Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History

For generations, San Francisco has fostered a vibrant community of local businesses, nonprofits, and other institutions that reflect the city’s history, culture, and people. In a new policy paper, Heritage surveys international efforts to protect cultural heritage assets and recommends community-based strategies and incentives for maintaining San Francisco’s cultural vitality. **STORY ON PAGE 6**
Last month, my wife and I made our weekly visit to our favorite Thai restaurant on Polk Street. The storefront was empty. In less than ten days, a restaurant that had been in operation over 20 years, with an owner who knew and greeted each local patron, had vanished. The sign on the window thanked patrons and explained that the building had been sold.

What I have described is a very small change in culture to our neighborhood, but symptomatic of a larger problem that has gripped the city we love. A hyper-speculative economy has fueled skyrocketing rents and placed our cultural resources at risk. As more residents and businesses vie for limited space, heritage businesses, arts and cultural institutions, and nonprofit organizations are increasingly vulnerable to being pushed out. Simply put, the city is being loved to death.

Axiomatic to historic preservation theory is that the best use for a building is its intended or original use, such as churches in church buildings, museums in museum buildings, etc. To safeguard our architectural heritage, we must support the cultural institutions, neighborhoods, and businesses that gifted our city both modest and grand structures. How to do this?

Just in time, Heritage staff has completed a seminal tool to guide San Francisco in the protection of both intangible cultural resources and our historic built environment. Entitled *Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets*, this 52-page report provides a roadmap for policy makers and neighborhood groups to follow in preserving our cultural vitality. Rooted in sound historic preservation theory and proven case studies, this work is a milestone in Heritage’s efforts to tackle the most pressing preservation issues of our time. I hope you will take the time to read it and then work with Heritage to ensure that its recommendations are implemented.

I would like to conclude this column by thanking you all for allowing me to serve as the president of Heritage for the last three years. To say it has been a privilege to work with Heritage staff and the Board of Directors would be a vast understatement. It has been an enriching and joy-filled experience far beyond what I could have imagined.

Finally, I would like to welcome Chandler McCoy as my successor beginning January 2015. As chair of the Education Committee, Chandler has already made significant contributions to Heritage’s public programming, and he will be a terrific collaborator with Mike Buhler and Heritage staff to advance our mission. I look forward to watching them achieve ever-higher goals in the coming year.
Discover SF! Youth Heritage Program
Middle School Students Unearth History and Traditions

This summer, Heritage and the National Park Service (NPS) embarked on a new partnership to lead a group of 20 middle school students from the Galing Bata After-School Program on an exploration of more than a dozen historic places throughout San Francisco. In its second year, our Discover SF! Youth Heritage Program aims to inspire local students to take pride in their cultural heritage while exposing them to the architecture, traditions, landscapes, and history of their diverse city.

The 2014 program commenced with a trip to the Presidio, where our budding archaeologists learned about human settlement and the built environment in early San Francisco through artifact assemblage, an ecology hike, and an adobe brick-making workshop. Week Two began aboard the historic Balclutha with a lesson on Filipino immigration and labor along the waterfront. Later that afternoon, students mapped the original shoreline and investigated the architecture and public art of the Aquatic Park Historic District. Week Three led students to the Mission District, where they learned about the connection between art and social activism through a tour of The Women’s Building and Clarion Alley with artists Lucia Ippolito and Valerie Aranda. Following the art walk, the group worked together to create a brand new mural illustrating important places in San Francisco. Week Four took students on a bus tour of the Excelsior, linking past and present in the neighborhood with stops at Balboa High School, Cayuga Park, and the Filipino Community Center. As a special treat, the Parangal Dance Company guided students through a Filipino folk dance workshop. Discover SF! concluded with a tour of the Haas-Lilienthal House.

The field trips enabled students to experience first-hand how heritage conservation shapes and reflects their communities, from iconic landmarks to neighborhood institutions. Together, Heritage and the NPS hope to promote diversity and the conservation of historic places by cultivating the next generation of cultural stewards.

