

HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

THE FOUNDATION FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

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SEPTEMBER 1988

Mayor's Office of Housing Adopts New Preservation Policy

Future conflicts between housing and preservation in San Francisco are more likely to be diffused early in the planning process under an important new procedure recently adopted by the Mayor's Office of Housing (MOH). The regulation was adopted as a result of negotiations between Heritage and MOH and calls for early consideration of potential preservation issues in the development of new housing projects.

Heritage has become increasingly concerned with the frequency of new housing projects supported by MOH which propose to demolish architecturally important structures. Recent examples include: Polytechnic High School, now demolished; the Colombo Building, subject of lengthy opposition by Heritage; and most recently, a proposal for the site of the auxiliary buildings of the former Harkness Hospital. (See Preservation Notes.) Of

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The "B" rated Colombo Building, left foreground, and the "A" rated old Transamerica Building on the right. Columbus Tower (also "A" rated) can be glimpsed in the background.

COLOMBO BUILDING DEMOLITION APPROVED

After four years of efforts to prevent the loss of the Colombo Building, Heritage reluctantly withdrew its appeal of the issuance of the demolition permit in July.

Together with the old Transamerica Building, the Colombo Building forms a traditional gateway at the foot of Columbus Avenue from the high-rise financial district to the low-rise, but intensely active, North Beach-China-town districts. Merrit and James Reid, considered in their day among the most

important architects in San Francisco, designed the building, built in 1913 and originally called the Ausonia, for Elise A. Drexler. Mrs. Drexler was the widow of Louis P. Drexler, entrepreneur and real estate developer with interests throughout California. The Reid Brothers left a legacy of significant structures that includes the Call Building at 74 New Montgomery, the Fairmont Hotel, the First Congregational Church at Post and Mason, the former Hale Brothers Department Store (901 Montgomery), and the Music

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HERITAGE

THE FOUNDATION
FOR SAN FRANCISCO'S
ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE

San Francisco Heritage is a non-profit member-supported organization dedicated to the conservation of important architectural and historical elements and diverse neighborhoods of the City through planning, education, advocacy and technical assistance.

Heritage is located at 2007 Franklin Street, San Francisco, 94109.
(415) 441-3000

The **HERITAGE NEWSLETTER** is published quarterly by The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage. Unsolicited articles and other copy are welcome and will be considered for publication.

New Landmarks Board Members Appointed

New members of the City's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board were sworn in by Mayor Agnos August 3rd. They are:

Anne Bloomfield	Alice Carey
Michael Crowe	Ina Dearman
David Hartley	Jean Kortum
Dorothy de Losada	Enid Lim
Bill Sugaya	

Mayor Agnos has characterized the nine Board members as bringing "...a depth and breadth of knowledge that includes architecture, history, urban planning and neighborhood concerns."

The Board is charged with identifying and recommending buildings for landmark status, groups of buildings as historic districts, and reviewing proposed alterations to designated buildings to ensure that architectural character is retained.

Heritage Adopts Long-Range Plan

New design versus historic structures? Property ownership by Heritage? These are just two of the questions which have been debated by the Heritage Board and staff during the last 15 months as Heritage sought to develop a long-range plan to guide the organization's activities for the next several years.

In addition to Board and staff discussion, input came from questionnaires sent to a sampling of Heritage members and from volunteers and experts. Members of the Board also conducted interviews with representatives from the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, SPUR, architects, architectural historians, and developers to get a perspective on Heritage's effectiveness.

The interviews confirmed that Heritage fills a real need in San Francisco. Consequently, the mission statement of the long-range plan affirms the organization's traditional mission:

"to develop and maintain a public appreciation and understanding of the cultural, aesthetic and economic value of San Francisco's architecturally and historically significant structures and districts; and to be an effective force in motivating public and private action to preserve and protect these resources."

The biggest challenge to Heritage is to continue to provide all the services and advocacy the community has come to expect from the organization. The goals of the long-range plan, adopted by the Board at the May meeting, establish an ambitious agenda. The organization is committed to be active concurrently in Advocacy, Education, Architectural Services, Property Conservation and Organizational Excellence.

The Board and staff acknowledge that preservation advocacy is the primary reason the organization exists. Therefore, the first goal of the plan is: *"Heritage is committed to identifying and raising public awareness on preservation issues in the city and is prepared to take an active role in supporting preservation in public forums."*

Education is a constructive way for Heritage to win the preservation war before any battles are fought because it promotes understanding of the value of preserving significant architecture.

Architectural Services is a very tangible part of Heritage's preservation programs. By providing technical assistance to projects which would not be undertaken by private architects, Heritage has a direct impact on preserving significant buildings. In addition, Heritage plans to increase technical assistance by offering more workshops.

Direct ownership is also a sure way to guarantee preservation. However, the Board concluded that the financial responsibility and the management attention required to operate additional properties would greatly limit the advocacy and education efforts Heritage could support at this time. For the next several years, therefore, Heritage will promote its façade easement program as an effective mechanism for supporting preservation of significant buildings without assuming ownership.

The plan does include a strong commitment to preservation and improvements to the Haas-Lilienthal house. Over the next year, Heritage will develop a comprehensive program to raise capital to fund improvements of the house to assure its viability as an important architectural resource for San Francisco.

The fifth goal of the plan deals with the organization itself. Heritage's objective is to be the leading preservation force in San Francisco. To accomplish this objective, Heritage needs a broad membership base, financial stability and a strong public presence. The staff, Board, members and volunteers all contribute to achieving this goal.

The goals and programs identified through the long-range plan will serve as the basis for annual planning, budgeting and staffing decisions. The process of long-range planning will be an ongoing effort to ensure that the resources of Heritage are directed in the most effective way possible to achieve the mission of preserving San Francisco's architectural heritage.

PRESERVATION NOTES

Shell Building

Plans for the expansion and refurbishment of the former headquarters of the Shell Oil Company of California are being discussed by its current owners, the JMB Realty Corp. of Chicago. Completed in 1930, the building at Bush and Battery was one of San Francisco's early modern highrises.

