



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: November 8, 2021

BUTTON DOWN

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-018
Business Name: Button Down
Business Address: 3415 Sacramento Street
District: District 2
Applicant: Kenneth Griffin, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: October 10, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

Button Down is a retail store selling men and women's high-end and luxury clothing, accessories, and furnishings, opened originally by Michael Sabino at 3169 Fillmore Street in the Cow Hollow neighborhood. Sabino opened the store with the intention of exclusively selling classic, luxury, high-quality menswear. Today, Button Down carries a variety of high quality and independent brands from Europe and from local manufacturers, attracting patrons of high-end fashion from San Francisco and the Bay Area. Button Down has been owned and operated by Kenneth Griffin and Daniel Keenan since 2020, when they took over ownership and operation of the store from its founder, Michael Sabino.

Button Down first opened in 1980 at 3169 Fillmore Street and remained there until 1990, then moved to the Presidio Heights neighborhood. Sabino chose Presidio Heights with the intention of targeting the neighborhood's cache of affluent clientele. Recognizing a growing and wealthy customer base in Presidio Heights, the store expanded its products to include womenswear and home furnishings. Button Down remained at its first location in Presidio Heights at 3640 Sacramento Street for eight years until moving to its present location at 3415 Sacramento Street in 1998, where it remains today.

Distinctive exterior features of Button Down's store include its classic storefront configuration and large window displays. Button Down's main interior retail area is composed of a collection of eclectic, vintage décor, furniture, and items such as antique trunks, sports equipment, and model airplanes, to name a few. Button Down's interior is designed to have its customers stop and stay, with its furniture arranged around one of its main fixtures, the fireplace with silver frames. Button down also has an in-store full-service barber shop. Button Down currently maintains a carefully curated collection of men and women's fashion items for sale from Europe and the United States. Button Down's inventory includes items from local and independent designers and manufacturers such as Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca. Button Down has remained a fashion and retail anchor in the Sacramento Street commercial corridor, making an effort to stock the highest quality items and paying close attention to the details of each product its sells. Button Down also offers highly personalized customer service. Button Down has had multiple customers of local cultural renown, including the Hearsts, Danielle Steele, the Trainas, the Mondavis, and the Gettys.

Button Down has continuously given back to the Presidio Heights neighborhood, from supporting and promoting its fellow Sacramento Street stores to donating to local schools, police and fire departments, and other charity events, including events associated with the Junior League.

Legacy Business Program

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





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, Button Down has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

3169 Fillmore Street from 1980 to 1990 (10 years).
3640 Sacramento Street from 1990 to 1998 (8 years).
3415 Sacramento Street from 1998 to Present (23 years).

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, Button Down has contributed to the history and identity of the Presidio Heights 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:

- The business' location at 3415 Sacramento Street is in a two-story Category A (History Resource Present) commercial building built in 1904. The property was surveyed in 1968 and 1976. The building was the original site of Peninou French Laundry and Cleaners, founded in San Francisco, and the oldest continuously operating French laundry in the United States. The property is included in the Planning Department's ongoing Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resource Survey.
- The store has been covered in local and national fashion-related media, including in MR (Men's Retailer) Magazine, a national source of men's fashion news and trends.

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, Button Down is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that Button Down 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:

- High-quality and vintage luxury retail clothing, accessories, and furnishings store.
- Curated collection of European fashion brands (including, but not limited to, Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca).
- Products from a variety of local, independent, and fair-trade clothing manufacturers.
- Personalized and professional customer service with special attention to detail.
- Fireplace within store.
- Old-time store décor and aesthetic consisting of antique furniture, props, and objects.
- Original storefront configuration and transom windows.
- Barbershop within store.

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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.

- Clothing and accessories store.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include Button Down currently located at 3415 Sacramento Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager
Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Small Business Commission

Resolution No. _____

November 8, 2021

BUTTON DOWN

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District: District 2
Applicant: Kenneth Griffin, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: October 10, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for Button Down, currently located at 3415 Sacramento Street.

