Heritage Takes on Two Easement Properties

Heritage is pleased to report the acquisition of conservation easements on two historic properties—the Spring Valley Water Company Building and the Colombo Building. A conservation easement is a legal instrument that empowers the recipient to review and grant or withhold approval for any changes that affect the historic features (usually exterior) of the subject property.

Completed in 1923, the seven-story reinforced concrete office building at 425 Mason Street was the work of architect Willis Polk. When the Examiner (September 29, 1923) announced the opening of the building, it noted, “No down-to-the-minute device for the comfort of workers and dispatch of business has been overlooked.” Nor had aesthetics been overlooked. The newspaper commented on the interior’s fine marble and oak finishes. A clock framed by a decorative sculptured group stood above the elevators on the north side of the main floor, and above it a mural by famed artist Maynard Dixon.

In 1928, anticipating the City’s purchase of the Spring Valley Water Company properties, Mayor Rolph proclaimed the office building at 425 Mason Street unsuitable for city offices and said the City would sell it. The proceeds would go toward construction of a new courthouse in Civic Center, allowing the courts to vacate the 4th floor of City Hall.

As it happens, the City did not sell the building, and the Water Department maintained its offices there until 2003; Civic Center did not get a new courthouse until 1997; and the courts did not vacate City Hall until its seismic retrofit and restoration project, completed in 1999. Now, nearly eighty years after Rolph’s confident statement, the City of San Francisco has sold 425 Mason Street, and, fulfilling a condition of the sale, the new owner has granted an easement on the historic building to Heritage.

Typically, the easement contract ensures protection of exterior character-defining features, such as the cut and cast stone entrance and window surrounds, the entablature with incised “Spring Valley Water Company,” entry door frame with window frame above, all exterior windows above the ground floor, fire escape, and rooftop cast concrete elevator tower and cornice. Less typical of easements held by Heritage, this one also calls out certain interior features on the ground floor: the mural and clock above the elevators, entryway vestibule woodwork, all column and pilaster capitals, and partial-height finished wood partitions.

Once apparently doomed to destruction, the Colombo Building today enjoys multiple layers of protection. It became a San Francisco landmark in 2002 (#237), is expected soon to enter the National Register, and is the subject of a preservation easement that the new owner has granted to Heritage.

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It is nearly 20 years since Heritage reluctantly withdrew from the fray to save the Colombo Building from demolition. In 1988, a proposal for development of the site that would include up to 150 units of affordable housing enjoyed widespread support in the community and within City government. Heritage had stood virtually alone in a four-year fight and pursued every avenue of administrative relief.

—continued on page 9
A chapter in the history of the Haas-Lilienthal House has closed. Elizabeth Lilienthal Gerstley, the last of the family members who grew up at 2007 Franklin Street, died October 8, 2007, after a brief illness. She was the wife of the late James M. Gerstley, whose death in June we noted in the last issue of Heritage News. They had been married 72 years.

Born in San Francisco on July 29, 1913, at the House, Elizabeth was the middle child of Samuel and Alice Lilienthal. She graduated from the Katherine Delmar Burke School and attended both Stanford University and Smith College. Throughout her life she was active in her passionate support of numerous causes, including Filoli Gardens in Woodside, Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters, and many animal rights and environmental programs.

She served as an election poll watcher for many years and frequently wrote politicians at every level of government with her views. She also enjoyed traveling, weaving, knitting, organic gardening and reading.

In 1973, Mrs. Gerstley joined her brother and sister, Ernest Lilienthal and Frances Lilienthal Stein, and their cousin, Madeleine Haas Russell, in donating the historic family home to Heritage. With them, she remained a devoted benefactor of the House.

The board and staff of Heritage extend sincere condolences to surviving members of Elizabeth’s family, her son James, daughter Anne, one granddaughter and two great-granddaughters. Her siblings Ernest Lilienthal and Frances L. Stein, and two grandsons predeceased her.

The family has generously included the Haas-Lilienthal House among preferred recipients of memorial contributions in Mrs. Gerstley’s name. You may send donations to Heritage at 2007 Franklin Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.
**Haight St. Church Converted to Housing**

Preservation was in the spotlight, on October 17, at the grand opening ceremony for Buena Vista Terrace, a 40-unit affordable senior housing development in the Haight-Ashbury. The project has brought new life to the long-abandoned (for nearly twenty years) Third Church of Christ, Scientist, at 1250 Haight Street.

