



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

Hearing Date: August 24, 2020

HOUSE OF NANKING

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-001
Business Name: House of Nanking
Business Address: 919 Kearny Street
District: District 3
Applicant: Kathy Fang, Manager
Nomination Date: July 9, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

House of Nanking is a restaurant opened by husband and wife, Peter and Lily Fang, at 919 Kearny (original and current location) in the Chinatown neighborhood in 1988. The Fangs immigrated to San Francisco from Shanghai in 1980 and worked in several restaurants before opening their own, named "House of Nanking," in honor of Lily's father who was from Nanking, China. Prior to opening, Peter wrote "House of Nanking" in Chinese and commissioned wooden letters be made in his handwriting. The Fangs also had a colorful blade sign made with the business's name in English. That same blade sign and wooden characters still adorn the business's transom today.

With Peter as chef, Lily the server, and one hired employee as the dishwasher, the Fangs dedicated their life to the restaurant. Shortly thereafter, the restaurant was recognized for its delicious offerings by a well-known local food critic, Patricia Unterman, and became an immediate hit. Within a few months, House of Nanking became famous for its incredible Shanghainese house-style cooking and iconic, unrelenting line that would wrap around the block.

Due to the amount of success the restaurant was facing, the owners were struck with a new problem: how to serve so many people within a single business day. Peter decided to try a new, unconventional approach to cooking and serving. He would no longer have customers sit idle with their menus, trying to decide what to order. Instead, Peter began deciding himself what offerings the customers should have. What began as a way to speed up service turned into the restaurant's signature trademark: House of Nanking became renowned for its chef that didn't allow you to order.

By the 1990s, House of Nanking's business was booming and receiving national attention from celebrities, top chefs, politicians, and publications. Customers were coming from all over the world for the food and the unique experience. In 1997, to accommodate more seating and a larger kitchen, House of Nanking took over the store next door and expanded their restaurant, adding the distinguishing red, white, and black tiles that clads the exterior and interior of the restaurant. In 2007, Peter and Lily's daughter, Kathy Fang, was brought on as a co-owner to help manage House of Nanking and open a new restaurant, "Fang", in the South of Market neighborhood.

The business is located in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the west side of Kearny Street between Jackson Street and Pacific Avenue in the Chinatown neighborhood.

Legacy Business Program

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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, House of Nanking has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:

919 Kearny Street from 1988 to Present (32 years)

CRITERION 2

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

Yes, House of Nanking has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown 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 is associated with Chinese cuisine.
- The property the property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of its location within the California Register-eligible and National Register-eligible Chinatown Historic District. The building location is within the boundaries of an on-going Chinese American Cultural Context Statement. The building itself was surveyed in 1978, 1994, and 1997, and determined to hold "Contributory" and "Contextual Importance" to the historic districts.
- There have been a number of features and articles on House of Nanking, both locally and nationally. The 1988 review by Patricia Unterman in the local Sunday newspaper kickstarted the restaurant's success. Thereafter, House of Nanking has been featured in the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, The Bay Guardian, The New York Times, SF Magazine, Eater DF, VICE, the Food Network, Phaidon: China Cookbook, CNN, Singtao Daily, the Travel Channel, 7x7, and many others.

CRITERION 3

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

Yes, House of Nanking is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that House of Nanking 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:

- Chinese cuisine.
- Food-serving experience.
- Red, white, and black tiled exterior (1997).
- "House of Nanking" blade sign (1988).
- Red-framed windows.
- Tiled interior (which matches the exterior tile, added in 1997 storefront expansion).

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- Wooden Chinese letters (sign) spelling “House of Nanking” above the entry (written and commissioned by Peter Fang when the restaurant opened, 1988).

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.

- Restaurant featuring Chinese cuisine.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include House of Nanking currently located at 919 Kearny 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. _____

August 24, 2020

HOUSE OF NANKING

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Business Address: 919 Kearny Street
District: District 3
Applicant: Kathy Fang, Manager
Nomination Date: July 9, 2020
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Adopting findings approving the Legacy Business Registry application for House of Nanking, currently located at 919 Kearny 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 in 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 August 24, 2020, 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 House of Nanking 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 House of Nanking.

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Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Chinese cuisine.
- Food-serving experience.
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- “House of Nanking” blade sign (1988).
- Red-framed windows.
- Tiled interior (which matches the exterior tile, added in 1997 storefront expansion).
- Wooden Chinese letters (sign) spelling “House of Nanking” above the entry (written and commissioned by Peter Fang when the restaurant opened, 1988).

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

- Restaurant featuring Chinese cuisine.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on August 24, 2020.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –

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Legacy Business Registry

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2020-21-001
Business Name: House of Nanking
Business Address: 919 Kearny Street
District: District 3
Applicant: Kathy Fang, Manager
Nomination Date: July 9, 2020
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin

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

919 Kearny Street from 1988 to Present (32 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: July 21, 2020

Richard Kurylo
Program Manager, Legacy Business Program

Legacy Business Program

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Member, Board of Supervisors
District 3



City and County of San Francisco

AARON PESKIN

佩斯金 市參事

July 9, 2020

Director Regina Dick-Endrizzi
San Francisco Office of Small Business
City Hall, Room 110
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Director Dick-Endrizzi:

It is my honor and privilege to nominate House of Nanking for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Located in Chinatown at 919 Kearny Street, House of Nanking opened its doors in 1988 by husband and wife, Peter and Lily Fang. With the goal of opening their own restaurant, they saved their hard-earned money by living in SROs and bargain hunting for the cheapest deals to make ends meet. Peter and Lily's success story is the epitome of an immigrant family reaching for the American dream, in which the restaurant's rise to popularity has now become a part of Chinatown's legacy.

Today, the restaurant is famous and iconic not only to the locals but also to visitors throughout the world. People come in with their travel books, circling House of Nanking as a "must-visit" along the likes of the Golden Gate Bridge, Chinatown and Fisherman's Wharf. The business has touched many lives and stomachs, attracting all sorts of new restaurant openings in neighboring storefronts and elevating that part of Kearny Street into a bustling foodie central.

I hope for its historic impact in the community and continued success, and hereby recommend it for inclusion on the Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aaron Peskin".