Special thanks to Donna Graves, Pin@y Educational Partnerships, Presidio Trust, and Whole Foods for their support of Discover SF!
Elevating Pier 70
Heritage Endorses Union Iron Works/Pier 70 Initiative on November Ballot

Proposition F, an initiative that would support rehabilitation of historic structures at Pier 70, will be on the ballot in November 2014, and will be the first measure to seek voter approval in the wake of passage of Proposition B earlier this year. Introduced by developer Forest City, the initiative would make it City policy that reuse of the site should include historic rehabilitation and other public benefits while also increasing height limits for new infill development from 40 to 90 feet. Approved by San Francisco voters in June 2014, Proposition B requires that any proposed increase to existing height limits on Port property must be approved by the electorate. If the measure is successful, the project will remain subject to environmental review and will undergo the same scrutiny, analysis and legal approvals mandatory for all development projects in San Francisco.

Heritage has provided extensive input on three proposed developments at Pier 70 since 2011, including proposals for Crane Cove Park and the 20th Street Historic Core in addition to Forest City’s waterfront development site. Our analysis of these projects has focused on the proposed treatment of historic resources and potential impacts to the Union Iron Works National Register Historic District. Bounded by Illinois Street to the west, 18th Street to the north, and 22nd Street to the south, the historic district contains a variety of maritime buildings and structures dating back to the 19th century. Significantly, although the existing height limit is 40 feet, the tallest historic building in the district exceeds 90 feet.

The project proposed by Forest City, crafted with extensive community input over the past two years, calls for the revitalization of a 28-acre site with new housing, commercial, and open spaces, and rehabilitation of three large historic buildings.

Voter approval of Proposition F would satisfy the requirements of Proposition B for the project site, but would not apply to other areas of Port property. The Forest City project would also support: the rehabilitation of three contributors to the historic district, totaling over 250,000 square feet; the development of nine acres of waterfront parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities; the creation of 300-600 new units of affordable housing on the site; the addition of new and renovated space for arts, cultural, nonprofit, small scale manufacturing, local retail, and neighborhood service; and the creation of 10,000 permanent jobs and up to 11,000 construction jobs.

Heritage has been reviewing various iterations of the Forest City project over the past year, including earlier concepts showing two 200-foot towers. Forest City has now reduced the maximum height of new infill construction to 90 feet, which is in accord with the Pier 70 Master Plan and is no higher than the tallest historic building on the site. Following a joint Issues Committee/Issues Policy Committee meeting with members of the project team on July 22, 2014, the full Heritage board endorsed the proposed height-limit increase as essential to the preservation and revitalization of Pier 70.

To learn more about Heritage’s review of Pier 70, please visit sfheritage.org/positions-testimony.
Preservation Element
Long-Term Vision for Historic Preservation Proposed for City’s General Plan

After a five-year hiatus, the Planning Department has resumed work on a preservation element for San Francisco’s General Plan. A comprehensive planning document outlining a vision for the city, the General Plan is required by state law to address seven issues: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In addition, San Francisco’s General Plan includes elements on arts, community facilities, commerce and industry, urban design, and air quality.

Each element encompasses a review and definition of needs, overall objectives, and a series of policies and implementation measures necessary to achieve or approach objectives. The General Plan spurs the creation of new legislation and changes to existing City policies and the Planning Code, and also informs the Department’s work program. Adding a preservation element to the General Plan will help establish priorities for future policy proposals to aid in the conservation of San Francisco’s architectural, cultural, and historic resources.

As defined by the Planning Department, the preservation element is: “an element of the General Plan that establishes a long-range vision for the protection of historic resources and that sets forth a series of goals, objectives, and policies to accomplish that vision over time.” Several versions of a preservation element have been drafted since the late 1980s, but none have been adopted. Recent attempts to develop a preservation element took place in 2007 and 2009, with significant community input and funding from the City. Due to budget cuts in the 2009-2010 fiscal year, however, progress stalled.

The Department’s proposed budget for 2014-2016 includes funding to renew and finalize the element, which is currently in development and is expected to undergo environmental review in 2015. After a series of hearings before the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) this summer, the Department will carry out a rigorous public outreach process in the fall and winter to revise and finalize the element.

Through meetings with Department staff and testimony at HPC hearings, Heritage is advocating for a range of policies and specific implementation measures relating to disaster planning, ADA compliance, design guidelines, seismic safety, and social and cultural resources, among other topics. Heritage and the Planning Department will co-present a public open house on Wednesday, September 10 (time and location to be announced). For more information about the element or upcoming open house, visit sfheritage.org.

