



Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE NOVEMBER 14, 2016

ST. FRANCIS FOUNTAIN

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-004
Business Name: St. Francis Fountain
Business Address: 2801 24th Street
District: District 9
Applicant: Peter Hood, Managing Partner
Nomination Date: August 3, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor David Campos
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

St. Francis Fountain is a soda fountain and diner in the Mission District that has operated continuously in the same location since 1918. Opened by the Christakes family who emigrated from Sparta, Greece, St. Francis Fountain is located on 24th Street between York and Bryant streets and represents the oldest business on the lower 24th Street corridor. Three generations of the Christakes family owned and operated the business, selling handmade chocolates, hard candies, and ice cream made following traditional recipes. The store was remodeled twice during this time, in both 1929 and 1949. St. Francis Fountain was sold in 2000 and again in 2002 to its current owners who transformed the business from a candy store and soda fountain to a diner and soda fountain. No longer viable to make handmade chocolates, hard candy, and ice cream, the new owners expanded the menu to include classic diner fare while continuing to sell vintage candies out of its original 1920's candy case as well as ice cream from Mitchell's Ice Cream, another local business. It also continues to serve classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas and malts, and still uses the fountain's original hot fudge warmer and malt dispenser. The interior and exterior looks much like it did in 1949, with intimate dining booths, a Bulova clock on the back wall, a phone booth, and Formica counter, stools, and back bar fixtures. The painted and neon signs that adorn the exterior also date back to the 1949 iteration of St. Francis Fountain. As the oldest continuously operating business on 24th Street, St. Francis Fountain is a direct connection to the neighborhood's history and is the only one in the neighborhood that pre-dates World War II. Its lease is up for negotiation in 2017. The business contributes to the community by donating to charity auctions, hosting community fundraisers, and making spare meeting space available for local groups..

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

2801 24th Street from 1918-Present (98 years)





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

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Mission District neighborhood's history and identity.

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:

- St. Francis Fountain is associated with classic mid-century soda fountain offerings including specialty ice cream sundaes, malts, and ice cream sodas, as well as vintage candies and diner food. Its exterior and interior physical characteristics give the restaurant a 1940s/1950s-era look and feel. The restaurant serves its soda and ice cream in classic soda fountain glassware and continues to operate original equipment such as the malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer.
- St. Francis Fountain has contributed to the Mission community's history and identity by operating continuously at the same location since 1918, offering chocolates, candy, ice cream, soda, and diner fare to generations of residents. As the only restaurant established prior to World War II that remains along 24th Street, St. Francis Fountain serves as a tangible connection to the past while remaining a popular social gathering spot.
- The business has been cited in the following publications:
 - The New York Times, September 21, 1988, "An Old-Time Fountain of San Francisco Sweets," by Jeannette Ferrary
 - San Francisco Examiner, "The booth where 49ers were born," by Bill Mandel; SF Gate, September 21, 2005, "St. Francis Fountain still makes a mean shake," by Amanda Berne
 - Mission Local, February 6, 2009, "St. Francis Fountain Draws Old-Timers and Newbies Alike," by Ayako Mie
 - SF Weekly, February 21, 2011, "Out with the Kids: Dinner at St. Francis Fountain," by Alex Hochman
 - St. Francis Fountain is listed in SF Heritage's list of "Legacy Bars & Restaurants"

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

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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that St. Francis Fountain 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:

- Classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas, malts, and unique ice cream sundaes; vintage candies; and comfort diner food made from scratch
- Diner food and soda fountain classic offerings
- Mid-century design aesthetic reflected in its menus and other collateral (e.g., matchbooks)
- Classic soda fountain glassware
- Vintage equipment including its malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer
- Original glass candy case that dates to the 1920s and was reinstalled during the 1949 renovation



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

- 1949 dining room interior including:
Formica counter and stools
Formica back bar fixtures and lighting
Intimate booths
Bulova clock on the back wall
Phone booth
Glass tile floor
1949 hand-painted advertising signs on the walls that feature different ice cream and sandwich offerings
- All signage, including:
Neon signs in the window that read, "St. Francis Candies" and "Homemade Ice Cream"
Backlit "St. Francis Fountain Thanks You!" sign hung over the front door
1949 hand-painted signage on the side of the building
Light box sign over the front door that dates from the 1950s or 1960s.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include St. Francis Fountain currently located at 2801 24th Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Manager
Legacy Business Program



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE CENTER / SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
1 DR. CARLTON B. GOODLETT PLACE, ROOM 110, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94102-4681
Small Business Assistance Center (415) 554-6134 / Small Business Commission (415) 554-6481

SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION
MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE NOVEMBER 14, 2016

ST. FRANCIS FOUNTAIN

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. _____

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-004
Business Name: St. Francis Fountain
Business Address: 2801 24th Street
District: District 9
Applicant: Peter Hood, Managing Partner
Nomination Date: August 3, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor David Campos
Staff Contact: Richard Kurylo
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR ST. FRANCIS FOUNTAIN, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2801 24TH 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 November 14, 2016, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore



SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

MARK DWIGHT, PRESIDENT
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

EDWIN M. LEE, MAYOR

BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes St. Francis Fountain 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 St. Francis Fountain:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas, malts, and unique ice cream sundaes; vintage candies; and comfort diner food made from scratch
- Diner food and soda fountain classic offerings
- Mid-century design aesthetic reflected in its menus and other collateral (e.g., matchbooks)
- Classic soda fountain glassware
- Vintage equipment including its malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer
- Original glass candy case that dates to the 1920s and was reinstalled during the 1949 renovation
- 1949 dining room interior including:
 - Formica counter and stools
 - Formica back bar fixtures and lighting
 - Intimate booths
 - Bulova clock on the back wall
 - Phone booth
 - Glass tile floor
 - 1949 hand-painted advertising signs on the walls that feature different ice cream and sandwich offerings
- All signage, including:
 - Neon signs in the window that read, "St. Francis Candies" and "Homemade Ice Cream"
 - Backlit "St. Francis Fountain Thanks You!" sign hung over the front door
 - 1949 hand-painted signage on the side of the building
 - Light box sign over the front door that dates from the 1950s or 1960s.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on November 14, 2016.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. _____

Ayes –
Nays –
Abstained –
Absent –



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**Legacy
Business
Registry**

Application Review Sheet

Application No.: LBR-2016-17-004
Business Name: St. Francis Fountain
Business Address: 2801 24th Street
District: District 9
Applicant: Peter Hood, Managing Partner
Nomination Date: August 3, 2016
Nominated By: Supervisor David Campos

