PRESIDIO PRESENTS
PRESERVATION CHALLENGE

The vote this spring by Congress to close the Presidio as an Army post effectively ended more than two hundred years of military history. Under legislation that established the Golden Gate National Recreational Area in the early 1970s, when the Army ceases to use the Presidio it is to become part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA.) Thus, Congress has given Bay Area residents unparalleled cultural and recreational opportunities. At the same time, the closing of the Presidio presents a major preservation issue.

The Presidio began as a Spanish garrison in 1776, with the construction of temporary quarters near the spring called El Polin. The Spaniards soon replaced the temporary structures with an adobe commandancia, a storehouse and barracks. In 1794 they constructed a castillo at the entrance to the bay.

After Mexico won its independence in 1822, the Presidio became that nation's primary outpost in Northern California. In 1835, however, Mexican headquarters were transferred to Sonoma, and the Presidio lay idle for the next twelve years.

During the Mexican War, American forces claimed the garrison for the United States. Over the next decade, they rebuilt some of the old adobe structures of the Presidio, including part of the old commandancia. But

the fort had little strategic importance in peacetime, and there was little construction in these years, particularly since the army had trouble keeping its troops from deserting to the goldfields. The most important project of this period was the construction of a fort to protect San Francisco Bay. In 1853, Congress authorized the Army to start work on Fort Point, which is currently part of the GGNRA.

Fearing an imminent Confederate attack on San Francisco, with its seaport and riches, between 1862 and 1864 the Federal Government took steps to strengthen all its installations here, including Alcatraz and the Presidio. During these years, the Army constructed officers' housing, a new powder magazine, barracks, and a hospital around the main parade ground. This Victorian Civil War era construction contributes significantly to the historic character of the Presidio.

Until the late 1870s, the Presidio was an area of barren wind-swept

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

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:
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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.

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As one of 15 members of the Committee which recommended the architectural team that will design the new Main Library, I was very impressed with the effort by the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Rudy Nothenberg, to construct a process which was objective, fair and designed to help ensure that committee made well-informed recommendations.

I support the very sound process by which the selection was made, and I support the outcome. However, I am personally disappointed that more Committee members did not recognize the superior qualifications which the MBT/Hartman Cox team holds for this particular project.

The architectural firm of Hartman Cox, while not widely known in the West has established a strong reputation on the East Coast for architectural designs in challenging situations of exactly the type we face with the new library project. The new Main Library must not only be contemporary and creative, but must fit into the context of its grand Beaux Arts neighbors far better than does either of the recent Van Ness additions represented by Davies Hall and the new State Building.

Messrs. Hartman and Cox were able to show the Committee numerous examples of constructed projects in which the predominance of large, formal governmental structures set the tone for new construction—a tone frequently reinforced by design guidelines.

Their new library for Georgetown University Law School showed skill in combining Beaux Arts forms and proportions with modern, steamlined detail which is elegant and simple. Their office addition to the Corcoran Gallery is not only completely compatible with the existing structure, but adds significantly to its beauty and complexity. "Market Square," on Pennsylvania Avenue achieves a high degree of complexity and interest seldom seen in such large structures by incorporating existing buildings, varying heights, and avoiding symmetry. It reflects well upon their ability to blend new structures into existing contexts with great imagination.

In addition to design considerations, two other broad categories of concern influenced my opinion: project management/budget control and the ability to work well with library supporters to produce the calibre facility they have long sought. No team surpassed MBT's strength and reputation in these areas.

Library management, commissioners and supporters have worked very hard over the years to provide high quality library services despite an increasingly inadequate facility. That experience has given them strong feelings about the contrast between the existing Main Library's monumental, traditional Beaux Arts façades and what they see as a dysfunctional interior space. Comments by library representatives in our Committee discussions suggested many strongly doubted the compatibility of traditional exterior façade designs with modern, flexible interior spaces and the ability of architectural teams to satisfy both concerns.

I.M. Pei and Simon, Martin-Vegue, Winkelstein, Moris, working with the many committed members of this community, will produce a very good library for San Francisco. Heritage looks forward to continuing to assist in this process. The required balance between exterior design, interior function, and budget constraints may not, however, be as fine as might have been achieved with MBT/Hartman Cox. In any case, Warren Cox and George Hartman should be offered other opportunities to contribute to San Francisco's tradition for fine urban architecture.

-Mark Ryser
Frequently cited by students of architectural history and declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, this 1931 "Zig Zag Moderne" service station will be demolished if Heritage does not identify a new location within 90 days. In recognition of its importance, the Planning Commission has required the current owner to pay costs of dismantling and moving the structure, if Heritage can facilitate storage and reconstruction on a new site. Interested parties should call Heritage at 441-3000. *(Photo by Kevin Levine)*

**SPECKELS RESIDENCE**

The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board has voted to recommend designation of the Spreckels residence complex as a city landmark.

