

FILE NO. 90-77-6

ORDINANCE NO. 210-77

FILED COPY

1 DESIGNATING THE JESSIE STREET SUBSTATION AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10
 2 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 Jessie Street
 5 Substation located at 220 Jessie Street (now vacated), a portion of Lot 70 in
 6 Assessor's Block 3706 has a special character and special historical, architectural
 7 and 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, Chapter
 11 II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, the Jessie Street Substation
 12 (Substation "C") is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having been
 13 duly approved by Resolution No. 7566 of the City Planning Commission, which
 14 Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-77-6.

15 (b) Required Data. This designation is applicable only to that portion of
 16 Lot 70 in Assessor's Block 3706 which is occupied by the Jessie Street Substation.
 17 The descriptions of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its design-
 18 nation; and of the particular features that should be preserved; as included in
 19 the said Resolution, are hereby incorporated herein and made a part hereof as
 20 though fully set forth.

Passed for Second Reading
 Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
 MAY 23 1977

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Feinstein, Fran-
 cols, Gonzales, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nel-
 der, Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen

~~Ayes Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisor KOPP

J.H. Bowman Clerk

90-77-6
 File No.

JUN 9 1977
 Approved

Read Second Time and Finally Passed
 Board of Supervisors, San Francisco
 MAY 31 1977

Ayes: Supervisors Barbagelata, Feinstein, Fran-
 cols, Gonzales, Kopp, Mendelsohn, Molinari, Nel-
 der, Pelosi, Tamaras, von Beroldingen.

~~Ayes Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisors BARBAGELATA, MENDELSON

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

J.H. Bowman Clerk
George R. [Signature] Mayor

SAN FRANCISCO

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 7566

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Jessie Street Substation at 220 Jessie 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 July 7, 1976 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 30, 1976, 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, the proposal to designate the Jessie Street Substation at 220 Jessie Street as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the City Planning Code is hereby APPROVED, the precise location and boundaries of the Landmark site being only that portion of Lot 70 in Assessor's Block 3706 which is occupied by the Jessie Street Substation.

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. 143 as adopted on July 7, 1976, 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 LM76.3.

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 Supervisory for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution has been ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of September 30, 1976.

Lynn E. Pio
Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Bierman, Dearman, Finn, Lau, Rosenblatt.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Mellon, Starbuck.

PASSED: September 30, 1976

HISTORY (continued):

An undetermined amount of construction based on these plans, along with much of the original, was destroyed by fire in February, 1906. Rebuilding began only to be destroyed in the earthquake and fire of April, 1906.

New plans based on those of 1905 were drawn up in 1906 by Polk (now with D.H. Burnham & Co.). The skylit room with its cherub-decorated entrance on the west end of the building was included in this design, and the whole subsequently constructed.

In 1909, the east annex was designed by Polk and built. A large skylit room, it added four windows (one above an additional entranceway) to the facade.

Since then, the building was acquired by the Redevelopment Authority in 1971 as part of the Yerba Buena Center plan. After continuing use of the building by leasing it from the Redevelopment Agency, Pacific Gas and Electric removed the last of its energized equipment in 1973. It is now vacant.

Some deterioration of the building -- mostly chipping of the terra cotta window frames -- has occurred. Buildings abutting it on both ends (as well as many others in the area) have been demolished by the city, opening it up to view for the first time in many years.

ARCHITECTURE:

The structure is one main level at grade of 18,000 square feet consisting of a major area of 80 feet by 120 feet, and a western extension of 25 feet by 48 feet. The interior contains upper-level mezzanines of 9,700 square feet. Total interior height (to roof trusses) is 35 feet.

An outer wall of unreinforced brick masonry, 16 inches thick, has pilasters at roof loading points. An inner structure of steel columns and brick bearing walls support the steel-trussed roof. The eastern addition's interior supports for mezzanine and roof are of reinforced concrete.

ARCHITECTURE (continued):

The façade appearance is the building's most important visual element. A subtle, innovative wall design utilizing classical architectural elements, it consists of the following. An expanse of rough, industrial brick has as its only relief four horizontal insets running low on the wall. Further decoration is all of cream-colored terra cotta. Plain trim tops the wall a few feet above a larger, very regular classical dentilated cornice.

The main entrance is a tall round arch rising almost to the cornice. A lintel (bearing on it the inscription, "Central Station. The San Francisco Gas and Electric Company MCMV") divides it in half. Above, a window is protected by a grid of cast iron mullions. Below are metal doors.

A smaller western entrance consists of metal doors the same size as those of the main entrance, but ornamented by a consoled entablature supporting a grouping of cherubs holding garlands of fruit and gourds beneath a torch. An especially fine example of terra cotta modelling, this group, done in a late Renaissance or Baroque style, is the only decoration (save some attached street lighting) of the building's western addition. The date inscribed there - 1907 - indicates completion of this section of the building.

On the eastern section, seven rectangular vertical windows march evenly-spaced to the end of the building. All are identically trimmed in rather massive terra cotta, including double lower sills. All are protected with cast-iron mullions similar to that of the main entranceway. Below the second and sixth windows are doors; the remaining have undecorated square windows of equal size. A counterpoint in terra cotta and brick is achieved where the four striations caused by indentations of the brick (which run the entire length of the wall) run parallel to the horizontal lines created by the lower windows' top and bottom edges.

ARCHITECTURE (continued):

This, in turn, balances the vertically of the tall, narrow windows above.

The sense of unity achieved by such handling belies the three-staged design, and two-staged construction Polk had to deal with. Although such elements as cornice, arch and statuary groups were stock-in-trade for the era's classic revivalism, Polk's handling here is outstanding in its dignity and imagination. It gained the praise of one of the period's most noted critics, C. Matlock Price, who commended the attention given to the design of such "every-day" architecture.

As far as its place in Polk's body of work, it marks a departure from his earlier shingle-style residential architecture. Loosely based on Classical and Renaissance prototypes, it reflects a general tendency toward Classical Revivalism in American architecture and planning of this period.

The side and rear walls of this building are of plain brick, discolored where other buildings once stood adjacent. An attached concrete shed remains at the west end. The skyline provides the only distinguishing feature. Four different false gables on the Stevenson Street side hide skylights of different heights and sizes. The east and west wall increase their height in five steps to meet the facade.

SURROUNDING
USE AND ZONING:

The building's zoning of C-3R (Downtown Retail) carries with it a height and bulk limit of 400-I. Much of the land surrounding it has been cleared for redevelopment as part of the Yerba Buena Center; its use remains undecided. Of the remaining buildings in the area, one of the most important is Saint Patrick's Church, a designated landmark, across Jessie Street from the substation. To the west, the General Services Administration Building stands at 49 Fourth Street; on the east, the Mercantile Building is located at the northwest corner of Third and Mission.

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SURROUNDING
USE AND ZONING (continued):

Although approximately 350 feet on Market Street at the rear of the building has been cleared, nearby buildings are mostly for office and retail use.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION:

The Jessie Street Substation is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.