



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: March 27, 2023

MENDELS / FAR OUT FABRICS

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-037
Business Name: Mendels / Far Out Fabrics
Business Address: 1556 Haight St.
District: District 5
Applicant: Naomi Silverman, Owner
Nomination Date: February 15, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Mendels / Far Out Fabrics (known as Mendels) is a third-generation one-stop-shop for crafting, art, knitting, fabric, and other creative supplies in the heart of the Haight-Ashbury. Mendel's was first founded in 1958 by Mendel and Sarah Herscovitz. Known for selling house paint, flooring, and art supplies, the business was originally located at 1401 Haight Street and was called "U-Save Paint and Linoleum." By 1968, the business had relocated to its present location at 1556 Haight Street, just down the street from the original location.

In the 1960s and '70s, during the height of "Summer Love" culture in San Francisco, the store gradually ceased selling linoleum products and shifted to offer primarily art and craft materials. The store was popular with bohemians and artists in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and beyond who flocked to the store for its unique selection of fabrics, paints, and other art supplies – a trend that continues to this day.

Mendel and Sarah had three children: Bette, Louise, and Maury. Bette became heavily involved in the business and, in 1978, officially took the business over from her parents. One of Louise's children, Naomi, later took ownership in 2013 upon Bette's passing.

CRITERION 1

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

Yes, Mendels / Far Out Fabrics has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

1401 Haight St. from 1958 to 1968 (10 years)
1556 Haight St. from 1968 to Present (55 years)

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, Mendels / Far Out Fabrics has contributed to the history and identity of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and San Francisco.

Legacy Business Program

Office of Small Business
City Hall Room 140
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-6680
legacybusiness@sfgov.org
www.legacybusiness.org





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:

- The Haight Street property is located within the California Register-eligible Haight Asbury Historic District. The neighborhood consists primarily of two- and three-story residential and commercial buildings that were constructed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area exhibits a predominant "Edwardian-era" architectural character, and includes styles such as Italianate, Stick-Eastlake, Queen Anne, Edwardian, and other early twentieth-century styles.
- There have been several features and articles on the store, both within and outside the industry. Mendels has been featured in the "Jewish News of Northern California." It has also been included in a YouTube Video posted by "Big Reviews California."

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, Mendels / Far Out Fabrics is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Mendels / Far Out Fabrics 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:

- Rotating display windows created by Mendels' staff.
- Curated selection of products not commonly found in other stores.
- Exterior street-facing signage reading "Mendels art supplies stationary Far Out Fabrics" with purple and blue brush graphic.
- Overall funky atmosphere.
- Upper façade of the building's front exterior clay tiles.

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.

- Art supplies and crafts store.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Mendels / Far Out Fabrics currently located at 1556 Haight St. in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

March 27, 2023

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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Mendels / Far Out Fabrics, currently located at 1556 Haight 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 March 27, 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 Mendels / Far Out Fabrics 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 Mendels / Far Out Fabrics.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Rotating display windows created by Mendels' staff.
- Curated selection of products not commonly found in other stores.
- Exterior street-facing signage reading "Mendels art supplies stationary Far Out Fabrics" with purple and blue brush graphic.
- Overall funky atmosphere.
- Upper façade of the building's front exterior clay tiles.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain Mendels / Far Out Fabrics on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Art supplies and crafts store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on March 27, 2023.

Katy Tang
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

Legacy Business Program

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2022-23-037
Business Name: Mendels / Far Out Fabrics
Business Address: 1556 Haight St.
District: District 5
Applicant: Naomi Silverman, Owner
Nomination Date: February 15, 2023
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston

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?
 X Yes No

1401 Haight St. from 1958 to 1968 (10 years)
1556 Haight St. from 1968 to Present (55 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?
 X 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?
 X Yes No

NOTES: N/A

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: February 15, 2023

Richard Kurylo and Michelle Reynolds
Legacy Business Program

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DEAN PRESTON

February 15, 2023

Office of Small Business
Attn: Legacy Business Registration Application
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: *Letter of Nomination for Mendels / Far Out Fabrics to the Legacy Business Registry*

Dear Mr. Kurylo:

I am writing to nominate Mendels / Far Out Fabrics, a one of a kind fabrics, crafting, art, knitting supplies store located in the heart of Haight Ashbury, to the Legacy Business Registry.

