



SAN FRANCISCO MODERN & POSTMODERN ARCHITECTURAL STYLES (1960-2000)

CONTEXT: ARCHITECTURAL METHODS & STYLES
SUB-CONTEXT: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

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Cover photo: Aerial view of downtown San Francisco, 1984. Source: San Francisco Public Library, History Center, San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, AAB-8341.

Preface

Modern and Postmodern architecture in San Francisco are themes identified within the Architectural Methods & Styles context, developed as part of San Francisco's Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey) Historic Context Statement Framework. Historic context statements are planning documents used to organize the events related to the development of a style of architecture, neighborhood, thematic topics or typologies, or a group of people. The Planning Department and California Office of Historic Preservation rely on these documents to identify, evaluate, and designate historically or culturally significant properties across the city. These documents are not comprehensive histories or catalogues of the development of a theme in the City but are rather intended as a reference guide for future field surveyors. For discussion of SF Survey methodology, please see [How to Use the Citywide Historic Context Statement](#).¹

This historic context statement is specifically focused on architecture, architectural styles, and associated landscape design in the period from 1960 to 2000, serving as an addendum to the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design (1935-1970) Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2011); the previous report is referred to as the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)* for short. The thematic focus of the context statement is Modern and Postmodern architectural and landscape design and is therefore focused specifically on National Register of Historic Places (National Register) Criterion C and California Register of Historic Places (California Register) Criterion 3. On occasion, however, properties related to specific events that have impacted the design and construction of Modern and Postmodern buildings or landscapes and/or urban design or planning principles should also be evaluated under Criterion A/1.

Contributors

This historic context statement has been prepared by Page & Turnbull, a preservation architecture and planning firm which has been based in San Francisco for over 50 years. Hannah Lise Simonson is a Senior Associate, Cultural Resources Planner at Page & Turnbull and the primary author of this document. Simonson holds a M.S. in Historic Preservation from The University of Texas at Austin and was a Planning Department intern in 2016 and 2017, working on historic context statements for the Diamond Heights, Excelsior, and Portola neighborhoods. She was the president of the Northern California Chapter of Docomomo US for five years (2019-2023) and has over seven years of experience in preservation planning in San Francisco. Her work was overseen by Christina Dikas, Principal-in-Charge, and Ruth Todd, FAIA, Advisory Principal, at Page & Turnbull. All Page & Turnbull staff responsible for this document meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Standards for architectural history and/or historic architecture.

City and County of San Francisco Planning Department staff overseeing this project include Melanie Bishop, Senior Preservation Planner, and Maggie Smith, AICP, Senior Preservation Planner, with the Citywide Cultural Resources Survey team.

¹ San Francisco Planning Department, "How To Use the Citywide Historic Context Statement," accessed online April 15, 2024, <https://sfplanning.org/project/citywide-historic-context-statement#info>.

Introduction

This historic context statement is concerned with extant resources in San Francisco built from 1960 to 2000 that fall under the umbrellas of Modern and Postmodern architecture and associated landscapes. The late twentieth century was a period of many divergent and reactionary strands of architectural theory and design that challenged the orthodoxy of Modernism. Some of these architectural explorations proved to be dead-ends, or at least short-lived. Architectural Postmodernism experienced a fruitful period in the 1980s and early 1990s, helped along in San Francisco by the policies and preferences of the San Francisco Planning Department. Although very few practitioners would have described themselves or their work as “postmodern,” emphasis on existing urban context, communication, borrowing from history and vernacular precedents, pluralism, and experimenting with high and low materials and references, were part of this period of architectural exploration. This period of architecture—within living memory of many San Franciscans—remains polarizing, but we must recognize our own subjectivity, aesthetic preferences, and participation in the cycles of taste which turn every few decades. Some of the most disliked buildings constructed in the late twentieth century are now beloved features of the skyline—including the Transamerica Pyramid (1972, William Pereira & Associates)—and there are significant and influential examples of all late twentieth century architectural styles that distinctively reflect a period in time and a set of theoretical, socio-economic, and cultural influences. In addition to many architecturally notable residential and neighborhood commercial and institutional buildings from the era, San Francisco in the late twentieth century also saw an unprecedented development of its public realm. The public realm became a site of architectural expression which shifted from Late Modern to Postmodern to New Modern between 1960 and 2000, with the opening up of the waterfront following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, transformation of former military sites to public open space, redevelopment of the cultural hub of Yerba Buena Center, and new requirements for open space and public art in the downtown core.

“Modernism” and “Postmodernism” here are used as broad umbrella terms that include a number of related sub-styles and trends or currents in architectural design.² Generally, the main themes of this document are **Late Modernism (1960s-1980s)** and **New Modernism (late 1980s-2000)** which fall under the umbrella of Modernism, and **Postmodernism (mid-1970s-2000)**. A number of sub-themes which have been identified for more detailed discussion in this historic context statement include **New Formalism**, **Brutalism**, **Corporate Late Modernism**, and **Third Bay Tradition**, which generally fall under the umbrella of Late Modernism (**Fig. 1**). While there are many variations and expressions of Late Modernism, Postmodernism and New Modernism, these particular sub-themes were identified based on their uniquely identifiable characteristics and significant presence in San Francisco. In contrast, as an example, while the tenets and physical characteristics of Deconstructivism and High-Tech Structuralism may appear in some buildings, there are not enough distinctive examples of these architectural styles built in San Francisco from 1960 to 2000 to warrant a separate sub-theme context and evaluative framework in this document.

² For definitions of terminology, including “Modern Age,” “Modern,” “Modernism,” “Modern Movement,” “Midcentury Modern,” “Post-War Architecture,” “Recent Past” and “Cultural Landscape,” refer to the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design (1935-1970) Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2011).

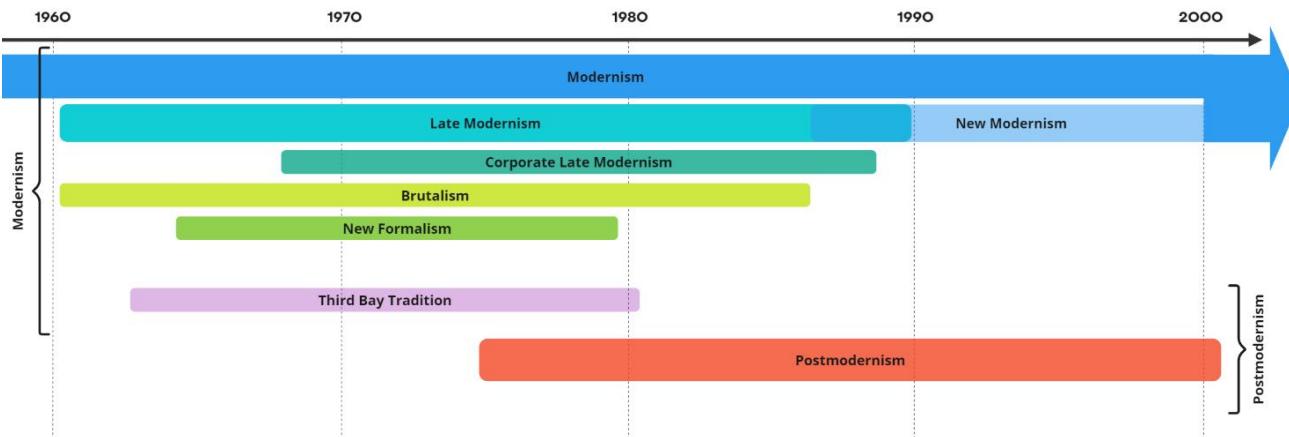


Fig. 1. Diagrammatic timeline illustrating “themes” (Late Modernism, Postmodernism, and New Modernism) and “sub-themes” (Corporate Late Modernism, Brutalism, New Formalism, and Third Bay Tradition) of this historic context statement.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2024.)

This document picks up where the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970* (adopted 2011) historic context statement (*Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*) left off, as Modernism transitioned into Late Modernism. Because architectural trends are a continuum rather than discrete periods of time, there is some overlap in the time periods addressed in this historic context statement and the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*. This document locates Brutalism, New Formalism, and the Third Bay Tradition as under the umbrella of Late Modernism, as they emerged in San Francisco in the 1960s as reactions to or divergences from the orthodoxy of earlier forms of Modernism. Brutalism, New Formalism, and the Third Bay Tradition are addressed in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, but evaluation criteria are only provided for Brutalism, and some of the most important examples of Brutalism were left out due to the overarching period of significance for the document which ended in 1970. Brutalism, New Formalism, and the Third Bay Tradition, as well as Late Modernism more broadly, extend into the 1970s and 1980s. In order to build off the work of the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, this document refers back to the discussions in the prior historic context statement as well as the existing evaluative framework for Brutalism, with some updates and revised considerations.

As stated in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, “Defining Modernism and Modern architectural design is a contentious issue that is subject to continual debate by architects, preservationists, planners and architectural historians. Even the validity of classifying buildings into styles is a subject under debate within the academic community. It appears that the only consensus historians can reach on this subject is to agree that there is a significant disagreement.”³ The same statement can be extended to the subject of Late Modernism, Postmodernism, and New Modernism. The notion of architectural “styles” since the Modern era has been widely challenged by architects and many scholars, especially as the Modern Movement and subsequent architectural approaches have tended to be based around theories of structure, form, material, and program and Bauhaus educational principles rather than pattern books, catalogs, a rigorously standardized Beaux-Arts educational approach, or apprenticeship models. The subject is further complicated by the fact that many practitioners of

³ San Francisco Planning Department and Mary Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco Planning Department, 2011), 2. Accessed online February 13, 2024, https://sfplanninggis.org/docs/Historical_Context_Statements/Modern%20Architecture%20Context%20adopted%20Jan%202011.pdf.

Postmodernism, even some of its leading lights, resisted being labeled as such. As Charles Jencks, architectural historian and one of the most prominent theorists of Postmodern architecture, said, “most architects, like people, are bored by labels, finding them reductive and constricting, like ill-fitting suits. There is much to be said for the view that all labels—stylistic, ideological, historical—distort the perception of architecture and reduce it to verbal categories,” but continues, “however, words and classifications cannot be avoided in creation and perception.”⁴

The classification and grouping of architectural styles, in other words, while imperfect can be a useful tool for describing, understanding, and contextualizing architecture, and are baked into the framework of historical resource evaluation in the form of National Register and California Register criteria and guidelines. Thus, architectural historians and evaluators must proceed with the caveat that classifications and terminologies around architectural style are tools and frameworks for understanding architecture, but are not monolithic or prescriptive, especially by the late twentieth century. There is some fluidity by which architects moved between modes or styles, and some buildings illustrate a hybrid of influences or transitions and are, thus, difficult to put in one box or another between Late, Post, and New Modern.⁵

Period Justification

While the general period of significance for the Citywide Historic Context Statement is 1848-1989, further research on certain subjects—as is the case with Modern and Postmodern architectural styles—warrants the extension of the period of significance beyond the 1980s. To document a more complete picture of architecture in San Francisco in the late twentieth century, this historic context statement begins with 1960, which is around the time that Late Modernism emerged in San Francisco—including offshoots such as Brutalism, New Formalism, Corporate Late Modernism, and the Third Bay Tradition—and extends to 2000 to encompass the rise and decline of Postmodernist architecture in San Francisco. The emergence of New Modernism in the 1990s as a response to Postmodernism is also addressed; however, it should be acknowledged that New Modernism has continued into the present, and further research and scholarship will be required in the future to understand its trends and influences in the twenty-first century. The year 2000 was selected as an end point for the period of study in the historic context statement for several reasons: (a) the period of 1960 to 2000 encompasses the vast majority and the height of built expressions of Late Modernism and Postmodernism in San Francisco; (b) following the year 2000, a number of much larger socioeconomic and political shifts occurred that impacted construction in San Francisco, including a second boom in the tech sector; and (c) contextualizing architectural history from less than 25 years ago for the purposes of evaluation for the National Register and California Register presents several challenges, and more historical distance and scholarship will benefit any review of architecture from the twenty-first century for this purpose. The period of significance for New Modernist architecture may be extended beyond 2000 in the future based on further research.

Approach to Designed Landscapes

It should be noted that the primary focus of this document is architectural design and styles. However, to contextualize the shift in how, what, and why architectural design changed in the late twentieth century in San Francisco, a discussion of broader trends in urban planning, historic preservation, the environmental movement, and public reception of and reactions to architecture and urbanism is provided. Furthermore, designed landscapes are discussed in this document, but the focus of discussion is on designed landscapes that are directly associated with and designed in conjunction with buildings or major development projects—such as corporate plazas, privately owned public open spaces (POPOS), residential gardens and courtyards, and

⁴ Charles Jencks, *The New Moderns: From Late- to Neo-Modernism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 17.

⁵ Discussing these three categories, Jencks notes, “the classification of any architect with one tradition rather than another will be a matter of degree.” Jencks, *The New Moderns*, 21.

redevelopment landscapes. The subject of public parks and designed landscapes in other open spaces is discussed, but is expected to be fully addressed in other historic context statements.

Other Relevant Historic Context Statements

Other historic context statements and survey documents within the Citywide Survey relevant to Modern and Postmodern architecture and landscapes in the late twentieth century include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970* [Adopted 2011] [*Modern Architecture HCS 1935-1970*]
- *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* [Adopted 2023]
- *Bay Area Tradition Styles (1880-1980)* [In Progress]
- *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency* [In Progress]
- *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* [In Progress]
- *Large Apartment Buildings (1900-1978)* [In Progress]
- *Landscapes (1848-1989)* [Planned]
- *Diamond Heights* [2016 Intern Draft]

These and other relevant cultural historic context statements are cross-referenced throughout this document.

Methodology & Sources Consulted

This historic context statement was prepared using a variety of primary and secondary source materials, as well as interviews with local practitioners and critics. Primary source materials included architectural journals, newspaper articles, exhibition catalogs, and historical photographs. Many of these materials are on file at the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), San Francisco History Room. Other repositories consulted included the Prelinger Archive; SFMOMA Library and Archives; California Historical Society; University of California, Berkeley Environmental Design Archives; California College of the Arts (CCA) Library; and the USModernist Library online repository of architectural publications. Secondary sources included scholarly publications, architectural monographs, architectural guidebooks, and maps, which are listed in the **Bibliography** of this document.⁶ James Shay's *New Architecture San Francisco* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989) provides a valuable survey of Bay Area architects and architecture in the late 1970s and 1980s in the form of illustrated interviews.

As the study period of this historic context statement is within living memory of people who were involved in the field of architecture and allied professions during the late twentieth century, Page & Turnbull took the opportunity to meet with and interview practitioners, critics, and scholars. These conversations provided

⁶ Architectural guidebooks published around the turn of the twenty-first century were particularly valuable for a study of the late twentieth century, including: Paco Asensio and Ana Cristina G. Cañizares, *San Francisco Houses* (Düsseldorf, Germany: TeNeues, 2003); Peter Lloyd, *San Francisco: A Guide to Recent Architecture* (London: Ellipsis, 1997); Melody Mason and Michelle Galindo, *San Francisco: architecture & design* (Düsseldorf, Germany: TeNeues, 2005); Mitchell Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2006); and Sally B. Woodbridge, John M. Woodbridge, and Chuck Byrne, *San Francisco Architecture: An Illustrated Guide to the Outstanding Buildings, Public Artworks, and Parks in the Bay Area of California*. (Revised Edition. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2005).

valuable insight that informed the direction of research. Interviews were typically around an hour long, and some were conducted in-person and others by video conference call. Conversations were not recorded and were not formal oral histories, but Page & Turnbull took notes during each conversation. Page & Turnbull is grateful for the time and insight provided by the individuals interviewed, including : Larry Badiner (former San Francisco Zoning Administrator), David Gill (architect and professor at CCA and Academy of Art University (AAU)), John King (architecture critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle*), Jeremy Kotas (architect and planner), Dean Macris (former San Francisco Planning Director), Mitchell Schwarzer (historian, author, and professor emeritus at CCA), Cathy Simon (architect, formerly a partner at SMWM), Daniel Solomon (architect and founding member of the Congress for New Urbanism), Jay Turnbull (preservation architect), Peter Walker (landscape architect), and Ethen Wood (architect and professor at AAU and Stanford University).

Page & Turnbull performed a high-level review of previous architectural surveys and evaluations, including the 1968 Junior League of San Francisco survey published in *Here Today*, 1976 Department of City Planning (DCP) architectural survey, the downtown survey conducted by Heritage and published in *Splendid Survivors* (1979), and resources that are currently listed in the National Register, California Register, and as Article 10 City Landmarks. Page & Turnbull also reviewed Historic Resource Evaluation Responses (HRERs) prepared by the Planning Department as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process, and in response to Historic Resource Assessment applications. This review was conducted utilizing geospatial data extracted from the Planning Information Map (PIM), provided by the San Francisco Planning Department.⁷

The only properties currently listed for architectural significance as Article 10 City Landmarks that date to 1960-2000 are Ghirardelli Square (which was adapted for reuse by Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons and Lawrence Halprin in the 1960s) and the San Francisco Arts Institute (SFAI) building; however, the local landmark designation for SFAI does not explicitly recognize the Brutalist addition by Paffard Keatinge-Clay. National Register nominations for Ghirardelli Square and SFAI both recognize the significance of their respective Modernist additions and interventions. Glen Park BART Station (1973, Ernest Born) is also listed in the National Register. *Here Today* did not document any properties constructed in the 1960s. *Splendid Survivors* documented a number of downtown buildings from the 1960s and 1970s but did not provide them with survey ratings. The 1976 DCP survey documented and rated at least 70 properties built after 1960, and photographed more that were not given ratings.

Planning Department Historic Resource Evaluation Responses (HRERs) have found a number of properties built between 1960 to 2000 to be eligible for listing in the California Register. Most of these properties are downtown commercial buildings, including but not limited to: Alcoa Building & Maritime Plaza (1964-67, Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons (WBE); Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); and Sasaki, Walker & Associates); 838 Grant Avenue (1966, Chan/Rader Associates); 430 California Street (1967, Anshen & Allen); 50 Beale Street (1967, SOM); 44 Montgomery Street (1967, John Graham); Transamerica Pyramid & Redwood Park (1971, William Pereira & Associates with Anthony Guzzardo); 750 Kearny Street (1971, Clement Chen, John Carl Warnecke, T.Y. Lin); Market Street, including U.N. Plaza, Hallidie Plaza, and Embarcadero Plaza (1979, Mario Ciampi, John Carl Warnecke, and Lawrence Halprin); and Embarcadero Center & Hyatt Regency Hotel (1971-1981, John Portman & Associates). Other properties found eligible for the California Register in HRERs include a few commercial, institutional, and residential buildings elsewhere in the city.

⁷ The geographic information system (GIS) data provided by the San Francisco Planning Department was filtered using year built data that is provided by the City and County of San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder. These year built dates are not always accurate for reasons that include recent demolitions, inaccurate previous records, or prior additions and alterations that have been recorded as a new “effective year built.” As such, the review of previous survey and Planning Department historic resource determination findings was not comprehensive, but provided a high-level understanding of existing designated resources and eligibility determinations.

Detailed building-specific research was not conducted for the properties discussed in this document. If the architect and year of construction for properties that are mentioned or illustrated in the historic context statement were not already known, the original building permits were requested electronically from the Department of Building Inspection for confirmation. Unless otherwise noted, San Francisco buildings, sites, and landscapes mentioned in this report are extant at the time of writing.

A windshield survey of representative Late Modern, Postmodern, and New Modern properties was conducted over several days in the summer and fall of 2023. Unless otherwise noted, photographs in this document were taken by Page & Turnbull during these windshield surveys.

Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old

This historic context statement considers properties built from 1960 to 2000, a period which is, at the time of this writing, generally considered the “recent past” within the context of historic preservation. Fifty years is a common threshold for beginning to consider properties as potentially “age-eligible” historic resources. However, properties that are less than 50 years old may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register or NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (California Register or CRHR), and/or as San Francisco City Landmarks (Article 10), and each register has different considerations.

Properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the **National Register** unless it can be demonstrated that they are of *exceptional importance*. According to National Register Bulletin 15, the concept of exceptional importance “may be applied to the extraordinary importance of an event or to an entire category of resources so fragile that survivors of any age are unusual.”⁸ In order for a property to be evaluated under National Register Criteria Consideration G, there must be sufficient historical perspective to determine that the property is exceptionally important. In addition, the property must be compared with other related properties to determine if the property qualifies as exceptionally important. Properties which have achieved significance within the past 50 years can also be eligible for the National Register if they are an integral part of a district which qualifies for the National Register listing.

The **California Register** has different guidance for understanding resources that are less than 50 years old. According to California Office of Historic Preservation Technical Bulletin 6, “In order to understand the historic importance of a resource, sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource. A resource less than 50 years old may be considered for listing in the California Register if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance.”⁹ In other words, the California Register threshold is lower than that of the exceptional significance threshold of the National Register, and requires only *sufficient time* and *scholarly perspective* to evaluate and consider properties less than 50 years old.

Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code, which addresses the preservation of historical architectural and aesthetic landmarks, does not explicitly state any criteria or considerations related to age-eligibility for local landmarks.

⁸ National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin Number 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995).

⁹ California Office of Historic Preservation, “Technical Assistance Series #6 California Register and National Register: A Comparison” (Sacramento: California Office of State Publishing, 2011), 3.

Historic Context

Late, Post & New: Architectural Modernism & Its Discontents

By the post-World War II period, Modernism was the dominant architectural style in American urban centers and was increasingly the norm in residential construction and the design of civic, commercial, and institutional buildings in both cities and suburbs. The “International Style” had been codified by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock in their exhibition and accompanying publication of the same name at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York in 1932—selectively emphasizing Modernism that was characterized by taut white stucco skins, geometric volumes, flat roofs, and ribbon windows and glass curtain walls. The Modern Movement, which had grown out of Europe and the Bauhaus (the German art school founded by Walter Gropius), flourished in the United States after many of its leading lights were forced to relocate because of the war—including Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Marcel Breuer on the East Coast, and Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler on the West Coast. While Le Corbusier—perhaps the preeminent spokesman and practitioner of the Modern Movement—did not move to the United States, his theory and influence loomed large over the field of architecture, and urban planning principles articulated in texts including *Towards a New Architecture* (1923, translated to English in 1927) and *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning* (1929), such as the notion of a tower in a park, had a profound effect on city planning and urban renewal.

In the 1950s, new high-rise towers were springing up in urban centers—following the model of purist, glass curtain wall slabs with flat roofs such as Lever House (1951, Gordon Bunshaft and Natalie de Blois of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, New York) and the Seagram Building (1958, Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson). By the 1960s, American cities were undergoing an unprecedented transformation as they were able to utilize federal funding and the powers of eminent domain through quasi-governmental redevelopment agencies to redevelop large swaths of historic urban fabric for new highways, business district megablocks, and Modernist housing complexes. The developments frequently ripped through existing communities, often long-standing African American communities and other socioeconomically disenfranchised communities.¹⁰ As tabula rasa Modernist planning principles were reshaping cities, Modernism—particularly in the model of Mies van der Rohe—was becoming the dominant corporate style in the urban and suburban landscape. Increasingly derivative design became the norm, to the point that many began to find the style, especially in large downtown high-rises and other large civic projects, to be too austere, abstract, or even banal. The *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), which had been co-founded by Le Corbusier in 1928 to spread the principles of the Modern Movement, disbanded in 1959 by a contingent known as Team 10 that increasingly critiqued the doctrinaire functionalism of orthodox Modernist architecture and urbanism.

Jane Jacobs, a journalist and activist living in New York’s Greenwich village, articulated a poignant critique of urban renewal and Modernist planning in her seminal text, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). Soon after, Robert Venturi published *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (1962) which went after the orthodoxy of purist, abstract Modernism, and called for an exploration of “both-and” in architecture, combining a hybrid of elements and forms including those drawn from history. Venturi proclaimed, “less is a bore” in response to Mies van der Rohe’s refrain “less is more.”¹¹ Although in his introduction to Venturi’s book, Vincent Scully proclaimed that *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* was “the most important writing on the making of architecture since Le Corbusier’s *Vers une Architecture* [Towards a New Architecture] of 1923” and the impact of the book was profound within the architectural community, there was not yet a clear direction in terms

¹⁰ For a detailed account of redevelopment in San Francisco, refer to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency HCS* (in Progress).

¹¹ Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966), 25.

of a movement, style, or form.¹² Yet, for many, there was a sense that the ideological promises of a better society through architecture had not been fulfilled.

The period beginning in the 1960s was one of increasing experimentation, and by the 1970s there were many notable divergences within Modernist architecture, including clearer reactions against it. Even Le Corbusier—the great progenitor of the Modern Movement—began exploring more expressive forms in concrete, as exemplified by his chapel in Ronchamp, with its swooping and evocative roof ([Fig. 2](#)). Within the United States, work such as the Brutalist raw concrete of Paul Rudolph, sweeping expressionist curves of Eero Saarinen, and primordial muscular geometries of Louis Kahn were looked to as new ways forward within the principles of Modernism. This period of what has retrospectively been deemed “Late Modernism” in the 1960s and 1970s included many strains of architectural design, including New Formalism, Brutalism, and Expressionism, as well as the High-Tech Structuralism and glass skin (‘slick tech’) architecture of Southern California and Texas, the exploded Neo-Corbusier exploration of architects like Peter Eisenman and Michael Graves, and early explorations of collage and “cheapskate” materials by Frank Gehry.¹³



Fig. 2. Chapelle Notre Dame du Haut (1954) by Le Corbusier in Ronchamp, France is an expressive chapel that signaled a shift from orthodox Modernism and the International Style by its own main progenitor. The building has been retrospectively identified as a source for Postmodernism because of its visual qualities as a well of communication and metaphor.

(Source: Flickr user Duncan Standridge.)

Robert Venturi and Charles Moore, who both studied under Kahn, represented a new generation of architects that pushed even further beyond Modernism to introduce historical and vernacular references, the lowbrow and kitsch, as well as complexity of form and interior space into their architecture. Projects by Robert Venturi, including the Guild House (1963) and Vanna Venturi House (1964), both in Philadelphia, are among the earliest examples of architectural Postmodernism, especially as characterized by historical reference and irony ([Fig. 3](#) and [Fig. 4](#)). Other early experimentations and precursors of Postmodernism that drew more on vernacular and regional sources include the work of Charles Moore as in his Orinda House (1962) in the East Bay, and projects at The Sea Ranch on the Sonoma coast by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker (MLTW) and Joseph Esherick in 1965 ([Fig. 5](#) and [Fig. 126](#)). Moore’s Piazza d’Italia (1978) in New Orleans would later demonstrate the Classicist strain of Postmodernism, with playful and colorful references to Classical architecture.

¹² Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, 11.

¹³ Charles Jencks, *Late-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980); and Hannah Simonson, “The ‘70s Turn 50: Divergences in American Architecture,” Docomomo US, August 17, 2020, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/the-70s-turn-50-divergences-in-american-architecture>.



Fig. 3. Guild House in Philadelphia, PA, designed by Robert Venturi, was completed in 1963. The apartment building for low-income elderly residents has been identified as one of the earliest examples of Postmodernist architecture in America.

(Source: Hannah Simonson, 2022.)



Fig. 4. Vanna Venturi House ("Mother's House") by Robert Venturi in Philadelphia, PA, completed in 1964.

(Source: Hannah Simonson, 2022.)

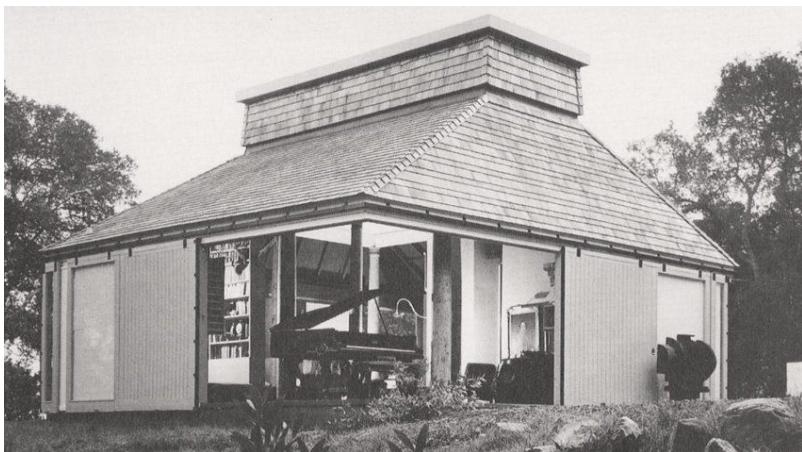


Fig. 5. Orinda House (1962) by Charles Moore in the East Bay featured two central aediculae (or temple-like interior spaces, supported by columns) which served to define the otherwise open living and bedroom spaces. The simple square volume had sliding barn doors to dissolve the walls and barriers to the exterior. The Orinda House, since effectively demolished, was an important precedent and precursor to Third Bay Tradition and Postmodern residential architecture.

(Source: Charles Moore Foundation).

It was not until the 1970s, however, that architectural Postmodernism was named and theorized. Charles Jencks produced a seminal text, *The Language of Post-Modernism* (1977), that put a name to the new architecture that was reacting to and diverging from Modernism. Jencks would also help to define the "Late Modern" in contrast to Postmodernism, while acknowledging the distinctions sometimes as fluid and matters of degrees, in his book *Late-Modern Architecture* (1980) (Fig. 6). Writings by Robert A. M. Stern, Paolo Portoghesi, and Heinrich Klotz helped to further define architectural Postmodernism, which by the 1980s was a dominant mode—albeit a pluralist one—in American architecture as indicated by the projects gracing covers of architectural periodicals and winning awards. In 1979, Philip Johnson—who had defined and codified the International Style—proved willing to shift with stylistic trends and was on the cover of TIME Magazine, holding a model of the soon-to-be-built AT&T Building (550 Madison Avenue, New York City, 1984), which has become an icon of Postmodernism with its top that resembled an eighteenth century Chippendale cabinet (Fig. 7). The first Venice Biennale of architecture, hosted in 1980, was a watershed moment for architectural Postmodernism, bringing the new architecture to a mass public audience first in Venice, then traveling to Paris, and to Fort Mason Center in San

Francisco in 1982. The exhibition titled “The Presence of the Past” emphasized a Postmodernism that drew on historical, particularly Classical, references and played with scale, color, irony, and humor.

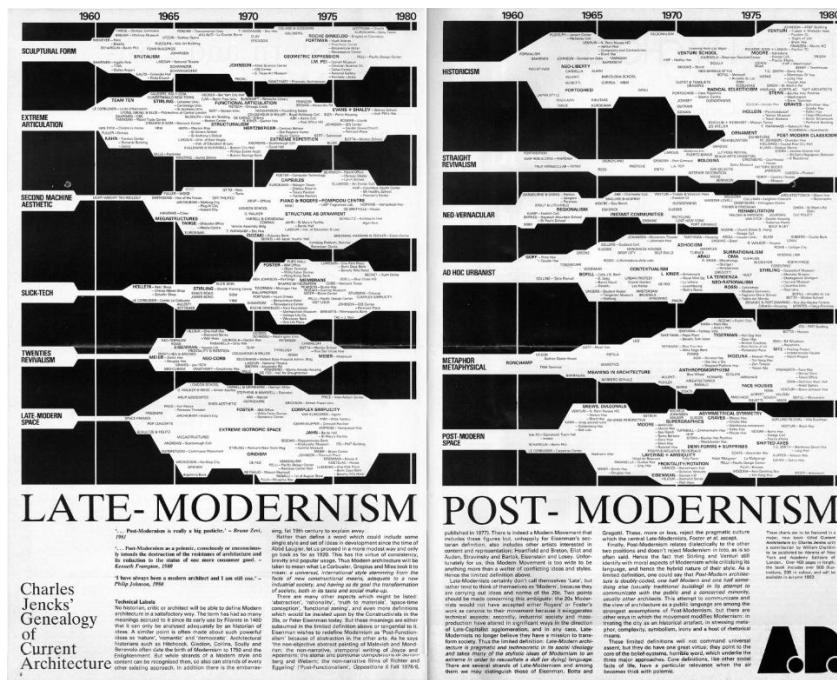


Fig. 6. One of Charles Jencks's many iterations on an evolutionary tree, in this case showing Late Modernism and Postmodernism side-by-side. Originally published in Charles Jencks, “Battle of the Labels: Late-Modern v Postmodern,” *A.D. News-Architectural Design News Supplement* (July 1981), 3.

(Source: Charles Moore Foundation).

San Francisco saw its own divergences from and reactions to Modernism, along similar lines as the broader national and international critique, but uniquely informed by specific local events and concerns, including urban renewal, fears of the Manhattanization of the city’s skyline, burgeoning historic preservation and environmental movements, and newly implemented urban planning principles, which are discussed in greater detail in the following section, **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century**. In the 1970s, architecture shifted into its Late Modern phase, with icons such as Transamerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street, 1972, William Pereira & Associates) and the Embarcadero Center (1-5 Embarcadero Center, 1971-81, John Portman & Associates) informing much of the public debate about how the city should look and grow. Explorations within Late Modernism included Brutalism and New Formalism, as well as the Third Bay Tradition, which developed out of The Sea Ranch and explorations of vernacular forms.

By the 1980s, particularly after the adoption of San Francisco’s 1985 Downtown Plan, architectural Postmodernism took hold, especially in corporate high-rise construction, but also found eclectic and highly contextual and regional expressions in the residential work of architects like Daniel Solomon, Donald MacDonald, and Jeremy Kotas. Generally speaking, Postmodernism in San Francisco was more contextual and regional in its expressions, particularly in residential architecture which drew on a long tradition of regional eclecticism, when compared to the flamboyant, dissonant collage and proto-Deconstructivist works coming out of the Los Angeles School of Postmodernism at the time.



Fig. 7. AT&T Building (550 Madison Avenue, 1984) by Johnson & Burgee in Manhattan, New York City, NY.

(Source: David Shankbone, 2007, cropped, Wikipedia.)

Postmodernism, however, ran a fairly brief course in San Francisco, with many architects finding it superficial, tired, and pastiche. By the early 1990s, they were seeking a new way forward in design through a return to the principles of Modernism and more minimalist or post-industrial aesthetic without the overt historical references and applied ornamentation of Postmodernism. The shift, signaled by the “In the Spirit of Modernism” exhibition at SFMOMA in 1991, was led by a new generation of local architects, including Jim Jennings, Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy, William Stout, and Stanley Saitowitz, and the New Modernist architecture continued to evolve in practice and expression into the twenty-first century and present day.

Additional contexts on Late Modernism, Postmodernism, and New Modernism, with specific reference to their local expressions in San Francisco, are provided in the relevant Theme and Sub-Theme sections of this document.

CHANGES WITHIN PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & EDUCATION

In the late twentieth century, the architecture profession experienced a number of broad national trends and new technological innovations that changed the practice, many of which also impacted allied fields like landscape architecture and planning. Notably, following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, more women and racial and ethnic minority individuals entered architectural education and subsequently, architectural practice, although significant work remained (and still remains) to be done to diversify the profession. For more information on the demographic shifts in Bay Area professional practice, refer to **Appendix A**.

This period also saw the growth and consolidation of a few major firms nationally—such as SOM, HOK, and Gensler—making it challenging for small firms to compete, especially during periods of inflation and recession, as well as the rise of the ‘starchitect.’ The increasing affordability and convenience of computers also changed architectural practice insofar as it allowed for more complex analysis and increased specialization, and of course, changed approaches to drafting and design with the introduction of Computer Aided Design (CAD) software.

Growth of Firms & Rise of the Starchitect

While the proliferation of construction in the immediate post-World War II period provided ample opportunity for young architects, the recessions in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s; rising costs of land, construction, and labor; decreasing availability of buildable sites; and increasing regulation and review all contributed to a more challenging environment for architects and designers in the late twentieth century. In many cases, larger firms were able to be more competitive and efficient, and provide more specialization and technical analysis. During this period, architecture firms like Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK); and Gensler, as well as some landscape architecture firms such as SWA Group (which evolved out of Sasaki, Walker & Associates), EDAW (which evolved from Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams) grew much larger.¹⁴ SOM, John Portman & Associates, and Welton Becket Associates dominated downtown high-rise construction through the 1980s.¹⁵ On the other hand, some smaller firms were able to find professional niches in residential design, as well as institutional design for recreational, educational, and other municipal sites.

¹⁴ Lawrence Halprin Associates also grew to over 60 employees, until Halprin closed the office to open a much smaller practice in the mid-1970s.

¹⁵ “San Francisco Skyscraper Timeline Diagram,” Skyscraper Page, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://skyscraperpage.com/diagrams/?cityID=114&searchname=timeline>.

By the 1990s, however, large cultural and institutional projects were often being given to big-name architects with national, or even international, cachet—signaling the beginning of the “starchitect” phenomenon. Even before the “Bilbao Effect” was theorized based on Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1997)—in which iconic architecture is employed to transform an urban environment and bolster the economy and tourism—the concept of starchitecture was being developed. The Centre Pompidou (Paris, 1977, Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers) was an early example of this strategy, and as early as 1987, a Chicago Tribune article defined the phenomenon as “Celebrity style architects—starchitects—whose hands at the drawing board virtually guarantee a distinctive, eye-catching, even whimsical creation that will enhance the building’s marketability.”¹⁶ While the AIA Gold Medal, one of the highest honors in American architecture, goes back to the early 1900s, the prestigious international Pritzker Prize—which was first awarded to Philip Johnson in 1979—has further heightened the public prominence of starchitects. Although the Financial District has its share of office skyscrapers designed by firms based outside of San Francisco, the starchitect phenomenon is perhaps most apparent at Yerba Buena Center. The area, controlled by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, went through many master planning iterations—including plans by local architects such as Beverly Willis—over decades before being largely built out in the 1990s. Yerba Buena Center, which has a concentration of arts and cultural institutions designed by starchitects includes the original San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by Mario Botta (151 3rd Street, 1995) with a later addition by Snøhetta (2016); the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts by Pritzker Prize-winner Fumihiko Maki (701 Mission Street, 1993); the Yerba Buena Center Theater (700 Howard Street, 1993) by James Polshek; and the Contemporary Jewish Museum (736 Mission Street, 2008) by Daniel Libeskind.¹⁷

Bay Area Design Education

Locally, the architecture field was also heavily influenced by the pedagogy of local educational institutions. One significant change was in 1959, when the College of Environmental Design (CED) was created at the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). The brainchild of William Wurster and Catherine Bauer Wurster, who cast a long shadow at UC Berkeley, the program was the first in the country to join the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning in one college.¹⁸ CED moved into its new home—now known as Bauer Wurster Hall—in 1964, an iconic work of Brutalist architecture. During the late twentieth century, architecture faculty included many notable Modernists, including Claude Stoller, Gerald McCue, and Donald Olsen, as well many of the leading architects of Second and Third Bay Traditions of regional architecture, such as Donlyn Lyndon, Joseph Esherick, and Charles Moore.¹⁹ A vanguard also arrived on the faculty with new ideas about architecture, planning, urbanism, and sustainability, including Christopher Alexander, Sim van der Ryn, and Daniel Solomon.²⁰ While the CED program was expanding and diversifying, Stanford University phased out its undergraduate architecture program between 1975 and 1977, and then-director of the program Robert

¹⁶ Chicago Tribune, January 18, 1987, cited in “Starchitect,” Oxford English Dictionary, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/starchitect_n?tl=true.

¹⁷ The starchitect phenomenon is also apparent in other civic and cultural buildings around the city, some of which date to after 2000, including the San Francisco Public Library (1996) by James Ingo Freed of Pei Cobb Freed, the Asian Art Museum addition (2003) by Gae Aulenti, the Federal Building (2006) by Thom Mayne of Morphosis, the DeYoung Museum (2005) by Herzog & de Meuron, and the California Academy of Sciences (2008) by Renzo Piano. Thom Mayne, Herzog & de Meuron, and Renzo Piano are all Pritzker Prize winners.

¹⁸ “About CED,” University of California, Berkeley College of Environmental Design, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://ced.berkeley.edu/about-ced>.

¹⁹ “Faculty of the School of Architecture/College of Environmental Design,” in *Design on the Edge: A Century of Teaching Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, 1903-2003*, eds. Waverly Lowell, Elizabeth Byrne, and Betsy Frederick-Rothwell (Berkeley: College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, 2009), 303-4.

²⁰ Christopher Alexander’s *A Pattern Language* (1977) was widely influential both in and outside the architecture profession. The book outlined patterns in the form a problem statement, illustrated discussion of the problem, and a solution to empower users to build and problem-solve through design on their own. The ideas in *A Pattern Language* are cited from New Urbanists to early software designers.

Mittelstadt was unable to persuade the university to establish a graduate program to compliment the undergraduate program.²¹



Fig. 8. The interior “nave” of the main CCA Montgomery Campus building at 1111 8th Street, adapted from a 1951 SOM-designed Greyhound Bus maintenance facility by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy in 1998.

(Source: Karl Petzke, photographer. “Institutional Patronage: An Interview with David Meckel, FAIA,” *arcCA* 07.1 (2007).)

Fig. 9. Exterior view of main CCA Montgomery Campus building (1111 8th Street).

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

In the 1980s, the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC, now known as California College of the Arts or CCA) challenged CED as the center of avant-garde architectural education in the Bay Area. Cogswell College (now University of Silicon Valley), a historic San Francisco college, was undergoing restructuring and relocated to Cupertino to be closer to the hubs of computer technology innovation in Silicon Valley. CCA purchased Cogswell College’s architecture program and merged it with its own interior architecture program. The new CCA program moved into a leased former industrial building at 1700 17th Street in 1987, marking the first step in what would eventually be a full relocation of the school from its historic Oakland campus to San Francisco in 2022.²² In 1996-98, architects Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy converted a former Greyhound Bus maintenance facility at 1111 8th Street in Potrero Hill (originally designed by SOM in 1951) as the new home for the CCA design and architecture programs (**Fig. 8** and **Fig. 9**). Under the leadership of director David Meckel, the architecture program at CCA became accredited by the time the first class graduated and grew into an influential force within Bay Area architecture. Many of the faculty members—including Jim Jennings, Paulett Taggart, Stephanie Felch, and David Ogorzalek of Praxis, and others—and graduates were leading local practitioners of Modernism in the late twentieth century.²³

²¹ “Stanford scrapping program in architecture after ’77.” *Palo Alto Times*, June 28, 1975. Undergraduate architecture was later reintroduced at Stanford University in the engineering school, c. early 2000s.

²² The Albert Roller-designed building at 1700 17th Street was renovated for CCA by Gensler & Associates. Refer to: “About,” California College of the Arts, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.cca.edu/about/#section-history>; and John Chase, “Architecture school to open in The City,” *San Francisco Examiner*, July 8, 1985.

²³ Oral interview in 2023 between author and architect David Gill, who received his architecture degree at CCA, then later taught at CCA.

Hand Drawing versus Computer Aided Design

Early use of computers for complex environmental and site analysis was occurring as early as the 1970s. UC Berkeley students were using computer geographic information systems (GIS)—arguably one of the first instances—to digitize and analyze 60 layers of data for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency in the early 1970s, and architect Beverly Willis's firm was developing its pioneering proprietary site analysis software, Computerized Approach to Residential Land Analysis (CARLA), in 1972.²⁴ However, it was not until the 1980s that commercially available software programs, which are now standard issue for design firms, were launched, including AutoCAD (1982), Microsoft Word (1983), Adobe Photoshop (1990).²⁵ In the 1980s, students were still primarily learning hand-drafting techniques, but by the 1990s, AutoCAD was becoming more widely adopted by architecture and engineering firms.²⁶ Computing tools allowed firms to become more efficient and for practitioners to become increasingly specialized in their expertise.

However, some architects have argued that “something is lost when they [students and architects] draw only on the computer” and that hand drawing remains vital to the practice of design.²⁷ In the Bay Area, the 1990s were rich with expressive hand drawing in both “paper architecture” and renderings for soon-to-be-built projects. Architects like Batey & Mack and Wes Jones, in particular, were known for their unique rendering styles, and the locally published *Pamphlet Architecture* was illustrated primarily with black and white drawings by the likes of Zaha Hadid and Lebbeus Woods (**Fig. 10**).²⁸

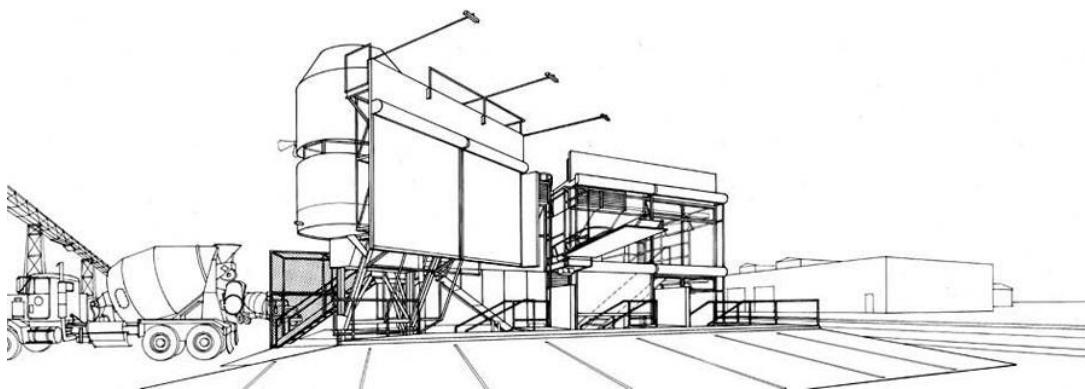


Fig. 10. Ink on mylar drawing of Right Away Redy Mix I in Oakland by Wes Jones, 1986.

(Source: Wes Jones. Jones, Partners: Architecture.)

²⁴ “CARLA,” Beverly Willis Archive, accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://beverlywillis.com/technology/carla/>; and Robert Twiss, “Perspectives on the Development of Environmental Planning in the department: 1960-1994, in *Landscape at Berkeley: The First 100 Years*, eds. Waverly B. Lowell, Carrie Leah McDade, and Elizabeth Douthitt Byrne (Berkeley: College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 75.

²⁵ “The Software That Changed Architecture: Reflecting on 40 Years of AutoCAD,” Architizer, n.d. (2022), accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://architizer.com/blog/practice/tools/autocad-40th-birthday/>.

²⁶ “The Evolution of CAD for Engineering and Architectural Technicians,” Digital School, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.digitalschool.ca/the-evolution-of-cad-for-engineering-and-architectural-technicians/>.

²⁷ Michael Graves, “Architecture and the Lost Art of Drawing,” *The New York Times*, September 1, 2012.

²⁸ Los Angeles-based Ming Fung and Craig Hodgetts of Hodgetts + Fung also contributed compelling, fantastical drawings of San Francisco and the Bay Bridge to the “Visionary San Francisco” exhibition at SFMOMA in 1990 to illustrate William Gibson’s short story “Skinner’s Room.” William Gibson, “Skinner’s Room” in *Visionary San Francisco*, ed. Paolo Polledri (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990), 152-65.

ARCHITECTURAL CRITICISM, PUBLICATIONS & EXHIBITIONS

Local Architectural Criticism

The primary source of local architecture criticism during the late twentieth century was in local newspapers. Allan Temko was the architecture critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle* from 1961 to 1993—a period of significant change in the urban built environment and architectural style in San Francisco.²⁹ While the *San Francisco Chronicle* was not as progressive as publications such as the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, Temko was noted for his sharp criticism of urban renewal, freeway construction, and what he perceived as the overreaches of planners in matters of individual building design, and for his defense of the urban design and quality of San Francisco. Local architectural historian and journalist Sally Woodbridge was also a significant local voice, serving as a longtime correspondent for *Progressive Architecture*, curating and editing a series of Bay Area architecture guidebooks, and editing the seminal text on Bay Tradition Architecture, *Bay Area Houses* (1976, rev. 1988).³⁰

Architecture Publications & Galleries

Although not locally focused, national trade and shelter publications shaped, or at least reflected, the trends and conversations in the architectural profession. *Architectural Forum* ceased publication in early 1974, and *Arts & Architecture* ended its run in 1967, before being briefly revived as a quarterly magazine from 1981 to 1985. Trade publications like *Architectural Record*, *AIA Journal* (later known as *Architecture*), and *Landscape Architecture Magazine* continued to run through the end of the twentieth century, as did more widely popular shelter magazines like *Sunset Magazine* and *Better Homes & Gardens*. In addition to AIA national and chapter awards programs, *Architectural Record* continued its “Record Houses” awards program.³¹ *Progressive Architecture* (P/A), considered a more avant-garde publication, also ran an awards program, which was highly coveted in the profession.³²

In addition to national publications, there were several notable architecture publications that were published in San Francisco, along with several influential bookstores, galleries, and local organizations. William Stout Architectural Books opened at its current location at 840 Montgomery Street in 1984—finding a long-term home after its start in William “Bill” Stout’s apartment in 1974, and then a location on Osgood Place.³³ In addition to new books, Stout was collecting and selling used and out-of-print books, as well as avant-garde periodicals. There were numerous architecture firms in the area—either in Jackson Square or within walking distance in the Financial District—which supported a small but vital network of architecture-related endeavors. Susie Coliver opened ARCH, a drafting and architectural supply store, at 43 Osgood Place in 1978, and Dan Friedlander

²⁹ Temko received a Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 1990. A collection of his essays was published as *No Way to Build a Ballpark: And Other Irreverent Essays on Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993).

³⁰ John Parman, “Remembering Sally Woodbridge,” Berkeleyside, May 29, 2020, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.berkeleyside.org/2020/05/29/remembering-sally-byrne-woodbridge>.

³¹ Several houses and apartments in San Francisco were “Record Houses” between 1970 and 2000, including: Studio Apartments by Whisler/Patri in 1970; the Waldman House by Bull Field Volkmann Stockwell and Friendship Village by Bulkley and Sazevich in 1972; the Coplans Residence (19 Belgrave Avenue) by Patricia Coplans in 1973; Union Street Apartments by Peters Clayberg & Caulfield in 1975; 747 North Point Townhouses by Donald MacDonald in 1980; the Corson-Heinser Live/Work Building by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy in 1992; and the Oliver Residence by Jim Jennings in 1998.

³² P/A Awards given to San Francisco projects between 1970 and 2000 include awards or citations to a proposal for Pacific Medical Center (the building at 2333 Buchanan Street was later constructed with a different design) in 1972; Telegraph Terrace by BAR in 1980; 388 Market Street by SOM in 1983; 999 Brannan by Tanner & De Vine in 1984; the San Francisco Downtown Plan in 1986; and 18th & Arkansas Townhouses and Lofts by David Baker in 1995.

³³ Stout started selling books out of his apartment at 1218 Montgomery Street, which he shared with architect Steven Holl. Originally, the store was called “Off Centre” but was renamed by the late 1970s. In the 1970s Stout was still practicing architecture and had an office on Osgood Place that he shared with Jim Jennings and Peter Van Dine. By 1992, Stout had closed his architectural office and focused only on the bookstore and publishing. Dung Ngo, “Shelf Life,” *Kazam Magazine*, Eames Institute, March 2023, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.eamesinstitute.org/kazam-magazine/william-stout-architectural-books/>.

opened modern furniture store Limn.³⁴ Mark Mack and Andrew Batey rented a nearby office at 25 Osgood Place where they co-founded Western Addition in c. 1976-77, which was “an organization devoted to fine architecture.”³⁵ The group hosted architecture lecture series and conversations, out of which the publication *Archetype* was formed shortly thereafter.

Where *Oppositions* was a more East Coast-centric avant-garde architecture publication, *Archetype* was a distinctly West Coast publication, but with global interests in disciplines ranging from architecture to photography and industrial design, as well as history and theory. The editorial team included Batey and Mack with Henry Bowles, Kurt Forster, and Diane Ghirardo, and was printed approximately quarterly from 1979 to 1983. The editorial in the first issue noted, “One of the objectives for a voice from the west should be to eradicate the fear of communication with the architectural community on the East Coast and in Europe,” demonstrating their interest in rectifying the image of San Francisco and the West Coast as isolated, provincial, and/or irrelevant to the national and global conversation about art and culture.³⁶

Stout also started publishing a series with architect Steven Holl (who had moved to New York in 1977) called *Pamphlet Architecture* in 1978, which is still running despite its very limited distribution in New York and San Francisco early on. Each issue of the highly experimental and theoretical publication was written, designed, and illustrated by emerging architects—many of whom later proved to be very well-known and influential, including Zaha Hadid, Lebbeus Woods, Steven Holl, and Mark Mack. The issues often featured work by the issue’s author, and the projects were “paper architecture” (either unbuilt or speculative). The series was and has been highly influential amongst a younger generation of architects, especially for those in the late 1970s through 1990s who were interested in new architecture outside of the Postmodern mainstream (which dominated national trade publications into the early 1990s), including Deconstructivism, High Tech Structuralism, and fresh approaches to Modernism.³⁷ Stout also started publishing books under the “William Stout Publishers” imprint in the 1990s, including monographs on notable Bay Area architects.³⁸

In the late 1980s, architect Mark Horton started a non-profit gallery called “Art and Architecture Exhibition Space,” better known by the acronym 2AES, at 340 Bryant Street. Horton was eventually joined by architect West Jones who in turn involved his partner at the time, architect Peter Pfau. The group was also joined by architect Frank Wong and landscape architect and artist Karla Dakin, who ran the gallery.³⁹ The gallery exhibited visionary and experimental work, often paper architecture, by avant-garde architects and hosted events like “Café Talks” at the

³⁴ ARCH later relocated to 10 Carolina Street around 2000, and in 2021 moved into the ground floor of CCA’s Blattner Hall (1490 17th Street). Taryn Lott, “ARCH Art Supplies moves to Blattner Hall,” CCA Newsroom, July 27, 2021, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.cca.edu/newsroom/arch-art-supplies-blattner-hall/>.

³⁵ “Western Addition,” advertisement, *Archetype* (Spring 1979), back cover.

³⁶ “Postmodernist Publishing Architecture in the late 1970’s,” Noever Design, accessed online February 13, 2024, <http://www.noever-design.com/de-cafe-aud.html>.

³⁷ Amelia Taylor-Hochberg, “Inside Pamphlet: How one of the most enduring experimental architecture publications got its start,” Archinect, February 12, 2016, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://archinect.com/features/article/147814975/inside-pamphlet-how-one-of-the-most-enduring-experimental-architecture-publications-got-its-start>; Steven Holl and William Stout, *Pamphlet Architecture 1-10* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

³⁸ Elizabeth Snowden, “Torch Passed: The Eames Institute’s acquisition of William Stout’s bookstore preserves a cultural icon,” The Architect’s Newspaper, February 27, 2023, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.archpaper.com/2023/02/eames-institutes-acquisition-william-stout-bookstore-preserves-cultural-icon/>.

³⁹ David Gill, email message to Hannah Simonson, July 23, 2024.

Brainwash Cafe to showcase the work of young architects in the Bay Area.⁴⁰ The work exhibited at 2AES was a departure from Postmodernism and can be understood as part of a shifting interest within the architecture profession to find a new way forward. The title of the 2AES gallery was also notable insofar as it tied together the realms of art and architecture—this kind of interdisciplinary conversation and mutual inspiration was also inherent in the project of *Archetype*. The cross-pollination was especially important in the 1980s and 1990s as architects sought new influences, and many architects experimented in fine art and other practical design (furniture, exhibitions, etc.) as commissions for young architects were relatively scarce.



Fig. 11. *Smithsonian Falls, Descending a Staircase for P.K.* (1987) by David Ireland, installed at the SFAI addition by Paffard Keatinge-Clay.

(Source: Gallery as Place, San Francisco Art Institute, 1987. Simo Neri, photographer.)



Fig. 12. 65 Capp Street designed by David Ireland and later home to the Capp Street Project artist residency. Photographed in 1982.

(Source: Tsujimoto and Wortz, *David Ireland: A Decade Documented, 1978-1988*, 32.)

David Ireland was a major nexus for such interdisciplinary collaboration, as were CCA, SFAI, and the Headlands Center for the Arts in Marin. Ireland, who treated his own home at 500 Capp Street in the Mission District as a kind of conceptual art piece by taking an almost archeological approach to its preservation and maintenance, engaged deeply with architecture in his practice—including pieces such as *Smithsonian Falls, Descending a Staircase for P.K.* (1987), which was installed in the stairwell of the Paffard Keatinge-Clay-designed Brutalist addition to SFAI and at the Headlands Center for the Arts (HCA) (Fig. 11). At HCA, Ireland not only undertook a number of “maintenance action” conceptual art projects to adaptively reuse the former military buildings, but also collaborated with architect Mark Mack on the furniture that is still used. Bruce Tomb, who previously worked for Batey & Mack and on *Archetype*, started an interdisciplinary art and architecture partnership with John

⁴⁰ The Café Talks series in 1992 was “series of evening presentations by a loose collection of emerging San Francisco-based architects and designers.” The work of the participants (Yung-Ho Chang, Ted Mahi, Doug Wittnebel, Michael Bell, Anne Fougeron, Louis Schump, Charles Wenzlau, Whitney Sander, Praxis Architects, David Gadarian, John Clagett, Daniel W. Pietra, Group 27-9, Sarah Willmer, and Byron Kuth/Liz Ranieri) was published in a brochure “CICA/2AES: Café Talks” (1992). The brochure observes “one finds within this group little influence from any historical Bay Tradition, nor much engagement in the specific typological realities of San Francisco or its environs. No doubt, this must be ascribed primarily to the rather place-less, mobile conditions of contemporary life. But it may also reflect the fact that, to the extent that the city seems largely built, and that new construction is severely constrained by the guardians of that context, San Francisco seems to offer little incentive for innovative or challenging public architecture.” Information about 2AES was gathered from an oral interview with architect David Gill, who worked for Mark Horton, and digital copy of the Café Talks brochure courtesy of David Gill.

