

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 2778-24th Street]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 2778-24th Street (aka Casa Sanchez Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 4210, Lot No. 018, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in single-underline italics Times New Roman font.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~striketrough italics Times New Roman font~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~striketrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. Findings.

(a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(1) The Planning Department has determined that the Planning Code amendment proposed in this ordinance is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section 15308 of California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq., the Guidelines for implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 211233 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that
2 the proposed landmark designation of 2778 24th Street, Assessor's Parcel Block No. 4210, Lot
3 No. 018 (aka Casa Sanchez Building) ("2778 24th Street"), will serve the public necessity,
4 convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission
5 Resolution No. 1200, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is
6 incorporated herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of
8 the 2778 24th Street is consistent with the General Plan and with Planning Code Section
9 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 1200.

10 (b) General Findings.

11 (1) On January 20, 2021, after holding a public hearing on the proposed
12 initiation, the Historic Preservation Commission initiated the proposed landmark designation of
13 the 2778 24th Street by Resolution No. 1165. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the
14 Board in File No. 211233.

15 (2) Pursuant to Charter Section 4.135, the Historic Preservation Commission
16 has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations
17 and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

18 (3) The Landmark Designation Fact Sheet was prepared by Planning
19 Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional
20 Qualification Standards for historic preservation program staff, as set forth in Code of Federal
21 Regulations Title 36, Part 61, Appendix A. The report was reviewed for accuracy and
22 conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

23 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 6,
24 2021, reviewed Planning Department staff's analysis of the historical significance of 2778 24th
25

1 Street pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet dated
2 September 29, 2021.

3 (5) On October 6, 2021, after holding a public hearing on the proposed
4 designation and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning
5 Department staff and the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet, the Historic Preservation
6 Commission recommended designation of 2778 24th Street as a landmark under Article 10 of
7 the Planning Code by Resolution No. 1200. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the
8 Board in File No. 211233.

9 (6) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 2778 24th Street has a special
10 character and special historical interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will
11 further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning
12 Code. In doing so, the Board hereby incorporates by reference the findings of the Landmark
13 Designation Fact Sheet.

14 Section 2. Designation.

15 Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, 2778 24th Street (aka Casa Sanchez
16 Building) , Assessor's Parcel Block No. 4210 Lot No. 018, is hereby designated as a San
17 Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code. Appendix A to Article 10 of the
18 Planning Code is hereby amended to include this property.

19 Section 3. Required Data.

20 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City
21 parcel located at 2778 24th Street (aka Casa Sanchez Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No.
22 4210, Lot No. 018, in San Francisco's Mission District.

23 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and
24 shown in the Landmark Designation Fact Sheet and other supporting materials contained in
25 Planning Department Record Case No. 2020-009613DES. In brief, 2778 24th Street is eligible

1 for local designation as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to
2 the broad patterns of San Francisco history. Specifically, designation of 2778 24th Street is
3 proper given its association with Latinx history and culture in San Francisco, specifically, with
4 the Casa Sanchez company, the longest-operating tamale and tortilla factory in San
5 Francisco. Casa Sanchez was the first mechanized tortilla factory in the city and a popular
6 “Mexicatessen” that sold a variety of prepared Mexican foods. Further, designation of 2778
7 24th Street is proper for its association with the development of San Francisco’s Latinx
8 business community during the 20th century. The family-owned business opened its
9 namesake restaurant at 2778 24th Street in 1968 as the company’s third and final location in
10 San Francisco.

11 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
12 necessary are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark
13 Designation Fact Sheet, which can be found in Planning Department Record Case No. 2020-
14 009613DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set
15 forth. Specifically, the following exterior features shall be preserved or replaced in kind: all
16 exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, rooflines, architectural ornament, and materials
17 of 2778 24th Street, identified as:

- 18 (1) Two-story height;
- 19 (2) Concrete panels with exposed aggregate cladding upper portion of façade;
- 20 (3) Brick-cladding at lower portion of façade and bulkhead;
- 21 (4) Ground floor storefront with simple aluminum-framed, plate-glass panels
22 and glazed aluminum-framed door and transom;
- 23 (5) Corrugated metal awning;
- 24 (6) Individual, square-shaped, internally-illuminated box signs affixed to
25 concrete panels above awning that spell out “SANCHEZ”; and

1 (7) Internally-illuminated, projecting blade sign at east corner of façade that
2 reads "Casa Sanchez Mexican Food."

