



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: January 9, 2023

DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTS

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-024
Business Name: Developing Environments
Business Address: 540 Alabama St.
District: District 9
Applicant: Carlo Abruzzese, Special Projects Coordinator
Nomination Date: November 9, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Developing Environments is an artist live-work space located at 540 Alabama Street in the Mission neighborhood. Founded in 1972 and formally incorporated as a non-profit in 1976, the organization emerged when a group of artists identified a vacant, three-story warehouse at the corner of Alabama and Mariposa streets and transformed it into a space for artists. The organization's founders envisioned a place where artists could live, create, and be in community with one another. At first, the founders fashioned makeshift studios with cloth barriers and tents; eventually, with the support of building's landlord, the artists erected new walls, electric wiring, plumbing, and windows, bringing the structure up to code. Today, Developing Environments features 46 live-work units, and has provided safe and affordable studio space to more than 375 artists since its inception in the 1970s.

Developing Environments operates with a consensus based, non-hierarchical governing structure. Artist-members share resources, collectively maintain the building facilities, and support each other's careers. The organizational philosophy traces its roots to the hippie movement and co-housing experiments of the 1960s, but continues to be shaped and upheld by the participation of its artist-members. Developing Environment's values also manifest in the layout and physical features of the building, which include communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities, along with meeting rooms and shared gallery space.

Artist-members at Developing Environments work in a variety of mediums and forms including performance, writing, photography, painting, jewelry, textile, sculpture, and digital art. Although members have displayed their work in museums and galleries around the world, their primary impact is in San Francisco, where they contribute to the local community in countless ways. Members have served as curators for the Queer Cultural Center, volunteered at the Mission Food Hub, advocated for bikeable and walkable streets, held teaching positions at local colleges, and founded new programs including the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival, Marigold Project, and SF Art & Film. In a city that has been losing artists in recent decades, Developing Environments has also served as a model for how San Francisco can support artists and cultivate a vibrant creative community.

CRITERION 1

Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

Legacy Business Program
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San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





Yes, Developing Environments has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

540 Alabama St. from 1976 to Present (46 Years)

CRITERION 2

Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, Developing Environments has contributed to the history and identity of the Mission neighborhood and San Francisco.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- Although Developing Environments is not associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition as a collective organization, many individual artist-members have worked on culturally significant art and/or craft projects over the years.
- Developing Environments is associated with the transformation of Showplace Square from an industrial area to a hub for artists. The neighborhood now features numerous arts-oriented businesses, organizations, and communities.
- Developing Environments has received coverage in the San Francisco Chronicle and San Francisco Examiner. Additionally, numerous articles about individual artist-members have appeared in the press. The organization received a commendation for Mayor London Breed for its 45th anniversary.

CRITERION 3

Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

Yes, Developing Environments is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Developing Environments qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Consensus based, non-hierarchical governing structure.
- Affordable live-work space.
- Layout of building including studio spaces and public hallways.
- Communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities.

CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Housing and work space for artists.

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Developing Environments currently located at 540 Alabama St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

Hearing Date: January 9, 2023

DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTS

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Developing Environments, currently located at 540 Alabama St.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included on the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on January 9, 2023, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission hereby includes Developing Environments in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at Developing Environments.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Consensus based, non-hierarchical governing structure.
- Affordable live-work space.
- Layout of building including studio spaces and public hallways.
- Communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Developing Environments on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Housing and work space for artists.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on January 9, 2023.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-024
Business Name: Developing Environments
Business Address: 540 Alabama St.
District: District 9
Applicant: Carlo Abruzzese, Special Projects Coordinator
Nomination Received: November 9, 2022
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen

CRITERION 1: Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?

☒ Yes ☐ No

540 Alabama St. from 1976 to Present (46 Years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

☒ Yes ☐ No

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?