Randolph called Interim Office Of Architecture (IOOA), which installed *The Latrine* (1998)—a useable sculpture at HCA. In 1983, Ann Hatch also started the Capp Street Project—a long-running artist residency program—out of 65 Capp Street, an early example of a building with minimalist New Modern architecture designed by David Ireland in 1981 (**Fig. 12**).⁴¹

Architecture Exhibitions

The shift from Late Modernism to Post Modernism to New Modernism could also be seen in larger architecture exhibitions put on between 1970 and 2000. In addition to several smaller shows highlighting new work by a specific architect or a single project, major exhibitions included: “A View of California Architecture: 1960-1976” (1976) at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA); “The Presence of the Past” (1982) at Fort Mason Center; “California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture” (1982) put on by the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) and San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) in New York; “Clos Pegas Design Competition” (1985) at SFMOMA; “Visionary San Francisco” (1990) at SFMOMA; and “In the Spirit of Modernism” (1991) at SFMOMA.⁴²

In 1976, SFMOMA exhibited “A View of California Architecture: 1960-1976,” which demonstrated the variety of styles and approaches being utilized by California architects from Brutalism to Miesian minimalism to Bay Area regional styles to various historical revivals to experimentation in new buildings systems like mirror glass. While featuring several Bay Area architects—including EHDD, Charles Warren Callister, Mario Ciampi, Fisher-Friedman Associates, William Turnbull, and Robert Mittelstadt—the exhibition catalog was heavily focused on Southern California architecture and architects—such as Cesar Pelli, DMJM, and Frank Gehry; the only San Francisco projects included were the SFSU Student Center (1600 Holloway Avenue, 1969-75) by Paffard Keatinge-Clay, Transamerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street, 1972) by William Pereira & Associates, Coplans Residence (19 Belgrave Avenue, 1973) by Burger & Coplans, and Bellair Duplex (30 Bellair Place, 1973) by Daniel Solomon. David Gebhard argued in his catalog essay that while “mild historicism has never of course left the California scene [...] since the early 1970s there has been a rash of even more blatant historicism,” foreshadowing the more full emergence and dominance of Postmodernism to come.⁴³ The exhibition “Transformations in Modern Architecture,” curated by Arthur Drexler at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1979, also showcased the many divergences in architecture over the course of the late 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁴

The arrival of Postmodernism on the architectural scene in San Francisco was marked by the restaging of the “The Presence of the Past” exhibition from the 1980 Venice Biennale; the exhibition was shipped to San Francisco and reinstalled at Fort Mason Center in 1982 (**Fig. 14**). Curated by Paolo Portoghesi, “The Presence of the Past,” was the first separate architecture exhibition at the Venice Biennale, and featured as its centerpiece a “new street” (*Strada Novissima*) installed in an old rope factory with 20 facades designed by the architectural avant-garde made with stage-set materials such as Styrofoam, chipboard, canvas, and paint; other elements of the architecture biennale included a floating theater (*Teatro del Mondo*) by Aldo Rossi and a gallery of work by 43

⁴¹ In 1989, the Capp Street Project moved to the AVT Auto Garage at 270 14th Street, and then moved into the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in 1998, which later became part of CCA. Refer to: “About CSP,” Capp Street Project Archive (CSPA), archived from the original on September 21, 2017 via the Wayback Machine, accessed February 13, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170921095256/http://libraries-archive.cca.edu/capp/aboutcsp.html>; Karen Tsujimoto and Melinda Wortz, *David Ireland: A Decade Documented, 1978-1988* (Santa Cruz: University of California, 1988); and Alan Hess, *Hyperwest: American Residential Architecture on the Edge* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1996).

⁴² Notable architect retrospectives at SFMOMA included “Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places” (1986), “An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster” (1995).

⁴³ David Gebhard, “A View” in *A View of California Architecture: 1960-1976* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1976), 12.

⁴⁴ Arthur Drexler, *Transformations in Modern Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, distributed by New York Graphic Society, 1979).

additional architects. Ironically, Portoghesi intentionally chose a name for the exhibition that did not include the term “postmodernism” because he already sensed that architectural movement was being restricted or pigeonholed.⁴⁵ However, the 1980 Venice Biennale exhibition was heralded as doing for Postmodernism what the 1932 “Modern Architecture: International Exhibition” at MOMA in New York, curated by Henry-Russell Hitchcock, did for the International Style and Modern Movement.⁴⁶ And, in fact, like the International Style exhibition at MOMA, the 1980 Venice Biennale presented a highly curated and specific type of Postmodernism—as with the Modern Movement, which in fact had many variations beyond the white stucco box, Postmodernism also had many variations beyond largely Classicist facades at the Venice Biennale.

San Francisco advertising executive Joseph Wiener and his wife, publicist Virginia Westover, visited the Venice Biennale in 1980 and had the idea to bring it to San Francisco. After the exhibition traveled to Paris, picking up two additional facades, it traveled by boat to San Francisco to be installed in one of the warehouse piers at Fort Mason Center, only a few years after the site was turned over from the military. For unspecified reasons, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown dropped out of the exhibition by the time it arrived in San Francisco, and instead a “shrine to Philip Johnson” was installed in recognition of his interest in “historical forms” and “after-Modern” architecture. The 1982 Fort Mason Center exhibition also included four additional facades by Bay Area architects, including facades by Batey & Mack, William Turnbull, the San Francisco office of SOM, and Daniel Solomon (**Fig. 13**).⁴⁷ SOM’s contribution by Jared Carlin, Michael Chow, Marc Goldstein, and Richard Tobias of the San Francisco office was a pun on the “curtain wall” for which the firm’s many Modernist skyscraper designs were noted, but also signaled the firm’s “eagerness to be counted among the post-modernists.”⁴⁸ Also added were an entry gate by Crosby, Thornton & Marshall, a Sponsors’ Pavilion by Thomas Gordon Smith, and an Italian food court designed by Batey & Mack, who were also responsible for the overall exhibition design at Fort Mason Center.

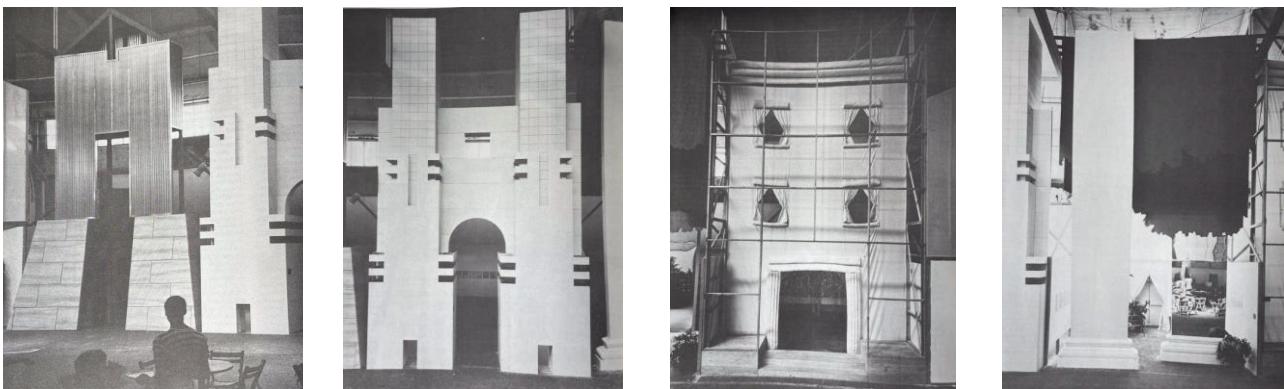


Fig. 13. Four new facades at the Fort Mason Center installation of the *Strada Novissima* by Bay Area architects. From left to right: Batey & Mack, Daniel Solomon, SOM, and William Turnbull.

(Source: “The Presence of the Past,” *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982)).

⁴⁵ Paolo Portoghesi, “The End of Prohibitionism,” in *Architecture 1980: The Presence of the Past the Past Venice Biennale* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 9.

⁴⁶ Paul Goldberger, “Strolling Along a Post-Modern ‘Street’ from Venice,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 1982.

⁴⁷ Work by Batey & Mack and William Turnbull had been included in the gallery exhibition at the 1980 Venice Biennale, but the firms did not have facades in the original *Strada Novissima*.

⁴⁸ Paul Goldberger, “Strolling Along a Post-Modern ‘Street’ from Venice,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 1982, in Goldberger, *On The Rise: Architecture and Design in A Postmodern Age* (New York: The New York Times Books Co., Inc., 1983): 33-35.

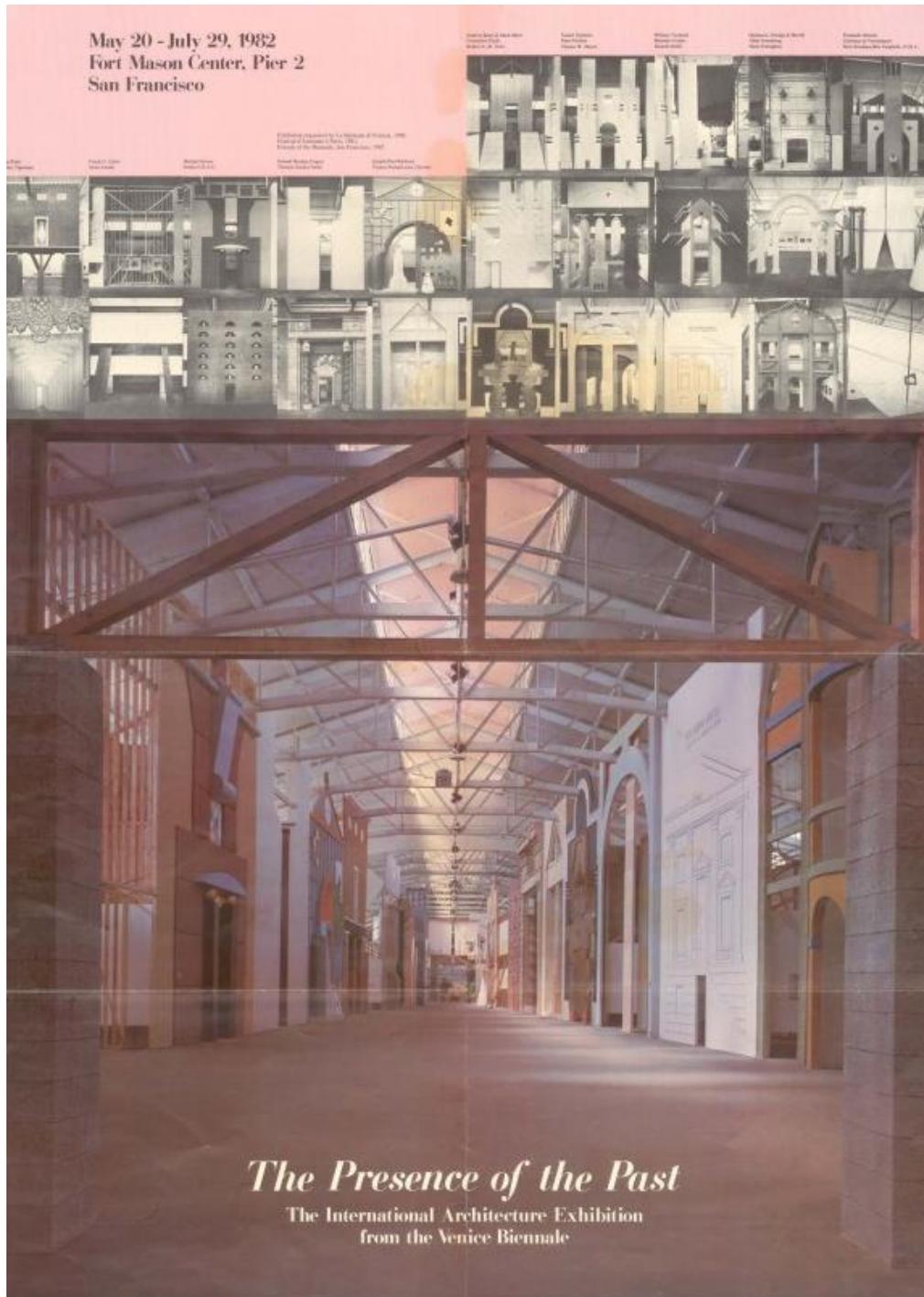


Fig. 14. Poster for
“The Presence of the
Past” exhibition at Fort
Mason Center in 1982.

(Source: William Stout
Architectural Books.)

An entire issue of *Archetype* in Spring 1982, “The Presence of the Past,” was dedicated to the installation of the Venice Biennale exhibition in Fort Mason.⁴⁹ While celebrating the exhibition, the “fun” and “less is a bore” attitude of Postmodernism, including the local contributions, the magazine also published a critical essay by Kenneth Frampton, who described the *Strada Novissima* as “self-indulgent images of the moment which, lacking both density and referential resonance, do nothing save engender a set of seductive *simulacra*.⁵⁰ *The New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger, more equivocating, described the Fort Mason Center exhibition by applauding it as an “experience like none other available at this moment in architectural history” but also observing that,

Post-modernism as shown here is extravagant, self-indulgent and wildly eclectic. Much of it is also exciting, and some of it is very good. Each façade is a kind of logo for its creator. [...] For these are not, one must say again, real buildings. They are stage sets, and they will do little to discourage the frequent criticism that post-modern architects are interested only in façade decoration and not in solving the “real” architectural problems.⁵¹

An explicit goal of bringing “The Presence of the Past” to San Francisco was to expose “more and more different kinds of people” to Postmodernism.⁵² It is further notable that sponsors and donors included large construction companies and real estate developers (among them, Gerald D. Hines Interests, Cushman & Wakefield, and Dinwiddie Construction) and architectural firms like SOM and Fisher-Friedman. Through the Sponsors’ Pavilion and involving players from the real estate and construction industry beyond architects, Joseph Wiener was hoping to influence taste and open up architectural discussion, and the following decade of downtown construction appears to reflect a conversation that, in part, was fostered at Fort Mason Center.⁵³

“California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture” was exhibited at the National Academy of Design (1083 Fifth Avenue, New York City) in 1982 to share new directions in California architecture with an East Coast audience. The exhibit and accompanying publication were a collaboration of the Institute of Architecture & Urban Studies (IAUS), a New York-based think tank originally headed by Peter Eisenman, and SFAI. While ostensibly about California architecture as a whole, the exhibition selections and essays were very focused on Southern California and Los Angeles. Stanley Saitowitz and Batey & Mack were the only Bay Area-based architects out of ten highlighted, and Batey & Mack’s façade for the Fort Mason Center *Strada Novissima* was the only San Francisco project featured.⁵⁴ In addition to featuring the unique rendering style of Batey & Mack, the

⁴⁹ The issue features several articles which describe the process of moving the *Strada Novissima* from Venice by way of Paris to San Francisco, the organization and funding of the exhibition, the new facades by Bay Area architects, as well as critical reflections. The issue includes photographs of each of the facades, as well as a map of the exhibition layout, including the facades, “Homage to Philip Johnson,” Italian marketplace, International Gallery, Sponsors’ Pavilion, and entry gate. Refer to: “The Presence of the Past,” *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982).

⁵⁰ Kenneth Frampton, “The Need for Roots: Venice 1980,” *GA Document* (Winter 1981), republished in *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 14.

⁵¹ Paul Goldberger, “Strolling Along a Post-Modern ‘Street’ from Venice,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 1982.

⁵² Kyle A. Thayer, “Landfall, Anchorage, Disembarkment,” *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 5.

⁵³ Weiner is quoted saying: “How do people’s tastes improve? You expose them to new ideas. If 100,000 people see the thing, that will raise the level of awareness, of discussions, of debate. It will help create an architectural consciousness of what’s happening in the future.” Refer to John Gittelsohn, “The Presence of the Past Comes to the City by the Bay,” *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 9.

⁵⁴ Where “California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture” primarily featured photographs of built projects, “California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture” was a mix of photographs of built work as well as drawings and models of speculative, unbuilt, or soon-to-be built work. *California Counterpoint: New West Coast Architecture*, 18 IAUS (New York: Rizzoli International, 1982).

exhibition highlighted the “Los Angeles School” of Postmodernism which was emerging with the likes of Frank Gehry, Frederick Fisher, and Morphosis.⁵⁵

The exhibition “Visionary San Francisco” at SFMOMA in 1990 explored the many past visions for urban San Francisco, including the Jean Jaques Vioget and Jasper O’Farrell land surveys in the nineteenth century, Daniel Burham’s 1905 plan, the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exhibition, and into post-World War II urban renewal and freeway development. While public backlash to the excesses of 1960s urban renewal and freeway construction and 1970s and 1980s downtown high-rise development was apparent in the reflections in the exhibition catalog, “Visionary San Francisco” presented an optimistic look at plans for the Yerba Buena Center and Mission Bay redevelopment areas (**Fig. 15**).⁵⁶ A massive shift in architectural expression was apparent in the early 1990s. The plans for Yerba Buena Center and Mission Bay in “Visionary San Francisco” had a distinct flavor of Postmodernism and New Urbanism. However, as ultimately constructed in the mid-1990s and into the twenty-first century, the neighborhoods have much more New Modernist architecture.



Fig. 15. Mission Bay proposal by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, 1990, which was developed from Daniel Solomon’s earlier master plan and was included in the SFMOMA “Visionary San Francisco” catalog.

(Source: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. In Polledri, ed., *Visionary San Francisco*, 149.)

Just one year after “Visionary San Francisco,” the SFMOMA hosted “In the Spirit of Modernism at SFMOMA,” an exhibition highlighting the work of four architects—Jim Jennings, James Shay, William Stout, and Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy. The exhibition was a marker of the backlash against the “excesses of Post-Modernism” and a desire to return to some of the tenets of Modernism and explore how they could, again, be relevant to contemporary architecture.⁵⁷ SFMOMA curator Paolo Polledri writes of the exhibition:

⁵⁵ City of Los Angeles, SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement, “Architecture & Engineering/Postmodernism, 1965-1991” (July 2018), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/a03c2624-ea2e-4d4b-b41c-df38d78713d3/Postmodernism_1965-1991_2.pdf.

⁵⁶ Sally B. Woodbridge, “Visions of Renewal and Growth: 1945 to the Present,” in *Visionary San Francisco*, ed. Paolo Polledri (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 1990), 118-151.

⁵⁷ Kyle Thayer, “Four Modernists at SFMoMa,” *Progressive Architecture* (January 1992), 24.

We cling to the cherished image that we have of San Francisco: a city of low buildings, buildings that are either dressed in colorful materials or somberly clad in brown shingles, their surfaces broken by bay windows. This image is a myth. In fact, throughout its history, San Francisco has been a city of constant change. Younger generations of architects have rebelled against their older colleagues. [...] Modernism is about change; it is about incorporating modern technologies to design buildings that are cheaper to build, inexpensive to maintain, and more pleasant to inhabit. Although at times simplistic and objectionable in its relentless pursuit of industrial functionalism and architectural rationalism, Modernism is still valid today.⁵⁸

While each of the four architects wrote manifestos about Modernism and its relevance to their work and contemporary San Francisco, the work exhibited demonstrates a “sensitivity to site and context” and some lineage with Postmodernism insofar as “history [was] back on the architectural agenda” even as architects were moving away from the historicism and classicism of traditional Postmodernism.⁵⁹ In addition to some speculative paper projects, the exhibit included the Oliver Residence (340 Lombard Street, 1996) by Jim Jennings, the Shay Residence (276 Edgewood Avenue, 1985) by James Shay, the Manchester Townhouses (160-180 Manchester Street, 1984), and California DataMart (later Diamond and Jewelry Mart, 999 Brannan Street, 1984) by Tanner & VanDine (which later became Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy) (**Fig. 16**).⁶⁰ Although the exhibition did not use the terminology of “New Modernism” or “Neo-Modernism,” the curation and accompanying text explicitly connected the contemporary unbuilt projects and new work by these four architects to the lineage of Modernism—positioning it as a response to Postmodernism—while emphasizing the more contextual approach of the new work.



Fig. 16. California DataMart, which later became the Diamond and Jewelry Mart, at 999 Brannan Street by Tanner & VanDine, 1984-6.

(Source: Richard Barnes, photographer. “In the Spirit of Modernism,” *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Architecture Design Journal* (November 1991), 10.)

⁵⁸ Paolo Polledri, “In the Spirit of Modernism,” *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Architecture Design Journal* 1, no. 3 (November 1991), 1-2.

⁵⁹ Thayer, “Four Modernists at SFMoMA,” 24.

⁶⁰ Polledri, “In the Spirit of Modernism,” *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Architecture Design Journal* 1, no. 3 (November 1991).

San Francisco in the Late 20th Century

The period from 1960 to 2000 in San Francisco was a tumultuous time characterized by both major successes in civil rights and social movements, as well as horrific tragedies, assassinations, and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, set against the backdrop of stagflation and several recessions followed by the dot-com bubble. After the 1967 Summer of Love—emblematic of the countercultural and hippie movements in the 1960s—1968 was characterized locally by the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Third World Liberation Front strike for civil rights, and nationally by the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Strides and setbacks to integration and fair housing directly affected the citizens of San Francisco, as well as the built environment.⁶¹ Following the passage of the 1963 Rumford Fair Housing Act in California, real estate lobbyists and primarily White voters used Proposition 14 to overturn the law in 1964, before the law was reinstated by the California Supreme Court in 1966. Several years later, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, including Fair Housing Act clauses, passed nationally. The legacy of decades of discrimination and redlining in housing, however, was not reversed by these new laws. While furious construction tried to make up for the large increase in San Francisco's population during the 1940s during and after World War II, the city's population actually decreased from 1950 to 1980 as many White residents chose to move out to the suburbs, and many other residents who were often of lower socio-economic status or from racial or ethnic minority groups were displaced by redevelopment, gentrification, and rising housing costs (Table 1).⁶²

Table 1. San Francisco Population by Decade

Year	San Francisco Population	Percent Change ⁶³
1930	634,394	+25.2%
1940	634,536	+0.0%
1950	775,357	+22.2%
1960	740,316	-4.5%
1970	715,674	-3.3%
1980	678,974	-5.1%
1990	723,959	+6.6%
2000	776,733	+7.3%
2010	805,235	+3.7%
2020	873,201	+8.5%

Source: Bay Area Census,
<http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/historical/copop18602000.htm>

Protests and organized grassroots movements against the excesses of freeway development, urban renewal and redevelopment, and downtown high-rises coalesced in the 1960s alongside a burgeoning local and national historic preservation movement. By the 1970s, new planning regulations, zoning, and guidance documents reflected and attempted to address many of these concerns. Neighborhood planning groups also got involved in redevelopment project areas, anti-gentrification efforts, and neighborhood arts programs.⁶⁴ As the nation experienced a period of stagflation in the 1970s, construction slowed in San Francisco. At the beginning of the

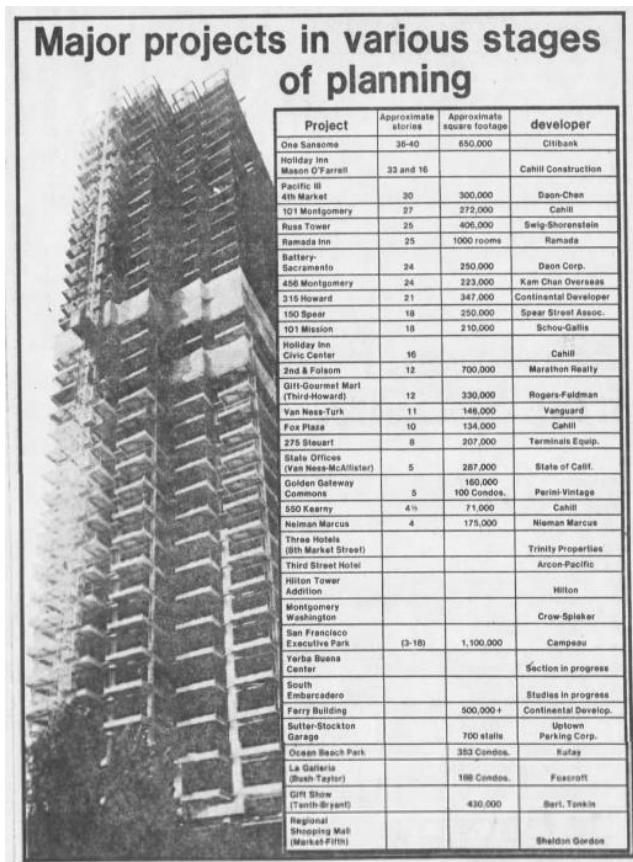
⁶¹ Chris Carlsson and LisaRuth Elliott, editors, *Ten Years That Shook the City: San Francisco 1968-1978* (San Francisco: City Lights Foundation Books, 2011).

⁶² Refer also to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency HCS*.

⁶³ The percent change is from the following year listed on the table. For example, the percent population change between 1940 and 1950 is +22.2%.

⁶⁴ Helene Whitson, "Strike!... Concerning the 1968-69 Strike at San Francisco State College," FoundSF, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=STRIKE!..._Concerning_the_1968-69_Strike_at_San_Francisco_State_College.

decade, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system opened in 1972. Toward the end of the decade, in 1978, the city experienced the trauma of the assassinations of both Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone, as well as the Jonestown Massacre in Guyana which resulted in the death of many Bay Area residents. In the 1980s, the HIV/AIDS epidemic devastated the city's LGBTQ community and stimulated a mobilization in the local medical and public health fields to understand and respond to the disease.



Project	Stories	Approximate square footage	Approximate completion Date
101 California	48	1,200,000	Early 1983
Four Embarcadero Center	45	770,000	Mid 1981
Crocker Bank Center	38	981,000	Late 1982
Pacific Gateway	30	488,000	Late 1982
Pacific II Apparel Mart	16	307,000	Mid 1981
Federal Reserve Bank	12	653,000	Mid 1982
Pacific Lumber	8	101,000	Late 1981
Levi's Plaza	7	870,000	Early 1981
		200	
United Air Lines	6	condominiums 335,000	Late 1981
Total under construction			5,705,000

Fig. 17. A *San Francisco Examiner* article from 1980 declares “No recession in S.F. downtown building” despite the national recession, noting that 5.6 million square feet of new office space were under construction in 1979 and over 5.7 million square feet were under construction during 1980. At the time, the city had a 0.2 percent vacancy rate in downtown office buildings.

(Source: Stanford M. Horn, “No recession in S.F. downtown building,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1980.)

Despite a recession in the early 1980s, San Francisco experienced significant growth downtown with over 5.7 million square feet of office space under construction and a 0.2 percent downtown office vacancy rate in 1980.⁶⁵ The City and its electorate sought to manage this growth via new policies set forth in the 1971 Urban Design Plan and 1985 Downtown Plan. In 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake led to the rebuilding of many structures and neighborhoods as well as code changes. The earthquake also changed the shape of the city and its public realm as it precipitated the demolition of the Central Freeway in Hayes Valley and the double-decker Embarcadero Freeway. Over the following decades, the once primarily working piers of the northeast waterfront were, through public and private improvements along the Embarcadero, also opened up to the public. Following another recession in the early 1990s, San Francisco saw a rise in population and increased development as the Financial District spread south of Market Street, much of which was directly or indirectly associated with the “dot com” boom of the 1990s as new startups related to the adoption of the internet proliferated. By the 1990s, redevelopment projects in Golden Gateway, Western Addition, and Diamond Heights were largely completed, but continued in Yerba Buena Center and Hunters Point, and plans were being developed for Mission Bay (Fig. 18 and Fig. 19).

⁶⁵ Stanford M. Horn, “No recession in S.F. downtown building,” *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1980.

The twentieth century in San Francisco closed with a mix of excitement and trepidation about the new millennium and a potential Y2K event; the bursting of the dot-com bubble was soon to come in March 2000, followed fairly quickly by the rise of “Web 2.0” and a new wave of tech companies beginning around 2003.



Fig. 18. Aerial view of San Francisco, looking north at SoMa, the Financial District, and North Beach, 1960.

(Source: OpenSFHistory, wnp27.7879.)



Fig. 19. Aerial view of San Francisco, looking north at Mission Bay, SoMa, and the Financial District, c. early 1990s.

(Source: Tim Dresher. FoundSF.org.)

Most of San Francisco was built out, or reserved for open space or other government uses, by the 1960s ([Fig. 20](#)). The most significant concentration of construction projects in the late twentieth century were associated with San Francisco Redevelopment Area projects in downtown (Golden Gateway, Yerba Buena Center, Rincon Point-South Beach, Transbay), Western Addition, Diamond Heights, and Bayview. Downtown high-rise construction in the Financial District filled available sites and, in some cases, replaced older buildings in the 1970s and 1980s, and by the 1990s began to shift south of Market Street. Outside of redevelopment areas, residential and neighborhood-scale commercial development generally occurred on scattered infill sites throughout the city. Clusters of residential development occurred on the few remaining open and buildable tracts around Twin Peaks and Sutro Tower. Residential construction—particularly multi-family residential construction—made up the largest portion of new construction in the late twentieth century by number of properties, but by the 1970s had slowed significantly from the postwar boom of the 1950s. On the other hand, by the late 1960s, downtown office and hotel high-rises proliferated in number and increased significantly in scale from the previous decade and even the early 1960s.

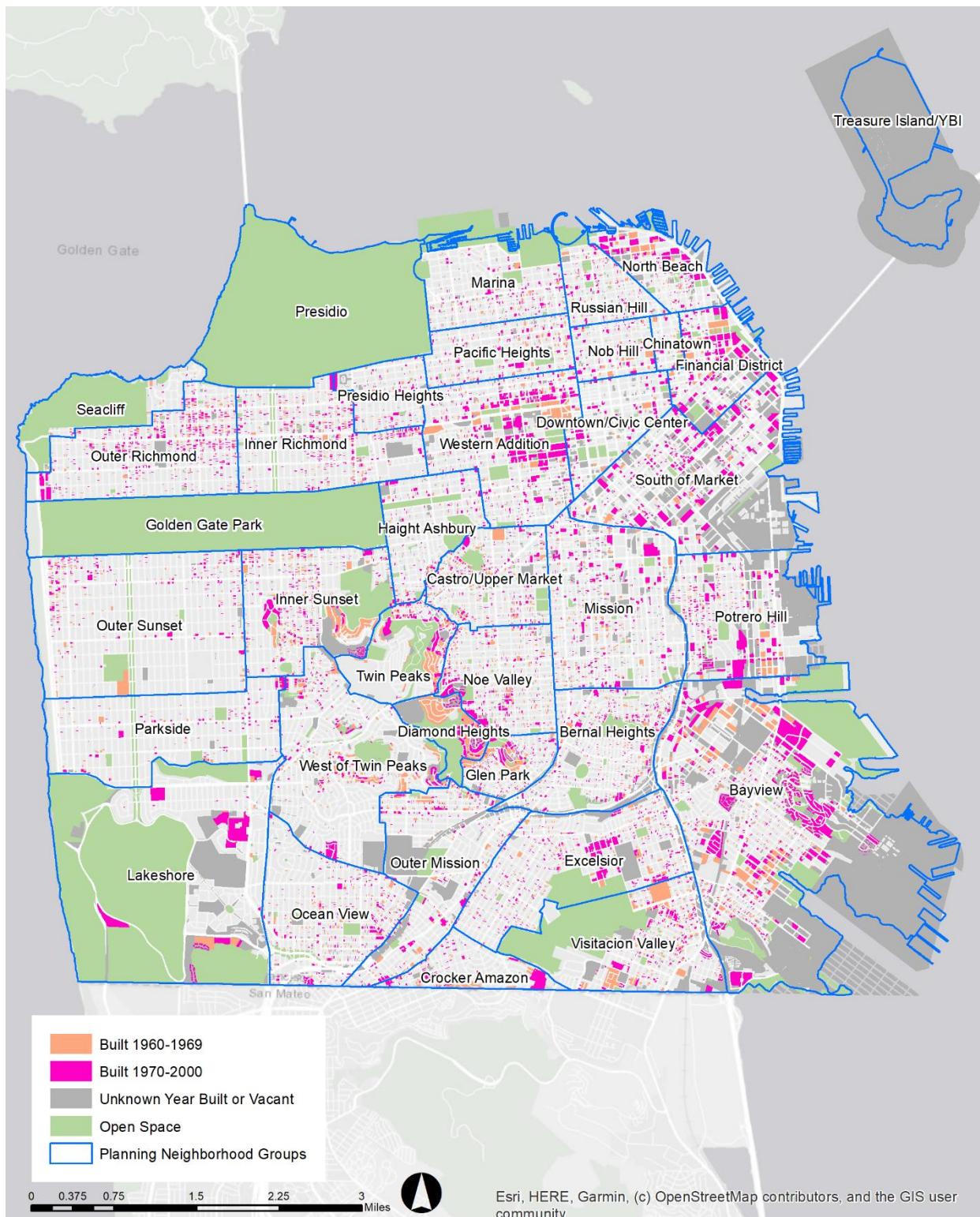


Fig. 20. Map of San Francisco showing extant properties built in 1960-1969 (orange) and 1970-2000 (pink) based on San Francisco County Assessor data.

(Source: San Francisco Open Data, Data SF, Assessor Historical Property Tax Rolls, updated March 13, 2024. Map created and edited by Page & Turnbull, April 2024.)

REDEVELOPMENT, ANTI-MANHATTANIZATION & URBAN PLANNING

The late twentieth century was arguably one of the most significant periods in the city's history in terms of urban planning. While the topography and street grid had for many decades conspired to mold the built environment of San Francisco, the late twentieth century saw the implementation of redevelopment plans that reshaped large areas of the city as well as formative policy changes such as in the 1971 Urban Design Plan, 1985 Downtown Plan, and 1989 Residential Design Guidelines. These policy changes came as a reaction to the real and perceived excesses of freeway and high-rise development, as well as redevelopment projects that had devastating consequences to existing communities, including the predominantly African American neighborhood of the Fillmore and Japanese American enclave of Japantown in the Western Addition, in addition to the Filipino and working-class residents of SoMa around Yerba Buena. This period felt, to many, to be a battle for the soul of San Francisco—in terms of communities and neighborhoods as well as the design and urban geography of the city.⁶⁶

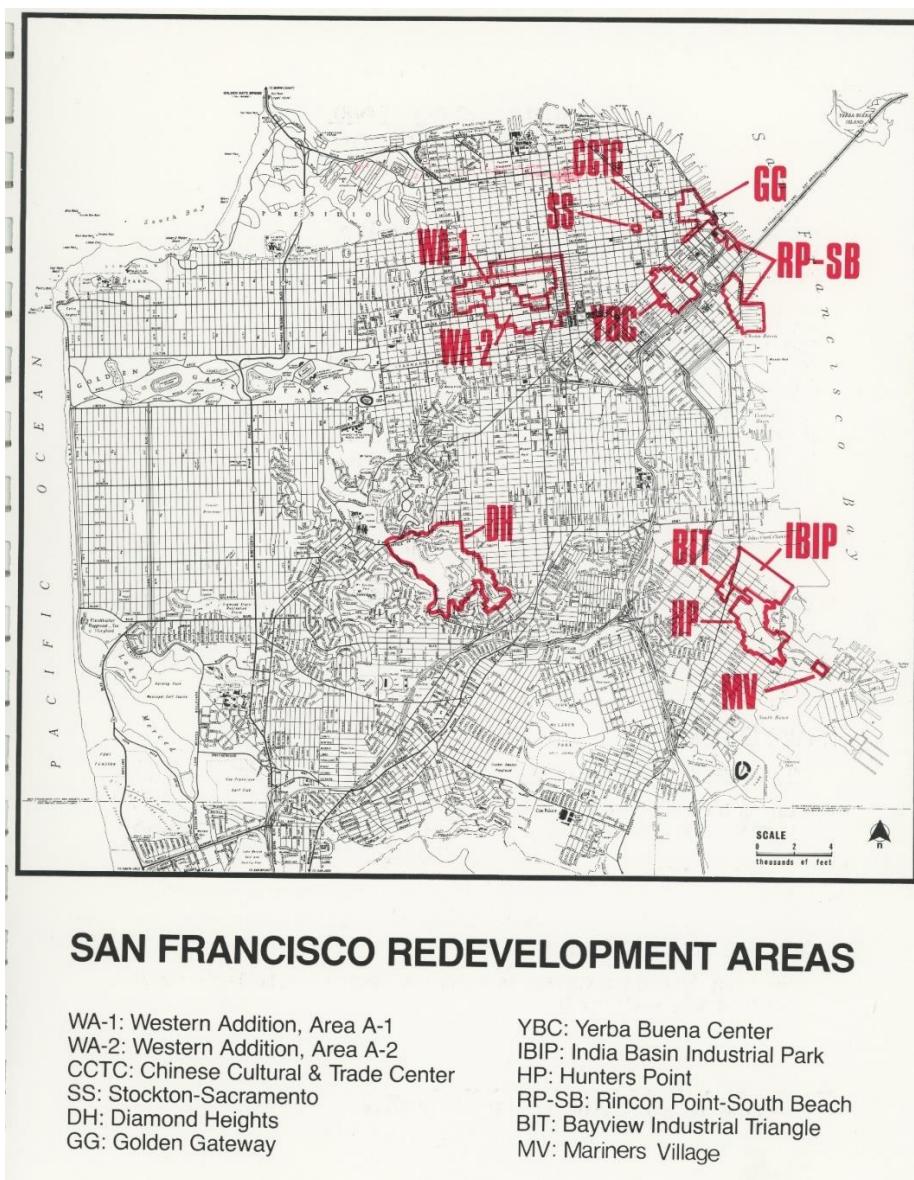
As stated in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, “In the postwar years, central-city areas were often seen as congested and increasingly obsolete, as they lost their share of economic activity relative to the booming suburbs. Older urban residential neighborhoods were viewed as blighted slums.”⁶⁷ Suburbanization, white flight, and freeway construction led urban cores to increasingly become isolated areas for commuters, as downtown commercial and retail areas declined with the parallel rise of suburban shopping malls. Still, San Francisco required additional housing for its growing population in the immediate postwar years, and even ‘progressive’ reformers, such as the San Francisco Housing Association (which later merged with Telesis to form SPUR), advocated for “slum clearance” to address real and perceived conditions of crowded and unsanitary or unsafe housing. The California Redevelopment Act of 1945 provided state funds for local urban renewal projects, and soon after, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) was formed in 1948. Title I of the Federal Housing act of 1949 gave further power and funding to redevelopment agencies, allowing cities and their newly formed redevelopment agencies to identify “blighted” areas, then acquire private property in the area through eminent domain, clear the land and re-plan the streets and parcels, and sell or lease the land to private developers for development (often below market rate). Availability of federal funding incentivized SFRA and other redevelopment agencies to identify large areas for urban renewal, and new Modernist planning principles and large-scale master planned developments replaced the smaller-scale mixed-use neighborhoods that had developed over previous decades.

The drastic nature of redevelopment and lack of public participation—even the San Francisco Planning Department had little influence over SFRA—led to significant criticism in the 1960s. New organizations such as the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO) and Tenants and Owners in Opposition to

⁶⁶ Allan Temko, who considered himself to be an “activist critic” at the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was by no means the most progressive voice in the debate during this period, but did not shy away from articulating a point of view that was unafraid of criticizing City Hall, city planners, architects, and developers alike. In the introduction to a collection of his essays written during the 1960s to 1990s, he writes “I was writing for the world at large—in The Chronicle and in national magazines—but Northern California was the place to take a stand. It had more to lose than Detroit or the Bronx. Locally, in one of the loveliest spots on earth, Candlestick Park showed how not to build a ballpark. The double-decked Embarcadero freeway was a prototype, aped in Seattle, of how to ravage an urban waterfront. The Vaillancourt Fountain looked as if it had been deposited by a giant concrete dog with square intestines. The new San Francisco Federal Building was a literally toxic monument to bad government. Massive downtown high-rises, strewn along the maldesigned BART line, inaugurated the “Manhattanization” of San Francisco, flattening hills, blocking views, depriving downtown streets of sun. [...] Not only fast-buck speculators and highway engineers, but also architects and planners—supposedly non-yahoos, who should have known better—joined in the devastation”; Allan Temko, *No Way to Build a Ballpark and Other Irreverent Essays on Architecture* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1993), 7.

⁶⁷ *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 43.

Redevelopment (TOOR) formed to advocate for residents. The 1970 Uniform Relocation Act required relocation plans and better compensation for residents displaced by redevelopment, but the efficacy of such plans has been questioned. SFRA was responsible for the demolition of 14,207 housing units between 1948 and 1978, but had only built 7,498 by 2012.⁶⁸ Citizens affected by redevelopment, as well as subsequent historians, have identified many critiques of the postwar urban renewal project, including the fact that neighborhoods identified for redevelopment were often low-income and/or communities of color and there was a lack of public participation in the planning process. Other critiques identified the short-sighted and overly academic approach to planning without adequate account of complex socioeconomic realities, the inhumane scale and design of the master plans and megastructures, and the destruction of older and historic urban fabric.



⁶⁸ Jay Barnamann, "SF Redevelopment Agency Successor Seeks To Make Good On Building 5,800 Affordable Units," SFIST, January 3, 2020, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://sfist.com/2020/01/03/sf-redevelopment-agency-successor-seeks-to-make-good-on-building-5-800-affordable-units/>.

SFRA Executive Director Justin Herman, who was largely responsible for the early and most active—and destructive—period of redevelopment, died unexpectedly at the age of 62 in 1971. While Herman was highly regarded by the downtown business and development community and many in city government at the time, he was later compared to Robert Moses—who also had a complex legacy associated with redevelopment in New York City—and was characterized as the “arch-villain in the black depopulation of the city” by Thomas C. Fleming, a reporter for the *Sun-Reporter*, a newspaper serving the African American community of San Francisco.⁶⁹ Herman was succeeded by Robert Rumsey and then Art Evans, who both had relatively short tenures, before Reverend Wilbur Hamilton was appointed by Mayor Moscone in 1977 and served as executive director until 1987.⁷⁰ Herman’s death, staunch public criticism of redevelopment projects, and new federal funding mechanisms combined to reshape redevelopment in the 1970s and through the remainder of the twentieth century.

By the end of the 1970s, Diamond Heights was built out and the Golden Gateway project was completed in the early 1980s with the final Embarcadero Center tower and the Golden Gateway Commons. Extensive development continued in the Western Addition, particularly in the A-2 area, through the 1980s. After several false starts, Yerba Buena Center was underway by the 1980s and much of Yerba Buena Gardens and surrounding developments were completed in the mid-1990s. Redevelopment plans for Rincon Point-South Beach, Bayview Industrial Triangle, India Basin Industrial Park, and Hunters Point were also adopted and executed during this period([Fig. 21](#)).⁷¹ The redevelopment project areas under active design and construction in the late twentieth century include examples of **Late Modern**, **Brutalist**, **Third Bay Tradition**, and **Postmodern** architecture; refer to the relevant Theme and Sub-Theme contexts later in this document.

For a more comprehensive account of urban renewal under the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, including the effects on and reactions from impacted communities, refer to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency HCS* (in progress).⁷² Redevelopment is also covered in the following context statements:

- “Urban Renewal” in *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)* (adopted 2011)
- “Urban Renewal in San Francisco’s African American Neighborhoods” in *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2024)
- “Resettlement and Renewal” in *San Francisco Japantown Historic Context Statement* (May 2009)
- “Post-War Era: 1946-2009” in *South of Market Area Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2011)
- “Urban Renewal and Displacement” and “Yerba Buena Redevelopment” in *San Francisco Filipino Heritage: Addendum to the South of Market Area Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2013)

⁶⁹ Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 18.

⁷⁰ “Fifty Years of Redevelopment,” SPUR Urbanist, March 1, 1999, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-03-01/fifty-years-redevelopment>.

⁷¹ The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was later dissolved in 2012 by an order of the California Supreme Court, along with some 400 other California redevelopment agencies, and was succeeded by the San Francisco Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII) which has continued to carryout existing redevelopment plans. “What We Do,” OCII, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://sfocii.org/what-we-do>.

⁷² For an account of Yerba Buena Center and the transformation of downtown and South of Market, refer to Chester Hartman, *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). For an account of the Golden Gateway redevelopment area, as well as the transformation of the northeast waterfront, refer to: Alison Isenberg, *Designing San Francisco: Art, Land, and Urban Renewal in the City by the Bay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017). For additional information about the Diamond Heights redevelopment area, refer to the *Diamond Heights Historic Context Statement* (2016 Intern Draft).

It was against this backdrop of postwar urban renewal and freeway development, and announcements of large new downtown high-rises, that residents, journalists, and activists became concerned about the “Manhattanization” of San Francisco. The double-decker Embarcadero Freeway had been completed in 1959, and it took significant grassroots organization and advocacy during what were known as the “Freeway Revolts” to stop the planning of proposed new freeways that would flank the Golden Gate Park Panhandle and cut through Glen Canyon.⁷³ San Francisco’s first Modernist high-rise—the Crown Zellerbach Headquarters—had been constructed in 1959, and at 20 stories it was just over 300 feet tall, generally within the scale of earlier twentieth century high-rises. Similarly scaled downtown construction continued in the 1950s, but began to increase in the 1960s first with the Alcoa Building (One Maritime Plaza, 27 stories, 398 feet) in 1964, followed by other increasingly tall and massive buildings like 650 California Street (1964, SOM, 33 stories), 44 Montgomery Street (1968, John Graham & Associates, 43 stories), and 555 California Street (previously known as the Bank of America Building, 1969, SOM, 52 stories), which also bucked the trend of light colored San Francisco buildings and glassy skyscrapers with its dark granite cladding. Proposals unveiled at the end of the 1960s forecast a trend of increasing height and bulk in downtown office buildings with the proposals for the Transamerica Pyramid (William L. Pereira & Associates, unveiled in 1969, completed 1972), Embarcadero Center (John Portman & Associates, unveiled in 1967 with a 60-story tower, completed in 1971-81 with two 45-story towers), and US Steel Corporation (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, proposed in 1969 at 550 feet tall, unbuilt).

The rapid onslaught of new downtown development made many San Francisco residents and planners feel that the unique topography and views of the city, along with its historic urban fabric, were being lost without due and comprehensive consideration. The *Bay Guardian*, a free alternative newspaper founded in 1966 by Bruce B. Brugmann, published critical articles and cartoons depicting the rapid redevelopment of downtown with skyscrapers and gave a voice to what became known as the “anti-Manhattanization” or “anti-high-rise” movement of San Francisco ([Fig. 22](#)).⁷⁴ Many of the voices on this side of the debate were already seasoned protesters and advocates, having been active in the Freeway Revolt of the early 1960s, and began organizing around this cause in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

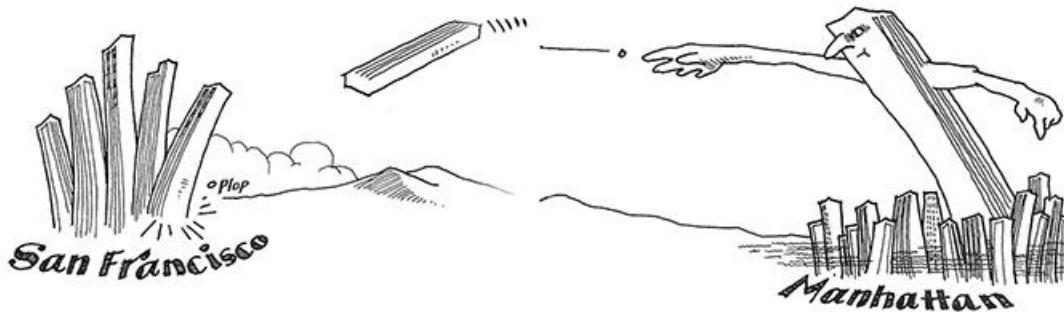


Fig. 22. *Bay Guardian* cartoon illustrating the “Manhattanization” of San Francisco.

(Source: *The Ultimate Highrise*, 234-35.)

⁷³ Chris Carlsson, “The Freeway Revolt,” FoundSF, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Freeway_Revolt.

⁷⁴ Page & Turnbull, *Transamerica Pyramid Historic Resource Evaluation Part 1* (submitted to San Francisco Planning Department, November 16, 2021), 54-62; and Page & Turnbull, *Embarcadero Center Historic Resource Evaluation Part 1* (submitted to San Francisco Planning Department, August 10, 2022), 77-80.

Alvin Duskin, a clothing entrepreneur-turned-activist, launched local ballot measure Proposition T in 1971 to limit building heights citywide to 72 feet (approximately six stories).⁷⁵ Duskin decried the “skyline of tombstones” and the control that developers seemed to hold over the city in full-page ads in local newspapers (**Fig. 23**).⁷⁶ Mayor Joseph Alioto and others called Duskin an “irresponsible extremist,” and the measure as well as two similar, subsequent, initiatives were not passed by voters.⁷⁷ However, while Duskin’s position might have been too far in the extreme for the taste of most voters, he did strike a chord that resonated with many who wanted to protect the unique character of San Francisco. In the same year, the *Bay Guardian* published *The Ultimate Highrise: San Francisco’s Mad Rush Toward the Sky* (1971), which compiled essays, studies, and cartoons in the form of an anti-Manhattanization manifesto with an introduction written by Duskin.

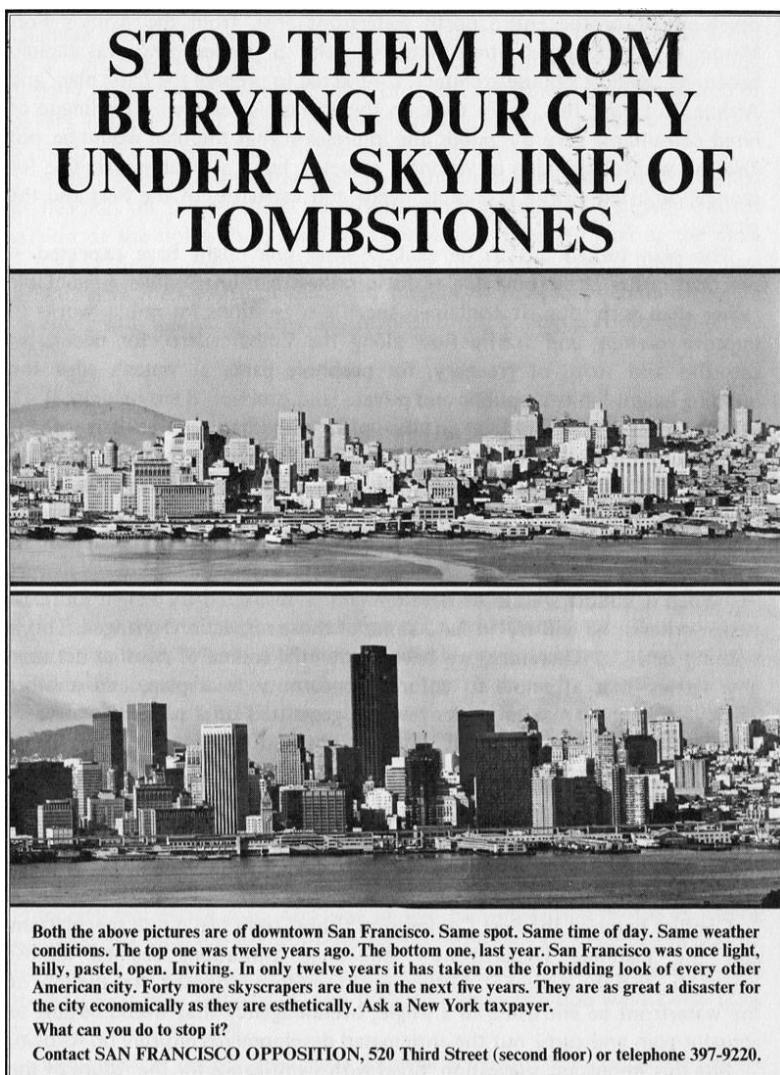


Fig. 23. This advertisement was run in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *San Francisco Examiner* beginning in October 1970, and was a first step in Alvin Duskin’s Proposition T campaign against the U.S. Steel Building and, generally, the “Manhattanization” of San Francisco’s skyline. The top photo was taken c.1957, and the bottom photo c.1969.

(Source: Bruce B. Brugmann, Gregg Sleteland, *The Bay Guardian Staff*, eds., *The Ultimate Highrise*, 109.)

⁷⁵ Earl Caldwell, “A Prime Election Issue in San Francisco Is a Proposed Ban on High Rise Buildings,” *The New York Times*, November 1, 1971.

⁷⁶ Duskin shifted his career and life’s work into activism over a battle to stop the island of Alcatraz being sold to a private developer in the late 1960s. Bruce B. Brugmann, Gregg Sleteland, and *The Bay Guardian Staff*, editors, *The Ultimate Highrise* (San Francisco: *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 1971), 7.

⁷⁷ John King, “38 years later, high-rise hater still standing tall,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 14, 2009.

1971 Urban Design Plan

While the activism surrounding the anti-freeway, anti-high-rise, and anti-redevelopment sentiments was getting heated in the public sphere in the early 1970s, the San Francisco Planning Department had already been working on its own response to the changing urban landscape of San Francisco. Allan Jacobs moved to San Francisco to serve as the new director of the Planning Department in 1967, and by 1969 had started work with his newly assembled urban design planning staff.⁷⁸ The Urban Design Plan, published in 1971 and adopted in 1972, was incorporated into the city's Comprehensive Plan (previously known as the Master Plan and now known as the General Plan), which was being overhauled for the first time in 25 years.⁷⁹ Through the two years of studies and public participation to prepare the plan, a number of issues related to development, conservation of the built and natural environment, and neighborhood character were raised; the list of "issues raised" also reflects some of Jacobs' primary concerns as an urban designer and in his role as planning director, which may not have been as top-of-mind for the average citizen, including street vacations and the release of air rights over streets.⁸⁰ Other issues raised included freeway development, infill of the Bay, development of federal lands and city open space, demolition of historic landmarks, and new high-rises and superblock developments. Specifically, the plan notes that "[m]ajor new buildings of extraordinary height and bulk have been opposed and criticized for their effects upon skyline, topography and views, their overwhelming appearance and lack of harmony, and the disruption of their immediate surroundings."⁸¹ In addition to addressing the specific needs and concerns of San Francisco at that moment, the Urban Design Plan embodied principles espoused by important contemporary urban critics and theorists, including Jane Jacobs and Kevin Lynch.⁸²

The Urban Design Plan was organized into four sections—City Pattern, Conservation, Major New Development, Neighborhood Environment—each with a primary objective and a series of fundamental principles and policies, as well as a discussion of how the section topic related to "human needs." In addition to emphasizing principles of historic preservation to retain landmarks as well as neighborhood character, the Urban Design Plan pushed ideas of contextual design and urbanism by emphasizing the scale, material, texture, proportion, form, and detail of existing and new buildings (**Fig. 24**). The plan suggested that larger and taller buildings should be clustered near "important activity centers" and that taller buildings could successfully be introduced in lower and more fine-scaled areas if there was adequate, gradual transition of height and mass.

⁷⁸ Allan Jacobs provides a very detailed account of his tenure as director of the Planning Department and the development of the 1971 Urban Design Plan in his memoir. Allan B. Jacobs, *Making City Planning Work* (Chicago: American Planning Association, 1980).

⁷⁹ Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan of San Francisco* (San Francisco: City and County of San Francisco, May 1971), front matter, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://archive.org/details/urbandesignplanf1971sanf/>.

⁸⁰ Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan*, 6.

⁸¹ Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan*, 6.

⁸² Larry Badiner noted that the 1971 Urban Design Plan was phrased in a way that was very "of its time" as it draws clear references from Kevin Lynch's concept of paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks in *The Image of The City* (1960). Steven L. Vettel also observed that the plan heavily utilized Lynch's notion of "legibility" in encouraging urban design that emphasizes the city's "distinctive visual pattern"; Steven L. Vettel, "San Francisco's Downtown Plan: Environmental and Urban Design Values in Central Business District Regulation," *Ecological Law Quarterly* 12, no. 3 (1985): 533.

