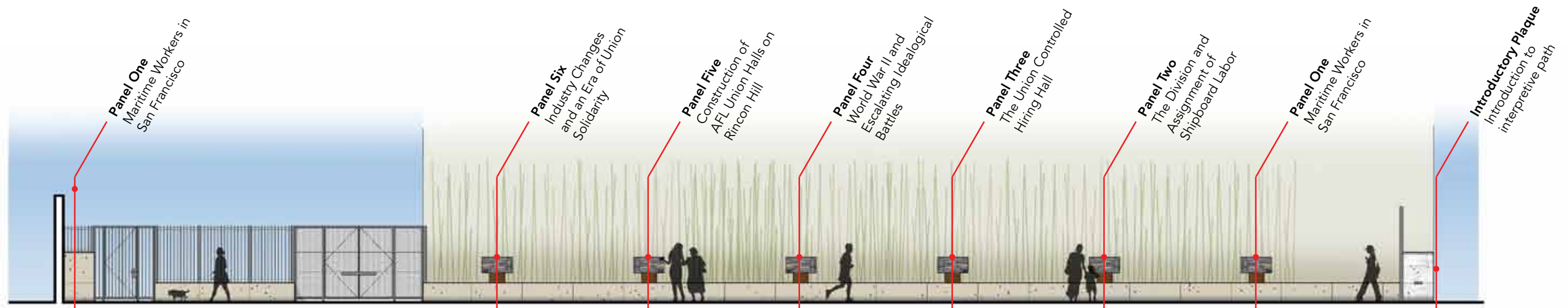








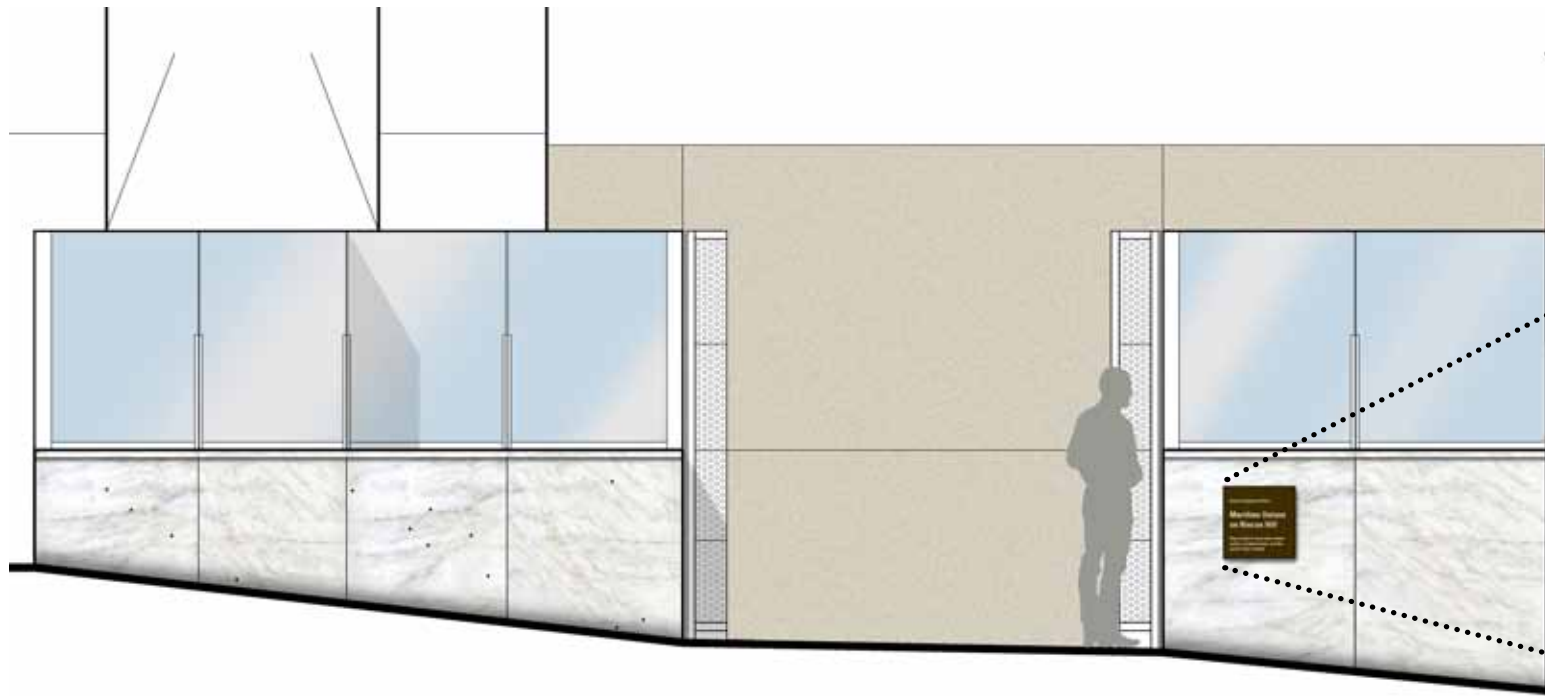




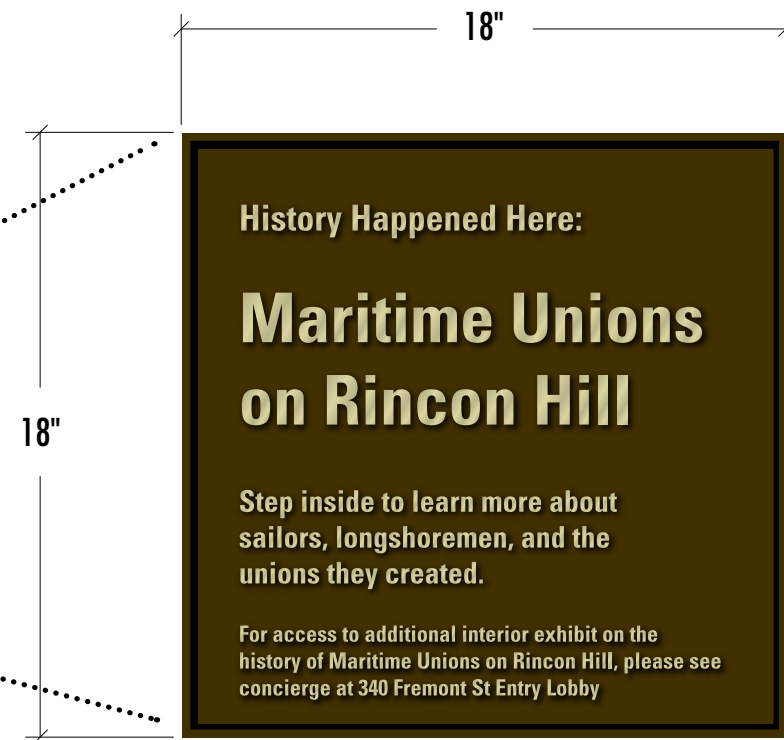
Conceptual Mid-block Passage Elevation



Conceptual Mid-Block Passage Plan



Conceptual Elevation at entry into Mid-block Passage, along Fremont St.

