PART I: HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION

Buildings and Property Description
The subject property, 874 Fell Street, is located on a rectangular-shaped lot measuring 45 feet by 100 feet on the north side of Fell Street between Fillmore and Steiner streets in the Western Addition neighborhood. The property is located within an RM-1 (Residential-Mixed, Low Density Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

The subject property is occupied by a two-story-over-raised-basement, wood-frame residential building constructed in 1901. The building was originally constructed as a single-family dwelling, but has since experienced interior and exterior alterations such that today it encompasses nine residential units. The most conspicuous of these alterations is a large, two-story hip-roofed addition projecting from the southeast corner of the building, which includes an integral garage on the first floor.

The addition is clad with vinyl siding, as is the primary façade of the main building. The secondary facades of the main building are clad with narrow wood shiplap siding. The raised basement level of the main building is clad with rusticated cast concrete masonry units, with similar masonry units used for a site wall running along the west end of the property line. The primary entry is accessed from a pass-through beneath the addition, with concrete steps rising to a landing. Secondary access to the building is provided by concrete stairs leading to a metal gate at the southwest corner of the property. Typical fenestration includes sliding aluminum windows. The primary façade of the main building terminates in a plain frieze, with a hip-roofed dormer. A metal fire escape accesses a dormer window, as well as a window on the second story. The roofline of the addition is eaveless.

Photos submitted with the Supplemental Information Form indicate the secondary facades of the main building retain original egg-and-dart molding at the roofline. A boxed bay window is located near the center of the second-story west façade, while a bracketed angled bay window is located at the second story of the rear façade. The rear façade also includes flush wood entry doors and a metal fire escape.
There are two buildings at the rear of the property. A former stable/auto garage is located at the northwest corner of the lot. It is two-stories in height, clad with rustic channel wood siding, and capped by a gable roof. A flush wood entry door is located at the southwest corner. Fenestration consists of six-over-one light, double-hung wood sash windows with flat board trim on the south facade. The south facade also terminates with wood brackets at the corners of the roofline. A portion of the original wood block and tackle arm for the stable hay loft projects from the upper facade of the east elevation.

A flat-roofed garage abuts the former stable to the east. It is rectangular in plan and clad with unpainted rustic channel wood siding. The garage entry consists of wooden double-doors with vertical slat fenestration at the southeast end of the building.

Known alterations to the property include converting the former stable/auto garage at the northwest corner of the lot into a two-room dwelling (1944), constructing an addition to convert the building from a six-family dwelling to an eight-family dwelling (1945), constructing a garage at the rear of the property (1948), installation of a fire escape at the front of the building (1962), installing drop ladders for existing fire escapes on the front and rear of the building (1962), installation of fourteen aluminum windows (1972), replacing the rear stairs (1998), installation of vinyl siding at the front and right side of the building (2003); and the replacement of some windows in the former stable/auto garage at the rear of the property (2010). A circa 1980 photograph indicates that the building addition was previously clad with stucco.

Pre-Existing Historic Rating / Survey
The subject property directly abuts a southeast corner of the Alamo Square Landmark District, added to Article 10 of the Planning Code in 1984. However, 874 Fell Street has not been addressed by any prior historic resource surveys and is not listed on any local, state or national registries. The subject property is considered a “Category B” property (Properties Requiring Further Consultation and Review) for the purposes of the Planning Department’s California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review procedures due to its age.

