



STAFF REPORT

SAUSALITO CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA TITLE:

Status Report on Proposed Veterans Administration Project for Machine Shop Building at 25 Libertyship Way

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Consider the recommendations of the Historic Landmarks Board for the Machine Shop Building at 25 Libertyship Way and establishment of a task force.

BACKGROUND

On October 5, 2010, the Veterans Administration (VA) presented to the City Council a conceptual construction plan which involves razing the existing vacant industrial building at 25 Libertyship Way (APN 063-100-11) and constructing an office building for a research facility. The existing industrial building is the former "Machine Shop" that was utilized by the Marinship Corporation during World War II. The Marinship shipbuilding company constructed 93 liberty ships and tankers between 1942 and 1945.

STATUS UPDATE

In response to the VA's presentation and scope of the project, the City Council requested the Historic Landmarks Board (HLB) to review of any historical significance associated with the project site and provide recommendations. The HLB prepared the attached memo which concludes that the Machine Shop building appears to be significant "because of its association with the Marinship, the Marinship's role in the country's shipbuilding efforts during World War II, and the role that the Machine Shop played in the overall function of the Marinship between 1942 and 1945" (**Attachment 1**, HLB Historical Significance Memo). The HLB also provided the following recommendations:

- ✓ Contact the referenced agencies to discuss the VA's project proposal.
- ✓ Allocate funds to retain a qualified historian or preservation professional to complete a detailed evaluation of the Machine Shop, or conduct a peer review of the historic evaluation commissioned by the VA.
- ✓ Begin the Marinship Inventory and allocate additional funds for a historical context study. The Historical Context study sets the framework for whether a building is historic. Note, the Marinship Inventory is scheduled to begin in March 2011.
- ✓ Allocate additional staff time for the review and coordination of this project.

Staff has written a letter to the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO) requesting City notification of SHPO actions regarding the project (see **Attachment 2** for letter). A letter was also sent to the VA requesting notification and documentation regarding all studies and plans regarding the project (see **Attachment 3** for letter).

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SECTION 106 PERMIT PROCESS

Due to the age of the building, and the federal funding for the project, a "Section 106 Permit" will be required. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects that their federally-funded activities and programs have on significant historic properties. "Significant historic properties" are properties that are included in, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register is a list of districts, sites, buildings, and structures that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service in conjunction with the SHPO.

Once the VA submits the Section 106 Permit materials to the SHPO, the City will be given an opportunity to provide comments on the contents of the Section 106 Permit materials. Depending on the significance findings at the state level, the SHPO could refer the Section 106 Permit application to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). The ACHP is an independent federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of the nation's historic resources, and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. A key responsibility of the ACHP is to administer the requirements of Section 106 to ensure historic properties are considered during the development of any federal project. To date, the VA has not submitted a Section 106 application to the SHPO.

A flow chart of the Section 106 Permit process is provided as **Attachment 4**.

TASK FORCE

In addition to the recommendations identified by the HLB, the City Council could appoint a task force to serve in an advisory role to the City Council on the proposed demolition of the Machine Shop Building and construction of the VA research center project. If the Council is interested in establishing a task force, staff suggests it could be composed of 3-5 members with representation by the HLB and Historic Society as well as other interested members of the community.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider the recommendations of the HLB for the Machine Shop Building at 25 Libertyship Way and establishment of a task force.

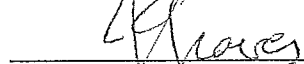
ATTACHMENTS

1. Historical Significance Memo prepared for Marinship-Machine Shop, Building No. 11
2. Letter to State Historic Preservation Office, dated October 29, 2010
3. Letter to Veterans Administration, dated October 29, 2010
4. Section 106 Flow Chart

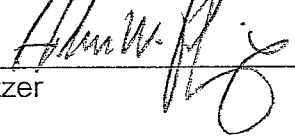
PREPARED BY:


 Heidi Burns, AICP
 Associate Planner

REVIEWED BY:


 Jeremy Graves, AICP
 Community Development Director

SUBMITTED BY:


 Adam W. Politzer
 City Manager

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sausalito City Council
FROM: Sausalito Historic Landmarks Board
RE: Marinship – Machine Shop-Building #11
DATE: November 10, 2010

Methodology

Pursuant to City Council direction, it is the responsibility of the Sausalito Historic Landmarks Board to examine any remodel or demolition application in the City if the application involves a structure of fifty or more years of age. The Board assigns two members to review each project and to consider the gathered information and produce this report. Our report is not intended to replace or augment any technical reports pertaining to this project: any comments regarding structural integrity, engineering, etc., are purely observational.