Although adaptive reuse required gutting the interior and construction of four floors of housing within the shell, the exterior of the ninety-year-old church—designed by Edgar Mathews in a blend of Romanesque and Byzantine Revival styles—essentially retains its historic form and character. Indeed, the richly ornamented façade has benefited from cleaning and restoration, and a complete seismic upgrade will help to secure the building’s future.

Previous development proposals for the site included one to demolish the church and construct market-rate housing in its place. The neighborhood and Heritage were of one mind in stating we could not support any plan that would result in the loss of this significant cultural resource. When Citizens Housing Corporation (CHC), a nonprofit affordable housing developer, came forward with its proposal, Heritage gave its support.

CHC wisely involved the neighborhood, which was clearly concerned about the retention of the building and favorable toward a socially beneficial use for the site. Project principals worked out design and other issues with area residents through outreach and periodic meetings.

The result was broad community support, unusual for any large development, manifest in the large turnout at the grand opening of Buena Vista Terrace. CHC president James Buckley presided over the ceremony, whose participants included Mayor Gavin Newsom and District 5 Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi.

The $13 million project was accomplished through funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Mayor’s Office of Housing and the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco. Project team included Hardison, Komatsu, Ivelich and Tucker, architect; Cahill Construction, Inc., general contractor; and Page & Turnbull, preservation architect. Senior project manager for Citizens Housing was Kaori Tokunaga.

**Proposals Sought for Muni Substation**

A long-standing preservation issue appears headed to a favorable resolution. In October the Redevelopment Agency issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the power substation at the SE corner of Turk and Fillmore.

Built for the Market Street Railway in 1902, the building passed into the hands of the Municipal Railway when it acquired the private company’s assets in 1944. It continued to supply power to Muni lines until 1978 and has been vacant since then. The City designated the substation a landmark (#105) the following year.

The Redevelopment Agency purchased the unreinforced brick structure, and the adjacent parcel behind, from the City in June 2003. The purchase agreement requires preservation of the historic building and development of the site for affordable housing and for arts and community uses “and/or other publicly beneficial uses.”

The housing component is currently under construction on the vacant parcel behind the substation. The agreement also requires the Agency to confer with Heritage and the Landmarks Board on rehab plans. Respondents to the RFP must include a qualified preservation architect on their project team.

The property lies within the Fillmore Jazz Preservation District, established by the Redevelopment Agency in 1995 to revitalize the lower Fillmore by creating an entertainment zone that draws on the cultural legacy of the neighborhood. Progress already made in realizing components of that plan is likely to make the substation project more attractive to developers.

Since acquiring the building, the Agency has overseen a number of site preparation tasks, including cleaning and securing the property, preliminary environmental remediation and the design of four possible seismic retrofit schemes. Beyond that, the Agency will finance up to $3.5 million toward the cost of the seismic upgrade and certain other improvements. Other financial incentives may include federal rehabilitation tax credits.

Eleven large arched windows on the north and west sides of the substation admit light to an expansive interior space that rises 25 feet from the 6300-square-foot main floor to exposed steel trusses. The RFP allows the insertion of a mezzanine. It will be a challenge to achieve that and provide for seismic stability without destroying defining features of the building. Heritage will monitor project
Agency staff’s aim is to have a recommended developer before the Redevelopment Commission by February 5, 2008.

**900 Innes Street**

The India Basin Neighborhood Association has campaigned for five years to make 900 Innes Street a landmark. At least two of those years have been spent waiting out the process. The Landmarks Board voted unanimously to endorse the nomination in May 2005. When it went before the Planning Commission the following September, that body voted to continue the matter and did so at several subsequent meetings, until finally continuing it indefinitely.

This failure to act on the Landmarks Board’s recommendation prompted the Board of Supervisors earlier this year to amend Article 10, requiring the Planning Commission to act within 90 days of receiving a nomination from the Board. Failure to do so shall constitute approval. In the case of nominations—like the one for 900 Innes—initiated before July 18, 2006, and not acted upon by the effective date of this amendment, the Board of Supervisors may take action. And the Board is expected to do so.

Located at India Basin, on the northwest corner of Griffith and Innes, the gabled plank-frame house clad in horizontal redwood rustic channel siding is, according to the landmark case report, the only surviving workers’ cottage in the neighborhood and one of the few physical reminders the City’s once important scow-building industry.

