

FILE NO. 90-77-10

ORDINANCE NO. 214-77

1 DESIGNATING THE GIBB-SANBORN WAREHOUSE AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE
2 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 Gibb-Sanborn Ware-
5 house, (Trinidad Bean and Elevator Building), 855 Front Street, being Lot 13 in
6 Assessor's Block 141 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 Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse (Trini-
12 dad Bean and Elevator Building) is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation
13 having been duly approved by Resolution No. 7582 of the City Planning Commission,
14 which Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File
15 No. 90-77-10. e

16 (b) Required Data. The descriptions of the location and boundaries of the
17 landmark site; of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation;
18 and of 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.

21
22 APPROVED AS TO FORM

RECOMMENDED

23
24 THOMAS M. O'CONNOR
25 CITY ATTORNEY

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

26
27 By Robert A. Vineland
28 Deputy City Attorney

29
30 By Rai Y. Okamoto
Director of Planning

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

MAY 23 1977

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

Noes: Supervisors

Absent: Supervisors ~~KOPP~~

 Clerk

90-77-10
File No.

JUN 9 1977
Approved

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

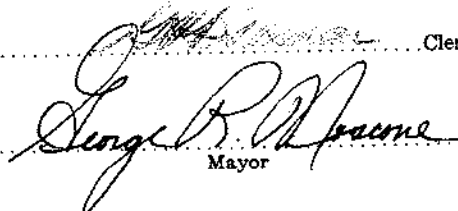
MAY 31 1977

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

Noes: 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.

 Clerk

Mayor

FILE NO. 90-77-11

ORDINANCE NO. 215-77

1 DESIGNATING THE GIBB-SANBORN WAREHOUSE AS A LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 10 OF THE
2 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 Gibb-Sanborn Ware-
5 house, (Pelican Paper Building), 901 Front Street, being Lot 3 in Assessor's Block
6 136 has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic
7 interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be in furtherance of
8 and in conformance with the purposes of Article 10 of the City Planning Code and
9 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 Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse,
12 (Pelican Paper Building) is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having
13 been duly approved by Resolution No. 7581 of the City Planning Commission, which
e 14 Resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors under File No. 90-77-11

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

20

21

22 APPROVED AS TO FORM

RECOMMENDED

23

24 THOMAS M. O'CONNOR
25 CITY ATTORNEY

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

26

27

28 By Robert W. [Signature]
Deputy City Attorney

By [Signature]
Rai Y. Okamoto
Director of Planning

29

30

Passed for Second Reading
Board of Supervisors, San Francisco

MAY 23 1977

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

~~Noes: Supervisors~~

Absent: Supervisor ~~KOPP~~

Clerk

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

MAY 31 1977

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

~~Noes: 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.

Clerk

90-77-11
File No.

JUN 9 1977
Approved

George P. Moscone
Mayor

RESOLUTION NO. 7581

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate the Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse (Pelican Paper Building) at 901 Front 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 25, 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 October 14, 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;

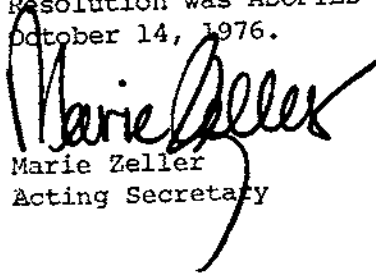
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, the proposal to designate the Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse (Pelican Paper Building) at 901 Front Street as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the City Planning Code is hereby APPROVED, the precise location and boundaries of the Landmark site being Lot 3 in Assessor's Block 136 which is occupied by the Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse (Pelican Paper Building);

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. 145 as adopted on October 6, 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 LM76.4;

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 October 14, 1976.