☒ Yes ☐ No

NOTES: n/a

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: November 9, 2022

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 9



City and County of San Francisco

HILLARY RONEN

November 9, 2022

Richard Kurylo, Legacy Business Program Manager
Legacy Business Program, San Francisco Office of Small Business

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing a Letter of Nomination in support of Developing Environments, located at 540 Alabama Street. Developing Environments is one of San Francisco's oldest artist live-work spaces and a longstanding organization and incubator for our city's artist community.

Since its inception in 1972, Developing Environments has housed and supported hundreds of local artists and creatives. Our city's legacy and reputation for the arts and culture, especially in the Mission District, would not be what it is today without the artist community's significant contributions. Sadly, many of our community's artists have been displaced due to gentrification and skyrocketing rents, and we are so grateful that Developing Environments has continued to be a home and anchor for local artists despite these challenges. Developing Environments is also remarkable for its special non-hierarchical and consensus-based organization, which truly embodies collective living. I am proud that Developing Environments continues to thrive today and that I can nominate this special live-work community to the Legacy Business Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Ronen".

Hillary Ronen
Supervisor, District 9



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Developing Environments

Business owner name(s): N/A (Non-Profit Organization)

Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business

Current business address: 540 Alabama St.

Telephone: (415) 626 – 0366

Email: cvea@sonic.net

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: developingenvironments.org

Facebook: @developingenvironments

Twitter:

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 0 1 0 1 8 9 8

Do any of these describe your business? (select all that apply)

Requires at least 51% of the business be owned, operated, and controlled by the business designation below.

☐ Immigrant-Owned Business

☐ Owned by Person with a Disability

☐ LGBTQ+-Owned Business

☐ Veteran-Owned Business

☐ Minority-Owned Business*

☐ Woman-Owned Business

**Minority is defined as on or more of the following racial or ethnic groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Middle Eastern or North African; Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*

Contact Person Information

Contact person name: Carlo Abruzzese

Contact person title: Special Projects Coordinator for Management Team

Contact telephone: (415) 626 – 0366

Contact email: cvea@sonic.net

Business Location(s)

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business.

If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address.

Original San Francisco address: 540 Alabama St. Zip Code: 94110

Is this location the founding location of the business? (Y/N): Y

Dates at this location: From: December 27, 1976 To: Present

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other Address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Other address (if applicable): Zip Code:

Dates at this location: From: To:

Section Three:

Disclosure Statement.

San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified. A business deemed not current with all San Francisco taxes, business registration and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for grants through the Legacy Business Program.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

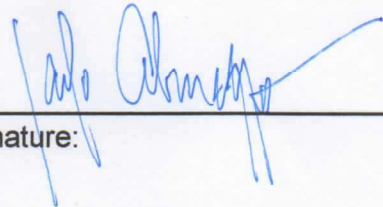
- ☒ I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- ☒ I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- ☒ I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- ☒ I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- ☒ I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- ☒ I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- ☒ I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

CARLO ABRUZZESE JULY 1, 2022

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:



DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTS

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

a. Describe the business. What does it sell or provide?

Developing Environments is an artist live/work community located at 540 Alabama Street in the Mission District.

Developing Environments is an ever-evolving social experiment in being a fully consensus-based community. They are governed by by-laws and dedicated to a completely non-hierarchical system of living collectively, maintaining their facility collectively, updating and archiving organizational systems collectively, and collectively utilizing their individual and shared resources to enhance each other's careers and build new resources. Through their time-tested ability to adapt and respond to the shifting socio-economic priorities of San Francisco, the artist-members of Developing Environments have created a continuous cultural impact with their artwork and civic engagement, which is especially notable in a city where artists and creatives are, arguably, the very thing that has made San Francisco the deeply ineffable and inimitable cultural destination that it is today.

b. Describe who the business serves.

Developing Environments serves a number of communities, from the active member-residents themselves to the broader artist communities that benefit from the members activities and efforts, locally and worldwide.