3 Section 4. Effective Date.

4 This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs
5 when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not
6 sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the
7 Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

8
9 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
10 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

11 By: /s/ Andrea Ruiz-Esquide
12 ANDREA RUIZ-ESQUIDE
Deputy City Attorney

13
14 n:\legana\as2021\1800206\01556966.docx
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25



City and County of San Francisco
Tails
Ordinance

City Hall
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

File Number: 211233

Date Passed: February 01, 2022

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 2778-24th Street (aka Casa Sanchez Building), Assessor's Parcel Block No. 4210, Lot No. 018, as a Landmark consistent with the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan, and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

January 10, 2022 Land Use and Transportation Committee - RECOMMENDED

January 25, 2022 Board of Supervisors - PASSED ON FIRST READING

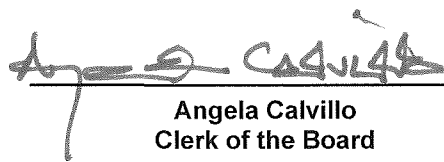
Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

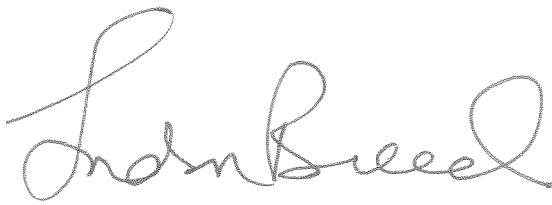
February 01, 2022 Board of Supervisors - FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

File No. 211233

I hereby certify that the foregoing
Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on
2/1/2022 by the Board of Supervisors of the
City and County of San Francisco.


Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board


London N. Breed
Mayor

2/11/22
Date Approved



ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION FACT SHEET



Historic Name:	Casa Sanchez
Address:	2778 24 th Street
Block/ Lot(s):	4210/018
Parcel Area:	2,596 sq. ft.
Zoning:	24th-Mission NCT (Neighborhood Commercial Transit) 55-X Calle 24 Special Use District
Year Built:	1925
Architect:	Unknown
Prior Historic Studies/Other Designations:	Calle 24 Latino Cultural District South Mission Historic Resource Survey
Prior HPC Actions:	The property was placed on the Landmark Designation Work Program on August 17, 2016.

Significance Criteria:	<u>Events</u> : Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Period of Significance:	The period of significance for Casa Sanchez is 1968-2011, commencing the year the business opened at 2778 24 th Street and ending the year the restaurant closed.
Statement of Significance:	The Casa Sanchez Building at 2778 24 th Street is significant for its association with the development of San Francisco's Latinx business community, particularly that of the Mission District, during the 20 th century and increased representation of Latinos in citywide commerce organizations. A multi-generational family-owned and -operated company, Casa Sanchez was founded by Roberto and Isabel Sanchez in 1924 with a popular "Mexicatessen" that sold a variety of prepared Mexican foods and was the first mechanized <i>tortilla</i> factory in the city. The Casa Sanchez company is the longest-operating <i>tamale</i> and <i>tortilla</i> factory in San Francisco. The family-owned business opened its namesake restaurant at 2778 24 th Street in 1968 as the company's fourth and final location in San Francisco. ¹
Assessment of Integrity:	<p>The seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (NPS) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association.²</p> <p>The Casa Sanchez Building maintains integrity to convey its historic and cultural significance. The building retains integrity of location and setting with the surrounding neighborhood reflecting similar development patterns and mix of uses, including restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops, <i>tienditas</i>, and retail stores that cater to a largely, although not exclusively, Latino clientele. The property maintains its historic feeling and association as a Latino-owned restaurant and business. Although it has been altered several times, integrity of design, materials, and workmanship of the simple commercial façade, storefront, and signage are intact.</p> <p>Overall, the Department has determined that the Casa Sanchez Building retains integrity to convey its historic and cultural significance.</p>
Character-Defining Features:	<p>The property's character-defining features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-story height; • Concrete panels with exposed aggregate cladding upper portion of façade; • Brick-cladding at lower portion of façade and bulkhead; • Ground floor storefront with simple aluminum-framed, plate-glass panels and glazed aluminum-framed door and transom; • Corrugated metal awning; • Individual, square-shaped, internally-illuminated box signs affixed to concrete panels above awning that spell out "SANCHEZ"; • Internally-illuminated, projecting blade sign at east corner of façade that reads "Casa Sanchez Mexican Food."

