



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HEARING DATE: December 6, 2017

CASE NUMBER: 2017-000965DES, 2016-013562DES, 2006.1465L

PROJECT ADDRESS 460 Arguello Blvd., 600 32nd Avenue, 2728 Bryant Street

BLOCK/LOT 1061/049, 1574/001, 4273/008

TO: Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: Shannon Ferguson
Preservation Planner, 415-575-9074

REVIEWED BY: Tim Frye
Historic Preservation Officer, 415-575-6822

RE: Landmark Recommendation Resolutions for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, George Washington High School, and Sunshine School

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On October 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution Nos. 909, 910, and 911 to initiate Article 10 landmark designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School), and 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School). Under Article 10, initiation and recommendation are two distinct steps of the landmark designation process which require separate hearings and resolutions.

On November 2, 2017, Commission President Wolfram and Commissioner Johnck visited 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) and 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School).

Attached are draft Resolutions to recommend approval to the Board of Supervisors the designation of all three properties as individual San Francisco landmarks under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1.

- a. **460 Arguello Blvd.** (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) is architecturally significant as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals. It also meets the Historic Preservation Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building.
- b. **600 32nd Avenue** (George Washington High School) is associated with significant events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration funds. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by the Federal Art Project. It also meets the Historic Preservation

Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types for its association with events of the Public Works Administration and designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas.

- c. **2728 Bryant Street** (Sunshine School) is significant for its association with events as the first public school specifically designed for children with disabilities built west of the Rockies and for its association with the Public Works Administration. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish accents; represents the work of four master architects - Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien; and exhibits high artistic values in its ingenious floorplan devised to combine two specialized schools into one campus and in its quality of materials and workmanship. It also meets the Historic Preservation Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types for its association with events of the Public Works Administration and designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas.

The Planning Department (Department) recommends adopting these Resolutions.

ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Resolutions
Draft Landmark Designation Reports
Designation Ordinances
October 18, 2017 Case Report
Resolution Nos. 909, 910, and 911



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE XXX XX, 2017

Case No. 2017-000965DES
Project: 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School)
Recommendation to Board of Supervisors
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 460 ARGUELLO BLVD. (AKA THEODORE ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 1061, LOT 049, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX

1. WHEREAS, on August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017 reviewed Department staff's analysis of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution XXX; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) as a landmark is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and
5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) conveys its architectural significance as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals; and

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) meets the eligibility requirements of Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation, as they relate to the building’s historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
8. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code, Section 101.1 and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved, and will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302; and
9. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor’s Block 1061, Lot 049 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on XXX XX, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT: none

ADOPTED: XXX XX, 2017



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE XXX XX, 2017

Case No. 2016-013562DES
Project: 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)
Recommendation to Board of Supervisors
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 600 32ND AVENUE (AKA GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 1574, LOT 001, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX

1. WHEREAS, on August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School), to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School) with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017 reviewed Department staff's analysis of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School) historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution XXX; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School) as a landmark is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and
5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School) associated with significant events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration funds; and is architecturally significant, as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by the Federal Art Project; and

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School) meets the eligibility requirements of Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building’s historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
8. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code, Section 101.1 and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved, and will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302; and
9. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor’s Block 1574, Lot 001 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on XXX XX, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT: none

ADOPTED: XXX XX, 2017



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE XXX XX, 2017

Case No. 2006.1465L
Project: 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)
Recommendation to Board of Supervisors
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 2728 BRYANT STREET (AKA SUNSHINE SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 4273, LOT 008, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX

1. WHEREAS, on August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School) with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017 reviewed Department staff's analysis of 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School) historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017 and initiated Landmark designation process through Resolution XXX; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School) as a landmark is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and
5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School) is significant for its association with events as the first public school specifically designed for children with disabilities built west of the Rockies and for its association with the Public Works Administration; is architecturally significant, as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish accents; represents the work of four master architects - Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien; and exhibits high artistic values in its ingenious floorplan devised to

combine two specialized schools into one campus, and in its quality of materials and workmanship.; and

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School) meets the eligibility requirements of Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and
7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of exterior and interior character-defining features, as identified in the Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the building’s historical significance and retain historical integrity; and
8. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code, Section 101.1 and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic buildings be preserved, and will serve the public necessity, convenience and welfare pursuant to Planning Code, Section 302; and
9. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of landmark designation of 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), Assessor’s Block 4273, Lot 008 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on XXX XX, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT: none

ADOPTED: XXX XX, 2017



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Landmark Designation Case Report

Hearing Date: October 18, 2017
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson – (415) 575-9074
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Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
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- a. Case No.: 2017-000965DES**
Project Address: 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School)
Zoning: P - Public
Block/Lot: 1061/049
Property Owner: San Francisco Unified School District
- b. Case No.: 2016-013562DES**
Project Address: 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)
Zoning: P - Public
Block/Lot: 1574/001
Property Owner: San Francisco Unified School District
- c. Case No.: 2006.1465L**
Project Address: 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)
Zoning: P - Public
Block/Lot: 4273/008
Property Owner: San Francisco Unified School District

PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

- a. **460 Arguello Blvd.**, historically known as Theodore Roosevelt Middle School occupies a 94,468-sf parcel bounded by Arguello Boulevard to the west, a pair of residential properties to the north, Palm Avenue to the east, and three commercial properties facing Geary Boulevard to the south. The property is located in the Jordan Park/Laurel Heights neighborhood. Designed in 1928 and built in 1929-30, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School sits on a generally level site, with a slight downhill grade toward the north. To the west, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School faces Arguello Boulevard. Anchoring the northwest corner of Geary and Arguello Boulevards is a large, two-story, masonry commercial building that was originally built in 1893 as the Park & Ocean Railroad Company's Geary Street Car Barn. Anchoring the north side of the block, at the southwest corner of Arguello Boulevard and Clement Street, is a three-story commercial building originally constructed in 1908 as a Masonic Temple and remodeled ca. 1930 in the Art Deco style with several commercial storefronts facing Clement Street. The rest of the west side of the block is occupied by residential dwellings with minimal front yard setbacks. A broad range of architectural styles is represented on the block, ranging from a Victorian-era Italianate cottage to a contemporary apartment complex.

- b. 600 32nd Avenue, historically known as George Washington High School, occupies a 691,811-sf parcel bounded by Geary Boulevard to the north, 32nd Avenue to the west, Balboa Street to the south, and 30th Avenue to the east, in San Francisco's Outer Richmond District. The campus is located atop a prominent rise. The neighborhood surrounding the school is characterized by a mixture of pre-and post-World War II residential development that reflects a pattern of speculative development present throughout most of the Outer Richmond District: rows and clusters of largely identical, stucco-clad, single-family dwellings built on 25-foot-wide lots, creating nearly unbroken street walls. The surrounding area was developed between 1920 and 1950, and most of the houses are designed in architectural styles popular during these decades, including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, French Provincial, Tudor Revival, and Streamline Moderne.
- c. 2728 Bryant Street, historically known as Sunshine School is located at in San Francisco's Mission District. It occupies a 38,999-sf parcel bounded by Bryant Street to the east, Florida Street to the west, and residential properties to the north and south. The site is level, as is the surrounding neighborhood. The southeastern Mission District, where the school is located, is characterized by a dense urban mix of single-family and multi-family residential properties, most of which were developed between 1890 and 1920.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School), and 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School) as three individual landmarks under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

- OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.
- POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

- a. The proposed designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation will help to preserve an important historical resource that is architecturally significant as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals.
- b. The proposed of 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School) designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation will help to preserve an important historical resource that is associated with significant events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration funds. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by the Federal Art Project.
- c. The proposed designation of 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School) will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation, will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its association with events as the first public school specifically designed for children with disabilities built west of the Rockies and for its association with the Public Works Administration. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish accents; represents the work of four master architects - Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien; and exhibits high artistic values in its ingenious floorplan devised to combine two specialized schools into one campus and in its quality of materials and workmanship.

BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) and 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School) were added to the Landmark Designation Work program on August 17, 2016. 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School) was added to the Landmark Designation Work program on June 15, 2011. The landmark designation reports were prepared by Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission adopts a resolution to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its October 18, 2017 hearing, a second Historic Preservation Commission hearing will be scheduled for the Commission's recommendation of approval of the designation. At the second hearing, if the Historic Preservation Commission recommends approval of the designation, its recommendation will be sent by the Department to the Board of Supervisors. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

INTERIOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION

According to Article 10, Section 1004(c) of the Planning Code, only those interiors that were historically publicly accessible are eligible for listing in Article 10. Article 10, Section 1004(c) of the Planning Code states,

- (1) For a publicly-owned landmark, review of proposed changes to significant interior architectural features.
- (2) For a privately-owned landmark, review of proposed changes requiring a permit to significant interior architectural features in those areas of the landmark that are or historically have been accessible to members of the public. The designating ordinance must clearly describe each significant interior architectural feature subject to this restriction.

PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

There is no known public or neighborhood opposition to designation the three properties as an Article 10 landmark. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

Staff presented on landmark designation of **600 32nd Avenue** (George Washington High School) and the New Deal Historic Context Statement to the Building and Grounds Committee of the San Francisco School Board on September 28, 2015. Staff is scheduled to present at the October 23, 2017 committee meeting on landmark designation of all three schools.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and following analysis was prepared by Department staff. The Department has determined that the subject properties meet the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for their inclusion is outlined below under the Significance and Integrity sections of this case report.

- a. **460 Arguello Blvd.** (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) meets the Historic Preservation Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significant architecture

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is architecturally significant as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals.

Roosevelt is an exceedingly rare example of a style that was essentially unknown in the United States until after World War II. Features of the building that embody the distinctive traits of Dutch and German Brick Expressionist architecture include the school's polychromatic clinker brick and terra cotta tile cladding, corbelled brickwork laid in geometrical zig-zag and diaper patterns, the basket-weave balustrade, and the use of the building's overall form – particularly the tower and the

gymnasium roof – to achieve an emotional, almost Gothic, effect. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School shows the influence of several specific buildings, including Fritz Höger’s Reemtsma Cigarette Factory in Hamburg (1923), the Hoechts Administration Building in Frankfurt by Peter Behrens (1924), Wilhelm Marx Haus in Düsseldorf by Wilhelm Kreis (1922-24), and especially Haus Am Köllnischen Park in Berlin by Alfred Gottheiner (1933-33).

As a design of Timothy Pflueger (1892–1946), Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is significant as an important work of one of San Francisco’s top architects. Pflueger is perhaps best known for his work in the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles. By the time his firm designed Roosevelt, Pflueger had transitioned from a more rigorously historicist and regionalist approach that had characterized much of his early work, toward a more experimental vocabulary influenced by both contemporary European modernism and the indigenous architecture of pre-conquest Mexico and Central America. Roosevelt is the only building designed by Pflueger in the Brick Expressionist style. Indeed, it is the only building designed in the style in San Francisco and possibly the only major example of the style in the United States.

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School embodies high artistic values by virtue not only of Pflueger’s design but also its three New Deal murals sponsored by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). Painted four years after the school was completed, the murals include two by Horatio Nelson Poole in the main lobby (Land and Harvest) and one above the entrance to the auditorium on the second floor level by George Nelson Walker (Education). Unlike many other New Deal-era art projects in San Francisco, most of which were frescoes, the murals at Roosevelt are oil painted on canvas, reflecting the fact that they were installed several years after the school was built and that they were not an integral part of the building’s original design. Land and Harvest depict time-honored themes of family, labor, and landscape and Education celebrates the role of the public school in American life.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is 1930-35, beginning with the completion of the school building and concluding with the completion of the last New Deal mural.

INTEGRITY

Though Theodore Roosevelt Middle School has undergone several alterations, chiefly window replacement and various interior upgrades to the classrooms, corridors, etcetera, the building retains ample integrity to convey its associations with its original design and period of significance.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The Landmark Designation Report lists exterior character defining features of the three buildings on page 77.

The **exterior** character-defining features of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School include all exterior elevations, including but not limited to: form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials. In the case of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, its specific character-defining features are:

- The school's overall height, massing, and footprint.
- The publicly visible portions of the school's four exterior façades, including their corbelled brick and tile spandrel cladding; and copper, cast stone, and terra cotta trim;
- The arched primary entrance at 490 Arguello Boulevard, including the oak doors and transom;
- The tower, including its corbelled brick exterior cladding and cast concrete screens;
- Terra cotta balustrades on the roof of the academic building;
- Grid-like fenestration pattern and trim (though not the window sashes themselves), including copper colonnettes, copper spandrel panels (gymnasium only) and terra cotta sills and lintels;
- The flat roofs of the academic building and the auditorium wing and the gambrel roof of the gymnasium wing.

The **interior** character-defining features of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School include:

- Layout, design and materials of the following spaces: main entrance lobby, corridor near the administrative offices, auditorium, auditorium balcony, stairs, and gymnasium;
- All three surviving New Deal-era murals, including those in the main entrance lobby and second floor level.
- All surviving doors, hardware, and light fixtures in the main entrance lobby, corridor near the administrative offices, auditorium, and auditorium balcony.
- Tile wainscoting in corridors and stairs.

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The boundaries of the landmark site encompass all of and are limited to lot 018 in Assessor's Block 3280.

- b. **600 32nd Avenue** (George Washington High School) meets the Historic Preservation Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types for its association with events of the Public Works Administration and designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significant architecture

George Washington High School is significant for its association with events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration funds. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by the Federal Art Project.

George Washington High School derives its significance in part from its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal New Deal agency established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933 to combat the Depression. After New York City, the San Francisco region was the most successful in obtaining PWA projects. In addition to San Francisco's influential mayor, Angelo Rossi, and its powerful congressional delegation, San Franciscans had already approved several school construction bonds, making its applications for federal funding more attractive to PWA chief Harold Ickes. Altogether, the PWA helped the San Francisco School Board construct or rebuild 11 public school campuses.

Designed in the Streamline Moderne style, George Washington High School is emblematic of much PWA construction, especially in the West, which embraced the “modernistic” style as its own. Interestingly, George Washington High School also embodies characteristics of the International Style and the Hollywood Regency style, especially the colonnade on the north side of the auditorium, which deliberately references George Washington’s Mount Vernon. This hybrid modern/traditional aesthetic, which characterized many PWA projects, was given its own name, the “PWA Moderne” style. Architect Timothy Pflueger used it on both of the high schools built with PWA funds, including George Washington High School and Abraham Lincoln High School.

Designed by architect Timothy Pflueger (1892–1946), George Washington High School is a work of a “master” architect. Known for his early embrace of the Art Deco style, Pflueger made the style his own by incorporating Mayan and Aztec motifs. By the time he designed George Washington High School, Pflueger had begun to embrace the more stripped-down and machine-like Streamline Moderne style, which was in keeping with the growing popularity of the International Style in Europe. GWHS is one of four public schools designed by Pflueger and four architecturally significant pre-World War II high schools.

Finally, George Washington High School is significant as a property characterized by high artistic values, as home to four New Deal-era murals and one outdoor frieze. All were sponsored by the PWA’s Federal Art Project (FAP). The artists who executed these projects, including Victor Arnautoff, Ralph Stackpole, Sargent Johnson, and several others, make GWHS one of the most important repositories of New Deal artwork in San Francisco.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for George Washington High School is 1935 –1974, beginning with the completion of the academic building in 1935, and concluding with the completion of Dewey Crumpler’s “Response” murals 39 years later.

INTEGRITY

Though parts of the George Washington High School campus have undergone changes, as a whole, George Washington High School retains ample integrity to convey its association in terms of its original design, use, and period of construction.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The Landmark Designation Report lists exterior character defining features of the three buildings on page 90.

The character-defining features of the George Washington High School complex include all elevations, including but not limited to form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials:

Academic Building

- The academic building's footprint and overall height and massing;
- Flat roof with skylights;
- All exposed portions of the academic building's four exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding, the terra cotta and cast stone decorative detailing, and cement plaster bas-relief motifs;
- The ribbon window openings, although not the aluminum sashes;
- The remaining original steel industrial windows flanking the main entrance on 32nd Avenue;
- The main entrance, including the concrete stair, cast stone piers, metal canopy and busts, though not the aluminum doors themselves;
- The other original entrances, including the curved metal canopies and pipe railing balustrades, but not the doors themselves, except for the two remaining historic doors on the east façade facing the esplanade;
- General layout of the academic building and the materials of the following interior spaces: main entrance lobby (including Arnautoff murals, George Washington statue, terrazzo stairs and flooring, handrails, tiled wainscoting, and Art Deco light fixtures), corridor near the administrative office suite (including Memorial Clock and other class gifts, display cases, tiled wainscoting, George Washington sculpture, and Dewey Crumpler murals), library (including the Langdon, Labaudt, and Stackpole murals, paneling, casework and clocks);
- All remaining tiled wainscoting in corridors and stairs;
- All remaining original wood doors throughout academic building;
- All remaining stairs with separate up and down traffic configuration, though not the materials.

Shop Building

- The shop building's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The shop building's flat roof and skylight;
- All exposed portions of the shop building's four exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding, cement plaster and terra cotta ornament, and four figural wall-mounted sculptures;
- The shop building's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all remaining steel industrial windows;
- The shop building's main entrance on the north façade, including the surviving metal doors;
- The concrete bridge connecting the shop building to the academic building.

Auditorium

- The auditorium's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The auditorium's stepped flat roof with fly tower;
- The auditorium's two exposed façades, including the painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament – in particular the north façade with its full-height colonnade;
- The fenestration pattern on the north façade of the auditorium, including the original steel windows and louvered vents;
- The original metal doors within the colonnade;
- The main auditorium space, including the telescoping plaster walls and proscenium arch and plywood seating;

- Auditorium lobby and finishes, including wood doors, curved plaster walls, and metal pipe railings.

Gymnasium

- The gymnasium's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The gymnasium's flat roof and skylights;
- The gymnasium's three exposed exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament;
- The gymnasium's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all remaining steel industrial windows;
- The original entrances on the north façade but not the doors themselves;
- Upper gymnasium with hardwood flooring and exposed steel truss roof.

Music Room Addition

- The music room addition's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The music room addition's stepped flat roof with skylight;
- The music room addition's painted concrete exterior cladding with terra cotta ornament.

Site

- Football field and bleachers;
- Sargent Johnson's *Athletics* frieze on the south side of the football field;
- Remaining lawn and planting strips along 32nd Avenue;
- Esplanade in front of the gymnasium and auditorium, including concrete walkways, benches, and balustrades;
- Courtyard space at south end of academic building.

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The site proposed for Landmark designation encompasses a portion of Assessor Parcel Number 1574/001, a 691,811-square-foot parcel bounded by Geary Boulevard to the north, 30th Avenue to the east, Balboa Street to the south, and 32nd Avenue to the west. The specific portion of the parcel proposed for Landmark designation includes only the portions of the site developed between 1936 and 1952, including the academic building (1935), shop building (1936), New Deal murals (1936), auditorium (1940), gymnasium (1940), football field and bleachers (1940), esplanade (1940), and music room addition (1952).

- c. **2728 Bryant Street.** (Sunshine School) meets the Historic Preservation Commission's priority for designation of underrepresented property types for its association with events of the Public Works Administration and designation of buildings located in geographically underrepresented areas.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significant events

The Sunshine School is also significant for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA). Established in 1933, the PWA's primary purpose was to boost construction and demand for building materials. Administered by Harold Ickes, the PWA provided a combination of grants, loans, and technical expertise to communities across the nation so that they could construct permanent and modern infrastructure and public buildings. Typically designed by local architects and built by local contractors, the PWA nonetheless carefully supervised its projects, insisting upon quality design and construction to ensure that countless PWA projects continue to serve the nation 80 years on.

Significant architecture

The Sunshine School is significant as the first public school specifically designed for children with physical disabilities built west of the Rockies. Progressive public health professionals and teachers of children with disabilities increasingly believed that disabled and chronically ill children should attend school in safe and accessible buildings separate from the mainstream. Designed in 1933–34 and built 1935–37, the Sunshine School was designed with a barrier-free floor plan prefiguring the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act over 50 years later. Built decades before the disability rights movement took off in the 1960s/1970s, those responsible for building the Sunshine School were nonetheless imbued with a sense that they were advancing the cause of social justice, by ensuring that previously marginalized communities had access to the same opportunities as “normal” Americans.

Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish details, the building is one of San Francisco's most distinctive public school buildings. Beyond its picturesque styling, the former Sunshine School has an ingenious floorplan devised to combine two specialized schools—the Sunshine School for Crippled Children and the Buena Vista Health School—into one campus.

Like so many other PWA projects, the former Sunshine School embodies high artistic values by virtue of its high-quality materials and craftsmanship. Although built of board-formed concrete and other mass-produced materials, the building is embellished with high-quality detailing and other features, including Mexican-style tilework on the water table and around the entrances, tile wainscoting in the lobby/stair and the therapeutic pool room, and the Art Deco light fixtures in the lobby/stair and the auditoriums. Other artistic touches include the hand-painted stenciling on the beams in many of the classrooms, the wrought-iron grilles over some of the windows, the statue of the child above the Bryant Street entrance, and the figural animal finials atop the classroom wings.

Finally, the former Sunshine School is significant as the work of four master architects: Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien. Though there is no record indicating who was responsible for what, the influence of all four architects can be seen in the design of the Sunshine School.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for the Sunshine School is 1937 to 1975, beginning with the completion of the school and concluding with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which signaled the end of separate schools for handicapped and chronically ill children.

INTEGRITY

Although the Sunshine School has undergone several alterations, chiefly window replacement and some interior upgrades to classrooms and toilet rooms, the building retains ample integrity to convey its association with its original design, use, and period of construction.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The Landmark Designation Report lists exterior character defining features of the three buildings on page 68.

The **exterior** character-defining features of the former Sunshine School include all elevations, including but not limited to its form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials. More specifically, its character-defining features include:

- The school's overall height, massing, and footprint;
- All exterior façades and the three courtyard façades, including the painted concrete walls with exposed board form impressions and all molded concrete ornament, including scalloped relief moldings, entablatures, engaged piers and buttresses, frieze, oversized buttresses facing the courtyard, balconies, and figural and animal sculptures;
- All Mexican-style tilework on the exterior, including on the water table of the classroom wings, on window spandrel panels, and flanking the entrances on Bryant and Florida Streets;
- Primary entrance and pavilion on Bryant Street, including paired wooden doors and all paneling above and to either side of the doors;
- Primary entrance on Florida Street, including paired wooden doors and transom;
- Fenestration pattern and turned wooden mullions along Bryant and Florida Street façades but not the aluminum sashes themselves;
- Fenestration pattern, turned wood wooden mullions, and decorative metal screens on courtyard elevations, including remaining historic steel windows;
- All wrought-iron window grilles on Bryant and Florida Street façades and on courtyard elevations;
- The entrance pavilion's hipped roof, including red clay tile accents, finial, and weather vane;
- Incised signage above main entrance on Bryant Street;
- Skylights atop east and west classroom wings;
- Courtyard and remaining sections of original landscaping, including planting bed along Bryant Street and two remaining planting beds at the south side of the courtyard, paved patio at the center of the courtyard (though not the paving material itself), and the tiled flagpole/bench at the north end of the courtyard.

The **interior** character-defining features of the Sunshine School include:

- Layout, design, and materials of the lobby/stair, including tiled wainscoting, terrazzo flooring, lath and plaster walls, stepped balance-run stair, and remaining light fixtures;
- Layout, design, and materials of the auditorium spaces on the first and second floor levels, including tiled wainscoting, stage area, and light fixtures;
- Layout, design, and materials of the first floor corridor, including remaining tiled surfaces, ceiling vaults, and built-in casework;
- Remaining tile in former therapeutic pool;
- All remaining hand-stenciling on concrete beams in first floor level classrooms;
- All remaining exposed metal trusses on second floor level;
- All surviving Art Deco light fixtures in the lobby/stair and second floor auditorium.

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The boundaries of the landmark site encompass all of and are limited to Assessor's Block 4273, Lot 008.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

- a. Based on the Department's analysis, **460 Arguello Blvd.** (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School) is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is architecturally significant as San Francisco's only Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals. Staff recommends approval of the proposed landmark designation of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.
- b. Based on the Department's analysis, **600 32nd Avenue** (George Washington High School) is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation. George Washington High School is associated with significant events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration funds. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by the Federal Art Project. Staff recommends approval of the proposed landmark designation of George Washington High School.
- c. Based on the Department's analysis, **2728 Bryant Street** (Sunshine School) is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation. Sunshine School is significant for its association with events as the first public school specifically designed for children with disabilities built west of the Rockies and for its association with the Public Works Administration. It is also architecturally significant as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish accents; represents the work of four master architects - Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien; and exhibits high artistic values in its ingenious floorplan devised to combine two specialized schools into one campus and in its quality of materials and workmanship. Staff recommends approval of the proposed landmark designation of Sunshine School.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School), 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School) as San Francisco landmarks under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft Landmark Designation Reports
- B. Draft Motion initiating designations

Parcel Map



SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2017-000965DES
460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt
Middle School)

Zoning Map

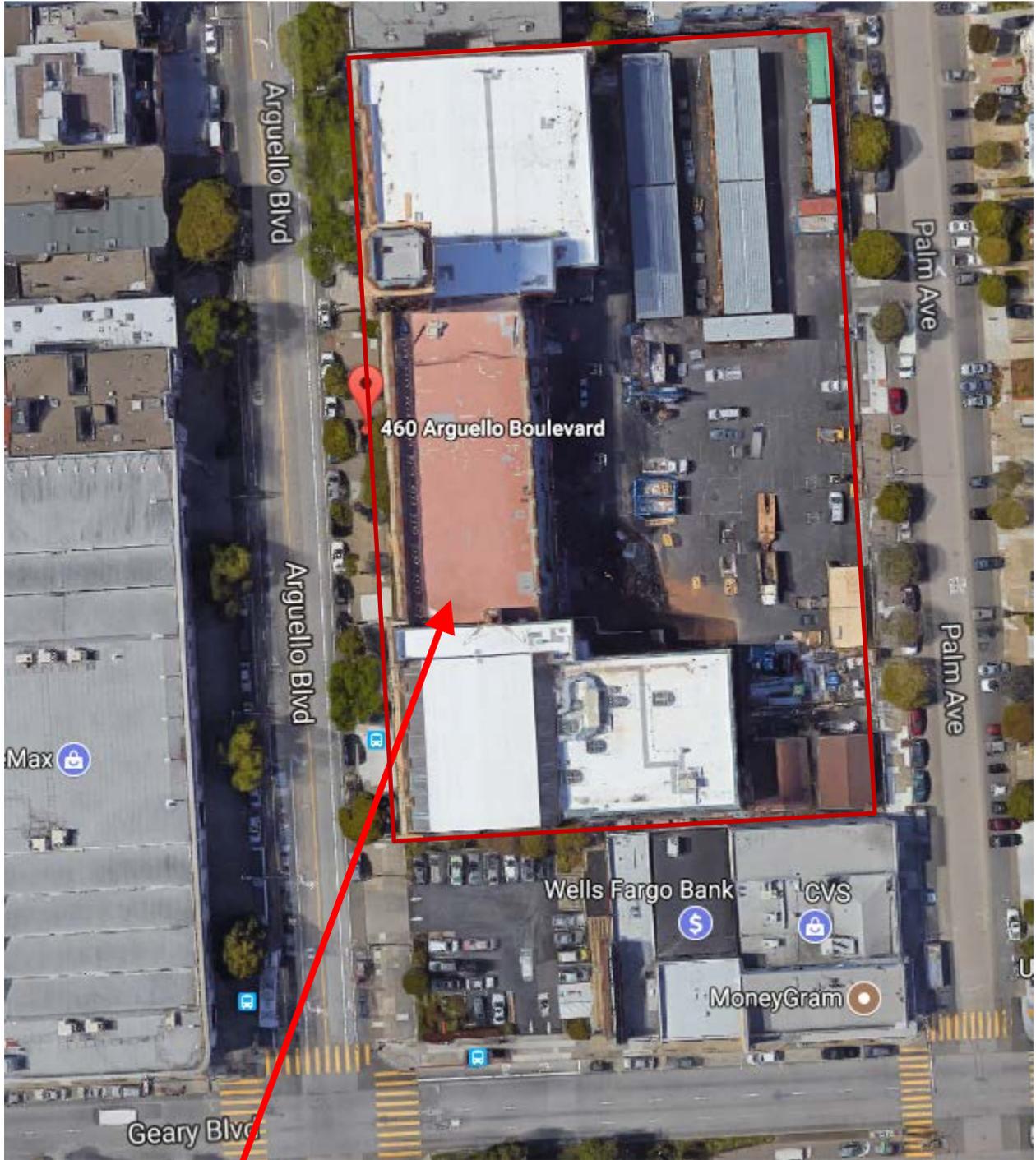


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2017-000965DES
460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt
Middle School)

Aerial Photo

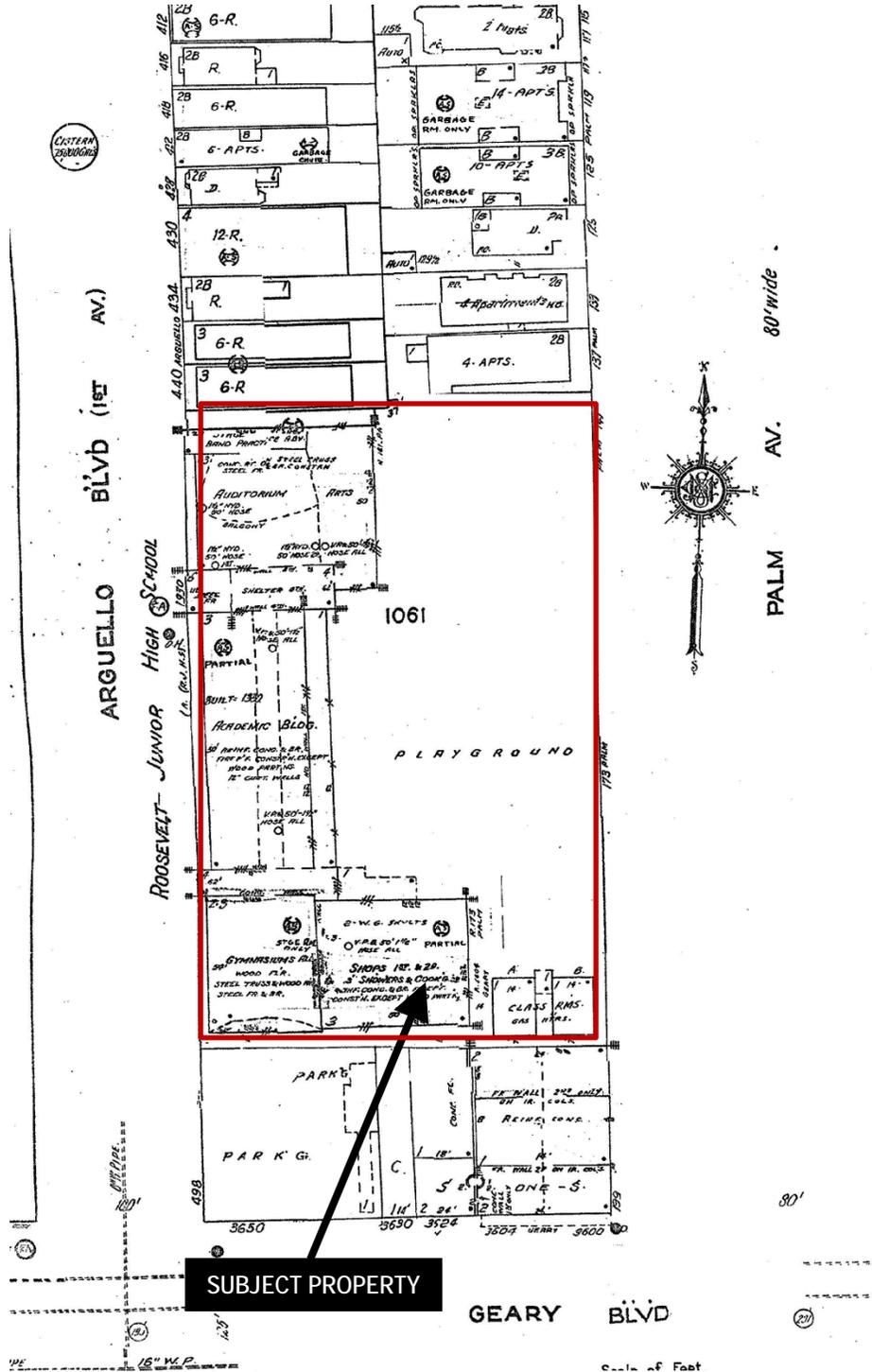


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2017-000965DES
460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt
Middle School)

Sanborn Map*



*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.



Site Photo



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2017-000965DES
460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt
Middle School)

Parcel Map

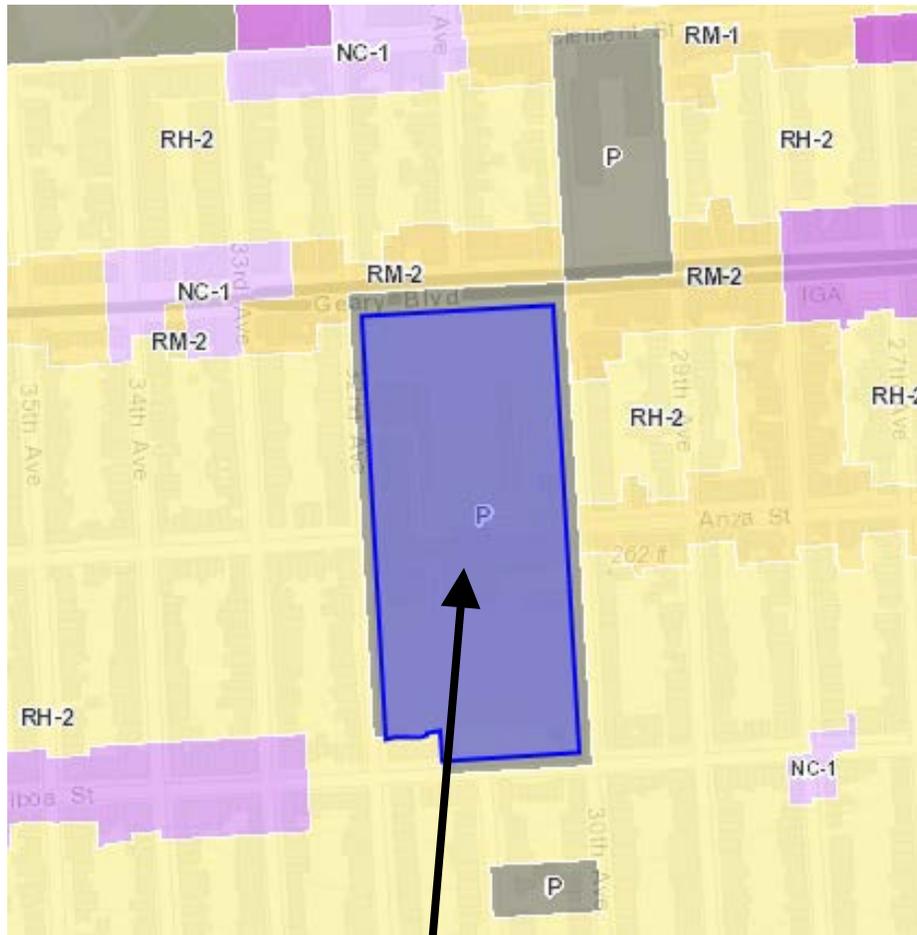


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2016-013562DES
600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)

Zoning Map



SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2016-013562DES
600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)

Aerial Photo

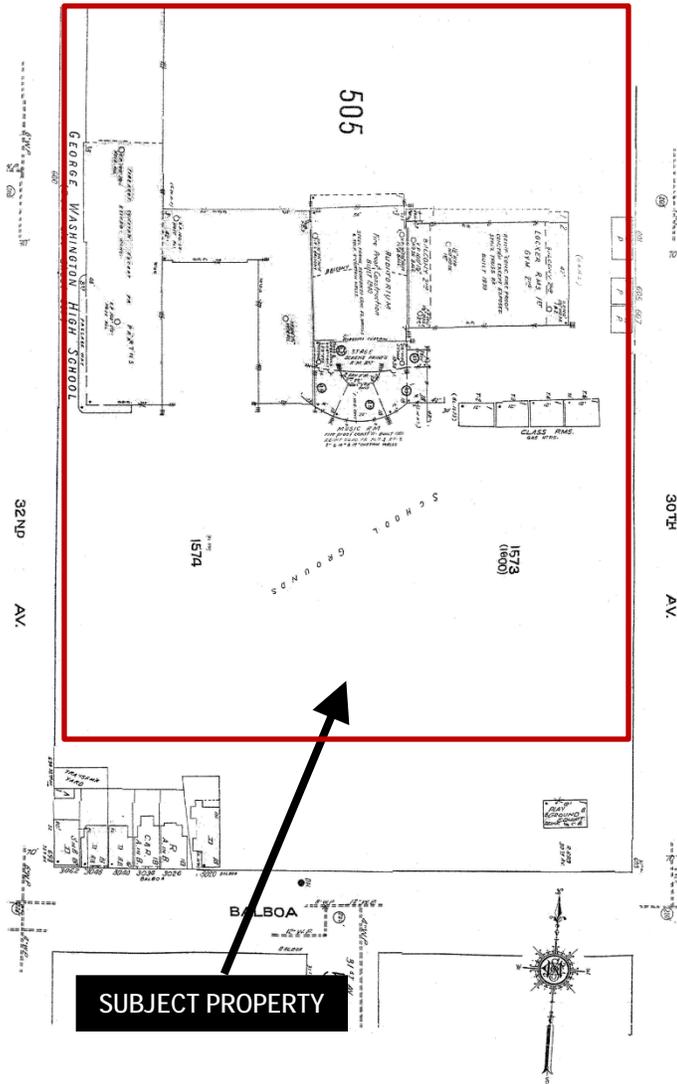


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2016-013562DES
600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)

Sanborn Map*



*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.

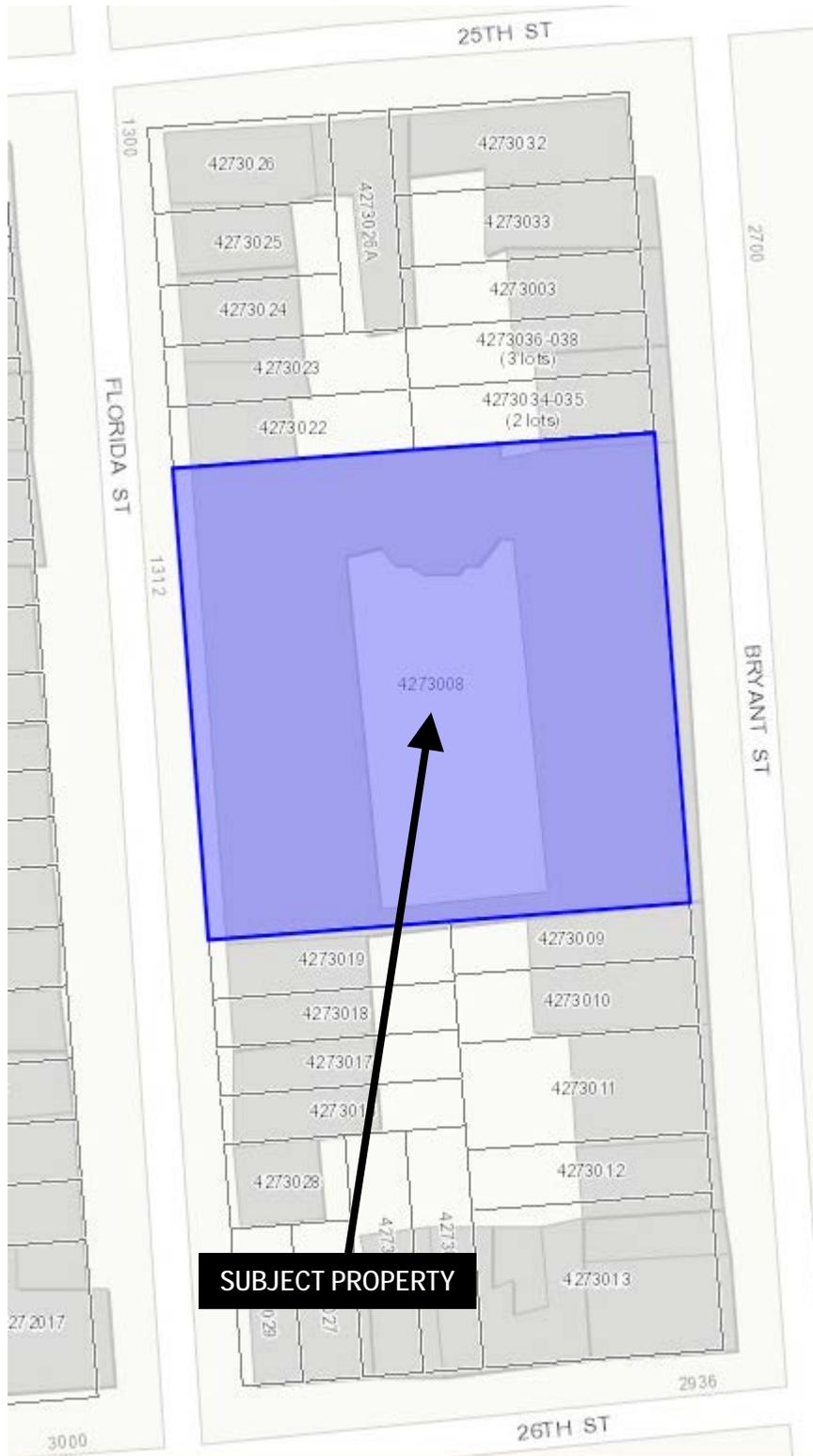


Site Photo



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2016-013562DES
600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High
School)

Parcel Map



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2006.1465L
2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)

Zoning Map

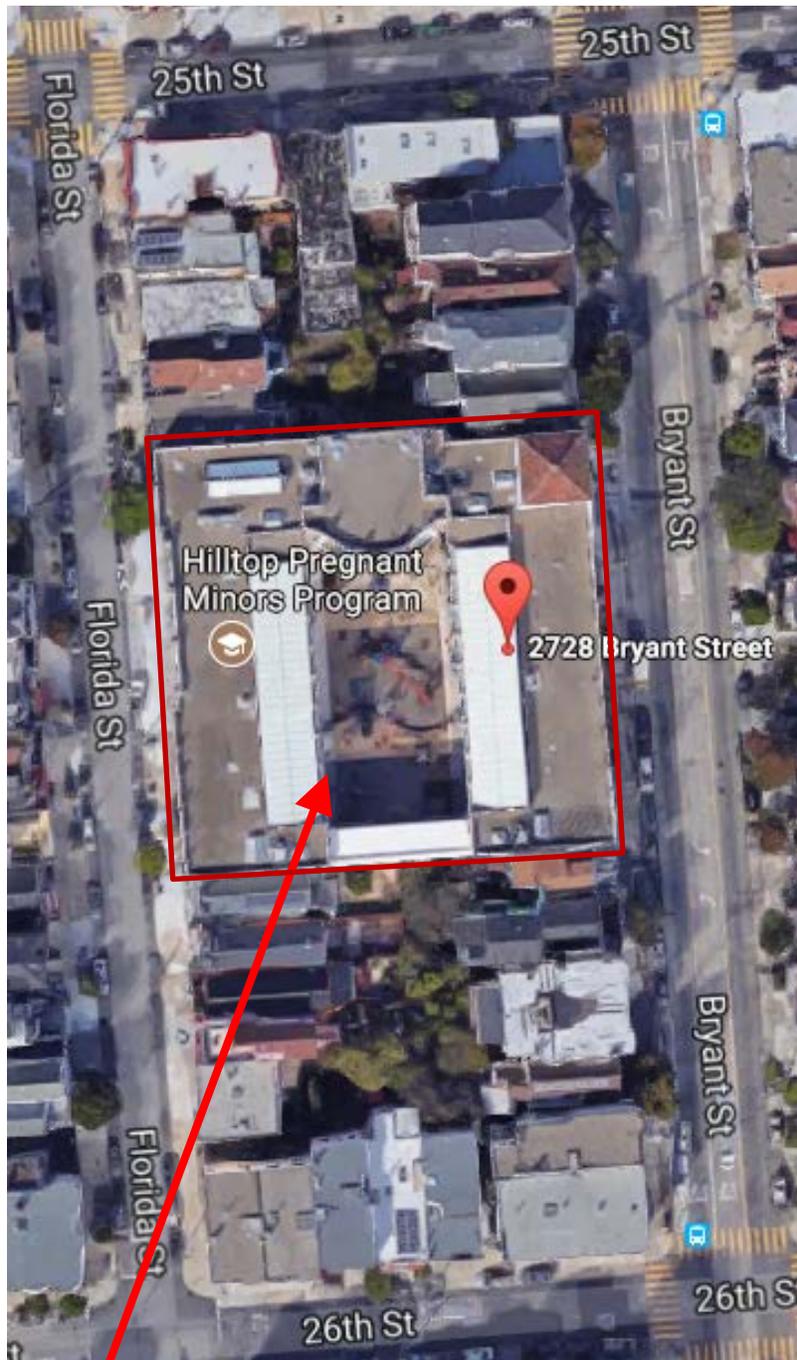


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2006.1465L
2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)

Aerial Photo

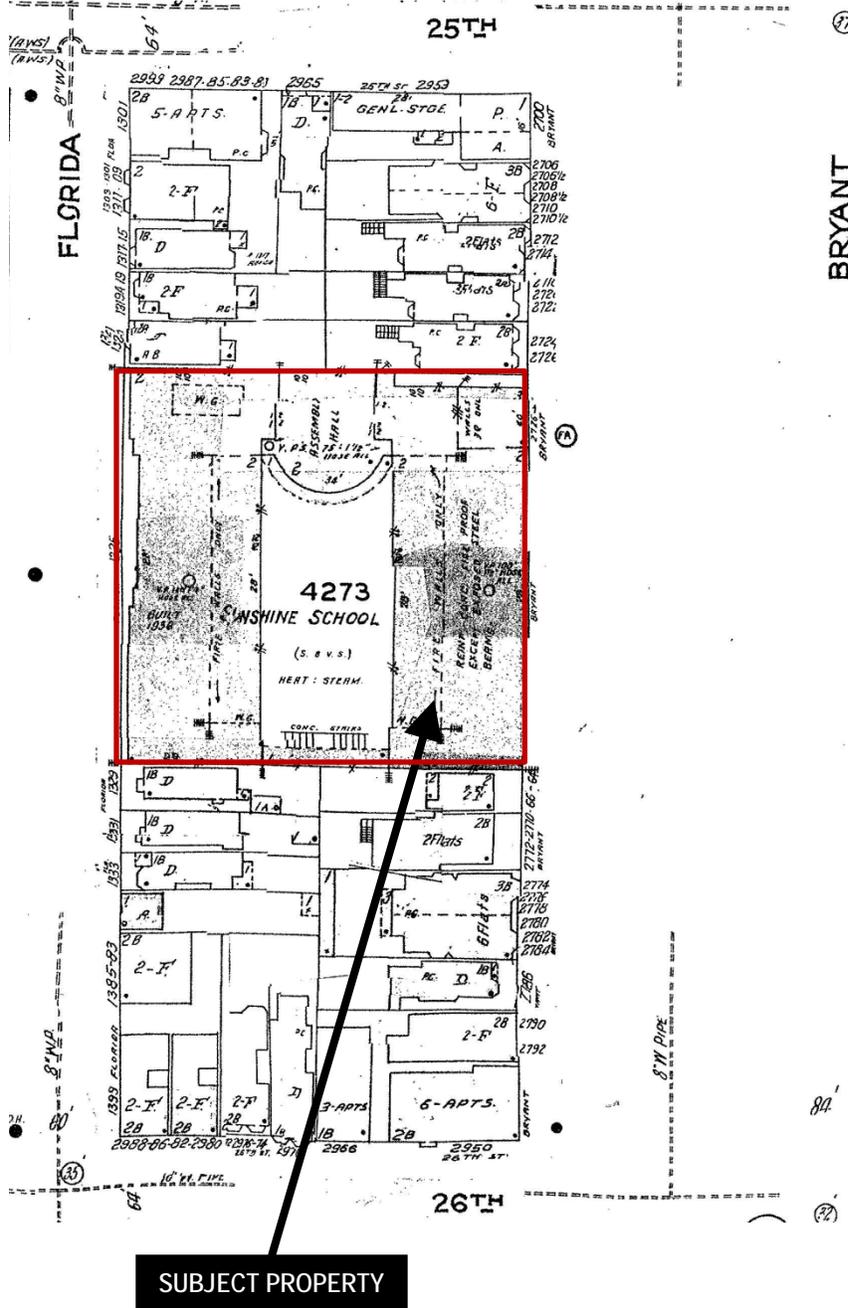


SUBJECT PROPERTY



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2006.1465L
2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)

Sanborn Map*



*The Sanborn Maps in San Francisco have not been updated since 1998, and this map may not accurately reflect existing conditions.



Article 10 Landmark Designation
2006.1465L
2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)

Site Photo





SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 909

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 18, 2017

1650 Mission St.
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Planning
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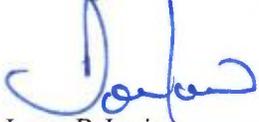
Case No. 2017-000965DES
Project: 460 Arguello Blvd. (Theodore Roosevelt Middle School)
Landmark Designation Initiation
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 460 ARGUELLO BLVD. (AKA THEODORE ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 1061, LOT 049, AS AN ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.

1. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of August 17, 2016, added 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Block 1061, Lot 049, to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 460 Arguello Blvd. with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Planning Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 460 Arguello Blvd.'s historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of 460 Arguello Blvd. as a Landmark in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Block 1061, Lot 049 as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 18, 2017.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Johnck, Johns, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Hyland

ADOPTED: October 18, 2017



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 910

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 18, 2017

Case No. 2016-013562DES
Project: 600 32nd Avenue (George Washington High School)
Landmark Designation Initiation
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

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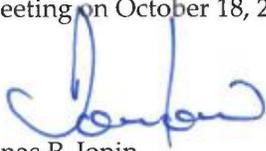
Planning
Information:
415.558.6377

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 600 32ND AVENUE. (AKA GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 1574, LOT 001, AS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.

1. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of August 17, 2016, added 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor's Block 1574, Lot 001, to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 600 32nd Avenue with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Planning Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 600 32nd Avenue's historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the nomination of 600 32nd Avenue as a landmark is in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor's Block 1574, Lot 001 as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 18, 2017.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Johnck, Johns, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Hyland

ADOPTED: October 18, 2017



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 911

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 18, 2017

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Case No. 2006.1465L
Project: 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)
Landmark Designation Initiation
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 2728 BRYANT STREET. (AKA SUNSHINE SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 4273, LOT 008, AS AN ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.

1. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 15, 2011, added 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), Assessor's Block 4273, Lot 008, to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 2728 Bryant Street with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Planning Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 2728 Bryant Street's historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2728 Bryant Street nomination is in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), Assessor's Block 4273, Lot 008 as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 18, 2017.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Johnck, Johns, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Hyland

ADOPTED: October 18, 2017

1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle
2 School)]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore**
4 **Roosevelt Middle School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, as a Landmark under**
5 **Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination**
6 **under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity,**
7 **convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of**
8 **consistency with the General Plan, and with the eight priority policies of Planning**
9 **Code, Section 101.1.**

10 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
11 **Additions to Codes** are in single-underline italics Times New Roman font.
12 **Deletions to Codes** are in ~~strikethrough italics Times New Roman font~~.
13 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
14 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
15 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
16 subsections or parts of tables.

17 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

18 Section 1. Findings.

19 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

20 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code
21 amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality
22 Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section
23 15308 of the Guidelines for implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies
24 for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is
25 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is
incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that
2 the proposed landmark designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle
3 School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, will serve the public necessity, convenience,
4 and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No.
5 _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated
6 herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of
8 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot
9 049, is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan and with Planning Code, Section
10 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No.
11 _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated
12 herein by reference.

13 (b) General Findings.

14 (1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the City Charter, the Historic Preservation
15 Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark
16 designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of
17 Supervisors."

18 (2) On August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 460
19 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049,
20 to the Landmark Designation Work Program, which was adopted by the Historic Preservation
21 Commission on June 15, 2011 and is a list of individual properties and historic districts under
22 consideration for landmark designation.

23 (3) The Designation report was prepared by outside historic preservation
24 experts and reviewed by Planning Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the
25 Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards and Planning Department

1 Preservation staff reviewed the report for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and
2 standards of Article 10.

3 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18,
4 2017, reviewed Planning Department Preservation staff's analysis of 460 Arguello Blvd.'s
5 historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report
6 dated October 18, 2017.

7 (5) On October 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission passed
8 Resolution No. _____, initiating designation of 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore
9 Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, as a San Francisco
10 Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. Said resolution is on file with the
11 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is incorporated herein by
12 reference.

13 (6) On _____, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation
14 and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department
15 Preservation staff and the Landmark Designation Case Report, the Historic Preservation
16 Commission recommended approval of the proposed landmark designation of 460 Arguello
17 Blvd. (aka Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, in
18 Resolution No. _____. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
19 Supervisors in File No. _____.

20 (7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka
21 Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, has a special
22 character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its
23 designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth
24 in Article 10 of the Planning Code.

1 Section 2. Designation.

2 Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka Theodore
3 Roosevelt Middle School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, is hereby designated as a
4 San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

5
6 Section 3. Required Data.

7 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City
8 parcel located at 460 Arguello Blvd., Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, in San Francisco's
9 Presidio Heights neighborhood.

10 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and
11 shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in
12 Planning Department Case Docket No. 2017-000965DES. In brief, 460 Arguello Blvd. (aka
13 Theodore Roosevelt Middle School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1061, Lot 049, is eligible for local
14 designation under National Register of Historic Places Criterion C (embodies the distinctive
15 characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represents the work of a master,
16 and possesses high artistic values). Specifically, designation of Theodore Roosevelt Middle
17 School is proper given that it is architecturally significant, as San Francisco's only
18 Dutch/German Expressionist style building designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger,
19 and exhibits high artistic values in its three New Deal murals.

20 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
21 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark
22 Designation Case Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. 2017-
23 000965DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set
24 forth herein. Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or replaced in-kind:

1 (1) All exterior elevations, including but not limited to the form, massing,
2 structure, architectural ornament, and materials of 460 Arguello Blvd., identified as:

3 (A) The school's overall height, massing, and footprint;

4 (B) The publicly visible portions of the school's four exterior façades,
5 including their corbelled brick and tile spandrel cladding and copper, cast stone, and terra
6 cotta trim;

7 (C) The arched primary entrance on Arguello Boulevard, including the
8 oak doors and transom;

9 (D) The tower, including its corbelled brick exterior cladding and cast
10 concrete screens;

11 (E) Terra cotta balustrades on the roof of the academic building;

12 (F) Grid-like fenestration pattern and trim (but not the window sashes
13 themselves), including copper colonnettes, copper spandrel panels (gymnasium only), and
14 terra cotta sills and lintels; and

15 (G) The flat roofs of the academic building and the auditorium wing and
16 the gambrel roof of the gymnasium wing.

17 (2) The character-defining interior features of the building are those associated
18 with areas that have historically been accessible to the public, and are depicted in the floor
19 plans or photos in the Landmark Designation Report dated October 18, 2017, identified as:

20 (A) Layout, design, and materials of the main entrance lobby, corridor
21 near the administrative offices, auditorium, auditorium balcony, stairs, and gymnasium;

22 (B) All three surviving New Deal-era murals, including those in the main
23 entrance lobby and second floor level;

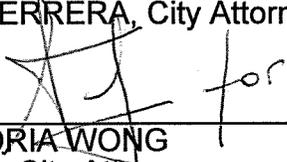
24 (C) All surviving doors, hardware, and light fixtures in the main entrance
25 lobby, corridor near the administrative offices, auditorium, and auditorium balcony; and

1 (D) Tile wainscoting in corridors and stairs.

2
3 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
4 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
5 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
6 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

7
8 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
9 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

10 By:

11 
12 _____
13 VICTORIA WONG
14 Deputy City Attorney

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1 [Planning Code - Landmark Designation - 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High
2 School)]

3 **Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate 600 32nd Avenue (aka George
4 Washington High School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, as a Landmark under
5 Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination
6 under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity,
7 convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of
8 consistency with the General Plan, and with the eight priority policies of Planning
9 Code, Section 101.1.**

10 **NOTE:** **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
11 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
12 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
13 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
14 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
15 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
16 subsections or parts of tables.

17 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

18 Section 1. Findings.

19 (a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

20 (1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed Planning Code
21 amendment is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality
22 Act (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section
23 15308 of the Guidelines for implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies
24 for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is
25 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is
incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

1 (2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that
2 the proposed landmark designation of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High
3 School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, will serve the public necessity, convenience,
4 and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No.
5 _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated
6 herein by reference.

7 (3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of
8 600 32nd Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot
9 001, is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan and with Planning Code Section
10 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No.
11 _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is incorporated
12 herein by reference.

13 (b) General Findings.

14 (1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the City Charter, the Historic Preservation
15 Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark
16 designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of
17 Supervisors."

18 (2) On August 17, 2016, the Historic Preservation Commission added 600 32nd
19 Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, to the
20 Landmark Designation Work Program, which was adopted by the Historic Preservation
21 Commission on June 15, 2011 and is a list of individual properties and historic districts under
22 consideration for landmark designation.

23 (3) The Designation report was prepared by outside historic preservation
24 experts and reviewed by Planning Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the
25 Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards and Planning Department

1 Preservation staff reviewed the report for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and
2 standards of Article 10.

3 (4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18,
4 2017, reviewed Planning Department Preservation staff's analysis of 600 32nd Avenue's
5 historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report
6 dated October 18, 2017.

7 (5) On October 18, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission passed
8 Resolution No. _____, initiating designation of 600 32nd Avenue (aka George
9 Washington High School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, as a San Francisco
10 Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. Said resolution is on file with the
11 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is incorporated herein by
12 reference.

13 (6) On _____, after holding a public hearing on the proposed designation
14 and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department
15 Preservation staff and the Landmark Designation Case Report, the Historic Preservation
16 Commission recommended approval of the proposed landmark designation of 600 32nd
17 Avenue (aka George Washington High School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, in
18 Resolution No. _____. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in
19 File No. _____.

20 (7) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that 600 32nd Avenue (aka George
21 Washington High School), Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, has a special character and
22 special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a
23 Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of
24 the Planning Code.

1 Section 2. Designation.

2 Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, 600 32nd Avenue (aka George
3 Washington High School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, is hereby designated as a
4 San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

5
6 Section 3. Required Data.

7 (a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of the City
8 parcel located at 600 32nd Avenue, Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, in San Francisco's
9 Outer Richmond District.

10 (b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and
11 shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in
12 Planning Department Case Docket No. 2016-013562DES. In brief, 600 32nd Avenue (aka
13 George Washington High School), in Assessor's Parcel No. 1574, Lot 001, is eligible for local
14 designation under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A (associated with events that
15 have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and National
16 Register of Historic Places Criterion C (embody the distinctive characteristics of a type,
17 period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, and possess high artistic
18 values). Specifically, designation of George Washington High School is proper given that it is
19 associated with significant events, as it was built largely using Public Works Administration
20 funds; and is architecturally significant as it embodies the characteristics of the Streamline
21 Moderne style, represents the work of master architect Timothy Pflueger, and exhibits high
22 artistic values in its four New Deal murals and one outdoor frieze that were all sponsored by
23 the Federal Art Project.

24 (c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined
25 necessary, are those generally shown in photographs and described in the Landmark

1 Designation Case Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. 2016-
2 013562DES, and which are incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set
3 forth herein. The character-defining interior features of the building are those associated with
4 areas that have historically been accessible to the public and are depicted in the floor plans or
5 photos in the Landmark Designation Report dated October 18, 2017. Specifically, the
6 following features shall be preserved or replaced in kind:

7 All exterior elevations, form, massing, structure, roofline, architectural ornament,
8 and materials of 600 32nd Avenue, identified as:

9 (1) Academic Building

10 (A) The academic building's footprint and overall height and massing;

11 (B) The academic building's flat roof with skylights;

12 (C) All exposed portions of the academic building's four exterior façades,
13 including the painted concrete cladding, the terra cotta and cast stone decorative detailing,
14 and cement plaster bas-relief motifs;

15 (D) The ribbon window openings (but not the aluminum sashes
16 themselves);

17 (E) The remaining original steel industrial windows flanking the main
18 entrance on 32nd Avenue;

19 (F) The main entrance, including the concrete stairs, cast stone piers,
20 metal canopy, and busts (but not the aluminum doors themselves);

21 (G) The other original entrances, including the curved metal canopies
22 and pipe railing balustrades, but not the doors themselves, except for the two remaining
23 historic doors on the east façade facing the esplanade;

24 (H) General layout of the academic building and the materials of the
25 following interior spaces: main entrance lobby, including Arnautoff murals, George

1 Washington statue, terrazzo stairs and flooring, handrails, tiled wainscoting, and Art Deco light
2 fixtures; corridor near the administrative office suite, including Memorial Clock and other class
3 gifts, display cases, tiled wainscoting, George Washington sculpture, and Dewey Crumpler
4 murals; and library, including the Langdon, Labaudt, and Stackpole murals, paneling,
5 casework, and clocks;

6 (I) All original tiled wainscoting in corridors and stairs;

7 (J) All original wood doors; and

8 (K) All original stairs with separate up and down traffic configuration,
9 though not the materials.

10 (2) Shop Building

11 (A) The shop building's footprint and overall height and massing;

12 (B) The shop building's flat roof and skylight;

13 (C) All exposed portions of the shop building's four exterior façades,
14 including the painted concrete cladding, cement plaster and terra cotta ornament, and four
15 figural wall-mounted sculptures;

16 (D) The shop building's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all original
17 steel industrial windows;

18 (E) The shop building's main entrance on the north façade, including the
19 surviving metal doors; and

20 (F) The concrete bridge connecting the shop building to the academic
21 building.

22 (3) Auditorium

23 (A) The auditorium's footprint and overall height and massing;

24 (B) The auditorium's stepped flat roof with fly tower;

1 (C) The auditorium's two exposed façades, including but not limited to
2 the painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament and the north
3 façade's full-height colonnade;

4 (D) The fenestration pattern on the north façade of the auditorium,
5 including the original steel windows and louvered vents;

6 (E) The original metal doors within the colonnade;

7 (F) The main auditorium space, including the telescoping plaster walls
8 and proscenium arch and plywood seating; and

9 (G) Auditorium lobby and finishes, including wood doors, curved plaster
10 walls, and metal pipe railings.

11 (4) Gymnasium

12 (A) The gymnasium's footprint and overall height and massing;

13 (B) The gymnasium's flat roof and skylights;

14 (C) The gymnasium's three exposed exterior façades, including the
15 painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament;

16 (D) The gymnasium's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all historic
17 steel industrial windows;

18 (E) The original entrances on the north façade (but not the doors
19 themselves); and

20 (F) Upper gymnasium with hardwood flooring and exposed steel truss
21 roof.

22 (5) Music Room Addition

23 (A) The music room addition's footprint and overall height and massing;

24 (B) The music room addition's stepped flat roof with skylight; and
25

1 (C) The music room addition's painted concrete exterior cladding with
2 terra cotta ornament.

3 (6) Site

4 (A) Football field site configuration and bleachers;

5 (B) Sargent Johnson's Athletics frieze on the south side of the football
6 field;

7 (C) Original landscaping design for lawn and planting strips along 32nd
8 Avenue;

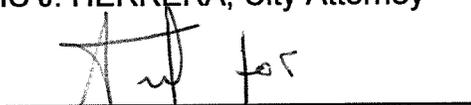
9 (D) Esplanade in front of the gymnasium and auditorium, including
10 concrete walkways, benches, and balustrades; and

11 (E) Courtyard space at south end of academic building.

12
13 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after
14 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the
15 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board
16 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

17
18 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
19 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

20 By:


21 VICTORIA WONG
22 Deputy City Attorney

23 n:\land\as2017\0900449\01227417.doc



SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 911

HEARING DATE OCTOBER 18, 2017

1650 Mission St.
Suite 400
San Francisco,
CA 94103-2479

Reception:
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Case No. 2006.1465L
Project: 2728 Bryant Street (Sunshine School)
Landmark Designation Initiation
Staff Contact: Shannon Ferguson (415) 575-9074
shannon.ferguson@sfgov.org
Reviewed By: Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
tim.frye@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE DESIGNATION OF 2728 BRYANT STREET. (AKA SUNSHINE SCHOOL), ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 4273, LOT 008, AS AN ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK.

1. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 15, 2011, added 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), Assessor's Block 4273, Lot 008, to the Landmark Designation Work Program; and
2. WHEREAS, Historic Preservation Consultants Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves prepared the Landmark Designation Report for 2728 Bryant Street with a grant from the Historic Preservation Fund Committee, which was reviewed by Planning Department Staff Shannon Ferguson and Tim Frye, who meet the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and
3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of October 18, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of 2728 Bryant Street's historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated October 18, 2017; and
4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 2728 Bryant Street nomination is in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby initiates designation of 2728 Bryant Street (aka Sunshine School), Assessor's Block 4273, Lot 008 as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on October 18, 2017.



Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Wolfram, Johnck, Johns, Matsuda, Pearlman

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Hyland

ADOPTED: October 18, 2017

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



Theodore Roosevelt Middle School

460 Arguello Boulevard

October 18, 2017

City and County of San Francisco
Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

Planning Department
John Rahaim, Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Article 10 landmark nomination was made possible by several individuals and organizations that deserve acknowledgement. Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, the authors of this nomination, would like to thank former District 1 Supervisor Eric Mar for originally suggesting Theodore Roosevelt Middle School as a potential landmark candidate. Second, we would like to acknowledge the San Francisco Historic Preservation Fund Committee (HPFC) for funding the nomination as part of its larger project to document the legacy of the New Deal in San Francisco. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Cherny, a historian and a member of the HPFC, whose interest in the New Deal made this entire project possible. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. Gray Brechin, the head of the Living New Deal project, who along with Dr. Cherny is an advisor on this project. Finally, we would like to thank the San Francisco Unified School District for its thoughtful stewardship of its many historic schools.

Cover: Roosevelt Middle School, August 2016

The Historic Preservation Commission is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

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Theodore Roosevelt Middle School

460 Arguello Boulevard

Built: 1929-30

Architect: Miller & Pflueger

OVERVIEW

Located near the northeast corner of Arguello and Geary Boulevards, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School occupies a prominent site near one of the primary “gateways” to the Richmond District. Occupying an irregular site spanning the block between Arguello Boulevard and Palm Avenue, the complex consists of three major components: the academic building, the auditorium wing, and the gymnasium wing. All three were built in 1929-30, with bond funds used to build 50 public schools in San Francisco between 1920 and 1930. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School (Roosevelt) is eligible as a San Francisco City Landmark as an excellent and well-preserved public school built during the “Golden Age” of school construction in San Francisco. Designed by master architect Timothy Pflueger of Miller & Pflueger Architects, Roosevelt is one of San Francisco’s most idiosyncratic buildings due to its unique Dutch/German Expressionist styling. It is the only building in San Francisco (and possibly the United States) known to be designed in this *avant-garde* style. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is significant for its association with master architect Timothy Pflueger, one of the most talented and influential architects to have worked in San Francisco during the first half of the twentieth century. A master of the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, Pflueger’s work is unparalleled in Northern California. Roosevelt is also significant for its association with high artistic values, in particular its three well-preserved New Deal murals, including a pair in the main lobby by Horatio Nelson Poole and one above the second-floor entrance to the auditorium by George Wilson Walker. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School has undergone few changes since it was completed 88 years ago—a testament to its solid construction and timeless aesthetic sensibility that continues to resonate with students and alumni to this day.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context

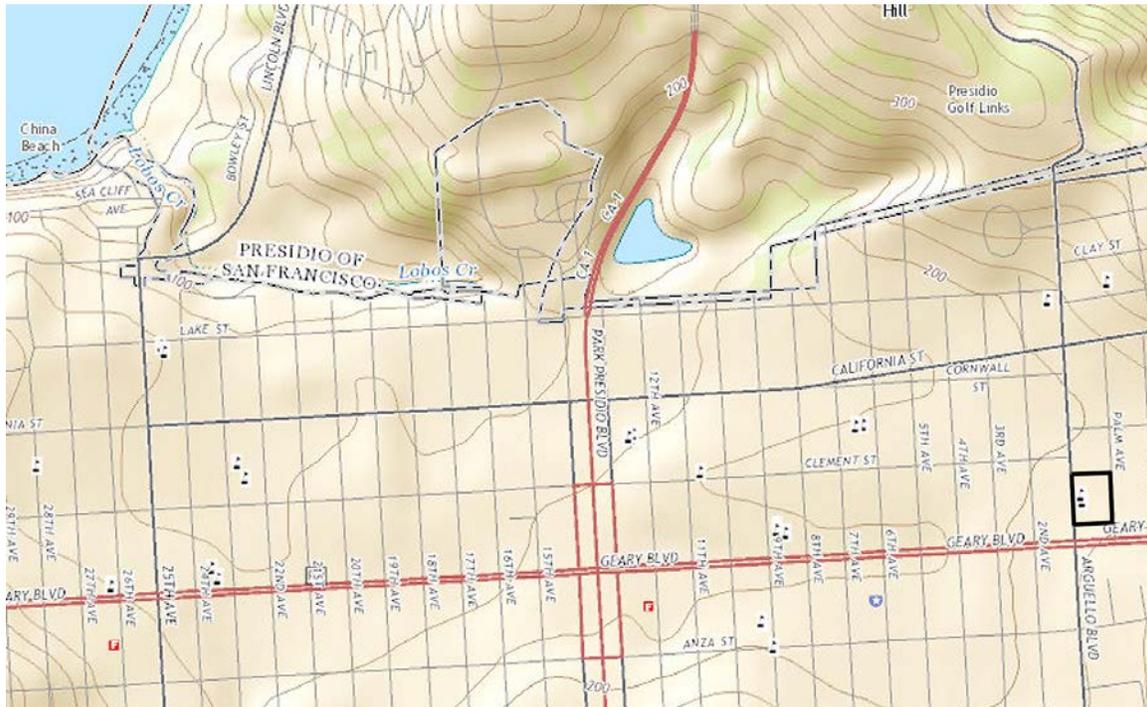


Figure 1. USGS Map showing location of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.
Source: USGS Maps; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School occupies a 94,468-sf parcel bounded by Arguello Boulevard to the west, a pair of residential properties to the north, Palm Avenue to the east, and three commercial properties facing Geary Boulevard to the south (**Figure 1**). The property is technically located in the Jordan Park/Laurel Heights neighborhood, but Arguello Boulevard (originally 1st Avenue) is the eastern boundary of the Richmond District and Theodore Roosevelt Middle School was built to serve Richmond District children. Designed in 1928 and built in 1929-30, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School (originally Roosevelt Junior High School) replaced a Victorian-era school of the same name. Indeed, the core of the site has been continuously occupied by a public school since Lobos Avenue Primary School opened in 1877.¹

The site is generally level, with a slight downhill grade toward the north. To the west, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School faces Arguello Boulevard, a busy thoroughfare connecting Golden Gate Park to the Presidio. From Geary Boulevard north to Clement Street, Arguello Boulevard is mainly commercial. Anchoring the northwest corner of Geary and Arguello Boulevards is a large, two-story, masonry commercial building that was originally built in 1893 as the Park & Ocean Railroad Company's Geary Street Car Barn (**Figure 2**).² This building, which was later altered for commercial use, now contains an office supply store and a parking garage. Anchoring the north side of the block, at the southwest corner of Arguello Boulevard and Clement Street, is a three-story commercial building originally constructed in 1908 as a Masonic Temple. Ca. 1930, it was remodeled in the Art Deco style with several commercial

¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1879-1880* (San Francisco: W. M. Hinton & Co. Printers, 1880), 653.

