Suit Filed to Save City of Paris

Heritage, joined by four other San Francisco and California preservation organizations, filed a lawsuit February 16 in San Francisco Superior Court to prevent the destruction of the historic City of Paris Building.

The lawsuit, technically a “Petition for Writ of Mandamus,” is a special proceeding used to obtain judicial review of decisions of governmental bodies. Named as defendants are the City and County of San Francisco, City Planning Commission, Department of City Planning, and Neiman-Marcus, Inc., owners of the Paris building.

The lawsuit alleges that the Planning Commission abused its discretion when it voted to permit demolition, because “feasible alternatives remain that do not require or produce the adverse impact of demolishing the City of Paris Building.”

According to Robert Burke, Executive Director of Heritage, feasible alternatives were available.

Inventory to be Published

Carolee Schneemann, noted performance artist, and Michael Corbett, the Project Director and Robin Thomas, the graphic designer, are currently negotiating for its publication by a well-known local publisher. Heritage will publish the Inventory itself if commercial publication cannot be arranged.

The Inventory and book were prepared by Charles Hall, Associate Director, who is responsible for the graphic design.

The 300-page book will include a history of the development of San Francisco, a detailed description of the city’s buildings, and a description of the methodology, criteria, and evaluation system used in the project.

The book will be published by the Foundation for San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage and its architects and a description of the methodology, criteria, and evaluation system used in the project. It will be illustrated with photographs and descriptions of 500 buildings, districts, and urban design elements, and it will be useful to the public in judging the effectiveness of our city government in guiding growth in downtown San Francisco’s booming economy.

San Francisco Downtown will enable intelligent planning and development decisions about building projects by city planners, policy makers, developers, and corporate leaders because it provides rational, comprehensive data on the city’s older buildings.

The 300-page book will include a history of the development of San Francisco’s downtown architectural landscape and its architects and a description of the methodology, criteria, and evaluation system used in the project. It will be illustrated with photographs and descriptions of 500 buildings, districts, and urban design elements, and 20 maps color coded to important data. Descriptive information and order forms will be mailed to Heritage members prior to publication.
An Important Message

You, the Heritage members, are our best promoters. You may have joined Heritage because you wanted to work with others who care about preserving public places, or you may have been attracted by our discounts on books and programs, and the feeling that you can have through the organization. Perhaps you also wanted to contribute some of the skills and energies you bring to our advocacy and educational work for San Francisco.

Whatever the reasons, we want you to know that we appreciate your membership, and we would like to ask you, as a supporter, to help us reach out for new members. Pass along the coupon below to a friend when you feel you may share a desire for preserving the area, heritage of this city. As you remember, Heritage membership makes valuable gifts that are always appropriate.

Heritage is a well-organized, non-profit citizens' group dedicated to encouraging the protection of San Francisco's historic landscapes. Members receive one quarterly newsletter, reduced rates for programs, bookshop discounts, and invitations to special events.

Enclosed is $15, $25, $50, or $75.00 (limited income) for your membership in Heritage.

Name
Address

Return to Heritage, 722 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. Thank you. (3—79)

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One Sansome & the Landmark Ordinance: Supers Frustrate Ordinance Intent?

Once again the designation of a REDEVELOPMENT BUILDING in a city landmark may be rejected by the Board of Supervisors because a development proposal for the property, despite the fact that designation alone provides a negative recommendation and that the development proposal is itself not objectionable, a speculative office high-rise, is beyond the scope of a Landmarks Ordinance. Designation would no longer be possible if the building were to be razed or completely transformed.

One Sansome is one of the city's finest leaparking buildings. It sets early 20th century Neoclassical and Greek Revival design and serves as an example of the civic buildings in San Francisco's downtown. It was built in 1906 as a major retail and office building, and since then it has been a major landmark in the city.

Our inventory placed the Hollis Building, which was one of the city's most significant buildings. In its current state, it is not some of the historic context. However, it is part of the city's overall architectural, historical, and cultural landscapes, and its presence is cherished by the community.