Above: In 2013, the Planning Department completed the Sunset District Historic Resource Survey, focusing on residential tracts constructed from the mid-1920s into the post-war era. Below: The proposed Preservation Element will include a separate section on post-disaster planning.
Over the past year, Heritage has delved deeply into what we consider the preservation issue of the moment: the rapid loss of the city’s cultural and social heritage resources. In response, Heritage is pleased to announce the release of *Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History: Strategies for Conserving Cultural Heritage Assets*, an extensive report that summarizes existing local heritage conservation initiatives; presents case studies from other cities across the globe; and offers a series of policy recommendations for furthering cultural and social heritage conservation in San Francisco. The 52-page report represents a continuation of Heritage’s longstanding commitment to related initiatives such as the Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Development Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS), Calle 24 Latino Cultural District, Legacy Bars & Restaurants, and the San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement.

For generations, San Francisco has been home to a thriving collection of local businesses, nonprofits, and other community institutions that reflect the city’s history, culture, and people. These places have the power to bring people together, provide a sense of continuity with the past, and lend the city a rich and layered
The report comes at a critical moment, as it coincides with the Planning Department’s latest efforts to create the first preservation element of the San Francisco General Plan (page five). With the express purpose of articulating a vision for historic preservation in San Francisco, Heritage believes the element should endorse a holistic approach to heritage conservation that embraces the city’s tangible and intangible heritage assets.

Heritage presented the report and its recommendations to the HPC on August 20. For more information, or to download the full report, visit sfheritage.org/cultural-heritage.

Amid unprecedented economic pressures, mainstays of San Francisco’s cultural landscape – our cultural heritage assets – are increasingly imperiled by skyrocketing rents and property values, encroaching new development, and incompatible adjacent uses. Others are at risk because of ongoing challenges unrelated to the current boom cycle, such as a lack of leadership succession planning or diminishing numbers of traditional arts and craft practitioners.

Despite their effectiveness in conserving architectural resources, traditional historic preservation tools are often ill-suited to address threats to cultural heritage assets. While cultural touchstones such as City Lights Bookstore, Castro Camera and Harvey Milk Residence, Sam Jordan’s Bar, Twin Peaks Tavern, and Marcus Books have been declared San Francisco City Landmarks, historic designation is not always feasible or appropriate, nor does it protect against rent increases, evictions, disruptions in leadership succession, and other factors that imperil longtime institutions.

As a result, discussions about how to best conserve the city’s non-architectural heritage have taken place among neighborhood and community groups, Heritage, the Planning Department, and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) over the last several years. In concert with neighborhood planning efforts in Japantown, the Planning Department, preservation firm Page & Turnbull, and the Japantown Organizing Committee developed a groundbreaking methodology to comprehensively document the city’s cultural fabric that accounts for “both tangible and intangible [elements] that help define the beliefs, customs, and practices of a particular community.”

In June 2013, Heritage worked with community and civic partners to organize a community summit to address public concerns over the loss of cultural and social heritage resources. The goals of the summit were to initiate an inclusive dialogue among community members and City decision-makers regarding the documentation, interpretation, and promotion of San Francisco’s diverse social and cultural heritage and to create a platform for developing new policy and partnerships.

With Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History, Heritage advocates a conservation-driven, incentive-based response to the loss of cultural heritage assets in San Francisco, both in the short and long-term. Based on proven international models, we propose a series of methods for stabilizing and revitalizing San Francisco’s cultural heritage assets for communities, nonprofits, small businesses, festivals, foundations, and government agencies.

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City Arts & Lectures: Jack Dorsey and Paul Goldberger

To benefit Heritage and the Haas-Lilienthal House, City Arts & Lectures will host a special evening with Jack Dorsey, co-founder of Twitter and Square, and Paul Goldberger, Vanity Fair contributing editor, on Monday, October 27th. Held at the historic Nourse Theater beginning at 7:30 p.m., the program will examine the tech industry’s influence on urban and suburban design in the Bay Area, including the revitalization of historic buildings. Steve Winn, writer and frequent City Arts & Lectures interviewer, will lead the conversation between Dorsey and Goldberger.

A celebrated web developer and businessman, Jack Dorsey was named to the MIT Technology Review as one of the top 35 innovators in the world under the age of 35. In 2012, The Wall Street Journal recognized him with the “Innovator of the Year” award for technology.