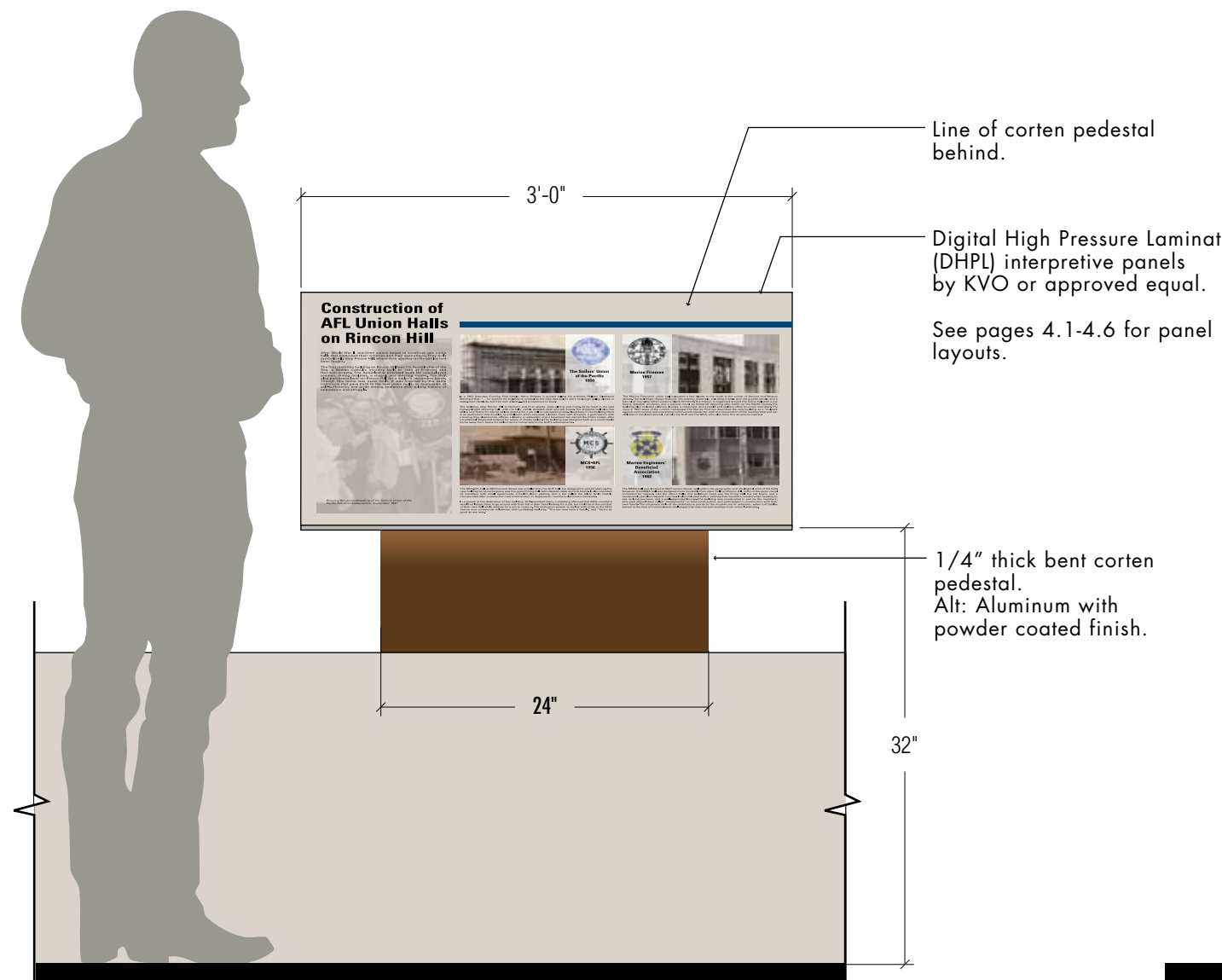


Enlarged Detail of Bronze Plaque

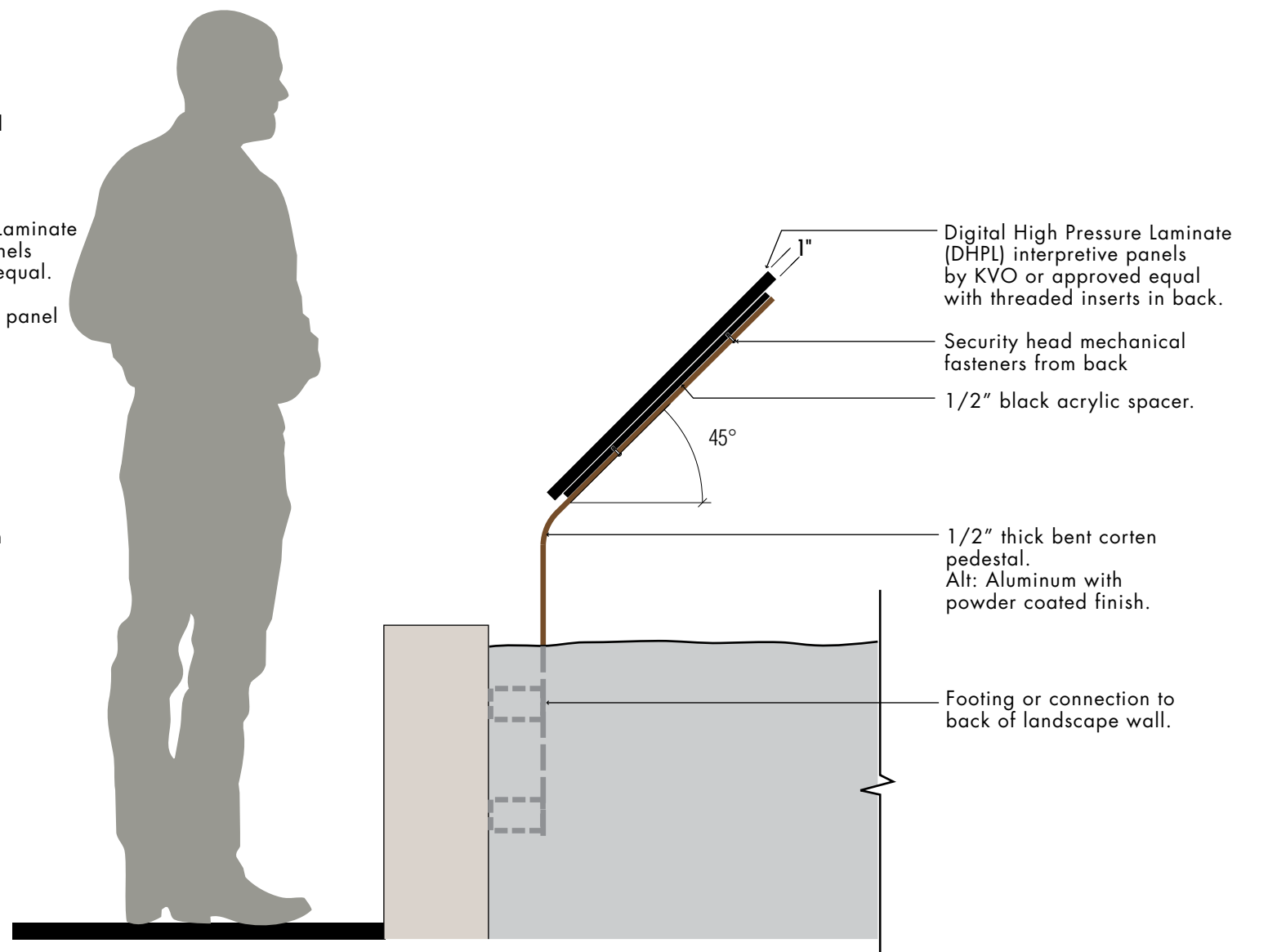
1/4" thick cast bronze plaque with raised outline and lettering. Raised letters are polished with oil rubbed background.



CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF MID-BLOCK PASSAGE



Front Elevation



Side/Section

# Maritime Workers in San Francisco

San Francisco, surrounded by the sea, has been a port city since well before the Gold Rush. Maritime workers have long been an important component of the City's economy and workforce, and their historic struggle for safe working conditions, fair employment practices, and good wages played out not only on the waterfront, but in union halls that were located on Rincon Hill.

