

Sixth Street Design Guidelines



San Francisco
Redevelopment Agency

5/03/05

Introduction



The following design guidelines were developed by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency ("Agency") in cooperation with the South of Market Project Area Committee. The intention is to improve the quality of 6th Street for buildings redeveloped with Agency assistance, including acquisitions for rehabilitation or new construction, SRO rehabilitation loans, business improvement loans and Owner Participation Agreements. These guidelines are supplemental to the Planning Code.

For buildings redeveloped without Agency assistance, the Agency has requested the San Francisco Department of City Planning to administer design review using the Planning Code with reference to these guidelines.

The overall objectives of the guidelines are to enhance the visual environment, to improve pedestrian safety, to promote economic development and attract greater investment to the area, and to complement public streetscape improvements including new street lights and trees.

History and Opportunity

Prior to 1858, Sixth Street consisted of marshlands. As manufacturing grew in the 1860s, transient men from the Gold Rush era moved into single-room occupancy (SRO) hotels on Sixth Street. In the late 1800s, Sixth Street was a vibrant retail district with grocery stores, bars, restaurants, barbershops, laundries, cigar stores and print shops.

The fire resulting from the 1906 earthquake burned Sixth Street to the ground. After reconstruction, hotels and retail remained prevalent along Sixth Street, while light industry dominated the surrounding area. During the Great Depression, 50% of the area workforce were unemployed. While the WWII production boom attracted more workers, it created a housing shortage and homelessness.

SRO hotels on Sixth Street have housed transients since the 1800s. Years of deferred maintenance

have led to the deterioration of these buildings. In addition, the marginal income of many residents makes it difficult for businesses to survive. The disincentive to invest in these properties contributes to the deterioration of many storefronts.

The lack of recent development along Sixth Street has resulted in the retention of a unique early twentieth century streetscape. Although blight remains prevalent, the street is also a valuable resource, offering both architectural character and some of the City's most affordable housing.

The careful enhancement of these two resources could be a key to improving overall conditions on Sixth Street. By strengthening the existing fabric of the street and neighborhood, Sixth Street could again become the retail and residential "main street" of a revitalized South of Market community.

Architectural Character

- Restore and extend the traditional architectural elements that give character and consistency to the street, such as cornice lines, windowsills and fenestration.
- Where appropriate, encourage creative use of materials and other design expressions, conveying the innovative character and diverse cultures of the South of Market neighborhood.
- Develop building scale, massing and articulation with reference to the relatively small lot sizes along the street.
- Develop building façades that respond to the street's traditionally vertical building and window proportions, counterpointed by cornices, stringcourses and other horizontal elements.



Historically, Sixth Street is a horizontal progression of vertically proportioned buildings and windows, given stepped emphasis by cornices and stringcourses. Also note the consistent lettering of the signs.

Architectural Treatments

- Develop color schemes which enhance the character of each building and the overall streetscape.
- Paint fire escapes a color that is complimentary to the overall building.
- Repair, paint and clean façades on a regular basis, including the immediate abatement of graffiti.
- Encourage the installation of hose bibs.
- Use lighting both to enhance building appearance and provide a safer pedestrian environment.
- Provide screens over exhaust grilles, integrating them with the building's overall design.
- Restore large windows to storefronts where they have been walled off or blocked.

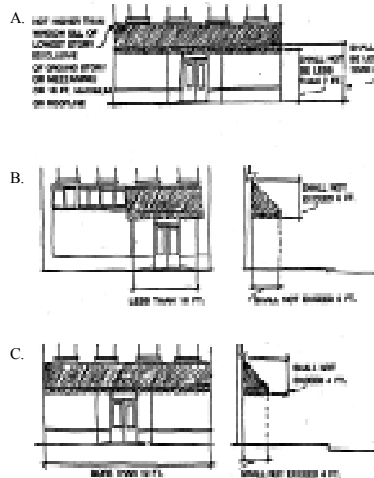


Careful attention to existing architectural details and appropriate color schemes can help enhance and rebuild the character of Sixth Street.

