

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 7

*Resource Name or #: 4840 Mission Street

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☐ Unrestricted

*a. County: San Francisco

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad:

Date:

T ; R ; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec ; M.D. B.M.

c. Address: 4840 Mission Street

City: San Francisco

Zip: 94112

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) APN 6959/019

*P3a. **Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries) 4840 Mission Street is a mortuary building with an L-shaped footprint and a series of flat composition roofs. It is 30,533 sq. ft. and alternately one and two stories over a full basement. The original 1925 building is unreinforced masonry block construction, and the 1959 addition is reinforced concrete. It is located in a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood. The building fronts Mission Street on the east; a parking lot surrounds the building on the south and west sides. Several immature trees are planted along the Mission Street sidewalk, and planters along the building's south façade and parking lot include trees, shrubs, and groundcover. Site features include low concrete masonry unit walls that separate the parking lot from Mission Street, a large sign post with neon lights near the southeast corner of the property that reads "Valente Marini Perata & Co. Funeral Directors Parking," and lamp posts on steel bases that are mounted on low walls in the parking lot.

The primary (east) façade is clad in 38-square-inch porcelain enamel panels with brick wainscoting at street level, and it terminates in metal coping. In the center of the façade is a projecting neon sign that reads "Valente Marini Perata & Co. Funeral Directors." Large painted letters on the south end of the façade have the same message and include the address. A recessed entry is marked by brick quoins; the walls of the entry are clad in brick and the ceiling in stucco. Marble steps with a tiled landing lead to a pair of glazed aluminum doors with a fixed aluminum-sash transom. The recessed entry is flanked by four, eight-light aluminum-sash windows on the south and two on the north. Identical aluminum-sash windows are located on the second floor, and above the recessed entry are a pair of aluminum-sash windows with four lights each. (Continued on Page 3)

*P3b. **Resource Attributes:** HP6. 1-3 story commercial building; HP16. Religious building; HP39. Mortuary, Assembly

*P4. **Resources Present:** ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing



P5b. Description of Photo:

Primary façade looking west
(1/30/17)

*P6. **Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** ☒ Historic 1925 or 1926

☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both
(SF Assessor/building permit)

*P7. **Owner and Address:**

Taylor 1998 Revocable Trust
4840 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112

*P8. **Recorded by:**

ESA
550 Kearny Street, Suite 800
San Francisco, CA 94108

*P9. **Date Recorded:** Feb. 2017

*P10. **Survey Type:** (Describe)
Intensive

*P11. **Report Citation:** San

Francisco Planning Department. Draft Excelsior Outer Mission Street Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Survey.

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

DPR 523A (1/95)

*Required information

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 7

*NRHP Status Code 3S

*Resource Name or # 4840 Mission Street

B1. Historic Name: Valente, Marini, Perata and Co.
B2. Common Name: Valente, Marini, Perata and Co.
B3. Original Use: Mortuary

B4. Present Use: Mortuary

*B5. Architectural Style: Midcentury Modern

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

Before construction of the subject property in 1925 or 1926, the parcel was vacant. John A. Porporato was the architect of the original building; he was a prominent Italian-American architect in San Francisco. The building was initially designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, and the estimated cost was \$40,000. Historic aerial photographs reveal that a formal landscaped garden originally occupied the western half of the lot; it was demolished by 1956. A billboard measuring 25 ft. by 10 ft. was erected in 1937. That same year, unspecified work in the amount of \$1,800 was completed and designed by architects Albert Farr and J. Francis Ward. Alterations were designed by the prominent architect and future urban planner Mario J. Ciampi in 1948, and work appears to be limited to the interior. Various site improvements were made in 1953 in the amount of \$8,000. A large addition and major alterations to the original building in the amount of \$184,985 were designed by architect Otto Hintermann in 1959. At that time, the building was redesigned in the Midcentury Modern style. The neon sign on the west (rear) façade was installed in 1961. In 1977, a concrete masonry unit "fence" was installed between the parking lot and Mission Street.

