



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Memo to the Historic Preservation Commission

HEARING DATE: AUGUST 19, 2015

DATE: August 19, 2015
TO: Historic Preservation Commission
FROM: Shannon Ferguson, Preservation Planner, (415) 575-9074
REVIEWED BY: Tim Frye, Preservation Coordinator, (415) 575-6822
RE: Historic Interpretive Program

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Introduction

This memo provides an overview of historic interpretive programs across the United States in order to facilitate discussion about creating such a program in San Francisco. The Planning Department (Department) is requesting the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) provide direction on the content and structure of the program.

1. Article 10 Individual Landmarks Plaque Program

The Department contracted with a graphic designer who provided a draft template of a plaque (Exhibit 1). Preliminary plaque designs for Article 10 buildings consist of a round plaque with polished bronze-colored border engraved with "San Francisco Landmark" at the top and "San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission" at the bottom. The center of the plaque is a darker matte bronze with raised letters. Text provides the landmark number, landmark name, a short explanation of the landmark's significance, and date of designation. City and County of San Francisco seal is located at the bottom.

Some cities allow the property owner to write the text, order, install and pay for the plaque. Other cities are responsible for writing the text, ordering and paying for the plaque with the property owner responsible for installation.

In San Francisco, either the City or the property owner/applicant could be responsible for the providing the text, ordering, installing and paying for the plaque. If the Commission desires to require landmark buildings to display a plaque, a code amendment may be necessary. If a building permit is required to install a plaque, the fee may be substantially reduced for such a permit.

Suggested vendor for plaques include Louis R. Biro. Preliminary cost estimates for a bronze metal plaque are \$1,175 for an 18" diameter plaque and \$2,000 for a 24" diameter plaque. An alternative metal, such as aluminum with a bronze colored painted finish, might reduce the cost. Other cost estimates are pending.

Example: City of San Diego, CA Plaque Program

Landmark property owners receive a letter encouraging them to display a plaque (Exhibit 2). The letter details plaque specifications, including shape, size, color and information the plaque must contain (such as historical name, date, and landmark number). Staff may be contacted to verify the historical information. The property owner may choose to order a plaque from the four listed companies as prices may vary from company to company. An example illustration of a plaque with dimensions is included with the letter.

Example: City of Covington, KY Plaque Program

The property owner must sign a letter of agreement with the city in which the owner agrees to maintain the structure's historic integrity. City staff assists with wording on the plaques. Plaques are ordered by the city and property owner reimburses the city for the plaque. The property owner is responsible for picking up the plaque from the city and installing it. The city provides installation instructions that include a suggested mounting location and instructions for mounting on masonry or wood (Exhibit 3).

Example: City of Philadelphia, PA Plaque Program

The Historical Commission authorizes property owners to install specially-made cast metal plaques (Exhibit 4) on historically-designated buildings, structures, sites, objects, and interiors that are in restored condition. The Commission's staff reviews and approves the application if the property is designated as historic and in restored condition. If the property is not designated or not in restored condition, staff directs the applicant on the steps to take to qualify the property for a plaque. Once a plaque application is approved, the Commission issues a letter to a specific plaque manufacturer authorizing it to sell a plaque to the applicant and issues a letter to the applicant with directions for purchasing a plaque. Plaque prices fluctuate, but the plaques generally cost about \$70. The applicant must submit photographs of all façades visible from the public right-of-way with the application form for review by the Commission and staff. The plaque may only be displayed on the building or structure for which it is issued. If it is lost or stolen, the owner must notify the Philadelphia Historical Commission of its loss. A new plaque may be issued upon approval of a new application. The Philadelphia Historical Commission may revoke the privilege of displaying the plaque should the building or structure fail to comply with the City's historic preservation ordinance.

2. Article 11 Conservation Districts Recognition

Six Conservation Districts are located exclusively in the city's downtown core area (Exhibit 5). Unlike traditional historic districts, which recognize historic and cultural significance, Conservation Districts seek to designate and protect buildings based on architectural quality and contribution to the environment. These downtown districts contain concentrations of buildings that together create geographic areas of unique quality and thus facilitate preservation of the quality and character of the area as a whole. Limited information is available on districts and individual buildings in the district beyond the Code, which makes recognition difficult. It may be more efficient to address recognition of Conservation Districts on a website or app.

Example: Coney Island Wayfinding Kiosks

A program of nine wayfinding kiosks placed along Coney Island Boardwalk with each kiosk incorporating a map with park facilities locations, landmarks such as the Parachute Drop, the Cyclone

and Keyspan Park, as well as historical photos with background anecdotes related to each kiosk area (Exhibit 6).

3. Article 10 Landmark Districts Recognition

Article 10 Landmark Districts are locally designated Historic Districts, similar to the National Register of Historic Places but at the local level. Districts are defined generally as an area of multiple historic resources that are contextually united (Exhibit 7). The Department has already created walking tours for each district that details the history and significance of the district and its contributors.

The Department contracted with a graphic designer who provided a draft template of a banner (Exhibit 8). Preliminary designs consist of a two sided banner with the front side displaying the name of the district and a new district logo. The back side displays the name of the district, a map of the district boundaries and brief history of the district. Design alternatives could include eliminating text and adding a website address that would provide more information on the district or displaying the name of the district and district logo on both sides of the banner. Banners may be made of either vinyl/fabric or metal.

Suggested vendors for banners include Art Sign and Banner Service and Signs America DBA Sign-A-Rama (a City vendor). Preliminary cost estimates for a vinyl/fabric, 72 x 36 inch double sided banner is \$268. Cost estimates for metal signs are pending.

