

File Copy

FILE NO. 90-73-1

ORDINANCE NO. 44-73

1 DESIGNATING THE TRANSAMERICA BUILDING (OLD FUGAZI BANK BUILDING) AS A LANDMARK
2 PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE.

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

4 Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Transamerica
5 Building (Old Fugazi Bank Building) at 4 Columbus Avenue, being Lot 2 in Assessor's
6 Block 195, has a special character and special historical, architectural and
7 aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be in
8 furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of Article 10 of the City
9 Planning Code and the standards set forth therein.

10 (a) Designation. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code,
11 Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the Transamerica Building
12 (Old Fugazi Bank Building) is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation
13 having been duly approved by Resolution No. 6934 of the City Planning Commission,
14 which Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File
15 No.

16 (b) Required Data. The location and boundaries of the landmark site, the
17 characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and the particular
18 features that should be preserved, described and included in the said Resolution,
19 are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth.

Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
JAN 22 1973

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Boas, Feinstein,
Francis, Gonzales, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari,
Pelosi, Tamaras, ~~von Beroldingen~~

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisor VONBEROLDINGEN

Robert J. Dolan
Clerk

90-73-1
File No.

FEB 1 1973
Approved

Read Second Time and Finally Passed
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
JAN 29 1973

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, ~~Boas~~, Feinstein,
Francis, Gonzales, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari,
Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors BOAS

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was
fully passed by the Board of Supervisors of the
City and County of San Francisco.

Robert J. Dolan
Clerk

Joseph L. Alioto
Mayor

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6934

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Transamerica Building (Old Fugazi Bank Building) at 4 Columbus Avenue as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on October 18, 1972, 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 December 14, 1972, 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 Transamerica Building (Old Fugazi Bank Building) at 4 Columbus Avenue 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 Montgomery Street and the northeasterly line of Columbus Avenue; running thence northerly along said line of Montgomery Street 126 feet 6 inches; thence at a right angle westerly 105 feet 4 inches to the said line of Columbus Avenue; thence southeasterly along said line of Columbus Avenue 164 feet 7½ inches to the point of beginning; being Lot 2 in Assessor's Block 195.

Second, That the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are set forth in the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board Resolution No. 75 as adopted on October 18, 1972, which Resolution is incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully set forth.

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 LM 72.10.

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 December 14, 1972.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Farrell, Fleishhacker, Mellon, Newman, Porter, Ritchie,
Rueda

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

PASSED: December 14, 1972

OWNER: Transamerica Corporation.

LOCATION: 4 Columbus Avenue; gore corner of Columbus Avenue and Montgomery Street; 164- $\frac{1}{2}$ feet on Columbus Avenue, 126- $\frac{1}{2}$ feet on Montgomery Street; Lot 2 of Assessor's Block 195.

HISTORY: The building was constructed in 1909 for the Banco Popolare Italiano Operaia Fugazi, founded immediately after the 1906 Fire and Earthquake by John F. Fugazi and Frank N. Belgrano. These two had been owners of the Columbus Savings Bank on the northeast corner of Washington and Montgomery Streets (the building still stands), which they sold in 1906 in order to start the new Fugazi Bank.

The Fugazi Bank continued for some years as an independent bank. Meanwhile, another Italian bank in San Francisco rose to great size and prominence: the Bank of Italy, founded in 1904 by Amadeo Peter Giannini who, like Belgrano, had been in the wholesale produce business. The new bank opened its office at the gore of Columbus and Washington Streets, adjacent to the Fugazi Bank. After the destruction of this building in the 1906 Fire and Earthquake, the Bank of Italy was located temporarily at 632 Montgomery Street. In 1908, the Giannini Bank moved into new headquarters at Clay and Montgomery Streets. Giannini's dominance increasingly emerged, and on January 6, 1928, the Fugazi Bank was merged into another Giannini corporation, the United Bank of California. This bank subsequently became the Bank of America of California, and as such was combined with the Bank of Italy in the last great merger; on November 3, 1930, the Bank of America National Trust and Savings Association was created.