Neighborhood Context and Description
874 Fell Street is located in San Francisco’s Western Addition neighborhood, a large irregularly-shaped area roughly bounded by California Street on the north, Duboce Avenue and Fulton Street on the south, Van Ness Avenue and Gough Street on the east, and Masonic Avenue on the west. The subject block is exclusively residential and largely comprised of residential flats, with a minority of single-family dwellings and apartments. Nearly all buildings are two to three stories in height above a raised basement. Construction dates for buildings located on the subject block range from circa 1890 to 1949, although the vast majority were constructed between circa 1895 and 1910. This is reflected in the architecture of the building stock, which is dominated by Classical Revival designs, with a few examples of Queen Anne and Stick/Eastlake designs. A number of buildings on the subject block have been altered to varying degrees, most frequently through the removal of ornament and the replacement of cladding (typically stucco or asbestos shingles over the original wood cladding). The best preserved portions of the block are the southern and western block faces, with the latter included within the boundaries of the Alamo Square Landmark District. It should be noted that the remainder of the block outside the Landmark District has not been formally surveyed.
CEQA Historical Resource(s) Evaluation

Step A: Significance

Under CEQA section 21084.1, a property qualifies as a historic resource if it is “listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources.” The fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources or not included in a local register of historical resources, shall not preclude a lead agency from determining whether the resource may qualify as a historical resource under CEQA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Historic District/Context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property is individually eligible for inclusion in a California Register under one or more of the following Criteria:</td>
<td>Property is eligible for inclusion in a California Register Historic District/Context under one or more of the following Criteria:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion 1 - Event: □ Yes □ No</td>
<td>Criterion 1 - Event: □ Yes □ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion 2 - Persons: □ Yes □ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion 3 - Architecture: □ Yes □ No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: □ Yes □ No</td>
<td>Criterion 4 - Info. Potential: □ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period of Significance: N/A</td>
<td>Period of Significance: Circa 1890 - 1915</td>
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</tbody>
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Based on the information provided in the Supplemental Information Form for Historical Resource Determination prepared by Eric Roussel (dated 24 March 2014), information found in the Planning Department files, and research conducted on the Alamo Square area, Planning staff find that the subject building is not individually eligible for listing on the California Register. The property is located with the boundaries of a locally-eligible extension of the Alamo Square Landmark District, but does not contribute to the district because of a loss of architectural integrity.

Criterion 1: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

The street grid for the Alamo Square area was first platted during the 1850s as a result of the Van Ness Ordinance, which created a large addition to the city boundaries known as the “Western Addition.” This legislation also reserved several squares for public use, including Alamo Square, Jefferson Square and Hamilton Square. Initially, the area was sparsely settled. But following the creation of Golden Gate Park, real estate speculators and streetcar companies lobbied for the introduction of cable car lines connecting the park to more developed areas of the city. These included two lines in the immediate vicinity of Fell Street: the Hayes Street Line, opened by the Market Street Cable Railway Company in 1886, as well as the Oak Street Line, opened by the Omnibus Railroad & Cable Company in 1889. A short distance to the north and south, respectively, the McAllister Street Line and the Haight Street Line both opened in 1883.

The introduction of mass transit touched off a sustained period of residential development in the Alamo Square area, largely concentrated between circa 1885 and 1915. The first Sanborn Map Publishing Company fire insurance maps were produced for the area in 1893 and show an uneven development
pattern. The subject block is shown as entirely vacant save for a single-family dwelling today addressed as 870 Fell Street. By contrast, adjacent blocks are shown as approximately twenty percent developed.

Residential development in the area increased significantly during the mid-1890s, as evidenced by the 1899 Sanborn map. The subject block is shown as approximately fifty percent developed, predominately with flats, while adjacent blocks were approximately forty to ninety percent developed. By 1905, only five vacant lots remained on the subject block. At that time, 874 Fell Street is shown as a single-family dwelling with a detached, two-story stable at the northwest corner of the property.

The neighborhood largely escaped damage during the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, and for a time Alamo Square was used as a refugee camp. Within a short time the neighborhood experienced another pulse of development as large numbers of San Franciscans relocated to areas outside the burned district. Many single-family residences were converted into rental apartments, and available vacant lots were quickly built up with infill construction. This is amply demonstrated by comparisons of the 1905 and 1913 Sanborn maps, which show only a single vacant lot remaining on the subject block. The 1913 map also shows that the stable behind 874 Fell Street had by that time been converted into an auto garage.

