

# **Comments on Julia Morgan Building: Character-Defining Features**

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## **Preface**

This paper is submitted as a comment on the Draft EIR prepared by San Francisco Planning Case Number 2022-009819ENV and is reference to section on "Character-Defining Features" listed on pages 3.B-15 to 3.B-20 and to Landmark Designation Recommendation, record number 2024-001869DES.

I am a resident of Heritage on the Marina at 3400 Laguna. My intention here is to bring attention and to record the existence of elements of high architectural quality in the project that are not mentioned in the draft EIR.

I am a former architect. Among other works, I designed and managed the renovation of over ninety houses in London and was number three in an architectural practice that designed twelve mass transit railway stations in Hong Kong. Working for Autodesk, I was Program Manager for three releases of AutoCAD.

## **Character-Defining Features: Julia Morgan Building**

### **Item #3 ~ Structural brick exterior walls**

The external cladding of the Morgan building is brickwork laid in English (American ;- ) bond, a single brick length deep.

The brickwork is not structural or load-bearing. It is a veneer. The primary structure of beams and columns is constructed of reinforced concrete. The engineer was Walter T Steilberg.

- <https://heritage-happenings.github.io/scans/1925-heritage-drawings-morgan/zoom-plan-structural-foundation-lr.jpg>
- [https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf209n992b/entire\\_text/](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf209n992b/entire_text/)

**Item #5 Symmetrical arrangement of front façade, with central gabled parapet**



The gable is topped with a large ornate, and wondrous finial.

**Item #10 ~ Terra cotta details...**

See my comments on the terra cotta details in a paper titled "The Roses of 3400 Laguna".

**Item #21 ~ Fireplace mantel**

There are three mantels

- Morgan parlor
- Stucky library
- Corridor dining room ~ relocated from what is now the kitchen

**Feature Not Identified: Unencumbered, undecorated reinforced concrete structure evident in the main lobby**

See also above: Item #3 ~ Structural brick exterior walls



Unlike most main lobbies of buildings in 1925, the main lobby of the Morgan building is without any decoration. All we see are plain columns and beams. This is evidence that the building is made of reinforced concrete. You are

entering a building that is designed to be earthquake resistant—a hallmark of Julia Morgan's architecture. This is a feature that should be identified and preserved.

## **Character-Defining Features: Front Lawn of the Julia Morgan Building**

Structures in San Francisco with extensive front gardens are rare. The Julia Morgan Building has a front garden that is a significant feature of the building. The fence extends runs along three different streets: Bay, Laguna and Francisco, perhaps over six hundred feet in length. Of premises in the northern half of San Francisco, perhaps only the Flood Mansion (Pacific Union Clubhouse) has a larger or more significant garden area.

## **Adjacent Historic Architectural Resources**

The draft EIR omits several significant historic resources that are adjacent or near to the project site that have much similarity to the Julia Morgan Building—unlike most of the other Art Deco buildings in the Marina District. These are:

### **George R Moscone Recreation Center**



- Visible from the Julia Morgan bilding
- John Reid Jr, 1924

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscone\\_Recreation\\_Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscone_Recreation_Center)
- <https://www.sfheritage.org/news/moscone-field-house-one-mayors-playground/>

## San Francisco Gas Light Company Building



- <https://www.sfheritage.org/news/sf-gas-light-building-the-marinas-industrial-past/>
- <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist7/gaslight.html>
- <https://noehill.com/sf/landmarks/sf058.asp>
- <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/In-the-Marina-a-stocky-castle-with-a-story-to-6366483.php>
- <https://www.christies.com/en/lot/lot-5617344>
- <https://pacunionpartners.com/legacy>

## Galileo High School

- 1921 & 1925
- John Reid Jr

## Ghirardelli Square

- 1890
- French Gothic
- Industrial brick

### **3152 Laguna Street**



Various realtor sites date this brick structure as being built in 1900. It is a rare example of a brick building in the Marina District pre-dating the 1906 earthquake.