



HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION RESPONSE

Record No.: 2021-012028ENV
Project Address: 501 Buckingham Way
Zoning: C-2 – Community Business; RH-1(D) – Residential- House, One Family-Detached Zoning Districts
65-D; 40-X Height and Bulk District
Block/Lot: 7295/022
Staff Contact: Chris Wendt – (628) 652-7583
Christopher.Wendt@sfgov.org

PART I: Historic Resource Evaluation

PROJECT SPONSOR SUBMITTAL

To assist in the evaluation of the proposed project, the Project Sponsor has submitted a:

- Supplemental Information for Historic Resource Determination Form (HRD)
- Consultant-prepared Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE)

Prepared by: Page & Turnbull, *Stonestown Galleria Complex Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1* (March 18, 2022)

Staff consensus with Consultant’s HRE report: Agree Disagree

Additional Comments: Planning Staff concurs with Historic Resource Evaluation provided by Page & Turnbull but disagrees with the consultant’s identified character-defining features.

BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood: Lakeshore

Date of Construction: 1970

Construction Type: Steel-Frame

Architect: George K. Raad

Builder: Unknown

Stories: 1

Roof Form: Flat

Cladding: Stucco

Primary Façade: Buckingham Way

Visible Facades: North, East, and South elevations

EXISTING PROPERTY PHOTOS / CURRENT CONDITIONS



Above: View west of primary elevation (Stonestown Galleria Complex Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1, March 18, 2022).



Left: View southwest of the north elevation (Stonestown Galleria Complex Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1, March 18, 2022).



Right: View north of the groin-vaulted colonnade along the primary elevation (Stonestown Galleria Complex Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1, March 18, 2022).

PRE-EXISTING HISTORIC RATING / SURVEY

- Category A – Known Historic Resource, per: _____
- Category B – Age Eligible/Historic Status Unknown
- Category C – Not Age Eligible / No Historic Resource Present, per: _____

Adjacent or Nearby Historic Resources: Yes No

CEQA HISTORICAL RESOURCE(S) EVALUATION

Step A: Significance

Individual Significance	Historic District / Context Significance
Property is individually eligible for inclusion in a California Register under one or more of the following Criteria: Criterion 1 - Event: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 2 - Persons: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 3 - Architecture: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Period of Significance: <u>1970</u>	Property is eligible for inclusion in a California Register Historic District/Context under one or more of the following Criteria: Criterion 1 - Event: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 2 - Persons: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 3 - Architecture: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Period of Significance: <u>NA</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Contributor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A

Analysis:

Below is summarized from the *Stonestown Galleria Complex Historic Resource Evaluation – Part 1* dated March 18, 2022 & *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement* dated January 12, 2011.

United Artists Stonestown Twin Theater

The United Artists Stonestown Twin Theater (subject property) is located at 501 Buckingham Way within block/lot 7295/022. Built in 1970 by George K. Raad, the United Artists (UA) Stonestown Twin Theater is an example of the New Formalism style of architecture, specifically showcasing the influence of Minoru Yamasaki. The one-story, reinforced concrete building displays a rectangular floor plan, a concrete slab foundation, and a single-ply membrane roofing system. The building is divided into three prominent sections of differing building heights: a New Formalism-style colonnaded entrance and lobby, a stucco-clad hyphen to the west of the entrance and lobby, and an undecorated stucco-clad rear volume west of the building hyphen that houses the two theater spaces.

The primary facade features a New Formalism-style colonnade along that wraps partially around the north and south elevations. Within the colonnade of groin-vaulted, round arches is a glazed wall system with bronze anodized aluminum mullions. Aluminum-framed fully glazed paired doors are displayed along the colonnaded entrance to the north, east, and south. A box office is located in the westernmost bays of the north facade, and an office is located at the western-most bay of the south facade. Additionally, the rear portion of the subject building that houses both auditoriums, displays a recessed bandcourse that encircles its taller rectangular massing, as well as two sets of paired metal, exit doors beneath wall-mounted lamps at the north and south elevations of the rear massing.

Additionally, the building is separated from Buckingham Way by a sunken courtyard at the primary (east) façade that features a rough aggregate concrete surface and cast-in-place concrete planters, stairs, and sidewalls. Metal tube handrails are located along the stairs and above the concrete sidewalls. A metal frame illuminated sign is located to the southeast of the building within a planter. The subject property also features surface parking that flank the north, west, and south elevations of the subject property.