Statement of Significance Summary

The Casa Sanchez Building at 2778 24th Street is significant for its association with the development of San Francisco's Latinx business community, particularly that of the Mission District, during the 20th century and increased representation of Latinos in citywide commerce organizations. A multi-generational family-owned and -operated company, Casa Sanchez was founded by Roberto and Isabel Sanchez in 1924 with a popular "Mexicatessen" that sold a variety of prepared Mexican foods and was the first mechanized *tortilla* factory in the city. The Casa Sanchez company is the longest-operating *tamale* and *tortilla* factory in San Francisco. The family-owned business opened its namesake restaurant at 2778 24th Street in 1968 as the company's fourth and final location in San Francisco.³

Property Description and History

The following description of the building and surrounding context is from "Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination," prepared by Desiree Smith and Anne Cervantes on behalf of SF Heritage:⁴

The "Casa Sanchez Building" is located along lower 24th Street in an area that has been home to the majority of the city's Latino population since the 1950s. The property sits mid-block between a two-story-over-basement residential building and a three-story residential-over-commercial building. The surrounding area is a bustling commercial and cultural corridor that has a high concentration of Latino-owned businesses and nonprofit organizations. Neighborhood-serving businesses such as laundromats, liquor stores, convenience stores, and restaurants are located nearby; Brava Theater (previously the York Theater) is across the street. The Casa Sanchez Building is situated within the Calle 24 ("*Veinticuatro*") Latino Cultural District, established by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2014 to recognize the corridor's significance to local Latino culture and commerce.

2778 24th Street is a two-story commercial building located on a 25- by 104-foot rectangular lot on the north side of 24th Street between Hampshire and York Streets in San Francisco's Mission District. The rectangular lot is currently occupied by a restaurant with an outdoor patio and a detached secondary building containing restrooms at rear of the property.

Constructed in 1925, 2778 24th Street is a two-story, wood-frame, commercial building that was significantly modified in 1965 when windows were replaced, an interior wall was erected, and the original façade was altered in a late 20th-century commercial style. The primary façade is clad in gravel-

¹ Previous locations in San Francisco included: 1523 Steiner Street (original location, building not extant); 1923 and 1925 Fillmore Street (relocated here in 1938, evolved into Club Sanchez in 1960s, closed in 1978 and 1982, building extant). The Casa Sanchez company wholesale production facilities are currently located in San Francisco and Millbrae.

² "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation," *National Register Bulletin*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995, p. 44.

³ Previous locations in San Francisco included: 1523 Steiner Street (original location, building not extant); 1923 and 1925 Fillmore Street (relocated here in 1938, evolved into Club Sanchez in 1960s, closed in 1978 and 1982, building extant). The Casa Sanchez company wholesale production facilities are currently located in San Francisco and Millbrae.

⁴ Desiree Smith and Anne Cervantes on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, "Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination," (October 21, 2016).

covered concrete panels with brick veneer at street-level. The side (east) façade is clad in channel drop wood siding. Two street-level entrances are set within an angled storefront that is setback from the front (south) property line. The building entrance consists of a solid door behind metal security gate below a wood-framed, glazed transom. Immediately adjacent is the storefront, which consists of an aluminum-framed, glazed entry door topped by a glazed transom and aluminum-framed plate-glass windows.

The property was purchased in 1968 by Robert Sanchez, Jr. and his wife, Martha and repurposed for use as Casa Sanchez Restaurant. The new owners removed an interior partition, relocated the stairs, and completed electrical and plumbing improvements to support the planned use of a restaurant and tortilla factory. A projecting blade sign was installed at the end of the façade (towards the east side of the building). It reads, “Casa Sanchez Mexican Food,” and features the company logo, an image of “Jimmy the Cornman.” A corrugated metal awning with gabled open-faced dormer, installed as part of an effort to revitalize lower 24th Street in 1991, runs the length of the building; the dormer is affixed to face of the concrete panels just above the storefront.⁵ Above the awning are six square-shaped red sign cabinets with white faces featuring red block letters that spell out “SANCHEZ.”

The interior building area is 2,500 square feet in volume and consists of a large ground floor and second-story mezzanine. With a depth of 47 feet, the restaurant covers the ground floor and includes both the kitchen and seating area for customers. The second-story mezzanine has been used as both office and living space. A tall ceiling with large skylight rises above approximately half the customer seating area.

There is an outdoor patio at the rear of the property that offers additional customer seating. The courtyard is 50 feet deep and is partially covered on each side with narrow roofing supported by structural beams. Walls on either side of the courtyard feature brightly colored murals depicting a scenic landscape and waterscape. Entitled “Far away ground,” the murals were painted in 1997 by an artist known as Cruzin Coyote. A small ancillary building (seven feet deep) containing restrooms is located at the northern edge of the property. Structural beams also support the second-story mezzanine, which can be accessed via stairs leading from the outdoor patio. The patio was an alteration (date unknown). Prior to [this alteration], the building covered the entire lot and the rear of the building was used to produce tortilla chips.

The property was damaged by fire in the early 1980s and alterations were made in 1984 to repair a 100-square-foot section of the roof and add a ventilated skylight. The building was damaged by fire again in the 1990s. Repairs included replacement of sections of the walls, siding, and ceiling with sheet rock. Two doors were replaced, and outdoor lighting was installed, but no structural changes were made to the building. Electrical, plumbing, carpentry, and painting work was completed in 1992 and upgrades were made to the kitchen in 1993. No major structural changes or alterations have been made to the building since. The building was reroofed in 2009 and in 2016.