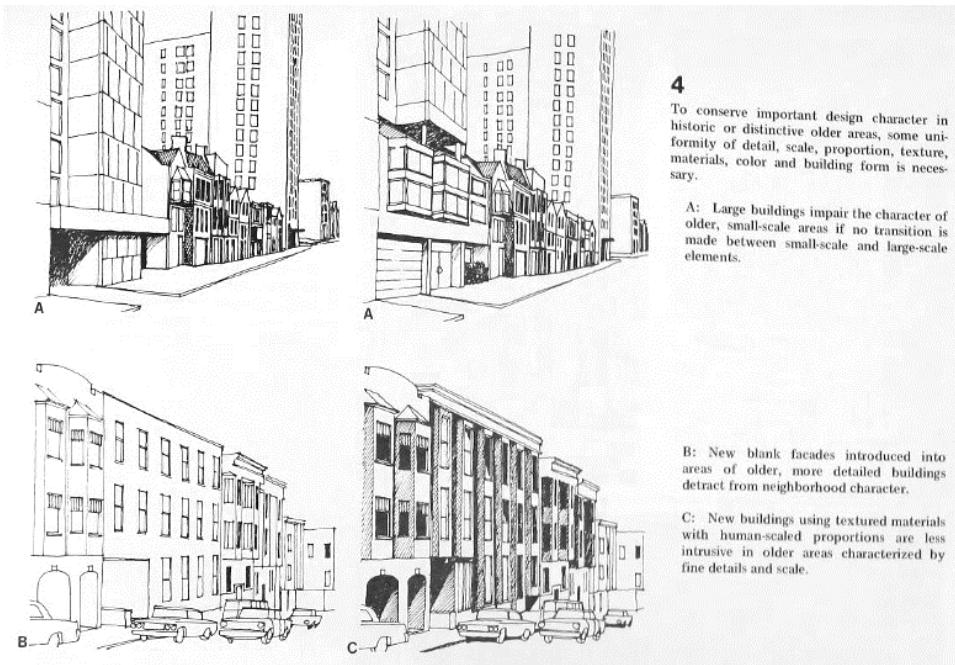


Fig. 24. The 1971 Urban Design Plan emphasized contextual design, suggesting that new buildings should respond to existing patterns and character through scale, massing, form, material, and color.

(Source: Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan*, 57.)

It is also noted that unusually shaped buildings can compete for attention, and when juxtaposed near each other can create “visual disorder.” Although unusual shapes may be appropriate for buildings of “symbolic importance” such as City Hall or St. Mary’s, it was suggested that they were not appropriate for things such as office buildings and apartment buildings. Clearly in reference to recently constructed buildings such as 555 California Street, the plan provided guidance that highly visible buildings should be “light in color” for “visual unity.”⁸³ One of the most important principles as related to new high-rise development and the anti-Manhattanization critique was that buildings should respond the existing city patterns and accentuate the natural topography of the iconic hills (Fig. 25).⁸⁴ Also noteworthy is that, while the plan did not prescribe any particular architectural style, it did suggest that exterior building façade details could provide “visual interest and enrichment,” which was picked up in some contextual Modernist architecture and to a greater degree in Postmodern architecture.

Refer to Theme: Late Modernism, Sub-Theme: Corporate Late Modernism, and Theme: Postmodernism for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

⁸³ Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan*, 84. The romanticized image of San Francisco as a light-colored, white city among the hills is captured by Jack Kerouac in *On The Road* (1957): “It seemed like a matter of minutes when we began rolling in the foothills before Oakland and suddenly reached a height and saw stretched out ahead of us the fabulous white city of San Francisco on her eleven mystic hills with the blue Pacific and its advancing wall of potato-patch fog beyond, and smoke and goldenness in the late afternoon of time.”

⁸⁴ The Urban Design Plan calls for “Tall, slender buildings at the tops of hills and low buildings on the slopes and in valleys accentuate the form of the hills.” Department of City Planning, *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprehensive Plan*, 92.

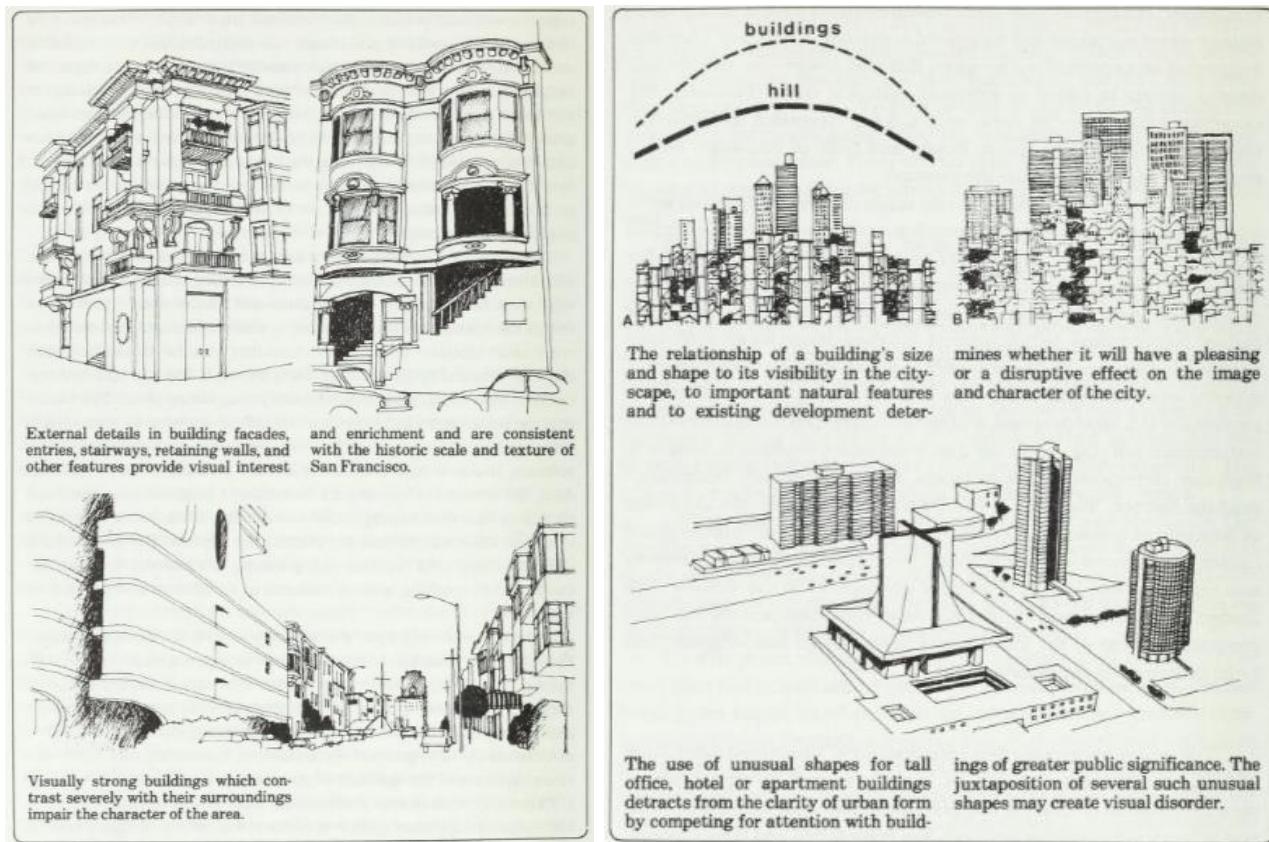


Fig. 25. Graphics from the 1971 Urban Design Plan related to exterior detailing, scale and location of buildings relative to topography, and unusual buildings shapes. These graphics were assembled as representative examples of the plan's urban design principles in Allan Jacob's memoir.

(Source: Jacobs, *Making Planning Work*, 204, 210.)

1978 Residential Rezoning

Building off of recommendations and principles in the urban design plan, under the leadership of then-Planning Director Rai Yukio Okamoto, the Planning Commission passed the new 1978 Residential Rezoning which implemented a 40-foot height limit in most residential areas, as well as setback regulations.⁸⁵ This rezoning was supported at the time by citizens, planners, and officials who wanted to protect neighborhood character and focus denser development in particular areas, but has since been the subject of criticism that the limited zoning is "anti-growth" and has contributed to high housing costs and the City's inability to keep up with housing needs.⁸⁶

Architect and urbanist Dan Solomon was a consultant on the "San Francisco Residential Zoning Study" from 1975 to 1978, which informed the adopted rezoning. One of Solomon's projects—the Pacific Heights Townhouses (3190 Sacramento Street, 1978)—was built as a demonstration of the new rezoning could actually allow for denser development on a site than previously allowed (Fig. 26).⁸⁷ The project exhibited the regionalism and

⁸⁵ "San Francisco Planning Commission: Centennial Celebration," San Francisco Planning Department, 2017, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://default.sfparking.org/publications_reports/SF_Planning_Centennial_Brochure.pdf.

⁸⁶ Hunter Oatman-Stanford, "Demolishing the California Dream: How San Francisco Planned Its Own Housing Crisis," Collectors Weekly, February 13, 2024, accessed online January 9, 2024, <https://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/demolishing-the-california-dream/>.

⁸⁷ Daniel Solomon, *ReBuilding* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 82-5; and "Pacific Heights Townhouses, San Francisco," Daniel Solomon, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.danielsolomon.us/housing/pacificheights/>.

contextualism of the Third Bay Tradition, with wood shingle siding and large gridded bay windows, and a mid-block open space based on historical urban precedents rather than a rear yard setback. The project was even published on the cover of the October 1979 issue of *Progressive Architecture*.⁸⁸

Refer to Sub-Theme: **Third Bay Tradition** and Theme: **Postmodernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

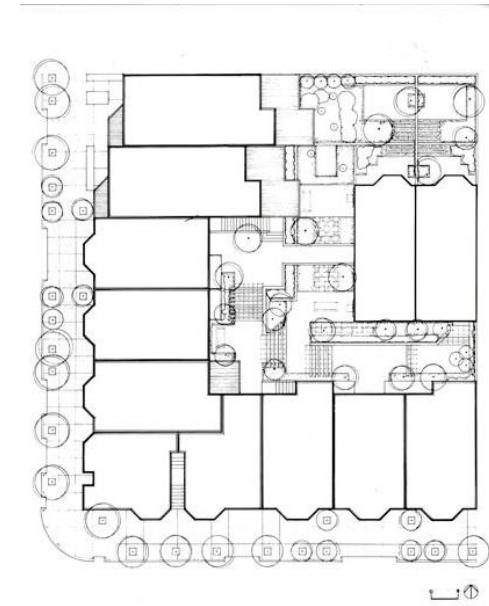


Fig. 26. Pacific Heights Townhouses (3190 Sacramento Street), completed in 1978, by Daniel Solomon were executed as a demonstration project for the recommendations that he contributed to in the “San Francisco Residential Zoning Study” which informed the 1978 Residential Rezoning changes. The complex is an important example of the overlap in the Third Bay Tradition and contextual Postmodernism.

(Source: Joshua Freiwald (photograph) in *Progressive Architecture* (October 1979). Daniel Solomon (site plan).)

1985 Downtown Plan

Following the success of the 1971 Urban Design Plan came one of the Planning Department’s signature achievements in the twentieth century—the 1985 Downtown Plan—under the leadership of Planning Director Dean Macris.⁸⁹ The Downtown Plan addressed urban form, downtown amenities, transportation, housing, and preservation, with the interrelated goals of preserving historic landmarks and older building stock and encouraging compatible new development with desirable amenities for office workers and other visitors.⁹⁰ In 2007, Macris said of the Downtown Plan and that era of San Francisco Planning:

The decade of the 1980s was probably the most productive 10 years this department ever had. We published the downtown plan, which I think still stands as one of the paramount documents

⁸⁸ “A new old language,” *Progressive Architecture* (October 1979): 54-59. The study itself also won an AIP National Urban Design Award and a Progressive Architecture Award (P/A, January 1979, p. 106).

⁸⁹ The Downtown Plan was published for public review in August 1983, and then following the completion and certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required by the still relatively new California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, the plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in September 1985. Refer to: SPUR, “San Francisco’s Downtown Plan: Landmark guidelines shape city’s growth,” SPUR Urbanist, August 1, 1999, accessed online February 13, 2024, <http://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-08-01/san-franciscos-downtown-plan>.

⁹⁰ “San Francisco’s Downtown Plan: Landmark guidelines shape city’s growth,” SPUR Urbanist, August 1, 1999.

of the profession. That plan introduced so many ideas that were enacted in the city's planning code. [...]

The amazing thing is we couldn't get the money that we needed for some consultant help. So the downtown plan was drafted, essentially, by our staff. We had an outstanding blend of skills at that time. My contribution was to get the right people to do the things they're best at doing and then figure out a strategy to make it happen. In terms of land use organization, scale and services, and pedestrian interest, all of it walkable, I believe we presently have one of the best central districts in the country, if not the world.⁹¹

The 1985 Downtown Plan, like the 1971 Urban Design Plan, attempted to address both the concerns of anti-growth and anti-high-rise activists, and other more moderate concerned citizens, as well as downtown business and development interests and City Hall.⁹² The Planning Department found a supporter in Mayor Dianne Feinstein, who was pro-business but cared deeply about how the city looked and about historic buildings, and who listened to Macris and the Planning Department.⁹³ Several of the innovative and impactful provisions of the Downtown Plan included new regulations related to privately owned open space (POPOS) and public art, which are further discussed in the following section **The Public Realm: Cultural Institutions, Waterfront, POPOS & Public Art** and historic resources, as further discussed in the **Historic Preservation Movement & Adaptive Reuse** section. In order to support new preservation goals, avoid encroachment or spillover into neighborhoods like Chinatown, North Beach, the Tenderloin, and SoMa west of Yerba Buena, and still support additional downtown growth, a new special use district was established in the east portion of SoMa. The plan's transfer of development rights (TDR) program helped to incentivize the shift across Market Street and the protection of historic buildings. The plan also called for rezoning of areas around downtown to provide for expected housing needs, and later implemented additional zoning and code changes would help to incentivize new multi-family housing on Rincon Hill, Mission Bay, and along Van Ness Avenue.⁹⁴ Ultimately, the extreme stance of Duskin and others provided room for the Planning Department to find compromise in the Downtown Plan that could address concerns from competing interests.⁹⁵ The Downtown Plan was adopted in 1985 by the Board of Supervisors with a revised provision that created an annual 950,000-gross-square-foot cap on new office space; one year later, the citizen-sponsored Proposition M initiative passed lowering that limit to 475,000 square feet.⁹⁶

Similar to the 1971 Urban Design Plan and the later 1989 Residential Design Guidelines, the Downtown Plan did not mandate any particular architectural style in new construction. However, the plan did address urban form, and included policies that encouraged the enhancement of the streetscape with projecting cornices and belt courses, "visually interesting details and/or decoration into the design of the base," and more articulated building tops, as well as lighter and non-reflective materials and setbacks near existing smaller buildings. The

⁹¹ SPUR, "Dean Macris: Toward a better city – SPUR's executive director interviews San Francisco's planning chief," *SPUR Urbanist*, February 1, 2007, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/2007-02-01/dean-macris-toward-better-city>.

⁹² The Downtown Plan received a Progressive Architecture award citation for urban design and planning in 1986. "San Francisco Downtown Plan," *Progressive Architecture* (January 1986), 122-4.

⁹³ John King, "Here's another part of Feinstein's S.F. legacy: She shaped how our city looks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 29, 2023, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/feinstein-shaped-s-f-18396941.php>.

⁹⁴ Conversations with former zoning administrator, Larry Badiner, and former planning director, Dean Macris; and "Dean Macris: Toward a better city – SPUR's executive director interviews San Francisco's planning chief," *SPUR Urbanist*, February 1, 2007.

⁹⁵ Conversations with former zoning administrator, Larry Badiner, and former planning director, Dean Macris;

⁹⁶ SPUR, "Proposition M and the Downtown Growth Battle," *SPUR Urbanist*, July 1, 1999, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/1999-07-01/proposition-m-and-downtown-growth-battle>.

proliferation of flat-topped Modernist high-rises was a particular bugbear of the Planning Department at the time, and the Downtown Plan addressed the perceived bulk and impact on the skyline of new high-rises by including policies and incentives to encourage more setbacks, as well as “sculptured” and “visually interesting terminations” building tops.⁹⁷

While the language of the plan, as well as planners such as Macris, insisted that no particular architectural style was mandated by the Downtown Plan, many architects perceived these requirements as an unwritten directive that was borne out in the realities of discretionary design review. Historian Mitchell Schwarzer has described the 1985 Downtown Plan as having “an ambitious preservation component enacted controls to save over 500 of the most significant older downtown buildings. The plan also mandated urban design controls that would force architects to design nostalgic towers with distinctive tops. Architectural postmodernism was now legally enforced.”⁹⁸ Critic Allen Temko, ever-colorful in his language, frequently referred to the elaborated building tops, which he saw as a direct result of Planning guidance and preference for Postmodernism, as “pointy ‘hats’” and, occasionally, “pickle-stickers,” referring to spires and flag-poles on some.⁹⁹ Indeed, there was a clear shift in downtown design into Postmodern contextualism and classicism in the early to mid-1980s, when interim controls were in place, and after the official adoption of the plan, at least through the 1990s (**Fig. 27**). One of the first examples of the articulated building tops is the Bank of Canton (555 Montgomery Street, 1984, SOM), with more elaborate examples following in 580 California Street (1986, Johnson & Burgee), 333 Bush Street (1986, SOM), 345 California Center (1986, SOM), 505 Montgomery Street (1988, SOM), and, of course, the San Francisco Marriott Marquis (780 Mission Street, 1989, DMJM, Zeidler Partnership Architects), which Temko called a “hallucinatory ‘jukebox’” (**Fig. 28**).¹⁰⁰

Refer to **Theme: Postmodernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

⁹⁷ One of several policies related building bulk and tops reads “Create visually interesting terminations to building towers. -- All buildings should be massed or otherwise designed or articulated to create a visually distinctive termination of the building facade. The intent is to return to the complex visual imagery of the surrounding hillsides and to the complex architectural qualities of older San Francisco buildings. However this does not mean that literal employment of historical detailing is encouraged, although that may be called for in particular circumstances. What is desired is the evolution of a San Francisco imagery that departs from the austere, flat top box — a facade cut off in space.” San Francisco Department of City Planning, *Downtown Plan: Proposal for Adoption by the City Planning Commission as a Part of the Master Plan* (October 1984), 82, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://archive.org/details/downtownproposal1984sanf/>.

⁹⁸ Mitchell Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2006), 48.

⁹⁹ Temko, “The Marriott Debate: A Hotel Architects Detest and People Are Crazy About,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1990, in *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 197; and Temko, “A 27-Story Collection of Architectural Errors,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 15, 1988, in *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 103.

¹⁰⁰ Temko, *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 13; and Temko, “The Marriott Debate: A Hotel Architects Detest and People Are Crazy About,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1990, in *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 193-8.



Fig. 27. 343 Sansome Street, which is a 15-story office addition to an adjacent historic building, was designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee Architects. The building, completed in 1992, was one of the first projects approved after Prop M, and exhibits the principles of the 1985 Downtown Plan.

(Source: Kendall/Heaton Associates, c. 1992.)

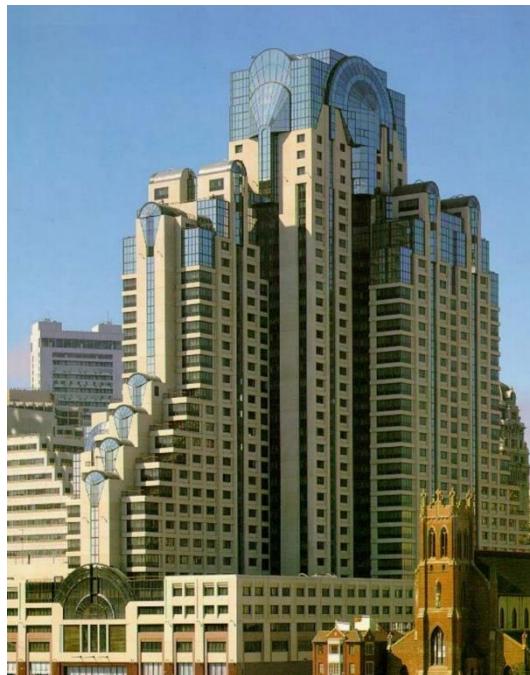


Fig. 28. San Francisco Marriott Marquis (55 Fourth Street), completed in 1989. The building was designed by Anthony Lumsden of DMJM, after taking over the project from Eberhard Zeidler.

(Source: Anthony J. Lumsden, c.1989.)

1989 Residential Design Guidelines

In 1989, the Planning Commission adopted the “Residential Design Guidelines,” which are still utilized in updated and revised form today (Planning Code Section 311(c)(1)). The Residential Design Guidelines built upon and elaborated on many of the principles in the 1971 Urban Design Plan, and provided more detailed guidance and illustrations for specifically residential use cases. Similarly, the Residential Design Guidelines did not mandate a specific architectural style, but did strongly emphasize contextual design and the idea that new construction should “respect or improve upon the context” of the existing neighborhood or streetscape, and ‘Contractor Modern’ type blank boxes are indicated as “disruptive” to the streetscape in numerous illustrations.¹⁰¹ Although the guidelines were not written to be prescriptive, their interpretation and implementation arguably led to a certain amount of design codification in practice. For example, although bay windows are not explicitly required as part of new construction, referencing the iconic San Francisco architectural feature has become a common means of contextualizing new architecture with the existing environment. (Fig. 29)

¹⁰¹ San Francisco Department of City Planning, *Residential Design Guidelines* (City and County of San Francisco, November 1989), 6, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://archive.org/details/residentialdesi1989sanf_0.

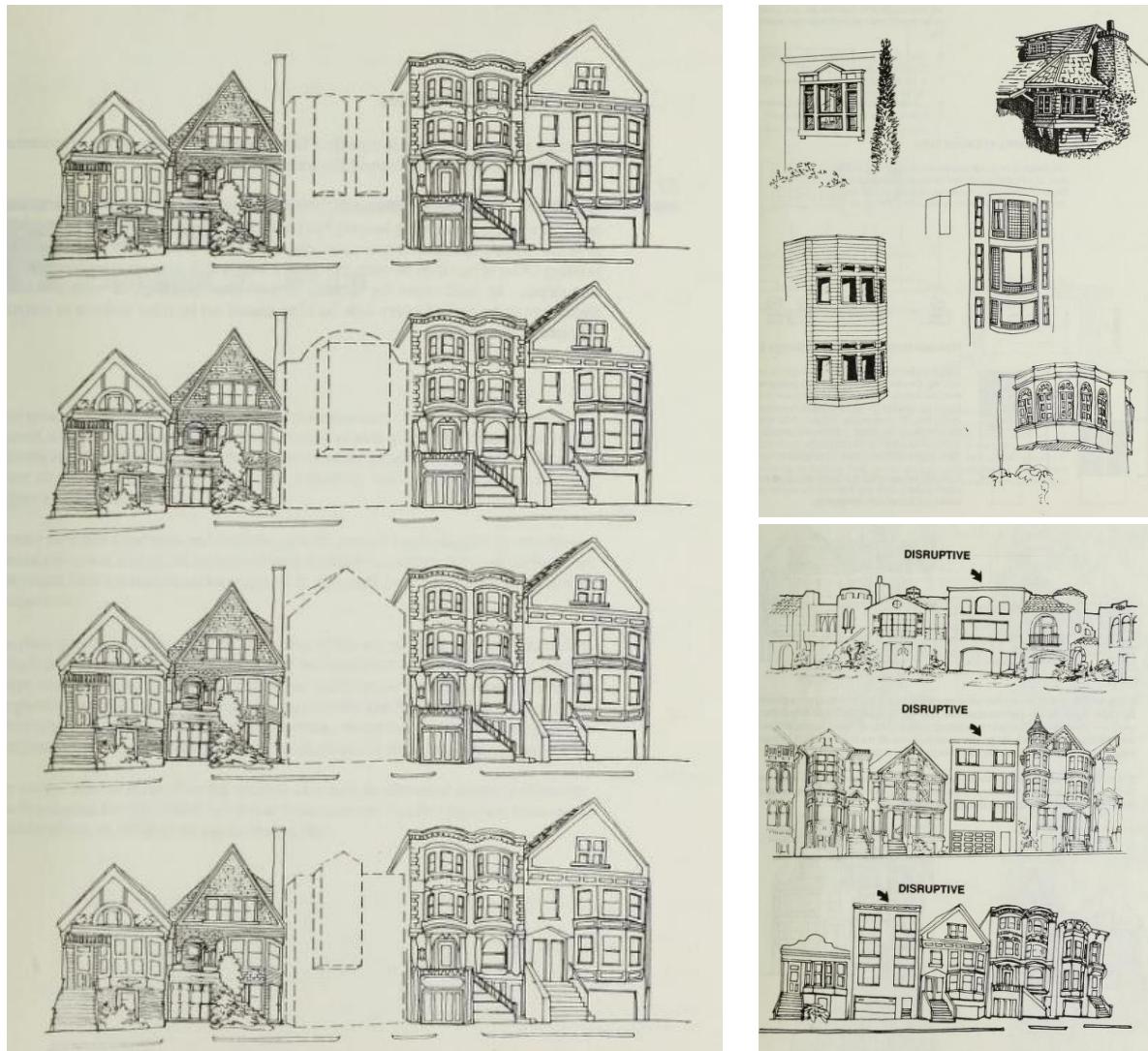


Fig. 29. Graphics from the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines.

(Source: San Francisco Department of City Planning, *Residential Design Guidelines* (1989), 9, 11, and 39.)

The guidelines have since been revised and expanded to try to further clarify that “There may be other design solutions not shown in the Guidelines that will also result in a successful project. The Guidelines do not mandate specific architectural styles, nor do they encourage direct imitation of the past.”¹⁰² While there are exceptions, the guidelines have enforced a normative level of contextual design in San Francisco’s residential architecture since adoption.¹⁰³

Refer to **Theme: Postmodernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

¹⁰² San Francisco Planning Department, *Residential Design Guidelines* (rev. 2003), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://default.sfcity.org/publications_reports/residential_design_guidelines.pdf.

¹⁰³ Mitchell Schwarzer wrote of the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines: “All through these years, however, the overall architectural culture in Northern California was getting more provincial. In 1989, San Francisco adopted Residential Design Guidelines that forced architects to include a host of features on new buildings that conform to the pre-1930s cityscape—bay windows, belt courses and cornices, materials like wood and stucco. Guidelines similarly encouraged breaking down the massing of larger buildings into smaller pieces.” Refer to: Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 49.

New Urbanism

While San Francisco—a densely built seven-by-seven-mile peninsula—does not have any “new town” type developments for which New Urbanism is perhaps best known, the principles of New Urbanism have informed a number of projects in the city. Daniel Solomon, an architect and founding member of the Congress of New Urbanism in 1993, spent his career thinking about urban planning, city blocks, and building typologies that could improve the livability of both cities and suburbs. Solomon also worked on the earliest iteration of the Mission Bay Master Plan (1989) with EDAW and ELS, which exhibited many New Urbanist principles as designed, including contextual references to the street grid, block types, and housing types historically found in San Francisco (**Fig. 15**).¹⁰⁴ Concepts promoted by New Urbanism, including the 15 Minute City and freeway-free cities, have also informed San Francisco planning, particularly after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake. While predating the founding of the Congress for New Urbanism, Solomon’s architectural work, as well as his consultant work for the Planning Department related to zoning code and design guideline updates, along with the analysis of urban designer Anne Vernez Moudon, provided prototypes and roadmaps for thinking about contextual design, neighborhood scale, and other qualities of livable and humane urbanism.¹⁰⁵

Refer to **Theme: Postmodernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

THE PUBLIC REALM: CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, WATERFRONT, POPOS & PUBLIC ART

Many of the improvements to San Francisco’s public realm in the late twentieth century were a direct result of new requirements set forth in the 1985 Downtown Plan or part of larger redevelopment plans, including new privately owned public open spaces (POPOS) and public art. The 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and the federal 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) also had significant impacts on San Francisco’s public realm—opening up the northeast waterfront and former military areas along the north side of the city for new recreation areas and commercial adaptive reuse. Some of the most notable examples of late twentieth century architecture and landscape architecture in San Francisco are associated with these improvements to the public realm.¹⁰⁶

The construction of the cultural institutions in the Yerba Buena Center redevelopment area was a significant change in San Francisco’s public realm—concentrating a cultural hub near downtown. Most of the city’s earlier museum institutions were located in Golden Gate Park, at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, and the Palace of Fine Arts, far away from the downtown center of the city. When the South of Market site for the new San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA, founded in 1935 as the San Francisco Museum of Art in the War Memorial Building), was announced in the late 1980s, it was considered a bold move as the neighborhood had historically been a mix of industrial; production, distribution and repair (PDR) and generally lower income housing and single room occupancy (SRO) hotels. SFMOMA, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta in a Postmodern style, opened in 1995, and was the first of a number of cultural institutions that were planned, alongside the Moscone Convention Center, numerous hotels, and the Metreon (135 4th Street, 1999, Gary E. Handel & Associates and SMWM) in the Yerba Buena Center (**Fig. 30**). Other cultural institutions that would follow include the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street, 1993, Fumihiko Maki), Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA (700 Howard Street, 1993, James Stewart Polshek & Partners), Children’s Creativity Museum (221

¹⁰⁴ The Mission Bay Master Plan was later refined by SOM in the 1990s, but the neighborhood as built out in the 2020s does not resemble these early plans. Daniel Solomon, *ReBuilding* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992) 108-9.

¹⁰⁵ Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986).

¹⁰⁶ Oral interview in 2023 between author and architect Cathy Simon.

4th Street, 1998, Adèle Naudé Santos), Museum of the African Diaspora (685 Mission Street, 2005, The Freelon Group), Contemporary Jewish Museum (736 Mission Street, 2008, Daniel Libeskind), and SPUR Urban Center (654 Mission Street, 2009, Pfau Long Architecture). Except for the Postmodern style SFMOMA and Children's Creativity Museum, the other institutions were designed in the New Modernist style, and the Contemporary Jewish Museum was designed specifically in the Deconstructivist mode of New Modernism.¹⁰⁷ For more information on the Yerba Buena Center redevelopment area, refer to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Historic Context Statement* (in progress).



Fig. 30. View of Yerba Buena Center, including the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (left), SFMOMA (center), and Blue Shield of California Theater (right). The Yerba Buena Gardens (1993) landscape was designed by Mitchell Giurgola, Mallas & Foote, Omi Lang, Paul Friedberg, and Hargreaves Associates. Public artworks, *Revelation* (a.k.a. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial) by Houston Conwill, Estella Majoza, and Joseph De Pace, and *Silver Walls* by Lin Utzon are visible at lower right.

(Source: SFMOMA. Henrik Kam, photographer, c. 2000s.)

The northeast waterfront was already experiencing substantial change by the 1960s, as former industrial sites transitioned to new uses—such as at Ghirardelli Square (900 North Point Street, 1962-8, Wurster Bernardi & Emmons with Lawrence Halprin) and the Cannery (2801 Leavenworth Street, 1967, Joseph Esherick and Thomas Church)—or were demolished for new development—such as at Fontana Towers. Although controversial proposals such as the Transamerica Pyramid and Embarcadero Center moved forward, several including the San Francisco International Market Center (proposed in 1968, designed by WBE and Lawrence Halprin) and Ferry Port Plaza and the US Steel Corporation tower (both proposed in 1969 by SOM) were defeated in the early 1980s. A more sensitively scaled and designed Postmodern complex was designed nearby at Levi's Plaza, which rehabilitated two landmark industrial buildings, and the Northeast Waterfront Historic District was adopted.¹⁰⁸ Pier 39 (Walker & Moody) opened in 1978 as a tourist destination that was disdained by many locals as the

¹⁰⁷ Although the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Blue Shield of California Theater opened in 1993, two years before SFMOMA, the planning and design for SFMOMA began earlier around 1988. Jenna McKnight, “Postmodern architecture: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art by Mario Botta,” *Dezeen*, August 10, 2015, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.dezeen.com/2015/08/10/postmodernism-architecture-sfmoma-san-francisco-museum-of-modern-art-mario-botta-snøhetta-craig-dykers-extension/>.

¹⁰⁸ Alison Isenberg, *Designing San Francisco: Art, Land, and Urban Renewal in the City by the Bay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 301-4.

Disneyfication of the waterfront, as the commercial retail and entertainment provided in the pseudo-historic wood buildings was felt to have little to do with the actual history of San Francisco's working waterfront.¹⁰⁹

While the nature of work and industry along the waterfront changed dramatically during the post-World War II period, these former industrial sites were being claimed and reused by private and corporate interests, but public access to the water and shore itself remained fairly cut off for average citizens. However, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake had a dramatic effect on the city and especially San Francisco's relationship to the waterfront. Following the recommendation of Mayor Art Agnos on September 24, 1990, the Board of Supervisors voted to tear down the damaged and long-disliked double-decker Embarcadero Freeway, opening up physical and visual connections to the waterfront that had not existed in decades. By 1992, the freeway had been demolished, and plans were put in motion to rehabilitate the historic Ferry Building—an icon of San Francisco's waterfront—to a retail and restaurant market hall (BCV Architecture & Interiors, SMWM and Page & Turnbull), although the project was not completed until 2003, along with the new Harry Bridges Plaza (ROMA Design Group). A new 2.5-mile *Ribbon of Light* (1996) public artwork—a collaboration of graphic designer Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, artist Vito Acconci, and architect Stanley Saitowitz—served to highlight the waterfront bulkhead and celebrate the public's reconnection with the waterfront ([Fig. 31](#)). Along with new parks—including South Beach Park (1994) and Rincon Park (2003, OLIN Studios)—the Embarcadero became a public promenade between the Ferry Building and the new Giants ballpark (24 Willie Mays Plaza, 2000, HOK Sport, now Populous).



Fig. 31. *Ribbon of Light* (1996) by Barbara "Bobbie" Stauffacher Solomon, Vito Acconci, Stanley Saitowitz, a 2.5-mile-long linear public artwork along the Embarcadero. The project, also known as the "Embarcadero Ribbon" or "Promenade Ribbon," is extant, although the lights no longer function. The black and white striped pole, visible at the left, is part of a series of interpretive history signage designed by artist Michael Manwaring and historian Nancy Leigh Olmstead.

(Source: Stanley Saitowitz | Natoma Architects Inc., c.1996.)

Damage caused by the earthquake to the historic San Francisco Public Library building also kicked new developments in the Civic Center public realm into gear.¹¹⁰ The old Beaux-Arts style library building (200 Larkin Street) was adaptively reused by Gae Aulenti—the Italian architect best known for her conversion of a former Parisien rail station to the Musée d'Orsay—to become the new Asian Art Museum, with design beginning by 1996

¹⁰⁹ Allan Temko, "The Port's Architectural Fiasco – Pier 39," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 30, 1978, in Temko, *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 175-9.

¹¹⁰ Although plans for a new library building dated to a 1986 design task force lead by Mayor Diane Feinstein in the mid-1980s, the earthquake led to a renewed prioritization of several Civic Center projects. Refer to: "Library Timeline," San Francisco Public Library, archived on Wayback Machine, March 1, 2006, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060301003019/http://sfpl.lib.ca.us/news/125/timeline.htm#>.

and completed in 2003.¹¹¹ A new main library next door at 100 Larkin Street, designed by James Ingo Freed of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners with local architect Cathy Simon of SMWM, presents a Postmodern façade to the Civic Center in keeping with the surrounding Beaux-Arts buildings in gray granite; the side and rear facades of the building, however, exhibit more tendencies of New Modernism, stripped of ornamentation and visual effects created by rotated volumes and punched openings within the grid of the cladding (**Fig. 32**).¹¹² The earthquake also inspired a seismic retrofit and restoration of the Palace of the Legion of Honor Museum, as well as an underground addition, replete with a mini-glass pyramid à la I.M. Pei's 1989 expansion of the Louvre in Paris; the renovation and addition were completed in 1995 by Edward Larrabee Barnes and Mark Cavagnero Associates.



Fig. 32. New San Francisco Public Library main branch (100 Larkin Street), completed in 1996. The building was designed by James Ingo Freed of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners with local architect Cathy Simon of SMWM.

(Source: Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, c.1996.)

The 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC) also resulted in vast areas that had been U.S. military property being incorporated into the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), managed by the National Park Service, including The Presidio, Crissy Field, and Fort Mason along the north waterfront, as well as Fort Funston in the southwest part of the city; refer also to the *Government, Planning & Infrastructure (1848-1989): Military Presence* (planned) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned) historic context statements. The Hargreaves Associates restoration of the Crissy Field landscape, which began in 1995 and was completed in 2001, exemplified the shift toward sustainable ecological design and habitat restoration in landscape architecture.¹¹³

¹¹¹ David Bonetti, "Revamped museums a hit with the masses," *San Francisco Examiner*, December 27, 1996.

¹¹² Architect Jeffrey Heller, in a *San Francisco Examiner* opinion letter, noted that critic Allan Temko "accurately faults the new building for its visual schizophrenia and lack of classical conviction." However, the building was well-received publicly with the main light-filled atrium remaining a crowd favorite (including for Temko). The building won the "Library Buildings Award: Award of Excellence for Library Architecture" in 1997, awarded by the American Institute of Architects and American Library Association, and the "Best Library" Interiors Award in 1996. Refer to: Allan Temko, "Great Thing Comes in So-So Package," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 7, 1996; Jeffrey Heller, "Main Concerns," Letters, *San Francisco Examiner*, April 21, 1996; and "San Francisco Main Library," Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.pcf-p.com/projects/san-francisco-main-public-library/>.

¹¹³ George Hargreaves and Mary Margaret Jones, "Fog, sky, water, land define Crissy Field," opinion, SFGate, January 24, 2014, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/Fog-sky-water-land-define-Crissy-Field-5172669.php>; and Elizabeth Boult and Chip Sullivan, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 232.

Even before BRAC in 1995, the Fort Mason Center for arts and culture opened in 1976 as one of the earliest public military and non-profit partnerships in the country, and in 1982 served as the site of the installation of the traveling “Presence of the Past” Venice Biennale, which was a defining moment in Postmodern architecture locally, as discussed earlier in this historic context statement in the **Architectural Criticism, Publications & Exhibitions** section.

Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS)

Prior to World War II, most downtown commercial buildings were built out to or near their lot lines, taking full advantage of their real estate. Often these downtown commercial buildings had ornamented, even lavish, interior lobbies. A watershed moment in San Francisco’s downtown architecture was the construction of the Crown Zellerbach Headquarters at One Bush Plaza (1959) by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which was not only the first Modernist high-rise in the city, but also was notably set off to just one-third of the site, with a one-story, round jewel box pavilion and an open, publicly accessible plaza occupying the remainder of the site. This plaza, which also included the first major contemporary, non-objective outdoor sculpture—a fountain by David Tolerton—installed in the public realm, was described as a “magnificent gift of urban space” to the people of San Francisco.¹¹⁴ The success of this design—which was based on design precedents such as the Seagram Building and plaza (1958, Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson) in New York City, as well as planning principles borrowed from New York City which allowed for density bonuses in exchange for certain public amenities—opened up an opportunity for architects and developers to negotiate over elements of their projects, such as height and bulk, in exchange for public amenities such as parks and plazas as fears of Manhattanization led to public debates over new proposed high-rises.¹¹⁵ For example, Transamerica Pyramid (1972, William Pereira Associates) offered Redwood Park (1974, Anthony Guzzardo) as a concession for approval of the controversial design, which would place the city’s tallest building immediately adjacent to the historic and lower-scale neighborhoods of Chinatown and North Beach.¹¹⁶

Eventually city planners grew frustrated with the system of giving density bonuses to developers just for what they saw as doing good urban design at the street level. Using principles established by people like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte, whose book *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) was highly influential for city planners and architects, San Francisco planners also wanted to provide guidelines that would encourage activity and use of downtown open spaces—and avoid the aesthetic of primarily open, empty plazas such as at the Seagram Building.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Allan Temko, “San Francisco’s Changing Cityscape,” *Architectural Forum* (April 1960) reproduced in Temko, *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 20.

¹¹⁵ Oral interviews in 2023 between author and Dean Macris, former San Francisco Planning Director, and Larry Badiner, former San Francisco Zoning Administrator.

¹¹⁶ Page & Turnbull, *Transamerica Pyramid Historic Resource Evaluation Part 1*, 82, 118-9.

¹¹⁷ In an oral interview with former Zoning Administrator Larry Badiner, he noted that the Planning Department brought William Whyte to San Francisco to talk to the planners about open space and the findings of his research.



Fig. 33. A POPOS on the roof of 343 Sansome Street, which was a requirement under the new 1985 Downtown Plan of the development of an adjoining office tower addition by Philip Johnson and John Burgee Architects (1991). Public artwork by Joan Brown.

(Source: Diana Lozano, 2016.
<https://sfpopos.com/popos/4.>)



Fig. 34. The POPOS at the Gap Headquarters (2 Folsom Street), completed in 2000, is by landscape architects Office of Cheryl Barton and Olin Partnership.

(Source: Office of Cheryl Barton (O|CB), c.2000.)



Fig. 35. Greenhouse atrium POPOS for Citigroup Center (1 Sansome Street, built in 1984 by William Pereira & Associates) within the shell of a c. 1910 Albert Pissis-designed former bank.

(Source: Diana Lozano, 2016.
<https://sfpopos.com/popos/10.>)

The 1985 Downtown Plan codified requirements for open spaces in development projects in the downtown C-3 zoning districts. These privately owned public open spaces (POPOS), which had previously been built by developers voluntarily, as a condition of project approval, or in exchange for a density bonus, were now systematically required with specific guidelines (Planning Code Section 138).¹¹⁸ POPOS could include plazas, pocket/snippet parks, and roof terraces, as well as indoor park, garden, or lobby seating areas (**Fig. 33** and **Fig. 34**). In several cases, reflecting new and evolving preservation and urban design values, POPOS incorporated retained elements of the historic built environment, such as the Citigroup Center (1 Sansome Street, 1984, William Periera & Associates) POPOS within the shell of a former bank (**Fig. 35**). The non-profit San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) has identified some 45 POPOS that were built between 1959 and 1985, predating the codification in the 1985 Downtown Plan, and the Planning Department has a list of approximately 80 POPOS built between 1985 and 2019 (**Fig. 36**).¹¹⁹

Refer also to **Historic Context: Late 20th Century Landscape Architecture**. As POPOS are integrated into the design of downtown architecture in the late twentieth century, they are often character-defining features of Corporate Late Modernist and Postmodernist architecture; refer to Evaluation Criteria in **Sub-Theme: Corporate Late Modernism** and **Theme: Postmodernism**.

¹¹⁸ “Privately-Owned Public Open Spaces and Public Art (POPOS),” San Francisco Planning Department, accessed online February 13, 2024, <http://sfplanning.org/privately-owned-public-space-and-public-art-popos>.

¹¹⁹ “POPOS & Public Art Map,” San Francisco Planning Department, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://sfplanning.org/privately-owned-public-space-and-public-art#map>; and “Secrets of San Francisco: A guide to San Francisco’s privately-owned public open spaces,” SPUR, October 2013, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/2013-10/popos-guide.pdf>.

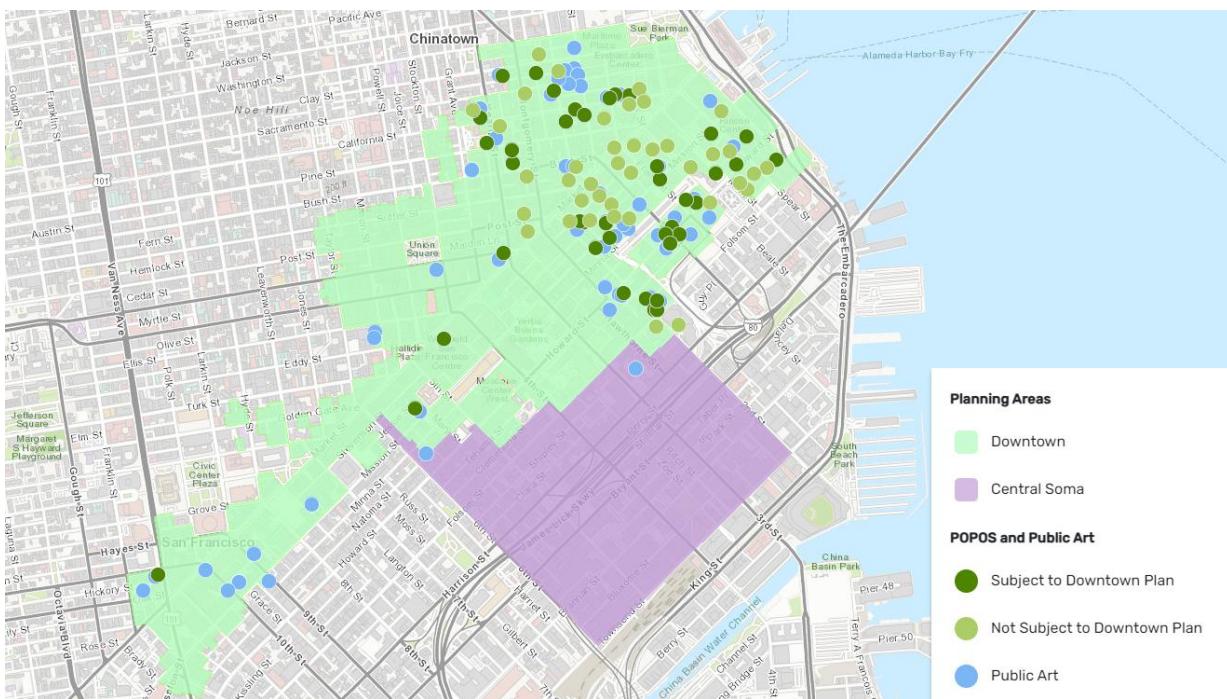


Fig. 36. Map of POPOS and public art in the Downtown Plan area. POPOS that are “not subject to Downtown Plan” (light green) generally predate the 1985 Downtown Plan. The public art shown on this map was generally subject to the 1% Art Program in the Downtown Plan, with several cases that predate the plan adoption but with approvals that were in the spirit of the pending plan. The map does not show public art associated with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency project areas, including Golden Gateway, Yerba Buena Center, Rincon Point-South Beach, or the Chinese Cultural Center.

(Source: San Francisco Planning Department, 2019. <https://sfplanninggis.org/popos/>.)

Percent for Public Art Programs

In the 1960s and 1970s, developers and municipalities were becoming increasingly aware of and interested in implementing “percent for art” programs and ordinances, but none yet formally existed in San Francisco. In 1969, the city implemented the Art Enrichment Ordinance, which stipulated that two percent of gross construction costs on new civic buildings and public facilities be allocated to new public art.¹²⁰ While San Francisco likely looked to early models like Philadelphia, which was the first city in the country to adopt a public art ordinance in 1959, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) was actually implementing its own percent-for-art requirements in development agreements for certain redevelopment projects by the early 1960s. A one-percent for public art requirement was stipulated in the SFRA land disposition agreements in the Golden Gateway project area, which led to the single greatest investment in public art in San Francisco since the New Deal, and marked a notable shift toward abstract and non-objective public art—including sculptures, mosaics, murals, and textile works.¹²¹ The Redevelopment Agency required public art contributions for some, but not all, commercial development projects in other redevelopment areas and also provided funding for public art in civic and public realm areas such as parks, plazas, and streetscapes in other redevelopment areas.

¹²⁰ “Permanent Public Art,” San Francisco Arts Commission, accessed online June 28, 2022, <https://www.sfartscommission.org/our-role-impact/programs/public-art>.

¹²¹ Letters on file in the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII, the successor agency to SFRA) archives indicate that many other city planning and redevelopment agencies inquired to executive director Justin Herman about SFRA’s percent-for-art requirements, which were quite innovative and predated many city public art ordinances nationwide. Perhaps in response to so many inquiries, the Redevelopment Agency published a booklet on their public art program: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, *Art in San Francisco Redevelopment Areas* (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1979), accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://archive.org/details/artinsanfrancisc1979sanf>.



Fig. 37. *Vaillancourt Fountain* (1971, Armand Vaillancourt) in Embarcadero Plaza. In Civic Art Collection.

(Source: AAR-6510, c. 1970s, SFPL, History Center.)



Fig. 38. *Icosaspire* (1967 Charles O. Perry) in Maritime Plaza. In Civic Art Collection.

(Source: AAR-6830, 1969, SFPL, History Center.)

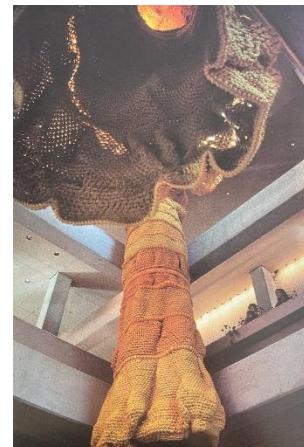


Fig. 39. *Yellow Legs* (1977, Barbara Shawcroft) in Embarcadero Center. Privately owned, since removed.

(Source: *Art in San Francisco Redevelopment Areas* (1979).)

Some of the public artworks that were funded by, or commissioned or installed by requirement of, the Redevelopment Agency were retained in public ownership, but only a subset have been formally acquisitioned in the Civic Art Collection under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Arts Commission (**Fig. 37** and **Fig. 38**). Other artworks, including those in corporate plazas, open spaces, and lobbies, are privately owned, and not all remain extant today; notably, a collection of massive textile artworks by significant women artists in the Embarcadero Center was removed, likely during a 1990s remodel of the office tower lobbies (**Fig. 39**).

The Redevelopment Agency percent-for-public art requirements for developers, although not implemented for all development sites in all redevelopment areas, was robust enough that it served as a proving ground and a model for the City to adopt its own two-percent-for-art program, the Art Enrichment Ordinance (San Francisco Administrative Code Section 3.19), in 1969, as noted earlier. The artwork funded and installed through the auspices of the Art Enrichment Ordinance is owned by the City and becomes part of the Civic Art Collection; the Civic Art Collection also includes artworks that were gifts to or purchases by the City, including monuments, memorials, and other artworks.¹²²

Later, as part of the 1985 Downtown Plan (Planning Code Section 429), the City also adopted a requirement for all new downtown commercial developments of a certain size to spend one percent of construction costs on public art.¹²³ The Downtown Plan explicitly cited the success of the Redevelopment Agency's percent-for-art program, stating that it had "made a substantial contribution to the quality of the downtown environment" and pointed to the one percent of construction costs stipulated by the Redevelopment Agency as a justification and basis for requiring the same one percent from new downtown developments.¹²⁴ The art funded by the one-

¹²² "Public Art," San Francisco Arts Commission.

¹²³ This downtown requirement was expanded to several other nearby neighborhoods in 2013.

¹²⁴ San Francisco Department of City Planning, *Downtown Plan: Proposal for Adoption by the City Planning Commission as a Part of the Master Plan*, 95.

percent-for-art program governed by the Downtown Plan generally remains in private ownership; in other words, these artworks generally are not acquisitioned into the Civic Art Collection ([Fig. 36](#)).

For more information and evaluation criteria for public art, refer to the *Public Art, Monuments & Murals Historic Context Statement* (in progress).¹²⁵

Supergraphics

In the 1960s and 1970s, supergraphics brought the “California cool” of the artworld and graphic design to larger scale environmental design. Supergraphics—which can be painted on the interior or exterior of buildings and other landscape objects—are characterized by their large-scale, bold colors, and simple graphic forms. San Francisco-based graphic designer and artist Barbara “Bobbie” Stauffacher Solomon pioneered supergraphics at The Sea Ranch with her bold, colorful designs that merged her training in hardline Swiss typography with the fun of West Coast Pop art; Stauffacher Solomon designed the iconic Sea Ranch logo and the supergraphics at the Moonraker Recreation Center (originally known as Sea Ranch Athletic Club) designed by MLTW, which was widely published—disseminating both Third Bay Tradition architecture and supergraphics.¹²⁶ The term itself seems to have originated in the March 1967 issue of *Progressive Architecture* that featured the Moonraker Recreation Center supergraphics, and was later entered into Webster’s Dictionary in 1969 ([Fig. 40](#)).¹²⁷



Fig. 40. *Progressive Architecture* March 1967 cover featuring the supergraphics by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon on the walls of the Sea Ranch Athletic Club by MLTW.

(Source: USModernist Library.)



Fig. 41. Supergraphic mural at Ghirardelli Square (c. 1968) by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon. No longer extant.

(Source: Barbara Stauffacher Solomon.)



Fig. 42. Supergraphic mural by Margaret Larsen wrapping the Shandygaff Health Food Restaurant at 1760 Polk Street, c. early 1970s. Painted over in 1974.

(Source: Horst Schmidt-Brumer and Feilee Lee, *Die bemalte Stadt* (Köln, Germany: DuMont-Schauber, 1973).)

Stauffacher Solomon, who shared an office with WBE and Lawrence Halprin, designed a number of environmental supergraphics in San Francisco, including the interiors of Hear Hear Records at the new

¹²⁵ Information specifically about public art in San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (now, OCII) project areas can be found in: Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Redevelopment Public Artwork Inventory Findings Report* (prepared for San Francisco Arts Commission, January 2024).

¹²⁶ “Bathhouse Graphics,” *Progressive Architecture* (March 1967): 156-147; and Donlyn Lyndon, Yukio Futagawa, and Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, and Whitaker, *MLTW: Houses by MLTW, Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker* (Tokyo: A.D.A. Edita, 1975).

¹²⁷ Isenberg, *Designing San Francisco*, 202.

Ghirardelli Square, a mural on the exterior of a new building at Ghirardelli Square, on the Kaiser Channel 44 KBHT T.V. Studio (420 Taylor Street), and Boas Pontiac (2323 Geary Boulevard) (**Fig. 41**).¹²⁸ While the lighted signs designed by Stauffacher Solomon at Ghirardelli remain, as does her public art piece *Ribbon of Light* (1996, designed with Stanley Saitowitz and Vito Acconci), along the Embarcadero, none of her environmental supergraphics appear to be extant in San Francisco. Likewise, a massive supergraphic mural by Marget Larsen on the Shandygaff Health Food Restaurant on Polk Street has been removed, but her graphic star signs at The Cannery remain (although repainted from their original green, pink, and orange scheme to all white) (**Fig. 42**). Supergraphic murals inside the Embarcadero Center by Bruce Dell, an employee of John Portman & Associates, have also been removed.

In the 1970s, San Francisco and the country were experiencing a recession, limiting the budgets of many privately funded development projects, and supergraphics were one means that cost-conscious developers and architects employed to introduce color and visual excitement to otherwise restricted projects. One example is the Buchanan Street Park (Buchanan Street, between Eddy and Grove streets), designed by Sasaki, Walker & Associates in 1975 for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in the Western Addition using a participatory design process. With limited budget, the landscape architects used over-scaled lines, making a basketball court into an abstract mural and bold font sans serif lettering to label various play equipment; none of these supergraphics are extant (**Fig. 70**).¹²⁹ The Redevelopment Agency hired graphic designer Michael Manwaring to design a sign for the India Basin Industrial Park on a budget, and in 1978 Manwaring installed large supergraphic concrete Helvetica letters that clearly reference the precedent of work by Stauffacher Solomon and Larsen (**Fig. 43**).¹³⁰



Fig. 43. India Basin Industrial Park supergraphic sign, c. 1978, by Michael Manwaring for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency at 1550 Evans Avenue. Sign has since been removed and put in storage by the Recreation & Parks Department.

(Source: Michael Manwaring.)

While supergraphics were popular and the influential graphic design trend deeply connected to San Francisco, there appear to be few—if any—extant examples from the late twentieth century in San Francisco, and should be evaluated for their rarity. Supergraphic designs and fonts have since come back into the environmental design repertoire in the twenty-first century.¹³¹

¹²⁸ “Visions Not Previously Seen: The Groundbreaking Work of Barbara Stauffacher Solomon,” Adobe Creative Cloud, article and video, March 28, 2018, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://creativecloud.adobe.com/discover/article/visions-not-previously-seen-the-groundbreaking-design-work-of-barbara-stauffacher-solomon>.

¹²⁹ Laurence A. Kennings, “Trafficking With Neighbors for San Francisco Park,” *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 66, no. 2 (March 1976): 143-146.

¹³⁰ The sign was removed from its original location for the construction of the new Southeast Community Center, and are currently in storage under the jurisdiction of the Recreation & Parks Department. Refer to: Sean Karlin, “Manwaring Letters Erased, But Not Forgotten,” *The Potrero View*, January 2021, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.potreroview.net/manwaring-letters-erased-but-not-forgotten/>.

¹³¹ Stauffacher Solomon has, herself, done a number of recent temporary supergraphic installations at the Berkeley Art Museum, Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, and SFMOMA.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MOVEMENT & ADAPTIVE REUSE

The historic preservation movement grew and professionalized alongside the sustainability and environmental movements, in the 1960s and through the remainder of the twentieth century. Although preservation, like environmental conservation, had existed for many decades, the shift in the 1960s was towards more legal frameworks for preservation at local, state, and federal levels, and the reaction to extensive demolition of historic urban areas as part of redevelopment and highway construction projects led to more organized advocacy. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) was passed in 1966, and a flurry of National Register designations followed in the 1960s and 1970s. As previously noted, NEPA and CEQA were both passed in 1970, which required that certain proposed projects consider potential adverse impacts to the environment, including historic resources.

