

File copy

NOTICE OF FINAL PASSAGE
FILE NO. 90-71-7 ORD. NO. 232-71
DESIGNATING VARIOUS STRUCTURES AS LANDMARKS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was read for the second time and finally passed by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco at its meeting of Aug. 30, 1971.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
Approved: Sept. 10, 1971
JOSEPH L. ALIOTO, Mayor
Sept. 15, 1971—11

FILE NO. 90-71-7 ORD. NO. —
DESIGNATING VARIOUS STRUCTURES AS LANDMARKS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE.

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

Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the hereinafter structures have a special character and special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, and that their designation as Landmarks will be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of Article 10 of the City Planning Code and the standards set forth therein.

(a) Designation. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code, Chapter 11, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the following are hereby designated as Landmarks:

Dennis T. Sullivan Memorial Fire Chief's Home, located at 870 Bush Street, being Lot 10 in Assessor's Block 274, for its special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value;

Cable Car Barn and Power House, located at the northwest corner of Washington and Mason Streets, being Lot 5 in Assessor's Block 190, for its special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value;

Donaldina Cameron House, located at 920 Sacramento Street, being Lot 8 in Assessor's Block 224, for its special historical interest and value;

these designations have been duly approved by Resolutions No. 6726, 6725, and 6729, respectively, of the City Planning Commission, which resolutions are on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-71-7, 90-71-6, and 90-70-16.

(b) Required Data. The locations and boundaries of the landmark sites, the characteristics of the landmarks which justify their designation, and the particular features that should be preserved, described and included in the said Resolutions, are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was passed for second reading by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco at its meeting of Aug. 23, 1971.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
Aug. 28, 1971—11

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6725

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Cable Car Barn and Power House as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on April 28, 1971, and said Advisory Board after due consideration, has recommended approval of this proposal; and

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission, after due notice given, held a public hearing on June 17, 1971, to consider the proposed designation and the report of said Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, The Commission believes that the proposed Landmark has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value; and that the proposed designation would be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes and standards of the said Article 10;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, That the proposal to designate the Cable Car Barn and Power House as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the City Planning Code is hereby APPROVED, the location and boundaries of the landmark site being as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the westerly line of Mason Street and the northerly line of Washington Street; running thence westerly along said line of Washington Street 187 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle northerly 137 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle westerly 18 feet 9 inches; thence at a right angle northerly 137 feet 6 inches to the southerly line of Jackson Street; thence at a right angle easterly along said line of Jackson Street 45 feet 10 inches; thence at a right angle southerly 77 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle easterly 22 feet 11 inches; thence at a right angle southerly 16 feet; thence at a right angle easterly 68 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle northerly 2 feet; thence at a right angle easterly 69 feet to the said line of Mason Street; thence southerly along said line of Mason Street 183 feet 6 inches to the point of beginning; being Lot 5 in Assessor's Block 190.

Second, That the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are as follows:

This is the only surviving cable car barn and power house in the city, of some fourteen which at one time or another served various lines. Although cable propulsion was invented in England early in the nineteenth century, its successful application to actual operation did not occur until Andrew S. Hallidie's inaugural run up the Clay Street hill, beginning at Portsmouth Plaza, on August 1, 1873. The great and world-wide interest generated by San Francisco's success lasted well into the 1890's, to be displaced by the advent of electric railways. In the 1880's when cable car systems were at the height of their popularity, they existed in a score of cities from Edinburgh to Melbourne and from Brooklyn to Constantinople; but San Francisco was unquestionably the world's cable car capital then, and it has fortunately remained so to the present.

The Washington and Mason Cable Car Barn was constructed in 1885-87. The building at first housed the cable cars and propelling machinery for the Powell Street Railway Company, which merged into the Ferries and Cliff House Railway Company in 1887 and after a series of further mergers became the property of the Municipal Railway in 1944. Power was supplied to the engines from steam boilers until 1906, after which the system was converted to electric motor operation. The original three-story building was in large part destroyed by the Great Fire that followed the 1906 Earthquake, but was reconstructed with two stories, preserving a similar general appearance.

A plaque designating the San Francisco Cable Car System as a National Historic Landmark was affixed to the Barn in November 1967, when the restored building was rededicated by Secretary Boyd of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This plaque had originally been placed at the Victorian Park turntable of the Powell-Hyde line in 1964, with then Chief Justice Earl Warren of the U.S. Supreme Court presiding at the ceremonies.

Third, That the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof and as described and depicted in the photographs, case report and other material on file in the Department of City Planning in Docket No. LM71.1; the summary description being as follows:

The building has two stories, with entrances from two levels, on both Mason Street and Washington Street. It is constructed of red brick, now restored to the appearance of the original structure. Thick, heavy bearing walls present a warehouse-like aspect, preserving an excellent example of industrial construction. The windows are large and multipaned, those at the lower level being deeply embrasured and very slightly arched with a brick keystone pattern above; while at the upper level some windows -- including a pair facing each street at the corner -- have rounded arches and some have flattened arches, with corresponding brick patterns lightly traced in each case above the window. Decorative circular patterns appear in brick below each window, and between some pairs of windows, at the upper level. There are two horizontal projecting brick courses between the upper and lower levels, as well as a projecting course at the roof line.