Awnings

Definition: a light, roof-like structure, supported entirely by the exterior wall of the building, of a fixed or movable frame covered with cloth, plastic or metal, extending over doors, windows and/or show windows

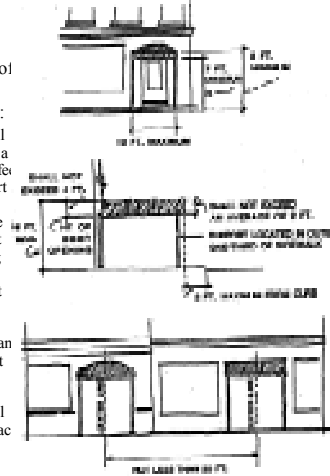
- Encourage overall and consistent awning designs for buildings with multiple storefronts and harmonize designs among buildings.
- Enhance awnings with suitable lighting.
- Relevant City Planning Code guidelines:
 - Portions of an awning shall be not less than eight feet above the finished grade, excluding any valance which shall not be less than seven feet above the finished grade. No portion of awning shall be higher than the windowsill level of the lowest story or exceed a height of 16 feet or the roofline of the building.
 - When the width of an awning is 10 feet or less, the horizontal projection shall not exceed six feet from the face of the supporting building and the vertical distance from the top to the bottom of such awnings shall not exceed six feet, including any valance.
 - When the width of an awning exceeds 10 feet, the horizontal projection shall not exceed four feet from the face of the supporting building and the vertical distance from the top to the bottom of such awnings shall not exceed four feet, including any valance.



Canopies

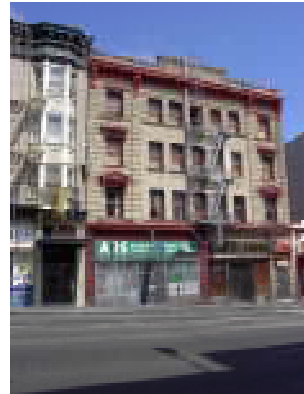
Definition: a light, roof-like structure, supported by the exterior wall of the building and on columns or wholly on columns, consisting of a fixed or movable frame covered with cloth, plastic or metal and extending over entrance doorways only

- Use canopies to emphasize the location of hotel entrances.
- Relevant City Planning Code guidelines:
 - The maximum width of any canopy shall be 10 feet. The horizontal projection of a canopy may extend not closer than two feet from the curb. The outer column support shall be located in the outer 1/3 of the sidewalk. The vertical distance from the top to the bottom of the canopy shall not exceed an average of two feet, including any valance. The highest point of the canopy shall not exceed a point four feet above the door opening or 16 feet, whichever is less. All portions of any canopy, excluding the column supports an excluding any valance which may be not less than seven feet above the finished grade, shall be not less than eight feet above the finished grade. Canopies shall not be spaced closer than 20 feet from each other, measured from centerline to centerline.



Security Measures

- Encourage electronic security systems, including recording video monitors, instead of grilles and gates.
- Encourage the use of tempered/safety glass for storefronts
- Discourage the use of security grilles, but if used, integrate them into storefront design and the architectural features of the building; grilles that roll down from above and moveable open grilles, not solid types, are preferred; the housing of the grilles should complement the architectural details of the building.
- Where possible, place grilles on the interior side of the glass.
- Provide sufficient lighting, integrated into the overall building design, to provide pedestrian safety, including lighting at awnings and canopies and along side streets at corner buildings; shield lighting to avoid glare.



Fixed grilles discourage business.

Signage

- Encourage signs that express the character and product of each business on 6th Street.
- Consider the placement, size, colors and lettering of signs within each building façade.
- For buildings with multiple storefronts, develop a ground floor signage band consistent with the architecture of the building to help harmonize the design of adjacent storefronts.
- Organize placement of signs with reference to building columns and other architectural features.
- Create a hierarchy of signs by encouraging the use of surface mounted signs for storefronts, while retaining historical blade signs for hotels.
- Emphasize or distinguish hotel signage by location and size.