Although often considered a single group by the general public, maritime workers are actually divided into two fairly distinct categories: sailors and longshoremen.

Although often considered a single group by the general public, maritime workers are actually divided into two fairly distinct categories: sailors and longshoremen.

- Sailors are the workers who go to sea on ships; above and below decks, they are the people who man and operate the ship's multitude of needs.
- Longshoremen are the workers who stay on land; they handle the mooring lines when a ship comes to dock, and move materials onto and off of ships while in port.

Both of these categories historically attracted similar types of workers, and many worked in both groups at various times in their lives. These men—for historically nearly all sailors and longshoremen were men—were often single, first- or second-generation immigrants, with few alternative marketable skills or occupational paths. Both performed dangerous work under often brutal conditions, with little job security. And both categories drew independent-minded men who came to chafe under systems in which they were forced to labor without representation.

In contrast to these similarities, two major differences existed between sailors and longshoremen that shaped the way these men interacted with the city and impacted the way they came to unionize.



Sailors at work, 1940.



Sailors at work, 1933.



Longshoremen at work 1936



Longshoremen at work 1946

## Legal Status of Sailors

Legal status: Before 1915, American sailors were legally wards of the government, declared by the Supreme Court in 1897 "deficient in that full and intelligent responsibility for their acts which is accredited to ordinary adults" Sailors were denied the protections of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, barring involuntary servitude, and could be forced to work against their will or arbitrarily detained by their employer. Ship's officers were legally authorized to beat sailors, imprison them in chains, or place them on reduced rations for insubordination, which they did routinely. Longshoremen, despite their abominable work conditions, were "ordinary adults" in the eyes of the law and not subject to the same archaic legal burdens.



An undated pamphlet comparing the rights of seamen to the rights of fugitive slaves.

## Geographic Stability of Longshoremen

Geographic stability: Longshoremen, though perhaps marginal to polite society, were attached to a place, to its social and civil institutions, and were able to associate with each other, exchange information, and organize for collective action. Sailors, in contrast, were isolated for long periods in small dispersed crews, out of communication with the larger society and with each other. They spent little time in port and were only minimally attached to society and institutions, which made it much more difficult for sailors to organize effectively. To illustrate the difference, longshoremen were able to create a fledgling union in San Francisco as early as 1853, while the first enduring seamen's union did not come into existence for another thirty years.

# The Division and Assignment of Shipboard Labor

Within the general category of “sailors”, shipboard work is rigidly structured, both departmentally and hierarchically. This structure is reflected in the way these workers unionized.

Aboard ships, work is customarily divided into three departments:

## The Deck Department

The Deck department is composed of those who steer the ship, stand lookout watches, maintain the hull and rigging, moor and unmoor the ship, work the anchor, and launch the ship’s life boats and working boats. The Deck department includes both licensed officers (the Master, or Captain of the ship) and unlicensed personnel.

## The Engine Department

The Engine department is composed of those who operate and maintain the propulsion and auxiliary machinery, as well as mechanical systems such as heating and air conditioning, plumbing, electricity, and refrigeration. The Engine department also includes both licensed officers and unlicensed personnel.

## The Stewards Department

The Stewards department is composed of those who do the cooking, serve the food, and do general housekeeping work in the ship’s living quarters. The Stewards department does not generally include licensed officers.

Historically, each department has been represented by its own autonomous union, sometimes with one union for licensed officers and another for unlicensed personnel.



Stewards in the galley of steamship President Jackson probably in Seattle, 1923



Engineer working on a Washington Diesel engine. Undated



Fireman in the engine room.



Sailing crew on deck c. 1899.

The first lasting maritime labor unions included:



The Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), formed in the Midwest in 1875 to represent licensed engine room workers.



The Marine Firemen, Oilers, Watertenders and Wipers Association (MFW), formed in San Francisco in 1883 to represent unlicensed engine room workers.



The Sailor’s Union of the Pacific (SUP), formed in San Francisco in 1891 to represent unlicensed deck workers.



The International Organization of Masters, Mates, and Pilots (MMP), formed in 1900 to represent licensed deck workers.



The National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards (MCS), formed in 1901 to represent unlicensed workers in the stewards’ department.



In contrast, longshoremen—whether they catch mooring ropes or dispatch fork-lifts—have been historically represented by a single union; since 1937, West Coast longshoremen have been represented by the International Longshore and Warehousemen’s

Prior to the 1930s most maritime employment lacked security. Under the traditional casual labor system, the term of employment was extremely brief; for longshoremen it was the day or the shift, for seamen the voyage. At the end of those periods, the worker was unemployed.

Sailors and longshoremen were also subjected to humiliating methods of hiring. In the case of the longshoremen it was the shapeup, a daily outdoor gathering of all those seeking work, at which the hiring bosses would simply point to those they wanted without offering any reasons. Seamen too were forced to compete against each other for employment. Payoffs and kickbacks were the order of the day.

This system worked to the advantage of employers, who were able to make rapid adjustments in their workforce and purge undesirables at will. Maritime workers came to see the control of hiring as the key to improving their lot, and it was to this end that they banded together in the Maritime Strikes of 1934 and 1936.



# Union Controlled Hiring Halls

Maritime workers went on strike in May 1934 to gain control of their own hiring process, and by summer had stopped virtually all cargo movement on the West Coast. Tensions were high by July, when two strikers were killed in a violent showdown with police, known as the "Battle of Rincon Hill". In solidarity, workers throughout the city called a General Strike, which lasted for three days and brought commerce to a near halt throughout the Bay Area. Arbitration in the fall of 1934 favored longshoremen, who received control of their hiring process. Sailors were forced to strike again in 1936 to secure control of their hiring process. Union-controlled hiring halls became the showpieces of the new union halls on Rincon Hill.

After gaining control of the hiring power, these unions created a revolutionary system called Rotary Hiring to allot available work among their members. The process sought to be impartial and transparent in an area that had historically been fraught with intrigue and favoritism. Rotary hiring is still in use today.



Crowds of strikers on Rincon Hill, 1934.



Members of the Marine Cooks and Stewards in their hiring hall, 1952.



Dispatchers working in a longshoremen's hiring hall, 1936.



Longshoremen considering their job board, 1936.



Longshoreman's working card, 1943.



The gym and the bar at the Sailor's Union of the Pacific Hall, for in between job call, no date.



## Rotary Hiring

The Rotary Hiring system consists of an open listing of all available jobs and a transparent method for offering jobs to qualified union members. No member is obligated to take any job and can pass; the job then becomes available to the next highest on the list, and so on. Those who pass retain their position on the list and can "throw in" for subsequent jobs, until they "fall off" and return to the bottom of the order.

## The Dispatcher

The Dispatcher administers the rotary system; registering members for work, receiving calls from employers, listing open jobs, conducting "job calls" in which jobs are offered, certifying the job bid, and issuing the dispatch slip to be presented to the employer. The Dispatcher conducts this business in the hiring hall at the Dispatch Counter, visible to the general membership.

## The Shipping Card

The Shipping Card is the control document for the rotary system, a time stamped registration card issued by the Dispatcher when a man registers for work. The shipping card is held by the worker until he takes a job. The goal is to give an individual a reasonable chance at getting a job, but prevent him from dominating the process for a prolonged period, thus encouraging the sharing of employment opportunities among the membership.

## The Job Board

As jobs are called in to the Dispatcher, they are posted on the Job Board in the shipping hall of the union, plainly visible to anyone interested. The job board includes the name of the ship, the shipping company, the length of the voyage, the ship's destination, the required rating for the specific position to be filled, and the time to report for duty.