Aaron Peskin

Section One:

Business / Applicant Information. 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:		
House of Nanking		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Peter Fang Liby Fang		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:	
919 Kearny Street San Francisco, CA 94133	(415) 421-1429	
	EMAIL: /	
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
/	House of Nanking	House of Nanking

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Kathy Fang	<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Manager (daughter of owners)	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	TELEPHONE:
SAME AS ABOVE	(415) 421-1429
	EMAIL: Kathy@Fangrestaurant.com

SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:	SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):
0332820	199928710069

OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff	
NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

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
919 Kearny Street, SF CA 94133	94133	1988
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	1988 - 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:

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 and a business deemed not current in 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 the Business Assistance Grant.

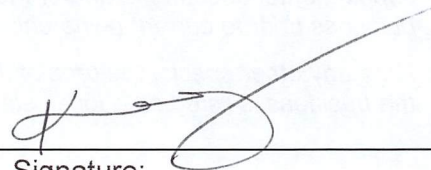
In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

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.

Kathy Fang
Name (Print):

8/6/19
Date:


Signature:

HOUSE OF NANKING

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.

House of Nanking, located at 919 Kearny Street was opened in 1988 by husband and wife, Peter and Lily Fang.

Both Lily and Peter had immigrated from Shanghai in 1980. Not having much money on hand and knowing minimal English, they decided to look for jobs immediately. They both found several gigs working at restaurants as servers, working both day and night shifts. After a few years working at various businesses, Lily and Peter decided to open their own restaurant in Chinatown.

Even before Peter immigrated to the U.S., he had a passion for cooking. He would spend hours watching chefs cook and took notes. He would visit his favorite food stalls and be mesmerized by their methods of making simple delicious comfort food. Cooking and entertaining back at home in Shanghai were some of the best memories he had, and he wanted to recreate that feeling by opening his own place one day.

With the goal of opening their own restaurant, they had to save all their hard-earned money. They stayed in SROs and sought out for deals for the cheapest produce they could find to make meals at home. Once they saved enough, Lily and her father Tong Liang found a location on Kearny Street in Chinatown, which passed all the Fengshui tests that Lily's father sought.

The space use to be Kong Za Ge, a Chinese restaurant. Once Lily and Peter took over the spot, they began putting it all together. They came up with the name House of Nanking, honoring Lily's dad who is from Nanking. He helped scout the location and provided the blessing for the two to start the business, so it felt appropriate to name it after his hometown.

Then came the cuisine. Peter is from Shanghai so he wanted to share the food he loved the most and grew up eating. Peter was self-taught. He devoured cookbooks during his youth and studied hard, and he practiced cooking for his family during his free time. Now he got the chance to make real Shanghainese home cooking for San Francisco.

After deciding on the name and cuisine, they started working on the interior. As they couldn't afford expensive restaurant furniture or contractors, Peter chose to do all the interior remodeling himself and even built his own chairs and tables from scratch. Never did he think

his passion for building furniture in his youth with his brothers would come in handy for his future business. Having an appreciation for calligraphy, Peter wanted to design the storefront signage himself. He wrote out the Chinese name to House of Nanking and had a vendor create it precisely out of wood, carved to match his Chinese letters. To this day, this wooden signage is still on the storefront after 32 years.

Peter and Lily opened doors in November 1988. Lily was the server, Peter the chef, and they hired one dishwasher. Aside from that, Lily and Peter did all the prep and set up themselves. The first month, business was mediocre at best. It wasn't slow, but it wasn't packed either. Only a handful of new people wandered in. A few months later, a woman named Sharon rushed in with her good friend Peter Kaufman. Sharon was walking with Peter K. when she smelled this incredible aroma that reminded her of Shanghai, which is where she is from. She told Peter K. they had to eat there.

Sharon and Peter K. were blown away and introduced Peter K.'s father, Philip Kaufman, a famous director and screenwriter, to House of Nanking. Philip had many successful films including *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and *The Right Stuff*. Being a well-connected person and iconoclast of his time, he brought in influential food writer Patricia Unterman, who is known for her food reviews, writeups and books. Patricia wrote a rave review about Peter the chef and how delicious the food was. Lo and behold, the day after the review hit the stands, Peter and Lily upon setting up and opening their doors, couldn't believe what they were seeing. A line had started to form outside their glass door before they were even open. And as weeks went by, the line got longer and longer, to the point where House of Nanking became famous for not only its food and one wok chef, but its iconic line that never let up, no matter what time of day.

Business was booming unlike anything they could have imagined in their wildest dreams, and now Peter and Lily had a great thing going, which also presented a new problem for them. They were so busy with people squeezing in that they couldn't order, serve and cook fast enough to keep everyone happy.

Fed up with the way service was going and trying to cook and do everything out of one wok; including frying, steaming and stir frying; he decided to try something different. Since ordering from the menu took too long, Peter decided to just cook what he felt was his best dishes at House of Nanking and just serve it. He started ladling food directly out of the wok onto the plates and told his customers to try it. His customers were first shocked and taken aback for a moment and then realized the chef was asking them to try his food from off the stove, like a free sample. He said, you waited hours to taste my food, so taste! He would wait to see their reaction. The customers would ooh and ahh and then he would take away their menus and said "I'll take care of it. No menus." He would decide for them what they would eat and that sped up his service tremendously.

What started out as a simple operational solution to faster service turned into the House of Nanking signature trademark. Everyone now knew House of Nanking not only one of the best

Chinese restaurants in the Bay Area and possibly all of America, but also the place where the chef doesn't let you order. Peter's fame was similar to the Soup Nazi in New York and Sushi Nazi in LA. If you sat down and tried to order, he would tell you no. And if you insisted on ordering something standard like fried rice, you would get kicked out and your seat opened to someone who waited to eat HIS FOOD, HIS WAY. News traveled fast about House of Nanking from word of mouth, writeups and awards. House of Nanking, also known as HONK, began appearing in Best of The Bay, the San Francisco Examiner, the San Francisco Chronicle and The New York Times. People started coming from all over the United States. The lines got even longer, spanning the entire block on Kearny Street. People were curious, including top chefs, actors, athletes, politicians, artists and more.