⁵ The awning was designed by Latina-owned architecture firm, Cervantes Design Associates.

Events: Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

The Casa Sanchez Building at 2778 24th Street is significant for its association with the development of San Francisco's Latinx business community, particularly that of the Mission District, during the 20th-century and increased representation of Latinos in citywide commerce organizations. A multi-generational family-owned and -operated company, Casa Sanchez was founded by Roberto and Isabel Sanchez in 1924 with a popular "Mexicatessen" that sold a variety of prepared Mexican foods and was the first mechanized *tortilla* factory in the city. The Casa Sanchez company is the longest-operating *tamale* and *tortilla* factory in San Francisco. The family-owned business opened its namesake restaurant at 2778 24th Street in 1968 as the company's fourth and final location in San Francisco.⁶

The restaurant offered home-style cooking to neighborhood residents and a *tortilla* factory that supplied nearby restaurants. While occupying the subject property, the Casa Sanchez company expanded their wholesale business, which grew from being the first in the country to distribute fresh *salsa*, to placing its products in mainstream grocery stores like Safeway, Whole Foods, and Lucky's, and "... grew to manufacture the highest selling *salsa* in California."⁷ While enjoying support from the surrounding Mission District largely-Latino customer base, the expanding business also benefited from a key "mid-twentieth century phenomena" that saw the rapid commodification of "Latino goods, especially music and food."⁸

The Casa Sanchez company and its associated multi-generational of family ownership contributed to the growth of the local Latino business community and increased representation of Latinos in citywide commerce organizations. Prior to the 1960s, Latinos were "severely underrepresented in white-collar positions [and as business proprietors] compared to the general population"⁹ with most Latino-owned businesses limited to the retail economy of barrio neighborhoods. Unlike their prior locations in Pacific Heights/Western Addition, the 2778 24th Street restaurant, established by the second generation of the Sanchez family, was the first location of the family business in the Mission District, a neighborhood of San Francisco that been home to the majority of the city's Latino population since the 1950s. At the time that Casa Sanchez opened on 24th Street, the "York theater across the street showed Spanish Language movies and there were a number of panaderias that attracted a non-English speaking Latino clientele."¹⁰

Robert Sanchez, III, who, along with his sister, Martha, succeeded his parents in ownership and operation of 2778 24th Street, co-founded the 24th Street Merchants Association and the 24th Street Festival. The 24th Street Merchants Association (also known as the 24th Street Merchants and Neighbors Association, and eventually *Calle 24*) has served as the primary voice advocating for the interests of small businesses and nonprofit organizations

⁶ Previous locations in San Francisco included: 1523 Steiner Street (original location, building not extant); 1923 and 1925 Fillmore Street (relocated here in 1938, evolved into Club Sanchez in 1960s, closed in 1978 and 1982, building extant). The Casa Sanchez company wholesale production facilities are currently located in San Francisco and Millbrae.

⁷ Lisa Wallace, "Martha Sanchez, owner of Casa Sanchez, dies," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 15, 2011.
<http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/Martha-Sanchez-owner-of-Casa-Sanchez-dies-2354513.php>.

⁸ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (California State Parks, 2015), 85.

⁹ Ibid, 65.

¹⁰ Anne Cervantes and Alan Martinez, on behalf of San Francisco Latino Historical Society, "Casa Sanchez / Sanchez Family History," December 14, 2020 (Revision 5), 3.

around this commercial strip, many of which are Latino-owned businesses. The 24th Street Merchants Association also coordinated the 24th Street Festival, which debuted in the 1970s, when street fairs were growing in popularity, and operated for 10 years, bringing more attention and business to this commercial corridor. Members of the Sanchez family continue to be deeply involved in the 24th Street community.

The following historic context on Casa Sanchez business and Sanchez family is from “Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination,” prepared by Desiree Smith and Anne Cervantes on behalf of SF Heritage:¹¹

Casa Sanchez at 2778 24th Street is representative of the family-owned and -operated business that is one of the longest-operating *tamale* and *tortilla* factory in San Francisco. Casa Sanchez Restaurant operated at its 24th Street location from 1968 to 2011, but the company dates to 1924. Founded by Mexican immigrants, Roberto and Isabel Sanchez, the family-owned business first opened as a “Mexicatessen” and food production and distribution business specializing in Mexican *tamales*, *tortillas*, *tortilla* chips, and *salsas*. It operated under the Sanchez family name at four different locations: 1523 Steiner Street, 1923 Fillmore Street, and 1925 Fillmore Street in the lower Pacific Heights/Western Addition neighborhood, and 2778 24th Street in the Mission District. Roberto and Isabel’s son, Robert Sanchez, Jr., and his wife, Martha, opened the 2778 24th Street factory and restaurant in 1968. The restaurant closed in 2011 but the successful wholesale food distribution business, Casa Sanchez Foods, continues to operate out of Millbrae, California under the direction of third-generation siblings, Robert (“Bob”) Sanchez, III, and Martha Sanchez.¹²

The story of Casa Sanchez is intimately tied to the history of the family that cultivated it, as well as the settlement trends of San Francisco’s Latino population. One of the oldest businesses in the city, Casa Sanchez is the only *tamale* manufacturer established before 1925 that still exists today.