During the Second World War, thousands of laborers arrived in the Bay Area to work in industries tied to the war effort. These included large numbers of African Americans, many of whom moved into the Western Addition where they lived in dwellings formerly occupied by Japanese residents who had been forced into internment camps. The intense demand for housing by war workers also led many property owners to subdivide their properties—typically Victorian era single-family houses, into apartments. This pattern is evidenced by alterations and additions made to the subject property in 1944 and 1945. Sanborn maps also show that five single-family dwellings on the subject block were subdivided into apartments between 1915 and 1950.

During the post-war period, many African Americans—as well as various immigrant communities—stayed in the neighborhood and the Western Addition emerged as a focal point of African American life in the city. Concurrently, however, a substantial portion of the neighborhood was declared “blighted” and targeted for redevelopment—resulting in the demolition and clearance of dozens of blocks in the Western Addition during the 1960s. In the vicinity of the subject block, this included the redevelopment of most blocks north of Fulton Street and east of Steiner Street. In partial response to redevelopment, residents of the Alamo Square area pursued the creation of a landmark historic district, which was created in 1984. The Alamo Square Landmark District is roughly bounded by properties along Golden Gate Avenue and Fulton Street on the north, Fell and Hayes streets on the south, Steiner and Webster streets on the east, and Scott Street on the west.

Considered as a whole, the build out of the blocks southeast of Alamo Square represents a cohesive development pattern concentrated during the last decades of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century. In this respect, the subject block appears significant for its association with the theme of city planning and community development. This includes the opening of the Western Addition and the development of the Alamo Square area as a Victorian streetcar suburb. The dates of construction and architectural styles for the local building stock convey a clear and significant association with these events. Based on analysis by Planning staff, the subject block face along Fell Street, as well as adjacent areas, constitute an eligible extension of the Alamo Square Landmark District. This extension is discussed at length under Criterion 3.
Although 874 Fell Street is located within the boundaries of an eligible extension to the Alamo Square Landmark District, the property has experienced numerous exterior alterations which have compromised its architectural integrity. Most notably, the large addition at the southeast corner of the building significantly changed the building’s massing and articulation. Most of the original architectural features on the primary façade have also been removed, while portions of both main building and addition have also been re-clad with vinyl siding.

In sum, 874 Fell Street is located within the boundaries of an eligible extension of the Alamo Square Historic District, which is significant under California Register Criterion 1 for its association with historic development patterns. However, the building does not contribute to this eligible extension because of extensive prior alterations. It is therefore determined that 874 Fell Street is not eligible for listing in the California Register individually or as a contributor to a potential historic district under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: It is associated with the lives of persons important in our local, regional or national past.

Based on information provided with the Supplemental Information Form for Historical Resource Determination, water service was connected to the house in May 1901 for owner James Scobie (1836-1902). A native of Blackford, Scotland, Scobie was naturalized in San Francisco in 1872. That year he is identified in the voter registry as a stonemason, living on Garden Street in the Western Addition. By 1880, he was identified in the Census as a railroad contractor, living in the South of Market. According to various sources, Scobie had become affiliated with the Southern Pacific Railroad and was awarded the contract for masonry work on a portion of the Oregon & California Railroad line, running from Redding, California to Ashland, Oregon. One source also names Scobie as the contractor responsible for the masonry work on several Nob Hill mansions, including the Leland Stanford residence. Scobie invested widely in real estate, including property near the railroad line in Dunsmuir and Montague, California, as well as Ashland. He also held numerous properties in San Francisco, including the entire block bounded by Fell, Oak, Fillmore and Steiner streets.