*B7. Moved? ☒No ☐Yes ☐Unknown Date: N/A

Original Location: N/A

*B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: John A. Porporato (1925 design), Otto Hintermann (addition) b. Builder: De Martini Bros., Inc. (addition)

*B10. Significance: Theme: Mid-Century Modern Architecture

Area: Outer Mission

Period of Significance: 1959

Property Type: Commercial

Applicable Criteria: C

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

The building at 4840 Mission Street was originally constructed in 1925 or 1926 in a neighborhood alternately known as the Excelsior, Mission Terrace, and Outer Mission. Various groups of European descent settled in the area in the 1870s; it has historically been home to a large Italian population. The area developed quickly as San Franciscans relocated from the areas affected by the 1906 earthquake and subsequent fire.

The mortuary located on the subject property has been continuously operated by Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. funeral directors since the 1920s. Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. has managed mortuaries in San Francisco since 1888, and the business has been owned by five generations of family members. The original location on Stockton Street was demolished in 1906, and operations temporarily moved to Lombard Street. In 1907, a new permanent location opened at 649 Green Street, and the first branch location opened at 3448 Mission Street in 1917. There was a need for a larger building to accommodate the growing business, and the subject property at 4840 Mission Street was constructed in 1925 or 1926. It was later enlarged and redesigned in 1959.
(Continued on Page 5)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) None

*B12. References:

See Continuation Sheet

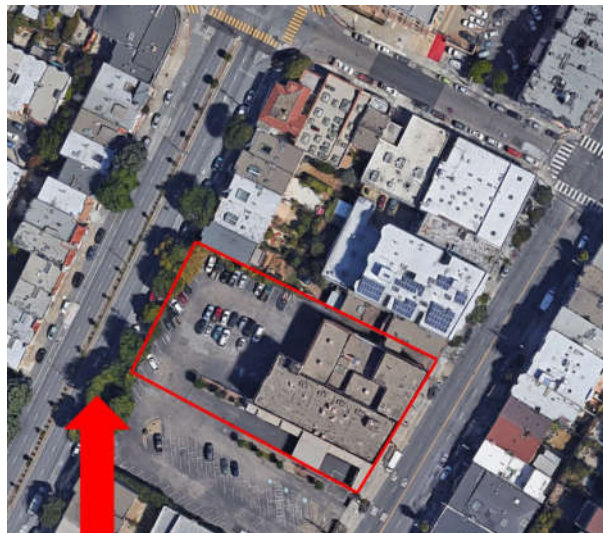
B13. Remarks: None

*B14. Evaluator: ESA

*Date of Evaluation: February 2020

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



Source: Google Maps

*Recorded by: ESA

*Date: Feb 2017/Feb 2020

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

P3a. Description (Continued): All fenestration on the second floor is framed by continuous bands of porcelain enamel-clad molding. A continuous wood belt course delineates the top of the first floor. At the south end of the primary façade, this molding projects over an enclosed one-story corridor along the south side of the building and also marks the driveway used for funerals. The corridor is accessed by a recessed entry with a pair of glazed aluminum doors with a fixed aluminum-sash transom and sidelights.

The south façade fronts the main driveway used for funerals and is separated from the adjacent parking lot by low concrete walls that contain concrete steps and a ramp. The first floor is a single-story mass that is clad in brick and features segments of flat roof with wood trim. The main entrance is approximately in the center of the south façade and features a pair of glazed aluminum doors with a three-light, fixed aluminum-sash transom and fixed sidelights. The entrance features a flat roof that projects over the driveway and above the flat roofs of the first floor. To the east of the entrance are five large, fixed aluminum-sash windows that enclose the entry corridor that is accessible from the east and west façades. To the west of the entrance are seven more large windows beneath three flat roofs that step down toward the rear (west side) of the property. The second floor is set back from the first floor and is clad in either concrete or stucco with porcelain enamel panels at the east end, and the business name is painted on these panels. On the east end of the second floor are three glass block windows that are framed by continuous bands of projecting concrete molding, and four similarly trimmed glass block windows are located on the west end of the second floor. A large metal vent is located above the main entry. The second floor terminates in metal coping.