For over sixty years, Mendels has embodied the creative ethos of the Haight Ashbury as a colorful and free-spirited neighborhood through its funky and creative atmosphere. It has been a reliable place when people are looking for materials to celebrate milestones such as birthday parties, prom, and graduations, or to create their own or their children's Halloween costumes from scratch.

As owner Naomi Silverman explained, one of the best things is seeing families return each year with their latest costume idea. On the day of Halloween, Mendels hands out candy to all costumed folks with an extra helping for the kids from the nearby preschool who have a costumed parade.

In addition, Mendels has been committed to supporting the schools and other neighborhood organizations through financial support of their events. In the early 2000s, Mendels partnered with The Arc San Francisco to provide an avenue for skills training to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Mendels has always been a family-owned business where three generations have served San Franciscans and have overcome numerous challenges and hardships. When Mr. and Mrs. Herscowitz founded Mendels in 1958, it originally sold house paint and linoleum flooring. During the “Summer of Love”, after the landlord was going to increase the rent, Mendels moved a block away to its current location where it started focusing its sales on fabrics and art supplies.

Mendels, once known as “Far-Out Fabric Shop,” has stayed true to its original name, welcoming creative people from all walks of life for generations. In ways both literal and figurative, it has become part of the fabric of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood. I am honored to nominate Mendels to the San Francisco Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,



Dean Preston
District 5 Supervisor



Legacy Business Registry Application



Business Information

Business name: Mendels/Far Out Fabrics

Business owner name(s): Naomi Silverman

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

Current business address: 1556 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117

Telephone: (415) 621 – 1287

Email: sales@mendels.com

Mailing address (if different than above):

Website: http://www.mendels.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/MendelsSF/

Twitter: @MendelsSF

7-digit San Francisco Business Account Number (BAN): 0 1 1 8 4 6 9

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: Naomi Silverman

Contact person title: Owner

Contact telephone: () –

Contact email:

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: 1401 Haight St. Zip Code: 94117

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

Dates at this location: From: 1958 To: 1968

Other address (if applicable): 1556 Haight St. Zip Code: 94117

Dates at this location: From: 1968 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:

Applicant Disclosures

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.

Name: Naomi Silverman

Signature: *Naomi Silverman*

Date: 12/8/2022

MENDELS

Written Historical Narrative

INTRODUCTION

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

Mendels is a one-stop-shop for crafting, art, knitting, fabric, and other creative supplies in the heart of the Haight-Ashbury district in San Francisco. It is a family-run business that has served the neighborhood since the 1950s.

b. Describe who the business serves.

Mendels is a place where neighbors, tourists, and other locals come to fulfill their arts and crafts needs. Its location at the heart of the Haight-Ashbury district means that it has constantly drawn in foot traffic from tourists and others passing through the neighborhood, and at the other end of the spectrum the store has dedicated lifelong customers who stop by Mendels to supply their latest creative project. It is not uncommon for customers to comment that they have been coming to Mendels since they were children, and to visit the store with their own children in tow.

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

Arts and craft supplies.

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.

Mendels is a third-generation family business that has been a destination for creative people in San Francisco since the 1950s.

Mendels first appeared in the telephone directory in 1958 at 1401 Haight Street at the corner of Haight Street and Masonic Avenue. The business was founded by Mendel and Sarah Herscowitz as a store that sold house paint and linoleum flooring, and the name of the store was "U-Save Paint & Linoleum."

Rents by the middle of the 1960s were soaring, and their landlord was going to increase the rent, so the pair found a property just a block away that was for sale. In 1968, the business moved into its current location at 1556 Haight Street selling art supplies and house paint. The

linoleum had been eliminated because it was heavy and with the hoards flocking Haight-Ashbury during the Summer of Love, Mendels' customers had a hard time getting their vehicles close enough to the store to load up their flooring. The space at 1556 Haight included a mezzanine, which Sarah thought would be the perfect area to display sewing notions added into the store's inventory.

Starting in the 1972 city directory, the business name changed to "Far-Out Fabric Shop" and U-Save Paint & Art Supplies," indicating Mendel and Sarah's move to shift the business' focus to fabrics and art supplies that it retains to this day.

Mendel and Sarah had three children: Bette, Louise, and Maury. Bette was the only one actively involved in the business and, in 1978, officially took the business over from her parents.

Louise's three children – Naomi, Emily and Darrell – would travel across the Golden Gate Bridge to spend the weekend with their grandparents from time to time and went to the store to "help out." In 1991, after graduating from high school and spending a year abroad, Naomi started working at the store with her aunt Bette.