Example: City of Chicago Landmark Districts Signage

18 x 30 inch metal signs (Exhibit 9) are installed on light poles by Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT). Signs are generally created and installed in the order of when the district was established. All content and design is provided by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks and staff.

4. Website or App

In addition to the plaque and banner program, a mobile and tablet friendly website or a free downloadable application (app) would provide more in-depth information on Article 10 and 11 buildings in one convenient location. It would document Article 10 and 11 buildings with detailed explanation of their significance, current photographs and historic photographs. Interactive maps, possibly using [Google My Maps](#), would allow users to find the closest landmark building or district to their current location. The website or app would include the District walking tours mentioned above or may allow users to create their own walking tours based on their interest. Finally, users may be able to add their own stories of historic buildings and districts to the website.

A mobile friendly website built by an outside professional may cost \$20-40,000 and require \$1,500 for outside hosting and maintenance. An app may cost \$50-75,000 to develop one platform (either Android or Apple). Developing an additional platform may cost \$15,000. Other associated costs may include budget for a City project manager, content administrator and technical staff for maintenance. The advantage of a mobile friendly website over an app is that it could be updated easily and as often as needed. Also, a mobile-friendly website could be translated into multiple languages using Google translate.

Another option is using a website template created by ERSI, a company that supplies ArcGIS, a geographic information systems (GIS) mapping software. This software is currently used by the

Department. ESRI Story Map templates are free with an ESRI account. There are templates for map-based tours, collections of points of interest, in-depth narratives, presenting multiple maps, and more. Most are mobile friendly. For example, the [Story Map Tour](#) presents a linear, place-based narrative featuring images or videos. Each “story point” in the narrative is geo-located. Users have the option of clicking sequentially through the narrative, or they can browse by interacting with the map or using the thumbnail carousel (Exhibit 10). Or the [Story Map Shortlist](#) can show users a curated list of city sites (Exhibit 11). Additional research would be necessary to determine if there is a monthly hosting fee or any other associated fees. Internal resources would still be needed for management and maintenance.

Example: City of Berkeley Historical Plaque Project Website

In 2012 the Berkeley Historical Plaque Project, a non-profit group started in 1997 to document Berkeley’s history through plaques identifying locations of historical importance, launched a website documenting its work, www.berkeleyplaques.org. On the mobile friendly website, plaques are categorized by geographic areas and linked to interactive Google maps (Exhibit 12). Texts are accompanied by historic photos and links to external articles, lectures, and videos. “e-Plaques” virtually document historic buildings, homes of notable Berkeley residents, and unique natural phenomena. Crowd-sourcing is used to expand the texts and photos.

Example: Connect Historic Boston Program

Connect Historic Boston, www.connecthistoric-boston.org, will make walking, biking, and taking public transportation to National Park Service sites and other destinations easy, fun, accessible, and convenient with discovery along the way. Connect Historic Boston is an initiative between the National Park Service (NPS) and the City of Boston’s Transportation Department. The initiative proposes upgrades to the built environment along the streets, sidewalks, and bridges that link transit stations to park destinations; and explores new tools for wayfinding including digital applications, traditional maps, and navigational markers in the landscape such as architecture, art, sound and signage. Partners will include historic sites, advocates for walking and biking, neighborhood associations, and government agencies that will help promote the Connect Historic Boston initiative as the way to get around downtown Boston.

5. Administration

The program may be administered by City staff that would be responsible for writing and approving content for plaques, wayfinding kiosks, banners, and website; issuing permits and reviewing attachment points and location of plaques, wayfinding kiosks, banners; providing technical assistance to property owners; purchasing; and administration of promotional and/or educational opportunities with local non-profits.

6. Partnership Opportunities, Funding, Branding and Outreach

Possible partnerships for the program include:

- SF Travel
- SF Heritage
- SF Beautiful
- SF Museum and Historical Society
- SF Library
- Community Benefit Districts
- Local media: 7x7, SF Magazine, San Francisco Chronicle

- SFMTA
- San Francisco Bike Coalition
- Walk SF
- California Preservation Foundation
- Office of Historic Preservation

Possible funding sources for the program include FOCP and Fund Committee.

As part of the branding for the program launch, designs for each neighborhood district can be made available on t-shirts, prints and cards. The designs can be exact replicas or slightly altered, depending on the audience. These items can be made available on the website as well as independent stores, local museums, and community events. Proceeds can be used to offset production costs or used for additional outreach programs. A possible partnership with a locally based company, such as SF Made, to collaborate on the process would be beneficial.

Outreach would be conducted via social media; including Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor, neighborhood newsletters, City agencies, district supervisors, neighborhood organizations and with a potential partnership organization. Pitching would include local and targeted national media.

