Proposed Changes to Article 10 Will Strengthen Protections for Landmarks

It is ironic that San Francisco, one of the most handsome cities in America has one of the weakest landmarks ordinances of any community of its stature. Our 20-year old ordinance, forward looking when adopted in 1967, and virtually unchanged since, has long needed revisions to supplement the largely advisory and “friendly persuasion” approach.

More than two years of discussion and negotiation between preservation organizations, the Western Regional Office of the National Trust, members of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB) and the Planning Department have lead to a proposed new Article 10 of the Planning Code. If adopted by the Board of Supervisors, the new landmarks ordinance will virtually prohibit demolition of landmarks and “contributory” buildings in historic districts—except where the property retains no substantive value of reasonable use, or where imminent safety hazards exist.

The new Article 10 will change the role of the LPAB from an advisory group making recommendations to the Planning Commission. Instead, the LPAB will be the body charged with implementation and administration of the landmarks ordinance. Specifically the renamed “Landmarks Board” will be able to refer their determinations on landmarks and historic district designations directly to the Board of Supervisors for action as well as make legally binding decisions to issue Certificates of Appropriateness (C of A’s) which authorize construction, alteration or demolition. Under the new ordinance, the Planning Commission would no longer exercise veto authority over the Board’s actions. Instead, the Commission will comment on the planning implications, if any, of proposed designations. The new Article 10 also codifies criteria for the issuance of C of A’s based on the (National) Secretary of Interior’s Standards which will bring San Francisco criteria in line with these widely accepted guidelines.

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This extraordinary stained glass dome illuminating the interior of the historic Ellinwood home in Pacific Heights could be legally protected under new Landmarks Ordinance.
ARTICLE 10, continued from page 1

In addition, the Landmarks Board will be responsible for maintaining a local register of historic properties; reviewing structures for compliance with the Proposition M priority policy covering historic buildings; reviewing land use, housing, development performed by the city, state and federal governments as they pertain to historic preservation; rendering advice to property owners; reviewing environmental documents; and developing a comprehensive preservation program for the City.

Under the existing Article 10, all building or demolition applications affecting properties proposed for protection under a pending designation are not acted upon by the City for a period of six months after initiation of the designation. The proposed new article would allow approval of permits for work consistent with the provision of the pending designation. The new proposal will also allow the suspension period to be extended for an additional six-month period by the Board of Supervisors, if action to adopt the protections has not been finally taken.

The proposed new Article would authorize the protection of privately owned interior spaces of exceptional significance, if they are already accessible to the public or if the owner grants permission. The Board is also empowered to protect highly unprotected interiors, not otherwise included, if they are threatened with deliberate destruction. Finally, the new Article 10 provides penalties for unlawful alteration or demolition of a landmark including the limitation on development of such structures to the floor ratio, dwelling unit density or building volume of the demolished building for a period of 20 years.

Designated landmarks and historic districts have thus far received tenuous protection from Article 10. With the creation of a stronger Landmarks Board, and the cooperation of the preservation community, the new landmarks ordinance will lay the groundwork for more systematic preservation planning, and provide current and future historic landmarks much needed permanent protections.

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Baker & Hamilton Building
Heritage has recently completed the research for a formal application for City Landmark status on the historically and architecturally significant Baker & Hamilton Building at Seventh and Townsend. Baker & Hamilton, a wholesale hardware firm, is the direct corporate descendent of several firms which date to 1849. The company and its predecessors, played a key role in the agricultural development of the California.

Completed in 1905, the red-brick building designed by Sutton and Weeks was—according to news reports of the day—the first of the major brick buildings to be built in the South of Market-Mission Bay area. It narrowly escaped the 1906 Fire which burned to within one block of the structure.

Vacated by Baker & Hamilton several years ago, the building is currently only partially occupied by several small retail businesses. The adjacent parking lot is regularly used for the South of Market Bazaar.

Haight & Cole Streets
The well-publicized pre-dawn torching of the controversial "Thrifty Jr." drugstore building in the Haight in September seriously damaged two Edwardian-era apartment structures at Cole and Haight Streets. Both buildings are important to the rich and substantially intact 1890s and turn-of-the-century architectural character of the Haight neighborhood. Whether it will be feasible to reconstruct these buildings is not yet known.

The remarkable Belle-Epoque building at 1679-81 Haight, occupied by Neda's Flowers, is among those in the area of the fire which were scorched but not badly burned. Designed and built in 1904 by James Dunn, this structure is similar to two larger buildings Dunn designed at 1347 McAllister and 2415 Franklin.

1340 Vallejo
Late last year, fire did substantial damage to this fine example of a post-1906 multi-unit residential structure. When an application for the building's demolition and the construction of a new building was filed, Heritage, Russian Hill neighbors and later the Planning Department became concerned about the possible loss of this valuable architectural contributor to the western Russian Hill streetscape.

Designed by architects Salfield & Kohlberg, who also designed the well-known Columbus Tower and the old Transamerica Building in North Beach, the Vallejo building was built in 1911. Together with a similar structure on an opposite corner, it creates a handsome "frame" to White street. Heritage is currently seeking to assist the building's owner by offering the services of qualified specialists to study the feasibility of rehabilitation. Independent architect Mark Pierce and structural engineer Jack Laws of SDE have donated their time to assess the structural condition of the building.

