



1 (1) The designation is in conformity with the Priority Policies of Planning Code  
2 Section 101.1 and with the General Plan as set forth in the letter dated January 10, 2002 from  
3 the Director of Planning. Such letter is on file with the Clerk of the Board in File No.

4 020196.

5 (2) The Board of Supervisors finds that this ordinance is in conformity with the  
6 Priority Policies of Section 101.1 of the Planning Code and with the General Plan, and hereby  
7 adopts the findings set forth in the letter dated January 10, 2002 from the Director of Planning  
8 and incorporates such findings by reference as if fully set forth herein.

9 (c) Required Data:

10 (1) The description, location and boundary of the Landmark site is Lot 4, in  
11 Assessor's Block 191.

12 (2) The characteristics of the Landmark which justify its designation are described  
13 and shown in the Landmark Designation Report adopted by the Landmarks Preservation  
14 Advisory Board on June 20, 2001 and other supporting materials contained in Planning  
15 Department Docket No. 2000.568L. In brief the characteristics of the landmark which justify  
16 its designation are as follows:

17 (a) Association with patterns of social and cultural history of San Francisco during the  
18 period of significance, particularly with the contesting of political and cultural power between  
19 working class based groups and middle class based Progressives.

20 (b) Architectural embodiment of Progressive and City Beautiful tenets of civic grandeur  
21 used as a means of social organization, particularly the acculturation of working class and  
22 immigrant populations.

23 (c) Architectural embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an early branch library  
24 building, especially those delineated in "Notes of the Erection of Library Buildings".  
25

(3) That the particular exterior features that should be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary, are those generally shown in the photographs and described in the Landmark Designation Report, both which can be found in the case docket 2000.568L which is incorporated in this designation ordinance as though fully set forth. In brief, the description of the particular features that should be preserved are as follows:

- (a) Exterior composition and materials.
- (b) The spatial volume of the Main Reading Room.
- (c) The ornamental ceiling of the Main Reading Room.

4/4/0210 Section 2. The property shall be subject to <sup>the</sup> ~~following further~~ controls and procedures, pursuant to this Board of Supervisor's Ordinance and Planning Code Article 10.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By:   
Sarah Ellen Owsowitz  
Deputy City Attorney

RECOMMENDED:  
PLANNING COMMISSION

By:   
Gerald G. Green  
Director of Planning



# City and County of San Francisco

## Tails

### Ordinance

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**File Number:** 020196

**Date Passed:**

Ordinance Designating 1135 Powell Street, The Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library, as Landmark No. 235 pursuant to Article 10, Sections 1004 and 1004.4 of the Planning Code.

April 15, 2002 Board of Supervisors — PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 11 - Ammiano, Daly, Gonzalez, Hall, Leno, Maxwell, McGoldrick, Newsom, Peskin, Sandoval, Yee

April 22, 2002 Board of Supervisors — FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 9 - Ammiano, Daly, Gonzalez, Hall, Leno, Maxwell, McGoldrick, Peskin, Sandoval

Absent: 2 - Newsom, Yee

SAN FRANCISCO

PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 16211

**ADOPTING FINDINGS RELATED TO THE APPROVAL OF LANDMARK DESIGNATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF SUCH DESIGNATION OF 1135 POWELL STREET, THE CARNEGIE CHINATOWN BRANCH LIBRARY, ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 191, LOT 4, AS LANDMARK NO. 235.**