## Job Call

At a Job Call, the Dispatcher calls out each job on the shipping board, similar to an auction. Some members may have "thrown in" their shipping card prior to the call. The Dispatcher announces the most senior of those cards and lets anyone more senior call out his bid and hand up his card. With the information listed on the Job Board, and knowledge of the age of his own Shipping card, each union member is in a position to calculate his own best interest.

## Between Calls

Between Calls, union members were essentially unemployed, so union halls were designed as comfortable places for men to spend time. Spaces were provided for playing cards, exchanging information and gossip, drinking in the on-site bars, or utilizing other facilities provided for them, like health clinics, libraries, gyms, and restaurants.

# World War II and Escalating Ideological Battles

During World War II, maritime unions pledged to “keep the ships moving” with a no-strike policy. Sailors were exempt from the draft if they didn’t tarry more than 30 days between ships, but were exposed to enemy action at sea on vulnerable unarmed ships and suffered nearly the same casualty rate as the U.S. Marine Corps.

Bolstered by the Roosevelt administration’s pro-labor policies, most unions in the country gained membership during the War. In the years after the War, San Francisco’s maritime unions were financially secure and held great bargaining power with employers. However, with this power came an escalation in an ideological struggle that had actually begun in the years before the War.



World War II-era United States Merchant Marine poster



Responding to Ideological Pressure



Harry Lundeberg at Pier 41 in San Francisco, 1938.



Harry Bridges addresses a rally at the Federal Building, 1965.

The prime issue was affiliation: although unions were autonomous organizations, coordination with related groups increased strength. Early affiliations represented a range of politics and negotiating strategies, with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the International Seaman’s Union (ISU) considered more conservative while the International Workers of the World (IWW) and the Marine Workers Industrial Union (MWIU) leaned towards direct-action strikes and Communist-influenced ideology.

The establishment of larger affiliation groups in the 1930s set the stage for further battles. As the maritime unions sorted themselves into affiliation, ideological arguments often devolved into violent brawls. Local police often joined in, usually with the AFL and Seafarers International Union (SIU) affiliates, against what was perceived as the more radical Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) affiliates. That perception was based on the CIO’s greater tendency to include communists and people of color in its ranks.

By the late 1930s, both the sailors and the longshoreman were led by dynamic men with strong personalities and contrasting political beliefs. The Sailor’s Union had affiliated itself with the AFL and the SIU and was led by Harry Lundeberg, a Norwegian native who had been a sailor for 18 years before rising to lead the SUP. The Longshoremen were affiliated with the CIO and led by left-leaning Harry Bridges, who had been a member of the IWW. During the decade after World War II, both sides engaged in flamboyant rhetoric including accusations of fascism, communism, racism, and hoodlumism.

The Taft Hartley Act, passed in 1947 over President Truman’s veto, imposed harsh restrictions on labor unions. The Act required union officials to file affidavits swearing they were not supporters of the Communist party. The affidavits had a crushing effect on the leadership and the members of many unions. The CIO began to rid itself of its well-known numbers of communists; Bridges was removed as California head of the CIO in 1948 and the Longshoremen were expelled from the CIO entirely in 1950 due to alleged communist influence. The AFL and its affiliated unions, in the meantime, remained staunchly anti-communist, and strove to enroll former members of disbanded or “busted” unions.

This conflict is epitomized in the fight for representation of marine cooks and stewards. These workers had long been represented by one of the most racially progressive and politically liberal unions of the era, the National Union of Marine Cooks and Stewards (MCS). The MCS was expelled from the CIO in 1949 when its leaders refuse to file non-communist affidavits. The establishment of a new marine cooks and stewards union became the focus of the ideological struggle between the AFL-affiliated SUP and the Longshoremen. Two new unions were hastily created to vie for the former members of the MCS. After several years of conflict-- physical, political, and legal--the AFL entity was triumphant. The new MCS, known as the AFL-MCS, represented a great victory for Harry Lundeberg and the AFL, and they encouraged the new union to build its headquarters adjacent to theirs on Rincon Hill.

# Construction of AFL Union Halls on Rincon Hill

After World War II, maritime unions began to construct new union halls that embodied their victories and their aspirations. They built symbolically atop Rincon Hill, where their greatest strike battles had been fought.

The first maritime building on Rincon Hill was the Apostleship of the Sea, a Roman Catholic ministry built in 1939 at Fremont and Harrison streets. The Apostleship provided beds for unemployed seamen, dining facilities, a chapel, and meeting rooms. The SUP also purchased land on Rincon Hill for a sailor's retirement home. Though this home was never built, it was inspired by the same intentions that gave birth to the new union halls; an expression of self-sufficiency and pride after a long history of oppression and struggle.

*Blessing the groundbreaking of the Sailor's Union of the Pacific Hall and Headquarters, September 1947*



**The Sailors' Union of the Pacific**  
1950

In a 1953 Saturday Evening Post Article, Harry Bridges is quoted telling his architect, William Gladstone Merchant that "... he wanted his building to symbolize the idea that sailors were no longer galley slaves or water-front derelicts, but free men at last—and prosperous to boot."

The building, atop Rincon Hill at Harrison and First streets, does all this and more. At its heart are the high-ceilinged shipping hall, dispatch desk, and job board. There is also an auditorium that doubles as a ballroom, a locker room with showers, a gymnasium with a boxing ring, classrooms, offices, a library, a restaurant, and a basement bar named the Chain Locker, named after the traditional shipboard hideout for weary or thirsty sailors. The building was designed both as a comfortable home away from home for sailors and a monument to the SUP's achievements.



**Marine Firemen**  
1957

The Marine Firemen's union hall is located a few blocks to the north at the corner of Second and Tehama streets. The building's design features rich marble and red granite exterior panels and a bas relief mural by artist Lucienne Bloch Dimitroff. The interior is organized around the hiring hall, job board and dispatch window, and includes a second mural by Dimitroff depicting ship traffic on the Pacific Ocean. The building also included a library, lounge, a restaurant, and a health and welfare office for union members. The June 2, 1957 issue of the union's newspaper *The Marine Fireman* described the new building as a "bulwark against communism and everything communism stands for, with the cooperation of the membership and our affiliates in the International, namely the SUP and the MCS, who also have fine structures nearby."



**MCS-AFL**  
1956

The MCS-AFL hall at 350 Fremont Street was smaller than the SUP hall, but was also designed to project its stature. Its centerpiece was also the large hiring hall, dispatch desk and job board. It also provided its members with small apartments, a health clinic, parking, and a bar called the Glory Hold, hastily incorporated after construction had commenced in response to union members' clamorous demands.

At the dedication of this building, SUP-president Harry Lundeberg proclaimed that MCS members would no longer have to go around with their hat in their hand looking for a job, but could sit in the comfort of their own hall while waiting for a job to come in. The dedication speech is replete with pride in the AFL's victory over communist influences, and Lundeberg declares, "You can now have a family," and "You're as good as any man."