During all these corporate mergers, the Fugazi Bank Building continued as a branch of the Giannini banks, until it was closed as a banking office on August 17, 1931, and its business transferred to the Clay and Montgomery Streets branch of the Bank of America (formerly headquarters of the Bank of Italy). After that date, the Bank of America continued for a time to use the Fugazi Bank Building as a training school for new employees. The building then stood vacant until purchased in 1938 to serve as headquarters of yet another Giannini financial enterprise -- The Transamerica Corporation.

Formed in 1928 as a holding company for banking stocks and headquartered with the Bank of America (at Powell and Market Streets) until 1938, Transamerica became, in effect, owner of the voting stock of the Bank of America. In 1937, partly due to Federal pressures and partly for strategic reasons, Giannini began a process of divorcing these two corporations -- a process completed in the 1950's. No longer a holding company for banks, Transamerica today offers services relating to all kinds of insurance, finance, lending, leasing, title insurance, mortgage banking, land services and manufacturing, and ranks among the largest organizations of its kind in the world.

ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORY:

The original design by Charles Paff showed a five-story building, of which the presentation drawings still exist. However, the building as actually constructed in 1909 was only two stories high, with a small ornate cupola. It had three bays (one a doorway) on Montgomery Street and five bays (two of which were doorways) on Columbus Avenue. The central portion and tower at the gore corner of the two streets, was then a curved glass display window, flanked by fluted columns.

Before 1914, the building was enlarged vertically: a third story was added and the cupola removed. An addition was made in more recent years to the rear of the building; it faces both Montgomery and Columbus and is directly connected with the old building. The result is a continuous facade along Columbus, but on Montgomery Street, the facade is a separate projecting front. On Columbus, the classical facade elements -- arches, pilasters, cornices, roof balustrades, window rails and capitals -- are continued in identical form along the entire facade. The horizontal addition and renovation were accomplished in handsome fashion.

ARCHITECTURAL
DESCRIPTION:

The building is three stories, and is constructed of concrete and stone with a steel frame. The entire facade is terra cotta, in blocks and slabs which simulate stone. The first or ground story has a high ceiling; second and third floors have lower ceilings, but the total height of the building is greater than usual for a three-story structure -- some sixty feet. The addition to the building ranges from 3 to 4 stories in height (four on Montgomery Street side).

The ground story is lighted by high round-arched windows: these are separated by flat and fluted pilasters of terra cotta blocks simulating stone. Surmounting the arches are scrolled keystones. Pilasters extend to ceiling level of second story and are surmounted by scrolled capitals, with projecting volutes. At this level, windows are rectangular and rather wide, with very wide, projecting sills which support handsome ornamental iron railings.

The major cornice of the building is at the third story floor level: projecting prominently, with large dentils, the cornice is also ornamented with animal heads. The third (added) story is less prominent than the others, and is surmounted by a classical balustrade. Windows are somewhat narrower than on second story, but are also rectangular. Each window here is flanked by small flat pilasters with unobtrusive capitals. Slight banks of ornamental designs and a small cornice surmount these windows. The Montgomery Street facade is flat and plain but carries out the main motifs of the more ornamental and principal facade.

SURROUNDING LAND
USE AND ZONING:

Zoning is C-2, part of the Washington-Broadway Special Use District (Area 1), and within the Jackson Square-North Beach 65-foot Special Height Limit District.

Surrounding buildings are predominately low-rise and house small offices, hotels, lodgings, restaurants and night clubs.

SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:
(continued) The new high-rise headquarters of the Transamerica Corporation is now under construction on the southeast corner of Montgomery and Washington Streets, on the site of the old Montgomery Block; its pyramidal shape will be a unique feature of the San Francisco skyline.

OTHER HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE: On the Montgomery Street side, at the rear of the addition to the original structure, is a plaque which reads as follows:

"FIRST JEWISH RELIGIOUS SERVICES

In a second floor room in a store which stood on this location, forty pioneers of Jewish faith gathered on Yom Kippur(5610) Sept. 26, 1849; and participated in the first Jewish religious services in San Francisco.

STATE REGISTERED LANDMARK NO. 462

Tablet placed by California Centennial Commission with the cooperation of the Society of California Pioneers.

Dedicated Sept. 6, 1950"