The scow schooner, a shallow-draft boat developed in San Francisco, carried most of the goods transported throughout the Bay Area and on inland waterways until trucks took over that traffic. An example of this type is the Alma, built at India Basin and currently in the collection of the National Maritime Museum at Hyde Street Pier.

Forced by larger operators away from bayside property closer to the growing city, shipwrights began to relocate to India Basin before 1870. The first to do so was Johnson J. Dircks, whom the case report identifies as the likely builder (c. 1875) of 900 Innes. Soon a small community of family-owned boatyards and dwellings for shipwrights, their workers and their families grew up in that area.

While substantially intact, 900 Innes has sustained some alterations. Most evident is the replacement of original double-hung windows of the front elevation with smaller fixed sash windows and infill of the balance of the window openings with wood paneling. A decorative bargeboard was removed in 2003. For more information visit www.indiabasin.org.

**Nonprofit Saves the Vogue**

Chalk one up for neighborhood movie houses!

On August 22, the San Francisco Neighborhood Theatre Foundation (SFNTF) announced its purchase of the Vogue Theater. The all-volunteer nonprofit organization waged a low-profile fundraising campaign to save the venerable theater, located at Sacramento Street near Presidio Avenue, from the probable threat of demolition. The group received generous contributions from friends and neighbors of the Vogue.

The new owners have engaged an experienced operator, Peerless Entertainment, which plans to offer first-run films and special events, including occasional film festivals. They have undertaken repairs and improvements, including restoration of the marquee and installation of a state-of-the-art sound system.

The intimate theater (c. 265 seats) first appears in the 1912 city directory as the Elite. Directories also show a theater operating at that address for short periods as the Rex and the Plaza, before it became the Vogue in 1939.

Established in 2002 in response to the closing of movie houses in neighborhoods across the city, the SFNTF has led successful preservation efforts on behalf of the Presidio Cinema 21, 4-Star and New Mission theaters. Its board members are Jack Bair, Alfonso Felder, Rachel Herbert, Denise La Pointe, Meagan Levitan, Christine Pelosi, Katherine Petrin, Ken Rich, Andrew Roth, Ned Segal, R. James Slaughter.

For current showings and the announcement of a grand opening event, visit www.voguesf.com.

**Appeal Fails**

The Board of Supervisors denied an appeal filed by the Landmarks Board, and supported by Heritage, to overturn the Planning Commission’s refusal to designate as a landmark the entire site of the University of California Extension Campus. The Board then proceeded to pass an ordinance to landmark only the three structures that frame the southeast and the northwest corners of the two-block site—Richardson Hall, Woods Hall and Woods Hall Annex—slated for rehabilitation and adaptive reuse as part of a housing development project. Landmark status will require that the project follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. Meanwhile, a National Register nomination for the entire campus site is making its way through the review process. The Landmarks Board endorsed the proposal at its October 3rd meeting, and the State Historical Resources Commission is expected to hear the case on November 9.
—This concludes Christopher VerPlanck’s two-part article on the Marina District. Part I appeared in the summer 2007 issue.

Work crews completed restoration of the grounds of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in February 1917. That same year Virginia Vanderbilt, daughter of James Fair—and the district’s largest landowner—filed a map for a proposed subdivision called “Marina Gardens.”

This subdivision went nowhere, for various reasons, and the cleared exposition site remained undeveloped until 1922, when, after lengthy negotiations, real estate developers George E. Bevel and the Rothschild Brothers purchased fifty-five acres from Mrs. Vanderbilt and formed the Marina Corporation. The tract lay within the boundaries formed by Fillmore, Scott, Chestnut Streets and Marina Boulevard.

Within the year, the company began laying out streets in preparation for a new subdivision (photo above). Most streets, including Cervantes, Alhambra and Mallorca, deviated from the city’s orthogonal grid. Diagonal and curvilinear forms provided striking bay views and recalled picturesque residential parks like Seacliff and St. Francis Wood platted a decade earlier.

Mrs. Vanderbilt and her sister Theresa Oelrichs retained most of the balance of the property west of Scott. There the standard grid would prevail, but development followed much the same pattern as in Marina Gardens.

