



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Landmark Designation Case Report

*Hearing Date:* December 7, 2016  
*Case No.:* 2011.1124L  
*Project Address:* 2117-2123 Market Street  
*Zoning:* (NCT) Neighborhood Commercial Transit  
*Block/Lot:* 3543/012  
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### PROPERTY DESCRIPTION & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

New Era Hall is a combination commercial building and social hall designed by master architect, August Nordin. Completed just seven months after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, New Era Hall provided crucial meeting space for organizations displaced by the disaster, such as the Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias and the Woodmen of the World. The building also housed a variety of commercial tenants, the most durable of which was the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. A pioneer Mexican-American business with state-wide significance, the company made notable contributions to the development of what is today known as the “western saddle” design. Between 1911 and 1953, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company exclusively manufactured their high-end and custom saddles in New Era Hall building, developing an international reputation for superior craftsmanship and quality.

2117-2123 Market Street, known as New Era Hall, is located at the intersection of Market and Church Streets, within the Upper Market Neighborhood Commercial Transit Zoning District. The subject building is located towards northeastern boundary of the Upper Market Neighborhood Commercial Transit (NCT) District that is characterized by variety of two and three-story mixed-use buildings dating from the 1900s to the 2010s, including many multi-family residential, garages, formula retail, and commercial uses.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration to initiate the landmark designation process of 2117-2123 Market Street, New Era Hall as an Article 10 landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.

POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

## SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 - GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of 3117-2123 Market Street will help to preserve an important architectural resource associated with architect August Nordin and the original headquarters of prominent Mexican-American owned business The Visalia Stock Saddle Company.

## BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

On June 15, 2011, the Historic Preservation Commission added New Era Hall to its Landmark Designation Work Program.

## OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission adopts a resolution to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its December 7, 2016 hearing and directs staff to finalize the landmark designation report, a second Historic Preservation Commission hearing will be scheduled for the

Commission's recommendation of approval of the designation. At the second hearing, if the Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval of the designation, its recommendation will be sent by the Department to the Board of Supervisors. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

## APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

### ARTICLE 10

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's *Regional Housing Needs Allocation* and the *Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area*. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

### ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that

possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## **PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT**

There is no known opposition to designation of 2117-2123 Market Street as an Article 10 landmark. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

## **PROPERTY OWNER INPUT**

The property owner is CTC RE III, LLC. On November 16, 2016, Department Staff received a letter of opposition from Gabriel Block, a managing member of the company. (*Attachment C: Letter of Opposition*)

## **PROPERTY OWNER AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

Building owners were mailed notice of the June 15, 2011 Work Program hearing, and received a follow-up letter to inform them that the building had been placed on the Work Program. In the summer of 2012, ownership of the building changed. In November 2012, the Department sent a duplicate notice to the new owners, and requested a one-on-one meeting at the site. Staff met with the owners and representatives at the site to discuss overall benefits and responsibilities of landmark designation. In October 2016, following the HPC's addition and reprioritization of the Landmark Designation Work Program, the property owners received a notice reminding them that the property was on the work program and requesting a meeting. Department staff contacted the owner's in advance of the December 7, 2016 hearing to explain the process, responsibilities, and incentives of landmarking, including the Mills Act Program. The owners replied to staff via email, stating that they are not in support of designation at this time. (*Attachment C: Letter of Opposition*)

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

2117-2123 Market Street is architecturally significant for its for its unique combination of architecture and for its structural engineering; and as a rare extant property type; and for associations with local master architect August Nordin, who made significant contributions to the development of San Francisco. The building is also significant for its associations with the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. Landmark designation will highlight and celebrate both aspects of the building's significance.

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff based upon the attached draft Landmark Designation Report as well as staff site visits, research, and photography.

The draft Landmark Designation Report was prepared by Moses Corrette and Jonathan Lammers, both authors meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.

The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is outlined below under the Underrepresented Landmark Types, Significance, and Integrity sections below.