The business eventually took on the name "Mendel's" and dropped the "U-Save" title and then the "Far-Out Fabrics" title from their primary branding in the early 2000s, as customers thought both names indicated the existence of two separate businesses. Also, although the business still sells fabric, it is no longer the primary focus of the store's inventory.

As the online presence of the business grew, the apostrophe in Mendel's was not always an accepted character (e.g., in web addresses), so it was eventually dropped from the business name. The full business name today is Mendels/Far-Out Fabrics.

In October of 2013, Bette passed away. Since then, Naomi has been carrying on the family legacy as Mendels' current owner.

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

1958 to 1978:	Mendel and Sarah Herscowitz
1978 to 2013:	Bette Mosias
2013 to Present:	Naomi Silverman

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

Mendels was mandated to close for two months during the initial COVID-19 shut down starting in March 2020. For an additional month, they were only allowed to do curbside pickup, which greatly reduced the number of customers they could serve.

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.

Mendels has been an important retailer in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood since 1958, first selling house paints and linoleum flooring and then arts and crafts supplies. Today, Mendels is filled with all of the supplies that creative types need: sewing materials, drawing tools, fabric dye supplies, paints, papers, glitter and gems, basic craft supplies like chenille stems, jingle bells and wiggle eyes, fabric for costumes, vinyl fabrics for table coverings, costume accessories including wigs, masks, makeup, and feathers.

Mendels has always been a business that primarily sold items that local residents needed rather than focusing on the tourist trade. Its overall funky and creative atmosphere contributes to the Haight-Ashbury's history and identity as a unique and colorful neighborhood.

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

The three generations of Mendels owners were and are well-known community figures in Haight-Ashbury. Original owner Mendel Herscowitz was president of the Haight-Ashbury Merchants and Property Owners Association. Before opening Mendels, owners Mendel and Sarah Herscowitz were established members of the community, having previously owned another business on Haight Street. The business has been serving the community continuously through times of economic success as well as through times when the neighborhood has struggled.

Mendels is there for all of the festivals, holidays, and celebrations in its customer's lives. For prom, graduation, birthday parties, Bay to Breakers, and all of the other events, Mendels has the supplies for banners and signs, decorations, and costumes. The main event though is Halloween. In the weeks leading up to Halloween, the store becomes the go-to spot for the DIY costume makers of San Francisco. Whether they are creating a costume from the ground up or embellishing a ready-made costume, people come to Mendels for advice and guidance on how to win that best costume award. One of the best things is seeing families return each year with their latest costume idea. On the day of Halloween, Mendels hands out candy to all costumed folks with an extra helping for the kids from the nearby preschool who have a costumed parade.

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

Mendels has been committed to supporting the schools and other neighborhood organizations through financial support of their events. In the early 2000s, Mendels partnered with The Arc San Francisco to provide an avenue for skills training to adults with intellectual and

developmental disabilities. The current owner of the business, Naomi Silverman, has been an active board member of the Haight Ashbury Merchants Association since 2014.

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

In 2016, Mendels owner Naomi Silverman was featured in the [Jewish News of California \(J-Weekly\)](#), which highlighted her family's legacy running the shop.

Historic preservation non-profit San Francisco Heritage included Mendels as a candidate in its [Haight-Ashbury legacy business voting contest](#) starting August 1, 2022, and the shop ultimately emerged as the winner (with Mendels receiving aid in its application to the Registry).

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

Not applicable.

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

If Mendels were to close, San Francisco would lose a vital part of its creative retail scene. True to its original name, the "far out" nature of the shop means that it has fit right in with the Haight-Ashbury's legacy of welcoming creative people from all walks of life.

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?

Mendels is located in a commercial storefront building on Haight Street in the California Register of Historic Resources' eligible Haight-Ashbury Historic District. San Francisco Planning records indicate that its building was constructed in 1930. Other than an upgrade to the front entryway of the building in the early 1980s, the appearance of the building has been untouched. The linoleum flooring from the 1950s is a very common pattern of the times and still covers the majority of the main floor.

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

Fabric and craft store serving the creative needs of locals and visitors alike.

c. What challenges is the business facing today?

In this age of online shopping, running a successful business that is primarily focused on walk-in customers is a challenge. Mendels' success is directly affected by the success and safety of the neighborhood as a whole.

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.