Background: The Sanchez Family Builds its Enterprise

The company’s founders, Roberto (1881-1932) and Isabel Sanchez (b. 1890), arrived in San Francisco between 1920 and 1923. Originally from Acaponeta, Mexico, the couple migrated to Texas in 1910 where Roberto worked as a *bracero* before relocating to San Francisco’s Pacific Heights neighborhood. They had three children: Guadalupe (“Lupe”), Robert, Jr., and Julia.

Roberto worked as a leather goods and shoemaker in Mexico but found his skills of little value once in San Francisco. To make ends meet, Roberto worked several jobs as a clerk and waiter but eventually decided to create his own business selling prepared Mexican foods. In 1924, he opened a store at 1523 Steiner Street in the city’s lower Pacific Heights/Western Addition neighborhood where he sold *enchiladas*, *tamales*, *sauces*, *cheeses*, *chorizo*, *masa*, *chili powder*, and *baked goods*. Sanchez brought the first mechanized *tortilla* machine to San Francisco in the early 1920s, enabling the production and sale of mass quantities of *tortillas*.

¹¹ Desiree Smith and Anne Cervantes on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” (October 21, 2016).

¹² Robert Sanchez, Interview with Rose Arrieta, San Francisco, February 2015. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 10.

The operation expanded over the years into a full production factory for both *tortillas* and *tamales*. The *tamale*-making process was time-consuming and labor intensive. The eldest Sanchez daughter, Lupe, recalls using an electric machine with a step pedal and a big stainless-steel table to make *tamales*. She also remembers how the business sold “early California *tamales*,” with olive and meat inside and served with gravy. While other Mexican stores in the city could be found at the time, the Sanchez “Mexicatessen” was one of the few that sold in bulk quantities.¹³

In addition to offering items for sale in the store, the Sanchez family also delivered hot food to neighborhood residents and sold its *tortillas* to other restaurants in the city. According to Lupe, who worked at the family business her entire life, the business’ clientele during these early years was not predominantly Mexican or Latino.¹⁴ Many Mexican families would make their own food at home, so the majority of customers who purchased prepared foods from Casa Sanchez included Jewish, Irish, Italian, and Spanish residents of the surrounding areas. She particularly remembers selling to “Nob Hill society” folks.¹⁵ Mexican food was considered a novelty during the early-twentieth century, as few Mexican restaurants existed in the city. The Sanchez business supplied products to some of these restaurants, including the popular Sinaloa Nightclub in North Beach and *El Papa Gallo*, a high-end Mexican restaurant in the Fairmont Hotel. Simultaneously, other Mexican-owned businesses would supply products to the Mexicatessen. A Mexican bakery called *La Mexicana* (located next to the Sinaloa Nightclub), for example, would deliver *pan dulce* (sweet bread) to the Sanchez store.¹⁶

The Sanchez family actively participated in the Mexican and Latino community that formed in the North Beach and Pacific Heights area during the early-twentieth century. The nearby *La Iglesia de Nuestra Reina de Guadalupe* (Our Lady of Guadalupe Church), located on Broadway in North Beach, cultivated the development of a pan-Latino community. The Sanchez family would attend mass at the church and often supply food for events and activities that occurred inside.¹⁷

When Mr. Sanchez died in 1932, Isabel assumed leadership of the Mexicatessen and *tamale/tortilla* factory and became the cornerstone of the business. At the time of Mr. Sanchez’s passing, all the children were under 13 and had to work full time with their mother after school. They sold tortillas in bulk wrapped in paper and string and made deliveries in Model A automobiles. Isabel continued to grow the business, which operated out of 1523 Steiner until 1938, when the family purchased a new building and relocated the business to 1923 Fillmore Street. A larger Mexican community surrounded this location and the family often provided food for parishioners of the nearby St. Dominic’s Church on Sundays. The Mexican Consulate was also located nearby, whose employees and their families contributed to the customer base.¹⁸

¹³ Guadalupe Sanchez, Interview with Rose Arrieta, San Francisco, January 2, 2015. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 11.