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

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

CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms? X Yes No

NOTES: NA

DELIVERY DATE TO HPC: September 19, 2016

Richard Kurylo
Manager, Legacy Business Program





Member Board of Supervisors
District 9

City and County of San Francisco

DAVID CAMPOS

August 3, 2016

Re: Nomination of St. Francis Fountain to the Legacy Business Registry

Dear Director Kurylo:

I am writing to nominate to the Legacy Business Registry – St. Francis Fountain. This Mission neighborhood business – that has been in continuous operation since 1918 in the exact same location - is the quintessential legacy business I had in mind when authoring the legislation to create this program. The business has been a staple of the neighborhood for close to a hundred years, providing a sense of stability throughout decades of change. To quote from the business' beautiful application,

“As it exists today, the St. Francis Fountain is a perfectly preserved 1940s soda fountain/diner. The neon signage, Formica counter, and the dining room with its intimate booths were installed in 1949 and have been restored to provide a dining experience that is both alive and current, and still a reminder of what the Mission district once was...Residents who lived and worked in the neighborhood for the last 100 years, whether German, Irish, Mexican, or Central American immigrants, whether cops, gangsters, hipsters, artists, city workers, techies or activists, they all came to the St. Francis Fountain: that universal appeal has kept it going strong into the 21st century.”

It is my distinct honor to nominate St. Francis Fountain to become part of San Francisco's Legacy Business Registry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Campos".

David Campos

APPLICATION FOR

Legacy Business Registration

Legacy Business registration is authorized by Section 2A.242 of the San Francisco Administrative Code. The registration process includes nomination by a member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor, a written application, and approval of the Small Business Commission.

1. Current Owner / Applicant Information

NAME OF BUSINESS:		
St Francis Fountain		
BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)		
Peter Hood 50% Levon Kazarian 50%		
CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE:
2801 24th St San Francisco, CA 94110		(415) 826-4200
		EMAIL:
		stfrancisfountain@gmail.com
WEBSITE:	FACEBOOK PAGE:	YELP PAGE
www.stfrancisfountainsf.com	https://www.facebook.com/StFrancisFounta	www.yelp.com/biz/st-francis-fountain-san-fr

APPLICANT'S NAME	
Peter Hood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as Business Owner
APPLICANT'S TITLE	
Managing Partner	
APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:	
105 E Strawberry Dr Mill Valley, CA 94941	
TELEPHONE:	
(415) 577-5266	
EMAIL:	
peterhood@sbcglobal.net	

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
Founding Location: 2801 24th St. San Francisco, CA 94110	
Current Headquarters Location: 2801 24th St San Francisco, CA 94110	
Operating in San Francisco since: 1918	

NAME OF NOMINATOR:	DATE OF NOMINATION:

2. Business Addresses

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
2801 24th St San Francisco, CA	94110	1918-Present
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING AND/OR HEADQUARTERED LOCATION? (check all that apply)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Founding Location	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current Headquarters	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
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3. Eligibility Criteria

Attach the business's historical narrative.

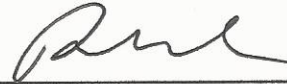
4. San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws, and Public Information Release

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.

Peter Hood

7/25/16



Name (Print):

Date:

Signature:

St. Francis Fountain Legacy Business Application

The St. Francis Fountain has been in continuous operation since 1918 at its current location (the corner of 24th and York streets in the Mission district). It is one of the oldest restaurants in continuous operation in San Francisco. As it exists today, the St. Francis Fountain is a perfectly preserved 1940s soda fountain/diner. The neon signage, Formica counter, and the dining room with its intimate booths were installed in 1949 and have been restored to provide a dining experience that is both alive and current, and still a reminder of what the Mission district once was. The St. Francis serves classic soda fountain ice cream dishes and classic comfort diner food. All the food is made from scratch, and the menu offers many vegan and vegetarian options. The St. Francis has always been and continues to be a neighborhood staple with universal appeal that attracts a diverse range of customers: neighborhood families, hipsters, tourists, tech workers, blue-collar workers, after school kids, etc.

Business History

The St. Francis Fountain was founded in 1918 by James Christakes, an immigrant from Sparta, Greece. From its start and in its heyday, the St. Francis specialized in making handmade chocolates, hard candy and ice cream. Three generations of the Christakes family owned and successfully operated the business until 2000, when the family sold the business and the building to Ramon Madrigal (see attached articles for deeper history and reminiscences of the Christakes family era).

Mr. Madrigal purchased the St. Francis as a turnkey business, making very few changes to the physical plant or the operation of the fountain and closing for only a couple of weeks during the transition in ownership. However, he quickly realized that making handmade chocolates, ice cream, soda syrup, marshmallows, etc. is an old world craft, and the accumulated expertise, family recipes, generational apprenticeships, work habits and routines of the Christakes family were impossible to replicate. The corner of 24th and York was in 2000 a notorious drug dealing corner, driving away customers, and sales had already been declining for years. As a cost and labor saving measure, Mr. Madrigal decided to stop making candy in-house, selling the old candy making equipment and stocking pre-made chocolates to sell. The ice cream making machine and other decades-old equipment were costly to maintain, breaking down often and requiring specialists for repairs. With the costs of replacing equipment mounting in the face of dwindling sales, Mr. Madrigal decided to put the St. Francis Fountain up for sale.

In the summer of 2002, Peter Hood and Levon Kazarian, the current owners, bought the St. Francis Fountain from Mr. Madrigal, who continues to own the building and is now the landlord. The new business partners were friends from high school and had been managing Boogaloos, another Mission district restaurant, since the mid-1990s. Rather than trying to restore the candy and ice cream making operations, the new owners decided to transform the St. Francis from a candy store/soda fountain into a diner/soda fountain, focusing on improving the quality and variety of food offerings while continuing to offer and improving the soda fountain ice cream service.

With extensive renovations, they transformed a former storeroom into a full service kitchen and expanded the menu greatly (the restaurant was closed for 4.5 months while these renovations took place). Instead of making their own ice cream, the new owners decided to use ice cream from Mitchell's, another legendary Mission district business. The old fashioned soda fountain items like ice cream sodas and banana

splits were joined on the menu by an extensive selection of breakfast and lunch items, including burgers, pancakes, corned beef hash and other traditional diner comfort food. The old candy case was stocked with nostalgic candies and trading cards from the 70s, 80s and 90s. The perfectly preserved but run down dining room, like a movie set from the 40s, was restored, the original neon lights were repaired and shined again, the St. Francis Fountain had new life and has been a thriving business ever since.