The stone-sheathed Baroque Revival residence was designed by the San Francisco architectural firm of MacDonald and Applegarth for local philanthropists Adolph B. and Alma de Bretteville Spreckels. The setting was consciously created by the Spreckels family, who reviewed older existing structures fronting on Jackson Street in order to create the dramatic site, running from Washington Street through to Jackson. The scheme is united by the matching stone walls which surround the entire property, the center island planters in Octavia Street and the garage complex on Jackson.

The great terraced lawn constitutes probably the largest remaining privately owned garden in the city. Given its location at the crest of the hill, the complex can be seen from great distances to the north. While landmark designation would not prohibit additional construction in the open spaces, it will ensure that any proposals for new construction must be reviewed for compatibility with the historically and architecturally significant features of the property.

"Citizens to Save the Spreckels Slope" has organized to educate the public about the importance of landmark designation and to act as a structure for the many individuals and organizations that treasure this very important part of San Francisco. A vote of the Planning Commission is anticipated August 24. Heritage and "Citizens..." urge supporters to write Douglas Engmann, President of the Planning Commission and Robert Passmore, Zoning Administrator, at the Department of City Planning, 450 McAllister Street, San Francisco, 94102. If you can help in other ways, write "Citizens," 2000 Jackson Street, San Francisco, 94109 or call Heritage. If the designation is adopted by the Commission, the Board of Supervisors will also have to approve it later in the year. Supporters are also needed for that effort.

**840 WASHINGTON STREET**

There are few buildings in Chinatown which contribute to the visual quality of the proposed historic district more than does the Chen, Woo and Yuen Family Associations building at 840 Washington. With its "sinecized" top balcony silhouetted against the skyline, this four-story structure (1909; remodelled in 1920 by the San Francisco architect A.A. Cantin) functions as a visible terminus to Waverly Place. The building looms on the western rise of Washington Street, while the handsome pressed metal ground floor canopy significantly enhances the pedestrian scale of the street. The San Francisco City Building Department recently requested the Family Association to repair the floor of the top balcony. This led the owners to assess the overall condition of the decorative elements attached to the structure and to conclude that the partially damaged ground floor canopy should be removed. At this point, Heritage entered into a discussion with mem-

continued on next page
bers of the Family Associations and representatives of the Departments of Building and City Planning in an effort to gain the owners' commitment to restore the canopy. Work has now begun on the building and the outcome of these discussions is still uncertain. Heritage will continue to encourage retention and proper restoration of the canopy and to offer assistance to the Family Associations.

SCENIC WAY

City landmark status has been proposed for a group of World War I vintage homes at 9, 25, and 45 Scenic Way, in Sea Cliff, together with their associated gardens. The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and the owner of one of the homes requested Heritage's help in preparing the research on these Willis Polk designed buildings after a proposal was made to alter 45 Scenic Way.

The houses, which date from 1915-17, are characteristic of Polk's interest in modest-scale urban dwellings carried out in his own distinctive amalgamation of French and Italian architectural vocabularies. The residences were built for Florence W. and John M. Procter. Mr. Procter was a principal of the developers Chamberlain & Procter who commissioned numerous significant commercial structures for sites throughout the state during the 1910s and 1920s. The Procter houses are among the earliest residences introduced in Sea Cliff (1913), which was laid out by the landscape engineer Mark Daniels for the developer John C. Brickell. As such, they contributed to a standard of architectural imagery, siting and high caliber of design that effected the rapid development of Sea Cliff.

The proposal is pending action by the LPAB. Heritage is attempting to work with the owner of 45 Scenic Way to eliminate the objections to the designation.

ALCAZAR THEATRE

The exotic Alcazar Theatre (1919) at 650 Geary Street is one of a small number of Islamic Revival structures in San Francisco. Its architect was T. Patterson Ross (whose architectural "palette" encompassed the Mission Revival as well as the "sinicized" vocabulary of Chinatown). The two-story theatre was to be restored in an agreement between the city and the developer, Metro-Post, Ltd. as part of the approvals granted to construct two high-rise condominium structures next to the theatre. The City Planning Department has raised questions as to the developer's compliance with the agreement. In an effort to impose the preservation protections of Article 10 of the City Planning Code, the Landmarks Board prepared an historic landmark nomination, which the City Planning Commission approved in June.

