DEMOLITION PERMIT ISSUED FOR ST. ROSE: PRESERVATIONISTS MAY APPEAL

On January 31st, the Planning Commission approved the request of the Dominican Sisters of San Rafael to demolish the St. Rose Academy building at Pine and Pierce Streets (See January/February 1991 Newsletter). In approving the request, the Commission stipulated that demolition not begin for forty-five days and directed the Sisters, owners of the building, and the Dominican Fathers, who own the land, to explore ways to utilize FEMA funds which are available to repair and upgrade the structure. The waiting period expired March 17, and demolition may proceed. However, members of the preservation community, including the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, San Francisco Heritage, a neighborhood group called "Save St. Rose" and individuals, including St. Rose alumnae, are prepared to appeal the demolition permit to the Board of Permit Appeals.

_Save St. Rose!_  
To join the effort  
call 291-1495 or 441-3000

Sister Cathryn deBack, representing the Dominican Sisters, has stated that although the Order has obtained the demolition permit, they will continue to explore FEMA possibilities before beginning demolition. Although they have not sought the assistance of preservation representatives, they have offered opportunities to view drawings showing new uses for the building.

At its January 31 hearing the Commission received a report prepared by City staff agreeing that the property was eligible for up to $5.4 million in FEMA funds. This finding confirmed Heritage's earlier testimony to the Commission that St. Rose was eligible for substantial FEMA grant funds. Prior to January 31, attorneys for the Sisters had emphatically denied that significant funds were available. The amount is less than the $9.5 million first reported because the Sisters revealed that approximately one-third of the building was associated with religious uses and is, therefore, ineligible for federal funds.

The report also discussed the financial feasibility of converting the building to another use. Specifically it explored the possibility of below market-rate rental apartments and concluded it was economically feasible.

The City's report concurred with the opinion of the John Stewart Company, well known in San Francisco for continued on page 8
On the evening of March 7, the congregation of Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church (455 Fair Oaks Street) hosted a reception to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the design and construction of their church by Ernest Coxhead. Architect Jeremy Kotas offered some informal remarks on Coxhead’s church designs. This small but active parish is exploring funding sources to repair the roof and ultimately to restore the church’s original shingled roofline and bell tower, as they appear in the Coxhead drawing shown above. If you are interested in the project, have ideas for funding, or wish to tour the church, call Holy Innocents’, 824-5142.

The California Historical Society has reopened its library at 2099 Pacific Avenue. Hours are Wednesdays from 10 am to 4 pm. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, it will be open by appointment only. Although the Society has announced the sale of its headquarters, the Whittier Mansion at 2090 Jackson Street, the library will remain at its present location until new facilities become available in the Jessie Hotel, which is scheduled for incorporation into a highrise development at Third and Mission.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is soliciting nominations for its National Preservation Honor Awards Program. Each year the Trust presents the awards to “individuals and organizations who demonstrate exceptional accomplishment in the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and interpretation of America’s architectural and cultural heritage.” The awards will be presented in October, at the National Preservation Conference in San Francisco. Call Katherine Adams (202) 673-4165 or (415) 956-0610 for information. Nominations must be postmarked by May 1.

San Francisco Heritage is offering a summer class on “Designating City Landmarks.” Participants will research individual properties and prepare case reports that will be submitted to the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board. This is an opportunity to learn about an individual building as well as how our local landmarking process works. Please contact Lauren Bricker for additional information on the program and an application form (441-3000).
Last year, the Grace Cathedral Corporation approached Heritage to review the church's proposal to construct a new chapter house on Sacramento Street and to demolish Cathedral House on Taylor Street for a grand ceremonial stairway which would provide an unobstructed access to the Cathedral's main entrance.

Following the 1906 earthquake and fire, the Crocker family donated the Nob Hill site of their residences (the city block bounded by California, Jones, Sacramento and Taylor Streets) to the Episcopal Church for the construction of a cathedral. Portions of the 1876-77 wrought iron fence that surrounded the Crocker mansions still frame three sides of the block.