Attachments:

Exhibits

Exhibit 1

Preliminary Plaque Design



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Exhibit 2

City of San Diego, CA Plaque Program



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

PLAQUES IDENTIFYING DESIGNATED HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Dear Historic Property Owner:

As an owner of a designated historical resource in the City of San Diego, you are encouraged to display a plaque identifying your property as an important part of San Diego's history. Plaques identifying historically designated properties must conform to the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (HRB) specifications (*see attached example*):

- ✓ Plaque must be oval in shape, a size that fits with the building; standard size is 17" x 12"; however a smaller size is acceptable.
- ✓ Lettering must be bronze on a black or brown background.
- ✓ Plaque must contain
 - City Seal
 - HRB site number assigned by HRB staff *i.e.* HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. 118
 - Name of the designated resource consistent with the adopted HRB Naming Policy *i.e.* CHARLES A. MARTIN HOUSE
 - Date designated resource was built *i.e.* 1912

Property owners may contact HRB staff to verify the historical name, date, and HRB site number of their property prior to placing an order for a plaque. It is also recommended to compare prices, as they may vary from company to company. The following companies may be used to purchase a historic designation plaque:

- ✓ **Erie Landmark Company**
637 Hempfield Hill Road, Columbia, PA 17512
Phone: (800) 874-7848 • Fax: (717) 285-9060/(703) 758-2574
Email: sales@erielandmark.com
- ✓ **Franklin Bronze Plaques**
191 Howard Street, Suite 306, Franklin, PA 16323
Toll Free: (866) 405-6623 • Phone: (814) 346-7205 • Fax: (814) 346-7047
Email: info@franklinbronzeplaques.com • Website: www.franklinbronzeplaques.com
- ✓ **The Plaque Specialist:** A.M. Tech Inc. Bronze & Aluminum Plaques
P.O. Box 2194, Malta, NY 12020
Toll Free: (888) 752-0991 • Phone: (518) 899-4790 • Fax: (518) 899-4795
Email: mwheeler.amtech@gmail.com • Website: www.amtechbronze.com
- ✓ **Rod Friant RC Signs**
5483 Gala Avenue, San Diego, CA 92120
Phone: (619) 546-4772
Email: rcsignssandiego@att.net • Website: www.rcsigns.biz

City Planning & Community Investment
202 C Street, MS 5A • San Diego, CA 92101-3865
Tel (619) 235-5200 • Fax (619) 533-5951

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Exhibit 3

City of Covington, KY Plaque Program



HISTORIC PLAQUE PLAQUE INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

City of Covington- Historic Preservation and Planning
Department of Development
20 W Pike Street, Covington, KY 41011
Tel: (859) 292-2171 Fax: (859) 292- 2106 email: bjohnson@covingtonky.gov
www.covingtonky.gov

PLAQUE PLACEMENT

As a general rule, plaques are to be placed on the facade of the building facing the main street. If the entrance is on the front of the house, plaques should be placed to the left or right of the door. Figure A. If the main entrance is on the side of the house, place the plaque near the corner of the house. Figure B.

Plaques may also be placed on brick porch piers. The suggested mounting height is 5'6" above porch or entry floor.

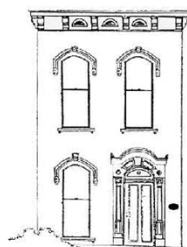


Figure A



Figure B

PLAQUE INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS - MASONRY

1. Install screws on the back of the plaque
2. Cut off screw heads
3. Make a template for hole positions. Using a masonry drill bit, drill the correct number of holes for the installation. Try if possible to make holes in mortar. If the mortar crumbles drill into stone or brick.
4. Dry fit the plaque to verify its level.
5. Use two-part epoxy, 30 minute set. It is available at hardware stores, Kmart, Wal-Mart, Auto Part Stores. It looks like two hypodermic syringes.
6. Put epoxy on screws and in the pre-drilled holes.
7. Install plaque on wall.