² Construction dates for all properties come from the San Francisco Assessor's Property Information Map, accessed online at <http://propertymap.sfplanning.org/>.

storefronts facing Clement Street (**Figure 3**). The rest of the west side of the block is occupied by residential dwellings with minimal front yard setbacks (**Figure 4**). A broad range of architectural styles is represented on the block, ranging from a Victorian-era Italianate cottage at 415 Arguello Boulevard to a contemporary apartment complex at 421 Arguello Boulevard that was constructed in 2012 behind the masonry façade of a 1912 garage (**Figure 5**).



Figure 21. 3700 Geary Boulevard, built 1893; view toward northwest.



Figure 3. 1 Clement Street, built 1908 and remodeled ca. 1930; view toward south.



Figure 4. West side of the 400 block of Arguello Boulevard; view toward northwest.



Figure 5. 421 Arguello Boulevard, built 1912 and 2012; view toward west.

The east side of the 400 block of Arguello Boulevard, which extends north to Euclid Avenue, is uniformly residential with the exception of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School. The dwellings are all located north of the school and include a mix of single-family dwellings, flats, and small apartment buildings (**Figure 6**). Most are between two and four stories in height and only a few have a front yard setback. Of the 12 residential properties on the block, six were constructed in the 1910s. Most of these are designed in the Craftsman or First Bay Tradition styles.



Figure 6. East side of 400 block of Arguello Boulevard.

The rest were constructed between 1963 and 1973; they are mainly small apartment buildings designed in the so-called “Contractor Modern” style.³

South of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, the properties on the 3600 block of Geary Boulevard include a mix of low-slung, auto-oriented commercial buildings dating to the middle of the twentieth century, as well as a much larger contemporary apartment building on the south side of the street. Directly south of the school, at the northeast corner of Geary and Arguello Boulevards, is a surface parking lot. It was previously occupied by a two-story commercial building and a gas station but the site has been vacant since the 1980s, affording an expansive view of Roosevelt from Geary Boulevard. East of the parking lot are a one-story commercial building at 3626 Geary Boulevard and a two-story commercial building at 3600-24 Geary Boulevard (**Figure 7**). These buildings occupy the same lot and were both constructed in 1923, although both have matching Late Moderne exteriors, suggesting that they were remodeled at the same time and by the same owner, probably in the late 1940s. Across the street is a gas station at the southeast corner of Geary and Arguello Boulevards. The remainder of the block is occupied by a six-story nursing home constructed in 2011 on the site of the former Coronet Theater, at 3575 Geary Boulevard (**Figures 8-9**).

³ The term Contractor Modern refers to post-war buildings that superficially resemble modernist buildings, but only through the omission of ornament as a cost savings method and the use of inexpensive mass-produced building materials. Contractor Modern buildings are also typically designed by either contractors or engineers.



Figure 7. Properties on north side of 3600 block of Geary Boulevard.



Figure 8. 3575 Geary Boulevard, constructed 2011; view toward southeast.



Figure 9. Gas station at 3675 Geary Boulevard, constructed 1988; view toward south.

Palm Avenue forms the eastern boundary of the Roosevelt campus. In contrast to busy Geary and Arguello Boulevards, Palm Avenue is a quiet two-block long residential street with little vehicular traffic. Palm Avenue is part of a small residential tract called Jordan Park, one of San Francisco's earliest "residence parks."⁴ Largely developed between 1906 and 1915, the single-family dwellings on Palm Avenue are similar to those in the rest of Jordan Park. However, unlike the rest of the neighborhood, Palm Avenue has several apartment buildings. South of Roosevelt's play yard are the previously described commercial buildings facing Geary Boulevard (**Figure 10**). North of the play yard are several single-family dwellings and three large apartment buildings built or remodeled in the 1960s (**Figure 11**). The most significant property is 129 Palm Avenue, a two-story Classical Revival-style dwelling built in 1913 (**Figure 12**).

⁴ Jordan Park is a small residence park developed by Joseph Leonard between 1906 and 1920. Its boundaries are Arguello Boulevard to the west, California Street to the north, Parker Avenue to the east, and Geary Boulevard to the south. The San Francisco Planning Department considers Jordan Park to be a potential historic district.



Figure 10. West side of Palm Avenue south of Roosevelt Middle School; view toward south.



Figure 11. West side of Palm Avenue north of Roosevelt School; view toward south.



Figure 12. 129 Palm Avenue; view toward northwest.

The east side of Palm Avenue is more consistent in terms of architecture and urban design, consisting entirely of single-family dwellings and flats designed in the Classical Revival and Craftsman styles (**Figures 13-14**).



Figure 13. East side of the 100 block of Palm Avenue; view toward northeast.



Figure 14. East side of the 100 block of Palm Avenue, looking south.

General Description

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is a three-story, reinforced-concrete educational building clad in brick and capped by a combination flat and gambrel roof. The building has an irregular L-shaped footprint, with the longer north-south axis oriented parallel to Arguello Boulevard and the shorter east-west axis running parallel to Geary Boulevard (**Figure 15**). Completed in 1930, the school is designed in the Dutch/German Expressionist style with some Art Deco detailing.⁵ Artistic exterior treatments include corbelled brickwork laid in zig-zag and diaper-patterns, pressed copper and ceramic tile spandrel panels, cast stone lintels and column caps, and pre-cast concrete screens and parapets. The interior of the building contains classrooms, offices, and special-purpose rooms – all organized around double-loaded corridors on all three floor levels. A 950-seat auditorium anchors the north end of the complex and a double-height gymnasium sits at the south end. The school contains three federally funded New Deal murals – all painted in 1934 – including two in the main lobby by Horatio Nelson Poole, and a third above the entrance to the auditorium on the second floor level by George Wilson Walker. Roosevelt retains the vast majority of its original interior finishes and features, including lath and plaster walls, built-in cabinetry and transom windows, and some original wood doors. Aside from the addition of an elevator tower at the intersection of the gymnasium wing and the academic building, the construction of two enclosed emergency stairs on the north façade, and the modification of two entrance canopies on the rear (east) façade, the exterior is intact. In addition, most of the original multi-lite metal windows have been replaced –at least twice – but the most recent replacements are entirely compatible with the original design. Having recently undergone interior and exterior renovations, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is in very good condition.

⁵ Therese Poletti, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008) p. 138.

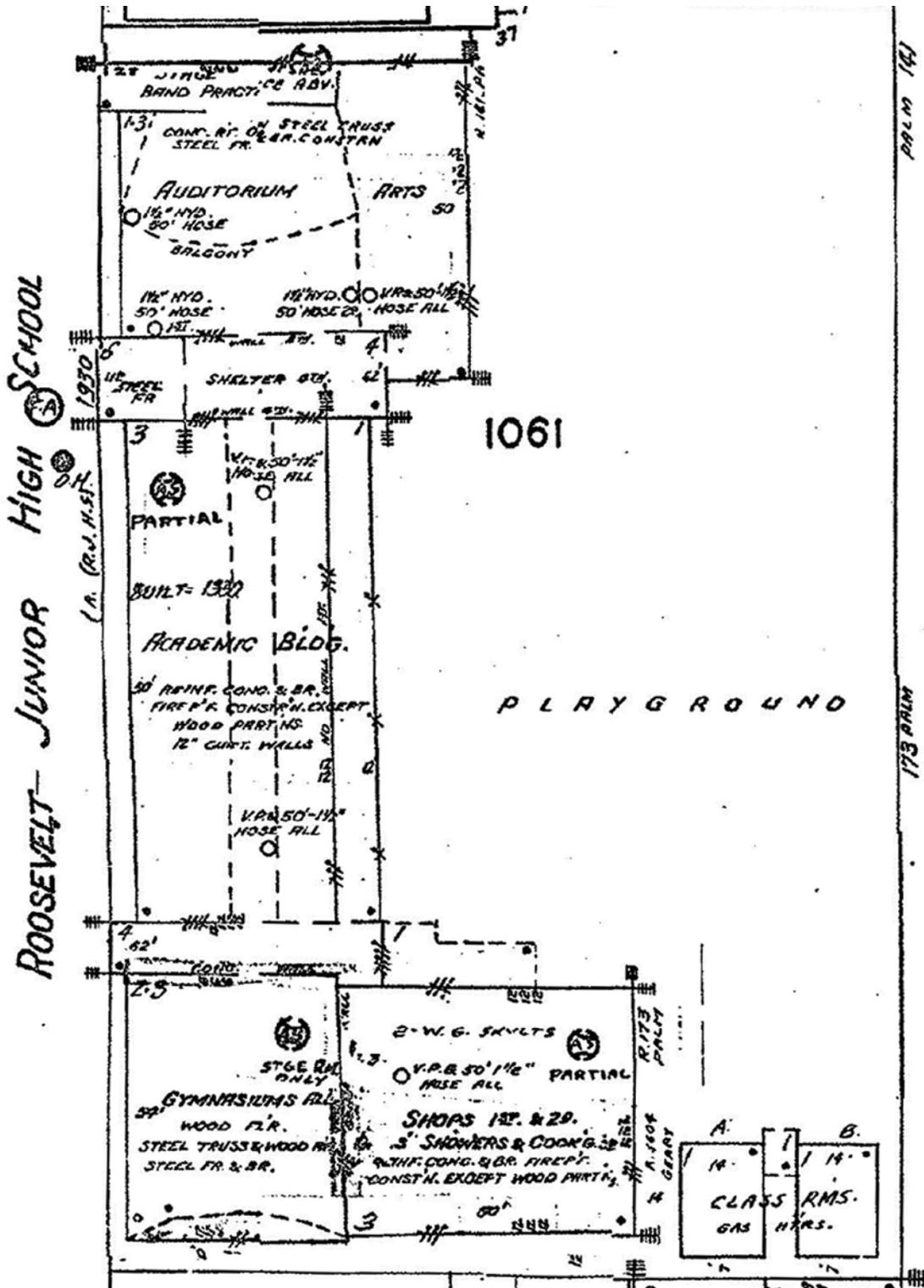


Figure 15. Ca. 1990 Sanborn Map showing floor plan of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.
 Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co., San Francisco Public Library



Figure 16. West façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward northeast.

Primary Façade—Arguello Boulevard

The primary façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School faces west toward Arguello Boulevard (**Figure 16**). The building is set back several feet from the west property line, providing space for a narrow planting strip containing grass, shrubs, and trees. The primary façade is 23 bays long and arranged in three distinct sections corresponding to each component of the complex. The first five bays to the left of the main entrance encompass the auditorium wing; the center 13 bays comprise the academic building; and the five bay, gambrel-roofed section to the right is the gymnasium wing. Two towers mark the divisions between the three sections and also the location of the two entrances on Arguello Boulevard.

The largely windowless auditorium wing is partially obscured behind a row of large untrimmed trees (**Figure 17**). The north (left) bay, which projects slightly out beyond the rest of the west façade, is ornamented by a vertical band of diaper-patterned brickwork capped by a frieze with an embossed chevron pattern (**Figure 18**). The remaining four bays are demarcated by engaged piers with overlapping brick joints. The piers are capped by cast stone capitals embellished with a diaper pattern (**Figure 19**). The second bay in from the north has a four-lite window at each floor level; these windows correspond to an interior stairwell serving the backstage area of the auditorium. There is a metal service door in the third bay that also serves the backstage area (**Figure 20**).



Figure 17. Auditorium wing of west façade; view toward northeast.

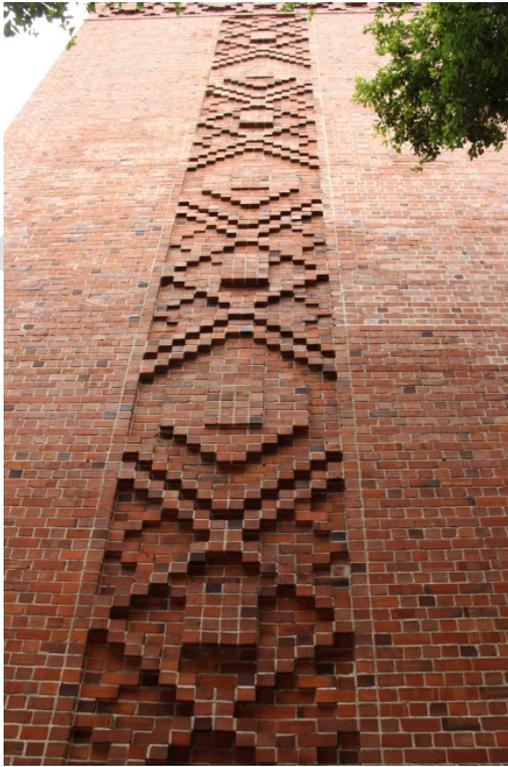


Figure 18. Diaper-pattern brickwork on auditorium wing.



Figure 19. Detail of auditorium wing frieze.



Figure 20. Metal door on primary façade.



Figure 21. North tower.

The north tower forms the sixth bay of the west façade (Figure 21). The tower, which is the most visually striking part of Roosevelt’s exterior, projects several feet beyond the rest of the primary façade. The main entrance is contained within an arched vestibule at the base of the tower. The entrance contains two pairs of original oak doors surmounted by multi-lite transoms (Figure 22). The vestibule is surmounted by a spandrel embellished with decorative brickwork laid in a zig-zag pattern. Above this are a pair of six-lite windows at the second floor level and a pair of three-lite windows with chamfered headers at the third floor level. The windows are demarcated by a fluted copper colonette. A pair of tiled spandrel panels separates the second and third floor levels of the tower. All four sides of the tower are embellished by diaper-patterned brickwork bracketed by plain brick piers that step backward at each corner. The tower also subtly steps inward at each floor level above the roofline, terminating with a belfry punctuated on all four sides by cast stone screens depicting an abstract geometrical pattern. The openings of the belfry have pointed arch headers. Above the openings are vertical recessed bands cut into the brickwork.



Figure 22. Main entrance.

The seventh through the seventeenth bays comprise the academic building. Each bay is identical, with each demarcated by engaged piers similar to those previously described on the auditorium wing, although without the cast stone capitals (**Figure 23**). Each bay is fenestrated by a pair of six-lite, fixed-and hopper-sash windows at each floor level. Continuous fluted copper colonnettes divide the windows into two sections. Ceramic tile spandrel panels mark the divisions between the floor levels. The windows at the third floor level have cast stone lintels displaying a zig-zag pattern. The academic building is capped by a corbelled brick frieze depicting a zig-zag motif and above the frieze is a pre-cast, open-weave balustrade built to safeguard the former rooftop play area.



Figure 23. Academic building; view toward southeast.

The south tower, which is located in the eighteenth bay of the west façade, also projects out beyond the rest of the primary façade. As mentioned previously, the south tower marks the location of the secondary entrance on this side of the building (**Figure 24**). The entrance, which is recessed within a deep segmental-arch vestibule at the base of the tower, contains a pair of contemporary metal doors surmounted by a non-historic transom (**Figure 25**). There are double-hung metal windows at the second and third floor levels of the south tower, and this feature terminates with a corbelled brick frieze featuring diaper and zig-zag motifs.



Figure 24. South tower.



Figure 25. Entrance at base of south tower.

The five bays to the right of the south tower on the west façade correspond to the gymnasium wing. This section is articulated by four piers identical to those previously described on the auditorium wing. The corner bays are blind and terminate with a brick frieze depicting a zig-zag pattern. Fenestration on the gymnasium wing consists of multi-lite fixed, awning, and hopper-sash metal windows. Similar to the academic building, the windows of the gymnasium wing are separated by fluted copper colonnettes (**Figure 26**). Copper spandrel panels embossed with chevron patterns mark each floor level of the gymnasium wing.



Figure 26. West façade of gymnasium wing.

Primary Façade—Geary Boulevard

As mentioned previously, the south façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School faces three commercial properties on the north side of Geary Boulevard. Nevertheless, these properties have always been occupied by low-scale development and/or parking lots, meaning that the south façade of the building has traditionally remained visible from Geary Boulevard (**Figure 27**). The south façade, which encompasses only the gymnasium wing, is organized in two sections, with the gambrel-roofed gymnasium to the left and a flat-roofed classroom section to the right. In total, the south façade is 10 bays wide, with the gymnasium comprising three bays and the flat-roofed classroom section, seven bays. The gymnasium section is detailed very much like the rest of the gymnasium wing facing Arguello Boulevard; the only differences being that the piers on the south façade are flush and the fenestration extends all the way to the roofline. In contrast, the classroom section is detailed very much like the academic building; the only exceptions being that the spandrel panels on the south façade are brick and there is no cast stone balustrade on the roof.



Figure 27. South façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward northeast.

Secondary Façade—Palm Avenue

The east façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School faces the school's paved play yard, and beyond it, Palm Avenue. Like the Arguello Boulevard façade, the east façade comprises three sections corresponding to the three major components of the building. The southernmost component is a flat-roofed classroom section that is part of the gymnasium wing. It contains the former metal/wood shop on the ground floor level (now the music room) and classrooms on the second and third floors. The central part of the east façade is the academic building; it contains the cafeteria at the first floor level and classrooms above. The northernmost section of the east facade is the auditorium wing. Similar to the west façade, tower-like elements mark the locations of the two main entrances on the rear of the building.

The left section of the east façade, which, as mentioned, comprises the classroom section of the gymnasium wing, is six bays wide (**Figure 28**). It is detailed the same as the south façade, with pairs of six-lite metal-sash windows divided by narrow brick piers. Corbelled brick spandrel panels featuring a diaper pattern demarcate the floor levels. Two windows at the center of each floor level were infilled with concrete in 1975 to form a shear wall.



Figure 28. East façade (south section) of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward southwest.

The central section of the east façade is 11 bays wide (**Figure 29**). The first floor level, which is where the cafeteria is located, projects out several feet beyond the rest of the façade. This section includes multi-lite metal windows in all bays and contemporary glazed metal doors in the third, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth bays. Cast stone lintels cap all fenestration at the first floor level. A pre-cast, open-weave balustrade that protects a now-inaccessible balcony caps the first floor level. The second and third floor levels of the east façade match the Arguello Boulevard façade, with pairs of six-lite metal windows divided by fluted copper colonnettes and each floor level marked by tiled spandrels. A corbelled brick frieze embellished with a zig-zag motif and an open-weave cast stone balustrade, which encloses what used to be the rooftop play yard, cap the central portion of the east façade.



Figure 29. Central section of east façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward west.

The right section of the east façade, which corresponds to the auditorium wing, is seven bays wide (**Figure 30**). The first bay projects out very slightly from the rest of the façade, and it has a four-lite window at the first floor level and six-lite windows at the second and third floor levels. This bay terminates with a corbelled brick frieze embellished with a diaper pattern. The remainder of the auditorium wing is detailed the same as the adjoining academic building, with pairs of six-lite windows divided by narrow copper colonnettes, tiled spandrels, and a corbelled brick frieze depicting a zig-zag pattern. All of the windows on the first floor level of the auditorium are protected behind metal security grilles.



Figure 30. North section of east façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward west.

Like Arguello Boulevard, the east façade has two towers marking the location of the two primary entrances on this side of the building. The south tower is partially concealed behind a stucco-clad elevator enclosure added in 1975, as well as a 1960s-era canopy that shelters the walkway leading to this entrance (**Figure 31**). The north tower is similarly design, although not as wide as the south tower. It too is partially concealed by a 1960s-era concrete canopy at the first floor level. Both towers terminate with corbelled brick friezes composed of three bands, including a narrow diaper band, a wider band of diamonds, and an upper band embellished with a zig-zag motif. Both towers have a contemporary metal door at the first floor level and are fenestrated with four-lite windows at the second and third floor levels (**Figure 32**).



Figure 31. South tower; view toward southwest.



Figure 32. North tower; view toward northwest.

Tertiary Façade—North Elevation

The north façade of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is composed of two sections: the north wall of gymnasium wing and the north wall of the auditorium wing. The north wall of the gymnasium wing has contemporary metal doors in the second, third, and fifth bays, and a concrete canopy (originally brick) spanning the third through the sixth bays (Figure 33). A stucco-clad elevator shaft rises above the roofline at the far right side of the wing, where it meets the academic building. Above the first floor level, the rest of the north wall of the gymnasium



Figure 33. North façade of gymnasium wing of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward south.

wing is identical to its east and south façades, with multi-lite metal windows in each bay divided by brick pilasters and each floor level demarcated by corbelled brick spandrel panels embellished with diaper motifs.

The north wall of the auditorium wing faces a narrow paved passageway along the north property line (**Figures 34–35**). In contrast to the rest of the exterior, this façade is utilitarian in character because most of it is not visible from any public streets. The basement level has seven small openings that originally illuminated the basement; they are now concealed behind plywood. The first floor level has a non-historic metal pedestrian door at the left side and a large wooden freight door at the right. Two enclosed fire escapes installed in recent years are located on the north wall of the auditorium wing. Above the pedestrian door at the left side of the auditorium wing are windows that mark the landings of an interior stair. Four multi-lite windows span the width of the third floor level, where there is a classroom. The north wall of the auditorium wing terminates with a brick frieze embellished with a diaper pattern.



Figure 34. North façade along north property line; view toward east.



Figure 35. North façade along north property line; view toward west.

Interior

Just like the exterior, the interior of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is organized in three sections, including the 950-seat auditorium; the academic building, which contains 39 classrooms, administrative offices, a cafeteria, and the library; and the gymnasium, which contains separate boys' and girls' gyms, locker rooms, offices, and additional classrooms and special-purpose rooms. Circulation is provided on all three floor levels by a double-loaded corridor that runs north south through the center of the academic building and east west along the north side of the gymnasium wing. The building is served by two sets of stairs at each end of the academic building and additional stairs at the northeast corners of the auditorium and gymnasium wings. Although it has been recently renovated, the interior of Roosevelt retains its original floorplan and the vast majority of its original materials, finishes, and detailing.



Figure 36. North wall of main lobby, showing one of Horatio Nelson Poole's murals.

The hub of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is the main lobby, which is accessed from the primary entrance by a low terrazzo stair. The lobby has a terrazzo floor and blue tiled wainscoting with a decorative nosing at the top. The upper part of the walls are finished in lath and plaster. The ceiling features painted concrete beams embellished with decorative moldings. The lobby contains two New Deal murals painted by Horatio Nelson Poole (described in depth below), as well as display cases and a receptionist's window (**Figures 36–37**). Along the north wall of the lobby are three entrances accessing the auditorium. Each entrance contains a pair of paneled hardwood doors with brass hardware (**Figure 38**).



Figure 37. Main lobby; view toward west.



Figure 38. Doors to auditorium; view toward north.

Adjoining the academic building to the north is the auditorium, the most architecturally significant interior space. It is composed of a large seating area with a balcony, a stage, a control room, and a backstage area (**Figure 39**). The seating area, which accommodates 950 people, retains its original varnished plywood seating manufactured by the Heywood-Wakefield Co. (**Figure 40**) and individual metal ventilation units on the floor below each seat (**Figure 41**). Lighting in the auditorium is provided by four suspended bronze and translucent glass Art Deco fixtures with starburst-shaped rosettes. The auditorium walls and ceilings are finished in lath and plaster and punctuated by geometric-patterned concrete vents. The perimeter of the ceiling has stepped moldings and the proscenium flanking the stage also has stepped moldings.



Figure 39. Auditorium of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School; view toward south.



Figure 40. Detail of seating in auditorium.



Figure 41. Heating units beneath seats.

Circulation within the academic building and the gymnasium wing is provided by a double-loaded, L-plan corridor on all three-floor levels. The corridors, though they retain their original floorplan and lath and

plaster walls and ceilings, have been remodeled using contemporary (but compatible) materials and features, including new metal lockers, metal and wood classroom doors, and period-appropriate resilient sheet flooring (**Figure 42**). In contrast, the stairs retain their original features and materials, including terrazzo treads and landings, tiled risers, and lath and plaster walls and ceilings (**Figure 43**). At the first floor level, the north stair is detailed to match the main lobby, with blue tiled wainscoting and decorative bronze radiator screens (**Figure 44**). In contrast, the south stair is more utilitarian, given that it serves the secondary entrance (**Figure 45**). The south stair has concrete landings, risers, and treads and blue-painted walls to imitate the tile wainscoting of the north stair.

The auditorium wing also contains several classrooms, including a large classroom at the first floor level that was originally the auditorium's "green room." A concrete stair at the northeast corner of the auditorium wing provides access to the basement, where a single-loaded corridor leads to several former classrooms that are now used for storage. Above the former green room are two classrooms at the second and third floor levels, including an art studio at the third floor level that was originally a band room.



Figure 42. Typical corridor in academic building.



Figure 43. North stair between first and second floor levels.



Figure 44. Tiled wainscoting and decorative metal radiator screen.

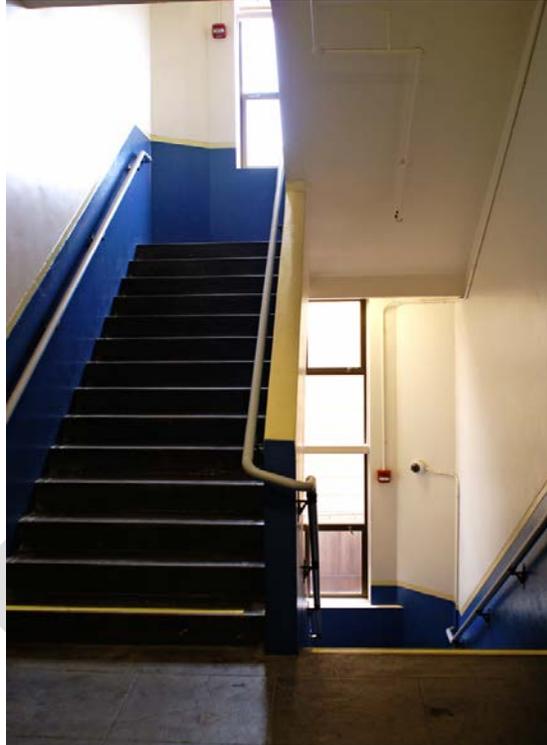


Figure 45. South stair between second and third floor levels.

The administration office suite at the first floor level of the academic building retains many original finishes and features, including lath and plaster walls, cabinetry, and built-in seating, counters, and desks. Original wood windows allow natural light from the offices to penetrate the corridors (**Figures 46–47**).



Figure 46. Original cabinetry in administration office suite.



Figure 47. Windows and bench in administration office suite.

In contrast to the administration office suite, Roosevelt’s 39 classrooms have been incrementally remodeled over time. The classrooms originally featured utilitarian materials and finishes appropriate to the school’s original period of construction, including lath and plaster walls, resilient sheet flooring, and built-in blackboards and storage cubbies. For the most part, these materials have been replaced or updated in keeping with advances in technology and teaching pedagogy. The classrooms still retain their original lath and plaster walls, but they also have new resilient sheet flooring and acoustical tile ceilings. Of course, the original furnishings have also been replaced and there do not appear to be any classrooms that retain their original blackboards or other built-in features (**Figures 48–49**).



Figure 48. Typical classroom in academic building.



Figure 49. Typical classroom in auditorium wing.

The academic building contains several special-purpose rooms, including the cafeteria on the first floor level and the library on the second floor level. The cafeteria, which is located at the rear of the building facing Palm Avenue and the play yard, has been remodeled several times and it retains little (if any) historic fabric (**Figure 50**). The library has also been remodeled and it appears to retain few of its original features beyond its footprint and perhaps its lath and plaster walls. The only other notable interior space within the academic building is the entrance to the auditorium in the north lobby of the second floor level. Though the space itself is not especially notable, it contains a New Deal mural called *Education* painted in 1934 by George Wilson Walker (**Figure 51**).



Figure 50. Cafeteria.





Figure 51. North lobby on second floor of the academic building, showing a portion of George Wilson Walker's mural, *Education*.

The southernmost part of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is the gymnasium wing. It is accessed via the secondary entrance on Arguello Boulevard. Doors on the south wall of the lobby provide access to a double-height gymnasium – originally the boys' gymnasium – that occupies the first and second floor levels. The lower gymnasium has maple flooring, retractable bleacher seating, beadboard wainscoting, and retractable basketball hoops (**Figure 52**). The upper gymnasium – formerly the girls' gymnasium – occupies the third floor level. It shares similar materials and features to the lower gymnasium but it also has exposed metal trusses that define the gambrel roof of the gymnasium wing (**Figure 53**). The easternmost section of the gymnasium wing contains several classrooms, locker rooms, a computer lab, an art studio, a home economics classroom, and at the first floor level, the band room, which was originally the industrial arts shop.

Except for a portion of the gymnasium wing, the roof of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is flat. The roof of the academic building has a pair of pavilions at either end of the former rooftop play area (**Figure 54**). The pavilion at the north end is clad in stucco, and houses a utility room and a large classroom. The south pavilion originally contained toilet rooms and a changing area, but it is currently in use for storage.



Figure 52. Lower gymnasium, first and second floors.
Source: Amanda Law

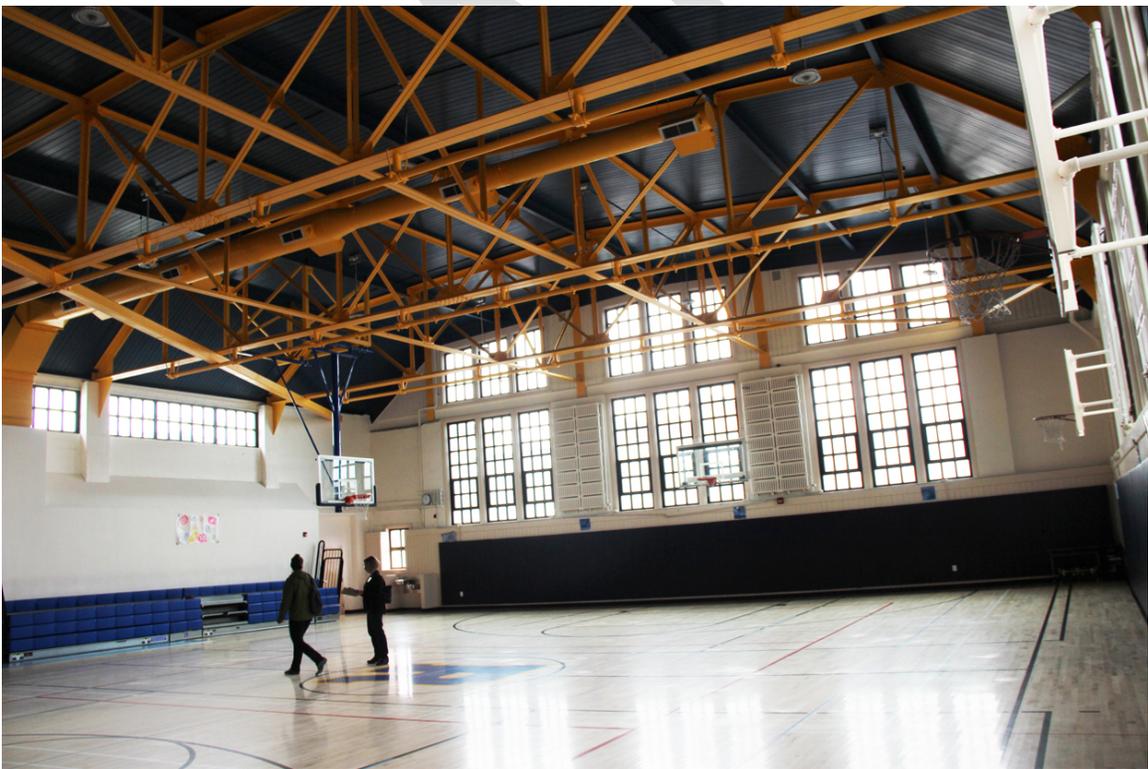


Figure 53. Upper gymnasium, third floor.



Figure 54. Rooftop play area; view toward north.

Additional Site Features

The only landscaped part of the Theodore Roosevelt Middle School campus is the previously described planting strip along Arguello Boulevard. The eastern part of the property is an asphalt-paved play yard which doubles as a surface parking lot (**Figure 55**). It is painted with multiple game fields and there are several double-headed, pole-mounted basketball hoops scattered throughout the play yard. The play yard is bound by a chain link fence mounted atop a low concrete stem wall. The stem wall and fence are interrupted twice, once by a driveway that accesses the campus from Palm Avenue, and the other, a brick-clad concrete console with a flagpole mounted on it. This console, which appears to be an original feature of the campus, has a stone panel inscribed with the words “Roosevelt Junior High School” (**Figure 56**).



Figure 55. Playground; view toward northeast.



Figure 56. Console and sign on Palm Avenue.

There are two one-story, wood-frame, portable “bungalows” at the southeast corner of the campus. Both are clad in asbestos shingles and rustic wood siding (Figure 57). These utilitarian buildings have multi-lite wood windows on their east and west façades and they are capped by low-pitched gabled roofs with exposed rafter ends. The buildings are joined by a flat-roofed breezeway at the center. Each building contains one classroom. These “temporary” buildings have been in this location since at least 1959.



Figure 57. Temporary classrooms at southeast corner of campus; view toward southeast.

New Deal Artworks

Nelson Poole's *Land and Harvest*

Nelson Poole's paired murals (each 5 x 20 feet) are located in the north first floor lobby and depict idealized visions of groups harvesting fruit from a tree and preparing to swim in a lake or a bay. These scenes reflect Poole's reputation in the Bay Area as a talented landscape artist. Both murals use soft, somewhat dark palettes that one reviewer at the time described as using "dominant tones of red, yellow and green in opalescent blending."⁶ Poole's images are consistent with a major theme of New Deal-era artworks, which historian Barbara Melosh describes as "heroic images of ordinary lives" that depict "the strength of common men and women."⁷



Figure 58. Nelson Poole's *Harvest*.

Scenes of people at work, whether industrial or agricultural, were a favorite subject of artwork during the Great Depression. *Harvest* depicts a group, possibly a family, of white people gathering fruit from a large tree in the center of the mural (Figure 58). There are two figures at the center of the image, presumably the father and mother; the man is



Figure 59. Detail of *Harvest*.

atop a ladder leaning over to hand a piece of fruit to the woman below who waits with a half-full basket (Figure 59). To the left of this couple are three more figures, including a young woman and a boy holding long-handled pickers and another young boy resting next to a dog. A girl at right holds a fruit crate; to her left is a young man who appears to be packing fruit in another crate. To the left of the image is a small

⁶ *California Art Research Vol. 11*, p. 54. The mural's colors may have darkened over time; it does not appear that they have received any restoration.

⁷ Barbara Melosh, *Engendering Culture: Manhood and Womanhood in New Deal Public Art and Theater* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 111.

herd of cattle watched over by a man on a horse. At the right side of the image are a small orchard and a pair of horses drawing a cart filled with hay.



Figure 60. Nelson Poole's *Landscape*.

Like *Harvest*, *Landscape* is a pastoral scene configured around a body of water, in this case a large pond or bay (Tomales Bay was one of Poole's favorite Bay Area landscapes) (Figure 60). Unlike *Harvest*, this mural has no buildings or structures, just a cluster of people at center with a trio of horses in the background toward the left. Most of the figures are women wearing modest, singlet-style bathing suits, sitting, standing, bending, or tending to a small naked child (Figure 61). The only man depicted sits against the central tree with arms crossed over his bent legs. Melosh describes how New Deal artists such as Poole depicted recreation as "earned respite" after labor, and as a counterpoint to consumer culture's commercial recreation.⁸



Figure 61 Detail of Nelson Poole's *Landscape*.
Source: Amanda Law

George Wilson Walker's *Education*

George Wilson Walker's 5 x 25 foot mural, *Education*, is affixed to the wall above the second floor entrance to Theodore Roosevelt Middle School's auditorium. In contrast to the soft colors of Poole's murals, Walker depicts stylized figures of students in saturated colors. The left half of the image is filled with vignettes of students engaged in physical activities, including diving, dancing, boxing and basketball.

⁸ Melosh, *Engendering Culture*, 185-187.

A male figure wearing a varsity athlete's sweater lounges in the foreground. A young woman's pose mirrors his, though she is reading a book. The figures behind her are engaged in various academic pursuits, including reading, peering into a microscope, and studying a model ship and a globe. While the majority of New Deal-era artworks depicted everyday people, the most prominent figure in *Education* is the central female figure, whose scale and garb indicates that she may represent a goddess of wisdom (Figure 62). The semi-clad woman is seated with arms outspread, her robes revealing most of her torso and a breast. Inscribed beneath her is "Theodore Roosevelt, 1858-1919. Courage, hard work and intelligent effort are all essential to successful life."⁹



Figure 62. Detail of George Wilson Walker's *Education*.

Nudes are a time-honored subject in much of art history, but unclothed figures were uncommon in New Deal artworks and it is surprising to find one in an American school of that time. In her groundbreaking study of New Deal-era murals in U.S. post offices, Karal Ann Marling found that nudes represented a "miniscule" portion of murals and wrote that the subject "never failed to engender suspicion and controversy."¹⁰ There is no indication in the historical record that this mural ever received a negative reaction from parents, school officials, or students.

⁹ Roosevelt's words usually appear as "Courage, hard work, self-mastery, and intelligent effort are all essential to successful life." Theodore Roosevelt Quotes, American Museum of Natural History accessed 2 October 2016 <http://www.amnh.org/theodore-roosevelt-quotes/>

¹⁰ Karal Ann Marling, *Wall to Wall America: Post Office Murals in the Great Depression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 22.

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

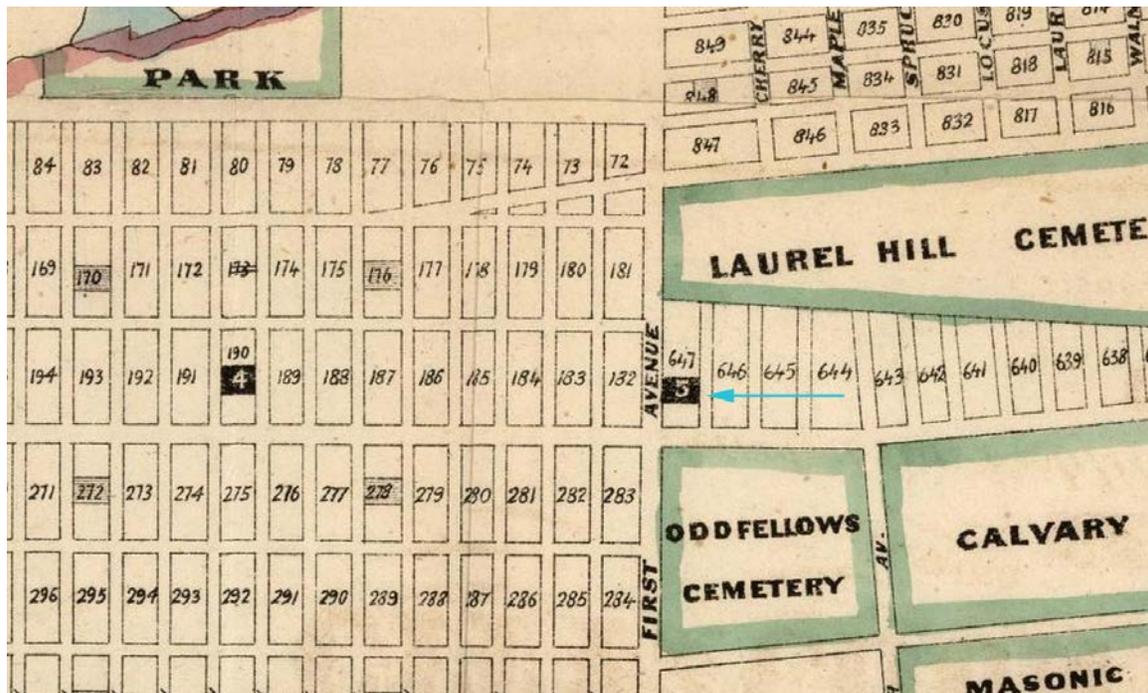


Figure 63. 1868 Outside Lands Map showing the location of the public reservation at First Avenue and Point Lobos Road (Geary Boulevard) marked by the number 5.

Source: Author's Map Collection

37

Pre-construction History: 1877–1929

In 1867, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors designated a tract measuring 150 feet on First Avenue (now Arguello Boulevard) and Mears Street (now Palm Avenue) between Point Lobos Avenue (now Geary Boulevard) and Laurel Hill Cemetery (now Euclid Avenue) as a “school reservation,” one of nearly 100 reservations set aside for future public use by the Outside Lands Committee. The locations of the future public school reservations were marked on the 1868 Outside Lands Map published the following year by the Committee (Figure 63).¹¹

Surrounded by cemeteries and small farms and ranches, the school reservation at First Avenue and Point Lobos Road remained unoccupied for approximately a decade. However, the Inner Richmond District began to develop during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, bringing children to the remote West Side neighborhood. In 1877, the Board of Education opened the Point Lobos Road Primary School on a portion of the site in September 1877.¹² Classes were held in a rented building, which was ultimately replaced with a purpose-built school in 1888. This building, designed by Thomas J. Welsh, longtime consulting architect to the Board of Education, cost \$15,627.25 to build.¹³ The three-story, wood-frame,

¹¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *General Orders of the Board of Supervisors Providing Regulations for the Government of the City and County Of San Francisco* (San Francisco: The Cosmopolitan Printing Company, 1869), 123. The areas under jurisdiction of the Outside Lands Committee included all of today's Richmond and Sunset Districts, the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, Presidio Heights, the Panhandle, Buena Vista Heights, and the southern Potrero District.

¹² *36th Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools of San Francisco for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1889* (San Francisco: W.M. Hinton and Company, Printers, 1889), 30.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Italianate-style schoolhouse was dedicated on September 19, 1888 (**Figure 64**). The Point Lobos Road Primary School housed grades one through six under the direction of Principal Miss E. Goldsmith.

The earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map series (Sanborn Map) to depict the Point Lobos Road Primary School was drawn in 1889 (**Figure 65**). The map shows the three-story, wood-frame schoolhouse facing First Avenue (now Arguello Boulevard), with a plank-covered play yard and two freestanding toilet rooms near the east side of the property. The toilet rooms were linked to the school by a canopy. Although the property went as far east as Mears Street (now Palm Avenue), a line through the property indicates that the play yard was likely fenced-in just behind the toilet rooms.



Figure 64. Former Point Lobos Road Primary School, ca. 1915; view toward east from Arguello Boulevard.

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Collection No. AAD-4634

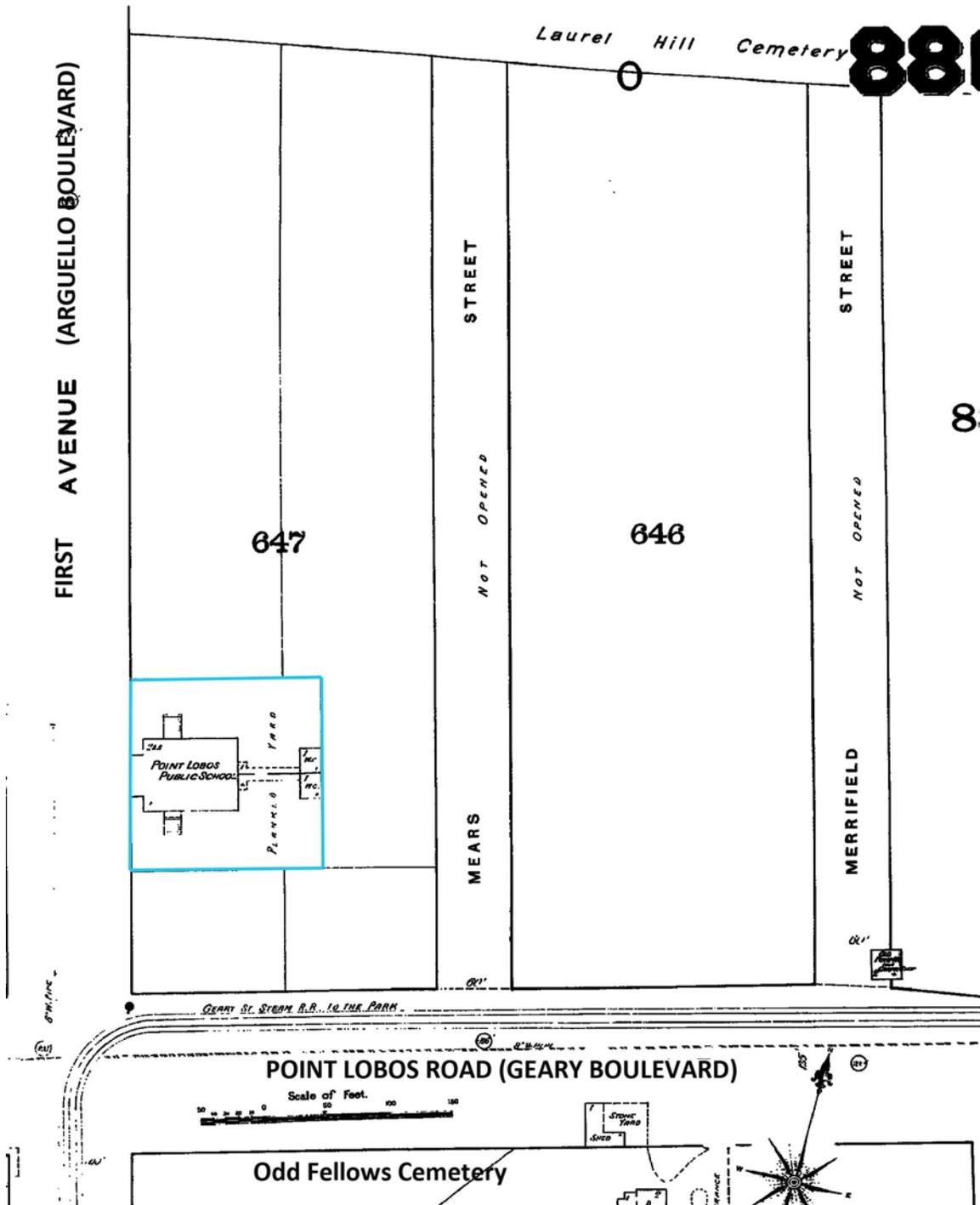


Figure 65. 1889 Sanborn Map, showing the Point Lobos Road School in blue.
 Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

Between 1877 and 1906, the Point Lobos Avenue Primary School served what was still a rural part of the city, where small poultry ranches, dairies, and isolated cottages housing cemetery workers were the dominant property types. Despite the existence of the Geary Street Steam Railroad along Point Lobos Road and its massive car barn at the northwest corner of Point Lobos Road and First Avenue, there were

only two dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the school – both on the west side of First Avenue, north of the car barn. Neither Mears Street (now Palm Avenue) nor Merrifield Street (now Jordan Avenue) were open to traffic because they ended at Laurel Hill Cemetery, one of several large cemeteries in the Lone Mountain/Inner Richmond area. Until their removal in the first half of the twentieth century, these cemeteries, including Laurel Hill, Odd Fellows, Calvary, and Masonic, hampered development in the area.

The 1900 Sanborn Maps indicate that the Point Lobos Road Primary School (renamed the Richmond School in 1891) had received a classroom wing addition on its south side (Figure 66). Another change was the relocation of the two toilet rooms from the center of the lot to the east side, along Michigan (now Palm) Avenue. The canopy that linked the school to the toilet rooms was still there but it ended abruptly at the middle of the lot, meaning that it had not been lengthened to reach the relocated toilet rooms! The 1900 Sanborn Maps illustrate that the streets surrounding the Richmond School were still largely undeveloped, indicating that the Inner Richmond District remained rural. The 1905 Sanborn Maps, published only five years later, show similar conditions, though by this time the school had been renamed the Richmond Grammar School.

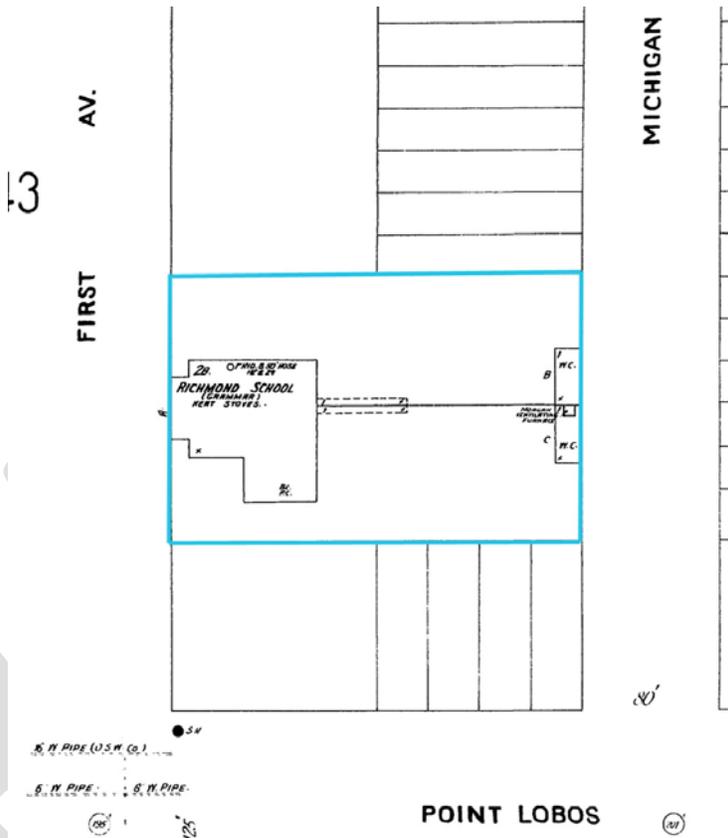


Figure 66. 1900 Sanborn Map, showing the Richmond School campus outlined in blue.
 Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

San Francisco Block Books from 1894, 1901, 1906 and 1910 indicate that the Richmond Grammar School continued to occupy the original 157' by 240' school reservation. Meanwhile, the adjoining lots that would later become part of the future Roosevelt Junior High School campus remained in private hands. In 1910, the lots north of the school along Arguello Boulevard belonged to Mary McHugh and the Eureka Beneficial Society. Meanwhile, the lots along Palm Avenue – both north and south of the existing schoolyard – belonged to the San Francisco & Suburban Home Building Society, the real estate investment firm that developed the adjoining Jordan Park residence park from 1906 onward.¹⁴

¹⁴ The San Francisco Original Handy Block Book (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Company, 1910), 598.

The 1913 Sanborn Maps show the former Richmond Grammar School, which was renamed after President Theodore Roosevelt in 1910, with several changes, including a new north wing and two smaller additions on the north and south sides of the building (Figure 67). An exterior stair had also been constructed on the rear of the school, presumably to facilitate direct access from the play yard to the north and south wings. The toilet rooms were still located on the east side of the property facing Palm Avenue. Just north of them was a new two-story, wood-frame building housing the school's "Domestic Science" and "Manual Training" departments.¹⁵ The 1913 Sanborn Maps indicate that the urbanization of the adjoining Inner Richmond and Jordan Park neighborhoods was well underway. In addition to Jordan Park, which was filling out with new single-family dwellings, on Arguello Boulevard, just north of the school, was the "French Colony," a residential compound containing 13 repurposed earthquake refugee cottages.

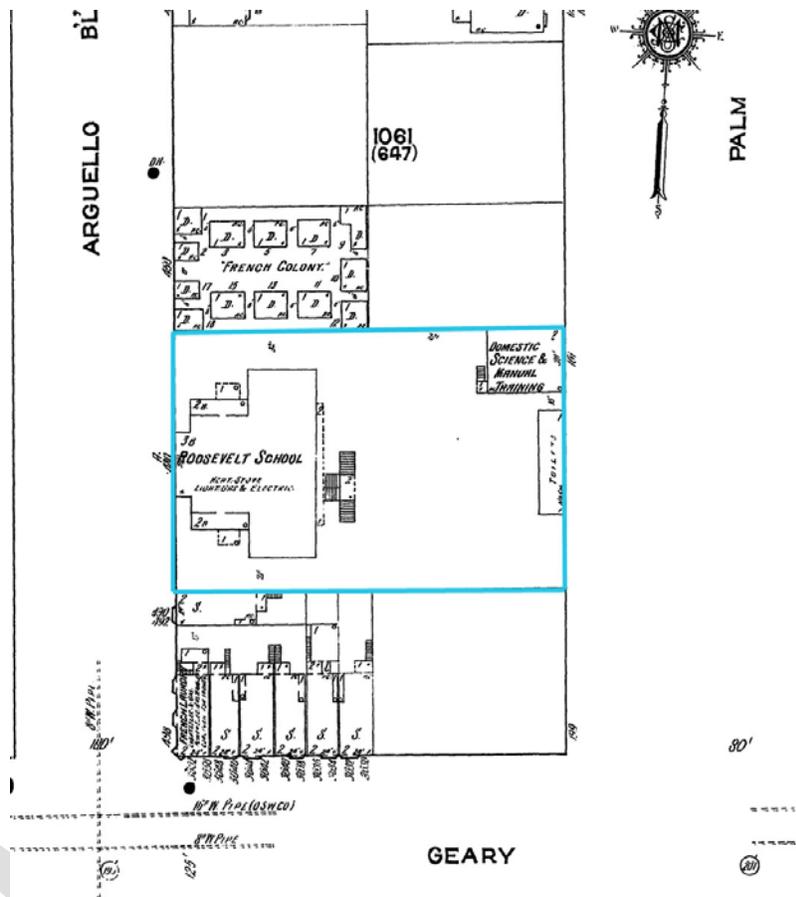


Figure 67. 1913 Sanborn Map, showing the Roosevelt School in blue.
 Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

¹⁵ In the early twentieth century, many school districts across the country began offering vocational programs in public schools, including "domestic science" course for girls and "industrial arts" for boys. These programs frequently required special-purpose spaces, including laboratories, kitchens, and shops that were not easy to insert into a traditional nineteenth-century schoolhouse.

Planning, Design, and Construction of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School: 1925–1930

The election of James Rolph as Mayor in 1912 ushered in a period of vast infrastructure improvements in San Francisco. Mayor Rolph pushed for the passage of two school bonds in 1917 and 1922, with the goal of building dozens of new public schools in outlying parts of the city, as well replacing outdated and hazardous schools.¹⁶ In December 1925, San Francisco School Superintendent Joseph Gwinn announced a \$6 million campaign to erect three new junior high schools: one in the Holly Park-Fairmount District, another in the western portion of the Richmond District, and a third in the eastern Richmond District, in the “neighborhood of Roosevelt School.” In fact, the plan called for transforming the “Roosevelt School building for junior high use by making repairs and adding new buildings and shops.” At that point, only a fraction of San Francisco’s junior high school-age students were accommodated in specialized junior high schools.¹⁷

Location of these new schools was a subject of debate. One critic attending the weekly building conference of the Board of Education in 1925 suggested that the Board conduct more careful research before any decision to convert Roosevelt Elementary School into a junior high began. Alfred Esberg, President of the Board of Education, countered this challenge by stating: “We have prepared maps and we have studied the situation thoroughly.” He admitted that the location selected was not the “ideal” one for a junior high school, but explained that it was the most feasible site given “the high price of property and other conditions restricting the expenditure of funds.”¹⁸

Within two years of announcing the Board of Education’s ambitious plan, the retrofit and expansion of the existing Roosevelt School building seemed inadequate. Fears that wood-frame schools were firetraps had existed for years. In 1911, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on a letter sent to the Board of Supervisors by J. C. Westenberg, Superintendent of the “Whosoever-Will Rescue Mission,” pointing to the dire need for adequate fire escapes on public school buildings: “The Roosevelt school has an outside stairway, but it is built of wood, and Westenberg says it should be of iron. He says that outer stairways for schools in the East are of iron, and constructed so that children may walk out six abreast.”¹⁹ By the mid-1920s, the Roosevelt School had become a favored example of why San Francisco desperately needed new facilities for its schoolchildren.

Confirming the critics’ suspicions, Roosevelt School caught fire in spring 1927. The extent of the damage is unknown but it seems to have not been enough to prevent it from being put back into use, because later that year the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran a series of articles on the city’s substandard public schools, including Roosevelt. A photograph of children clustered on an exterior stairway is captioned: “Roosevelt School, 50-Year-Old Fire trap Where Youngsters Get Education Start.” A text box underneath the photo reads: “Little children are still housed in Roosevelt School at Arguello and Geary Street, built in 1877, attacked by fire last spring, and long since condemned.”²⁰ By fall 1927, the *Chronicle* illustrated another article, titled: “S. F. Schools Totally Inadequate to Accommodate Increasing Role,” with a photograph of Roosevelt School and a description of the building as a “three-story fire trap.” The article stated that the

¹⁶ One newspaper account describes the school as founded in 1877. “Old Wooden Shacks House 7000 Children,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 9, 1927), p. 1.

¹⁷ “Gwinn Urges \$6,000,000 School Plan,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 30, 1925), 10.

¹⁸ “School Board Credit Stirs Heated Row,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 3, 1925).

¹⁹ “Fire Escapes Needed For School Children,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 10, 1911), 18.

²⁰ “Preliminary ‘Economy’ Budget Brings Hot Protests from Citizens,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 20, 1927), 1.

school had been condemned by the fire marshal after the recent fire, but that the facility continued to house 179 children from first to sixth grades because there were no other classrooms available.

At the same time that San Francisco's Board of Education decried the safety of its school facilities, it argued that new schools were needed to develop the local economy, and to ensure that San Francisco's educational facilities remained on par with other California cities. As argued by one member, "Antiquated units" replaced by "new and efficient schools" would draw students from private and parochial schools and families to neighborhoods "served by a modern school."²¹ Superintendent Gwinn elaborated: "Good schools create property values. They bring more homes, more business, and hence a greatly expanded tax assessment roll. This makes possible a lower tax rate. If the Board of Supervisors really want to lower the tax rate permanently, the best way to do it is to build more schools, and to provide the funds for their effective operation."²²

Planning for a new facility at the existing Roosevelt School site presented physical limitations; adequate recreational space was a serious constraint at that location and a general concern for the Board of Education. "Our schoolchildren have to play vertically," lamented Superintendent Gwinn because "housing conditions are generally crowded in San Francisco, due to the small area of the Metropolitan district. But it is commonly acknowledged that children must have room to play."²³ Apparently, these concerns led the Board of Education to look at the feasibility of building on the Odd Fellows cemetery south of Geary Street.²⁴ Ultimately, the School Board chose to erect a new building at the existing location so long as additional square footage could be obtained for an expanded play yard.²⁵

Beginning in 1927, the Board of Education began assembling, through outright purchase or condemnation, a larger campus for the school, including five parcels on the east side of Arguello Boulevard north of the fire-damaged school.²⁶ In 1928, the Board of Education hired the architectural firm of Miller & Pflueger to design the new building. Miller & Pflueger finished the plans in February 1929, and the specifications and estimates one month later. The Department of Public Works then issued requests for bids on April 3, 1929.²⁷ Contracts were awarded three days later, with the general construction contract going to Jacks & Irvine (\$369,588), mechanical to the Scott Company (\$44,130), brick and tile work to Larsen & Larsen (\$51,957), and miscellaneous contracts in the amount of \$15,000 going to several other firms.²⁸ Over the next week or two, additional contracts were let to Alta Electric Company (\$26,493) for electrical and to the Scott Company (\$28,337) for plumbing.²⁹ Construction got underway during the summer of 1929 and proceeded over the next year. Throughout construction, Roosevelt Junior High School continued to operate, most likely in temporary "bungalows" placed on the future play yard.³⁰

Although the newly completed Roosevelt Junior High School was finished in time for the new class entering in September 1930, it was not formally dedicated until November 9, 1930. The ceremony, held in

²¹ "S.F. Schools Totally Inadequate to Accommodate Increasing Role," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 11, 1927), 16.

²² "18 Antiquated School Buildings Remain in Service," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 9, 1927), 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ "Roosevelt School Plans Postponed," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1927), 1.

²⁵ "New Junior High School Dedicated," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 10, 1930), 10.

²⁶ San Francisco Assessor's Office.

²⁷ "Board Asks Bids in Junior High Program," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 7, 1929), 10.

²⁸ "New Roosevelt School Contracts Awarded," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 6, 1929), 4.

²⁹ "City to Pass on Labor Plea," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 18, 1929), 14.

³⁰ It seems probable that Roosevelt Junior High was operating out of temporary buildings at this point because the old building would have had to been demolished to build its replacement. There is no evidence that Roosevelt's students were moved to any other schools during construction.

the new 950-seat auditorium, was chaired by Mrs. Ernest J. Mott, vice-president of the Board of Education. Various speakers addressed the convocation, including Superintendent Joseph M. Gwinn and Supervisor Coleman, who stood in for Mayor James Rolph. The ceremony concluded with Colonel Thomas P. Robertson, President of the Point Lobos Improvement Association, presenting the school with a large American flag.³¹ Several historic photographs taken of the newly opened school ca. 1930 indicate that it looked almost exactly as it does today (**Figures 68–69**).

In terms of the unusual design of Theodore Roosevelt Junior High, Miller & Pflueger were clearly influenced by the work of contemporary Dutch and German Brick Expressionism. The use of dark clinker brick and corbelling on Roosevelt, as well as the incorporation of zig-zag and diaper patterns in the brickwork, is entirely characteristic of a series of avant-garde buildings that had been constructed in northern Germany and The Netherlands between 1920 and 1930. Though Roosevelt's design is not based on one example, various features of the building recall specific buildings, including Das Chilehaus in Hamburg by Fritz Höger (1922-24) (See Figure 83), Reetsma Cigarette Factory in Hamburg by Fritz Höger (1923), the Hoechts Administration Building in Frankfurt by Peter Behrens (1924), Wilhelm Marx Haus in Düsseldorf by Wilhelm Kreis (1922-24), and especially the Haus Am Köllnischen Park in Berlin by Alfred Gottheiner (1933-33) (See Figure 84). The last building, which was under construction as Roosevelt was being completed in 1930, shares many specific features in common with Roosevelt, including piers with overlapping brick joints and friezes and panels embellished with corbelled brick laid in zig-zag and diaper patterns. Though Timothy Pflueger was the son of German immigrants, he had not traveled to Germany when his firm was hired to design Roosevelt, so if Haus Am Köllnischen Park was indeed an important source, Pflueger would likely have become aware of it through international architectural journals. Roosevelt's north tower may be based on Willem Dudok's Raadhuis (City Hall) in Hilversum, The Netherlands (1928-31), a very well-known building at the time.

³¹ "New Junior High School Dedicated" *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 10, 1930), 10.



Figure 68. Newly completed Roosevelt Junior High School, ca. 1930; view toward northeast from Arguello Boulevard.

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Image No. AAD-4639



Figure 69. Newly completed Roosevelt Junior High School, ca. 1930; view toward southwest from play yard.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Image No. AAD-4636

Concise History of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School: 1930–2017

Even with its new and much larger facility, Roosevelt Junior High School instantly faced overcrowding. Within just two months of its dedication, the *Chronicle* reported that Roosevelt had so many students transferring from Hamilton and Crocker schools that non-classroom space was being repurposed for teaching.³² In 1937, the Board of Education addressed outdoor space constraints by securing a condemnation order for land at the rear of the site to expand the school's play yard.³³ During subsequent decades, overcrowding at Roosevelt was reported cyclically; in 1963, the *Chronicle* reported that Everett and Roosevelt Junior High Schools were the most severely overcrowded junior high schools in the district.³⁴ In 1974, students went on half-day schedules to accommodate nearly 1,000 new students who had temporarily transferred to Roosevelt from Presidio Junior High in the Outer Richmond District, which was undergoing a seismic retrofit.³⁵

Demographic and cultural changes affected Roosevelt Junior High (and many other San Francisco schools) during the 1960s and 1970s. In the early 1970s, San Francisco's Board of Education desegregated its elementary schools under federal court order. In the ensuing years, the number of white elementary students dropped by nearly 50% as increasing numbers of white families placed their children in private and parochial schools or left the city entirely.³⁶ By 1973, the city's Human Rights Commission pleaded with the Board of Education to follow through on its district-wide integration commitment by addressing segregation in junior high and high schools.³⁷ The federal government required a plan by December 1973 or SFUSD would be in danger of losing more than \$4 million in federal funding.³⁸ Roosevelt was among the first group of secondary schools to be "integrated" under the school district's plan, but an assessment made during the program's second year found that the number of schools meeting state racial guidelines had fallen. As described by the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "The reason for the plan's failure is that the Board of Education allowed any student affected by the plan to transfer to a school closer to home if he wished" which meant that residential patterns of segregation were echoed in schools.³⁹ Nearly two-thirds of the students who would have been bussed to other schools sought and received transfers, prompting the attorney for the NAACP's western regional office to call the integration plan "absolutely worthless."⁴⁰ Roosevelt was reportedly out of compliance because the school had "too many Chinese" students.⁴¹

Roosevelt Junior High School drew statewide attention in 1972 after teachers invited representatives from the Gay Counseling Service to speak to ninth graders in social studies classes as part of its sex education curriculum. After some students and parents complained, the school's principal, Walter Nolan, stated that the lectures were to help students understand "'social aspects' of sexual divergence from the 'norm,'" but that a handful of students had "needled" the speakers disrespectfully and that the visitors had responded with "some very explicit language."⁴² Nolan publicly denounced the speakers and stated that they would not be invited back to Roosevelt.

³² "90,000 S.F. Children Answer Call of School Bell for Spring Term," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 6, 1931).

³³ "School Board to Probe Use of Machinery" *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 2, 1937), 28.

³⁴ James Benet, "S.F. Schools Act to Hire Racial Aide," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 24, 1963), 2

³⁵ "Double Sessions for S.F. School," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 July 1974, 2.

³⁶ Ron Moskowitz, "Ethnic Shift in S.F. Schools," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 7, 1973), 2.

³⁷ "Rights Board Issues Plea for Desegregation," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 9, 1973), 5.

³⁸ "Schools Set Meeting on Integration," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 28, 1973), 41.

³⁹ Ron Moskowitz, "School Integration Slips," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 16, 1975), 2.

⁴⁰ "School Plan 'Worthless' Says NAACP," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 22, 1974), 43.

⁴¹ Ron Moskowitz, "School Integration Slips," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 16, 1975), 2.

⁴² "Sex Causes Hassles in Schools," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 18, 1972), 5.

This incident, along with another in which copulation was discussed in a Marin County high school history class, reached the State Board of Education. Board member Gene Ragle, a Reagan appointee who opposed all sex education, called for the state to investigate “the injection of illegal sex instruction and perversion” into classrooms and invited citizen comment.⁴³ Within the next few months, only a handful of complaints came from the state’s 1,138 school districts, leading the Board to recommend that better guidelines be developed for teachers of sex education.⁴⁴ It is likely that this controversy helped feed into the 1977 campaign for statewide Proposition 6 that targeted homosexual teachers. The proposition’s author John Briggs was a member of the California state senate from Orange County; in June 1977, he announced from the steps of San Francisco’s City Hall a state ballot initiative that would remove all gay and lesbian teachers from California’s public classrooms.⁴⁵

In 1978, Theodore Roosevelt Junior High was renamed Theodore Roosevelt Middle School. Today, Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is one of 13 dedicated middle schools in San Francisco.⁴⁶ It is also one of the city’s highest-performing middle schools, serving the Richmond District and its vicinity. In terms of its demographics, the school is 51 percent Asian American, 16 percent white, 14 percent Latino, 7 percent African American, 4 percent Filipino, 2 percent two or more races, and 2 percent Pacific Islander.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ “A Call for More Sex Guidelines,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 14, 1972), 51.

⁴⁵ Josh Sides, *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155.

⁴⁶ SFUSD. <http://www.sfusd.edu/en/schools/middle-schools.html>, Accessed December 19, 2016.

⁴⁷ “Roosevelt Middle School,” <http://www.greatschools.org/california/san-francisco/6427-Roosevelt-Middle-School/details/>, Accessed December 19, 2016.

Alteration History of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School: 1930–2017

This alteration history is based on several sources, including Sanborn Maps, aerial photographs, newspaper articles, a handful of building permit applications for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School on file at the Department of Building Inspection (DBI), a 1975 drawing set by Yull-Thorton & Levikow Architects, and a summary of recent alterations provided to us by SFUSD staff. Records of all of the documented alterations were verified in the field.

The earliest known alterations to affect Roosevelt Junior High occurred in the mid-1930s, when artists employed by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), a New Deal agency, painted three murals inside the academic building. These murals, completed in 1934, include George Wilson's *Education* and Horatio Nelson Poole's *Land and Harvest*. More information on these commissions is provided below on pages 57-58.

An aerial photograph taken in 1938, eight years after Roosevelt Junior High School was completed, shows the completed complex largely as it appears today (**Figure 70**). The aerial shows the auditorium wing and most of the academic building on the five parcels acquired by the Board of Education in 1927 north of the original school reservation. Meanwhile, the gymnasium wing and a portion of the academic building occupied the original 157' 7" x 240' school reservation. The 1938 aerial photograph indicates that all traces of the old school and its outbuildings had been removed, including the two-story vocational training building and the one-story toilet rooms. The rest of the site consisted of an asphalt-paved play yard painted with multiple game fields. In 1937, the Board of Education secured a condemnation order for one parcel on Palm Avenue to expand the play yard, but this property still appeared on the 1938 aerial, suggesting that the dwelling had not yet been vacated.⁴⁸

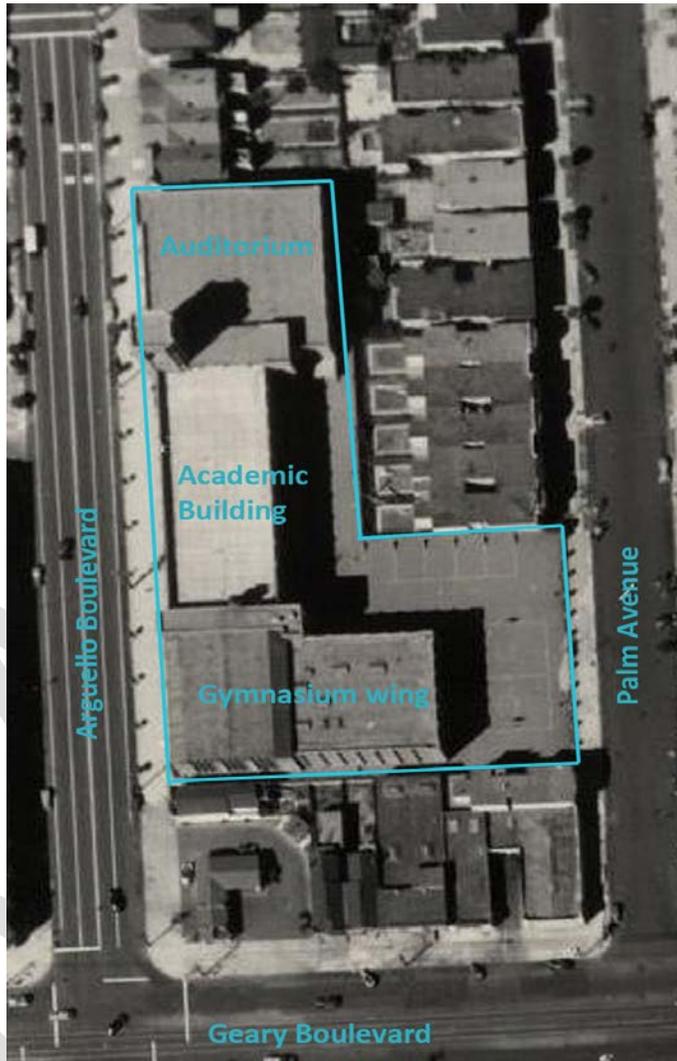


Figure 70. 1938 aerial photograph showing Roosevelt Junior High School in blue.

Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

⁴⁸ "School Board to Probe Use of Machinery" *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 2, 1937), 28.

The 1950 Sanborn Maps were the earliest to show Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (**Figure 71**). Notes on the map describe the school's physical characteristics, including its "fireproof" concrete construction and its basic layout. According to the map, the auditorium wing contained an auditorium for performing arts, as well as music and arts classrooms, suggesting that the northernmost part of the campus was reserved for the arts. The academic building at the center of the complex contained the administration office suite, the academic classrooms, the library, and the cafeteria. The basement of the academic building contained storage and mechanical spaces. Anchoring the southernmost part of the complex was the gymnasium wing, which contained the boys' and girls' gymnasiums, locker rooms, and classrooms and shops for the vocational and domestic science programs. The map indicates that the roof of the academic building was in use as an outdoor play area, with a covered shelter next to the north tower. By this time, the single-family property condemned in 1937 on Palm Avenue had been demolished or moved and replaced with three portable "bungalows." In 1958-59, seven more houses on Palm Avenue were condemned and removed in order to expand the play yard to its present extent.

