

2025-03-22 2

Mayor Lurie, Supervisor Sherrill, members of the Board of Directors, distinguished residents and team members, and fellow citizens,

You've likely passed by this building countless times. You may have even entered it. But have you ever truly looked at it?

My goal today is to reveal to you the secrets of the Julia Morgan Building. It's a story with a rich history.

Two years ago, we celebrated in this parlor, the 170th anniversary of the San Francisco Ladies Protection and Relief Society — the second oldest charitable organization in the city.

Today, we gather to honor the Society's enduring gift to the city.

We celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Julia Morgan Building,

Not surprisingly, the Society has a history of employing the most illustrious architects of their day.

In 1922, they commissioned Julia Morgan to design a building to serve as a home for the elderly and infirm.

Julia Morgan, famous as the designer of Hearst Castle at San Simeón, designed over 750 projects.

But she rarely spoke about her work or gave interviews.

As she said: "My buildings will be my legacy... they will speak for me long after I'm gone."

As a phenomenal "Building whisperers", what is Julia telling us?

What secrets is the building whispering as we walk by?

The style is Tudor Revival, constructed with brick, terracotta, and slate.

The decorations here are more than just aesthetic; they carry meaning.

In the past, such decorations were symbols that spoke to people.

Let's take a closer look.

Just above the outside front door, there are two shields. Unadorned. Just shields.

Why do you carry a shield? To protect yourself, of course.

What is the name of the organization that built this building? The San Francisco Ladies Protection and Relief Society.

We protect you!

The largest decorations are the two large terracotta panels on the second floor.

Each contains three images of a flower - the Tudor rose.

This rose symbolizes the end of the War of the Roses, uniting the Houses of York and Lancaster.

Looking around, you can see these roses in at least twenty different places. Even indoors.

There are four on the fireplace in the parlor and four more roses on the altar in the chapel.

So why does Julia obsess on the rose?

The rose is an ancient symbol of love.

What do you send to someone you love on Valentines Day? A dozen roses.

In designing this home for women in need, Julia Morgan wrapped them — and us — in a quiet message of safety, comfort, and love.

The panels with three roses?

Three roses often stands for three words "I love you."

Guess what? It works.

Go up to the art gallery on the second floor.

There's an exhibit on the history of the building and the art of its residents.

The exhibit is a love letter to the building.

From a community filled with love.

Julia still speaks to us.

You are in a building surrounded by symbols of love.

You are in one of the loveliest building in San Francisco

Let us return the compliment.

Let us speak to Julia.

Kindly raise your glasses.

To Julia Morgan! We love you!