The lobby of the UA Stonestown Twin Theater displays carpeted and tiled flooring, a stucco-clad ceiling, chandeliers with glass globe fixtures, and a concession counter at the western wall. The groin vaulting displayed at the exterior is carried into the interior walls of the lobby and bathrooms are located to the north and south of the concession counter. The auditoriums to the rear of the building display unpainted wood panel doors with original wood door handles and replacement decorative bronze door handles. The theater auditoriums display screens on the western

walls and tiered seating throughout. The theater operated until March 2020 when it was closed due to the City of San Francisco's Covid-19 shelter-in-place order and was not reopened.

Development History

Prior to construction in 1970, the site of the UA Stonestown Twin Theater was a Standard Oil service station constructed in 1954 and demolished to make way for the theater. Plans to construct the theater were first announced in 1965 in conjunction with the Cinema 150 Theater in Santa Clara (demolished). Initially, the Stonestown theater was to be designed by William David while the theater in Santa Clara was to be designed by George K. Raad. When the United California Theaters company applied for the permit of the Stonestown theater in 1965 it was denied due to neighborhood opposition and the project was postponed for nearly five years. During that time, United California Theaters hired George K. Raad to design the Stonestown theater to a nearly identical design as the Cinema 150 Theater in Santa Clara.

The UA Stonestown Twin Theater has seen minimal alterations. In 1973, a dividing wall was constructed bisecting the single auditorium to create two separate theater spaces. In 1998, a drinking fountain, telephone, and new auditorium doors were permitted along with renovations to the extant restrooms. Additionally, in 1998, an approved ADA entrance and sidelight were relocated to the primary façade. Lastly, in 2016, a single-ply membrane roofing system was installed over the existing built-up tar and gravel roof cladding.

Stonestown Shopping Center and Stonestown Galleria Complex

Stonestown Shopping Center was originally developed by the San Francisco-based Stoneson Development Company, led by brothers Henry and Ellis Stoneson. In 1948, the brother targeted a 65-acre tract west of 19th Avenue in the Lakeshore District as the location of a mixed-use development that would include a shopping center, four 10-story mid-rise apartment buildings, and 10 three-story low-density garden apartments. The residential portion of the development began construction in 1948 and was designed by San Francisco architect Angus McSweeney.

The shopping center began development in 1950 and was designed by Los Angeles-based architect Welton Becket. Set on 40 acres, the Stonestown shopping center was considered "the most extensive commercial center in California." The shopping center was anchored by the 300,000 square foot Emporium department store and featured a movie theater, medical building, restaurant, gas station, bank, and smaller retail stores. The shopping center was reflective of then modern theories in retailing and when it opened in 1952, the shopping center represented a direct threat to the historic commercial centers along Mission Street, Union Square, and Downtown San Francisco.

The stated goal of the shopping center was to provide shopping facilities and services to meet every need of the consumer and was designed to "service and supply" the estimated population of 250,000 in the area. Services within the development included the extant five-story Stonestown Medical and Dental Center which opened in 1953 and was designed in the Midcentury style. During the 1980s, the main portion of the shopping center was completely remodeled into an enclosed mall structure dubbed Stonestown Galleria. Remnants of the original design and buildings remain, particularly near the intersection of 20th Avenue and Buckingham Way, though only a few buildings, including the medical and dental center and UA Stonestown Twin Theater, retain high integrity.

United California Theaters

United California Theaters was founded in the 1940s by Michael Naify of T & D, Jrs. Enterprises with the merging of three independent theater operations on the west coast: T & D, Golden State Theaters, and San Francisco Theaters. In the late 1940s, United California Theaters merged with United Artists Theater Circuit and the Naify family became the majority shareholders. In 1988, the United Artists Theater chain was bought by Tele-wood Communications Incorporated and in 2002, after filing for bankruptcy, the theater chain was consolidated as part of the Regal Entertainment Group.