MT. ZION HOSPITAL

As part of an upcoming integration of the facilities and activities of the University of California, San Francisco and Mt. Zion Hospital, UCSF has announced that several buildings of architectural and historic significance will be demolished and replaced by two new structures. The buildings slated for demolition include the 1912-14 Hellman Building, at the northwest corner of Post and Scott Streets, and the Nurses' Residence (1925), midblock on Sutter, between Scott and Divisadero. The two are among the structures built to accommodate Mt. Zion Hospital, originally founded in 1887 to provide medical care for the city's Jewish population. UCSF has engaged Environmental Science Associates, a local consulting firm, to prepare an Environmental Impact Report on the project. Heritage has learned that ESA will recommend that the proposed demolitions be reviewed by the Landmarks Board. Heritage will seek also to review the proposals.
HERITAGE SELCTS  
"AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE" JURY

Heritage has assembled a five-member jury, representing varied perspectives in today's preservation community, to judge its inaugural Awards for Excellence in Architectural Conservation. As announced in the spring issue of the Newsletter, the purpose of this juried awards program is to increase public understanding and generate support for the sensitive treatment of San Francisco's rich architectural environment. Heritage will honor the persons, organizations and firms responsible for excellence and creativity in architectural conservation and new design in context.

The jurors are:

- James Marston Fitch, AIA, director of historic preservation with the New York firm of Beyer, Blinder & Belle, Architects & Planners. Mr. Fitch has had a long and distinguished career as educator, author-journalist and practitioner in architectural preservation, history and criticism. On the faculty at Columbia University since 1954, where he founded the master of science program in architectural preservation in 1963, Mr. Fitch is currently professor emeritus.
- Alice Ross Carey, AIA, is a preservation architect in San Francisco, a member of the San Francisco Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, a member of the Board of Trustees of San Francisco Beautiful and former chair of the San Francisco AIA Preservation Committee.
- Steade R. Craigo, AIA, is Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer and Senior Restoration Architect for the California State Office of Historic Preservation.
- Elizabeth R. Thompson, FAIA, is editor of Architecture California and retired senior editor of Architectural Record.
- Mark P. Ryser is Executive Director of San Francisco Heritage.

The preservation arena in San Francisco has undergone significant changes since 1979, when Heritage published its precedent-setting downtown survey, Splendid Survivors. Based on that data and further surveys, in 1985 the City of San Francisco adopted a new Downtown Plan, one of the nation's strongest preservation plans, which provides protection for 250 significant buildings and encourages preservation of an additional 182 contributory buildings.

The following year, voters approved Proposition M, setting priority policies in the City's Master Plan that include preservation of landmarks and historic buildings and conservation of neighborhood character citywide. Coincidentally, between 1976 and 1986, federal tax incentives increasingly favored preservation by making the rehabilitation and reuse of older structures economically attractive.

While the preservation struggle continues and vigilance is still needed, the days of trench warfare over issues on the scale of the City of Paris and the Fitzhugh demolitions seem to have passed. Heritage today is in the forefront of a broad coalition of informed and sophisticated preservation interests, including neighborhood associations, working within the context of city planning policies that offer more protection to historic buildings than ten years ago.

In sum, it is appropriate now for Heritage to take stock of the tangible results of preservation efforts in San Francisco and to acknowledge those who have helped to sustain and to enrich this city's renowned urban character. Projects eligible for the Awards for Excellence in Architectural Conservation include any projects completed between January 1, 1977 and July 1, 1989, within the City and County of San Francisco.

Awards will be given in the following categories:

1) Restoration and Rehabilitation: returning a structure to its appearance at an earlier time through the historically accurate recovery or replacement of altered, irreparable or missing architectural features (Restoration); or the systematic repair of a structure by retaining original elements important to its historic architectural character (Rehabilitation).

2) Adaptive Reuse and Sympathetic Alterations: the modification of a structure to serve a new and different purpose without compromising its historic integrity (Adaptive Reuse), or improvements in a structure which respect its historic character (Sympathetic Alterations).

3) New Construction in Historic Settings: a new building within an historic district or a new building which responds to the existing architectural character of its neighborhood, or an addition to an individually significant building.

Awards will be announced during a luncheon on October 24, at the Stanford Court Hotel. An exhibition of winning projects will be on display, and James Marston Fitch will be the featured speaker. Deadline for entries in Heritage's 1989 Awards for Excellence in Architectural Conservation is 5 pm, September 1, 1989. For additional information and entry forms, call 441-3000.
Kim de Steiguer came by his interest in residential rehabs at an early age, in Palmdale. When Kim was seven, his father encouraged him and two brothers to fix up a house and rent it out. More recently, de Steiguer has completed two residential rehabs in the 1400 block of Page Street.

The first undertaking was to rescue a set of stuccoed-over Stick Victorian flats at 1466. Stripping off the stucco and underlying chicken wire revealed the shadow lines of the original detailing on the façade. Kim took clues for the restoration from those scars and from the features left intact in the slot on the left side of the building, which, for some reason, had not been stripped of detail and covered with stucco.

Even with these hints, de Steiguer admits that he had to improvise a certain amount of the detail. He and Curt, his tenant in one of the flats, drove around town looking for buildings of the same period and similar design to glean what ideas they could. They got no help from the erstwhile twin next door, long since "Mediterraneanized". In some cases they created their own ornamentation, like the sunburst with undulating rays and a stylized goat medallion, inspired by Kim's family crest.