Mendels is an arts and crafts store. The business suggests that the following features and traditions define their store:

- Rotating display windows created by Mendels' staff.
- Curated selection of products not commonly found in one store.
- Exterior street-facing signage reading "Mendels art supplies stationary Far Out Fabrics" with purple and blue brush graphic.
- Overall funky atmosphere.
- Upper façade of the building's front exterior featuring clay tiles.

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.

Mendels is located in the California Register of Historic Resources' eligible Haight-Ashbury Historic District, which consists primarily of two-and three-story residential buildings (single-family houses and multiple-family flats) that were constructed during the late 19th century and early 20th century. Its historic resource status is listed by the San Francisco Planning Department as "A-Historic Resource Present," and the building is currently being surveyed as part of the city's Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resources Survey.



Mendels
art supplies
stationery

Far Out
Fabrics





WE LOVE YOU BETTER!



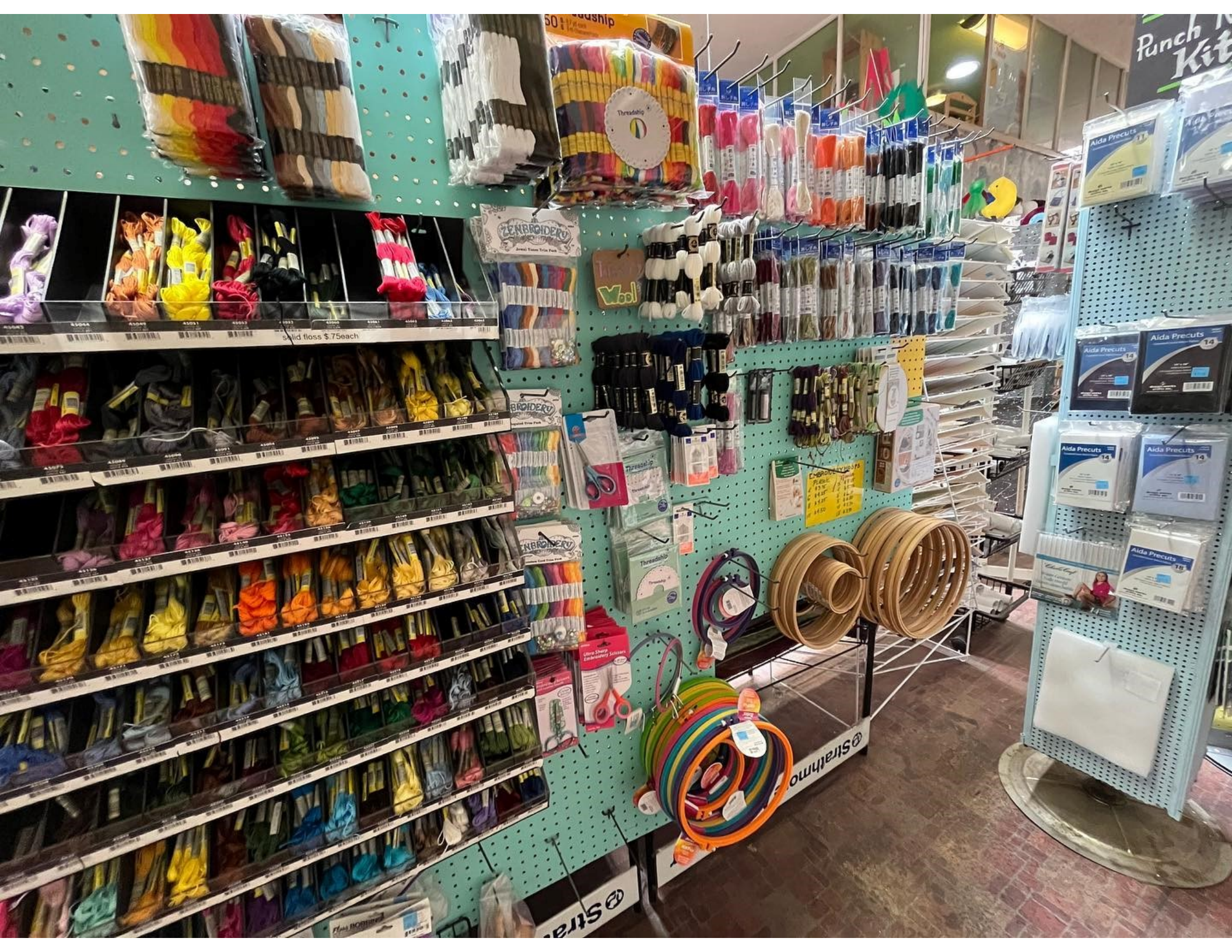
PLEASE
GIVE
SPACE

Stay 6 feet apart



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Mendel's
on the web
<http://www.mendels.com>

MENDELS.COM

1556 Haight St.
San Francisco

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\$5.50
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825

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The Jewish News
of Northern California

JEWISH LIFE — TALKING WITH ...