The trouble began. The Board of Supervisors' Planning and Development Committee, (Law and Order) Act of 2018, and designation of buildings after the hearing from both Heritage (for) and developer (against). Strong support for designation was also sufficient for the Planning Department staff to oppose the Board's decision. The city's planning staff was also told that designation was made because of a belief that designation as a landmark would delay of designating the development proposal. Decision on designation of a landmark on the basis of whether designating development is proposed, is fundamentally wrong for three reasons.

First, the Landmark Ordinance (Article 10 of the City Planning Code) sets forth entirely separate procedures for designation of buildings as city landmarks and for development projects. It is not intended to provide a systematic process for dealing with both Heritage (for) and developer (against) Strong support for designation was also sufficient for the Planning Department staff to oppose the Board's decision. The city's planning staff was also told that designation was made because of a belief that designation as a landmark would delay of designating the development proposal. Decision on designation of a landmark on the basis of whether development is proposed, is fundamentally wrong for three reasons.

Second, the information necessary to an intelligent and responsible decision about whether to preserve either of these buildings or whether to approve the proposed development may not be available now. There is no environmental impact report has not been prepared, the costs and benefits of the project have not been identified, and all of the other planning and policy analyses that are a part of the project review process have not been done.

Finally, the City Charter and the Planning Commission, and matters relating to legislation, including designation of city landmarks, are the Board of Supervisors. (Law and Order) Act of 2018, and designation of buildings after the hearing from both Heritage (for) and developer (against). Strong support for designation was also sufficient for the Planning Department staff to oppose the Board's decision. The city's planning staff was also told that designation was made because of a belief that designation as a landmark would delay of designating the development proposal. Decision on designation of a landmark on the basis of whether development is proposed, is fundamentally wrong for three reasons.

These buildings deserve the recognition that designation under Article 10 is intended to provide. If buildings significant to San Francisco's history, traditions, and environment are not designated landmarks because of proposed development projects, the intent and purposes of Article 10 are thwarted, and important community values are not given the recognition and consideration that they are morally entitled to.

RETURN TO HERITAGE, 722 FRANKLIN STREET, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109. THANK YOU. (3-79)
Construction to Begin on PLP Project

Rick Wells, Administrator of the Preservation Loan Program in Heritage, announced recently that under PLP fundraising, construction will begin soon to restore a large- masonry building currently located at 15th and Mission Streets. The project includes the construction of a new facade and the renovation of the interior to its original state, preserving the landmark status of the building.

Directory Updates Requested

The Heritage Directory, our most requested and most helpful publication, is updated regularly. We are asking for the latest information on your organization, including changes in officers, members, locations, and services.

Jr. League Training Benefits Heritage

Heritage is one of eleven non-profit groups selected by the San Francisco Junior League to benefit from the 1978-79 Technical Assistance Program (TAP). TAP provides training for these groups in the technical and process skills involved in management, fund raising, and public relations.

Thanks

Special attention has been given to Haas-Lilienthal House in the past few months. Carl Farkas, the building's caretaker, has been instrumental in preparing the house for the upcoming restoration work. The interior design and decoration of the house have been enhanced, and the exterior has been restored to its original state.

In addition to using conventional public service announcements and news releases, Heritage is beginning a direct mail campaign to spread information about the program to all eligible homeowners within designated areas. This strategy is designed to inform potential participants and encourage them to contact Heritage as soon as possible.

Please return to:
2007 Franklin Street, S.F., CA 94109

1. I would like to see the following listed in the Heritage Directory:

   - [ ] Name
   - [ ] Address
   - [ ] Phone (day) (even)
   - [ ] ZIP

2. I have used the Directory and have the following comments:

   - [ ] Name
   - [ ] Address
   - [ ] Phone (day) (even)
   - [ ] ZIP

The Heritage Directory is available at: 777 Market St., San Francisco 94102, or by contacting Betsy Stafford at (415) 989-1066.
Buildings in the News

Forest Hill Station

In January the Public Utilities Commission voted unanimously to preserve the 1947 neo-classical Forest Hill Station as part of a larger transit improvement project, an apparent victory for preservation. However, in a surprise move the Transportation Commission of the Board of Supervisors asked Mayor Feinstein to request the PUC to reverse its decision to preserve the 60 year old station. Neighbors have opposed preservation of the station because of alleged crime problems. Heritage believes the Forest Hill Station is architecturally and historically important to the city, and that the crime problem, which is at least partly due to neglect, can be dealt with in the design and operation of the new facility. MINC consultants determined that preservation of the existing station would cost $444,000 less than an all-new station.