San Francisco adopted a landmarks ordinance (Article 10 of the Planning Code) in 1967, which also created the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB, which was later replaced with the Historic Preservation Commission in 2008).¹³² In addition to a wave of individual landmarks, the Jackson Square Historic District was designated as an Article 10 local landmark within a few years. The Junior League of San Francisco undertook an architectural survey of the city in 1963, and published the results as *Here Today* (1968); the list of properties included in *Here Today* were later adopted by the Board of Supervisors as a local inventory of historic resources by Resolution 268-70.¹³³ The Planning Department conducted a citywide architectural survey between 1974 and 1976—known as the 1976 DCP Citywide Architectural Survey—and the unpublished 60-volume inventory of some 10,000 buildings, thought to represent approximately the top ten percent of architecturally notable buildings in the city—was utilized to understand urban design and architectural review principles.¹³⁴

The local advocacy non-profit, San Francisco Architectural Heritage (founded in 1973, now known as San Francisco Heritage, or simply Heritage) commissioned a survey of downtown San Francisco in 1977 to 1978, which was published in 1979 as *Splendid Survivors: San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*. The Planning Department later reviewed the survey ratings and issued its own set of downtown guidelines and policy recommendations in the 1985 Downtown Plan, including historic preservation policies such as Article 11 of the Planning Code, which classifies buildings the downtown C-3 zoning area as significant (Category I and II), contributory (Category III and IV), and unrated (Category V) buildings, with six conservation districts and provisions for transfer of development rights (TDRs).¹³⁵

While these new ordinances and surveys provided a framework for local preservation, support for preservation was galvanized by several notable advocacy fights led by Heritage, such as the six-year battle for the City of Paris building—then San Francisco’s oldest department store—which opened in 1850 and was reconstructed in 1907. The fight for the City of Paris was lost, but as a concession, the elliptical rotunda and stained-glass dome were

¹³² San Francisco Planning Department, “San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 14: Brief History of the Historic Preservation Movement in the United States and in San Francisco” (2003, reprinted 2011), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/preserv/bulletins/HistPres_Bulletin_14.PDF.

¹³³ San Francisco Planning Department, “San Francisco Preservation Bulletin No. 11: Historic Resource Surveys” (January 2003), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/documents/preserv/bulletins/HistPres_Bulletin_11.PDF.

¹³⁴ Oral interview in 2023 between author and architect and planner, Jeremy Kotas.

¹³⁵ Woody LaBounty, “Heritage 50: Splendid Survivors, Part II,” SF Heritage, April 11, 2021, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.spheritage.org/news/heritage-50-splendid-survivors-part-ii/#2>.

retained in the new building designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee ([Fig. 44](#) and [Fig. 45](#)).¹³⁶ More successful examples of adaptive reuse, such as Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery, were celebrated locally and in the national press, and advocates and planners began to push for more sensitive and contextual additions to historic buildings and neighborhoods. Among the best examples are Anshen & Allen's 1968 Modernist office tower addition (430 California Street) to Bliss & Faville's Bank of California (400 California Street, 1906-8), which references the fluting of the bank's columns in its own concrete spandrels, and the Postmodern brick Levi's Plaza (1105 Battery Street, 1981) complex by HOK (with Gensler and Lawrence Halprin), which responds to the scale and materiality of the industrial northeast waterfront.



Fig. 44. Neiman Marcus (150 Stockton Street, 1982) by Johnson & Burgee included the elliptical rotunda from the City of Paris department store which once occupied the site. Shown c. 1980s.

(Source: SFH 24 James A. Scott Collection, SFPL, History Center.)



Fig. 45. The glass curtain wall around the rotunda designed by Johnson & Burgee at Neiman Marcus (150 Stockton Street) was replaced sometime before 2008.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2022.)

Advocacy for historic preservation, however, is never complete, and time and development pressures have changed where the threats and new priorities lie. The protections for downtown and older neighborhoods have been well established, but the field has since broadened to also address cultural heritage beyond architecturally significant buildings. While case studies like Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery clearly demonstrated that Modernist architects could design sensitively within an existing historic context, pervasive narratives often pitted the preservation movement against Modernist architecture—especially within the context of redevelopment in

¹³⁶ The *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger called the “checkerboard box of reddish granite” “an awkward intrusion into San Francisco, a building that struggles to reflect a certain spirit and ends up, instead, capturing that spirit under glass and nearly suffocating it.” Goldberger further observes that, while Johnson was a noted preservationist in some cases, that “Mr. Johnson likes history best when he creates it” and that ultimately Johnson’s new building “upstages” the rotunda. Refer to: Paul Goldberger, “San Franciscans Get Three New Buildings,” *The New York Times*, November 15, 1983.

the 1960s and 1970s—whereas Postmodernism with its historical references was generalized as more sensitive and contextual for new construction in historic neighborhoods.

Often historic preservation is framed as antithetical to Modernist architecture. However, in the 1960s and 1970s, a number of nationally influential case studies proved that Modernist architects, landscape architects, and graphic designers could revitalize existing urban sites in a sensitive way for new uses. As the historic preservation movement grew and professionalized in the 1970s, new guidelines—and sometimes restrictions—were implemented; for example, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties were not published until 1977. As such, some early adaptive reuse projects exhibit creative and experimental means of engaging with historic sites. In particular, the rehabilitation of Ghirardelli Square from a chocolate factory to a commercial and retail shopping center with a below-ground parking garage, and a similar conversion of the Cannery, were test cases that were awarded and published nationally, inspiring a wave of adaptive reuse and festival marketplace projects that extends to the rehabilitation of the Ferry Building in the early 2000s ([Fig. 46](#) and [Fig. 47](#)).



Fig. 46. Ghirardelli Square in May 1968, after it reopened as commercial retail complex. The design team included architects Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons, landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, graphic designer Barbara Stauffacher Solomon and a fountain sculpture by Ruth Asawa.

(Source: OpenSFHistory, wnp25.3898.)



Fig. 47. The Cannery, a former warehouse and fruit canning facility, was reconfigured with strategic incisions and insertions by architect Joseph Esherick, in collaboration with landscape architect Thomas Church and graphic designer Marget Larsen.

(Source: Joseph Esherick Collection, Environmental Design Archives, UC Berkeley.)

The rehabilitation of Ghirardelli Square (900 North Point Street, 1962-8) was led by a team of some of the most locally renowned Modernists, including Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons (WBE), Lawrence Halprin, and Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, and blends Modernist plaza terraces and contextual Modern brick buildings in with the older complex. The Cannery (2801 Leavenworth Street, 1967) adaptive reuse also featured an all-star team of Joseph Esherick, Thomas Church, and Marget Larsen, and the result was a complex and playful spatial

experience with colorful wayfinding. Both Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery projects were published in national architectural journals and received numerous awards.¹³⁷

Other notable adaptive reuse projects that feature distinctive Modernist design that is part of the public and/or exterior experience of the building, include the Ice Houses (151 Union Street, c.1968, Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons), Oriental Warehouse Lofts (650 Delancey Street, 1996-7, Fisher-Friedman Associates), and the San Francisco Design Center and Showplace Square (c. 1970s, developer Henry Adams). In some cases, adaptive reuse of a site did not conform to preservation best practices, but did salvage certain building elements or features, such as: Banneker Homes (725 Fulton Street, 1970) by Joseph Esherick & Associates and Lawrence Halprin, which reused part of a former Acme Beer factory as the garage podium for a new housing complex in the Western Addition Redevelopment Area, retaining some factory features as sculptural elements in the courtyard (which have since been removed) (**Fig. 48**).¹³⁸



Fig. 48. Banneker Homes (725 Fulton Street, 1970) by Joesph Esherick & Associates and Lawrence Halprin utilized salvage building and factory elements from the former Acme Beer factory on site.



Fig. 49. Hills Plaza (345 Spear Street, 1986) Postmodern addition and adaptive reuse of the Hills Bros. Coffee plant by Whisler-Patri.

(Source: Loopnet.com.)

(Source: SFH 371 San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Records, SFPL, History Center.)

In other cases, even less of an old building was salvaged while the remainder of the site was redeveloped, in some cases amounting to what is now known as ‘facadism,’ such as Friendship Village (1047 McAllister Street, 1971) by Bulkley & Sazevich in the Western Addition, which retained a Victorian era façade as an entry gateway into the courtyard. Another example is the office tower addition at 456 Montgomery Street (1985, Roger Owen Boyer & Associates), which created a sunken Postmodern plaza between and below two retained Neoclassical bank facades. The firm Whisler-Patri, which worked on a number of adaptive reuse and restoration projects including in the landmark Jackson Square, designed Hills Plaza (345 Spear Street, 1986), an adaptive reuse of a

¹³⁷ Pioneer Wollen Mills and D. Ghirardelli Company, National Register Nomination No. 82002249, April 29, 1982; “Ghirardelli Square,” *Architectural Forum* (June 1965): 52-7; and James Burns, “Evaluation: A Classic Recycling after 11 Years,” *AIA Journal* (July 1978): 50-59.

¹³⁸ The original paint scheme for Banneker Homes included earth-tone oranges, yellows, and reds, but has since been repainted gray. The project received a HUD Award for Design Excellence in 1970. “Banneker Homes, San Francisc Kalifornien,” *Das Werk : Architektur und Kunst* 58 (July 1971): 444-6; and Garrett Eckbo, *Public Landscape: Six Essays on Government and Environmental Design in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Berkeley: Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, 1978).

1925 Hills Brothers Coffee plant by George Kelham converted to an office complex with a Postmodern condo tower addition (**Fig. 49**).¹³⁹

Refer to **Theme: Late Modernism** and **Theme: Postmodernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria for adaptive reuse projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT, HIPPIE MODERNISM & SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN

Growing concerns about the environment and human impacts on the planet were reflected in new legislation, such as the Clean Air Act of 1963 and Clean Water Act of 1972, and the influential work of the environmental science writing, *Silent Spring* (1962), by Rachel Carson. In 1970, shortly after the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was passed, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted, and required the analysis, public disclosure, and mitigation of potential adverse impacts on the environment (including historic resources). The first Earth Day was celebrated nationwide on April 22, 1970, marking the early stages of a national grassroots environmental movement.

In the Bay Area, local environmental advocacy took many shapes, including the 1960s “Save the Bay” movement and anti-freeway protests.¹⁴⁰ Stewart Brand began publishing his countercultural, do-it-yourself *Whole Earth Catalog* in 1968 out of Menlo Park, suffused with radical ethos of self-sufficiency and ecology.¹⁴¹ The countercultural and hippie communities of the Bay Area were involved in numerous experiments in the “back-to-the-land movement” in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in Marin and Sonoma counties to the north of San Francisco, and Santa Cruz county to the south. Hippie and eco-modern architecture took many forms from the woodbutcher’s artist shacks like those of J.B. Blunk in Inverness and the houseboats of Sausalito, to the iconic geodesic domes pioneered by mathematician and architect Buckminster “Bucky” Fuller and popularized by do-it-yourself (DIY) publications like *Whole Earth Catalog*, *The Dome Builder’s Handbook* (1973 and 1978), and Lloyd Kahn’s *Domebooks* (1970 and 1971) to the radical inflatable architecture of the interdisciplinary art and architecture practice of Ant Farm.¹⁴² Most examples of eco- and hippie-modern architecture in the Bay Area were built outside of San Francisco, where there was more affordable space and less regulation and oversight by

¹³⁹ John King, “Hills Plaza is contextualism at its best,” SFGate, April 2, 2011, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/hills-plaza-is-contextualism-at-its-best-2376212.php>.

¹⁴⁰ Rae Alexandra, “The 1960s Women Whose Environmental Activism Saved the Bay,” KQED, April 22, 2022, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.kqed.org/arts/13911567/the-1960s-women-whose-environmental-activism-saved-the-bay>; and Jessica Wolfrom, “Why are there 70 acres of open space in the heart of San Francisco? Thank the Gum Tree Girls,” *San Francisco Examiner*, October 5, 2023.

¹⁴¹ Widely considered a tech visionary, Brand was involved in many aspects of early computing and internet innovation in Silicon Valley, including operating the camera for Douglas Engelbart’s 1968 “Mother of All Demos.” *New York Times* technology writer, John Markoff, described Brand’s *Whole Earth Catalog* as “the internet before the internet. It was the book of the future. It was a web in newsprint” and Steve Jobs also pointed to Brand as an inspiration; Carole Cadwalladr, “Stewart Brand’s Whole Earth Catalog, the book that changed the world,” *The Guardian*, May 4, 2013, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/05/stewart-brand-whole-earth-catalog>; and Anna Wiener, “The Complicated Legacy of Stewart Brand’s ‘Whole Earth Catalog,’” *The New Yorker*, November 16, 2018, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-silicon-valley/the-complicated-legacy-of-stewart-brands-whole-earth-catalog>. Brand co-founded the Long Now Foundation in 1996 in San Francisco, which is a non-profit headquartered in Fort Mason Center with the goal of promoting long-term culture and thinking. Brand also wrote an important book within the field of historic preservation and urban planning, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They’re Built* (Viking Press, 1994).

¹⁴² Art Boericke and Barry Shapiro, *Handmade Houses: A Guide to the Woodbutcher’s Art* (San Francisco: Scrimshaw Press, 1973); Ant Farm, *Inflatocookbook* (Sausalito, CA: Rip Off Press, 1970-71); Kathy Shaffer, *Houseboats: Aquatic Architecture of Sausalito* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 2007); Alastair Gordon, “Remembering Jay Baldwin, experimental geodesic dome champion,” *The Architect’s Newspaper*, April 12, 2018, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.archpaper.com/2018/04/remembering-jay-baldwin/>; Page & Turnbull, *Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds Historic Resources Documentation* (prepared for City of Petaluma, July 1, 2022), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_v5YKF0aRTPwRTN2KE4uGq-CzGT-C18c/view; and Felicity D. Scott, “Eco-Tripping Ant Farm’s Environmental Media,” *Flash Art*, August 13, 2019, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://flash--art.com/article/ant-farm/>.

building departments, and were often associated with countercultural communities or experimental programs at schools and universities. A rare known example of this type of radical architecture built in San Francisco was a kitchen addition to an existing shingled home on Telegraph Hill (address unknown) by Ant Farm c. 1975, which had an organic amorphous bubble window that references their earlier inflatable architecture and House of the Century (Houston, TX, 1972) (**Fig. 50** and **Fig. 51**).



Fig. 50. Poole House kitchen remodel, c. 1975, on Telegraph Hill by Ant Farm (Chip Lord, Doug Michels, and Curtis Schreier). No longer extant.

(Source: Ant Farm, photograph. “From the folks who gave you 20-20 vision,” *Progressive Architecture* (September 1975): 64-67.)

Fig. 51. Ant Farm installed a geodesic dome to serve as the gift shop for the Exploratorium when it was located at the Palace of Fine Arts, c. 1970s-80s. No longer extant.

(Source: Chip Lord, Ant Farm.)

In the 1970s, a recession and energy crisis (due to the OPEC embargo of U.S. oil imports), brought a new urgency to addressing energy-efficiency through design. In commercial construction, the interest in energy efficiency led to an emphasis on air-tight construction and reliance on mechanical climate control systems. Downtown high-rises adopted strategies such as mirror, tinted, or low-e glass to avoid solar gain—replacing the expansive, transparent glazing associated with earlier Modernism.¹⁴³ In 1978, California’s Governor Jerry Brown implemented the country’s first strong energy-efficient building code, known as Title 24, and hired architect Sim Van der Ryn as the State Architect of California, who oversaw the state’s first energy-efficient government building projects.¹⁴⁴ Van der Ryn also taught ecological design at UC Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design and wrote numerous books on the subject. Although most of his built work is outside of San Francisco, Van der Ryn designed the interiors of the innovative early vegetarian restaurant, Greens Restaurant, which was opened in 1979 by the San Francisco Zen Center and continues to operate out of Fort Mason Center; the restaurant brings together both sustainable design and food, sourcing local organic produce from the Zen Center’s Green Gulch Farm in Muir Beach (**Fig. 52**).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Flora Chou, Page & Turnbull, “The ‘70s Turn 50: Building the Context,” Docomomo US, August 13, 2020, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/the-70s-turn-50-building-the-context>.

¹⁴⁴ Allan Temko, “California’s New Generation of Energy Efficient State Buildings,” *AIA Journal* (December 1977): 50-56; and Allan Temko, “Bold State Offices to Save Energy” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 10, 1977, in *No Way To Build a Ballpark* (1993).

¹⁴⁵ Greens was constructed by Paul Discoe of Joinery Structures and the San Francisco Zen Center Carpenters, and features burlwood redwood sculpture by J.B. Blunk. Van der Ryn also designed several buildings for Green Gulch Farm. Refer to: “About,” Greens Restaurant, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://greensrestaurant.com/about/>; and “The Architecture of Sim Van der Ryn,” Sim Van der Ryn, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://simvanderryn.com/sim-architect>.

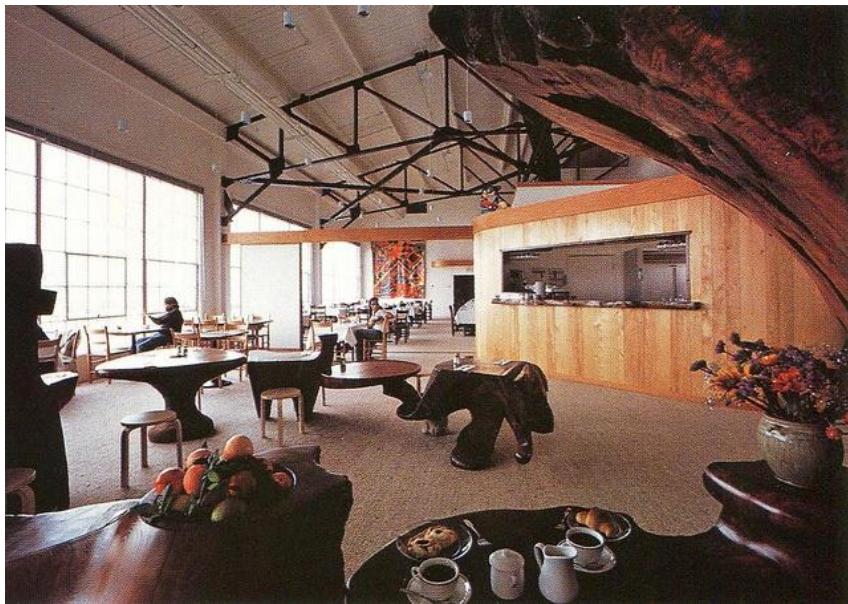


Fig. 52. Greens Restaurant, shortly after opening in Fort Mason Center in 1979 (Building A, 2 Marina Boulevard). Interiors designed by Sim Van der Ryn.

(Source: Pilar Viladas, *The Interiors Book of Shops & Restaurants* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1981), 88-89.)

Private homes also adopted new sustainable building strategies, including the use of solar panels—which became somewhat more commercially available for homeowners after the Solar Energy Research, Development, and Demonstration Act of 1974—and other passive solar strategies. Popular shelter publications like *Sunset Magazine* published examples of “solar homes” and passive solar heating and cooling strategies.¹⁴⁶ However, many of these strategies remained experimental at the time, and solar panels have only become affordable to more homeowners in the twenty-first century with lower manufacturing and installation costs and federal and state tax incentives.¹⁴⁷ One experimental strategy was to have an underground rock bed to provide thermal mass that would absorb heat from the sun during the day and re-radiate it back through the building at night.¹⁴⁸ This strategy was utilized in the Sunhouse Complex, a Third Bay Tradition style condo complex in the Western Addition by Zoe Works (1979-80, 1989 Eddy Street) (Fig. 53 and Fig. 54).

By 1988, the “greenhouse effect” and “global warming” became household concepts during the hottest summer on record at the time.¹⁴⁹ Local San Francisco architecture in the 1990s did not typically have overt signals of sustainable design, but by the twenty-first century trends like green roofs and green walls became more pervasive features of “green architecture,” such as at the California Academy of Sciences (2008, 5 Music Concourse Drive) designed by Renzo Piano. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification also became increasingly more common after it was first piloted in 1998.¹⁵⁰

Refer to Theme: Late Modernism and Sub-Theme: Third Bay Tradition for relevant Evaluation Criteria.

¹⁴⁶ *Sunset Homeowner's Guide to Solar Heating & Cooling* (Menlo Park, CA: Lane Publishing Co., 1978, 1980).

¹⁴⁷ Elizabeth Chu and D. Lawrence Tarazano, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, “A Brief History of Solar Panels,” Smithsonian Magazine, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/sponsored/brief-history-solar-panels-180972006/>.

¹⁴⁸ The strategy was pioneered by Sim Van der Ryn at the Bateson State Office Building (1981) in Sacramento.

¹⁴⁹ “Climate Change History,” History, June 9, 2023, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.history.com/topics/natural-disasters-and-environment/history-of-climate-change>.

¹⁵⁰ “Mission and Vision,” U.S. Green Building Council, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.usgbc.org/about/mission-vision>.

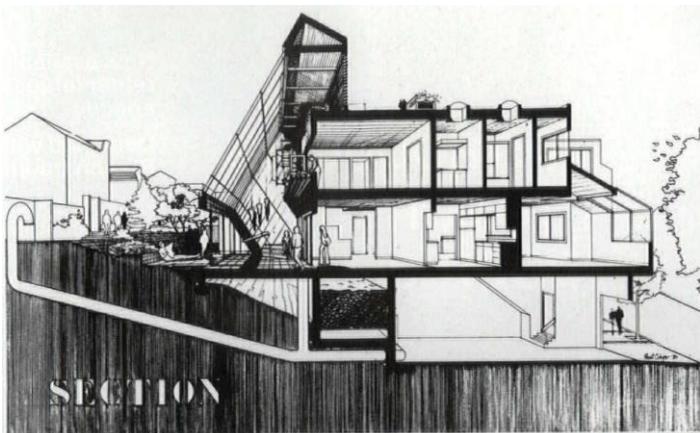


Fig. 53. Section rendering of the passive solar system at the Sunhouse Complex (1989 Eddy Street), designed by Zoe Works in 1979 based on passive solar principles and completed in 1980.

(Source: “Sunhouse Complex, San Francisco, Ca,” *Progressive Architecture* (February 1979), 42.)



Fig. 54. Third Bay Tradition design of the built Sunhouse Complex (1989 Eddy Street), c. 1980s.

(Source: SFH 371 San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Records, SFPL, History Center.)

LIVE/WORK ORDINANCE

In 1988, concerned about the affordability of housing and studio space for artists, the City passed a new “live/work” ordinance to incentivize loft conversion and construction of new live/work buildings for artists. While intended to support the artistic and bohemian culture of San Francisco, the ordinance fairly quickly became used as a loophole for developers to build dense complexes on more affordable land and take exemptions from various city taxes, fees, and parking and affordable housing requirements, especially as the real estate market heated up during the mid-1990s dot com boom. By 2002, the ordinance was repealed with the support of many artists and affordable housing advocates who recognized that the unintended consequences of the ordinance—gentrification of industrial areas, displacement of PDR businesses and long-time residents from southeast neighborhoods, proliferation of new market rate units not affordable to artists or many others, and the lack of enforcement of requirements for units to be occupied by artists and/or business license holders—outweighed any benefits.¹⁵¹ A damning statistic from a City study found that “Construction of live/work units began to increase in 1996 and 1997 and reached its maximum in 1999, when more than 600 live/work units were completed. The average initial sales price in 2000 of \$353,100 for the new live/work projects was 32 percent

¹⁵¹ The Coalition for Jobs, Arts & Housing, which brought together artists, housing advocates, and others, rallied at City Hall to support a moratorium on live/work construction leading up the ordinance repeal, stating “New Live/Work Lofts are \$400,000 condos, not workspaces for artists as originally intended by the artists’ live/work law. Lofts are pushing jobs, artists and businesses out of the City, and they have cost the City millions of dollars in lost fees.”; refer to: Absolute Arts, “No More Lofts Rally,” Coalition for Jobs, Arts & Housing, Indepth Art News, August 9, 1999, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.absolutearts.com/artsnews/1999/08/09/25778.html>. Despite the good intentions of the ordinance, studies and reports conducted by the City also bore this out noting a “failure of live/work projects to be used either as artist work spaces or, in some instances, as residences at all.”; refer to: “Industrial Protection Zones, Live/Work Projects and Community Plans,” San Francisco Board of Supervisors, c. 2002, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://sfbos.org/industrial-protection-zones-livework-projects-and-community-plans>. An oral history with Debra Walker, an artist, activist, and commissioner, provides an extensive history of the live/work ordinance and artist live/work spaces in San Francisco; Debra Walker, “Interview with Debra Walker: Artists’ Live-Work Housing in San Francisco Oral History Project,” by Michael B. Kahan and Nova Meurice, Stanford University. Libraries. Department of Special Collections and University Archives, August 21, 2020, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://purl.stanford.edu/bk873ht6126>. Refer also to: San Francisco Planning Code, Section 202.6. Live/Work Units, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_planning/0-0-0-49925; John McCloud, “Live-Work Law for Artists Roils San Franciscans,” *The New York Times*, April 27, 1997; and Robert Selna, “How S.F.’s live-work development boom began,” SFGate, August 18, 2008, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/How-S-F-s-live-work-development-boom-began-3272818.php>.

higher than non-live/work housing.”¹⁵² All live/work units created under the live/work ordinance between 1988 and 2002 are located in the SoMa (and the Financial District south of Market Street), Mission, and Potrero Hill neighborhoods.¹⁵³

The live/work ordinance had a fairly short lifespan, but live/work loft conversions and construction of new live/work buildings occurred before the ordinance was put in place, and have continued since through other legal zoning and building code mechanisms, like “accessory uses” to dwelling units.¹⁵⁴ In practice, many units that are currently designated as “live/work” uses with “Notice of Special Restrictions” in the deed are not enforced.¹⁵⁵

Some version of artist live/work spaces could be traced back to at least the Montgomery Block, which was built in 1853. Inexpensive studios were rented by many artists and writers over the years before the building was demolished and the site later redeveloped with the Transamerica Pyramid.¹⁵⁶ In the 1970s, artists began occupying abandoned warehouses and factories, particularly in the South of Market, east Mission District, and Potrero Hill areas, which prompted a larger discussion with the City about how to legalize these occupancies and uses. Several long-running artist communities occupying live-work loft conversions include Project Artaud (499 Alabama Street, est. 1971) and Developing Environments (540 Alabama Street, originally known as Project Two, est. 1972) (**Fig. 55**). Through the live/work ordinance, the Schmidt Lithograph Company was converted in 1992 by David Baker + Partners as the Clocktower Lofts (461 2nd Street) but does not have the same kind of longstanding cohesive artist community as places like Project Artaud and Developing Environments.

Live/work lofts typically feature high ceilings and large windows to allow for natural light and artistic pursuits that may require large walls or areas for work. Even as developers began using the live/work loophole to build new units that were not truly designed for artists, these characteristics of high ceilings, open plans, and lofted bedroom areas were often adopted because they were also desirable to residential tenants, and the open plan and lofted bedrooms, at least, were cheaper to build. Other than these typical features, live/work lofts could take many forms in either adaptive reuse—usually of former industrial buildings—or new construction. Live/work lofts built as new construction can exhibit either Postmodern or New Modern styles, and often utilize industrial materials which reflect the character of their surrounding neighborhoods and harken to live/work loft conversions of warehouses. Likely due to the fact that live/work loft construction became popular in the 1990s and in largely industrial neighborhoods, styles such as shingled or woodsy Third Bay Tradition, which is more associated with residential neighborhoods, are not used for live/work buildings.

¹⁵² “Industrial Protection Zones, Live/Work Projects and Community Plans,” San Francisco Board of Supervisors, c. 2002, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://sfbos.org/industrial-protection-zones-livework-projects-and-community-plans>.

¹⁵³ Based on the Land Use 2020 GIS dataset (created 2016, updated May 25, 2023) available through DataSF, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://data.sfgov.org/Housing-and-Buildings/Land-Use/us3s-fp9q>.

¹⁵⁴ San Francisco Planning Code, Section 204.4. Dwelling Units Accessory To Other Uses, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/san_francisco/latest/sf_planning/0-0-0-19858.

¹⁵⁵ Many buildings constructed under the live/work ordinance also do not enforce the requirements for tenants to be practicing artists and/or hold a business license, making the buildings functionally the same as other condos. Likewise, not all former warehouse loft conversions are live/work buildings, which indicates a zoning and accessory use allowance.

¹⁵⁶ Jakie Barshak, “Live/Work Spaces for Artists: A Historical Perspective,” FoundSF, 2013, accessed online December 7, 2023, https://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=Live/Work_Spaces_for_Artists:_A_Historical_Perspective.



Fig. 55. Project Artaud (499 Alabama Street), a long-running artist community, converted an abandoned former American Can Company factory to live/work artist lofts in 1971. Photograph c. 1995.

(Source: Tom Gray, photographer.
Sanfranciscotheaters.blogspot.com.)



Fig. 56. 86-96 South Park (1996) live/work units by Levy Art + Architecture in the Postmodern collage style.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 57. Postmodern style 41-45 Hallam Street (1989-90) by Donald MacDonald is listed as live/work units in PIM, but adjacent condos are not.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

The Corson-Heinser Live/Work Building (25 Zoe Street, 1992) by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy is one of the best local examples of New Modernism as it emerged in San Francisco (**Fig. 58**). The building was recognized as part of *Architectural Record's* Record House program in 1992, and has been widely published in books, guidebooks, and maps about San Francisco architecture since.¹⁵⁷ The live/work residence reflects the industrial character of the surrounding SoMa neighborhood and was originally built for a husband-and-wife duo who both ran their separate design businesses from the floors above the dwelling level. Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy also designed a larger complex of New Modernist live/work lofts—Showplace Square Lofts (370 De Haro Street, 1999)—on an unusually narrow, angled through-block lot that occupies a former railroad alignment. Another notable example of a New Modernist style live/work building is 1022 Natoma Street (1993), which was designed by Stanley Saitowitz, whose firm Stanley Saitowitz | Natoma Architects continues to be run out of one of the units.

¹⁵⁷ “Industrial Arts,” Record Houses, *Architectural Record* (April 1992): 125-31.



Fig. 58. Exterior (left) and interior of the workspaces (right) of the New Modernist style Corson-Heinser Live/Work Building (25 Zoe Street, 1992) by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy.

(Source: "Industrial Arts," Record Houses, *Architectural Record* (April 1992): 125-31.)

The Oriental Warehouse Lofts (650 Delancey Street, 1997) by Fisher-Friedman Associates utilize the exterior brick wall of a historic 1872 warehouse while inserting a New Modernist live-work loft building inside (**Fig. 59**). Unlike other warehouse loft conversions, this building is essentially an entirely new structure with new floor plates, that has structural bracing to support the remaining brick walls.

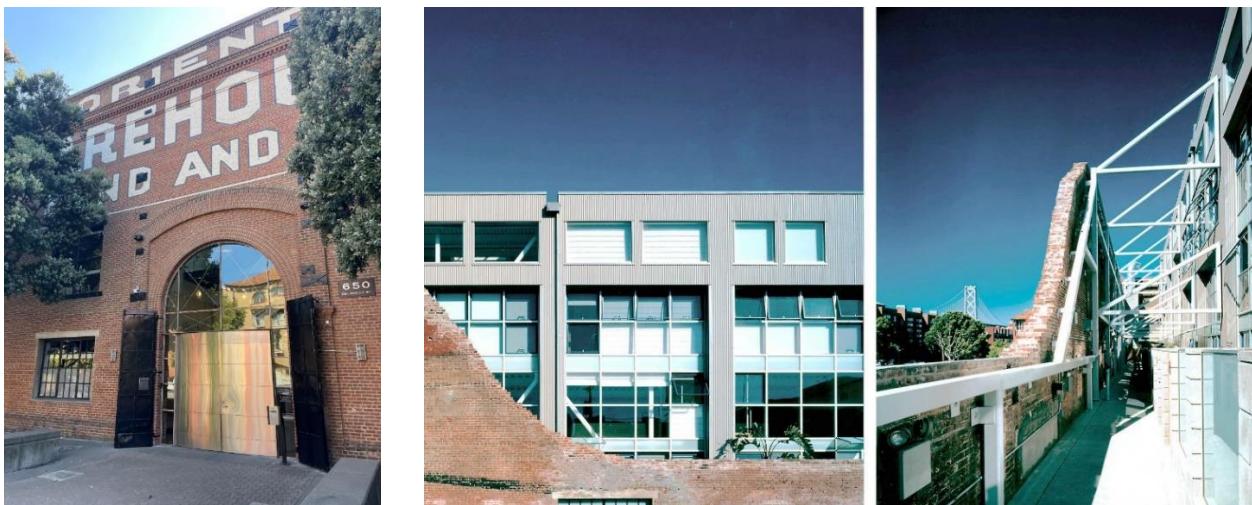


Fig. 59. Current (left) and c. 1997 (center and right) photographs of the Oriental Warehouse Lofts (650 Delancey Street). The project was a conversion of a historic industrial brick warehouse to accommodate New Modernist live-work lofts by architects Fisher-Friedman Associates in 1997. It is notable as an adaptive reuse live/work project as the New Modernist design is made visible to the exterior, protruding above a seemingly crumbling brick wall.

(Source: Page & Turnbull (left). Fisher-Friedman Associates (center, right).)

The 18th & Arkansas/g2 Lofts (1995) by David Baker Architects are an interesting example of both contextual Postmodernism and transitional, industrial New Modernism; the complex includes market rate units and lofts, as well as below-market-rate (BMR) live/work lofts for artists (**Fig. 60**). Along Arkansas Street, facing a block of primarily post-1906 earthquake housing, the complex features attached, Postmodern walk-up units that exhibit subtle references to period revival styles and typical bay windows, with stucco and wood siding. Along 18th Street, which faces the more industrial flatlands of Potrero Hill, the complex has an industrial character with double-height loft spaces and corrugated metal siding.



Fig. 60. 18th & Arkansas/g2 Lofts (1995) by David Baker Architects. The triangular complex features market-rate units, including contextual Postmodern walk-up apartments along Arkansas Street and industrial (transitional New Modern) lofts, as well as below-market-rate (BMR) artist live/work lofts which extend from 18th Street into the center of the parcel. The complex also has a 99-seat experimental theater, gallery, and performance spaces.

(Source: “18th & Arkansas/g2 Lofts,” David Baker Architects, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.dbarchitect.com/projects/18th-arkansasg2-lofts>.)

Examples of live/work buildings designed in the Postmodern style include: 728 Alabama Street (1995; unknown architect), 86-96 South Park (1996) by Levy Art + Architecture, 1568 Indiana Street (1999) by Gary Gee, and at least some of the Hallam Street houses (1989-90) by Donald MacDonald.¹⁵⁸

Refer to **Theme: Postmodernism** and **Theme: New Modernism** for relevant Evaluation Criteria for live/work lofts.

¹⁵⁸ While the units at 41-45 Hallam Street were built under the live/work ordinance, other units immediately adjacent that were also designed by MacDonald in the same style are not listed as having a “live/work” use in available data through the San Francisco Property Information Map and DataSF.

IMPACT OF URBAN PLANNING ON SAN FRANCISCO ARCHITECTURE IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

In sum, new principles and values around historic preservation and adaptive reuse; sustainability; and urban planning played a significant role in shaping San Francisco urban planning policy and guidance in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the city's built form in **Late Modern**, **Postmodern**, and **New Modern** architecture, as discussed in the following Theme and Sub-Theme chapters. Responding to the excesses of Modernist planning, especially as related to freeways, high-rises, and urban renewal, the San Francisco Planning Department had a major influence on architecture and urban design during this period. While evidence of this is concentrated downtown, as well as the larger northeast quadrant and SoMa, evidence can be seen throughout the city. Emphasis on contextual design, including material and formal references to existing buildings and in urban design guidance documents including the 1971 Urban Design Guidelines, 1985 Downtown Plan, and 1989 Residential Design Guidelines, dovetailed with the emergence of architectural Postmodernism. During this period of the late twentieth century, planners believed that these new contextual buildings were "good background buildings" that were compatible with the existing and historic fabric of the city, and many architects and critics felt that the Planning Department was effectively mandating architectural Postmodernism in new construction both downtown and for infill residential construction. Unlike the proto-Deconstructivist Postmodernism of Los Angeles or more Classicist strains of Postmodernism on the East Coast, much of San Francisco's Postmodernist architecture is highly contextual, and often more subtle. By the mid-1990s, Postmodernism had fallen out of vogue nationally, and San Francisco architects, too, were seeking ways to explore new materials, space, and program through a return to some of the tenets of Modernism, but with more sensitivity to the existing built and natural environments.

Late 20th Century Landscape Architecture

The trajectory of landscape architecture in the late twentieth century does not directly align with or follow that of architecture, in so far as there was not the same parallel Postmodern movement in landscape architecture. While some landscapes do exhibit features of Postmodernism—most often these are landscapes directly associated with Postmodern buildings—there is not the same body of theory, criticism, and built work in a Postmodern style or aesthetic within the landscape architecture profession. Postmodern critiques within the field of landscape architecture have tended toward ecological and urbanistic critiques, which focused on environmental concerns, a critique of the *tabula rasa* approach to site in Modernism, as well as humane urbanism through participatory design.¹⁵⁹

By the 1960s, landscape architecture firms, like architecture firms, were growing in size, complexity and specialization, and many of the most prominent practitioners were “expanding into the public sector with urban design, regional planning, and environmental impact studies.”¹⁶⁰ Where Modernist landscape architects—such as Thomas Church, Robert Royston, and Garrett Eckbo—were known for their many residential projects (as well as parks and other institutional landscapes), the next generation of landscape architects—such as Lawrence Halprin and Sasaki, Walker & Associates—were increasingly involved in larger institutional and corporate landscapes rather than residential gardens. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s, Halprin published influential texts *Cities* (1963) and *Freeways* (1966) and was working on urban scale projects like the adaptive reuse of Ghirardelli Square and the redesign of Market Street. In 1965, landscape architect Michael Laurie already was observing this trend in an article for *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, stating:

The ten-year period after World War II, when garden design was a major preoccupation of landscape architects in California, was a time of experimentation in form and ideas which had widespread influence throughout the States and in the world. [...] Later] the attention of private landscape architects, in common with the general public, began to turn to larger matters—subdivision design, community and urban design, recreation, and parks projects, and to significant and often controversial problems of the entire physical environment. Meanwhile, the private garden, that small yet most significant of all landscape elements, has been left hanging in mid-air. What new turn of events will bring it back into the mainstream of design thought?¹⁶¹

This trend continued throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, with education, most mid-size and large firms, publications such as *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, and awards programs all focusing more on forms of landscape architecture, urbanism, and environmental design beyond the private residential garden.

¹⁵⁹ “Postmodern critiques of Modernism stressed its failure to acknowledge the practical and ecological side of landscape architecture, accusing it of aesthetic elitism. However, no strong designer took Garrett Eckbo’s place [when he retired from UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design in 1978] as hoped, in part because the nature of the practice had changed so dramatically. Although design continued to respond to context and economy, the profession was also addressing issues of urban design, land use, suburban development, water and energy shortages, demographic change, and social attitudes and interests. In fact, the environmental and participatory work of the current faculty had become the professional mainstream.” H. Leland Vaughn, “Introduction, Space, 1948,” in *Landscape at Berkeley*, 11.

¹⁶⁰ Vaughn, “Introduction, Space, 1948,” in *Landscape at Berkeley*, 8; and Peter Walker and Melanie Simo, *Invisible Gardens: The Search for Modernism in the American Landscape* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 228, 284-298.

¹⁶¹ Michael Laurie, “The California Garden: No Place To Go?” *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 56, no. 1 (October 1965): 27. Refer also to Vaughn, “Introduction, Space, 1948,” in *Landscape at Berkeley*, 9; “As within the broader profession, emphasis on design was decreasing, possibly a continued reaction to the hegemony of Modernism, and other issues were challenging its place such as environmental planning at the regional level, the scientific analysis of ecological conditions, and the structure and form of the urban environment which were backed with new federal and state government environmental impact laws and reviews (NEPA, CEQA, EIRs).”

Redevelopment & Corporate Landscapes

Many of the largest and most notable commissions in San Francisco during the late twentieth century for landscape architects were related to Redevelopment Agency projects, including new public and private parks, courtyards for multi-family housing complexes, and streetscapes. Most of these landscapes exhibited the principles of Modernist design, which are described in greater detail in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*. In addition to Maritime Plaza (public) and Sydney Walton Park (private) in the Golden Gateway, notable public landscapes designed in redevelopment project areas included Buchanan Street Park (1975, Sasaki, Walker & Associates), Buchanan Pedestrian Mall (1976, Rai Yukio Okamoto), Hilltop Park in Hunters Point (1979, Michael Painter Associates), and Yerba Buena Gardens & Esplanade (1993, Mitchell Giurgola, Mallas & Foote, Omi Lang, Paul Friedberg, and Hargreaves Associates) (**Fig. 61** and **Fig. 62**). Many of the multi-family housing complexes developed in Diamond Heights and Western Addition also included shared, designed landscapes. In the Western Addition, these were usually central courtyards which remain, but many have been altered over time and have typically been enclosed with security gates (**Fig. 48**).

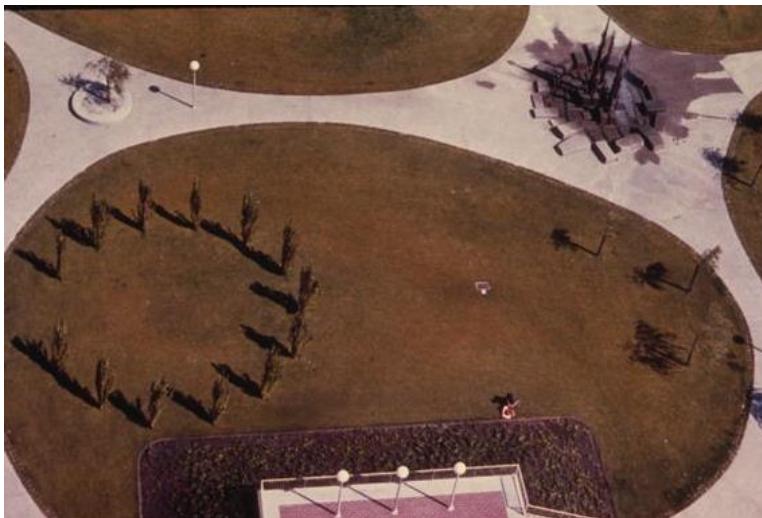


Fig. 61. The Modernist Sydney Walton Park (1960, Sasaki, Walker & Associates) has the appearance of a public park, but is privately owned by the surrounding Golden Gateway Commons complex.

(Source: AAR-6791, SFPL, History Center.)



Fig. 62. Buchanan Pedestrian Mall (1976, Rai Yukio Okamoto) includes two Origami fountains by artist Ruth Asawa and is notable for its incorporation of Japanese landscape aesthetics and naturalistic forms to compliment the flanking Japantown retail stores.

(Source: AAR-6791, SFPL, History Center.)

In the 1960s, Market Street, San Francisco's main commercial and transit throughfare, was ripped up for the cut-and-cover construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, which opened in 1972. As a result, Market Street was reimagined by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin with architects Mario Ciampi and John Carl Warneke, as a brick-paved Modernist designed landscape connecting a series of public plazas and fountains—Embarcadero Plaza, Hallidie Plaza, and U.N. Plaza—and nodes around monuments and seating features. It has been identified as an eligible historic cultural landscape.¹⁶²

¹⁶² A detailed account of the history and significance of the Market Street Cultural Landscape can be found in: San Francisco Planning Department, *Better Market Street Project EIR*, Appendix 6: Cultural Resources Supporting Information, Case No. 2014.0012E, State Clearinghouse No. 2015012027, DEIR

The new requirements of the 1985 Downtown Plan to provide POPOS resulted in many new urban landscapes. However, at their relatively small scale and potentially for cost reasons, it seems that many of these landscapes were designed by the building architect rather than as a collaboration with a landscape architect or firm. Refer to the previous section, **The Public Realm: Cultural Institutions, Waterfront, POPOS & Public Art**, for more information on POPOS. Studies such as *People Places* (1976) by Clare Cooper Marcus and Carolyn Francis and *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) by William H. Whyte served as guides for designers and planners to design more humane, user-friendly, and activated public plazas and POPOS in the late twentieth century (**Fig. 63**). Brick and concrete were commonly utilized materials for public and highly trafficked public landscapes, whereas prestige materials such as marble and granite were more frequently utilized in corporate POPOS. In the mid-1990s, Yerba Buena Gardens introduced a bold, two-tone graphic pattern into the Esplanade paving; other geometric two-toned plazas designed in the 1990s were completed in the early 2000s, including Harry Bridges Plaza, Union Square, and Jesse Square (**Fig. 64**).

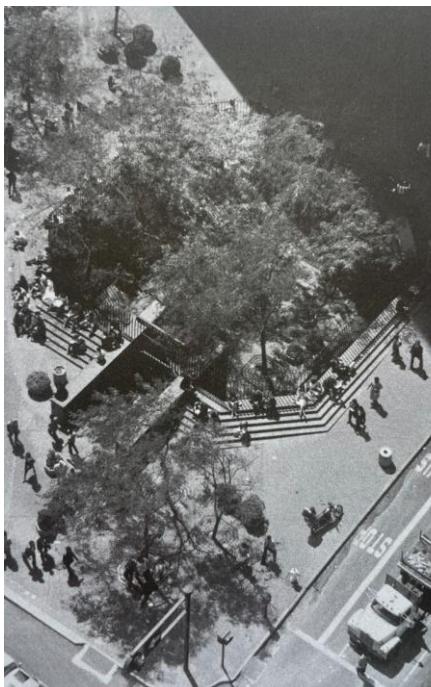


Fig. 63. Tiered steps with chamfered corners surround the sunken One Post Plaza (1969, Sasaki, Walker & Associates), which includes a BART entrance. When first built, the sunny steps were frequented by office workers during lunchtime, demonstrating the principles of activated urban spaces.

(Source: Walker and Simo, *Invisible Gardens*, 251.)

Fig. 64. Bold two-tone square and triangular graphic paving is utilized at the Yerba Buena Gardens Esplanade (1993, Mitchell Giurgola, Mallas & Foote, Omi Lang, Paul Friedberg, and Hargreaves Associates).

(Source: YerbaBuenaGardens.com)

One of the most notable corporate landscapes in San Francisco from the late twentieth century is Levi's Plaza (1155-1160 Battery Street), designed by Lawrence Halprin and surrounded by a three-block contextual Late Modern brick mid-rise office complex by HOK and Gensler. Halprin's design, completed in 1982, features a highly geometric Modernist "Hard Park" plaza with a stepped, interactive fountain, which is contrasted with a naturalistic "Soft Park" meta-landscape (Fig. 65 and Fig. 66). The project was widely published and was featured as one of Halprin's most significant landscapes in the retrospective exhibition of his work at the SFMOMA and accompanying publication, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places* (1986).

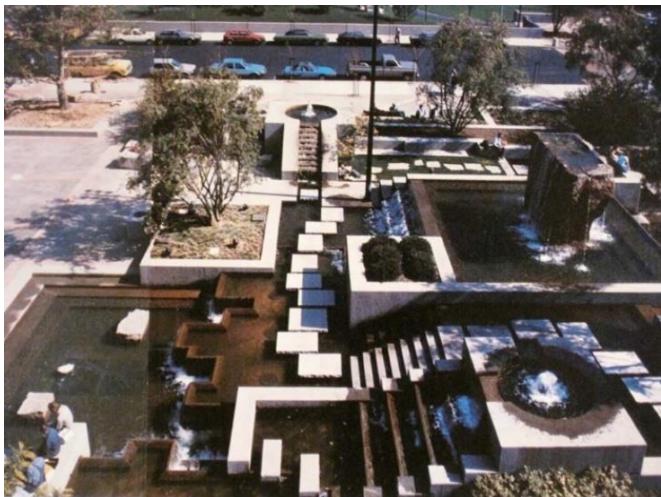


Fig. 65. The Hard Park of Levi's Plaza, 1982.

(Source: Joshua Freiwald, photographer. Donald Canty, "Corporate Campus Laid Back Against Telegraph Hill," *AIA Journal* 71, no. 6 (Mid-May 1982), 157.)



Fig. 66. Soft Park of Levi's Plaza, c. 1982, looking south.

(Source: Peter Aaron/ESTO, photographer, in Garrett Eckbo, "Man and Nature at Levi Strauss," *Landscape Architecture Magazine* 73, no. 6 (Nov/Dec 1983), 53.)

Postmodern Landscapes

Some aesthetic strains of Postmodernism do find their way into landscape architecture in the late twentieth century—for example, in the work of Martha Schwartz. Landscape architect Elizabeth Boult has observed that, as "a reaction to modernist sterility, artists and designers reintroduced playful ornament, color, and historic motifs into their work. A renewed interest in metaphor was also evident in postmodern gardens. Landscape design became increasingly conceptual."¹⁶³ However, the "art-for-art's sake" approach in Postmodern landscape was criticized by landscape architect and professor at UC Berkeley, Randolph T. Hester, who advocated for conservation and participation approaches to design, and found the Postmodern approach to be "elitist aestheticism" that gave "license to produce private jokes at the public expense."¹⁶⁴

San Francisco's Postmodern landscapes tend to be POPOS that are closely associated with Postmodern corporate architecture (Fig. 67 and Fig. 68). There is also a large Postmodern playground at the Children's Creativity Museum (221 4th Street, 1998, Adèle Naudé Santos with landscape architect M. Paul Friedberg).

¹⁶³ Boult and Sullivan, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, 223-4.

¹⁶⁴ Randolph T. Hester, Jr., "Process Can Be Style: participation and Conservation in Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Architecture Magazine* (May/June 1983), reproduced in *Landscape at Berkeley*, 49.



Fig. 67. The office tower at 456 Montgomery Street (1985, Roger Owen Boyer & Assoc.) has a sunken, tiered Postmodern plaza, with multiple levels of offices and retail connected by stairs and escalators.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 68. John Portman's design for the Embarcadero Center West expansion in the early 1980s includes Postmodern elements including this trellis and ramp fountain on Commercial Street between Battery and Sansome streets.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2022.)

Ecological Design, Land Art & Participatory Design

As previously noted, “ecological design” (or “conservation design”) and “participatory design” were the primary new approaches to landscape design and urbanism that challenged the doctrines of Modernism.¹⁶⁵ However, plenty of Modernist architects shifted their practices towards ecological and participatory design while still utilizing materials and form language found in Modernist landscape architecture. For example, Lawrence Halprin’s highly influential master plan for the Sea Ranch on the coast of Sonoma County was based on the principle of “living lightly on the land,” and although there is a clear hand in the landscaping of hedgerows and bluffs, the overall design is naturalistic with the idea of preserving the coastal environment and ecosystem through human stewardship (Fig. 69).¹⁶⁶ The rising interest in ecological design in the 1960s occurred along with the burgeoning environmental movement, and was influenced by texts such as biologist and conservationist Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) and landscape architect Ian McHarg’s *Design With Nature* (1969), which “championed site analysis techniques based on the carrying capacity of the land and its fitness to intended

¹⁶⁵ Randolph Hester argued that participatory process could be a “style” in his 1983 essay, “Process Can Be Style: participation and Conservation in Landscape Architecture.” However, Modernist landscape architect Garrett Eckbo disagreed with this assessment in a responding letter to the editor, stating, “It is a frustrating disservice to sound, intelligent, sensitive, inspired environmental design to say, or imply, that it must choose between three ‘styles’ labeled modern, conservation, and participation. These are not styles. They are attitudes, approaches, ways of seeing the world. They are essential components of the larger view and broader conception, which are essential to the solution of our problems today and tomorrow.” Hester’s essay and Eckbo’s response are both reproduced in in *Landscape at Berkeley*, 49-54.

¹⁶⁶ “Journey To The Sea Ranch,” University of California, Berkeley, College of Environmental Design, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://search.berkeley.edu/s/sea-ranch/page/Intro>.

use.¹⁶⁷ Much of ecological design necessarily occurs at a larger scale, such as at the level of regional planning, but several notable examples within San Francisco include the Great Highway redesign (1984, Michael Painter) and the wetland and dune restoration of Crissy Field (1998-2001, Hargreaves Associates).¹⁶⁸ Ecological and sustainable design would become more intertwined with building design in the 2000s with the popularity of roof gardens—a notable example being the living roof at the new California Academy of Sciences (2008, Renzo Piano)—and living walls.

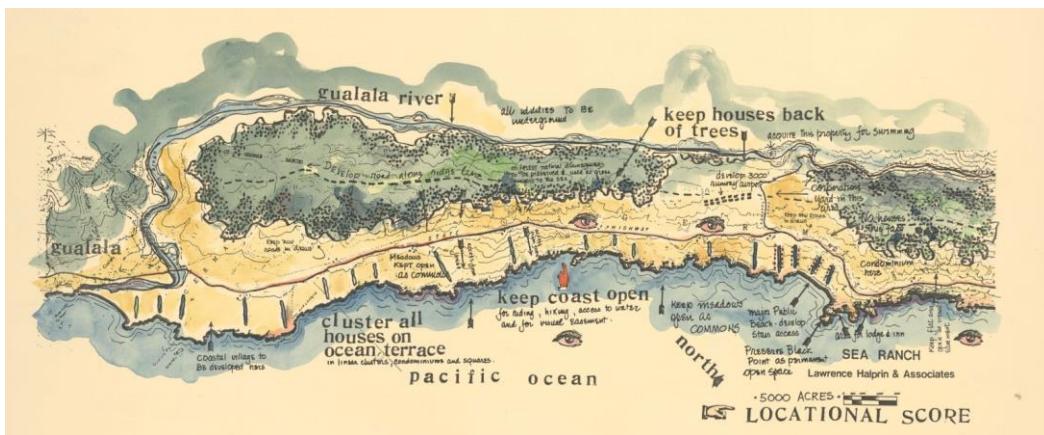


Fig. 69. Master plan diagram for The Sea Ranch in Sonoma County by Lawrence Halpin.

(Source: Lawrence Halpin Collection, University of Pennsylvania.)

In addition to more technical approaches to ecological design and sustainability, which were based on scientific analysis, landscape design also intersected with the art world in the late twentieth century with the rise of conceptual “land art” movement.¹⁶⁹ Works like Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (1970, Great Salt Lake, UT) utilized nature as an artistic medium. Noteworthy contributions to the land art movement by artist Andy Goldsworthy are located in San Francisco, but date to the twenty-first century.¹⁷⁰

Although environmental design, especially as practiced by landscape architect Ian McHarg, did take social factors into account, it is primarily driven more, or at least first, by ecology and natural systems. Participatory design, on the other hand, takes human users as the primary driver of design. Halpin was also at the forefront of this movement within landscape architecture and urbanism as “one of the first advocates for citizen participation in the design process.”¹⁷¹ Randolph Hester was an early and significant proponent of participatory design, writing several key texts beginning with *Neighborhood Space: User Needs and Design Responsibility* (1975) and teaching numerous courses at UC Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design. Principles of participatory design were utilized in the development of Buchanan Street Park (1975, Sasaki, Walker & Associates) (Fig. 70).¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ McHarg was hugely influential in the environmental movement and taking landscape architecture in the direction of ecological/conservation design and regional planning. Boult further notes, “McHarg developed a methodology based on coordinated overlays of maps, which became the foundation of geographic information systems (GIS) technologies. He pioneered the analysis of opportunities and constraints to assess the many social and environmental costs of a project”; Boult and Sullivan, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, 222.

¹⁶⁸ “Great Highway and Ocean Beach Reconstruction Plan,” MPA Design, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://mpadesign.com/portfolio/great-highway-and-ocean-beach-reconstruction-plan/>.

¹⁶⁹ Boult and Sullivan, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, 219; and Martha Schwartz, “Landscape and Common Culture Since Modernism” in *Modern Landscape Architecture: A Critical Review*, ed. Marc Treib (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994): 260-5.

¹⁷⁰ These works include: *Drawn Stone* (2003-5) at the DeYoung Museum; and *Spire* (2008), *Wood Line* (2010-11), *Tree Fall* (2013), and *Earth Wall* (2014), all in the Presidio.

¹⁷¹ Boult and Sullivan, *Illustrated History of Landscape Design*, 217; Walker and Simo, *Invisible Gardens*, 155; and Lawrence Halpin and Jim Burns, *Taking Part: A Workshop Approach to Collective Creativity* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1975).

¹⁷² Kennings, “Trafficking with Neighbors for San Francisco Park,” 143-6.

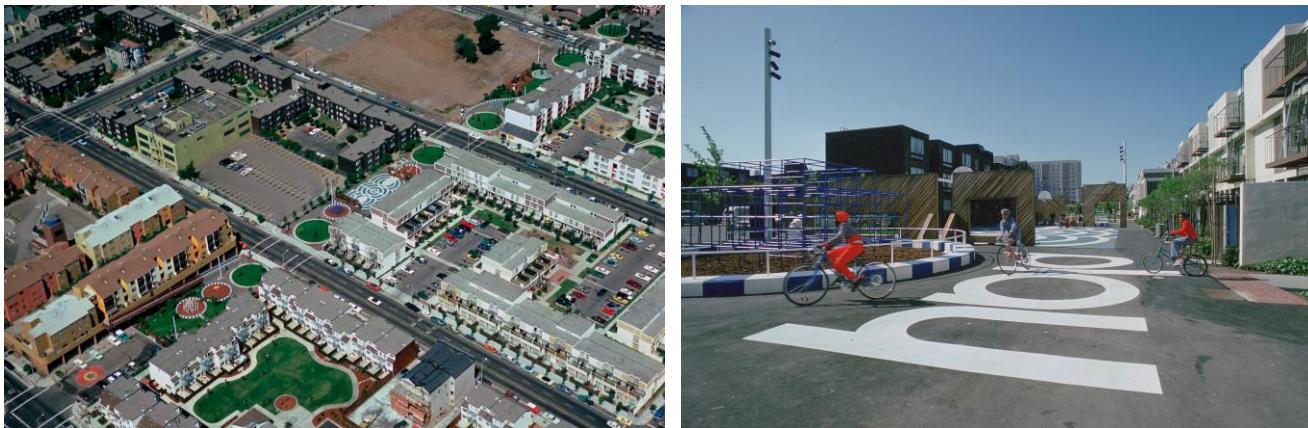


Fig. 70. Buchanan Street Park (1975) by Sasaki, Walker & Associates was designed using a participatory process with input from local youth. Supergraphics and play equipment have since been removed.