Initially the Marina Corporation, which oversaw street grading and paving, utilities and other site improvements, also took charge of residential lot sales. A handful of speculative buyers acquired clusters of lots.

Italian surnames appear frequently among individual buyers seeking family homes or small income property, a sign that prosperous families were moving westward from the dense North Beach district. Their numbers increased markedly west of Scott Street.

Despite their intention to promote the Marina as an exclusive subdivision of large-lot residences, the Rothschild Brothers soon offered mostly standard twenty-five-foot lots when the market did not support that plan. Some larger lots, located often at corner sites, allowed for construction of apartment houses or somewhat grander homes.

One of the first developers in the Marina was the Meyer Brothers Company. Others soon followed, including William W. Rednall, the St. George Holden Realty Company, Ben Liebman, and E.L. Stoneson, who went on to become a major builder in the Lake Merced district in the years after the Second World War.

Many of the developers and contractors had staff architects. Developer Lawrence O. Ebbets partnered with architect Richard R. Irvine to design and build dozens of houses and apartments. Other architects who were busy in the Marina include Herman C. Baumann, Charles S. Strothoff, Albert H. Larsen, Louis Mastropasqua, Harold Stoner, Sidney Colton, and Pietro Canali. Despite their productive careers, most are not well known today. Occasionally, prominent residential architects accepted commissions to design individual single-family dwellings in the Marina, including...
Clarence Tantau and the partnership of Farr & Ward.

The separation of commercial and residential uses in the Marina is consistent with other residential districts constructed in San Francisco during the 1920s, a consequence of the city’s first zoning ordinance, passed in 1917. Another feature of the district’s development, the inclusion of ground-floor garages in most residential buildings, reflects the growing popularity of the automobile.

By 1925, the Rothschild Brothers reported the sale of eighty percent of the lots in the Marina. Five years later, three-quarters of the residential sites had been developed with single-family dwellings, apartment buildings and flats housing about 25,000 people.

Although few individual buildings stand out as examples of excellent design, the Marina displays a remarkably cohesive architecture that exudes a sense of order and prosperity. This was the result not of design guidelines or any other prescriptive means, but rather of the fact that a small pool of residential builders developed the area in a short period of time, the prosperous 1920s.

Designing for the speculative market, developers rarely took risks. Consequently, most of the buildings that went up in the Marina reflected popular styles of the day, including the Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean Revival. Today the white-painted stucco facades, red clay tile roofs, dark stained wood trim and wrought iron and tile detailing typical of these styles give much of this district its distinctive character.

A particularly good example of Spanish Colonial Revival is the three-story house at 25 Casa Way (photo left). Architect Sidney Colton designed it in 1930; the builder was E.L. Stoneson.

Occasionally, other “period revivals” make an appearance in the Marina. A rare example of the Tudor Revival style is the single-family residence at 2450 Francisco Street. Irvine & Ebbets designed the house, constructed in 1933 by contractor M.P. Jorgensen.

With a large number of apartments—more than 200 apartment buildings providing nearly 2900 units—and good public transit to various parts of the city, the Marina proved a good place for renters to live.

The three-story-over-garage apartment building at 3825-35 Scott Street is typical of the district. Irvine & Ebbets designed this Mediterranean Revival-style structure, built in 1928 by developer Ben Liebman.

By the end of the ’20s, the increasingly popular Art Deco Style made its appearance in the Marina. Good examples include the apartment houses at 3700 and 3665 Scott Street. Irvine & Ebbets designed the former, completed in 1930, while Lawrence Ebbets, working on his own, turned out the latter, also constructed in 1930 (photo of entry above).

Development of the Marina’s commercial district lagged a little behind the residential areas, business owners waiting for the rooftops to appear in sufficient density before investing in the district. Throughout the late 1920s and early ’30s, one- and two-story commercial buildings sprouted along Chestnut Street, west of Fillmore. The original F streetcar line (now Stockton trolley bus) and the 22 Fillmore crossed at that intersection, forming the Marina’s transit hub.

Like the residential neighborhood, the older commercial buildings on Chestnut formed a cohesive urban streetscape and reflected the Spanish Colonial Revival and Art Deco styles of the period. Many remain and are in good condition. A good example is the two-story Art Deco-style commercial building at 2176 Chestnut Street (photo above), designed by architect Hugh Kirk and constructed
in 1931. It features elaborate wrought iron screens within the second floor window openings. Also of note is the two-story terra cotta-clad concrete commercial building at 2080 Chestnut Street. Its architect was the prominent firm of Hyman & Appleton.