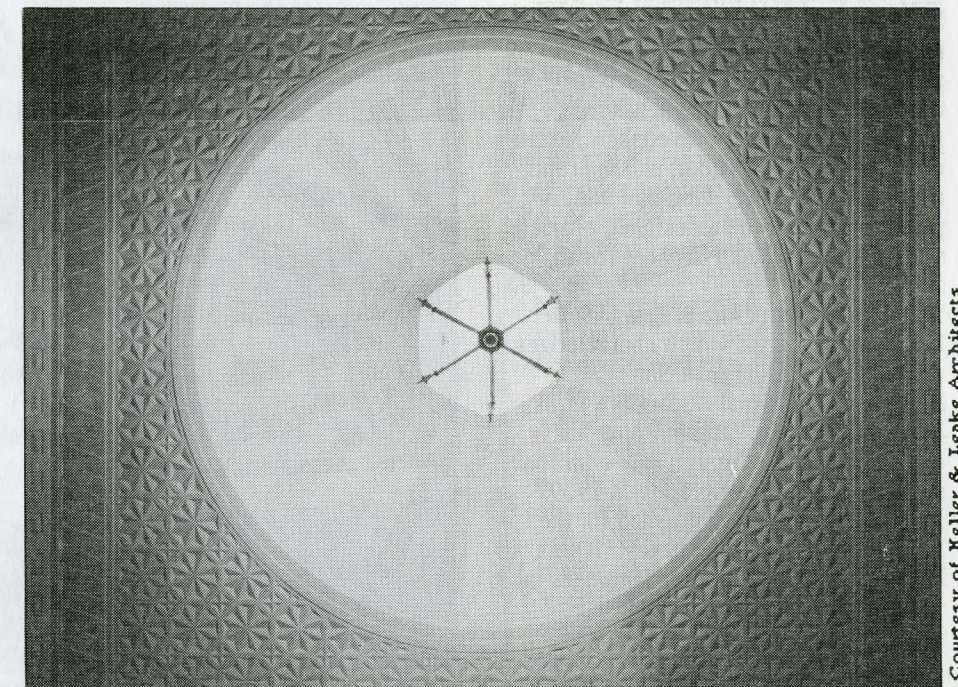
The current proposal would restore the exterior of the structure, redesign the lobby in keeping with its original Art Deco style, and construct a small addition on the Battery Street side. Exterior restoration work would include reinstallation of lost lighting and correction of inappropriate storefront modifications.

The proposal raises two important conservation issues which are the focus of Heritage's review. The first is whether the design of the façade of the addition should be the same as the original building, and if so, how closely identical should it appear to be. The second issue concerns alteration of the original lobby design to create a more dramatic volume of space. In order to do so, the richly designed and executed plaster ceiling would have to be lifted to a new, higher level. For Heritage, the issue is should the original design be altered to more closely match contemporary ideas and if so, should it be done if the original ceiling would be destroyed in the process?

1600 Block Hayes Street

Demolition of the auxiliary buildings of the Southern Pacific, later Harkness Hospital, was recently proposed to accommodate the construction of new rental housing for moderate income families. The project, to be developed privately for the Sisters of Mercy, has sought financial support from the Mayor's Office of Housing.

The main hospital building was converted to senior housing in the early 1980s and renamed Mercy Terrace. Three smaller buildings on the site were not made part of that project and have remained unused since Harkness



Ceiling of the lobby of the Shell Building.

Hospital closed in 1974. The reuse of the main building represents an example of housing needs and architectural conservation working together for a result of which the community is justly proud.

This complex of structures which together occupy the full block bounded by Fell, Hayes, Baker and Lyon Streets are significant not only for their individual designs, but also as a unified architectural group. Built between 1908 and 1911, institutional complexes such as this are increasingly rare, particularly when all structures have undergone so little damaging modification of their original design.

Early response to the proposal by the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and Heritage alerted the project sponsor to the architectural significance of the structures and to opposition to a demolition scheme. The Landmarks Board initiated designation of the structures as a local landmark.

As the City was considering a grant of federal funds to the project, Heritage

also advised that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act would apply and as a result, the sponsor has studied the feasibility of a new design scheme which retains and reuses the existing structures. Although not as many housing units can be created, the developer has indicated that a rehabilitation approach is possible and is under serious consideration. Heritage is continuing to follow this project closely and looks forward to assisting the proposal gain approvals necessary for its political and financial success.

Metropolitan Life Building/ Cogswell College Building

This prominent visual landmark at 600 Stockton will undergo adaptive rehabilitation for reuse as a prestigious hotel under plans being developed by Waverly Associates of Palo Alto.

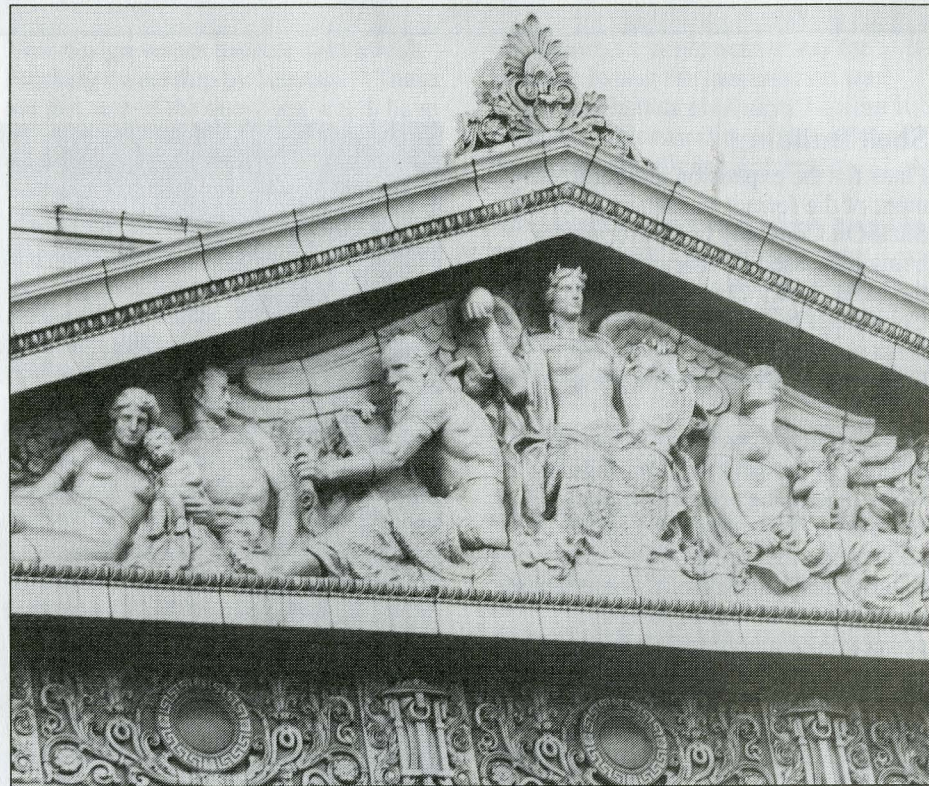
Restoration of deteriorated exterior terra cotta, replacement of the front stairs with a porte cochère sensitively designed to blend with the original

Please see PRESERVATION, page 4

building and construction of a second penthouse structure are the key features of the project involving the exterior of the structure. The interior of the building will undergo substantial changes. In recent meetings with the project sponsor, Heritage called for redesign of the proposed penthouse, modification of the porte cochère, reuse of the original front door, and appropriate window glazing. Heritage anticipates supporting the redesigned project when it seeks official City approval.

The dramatic structure is designed in Neo-Classical style which characterizes many of the buildings of San Francisco's financial institutions built following the fire. The building has expanded greatly through four additions since its original completion in 1909. An "A" rating was established for the building by Heritage's survey. It was designated an official City landmark in 1984.

"Preservation Notes" seeks to cover architectural conservation issues throughout the City. If there is a story which you believe should be mentioned, please contact the Newsletter Editor.



Detail of pediment on the Stockton Street side of Cogswell College, circa 1919.