In 1907 the Church engaged the well-known British architect, George F. Bodley to design the cathedral and an adjacent ecclesiastical quadrangle (or “close”) to house a Divinity School and the senior clergy associated with the church and school. The local architect Lewis Hobart was to serve as supervising architect for the project.

Bodley's original design projected a north/south orientation of the cathedral along Jones Street and located the “academic quadrangle” at the eastern edge of the block, with one side fronting Taylor Street. After Bodley's death in 1908, his associate Cecil Hare continued to work on the cathedral scheme. In 1909, he suggested a reorientation of the church along California Street, with its principal entrance to the east. Drawings and correspondence from the Bodley and Hare period indicate use of an architectural vocabulary based on Early English Gothic of the fourteenth century (the preferred language of the High Victorian Gothic).

Hare's design concept was implemented by Hobart, who became sole architect for the cathedral in 1910. The only structure that dates from the initial period of site planning and development is Cathedral House (1910-1912). Hobart's design for the four story brick divinity school, sheathed in Utah limestone, is characteristic of the "Collegiate Gothic" found in contemporary building ensembles of the period. Fine medieval door and window detailing set against carefully scaled and composed volume creates a building that conveys a sense of historic authenticity. Hobart's design called for a bishop's house, library and diocesan house to flank the building on the south and north. Therefore, the architect sheathed only the east and west walls of the building in limestone, leaving the remaining walls of exposed brick. The only other permanent development of the block throughout the 1910s was the cathedral crypt (completed in 1914).

Finally, in 1925, Hobart, in consultation with Ralph Adams Cram, a Boston architect with a specialization in Medieval period religious and school buildings, began to develop a new concept for the cathedral and adjacent buildings. The twenties vision of the site called for an enlarged cathedral with an unobstructed entrance from Taylor Street. The divinity school and other secondary buildings would stand along Sacramento Street with quadrangular landscaped and paved areas linking them with the church. The cathedral alone was realized and that completed only in 1964, giving historic Nob Hill the imposing visual landmark we know today.

After Heritage's Issues Committee reviewed the Cathedral's development proposal on two occasions, including a site visit, the full Board undertook a lengthy discussion of the case. Heritage understands the Corporation's desire to open up the cathedral's façade to unobstructed view but does not believe this justifies demolition of an important historic and architectural resource like Cathedral House, which contributes so much to Nob Hill's appeal to pedestrians.

Noting that it is the first permanent component of the earlier design for the site and the oldest structure in the cathedral complex, the Heritage Board urged retention of Cathedral House, as the planned new construction on Sacramento Street does not require its removal. In addition, the Board recommended that the Corporation undertake a seismic evaluation and stone conservation study of the building, before continuing to claim the building is earthquake damaged and the stone irreparably deteriorated.

Heritage appreciates the Corporation discussing this design issue at an early stage and looks forward to working together with the Church.
37 DRUMM STREET

The Shorenstein Company, in June of last year, filed application for demolition of a B-rated and Downtown Plan Category III building at 37 Drumm Street. Citing costs to repair earthquake damage and to complete a seismic retrofit of the eighty-year old unreinforced masonry structure, the owner proposed construction of a replacement building of the same scale and compatible design, coupled with the rehab of neighboring structures at 25 and 33 Drumm Street.

The architect of 37 Drumm was Etienne A. Garin, who designed the rectory of Notre Dame des Victoires Church on Bush Street. The building is part of a row of low-rise commercial buildings, all built in 1912, which are typical of post-fire downtown reconstruction but have mostly given way to highrises. Within the last two years, The Shorenstein Company proposed a new conservation district for this block and obtained Heritage's support for the idea. Although they took no further action at that time, their subsequent proposal to demolish 37 Drumm came as a surprise.

Heritage expressed concern that the owner had not documented claims of excessive costs, and when no further information was provided, requested referral of the case to the Landmarks Board for review. The Board unanimously opposed demolition, citing the owner's failure to present evidence that it had explored the availability of tax credits to rehab 37 Drumm and the option of using the State Historical Building Code to facilitate a cost-effective repair and seismic retrofit. On February 7, the Planning Commission granted the demolition request.