The possibility of restoring this fire-damaged Edwardian apartment to its original stately presence at Vallejo and White streets is being explored. Photograph by Kevin Levine.

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Sheraton Palace Hotel

Specific designs and specifications for the upcoming refurbishment of the Sheraton Palace Hotel are rapidly developing. On behalf of its owners, a Japanese corporation, and Sheraton Hotels who lease the building, architects Skidmore Owings and Merrill (SOM), assisted by Page & Turnbull, are seeking approval from the Planning Commission to enable work to begin early in 1989.

Work on the building will involve every floor. The hotel will be closed for an estimated 14 months. In general, the plans focus on preserving and enhancing the original architectural character of the building. Proposed work includes reconstruction of the entire street-level storefronts, construction of meeting rooms and health club facilities on the southwest portion of the building, a return of the main entrance to its original plan with doors recessed into the interior of the building, as well as reconstruction of a glass canopy.

Earlier plans which would have removed the historic Pied Piper Grill and an adjacent bar have been dropped.

Included in the Palace project is the repair and restoration of the Garden Court, one of the most magnificent interior architectural spaces in America. Details of this work, as well as the impacts on other elegant public spaces, are still under discussion.

For the past year, Heritage has been carefully reviewing evolving plans developed by SOM. In reviewing the proposals for work on one of the most historically and architecturally significant structures in San Francisco, Heritage has sought to ensure that fragile historical continuity and the rare grand interior public spaces are not lost in the process. If successful, this major project will help return today’s Palace to the position of social prominence it once held.

Interim Neighborhood Conservation Ordinance

The newest temporary controls on construction in residential areas of the city were approved by the Planning Commission September 29. They include specific language on historic residential buildings.

In areas zoned for one- and two-family dwellings, demolitions of officially designated landmarks or buildings which upon review the Landmarks Board finds would meet the criteria for designation, will be prohibited except under exceedingly narrow circumstances.

The definition of demolition was redrafted to include situations which previously escaped control, including the filing of a series of applications to alter. Under the old rule, the cumulative effect of these changes could amount to de facto demolition.

Although endangered architecturally significant buildings are often located in higher density zones not affected by this ordinance, the ability to prevent demolition of one- and two-family dwellings which meet but have never been designated landmark structures is an important new preservation tool.

If enacted by the Board of Supervisors, the ordinance is expected to remain in effect for 18 months.
Special Report

Housing Developers and Preservation Groups Search For Some Common Ground

John Stewart didn’t start out as a preservationist, but he certainly sounds like one now. When the John Stewart Company first looked at the potential for development of the former Southern Pacific hospital campus at Hayes and Fell Streets, “our primary concern was to build affordable housing,” says Stewart. The main hospital building was rehabilitated into senior housing in the early 1980s by the Sisters of Mercy, and Stewart envisioned replacing the remaining vacant outbuildings and parking lots with clusters of new apartments for low-income families.

San Francisco Heritage and the city’s Landmarks Advisory Board and many neighborhood residents had a different vision, however. “Let’s just say they ‘importuned’ us to look carefully at the preservation of the existing buildings,” says Stewart wryly. With preservation architect Charles Hall Page added to the design team, the Stewart Company changed direction and came up with a new plan to build townhouses and flats in the remaining institutional buildings. “We’re now committed to this rehab effort,” says Stewart, but he admits making it work won’t be easy.

Efforts by John Stewart and other developers to provide affordable housing often appear to conflict with preservation interests. The development of new homes for first-time homebuyers by non-profit BRIDGE Housing on the site of the demolished Polytechnic High School near Kezar Stadium marks one well-known example.

As housing prices in San Francisco continue to spiral upward and the need for affordable housing continues to grow, new housing development could have a major impact on the historic fabric of San Francisco. Yet despite the conflicts and the tensions, housing developers and preservationists are increasingly finding common ground. Indeed, on-going efforts to solve San Francisco’s housing shortage may provide a significant opportunity to combine preservation concerns with the those of affordable housing advocates.

In San Francisco in the last several years a number of important projects have been completed which provide affordable housing through historic preservation. Many involve residential hotels in Chinatown, South of Market, and the Tenderloin. These hotels, many built after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, have provided inexpensive housing to San Francisco’s workforce and a number of non-profit organizations are working to retain them as a stock of affordable housing for the future.

One of the best known examples is the Cadillac Hotel, a 1908 single-room occupancy hotel in the Tenderloin. The Cadillac was designed by Frederick Meyer, architect of several well-known San Francisco structures including the Monadnock Building and the Humboldt Bank Building on Market Street. Reality House West, a neighborhood-based, non-profit agency, acquired the building in 1976 and made basic repairs over the next several years using private donations and foundation grants. A more substantial renovation in 1984-85 was made possible by funds from the city and state. Heritage’s Technical Services Program provided the architectural services in this effort. In the process of this renovation, with the help of Heritage, Reality House West also had the building designated as a city landmark.