¹⁴ Ibid. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 11.

¹⁵ Ibid. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 11.

¹⁶ Robert Sanchez, Interview with Rose Arrieta, San Francisco, February 2015. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 11.

¹⁷ Robert Sanchez, Interview with Rose Arrieta, San Francisco, February 2015. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 12.

¹⁸ Ibid. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 12.

The family business struggled during World War II with Robert Jr. away on active duty. The war years also brought significant demographic shifts. As the neighborhood changed from Mexican to African American and Asian, the Mexicatessen's clientele declined.

In the early 1950s, Martha Rodriguez got a job working at the factory on 1923 Fillmore [Street]. She is from Zacatecas, Mexico. There she met Robert Jr. and they fell in love. They married in 1954 and had five children: Robert, Martha, George, Liz, and Jim. (Jim was the basis for the logo, developed in the late 1960s, named Jimmy the Cornman) By the late 1960s, Robert Jr. and Martha Sanchez had decided to open a new location in the Mission District, where the city's Latino population had been concentrated since the 1950s. This trend is noted in *Latinos in Twentieth Century California National Register Historic Context Statement*:

Geographically, postwar businesses followed residential patterns, as in earlier decades. More businesses developed in existing Latino neighborhoods and new ones developed in new Latino neighborhoods. In San Francisco's Mission District, the population of Latino residents increased steadily in the postwar era...more established Latinos migrated to the southern part of the district that had larger and more desirable housing options. New businesses quickly followed. They were primarily located along 24th Street which became "the banner corridor for Latino culture" and home to many Latino-owned enterprises.¹⁹

Meanwhile, siblings Lupe and Julia continued to operate the business's Fillmore location, converting it into a jazz club called Club Sanchez. The Fillmore became a hub for jazz in the 1960s and 1970s and the Sanchez family made an effort to update its approach with the changing market. Lupe remembers Club Sanchez as a "typical jazz club," offering spirits and good music, except that it also served Mexican food. Club Sanchez continued to operate out of 1923 Fillmore until 1978 and at 1925 Fillmore until 1982.²⁰

Casa Sanchez Opens on 24th Street

In 1968, Robert Jr. and Martha Sanchez purchased a former donut shop at 2778 24th Street, converting it into a restaurant that offered home-style cooking to neighborhood residents and a *tortilla* factory that supplied nearby restaurants. Martha Sanchez became the backbone of the operation and a fixture of 24th Street, as she spent most of her waking hours at the restaurant. It was under her direction that "the Casa Sanchez wholesale business grew to manufacture the highest selling salsa in California."²¹ The recipe for the multi-award-winning salsa was created at the 24th Street location. Many people revered Martha as the "Matriarch of the Mission."²² Martha and Robert had five children who also pitched in with the family business and contributed to its growth. The family would gather at the 24th Street restaurant

¹⁹ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (California State Parks, 2015), 85. Quoted in "Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination," Section 9, Page 12.

²⁰ Guadalupe Sanchez, Interview with Rose Arrieta, San Francisco, January 2, 2015. Quoted in "Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination," Section 9, Page 13.

²¹ Lisa Wallace, "Martha Sanchez, owner of Casa Sanchez, dies," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 15, 2011.

<http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/Martha-Sanchez-owner-of-Casa-Sanchez-dies-2354513.php>. Quoted in "Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination," Section 9, Page 13.

²² Ibid. Quoted in "Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination," Section 9, Page 13.

after school. They would sit in circles and put labels on containers, while learning every aspect about business.

The second and third generation of the Sanchez family continued to grow the business while it operated out of its 24th Street location. Part of this new establishment was the introduction in 1968 of the “Jimmy the Cornman” logo- a whimsical image of a smiling man in a sombrero riding a corn rocket ship. This logo was the idea of Robert Jr., inspired by the Space Program.²³ In the early 1970s, after the first man landed on the moon, there was much excitement about space travel. The company tagline became “It’s the taco the town” and “Flavor out of this World.”

A surge in the Mission District’s Central American population in the 1970s and 1980s significantly expanded Casa Sanchez’s customer base. As noted in *Latinos in Twentieth Century California National Register Historic Context Statement*:

Beginning in the 1970s, California’s Latino population diversified significantly with an increase in immigration from Central America, particularly El Salvador and Guatemala. Latino businesses diversified accordingly.²⁴

Pupusas, a uniquely Central American dish, were added to the Casa Sanchez Restaurant menu.

During the 1980s, Casa Sanchez focused its efforts on selling *tortilla* chips and *salsa* during the “*tortilla* wars,” when *tortilla* companies rivaled each other for business at local *taquerias*. The *tortilla* wars were so contentious that delivery persons were said to carry guns.²⁵ In the 1990s, the restaurant made headlines when it advertised free tattoos of its “Jimmy the Cornman” logo in exchange for “free lunch for life.” Inspired by Sanchez’ grandson Jim, the logo is now tattooed on at least 50 people.²⁶ The tattoo promotion, [launched by Martha Sanchez], drew international media coverage from nearly 100 sources.