St Francis Fountain, 24th Street, and the Outer Mission

The tightly packed storefronts of 24th Street from Potrero Avenue to Mission Street are a legacy of the street's origins and long history as a shopping district. Before the age of supermarkets, streets like 24th were where neighborhood residents went for their daily supplies. Produce stands, butchers, bakeries, and sundry stores or "five and dimes" lined both side of 24th Street, along with banks, bars, restaurants, and movie theaters. St. Francis Fountain took its place among them as both a place to get chocolates and candies for special occasions and home treats, and as a place to sit at the counter and have a tonic or ice cream as refreshment. Today, St. Francis Fountain is the oldest continuously operating business on 24th Street and is a direct link to the street's history as a working class shopping district.

When the new partners took over in 2002, some regulars who had been patronizing the fountain since the 1930s were still coming in daily, sitting in their regular stools, and regaling staff and customers with stories of how the neighborhood and fountain used to be: "there was a line around the block everyday," "the mayor used to come here with his mistresses to hide from the reporters near civic center," "the Morabito brothers (founders of the 49ers football team) would take up the whole big booth in the back and only eat egg salad sandwiches." Regulars like Rose, Betty, Hector and others who had lived on the block their whole lives have now passed away, but their thick "Mish" working class accents, like a b-movie or Brooklyn accent, still echo in the memories of those who served them or sat next to them at the counter.

Today, like all of San Francisco, the neighborhood is going through changes, yet it remains remarkably intact as a shopping district. Since the 1970s, the outer mission district has been primarily a Latino neighborhood, and today Latino produce stands, murals, bakeries, taquerias, the prevalence of the Spanish language up and down the street still dominate, but new condos, boutiques and upscale restaurants are now in the street's mix, subtly altering the tenor of the neighborhood. St Francis Fountain has been a constant on 24th Street through these and many previous transformations. Residents who lived and worked in the neighborhood for the last 100 years, whether German, Irish, Mexican, or Central American immigrants, whether cops, gangsters, hipsters, artists, city workers, techies or activists, they all came to the St. Francis Fountain: that universal appeal has kept it going strong into the 21st century.

Physical Characteristics

The St. Francis Fountain has undergone two major design renovations in its history: one in 1929, and another in 1949. The dining room today reflects mostly the 1949 renovation. The long Formica counter and stools, the Formica back bar fixtures and lighting, the neon signs in the window, the Bulova clock on the back wall, the phone booth (no longer operating but with a vintage payphone still installed), the backlit "St. Francis Fountain Thanks You!" sign over the front door, all date from the 1949

renovation. The glass candy case was made in the 1920s and reinstalled after the 1949 renovation. The glass tile floor we believe is original to the 1918 first iteration of the fountain. You can see evidence of the 1929 renovation where the glass tile was replaced with quarry tile near the candy case. Original 1949 hand painted advertising signs featuring different ice cream and sandwich offerings are still on the walls, though the prices shown are long out of date.

When we took over in 2002, all the elements described above were there, but were worn, dirty, or broken. Before reopening the St. Francis, we meticulously restored the dining room to as close to its original 1949 condition as we could. The neon and other decorative lighting was repaired, the tile floor was restored and scrubbed, the entire room was given fresh paint, half a century's worth of chewing gum was scraped from the underside of all the tables, booth benches and the counter, and all the wooden booths were given a painstaking new "faux wood" finish that replicated the scratched and faded 1940s original. The original 1949 cork and stainless steel freezers were still there, beautiful and still operational (if barely), but not really practical anymore (using too much energy, breaking down too often, impossible to get truly clean and to move in order to clean behind). When we replaced them, we found a thick layer of old rat feces now turned to dirt, with 50 years worth of saltine wrappers, matchbooks and other ephemera from the 50s to the 90s buried in it. It was clear that the St Francis Fountain had needed a to-the-bones cleaning for a long time. When we were finished the place felt, looked and smelled like a brand new 50-year-old soda fountain.

The exterior features of the St. Francis include the 1949 neon sign over the front door that wraps around the corner of the building, and the signage painted on the side of the building from the same era. There is also a lightbox sign over the front door that we believe dates from the late 1950s or early 1960s. The building itself is from the second half of the 19th century and remains close to its original state, with many Victorian details visible on the second floor. When we took over in 2002, the exterior neon sign was no longer working, and much of its glass neon tubing was missing. We had the sign repaired to working order, but decided not to restore the paint on the sign because we liked the look of the old patina and cracked fading paint. Last year, we painted over the old signage on the side of the building after fighting a losing 12 year battle with taggers and other graffiti vandalism: so much of the original sign had been repainted over and over that it had lost its original integrity. We are planning to commission a mural on the side of the building that will pay homage to the original sign and the fountain but will also reflect the legacy of the neighborhood's mural culture. Hopefully, such a mural will be a little more immune to graffiti.

"Timeless Classic"

Given the historical significance of the St Francis Fountain, it has always been extremely important to us that the original intact 1949 dining room remain just as it was, including all of its features and details. We will never alter the dining room or remove its historical artifacts. We invested a lot of time and effort getting the fountain back to its original state, and its mid-century design is still visually pleasing and a key draw. Our traditional food, both classic American and classic Mexican-American (such as Huevos Rancheros and Chili) is the food that would have been served at diners and soda fountains in the early to mid 20th century. Our signage, menus, collateral material like matchbooks and t-shirts also all stay true to mid-century design and evoke, without the kitsch that "retro" diners sometimes indulge,

a specific period in the history of the Mission district in San Francisco. The roots of the St. Francis Fountain are in candy, ice cream and chocolate, but by the time we got the keys to the business, all of the equipment, recipes and know-how of that era had already been sold or lost. In 2002, it was not clear that the neighborhood would have supported a chocolatier and the prices such a labor intensive process would have demanded. We used our own backgrounds in the restaurant industry to transform the original St. Francis Fountain into a viable business while still honoring its historical roots. What had been a decaying, moribund room only hinting at its glorious past was transformed into a loud room full of people enjoying themselves, as it had been in its heyday.

We are also committed to keeping alive the culture of the soda fountain. We source classic, hard-to-find soda fountain glassware, keep beautiful vintage equipment like our malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer functioning, use anachronisms like paper straws and try to promote classic but forgotten items like ice cream sodas, malts and unique ice cream sundaes, all in an attempt to offer a high quality nostalgic experience.