PLAQUE INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS - FRAME

1. Place plaque on building and mark holes with pencil. Drill holes.
2. Screw the plaque into the pre-drilled holes.

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Exhibit 4

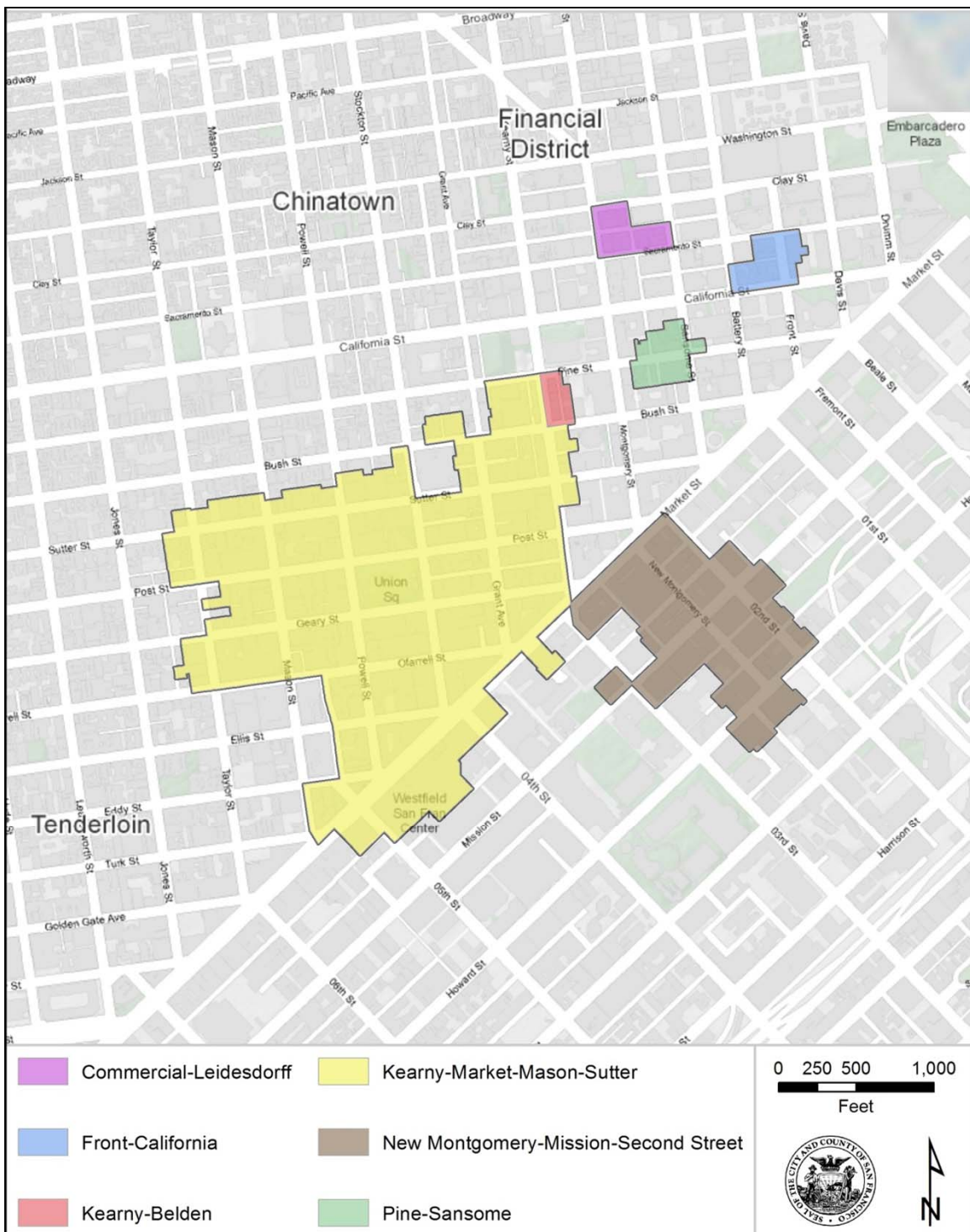
City of Philadelphia, PA Plaque Program



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Exhibit 5

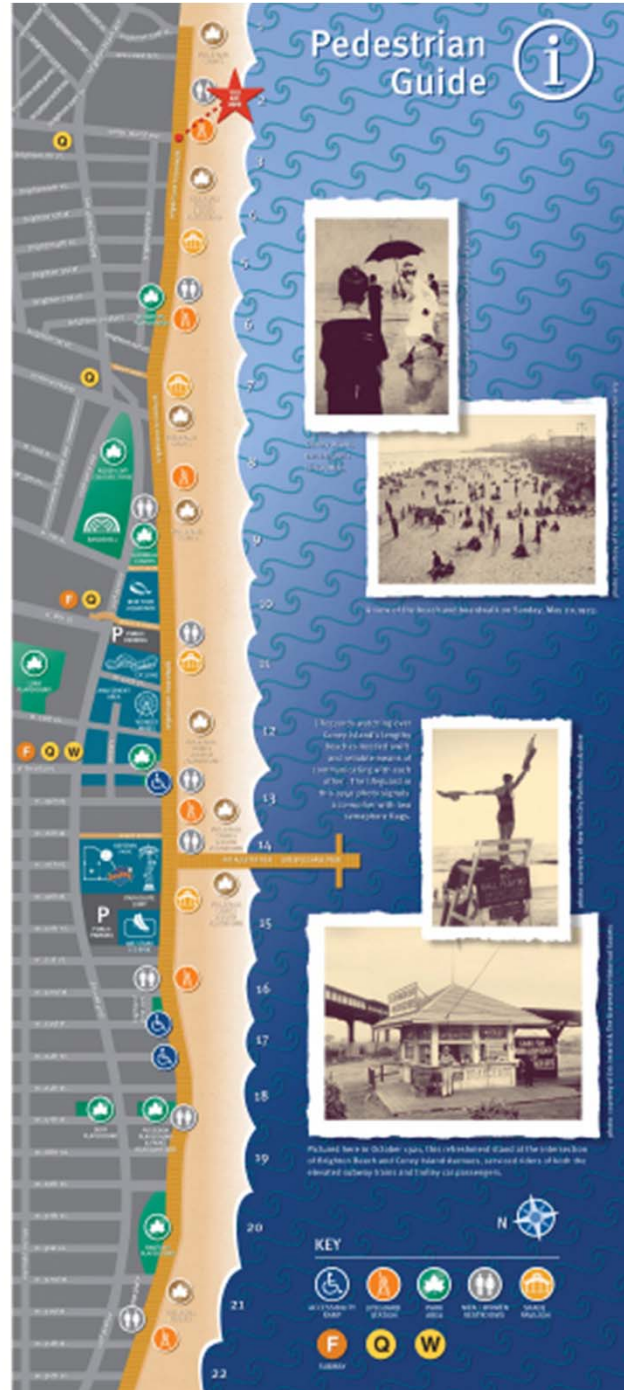
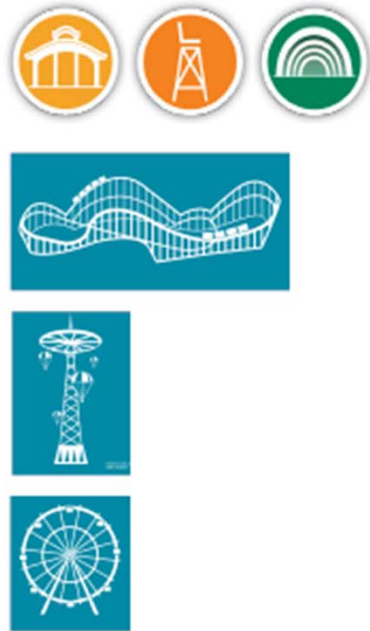
Article 11 Conservation Districts



