SAUSALITO HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESIGN CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

For use by Property Owners, Residents,
Developers, Architects, and
Decision-making Public Bodies.

City of Sausalito
--
Historic Landmarks Board

Adopted: January 21, 1993

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1.0 THE SAUSALITO HISTORIC LANDMARKS BOARD (HLB)

1.1 Introduction

Sausalito, with its scenic location and well preserved original architecture, has one of the most naturally attractive small downtowns in the entire country. Most of the early commercial structures are included in the Historic Preservation District established by the Sausalito City Council in 1981, and certified by the United States Department of the Interior in 1982.

Sausalito's Historic District reflects design values especially suited to the town and its location. These can be lost through inattention or carelessness. It is the purpose of these Guidelines to state clearly the procedures and criteria the community intends to use to conserve them.

The Sausalito Historic Landmarks Board, HLB, formally adopted these Guidelines for the Downtown Historic District at its meeting of January 21, 1993. The motion for adoption included the proviso that the HLB undertake periodic reviews for the purpose of modifying the Guidelines based on revised codes and ordinances and updated information.

1.2 Purposes of the HLB

Section 8.44 of Sausalito Ordinance 901, Preservation of Historical Landmarks, states the following purpose for the HLB:

> A. The protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of structures, sites, and areas that are reminders of past eras, events, and persons important to local, state or national history, or which provide significant examples of architectural styles of the past or area landmarks in the history of architecture, or which are unique and irreplaceable assests to the city and its neighborhoods, or which provide for this and future generations examples of the physical surroundings in which past generations lived;
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> B. The development and maintenance of appropriate settings and environment for such structures;
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> C. The enhancement of property values, the stabilization of neighborhoods and

the increase of economic and financial benefits to the city and its inhabitants;

D. The enrichment of human life in its educational and cultural dimensions by serving aesthetic as well as material needs and fostering knowledge of the living heritage of the past.

1.3 The Sausalito Historic District

The downtown commercial district is centered around the intersection of Princess and Bridgeway streets. This older commercial district exhibits a consistent architectural grouping of late 19th Century styles. The scale is one that complements the view of San Francisco. This is one of the primary attractions of Sausalito, and people who come here enjoy being by the Bay and its play of light, boats, city and seascape.

1. The Northern portion of the Historic District which is on Bridgeway north of Princess Street, can be characterized as two and three story attached row-buildings that relate to one another in a harmonious way while representing different styles of architecture and modernizations.

The time periods represented here date from the 1890's through the decade following World War II. The facades are of a shared scale, height and general style, with several notable exceptions, and have in common some or all of the following: bay windows, boxed cornices, false fronts, Italianate roofline detail, recessed entryways and transoms.

2. The Central portion of the District is oriented to a small, triangular park/plaza with a fountain form the 1915 San Francisco Panama Pacific International Exposition. The park is filled with shrubs, specimen trees and flowering plants and combines the feeling of a Victorian garden with that of a Mediterranean plaza. This impression is enhanced by the 1915 mission revival style Sausalito Hotel. North and east of the hotel are the last remnants of the railroad/ferryboat era--the vestigial pilings of the old ferryboat slip.

3. Southern Bridgeway south of Princess has an unrestricted view of Richardson and San Francisco Bays. Yee Tock Chee Park is a small, multi-level area of concrete and wood pilings built on the site of the original ferryboat landing (the ferry Princess, 1868).

The building along this portion of the street are more heterogeneous than those of the northern protion. Many were either built or remodeled in the 1920s--functional structures that suggest their original uses--stores and garages. Others are representative of the "Victorian" era.

4. Princess Street is the transition between Bridgeway and the Hill. At its base, a continuation of the type of building that appear on Bridgeway, then a gradual transition to residential at the top of the street. At the intersection with Bulkley on the south side, a small, wood Greek revival house is all but obscured by trees. Two homes accross the street on Bulkley have been coverted to apartments and have been included in the District as they are prominent in early photos from the water and represent the styles of many early hillside homes.

At the top of Princess Street, on Bulkley, are the "Portals of the Nook"--an arched brick and terra cotta entryway to a Willis Polk designed shingle-style Queen Anne mansion.

Just to the north, on Bulkley, the "crown jewel" of the district, Laneside. Built only months after the Nook was completed, the style and use of materials suggests that Polk may have inspired its design as well. (New condominiums have been added to the original house.)

The buildings of the Historic District are largely in commercial and related use. It is the function of the HLB to conserve the qualities the District gives the town. It is understood that owners may want or be required to adapt their properties to new uses, functions and codes from time to time.