POLICY, *continued from page 1*

still greater concern has been the procedure itself by which the earlier proposals were approved without adequate consideration of the architectural character of the existing buildings.

As a result of detailed negotiations between Heritage and MOH, a written procedure which will be followed by the Office has been adopted. (See related story on the Colombo Building appeal on page 1.)

For proposed projects seeking grants of federal funds from the City, a formal commitment has been made by MOH that the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act will be followed.

More Significantly, MOH has adopted an early review policy for projects using only local monies from the City. At the earliest stages of consideration of

proposed projects seeking financial support from the City's own housing monies, the Office will request advice from the City Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, and from San Francisco Heritage as to whether any structures proposed for demolition or exterior alteration are of architectural significance.

Identification of significant structures by either Heritage or the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board will trigger a "consultation" process between MOH, the project developer, the Landmarks Board and Heritage. Public comment will be solicited for 30 days. If the sponsor states that the high cost of rehabilitation prevents retention of the structures, professionally prepared cost estimates must be made public for review and comment. MOH

will work with the project sponsor, the Landmarks Board and Heritage to redesign the project to avoid the loss of significant structures. If agreement can be reached, specific conditions will accompany any public funding granted to the project.

Like Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the procedure does not guarantee the retention of all buildings. If the parties fail to agree, MOH can still proceed to grant funding to the project. In that event, conservation advocates would focus their efforts on the planning and political approval processes. The requirement for early consideration of historic preservation issues in housing project funding decisions will vastly strengthen opportunities to prevent future losses of buildings like the Colombo.

Civic Architecture: San Francisco's Public Schools

When San Franciscans are asked to name the finest examples of civic architecture in the City, they inevitably turn to Civic Center. Few think to look around their own neighborhood, where, more than likely, they would find a school building whose design and decorative elements add a degree of grace and civility to their lives.

But more than ten years of neglect and deferred maintenance have placed San Francisco's legacy of fine school architecture in jeopardy. Moreover, a twelve percent increase in school enrollment since 1980 has put additional strain on the aging infrastructure.

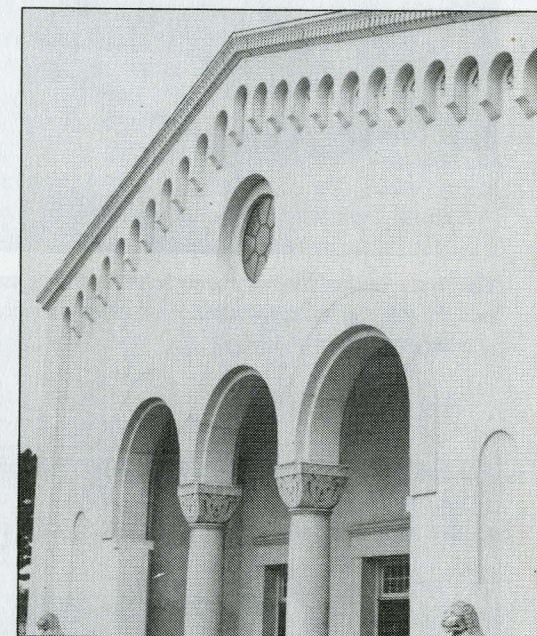
In June, the voters of San Francisco approved a \$90 million bond issue to pay for school rehabilitation. The money accounts for roughly one fifth of the San Francisco Unified School District's estimated deferred maintenance deficit of \$450 million. Nevertheless, it augurs some measure of return to an earlier era when schools were a source of civic pride.

The years following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire witnessed rapid construction to replace the 29 school buildings destroyed in that disaster. The Department of Architecture, newly organized in October 1907 under City Architect Newton Tharp, supervised design and construction.

About a dozen schools dating from that period of reconstruction are still in use and slated for work under the bond program. These include the Jean Parker School (840 Broadway) by Loring P. Rixford, City Architect following Tharp's death in 1909; Washington Irving, now the School for Business and Commerce (350 Broadway), an early work of John Reid, Jr.; and the Commodore Stockton School (949 Washington) by San Francisco Architect Albert Pissis, whose other designs in the city

include the Flood Building, the Emporium, the Mechanics' Institute and the Hibernia Bank.

The "Golden Age" of San Francisco school construction, however, was the 1920s. In that ten-year period, 49 new school buildings went up, and the Board of Education approved plans for



Stylized Romanesque lions guard the entrance to Presidio Middle School. Blind arcade, rounded arches, and carved capitals carry out the theme.

a fiftieth in 1930. That year, the Superintendent's Report noted that 53 percent of the existing plant had been built since 1920 and boasted that, "The new buildings. . . are considered among the best in the United States."

This remarkable expansion reflected a 45 percent increase in school enrollment between 1920 and 1930 and the shift of population to the outer districts. The southern and western reaches of the City grew with the exodus of families from the sections burned out in 1906 and with the increase in population from 416,912 in 1910 to 634,394 in 1930. Extension of streetcar service from downtown, particularly the Geary

Street line in 1912/13 to the outer Richmond and the lines through the Twin Peaks Tunnel beginning in 1918 to West Portal, the Parkside, Ingelside and Ocean View, made these districts ever more attractive to families.

The building program of the 1920s grew out of academic changes, as well as demographic ones. According to the 1908 *Municipal Reports*, San Francisco was already experimenting with instruction in "domestic science" for girls and "manual training" for boys in the seventh and eighth grades. The conviction grew among educators that schools should recognize children's differences—their varied abilities, interests, aptitudes and vocational preferences—and begin to accommodate them earlier than the first year of high school. As a consequence, a gradual transition took place from the "8-4" to the "6-3-3" school plan.

The creation of junior high schools began in 1913 with the reclassification of three grammar schools—Crocker, Hamilton, and Horace Mann—as "intermediate schools." In 1922, the Board of Education officially designated them as junior high schools. Conversion of grammar school facilities could not satisfactorily accommodate the junior high curriculum, and by the end of the decade, Horace Mann received a new plant, Presidio and Roosevelt replaced the inadequate facilities of Hamilton and Crocker, and San Francisco constructed or approved plans for four more junior highs: Everett, Portola, Francisco, and Aptos.

Other educational changes affected school construction during this decade. Traditionally, specialized high schools—Polytechnic, Commercial, Girls, Lowell (academic)—enrolled students city-wide. During the 1920s, the city began to changeover to a system of district high schools (except Lowell), each offering a comprehensive curriculum, both academic and voca-

Please see SCHOOLS, page 6

tional. The Board of Education established new high schools in the northeast and in the outer Mission—Galileo and Balboa—and provided new or expanded facilities for Mission, Commercial, and Polytechnic High Schools.

Increased concern for physical education in the years following World War I influenced school design, as well. Educational leaders in San Francisco recommended expanded school sites to accommodate larger recreational areas, yards, and playing fields. A committee reviewing the proposed expenditure of school construction funds in 1924 admitted this would be difficult in a city where land was so costly. Yet the generous campuses of many of the schools built since then attest to the City's commitment. A pictorial feature in the *Sunday Chronicle* of October 21, 1928 showed the courtyard at Everett Junior High, "in which the Board of Education takes especial pride" and was captioned, "where pupils get fresh air, recreation, and sunshine."