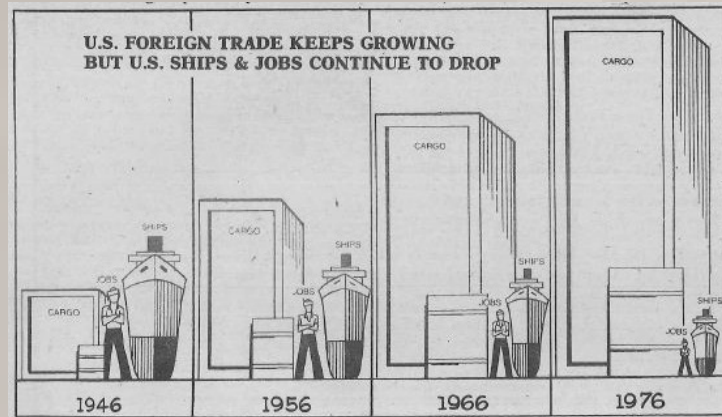
**Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association**  
1962

The MEBA hall was located at 340 Fremont Street, well within the geographic and ideological orbit of the SUP. The building's heart was the hiring hall, job board, and dispatch counter, and it included indoor parking for members heading to sea, and a well-appointed lounge. The building was constructed in part by the members, who paid special construction dues called "assessments", and participated with their own hands. The MEBA hall was designed more modestly than other halls on Rincon Hill, without the same visual command for respect. Rather, the corporate style of the architecture points towards the modern era of unionism, when turf battles waned in the face of industry-wide challenges that required partnerships from union leadership.

# Industry Changes and an Era of Union Solidarity

The end of the 1950s brought a wane in the fierce infighting that had characterized maritime labor relations for several decades, and maritime unions began to face industry-wide challenges that would require cooperation on all fronts.

In part, ideological differences that had driven battles between unions for many years were reaching resolution on a larger cultural front. The Red Scare that had gripped the nation after World War II was, by the end of the 1950s, beginning to lose steam. Many actual communist union leaders and members (along with many, many who were not communists) had been removed from power, and the impetus to root out communist sympathizers began to lose political traction. Similarly, issues of racial exclusion that had divided union leaders and members decreased as unions became more thoroughly racially integrated throughout the 1960s, largely due to the efforts of progressive leaders in the NMU and CIO.



U.S. shipping jobs losses grow as foreign trade increases.

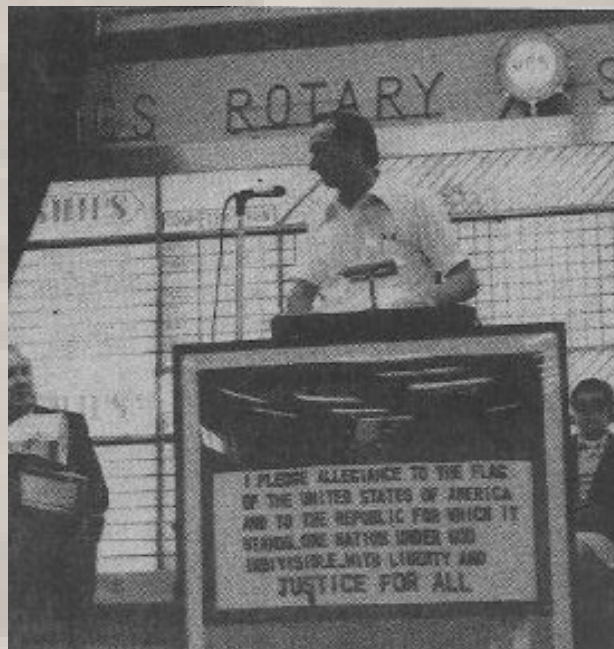
For more additional information on the history of Maritime Unions on Rincon Hill, please see our concierge at the main lobby of 340 Fremont St.



George Meany and Walter Reuther pronounce the merger of the AFL and the CIO, 1955.



The MCS votes to merge with the Seafarers International Union, 1978.



Frank Drozak, SIU Executive Vice President speaks to MCS members in San Francisco about the MCS-SIU merger.



Early image of containerized shipping at the San Francisco Port, 1960

Maritime industry changes during this time affected workers on all fronts. The disappearance of passenger ship travel decimated available jobs for marine cooks and stewards. A steep reduction in commercial shipping affected the whole sea-going maritime workforce, from captains to sailors, engineers to firemen. This reduction came about for several reasons, including improvements in truck and rail transportation systems, a slow-down in U.S. production and exports, and the registration of ships under foreign "flags of convenience", a practice which was bitterly and unsuccessfully fought by the unions.

At the ports, longshore employment was affected by changes in waterfront technology, primarily containerization. Containerization standardized the loading and unloading of cargo, and was resisted by the ILWU when it first appeared in the mid-1950s. In 1960, after a brief period of guerilla tactics aimed at undermining containerization, ILWU leader Harry Bridges negotiated the Mechanization and Modernization Agreement which aimed to protect union members from job losses. Routinely renegotiated in the following years, the M&M Agreement has had a mixed legacy, protecting some workers while failing to arrest changes at the ports that undercut longshore employment over the long term.

During this era of decreased maritime employment, union mergers began to take place that were motivated by need more than disagreement. In 1955, the national merger of long-time ideological foes the AFL and the CIO signaled recognition that union solidarity would be necessary to protect workers in the face of new economic realities. Steady declines through the 1960s and 1970s in maritime employment and union membership contributed to the decision by the MCS-AFL in 1978 to merge with the larger Seafarers International Union (SIU). Even the ILWU, after decades of staunch opposition to the ideology and practices of the AFL-CIO, decided to affiliate with that group in 1988.

However, the maritime industry is not static, and mergers and affiliations are not either. In 2005, a handful of large unions left the AFL-CIO to form a rival group called the Change to Win Coalition. In 2013, after complaints that other unions were performing the work of their members and frustrated with moderate and compromising policies, the ILWU also decided to disaffiliate from the AFL-CIO. The history of maritime labor unions in San Francisco continues to evolve.



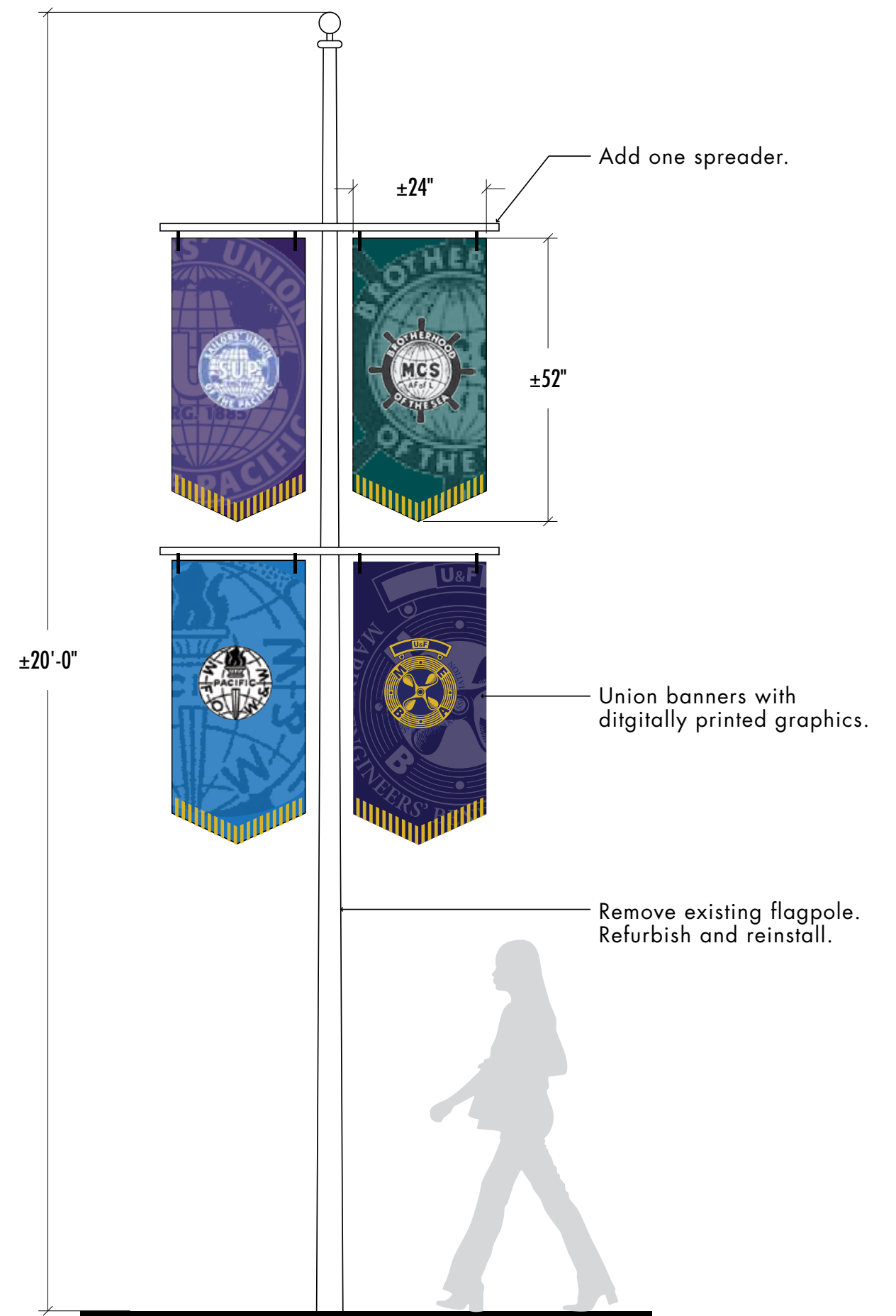
Photograph of Union Banner  
Note: Photograph is not of existing flag pole found on site