During the 1930s, in spite of the Depression, the Marina district continued to thrive and expand. Some buildings attracted favorable attention from the local press, including the Presidio Theater, at 2338-46 Chestnut Street (photo bottom page 6). Local theater architect John Ahnden designed the movie house (1937), with its brightly lit neon marquee and sculptured façade, to attract patrons shopping the street. The Presidio still anchors the western end of the commercial district.

As the neighborhood developed, the City of San Francisco invested significantly in public facilities and amenities. The Reid Brothers designed the Winfield Scott Elementary School (1930), on Divisadero Street, and later that decade, with city bond funds and assistance from the New Deal’s Public Works Administration (PWA), Marina Junior High (now Middle School) arose on Fillmore in 1935-1939 (photo left).

Working under the mandate of the Field Act, California’s response to the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, prominent San Francisco architects George W. Kelham and William P. Day incorporated the latest earthquake-resistant technology in their design for the school. It stands out as one of the best Moderne Style public schools in a city with many.

The Marina enjoys some of the city’s choicest recreation areas, including two yacht harbors, the Palace of Fine Arts, Moscone Recreation Center and Marina Green. In June 1921, the Exposition Company, on the initiative of William H. Crocker, donated to the City the four bayside blocks of filled land that offered fair patrons a landscaped greensward called North Gardens.

Altruistic impulses aside, Crocker had business ties with the Rothschild Brothers, who, once assured that public parkland—Marina Green—and not industry, would occupy the shoreline, closed the deal to purchase Mrs. Vanderbilt’s tract. The St. Francis Yacht Club made its home at the western end of the Marina Green in 1927, at the newly completed West Yacht Harbor. It has shared the harbor with the Golden Gate Yacht Club since 1939. Responding to neighborhood concerns, the City acquired land at Gashouse Cove to head off a proposal to construct an “air ferry terminal” at that site and, in 1929, announced plans to extend the Green eastward to Laguna Street. The City built the East Yacht Harbor at the cove, in 1933, with PWA funds.

San Francisco originally set aside Lobos Square—the four blocks bounded by Bay, Laguna, Chestnut, and Webster Streets—as public open space in the 1850s, but its development as a park had to wait many years. Not before 1925 did the Parks Department landscape the site, renaming it Funston Square (now Moscone Recreation Center). Until then it had been home to squatters in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a marshalling yard for the 1890s seawall project, a post-quake refugee camp and part of the 1915 fair grounds.

The crown jewel of the Marina, and the attraction that draws more visitors to the district than any other, is the Palace of Fine Arts (photo left), a universally recognized San Francisco
icon. Bernard Maybeck designed the classically inspired complex with its landscaped site in 1914, to showcase works of art from around the world at the PPIE.

Built of lightweight materials, all structures at the exposition were intended for demolition at the fair’s conclusion. However, even before the fair closed on December 4, 1915, a movement emerged to save the much-loved Palace of Fine Arts from this fate. The preservation effort succeeded, and for some time the exhibition hall housed a permanent art collection. However, time was not kind to the structures comprising the Palace, as it passed through a variety of less compatible uses.

After deteriorating to a point where it had become unsafe, the Palace of Fine Arts underwent reconstruction in concrete in the mid-1960s. Today, the structures and the surrounding parkland and lagoon are undergoing restoration.

Once isolated from traffic and congestion, the Marina district became inundated by commuter traffic after the Golden Gate Bridge opened in 1937. Widening of Lombard Street from two to four (and eventually six) lanes to accommodate the volume of traffic, physically and psychologically cut the Marina district off from Cow Hollow and other neighborhoods to the south. During the 1940s and ’50s, Lombard became San Francisco’s “Motel Row.” Motels designed in the then-poplar Googie style sported large neon signs and modern styling (illustrated below).

The 1950s witnessed the construction of two other well-known modern buildings. The first was the locally famous “Marina Safeway” (photo above). Designed by famed Northern California architect William Wurster and built in 1959, it has undergone only minor exterior modifications in the nearly fifty years since its completion. Known as the Marina Prototype, Wurster’s design was the basis for hundreds of Safeway stores across the nation.

