





TOURS

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Potrero Hill

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Discover Potrero Hill

Three Walking Tours

Introduction:

Potrero Hill is one of San Francisco's most diverse and richly-textured neighborhoods...ethnically, culturally and architecturally, possessing extraordinary views from all parts of the Hill. It is isolated from the rest of the city by its geographical location and ringed with freeways so that many, including native San Franciscans, are unaware of the Hill and its unique environment.

These walks have been carefully planned in terms of interest, accessibility and ease of walking. Points of interest on the walks are indicated on the map by numbers while others not included on the walks are indicated by letters. The points indicated by no means include all of the architectural and visual treasures of Potrero Hill but they should serve as a guide to further individual exploration and observation.

The architectural styles of the buildings listed fall roughly into the following categories: Italianate, Stick, Queen Anne, Edwardian, Mission Revival, Art Deco and Contemporary. The most distinctive features of each of these styles are listed below; however, all features may not appear in any one building. Some structures have been the victims of misguided modernization and have been stripped of their distinctive stylistic ornamentation and have been re-sided with stucco, asbestos shingles or aluminum. Hopefully, thoughtful owners will consider restoring them to their former stylistic authenticity thus preserving our architectural heritage and enhancing their property.

Description of Styles:

ITALIANATE: 1860's-70's. "False fronts" with bracketed cornices. Tall, narrow windows, often rounded at top, with pediment above. Slanted bays with colonnettes at sides of windows. Intricate porticos with Corinthian columns. Rounded balustrades. Classical decorative elements.

STICK: 1880's. Emphasis of vertical structural elements in decorative treatment. Square bays. Columns flattened or eliminated. False fronts with heavy, bracketed cornices; often with gable or demi-Mansard. Flat-surfaced, geometric mass-produced embellishments. Rectangular balustrades.

QUEEN ANNE: Most fanciful and eclectic Victorian style. Steep gables ornamented with wood and plaster decorative elements. Slanted bays. Corner bays are round or octagonal topped with cap tower or turret. Spindle arches over entrances.

EDWARDIAN, also known as **NEO-CLASSIC** or **PERIOD:** Late 90's to 1915. Slanted and round bays. Decorative elements from Classical motifs, i.e., Ionic and Doric. Many apartments and flats. More austere than predecessors, sometimes verging on dullness.

MISSION REVIVAL: Late 90's to about 1917. Square, round and slanted bays. Heavy, tiled cornices and window hoods. Rough stucco. Decorative elements derived from the Southwest Missions with their crude, massive woodworking done by priests and Indians.

ART DECO: Late 1920's and 30's. Round corners of buildings, "streamlining," glass bricks. Stylized floral and leaf decorative elements in relief.

CONTEMPORARY: Structural elements and sensitive proportion become major elements of design. Honest use of materials without added embellishment. Form follows function.