Marie Zeller
Acting Secretary

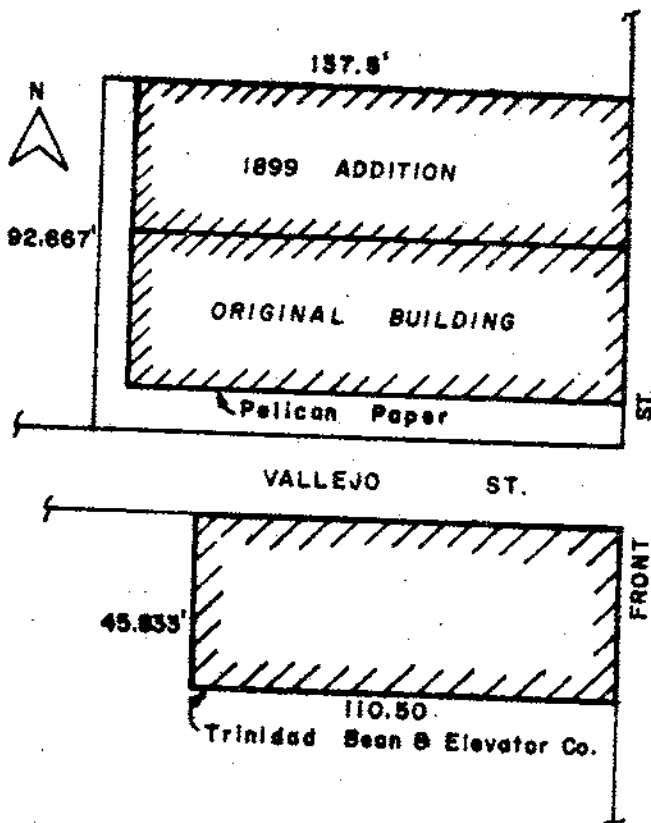
AYES: Commissioners Bierman, Dearman, Finn, Lau, Starbuck.

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Mellon, Rosenblatt.

PASSED: October 14, 1976

THE GIBB-SANBORN WAREHOUSES



Pelican Paper
901 Front Street

Trinidad Bean and
Elevator Company
855 Front Street

PELICAN PAPER

OWNER: Robert Sanborn
LOCATION: 921 Front, northwest
corner of Front and Vallejo;
Lot 3 in Assessor's Block 136.

TRINIDAD BEAN AND ELEVATOR CO.

OWNERS: William & Eleanor Pieri
LOCATION: 855 Front, southwest
corner of Front and Vallejo;
Lot 13 in Assessor's Block 141.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The two Gibb-Sanborn Warehouses are among a handful of extant San Francisco structures which date from the Gold Rush era; their probable year of construction is 1855. They were erected by 49er Daniel Gibb, commission merchant, who was active in civic and commercial affairs. As evidenced by an early lithograph and later photographs, they were rebuilt very nearly along their original lines following extensive damage in the 1906 disaster.

HISTORY:

In the Alta California of January 18, 1852, Alexander Forbes of Forbes & Co., a rear estate firm, advertised a number of lots for sale including two "on the corner of Vallejo and Front". Maps of that year indicate that the property was still underwater; by 1855, however, the site was filled and Daniel Gibb had erected his warehouses. The earliest recorded deed at City Hall for the southwesterly lot reveals that on November 22, 1852, Daniel Gibb purchased this site from James Cunningham for \$24,000. The property was described as Lot 13 of the Beach and Waterfront Survey, with a frontage of 45'-10" on Front and 137'-6" on Vallejo. (The early history of ownership is somewhat unclear. Descendants of John Sanborn have deeds indicating the properties were sold by the Land Commission to Charles Minturn in 1854, and resold by Minturn to John Sanborn in 1864.)

In all probability, Cunningham was the famous shipbuilder of Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, absentee 'capitalist' in San Francisco, the owner of Cunningham's Wharf at Vallejo Street and Cunningham's warehouses on Front between Green and Union Streets. He became the father-in-law of Darius Ogden Mills and was closely associated with Charles Minturn who arrived in San Francisco on the steamer SENATOR in 1849, and later became a leading steamboat operator in the Bay Area.