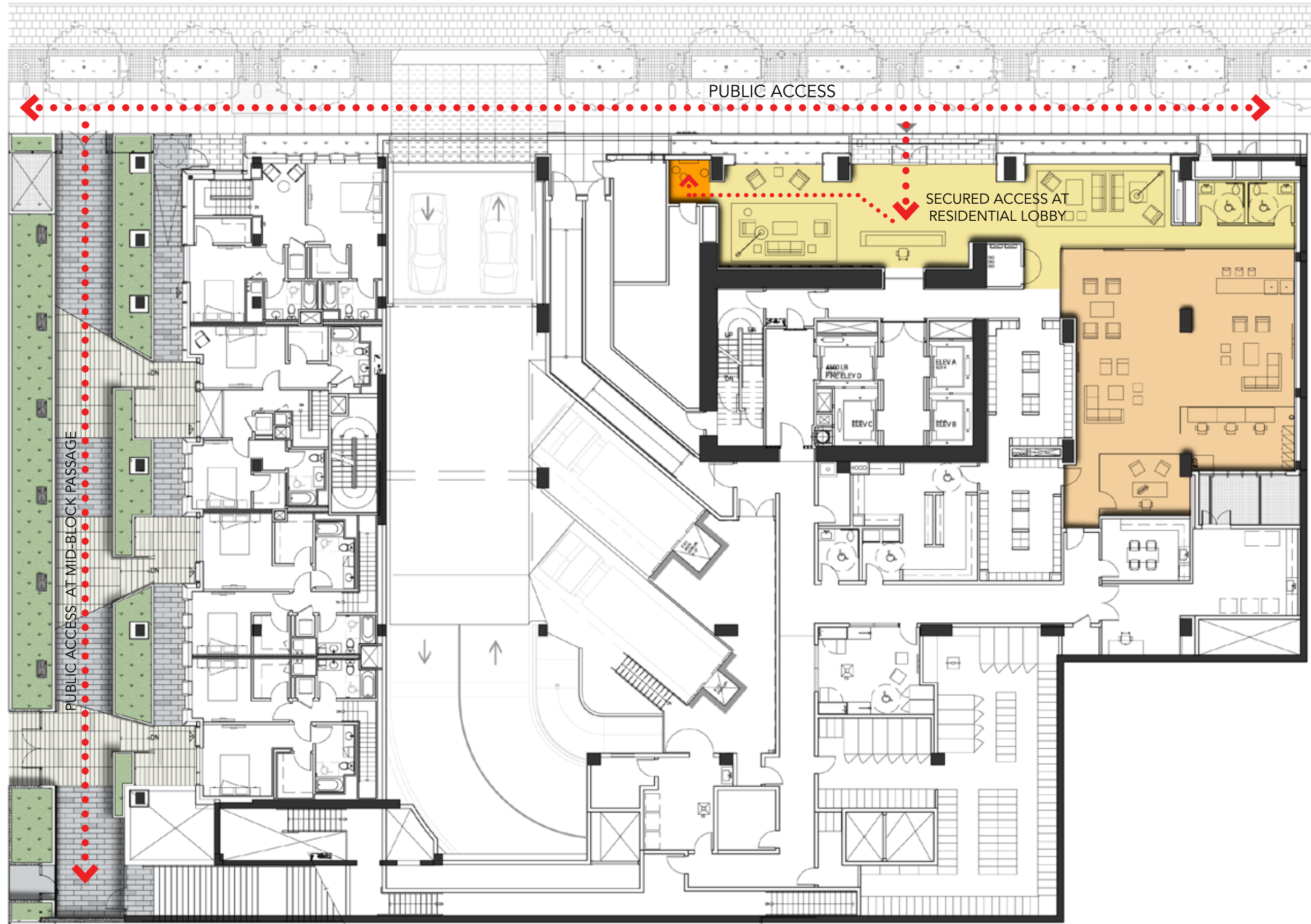


Existing flag pole on site to be salvaged



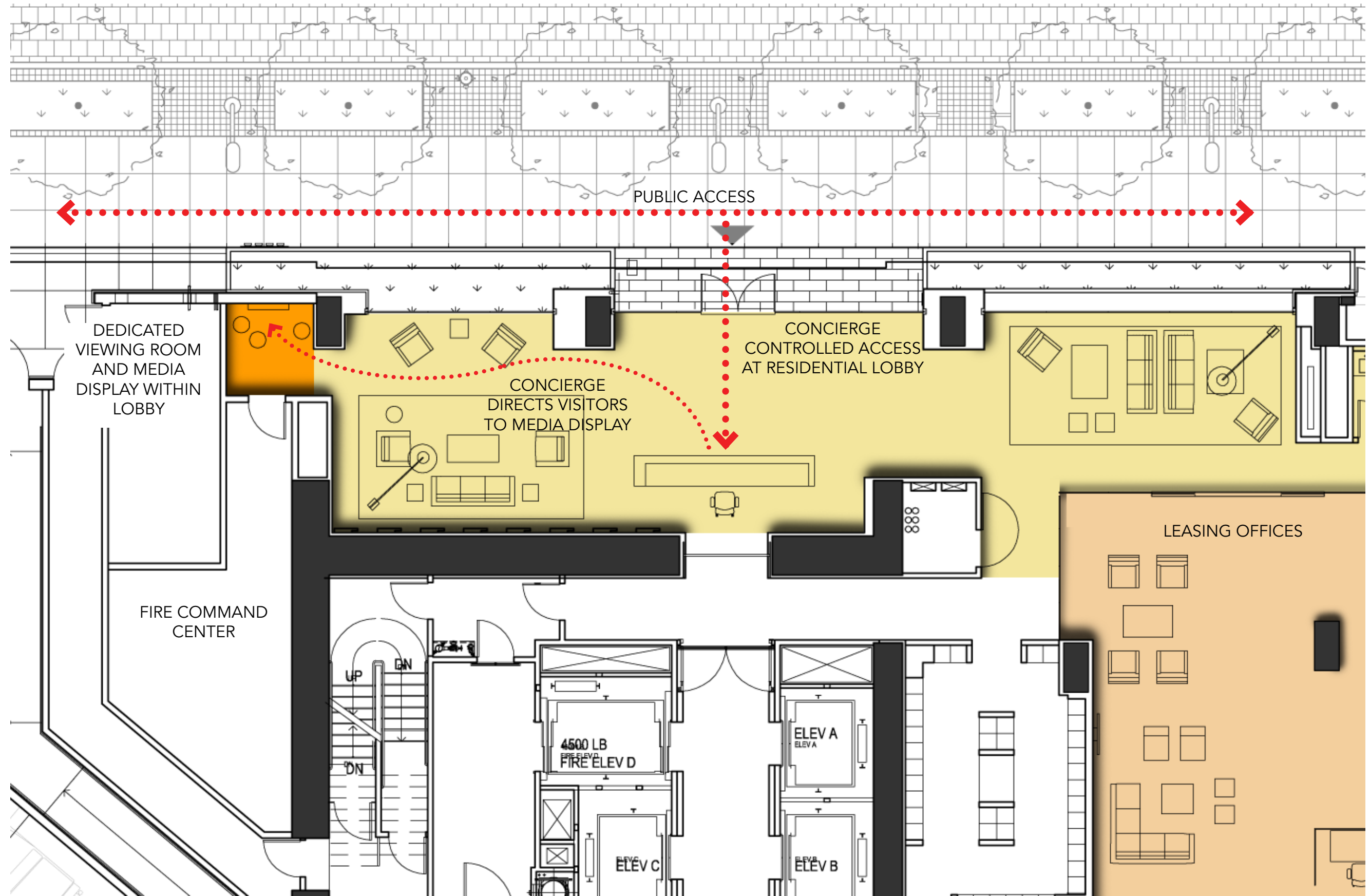