Salvage provided some of the details, but skilled carpenters, hired by a contractor with a particularly good sense for Victorian restoration, had to replace most of the wood trim. Kim and Curt did some of the simple pieces themselves with the contractor's bandsaw. Gail Redmond did the turnings for the entry columns.

The door to one of the flats is original, rescued from the basement, where it had served as a makeshift partition. A carpenter reproduced the second door and recreated the transoms that had fallen victim to modernization. The façade still bears scars from the fire axe used to remove the original ornamentation. Kim decided not to sand those away. Painted over but still discernible, they reflect a part of the house's history.

The original wood windows and the cornice remained intact, as is often the case with the stucco or asbestos shingle "modernization" of Victorians. But there was no way de Steiguer or his contractor could have inferred that the roof was originally capped with a trapazoidal peak. This fact turned up in an old photo of the street which Kim discovered only after the work was finished. However, as he says, the work he has done does not preclude a fully historic restoration of that feature—maybe by a future owner.

Down the street, at 1424 Page, the stucco work had been more refined, but the modernization resulted in more drastic alterations than at 1466. In addition to all the trim, previous owners also removed an overhang at the cornice line of this gabled Queen Anne, built by George Hinkel in 1892. Restoration of the cornice entailed costly roof repairs and recreation of the portico. One column from the original portal remained, and Gail Redmond used it as a model for two others, cutting one in half, lengthwise, for the pilasters.

Kim provided a small porch above the portico, off the second floor. Although almost surely not original, this attractive feature is compatible with the spirit of the design. All window openings had been altered and wood frames replaced with aluminum. By chance, the original window under the peak had been tossed in the attic. Kim returned it to its original place and used it as a model for recreating the other windows.

On the inside, the doors and frames in the dining room were original and served as models for restoring the other trim. Kim returned the kitchen to its original state, removing sheet rock from the walls and installing custom cabinet work that suits the historic character of the house yet provides ample countertop and work surface. A Spark gas stove, circa 1925—"modern" for this Victorian house—serves the household well.

"Do not begin a house rehab with preconceived ideas," de Steiguer advises. "Work step by step, letting the puzzle of the house reveal itself." Nor does he believe the whole project has to be completed in one stroke. "However, take care that each step in the process is a step in the right direction, so that you will not have to undo mistakes in the future."
HERITAGE GUESTS ENJOY
A NIGHT AT THE CIRCUS

Since our first soirée fundraiser 16 years ago, Heritage has hosted annual gala evenings with dining, dancing, and gaming at San Francisco Landmark buildings. On June 9 we continued the tradition with the event held at San Francisco Landmark #183, the International Style One Bush Street, known as the Crown Zellerbach Building when constructed in 1959. We added a theme to the 1989 event, a take-off on the very successful Cirque du Soleil of Montreal, calling it Cirque de Soirée. With the addition of circus acts, it proved to be a festive occasion.

The evening began in the lobby of One Bush Street. Tightrope walkers and clowns performed on the open terrace, while guests partook of Belvedere Wines donated by Hambrecht & Quist. The party then moved up to the 13th floor and 14,000 square feet of unfinished space which offered an almost 360 degree view of downtown San Francisco.

Heritage recreated a circus atmosphere with masses of brightly colored balloons. The gaming tables were at the west end and Walt Tolleson’s Orchestra at the east end with a circus ring in the middle, where the jugglers, acrobats, chimpanzees, fire-eaters, and clowns performed non-stop.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THOSE WHO GENTLELY SUPPORTED CIRQUE DE SOIRÉE

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Photo: R. Claymore
SAN FRANCISCO MARKS
50 YEARS OF PUBLIC HOUSING

In 1938, San Francisco established a housing authority under the 1937 U.S. Housing Act. Responding to the social ethic of the modern movement in architecture and pressed by economic realities of the Depression, some of San Francisco's best-known architects enlisted in the federally financed effort to provide low-rent housing for the city's poor.

Northern California's first experience with Depression-era public housing was under the Rural Resettlement Administration, in the mid-1930s. Its aim was to provide decent low-cost housing for migrant farm workers. The western regional office of the RRA opened in Berkeley in 1935 under Burton Cairns, a San Francisco-born, Berkeley-trained architect who planted the idea of "social housing" among Bay Area architects. The office moved to San Francisco in 1957, when the RRA merged with the Farm Security Administration.

Also in the late '30s, Catherine Bauer came to UC Berkeley as a lecturer. A protege of New York critic Lewis Mumford, Ms. Bauer helped shape the growing national consensus in support of public housing with her 1934 book, Modern Housing. She married architect William Wurster and remained in the Bay Area, where, according to Roger Montgomery, "she had an enormous effect in developing the norms for community design and building a sense of camaraderie in doing critical, socially consequential work."

