

ORDINANCE DESIGNATING LANDMARK

FILE NO. 90-75-6

ORDINANCE
RECEIVED NO. 461-75

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1 DESIGNATING Samuels Clock AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE CITY PLANNING
2 CODE.
3
4 Be It Ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:
5 Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that Samuels Clock located
6 in the sidewalk area on the north side of Market Street between Powell and Stockton
7 Streets, in front of 856 Market Street, has a special character and special his-
8 tory of architectural and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation
9 as a landmark will be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of
10 Article 10 of the City Planning Code and the standards set forth therein.
11 Section 2. Pursuant to Section 1704 of the City Planning Code, Chapter
12 II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, Samuels Clock is hereby designated
13 as a landmark, this designation having been duly approved by Resolution No. 7377
14 of the City Planning Commission, which Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the
15 Board of Supervisors under File No. 7377-6.
16 Section 3. Required Data. The descriptions of the location and boundaries of the
17 landmark; the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation;
18 and the particular features that should be preserved; as included in the said
19 Resolution, are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as though fully
20 set forth.

Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
NOV 07 1975

Ayes: Supervisors Harbage, Fainstein, Francis, Gonzalez, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nelder, Peconi, Tamaras, von Borodignon.

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors [Blank]

W. H. Brennan

Clerk

90-75-6
File No

NOV 07 1975
Approved

Read Second Time and Finally Passed
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
NOV 3 1975

Ayes: Supervisors Harbage, Fainstein, Francis, Gonzalez, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nelder, Peconi, Tamaras, von Borodignon.

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors KOPP

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

W. H. Brennan

Clerk

Antonio Fagg
Mayor

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SAN FRANCISCO

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 7379

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate Samuels Clock located in the sidewalk area on the north side of Market Street between Powell and Stockton Streets, in front of 856 Market Street, as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on August 6, 1975, 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 September 25, 1975, 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 Samuels Clock located in the sidewalk area on the north side of Market Street between Powell and Stockton Streets, in front of 856 Market Street, 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:

The location and boundaries of the landmark site being those of the structure itself; said structure being situated in the sidewalk area on the north side of Market Street, between Powell and Stockton Streets, in front of 856 Market Street; a map of this location being on file in the Department of City Planning in Docket No. LM75.7;

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. 130 as adopted on August 6, 1975, 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 Docket LM75.7;

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 on September 25, 1975.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

Ayes: Commissioners Finn, Fleishhacker, Mellon, Newman, Porter, Ritchie
Noes: None
Absent: Commissioner Rueda
Passed: September 25, 1975

OWNER: LCW Enterprises

LOCATION: Sidewalk area, north side of Market Street between Powell and Stockton Streets, in front of 856 Market Street.

HISTORY: For sixty years, the City's most famous street clock has graced the front of the Albert S. Samuels Jewelry Co., on Market Street. Its original location was at 895 Market Street where it began operating coincident with the opening of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in February 1915. It was designed and built by Mr. Samuels in collaboration with Joseph Mayer, a mechanical engineer, from Seattle.

Albert S. Samuels was born in Karlsberg, Austria, on February 2, 1882, and came to New York with his parents in 1891. Two years later, the family moved to San Francisco where his father operated an ice cream and candy store on Folsom Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets with the family residence on Shipley Street just around the corner. Mr. Samuels attended the Lincoln Grammar School (southeast corner of Fifth and Market Streets) and in 1897, was apprenticed to Albert Kuhlman, a watchmaker, where he served four years without pay to learn the trade. Following apprenticeship, he was employed by William Glindemann, a downtown firm which moved to 1532 Fillmore Street following the earthquake and fire. In 1908, Mr. Samuels bought out his employer and remained at the Fillmore Street location for one more year until the Lincoln Building on the site of his grammar school was completed.

While clocks and watches were a significant part of the Samuels trade, the firm was best known for its sale of diamonds. In this connection, Mr. Samuels invented several instruments to aid prospective purchasers in the determination of the quality of the stones.

It was for the Lincoln Building location that he conceived the idea of the street clock. When the Samuels firm moved to 856 Market Street in 1943, the clock was also relocated.

The clock remained in operation at that location until August 1967, when it was temporarily placed in storage until October 1970, during the construction of BART. The Samuels Company bore the expense of removal, storage and replacement of the clock. In addition, to protect the subsurface vault area housing the mechanism and the clock during the construction period, the company expended in excess of \$3,000 for reinforcing.

Following construction, during which time the City had decided to plant trees in conjunction with Market Street beautification, it became apparent that one of the several hundred trees would be located very near the site of the clock. For some time, it appeared that the clock might not be reinstalled, however, after negotiations with the City -- and because of expressed public opinion favoring its return -- it was decided to allow the clock to be returned to its exact prior location despite the proximity of that nearby tree whose branches may someday engulf the clock.

Mr. Samuels died on July 9, 1973, survived by his wife, Rhoda, and children Helen and Albert, Jr.

THE CLOCK: The clock, a metal structure about 18 feet tall located on the north side of Market Street between Powell and Stockton Streets, is composed essentially of three elements: a spherical housing for the four major clock faces, a column shaft, and a base with four smaller clock faces.

The larger clock faces are housed in a gold colored sphere, approximately three and one-half feet in diameter, with four segments removed to provide plane surfaces to house the clock faces. The sphere rests on a modified Corinthian capital atop a short, fluted column whose lower third is intricately detailed.

The base or pedestal, painted blue, upon which the column rests is about six feet high and square in plan. Each side features a large glass panel which allows viewing some of the working mechanism of the clock. At eye-level, near the top of this base, are four smaller clock faces which have sweep-second hands in addition to those for the hour and minute. Plaques below these faces note that that clock is dedicated to the public of San Francisco.

Casting and milling of components for the clock housing was done in the Seattle area; the dials and other works were fabricated locally under the direction of Mr. Samuels.

Until the late 1920's the clock was manually wound with a large lever or key. At that time a self-winding device was installed -- when the weights reach a certain point below the sidewalk level, they trigger a switch which activates an electric motor, pulling them upward to once again begin their descent.

**ZONING AND
SURROUNDING
LAND USE:**

The surrounding properties are zoned C-3-R (Downtown Retail District) and uses reflect this classification.