By 1997, Peter and Lily took over the store next door and expanded into their space, moving the kitchen to the back and adding 25 more seats. Prior to the expansion, the kitchen was in the front of the store, which is made of glass. The wok/burner was right up front, which was fun for customers waiting in line to watch. Ultimately the space was too small to continue this tradition, as it only allowed for one burner/wok. Peter hired more employees and a chef to help him crank out dishes.

Today, the restaurant is the same size as it was after the expansion, and there has consistently been a line to get in, which is impressive for a mom-and-pop restaurant over 30 years, especially in San Francisco where restaurant competition is notoriously hard. Restaurants close faster than they can open, and yet new ones pop up regularly, constantly challenging the old places that have been holding on since the beginning.

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

House of Nanking has not ceased operations in San Francisco since its founding in 1988.

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

House of Nanking is a family owned business. Lily and Peter opened House of Nanking as a wife and husband team in 1988. In 2007, they brought in their only child, Kathy Fang, as a co-owner to help manage the restaurant. Kathy has followed in the footsteps of her father and has become a notable chef on her own right. After spending close to 15 years helping out at HONK as a child and teenager in between school, Kathy developed a passion for her family's business and, most importantly, for food.

House of Nanking is now managed by Kathy, while Lily still operates and works at the restaurant every day. Peter and Kathy have gone on to open another restaurant called Fang, located in SoMa. Peter now splits his time between running HONK and Fang.

Now with two restaurants in San Francisco – both run by husband, wife and daughter – they hope to continue growing their roots into the city that they love and know. Knowing their daughter is fully capable and having been growing and running their restaurants alongside them, it gives them the confidence and desire to keep their business going for many more years to come. They want to turn this into a Legacy Business now, something that can be passed down through generations. They can't imagine after all the hard work they've put in and the success that they have created, for it to eventually go away.

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

The original owners of House of Nanking are still the owners of House of Nanking. No ownership change has taken place at any point in time aside from the addition of their daughter. Kathy Fang will be eventually be taking over completely.

1988 – 2007	Peter and Lily Fang
2007 – Present	Peter, Lily and Kathy Fang

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.

Not applicable. Peter and Lily Fang have been the owners of House of Nanking for 32 years.

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 that houses House of Nanking is classified by the Planning Department as Category A, Historic Resource Present, with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. The building is a four-story brick building constructed in 1909. It is listed in the California Register and determined to be eligible for the National Register.

CRITERION 2

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

The Fang family is aware that House of Nanking has become a part of history in Chinatown. The restaurant is famous and iconic not only to locals in San Francisco but also to people throughout the world. People come in with their travel books, circling House of Nanking as a must-visit business, like with famous sites such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, etc. The business has touched many lives/stomachs, and its popularity has

turned that part of Kearny Street into a bustling foodie spot with all sorts of restaurants serving dumplings, noodles, boba, dim sum, ramen and more.

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

Kathy Fang has represented House of Nanking at a few LUCKYRICE events hosted in San Francisco. LUCKYRICE is a company that has produced over 25 food festivals across North America, and countless private events for clients, featuring cuisines from every channel of the Asian and Asian Fusion diaspora. Each participating business donates over 600 bites to the event. One year, House of Nanking was the main feature for the LUCKYRICE event, as the theme was generational businesses.

Kathy Fang was awarded the Ignite Award in 2017 by the 1990 Institute and has been involved with GlobalSF, even hosting a Chinatown Historical Walkthrough for their members once.

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

In the 1980s when House of Nanking was founded, there was no Yelp or social media. There were food critics and reviewers who wrote about restaurants for newspapers and magazines. A good review in the Sunday newspaper was the best form of advertising a restaurant could get. When Patricia Unterman wrote a rave review about House of Nanking a few months after they opened, things took a wonderful turn for the restaurant. The tiny hole-in-the-wall being reviewed by an incredibly famous food writer was something they would have never been able to get on their own, especially out of so many Chinese restaurants in the city.

House of Nanking has been written about and given awards over the years by the following publications/media:

- San Francisco Chronicle
- San Francisco Examiner
- The Bay Guardian
- New York Times
- SF Magazine
- Eater SF
- VICE
- Food Network
- Phaidon: China Cookbook
- CNN
- SingTao Daily

House of Nanking has also been featured on many food shows/television:

- The Food Network – Rachael Ray’s Tasty Travels
- Famous Israeli travel show – The Amazing Journey:
<https://reshet.tv/yummies/the-amazing-journey/season-07/episodes/>
- America’s Worst Driver, Season 1, San Francisco
- CNN – 50 Shades of America
- The Travel Channel – Food Paradise, Season 10, “Passport on a Plate”

Links to press and coverage:

- <https://www.cntraveler.com/gallery/best-chinese-food-in-san-francisco>
- <https://www.zagat.com/b/9-sf-bay-area-restaurant-families-to-know>
- <https://www.travelpulse.com/news/destinations/5-hot-spots-in-san-francisco.html>
- <https://trendingtravel.org/5-asian-restaurants-in-san-francisco/>
- <https://www.cntraveler.com/restaurants/san-francisco/house-of-nanking>
- <https://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2018/03/14/best-egg-rolls-in-san-francisco/>
- <https://www.foodrepublic.com/2015/06/10/the-history-of-san-franciscos-chinatown-in-10-dishes/>
- <https://www.7x7.com/secret-recipe-house-of-nankings-fried-onion-cakes-1786577589.html>
- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/nine-cool-things-to-do-in-b-3710565?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAHRtldy_ac6HeqlrDEnfXOEXmh1N-noyrZQZBbM-n6pB81RvT8Lfdpb6MrEOBp_NlmQTJzC12tEw0uybGJE4qMZ8IizLvlTU8jLfzaS6JrS_24k5D45fMdiHVI2lgfQxQ_GJ_Cjap4cgGqgegObcPMcwIZFWWn3bYzgPiX7Sw

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

The Fang family are significant due to their culinary contributions to San Francisco through their restaurants House of Nanking and Fang. Peter Fang is famous for eliminating the menu at HONK and insisting that customers let him order food for the table. If you sat down and tried to order, he would say no. This became the House of Nanking signature trademark.