## SIGNIFICANCE

New Era Hall, located at 2117-2123 Market Street in the Upper Market Street neighborhood, is a Reconstruction-era social hall and retail building. It derives its significance from its high quality architecture, as a rare example of its property type, as the work of master architect, August Nordin, as well as its association with the rebuilding of San Francisco after the disaster of 1906, the establishment of Upper Market Street as a commercial corridor, and for its association with the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. Completed and occupied within seven months of the earthquake and fire of April 1906, New Era Hall played a role in the social history of San Francisco from 1906-1914 as the home to several benevolent associations that were left without meeting spaces.

New Era Hall is architecturally significant for its architectural embodiment of the Classical Revival style through its proportions, organization, and scale detailed with heavy Craftsman style ornament and exaggerated ornament. New Era Hall is an early example of master architect August Nordin's work. Nordin's San Francisco career began in 1899, and he designed over 300 structures until his death in 1936. The building employs innovative engineering techniques borrowed from railroad bridge technology in its roof truss design. Of the 72 social halls that were present in San Francisco in 1907, New Era Hall is one of only nine surviving examples that retain excellent integrity.

Significant for its association with the events of the Reconstruction era and the rebuilding of San Francisco following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, New Era Hall provided meeting space for numerous displaced organizations seeking a venue for meetings and events. The Name "New Era" itself implies a conscious participation in the rebuilding of San Francisco. The property is also associated with the development of local civic infrastructure in the Upper Market Street area during the early 20th century and reconstruction era. New Era Hall is a contributory property to the California Register identified-eligible district; the Upper Market Street Commercial Historic District. The district extends down Market Street from Church to Castro Streets, and is comprised of many neighborhood commercial buildings that served the surrounding residential area beginning in 1886.

A significant pioneer Mexican-American business dating from 1869, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company, occupied the ground floor storefronts of New Era Hall for nearly 50 years starting in 1911. Recognized as significant by the Office of Historic Preservation in its Latino heritage publication *Five Views: An Ethnic Site Survey for California* for its contribution to the development of the "western saddle" and for the astonishing quality of the handiwork of the saddles that were manufactured in this building, the Visalia Stock Saddle Company's other California locations are lost, leaving this site as the remaining best location to commemorate this significant California enterprise.

## INTEGRITY

The seven aspects of integrity are considered to be location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Cumulatively, the building at 2117-2123 Market Street retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance in the period of significance (1906, 1911-1949), as detailed in the integrity analysis below.

New Era Hall retains integrity of location, setting, and association with a commercial context. Although it is no longer in use as a lodge hall, the arrangement of the interior hall spaces appears to be unchanged. The building retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, with exceptions alterations installation of metal-frame lower storefront windows and doors to the storefront at 2123 Market in 1975 on the first story, and the addition of a second-story central window in 1920. The remaining elements on the ground floor including the main entrance surround and storefront transoms, upper floor fenestration and cornice are unaltered.

## CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

### **The character-defining exterior features of the building are identified as:**

- Two-story height and massing (ground floor of 14 and 15-feet and second floor of 16 and 24 feet);
- All rooflines, including the flat roof;
- All exterior elevations including the narrow, flush wood siding at the second floor of the front elevation and channel drop siding at the side elevation;
- All architectural details and motifs: including the cornice with plain frieze; over-scaled, paired brackets with extended triple pendants; and square, beveled rafter tails supporting a deeply projecting cornice with banded moldings.
- Central entry doors within the center bay at 2117 Market Street including; the single-glazed, double leaf, wood doors with decorative flared door surround, capped by a beveled lintel entry hood with applied floriated ornament, supported by nailhead block details;
- Ground floor storefronts including; the partially recessed, angled vestibule storefront entry with tile flooring at 2117 Market Street and the deeply recessed, angled vestibule storefronts at 2123 Market Street; the configuration of the storefronts at 2117 and 2123 Market Street comprised of stucco bulkheads, raised display platforms, and plate glass windows storefront windows; the over-scaled, divided light, wood transom spanning the plate glass storefronts at the ground floor; and the wood-sash, single-light doors at 2117 and 2121 Market Street (non-historic aluminum doors at 2123 Market Street are not character-defining features);
- Second floor fenestration including; triple-ganged, wood sash, double-hung windows with ogee lugs surrounded heavy casings and bracketed lintels and sills with nailhead block trim, located in the first and third building bays. The single double-hung, wood sash window with ogee lugs and heavy casings located within the middle bay.