Since its inception, Developing Environments has housed over 375 artists who have individually and collectively made an immeasurable impact on the Bay Area. The breadth of artistic, programmatic, and serviceable work that branches out from Developing Environments is tremendous, ongoing, and indeed a living, breathing force. The artistic expression varies widely: performance (singers, dancers, circus performers), writers, photographers, painters, craft (jewelry, textiles), sculpture, installation art and digital art.

In addition to their artistic endeavors, many of the artist-residents are engaged in local civic community service. Some examples: leading advocacy projects with the SFMTA to keep San Francisco walkable and bike-able; fostering hard-to-home dogs for the SFSPCA; and ongoing core volunteer support for the Mission Food Hub, SF/Marin Food Bank, and Maitri AIDS Hospice.

c. In about 2-5 words (15-30 characters), describe what the business is known for.

Artist live/work community.

CRITERION 1: The business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years

a. Provide a short history of the business, including locations and owners.

Developing Environments was founded in 1972 by a small group of artists seeking an affordable space in which they could live and make work. They discovered a vacant three-story warehouse at the corner of Alabama and Mariposa streets in the Mission District that they could transform into an artist community. They moved in, created make-shift studios divided by improvised cloth barriers and tents, and began making art. The landlord, Ken Royce, soon became aware of their presence in his building and chose to help them rather than evict them. With his advice and assistance, they were able to obtain a low-interest loan to finance the renovation of the building. Sheet rock walls, electrical wiring, plumbing, lighting, and a sprinkler system were installed. They sledge-hammered openings in the exterior walls to recreate the windows that had been closed up. The artists brought the building up to code, obtained a long lease, organized an internal system of self-governance based on consensus, and formalized their structure as a legal artist live/work community. Since that time, Developing Environments has been providing truly affordable live-work space for locally-based artists.

Developing Environments was formally organized and incorporated as a California Not-for-Profit Corporation on December 27, 1976.

Since Developing Environments was first founded, it has operated continuously at the same location—540 Alabama Street. While individual artists have come and gone over the decades, the primary role of Developing Environments—to provide a safe and robust self-governing community of affordable live-work spaces—has not changed.

b. Provide the ownership history of the business in a consolidated year-to-year format.

Developing Environments has been a California Not-for-Profit Corporation since its incorporation in 1976. It is governed by a Board of Directors (aka 'Management Team') that is comprised of active artist residents. Developing Environments is currently applying for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.

c. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for any significant length of time.

Developing Environments has not ceased operations since it was incorporated in 1976.

CRITERION 2: The business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community

a. Describe the business' contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community, business sector, or San Francisco as a whole.

Developing Environments has created a powerful legacy of effectively safeguarding the arts in San Francisco, by providing affordable live-work space for locally-based artists, since 1972. Developing Environments has been a creative hub and a secure home to artists across all disciplines, acting as a critical haven for their minds and bodies, and ensuring that their dynamic practices have a healthy and robust place to incubate and grow.

The creation of Developing Environments coincided with several movements within San Francisco. The organization embraced the artist-hippie movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s incorporating the ethos of the time into their internal governance and hierarchical structures. Beyond the neighborhoods of the Haight-Ashbury and the Castro, part of the Mission District was a 'no man's land'. The move into the empty warehouse on the eastern edge of the Mission District made the organization an early pioneer in the transformation of this part of the city into a vibrant artist neighborhood.

b. Is the business associated with significant people or events, either now or in the past?

To this day, Developing Environments is run on a consensus-based philosophy of decision making that has its roots in the hippie movement of non-hierarchical governance. Developing Environments is also an example of the communal co-housing model of living that has roots back to the early 1960s.

Over the years, there have been many significant artists that have lived and worked at Developing Environments. Some are nationally and internationally known. Other artists are important for their contribution to their specific craft and community. And some are teachers and administrators that have brought insight and development to the art community. Developing Environments believes that all the artists who have lived and worked there are significant and bring their own contribution to the greater community.