Modernism also appeared in the district in the form of a new branch library. The San Francisco architectural firm of Appleton & Wolfard designed the boldly modern brick, steel and glass building. Opened to the public on June 16, 1954, the branch returned to service last August after undergoing a two-year rehabilitation and seismic upgrading.

A hidden gem of Modernism, a two-flat residence on Jefferson Street (photo page 7, column 3), is the work of Richard Neutra, an architect of international stature, with Otto Winkler. It appeared in the August 1939 issue of Architectural Record.

By the early 1950s, the Marina district was built out and did not undergo appreciable physical change until 1989, when the Loma Prieta Earthquake hit the neighborhood hard. The fill that underlies much of the district proved unstable in some areas, liquefying and destroying several apartment buildings, especially those with so-called ‘soft stories,’ that is, buildings with ground floors devoted to garages or storefronts.

Recovery and reconstruction, however, were swift and complete. Today the Marina district remains a desirable middle-class to upper middle-class neighborhood that in recent years has attracted well-paid younger people from all over the nation. Although chains have replaced many local businesses, Chestnut Street remains the thriving commercial heart of this attractive and vibrant urban neighborhood.

—Our gratitude to Christopher VerPlanck for generously providing this feature. He is a founding principal of Kelley & VerPlanck, Historical Resources Consulting

Sources for this article
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Scott, Mel, The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective (1959)
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Easements
continued from page one

Faced with certain defeat, and wishing to defuse the conflict between preservation and construction of low-income housing, the organization stepped back. In exchange Heritage negotiated an agreement with the Mayor’s Office of Housing that would ensure consultation with Heritage and the Landmarks Board early in the planning process for future projects that may result in demolition or destructive alteration of historic buildings.

We drew considerable criticism for “abandoning” the Colombo Building, but the long-term gain seemed worth the sacrifice. Since then the much-promoted housing project failed to materialize, and the building sat, its future uncertain, until City College seemed ready to incorporate the structure into a new campus. Unable to make the project meet their programmatic needs, the college sold the building to Drexler Colombo, LLP, one of whose principals is a long-time tenant of the building, Luigi Barassi.

The Reid Brothers designed the 1913 Colombo Building for Elise Drexler, an important “capitalist,” as city directory entries described her. The two-story Classical Revival commercial structure on the gore lot framed by Columbus & Washington was part of Mrs. Drexler’s large portfolio of real estate holdings. It is representative of the reconstruction of North Beach after the great earthquake and fire, and for much of its history it housed mostly Italian-American businesses serving that district.

Other than the addition of a basement-level parking garage in 1924, there have been relatively few alterations to the historic structure. These mostly entail incompatible windows and ground floor storefronts. The new owner has submitted a rehabilitation/restoration plan that includes replacing those with new windows and storefronts to match the historic ones, as well as restoration of interior finishes. Documentation of the completed restoration will augment the easement contract and identify the historic features subject to its terms.

It seems the tale of the Colombo Building has a happy ending, after all.

Booknotes


Anne Bloomfield was a frequent visitor to Heritage, gleaning information from our survey files for many of the landmark and historic district case reports she generated as an architectural history consultant. She also produced a series of articles that appeared in the New Fillmore neighborhood newspaper, each monthly installment featuring a historic profile of a Pacific Heights building. It was Anne’s intention, “some day,” to collect and publish these in book form. She died in 1999, before realizing that plan, but her husband, Arthur Bloomfield, took up the task, and the result appeared earlier this year. It is a nice tribute to Anne, whose careful research is evident throughout the 110 profiles, leavened with Arthur’s own stylistic touches and an occasional anecdote.


In a relatively brief career of about a dozen years, George Washington Smith helped define a “California” architecture. He never completed formal training in architecture and apprenticed only briefly in the field before turning to a career as a stockbroker. Retiring from business in 1912, Smith pursued his first love, painting. On a European sojourn he absorbed influences that he would draw on when he designed his own house in Santa Barbara. His use of imagery of southern Spain caught the fancy of a community in the process of remaking itself in the image of California’s romanticized Hispanic past. With a demand from clients for houses like his, Smith launched his practice. Patricia Gebhard gives a fine, clear account of the life and work of “the founding father of the Spanish Revival” by focusing on some two dozen buildings. Excellent illustrations show how thoroughly Smith internalized Mediterranean influences and adapted them so perfectly to the California landscape.


