State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
CHRSC Status Code
Other Listings
Review Code Reviewer Date

 Resource name(s) or number Mission High School

P1. Other Identifier: School Number 725, San Francisco Unified School District
***P2. Location:** ☐Not for Publication ☒Unrestricted ***a. County** San Francisco
***b. USGS 7.5' Quad** San Francisco North, Calif. **Date:** 1995
***c. Address** 3750 18th Street **City** San Francisco **Zip** 94114-2614
***e. Other Locational Data:** Assessor's Parcel Number Block: 3579 Lot: 006

***P3a. Description:**

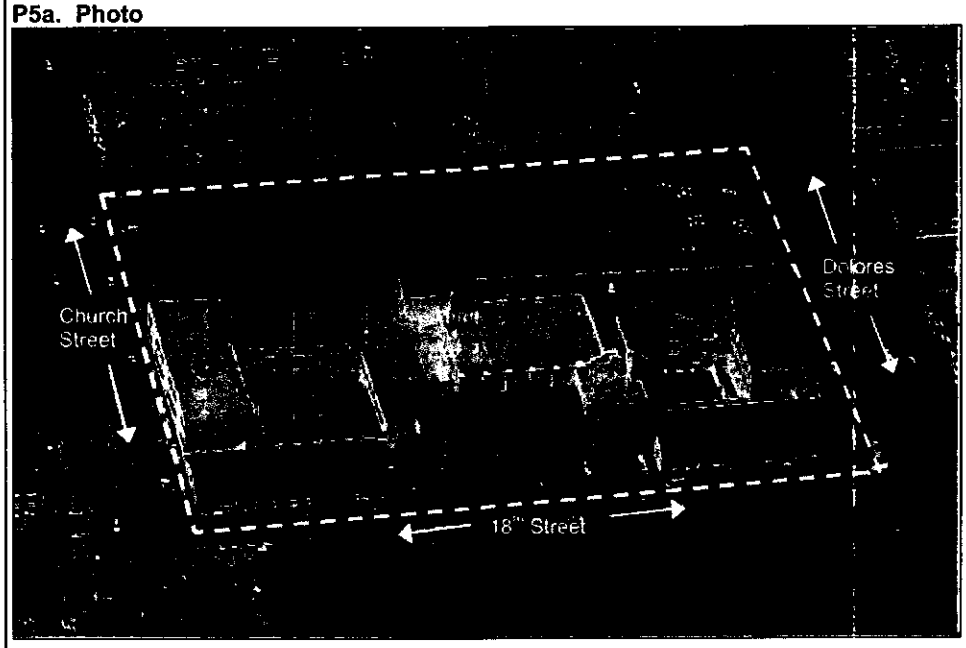
Mission High School is a public facility located in San Francisco's Inner Mission District, an older residential area that is served by corridors of dense neighborhood commerce and heavy transit use. The school consists of an interconnected complex of buildings in a generally rectangular plan, as well as an athletic field and a parking lot, all occupying a square parcel of 5.2 acres. The building complex covers the southern portion of the block, fronting 18th Street between Church and Dolores Streets. The complex was constructed in two phases, 1923-25 and 1925-27. Behind the building complex, the school athletic field, installed in 1939, and the school parking lot occupy the middle portion of the block. The remaining northern portion of the block consists of typical Inner Mission residential properties that abut the school. Surrounding land uses on adjacent blocks include the 13.7-acre Mission Dolores Park to the south, across 18th Street, and residential properties to the east and to the west, across Dolores and Church Streets respectively. (See Image 1)

(Continued on Pages 2-7)

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** (HP15) Educational building, (HP26) Mural, (HP35) New Deal Public Works Project.

***P4. Resources Present:** ☒Building ☐Structure ☐Object ☐Site ☐District ☐Element of District ☐Other

P5a. Photo



P5b. Photo: Aerial view to the north, August 2002.

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** ☒historic
1923-27 (western phase constructed 1923-25; eastern phase constructed 1925-27). Sources: *Insurance Maps of San Francisco, California (Volume 7)*, Sanborn Map Company, 1914 (revised to 1950); Ted Scourkes, Mission High School Alumni Association, 2006.

***P7. Owner and Address:** City and County of San Francisco, Real Estate Department, 25 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco CA 94103.

***P8. Recorded by:**
Matt Weintraub, Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco, 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94103

***P9. Date Recorded:** September 30, 2006

***P10. Survey Type:** Individual Resource

***P11. Report Citation:** *Landmark Designation Report, file# 2006.0571L*, San Francisco Planning Department, 2006. Prepared by Tim Frye.