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Exhibit 6

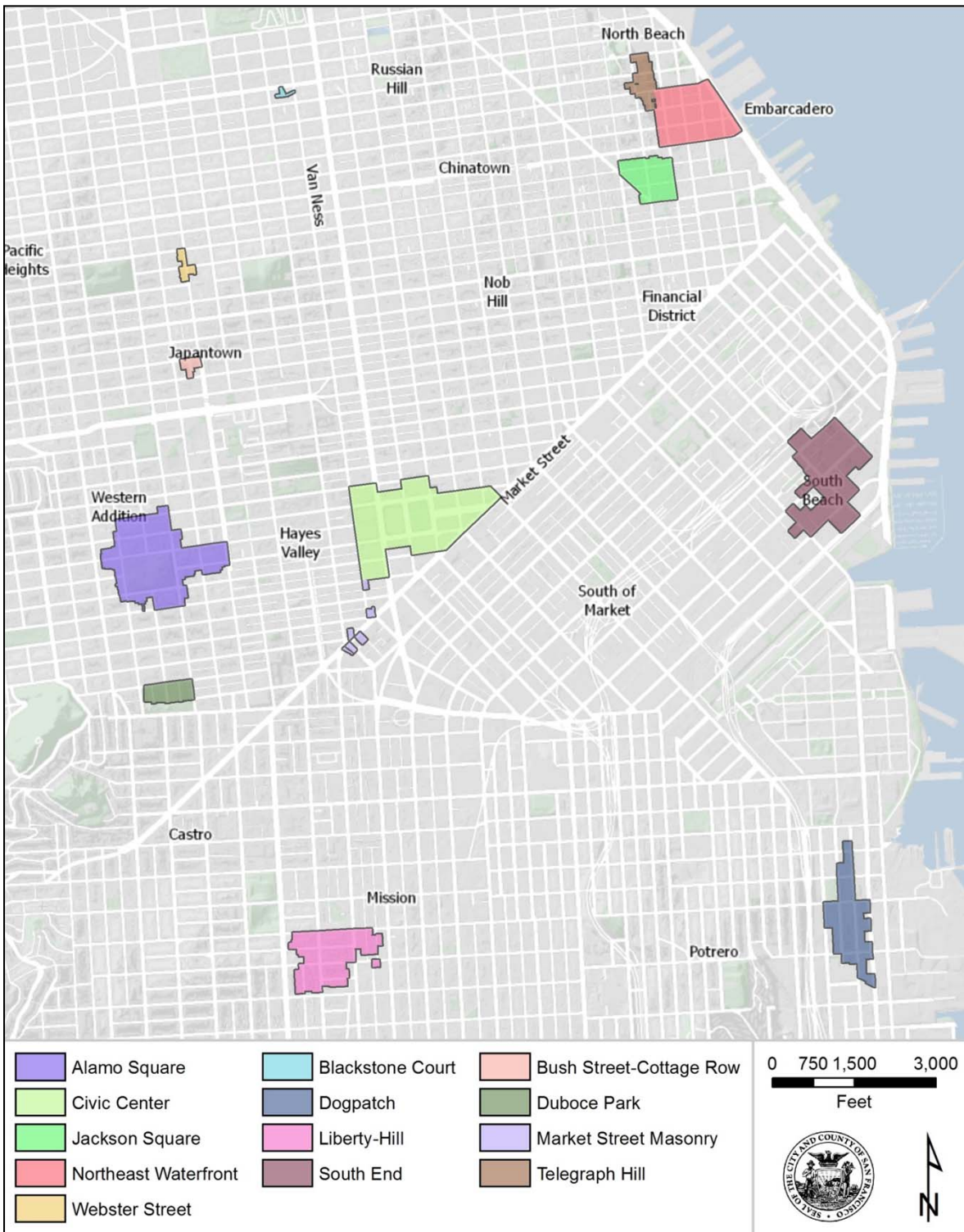
Coney Island Wayfinding Kiosks



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Exhibit 7

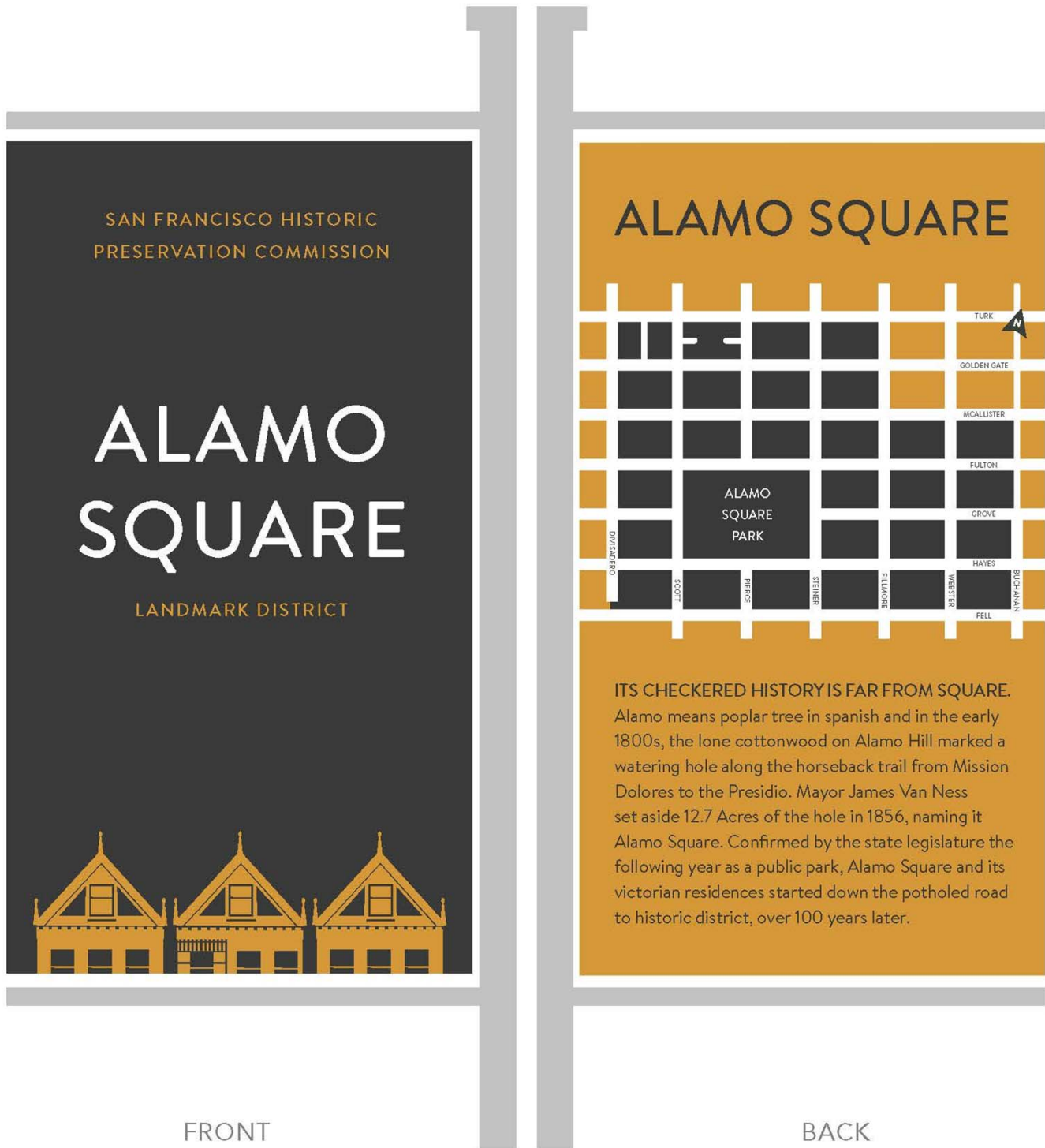
Article 10 Landmark Districts



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Exhibit 8

Preliminary Banner Design