The rear (west) façade fronts a rear parking lot and is composed of four bays. The south bay is composed of a one-story corridor that is accessed by a single glazed aluminum door with a fixed aluminum-sash transom and sidelights. The bay terminates in a flat roof. The first-from-south bay is three stories in height and is clad in either concrete or stucco. It features two paneled garage doors at the basement level. The second-from-south bay is three stories in height and is clad in either concrete or stucco. At the basement level, it features one paneled garage door and a fixed, four-light, aluminum-sash window with wire glass. At the first floor, it features two four-over-four aluminum-sash windows. At the second floor, it features two, eight-light aluminum-sash windows. The north bay is two stories in height and is clad in painted concrete blocks. At the basement level, it features two paneled garage doors and three one-over-one wood-sash windows with wire glass. (The southernmost window has been partially covered with a metal vent on a wood panel.) At the first floor are a series of leaded Tudor arch windows. There are two individual wood-frame, double casement windows, and there is one wood-frame, double casement flanked by single casement windows. The north bay terminates in a molded cornice with red roof tiles.

The north (side) façade is separated from the adjacent property by a narrow driveway that slopes down toward the rear parking lot. The façade is clad in painted concrete blocks except for the east end, which is clad in porcelain enamel panels with brick wainscoting at street level. The façade is composed of three bays. The east bay is two stories in height and features wood-sash casement windows on the first floor with concrete sills and wood-sash single-hung windows with concrete sills on the first and second floors. The east bay terminates in metal coping. Toward the west end of the bay, a classically-inspired porte-cochère spans the driveway and provides a covered entry to a pair of flush wood doors and marble steps. The porte-cochère is supported by two ornamental pilasters flanking the doors, and the flat roof spans the driveway to rest on four columns upon a low concrete block wall. The porte-cochère terminates in a simple architrave and molded cornice with metal coping. The center bay is one story over an exposed basement, and an external chimney divides the bay in half. The basement level features two fixed wood-sash windows and a glazed wood-frame door. The first floor features fixed, double casement, and single-hung wood-sash windows with simple concrete sills. At the west end of the first floor are three leaded, wood-sash Tudor arch windows. The center double casement is flanked by single casements on a continuous concrete sill. The eastern part of the center bay terminates in a molded cornice with metal coping, and the western part terminates in molded cornice with red roof tiles. The west bay is three stories in height with a vertical projection that provides roof access also encloses an interior stairwell. The basement level features a pair of partially-glazed wood doors with wire glass. Staggered on the upper floors of the west bay are two fixed, four-light, aluminum-sash windows and two, eight-light aluminum-sash windows. The bay terminates in metal coping.

The building exterior appears to be in good condition.

***Recorded by:** ESA

***Date:** Feb 2017/Feb 2020

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

P3a. Description (Continued):



South façade looking northeast. (ESA)



North façade and driveway with portico, looking west. (ESA)

*Recorded by: ESA

*Date: Feb 2017/Feb 2020

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

B10. Significance (Continued): According to San Francisco journalist Herb Caen, Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. "has handled every big Italian funeral since 1892." San Francisco-based journalist/publisher Nickolas Marinelli describes the business as "the most respected and highly recommended funeral home in the region."

John A. Porporato (1877-1965) was a prolific architect of local significance who worked from 1901 to ca. 1953 (SF Planning Department, HRER Case No. 2012.0015E). Research revealed that Porporato was the architect of numerous residential buildings in San Francisco, and his design for the mortuary at 4840 Mission Street may have been an important commercial project for him.