A prominent feature of the building is the round chimney that sits on a squared base atop the rear of the building's Washington Street side; once functional, it is no longer used. The name "Ferries and Cliff House Railway Co. 1887" is affixed to the building above the central windows on each street facade.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the proposal for designation, with a copy of this Resolution, to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the proposal for designation, with a copy of this Resolution, to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of June 17, 1971.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Crowley, Fleishhacker, Mellon, Newman, Porter,
Ritchie & Rueda
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
PASSED: June 17, 1971

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
Revised Case Report - February 24, 1971

CABLE CAR BARN
AND POWER HOUSE

OWNER: City and County of San Francisco (under the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Commission, Municipal Railway).

LOCATION: Northwest corner of Washington and Mason Streets (lot has 183.5 feet of frontage on Mason Street and 187.5 feet of frontage on Washington Street, and extends through to Jackson Street); being Lot 5 in Assessor's Block 190.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE: This is the only surviving cable car barn and power house in the city, of some fourteen which at one time or another served various lines. Although cable propulsion was invented in England early in the nineteenth century, its successful application to actual operation did not occur until Andrew S. Hallidie's inaugural run up the Clay Street hill, beginning at Portsmouth Plaza, on August 1, 1873. The great and world-wide interest generated by San Francisco's success lasted well into the 1890's to be displaced by the advent of electric railways. In the 1880's when cable car systems were at the height of their popularity, they existed in a score of cities from Edinburgh to Melbourne and from Brooklyn to Constantinople; but San Francisco was unquestionably the world's cable car capital then, and it has fortunately remained so to the present.

The Washington and Mason Cable Car Barn was constructed in 1885-87 near the site of the original spring and reservoir of the Spring Valley Water Company, which along with other private companies served the city's needs during the 1850's. The building at first housed the cable cars and propelling machinery for the Powell Street Railway Company, which merged into the Ferries and Cliff House Railway Company in 1887 and after a series of further mergers became the property of the Municipal Railway in 1944. Power was supplied to the engines from steam boilers until 1906, after which the system was converted to electric motor operation. The original three-story building was in large part destroyed by the Great Fire that followed the 1906 Earthquake, but was reconstructed with two stories, preserving a similar general appearance.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: The building has two stories, with entrances from two levels, on both Mason Street and Washington Street. It is constructed of red brick, now restored to the appearance of the original structure. Thick, heavy bearing walls present a warehouse-like aspect, preserving an excellent example of industrial construction. The windows are large and multipaned, those at the lower level being deeply embrasured and very slightly arched with a brick keystone pattern above; while at the upper level some windows -- including a pair facing each street at the corner -- have rounded arches and some have flattened arches, with corresponding brick patterns lightly traced in each case above the window. Decorative circular patterns appear in brick below each window, and between some pairs of windows, at the upper level. There are two horizontal projecting brick courses between the upper and lower levels, as well as a projecting course at the roof line.

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

CABLE CAR BARN
AND POWER HOUSE
(Page Two)

ARCHITECTURAL

DESCRIPTION:
(Continued)

A prominent feature of the building is the round chimney that sits on a squared base atop the rear of the building's Washington Street side; once functional, it is no longer used. The name "Ferries and Cliff House Railway Co. 1887" is affixed to the building above the central windows on each street facade.

VISITORS
GALLERY:

A new visitors gallery and mezzanine has been constructed inside the Cable Car Barn, to enable the public to view the "winding room" with its imposing wheels which move the long cables of the system. Wheels and columns have been brightly painted by workers at the Barn. The upper level contains tracks and pits for storage and repair of the cars, storage of parts, and offices for master mechanic and superintendent, as well as cable cars dating from the 1870's and an exhibit of historic photographs. There is an elevator -- no longer in use since the end of the Sacramento-Clay Street line -- for raising cars from lower to higher level, with tracks entering at both levels.

SURROUNDING LAND
USE AND ZONING:

Uses are mixed residential and neighborhood commercial across Mason Street to the east and north; and residential to the west and northwest. To the south across Washington Street is the Chinatown Recreational Center of the Recreation and Park Department, a corner formerly the site of the old Washington Grammar School. Zoning of the Barn is R-4 (never rezoned to P for Public Use) with R-4 predominating to the north, west and south, and C-2 to the east and north; more distantly to the south the top of Nob Hill is zoned R-5.

DESIGNATION BY
OTHER GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES:

A plaque designating the San Francisco Cable Car System as a National Historic Landmark was affixed to the Barn in November 1967, when the restored building was rededicated by Secretary Boyd of the U. S. Department of Transportation. This plaque had originally been placed at the Victorian Park turntable of the Powell-Hyde line in 1964, with then Chief Justice Earl Warren of the U. S. Supreme Court presiding at the ceremonies.