George K. Raad (1924 - 2016)

George K. Raad was born in Jerusalem, Palestine in 1924 and came to the United States to earn his master's degree in

architecture from the University of California, Berkeley. Following graduation, Raad settled in San Francisco and opened his architectural practice, George Raad Associates, at an unknown date. Raad appears to have worked predominately on residential and commercial projects in the San Francisco Bay Area and designed theaters throughout California, Texas, and Illinois. Raad lived with his wife in Telegraph Hill until 2008, when the couple relocated to Idaho. Raad served as the president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers in the 1960s and was an outspoken opponent of the planned but never-built Golden Gate Freeway. George K. Raad died in 2016.

Table 1 profiles the known works of George K. Raad and George Raad Associates.

Known works of George K. Raad and George Raad Associates	
Project Name	Date
Robert T. Evju family residence, 5 Morgan Lane, San Rafael, California (extant)	1961
Southgate Indoor Outdoor Theater, Sacramento, California (demolished)	1964
Cinema 150 – El Camino Real and Bowers Avenue, Santa Clara, California (demolished)	1966
Mr. and Mrs. Carl R. Calrsen residence, 21 Portofino Road, San Rafael, California (extant)	1966
UA Cinema, Oak Brook Illinois (demolished)	1968
UA Cine I & II, Dallas, Texas (demolished)	1972
UA Cinema 6, Santa Rosa, California (extant)	1976
Cost Plus Imports, Jack London Square, Oakland, California (extant)	1975
Cost Plus Imports, Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, California (extant)	1983

Of the above-listed theaters, Cinema 150 in Santa Clara, UA Cinema in Oak Brook, Illinois, and the UA Cine I & II in Dallas, Texas, were designed nearly identically to the UA Stonestown Twin Theater in the New Formalism style, with colonnaded facades and glazed lobbies with hanging globe chandeliers. All the other examples of Raad’s New Formalism-style theaters have since been demolished.

The New Formalism Style (1950s – 1970s)

While the International style dominated the landscape of modern architecture in the early 1950s, Edward Durrell Stone’s design of the American Embassy in New Delhi in 1954 represented a new, more ceremonial modern style based on classical elements that utilized building materials and technologies of the International Style. The American embassy celebrated monumental forms and feature ornamental concrete screen grille, free-standing slender columns, and interior courtyards.

New Formalism architecture is commonly characterized by a symmetrical façade with columnar arched supports. The style concentrated on updating, rather than re-creating, Classical forms and was visibly and theoretically distinct from the Neoclassical style. The overall massiveness of the style is achieved through a concrete-block-type structure set on an elevated podium and typically capped with a flat slab roof. Wall cladding is typically smooth and unadorned and commonly made of stone, brick, and marble while columns are generally slender and attenuated. New Formalism was typically applied to civic and commercial buildings but was applied sparingly to residential architecture.

Character-defining features include:

- Symmetrical façade of the one-story portion of the theater
- Groin vaulted colonnade at the primary façade
- Groin vaults with glazing and blind arches in the lobby
- Flat roof
- Sunken courtyard with a large aggregate concrete surface in square sections
- Smooth, unadorned wall surfaces
- Overall massing of the auditoriums and hyphen at the rear (west) of building
- Interior chandeliers with glass globe fixtures

New Formalism in San Francisco (1950-1965)

New Formalism represented a Modern interpretation of classical forms in American architecture. A common style for Southern California apartment buildings, New Formalism buildings are rare in San Francisco and the style was most often applied to early 1960s bank design. Architects associated with the style include Mies van der Rohe, Philip Johnson, Paul Rudolph, and Minoru Yamasaki. The style is characterized by slender arches, strict symmetry, flat roofs, vertical lines, and columnar supports.

Table 2 profiles the known examples of New Formalism in San Francisco.

Known examples of New Formalism in San Francisco	
Project Name	Date
Kendrick Hall, University of San Francisco	1962
Bank of America branch, 275 Ellis Street	1963
U.S. Bank Bay View branch, 4947 3rd Street	1964
St. Marks’s Urban Life Center, 1031 Franklin Street, Cathedral Hill	1965
Chase Bank branch, 2500 Mission Street	Façade remodeled in 1968

California Register Evaluation

Criterion 1 – The subject property was constructed in 1970 within the Stonestown Shopping Center development in the Lakeshore neighborhood. To be considered eligible for listing under Criterion 1, the subject property must be associated with an event important to history. Research failed to suggest that the subject property is associated with an event important to local, regional, state, or national history. Therefore, the UA Stonestown Twin Theater (501 Buckingham Way) does not appear eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) under Criterion 1 either as an individual resource or as part of an eligible district.