***Attachments:** ☐None ☐Location Map ☐Sketch Map ☒Continuation Sheet ☒Building, Structure, and Object Record
☐Archaeological Record ☐District Record ☐Linear Feature Record ☐Milling Station Record ☐Rock Art Record
☐Artifact Record ☐Photograph Record ☐ Other (list)

***P3a. Description:** (Continued)

The school, constructed of reinforced concrete that resembles adobe in appearance, varies in height from one to four stories, and includes some split-level sections that result from the upward slope of the land from south to north. The complex displays a multi-level combination of flat roofs and low-pitched sloping roofs, the latter clad in Mission-style red clay tiles. The multi-level roofline is punctuated by robustly decorated towers, parapets, and cornices. The school's exterior is elaborately adorned in glazed terra cotta, cast stone, and multi-colored decorative clay tiles. The facades are asymmetrical and differentiated, masking an ordered building plan. (See Image 2)

Image 2: The front elevation along 18th Street, May 2006. View north from Mission Dolores Park.

The generally symmetrical building plan displays similar east and west wings, each designed around an open-air courtyard with a tower at the southwest corner, and each with a single-story gymnasium to the south and taller buildings at the other three sides, flanking a central auditorium. The wings are distinct from each other in detail and treatment. The west wing was constructed earlier, from 1923 to 1925, and it is the more modest and altered of the wings. The west wing is three stories high behind the gymnasium, and displays sparse ornamentation, most notably the 62-foot tall cupola tower that overlooks the west courtyard. The west wing contains the science, art, and vocational classrooms, and the boys gymnasium. The east wing was constructed later, as was the central auditorium and most of the front instructional and administrative building, from 1925 to 1927. At four stories high, the east wing is taller than the west wing, and it is heavily ornamented. The east wing features the school's signature architectural feature, the 127-foot tall bell tower overlooking the east courtyard, as well as the prominent main entrance. The east wing contains traditional academic classrooms as well the library, cafeteria, and girls gymnasium. (See Image 3)

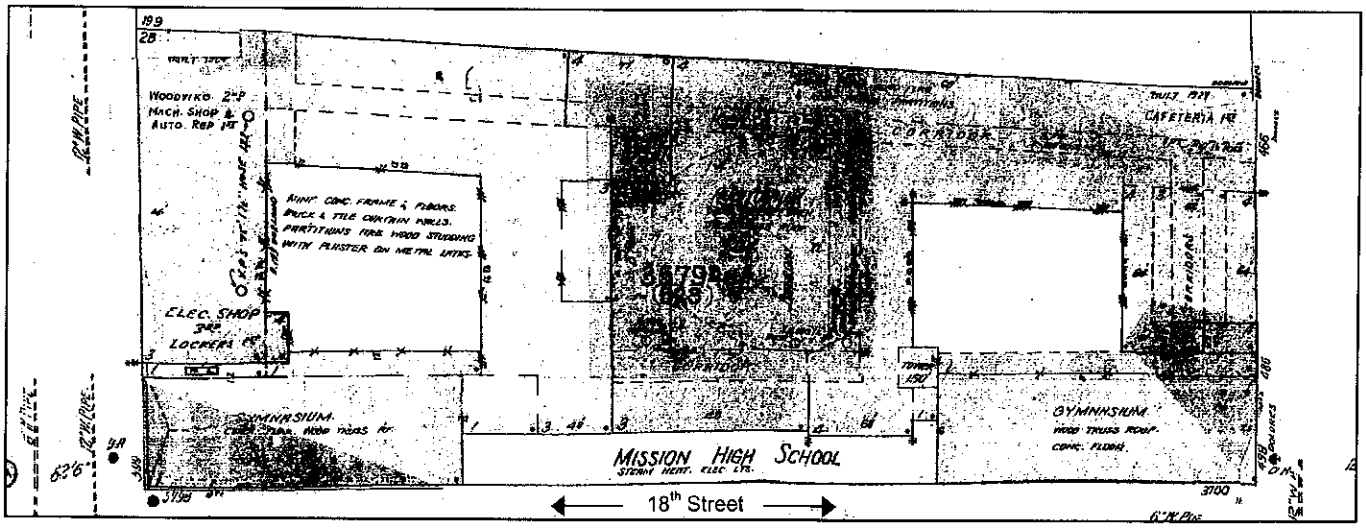


Image 3: The building plan, displaying the central auditorium and east and west wings. Source: *Insurance Maps of San Francisco, California, Volume 7*, Sanborn Map Company, 1998.