Disorganized signage distracts from creating a positive retail environment on Sixth Street.

Signage (continued)

- Place names of establishments on awnings or canopies.
- Place building address numbers on entrance doors.
- Enhance the vitality of the street with signs that express the diverse cultural traditions of the neighborhood.
- Encourage signs that creatively depict products – graphically, sculpturally or symbolically.
- Retain and enhance historical signage types.
- Reduce visual clutter by avoiding redundant or competing signs within the same storefront.
- Limit placement of opaque signs on windows to reduce visual clutter and provide clear visibility of interior products and activity. (Maintain at least two-thirds of window area unobstructed.)
- Remove signage for businesses that are no longer present.
- Provide consistent and attractive temporary leasing signs for vacant storefronts.
- Temporary signage advertising special sales shall not exceed one month duration.
- Enhance signage with appropriate lighting such as lights that do not produce glare and which complement the building's architectural character.
- Adhere to signage controls in the City Planning Code.

Hotel Treatments

- Restore blade signs of historic or architectural value.
- Create a signage hierarchy, for example: a historic blade sign located above sign band for street visibility; a small sign within the sign band above hotel entrance for pedestrian visibility; and a smaller sign with the name and address of the hotel lettered on the main door or window.
- Use canopies to accentuate the entrance of a hotel, while using awnings for storefronts.
- Install consistent curtains, shades or blinds to enhance and to create a more organized window appearance from the street.
- Encourage window boxes to further enhance façades and to visually signify residential use.



Historic hotel signage hierarchy at Seneca Hotel is compromised by uncoordinated storefront signs.

Historic Preservation

- Article 11 of the Planning Code regulates historic buildings and buildings within the South of Market Extended Preservation District. Historic buildings must be at least 40 years old, judged Buildings of Individual Importance, and rated Excellent or Very Good in Architectural Design and/or in Relationship to the Environment. Historic buildings are divided into: Significant (Categories I&II) and Contributory (Categories III&IV) buildings. Non-historic buildings are Unrated (Category V).

Historic Buildings on 6th Street:

Category	Address	Name
I	106 Sixth	Henry Ho
I	1000 Howard	
I	201 Sixth	Orlando I
III	32 Sixth	Seneca H

Historic Buildings NOT on 6th Street:

Category	Address	Name
I	1049 Howard	
I	335 Seventh	Holy Trir...
II	1035 Howard	Eng Skell
III	1097 Howard	Blindcraft
III	1087 Mission	





Historic Preservation (continued)

Per Article 11, the following restrictions apply to Major Alterations of Category I-IV buildings within a Preservation District:

- Major exterior alterations shall be compatible in scale and design with the District.
- No demolition permit may be approved unless the property retains no substantial market value or reasonable use; or demolition is required for public safety.
- A signage permit is subject to conditions if the location, materials, means of illumination or attachment would adversely affect the architectural, historical or aesthetic significance of the building or District.

In addition, alterations of structural elements and exterior features shall be consistent with the building's architectural character and comply with the following requirements:

- (1) Distinctive architectural features affecting the overall appearance of the building shall not be altered unless it is needed for public safety.
- (2) Distinctive stylistic features shall be preserved.
- (3) Deteriorated distinctive architectural features shall be repaired. When replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the original in composition, design, color and texture.
- (4) Contemporary design of alterations is permitted when the significant exterior architectural material is preserved and the design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the building and its surroundings.
- (5) Category I buildings are limited to one additional story compatible with the scale and character of the building and not exceed 75% of the roof area.
- (6) Category II buildings may add a new structure or addition, if it is compatible with the retained portion and its appearance as a separate structure is unaffected.



Produced by:
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