Daniel Gibb, a native of Scotland, also arrived in San Francisco in 1849. The City Directory for 1856-57 (Colville) reports that the firm of Daniel Gibb & Co., Commission Merchants, was "established in 1849 as Daniel Gibb; changed to present style in 1852." By the latter year, William Gibb had joined the firm.

Gibb's first known business address was aboard the beached ship NIANATIC, where according to records of the California Historical Society, he rented two rooms under the poop deck. The Society also has letters from the period 1850-52, and one of these bears the address: Daniel Gibb, Esq., Office on board Niantic Store Ship. Gibb's character and the nature of the commission business of that era is best revealed in a document written by one of his clients, J.A. Walker & Co.:

"Daniel Gibb was early established as a commission merchant. He seemed to be energetic and capable. Goods were sent to him from all quarters of the world on consignment alone, trusting to his honesty and integrity to dispose of them to the best advantage in the wildly fluctuating market at San Francisco. The Niantic was not only used as a storeship, but also her cabins were divided up and rented as offices.

"It is a curious fact that merchants all over the world speculated almost as heavily as the miner did on the streams. Shiploads of goods were poured into the new El Dorado from all ports of the world. At first, large profits were realized; then the results became ruinous to the shipper. It is a notorious fact that the shiploads of merchandise were sold at auction for a fraction of their worth to be retailed in a few days at two or three hundred percent profit. What the machinery was behind this we can only surmise. Sound merchants, such as the Scotch clients of Daniel Gibb and Company, felt their market carefully and endeavored to be guided absolutely by its consumption. Others sent in consignments without rhyme or reasons, and reaped the corresponding reward."

Gibb's stay in San Francisco extended over a 12 year period. He was subscriber to the construction of the Pelton School, the first public school in San Francisco, and served as President of the Chamber of Commerce. As such, he had been a stalwart leader in fighting back the attempts of a handful of speculators (known as "Bulkheaders") to gain exclusive control of San Francisco's waterfront.

He was typical of many natives of the British Isles who emigrated and, after having established fortunes, returned to the land of their birth. Daniel Gibb returned to Scotland in mid-1861, intending to return to San Francisco, however, he died in Glasgow in December of that year.

In 1862, Daniel Gibb & Co. was under the stewardship of William Gibb and Alexander Forbes. In 1863, less than two years after the death of Daniel Gibb, newspapers carried the news of the death of William Gibb:

In this city, May 15th, of Messrs. Daniel Gibb & Co., aged 35 years. The Friends and acquaintances of the deceased are requested to attend his funeral from the residence of Alexander Forbes, corner of South Park and Third Street.

With William's death the Gibb family apparently came to its end in San Francisco. On January 16, 1863, according to a newspaper advertisement, John Middleton & Son, Auctioneers, sold "at the residence of the late Daniel Gibb, on the corner of Chestnut and Kearny streets, all the well-kept and elegant family furniture in said house".

Alexander Forbes, partner of Daniel and William Gibb, was also a leading citizen. He was a member of the St. Andrew's Society, the British Benevolent Society, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. In the early 1880's he moved to a house in San Rafael. Mason's History of California reports that Forbes, along with William T. Coleman, was "responsible for modern San Rafael" and also "played a similar role on the bay front south of it". Forbes died at his house in San Rafael on October 29, 1883 at the age of 60. He was, like Daniel Gibb, a native of Scotland, having been born in Inverness in 1823.

In 1864, the two Gibb warehouses were sold to John Sanborn, a native of New York, who had come to California in 1851 and engaged in gold mining until 1859. He married Elizabeth Brodigan of Sonora and they raised five children. Their estate in Fruitvale was given to the city of Oakland for a park.

In 1879, a vault for the storage of opium (a legal trade in those days) was built for John Sanborn by William Stebbins at a cost of \$4,100 under the Vallejo Street sidewalk of the north building.