To the Cadillac Hotel’s Richard Livingston, preservation is an integral part of his organization’s program. “Historic context is important to the livability of the neighborhood,” says Livingston. “Just as the architect Meyer understood and used the classical architectural vocabulary, he also understood the vocabulary of dense, downtown living.” As a result, Meyer’s building is a better living environment today than many contemporary developments for low-income tenants.

In Chinatown and North Beach, the Chinese Community Housing Corporation (CCHC) has rehabilitated several historic residential hotels, including the Claydon, the Swiss-American, and the Tower. But housing and preservation interests are increasingly concerned

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about protecting the neighborhood and its housing stock as a whole, according to local housing advocate David Prowler. Chinatown’s proximity to downtown, combined with the high densities allowed by the city’s zoning ordinance, threaten historic structures with redevelopment and increase property prices beyond the reach of non-profit organizations like CCHC, who seek to preserve the buildings for the existing low-income tenants. In response, the proposed Chinatown Historic District (currently before the Planning Commission) is part of a strategy formulated by non-profit housing developers and preservationists aimed at saving the buildings of Chinatown and retaining their current occupants.

One of the problems in combining historic preservation and affordable housing, according to Brad Paul, a former staff member of the Western Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and currently a low-income housing advocate with CCHC, revolves around the same profitability issue preservationists face in trying to stop demolitions. Developers often feel that the highest and best use of a site entails bulldozing the existing structures, says Paul. “This highest and best use concept gets transferred to preservation projects, where the façade is saved but the interior use is changed to one that the developer feels will bring the quickest return.”

As a result, reuse of historic buildings often contributes to the loss of affordable units through gentrification of the neighborhood or, as in the Tenderloin and North Beach, conversion to commercial uses. Paul feels San Francisco is generally more sensitive to the “finer grain” of the interaction between housing and preservation than many other cities. As an example, he points to the case of 1000 Montgomery in North Beach, where a tenement was converted to an unsuccessful office building and is now being returned to low-income apartments by CCHC. “The office developers would be heroes in some cities,” says Paul, but there is strong support for housing efforts in San Francisco.

With the era of large federal subsidies long past, affordable housing developers must seek a variety of resources to make these projects work. While the need for affordable housing is critical in San Francisco, groups like the Stewart Company face many difficulties in putting the pieces together for a low-income housing development. Some housing developers regard preservation concerns as just another obstacle, but Stewart feels preservationists can help their own cause and that of affordable housing by being more proactive.

“The process often makes people say ‘This isn’t worth it’,,” says Stewart, who is trying to get his Southern Pacific Hospital plans certified by the State Historic Preservation Office. “The preservation community needs to support these efforts with advocacy and assistance to fast-track projects.”

Affordable housing has been an active area of development in San Francisco over the last few years, due in part to the efforts of the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Economic Development (MOHED). For preservationists, the challenge is to channel the city’s efforts into developments sensitive to the historic fabric of San Francisco.

The new “preservation policy” recently announced by MOHED (see September newsletter) is a major step towards that goal. An outgrowth of the controversial approval of demolition of the Colombo Building on Columbus Avenue as part of a new housing development on the site of the former International Hotel, this new policy statement establishes preservation as a priority consideration in MOHED-supported projects and reaffirms the city’s commitment to safeguards such as Section 106 review and Prop M standards.

“This policy ensures that preservation concerns will be brought into the process early on,” says MOHED’s Bill Rumpf. “The key to making it work is for preservationists to bring some positive suggestions to the discussion rather than simply opposing a project.”

There are some resources available to encourage efforts to provide affordable housing through historic preservation. MOHED assists projects through a variety of programs, including Commu-

The Cadillac Hotel, at Eddy and Leavenworth, was completed in 1908 in the city’s post-quake reconstruction. Handsomely refurbished by Reality House West, it was made a city landmark in 1985.
nity Development Block Grants from the federal government and the Office/Affordable Housing Production Program, which is funded by contributions from downtown office developers. In addition, the Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 provided two major tax shelters for real estate development: the 20 percent tax credit allowed for rehabilitation of a historic structure, and a variable credit available for investment in low-income housing (see box).

Such incentives have made a believer out of John Stewart. The decision to rehabilitate added at least $20,000 per unit in construction costs to his Southern Pacific Hospital project. The loss of units from the original plan for new construction and seismic repairs that will be required for the old structures both contributed to the added costs. But the equity funds raised through the combined preservation and housing tax credits will allow the developer to make up the difference in cost.

Rehab and Low-Income Housing
Tax Credits Can Create Affordability

Preservationists have understood the importance of favorable tax treatment since the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act provoked a boom in preservation activity through use of the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) for historic preservation. Though the 1986 tax overhaul reduced the preservation ITC in value and tightened up the rules for investors, the legislation still provides a 20 percent tax credit for rehabilitation of a historic structure. The credit can be taken in the first year of operation.

The low-income housing credit, introduced by the 1986 tax code revisions, allows the developer of a new low-income housing development to take an annual tax credit of 9 percent of the development cost for 10 years. This is reduced to a 4 percent annual credit if other federal funds are used, or for purchase and rehabilitation of existing residential building. The state adds an additional credit towards state taxes of 30 percent of the development cost spread over four years.