(Source: SWA, c.1975.)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE EVALUATION CRITERIA

As previously stated, this historic context statement is primarily focused on architectural styles, and as such takes landscapes that are directly associated with buildings or building complexes—such as residential gardens and courtyards and corporate plazas as its purview. Designed and cultural landscapes such as public parks, recreation areas, and open spaces will be addressed in the *Recreation & Park Historic (1848-1989)* (planned) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned) historic context statements. As such, a separate evaluation framework is not provided for late twentieth century designed landscapes in this document. Properties that include designed landscapes that are directly associated with buildings or building complexes, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features for **Late Modern, Postmodern** and **New Modern** architecture.

Refer also to the Modern Landscape Design “Criteria for Evaluation” in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement, 159-61.

Theme: Late Modernism (1960s-1980s)

Late Modernism is a broad, umbrella term that encompasses a variety of expressions of Modernist architecture during a period of the late twentieth century that saw many divergences within and reactions to Modernism. The perceived uniformity and repetitiveness of the International Style and Miesian architecture, and a sense that Modernism had become mundane in its more commercial and corporate expressions, caused architects to explore new forms.¹⁷⁴ Theorist and architectural historian Charles Jencks—also an advocate for Postmodern architecture—was one of the first to codify the term “Late Modern” as an architectural style or movement, and observed, “There are many ways to characterize Late-Modern architecture and most of them can be reduced to the single notion of exaggeration. Late-Modernism takes Modern architecture to an extreme to overcome its monotony and the public’s boredom with it.”¹⁷⁵ The divergences in American architecture that began in the 1960s became pronounced in the 1970s, and were the subject of exhibitions and books as critics and practitioners tried to get a handle on how to describe and categorize the new architecture, as well as to understand where architecture was going and where it should go.¹⁷⁶ The photo essays in the catalog for the 1979 “Transformations in Modern Architecture” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Jenck’s own book *Late-Modern Architecture* (1980) both illustrate the range of approaches and explorations within Modernism in the late twentieth century.¹⁷⁷

During the late twentieth century a sense that the utopian promises of Modernism—architectural and otherwise—set in, and the notion that Modernist architecture could build a better world through functionalism, new technologies, and material and structural honesty was challenged. Corporations had adopted Modernism as the standard corporate aesthetic, and architectural Modernism was mainstream rather than avant-garde. Jencks had declared the “death of Modern architecture,” which is to say high or orthodox Modernism, in 1972 with the intentional implosion of the Pruitt-Igoe public housing complex (1954, Minoru Yamasaki) in St. Louis. This was a narrative that many others parroted, and the period from the 1970s has also been described as a “decline” for Modernism.¹⁷⁸ The San Francisco *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)* characterizes the “decline” as tied to economics:

Economics played a significant role in the decline of Modern design. There was an increased disparity from 1935 to 1970 between the cost of architect-designed custom houses and builder-developed houses. This increase was due, in part, to the proliferation of agencies charged with regulating construction, seismic safety, siting, zoning and land-use. As architect-designed houses became cost-prohibitive, the numbers of “Contractor Modern” buildings increased. The cheaper construction costs associated with Modernism’s stripped-down aesthetic resulted in more and uglier buildings despised by the public.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Kazys Varnelis, “Embracing Late Modern,” L.A. Forum, accessed February 13, 2024, <http://laforum.org/article/embracing-late-modern/>.

¹⁷⁵ Charles Jencks, *Architecture Today* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, Publishers, 1988) cited in “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement: Architecture and Engineering/LA Modernism/Late Modern, 1966-1990,” SurveyLA, prepared for City of Los Angeles, Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources (July 2020), 2.

¹⁷⁶ Hannah Simonson, “The ‘70s Turn 50: Divergences in American Architecture,” Docomomo US, August 17, 2020, accessed online January 28, 2024, <https://www.docomomo-us.org/news/the-70s-turn-50-divergences-in-american-architecture>.

¹⁷⁷ Drexler, *Transformations in Modern Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, distributed by New York Graphic Society, 1979); and Charles Jencks, *Late-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

¹⁷⁸ Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 9. There is plenty to be said about a misreading of the symbolism of the demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe complex as the death of Modernism, which fails to recognize the socioeconomic context and systemic racism in American public housing, which is documented in the documentary, *The Pruitt-Igoe Myth* (2011).

¹⁷⁹ San Francisco *Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 144.

Undeniably, economics, environmentalism, historic preservation, new regulations and urban planning guidelines, and valid critiques of urban planning and redevelopment played a role in reshaping architecture nationally and locally in the late twentieth century. However, even Jencks, the champion of Postmodernism, observed that the designation of “late” Modernism—although it is linked to a notion of late capitalism and post-industrial culture in Western society, as later theorized by Frederic Jameson—need not be a pejorative term. He argued that it signaled an evolution of Modernism toward a “Mannerist” or “Baroque” elaboration characterized by more complex and exaggerated form and materials.¹⁸⁰ Whether some argue that there was a general decline in architectural quality or in the majority of new buildings during the period is partly a matter of subjective taste, and with every era there are still exceptional examples of architectural design that have aesthetic, cultural, and historical value.

Indeed, Late Modernism includes several important styles, schools, and approaches that are uniquely characteristic of the late twentieth century—building on many of the tenets of Modernism but breaking out of the proverbial Modernist box. Some architects pushed the modern aesthetic to new extremes via advancements in structural and material technologies in the modes of Brutalism, High-Tech Structuralism and Expressionism, and others transformed the glass-and-steel of Miesian design into a more taut glass skin with mirrored and slick-tech approach. Others experimented with sculptural and modular forms in Expressionist and Metabolist modes, whereas some turned to vernacular precedents and local and organic presents as in the regional Third Bay Tradition and radical eco or hippie Modernism. Still others drew inspiration for historic architectural examples, particularly Classicism, as seen in New Formalism and Neo-Rationalism.

Precedents for a shift towards Late Modernism are located in the late works of Le Corbusier (particularly Notre-Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, France) and Louis Kahn’s monumental and primordial geometries, and practitioners of Late Modernism in San Francisco included many architects trained and practiced with in the Modern Movement, including the likes of Welton Becket, John Carl Warnecke, William Pereira, and SOM, who spent a later phase of their careers experimenting with new forms, and as well as trained Modernists that eventually rejected or moved away from orthodox Modernism to dabble in Postmodernism, such as Philip Johnson. While, as discussed, other idioms of Late Modernism exist nationally and internationally, this historic context statement focuses on the expressions of Late Modernism that are found in San Francisco in the late twentieth century. Corporate Late Modernism, Brutalism, New Formalism, and the Third Bay Tradition are further addressed as Sub-Themes in this document, as they have distinctive and recognizable qualities or typologies that have enough extant examples in San Francisco to warrant separate discussion and evaluation frameworks.

Commercial Late Modernism

Late Modernism, like earlier forms of Modernism, was very popular for commercial property types including retail commercial buildings, mixed-use buildings, banks, and offices. Corporate Late Modernism, which is the particular expression of commercial Late Modernism in downtown high-rise office and hotels, is discussed as a separate sub-theme, as the features and materials associated with the high-rise typology are quite distinctive; refer to **Sub-Theme: Corporate Late Modernism** in this document. Commercial examples of Late Modernism range from the conservative—such as Opera Plaza (601 Van Ness Avenue, 1982, Jorge de Quesada, John Carl Warnecke, Anthony Guzzardo)—to the surprising and highly expressive—such as 145 Natoma Street (1970, Thomas Lile) ([Fig. 71](#) and [Fig. 72](#)). Common amongst commercial examples of Late Modernism is a more

¹⁸⁰ Charles Jencks, *The New Moderns: From Late- to Neo-Modernism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 17, 245; City of Los Angeles, “Architecture and Engineering/LA Modernism/Late Modern, 1966-1990,” SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement (July 2020), 35, accessed online, February 13, 2024, https://planning.lacity.gov/odocument/de23aa2c-7d44-4f2d-a071-67354bbf9255/6.13_LateModern_1966-1990.pdf; and Frederic Jameson, “Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” *New Left Review* 146 (July/August 1984), accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://newleftreview.org/issues/i146/articles/fredric-jameson-postmodernism-or-the-cultural-logic-of-late-capitalism>.

massive and heavy visual quality when compared to earlier examples of Modernism. Brick is more common than in earlier Modernism in San Francisco, and concrete and/or aggregate panel cladding are also more common. Whereas Corporate Late Modernism is concentrated downtown, other examples of commercial Late Modernism are found throughout neighborhood commercial corridors. Commercial buildings and mixed-use complexes along Van Ness Avenue and in redevelopment areas, including the Western Addition, Yerba Buena Center, and Rincon Point-South Beach, utilize Late Modernist design.



Fig. 71. Opera Plaza (601 Van Ness Avenue, 1982, Jorge de Quesada, John Carl Warnecke, Anthony Guzzardo) illustrates a more conservative side of commercial Late Modernism. The mixed-use complex features retail, office, and residential components, with a central courtyard. The multi-level courtyard plaza appears to have taken cues from Embarcadero Center. The material selection and detailing, particularly at the upper levels, lacks distinction.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

While Late Modernist architecture generally eschews applied ornamentation and overt historicist references, which might be found in Postmodernism, some examples of commercial Late Modernism have contextual features or materials, since by the late twentieth century urban planning principles were directing architects to respond more to the existing built environment. Levi's Plaza (1105 Battery Street, 1981, HOK, Arthur Gensler, and Lawrence Halprin) in particular is a notable example of a more contextual approach to scale and design in commercial Late Modernism, which was influenced by the conversations around adaptive reuse, urban design, and anti-high-rise sentiments in the 1970s (**Fig. 73**). Levi's decided to move their headquarters out of the Embarcadero Center and into what is arguably the only corporate office park in San Francisco—a typology much more associated with the suburbs—with a generously scaled plaza and park surrounded by mid-rise brick buildings nestled into the foot of Telegraph Hill and comfortably situated amongst historic brick warehouses.¹⁸¹



Fig. 72. 145 Natoma Street (1970, Thomas Lile) is tucked away in an alley in SoMa behind SFMOMA and is surprising in its contrasting use of brick curved details at the balconies.

(Source: Jack McCarthy, Docomomo US/Northern California, 2020.)

¹⁸¹ San Francisco Chronicle architecture critic Allan Temko, who notably disliked high-rises such as the Transamerica Pyramid and Embarcadero Center, went as far as saying that Levi's Plaza was "not only a magnificent gift of public space to the city, twice as large as Union Square, but also the most eloquent alternative yet offered to the soul-destroying Manhattanization that afflicts virtually every major U.S. metropolis" and that it was "one of Halprin's most remarkable jobs." Allan Temko, "Well-Tailored Plan From Levi Strauss," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 14, 1978.



Fig. 73. Levi's Plaza (1105 Battery Street, 1981) was a collaborative design of Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK, architect), Gensler (interior architect), and Lawrence Halprin (landscape architect). The lobby atrium exhibits features of High Tech-Structuralism while the remainder of the complex is highly contextual Late Modernism.

(Source: HOK. Peter Aaron, photographer.)

Contextual features are also found in Late Modernist buildings in Japantown, where areas of the commercial core were constructed as part of the Western Addition redevelopment project area. Following backlash to the earlier stages of the Western Addition redevelopment project, later phases had more community input and moved away from the tower-in-a-park and superblock typologies of Modernism toward more neighborhood scale projects. Commercial retail buildings, particularly at the Buchanan Pedestrian Mall between Post and Sutter streets, reflect a hybrid of Modernist forms—including highly geometric massing and shed roofs—and Japanese features such as tiled roofs, exposed rafter tails, and the appearance of exposed post-and-beam construction (Fig. 74). Many of these retail buildings in Japantown draw on historical precedents in Japanese residential and religious architecture, which had also previously been a strong source of inspiration for Modernist architects, particularly in Midcentury Modern residences. There are also examples in Chinatown where Chinese architectural motifs have been incorporated in Late Modernist and Brutalist buildings, such as the China Trade Center (838 Grant Avenue, 1966, Chan/Radar Associates and Michael Cabak), Hilton Hotel (750 Kearny Street, 1971, Clement Chen with T.Y. Lin, Chen-chi Kwan, and John Carl Warnecke), and Mandarin Tower (946 Stockton St, 1972, Thomas Hsieh).

For additional context and evaluation criteria for architecture in Japantown and Chinatown, refer to (respectively): *Japantown Cultural Heritage Economic Sustainability Strategy* (JCHESS, adopted 2013) and *Chinese American Citywide Historic Context Statement* (in progress).¹⁸²

¹⁸² A *Japantown Historic Context Statement* (Donna Graves and Page & Turnbull, 2011) was prepared as part of the Better Neighborhoods Plan effort, but was not formally adopted.



Fig. 74. Soko Hardware (1698 Post Street, 1979, Van Bourg, Nakamura, Katsura, Karney Inc.), photographed c.1980s, has the formal qualities of Late Modernist and Third Bay Tradition architecture, with tile roof features that reference historical Japanese architecture.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 – Redevelopment Agency Collection.)

Residential Late Modernism

By the late twentieth century, available single-family residential lots were quite rare. The majority of residential construction in this period was multi-family apartment and condo buildings, or mixed-use complexes. In the 1960s, the formal and material tropes of Modernism continued to be utilized in residential architecture, and the transition from Modernism and Midcentury Modernism to Late Modernism in residential architecture exists on a spectrum during this decade (**Fig. 75**). During the 1960s and 1970s, the Third Bay Tradition was a particularly popular style for residential architecture. Single-family residential examples of Late Modernist architecture—as an expression distinct from Midcentury Modernism, the Bay Traditions, or Postmodernism—are particularly rare (**Fig. 76** and **Fig. 77**).



Fig. 75. 2351 Filbert Street (1969) by Robert H. Chan. This apartment building continues to utilize the tropes of Modernism, including International Style and Midcentury Modern design, that had been used in previous decades.

(Source: Joshua Freiwald, photographer, in “Nine family-size apartments get built-in privacy on a tight urban site,” *House & Home* 41, no. 3 (March 1972), 40.)



Fig. 76. Joseph & Stephanie Koret Residence (711 El Camino Del Mar, 1974) by Beverly Willis is a rare example of Late Modernist single-family residence.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 77. 124 24th Avenue (1970, extant) by Bruce E. Heiser, photographed while under construction, illustrates how Modernist residential design continued to evolve in increasingly rare expressions of single-family residential architecture in San Francisco.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFP 24 – James A. Scott Collection.)



Fig. 78. 2190 Washington Street (1961, Harada & Meu), built in the early 1960s, exhibits expansive full-height glazing, thin floorplates, and projecting balconies, which are associated with Midcentury Modern style.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 79. John F. Kennedy Towers (2451 Sacramento Street, 1964, John Savage Bolles) reflects the transitional nature of the 1960s decade with elements of both Midcentury Modernism and Late Modernism.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

In the 1960s, mid-scale and large-scale multi-family residences exhibited a transition from Midcentury Modernism. Such early 1960s apartment buildings often featured expansive or full-height glazing, thin (legible) floorplates, cantilevered eaves and/or balconies, vaulted or folded plate entry canopies, material features such as rock, brick, or breeze block accents at the ground level; examples include 2190 Washington Street (1961,

Harada & Meu), Comstock Apartments (1333 Jones Street, 1961, Hammarberg & Herman), Fontana Towers (1000-1050 North Point Street, 1963-65, Hammarberg & Herman), and 1998 Broadway (1964, John Sardis & Associates) (**Fig. 78**). Some buildings may reflect the transitional nature of the decade of the 1960s and exhibit some features of both Midcentury Modernism and Late Modernism, such as John F. Kennedy Towers (2451 Sacramento Street, 1964, John Savage Bolles) and Summit Tower (999 Green Street, 1963, Eichler Homes, Inc.) (**Fig. 79**). By the late 1960s, these multi-family residences begin to take on more qualities of Late Modernism, including heavier massing, smaller or recessed windows in highly regular patterns (higher ratio of wall to windows than in Midcentury Modern buildings), and more exposed concrete material; examples include 990 Pacific Avenue (1969, John Savage Bolles), The Sequoias (1400 Geary Boulevard, 1969, Stone, Marraccini & Patterson), Grosvenor Court (2055 Sacramento Street, 1975, Leo S. Wou & Associates with engineers T.Y. Lin, Kulka, Yang & Associates) (**Fig. 80** and **Fig. 81**). Refer also to the *Large Apartment Buildings (1900-1978) Historic Context Statement* (in progress).



Fig. 80. The Sequoias (1400 Geary Boulevard, 1969, Stone, Marraccini & Patterson), built in the late 1960s, exhibits Late Modern features including the bush-hammered concrete service core and highly regular pattern of smaller windows.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 81. 990 Pacific Avenue (1969, John Savage Bolles) is a residential building constructed in the late 1960s that exhibits the Late Modernist style through its heavy massing, exposed concrete, and highly regular pattern of recessed windows.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

By the 1970s, Modernist multi-family residential architecture had a more distinct expression than previous decades of Modernist design. While stucco and wood siding remained common in Late Modernist residential architecture, characteristic features that emerged during this period in mid-scale (two- to four-story) multi-family residential architecture included the shed roof framed at the sides by projecting parapets. The Western Addition A-2 and Bayview Hunters Point redevelopment project areas include concentrations of Late Modernist residential complexes. In the Western Addition, these tend to be three- to four-story full-block complexes with central courtyards and limited regional Modernist features such as wood shingles or wood details. Due to the hilly topography of Bayview and Hunters Point, the complexes include typically two- to three-story buildings clustered along curvilinear streets (**Fig. 82**). Refer also to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Historic Context Statement* (in progress).



Fig. 82. Late Modernist style Jackie Robinson Garden Apartments (1340 Hudson Avenue, 1971) by African American architects Kennard & Silvers in the Bayview Hunters Point redevelopment project area.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 – Redevelopment Agency Collection.)

Institutional Late Modernism & Infrastructure

The distinct heaviness of material and form of Late Modernism is evident in institutional buildings and infrastructure, which include educational and medical complexes, religious institutions, community centers, fire stations, and BART stations. Monumental geometric form and massing are often combined with substantial construction materials such as concrete and brick, with fewer or more deeply recessed windows than earlier expressions of Modernism, and a distinctive interplay between the planes and volumes (**Fig. 83** and **Fig. 84**).



Fig. 83. The shift to heavier form and material in Late Modernism is evident in the Little Sisters of the Poor complex (300 Lake Street, 1982) by Anshen & Allen. The firm is responsible for the iconic Modernist style International Building (601 California Street, 1960) and tract homes for Eichler Homes, characterized by light and glass, whereas this complex is almost bunker-like.

(Source: AAC-9995, SFPL, History Center, San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection.)

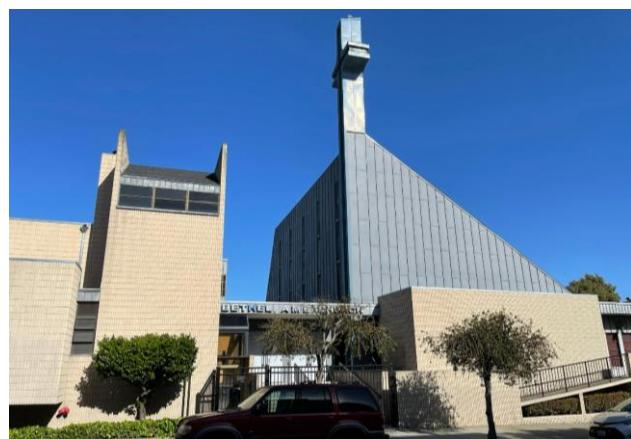


Fig. 84. Bethel A.M.E. Church (916 Laguna Street, 1973, architect unknown) expresses late Modernism in its geometric interplay of sculptural forms and vertical planes. The building is clad in gridded concrete and metal panels.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Religious buildings tend toward more **Expressionist** modes of Late Modernism, characterized by soaring or swooping monumental forms. The sculptural treatment of architecture in America is particularly associated with architect Eero Saarinen. Local San Francisco examples were built primarily in the 1960s and include Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption (1111 Gough Street, 1967-71), other religious buildings, and the 16th and 24th Street Mission BART stations (**Fig. 85** and **Fig. 89**). For more on Expressionism, refer to the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*.



Fig. 85. The 16th and 24th Street Mission BART stations (1970, Hertzka & Knowles) have an expressionist concrete vaulted hall with brick and colored tile surfaces.

(Source: Jack McCarthy, Docomomo US/Northern California.).

High-Tech architecture (or High-Tech Structuralism or Structural Expressionism) emerged in the 1970s as an expression of Late Modernism that uses technology, high-tech materials, and systems as the driver of design and seeks to make these features and systems highly visible. The approach was pioneered in Britain by architects such as Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, and others contributed significantly to the style, including Renzo Piano and Santiago Calatrava. The use of space frames, tensile roofs, and cable structures, and futuristic-looking technology also captured the imagination of the public at Expo '70 in Osaka.¹⁸³ Notable space frame buildings that were built soon after in the Bay Area include the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (1972, Branca, De Brer, Heglund) and Concord Pavilion (1975, Frank O. Gehry, Peter Walker).¹⁸⁴ The fullest expression of High-Tech architecture built in San Francisco was the Moscone Convention Center (originally known as the Yerba Buena Convention Center), which demonstrates the possibilities of long-span bridge technology applied to building design (**Fig. 86**). Completed in 1982, the Moscone Convention Center was designed by the renowned structural engineer T.Y. Lin, and featured a 250,000-square-foot, column-free underground exhibit hall; in 2019, an expansion of the convention center, including a new three-story building, was completed by SOM with Mark Cavagnero Associates, which retained structural elements of the original building but has completely transformed the look and design.¹⁸⁵ Although full expressions of High-Tech Structuralism are rare within San Francisco, architects utilized some of the principles of structural expression to create dynamic works of Late Modernist architecture that clearly articulate their structural systems and use structure as a kind of sculptural expression (**Fig. 87** and **Fig. 88**).

¹⁸³ "Expo 1970 Osaka: the story of Japan's first World Expo," Bureau International des Expositions, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/blog/entry/expo-1970-osaka-the-story-of-japan-s-first-world-expo>.

¹⁸⁴ "Mapping the '70s Turn 50," Docomomo US/Northern California, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.docomomo-noca.org/70s-turn-50-noca-map>.

¹⁸⁵ T.Y. Lin, ""The Father of Prestressed Concrete": Teaching Engineers, Bridging Rivers and Borders, 1931 to 1999," Eleanor Swent, 1999, Oral History Center, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt4w1003s9&query=&brand=oac4>; and "Moscone Center Expansion," SOM, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.som.com/projects/moscone-center-expansion/>.



Fig. 86. Moscone Convention Center (1982, 747 Howard Street) designed by structural engineer T.Y. Lin was arguably the fullest expression of High-Tech Structuralism in San Francisco. Photographed in 1982, the year of completion. The arched steel interiors were developed based on bridge technology, allowing for a massive column-free, clear-span convention hall. The building was remodeled in 2019 with a three-story addition.

(Source: AAC-0725, SFPL, History Center, San Francisco Subjects Photograph Collection.)



Fig. 87. Ambulatory Care Center & Parking Garage at UCSF Parnassus Campus (400 Parnassus Avenue, 1972) by Reid, Rockwell, Banwell & Tarics has a highly expressive structure in the form of cantilevered concrete waffle-slab floorplates and roof. The attached garage down the hill also has a dramatically articulated concrete ramp design.

(Source: University of California San Francisco (UCSF), 1974.)



Fig. 88. Thelma B. Doelger Primate Discovery Center at the San Francisco Zoo (2901 Sloat Avenue, 1985) by Robert Marquis and Cathy Simon is a highly expressed steel frame structure.¹⁸⁶

(Source: “Our History,” San Francisco Zoo & Gardens, accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfzoo.org/our-history-1950s-the-zoological-society/>.)

¹⁸⁶ James Shay, *New Architecture San Francisco* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989), 112-3.

Late Modernism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	<p>Late Modernism is a broad umbrella term that encompasses a variety of expressions of Modernist architecture during a period beginning in the 1960s that saw many divergences within and reactions to the orthodoxy of the Modern Movement. The perceived uniformity and repetitiveness of the International Style and Miesian architecture, and a sense that Modernism had become mundane in its more banal and corporate expressions, caused architects to explore new forms—often characterized by an exaggeration of scale, material, structure, or repetition. As Late Modernism is characterized by varied forms and sub-genres, it can be difficult to define with generalizations. Typically, Late Modern commercial, institutional, and infrastructure buildings are monumental in scale; have sculptural qualities, including strong linear elements, pronounced structural components, or an interplay of planes or geometric volumes, as well as a visual weight to their form and materials. Residential Late Modernism tends to be more contextual and an extension of earlier Modernist modes. Some of the most iconic buildings in San Francisco are Late Modernist, or belong to a sub-theme of Late Modernism. Late Modernism is also influenced by local and regional concerns with environmentalism, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, and new urban planning principles.</p> <p>Significant examples of Late Modernist architecture typically display a distinctive expression of this era or express the transitional evolution of Modernism, drawing from the character-defining features outlined below. Significant examples of Late Modernist architecture include a range of property types and will likely be a particularly notable example of the work of an Architect of Merit or prominent firm. Properties expressing the particular characteristics of Corporate Late Modern high-rises, Brutalism, New Formalism, or the Third Bay tradition should be evaluated under their respective sub-theme evaluation frameworks.</p>
Period of Significance:	1960s – 1980s
Justification of Period of Significance:	<p>There is not a clear temporal cutoff that distinguishes Late Modernism from earlier Modernist modes. Rather, the shift occurs during the 1960s, during which a mix of Modernist modes were being constructed in San Francisco, including Midcentury Modern, New Formalism, Brutalism, Third Bay Tradition and Late Modernism. Late Modernism also continued to be utilized in the 1980s even as Postmodernism gained in popularity. By the 1990s, Modernism was reinvigorated in New Modernism and it is rare that any buildings constructed after 1990 would be considered Late Modernist.</p>
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide. Many examples are located in redevelopment project areas, and other examples are scattered throughout the city.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Redevelopment Agency; Large Apartment Buildings; Public Art, Monuments & Murals; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3

Associated Property Type(s):	Public & Private Institutions Municipal & Federal Buildings Planning & Engineering: Transit Infrastructure Multi-Family: Small Apartments Multi-Family: Large Apartments Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Mass Media & Communications: Telephone & Telegraph Buildings
Property Type Description(s):	Residential examples are primarily multi-family apartment and condominium buildings and mixed-use complexes; single-family residences are very rare. Institutional examples include schools and religious buildings, as well as neighborhood municipal buildings like fire stations and community centers. Transportation infrastructure, including some BART stations, are Late Modernist. Many late twentieth century neighborhood commercial buildings and low- to mid-scale office buildings are Late Modernist.

Criterion C/3 Eligibility Standards

A property *may* be considered an eligible resource under Criterion C/3, if it meets the following:

- Constructed during the period of significance (1960s to 1990s) and meets the relevant criterion considerations for properties of the recent past; refer to “Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old” in the **Introduction** of this report.
- Significant examples of Late Modernism that may qualify as eligible historic resources are excellent or distinctive expressions of Late Modernism. Comparative analysis with other contemporaneous examples of Late Modernism is important to understanding whether the property may rise to a level of significance for eligibility under Criterion C/3.
 - Quality or significance may be demonstrated (but is not guaranteed) through publication in architectural journals of record, design awards, subsequent architectural monographs or books, and/or association with an Architect or Builder of Merit, or a prominent architectural firm.
 - Late Modernist buildings include a range of sub-themes or related styles, including **Corporate Late Modernism, Brutalism, New Formalism, and the Third Bay Tradition**. These properties should be evaluated using the relevant evaluation criteria in this document, or as referenced in other historic context statements.
- Must retain character-defining features and have high levels of integrity, particularly integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Rarity of an extant property type in the Late Modernist style may be a consideration in determining eligibility.
- Properties that include an original, associated public artwork and/or designed landscape, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape and/or public art should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features.
 - The presence of extant supergraphics (whether designed by the building architect or another artist) may be considered a character-defining feature of a Late Modernist property, or may have significance as a work of design in their own right. Extant environmental-scale supergraphics from the late twentieth century appear to be rare in San Francisco.
 - In some cases, a public artwork and/or designed landscape may also rise to a level of individual significance. Refer also to the evaluative frameworks in following historic context statements: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* (in progress) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned).

- Other considerations:
 - Properties designed or constructed by an Architect or Builder of Merit, particularly if the resource is a rare or exceptional example of the architect or builder's work in San Francisco, should be considered. Refer to the Evaluative Framework in *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* for further information.
 - Examples of adaptive reuse may include Late Modernist additions or alterations, which may be considered for eligibility under Criterion C/3 as examples of Late Modernism. Eligible properties would include distinctive, full examples of Late Modernist design that are clearly visible and expressed at the exterior or within the public realm; in other words, an interior remodel of an existing building for an adaptive reuse project is unlikely to be eligible under Criterion C/3 for association with the theme of Late Modernism.
 - A property may also qualify under Criterion C/3 as a contributor to a historic district if it is situated within a geographically cohesive grouping of buildings related by design or by an architect or developer. In order to meet local, state, and/or national registration requirements as a district, a majority of contributing properties would need to retain most of their character-defining features. Generally, contributors to a historic district need not meet as high a threshold for integrity as individual buildings; however, at this time, a high degree of integrity would be expected for Late Modernist buildings if part of an eligible historic district as not much time has passed since their original construction. To qualify as a historic district under Criterion C/3, the grouping should possess distinctive and unique architectural characteristics, rather than simply be a group of typical Late Modernist buildings.

Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of Late Modernist architecture significant under Criterion C/3 are those elements that represent its significant design qualities relative to its date of construction. While Late Modernist architecture has a particular approach to form and materials, it is not a strict “style” like more traditional styles or period revivals that have an identifiable set of common features and materials that were codified through architectural education and training, pattern books, and catalogs. As such, a list of characteristic features associated with Late Modernism should not be understood or treated as finite.¹⁸⁷ The following are features that can be characteristic of significant Late Modernist architecture:

- Massing and materials are often visually heavier than earlier Modernism.
- Strong geometric or sculptural forms, including repeating modules or an interplay of planes and volumes, are typical of the massing.
- Flat roofs are common, but other roof forms, including shed, parabolic, and flat-on-hipped, may be used.
 - Shed roof forms framed by projecting stucco side parapets are distinctive of Late Modernism.
- Concrete, brick, metal, and concrete or synthetic panels are more common materials for commercial and institutional examples, whereas stucco, wood, and concrete are typical of residential examples.
- Structure or structural components may be pronounced.
- Expressionist and sculptural form, including cantilevered or parabolic roofs, are most closely associated with religious architecture.

¹⁸⁷ The same is true for other Late Modernist and Postmodernist styles which have a wide, and sometimes divergent, range of expressions especially across property types.

Integrity Considerations

A property eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain the majority of its aspects of integrity dating to the period when the significant design was completed, with an emphasis of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The building's significant design qualities should remain readily apparent, and the majority of original features and materials that convey the significant design should remain extant. Due to the fact that many Late Modernist properties are still considered part of the "recent past" and relatively little time has passed since their construction, properties eligible under Criterion C/3 are expected to retain a high degree of integrity of design and materials. Still, minor changes such as installation of security gates or replacement garage doors or in-kind window replacements are unlikely to affect overall integrity, unless other minor changes accumulate to result in a loss of integrity of design or materials. Integrity of location is expected for individually eligible Late Modernist properties. In an urban environment such as San Francisco, it is expected that the broad setting and nearby properties will change over time; changes to the area surrounding a property are generally unlikely to be a factor in evaluating late twentieth century properties under Criterion C/3.



Fig. 89. Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption (1111 Gough Street, 1967-71, Pier Luigi Nervi, Pietro Belluschi, John Michael Lee, Paul A. Ryan, and Angus McSweeney) is one of the most iconic buildings in San Francisco and is an excellent example of the Expressionist mode of Late Modernism. The building appears to be eligible under Criterion C/3. The plaza and main interior space, including features such as the parabolic concrete piers, organ, ceiling, and stained glass, are also significant.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 90. Christ United Presbyterian Church (1700 Sutter Street, 1975, Wayne Osaki) is a more modest expression of Late Modernist architecture, which wood shingles and shed-roofed clerestory windows. This church does not rise to the level of individual significance under Criterion C/3 as an example of Late Modernist architecture. Additional research on architect Osaki is required.

(Source: Google Maps, 2023.)



Fig. 91. Levi's Plaza (1105 Battery Street, 1981, HOK, Arthur Gensler, and Lawrence Halprin), inclusive of the office building and designed landscape, is one of the most significant examples of Late Modernist landscape design in San Francisco. The complex responds to the context of the surrounding neighborhood of historic brick warehouses, while expressing a highly geometric and repeating Modernist form. The property was very popular with both occupants and the public, and was widely published as an example of contextual Modernism and urbanism, the possibilities of adaptive reuse, and exceptional landscape design. Few major alterations have been made to either the building or the landscape (including both the 'Hard Park' plaza or the 'Soft Park'). Painted supergraphics added to the brick building cladding c. 2023 are not compatible with the original design or brick material but do not significantly impact integrity of design or materials. However, the Levi's Plaza complex is eligible under California Register Criterion 3 and appears likely to meet the "exceptional significance" threshold (Criterion G) for significance under National Register Criterion C. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 92. The office buildings at 75 Hawthorne Plaza (left photo, foreground) and 680 Folsom Street (left photo, background) are both examples of Late Modernist architecture; the architect of 75 Hawthorne Plaza is unknown and 680 Folsom Street was designed by John Carl Warnecke & Associates. Both buildings have since been altered (right photo). 680 Folsom Street was completely reskinned in a glass curtain wall in 2013, and 75 Hawthorne Plaza has been altered with additional window openings and replacement windows. While both had some typical characteristics of Late Modernism, neither building was an exceptional example of Late Modernism as originally designed, and as such would not likely meet the significance thresholds for individual eligibility under Criterion C/3. Furthermore, both buildings now lack historic integrity as their Late Modernist features have either been completely removed, as in the case of 680 Folsom Street, or substantially altered, as in the case of 75 Hawthorne Plaza. While in-kind replacement windows may not impact overall integrity, changing the size and position of window openings and replacing windows with new window types has a significant impact on the overall design of a Late Modernist façade such as 75 Hawthorne Plaza. (Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 (left). Google Maps, 2023 (right).)

Sub-Theme: Corporate Late Modernism (late 1960s-early 1980s)

Corporate Late Modernism is a sub-theme of the Late Modernist architecture theme. Corporate Late Modernism is an evolution of corporate Modernist architecture that begins in the 1960s in downtown San Francisco. By the 1960s, many of the first generation of European Modernists had died or retired, and the first generation of San Francisco Modernists were reaching a late period of their own careers. Modernism was evolving away from the pure minimalism and functionalism of the International Style and Miesian precedents and beginning to diverge into new directions. By the 1970s, critics such as Charles Jencks were declaring the “death of Modernism,” which became a popular refrain for practitioners and supporters of architectural Postmodernism. It is through this lens that the period of the late 1960s through the 1970s has also been described as a “decline” of Modernism.¹⁸⁸ However, as previously noted, rather than describing this period as a decline from “high” or “orthodox” Modernism, the Late Modernist period can also be seen as an evolution of Modernism.



Fig. 93. The Transamerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street) was completed in 1972 and is one of the most significant examples of Corporate Late Modernism in San Francisco. It has previously been determined to be an individually eligible historic resource. The building was designed by William Pereira & Associates with Gin Wong serving as project architect. While the building has a unique shape, it expresses common Corporate Late Modernist features in its highly repetitive fenestration, precast panel cladding, and corporate plaza. The building is currently undergoing renovation to the lobby, plaza, and lower interior levels.

(Source: Wayne Thom, photographer, 1972.)

While there are distinctive and notable examples of Corporate Late Modernism, factors ranging from the 1970s energy crisis and stagflation to technological changes and increases in construction costs, the economic incentives for corporate developers pushed the average high-rise design toward cheaper materials, standardized designs, and less experimentation. In other words, one might be able to point to a lower average quality in Corporate Late Modernist design compared to mid-century Corporate Modernism, but there are still dynamic and interesting explorations in the late twentieth century, including some of the city’s most iconic downtown high-rises—among them, Bank of America World Headquarters (555 California Street, 1967-9), Transamerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street, 1972), and Embarcadero Center (1-5 Embarcadero Center, 1971-1981). During the late 1960s and 1970s, downtown office and hotel high-rises became noticeably larger than those that had been constructed in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the rapid rate of downtown development raised concerns amongst some sectors of the San Francisco public. Fears over the “Manhattanization” of the city’s skyline led to anti-high-rise protests and campaigns, as discussed in greater detail in the **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** section of this document. Of course, the Transamerica Pyramid, which was a major touchstone

¹⁸⁸ Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 143-4.

of the anti-high-rise protests, is now an iconic and beloved feature of the San Francisco skyline, although the public sentiment toward other late twentieth century high-rises is more ambivalent ([Fig. 93](#)).¹⁸⁹

Among the primary distinctive characteristics of Corporate Late Modernism is exaggeration—often achieved through repeating fenestration and cladding patterns. Jencks has described Late Modernism as taking “the ideas and forms of the Modern Movement to an extreme, exaggerating the structure and technological image of the building in its attempt to provide amusement, or aesthetic pleasure” ([Fig. 94](#)).¹⁹⁰ In part a reaction to the proliferation of Miesian style high-rises—many of which did not stand up to the rigor and quality of Mies—as well as practical concerns such as material cost, building efficiency, and the desire to maximize site development potential, Corporate Late Modernist high-rises in San Francisco also have a much more massive and heavy visual quality to them when compared with earlier steel and glass Modernist towers like Crown Zellerbach Headquarters. The visual weight of the buildings is often created both by the sheer size of the buildings, as well as the visual dominance of repeating cladding panels—often precast concrete, cast stone, or granite. Many Corporate Late Modernist high-rises also utilized smaller windows, often due to cost and efficiency concerns, which could be disguised with dark or reflective glass.



Fig. 94. The visual massiveness of the Bank of America Headquarters (555 California Street, 1969) is due in part to its siting on a hill, as well as its sheer bulk and dark, polished granite cladding. Here the exaggerated repetition of triangular bay forms and the lack of window articulation (the dark glass is nearly the same color as the granite cladding) create the “aesthetic pleasure” described by Jencks. A notable example of Corporate Late Modernism, the building was a collaborative design by Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill; and Pietro Belluschi (pictured left) with a plaza design by Lawrence Halprin and featuring the artwork *Transcendence* (1973) by Masayuki Nagare (pictured right).

(Source: Joshua Freiwald, photographer, in John Pastier, “Evaluation: Brooding, Outsize Tower,” *AIA Journal* (August 1980), 49-55.)

¹⁸⁹ Paul Goldberger, “The Transamerica Building: What Was All the Fuss About?” *The New York Times*, March 2, 1977.

¹⁹⁰ Charles Jencks, *Late-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 6.

San Francisco does not have many full expressions of the “slick tech” look of mirrored glass that was popular in places like Southern California and Texas, including in more suburban office centers.¹⁹¹ The “glass skin” effect is perhaps most fully expressed in 101 California Street (1982, Johnson & Burgee with Eli Attia, project architect) (**Fig. 95**). 425 California Street (1968, John Carl Warnecke) and 211 Main Street (1973, Corwin Booth) both have dark, reflective glass skins (**Fig. 96**).¹⁹²



Fig. 95. The mirror glass skin of the 101 California Street (1982, Johnson & Burgee with Eli Attia, project architect) is Late Modernist, but the base is more Postmodernist.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 96. Dark, reflective glass is used in this Corporate Late Modernist building at 425 California Street (1968) by John Carl Warnecke & Associates.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Corporate Late Modernism extends to about the mid-1980s in San Francisco, generally predating the adoption of the 1985 Downtown Plan and codification of public art and privately owned public open space (POPOS) requirements. However, the precedent for inclusion of corporate plazas and public art was established in this earlier period, with these features being included whether voluntarily or as means of negotiating density bonuses; A.P. Giannini Plaza (555 California Street, 1969, Lawrence Halprin), Transamerica Redwood Park (600 Montgomery Street, 1974, Anthony Guzzardo), and Embarcadero Center (approximately \$5 million public art program with various artists and extensive public plaza network) are notable pre-Downtown Plan examples. Refer to **The Public Realm: Cultural Institutions, Waterfront, POPOS & Public Art** sub-section of **Historic Context:**

¹⁹¹ Jencks, *Late-Modern Architecture*, 8.

¹⁹² City of Los Angeles, “Architecture and Engineering/LA Modernism/Late Modern, 1966-1990,” SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement (July 2020); Ouida Angelica Biddle, “A Short History of the Mirrored Glass Façade,” *PIN-UP* 17 (Fall/Winter 2014), accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://archive.pinupmagazine.org/articles/panorama-a-short-history-of-the-mirrored-glass-facade-buildings-ouida-biddle>.

San Francisco in the Late 20th Century in this document for additional information about POPOS and public art, as well as **Historic Context: Late Twentieth Century Landscape Architecture**.¹⁹³

Due to the scale of the commissions, Corporate Late Modernist buildings tend to be by larger, established firms. Practitioners associated with Corporate Late Modernism include, but are not limited to (alphabetical): Welton Becket & Associates; Corwin Booth; Gin Wong & Associates; Hertzka & Knowles; William L. Pereira & Associates; John Portman & Associates; Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM); and John Carl Warnecke & Associates ([Fig. 97](#) - [Fig. 100](#)). In particular, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill turned out San Francisco high-rises at a prolific rate, designing at least 15 major office and hotel projects constructed between 1969 and 1980 before their practice shifted into the newly popular Postmodern mode.¹⁹⁴

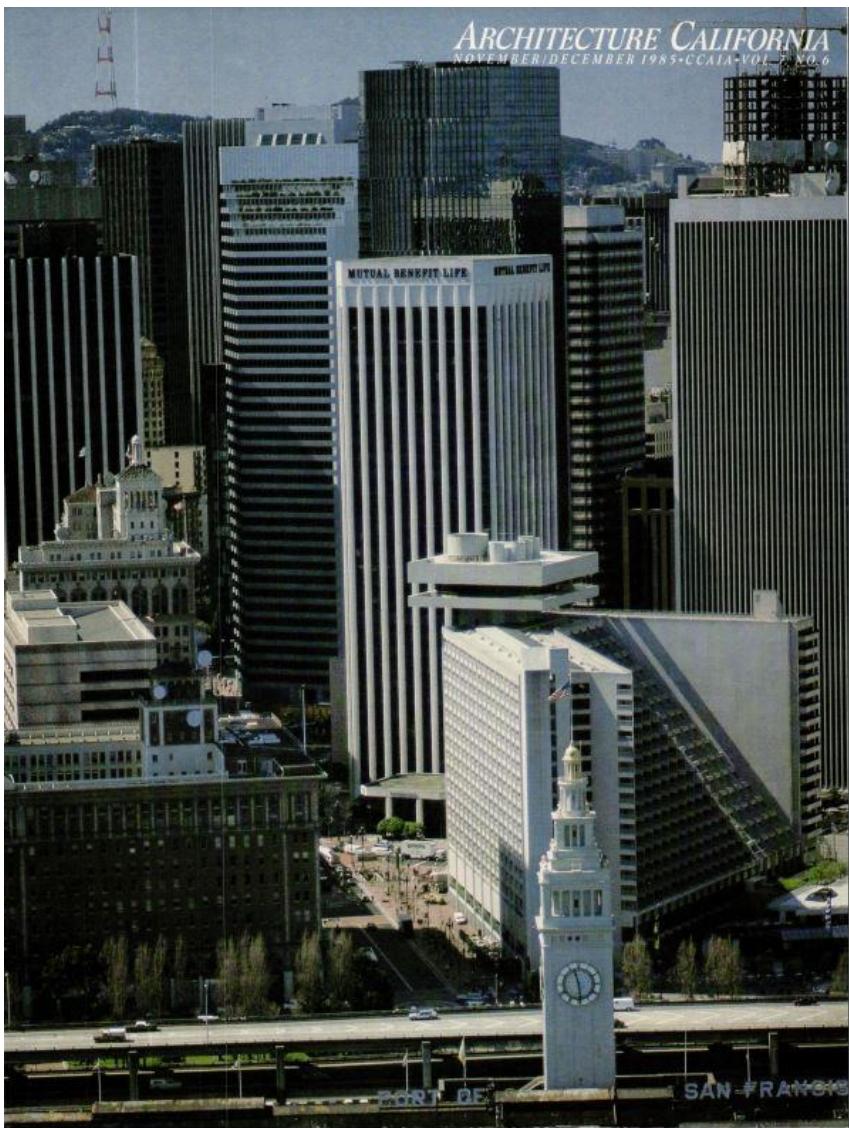


Fig. 97. San Francisco downtown skyline on a 1985 cover of *Architecture California*, depicting a cluster of Corporate Late Modernist buildings looking west from the Ferry Building, including: Hyatt Regency Hotel (1973, John Portman), Mutual Benefit Life (One California Street, 1969, Welton Becket & Associates); 50 California Street (1972, Welton Becket & Associates); 333 Market Street (1980, Gin Wong & Associates); Shaklee Terrace (One Front Street, 1980, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill); 101 California Street (1980, Johnson & Burgee); and Pacific Insurance Co. Building (100 Pine Street, 1972, Hertzka & Knowles).

(Source: *Architecture California* 7, no. 6 (November/December 1985), cover.)

¹⁹³ Additional sources include: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals Historic Context Statement* (in progress); and Page & Turnbull, *San Francisco Redevelopment Public Artwork Inventory Findings Report* (prepared for San Francisco Arts Commission, January 2024).

¹⁹⁴ "CCAIA Firm Award: Skidmore, Owings & Merrill San Francisco," *Architecture California* (September/October 1988): 15-34.



Fig. 98. The massive base of the Beal Bank Building (148 Sansome Street, 1965, Hertzka & Knowles) is notable in this transitional example of Corporate Late Modernism.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Fig. 99. Grand Hyatt Union Square (345 Stockton Street, 1972, SOM) was highly praised in *Splendid Survivors* for its Modernist design and has a sculptural fountain by Ruth Asawa.¹⁹⁵

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Fig. 100. Embarcadero Center (1971-1981) by John Portman & Associates includes an extensive public art collection and network of plazas and pedestrian bridges.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

¹⁹⁵ “One of the best examples in San Francisco of urban architecture in the Modern idiom.” Michael R. Corbett, Charles Hall Page & Associates, Foundation for San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage, *Splendid Survivors* (San Francisco: California Living Books, 1979), 168.

Corporate Late Modernism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	<p>Corporate Late Modernism evolved in the late 1960s as one response to the orthodoxy of Modernism, particularly the proliferation of Miesian-style high-rises. Among the examples of Corporate Late Modernism in the late twentieth century are some of the most iconic and prominent buildings in San Francisco, designed by internationally renowned architects including Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, William Pereira, John Portman, and others. One of the primary distinguishing characteristics of Corporate Late Modernism in San Francisco is a sense of visual and structural exaggeration—often achieved through repeating fenestration and cladding patterns, or through façade articulation. Corporate Late Modernist high-rises in San Francisco also have a much more massive and heavy visual quality, distinct from orthodox Modernism, and a reflection of late capitalist socioeconomic conditions, including high construction costs, an energy crisis, stagflation, and pressure to maximize development on limited available downtown sites. Although predating codified requirements in the 1985 Downtown Plan, many of the significant examples of Corporate Late Modernism include plazas or public artwork.</p> <p>Significant examples of Corporate Late Modernist architecture typically display a full and distinctive expression of the style, drawing from the character-defining features outlined below. Significant examples of Corporate Late Modernist architecture include office and hotel high-rises and will likely be particularly notable examples of the work of an Architect of Merit or prominent firm. Other Late Modernist architecture associated with smaller scale commercial architecture, including office buildings, retail, etc. should be evaluated under the Theme: Late Modernism framework and evaluation criteria. Due to the relatively recent construction of Corporate Late Modernist buildings, eligible examples are expected to have a high degree of integrity, although some alterations may have occurred to the building lobby or plaza.</p>
Period of Significance:	Late 1960s-Early 1980s
Justification of Period of Significance:	The period of significance from the late 1960s to the early 1980s reflects the years that Corporate Late Modernism was popular in San Francisco. By the late 1960s, corporate office and hotel buildings had shifted from high to late Modernism. By the mid-1980s, Postmodernism was the dominant form of corporate downtown high-rise architecture.
Geographic Boundaries:	Northeast quadrant. Primarily in the Financial District, including south of Market Street, and Downtown/Civic Center around Union Square.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Downtown Core; Redevelopment Agency; Public Art, Monuments & Murals; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3
Associated Property Type(s):	Commercial: Downtown Core Artistic Expression: Public Art, Monuments, & Murals Designed Landscapes
Property Type Description(s):	Commercial high-rise buildings, including office buildings and hotels.

Criterion C/3 Eligibility Standards

A property *may* be considered an eligible resource under Criterion C/3 if it meets the following:

- Constructed during the period of significance (late 1960s to early 1980s) and if relevant, meets criterion considerations for properties of the recent past; refer to “Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old” in the **Introduction** of this report.
- Significant examples of Corporate Late Modernism that may qualify as eligible historic resources will be excellent or distinctive expressions of Corporate Late Modernism. Comparative analysis with other contemporaneous examples of Corporate Late Modernism is important to understanding whether the property may rise to a level of significance for eligibility under Criterion C/3.
- Must retain character-defining features and have high levels of integrity, particularly integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Properties that include an original, associated public artwork and/or designed landscape, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape and/or public art should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features.
 - The presence of extant supergraphics (whether designed by the building architect or another artist) may be considered a character-defining feature of a Corporate Late Modernist property, or may have significance as a work of design in their own right. Extant environmental-scale supergraphics from the late twentieth century appear to be rare in San Francisco.
 - In some cases, a public artwork and/or designed landscape may also rise to a level of individual significance. Refer also to the evaluative frameworks in following historic context statements: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* (in progress) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned).
- Other considerations:
 - Properties designed or constructed by an Architect or Builder of Merit, particularly if the resource is a rare or exceptional example of the architect or builder’s work in San Francisco, should be considered. Most Corporate Late Modernist architecture was designed by prominent and prolific local and national architectural firms, many of whom have already been recognized as architects or firms of merit. Thus, buildings that are individually eligible for their association with a particular architect or firm should be particularly notable examples of that architect’s work, demonstrating or expressing a particular phase of their career or a particular theme or idea. All buildings by an Architect of Merit will not automatically be eligible as historic resources. Refer to the Evaluation Framework in *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* for further information.
 - A property may also qualify under Criterion C/3 as a contributor to a historic district if it is situated within a geographically cohesive grouping of buildings related by design or by an architect or developer. In order to meet local, state, and/or national registration requirements as a district, a majority of contributing properties would need to retain most of their character-defining features. Generally, contributors to a historic district need not meet as high a threshold for integrity as individual buildings.
 - Corporate Late Modernist buildings are concentrated in the Financial District and Union Square areas but are generally interspersed with both older and newer buildings. Thus, it is unlikely that a grouping of Corporate Late Modernist buildings would be eligible as a historic district only for association with their Corporate Late Modernist architectural style under Criterion C/3.

Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of Corporate Late Modernist properties significant under Criterion C/3 are those elements that represent its significant design qualities relative to its date of construction. The following are anticipated character-defining features of a significant Corporate Late Modernist properties under Criterion C/3:

- Rectangular massing and steel-frame construction are typical, but some examples have stepped massing.
- Flat roofs with no overhang or articulated cornice.
- Highly repetitive fenestration.
- Verticality is often emphasized.
- Generally, every floor above the ground floor has the same or similar appearance and will include flexible interior spaces and climate-controlled environments.
- Common cladding materials are precast concrete panels or other prefabricated panels; dark, opaque or mirrored glass; or, in some cases, stone.
- Full-height window systems are typical at the ground floor and may include retail spaces. Bronze anodized aluminum or other dark metal framing is common for storefront window systems.
- Buildings appear more massive and with heavier materials than earlier Corporate Modernism.
- Buildings may be set back on a designed plaza or built out to lot lines.
- Plaza paving material is often carried partially or fully into the lobby interior but may transition from rough to polished in texture. Plaza paving may also delineate private and public or semi-public spaces.
- Plazas and/or lobbies may include publicly accessible artwork, fountains, and/or seating areas.

Integrity Considerations

A property eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain the majority of its aspects of integrity dating to the period when the significant design was completed, with an emphasis on integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The building's significant design qualities should remain readily apparent, and the majority of original features and materials that convey the significant design should remain extant. Given the prevalence of Corporate Late Modernist properties and the fact that some are less than 45 years old, individually eligible properties should retain a high level of integrity.

Significant alterations to exterior cladding and window openings are not typical but may become more common in the future. Replacement of window systems should be considered when evaluating for integrity of design and materials; however, in-kind replacement of window systems that retain the visual character of the building may not result in an overall loss of integrity. Alterations to office and hotel lobbies and plazas are common. Original design and materials of publicly accessible lobbies and plazas, including public artwork, can contribute to the overall character of a Corporate Late Modernist building. The loss of an original lobby, particularly if alterations are primarily limited to interior spaces, is unlikely to diminish overall integrity to the point of ineligibility. However, cumulative alterations to features such as lobbies, ground floor windows and storefronts, plazas, public artwork, and other features may result in a lack of integrity.

Integrity of location is expected for individually eligible Corporate Late Modernist properties. In an urban environment such as San Francisco, it is expected that the broad setting and nearby properties will change over time; changes to the area surrounding a property are generally unlikely to be a factor in evaluating late twentieth century properties under Criterion C/3.



Fig. 101. Shaklee Terrace (now, One Front Street, also known as 444 Market Street), was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) and completed in 1980. The building expresses Corporate Late Modernism in its smooth, slick façade plane and highly repeating pattern of fenestration, and the uniquely undulating façade profile. The building is a distinctive example of Corporate Late Modernism in San Francisco and is notable within the portfolio of SOM, which is one of the most prolific firms to build downtown. The building has alterations to the lobby interiors, but exterior materials and features, including at the ground floor, are intact. There is sufficient time and scholarly perspective to understand the building within the context of downtown San Francisco development and the work of SOM. As such, the property appears to be eligible as a historic resource under Criterion C/3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 102. Mutual Benefit Life (One California Street, 1969) by Welton Becket & Associates with Royston, Hanamoto, Beck & Abey. The building expresses the characteristics of Corporate Late Modernist architecture through highly repeating fenestration, vertical emphasis, and precast panel cladding. The building has bulky, rectangular massing and an associated one-story bank. Welton Becket is a recognized Architect of Merit in Southern California and built several buildings in San Francisco. However, this property, completed the same year of Becket's death, is not distinctive within his career or even his work in San Francisco. The design is fairly generic and similar to many other Corporate Late Modernist buildings in San Francisco and elsewhere. As such, the property does not appear to be individually eligible under Criterion C/3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Sub-Theme: Brutalism (1960s-mid-1980s)

Brutalism is a strain of Late Modernist architecture that is characterized first and foremost by its most typical material—exposed concrete—and the term “brutalism” is generally understood to be derived from the French *béton brut*, meaning “raw concrete.” Brutalist buildings can be of concrete construction, utilizing poured-in-place (or “board-formed”) concrete with the wood grain and/or ties of wood formwork left exposed, waffle slab floors, and/or precast concrete, or can be steel-frame construction with exposed concrete at the exterior. Brutalist architecture is also characterized by its form, which tends to be massive, geometric, and expressive—often interior features or uses are legible at the exterior massing. Refer to the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)* for more on Brutalism.¹⁹⁶

In San Francisco, Brutalist architecture is most closely associated with institutional properties, especially educational and medical institutions, and infrastructure buildings ([Fig. 103](#) and [Fig. 104](#)). A number of San Francisco Unified School District public school buildings were designed in the Brutalist style, including San Francisco International High School (655 De Haro Street, c. 1969, Corwin Booth) and McAteer High School (555 Portola Drive, 1972, Reid & Tarics), and several building at San Francisco State University (SFSU) ([Fig. 105](#)). Other examples of Brutalism associated with higher education include the addition to SFAI by Paffard Keatinge-Clay, and Golden Gate University (540 Mission Street, 1978, William D. Podesta and T.Y. Lin), which is a unique expression of brick Brutalism ([Fig. 106](#) and [Fig. 107](#)). San Francisco’s two above-ground BART stations—Glen Park and Balboa Park—are both Brutalist, and the PG&E Embarcadero Substation represents an extreme expression of Brutalism, where a lack of windows and its massive form create a bunker-like quality ([Fig. 108](#)). Diamond Heights has a fully expressed Brutalist fire station, and smaller scale Brutalist infrastructure can be found in some public parks like John McLaren Park in the form of bathrooms, lookout towers, and amphitheaters ([Fig. 109](#) and [Fig. 110](#)).