There are only four permit applications on file for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School at DBI.⁴⁹ They describe a range of projects, including the relocation of portable classrooms, aka "bungalows," from the northeast corner of the site to the southeast corner in 1959, interior changes to the vocational/domestic science shops and classrooms in 1965 and 1966, and the addition of 20 sprinklers in 1996:

- July 22, 1959: Relocate portable classrooms and yard work (Building Permit #201918).
- January 8, 1965: Non-structural alterations to rehabilitate Foods Laboratory (Building Permit #276142).
- April 14, 1966: Alterations to shops, including mechanical, electrical, and miscellaneous work (Building Permit #293109).
- August 14, 1996: Add 20 sprinklers to the existing system (Building Permit #801119).

A set of architectural drawings prepared by Yull-Thorton & Levikow Architects in 1975 describes the first major renovation of Roosevelt Junior High School since its completion 45 years earlier. The project included several substantial changes to the building, including infilling two vertical banks of windows on the east façade of the gymnasium wing to install a shear wall, construction of an elevator tower at the intersection of the academic building and the gymnasium wing, resurfacing a pair of concrete entrance canopies with stucco on the east side, and the replacement of all the original windows.

SFUSD made several other changes to Theodore Roosevelt Middle School as a result of two school bonds passed in 1988 and 1994, as well as additional bonds in 2006 and 2011, which collectively provided almost \$1 billion to modernize San Francisco's public schools. This work included window sash replacement and miscellaneous site improvements (1991), exterior door replacement and additional window sash replacement (1992), roof replacement (1993), exterior painting and playground and fence improvements (1995), window sash replacement and playground improvements (1997), and additional window sash replacement (1998). More recently, SFUSD has renovated all of the classrooms and corridors inside Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, including the installation of new resilient sheet flooring in classrooms and corridors, new lockers, new furnishings, new and enhanced lighting, and new kitchen and bathroom fixtures. On the exterior, all of the windows have been replaced in multiple campaigns for energy efficiency and soundproofing. The most recent alteration is the addition of two enclosed fire escapes on

⁴⁹ The state of California, and not the City and County of San Francisco, is the entity that issues building permits and oversees construction of public schools throughout the state.

the north wall of the auditorium wing in the last year or two. These two structures allow people to exit the auditorium in case of fire without having to re-enter the academic building.

The ca. 1990 Sanborn Maps, the most recent available, show few major changes to Theodore Roosevelt Middle School since 1950 (**Figure 72**). The ca. 1990 Sanborn Maps do not show the addition of the elevator to the east façade or the construction of the shear wall on the east wall of the gymnasium wing. However, they do show the removal of the seven dwellings from along Palm Avenue in 1958-59 to expand the play yard, and the two bungalows that were relocated from the northeast to the southeast corner of the campus around the same time.

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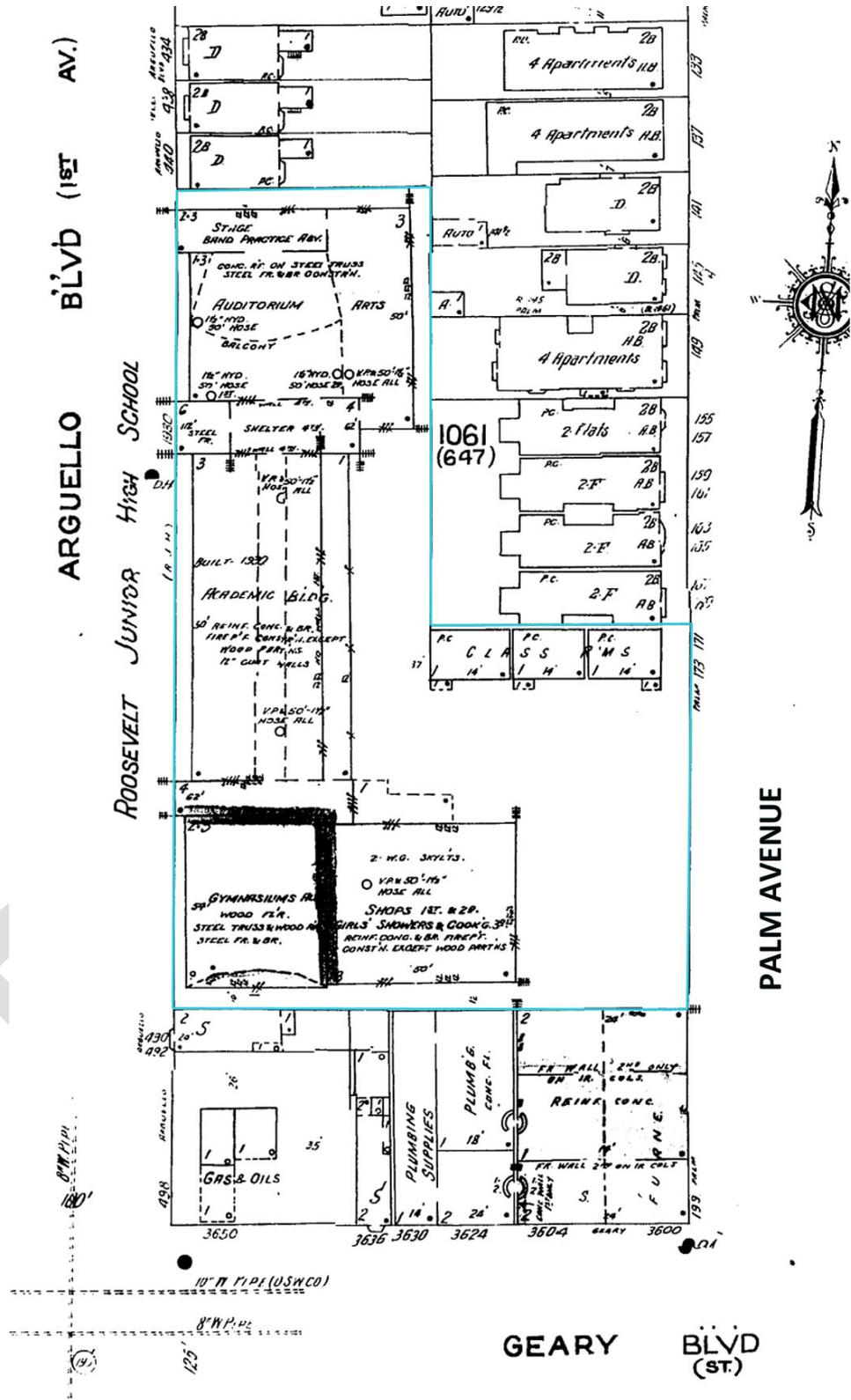


Figure 71. 1950 Sanborn Map, showing Theodore Roosevelt Middle School in blue.
 Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

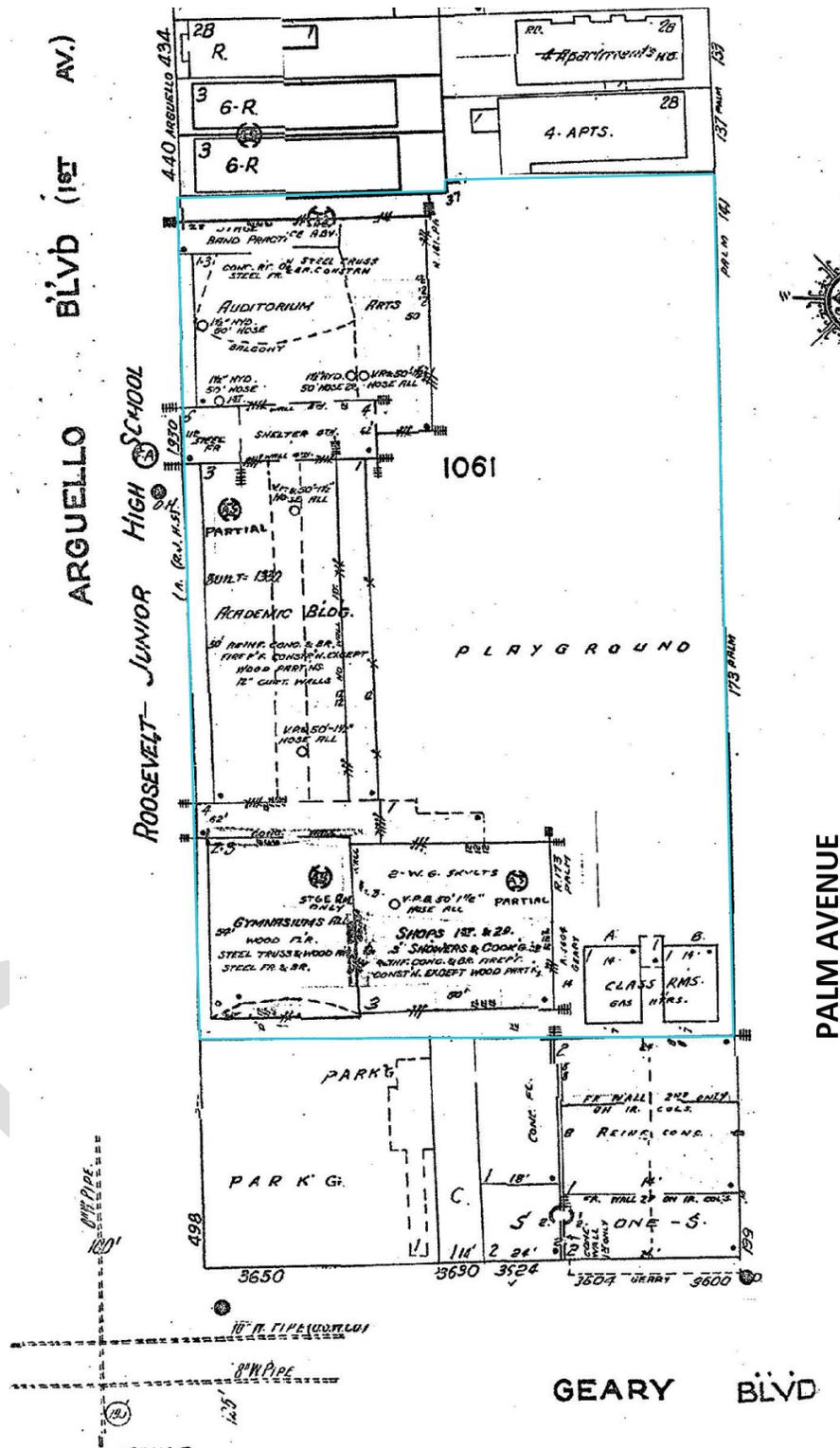


Figure 72. Ca. 1900 Sanborn Map, showing Theodore Roosevelt Middle School in blue.
 Source: San Francisco Public Library; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

Concise History of SFUSD and School Construction: 1847–1938

Public education in San Francisco dates to 1847 when the first school opened on what is now Portsmouth Square. Three years later, the Free School Ordinance passed, allowing taxes to be levied to support public schools. The first high school was established in 1856, and the first free kindergarten in the western United States opened in San Francisco in 1878.⁵⁰ Compulsory education laws, massive immigration from outside the U.S., and internal migration from rural to urban settings led to an explosion in school enrollment in California and across the nation during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As the school system became more elaborate and the number of students continued to grow, the teaching workforce expanded and teachers' organizations increased in number as well. By the 1910s, members of San Francisco teachers' associations were active in state and local campaigns affecting schools and child welfare alike.⁵¹

Educational reform efforts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were part of the overall Progressive movement to address government corruption, as well as economic dislocation and social turbulence brought about by rapid industrialization and mass immigration. Schools were seen as vehicles for inculcating moral values, especially in foreign-born children. As San Francisco leader John Swett argued, "Nothing can Americanize these chaotic elements and breathe into them the spirit of our institutions but the public schools."⁵² Statements such as these offended many members of San Francisco's large Irish, Italian, and German immigrant communities, who found more sympathetic ears in Democratic Party officials who "dominated" the Board of Education for most of the 1870s and 1890s.⁵³

Progressive campaigns for educational reform included expansion and reorganization of curricula, improving teacher education, and changes in how schools and school districts were administered.⁵⁴ Assessments of San Francisco's school system in 1911 and 1917 found major deficiencies in both educational instruction and facilities.⁵⁵ These critiques fueled a "good government" campaign for School Board members and the Superintendent of Schools to be appointed rather than elected. A citywide initiative called Amendment 37 calling for these measures failed in 1918, but passed by a narrow majority of voters in 1920.⁵⁶

Reorganizing school systems to add junior high schools was a feature of Progressive educational reform. Junior high schools were viewed as serving unique developmental needs of early adolescence. They helped prepare students for the new curricular requirements of comprehensive high schools, a trend begun earlier in the twentieth century to integrate academic curricula with commercial and vocational education. In contrast to the "common school" of the nineteenth century, these new facilities offered a diversified curriculum that attempted "to accommodate the differentiated roles that students would play

⁵⁰ "Finding Aid to the San Francisco Unified School District Records 1854-2005, Biographical/Historical Note." (San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 2005), 3-4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵² William Issel and Robert W. Cherny *San Francisco, 1865-1932: Power, Politics and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 102.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁵⁴ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr. *American Education: A History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009, fourth edition), 227.

⁵⁵ Sonnier Francisco, "Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009), 28.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

in their later lives.”⁵⁷ Junior high schools included pre-vocational studies and other training that allowed for differentiating students in terms of their backgrounds and presumed futures.⁵⁸

Junior high schools were adopted in California starting in 1909, and by 1913, three San Francisco grammar schools had been converted to serve seventh through ninth grades with modified schedules and curriculum designed for children in early adolescence. Dr. Joseph A. Gwinn, the first Superintendent hired by a newly appointed Board of Education championed the transformation from an “8-4” system (eight years in elementary school then four in high school) to a “6-3-3” program that placed 7-9th graders in junior high and 10-12th graders in high school.⁵⁹ By 1929, the city had nine operating junior high schools and more planned; junior high schools were being added during a time of general expansion in the city school system.⁶⁰ The grade configuration of each school continued to evolve and be a focus for debate. In 1946, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the President of the Board of Education advocated (unsuccessfully) for junior high schools to be abolished so that the District could return to the “8-4” system.⁶¹

The proliferation of schools in San Francisco’s western neighborhoods followed logically as residential and commercial development increased in those parts of the city. San Francisco’s “Outside Lands” – the area that would eventually become the Sunset and Richmond Districts, as well as Golden Gate Park – consisted of thousands of acres of sand dunes, thickets of willows, and coastal sage scrub.⁶² San Francisco experienced major building booms in these areas after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, and again during the 1920s. Infrastructural developments, such as graded streets and streetcar tunnels, as well as the mass adoption of private automobiles, spurred residential development in what had previously been the city’s outlying areas.⁶³

School location decisions were subject to political pressures as well as objective calculations of need.⁶⁴ Lincoln High School was erected in the Sunset District at the behest of parent and civic organizations who argued that the “fast growing region” deserved a secondary school. Superintendent Lee stated at a meeting held at Parkside School in February 1934 that “If the \$3,000,000 bond issue pending with the Government and providing for the George Washington High School in the Richmond District can be approved, the Sunset will be the next thing on the expansion program.”⁶⁵

The period from World War I to World War II has been called the “Golden Age” of San Francisco school construction.⁶⁶ Approximately 50 new school buildings were erected in the 1920s and 1930s, including several built with assistance from the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress

⁵⁷ Urban and Wagoner, Jr. *American Education: A History*, 271 and 234.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 275

⁵⁹ Francisco, 32.

⁶⁰ Lee Stephen Dolson, Jr. “The Administration of the San Francisco Public Schools, 1847 to 1947” (Berkeley: PhD Dissertation, 1965), 455.

⁶¹ “McEnerney Suggests S.F. Abolish Junior High Schools,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 6, 1946), 13.

⁶² Mary Brown, *Sunset District Residential Builders, 1925-1950: Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco Planning Department: 2013), 19.

⁶³ Brown, 21.

⁶⁴ Dolson, 482-83.

⁶⁵ “Sunset Area High School Need Shown,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1934), 19.

⁶⁶ The term appears to have first been used in “Civic Architecture: San Francisco’s Public Schools,” *San Francisco Architectural Heritage Newsletter* (1988 v. XVI, no. 3), 5. It is the title of a recent study conducted for the San Francisco Planning department by Sonnier Francisco, “Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009).

Administration (WPA).⁶⁷ John Reid Jr, who served as City Architect from 1919 until 1927, designed a large number of these facilities. Other prominent Bay Area architects contributed to this body of work, including Miller & Pflueger, Bakewell & Brown, and Weeks & Day.⁶⁸

San Francisco School Construction Bonds: 1917–1928

San Franciscans voted four times in two decades to fund expansion of their public school district's physical plant. In November 1917, \$3.5 million dollars were authorized to address overcrowding. In part, this was a long-term hangover from the devastation wrought by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, which destroyed 29 schools. More than ten years after the tragedy, more than 170 classes were reportedly being held in "temporary shacks, lunchrooms, basements, corridors, rented rooms, stores and auditoriums."⁶⁹ In December 1917, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the bond funds would be spent on new elementary and high schools, and on purchase of land for a school and playground.⁷⁰

In 1922, voters were again asked to "invest in the future of the children of San Francisco" because "today's school children will be San Francisco's men and women of tomorrow."⁷¹ Mayor James Rolph Jr. described the bond measure as an issue of equity. "Every neighborhood must be given an equal opportunity with every other neighborhood. We must not have good buildings here and poor buildings elsewhere."⁷² After the overwhelmingly positive November election results, City agencies scrambled to coordinate planning and expenditure of the \$12 million devoted to rehabilitating 30 schools. "The plan for the rehabilitation of the schools is the most gigantic ever attempted in San Francisco. It is comparable only to the Civic Center project," stated Rolph.⁷³ The bond also funded a study of educational needs based on the city's growing population so that future schools could be sited in the most appropriate locations.⁷⁴

Public Works of Art Project: 1933–1934

Public Works of Art Project

The three murals at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School were funded through the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). PWAP was created in late 1933 as part of the Civil Works Administration (CWA), an agency funded through the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) of 1933. FERA was passed during the first hundred days of Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration as part of a broad-scale effort to counter the effects of the Great Depression, which had begun with the stock market crash in late 1929 and had produced wide-spread unemployment and underemployment by the time Roosevelt took office in March 1933.

FERA provided funds to states for the purpose of providing work relief to the unemployed. However, the FERA administrator, Harry Hopkins, feared that not enough was being done in time to see the unemployed through the winter of 1933-1934, so he created CWA as the first, direct federal work-relief program. Within CWA, he created PWAP for unemployed artists. PWAP was inspired at least in part by George Biddle, an independently wealthy artist and former classmate of Roosevelt, who had traveled in Mexico with Diego Rivera. Enthusiastic about the work of Mexican artists in transforming public buildings

⁶⁷ Figure for the 1920s from "Civic Architecture" San Francisco's Public Schools."

⁶⁸ "Civic Architecture."

⁶⁹ "School Bond Election to be Held Tuesday," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 28, 1917), 8.

⁷⁰ "Board Locates First Schools to Be Erected," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 5, 1917), 10.

⁷¹ "Future of S.F. is at Stake at Polls Tuesday," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁷² James Rolph Jr. "Rolph Appeals to S.F. to Vote School Bonds," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁷³ "First Steps Taken on Big School Plans," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 25, 1922), 3.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

with bold murals, Biddle tried to persuade Roosevelt to promote a contemporary approach to art in public buildings. Where earlier art in federal buildings had tended to be as classical as the architecture, the subject matter for PWAP artists was specified as “The American Scene,” an approach to art developed in the early 20th century by the “Ash Can School,” who focused on urban scenes, and by artists in the late 1920s, notably Grant Wood and Thomas Hart Benton.

PWAP was headed by Edward Bruce, a lawyer, art collector, and painter from California, and the new agency was launched in early December with funding to expire on May 1. On December 10, Bruce asked Walter Heil, recently appointed as director of the De Young Museum, to take charge of PWAP Region 15, including northern California, and to move quickly to commission works of art and locate appropriate public buildings where art might be installed. Well connected with San Francisco civic leaders, Bruce joined with Herbert Fleishhacker, a politically well-connected banker who was on both the Art and Park Commissions, to assist Heil in selecting an executive committee and advisory committee. The executive committee consisted of Thomas Carr Howe, assistant director of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor; Harold Mack, a successful stock broker and art patron; and Charles Stafford Duncan, a prominent commercial artist. Heil and his associates then began to seek both artists and locations for art.⁷⁵

Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School Murals

Murals were the most plentiful public art form commissioned under New Deal visual art programs and the medium employed by artists Horatio Nelson Poole and George Wilson Walker to enhance Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School. Over 2,250 murals were commissioned by FAP across the U.S.⁷⁶ A flexible medium for architectural spaces, murals could be planned as part of new construction projects funded by the New Deal or as adornment to existing public buildings. Other San Francisco schools that received New Deal artworks after their completion include John Muir Elementary School and Mission High School. Many New Deal-era murals in San Francisco were created through the medium of fresco, in which ground pigments were applied to wet plaster laid directly on a wall. Frescos must be painted in sections quickly while the plaster is still wet. Poole was among the earliest San Francisco artists to try fresco painting, reportedly experimenting with the medium as early as 1926.⁷⁷ The murals at Roosevelt were created with oil painted on canvas panels that were later affixed to the walls, presumably because the Board of Education did not wish to go to the trouble of re-plastering any interior wall surfaces.

Heil’s notebooks indicate that Poole probably began work about December 18. Heil’s final report indicates that Poole did not complete his two murals by May 1, 1934, when PWAP funds expired, and that he was paid to complete the murals with funds from the State Emergency Relief Act (SERA). Poole was paid \$635.69 from PWAP funds and \$147.52 from SERA funds. Poole’s assistant artist, Gerome De Hollin, was paid \$331.562 from PWAP funds and \$91.99 from SERA funds. Walker was paid entirely from PWAP funds; the San Francisco Chronicle reported on April 21 that Walker had finished. Walker was paid \$356.62. The San Francisco Board of Education contributed \$105 toward the total cost of the murals.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ The preceding two paragraphs are based on Robert W. Cherny, *Victor Arnautoff and the Politics of Art* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), pp. 81-83.

⁷⁶ Melosh, 5.

⁷⁷ “Frescoes, an Old Medium Revived,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 2, 1926), 8F. Aline Kistler, “Nelson Poole Exhibited in Painter Role,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 12, 1929), D5. Gene Hailey editor, *California Art Research Vol. 11*, (San Francisco: Works Project Administration, 1936), 48.

⁷⁸ Heil’s notebook and final report are part of the Heil papers at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. There is a microfilm copy at the DeYoung Museum. See also “First Mural Completed,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 21, 1934), p. 5.

Artists' Biographies

Horatio Nelson Poole: 1884–1947

Horatio Nelson Poole (1884-1947), who painted the *Land* and *Harvest* murals at Roosevelt, grew up in New Jersey and Philadelphia. He left school to help support his family at age fourteen, but was later able to study at the Philadelphia School of Industrial Art and later, the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Poole began to find work drawing cartoons for Philadelphia newspapers and then in Hawaii, where his older brother John also worked as a cartoonist. Poole joined the California Society of Etchers, which led to his relocation to San Francisco in 1921, where he began exhibiting paintings as well as prints. Poole established a studio in what is now known as the Belli Building at 728 Montgomery Street (San Francisco Landmark No. 10) but he often painted outdoors to capture the landscapes that were his preferred subjects. He taught at the California School of Fine Arts and at University of California, Berkeley. By the early 1940s, Poole was described as “among the artists of first importance in San Francisco, who were drafted to design civic art decorations as part of the extensive program of the Public Works Administration.”⁷⁹ California Art Research described Poole as contributing “handsome decorations in theatres” in “smaller communities of California.”⁸⁰ Poole’s later commission for a mural at the Golden Gate International Exposition was described by art critic Alfred Frankenstein as being “among several of the fair’s finest murals.”⁸¹ In 1953, a memorial exhibit was organized for the artist at the City of Paris Gallery at O’Farrell and Stockton Streets.⁸²

George Wilson Walker: 1883 – 1958

George Wilson Walker (1883-1958) painted the mural *Education* at Roosevelt. The artist was born in New Hampshire and died in Los Angeles. No detailed information about Walker’s life or career was found during the course of this research.⁸³

Timothy Pflueger, Architect: 1892–1946

Timothy Pflueger is one of the most remarkable architects to have worked in San Francisco (**Figure 73**). In spite of several significant hurdles, including the Depression and World War II, Pflueger created an extensive and high-quality oeuvre during his relatively short life. Attesting to their quality and stature, dozens of Pflueger’s buildings still stand throughout Northern California. Coming of age in an era dominated by the conservative aesthetic of the *École des Beaux Arts*, Timothy Pflueger defied the



Figure 73. Drawing of Timothy Pflueger in 1936 by Peter van Valkenburg. Source: Wikimedia Commons

⁷⁹ *California Art Research*, Vol. 11, 53. His studio address is mentioned in “Frescoes, an Old Medium Revived,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 2, 1926), 8F

⁸⁰ *California Art Research* Vol. 11, 55. Most of the biographical information on Poole is drawn from this document.

⁸¹ Alfred Frankenstein, “X Marks the Spot’--An art critic looks at the architecture --and finds it good--and bad,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 17, 1939).

⁸² “A Handy Guide to Local Events,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 29, 1953), 20.

⁸³ Biography of George Wilson Walker accessed at

http://www.askart.com/artist/George_Wilson_Walker/11193148/George_Wilson_Walker.aspx

dominant taste of his provincial hometown and embraced a daring modernist aesthetic that incorporated influences of Chinese, Persian, Mayan, and Aztec architectural and artistic traditions. Long known as a supporter of the fine arts, Pflueger often collaborated with well-known sculptors, muralists, lighting designers, and other artisans and craftspeople, including Diego Rivera, Ralph Stackpole, and Arthur Mathews. Pflueger was also a proponent of modern technology and he embraced contemporary building materials, including aluminum, Lucite, and sheet metal, using them to make his buildings seem more richly appointed than constrained Depression-era budgets would allow.

Timothy Ludwig Pflueger was born September 26, 1892 in San Francisco. His German immigrant parents, Otilie and August Pflueger, both arrived in San Francisco in 1890. August Pflueger was a merchant tailor and from 1904 on, the family lived above his shop at 1015 Guerrero Street in the city's Mission District. While not poor, Timothy Pflueger was raised in humble circumstances in a multi-ethnic district composed of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, and France. Though frugal, religious, and of humble means, Timothy Pflueger's parents were cultured, and they did not neglect their children's education in the arts, paying for piano and drafting lessons for young Timothy. Many of his relatives lived nearby, including several tradesmen that Pflueger would work with for the rest of his life. He had comparatively little formal education, going only as far as high school. Like many boys in his circumstances, Timothy went to work as soon as he could to help his family, learning skills on the job.⁸⁴



Figure 74. Our Lady of the Wayside, Portola Valley, CA.
Source: Town of Portola Valley

Pflueger showed an early talent in drawing and painting. He began working as a draftsman at the age of 14, when the demand for skilled renderers and delineators surged after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. He soon began working in the offices of James Rupert "J. R." Miller and George T. Colmesnil.⁸⁵ The partners recognized that their young hire was very talented, and they encouraged him to join the San Francisco Architectural Club, an organization that offered night

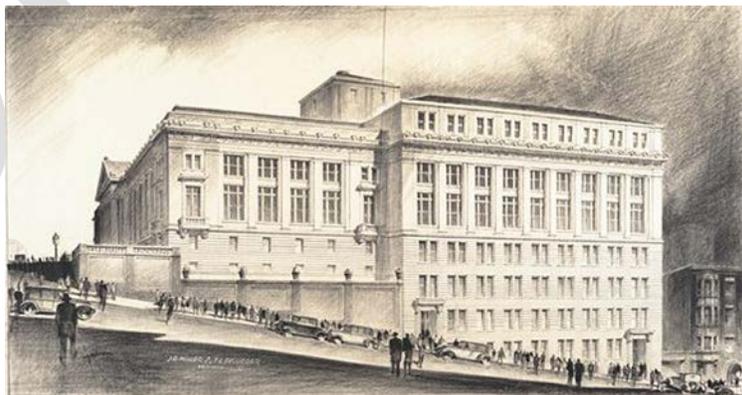


Figure 75. Rendering of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. building.
Source: SFMoMa

⁸⁴ Therese Poletti, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 3–5.

⁸⁵ Poletti, 8.

classes steeped in the methods and pedagogy of the *École des Beaux Arts*.⁸⁶ Pflueger steadily improved his skills in this nurturing environment and in 1912, at the age of 20, he was given his first solo project, a small country church in Portola Valley, California. Our Lady of the Wayside, which still stands, is designed in the Mission Revival style, incorporating features of several California missions (**Figure 74**).⁸⁷ Miller & Colmesnil began giving Pflueger even more high-profile jobs, including the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company building (now the Ritz-Carlton Hotel), a Beaux-Arts–styled office building that still stands at the northeast corner of Stockton and Pine Streets on Nob Hill (**Figure 75**).⁸⁸

Miller & Colmesnil dissolved in 1913, but Pflueger continued to work as an employee of J. R. Miller for another six years, assisting him on a variety of projects. In 1917, after the U.S. entered World War I, Timothy Pflueger was drafted into the Army Corps of Engineers. He spent the war designing training camps, including camps in Washington, D.C. and San Juan, Puerto Rico.⁸⁹ Upon his return to San Francisco in 1919, Miller promoted Pflueger to the position of chief draftsman, and then in 1920, after Pflueger received his architecture license, Miller made him partner. With

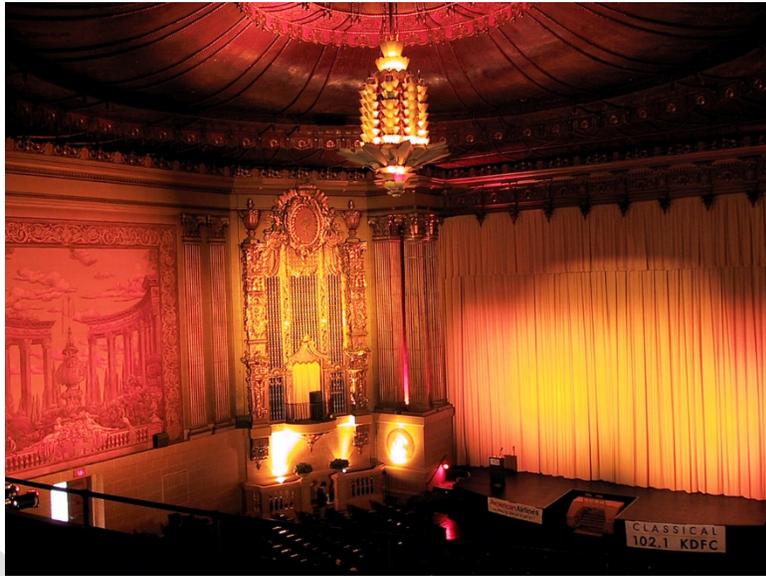


Figure 76. Interior of the Castro Theater.
Source: Flickr user SFHandyman

the economy booming during the 1920s, and work abundant in San Francisco, Miller & Pflueger designed several buildings that have since become local landmarks. The firm's work in the 1920s still largely adhered to historicist styles, including the Beaux Arts, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, and Mediterranean. Some of the firm's most famous works from this era include the Castro Theater (1921) at 429 Castro Street, and the San Francisco Mining Exchange (1923) at 350 Bush Street. The Castro Theater was Pflueger's first major movie theater, a building type that would make him famous. Though the exterior is designed in a straightforward rendition of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the interior is a fanciful blend of exotic influences that combines features of a Roman amphitheater with a Middle Eastern caravanserai (**Figure 76**).

The Castro Theater project earned Miller & Pflueger several other high-profile theater commissions, mainly from the Nasser Brothers, the proprietors of the Castro Theater and a chain of theaters throughout Northern California. Indeed, the Nasser Brothers hired Miller & Pflueger to design all of their theaters, including The Alhambra (1925) in San Francisco; three theaters in Tulare, Oroville, and Chico (1926–27); the Paramount (1931) in Oakland; the Alameda Theater (1932) in Alameda; and the New

⁸⁶ Poletti, 11.

⁸⁷ Poletti, 26–7.

⁸⁸ Poletti, 27.

⁸⁹ Poletti, 30.

Mission Theater, a remodel of an existing 1917 neighborhood theater in San Francisco's Mission District (1932). The Nassers gave Pflueger a free hand with their commissions, allowing him to come up with fanciful interior spaces that would transport moviegoers to far-off lands before the curtain had even parted.

The Castro Theater caught the attention of prominent businesspeople, including the directors of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, who decided to hire Miller & Pflueger to design their new high-rise office building in San Francisco's South of Market area. After securing the commission, Pflueger developed several traditional designs for San Francisco's first true "skyscraper." Not caring for any of his initial schemes, Pflueger became engrossed in the recent 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition.⁹⁰ One of the entries, by Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, dispensed with the traditional Beaux-Arts tripartite high-rise arrangement of base, shaft, and capital in favor of a unified, Gothic-inspired approach using vertical lines and sequential setbacks to emphasize the building's height. Pflueger's final 1923 design for the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building, which clearly shows Saarinen's influence, was an important breakthrough for the young architect, marking the beginning of his embrace of modern design (**Figure 77**).

The national press finally took notice of Timothy Pflueger following the completion of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building in 1925. Five years later, Pflueger would make his second major contribution to San Francisco's skyline with the Medical-Dental Office Building (1929) at 450 Sutter Street, a block north of Union Square. Along with Howe & Lescaze's PSFS Building in Philadelphia, 450 Sutter is arguably the most innovative skyscraper built in the United States during the 1920s. Discarding the heavy pseudo-masonry cladding of the Telephone Building, Pflueger embraced the underlying logic of the steel frame and wrapped the Medical-Dental Building in a thin terra cotta and glass curtain wall, with delicate spandrels ornamented with Mayan-inspired patterns. The windows wrap around the corners of the building, contributing to its lightweight and modern appearance. Pflueger, a lover of dramatic flourishes, designed a richly appointed lobby for 450 Sutter. The lobby, one of the most photographed in San Francisco, is finished in black marble and gilded stucco embossed with Mesoamerican pictographs resembling a Mayan temple (**Figure 78**).⁹¹

The Medical-Dental Building was completed several months after the Stock Market Crash of November 1929. The ensuing Depression ushered in a period in San Francisco in which comparatively little was constructed for almost a decade. Fortunately for Miller & Pflueger, their reputation was so great that they continued to get high-profile projects. Theaters and office buildings continued to comprise a major part of their

⁹⁰ Poletti, 61-5.

⁹¹ Poletti, 79-80.

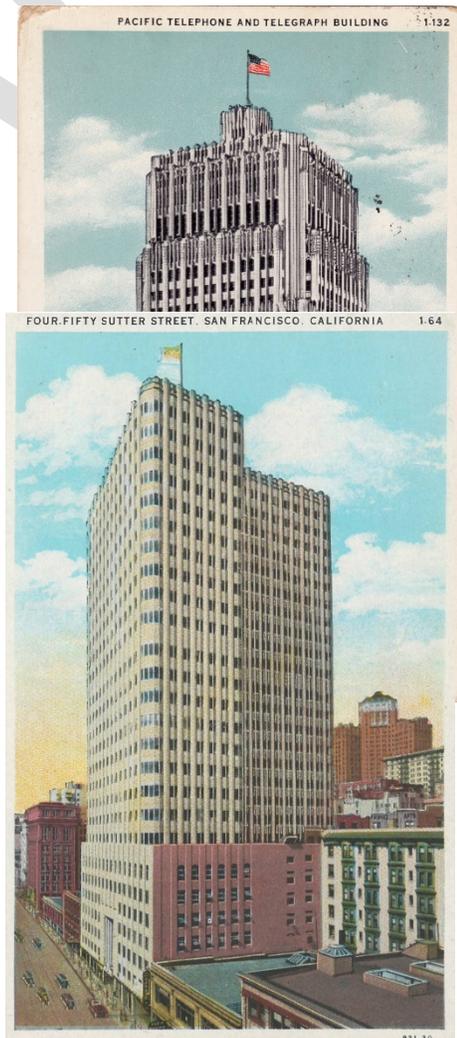


Figure 78. Medical-Dental Building.
Source: Author's postcard collection

work, including an addition and remodel of the Pacific Stock Exchange (1930), El Rey Theater (1931), and the Paramount Theater in Oakland (1932). Embracing an escapist tendency that is characteristic of so much of their work, Miller & Pflueger designed several high-end San Francisco nightclubs and cocktail lounges, including Bal Tabarin (now Bimbo's 365), Le Cirque Room in the Fairmont Hotel, the Patent Leather Lounge in the St. Francis Hotel, and Top of the Mark in the Mark Hopkins Hotel. The firm's work wasn't solely focused on fantasy; Miller & Pflueger designed several major public buildings in San Francisco during the Depression, including Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (1930), George Washington High School (1936), the Transbay Terminal (1937), San Francisco Junior College (now San Francisco City College – 1940), and a parking garage beneath Union Square (1942). Much of the firm's work from the latter half of the 1930s shows a gradual evolution away from the "Mayan Deco" toward a more austere aesthetic in keeping with contemporary European modernism. George Washington High School, designed in the Streamline Moderne style with some Regency and International style influences, is one of the best examples demonstrating the growing abstraction of Pflueger's later work. This evolution picked up speed following the retirement of the more traditionally minded J. R. Miller in 1937. From this point on, the firm became known as Timothy L. Pflueger & Associates.

In 1939, Timothy Pflueger was appointed to the board of architects in charge of designing the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) on Treasure Island. As part of his duties, Pflueger designed the Federal Building, the California State Building, the California Auditorium, and the Court of the Pacific. Pflueger's work at the GGIE represented his continuing evolution toward modernism. During World War II, Pflueger worked for the U.S. government, designing the U.S. Army General Depot in Ogden, Utah; various Army transmitter buildings and broadcasting studios; and several housing projects for defense workers. His final project was a remodel of I. Magnin's Co.'s flagship store at the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton Streets in San Francisco's Union Square. This ultra-modern building was under construction when Timothy Pflueger died of heart failure on November 7, 1946, following his daily swim at the Olympic Club.⁹² Following his death, the firm was taken over by Timothy's younger brother, Milton, who renamed it, Pflueger Architects.

Art Deco Architecture in San Francisco

The Art Deco style emerged on the world stage at the 1925 *Exposition des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. Rejecting European Neoclassicism in the wake of the horrors of World War I, the artists, artisans, graphic designers, and architects who developed the Art Deco style were inspired by a variety of sources, in particular the ancient ziggurat-building cultures of the pre-Islamic Middle East, including Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. Other sources included ancient Egyptian art and African textiles, as well as contemporary European Cubist and Fauvist painters and German Expressionist architects, graphic designers, and visual artists. Signature details of the style included its use of geometric shapes, including chevrons, zig-zags, diagonal rays, stylized papyrus leaves, pulvinated moldings, and horizontal "speed lines" (parallel lines incised into the parapet of a building). The Art Deco style soon made its way across the Atlantic to the United States. Gradually, the American public embraced the "modernistic" Art Deco style, largely due to its popularity with Hollywood set designers like Cedric Gibbons. Mass-produced consumer goods, including those designed by industrial designers such as Raymond Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes, and others, disseminated the style to the furthest corners of the country.⁹³

⁹² Poletti, 218.

⁹³ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), 235-40.

The Art Deco style evolved in a different direction in California than it did in Europe or on the East Coast. In part due to the state's geographical proximity to Mexico, architects in California relied more heavily on the pre-Columbian architecture of Meso-America than on Middle Eastern or African sources. Though not specifically Art Deco, Frank Lloyd Wright's "textile block houses" in Los Angeles and Pasadena display the strong influence of Meso-American architecture. Architects working in both Southern and Northern California, including Los Angeles-based Robert Stacy-Judd and San Francisco's Timothy Pflueger, mined Mayan and Aztec architecture for building forms and ornament. By the late 1920s, these various strands had coalesced into a regional school known as the "Mayan Deco" style. One of the best examples in San Francisco is the Western Furniture Mart at 1355 Market Street. Designed by Capitol Co. Architects, this building was completed in 1937 (**Figure 79**). In addition to its tower's pylon-like massing, the exterior is entirely clad in terra cotta embossed with Mayan and Aztec-inspired ornament.



Figure 79. Western Furniture Mart, by The Capitol Co., Architects, 1937.

Source: Page & Turnbull, Inc.

Mayan Deco buildings are characterized by an imaginative interpretation of Meso-American architectural forms, including stepped massing, corbelled entrances, tapered pylon-like tower elements, and ornamentation utilizing pre-Columbian pictographs. San Francisco architects who embraced the style include Miller & Pflueger, Wilbur Peugh, George Kelham, William Crim, and others. Miller & Pflueger employed the Mayan Deco style in several of their San Francisco projects, including the Medical-Dental Building at 450 Sutter Street (1929) and the New Mission Theater at 2550 Mission Street (1932). Other good examples of the style by other local architects include the Independent Order of Foresters' Hall (now the San Francisco Baha'i Center) at 170 Valencia Street (1932), by Harold Stoner; and James Lick Middle School at 1220 Noe Street (1932), by William H. Crim (**Figure 80**).

The Depression considerably slowed private construction in San Francisco. Nonetheless, the work funded by the PWA and other government agencies ensured that the Art Deco style would remain popular during the 1930s. The majority of the PWA-funded schools in San Francisco were designed in the Art Deco style, including Marina Junior High School at 3500 Fillmore Street (1936), by George Kelham; Visitacion Valley Elementary School at 55 Schwerin Street (1936-37), by G. Albert Lansburgh and Hyman & Appleton; Francis Scott Key Elementary School at 1530 43rd Avenue (1936-39), by Edward Eames, William Mooser, and Douglas D. Stone (**Figure 81**); Glen Park Elementary School at 151 Lippard Street (1937), by Bliss &

Fairweather and Lewis Hobart; and Lawton Elementary School at 1570 31st Avenue (1939), by Ciampi & Rogers and Dodge Reidy.

DRAFT



Figure 80. Detail of James Lick Middle School, by William H. Crim, Architect.



Figure 81. Entrance of Francis Scott Key Elementary School, by Edward Eames, William Mooser, and Douglas D. Stone.

Dutch and German Brick Expressionist Architecture

Expressionism was an architectural movement that emerged in northern Europe around 1910. Like the Art Deco style, Expressionism was an artistic movement that embraced architecture, fine arts, and the performing arts. Stemming from the early Modernist movement in Europe, Expressionism rejected historicism in favor of industrial materials like brick, steel, and glass; use of unusual geometrical and biomorphic forms; and the handling of commonplace industrial materials in interesting ways. Expressionist architecture, especially as it evolved in Germany and The Netherlands, became known for its use of different types of brickwork to create bold new forms and geometric patterns. Expressionism thrived between the two world wars. Indeed, many of the architects who worked in the style had fought in World War I, and this experience caused them to embrace a Socialist agenda that rejected toxic nationalism, militarism, and rightist political movements. The leading practitioners of Expressionist architecture in Europe included Erich Mendelsohn, Bruno Taut, Hans Poelzig, Fritz Höger, and Michel de Klerk.⁹⁴

One of the most important groups of Expressionist architects to emerge in Europe during the 1910s and 1920s were members of the Amsterdam School, including Hendrik Berlage, Michel de Klerk, Willem Dudok, and Piet Kramer. More so than any other regional school, the Amsterdam school became imbued with Socialist ideals, and they often employed their services for the public good, especially in designing high-quality social housing. One of the most famous examples of the style is “Het Schip” in Amsterdam. This brick and tile-clad apartment building, designed by Michel de Klerk and built 1917-20, embodies many characteristics of the style, including its geometric massing, curved corners, corbelled brick and tiled cladding, and a prominent vertical element in the shape of a central spire (Figure 82).⁹⁵

Expressionist architecture also thrived in Germany, including Hamburg and the Ruhr Valley. Evolving around the same time as the Bauhaus in Dessau, German architects who practiced the style known as “Brick Expressionism” did not eschew ornament,

⁹⁴ Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture – A Critical History*, F
⁹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 82. “Het Schip,” Amsterdam, by Michel de Klerk, Architect.
Source: Ben Austwick



Figure 83. Chilehaus, Hamburg, by Fritz Höger, 1924.
Source: SAHARA database

unlike their Bauhaus contemporaries. Indeed, German Expressionist architects were fond of using decorative brickwork – often clinker brick and tile – to create elaborate patterns on their buildings’ façades. They also embraced dramatic architectonic features, including angular or pointed elements, towers, and vertical bands of fenestration to express a sense of excitement in their work. Perhaps the best-known example of German Brick Expressionism is the Chilehaus office building in Hamburg, which was designed by Fritz Höger and built in 1924 (**Figure 83**). Probably the example of Brick Expressionism that most closely resembles Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is Haus Am Köllnischen Park, an office building constructed in Berlin in 1930-33 according to designs by Alfred Gottheiner (**Figure 84**).

German Expressionist architecture thrived in Germany until the early 1930s when the Nazi regime declared it “degenerate art” and suppressed the style, as well as all other avant-garde architecture in the nation. The style lived on for another few years in The Netherlands until Nazi Germany invaded and occupied the country in 1940. Various strains of the Amsterdam School and Dutch Expressionism survived into the 1950s, and the style continues to influence various Neo-Expressionist movements to the present day, including the work of American architect Frank Gehry.⁹⁶



Figure 84. Haus Am Köllnischen Park, Berlin, by Alfred Gottheiner, 1930-33.

Source: Wolfsraum, architectuul.com

Unlike the contemporary Art Deco style, Expressionism did not make it across the Atlantic to the United States before World War II, although individual architects – like Timothy Pflueger – were clearly inspired by the style. Aside from Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, there are no other major buildings in San Francisco (or the United States) known to have been designed in the style.

Public School Design in San Francisco: 1850–1930

During the first decades of the city’s existence, San Francisco’s public schools were housed in structures built for other purposes, including commercial buildings, churches, and even private dwellings. Post-Gold Rush San Francisco, especially after the Second Vigilance Committee of 1856, was dominated by conservative businessmen who disliked taxes, and infrastructure, including streets, sewers, parks, and schools, all suffered as a result. Nevertheless, a growing population of families in the 1860s increased the demand for public schools. By 1865, there were 37 public primary and secondary schools in San Francisco accommodating around 8,000 students.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 118-31.

⁹⁷ George Mullany, “New Goals of Public Education,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (1939), 5.

Early Public School Design in San Francisco: 1865–1890

Public school buildings erected in San Francisco during the latter half of the nineteenth century were usually of wood-frame construction, three or four stories high, and designed in a utilitarian vocabulary incorporating a modest amount of Italianate ornament. A rare and excellently preserved example of this type is the Irving M. Scott School at 1070 Tennessee Street in Dogpatch (**Figure 85**). Designed by Thomas J. Welsh, a longtime consulting architect to the San Francisco Board of Education, and built in 1895, the Irving M. Scott School (originally the Potrero School), which is City Landmark No. 138, is the only surviving Victorian-era public school in San Francisco. It is a wood-frame structure massed as a cube and it contains two full floor levels above a raised basement. The basement contains storage and the upper floors simply contain classrooms, a principal's office, and a central stair. The classrooms have oversized windows to admit as much natural light as possible. The windows are also operable and used to regulate indoor temperature. Like most Victorian schools in San Francisco, the Irving M. Scott School did not originally have a central heating system, and the bathrooms were located outside in small one-story structures linked to the main building by covered walkways.



Figure 85. Irving Scott School.

The Progressive Era: 1890–1906

The Progressive movement of the late nineteenth century began to change how Americans thought about education. Among other things, it led to the professionalization of teaching, the application of business/bureaucratic management methods to school administration, and the standardization of school design. School enrollments surged because of Progressive-era reforms, including the passage of child labor laws and compulsory education statutes in most northeastern, Midwestern, and western states. In response, most large American cities, including San Francisco, found themselves scrambling to build new school facilities to accommodate growing enrollments.⁹⁸



Figure 86. Rendering of Girls' High School.
San Francisco Chronicle (June 27, 1892)

⁹⁸ Dale Allen Gyure, *The Chicago Schoolhouse* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011).

During the 1890s, the San Francisco Board of Education launched a campaign to build several new public schools. Many of the city's Victorian schools were reportedly in "wretched" condition, with little or no heat or running water, sewage leaks, and other sanitary and safety issues. Fire was also an ever-present danger with older wood-frame buildings, as evidenced by the destruction by fire of Girls' High School on Scott Street.⁹⁹ The Board of Education decided to replace it with a new, state-of-the-art, three-story-over-basement masonry school building (**Figure 86**). Designed by Thomas J. Welsh, the new Girls' High School was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and built of brick. Its raised basement contained mechanical rooms, a janitor's room, storerooms, two classrooms, a science laboratory, and a recitation [examination] room. Meanwhile, the first floor contained a reception hall, principal's office, library, "museum," four classrooms, and lavatories. The second floor contained six classrooms and a "retiring room," and the third floor contained a large assembly room.¹⁰⁰ Girls' High School, which complied with all of the Progressive reformers' guidelines, was much more sophisticated than the contemporary Irving M. Scott School. The large number of special-purpose rooms at Girls' High School signaled the expanding mission of public schools, as they evolved from teaching basic skills to a small number of students toward providing instruction in a range of specialized subjects to a much larger segment of society, including vocational skills, arts and music, and the hard sciences.

Throughout the rest of the 1890s and into the first decade of the twentieth century, the San Francisco Board of Education replaced several of its older wood-frame "firetraps" with new masonry buildings similar to Girls' High School. Unfortunately, many of these new schools succumbed to the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. In the disaster, 29 of the city's 74 public school buildings, including Girls' High School, were destroyed. Many others were rendered temporarily unusable. The Board of Education hurriedly set up temporary schools in the refugee camps and quickly built 36 temporary buildings accommodating 8,000 children.¹⁰¹

Post-Earthquake School Construction in San Francisco: 1906–1915

In 1907, Mayor Edward R. Taylor established the Bureau of Architecture, and appointed Newton Tharp as the first City Architect. Just two months later, the Board of Education announced its plan to build 44 new schools, including 16 "Class A" buildings of reinforced concrete and 28 "Class B" schools of wood-frame construction. City Architect Tharp rejected brick construction, given how poorly it had fared in the earthquake. All of the new schools were to be modern in every way, with central heating and ventilation and indoor plumbing. Tharp prioritized four new high school buildings, including replacements for Girls' High School, Lowell High School, and Polytechnic High School, as well as the new Commercial High School. A good example of Tharp's post-quake schools is the former Newton J. Tharp Commercial High School at 170 Fell Street. Built in 1908 on the site of City Hall, this three-story-over-basement, reinforced concrete, brick-clad high school is designed in the Renaissance/Baroque style. It was moved to its current site next to the High School of Commerce in 1911. Lowell High School, now San Francisco City College's John Adams Campus, is another excellent example of a post-quake school. Built in 1911 at the northwest corner of Masonic Avenue and Hayes Street, the former Lowell High School is a typical American high school from the early twentieth century (**Figure 87**). Constructed of concrete with brick facing, the building has a 'U'-shaped plan enclosing a central courtyard. Its exterior is designed in a restrained Renaissance/Baroque vocabulary with a modest amount of applied ornament. It also has a separate, freestanding gymnasium.

⁹⁹ "Money Wanted for Schools and Jails," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1896), 15.

¹⁰⁰ "Girls' High School," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1892), 3.

¹⁰¹ City and County of San Francisco, *Municipal Reports: The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 1906* (San Francisco: 1907).



Figure 87. Former Lowell High School (now San Francisco City College's John Adams Campus).

Source: Google Streetview; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

Golden Age of School Construction: 1915 –1930

The election of James Rolph as mayor of San Francisco in 1911 signaled the beginning of an unprecedented 19-year period of infrastructure development in the city. Though registered as a Republican, Rolph was a progressive politician enjoying strong bipartisan support from many sectors, including unions and working-class San Franciscans. His many infrastructure projects included City Hall, Civic Auditorium, the Hetch Hetchy water system, the Panama Pacific International Exposition, the Municipal Railway, Twin Peaks Tunnel, and many roadbuilding projects. His road and transit improvements opened up the vast western and southern parts of the city to development. The rapid development of these same areas, including the Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond Districts on the West Side; and the Excelsior, Crocker-Amazon, Portola, and Outer Mission Districts in the southeastern part of town, led to demands to increase the number of public schools in these newly developing areas.

Not long after being elected, Mayor Rolph appointed John Reid, Jr. as the new City Architect. Reid immediately found himself confronted with the task of building several new schools and rebuilding many of the city's older schools. The Board of Education still operated 17 outdated Victorian-era schools and several "temporary" schools built in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake. With Reid's assistance, Mayor Rolph oversaw the drafting of two school construction bonds in 1917 and 1922 to fund the work. Desperate for better schools, San Franciscans eagerly approved the bonds, ushering in the "Golden Age of School Construction." City Architect Reid designed about half of the approximately 50 schools built in San Francisco between 1920 and 1930, with the newly formed Board of Education awarding the rest to various private architecture firms.¹⁰²

¹⁰² "Message of His Honor, Mayor Rolph," *The Municipal Record* (San Francisco: January 7, 1926), 4.

The schools built during Reid’s tenure were almost all designed in regional styles appropriate to California’s Mediterranean climate and landscape, including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance, and Mediterranean styles. In conformance with modern building and life/safety codes, all are built of “fireproof” concrete construction with durable stucco finishes and terra cotta and cement plaster trim. Some of the best examples include Mission High School (1925–27), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 255 (Figure 88); Commerce High School (1926), which is San Landmark No. 140; and Balboa High School (1928–34), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 205.

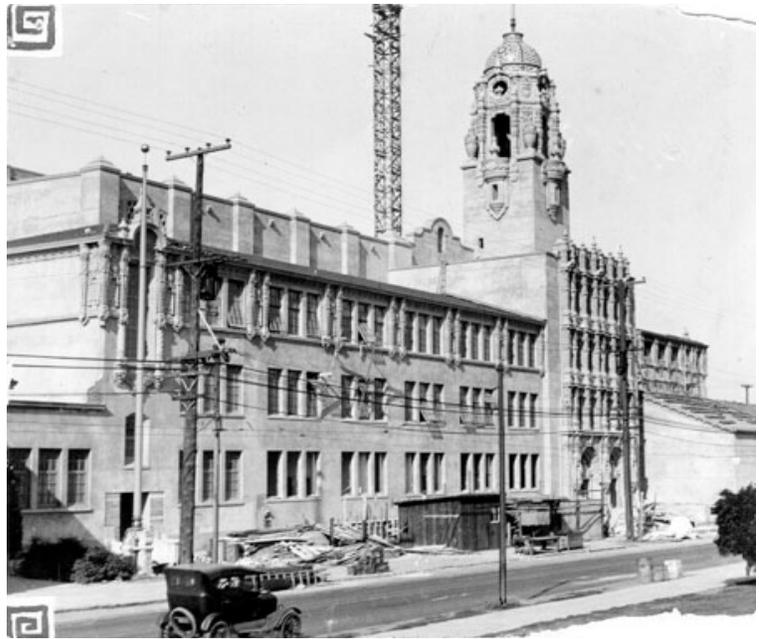


Figure 88. Mission High School, 1926.
Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, Image No. AAB-0389

Many of the new schools built by John Reid, Jr. were much larger than their Victorian and Edwardian predecessors. In contrast to the Victorian-era schools, or even the Edwardian-era schools, both of which typically consisted of a single block sited at the center of a paved lot, Reid’s schools were usually composed of multiple buildings, as well as adjoining ballfields and other sporting facilities. Since World War I, educational leaders had advocated for the incorporation of physical education into the public school curriculum. This required large sites to accommodate play yards, running tracks, and ballfields. Accommodating outdoor recreation was not as challenging in the peripheral neighborhoods where land was still available, but it was much more difficult to achieve in already built-up parts of the

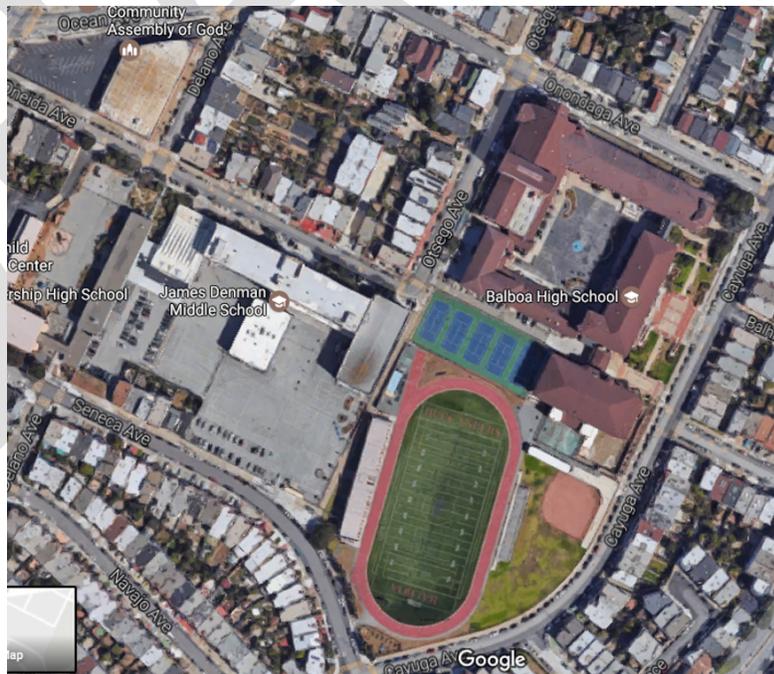


Figure 89. Aerial photograph of Balboa High School.
Source: Google Maps

city, giving administrators the choice of assembling the sites through condemnation proceedings—never a popular idea—or relocating the school to an outlying neighborhood where land was available.

Another factor in the growth in size of American public schools during the 1920s was the invention of the “comprehensive” school model, which combined academic, vocational, arts and music, sports, and home economics departments in one campus. As the complexity of public schools grew, City Architect John Reid Jr. and contract architects designed sprawling multi-unit complexes that typically included an “academic” building, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and a shop/industrial arts building. Typically linked together in an “h,” “L,” “U,” or “O”-shaped plan, each component is expressed on its exterior as a separate building, even though they are all linked together by internal corridors. Balboa High School, the first high school built in the Outer Mission District, occupies approximately five city blocks. It has an O-plan with academic wings extending along Onondaga and Cayuga Avenues; an auditorium on Otsego Avenue; and a gymnasium and sports fields occupying a swath of land bounded by Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Otsego Avenues (**Figure 89**). One of the largest school campuses in San Francisco, it is even larger when combined with the adjoining James Denman Middle School campus on Oneida Avenue.

By the end of the 1920s, San Francisco, which had once been known for having one of the worst public school systems in the nation, now had what many considered to be the best. In 1923, St. Louis architect William B. Ittner praised San Francisco’s commitment to building not only functional but beautiful schools: “The creation of an environment, healthful and beautiful, has been the architectural keynote and the school buildings are a sincere expression of the joy, health and beauty that should belong to our school children.”¹⁰³

Although he did not take a salary, City Architect John Reid, Jr. received a commission equal to 6 percent of the construction costs of each completed building. Though there was no evidence of any wrongdoing, Reid was also Mayor Rolph’s brother-in-law, and following an incident, he resigned his post in 1927 to quash accusations of nepotism. Reid’s resignation left a void at the office of the City Architect. His replacement, Charles Sawyer, did not design many new civic buildings, limiting his role to awarding commissions to private firms. The Stock Market Crash two years later also dealt a temporary blow to San Francisco’s school construction campaign. Ten days after the crash, Board of Education President Daniel C. Murphy issued a statement calling into question San Francisco’s continued ability to build “the fine type of schools” that the city had grown accustomed to during the 1910s and 1920s.¹⁰⁴ Although the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architects argued that the City should continue “providing school buildings of enduring quality and design,” the primary question on everyone’s mind



Figure 90. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.

¹⁰³ Don Andreini, “Civic Architecture: San Francisco’s Public Schools,” *Heritage Newsletter*, XVI: 3 (September 1988), 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

was where the money would come from.

Nonetheless, several schools that had already been designed and funded were built in the first year or two after the Crash, including Miller & Pflueger's Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (now Roosevelt Middle School), which was built in 1930 (**Figure 90**). Roosevelt, designed in a fusion of the Art Deco and German and Dutch Brick Expression styles, is universally recognized as one of San Francisco's best-designed public schools. Even though it was not a New Deal project, in terms of its architectural quality and advanced styling, it foreshadowed the continuation of the Golden Age of San Francisco School Construction into the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal public works programs picked up the mantle.

DRAFT

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the case report provides an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity statement, statement of significance, period of significance, inventory of character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

Criteria for Eligibility

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justifications for *why* the resource is important.

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

Significant Architecture

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type (public school), period (1920s), method of construction (concrete, brick, and tile), and style (Brick Expressionism). Indeed, Roosevelt is an exceedingly rare example of a style that was essentially unknown in the United States until after World War II. Features of the building that embody the distinctive traits of German and Dutch Brick Expressionist architecture include the school's polychromatic clinker brick and terra cotta tile cladding, corbelled brickwork laid in geometrical zig-zag and diaper patterns, the basket-weave balustrade, and the use of the building's overall form – particularly the tower and the gymnasium roof – to achieve an emotional, almost Gothic, effect. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School shows the influence of several specific buildings, including Fritz Höger's Reemtsma Cigarette Factory in Hamburg (1923), the Hoechts Administration Building in Frankfurt by Peter Behrens (1924), Wilhelm Marx Haus in Düsseldorf by Wilhelm Kreis (1922-24), and especially Haus Am Köllnischen Park in Berlin by Alfred Gottheiner (1933-33). It appears that Pflueger left no written account of why he chose the Brick Expressionist style for Roosevelt, especially since he had not traveled to Germany or The Netherlands, but it is likely that he became familiar with these buildings after seeing them published in architectural journals. As a child of German immigrants, it is not surprising that Pflueger may have been drawn to the contemporary architecture of his ancestral homeland, but it is curious that he never used the style again.

As a design of Timothy Pflueger (1892–1946), Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is significant as an important work of one of San Francisco's top architects. Pflueger is perhaps best known for his work in the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, but he was well acquainted with other styles by virtue of his extensive library containing hundreds of monographs on architecture and dozens of American and European architectural journals. By the time his firm designed Roosevelt, Pflueger had transitioned from a more rigorously historicist and regionalist approach that had characterized much of his early work, toward

a more experimental vocabulary influenced by both contemporary European modernism and the indigenous architecture of pre-conquest Mexico and Central America. Roosevelt is the only building designed by Pflueger in the Brick Expressionist style. Indeed, it is the only building designed in the style in San Francisco and possibly the only major example of the style in the United States. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is one of four public schools – all in San Francisco –designed by Pflueger. In addition to Roosevelt, they include Alamo Elementary School (1926), George Washington High School (1935-40), and Abraham Lincoln High School (1940). One of Pflueger’s early works, Alamo Elementary was originally designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, but it was later stripped. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln High Schools, which are two of his later projects, are both designed in the Streamline Moderne style and more modernist in character than Roosevelt, which remains unique among Pflueger’s *oeuvre*.

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School embodies high artistic values by virtue not only of Pflueger’s design but also its three New Deal murals sponsored by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). Painted four years after the school was completed, the murals include two by Horatio Nelson Poole in the main lobby (*Land* and *Harvest*) and one above the entrance to the auditorium on the second floor level by George Nelson Walker (*Education*). Unlike many other New Deal-era art projects in San Francisco, most of which were frescoes, the murals at Roosevelt are oil painted on canvas, reflecting the fact that they were installed several years after the school was built and that they were not an integral part of the building’s original design. *Land* and *Harvest* depict time-honored themes of family, labor, and landscape and *Education* celebrates the role of the public school in American life.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is 1930-35, beginning with the completion of the school building and concluding with the completion of the last New Deal mural.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity used by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and Article 10 of the Planning Code are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. In summary, though Theodore Roosevelt Middle School has undergone several alterations, chiefly window replacement and various interior upgrades to the classrooms, corridors, etcetera, the building retains ample integrity to convey its associations with its original design and period of significance.

Location:

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School retains the aspect of location because it has not been moved.

Design:

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School retains the aspect of design because it has kept its original form and massing, fenestration pattern, and Brick Expressionist ornament. Within the interior, the school retains its original floorplan and features in the main entrance lobby, corridors and stairs, administrative office suite, auditorium, and gymnasium. In contrast, the library, cafeteria, and many of the classrooms have been refinished. However, these spaces were all utilitarian to begin with and contained no known significant features.

Materials:

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School retains the aspect of materials because it still has nearly all of its original building materials, including its polychrome clinker brick and tile exterior cladding, copper window accents, and cast stone and terra cotta trim. The only original materials that have been removed include the steel windows, which were replaced in-kind with compatible metal windows in recent years. In addition, aside from the main entrance, which retains its original wood doors, most of the original exterior doors have been replaced with non-historic metal counterparts. Within the interior, most of the original materials remain, particularly in the public and semi-public areas, including the main lobby, corridors and stairs, administrative office suite, and the majestic auditorium, which retains its original lath and plaster walls, Art Deco light fixtures, and Heywood-Wakefield seating.

Workmanship:

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School retains the aspect of workmanship because the building's exterior and much of its original interior craft-based materials, including – on the exterior – the corbelled brickwork, tiled spandrel panels, and copper and terra cotta trim, have been kept and maintained. Within the interior, the building retains its original tile and terrazzo finishes in the primary public areas, as well as the lath and plaster wall finishes and Art Deco light fixtures in the auditorium. Roosevelt also retains all three of its New Deal murals, which appear to be in good condition.

Setting

The one aspect of integrity that has changed the most at Theodore Roosevelt Middle School is its setting. After the building was completed in 1930, the site has been incrementally expanded to increase the size of the play yard, eventually resulting in the removal of eight adjoining dwellings along Palm Avenue. In addition, two portable “bungalows” were relocated from the northeast to the southeast corner of the property in 1959. However, the character of the play yard as a simple asphalt-covered area has not changed. Furthermore, none of the changes to the site and its surroundings have detrimentally affected views of the building from public rights-of-way along Arguello and Geary Boulevards and Palm Avenue.

Feeling:

Though Theodore Roosevelt Middle School has been periodically upgraded and renovated over the years, it retains the aspect of feeling because it continues to look largely as it did when it was completed almost 90 years ago. Its unique Brick Expressionist styling and intact New Deal murals provide a window into a lost world in which public works were considered to be one of the most important contributions that a government could make to its citizens. Aesthetically, both the building's architecture and its three murals evoke the feeling of the 1920s and 1930s, a time of transition from a more traditional Beaux-Arts sensibility toward a more modern and egalitarian outlook.

Association:

Theodore Roosevelt Middle School retains the aspect of association because it essentially looks the same as it did when it was built and, as a result, it continues to convey the architectural, artistic, and social values behind its design and construction that make it significant.

Article 10 Requirements Section 1004 (b)

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

The site proposed for Landmark status encompasses the entirety of Assessor Parcel Number 1061/049, a 94,468-square-foot parcel bounded by Arguello Boulevard to the west, Palm Avenue to the east, a pair of residential properties to the north, and three commercial properties to the south.

Character-defining Features

Any property proposed for Landmark status under Article 10 of the Planning Code requires an inventory of all character-defining features. This is necessary so that the property owner, Planning staff, and the public know what features and materials (elements) should be preserved to protect the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The character-defining exterior features of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School include all exterior elevations, including but not limited to: form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials. In the case of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, its specific character-defining features are:

- The school's overall height, massing, and footprint.
- The publicly visible portions of the school's four exterior façades, including their corbelled brick and tile spandrel cladding; and copper, cast stone, and terra cotta trim;
- The arched primary entrance at 490 Arguello Boulevard, including the oak doors and transom;
- The tower, including its corbelled brick exterior cladding and cast concrete screens;
- Terra cotta balustrades on the roof of the academic building;
- Grid-like fenestration pattern and trim (though not the window sashes themselves), including copper colonnettes, copper spandrel panels (gymnasium only) and terra cotta sills and lintels;
- The flat roofs of the academic building and the auditorium wing and the gambrel roof of the gymnasium wing.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining exterior features include all post-1935 alterations, including the following features:

- All window sashes;
- All exterior doors except for the original doors in the main entrance at 490 Arguello Boulevard;
- Metal signage to the left of the main entrance at 490 Arguello Boulevard;
- Infilled window openings on the east façade of the gymnasium wing;
- Elevator shaft at the intersection of the academic building and the gymnasium wing on the east side of the building;
- Concrete canopy/*porte cochères* on the east façade;
- Changes to first-floor level fenestration on the east façade of the academic building corresponding to the cafeteria;
- Changes to basement-level fenestration on the east façade of the auditorium wing;
- Enclosed fire exits on the north façade of the auditorium wing.