CONCEPTUAL RENDERING OF FLAG POLE AND BANNERS AT END OF MID-BLOCK PASSAGE



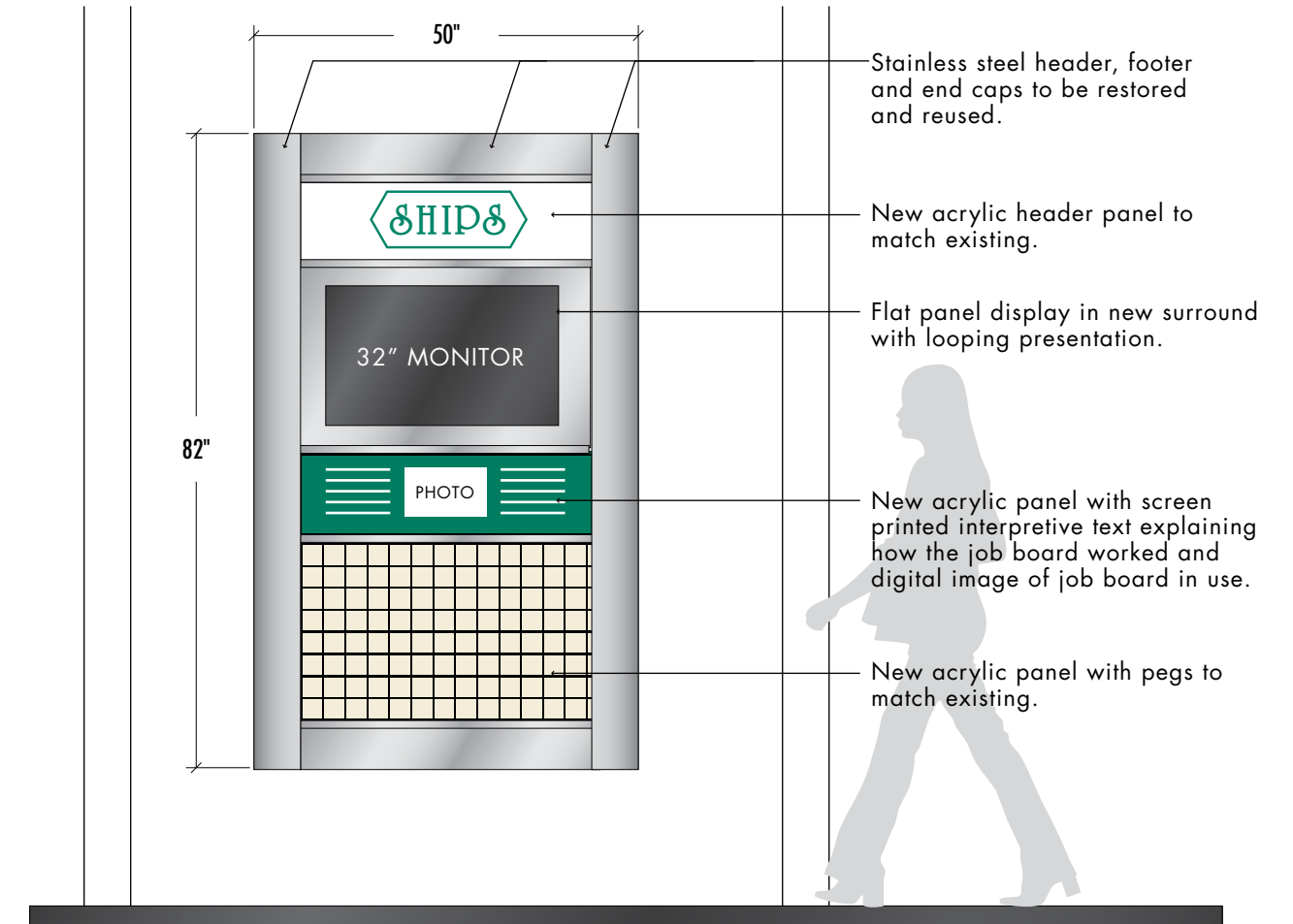
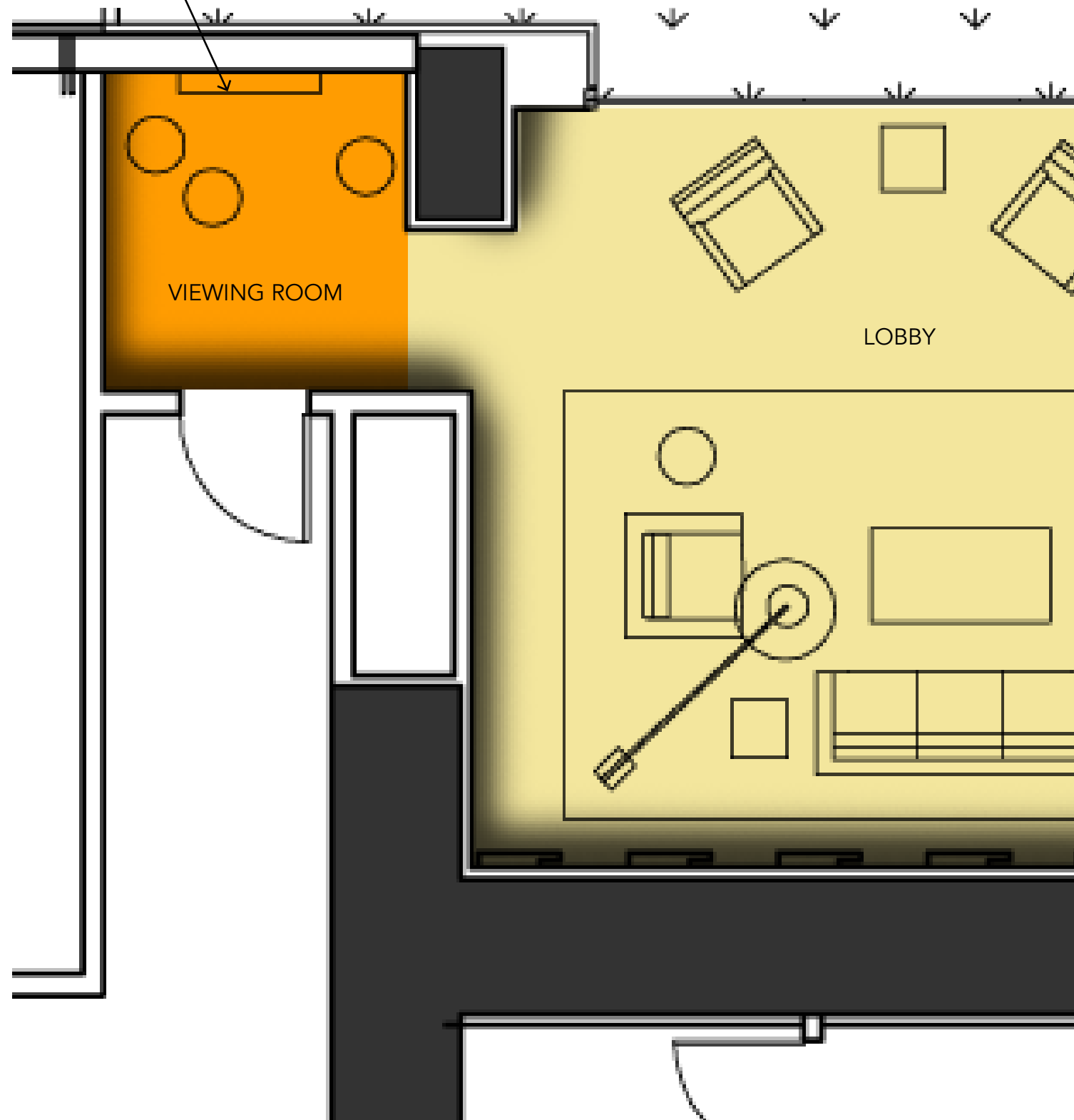