1. **WHEREAS**, on June 2, 1999, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) established its Landmark Designation Work Program for fiscal year 1999-2000. Planning Department staff prepared Landmark Designation Reports for each of the eight sites chosen for the Landmark Designation Work Program. All eight sites were to be brought to the Landmarks Board for review, comment, and consideration of initiation of landmark designation. Included among the sites was the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library, 1135 Powell Street, Assessor's Block 191, Lot 4; and
2. The Landmarks Board reviewed and endorsed the Context Statement, *Origins of the Seven San Francisco Carnegie Branch Libraries, 1901-1921*, on June 20, 2001 and directed that it be placed in the Landmarks Preservation Library. Included in the seven branch libraries was the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library, 1135 Powell Street, Assessor's Block 191, Lot 4; and
3. The Landmarks Board, at its regular meeting of June 20, 2001, reviewed a draft the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library Landmark Designation Report for 1135 Powell Street prepared by Tim Kelley. The Landmarks Board considered the report to be a final Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library Landmark Designation Report; and
4. At its regular meeting of June 20, 2001, the Landmarks Board found that the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library Landmark Designation Report describes the location and boundaries of the landmark site, describes the characteristics of the landmark which justifies its designations, and describes the particular features that should be preserved and therefore meets the requirements of Planning Code Sections 1004(b) and 1004(c)(1). That Designation Report is fully incorporated by reference into this resolution; and
5. At its regular meeting of June 20, 2001, the Landmarks Board reviewed and endorsed the description, location and boundary of the Landmark site as 1135 Powell Street, encompassing all of and limited to Lot 4 in Assessor's Block 191; and
6. The Landmarks Board, in considering the proposed landmark designation employed the National Register Criteria and found that the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library is significant under Criterion A (associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and C (embodies distinctive characteristics

## PLANNING COMMISSION

Case No. 2001.568L  
Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library  
Assessor's Block 191, Lot 4  
Resolution No. 16211  
Page 2

- of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction); and
7. At its regular meeting of June 20, 2001, the Landmarks Board reviewed and endorsed the following description of the characteristics of the Landmark which justify its designation:
    - a) Association with patterns of social and cultural history of San Francisco during the period of significance, particularly with the contestation of political and cultural power between working class based groups and middle class based Progressives.
    - b) Architectural embodiment of Progressive and City Beautiful tenets of civic grandeur used as a means of social organization, particularly the acculturation of working class and immigrant populations.
    - c) Architectural embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an early branch library building, especially those delineated in "Notes of the Erection of Library Buildings".
  8. At its regular meeting of June 20, 2001, the Landmarks Board reviewed and endorsed the following particular features that should be preserved:
    - a) Exterior composition and materials.
    - b) The spatial volume of the Main Reading Room.
    - c) The ornamental ceiling of the Main Reading Room.
  9. The Landmarks Board reviewed documents, correspondence and oral testimony on matters relevant to the proposed landmark designation, at a duly noticed public hearing held on June 20, 2001.
  10. The Planning Commission reviewed the case file (No. 2000.568L) and considered the findings and recommendation of the Landmarks Board set forth in the Landmarks Board Resolution No. 536, and held a duly noticed public hearing on the matter on August 23, 2001;
  11. THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, That the Planning Commission does hereby concur with the findings and recommendation of the Landmarks Board and **APPROVES** the landmark designation of the property at 1135 Powell Street, known as the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library, in Assessor's Block 191, Lot 4, as Landmark No. 235;
  12. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the landmark is set forth in the adopted the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library Designation Report, Landmarks Board Resolution No. 536 and other materials on file in the Planning Department Docket No. 2000.568L, which is incorporated herein and made a part of thereof as though fully set forth;
  13. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Planning Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the adopted the Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library Designation Report, the photographs and other pertinent materials in the Case File No. 2000.568L, and a

**PLANNING COMMISSION**

Case No. 2001.568L  
Carnegie Chinatown Branch Library  
Assessor's Block 191, Lot 4  
Resolution No. 16211  
Page 3

copy of this Resolution of Approval to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Planning Commission on August 23, 2001.

Linda D. Avery  
Commission Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Baltimore, Chinchilla, Joe, Theoharis and Salinas

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Fay

ADOPTED: August 23, 2001

**HISTORIC NAME:** North Beach Branch

**POPULAR NAME:** Chinatown Branch

**ADDRESS:** 1135 Powell Street

**BLOCK & LOT:** 191-004

**OWNER:** San Francisco Public Library  
Civic Center  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**ORIGINAL USE:** Public branch library

**CURRENT USE:** Public branch library

**ZONING:** "p"

**National Register Criterion (a)**

- (A) ☒ Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- (B) ☐ Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- (C) ☒ Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- (D) ☐ Has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

• **Period of Significance:** 1921-Present

- **Integrity:** The building presently retains adequate integrity. Recent seismic work and alterations have resulted in changes to the fabric of the Main Reading Room, as well as a large addition to the rear of the building, and alterations in the ground level fenestration.