LOWER NOB HILL APARTMENT-HOTEL DISTRICT

The story intended to convey the fact that the case presented by Mr. Conner did not meet the test established by the law for demolition of significant Downtown Plan-rated buildings.

Since last year, Heritage has supported the effort of Jack E. Doty of Metro Pacific Corporation to place a Lower Nob Hill Apartment-Hotel District on the National Register of Historic Places. Anne Bloomfield, who prepared the nomination, described the district as an "unusually large, virtually intact, architecturally consistent, densely packed inner-city residential area" that has few peers in the country. The advantages for this district of many unreinforced masonry buildings include possible tax credits that could assist in the rehab and seismic upgrade of designated properties, which would also be eligible for use of the State Historical Building Code.

The district falls along the south slope of Nob Hill, between the Tenderloin, the Polk-Van Ness commercial corridor and the retail-financial district. The remarkable homogeneity of this area of mostly brick, multi-storied residential hotels and apartment houses and small-scale commercial buildings resulted from rapid redevelopment in the twenty years following the devastation of the 1906 earthquake and fire. Many of the hotels sprang up in the teens to house visitors to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, of 1915, and apartment houses and residential hotels accommodated workers in the nearby retail and financial districts.

Among the architectural elements, which characterize the various styles employed are classical details executed in plaster and cast cement, ornamental terra cotta and galvanized iron (shaped to look like roofing tile) set against stuccoed surfaces to "read" Hispanic or Mediterranean.

On March 1, the State Historical Resources Commission adopted the district and forwarded it to the Keeper of the Register in Washington, D.C.

POSTSCRIPT

In our story on the defeat of a proposal by its owner to demolish 620 Post Street, which appeared in Volume XVII, Number 4 of this newsletter, we said, in part, "While the retention of 620 Post is by no means assured, the 'escape valve' provision for excessive economic hardship has been successfully defended against false claims and remains reserved for cases which genuinely meet the conditions called for in the law."

We have received correspondence from representatives of the owner, Mr. Edward J. Conner, taking exception to this passage as "patently libelous." The editor regrets that Mr. Conner apparently misunderstood this statement. It was not our intention to suggest that his case was based on dishonest representations, and we trust the statement, when read in context of the article, did not confuse our readers.

Heritage News Letter

4 HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

4 HERITAGE NEWSLETTER
The phoenix is one of San Francisco’s most enduring symbols. A recent example of the city’s spirit of renewal is 1340 Vallejo Street. This six-unit apartment house suffered three-quarters of a million dollars damage, according to the Fire Department investigation, in a four-alarm fire of incendiary origin, the night of December 26, 1987 (See Newsletter, Winter 1988).

The Bureau of Building Inspection informed the owner, Mr. Ernest Chew, who lived in the building with his family at the time of the fire, that the damage was so great “the building will have to be replaced in its entirety.” Mr. Chew filed for permits for demolition and new construction on the site. Heritage believed the architecturally significant 1911 apartment house, designed by the firm of Salfield and Kohlberg, could be saved. At the request of Heritage, Mr. Chew agreed to a walk-through inspection by Heritage staff, representatives of the Russian Hill Neighbors, John Laws of Structural Design Engineers (SDE) and Mark Pierce, an architect experienced in restoration of fire-damaged older structures.

The inspection revealed that the fire had destroyed the roof structure and much of the third story walls, some walls and floor framing at the second level and most of the interior property line walls. Substantial smoke and water damage occurred to the remainder of the building. After viewing the conditions, Pierce and SDE concurred with Heritage staff in the judgment that a rehab was both feasible and cost effective, when compared to a replacement structure of comparable quality.

Although skeptical, Mr. Chew agreed, in December 1988, to allow an estimate on the work required to repair and rehabilitate the building and said he would pursue the less costly option—rehab or demolition and new construction. Heritage agreed to act as facilitator, while John Roberto Associates, planning consultants, represented Mr. Chew’s interests.