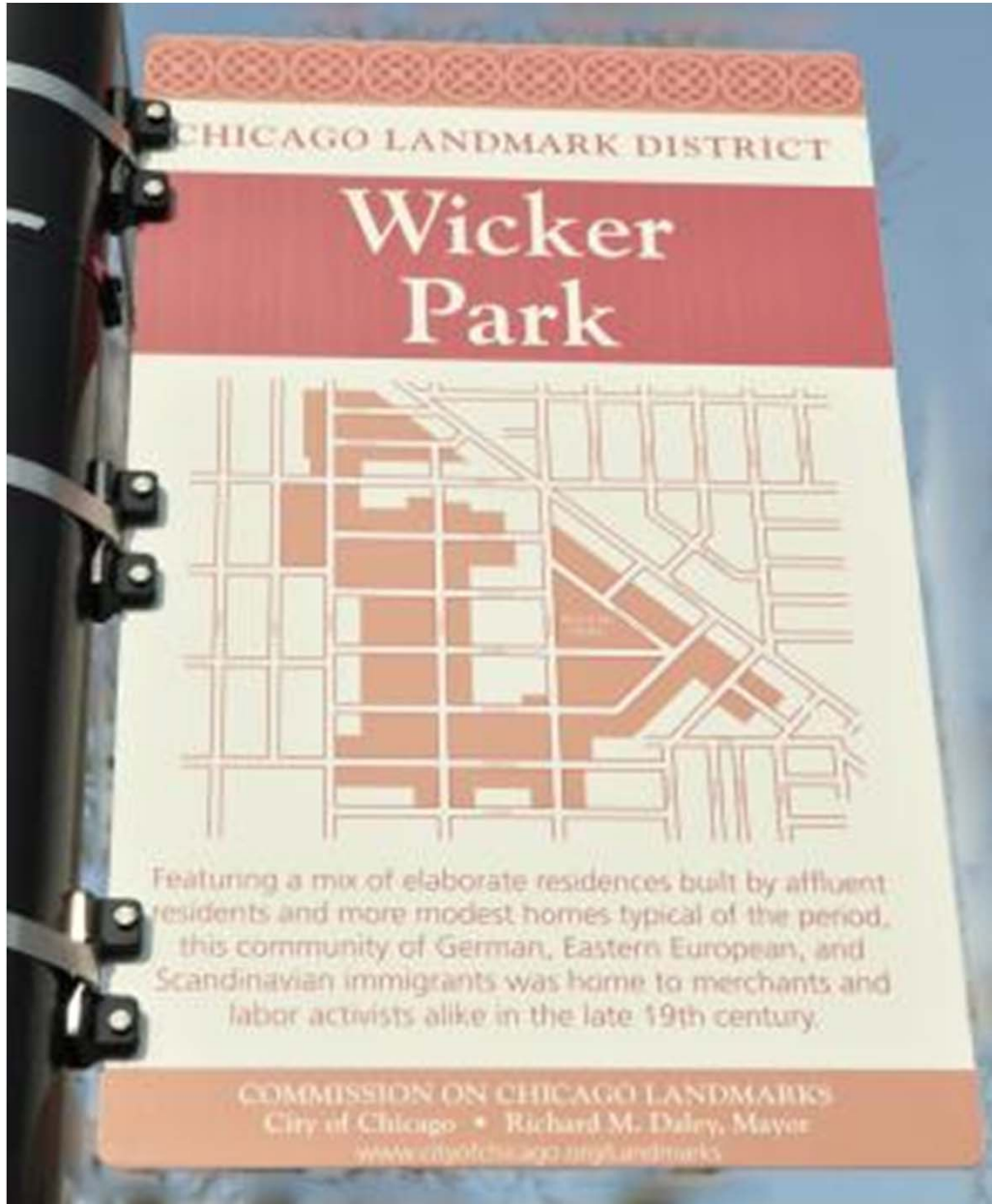
FRONT

BACK

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Exhibit 9

City of Chicago, IL Landmark District Signage

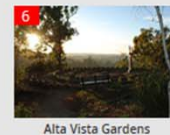
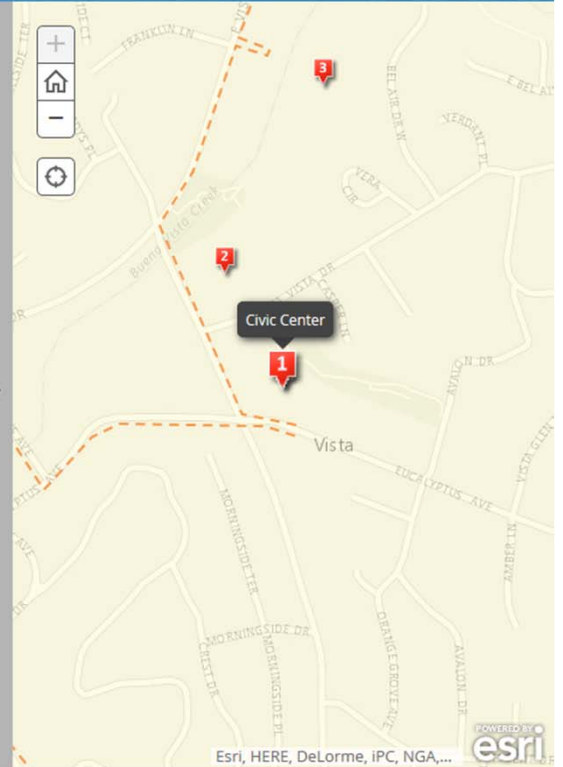
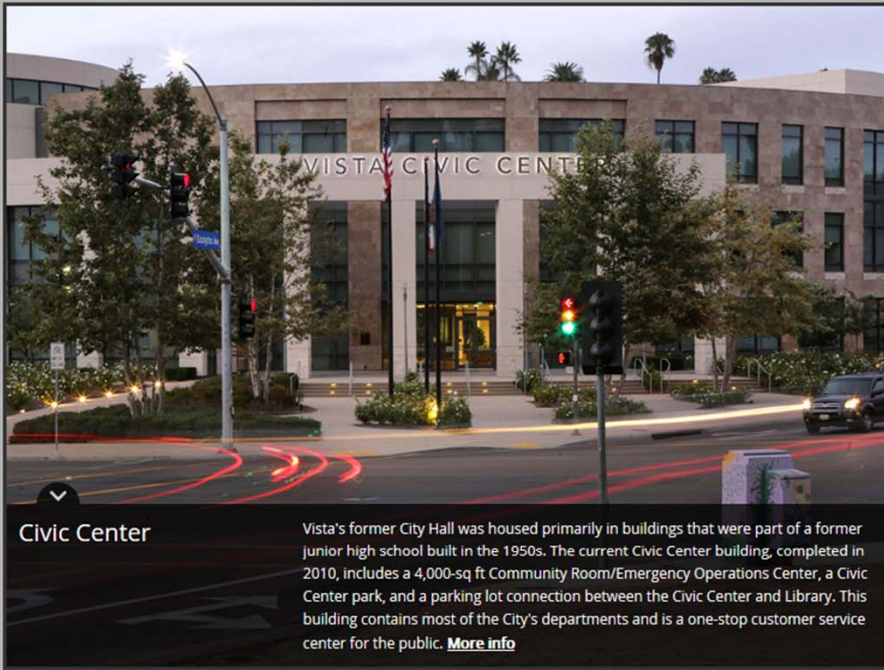


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Exhibit 10