As a pioneer in the transformation of the east Mission warehouse area, Developing Environments has been a champion for the development of the arts in the area. The transformation of the neighborhood is ongoing. Along with adjacent artist buildings, Developing Environments is now part of a thriving artists area (including Project Artaud, 1890 Bryant, Pacific Felt Factory, Art Explosion, and others). While not a specific event space, Developing Environments has been instrumental in helping the neighborhood and encouraging art business development in the area.

c. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?

Since its inception, Developing Environments has demonstrated its commitment to the wider San Francisco and artists communities through the individual artists that have been allowed to nurture their craft and expertise in an affordable, supportive environment. Their contributions to the community vary.

The performers at Developing Environments have showcased their talents from the local Pickle Family Circus to symphony and chamber music collaborative performances. Visual artists have shared their work at hundreds of venues from small start-up galleries in San Francisco to the de

Young Museum to major venues around the world. There are Developing Environments artist's work in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the J. Paul Getty Museum, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Berkeley Art Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others. There is an exhaustive list of artistic honors, awards, and exhibitions garnered by the artists (including a Grammy award, shows at the Whitney Biennial, the Rome Prize, and National Endowment of the Arts Fellowships).

Beyond their primary art practices, Developing Environments' artist-members are consistently involved in collaborations outside of the walls of the building, nurturing expansive, cross-disciplinary, and transformational art and social practice events that change the cultural schematics of San Francisco and beyond. Some of the extracurricular projects that have been instigated by Developing Environments members are:

- Curating for the Queer Cultural Center.
- Founding the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival.
- Founding the Marigold Project, which has led the Day of the Dead Festival of the Altars since 1993.
- Founding SF Art & Film (classes for high school students).
- Holding arts-based teaching posts at Cal State East Bay, San Jose State University, San Francisco Art Institute, Stanford, UC Berkeley, and Mills College.

d. Has the business ever been referenced in the media, business trade publication, and/or historical documents?

Developing Environments has been covered in the local media (e.g., San Francisco Chronicle; San Francisco Examiner) in various ways over the years. But the main contribution of Developing Environments is the artists, who have been covered in literally hundreds of articles in local media and trade publications for their artwork and contributions for their particular crafts.

e. Has the business ever received any awards, recognition, or political commendations?

Developing Environments has received commendations from the State legislature and City and County of San Francisco over the years. The most recent was a commendation from Mayor London Breed for Developing Environments' 45th anniversary.

f. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?

As we all know, San Francisco has been losing artists due to high rents and cost of living. As one of the oldest surviving artists communities from the 1970s, Developing Environments is a connection to the communal-living era of the past, but is also a thriving artist community of the present. Providing 46 affordable live-work spaces for a wide variety of artists is a part of the essential fabric of a city trying to maintain its vibrant creative environment. The arts have supported San Francisco's reputation as a culturally significant city. As our city loses more

artists, saving Developing Environments not only saves valuable work space, but also vital living space as well.

CRITERION 3: The business is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business

a. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building, structure, object, signage, mural, architectural detail, neon sign, or any other special physical feature that defines the business?

While the exterior of the Developing Environments building is no different than most of the other buildings in the area – large warehouse structures – the activities inside are unique. The artists that began Developing Environments completely renovated the interior, laying out studio spaces and public hallways that flow through the shell of the building, creating unique spaces that now serve as meeting spaces, gallery spaces, and communal utility spaces. The walls are lined with artwork created by the visual artists in the building, again, turning the warehouse into a living example of the artistic creations of the original visionaries and of the current inhabitants.

The building reinforces the communal aspect of the organization. There are communal kitchens, laundries, and bathrooms that foster interaction and supportive living. The layout of the building is a physical manifestation of the community's philosophy of living.

b. In a few words, describe the main business activity you commit to maintaining.

The commitment to helping artists with affordable live-work space in a city that has seen opportunities for artists diminish over the years and to foster community and self-reliance is an essential part of what Developing Environments provides.

While many businesses that began in the 1960s and 1970s have transformed their management style and focus over the years to 'keep up' with the times, Developing Environments is one of the unique businesses that has not significantly changed its by-laws or self-governing rules. The organization is still a completely consensus-based decision-making entity.

c. What challenges is the business facing today?