The St. Francis Fountain has always been a neighborhood lynchpin. We've heard from our older customers who remember the era that in the 1950s and 1960s the fountain was one of the most important social institutions in its corner of the mission. Generations of neighborhood children begged to be taken for a candy treat or an ice cream cone; generations of teenagers worked at the fountain or snuck kisses in the high-backed booths over banana splits. The huge booth in the back of the dining room is said to have provided refuge for politicians to hammer out important deals away from nosy city hall reporters; the same booth is said to be the site of the handshake deal that founded the San Francisco 49ers football team. For those who remember these happenings or read about them in the press, the continued existence of the St. Francis Fountain provides continuity and anchors a San Francisco that is disappearing rapidly.

Since 2002, we have tried to be an integral, beneficial part of the community. We've donated to countless charity events in the neighborhood and never turned down a request to donate a prize for a local charity auction. We've hosted many community events and fundraisers over the years, and made our spare room available as a meeting space for local groups.

When we covered over the windows in 2002 in order to do our renovations, the neighborhood panicked and left frantic notes all over the front windows begging the fountain not to go out of business, pleading for the fountain to reopen just as it was, desperately hoping that nothing would replace it. That love for the St. Francis Fountain still exists, and the neighborhood still warmly loves the old place like a family member or an old friend: we hear it every day. Since our neighbor the Roosevelt Tamale Parlor went out of business last year, the St. Francis is the only surviving pre-World War II business on 24th Street. To lose the sole remaining business from that era would be to sever an increasingly rare historical tie in a city whose boom times are churning old businesses more and more rapidly.

In 2018, the St. Francis Fountain will celebrate its 100th anniversary; our lease is up for negotiation in 2017. We are hoping that the Legacy Business Program, along with our goodwill and that of our landlord and our customers, will allow the St. Francis Fountain to continue as a viable business far into the future.



St. Francis
CANDIES
ICE CREAM
LUNCHES

ST. FRANCIS
FOUNTERIA - LUNCH
Homemade ICE CREAM and CANDIES Est. 1918

Home Made
ICE CREAM

STOP

ALL WAY WORLD
WASH & DRY

COIN-OP
WASH & DRY
GIANT WASHERS

B
R
A
V
I
A



ST. FRANCIS
SANDWICHES - FOUNTAIN - LUNCH

Home Made ICE CREAM *and* CANDIES *Est.* 1918

St. Francis
CANDIES

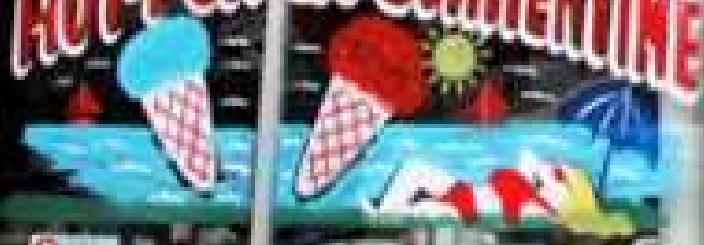
Home Made
ICE CREAM



ST. FRANCIS
SANDWICHES - FOUNTAIN

St. Francis
CANDIES
ICE CREAM
LUNCHES

HOT FUN IN SUMMERTIME



Hand
LUNCHES





St. Francis
CANDIES
ICE CREAM
LUNCHES

ST. FRANCIS
SANDWICHES & FOUNTAIN

SANDWICHES - ST. FRANCIS - FOUNTAIN - LUNCH

St. Francis
CANDIES

Home Made
ICE CREAM

QUALITY
ICE CREAM
CANDY
LUNCHES

ICE CREAM and CANDIES 1918





During BUSY times,
BOOTHS are reserved
for parties of
3
OR MORE



FOR HERE
or TO GO
DISH
ONLY

Waffles & Malted

Large Dinner Pineapple
Salad

Large Dinner Pineapple
Salad

St. James
Jambic

TELEPH

RESTROOM

During BUSY times,
BOOTHs are reserved
for parties of
3 OR MORE



The answer
FOR HERE
is a DISH
CONES
are just
TO GO
in terms of
ONLY

Soft
Malted
14¢

FOR HERE
is a DISH

During BUSY times,
BOOTHs are reserved
for parties of
3 OR MORE



WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

ICE CREAM		BEVERAGES		WE PROUDLY FEATURE:		ICE CREAM FLAVORS	
SINGLE SCOOP	2.75	MILKSHAKE	4.00/5.75	* MINTCHOC	VANILLA		
DOUBLE SCOOP	4.50	MILKED SHAKE	4.50/6.25	* ICE CREAM	CHOCOLATE		
		ALL-SOY SHAKE	5.50/7.00	* LA COFFEE	COFFEE		
		STRAIGHT SHAKE	4.50/6.00	* SOYCREAM	STRAWBERRY		
		* ADD FRESH FRUIT	.50/.75		ORIO		
-- COMES ARE TO-GO ONLY --					CHOCOLATE CHIP		
SUNDAE	5.50	EGG CREAM SODA	3.50		COCONUT		
HOT FUDGE SUNDAE	6.00	DOUBLE OIP SODA	4.75		BANANA		
BANANA SPLIT	7.75	ROOT BEER	4.00		CHIP		
HOT FUDGE BANANA SPLIT	8.25	COCA-COLA	FLLOAT 4.00		ORANGE SHERRBERT		
APPLE PIE A LA MODE	7.00	DRAMA/DICE SODA	5.50		& SOY VANILLA		
MORNING SUNDAE	7.00	FLAVOR OF THE MONTH	COMMON SNAP				
* SEE MENU FOR SPECIALS							
FOR TO-GO FOOD, ORDER PLEASE, WAIT AT THE END OF COUNTER							



The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1988

The New York Times/Steve Kagan

An Old-Time Fountain of San Francisco Sweets

By JEANNETTE FERRARY

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO — Every Wednesday, for as far back as he can remember, Peter Christakes has mixed up a batch of his family's secret recipe for chocolate syrup, poured it into a potbellied copper kettle and lighted the old gas jets underneath. He stirs the mixture with a wire whisk the size of a baseball bat and gives the old kettle an affectionate kick.

"This was Grandpa Jim's," he said one recent Wednesday, referring to just about everything: the kettle, the recipe, the building and even some of the mystique that has made the St.

Francis Fountain a San Francisco institution.

Now celebrating its 70th anniversary, it is a combination of soda fountain, ice cream parlor, candy store and lunch counter. It is situated at 2801 24th Street in an ethnically diverse neighborhood that is also home to Mexican tamale parlors, Chinese restaurants, Central American grocery stores and bakeries of every description.

Born Into the Business

The fountain has been in the Christakes family since Mr. Christakes's grandfather, James Christakes, came from Sparta, Greece, and opened the place in 1918. With his family, he lived in an apartment above the store where, one June

morning five years later, his son, Chris, was born.