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 November 8, 2021, 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 Button Down in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

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

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- High-quality and vintage luxury retail clothing, accessories, and furnishings store.
- Curated collection of European fashion brands (including, but not limited to, Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca).
- Products from a variety of local, independent, and fair-trade clothing manufacturers.
- Personalized and professional customer service with special attention to detail.
- Fireplace within store.
- Old-time store décor and aesthetic consisting of antique furniture, props, and objects.
- Original storefront configuration and transom windows.
- Barbershop within store.

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

- Clothing and accessories store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on November 8, 2021.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

Legacy Business Program

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-018
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District: District 2
Applicant: Kenneth Griffin, Owner
Nomination Letter Date: October 10, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani

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

3169 Fillmore Street from 1980 to 1990 (10 years).
3640 Sacramento Street from 1990 to 1998 (8 years).
3415 Sacramento Street from 1998 to Present (23 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: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: October 6, 2021

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program
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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 2



City and County of San Francisco

CATHERINE STEFANI

October 10, 2020

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

Dear Mr. Kurylo,

It is my pleasure to nominate Button Down for the Legacy Business Registry. Button Down is a distinguished small business providing patrons with an opportunity to purchase various items imported from around the world in a charming boutique environment. Throughout their time running the business, Kenneth Griffin and Daniel Keenan have carried on the legacy of the store's founder, Michael Sabino. This legacy is based on their dedication to elegance and variety, and to provide each guest with a unique shopping experience.

The nominee has operated in San Francisco for 40 years and has maintained a strong and consistent identity. Button Down first opened on Fillmore Street and operated in Cow Hollow for 10 years, until moving to Sacramento Street in Presidio Heights. Since moving to Sacramento Street, Button Down has become a staple along the charming merchant corridor and continues to be one of the neighborhood's strongest businesses with strong ties to the area's identity. Store visitors are known to return on a regular basis to discover new and exciting luxury clothing items and unique gifts from around the world. Button Down is committed to maintaining a diverse and elegant collection that is reflective of the beautiful Presidio Heights neighborhood and surrounding City.

As a small business institution, Button Down has become a vital community resource and contributor to the well-being of the surrounding commercial district. Button Down's dedicated owners are committed to providing each guest with an experience that is built upon the longstanding traditions of their neighborhood serving small business.

The nominee can be contacted here: Kenneth Griffin and Daniel Keenan, 3415 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California, 94118; Ken@ButtonDownSF.com; 415-563-1311

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Stefani".

Catherine Stefani
Member, Board of Supervisors

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information.

Please provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

NAME OF BUSINESS:	
Button Down	
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (Identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business):	
Kenneth Griffin and Daniel Keenan	
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE NUMBER:
3415 Sacramento St. San Francisco, CA 94118	(415) 563-1311
	EMAIL ADDRESS:
	sales@buttondownsf.com
MAILING ADDRESS – STREET ADDRESS:	MAILING ADDRESS – CITY AND STATE:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Address	
	MAILING ADDRESS – ZIP CODE:
WEBSITE ADDRESS:	
www.buttondownsf.com	
FACEBOOK PAGE:	
www.facebook.com/buttondownsf	
TWITTER NAME:	
APPLICANT'S NAME:	APPLICANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER:
Kenneth Griffin	
APPLICANT'S TITLE:	APPLICANT'S EMAIL ADDRESS:
Owner	
SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	
SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (If applicable):	

Section Two:

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. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS	ZIP CODE	START DATE OF BUSINESS
3169 Fillmore St.	94123	1980
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	1980 to 1990	

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
3640 Sacramento St.	94118	Start: 1990
		End: 1998

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
3415 Sacramento St.	94118	Start: 1998
		End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (If applicable)	ZIP CODE	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start:
		End:

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.