Named “the leading figure in architecture criticism” by the Huffington Post, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Paul Goldberger served as the Architecture Critic for The New Yorker from 1997 to 2011. He holds the Joseph Urban Chair in Design and Architecture at The New School in New York City, has authored several books, and is on the Board of Trustees of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In January 2014, Goldberger authored “The Shape of Things to Come” for Vanity Fair, which contrasts sprawling, suburban tech headquarters projects by “starchitects” such as Norman Foster and Frank Gehry, with Twitter’s recent move into the 1936 Art Deco Merchandise Mart Building in Mid-Market. Highlighting a possible connection to historic preservation, Goldberger observes:

At a time when the city, not the suburb, seems to hold the allure for younger workers in the technology industry...Twitter’s renovated office space in an old San Francisco neighborhood may, in the end, be the real harbinger of the future.

The October 27th program will be taped and broadcast over more than 130 public radio stations around the country, including NPR. Broadcasts are co-produced with KQED 88.5 FM in San Francisco. Tickets are $27 and may be purchased online at cityarts.net or by calling 415-392-4400. The Nourse Theater is located at 275 Hayes Street near the Civic Center. All net proceeds from the event will benefit Heritage and the Haas-Lilienthal House.

Since 1980, San Francisco-based nonprofit City Arts & Lectures has offered unique programs with leading figures in arts and ideas. Each year, it hosts more than fifty lectures and on-stage conversations with outstanding writers, critics, scientists, performing artists, and cultural leaders from around the world. We are truly grateful to Executive Director Sydney Goldstein and her entire staff for hosting this unique event on Heritage’s behalf.
The Haas-Lilienthal House, one of only 45 sites selected as a “National Treasure” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is recruiting volunteers for our 2014 docent training. Built in 1886 and entrusted to Heritage in 1973, the House is San Francisco’s only intact Victorian-era residence regularly open to the public.

Share your passion for history and San Francisco with visitors from around the globe! Volunteer docents lead guests through this one-of-a-kind landmark while sharing stories about the Victorian Age, the 1906 earthquake, and Jewish immigrant history.

Orientation for new docents will be held on Tuesday, September 23rd at 6:00 p.m. at the Haas-Lilienthal House, located at 2007 Franklin Street between Washington and Jackson streets.

Docent training consists of seven meetings featuring presentations from Heritage staff and special guest speakers. Upon completion of the program, new volunteers will be experts on Victorian architecture, San Francisco history, and public speaking!

For more information and to register for the training, please contact Volunteer Coordinator John Adams at 415-441-3000 x25 or jadams@sfheritage.org.
Profile: Jeremy Blakeslee
Photographer and Heritage Volunteer Uncovers Hidden Histories in San Francisco and Beyond

A native of New York City and graduate of the School of the Arts, photographer and urban archaeologist Jeremy Blakeslee first immersed himself in San Francisco’s built environment in 2012 when he began studying the historic rail corridor that once connected San Francisco to Los Gatos, a route that required the construction of several now-abandoned and well-hidden 1880s tunnels. Throughout his career, Jeremy’s expertise in historical industrial architecture, machinery, infrastructure, and mines has led him on explorations of cities and landscapes across the country.

“I want to have a different relationship with the built environment,” he notes. “I’m constantly searching for places where a city’s history is buried, seeking out the truth of our urban existence, something that most of us have lost touch with.”

For the past 15 years, Jeremy has researched and documented America’s vast industrial heritage, starting with his first love, the former Bethlehem Steel Plant in southeastern Pennsylvania. “These often dangerous and less traveled spaces - the forgotten mines, steel mills, rail systems, and cities - still have a story to tell us about ourselves,” he maintains.

Jeremy first began volunteering his time and considerable skills to Heritage in the fall of 2012, when he and fellow photographer Ian Boyle shot the second annual Free Community Day at the Haas-Lilienthal House. The following summer, his talent for capturing expressive architectural spaces was on full display in Adapt/Transform/Reuse, an exhibition co-presented by Heritage and SPUR. Jeremy’s dynamic photographs juxtaposing old and new in San Francisco’s urban fabric - including Jackson Square, Mint Plaza, and the Contemporary Jewish Museum - celebrated the city’s architectural diversity while providing a thought-provoking look at change in historic environments.

Following last year’s redesign of Heritage News, Jeremy’s vivid images have been featured in numerous articles, including specially-commissioned cover photographs of Marcus Books (Winter 2013/2014), the Hobart Building (Summer 2014), and Balmy Alley (Fall 2014). The range and depth of his compositions enliven the pages, capturing unique perspectives of authentic San Francisco places. Jeremy also generously donated three signed prints to Heritage’s silent auction at Soirée 2014.