ESRI Story Map App Example 1




City of Vista Citywide Map Tour




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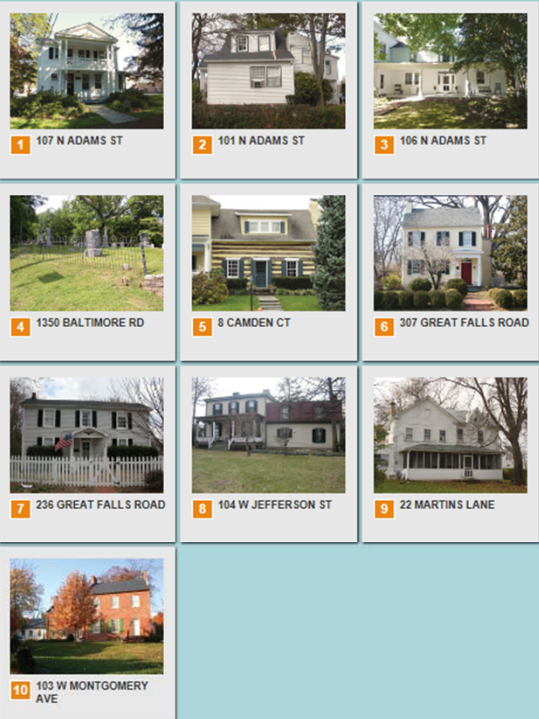
Exhibit 11

ESRI Story Map App Example 2

Rockville Historic Buildings Tour A story map   

An inventory of historic sites and buildings in the City of Rockville as published in the 2011 Historic Buildings Catalog. 