Sanborn entered into partnership with J. O. Strauch and together they operated the two warehouses, variously known as the Vallejo Street Bonded, Vallejo Street Tea Bonded, and Vallejo Street Free, or merely as the Gibb warehouses. In 1898, William B. Sanborn, son of John, took over management of the warehouses.

In 1899, an addition to the north warehouse was built. This was ordered by Mrs. Elizabeth Sanborn, and cost \$17,650 "U.S. dollars in gold coin". The architects were Wright and Sanders, and Mrs. Sanborn carefully wrote into the building contract (which the Sanborn family has) that the granite, the brick, etc., conform as closely as possible to the adjoining building. (The granite came from the Folsom quarry.)

These two buildings were in the ownership of one family, the Sanborns, for over 100 years. The family still owns the north building, an ownership of 112 years.

In subsequent years the two Gibb warehouses were used for:

(855 Front Street) A "wine house" in 1889; the Swiss-American Wine Co. in 1908; the Sevin-Vincent Seed Co. in 1913 (wholesale seeds); and the Trinidad Bean & Elevator Co. in the 1920's.

(901 Front Street) in 1911 occupied by the C.A. Hutton Flour Co., Inc.; occupied by the Pelican Paper Co. from the early 1920's until the late 1960's.

The two buildings were badly damaged in the Earthquake and Fire of 1906, but were rebuilt much to the original within the same year. Essentially the only change was that the interesting window-door pattern of the side elevations was not restored.

ARCHITECTURE:

The Gibb-Sanborn warehouses are handsome buildings. An early lithograph, in the collection of the California Historical Society shows the two buildings, with the Fremont Hotel on a rise to the rear. This lithograph, undated, was by Kuchel and Dresel, Lithographers, printed by Britton & Rey.

Architecturally, the buildings are splendid. The warehouse on the southwest corner was 45 x 110 feet, and the other was 45 x 130 feet. Both were "Class I" buildings; both had double walls, tin roofs and iron doors on front and back. The building material was brick (not necessarily imported; as early as 1851 a large domestic brick industry had emerged in the Bay Area), but the finest feature was the use of sandstone blocks in alternating receding and protruding pattern, fashioning the pilasters around the doors. The buildings were also characterized by a handsome pattern of doors and windows on the side elevations, the windows arranged seriatim with the doors in a one-two-two-one pattern. Each of the doors and windows is arched at the top, and the top of the window squared off with what is probably brick painted to look like sandstone. This treatment still occurs on the Vallejo side of the south building. The roofline is fairly simple, ornamented by dentils. The original roofs of the two buildings were tin, typical of the early warehouses. The foundations of the buildings are of irregular-cut blocks of fieldstone, possibly from Telegraph Hill because of its color. There is a capstone tier of granite on top of this.

The steps shown in the litho, stretching for the whole width of the buildings, were probably never built for they do not appear in early photographs. There were steps only in front of the main doors. Both buildings originally had marble insets at the corners at second floor level identifying Vallejo and Front Streets. These still remain in the south building.

The large signs on the roofline also appear in early photographs.

The basements of the two buildings feature load bearing arches characteristic of early warehouse construction. As revealed on the exterior, these are not, as is sometimes assumed, former windows which been bricked up.

The interiors of the warehouses were completely destroyed in 1906 and only portions of the exterior walls remained standing. The extent of exterior damage is still visible in that the newer portions of the walls are lighter in color than the original. This is most discernable when the facades of the buildings are viewed in their entirety from across the street or an equivalent distance away on Vallejo Street.

SURROUNDING LAND USE AND ZONING:

Both properties are in a C-2 zoning district and in Northern Waterfront Special Use District No. 3. The height and bulk limit for 855 Front Street is 84-E; for 921 Front Street it is 65-X. The neighboring land use is mixed and includes offices, retailing, wholesaling and light manufacturing.