When the two credits are combined, the value of the preservation credit has to be subtracted out of the value of the housing credit, but this allows a developer of low-income housing to realize the amount of the rehabilitation credit in the first year rather than over 10 years.

Both credits are due to expire at the end of 1989, but lobbyists from national preservation and housing groups, including like the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Low-Income Housing Coalition, are working together to obtain extensions of these incentives.

One good example of this cooperative approach is Casa Valencia at 16th and Valencia, where the non-profit Housing Development and Neighborhood Preservation Corporation is rehabilitating this 61-unit Edwardian apartment building for low-income households (see April Newsletter). Heritage provided the architectural design and construction oversight for the project which upgraded kitchens and baths, installed a fire sprinkler system and a new roof.

Is the future bright for such combined preservation and affordable housing efforts? Though he is enthusiastic about his current project, the jury is still out for John Stewart. "We're still learning the process," says Stewart.

JIM BUCKLEY is a project manager for BRIDGE Housing in San Francisco. He has a B.A. in art history and an M.A. in city planning.
Once the human tragedy of a major urban fire has been absorbed, the question that occurs to preservation advocates is, "Has any worthwhile architecture been lost?" Several recent fires in San Francisco—at 20th and Valencia, 14th and Mission, Vallejo and White, and the conflagration at Haight and Cole—have all resulted in damage to typical San Francisco Edwardian flats and apartments. While not landmark structures on their own, such buildings are contextually important and help make the distinctive character of San Francisco neighborhoods.

Owners of fire-damaged older buildings who are considering their options, should know about the case of 1155 Howard Street. In the early morning hours of October 4, 1986, an exploding gas meter in the basement sent flames up through three floors to the roof. The five-alarm fire caused $1 million damage to the apartment building and its contents and another $1 million loss at Sam's International, housed next door, at 1159 Howard, in a 2-story Deco/Moderne structure.

The morning of the fire, the long-time owners of the apartment house approached Sam Abecassis, owner of the building and the rug import business at 1159, with an offer to sell. Abecassis had long been interested in buying the property but had been discouraged by the deteriorated condition of the building's interior, which suffered from years of neglect. His Deco building sits on a lot that wraps around the west and south sides of 1155 on the corner lot of Howard and Rausch (between 7th and 8th). By purchasing 1155 and the smaller apartment building of like design at 12 Rausch in December 1986, Abecassis gained control of the complete corner parcel, with frontage on Howard and on Rausch.

Already of a mind to restore the building, Sam Abecassis was firmly convinced when architect Mark Pierce, a former tenant in his building, urged him to let him take on the project. Pierce has done 30 or 40 residential alteration projects and Victorian rehabs. Moreover, his work was known firsthand to Abecassis because Pierce had designed and supervised construction of an addition to the Abecassis family home in St. Francis Wood, and Abecassis was impressed with his careful matching of materials and replication of detail in that project.

Working from photos and his own familiarity with the building—there were no original plans or drawings extant—Mark Pierce began the project early in 1987. The work was undertaken by a Howard Street neighbor, CNL Construction and was completed by the end of the summer.

Because of the extent of the fire damage—virtually the whole top floor was destroyed, along with much of the second floor—the interior had to be gutted. A bit of detail was salvaged for reuse, but essentially the interior is entirely new. A full-scale interior restoration would have priced the twelve two-bedroom apartments out of the moderate South of Market range.

Except for the removal of an outside stairway on the Rausch Street side, the exterior of the H-shaped building has been faithfully restored to its 1914 Craftsman design. Built in 1914 for Daniel G. Coleman, who was a member of the retail clerks' union and "a lively and persuasive speaker" elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1905 during the Ruef-Schmitz era, the building was known as the Coleman Apartments. San Francisco architect George Applegarth (Legion of Honor) held title to the property just prior to the owners who sold to Sam Abecassis. Applegarth received the building in 1943, as administrator for the Coleman estate.

The architect of 1155 Howard was William Beasley, who designed a number of apartment buildings in the same period: 1241 Bush, 720 Jones, and 621 Taylor. Square bays mark the four corners of the second and third stories on the two wings that face Howard. Notable features include bracketed eaves, hooded windows and parapets.

Sam Abecassis speaks of his building with enthusiasm and evident pride, saying you can't get a new building that looks this good and is remotely competitive in cost. The results demonstrate that extensive fire damage does not necessarily condemn a building to demolition. With a shared commitment by the owner, architect, and contractor, a restoration can be done that returns the gift of good architecture to the street and retains affordable housing at the same time.
Voters Consider Major Library Construction Proposal

Libraries Reflect the City's Values

Two years before San Francisco opened its first free public library, B.E. Lloyd, in the book *Lights and Shades in San Francisco* (1876), boasted of the city’s fine libraries. Barely a generation removed from the Gold Rush, San Francisco had three major collections open to the public on a subscription basis: the Mercantile, the Odd Fellows, and the Mechanics’ Institute. These institutions reflected the avid interest in culture that characterized San Francisco’s population as early as the 1850s.