Significant patrons of House of Nanking include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. DIRECTORS/PRODUCERS: Steven Spielberg, Brett Ratner, Francis Ford Coppola, Phil Kaufman, Sophia Coppola
2. FOOD, CHEF CELEBRITIES: Martha Stewart, Jamie Oliver, Rachel Ray, Paul Prudhomme, Michael Chiarello
3. ACTORS: Sean Penn, Keanu Reeves, Danny Glover
4. COMEDIANS: Kathy Griffin, Chris Rock
5. ATHLETES: Chris Weber, Bill Walton, Warren Sap
6. SINGERS: Joss Stone, Anthrax Singer

7. POLITICIANS: Chelsea Clinton, Jon Huntsman Jr. (Governor of Utah and now US Ambassador to Russia)
8. INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE: Marc Benioff (CEO of Salesforce) who tweeted about House of Nanking and Fang restaurants being among the best Chinese restaurants in San Francisco.

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

House of Nanking demonstrates its commitment to the community by donating to schools and nonprofit organizations, and by participating in events:

- House of Nanking donates to schools and organizations by offering gift certificates for raffles.
- House of Nanking assists nonprofit organizations such as Futures Without Violence and Glide Memorial Church by donating prepared appetizers for their events. For Glide's Annual Legacy Gala, House of Nanking has provided 600-800 bites.
- House of Nanking participates in events that help promote the growth of Asian food and beverage businesses, such as Lucky Rice. The event draws in people of all backgrounds to come taste, experience and learn more about Asian culture and food, thereby helping Asian businesses grow all over the country.

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

The customers of the business are approximately 65% locals and 35% tourists, which can vary depending on the season. The restaurant primarily serves the Chinatown area, but people from all over the city come to visit and dine at HONK. The general average demographic of customers range from 25-50 and oftentimes are families. Families come in with kids, parents and grandparents after a long day in Chinatown. As small as the place is, people like to come in small groups as everything is family style. People share tables and so the experience is unique and memorable.

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

The building that houses the business is located in a historic building listed on the National Register. The exterior wooden signage and blade signage for House of Nanking are significant to the business.

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

The block of Kearny Street between Columbus and Jackson has become a highly photographed hot spot. The section is important as it marks the connecting points of Chinatown, North Beach and the Financial District. There is a bustle of restaurants on the block sandwiched next to the

iconic Columbus Tower. When one look at the photos taken along this block, one can't miss the multi-colored House of Nanking sign. If the business and its sign were gone, it would feel like something was missing from this block after 30 years. When Sing Tao came out with an article about Chinatown, their headlining photo was an image of this exact street with the House of Nanking sign front and center. HONK has definitely become an integral piece of Chinatown just like the many other old businesses that are still around. This is the old soul of Chinatown that reminds us what things were like back then. If House of Nanking were to shut down or move, the neighborhood would lose a colorful tile in the Chinatown mosaic. It would be different for San Francisco locals and even tourists who frequent House of Nanking to see it elsewhere or gone. It just wouldn't be the same.

CRITERION 3

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

House of Nanking is a staple Chinese restaurant in San Francisco. The recipes transpire from traditional recipes that have been updated based on the owners' own experiences. They like to recreate standard dishes and give them a twist. At House of Nanking, one of the popular things to order is in fact not to order yourself! They are fantastic at putting together a dish for you based on what you like. Their menu is constantly changing and dishes are rotated around. Some of their dishes, however, are favorites and have been around for quite some time. These special dishes include: Nanking sesame chicken, fried potstickers with peanut sauce, shrimp packets with peanut sauce, house noodles and fried calamari.

Aside from the food, the exterior and interior of the business are also iconic. The white and red tiles and the multi-colored blade sign on the exterior are iconic. The interior is always packed with people, with stacks of Tsingtao Beer and soy sauce containers because of limited space. There are no bells and whistles here – it's just about the food, the fastest service you can get outside of a fast food joint and the infamous lines outside.

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)

House of Nanking is committed to maintaining its historical tradition of being a food destination hot spot for locals and tourists who want to taste Chinese food unlike any other they've had before. House of Nanking is committed to serving Fang family recipes. Peter has always been creating new dishes for House of Nanking since its inception, and he continues to do so now with the help of his daughter, so the next generation of customers will come in knowing the place has remained the same as it was 30+ years ago. They are experiencing history when they come to dine at House of Nanking. The restaurant is also committed to maintaining the feel of the space by keeping some of its iconic exterior and interior aesthetics so people don't think the original history and soul have changed over time. Even the service remains the same: curt,

quick and preferably no menus. Many customers still come here and ask the servers or the chef to order for them, and House of Nanking wants to keep it that way for many generations to come.

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.).

House of Nanking is committed to maintaining the carved wooden signage and the colorful blade sign.

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.

Not applicable.

868 Kearny St
San Francisco, California

Google

Street View



Google



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RANT
982-3853
PHO
VIET HOI AN
FOOD TO GO

南京小館

Chef J
RESTAURANT

南京小館

HOUSE OF
NANKING
南京小館

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San Francisco Chronicle

THE LARGEST DAILY CIRCULATION IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Inexpensive, Remarkable Chinese Restaurant

BY PATRICIA UNTERMAN

CHRONICLE RESTAURANT CRITIC

A PASSER-BY would never notice House of Nanking, a small, nondescript restaurant on a block of Kearny that specializes in them. Half the steamy front window is blocked by sheet metal. Inside a tiny kitchen has been installed. A counter with stools and six tables take up the rest of this very modest dining room recently opened by Peter and Lily Fang and her father. Peter is the sole cook; Lily the only waitress. Her father washes dishes. You wouldn't think anything very special would come out of this bare bones setup, but it turns out that the food at House of Nanking is extraordinary and that Peter Fang is a natural, if unschooled, chef.

His Shanghai-style dishes taste like the best home cooking — the honest kind of cooking done by people who shop every day and buy only what is best; the kind of cooking in which the flavors are so clean and clear they jump out at you; the kind of cooking that comes from people who love to cook. You rarely find food like this in a restaurant, but it's here at the tiny House of Nanking.