The supervisory committee which asked for the rehearing met on March 15 and did not hear from many supporting preservation. The PUC re-heard the matter on March 27 and reaffirmed its decision to approve the improvement plan which included preservation of the station.

Matson Building

In February, the Chronicle reported that real estate developer Walter Shorenstein had paid $10,730,000 for the Matson Building at 215 Market Street. Shorenstein’s office confirmed the purchase to the NewsLetter, but no one there was free to confirm price or tell us the Matson Building’s reason was love of the building, because it is one of those buildings, so architecturally outstanding and so steeped in local history that it practically talks to you as you look at it. A visit to Market Street, a review of background and analysis in our inventory files of San Francisco downtown (see story, Page 5), and a chat with Matson Navigation Company, provided more information that can fit here.

Walking down Fitch Street from Nob Hill, one sees as Pine’s terminus, the block of Market between Main and Beale. The block is wholly occupied by two outstanding office buildings - the Matson Building at 215 Market and the G&E Building at 277 Beale.

The G&E Building, important and interesting as it is, must wait for another time. Notice it today. These two 1920’s commercial buildings are an impulse pair. They form an important segment of the post-1906 Market Street wall, all the more noticeable as they contrast with high-rises.

The Matson Building is named for the Matson Navigation Company which commissioned Mills and Fawville to design its headquarters in 1921. Using superb detailing and excellent design, the architects created the main activities and the importance of the office in the decoration of the building.

Revealed in a new design in a blue film, announce Matson - Polychrome terra cotta, anchors, tridents, fishes, dolphins, scaling ably thin, and stylized waves instantly recall the ocean. Sculpted ships outside and maps of Hawaii on elevator doors inside contrast with the small references to the owner’s Hawaiian shipping business.

The importance of the Matson Navigation Co. was expressed by the architects who chose to rehabilitating the exterior and interior of the building.

The form is a well-executed, three-part composition of base, shaft, and capital. As in the Merchant’s Exchange, columns define base and capital, while the shaft is a large textured “certain well” of rusticated masonry.

After reviewing the architecture and history of the Matson Building, its importance in the city’s architecture and history is so obvious that one hopes Walter Shorenstein’s purchase results from his desire to own and protect this particular piece of the city’s heritage.

Other buildings of exceptional importance in this group of lofts and complementary neighbors are the Wilson Building (973-977 Market), and Halle Building (901-919 Market), the Eastern Outfitting Co. Building (1019-1021 Market) and the Ebe Building (1055-1061 Market).

Sunnyside Conservatory

Sunnyside Conservatory at 236 Monterey Boulevard is a designated San Francisco landmark which has been threatened by demolition plans. In order to save it, a joint recommendation has come from the Planning Commission and the Recreation and Parks Commission to incorporate into the unusual octagonal structure into the Open Space Plan.

Audiffred Building

A fine reconstruction and renovation plan is being planned for the Audiffred Building, according to Bellinda Byland of Baker and Co., architects for the property. The Audiffred Building, 315 Second and Mission streets, on the French Market, style brick building which was badly damaged by fire in August 1978.

This San Francisco landmark is about to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places which will qualify the property for the tax benefits available under the Tax Reform Act of 1976. These tax provisions are an incentive to the owners who will be rehabilitating the exterior and interior of this historic waterfront structure. The rehabilitation drawings are being prepared in consultation with Studebaker, the State’s preservation architect, who determines whether plans qualify for the tax benefits. The owners, Frederick A. Baker, Jr., Dusan Mills, John Cochrane and Jack Benjamine, have expressed their eagerness to rehab the building properly. In the National Register application they point out that “in an age when large contemporary buildings crowd the skyline, some care must be taken to save the older structures which are so much a part of the city’s heritage.” The Audiffred Building serves as a reminder to residents and tourists alike of earlier waterfront days...