FREMONT STREET



SALVAGED JOB BOARD  
USED AS HOUSING FOR  
MEDIA DISPLAY

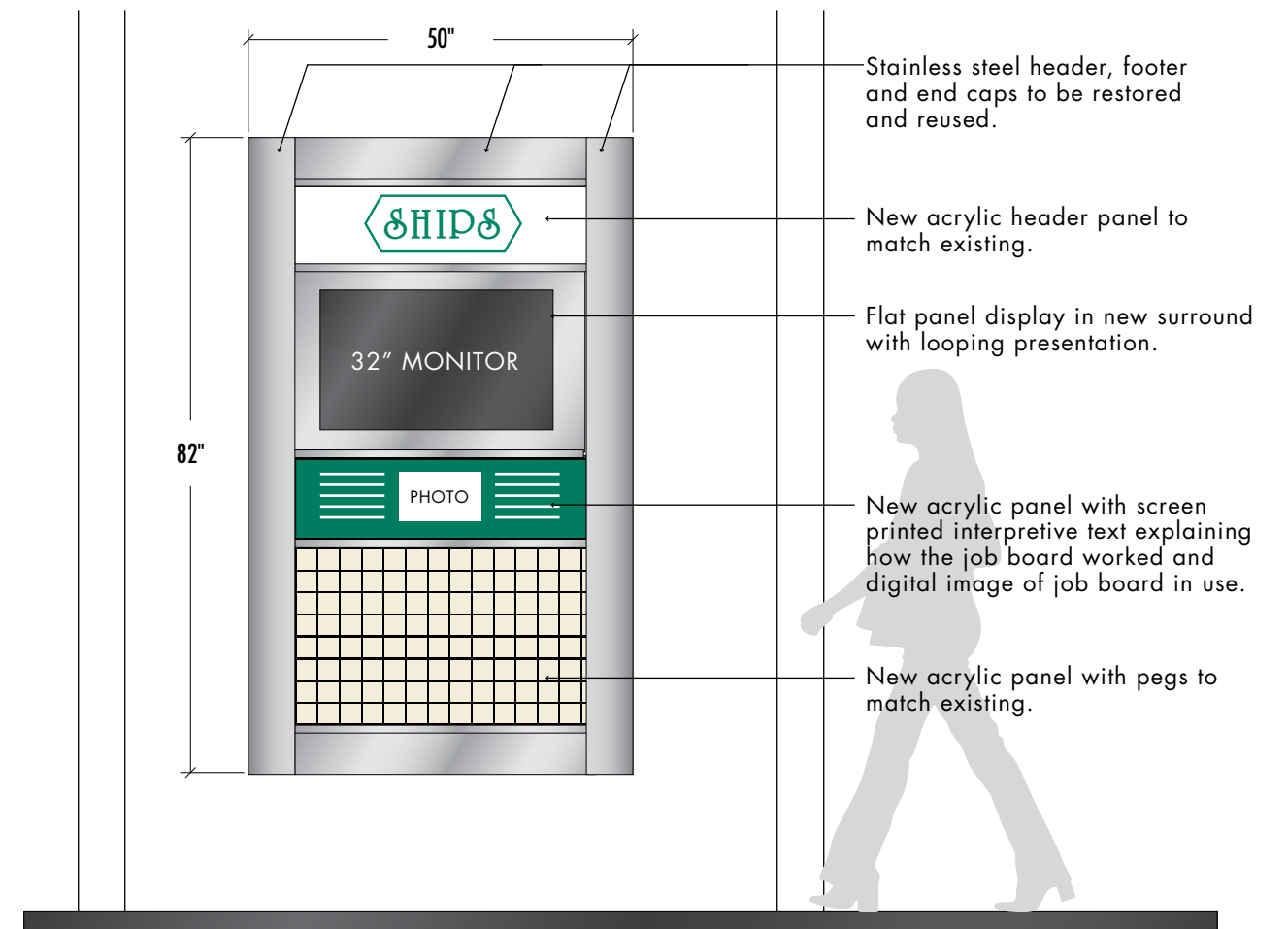


**Interior Elevation**

1/2"=1'-0"



Original Job Board at existing site. Portions to be restored and incorporated as housing for Interpretive Media Display.



**Interior Elevation**

1/2"=1'-0"

## INTERPRETIVE DISPLAY SUMMARY

-A bronze plaque along Fremont St., located at the entry of the mid-block passage, marks and introduces the significant labor history that occurred on this site.

-Within the mid-block passage, accessible to the public, a series of six panels, each 36"x24" wide, exhibits through photographs and narrative the significance of the Maritime Unions on Rincon Hill.

-At the end of the mid-block passage, a flag pole salvage from the site is restored and modified to display the crests of the four major maritime union organizations significant to Rincon Hill and San Francisco.

-Within the residential lobby, the full-time building concierge can direct visitors seeking additional historic information to a dedicated media room, displaying a continuous looping video that will include interpretive text and historic images.

-The media display salvages and incorporates sections of the original Job Board from the AFL-MCS/SIU union hall at 350 Fremont. The media display will be accompanied by a photograph of the job board in its original setting and state.

-Additional printed media, in the form of a pamphlet summarizing the display along the mid-block passage, will be available in the media room and at the concierge's desk. This will include additional information that was edited from the interpretive display due to size constraints.

-A website will be developed that displays the full context of the Maritime Labor History Context Statement and Survey, links to which will be provided in the printed media and elsewhere in the interpretive display.