The character-defining spaces and features of the interior of Theodore Roosevelt Middle School include:

- Layout, design and materials of the following spaces: main entrance lobby, corridor near the administrative offices, auditorium, auditorium balcony, stairs, and gymnasium;

- All three surviving New Deal-era murals, including those in the main entrance lobby and second floor level.
- All surviving doors, hardware, and light fixtures in the main entrance lobby, corridor near the administrative offices, auditorium, and auditorium balcony.
- Tile wainscoting in corridors and stairs.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining interior features include all spaces affected by post-1935 alterations, including all bathrooms, all classrooms, and all utilitarian back-of-house spaces in the basement.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Theodore Roosevelt Middle School

Popular Name: Roosevelt Middle School

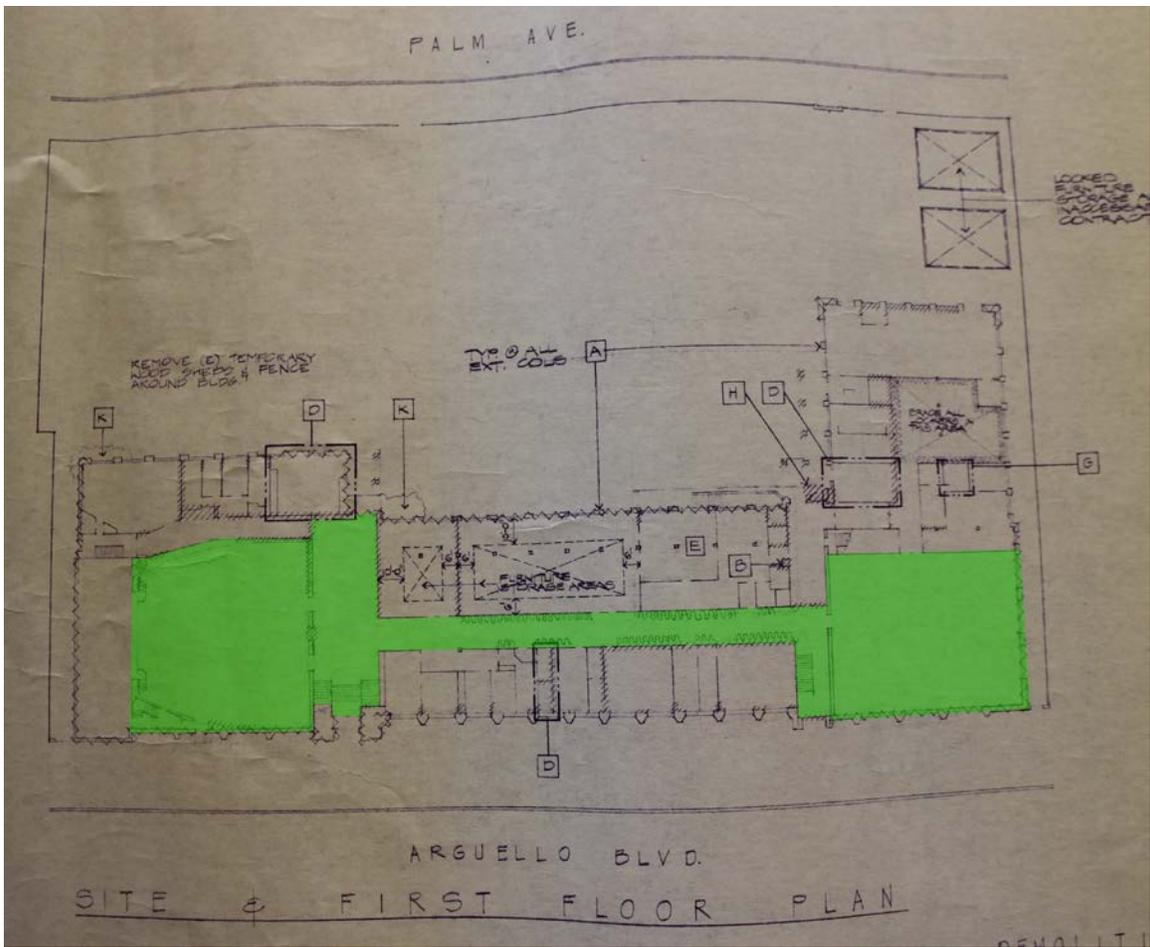
Address: 460 Arguello Boulevard

Block and Lot: 1061/049

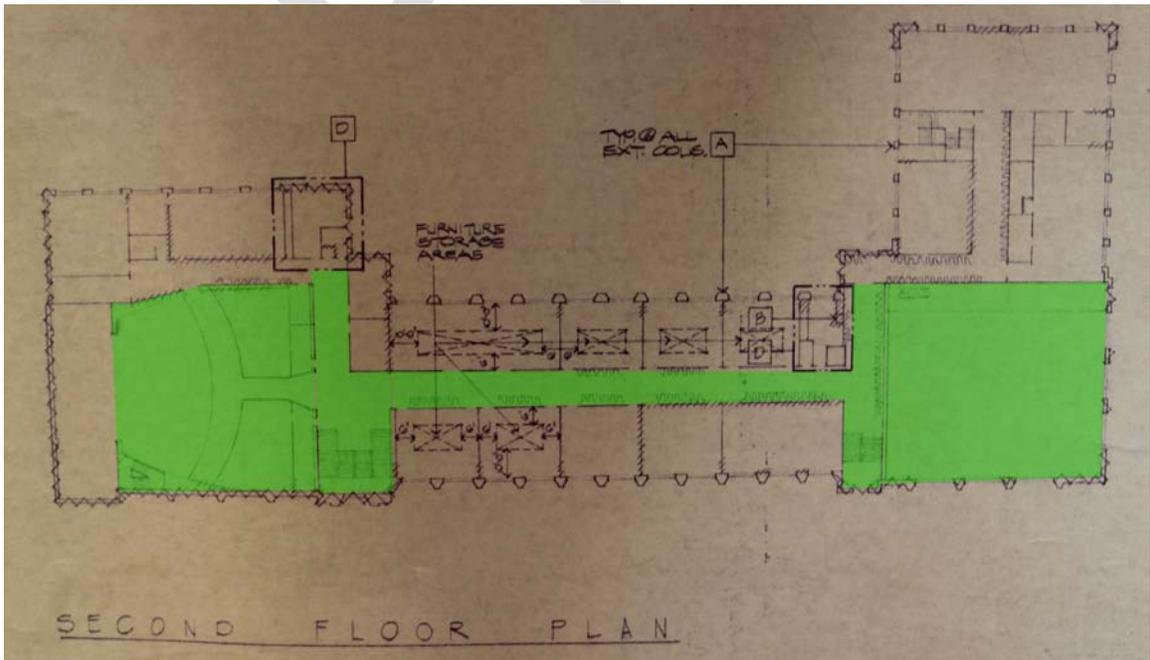
Owner: San Francisco Unified School District

Current Use: Public School

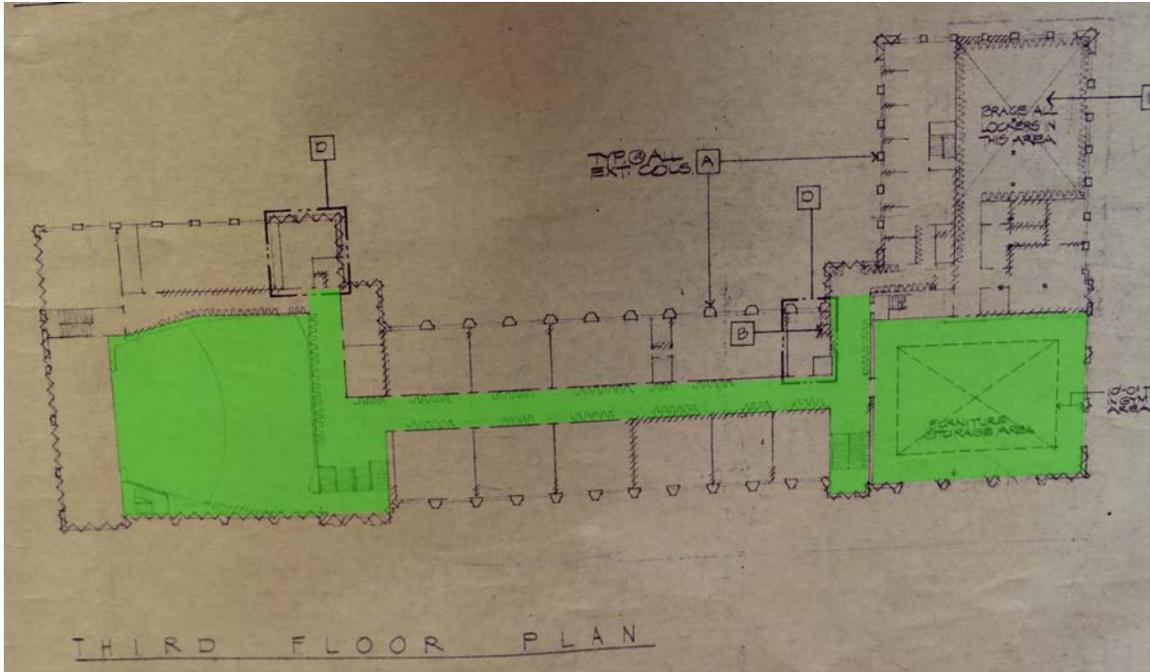
Zoning: P – Public; 40-X height and bulk



First floor interior character defining features are shaded.



Second floor interior character defining features are shaded.



Third floor interior character defining features are shaded.

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LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



George Washington High School

600 32nd Avenue

October 18, 2017

City and County of San Francisco
Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

Planning Department
John Rahaim, Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Article 10 Landmark nomination for George Washington High School was made possible by several individuals and organizations. First, Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, the authors of this nomination, would like to acknowledge former District 1 Supervisor Eric Mar, who originally suggested the nomination of George Washington High School. We would also like to acknowledge the San Francisco Historic Preservation Fund Committee (HPFC), which funded the nomination as part of a larger project to document the legacy of the New Deal in San Francisco. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Cherny, a historian and a member of the HPFC, whose interest in the New Deal in San Francisco made this entire project possible. Dr. Cherny serves as a technical advisor on this project and his suggested revisions have been very helpful. Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Gray Brechin, the foremost scholar of the New Deal in the United States and the creator of the Living New Deal project.

Cover: George Washington High School, August 2016, by Amanda Law

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

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June 30, 2017

George Washington High School

600 32nd Avenue

Built: 1935, 1936, 1940, 1952, 1974

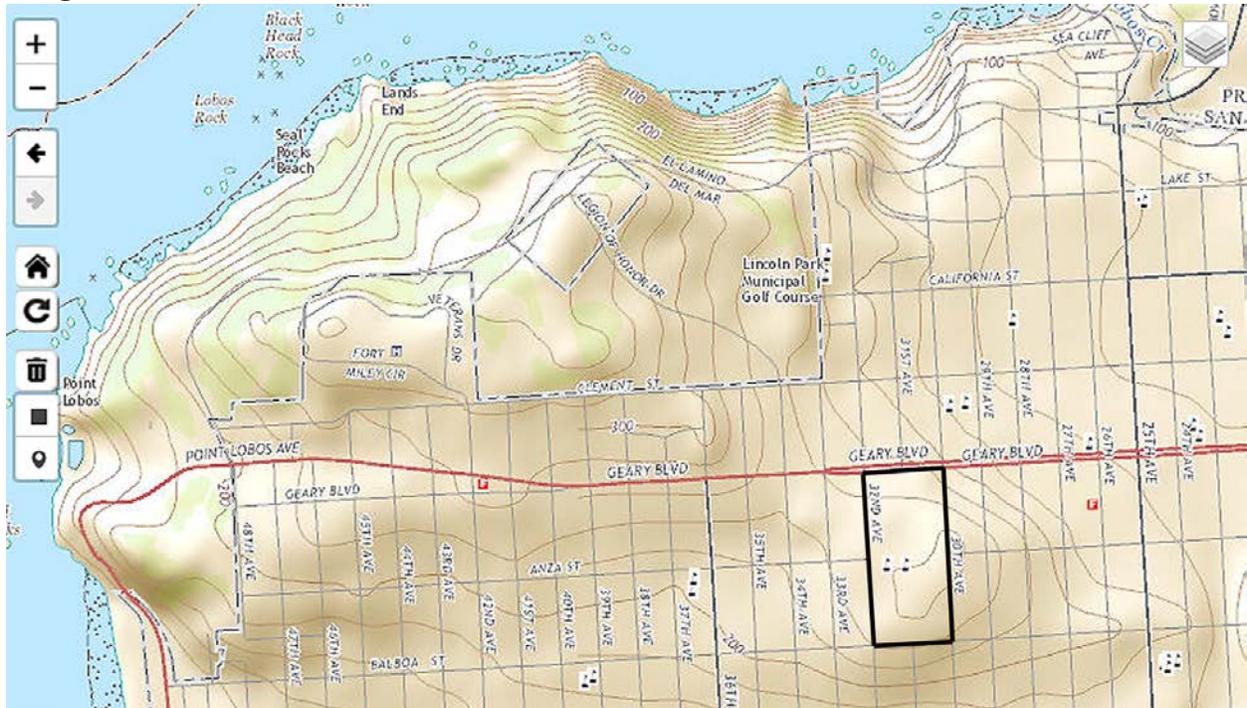
**Architects: Miller & Pflueger, Timothy L. Pflueger & Associates,
Milton Pflueger**

OVERVIEW

George Washington High School is eligible for designation as a San Francisco City Landmark as a well-preserved New Deal-era high school designed in the Streamline Moderne style and built under the auspices of the federal Public Works Administration (PWA). Its primary designer, architect Timothy Pflueger, is one of the most talented and influential architects to work in San Francisco during the first half of the twentieth century. A master of the Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles, Pflueger's work is unparalleled in Northern California. George Washington High School was constructed in three major campaigns, with the academic building and the shop building completed first in 1935–1936, the auditorium and gymnasium finished next in 1940, and the music room addition (designed by Timothy's brother, Milton) built in 1952. Sited atop a prominent rise in the Outer Richmond District, George Washington High School (GWHS) is visible from most of the surrounding neighborhood and beyond. The four-square-block campus, which enjoys views of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Marin Headlands, and downtown San Francisco, is complemented by vast sports fields, a football stadium, landscaping, an esplanade, and various means of internal circulation designed to tie the hilly site together. GWHS is especially significant for its New Deal-sponsored public arts program, which includes murals by Victor Arnautoff, Lucien Labaudt, Ralph Stackpole, Gordon Langdon, and Nelson Poole; a massive frieze by sculptor Sargent Johnson; and bas-relief portraits by Robert Howard. GWHS has undergone very few major changes since it first opened 80 years ago – a testament both to its solid construction and timeless aesthetic that continues to resonate with students and alumni today.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context



**Figure 1. USGS Map showing location of George Washington High School.
Source: Google Maps; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck**

GWHS occupies a 691,811-sf parcel bounded by Geary Boulevard to the north, 32nd Avenue to the west, Balboa Street to the south, and 30th Avenue to the east, in San Francisco's Outer Richmond District (**Figure 1**). The Outer Richmond District was first platted in 1868 as part of the Outside Lands Ordinance, which extended the city's street grid westward from Divisadero Street to the Pacific Ocean. GWHS's massive parcel was created in 1935, a culmination of a decade's worth of property assemblage by the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). The campus is located atop a prominent rise, affording dramatic views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the Marin Headlands to the north, Golden Gate Park and San Bruno Mountain to the south, and the skyline of downtown San Francisco to the east.

The neighborhood surrounding GWHS is characterized by a mixture of pre-and post-World War II residential development. With the exception of a two-story Craftsman-style dwelling at 538-40 30th Avenue, which was built in 1909, the area surrounding the campus reflects a pattern of speculative development present throughout most of the Outer Richmond District: rows and clusters of largely identical, stucco-clad, single-family dwellings built on 25-foot-wide lots, creating nearly unbroken street walls. The surrounding area was developed between 1920 and 1950, and most of the houses are designed in architectural styles popular during these decades, including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean, French Provincial, Tudor Revival, and Streamline Moderne.

With the exception of the 1909 dwelling mentioned above, the oldest houses near GWHS include a row of five Mediterranean-style rowhouses on the north side of Balboa Street, just east of 32nd Avenue (**Figure 2**). Non-descript in appearance, this row, which was built in 1920, is the only part of the four-block “superblock” excluded from the campus when SFUSD was assembling the site. Some higher-quality speculative housing in the immediate vicinity of GWHS includes a row of five Storybook Period Revival rowhouses on the west side of 32nd Avenue, just south of Anza Street. Constructed in 1935–36, these dwellings are designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, and French Provincial Storybook styles (**Figure 3**). Houses constructed during and after World War II typically have less architectural detailing than those built in the 1920s or early 1930s. Reasons include the introduction of Federal Housing Authority (FHA) mortgages in the late 1930s and the adoption of mass-production techniques and pre-fabricated industrial materials during the war. Nine houses built on the east side of 30th Avenue in 1941 just north of Anza Street and four flats built in 1947 on the west side of 32nd Avenue just south of Anza Street illustrate this shift toward utilitarianism (**Figure 4**).

The area surrounding GWHS was built-out in the decade following World War II. Most 1950s-era construction consisted of infill dwellings built on long-vacant corner lots or large apartment buildings built on the sites of older buildings demolished along Geary Boulevard and its intersecting avenues. On the west side of 32nd Avenue, just south of Geary Boulevard, is a row of four three-story, “Contractor Modern” buildings constructed between 1958 and 1960. The term Contractor Modern refers to post-war buildings that superficially resemble modernist buildings, but only through the omission of ornament as a cost savings method and the use of inexpensive mass-produced building materials. Contractor Modern buildings are also typically designed by either contractors or engineers. One of the largest Contractor Modern-style buildings near GWHS is a five-story apartment building at 524 30th Avenue that was built in 1971 (**Figure 5**).



Figure 2. Mediterranean-style rowhouses at the northeast corner of 32nd Avenue and Balboa Street, constructed 1920; view toward northeast.



Figure 3. Period Revival rowhouses at 639 to 651 32nd Avenue, constructed 1935–36; view toward southwest.



Figure 4. Minimal Traditional-style rowhouses on east side of 30th Avenue, north of Anza Street, constructed 1941; view toward northeast.



Figure 5. Contractor Modern apartment building at 524 30th Avenue, constructed 1971; view toward southeast.

Geary Boulevard, which forms the northern boundary of the GWHS campus, is the Outer Richmond District's main commercial and transit thoroughfare, with six lanes of traffic separated by a narrow median. GWHS marks the transition between the commercial part of Geary Boulevard east of 30th Avenue and the more heavily residential part to the west. Indeed, the buildings on the north side of Geary Boulevard opposite GWHS are uniformly residential, including a two-story, First Bay Region Tradition, single-family dwelling at 6736 Geary Boulevard (built 1912); a two-story Craftsman rowhouse at 6740 Geary Boulevard (built 1921); and several Contractor Modern apartment buildings built between 1961 and 1982 on the western part of the block (**Figure 6**). Several non-residential buildings are also located within the vicinity of GWHS. The most notable example is Presidio Middle School. Located at the northeast corner of 30th Avenue and Geary Boulevard, this reinforced concrete, Romanesque Revival-style school was built in 1930 (**Figure 7**). Across the street, at the southeast corner of 30th Avenue and Geary Boulevard, is the Ta Kioh Buddhist Temple (formerly First United Lutheran Church), built in 1949.



Figure 6. Post-World War II-era apartment buildings along north side of Geary Boulevard; view toward northwest.



Figure 7. Presidio Middle School auditorium; view toward southeast.

General Description

George Washington High School is a three-story, reinforced-concrete educational building. It is clad in painted concrete, terra cotta, and cast stone, and capped by a flat roof punctuated by pyramidal skylights. It is designed in the Streamline Moderne style with influences of the International and Hollywood Regency styles. All of the building's windows were originally steel, though SFUSD has replaced most of them with compatible aluminum counterparts. The doors were also originally steel, and most of them have been replaced with compatible aluminum counterparts. Designed by Miller & Pflueger according to a master plan that could be incrementally realized as funding became available, the GWHS campus was indeed built over a period of 17 years in multiple phases. The academic building was completed first in 1935, followed less than a year later by the shop building in 1936. The auditorium and gymnasium were both completed in 1940 and the music room addition was built in 1952. The New Deal murals were all in place by 1936 and Dewey Crumpler's Response murals were painted in 1974.

The complex is massive and quite complicated and to ease the reader's comprehension of the site we have included a cropped site plan that shows the location of each major part of the building (**Figure 8**). As shown on the site plan, GWHS is divided into five sections that together form an irregular "h"-shaped footprint. The majority of the complex occupies a high knoll at the center of the property, which aligns with Anza Street. This siting strategy serves to provide dramatic views and block onshore winds. A secondary axis running along 32nd Avenue, including the majority of the academic building and the shop building, are also sited to block onshore winds from affecting the football field and play yards clustered in the lower, northeastern part of the campus (**Figure 9**). A large running track and soccer field occupy the southern third of the property, which was not developed until the late 1950s – the final part of the campus to be developed.

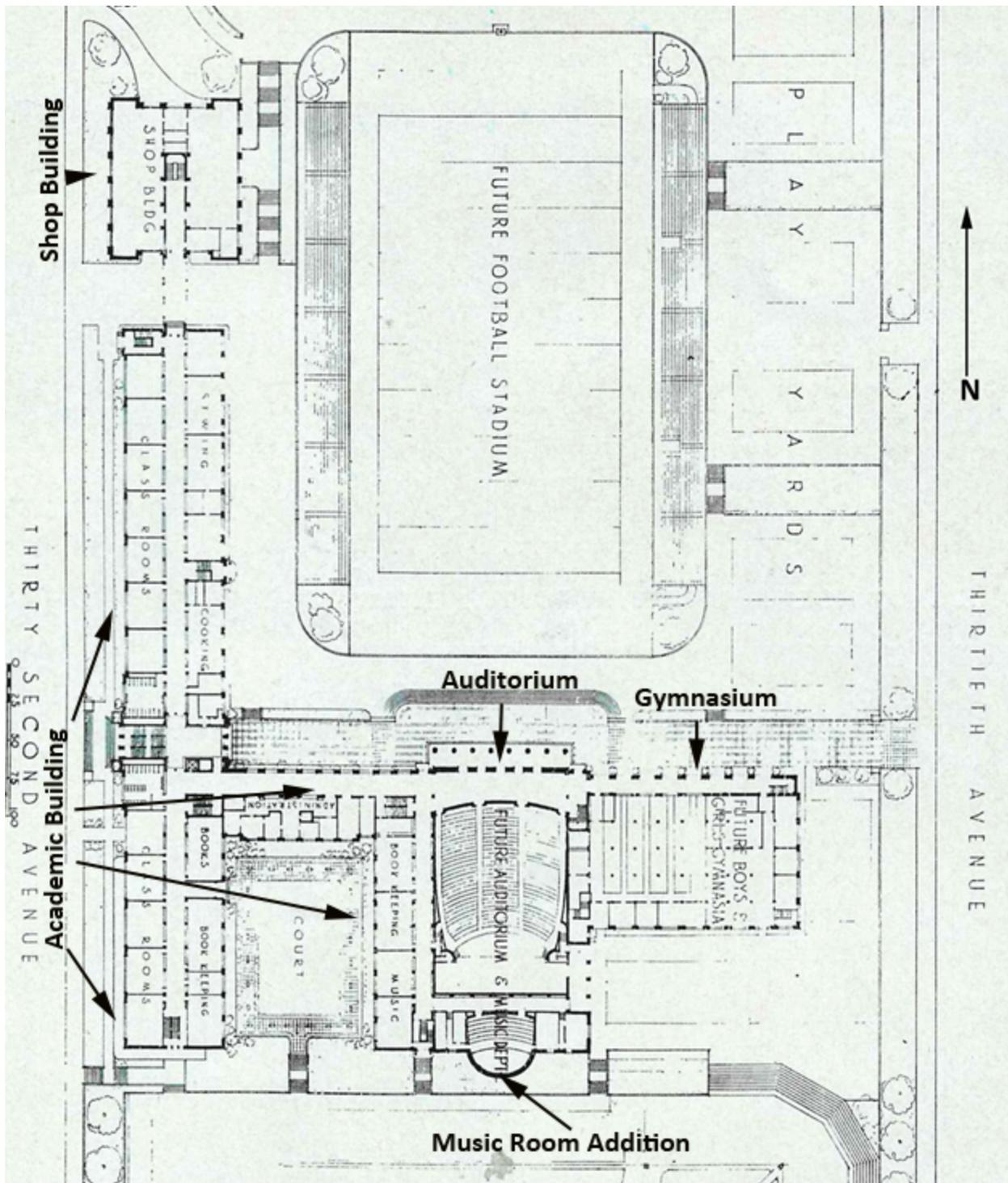


Figure 8. George Washington High School master plan by Miller & Pflueger, 1935.
 Source: *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1936)

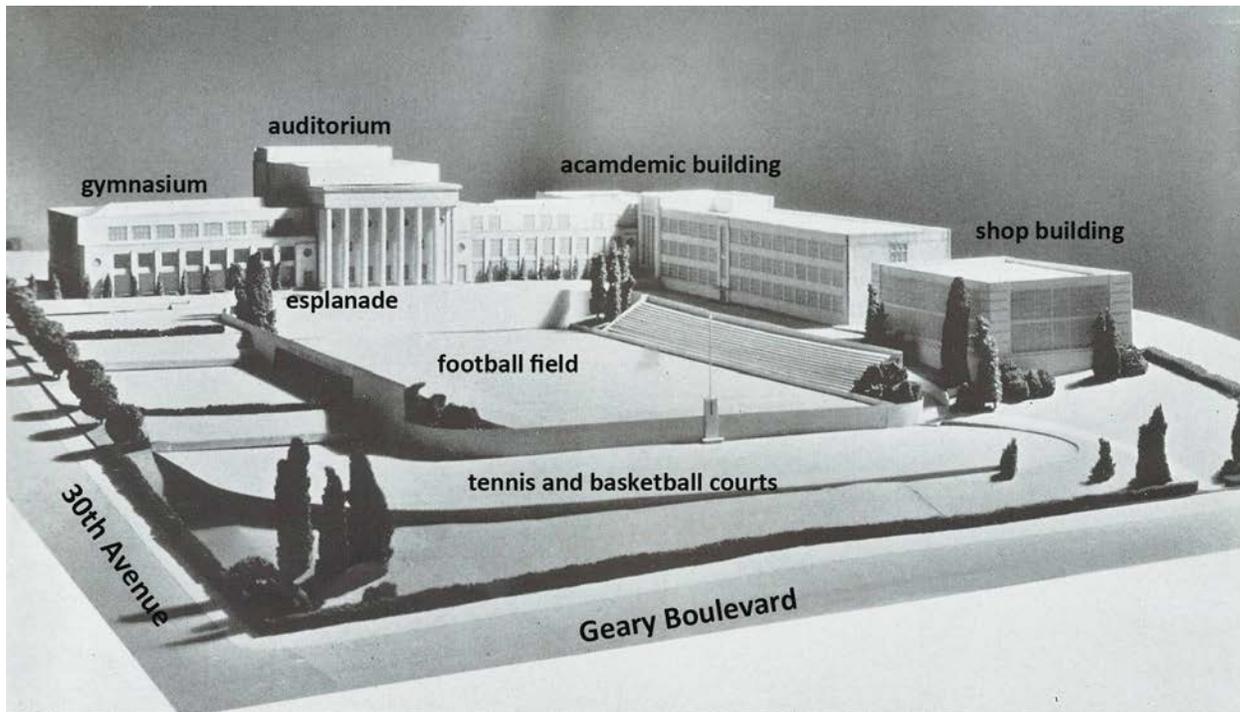


Figure 9. Model of George Washington High School showing each of the major components (note, music room addition is behind the auditorium).

Source: *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1936)

The academic building, the oldest part of the GWHS complex, is its spiritual heart. Organized around an L-shaped, double-loaded corridor, the academic building contains dozens of classrooms and several special-use/ceremonial areas, including the main lobby, the administrative office suite, the library, and the cafeteria. The main lobby, which has terrazzo flooring and Art Deco light fixtures, contains a bronze statue of George Washington and Victor Arnautoff's *Life of George Washington*, one of the best-known New Deal murals in San Francisco. The administrative office suite and the adjoining corridor contains Memorial Clock and other class gifts, display cases, and the "Response" murals by Dewey Crumpler. The library contains three New Deal-era murals by Lucien Labaudt, Ralph Stackpole, and Gordon Langdon. The rest of the academic building's interior is finished in durable and utilitarian materials, including tiled wainscoting, steel lockers, and lath-and-plaster walls and ceilings.¹ The shop building, the auditorium, and the gymnasium are all open-plan buildings composed of double-height volumes. With the exception of the auditorium, which has lath-and-plaster wall finishes, these three buildings are all finished in utilitarian and industrially produced materials. The music room addition, built long after the rest of the complex, is a simple two-level structure containing a small rehearsal space and several utilitarian classrooms and storage areas in the basement. It is also finished in utilitarian materials and contains no public art.

¹ Charles H. Sawyer, "The George Washington High School," *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1936), 16.

Each major component of GWHS is described in the order that it was constructed, beginning with the academic building and concluding with the music room addition. Additional site features are also described, including the football field and bleachers, running track, tennis and basketball courts, esplanade, and several later outbuildings and modular classrooms.

Academic Building

Completed in December 1935, the academic building has an h-shaped footprint consisting of a long horizontal bar oriented parallel to 32nd Avenue and two subsidiary wings at the center of the campus (**Figure 10**). The main classroom wing runs north-south along 32nd Avenue. Rising three stories, this part of the academic building is visible from many blocks away along Anza Street. Just south of the main entrance, which is on axis with Anza Street, the academic building branches out toward the east as an intersecting wing containing GWHS's administrative office suite at the first floor level. Meanwhile, the classroom wing continues south toward the running track. At the east end of the administrative wing is a secondary classroom wing that extends south toward the running track, forming the right leg of the "h." This wing adjoins the auditorium and the music room addition to the east and between it and the main classroom wing is a landscaped courtyard. Like the rest of the GWHS complex, the academic building is made of painted concrete, with terra cotta, cement plaster, and cast stone accents. The majority of the original steel windows have been replaced with aluminum counterparts in the last decade or so. Compatible with the building's original design, the replacement windows include fixed and operable awning sashes. Most of the paneled steel doors have also been replaced with aluminum counterparts that largely match the originals. The academic building has a flat roof concealed behind a raised parapet. The roof is punctuated by pyramidal skylights that illuminate the corridors on the third floor level as well as the stairwells.

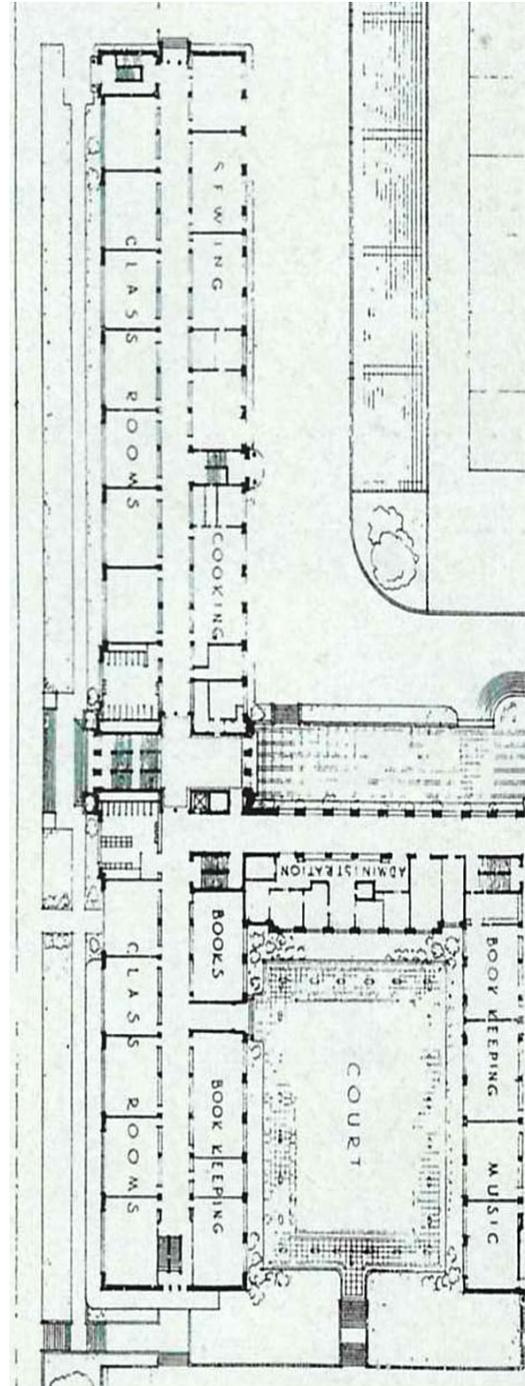


Figure 10. Academic building; north is up.
Source: *Architect and Engineer*
(April 1936)

Academic Building: West (Primary) Façade

The primary façade of the academic building faces west toward 32nd Avenue (**Figure 11**). It is 487 feet long and consists of 16 bays. Constructed of concrete, the exterior columns are placed in order to permit a largely unbroken expanse of glass in the classrooms. The spandrels were made with monolithic pours, ensuring a continuous expanse of concrete without expansion joints. The primary entrance is marked by a large pavilion located on axis with Anza Street whose tower-like parapet extends above the roofline of the adjoining classroom wings. Due to the sloping site, the basement is concealed from view north of the main entrance pavilion and fully exposed south of it.



Figure 11. Primary façade of academic building; view toward southeast.



Figure 12. Primary façade, first and second bay; view toward east.



Figure 13. Frieze and cornice detail; view toward east.

The first (left) bay of the academic building projects outward from the west façade, forming a narrow entrance pavilion (**Figure 12**). At the base of this pavilion is a pair of glazed aluminum doors sheltered beneath a curved concrete canopy supported by round columns. Above the canopy, which is capped by metal pipe railings, is a vertical column of 12 two-lite windows and three single-lite windows, all framed with terra cotta moldings. The pavilion terminates with a cement plaster stringcourse, a blank frieze, and a scalloped recessed molding that is painted red and that runs around the entire building (**Figure 13**). Above the molding is the parapet, which is capped by terra cotta coping.

The second through the eighth bays of the primary façade are essentially identical, with each bay containing a window containing 24 lites, including fixed and operable awning sashes, at each floor level. The window units are separated by wide terra



Figure 14. Primary façade, detail of piers, molding, and "tree and leaf" bas-relief ornament; view toward northeast.

cotta piers embellished with dentil moldings at the first floor level and “reeded” moldings at the second and third floor levels (**Figure 14**). Each floor level is separated by continuous concrete spandrels ornamented with cement plaster “tree and leaf” motifs. These motifs align with the previously described terra cotta piers. The basement is above ground at the fifth through the eighth bays. It is blank with the exception of a hollow-core metal door in the eighth bay.



Figure 15. Primary façade, ninth through eleventh bays; view toward east.

The ninth through the eleventh bays of the west façade correspond to the tower-like entrance pavilion on axis with Anza Street (**Figure 15**). At the center of the entrance pavilion, bracketing the main entrance, are two massive concrete piers that rise from the basement to the roof. The bay to the left of the main entrance contains a multi-lite steel window at the basement level and a 15-lite window on floors one through three. The primary entrance is accessed by a broad cement stair rising. The entrance, which is clad in cast stone paneling with square piers separating the doors, features three pairs of glazed, multi-panel aluminum doors. The door in the right entrance is

slightly different; it contains a single-leaf door to the left and a fixed sidelight to the right. Above each door is a terra cotta panel containing a bas-relief bust with incised inscriptions identifying each figure, including: “Invention” (Thomas Edison), “Statesmanship,” (George Washington), and “Literature” (Walt Whitman). The bas-relief panels were executed from molds made by sculptor Robert Howard in 1935-36 (**Figure 16**). The entrance is sheltered beneath a curved copper canopy with original extruded metal lettering reading: “George Washington High School.”



Figure 16. Canopy and bas-relief panels above main entrance.

Above the main entrance, the center bay of the entrance pavilion includes three eight-lite windows at each floor level. Nine concrete bas-relief cartouches within the spandrel panels illustrate various academic and vocational themes, including music, art, theater, literature, engineering, woodworking, chemistry, science, and electricity (**Figure 17**). The entrance pavilion terminates with three shallow scalloped cement plaster moldings and terra cotta coping. The right bay of the entrance pavilion repeats the design of the left bay, except at the basement level, where an original steel industrial window was replaced with an ADA-compliant entrance consisting of two pairs of aluminum doors. This entrance is accessed by a concrete wheelchair ramp protected by metal pipe railings. The entrance, which was added in 1990, is surmounted by a multi-lite transom and a curved canopy resembling the building’s other entrances.

To the right of the entrance pavilion, the twelfth through the sixteenth bays of the academic building’s west façade mirror the bays to the left of the main entrance (**Figure 18**). The only major difference is that the area to the right of the entrance is higher due to the sloping site and the basement is fully above grade. The basement is the location of the cafeteria, which projects out from the rest of the west façade as a curved profile, wrapping around the southwest corner of the building. The cafeteria is articulated by a continuous band of metal ribbon windows. There is an entrance in the twelfth bay, which contains a pair of glazed aluminum doors. Like the rest of the entrances, it sheltered beneath a curved canopy.



Figure 17. Primary façade, upper floor levels above the main entrance; view toward northeast.



Figure 18. Primary façade, 12th through 16th bays; view toward southeast.

Academic Building: South Façade

The westernmost section of the south façade forms the base of the left leg of the “h.” Beginning at the left side, the one-story cafeteria wraps around from the primary façade until it terminates at an open-air service porch accessed through a semi-circular portal. The rear wall of the porch contains three aluminum doors surmounted by a large porthole window (**Figure 19**). Above the porch, the first through the third floor levels are identical; each has terra cotta piers at the corners and a vertical column of 15 two-lite and three single-lite windows—all framed by terra cotta surrounds—at the center. This section terminates with a cement plaster stringcourse, a blank concrete frieze, a recessed scalloped molding, and a plain parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 19. South façade of the academic building; view toward northeast.

The central part of the south façade faces a 100' x 138' paved courtyard between the two legs of the “h.” The courtyard also has east-and west-facing façades. The south-facing courtyard façade is eight bays wide. Each bay has eight windows at each floor level (Figure 20). The second through seventh bays project out slightly from the rest of the façade, with each bay demarcated by wide concrete piers. This section terminates with a plain frieze interrupted by the upper parts of the piers. The sections of the frieze between the piers feature decorative cement plaster panels depicting an abstract vegetal motif. The east and west-facing courtyard façades mirror each other. Both are nine bays wide, with each bay containing a 12-lite window bounded by terra cotta piers. Continuous concrete spandrels embellished with cement plaster “tree and leaf” motifs demarcate the floor levels. An entrance containing three glazed aluminum doors is located at the right side of the east-facing courtyard façade. This entrance, which is surmounted by an abstract cement plaster motif, is accessed by a concrete stair and a wheelchair ramp (Figure 21).



Figure 20. Central part of south façade; view toward north.



Figure 21. Entrance onto courtyard; view toward west.

The easternmost part of the south façade of the academic building adjoins the auditorium and the music room addition (**Figure 22**). It is finished and detailed similarly to its counterpart on the west side of the courtyard but it is narrower, reflecting the fact that its interior contains a single-loaded corridor with one bank of classrooms. The left side of this part of the building features the same decorative terra cotta detailing seen elsewhere on the building. Meanwhile, the right side has an entrance at the basement level that contains aluminum doors sheltered beneath a curved canopy supported by round columns. Above the entrance is a vertical column of fenestration composed of 12 two-lite and three single-lite windows with terra cotta surrounds. This part of the south façade terminates with a cement plaster stringcourse, a blank concrete frieze, a recessed scalloped molding, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 22. East part of south façade; view toward north.

Academic Building: North Façade

The north façade of the academic building consists of two sections, including a broad east section that faces the football field and a narrow west section that faces the shop building. The east section is 11 bays wide. Its first (left) bay projects slightly outward from the rest of the façade, forming an entrance pavilion. This pavilion contains a contemporary aluminum door with a sidelight and a transom window (**Figure 23**). The entrance is framed by terra cotta surrounds and surmounted by a cusped terra cotta panel depicting a Masonic motif—a nod to George Washington’s involvement in Freemasonry. Above the entrance is a porthole window. The right bay of this section of the north façade features a blind pavilion with an identical porthole window. The area between the pavilions contains nine identical bays articulated by eight-lite aluminum windows demarcated by concrete piers (**Figure 24**). Terra cotta spandrel panels demarcate the first and second floor levels. The third floor level, which is set back, has a similar fenestration pattern. This part of the north



Figure 23. Main entrance on north façade.

façade terminates with a plain frieze, a recessed scalloped molding, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 24. East part of north façade facing the GWHS football field; view toward southwest.

The west section of the north façade faces a paved passageway between the academic building and the shop building (**Figure 25**). At the center of the façade, a low concrete stair provides access to an entrance at the first floor level. The entrance contains three glazed metal doors with aluminum transoms and terra cotta surrounds. It is sheltered beneath an arched, concrete pedestrian bridge that connects the academic building to the shop building. The bridge is accessed from the academic building by three contemporary glazed aluminum doors with operable transoms. The third floor level includes three two-lite windows with operable transoms and terra cotta surrounds. This section of the north façade terminates with a cement plaster stringcourse, a plain frieze, a scalloped molding, and parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 25. North façade, west section; view toward southeast.



Figure 26. East façade of the academic building; view toward southwest from football field.

Academic Building: East Façade

The east façade of the academic building is 18 bays wide and faces the football field (Figure 26). With the exception of the first and eighth bays, which are entrance pavilions, each bay consists of a nine-lite window bounded by terra cotta piers at each floor level. Similar to the rest of the academic building's exterior, the spandrels between the floor levels are continuous bands of painted concrete embellished with cement plaster "tree and leaf" motifs. The east façade terminates with a cement plaster stringcourse, plain frieze, scalloped molding, and parapet capped by terra cotta coping.

The first bay of the east façade is an entrance pavilion on axis with Anza Street and the main entrance on 32nd Avenue. Similar to the building's other entrance pavilions, it projects out from the rest of the façade and rises above the roof as a tower-like form (Figure 27). The entrance at the first floor level contains three pairs of glazed metal doors, including two original double-leaf doors in the center and right entrances. In the left entrance is a contemporary ADA-compliant door with sidelights added in 1990. The entire entrance is sheltered beneath a curved canopy surmounted by a band of transom windows. Above the entrance, at the second and third floor levels, are three eight-lite windows. Cast stone piers and terra cotta spandrel panels demarcate each window. The flanking piers feature painted profiles of George Washington. They are not historic, and were probably painted in the 1970s. The entrance pavilion terminates with a blank frieze punctuated by a bas-relief bust of George Washington and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping. The artist who created the bust is not known, but it was likely Robert Boardman Howard, who completed the bas reliefs above the main entrance on 32nd Avenue. The eighth bay of the east façade also contains an entrance pavilion (Figure 28). The entrance at the first floor level

contains three glazed aluminum doors. It is sheltered beneath a curved canopy supported by round concrete columns and capped by metal pipe railings. Above the entrance is a vertical column of fenestration consisting of large multi-lite aluminum windows separated by terra cotta spandrel panels.



Figure 27. Entrance pavilion in first bay of east façade; view toward west.



Figure 28. Entrance pavilion in eighth bay of east façade; view toward west.

Academic Building: Interior

The academic building contains 88 classrooms, a suite of administrative offices, stairs and corridors, a library, a kitchen, a cafeteria, and mechanical and storage rooms. The academic building retains its original floor plan and most of its historic finishes. Nonetheless, SFUSD has updated the building to comply with contemporary fire, life/safety, and accessibility codes. The 1,400-sf main lobby, the most important interior space, is accessed by a broad terrazzo stair from the primary entrance on 32nd Avenue (**Figure 29**). This space has a dark terrazzo floor, a coffered concrete ceiling, and large-scale fresco murals painted by Victor Arnautoff in 1936. The murals are described in more detail later in this report. As mentioned, the administrative office suite is located east of the main lobby on the first floor level. Opening off the main lobby are three double-loaded corridors finished with resilient tile flooring, lath and plaster walls, tile wainscoting, metal lockers, and acoustical ceilings. Clerestory windows provide natural light from the classrooms into the corridors (**Figure 30**). Classrooms on all three floor levels are rectangular and accessed by two doors each—one original wood and the other contemporary metal. Classroom finishes are simple and utilitarian, including original lath and plaster walls, acoustical ceiling tiles, contemporary linoleum flooring, white “dry erase” boards, and contemporary furnishings and fittings.



Figure 29. Stairs accessing main lobby; view toward southwest.



Figure 30. Typical corridor in the academic building; view toward north.

Southeast of the main lobby is the administrative office suite (**Figure 31**). The corridor north of the suite contains the Memorial Clock, dedicated in 1948 to students killed in World War II (**Figure 32**), as well as several other class gifts, display cases, and a sculpture of George Washington. The corridor south of the administrative office suite contains the three “Response” murals painted by Dewey Crumpler in 1974, which are described in more depth later in this report.

In terms of its floor plan, the second floor level of the academic building is similar to its first floor level. By far, the most important space on the second floor level is the library, which is above the administrative office suite. Above the entrance to the library is a mural by Gordon Langdon. The library contains two additional murals – one by Lucien Labaudt and the other by Ralph Stackpole, which are all described in more detail later in this report. The third floor level is similar to the second floor, although it is devoted entirely to classrooms. The corridors on the third floor level are naturally illuminated by roof-mounted skylights.

Vertical circulation in the academic building is provided by traditional stairwells and unique double-track stairwells that permit circulation, either up or down, to operate entirely independently (**Figure 33**). Looking a little bit like an M. C. Escher drawing, the two sections are parallel to each other but have different entrances at opposite corners. The stairs, which are made of painted concrete, are illuminated by recessed lighting. The basement level includes the cafeteria, kitchen, a boiler and mechanical rooms, and several storage rooms. A service elevator is located at the south end of the building.



Figure 31. Administrative office suite and main corridor; view toward east. Note marble statue of George Washington.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer



Figure 32. Memorial Clock.
Source: Donna Graves



Figure 33. Double stair detail.

Shop Building

The shop building is directly north of the academic building and linked to it by a concrete bridge (**Figure 34**). Designed by Miller & Pflueger, it was completed in 1936, shortly after the academic building. The shop building, which is two stories above a partial daylight basement, has a rectangular footprint and stepped, cubic massing. It is clad in painted concrete with a limited amount of cement plaster ornament, consisting primarily of cement plaster medallions on each pier. It has a flat roof punctuated by a central skylight. The building's exterior retains the majority of its original steel industrial windows. The interior is entirely utilitarian, consisting of a basement shop where auto repair is conducted, and two stories of classrooms and shops above.



Figure 34. West façade of Shop Building; view toward northeast.

Shop Building: East and West Façades

The east and west façades of the shop building are similarly configured. Both are six bays wide, with each bay containing a 12-lite steel industrial window with operable awning sashes at each floor level (**Figure 35**). The windowsills are made of terra cotta and the spandrel panels are painted concrete without any ornament. The bays are defined by concrete piers that extend from the ground to just above the windows on the second floor level. Terra cotta moldings cap the piers. Due to the sloping terrain, the northernmost section of the west façade includes several basement windows. The basement level at the east façade is completely above ground, with the same window configuration found at the upper floor levels, except for the second bay, which has been reconfigured to contain a pedestrian entrance. At all four façades, the shop building terminates with a terra cotta stringcourse, a plain frieze, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 35. East façade of shop building; view toward north.

Shop Building: North and South Façades

The north and south façades of the shop building are both five bays wide. In contrast to the east and west façades, which are both entirely fenestrated, the north and south façades have wide concrete piers at the corners (**Figures 36–37**). The upper portions of these piers are embellished with cement plaster sculptures, including on the north façade, men working with machinery, and on the south façade, a pair of anvils. Signage attached below one of the anvils on the south façade reads “A. E. Lubamersky Industrial Arts Center.”² At the south façade, the three center bays are articulated by contemporary multi-lite aluminum windows, as well as two contemporary aluminum doors. The windows to the right of the bridge were infilled at an unknown date. Beneath the bridge, the main entrance contains three original metal doors (**Figure 38**). Like the east and west façades, concrete piers with terra cotta caps define each of the bays. In contrast to the south façade, the basement level is completely above-ground along the north façade. The center three bays of the basement level contain original glazed metal doors. The first and second floor levels each contain steel industrial windows that match the rest of the exterior. The north and south façades both terminate with a terra cotta stringcourse, a plain frieze, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.

² The shop building was renamed in 1984 in honor of a former coach, shop teacher, and vice-principal of George Washington High School.



Figure 36. North façade of shop building; view toward south.



Figure 37. South façade of shop building; view toward northwest.

Shop Building: Interior

The interior of the shop building accommodates an auto repair facility at the basement level (**Figure 39**), and 11 classrooms on the upper two floor levels. The auto repair shop is finished in concrete and is entirely utilitarian in character. The classrooms have metal doors, concrete walls, and utilitarian light fixtures. Vertical circulation is provided by a centrally located stairwell illuminated by a large roof-mounted skylight.



Figure 38. South entrance to shop building; view toward north.



Figure 39. Typical interior of shop building.

Gymnasium

Also designed by Miller & Pflueger, the GWHS gymnasium was completed in 1940, five years after the academic building. However, its construction was overseen by the Office of Timothy Pflueger, who had just formed his own firm following J.R. Miller's retirement. The gymnasium forms the easternmost portion of the GWHS complex, just south of Anza Street. Following its completion, the gymnasium was for a very short time a freestanding building. It was soon connected to the academic building by the auditorium, which was completed in the fall of 1940. As a result, the west façade of the gymnasium is not visible because it abuts the auditorium. The gymnasium has a rectangular footprint and massing. It contains the boys' and girls' gymnasiums, locker rooms, and toilet rooms.

Gymnasium: North Façade

The north façade of the gymnasium is ten bays wide (**Figure 40**). In the first (left) bay of the first floor level, there is a porthole window with a terra cotta surround. A two-level colonnade defines the rest of the north façade. A concrete ramp and two concrete stairs with pipe railings provide access to the colonnade. Fenestration at the first floor level includes two contemporary glazed aluminum doors with multi-lite transoms—one in the second bay and the other in the eighth bay. Other fenestration at the first floor level includes three multi-lite aluminum windows with operable awning sashes and one double-hung aluminum window. At the second floor level, metal pipe railings and wire mesh screen the walkway, while the eighth and ninth bays contain contemporary aluminum windows. The only other fenestration at the second floor level is a pair of metal doors in the third bay. There is also a blind porthole window outlined by a terra cotta surround in the tenth bay. At the third floor level, the second through ninth bays contain fixed and pivot-sash, multi-lite steel windows, which appear to be original. The north façade terminates with a plain concrete frieze, a scalloped molding, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 40. Gymnasium, north façade; view toward south.

Gymnasium: East Façade

The east façade of the gymnasium is six bays wide and three stories high, though the fenestration pattern makes it appear to be only two stories high (**Figure 41**). The first (left) and fifth bays contain multi-lite steel industrial windows at both floor levels. In contrast, the second, third, and fourth bays have much larger, multi-lite steel windows. The windows on the upper level are capped by a continuous concrete or cement plaster molding. In contrast, the sills and moldings are terra cotta. Terra cotta moldings extend below the windows to meet the cement plaster stringcourse that demarcates the first and second floor levels. At the far right side of the first floor

level is a gridded concrete vent. The east façade terminates with a blank frieze, a scalloped molding, and a raised parapet capped by terra cotta coping.

Gymnasium: South Façade

The south façade of the gymnasium is nine bays wide and closely resembles the east façade in terms of its fenestration pattern and detailing (See Figure 41). The first (left) bay contains a pedestrian entrance and a gridded concrete vent. The tenth (right) bay has a recessed entrance containing a contemporary aluminum door with sidelights and a transom. The rest of first floor level has multi-lite aluminum windows of various sizes. The upper floor levels contain seven double-height, multi-lite aluminum windows. The tenth bay is blind except for a two-lite aluminum window at the second floor level. The south façade terminates with a plain frieze, a scalloped molding, and a parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 41. Gymnasium, south and east façades; view toward northwest.

Gymnasium: Interior

The interior of the gymnasium contains smaller boys' and girls' gymnasiums and offices at the first floor level and a large gymnasium at the upper floor level that is lit by four large skylights. Vertical circulation is provided by stairwells at each corner of the building. The main gymnasium has a polished maple floor and plywood-covered walls, above which are multi-lite windows along the north and south walls. At the east and west sides, there are locker rooms, offices, and bleachers (**Figure 42**). The steel roof trusses in this space are exposed, and retractable and fixed basketball hoops are suspended from the underside of the trusses.



Figure 42. Gymnasium interior, upper floor level; view toward west.

Auditorium

Designed by Miller & Pflueger, the auditorium was constructed not long after the gymnasium was completed, late in 1940. Like the gymnasium, its construction was overseen by the Office of Timothy Pflueger. The three-story auditorium has a rectangular footprint and massing, although the south façade curves outward to enclose the backstage area. It is clad in painted concrete with cement plaster and terra cotta ornament. Its colonnaded north façade, which is designed to resemble the portico of George Washington's plantation, Mount Vernon, is perhaps the most recognizable part of GWHS's exterior. This part of the building displays some Hollywood Regency characteristics, in particular its attenuated columns and semi-abstract interpretation of colonial architectural motifs. The interior of the auditorium contains the auditorium itself, as well as a backstage area, lobbies, toilet rooms, and storage.



Figure 43. North façade of the Auditorium; view toward south.

Auditorium: North Façade

The primary (north) façade of the auditorium is seven bays wide and articulated by a two-story concrete colonnade designed to resemble Mount Vernon (**Figure 43**). The simplified Tuscan order colonnade supports a coffered ceiling that forms a shallow and very high portico. A broad concrete stair accesses the portico. The primary entrance spans the area between the third and fifth bays, and it contains four contiguous pairs of glazed metal doors set within a double-height window wall divided by metal muntins (**Figure 44**). Secondary entrances containing contemporary aluminum doors with sidelights are located in the first and seventh bays. Within the sixth bay is a box office/ticket window. All fenestration at the first floor level has terra cotta surrounds. Aside from the window wall, there is no fenestration at the second floor level. At the third floor level, five small louvered openings provide ventilation. The north façade of the auditorium terminates with a scalloped molding and a flared entablature capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 44. Main entrance to the Auditorium.

Auditorium: East Façade

The majority of the east façade of the auditorium is concealed behind the adjoining gymnasium. However, the exposed portion has two recessed pedestrian entrances at the first floor level (**Figure 45**). Both entrances contain utilitarian metal doors. The upper portion of the east façade of the auditorium contains no fenestration, although it is embellished with a painted eagle, the GWHS mascot, and the phrase: "Washington High Eagles are #1." The left (south) side of the east façade adjoins the music room addition (described below). The east façade terminates with a scalloped molding and a flared entablature matching the primary façade. Visible above the roof is the top of the flat-roofed fly tower, which steps upward and inward. The fly tower terminates with a raised parapet outlined with terra cotta coping.



Figure 45. East façade of the Auditorium; view toward west. The music room addition is visible to the left and the gymnasium to the right.

Auditorium: South Façade

The south façade of the auditorium is seven bays wide. The bays are blind, and articulated by piers reminiscent of the colonnade on the north façade (**Figure 46**). The first floor level is concealed behind the music room addition (described below). The east façade terminates with a scalloped molding and a flared entablature capped by terra cotta coping. A portion of the auditorium's fly tower is visible above the entablature.



Figure 46. South façade of the Auditorium; view toward north. The academic building is visible to the left and the gymnasium to the right.



Figure 47. Auditorium interior; view toward north.

Auditorium: Interior

The interior of the auditorium contains GWHS's performing arts auditorium (Figure 47), as well as lobbies at the first and second floor levels, a backstage area, toilet rooms, and storage. The auditorium is accessed through the primary entrance on the north side of the building, as well as by doors connecting it to the gymnasium and the academic building. The main lobby at the first floor level contains a ticket booth, several glass display cases, and two quarter-turn stairs



Figure 48. First floor lobby in the auditorium; view toward east.

that access the lobby at the second floor (balcony) level (Figure 48). Two pairs of paneled wood doors provide access to the auditorium from the first floor lobby. The second floor lobby consists of a narrow corridor with two metal doors that provide access to the balcony. The partial third floor level contains lighting harnesses and other

equipment. The auditorium itself retains its original varnished plywood seats on the first floor level and on the balcony above. The proscenium walls are finished in lath-and-plaster and stepped in a telescope pattern characteristic of the Streamline Moderne style. The backstage area is flanked by control rooms connected by a crossover behind the stage. Doors at the rear of the backstage area provide access to the music room addition. Above the stage is the fly tower, where rigging equipment for changing scenery is located.

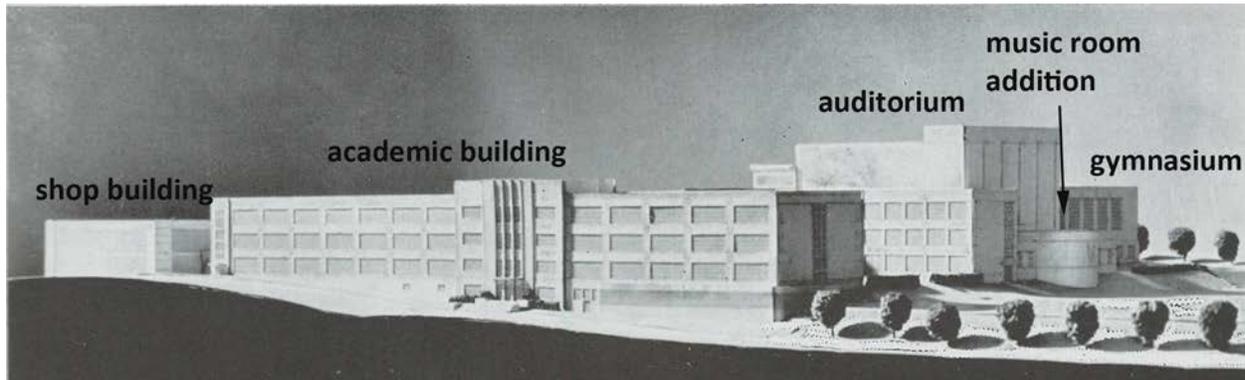


Figure 49. Model of George Washington High School showing the music room addition as it was originally designed.
Source: *The Architect and Engineer* (April 1936)

Music Room Addition

According to the original site plan by Miller & Pflueger, a music room was to have been an integral part of the auditorium (**Figure 49**). However, due to insufficient funding, the music room was not built in 1940 when the auditorium was completed. Instead, it was built 12 years later as an addition designed by Timothy Pflueger's younger brother, Milton Pflueger. Though it bears some resemblance to Miller & Pflueger's original design, Milton Pflueger's music room addition has a shallower apse and slightly more fenestration. The music room addition is two stories in height with generally rectangular footprint and massing, although the south façade curves outward in a gentle arc (**Figure 50**). Due to the steeply sloping site, the music room addition is completely concealed from view by the auditorium to the north and it has little exposure along its north and west sides.



Figure 50. South façade of the music room addition; view toward north.

Music Room Addition: South Façade

The south façade of the music room addition is ten bays wide. Within the first bay, there is an entrance and a multi-lite window at the first floor level and a multi-lite window at the second floor level. The central section of the south façade consists of seven multi-lite steel windows at the first floor level. The curved upper part of the south façade is not fenestrated and it terminates with a raised parapet capped by terra cotta coping. In the ninth bay, there are two multi-lite windows at the first floor level and a six-lite aluminum sash window at the second floor level. Within the tenth bay, there is a multi-lite window at the first floor level.

Music Room Addition: East Façade

The east façade of the music room addition is three bays wide and includes a 12-lite aluminum window at the left; a two-lite, double-hung aluminum window at the center; and a pair of double-hung aluminum windows at the right (**Figure 51**). The right side of the east façade has a curved profile that wraps around to the north façade, where there is a pair of metal doors. Like the south façade, the east façade of the music room addition terminates with a raised parapet capped by terra cotta coping.



Figure 51. East façade of the music room addition; view toward west.

Music Room Addition: Interior

The interior of the music room addition includes several classrooms and offices at the first floor level and classrooms and a small auditorium at the second floor level. It is finished in utilitarian materials such as gypsum board walls and acoustical tile ceilings.

Site Features

The northern half of the GWHS campus was originally set aside from a large football “stadium” consisting of a turf field and grandstands and an L-shaped “play yard” consisting of tennis courts and basketball courts extending in an arc-like formation along Geary Boulevard and 30th Avenue. A retaining wall separates the play yards from the steeply sloping northern and eastern edges of the campus; these areas are all informally landscaped with grass, shrubs, and trees. The original site plan shows another large landscaped area at the northwest corner of the campus. This area, which is today bisected by a paved driveway accessing the shop building, still exists. Semi-natural landscaping is also located on the sloping perimeter of the site along portions of 30th Avenue and Balboa Street. Another concrete retaining wall located roughly midway along the 30th Avenue side of the campus separates the play yards from the esplanade, a hardscaped promenade on axis with Anza Street and the main entrance to the academic building on 30th Avenue.

Tennis and Basketball Courts

Six tennis courts are located along the north side of the campus near Geary Boulevard and three basketball courts are located in the northeastern part of the campus along 30th Avenue (**Figures 52–53**). The tennis courts, which were in place by 1938, were rebuilt in 1984 and bleachers were installed at the far west side at the same time. The tennis and basketball courts occupy a terraced level below the football field and they are separated from Geary Boulevard and 30th Avenue by a concrete retaining wall and a chain link fence. Beyond the fence, the informally landscaped grounds slope downhill toward both streets.



Figure 52. Tennis courts, view toward northwest.



Figure 53. Basketball courts, view toward northeast.

Football Field and Bleachers

The football field and the bleachers were installed in 1940. The football field, which occupies a natural bowl that was originally a quarry, is on axis with the auditorium colonnade (**Figure 54**). There is a flagpole at the north end of the field and a broad frieze on the south side of the field. The frieze, *Athletics*, which was designed and executed in 1942 by artist Sargent Johnson, is described in more detail below (**Figure 55**). Concrete bleachers are located along the east and west sides of the football field. Metal doors and windows along their north walls provide access to locker rooms, restrooms, and offices below the bleachers. On the east side of the bleachers, facing 30th Avenue, painted signage reads: “Of all victories, the first and greatest is for a man to conquer himself,” a quote long attributed to Plato (**Figure 56**). East of the bleachers is a surface parking lot where basketball courts originally stood. At the south side of the parking lot, a multi-legged ramp provides access from the parking lot to the esplanade.



Figure 54. Football field and bleachers; view toward south.



Figure 55. Detail of Sargent Johnson's frieze, south side of football field; view toward southwest.



Figure 56. East wall of eastern bleachers; view toward northwest.

The Esplanade

The esplanade is a U-shaped, hardscaped promenade that runs along the north side of the academic building, the auditorium and the gymnasium, as well as along the east and west sides of the football field. The north section, which is on axis with Anza Street, features low concrete walls punctuated by square balusters, benches, and several mature trees (Figure 57). This part of the esplanade, which has traditionally been the location of many GWHS ceremonies, enjoys sweeping views out over the football field, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Marin Headlands. The sections of the esplanade on the east and west sides of the football field are more utilitarian in character, with asphalt paving and no landscaping. The west side is used for circulation between the shop building and the academic building and the east side is currently occupied by several modular classrooms (Figures 58–59).



Figure 57. Detail of the esplanade, north of the auditorium; view toward northwest.



Figure 58. Detail of the esplanade, east of the academic building; view toward north.



Figure 59. Detail of the esplanade, north of the gymnasium, with modular classrooms at left; view toward east.



Figure 60. Running track and soccer field at southern part of GWHS campus; view toward southeast.

Running Track and Soccer Field

According to the original GWHS master plan, the southern third of the campus was set aside for a baseball field, but this feature was never built. An aerial photograph taken in 1946 shows the southern part of the site entirely undeveloped, with informal “social” paths leading across it from surrounding streets. A historic aerial photograph taken a decade later shows an oval running track under construction. This running track was completed in 1957 or 1958. A soccer field was installed in the infield area in 1992. The existing running track spans the southern part of the campus between 30th and 32nd Avenues. The track was rebuilt and renamed the Don Barksdale Track in 1992. It is finished in a rubberized surface and the infield area contains an artificial turf soccer field. A pole-mounted scoreboard stands at the east end (**Figure 60**). Bleachers were installed on the north side of the running track in 1962. Punctuating the bleachers are two concrete towers containing wheelchair lifts that were installed in 2006 (**Figure 61**). There is a modular classroom building at the northeast side of the track, a one-story equipment storage building at the southeast corner, and a fenced enclosure at the southwest corner (**Figure 62**). Beyond the fence, the informally landscaped grounds slope downhill to Balboa Street and 30th Avenue.



Figure 61. Bleachers and wheelchair lift tower; view toward west.



Figure 62. Equipment shed southeast of the track; view toward south.

New Deal Artworks

George Washington High School has an extensive collection of public artworks commissioned under the aegis and direction of the Federal Art Project (FAP) of the Works Project Administration (WPA). Major works from the New Deal–era arts program include several fresco murals painted by prominent Bay Area artists, including Ralph Stackpole, Robert Boardman Howard, Victor Arnautoff, Lucien Labaudt, and Gordon Langdon. Architect Timothy Pflueger selected these artists and recommended them to the Board of Education for this project.

Robert Boardman Howard’s Bas-reliefs at Main Entrance

Bas-reliefs likely sculpted by Robert Boardman Howard greet students and visitors entering GWHS through the main entrance on 32nd Avenue. Busts of Thomas Edison, George Washington, and Walt Whitman are placed above the doors and underlined by the words “Invention,” “Statesman,” and “Literature.” While these artworks are not usually listed among those commissioned for GWHS, Pflueger described them as being cast from models of Howard’s design.³ Howard may well have also been responsible for the other abstract bas-reliefs that appear on various portions of the exterior of the buildings, but no documentation about them has been found.

Victor Arnautoff’s *The Life of George Washington*

Once inside the school, viewers come upon the largest and most prominent of the New Deal–era artworks, a visual history lesson titled *Life of George Washington*. The project was awarded to Victor Arnautoff, an artist born in Imperial Russia who was an assistant to Diego Rivera. The approximately 1,600-square-foot mural cycle spans the north and south walls of the stairway and lobby entrance at 32nd Avenue. Arnautoff described the imagery on the south stairway wall as illustrating the “formation of [Washington’s] personality and personality in action.”⁴ The future president is depicted in his early career as a surveyor, followed by his activities as a scout, messenger, and officer of the revolutionary militia. The scenes are organized chronologically, beginning at the vestibule with Washington standing in the foreground using surveyor’s tools; in the background is a scene of African Americans working the fields in front of Washington’s Virginia estate, Mount Vernon. Arnautoff used rocks, plants, and two tree trunks reaching from the bottom to the top of this panel to organize the subsequent sections above the stairs. The next scene includes Washington portrayed as a scout and as a messenger wearing a dark coat or buckskins with a coonskin cap, surrounded by elaborately garbed soldiers and Native Americans – many bearing firearms. The tableau at the south wall of the lobby atop the stairs shows Washington standing near a table with Benjamin Franklin and two other figures, pointing with his right hand to a map and with his left hand gesturing toward a group of buckskin-clothed frontiersmen depicted standing over a prone, lifeless Native American (**Figures 63–64**).

³ Therese Poletti, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 143. Timothy Pflueger, Typewritten manuscript of an article sent to Mr. J.E. Jellick of the Portland Cement Association for publication in *Architectural Concrete*, February 24, 1936. Other sources, including the Smithsonian American Art Museums’ online Art Inventories Catalog and *A Survey of Art Work in the City and County of San Francisco* (Art Commission of the City and County of San Francisco, 1975), attribute these portraits to Victor Arnautoff. The same sources also misidentify the “Literature” portrait as Shakespeare. Neither Arnautoff nor Howard left a record claiming those bas-relief sculptures as their work.

⁴ Victor Arnautoff, “Frescoes of Geo. Washington School,” *Architecture and Engineering* (April 1936), 17.

The frontiersmen are the only figures in these colorful murals painted in *grisaille*, or gray monochrome, perhaps to indicate that they are “ghostly figures of the imagination,” as contemporary art critic Alfred Frankenstein surmised.⁵

The section on the north side of the vestibule, stair, and lobby portrays Washington’s personality in “action” according to Arnautoff. Above the stairs are the scenes of stamps being burned and tea dumped in Boston Harbor, British soldiers opening fire on colonists (the Boston Massacre), and revolutionaries raising a pole with the new national flag. The chaos of these scenes, which the *San Francisco Chronicle* described as “Breughellesque,” is organized by diagonal linear elements composed of poles, ropes, and chains.⁶ At the top of the stairs, Washington appears on horseback accepting command of the Revolutionary Army. The north wall of the lobby depicts Washington as master of Mount Vernon, standing with riding crop in hand, with a young African American man holding the reins of his horse. Washington is interacting with an overseer who points to African Americans picking cotton, shucking corn, and hauling loads, while three white male workers build wooden casks. An alcove off the north side shows Washington at Valley Forge and the surrender of the Hessians, under a ceiling panel symbolic of war. An alcove on the south side shows Washington greeting Lafayette, Von Steuben, and Pulaski, and Washington as president implementing the new Constitution by mediating between Hamilton and Jefferson, under a ceiling panel symbolic of peace. The other alcove on the south side shows Washington bidding farewell to his aged mother and Washington proposing establishment of a national university, under a ceiling panel showing a bare-breasted representation of liberty placing thirteen new stars in the firmament.⁷

⁵ Alfred Frankenstein, “Arnautoff Completes...” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 21, 1936), D6.

⁶ Pieter Brueghel “The Younger” was a Flemish painter noted for his gruesome depictions of Hell. Alfred Frankenstein, “Arnautoff Completes...” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 21, 1936), D6.

⁷ Victor Arnautoff, “Frescoes of Geo. Washington School” (Unpublished manuscript), 17. This article was apparently written well before Arnautoff had completed his work, and the subjects of some of the smaller panels do not correspond with his description of those panels in this article.



Figure 63. North wall of main lobby showing a portion of Victor Arnautoff's *The Life of George Washington*.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer



Figure 64. Detail of Victor Arnautoff's *The Life of George Washington*.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer

In addition to the frescoes, the main lobby contains a bronze statue of George Washington. It is a replica of the sculpture by Jean-Antoine Houdon that was commissioned by the Virginia legislature and installed in 1792 in the rotunda of the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond.⁸ Houdon's piece has served as a model for countless other reproductions. Nothing else is known about the statue, or the marble sculpture of Washington in the corridor between the administration office suite and the auditorium, except that the latter was fabricated by the A. Frilli sculpture studio in Florence, Italy.

Historian and Arnautoff biographer, Robert Cherny, describes a "counter-narrative" to the then-standard high school treatment of the founding fathers and westward expansion that places African American, Native American, and working-class revolutionaries at the center of the major compositions of the *Life of George Washington*. High school curricula in the 1940s did not address the inconsistency between the founding fathers' adherence to the concept that "all men are created equal" and the fact that many of them, including George Washington, profited from the ownership of African Americans as chattel slaves. Likewise, the figure of the dead Native American with the ghostly frontiersman moving over him provided students with an image that challenged the common perspective that westward expansion filled territory that had been empty and underutilized.⁹

Library Frescoes by Gordon Langdon, Lucien Labaudt and Nelson Poole

Frescos by Gordon Langdon, Lucien Labaudt, and Nelson Poole are painted on the interior and above the entry to the second-floor library. Like Arnautoff's, these paintings were conceived and implemented in 1936 during the school's first phase of construction. Langdon's *Modern and Ancient Science* (4' x 10') appears above the doors to the library and depicts the experimental physicist Robert Millikan in academic robes on the left and a classically robed figure holding a scroll and compass on the right (**Figure 65**). Between these large seated figures, stands a smaller figure of Mercury turning to look the viewer in the eye as he manipulates a painted mechanism visually connected to the actual alarm bell and siren horns emerging from the wall.¹⁰

⁸ Tracy L. Kamerer and Scott W. Nolley, "Rediscovering an American Icon: Houdon's Washington," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Autumn 2003).

⁹ Electronic communication between authors and Arnautoff biographer, Robert Cherny, February 9, 2017.

¹⁰ Alfred Frankenstein, "Arnautoff Completes..." *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 21, 1936), D6.



Figure 65. Gordon Langdon's *Modern and Ancient Science*.

On the east wall of the library, Lucien Labaudt's *Advancement of Learning through the Printing Press* (5'6" x 27') is an almost surreal collage of large facial portraits and smaller-scaled full figures (Figure 66). The faces depict prominent men in the history of religion, politics, literature, and science, including Junipero Serra, Abraham Lincoln, Edgar Allan Poe, and Thomas Edison floating above people engaged in various activities related to the printed word. At center, a sheaf of papers tumbles out of a press in which the actual wall clock is embedded (Figure 67). Johannes Gutenberg stands reading one of the newly printed sheets just to the right of the press, for which he is credited as the inventor.



Figure 66. Lucien Labaudt's *Advancement of Learning through the Printing Press*.

Source: Amanda Law, photographer



Figure 67. Detail of Lucien Labaudt's *Advancement of Learning through the Printing Press*.

Source: Amanda Law, photographer

Ralph Stackpole's *Contemporary Education* (5'6" x 27') depicts scenes at a contemporary high school, featuring students whose notably varied skin tones presumably represent a racially and ethnically diverse student body (Figures 68–69). The left half of the painting is populated by female students who are reading, typing, sewing, and cooking at the central stove, which incorporates the actual wall clock. The right portion shows male students engaged in shop class, working a ham radio that incorporates an actual speaker, and reading.



Figure 68. Ralph Stackpole's *Contemporary Education*.

Source: Amanda Law, photographer



Figure 69. Detail of Ralph Stackpole's *Contemporary Education*.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer

Sargent Johnson's Athletic Field Frieze

Work on GWHS's athletic fields followed the completion of the gymnasium and auditorium in 1940. Landscaping and other site improvements got underway in 1940-41, and in 1942, following the completion of the football field and bleachers, Sargent Johnson executed a large relief frieze titled *Athletics* at the north end of the playing field. The frieze comprises four panels, each 12 feet high and 185 feet in length (**Figures 70–74**). Arrayed in a style reminiscent of Greek friezes, figures of physically fit young men and women are engaged in golf, track events, boxing, archery, football, tennis, basketball, diving, and rowing. References to the Olympic Games appear in five interlocking rings and a torch. The artwork was made of cast stone executed in 6-by-14-foot sections.



Figure 70. Sargent Johnson's *Athletics*.



Figure 71. Detail of Sargent Johnson's *Athletics*.



Figure 72. Detail of Sargent Johnson's *Athletics*.



Figure 73. Detail of Sargent Johnson's *Athletics*.



Figure 74. Perspective of Sargent Johnson's *Athletics*.

Dewey Crumpler's Response Murals

Dewey Crumpler's "Response" murals were painted in 1974 in reaction to earlier student protests against Victor Arnautoff's *Life of George Washington*. In 1967-68, African Americans attending GWHS did not see the counter-narrative but rather, found the depictions of enslaved African Americans shucking corn, picking cotton, and loading barges as servile and humiliating. Crumpler's mural series consists of three Masonite panels measuring 6' x 15', 12' x 16', and 6' x 15'. Painted with acrylics, the formal title of the work is *Multi-Ethnic Heritage: Black, Asian, Native/Latin American*, and represents the many ethnicities of the school's student body. Installed near Arnautoff's mural at the west end of the hall leading from the academic building to the auditorium, the three murals depict individuals such as César Chávez, Emiliano Zapata, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Ho Chi Minh, and Ruth Asawa, as well as mythical figures and others who represent everyday African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans (**Figures 75-77**). The three murals share a fiery red background and the compositions are visually linked by a sinuous element that begins as a snake held in an eagle's mouth in the Latino/Native American mural, becoming a dragon's tail in the Asian American mural, and then ends as a broken chain link in the African American mural.