The current Management Team at Developing Environments is working to continue the businesses success far into the future. They are working on federal 501(c)(3) status, securing a long-term extension on the building lease, looking at other ways to increase the financial security of the organization, and continuing to foster the arts (and artists) in San Francisco. Financial security is by far the biggest challenge facing Developing Environments. Rising rents, utility and operating costs make each year more difficult to offer truly affordable live-work space to the artist community.

Legacy Business Program staff will add the following details:

a. Features or traditions that define the business and should be maintained for the business to remain on the Legacy Business Registry.

Artist live/work community.

b. Other special features of the business location, such as if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.

Developing Environments is located at 540 Alabama Street in a corner building at the intersection of Alabama and Mariposa streets in the Mission. The building also has an entrance on Mariposa Street (2901 Mariposa).

The historic resource status of the building at 540 Alabama Street/2901 Mariposa Street is classified by the Planning Department as Category B, Unknown / Age Eligible. The property is not listed on any local, state, or federal historic resource registry.

The building is a three-story reinforced concrete industrial structure built in 1922. The original owner was the Illinois Glass Company and the building was used as a warehouse. The Glass Company's offices were at 1855 Folsom (now the UCSF Mission Center) and the glass manufacturing building was where the parking lot is located at 15th and Harrison. The train tracks along Harrison connected the manufacturing building to the warehouse where the tracks ran right up to the side entrance of the warehouse. The builder of the warehouse was the Ralph McLeran Company. (Ralph McLeran was a San Francisco Supervisor and was involved in San Francisco politics at the time.) The building changed hands a few times over the years before the current ownership—a private family trust.





Archival images from the original build-out









Our Members

Carlo Abruzzese	Matt Frederick	Karen Quest
Lark Alder	Leo Germano	Brett Reichman
Joanne Bloomfield	Alexander Gyenes	Ana Rivero Rossi
Kathy Bradley	tani hasegawa	Robin Richardson
Hugh Buck	Ruth Hawkins	Silky Shoemaker
Ronald Chase	Marc Jondall	Janet Silk
John Chiara	Hannah Kahn	Gabrielle Thormann
Moshe Cohen	Lakshmi Karna	Conley Treanor
Tom Conlogue	Rudy Lemcke	Karin Wilkström
Rosa De Anda	Kija Lucas	Winni Wintermeyer
Jennifer Ewing	Tuyen Q. Nguyen	Pamela Z
Cathy Feiss	Mitzi Pederson	
Rebekah Frank	Ian Pollock	





LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: December 7, 2022

Filing Date: November 9, 2022
Case No.: 2022-011010LBR
Business Name: Developing Environments
Business Address: 540 Alabama Street
Zoning: Production, Distribution & Repair – 1 – General (PDR-1-G) Zoning District
68-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 4019/001
Applicant: Carlo Abruzzese
540 Alabama Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Located In: District 9
Staff Contact: Alessandro Hall – (628) 652-7336
Alessandro.Hall@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

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continues to be shaped and upheld by the participation of its artist-members. Developing Environment's values also manifest in the layout and physical features of the building, which include communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities, along with meeting rooms and shared gallery space.

Artist-members at Developing Environments work in a variety of mediums and forms including performance, writing, photography, painting, jewelry, textile, sculpture, and digital art. Although members have displayed their work in museums and galleries around the world, their primary impact is in San Francisco, where they contribute to the local community in countless ways. Members have served as curators for the Queer Cultural Center, volunteered at the Mission Food Hub, advocated for bikeable and walkable streets, held teaching positions at local colleges, and founded new programs including the San Francisco Electronic Music Festival, Marigold Project, and SF Art & Film. In a city that has been losing artists in recent decades, Developing Environments has also served as a model for how San Francisco can support artists and cultivate a vibrant creative community.