One Montgomery

On March 19, Crocker Bank announced that it will not seek a variance from the 150 foot height limit for its highrise headquarters project at Post and Kearny Streets, because of public opposition to the 600 foot project on the opposite corner. The Bank will still preserve 1 Montgomery and 111 Sutter, although it may not remove the upper 9 stories of 1 Montgomery to create a roof garden as originally planned.
Landmark News

Important San Francisco buildings can be officially recognized in various ways. They may be designated as a San Francisco Landmark, a State Landmark, or a National Historic Landmark. Also they may become part of the National Register of Historic Places. Each kind of designation has different criteria and involves different processes. The designation of greatest honor is the National Historic Landmark, which is the state of the designation of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Below are those buildings recently designated or now in one or more of those processes.

**Preservation Meeting Planned for May**

"Can Historic Preservation Survive the 1980's?" is the title of an question posed by the Youth Annual California State Historic Preservation Conference, to be held May 10 to 12 in San Diego.

Various topics will be held on "fingering, neighborhood conservation, and design trends." Events will include tours of the Historic Gaslamp Quarter and Balboa Park in San Diego, an exhibit of the work of architect Irving Gill, and a designer showcase house tour. The conference is sponsored by the California State Office of Historic Preservation, and hosted by the Gaslamp Quarter Association. Contact Judith Walsworth, San Francisco History Room, the Main Library, San Francisco, CA 94107 for applications.

**Ritchie Appointed to Landmarks Board**

John Ritchie, former president of the San Francisco Real Estate State Historical Resources Commission from evaluating an application for a State Landmark, or a National Historic Landmark. Also they may become part of the National Register of Historic Places. Each kind of designation has different criteria and involves different processes. The designation of greatest honor is the National Historic Landmark, which is the state of the designation of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Below are those buildings recently designated or now in one or more of those processes.

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Phelps House Restored

What is one of the oldest, perhaps even the oldest, of residences in San Francisco? Has been restored and awaits some lucky new owner or occupant. The Abner Phelps house, located in the Western Addition, and several, surrounding properties, have been restored by the Preservation Group. A private films specialized in historic restoration and adaptive re-use.

Thought to have been built in 1852 by Colonel Phelps for his Louisiana wife, this modest, plantation-style building stood at the foot of Buena Vista Hill, where a path was preserved. What is one of the oldest, perhaps even the oldest, is that the walls were insulated, before the siding was replaced.

The walls were insolated, before the siding was replaced. Two major alterations were necessary to preserve the building to its original state. An asbestos roof was removed and replaced with wood shingles, as was done in the house, originally. Also, a photograph from 1970, as well as watercolors of the house, showed the rearway extended out, straight from the building. It was restored to this position. No windows were added to the ground floor, because it is questionable that they existed when the house was built.

The Phelps House and three other distinguished buildings in the city, hidden for 5 years, are the Phelps and Mish houses, the Mish House, a two-story-country house, that was restored to this condition. No windows were added to the ground floor, because it is questionable that they existed when the house was built.

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Heritage Walks: A Special Thing to Do

Heritage Walks, a new program of guided walking tours of San Francisco, has all the ingredients for making a Sunday afternoon, for one person, a whole family or group of friends, an educational, entertaining and inspiring experience. Three areas are covered, each Sunday at 1:30, 3:00, and 11:00 - North Beach and Telegraph Hill, the Financial District, and Victorian and Edwardian Pacific Heights.

The North Beach and Telegraph Hill walk starts at Washington Square near Saints Peter and Paul Church, Take in Filbert Street, and hike up Telegraph Hill to visit and disclose. The Mish House, a Queen Anne style building that has fallen victim to "sudden modernization," was restored with an appropriate facade, and a small, simple Victorian was restored. Both the Phelps and Mish houses are San Francisco's landmark buildings, and have been nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The buildings are available for sale or lease as commercial properties by the owner or occupant. The Abner Phelps house, Two major alterations were necessary to preserve the building to its original state. An asbestos roof was removed and replaced with wood shingles, as was done in the house, originally. Also, a photograph from 1970, as well as watercolors of the house, showed the rearway extended out, straight from the building. It was restored to this position. No windows were added to the ground floor, because it is questionable that they existed when the house was built.