1.4 General Concerns of the HLB

The delicate historic character and scale of the District may be easily disrupted or overwhelmed by large or blank-faced buildings out of proportion to surrounding structures or by architectural styles or lines which do not respect or relate to the existing historic, commercial neighborhood.

Structures in the District may be renovated, rehabilitated or upgraded in ways that materially contribute to the entire District. Design elements which can be identified as positive features of the Historic District are encouraged.

In evaluating applications for permits and entitlements within the Historic District, the HLB uses the United States Secretary of the Interiors' "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings" (GPO937-843). Copies of this are maintained in the Sausalito Planning Department at City Hall. In addition the HLB has identified the following general design principles to which the HLB may refer in determining what conditions or limitations, if any, shall be applied to any project subject to HLB review:

A. Consistency

Any addition and/or alteration to a structure in the District should be designed so as not to destroy the integrity of the original. By matching elements in exterior materials, color, texture, architectural detailing, and roof shape, an addition can be successfully integrated with the original structure while incorporating contemporary features and functions.

B. Height

Height is an important consideration in designing new structures or additions to preserve neighborhood scale and fit in with existing development. With the exception of important community, institutional, or unique buildings which act as visual landmarks, a new structure should always be designed so that its height is in scale with its surrounding environment. While varied heights can offset each other in interesting ways, a building height out of scale with its surroundings can produce an inharmonious effect.

C. Scale

Scale is also determined by building mass, height, and proportion as it relates to circulation, open space and neighboring structures. New structures or renovations should communicate a scale consistent with the identity, use, and characteristics of the District.

D. Materials

Materials help to maintain the historic character of the District. In areas where either historic or architecturally significant structures predominate, the use of similar exterior construction materials (board and batten, shingled, clapboard, and shiplap wood siding, for instance) are appropriate. Avoid shiny metallic or bogus materials which simulate

natural materials. Wood sash should be used whenever wood was the original material. Whenever metal frames are requred in new construction, bronze anodized aluminum should be considered. Historically inappropriate materials should not be used.

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Disproportional gaps or masses that would visually disrupt the rhythm of any existing sequence of buildings are inappropriate.

F. Other Elements

Other elements which might impact the overall historic character of the building or the District as a result of the proposed project. Some of these elements include building proportion as it relates to adjacent structures, design of doors and windows, relationship of buiding projections, architectural details, texture, color and signage.

1.5 Jurisdiction of the HLB

As outlined in Sausalito City Ordinance 901, the HLB approves three groups of projects:

(i) Projects which involve modifications to facades of city designated Landmarks.
(ii) Projects which involve modifications to facades of Historic District structures
(iii) Projects involving any of the arks

Ordinance 901, Section 8.44 provides that modifications to facades of structures in the Historic District require plans to be reviewed and approved by the HLB before permits are granted.

Whenever possible, HLB approval should be obtained before approvals from other bodies which may have jurisdiction, such as Design Review Board.

1.6 Normal Procedures of the HLB

The review process followed by HLB consists of these steps:

1. Applicants are encouraged to make informal presentations of preliminary ideas or sketches to the HLB for feedback prior to submittal to the Planning Department. (This step is optional.)

2. Submit completed application with plans to the Planning Department.

3. Present plans at a regularly scheduled meeting of the HLB for its review and vote.

4. In reviewing applications, the HLB may take one of the following actions:
   (i) approve
   (ii) approve with conditions
   (iii) continue to next meeting with specific recommendations
   (iv) deny

Note: all applicants are encouraged to present color schemes in detail, including paint chips or samples as early in the process as possible; also make available samples of materials to be used, such as facing materials, canvass for awnings, typefaces for signs, glass if other than clear, etc.

The HLB holds regular meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. To accommodate applicants the HLB can schedule additional meetings, which are generally on the second Tuesday of the month.

If you need further information regarding the HLB, please contact the Planning Department at 415 289-4129 or send your inquiry to the Planning Department, Attn: HLB Chairperson, 420 Litho Street, Sausalito.

2.0 REFERENCE MATERIALS

These resources may be useful:

1. Sausalito City Ordinance 901, Section 8.44.

2. Sausalito City Zoning Ordinance 630.

3. "Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings," Department of the Interior, (GPO937-843).

5. State Historic Building Code

6. The Sausalito Historic Society archives.

The Sausalito Historical Society, located in City Hall, has archives including photographs and files of buildings in the Historic District; assistance is available.

7. Sausalito Historic District Booklet (available in Planning Department).