**The character-defining interior features of the building are identified as:**

- Stairway to Second Floor Lodge Rooms
  - Vertical board-and-batten wood paneling with bead board above (presently painted)
  - Wooden steps to upper floor
- Second-Story Entry Hall
  - Vertical board-and-batten wood paneling and flat-board surrounds with nailhead block details
  - Turned wood staircase baluster
- Second-Story Anterooms
  - Vertical board-and-batten and bead board paneling with nailhead block details
- Second-Story Lodge Room No. 1, including:
  - Open plan and volume measuring 49-feet by 49-feet, with a ceiling height of 24-feet to the underside of the roof.
  - Board-and-batten and tongue-in-groove wall cladding (presently painted) with nailhead block details.
  - Three exposed Howe trusses
- Second-Story Lodge Room No. 2, including:
  - Open plan and volume historically measuring 49-feet by 20-feet with a ceiling height of 16-feet to the underside of the roof.
  - Interior wall finishes including: the wide board shiplap siding, laid horizontally; board and batten wainscoting with nailhead block details, and door and window casings? (all currently painted);
  - Two? Howe trusses (Currently, these are altered enclosed in non-historic siding)

## INTERIOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

Because the Lodge Rooms and Entry Hallway are the principal interior spaces and are largely unaltered, landmark designation of these interior features is authorized under Section 1004(c) of the Planning code, which states that:

(c) The property included in any such designation shall upon designation be subject to the controls and standards set forth in this Article 10. In addition, the said property shall be subject to the following further controls and standards if imposed by the designating ordinance:

- (1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.
- (2) For a privately-owned landmark, review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public. The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction.

## UNDERREPRESENTED LANDMARK TYPES

The proposed landmark designation addresses one previously identified underrepresented landmark type, as a landmark that is significant for cultural associations. The building stands as a tangible connection to the City's early Mexican-American and ranching history as the long-standing sales and manufacturing headquarters to the Visalia Stock Saddle Company. There are currently only two San Francisco landmarks directly associated with Latino or Mexican-American history: Landmark No. 1, Mission Dolores (320 Dolores Street) and Landmark No. 204, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (906 Broadway Street) which recognizes the building's early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Latino associations.

The building is an area of the city with a high concentration of landmarks, including 7 within three blocks of the subject property: Landmark No. 39, Saint Francis Lutheran Church (152 Church Street); Landmark No. 267, Swedish American Hall (2168-2174 Market Street); Landmarks No. 67 & 68, Tanforan Cottages, (214 & 220 Dolores Street); Landmark No. 137, Notre Dame School (347-351 Dolores Street); and Landmark No. 1, Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores), (310-320 Dolores Street).

To address underrepresented landmark property types, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regularly scheduled meetings on June 15, 2011 added 16 properties to its Landmark Designation Work Program and on August 17, 2016, the HPC added 33 additional properties, 27 of these properties are significant for cultural associations including properties associated with African American, Latino, and LGBTQ persons, institutions, and events.

The Department believes that 2117-2123 Market Street meets the established eligibility requirements for landmark designation due to its high architectural values, for events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history.

## BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The boundaries of the landmark site encompass a portion of Lot 12 in Assessor's Block 3543 on the south side of Market Street, 105 feet west of Church Street.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department's analysis, 2117-2123 Market Street, known as New Era Hall, is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation as a San Francisco as the embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction – for both architecture and cultural associations. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission initiate designation of 2117-2123 Market Street as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed designation of 2117-2123 Market Street as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission



disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Draft Landmark Designation Report
- B. Draft Motion initiating designation
- C. Letter in Opposition of Designation from CTC RE III, LLC, dated November 21, 2016