"I think that was the day I began scooping ice cream and pumping soda," said the son, now 65 years old. He works at the fountain three or four days a week with his own sons, Peter, 32, and James, 34. "I knew I'd never starve in this business," he said, on the assumption that "ice cream is eternal."

The fountain makes 800 gallons of ice cream a month. All sauces and toppings, from strawberry and marshmallow to hot fudge and root beer, are homemade, as is the special chocolate used to coat hand-dipped confections like raspberry creams, coconut clusters and rum truffles.

Even the marshmallows are made on the premises in an old-fashioned procedure that takes two days. The ingredients are mixed and cooked, poured into trays to set, and finally cut into squares for use in rocky road ice cream and dense chocolate eggs. A separate recipe yields marshmallow topping.

A Reputation for Brittle

For the fountain's peanut brittle, which longtime customers call "the pride of San Francisco," credit must be divided between the family recipe and the four-inch-thick slab of Italian marble that forms part of Grandpa Jim's legacy. After it is cooked, the

molten peanut brittle mixture is poured onto the slab, stretched by hand and allowed to cool.

Equally famous is the German-style fudge, but this specialty is in the hands of John Prongos and Ray Treanor, both in their late 70's, veterans of two other candy shops that closed their doors in the last 10 years. They come in two days a week to produce the fudge.

People who come for lunch order the homemade beef-barley or minestrone soup or clam chowder, \$1.10; they make a meal of hefty sandwiches on thick slices of sourdough bread for less than \$2.50, and they may treat themselves to the only homemade double-decker ice cream cone in the city for \$1.60.

A scrapbook on the lunch counter, full of pictures from the past 70 years, shows that nothing much has changed. Above the cozy blond wood booths, the walls are lined with rectangular framed cards depicting menu items. One says, "For that vital energy, have a triple scoop milkshake, \$1.95." Although the prices are current, the faded cards with their rose backgrounds have an old-fashioned look.

St. Francis Fountain is open Monday through Friday, 10 A.M. to 9 P.M.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 9 P.M. Telephone (415) 826-4200.

ILL
MANDEL



The booth
where 49ers
were born

PLENTY OF restaurants will feature 49ers Specials this weekend, but only one will be the act dish served at the founding of the team.

The 49ers Special at the year-old St. Francis Candy Shop & Fountain at 24th and Park streets in the Mission was an invariable power lunch for the Morabito boys, Nicky and Vic, as they planned San Francisco's new NFL franchise in the closing months of World War II.

The Morabitos, who were in the lumber transport business, would come over to the St. Francis to meet their football partners — Allan Sorrell, Ernest Fre and money man Nate Ardigli from the Bank of America on the corner. They'd pile into the six-person back booth and chow down like the working-class guys they were. They ate open-faced sandwiches, half tuna salad, half salad, on toasted slices of thick French bread slathered with the St. Francis' homemade mayo. Hardly exalted fare, but you could the first 49ers know they were dining at the creation of an empire?

There were lean years and fat years for the 49ers after 1946's first season. Lean years aren't

possible for the St. Francis, which still makes its own mayo as well as its own ice cream, toppings, syrups, peanut brittle, a large variety of chocolate candies and, above all, a nourishing brew of friendliness, generosity and reminders of (dare I say it?) a kinder, gentler era.

Founded in 1918, the St. Francis is celebrating its 70th birthday in 1989. Why the leisurely pace? Because the Christakes family, owners since the beginning, knows how to take its time. The informal motto of the St. Francis is, the more things outside our doors change, the more we'll stay the same. The St. Francis is the only time capsule I know of that serves a concrete-thick milk shake.

If I were making a list of the 10 most magical places in San Francisco, the St. Francis Candy Shop & Fountain would be high on the roster. It's one of the few surviving treasures of the small, neighborly city old-time San Franciscans mourn and latecomers can only imagine. The St. Francis confirms sweet cultural memories — yes, places like this really did exist outside of Archie comics and Mickey Rooney movies.

The long room, lit by a glass wall that runs along the York Street side, was last redecorated in 1949. The decor — exactly what '80s restaurant designers try, and fail, to capture in their retro diners — is peppermint Air Stream, pink and white, highlighted by curving Deco cornices made of pink mirror mosaic. The walls are adorned with super-realist food iconography: glowingly painted sandwiches, sundaes, malts and banana splits float through the air like plump Renaissance cherubim.

On the left as you enter are pot-bellied glass candy cases filled with brittle, toffee and chocolates made in the back room. On the right, red-topped stools side up to a marble counter facing big silver



EXAMINER/FRAN OR

Toasting the 49ers with trademark thick shakes are father and son Jim and Chris Christakes, whose 70-year-old St. Francis Candy Shop & Fountain on 24th Street is where the NFL franchise was founded at the end of WWI

Hamilton-Beach milk shakers with extra-generous canisters. Roomy booths in the rear. Heart-shaped windows cut into swinging doors that lead to the restrooms. An actual phone booth of actual wood.

This is the "modern" St. Francis, done in 1949, a time 65-year-old Chris Christakes, the semiretired resident elder, refers to as "a little while ago." Before that, the place really looked old-fashioned.

When Chris' dad, Jim, founded the St. Francis in 1918 it had a marble-and-zinc-topped counter faced with Philippine mahogany. The back bar was German silver. Hand-painted angels flew across the ceiling. When the 1949 renovations began, the owners had to pay to have the marble, zinc, silver and mahogany fixtures hauled to the salvage yard. Nobody wanted the junk.

Two years ago, the current Christakes crop — Jim, 36, and Pete, 32, both born over the store

— surprised themselves by leaving promising modern careers to join their dad, Chris, behind the counter. In trading their white collars for the red-and-white striped shirts of St. Francis soda jerks, Jim and Pete acknowledged the inexorable tug of family and tradition.

The place is open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Drop in for lunch and you'll see 24th Street locals — Latinos and a smattering of the New Bohemian artistic scene flowering in the Mission — mixing with downtown judges, lawyers, cops and business people who've been eating at the St. Francis all their lives.

Families will wander in, moms or grandfathers pointing to the booth where they met their future spouses. Folks who moved

out of The City bring their kids to see what a real milk shake tastes like. Ex-New Yorkers come for authentic egg creams. And through it all Chris and Pete and Jim and their friendly employees cruise the booths a counter, suggesting desserts of home-baked pies or huge sundaes, pouring fresh coffee, doing the hospitality business the way it should be done.

One day last week, Chris, a hugely likable man, was pointing out the six-person booth where the 49ers were born. Something made him chuckle.