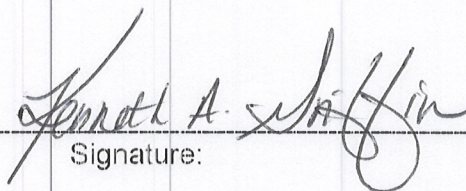
KENNETH A GRIFFIN

10/8/2020

Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:



BUTTON DOWN

Section 4: Written Historical Narrative

CRITERION 1

a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.

Button Down is a clothing, accessories, and furnishings store located at 3415 Sacramento Street in the Presidio Heights neighborhood. It was founded in the fall of 1980.

Button Down started as a small men's classic clothing store filled with antiques and old luggage. The original location of the store was 3169 Fillmore Street, next to the famous Balboa Café. It was founded by Michael Sabino. Michael founded the business in his early 20s with his passion for luxury wears always with quality as the main focus.

When the business outgrew its original space, Michael moved it to a larger space in Presidio Heights at 3640 Sacramento Street in 1990. In that location, the store expanded to selling women's clothing and accessories, as well as some home furnishings. At that time, Button Down was only one of a handful of stores on Sacramento Street, including Dottie Doolittle and Sue Fisher King, who are still in existence today.

After remaining at that location for eight years, it was time to find a larger space, and Button Down moved to its current location at 3415 Sacramento Street in 1998. The popular Spruce Restaurant can be found in the 3640 Sacramento Street space today.

When it was time to make a change in the business, Michael tapped his friend and colleague Ken Griffin to take over Button Down. Michael and Ken had worked together in the fashion industry for almost 20 years. Ken and his partner Dan came into Button Down with some fresh ideas of ways to modernize the business, but always making sure to keep the essence of what made Button Down the success that it has been.

Button Down continues to flourish, serving loyal customers who appreciate the fine quality of the clothing as well as unique accessories and furnishings.

b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?

While Button Down survived several earthquakes, recessions, and natural disasters, the only time Button Down closed for any extended period was during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The business was closed for about four months from March through June of 2020.

c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.

Button Down is a sole proprietorship and not a “family-owned business,” defined here as any business in which two or more family members are involved and the majority of ownership or control lies within a family.

d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.

The ownership history of Button Down is as follows:

Fall 1980 to June 15, 2020: Michael Sabino
June 15, 2020, to Present: Ken Griffin and Dan Keenan

e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation of the existence of the business verifying it has been in operation for 30+ years is provided in this Legacy Business Registry application.

f. Note any 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.

The historic resource status of the building at 3415 Sacramento Street is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The property was surveyed in a 1976 survey and was also included in a 1968 book titled Here Today on page 291.

CRITERION 2

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

Button Down was established before most retail stores came to the Sacramento Street/Presidio Heights neighborhood. As a store with high end, high quality clothing, it catered to the well-heeled clientele of that area and encouraged other stores with similarly high quality, products to open. Currently the Sacramento corridor is home to men’s and women’s clothing, home goods, designers, antiques shops, and other specialty retail stores with a focus on quality goods and excellent customer service.

b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?

Button Down participates in all of the Sacramento Street Merchants association events and has donated to many local school and charity events.

c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?

Button Down has been included in the Sacramento Street Retailers Map by the Sacramento Street Merchants Association. It was also featured in MR (Men's Retailer) Magazine in 2020.

d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?

Button Down was established at the time when Wilkes Bashford and Bullock and Jones were the main independent clothiers in the Union Square area. In Presidio Heights, Button Down has served many well-known San Francisco clients including Danielle Steele, Dede Wilsey, William Hearst, the Traina Family, the Fisher family, the Mondavi family, the Getty Family, and many other famous San Francisco families.

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

Button Down has donated to many local school and charity events, such as the Junior League of San Francisco and the local police and fire departments. Button Down participates in all Sacramento Street Merchant Association events.

f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.