By 1889 Scobie had relocated from the South of Market to 324 Haight Street (no longer extant). In 1891, Scobie moved into a new mansion at 601 Steiner Street (also addressed as 900 Fell Street), designed for him by the architect, Charles Havens. This large, Queen Anne style residence remains extant as a contributor to the Alamo Square Landmark District. Around the same time, Scobie was named a director of the new Cypress Lawn Cemetery Corporation, serving alongside notable personages that included Timothy Hopkins and Charles Felton. Scobie also served as Chairman of the St. Andrew’s Society, a Scottish benevolent association organized in San Francisco during the early 1860s.

Around 1901, Scobie sold his house at 601 Steiner Street to Nicolas Ohlandt, president of the German Bank, and moved into a new residence at 874 Fell Street. The following year, Scobie died in his new residence on February 23, 1902. According to the Scobie’s obituary in the San Francisco Call:

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2 “A Great Sale,” San Francisco Call, April 10, 1891.
The deceased came to this country when a boy and began his career as a miner at the Cariboo mines, British Columbia. Later, he followed the trade of a stonemason and afterward became a contractor for stone masonry work, principally for the Southern Pacific Company. He took a prominent part in the building of the California and Oregon system of that company. Through contracting and successful investments in real estate in this city Scobie accumulated a large fortune. He was a prominent member of the Masonic order, of the Scottish societies, and more particularly of the St. Andrew’s Society. He was prominently identified with various churches and was known for his liberality toward religion and charity.3

Newspaper articles indicate that Scobie left an estate appraised at more than $375,000, much of it real estate in San Francisco, Sonoma, Siskiyou and San Mateo counties. A bequest in his will provided $10,000 in a trust to benefit the poor of Blackford, Scotland. Scobie’s widow, Agnes, used a portion of the estate to fund the development of the Scobie Memorial Sanitarium, opened in 1904 at the northwest corner of Page & Masonic. This building remains standing adjacent to St. Agnes Church. Around 1910, Agnes Scobie was remarried to James Campbell Moffat, a building materials supplier. The couple lived at 874 Fell Street where James Moffat died in residence in 1911. Agnes Moffat continued to live at the property with her sisters Johanna and Bella McBean until her death in 1926.

Following Agnes Moffat’s death, the interior of the building was converted into apartments, plausibly to serve as rental income for Moffat’s sisters, the McBeans. This is evidenced by the 1929 city directory, which shows the following occupants of the building: Joy McBean (no occupation given); Johanna McBean (no occupation given); Sadie Campbell (nurse); Frank Brown (no occupation given); Percival C. Fraser (clerk); Anna R. Johnson (stenographer); Wilhemina Kioze (no occupation given); Joseph Zwick (brewer); Silas Sjoberg (no occupation given); Betty Shafer (no occupation given); and John D. Clark (warehouseman). City directories from the 1930s through 1980 show that subsequent occupants of the rental units included a typist, printer, porter, waitress, city employee, nurse, and numerous occupants with no occupation given—likely retirees.

The property ownership history submitted with the Supplemental Information Form for Historic Resource Determination is not complete, but the property appears to have been sold prior to World War II to Eino O. Risu and Anna M. Risu. The Risus are identified as owners on building permit applications to convert the former stable/garage to a two-room dwelling unit (1944), as well as a permit for an addition to convert the dwelling from six to eight apartments (1945). Eino Risu (1899–1965) worked as a building contractor and performed the work himself. Risu also constructed a new garage at the rear of the property in 1948. The Risus owned the building as a rental property, and during the mid-1940s lived at 2535 16th Avenue.

The Risus sold the property in 1954, to Houston & Alice Jones (no occupations identified). As before, the property was likely purchased as an investment property as the 1955 city directory shows Jones living a few blocks away from the subject property at 717 Page Street. In 1961 the property was sold again to Frank & Ardath Nichols. At the time Frank Nichols was employed as a stevedore and lived at 1045

3 “Prominent Character Passes to Last Rest, San Francisco Call, February 24, 1902.
Girard Street. Other owners included Lily Young (purchased 1990) and Yolanda Burton-Wilson (purchased 2000).