Robert Sanchez, Jr. passed away in 2003 and Martha in 2011, leaving the business to their children, siblings Robert (“Bob”), III, and Martha Sanchez, II. Under their management, food production was moved to Millbrae, where space is plentiful and affordable, and the company has become one of the largest distributors of tortilla chips and salsas in California. It also continues to sell *tortillas*, *guacamole*, *tamales*, *gorditas*, and *pupusas* to grocery stores throughout the region. Robert, III “expanded the business into a top ten highest grossing business in San Francisco” and has earned dozens of accolades including “Business Man of the Year” by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.²⁷ While “major

²³ Anne Cervantes and Alan Martinez, on behalf of San Francisco Latino Historical Society, “Casa Sanchez / Sanchez Family History,” December 14, 2020 (Revision 5), 3.

²⁴ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (California State Parks, 2015), 85-86. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 13.

²⁵ San Francisco Heritage, “SF Legacy Bars & Restaurants,” 2013. <http://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/#>. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 14.

²⁶ Stu Woo, “Free Tacos for Life, in Exchange for a Tattoo,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 2010.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304370304575151861646999610>. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination,” Section 9, Page 14.

²⁷ “About Casa Sanchez,” <https://casasanchezsf.com/about-casa-sanchez-sf/>. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National

[Latino] corporate success stories...were unfortunately rare throughout the twentieth century,” Casa Sanchez stands out as a shining exception.²⁸

From being the first to distribute fresh *salsa* in the country, to placing its products to mainstream grocery stores like Safeway, Whole Foods, and Lucky’s, Casa Sanchez is a true success story. It is now the highest selling salsa in California based on Nielson reports and is available in ten states. For these reasons Casa Sanchez was instrumental in making salsa the #1 condiment in America, replacing ketchup. The company’s market has never been strictly Latino but the company has always been Latino-owned, managed, and staffed. Casa Sanchez is listed on San Francisco Heritage’s certified list of San Francisco Legacy Bars & Restaurants, a program dedicated to bringing attention to the city’s longstanding businesses that have contributed to the history of the city.²⁹

The third generation also contributed significantly to the development of a local Latino business community. Robert Sanchez, III, co-founded the 24th Street Merchants Association and the 24th Street Festival. The 24th Street Merchants Association (also known as the 24th Street Merchants and Neighbors Association, and eventually *Calle 24*) has served as the primary voice advocating for the interests of small businesses and nonprofit organizations located on lower 24th Street in the Mission District. Most, but not all, are Latino-owned businesses. The organization also coordinated the 24th Street Festival, [a festival inspired by the Fillmore festival and intended to boost business, promote Latino cultural identity, and foster community spirit.³⁰] This festival, which debuted in the 1970s when street fairs were growing in popularity, operated for ten years. Over 10,000 people attended the inaugural event, which included lowrider contest, music and a boxing competition, and Carlos Santana performed on the main stage one year. The event succeeded in bringing attention to the bustling commercial corridor that existed on 24th Street and to Latino-owned businesses in general. Latinos were invited to join citywide business and commerce organizations such as the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce as a direct result of this advocacy.

[Before the 24th Street Merchants Association was formed there wasn’t a merchant’s group specifically for 24th Street although there was one for Mission Street. 24th Street differed from Mission Street somewhat in that unlike with Mission Street many of the 24th Street merchants lived in the neighborhood and attended St. Peters and sent their children to local schools. Thus the 24th Street merchant’s group had a multifaceted investment in the neighborhood, not just a

Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 14.

²⁸ California Office of Historic Preservation, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (California State Parks, 2015), 87. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 14.

²⁹ San Francisco Heritage, “SF Legacy Bars & Restaurants,” 2013. <http://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/#>. Heritage has inducted more than 100 culinary establishments into its Legacy Bars and Restaurants program since 2013. Located throughout San Francisco, eligible businesses have achieved longevity of 40 years or more, possess distinctive architecture or interior design, and/or contribute to a sense of history in the surrounding neighborhood. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 14.