In 1937, the U.S. Housing Act, which Catherine Bauer helped to author, set up the U.S. Housing Authority. Its mandate was to assist the States in the construction of public rental housing for the lower third of American families that could not afford to get themselves out of the slums.

Advocates of a federally financed housing program argued that it would revive the construction and the building materials industries and stimulate employment among architects and in the building trades. It would solve the housing shortage. Elimination of slums and improvement in living conditions for the poor would reduce crime and juvenile delinquency. Public health problems, including high infant mortality, could be eradicated with the elimination of their breeding grounds. Removing these hazards to health and safety would not only lift the burden from their victims, but would ease the burden that fell on the taxpayer, who must pay their costs.

Under the Housing Act, States had to pass enabling legislation, and cities and towns were to set up local housing authorities, if they wanted a share of the $800 million provided by Congress. Up to 90 percent of the construction cost of low-rent projects could be borrowed from the federal government by the local housing authority, which bore full responsibil-

Valencia Gardens in c. 1940 photo by Roger Sturtevant. (Courtesy of The Oakland Museum)
Perry designed Potrero Terrace. Sunnydale was the work of Albert Roller and Roland I. Stringham. In addition, noted landscape architect Thomas D. Church designed the grounds at Potrero Terrace, Sunnydale, Valencia Gardens and North Beach Place.

Across the nation noted architects turned to designing public housing under the influence of the social ethic of Modernism. It was the paradox of industrialism, in the view of the Modern Movement, that not only did industrialism cause the massing of poor workers in urban slums, but it generated the solution to the problem of housing the poor as well.

In the opinion of Le Corbusier and others, the products and processes of modern technology—reinforced concrete, mass production, prefabrication—made it economically feasible to produce housing of simple, standardized design for the working class without compromising quality. This workers’ housing, set in a park-like environment, they believed, would provide the humane living conditions the poor needed. The modern architect would be an instrument of social betterment.

The San Francisco Housing Authority selected architects not by soliciting proposals, but on the recommendation of staff, who worked from their knowledge of the architects in the city. Other than the requirements of minimum housing standards and budget constraints, architects were on their own in design and choice of imagery.

Occasionally, a gesture toward regional imagery appears, as with the hipped tile roofs of Frederick Meyer’s Potrero Terrace, but for the most part, the results were simple, unadorned structures. That was in keeping with contemporary architectural trends and, in the case of William Wurster, with his concept of residential design.

Wurster and Harry Thomsen, Jr. designed the 246-unit Valencia Gardens. The architects stated that from the start, “we agreed to do all we could to stress the dignity of the individual” and to produce a design that would be on a human scale (Pencil Points, January 1944). Twenty-two three-story buildings of 8 different types comprise Valencia Gardens. They are arranged, serpentine fashion, to form three garden courts and two service courts and give some of the intimate feeling of a small neighborhood. No more than six apartments shared a common stairway or balcony-corridor. There are no long unbroken façades, and the architects specified painting the exterior walls in several colors to diminish the sense of scale. Occasional small areas of glass brick lightened the weight of the concrete walls and admitted natural light to stairwells.

The garden courts are, in fact, mostly concrete, because housing authorities found that extensive landscaping added greatly to maintenance costs. However, Thomas Church designed the plantings in raised areas so that, from eye level, the courts appear to be mostly green. Valencia Gardens also has several Bufano sculptures, received by the Housing Authority from the artist, in lieu of rent for his project apartment.

Community facilities included laundry rooms, social halls and hobby and craft rooms. Overall, in the assessment of Sally Carrighar, writing in the March 1943 issue of Architect and Engineer, Valencia Gardens is “a set of buildings humbly conceived in the idea that human beings...deserve a dignified, human environment in which to live.”

In May 1941, Mark Daniels and Henry T. Howard presented plans for the Chinatown project, incorporating the type of Chinese-inspired ornamentation long familiar to the neighborhood. However, with industry geared up to serve America’s role as the “arsenal of democracy,” steel shortages put a halt to all public housing construction in September 1941. The government allocated sufficient supplies two months later for Valencia Gardens and Westside Courts to proceed to completion. Other projects in the planning stage were put on hold until after World War II. In the interim, the San Francisco Housing Authority built temporary wartime housing for 35,000 workers and their families at Hunters Point.

In 1949, Congress funded construc-

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dunes, and military personnel considered it a hardship post. During the 1880s, the Army Corps of Engineers planted the trees and shrubs which make the Presidio so pleasant today. In these years, too, the Army built a frame chapel, located next to the Officers' Club, and a sutler's, or post trader's house. An Italian immigrant, Angelo Baretta, operated the sutler's store, the precursor of the modern post exchange, under contract from the Army.