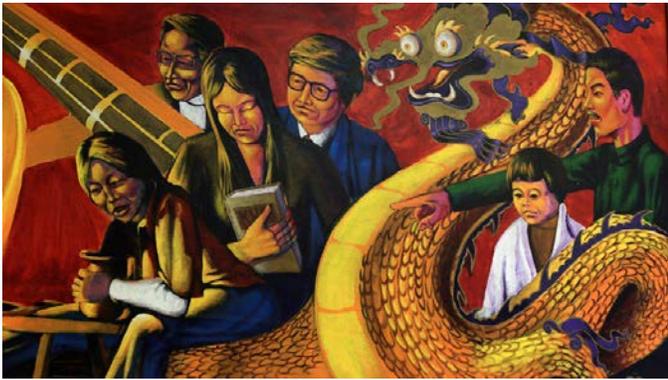


Figure 76. Detail of Dewey Crumpler's mural depicting Asian American themes.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer



Figure 77. Detail of Dewey Crumpler's mural depicting African American themes.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer

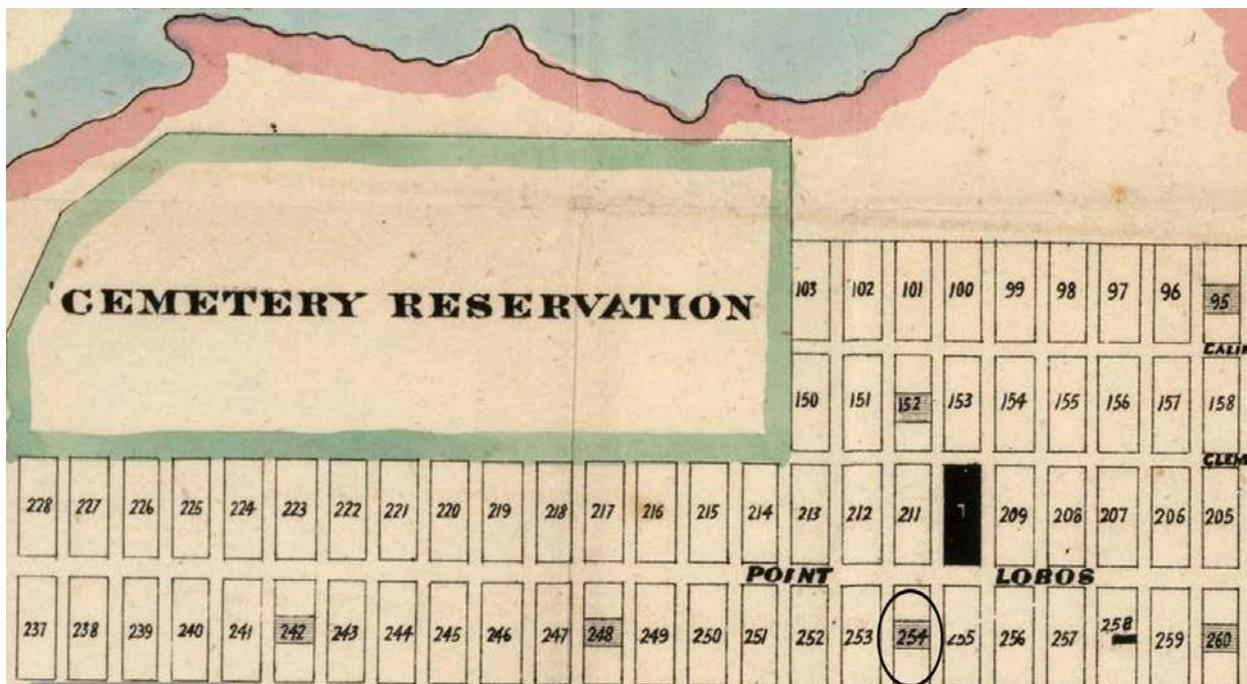


Figure 75. Dewey Crumpler's mural depicting Latino/Native American themes.
Source: Amanda Law, photographer

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Pre-construction History: 1867–1933

In 1867, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors designated a tract consisting of “150 feet on Thirtieth and Thirty-first avenues between A Street and Point Lobos Avenue” as a “school reservation,” one of nearly 100 such reservations set aside for future public use by the Outside Lands Committee in areas under its jurisdiction. The future location of George Washington High School is shown on the 1868 Outside Lands Map (Figure 78).¹¹ However, construction of schools and other public facilities only followed residential development, which did not occur in the Outer Richmond District until the 1920s. For these reasons, more than 65 years passed between the



time the area was set aside as a school reservation and when the construction of George Washington High School got underway.

Figure 78. 1868 Outside Lands Map showing the location of the public reservation at 30th Avenue and Point Lobos Road (Geary Boulevard).

Source: Author’s Map Collection

¹¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *General Orders of the Board of Supervisors Providing Regulations for the Government of the City and County Of San Francisco* (San Francisco: The Cosmopolitan Printing Company, 1869), 123. The areas under jurisdiction of the Outside Lands Committee included all of today’s Richmond and Sunset Districts, the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, Presidio Heights, the Panhandle, Buena Vista Heights, and the southern Potrero District.

San Francisco Block Books published in 1901, 1906, and 1910 show that while the 150' x 240' school reservation belonged to the City, the remainder of the lots comprising the four city blocks that would eventually become George Washington High School belonged to over 30 individuals and corporations.¹² Lots located north of A (Anza) Street were more intensively subdivided into small farms and house lots, while south of Anza Street many of the larger parcels belonged to a private landowner named Sarah Sinclair and the real estate development firm of Sol Getz & Sons. Meanwhile, most of the area east of 32nd Avenue belonged to the estate of Adolph Sutro. Until his death in 1898, Adolph Sutro, mayor of the city from 1894 to 1896, was San Francisco's largest private landowner, owning hundreds of acres in the Outer Richmond District.

The earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. Maps (Sanborn Maps) to depict these blocks were drawn in 1913, and they show that development in the still-rural Outer Richmond District remained sparse (**Figure 79**). There were no buildings south of Anza Street, and all of the numbered avenues were "undefined," meaning that they were ungraded. Only four dwellings and one large barn stood north of Anza Street on the future GWHS campus. These maps indicate that the City had leased the school reservation to the proprietor of a "red rock quarry." Eight small structures associated with the quarry, including barns, two rock bins, a tool shed, and a cabin, were arrayed

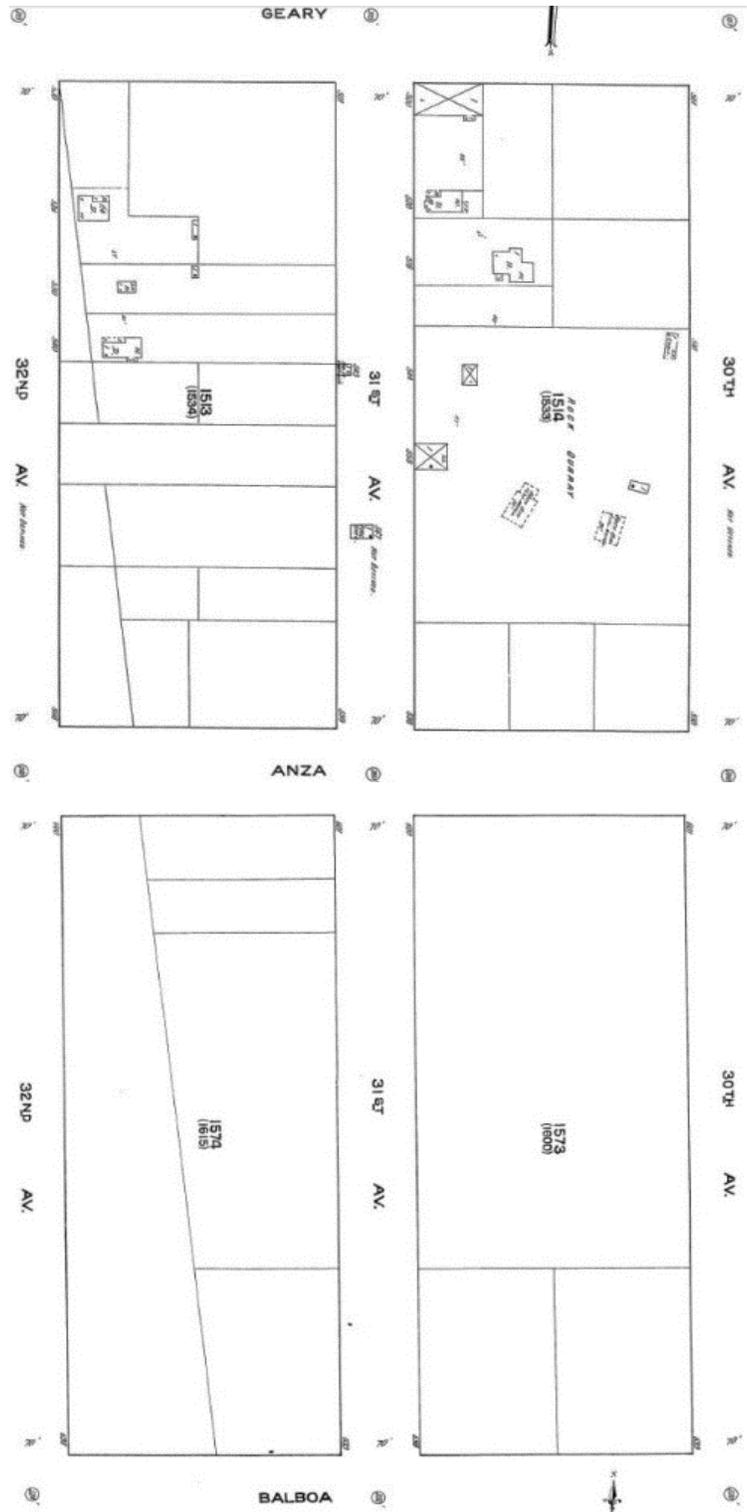


Figure 79. 1913 Sanborn Maps showing future site of George Washington High School.

¹² The San Francisco Original Handy Block Book (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Company, 1910), 684-85.

around the parcel and in the undefined right-of-way along 31st Avenue. A 1923 Department of Public Works (DPW) photograph shows the quarry in operation (**Figure 80**).

In 1925, the San Francisco Board of Education began purchasing lots on the four blocks bounded by Geary Boulevard, 30th Avenue, Balboa Street, and 32nd Avenue in anticipation of building a new high school in the fast-growing Outer Richmond District. With the exception of six house lots at the northeast corner of 32nd Avenue and Balboa Street that had been developed

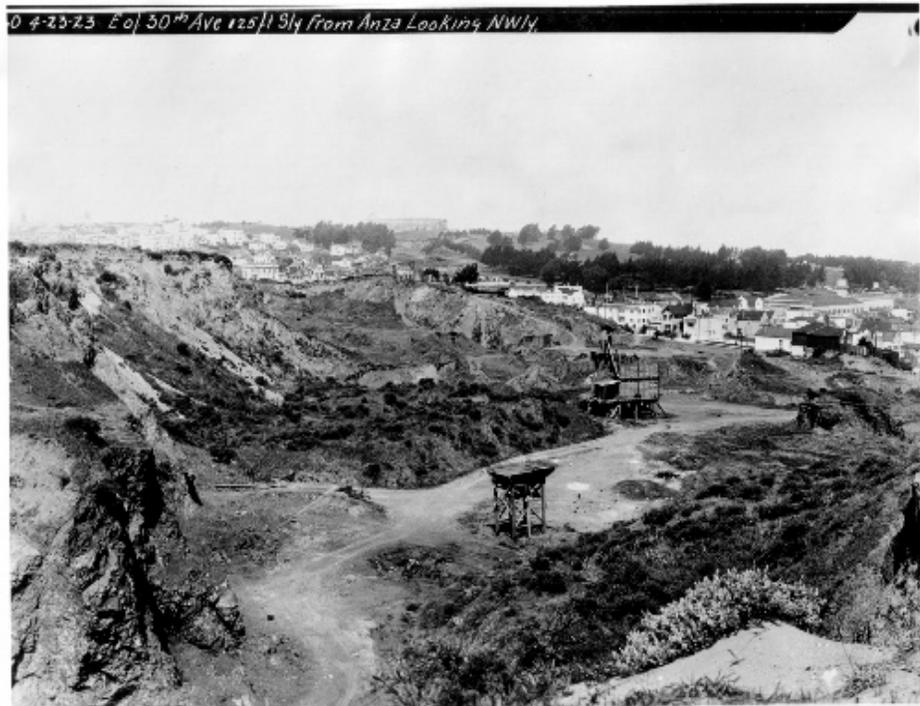


Figure 80. Quarry at 30th Avenue and Anza Street; view toward northwest.
Source: Department of Public Works; provided by Lorri Ungaretti

before the site acquisition process began, the City eventually acquired the entire four-block tract, purchasing the last lot in 1935, only a few months after construction had begun on the academic building. DPW then vacated a two-block long stretch of 31st Avenue between Geary Boulevard and Balboa Street, as well as two blocks of Anza Street between 30th and 32nd Avenues, merging the rights-of-ways and the four blocks into a “superblock” heretofore known as Assessor’s Block 1574.¹³

¹³ San Francisco Office of the Assessor-Recorder, Assessor’s Maps.

Construction History: 1933–1952

San Francisco voters approved a bond on December 19, 1933 to fund three new schools, including George Washington High School.¹⁴ Design began in late 1933 with Miller & Pflueger in charge of architectural drawings and Walter L. Huber in charge of structural engineering. The building's engineering had to comply with the 1933 Field Act, which passed in the wake of the Long Beach Earthquake. Clearing and grading began in February 1934 and construction began on November 4, 1934.¹⁵ The \$734,000 academic building was completed first, in December 1935, and the shop building was completed next, in February 1936. The academic building contained 45 classrooms and 30-special purpose classrooms and laboratories, administrative offices, a library, a cafeteria, and ROTC training rooms.¹⁶ The dedication ceremony for the first unit was held on August 23, 1936. By this time, all of the federally funded murals in the academic building had been completed. Photographs taken in 1936 show the newly completed academic building looking very much as it does now (**Figures 81–84**).¹⁷

GWHS's tennis and basketball courts were built next in 1938, followed shortly thereafter by the gymnasium and the football field and 5,000-seat bleachers, which were all were completed in February 1940.¹⁸



Figure 81. George Washington High School, shortly after construction was completed, 1936.
Source: SFPL, Photo ID# AAD-4913



Figure 82. George Washington High School, shortly after construction was completed, 1936.
Source: SFPL, Photo ID# AAD-4911

¹⁴ "Lee Expresses Joy at School Bond Issue," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 20, 1933), 2.

¹⁵ "Sunset Area High School Needs Show," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1934), 19; and "Fete for New S.F. School Set," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 19, 1934), 32.

¹⁶ Timothy Pflueger, Typewritten manuscript of an article sent to Mr. J.E. Jellick of the Portland Cement Association for publication in *Architectural Concrete*, February 24, 1936.

¹⁷ "Talented San Francisco Artists Complete Fresco Projects," *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* (June 20, 1936).

¹⁸ "Washington High School Opens Gym," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 18, 1940), 3-H.

The 1,900-seat auditorium, the fourth section of the GWHS complex, was dedicated on November 11, 1940.¹⁹ Sargent Johnson's frieze, *Athletics*, was installed on a retaining wall on the south side of the football field in the summer of 1942.²⁰ Memorial Clock, donated by the Class of 1946 to honor GWHS students killed in World War II, was installed outside the school's administrative offices in October 1948.²¹

A permit for the construction of the music room addition was issued by the State of California in April 1951, and construction was complete in April 1952, marking the last major component of the building.²² The music room addition was designed by Timothy's brother, Milton, who had taken over the firm after Timothy Pflueger's untimely death on November 20, 1946.

On the undeveloped south side of the campus, the Board of Education built a running track and storage shed between 1957 and 1958. Bleachers for the running track were constructed in 1962.²³ Swelling school enrollment required the installation of two modular classrooms in the south courtyard of the academic building in 1962.

Three more were added in 1963 in what had been the faculty parking lot, directly south of the gymnasium.²⁴ The "Response Murals" by Dewey Crumpler were installed at the west end of the main lobby in 1974.²⁵



Figure 83. George Washington High School, lobby murals, 1936. Source: SFPL, Photo ID#AAD-4942



Figure 84. George Washington High School, administrative offices, 1936. Source: SFPL, Photo ID#AAD-4917

¹⁹ "S.F. School is Dedicated," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 12, 1940), 12.

²⁰ George Washington High School Alumni Association, "George Washington High School's History and Traditions" (San Francisco: unpublished manuscript, 2011), 3-4.

²¹ George Washington High School Alumni Association.

²² San Francisco Building Permit #135871, Issued April (date unclear).

²³ George Washington High School Alumni Association.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Public Art Program at George Washington High School: 1935–1974

Federal Art Project

New Deal-era artworks at GWHS were funded through the Federal Art Project (FAP) of the Works Progress Administration. Created through the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, FAP operated from summer 1935 to summer 1943; it was one of several government-sponsored art programs of the period. Others included the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) (1933–34), the Department of the Treasury's Section of Painting and Sculpture (1934–42; renamed the Section of Fine Arts in 1938); and the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) (1935–38). FAP, together with the Federal Music Project, the Federal Theater Project, and the Federal Writers' Project – comprised a set of cultural programs collectively called “Federal One.” FAP supported artists in a wide variety of media and brought their work to communities across the nation. The work of FAP fell into three main areas: production of artwork, art education through classes and community centers, and art research through the Index of American Design. During the course of the program, artists created murals and other artwork for many federal construction projects and for non-federal buildings such as schools, hospitals, and libraries.²⁶

George Washington High School Murals

Murals were the most plentiful public art form commissioned under New Deal visual art programs. Murals could be planned as part of new construction projects funded by various New Deal construction programs or executed as adornments to existing buildings. In fact, murals created by Mexican artists employed by their own government were a significant inspiration for federal support to American artists.²⁷

Murals by four Bay Area artists were completed by the time GWHS opened in August 1936.²⁸ All of the murals at GWHS were created through the medium of fresco, in which ground pigments are applied to wet plaster laid directly on a wall. The Mexican muralists so admired by many Bay Area artists had revived this ancient technique. In the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1935, Victor Arnautoff directly credited Diego Rivera for his own interest in fresco: “Rivera is partly responsible for my becoming a mural painter. When I was a student I intended to become a sculptor, but when I touched wet plaster I somehow lost interest in sculpture. I like the big scale of fresco and the technical exactness of the medium.”²⁹

Frescos must be quickly painted in sections while the plaster is still wet. When dried, the color is integral to the wall and changes can only be made by over-painting or chipping out the original section. At approximately 1,600 square feet, Arnautoff's *Life of George Washington* was a monumental undertaking described at the time as

²⁶ “Historical Note” Federal Art Project, Photographic Division Finding Aid. Smithsonian Institution. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/federal-art-project-photographic-division-collection-5467/more#biohist>, accessed 30 August 2016.

²⁷ Masha Zakheim, *Coit Tower, San Francisco: Its History and Art* (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 2009), 12.

²⁸ “Talented San Francisco Artists Complete Fresco Projects,” *San Francisco Call Bulletin* (June 20, 1936).

²⁹ “San Francisco Artists,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 1, 1935), D3.

“probably the largest fresco assignment ever executed in this city by a single artist.”³⁰ Two assistants, George Harris and Gordon Langdon, have been noted as working with Arnautoff on this project.³¹ Assistants performed tasks such as grinding pigments and spraying water to keep wet plaster moist.³² They were also allowed to paint smaller landscape details.

Early responses to Arnautoff’s murals were celebratory, citing it as a visual history lesson for students and other viewers, and George Washington was lauded as a proud example of what it meant to be an American. More recently, San Francisco historian Robert Cherny has described how Arnautoff’s depictions of African Americans and Native Americans challenged their common erasure in school textbooks: “In depicting Mount Vernon, Arnautoff literally marginalized Washington and put enslaved African Americans in the center of one of the scenes.” Cherny reads a powerful subtext into the section showing Washington pointing to the frontier. “...Arnautoff’s counter-narrative makes it dramatically clear that the way west was over the body of a dead Indian.”³³ That perspective was presumably not obvious to students who made it a GWHS tradition to meet under the “Dead Indian,” the “sleeping guardian” of the school’s main lobby.³⁴

In the 1960s, Arnautoff’s murals became a source of outspoken anger from African American students who found the depictions of enslaved African Americans shucking corn, picking cotton, and loading barges as servile and humiliating. “Sure we picked cotton,” stated Daryl Thomas, President of the Washington Afro-American Club in May 1968. “That’s part of our history, but we would also like some recognition of the great contributions of black people to the sciences and history.”³⁵ By October of that year, the focus of student protest had evolved toward the removal of the murals, leading school officials to cover the offending scenes with sheets of paper according to one account.³⁶ However, a questionnaire returned by nearly half of the student body reportedly showed that less than 20 percent of students voted to have the murals removed while 61 percent agreed that “supplementing them” with additional depictions of African American history was the preferred remedy.³⁷

³⁰ Alfred Frankenstein, “Arnautoff Completes...” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 21, 1936), D6.

³¹ “‘When?’ Is a Native’s Work,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 29, 1940) describes Harris’s involvement. Langdon is described as assisting on the murals in George Washington High School Alumni Association, “George Washington High School’s History and Traditions” (2011), 4–5. <http://sfgwhsalumni.org>.

³² Zakheim, 19–20.

³³ Robert Cherny, “Victor Mikhail Arnautoff, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and Stanford,” *Sandstone & Tile* (Stanford Historical Society, fall 2013), 6–7.

³⁴ “The Background of George Washington,” *The Surveyor*, Vol. XV (June 1947).

³⁵ Phil Garlington, “Resentment Over High School Mural,” *San Francisco Examiner* (May 21, 1968), 3.

³⁶ Donald Canter, “High School Controversy: Black Students Want Murals Out,” *San Francisco Examiner* (October 24, 1968), 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

In 1968, the Afro-American Club identified a young African American painter named Dewey Crumpler as their preferred candidate to paint murals in response to the *Life of George Washington*. Only 19 years old at the time, Crumpler had just graduated from Balboa High School. According to Crumpler, members of the San Francisco Arts Commission were concerned that Crumpler did not have enough experience and held up the commission for several years. Taking advantage of the lull, Crumpler traveled across the country to look at murals by artists he admired, including several works by Diego Rivera. Crumpler also visited Mexico City, where he met the famed Mexican muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros. Crumpler showed his sketches of the proposed GWHS murals to Siqueiros, who provided valuable guidance on how to paint within an architectural space.³⁸ In 1974, six years after the controversy erupted, Dewey Crumpler's murals were installed at the west end of the main hall of GWHS. Formally called *Multi-Ethnic Heritage: Black, Asian, Native/Latin American*, the so-called "Response" murals depicted struggles for equality by African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans.³⁹

Sargent Johnson *Athletics* Frieze

A second phase of bond-funded work began after completion of the academic building in 1936, including the gymnasium and the football field and bleachers. Well-known San Francisco artist Beniamino Bufano was initially selected to produce the accompanying artwork, which was described as a "heroic frieze" to decorate a retaining wall on the south side of the football field. Early in 1940, rumors began circulating that Bufano had included likenesses of union organizer Harry Bridges and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in his sketches. In response, the local office of the Federal Art Project fired Bufano, ostensibly for taking too much time to complete his work.⁴⁰ The Board of Education, whose approval of the final artwork was required alongside that of the Arts Commission, passed a resolution in April 1940 claiming that it was satisfied with Bufano's design and requested that FAP explain why a new design was necessary.⁴¹ However, by June, Sargent Johnson, who had been a protégé of Bufano's, had received final approval from the Board of Education for his new design.⁴² The *Athletics* frieze was installed in 1942.

³⁸ Telephone interview with Dewey Crumpler by Donna Graves, February 16, 2017.

³⁹ George Washington High School Alumni Association, "George Washington High School's History and Traditions" (2011), 4–5. <http://sfgwhsalumni.org>

⁴⁰ "Project Fires Bufano," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 16, 1940).

⁴¹ "Education Board Wants Answers to Bufano Ouster," *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 24, 1940).

⁴² "School Board Approves Substitute for Bufano," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 26, 1940), 14. Johnson had studied with Bufano at the California School for the Arts. In 1935, the two artists shared the first sculpture prize of the 55th annual exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association; "12 Sculptors, Painters Share Art Awards," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 13, 1935), 12. The award jury included William Gaw, Gottardo Piazzoni, and Ralph Stackpole.

Concise History of George Washington High School: 1936–2017

The dedication ceremony for George Washington High School was held on August 23, 1936 and featured remarks by Mayor Antonio Rossi; Superintendent of Schools Joseph P. Nourse; and Elizabeth Morcombe, a representative of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers. The event recognized the completion of the first phase of the campus, which was designed to accommodate 1,500 students, with final plans for accommodating 3,000 pupils once the rest of the buildings were completed.⁴³ Students arrived for classes two days later.⁴⁴ GWHS's inaugural class consisted of entering tenth-graders and students transferred in from Lowell, Galileo, and Polytechnic High Schools, all of which had suffered from overflow enrollment.⁴⁵ Pupils faced several challenges: furniture had not been secured, so they reportedly were forced to stand or sit on the floor; gym classes were held in classrooms; and the library was without books except for one set of encyclopedias. The din of construction noise from the new gymnasium and auditorium accompanied the first two years of classes. Ernest J. Cummings served as GWHS's first principal; William Weiland was vice-principal and later dean of boys; Edith Pence was first dean of girls.⁴⁶

GWHS's first commencement took place in December 1936, when 148 students participated in a graduation ceremony at Commerce High School. No formal graduation exercises were scheduled after that until June 1938, when a ceremony for another 233 students was held at the Veterans' Memorial Opera House on June 7.⁴⁷ The *San Francisco Chronicle* proudly reported that nearly all students graduating from the "newest and most modern of San Francisco's high schools" were continuing their studies or had found employment (noteworthy, given the ongoing impact the Depression had had on youth employment).⁴⁸ Students who went on to further education made up more than half of the graduating class. Most enrolled in universities, secretarial colleges, and business and technical schools; a handful entered schools of art and music.⁴⁹

GWHS was an exemplar of what was then called a "comprehensive high school," a trend begun earlier in the twentieth century to integrate academic curricula with commercial and vocational education. In contrast to the "common school" of the nineteenth century, these new facilities offered a diversified curriculum that attempted "to accommodate the differentiated roles that students would play in their later lives."⁵⁰ In addition to traditional classrooms, GWHS in its final form housed learning spaces dedicated to "home economics," with stoves and

⁴³ "High School Dedication Slated Today," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 23, 1936), 9.

⁴⁴ "School Dedication Set: George Washington High to be Opened Sunday," *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 17, 1936), 28.

⁴⁵ "Dr. Lee Replies to Critics of School Plans," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 7, 1935), 24.

⁴⁶ "The Background of George Washington," *The Surveyor*, Vol. XV (June 1947).

⁴⁷ "Public School Classes Here to End Tomorrow," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 17, 1937), 7; "Washington High School to Graduate 233 June 7," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 26, 1938), 30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009, fourth edition), 271, 234.

sewing machines; training quarters for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC); a music unit; and a separate shop building designed to accommodate automobile, machine, electrical, cabinet, and pattern shops.⁵¹

Some educational reformers worried that the "comprehensive" structure would reinforce separation by social/economic class. In response, they encouraged extracurricular activities that might foster social cohesion such as newspapers, athletics, ROTC, and various other clubs.⁵² Within a few years of its founding, GWHS boasted an array of rallies, parties, concerts, "family dinners," and receptions that offered occasions to knit the student body together.⁵³ By the late 1940s, the GWHS Handbook described several clubs, including the Motion Picture Projectors Club, Floral Arts Club, Camera Club, French Club, and clubs organized by the YMCA and YWCA.⁵⁴ Assemblies were another "extracurricular activity to develop social unity," according to Urban and Waggoner's *American Education: A History* (2009).⁵⁵ Although the authors do not make this claim, assemblies may well have elevated the importance of auditoriums in school design during this era of school design and construction.

Described as a school that would eventually serve 3,000 students, GWHS's enrollment was only 1,740 in 1946. However, continuing residential development in the Outer Richmond District during the late 1940s and early 1950s caused school enrollment to continue growing. In a 1958 article titled "Three Cheers for George Washington High!" *Readers Digest* described GWHS as a national model that educated 2,676 students. Quoting University of California President Robert Gordon Sproul, who dubbed GWHS "the best academic high school in the state," the article touted the school as a place of "intellectual maturity" and "imaginative teaching," as well as a sports powerhouse.⁵⁶ By the early 1960s, the student population grew enough to bring the number of portable classrooms installed on the site to five.⁵⁷ In 1978, GWHS joined all of San Francisco's high schools in switching from a 3-year to 4-year curriculum.⁵⁸

When GWHS opened in 1936, it was overwhelmingly white, with small numbers of Asian Americans (predominantly Japanese American), Arab Americans, and Latinos. Journalist Spencer Michels compared his experience of the school in the mid-1950s with what he observed nearly three decades later.⁵⁹ As early as 1958, *Readers Digest* described the "vivid heterogeneity" of the student body, made up of "Scandinavian, Chinese, Irish, Slavic, Polish, French, Negro, Japanese, German and Greek—all Americans, but some only second generation."⁶⁰ By

⁵¹ Chas. H. Sawyer, "The George Washington High School" *Architect and Engineer* (April 1936), 33.

⁵² Urban and Wagoner, 272

⁵³ "The Background of George Washington," *The Surveyor*, Volume XV, June 1947.

⁵⁴ *Washington Eaglet: Handbook* (San Francisco: George Washington High School, n.d.), 55–57.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 273

⁵⁶ Frances V. Rummell, "Three Cheers for George Washington High!" *National Parent-Teacher Magazine* excerpted in *Reader's Digest* (March 1958), 86.

⁵⁷ George Washington High School Alumni Association, "George Washington High School's History and Traditions" (2011), 4–5, <http://sfgwhsalumni.org> accessed August 20, 2016.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Spencer Michels, "Washington: Alma Mater Revisited," *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle* (February 28, 1982), 16, 18–19.

⁶⁰ Rummell, 86.

1982, Michels reported that GWHS's student population was more than 50 percent Asian American (predominately Chinese American), 22 percent African American, 16 percent white, and 2 percent Latino. High student turnover and large numbers of students with "limited" English were described as being significant challenges. Honors and advanced placement classes, unknown in the 1950s, created "built-in segregation of serious students" according to Michels.⁶¹ Today, GWHS is 64 percent Asian American, 15 percent Latino, 8 percent white, 4 percent African American, and 9 percent other/decline to state. GWHS is still an academic powerhouse, with 98 percent of its 503 graduates in 2016 going on to post-secondary education.⁶²

Alteration History: 1952–2017

Building permits for public school construction are issued by the State of California to the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). These permits were not made available to us by SFUSD. Therefore, the following alteration history is based on a handful of building permits on file at the Department of Building Inspection Records Management Division (DBI), a summary of recent alterations provided by SFUSD staff, and an account of the school's construction and alteration history published by the George Washington Alumni Association. All alterations were verified in the field. In summary, GWHS has undergone comparatively few major alterations over its 80 years of existence, with most of the work centered on general maintenance, mechanical and systems upgrades, life/safety and accessibility compliance, and energy conservation.

There are five alteration permits on file at DBI. These permits, which are presented in chronological order, provide only limited information about changes to the complex and to the site during the first 35 years of GWHS's existence:

- October 3, 1962: Alterations and underpinning to portable classrooms, for temporary use only (Building Permit #271539).
- April 5, 1963: Relocate portable classrooms to George Washington High School (Building Permit #250163).
- June 23, 1964: Alterations to existing classrooms, including carpentry, plumbing, and electrical (Building Permit #268795).
- November 16, 1966: Non-structural alterations to electronics shop (Building Permit #3010000).
- June 8, 1970: Installation of two new portable classroom buildings on the school site (Building Permit #344825).

A summary of alterations provided to us by SFUSD staff focuses on facility improvements completed since 1988 as a result of bonds passed in 1988, 1990, 1994, 2003, 2006, and 2011. This work concentrated on classroom modernization and improvements to life/safety and accessibility, including installing ADA-compliant ramps and doors (1990), exterior door replacement (1988 and 1994), exterior painting (1989, 1990, 1993, and 1996),

⁶¹ Michels, 16.

⁶² San Francisco Unified School District, "George Washington High School, 2016–2017 School Year Profile." <http://www.gwhs-sfusd-ca.schoolloop.com/schoolprofile>, accessed December 12, 2016.

unspecified landscape and site improvements (1992 and 1996), and window sash replacement (1989, 1996, and 1997).

In 2011, the George Washington Alumni Association published a thoroughly researched account of the school's construction and alteration history. Although most of the information in this account is documented in the records described above, we included them because they flesh out the existing data. 1964: Most west-facing windows were replaced and the school was repainted.

- 1972: Boilers were converted to gas.
- 1984: The shop building was renamed the A. E. Lubamersky Industrial Arts Center, and new signage was installed.
- 1984: The tennis courts were resurfaced and bleachers at the west side of the courts were installed.
- 2006–09: Extensive alterations were completed following the passage of Proposition A in 2003, including the removal of prefabricated classrooms installed in 1962, classroom improvements, installation of accessible ramps from the esplanade to the auditorium; construction of two wheelchair lift towers on the north side of the track, and interior and exterior painting.
- 2010: The football field and the south field were converted to artificial turf.

Aerial photographs and Sanborn Maps provide additional information on the evolution of GWHS's campus. Aerial photographs taken in 1938 show the academic building and the shop building just a few years after they were constructed and two years before the gymnasium, auditorium, and football field were completed (**Figure 85**). Visible at the upper edge of the image are the tennis and basketball courts on the north side of the campus. Remnants of the quarry can be seen where the football field was to be built. Visible south of the academic building and the future auditorium and gymnasium is the undeveloped southern third of the campus, which then consisted of sand dunes and brush marked by informal footpaths. Published 12 years later, the 1950 Sanborn Maps illustrate the entire complex completed except for the music room addition, which was built in 1952, and the running track which was built in 1958 (**Figure 86**). Published almost 40 years later, the ca. 1990 Sanborn



Figure 85. 1938 Aerial photograph showing George Washington High School; north is up. Source: David

Maps updated by the San Francisco Planning Department show the music room addition and the rest of the site improvements that exist today (**Figure 87**). The 1990 Sanborn Maps also show the equipment shed on the south side of the campus as well as several modular classrooms on the east side of the campus.

George Washington High School has some very prominent alumni, including Philip Burton, Maya Angelou, Danny Glover, Johnny Mathis, Hal March, and Edwin Newman.

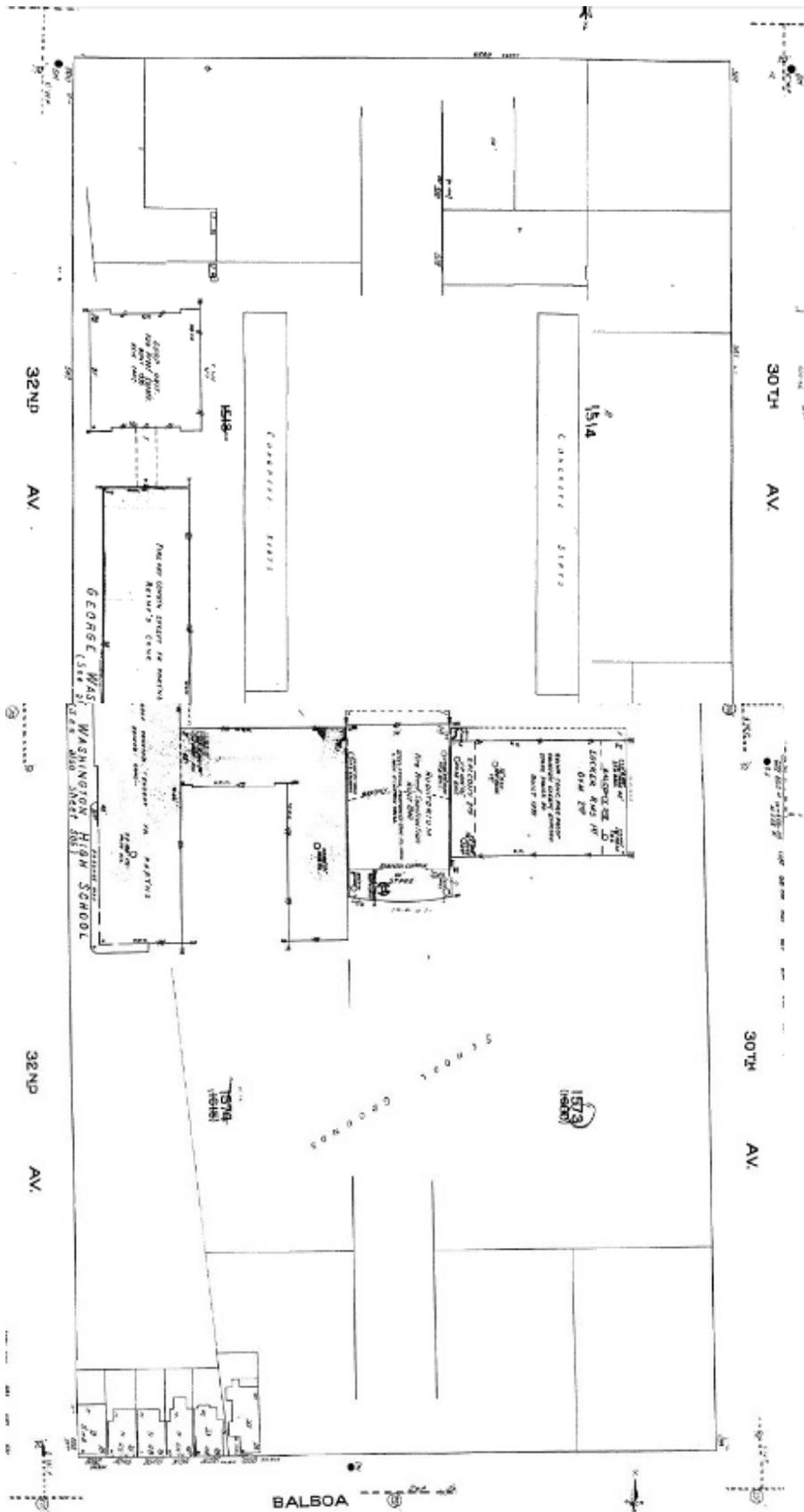


Figure 86. 1950 Sanborn Maps showing George Washington High School.

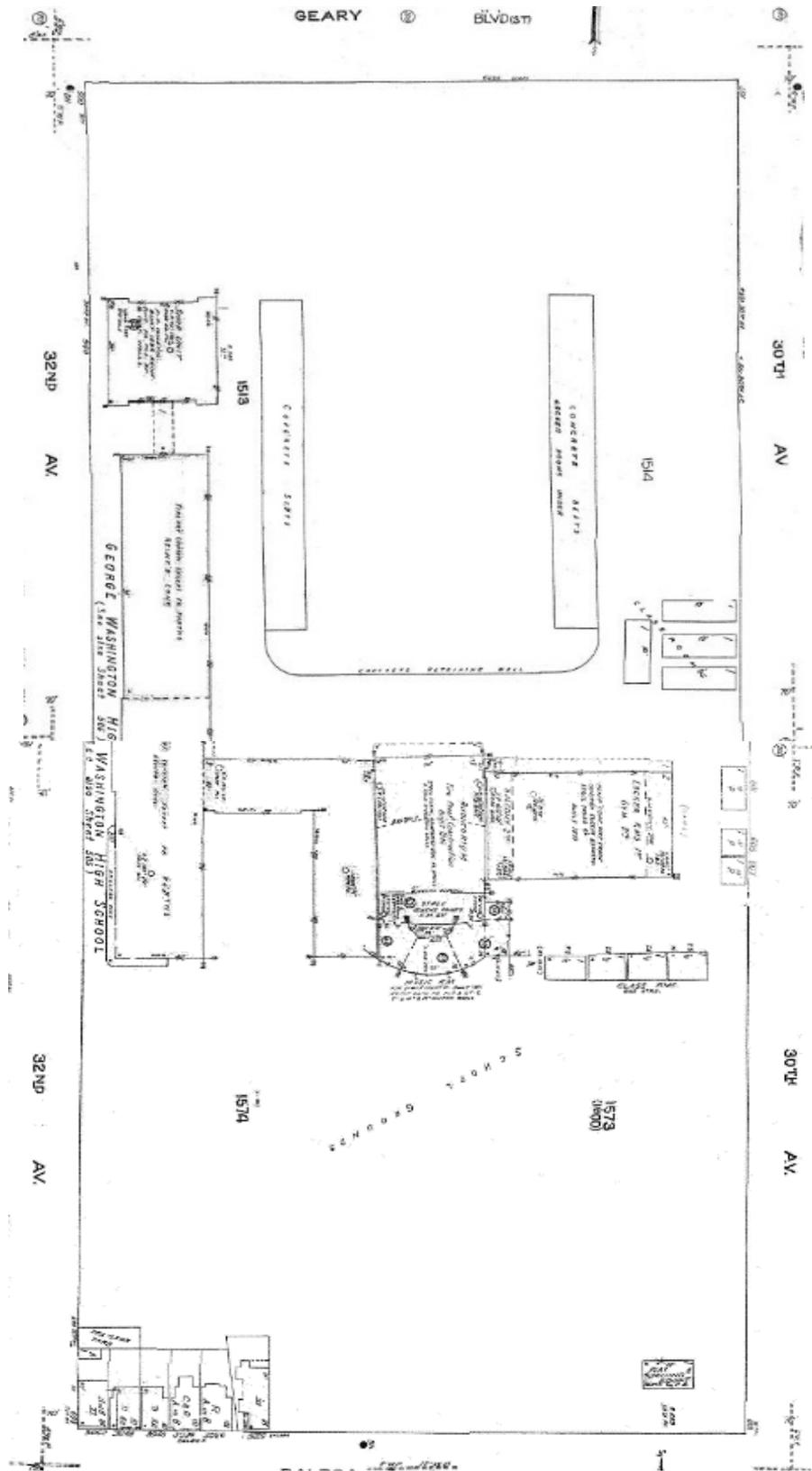


Figure 87. Ca. 1900 Sanborn Maps showing George Washington High School.

Concise History of the SFUSD and School Construction: 1847–1940

Public education in San Francisco dates back to 1847, when the first school opened on Portsmouth Square. Three years later, the Free School Ordinance divided the city into seven school districts and allowed local taxes to be levied to support public schools. San Francisco's first high school was established in 1856, and the first free kindergarten in the western United States opened in San Francisco in 1878.⁶³ Compulsory education laws, massive immigration from outside the U.S., and internal migration from rural to urban settings led to an explosion in school enrollment in California and across the nation during the late nineteenth century. As the school system became more elaborate and the numbers of students grew, the teaching workforce expanded and teachers' organizations grew as well. By the 1910s, members of San Francisco teachers' associations were active in state and local campaigns affecting schools and child welfare alike.⁶⁴

Educational reform efforts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were part of the overall Progressive movement to address government corruption, as well as economic dislocation and social turbulence brought about by rapid industrialization and mass immigration. Schools were seen as vehicles for inculcating moral values, especially in foreign-born children. As San Francisco civic leader John Swett argued, "Nothing can Americanize these chaotic elements and breathe into them the spirit of our institutions but the public schools."⁶⁵ Statements such as these probably would have offended many members of San Francisco's large Irish, Italian, and German immigrant communities, who found more sympathetic ears in Democratic Party officials who "dominated" the Board of Education for most of the 1870s–1890s.⁶⁶

Progressive campaigns for educational reform included expansion and reorganization of curriculum, improving teacher education, and changes in how schools and school districts were administered.⁶⁷ Assessments of San Francisco's school system in 1911 and 1917 found major deficiencies in both educational instruction and facilities.⁶⁸ These critiques fueled a "good government" campaign for selecting school board members and the superintendent of schools to be appointed, rather than elected. Amendment 37, a citywide initiative calling for these measures failed in 1918, but was passed with a narrow majority of voters in 1920.⁶⁹

Reorganizing school systems to add junior high schools was another feature of progressive education reform. Junior high schools were adopted in California starting in 1909, and by 1913, three San Francisco grammar schools

⁶³ "Finding Aid to the San Francisco Unified School District Records 1854–2005, Biographical/Historical Note" (San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 2005), 3–4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁵ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865–1932: Power, Politics and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 102.

⁶⁶ Issel and Cherny, 104.

⁶⁷ Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009, fourth edition), 227.

⁶⁸ Sonnier Francisco, *Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California* (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009), 29.

⁶⁹ Francisco, 30.

had been converted to serve seventh through ninth grades with modified schedules and curriculum designed for children in early adolescence. Dr. Joseph A. Gwinn, the first superintendent hired by the newly appointed Board of Education, championed the transformation from an “8-4” system (eight years in elementary school then four in high school) to a “6-3-3” program that placed seventh through ninth graders in junior high and tenth through twelfth graders in high school.⁷⁰ By 1929, the city had nine operating junior high schools and more planned.⁷¹

The proliferation of schools in San Francisco’s western neighborhoods followed logically as residential and commercial development increased in those parts of the city. San Francisco’s “Outside Lands” – most of which would eventually become the Sunset and Richmond Districts, as well as Golden Gate Park and parts of the Potrero and Mission Districts – consisted of thousands of acres of sand dunes, thickets of willows and oaks, and coastal sage scrub.⁷² San Francisco experienced major building booms in these areas after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, and again during the 1920s. Infrastructure developments, such as graded streets and streetcar tunnels, as well as the mass adoption of private automobiles, spurred residential development in what had previously been the city’s outlying wilderness and agricultural areas.⁷³

School location decisions were subject to political pressures as well as objective calculations of need.⁷⁴ Lincoln High School was erected in the Sunset District at the behest of parent and civic organizations who argued that the “fast growing region” deserved a secondary school. Superintendent Lee stated at a meeting held at Parkside School in February 1934 that “If the \$3,000,000 bond issue pending with the government and providing for the George Washington High School in the Richmond District can be approved, the Sunset will be the next thing on the expansion program.”⁷⁵

The period between World War I and World War II has been called the “Golden Age” of San Francisco school construction.⁷⁶ Approximately 50 new school buildings were erected in the 1920s and 1930s, including several built with assistance from the PWA and WPA.⁷⁷ John Reid Jr., who served as city architect from 1919 to 1927, designed a large number of these facilities. Other prominent Bay Area architects who designed schools in this period include Miller & Pflueger, Bakewell & Brown, and Weeks & Day.⁷⁸

⁷⁰ Francisco, p. 32.

⁷¹ Lee Stephen Dolson, Jr., *The Administration of the San Francisco Public Schools, 1847 to 1947* (Berkeley: PhD Dissertation, 1965), 455.

⁷² Mary Brown, *Sunset District Residential Builders, 1925–1950: Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco Planning Department: 2013), 19.

⁷³ Brown, 21.

⁷⁴ Dolson, 482–83.

⁷⁵ “Sunset Area High School Need Shown,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1934), 19.

⁷⁶ The term appears to have first been used in “Civic Architecture: San Francisco’s Public Schools,” *San Francisco Architectural Heritage Newsletter* (1988, XVI:3), 5. It is the title of a recent study conducted for the San Francisco Planning department by Sonnier Francisco, “Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California” (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009).

⁷⁷ Figure for the 1920s from “Civic Architecture,” *San Francisco’s Public Schools*.

⁷⁸ “Civic Architecture.”

San Francisco School Construction Bonds: 1917–1938

San Franciscans voted four times in two decades to fund expansion of their public school district's physical plant. In November 1917, \$3.5 million dollars were authorized to address overcrowding. In part, this was a long-term hangover from the devastation wrought by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, which destroyed 29 schools. More than 10 years after the tragedy, more than 170 classes were reportedly being held in "temporary shacks, lunchrooms, basements, corridors, rented rooms, stores and auditoriums."⁷⁹ In December 1917, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the bond funds would be spent on new elementary and high schools, and on purchase of land for a school and playground.⁸⁰

In 1922, voters were asked again to "invest in the future of the children of San Francisco" because "today's school children will be San Francisco's men and women of tomorrow."⁸¹ Mayor James Rolph Jr. described the bond measure as an issue of equity. "Every neighborhood must be given an equal opportunity with every other neighborhood. We must not have good buildings here and poor buildings elsewhere."⁸² After the overwhelmingly positive November election results, City agencies scrambled to coordinate planning and expenditure of the \$12 million devoted to building 30 schools. "The plan for the rehabilitation of the schools is the most gigantic ever attempted in San Francisco. It is comparable only to the Civic Center project," stated Rolph.⁸³ The bond also funded a study of educational needs based on the city's growing population so that future schools could be sited in the most appropriate locations.⁸⁴

A 1933 bond measure approved \$3 million for school projects inspired, at least in part, by safety concerns highlighted by a fire at the Fremont School. Arguments for replacing older wood-frame schools for just this reason had been made for more than 10 years, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In addition to replacing buildings made of timber, the Board of Education planned to use the campaign to make "readjustments of school districts, and in some cases consolidations."⁸⁵ The measure contained funds for three new schools, including George Washington High School, Marina Junior High School, and Lawton Elementary School.⁸⁶ Voters approved the bond on December 19, 1933.⁸⁷ Another impetus for this bond measure was provided by the Field Act, a state law passed in April 1933, one month after a major earthquake shook Southern California and turned 230 schools into rubble

⁷⁹ "School Bond Election to be Held Tuesday," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 28, 1917), 8.

⁸⁰ "Board Locates First Schools to Be Erected," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 5, 1917), 10.

⁸¹ "Future of S. F. is at Stake at Polls Tuesday," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁸² James Rolph Jr. "Rolph Appeals to S.F. to Vote School Bonds," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁸³ "First Steps Taken on Big School Plans," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 25, 1922), 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ "Rossi Makes Final School Bond Appeal," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1933), 11.

⁸⁶ "Women Urge Approval of School Bonds," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 10, 1933), 9.

⁸⁷ "Lee Expresses Joy at School Bond Issue," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 20, 1933), 2.

or otherwise unfit for occupation. The Field Act also established the Office of the State Architect, which then assumed regulatory overview and permitting for school construction throughout California.⁸⁸

In 1938 another bond issue proposed borrowing \$2.8 million to construct a new unit for San Francisco Junior College (now San Francisco City College), as well as gymnasiums and auditoriums for selected elementary, junior, and high schools. This bond included funds to complete several components of the George Washington High School campus, including an auditorium, a gymnasium, a football field, and a running track.⁸⁹ Six other bond issues appeared on the September ballot, but only the \$2.8 million measure to fund the school projects was approved. For the first time, these bonds depended on a grant from the federal Public Works Administration (PWA), which provided 45 percent of the total cost. Without support from Washington, even if approved by voters, the local bonds could not have been offered for sale.⁹⁰ On October 2, 1938, the *San Francisco Chronicle* announced that Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, would be visiting San Francisco following an announcement that he had approved \$2.5 million in PWA funds for local school building projects.⁹¹ The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Ickes had been withholding PWA funds up to that time because he disapproved of the City's handling of power distribution from the recently completed Hetch Hetchy water system.⁹²

Concise History of the Public Works Administration: 1935–1943

The Public Works Administration (PWA) was a federal agency signed into law on June 16, 1933 under Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Not originally envisioned as a work relief program, the PWA's initial purpose was to stimulate demand for construction materials by providing a combination of grants and loans to state and local governments for major public works projects. Headed by Harold Ickes, the PWA provided 30 percent of the cost of labor and materials to the project sponsor and loaned the remainder if necessary. The interest rate was 4 percent to avoid competing with private banks. The PWA's contribution was later elevated to 45 percent. To be approved for PWA funds, a project sponsor had to represent a federal, state, or local government jurisdiction and demonstrate that its project was both necessary and economically viable. The project sponsor also had to comply with all federal regulations for procurement, labor, etc.⁹³ Vetting of non-federal (state and municipal) projects was slow and laborious, but nearly every approved project was successfully built, a testament to the PWA's rigorous review process.

⁸⁸ California State Safety Commission, "The Field Act and Public School Construction: A 2007 Perspective."

⁸⁹ "Work to Cost Ten Millions on Bond Issue List," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 15, 1938), 6.

⁹⁰ Earl Behrens, "Schools Win: Market Line Bond Issue Defeated," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 28, 1938), 1, 11.

⁹¹ "Cake for S.F.," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 2, 1938), 5.

⁹² Ben Kline, "City Hall," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 22, 1938), 11.

⁹³ Robert D. Leighninger, Jr. *Long-Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 9.

PWA was created to fund permanent infrastructure as a way of stimulating the economy more generally, and employment on PWA projects was not limited to the unemployed. WPA (Works Progress Administration) was created to provide work relief to the unemployed. PWA projects were expected to include a significant expenditure for building materials. WPA projects were expected to make the bulk of their expenditures on wages. The PWA was supposed to confine its activity to projects costing more than \$25,000. In San Francisco, most PWA projects were permanent buildings as opposed to streets, parks/playgrounds, and other basic infrastructure projects upon which the WPA concentrated. San Francisco was a major beneficiary of PWA funds, in part because it had passed several bond issues for school construction, meaning that it had the matching funds on hand and the political will to start building as soon as possible. As a result, many of the PWA projects in San Francisco were public schools. The tally included eight elementary schools: Buena Vista, Francis Scott Key, Glen Park, Horace Mann, Lawton, Patrick Henry, Starr King, and Visitacion Valley; three junior high schools: James Denman, Marina, and Portola (auditorium only); and three high schools: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Samuel Gompers Trade School.

The PWA funded several major government buildings for the federal government in San Francisco, including the new Mint at Hermann and Buchanan Streets, the new Federal Office Building in the Civic Center, and the Appraisers Building in Jackson Square.⁹⁴ The PWA also funded several major non-educational infrastructure projects for the City and County of San Francisco, including the Cow Palace (part of which is in San Mateo County), the expansion of O'Shaughnessy Dam in Yosemite National Park to augment the Hetch Hetchy water delivery system, the construction of massive transit sheds at Piers 35 and 37, the construction of the Pulgas Water Temple at Crystal Springs Reservoir in San Mateo County, erection of the Richmond-Sunset Sewage Treatment Plant in Golden Gate Park (demolished), San Francisco Junior College (now San Francisco City College), and improvements to Mills Field (now San Francisco International Airport).

⁹⁴ William Mooser, Jr., Branch Manager, W.P.A., *Report on Progress of the Works Program in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Works Progress Administration, San Francisco Branch, 1938).

Timothy Pflueger, Architect: 1892–1946

Timothy Pflueger is one of the most remarkable architects to have come from San Francisco (**Figure 88**). In spite of several significant hurdles, including the Depression and World War II, Pflueger created an extensive and high-quality oeuvre during his short life. Attesting to their quality and stature, dozens of Pflueger's buildings still stand throughout northern California. Coming of age in an era dominated by the conservative aesthetic of the *École des Beaux Arts*, Timothy Pflueger defied the dominant taste of his provincial hometown and embraced a daring modernist aesthetic that incorporated influences of Chinese, Persian, Mayan, and Aztec architectural and artistic traditions. Long known as a supporter of the fine arts, Pflueger often collaborated with well-known sculptors, muralists, lighting designers, and other artisans and craftspeople, including Diego Rivera, Ralph Stackpole, and Arthur Mathews. Pflueger was also a proponent of modern technology and he embraced contemporary building materials, including aluminum, Lucite, and sheet metal, using them to make his buildings seem more richly appointed than constrained Depression-era budgets would allow.



Figure 88. Drawing of Timothy Pflueger in 1936 by Peter van Valkenburg.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

Timothy Ludwig Pflueger was born September 26, 1892 in San Francisco. His German immigrant parents, Otilie and August Pflueger, both arrived in San Francisco in 1890. August Pflueger was a merchant tailor and from 1904 on, the family lived above his shop at 1015 Guerrero Street in the city's Mission District. While not poor, Timothy Pflueger was raised in humble circumstances in a multi-ethnic district composed of immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, and France. Though frugal, religious, and of humble means, Timothy Pflueger's parents were cultured, and they did not neglect their children's education in the arts, paying for piano lessons and art and drafting lessons for young Timothy. Many of his relatives lived nearby, including several tradesmen that Pflueger would work with for the rest of his life. He had comparatively little formal education, going only as far as high school. Like many boys in his circumstances, Timothy went to work as soon as he could to help his family and earn his way, learning skills on the job.⁹⁵

Pflueger showed an early talent in drawing and painting. In fact, it seems that he began working as a draftsman as early as 1906 (at the age of 14), when the demand for skilled renderers and delineators surged after the 1906

⁹⁵ Therese Poletti, *Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 3–5.

Earthquake and Fire. As a teenager, he began working as a draftsman in the offices of James Rupert, or J. R., Miller and George T. Colmesnil, a young firm heavily involved in the post-quake reconstruction of San Francisco.⁹⁶ The partners quickly recognized that their young hire was very talented, and they encouraged him to join the San Francisco Architectural Club, a young architects' organization that offered night classes based on the methods and pedagogy of the prestigious *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris.⁹⁷

The talented Timothy Pflueger steadily increased his skills in the nurturing environment of Miller & Colmesnil and in 1912, at the age of 20, he was given his first solo project, a small country church in Portola Valley, California. Our Lady of the Wayside, which still stands, is designed in the Mission Revival style, combining features of several different California missions, including Mission Dolores, Mission San Gabriel, and Mission San Carlos Borromeo (**Figure 89**).⁹⁸ Our Lady of the Wayside was greeted with rave reviews, and Miller & Colmesnil began giving Pflueger larger and more high-profile jobs, including the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company building (now the Ritz-Carlton Hotel), a Beaux-Arts-styled office building that still stands at the northeast corner of Stockton and Pine Streets on Nob Hill (**Figure 90**).⁹⁹



Figure 89. Our Lady of the Wayside, Portola Valley, CA.
Source: Town of Portola Valley



Figure 90. Rendering of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. building.
Source: SFMoMa

Miller & Colmesnil dissolved in 1913, but Pflueger continued to work as an employee of J. R. Miller's for another six years, assisting him on a variety of projects. In 1917, after the U.S. entered World War I, Timothy Pflueger was drafted into the Army Corps of Engineers. He spent the war designing training camps, including camps in Washington, D.C. and San Juan, Puerto

⁹⁶ Poletti, 8.

⁹⁷ Poletti, 11.

⁹⁸ Poletti, 26–7.

⁹⁹ Poletti, 27.

Rico.¹⁰⁰ Upon his return to San Francisco in 1919, Miller promoted Pflueger to the position of chief draftsman and then in 1920, after Pflueger received his California architecture license, Miller made Pflueger his partner. With the American economy booming during the 1920s, and work abundant in San Francisco, Miller & Pflueger designed several buildings that have since become local landmarks. The firm's work in the 1920s still largely adhered to historicist styles, including the Beaux Arts, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, and Mediterranean.



Figure 91. Interior of the Castro Theater.

Source: Flickr user SFHandyman

Some of the firm's most famous works from this era include the Castro Theater (1921) at 429 Castro Street and the San Francisco Mining Exchange (1923) at 350 Bush Street. The Castro Theater was Pflueger's first major movie theater, a building type that would make him famous. Though the exterior is designed in a straightforward rendition of the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the interior is a fanciful blend of exotic influences that combines features of a Roman amphitheater with a Middle Eastern caravanserai (Figure 91).

The Castro Theater project earned Miller & Pflueger several other high-profile theater commissions, mainly from the Nasser Brothers, the proprietors of the Castro Theater and a chain of theaters throughout Northern California. The Nassers gave Pflueger a free hand with their theater commissions, allowing him to come up with fanciful interior spaces that would transport moviegoers to far-off lands before the curtain had parted. Indeed, the Nasser Brothers hired Miller & Pflueger to design all of their theaters, including The Alhambra (1925) in San Francisco; three theaters in Tulare, Oroville, and Chico (1926–27); the Paramount (1931) in Oakland; the Alameda Theater (1932) in Alameda; and the New Mission Theater, a remodel of an existing 1917 neighborhood theater in San Francisco's Mission District (1932).

The Castro Theater caught the attention of many prominent businesspeople, including the directors of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Company, who decided to hire Miller & Pflueger to design its new high-rise office building in San Francisco's South of Market area. After securing the commission, Pflueger developed several traditional designs for San Francisco's first true "skyscraper." Not caring for any of his initial designs, Pflueger became

¹⁰⁰ Poletti, 30.

engrossed in the recent 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition.¹⁰¹ One of the entries, by Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, dispensed with the traditional Beaux-Arts tripartite arrangement consisting of a base, shaft, and capital in favor of a unified, Gothic-inspired approach using vertical lines and sequential setbacks to emphasize the building's height. Pflueger's final 1923 design for the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building, which shows the influence of Saarinen, was another important breakthrough for the young architect, marking the beginning of his embrace of modern design **(Figure 92)**.

The national press finally took notice of Timothy Pflueger following the completion of the Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Building in 1925. Five years later, Pflueger would make his second major contribution to San Francisco's skyline with the Medical-Dental Office Building (1929) at 450 Sutter Street, a block north of Union Square. Along with Howe & Lescaze's PSFS Building in Philadelphia, 450 Sutter is arguably the most innovative skyscraper built in the United States during the 1920s. Discarding the heavy pseudo-masonry cladding of the Telephone Building, Pflueger embraced the underlying logic of the steel frame and wrapped the Medical-Dental Building in a thin terra cotta and glass skin, with delicate spandrels ornamented with Mayan-inspired patterns. The windows wrap around the corners of the building, contributing to its lightweight and modern appearance. Pflueger, a lover of dramatic flourishes, designed a richly appointed lobby for 450 Sutter. The lobby, one of the most photographed in San Francisco, is finished in black marble and gilded stucco embossed with Mesoamerican pictographs resembling a Mayan temple **(Figure 93)**.¹⁰²



Figure 92. Pacific Telephone Building.
Source: Author's postcard collection

The Medical-Dental Building was completed several months after the Stock Market Crash of November 1929. The ensuing Depression ushered in a period in San Francisco during which comparatively little was constructed for almost a decade. Fortunately for Miller & Pflueger, their reputation was so great that they continued to get high-profile projects. Theaters and office buildings continued to comprise a major part of their work, including an addition and remodel of the Pacific Stock Exchange (1930), El Rey Theater (1931), and the Paramount Theater in Oakland (1932). Embracing an escapist tendency that is characteristic of so much of their work, Miller & Pflueger designed several high-end San Francisco nightclubs and cocktail lounges, including Bal Tabarin (now Bimbo's 365), Le Cirque Room in the Fairmont Hotel, the Patent Leather Lounge in the St. Francis Hotel, and Top of the Mark in

¹⁰¹ Poletti, 61-5.

¹⁰² Poletti, 79-80.

the Mark Hopkins Hotel. The firm's work wasn't solely focused on fantasy; Miller & Pflueger designed several major public buildings in San Francisco during the Depression, including Roosevelt Junior High School (1930), George Washington High School (1936), the Transbay Terminal (1937), San Francisco Junior College (now San Francisco City College – 1940), and a parking garage beneath Union Square (1942). Much of the firm's work from the latter half of the 1930s shows a gradual evolution away from the "Mayan Deco" toward a more austere aesthetic in keeping with contemporary European modernism. George Washington High School, designed in the Streamline Moderne style with some Regency and International style influences, is one of the best examples demonstrating the growing abstraction of Pflueger's later work. This evolution picked up speed following the retirement of the more traditionally minded J. R. Miller in 1937. From this point on, the firm became known as Timothy L. Pflueger & Associates.

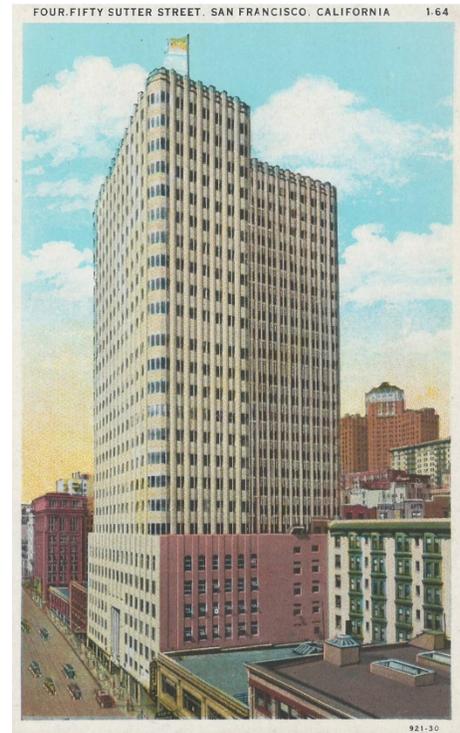


Figure 93. Medical-Dental Building.
Source: Author's postcard collection

In 1939, Timothy Pflueger was appointed to the board of architects in charge of designing the Golden Gate International Exposition (GGIE) on Treasure Island. As part of his duties, Pflueger designed the Federal Building, the California State Building, the California Auditorium, and the Court of the Pacific. Pflueger's work at the GGIE represented his continuing evolution toward modernism. During World War II, Pflueger worked for the U.S. government, designing the U.S. Army General Depot in Ogden, Utah; various Army transmitter buildings and broadcasting studios; and several housing projects for defense workers. His final project was a remodel of the I. Magnin's Co.'s flagship store at the southwest corner of Geary and Stockton Streets in San Francisco's Union Square. This ultra-modern building was under construction when Timothy Pflueger died of heart failure on November 7, 1946, following his daily swim at the Olympic Club.¹⁰³ Following his death, the firm was taken over by Timothy's younger brother, Milton, who renamed it Pflueger Architects.

¹⁰³ Poletti, 218.

Artists' Biographies

Victor Mikhail Arnautoff: 1896–1979

Victor Arnautoff painted his mural cycle, *Life of George Washington*, in the main lobby of the academic building at George Washington High School. Born in 1896 in what then a part of Imperial Russia (now Ukraine), Arnautoff (**Figure 94**) grew up in the city of Mariupol. He served as a cavalry officer during World War I and then became a cavalry officer in one of the White armies that opposed the Bolsheviks' Red Army in the Russian Civil War. Unable to return home because of his service in a White army, he first lived in northeastern China as a refugee.¹⁰⁴ He arrived in San Francisco in 1925 on a student visa to pursue studies at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute).¹⁰⁵ Among Arnautoff's instructors was Ralph Stackpole, who encouraged him to study mural painting in Mexico with Diego Rivera. Arnautoff assisted Rivera on major mural commissions in Mexico City and Cuernavaca.¹⁰⁶ He returned to San Francisco in 1931 and three years later, he was selected to serve as technical coordinator for the group of artists working on murals for Coit Tower, funded by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). Arnautoff contributed his own fresco titled *Urban Life* to the project.¹⁰⁷ In 1936, he painted *Life of George Washington* in the main lobby of George Washington High School.



Figure 94. Victor Arnautoff painting at George Washington High School, June 8, 1936.

Source: San Francisco Public Library, History Center, Photo AAA-5413.

In addition to GWHS and Coit Tower, Arnautoff received other federal commissions to execute murals in several post offices around Northern California and Texas, including South San Francisco, Pacific Grove, and Richmond, California; and Linden and College Station, Texas. Working for the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA), Arnautoff created a mural for the Presidio Chapel in San Francisco.¹⁰⁸ A WPA-funded profile of the artist described Arnautoff as believing that the placement of “frescos in public buildings is a forward step of great importance for the education of those who are unable to find art interest in other forms.”¹⁰⁹ Arnautoff also painted several murals for non-public clients, including at the Old Cathedral of the Holy Virgin on Fulton Street in San Francisco and the Palo Alto Clinic. He taught at the California School of Fine Arts, Stanford University, and the California Labor School,

¹⁰⁴ Robert Cherny, “Victor Mikhail Arnautoff, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and Stanford,” *Sandstone and Tile* (37:3, 2013), 4.

¹⁰⁵ Gene Hailey, ed. *California Art Research* (San Francisco: California Art Research Project, Vol. 20, 1936), 109. Says his studio at 790 Montgomery Street, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Cherny, 5. According to *California Art Research*, Vol. 20, 110, Arnautoff completed his first public commission, a fresco for a Russian Church on Fulton Street.

¹⁰⁷ Masha Zakheim, *Coit Tower, San Francisco: Its History and Art* (Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 2009), 67.

¹⁰⁸ New Deal Art Registry, <http://www.newdealartregistry.org/artist/ArnautoffVictor/>.

¹⁰⁹ *California Art Research*, Vol. 20, p. 120.

an organization that reflected his political views as a member of the Communist Party, which he joined in 1938. Arnautoff retired from Stanford in 1962 after 24 years on the faculty. One year later, he returned to his home village, Mariupol, in the Ukraine. He continued to exhibit and produce public art works in Mariupol, including three major mosaic murals that were installed in a school, an airport, and the Communications Building. In 1970, he moved to Leningrad, where he died in 1979.¹¹⁰

Sargent Johnson: 1888–1967

Sargent Johnson, who created the relief frieze *Athletics* at the south end of the football field at George Washington High School, was born in Boston to a Swedish American father, Anderson Johnson; and an American mother of African and Cherokee descent, Lizzie Jackson Johnson. Sargent Johnson (**Figure 95**) was raised by his maternal aunt, May Howard Jackson, a sculptor who specialized creating in busts of African American subjects. Her early influence set young Sargent on his way toward becoming an artist. As early as 1915, Johnson came to San Francisco to study art, first at the A. W. Best School, and then at the California School of Fine Arts (now the San Francisco Art Institute). At the California School of Fine Arts, he worked with Ralph Stackpole, Maurice Stern, and Beniamino Bufano. Johnson was member of the Communist Party for much of his life. Even though he could “pass” as a white man, Johnson



Figure 95. Sargent Johnson, ca. 1935
Source: National Archives

consciously embraced his African American heritage, believing that the fine arts could improve the place of African Americans in twentieth-century America. Johnson became a leading figure in the “New Negro” movement, which consciously embraced W. E. B. DuBois’s goal of fostering racial pride through cultural self-expression, economic independence, and progressive politics.¹¹¹ Johnson became the first African American artist in California to draw national attention, exhibiting at New York’s Harmon Foundation, which supported African American artists nationally and organized major exhibits associated with the Harlem Renaissance.¹¹² Much of his early work consisted of busts, drawings, and sculptures that celebrated black Americans’ African roots.

During the Depression, Sargent received several commissions from the Federal Arts Project (FAP) and other New Deal-era public arts programs. In 1937 his first New Deal project consisted of carving several wood relief panels for

¹¹⁰ Electronic communication between authors and Arnautoff biographer, Robert Cherny, February 9, 2017.

¹¹¹ “Sargent Johnson,” San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, <http://sfmoma.org/explore/collection/artists/365>, accessed April 5, 2015.

¹¹² Anne Evenhaugen, “African American Art and the Harmon Foundation” Smithsonian Institution blog, <https://blog.library.si.edu/2013/02/african-american-art-and-the-harmon-foundation/#.V747Y2W1OLE>, accessed August 24, 2016.

the California School of the Blind in Berkeley.¹¹³ He then went to work with his old mentor, Beniamino “Benny” Bufano, on a series of metal sculptures in San Francisco, including “Sun Yat-Sen” in St. Mary’s Square (1937), the “Peace Sculpture” at San Francisco International Airport (1938), and a group of animal sculptures for the new Sunnydale Housing Project (1938). However, it was the Aquatic Park commission that earned Johnson his enduring reputation as a giant in the San Francisco art world. On this project, Johnson supervised a team of 45 artists to create a series of marble mosaic murals and sculptures decorating a new public bathhouse built on the city’s Northern Waterfront. However, after the City decided to lease most of the building to a private casino operator, Johnson walked off the job leaving one tile mosaic unfinished at the second floor level.¹¹⁴

Johnson’s work at Aquatic Park attracted the attention of the architect Timothy Pflueger, a member of the board of architects in charge of the Golden Gate International Exposition. Pflueger hired him to execute commissions for the GGIE, including several sculptures in the Court of Pacifica. Impressed with Johnson’s abilities, Pflueger was instrumental in reassigning the relief frieze at George Washington High School from Bufano to Johnson. As a result, Bufano never spoke to his erstwhile protégé again.