The south flank of Everett shows John Reid Jr.'s use of Spanish elements: red tile, a loggia, and the low-rise mission-inspired structure connecting the larger blocks housing the main entrance and the gym wing.

If the 1920s were the Golden Age of school construction in San Francisco, then John Reid, Jr. was its King Midas. He designed nearly half the schools built in the City during that decade. This San Francisco-born architect was encouraged by John Galen Howard while a student at Berkeley to attend the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris. He received his diploma from the *Ecole* in 1909 and began his practice in San Francisco. From 1919 to 1927 he served as City Architect.

Reid's school designs were influenced the most by Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. The most noteworthy example is Mission High School, with its red tile roof and Spanish Baroque tower capped in glazed tile. Ornate Baroque detailing also adorns the portal and upper story of the facade on 18th Street at Dolores.

At Everett Middle School (Church & 17th St.), Reid incorporated the Moorish element of Spanish tradition. Massive columns define the portico of the main entrance, and a wall of glazed tile in colorful geometric patterns and floral designs appears from the street like

Persian carpets hanging in a row. Polychrome rafters complete the design of this alluring and inviting entrance.

Just as his designs for Everett and Mission offered gestures in recognition of their neighborhood's historic context (both sites are within two blocks of Mission Dolores), Reid attached Chinese elements to the basic Spanish Revival building for the then exclusively Chinese Commodore Stockton School Annex (950 Washington). Reid sometimes drew on his Beaux Arts background, as in his design of Pacific Heights School (now Newcomer High, Jackson & Webster).

Reid served as City Architect for eight years. Although the position was not salaried, he received 6 percent of construction costs for each city building he designed. But as Mayor Rolph's brother-in-law, Reid was an easy target for the mayor's political opponents, and he was embroiled in controversy during much of his tenure. In 1927 he resigned.

Although John Reid, Jr. dominated the scene in the twenties, others were

associated with school design in this era, and their names read like an honor roll of San Francisco architects: Bakewell and Brown (Sanchez School), Weeks and Day (Hawthorne, altered in 1973), and the Reid Brothers (Winfield Scott). John Reid's erstwhile mentor, John Galen Howard designed the Beaux Arts Leonard R. Flynn (formerly Le Conte) School, and George Applegarth, architect of the Legion of Honor and the Spreckels Mansion invoked the Beaux Arts spirit at the Edison School. Crim & Resing executed fine Romanesque Revival detailing at Presidio Middle School.

But of all the schools designed in the twenties, Roosevelt Middle School (Arguello & Geary), by Miller & Pflueger, was the most innovative and remains the City's most distinctive school building. "Designed by San Francisco's master of Art Deco," historian Gray Brechin has written, "it's a swank composition of patterned bronze, brick, and terra cotta recalling the work of Dutch and German expressionists."

San Francisco became nationally known for the quality of its school buildings. They were a source of pride to the city and the neighborhoods they graced. In 1923, St. Louis architect William B. Ittner, a national authority on school architecture, praised the City and said, "The creation of an environment, healthful and beautiful, has been the architectural keynote and the school buildings are a sincere expression of the joy, health and beauty that should belong to our school children."

As the era of the Great Depression approached, however, already there was doubt as to how long the city would stand by its commitment to school architecture. Ten days before the stock market crash in 1929, noting that it cost more to build a school in San Francisco than in Oakland, Board of Education

endorse a continued policy of "providing school buildings of enduring quality and design." But in the end, the question was whether Depression economics could sustain such a policy.

In fact, in the 1930s, San Francisco did continue to provide school buildings of some architectural distinction, including George Washington High School, and Marina Junior High. Marina was built under a 1933 Public Works Administration bond issue, as were Glen Park, Lawton, and Visitation Valley. PWA grants in 1938 financed construction of the Horace Mann gymnasium and cafeteria, the gymnasium at Washington, and the Marina and Portola auditoriums. Classic examples of '30s styling include the Moderne James Lick Middle School by Crim & Resing and a Deco gem, Francis Scott Key, hidden away in the outer Sunset.



William Mooser, Jr., a third generation San Francisco architect, designed Francis Scott Key on 43rd Avenue and Kirkham. The sea-green tilework of the entrance complements the ambience of the Outer Sunset.

President Daniel C. Murphy observed, "There is no question this city leads the Nation in the fine type of its schools. The problem is, shall we continue to incorporate these features of beauty in the buildings or construct only for serviceability like other cities are doing?" This prompted the Northern California chapter of the AIA to

Continuing the involvement of some of the City's finest architects, Marina (Fillmore & Chestnut), in 1930s Moderne with spare, stylized ornamentation and sharply honed clean clear lines, was the work of George Kelham and William P. Day. Kelham's work, a decisive presence in San Francisco, includes the Main Library, the Federal

Reserve Bank, and the Shell, Standard Oil, and Russ Buildings. At the time of his death, Kelham was the chief architect of the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island.

The committee looking into planned construction in 1924 had prophesied that "the buildings that are erected at this time will in all probability be serving the City of San Francisco in the year 2000. . . ." In 1988, the majority of the fifty schools which were erected in the twenties were still in use, many upgraded during the 1970s to meet State-mandated seismic safety standards.

In some cases, as at Alvarado Elementary School, seismic alteration involved removal of all ornamental detail—and Alvarado was rich in ornamental detail. In other instances, notably at Mission High, great care was taken to preserve and secure the decorative elements. Miller and Pflueger's Alamo School was stripped to the frame and reconstructed. Several other school buildings were wholly or partially demolished and replaced because they were found to be beyond seismic upgrading.

At Commodore Sloat Elementary, sensitive new construction designed by Marquis & Associates respects the original auditorium by John Reid, Jr., which was retained and with which the new building has been integrated. Consequently, the school continues to be a graceful presence overlooking the important intersection of Ocean and Junipero Serra.

The pre-World War I Garfield Elementary School was entirely demolished for seismic safety reasons and replaced in 1980 with a new school by the firm of Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis. Sited on the west slope of Telegraph Hill just below Coit Tower, the school fits snugly on the site. Stepping down the hillside, sensitive to the scale of the neighborhood, Garfield's design makes clear references to historic San Francisco school design—a couple of bays, small-paned windows, and the rusticated entry arch.

Please see SCHOOLS, page 8

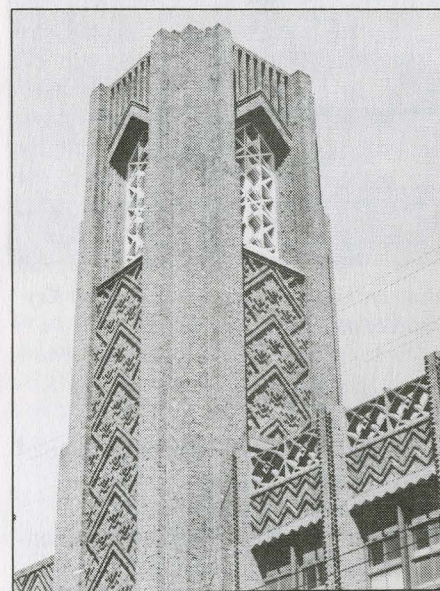


Medieval-inspired terra cotta detail adds a bit of whimsy to the main entrance of Reid-designed Commerce High (now San Francisco Unified School District's Administration building) at 135 Van Ness Avenue.