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New Staffers Welcomed

Heritage welcomes four new members to the staff this month, Jeaneen and Gary Bast, moved into the Hammill-Gillam house as Resident Managers. They are already hosting weddings and meetings. Before the Bastles recently moved to San Francisco, from Atlanta, Georgia was the second in the series of tours of the Atlanta Regional Commission, a seven-county metropolitan area planning and development commission. She holds a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling, and a Certificate in Gerontology from Wayne State University. Gary, in turn, is employed as the Veteran's Administration Hospital at Land's End and is an accredited psychiatric social worker, with the N.W. from Wayne State University, as well as a social worker, with the N.W. from Wayne State University.

His hobbies include restoring furniture and collecting, and recently he has described himself as "an enthusiastic, yard, scrapbooker". His recent work has involved an antique, and a restaurant, previously occupied by the historic "National Guard". The tour, bringing to life "an extraordinary" building, and presenting an extensive, and a website, previously occupied by the historic "National Guard". The tour, bringing to life "an extraordinary" building, and presenting an extensive, and a website, previously occupied by the historic "National Guard". The tour, bringing to life "an extraordinary" building, and presenting an extensive, and a website, previously occupied by the historic "National Guard".
Who Does What At Heritage

Jay Turnbull: Architect. Jay is the major resource person for number of people who call with questions about rehabilitation and restoration of their properties. He prepares analyses of architectural aspects of development proposals and provides professional backup for Heritage loan program projects. Also Jay adds the layout and design of the Newsletter and other publications. He provides many photographs for Heritage public information work.

Gray Booth, Architectural Historian. Gray performs basic research on architecture and history of San Francisco buildings and neighborhoods, and analyses proposed development projects, public policies, and rehab plans for their environmental impact. Gray will be making many public presentations discussing our downtown, urban conservation and the Preservation Program. The Executive Director staffs, in collaboration with the Board of Directors and reports to the President and Board.

Linda DoFitz, Assistant Executive Director: Linda is responsible for the work of our office staff. In addition she has specific responsibility for responding to public inquiries about landmark and historic landmarks processes, and follows those issues in the public arena, acting as the Heritage liaison to the city. Linda is responsible for personnel administration, and general operation of the Haas-Lilienthal House. She provides technical assistance for neighborhoods preservation projects.

Bill Masseng, Preservation Loan Program Administrator. Rick manages the Heritage Preservation Loan Program, recruiting and negotiating with homeowners who may receive loans, dealing with commercial loan arranging with Crocker Bank through which the loans are made. Rick also acts as a Heritage resource person for individuals and organizations seeking information about loans and other methods of rehabilitation.

Suzette Connolly, Membership Secretary. Suzette manages and maintains our membership records and mailing lists. She also processes and deposits income to Heritage, and is responsible for keeping us stocked with adequate office supplies. Suzette's job is part-time.

Contributors: November 1, 1978-January 31, 1979

It is through the interest and support of our members that Heritage is able to continue its activities and to plan for future programs to save historic and significant buildings and spaces. We thank the following for their membership support received in the last few months.

New Members November 1, 1978 - January 31, 1979

Bill Stout's Bookstore

Bill Stout operates a thoroughly fascinating architectural bookshop at 17th and Castro (between Pacific and Broadway in the block bounded by Montgomery and Sutter). Bill, an architect himself, has an eye for the intriguing, obscure, and periodical in books and periodicals. Much of the material is found on his shelves along with standard texts on architecture. In addition, he stocks popular numbers of architectural magazines, both domestic and foreign, and out-of-print books which would simply be unavailable anywhere else. His stock lists 1500 titles, and expands constantly.