Johnson later recalled that the New Deal arts programs were the high point of his career, enabling him to create in new materials and on a massive scale in well-equipped studios.¹¹⁵ Sargent Johnson continued to exhibit after World War II, gaining fresh inspiration from his extended travels to Mexico. Beginning in 1945, and continuing through 1965, Johnson made a number of trips to remote villages in Oaxaca, where he learned how to use the local black clay to make pots and figures. When he was not in Mexico, Sargent Johnson lived very frugally in an apartment at 1507 Grant Avenue on Telegraph Hill. He continued to make art for the rest of his life, dying in San Francisco on October 10, 1967, after suffering a heart attack.¹¹⁶

Robert Boardman Howard: 1896–1983

Sculptor and painter Robert Howard, the likely creator of several bas-relief friezes at George Washington High School, was among the creative offspring of the prominent Bay Area architect, John Galen Howard. His siblings included painters Charles and John Langley, and the architect Henry Howard. Robert Howard studied at the College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland and the Art Students League in New York. After serving in the U.S. Military during WWI, he remained in Europe and continued his studies in Germany and France. He returned to San Francisco in the early 1920s and began creating architectural ornaments. In 1928, he received a commission to paint graphic

¹¹³ Carol Pogash, “Berkeley’s Artwork Loss Is a Museum’s Gain,” *New York Times* (February 20, 2012).

¹¹⁴ National Park Service, *Aquatic Park Bathhouse: A Palace for the Public*, onsite interpretive plaque.

¹¹⁵ Tim Kelley, Christopher VerPlanck, Alfred Williams, *San Francisco Citywide African American Historic Context Statement, 1579–2014* (San Francisco: San Francisco Planning department, 2015), 75.

¹¹⁶ “Sargent Johnson: A Bay Area Artist,” The African American Registry http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/sargent-johnson-bay-area-artist, accessed April 5, 2015.

maps of the Bay Area on the Key Route ferries.¹¹⁷ Howard worked with architect Timothy Pflueger and the sculptor Ralph Stackpole on several artworks for the San Francisco Stock Exchange, where he worked with his future wife sculptor Adeline Kent, and on Oakland's Paramount Theater. Howard's other New Deal-era commissions include bas-reliefs for the Livermore, California Post Office and Berkeley High School.¹¹⁸

Gordon Langdon: 1910–1963

Gordon Langdon, the creator of the mural *Modern and Ancient Science* above the entrance to the library at George Washington High School, is the least well documented of the artists who created art for GWHS. In her book on Coit Tower, Masha Zakheim wrote: "Gordon Langdon emerges as an almost mythical figure who came, remained briefly, and then moved on."¹¹⁹ Born in San Francisco, Langdon studied art at the California School of Fine Arts and reportedly shared a studio with Ralph Stackpole during the Depression. In addition to George Washington High School, Langdon contributed a scene titled *California Agriculture and Industry* to the mural cycle at Coit Tower. Langdon abandoned his art career after serving in the U.S. military during World War II. He spent his remaining years working and living in Palo Alto.¹²⁰

Lucien Labaudt: 1880–1943

Lucien Labaudt (**Figure 96**), creator of the mural *Advancement of Learning through the Printing Press* in the library at George Washington High School, was born in Paris in 1880. Labaudt began his career as a clothing designer in France and England, and was almost entirely self-taught as a painter. He immigrated to the United States in 1906, settling briefly in Nashville, Tennessee, before coming to San Francisco in 1910. In San Francisco, he resumed costume design, but he also painted and taught at the California School of Fine Arts. Labaudt opened his own commercial art



Figure 96. Lucien Labaudt, standing at far left. Note Diego Rivera seated in front of Labaudt, 1940.

Source: yungee.com

school, the California School of Design, in the 1920s. By this time, Labaudt was exhibiting regularly in San Francisco and occasionally in galleries and museums in New York and Paris. In 1933, the Palace of the Legion of Honor

¹¹⁷ Aline Kinstler, "Howard Trio's Exhibit Draws Attention," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 18, 1928), D8.

¹¹⁸ Poletti, 97.

¹¹⁹ Zakheim, 85.

¹²⁰ AskArt.com Gordon Langdon cites source Edan Hughes Artists in California, 1786–1940. New Deal Art Registry, <http://newdealartregistry.org/artist/LangdonGordon/>.

mounted a major retrospective exhibit of his paintings.¹²¹ His other New Deal–era works include the painting, *Powell Street*, which flanks a stairwell in Coit Tower, a series titled *San Francisco Scenes* at the Beach Chalet, and several murals in the Federal Courthouse in Los Angeles.¹²² Labaudt worked in two Bay Area shipyards during World War II. He was killed in a 1943 plane crash while on assignment for *Life* as an artist/war correspondent.¹²³ His widow, Marcelle Labaudt, who taught alongside her husband at the California School of Design, founded the Lucien Labaudt Gallery in San Francisco after his death. She specialized in giving younger or relatively unknown artists their first exhibitions, operating the gallery until 1980.¹²⁴

Ralph Stackpole: 1885–1973

Ralph Stackpole (**Figure 97**), the creator of the mural *Contemporary Education* in the library at George Washington High School, was born to a working-class family in the small town of Williams, Oregon on May 1, 1885. Ralph Stackpole left school to become a laborer after his father’s early death. In 1903, he moved to San Francisco to study at the Mark Hopkins Institute (later the California School of Fine Arts and now the San Francisco Art Institute) under sculptor Arthur Putnam and painter Gottardo Piazzoni. After the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, Stackpole took classes at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris.¹²⁵ He returned to San Francisco and by the following decade, he had built a reputation as a major figure in San Francisco’s visual arts world. His public commissions included sculptures for several buildings at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE). In 1928, Stackpole began a fruitful relationship with architect Timothy Pflueger, who enlisted him to help develop the arts program for the San Francisco Stock Exchange and to sculpt a pair of heroic figures for its entry. They worked together again on Oakland’s Paramount Theater, the Golden Gate International Exposition, George Washington High School, and a sculpture for the Department of the Interior headquarters in Washington, D.C.¹²⁶ During World War II, Stackpole was appointed to the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, the first member from the West Coast. In 1949, he moved to France, where he died in 1973.



Figure 97. Ralph Stackpole, n.d.
Source: Wikimedia Commons

¹²¹ *California Art Research*, Vol. 19. Abstract from WPA Project 2874 (San Francisco: 1937), <https://archive.org/stream/californiaartres19hail#page/n7/mode/2up>.

¹²² New Deal Art Registry, <http://newdealartregistry.org/artist/LabaudtLucien/>.

¹²³ “Oral history interview with Marcelle Labaudt, 1964,” Archives of American Art. <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-marcelle-labaudt-11986>.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Kevin Starr, *The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s* (Oxford University Press, 2002), 151.

¹²⁶ Poletti, 89–91. New Deal Art Registry, <http://www.newdealartregistry.org/artist/StackpoleRalph/>.

Dewey Crumpler: 1949–

Dewey Crumpler (**Figure 98**) was the artist who painted the three “Response” murals in the main corridor of George Washington High School. Crumpler was born in 1949 in Arkansas but raised in San Francisco. In high school, Crumpler won an award for a piece on poverty that was shown to acclaim in an exhibit at the San Francisco Civic Center. He was only 19 and a recent graduate of Balboa High School when he was selected in 1968 by the Afro-American Club at George Washington High School to paint several murals in response to Victor Arnautoff’s *Life of George Washington*. African American students at GWHS objected to the depiction of slaves in the murals and wanted a more positive representation of African American cultural and scientific achievements. The project was put

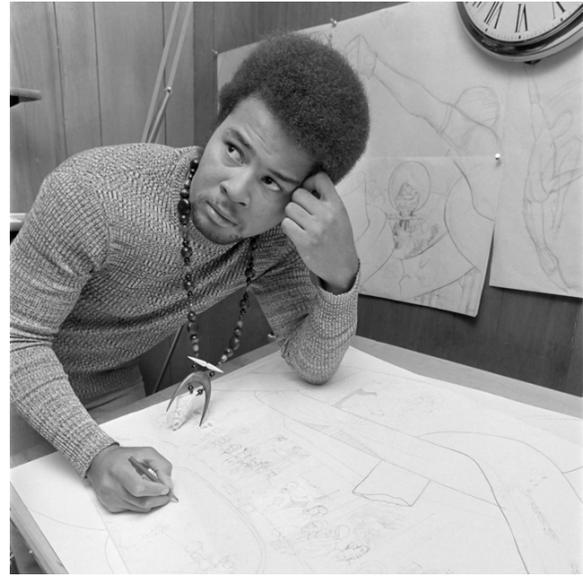


Figure 98. Dewey Crumpler, 1970.
Source: Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley

on hold for several years, during which Crumpler earned his BFA at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1972 and his MA at San Francisco State University in 1974. He painted the three Response murals in 1974, which depicted Latinos and Native Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans in a heroic light reminiscent of the Mexican muralist tradition. He later went on to earn his MFA at Mills College in 1989.¹²⁷ In addition to the Response murals, Dewey Crumpler has painted 15 other major murals throughout the Bay Area. He has also exhibited his work widely in galleries and museums. Today, Dewey Crumpler is an associate professor of painting at his alma mater, the San Francisco Art Institute.¹²⁸

Streamline Moderne Style in San Francisco: 1930–1940

George Washington High School is best classified as a Streamline Moderne–style public building. The Streamline Moderne style emerged from the Art Deco style, which had gained worldwide popularity after the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. The Art Deco style consciously charted a new stylistic vocabulary based on low-relief geometric designs—including parallel lines, chevrons, zigzags, stylized vegetation, circles, and linear motifs. Turning its back on ancient Greece and Rome, the Art Deco style looked to non-traditional and non-western sources for inspiration, including ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, Africa, Asia, and European artistic movements like Cubism.

¹²⁷ “Dewey Crumpler,” San Francisco Art Institute website: <http://www.sfai.edu/bios/dewey-crumpler>, accessed April 20, 2017.

¹²⁸ Interview with Dewey Crumpler by Donna Graves, February 16, 2017.

By the end of the 1930s, the idealization of the machine, in particular the airplane and the ocean liner, had led toward the simplification and refinement of the Art Deco style, an aesthetic that ultimately became the Streamline Moderne style. This new style evolved along several different paths, ranging from the literal application of the aerodynamic vocabulary of airplanes, ocean liners and automobiles to the “Stripped Classicism” popular with U.S. government institutions. In the United States, this latter style became known as “PWA Moderne” because it was favored by the New Deal public works agencies established during the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

The dominant characteristics of the Streamline Moderne style include planar, unornamented surfaces (sometimes exposed concrete but usually finished in stucco); groups of horizontal moldings called “speed lines”; vertical pulvinated or “reeded” moldings; curved canopies above entrances and windows; ribbon and porthole windows; brushed metal or aluminum trim, light fixtures, and hardware; structural glass block windows; and extruded aluminum hand rails and balustrades. The Streamline Moderne style was employed for nearly every building type imaginable, including government buildings, airports, train stations, schools, factories, houses, movie theaters, and commercial storefronts.

The Streamline Moderne style is common in San Francisco, which experienced a substantial building boom at the end of the 1930s when the style was the most popular. In San Francisco, the Streamline Moderne style was used for all major building types, chief among them several public schools funded by the PWA, including Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Visitacion Valley Elementary School, George Washington High School, Abraham Lincoln High School, and Samuel Gompers Trade School. Other well-known examples of the style that are not schools include the old Transbay Terminal



Figure 99. Bathhouse at Aquatic Park.

(demolished), the U.S. Mint, and the Henry Doelger Building at 9th Avenue and Judah Street in the Inner Sunset District. Undoubtedly, the best-known Streamline Moderne building in San Francisco is the Aquatic Park Bathhouse, which embodies all of the style’s characteristics, including its curved volumes, porthole windows, extruded aluminum railings and balustrades, and curved canopies (**Figure 99**). The Streamline Moderne style was also popular with local merchant builders, who built an untold number of Streamline Moderne rowhouses in new residential tracts on the West Side, especially Miraloma Park.

Public School Design in San Francisco: 1850–1930

During the first decades of the city's existence, San Francisco's public schools were housed in structures built for other purposes, including commercial buildings, churches, and even private dwellings. Post-Gold Rush San Francisco, especially after the Second Vigilance Committee of 1856, was dominated by conservative businessmen who disliked taxes, and infrastructure, including streets, sewers, parks, and schools, all suffered as a result. Nevertheless, a growing population of families in the 1860s increased the demand for public schools. By 1865, there were 37 public primary and secondary schools in San Francisco accommodating around 8,000 students.¹²⁹

Early Public School Design in San Francisco: 1865–1890

Public school buildings erected in San Francisco during the latter half of the nineteenth century were usually of wood-frame construction, three or four stories high, and designed in a utilitarian vocabulary incorporating a modest amount of Italianate ornament. A rare and excellently preserved example of this type is the Irving M. Scott School at 1070 Tennessee Street in Dogpatch (**Figure 100**). Designed by Thomas J. Welsh, a longtime consulting architect to the San Francisco School Board, and built in 1895, the Irving M. Scott School (originally the Potrero



Figure 100. Irving Scott School.

School), which is City Landmark No. 138, is one of the only surviving Victorian-era schools in San Francisco. It is a wood-frame structure massed as a cube that contains two full floor levels above a raised basement. The basement contains storage and the upper floors simply contain classrooms, a principal's office, and a central stair. The classrooms have oversized windows that are designed to admit as much natural light as possible. The windows are also operable and were used to regulate indoor temperatures. Like most Victorian schools in San Francisco, the Irving M. Scott School did not originally have a central heating system, and the bathrooms were located outside in small one-story structures linked to the main building by covered walkways.

The Progressive Era: 1890–1906

The Progressive movement of the late nineteenth century began to change how Americans thought about education. Among other things, it led to the professionalization of teaching, the application of business/bureaucratic management methods to school administration, and the standardization of school design. School enrollments surged because of Progressive reforms, including the passage of child labor laws and

¹²⁹ George Mullany, "New Goals of Public Education," *San Francisco Chronicle* (1939), 5.

compulsory education statutes in most northeastern, Midwestern and western states. In response, most large American cities, including San Francisco, found themselves scrambling to build new school facilities to accommodate growing enrollments and to replace outdated facilities.¹³⁰

During the 1890s, the San Francisco School Board launched a campaign to build several new public schools. Many of the city's Victorian schools were reportedly in "wretched" condition, with little or no heat or running water, sewage leaks, and other sanitary and safety issues. Fire was also an ever-present danger with older wood-frame buildings, as evidenced by the destruction by fire of Girls' High School on Scott Street.¹³¹ The School Board decided to replace it with a new, state-of-the-art, three-story-over-basement masonry school building (**Figure 101**). Designed by Thomas J. Welsh, the new Girls' High School was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and built of brick. Its raised basement contained mechanical



Figure 101. Rendering of Girls' High School.
San Francisco Chronicle (June 27, 1892)

rooms, a janitor's room, storerooms, two classrooms, a science laboratory, and a recitation [examination] room. Meanwhile, the first floor contained a reception hall, principal's office, library, "museum," four classrooms, and lavatories. The second floor contained six classrooms and a "retiring room," and the third floor contained a large assembly room.¹³² Girls' High School, which complied with all of the Progressive reformers' guidelines, was much more sophisticated than the contemporary Irving M. Scott School, which was also designed by Welsh and built in 1890. The growing number of special-purpose rooms at Girls' High School signaled the expanding mission of public schools, as they evolved from teaching basic skills to a small number of students toward providing instruction in a range of subjects to a much larger segment of society, including vocational skills, arts and music, and the hard sciences.

Throughout the rest of the 1890s and into the first decade of the twentieth century, the San Francisco School Board replaced several of its older wood-frame "firetraps" with new masonry buildings similar to Girls' High School. Unfortunately, many of these new schools succumbed to the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. In the disaster, 29 of the city's 74 public school buildings, including Girls' High School, were destroyed. Many others were rendered

¹³⁰ Dale Allen Gyure, *The Chicago Schoolhouse* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011).

¹³¹ "Money Wanted for Schools and Jails," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1896), 15.

¹³² "Girls' High School," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1892), 3.

temporarily or permanently unusable. The School Board hurriedly set up temporary schools in the refugee camps and quickly built 36 temporary buildings accommodating 8,000 children.¹³³

Post-Earthquake School Construction in San Francisco: 1906–1915

In 1907, Mayor Edward R. Taylor established the Bureau of Architecture, and appointed Newton Tharp as the first City Architect. Just two months later, the School Board announced its plan to build 44 new schools, including 16 “Class A” buildings of reinforced concrete and 28 “Class B” schools of wood-frame construction. City Architect Tharp rejected brick construction, given how poorly unreinforced-masonry buildings had fared in the earthquake. All of the new schools were to be modern in every way, with central heating and ventilation and indoor plumbing. Tharp prioritized four new high school buildings, including replacements for Girls’ High School, Lowell High School, and Polytechnic High School, as well as the new Commercial High School. A good example of Tharp’s post-quake schools is the Newton J. Tharp Commercial High School at 170 Fell Street. Built in 1908, this three-story-over-basement, reinforced concrete, brick-clad high school is designed in the Renaissance/Baroque style. Lowell High School, now San Francisco City College’s John Adams Campus, is another excellent example of a post-quake school. Built in 1911 at the northwest corner of Masonic Avenue and Hayes Street, Lowell High School is a typical American high school from the early twentieth century (**Figure 102**). Constructed of concrete with brick facing, the building has a ‘U’-shaped plan enclosing a central courtyard. Its exterior is designed in a restrained Renaissance/Baroque vocabulary with a modest amount of applied ornament.

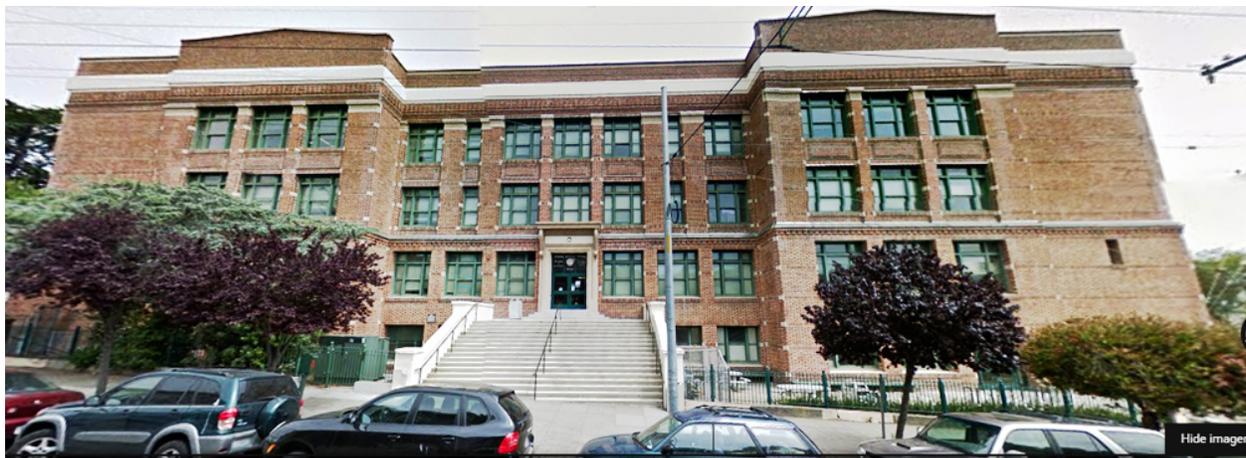


Figure 102. Former Lowell High School (now San Francisco City College’s John Adams Campus).
Source: Google Streetview; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

¹³³ City and County of San Francisco, *Municipal Reports: The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 1906* (San Francisco: 1907).

Golden Age of School Construction: 1915 –1930

The election of James Rolph as mayor of San Francisco in 1911 signaled the beginning of an unprecedented 19-year period of infrastructure development in the city. Though registered as a Republican, Rolph was a progressive politician enjoying strong bipartisan support from many sectors, including unions and working-class San Franciscans. His many infrastructure projects included a new City Hall, the Civic Auditorium, the Hetch Hetchy water system, the Panama Pacific International Exposition, the Municipal Railway, Twin Peaks Tunnel, and many roadbuilding projects. His road and transit improvements opened up the vast western and southern parts of the city to development. The rapid development of these areas, including the Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond Districts on the West Side; and the Excelsior, Crocker-Amazon, Portola, and Outer Mission Districts in the southeast part of town, led to demands to increase the number of public schools in these newly developing areas.

Not long after he was elected, Mayor Rolph appointed John Reid, Jr. as the new City Architect. Reid immediately found himself confronted with the task of building several new schools and rebuilding many of the city's older schools. The School Board still operated 17 outdated Victorian-era schools and several "temporary" schools built in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake. With Reid's assistance, Mayor Rolph oversaw the drafting of two school construction bonds in 1917 and 1922 to fund the work. Desperate for better schools, San Franciscans eagerly approved the bonds, ushering in the "Golden Age of School Construction." City Architect Reid designed about half of the approximately 50 schools built in San Francisco between 1920 and 1930, with the newly formed Board of Education awarding the rest to various private architecture firms.¹³⁴

The schools built during Reid's tenure were almost all designed in regional styles appropriate to California's Mediterranean climate and landscape, including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance, and Mediterranean styles. In conformance with modern building and life/safety codes, all were built of "fireproof" concrete construction with durable stucco finishes and terra cotta and cement plaster trim. Some of the best examples include Mission High School (1925–27), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 255 (**Figure 103**); Commerce High School (1926), which is San Landmark No. 140; and Balboa High School (1928–34), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 205.



Figure 103. Mission High School, 1926.
Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco
Public Library, AAB-0389

¹³⁴ "Message of His Honor, Mayor Rolph," *The Municipal Record* (San Francisco: January 7, 1926), 4.

Many of the new schools built by John Reid, Jr. were much larger than their predecessors. In contrast to the Victorian-era schools, or even the Edwardian-era schools, both of which typically consisted of a single block sited at the center of a paved lot, Reid’s schools were usually composed of multiple buildings, as well as adjoining ballfields and other sporting facilities. Since World War I, educational leaders had advocated for the incorporation of physical education into the public school curriculum. This required larger sites to accommodate play yards, running tracks, and ballfields. Accommodating outdoor recreation was not as challenging in the peripheral neighborhoods where land was still available, but it was much more difficult to achieve in already built-up parts of the city, giving administrators the choice of assembling the sites through condemnation proceedings—never a popular idea—or relocating the school to an outlying neighborhood where land was available.

Another factor in the growth in size of American public schools during the 1920s was the invention of the “comprehensive” school model, which combined academic, vocational, arts and music, sports, and home economics departments in one campus. As the complexity of public schools grew, City Architect John Reid Jr. and contract architects designed sprawling multi-unit complexes that typically included an “academic” building, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and a shop/industrial arts building. Typically linked together in an “h,” “L,” “U,” or “O”-shaped plan, each component was expressed on its exterior

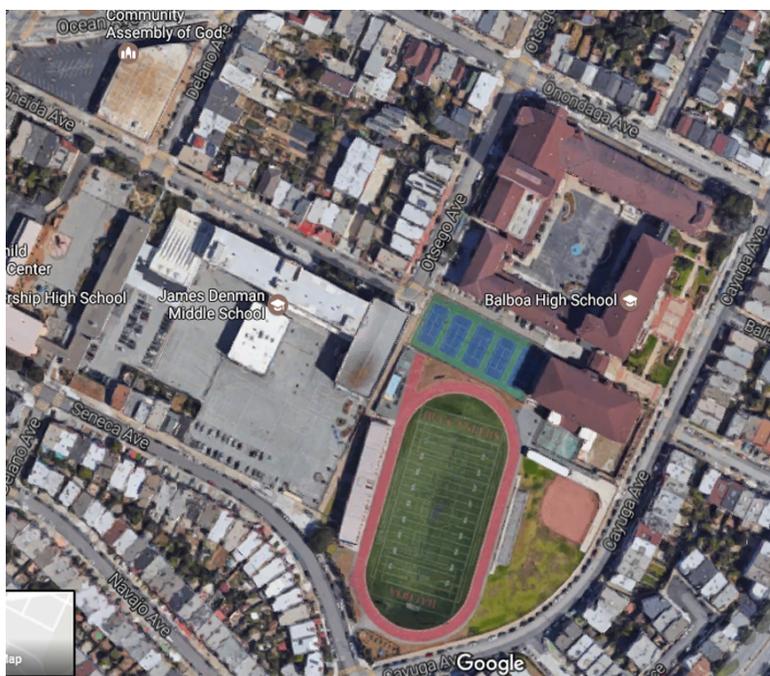


Figure 104. Aerial photograph of Balboa High School.

Source: Google Maps

as a separate building, even though they were all linked together by internal corridors. Balboa High School, the first high school built in the Outer Mission District, occupies approximately five city blocks. It has an O-plan with academic wings extending along Onondaga and Cayuga Avenues; an auditorium on Otsego Avenue; and a gymnasium and sports fields occupying a swath of land bounded by Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Otsego Avenues (Figure 104). One of the largest school campuses in San Francisco, it is even larger when combined with the adjoining James Denman Middle School campus on Oneida Avenue.

By the end of the 1920s, San Francisco, which had once been known for having one of the worst public school systems in the nation, now had what many considered to be second-to-none. In 1923, St. Louis architect William B. Ittner praised San Francisco's commitment to building not only functional but beautiful schools: "The creation of an environment, healthful and beautiful, has been the architectural keynote and the school buildings are a sincere expression of the joy, health and beauty that should belong to our school children."¹³⁵

Although he did not take a salary, City Architect John Reid, Jr. received a commission equal to 6 percent of the construction costs of each completed building. Though there was no evidence of actual wrongdoing, Reid was Mayor Rolph's brother-in-law, and following an incident, he resigned his post in 1927 to quash accusations of nepotism. Reid's resignation left a void at the office of the City Architect. His replacement, Charles Sawyer, did not design many new civic buildings, limiting his role to awarding commissions to private firms. The Stock Market Crash two years later also dealt a temporary blow to San Francisco's school construction campaign. Ten days after the crash, Board of Education President Daniel C. Murphy issued a statement calling into question San Francisco's continued ability to build "the fine type of schools" that the city had grown accustomed to during the 1910s and 1920s.¹³⁶ Although the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architects argued that the City should continue "providing school buildings of enduring quality and design," the primary question on everyone's mind was where the money would come from.

Nonetheless, several schools that had already been designed and funded were built in the first year or two after the crash, including Miller & Pflueger's Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (now Roosevelt Middle School), which was built in 1930 (**Figure 105**). Roosevelt, designed in a fusion of the Art Deco and Dutch Expression styles, is universally recognized as one of San Francisco's best-designed public schools. Even though it was not a New Deal project, in terms of its architectural quality and advanced



Figure 105. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.

styling, it foreshadowed the continuation of the Golden Age of San Francisco School Construction into the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal public works programs picked up the mantle.

¹³⁵ Don Andreini, "Civic Architecture: San Francisco's Public Schools," *Heritage Newsletter*, XVI:3 (September 1988), 7.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the case report provides an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity statement, statement of significance, period of significance, inventory of character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justifications for *why* the resource is important.

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

George Washington High School derives its significance in part from its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal New Deal agency established by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1933 to combat the Depression. San Francisco was awarded several major PWA projects, which, in contrast to the contemporary Works Progress Administration (WPA), concentrated on significant infrastructure projects, including schools, government buildings, dams, etc. After New York City, the San Francisco region was the most successful in obtaining PWA projects. In addition to San Francisco's influential mayor, Angelo Rossi, and its powerful congressional delegation, San Franciscans had already approved several school construction bonds, making its applications for federal funding more attractive to PWA chief Harold Ickes. Altogether, the PWA helped the San Francisco School Board construct or rebuild 11 public school campuses, including: George Washington High School, Abraham Lincoln High School, Samuel Gompers Trade School, James Denman Junior High School, Marina Junior High School, Portola Junior High School auditorium, Glen Park Elementary School, Francis Scott Key Elementary School, Lawton Elementary School, Patrick Henry Elementary School (now Downtown High School), and Visitacion Valley Elementary School. Most of these schools were constructed on the city's fast-growing periphery, where merchant builders were in the process of building thousands of five-room rowhouses.

George Washington High School also derives significance as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction. Designed in the Streamline Moderne style, GWHS is emblematic of much PWA construction, especially in the West, which embraced the "modernistic" style as its own. Interestingly, GWHS also embodies characteristics of the International Style and the Hollywood Regency style, especially the colonnade on the north side of the auditorium, which deliberately references George Washington's Mount Vernon. This hybrid modern/traditional aesthetic, which characterized many PWA projects, was given its own name, the "PWA Moderne" style. Architect Timothy Pflueger used it on both of the high schools built with PWA funds, including George Washington High School and Abraham Lincoln High School.

Designed by architect Timothy Pflueger (1892–1946), George Washington High School is a work of a “master” architect. Known for his early embrace of the Art Deco style, Pflueger made the style his own by incorporating Mayan and Aztec motifs. By the time he designed George Washington High School, Pflueger had begun to embrace the more stripped-down and machine-like Streamline Moderne style, which was in keeping with the growing popularity of the International Style in Europe. GWHS is one of four public schools (all in San Francisco) designed by Pflueger, a list that also includes Alamo Elementary School (1926–altered), Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (1930), and Abraham Lincoln High School (1940). It also joins a very short list of architecturally significant pre-World War II high schools that also includes Balboa High School (San Francisco Landmark No. 205), Mission High School (San Francisco Landmark No. 255), Galileo High School, and Abraham Lincoln High School.

Finally, George Washington High School is significant as a property characterized by high artistic values, as home to four New Deal–era murals and one outdoor frieze. All were sponsored by the PWA’s Federal Art Project (FAP). The artists who executed these projects, including Victor Arnautoff, Ralph Stackpole, Sargent Johnson, and several others, make GWHS one of the most important repositories of New Deal artwork in San Francisco.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for George Washington High School is 1935 –1974, beginning with the completion of the academic building in 1935, and concluding with the completion of Dewey Crumpler’s “Response” murals 39 years later.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity used by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and Article 10 of the Planning Code are: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance above. In summary, though parts of the George Washington High School campus have undergone changes, as a whole, George Washington High School retains ample integrity to convey its association in terms of its original design, use, and period of construction.

Location:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of location because no part of it has been relocated.

Design:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of design because the complex has kept nearly every element of its original design, including its site layout and floorplan, height and massing, fenestration pattern, and PWA Moderne styling and ornament. Within the interior, George Washington High School retains most of its original design features in the main entrance lobby, corridors and stairs, administrative office suite, library, auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria.

Materials:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of materials because nearly all of its original components, including its painted concrete walls, terra cotta and cast stone accents, and cement plaster ornamental detailing have been retained and preserved. The only original materials that have been replaced are the steel windows and doors, many of which have been replaced with aluminum counterparts. However, the replacement doors and windows closely resemble the originals and do not detract from the building’s design. Within the interior, many of

the original materials remain, particularly in the most important public areas, such as the main lobby, corridors and stairs, administrative office suite, library, auditorium, gymnasium, and cafeteria.

Workmanship:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of workmanship because it retains all of its fine artistry and handiwork on both the exterior and the interior of the building. On the exterior, it retains all of its cement plaster ornament, its metal entrance canopies, and terra cotta and cast stone trim. Within the interior, it retains its original terrazzo flooring (lobby), tiled wainscoting (stairs and corridors), decorative light fixtures (lobby), and wood paneling and casework (library and corridors). Most important, it retains all four of its New Deal–era murals and the three “Response” murals by Dewey Crumpler.

Setting

George Washington High School retains the aspect of setting because the neighborhood surrounding the sprawling campus remains largely as it was when the high school was completed in the early 1950s. The campus itself has also changed very little aside from the build-out of the southern third of the campus, where the running track and soccer field are, in 1958 but the development of this part of the campus had been anticipated in the original master plan.

Feeling:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of feeling because it continues to look and feel like a PWA Moderne school of the 1930s/1940s. Though SFUSD has modernized the campus, including upgrading its buildings to comply with contemporary code requirements for accessibility, energy consumption, life/safety, etc., it has taken pains to avoid removing or altering important features that would negatively impact the facility’s historical appearance.

Association:

George Washington High School retains the aspect of association because it would be recognizable to anyone who ever attended or worked at the school during the period of significance.

ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

The site proposed for Landmark designation encompasses a portion of Assessor Parcel Number 1574/001, a 691,811-square-foot parcel bounded by Geary Boulevard to the north, 30th Avenue to the east, Balboa Street to the south, and 32nd Avenue to the west. The specific portion of the parcel proposed for Landmark designation includes only the portions of the site developed between 1936 and 1952, including the academic building (1935), shop building (1936), New Deal murals (1936), auditorium (1940), gymnasium (1940), football field and bleachers (1940), esplanade (1940), and music room addition (1952). The period of significance goes to 1974 to include the “Response” murals by Dewey Crumpler, but it does not include other physical changes made to the campus or the buildings after 1952. It does not include the tennis or basketball courts, which were rebuilt in the 1980s; the soccer field and running track, which were built in 1958 and 1992; any of the modular buildings on the site; the parking lots on the east side of the campus; or any of the other sheds or any other temporary sheds or enclosures located along the south side of the campus. The only landscape features to be included in the Landmark designation include the narrow lawn panels and planting strips along 32nd Avenue adjoining the academic building and the shop building; the courtyard between the east and west wings of the academic building; the landscaped area south of the music room addition; and the esplanade. See **Appendix Item A** for a map showing the proposed Landmark boundaries.

Character-defining Features

Any case report for a property proposed for Landmark status under Article 10 of the Planning Code requires an inventory of all character-defining features. This is necessary so the property owner, planning staff, and the general public know which features and materials (elements) must be preserved in order to protect the historical and architectural character of the proposed Landmark. The character-defining features of the George Washington High School complex include all exterior elevations, including but not limited to form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials. Due to the size and complexity of the complex, we have provided separate lists for each component of the campus.

Academic Building

- The academic building’s footprint and overall height and massing;
- Flat roof with skylights;
- All exposed portions of the academic building’s four exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding, the terra cotta and cast stone decorative detailing, and cement plaster bas-relief motifs;
- The ribbon window openings, although not the aluminum sashes;
- The remaining original steel industrial windows flanking the main entrance on 32nd Avenue;
- The main entrance, including the concrete stair, cast stone piers, metal canopy and busts, though not the aluminum doors themselves;
- The other original entrances, including the curved metal canopies and pipe railing balustrades, but not the doors themselves, except for the two remaining historic doors on the east façade facing the esplanade;
- General layout of the academic building and the materials of the following interior spaces: main entrance lobby (including Arnautoff murals, George Washington statue, terrazzo stairs and flooring, handrails, tiled wainscoting, and Art Deco light fixtures), corridor near the administrative office suite (including Memorial Clock and other class gifts, display cases, tiled wainscoting, George Washington sculpture, and Dewey

Crumpler murals), library (including the Langdon, Labaudt, and Stackpole murals, paneling, casework and clocks);

- All remaining tiled wainscoting in corridors and stairs;
- All remaining original wood doors throughout academic building;
- All remaining stairs with separate up and down traffic configuration, though not the materials.

Shop Building

- The shop building's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The shop building's flat roof and skylight;
- All exposed portions of the shop building's four exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding, cement plaster and terra cotta ornament, and four figural wall-mounted sculptures;
- The shop building's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all remaining steel industrial windows;
- The shop building's main entrance on the north façade, including the surviving metal doors;
- The concrete bridge connecting the shop building to the academic building.

Auditorium

- The auditorium's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The auditorium's stepped flat roof with fly tower;
- The auditorium's two exposed façades, including the painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament – in particular the north façade with its full-height colonnade;
- The fenestration pattern on the north façade of the auditorium, including the original steel windows and louvered vents;
- The original metal doors within the colonnade;
- The main auditorium space, including the telescoping plaster walls and proscenium arch and plywood seating;
- Auditorium lobby and finishes, including wood doors, curved plaster walls, and metal pipe railings.

Gymnasium

- The gymnasium's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The gymnasium's flat roof and skylights;
- The gymnasium's three exposed exterior façades, including the painted concrete cladding and cement plaster and terra cotta ornament;
- The gymnasium's grid-like fenestration pattern, including all remaining steel industrial windows;
- The original entrances on the north façade but not the doors themselves;
- Upper gymnasium with hardwood flooring and exposed steel truss roof.

Music Room Addition

- The music room addition's footprint and overall height and massing;
- The music room addition's stepped flat roof with skylight;
- The music room addition's painted concrete exterior cladding with terra cotta ornament.

Site

- Football field and bleachers;
- Sargent Johnson's *Athletics* frieze on the south side of the football field;
- Remaining lawn and planting strips along 32nd Avenue;

- Esplanade in front of the gymnasium and auditorium, including concrete walkways, benches, and balustrades;
- Courtyard space at south end of academic building.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining exterior features include all post-1974 alterations to the complex and the site, including all non-historic aluminum windows and doors on the exterior of the buildings; all remodeled bathrooms, classroom interiors, and utilitarian back-of-house spaces; all sheds, modular classroom and office buildings, the soccer field and the running track, the basketball and tennis courts, and the parking lot and driveway along 30th Avenue.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: George Washington High School

Popular Name: GWHS, Washington High

Address: 600 32nd Avenue

Block and Lot: 1574/001

Owner: San Francisco Unified School District

Current Use: Public High School

Zoning: P – Public; 40-X height and bulk

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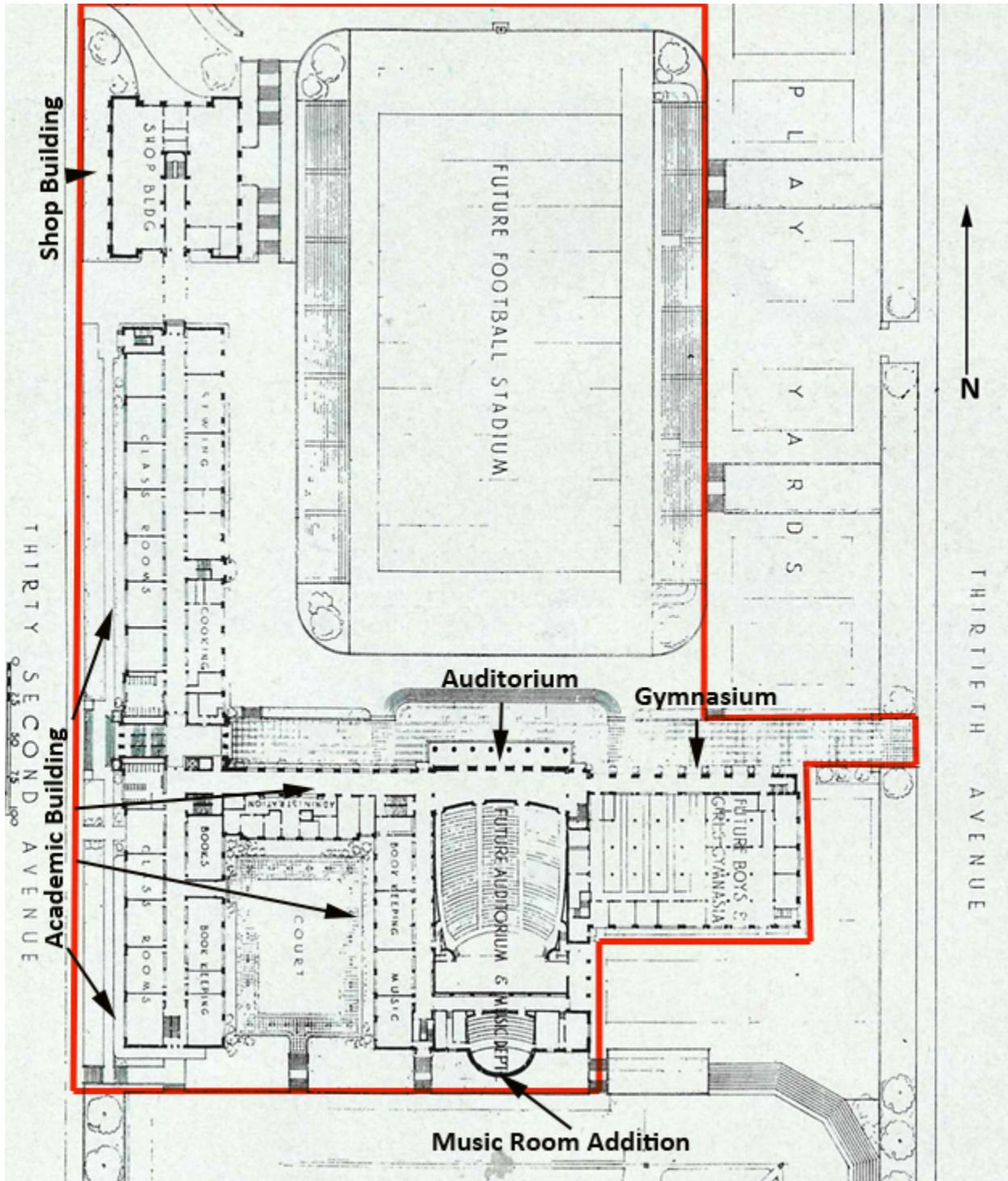
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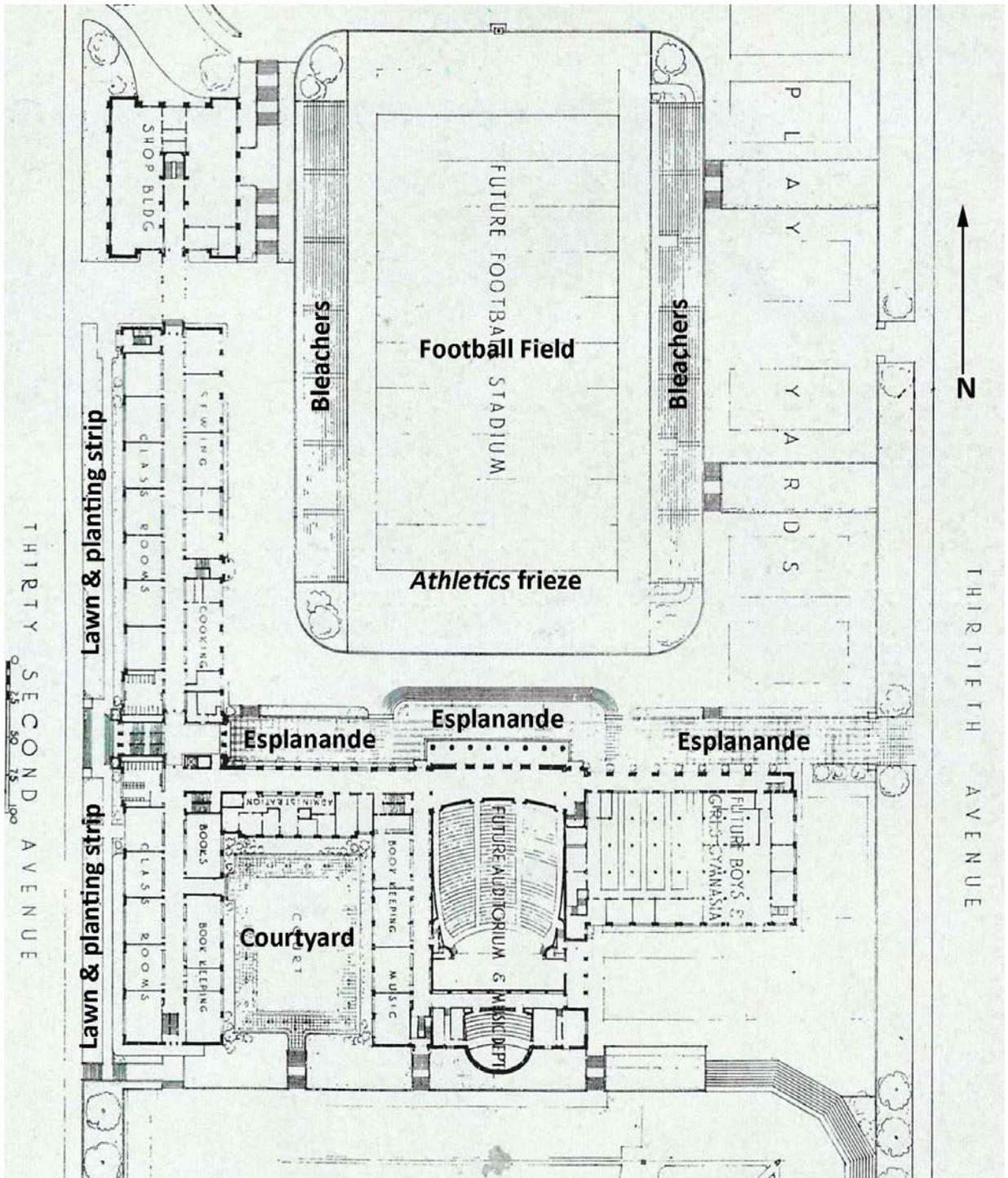
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Appendix 1: Boundaries of the Landmark



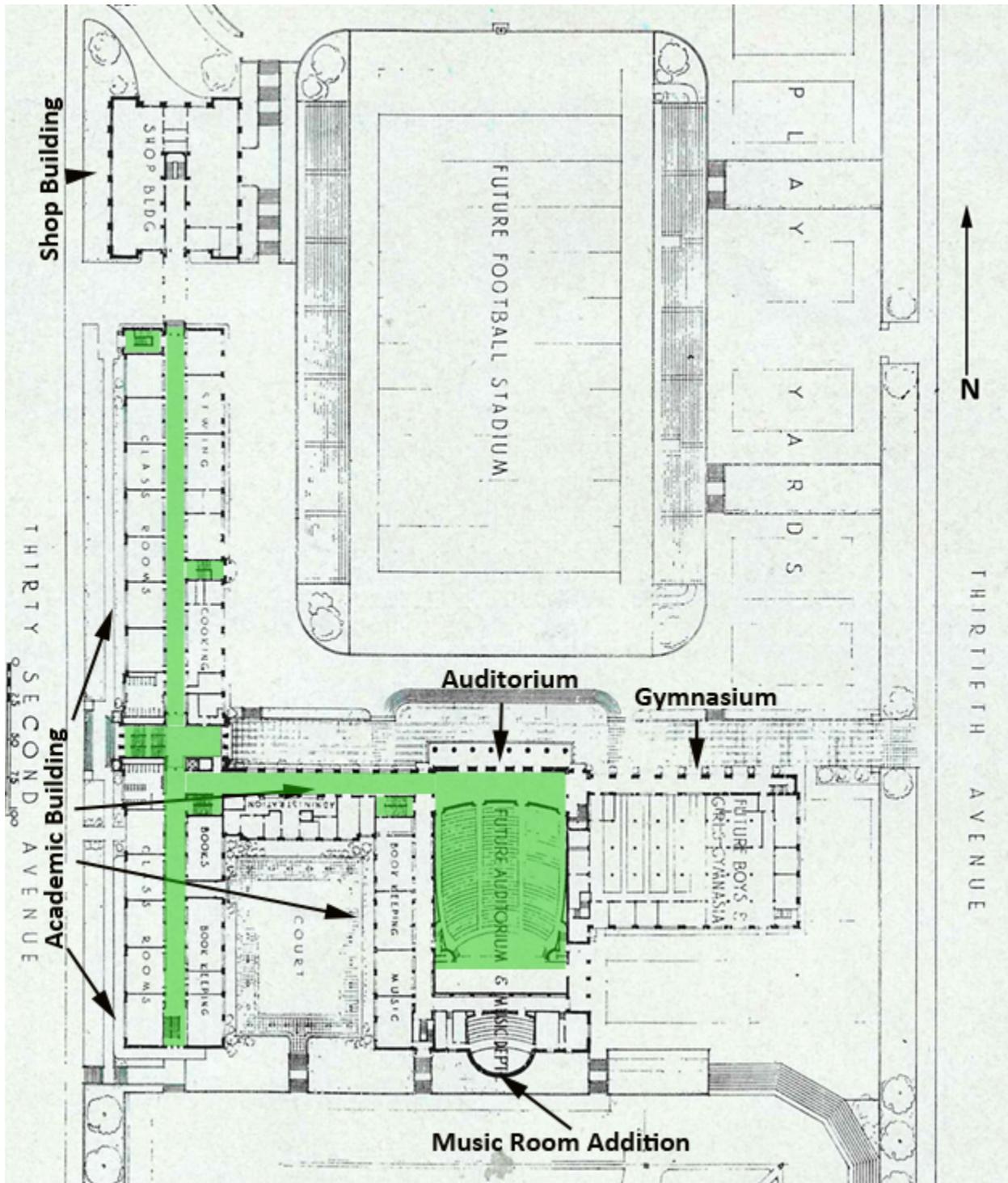
Annotated plan showing the boundaries of the GWHS campus proposed for Landmark status.

Appendix 2: Character-Defining Site Features

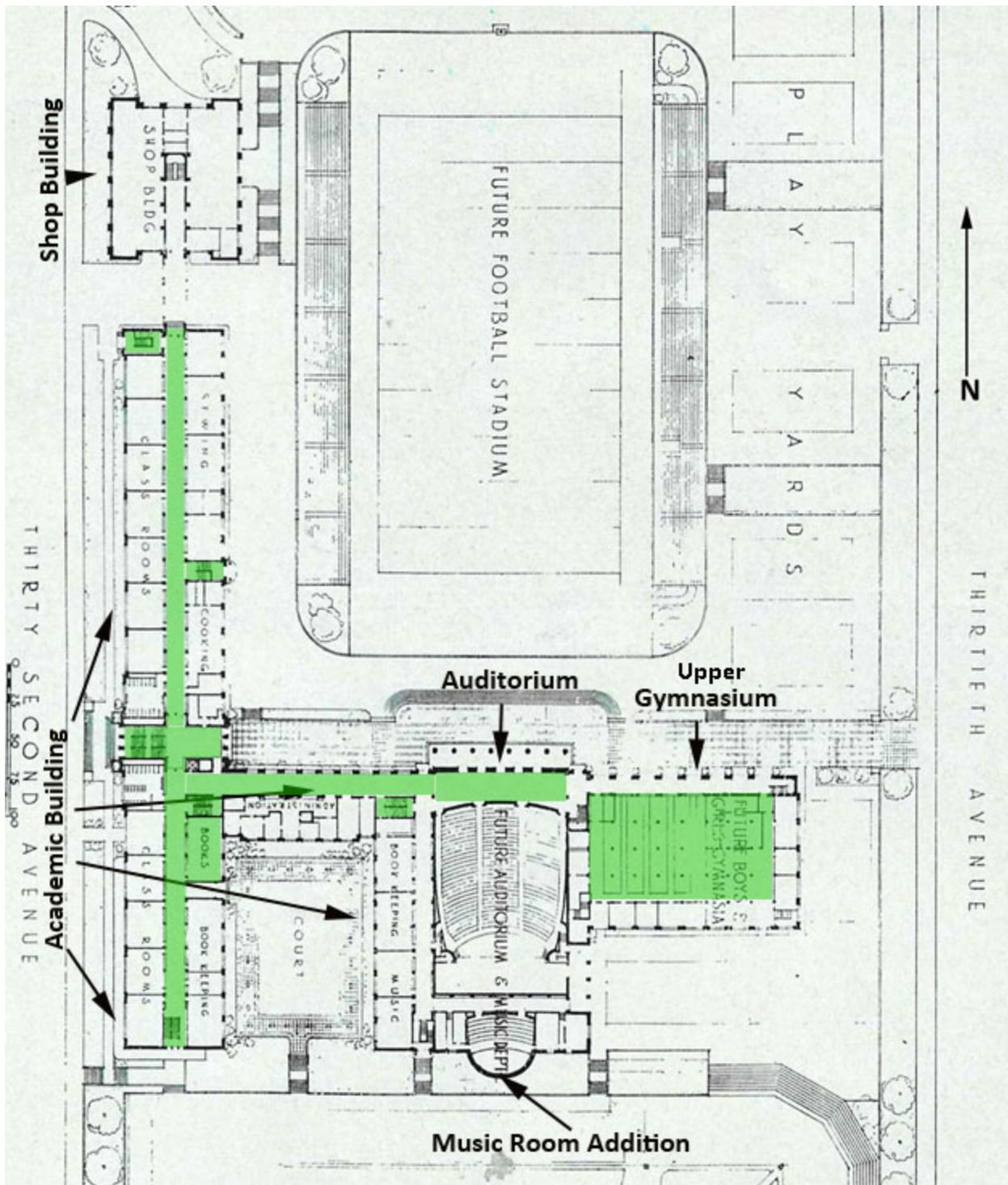


Annotated plan showing character-defining site features

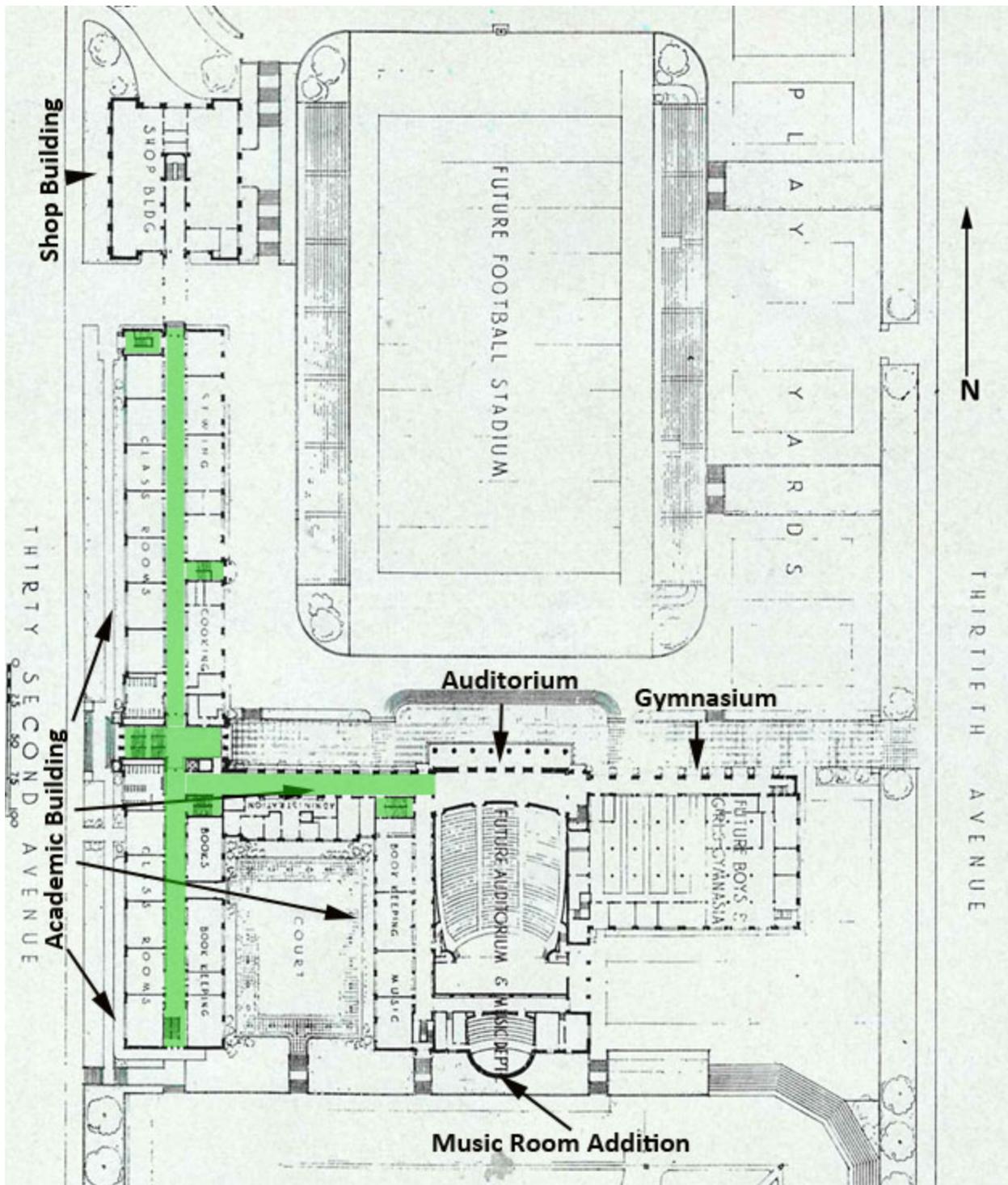
Appendix 3: Interior Character-Defining Features



Annotated plan showing first floor interior character-defining features



Annotated plan showing second floor interior character-defining features



Annotated plan showing third floor interior character-defining features

Appendix 4: Photo Exhibit of George Washington High School Murals
Photos by Richard Rothman



"Life of Washington" mural by Victor Arnautoff, 1935. Located near first floor entrance.



"Life of Washington" mural by Victor Arnautoff, 1935. Located near first floor entrance.



"Life of Washington" mural by Victor Arnautoff, 1935. Located near first floor entrance.



"Modern and Ancients Science" (1936), located at hall/entrance to Gordon Langdon Library.

DRAFT–OCTOBER 18, 2017



LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

Sunshine School

2728 Bryant Street

City and County of San Francisco
Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

Planning Department
John Rahaim, Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Article 10 Landmark nomination for the Sunshine School was made possible by several individuals and organizations. First, the authors of this nomination, Christopher VerPlanck and Donna Graves, would like to thank the San Francisco Historic Preservation Fund Committee (HPFC) for funding the nomination as part of its larger efforts to document the legacy of the New Deal in San Francisco. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Cherny, a historian and a member of the HPFC, whose interest in the New Deal made this entire project possible. In addition, we would like to thank Dr. Gray Brechin, the head of the Living New Deal project, who along with Dr. Cherny is an advisor on this project. Finally, we would like to thank the San Francisco Unified School District for its thoughtful stewardship of its many historic schools, including the Sunshine School.

Cover: Sunshine School, November 2016

The Historic Preservation Commission is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

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Sunshine School

2728 Bryant Street

Built: 1935–37

Architects: Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien

OVERVIEW

Occupying a quiet mid-block parcel near the intersection of 25th and Bryant Streets, the former Sunshine School was built in 1935–37 as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project for the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Planned in consultation with public health professionals and teachers experienced in instructing disabled and chronically ill students, the Sunshine School was a collaborative venture of four prominent architects: Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien. The former Sunshine School appears eligible as a San Francisco Landmark for its historical associations and its architecture. It was the first purpose-built public "orthopedic" school built west of the Rockies. With a barrier-free first floor level, the Sunshine School anticipated by decades the passage of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Moorish and Art Deco detailing, the former Sunshine School is an excellent and well-preserved public school constructed during the height of San Francisco's "Golden Age" of school construction. It is also notable as a project of the New Deal-era Public Works Administration (PWA), which funded several important public schools across the city between 1935 and 1940. Frugally built of board-formed concrete with a modest amount of molded concrete ornament, its red clay tile accents and Mexican-style tilework enliven the building. In terms of its layout, the Sunshine School is quite innovative. The school was designed to house two separate special needs populations. Children with physical disabilities were instructed on the first floor level, where they had access to a therapeutic pool and a specially designed gymnasium. Meanwhile, children with chronic and acute illnesses had separate quarters on the second floor level, where they could recuperate in open-air "rest rooms" and eat nutritious meals made at nearby San Francisco General Hospital in their own dining room. The Sunshine School served its original purposes for over a quarter century, until disability rights groups successfully lobbied to have special needs children assigned to "mainstream" schools in the 1970s. Although it has been converted into an alternative high school for teen parents in 1985, the building did not require many changes. Indeed, the former Sunshine School – now called Hilltop High School – remains a well-preserved and greatly loved building that continues to serve San Francisco 80 years on.



Figure 1. 2012 USGS Map showing the location of the former Sunshine School depicted by a black box at the lower edge of the map.

Source: United States Geological Society; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Neighborhood Context

The former Sunshine School is located at 2728 Bryant Street in San Francisco’s Mission District (**Figure 1**). It occupies a 38,999-sf parcel bounded by Bryant Street to the east, Florida Street to the west, and residential properties to the north and south. The building was constructed 1935–37 on a site previously occupied by the Columbia Street Grammar School. The site is level, as is the surrounding neighborhood. The southeastern Mission District, where the school is located, is characterized by a dense urban mix of single-family and multi-family residential properties, most of which were developed between 1890 and 1920. The neighborhood was surveyed by the San Francisco Planning Department as part of the South Mission Historic Resources Study (South Mission Survey), completed in 2011.

To the east, the former Sunshine School faces the broad thoroughfare of Bryant Street. The 2700 block of Bryant Street is almost uniformly residential, with the exception of a mixed-use (residential-over-commercial) building at the southeast corner of 25th and Bryant Streets. Construction dates range from ca. 1875 to 1980, but only three buildings, including the former Sunshine School, were constructed after 1928. Architectural vocabulary consist of styles popular during the Victorian and Edwardian eras, including the San Francisco Stick/Eastlake, Italianate, Queen Anne, First Bay Region/Shingle, and Classical Revival styles. Heights range from one-to-three stories and setbacks vary, although most older single-family dwellings are set back at least 10 feet from their front property lines, while later post-

quake flats and apartment buildings typically meet their front property lines. Unlike some other blocks in this part of the Mission District, development on the 2700 block of Bryant Street appears to have been mainly the work of individual builders rather than speculative merchant builders. Although some properties retain their original appearance, many more show evidence of substantial remodeling, including reconfigured entrances, street-level garages, incompatible cladding materials, and contemporary windows, including most of the buildings on the west side of the street (**Figures 2–3**). The best-preserved dwellings on the block include a row of San Francisco Stick/Eastlake and Queen Anne cottages that are located directly opposite the school, at 2743, 2747, 2749, and 2753 Bryant Street (**Figures 4–5**).



Figure 2. Residential properties on the west side of Bryant Street, south of the former Sunshine School; view toward southwest.



Figure 3. Residential and commercial properties on the west side of Bryant Street, north of the former Sunshine School; view toward southwest.



Figure 4. The east side of Bryant Street across the street from the former Sunshine School; view toward northeast.



Figure 5. East side of Bryant Street across the street from the former Sunshine School, at 2743 to 2753 Bryant Street; view toward east.

The former Sunshine School faces the 1300 block of Florida Street to the west. Florida Street is a narrow secondary street that is almost uniformly residential. Aside from the former Sunshine School, the only non-residential property is a mixed-use (residential-over-commercial) building at the southeast corner of 25th and Florida Streets (**Figure 6**). Construction dates on the 1300 block of Florida Street range from ca. 1875 to 1994, with only three buildings constructed after 1930. More than half the properties on the

block were constructed prior to 1900, and most are designed in the Italianate and San Francisco Stick/Eastlake styles (**Figures 7–8**). Additional styles represented include the Queen Anne, Classical Revival, Mediterranean, and contemporary. Heights range from one-to-three-stories and setbacks vary, with most older single-family dwellings set back at least 10 feet from their front property lines and most post-quake flats and apartment buildings meeting their front property lines. The South Mission Survey determined that eight properties on this block appeared individually eligible for the California Register, including a pair of San Francisco Stick/Eastlake-style dwellings at 1329 and 1331 Florida Street, which are both located directly south of the former Sunshine School (**Figure 9**).



Figure 6. Mixed-use building at southeast corner of 25th and Florida Streets (at left); view southeast along Florida Street toward the former Sunshine School.



Figure 7. The west side of Florida Street, directly across the street from the former Sunshine School, view toward northeast.



Figure 8. Stick/Eastlake duplex and Queen Anne flats across the street from the former Sunshine School on Florida Street; view toward northwest.



Figure 9. The east side of Florida Street, including 1329 Florida Street, directly south of the former Sunshine School, view toward east.

Properties along 25th and 26th Streets – half a block north and south of the former Sunshine School – share a similar range of construction dates, architectural styles, uses, and height and massing as those on Bryant and Florida Streets. There are very few non-residential properties on either street, though mixed-use (residential-over-commercial) buildings occupy the corner lots, including two-story buildings at the northwest corner of 25th and Bryant and the southwest corner of 26th and Bryant. Standing at the

southwest corner of 25th and Bryant is a one-story building that historically housed a bocce court but that is now used as a warehouse. The rest of the buildings on the 2900 blocks of 25th and 26th Streets include one-to-three-story dwellings constructed between 1888 and 1993. Generally speaking, the integrity level of properties along these blocks is much lower than either the 2700 block of Bryant Street or the 1300 block of Florida Street (**Figures 10–11**).



Figure 10. The south side of 25th Street between Florida and Bryant Streets, north of the former Sunshine School, view toward southeast.



Figure 11. The south side of 26th Street between Florida and Bryant Streets, south of the former Sunshine School, view toward southwest.

General Description

The former Sunshine School is a two-story, reinforced-concrete building constructed of board-formed concrete and capped with a combination flat, shed, and hipped roof punctuated by skylights. The building has a U-shaped footprint, with classroom wings aligned parallel to Bryant and Florida Streets. These wings are connected by an intersecting auditorium wing located along the north side of the property. A team of four architects, including Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien designed the building in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Moorish and Art Deco detailing. Artistic exterior treatments include cast concrete sculptures, moldings, and entablatures; Mexican-style tilework on the spandrels and door and window surrounds; carved wooden mullions and door and window trim; and wrought iron grilles. Within the interior, the two classroom wings have double-loaded corridors on their first floor levels and single-loaded corridors on the second floor levels. In addition to classrooms, these wings house administrative offices and toilet rooms. The north auditorium wing, which connects the two classroom wings, is the ceremonial heart of the school as indicated by its higher level of ornament; it was historically the location of special-purpose spaces, including a dining room/auditorium on each floor level and the therapeutic pool and gymnasium on the first floor level. At the center of the school is a large, open-air courtyard containing planting beds and an elaborate tile-clad bench/flagpole at the north end (**Figures 12–13**). Although the building retains its original metal awning-sash windows within the courtyard, the window sashes along the two street facades have been replaced with compatible aluminum counterparts. Nonetheless, windows throughout the building retain their original wood mullions and tiled spandrels. The two main entrances on Bryant and Florida Streets also retain their original wood doors and ornamental trim. The former Sunshine School, which has undergone very few changes, is well-maintained and appears to be in good condition.

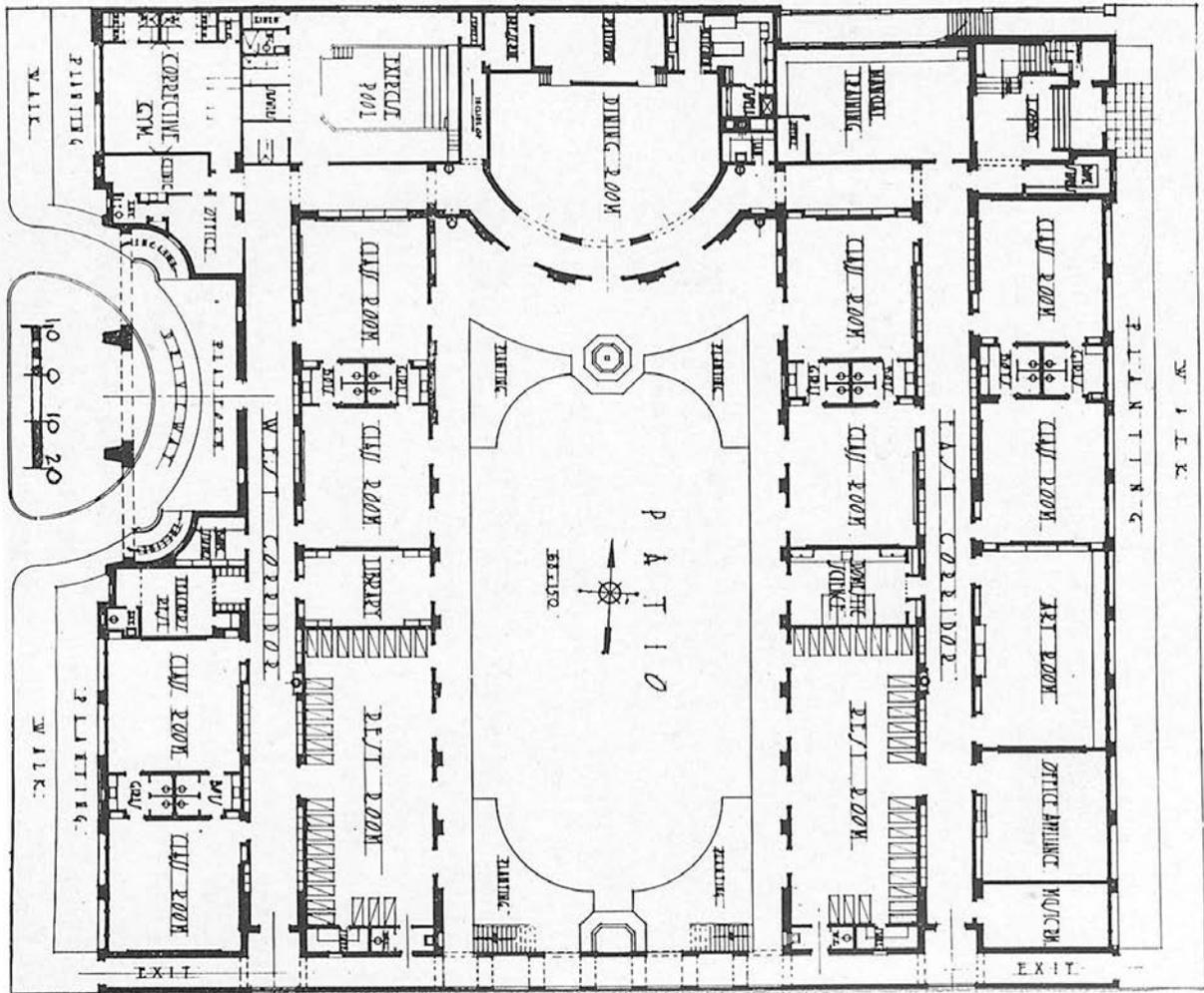


Figure 12. First floor plan of the former Sunshine School; north is up.
 Source: *Public Buildings: Architecture under the Public Works Administration, 1933 to 1939*

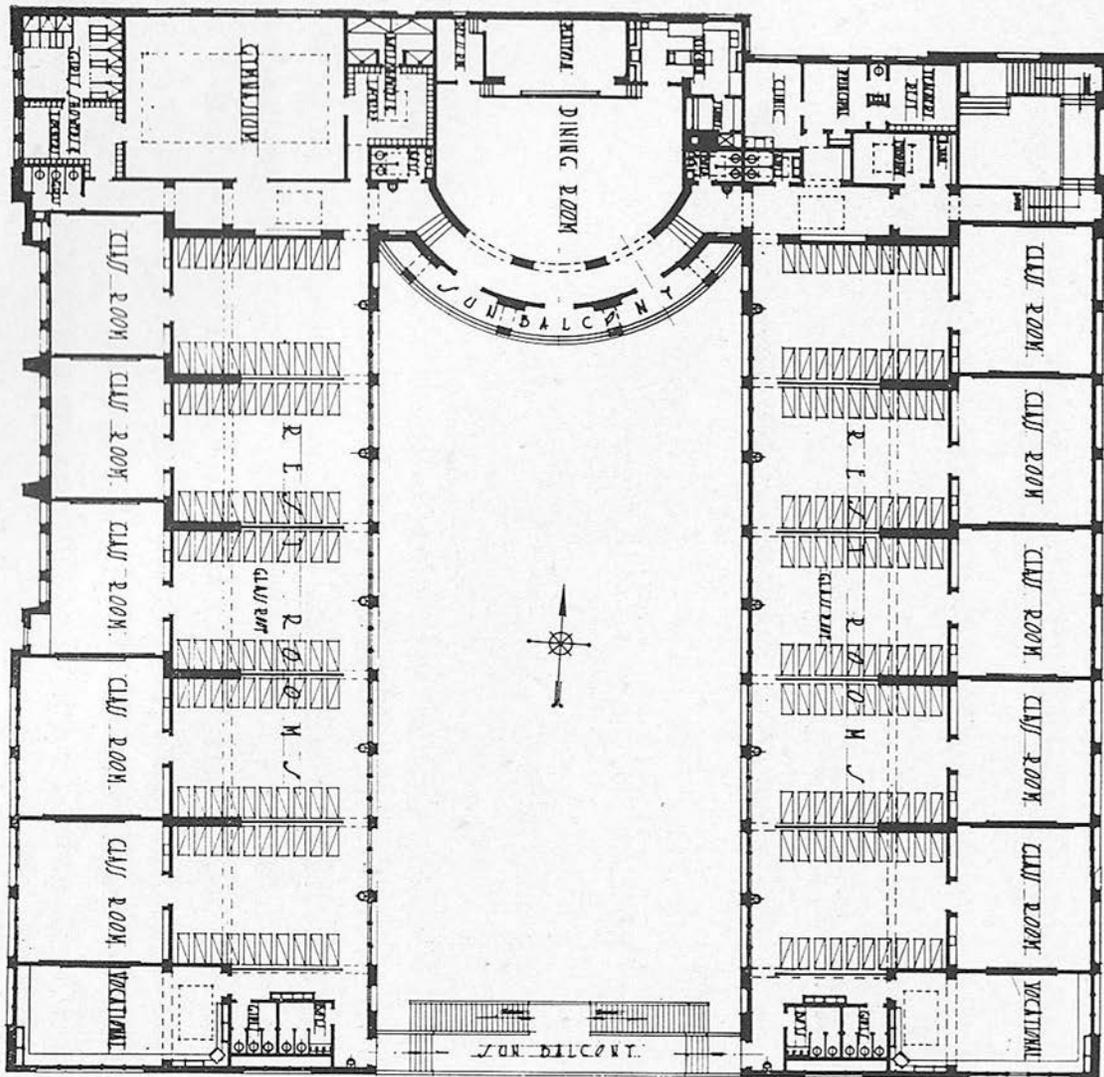


Figure 13. Second floor plan of the former Sunshine School; north is up.
 Source: *Public Buildings: Architecture under the Public Works Administration, 1933 to 1939*

Primary Façade—Bryant Street

The east (primary) façade of the former Sunshine School faces Bryant Street. It is set back several feet from the property line, providing space for a narrow planting bed enclosed behind a non-historic metal fence. Like the rest of the exterior, the east façade is constructed of painted board-formed concrete. The east façade is asymmetrical, with 11 repeating bays at the left forming the east classroom wing and a tower-like entrance pavilion at the far north (right) end (**Figures 14–15**). The pavilion projects out beyond the rest of the east façade, indicating the former location of the school’s entrance for children with acute and chronic illnesses. Because these students were ambulatory, there was no need to place this entrance at grade, unlike its counterpart on Florida Street.