Button Down serves those in the surrounding neighborhoods of Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights, Laurel Village, and Sea Cliff, but has also become a destination for those seeking, luxury, fine quality, classic clothing from all over the Bay Area. Button Down also attracts many tourists visiting San Francisco and seeking beautiful clothing.

g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?

The current location of Button Down is located in the original Peninou French Cleaners building.

One of the great parts of Button Down is the décor. It is an eclectic mix old world charm, steamer trunks, antique sports equipment, and many other fantastic objects that people always comment on. Button Down has always felt like a "lodge" more than a retail shop, and the business strives to maintain that feeling of walking into someplace special.

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

If the business were to close, the neighborhood would lose its only men's and women's clothing store that specializes in luxury and classic, fine quality clothing. There isn't a week that goes by when a customer says the neighborhood wouldn't be the same without Button Down. People would lose a true legacy business.

CRITERION 3

a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.

Button Down is an independent specialty clothing store that sells luxury men's and women's clothing, housewares, accessories, jewelry, handbags, and sterling accessories.

The store carries some recognizable labels, but also sources quality products from smaller independent manufacturers of high-end men's and women's clothes from Italy, France, and the United Kingdom. Designers include, Etro, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca. The store also sources from independent local designers and fair-trade businesses.

b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)

Button Down is committed to maintaining quality and luxury in all products, while supporting independent designers and manufacturers. Button Down focuses on individualized customer service with expert attention to detail.

c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).

Button Down has the feel of stepping into a fine haberdashery filled with old antique dressers and armoires, and eclectic props including bicycles, large model airplanes and old steamer trunks. There is a fireplace with sterling silver frames on the mantel and sofas covered with hand sewn pillows and fine cashmere blankets.

d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or

materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.

Documentation that demonstrates the business has been a clothing store for 30+ years is included in this Legacy Business Registry application. The current owners took over the business in June 2020 and maintained the same décor and aesthetics of the physical location. They continue to consult with the original owner for buying and merchandising.

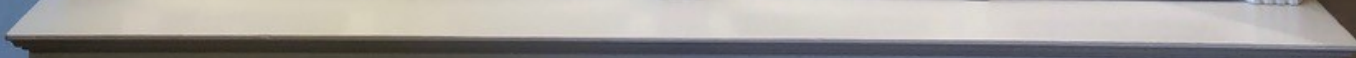


BUTTON DOWN

KENDALL WILKINSON













FRY'S CHOCOLATES







15-19 SACRAMENTO

1020

3135

1

street address

block number

lot number

summary

COM-OC-12

building type/use/number of floors

landmark number

RELATIONSHIP WITH SURROUNDING BUILDINGS

Relationship of setting to building -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Importance as contribution to a cluster/streetscape -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN VALUATION

Facade proportions -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Richness/Excellence of detailing/decoration -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Unique visual feature of interest 0 1 2 3 4 5

Example of a rare or unusual style or design 0 1 2 3 4 5

Overall architectural quality -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

PROPOSED FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

CORNICE, PARAPET, APPENDAGE Importance of cornice to building design -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Cornice contribution to streetscape -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

FACADE CONDITION Physical condition -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

Paint/Material color -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

REMODELING Appropriateness of improvements -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

10/21/75 ARNOLD date



Field Notes

WINDOWS 2ND FLOOR CORNICE, BRACKETS MATERIALS ARE GOOD

Review Notes

- Junior League Listing text index file Northern California Guide Other Listing _____

photo 83/7

E2

Book
Remarks on 3399 Sacto
Applies to many more
bldgs than marked in
Book (there were too
many) - maybe could be

Address Block Lot

REVIEW PANEL NOTES
SETTING
applied city wide on more
consistent basis

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

CLUSTER/STREETScape

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

FACADE PROPORTIONS

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

DETAILING/DECORATION

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

UNIQUE FEATURES

0 1 2 3 4 5

RARE STYLE/DESIGN

0 1 2 3 4 5

OVERALL ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY

-2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

SUMMARY

STYLE

ARCHITECT
DESIGNER
BUILDER

APPROXIMATE DATE

SEE BACK FOR COMMENTS

The similar entries are more
important than differences.