The Presidio's next great period of building came at the end of the Indian Wars (1890), when the Army abandoned its far-flung system of western forts in favor of more centralized posts. The Spanish-American War, at the end of the century, also increased activity at the Presidio, as men and material passed through the post to serve America's widening Pacific interests. Pershing Hall, originally the Officers' Guest House, the row of enlisted men's barracks north of the main parade ground, the bank and post office and a new hospital all date from this period. Local architect W. H. Wilcox designed the Presidio General Hospital, named in 1911 for Dr. Jonathan Letterman. Although new medical facilities replaced most of Wilcox's hospital quadrangle in 1975, the administration building, a row of officers' quarters, and one of the

original wards survive.

With the construction of Letterman and the completion of the structures surrounding the Main Parade Ground, the eastern portion of the base reached its present level of development. In the first decades of the

Mission Revival barracks at Fort Scott
(Photographs on this page:
Jack Schafer of Page & Turnbull, Inc.)

Brick barracks, built between 1895 & 1897.
and Fort Mason and the Oakland Army Terminal served as the embarkation point for American troops destined for the Pacific. However, Letterman Hospital served troops wounded in the Pacific and made the post essential to the war effort.

Congress first considered closing the Presidio after World War I, and the issue surfaced several times in the '20s and '30s. In 1946, the Truman administration offered the base as a permanent site for the United Nations. When that prospect faded, real estate interests spoke of subdividing the land for housing. The Korean War and later the Vietnam War delayed further discussion of alternative uses for the Presidio.

In 1971, Congress established the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, thus securing the Presidio for public use. Under provisions of the legislation that created the GGNRA, the Presidio will become the newest component of the nation's finest urban national park. But many questions regarding its final disposition remain.

Of concern is the Presidio's greatest historic resource, its 800 buildings, 355 of them registered national landmarks, and 6.2 million square feet of floor space. Because of its size, the Presidio and its structures could become a major liability if their reuse is not well planned and if adequate funding is not found to maintain the post properly. Those who are involved in planning for the Presidio fear that it might be carved up, particularly if no appropriate use were found for the post and Congress came under pressure to amend the legislation that created the park to permit private development.

The National Park Service has involved a number of the Bay Area's leading public interest groups in early planning for the future. In a major effort at public education, Heritage, the Sierra Club, the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Park Association and City Guides have created a task force which, over the next eighteen months, plans to hold two Presidio walks per week. Heritage will offer a summer walk through the Presidio on September 23, with an additional walk on November 18.

This concerted educational effort seeks to assure that an informed public will meet the challenge of deciding the future of the Presidio.

R.P.
"Treasure Island Rediscovered" is the title of a symposium on the architectural and artistic heritage of the 1939-40 Golden Gate International Exposition. Through a series of slide lectures and a panel discussion, the half-day symposium will explore the "Pacific Basin" creations for the fair by such architects as Arthur Brown, Jr, Timothy Pflueger and William Merchant and artists such as Ralph Stackpole, Helen Phillips and Antonio Sotomayor. The symposium is set for Saturday, September 16, 12:30-5:30 pm at the Treasure Island Naval Station. Admission is $15 per person. For further information, call 524-2015 or 845-9197. Space is limited; reserve early.

Architect and Heritage member, Zachary Nathan serves on the oversight committee which monitors the expenditure of $90 million in school repair bonds approved by voters as Proposition A last year. To date, Nathan reports, the San Francisco Unified School District has upgraded heating and ventilation systems and undertaken repainting, roof repairs and yard resurfacing. Therefore, serious questions of maintaining architectural integrity have not yet arisen. Nathan believes that the current Prop A project manager is sensitive to the architectural value of the buildings. While only a portion of the recently completed work on the Potrero Hill building which now houses the International Studies Academy was funded from Prop A, the handsome renovation of the Deco interior, according to Nathan, augurs well for future projects. Heritage has offered its assistance to the school district in assuring that repairs and renovations to school buildings will respect their architectural character.

During Preservation Week in May, the St. Anthony Foundation received a Governor's Award for Historic Preservation in recognition of the "sensitive adaptive re-use of an historically significant residence to provide a low-income group home." The late Queen Anne residence located on Alamo Square, at 818 Steiner St. (See Heritage Newsletter, October 1985), has been renovated to serve as a halfway house, called Covenant House, for men recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. In the words of the Governor's citation, "The Foundation preserved the historic character of the structure, successfully integrating the special new use into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhood." Heritage provided the architectural services for this project.

Win Hayward, a long-active member of Heritage, reports that extensive renovation of the Mission Presbyterian Church at 23rd and Capp Street has been completed. The public is invited to dedication services on Sunday, September 17 at 3 pm. Tours of the church and a reception in the social hall will follow. In addition, the church will be included in a house tour by the Victorian Alliance on Sunday afternoon, October 1.