Developing Environments is located at 540 Alabama Street in a Category B (Unknown / Age Eligible) structure on the southwest corner of Alabama and Mariposa Streets in the Mission neighborhood. It is within the PDR-1-G (Production, Repair & Distribution – 1 - General) Zoning District and a 68-X Height and Bulk District.. 540 Alabama Street was included in the Showplace Square/Northeast Mission Historic Resource Survey and received status codes of "6L" and "7R." Despite these evaluations, the property maintains a Planning Department historic resource status of "B" (Unknown / Age Eligible).

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

Although Developing Environments traces its roots to 1972, the organization was formally established as a California Not-for-Profit Corporation in 1976.

2. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes. Developing Environments qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Developing Environments has operated continuously in San Francisco for 46 years.
- b. Developing Environments has contributed to the history and identity of the Mission neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Developing Environments is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

3. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

No, not as a collective organization. However, many individual artist-members have worked on culturally significant art and/or craft projects over the years.

4. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

Developing Environments is associated with the transformation of Showplace Square from an industrial area to a hub for artists. The neighborhood now features numerous arts-oriented businesses, organizations, and communities.

5. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No.

6. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No, not as of the date of this Executive Summary.

7. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes. Developing Environments has received coverage in the San Francisco Chronicle and San Francisco Examiner. Additionally, numerous articles about individual artist-members have appeared in the press. The organization received a commendation for Mayor London Breed for its 45th anniversary.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 540 Alabama Street (1976 – Present)

Recommended by Applicant

- Consensus based, non-hierarchical governing structure
- Affordable live-work space
- Layout of building including studio spaces and public hallways
- Communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities

Additional Recommended by Staff

- None

Basis for Recommendation

The Department recommends the Historic Preservation Commission adopt a resolution recommending the business listed above be adopted by the Small Business Commission to the Legacy Business Registry.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Resolution

Legacy Business Registry Application:

- Application Review Sheet
- Section 1 – Business / Applicant Information
- Section 2 – Business Location(s)

- Section 3 – Disclosure Statement
- Section 4 – Written Historical Narrative
 - Criterion 1 – History and Description of Business
 - Criterion 2 – Contribution to Local History
 - Criterion 3 – Business Characteristics
- Contextual Photographs and Background Documentation



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 1293

HEARING DATE: DECEMBER 7, 2022

Case No.: 2022-011010LBR
Business Name: Developing Environments
Business Address: 540 Alabama Street
Zoning: Production, Distribution & Repair – 1 – General (PDR-1-G) Zoning District
68-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 4019/001
Applicant: Carlo Abruzzese
540 Alabama Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Hillary Ronen
Located In: District 9
Staff Contact: Alessandro Hall – (628) 652-7336
Alessandro.Hall@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR DEVELOPING ENVIRONMENTS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 540 ALABAMA STREET, BLOCK/LOT 4019/001.

WHEREAS, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; and

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the City's history and identity; and

WHEREAS, the subject business is committed to maintaining the traditions that define the business; and

WHEREAS, at a duly noticed public hearing held on December 7, 2022, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed documents, correspondence and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry nomination.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends that Developing Environments qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) as it has operated for 30 or more years and has continued to contribute to the community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions for Developing Environments

Location(s):

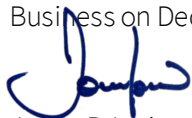
- 540 Alabama Street (1976 – Present)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Consensus based, non-hierarchical governing structure
- Affordable live-work space
- Layout of building including studio spaces and public hallways
- Communal kitchens, bathrooms, and laundry facilities

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission's findings and recommendations are made solely for the purpose of evaluating the subject business's eligibility for the Legacy Business Registry, and the Historic Preservation Commission makes no finding that the subject property or any of its features constitutes a historical resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby directs its Commission Secretary to transmit this Resolution and other pertinent materials in the case file 2022-011010LBR to the Office of Small Business on December 7, 2022.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wright, Black, Johns, So, Nageswaran, Matsuda

NOES: None

ABSENT: Foley

ADOPTED: December 7, 2022