"You know," he said, "the Morabitos gave me these great season tickets at Kezar — right on the 50-yard line, about 16 rows up. But I got mad and gave up the tickets when Buck Sha (the team's first coach) left. Maybe I should have kept the

SFGATE

St. Francis Fountain still makes a mean shake

Amanda Berne

Published 4:00 am, Wednesday, September 21, 2005

As a kid, every trip to the grocery store with my mother meant at least five minutes of my begging for the newest Archie comic book. The rascally redhead would get into trouble, have to decide between Betty and Veronica, and end the day sharing an oversized milkshake -- with three straws inserted.

I had an Archie moment as I sat in one of the dark-wood booths at St. Francis Fountain. The humungous egg cream (\$2.75) comes with creamy soda layers in light, medium and dark brown, with gobs of whipped cream on top. It contains no egg and no cream, but the drink -- with three straws -- would satisfy anyone yearning for Archie's idyllic life.

It's what the St. Francis Fountain is all about. Open since 1918, St. Francis made its mark by serving homemade ice creams, candies and over-the-counter sandwiches. It was the place to go, says co-owner Peter Hood, before the corner market made getting ice cream so easy.

Hood, with partner and longtime friend Levon Kazarian, took over the fountain in November 2002, at a time when many feared this old neighborhood standby would close for good.

The new owners knew they had to make changes because people weren't going out just for ice cream any more.

Instead of the homemade candy and ice cream, Hood and Kazarian opted to offer ice cream from Mitchell's, a San Francisco favorite since 1953, along with retro candies like chewy Abba Zabba; sugary, multi-colored Dots; and packs of trading cards.

They also installed a kitchen to churn out back-to-basics diner food with a Californian/vegetarian bent.

Basic sandwiches and egg dishes are examples of what St. Francis does best, along with shakes and the like. Most come with a choice of one of the many side dishes, such as macaroni and cheese, chili or cornbread.

An egg salad sandwich (\$5) on lightly toasted bread holds a creamy filling with just the tiniest bit of minced pickle folded in. With the egg salad, try the vegetarian chili, which has a smoky flavor in its thin broth, replete with tomatoes and beans, and a good hit of oregano.

The chili is much better than the macaroni and cheese, which we chose on another day, along with a turkey deluxe (\$7.50). The pasta was mushy and the cheese flavor indistinct. However, the sandwich, with turkey, bacon and jack cheese, is fresh and simple, although on the dry side.

In typical diner fashion, breakfast portions are huge, and the decadent Nebulous Potato Thing (\$5.50) -- a scramble of home fries, fresh salsa, green onions and cheese -- is the ultimate in comfort food. It's rich and filling, while the fresh salsa perks it up. Still, it is what it is -- a big, starchy mess.

Other egg dishes, such as corned beef hash (\$7), huevos rancheros (\$6.50) and scrambles, are solid choices. Many come tossed with fresh herbs, which give them a distinctive lift, as in the basil-rich fresh pesto and chicken scramble (\$8). Don't pass up the moist, barely sweet cornbread, one of the many bread choices that comes with the scrambles.

Huevos rancheros also has sparkle, but the accompanying black beans, which also come with the delicious breakfast burrito (\$6.50), lacked depth and proper seasoning.

Tofu scrambles provide vegan options. Tofu Thai (\$7.75) -- soft tofu cooked in a thick peanut sauce with fresh spinach and mushrooms -- would match nicely with a scoop of rice to sop up the sauce. Instead, it's served with home fries, an odd combination.

However, the burger (\$6.50) was disappointing. Cooked well done, it was too firm and dry to enjoy whole-heartedly. The patty melt (\$8), with a thinner beef patty and caramelized onions on grilled rye, is noticeably better.

The St. Francis is also welcoming to those just stopping by for dessert. There's homemade apple pie (\$3.75), with fresh, chunky apple slices, although the crust is dense. Instead, stick with what this place is known for and go for a banana split (\$6.50) or a hot fudge sundae (\$5.25).

Or, since the Mission is the starting point for many heading out for the evening, end it sweetly with a Guinness float (\$6) of bitter Guinness beer and vanilla ice cream.

Archie would probably be surprised by the vegan dishes, and also by the servers. Instead of Pops, the revered, jovial hash-slinger of comic book lore, the fountain is run by tattooed hipsters who probably would never give the preppy Archie a second look. They're too busy, anyway, helping one another out on tables and hustling behind the 14-seat counter.

But do stop by the candy counter on the way out. The St. Francis may not offer Archie comics, but it indulges the kid in everyone.



Chronicle / Liz Hafalia

Employees from the Gap have frequented this soda fountain since it reopened last year. St. Francis Soda Fountain was originally built in 1918. Very old-fashioned, good diner food, but fresh. Photographed by Liz Hafalia on 9/14/05 in San Francisco, California.

St. Francis Fountain Draws Old-Timers and Newbies Alike



St. Francis Fountain on 24th and York Street

Posted February 6, 2009 10:00 pm

By AYAKO MIE

The east side of 24th Street is usually crowded with mothers buying fresh produce from Mexican grocery stores, and old men smoking on the steps. But most weekend afternoons, a throng of hipsters waiting to get into St. Francis Fountain joins the scene.

The corner of 24th and York streets is one where history meets 2009. It's an example of how the older population of Irish, Italian and German immigrants became Latino, and how the old melds with the Mission's younger, hipper, newer residents.

Change. It's something residents in the Mission District are once again considering as Valencia Street debates the good and bad of American Apparel moving in.

Lavon Kazarian knows that debate well. When he bought St. Francis Fountain in 2002, locals hated the idea of a landmark being turned over to an outsider. "They thought we were going to

destroy it,” Kazarian said. “People were writing notes saying ‘Please do not go away.’” He said the front window of the diner was covered with the notes when he purchased it.

The diner has a long history. James Christakes, a Greek immigrant, founded it in 1918, the same year World War I ended. The family kept it, serving homemade ice cream, chocolate and other sweets until 2000. That year, Ramon Mondrigal bought it and ran the soda fountain for two years, but then became too busy with a printing business.

At that point, Kazarian and his business partner Peter Hood, who worked at the breakfast place Boogaloos on Valencia, saw it vacant. The two were friends from their high school days in Sacramento, and immediately looked into leasing the building.

“I am honored to have this place,” said Kazarian. “I have known this place forever, and used to come here every once and while. I thought they would never sell. I didn’t even ask them if they wanted to.”

The 42-year-old said he knew the restaurant’s history well. He knew, for example, that the Morabito brothers who owned a lumberyard nearby often lunched at St. Francis and, as legend goes, hatched the idea there in the late 1940s to buy the franchise for the Forty-Niners.

