Pier 70 Waterfront

Character of the Area:
The area commonly known as “Pier 70” includes Pier 70, Pier 68, and part of Seawall Lot 349. The area addressed by this Element, most of which has been declared surplus to maritime uses, is shaded on the map below. San Francisco Drydock utilizes a small part of this area, as well as a substantial portion of the remaining unshaded area which is reserved for long-term maritime use.

The most significant waterfront views in the Pier 70 area are of the on-going ship construction and repair industry. Cargo and cruise ships at dry-dock, ship repair cranes, and other machinery are major visual points of interest. Pier 70 is the United States’ oldest operating civilian shipyard. It contains important historic structures (constructed between 1886 and 1944) including warehouses, machine shops, office buildings, piers, and cranes associated with ship construction and repair. There are three primary building types: brick masonry, concrete, and metal. Metal buildings are the most common and brick masonry buildings are the oldest. Most of the buildings at Pier 70 do not meet current seismic standards and many would require substantial repairs to be useable.

Urban Design Features:
- Twentieth Street is the ‘main street’ of the area.
- The character of the area is defined by uses and structures of the historic Union Iron Works shipyard.
- A new walkway along Illinois Street will connect to Mission Bay to the north.

Pier 70 Waterfront Highlights Map
Waterfront Land Use Plan Objectives
The Waterfront Plan allows eighteen acres within the shaded area to be redeveloped for mixed-use development, provided that new uses are compatible with ongoing ship repair operations. The non-maritime activities are intended to facilitate revitalization of an area that survives as an example of San Francisco’s earliest maritime activity and, in particular, to encourage preservation of four Union Iron Works buildings.

Summary of Design and Access Objectives
The objectives promote creation of new public access to the Bay through a shoreline area west of Pier 68, provided such access does not interfere with ship repair or related maritime activities. Access will be in the area of 18th Street, bayward from Illinois Street, if feasible with new development. Also proposed is the extension of the waterfront walkway from Terry Francois Boulevard to 20th Street, to connect the center of the Pier 70 area with Seawall Lot 345 and Mission Bay open spaces to the north.

Twentieth Street will be established as the “main street” of the Pier 70 area and Michigan Street will be kept open in front of a row of historic warehouses. New development will include public access, open space and circulation routes with views of maritime activities and, where feasible, physical connections to the Bay.

To protect the historic character of the area, the design objectives call for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the three Union Iron Works buildings along the north side of 20th Street (Buildings #101, 102, and 104) and, if feasible with its on-going maritime use, Pier 70’s oldest building, the Union Iron Works Machine Shop (Building # 113-114) on the south side of 20th Street. Additional Pier 70 resources may be identified for preservation following further research and analysis of Pier 70’s periods of historical significance and the feasibility of reusing individual buildings. Designation of a National Register Historic District will be considered.

Ship repair in the Pier 70 area
Design Criteria

PIER 70

This area includes the portion of the greater Pier 70 area which abuts Illinois Street and is centered on 20th Street. There are several existing office and industrial buildings on the site, and other structures used for ship construction and repair. The Waterfront Land Use Plan allows a range of maritime and compatible non-maritime uses, but encourages non-maritime uses in historic buildings to finance costly rehabilitation.

Site

HISTORIC PRESERVATION -- Union Iron Works Buildings: Rehabilitate and adaptively reuse Union Iron Works Buildings 101, 102, and 104, maintaining the character-defining historic building elements to the extent feasible. Seek funding to preserve Building 113-114, if feasible with on-going maritime use.

HISTORIC -- Resources Study: Research and document Pier 70’s periods of historical significance to determine whether additional buildings and structures should be preserved in both the Mixed Use Opportunity Area and the Maritime Reserve Area designated in the Waterfront Plan. Consider designation of a National Register Historic District.

SITE COVERAGE -- City Street Grid: Where not in conflict with historic buildings or maritime activities, extend the City street pattern and acknowledge the terminus of street corridors with views of the Bay, historic buildings or architecture with a waterfront identity.

SITE COVERAGE -- Bay Connections: New development within the Pier 70 ‘connection area’ should include exterior circulation or pedestrian ways between building massings, and, if feasible, connect inland portions of the site to the Bay.

MASSING: Recognize the established neighborhood scale by limiting building mass to maximum 1/2 standard block size and building heights to those of existing buildings. Encourage multiple buildings per block.

Historic District Study Area

Michigan Street

124 Pier 70 Waterfront
**Site (continued)**

**OPEN SPACE:** Create public access to the water’s edge adjacent to Pier 68 with views of the Pier 70 shipyard and with access from Illinois Street, if feasible with new development, and if it does not interfere with ship repair or related maritime activities.

**OPEN SPACE -- Continuous Walkway:** Connect waterfront destinations and open spaces by establishing a walkway along Illinois Street from 20th Street to the Mission Bay open spaces to the north.

**Orientation**

**EDGE:** Place new structures at the sidewalk to form an edge to Illinois and 20th Street.

**ORIENTATION -- Facing Primary Streets:** The primary commercial uses and entrances for buildings located along 20th Street, Michigan Street, and Illinois Street should face those streets.

**Architectural Details**

**ARTICULATION:** New development should provide vertical changes in street facades at a maximum of 50 foot intervals by varying storefronts, setbacks, breaks in building massings, color or with architectural details such as columns, arches, structures or material changes.

**CHARACTER -- Maritime/Industrial:** Materials, style, detailing of buildings, street furniture, and other public improvements should acknowledge the historic and industrial character of the area.

**TRANSPARENCY:** Avoid blank ground floor walls by providing views into the ground floor of buildings wherever feasible.