Research revealed little information about Otto Hintermann (1895-1996), the architect who designed the 1959 addition. ESA did not identify any of his other completed projects, either in San Francisco or elsewhere. Hintermann was an active member of San Francisco's architectural profession. He was president of the San Francisco Architectural Club and served on its various committees, he was treasurer of the State Association of California Architects as well as its Northern Section, and he was on the Board of Control for *The Architect and Engineer* magazine.

Evaluation

A San Francisco Planning Department Memo dated December 30, 2019 regarding 4840 Mission Street stated the following.

...the Planning Department's ("Department") determination that the building at 4840 Mission Street ("subject building") is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places ("National Register") as an individual property. This determination is based on the Department's earlier determination that the subject building is eligible for individual listing in the California Register of Historical Resources ("California Register") under Criterion 3 as an outstanding and intact example of a large-scale Midcentury Modern commercial building in San Francisco. Accordingly, the Department now finds that the subject building is eligible for listing in the National Register for local significance under Criterion C (Design/Construction).

This determination was made based on the Planning Department's March 8, 2018, Historic Resource Evaluation Response (2018 HRER) in which the subject building's California Register significance was determined. The following criterion by criterion evaluation excerpts are taken directly from the 2018 HRER.

Criterion 1: Property is associated 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.

To be eligible under the event Criterion, the building cannot merely be associated with historic events or trends but must have a specific association to be considered significant. Staff concurs with ARG that the subject building is not eligible for inclusion on the California Register individually or as a contributor to a potential historic district under Criterion 1.

4840 Mission Street was constructed in 1926 and assumed its current appearance largely as the result of a major expansion and renovation in 1959. Although the Valente, Marini, Perata & Co. funeral parlor is associated with San Francisco's historic Italian-American community, it is neither the oldest nor the longest continuously operating Italian-American business in San Francisco. By the time the funeral parlor was constructed in its current location in 1926, the Outer Mission/Excelsior area was long established as a prominent Italian-American neighborhood supporting numerous Italian-American enterprises and institutions, such as Copus Christi Church (original building constructed in 1898). Furthermore, the building's current appearance essentially dates to 1959, which further distances it from the Italian-American community's historic roots. Therefore the subject building does not possess the specific associations with the development of the Italian-American community – both throughout San Francisco and more specifically within the Excelsior/Outer Mission neighborhood – necessary to support a finding of individual significance under Criterion 1.

As noted, the Excelsior/Outer Mission neighborhood does have historical associations with the Italian-American Community. However, the neighborhood has undergone dramatic demographic changes that have reduced the size of the Italian-American community relative to other groups. Although several institutions with clear ties to the Italian-American community do remain in the neighborhood (e.g., the Sons of Italy Hall & Cultural Center, 5051 Mission St.; the Italian-American Social Club, 21-25 Russia St.), they are too geographically dispersed to cohere into a historic district eligible under Criterion 1.

(Continued on Page 6)

*Recorded by: ESA

*Date: Feb 2017/Feb 2020

■ Continuation

□ Update

B10. Significance (Continued):

Therefore the subject building does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR either individually or as a contributor to a potential historic district under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: Property is associated with the lives of persons important in our local, regional or national past.

Planning Staff concurs with ARG's report that the subject building does not appear eligible for listing in the CRHR under Criterion 2. Although founding partner Frank Marini was a prominent philanthropist and community leader, he died seven years before the subject building assumed its current appearance in 1959. Records show that none of the other owners and operators of the funeral parlor was important in our local, regional, or national past. Therefore, 4840 Mission Street is not eligible under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

Planning Staff concurs with ARG's conclusion that the subject building at 4840 Mission Street is eligible for individual listing in the CRHR under Criterion 3 as an outstanding intact example of a large-scale Midcentury Modern commercial building in San Francisco. Planning staff also finds that the subject building is not located in a CRHR-eligible historic district...