In order to sample it, you will have to be patient. Since Peter Fang does all the shopping himself every day and all the cooking, it means that not every dish on the menu will be ready to serve. The dishes come out one at a time and you may have to wait between courses. Some

House of Nanking

919 Kearny Street, San Francisco.
Open every day from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Beer. No credit cards. Reservations accepted. 421-1429.

FOOD ★★★

PRICES Inexpensive

PLUSES Clean, beautiful home-style Shanghai cooking by a single owner chef

MINUSES The place is tiny; the wait for food can be long

★★★ EXCELLENT ★ GOOD
★★ VERY GOOD □

dishes even take longer because the usual preparation work has not been done in advance. Frankly, all this makes the food at House of Nanking singular, but don't go there and expect a banquet to materialize like magic. There's only one table that seats more than four people anyway and eight is the most that could squeeze around it. So, with this warning about the scope of this restaurant, let me tell you about some of the wonderful dishes this recent émigré from Shanghai can turn out.

First of all, Fang makes the most delicious Shanghai dumplings (\$3.20). Every time they are ordered he pulls out a ball of soft yeast dough and carefully makes five beautiful meat or vegetable-filled buns. Then he pan fries them so that they become crisp on each side or he steams them so the sweetness

and tenderness of the delicate dough is emphasized. They are truly the best Chinese buns I've ever tasted. Another spectacular starter hides behind the mundane title of Fried Squids (\$4.25). They turn out to be lacy fritters of tender squid inside a crisp, scallion studded crust. Shanghai Eggplant Salad (\$2.95) is made with long, pale purple Chinese eggplants cut-into long strips. Though usually served cold the salad was made to order on the evening I asked for it, and the hot and sour dressing on the still warm eggplant works equally well on hot or cold vegetables.

The Nanking fish soup (\$2.25 person) is a dream, a lovely, clean peppery fish broth, ever so slightly thickened and full of bits of kingfish, cucumber, fresh tomato, black mushroom and green peas. I order it every time as a restorative. Another fine soup loaded with fresh noodles, crunchy bits of the bright mustard greens and shrimp, called Prawn Noodle Soup (\$3.95), possesses the same exemplary clarity of flavor and texture.

Noodles are a specialty here and one of the most brilliant preparations is a crisp noodle pancake topped with baby eggplants, miraculously crunchy but tender green beans and velvety chicken, called Shanghai Crispy Noodles (\$4.40). Shanghai Special Fried Noodles (\$3.75) are soft, wider noodles generously sauced and topped with snow peas and the lovely baby Chinese eggplants. Finally, House of Nanking prepares gelatinous rice

See Page

HERB CAEN



Monday-Go-Round

★ ★ ★
TALKTAIL LOUNGE: At the House of Nanking, writer Edwin Heaven was making a pitch to Francis Coppola about his script, "The Lobster & The Mobster." Francis, between bites of fiery-hot shrimp cakes and gulps of Chinese beer: "Well, mobsters, they are always in season, but try to find a good lobster when you need one!" An Oscar-winning brush-off ... Can you believe there'll be a Quentin Kopp roast at the Fairmont June 6? A Quentin Kopp roast is where everybody says nice things about him, I guess ... Add sightseers that stick: the female mendicant outside Shreve's who weeps continuously into her hands, now and then peeking through her fingers to see how the take is going ... Ann Harris, who owns the super steak house at Van Ness and Pacific, is branching out to Novato; her Cacti Grill, formerly Santa Fe Mary's, opens in September, heavy on the chili.

<https://www.sfgate.com/restaurants/diningout/article/DINING-OUT-House-of-Nanking-s-food-is-great-2300639.php>

San Francisco Chronicle

DINING OUT / House of Nanking's food is great, just don't try to order

Bill Addison, Chronicle Staff Writer

Published 4:00 am PDT, Friday, June 23, 2006



Chronicle / Lacy Atkins

San Francisco's classic Chinatown restaurant House of Nanking chef-owner, Peter Fang prepares his special dish Nanking sesame chicken, Sunday June 18, 2006, in San Francisco, Ca. (Lacy Atkins/The Chronicle)

Peter Fang hovered impatiently over our table at **House of Nanking** with notepad in hand, not uttering a word but obviously waiting for us to order.

"What's good tonight?" I asked.

"Depends on what you like," Fang answered.

"We're adventurous," I replied.

"In that case, let me take care of it," Fang said. "I'm the chef."

And before I could inquire exactly what he might have in mind, Fang propelled himself through the congested dining room and disappeared.

His brusqueness might have been startling had it not been so in keeping with the mythology that swirls around House of Nanking: hour-plus waits. Gruff service designed to keep the tables turning. The long menu considered by regulars -- who always let Fang choose their dishes -- to be superfluous or only for first-timers.

Fang opened his diminutive restaurant on the edge of San Francisco's Chinatown in 1988, and lines quickly began forming out the door for his accessible, homey cooking.

Since The Chronicle last published a full review of House of Nanking in 1989, the restaurant has doubled in size, and Fang works the front of the house while other cooks prepare the food. Visits from **Food Network** luminaries such as **Jamie Oliver** and **Rachael Ray**, whose smiling mugs adorn one wall, have helped maintain Nanking's popularity. Lines of tourists and locals alike often still trail out the door.

On the midweek night of my indoctrination into the Nanking experience, there was no wait for a table. But you wouldn't know it from the staff's adrenaline-fueled snippiness.

"What is this?" I asked each time a server flung down one of the dishes that Fang had selected for us.

If I was lucky, the server barked a one-word response over her shoulder.

Yet Fang had done his job admirably. The dishes -- all served in family-style portions on enormous platters -- contrasted satisfyingly with one another and exhibited care in preparation.



Chronicle / Lacy Atkins

San Francisco's classic Chinatown restaurant House of Nanking is jam-packed, Sunday June 18, 2006, with people inside the two room restaurant and people waiting always waiting outside, in San Francisco, Ca. (Lacy Atkins/The Chronicle)

Tender calamari (\$11.95) are delicately battered, then served in a broth with an almost milky texture and a puckery vinegar nip. Licorice-like basil, pungent scallion and almost-raw onion slivers impart a vivid edge to otherwise mild beef tossed with crispy rice (\$8.95).