The changes Kazarian and Hood ended up making were small. They repainted the walls white from bright pink, and built a full kitchen in an area once used for storage.

The menu went from the offerings of a soda fountain—floats, sandwiches and omelets—to a full menu for breakfast and lunch.

But much of the aesthetic of the old place remains. The candy case where the owners once sold their chocolate has been filled with old-fashioned bubble gum. Pictures of the old days hang in the front window, and the original 49ers sandwich—egg salad, bacon, lettuce, tomato and mayo—is still on the menu.

Some old-timers still miss the diner’s earlier days. “They do not make their own candy and ice cream any more,” said Bill Nizuk, a regular who runs a TV repair store down the block.

Kazarian said that when they bought the business, the ice cream maker, which produced St. Francis’ signature ice cream, was broken. Instead of fixing it they decided to buy ice cream from Mitchell’s, an ice creamery based in San Francisco for more than 50 years.

To pay respect to that past, Madrigal’s wife Regina runs a lingerie store called the Candy Kitchen Lingerie Boutique in the part of the Fountain where sugar and cream once turned into ice cream and brittle. “A lot of the neighbors said I should keep the name on the sign,” said Regina Madrigal. So she repainted it and rehung it out front.

A bigger change came with the Mission’s newer residents. “It was very much middle-aged and older white people, and now it’s sort of a young spot,” said Peter Delacorte, a writer based in San Francisco who used to lunch at the old soda fountain in 1970s. Still, Delacorte is happy it’s still

there at all. “I think it’s wonderful, that you can keep something like this. It’s very unusual,” he said.

The so-called hipster clients who wait outside on weekends say they are unfamiliar with the diner’s past. “But I love the food. It’s so hard to find a good diner in the Mission,” said Luke Ramoce, a thirty-something who works and lives in the neighborhood.

Others appreciate the updated menu. “I’m a vegan, and a vegan dish is something you do not expect in American diners,” said Ben Kruer, a waiter at St. Francis Fountain.

For Jennifer Baghern, the draw is simple. “The food is classic, and I like the way they kept the place old-fashion,” she said, sipping a strawberry shake with whipped cream.

Others like the diversity of the neighborhood. “I like restaurants with character in different neighborhoods,” said Lisa Blades, a personal assistant who lives in the Mission. Blades, who eats at the diner once a month, thinks that unlike other gentrification in the Mission, the diner is in harmony with the neighborhood. “Gentrification is good in some aspects, but it takes away a lot of character. But this place still has a balance,” she said.

Kazarian said preserving the place ultimately became more important than who would own it. “A lot of people have memories in this place. So it was nice to keep it open and preserve and fix it up and make a nice place that people want to go to again,” he said.

WEEKLY

Out with the Kids: Dinner at St. Francis Fountain

Posted By [Alex Hochman](#) on Mon, Feb 21, 2011 at 8:05 AM



Alex Hochman

Three-scoop banana split (\$8.25), a dinner essential at St. Francis Fountain on 24th Street.

You'd think the city's oldest ice cream parlor – a place that's been in the same storefront on 24th Street since 1918 – would be packed at dinner with families reveling in nostalgia as they lap up old-school ice cream creations. You'd think wrong. On evenings when 2-year-olds and their parents are lined up nearby at **Humphry Slocombe** for double cones of peanut butter curry and Jesus Juice, our girls have the vintage counter at St. Francis all to themselves.



Alex Hochman

Your kids will forget Pokemon ever existed once they start trading *Three's Company* cards.

Even without the ice cream, St. Francis would be an easy sell for little ones. The full breakfast menu's available all day, along with a greatest hits of kid staples like burgers, fries, and mac n cheese. Though the smallish children's menu is insanely cheap (it tops out at \$3.25 for a grilled cheese or PBJ with fries), the portions are smallish (perfect for kindergartners or younger), so my 8- and 10-year-olds typically split an adult-size cheeseburger (\$8.75 with choice of side) or a bacon, cheddar, and onion omelet (\$11 with hash browns and toast).

As is often the case, our kids rate the sides highest. The Stoufferesque mac and cheese is "awesome," and the crunchy hash browns better than the gold standard (well, in my girls' reckoning) at **Bagel Twins** near grandma and grandpa's in Boca. The St. Francis staff is beyond nice, always providing a sharing plate and a sharp knife sans attitude.



Alex Hochman

One of many kids' entertainment options at St. Francis.

There are plenty of distractions to keep kids (including me) amused. The retro powdered soap dispenser in the hot-pink bathroom makes for nice dinner conversation. Old fashioned straw canisters are good for a few minutes of entertainment before a quick turn on the rotating counter stools, a game unto itself. Then there's the candy case loaded with vintage goodies, including **Wacky Packs**, **Gold Rush gum**, and *Three's Company* trading cards. Nothing mortifies our girls more than when my wife and I loudly impersonate **Mr. and Mrs. Roper**. Oh Stanley!

Our 10-year-old got turned on to **Ratatat** here a few years ago and now begs me to **Shazam** the St. Francis sound system during every visit. Does she really think I'm so lame that I can't identify The Strokes or Broken Bells? Um, yes.

But who are we kidding here? Suggesting St. Francis Fountain for a family dinner is really just a poorly disguised ruse to pig out on ice cream. This is the place to introduce your kids to the classics, all made with local favorite **Mitchell's**. We usually go big, slurping monstrous, super-thick milkshakes (\$5.75) as appetizers and finishing up with a couple of three-scoop hot fudge banana splits (\$8.25), also mammoth. Ruthless gamesmanship is imperative for maximum dessert consumption. My wife and I suggest the girls

go wash their hands or feed the meter (even though it's after 6 p.m.) so we can get in a few uninterrupted spoonfuls of whipped cream.

If they have to learn the ropes, it might as well be at an ice cream parlor.

St. Francis Fountain: 2801 24th St. (at York), 826-4200.