HONOURMARK

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Finest Partners: Button-Down San Francisco

November 27, 2015



Editor's Note: Here we feature the stable of the best men's stores where you can find select HonourMark product. Each of our partners represents the best in quality, character and distinction.

Today we hear from Michael Sabino, founder of Button-Down, based in San Francisco.

Tell us about your store's history.

Button-Down first opened its doors in SF in 1980 in the Cow Hollow neighborhood next to the Balboa Cafe and then two years later moved up to Presidio Heights.

I chose that neighborhood because even though it's not a heavy traffic area, it had the right clientele with deep pockets and spending power.

Four years prior to opening Button Down, I worked in NY as a manufacturers rep for some of the finest men's & women's collections from the UK. I had the opportunity to work with the best specialty stores throughout the United States and the honor to work with some of the top Merchandisers and Buyers in the luxury retail world.



Michael Sabino, Button-Down Founder

What makes Button-Down distinctive?

My shop is unique in the fact that I hand pick and sometimes design product that is exclusive to Button-Down. I have a strong passion for beautiful product and especially textiles and a love for the subtlety of fine details.

The store is filled and merchandised around beautiful antiques from all around the world and feels more like a home than a retail store. I learned this from my mentor and friend at an early age, "There will always be a market for the finest."

How do you stand out with customer service and the in-store experience?

We try to give the best customer service by always being mindful of our customers' needs and always trying to make them feel at ease. They come in knowing we are luxury so we never have to hard sell anyone. We try to feed them with as much knowledge about the product as possible without overwhelming them.

Tell us about the qualities you look for in the brands you carry?

I am very loyal to the brands we carry in my store just as long as we can grow together. I have always had a love for beautifully classic merchandise with a strong attention to details. Some of my personal favorites in my wardrobe are some of the most simple pieces....timeless.

Quality does not have to shout!

What is the one piece of clothing every man should have?

Every man should have a great navy blazer or sport coat and great white shirt. It will carry through dress to casual with a pair of jeans.



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BUTTON DOWN'S NEW VISION



BY [KAREN ALBERG GROSSMAN](#)

JAN 12, 2021

There was no worldwide pandemic when Ken Griffin started negotiations with Michael Sabino, founder of [Button Down San Francisco](#), to buy the store. That said, Griffin and his partner Dan Keenan took over ownership this past June. Despite the pandemic, they've been aggressively implementing their plan to continue curating classically elegant European fashion while adding e-commerce, personal shopping, and a fabulous speakeasy-inspired barbershop. Sabino is staying on as a valued consultant.

Griffin's resume includes working at two well-respected menswear giants: Nordstrom and Robert Talbott. "We did a sizeable business (\$20+ million) with Talbott while I was at Nordstrom. I was always so inspired by Mrs. T: her integrity, work ethic, the respectful way she dealt with people. I learned so much from her. While working there, I sold menswear to Button Down, became friends with Mike, and always admired his business. So, this was a natural transition..."

Thanks to Keenan's technology skills, the new owners' first move was to launch a website. But Griffin admits that most customers are using the website to preview purchases; they then come into the store to try stuff on. "The website has helped us market ourselves, which we also do on Facebook and Instagram, allowing us to reach younger customers. Our neighborhood is also getting younger with more couples in their 40s and 50s buying homes. Another plus: our business has never been reliant on suits; we've always had a more West Coast casual mentality."



Button Down was founded in 1971 by Michael Sabino with a mission to showcase Europe's best menswear. Key brands include Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mac jeans, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, and more. The store is about 3,000 square feet with a 600 square-foot modern barbershop. "This creates interest," notes Griffin. "Trunk shows were no longer bringing people in." The store's ratio of men's to women's is 60/40 and there's also a nice gift business including blankets, unique housewares, and hand-made wooden animals with proceeds benefiting female workers in Nepal.