This year, the city's libraries have increasingly been in the public eye. City budget woes resulted in the closure of the financial district branch and reduced hours in other libraries. Meanwhile, the November ballot contained both city and statewide bond measures designed to finance new facilities. This fall, the California Office of Historic Preservation announced a statewide survey to identify Carnegie library buildings for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

In San Francisco, ballot proposition A will raise $109.5 million to finance the construction of a new main library and upgrade branches. According to Head Librarian Kenneth Dowlin, the money would take the Main Library from a beautiful, but dysfunctional building designed for 19th century librarianship into a structure built for the information age of the 21st century. He hopes the new main library will be a symbol of San Francisco’s cultural vitality and prosperity.

Throughout history, libraries have aimed to promote learning and treasure the knowledge of a civilization. Assyrian King Ashurbanipal (7th century B.C.) established the first library, a collection of 1200 clay tablets, to preserve works of literature. Municipal libraries were among the amenities of civic life in the Roman Empire. During the early Middle Ages, libraries were mostly confined to monasteries.

The invention of the printing press in the 15th century revolutionized book production—and ultimately libraries, as well. As the supply of books expanded, private libraries became more common in the 16th century, and royal libraries took form—the beginnings of today's great national libraries in Europe. The educated populace, the movement to found free public libraries—first in Boston, in 1852, and in Chicago and New York soon after—was part of a more general effort to expand the scope of public education in the later 19th century. High schools, land-grant colleges, and great universities on the German model proliferated. San Francisco’s first free public library was founded in 1878, when the city appropriated $24,000 for the purpose. The *Municipal Reports* of 1878-79 noted that the sum was scarcely adequate to launch so important a venture as a new library, and organizers approached the Mechanics’ Institute to find out if they could acquire its library as the core for the public library. When the Mechanics’ Institute rejected the proposal, $15,000 was set aside to purchase books, and the balance of the appropriation went toward setting up the library in rented space in Pacific Hall, on Bush between Grant and Kearny. The library opened June 7, 1879 with a collection of some 6,000 volumes.

The Main Library remained on Bush Street until 1889, when it relocated to a wing of City Hall. The Earthquake and Fire of 1906 destroyed City Hall and with it the library’s 142,000 volumes. The recovery of the library system was directed from a temporary building at Hayes and Franklin Streets. In 1908, the president of the library’s board of trustees, emphasizing the importance of building a permanent main library, wrote, “In all progressive cities, libraries have come to be recognized as an absolutely essential part of the educational system of the community.”

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie believed so strongly that free public libraries are the most democratic instrument of
public education that he pledged $45 million at the turn of the century to the construction of libraries throughout the nation. According to a recent Fortune magazine article, in constant dollars the Scottish-born steel magnates philanthropy, most of it benefiting libraries, exceeds the generosity of all other American industrialists before or since.

In 1901, Carnegie offered San Francisco $750,000 for a new main and branch libraries. But public opposition developed against accepting “tainted” money from the union-busting Carnegie, and nothing was done until 1912, when the Board of Supervisors put the question to the voters. That November, a large majority of the electorate voted to accept the Carnegie grant, and the city began making plans for construction.

Expansion of the city’s population in the neighborhoods brought increased pressure to replace inadequate branch facilities, most of them in rented quarters. For the branch libraries, the Carnegie grant was a boon. Half the allotment, $375,000, financed construction of seven branch libraries between 1914 and 1921: Richmond, Mission, Noe Valley, Sunset, Golden Gate Valley, North Beach (now Chinatown), and Presidio. After voters ratified acceptance of the money, the Board of the Supervisors immediately authorized construction of the Richmond Branch, on 9th Avenue between Geary and Clement. Built at a cost of $48,910 & opened in November 1914, the grey sandstone structure was designed by architects Bliss and Faville. Its somewhat formidable, austere appearance is offset by its placement in the middle of a park and the use of polychrome terra cotta ornamentation (recently restored).

On January 2, 1916, after more than 25 years in a succession of temporary quarters, the Mission Branch opened at 24th and Bartlett. That year’s report by the city librarian noted its design was “in harmony with the historic associations of the Mission…” The architect, G. Albert Lansburgh, described it cryptically as “an interesting example of an individual type of Spanish architecture.” The building is faced in matt glazed terra cotta with polychrome ornamentation. The roof is red tile.

Lansburgh designed four of the seven Carnegie-endowed branches. Panama-born and San Francisco-schooled, Lansburgh entered the University of California in 1894. Bernard Maybeck, encouraged him to attend the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris from which he graduated in 1906 with highest honors. He returned to San Francisco scarcely a month after the Earthquake. At the height of his career, Lansburgh had offices in New York and Los Angeles, as well as San Francisco, and became famous as a designer of theaters and auditoriums. His works include the Warfield and the Golden Gate theaters and the interiors of the Opera House and the Veterans’ Building.

When Lansburgh’s Sunset Branch at 18th and Irving opened in March 1918, the Chronicle admired the building, faced entirely in light terra cotta, “for its graceful lines and classic beauty.” The three arches of the porch recall the classicism of early Italian Renaissance design, such as Brunelleschi’s Foundling Hospital in Florence.