Considered as a whole, the property is most closely identified with James and Agnes Scobie, who commissioned its construction in 1901. Agnes also remained in residence through 1926. Based on research by Planning staff, James Scobie appears to be a person important to regional history, most notably for his involvement in the construction of the California and Oregon railroad over Siskiyou Pass, as well as his involvement in local development and benevolent associations. However, his period in residence at 874 Fell Street lasted less than one year, and this period is not associated with the most productive portion of his career. By contrast, the residence James Scobie constructed at 601 Steiner Street and lived in for approximately a decade remains extant. Agnes Scobie, although intimately associated with the founding of the Scobie sanitarium, does not otherwise appear to be a person important to local, state or national history.

None of the other owners or occupants named above appear to be important to local, state or national history. It is therefore determined that 1640 Fulton Street is not eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.

874 Fell Street was constructed in 1901. Based on a circa 1920 historic photo submitted with the Supplemental Information Form for Historical Resource Determination, the property was originally designed with strong Classical Revival influences, including an entry portico with Corinthian columns supporting an entablature with an arched pediment. A first story window on the primary façade was likewise crowned with a large pediment, and the corners of the building were marked by two story Corinthian pilasters. The building was clad with shiplap wood siding, and the primary façade terminated in egg-and-dart molding beneath the eaves.

The house was constructed for James Scobie at a cost of $7,760 by architect Thomas Paterson Ross, with Cotter & Jones serving as contractors.\(^4\) Thomas Ross was a native of Scotland and arrived in San Francisco during the 1880s where he worked as a draftsman for the architect, John Cash. In 1892, Ross designed the Chapel at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park—almost certainly bringing him into contact with James Scobie. Ross briefly partnered with City Architect Edward A. Hatherton in 1895, then opened his own practice, operating from the Columbian Building. Some of his known works from the turn of the century include the subject property, as well as the Fritz Habenicht House at 1001 Chestnut Street (1904).

Following the 1906 Earthquake, Ross partnered with the engineer A. W. Burgren on numerous hotels and commercial buildings, including the Ansonia Hotel at 711 Post Street (1906), The Baldwin Hotel at 1030 Polk Street (1906), and the Sing Fat and Sing Chong buildings in Chinatown (1908, 1909).\(^5\) Other well-known works by the firm include the Scottish Rite Temple at Van Ness Avenue and Sutter (demolished), and the Shriners Islam Temple at 650 Geary Street, known today as the Alcazar Theater (1919). The firm

\(^4\) “Builders Contracts,” San Francisco Call, April 10, 1901.
also completed several large residential projects, including the Greenwich Terrace cooperative villas at 1101 Greenwich Street (1912), the Summit Apartments at 2164 Hyde Street (1914), group of twenty-nine Pueblo Revival townhomes known as Union Terrace at 1020 Union Street (1921), and the Capo de Monte apartment building at 2111 Hyde Street (1921). Based on a review of Ross’ career, 874 Fell Street appears to be an early commission for a prominent client, but is not otherwise among the architect’s most important works.

As noted previously under Criterion 1, the area surrounding the subject property appears to qualify as an eligible extension of the Alamo Square Landmark District. As noted in the designation ordinance:

The Alamo Square Historic District is significant as a continuum of distinguished residential architecture by distinguished architects spanning the period from the 1870s to the 1920s .... With a variety of architectural styles, the District is unified in its residential character, relatively small scale, construction type, materials (principally wood), intense ornamentation (especially at entry and cornice) and use of basements and retaining walls to adjust for hillside sites.

Based on research performed by Preservation staff, the 800 block of Fell Street, as well as adjacent areas, features a dense concentration of residential properties constructed between circa 1890 and 1915. These properties conform to the character-defining features of the Alamo Square Landmark District in that they are uniformly residential, relatively small in scale, are constructed of wood, and are highly ornamented. Preservation staff also find that a large percentage of these buildings retain architectural integrity.