At this point, the question whether any of the older San Francisco schools will make it to the year 2000 depends on successful completion of restoration work that will begin with the \$90 million in bond funds. A "Blue Ribbon" panel, the Citizens Advisory Committee for Proposition A, has been appointed to monitor expenditure of the funds and to advise on additional building maintenance. At the request of the AIA, the Committee includes a practicing architect to ensure that work undertaken will be consistent with principles of architectural conservation.

Before the end of the century, changing demographics and changing educational needs can be expected to raise an even more critical preservation issue: what to do with redundant school buildings? In adaptive reuse of surplus school property, San Francisco has not yet followed the examples of cities like Boston and Seattle. That certain buildings prove of no further use as schools does not mean they have no further value at all to the community. Greater awareness of the quality of older school architecture in the city might yield a consensus in favor of creative reuse.

Schools reflect a community's attitude towards its educational system. The overwhelming majority given the school bonds in June signals a growing commitment to the quality of the system. The primary beneficiaries of refurbishing the school buildings will be the students. Ultimately, all San Franciscans can renew their pride in the legacy of fine school architecture in this city as symbolic of the quality of the educational system itself.



The bold patterned brick tower of Roosevelt Middle School makes a landmark statement in the Inner Richmond

Heritage welcomes the following new members:

Darius Aidala	Denise Auerbach
John Baessler	Gretchen Bender
Norma Bianucci	Joan Buckley
Patrick Cannon	Denise Cano
Richard Catalano	Anne Clarke
Bill Colvin	Christy Dillon
Kate Diskin	Events Etc.
Theresa Felmerly	Leo Fernandez
Olivia Fisher	M/M Herman Fish
Ashton Fleetham	Candace Foote
M/M Roy Goodwin	Dorene Gould
Erika Harkins	Helin Organization
Lola Hellman	Lauren Hettick
Howard Hetzler	Claude Imbault
Lorraine Imbody	Tricia Kain
Trish Kirchhoff	Kathryn Langstaff
Lee Lawrence	Louise Lee
Oza Lee	Stephanie Lee
Susan Levine	Antoinette Lewis
Rebecca Long	Peggy Lovegreen
Carter Lowrie	Daniel Mairani
Stephen & Thalia Lubin	Annette McCormick
Jo Ann Mandinach	Elizabeth McGovern
Constance McGeorge	Allison Miller
M/M Paul Meyer	Rita Moran
Richard Moran	Patricia O'Rourke
Peter Necarsulmer	Richard Pike
Carolyn Perkins	M/M Henry Prien
Barbara Pivnicka	Barry Robin
James Roberts	M/M Ted Savetnick
John Sampson	Margaret Schlitzer
James Schlesinger	M/M Kevin Shannon
M/M Andy Segal	Mrs. K.W. Sieving
Meg Siems	Marcia Tanner
Nancy Soltau	Jane Totten
Arles Tooker	Pietre van Houten
Touche Ross	Carol Weisner
Fred Wagner	Robert Yeargin
Juliet Wong	M/M Lee Zeigler
Paul Zager	
Marty Zwick	

A "welcome" reception will be held at the Haas-Lilienthal House on Monday, August 29th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, where new members will have a chance to meet Heritage Board and staff. Watch for your invitation in the mail.

New Landmarks Ordinance Nears Completion

Work is nearly complete on the draft of a new landmarks ordinance for San Francisco.

Since early 1987, representatives of the Landmarks Board, the Planning Department and key preservation organizations have held regular working sessions to reach agreement on long overdue changes to the city's twenty-year old landmarks law. The 1967 ordinance created the Landmarks Board as an advisory body, appointed by the Mayor, to recommend important individual buildings and historic districts for designation by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Under the ordinance, buildings designated can be protected from demolition for up to one year. Since 1967, approximately 190 structures

have been individually designated and seven historic districts have been adopted.

However, its advisory status and lack of sufficient staff have kept the Board from realizing its full potential. The absence of stronger protections has left designated buildings vulnerable. Major changes are now being proposed which will increase opportunities for the designation of valuable architectural features of the city and strengthen protections for them once identified.

Key provisions of the new, proposed ordinance would:

- codify strong conservation standards to be used in approving changes to protected buildings

- allow approval of requests for demolitions of protected buildings only if the structure retains no market value
- specify that necessary staff support is to be provided to the Landmarks Board
- codify authority of the Landmarks Board to review development applications for conformity with Proposition M as it affects significant structures
- allow the Landmarks Board to protect important interior spaces
- identify specific areas of knowledge or expertise sought in Landmarks Board members
- eliminate the requirement for Planning Commission approval of the Landmarks Board's recommendations
- reduce opportunities for condemnation of designated buildings without consultation with the Landmarks Board
- suspend development permits which would damage buildings proposed for protections while the designation is under consideration

Changes to the existing landmarks ordinance must be adopted by the Board of Supervisors which is expected to consider them before the end of the year. To enact these provisions will require a strong demonstration of support. If you can help, please return the coupon below to HERITAGE, 2007 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.



1919 Sacramento Street

OFFERED FOR SALE - PACIFIC HEIGHTS HOME

This grand and elegant Colonial Revival home built in 1895 by the Reid Brothers is amidst an exceptional cluster of five stately, detached Victorians. Restored with careful attention to fine details, it includes five bedrooms (with private master suite), three and one-half baths, family room, sitting rooms, five fireplaces, five car parking and lovely walkout south garden.

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YES I want to help enact a new, stronger Landmarks Ordinance. I can:

- ☐ make a phone call;
- ☐ write a letter;
- ☐ attend a hearing
- ☐ Please call me to discuss other ways in which I could help.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Pavilion in Golden Gate Park. Reid Brothers also did the Garfield Building at 938-42 Market for Mrs. Drexler.

Since 1984, Heritage actively opposed plans by the Four Seas Corporation to demolish the B-rated structure as part of its plan to develop Pan Magna Plaza—an office, housing and retail complex bounded by Washington, Columbus and Kearny Streets. In 1984 and 1985 Heritage opposed the project's special exemption from the Downtown Plan and in 1986 objected to the inadequate Environmental Impact Report. Heritage continued to oppose demolition of the Colombo after it was approved by the Planning Commission in July of last year. Shortly afterward, Heritage successfully prevented a proposed violation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act which requires efforts to preserve important buildings if federal funds are involved. After plans to use federal monies were shelved earlier this year, Heritage unsuccessfully sought to require conformance of the proposal with key provisions of the Downtown Plan.