Colonial **Romantic** **Victorian** **Victorian Vernacular** **20th Century** **Modern** **Late Modern** Historic Districts ▼

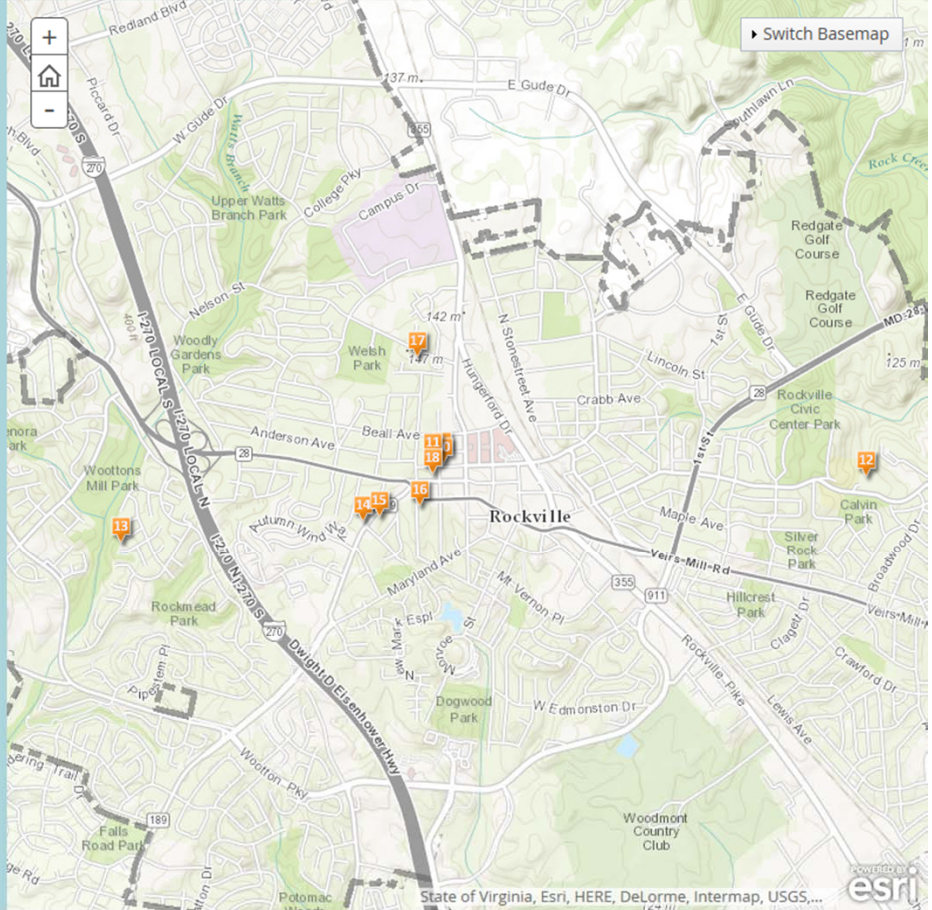


1 107 N ADAMS ST 2 101 N ADAMS ST 3 106 N ADAMS ST

4 1350 BALTIMORE RD 5 8 CAMDEN CT 6 307 GREAT FALLS ROAD

7 236 GREAT FALLS ROAD 8 104 W JEFFERSON ST 9 22 MARTINS LANE

10 103 W MONTGOMERY AVE



Rockville

esri

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Exhibit 10

City of Berkeley, CA

Historical Plaque Project Website

BERKELEY HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROJECT
HONORING BERKELEY'S HISTORY • SINCE 1997

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Historical Plaques in Berkeley

Berkeley, California, is situated in a magnificent natural setting, replete with landmark architectural treasures and historic neighborhoods. Our city's rich history has seemingly been shaped by just the right blend of provocative eccentrics, visionaries, and down-to-earth, hardworking citizens. Berkeley's attraction to the unconventional and its *University of California* have nurtured a wide assortment of people: political activists, educators, architects, city planners, builders, scientists, tradesmen, poets, and artists. Their individuality, talent and creativity are the source of our texts.

For convenience, plaques are grouped on this website by geographical area. E-plaques are located in a section of their own. In reality, there is no underlying order to where plaques are placed throughout Berkeley. Each is the result of a serendipitous process involving Plaque Project outreach, building owners' interest, and community input. Some of Berkeley's lesser known buildings and locations have plaques while certain prominent landmarks are without them.

Campus Area Downtown North

BERKELEY HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROJECT
HONORING BERKELEY'S HISTORY • SINCE 1997

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Interactive Maps

While we continue taking advantage of Google Maps' interactive capabilities, their latest update eliminated useful features we had been using such as linking to a specific location and then linking back to the corresponding website page. Though now limited, the maps remain useful. We hope Google will soon reintroduce their map's previous capabilities.

Campus Area Downtown North

South West & Central e-Plaques

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