**Article 10 Requirements—Section 1004 (b)**

• **Boundaries of the Landmark Site**

The boundaries of the Landmark Site are the footprint of the historic building and exterior stairway.

• **Characteristics of the Landmark which justify its designation**

1. Association with patterns of social and cultural history of San Francisco during the period of significance, particularly with the contestation of political and cultural power between working class based groups and middle class based Progressives.
2. Architectural embodiment of Progressive and City Beautiful tenets of civic grandeur used as a means of social organization, particularly the acculturation of working class and immigrant populations.
3. Architectural embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of an early branch library building, especially those delineated in *"Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings"*.

• **Description of the Particular features that should be preserved**



1. Exterior composition and materials.
2. The spatial volume of the Main Reading Room.
3. The ornamental ceiling of the Main Reading Room.

## DESCRIPTION

Constructed of yellow-brown brick in Flemish Bond, the Chinatown Branch Library is built to the side lot lines and set back slightly from the street to accomodate a prominent exterior double-return switchback stairway that leads from the street to the main floor. The building has one story over a grade level basement, with a flat, parapeted roof.

The symmetrical composition has five bays on the upper level, the center occupied by a double-doored entrance with pilasters and arched pediment. Each side bay contains a pair of single-light vertical arched windows, the pair contained within a larger arch slightly smaller than the central pediment. Two steps up from the street, where the stairs first split, is a central arched entrance, now converted to a window, flanked by an arched window on each side. New grade level entrances have recently been cut at each end of the facade.

Horizontal divisions are marked by a glazed terra cotta cornice, with dentils and frieze, at the roof line; and a belt cornice molding at the main floor level. The upper frieze is inscribed "SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY CHINATOWN BRANCH". This inscription was altered from the historic "...NORTH BEACH BRANCH" in 1958, when a new North Beach branch was constructed. The alteration is still discernible because of differing coloration.

Glazed terra cotta also forms the colonnaded window surrounds, the entrance pilasters and pediment, and the balustrade on the central stairways. Decorative brick work below the large windows forms panels featuring Flemish diamond shapes. A soldier course subtly marks the spring of the five arched openings; and each arch is outlined with stretchers.

The main entry is through a small paneled vestibule into the large main reading room, which occupies nearly the entire floor space of the historic building. Behind it is a large 1992 addition. Prominent diagonal seismic bracing intrudes into the reading room, but is stepped back from the large windows. There is also a modern mezzanine addition in the historic reading room, also stepped back from the windows and wall fabric. A new grade level entrance at the south end of the main facade gives access to an elevator which connects to the main reading room and the mezzanine.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### CRITERION A: SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC PATTERNS

The Chinatown Branch Library, built as the North Beach Branch, was the sixth of seven branch buildings financed by a Carnegie grant. The

grant itself was the subject of twelve years of intense political and class conflict in San Francisco. This branch was constructed in the

densely settled North Beach neighborhood, which was continually referred to by the Library Trustees as the home of "the foreign element." Although the need for a branch building here had been explicitly acknowledged for many years in the annual Trustee reports, it was the next to last constructed. By providing easy access to published works for neighborhood residents, the building expresses the national and local ascendancy of Progressive political and social values, as well as the development of public libraries. It also expresses the City Beautiful philosophy by presenting a building intended to create a sense of civic grandeur and dignity in the citizen who enters, or merely views it.

#### CRITERION C: POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES

In both its exterior composition and its grand main reading room, the Chinatown Branch Library possesses high artistic values. The prominent windows, entrance, and stairway impart an orderly rhythm to the design from the exterior. The historic entry path is carefully controlled; with the transition from the street, up the grand stairway and through the small constricted vestibule into the main reading room conveying a sense of intellectual and civic rebirth. The switchback stairway lends even greater ceremonial gravity to the entrance for this branch, which historically has served large numbers of immigrants.