According to this [*San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement*] evaluation framework, the subject building appears eligible for individual listing in the CRHR Under Criterion 3 due to its full expression of Midcentury Modern design, which remains essentially Unaltered since the time of its construction in 1959. Intact features of the subject building that embody the Midcentury Modern style include its "flat roof, porcelain enamel panels forming a geometric grid across the façade, roman brick veneer water table, aluminum sash windows and doors, clean lines, and minimal exterior detailing largely limited to the sweeping belt course across the east façade and the projecting boxes enframing windows at the second story."...

The finding of individual eligibility under Criterion 3 derives from the subject building's full embodiment of the Midcentury Modern style, and not from its status as the work of Otto G. Hintermann, who is not a recognized master architect and the majority of the subject building's exterior features dating to this original phase of construction have been removed.

The Planning Department conducted additional analysis to determine if the subject building contributes to a potential historic district. The specific direction of the initial district analysis was..."[a] larger cluster for [prioritized district analysis] could include all of the individually-identified Midcentury Modern buildings from c.1935 to c.1965."

In examining this cluster, Planning staff finds that the Midcentury Modern buildings identified in the survey are too geographically dispersed to form a coherent historic district. This remains true even if one incorporates some of the less distinguished Midcentury Modern buildings on and around Mission Street that were not identified in the survey...

In conclusion, the subject building is eligible for individual listing in the CRHR under Criterion 3, but is not located in an eligible historic district.

Criterion 4: Property yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Based upon a review of information in the Departments records, the subject property is not significant under Criterion 4 since this significance criterion typically applies to rare construction types when involving the built Environment. The subject property is not an example of a rare construction type.

*Recorded by: ESA

*Date: Feb 2017/Feb 2020

☒ Continuation

☐ Update

B10. Significance (Continued):

Integrity

The following integrity analysis was taken directly from the 2018 HRER.

Integrity is defined as “the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical Characteristics that existed during the property’s period of significance.” Historic integrity enables a property To illustrate significant aspects of its past. All seven qualities do not need to be present as long as the overall Sense of past time and place is evident.

The 2018 HRER determined that 4840 Mission Street retained all seven aspects (location, association, design, workmanship, setting, feeling, and materials) of integrity and overall retained a high degree of integrity to its 1959 period of significance.

Summary

A San Francisco Planning Department Memo dated December 30, 2019 determined that the building at 4840 Mission Street is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as an individual property for local significance under Criterion C (Design/Construction). This determination was based on the Department’s earlier determination that 4840 Mission Street is eligible for individual listing in the California Register of Historical Resources under “Criterion 3 as an outstanding and intact example of a large-scale Midcentury Modern commercial building in San Francisco.”

B12. References (Continued):

References

Architectural Resources Group (ARG). *Draft Historic Resource Evaluation for 4840 Mission Street*, January 2017. Draft copy provided to ESA on February 7, 2017.

Caen, Herb. “Pocketful of Notes,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 February 1970, p. 31, col. 1.

Group Delta. *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment: 4840 Mission Street*, 9 September 2015.

Jebe, Walter G. *Images of America: San Francisco’s Excelsior District*. Arcadia Publishing: San Francisco, CA. 2004.

Marinelli, Nickolas. “Valente, Marini, Perata & Company,” *L’Italo-Americano* (www.italoamericano.org), 25 October 2012.

San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. *APN 6959/019*, Building plans and permits.

San Francisco Planning Department. *Draft Excelsior Outer Mission Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) Survey*. Draft copy provided to ESA on February 8, 2017.

-----, *Historic Resource Evaluation Response Case No. 2012.0015E: 245 Marina Boulevard*, March 2012.

-----, *Draft Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Historic Context Statement 1865-1965*, February 17, 2016.

-----, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement*, January 2011.

San Francisco Planning Department. *4840 Mission Street National Register of Historic Places Eligibility Memo*, December 30, 2019.

San Francisco Planning Department. *Historic Resource Evaluation Response for 4840 Mission Street*, March 8, 2018.

The Architect and Engineer (various issues).