Architectural Research

The Machine Shop (Listed as Building 11 in the 1945 Inventory of Marinship buildings done for the Maritime Commission at the closing of the yard) was constructed on a concrete foundation on wood piles with concrete flooring. Measuring 135' x 202' the floor area is 27,400 square feet. Built to accommodate the heavy equipment required for the work done there, it had an allowable floor load of 300 lbs. per square foot. Its outside construction consisted of wood framing covered with plywood. Several special mechanical features were also located here to complete the job; a truck drive-in area, one 3-ton crane, three 10-ton bridges and four jib cranes rails including 2 hoists weighing 2 tons each. Steam heaters were provided overhead. Recent hazardous material removal has revealed the original signage showing "MACHINE SHOP" prominently lettered in red on the northeast facing façade. The building has had much of the outside sheathing removed for asbestos removal and retains its original footprint on its original site.

Historical Research

On March 2, 1942, a request from the Chairman of the U. S. Maritime Commission to the Bechtel Corporation of San Francisco started their search for a suitable location to build warships in response to the "immediate national emergency". Within 24 hours a tentative plan for a plant on the Sausalito waterfront was submitted. Sausalito provided good rail and highway access and just ten days later on March 12, 1942, Bechtel signed a contract in Washington DC after presenting a detailed proposal plan. The contract awarded was to deliver 34 ships by the end of 1943. Sausalito's facility, known as 'Marinship' went on to produce an incredible 93 ships completing the last ship, *Mission San Francisco*, shortly after the close of the war in October 1945.

Close to forty buildings were demolished or moved and the land scraped to fill in the bay at Pine Point. This geographic solution, meant for the short-term war effort, has contributed to subsidence in the area of the most prominent fill. The Mold Loft (Building #30, currently the ICB Building on Harbor Drive) has had the filled land surrounding the structure sink as much as five to six feet. The Machine Shop, located in the more southern portion of the Marinship has not experienced the same degree of subsidence and sits on its site relatively unaffected. The construction of the Machine Shop followed this chronology: The driving of the foundation piles began on June 20 and completed on June 22. The concrete foundations were poured by Marinship's own force from June 24 to June 30. Erection of the building started on June 4 and was completed August 8. Construction on an extension to the Machine Shop was started on October 30 and completed on March 22, 1943. All together there were 21 buildings being started and completed for this effort with the first ship, the *William Richardson*, rolling down the ways on September 26, 1942. Marinship, like its sister yard Kaiser, across the bay in Richmond, became an "instant shipyard." The 1945 inventory done at the close of the yard documents 30 buildings. It is significant to note that from September 1942 to October 1945 Marinship produced 16 tankers, which carried water and fuel necessary to replenish ships in service, and 77 Libertyships. Marinship achieved a world record when building the *Huntington Hills* ship in 33 days! It is notable that rapid and fine work done at this yard had a perfect record of solid and dependable construction with several of the vessels surviving in the "Moth Ball Fleet" at Mare Island in Vallejo. The USS Jeremiah O'Brien is a wonderful example of one of these vessels and has been restored and serves as an educational model at the Hyde Street Maritime Museum as well as traveling around the Bay Area.

Significance and Integrity

Based on the research completed to date, it appears that the Machine Shop is significant because of its association with the Marinship, the Marinship's role in the country's shipbuilding efforts during WWII, and the role that the Machine Shop played in the overall function of the Marinship between 1942 and 1945. As a result, the Machine Shop may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under Criterion 1: Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

The building may also be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Eligibility for listing in these registers requires that a resource retain integrity. That is, the property needs to retain the physical features that convey its significance. The categories of integrity are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Because of the Machine Shop is on its original site, is adjacent to buildings that date from the same period of construction, has been largely unmodified since its construction in

1942, and is still situated in an industrial setting, we believe the building retains sufficient features to retain integrity.

Additional research would be required to confirm these preliminary findings of significance and integrity.

Findings

The Historical Landmarks Board discussed the report and made the following findings after their discussion.

1. **Is the structure associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history or cultural heritage of Sausalito, California, or the United States?**

The board finds High Significance under this criterion.

2. **Is this structure associated with the life or lives of one or more people important to our past?**

The Board finds High Significance under this criterion.

3. **Does the structure embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual, or possess high artistic values?**

The Board finds Significance under this criterion.

4. **Has the structure yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history?**

The Board finds Low Significance under this criterion.

Researched by: Carolyn Kiernat and Vicki Nichols

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To date there has been no indication that the Department of Veterans Affairs has initiated the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act. The members of the HLB would like to stress the urgency of action to evaluate the significance of this building and the surrounding area. Our recommendations below stem from a concern that the building could be demolished without the City of Sausalito's consent or knowledge.

At minimum, the VA should initiate the Section 106 process with the State Office of Historic Preservation to evaluate the impact that a proposed project at the Machine Shop

may have on a potential historic resource. The City of Sausalito should be a primary consulting party in this review process.