On May 11th the City Attorney rendered an opinion negating Heritage's arguments that the project violated provisions of the Downtown Plan Ordinance. This ruling cleared the way for issuance of the demolition permit. The City moved quickly to grant the permit on May 19th, leaving the filing of an objection with the Board of Permit Appeals as the final option to force redesign of the project.

Heritage filed an appeal on June 3rd to trigger another public review and vote on the proposal, and to preserve the right to file a lawsuit if the appeal was denied. Faced with certain defeat of our appeal and after lengthy deliberations, the Board of Directors believed that the greater long term benefit for San Francisco would be achieved if the growing conflict between historic preservation and low-income housing construction could be permanently defused. As discussed in a special July letter to Heritage members, the appeal was withdrawn after the Mayor's Office agreed to a new policy to address preservation issues at the earliest stages of consideration of future housing projects.

Executive Director's Comment

Colombo Building Revisited

As members and friends of Heritage you may have shared my surprise at the controversy over our most recent action on the Colombo Building.

The critical, if inaccurate, commentary on our actions, and charges by a few well-meaning but uninformed individuals has been a sobering experience.

In the 1970s Heritage repeatedly failed to prevent the loss of major downtown landmarks when our efforts began too late and after the proposed replacement for those landmark buildings had already been planned. Partly as a result, Heritage re-examined its strategy and came to the conclusion that if architectural conservation was to be successful, it had to be built into the decision-making process at a much earlier stage. Heritage then redirected its efforts into a downtown survey which would enable us to identify significant buildings in advance. The survey findings themselves became the basis of a community educational process to gain widespread agreement on the importance of saving specific buildings.

Since that time our experiences have continued to confirm the belief that the most far reaching impacts are to be achieved through the adoption of policies and plans which ensure that considerations for architectural and historical significance are integral to planning and development decisions. In recent years we have therefore concentrated our efforts on such projects as major improvements to the City's Landmark's Ordinance, the adoption of a Preservation Ordinance of the General Plan, an historic district in Chinatown, the implementation of procedures which take advantage of Proposition M's language regarding significant buildings and plans for new survey work in the neighborhoods.

At the same time we have not neglected individual buildings proposed for demolition, which are not protected by

any existing policy, plan or procedure. As you know, Heritage reviews every building proposed for demolition in San Francisco. But by the point that application is made for demolition, the new project has already been planned, the project sponsor is inflexible, and the predisposition of local government is to grant the request. Heritage fights an uphill battle, and one in which the involvement of neighborhood organizations and individuals are essential.

Despite the lack of support from any other organized community interest, Heritage continued to oppose the demolition of the Colombo Building. However, in the process, we had to give very serious consideration whether to continue to prevent the construction of 150 units of low-income housing supported by every other community organization on record on the issue and which Mayor Agnos indicated was his highest priority housing project. His office further made clear that those units could not be built without demolition of the Colombo. In addition, we were forced to acknowledge the political reality that the matter would be decided by a Board of Permit Appeals appointed by Mayor Agnos in June.

Given the organization's commitment to planning for ways to avoid continual crises over buildings where demolition is imminent, Heritage sought a fundamental change in City procedure which would address the cause of the Colombo crisis rather than merely its effect. This procedure is described elsewhere in this issue.

It is important to be aware of the background in order to assess the validity of Heritage's actions in the Colombo case. As in any matter of interest to our members and friends, I welcome your comments and suggestions, critical as well as supportive. Thanks to those who have already shared with me your thoughts.

Mark Ryser

SPOTLIGHT ON REHAB

Alhambra Theater Restoration

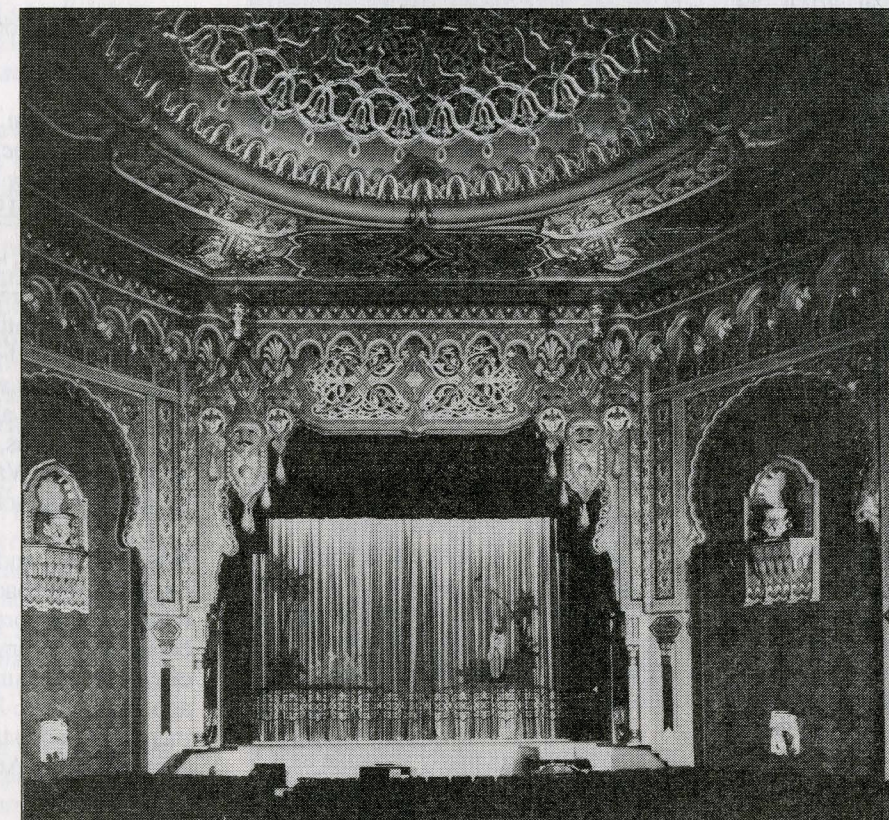
For years, twin minarets, subtly illuminated, beckoned residents of Cow Hollow, Polk Gulch, and Russian Hill to a temple of Moorish delights at Polk near Union. The movie-goer at the Alhambra Theater entered an exotic environment of colorful tile, horseshoe arches, arabesques, and geometric designs, transported to a fantasy world even before the screen flickered to life with the images of Hollywood idols set in fantastic realms. The Alhambra was aptly named for the citadel-palace of Granada, an expression of the last flowering of Spanish Islam, completed in the 14th century. Early this year, the theater closed for renovations, and now has reopened with its interior restored to its 1920s splendor.

The Alhambra was built in 1926 for Nasser Brothers Theaters. The architect, Timothy Pflueger, had designed their first movie house, The Castro, in 1922. When the *Chronicle* of November 6, 1926 reported the opening of the Alhambra, it said it was the first theater on the Pacific Coast designed throughout in the Moorish style. Twenty distinct colors were used in carrying out the decorations outlined by artist Arthur F. Mathews, known for murals in the State Capitol and in the Mechanics' Institute.