Q&A: Mendel's owner on far-out Haight

BY **PATRICIA CORRIGAN** | MAY 27, 2016

Name: Naomi Silverman

Age: 44

City: Pacifica

Position: Owner of Mendel's, "the store for crafty people"



Naomi Silverman

J.: *You are the third generation of storekeepers at Mendel's Art Supplies on Haight Street, which Mendel and Sarah Herscowitz — your grandparents — established in 1968 after opening down the block in 1952. Their daughter Bette Mosias took over in 1978, and now you are the owner. How does that feel?*

Naomi Silverman: I enjoy my job and I also enjoy being part of a legacy. I take seriously that I'm doing the same thing my aunt and my grandfather did, though at first the store sold house paint and linoleum flooring.

Isn't that a far cry from the art supplies, costume accessories, fake fur, "far-out fabrics," feathers, decorative buttons and oilcloth you sell today?

My grandfather would be surprised to see what the store has become, but Mendel's is a connection to the past, and that is a strong force in my life. Plus, my grandfather would appreciate that we are still here and going strong, with 14 employees. We just keep morphing into what we need to have as far as craft supplies.

Which merchandise is popular right now?

Coloring books for adults. It's what knitting was four or five years ago. You can do it alone or in a group, and it's a craft project for people who don't consider themselves to be artistic.

Do you consider yourself crafty?

I like sewing and creating stuff. I get into niches sometimes. For a while I did mosaics, and then I painted, changing the colors of everything around me. I go through phases.

Do you design Mendel's whimsical window displays?

My employees do the windows. That's a skill in and of itself. It would be hard for me to spend six weeks planning a display and then taking eight hours to install it. It's quite a project.



Naomi Silverman, Sarah Herscowitz and Bette Mosias
(from left) in front of store in 1995

Tell me about Halloween at Mendel's.

Every year, I ignore Halloween until August, when I get heart palpitations because it is by far our busiest time. Halloween is fun — it's a self-indulgent holiday and everyone is in a good mood. We put out all the merchandise Oct. 1, but it seems that few people plan ahead, because most of them come in at the last minute.

What do you sell for the holiday?

Wigs, makeup, boas, ears, bow ties and hairspray. Some customers head to the fabric department for fake fur or some fabric to make a cape. The crowds carry over to the Day of the Dead, and then we go back to

being an art supply store again.

Where did you grow up?

I was raised in Tiburon, graduated from Redwood High School and then graduated from San Francisco State University in 1996 with a bachelors' degree in German, with a minor in Jewish studies.

And when did you start working at the store?

When I was young, I spent some weekends with my grandparents, and I'd go to the store with them. I thought that was great, but I am the only one of my siblings who took a liking to it. I started working in the store with my Aunt Bette in 1991. She passed away in 2013.

Is there another generation coming up?

I started bringing my son to the store when he was 6 weeks old. He's 10 now, and he helps sometimes when he is here, just as I used to help my grandparents. He has skills, but it's too soon to think about it.

Did you ever think you might have a career in a different field?

I thought about teaching, but it was evident that I liked working at the store and I had the skills necessary for it.

What do you like best about your job?

It's hard for me to say what my favorite thing about it is, because I do a lot of different things. I manage employees, order stock, organize stock and deal with customers. That's all part of managing the store. That's the best part, I think — that I do different things all the time.

How have you seen Haight Street change over the years?

Haight Street is cyclical. It goes up and down. It's a little more upscale recently, but we still have the usual issues with the homeless, the street kids and the visitors.

Sometimes it's edgy and sometimes it's calm, but it's always changing. Of course, you can't ever keep anything the way it was, and change can be good, especially if you welcome it.

MENDELS VIDEOS



Mendels a Craft Store in San Francisco selling Fabric and Art Supplies

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pruwBLMs_6U

Published on December 15, 2015

Posted by [Big Review TV](#)

The store smack dab in the middle of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury for all of your creativity needs!