Vincent Marsh, Secretary of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, writes that on June 1, the City of San Francisco began a year-long survey of 2,100 unreinforced masonry buildings. The National Historic Preservation Federal Grant-In-Aid Program has funded the study. The Landmarks Board is coordinating the architectural and historical survey and has the assistance of the Preservation Committee of the San Francisco AIA and the Victorian Alliance. The Department of City Planning will use the information in preparing an Environmental Impact Report and a socio-economic study which will assist officials and the public in making informed decisions how best to address the issues of seismic retrofitting.
**Booknotes**

_Icons and Aliens: Law, Aesthetics, and Environmental Change_  
John J. Costonis  

In _Icons and Aliens_, John J. Costonis has given us an extended essay that deals with the tension inherent in what he calls "legal aesthetics," the social effort to determine what in our architectural heritage must be preserved and what is, at some level, dispensable. To help describe the conflict between what is old and new, accepted and not accepted, Costonis characterizes two types of buildings or institutions. Icons please the greater part of the community and give it psychological comfort. Aliens are intruders, which endanger our collective sense of security or identity.

However, Costonis' topic is not as clear as the above dichotomy would suggest, for even a society with shared values does not always share personal or cultural tastes. One person's landmark may be another's economic burden, as in the case of a couple who bought a townhouse in New York's Greenwich Village Historic District and found an historic landmark, in the form of a classical revival gas station, in their backyard.

As Costonis points out, time can also shift our perceptions. In fifty years, the Golden Gate has passed from alien, characterized by one critic as an "eye-sore," to the status of a most holy icon. In even a shorter time the first McDonald's restaurant has become a cultural, if not an aesthetic, landmark.

Nor is there any legal definition of good taste that a free society can reasonably impose on its citizens. As Costonis points out, "little can be said about legal aesthetics in one breath that cannot plausibly be denied in the next." This ambivalence pervades the book, and at its end Costonis can offer no clearer solution to the problems he raises than a plea for informed judgment.

Despite its failure to reach firm conclusions, _Icons and Aliens_ is worth reading. The book provides a comprehensive discussion of the major issues surrounding preservation and their philosophical, legal, and psychological implications. It is well-written and Costonis uses his illustrations, mostly cartoons and photographs, to illuminate his themes most strikingly.

The book is not without its problems, however. Given the complexity of the subject and Costonis' attempt to deal with it clearly, comprehensively, and dispassionately, the book tends to overuse extended metaphors and in places it becomes rather repetitious. In short, it would have profited from more rigorous editing.

This is not a book to take on vacation or to read while trying to fall asleep. It does, however, provoke thought on virtually every page. And that is high praise for any book.

Rick Propas

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Since its appearance in 1974, California Design, 1910 (which accompanied an exhibition of the same title) has been regarded as a seminal document of California's vital role in the international Arts and Crafts Movement.

The handsome reprint of this book, with a new foreward, fits into a somewhat different body of literature than was true in the mid-1970s. At that time, local historians still felt the need both to clarify California's notable contribution to American architecture and to redress the often singular Modernist interpretation of the past. Today, California's architectural heritage is better appreciated and understood, thanks in large part to a number of the contributors to this volume.

Eudorah M. Moore, an editor of the volume and author of its "Introduction" suggests that California (circa 1890-1920) came close to realizing the arts and crafts ideal as expressed by its British founders, the critic John Ruskin and the designer/theorist William Morris. That ideal entailed "an attitude towards life and objects, a value statement not a design style. Within the attitude, styles could be as diverse as the visions which created them."

The volume opens with a stimulating essay by Robert W. Winter on "The Arroyo Culture" which establishes the ideology associated with the international Arts and Crafts movement in Pasadena, Berkeley and elsewhere in the state. This ideology developed as a response to the environment (especially as experienced out of doors), progressive ideals and the family. The Hispanic tradition as well as an interest in the cultural artifacts of Native Americans infuse the emerging Craftsman imagery with a regional sense of the particular.

Through the successive, lavishly illustrated chapters on the various media, practitioners, schools of design and outstanding examples of the Craftsman Movement, the reader is presented the range and coherence of the artistic production of the period. Among the essays which appear as outstanding discussions of their subjects are those by David Gebhard on Irving Gill, Harvey L. Jones on Arthur and Lucia Mathews and Randell L. Makinson on Charles and Henry Greene. Individual catalogue entries and short biographies at the back of the book also provide valuable information.

Lauren Weiss Bricker
CHINATOWN FORUM

Heritage will sponsor a major public presentation in the fall that will look at the issue of whether Chinatown should be designated an historic district. The forum, co-sponsored by the Chinese Culture Foundation, will include speakers who support the creation of a Chinatown Historic District and those in opposition. Experts will also discuss the rich history of Chinatown and the Chinese in San Francisco and address social concerns and the issue of seismic stability. Details will be announced.