Figure 14. East façade of the Sunshine School (classroom wing); view toward southwest.

A contemporary concrete ramp and stair provide access from the sidewalk to the primary entrance. The entrance contains a pair of six-light, paneled wood doors set within an arched portal (**Figure 16**). The upper part of the portal is infilled with painted wood paneling and the arch itself is defined by a scalloped molding. The adjoining water table is finished in Mexican-style tilework. Above the water table are two fixed wood windows protected behind wrought iron grilles. The area above the entrance is punctuated by a pair of windows, each consisting of 12 square openings infilled with structural glass. Between the windows, the words “Sunshine School,” are incised into the concrete, and above the sign is a niche containing a statue of a male child. The child, executed by a now-unknown artist or craftsman, is standing on a semi-circular platform supported by a funnel bracket. The niche is capped by a scalloped arch molding marked by a central keystone (**Figure 17**). A broad scalloped frieze marks the lower edge of the parapet, which steps inward several feet on either side. The parapet terminates with a corbelled cornice and a red clay tile-clad hipped roof.



Figure 15. Entrance pavilion on east façade; view toward west.



Figure 16. Detail of Bryant Street entrance.



Figure 17. Detail of niche, frieze, and cornice.

The remainder of the east façade corresponds to the east classroom wing. It is composed of 11 identical bays articulated by an equal number of vents at the water table level and large tripartite windows at the first and second floor levels. The walls are painted board-formed concrete with a modest amount of cast concrete ornament. At the first floor level, each bay contains a segmental-arched window divided into three sections by turned wood mullions. The windows sit atop a spandrel panel finished in brightly colored Mexican-style tilework. The window sashes themselves are not historic, although they do resemble the originals in regard to design, materials, and functionality (**Figure 18**). At the second floor level, each bay contains a rectangular window surmounted by a shallow scalloped molding (**Figure 19**). The bays are separated by engaged piers embellished with a chamfered corner detail and cast concrete capitals. The window sashes on the second-floor level are also demarcated by turned wood mullions. The east classroom wing terminates with a scalloped parapet identical to the frieze atop the entrance pavilion. Above the parapet, each of the engaged piers extends above the roofline, where they are capped by either a finial or an abstract animal figure.



Figure 18. Typical window on first floor level of east classroom wing facing Bryant Street.



Figure 19. Typical condition at second floor level of east classroom wing facing Bryant Street.

Primary Façade—Florida Street

The west (secondary) façade of the former Sunshine School faces Florida Street. Unlike the Bryant Street façade, it sits flush with the property line. The west façade is divided into three distinct sections, with the right and center sections being part of the west classroom wing and the left section being part of the auditorium wing. The south (right) section is five bays wide and it is configured just like the east classroom wing (**Figure 20**). The main difference is that one of the arched bays at the center has a small three-part window within it, indicating the location of a toilet room inside the building. In addition, there is a gated doorway at the far right side that provides pedestrian access from Florida Street to the central courtyard and to Bryant Street. Finally, the bay at the far left has a distinctive 15-light window resembling the pair above the main entrance on Bryant Street. Otherwise, this part of the west façade matches the east façade in every detail.



Figure 20. South part of the west façade of the former Sunshine School; view toward northeast.

The middle section of the west façade is also five bays wide, although the three central bays are much wider than the narrow corner bays (**Figure 21**). The corner bays are unornamented and contain only narrow, multi-light windows at the first and second floor levels. The three center bays comprise what was historically the driveway. Taxis carrying children with physical disabilities would enter through the south arch, drop their charges off at the main entrance, and then exit through the north arch. As mentioned previously, physically disabled children were kept apart from the children with acute and chronic illnesses, with the former accessing the building via their own entrance on Florida Street and the latter via Bryant Street. The driveway has not been used since the late 1970s, and the three arched openings are now enclosed behind non-historic metal security fencing. The arches are outlined by scalloped moldings that resemble the one above the main entrance on Bryant Street. Incised lettering above the central arch reads “Sunshine School.” A low concrete planter at the bottom of the central bay, added in ca. 1985, features incised lettering reading “Hilltop High School.” At the second floor level, each of three wide center bays contains three rectangular windows, with the center window in each group protected behind an elaborate wrought-iron grille. This section of the west façade terminates with the same parapet and cornice detailing described previously for the east and west classroom wings, including the scalloped parapet and the tapered piers capped by an alternating arrangement of pointed finials and animal figures.



Figure 22. Central section of the west façade of the former Sunshine School; view toward northeast.

The vehicular driveway has been converted into storage space but it retains its original design, materials, and detailing (**Figure 22**). The main entrance on Florida Street, which is located on the east side of the driveway, is detailed similar to the Bryant Street entrance, indicating that they were of equal importance. Functionally, the main difference between the two entrances is that the Florida Street entrance is on-grade with the first floor level of the school, indicating that this entrance was used as a barrier-free path of travel. Brought to school by contracted taxi service, the enclosed driveway allowed students with physical disabilities to remain dry in inclement weather. The entrance on Florida Street contains a pair of paneled wood doors, surmounted by a multi-light transom, that are enclosed within a segmental-arched portal similar to Bryant Street (**Figure 23**). The entrance itself is bordered by Mexican-style tilework that extends along the base of the wall and encompasses the windows in the adjoining bays. The ceiling of the driveway has painted concrete beams supported by three intersecting concrete arches with chamfered corner detailing.



Figure 22. Driveway on west side of the former Sunshine School; view toward northeast.

The northernmost section of the west façade is only two bays wide, and it corresponds to the auditorium wing (**Figure 24**). It is also on axis with its counterpart, the main entrance on Bryant Street. At the far right side of this section is a wide pier-like element. At the first floor level is a window composed of 15 structural glass lights. Otherwise, each bay of the first floor level contains a segmental-arched window divided into three sections by turned wood mullions. Each window, which contains compatible replacement metal window sashes, sits atop a spandrel panel finished in brightly colored Mexican-style tilework. At the second floor level, each bay contains a pair of narrow casement windows containing non-historic metal sashes. The northernmost section of the west façade terminates with a plain concrete parapet without a frieze or a cornice.

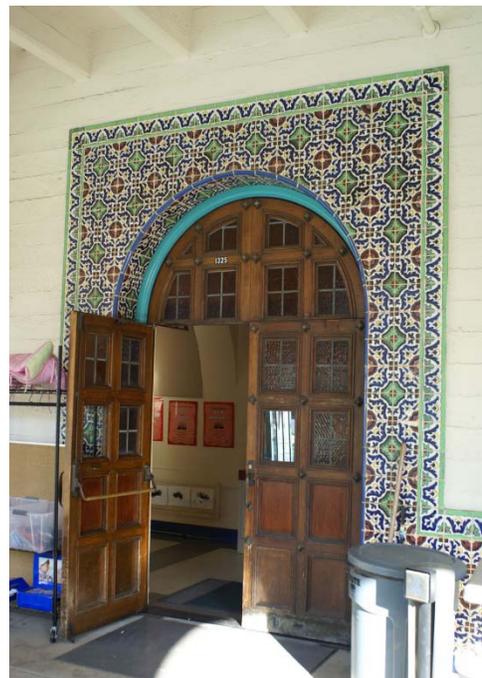


Figure 23. Florida Street entrance; view toward northeast.

Secondary Façade—North Elevation

The north elevation of the former Sunshine School faces the mid-block property line. It is therefore largely obscured from any public rights-of-way. However, a small portion is visible from Bryant Street, where a gated passageway provides access to the building's basement level. The visible portion of the north elevation is made of painted board-formed concrete and it has no ornamentation. It has a few openings, however, including a pair of metal doors—including one at street grade and another at the bottom of a stair—that access the mechanical room in the basement. There is also a large metal window located halfway between the first and second floor levels. This window, which is fitted with obscure art glass, provides natural illumination to the main lobby and stair just inside the Bryant Street entrance. The second floor level of the north façade has several additional metal sash windows.



Figure 24. Northernmost part of the west façade of the former Sunshine School; view toward southeast.

Secondary Façade—South Elevation

The south elevation of the former Sunshine School is set flush with the south property line and is therefore not visible from the street. Aerial photographs indicate that the south façade is made of painted board-form concrete and that it does not have any applied ornamentation. The south façade does contain several openings, including a row of semi-circular lunette windows that illuminate a passageway at the first floor level of the building. There is also a rectangular window at the southwest corner of the building, at the second floor level (**Figure 25**).

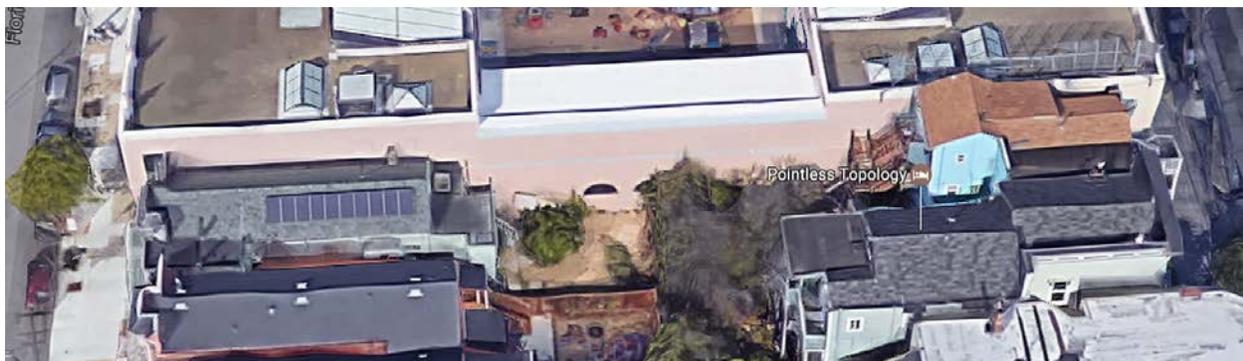


Figure 25. South façade of the Sunshine/Hilltop School; view toward north.
Source: Google Maps



Figure 26. North side of the courtyard of the former Sunshine School; view toward north.

Courtyard: North Elevation

The courtyard at the center of the former Sunshine School was historically used as a protected play area. The north side of the courtyard is defined by the elaborately ornamented and gently curved façade of the auditorium wing (**Figure 26**). At the first floor level, three arched openings defined by scalloped moldings contain pairs of glazed metal doors set within larger multi-light windows with turned wood mullions. The first-floor fenestration pattern is repeated at the second floor level. At the second floor level, however, a concrete balcony follows the undulating contour of the façade. The balcony, which is supported by four oversized concrete buttresses, has a low concrete balustrade articulated by punched openings resembling keyholes (**Figure 27**). These buttresses continue upward beyond the balcony, arching over it, becoming piers above the windows, and terminating above the parapet as cast concrete finials. This section of the north courtyard façade terminates as a scalloped parapet identical to what is described previously in this report for the Bryant and Florida Street façades.



Figure 27. Balcony on north side of courtyard; view toward east.

Courtyard: East and West Elevations

The east and west sides of the courtyard are bounded by the classroom wings, which are made of painted board-form concrete and generally resemble their street-facing elevations (**Figures 28–29**). Both elevations are nine bays long, with segmental-arched, tripartite windows at the first floor level and rectangular windows with flat headers at second floor level. At the first floor level, the arched openings include paired, four-light wood doors flanked and surmounted by multi-lite wood windows. The only exception to this pattern is the second bay in from the north on either side of the courtyard, which contains a blind arched opening containing a small multi-light window protected behind a wrought-iron grille. This detail indicates where the toilet rooms are located inside the school. At the second floor level, each bay contains a pair of nine-light, steel industrial windows ornamented at their corners by metal grilles depicting a floral motif. The windows on the second floor levels are separated by engaged concrete piers capped by molded capitals. The piers extend above the parapet and are capped by cast concrete finials.



Figure 28. West side of the courtyard of the former Sunshine School; view toward northwest.



Figure 29. East side of the courtyard of the former Sunshine School; view toward southeast.

Courtyard: South Elevation

The south side of the courtyard consists of a pair of open-air passageways connecting Bryant and Florida Streets. At the first floor level, a barrel-vaulted passageway with a concrete floor and engaged piers runs along the south side of the property (Figure 30). The piers are capped by molded capitals, from which springs the barrel vaulted ceiling. Semi-circular lunette windows on the south property line illuminate the corridor. Non-historic security fencing separates the passageway from the courtyard. Two flights of concrete stairs that converge at the center provide access from the courtyard to a balcony at the second floor level. The balcony, which is supported by oversized corbels, provides access to the passageway at the second floor level and the second floor of the classroom wings (Figure 31). The passageway at the second floor level is utilitarian in character and sheltered beneath a functional metal canopy supported by metal pipe columns.

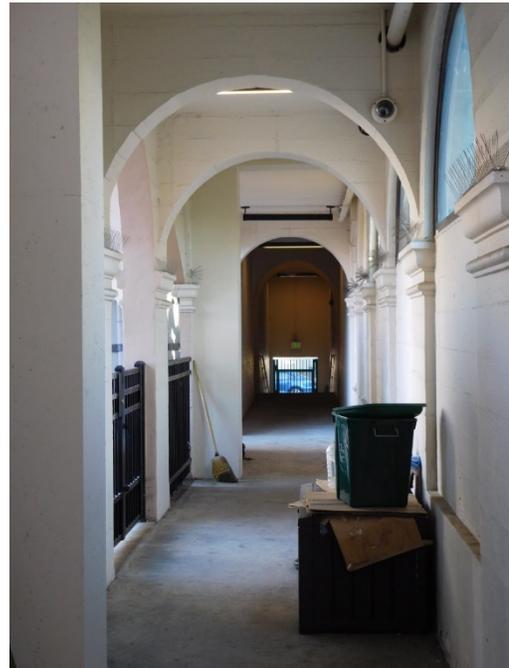


Figure 30. Passage at first floor level; view toward east.



Figure 31. South side of the courtyard of the former Sunshine School; view toward southeast.

Landscaping

The courtyard at the center of the former Sunshine School is hardscaped, although there are two planting beds located at the southeast and southwest corners. Students as part of their treatment plans originally cultivated these planting beds. Their counterparts at the north end of the courtyard may still exist beneath non-historic patio finishes. Located at the north side of the courtyard is a flagpole attached to an elaborately ornamented metal base mounted on an octagonal concrete planter/bench finished in brightly colored Mexican-style tilework (Figure 32). All of the play fixtures and the rubberized surface of the courtyard are contemporary.



Figure 32. Flagpole and planter/bench in courtyard; view toward northeast.

Interior

As mentioned, the former Sunshine School has a U-shaped floor plan consisting of two classroom wings along Bryant and Florida Streets and an intersecting auditorium wing. The first floor level of the two classroom wings contain classrooms, offices, and toilet rooms arranged along double-loaded corridors. The second floor level of the classroom wings have single-loaded corridors, with classrooms and offices on one side and open areas formerly used as sunrooms on the inside. Meanwhile, the auditorium wing contains the majority of the special-purpose rooms, including the main lobby/stair, dining room/auditoriums, gymnasium, and therapeutic pool. There is also a basement beneath the auditorium wing containing the mechanical room and storage.

The entrance on Bryant Street leads into the double-height entrance lobby. The lobby is paved in terrazzo laid in a checkerboard pattern and it has blue and sienna-colored tile wainscoting (**Figure 33**). A balanced-run stair with stepped cheek walls, continuous with the lobby, advances along all four walls of the double-height volume to the second floor level. The lobby/stair space is illuminated by a large segmental-arched window on the north wall, several smaller windows, and an Art Deco pendant fixture suspended from the ceiling (**Figure 34**). The ceiling of the lobby/stair has exposed concrete beams painted in the Spanish *Mudéjar* style to simulate wood construction (**Figure 35**). This ceiling treatment is used throughout the building.

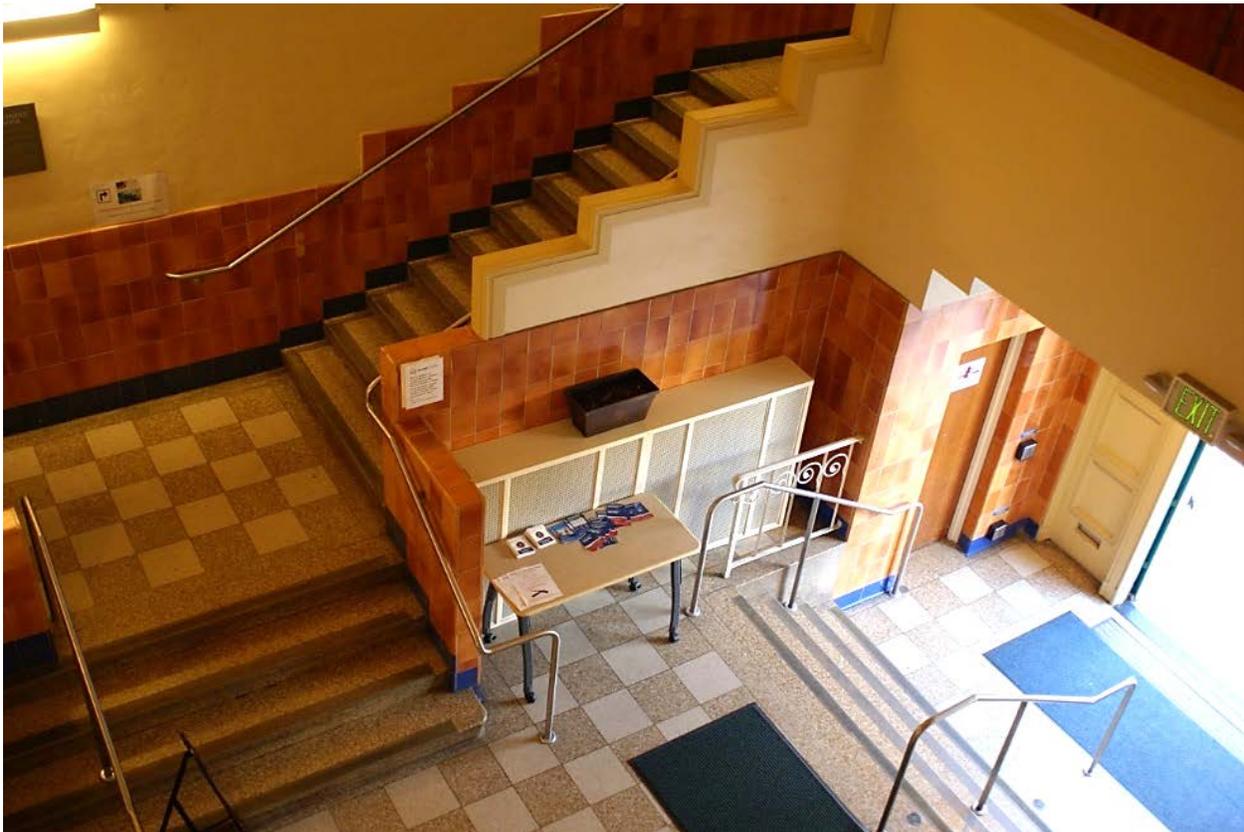


Figure 33. Main lobby/stair of the former Sunshine School; view toward northeast.



Figure 34. Upper part of main lobby/stair; view toward northeast.



Figure 35. Ceiling of main lobby/stair; view toward north.

As mentioned previously, the north wing of the former Sunshine School contains several special-purpose rooms. Both floor levels have an auditorium that originally also served as a dining room, with adjoining kitchens. Both auditoriums have segmental-arched windows overlooking the courtyard on their south walls and stages on their north walls (**Figures 36–37**). These rooms, which are the most important interior spaces inside the former Sunshine School after the lobby/stair, contain pairs of brightly colored tile mosaic murals above the radiators in their southeast and southwest corners, respectively. Unsigned and unattributed, these mosaics, which depict a fish, a butterfly, a turtle, and a bird, fit neatly within their semi-circular niches. Based on their design and colors, they appear to have been fabricated and installed in the early 1970s. The second floor auditorium retains all four of its original Art Deco pendant fixtures. At the first floor level of the auditorium wing is the former therapeutic pool, which now houses an industrial kitchen. The pool has been demolished, although portions of it have been retained as part of the counters and much of the tiled wainscoting remains attached to the walls (**Figure 38**).



Figure 36. South side of first-floor auditorium; view toward west.



Figure 37. Stage on north side of second-floor auditorium; view toward west.



Figure 38. Remnant of therapeutic pool in kitchen; view toward north.

The double-loaded corridors of the classroom wings have linoleum flooring, lath-and-plaster walls, acoustical ceiling tile, and contemporary fluorescent light fixtures (**Figure 39**). Portions of the corridor ceilings are vaulted. There are also several tiled niches containing water fountains. Some original casework remains, including several banks of lockers, storage cabinets, and display cases. Opening off the first floor corridors are classrooms, offices, and toilet rooms. All classrooms and offices contain a mixture of historic and contemporary finishes, including contemporary linoleum flooring, lath-and-plaster walls, and stenciled concrete beams with acoustical tiles placed in between. Some classrooms retain their original chalkboards, lockers, and cabinetry, but all have contemporary fluorescent lighting (**Figures 40–42**). All of the toilet rooms appear to have been remodeled in recent years.



Figure 39. Corridor near west entrance; view toward south.



Figure 40. Typical classroom (now used as an office) in west classroom wing; view toward west.



Figure 41. Original lockers in classroom.



Figure 42. Sink and cabinets in a typical classroom.



Figure 43. Typical corridor on second floor level; view toward south.

The second floor level of the classroom wings have single-loaded corridors that provide access to open-plan offices on the street side and former “rest rooms” or rest areas on the courtyard side. Originally set aside for children with tuberculosis and other respiratory and pulmonary diseases, these rest areas allowed students to nap or rest bathed in natural light and fresh air, which at the time were believed to be restorative. This is why the courtyard-facing walls of the corridors have large operable windows and skylights that bathe the second floor in natural light (**Figure 43**). The rest areas were historically divided into smaller areas by demountable wooden partitions. Most of the classrooms on the second floor have been remodeled in recent years and there are consequently fewer character-defining features on this floor level than the first floor level.



Figure 44. Basement of the former Sunshine School; view toward west.

As mentioned, the former Sunshine School has a partial basement level, which has concrete flooring and walls. All of the school’s utilities are housed in the basement, including some original mechanical equipment (**Figure 44**).

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

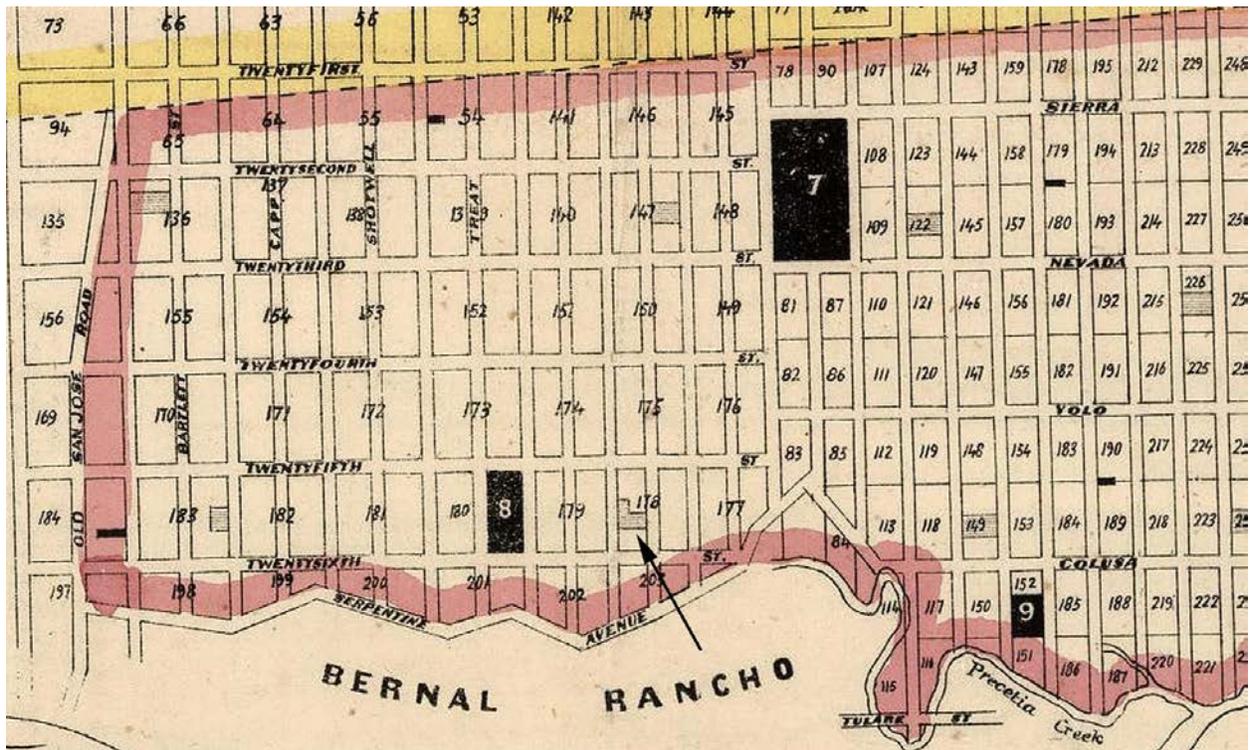


Figure 45. 1868 Outside Lands Map, with black arrow showing the future location of the Sunshine School.
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

Pre-construction History: 1879–1935

Although its recorded history goes back to 1776, the Mission District did not begin to urbanize until after 1855-56, when much of it was surveyed as part of the Van Ness Ordinance, which paved the way for the city to expand beyond its original 1847 boundaries. However, the southeast corner of the Mission District, where the Sunshine School was built 80 years later, lay just outside the Charter Line, so it was not surveyed. Endowed with balmy weather and within easy reach of built-up portions of the city, the southeast Mission District became ideal for horse racing. Early Anglo-American settlers and Mission District property owners, George and John Treat, built the Pioneer Race Course just west of the site of the future Sunshine School. The Union Race Course was close by as well. In 1863, with urbanization spreading inexorably southward, the San Francisco Homestead Association bought the Pioneer Race Course and subdivided it into house lots. However, property development in this part of the city was complicated by overlapping land claims. The Outside Land Ordinances of 1866 and 1868 were written by city authorities to resolve longstanding disputes and untangle property ownership. The Outside Land Ordinances also provided for surveying much of the city beyond the Charter Line and reserving select parcels for schools, parks, hospitals, and other infrastructure (Figure 45).¹

¹ San Francisco Board of Supervisors, *The Clement Ordinance, for Settling the Title to the Outside Lands of the City and County of San Francisco* (San Francisco: 1866).

In 1867, the Board of Supervisors set aside the central portion of Mission Block 178 (now Assessor's Block 4273) as a future school site. It remained undeveloped for about a decade, until 1879, when the Board of Education voted to build the Columbia Street Primary School at 25th and Columbia (now Florida) Streets.² Built in 1880, this school first appears on the 1889 Sanborn maps. The maps show an L-shaped property with a three-story, wood-frame building facing Florida Street. The property also included a row of one-story sheds along Bryant Street and the north and south property lines, a one-story toilet room at the southwest corner, and a planked play yard at the center (Figure 46). The rest of the block remained sparsely developed with a handful of single-family dwellings, farmhouses, and one mixed-use store/dwelling.

The Columbia Grammar School, as it was renamed in 1881, was a typical Victorian school in San Francisco. Built of wood and towering three stories above the street, it was designed in the then-popular Italianate style. Largely indistinguishable from other institutional building types of its era, the only exterior features that marked it as a school were its oversized windows, which were designed to illuminate the otherwise dark interiors with as much natural light as possible (Figure 47).

The 1900 Sanborn maps, published about a decade later, show several changes to the Columbia Grammar School campus. Visible on its north side is a three-story classroom wing addition. Also visible are a new one-story toilet room along Bryant Street, a freestanding "school room" northeast of the school, and the former toilet room relocated to the south end of the site (Figure 48). The 1900 Sanborn maps indicate that although the surrounding neighborhood had grown quite a lot since 1889, the subject block was still only about two-thirds developed.

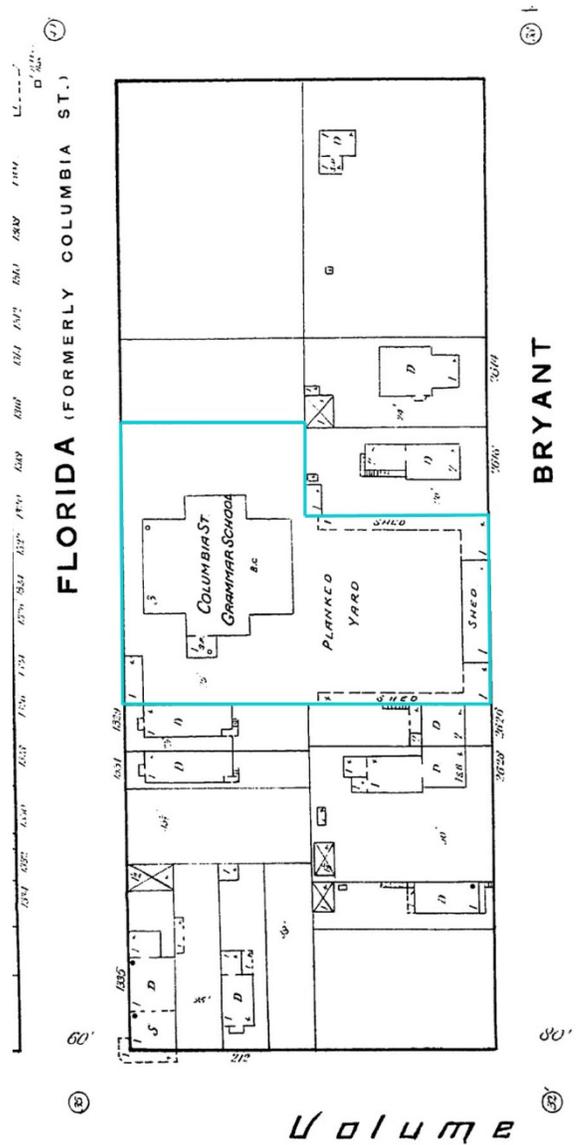


Figure 46. 1889 Sanborn maps showing the Columbia Street Grammar School.
Source: San Francisco Public Library

² The school's name was changed to the Columbia Street Grammar School in 1881 and the street's name was changed to Florida Street in 1882.

The 1914 Sanborn maps show great changes to the Columbia Grammar School campus, including a new south wing, the relocation of the former toilet room to become an addition, and the construction of a large stair at the rear of the building. The 1914 Sanborn maps also indicate that the subject block had been built-out in the decade and a half that had elapsed since the 1900 maps had been published. Although mostly residential, three of the four corner lots on the block were occupied by commercial or mixed-use buildings. Aside from the Columbia Grammar School, the only building on the block without a residential or a commercial component was the Swedish-Finnish Ebenezer Church at 25th and Florida Streets (**Figure 49**).



Figure 47. Columbia Grammar School, ca. 1915.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-8821

Historic photographs and contemporary descriptions of the Columbia Grammar School suggest that it was not very well-maintained. Indeed, it, as well as many other Victorian school buildings in San Francisco, was viewed as a “fire trap.” The addition of the rear stair was almost certainly a concession to the public’s concerns over the building’s safety. Fears about the building’s vulnerability to fire were evidently not misplaced, because in 1926 Columbia Grammar School was heavily damaged in a major fire.³ No one was injured, but after several months of deliberations over whether to repair the building or not, the Board of Education voted to demolish it in December 1926.⁴

³ “Board Defers Action on Columbia School,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 17, 1926), 12.

⁴ “Board Considers Plan for School,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 8, 1926), 9.

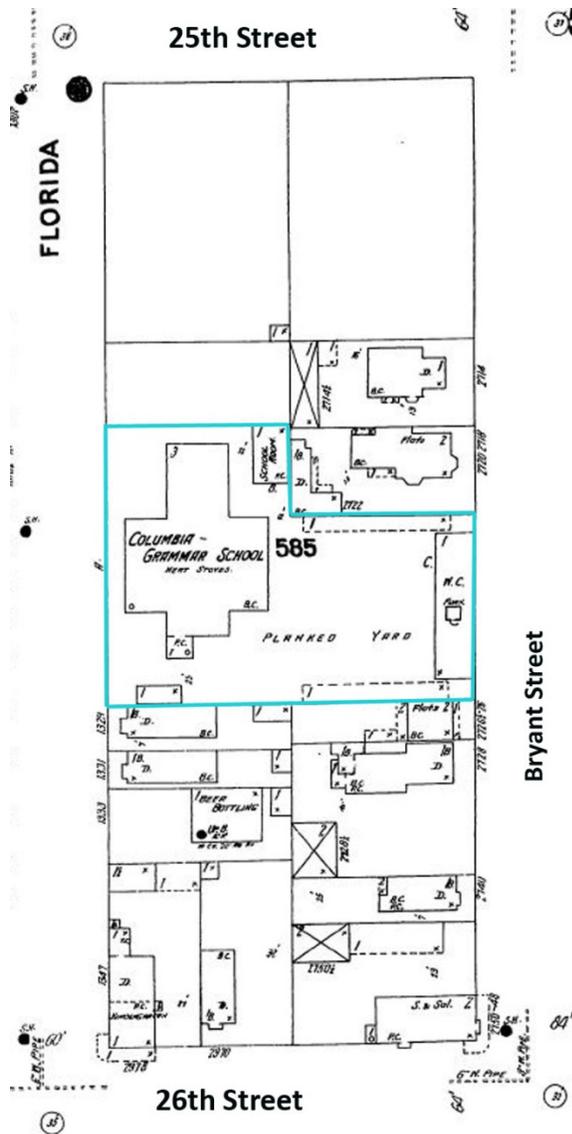


Figure 48. 1900 Sanborn maps showing the Columbia Street Grammar School.
Source: San Francisco Public Library

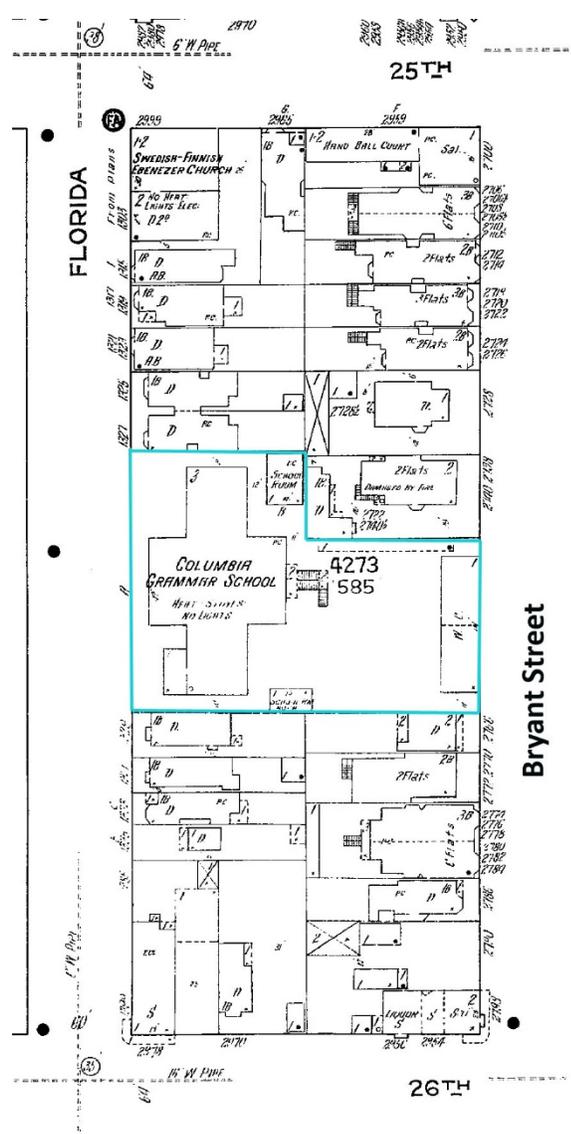


Figure 49. 1914 Sanborn maps showing the Columbia Street Grammar School.
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Planning, Design, and Construction of the Sunshine School: 1933–1937

San Francisco's Sunshine School followed national patterns in addressing the needs of two student populations: children with physical disabilities and those suffering from difficult-to-treat chronic and acute illnesses. Special classes for "crippled" children, nearly all of whom might have been sequestered at home or confined to an institution, grew in number during the early twentieth century. At the same time, several school districts established "open air" or "fresh air" classes to serve children with communicable diseases like tuberculosis. Boston opened the first such school in 1908, abiding by contemporary medical practice that posited that tubercular children needed exposure to fresh, cool air to improve their lungs' functional capacity.⁵ However, it was not until the late 1920s that special-

⁵ Robert L. Osgood, *The History of Special Education: A Struggle for Equality in American Public Schools* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 62-3.

purpose schools for crippled and chronically ill children were established in cities across the nation. Special education historian Robert L. Osgood writes: "the 1930s was a busy time for constructing such facilities" and lists Philadelphia, Cleveland, Indianapolis, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin as cities that constructed schools specifically geared toward "crippled" children.⁶

The San Francisco Rotary Club organized the Sunshine School in 1924 as an outgrowth of the organization's charity work for physically disabled children, which began as early as 1916. The Rotary Club's efforts occurred around the same time that the Shriners had begun establishing hospitals for "crippled" children. A Rotary chapter in Dayton, Ohio that had opened a school for "crippled children" inspired the San Francisco effort. In 1923, the San Francisco Rotary Club undertook a study to determine the composition of the city's disabled student population and the steps needed to establish a special school for them.⁷ With enthusiastic support from the San Francisco Board of Education, the Rotary Club renovated a city-owned "cottage" at 1753 Bush Street, between Gough and Octavia Streets, for the school (no longer extant). The school, which opened with 17 students in autumn 1924, was set back from the street with a generous play yard at the front of the property. It had a level planked driveway which enabled students, who were nearly all transported to school by taxis, to easily access the building. The school had side yards containing planting beds, where students could cultivate flowerbeds and vegetable plots. Rotary Club members supplied equipment and supplies, a daily hot lunch, and funds to pay for a nurse; the School District paid the salaries of three teachers. By the beginning of the second term, the Board of Education took on all responsibilities for the school, though the Rotary Club continued to provide financial and moral support throughout the life of the school.⁸

In 1926, in response to overcrowding, the Board of Education moved the Sunshine School to a building at 440 Dolores Street, behind Mission High School (no longer extant).⁹ Carrie Daly, the Sunshine School's principal, described this facility and her 90 students in a 1931 address to the California Society for Crippled Children. The children enrolled "are all mentally normal or above" with the same rate of progress as "normal" children. Transported to and from school via a fleet of taxis, the students engaged in a curriculum that was "the same as that of the regular school," with manual training and sewing offered to older children.¹⁰ Documentation shows that children with disabilities were also served with specialized instruction at Jean Parker, Gough, and Sanchez Elementary Schools; and Everett Junior High School.¹¹

The "sister" school for the Sunshine School for "Crippled" Children was the Buena Vista "Health" School. Dating back to 1915, Buena Vista Health School accommodated 126 students in a six-classroom school building in the Mission's "warm belt," at 18th and Bryant Streets. Pupils admitted to Buena Vista suffered from various chronic and acute illnesses, including heart disease, malnourishment, asthma, and

⁶ Osgood, 66.

⁷ "The Sunshine School," *The Rotarian* (Vol XXVI, No. 1, January 1925) 3, 47.

⁸ Theresa Whitener, *A Tradition of Fellowship and Service: The Rotary Club of San Francisco at 100* (Rotary Club of San Francisco, 2008), 39.

"Rotary Club Crippled Tots' School Opens," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 6, 1924), 1.

⁹ "Sunshine School under Construction," *San Francisco Public Schools Superintendent Report* (1936), 132.

¹⁰ Carrie Daly, "The Sunshine School," *San Francisco Public Schools Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (May 1931), 21.

¹¹ "Handicapped Pupils Aided," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 13, 1932), 2.

“communicable and debilitating diseases,” such as tuberculosis. The Board of Public Health determined each student’s eligibility for the school.¹² Children with especially acute or contagious diseases were instructed in special classes administered at the San Francisco Shriners’ Hospital on 19th Avenue or San Francisco General Hospital. In some cases, teachers visited students at home.¹³ The wood-frame building housing the school had been erected in 1880, making it one of the oldest school buildings still in use in San Francisco.

San Francisco’s \$3 million school bond measure, approved by voters in December 1933, included funds to erect a new Sunshine School. San Francisco voters approved the bonds with expectations that the newly elected president Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal public works programs would help financially, and in 1934, the Public Works Administration (PWA) included the school as part of a package of approved funding for building and rebuilding 12 schools for the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).¹⁴ The Board of Education selected the site of the old Columbia Grammar School, which had burned and been subsequently demolished several years earlier. The site was chosen mainly for its location in San Francisco’s “warm belt” and for its proximity to San Francisco General Hospital, located three blocks east on Potrero Avenue, which would supply special meals for the children.¹⁵ After selecting the site, the Board of Education enlarged the parcel to its existing 195’ by 200’ configuration by condemning and purchasing four parcels along Bryant Street, making the lot just about square. The Board of Education then selected a team of architects, including Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O’Brien to design the new school.¹⁶

Despite the involvement of so many designers and advisers, the building has a very cohesive aesthetic and efficient plan that leverages the strengths of each of the four architects. Based on his extensive experience designing public school buildings, it seems likely that Martin Rist took the lead on the overall plan of the school. Built on a compact lot in a dense urban neighborhood, the Sunshine School makes the most of its relatively cramped site by providing a central courtyard, which opens up the interior to natural light and air. In terms of its Spanish Colonial design embellished with high-quality Mexican-style tilework, statuary, and wrought iron grilles, the input of the other three architects is evident, in particular Charles Strothoff, whose Period Revival houses in the West of Twin Peaks area often embody fanciful Spanish Colonial Revival detailing. Smith O’Brien’s involvement likely stems from his interest in socially beneficial projects.

In 1934, the Board of Education voted to consolidate the Buena Vista Health School with the new Sunshine School in the new building. However, parents of students at the Sunshine School quickly mobilized to mount an intense campaign directed against the Board’s plans to combine the schools, claiming that the needs and activities of the two populations were too far removed. Specifically, they

¹² “Gains in Special Schools and Classes,” *A Review of Accomplishments: Report of the Superintendent* (1930), 49.

¹³ “Rossi Makes Final School Bond Appeal,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1933), 11. M.M. FitzGerald, “For Physically Handicapped,” *San Francisco Public Schools Bulletin*, 1931, p. 11. The dates for Buena Vista School appear in “Sunshine School under Construction,” *Superintendent’s Report San Francisco Public Schools* (1936), 127.

¹⁴ “Board to Hear School Protest,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 24, 1934), 13.

¹⁵ “Consolidated School for Cripples and Invalids Believed Assured in S. F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 2, 1934).

¹⁶ “A School for the Physically Handicapped,” *The Architect and Engineer* (November 1938), 37.

objected that the 1933 bond measure had specified funds only for the Sunshine School and not the Buena Vista Health School. Perhaps more to the point, they argued that a combined facility would endanger their children by placing them in proximity to students suffering from communicable diseases.¹⁷ Parents also argued that the proposed design would disadvantage students with limited mobility because any second floor overhangs would shade their first floor classrooms and play area, depriving the children of sunlight. Both groups of children, they argued, would be psychologically harmed by a joint facility where they would have to “consider and see their different sufferings.”¹⁸ Finally, the Sunshine School PTA Protest Committee argued that “crippled” children were especially vulnerable to conscious and unconscious cruelty of “normal children.”¹⁹

To support the Board’s decision, Superintendent Edwin Lee formed an “Expert Special Building Committee” of teachers and public health professionals, which met with the architects from July to August 1934 (**Figure 50**). In addition to four members of the Board of Education, the committee included professionals from the Department of Public Health, several doctors, and a professor of education from Mills College.²⁰ The committee voted 12-to-1 in favor of consolidating the two schools into one building; the principal of the Sunshine School, Carrie Daly, casting the lone “no” vote.²¹



Figure 50. Group of physicians and educators meeting to discuss plans for the Sunshine School, n. d. (c. 1935). Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4288

During the fall of 1934, the Sunshine School PTA and the Guild for Crippled Children met with Mayor Rossi, Superintendent Lee, and the School Board to register their protests.²² Journalists initially reported that the Board of Education had ended the conflict by rejecting the two-story design in favor of a one-story structure with separate playgrounds on a large lot near San Francisco General Hospital.²³ Yet a letter dated March 7, 1935 from

¹⁷ “Sunshine School for Crippled Children Parent-Teachers Association Protest Letter” (May 2, 1935) San Francisco Public Library, Vertical File SF Schools, Sunshine School for Crippled Children.

¹⁸ “Plan to Merge Health, Cripple Schools Fought,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 30, 1934).

¹⁹ “Sunshine School for Crippled Children Parent-Teachers Association Protest Letter” (April 23, 1935), San Francisco Public Library, Vertical File: “SF Schools, Sunshine School for Crippled Children.”

²⁰ “Sunshine School, Expert Special Building Committee,” San Francisco Public Library, Vertical File: SF Schools, Sunshine School for Crippled Children.” “Sunshine School under Construction,” *Superintendent’s Report San Francisco Public Schools* (1936), 129.

²¹ “Sunshine School under Construction,” *Superintendent’s Report San Francisco Public Schools* (1936), 129.

²² Miscellaneous undated news clippings in San Francisco Planning department scrapbook. San Francisco Public Library, Vertical File: “SF Schools, Sunshine School for Crippled Children.”

²³ “Health School Row Ended,” (November 8, 1934) unattributed article in San Francisco Planning department scrapbook. “School Fire Escape Peril is Charged,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 14, 1934). “Consolidated School for Cripples and Invalids Believed Assured in S.F.,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 2, 1934), 7. According to one newspaper account, a property on Vicente between 26th and 28th Avenues was considered a possible site. “Site Selected for Sunshine School,” *San Francisco Examiner* (December 20, 1934).

Frank Marisch, Chairman of the Sunshine School Protest Committee, stated that the Board had reneged on its revised plan and that it had gone “back to the original plans of combining the Sunshine and Buena Vista Schools on Bryant and 25th Streets.” The reason given was that there were simply not enough funds to secure the necessary acreage to erect the side-by-side facilities.²⁴

In May 1935, a Grand Jury Committee convened to resolve the conflict.²⁵ However, the Grand Jury upheld the consolidation based on the endorsement of medical and educational professionals, the critical fire danger created by keeping students in the dangerous Buena Vista School, and the prospect of losing PWA funds if construction was further delayed.²⁶ Indeed, one substantial reason that the PWA had agreed to fund so many projects in San Francisco, including 12 public schools, was that the city had done the necessary fundraising and mobilization of public opinion to ensure that it had what today would be called, “shovel-ready” projects. Holding up the Sunshine School project not only made the city look bad, but it endangered funding for upcoming projects.²⁷

In further support of its plans, the 1936 School Superintendent’s Report stated: “the idea of a consolidated health school is no innovation” and it listed several schools serving children with a variety of disabilities in St. Louis, Cleveland, Boston, Toledo, Baltimore, and Detroit. The report claimed that the Sunshine School was specifically modeled after the David W. Smouse Opportunity School in Des Moines, Iowa. Dr. Smouse and his wife, Amanda, had both suffered from childhood disabilities and as adults pledged funds to build a special school in Des Moines where Dr. Smouse practiced medicine. The Smouse Opportunity School, which opened in March 1931, served students up through 8th grade with a variety of physical disabilities including limited vision and hearing, “orthopedic cripples,” and children with “seriously defective vitality.”²⁸ A telegram from the Des Moines Superintendent of Schools to Superintendent Edwin Lee stated:

Teachers in school for physically handicapped extremely enthusiastic in favor of consolidated plan. The consolidation is economical as to transportation and overhead. Possible to run better a fuller program with educational advantages to all. Psychologically sound because handicapped child loses self-pity and finds himself [sic] able to excel in some line. He also feels more truly a part of the school than when he is segregated in regular buildings. Children with different handicaps learn to help each other and often form helpful friendships. It is wise to include in such a school the defective vitality group whose members are built up and go back to normal school work as that fact sells school to the public.²⁹

However, as a compromise, the Board of Education decided to segregate the Sunshine School’s student population, with physically disabled students confined to the first floor and “invalid” students to the second, where each classroom had a glass-roofed “rest area.” Each group accessed the facility through

²⁴ “Letter from Sunshine School P.T.A. Protest Committee” (March 7, 1935) San Francisco Public Library, Vertical File: “SF Schools, Sunshine School for Crippled Children.”

²⁵ “Row on Joint Schools Taken to Grand Jury,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 23, 1935).

²⁶ “Sunshine School under Construction,” *Superintendent’s Report San Francisco Public Schools* (1936), 129.

²⁷ “Mayor Keeps Hands Off in School Merger,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 31, 1934), 3.

²⁸ David W. Smouse Opportunity School, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2002), Section 8, page 4.

²⁹ “Sunshine School under Construction,” *Superintendent’s Report San Francisco Public Schools* (1936), 130.

separate entrances as well, with the students with physical disabilities entering at grade via the internal driveway on Florida Street and the students with chronic illnesses entering the building from Bryant Street, where a flight of stairs leads up to the second floor level from the lobby. Both floor levels had their own toilet rooms and dining room/auditoriums as well. The ground floor level held a small therapeutic bathing pool, while both levels featured “corrective gymnasiums” where physical therapy could be administered.³⁰ In contrast to the Smouse School, which incorporated a pair of semicircular ramps in its courtyard, vertical circulation at the Sunshine School is achieved by stairs because the children with physical disabilities were confined to the ground floor.³¹

The incorporation of a therapeutic pool at the proposed new Sunshine School was likely a nod to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Stricken with a debilitating case of polio in 1921, which cost him use of his legs, FDR worked hard to overcome his disability. Hearing of the curative effects of the warm mineral springs at Warm Springs, Georgia, Roosevelt visited in 1924. After swimming for a day, he was able to move his right leg for the first time in three years. Convinced of its curative effects, FDR bought the resort property and 1,200 acres from George Foster Peabody. In 1927, he founded the Warm Springs Foundation, a non-profit foundation dedicated to curing victims of polio. Although he never regained full use of his legs, by 1928, FDR had recovered enough to return to his main passion of politics.³² FDR returned to Warm Springs every year for the rest of his life, except for in 1942. After being elected president in 1932, he built the “Little White House” at Warm Springs. Although there is no documentary evidence, it seems quite likely that the decision to build a therapeutic pool at the Sunshine School was likely influenced by the president, who throughout his life remained convinced that soaking in warm mineral springs did provide relief and some level of recovery from polio-induced paralysis.³³

Groundbreaking for the new \$325,000 Sunshine School occurred on November 10, 1935 (**Figure 51**). The contractor was Anderson & Ringrose, who submitted the lowest bid of \$223,869.³⁴ Construction took 20 months and the building was dedicated in a small ceremony held on August 17, 1937. Present at the ceremony were the architects and the structural engineer, H. J. Brunnier, a very prominent San Francisco engineer and



Figure 51. Groundbreaking for the Sunshine School, 1935.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4255

³⁰ “A School for the Physically Handicapped,” *Architect & Engineer* (November 1938), 37-9.

³¹ David W. Smouse Opportunity School, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (2002), Section 8, page 4.

³² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Warm Springs Historic District,” *Roosevelt’s Little White House State Historic Site and Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation*: https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/presidents/roosevelts_little_white_house.html, accessed July 31, 2017.

³³ David M. Ohinsky, *Polio: An American Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 35-40. Gray Brechin, “Letters to the Editor,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 19, 2011), A13.

³⁴ *Pacific Constructor* (1935).

long-time president of the San Francisco Rotary Club. As a Rotary Club dignitary, he was certainly aware of the Sunshine School, but it is not known whether he donated his time to the project or received a fee. The initial dedication of the Sunshine School consisted of a flag-raising ceremony in the courtyard led by Superintendent of Schools Joseph P. Nourse.³⁵ Nourse stated that the school, built to accommodate 250 students, was the only one of its kind in the West.³⁶

A second public ceremony held on November 7, 1937 to coincide with American Education week included more speeches by several dignitaries, including U.S. Commissioner of Education Dr. John W. Studebaker, Mayor Angelo Rossi, Superintendent of Schools J.P. Nourse, and Dr. David W. Smouse, co-founder of the Smouse Opportunity School in Des Moines.³⁷ Dr. Smouse offered that the Sunshine School was only the “second complete school of its kind” in the U.S., after his own. Commissioner Studebaker, who had supported the Smouse Opportunity School as the Superintendent of Des Moines schools, held the Sunshine School up as a model for the nation:

The problem we are attempting to solve here is a national one, born of a love for humanity. The Sunshine School was constructed because a Nation is beginning to realize its duty under democracy to be just to all of its citizens.

It is a public act, not of benevolence, but an act which typifies the democratic workings of social justice. In body, mind and spirit these children are fundamentally the same as the rest of us. Are they not, then, entitled to the same rights and opportunities?³⁸

He concluded his speech with a plea for American communities to design and remodel existing educational facilities “to meet the needs of the 2,000,000 physically handicapped children of the Nation” and commended San Francisco for “tak(ing) its place among the leaders of the Nation in this national problem.”³⁹ Commissioner Studebaker’s language is striking for its assertion that people with disabilities were just as worthy of citizenship as anyone else, as well as the idea that providing accessible facilities was not an act of “benevolence” or much worse, pity, but an act of “social justice.” Commissioner Studebaker’s words would not be out of place three decades later with the birth of the disability rights movement in the late 1960s. The view of physical disability as a neutral characteristic rather than an abnormal or shameful condition still had a long way to go in the American psyche, but doubtlessly the election of America’s first (and only) disabled president had something to do with the changing awareness of the place of disabled Americans in society.

The SFUSD photographed the Sunshine School after its opening. These photographs illustrate a facility that looked very much like it does now. The images show students and faculty touring the facility, disabled children arriving at the Florida Street entrance via taxi, and children resting in cots in the rest areas on the second floor level (**Figures 52–55**).

³⁵ “San Francisco Schools Swing Open to 100,000,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (August 18, 1937).

³⁶ “Crippled Tots to Get Modern School Plant.”

³⁷ “S.F. Sunshine School Opens,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 8, 1937).

³⁸ U.S. Commissioner of Education Dr. John W. Studebaker, as quoted in “Sunshine School of S.F. Dedicated,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 8, 1937), 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*



Figure 52. Students and staff in the courtyard of the new Sunshine School, 1937.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4292



Figure 53. Students arriving by taxi at the new Sunshine School, 1937.
Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4254



Figure 54. Dining room on second floor of the Sunshine School, 1937.

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4265



Figure 55. Children resting in cots on second floor of the Sunshine School, 1937.

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4269

Concise History of the Sunshine School: 1937–2016

The Sunshine School educated physically disabled and chronically ill children for almost half a century, from 1937 until ca. 1980. San Francisco's Rotary Club, which had started the school in 1924, continued to raise money to buy supplies and equipment, as well as participate in various events and celebrations held at the school. In 1938, the Rotary Club sponsored an experimental physical rehabilitation program for children diagnosed with "spastic paralysis." The program, overseen by the Board of Education and the Department of Public Health, was apparently successful in restoring mobility to several children who had been previously unable to walk or pick up objects. The program also worked with children who had speech impediments, with specialized instruction carried out at each child's pace.⁴⁰

The therapeutic pool, though it was part of the Sunshine School's initial design, was not ready to use until March 7, 1940, when it was finally opened in a ceremony attended by officials representing SFUSD, the Health Department, and the Rotary Club. The delays were caused by several factors, including technical problems with the heating apparatus, as well as disagreements over the proper treatment procedures to be used. To prevent the perceived danger of drafts, special ventilating equipment was installed so the windows could be closed. A photograph taken of the pool ca. 1941 shows what it looked like before the space was converted into a commercial kitchen ca. 1985 (**Figure 56**).

Students who graduated from the Sunshine School typically went on to study at Everett Junior High and then Mission High School, both of which had special programs catering to physically disabled students.⁴¹ Countless stories in local newspapers discussed how graduates of the Sunshine School gained confidence in their abilities, allowing them to graduate from high school and get jobs or go on to higher education.

Students at the Sunshine School, as well as the Gough School for the Deaf, were urged to stay home in the weeks following the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor and other Pacific bases on December 7, 1941. City authorities believed that San Francisco would soon be attacked and that physically disabled children would be helpless when Japanese bombers appeared above San Francisco.⁴² After a few weeks, when the bombings did not occur, San Franciscans went back to their daily affairs and the Sunshine School reopened. Enrollment at the school spiked upward during World War II, as tens of thousands of defense workers, including many African Americans from the South, came to the city to work in the shipyards and other defense industries. By 1945, Navy buses were transporting 53 handicapped children from the Hunters Point housing projects to the Sunshine School.⁴³

⁴⁰ "Unique School Cures Children of Paralysis," *San Francisco Chronicle* (May 30, 1938), 11.

⁴¹ "386 to Graduate at Mission High," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 5, 1938), 86.

⁴² "More on Defenses of S.F. Schools," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 6, 1942), 8.

⁴³ "Navy Asks Rides for Crippled Pupils," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 2, 1945), 11.



Figure 56. Therapeutic pool on first floor level of the Sunshine School, ca. 1937.

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public Library, Photo ID# AAD-4266

In addition to the San Francisco Rotary Club, the Yellow Cab Co. of San Francisco had a longstanding relationship with the Sunshine School. Yellow Cab drivers had worked under contract to drive the students to the school since it opened in 1924, and many drivers were loyal to “their” students, often driving the same children to school every day. Indeed, in April 1948, 30 Yellow Cab Co. drivers volunteered to give blood to a Sunshine School student, Lydia Radich, who had been hit by a truck.⁴⁴

An article in the October 29, 1948 *Chronicle* provides a window into the operation of the Sunshine School a little over a decade after it opened. The article, written to cover the activities of the California Congress of Parents and Teachers, described participants’ visits to San Francisco’s three schools for children with special needs, including the Sunshine School. The piece on the Sunshine School described how children with physical and/or mental disabilities, as well as chronic illnesses such as asthma, rheumatic fever, and “healed tuberculosis” “laugh, play, and keep track of their own progress on charts. Their teachers envelope them in an atmosphere of kindness, (and) encouragement for every gain they make.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “30 Cab Drivers Donate Blood for Crippled Child,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (April 1, 1948), 13.

⁴⁵ Zilfa Estcourt, “PTA Plans Tours of Special Schools,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 29, 1948), 9.

The article provided useful information on the organization of the school, whose principal, Mrs. Ursula Murphy, had succeeded longtime principal Carrie Daly following her death in 1945. The first floor, called the “Orthopedic Sunshine School,” continued to serve children with physical disabilities. In addition to providing a standard education, the school’s primary goal was to improve each child’s physical performance, if not heal them entirely. The centerpiece of the rehabilitation program was the therapeutic pool, where children were suspended in the warm water while completing exercises with specialized equipment (**Figure 57**). In addition to physical therapy, students were given psychological counseling to build their self-esteem and confidence. In 1948, there were 110 pupils in the orthopedic department. Upon graduating, most students went on to Everett Junior High School. In 1948, the department on the second floor was known as the Sunshine Health School, and it was still dedicated to children with chronic illnesses. Children were accepted to the program on the recommendation of a physician. Each child had a custom treatment plan devised for his or her particular health situation. Treatment centered on high calorie breakfasts and lunches, physical training and exercises, and “all the milk they can drink.” According to Principal Murphy, most of the pupils of the Sunshine Health School “improve rapidly.” “It gives us a thrill to see the roses come out on their pale cheeks.”⁴⁶



Figure 57. Nurse with child in pool, 1940.
Source: San Francisco Historical
Photograph Collection, San Francisco
Public Library,
Photo ID# AAB-0081

By all accounts, the Sunshine School was known and respected not only by local parents and authorities but also by educators and healthcare professionals from around the world. Professional conferences held in San Francisco often included tours of the school, which perennially elicited the praise of educators and public health specialists alike.⁴⁷ In an era preceding the disability rights movement, the most important impact that the Sunshine School had was to inspire the creation of similar schools throughout the Bay Area and beyond, including similar institutions in Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Contra Costa, and Marin Counties.

Despite being held in such high regard, enrollment at the Sunshine School began to decline during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Reasons ranged from the prosaic – in particular mass suburbanization – to the profound, particularly the development of vaccines and cures for many common diseases. Tuberculosis, a frightening and frequently lethal disease, received an effective cure with the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ SFUSD also operated the Alta Vista School, at Pierce and Hayes Street, for mentally handicapped students.

development of the antibiotic streptomycin in 1946. This innovation reduced the mortality rate from approximately 50 percent to less than 10 percent. Rising living standards and improved sanitation also reduced the number of new cases, a trend that has lasted until recent years. In 1952, Dr. Jonas Salk developed the first effective polio vaccine and after several years of testing, the polio vaccine became available to the public in 1955. Polio, as well as many other potentially lethal childhood diseases had been effectively eliminated.⁴⁸ Vaccines and better public health practices led to a sharp reduction in the number of students with chronic illnesses requiring the services of the Sunshine School's health department. No further mention is made of chronically ill children attending the school after 1960. Indeed, in 1962, Yellow Cab Co. of San Francisco discontinued its longstanding contract with the City to provide transportation to students, suggesting that enrollment had declined.⁴⁹

A similar fall in enrollment in the number of children with physical disabilities began to occur at the Sunshine School in the late 1960s. Taking a lead from the contemporary civil rights movement, the American disability rights movement, which began in the late 1960s, gained momentum in the early 1970s.⁵⁰ Based on specifications for barrier-free travel completed in the late 1940s by Dr. Timothy J. Nugent, who developed the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Barrier Free Standard, the independent living movement emerged in California through the efforts of Edward Roberts and other wheelchair-using individuals.⁵¹ Activists like Roberts advocated for removing barriers that prevented wheelchair users and from leading a normal life, including providing only steps to access buildings, unmaintained sidewalks, locations not connected with public transit, or any other physical or social barriers that segregated people with disabilities and prevented them from having the same opportunities as people without disabilities. Of course, what this meant was that separate schools and other facilities for people with disabilities would soon no longer be acceptable.

During the 1970s, Congress passed several laws to allow people with disabilities to join mainstream society, including the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Passed in 1975, this law required that disabled and non-disabled children be educated together.⁵² Between 1973 and 1976, enrollment at the Sunshine School continued to decline, shrinking from 140 students to 119.⁵³ One year later, in 1977, the San Francisco Chronicle reported, "most of the district's handicapped youngsters are in regular classrooms."⁵⁴ The remaining facilities dedicated to disabled students, including the Sunshine School and the Louise Lombard School (formerly known as the Alta Vista School), which served students with cognitive disabilities, were pared down and eventually closed. A history of the San Francisco Rotary Club, which had continued its connection to the Sunshine School through events such as an annual Christmas party, stated that the school had closed by 1980. A handful of students who were unable to be "mainstreamed" into the general population of elementary schools were educated at the LeConte

⁴⁸ Religious fundamentalists and Libertarians have begun resisting vaccinations on a massive scale.

⁴⁹ "Transport of Handicapped is Improving," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 18, 1962), 5.

⁵⁰ Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley. "Introduction," The Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm/>; Accessed February 7, 2017.

⁵¹ Samuel Bagenstos, *Law and the Contradictions of the Disability Rights Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵² "Federal Call for Education for the Disabled: Only a Beginning," *San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle* (November 6, 1977), 24. "Compromise Bus Plan for Handicapped," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 1, 1976), 2.

⁵³ "School Bus Strike," *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 9, 1976), 26.

⁵⁴ "Federal Call for Education for the Disabled: Only a Beginning," *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 6, 1977), 1, 24.

School (now Leonard R. Flynn Elementary) at 3125 Army Street.⁵⁵ Vacant for several years, the former Sunshine School became a facility for pregnant minors and teenage parents and was renamed Hilltop High School in 1985.⁵⁶

Alteration History: 1937–2016

Sanborn Maps and Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs of San Francisco taken by Harrison Ryker in 1938 show the recently completed Sunshine School. At least from the air, the school looks exactly like it does now, with the exception of the courtyard, which has been incrementally remodeled over time. The 1938 aerials indicate that there were originally four planting beds – one at each corner of the courtyard – including two on either side of the flagpole. Only the two on the south side of the courtyard remain. The courtyard surface also appears to have been replaced. The 1938 aerials also do not show the shed-roofed canopy added above the stair on the south side of the courtyard ca. 1954 (**Figure 58**). The 1950 Sanborn maps, published 13 years after the opening of the Sunshine School, show similar conditions, as well as useful information on the building’s construction methods, mechanical systems, fenestration pattern, and floor plan (**Figure 59**).

⁵⁵ Theresa Whitener, 126.

⁵⁶ The San Francisco Foundation made a multi-year grant for a teen parent program at Sunshine School in 1985, “Teen Dads Are Not All Ogres,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 4, 1985), 31. By the end of 1985, the name Hilltop School was mentioned in “Teens Cope with Babies,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 22, 1985), 56.

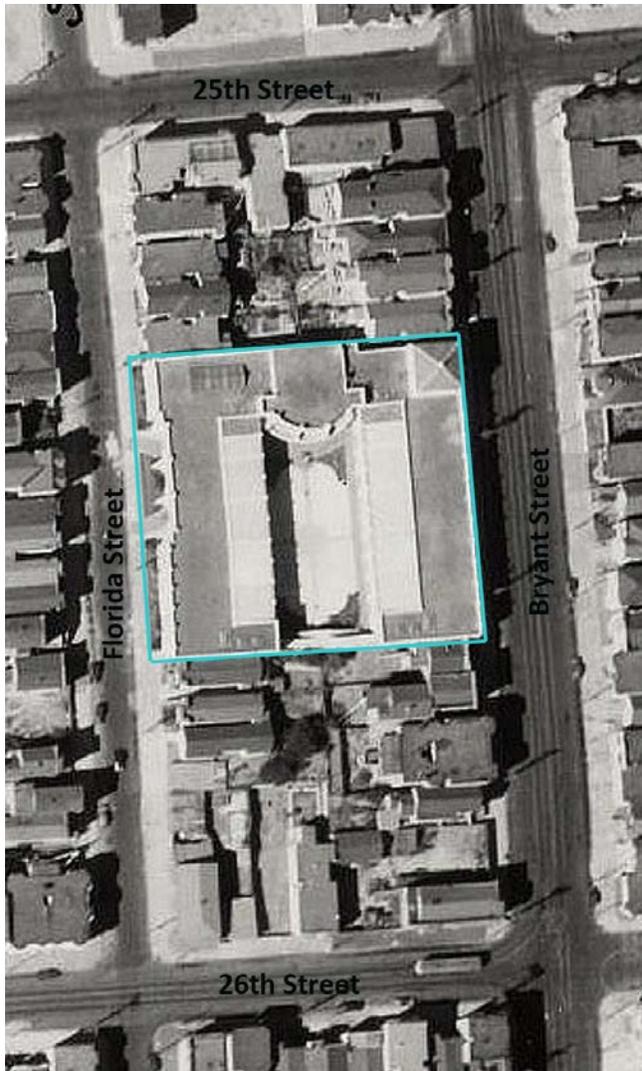


Figure 58. 1938 aerial photograph by Harrison Ryker showing the Sunshine School.
Source: David Rumsey Map Collection

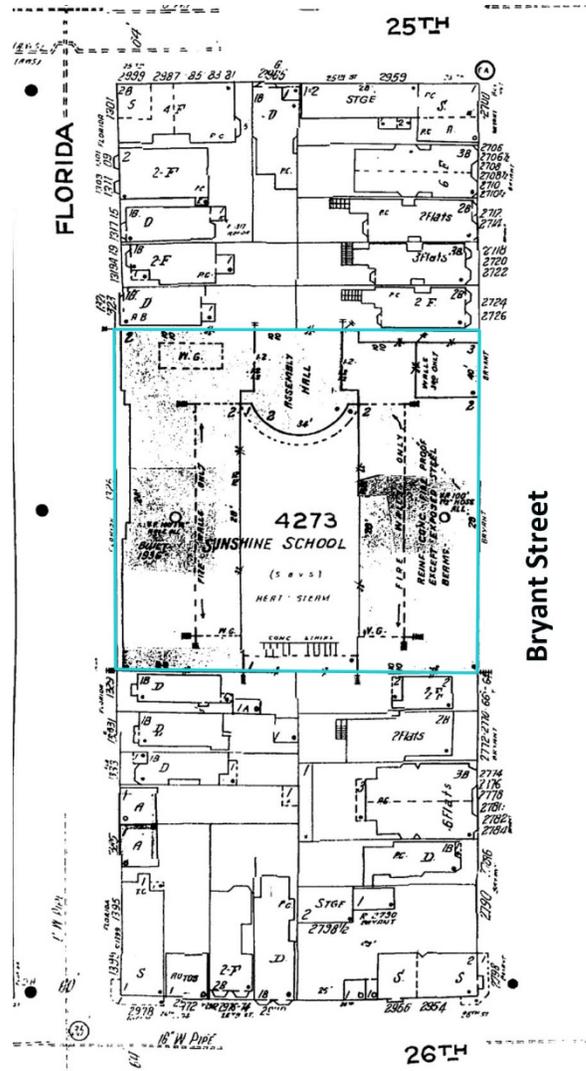


Figure 59. 1950 Sanborn maps showing the Sunshine School.
Source: San Francisco Public Library

Recorded Alterations

Building permits for public school construction are issued directly by the State of California to the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). As a result, there are very few permit applications for the property on file at the Department of Building Inspection (DBI), which is the usual repository for building permits for the vast majority of properties in San Francisco. SFUSD did not make its state-issued permits available to us but we do have access to a maintenance log summarizing changes/maintenance work completed at the building. Records of alterations and additional contemporary alterations were verified in the field. According to SFUSD’s building permit inventory, the following alterations were made to the Sunshine School between 1937 and 1969.

- 1940: Venting system for exercise and pool room;
- 1958: Roof repair and skylight overhaul;
- 1959: Exterior painting;

- 1962: Alter Florida Street driveway, external brick paving to remain, new concrete surface inside;
- 1965: Add games to the courtyard, including four-square, shuffleboard, and basketball; and
- 1969: Courtyard surface upgrades.