One of the theater's most striking features resulted from the solution of a

design problem. The narrowness of the lot made it impossible to place the organ next to the proscenium, as customary. Instead, Pflueger set the organ above the ceiling and designed a pierced dome, looking like an elaborately crocheted lace cap, to allow the

CinemaScope screen, installed in the mid-50's, covered but did not damage the elaborate proscenium. Even when owners divided the theater in two, the ornamentation remained remarkably intact. A wall of gray cinder blocks cut the auditorium in half and a false ceiling concealed the dome.



The Alhambra Theater interior has been returned to its original Arabesque design shown here in 1926.

sound to enter the auditorium. The organ, a small Wurlitzer, was removed in the late '40s.

Little alteration of the Alhambra's interior occurred over the years. When the sound era came in, the main floor was closed off from the lobby. A

Blumenfeld and Pacific, which has operated the Alhambra under lease from the Nasser family since 1974, closed the theater for several months this year in order to return it to single-screen operation. Dusty Dillon of Whatever Works undertook plaster patching of the interior, and Rainbow Painting & Decorating cleaned and restored the paint. Electrical work entailed replacing two thousand burned out bulbs and restoring neon fixtures. A computerized system will do the work it once took five men to perform in recreating

the multi-colored lighting effects of the original Moorish ambience. Installation of a new organ is under discussion.

The Alhambra is the first theater in the Bay Area, once divided, to be restored to a single auditorium. Just when it seemed the multiplexed shoebox-size movie house and the home VCR had won the day, the restoration of this theater's exotic interior proves that seeing a movie can still be a total experience, part of which is the theater itself.

Courtesy of Steve Levin

BOOKNOTES

Barclay G. Jones (ed.) *Protecting Historic Architecture and Museum Collections from Natural Disasters*. Butterworth Publishers, 1986.

Efforts to preserve historic buildings and other cultural artifacts have tended to focus on staving off general deterioration, or on stopping destruction or demolition due to careless disregard. However, little attention has been paid to the threat of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and tornadoes.

To help address this concern, a conference was held at the National Academy of Science in Washington, D.C. on March 29 and 30, 1982. The recently published book, *Protecting Historic Architecture and Museum Collections from Natural Disasters*, is a compilation of the papers delivered at this conference. The authors include engineers, architects, museum curators, governmental officials, and others involved in historic preservation.

The purpose of publishing this 560-page book, as described in the preface, was to provide a "handbook. . . which would serve as a useful guide for professionals engaged in the preservation of our cultural heritage, whether artifacts or structures." Although many of the essays are of a technical nature, some of the material is basic enough that it might also be of interest to the general reader.

The book is divided into the following sections:

Destruction of the Cultural Heritage by Earthquakes and Other Natural Disasters.

Policy Issues. Along with the introductory essay, there is a paper on the principal elements of a good disaster-preparedness policy.

Assessment of Hazards and Vulnerability.

Preventive Measures to Mitigate Losses. Five essays cover a wide variety of topics, including how to reduce earthquake damage to museum collections and general disaster-preparedness planning for museums.

Emergency and Rescue Measures for Structures and Artifacts. In this section, case histories of specific disasters are analyzed for lessons that apply to disaster preparedness.

Public and Private Response Measures. Four articles cover the relief efforts and services of various organizations.

Basically, this book provides an excellent starting point either for the professional, or the general reader, who is interested in learning more about protecting historic structures and museum collections from natural disasters.

The book is particularly valuable as a reference. Each essay is accompanied by a bibliography provided by the author, and there is a general bibliogra-

phy at the end of each major section. There are two useful appendices, as well. One provides a county-by-county rating of the degree of threat posed by various natural hazards; the other is a general bibliography on natural disasters that includes listings that relate to historic preservation. The only limitation is that the references do not go beyond the 1982 date of the original conference.

Sharon Symington

Mark A. Wilson. *A Living Legacy: Historic Architecture of the East Bay*. Photography by Monica Less. Lexicon Press, 1987.

A Living Legacy, by Mark Wilson, is an updated and corrected remake of *East Bay Heritage*, out of print since 1982. Thirty-seven self-guided tours, each accompanied by a clear, well-marked map, survey the architecture of East Bay cities, towns, districts and neighborhoods from Vallejo in the north to Fremont in the south.

While not of handbook size, *A Living Legacy's* paperback format makes it a relatively comfortable walking-tour companion. Admirers of San Francisco's architecture will find much to appreciate in the East Bay and will gain increased understanding from the larger context of Bay Area traditions which this book offers.

Donald Andreini

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BOOKNOTES

Sally Woodbridge (ed.) *Bay Area Houses*, New Edition. Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake City: 1988.

In a 1947 *New Yorker* article, Lewis Mumford first brought to national attention the idea of a Bay Area Tradition in architecture. That, in turn, prompted a symposium at the Museum of Modern Art in 1948 and a feature in *Architectural Record* the following year that asked the question: "Is There a Bay Region Style?" The discussion has continued ever since and is the central theme of *Bay Area Houses*.

An introduction and seven essays describe the Bay Area Tradition, identify its chief practitioners, and give a detailed chronological account of its evolution through the present. Each essay indicates the characteristics that defined the tradition at each stage of its development and describes several typical houses in detail. Excellent photographs and architectural drawings illuminate the text substantially.

A "warm and winsome woodsy architecture" appeared in the Bay Area before the turn of the century with the shingle style of Coxhead and Polk and the local variation of the Craftsman bungalow by Maybeck and Morgan. The evolution of this Bay Area Tradition has produced less a cohesive and consistent style than a "theme and variations", interacting with, adapting or playing off against prevailing national and international styles.

One essay is devoted to the work of a single architect, William Wilson Wurster. This pivotal figure helped lead the Bay Area Tradition into the era of modern house design and elevate it to a position of influence in American architecture.

A native of Stockton, Wurster seems the quintessential practitioner of the tradition. He was sensitive to the region's history and culture and the diversity of its landscape and climate. He placed these uppermost in conceiving the design of each house, to make it the natural expression of its site and to



Maybeck designed this 1909 house for San Francisco department store owner Leon L. Roos.

embrace the outdoors as an integral part of the home's living space. "Architecture is not a goal," Wurster wrote. "Architecture is for life and pleasure and work and for people. The picture frame and not the picture."

When *Bay Area Houses* first appeared in 1976, the concluding essay, "The End of Arcadia", foresaw an uncertain future for the Bay Area Tradition in house design. Escalating costs of land and construction greatly reduced the volume of architect-designed, individually built homes. In the decade following, conditions seemed no more promising, with double-digit interest rates and the shortage of suitable sites, in part because of "no-growth" measures in Bay Area communities. Yet this new edition of *Bay Area Houses*

concludes with the essay "Arcadia Revisited", by Sally Woodbridge and argues that the tradition is "alive and well", if changing. Ingenious architects have responded to the challenge of finding a building site by designing for sites previously considered unbuildable or by replacing existing structures, often forced to compress houses into older, denser contexts. This final essay surveys fifteen recent examples of the Bay Area Tradition.

In sum, *Bay Area Houses* is an attractively produced book that offers an intelligent survey of the work of more than 60 architects spanning nearly a century of house design in this region.