There are many ways to tell the history of San Francisco. Sally Woodbridge, who has explored the architectural history of the Bay Area through more traditional avenues, here traces the story of San Francisco through historic maps and the urban vistas that were widely published to promote cities to both visitors and investors. She begins with the earliest handcrafted attempts to chart the bay and continues through to the present century’s computer-generated graphics. Ms. Woodbridge interprets and comments upon these documents to explicate the city’s patterns of growth and development. Most of the maps and views—all in fine full-color reproductions—will be new to most readers, and never have they been offered in a collection that provides this kind of cartographic narrative.


Woodruff Minor has produced a monograph on “the San Francisco Bay Area’s oldest architectural firm,” founded by Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr., in 1906. The firm has been in continuous practice, albeit under slightly varied names, now into three generations of the Ratcliff family. The year 1906 launched many careers, but while most thrived on the rebuilding of San Francisco, Ratcliff was among those who met the demand caused by the tremendous growth of the East Bay that resulted from the relocation of burned-out San Franciscans. Minor traces the firm’s development from the Arts and Crafts and Beaux-Arts aesthetic that informed Ratcliff’s early work—mostly residential—through a century that has encompassed revivalism, Bay Area modernism and post-modernism in an ever-widening practice that includes church, school, hospital, concert hall, skyscraper and airport terminal design.
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Heritage Tours

Allied Arts Guild
Menlo Park, 650-322-2405
Camron-Stanford House
Oakland, 510-521-1247
City Guides Walks
San Francisco, 415-441-7512
Cohen-Bray House
Oakland, 510-532-0704
Cypress Lawn Cemetery
Colma, 650-550-8810, or 8811
Dunsmuir Historic Estate
Oakland (Apr-Sep), 510-615-5555
Falkirk Cultural Center
San Rafael, 415-485-3328
Filoli House & Garden
Woodside (Feb-Oct), 650-364-8300
Hanna House
Stanford, 650-725-8352
Lathrop House
Redwood City, 650-365-5564
Luther Burbank
Home & Gardens
Santa Rosa, 707-524-5445
McConaghy House
Hayward, 510-276-5010
Meyers House & Garden
Alameda, 510-521-1247
Oakland Tours Program
510-238-3234
Octagon House
San Francisco, 415-441-7512
Palo Alto-Stanford Heritage
650-299-8878 or 324-3121
Pardee Home
Oakland, 510-444-2187
San Francisco City Hall
415-554-5780
Strybing Arboretum
Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
415-661-1316, ext. 312

TO ARRANGE GROUP TOURS
Call Shelley Adams, 415-441-3000

TOUR/EVENT INFORMATION
Call 415-441-3004 or go to:
www.sfheritage.org/events+tours.html

Heritage tours are free to members and their guests, $8 for the general public/$5 for seniors and children 12 and under.

Bay Area Tours

Bay Area Tours

December

THROUGH January 21, 2008
Exhibition: Past Tents: The Way We Camped. CHS, 415-357-1848
www.californiahistoricalsociety.org

THROUGH February 17
Exhibition: Marie-Antoinette and the Petit Trianon at Versailles. de Young
415-863-3330; www.thinker.org

THROUGH February 24
Exhibition: Chim: The Photography of David Seymour (1911-1956)
Legion of Honor. 415-750-3600
www.thinker.org

THROUGH March 16
Exhibition: Artists of Invention: A Century of CCA. Oakland Museum
510-238-2200, www.museumca.org

THROUGH April 13
www.californiamuseum.org

THROUGH May
www.californiapioneers.org

December 2, 11:00 AM
Art Deco Walking Tour: Downtown San Francisco. Art Deco Society of California. 415-982-DECO
www.artdecosociety.org

December 2, Noon - 3:00 PM
Heritage Holiday Open House (See page 10)
415-441-3000; www.sfheritage.org

December 5, 7:30 PM
Contact: seatulip@hotmail.com

December 6, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Program: Sequoias, Cars and the Transformation of Camping
CHS. 415-357-1848
www.californiahistoricalsociety.org

December 11, 6:00 PM
Literary event: Ghirardelli Chocolate Cookbook
Mechanics’ Institute Library
www.mlibrary.org. 415-393-0116

December 11, 8:00 PM
Lecture: Silversmiths to the Nation: Thomas Fletcher and Sidney Gardiner. ADAF, de Young
415-249-9234; www.adafca.org