Mendels

1556 Haight Street San Francisco CA United States 94117



Mendel's Far-Out Fabrics. ProductionVilleSF Video Postcard: San Francisco

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQBme4oudpU>

Published on July 9, 2012

Posted by [Tess Cundall](#)

ProductionVilleSF's Video Postcards are personal interviews with Bay Area business owners who work in film, photography and event production by serving the artists and creatives in those fields.



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: MARCH 15, 2023

Filing Date: February 15, 2023
Case No.: 2023-001581LBR
Business Name: MENDELS/FAR OUT FABRICS
Business Address: 1556 HAIGHT ST
Zoning: NCD (HAIGHT STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1231/015
Applicant: Naomi Silverman
1556 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Branden Gunn – (628) 652-7367
Branden.Gunn@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Mendels / Far Out Fabrics (known as Mendels) is a third-generation one-stop-shop for crafting, art, knitting, fabric, and other creative supplies in the heart of the Haight-Ashbury. Mendel's was first founded in 1958 by Mendel and Sarah Herscowitz. Known for selling house paint, flooring, and art supplies, the business was originally located at 1401 Haight Street and was called "U-Save Paint and Linoleum." By 1968, the business had relocated to its present location at 1556 Haight Street, just down the street from the original location. In the 1960s and 70s, during the height of "Summer Love" culture in San Francisco, the store gradually ceased selling linoleum products and shifted to offer primarily art and craft materials. The store was popular with bohemians and artists in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and beyond who flocked to the store for its unique selection of fabrics, paints, and other art supplies – a trend that continues to this day.

Mendel and Sarah had three children: Bette, Louise, and Maury. Bette became heavily involved in the business and, in 1978, officially took the business over from her parents. One of Louise's children, Naomi, later took ownership in 2013 upon Bette's passing.

The businesses' location at 1556 Haight Street, is in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure and located within the Eligible Haight Asbury Historic District. The property is located on the north side of Haight Street between Clayton and Asbury streets in the Haight Asbury neighborhood. It is within the NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1958.

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

Yes. Mendel's qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Mendel's has operated continuously in San Francisco for 65 years.
- b. Mendel's has contributed to the history and identity of the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and San Francisco.
- c. Mendel's 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.

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

Yes. The Haight Street property is located within the California Register-eligible Haight Asbury Historic District. The neighborhood consists primarily of two- and three-story residential and commercial buildings that were constructed during the late 19th and early 20th century. The area exhibits a predominant "Edwardian-era" architectural character, and includes styles such as Italianate, Stick-Eastlake, Queen Anne, Edwardian and other early twentieth-century styles.

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. There have been several features and articles on the store, both within and outside the industry. Mendel's has been featured in the "Jewish News of Northern California." It has also been included in a YouTube Video posted by "Big Reviews California."

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 1556 Haight Street (1968 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 1401 Haight Street (1958 – 1968)

Recommended by Applicant

- Rotating display windows created by Mendel's staff.
- Curated selection of products not commonly found in other stores.
- Exterior street-facing signage reading "Mendel's art supplies stationary Far Out Fabrics" with purple and blue brush graphic.
- Overall funky atmosphere.
- Upper façade of the building's front exterior clay tiles.

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. 1318

HEARING DATE: MARCH 15, 2023

Case No.: 2023-001581LBR
Business Name: MENDELS/FAR OUT FABRICS
Business Address: 1556 HAIGHT STREET
Zoning: NCD (HAIGHT STREET NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1231/015
Applicant: Naomi Silverman
1556 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117
Nominated By: Supervisor Dean Preston
Located In: District 5
Staff Contact: Branden Gunn – (628) 652-7367
Branden.Gunn@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR MENDELS/FAR OUT FABRICS CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1556 HAIGHT ST (1556 HAIGHT STREET; BLOCK 1231, LOT 015).

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 March 15, 2023, 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 Mendels / Far Out Fabrics 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 Mendels / Far Out Fabrics.

Locations

Current Locations:

- 1556 Haight Street (1968 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 1401 Haight Street (1958-1968)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- Rotating display windows created by Mendel's staff.
- Curated selection of products not commonly found in other stores.
- Exterior street-facing signage reading "Mendels art supplies stationary Far Out Fabrics" with purple and blue brush graphic.
- Overall funky atmosphere.
- Upper façade of the building's front exterior clay tiles.

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 2023-001581LBR to the Office of Small Business on March 15, 2023.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wright, Black, Foley, So, Nageswaran
NOES: None
ABSENT: Matsuda
ADOPTED: March 15, 2023