With the opening of the North Beach (now Chinatown) Branch in February 1921, Lansburgh captured the feel of a North Italian palazzo comunale, or city hall. The building’s graceful twin staircases lead in opposite directions across the face of the building from a common ground-level landing then turn and rise to meet again at a balcony landing at the second-story main entrance. The balustrade is of terra cotta, as is the detailing of the portal, double windows and frieze, all adding interest to the chaste brick façade.

The Presidio Branch, dedicated in April 1921, enjoys a generous site similar to the Richmond Branch’s, mid-block on Sacramento Street, clear through the block to Clay, between Baker and Lyon.
Lansburgh set the building on a slight elevation, 80 feet from the street. Gradually rising stairways approach the arched entry, which is framed by a pair of Tuscan columns with Ionic capitals. The effect of the siting and landscaping, done under John McLaren’s direction, is to give this classic Renaissance-inspired building a stately appearance.

Two other well-known architects had a hand in the Carnegie branches. John Reid, Jr., particularly remembered for his schools, designed the Noe Valley library, opened to the public in September 1916. Reid unleashed a barrage of Beaux-Arts detailing: a variety of fretwork and wave motifs, dentils, egg and dart, and polychrome swags. The Chronicle said the building provided a separate space for children and noted the recent introduction of “Story Hour” in the city libraries, “to cultivate a taste for reading and learning.”

Ernest Coxhead, best known for his association with the early Bay Area Tradition shingle-style house, designed the Golden Gate Valley Branch at Green and Octavia. Dedicated in 1918, the terra cotta-clad building is in the form of a Roman basilica—a rectangular building with an apse at one end. High arched windows are set off by fluted pilasters. Rich detailing is Baroque in spirit.

The Carnegie grant also gave impetus to construction of the long-overdue Main Library. In 1914, the Library Commission invited six architects, including George Kelham, Albert Lansburgh, Albert Pissis, and the Reid Brothers, to submit plans in a design competition. Reviewing the contest, San Francisco architect B.J.S. Cahill (Architect and Engineer, May 1914) applauded the winning design by George Kelham as “a clean-cut plan, perfectly balanced and admirably arranged.”

In praising the “high standard of work” submitted by all the contestants, Cahill observed that the unsuccessful entrants “stood by the verdict with gameness and even generosity.” But, Edgar A. Mathews, one of the losers, charged that Kelham’s design copied the Detroit Public Library in order to flatter the vanity—and win the votes—of two of the three judges: Cass Gilbert, who designed the Detroit library, and Paul Cret, who had voted for Gilbert’s design in the Detroit competition. Architect and Engineer dismissed Mathew’s contentions, saying they “are considered ridiculous by most members of the profession.”

The Main Library was dedicated February 15, 1917, and Arthur Brown, Jr., of Bakewell & Brown, architects of City Hall, stated that the Renaissance-inspired building harmonized with the general Civic Center scheme. According to Brown, the structure expresses “beautiful and noble architectural forms . . . in the simple and direct manner which characterizes all the best work in architecture.” Kelham seized the “opportunities for monumental effects” with “great feeling and skill” without overwhelming the viewer.

For more than two decades, the City has been considering what to do about overcrowding in the Main Library. Four studies since 1964 have all reached the same conclusion: it is not feasible to remodel and expand the existing building. This fact sparked Proposition A.

Although, the design for the new Main Library is purely conceptual at this stage (the site will be Marshall Square, just south of the present facility), some aspects of the design are certain, and they foretell something of what a new Main Library may add to San Francisco. The conceptual proposal lays out a design framework which should make the building harmonize with the rest of Civic Center. Exterior materials will have to be compatible with the prevailing Beaux Arts tradition, and the general height and bulk of the building will also have to be in keeping with the rest of the buildings at Civic Center.

When finished, the new main library will make Civic Center whole, completing an architectural vision articulated more than 75 years ago. Combined with the conversion of the old library into the Asian Art Museum, the area would become the cultural heart of San Francisco. Then, the library, true to its ancient traditions, may well embody the highest hopes of the city’s residents.
B & B. Bed and Breakfast. American tourists immediately recognize this phrase today. Fifteen years ago the term was relatively uncommon in the United States. Today, the B&B sector of the lodging industry represents a sizeable addition to tourism and to the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

B&Bs, small inns where bed and breakfast are included in the lodging price, are frequently housed in historic structures. Older buildings, particularly large older homes, lend themselves to the cozy intimate atmosphere desired by B&B keepers. Travellers enjoy the charm of the past with the convenience of the present.

Though originally envisioned as an interesting and less expensive alternative to large hotels, B&Bs vary greatly in price and services offered. Their owners range from retired couples with a large home who open extra bedrooms seasonally, to professionally staffed year-round inns.

From the point of view of preservationists, Bed and Breakfasts help to interpret a city's architectural history. Frequently the large homes they inhabit were built by individuals or families who figure prominently in a city's past. Moreover, B&Bs usually bring the adventurous tourist away from the city center into the neighborhoods. Many B&B innkeepers take pride in their knowledge of their building's history. The service is personal and on occasion charmingly eccentric.

