Civic Center Landscape Features

Significant Utilities

CIVIC CENTER — CULTURAL — LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

Civic Center is dotted with fire boxes and fire hydrants that date back to the early 20th Century. In 1899, the citywide fire box system was established and a handful of boxes bearing a 1899 date, recognizable by their red posts with gold trim, remain in Civic Center.

In the wake of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire in which 80% of the City's 28,000 buildings were destroyed, utilitarian features such as the Auxiliary Water Supply System hydrants – a gravity fed system – was installed throughout the City, including in Civic Center. The hydrants in Civic Center are short and painted white with a blue cap. Several are stamped: "1909: S.F., A.W.S."

Both the fire boxes and the AWSS fire hydrants are usable today. According to a report by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the fireboxes are still used in over 1,000 emergencies a year. Likewise, a 2009 City of San Francisco study of the AWSS found 135 miles of underground piping to be in mostly usable condition. Repairs and optimizations have since been implemented.

Other utility features such as piping, traffic signals, and traffic control devices date to the period of significance (1896-1951).

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Fire and police box at War Memorial Complex. Using telegraph technology, the boxes remain active today. Dates to 1899.

MIG, Inc.

Auxiliary Water Supply System hydrant with a blue cap next to a low pressure hydrant near City Hall. Dates to 1909.

MIG, Inc.

Traffic control box with green metal post on the southwest corner of the Asian Art Museum. Dates to 1916.