It is not easy to create a business just like it, and it is not easy to transport books which would appeal to architects (or, traditionally, antiquarian books, and until recently, only in thoroughly specialized bookstores) in the more fully stocked bookshops and the mail-order catalogs operated by the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Though much of Bill's stock is necessarily centered toward the newest and most modern, he makes an effort to have books which would be of interest to preservationist, particularly works on famous California practitioners such as Mayne or Greens and Greens. Visit Bill's shop; hours are limited so a telephone call (391-6757) before arriving is wise.
You and Your Old House
Heritage Practical Rehab Conference

If you have or want to buy an older house, you are likely to want to attend "You and Your Old House: A Practical Conference on Rehabilitation." June 16, at San Francisco State University, Heritage will select among approximately 20 workshops, ranging from choosing professional help with rehab, to finding the perfect doorknob, to understanding the wiring and plumbing of older homes. Also, craftspeople and suppliers will display and explain their wares.

The conference is being produced by the all-volunteer, Heritage Committee. Fee for the day, including materials, is $15 for Heritage members and $18 for non-members (Heritage membership is $15 per year). A detailed brochure will be mailed to Heritage members. Contact staffer Nancy Belden for registration information at 441-1999.

Preservation Week: H-L Public Day

In celebration of Preservation Week, the Haas-Lilienthal House will be open free of charge on Sunday, May 13, from 11 to 4:30. Bring your family and friends for refreshments and stroll through the House at your leisure. Heritage documents will be on display in each of the principal rooms of the House to answer questions.

Environmentalists Move to Control Downtown Growth

San Franciscans may get a chance in November to decide whether highrise office building development in the downtown should be limited. An initiative measure has been developed for the ballot, under the leadership of San Francisco Tomorrow, to change height and floor area ratio limits and amend the development bonus system.

Bankers of the petition say that "the continued addition of huge amounts of office space in the downtown commercial district jeopardizes the liveability of San Franciso." Proposition 13 has significantly reduced revenues from downtown property taxes, thereby shifting costs of providing downtown services to the residential neighborhoods. Existing transportation networks cannot accommodate the number of people projected to come into the city if the current rate of downtown growth continues. Buildings with architectural or historical merit are threatened by continued pressure from downtown highrise development. Now office workers have created a demand for housing that diarrmates with the city's zoning laws. In order to achieve a healthy and balanced economic development for San Francisco, we are proposing this initiative.

Under the initiative no building could be higher than 260 feet (20 stories). Current limit is 290 feet. It would also impose much lower bulk limits. The initiative would development bonus allowing a developer to exceed the basic maximum limits when preserving a landmark within 500 feet of the project. The Heritage Board and staff are analyzing the preservation and other implications of the initiative.

Save City of Paris

continued from page 1

Bernard said in a news release issued February 20. "The ultimate purpose of this lawsuit is to obtain the Paris permits, if necessary, that not only set aside the existing conditional approval of Neiman-Marcus, but also forbid the City from reapproving that project as long as we get our day in court in the matter of the existing City of Paris Building. Although our first claim is that the environmental impact report failed to deal adequately with our claim, our ultimate claim is based on state law that forbids the unnecessary destruction of the environment (such as demolition of the City of Paris) if feasible, land use alternatives are available.

"We recognize that the City still has more review to do of this project—not only by the Planning Commission, but also the Board of Permit Appeals. We would like to believe that in those ensuing hearings, the City will do the right thing and refuse to grant the Neiman-Marcus permit, thus making our lawsuit moot. But at the same time, the proceedings yet to come may give rise to additional claims against the City, should it continue to approve the project. Accordingly, the suit we filed should not be considered to include all the possible claims we may have against the City," Bernard said.

The four co-plaintiffs in addition to Heritage are San Francisco Tomorrow, Californians for Preservation Action, the Citizens Committee to Save the City of Paris, and the Victorian Alliance.

Heritage and the other organizations are being represented by attorney Antonia Rosansky, a specialist in public interest law concentrating in natural resources, environmental, administrative and constitutional matters.

The battle to save the City of Paris Building from the wrecking ball began as early as 1974, when the Victoria Alliance and the City Planning Board concluded that the Neiman-Marcus project, if approved, would be destructive to the area. The Planning Board also received over 3,000 letters and comments urging saving the City of Paris. The Citizens Committee to Save the City of Paris was formed early this year to represent the City of Paris Building and the Victoria Alliance. We'll see all of you and your friends April 28!