



# HERITAGE news

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*Jack Kerouac Alley between Vesuvio Cafe and City Lights Bookstore*

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## If North Beach Isn't An Historic District, What Is?

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After decades of work, a nomination for a North Beach National Register Historic District has finally been completed. Originally scheduled to be heard at the State Historical Resources Commission on February 7, 2025, it is now on hold at the request of new District 3 supervisor Danny Sauter and new San Francisco mayor Daniel Lurie.

STORY ON PAGE 6

IN THIS ISSUE 2. PRESIDENT'S COLUMN 3. HERITAGE ON THE MARINA TURNS 100 AS A LANDMARK  
6. NORTH BEACH HISTORIC DISTRICT STALLED 10. LA MED GETS NEW LIFE, PEGGY CASERTA (1940-2024)  
11. HERITAGE EVENTS 12. WELCOME BACK KERRI YOUNG

## Heritage on the Marina Turns 100 as Landmark



THEO ARMOUR PHOTO

*Heritage on the Marina at 3400 Laguna Street, designed by Julia Morgan and constructed in 1925.*

**O**n December 17, 2024, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Ordinance No. 302-24 designating the former Ladies Protection and Relief Society building at 3400 Laguna Street as a city landmark. San Francisco Heritage supported the designation and testified in its favor. Mayor London Breed signed the ordinance on December 19, 2024.

Heritage on the Marina, a senior residential community, owns and occupies the 3400 Laguna Street campus as a successor organization to the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society (LPRS), San Francisco's second oldest charitable institution and the first established by and for women. LPRS was formed in 1853.

The brick-clad main campus building was designed by renowned architect Julia Morgan in Jacobethan Revival, a rare style for San Francisco. The landmark designation encompasses the 1925 Morgan building facing Laguna Street, the front garden, and a 1929 Stone

Cottage at the northeast corner of the campus. Excluded from the designation are later additions to the campus designed by architects Warren C. Perry and Gardner Dailey, both accomplished architects.

Heritage on the Marina has submitted plans to the city which propose to demolish these later additions to construct two buildings of residential care suites. San Francisco Heritage and some members of the Historic Preservation Commission urged due consideration to preserve the additions in the expansion, especially the Warren C. Perry building.

Planning Department staff determined that the additions by Perry and Dailey were not significant. San Francisco Heritage's Project and Policy Committee ultimately decided that landmark designation and rehabilitation of Morgan's main building and the 1929 Stone

In addition to architectural merit and association with Julia Morgan, 3400 Laguna street is also significant for its connection to the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society. Founded by Protestant women in San Francisco's Gold Rush era, the society's mission was to care for women in need: the widowed or abandoned without resources. LPRS also established an orphanage and offered vocational training. From the 1860s into the twentieth century, its primary building stood on the southeast corner of Franklin and Post Streets. The society owned the entire block and the sale of the property helped fund the 1920s move to Laguna and Bay streets.

When the society contracted with Morgan to design the campus at Laguna and Bay Streets in 1924, it had begun a shift away from the residential-institution model to focus on short-term care to women recovering from illnesses and/or medical care and to provide long-term housing for single retired women. In the 1950s, LPRS merged with another 19th century institution for the aged, the Crocker Old People's Home (which was co-ed), and it was during this expansion that the Warren Perry and Gardner Dailey additions were commissioned.

Architectural historian Christopher VerPlanck wrote and submitted the landmark nomination. The Historic Preservation Commission passed a resolution to formally initiate the landmark, and Senior Preservation Planner Pilar LaValley prepared the designation for consideration. The Article 10 landmark ordinance defines 3400 Laguna Street as qualifying for city landmark status under Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places for its associations with LPRS, Julia Morgan, its rarity and integrity as a Jacobethan Revival style building, and as an "excellent and rare example of an early twentieth century retirement home."

Situated across from Moscone Parl Playground, and set back from Laguna Street by gardens, the 1925 Morgan building has the appearance of a country home estate from the English Renaissance. The exterior is clad in unpainted red brick and the divided-lite windows are stacked in lines across the facade. Bays and dormers symmetrically break up the west elevation and the hip roof. Around cornices, window surrounds, and belt courses are terra cotta floral designs and details.

Inside the lobby and primarily public areas are original finishes continuing Morgan's floral motifs. Coffered ceilings, a carved stone fireplace, tile floors, and wood trim in the western section all appear intact from 1925 construction.

Each day, hundreds of automobiles speeding along Bay Street pass a stone caretaker's cottage tucked in the northeast corner of the property. A hedge mostly hides this story-book structure from motorists, but attentive pedestrians are able to see more. Not a work of Julia Morgan, the cottage was designed and constructed by Ernest Higgins, a Berkeley contractor. In recent years it has been used as an activity space for residents.

Theo Armour, a retired architect and current resident of Heritage on the Marina, has noted that Morgan included many different varieties of the Tudor Rose or Luther Rose in terra cotta panels, parapet roundels, corbels, pilasters, spandrels, transoms, mantle pieces, and interior ornaments. "Representations of roses are repeated several



**192. Ladies' Protection and Relief Society Building.**  
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*Original Ladies' Protection and Relief Society Building on the southeast corner of Franklin and Post streets in the 1860s.*

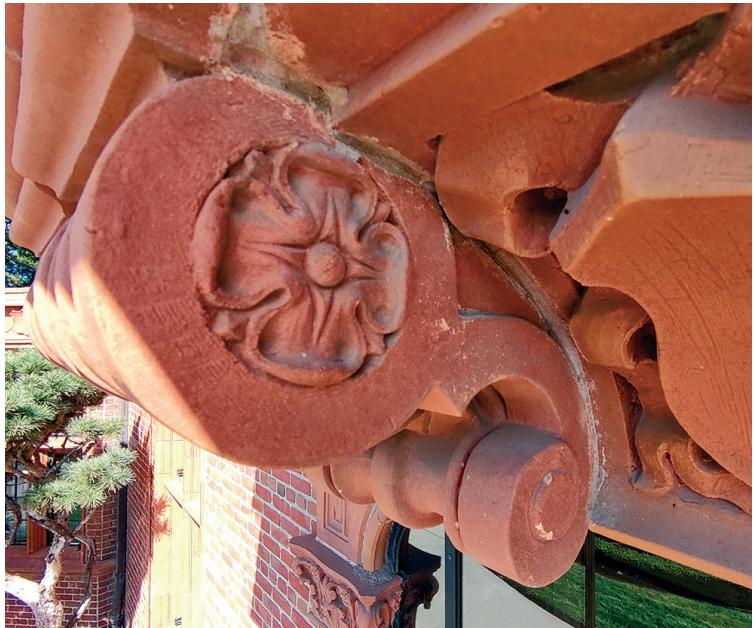


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*Residents of the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society's Laguna Street garden in 1935.*

dozen times in at least twelve expressions. Trefoils and berries, while not as numerous, may also be observed in a variety of locations. The quality and repetition of these decorative details are hallmarks of great architecture."

Heritage on the Marina is planning a commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Julia Morgan campus on **Thursday, March 27, 2025**. Details are still being arranged. ■



PHOTOS BY PAGE & TURNBULL (TOP) AND THEO ARMOUR

*Top:* Caretaker's cottage designed by Berkeley contractor Ernest Higgins. *Middle:* rose motif used by architect Julia Morgan in parlor fireplace surround and gold wall ornaments. *Above:* rose relief within one of six entry bay corbels. *Right:* one of two large terra cotta panels set on the facade of 3400 Laguna Street. Each rose consists of three additional nested roses. The upper corners feature rosebuds.