In April 1989, Veale Construction Services presented an estimate that placed the cost of rehab only slightly higher than the cost of a new building. Mr. Chew decided to preserve 1340 Vallejo and engaged Edwin Cheung of C & L Construction as contractor, who in turn hired Mark Pierce to prepare plans for the job. The design for the rehab received the strong endorsement of the Russian Hill Neighbors, and Heritage supported the project before the Planning Department. Heritage expressed its appreciation for the efforts of Mr. Thomas Chew, who by then had succeeded to the ownership of the property, after the death of his father.

Workers recently completed the project, returning this important visual landmark to the neighborhood. They restored or reconstructed most of the original exterior detail. On the inside, where the fire destroyed most of the original finishes and details, modern apartments have been constructed with an open floor plan. Original wood windows remain where they survived the fire, while new matching wood windows have replaced the damaged ones. Installation of energy efficient appliances and insulation in all wall and floor cavities, along with a seismic upgrade to current code requirements. The building now also provides garage parking for four cars, carved from street level storage space, a definite advantage in this high density neighborhood.

This phoenix has risen anew, to general satisfaction. The neighbors are pleased, because the building remains in its prominent position on the slope of Russian Hill, an architecturally sensitive part of the city. The owner has a building that combines the advantages of new construction, including new apartments that accommodate current living styles, with a distinctive historic exterior that will attract prospective tenants.

—R.M. & D.A.
Perhaps it was inevitable in land-poor San Francisco that gas stations would be marked for demolition. They generally sit on prime corner lots, in high-density neighborhoods, zoned for more intense development than lots that are mid-block. On major street-level highways, such as Van Ness Avenue, Lombard Street and Nineteenth Avenue, it was not unusual to find gas stations on each of four corners of an intersection. Today, in a city hungry for housing sites, multi-family residences are replacing many of these.

Three years ago, San Francisco began to lose service stations at such a rate that both residents and the Planning Department became concerned that it would soon become difficult, particularly in the neighborhoods, to buy gas. When demolition threatened the architecturally significant service station at Larkin and Pacific (See Summer 1989 Newsletter), Heritage staff undertook an informal drive-by survey of the city's operating service stations to assist the Planning Department in determining how many others of architectural value remain and might be threatened. This photo essay presents some of the results of that survey.

Gasoline stations have assumed a wide range of forms since the 1920s, when national prosperity and assembly line production made automobiles affordable to the average American. The first stations were purely utilitarian curbside fueling depots, often attached to general stores that sold a variety of goods. When establishments dedicated exclusively to servicing and supplying gas and oil to automobiles appeared, they often employed functional "generic" designs, such as the prefabricated stations supplied nationally by San Francisco's Michel and Pfeffer Iron Works.

The first great period of gas station architecture coincided with the rise of suburbia and the emergence of regional imagery in architecture in the 1920s and 1930s. Whole subdivisions of English cottages, French chateaus, Italian villas and Indian pueblos were
built across America, and service buildings, including shops and fire and police stations, as well as gas stations, all conformed to those design standards.

By the 1930s, the aesthetic of the streamline moderne style imitated the sleek look of new automobiles. At the same time, major oil companies, now involved with marketing as well as production, sought to establish a clear image for themselves and their products. As early as the 1920s, they began to commission designs from such industrial designers as Norman Bel Geddes, Frederick Frost, Raymond Loewy and Walter Dorwin Teague.

Teague, in fact, designed what is arguably the classic American service station, a functional box that incorporated display areas and specialized service bays with canopied pumps in front. The design, commissioned by Texaco, stressed easy maintenance, cleanliness and light. Manned by smartly uniformed attendants, these stations induced millions of Americans to trust their cars "to the man who wears the star."

Convinced that beauty results from the successful adaptation of form to function—even the humblest function, Teague wrote, in 1940, that "there are plenty of good service stations and garages which are more beautiful than any number of banal temples and capi- tols with which our land is dotted."

Other companies adopted more or less standardized station plans, but none were as successful as Texaco, until the mid-1960s when Mobil commissioned Eliot Noyes and Associates to design a station that would reflect the company's forward-looking image and could be built anywhere. With its rounded indirectly lit canopies and drum-like pumps, the Noyes design was starkly modern and functional, while making a distinct corporate statement, much as Teague's had done thirty years before.