#### REFERENCES:

Bean, Walton. *Boss Ruefs San Francisco*. U.C. Press. 1952

Board of Supervisors. *San Francisco Municipal Reports*. various years 1900 to 1925

Cahill, B. J. S. "The San Francisco Public Library Competition". *The Architect and Engineer of California*. May 1914.

Carnegie Corporation of New York Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University

Carnegie Corporation of New York, website, "Andrew Carnegie's Legacy"

Corbett, Michael R. & The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. *Splendid Survivors; San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*. San Francisco. California Living Books. 1979

The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. "Libraries Reflect the City's Values". *Heritage Newsletter*, vol XVI, No. 4. uncredited author Donald Andreini

Issel, William and Robert W. Cherny. *San Francisco 1865-1932; Politics, Power, and Urban Development*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press. 1986

Jones, Theodore. *Carnegie Libraries Across America, a Public Legacy*. Washington, D.C. Preservation Press; New York : John Wiley, 1997.

Kahn, Judd. *Imperial San Francisco; Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897-1906*. Lincoln, NB, University of Nebraska Press. 1979

Kazin, Michael. *Barons of Labor*. University of Illinois Press. Urbana and Chicago. 1987

Kelley, Tim. "Origins of the Seven San Francisco Carnegie Branch Libraries, 1901-1921" Context Statement. Planning Department. January, 2001

DATE:

CASE NO.:

PAGE 4

LANDMARKS BOARD VOTE:

APPROVED:

PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE:

APPROVED:

PROPOSED LANDMARK NO.:

Kortum, Lucy Deam. "Carnegie Library Development in California and the Architecture It Produced, 1899-1921". M.A. Thesis, Sonoma State University, 1990

Longstreth, Richard W. *On the Edge of the World: Four Architects in San Francisco at the Turn of the Century*. New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press. 1983

Stern, Norton B. & William M. Kramer. "G. Albert Lansburgh, San Francisco's Jewish Architect from Panama" *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly*. April-May 1981

Van Slyck, Abigail A. *Free to All, Carnegie Libraries and American Culture: 1890-1920*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1995

**RATINGS:** 1976 Citywide Survey "3"

**PREPARED BY:** Tim Kelley  
San Francisco Landmarks Board  
1660 Mission Street, SF, CA

**ADDRESS:**

**Attachments:** ☒ 523A ☒ 523B ☒ 523L (continuation sheets) ☒ Context Statement ☐ Other...

# PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI# \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 4 \*Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Chinatown Branch Library

## P1. Other Identifier:

\*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

\*a. County San Francisco and (P2c, P2e, and P2b or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ T \_\_\_\_\_; R \_\_\_\_\_; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec \_\_\_\_\_; B.M. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Address 1135 Powell Street City San Francisco Zip 94108

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone \_\_\_\_\_ mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Block 131

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries) Lot 4

Constructed of yellow-brown brick in Flemish Bond with flare headers, the Chinatown Branch Library is built to the side lot lines and set back slightly from the street to accommodate a prominent exterior double-return switchback stairway which leads from the street to the main floor. The building has one story over a grade level basement, with a flat, parapeted roof. A modern rear addition more than doubles the main floor area.

The symmetrical composition has five bays on the upper level, the center bay occupied by a double-doored entrance with pilasters and arched pediment. (continued)

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP14 Govt. Building; HP13 Community Center;

\*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photograph or Drawing (Photograph required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (view, date, accession #)

Powell Street facade  
3/29/00

\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Source: ☒ Historic ☐ Prehistoric  
☐ Both

1921. San Francisco Public  
Library Trustees Report

\*P7. Owner and Address:  
San Francisco Public Library  
Civic Center  
San Francisco, CA 94102

\*P8. Recorded by:  
(Name, affiliation, and address)

Tim Kelley  
San Francisco Landmarks Board  
1660 Mission Street, SF, CA

\*P9. Date Recorded: 12/1/00

\*P10. Survey Type: (Describe) Thematic Landmark Nomination

\*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

\*Attachments: ☐ NONE ☐ Location Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure & Object  
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record  
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (List):

**State of California - The Resources Agency**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**  
**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

Primary # \_\_\_\_\_

HRI # \_\_\_\_\_

\*NRHP Status Code \_\_\_\_\_

Page 2 of 4 \*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Chinatown Branch Library

