
NOONAN BUILDING ARTISTS

noonanbuildingartists.com

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Good afternoon Commissioners,

My name is Kim Austin, and I am here today to speak on behalf of the Noonan Building Artists. First I would like express our group support for the preservation project at Pier 70. We have been an active community resource here for many decades and believe the work you are doing is an important and necessary project that will both save the existing buildings on this historic site and will revive this area in ways that are yet to be seen. We are excited to be part of the evolution of restoration, innovation, and rebirth at pier 70. We look forward to continuing the rich history of art house community that the Noonan Building has served for over 40 years.

We do however object to the proposed demolition of building no. 11 as stated in the Pier 70 Master Plan. We understand that the Noonan Building is slated for demolition for 2 reasons.

#1

Even though the Noonan Building was built within the period of historic significance in 1941, it has not been classified as a historically significant building within the Pier 70 Master Plan. Building no. 11 is considered a context resource, or a contributing building.

#2

The building is considered beyond repair, the infrastructure is said to be compromised, and it has been claimed that it is too expensive to be included in the Forest City Waterfront Preservation Project.

We question the validity of these 2 arguments and could elaborate from various perspectives, but today we would simply like to point out and reflect on 2 reports that are available to the public on the San Francisco Port website.

First we cite the “Request for Historic District Status” prepared by Carey & Company. In this 268 page report the history of Pier 70 is meticulously outlined. This report states that the Noonan Building maintains a high degree of integrity for location, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship. It does not cite any serious damage or alteration to the building.

However in the “Pier 70 Historic Building Survey” also conducted by Carey & Co. in 2008, the Noonan Building is not included. There is no documentation of the building at all in this extensive survey of the historic Pier 70 structures. It was simply overlooked or worse yet, excluded.

It is troubling that there appears to be no conclusive examination of the Noonan Building, while other “contributing” buildings are thoroughly documented in both of these reports, regardless of their physical condition or historic status. We feel the demolition of the Noonan Building would be a terrible and irreversible mistake, and will seriously blemish the integrity of the preservation project.

The loss of the Noonan Building and the artists community it supports would touch many in the surrounding Dog Patch and Potrero Hill neighborhoods, as well as 100’s of visitors who come to the site each year. As one of the few remaining art houses in San Francisco, and an active participant in the city wide open studio program, it is hard to determine the impact the destruction of this building would have on the community.

In conclusion, we object to approving any plans that propose the demolition of building no.11 with out research, justification, or clarification of the living resource that it is. We are deeply concerned that the unique and historic qualities that are found only in the Noonan Building would be lost simply because the structure was overlooked and not surveyed.

We thank you for your time.

The Noonan Building Artists