The maintenance log provided by SFUSD focuses on facility improvements completed between 1988 and 1999. These projects were executed with funds from general obligation bonds passed in 1988 and 1994, as well as Proposition B, approved by San Francisco voters in 1990. In addition to general classroom modernization and structural, fire, and life/safety improvements, alterations completed during this period include exterior painting (1989), roof replacement and exterior door replacement (1990), new partitions in the administrative offices (1995), window sash replacement and miscellaneous site improvements (1996), and general construction (1997).

There are only two alteration permits for Sunshine/Hilltop School on file with DBI.⁵⁷ These permits are both for roof work:

- February 14, 1968: Roof rehabilitation – replace skylight bars, install new glazing, roof repairs, and waterproof parapets (Building Permit #316970); and
- August 29, 2002: Reroof building (Building Permit #200208295182).

Additional alterations to the building observed during our fieldwork include the removal of an elevator (itself added in 1954) at the south side of the courtyard and construction of a new elevator near the Bryant Street entrance (ca. 1997); enclosure of the south walls of the dining room/auditoriums at the first and second floor levels (ca. 1985); conversion of the therapeutic pool room into a commercial kitchen (ca. 1985); construction of a concrete planter and gate enclosures at the Florida Street automobile entrance (ca. 1985); and the installation of a metal awning above the balcony at the south side of the courtyard (ca. 1954).

⁵⁷ Several additional building permits on file for the addresses associated with Sunshine/Hilltop School (1325 Florida Street and 2728-2762 Bryant Street), and the APN 4273/008 relate to residential buildings located at the site before Sunshine/Hilltop School was constructed.

Concise History of the SFUSD and School Construction: 1847–1940

Public education in San Francisco dates back to 1847, when the first school opened on Portsmouth Square. Three years later, the Free School Ordinance divided the city into seven school districts and for the first time allowed local taxes to be levied to support public schools. San Francisco's first public high school was established in 1856, and the first free kindergarten in the western United States opened in San Francisco in 1878.⁵⁸ Compulsory education laws, massive immigration from outside the U.S., and internal migration from rural to urban settings led to an explosion in school enrollment in California and across the nation during the late nineteenth century. As the school system became more elaborate and the numbers of students grew, the teaching workforce expanded and teachers' organizations increased in numbers as well. By the 1910s, members of San Francisco teachers' associations were active in state and local campaigns affecting schools and child welfare alike.⁵⁹

Educational reform efforts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were part of the overall progressive movement to address government corruption, as well as economic dislocation and social turbulence brought about by rapid industrialization and mass immigration. Schools were seen as vehicles for inculcating moral values, especially in foreign-born children. As San Francisco civic leader John Swett argued, "Nothing can Americanize these chaotic elements and breathe into them the spirit of our institutions but the public schools."⁶⁰ Statements such as these offended many members of San Francisco's large Irish, Italian, and German immigrant communities, who found more sympathetic ears in Democratic Party officials who "dominated" the school board from the 1870s through the 1890s.⁶¹

Progressive campaigns for educational reform included expansion and reorganization of curriculum, improving teacher education, and changes in how schools and school districts were administered.⁶² Assessments of San Francisco's school system in 1911 and 1917 found major deficiencies in both educational instruction and facilities.⁶³ These critiques fueled a "good government" campaign for school board members and the superintendent of schools to be appointed rather than elected. Amendment 37, a citywide initiative calling for these measures failed in 1918, but it passed with a narrow majority of voters in 1920.⁶⁴

Reorganizing school systems to include junior high schools was another feature of Progressive era educational reform. Junior high schools were adopted in California starting in 1909, and by 1913, three San Francisco grammar schools had been converted to serve seventh through ninth grades with modified schedules and curriculum designed for children in early adolescence. Dr. Joseph A. Gwinn, the

⁵⁸ "Finding Aid to the San Francisco Unified School District Records 1854–2005, Biographical/Historical Note" (San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, 2005), 3–4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁰ William Issel and Robert W. Cherny, *San Francisco, 1865–1932: Power, Politics and Urban Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 102.

⁶¹ Issel and Cherny, 104.

⁶² Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009, fourth edition), 227.

⁶³ Sonnier Francisco, *Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California* (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009), 29.

⁶⁴ Francisco, 30.

first superintendent hired by the newly appointed Board of Education, championed the transformation from an “8-4” system (eight years in elementary school then four in high school) to a “6-3-3” program that placed seventh through ninth graders in junior high and tenth through twelfth graders in high school.⁶⁵ By 1929, San Francisco had nine operating junior high schools with more planned during a time of general expansion in the city school system.⁶⁶

The proliferation of schools in San Francisco’s neighborhoods followed logically as residential and commercial development increased in outlying parts of the city. San Francisco experienced major building booms in areas affected by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, and again during the 1920s, when Mayor James Rolph directed authorities to build schools and other infrastructure in the fast-growing western and southern neighborhoods, as well as rebuilding aging facilities in older neighborhoods. These infrastructure improvements, including newly graded streets and streetcar tunnels, as well as the mass adoption of private automobiles, spurred residential development in what had previously been rural, outlying areas, resulting in new schools being built in the Outer Richmond District, the Sunset District, the Excelsior District, the Outer Mission District, Bayview-Hunters Point, and the OMI District.⁶⁷

The period between World War I and World War II has been called the “Golden Age” of San Francisco school construction.⁶⁸ During the 1920s and 1930s, the SFUSD built approximately 50 new school buildings, including several with assistance from New Deal agencies like the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA).⁶⁹ John Reid Jr., who served as City Architect from 1919 to 1927, designed a large number of these facilities. Other prominent Bay Area architects who designed schools in this period include Miller & Pflueger, Bakewell & Brown, Weeks & Day, Albert Schroeffer, and others.⁷⁰

San Francisco School Construction Bonds: 1917–1938

San Franciscans voted four times in two decades to fund the expansion of the SFUSD’s physical plant. In November 1917, \$3.5 million dollars in bonds were disbursed to address overcrowding, in part a long-term hangover from the devastation wrought by the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, which had destroyed 29 public schools. More than 10 years after the tragedy, more than 170 classes were still reportedly being held in “temporary shacks, lunchrooms, basements, corridors, rented rooms, stores and auditoriums.”⁷¹ In December 1917, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that bond funds would be spent on several new elementary and high schools, and on the acquisition of land for a school and playground.⁷²

⁶⁵ Francisco, p. 32.

⁶⁶ Lee Stephen Dolson, Jr., *The Administration of the San Francisco Public Schools, 1847 to 1947* (Berkeley: PhD Dissertation, 1965), 455.

⁶⁷ Mary Brown, *Sunset District Residential Builders, 1925–1950: Historic Context Statement* (San Francisco Planning Department: 2013), 19, 21.

⁶⁸ The term appears to have first been used in “Civic Architecture: San Francisco’s Public Schools,” San Francisco Architectural Heritage Newsletter (1988, XVI:3), 5. It is the title of a recent study conducted for the San Francisco Planning department by Sonnier Francisco, “Historic Context Statement: Golden Age of School Construction, San Francisco, California” (San Francisco Planning Department, 2009).

⁶⁹ Figure for the 1920s from “Civic Architecture,” San Francisco’s Public Schools.”

⁷⁰ “Civic Architecture.”

⁷¹ “School Bond Election to be Held Tuesday,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 28, 1917), 8.

⁷² “Board Locates First Schools to be Erected,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 5, 1917), 10.

In 1922, voters were again asked to “invest in the future of the children of San Francisco” because “today’s school children will be San Francisco’s men and women of tomorrow.”⁷³ Mayor James Rolph Jr. described the bond measure as an issue of equity. “Every neighborhood must be given an equal opportunity with every other neighborhood. We must not have good buildings here and poor buildings elsewhere.”⁷⁴ After the overwhelmingly positive November election results, the SFUSD and other agencies scrambled to coordinate planning and expenditure of the \$12 million devoted to rehabilitating 30 schools. “The plan for the rehabilitation of the schools is the most gigantic ever attempted in San Francisco. It is comparable only to the Civic Center project,” stated Mayor Rolph.⁷⁵ The bond also funded a study of educational needs based on the city’s growing population so that future schools could be sited in the most appropriate locations.⁷⁶

A 1933 bond measure approved \$3 million for school projects inspired, at least in part, by safety concerns highlighted by a recent fire at the aging Fremont School. Arguments for replacing the older wood-frame Victorian-era schools for just this reason had been made for more than 10 years, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In addition to replacing buildings made of timber, the Board of Education planned to use the campaign to make “readjustments of school districts, and in some cases consolidations.”⁷⁷ Another important impetus was the promise of federal money from the newly founded Public Works Administration (PWA). The PWA provided 30 percent of the cost of labor and materials on approved projects, and cities like San Francisco that had passed bond issues to fund infrastructure projects were in a much better position to leverage PWA funds.⁷⁸

The 1933 bond measure contained funding to build three all-new schools, including George Washington High School, Marina Junior High School, and Lawton Elementary School.⁷⁹ It also included funds for building new facilities for several existing schools, including the Sunshine School, a school established for physically disabled children in 1924, which was then housed in an interim location behind Mission High School.⁸⁰ Voters approved this bond on December 19, 1933.⁸¹ Another impetus for this bond measure was the Field Act, a state law passed in April 1933 one month after a major earthquake shook Southern California and turned 230 schools into rubble or rendered them unfit for occupation. The Field Act established the Office of the State Architect, which then assumed regulatory overview and permitting for all school construction in California.⁸²

Another bond issue in 1938 proposed borrowing \$2.8 million to construct a new campus for San Francisco Junior College (now San Francisco City College), as well as gymnasiums and auditoriums for

⁷³ “Future of S.F. is at Stake at Polls Tuesday,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁷⁴ James Rolph Jr. “Rolph Appeals to S.F. to Vote School Bonds,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 19, 1922), 10.

⁷⁵ “First Steps Taken on Big School Plans,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 25, 1922), 3.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ “Rossi Makes Final School Bond Appeal,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1933), 11.

⁷⁸ Robert D. Leighninger, Jr., *Long-Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 36-37.

⁷⁹ “Women Urge Approval of School Bonds,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 10, 1933), 9.

⁸⁰ “Rossi Makes Final School Bond Appeal,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 June 1933, 11.

⁸¹ “Lee Expresses Joy at School Bond Issue,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 20, 1933), 2.

⁸² California State Safety Commission, “The Field Act and Public School Construction: A 2007 Perspective.”

selected elementary, junior, and high schools.⁸³ Six other bond issues appeared on the September ballot, but only the \$2.8 million measure to fund the school projects was approved. These bonds also depended on contributions from the PWA, which provided 45 percent of the total cost.⁸⁴ School projects completed as part of the 1938 bond included the Samuel Gompers Trade School, an addition to Horace Mann Junior High School, and James Denman Junior High School.⁸⁵

Concise History of Education for Students with Disabilities in the U.S.: 1870–1938

Institutions founded to support people with disabilities began in the United States in the early nineteenth century. Based on Enlightenment philosophies and religious commitments to charity, residential facilities for people who were blind, deaf, or “feeble-minded” were established across the United States. Educational historian Margaret A. Winzer writes that institutions at that time held to a reformist, rather than radical, philosophy that embodied three principals: “protection, separation, and dependence” for people with special needs.⁸⁶ As American public education increasingly became a state function, schools were forced to address the needs of students with diverse abilities as well as those from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious backgrounds. Beginning in the 1870s, public schools in the eastern U.S. established special “ungraded” classrooms for students deemed unfit for regular instruction, including immigrants new to the English language, children with behavioral problems, or “defective learners” suffering from physical and/or cognitive disabilities.⁸⁷

By the late nineteenth century, American public education had been transformed into a sprawling, stratified, and highly regimented system that was only beginning to reflect new theories of human development and medicine. According to Winzer, “The child study movement and new psychological and medical findings made professionals, parents, and the public more alert to the educational implications of physical and mental disabilities”.⁸⁸ Included among the Progressive Era’s foundational goals was the idea that intervening in individual lives and among social groups was worthwhile and appropriate if it would make the public sphere more efficient and orderly. Poor and/or immigrant populations were frequently targeted by these interventions. And as a much larger percentage of children attended school than before compulsory education was instituted, “deviant” behavior and performance issues became defined as a growing problem in increasingly regimented public schools. At the same time, teachers and administrators began to focus on conditions among children that had previously gone unnoticed. Attention to the nature and extent of individual differences, especially those that affected the ability to function successfully in society, increased as well.

By 1900, disability had become a key construct and a target of Progressive reformers. The early twentieth century also saw a national transition from ungraded special education programs within existing public schools toward segregated facilities. Compulsory attendance laws required schools to

⁸³ “Work to Cost Ten Millions on Bond Issue List,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 15, 1938), 6.

⁸⁴ Earl Behrens, “Schools Win: Market Line Bond Issue Defeated,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 28, 1938), 1, 11.

⁸⁵ “Educational Projects Mark Mission Activity,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 31, 1939), 28.

⁸⁶ Margret A. Winzer, “Confronting Difference; an excursion through the history of special education” in Lani Florian editor, *The Sage Handbook of Special Education* (London: Sage Publications, 2007), 24.

⁸⁷ Winzer, 26.

⁸⁸ Winzer, p. 27.

find placement options for all disabled children, which led to special classes for children who were "crippled," blind, deaf, "incorrigible," or chronically ill.⁸⁹ Advocates argued that segregation of these students was necessary for efficient classroom and school operation, and that separate programs for disabled children was in their best educational and psychological interests as well.⁹⁰ As American psychologist J.E. Wallace Wallin claimed in an influential 1924 treatise, segregated facilities allowed students to "escape from the taunts, jeers, jokes, and gibes sometimes suffered at the hands of their normal playfellows."⁹¹

With children with disabilities increasingly segregated from the general school population, the main challenge for school districts became where to put them. In smaller communities, special-purpose classrooms were often set aside in mainstream schools. This was more difficult in larger cities with significantly greater populations of children with special needs. Furthermore, parents of "normal" children often objected to having their children attend school in the same building with "abnormal" children, particularly those suffering from communicable illnesses. In San Francisco, as in other cities, in the 1920s, the Board of Education began repurposing older school buildings as special purpose schools for students with physical or cognitive disabilities and/or chronic illnesses. Unfortunately, these repurposed schools were unsatisfactory by several measures. Many of these older schools were obsolete, wood-frame Victorian "firetraps." Often several stories in height, they were not at all ideal for the mobility-impaired students.

Though it would be a stretch to describe such efforts as being part of any organized disability rights movement, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, teachers, parents, and others began to realize that students with disabilities deserved better than unsafe cast-offs. Instead, they argued that children with special needs required specially designed facilities that would allow them to participate fully not only in their education, but also to take advantage of rehabilitation programs. Although there were several sporadic efforts by physically handicapped people to secure basic rights, including the founding of the League of the Physically Handicapped in New York in 1935, more important was a "sea change" in American culture away from "rugged individualism" and toward collective responsibility toward disadvantaged members of society. This change in the American *zeitgeist* is reflected in Franklin D. Roosevelt's defeat of Herbert Hoover in the 1932 election, and Congress's subsequent passage of a raft of work relief and social programs collectively known as the New Deal. A centerpiece of the New Deal that continues to exist (at least for now) was the Social Security Act of 1935, which among other things, provided government pensions to the aged and infirm, as well as grants to states for maternal and child welfare. In addition to monetary support, the Act extended vocational rehabilitation programs for disabled people.

⁸⁹ Robert L. Osgood, 45.

⁹⁰ Robert L. Osgood, 12, 22.

⁹¹ J. E. Wallace Wallin. *The Education of Handicapped Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924).

Concise History of the Public Works Administration: 1935–1943

The Sunshine School was paid for in part by the Public Works Administration (PWA), a federal agency signed into law on June 16, 1933 under Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). Not originally envisioned as being primarily a work relief program, the PWA's purpose was to stimulate demand for construction materials by providing a combination of grants and loans to state and local governments for major public works projects. Headed by the cautious and conservative Harold Ickes, the PWA provided 30 percent of the cost of labor and materials to the project sponsor and loaned the remainder, if necessary. The interest rate was 4 percent to avoid competing with private banks. The PWA's contribution was later elevated to 45 percent. To be approved for funds from the PWA, a project sponsor had to demonstrate that its project was both necessary and economically viable, and that it would comply with federal regulations for procurement, labor, etc.⁹² Vetting of non-federal (state and municipal) projects was slow and laborious, but nearly all approved projects were eventually built.

The PWA was created to fund permanent infrastructure as a way of stimulating the economy more generally, and employment on PWA projects was not limited to the unemployed. WPA (Works Progress Administration) was created to provide work relief to the unemployed. PWA projects were expected to include a significant expenditure for building materials. WPA projects were expected to make the bulk of their expenditures on wages. In addition, the PWA was supposed to take on only public works projects costing more than \$25,000. The WPA, headed by the brilliant and wily Harry L. Hopkins, was often able to get around the \$25,000 threshold by splitting larger public works projects into smaller components costing less than that amount. Although there was some overlap between the two agencies, in San Francisco as elsewhere, most PWA projects tended to be major public buildings, as opposed to sewer and water mains, street widening and road construction, parks and playgrounds, and other more ephemeral and lower-skilled work relief projects in which the WPA specialized.

San Francisco was a major beneficiary of PWA funds, in part because it had recently passed a major school construction bond in April 1933, meaning that it already had the matching funds to start building as soon as possible. Because of this, the many of PWA projects in San Francisco were public schools. The tally included eight elementary schools: Buena Vista, Francis Scott Key, Glen Park, Horace Mann, Lawton, Patrick Henry, Starr King, and Visitacion Valley; three junior high schools: James Denman, Marina, and Portola (auditorium only); and three high schools: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Samuel Gompers Trade School. The PWA funded several government buildings and infrastructure projects for the City and County of San Francisco, including the Livestock Pavilion (Cow Palace), O'Shaughnessy Dam, Piers 35 and 37, Pulgas Water Temple, the Richmond-Sunset Sewage Treatment Plant, San Francisco Junior College (San Francisco City College), and Mills Field (San Francisco International Airport). The PWA also built several federal office buildings in San Francisco, including the

⁹² Robert D. Leighninger, Jr. *Long-Range Public Investment: The Forgotten Legacy of the New Deal* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 9.

San Francisco Mint, the Federal Office Building at 450 Golden Gate Avenue, and the Appraisers Building in Jackson Square.⁹³

Architects' Biographies

Albert A. Schroeffer (1874-1965)

Albert A. Schroeffer was born in New York in 1874 to Albert D. and Annie Schroeffer. His father was a Prussian-born architect and his mother was a native of New York City of German heritage.⁹⁴ By 1880, the family was living in San Francisco. The senior Schroeffer was a successful architect, who mainly worked for members of San Francisco's German mercantile community. He was also active in the wine-growing Napa Valley, designing many of the early wineries there, including Rhine House, which he designed for Jacob and Fritz Beringer in 1883-84. Little is known about the younger Schroeffer's education or training, but he almost certainly learned to draft and design in his father's employ. He first appears as an architect in the 1899 San Francisco City Directory as a partner in the firm of Dunn & Schroeffer, with James F. Dunn.⁹⁵ The firm designed at least two buildings, including a house at 2250 Vallejo Street (1901–extant) and "Parisian-style" flats at 1347 McAllister Street (1900–extant). In 1903, Albert Schroeffer began working on his own. Between 1902 and 1906, Schroeffer appeared in local newspapers as the designer of several dozen buildings—principally two, three, or four-story, wood-frame flats or mixed-use (residential and commercial) buildings.

After the 1906 Earthquake, Albert Schroeffer moved to 1215 Golden Gate Avenue, where he lived and worked. Like many of his counterparts, Schroeffer's business took off during the post-quake reconstruction era. During this time, Schroeffer graduated from smaller wood-frame structures to designing much larger and more complicated concrete and brick buildings, including several large apartment buildings and hotels in the Tenderloin and Nob Hill. Schroeffer's growing business led him to form a partnership with Edward G. Bolles in 1910. Nonetheless, many of Schroeffer's projects from this era are attributed only to him, suggesting that he

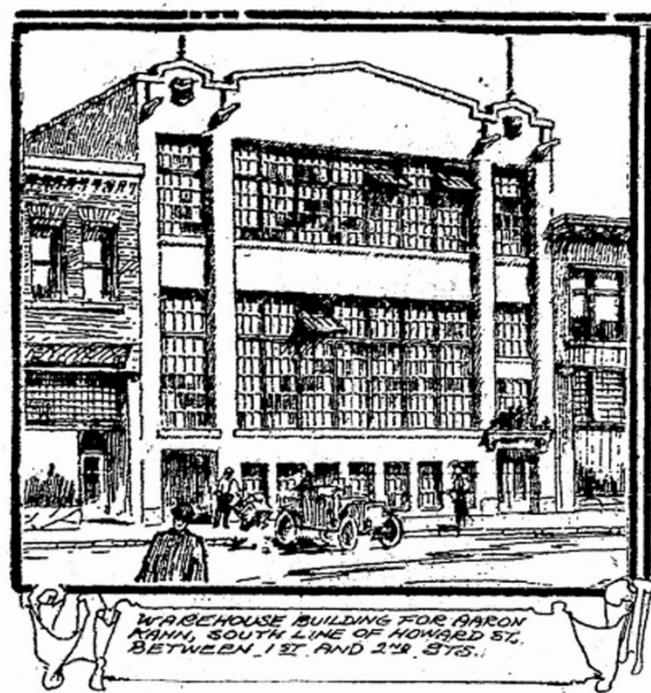


Figure 60. Warehouse for Aaron Kahn, 553-55 Howard Street.
Source: *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 8, 1911)

⁹³ William Mooser, Jr., Branch Manager, W.P.A., *Report on Progress of the Works Program in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Works Progress Administration, San Francisco Branch, 1938).

⁹⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880 Census for San Francisco City, Enumeration District 227, page 10.

⁹⁵ San Francisco Great Register of Voters, 5th Precinct, 38th Assembly District.

collaborated with Bolles only on projects that he could not handle on his own. Several examples of Schroepfer's work from this period include the Warburg Estate Building at 657 Clay Street (1910–extant), a tobacco warehouse for Aaron Kahn at 553-55 Howard Street (1911–extant) (**Figure 60**), and a hotel for I. Mensor at 552 Jones Street (1913–extant). Schroepfer and Bolles, who were good friends, continued to collaborate off and on for another two decades.

Schroepfer did not only design commercial buildings and hotels. He was also involved with other building types, including schools, film exchanges, and single-family dwellings. In 1917, the Colma School District hired him to design two wood-frame schoolhouses in northern San Mateo County. Schroepfer collaborated with architect William Mooser, Jr. on these buildings, including one four-room and one six-room schoolhouse.⁹⁶ In 1920, L. L. Lurie hired Schroepfer to design three film exchanges at 201 through 229 Golden Gate Avenue in the Tenderloin (all three extant).⁹⁷ Schroepfer and Bolles were also active in Chinatown, having designed several of the characteristic Chinese Exotic Revival-style commercial buildings and residential hotels that went up in Chinatown after the 1906 Earthquake and Fire.⁹⁸



Figure 61. Chambord Apartments, 1298 Jones Street.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

Schroepfer's practice continued to thrive throughout the 1920s-era building boom, when he designed some of his most famous buildings, chief among them the Chambord Apartments at 1298 Jones Street (1922–extant) (**Figure 61**). This building, which is San Francisco Landmark 106, was a "London style" apartment building built on a prominent corner in one of San Francisco's most exclusive residential areas.⁹⁹ By the late 1920s, Charles Schroepfer's work was no longer mentioned in local newspapers as it had been in the past, suggesting that he was not as busy as he had been. Nevertheless, city directories from the early 1930s continued to list him as operating a solo practice from his offices at 618 Market Street. During the Depression, Schroepfer's most notable commission was the Art Deco-style Lindsay Theater (extant) in Lindsay, California (Fresno County). His last major project in Northern California was the Sunshine School (1937–extant). By 1940, he was retired and living in Los Angeles County with his wife Florence and his sister-in-law, Ella J. Pugsley.¹⁰⁰ Albert A. Schroepfer died October 17, 1965 in San Bernardino, California.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ "Building New Schoolhouses," *San Francisco Chronicle* (October 7, 1917), 41. William Mooser Jr., was the son of William Mooser II and a grandson of William S. Mooser, a prominent Swiss-born architect in San Francisco. William Mooser, Jr. later went on to become the Assistant Director of the San Francisco branch office of the Works Progress Administration.

⁹⁷ "Three Film Exchanges Buildings to be Built," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 10, 1920), 7.

⁹⁸ The Chinese Exotic Revival style is one of several recognized "Exotic Revival" styles, including the Mayan, Egyptian, Byzantine, Moorish, Chinese/East Asian, and Tiki/Polynesian. Survey LA, Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, *Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Context: Architecture and Engineering, Theme: Exotic Revival, 1900-1980*.

⁹⁹ "London Style Building being Erected in San Francisco," *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 22, 1922), 8.

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 1940 Census for San Antonio Township, Los Angeles County, Enumeration District 19-625.

¹⁰¹ California Death Index, 1940-1997.

Charles F. Strothoff (1892-1963)

Charles F. Strothoff was a notable San Francisco architect who specialized in designing single-family dwellings for merchant builders active in developing residence parks in San Francisco's West of Twin Peaks area. Charles Frederick Strothoff was born May 9, 1892 in San Francisco to John and Freda Strothoff, immigrants from Germany.¹⁰² His father was a saloonkeeper and his mother did not work outside the home. Charles Strothoff graduated from the Wilmerding School of Industrial Arts, a technical high school for working-class youth, where he majored in architectural drafting. Strothoff, who presumably could not afford a university education, continued his architectural studies at local night schools and architectural clubs. In 1913, he won a medal in a competition that also included the talented Carl J. Warnecke, Ernest Weihe, and Timothy Pflueger.¹⁰³ From 1912 until 1913, Strothoff worked as a draftsman in the offices of Albert Farr, a prominent society architect who specialized in high-end single-family homes.¹⁰⁴ Ca. 1915, Strothoff began practicing architecture on his own. Following in the line of his erstwhile employer, Strothoff specialized in designing expensive single-family dwellings, especially in San Francisco's recently established and very affluent St. Francis Wood neighborhood. He worked in the neighborhood for his entire career, eventually designing 25 houses in the tract, nearly all of which still stand.¹⁰⁵

Charles Strothoff's residential work was simultaneously picturesque and conservative. He favored period revival styles, including the English Tudor, French Provincial, Georgian, and various Hispanic styles that were popular in San Francisco during the 1920s-era building boom. Charles Strothoff often worked in tandem with a Swedish immigrant contractor named Hans Nelson. Working together, the two men designed and built hundreds of houses in several newly developed tracts in the 1920s, including Westwood Park, Westwood Highlands, Monterey Heights, Parkside, Pine Lake Park, and several others. In the early 1920s, the pair was quite active in Westwood Park, where they designed and built dozens of Craftsman bungalows (**Figure 62**).¹⁰⁶ In 1925, the real estate firm of Baldwin & Howell hired Nelson and Strothoff to design and build all of the houses in the new residence park of Westwood Highlands.¹⁰⁷ By the late 1920s, most of the more desirable tracts on the West Side of San Francisco had been developed and Charles Strothoff began working on the Peninsula, designing houses in several new tracts in Burlingame, San Mateo, and Millbrae. He worked with



Figure 62. Craftsman bungalow in Westwood Park designed by Charles Strothoff.

Source: David Kramer

¹⁰² U.S. Census Bureau, 1900 Census for San Francisco City, Enumeration District 122.

¹⁰³ "Architects' League Awards Annual Prizes," *San Francisco Call* (May 31, 1913), 18.

¹⁰⁴ Carolyn Loeb, *Entrepreneurial Vernacular: Developers' Subdivisions in the 1920s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2001), 102-3.

¹⁰⁵ Richard Brandi, *San Francisco's St. Francis Wood* (San Francisco: Outside Lands Media, 2012), 140.

¹⁰⁶ "8 Westwood Park Dwellings Planned," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 28, 1924), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Loeb, 102-3.

several different merchant builders on these San Mateo County developments, including the Stoneson Brothers, Niel Schultz, and Gus Moeller.¹⁰⁸

The onset of the Depression in the early 1930s put a crimp on speculative homebuilding in the United States, and gradually most of the tracts Strothoff was working on ceased construction. Like many San Francisco architects, Charles Strothoff did not design many new buildings for the private market during the Depression. Instead, he began concentrating on government projects, including the Sunshine School (1937 – extant), or anonymous remodeling work. During World War II, Charles Strothoff was appointed Director of the Richmond Housing Authority, and in this capacity, he oversaw the construction of thousands of permanent and temporary housing units for shipyard workers who crowded into the East Bay city. He continued to maintain a satellite office in Richmond from 1947 until 1958. In 1957, he designed Contra Costa Junior College (now Contra Costa College) in the Richmond suburb of San Pablo (extant). Prior to his death in 1963, Charles Strothoff was consulting for the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department.¹⁰⁹

Martin J. Rist (1888-1956)

Martin J. Rist was born August 17, 1888 in Columbus Ohio. His parents, George and Friederiker Rist, were German immigrants.¹¹⁰ In 1906, the entire Rist family moved to San Francisco, where they appear in the 1910 Census as living at 315 Mateo Street in Glen Park. Martin Rist, then 22 years old, was already listed as an architect in city directories.¹¹¹ Martin Rist first began working as a draftsman for architect William Curlett. In 1914, he took a job as a designer for Charles Gottschalk and Carl Werner. In 1922, he received his license from the California State board of Architecture, and in 1923, he left Gottschalk & Werner to start his own firm.¹¹² In 1924, Rist collaborated with his old boss, Charles Gottschalk, and the new firm moved into the Phelan Building on Market Street. The partnership of Gottschalk & Rist was very successful, with the firm winning commissions to design estates in Hillsborough and several other affluent enclaves in San Mateo County.¹¹³

The onset of the Depression in the early 1930s affected the careers of many San Francisco architects, but not Martin J. Rist, who appears to have done very well, earning commissions for several government buildings, in addition to his traditional base of affluent suburbanites in



**Figure 63. Taraval Police Station, 2345 24th Avenue.
Source: Flickr user Anomalous_A**

¹⁰⁸ "Developers Start Office Building," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 28, 1930), 5.

¹⁰⁹ "Charles Strothoff, Architect, Dies," *San Francisco Chronicle* (March 6, 1963), 28.

¹¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 1900 U.S. Census for Columbus, Ohio.

¹¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 1910 U.S. Census for San Francisco City, Enumeration District 73, sheet 15B.

¹¹² "Granted Certificates to Practice," *The Architect and Engineer*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (October 1922), 106.

¹¹³ San Francisco Planning Department, *Landmark Designation Report: "University Mound Old Ladies' Home"* (San Francisco: 2015), 16.

San Mateo County. Rist's extensive body of Depression-era work was featured in a 17-page spread in the September 1932 edition of *The Architect and Engineer*. The article included brief descriptions, photographs, and drawings of most of Rist's recent works, including the University Mound Old Ladies Home at 350 University Street (San Francisco Landmark No. 269), in San Francisco's Portola District (1931-32–extant); the Taraval Police Station at 2345 24th Avenue, in San Francisco's Parkside District (1930–extant) (**Figure 63**); the McKinley School at 400 Duane Street, in Redwood City (extant); the Gualt School in Santa Cruz (1931–extant); several estates in Hillsborough, Atherton, and Burlingame; and his own residence at 136 Yerba Buena Avenue in San Francisco's St. Francis Wood neighborhood (1928–extant). Like many architects active during the 1920s and 1930s, Martin J. Rist was proficient in several popular styles, including the Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance, and the Georgian Revival.¹¹⁴

During the late 1930s, Martin Rist's work became more abstract and increasingly influenced by the contemporary Art Deco, Streamline Moderne, and Modernist styles. Some of this may have been the influence of his work for the Public Works Administration (PWA). Indeed, Rist designed three public schools for the PWA in San Francisco, including the Sunshine School at 2728 Bryant Street (1937–extant), the Buena Vista School at 2789 25th Street (1938–demolished in 1968), and Abraham Lincoln High School at 2162 24th Avenue (1940–extant). On the first two commissions, Rist collaborated with Albert Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, and Smith O'Brien. On Abraham Lincoln High School, he worked with Timothy Pflueger, Frederick Meyer, and Wilbur D. Peugh.¹¹⁵

After World War II, Martin J. Rist designed several large institutional buildings in San Francisco's West of Twin Peaks area, including West Portal Lutheran Church at 200 Sloat Boulevard (1947–extant), Mercy High School at 3250 19th Avenue (1952–extant), and St. Cecilia's Catholic Church at 2555 17th Avenue (1956–extant). After World War II, Rist's office was based in builder Henry Doelger's headquarters at 320 Judah Street (San Francisco Landmark No. 265). Martin and his wife Alice continued to live at 136 Yerba Buena Avenue in St. Francis Wood until Martin's death on December 3, 1956.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Julian C. Mesic, "Architectural Practice and the Work of Martin J. Rist," *The Architect and Engineer*, Vol. 110, No. 3 (September 1932), 11-26.

¹¹⁵ San Francisco Planning Department, *Landmark Designation Report: "University Mound Old Ladies' Home"* (San Francisco: 2015), 16.

¹¹⁶ California Death Index, 1940-1997.

Smith O'Brien (1868–1952)

Smith O'Brien was an Irish-born architect, painter, and sculptor who played an important role in San Francisco's architectural community for many years. Smith O'Brien was born April 21, 1868 in Cork, Ireland.¹¹⁷ He immigrated to the United States in 1887 as a teenager and became a naturalized American citizen five years later. In Ireland, O'Brien had studied at Stanislaus College. After arriving in San Francisco, he pursued landscape painting at the California School of Fine Arts. Needing money, O'Brien began working as a draftsman for San Francisco architect Clinton Day. In the early 1890s, he started working for the firm of Shea & Shea, where he worked on old San Francisco City Hall.¹¹⁸ In 1895, O'Brien first appears in city directories as an independent architect, with offices at 126 Kearny Street. In 1902, he formed a partnership with Frederick H. Meyer, a notable collaboration that lasted until 1908.¹¹⁹ Meyer & O'Brien completed many very important buildings in San Francisco during this period, including the Cadillac Hotel at 380 Eddy Street (1909–extant), the Foxcroft Building at 68-82 Post Street (1908–demolished), the Galen Building at 391-99 Sutter Street (1908–extant), the Hastings Building at 180 Post Street (1908–extant), the Humboldt Bank Building at 783-85 Market Street (1906–extant) (**Figure 64**), the Monadnock Building at 673-87 Market Street (1906–extant), and the Rialto Building at 116 New Montgomery Street (1910–extant).¹²⁰

Smith O'Brien resumed his solo practice in 1908, working out of an office in the Humboldt Bank Building, a building that he and Frederick H. Meyer had designed two years earlier. In contrast to his earlier commercial work, Smith O'Brien began taking on more religious and public commissions, including the Youth Directory Building at 19th and Church Streets (1909–demolished), St. Joseph's Catholic Orphanage in the Bayview District (1911–demolished), St. Dominic's Priory at Bush and Pierce Streets (1911–extant), and the Novitiate of the Sacred Heart in Los Gatos (demolished). Smith O'Brien also took on several apartment house and hotel commissions in the Tenderloin and Nob Hill, several light industrial loft buildings in the South of Market area, and more commercial buildings downtown. Several of his best-known projects from this period include the Hamman Baths Building at 201-05 Ellis



Figure 64. Humboldt Bank Building.
Source: Author's collection

¹¹⁷ U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925 for Smith O'Brien, Roll 668, January 17, 1905.

¹¹⁸ "Plans were Stolen," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 26, 1894), 5.

¹¹⁹ Finding Aid for the Smith O'Brien drawing of the Youth Directory building (San Francisco, Calif.), Architecture and Design Collection, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

¹²⁰ Michael Corbett, *Splendid Survivors: San Francisco's Downtown Architectural Heritage* (San Francisco: Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, 1979).

Street (1909–extant), the Knights of Columbus Hall at 150 Golden Gate Avenue (1913–demolished), and Newman’s Furniture Company store at 17th and Mission Streets (1917–extant).

Private construction activity largely came to a halt during World War I, but it resumed in the early 1920s. Smith O’Brien designed several buildings for the Archdiocese of San Francisco, as well as several more for his longtime private clients, during the early 1920s. By 1926, Smith O’Brien, now approaching 60, desired to make art again. Although he continued to take on architectural projects that were of interest to him, he increasingly turned his attention toward realizing his artistic ambitions. By the late 1920s, Smith O’Brien was taking his artistic career seriously for the first time since he was a young man, working in watercolors, oils, and making sepia prints.¹²¹ After being elected president of the California Society of Etchers, O’Brien began exhibiting his work at galleries and museums across the Bay Area. By the time the 1930 Census was recorded, Smith O’Brien was listed as not having a paid occupation, although by then he was most certainly pursuing his artistic career. He lived with his wife Emily at their longtime home at 2032 Baker Street in Pacific Heights.¹²² One of O’Brien’s last known commissions was the Sunshine School (along with Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, and Martin J. Rist). Smith O’Brien enjoyed a long and prosperous retirement doing what he enjoyed most. He died two decades later, in San Francisco, on July 9, 1952 at the age of 84.¹²³

¹²¹ Gene Hailey, “Art Exhibits of Small Town,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (September 26, 1926), 94.

¹²² U.S. Census Bureau, 1930 U.S. Census for San Francisco City, Enumeration District 38-326, sheet 5-B.

¹²³ California Death Index, 1940-1997.

Spanish Colonial Revival Style

Historically rooted in the domestic architecture of Spain and its colonies, the Spanish Colonial Revival style became the preeminent style in California between World War I and the Depression. During the nineteenth century, most architects in California ignored the state's Hispanic heritage. Nearly all came from other places and they tended to bring their favored architectural styles with them from the East Coast or from Europe. By the mid-1890s, a newfound sense of California identity, combined with the growth of tourism from outside the state, led to the development of an architectural vocabulary better-suited to the state's Spanish/Mexican heritage, dramatic landscape, and temperate climate. The Mission Revival style was the earliest of the Hispanic revivals in California. Influenced by contemporary efforts to restore the state's crumbling missions, architects mined the missions' architectural vocabulary when designing new buildings. The California Building at the 1894 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, designed by San Francisco architect A. Page Brown, is widely recognized as being the first Mission Revival building. The Mission Inn in Riverside, California (1902-35) is another early well-known example.

Most Mission Revival buildings are simple structures characterized by having an overall horizontal massing punctuated by arcades or bands of arched windows, shallow-pitched gable roofs clad in terra cotta tiles, sculpted and/or lobed parapets, and thick stucco-finished walls evoking traditional adobe construction. More elaborate examples of the style, including the Mission Inn, may incorporate a *campanario*, or freestanding belfry tower. The Mission Revival remained the most popular style in California well into the first decade of the twentieth century.

By the 1910s, having largely exhausted the repertoire of California's humble missions, architects began turning toward the more elaborate Spanish colonial buildings of Arizona and Texas, as well as the late Baroque churches of Mexico proper. Taking advantage of these sources, architects designed more complex buildings incorporating towers, domes, and ornate *Churrigueresque* frontispieces. Colorful Mexican tilework, hand-tooled wooden trim, and wrought iron balconies and light fixtures rounded out the new Spanish Colonial Revival style. In California, the style emerged full-



Figure 65. Santa Fe Depot, San Diego

blown in San Diego with the Panama-California Exposition of 1915. In addition to several exhibition halls designed by Bertram Goodhue in Balboa Park, probably the best-known early example is the Santa Fe Railroad's San Diego Depot, designed by Arthur Brown Jr. and built in 1915 (Figure 65).

From San Diego, the Spanish Colonial Revival style spread northward throughout the rest of the state. Notable examples include the Santa Barbara County Courthouse (1926), Pasadena City Hall (1927), as well as several new suburban and resort communities, ranging from the affluent rural enclaves of Rancho Santa Fe (San Diego County) and San Clemente (Orange County) to middle-class residential districts such as San Diego's Kensington district or San Francisco's Westwood Highlands (Figure 66).



Figure 66. Westwood Highlands

Source: San Francisco Historical Photograph Collection, San Francisco Public

Though it never gained the same level of popularity as it did in Southern California, there are many good examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in Northern California. Railroad companies were especially enamored of the style, and many historic rail depots and hotels in the northern part of the state are designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, including the Southern Pacific Railroad's San Francisco Depot (1915–demolished) and Hotel Woodland in Yolo County (1928–extant) (Figure 67).



Figure 67. Hotel Woodland, Woodland, California.

Source: Noehill.com

The style was also popular for churches, theaters, and public buildings, including Mission Dolores Basilica (1926–extant), San Francisco's Castro Theater (1922–extant), and a series of fire and police stations and schools designed by San Francisco's City Architect, John Reid Jr., in the 1920s. By the 1930s, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was still popular, but it was increasingly being leavened with other exotic revival influences, including the Moorish, Byzantine, and Art Deco styles. With construction budgets being curbed during the Depression, many architects and builders went in the other direction and stripped the style of many of its features, resulting in the much more restrained Mediterranean style. By the end of the decade, the style had largely vanished in favor of the Streamline Moderne style and Modernism.

Public School Design in San Francisco: 1850–1933

During the first decades of the city's existence, San Francisco's public schools were housed in structures built for other purposes, including commercial buildings, churches, and even private dwellings. Post-Gold Rush San Francisco, especially after the Second Vigilance Committee of 1856, was dominated by conservative businessmen who disliked taxes, and infrastructure, including streets, sewers, parks, and schools, all suffered as a result. Nevertheless, a growing population of families in the 1860s increased the demand for public schools. By 1865, there were 37 public primary and secondary schools in San Francisco accommodating around 8,000 students.¹²⁴

Early Public School Design in San Francisco: 1865–1890

Public school buildings erected in San Francisco during the latter half of the nineteenth century were usually of wood-frame construction, three or four stories, and designed in a utilitarian vocabulary incorporating a modest amount of Italianate ornament. A rare and excellently preserved example of this type is the Irving M. Scott School at 1070 Tennessee Street in the Dogpatch neighborhood (**Figure 68**).



Figure 68. Irving Scott School.

Designed by Thomas J. Welsh, a longtime consulting architect to the San Francisco School Board, and built in 1895, the Irving M. Scott School (originally called the Potrero

School), which is City Landmark No. 138, is one of the only surviving Victorian-era schools in San Francisco. It is a wood-frame structure massed as a cube that contains two full floor levels above a raised basement. The basement contains storage and the upper floors simply contain classrooms, a principal's office, and a central stair. The classrooms have oversized windows that are designed to admit as much natural light as possible. The windows are also operable and were the sole means of regulating indoor temperatures. Like most Victorian schools in San Francisco, the Irving M. Scott School did not originally have a central heating system, and the toilet rooms were located outside in small one-story structures linked to the main building by covered walkways.

The Progressive Era: 1890–1906

The Progressive movement of the late nineteenth century began to change how Americans thought about education. Among other things, it led to the professionalization of teaching, the application of business/bureaucratic management methods to school administration, and the standardization of school design. School enrollments surged because of Progressive reforms, including the passage of child labor laws and compulsory education statutes in most parts of the country outside the South. In

¹²⁴ George Mullany, "New Goals of Public Education," *San Francisco Chronicle* (1939), 5.

response, most large American cities, including San Francisco, found themselves scrambling to build new school facilities to accommodate growing enrollments, as well as to replace outdated facilities.¹²⁵

During the 1890s, the San Francisco School Board launched a campaign to build several new public schools. Many of the city's Victorian schools were reportedly in "wretched" condition, with little or no heat or running water, sewage leaks, and other sanitary and safety issues. Fire was also an ever-present danger with older wood-frame buildings, as evidenced by the destruction of Girls' High School on Scott Street.¹²⁶ The School Board decided to replace it with a new, state-of-the-art, three-story-over-basement masonry school building (**Figure 69**). Designed by Thomas J. Welsh and built in 1892, the new Girls' High School was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and built of brick. Its raised basement contained



Figure 69. Rendering of Girls' High School.
San Francisco Chronicle (June 27, 1892)

mechanical rooms, a janitor's room, storerooms, two classrooms, a science laboratory, and a recitation [examination] room. Meanwhile, the first floor contained a reception hall, principal's office, library, "museum," four classrooms, and toilet rooms. The second floor contained six classrooms and a "retiring room," and the third floor contained a large assembly room.¹²⁷ Girls' High School, which complied with all of the Progressive reformers' guidelines, was much more sophisticated than the contemporary Irving M. Scott School. The growing number of special-purpose rooms at Girls' High School signaled the expanding mission of public schools, as they evolved from teaching basic skills to a limited number of self-selected students toward providing instruction in a range of subjects to a much larger segment of society, including vocational skills, arts and music, and physical sciences.

Throughout the rest of the 1890s and into the first decade of the twentieth century, the San Francisco School Board replaced several of its older wood-frame "firetraps" with new masonry buildings similar to Girls' High School. Unfortunately, many of these new schools succumbed to the 1906 Earthquake and Fire. In the disaster, 29 of the city's 74 public school buildings, including Girls' High School, were destroyed. Many others were rendered temporarily or permanently unusable. The School Board hurriedly set up temporary schools in the refugee camps and quickly built 36 temporary buildings accommodating 8,000 children.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Dale Allen Gyure, *The Chicago Schoolhouse* (Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011).

¹²⁶ "Money Wanted for Schools and Jails," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 15, 1896), 15.

¹²⁷ "Girls' High School," *San Francisco Chronicle* (June 27, 1892), 3.

¹²⁸ City and County of San Francisco, *Municipal Reports: The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 1906* (San Francisco: 1907).

Post-Earthquake School Construction in San Francisco: 1906–1915

In 1907, Mayor Edward R. Taylor established the Bureau of Architecture, and appointed Newton Tharp as the first official City Architect. Just two months later, the School Board announced its plan to build 44 new schools, including 16 “Class A” buildings of reinforced concrete and 28 “Class B” schools of wood-frame construction. City Architect Tharp rejected brick construction, given how poorly unreinforced-masonry buildings like Girls’ High School had fared in the earthquake. All of the new schools were to be modern in every way, with central heating and ventilation and indoor plumbing. Tharp prioritized four new high school buildings, including replacements for Girls’ High School, Lowell High School, and Polytechnic High School, as well as the new Commercial High School. A good example of Tharp’s post-quake schools is Commercial High School at 170 Fell Street. Built in 1908, this three-story-over-basement, reinforced concrete, brick-clad building is designed in the Renaissance/Baroque style. Lowell High School, now San Francisco City College’s John Adams Campus, is another excellent example. Built in 1911 at the northwest corner of Masonic Avenue and Hayes Street, the former Lowell High is a typical American high school from the early twentieth century (**Figure 70**). Constructed of concrete with brick facing, the building has a ‘U’-shaped plan enclosing a central courtyard and a separate freestanding gymnasium. Its exterior is designed in a restrained Renaissance/Baroque vocabulary with a modest amount of applied ornament.

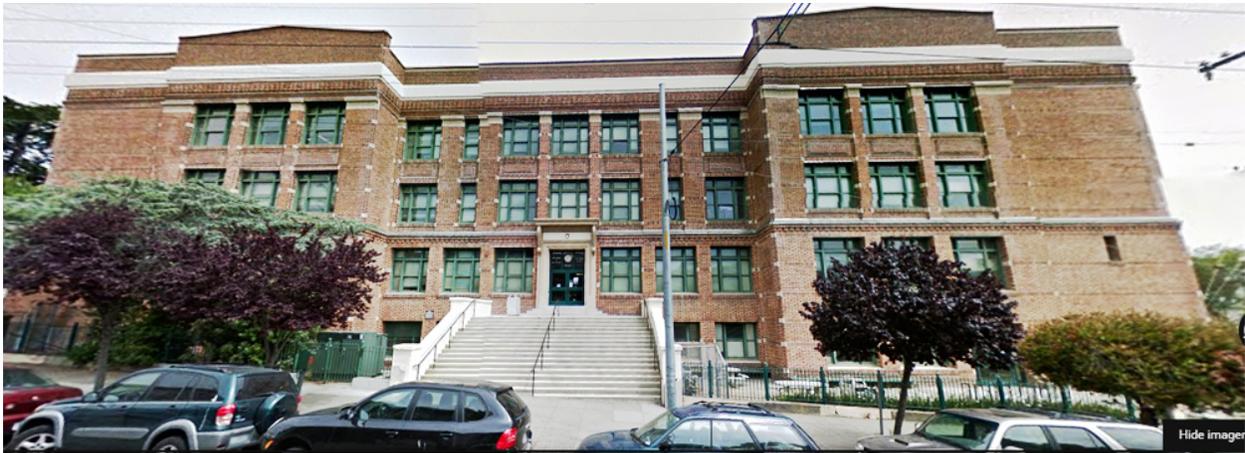


Figure 70. Former Lowell High School (now San Francisco City College’s John Adams Campus).

Source: Google Streetview; annotated by Christopher VerPlanck

Golden Age of School Construction: 1915 –1930

The election of James Rolph as mayor of San Francisco in 1911 signaled the beginning of an unprecedented 19-year infrastructure boom in the city. Though registered as a Republican, Rolph was a progressive politician enjoying strong bipartisan support from many sectors, including organized labor and working-class San Franciscans of all stripes. His many infrastructure projects included New City Hall, the Civic Auditorium, the Hetch Hetchy water system, the Panama Pacific International Exposition, the Municipal Railway, Twin Peaks Tunnel, and many roadbuilding projects. His road and transit improvements opened up the vast western and southern parts of the city to development. The rapid development of these areas, including the Sunset, Parkside, and Richmond Districts on the West Side; and the Excelsior, Crocker-Amazon, Portola, and Outer Mission Districts in the southeast part of town, led to demands to increase the number of public schools in these newly developing areas.

Not long after he was elected, Mayor Rolph appointed John Reid, Jr. as the new City Architect. Reid immediately found himself confronted with the huge task of building several new schools and rebuilding many of the city's older schools. The School Board still operated 17 outdated Victorian-era schools and several "temporary" schools built in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake. With Reid's assistance, Mayor Rolph oversaw the drafting of two school construction bonds in 1917 and 1922 to fund the work. Desperate for better schools, San Franciscans eagerly approved the bonds, ushering in the "Golden Age of School Construction." City Architect Reid designed about half of the approximately 50 schools built in San Francisco between 1920 and 1930, with the newly formed Board of Education awarding the rest to various private architecture firms who worked under Reid's supervision.¹²⁹

The schools built during Reid's tenure were almost all designed in regional styles appropriate to California's Mediterranean climate and landscape, including the Spanish Colonial Revival, Italian Renaissance, and Mediterranean styles. In conformance with modern building and life/safety codes, all were built of "fireproof" concrete construction with durable stucco finishes and terra cotta and cement plaster trim. Some of the best examples include Mission High School (1925–27), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 255 (**Figure 71**); Commerce High School (1926), which is San Landmark No. 140; and Balboa High School (1928–34), which is San Francisco Landmark No. 205.

Many of the new schools were much larger than their predecessors. In contrast to the Victorian-era schools, or even the Edwardian-era schools, both of which typically consisted of a single block sited at the center of a paved lot, Reid's schools were usually composed of multiple buildings, as well as adjoining ballfields and other sporting facilities. Since World War I, educational leaders had advocated for the incorporation of physical education into the public school curriculum. This required larger sites to accommodate play yards, running tracks, and ballfields. Accommodating outdoor recreation was not as challenging in the peripheral neighborhoods where land was still available, but it was much more difficult to achieve in already built-up parts of the city, giving administrators the choice of assembling the sites through condemnation proceedings—never a popular policy—or relocating the school to an outlying neighborhood where land was available.



Figure 71. Mission High School, 1926.

Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, AAB-0389

¹²⁹ "Message of His Honor, Mayor Rolph," *The Municipal Record* (San Francisco: January 7, 1926), 4.

Another factor in the growth of American public school campuses during the 1920s was the invention of the “comprehensive” school model, which combined academic, vocational, arts and music, sports, and home economics departments in one campus. As the complexity of public schools grew, City Architect John Reid Jr. and contract architects designed sprawling multi-unit complexes that typically included at a minimum an “academic” building, a gymnasium, an auditorium, and a shop/industrial arts building. Typically linked together in an “h,” “L,” “U,” or “O”-shaped plan, each component was expressed on the exterior as a separate building, even though they were all linked together by internal corridors. Balboa High School, the first built in the Outer Mission District, occupies approximately five city blocks. It has an O-plan with academic wings extending along Onondaga and Cayuga Avenues; an auditorium on Otsego Avenue; and a gymnasium and sports fields occupying a swath of land bounded by Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Otsego Avenues (**Figure 72**). One of the largest school campuses in San Francisco, it is even larger when combined with the adjoining James Denman Middle School campus on Oneida Avenue.

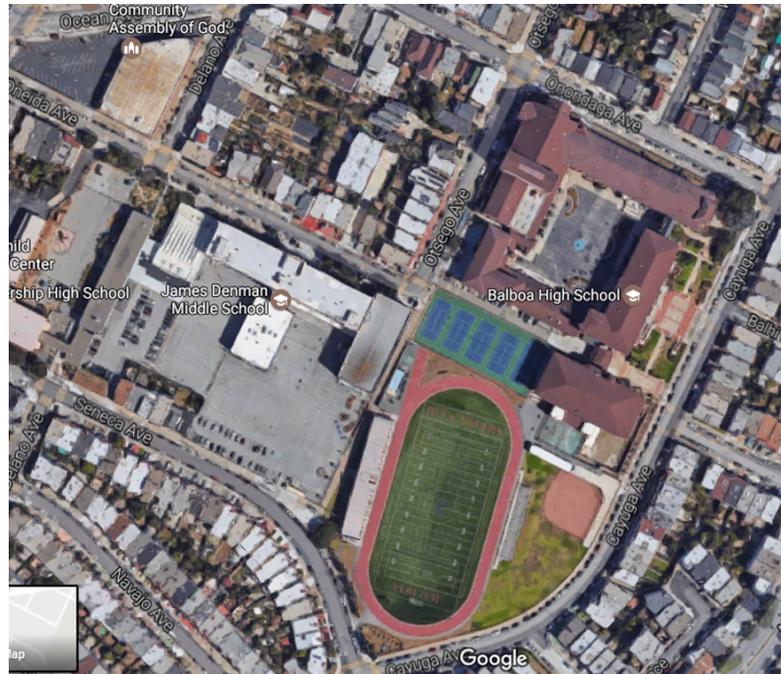


Figure 72. Aerial photograph of Balboa High School.
 Source: Google Maps

Balboa High School, the first built in the Outer Mission District, occupies approximately five city blocks. It has an O-plan with academic wings extending along Onondaga and Cayuga Avenues; an auditorium on Otsego Avenue; and a gymnasium and sports fields occupying a swath of land bounded by Oneida, Cayuga, Seneca, and Otsego Avenues (**Figure 72**). One of the largest school campuses in San Francisco, it is even larger when combined with the adjoining James Denman Middle School campus on Oneida Avenue.

By the end of the 1920s, San Francisco, which had once been known for having one of the worst public school plants in the nation, now had what many considered to be second-to-none. In 1923, St. Louis architect William B. Ittner praised San Francisco’s commitment to building not only functional but beautiful schools: “The creation of an environment, healthful and beautiful, has been the architectural keynote and the school buildings are a sincere expression of the joy, health and beauty that should belong to our school children.”¹³⁰

Although he did not take a salary, City Architect John Reid, Jr. received a commission equal to 6 percent of the construction costs of each completed building. Though there was no evidence of actual wrongdoing, Reid was Mayor Rolph’s brother-in-law, and following an incident, he resigned his post in 1927 to quash accusations of nepotism. Reid’s resignation left a void at the office of the City Architect. His replacement, Charles Sawyer, did not design many new civic buildings, limiting his role to awarding commissions to private firms. The Stock Market Crash two years later also dealt a blow to San Francisco’s school construction campaign. Ten days after the crash, Board of Education President Daniel

¹³⁰ Don Andreini, “Civic Architecture: San Francisco’s Public Schools,” *Heritage Newsletter*, XVI:3 (September 1988), 7.

C. Murphy issued a statement calling into question San Francisco’s continued ability to build “the fine type of schools” that the city had grown accustomed to during the 1910s and 1920s.¹³¹ Although the San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architects argued that the City should continue “providing school buildings of enduring quality and design,” the primary question on everyone’s mind was where the money would come from.

Nonetheless, several schools that had already been designed and funded were built in the first year or two after the crash, including Miller & Pflueger’s Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School (now Roosevelt Middle School), which was built in 1930 near the intersection of Arguello and Geary Boulevards (**Figure 73**). Roosevelt, designed in a fusion of the Art Deco and Dutch Expressionist styles, is universally recognized as being one of San Francisco’s best-designed public schools. Even though it was not a New Deal project, in terms of its architectural quality and advanced styling, it foreshadowed the continuation of the Golden Age of San Francisco School Construction into the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal public works programs picked up the mantle.



Figure 73. Theodore Roosevelt Middle School.

¹³¹ Ibid.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the case report provides an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity statement, statement of significance, period of significance, inventory of character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked are the basic justifications for *why* the resource is important.

Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

Events

The former Sunshine School is significant as the first public school specifically designed for children with physical disabilities built west of the Rockies. Prior to its completion in 1937, children with physical disabilities attended the Sunshine School for Crippled Children (established 1924), which was housed in a bungalow on Bush Street, and then a decrepit wood-frame building behind Mission High School. Meanwhile, children with chronic and acute illnesses attended the Buena Vista Health School (established 1915), which was in an old unsafe Victorian school building in the Mission District. Progressive public health professionals and teachers of children with disabilities increasingly believed that disabled and chronically ill children should attend school in safe and accessible buildings separate from the mainstream. The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the United States' first disabled president, in 1932 signaled a sea change in the treatment of children with disabilities in the U.S. – at least in more enlightened areas like San Francisco. Designed in 1933–34 and built 1935–37, the Sunshine School was designed with a barrier-free floor plan prefiguring the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act over 50 years later. The Sunshine School also contained rehabilitation facilities, sunlit rest areas, and a protected outdoor play area. Built decades before the disability rights movement took off in the 1960s/1970s, those responsible for building the Sunshine School were nonetheless imbued with a sense that they were advancing the cause of social justice, by ensuring that previously marginalized communities had access to the same opportunities as “normal” Americans.

San Francisco's Sunshine School inspired several adjoining Bay Area counties to build their own "orthopedic" schools, including the Sunshine School in Berkeley and the Park School in Mill Valley. More important, throughout its almost half-century of existence, the Sunshine School improved the lives of an untold number of San Franciscans. Public health professionals and teachers from across the nation regularly toured the school and remarked on its caring and competent teachers and the happy and contented demeanor of its students. Many children who could not walk or perform other basic motor skills when they entered the school gained (or regained) the use of their limbs. Moreover, many chronically ill children, whose parents may have given up on their recuperation, recovered their strength with the assistance of nutritious diets (including all the milk they could drink), targeted exercise, and regular periods of rest in sunlit and airy "rest rooms." Kept apart from the occasional insensitive comments of "normal" children, the students of the Sunshine School thrived in a supportive environment, learning confidence and forming lifetime bonds with teachers and fellow students.

The Sunshine School is also significant for its association with the Public Works Administration (PWA), a New Deal public works program that literally changed the face of America. Established in 1933 as part of FDR's National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA), the PWA's primary purpose was to boost construction and demand for building materials. Administered by Harold Ickes, the PWA provided a combination of grants, loans, and technical expertise to communities across the nation so that they could construct permanent and modern infrastructure and public buildings. Typically designed by local architects and built by local contractors, the PWA nonetheless carefully supervised its projects, insisting upon quality design and construction to ensure that countless PWA projects continue to serve the nation 80 years on.

Significant Architecture

The former Sunshine School is an architecturally distinguished property that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type (public school), period (Depression), method of construction (concrete and tile), and style (Spanish Colonial Revival). Designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style with Art Deco and Moorish details, the building is one of San Francisco's most distinctive public school buildings. Beyond its picturesque styling, comparable to the locally landmarked Mission High School, the former Sunshine School has an ingenious floorplan devised to combine two specialized schools—the Sunshine School for Crippled Children and the Buena Vista Health School—into one campus. A controversial decision, those responsible for its design responded to fears that children with communicable diseases should be kept apart from the disabled children by providing separate entrances. Children with physical disabilities, who arrived by taxi, entered the school on Florida Street via a covered driveway. Meanwhile, children with chronic and acute illnesses entered the building on Bryant Street, where stairs lead up to the second floor. Each floor level had its own classrooms, dining facilities, gymnasiums, and toilet rooms. Designed to take advantage of the Mission's balmy climate, banks of operable windows and skylights allowed fresh air and light into all parts of the building's interior. In addition, the large central courtyard provided a safe play area for the children as well as a place to grown their own vegetables and flowers.

Like so many other PWA projects, the former Sunshine School embodies high artistic values by virtue of its high-quality materials and craftsmanship. Although built of board-formed concrete and other mass-produced materials, the building is embellished with high-quality detailing and other features, including Mexican-style tilework on the water table and around the entrances, tile wainscoting in the lobby/stair and the therapeutic pool room, and the Art Deco light fixtures in the lobby/stair and the auditoriums. Other artistic touches, whose makers' names are now lost to history, include the hand-painted stenciling on the beams in many of the classrooms, the wrought-iron grilles over some of the windows, the statue of the child above the Bryant Street entrance, and the figural animal finials atop the classroom wings.

Finally, the former Sunshine School is significant as the work of four master architects: Albert A. Schroepfer, Charles F. Strothoff, Martin J. Rist, and Smith O'Brien. Although at very different points in their respective careers, with Messrs. O'Brien and Schroepfer nearing retirement and Messrs. Strothoff and Rist still very active, all four were comparable in terms of their output, though Smith O'Brien was responsible for far more high-profile buildings than the other three. Schroepfer was a prolific designer of residential hotels and apartment houses, with the Chambord Apartments being his primary masterpiece. Strothoff was mainly a designer of speculative housing in San Francisco's West of Twin Peaks area, where he specialized in fanciful Spanish Colonial Revival houses for the middle class. Martin J. Rist, who had more experience designing schools than the other three, was also a designer of estates in San Mateo County's most prestigious enclaves. Though there is no record indicating who was responsible for what, the influence of all four architects can be seen in the design of the Sunshine School.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the Sunshine School is 1937 to 1975, beginning with the completion of the school and concluding with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which signaled the end of separate schools for handicapped and chronically ill children.

Integrity

The seven aspects of integrity used by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, and Article 10 of the San Francisco Planning Code are: location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association. In summary, although the Sunshine School has undergone several alterations, chiefly window replacement and some interior upgrades to classrooms and toilet rooms, the building retains ample integrity to convey its association with its original design, use, and period of construction.

Location:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of location because it has never been moved.

Design:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of design because the school continues to keep its original floorplan, massing, fenestration pattern, and Spanish Colonial Revival ornament. The building has undergone very exterior few changes at all. Many interior spaces have had their original uses change, particularly after Hilltop High School moved into the building in 1985. This resulted in some changes to certain character-defining spaces, including the therapeutic pool, which was converted into an industrial kitchen. In addition, SFUSD has upgraded toilet rooms and added a new elevator to comply with accessibility, life-safety, and energy codes.

Materials:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of materials because it has kept virtually all of its original building materials, including its painted concrete exterior walls and trim, exterior tilework, tiled lobby/stair, original Art Deco light fixtures, and more basic interior finish materials. Some original interior materials have been replaced as part of ongoing maintenance, including new resilient tile flooring, acoustical ceiling tiles, fluorescent light fixtures, and toilet room interiors, but for the most part these new materials are additive and entirely compatible.

Workmanship:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of workmanship because the school retains its original craftsmanship, including, on the exterior the cast concrete ornament, Mexican-style tilework, and ornate wrought-iron window grilles. Within the interior, the building retains its original tiled wainscoting in the lobby/stair on Bryant Street and the entrance lobby on Florida Street, and the Art Deco light fixtures in the lobby stair. In addition, most of the classrooms retain their original hand-painted stenciling.

Setting

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of setting because in addition to the surrounding neighborhood not having undergone any substantial changes since the school was completed in 1937, the property itself remains largely unchanged, including the landscaped planting strip along Bryant Street and the central courtyard with its flagpole/bench and two intact planting beds.

Feeling:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of feeling, because even though the interior of the school has been upgraded over the years, the building retains enough of its original high-quality materials and hand-crafted ornament and finishes that it still feels like a New Deal-era property.

Association:

The former Sunshine School retains the aspect of association because it has not changed enough that it would not be immediately recognizable to anyone who either attended or worked at the school during the period of significance.

Article 10 Requirements Section 1004 (b)

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

The site proposed for Landmark status encompasses the entirety of Assessor Parcel Number 4273/008, a 38,999-square-foot parcel bounded by Bryant Street to the east, Florida Street to the west, and residential properties to the north and south.

Character-defining Features

A case report for a property proposed for Landmark status under Article 10 of the Planning Code requires an inventory of character-defining features. This is required so that the property owner, Planning staff, and the public know what features and materials (elements) should be preserved in order to protect the historical and architectural character of the proposed Landmark. The character-defining exterior features of the former Sunshine School include all exterior elevations, including but not limited to its form, massing, structure, architectural ornament, and materials. More specifically, its character-defining features include:

- The school's overall height, massing, and footprint;
- All exterior façades and the three courtyard façades, including the painted concrete walls with exposed board form impressions and all molded concrete ornament, including scalloped relief moldings, entablatures, engaged piers and buttresses, frieze, oversized buttresses facing the courtyard, balconies, and figural and animal sculptures;
- All Mexican-style tilework on the exterior, including on the water table of the classroom wings, on window spandrel panels, and flanking the entrances on Bryant and Florida Streets;
- Primary entrance and pavilion on Bryant Street, including paired wooden doors and all paneling above and to either side of the doors;
- Primary entrance on Florida Street, including paired wooden doors and transom;
- Fenestration pattern and turned wooden mullions along Bryant and Florida Street façades but not the aluminum sashes themselves;
- Fenestration pattern, turned wood wooden mullions, and decorative metal screens on courtyard elevations, including remaining historic steel windows;
- All wrought-iron window grilles on Bryant and Florida Street façades and on courtyard elevations;
- The entrance pavilion's hipped roof, including red clay tile accents, finial, and weather vane;
- Incised signage above main entrance on Bryant Street;
- Skylights atop east and west classroom wings;
- Courtyard and remaining sections of original landscaping, including planting bed along Bryant Street and two remaining planting beds at the south side of the courtyard, paved patio at the center of the courtyard (though not the paving material itself), and the tiled flagpole/bench at the north end of the courtyard.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining exterior features include all post-1937 alterations, including the following features:

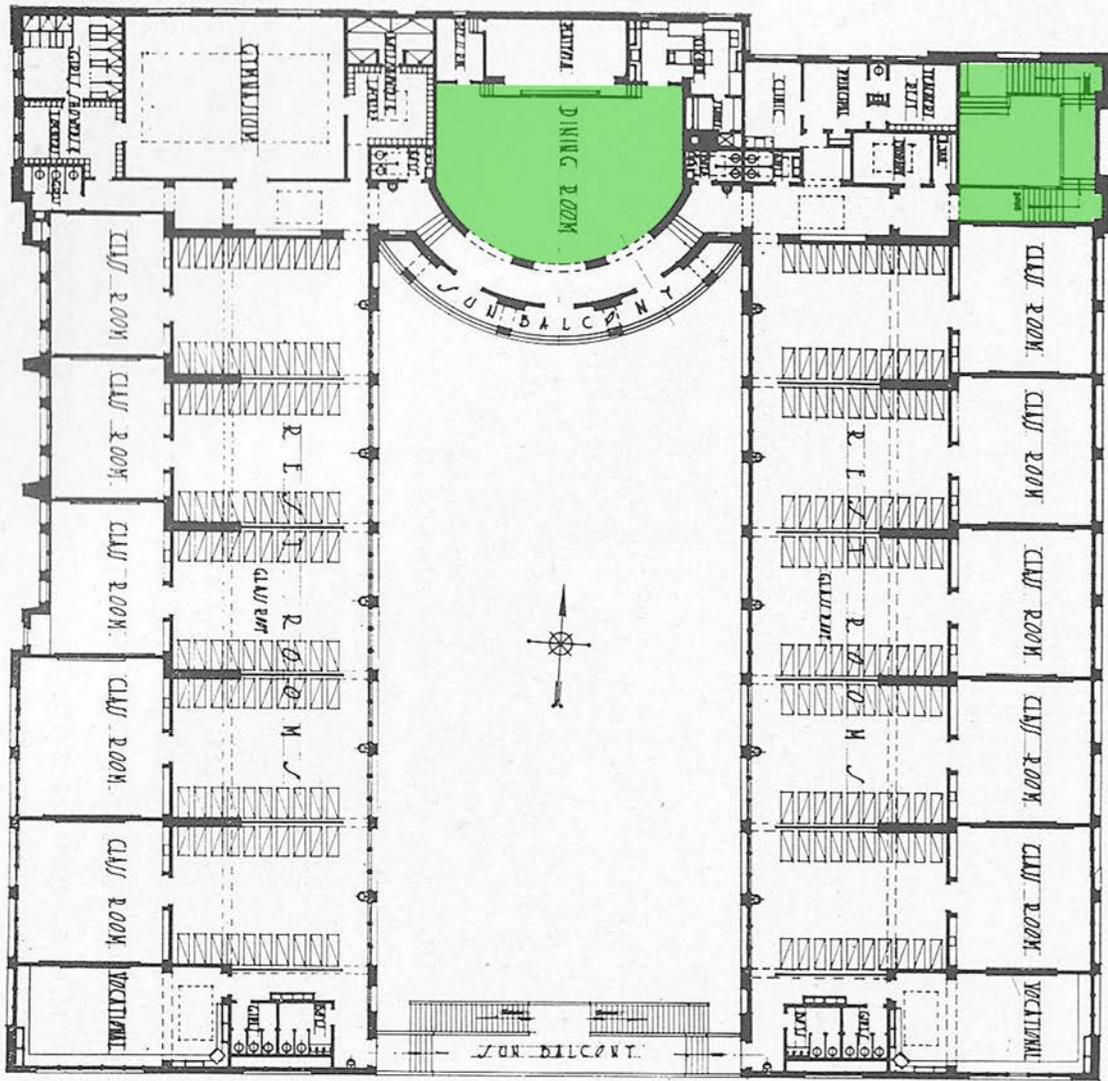
- All non-historic aluminum window sashes along the Bryant and Florida Street façades;
- Concrete pedestrian ramp and aluminum railings at Florida Street entrance;
- Metal security fencing and concrete signage at Florida Street entrance;
- Aluminum doors, flanking sidelights, and transoms in openings on north elevation of courtyard;
- Canopy above balcony on south side of the courtyard;
- Paving and play surfaces in courtyard;
- Play equipment in courtyard;
- Incandescent sconce light fixtures and floodlights on exterior of building;
- Metal fencing along Bryant Street sidewalk;
- Metal security door at south side of Bryant Street and Florida Street façades.

The character-defining spaces and features of the interior of the Sunshine School include:

- Layout, design, and materials of the lobby/stair, including tiled wainscoting, terrazzo flooring, lath and plaster walls, stepped balance-run stair, and remaining light fixtures;
- Layout, design, and materials of the auditorium spaces on the first and second floor levels, including tiled wainscoting, stage area, and light fixtures;
- Layout, design, and materials of the first floor corridor, including remaining tiled surfaces, ceiling vaults, and built-in casework;
- Remaining tile in former therapeutic pool;
- All remaining hand-stenciling on concrete beams in first floor level classrooms;
- All remaining exposed metal trusses on second floor level;
- All surviving Art Deco light fixtures in the lobby/stair and second floor auditorium.

At the time of designation, non-character-defining interior features include all spaces affected by post-1937 alterations, including the remodeled toilet rooms, classrooms (except for the hand-stenciled ceilings), and all utilitarian back-of-house spaces.

Interior Character-Defining Features – Second Floor



Interior character-defining features are shaded.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Sunshine School

Popular Name: Hilltop High School

Address: 2728 Bryant Street

Block and Lot: 4273/008

Owner: San Francisco Unified School District

Current Use: Public School

Zoning: P – Public; 40-X height and bulk

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