The boundaries of this eligible extension include all properties on the north and south sides of the 800 block of Fell Street not presently included within the Landmark District. The boundaries also include most properties along the 500 block of Steiner Street, as well as a grouping of three properties at the northeast corner of Steiner and Oak streets. The boundaries of the eligible extension also include most properties along the west side of the 600 block of Fillmore Street. Preliminary analysis by Preservation staff indicates that nearly eighty percent of properties within these boundaries would qualify as contributors to the Landmark District.

While the subject property is located within these boundaries, 874 Fell Street does not appear to retain sufficient integrity to qualify as a contributor to the historic district. The building has experienced a large addition which has significantly altered its massing. Likewise, the building has lost nearly all of its original ornament, and has had all of its original windows replaced.

It is therefore determined that 874 Fell Street is not eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 3, either individually or as a contributor to a potential historic district.

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7 San Francisco Ordinance No. 324-84 Amending Article 10 of the City Planning Code, Part II of Chapter II of the Municipal Code by Adding Appendix E Designating the Alamo Square Historic District, (City and County of San Francisco, 1984), 2.
Criterion 4: It yields, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Based upon a review of information in the Departments records, the subject property is not significant under Criterion 4, which is typically associated with archaeological resources. The building is also unlikely to yield information important to history, such as evidence of unique building materials or methods.

It is therefore determined that 874 Fell Street is not eligible for listing in the California Register under Criterion 4.

Step B: Integrity
To be a resource for the purposes of CEQA, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the California Register of Historical Resources criteria, but it also must have integrity. Integrity is defined as “the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s period of significance.” Historic integrity enables a property to illustrate significant aspects of its past. All seven qualities do not need to be present as long the overall sense of past time and place is evident.

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

| Location: | ☒ Retains | ☐ Lacks |
| Association: | ☐ Retains | ☒ Lacks |
| Design: | ☐ Retains | ☒ Lacks |
| Workmanship: | ☐ Retains | ☒ Lacks |

Setting: | ☒ Retains | ☐ Lacks |
Feeling: | ☐ Retains | ☒ Lacks |
Materials: | ☐ Retains | ☒ Lacks |

874 Fell Street has experienced numerous prior alterations. These include a large addition at the southeast corner of the building which has significantly changed its massing and articulation. Most of the original architectural features on the primary façade have also been removed, including pilaster capitals at the building corners, as well as pediments crowning the primary entry and first-story windows. The windows have been replaced, and the primary façade of the both the main building and addition have been re-clad with vinyl siding. Considered as a whole, these alterations have compromised the building’s integrity of design, association, workmanship, materials and feeling. Therefore, the subject property no longer retains integrity.

Step C: Character Defining Features
If the subject property has been determined to have significance and retains integrity, please list the character-defining features of the building(s) and/or property. A property must retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity in order to avoid significant adverse impacts to the resource. These essential features are those that define both why a property is significant and when it was significant, and without which a property can no longer be identified as being associated with its significance.

As discussed above, 874 Fell Street has experienced numerous alterations that have significantly altered its design and materials such that it no longer retains integrity. Therefore, a discussion of character defining features is not warranted.
CEQA Historic Resource Determination

☒ Historical Resource Present
  ☐ Individually-eligible Resource
  ☐ Contributor to an eligible Historic District
  ☒ Non-contributor to an eligible Historic District

☐ No Historical Resource Present

PART I: SENIOR PRESERVATION PLANNER REVIEW

Signature: Megan Date: 5-23-17
Tina Tam, Senior Preservation Planner

cc: Virnaliza Byrd, Environmental Division/ Historic Resource Impact Review File
874 Fell Street primary façade, viewed from the southwest (Bing Maps)

874 Fell Street primary façade, viewed from the southeast (Bing Maps)
874 Fell Street satellite view (Google Maps)

Circa 1920 photograph of 874 Fell Street provided with the Supplemental Information Form for Historic Resource Determination