A chicken special (\$8.95) includes chunks of deep-fried chicken tossed in sweet-and-sour sauce and arranged around a bed of chopped snow pea shoots. The shoots are then topped with matchsticks of deep-fried yams.

It's an unconventional but ultimately captivating combination that works. The sauce courts cloying sweetness but is rescued by the grassy snow pea shoots, which also balances the crispy-soggy chicken and yams with their fresh snap.

The only plate that brought the dinner down was an assortment of deep-fried appetizers (\$8.95). Potstickers and onion cakes (\$4.95 each, if ordered separately) sported blistered exteriors that teetered somewhere between dumplings and fried wontons.

I would have much preferred to begin the meal with Shanghai special rice soup (\$6.95) - essentially egg drop soup jazzed up with fresh peas, diced zucchini, pork and rice. A cup of this potage nicely sets the palate for the whirligig of flavors to follow.



The House of Nanking special dish Nanking sesame chicken, Sunday June 18, 2006, in San Francisco, Ca. (Lacy Atkins/The Chronicle)

Just to assert our independence, we also flagged down one of the perpetually busy servers and asked her to bring us the chicken in Tsingtao beer sauce (\$8.95). It turns out there's a reason this specialty has been on the menu since the restaurant's early days. The gently thickened sauce surprises with a subtle tanginess and showcases the clean, light flavor of the truly fresh chicken.

We lucked out choosing the chicken in beer sauce on our own. On my third visit, after two meals in which I had relinquished control of ordering, I learned the hard way that Fang doesn't like control freaks.

Determined to try some as-yet-unsampled dishes from the menu, I asked Fang how the Nanking sesame pork (\$8.95) was prepared.

"What else do you want besides pork?" Fang retorted bluntly.

"Well, what's in this particular dish?" I asserted.

"What do you want besides pork?" Fang repeated.

We stared at each other for a moment.

"We're just wondering what the Nanking pork is like so we could decide from there," my friend tried to interject helpfully.

"I don't recommend the Nanking pork." Fang said finally.

Right. How about the crispy sole with Chinese greens?

"That's OK."

"OK?"

"No, it's good."

"And we'd like to try the Nanking noodle with XO sauce."

"No, I'll make you a noodle dish you'll like."

Fine. Now back to the pork. The pork chops?

"Yeah, good. OK, that's enough food for you."

And off he dashed.

I had obviously thrown Fang off his usual canny abilities at plotting meals. The sole (\$11.95) arrived first, and was the best of the lot. The chunks of crispy fish thrum with the dusky heat of white pepper and are strewn over a bed of pea shoots with the same vinegary broth as the calamari.

Disappointments followed: The bland pork chops (\$8.95) included a side of mushrooms stuffed with excessively crunchy deep-fried pork in sugary sweet-and-sour sauce. The special noodle dish (\$8.95) consisted of thick flour noodles with more deep-fried fish coated in a reddish liquid that was by turns sharp and saccharine.

To add insult to injury, we later requested moo shu beef (\$8.95), which came shellacked in a sauce dominated by hoisin. My friend and I both left with an unpleasant sweet taste in our mouths.

But there you have it. House of Nanking, after a long reign of acclaim, can still produce food that exemplifies the subtle juxtapositions of Chinese cuisine.

To order correctly, though, you need to trust the man behind the legend.

SAN FRANCISCO

10

Kathy Fang of House of Nanking and FANG

by [Sophia Lorenzi](#) | Nov 1, 2011, 3:25am PDT



Kathy Fang outside her restaurant, House of Nanking

*Throughout Chinese Food Week, Eater is interviewing chefs and restaurateurs behind favorite Chinese food establishments across the U.S. Today we tap **Kathy Fang**, owner of Chinatown staple **House of Nanking** and its newer sister restaurant, **Fang**.*

■ GRID VIEW



Kathy Fang outside her restaurant, House of Nanking

| 1 of 2



[Photo: [Molly DeCoudreaux](#)]

Peter Fang opened **House of Nanking**, a Shanghaiese restaurant with a single-burner stove, in 1988. Outwardly inconspicuous, the restaurant continues on as a Chinatown travel guide fixture, drawing the attention of visitors and locals alike, many of whom don't even flinch at hour-long waits for a seat. Two years ago, Fang opened a new restaurant, **FANG**, where the focus is updated Chinese cuisine. We sat down with his daughter, owner **Kathy Fang**, to discuss her restaurant experiences, **Francis Ford Coppola**, and MSG, among other things. **Kathy Fang, Owner:** Our restaurants have always been a family business. My mom helps manage House of Nanking while my dad and I are at FANG. I'm fortunate enough that my father and I think alike and approach food in the same manner. It's been a blessing to be able to work side by side with my father as a business partner. He has the craziest work ethic I've ever seen and it's motivating to be around him every day.

Have you seen the neighborhoods change over the years? How so? SOMA [where Fang is located] has changed a lot over the last few years. There is so much more energy in the area now due to the wide range of occupants. You have the SFMOMA, Academy of Art University, the W Hotel, major companies like Blackrock and McKesson,

and small firms like Hubpages and Kontagent all clustered in one area. We're extremely excited about the expansion of the SFMOMA, the new section will occupy the space right next to our restaurant. With all of these new developments and the Transbay Terminal to come in the near future, SOMA will become the destination hot spot for people to come to for art, food, drinks, and entertainment.

Chinatown, surprisingly enough, has not changed dramatically in the last 25 years. There's something really special about this place that I have not seen in any other Chinatowns in the U.S. The Chinatown in San Francisco is just as much a place for tourists as it is for local Chinese immigrants. If you walk down Stockton Street between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., the hustle and bustle of all the Chinese people in the area buying their daily groceries gives you the same rush that you may experience on the streets of Hong Kong. There is very little turnover here with restaurants and stores. We recognize everyone here and we hope that the neighborhood doesn't change in the future.