***P3a. Description:** (Continued)

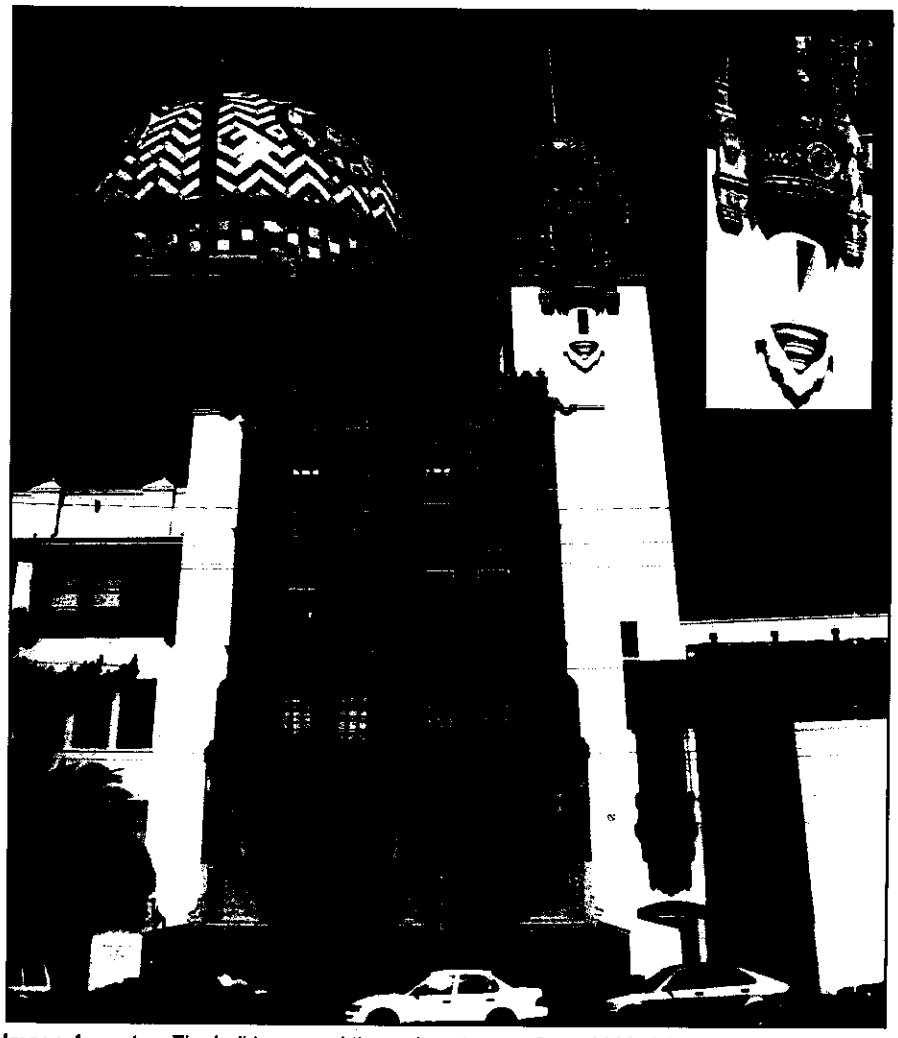
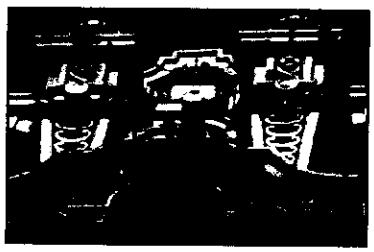


Image 4, center: The bell tower and the main entrance, Sept. 2006. View to the north from 18th Street. **Images 5 & 6, inset:** Bell tower detail, Sept. 2006.



Images 7, 8, & 9: Main entrance bay detail, Sept. 2006.

At the front elevation, east of center is found the squared bell tower, rising high over the building complex. The tower features an ornate belfry detailed in terra cotta and cast stone, with foliation, festooning, and scrollwork. The belfry is pierced by trefoil arches below oxeyes. At the belfry base, large freestanding urns are found at the corners, framed by estipites, while smaller urns are set atop turreted pedestals that display the monograms "M" for "Mission". The belfry is capped by a dome that is decorated with polychromatic Spanish glazed clay tiles set in arabesque mosaics. Large circled stars are set on diapered chevrons across the arc, above a checkered bandage and below a diamond oculus band. (See Images 4-6).