³⁰ Anne Cervantes and Alan Martinez, on behalf of San Francisco Latino Historical Society, “Casa Sanchez / Sanchez Family History,” December 14, 2020 (Revision 5), 4.

business investment. Seeing as this was the time of growing Latino cultural and political self-awareness, this new association was one way for the businesses to participate in this movement. The merchant's association held candidates forums, monitored legislation that affected small business and cultivated relationships with political leaders, the police department and agencies such as the Department of Public Works and the Department of Health and Human Services. This cultivation of political relationships put 24th Street on the map as a significant constituency.^{31]}

In 2014, at the height of neighborhood gentrification, the association played a critical role in passage of legislation establishing lower 24th Street as the Calle 24 (“*Veinticuatro*”) Latino Cultural District.³² Martha Sanchez, II, continues the family’s legacy of community advocacy as a member of the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District Council.³³

The site of the longest-operating *tamale* and *tortilla* factory in San Francisco, the Casa Sanchez Building at 2778 24th Street is significant for its association with the development of San Francisco’s Latinx business community during the 20th-century. With roots dating to the 1920s, the family-owned business has grown into one of the most successful distributors of Mexican food products in the state. In addition, the leadership of the Sanchez family contributed to the influence and proliferation of Latino businesses on 24th Street in the Mission District that continues to reverberate today.³⁴

³¹ Anne Cervantes and Alan Martinez, on behalf of San Francisco Latino Historical Society, “Casa Sanchez / Sanchez Family History,” December 14, 2020 (Revision 5), 4.

³² Resolution establishing the Calle 24 (“Veinticuatro”) Latino Cultural District, 2014.
http://www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/committees/materials/LU051914_140421.pdf. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 15.

³³ Calle 24, “Calle 24 Current Council,” <http://www.calle24sf.org/en/about/current-council/>. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 15.

³⁴ San Francisco Heritage and San Francisco Latino Historical Society. “Calle 24: Cuentos del Barrio,” 2013.
<http://www.sfheritage.org/Calle24Booklet.pdf>. Quoted in “Casa Sanchez Building National Register Nomination” (Desiree Smith, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler on behalf of San Francisco Heritage, October 21, 2016), Section 9, Page 15.

Bibliography

Bote, Joshua. "In 1998, these SF men got a tattoo to snag free tacos for life. Here's what happened after." *SFGate*, September 20, 2021. <https://www.sfgate.com/food/article/casa-sanchez-tattoos-free-meal-promo-san-francisco-16465800.php>.

California Office of Historic Preservation. *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement*. Sacramento: California State Parks, 2015.

Calle 24. "Calle 24 Current Council." <http://www.calle24sf.org/en/about/current-council/>

Casa Sanchez. "About Casa Sanchez," last modified 2016. <https://casasanchezsf.com/about-casasanchez-Sf/>

Cervantes, Anne and Alan Martinez. "Casa Sanchez / Sanchez Family History." San Francisco Latino Historical Society: December 14, 2020 (Revision 5).

City of San Francisco Building Permits.

Page & Turnbull. "Primary Record Form: 2778 24th Street," State of California Department of Recreation Form, November 14, 2007. <http://sfplanning.org/ftp/files/GIS/SMission/Docs/4210%20018.pdf>

Sanchez, Guadalupe. Interview with Rose Arrieta. Personal interview. San Francisco, January 2, 2015.

Sanchez, Robert. Interview with Rose Arrieta. Personal interview. San Francisco, February 2015.

San Francisco City Directories.

San Francisco Heritage. "SF Legacy Bars & Restaurants." <http://www.sfheritage.org/legacy/>.

San Francisco Heritage and San Francisco Latino Historical Society. "Calle 24: Cuentos del Barrio," 2013. <http://www.sfheritage.org/Calle24Booklet.pdf>

Smith, Desiree, Anne Cervantes, and Mike Buhler. "Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination." SF Heritage: October 21, 2016.

Wallace, Lisa. "Martha Sanchez, owner of Casa Sanchez, dies," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 15, 2011. <http://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/article/Martha-Sanchez-owner-of-Casa-Sanchez-dies-2354513.php>

Woo, Stu. "Free Tacos for Life, in Exchange for a Tattoo," *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 2010. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304370304575151861646999610>

Photos



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street) and adjacent buildings, primary (south) façade, view north, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), primary façade ground floor, view north, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), awning and “SANCHEZ” sign at primary façade, view north, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), “Jimmy the Cornman” projecting sign at primary façade, view northeast, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez, primary façade, view northeast, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), restaurant interior, view south, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), rear courtyard, view north, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), rear courtyard, view south, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), seating area with mural in rear courtyard, view southwest, 2016. Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street
Left: Sstairs at rear elevation, view southwest, 2016.
Below: Ancillary building at rear of parcel, view north, 2016.
Source: Casa Sanchez National Register Nomination





“Jimmy the Cornman” pinata, no date. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection



Mariachis at 24th Street Festival, no date. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection



Casa Sanchez (2778 24th Street), child in front of storefront, c. 1992. Source: San Francisco Public Library, Historic Photograph Collection

:



Casa Sanchez distribution truck. Source