Fig. 103. CPMC Pacific Heights (2333 Buchanan Street) completed 1972. Designed by Stone, Marraccini & Patterson with Roselyn Lindheim. (Source: Page & Turnbull).

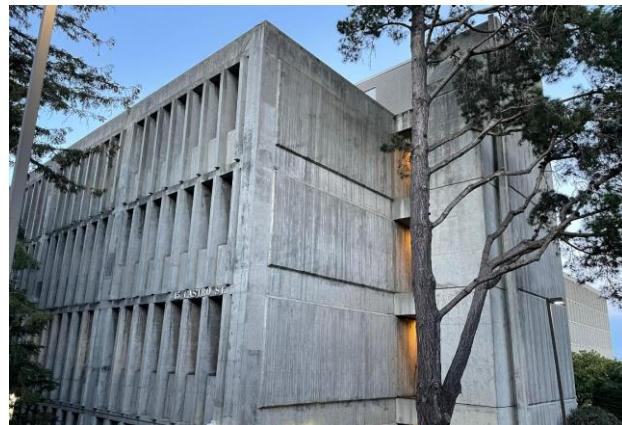


Fig. 104. CPMC Davies (45 Castro Street, 1970) by Stone, Marraccini & Patterson. (Source: Page & Turnbull).

¹⁹⁶ Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 138, 201-3. Despite a resurgent interest in Brutalism, many books on the subject tend to be primarily photography books with limited historic context or theory and/or are focused on a specific architect such as Paul Rudolph or on a highly specific region. A key early text theorizing Brutalism, then referred to as the ‘New Brutalism,’ is Reyner Banham’s *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic?* (New York: Reinhold, 1966), although what is currently understood and defined as Brutalism is somewhat different than Banham’s New Brutalism, which encompassed more of Late Modernism and High-Tech architecture. Simon Henley has also observed that Banham’s text was overly preoccupied with the work of the Smithsons and puts the book and the larger development of Brutalism in context in *Redefining Brutalism* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: RIBA Publishing, 2017).



Fig. 105. International High School (655 De Haro Street, c.1969) by Corwin Booth. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 106. SFAI Addition (800 Chestnut, 1966-70) by Paffard Keatinge-Clay. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 107. Golden Gate University (540 Mission Street, 1978) by William D. Podesta and T.Y. Lin. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 108. PG&E Embarcadero Substation (405 Folsom Street, 1971) by Sidney H. Smyth. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 109. Fire Station No. 26 (80 Digby Street, 1963) by Rockrise & Watson. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 110. Southeast Community Facility (1800 Oakdale Avenue, 1983-86) by Jefferson Associates and Jan Lubicz-Nycz. (Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Brutalism is less commonly found downtown, as most late twentieth century high-rise offices and hotels in San Francisco are Late Modern or Postmodern. A notable exception is the Hilton Hotel (750 Kearny, 1971, Clement Chen & Associates, TY. Lin), originally a Holiday Inn, at Portsmouth Square. Examples of Brutalist architecture in single-family homes or duplexes in San Francisco, if any exist, are exceedingly rare. Some examples of Brutalist multi-family housing complexes do exist, but most are associated with senior or assisted living facilities, such as Woodside Gardens (255 Woodside Avenue, 1962, Neill Smith) and the Annex A addition to the Jewish Home for the Aged (302 Silver Avenue, 1969, Howard Friedman). One notable example is the 2000 Broadway apartment building (1974, Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)), which has exposed, raw concrete exteriors with visible formwork tie holes, articulated floorplates, and expressive and sculptural massing (**Fig. 113**).

Most known examples of Brutalist architecture in San Francisco were built in the 1960s and 1970s. A later known example is the Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale Avenue in Bayview, built 1983-86, and designed by Jan Lubicz-Nycz (**Fig. 110**).¹⁹⁷ Additional research and survey efforts may identify more examples from the 1980s.

¹⁹⁷ John King, "Brutalism looks better with age," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 3, 2013; and Jan Lubicz-Nycz Collection (not yet catalogued), San Francisco Public Library, History Center.

Brutalism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	Refer to the Brutalism Evaluation Framework in the <i>Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)</i> for a statement of significance, character-defining features, evaluation criteria, and integrity thresholds.
	<i>Note of clarification to the Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970):</i> While concrete as a construction method or key exterior material are key characteristics of Brutalism, not all buildings with concrete at the exterior are Brutalist—some are better understood and described as Late Modernist. In particular, buildings with modular precast concrete or aggregate panel cladding, highly repetitive or regular fenestration, and more simple rectangular or boxy forms, should be evaluated as Late Modernist buildings. Some buildings that were described in the Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970) as Brutalist would be better described and evaluated as examples of Late Modernism, including: Fox Plaza (Victor Gruen), Transamerica Pyramid (William Pereira), and the School of Dentistry in Pacific Heights (SOM). With regards to integrity, it should also be noted that painting originally exposed concrete exteriors of Brutalist buildings can substantially diminish their integrity of materials, design, and workmanship. Exposed concrete, including the visual and physical texture and color, is one of the most important character-defining features of Brutalism. Painting the original concrete would have a major negative effect on the character of a Brutalist building.
Period of Significance:	1960s – mid-1980s
Justification of Period of Significance:	Note that the period of significance for Brutalism has been expanded to the 1980s as most, including many of the best, examples of Brutalism in San Francisco were built in the 1970s. ¹⁹⁸ The period of significance for the Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970) document ended in 1970, but acknowledged that Brutalism was built in San Francisco through the mid-1980s.
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Redevelopment Agency; Downtown Core; Public Art, Monuments & Murals; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3
Associated Property Type(s):	Public & Private Institutions Municipal & Federal Buildings Planning & Engineering: Transit Infrastructure Planning & Engineering: Utilities Building Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Commercial: Downtown Core Multi-Family: Large Apartments

¹⁹⁸ These examples include, but are not limited to: San Francisco Art Institute Addition (1966-70, Paffard Keatinge-Clay), Hilton Hotel at Portsmouth Square (1971, Clement Chen, et. al.), CMPC Pacific Heights (1972, Stone Marraccini & Patterson), Glen Park BART Station (1973, Ernest Born and Corlett + Spackman), and San Francisco State University Student Center (1969-75, Paffard Keatinge-Clay).

Property Type
Description(s):

Brutalism is most frequently utilized in institutional property types, including educational and medical, as well as transportation and infrastructure properties. Commercial and multi-family residential properties are less common.



Fig. 111. The Hilton Hotel (750 Kearny Street, 1971, Clement Chen, T.Y. Lin) exemplifies Brutalist architecture through its exposed concrete exterior, which has evidence of the wood grain from the board formwork. Furthermore, the massing is sculptural and reflects interior programing with a wider base for the lobby, restaurant, and Chinese Cultural Center, and a narrow shaft for the standard hotel rooms. The circulation core is also expressed.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 112. Fox Plaza (1390 Market Street, 1967, Victor Gruen & Associates with Norma Merrick Sklarek) is better described as Late Modernist, and not Brutalist. Although the building has concrete at the exterior, it is a smooth concrete without the rawness typically associated with Brutalism. Furthermore, the massing and fenestration are that of a typical Late Modernist high-rise, with a very regular grid of windows and balconies, and simple rectangular massing.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2024.)



Fig. 113. 2000 Broadway apartment building (1974, Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)), which has exposed, raw concrete exteriors with visible formwork tie holes, articulated floorplates, and expressive and sculptural massing. BAR is a notable local firm that was active during the late twentieth century. Although multi-family Brutalist complexes are very common elsewhere, especially in the U.K. and eastern Europe, this is a rare and unique example in San Francisco. The building embodies the distinctive characteristics of Brutalist architecture, appears to have good integrity, and appears to be eligible as a historic resource.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 114. The cross-plan Annex A addition to the Jewish Home for the Aged campus (302 Silver Avenue) was built in 1969, designed by Howard A. Friedman. The building has elements of Brutalism including board-formed concrete exteriors, as well as some brick. Circulation cores are expressed at the sides and ends of the cross plan. However, the building lacks the more expressive and sculptural qualities of form and massing associated with the best examples of Brutalism. This building does not appear likely to rise to the level of individual significance as an example of Brutalist architecture.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 115. The SFSU Student Center (1600 Holloway Avenue, 1969-75, Paffard Keatinge-Clay), shown at left soon after completion. The building now has an addition at the former roof deck that is not particularly compatible with the original design. However, the strength and clarity of the original design remain legible, and most of the original exterior materials and features, including the concrete exterior, massive enamel panel pivot doors, concrete downspouts, concrete stairways, projecting pyramid (housing a study area), and the projecting stadium seating, all remain. Given the significance of Paffard Keatinge-Clay as an architect, and this building as a unique expression of Brutalism in San Francisco, the building appears to have sufficient integrity to an eligible historic resource.

(Source: Docomomo US/NOCA (left), SFSUStudentCenter.com(right).)

Sub-Theme: New Formalism (1960s-1970s)

New Formalism is a sub-theme of the historic context statement theme of Late Modernism. The style, sometimes known as Neo-Formalism, emerged in the United States in the mid-1950s as a Modern interpretation of Classicism.¹⁹⁹ New Formalism represents one of many strains of Modernism that evolved in the late twentieth century as the stark, unornamented orthodoxy of Modernism began to feel stale, especially as derivative forms of Modernism became increasingly pervasive, mundane, and corporate. Architects Minoru Yamasaki, Edward Durrell Stone, and Philip Johnson, in particular, pioneered and developed the New Formalist style between the 1950s and 1970s. While all were, themselves, adherents to the International Style and Miesian Modernism in their early careers, these architects brought refined Classical forms, symmetry, and restrained ornament back into Modern design. Although these architects are among the most prolific and best-known American architects of the mid- to late-twentieth century, some of their die-hard Modernist contemporaries scoffed at New Formalism and its level of delicate ornamentation.²⁰⁰ Many of the iconic works of New Formalism have since been more widely accepted as some of the best works of civic and institutional architecture from the era.

California architects who also embraced New Formalism include Welton Becket, Charles Luckman, William Pereira, and John Carl Warnecke, although the style is evident more in their work outside of San Francisco, particularly in Southern California. Notable national examples of the style include: New Delhi American Embassy (India, 1955-58, Edward Durrell Stone), Stanford University Medical Center (1955, Edward Durrell Stone), United States Science Pavilion for the Seattle World's Fair (Seattle, 1962, Minoru Yamasaki), and Hawaii State Capitol (1965-69, John Carl Warneke) ([Fig. 116](#) and [Fig. 117](#)).

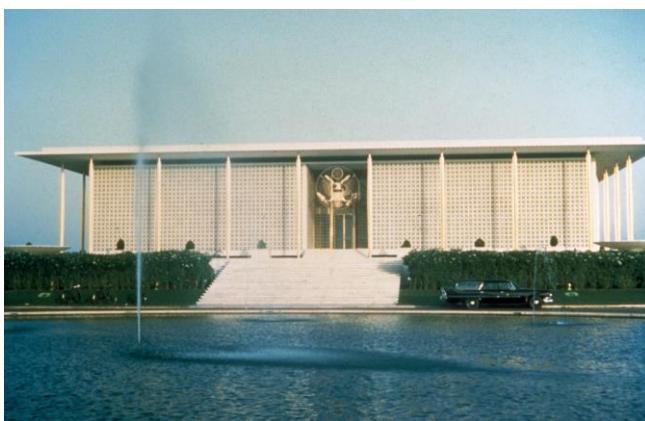


Fig. 116. New Delhi American Embassy (1955-58) in India by Edward Durrell Stone.

(Source: National Archives (NARA).)



Fig. 117. Hawaii State Capitol (1965-69) in Honolulu by San Francisco-based architect John Carl Warnecke with local architects Belt, Lemmon, and Lo.

(Source: Architectuul.com.)

The New Formalist style is, as the name suggests, an elevated, refined, and often monumental style, utilizing prestige materials and generous plazas and fountains. Characteristics include flat, projecting roof planes, strict

¹⁹⁹ Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 134.

²⁰⁰ In the catalog essay for the “Transformations in Modern Architecture” exhibit at the MOMA, Arthur Drexler observes, “Because they are so thin such columns [flared at top and bottom] tend to look like congealed taffy that has dripped from the underside of the attic story. This effect is disliked by most architects but is often appreciated by laymen, who correctly interpret soft curves as signaling a sire to please.” Arthur Drexler, *Transformations in Modern Architecture*, 118-9.

symmetry, and expressed arches or columns.²⁰¹ As such, nationally, the style is most often used for civic buildings, cultural institutions, and public-facing educational buildings such as conference centers. The New Formalist style has also frequently been adapted for banks—which have long used the features of Classical architecture to convey tradition and stability in banking temples. With smaller New Formalist banks, more affordable materials such as concrete and less elaborate ornamentation may be used. The New Formalist style is rarely, if ever, utilized for single-family residences or duplexes, and typically not associated with transportation or infrastructure properties.²⁰²



Fig. 118. John Hancock Building (also known as Mutual Life Insurance Company, or Industrial Indemnity Building) at 255 California Street was designed by Chuck Bassett of SOM in 1959. Overall Modernist in character, the building has some features that would later be associated with New Formalism, including a tripartite configuration, arched podium base, and polished granite cladding.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 119. The Donatello Hotel (501 Post Street, 1969, Mario Gaidano, architect, and Byron Niskian, engineer) exhibits features of New Formalism, including ornamental concrete panels, emphasized verticality, and a projecting flat roof. The exterior materials are primarily concrete with travertine planters at the base. The building might best be described as Late Modernist with influences of New Formalism.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

San Francisco lacks any monumental examples of New Formalist civic or institutional architecture; rather, the New Formalist style is quite rare and most often used for banks, including Home Savings & Loan Association branch banks, which are discussed in more detail below. Some early 1960s branch banks exhibit features

²⁰¹ Robinson & Associates, *Growth, Efficiency and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Services Administration, Office of the Chief Architect, Center for Historic Buildings, 2005), 14.

²⁰² A very rare example of a New Formalist single-family residence is the Beck House (1964) by Philip Johnson in Dallas, Texas. Johnson also designed a lake pavilion folly (1962) at his Glass House estate in New Canaan, Connecticut in the New Formalist style.

associated with New Formalism, such as arched windows or an arcade entrance, but are otherwise modest, and lack the monumental quality and prestige materials typically associated with New Formalism. In some cases, such as the branch banks (now both US Bank branch locations) at 4610 Mission Street and 4947 Mission Street, the overall design of the building is Late Modernist, with a few features that are also associated with New Formalism. Additionally, the New Formalist style has been used for at least one movie theater (UA Stonestown Twin Theater, 501 Buckingham Way, 1970, George K. Raad), and several mid- and high-rise medical, office, and hotel buildings ([Fig. 118](#) and [Fig. 119](#)). Known examples of the New Formalist style in San Francisco date to the 1960s and 1970s.

Millard Sheets Studio and Home Savings & Loan Association

Artist Millard Sheets (1907-1989) established his business in 1953 under the name Millard Sheets Designs, Inc. (later, Millard Sheets & Associates Designs, Inc.) as an atelier-style studio in Southern California.²⁰³ Although he was not, himself, a trained or licensed architect, Sheets began a fruitful and prolific collaboration with Howard F. Ahmanson in 1955, designing Home Savings & Loan Association branch banks throughout the Southern California region, and later in the Bay Area.²⁰⁴ Sheets designed at least 80 Home Savings branch banks, and historian Adam Arenson has identified at least 168 Home Savings locations that contain artwork from Sheets's studio, and another 159 other projects with publicly accessible artworks, including churches, commercial buildings, and educational institutions.²⁰⁵

Sheets developed a collaborative design studio with a talented pool of artists who had various specialties, including stained glass, mosaics, painting, and sculpture. Ideas typically originated with Sheets, or were reviewed and given approval by Sheets, who functioned as the “impresario” of the collaborative studio.²⁰⁶ Sheets developed a very identifiable and unique expression of the New Formalist style in his work for Ahmanson, which has also been called the “Home Savings Style.” The style is characterized by monumental and geometric massing, white travertine marble, integrated artworks, and gold gilding. Building off the success of the first commission, Sheets further refined the Home Savings Style to its recognizable form, sometimes repeating the basic plan and form of a bank with a new art program. Prototypical examples of the early Home Savings Style of New Formalism include the Compton branch (1958) and Buena Park branch (1960), and more elaborate examples include the Pasadena branch (1963) and Santa Monica branch (1971) ([Fig. 120](#) and [Fig. 121](#)).

Following the untimely death of Ahmanson in 1968, Sheets continued to collaborate with the Home Savings & Loan Association, and began producing designs that diverged from his earlier, more standardized models. These later commissions often included more locally specific themes and motifs in the integrated mosaic and mural art programs.²⁰⁷ In 1972, a state law changed that allowed savings and loan associations to operate statewide, which created new opportunities for Home Savings & Loan Association to expand to Northern California.²⁰⁸ Sheets continued to work until 1978, when he retired, and his studio closed in 1980.²⁰⁹ Millard Sheets designed the frieze

²⁰³ Adam Arenson, *Banking on Beauty: Millard Sheets and Midcentury Commercial Architecture in California* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018), 70.

²⁰⁴ In a 1977 interview, Sheets noted, “an architect named Homolka, who works with me now at a great many of my jobs. After I design them, he does the finish engineering. He’s an excellent architect and has good engineers.” Millard Sheets, Interview of Millard Sheets, George M. Goodwin, November 17, 1976 – January 16, 1977, University of California Los Angeles Library, Center for Oral History Research, n.p. (page 250 of 345 in transcript PDF).

²⁰⁵ “Definitive List for Home Savings and Loan Artwork, Savings of America Artwork, and the Millard Sheets Studio Public Projects,” Adam Arenson, updated August 2018, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://adamarenson.com/books/banking-on-beauty-millard-sheets-and-midcentury-commercial-architecture-in-california/definitive-list-for-home-savings-and-loan-artwork-savings-of-america-artwork-and-the-millard-sheets-studio-public-projects-2-3/>.

²⁰⁶ Arenson, *Banking on Beauty*, 284.

²⁰⁷ Arenson, *Banking on Beauty*, 158.

²⁰⁸ Arenson, *Banking on Beauty*, 180.

²⁰⁹ Arenson, *Banking on Beauty*, 284.

and interior and exterior murals for the California Scottish Rite Memorial Temple (2850 19th Avenue, 1964). After Home Savings began expanding north in the early 1970s, Sheets designed three branch banks in San Francisco: 265 Sacramento Street (1974, not extant), 98 West Portal Avenue (1977), and 2750 Van Ness Avenue (1977) (**Fig. 122** and **Fig. 124**). Through a series of acquisitions and mergers in the 1990s and early 2000s, most former Home Savings & Loan Association branch banks are now owned by Chase Bank.



Fig. 120. Buena Park Home Savings branch, built 1960, by Millard Sheets closely resembles the Compton branch and others.

(Source: Adam Arenson, Jason Foo, Laurene Harding Rivas, Regina O'Brien, and Cheryll Dudley Roberts, "Millard Sheets, A Legacy of Art and Architecture," LA Conservancy, 2012.)



Fig. 121. Santa Monica Home Savings branch, completed 1969 (later altered), is a more elaborate expression of the Home Savings Style of New Formalism.

(Source: Hadley Meares, "The Iconic Murals Of Millard Sheets Are Disappearing From LA," LAist, July 31, 2019.)



Fig. 122. Former Home Savings & Loan Association branch bank (1977) at 98 West Portal Avenue, designed by Millard Sheets and his collaborative design studio. The building includes a sculptural fountain and mosaic mural.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

New Formalism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	<p>The New Formalist style is an expression of Late Modernism that incorporates simplified features with Classical, and less commonly Gothic, precedents. The New Formalist style emerged in the United States in the mid-1950s and was pioneered by architects such as Minoru Yamasaki, Edward Durrell Stone, and Philip Johnson. Characteristics include massive or monumental scale, flat projecting roof planes, strict symmetry, expressed arches or attenuated columns, and prestige materials. Nationally, generous public plazas, often with pools, fountains or sculpture, are typical of New Formalist architecture but are less common in San Francisco. The New Formalist style, which reached its peak popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, has an elevated, refined, and monumental quality, with a populist and familiar aesthetic, which made it well suited for civic buildings and cultural institutions. As the style gained popularity, it also became employed for bank buildings, including for high-style and more modest branch bank examples. Resources within this sub-theme should be evaluated for significance under Criterion C/3 as excellent examples of New Formalist architecture.</p> <p>Significant examples of New Formalist architecture will typically display a full expression of the style, drawing from the character-defining features outlined below. The New Formalist style is rare in San Francisco, but significance is derived from expressive features—typically derived from Classical or Gothic precedents—as well as ornamentation and/or prestige materials. Properties that incorporate only some features of the New Formalist style, but that lack ornamentation, symmetry, or typical materials or features, would not qualify as individually architecturally significant. In San Francisco, the style is most commonly associated with branch banks, including former Home Savings & Loan Association banks by Millard Sheets, and, less commonly, with commercial buildings, offices, theaters, and religious institutions.</p>
Period of Significance:	1960s-1970s
Justification of Period of Significance:	In the early 1960s, some San Francisco buildings began to exhibit features that are associated with the New Formalist style, including arched bases or colonnades. Full expressions of New Formalism were built in the city between the mid-1960s and late 1970s. By the late 1970s, the already rare style had fallen out of favor.
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide. New Formalist buildings are fairly rare in San Francisco and are found in various neighborhood commercial corridors, as well as downtown.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Neighborhood Commercial Buildings; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3
Associated Property Type(s):	Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Public & Private Institutions Commercial: Downtown Core Health & Medicine Artistic Expression: Public Art, Monuments, & Murals

Property Type Description(s):	Banks are the most common property type associated with New Formalism in San Francisco. Limited examples of theaters, religious institutions, office and commercial buildings (including medical offices), and hotels are found in San Francisco.
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Criterion C/3 Eligibility Standards

A property *may* be considered an eligible resource under Criterion C/3 if it meets the following:

- Constructed during the period of significance (1960s-1970s) and meets relevant criterion considerations for properties of the recent past; refer to “Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old” in the **Introduction** of this report.
- Individually eligible resources will be excellent and full expressions of New Formalism.
- Must retain character-defining features, with a particular emphasis on symmetry, roofline, exterior cladding, simplified Classical or Gothic features, and ornamental details.
- Must have high levels of integrity, particularly integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Rarity of an extant property type in the New Formalist style may be a consideration in determining eligibility.
- The New Formalist style, which is nationally associated with monumental government and civic design, is rare in San Francisco. More often, Late Modernist buildings in San Francisco have elements of New Formalist design but are not full expressions of the style. Incomplete expressions of the New Formalist style, or Late Modernist buildings with some elements of New Formalist design, would not qualify as architecturally significant under the sub-theme of New Formalism. For example, modest branch banks with only some features of the New Formalist style, such as an arcade or arched window openings, are not likely to rise to a level of significance for individual eligibility under Criterion C/3.
- Properties that include an original, associated public artwork and/or designed landscape, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape and/or public art should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features.
 - In some cases, a public artwork and/or designed landscape may also rise to a level of individual significance. Refer also to the evaluative frameworks in following historic context statements: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* (in progress) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned).
- Other considerations:
 - Properties designed or constructed by an Architect or Builder of Merit, particularly if the resource is a rare or exceptional example of the architect or builder’s work in San Francisco, should be considered. Refer to the Evaluation Framework in *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* for further information.

As New Formalist buildings are rare in San Francisco, no clusters or potential districts are known to exist.

Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of New Formalist properties significant under Criterion C/3 would be those elements that represent its significant design qualities relative to its date of construction. The following are anticipated character-defining features of a significant New Formalist properties under Criterion C/3:

- Massive or monumental massing
- Strict symmetry
- Flat, often projecting rooflines
- Smooth wall surfaces
- High-quality materials, such as travertine, marble, or granite, or man-made composite materials that approximate the look of prestige materials
- Buildings often set on a podium
- Simplified features based on Classical or Gothic precedents, such as arches, colonnades, and columns.
- Columns are typically slender or attenuated
- Ornamental details, including integrated artworks such as mosaics or murals
- Plaza or formal landscape. Pools and fountains are less common in San Francisco examples.

Integrity Considerations

A property eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain the majority of its aspects of integrity dating to the period when the significant design was completed, with an emphasis of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The building's significant design qualities should remain readily apparent, and the majority of original features and materials that convey the significant design should remain extant. Integrity of location is expected for individually eligible New Formalist properties. In an urban environment such as San Francisco, it is expected that the broad setting and nearby properties will change over time; changes to the area surrounding a property are generally unlikely to be a factor in evaluating late twentieth century properties under Criterion C/3. Exterior cladding materials are generally quite significant to the design of New Formalist buildings. In order for a building to retain integrity with replacement windows, windows must be replaced in-kind or replaced with windows that mimic the existing fenestration pattern within original openings; buildings that retain high integrity otherwise but have replaced windows will be evaluated for individual eligibility on a case-by-case basis. In the case of New Formalist banks, alterations to signage and installation of ATMs are typical and are not likely to have a substantial overall impact to the design. Properties eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain all or most original ornamental details and integrated art programs. Plazas and associated landscape features may also be important to an understanding of design integrity.



Fig. 123. 2001 Union Street (1970, Donald Francis Haines) is a mid-rise medical office building in Pacific Heights. Although the building has some characteristics of New Formalism, including symmetrical facades, a podium base, and an arcade, the overall quality of design and materials is modest. Rather than featuring prestige materials, the exterior is brick and concrete and does not exhibit the level of detail or ornamentation associated with the best examples of New Formalism. As such, the property does not appear to be significant for its architectural design.

(Source: LoopNet.com, February 2024.)



Fig. 124. Former Home Savings & Loan Association branch bank at 2750 Van Ness Avenue (1977), was designed by Millard Sheets and his collaborative design studio. The mosaic mural features local motifs, including the city skyline and Golden Gate Bridge. While the building does not have some of the features of typical New Formalism, such as columns or arcades, it exemplifies the unique Home Savings Style of New Formalism. The monumental massing, stone cladding, gold trim, and mosaic art contribute to the distinctive character of the building, which appears to be eligible under Criterion C/3 as an example of the Home Savings Style of New Formalism and the work of Millard Sheets.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 125. 175 Jefferson Street was built c. 1964 as A. Sabella's Restaurant by architect Edward Wong. The building is an example of New Formalist design in neighborhood commercial building. The building has been substantially altered over the years, including alterations to the ground floor, alterations to signage, added awnings, and more notably, the pattern of fenestration has been disrupted by a new balcony, replacement windows, and added signage. As such, the building does not appear to retain overall historic integrity.

(Source: CardCow.com (left); Flynn Group (right).)

Sub-Theme: Third Bay Tradition (c.1965-c.1980)

The Third Bay Tradition is a sub-theme of the Bay Tradition Styles theme, which is elaborated upon in the *Bay Area Tradition Styles HCS (1880-1980)* (in progress). Bay Region Modernism is also discussed in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, with a brief section on the Third Bay Tradition. The Third Bay Tradition can be understood as a regional idiom of Modernism, which includes contextual, wood-clad housing that spans between Late Modernism and Postmodernism. Key early examples of residential architecture that embody the principles that would be developed in the Third Bay Tradition include the early buildings at The Sea Ranch in Sonoma County, including Condominium One (1963-65, Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker), and the Orinda House (1962) by Charles Moore ([Fig. 5](#) and [Fig. 126](#)). The Sea Ranch was widely photographed and featured in contemporary publications, and Moore was a prolific writer who taught at UC Berkeley, Yale, UCLA, and the University of Texas at Austin. As such principles of the Third Bay Tradition were widely disseminated and influential in residential architecture of the late twentieth century.²¹⁰

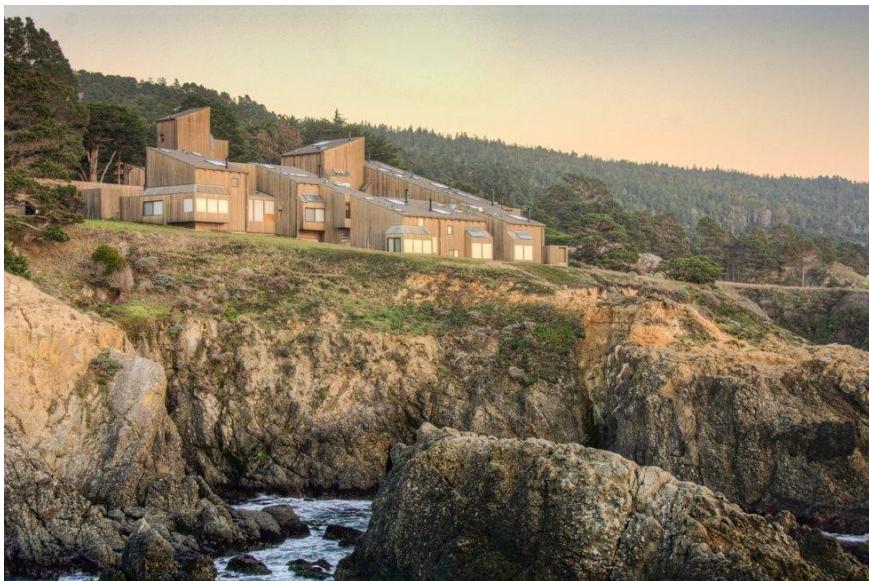


Fig. 126. The Sea Ranch Condominium One complex (1963-65) on the Sonoma County coast was designed by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker (MLTW) and is one of the most significant progenitors of the Third Bay Tradition. The style also was reused and diluted in many more mundane examples of condo vernacular group housing.

(Source: 7x7.com.)

The early Sea Ranch projects found inspiration in local vernacular architecture, such as weathered barns, and utilized shed roofs, and what Moore referred to as “saddlebag” volumes hung on the sides.²¹¹ These features, as well as unpainted wood board or shingle siding, along with the interior space planning, all became characteristic features of the regional Northern California Third Bay Tradition of architecture. These projects began to break out of the typical box of Modernism, introducing more complex massing and interior volumetric planning. These complex interiors were based on three-dimensional planning principles of the *raumplan*, wherein there are not standard interior floor plates (first story, second story, etc.), but rather a complex and interconnected series of multi-height spaces, mezzanines, and lofts. The Third Bay Tradition, which grew out of these early precedents, retained the regional Modernist interest in indoor-outdoor connections, but further sought to site buildings into the existing topography and landscape, rather than clearing and leveling a site.²¹² Strategically placed windows

²¹⁰ Charles Moore, Gerald Allen, Donlyn Lyndon, *The Place of Houses* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1974); and Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher and Joseph Becker, *The Sea Ranch: Architecture, Environment, and Idealism* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2018).

²¹¹ Charles Moore, “The End of Arcadia,” in *Bay Area Houses*, ed. Sally Woodbridge, (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith, 1988), 280.

²¹² This principle was, of course, lost for the most part by the time the Third Bay Tradition was being used as a ‘condo vernacular’ for more generic housing complexes in suburban areas.

framed specific views, rather than trying to capture a panoramic view, and were used to throw and reflect natural light across rooms.

The Third Bay Tradition, like the First and Second Bay Traditions, is used almost exclusively in residential architecture. There are scattered examples of Third Bay Tradition single-family houses and duplexes throughout San Francisco's residential neighborhoods, particularly in the central hills and around Pacific Heights ([Fig. 127](#) - [Fig. 129](#)). In San Francisco, building on smaller urban lots, examples of single-family, duplex, and multi-family residential Third Bay Tradition buildings can include buildings that have more traditional Modernist boxy volumes and more standard floor plans; these examples still typically have wood shingle or unpainted wood board siding, and may have features such as projecting bay windows, smaller shed roof features, or projecting chimneys that add to the overall volume of the building.

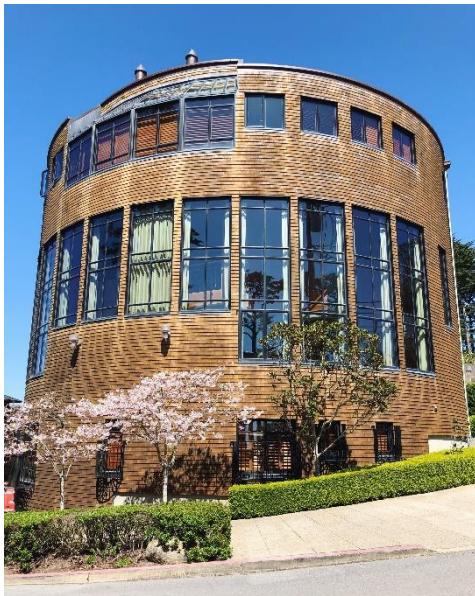


Fig. 127. The round side of this shingled Third Bay Tradition style residence (111 Edgehill Way, 1970, Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)) is uniquely adapted to its curved, corner site. The J-plan building has projecting shed-roofed glass bays that hang like saddlebags—a common feature of the Third Bay Tradition and Sea Ranch architecture.

(Source: Jack McCarthy, Docomomo US/Northern California.)

Fig. 128. The Third Bay Tradition 743-747 North Point Street (1978) duplex by Donald MacDonald stacks a series of cubic volumes up a steep hillside site with unfinished wood siding, and stepped windows.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2024.)

Fig. 129. 91 Clarendon Avenue (1974, Burger & Coplans) has a playful contrast between two exaggerated styles of bay windows. Except for the carport, now enclosed as a garage, the building appears much as it did when documented in the 1976 DCP survey.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

The Third Bay Tradition, however, is most commonly found in multi-family residential properties ([Fig. 130](#)). As noted in the *Modern Architecture HCS (1935-1970)*, the rise in popularity of the Third Bay Tradition and 'Sea Ranch style' coincided new regulations and other socioeconomic factors that precipitate an increase in condominium

home ownership and clustered group housing complexes, and features of the style were “diffused across the country and became a national condominium vernacular.”²¹³



Fig. 130. Vine Terrace Apartments (930 Pine Street, 1973) by Beverly Willis embody the Third Bay Tradition style with wood shingle siding, canted skylights, and large articulated chimneys.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

The National Housing Act of 1961 passed by Congress made federal mortgage insurance available to buyers of what were known as condominiums (abbreviated as condos)—or privately owned units in a building or complex of buildings that have undivided interest in the shared parts of the property. This change made it much more affordable and attractive to buy a condo than it had been previously, and construction of condo buildings increased in San Francisco as demand for housing remained high even as availability of land decreased. Condos were constructed in redevelopment areas, including Golden Gateway, Diamond Heights, Western Addition, Rincon Point-South Beach, and Bayview Hunters Point, as well as throughout other areas of the city.²¹⁴ In some cases, these condos appeared similar to apartment buildings and were designed in various contemporary Modern and Postmodern styles; due to the popularity of Condominium One at The Sea Ranch (1965) in Northern California designed by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull & Whitaker (MLTW), the Third Bay Tradition style became particularly popular for condo buildings in the late 1960s and 1970s (Fig. 131). In other cases, condos had additional community amenities such as pools, gyms, communal rooms, and/or shared landscapes that were owned and maintained by a homeowner’s association (HOA).²¹⁵ Such amenities were also heavily marketed to counteract the general trends of suburban flight.

²¹³ Brown, *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design, 1935-1970: Historic Context Statement*, 139.

²¹⁴ Some Diamond Heights sales brochures even provided definitions of condominiums to help familiarize potential buyers with the relatively new concept. “Town House Ownership on General Electric’s Red Rock Hill,” brochure, c.1964. San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Archives.

²¹⁵ “Origin and History of Condominium Laws in California,” Adams Stirling Professional Law Corporation, February 6, 2021, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9m2OZOIV6o4>.



Fig. 131. Community building and pool at the Diamond Heights Village (115 Red Rock Way, 1972) condo complex, designed by Joseph Esherick and Arthur Gensler. The Third Bay Tradition style has clear references to The Sea Ranch, where Esherick also designed a number of early houses.

(Source: SFH 371 San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Records, SFPL, History Center.)

The clustered Third Bay Tradition complexes in Diamond Heights are generally intact, although in at least one case unpainted wood shingles have been replaced with painted shingles. In the Western Addition, where full-block apartment complexes tend to have many features of Late Modernism, including massing, flat roofs, and regular fenestration, it is more common that limited regional features such as wood shingles and other wood siding have been replaced with stucco siding (**Fig. 132 - Fig. 134**). In some limited examples, a more regional vernacular of Late Modernism is employed for neighborhood commercial architecture such as banks or retail stores, or in religious and institutional architecture; in these cases, wood siding (diagonal wood is common), geometric volumes, and shed roofs may be employed (**Fig. 135**).



Fig. 132. Friendship Village (1047 McAllister Street, 1971) by Bulkley & Sazevich in the Western Addition A-2 redevelopment project area, which retained a Victorian era façade as an entry gateway into the central courtyard.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 – Redevelopment Agency Collection.)



Fig. 133. The Victorian era façade at Friendship Village is extant, although it has been enclosed with a security gate. The building has the massing, flat roof, and regular fenestration of a Late Modernist building, with shingle siding that evokes some of the regional style of the Third Bay Tradition. The residential complex has been painted, but the brown color is similar to the original color of the shingles. (Source: Page & Turnbull).



Fig. 134. The community building in the central courtyard of the Buchanan Park Apartments complex (1150 Buchanan Street, 1977, Krisel, Shapiro & Associates) in the Western Addition A-2 redevelopment project area has a unique butterfly roof and diagonal wood siding. This Third Bay Tradition building has been stripped of its wood siding and is now clad in stucco.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 – Redevelopment Agency Collection.)



Fig. 135. Ella Hill Hutch Community Center (1050 McAllister Street, 1981) by the African American-led firm Jenkins & Fleming has many of the formal characteristics of Late Modernism, but is inflected with a certain amount of regional materiality in the diagonal wood siding, which is associated with the Third Bay Tradition.

(Source: SFPL, History Center, SFH 371 – Redevelopment Agency Collection.)

Supergraphics, which were made popular by The Sea Ranch and Bobbie Stauffacher Solomon, may be a feature of Third Bay Tradition design. However, extant examples of twentieth century environmental supergraphics appear to be rare in San Francisco. Refer to the **Supergraphics** sub-section of the **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** chapter of this document.

Some Third Bay Tradition architecture is influenced by “hippie” or “eco” Modernism, as well as solar design, which was popular in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to environmental concerns. Relatively few examples of hippie Modernism were built within the city of San Francisco, which was already densely built out and more highly regulated than places like Marin County. Hippie Modernism is discussed further in the **Historic Context: Environmental Movement, Hippie Modernism & Sustainability in Design** section of this report.

Regionally, Charles Moore, William Turnbull, Donlyn Lyndon, Richard Whitaker (who worked together as the firm Moore, Turnbull, Lyndon & Whitaker or MLTW, and various later iterations), Joseph Esherick (and his firm Esherick Homsey, and Dodge, and later Esherick, Homsey, Dodge & Davis or EHDD), and Dimitri Vendensky were influential in pioneering the Third Bay Tradition, particularly through their highly publicized work at The Sea Ranch. Esherick and his firm completed a number of projects in San Francisco in the Second Bay and Third Bay Tradition modes. While highly influential regionally, built works by Moore and Turnbull are rare within the city of San Francisco. Local architects who built in the Third Bay Tradition within the city include, but are not limited to (alphabetical): Jonathan D. Bulkley, Burger & Coplans (Edmund G. Burger and Patricia Coplans), Bowler & Chan (Carson Bowler and Robert H. Chan), Joseph Esherick and EHDD, Fisher-Friedman Associates, Donald MacDonald, Daniel Solomon, Sandy Walker, Beverly Willis, and Zoe Works.

Third Bay Tradition Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	Refer to the Evaluation Framework in the <i>Bay Area Tradition Styles HCS (1880-1980) (in progress)</i> for a statement of significance, character-defining features, evaluation criteria, and integrity thresholds. Most Third Bay Tradition architecture was built in San Francisco in the late 1960s and 1970s; however, there is significant overlap in style, form, and material between the Third Bay Tradition and contextual Postmodernism in the 1980s and 1990s. Refer to the Theme: Postmodernism (1970s – early 2000s) discussion of this report for more about regional and contextual Postmodernism.
Period of Significance:	c.1965 – c.1980
Justification of Period of Significance:	The Third Bay Tradition became popular after the widely published projects at The Sea Ranch in Sonoma County, and remained in use throughout the 1970s.
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide. Tends to be found in residential neighborhoods.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Redevelopment Agency; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3
Associated Property Type(s):	Multi-Family: Small Apartments Multi-Family: Large Apartments Single Family: Attached Single Family: Semi-detached Single Family: Detached Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Public & Private Institutions Designed Landscapes
Property Type Description(s):	The Third Bay Tradition is primarily associated with residential properties. Partial and full examples of the Third Bay Tradition in neighborhood commercial and institutional properties are rare.



Fig. 136. Two adjacent single-family residential properties at 282 Franconia Street (1965, Bowler & Chan) and 201 Rutledge Street (1973, Robert H. Chan) were designed in the Third Bay Tradition by the same architect. These two homes are full expressions of the Third Bay Tradition with clear references to Sea Ranch Condo One in their vertical, unfinished wood siding, shed roofs, and irregular massing with saddlebag volumes. The complexity of the interior space is evident from the exterior. The properties appear to have good integrity and appear to each be individually or collectively eligible as historic resources.

(Source: Google Street View, 2023.)



Fig. 137. 233 Franconia Street (1964) by local architect Jonathan Bulkley originally exhibited several features of the Third Bay Tradition, including references to vernacular barn architecture and unfinished wood siding.

(Source: 1976 DCP Survey Form, PIM.)



Fig. 138. 233 Franconia Street has since been remodeled with more conventional windows, roof eaves, and stucco siding. The residence lacks integrity of design, workmanship, materials, association, and feeling that would tie it to the Third Bay Tradition or architect Jonathan Bulkley's body of work. As such, the property is not an eligible historic resource.

(Source: Google Street View, 2023.)

Theme: Postmodernism (mid-1970s-2000)

Architectural Postmodernism describes a movement and era of reactions to orthodox Modernism that took a multiplicity of forms.²¹⁶ As an umbrella term, Postmodernism describes both a general set of traits—theoretical and aesthetic—as well as variety of strands or sub-genres of architectural design that have been variously named and categorized. These include expressions of Postmodernism that run the gamut from ironic to Classicist to eclectic to neo-vernacular and shingled regionalism to contextual urbanism to collage aesthetic to straight revivalism and historicist pastiche. As discussed in the **Historic Context: Late, Post & New: Architectural Modernism & Its Discontents** section of this historic context statement, architectural Postmodernism emerged as a reaction to and evolution away from Modernism that was informed by nascent critiques based on the works of Jane Jacobs, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Aldo Rossi.

Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) was a pivotal critique of mid-twentieth century urban planning policy and redevelopment and documented humane concerns about city life. Aldo Rossi's *L'architettura della città* (1966, published in English as *The Architecture of the City*, 1982) observed that the city must be studied and understood by architects as something built on over time—a palimpsest of “collective memory.” Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi sought to explore historical and vernacular sources, both highbrow and lowbrow, kitsch, ugly and ordinary in their professional architectural practice as well as their teaching and seminal publications including *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (Robert Venturi, 1962), and later in *Learning from Las Vegas* (Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, 1972).²¹⁷ Broadly, Postmodernism provided a response to critiques of the tabula rasa approach to Modernist urbanism and to the over-emphasis on abstraction and functionalism in purist Modernist orthodoxy, which to some, had become banal. To Mies van der Rohe's refrain “less is more” – Robert Venturi quipped “less is a bore.”²¹⁸

Charles Jencks, one of the main theorists of architectural Postmodernism, spent a career refining and revisiting a complex “evolutionary tree” of Postmodernism in which he tended to illustrate six rivers or blobs that flowed in and out of each other, filled with sub-styles, architects (some of whom appeared in multiple locations), and specific buildings (**Fig. 139**).²¹⁹ Whereas in the popular imagination, Postmodernism likely is most associated with what Jencks calls Postmodern Classicism, as practiced by architects like Michael Graves, or perhaps the “dissonant collage” of Frank Gehry and the Los Angeles School, these diagrams illustrate the diversity within Postmodernism and the fluidity of categories. And, indeed, most San Francisco Postmodernism tends to be more in the realm of neo-vernacular, regionalism, ad-hoc urbanism, and contextualism, to borrow Jencks’s terms, building off the eclecticism of the earlier Bay Traditions.

²¹⁶ The term “postmodern” was already in use to describe a self-referential skepticism of Modernism in philosophy, art, and sociology. There is some debate about who first used the term in the context of architecture. However, the term was employed to describe architecture by Charles Jencks in his 1975 essay, “The Rise of Post-Modern Architecture,” *Architectural Association Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (October/December 1975): 3-14, as well as his seminal text, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture*, which was first published in 1977. Jencks remains one of the most prominent and prolific exponents of Postmodern architectural theory and criticism, and the many editions of *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1991, 2002), continue to be widely read. He provides his own, perhaps defensive account of the use of the term in the sixth edition; Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991), 20. Robert A. M. Stern also began using the term and writing about Postmodernism during this period in the 1970s.

²¹⁷ Other seminal texts in the critique of Modernism and formulation of Postmodernism included Lewis Mumford's essay “The Case Against Modern Architecture” in *Architectural Record* (April 1962), Peter Blake's *Form Follows Fiasco* (1977), Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter's *Collage City* (1978), and the widely popular *From Bauhaus to Our House* (1981) by Tom Wolfe.

²¹⁸ Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1966), 25.

²¹⁹ Mark Wigley, “The Drawing that Ate Architecture,” Jencks Foundation, 2023, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.jencksfoundation.org/explore/text/the-drawing-that-ate-architecture>.

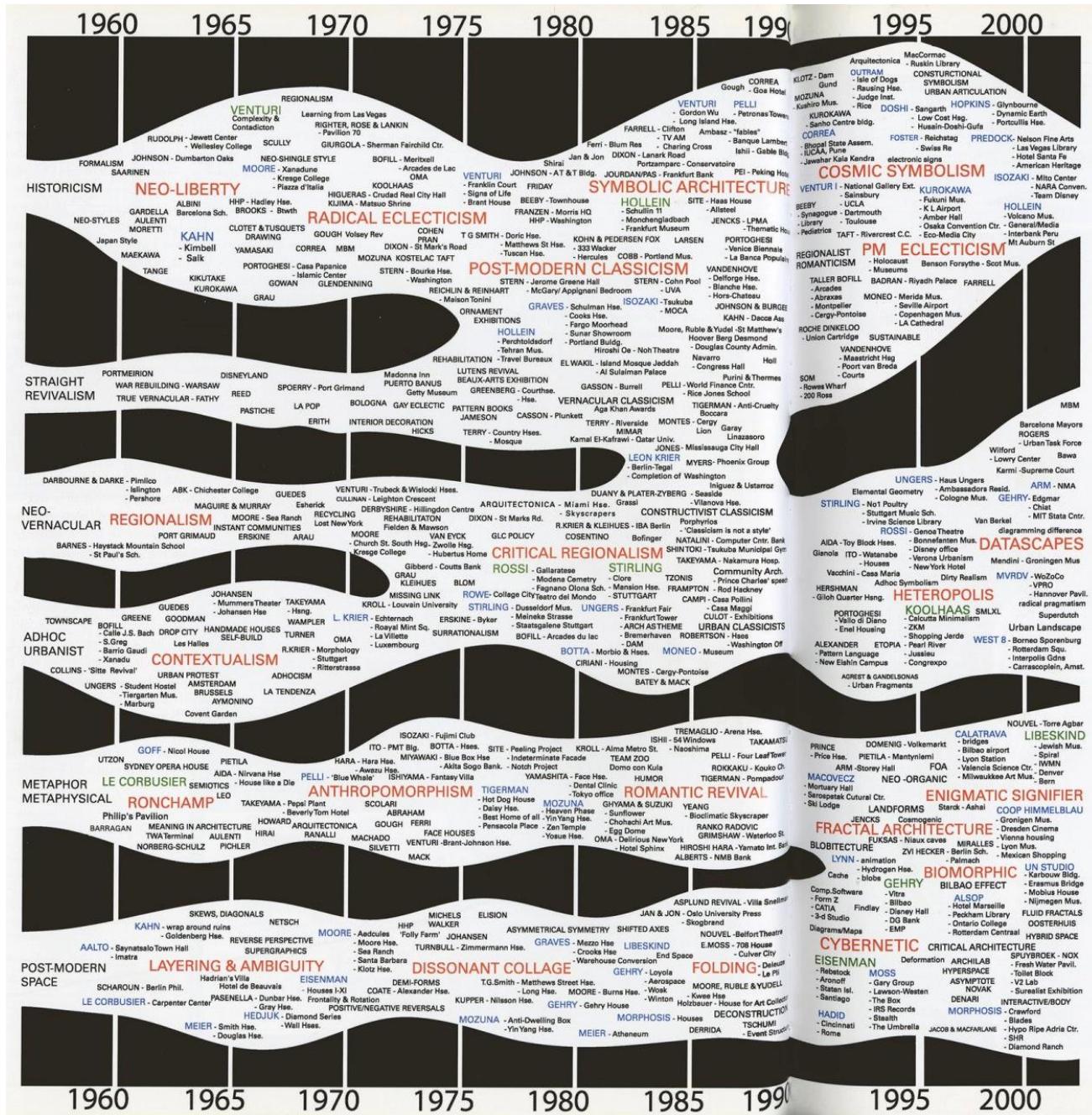


Fig. 139. The “Post-Modern Evolution – Evolutionary Tree,” by Charles Jencks, 2002. This is one of many iterations of evolutionary trees that Jencks published on Late-, Post-, and Neo-Modernism.

(Source: Charles Jencks, *The New Paradigm in Architecture: The Language of Post-Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 51.)

For Jencks, the primary identifiers of Postmodernism included pluralism, by which he called for architects to embrace a “radical eclecticism,” and a “double-coding” or multivalence, by which he meant that buildings could communicate to architect experts (elites) as well as the broader public through historical references, symbolism,

and irony.²²⁰ Heinrich Klotz, another major theorist of architectural Postmodernism, argued that Postmodernism was a revision or evolution of Modernism—rather than a wholesale revolution or rejection—and that Jencks put too much emphasis on pluralism. Klotz, instead, defined Postmodernism in terms of narrative, and as responding to “not only function but fiction as well!” with the “new impetus aimed toward representation and directly opposed to abstraction.”²²¹ Common amongst definitions of Postmodernism, however, are emphasis on architectural communication and language, and the reopening of the well of history—as well as vernacular and mass culture—for reference and source material.

Although Postmodernism emerged in San Francisco in built form in the mid-1970s, there were several important precursors in California, including The Sea Ranch (1965, MLTW) and Charles Moore’s Orinda House (1962) and Citizens Savings Bank (1 Kearny Street, 1962), which have been described as harbingers of Postmodernism (**Fig. 5**, **Fig. 126**, and **Fig. 140**).²²² Pointing to these buildings, architectural historian Mitchell Schwarzer has gone as far as saying that “San Francisco is one of the birthplaces of architectural postmodernism.”²²³ Although more national and international narratives have typically located the beginnings with Le Corbusier’s Ronchamp chapel (**Fig. 2**) or Robert Venturi’s Guild House and Vanna Venturi House in Philadelphia (**Fig. 3** and **Fig. 4**), it is a fair observation that the work and writings of Charles Moore, alongside his colleagues at MLTW, had a profound impact on the trajectory of local and national architecture, and in particular the approach to complex interior spaces (*raumplan*) and use of vernacular sources.



Fig. 140. The Citizens Savings Bank (1 Kearny Street, 1962) by Charles Moore was heralded at the time of construction as an example of contextual Modernism that responded to the existing urban context. The building floor plates reference the window pattern at the adjacent Mutual Savings Bank (700 Market Street, 1902, William Curlett), as well as the mansard roof. The building has also been described as a precursor to Postmodernism in San Francisco.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²²⁰ Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1991), 10.

²²¹ Heinrich Klotz, *The History of Postmodern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), preface, 129-30. Klotz writes, “The transition from modernism to postmodernism was an almost smooth one, like the transition between the early and the high Renaissance; by no means did all the standards or the priorities change. The protest against modernism is not a determinate and rigid “No”; rather, it is a “Yes, but.”; Klotz, *The History of Postmodern Architecture*, 128.

²²² Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 44.

²²³ Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 44.

Indeed, Klotz places, alongside Venturi and Hans Hollein, a strong emphasis on the work of Charles Moore and MLTW—including the *Piazza d'Italia* (New Orleans, 1974), Kresge College (University of California, Santa Cruz, 1971), Sea Ranch, and Orinda House—as setting the stage and preconditions for Postmodernism.²²⁴ Klotz further highlights the works of Thomas Gordon Smith as significant within the Postmodern canon; although Smith did not build any known projects within San Francisco, his early works in Livermore and Richmond are notable as examples of a colorful expression of Postmodern Classicism ([Fig. 141](#)).²²⁵ Michael Graves, also known for his use of color and Classical architectural references, pushed Postmodernism to an extreme of exaggerated scale and irony. Graves's commission for Clos Pegas Winery in Calistoga was featured in a design competition on view at the SFMOMA in 1985. That exhibit, along with the 1982 installation of the *Strada Novissima* from the Venice Biennale at Fort Mason Center, were watershed moments in San Francisco, marking the rise of Postmodernism in popular culture and the arts; for more on these exhibitions, refer to **Historic Context: Late, Post & New: Architectural Modernism & Its Discontents** ([Fig. 142](#)).



Fig. 141. Richmond Hill House by Thomas Gordon Smith (1983) in Richmond, CA is an example of historicist or Postmodern Classicism.

(Source: Henry Bowles, photographer.²²⁶)



Fig. 142. Clos Pegas Winery in Calistoga, Napa Valley, California by Michael Graves was the result of a design competition that was featured as an exhibition at SFMOMA in 1985. The project was completed in 1987. The exaggerated scale and borrowing of Classical references epitomize Postmodern Classicism and its use of irony.

(Source: Michael Graves.)

The formation and rise of Postmodern architecture did not only occur in the realm of theory and criticism, which is particularly evident in San Francisco. Public sentiments that had begun brewing in the 1950s and 1960s during the Freeway Revolts, came to a fore in response to the inhumane excesses of urban renewal and redevelopment. As the city grew and downtown boomed, citizens expressed fears over the “Manhattanization” of the City’s unique, hilly, waterfront skyline by an onslaught of high-rise construction, as well as the loss of historic buildings and fine-grained urban character downtown and in the neighborhoods subject to redevelopment. Debates over

²²⁴ Klotz, *The History of Postmodern Architecture*, 130, 158-61, and 176-91.

²²⁵ Klotz, *The History of Postmodern Architecture*, 199-205.

²²⁶ Gordon H. Block, “Classical Architecture Contributor: Thomas Gordon Smith,” Traditional Building, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.traditionalbuilding.com/features/thomas-gordon-smith>.

building heights and urban design informed the San Francisco Planning Department's issuance of several documents that were instrumental in shaping the city in the late twentieth century: the 1971 Urban Design Plan, the 1985 Downtown Plan, and the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines.²²⁷ The city's search for contextual urbanism aligned with the broader critiques of Modernism, and the rise of architectural Postmodernism. Indeed, Schwarzer wrote of the implementation of the 1985 Downtown Plan, "Architectural postmodernism was now legally enforced"—a sentiment that Allan Temko, if not city planners, would have agreed with.²²⁸ Drawing from the well of eclecticism within the Bay Area Tradition, as well as other distinctly San Franciscan vernaculars, such as Victorian and Edwardian era rowhouses and bay windows and brick industrial warehouses, the Postmodern architecture of San Francisco emphasizes contextualism and regionalism. This contextualism and regionalism was further reinforced in Planning Department guidelines and policies. Refer also to the **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** section of this report.

Commercial Postmodernism

Postmodernism became the dominant architectural style for downtown high-rise construction in the mid-1980s, especially following the adoption of the 1985 Downtown Plan, and through the 1990s. Even by the 1970s, though, Postmodern architecture was emerging in commercial retail environments and spanned the spectrum from utterly cool Scandinavian home goods at Design Research (D/R) to the Disneyfied waterfront tourist experience of Pier 39. Within the massive Late Modernist Embarcadero Center, William Turnbull remodeled an interior retail space in a Postmodern mode that he described as "recalling poetically the idiosyncrasies of residential Victorian San Francisco" (**Fig. 143**).²²⁹ The epitome of cool and good taste, D/R sold Scandinavian and Modernist home goods from the Embarcadero Center location from 1973 to 1979. On the other hand, Pier 39 opened in 1978, and was excoriated by architectural critics from Allan Temko to Paul Goldberger, but it has proven to at least be a commercial success and remains a popular tourist destination.²³⁰ Temko's characterization of Pier 39 as "Corn. Kitsch. Schlock. Honky-tonk. Dreck. Schmaltz. Merde" and "pseudo-Victorian junk" was not appreciated by architects John C. Walker and Bruce Moody who defended the project as "Post-Modern" and "ad-hoc populism" along the lines of Venturi, Scott Brown, and Jencks.²³¹

²²⁷ For additional discussion of redevelopment, urban planning, anti-Manhattanization, and historic preservation, refer to **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** in this document.

²²⁸ Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 48.