“Everywhere I go, I seek out the preservationists, historians, and historically-minded individuals, and Heritage is no exception,” he shares. “There is a wealth of knowledge and connections in these groups, and together we try to create a stronger movement and awareness of preservation challenges.”

In addition to his work for Heritage, Jeremy’s photography has been featured in Preservation Nation, San Francisco Chronicle, PBS NewsHour, and Dwell, among others. He frequently collaborates with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Park Service, and the National Museum of Industrial History, and his work is on display in galleries across the country.

True to his roots, Jeremy is currently immersed in San Francisco’s industrial heritage, having received a commission from the Port of San Francisco to document historic resources at Pier 70 for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). “I feel a special calling to preserve the history and heroism of the mechanical beasts of burden that carried America into and through the industrial revolution,” he explains.

To explore his photographs of the Union Iron Works and Bethlehem Shipbuilding facilities, and many other industrial wonders, please visit jeremyblakeslee.com.
Annual Appeal

Your Generous Support Affirms Heritage’s Advocacy and Educational Initiatives Throughout San Francisco

This issue of Heritage News reveals the depth and breadth of Heritage’s efforts in preservation advocacy and education in our local communities and on the national stage. As we reflect on the milestones that we have achieved so far this year, we are grateful for your loyal commitment to our mission to preserve and enhance San Francisco’s unique architectural and cultural identity in neighborhoods across the city. Each year, the generous contributions of our extended community to our Annual Appeal enable us to pursue proactive preservation initiatives, develop innovative educational programming, and respond effectively to pressing advocacy issues.

Heritage is leading the way in conceiving groundbreaking strategies for conserving the city’s cultural heritage assets and historic architecture through new community partnerships and special projects. As we face unprecedented growth and development, these unique places and institutions, more than ever, need to be valued and preserved. From the publication of our new report, Sustaining San Francisco’s Living History, and our work on the citywide Latino Historic Context Statement, to our review of transformative projects such as Pier 70 and our contributions to the Preservation Element of the General Plan, Heritage is tackling today’s definitive preservation questions on all fronts.

Your generous gift to the Annual Appeal bolsters our efforts to raise awareness for San Francisco’s cultural and architectural treasures, shape essential policies, and bridge differences through inclusive community projects and educational programs. In its second year, our Legacy Bars & Restaurants initiative continues to draw attention to the city’s beloved establishments as part of a “worldwide movement... to identify and protect places of social significance” (Guardian Cities, June 2014).

Through original programming, Heritage reaches new audiences across generations. Local middle school students are exposed to the diverse stories embedded in the city’s historic landscape and empowered to take pride in their own heritage through our Discover SF! Youth Heritage Program, a partnership with the National Park Service. Legions of children and young adults are introduced to the Haas-Lilienthal House as a Victorian “hidden gem” through our Heritage Hikes program and Mayhem Mansion Halloween fun. We have embarked on an ambitious update of the Haas-Lilienthal House interpretive plan, which will excavate new layers in its rich cultural and architectural history while bringing a broader audience to San Francisco’s “National Treasure.” Heritage’s 2014 Lecture Series and October 27th event with City Arts & Lectures (featuring Jack Dorsey and Paul Goldberger) have sparked tremendous interest as we explore the city’s future by deepening our understanding of its past.

Your fully tax-deductible contribution to Heritage through the Annual Appeal ensures that our pioneering initiatives throughout the city will continue to have a meaningful impact on San Franciscans of all ages. To make a gift or to learn more about supporting Heritage, please return the enclosed envelope or contact Carolyn Squeri at csqueri@sfheritage.org or 415-441-3000 x14.

Above: Discover SF! participants learn about Filipino heritage aboard the historic Balclutha. Below: Heritage advocated in support of legislation enabling St. Boniface Church, City Landmark #172, to sell Transferable Development Rights to finance much-needed rehabilitation work.

Heritage’s 2014 Lecture Series commenced with “Latin Jazz in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Retrospective,” featuring Grammy Award nominee John Santos. The event celebrated the citywide Latino Historic Context Statement, a partnership with the San Francisco Latino Historical Society.
Thursday, September 18, 6 PM
The Magic City: Treasure Island’s Golden Gate International Exposition
Pier 1, Bayside Conference Room
The Embarcadero
(Please note new location)