

HERITAGE 2018

Proceedings of the 6th International Conference
on Heritage and Sustainable Development
10th Anniversary Edition

VOLUME 2

Edited by

Rogério Amoêda

Sérgio Lira

Cristina Pinheiro

Juan M. Santiago Zaragoza

Julio Calvo Serrano

Fabián García Carrillo



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*Granada, Spain
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Towards a new future: the San Francisco Legacy Business Program as a model for intangible heritage preservation

B. R. Turner

National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States, San Francisco, California, USA

D. Aggarwal

B. A. Yale College, New Haven, Connecticut, USA

ABSTRACT: Policy tools to protect cultural heritage in the United States have traditionally focused on safeguarding its physical assets. While this approach has often yielded the successful protection of historic sites, architecture and artefacts, it overlooks the intangible contributions that define American life. This paper will first survey the traditional regulatory approach to protecting heritage in San Francisco, California. With this background in mind, the second part will illuminate how the City's Legacy Business Program, adopted in 2015, reflects a critical shift from the traditional policy approach to the preservation of cultural assets. Based on these findings, we will introduce a roadmap for the future that takes into account a broader definition of "cultural heritage".

1 INTRODUCTION

The rules and regulations that protect cultural heritage in the United States have traditionally focused on the protection of the built environment. This paper seeks to promote a policy approach to cultural heritage preservation that embraces intangible assets: long-standing businesses that enhance civic engagement and pride in neighborhoods. Created in 2015, the City and County of San Francisco's (City's) Legacy Businesses Program reflects the strong public interest in providing support for places that sustain the city's unique identity.

The City's historic preservation regulations protecting its physical assets are some of the most stringent in the country. But they have proven a blunt tool for saving the intangible aspects of its heritage. The Legacy Businesses Program emerged from a realization that while existing laws have been effective in protecting historic buildings, skyrocketing commercial rents threatened the loss of the cherished businesses that add to the City's vibrancy. The development of new economies has come at the risk of causing the loss of treasured cultural assets.

This paper outlines how San Francisco pursued an incentive-based approach in adopting one of the first policies in the U.S. which explicitly recognizes intangible cultural heritage assets. It begins with an overview of the legal framework for how the City regulates its historic building stock through substantive legal mandates. It then describes how the Legacy Business Program developed as an incentive-based model.

San Francisco's experience with legacy businesses demonstrates that the aesthetics of the urban environment are only part of what should concern the historic preservation movement. In

recognizing the intangible cultural heritage embodied by commercial enterprises, the City has created a replicable policy that expands the scope of work of the preservationist in line with international trends which recognize heritage is located in more than our material environment.

2 THE TRADITIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTION OF HISTORIC RESOURCES IN SAN FRANCISCO

The City of San Francisco employs restrictive land use regulations including those that aim to protect its world-renowned stock of historic buildings. A 2017 factsheet on the City published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation revealed that 32.3% of its buildings were

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