

***Regular Meeting of the
Abatement Appeals Board***

July 15, 2026

***Agenda Item C1
Public Comment #1***

2960 POLK STREET ELEVATOR MODERNIZATION

This statement is provided by James Heron, a 45-year resident of 2960 Polk St. Mr Heron is a Licensed Architect and advocate for Building and Housing Code refinements as they relate to Elevators and Access. Mr Heron has a physical disability, the result of a childhood injury.



Among the notable assets of this prime Russian Hill apartment building is its elevator. Built in 1925 on a large corner lot, the building (12 - 2BR units) has always benefited from a working elevator, which has been generally reliable, with only occasional needs for maintenance and repairs.

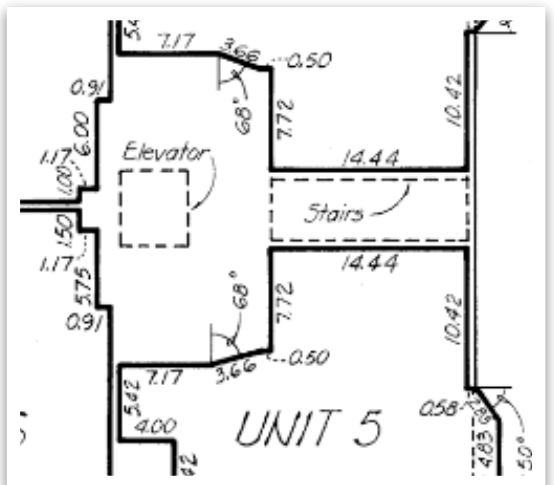
In 2020, the Owners voluntarily decided to make the far-sighted investment in a **modernization of the elevator**. KONE Elevator was hired to do the work. The project began on schedule, proceeding diligently.

The work was expected to take 4 months.

Existing Roof Top Elevator Equipment Room - 2960 Polk Street



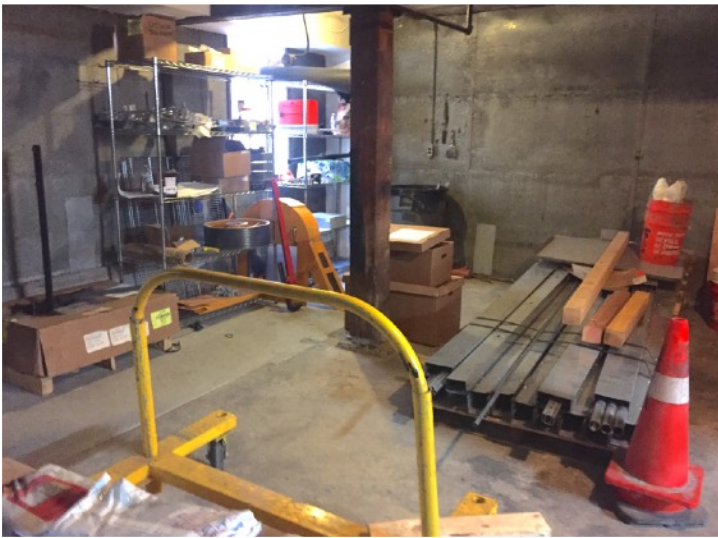
Existing 4-Story Common Stairwell - 2960 Polk Street



Detail from Condominium Map for 2960 Polk Street (Sheet 4 of 4), prepared by Martin M Ron Associates, Inc., Land Surveyors, January 1981, Recorded October 19, 1981.



New Motor on site, February 23, 2021



Temporary Field Machine Shop, Garage of 2960 Polk St, February 23, 2021



March 4, 2021

THE WORK: The elevator was operational at the time the work began. A temporary machine shop was set up in the garage, the existing motor was removed, a new motor and equipment were brought on site. But after a few months, the work stopped. Responding to Mr Heron's inquiries, KONE suggested that structural issues not anticipated in the original bid were encountered. KONE recommended that the Owners retain an independent licensed Structural Engineer for an evaluation. The work performed to that point was extensive - and not reversible. The Owners' only statement to residents was...

"...it would present an undue financial burden to return the elevator to working order."

ELEVATOR STATUS: The suggestion has been made that the elevator was "decommissioned." This conflicts with the original goal of the elevator modernization, initiated voluntarily. It was the Owner's failure to obtain a complete bid (including contingencies), the Contractor's estimate not including the full scope, and the costs being higher than quoted. The elevator was not "decommissioned"- it was simply abandoned.

PERMIT: Issuance of a Permit for removal of this existing elevator would be in violation of the SF Housing Code (approved unanimously by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor).

"Section 713 (b). In all R-1 and R-2 occupancies ...Buildings that have an existing elevator, regardless of the height of the building, shall maintain at least one operable elevator for residential occupants' use."