Filing Date: September 19, 2016
Case No.: 2016-012299LBR
Business Name: St. Francis Fountain
Business Address: 2801 24th Street
Zoning: NCT (24th Mission Neighborhood Commercial Transit)
55-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 4267/001
Applicant: Peter Hood, Managing Partner
2801 24th Street
San Francisco, CA 94110
Nominated By: Supervisor David Campos, District 9
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

St. Francis Fountain is a soda fountain and diner in the Mission District that has operated continuously in the same location since 1918. Opened by the Christakes family who emigrated from Sparta, Greece, St. Francis Fountain is located on 24th Street between York and Bryant Streets and represents the oldest business on the lower 24th Street corridor. Three generations of the Christakes family owned and operated the business, selling handmade chocolates, hard candies, and ice cream made following traditional recipes. The store was remodeled twice during this time, in both 1929 and 1949. St. Francis Fountain was sold in 2000 and again in 2002 to its current owners who transformed the business from a candy store and soda fountain to a diner and soda fountain. No longer viable to make handmade chocolates, hard candy, and ice cream, the new owners expanded the menu to include classic diner fare while continuing to sell vintage candies out of its original 1920's candy case as well as ice cream from Mitchell's Ice Cream, another local business. It also continues to serve classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas and malts, and still uses the fountain's original hot fudge warmer and malt dispenser. The interior and exterior looks much like it did in 1949, with intimate dining booths, a Bulova clock on the back wall, a phone booth, and Formica counter, stools, and back bar fixtures. The painted and neon signs that adorn the exterior also date back to the 1949 iteration of St. Francis Fountain. As the oldest continuously operating business on 24th Street, St. Francis Fountain is a direct connection to the neighborhood's history and is the only one in the neighborhood that pre-dates World War II. Its lease is up for negotiation in 2017. The business contributes to the community by donating to charity auctions, hosting community fundraisers, and making spare meeting space available for local groups.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Review Criteria

1. *When was business founded?*

1918

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

Yes, St. Francis Fountain qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- i. St. Francis Fountain has operated for 98 years.
- ii. St. Francis Fountain has contributed to the Mission community's history and identity by operating continuously at the same location since 1918, offering chocolates, candy, ice cream, soda, and diner fare to generations of residents. As the only restaurant established prior to World War II that remains along 24th Street, St. Francis Fountain serves as a tangible connection to the past while remaining a popular social gathering spot.
- iii. St. Francis Fountain is committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define its 1940's era soda shop look and feel, as well as its longstanding culinary offerings including candy, ice cream, soda, and more recently, classic diner food.

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

Yes, St. Francis Fountain is associated with classic mid-century soda fountain offerings including specialty ice cream sundaes, malts, and ice cream sodas, as well as vintage candies and diner food. Its exterior and interior physical characteristics give the restaurant a 1940s/1950s-era look and feel. The restaurant serves its soda and ice cream in classic soda fountain glassware and continues to operate original equipment such as the malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer.

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

The property was previously evaluated by the Planning Department and was determined not to be a historic resource; it is considered a "Category C Property." Based on information available at the Planning Department, it is unknown whether the property is associated with significant events or persons.

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

No.

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

No.

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

Yes. The New York Times, September 21, 1988, "An Old-Time Fountain of San Francisco Sweets," by Jeannette Ferrary; San Francisco Examiner, "The booth where 49ers were born," by Bill Mandel; SF Gate, September 21, 2005, "St. Francis Fountain still makes a mean shake," by Amanda Berne; Mission Local, February 6, 2009, "St. Francis Fountain Draws Old-Timers and Newbies Alike," by Ayako Mie; SF Weekly, February 21, 2011, "Out with the Kids: Dinner at St. Francis Fountain," by Alex Hochman. St. Francis Fountain is listed in SF Heritage's list of "Legacy Bars & Restaurants."

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

Location(s) associated with the business:

- 2801 24th Street

Recommended by Applicant

- Classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas, malts, and unique ice cream sundaes; vintage candies; and comfort diner food made from scratch
- Diner food and soda fountain classic offerings
- Mid-century design aesthetic reflected in its menus and other collateral (i.e. matchbooks)
- Classic soda fountain glassware
- Vintage equipment including its malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer
- Original glass candy case that dates to the 1920s and was reinstalled during the 1949 renovation
- 1949 dining room interior including:
 - Formica counter and stools,
 - Formica back bar fixtures and lighting,
 - Intimate booths,
 - Bulova clock on the back wall,
 - Phone booth,
 - Glass tile floor, and
 - 1949 hand-painted advertising signs on the walls that feature different ice cream and sandwich offerings
- All signage, including:
 - Neon signs in the window that read, “St. Francis Candies” and “Homemade Ice Cream”
 - Backlit “St. Francis Fountain Thanks You!” sign hung over the front door,
 - 1949 hand-painted signage on the side of the building
 - Light box sign over the front door that dates from the 1950s or 1960s

Additional Recommended by Staff

No additional recommendations.



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 804 HEARING DATE OCTOBER 19, 2016

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

Reception:
415.558.6378

Fax:
415.558.6409

Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

Case No.: 2016-012299LBR
Business Name: St. Francis Fountain
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Zoning: NCT (24th Mission Neighborhood Commercial Transit)
55-X Height and Bulk District
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Applicant: Peter Hood, Managing Partner
2801 24th Street
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Nominated By: Supervisor David Campos, District 9
Staff Contact: Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093
desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

ADOPTING FINDINGS RECOMMENDING TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY NOMINATION FOR ST. FRANCIS FOUNTAIN, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 2801 24TH STREET (BLOCK/LOT 4267/001).

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

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

WHEREAS, the subject business has contributed to the Mission community'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 October 19, 2016, 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 St. Francis Fountain 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 St. Francis Fountain

Location (if applicable)

- 2801 24th Street

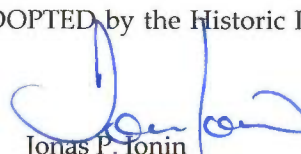
Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business

- *Classic soda fountain offerings like ice cream sodas, malts, and unique ice cream sundaes; vintage candies; and comfort diner food made from scratch*
- *Diner food and soda fountain classic offerings*
- *Mid-century design aesthetic reflected in its menus and other collateral (i.e. matchbooks)*
- *Classic soda fountain glassware*
- *Vintage equipment including its malt dispenser and hot fudge warmer*
- *Original glass candy case that dates to the 1920s and was reinstalled during the 1949 renovation*
- *1949 dining room interior including:*
 - *Formica counter and stools*
 - *Formica back bar fixtures and lighting*
 - *Intimate booths*
 - *Bulova clock on the back wall*
 - *Phone booth*
 - *Glass tile floor*
 - *1949 hand-painted advertising signs on the walls that feature different ice cream and sandwich offerings*
- *All signage, including:*
 - *Neon signs in the window that read, "St. Francis Candies" and "Homemade Ice Cream"*
 - *Backlit "St. Francis Fountain Thanks You!" sign hung over the front door*
 - *1949 hand-painted signage on the side of the building*
 - *Light box sign over the front door that dates from the 1950s or 1960s*

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 2016-012299LBR to the Office of Small Business.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Historic Preservation Commission on October 19, 2016.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Hasz, Johnck, Johns, Pearlman

NOES: None

ABSENT: Hyland, Matsuda, Wolfram

ADOPTED: October 19, 2016