DOCENT COUNCIL

On May 15, a small group of docents and walks guides met to form a new Heritage Docent Council. This came in response to a number of requests and a survey which indicated that docents and walks guides felt the need to communicate more closely with each other. On June 20, the Council sponsored its first event, a talk by urban archeologist Allen Pastroh.

The Council's second event, Wednesday, July 12, was a tour of a 1904 Russian Hill mansion designed by T. Patterson Ross. The Council looks forward to producing a newsletter and sponsoring continuing education programs for members.

FALL LECTURE SERIES

This fall, Heritage will offer a three-part lecture series that will trace San Francisco's architectural development from the earliest days to the present. The speakers, all nationally known authors and historians, have contributed greatly to the public's understanding of Bay Area architecture. Richard Longstreth, who is head of the preservation program at George Washington University, will lecture on San Francisco's early development. He is the author of On the Edge of the World, a study of the work of Willis Polk, Ernest Coxhead, A.C. Schweinfurth and Bernard Maybeck. David Gebhard's subject will be the crucial period between the World Wars, when San Francisco assumed its modern profile. Gebhard is Professor of Architectural History and Curator of the Architectural Drawing Collection at UC Santa Barbara. His works include The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California. Architecture critic and historian Sally B. Woodbridge will consider postwar development: Ms. Woodbridge, West Coast correspondent for Progressive Architecture since 1973, has authored several guides to California architecture, including Architecture San Francisco: The Guide.

Heritage members will receive details shortly, but those wishing to plan ahead should keep Tuesday evenings in late October and November open.

SUMMER WALKS CONTINUE

A tour of the Inner Richmond inaugurated Heritage's summer series of walks on July 8. The series continues on August 26, with a tour of Russian Hill ($25 for Heritage members/$30 for non-members) that will feature the interiors of three houses designed by Willis Polk, as well as a garden tour and a refreshment stop at Le Petit Cafe. The Presidio Walk ($5/$7) concludes the series on September 23. Space is still available for both tours. Call 411-3000 for reservations.

Public Housing

continued from page 9

tion of projects deferred by the war. William Merchant's Bernal Dwellings and North Beach Place, designed by Henry Gutterson and Ernest Born, were completed in the early 1950s, along with Chinatown's Ping Yuen in a revision of Mark Daniels' plan.

SFHA continues to operate all of the projects built or planned before World War II. Construction of public housing in the city proceeded through the '50s and '60s. Building of large-scale projects to house families peaked in the early 1960s. Since then, the SFHA has constructed several hundred units for elderly and handicapped residents, many in smaller, "scattered site" projects which are physically, and often socially, better integrated into an existing neighborhood context than traditional projects.

At present, the Housing Authority has plans to demolish three highrise structures at Yerba Buena Plaza, in the Western Addition, to make way for 203 walk-up apartments whose design is intended to fit the neighborhood context. In 1987, the SFHA began the reconstruction of a 90-year old fire-damaged structure at 1357 Eddy Street, which now provides eight family apartments. The interiors have been upgraded, but the original Victorian facades are preserved. The Authority has come a long way from the days when its publications showed rows of Victorian structures as examples of the "substandard housing" that new projects would replace.

Increasingly, housing development corporations are providing alternative rental housing in San Francisco, often by rehabilitating older, architecturally worthwhile structures. Such projects not only preserve neighborhood character but offer residents a sense of continuity in the community. A future issue of the Newsletter will explore the subject of rehabs for low and moderate rental housing in the city.
CALENDAR

AUGUST
August 17 through November 30
San Francisco Architecture Club
Series of 8 lectures. Call 441-1098

August 26, 10 am
Heritage Russian Hill Walk
(See page 15)

Through October
Heritage Chinatown Walks
Saturdays, 10 am

SEPTEMBER
September 16, 12:30-5:30
"Treasure Island Rediscovered"
(See page 12)

September 17, 3 pm
Mission Presbyterian Church Dedication
(See page 12)

September 23, 10 am
Heritage Presidio Walk
(See page 15)

Through September 28
Exhibit, "Archaeological Discoveries at 505 Montgomery"
Free. Call 433-4555

September 26-November 21
SFMOMA--AIA/SF
Series of 5 lectures on contemporary architecture

OCTOBER
October 1, 1-5 pm
Victorian Alliance House Tour
Call 863-8036

October 24
Heritage Architectural Awards Luncheon
(See page 5)

NOVEMBER
November 4
Alameda Victorian Preservation Society Ball
Call 521-9421/523-3779

November 18, 10 am
GGNPA Presidio Walk
"Two Centuries of Architecture"
Reservations: 556-2236

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December 3
Heritage's Annual Holiday Open House
Details will follow

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