San Francisco has a rich stock of historic Bed and Breakfasts. Large Victorian homes lend themselves easily to this new function with their spacious public rooms and myriad of bedrooms. Heritage's Holiday Bed and Breakfast Tour will feature five inns decorated in their holiday finery.

The Inn San Francisco, the Archbishop's Mansion, Victorian Inn on the Park, the Spreckels Mansion and Spencer House.

The exteriors of some of the inns are well known as city landmarks. The interiors are significant in their generally sensitive and adaptive renovations. All of the buildings have interesting histories. The Spreckels Mansion on Buena Vista West, for example, was built in 1897 for Floyd Spreckels. The attic was used as a writers' garret by both Jack London and Ambrose Bierce.

The Archbishop's Mansion at 1000 Fulton (City Landmark 151) boasts a sumptuous interior combining luxury with historic whimsy. The Victorian Inn on the Park (City Landmark 128) takes gracious advantage of its corner lot on the Panhandle with gables and turrets.

The tour is Sunday, December 11, from noon until 5 pm. Tickets are $20 for Heritage members, $25 for non-members. Admission price includes a reception following the tour and transportation to the inns via motorized cable car. The tour will begin at the Department of Motor Vehicles parking lot at Fell and Baker Streets (at the end of the Panhandle) where free parking will be available. Advance reservations are necessary. Call 441-3000 for information and reservations.
With pine garlands over the fireplace mantel, Victorian ornaments adorning the tree and carolers filling the air with holiday cheer, the Haas-Lilienthal House will usher in holiday festivities on Sunday December 4th from 1-5 pm. The Foundation for San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage is sponsoring its annual Holiday Open House, a treat for young and old. It’s a glimpse into the Victorian manner of celebrating the special warmth and good cheer of the season with friends and family.

There’s no better time to see the historic Haas-Lilienthal House enlivened by holiday decor and guests, as it was between 1886 and 1971, when the Haas and Lilienthal families entertained grandly.

It’s said that over eighty people attended elaborate holiday celebrations each year, and each year there was a different theme to the entertainment. One year, a member of the food wholesaling family might be tea tasting in Asia, so the theme would have a decidedly eastern flavor as all the women were required to wear kimonos to the party. Holiday presents, typically exotic, and beautifully presented selections of food, also took on the theme of that year.

In 1988, holiday visitors will delight to the sounds of a children’s choral group, be entertained by a quartet of singers dressed in Victorian garb, and participate in a special auction and sale of holiday gifts.

This year as a treat for the young-at-heart, Santa Claus will make a special appearance at the Holiday Open House at 3:00 pm to greet children and give away little treats for all.

Everyone is invited to bring family and friends. At the Holiday Open House a warm group will enliven all with the spirit of the season.

$5.00/Heritage Members
$7.00/Non-Members
$2.50/Children under 18

Call 441-3000 for information and reservations.

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Richard Gabhart, a longtime Heritage volunteer and Walks Guide, died suddenly in Sacramento on October 2.

Mr. Gabhart was a native Californian, a Cal alumnus, and a constant student of California history. His collection of books relating to San Francisco and California history was known to many of his fellow guides.

In recent years, Mr. Gabhart commuted from Sacramento, where he had moved, to Heritage events and tours. He loved San Francisco, particularly its history and architecture. The city has lost a devoted preservationist who fought the battle with wit and charm.

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Who was the architect that designed “Hearst Castle” at San Simeon? If you know the answer, you are either an architectural aficionado, or you have already read Sara Holmes Boutelle’s *Julia Morgan, Architect*.

Ms. Boutelle is credited with writing the first significant biography of Julia Morgan—a prolific California architect who designed and built over 700 structures between 1902-1945. Although Miss Morgan left an indelible mark on the California landscape and was a “pioneer” as a woman in the field of architecture, she also succeeded in her quest to be an anonymous workman—until now. The author has spent over a decade gathering information about Julia Morgan through interviews with scattered clients because the architect had her own files and documents destroyed when she closed her office in 1951. Given that some of the material cannot be substantiated by written records, it is inevitable that discourse will ensue to challenge Ms. Boutelle’s data. The book is a remarkable resource nonetheless.

Nine chapters chronicle Miss Morgan’s life and work from her birth in San Francisco in 1872, to her triumph as the first woman admitted to the Architecture Department of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1898, through various projects to design private homes and public spaces, culminating with the Hearst commissions for San Simeon and the Bavarian “village” Wyntoon on the McCloud River in Northern California. Color photographs by Richard Barnes provide another dimension through which the reader learns to appreciate the artistry of this extraordinary architect. Plans, renderings, as well as notes and letters detail the processes of the architect’s craft.