The Noyes design is rapidly disappearing, and few of the older stations survive in unaltered condition. Some vintage stations now house other businesses, but most became victims, over time, of the oil industry's urge to modernize in step with the automobile.

—F.I.P.
its award-winning conversion of the former SP Hospital complex at Fell and Baker to housing. In an effort to demonstrate to the Orders that repair and retention of the structure was feasible, Heritage had requested the company review the possibility of converting St. Rose to a housing use. The Stewart Company estimated that the building could be converted to forty to fifty apartment units with parking for $5.5 to $6.5 million. Funds to supplement the FEMA grant could come from sources like the City’s housing development programs.

The Sisters and the Dominican Fathers have stated that they do not wish to have housing on this site, however, and discussion of this approach has ended.

At the January 31 hearing, attorneys for the Sisters claimed that $5.4 million was insufficient to repair and retrofit the building and convert it to a new use, although they presented no construction cost estimates as a factual basis for this claim. In fact, $5.4 million represents slightly over $100 per square foot for the 50,000 square feet of St. Rose Academy, an amount roughly similar to the costs of other recent seismic upgrade/rehabilitation projects in San Francisco. For example, a project for a 75,000 square foot masonry building of similar age south of Market ran approximately $83 per square foot, including seismic rehab, architects’ and engineers’ fees and interest costs. A costly 60,000 square-foot rehab in the central business district on Sutter Street ran $112 per square foot. This structure was also of similar age and materials.

Advocates for preservation maintain that St. Rose Academy may represent an opportunity, if used creatively, for St. Dominic’s to gain additional classrooms and a cafeteria for its own school, as well as a new parish hall, paid for by outside funds to which the building is entitled. The preservation community is pleased that the two Orders are studying this possibility.
EDWARD E. YOUNG, 1870-1934

This is the first in a series of profiles, to appear intermittently in the Newsletter, that represents Heritage's effort to document those practitioners who, although they contributed significantly to San Francisco's built environment, are not well known. We invite readers who have information on the subject of this profile to contact us.

Edward Eyestone Young was born March 11, 1870, in Carthage, Missouri, and moved to San Francisco at age thirty-two. He first appears in local documents as contractor for a residence at 72 Sth Avenue, in 1902. We know nothing of his training, although he must have completed it before his move to San Francisco. The 1903 City Directory listed Young as an architect, residing at 125 Downey Street, and he received formal certification to practice architecture in California in April of 1905.

Upon marriage in 1906, Young and his wife, Julia Rapier Tharp, the sister of City Architect Newton Tharp, took up residence at 22 Presidio Terrace, which Young himself designed. They lived there more than twenty-five years and raised five children, including a son, John Davis Young, who joined his father's practice about 1931. Edward Young died in San Francisco in 1934.

During the thirty years of his practice, Young generated nearly six hundred designs, mostly residential, ranging from single family homes to large apartment houses. He was not a trend-setting architect but rather mastered the historical revival styles current in the early decades of the twentieth century. Often working on speculative projects for owner-builders, Young displayed particular skill at varying the details of a block of buildings whose basic design is the same. His work in the 1920s shows a preference for the use of pressed brick applied as a veneer to exterior walls.

Many of Edward Young's clients sought him out time after time, because of his consistently good quality designs. His substantial output, particularly in Pacific Heights and the Richmond, has left a lasting impression and enhances the overall architectural distinction that is so much a part of the quality of the urban experience in San Francisco.

Freelance architectural historian Gary Goss provided the research for this article.

Young designed and built this apartment house and one-story over garage studio, at 2000-2002 California, for himself (1922-23). He worked out of the studio until the end of his life. The project illustrates a range of interpretations of the Mediterranean Revival.

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160 Vicksburg. One of Young's early designs (1907), this Queen Anne/Colonial Revival residence is a basic gabled volume with florid decorative treatment of the front elevation.

106 25th Avenue. Young designed this two-story Medieval Revival residence for C.P. Cain. The cost of construction, in 1912, was $11,000.