B1. Historic Name: North Beach Branch

B2. Common Name: Chinatown Branch

B3. Original Use: Public branch library

B4. Present Use: Public branch library

\*B5. Architectural Style: Italian Renaissance

\*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Built 1920; Seismic upgrade, ADA work, rear addition & mezzanine added 1992

\*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\*B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: G. Albert Lansburgh

b. Builder: McLeran & Peterson

\*B10. Significance: Theme Cultural History, Library Area: San Francisco

Period of Significance: 1921-Present Property Type: Branch Library Applicable Criteria: A, C

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

**CRITERION A: SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC PATTERNS**

The Chinatown Branch Library, built as the North Beach Branch, was the sixth of seven branch buildings financed by a Carnegie grant. The grant itself was the subject of twelve years of intense political and class conflict in San Francisco. This branch was constructed in the densely settled North Beach neighborhood, which was continually referred to by the Library Trustees as the home of "the foreign element." Although the need for a branch building here had been explicitly acknowledged for many years in the annual Trustee reports, it was the next to last constructed. (continued)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP14 Govt. Building; HP13 Community Center; HP39 Other

\*B12. References: See continuation sheet, page 4

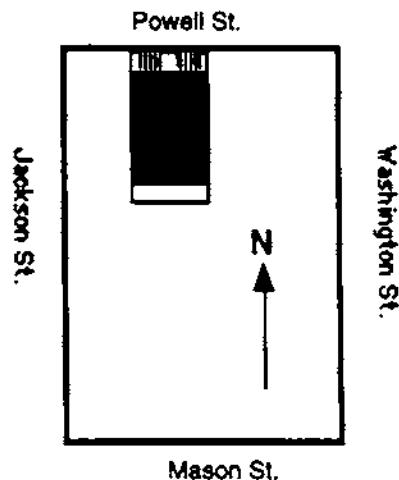
B13. Remarks:

\*B14. Evaluator: San Francisco Landmarks Board

\*Date of Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

(This space reserved for official comments)

Sketch Map with north arrow required.



Page 3 of 4

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Chinatown Branch Library

Recorded by: Tim Kelley

Date: 12/1/00

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

**P3a. Description:** (continued)

Each side bay contains a pair of single-light vertical arched windows, the pair contained within a larger arch matching the central pediment. Up two steps from the street, where the stairs first split, is a central arched entrance, now converted to a window, flanked by an arched window on each side. New grade level entrances have recently been cut at each end of the facade.

Horizontal divisions are marked by a glazed terra cotta cornice, with dentils and frieze, at the roof line; and a belt cornice molding at the main floor level. The upper frieze is inscribed "SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY CHINATOWN BRANCH". This inscription was altered from the historic "...NORTH BEACH BRANCH" in 1958, when a new North Beach branch was constructed. The alteration is still discernible because of differing coloration.

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The main entry is through a small paneled vestibule into the large main reading room, which occupies nearly the entire floor space of the historic building. Behind it is a large 1992 addition. Prominent diagonal seismic bracing intrudes into the reading room, but is stepped back from the large windows. There is also a modern mezzanine addition in the historic reading room, also stepped back from the windows and wall fabric. A new grade level entrance at the south end of the main facade gives access to an elevator which connects to the main reading room and the mezzanine.

**B10. Significance:** (continued)

By providing easy access to published works for neighborhood residents, the building expresses the national and local ascendancy of Progressive political and social values, as well as the development of public libraries. It also expresses the City Beautiful philosophy by presenting a building intended to create a sense of civic grandeur and dignity in the citizen who enters, or merely views it.

**CRITERION C: POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES**

In both its exterior composition and its grand main reading room, the Chinatown Branch Library possesses high artistic values. The prominent windows, entrance, and stairway impart an orderly rhythm to the design from the exterior. The historic entry path is carefully controlled; with the transition from the street, up the grand stairway and through the small constricted vestibule into the main reading room conveying a sense of intellectual and civic rebirth. The switchback stairway lends even greater ceremonial gravity to the entrance for this branch, which historically has served large numbers of immigrants.