The first part of the book describes the development of Julia Morgan’s “style” of architecture: the influence of her California environment and the crafts-related theories (of building simply and in harmony with the site); her primary concern of meeting the client’s wishes; the Beaux-Arts training which provided a mastery of historical styles to adapt; her attention to detail and preoccupation with light and color. There follows some discussion of various commissions wrought by the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Fire, and projects gained through an “old girls” network of women active in California public life: YWCA buildings in Oakland and San Francisco’s Chinatown, the Berkeley Women’s City Club, Mills College Campanil, Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland, to name but a few. Ms. Boutelle’s rich descriptions of the architectural details of these buildings rival the buildings themselves.

The latter part of the book documents the development of San Simeon and Wyntoon with so much detail as to include the “nonarchitectural aspects” of financing the projects. For over thirty years Julia Morgan collaborated with William Randolph Hearst on both of these “fantasies”—she, working on the overnight train from San Francisco almost every Friday; he, testing her engineering prowess in the construction of the Neptune pool. The sumptuousness of the San Simeon pools lead the author to speculate, “Perhaps the pools express the exuberance of some alter ego, for in them we see a glorification of the senses that is rarely conspicuous in Morgan’s other work.” Neither San Simeon nor Wyntoon was fully realized by the time of Mr. Hearst’s death in 1951.

The book closes with a brief chapter about Julia Morgan’s final, reclusive years. A listing of the architect’s projects is also included.

It is heartening to have a biography that is mindful of the subject’s desire to be a “working architect”—as opposed to a “talking” one—and for the most part the author allows the buildings to speak for themselves. Fortunately, Ms. Boutelle also presents what little is known about the woman who was respected by her peers, employees and friends, and whose dedication to her work and “generosity of spirit” is as much a legacy to architecture as are her buildings.

M. Bartolo

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In a city of hills, it wasn't a particularly lofty eminence. But it was high enough to attract San Francisco's first generation of wealthy citizens seeking to set themselves apart from the hoi polloi. With good weather, bay views, and easy access to the business district Rincon Hill was a fashionable address in San Francisco in the 1850s.

Rincon Hill was also the site of one of San Francisco's earliest experiments in city planning -- South Park. Dr. Albert Shumate, noted California historian and President Emeritus of the California Historical Society, has chronicled the story of these two south of Market districts from the Gold Rush to 1906, in an historical essay and photo album, *Rincon Hill and South Park*.

Developed by George Gordon and designed by English architect George H. Goddard, the South Park plan envisioned a fancy London-style residential square or crescent. But the vision was never fully achieved. In 1855, a depression slowed development. After 1860, the eastern half was eventually completed, but not in conformity with the single-family residential brick construction of the original scheme. Then in the 1869, the decline of Rincon Hill began with the Second Street Cut. When Andrew Hallidie (a Rincon Hill resident ten years earlier) invented the cable car, solving the problem of developing the higher hills of the city, the wealthy abandoned Rincon Hill. By 1906, the area was inhabited mostly by working-class Irish.

Today there is little to recall the area's past glory. The Earthquake and Fire took a heavy toll. Rincon Hill has been cut down to provide for the San Francisco anchorage of the Bay Bridge. One house from the 1860s survives, but in the Santa Cruz Mountains, where it was moved in 1891. South Park has experienced urban renewal, but only the 3/4 acre landscaped oval, a city park since 1897, remains from George Gordon's original grand concept.

Dr. Shumate's historical essay, the result of 25 years of research and personal interviews, reveals to those who know only the industrial and commercial history of the South of Market area a wholly unexpected side of this district. More than one hundred photos resurrect the images and recreate the life of this important district. They clearly demonstrate what Joseph A. Baird, Jr. describes, in the book's brief essay on Rincon Hill architecture, the "confrontations of the grand and the wretched," great mansions juxtaposed with structures like the Sailors' Home.

Much of San Francisco's early institutional history is linked with Rincon Hill. St. Rose Academy, the Episcopal Church of the Advent, Canon Kip's Community House, St. Mary's Hospital, and the French and the German (now Davies) Hospitals all have Rincon Hill roots. The book lists more than 500 early residents who figured prominently in the city's history, making it clear how important South of Market is in the social and cultural history of San Francisco. Dr. Shumate's book brings this importance to light for the general reader.

Donald Andreini
CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

"Painted Ladies—American Victoriana" through November 11
One Market Plaza

One Market Plaza presents a free exhibition of 39 color photographs of Victorian homes featured in Daughters of Painted Ladies. There are also samples of Victorian architectural detailing. The exhibit is open Monday through Friday from 7am to 6:30pm.

For information, please call 552-1734.

"Architecture in Perspective III"
November 14 - January 13
AIA/SF Gallery
130 Sutter Street, 6th floor

The American Society of Architectural Perspectives (ASAP) & the Van Nostrand Reinhold Company are sponsoring an exhibition featuring the work of Thomas Schaller. ASAP president P. Stevenson Oles will give a presentation on the subject of architectural rendering on Monday, November 21 at 6:30 pm.

For information, please call 362-7397.

Building the City
November 17
Laurel Heights Campus of UCSF

Heritage presents the final lecture in Gray Brechin's popular series, Thursday evening at 7pm.

For information, please call 441-3000.

Bed & Breakfast Tour
December 11

Heritage presents guided tours of five "B & B" inns dressed in their holiday finery. Please see page 12 for information.

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