Below and in front of the bell tower is located the four-story main entrance bay, also elaborately decorated in terra cotta, stucco, and cast stone. A series of wide red brick steps leads from the sidewalk to a pair of slightly recessed entry arches at the first story, each containing a set of contemporary double doors. The entry arches are framed by a trio of cartouches displaying the monograms "M", "H", and "S" for "Mission High School". The four-story bay is divided between stories by raised belt courses, and vertically by robust multi-level estipites – stylized, squared pilasters – that support shaped pediments over the upper story, all adorned in rosettes, seashells, mascarons, and zigzags. The arcaded parapet-cornice, set atop rounded pilasters, is lined with free-standing urns and orbs. (See Images 7-9)

The remainder of the long front elevation consists of a central three-story academic and administrative building, and a pair of flanking single-story gymnasiums, all with low-slung roofs clad in Mission clay tile. The gymnasiums display rafters at the eaves and tall arched windows separated by flat pilasters. The entry bay's decorative treatment extends to the upper floor of the academic and administrative building, where is found a seashell frieze below a cornice, and estipites that frame the window bays. Also decorated are windows isolated at passageways and at the top level of stairways.

***P3a. Description:** (Continued)

The tall auditorium wall, set back from the front facade, looms behind the central academic and administrative building. The auditorium wall features broad squared pilasters with pyramidal capitals that project above the auditorium roofline. A Mission-style bell-shaped parapet with arched piercing is found at the east side of the auditorium roofline, next to the bell tower, rising behind and above the main entance bay.

On the Dolores Street side elevation, the decorative treatment continues to the upper floor of the east wing's four-story academic building, which contains an arcaded open-air library plaza with low-pitched roofs and exposed rafters at the interior (see Image 10). The upper floor features a frieze band of seashells and estipites in pairs to match those found at the decorated upper story of the front elevation, as well as a broken band of multi-colored glazed clay tiles set in a running diamond pattern below the windows of the upper story. The surround of the large window at the upper southeast corner features a seashell crown with a pair of urns, spiral pilasters, and pendants, matching the decoration found at upper stairwell windows of the front elevation. Notable also is the east gymnasium's multifoil circular clerestory window. The ground floor arched windows of the academic building, and all the windows of the northernmost building bay, have been removed and filled, with the window profiles preserved as recessed panels. At the internal courtyard, pilastered arcades line the sides and feature decorative scuppers. (See Images 10-15)

Image 10, left: The east wing along the Dolores Street side elevation, May 2006. View northwest from Dolores/18th Streets. **Images 11, 12, & 13, right:** East wing detail, May/Sept. 2006.

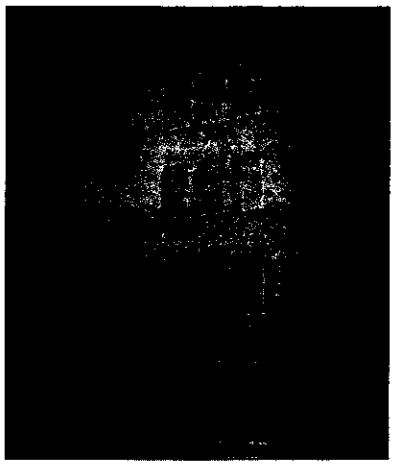


Image 14, left: Altered windows at the Dolores Street side elevation, May 2006.
Image 15, left: The fourth floor open-air library plaza, 2005. Source: Mission High School Alumni Museum (MHSAM).

In contrast to the east wing, the west wing's ornamentation is sparse, and alterations at the west wing are more apparent. At the west gymnasium, the lower portion of the large end window has been walled up, and the heavy window hood has been removed. Behind the west gymnasium, at the instructional building, the long bands of paired windows that faced Church Street have been replaced with large industrial-style windows, and the upper story windows that faced 18th Street have been filled. In addtion, a row of decorative scuppers have been removed from below the roofline of the instructional building. Ornamentation at the west wing is largely limited to the cupola tower that rises over the east courtyard, and projects just above the roofline of the adjacent instructional building. The polygonal cupola tower displays a decorative treatment that is distinct from that found on the east wing, most notably by the

***P3a. Description:** (Continued)

absence of terra cotta and cast stone detail. The cupola is adorned in panels of brightly colored glazed tile, set in arabesque floral mosaics, and is pierced by classical arches with rounded balconettes that terminate in pendant drops. The cupola is capped by a Moorish arcade-pendant cornice and a Mission clay tile roof. The west courtyard features pilastered arcades, similar to the east courtyard. (See Image 16-19)