This is a good example of Young's design for a small-scale subdivision. Three Mediterranean Revival residences create a harmonious streetscape, as they mount the hill at Green & Divisadero. Developer Matthew A. Little was the client for this project (1915). Penthouses appear to be later additions.
American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places
William H. Tishler, ed.
The Preservation Press
Washington, D.C., 1989

"Interest in landscape history has never been higher. But the challenge for the future goes beyond documenting and protecting sites and ensuring their survival. It calls for creative interpretation that will communicate to the public not only what landscapes of the past looked like, but, more important, the meaning of these places in the lives of people who shaped them."

This statement from Suzanne Louise Turner's essay on "Historic Landscapes" defines several goals of American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places, the most recent volume in the Building Watchers Series of the Preservation Press, published cooperatively with the American Society of Landscape Architects. The book presents the diversity of America's response to its native and cultivated landscape through an introductory historical essay by William Tishler, ASLA, a collection of biographical sketches of important landscape architects and brief overviews of typical American places.

Several themes weave throughout this volume. William Beiswanger's essay on Thomas Jefferson introduces the subject of landscapes that result from the adaptation of European garden theory to the environment of the New World. The English picturesque garden inspired Jefferson, along with Andrew Jackson Downing and other nineteenth century figures, because its "natural" or informal appearance could be easily adapted to the small garden or a large public park. Another European transplant was the formal Italian garden, which provided the landscaped setting for a number of estate gardens designed by Charles A. Platt and Ellen Biddle Shipman.

Landscape has also played a key role in the nation's urban development, as a component of new town design, as well as a tool of urban reform during the period of the mid-nineteenth century "park movement" and the "City Beautiful Movement" at the start of the twentieth century. Several contributors to this volume discuss the study of landscape scenery and the development of state and national parks as mechanisms for its conservation.

The preservation of America's historic landscapes must, as Turner observes, be based on our knowledge of their physical appearance and historic meaning. The book's handsomely reproduced contemporary and historic photographs, period views, site plans and detail drawings effectively convey the aesthetic appeal of America's landscapes. With respect to the historic meaning of America's landscape, this volume makes an important though somewhat selective contribution to its understanding. In particular, the limited discussion of the landscape of the western states is misleading, the professional relationship between the landscape architect and architect deserves fuller discussion and, while a list of sources of additional documents is appended, the location of records for particular projects would facilitate their preservation. An excellent bibliography adds to the value of this publication.

—Lauren Weiss Bricker

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St. Francis Wood, a residential subdivision in San Francisco, was laid out by the Olmsted Brothers, Boston, with architectural elements by John Galen Howard and others, c. 1912.

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CONTINUING HERITAGE EVENTS

Sundays 11 am to 4:15
Wednesdays 12 noon to 3:15
Haas-Lilienthal House Tours

Sundays 12:30 pm
Pacific Heights Walking Tour
For information concerning all Heritage events, call 441-3004

MAY
May 12 from 11 am to 4:15 &
May 15 from 12 noon to 3:15
Free tours of the Haas-Lilienthal House in celebration of National Preservation Week

May 4 through June 2
Decorators Showcase, 2020 Jackson St.
Call 563-6367

May 9-12 Santa Barbara
California Preservation Conference
Call (415) 763-9072

May 19, 1-5 pm
Oakland Heritage Alliance
Spring House Tour Call 763-9218

JUNE
June 8, 10:30 am
Heritage Architectural Bay Cruise
$30 members $40 non-members
Come on board Hornblower Yachts for brunch and an architectural and historical tour narrated by Heritage guides. The tour will highlight the development of the San Francisco shoreline from the Golden Gate Bridge to the South Beach. Members will receive details in the mail.

Every Saturday June 1 through September 28, 10 am
Heritage Chinatown Walking Tour
Meets at 950 Clay St.

Every other Saturday starting June 1 through September 28, 10 am
Heritage Presidio Walking Tour
Meets at Main Parade Ground

1991 HERITAGE PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

July 7
Heritage Family Picnic

September 7
Labor History Program

September 20*
Soirée

November 7, 14, 21*
Fall Lecture Series

December 1
Holiday Open House

*These dates subject to change.

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