

Memorandum

Date May 28, 2014

Project Del Monte Warehouse, Alameda

To Mr. Andrew Thomas
City of Alameda, Community
Development Department
2263 Santa Clara Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501

From Christopher VerPlanck
VerPlanck Historic Preservation
Consulting
57 Post Street, Suite 512
San Francisco, CA 94104

Topic Rothchild Building, San Francisco

Copied William Duncanson

Via Email

Dear Andrew,

I prepared this memorandum in response to your request for more information on the Rothchild Building in San Francisco, which I used as an example of a comparable rehabilitation project to the Del Monte Warehouse conversion at the April 3, 2014 Historical Advisory Board meeting. At your request, this memorandum includes more written detail on this project. This memorandum concludes with additional visual material, including photographs of the building before and after the project, which was completed in 1998.

The Rothchild Building is located at 465 10th Street in San Francisco's South of Market Area. Originally built in 1924 as a "stage scene factory" for its original tenant, the Herbert L. Rothchild Entertainment, Inc., the Rothchild Building belonged to the Lurie Company, a real estate holding company. The building served its original use – mainly building sets for Vaudeville productions – for Rothchild's local theater chain, which at various times included the California, Granada, Alexandria, Coliseum, Portola, and Strand theaters. The building's unusual 80'-high tower was designed to match the height of the proscenium of

telephone: 415.391.7486
email: chris@verplanckconsulting.com
57 Post St., Suite 512, San Francisco, CA 94104

Rothchild's largest theater, the Granada, on Market Street. The Rothchild Building was designed by the O'Brien Brothers, one of San Francisco's most prolific architecture firms during the first quarter of the twentieth century. With the decline of Vaudeville in the 1920s, Rothchild converted all his theaters to film and gave up his lease on the building in 1927. From 1928 until 1995, the building housed a cable manufacturer and several print shops. The Rothchild Building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in April 1999.

In 1996, the new property owner decided to convert the disused Rothchild Building to residential use. The owner hired architect George Hauser who developed a scheme to convert the building into 18 luxury lofts. To house the program George Hauser designed a two-story, L-shaped addition for the roof of the existing two-story building. The addition was set back from the primary (10th Street) façade by approximately one structural bay, or about 20'. The addition, which is clad in corrugated metal in keeping with the South of Market Area's industrial context, is visible from 10th Street, especially from the north where the addition is not obstructed behind any taller structures **(See Appendix Items A-C for views of the project)**. In addition to blending in with the property's industrial setting, the addition's corrugated steel cladding was selected to give it a lighter-weight, less-obtrusive appearance and to make it clear that it is not part of the historic concrete building. Finally, the addition was sculpted with setbacks and notch-outs to reduce its apparent massing and to avoid obscuring the building's signature tower. The exterior and much of the interior were preserved and restored, retaining the building's industrial character as much as possible.

Because the project sponsor sought federal rehabilitation tax credits the project had to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and pass muster with local, state, and national authorities, including the San Francisco Landmarks Advisory Board (now the Historic Preservation Commission), the California Historical Resources Commission, and the National Park Service. The project was completed in 1998 and was well-regarded as a sympathetic rehabilitation of a historic industrial building. It seems to have become a template for several later adaptive reuse projects that included vertical additions to historic industrial buildings in the South of Market Area, including 475 Brannan Street, 680 2nd Street, and 178 Townsend Street. In a similar vein, many of the same strategies were employed by the design team for the Del Monte Warehouse rehabilitation project, including the setbacks from the primary street façades, differentiated yet compatible cladding, and the use of notch-outs to reduce the addition's apparent massing.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher VerPlanck



Appendix Item A. Ca. 1998 view of the Rothchild Building; arrow indicates vertical addition
Source: National Register nomination by Anne Bloomfield



Appendix Item B. Ca. 1996 view of the Rothchild Building without addition; view toward south
Source: National Register nomination by Anne Bloomfield



Appendix Item B. Ca. 1998 view of the Rothchild Building with addition; view toward south
Source: National Register nomination by Anne Bloomfield