Donald Andreini

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HERITAGE NEWS IN BRIEF

ArchiTreasures Update

The final figures from Heritage's first auction of architectural artifacts are in. With over 400 people in attendance and over 400 pieces sold, Heritage netted approximately \$25,000, a figure substantially over the amount budgeted for a "first time" event. Heritage also received extensive press coverage for its efforts to find new owners and new uses for the many architectural artifacts collected from warehouses, basements and garages around the Bay Area.

Heritage is enormously grateful to the volunteers and donors who made this event possible. Although it may sound like a cliché, it is still true that this could not have been possible without the teams of volunteers, especially those who helped move huge and heavy items from our warehouse to Rincon Center. The calloused hands and stiff backs attest to the hard work volunteered by many. The volunteers attending that evening made a significant difference in Heritage's ability to keep up with the fast-paced auction and sale activities. And of course, it would not have been

possible without the support of the many donors of items to the auction and sale. Heritage had something for everyone, at any price and our thanks go to the many donors listed below.

One final news item is that Heritage was unable to sell the highlight of the auction, the City of Paris Windows. That auction sale did not meet the owner's stipulations, however, we are still hopeful a developer, architect or designer will be found to reuse these magnificent windows from one of the City's lost architectural treasures. Indeed, Heritage hopes that the attention given to this event and its artifacts serves as a reminder of the city's loss of its architectural legacy over the last 25 years and provides further evidence as to the importance of preservation activities.

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Board member Richard Reinhardt engaged in spirited bidding during the ArchiTreasures live auction.

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Streetscape of Linden Alley with Fox Plaza towering over the roofline.

Rediscovering Hayes Valley

The Hayes Valley frequently eludes mapmakers and native San Franciscans. Named and legally defined by an 1860 land ordinance which was supposed to settle land claims in the western outskirts of the city, the Hayes Valley today contains an interesting enclave of shops, galleries, restaurants and residential architecture in the backyard of the Civic Center.

Thomas Hayes was a maverick politician who arrived in San Francisco in 1849. He held a variety of municipal positions throughout the 1850s. Then in 1857, he left government to establish the Market Street Railroad Company. The railroad, like many urban streetcar lines of the day, served as a mechanism for real estate development and speculation. A line extended up Hayes Street from Market, and the railroad itself began actual operations in 1860 shortly after Hayes' claim to the area which now bears his name was confirmed.

Hayes' land tract consisted of a square plot oriented at a 45 degree angle to the established grid of streets. The tract included 160 acres. Though development languished throughout the 1860s, Hayes built himself a home there along with the Hayes Park Pavilion. The open-air concert pavilion was supposed to encourage sales and development.

Ironically, development of the Hayes Valley did not begin in earnest until

after an 1872 fire destroyed Hayes' home and the pavilion. In the later 1870s and 80s, as the city grew westward, many educational and religious institutions moved to the valley. Among them was St. Ignatius College (later USF) which occupied a large portion of the block bounded by Grove and Van Ness.

Homebuilders followed the institutional development of the Hayes Valley and left a rich legacy of wooden Victorian residences. These early builders were largely Irish. Their lives centered around the churches and schools of St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart (at Fillmore and Oak). During the 1920s the Irish began to move farther west in the City. The neighborhood witnessed an influx of Jewish settlers and institutions. The Emanu-el Sisterhood Boarding Home for Jewish Working Girls (now the Zen Center at 300 Page Street) was designed by Julia Morgan in 1923. A Young Men's Hebrew Association at 121 Haight was organized in 1917.

Following the Great Depression, the Valley increasingly became home to Blacks and Latins. The redevelopment of the 1950s/60s saw public housing and freeways carve away blocks of the Victorian housing stock. These effects are readily evident in today's architectural mix.

WALKS IN THE CITY

If you were unable to participate in last year's Summer Walks, here's your chance to tour the Richmond with Heritage! This year our walks program will include a walking tour of Hayes Valley, featuring the interior of the Julia Morgan-designed Zen Center. Our series concludes with a special neon sign-making demonstration by Josie Crawford, and a lecture by Michael Crowe about various neon-ornamented buildings South of Market. Call Heritage at 441-3000 to make reservations now!

THE RICHMOND, \$10 (\$15 non-mbrs)

Lecture: August 25, 7:00 pm

Walk: August 27, 1:00 pm

HAYES VALLEY, \$10 (\$15 non-mbrs)

September 10, 1:00 pm

NEON LECTURE & DEMO

\$10 (\$15 non-mbrs)

October 22, 10:30 am

Gray Brechin Lectures Fall 1988

As part of Heritage's Fall Lecture Program, Gray Brechin has added a new lecture to his series on "Building the City." Titled "Suburban Utopias: The City Grows Out," this lecture explores the movement of San Franciscans to the Peninsula and the East Bay.

The lectures will be held on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Auditorium of UCSF's Laurel Heights Campus (formerly Firemen's Fund), 3333 California at Presidio Avenue. The series of seven lectures begins on October 6th and concludes on November 17th. Call Heritage at 441-3000 for information and reservations.

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

"That Exceptional One"
August 5 - September 3
Western Merchandise Mart
1355 Market Street

The San Francisco Chapter of the AIA is co-sponsoring this exhibition honoring a century of women's contributions to architecture. Exhibition hours are Monday through Friday from 10am-6pm.

For information, please call 552-2311.

Hayes Valley Walk
September 10

Heritage guides will lead a walking tour through the "backyard" of the Civic Center. See page 15 for information.

Seismic Workshop
September 23

Co-sponsored by the California Preservation Foundation with the State Seismic Safety Commission, State Historic Building Code Board and ICBO, this day-long workshop addresses recently adopted revisions to the State Historic Building Code, the recently published *Seismic Safety Commission's Guidebook: To Identify and Mitigate Seismic Hazards in Buildings*, and the role of the Uniform Code for Building Conservation in dealing with historic resources.

For information, please call 763-0972.

Adolph Sutro Walk
September 24

The GGNRA will give a guided walk through the estate of Adolph Sutro, the ruins of the Sutro Baths and the Cliff House, illustrating Adolph Sutro's "Contributions to San Francisco."

For information, please call 556-8642.

OCTOBER

"Current Issues in San Francisco City Planning"
October 4

The San Francisco Architectural Club hosts a lecture by City Planning Director Dean Macris at The Gatehouse, Fort Mason Center at 8pm.

For information please call 441-1098.

"Building the City"
October 6 - November 17
Laurel Heights Campus of UCSF

Heritage presents Gray Brechin's popular lecture series this fall. Please see page 15 for information.

Liberty Hill House Tour
October 16

This year Victorian Alliance offers a tour of six homes in the Liberty Hill historic district. Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 at the door.

For information, please call 647-9173.

Neon Lecture & Demonstration
October 22

The Heritage Walks Program concludes with this special neon sign-making demonstration by Josie Crawford, and a lecture by Michael Crowe about neon-ornamented buildings South of Market. See page 15 for information.

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