²²⁹ Turnbull quoted in Isenberg, *Designing San Francisco*, 164; Page & Turnbull, *Embarcadero Center: Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) Part 1*, 159-61.

²³⁰ Paul Goldberger described Pier 39 as suffering from "excessive cuteness" and a "trite imitator of Ghirardelli" in his article "A Cliché Comes Home To Roost," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1979.

²³¹ Allan Temko "The Port's Architectural Fiasco – Pier 39," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 30, 1978, in Temko, *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 175-9.



Fig. 143. William Turnbull of MLTW remodeled an interior retail space at One Embarcadero Center in 1973 for the new San Francisco Design Research (D/R) store. Design Research, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, opened their first San Francisco location in the newly adapted Ghirardelli Square in 1965, then later moved into Embarcadero Center in 1973. All nine D/R stores closed in 1979 when the company declared bankruptcy. The Embarcadero Center D/R retail space is no longer extant as it was remodeled during or before a 1994 movie theater addition.

(Source: William Turnbull, Jr./MLTW Collection, 1952-1997, UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Archives.)

Precursors to Postmodern high-rises—hints of what was to come—can be found in Charles Moore’s design for the Citizens Savings Bank (1 Kearny Street, 1962) with its metal mansard roof, and in 350 California Street (1977) by SOM, which has an over-scaled grid of bosses (knobs) and round columns. However, Postmodernism did not fully arrive in downtown high-rise architecture until the 1980s with Crocker Tower & Galleria (50 Post Street, 1982) by SOM. For decades, SOM had been thought of as one of the stalwarts of Modernism, but the San Francisco office had signaled their interest in exploring Postmodernism with their participation in the “Presence of the Past” exhibition at Fort Mason Center in 1982, and while the Crocker Tower has the rectangular form of a typical Late Modernist high-rise, it introduces pattern and ornamentation to the polished granite façade, and the arched glass atrium of the Crocker Galleria. The historicist columns and pergolas at the roof terrace on the historic bank at One Montgomery Street demonstrate a full shift into Postmodernism (**Fig. 144**).

Many of the downtown Postmodernist high-rises amount to good background buildings—fulfilling the principles of the 1985 Downtown Plan, but not excelling architecturally. The buildings are often very staid with polished granite or stone cladding and a requisite articulation or setback at the top. Others verge toward the absurd and kitsch with the exaggeration of their form and ornamentation, such as the “hallucinatory jukebox” of the Marriott Marquis (780 Mission Street, 1989, DMJM, Zeidler Partnership Architects) and the cynical “Corporate Goddesses” atop 580 California Street (1984, Johnson & Burgee).²³² As previously noted, Postmodernism became the dominant mode of high-rise corporate and commercial architecture downtown, including for office towers, hotels, and condos. Postmodernism was becoming nationally popular around the same time that the 1985 Downtown Plan was implemented, and the historic preservation movement was taking hold, and Postmodernist design that included historical architectural references, more stone and granite cladding, and articulated tops was considered to be more appropriate and contextual with the existing downtown built environment (**Fig. 145**). Refer to the sub-section on the **1985 Downtown Plan in Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** section of this report for more.

²³² Temko, “The Marriott Debate: A Hotel Architects Detest and People Are Crazy About,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 26, 1990, in *No Way to Build a Ballpark*, 193-8. Artist Muriel Castanis (1926-2006) was commissioned by Philip Johnson to design the art installation atop 580 California Street; John M. Glionna, “Locals face off over Bay Area’s statues’ meaning,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 2007.

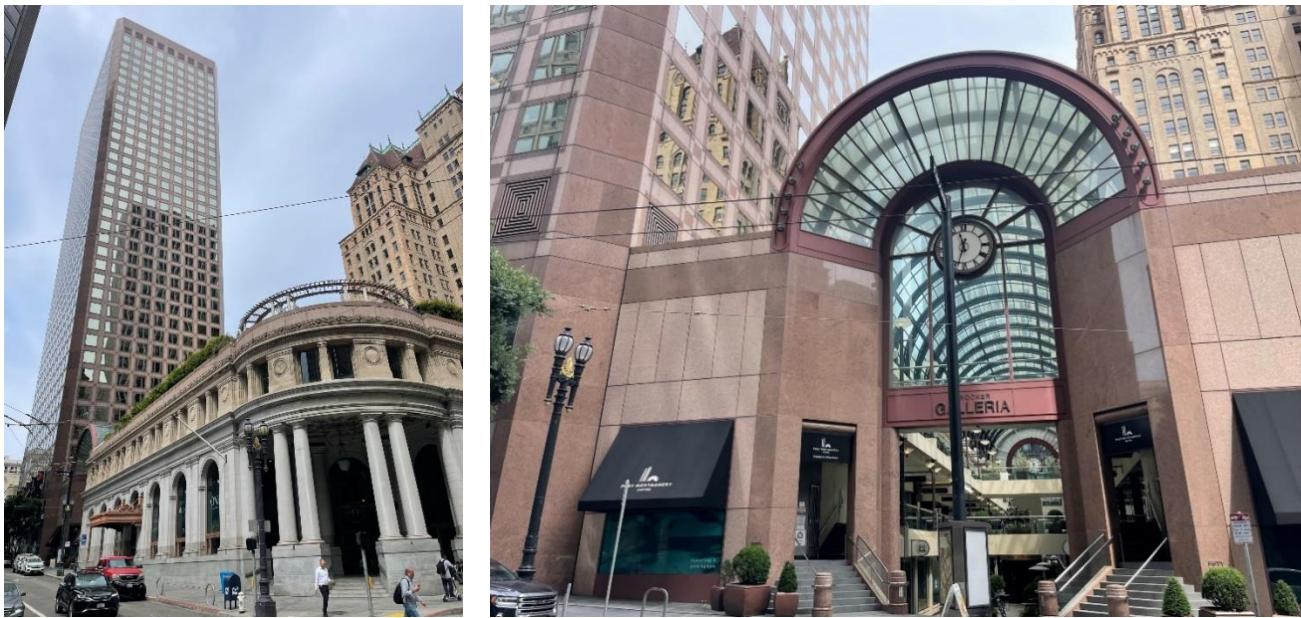


Fig. 144. Crocker Tower (now known as Post Montgomery Center, 120 Kearny Street) and Crocker Galleria (50 Post Street) were designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, along with a roof terrace atop the adjacent historic bank at One Montgomery Street. Completed in 1982, Crocker Tower & Galleria represents an early major Postmodernist project in downtown San Francisco, by one of the stalwart Modernist firms no less, signaling a shift in design that would last the following two decades.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 145. Articulated building tops, which critic Allen Temko referred to as “pointy hats,” were a feature of Postmodernist high-rise design following the adoption of the 1985 Downtown Plan. Examples ranged from pseudo-Art Deco setbacks as at 100 First Plaza (1989, SOM with Heller & Leake, shown at left), to the flag-topped spires of 345 California Center (1986, SOM, shown at center), to the more extreme in Johnson & Burgee’s 580 California Street (1984, shown at right), a mirror glass faux-mansard replete with cynical “corporate goddess” sculptures.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

The dominance of Postmodernism in high-rise construction continued through San Francisco's boom in downtown office construction in the 1980s, followed by a quiet decade of high-rise construction in the 1990s. Planned nine years earlier but completed in 2001, the Gap Headquarters (2 Folsom Street) by Robert A. M. Stern was the last major Postmodern office building built downtown.²³³ When the next wave of construction came following the tech boom in the early 2000s, construction had fully shifted to SoMa and expressed New Modernist design.

Compared to corporate high-rises, more lush material and freer use of ornamentation and historicist reference is seen in some mixed-use commercial buildings downtown, such as One Trinity Center (1145 Market Street, 1989, Backen, Arrigoni & Ross) and 900 Kearny Street (1989, William Podesta), the Postmodern pair to the 1907 Sentinel Building ([Fig. 146](#) and [Fig. 147](#)). Postmodernism was popular for other commercial retail buildings such as urban shopping malls along Market Street and around Union Square. New shopping centers and department stores built downtown such as San Francisco Centre (865 Market Street, 1988, Whisler/Patri) and Neiman Marcus (150 Stockton Street, 1982, Johnson & Burgee) competed with suburban shopping malls ([Fig. 148](#), [Fig. 44](#) and [Fig. 45](#)). These retail buildings are characterized by high-end finishes such as polished granite and applied ornamentation. Postmodern neighborhood commercial buildings are found throughout the city, but are less common and tend to be quirkier and rendered in more modest materials like stucco and concrete ([Fig. 149](#)). A rare known industrial commercial building in the Postmodern style is the MoST Building (80 Missouri Street, 1991) by Kotas/Pantaleoni in Potrero Hill.

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) was by far the most prolific designer of high-rises in the Modern and Postmodern eras, building over 15 high-rises in San Francisco in the 1960s and 1970s, and at least 15 more in 1980s and 1990s ([Fig. 150](#)). Other practitioners associated with commercial Postmodernism include, but are not limited to (alphabetical): Fee & Munson; Arthur Gensler; Jeffrey Heller (Heller Manus Architects); Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum (HOK); Hornberger + Worstell; Johnson & Burgee; Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Anthony Lumsden and Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall (DMJM); John Portman & Associates; Walker & Moody; and Whisler-Patri.



Fig. 146. One Trinity Center (1145 Market Street, 1989) by Backen, Arrigoni & Ross (BAR).

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 147. 900 Kearny Street (1989) by William Podesta is the Postmodern pair to the 1907 Sentinel Building

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²³³ John King, "Fall into Gap of mediocrity / Chain headquarters' new Embarcadero building disappoints," SFGate, June 11, 2001, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/fall-into-gap-of-mediocrity-chain-headquarters-3314988.php>.



Fig. 148. San Francisco Centre (Westfield Shopping Mall, 865 Market Street) by Whisler/Patri was opened in 1988, and later expanded to the adjacent historic Emporium Building site in 2006 by Kohn Pedersen Fox.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 149. 3401 Cesar Chavez (1991) mixed-use commercial building by Kotas/Pantaleoni. Adjacent building to the right is an apartment building by Gary Gee (3405 Cesar Chavez, 1991).

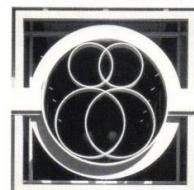
(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



San Francisco legend: A) John Hancock (Industrial Indemnity), 1960; B) The Hartford Building, 1965; C) Alcoa Building, 1967; D) Bechtel 50 Beale Street, 1967; E) Bank of America World Headquarters, 1969; F) Hyatt on Union Square, 1972; G) Quantas Building, 1973; H) Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 1973; I) California First Bank Headquarters, 1977; J) 595 Market Street, 1979; K) 444 Market Street, 1980; L) 353 Sacramento Street, 1983; M) Bank of Canton Headquarters, 1984; N) Five Fremont Center, 1984; O) 333 Bush Street, 1986; P) 345 California Center, 1986; Q) 388 Market Street, 1986; R) 88 Kearny Street, 1986. S) Crocker Center & Galleria, 1982. Other projects not visible in this photograph.

STEVE PROEHL

CCAIA Firm Award
Skidmore, Owings & Merrill
San Francisco



When called upon to display the work of their office, most architects point to models and renderings scattered around the studio, then pull out the slide projector for the feature presentation. Architects at the San Francisco office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill have a three-dimensional, life-size exhibit right outside every window of the three floors they occupy on Bush Street in the heart of the financial district.

When SOM began to build in San Francisco, it built within the context of an architectural movement, exploring the Modern vocabulary of Mies van der Rohe as articulated by Gordon Bunshaft. The early buildings—Crown Zellerbach and John Hancock (Industrial Indemnity)—bore reasonable proximity of scale to their surrounding neighbors. But when the Bank of America World Headquarters was built in 1969, the brave new emblem of commerce rampant on a field of black stone irrevocably altered the city.

Fig. 150. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) built at least 30 high-rise office towers and hotels in downtown San Francisco in the twentieth century, making it the firm with the most extensive impact on the city's skyline.

(Source: “CCAIA Firm Award Skidmore, Owings & Merrill,” Architecture California (September/October 1988): 15-34.)

Some commercial Postmodern properties utilize retained historical features, including facades of historic buildings. Refer to the **Historic Preservation Movement & Adaptive Resue** section of **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century**.

Residential Postmodernism

Postmodernism has a wide range of expressions in residential architecture in San Francisco from playful and colorful kitsch to industrial collage aesthetic to contextual brick and stucco cluster housing to fully historicist pastiche revival styles. In many cases, the influence of the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines can be identified in the use of bay windows, cornices, and historical references, but it is also in residential architecture that the unique aesthetics of particular architects is most evident; refer also to **Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century** for more on the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines. With the rise of Postmodernism, architects were empowered to mine the depths of architectural history as well as the vernacular and every day, mixing high-brow and low-brow. Architectural historian Sally Woodbridge, in her essay “Arcadia Revisited” for the revised and expanded edition of *Bay Area Houses* (1988), observed that the Bay Area Tradition of residential architecture had always borrowed from a variety of eclectic sources. While not utilizing the terminology of Postmodernism, she argued that:

[...] the decade from 1976 to the late eighties has shown – to paraphrase Mark Twain – that the reports of the tradition’s death have been highly exaggerated. The regional strain in Bay Area design is alive and well; it continues to mutate in healthy ways. [...] The current taste for historical reference in design has produced adaptations – even direct quotations – of the stylistic hallmarks of Bernard Maybeck, Ernest Coxhead, and William W. Wurster, as well as the anonymous rural and urban buildings of the past.”²³⁴

The irreverent ad-hoc approach of mixing styles, influences, and materials could border on kitsch, but was generally imbued with a sense of humor and playfulness. Although Postmodernism, particularly as theorized by Robert Venturi and Charles Jencks, is ostensibly about communication in architecture, not all members of the public, or other architects, appreciated this message, and Postmodernism was practiced in San Francisco residential architecture for a fairly fleeting period between the late 1970s and 1990s.

One of the earliest examples of Postmodern residential architecture in San Francisco is a duplex in Bernal Heights by Robert Mittelstadt (21-23 Prospect Avenue, 1975-79) that has the gabled form of a typical San Francisco rowhouse, but with unfinished wood siding; a bay window capped by a projecting fanlight; a porthole window; and wood lattice in the gable end where earlier Victorian era residences would have more elaborate ornamentation (**Fig. 151**). The most unique Postmodern features of the residence are the four Doric columns that hang suspended from the ceiling inside the double-height upper unit. By turns contextual and shocking, the building mixed Classical and vernacular references in an unpolished (almost seemingly unfinished) manner that was unprecedented. It was featured in and on the cover of Global Architecture’s *GA Houses 11* issue “Special Feature: New Waves in American Architecture.”²³⁵

²³⁴ Sally Woodbridge, “Arcadia Revisited” in *Bay Area Houses*, 313-4.

²³⁵ “R. Mittelstadt Duplex,” OfHouses, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://ofhouses.com/post/172263654935/534-robert-mittelstadt-r-mittelstadt-duplex>; and “Special Feature: New Waves in American Architecture,” *GA Houses 11* (Tokyo, Japan: Global Architecture, May 1982).



Fig. 151. The R. Mittelstadt Duplex (21-23 Prospect Avenue, 1975-79), designed by local architect Robert Mittelstadt is one of the first examples, if not the first, of Postmodern residential architecture in San Francisco. It mixes vernacular, Victorian, and Classical references in a manner that was unprecedented locally. Four Doric columns hang, suspended from the double-height upper unit.

(Source: Mittelstadt Archive via “R. Mittelstadt Duplex,” OfHouses.)

In addition to projects by Frank O. Gehry, Gwathmey Siegel and Robert A. M. Stern, Susana Torre, and Tod Williams, *GA Houses 11* features four projects by San Francisco architect Daniel Solomon—the Glover Duplex (15-17 Glover Street, 1981), Bellair Duplex (Solomon/Stauffacher Solomon Residence, 30 Bellair Place, 1973), Castro Commons (2425 Market Street, 1982, with Paulett Taggart) and an unbuilt housing project called Francisco Reservoir (**Fig. 152** and **Fig. 153**). Daniel Solomon made important contributions to San Francisco urban design and planning through rigorous studies of historical urban block and residential typologies that informed documents such as the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines, and he was a co-founder of the Congress of New Urbanism. His extensive portfolio of housing projects in San Francisco also includes some of the finest examples of contextual Postmodernism, which draw on Bay Region Tradition and San Francisco vernacular housing typologies, many of which won local and national architecture awards.²³⁶

While some residential architecture built during this period was a pastiche historicist revival (discussed in further detail below), other San Francisco architects, like Solomon, found fruitful explorations of historic and vernacular precedents to create contextual Postmodernist design. Although the firm paved the way toward New Modernist

²³⁶ “Recognition,” Daniel Solomon, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.danielsolomon.us/recognition/>; Shay, *New Architecture San Francisco*, 123-127; and Daniel Solomon, *ReBuilding* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992).

architectural expression, Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy incorporated bay windows and cornices in their Haight Street Lofts project (645 Haight Street, 1994) that evoke abstracted Italianate rowhouse or flat features.



Fig. 152. Glover Duplex (15-17 Glover Street, 1981) by Daniel Solomon.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 153. Castro Commons (2425 Market Street, 1982) by Daniel Solomon with Paulett Taggart.

(Source: “Special Feature: New Waves in American Architecture,” *GA Houses 11* (Tokyo, Japan: Global Architecture, May 1982), 67.)



Fig. 154. Haight Street Lofts (645 Haight Street, 1994) by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy. This project has abstracted bay windows and cornice lines that evoke the adjacent Italianate rowhouses, reflecting the principles of contextual Postmodernism and the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines. The use of simple Modernist geometries and industrial window sashes reflect a hybrid with the burgeoning New Modernism.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

San Francisco architect Jeremy Kotas brought his interest in architectural history—undoubtedly developed over the course of extensive survey fieldwork for the 1976 DCP Survey while working for the San Francisco Planning Department—and the early Bay Area region of eclecticism as exhibited in the works of architects such as Ernest Coxhead and Bernard Maybeck to his explorations as architect (**Fig. 155** and **Fig. 156**).²³⁷ Kotas's influence is particularly felt along Laidley Street in Glen Park, where he designed or extensively remodeled at least five houses—expressing an eclectic range of approaches to Postmodernism (**Fig. 159** and **Fig. 163**). Kotas's work embodies the eclecticism of Postmodern architecture—by turns playful, humorous, even kitschy—as well as acutely aware of local vernacular and historical architectural references.



Fig. 155. Bader Bloom House (a.k.a. Solar Energy Research Accumulation Retention and Conservation House or SEARCHouse) at 715 Florida Street by Jeremy Kotas built in 1981 exemplifies the playful kitsch side of Postmodernism with a Neapolitan color palette and cheap materials like painted plywood and a canvas awning. The building has since been expanded with a large front addition and has been painted mono-chrome gray.

(Source: Jeremy Kotas.)



Fig. 156. Cottage Row (2910 California Street, 1989) by Kotas/Pantaleoni utilizes playful vernacular references to Victorian era cottages to create several distinct units on a small urban site.

(Source: Shay, *New Architecture San Francisco*, 74.)

San Francisco architect Jeremy Kotas brought his interest in architectural history—undoubtedly developed over the course of extensive survey fieldwork for the 1976 DCP Survey while working for the San Francisco Planning Department—and the early Bay Area region of eclecticism as exhibited in the works of architects such as Ernest Coxhead and Bernard Maybeck to his explorations as architect (**Fig. 155** and **Fig. 156**).²³⁸ Kotas's influence is particularly felt along Laidley Street in Glen Park, where he designed or extensively remodeled at least five houses—expressing an eclectic range of approaches to Postmodernism (**Fig. 159** and **Fig. 163**). Kotas's work embodies the eclecticism of Postmodern architecture—by turns playful, humorous, even kitschy—as well as acutely aware of local vernacular and historical architectural references.

²³⁷ Woodbridge, "Arcadia Revisited" in *Bay Area Houses*, 340-3.

²³⁸ Woodbridge, "Arcadia Revisited" in *Bay Area Houses*, 340-3.

Donald MacDonald, now best known for his specialty in bridge design, began his career in San Francisco focused on housing, including small-scale and affordable housing typologies that fit in with existing neighborhoods. These ranged from cottages that look like prototypical gable-roofed houses with sash windows that make unexpected use of once-common vernacular board-and-batten siding, to a bizarrely fun grouping of condos that explode and skew typical bay window and roof forms ([Fig. 157](#) and [Fig. 158](#)).



Fig. 157. Germania Street Houses (196-198 Germania Street, 1984) is one of several projects by Donald MacDonald that explored low-cost, affordable housing using vernacular references. These board-and-batten pitched roof houses were originally painted red with white battens.²³⁹

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 158. Hallam Street, a small mid-block street in SoMa, has an eclectic mix of Postmodern residences. The triplex at the right (41-45 Hallam Street, 1990) is repeated four times on this block, and the design of the middle residence (35 Hallam Street, 1991) is replicated in a cluster on Sumner Street in SoMa. The residence at left (33 Hallam Street, 1992) is a rare example of ironic Classicism in San Francisco Postmodern architecture. All three buildings are by Donald MacDonald.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

As previously noted, the 1989 Residential Guidelines, while intended to provide parameters rather than mandates, had the normative effect of codifying bay windows within residential design. However, architects have experimented to produce a wide range of interpretations of San Francisco's most ubiquitous and quintessential residential feature ([Fig. 159](#)).

²³⁹ "California Culture," *Arts + Architecture* (1984), 50.

San Francisco Postmodern architecture tends toward more contextual and vernacular expressions; however, some examples of the ‘collage aesthetic’ exist around South Park, other areas of SoMa, and Potrero Hill (**Fig. 160**). Harkening to Frank Gehry’s Santa Monica House (1991), mundane and industrial materials are combined or collaged in unexpected ways. The Brown Residence (69 Grand View Avenue, 1997), designed by Frank Israel, was completed posthumously and is a rare example of the Los Angeles School of Postmodernism, which was developed by a loose cohort of architects including Gehry, Eric Owen Moss, and Morphosis and embodies what Jencks has referred to as “radical eclecticism” and “dissonant collage” (**Fig. 161**).²⁴⁰



Fig. 159. Unique takes on the quintessential San Francisco bay window are a common feature of local Postmodern residential architecture. Left to right: Glickman Residence (1982, Backen Arrigoni & Ross, 1988), 75 Pleasant Street (1984, Richard M. Brayton, Charles Pfister Inc.), and the Tansev House (1987, Kotas/Pantaleoni, 102 Laidley Street).²⁴¹

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²⁴⁰ City of Los Angeles, SurveyLA Citywide Historic Context Statement, “Architecture & Engineering/Postmodernism, 1965-1991” (July 2018), 19.

²⁴¹ The Glickman Residence received a merit award from the California Council of the American Institute of Architects in 1988; “Honor Awards, 1988,” *Architecture California* 10, no. 5 (May/June 1988), 26.



Fig. 160. 271 Shipley Street Condominiums (1992, Sternberg Architects) in SoMa typifies the ‘collage aesthetic’ of Postmodernism that utilizes a mix of materials and forms, including more industrial or mundane materials.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 161. Brown Residence (69 Grand View Avenue, 1997) by Frank Israel at right is a rare San Francisco example of the Los Angeles School of Postmodernism. The building at left (65 Grand View Avenue, 2000) is by Levy Art + Architecture.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

While wood shingled residential architecture is commonly associated with the Bay Area Regional Tradition, there is significant overlap in style, form, and material between the Third Bay Tradition, built in the 1960s and 1970s, and contextual Postmodernism in San Francisco in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, there are a number of examples of shingled and wood-clad Postmodern residences in San Francisco that draw on the precedents of the Third Bay Tradition, but that have more overt Classical or historicist references and ornament, such as the Hermitage Condominiums (1020 Vallejo Street, 1982, George Homsey of EHDD); invoke humor, as in the Owl House (140 Laidley Street, 1989, Kotas/Shaffer); or that have more exaggerated contextual references—such as the gridded bay windows of Fulton Mews (443 Fulton Street, 1982, Daniel Solomon) or the central chimney and projecting stair tower of the Gleeson Residence (610 Rhode Island Street, 1991, Daniel Solomon) ([Fig. 162 - Fig. 164](#)).²⁴²

²⁴² Woodbridge, “Arcadia Revisited” in *Bay Area Houses*, 313-55.



Fig. 162. The Hermitage Condominiums (1020 Vallejo Street, 1982) was designed by George Homsey of Esherick, Homsey, Dodge & Davis (EHDD) and take cues from the neighboring First Bay Tradition residences, including the black wood balusters on a Willis Polk-designed residence.²⁴³

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 163. Jeremy Kotas injects humor and double-coding into this residence, often referred to as the “Owl House” (140 Laidley Street, 1989, Kotas/Shaffer), and has references to Bay Tradition shingling.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²⁴³ Dave Weinstein, “No Second Fiddle: Esherick sidekick is a force of his own in architecture’s Third Bay Tradition,” SFGate, December 4, 2004, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.sfgate.com/homeandgarden/article/No-second-fiddle-Esherick-sidekick-is-a-force-2631892.php>.

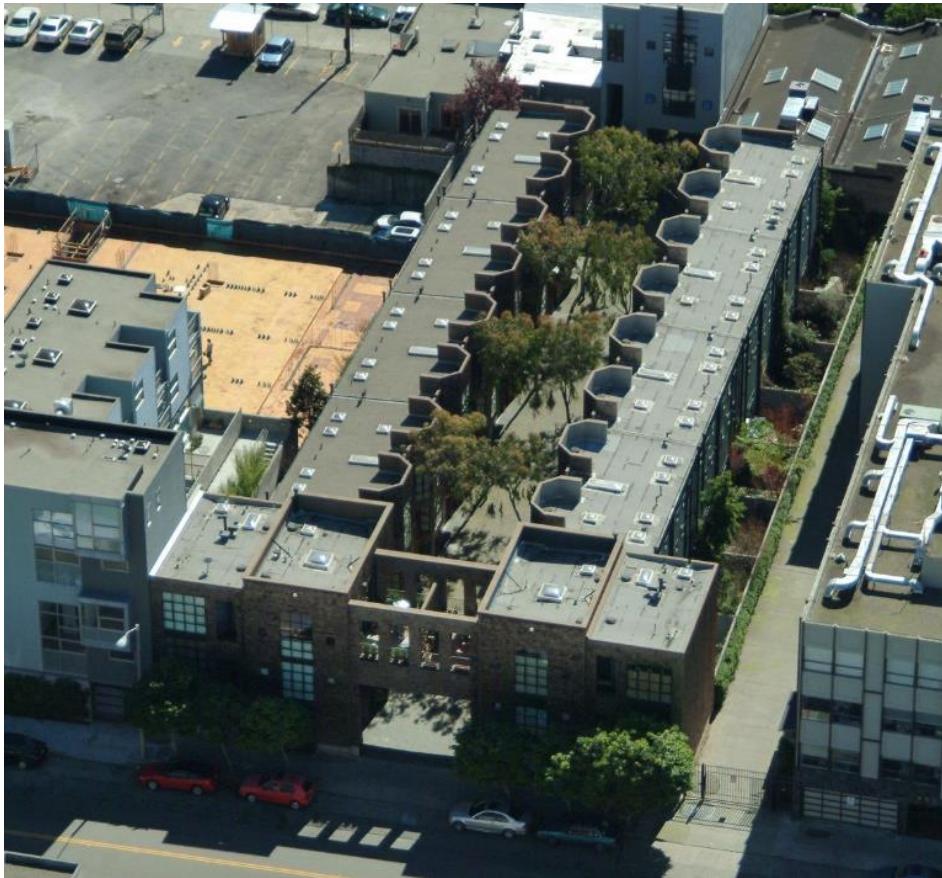


Fig. 164. Fulton Mews (443 Fulton Street, 1982) is the product of Daniel Solomon's rigorous study of historical San Francisco urban block patterns. Solomon uses earlier Bay Tradition architecture, as well as the plain clapboard rear facades of typical San Francisco architecture, bay windows, and industrial gridded sash windows for an eclectic mix of references.

(Source: Daniel Solomon | Mithun.)

Local practitioners associated with residential Postmodernism include, but are not limited to (alphabetical): Ace Architects, Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR), David Baker, Jonathan Bulkley, Fisher-Friedman Associates, Gary Gee, George Homsey (Esherick, Homsey, Dodge & Davis), Hood Miller Associates, Jeremy Kotas, Levy Art + Architecture, Donald MacDonald, Stephen Allen Roake, James Shay, Daniel Solomon, David Sternberg, and Jorge de Quesada.²⁴⁴

Straight Historicist Revivals

Informed by the principles of New Urbanism and the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines, the residential complexes in South Beach, many of which were built in the 1980s and early 1990s when Postmodernism was at peak popularity in San Francisco, exhibit a pastiche of historicism—such as the Delancey Street Center (The Embarcadero and Delancey Street, 1992, Backen Arrigoni & Ross) complex which is rendered in stucco with pyramidal tile roofs, wood brackets, and small balconettes in a Neo-Mediterranean style (Fig. 165). Postmodernism opened up the historical architectural canon again as source material, and architects referenced and borrowed from the past while experimenting in scale, composition, and form. The late twentieth century also saw a rise in more pastiche and derivative historicism in suburban McMansions as well as tract development and clustered multi-family housing in San Francisco. These straight historicist revivals often have surface application of historicist features and lack a sophistication of design and workmanship.

Examples in San Francisco include various “Neo” styles (Neo-Mansard, Neo-Eclectic, Neo-Traditional, Neo-Spanish Colonial, Neo-Mediterranean), as well as mock Victorian and Edwardian apartments. These historicist

²⁴⁴ Shay, *New Architecture San Francisco*.

designs were developed as compatible infill buildings, respectful of the scale and existing design context of older residential neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial corridors, consistent with the principles of the 1989 Residential Design Guidelines. Examples include mock Edwardian mixed use buildings, such as those at 915 Irving Street (1989) and 925 Irving Street (1985), that have similar bay windows, wood spandrel and window surrounds, and cornice details to true Edwardian era buildings, but with modern materials, less ornamentation, and lacking comparable workmanship (**Fig. 166**). Other examples, like Victorian Mews (Block 4070, 1978, Barovetto, Ruscitto & Barovetto), apply Victorian era features as pastiche to buildings that have a clearly contemporary scale and massing (**Fig. 178**). These examples of pastiche and derivative historicist styles do not meet the eligibility criteria for significance under Criterion C/3 for their architectural design alone.



Fig. 165. Delancey Street Center (600 The Embarcadero, 1992) by Backen Arrigoni & Ross is a Neo-Mediterranean complex that reflects some of the New Urbanist planning principles in South Beach.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 166. Mock Edwardian apartments and flats at 915 Irving Street (Optimal Design Group, 1985) and 925 Irving Street (John Baumann, 1985) exhibit historicistic pastiche.

(Source: Google Street View, 2023.)

Civic, Institutional & Recreational Postmodernism

Postmodern architecture was utilized in a range of civic, institutional, and recreational property types in San Francisco with varied and eclectic expressions. The Postmodernist architecture of civic government buildings, particularly those around the Civic Center, tend to be staid, contextual examples that either utilize Beaux-Arts ornamentation—such as the new main library, 100 Larkin Street, 1996, Pei Cobb Freed & Partners with SMWM—or balance monumental scale and exaggerated features with subdued gray tones that complement the granite of older neighboring buildings—such as Davies Symphony Hall (201 Van Ness Avenue, 1980) and Public Utilities Commission State Office Building (505 Van Ness Avenue, 1986), both by SOM (**Fig. 167**).²⁴⁵ On the other hand, cultural institutions such as those at Yerba Buena Center exhibit the expressive and playful side of Postmodernism. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (151 3rd Street, 1995, Mario Botta) is executed in a warm brick that uses the orientation of the brick units to create a patterned ornamentation. Black and white striped granite is used at the columned base and projecting oculus atrium. The Children's Creativity Museum (221 4th Street, 1998, Adèle Naudé Santos) is awash with pastel colors, and the evocative building shapes invite exploration (**Fig. 168**).

²⁴⁵ MIG, *San Francisco Civic Center Historic District Cultural Landscape Inventory* (prepared for San Francisco Planning Department, adopted September 2015), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://default.sfplanning.org/Preservation/cultural_landscape/CivicCenterCLI_FinalReport.pdf.



Fig. 167. Davies Symphony Hall (201 Van Ness Avenue, 1980) was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill within the parameters of design review criteria established by the San Francisco Planning Department, which determined the cornice line, color, and finishes of exterior materials to compliment the neighboring Beaux-Arts style Civic Center buildings.

(Source: SOM.)

Other institutional examples of Postmodernism appear to be fairly rare in San Francisco, but known examples include public schools, recreational facilities, and religious buildings (**Fig. 169**). One of the earliest known examples of Postmodernist architecture built in San Francisco was the Margaret Hayward Playground (1016 Laguna Street) building by Beverly Willis; completed in 1978 (since demolished), the building had a playful stage set-like form with a Palladian doorway, and a blue and dusty pink color scheme (**Fig. 170**).²⁴⁶ One of the last major Postmodern buildings constructed in San Francisco is also a recreational facility—the Giants Ballpark (24 Willie Mays Plaza) designed by HOK Sport (now Populous), which opened for the 2000 baseball season and was one of several new Postmodern “retro” ballparks that were part of a national shift to move sports stadiums back into the urban environment.²⁴⁷ Refer also to *The Public Realm: Cultural Institutions, Waterfront, POPOS & Public Art in Historic Context: San Francisco in the Late 20th Century*.

An earthquake in 1971 in San Fernando led to state-wide concerns about seismic safety and code requirements for school buildings, and as a result some San Francisco schools were stripped of ornamental features, for fear that they might fall off the building, while other older school buildings were fully demolished.²⁴⁸ Alamo Elementary School (250 23rd Avenue, 1926), for example, was fully remodeled from a Collegiate Gothic style to a colorful, Postmodern style.²⁴⁹ The 1920 Tudor Revival style Argonne Elementary School (680 18th Avenue)

²⁴⁶ “Margaret Hayward Park Playground Building,” Beverly Willis Archive, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://beverlywillis.com/architecture-project/0716/#pane1>.

²⁴⁷ Eric Wills, “Paul Goldberger on What Makes a Good Ballpark,” *Architect*, October 15, 2019, accessed online February 13, 2024, https://www.architectmagazine.com/design/paul-goldberger-on-what-makes-a-good-ballpark_o.

²⁴⁸ Page & Turnbull, 1351 42nd Avenue – Francis Scott Key Annex Historic Resource Evaluation Part 1 (prepared for San Francisco Planning Department, October 8, 2019), 30.

²⁴⁹ Sonnier Francisco, *Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California Historic Context Statement – Draft* (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009, 66-67).

building was demolished in 1971, and later replaced with a Postmodernist building in 1994. Garfield Elementary School (40 Filbert Street, 1979) by George Homsey of EHDD was lauded for its contextual design on Telegraph Hill.²⁵⁰ The new Moscone Elementary School and Las Americas Children's Center (2576 Harrison Street, architect unknown) was the first new school building to be constructed in the city in 20 years; the school broke ground in 1996, and is designed in the Postmodern style.²⁵¹ The Urban School (1563 Page Street, 1994, SMWM) is an example of residential-scaled contextual Postmodernism used for a private school.



Fig. 169. Bethel Temple (1325 Valencia Street, 1995) was designed by Mark Lechowski of Allen-Drever-Lechowski. The church has a highly expressed steeple frame structure, which was a trope of Late Modernism, but the double-coding of the mountain range-like roof puts this building more in the Postmodern tradition. Built by a Swedish American congregation, the church was renamed the Bethel Christian Church to avoid any possible mis-associations with Jim Jones and The Peoples Temple.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 170. The Margaret Hayward Playground Building (1016 Laguna Street) was designed by Beverly Wills in 1978 and is one of the earliest known built examples of architectural Postmodernism in San Francisco. The building was demolished in 2019.

(Source: Beverly Willis Archive.)

²⁵⁰ Homsey's design for Garfield Elementary School was awarded a 1982 Honor Award and was featured in a 1984 special issue of Arts + Architecture on California design; "Garfield Elementary School, San Francisco," *Architecture California* (July/August 1982), 20-21; and "California Culture," *Arts + Architecture* (1984), 50.

²⁵¹ "Schools in Mission break ground," *San Francisco Examiner*, September 21, 1996.

Postmodernism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	<p>Architectural Postmodernism emerged as a reaction to and evolution of Modernism, and was informed by nascent critiques in the writings of Jane Jacobs, Robert Venturi, and Aldo Rossi of tabula rasa Modernist planning and the perceived banality of the functionalism and abstraction in purist Modernist orthodoxy. Venturi's declaration "less is a bore" was a rallying cry to architects to embrace the messy vitality of contemporary life, and to experiment more freely with both highbrow historical references and lowbrow kitsch and vernacular sources. Postmodern architecture has taken many forms but is characterized generally by its plurality and by an interest in communication and narrative through architectural design. As opposed to the dissonant collage of the Los Angeles School of Postmodernism, San Francisco Postmodernism highlighted contextual and regional influences, drawing from local historical reference material and a long tradition of eclecticism in the Bay Region Tradition. In San Francisco, architectural Postmodernism was influenced by anti-Manhattanization and redevelopment sentiments, a burgeoning preservation movement, and new urban planning policies. Watershed moments in local architectural Postmodernism were the installation of the <i>Strada Novissima</i> from the Venice Biennale in Fort Mason Center in 1982, showcasing architectural Postmodernism, and the adoption of the 1985 Downtown Plan.</p> <p>Significant examples of Postmodern architecture include excellent and distinctive examples of the style, drawing from the character-defining features outlined below while recognizing the inherent eclecticism and pluralism of the style. Notable examples of Postmodernist architecture in San Francisco include residential properties, as well as some exceptional civic, institutional, and commercial high-rise examples. Significant examples of Postmodernist architecture, especially as the period of significance begins about 50 years ago, will typically be by locally or nationally notable architects or firms, and may have demonstrated significance through publication and/or awards. Due to the relatively recent construction of Postmodernist buildings, eligible examples are expected to have a high degree of integrity.</p>
Period of Significance:	Mid-1970s-2000
Justification of Period of Significance:	The period of significance begins in the mid-1970s, when architectural Postmodernism began to be constructed in San Francisco. While New Modernism became increasingly popular in the 1990s, Postmodernism continued to be utilized through the 1990s, with only few notable examples completed in the early 2000s. ²⁵²
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide. The Financial District and Downtown/Civic Center have some of the highest concentrations, along with SoMa and South Beach. Other residential and institutional examples are scattered through other neighborhoods but tend to be in central and eastern neighborhoods.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Downtown Core; Public Art, Monuments & Murals; Landscapes.

²⁵² Postmodern style office buildings designed in the 1990s were completed in the early 2000s, such as the Gap Building (2 Folsom Street, 2001) by Robert A.M. Stern. Hart Production Studio (722 Bryant Street) by Michael Graves was completed in 2005.

Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3
Associated Property Type(s):	Single-Family: Attached Single-Family: Semi-detached Single-Family: Detached Multi-Family: Small Apartments, including Live/Work Multi Family: Large Apartments, including Live/Work Commercial: Downtown Core Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Public & Private Institutions Municipal & Federal Buildings Artistic Expression: Public Art, Monuments, & Murals Designed Landscape
Property Type Description(s):	Commercial, in particular downtown office buildings and hotels, are the most common property type associated with Postmodernism. Other associated property types include institutional, civic/municipal, educational, and multi-family properties, including the live/work lofts that became popular in the 1990s. Single-family residences in the Postmodern style are fairly rare across the city, but include some of the more notable architect-designed examples of the style.

Criterion C/3 Eligibility Standards

A property *may* be considered an eligible resource under Criterion C/3, if it meets the following:

- Constructed during the period of significance (mid-1970s to 2000) and meets relevant criterion considerations for properties of the recent past; refer to “Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old” in the **Introduction** of this report.
- Significant examples of Postmodernism that may qualify as eligible historic resources even part of the ‘recent past,’ will be excellent or distinctive expressions of Postmodernism. Comparative analysis with other contemporaneous examples of Postmodernism is important to understanding whether the property may rise to a level of significance for eligibility under Criterion C/3.
 - Quality of design or significance may be demonstrated (but is not guaranteed) through publication in architectural journals of record, design awards, subsequent architectural monographs or books, and/or association with an Architect or Builder of Merit, or a prominent architectural firm.
 - Evaluators should recognize that Postmodernism in San Francisco is distinctive and often much more contextual than the flamboyant, dissonant collage Postmodernism of the Los Angeles School or other strains of Postmodern Classicism. However, eligible examples of contextual Postmodernism should still be distinctive expressions that have exceptional or unique qualities of design. Contextual buildings that might be described as “good background buildings” support the quality of urban design and neighborhood character but are not likely to be individually eligible under Criterion C/3.
 - Properties exhibiting historicist derivative and pastiche architecture from the late twentieth century (including Neo-Mansard, Neo-Victorian, and other ‘Neo’ revival styles) are not eligible under Criterion C/3 for their architectural design alone.

- Postmodern residential architecture may share overlapping characteristics with Third Bay Tradition architecture, which does not preclude properties from being distinctive, significant examples of residential architecture under Criterion C/3.
- Must retain character-defining features and have high levels of integrity, particularly integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Rarity of an extant property type in the Postmodernist style may be a consideration in determining eligibility.
- Properties that include an original, associated public artwork and/or designed landscape, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape and/or public art should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features.
 - In some cases, a public artwork and/or designed landscape may also rise to a level of individual significance. Refer also to the evaluative frameworks in following historic context statements: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* (in progress) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned).
- Other considerations:
 - Properties designed or constructed by an Architect or Builder of Merit, particularly if the resource is a rare or exceptional example of the architect or builder's work in San Francisco, should be considered. Refer to the Evaluation Framework in *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* for further information.
 - Examples of adaptive reuse (including live/work units) may include Postmodernist additions or alterations, which may be considered for eligibility under Criterion C/3 as examples of Postmodernism; however, examples have not been identified during the course of researching this historic context statement. Eligible properties would include distinctive, full examples of Postmodernist design that are clearly visible and expressed at the exterior or within the public realm; in other words, an interior remodel of an existing building for an adaptive reuse is unlikely to be eligible under Criterion C/3 for association with the theme of Postmodernism.
 - Live/work artist loft conversions that adapt an existing building with primarily interior alterations are unlikely to be significant under Criterion C/3 for association with the live/work conversion, but may be significant under other criteria or for other associations such as with artistic or counterculture communities or movements.
 - A property may also qualify under Criterion C/3 as a contributor to a historic district if it is situated within a geographically cohesive grouping of buildings related by design or by an architect or developer. In order to meet local, state, and/or national registration requirements as a district, a majority of contributing properties would need to retain most of their character-defining features. Generally, contributors to a historic district need not meet as high a threshold for integrity as individual buildings; however, at this time, a high degree of integrity would be expected for Postmodernist buildings if part of an eligible historic district as not much time has passed since their original construction.
 - Corporate Postmodernist buildings are concentrated in the Financial District and Union Square areas, but are generally interspersed with both older and newer buildings. Thus, it is unlikely that a grouping of Corporate Postmodernist buildings would be eligible as a historic district only for association with their Corporate Postmodernist architectural style under Criterion C/3. Likewise, Postmodernist civic buildings are interspersed with older Beaux-Arts buildings in the Civic Center and are designed in a sensitive and contextual manner as appropriate additions within the cultural landscape, but the

Postmodern buildings are unlikely to be eligible as a historic district only for their association with Postmodernist architecture under Criterion C/3.

- Contiguous clusters or groupings of residential Postmodernist buildings may be eligible as small historic districts if they collectively express a distinctive representation of Postmodern architecture and/or are exemplary of the work of an Architect of Merit.²⁵³

Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of Postmodernist architecture significant under Criterion C/3 are those elements that represent its significant design qualities relative to its date of construction. Postmodernism has a range of expressions that vary between property types and include ironic and Classical idioms, collage aesthetic, contextual and regional design, and more straight historicism. As such, a list of characteristic features associated with Postmodernism should not be understood or treated as finite.²⁵⁴ The following are features are associated with significant Postmodern properties under Criterion C/3, and are grouped according to property type:

Commercial Postmodernism

- Massing is often stepped back or otherwise broken up by features such as windows or ornamentation.
- Steel frame construction is typical in high-rises. Smaller commercial buildings may have other construction methods.
- Buildings typically have a tripartite composition with an articulated base, shaft, and top.
- Building tops are highly articulated rather than flat, terminating in roof shapes that may be stepped back, triangular, faux-Mansard, or capped with spires.
- Typical cladding types include polished and unpolished granite and concrete or other manufactured panels that give the appearance of stone.
- Fenestration may be uniform at the shaft, but often is more divided with different window sizes and groupings across the façade.
- Glazing is typically dark or mirrored.
- Architectural features and applied ornamentation often have an exaggerated presence or scale.
- In addition to new, applied ornamentation, buildings may incorporate remnant historical features from the built environment including former building facades or ornamental details.
- Columns and arcades at the ground level are common.
- Buildings may be set back on a designed plaza or built out to the lot lines.
- Most downtown commercial Postmodern buildings are subject to the provisions of the 1985 Downtown Plan and include a privately owned public open space (POPOS) which may be a plaza, park, roof deck, or atrium, and public art. POPOS may include fountains or seating areas.

Residential Postmodernism

- Buildings may be built out to fit small urban lots, but massing is often irregular or includes irregular projecting features.
- Roof types vary but are often highly expressive, and may be irregular or composite forms.
- Cladding types vary and include a wide range of materials, but often respond to the surrounding context. Materials may include regional materials such as wood shingles, wood board or board-and-batten, or stucco. In post-industrial neighborhoods a ‘collage aesthetic’ is more common with materials including corrugated metal, sheet metal, and composite panels.

²⁵³ Known clusters of Postmodernist architecture by Donald MacDonald are located in SoMa and Duboce Triangle/Western Addition and should be evaluated as groupings. A number of examples of Postmodernist architecture by Jeremy Kotas exist along Laidley Street, but are interspersed amongst homes of many styles; as such, they may not meet the definition of eligibility as a contiguous historic district and be better evaluated individually.

²⁵⁴ The same is true for other Late Modernist and Postmodernist styles which have a wide, and sometimes divergent, range of expressions especially across property types.

- Applied, exaggerated, eclectic, or playful ornamentation or architectural features, such as columns, chimneys, bay windows, dormers, or cornices, are common.
- Windows with unusual or unexpected shapes, detailing, or location are common.
- Selective references to vernacular or classical design features from earlier eras, but not as expressions of a revival style, are typical.
- Bay windows are a common feature but may be exaggerated, skewed, or unusually shaped.
- A playful or vibrant use of color on select architectural features is found in some single-family and smaller multi-unit buildings.

Civic, Institutional & Recreational Postmodernism

- Asymmetrical massing and façade arrangement are typical.
- Contextual exterior materials, such as grey concrete or granite around the Civic Center, or brick in former industrial or waterfront neighborhoods.
- Applied ornamentation including Classical, Beaux Arts, or Victorian era motifs, may be used, or ‘double-coding’ of form or ornament.
- Playful or vibrant use of color may be used in some cases but is distinctly not a feature of Postmodernism in the Civic Center, where Postmodern buildings are respectful of the gray tone of the Beaux-Arts civic buildings.

Integrity Considerations

A property eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain the majority of its aspects of integrity dating to the period when the significant design was completed, with an emphasis of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The building's significant design qualities should remain readily apparent, and the majority of original features and materials that convey the significant design should remain extant. Given the fact that most Postmodern properties are less than 50 years old, individually eligible properties should retain a high level of integrity. In some cases, particularly rare or early property type examples or significant projects may warrant consideration of integrity if alterations are primarily limited to paint or replacement of windows or doors. Significant alterations to exterior cladding and window openings are not typical but may become more common in the future. Replacement window systems should be considered when evaluating for integrity of design and materials; however, in-kind replacement of window systems that retains the original fenestration pattern and visual character of the building may not result in an overall loss of integrity.

Use of playful or vibrant color is a typical feature of some idioms of Postmodernist architecture—particularly in residential and institutional properties outside of Downtown and the Civic Center—and may be considered when assessing historic integrity and identifying character-defining features. Changes to color through repainting have the potential to affect integrity of design—particularly where vibrant color is a significant character-defining feature—or obscure original materials, but should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Alterations to office and hotel lobbies and plazas are common. Original design and materials of publicly accessible lobbies and plazas, including public artwork, can contribute to the overall character of Postmodern buildings downtown. The loss of an original lobby, particularly if alterations are primarily limited to interior spaces, is unlikely to diminish overall integrity to the point of ineligibility. However, cumulative alterations to features such as lobbies, ground floor windows and storefronts, plazas, public artwork, and other features may result in a lack of integrity.

Integrity of location is expected for individually eligible Postmodern properties. In an urban environment such as San Francisco, it is expected that the broad setting and nearby properties will change over time; changes to the area surrounding a property are generally unlikely to be a factor in evaluating late twentieth century properties under Criterion C/3.



Fig. 171. The Golden Gateway Commons (750 Front Street, 1980-83) is a three-block mixed-use complex designed by Fisher-Friedman Associates within the Golden Gateway redevelopment project area. Landscape architect Anthony Guzzardo designed the roof terraces. The contextual use of brick for this site along the waterfront provides a transition from the former warehouse district to the high density of the rest of the Golden Gateway. The arched windows and cutouts, expressed chimneys, and projecting window bays and balconies contribute to the Postmodern design, and the complex overall has few exterior alterations. The property appears eligible under Criterion C/3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull, 2021.)



Fig. 172. 388 Market Street (1986) was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), which was one of the most prolific firms in downtown high-rise construction in the late twentieth century. This building exemplified the firm's identity shift from stalwart Modernists to willing Postmodernists. The slick polished granite and tripartite composition are characteristic of downtown Postmodernism. The massing of the flatiron building—a circle enveloped by a triangle—is distinctive and executed in a manner that exhibits the high quality of design achieved by many (although not all) of SOM's late twentieth century high-rises. The building appears eligible under Criterion 3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 173. 101 Montgomery Street (1984, William Schuppel & Associates) has features of downtown high-rise Postmodernism, including a tripartite composition with a ground floor arcade and exaggerated features and ornament. However, the building lacks distinction in design and material quality and is not associated with an identified Architect of Merit, nor does William Schuppel & Associates appear likely to meet the criteria for a firm of merit. The building does not meet the individual eligibility requirements under Criterion C/3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 174. The Gleeson Residence (610 Rhode Island Street, 1989-91) is exemplary of Daniel Solomon's regionalist Postmodernism. The exaggerated presence of the central chimney and the small repeating square windows on the projecting bays provide an ambiguous sense of scale, and the asphalt shingles are both familiar and unexpected. Daniel Solomon should be evaluated as a potential local Architect of Merit. The residence appears eligible under California Register Criterion 3. Further research would be needed to establish potential "exceptional significance" under National Register Criterion C and Criterion Consideration G.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 175. The Postmodern live/work lofts at 1568 Indiana Street (1999, Gary Gee) include playful forms, color, and porthole windows. However, the building does not exhibit a level of craftsmanship or distinctive design that appears to rise to the level of individual significance under Criterion C/3, especially as an example of the recent past (less than 45 years old).

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 176. Sumner Rowhouses (1-7 Sumner Street, 1993) by Donald MacDonald. These Postmodern residences respond to the post-industrial context of SoMa and include uniquely expressive and unusual bay windows and shed dormers, as well as industrial metal panel cladding. The residence at the right has been painted black, which diminishes the design and material integrity of the individual building, but it would still contribute to a small district of these four properties as the form and design of the building are still legible. The grouping is not likely to meet the threshold of “exceptional significance” for National Register Criterion G, but could be eligible for the California Register under Criterion 3. MacDonald should be evaluated as a potential Architect of Merit.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 177. The R. Mittelstadt Duplex (21-23 Prospect Avenue, 1975-9) by Robert Mittelstadt is a very early example of Postmodernism in residential architecture in San Francisco. The originally unfinished wood has since been painted and the garage door replaced (Fig. 151). However, all other original features and materials remain, including the hanging Doric columns at the interior of the upper unit, visible through the arched bay window. This residence is an exceptional and early example of Postmodern residential architecture in San Francisco and despite being painted appears to be eligible under California Register Criterion 3.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 178. Victorian Mews (1978, Barovetto, Ruscitto & Barovetto) is a full-block condo complex bounded by 19th, Wisconsin, 20th, and Carolina streets in Potrero Hill that include three-story buildings with Victorian era pastiche features paired with modern amenities such as a pool, tennis courts, and parking garages. The historicist pastiche reflects a 1970s interest in historic architecture, the preservation movement, and contextual urbanism, especially in residential design. However, this type of historicist pastiche does not represent an architecturally significant or distinguished form of Postmodernism and is not eligible for listing under Criterion C/3 for architectural design.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 179. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA, 151 3rd Street, 1995) by Mario Botta uses orientation of the brick units to create a patterned ornamentation, and black and white striped granite is used at the columned base and projecting oculus atrium. A 2016 expansion of the museum designed by Snøhetta resulted in the removal of the Botta-designed, central black granite interior staircase. All other major exterior features remain, including the jagged profile of an exterior side stair. As such, the property appears to retain sufficient integrity for eligibility under California Register Criterion 3, and may rise to the level of “exceptional significance” under National Register Criterion C and Criterion Consideration G, as it is one of the most exceptional examples of Postmodernism in San Francisco and one of very few buildings by internationally renowned architect Mario Botta in the United States.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

Theme: New Modernism (late 1980s-2000)

New Modernism is an architectural style or approach that evolved in the late 1980s as a reaction to Postmodernism, and that can be seen as an offshoot of Modernism. While there is not wide consensus on how to name, categorize, or describe post-Postmodern architecture, the terms “New Modernism” and “Neomodernism” (and, less often, “Meta-Modernism”) have been used by some critics and architects. The term “Contemporary” architecture is often also used as a more general placeholder term but is one that has a shifting definition as it is understood to refer to our present moment or generation. Part of the challenge in categorizing and describing architecture from the 1990s and onward is that we do not yet benefit from many decades or generations of distance. Indeed, many of the practitioners of New Modernism in the late twentieth century in San Francisco are still practicing today, and their work continues to mature, change, and evolve.

This document uses the term New Modernism to signal that the architecture described is, generally, a continuation or evolution of Modernism rather than a revival of a particular type of Modernism. This term also acknowledges that New Modernism is continuing to evolve in our present time, and that there may be other useful distinctions or sub-categories to describe various trends and approaches within contemporary twenty-first century architecture in future scholarship. However, the term “Neo-Modernism” has been and can be used fairly interchangeably to describe architecture after Postmodernism. It should be acknowledged that most architects working in the 1990s and onward would be unlikely to ascribe the term “New Modernist” to themselves or their body of work (not unlike how most architects rejected the label of “Postmodernist”), and generally resist labels and categorization of architectural style as reductive.²⁵⁵ However, even if not a “style” in the stricter sense of earlier nineteenth century architectural styles and early twentieth century period revivals, New Modernism can describe an approach, series of values, common formal and material choices, and an overall aesthetic that sets it apart from Late Modernism and Postmodernism.

New Modernism emerged in the 1980s as a response to architectural Postmodernism, especially historicist and Neo-Classical Postmodernism, which had grown in popularity from the 1970s and peaked in the 1980s. Many architects were beginning to perceive Postmodernism as tired and pastiche, and a dead-end for the avant-garde. Kenneth Frampton had been pointedly criticizing Postmodernism for its superficiality as early as 1980 when reviewing the “Presence of the Past” Venice Biennale, and Elizabeth Farrelly, already in 1986, declared “Post modernism is dead. Some have known from the start that it was no more than a painted corpse.”²⁵⁶ Mitchell Schwarzer, Architectural historian and former planner, referred to the 1980s as the “nadir of architectural design” in San Francisco—an opinion likely shared by many of the architects who began to define the local New Modernism.²⁵⁷ Nationally, architects like Peter Eisenman were part of a loose cohort of architects deemed the “Deconstructivists” or “Deconstructionists” by Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley in a 1988 exhibition at the MOMA in New York City called “Deconstructivist Architecture.”²⁵⁸ Jencks has observed that Deconstructivist architecture’s “explosive space” had broken out of the “dumb box” of Modernism, and while some critics and theorists locate Deconstructivism within Postmodernism, Jencks associated it with Neo-Modernism, as the

²⁵⁵ Architectural critic Charles Jencks observed “most architects, like most people, are bored by labels, finding them reductive and constricting, like ill-fitting suites. There is much to be said for the view that all labels—stylistic, ideological, historical—distort the perception of architecture and reduced it to verbal categories [...] however, words and classifications cannot be avoided in creation and perception.”; Charles Jencks, *The New Moderns: From Late- to Neo-Modernism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 17. The resistance to labels, and the fuzziness of labels, is further evident in Jencks’s interviews with architects such as Philip Johnson, Peter Eisenman, Richard Meier, and Fumihiko Maki, in *The New Moderns*.

²⁵⁶ Kenneth Frampton, “The Need for Roots,” republished in *Archetype* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1982), 14; and E.M. Farrelly, “The New Spirit,” *Architectural Record* (August 1986), accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.architectural-review.com/archive/the-new-spirit-by-e-m-farrelly>.

²⁵⁷ Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 53.