Despite the pandemic, Griffin says that holiday business was healthy. Hot items included a knit/wool felt Baldassari jacket for \$1125, private label sweaters by Gran Sasso and alpaca knits from Peru for \$395-\$500, fun printed shirts by Emanuel Berg, outerwear from Manto and Baldassari, Waterville and Millar vests, fun wools from Johnstons of Elgin, cashmere blankets and interesting housewares.



New owners Ken and Dan





Griffin believes that, more than all else, knowing their customers is key to their business. “Their taste level is essentially updated classic but we try to gradually push them forward. We can’t be scared of trying new: if the store looks boring and predictable, why would anyone come in? Also, we’ve chosen to support the smaller niche brands rather than the majors so we don’t have to follow vendor markdown cadences or compete with big discounts on their websites.”

Griffin also believes in focused assortments. “Guys are not looking for dozens of options in denim. Better to pick our three favorite brands with slightly different fits and direct them to what we think is best.”

In addition to running the store, Griffin is active in his community retailers’ association: Presidio Heights Association of Neighbors. “We have about three dozen stores, restaurants, and businesses involved. We made up canvas totes to distribute to customers, and we’ve started a referral program to create awareness and camaraderie. People love to support local businesses, especially businesses that support each other. It’s been a very rewarding enterprise.”



LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Filing Date: October 6, 2021
Case No.: **2021-010308LBR**
Business Name: Button Down
Business Address: 3415 Sacramento Street
Zoning: NCD (Sacramento Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1020/035
Applicant: Kenneth Griffin
3415 Sacramento Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 2
Staff Contact: Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

Business Description

Button Down is a retail store selling men and women's high end and luxury clothing, accessories, and furnishings, opened originally by Michael Sabino at 3169 Fillmore Street in 1980. Sabino opened the store in 1980 with the intention of exclusively selling classic, luxury, high quality menswear. Today, Button Down carries a variety of high quality and independent brands from Europe and from local manufacturers, attracting patrons of high end fashion from San Francisco and the Bay Area. Button Down has been owned and operated by Kenneth Griffin and Daniel Keenan since 2020, when they took over ownership and operation of the store from its founder, Michael Sabino.

Button Down first opened in 1980 at 3169 Fillmore Street in the Cow Hollow neighborhood. Button Down remained at 3169 Fillmore Street until 1990, until moving to the Presidio Heights neighborhood. Sabino chose Presidio Heights with the intention of targeting the neighborhood's cache of affluent clientele. Recognizing a growing and wealthy customer base in Presidio Heights, Button Down expanded its products to include womenswear and home furnishings. Button Down remained at its first location in Presidio Heights at 3640 Sacramento Street for eight years until moving to its present location at 3415 Sacramento Street in 1998, where it remains today.

Distinctive exterior features of Button Down's store include its classic storefront configuration and large window displays. Button Down's main interior retail area is composed of a collection of eclectic, vintage décor, furniture, and items such as antique trunks, sports equipment, and model airplanes, to name a few. Button Down's interior is designed to have its customers stop and stay, with its furniture arranged around one of its main fixtures, the fireplace with silver frames. Button down also has an in-store full-service barber shop. Button Down currently maintains a carefully curated collection of men and women's fashion items for sale from Europe and the United States. Button Down's inventory includes items from local and independent designers and manufacturers such as Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca.

Button Down has remained a fashion and retail anchor in the Sacramento Street commercial corridor of the Presidio Heights neighborhood since moving there in 1990. Since 1990, Button Down has carried both men and women's clothing and accessories, with its patrons primarily being from the Presidio Heights neighborhood and San Francisco. Button Down makes an effort to stock the highest quality items from both its international and local independent manufacturers, paying close attention to the details of each product its sells. Button Down also offers highly personalized customer service, striving to meet the individual needs of each customer. Lastly, Button Down has had multiple customers of local cultural renown, including the Hearsts, Danielle Steele, the Trainas, the Mondavis, and the Gettys.