Criterion 2 – In order to be eligible under Criterion 2, persons associated with a historic property must be individually significant within a historic context and the subject property must be representative of the person’s productive life. Research failed to suggest that any of the subject property’s prior owners and occupants rose to the level of significance to justify inclusion in the California Register. As such UA Stonestown Twin Theater (501 Buckingham Way) does not appear eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2 either as an individual resource or as part of an eligible district.

Criterion 3 – The subject property was constructed in 1970 to a design by George K. Raad and is an excellent example of the New Formalism architectural style in San Francisco. The subject property represents an excellent example of the style and is comparable to other local properties that exemplify the style. The property illustrates the New Formalism style through its groin-vaulted colonnade and lobby, sunken entry courtyard, flat roof, and smooth, unadorned walls. New Formalism is a rare architectural style within San Francisco and was more typically applied to the design of bank buildings.

The subject property was designed by local architect George K. Raad, who designed several other theaters in the same style in California, Texas, and Illinois that have since been demolished. Although Raad successfully adapted the style to a more modest use and size in this application, Raad’s overall body of work failed to garner recognition and/or distinction, and his work is not listed in architectural archives or databases such as the Pacific Coast Architectural Database. As such, research failed to suggest that Raad rose to the level of mastery to justify inclusion into the California Register under Criterion 3.

In conclusion, the subject property is a superior example of the New Formalism style within San Francisco and is therefore individually eligible for inclusion in the California Register under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4 – The subject building is not likely to yield valuable information that will contribute to our understanding

of human history because the property is not—nor was it ever—the principal source of information pertaining to subjects like early-twentieth-century residential architecture/development. Therefore, the subject property does not appear eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 4 either as an individual resource or as part of an eligible historic district. Archeological review will be undertaken through the Department’s preliminary archeological review process and is outside this scope of this analysis.

Step B: Integrity

The subject property has retained or lacks integrity from the period of significance noted in Step A:

Location:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Setting:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Association:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Feeling:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Design:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks	Materials:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks
Workmanship:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retains	<input type="checkbox"/> Lacks			

Analysis:
Historical Integrity
 The subject property is an excellent example of the New Formalism style as executed in a late-twentieth-century theater building context. It displays several hallmark character-defining features, including a flat roof, symmetrical primary facade, smooth, unadorned wall cladding, groin vaulted colonnade at the primary façade, groin vaults with glazing and blind arches in the lobby, and a sunken courtyard.

The subject property was evaluated considering the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the Secretary of the Interior in National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (National Park Service 1997).

As an individual resource, the subject property retains **high** integrity.

Location: The subject property retains **high integrity of location** as it has not been moved from its original location.

Design: The subject property retains **high integrity of design**. Since its period of significance, the building has undergone only minor alterations that have not significantly and detrimentally altered the historic design intent of the building.

Setting: The subject property retains **high integrity of setting**. As one of the later buildings to be constructed within the Stonestown Shopping Center development, the setting has not changed considerably since the building’s construction.

Materials and Workmanship: The subject property retains **high integrity of materials and workmanship**. The minor alterations that have been performed since the building’s initial construction, including the replacement of an original door with an ADA compliant door, painting of some exterior metal railings, and the reroofing of the building are congruous with the materials and caliber of workmanship apparent in the building historically.

Feeling: The subject property retains **high integrity of feeling**. The building’s overall high integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship contribute to the building’s ability to satisfactorily convey the associative qualities of its particular place in time as a late-twentieth-century movie theater building designed in the New Formalism style.

Association: The subject property retains **high integrity of association**. The building is sufficiently intact and continues to convey its associative qualities as a late-twentieth-century theater building designed in the New

Allison Vanderslice, CEQA Cultural Resources Team Manager

CC: Xinyu Liang, *Senior Planner*
Southeast Quadrant Team, Current Planning Division

HRER PART I ATTACHMENTS:

- Architectural Plans, dated: _____
- HRE / Supplemental, dated: March 18, 2022