Do you have any favorite customers? If so, please describe them. I love seeing regulars at FANG. I've gotten to the point where I know my regulars so well, they don't even need to use the menu any more. Both of our restaurants have amazingly loyal customers. One family who frequents Fang started coming to House of Nanking 20-some years ago and knew me as a little kid. Now that little kid is running a restaurant that they visit with their grandchildren.

Of course, famous people are always fun to have at the restaurant. My favorite celebrity guests would probably be **Derek Jeter** and **Jorge Posada**, who are some of the nicest and most gracious customers I've served. You would never think that they were big baseball stars.

At House of Nanking, we have so many customers who have dined with us and become lifelong friends of my family. One of my favorite customers from House of Nanking is **Francis Ford Coppola**. We all may know him as The Godfather, and he definitely looks the part whenever he is dining with us. But as a child, I did not know him as The Godfather. I just knew him as Mr. Coppola, the big man who always sat at the counter chowing down on his favorite appetizer, fried shrimp packets with peanut sauce. One evening, as I sat next to him at the counter, I turned to him and asked him, "Mr. Coppola, why are you so fat?" He answered, "Probably because I love your father's food and eat it way too much." Years later, I was finally old enough to watch his Godfather trilogy --

thank god he didn't take my question personally, and had an amazing sense of humor! He's got so much pizzazz and character to him. It's always fun to see him at House of Nanking.

Where do you eat when you're not at the restaurant? I cook a lot of Chinese, Italian, and French fusion food on my nights off at home. I also post a lot of my own recipes that I cook at home on my blog: www.myfangalicious.com. But San Francisco is also a great city to eat out in. I'm a huge fan of simple but satisfying food, and **Kokkari** is exactly that. **Cotogna** has great homemade pastas and is open late on weekends, which is a major plus for us restaurant people who work late. I love having omakase sitting at **Sushi Ran's** bar and tasting their amazing sake menu.

Do you have any strong feelings about MSG? I always hear people talking about it like it's the worst ingredient on earth and should be banned. Quite honestly, I grew up eating my grandparents' Shanghainese cooking and we used to joke about how you can't make a great Shanghainese dish without using sugar, soy, and MSG. Try convincing my grandma to make Hong Sau Ro (Braised Pork Belly with Eggs and Squid) without MSG, and she'll claim it's not edible.

I think back in the day, MSG was more necessary because we didn't have access to so many ingredients. These days, we have so much amazing organic produce and so many specialty proteins we can use to create that same umami flavor -- MSG isn't really needed. **I think eventually Chinese cuisine will slowly wean itself off MSG.** Many restaurants in Shanghai now don't use it and maybe five years ago, that wasn't even imaginable.

Have you had any memorable kitchen disasters over the years? Thinking about the history of House of Nanking, I can't recall any disasters, but I can say we learned that our kitchen wasn't big enough for the amount of customers we eventually had. This situation could have become a disaster. When my father first opened House of Nanking, he had one tiny kitchen—with one burner—in the front of the restaurant. He used the one burner to stir fry, steam, pan fry, and boil. That wasn't really a problem when he first started out because the restaurant was small and we never had more than 10 or 15 customers at any one time.

After we were written up in the *Chronicle* by Patricia Untermann, House of Nanking started drawing lines outside the door and down the block. The first day the line formed,

my father couldn't keep up with all the orders with just one burner. Not wanting to keep customers waiting or have them get angry, he made super large portions of dishes and served them to his customers straight out of the wok, regardless of what they ordered. People were just given whatever he decided to cook up. Service was super quick because there was no need to order—people were just fed once they sat down. Our customers loved the craziness of it and it went on for a little while, until my dad was finally able to afford to build a bigger kitchen with more burners. To this day, people still recall those days when Peter Fang would just serve whatever he wanted, straight out of the wok.

What's the secret to your success? Because my dad and I are always at the restaurant, we can accurately gauge what our customers like and don't like. We're always there to make sure the quality of our food stays the same, and we interact with all customers personally. We learn from our customers and our mistakes. It can be a humbling experience when you create something you thought conceptually was a great dish but then find out that there isn't a market for it. As a chef and restaurant owner, you have to remember that the customer is always right. You can't simply make food you think is amazing and just expect people to like it. When they don't like it, you need to learn to let it go and go back to the drawing board to come up with something else that you think will blow their minds.

Do you have any plans for the future? Now that FANG has been open for two years and is successful, I'm itching to open something new with a more modern slant to Chinese cuisine.

- *Kate Garklavs*

- [All House of Nanking Coverage](#) [~ ESF ~]
- [All Fang Coverage](#) [~ ESF ~]

Best

OF SAN FRANCISCO

&

THE BAY AREA

"Best Chinese Restaurant"
1991

HOUSE OF
NANKING

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THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

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McGUARDIAN

SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS

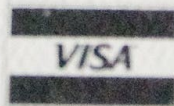
Honors

House of Nanking

voted

*Best Chinese
Silver*

In the Annual Reader Restaurant Poll
by the readers of San Francisco Focus
The City Magazine for the San Francisco Bay Area
Chez Focus celebratory event is in association with



1 · 9 · 9 · 1



*This is to certify that the professional named below
is hereby honored as one of North America's outstanding chefs*

1993

Peter Fang

is hereby included in

America's 2000

providing culinary leadership into the twenty-first century

Chef Daniel Durand
National President
Chefs In America

Chef Jack Martine
National Headquarters Chairman
Chefs In America

Jesse Sartain
Founder
Chefs In America

THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY

GUARDIAN

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BEST OF THE BAY
24th Annual

THE
NATION'S
ORIGINAL

JULY 29, 1998
VOL. 32 ISSUE # 43

Best Chinese Food
House of Nanking

12TH ANNUAL

Chez Focus

A CELEBRATION *of the* BAY AREA'S BEST RESTAURANTS

House of Nanking

HAS BEEN VOTED

BEST CHINESE

BRONZE

SAN FRANCISCO FOCUS

1995 READER RESTAURANT POLL

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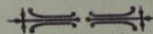
AUGUST 2002

☞ Readers' Poll Winners 2002 ☞

Every month we get to tell you what we think the hottest dining destinations are, along with the ones to avoid, now you've told us the 63 places where you really like to eat. Here are the culinary landmarks, the bustling bistros, and the ethnic oases 4,527 of you voted the best in the Bay Area. —Katrina Hendrix