Button Down has continuously given back to the Presidio Heights neighborhood, from supporting and promoting its fellow Sacramento Street stores to donating to local schools, police and fire departments, and other charity events, including events associated with the Junior League of San Francisco. Button Down is also an active member of the Sacramento Street Merchants Association.

The business' primary location, 3415 Sacramento Street, is a Category A (Historic Resource Present) commercial structure on the south side of Sacramento Street between Walnut and Laurel Streets in Presidio Heights. It is within the Sacramento Street Neighborhood Commercial (NCD) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

Staff Analysis

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1980.

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

Yes. Button Down qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all the eligibility Criteria:

- a. Button Down has operated continuously in San Francisco for 41 years.
- b. Button Down has contributed to the history and identity of the Presidio Heights neighborhood and San Francisco.

c. Button Down 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 building in which Button Down is located was the original site of Peninou French Laundry and Cleaners, founded in San Francisco, and the oldest continuously operating French laundry in the United States.

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

Yes. The business' primary location, located at 3415 Sacramento Street, is in a two-story Category A (History Resource Present) commercial building built in 1904. The property was surveyed in the DCP 1976 Survey, receiving a rating of 1, and was also part of the Here Today Survey in 1968. 3415 Sacramento Street is also included in the Planning Department's ongoing Neighborhood Commercial Corridors Historic Resource Survey.

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. The store has been covered in local and national fashion-related media, including in *MR (Men's Retailer) Magazine*, a national source of men's fashion news and trends.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

Current Locations:

- 3415 Sacramento Street (1998 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 3169 Fillmore Street (1980-1990)
- 3640 Sacramento Street (1990-1998)

Recommended by Applicant

- High-quality and vintage luxury retail clothing, accessories, and furnishings store.
- Curated collection of European fashion brands (including, but not limited to, Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca).
- Products from a variety of local, independent, and fair-trade clothing manufacturers.

- Personalized and professional customer service with special attention to detail.
- Fireplace within store.
- Old-time store décor and aesthetic consisting of antique furniture, props, and objects.

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Original storefront configuration and transom windows.
- Barbershop within store.

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 DRAFT RESOLUTION NO.

HEARING DATE: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Case No.: **2021-010308LBR**
Business Name: Button Down
Business Address: 3415 Sacramento Street
Zoning: NCD (Sacramento Street Neighborhood Commercial) Zoning District
40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 1020/035
Applicant: Kenneth Griffin
3415 Sacramento Street
Nominated By: Supervisor Catherine Stefani
Located In: District 2
Staff Contact: Gretel Gunther – 628-652-7607
gretel.gunther@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR BUTTON DOWN CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 3415 SACRAMENTO STREET, BLOCK/LOT 1020/035.

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 November 3, 2021, 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 Button Down 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 Button Down.

Location(s):

Current Locations:

- 3415 Sacramento Street (1998 – Present)

Previous (No Longer Extant) Locations:

- 3169 Fillmore Street (1980-1990)
- 3640 Sacramento Street (1990-1998)

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- High-quality and vintage luxury retail clothing, accessories, and furnishings store.
- Curated collection of European fashion brands (including, but not limited to, Fedeli, Baldassari, Barbera, Etro, PT Torino, Emanuel Berg, Mason's, Alan Paine, Peter Millar, Luciano Barbera, Finamore, Amina Rubinaci, and Cinzia Rocca).
- Products from a variety of local, independent, and fair-trade clothing manufacturers.
- Personalized and professional customer service with special attention to detail.
- Original storefront configuration and transom windows.
- Barbershop within store.
- Fireplace within store.
- Old-time store décor and aesthetic consisting of antique furniture, props, and objects.

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 2021-010308LBR to the Office of Small Business November 3, 2021.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RECUSE:

ADOPTED: November 3, 2021