December 13 - 16, 12 Noon
Walking tour and tea: Inner Sunset and Central Golden Gate Park
CHS. Reservations required
www.californiahistoricalsociety.org 415-357-1848

January

January 16, 6:00 PM
Heritage Members’ Meeting
(See back page)
415-441-3000; www.sfheritage.org

February

February 22 - 23
Program: The Enduring Legacy of Genghis Khan. Humanities West
415-391-9700. www.humanitieswest.org
Carolyn Kiernat, AIA, an associate principal with Page & Turnbull, has worked broadly in historic preservation including all aspects of architecture, cultural resource assessment, and regulatory compliance review. Representative projects include the Old U.S. Mint and the Walt Disney Family Museum in the Presidio. With extensive experience reviewing projects for compliance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, she has successfully completed the Federal Tax Certification process for several projects, including the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. Ms. Kiernat holds a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Columbia University with a concentration in conservation, and an undergraduate degree in architecture from Arizona State University. She has experience with architecture firms in the United States and in Germany, with English Heritage/ICOMOS in Cornwall, England, and in historic documentation projects at Sequoia, Joshua Tree, Hovenweep and Mesa Verde National Parks. Ms. Kiernat is currently the co-chair of the AIA-San Francisco Historic Resources Committee.

San Francisco-born Mark Paez resides in the Duboce Triangle, where he is vice president of the neighborhood association. A professional city planner, he gained wide experience in historic preservation in several Bay Area jurisdictions, including five years as secretary to the Berkeley Landmarks Commission. After joining the San Francisco Planning Department, Mark worked as staff for the Landmarks Board and as secretary to the Board. He is currently the historic resource expert for the Port of San Francisco and was the primary staff person responsible for the recent listing of the Embarcadero Historic District in the National Register.

A strong advocate for labor and historic preservation, Mark has served as president of the Planners Chapter of International Federation Professional and Technical Engineers Local 21, and is the chair of Friends of 1800 Market, a grassroots preservation advocate with a GLBT focus that has worked closely with Heritage on many issues. Mark holds a BA degree in Environmental Studies and Planning from Sonoma State University and a certificate from the National Preservation Institute for advanced Section 106 training.

Any visit to the Haas-Lilienthal House during the month of December is a cause for delight, with holiday decorations throughout. But nothing quite captures the spirit of the season like the annual Holiday Open House, when the old home fills with members and friends of Heritage, creating the feeling of family at home for the holidays.

Join us around the massive 13-foot Christmas tree, with the sounds of holiday music in the background, and raise a glass of wine or a cup of hot cider to toast the season. The dining room table will offer a spread of fine cheeses and a variety of fruit, sweets, canapés and hors d’oeuvres.

Heritage members will receive invitations in the mail, but mark down the date now: Sunday, December 2, from noon until 3:00 p.m. Children are welcome and should plan for a visit from Santa Claus around 2:00 p.m. For children of any age in your party, be sure they get to see the working display of antique electric trains in the basement of the house. If you have some booklovers on your gift list, members may take advantage of a 20 percent discount on all bookstore purchases.

The Holiday Open House is free to members and their guests, $10 for the general public. RSVP: 415-441-3000, or e-mail info@sfheritage.org

Wanted: to reproduce or to purchase original vintage photos of late 19th or early 20th century San Francisco or Bay Area indoor Christmas trees. Please contact Joe Pecora at jbpsorg.net, or 415-567-5197

Splendidly Decorated Christmas Tree at the Ellinwood House 2739 Pacific Avenue (1896)

—Octagon House, at Union and Gough Streets, will be open and decorated for the holidays on December 2, 9 and 13, noon to 3:00 p.m. Tours of the historic 1861 house and its fine collection of Colonial and Federal era decorative arts and documents are informal and do not require reservations. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. If you wish, bring a new unwrapped gift for a needy child. For more information call 415-441-7512.
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The historic Haas-Lilienthal House, a property of San Francisco Architectural Heritage, is a great venue for your wedding or your next corporate or personal event. The house can accommodate up to 150 guests. For information, call 415-441-3000, ext. 14.

Save the Date
Heritage Members’ Meeting
Wednesday, January 16, 2008
6:00 p.m.
Haas-Lilienthal House Ballroom
Look for an announcement in your U.S. Mail soon.