1. The HLB encourages the City Council or local leadership to make immediate contact with the following agencies to discuss the proposed project and to recommend that the proper federal review process be initiated:

A. VA Federal Preservation Officer

Ms. Kathleen Schamel
Federal Preservation Officer
Office of Construction & Facilities Management
Department of Veteran Affairs
811 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington DC 20420
Phone: 202-461-8254
Email: kathlen.schamel2@va.gov

B. Advisory Council for Historic Preservation (ACHP)

Brian Lusher
ACHP Liaison to the VA
Phone: 202-606-8580
Email: blusher@achp.gov

C. California Office of Historic Preservation

1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

Wayne Donaldson, State Historic Preservation Officer
Phone: 916-445-7050
Email: mwdonaldson@parks.ca.gov

Ed Carroll, State Historian
Phone: 916-445-7006
Email: ecarroll@parks.ca.gov

D. National Trust for Historic Preservation, Western Regional Office

5 Third Street, Suite 707
San Francisco, California 94103
Phone: 415-947-0692
Email: wro@nthp.org

Anthea Hartig, Director
Email: Anthea.Hartig@nthp.org

Anthony Veerkamp, Program Director
Email: Anthony.Veerkamp@nthp.org

2. The HLB urges the City Council to allocate funds for completion of a detailed historic evaluation of the Machine Shop by a qualified historian or preservation professional. If the City is able to obtain a copy of the historic evaluation commissioned by the VA, a peer review of this document may be sufficient.

Estimated cost for historic evaluation: \$4,500

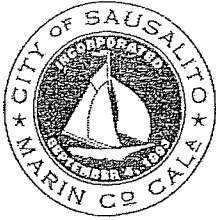
3. The HLB encourages the City Council to begin commission the survey and inventory of the existing buildings in the Marinship that is allocated in the current budget. A historic context statement should be included in this survey.

Estimated cost for survey/inventory/context statement ranges from \$15,500 to \$25,000

4. The HLB encourages the allocation of additional staff time for review and coordination of this project. Time would be allocated toward coordination of the City's role in the Section 106 review process, coordination of public meetings, if needed; coordination of materials needed to solicit proposals for building evaluation and survey; and review of materials submitted for accuracy, clarity and consistency.

AYES: Nichols, Supino, Kiernat, Flavin, Pierce
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

Sources: Sausalito Historical Society archives, 1945 Inventory of Marinship Buildings by R. F. Grambow, *Marinship at War* by Charles Wollenberg, *Moments in Time* by Jack Tracy, information provided on the Bechtel website,



**CITY OF SAUSALITO
PLANNING DIVISION**

October 29, 2010

Office of Historic Preservation
Attn: Ed Carroll, State Historian I
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

RE: Request for Notification regarding the Section 106 Permit for the VA
Sausalito Research Center located at 25 Libertyship Way

Dear Mr. Carroll:

The City of Sausalito has been informed by the Veteran's Administration of a development proposal which includes the demolition of a building that is over 50 years old at 25 Libertyship Way (063-100-11). The City understands that a Section 106 Permit application will be submitted to the State Office of Historic Preservation (SHPO). As such, the City requests the SHPO to provide the City with notification and copies of any relevant information pertaining to the Section 106 Permit application, in addition to any public comments deadlines. Please mail all correspondence regarding the Section 106 application to:

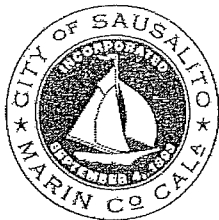
City of Sausalito Community Development Department
Attn: Jeremy Graves, Community Development Director
420 Litho Street
Sausalito, CA 94965

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 415-289-4135 or email at hburns@ci.sausalito.ca.us if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Heidi Burns, AICP
Associate Planner



CITY OF SAUSALITO PLANNING DIVISION

October 29, 2010

San Francisco VA medical Center (001)
Attn: John Pechman, Facility Planner
4150 Clement Street
San Francisco, CA 94121

RE: Request for Notification for all Studies and Environmental Documents regarding the
VA Sausalito Research Center located at 25 Libertyship Way

Dear Mr. Pechman:

Thank you for your past efforts in meeting with the City regarding the development of the former "Machine Shop" building related to the World War II activities within the Marinship for a Research Center to be located at 25 Libertyship Way (063-100-11). The purpose of this letter is to formally request that the Veterans Administration provide the City with notification and documentation regarding all studies and plans (e.g., Section 106 Permit application and other cultural and historical information, geotechnical studies, preliminary grading and drainage, etc.), all environmental assessments related to the National Environmental Policy Act (e.g., Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact or an Environmental Impact Statement), and any Notices of Intent and public hearings, and pending decision-making activities. The City is also requesting to be provided with notice regarding all deadlines to comment on any of the aforementioned documentation.

Please mail all correspondence and documentation to:

City of Sausalito Community Development Department
Attn: Jeremy Graves, Community Development Director
420 Litho Street
Sausalito, CA 94965

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 415-289-4135 or email at hburns@ci.sausalito.ca.us if you have any questions.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Heidi Burns, AICP
Associate Planner

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