Best Chinese House of Nanking

2. House of Nanking The atmosphere may be bare bones and the service halfhearted—you can't get a glass of water to save your life—but the cheap eats here are surprisingly tasty. 919 KEARNY ST., S.F., (415) 421-1429



Cheng
John

Hi Peter
and working
with GATING
and LOVING



No Smoking
Area





SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Legacy Business Registry Executive Summary

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2020

Filing Date: July 22, 2020
Case No.: 2020-006872LBR
Business Name: House of Nanking ("HONK")
Business Address: 919 Kearny Street
Zoning: Chinatown Community Business (CCB) Zoning District
65-N Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0177/002
Applicant: Kathy Fang, Manager
919 Kearny Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Katie Wilborn - (415) 575-9114
katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org
Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution to Recommend Approval

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

House of Nanking is a restaurant opened by husband and wife, Peter and Lily Fang, at 919 Kearny (original and current location) in the Chinatown neighborhood in 1988. The Fangs immigrated to San Francisco from Shanghai in 1980 and worked in several restaurants before opening their own, named "House of Nanking", in honor of Lily's father who was from Nanking, China. Prior to opening, Peter wrote "House of Nanking" in Chinese and commissioned wooden letters be made in his handwriting. The Fangs also had a colorful blade sign made with the business's name in English. That same blade sign and wooden characters still adorn the business's transom today. With Peter as chef, Lily the server, and one hired employee as the dishwasher, the Fangs dedicated their life to the restaurant. Shortly thereafter, the restaurant was recognized for its delicious offerings by a well-known local food critic, Patricia Unterman, and became an immediate hit. Within a few months, House of Nanking (also referred to as HONK) became famous for its incredible Shanghainese house-style cooking and iconic, unrelenting line that would wrap around the block.

Due to the amount of success the restaurant was facing, the owners were struck with a new problem: how to serve so many people within a single business day. Peter decided to try a new, unconventional approach to cooking and serving. He would no longer have customers sit idle with their menus, trying to decide what to order. Instead, Peter began deciding himself what offerings the customers should have. What began as a way to speed up service, turned into the restaurant's signature trademark. HONK became renowned for its chef that didn't allow you to order.

By the 1990s, HONK's business was booming and receiving national attention from celebrities, top chefs,

politicians, and publications. Customers were coming from all over the world for the food and the unique experience. In 1997, to accommodate more seating and a larger kitchen, HONK took over the store next door and expanding their restaurant, adding the distinguishing red, white, and black tiles that clads the exterior and interior of the restaurant. In 2007, Peter and Lily's only daughter, Kathy Fang, was brought on as a co-owner to help manage HONK and open a new restaurant, "Fang", in the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood. After 32 years of family-run operation, the Fangs hope HONK (House of Nanking) will be accepted on the Legacy Business Registry, so it may continue its legacy in its original Chinatown location for many more years – and generations – to come.

The business is located in a Category A (Historic Resource Present) structure on the west side of Kearny Street between Jackson Street and Pacific Avenue in the Chinatown neighborhood. It is within the Chinatown Community Business (CCB) Zoning District and a 65-N Height and Bulk District.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1988.

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

Yes. House of Nanking (HONK) qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. HONK has operated continuously in San Francisco for 32 years.
- ii. HONK has contributed to the history and identity of the Chinatown neighborhood and San Francisco.
- iii. HONK 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?*

Yes. The business is associated with Chinese cuisine.

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

Yes. HONK's building is located within the California Register-eligible and National Register-eligible Chinatown Historic District. The building location is within the boundaries of an on-going Chinese American Cultural Context Statement. The building itself was surveyed in 1978, 1994, and 1997, and determined to hold "Contributory" and "Contextual Importance" to the historic districts.

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

No. However, the property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status codes of "A" (Historic Resource Present) because of their locations within the eligible historic district.

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

No.

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

Yes. There have been a number of features and articles on House of Nanking, both locally and nationally. The 1988 review by Patricia Unterman in the local Sunday newspaper kickstarted the restaurant's success. Thereafter, HONK has been featured in the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner, The Bay Guardian, The New York Times, SF Magazine, Eater DF, VICE, the Food Network, Phaidon: China Cookbook, CNN, Singtao Daily, the Travel Channel, 7x7, and many others.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 919 Kearny Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Chinese cuisine
- Food-serving experience
- Red, white, and black tiled exterior (1997)
- "House of Nanking" blade sign (1988)

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Red-framed windows
- Tiled interior (which matches the exterior tile, added in 1997 storefront expansion)
- Wooden Chinese Letters (sign) spelling "House of Nanking" above the entry (written and commissioned by Peter Fang when the restaurant opened, 1988)

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 Documents



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Draft Resolution No. 1131

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2020

Filing Date: July 22, 2020
Case No.: 2020-006872LBR
Business Name: House of Nanking ("HONK")
Business Address: 919 Kearny Street
Zoning: Chinatown Community Business (CCB) Zoning District
65-N Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 0177/002
Applicant: Kathy Fang, Manager
919 Kearny Street
San Francisco, CA 94133
Nominated By: Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Located In: District 3
Staff Contact: Katie Wilborn - (415) 575-9114
katherine.wilborn@sfgov.org

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Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR HOUSE OF NANKING CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 919 KEARNY STREET, BLOCK/LOT 0177/002.

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 32 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 August 19, 2020, 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 House of Nanking 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 House of Nanking.

Location(s):

- 919 Kearny Street

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

Recommended by Applicant

- Chinese cuisine
- Food-serving experience
- Red, white, and black tiled exterior (1997)
- “House of Nanking” blade sign (1988)

Additional Recommended by Staff

- Red-framed windows
- Tiled interior (which matches the exterior tile, added in 1997 storefront expansion)
- Wooden Chinese Letters (sign) spelling “House of Nanking” above the entry (written and commissioned by Peter Fang when the restaurant opened, 1988)

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 2020-006872LBR to the Office of Small Business August 19, 2020.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hyland, Matsuda, Black, Foley, Johns, Pearlman, So

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ADOPTED: Recommendation for Approval