²⁵⁸ Jencks, *The New Moderns*, 9, 212; Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1988).

architects were generally united in their “contempt” for Postmodernism.²⁵⁹ While plenty of debate has occurred about whether Deconstructivism ever existed as a style or even a meaningful category, the work presented in the exhibition demonstrated a break with the orthodoxy of Postmodernism and signaled a new avant-garde within the profession. This avant-garde, including Eisenman, Rem Koolhass, Daniel Libeskind, Zaha Hadid, and others engaged in abstract, asemantic and non-communicative architecture, theory-heavy explorations of program, process, material, and form. The rare examples of built Deconstructivist architecture were not built in San Francisco until the twenty-first century with the Federal Building (90 7th Street, 2006 Thom Mayne of Morphosis) and Jewish Contemporary Museum (736 Mission Street, 2008, Daniel Libeskind).

Other explorations of New Modernism that began in the 1980s and blossomed in the 1990s revisited the tenets of Modernist architecture based on function, program, progress in material innovation, and lack of ornament or aestheticized material and structure. While developers, especially in downtown San Francisco, continued to favor Postmodernism as a populist mode and a safe route through the bureaucracy of design review at the Planning Department in the 1980s and even into the 1990s, by the late 1980s, architects sought a new way forward through a return to Modernist principles. Schwarzer, writing in 2007, stated that “contemporary design shares a great deal in common with mid-century modernism, including a concern for inventing and expressing new materials, and investigating and implementing new organizations of space.”²⁶⁰ He further observed that contemporary design, which he has also called “The New Modernism,” diverges from Modernism through means of design (especially CAD and custom and prefabricated materials), the prominence of new buildings in the public realm (including the Bilbao Effect), the architect’s role as a “cultural mediator,” and the move away from the Modernist tabula rasa approach to more site-specific design.²⁶¹

The shift away from Postmodernism to New Modernism in San Francisco was signaled with early projects such as the California DataMart (999 Brannan Street, 1986) by Tanner & VanDine, and publicly with the 1991 SFMOMA exhibition “In the Spirit of Modernism” ([Fig. 16](#)). As discussed in greater detail in the **Historic Context: Architectural Criticism, Publications & Exhibitions** section of this document, the SFMOMA exhibition was an explicit response to the excesses of Postmodernism, and included manifestos by each of the four architects featured—Jim Jennings, James Shay, William Stout, and Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy—about Modernism and its relevance to their work and contemporary San Francisco. The work featured in the exhibition demonstrated a return to certain tenets of Modernism, but also that “sensitivity to site and context” were now an important factor in the New Modernism.²⁶² Some of the projects featured in the SFMOMA exhibition included more overt references to early Modernist architecture with white stucco cubic massing à la the International Style, though such references became increasingly abstracted in the minimal approach that evolved over the 1990s and into the twenty-first century ([Fig. 180](#)). The establishment of the new architecture program at CCA, located in San Francisco rather than at the historic Oakland campus, in the late 1980s also brought a new avant-garde energy to architectural education, as well as architectural practice, as graduates represented a new generation of designers.

²⁵⁹ Jencks, *The New Moderns*, 274, 204.

²⁶⁰ Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 53.

²⁶¹ Schwarzer, *Architecture of the San Francisco Bay Area: A History & Guide*, 53. The ‘Bilbao Effect’ refers to the commissioning of a new, iconic piece of architecture to stimulate economic development through cultural investment, after the success of the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Bilbao, Spain in 1997.

²⁶² Thayer, “Four Modernists at SFMoMa,” 24.



Fig. 180. A model of the Oliver Residence (340 Lombard Street, 1996) by Jim Jennings was featured in the “In the Spirit of Modernism” exhibition at SFMOMA and was later recognized by *Architectural Record* as a 1998 Record House. The design has clear references back to International Style Modernism in the stuccoed, boxy massing and gridded metal windows. The interior has an exposed concrete cylindrical circulation core with a skylight that seems to reference stairways by Louis Kahn and the atrium at Mario Botta’s SFMOMA. Jennings’ work would evolve to epitomize the pure, minimalist end of the New Modernist spectrum.

(Source: Jim Jennings Architecture.)

The New Modernism of San Francisco explored a return to tenets of Modernism, including design based on program and function, use of high-tech and modern materials, and a lack of applied ornamentation. However, in San Francisco, New Modernism typically has had a more contextual and humane urbanist ethic, which was, in part, learned as reaction to the failures of Modernist planning and also prescribed by local regulations and urban design and residential design guidelines. New Modernist residential architecture in San Francisco ranges from the ‘industrial chic’ of 1990s live/work lofts to more pure minimalism characterized by simple geometric forms and simplified material palettes of metal, glass, and concrete (**Fig. 181**). For more information on live/work properties, which skyrocketed in popularity in the 1990s due to local regulatory changes, alongside the rise of the New Modernism, refer to the Live/Work Ordinance sub-section of the Historic Context chapter of this report.



Fig. 181. Studio & Apartments at 1022 Natoma Street (1992, right) and 1028 Natoma Street (2005, left) both by Stanley Saitowitz exhibit the more industrial chic that was common in New Modernist live/work lofts of the 1990s and the more pure, minimalist aesthetic that characterizes some of Saitowitz’s later work. Both buildings have an abstracted, multi-story bay window.

(Source: Stanley Saitowitz.)

Live/work lofts are exclusively located in the SoMa, Mission, and Potrero Hill neighborhoods, and these are the neighborhoods with the most New Modernist residential architecture in general. Other New Modernist residential architecture is found in various neighborhoods throughout the city, but tends to be in the northeastern and eastern neighborhoods. By the 1990s, very few lots were available in the geographically constrained city of San Francisco for individual property owners to buy and build a new home. As such, New Modernist residential projects are frequently renovations or significant expansions of existing residences in San Francisco.²⁶³

Although most examples of New Modernism do not utilize the regionally specific material palette associated with the Bay Traditions, examples of wood cladding can be found on some New Modernist single-family residences (**Fig. 182** and **Fig. 183**). Other regional and contextual characteristics can be found in New Modernist residential architecture, such as bay windows, but are typically highly abstracted. These residential examples of New Modernism exhibit a balance between globalized Modern architecture and regional specificity. Kenneth Frampton advocated for this “critical regionalist” approach to contemporary architecture, as a reaction to Postmodernism and its critiques of Modernism.²⁶⁴



Fig. 182. The Iann/Stoltz Residence (44 Reed Street, 1999) by Kuth/Ranieri Architects is an example of New Modernist residential architecture that incorporates regional context through its wood material and abstracted bay window.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 183. Barnes Residence (1401 Shotwell Street, 1999-2001) by Stanley Saitowitz is an example of New Modernist residential architecture that has subtle regional influences, including the wood siding and curved bay window. Steel I-beams are exposed at the exterior, articulating the floor plates and interior spaces, and at the interior exposed metal trusses at the roof are contrasted with wood ceilings.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²⁶³ Meanwhile, the devastating Oakland Firestorm of 1991 resulted in the destruction of over 2,800 homes. Amidst these ashes arose many adventurous experimentations in New Modernist (as well as Postmodernist) residential architecture by San Francisco and Bay Area firms that may not have much built work within the City of San Francisco. The confusingly titled *San Francisco Houses: After the Fire* (London: Ellipsis, 1997) by Peter Lloyd documents this architectural phenomenon.

²⁶⁴ Kenneth Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six points for an architecture of resistance,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983).

New Modernism also became closely associated with civic and cultural institutional buildings, especially as the trend of bringing in big-name starchitects and firms to design key buildings was taking hold. Yerba Buena Center, in particular, exemplifies this trend and represents a concentration of New Modernist museums, theaters, convention center, hotel, and retail buildings—most of which were designed by internationally known architects; these include the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street, 1993, Fumihiko Maki), Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA (700 Howard Street, 1993, James Stewart Polshek & Partners), Metreon (135 4th Street, 1999, Gary E. Handel & Associates) (Fig. 184).²⁶⁵ Refer also to the **Changes within Professional Practice** and **The Public Realm: Cultural Institutions, Waterfront, POPOS & Public Art** sub-sections of the Historic Context chapter of this document.



Fig. 184. The Blue Shield of California Theater (700 Howard Street, 1993) was designed by James Stewart Polshek & Partners (now known as Ennead). The theater exemplifies New Modernist design in its use of modern materials, pure geometries, and a minimalist aesthetic.²⁶⁶ The theater is one of several New Modernist cultural buildings in Yerba Buena Center.

(Source: Ennead.)

In addition to live/work adaptive reuse projects like Oriental Warehouse Lofts (650 Delancey Street, 1997, Fisher-Friedman Associates), New Modernism has been used for other adaptive reuse projects and additions (Fig. 59). By the 1990s, most lots in San Francisco were built out and city regulations around historic preservation meant that increasingly architects were finding creative ways to work within the existing built environment, such as the Green Glen industrial to office conversion (500 Treat Avenue, 1999, Peter Pfau Architects) and the conversion of a former SOM-designed 1951 Greyhound Bus maintenance facility by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy for the new CCA

²⁶⁵ Other New Modernist projects built in the early twenty-first century in Yerba Buena Center include the Four Seasons Hotel (2001, Gary Handel, 757 Market Street), Museum of the African Diaspora (2005, 685 Mission Street, The Freelon Group), Contemporary Jewish Museum (736 Mission Street, 2008, Daniel Libeskind), and SPUR Urban Center (2009, 654 Mission Street, Pfau Long Architecture). For more information on the Yerba Buena Center redevelopment area, refer to the *San Francisco Redevelopment Historic Context Statement* (in progress).

²⁶⁶ Awards included: Award of Honor for Design Excellence, AIA/San Francisco, 1995; AIA National Honor Award for Architecture, 1994; AIA National Honor Award for Interiors, 1994; Award, AIA/New York Chapter, 1994; USITT Architecture Award, United States Institute of Theatre Technology, 1994; Rudy Bruner Gold Medal for Urban Excellence, Institute for Urban Design, 1999; Award for Excellence in Design, AIA/New York State, 1994; Award for Excellence in Design, AIA/New York State, 1994. Refer to: "The Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA," Ennead, accessed online January 20, 2024, <https://www.ennead.com/work/yerba>.

San Francisco campus in 1998 (1111 8th Street) (**Fig. 185**, **Fig. 8**, and **Fig. 9**).²⁶⁷ The CCA campus in Potrero Hill continued to grow in the twenty-first century and features a cluster of New Modernist buildings designed by notable local architects.



Fig. 185. Peter Pfau Architects designed an adaptive reuse of an existing 1947 industrial building at 500 Treat Avenue for office use in 1999. Known as Green Glen, the building is named after the former linen service that operated out of the building. The intervention contrasts the new approach to Modernist design with an existing, albeit modest, Modernist industrial design.

(Source: SKS Partners.)

New Modernism lagged in use for downtown corporate office high-rises, which can likely be explained by a combination of factors including the fact that there is a long lead time with design, entitlements, and construction of such large projects, as well as a more conservative attitude of real estate developers who are often more comfortable following a proven path through entitlements and design review. A transitional design by SOM was completed in 1999 at 101 Second Street—the building returns to the glass and steel curtain wall of Miesian corporate Modernism, but still features a white stone paneling at the base and a portion of the tower, which is a material more closely associated with Postmodern corporate design and compliance with the 1971 Urban Design Plan and 1985 Downtown Plan. Likewise, the Four Seasons Hotel (757 Market Street, 2001, Gary Edward Handel & Associates) has a more contextual base design but a New Modernist glass and steel tower. By the late 2000s, New Modernist blue and green-tone glass skin towers replaced the contextual and pointy-hatted Postmodern corporate office towers as downtown construction shifted south of Market Street to the Transbay area.

Local practitioners associated with New Modernism in the late twentieth century include (alphabetical): David Baker & Associates, Fisher-Friedman Associates, Anne Fougeron, Gary Handel, Jim Jennings, Ira Kurlander, Kuth/Raineri, Pfau Architecture, Stanley Saitowitz, James Shay, SMWM, William Stout, Paulette Taggart, Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy, and Tanner & VanDine.

²⁶⁷ Lisa Findley, "Punching the Clock: Peter Pfau, AIA," *arcCA* 00.1 (2000), accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://arccadigest.org/punching-clock-peter-pfau-aia/>.

New Modernism Evaluation Criteria

Statement of Significance:	New Modernist architecture developed in response to Postmodernism, which by the 1980s was falling out of favor as it was perceived as superficial, tired, and pastiche. The New Modernists had an interest in returning to some of the principles of Modernism—including design based on program and function, the use of high-tech and modern materials, and a lack of applied ornamentation—while still carrying forward some of the humane urbanism that was learned in reaction to early and mid-twentieth century Modernism. New Modernist architecture includes modes that range from the ‘industrial chic’ of 1990s live/work lofts to pure, minimalism characterized by simple geometric forms and simplified material palettes of metal, glass, and concrete. Regional and contextual characteristics, such as bay windows and wood cladding, can be found in New Modernist residential architecture. The shift away from Postmodernism to New Modernism in San Francisco was signaled with early projects such as the DataMart (999 Brannan St, 1986) by Tanner & VanDine, and publicly with the 1991 SFMOMA exhibition “In the Spirit of Modernism.”
	Significant examples of New Modernist architecture typically display a full expression of the style, drawing from the character-defining features outlined below. Notable examples of New Modernist architecture built before 2000 include cultural and educational institutions, live/work lofts, and other residential buildings. Significant examples of New Modernist architecture, especially as period of significance begins less than 45 years ago, will be by locally or nationally notable architects or firms, and have demonstrated significance through publication and/or awards. Due to the relatively recent construction of New Modernist buildings, eligible examples are expected to have a high degree of integrity. Examples of adaptive reuse (including, but not limited to, live/work lofts) may be eligible as examples of New Modernist architecture, but in these cases the New Modernist additions or interventions should be visible at the exterior (not just interior remodels).
Period of Significance:	Late 1980s – 2000
Justification of Period of Significance:	The period of significance begins in the late 1980s, when a resurgent interest in the tenets of Modernism began to eclipse the era of architectural Postmodernism, and encompasses the rise of New Modernism in the 1990s became a prevalent architectural style, particularly for architect-designed buildings. As the style has continued to be utilized into the 2000s, the end of the period of significance may be reevaluated with future research and more scholarly distance.
Geographic Boundaries:	Citywide. The majority of New Modernist commercial, institutional and mixed-use buildings are located in the South of Market, Mission Bay, Potrero Hill, and Central Waterfront neighborhoods. Residential examples are found throughout the city but are most common in the east side of the city.
Related Citywide Historic Context Statement Themes of Significance:	Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals Biographies; Downtown Core; Redevelopment Agency; Public Art, Monuments & Murals; Landscapes.
Criteria for Eligibility:	NRHP: C; CRHR: 3

Associated Property Type(s):	Public & Private Institutions Residential: Multi-Family, including Live/Work Residential: Single-Family Commercial: Neighborhood Commercial Buildings Artistic Expression: Public Art, Monuments, & Murals Designed Landscape
Property Type Description(s):	Institutional buildings, including cultural institutions such as museums, are among the most notable examples of New Modernism from the period before 2000. Additionally, the style is found in single-family and multi-family residences, including the live/work lofts that became popular in the 1990s. New Modernism is also utilized in educational and commercial buildings, including offices, retail, and mixed-use buildings, but New Modernist examples of these property types become more common after 2000. New Modernism was not utilized in downtown commercial high-rise buildings until the 2000s. Most known examples of New Modernist transportation, recreational and religious institutions date to after 2000.

Criterion C/3 Eligibility Standards

A property *may* be considered an eligible resource under Criterion C/3, if it meets the following:

- Constructed during the period of significance (late 1980s to 2000) and meets relevant criterion considerations for properties of the recent past; refer to “Recent Past & Considerations for Resources Less than 50 Years Old” in the **Introduction** of this report.
- Significant examples of New Modernism that may qualify as eligible historic resources, even as part of the ‘recent past,’ will be full expressions of New Modernism and will have demonstrated architectural quality and/or influence within the local, regional, or national architecture or design field. Quality or significance may be demonstrated (but is not guaranteed) through publication in architectural journals of record, design awards, subsequent architectural monographs or books, and/or association with an Architect or Builder of Merit, or a prominent architectural firm. Comparative analysis with other contemporaneous examples of New Modernism is important to understanding whether a ‘recent past’ property may rise to a level of significance for eligibility under Criterion C/3.
- Must retain character-defining features and have high levels of integrity, particularly integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.
- Rarity of an extant property type in the New Modernist style may be a consideration in determining eligibility.
- Properties that include an original, associated public artwork and/or designed landscape, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape and/or public art should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity, and identification of character-defining features.
 - In some cases, a public artwork and/or designed landscape may also rise to a level of individual significance. Refer also to the evaluative frameworks in following historic context statements: *Public Art, Monuments & Murals* (in progress) and *Landscapes (1848-1989)* (planned).
- Other considerations:

- Properties designed or constructed by an Architect or Builder of Merit, particularly if the resource is a rare or exceptional example of the architect or builder's work in San Francisco, should be considered. Refer to the Evaluation Framework in *Architecture, Planning, & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* for further information.
- Examples of adaptive reuse (including live/work units) may include New Modernist additions or alterations, which may be considered for eligibility under Criterion C/3 as examples of New Modernism. Eligible properties would include distinctive, full examples of New Modernist design that are clearly visible and expressed at the exterior or within the public realm; in other words, an interior remodel of an existing building for an adaptive reuse is unlikely to be eligible under Criterion C/3 for association with the theme of New Modernism.
 - Live/work artist loft conversions that adapt an existing building with primarily interior alterations are unlikely to be significant under Criterion C/3 for association with the live/work conversion, but may be significant under other criteria or for other associations such as with artistic or counterculture communities or movements.
- Properties that include designed landscapes that are directly associated with buildings or building complexes, including residential gardens, corporate plazas, and institutional grounds, should be evaluated comprehensively. In other words, the landscape should be evaluated as part of the overall design of the property and factored into considerations of significance and integrity and identification of character-defining features.
- A property may also qualify under Criterion C/3 as a contributor to a historic district if it is situated within a geographically cohesive grouping of buildings related by design or by an architect or developer. In order to meet local, state, and/or national registration requirements as a district, a majority of contributing properties would need to retain most of their character-defining features. Generally, contributors to a historic district need not meet as high a threshold for integrity as individual buildings; however, at this time, a high degree of integrity would be expected for New Modernist buildings as part of an eligible historic district since not much time has passed since their original construction.
 - Clusters of New Modernist buildings are located at Yerba Buena Center and the CCA campus in Potrero Hill; however, some of the New Modernist buildings in these clusters were built after 2000. These clusters may not, at this time, meet the criteria considerations for districts less than 50 years old, or would require further research to justify the coherence of their association under Criterion 3/C as eligible groupings.

Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features of New Modernist architecture significant under Criterion C/3 are those elements that represent its significant design qualities relative to its date of construction. While New Modernist architecture has a particular approach to form and materials, it is not a strict "style" like more traditional styles or period revivals that have an identifiable set of common features and materials that were codified through architectural education and training, pattern books, and catalogs. As such, a list of characteristic features associated with New Modernism should not be understood or treated as finite.²⁶⁸ The following are features which can be characteristic of significant New Modernist architecture:

- Boxy massing is typical.

²⁶⁸ The same is true for other Late Modernist and Postmodernist styles which have a wide, and sometimes divergent, range of expressions especially across property types.

- Flat roofs with no overhang are most common.
- Large, gridded glass walls are typical in institutional and commercial properties.
- Metal and other synthetic panels are common in industrial and commercial properties, typically creating a flat and/or gridded visual character. The grid of panel cladding is typically expressed through reveals (rather than projecting mullions).
- Industrial materials (including sheet metal, corrugated metal, industrial metal windows, exposed I-beam frames, etc.) are typical in live/work lofts and other residential and commercial examples in SoMa, the Mission, and Potrero Hill.
- Exposed concrete is typically smooth or polished and will often feature exposed tie-holes.
- Stucco and wood are less common exterior materials but may be found in New Modernist single-family residences.
- Residential buildings may have projecting window bays, which are usually square. Downtown corporate properties and cultural institutions may have associated designed landscapes, plazas, or roof gardens.

By the early 2000s, New Modernism had replaced Postmodernism as the predominant architectural style in downtown corporate high-rise construction. Corporate New Modernism is characterized by the extensive use of glass curtain walls. In distinction with Late Modern and Postmodern Architecture, corporate New Modern office towers typically utilize more opaque glass that may be blue or green in hue, as opposed to darker, opaque, or mirrored glass. Further research and documentation of New Modernism in the 2000s will be required in the future.

Integrity Considerations

A property eligible under Criterion C/3 should retain the majority of its aspects of integrity dating to the period when the significant design was completed, with an emphasis of integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The building's significant design qualities should remain readily apparent, and the majority of original features and materials that convey the significant design should remain extant. Due to the fact that New Modernist properties are still considered part of the "recent past" and relatively little time has passed since their construction, properties eligible under Criterion C/3 are expected to retain a high degree of integrity of design and materials. Still, minor changes such as installation of security gates in residential properties, or replacement garage doors or in-kind window replacements are unlikely to affect overall integrity, unless other minor changes accumulate to result in a loss of integrity of design or materials. Integrity of location is expected for individually eligible New Modernist properties. In an urban environment such as San Francisco, it is expected that the broad setting and nearby properties will change over time; changes to the area surrounding a property are generally unlikely to be a factor in evaluating late twentieth century properties under Criterion C/3.



Fig. 186. The Corson-Heiser Live/Work Building (25 Zoe Street, 1992) by Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy is a distinctive example of a New Modernist live/work loft. The style is closely associated with live/work lofts which became popular in the early 1990s when San Francisco passed an ordinance that incentivized their construction in SoMa, the Mission, and Potrero Hill, around the same time that New Modernism was eclipsing Postmodernism in popularity. Although the firm has not yet been identified or evaluated as an architectural firm of merit, the firm won the AIA Architecture Firm award in 2017 and has produced a notable body of work.²⁶⁹ The firm was featured in the 1991 “In the Spirit of Modernism” exhibit at SFMOMA, and helped define the New Modernist architectural locally. The Corson-Heiser Live/Work Building was awarded as a 1992 Record House by *Architectural Record* and has been widely published since. The building has characteristic features of New Modernism including simple geometric massing and industrial materials, and is uniquely expressive of its function as a live-work space with the division of space clearly articulated by the exterior gridded windows. (Refer to historic photos: **Fig. 58**). The building appears unaltered at the exterior. As a particularly distinctive example of a New Modernist live/work building, it appears to be eligible as a historic resource under California Register Criterion 3. The firm is a highly recognized firm and it is likely that some additional research may make the case for “exceptional significance” under National Register Criterion C.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

²⁶⁹ The AIA Architecture Firm award is awarded annually and is considered one of the highest national honors that a firm can receive (and is different than the AIA Gold Medal which can only be awarded to an individual). Very few Bay Area firms have received the award—others include Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons (1965); Ernest J. Kump (1970); Esherick Homsey Dodge & Davis (1986); and Gensler (2000); as well as a few firms such as SOM (1962, 1996) and Mithun (2023) which have major offices in San Francisco.



Fig. 187. 960 Natoma Live/Work (1993) by David Sternberg in SoMa. The building has some of the typical characteristics of New Modernism, especially as associated with live/work lofts, including boxy massing and industrial materials. However, it is not a particularly distinctive example either of New Modernism or a live-work loft such that it would meet the eligibility thresholds for significance, especially as a property less than 45 years old. The building does not exhibit the level of material detailing found in the Corson-Heiser Live/Work Building, using generic window and fire escape components, and other properties more fully exhibit the New Modernist style.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 188. Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA (700 Howard Street, 1993) by nationally renowned architect James Polshek is a distinctive example of New Modernist architecture used for a cultural institution. The theater, which won numerous awards, exhibits a return to Modernist geometric forms, with a new complexity of massing and refined, contemporary materials. The building is likely eligible under California Register Criterion 3, but may not meet the “exceptional significance” (Criterion G) threshold under National Register Criterion C.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)



Fig. 189. The Metreon shopping center (Metreon (135 4th Street, 1999) by Gary E. Handel & Associates, while an early example of New Modernist architecture applied to a commercial complex of this scale in San Francisco, does not appear to rise to the level individual eligibility under Criterion C/3, especially as a property less than 45 years old. Other properties in the Yerba Buena Center area more fully exhibit the New Modernist style.

(Source: Page & Turnbull.)

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Appendix

Appendix A: Architects & Designers Identified in Research

The following lists includes notable architects, landscape architects, and designers identified during the course of research for this historic context statement whose work is connected to the themes of Modernist and Postmodern architecture and landscape in San Francisco during the period from 1960 to 2000. These professionals appear worthy of inclusion in the *Architecture, Planning & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies (Biographies HCS)* historic context statement being developed by the San Francisco Planning Department, and are not among those who have already been included in the document. Inclusion on this list is not a determination regarding whether a practitioner rises to the level of Architect of Merit; such a determination would be made in the *Biographies HCS*.

Architects & Engineers

- Backen, Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)
- Baker, David ²⁷⁰
- Batey & Mack (Andrew Batey and Mark Mack)
- Becket, Welton
- Burger & Coplans
- Corlett & Spackman
- Eichler, Joseph ²⁷¹
- Fougeron, Anne
- Geering, Robert (Fisher-Friedman Associates)
- Gensler, Arthur ²⁷²
- Goldstein, Marc (SOM)
- Heller, Jeffrey (Heller Manus Architects)
- HOK (Gyo Obata and Bill Valentine)
- Holt Hinshaw Pfau Jones
- Hood, Bobbie Sue (Hood Miller Associates)
- Levy, Toby (Levy Art + Architecture)
- Lin, T.Y. (structural engineer)
- Lumsden, Anthony (DMJM)
- Jennings, Jim
- Johnson, Philip
- Kaplan/McLaughlin/Diaz
- Keatinge-Clay, Paffard
- Kotas, Jermey (Kotas/Pantaleoni)
- MacDonald, Donald ²⁷³
- Maule, Tallie
- Podesta, William
- Roake, Stephen Allen ²⁷⁴
- Shay, James
- Sheets, Millard
- Simon Martin-Vegue Winkelstein Morris (SMWM) ²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ Although David Baker is included in the *Biographies HCS*, the project list could be more fully developed.

²⁷¹ Although for architects who frequently worked with Joseph Eichler and his company Eichler Homes (including Claude Oakland, Frederick Earl Emmons, A. Quincy Jones, Anshen, & Allen, William "Steve" Allen, and Robert "Bob" Anshen) are included in the *Biographies HCS*, given Eichler's extensive influence on Bay Area homebuilding, involvement in fair housing, and number of built projects in San Francisco, a focused context is warranted.

²⁷² Project list could be expanded as Gensler worked on numerous local projects.

²⁷³ Project list and bio should be expanded to also include early work on affordable and multi-family, which includes many notable local examples of the Postmodern style in residential architecture.

²⁷⁴ Roake is included in the *Biographies HCS*, but the project list could be more fully developed. A number of projects are listed in Anne Vernez Moudon, *Built for Change: Neighborhood Architecture in San Francisco* (1986).

²⁷⁵ Cathy Simon is included in the *Biographies HCS*, but a biography of the firm and other principals has not yet been prepared.

- Solomon, Daniel
- SOM ²⁷⁶
- Stout, William ²⁷⁷
- Taggart, Paulett
- Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy ²⁷⁸
- Van Bourg/Nakamura.

Landscape Architects & Other Designers

- Abergast, Mai
- Asawa, Ruth
- Galli, Tom
- Guzzardo, Anthony ²⁷⁹
- Halprin, Lawrence ²⁸⁰
- Hargreaves Associates
- Larsen, Marget
- Manwaring, Michael
- Painter, Michael
- Royston, Robert / RHAA ²⁸¹
- Stauffacher Solomon, Barbara "Bobbie" ²⁸²
- Walker, Peter.

Other internationally recognized architects, landscape architects, and designers discussed within this report were not based in San Francisco and only built one or a few projects in San Francisco. Thus, these practitioners may be a lower priority for the development of biographies, especially as their biographies and project lists are well documented elsewhere.²⁸³

Some architects, landscape architects, and designers may be found to warrant biographies with additional research or information.²⁸⁴

Some architects, landscape architects, and designers began their careers during this period, but most of their notable projects were built in the twenty-first century and may warrant additional research in the future.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁶ Biography and project list should be expanded to end of the twentieth century. SOM was one of the most prolific architects of downtown high-rise buildings in San Francisco during the period from 1960-2000.

²⁷⁷ William Stout worked as an architect in the San Francisco Bay Area and, while there are relatively few built works by Stout compared to some architects on this list, his contributions to the architectural profession during this period and beyond are notable, including in the form of William Stout Architectural Books, a bookstore in North Beach, William Stout Publishers, and *Pamphlet Architecture*.

²⁷⁸ Previously, Tanner & VanDine. Now, Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects.

²⁷⁹ Note that Guzzardo designed the Transamerica Pyramid Redwood Park, not Tom Galli as is currently indicated in the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design 1935-1970 Historic Context Statement*. Refer to Page & Turnbull, *Transamerica Pyramid Historic Resource Evaluation Part 1* (November 16, 2021).

²⁸⁰ Halprin's project list should be expanded into later 20th century, including important projects such as Levi's Plaza. Also, note that the Embarcadero Center landscape was *not* designed by Halprin; only Embarcadero Plaza was designed by Halprin.

²⁸¹ RHAA, the legacy firm of Robert Royston, has continued to practice in San Francisco. Expansion of the existing biography for Robert Royston to include additional projects and expanding to include projects by RHAA in the later 20th century would be beneficial.

²⁸² Biography and project list should be expanded. Notable local projects that Walker worked on include Maritime Plaza, Buchanan Street Mall, and Sydney Walton Square, among others.

²⁸³ These include: Mario Botta, James Ingo Freed (Pei Cobb Freed), M. Paul Friedberg, Romaldo Giurgola, Michael Graves, Herzog & de Meuron, Frank Israel, Ricardo Legorreta, Fumihiko Maki, Thom Mayne (Morphosis), Cesar Pelli, James Polshek, Rafael Viñoly Architects, Paul Rudolph, Adèle Naudé Santos, and William Turnbull.

²⁸⁴ These may include but are not limited to: Ace Architects, Valentino Agnoli, Ant Farm, The Architects Collaborative, Violeta Autumn, Robert Hing Chan, Gary Gee, Interim Office of Architecture (IOOA, with John Randolph and Bruce Tomb), David Ireland, Oleg Ivanitsky, Ira Kurlander, Albert Lanier, Jan Lubicz-Nycz, George Matsumoto, McCue Boone Tomsick (Gerald McCue), Robert Mittelstadt, George Omi (Omi Lang Associates), Wayne Osaki, Harry Lee Overstreet John Pflueger, William Podesta, Praxis (Stephanie Felch and David Ogorzalek), Adèle Naudé Santos (Sandos Prescott & Associates), Sim Van der Ryn, Richard Vignolo, and Sandy Walker (Walker & Moody).

²⁸⁵ These include but are not limited to: Cheryl Barton, Mark Cavagnero, Andrea Cochran, Andy Goldsworthy, Walter Hood, Mark Horton, Jensen & Macy Architects, Owen Kennerly, Kuth/Ranieri Architects (Liz Ranieri and Byron Kuth), Laurie Olin, Craig Steely, Robert Swatt, and WRNS.

DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS IN LOCAL PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

The following discussion of demographic shifts in local professional practice is provided to give context for understanding the contributions of architects and designers from underrepresented groups, including women, African American, and Asian American architects, as well as to provide additional areas of study. Disparities in educational and professional opportunities for women and individuals from racial and ethnic minorities should be considered when evaluating whether a practitioner rises to the level of a local Architect of Merit. Per the Evaluation Criteria in the *Architecture, Planning & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies*, “A practitioner may also rise to the level of Architect of Merit for contributing to the history of a particular cultural, ethnic, or racial group in San Francisco or for working in the field as a rare member from their cultural, ethnic, or racial group.”²⁸⁶

While the architecture and landscape architecture professions did diversify over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, the professions have still not come close to anything like gender parity or a reflection of the racial and ethnic diversity in the national, state, or Bay Area population. Many more women and racial and ethnic minority individuals entered educational programs, but the translation to licensed professionals and firm leaders was much lower.²⁸⁷ However, significant steps were made during later decades of the twentieth century in terms of organization and awareness, which were aided by broader civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and more local firms led by women and racial and ethnic minority individuals were established and practicing in San Francisco.

In 1974, a “Women in Architecture Symposium” was hosted by Washington University in St. Louis to address the challenges that women faced in the male-dominated profession of architecture. The symposium received national media attention and spurred additional events, discussions, exhibitions, and symposia nationwide. The Brooklyn Museum exhibited “Women in Architecture” in 1977, which was featured in *Progressive Architecture* (March 1977).²⁸⁸ Locally, in 1973, a group of Bay Area women in architecture incorporated the non-profit Organization of Women Architects (OWA) as networking and professional organization that hosted tours, lectures, exhibits, retreats, and other events; the organization, which still exists today, was renamed Organization of Women Architects + Design Professionals (OWA+DP) in 1978 (**Fig. 190**).²⁸⁹ The OWA made their presence known at the 1973 AIA annual convention in San Francisco with an eight-foot-tall photo of 50 local women architects. Inge Horton, OWA member and planner at the San Francisco Planning Department, published a book on early women architects in the Bay Area through 1951; her archive, housed at Virginia Tech, also includes

²⁸⁶ “Evaluation Criteria” in San Francisco Planning Department, *Architecture, Planning & Preservation Professionals: A Collection of Biographies* (adopted October 2023), 6, accessed online February 19, 2024, <https://sfplanning.org/project/architecture-planning-and-preservation-professionals-collection-biographies#info>.

²⁸⁷ The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) has several comprehensive national studies about diversity in architectural education and professional practice, including about women; African Americans; Latinos; Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders; Native and Indigenous peoples; and Middle Easterners and North Africans. These studies can be found on the ASCA website: “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion,” ACSA, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.acsa-arch.org/resources/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/>.

²⁸⁸ “Women in Architecture,” *Progressive Architecture* (March 1977), 37-77. The exhibition, organized by The Architectural League of New York through its Archive of Women in Architecture, was curated by architect Susana Torre, who also edited an accompanying publication. Refer to: “Women in Architecture,” *Progressive Architecture* (March 1977), 37-77; and Susana Torre, ed., *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977).

²⁸⁹ “40th Anniversary 2013: History of OWA,” Organization of Women Architects + Design Professionals, 2013, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://owa-usa.org/docs/1299-40th%20Anniv%202013-spreads.pdf>.

research about Bay Area women architects whose spanned the late twentieth century and/or into the twenty-first century.²⁹⁰



Fig. 190. Founding members of OWA on the rooftop of the SFAI Addition (800 Chestnut Street), 1973.

(Source: OWA+DP. Jeremiah Bragstad, photographer.)

Notable women who were practicing architecture, landscape architecture, and allied design fields in San Francisco in the late twentieth century include: Mai Abergast, Ruth Asawa, Gae Aulenti, Violeta Autumn, Cheryl Barton, Patricia Coplans (Burger & Coplans), Lari Maria Diaz (Kaplan, McLaughlin, Diaz), Stephanie Felch (Praxis Architecture), Anne Fougeron, Bobbie Sue Hood (Hood Miller), Lucia Howard (Ace Architects), Toby Levy (Levy Art + Architecture), Marsha Maytum (Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy), Liz Raneri (Kuth/Raneri), Adèle Naudé Santos (Sandos Prescott & Associates), Cathy Simon (SMWM), Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, Paulett Taggart, and Beverly Willis. Among them, Beverly Willis, FAIA (1928-2023), was one of the pioneering women architects to start her own firm in San Francisco—opening a San Francisco office of Willis Atelier in 1958, which she had originally started in Honolulu in 1954; the firm later became Willis and Associates Architects in 1966, then Beverly Willis Architect in 1991 when she moved to New York.²⁹¹ Willis served as the first female president of the California Council of the American Institute of Architects in 1979, and founded the Beverly Willis Architecture Foundation in 2002. Her notable projects in San Francisco include: early adaptive reuse at Union Street Stores (1963-5), Vine Terrace Apartments (930 Pine Street, 1973), Digby & Everson Condos (1973), Koret Residence (711 El Camino del Mar, 1974), Margaret Hayward Playground Building (1016 Laguna Street, 1978, not extant), Yerba Buena Gardens Redevelopment Master Plan (1980), and San Francisco Ballet Building (455 Franklin Street, 1984).²⁹²

The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) was founded in 1971 after 12 African American architects—William Brown, Leroy Campbell, Wendell Campbell, John S. Chase, James C. Dodd, Kenneth B. Groggs, Nelson Harris, Jeh Johnson, E.H. McDowell, Robert J. Nash, Harold Williams, and Robert Wilson—met at the annual AIA National Convention in Detroit that year. NOMA, whose mission as currently stated is "to champion diversity within the design professions by promoting the excellence, community engagement, and professional development of its members," has chapters across the country, including many affiliated student

²⁹⁰ Inge Schaefer Horton, *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area: The Lives and Work of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2010); and Inge S. Horton Architectural Collection, Ms-1990-065, Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech, finding aid accessed online December 5, 2023, <https://aspace.lib.vt.edu/repositories/2/resources/1798>.

²⁹¹ "Beverly Anne Willis," Pioneering Women of American Architecture, BWAF, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://pioneeringwomen.bwaf.org/beverly-ann-willis/>.

²⁹² "Architecture by Beverly Willis," Beverly Willis Archive, accessed online, February 13, 2024, <https://beverlywillis.com/architecture/>.

organizations at architecture schools.²⁹³ Leopold Ray-Lynch, who worked on numerous East Bay projects before joining WLC Architects, Inc. and is credited with helping to build up the west region of NOMA into one of the largest and most active in the organization.²⁹⁴ In 1969, African American architects Frank Clark, Horace Gilford, and Gordan Jackson founded Advocate Design Associates in Berkeley, which was the first, and at the time only, African American-owned and run architecture firm in the Bay Area.²⁹⁵ Harry Lee Overstreet (1938-2019), who was the 14th president of NOMA, partnered with Hans and Tim Gerson to form Gerson-Overstreet Architects in 1968, and the firm worked on many projects for the San Francisco International Airport (SFO), and on various Bay Area schools and civic buildings, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Swimming Pool in San Francisco (5701 3rd Street, completed in 2001).²⁹⁶ The firm also worked on preservation projects such as the reconstruction of the Palace of Fine Arts and the rehabilitation of the Bayview Opera House with African American landscape architect Walter Hood.²⁹⁷ While Paul Revere Williams, a Los Angeles-based architect who designed several homes in San Francisco in the 1930s and 1940s, is discussed in the *African American Citywide Historic Context Statement* (adopted 2024), further research is required to identify buildings designed by African American architects in San Francisco during the late twentieth century. African American-founded and -led Los Angeles-based firms Kennard & Silvers and Jenkins & Fleming built projects in Western Addition and Bayview Hunters Point redevelopment areas, and Norma Merrick Sklarek (working for Los Angeles-based Victor Gruen & Associates) designed Fox Plaza (1390 Market Street, 1967).

San Francisco has a rich history of architecture by Asian American architects. In particular, many Asian American architects—generally of Japanese or Chinese descent—were active in the post-World War II period, practicing in Modern and Bay Tradition styles. Some of these practitioners, including architects Worley Wong (Campbell & Wong), Roger Lee, Merrill Jew, Kinji Imada (Claude Oakland & Associates), Lun Chan (Radar/Chan), and Clement Chen, and landscape architects Casey Kawamoto, Asa Hanamoto (Royston Hanamoto Mayes & Beck), and George Omi continued to work in San Francisco through the 1960s and 1970s. Rai Yukio Okamoto (1927-1993) founded his firm in San Francisco in 1960, then worked for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to develop a master plan for Japantown, and served as San Francisco Planning Director from 1975 to 1980. One of Okamoto's major contributions to the city was the design for Buchanan Pedestrian Mall (1976), which includes two *Origami Fountains* (1976; rebuilt 1996) by artist Ruth Asawa. Many Japanese American architects were involved with projects in the Japantown portion of the Western Addition Redevelopment Area, working with Modernist and Late Modernist styles often with significant influences from traditional Japanese architecture; these include Y. Tajima, Wayne Osaki, Van Bourg/Nakamura, Katsura, Karney Inc., Henry Chang, and George Matsumoto. Landscape architect Mai Arbegast, whose work in the Bay Area was prolific as she collaborated as horticultural consultant for Lawrence Halprin, Peter Walker, SWA Group, EDAW, and Dougal Baylis, is known to

²⁹³ "About NOMA," NOMA, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.noma.net/about-noma>.

²⁹⁴ "Leopold Ray-Lynch, AIA, NOMA," NOMA, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.noma.net/history/leopold-ray-lynch/>.

²⁹⁵ Almena Lomax, "Black Crusade Here To Aid Ghetto Youth," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 1, 1971; and "Famed Oakland architect Horace Gilford dies at 68," *East Bay Times*, January 11, 2007, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2007/01/11/famed-oakland-architect-horace-gilford-dies-at-68/>.

²⁹⁶ Harry Lee Overstreet (1938-2019) was an African American architect and partner at Gerson Overstreet Architects since 1968; the firm worked on numerous projects at SFO, as well as various schools and public institutions, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Swimming Pool (2001) in the Bayview District. "Mr. Harry Lee Overstreet – Berkeley Architect, Political, Activist," NOMA, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.noma.net/history/mr-harry-lee-overstreet-berkeley-architect-politician-activist/>.

²⁹⁷ African American landscape architect Walter Hood is one of the most significant living landscape architects in the Bay Area. However, his built projects in San Francisco post-date the period of study for this report, including: DeYoung Museum Gardens (2005), Abraham Lincoln Brigade (2008) public art installation at Embarcadero Plaza, Union Street Garden private residence (2011), Powell Street Promenade (2012), Telegraph Hill Private Residence (2013), Frame/Refrain (2015) public artwork with Mildred Howard at Hunters Point, the renovation of Bayview Opera House (2016), and Yerba Buena Island Hilltop Park (2012-present). "All Projects," Hood Design Studio, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.hooddesignstudio.com/all-projects-1>.

have worked on several urban San Francisco projects including Bayside Plaza (177 Steuart Street, 1986), which includes the *Aurora* fountain by Ruth Asawa, as well as the California Palace of the Legion of Honor (1991-6), Southwest Water Pollution Control Plant (750 Phelps Street, 1979-81, with EDAW), and the Gap Headquarters (2 Folsom Street, 1998-2002, with Cheryl Barton).²⁹⁸ Gary Gee and Vincent Tai (Tai Associates) were practicing in San Francisco by the 1980s in the Postmodern style.

Structural engineer T.Y. Lin was, in particular, was a very influential figure in Modern and Late Modern architecture in the Bay Area, working on San Francisco projects as the Holiday Inn Hotel (750 Kearny Street, 1971, with Clement Chen), George Moscone Convention Center (1981, not extant), Hearst Parking Garage (51 Third Street, 1970), and Golden Gate University (540 Mission Street, 1978). Lin, who founded T.Y. Lin International, is considered “one of the world’s most influential structural engineers” and often referred to as the “father of prestressed concrete.”²⁹⁹ Nationally renowned Asian American architects also built significant projects in San Francisco, including Minoru Yamasaki’s design for the Japanese Cultural & Trade Center (1968, bounded by Fillmore, Post, Laguna, and Geary streets), Gin Wong, who served as design architect for William Pereira & Associates for the Transamerica Pyramid (600 Montgomery Street, 1972), and Fumihiko Maki’s design for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street, 1993).

In the *Try Us: 1975 National Minority Business Directory*, the following San Francisco-based architecture firms and practitioners are listed: Clement Chen & Associates; Roger Chinn; Del Campo Associates; Gerson-Overstreet; Hatoyama Jun & Choi Associates; Eugene Lew; Henry Look Associates; George Matsumoto & Associates; George Meu & Associates; Okamoto Associates; Wayne Osaki; Reay Tsuruta Associates; Som & Associates; Mitsuru Tada; Urban Design; Edward Wong & Associates; Robert B. Wong; Wil Wong; Leo S. Wou & Associates; Young & Associates; and Young & Wong Associates.³⁰⁰ Other architects from minority communities known to be working in San Francisco in the late twentieth century include Yves Ghiaï (Iranian-Belgian), Oleg Nichol Ivanitsky (Russian), Jorge de Quesada (Cuban), and Igor Sazevich (Russian-American).

²⁹⁸ Arbegast, Mai Kitazawa Collection, 2006-11, 2006-16, UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Archives, finding aid accessed online December 5, 2023, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4v19r98p/>; and “Mai K. Arbegast,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/mai-k-arbegast>.

²⁹⁹ “T.Y. Lin: Visionary structural engineer,” Berkeley Engineering, accessed online February 13, 2024, <https://engineering.berkeley.edu/t-y-lin-visionary-structural-engineer/>.

³⁰⁰ The National Minority Business Directory was first published in 1969. The 1975 edition is the only addition currently available online, and has separate listings for contractors and engineering and drafting services, but does not include separate listings for landscape architects or urban planners. Editions from subsequent years are not readily available at public library institutions in California, but could be a useful research source. *Try Us: 1975 National Minority Business Directory* (United States: U.S. Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, 1975), accessed online February 13, 2024, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Try_Us/N-rnhFdSVQ0C?hl=en&gbpv=1.

Appendix B: Shortlist of Representative Sites (1970-2000) Identified in Research

The following is a shortlist of representative buildings and landscapes (built 1970-2000) identified during the course of research for this historic context statement. This list is not comprehensive, and is focused on properties built between 1970 to 2000, to pick up where the *San Francisco Modern Architecture and Landscape Design (1935-1970) Historic Context Statement* leaves off. The inclusion of a property in this shortlist is not a finding of historic resource eligibility. The following properties are listed in order of their year of completion.

1. BART Stations (c.1970-3) – Various architects
2. San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) Addition, 800 Chestnut Street (1966-70) – Paffard Keatinge-Clay
3. 145 Natoma Street (1970) – Thomas Lile
4. 111 Edgehill Residence (1970) - Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)
5. 162 24th Avenue (1970) - Bruce E. Heiser
6. Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption, 1111 Gough Street (1967-1971) - Pier Luigi Nervi, Pietro Belluschi, John Michael Lee, Paul A. Ryan, and Angus McSweeney
7. Hilton Hotel Financial District, 750 Kearny (1971) – Clement Chen & Associates, T.Y. Lin
8. PG&E Embarcadero Substation, 405 Folsom Street (1971) – Sidney H. Smyth
9. Ambulatory Care Center & Parking Garage, UCSF Parnassus, 400 Parnassus Avenue (1969-72) – Reid, Rockwell, Banwell & Tarics
10. Transamerica Pyramid, 600 Montgomery Street (1972) & Redwood Park (1974) – William L. Pereira & Associates (Gin Wong, design architect), Anthony Guzzardo
11. CPMC Pacific Heights, 2333 Buchanan Street (1972) – Stone, Marraccini & Patterson with Roselyn Lindheim
12. 282 Franconia Street (1965) & 201 Rutledge Street (1973) – Robert H. Chan
13. Vine Terrace Apartments, 930 Pine Street (1973) – Beverly Willis
14. Bellair Duplex (Solomon/Stauffacher Solomon Residence), 30 Bellair Place (1973) – Daniel Solomon
15. Coplans Residence, 19 Belgrave Avenue (1973) – Patricia Coplans (Burger & Coplans)
16. Koret Residence, 711 El Camino del Mar (1974) – Beverly Willis
17. 2000 Broadway (1974) - Backen Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)
18. San Francisco State University (SFSU) Student Center, 1600 Holloway Avenue (1969-75) – Paffard Keatinge-Clay
19. Buchanan Pedestrian Mall, Buchanan Street (Osaka Way) between Post & Sutter streets (1976) – Rai Yukio Okamoto, Ruth Asawa
20. Home Savings & Loan Association branch banks, 98 W. Portal Avenue (1977) and 2750 Van Ness Avenue (1977) – Millard Sheets
21. R. Mittelstadt Duplex, 21-23 Prospect Street (1975-9) – Robert Mittelstadt
22. Pacific Heights Townhouses, 3190 Sacramento Street (1978) – Daniel Solomon
23. North Point Townhouses, 743-747 North Point Street (1978) – Donald MacDonald
24. Market Street Cultural Landscape (1979), including U. N. Plaza, Hallidie Plaza, and Embarcadero Plaza – Lawrence Halprin with Mario J. Ciampi & Associates and John Carl Warnecke & Associates
25. Greens Restaurant, Building A, Fort Mason Center (1979) – Sim Van der Ryn, J.B. Blunk
26. Golden Gate University, 540 Mission Street (1979) – William Podesta (architect) and T. Y. Lin (structural engineer)
27. Laidley Castle, 135 Laidley Street (1975-80) – Jeremy Kotas

28. Shaklee Terraces, One Front Street (1979-80) – Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)
29. Embarcadero Center & Hyatt Regency (1971-1981) – John Portman Associates
30. Levi's Plaza, 1105 Battery Street (1981) – HOK, Arthur Gensler, and Lawrence Halprin
31. Golden Gateway Commons, 750 Front Street (1980-3) – Fisher-Friedman Associates, Anthony Guzzardo
32. 65 Capp Street (Capp Street Project) (1981) – David Ireland
33. Ella Hill Hutch Community Center, 1050 McAllister Street (1981) – Jenkins & Fleming
34. The Hermitage, 1020 Vallejo St (1980-2) – Joseph Esherick/EHDD
35. 101 California Street (1982) – Johnson & Burgee (Eli Attia, project architect)
36. Castro Commons, 2425 Market Street (1982) – Daniel Solomon, Paulett Taggart
37. Neiman-Marcus, 150 Stockton Street (1982) – Johnson & Burgee
38. San Francisco Ballet Building, 455 Franklin Street (1984) – Beverly Willis
39. DataMart, 999 Brannan Street (1984) – Tanner & VanDine
40. Germania Street Houses, 196-198 Germania Street (1984) – Donald MacDonald
41. Doelger Primate Discovery Center at SF Zoo (1985) – Robert Marquis and Cathy Simon
42. Glickman Residence, 210 Francisco Street (1985) - Backen, Arrigoni & Ross (BAR)
43. 1800 Oakdale Avenue (1983-86) – Jan Lubicz-Nycz, Jefferson Associates
44. Darrell Place Condos, 34-40 Darrell Place (1986) – Ace Architects
45. 388 Market Street (1986) - Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM)
46. Gleeson Residence, 610 Rhode Island Street (1988) – Daniel Solomon
47. Cottage Row, 2910 California Street (1989) – Jeremy Kotas
48. Marriott Marquis, 780 Mission Street (1989) – DMJM, Zeidler Partnership Architects
49. 14-16 Leroy Place (1990) – Hood Miller Associates
50. Fulton Mews, 457 Fulton Street (1991-2) – Daniel Solomon
51. Corson-Heinser Live/Work Building, 25 Zoe Street (1992) – Tanner Leddy Maytum Stacy
52. 1022 Natoma Street (1992-3) – Stanley Saitowitz
53. Sumner Rowhouses, 1-7 Sumner Street (1993) – Donald MacDonald
54. Blue Shield of California Theater at YBCA, 700 Howard Street (1993) – James Polshek
55. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), 151 3rd Street (1995) – Mario Botta
56. 18th & Arkansas Townhouses and Lofts (1995) – David Baker & Associates
57. 86-96 South Park (1995-6) – Levy Art + Architecture
58. *Ribbon of Light*, The Embarcadero (1996) – Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, Vito Acconci, Stanley Saitowitz
59. Oriental Warehouse Historic Lofts, 650 Delancey Street (1867; 1996-7) – Fisher-Friedman Associates
60. Oliver Residence, 340 Lombard Street (1997) – Jim Jennings
61. Willenborg Residence, 1766 Alabama Street (1995-9) – Paul Rudolph
62. 2710 Broadway (1999) – Robert A. M. Stern
63. Iann/Stolz Residence, 44 Reed Street (1999) – Kuth/Raineri
64. SFO International Airport (1995-2000) – SOM
65. Giants Ballpark, 24 Willie Mays Plaza (2000) – HOK Sport

Appendix C: 1960-2000 Timeline

1960s

1959-69	Freeway Revolts ³⁰¹
1961	<i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> by Jane Jacobs
1962	40' height limit adopted for 82 blocks of the Northeast Waterfront. <i>Complexity & Contradiction</i> by Robert Venturi
1963	Rumford Fair Housing Act in California. ³⁰²
1964	UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design (est. 1959) moves into new Wurster Hall.
1965	First buildings completed at The Sea Ranch on the Sonoma County coast.
1966	National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
1967	Summer of Love Article 10 of the Planning Code adopted, establishes Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (LPAB), the precursor to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).
1968	Federal Civil Rights Act of 1968, including Fair Housing Act clauses, passes. First Article 10 local historic landmarks are designated. SFSU Third World Liberation Front strike Stewart Brand publishes <i>Whole Earth Catalog</i>
1968-69	International Trade Mart (1968, WBE, Halprin), Ferry Port Plaza (1969, SOM), US Steel Corporation Tower (1969, SOM) proposals are touchstones in the debate about waterfront development and height limits; none are built. Transamerica Pyramid plan is also unveiled to the public.
1969	Art Enrichment Ordinance (2% for Art) for civic construction <u>Here Today</u> survey by published by Junior League of San Francisco.

1970s

1970	National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) passed. First Earth Day
1971	<u>Urban Design Plan</u> , largely spearheaded by Planning Director Allan Jacobs. Jackson Square Historic District listed in the National Register, and is the first historic district in San Francisco. Justin Herman, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) Executive Director, dies unexpectedly. <u>The Ultimate Highrise</u> by the <i>Bay Guardian</i> published.
1972	Prop T fails, a citywide 72' height limit sponsored by Alvin Duskin. BART opens on September 11. Transamerica Pyramid completed. <i>Friends of Mammoth v. Board of Supervisors of Mono County</i> interprets CEQA to cover private and public projects, not just government projects, that are approved by a government agency's discretionary review.
1973	<i>Learning from Las Vegas</i> by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour
1973-75	San Francisco Architectural Heritage (now, SFHeritage) founded. Oil Crisis (Oil Shock) Recession
1976	Department of City Planning (DCP) Architectural Survey “A View of California Architecture, 1960-1976” exhibition at SFMOMA
1977	<i>The Language of Post-Modern Architecture</i> by Charles Jencks
1978	Residential rezoning, led by Planning Director Rai Yukio Okamoto, lowers building height limits to 40 feet for most of the city except the downtown financial district.

³⁰¹ The double-decker Embarcadero Freeway opened in 1959 and the Clay and Washington on and off ramps to the Embarcadero Freeway opened in 1965.

³⁰² The Rumford Fair Housing Act was overturned by voters in Prop 14 in 1965, then reinstated by the California Supreme Court in 1966.

Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone are assassinated in City Hall.

California Prop 13 fixes property tax rates at 1976 rates.

Pamphlet Architecture begins publication.

1979 [*Splendid Survivors: San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage*](#) published.

Archetype magazine founded and runs through 1983.

1980s

- 1980** Planning Commission Resolution No. 8600 endorses a list of "Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Buildings" which informs the *Guiding Downtown Development* document, then the *Downtown Plan*.
- 1981-82** Energy Crisis Recessions
- 1981** Beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic
- 1982** [*Guiding Downtown Development*](#) report by San Francisco Planning Department
Venice Biennale (1980) *Strada Novissima* installed at Fort Mason Center.
“California Counter Point: New West Coast Architecture” exhibition by IAUS and SFAI hosted in New York.
AutoCAD is launched as a desktop application.
- 1983** SFMOMA is first West Coast museum to establish an architecture department .
- 1985** [*Downtown Plan*](#) adopted, includes Article 11, TDR program, and POPOS and 1% for art requirements in downtown developments, under Planning Director Dean Macris.
“Clos Pegas Design Competition” exhibition at SFMOMA
- 1986** “Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places” exhibition at SFMOMA
Prop M passes, a citizen-sponsored initiative that created an annual limit on high-rise development.
- 1987** CCA/C establishes an architecture program, located in Potrero Hill.
- 1988** Neighborhood Commercial Districts Special Use Districts
Live/Work Ordinance adopted; later repealed in 2002.
“Deconstructivist Architecture” exhibition at MOMA in New York
- 1989** Loma Prieta Earthquake
[*Residential Design Guidelines*](#) adopted by San Francisco Planning Commission.

1990s

- 1990** “Visionary San Francisco” exhibition at SFMOMA
- 1990-91** Gulf War Recession
- 1991** “In the Spirit of Modernism” exhibition at SFMOMA
Double-decker Embarcadero Freeway demolished.
- 1993** Congress for New Urbanism founded.
- 1995** SFMOMA opens in its new Mario Botta-design building (151 3rd St), after planning began in 1988.
“An Everyday Modernism: The Houses of William Wurster” exhibition at SFMOMA
Northern California chapter of Docomomo chapter founded.
Base Realignment & Closure Act (BRAC)
- 1996** New city "Master Plan" adopted, later renamed the "General Plan"
- 1998** Interim Industrial Protection Zones (Eastern Neighborhoods Plans would be adopted in 2009)
- 1999** Better Neighborhoods Program launched.
- 2000** Y2K
Giants Ballpark opens in Mission Bay.
- 2001** Dot Com Recession.



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