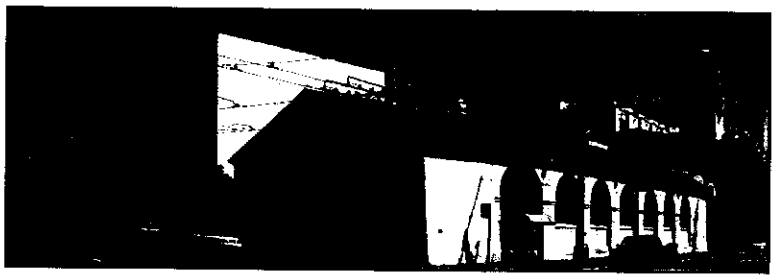
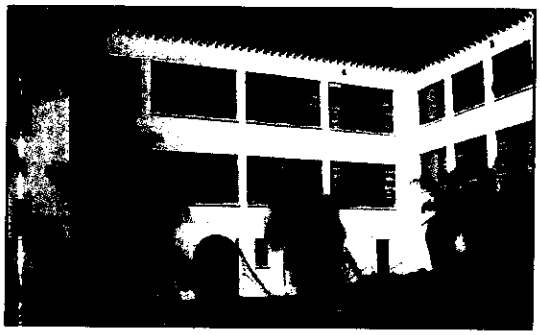


Image 16, above: The west wing along the Church Street side elevation, May 2006. View northeast from Church/18th Streets (montage of two photographs).

Image 17, above: The west wing, historic condition, date not known. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Image 18, upper right: The cupola tower, Aug. 2006. View west.

Image 19, lower right: The interior west courtyard, Aug. 2006. View northwest.



The rear elevation and the athletic field, though gated, are visible and often accessible to the public. The school's rear elevation continues the decorative treatment in a more subdued mode that at the front, made more so by apparent alterations at the rear façade's west wing. At the three-story split-level west wing, the long bands of triple windows that faced the athletic field have been replaced with large industrial-style windows in some bays, and removed entirely in other bays, as also occurred at the west wing's front and sides. The west wing is flanked by entry and stairwell bays that feature a pair of tall bell-arch windows with rounded, corbelled balconets. Decorative scuppers and a parapet ornament, historically found over the west wing's eastern stairwell bay, have been removed. A low-pitched pent cornice clad in Mission-style red clay tile projects over the west wing, supported by corbelled, ogee-shaped braces.

The rear elevation is divided between east and west wings by a tall squared four-story bay with a low-pitched side gable roof clad in flat tile. At the back of the gable roof is found a simple cupola set atop a flat gable parapet. A large decorative seashell scupper with a stylized "M" monogram is featured below the narrow eave of the gable peak. The upper floor displays arched windows, and the ground floor entrance is shaded by a pent hood clad in Mission-style red clay tile.

The four-story split-level east wing of the rear elevation is longer, taller, more ornate, and less altered than the west wing. The east wing features a prominent rear entrance bay that is aligned with the front elevation's main entrance and adorned similarly in terra cotta and cast stone. The rear entrance bay contains a two-story, flattened bell-arch window, framed by pairs of multi-level estipites, and crowned by a seashell parapet above a monogram, all decorated with urns, orbs, torches, zigzags, mascarons and the like. The east wing façade also displays decorative scuppers. (See Images 20-23 on Page 6)

A large number of the school's historic wood windows are present and operable, while others have been replaced with new metal windows that differ from the historic ones but are generally consistent with the overall design and function. The windows appear in a variety of sash patterns and operable types, and the differentiated fenestration gives clear indication of the interior functions. Pairs and trios of awning windows, double- and triple-part, are located at traditional classrooms and offices, which make up the majority of the school. Tall arched windows are located at recreational and social areas, such as the gymnasiums, cafeteria, and the internal open-air courtyards. Large rectangular, industrial-style windows are reserved for the vocational and science classrooms, typically seen at the west wing, which require the additional natural light. Other specialized window types are found in

*P3a. Description: (Continued)

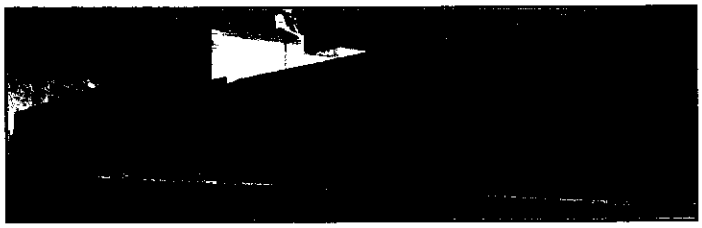


Image 20, above: The rear elevation, Sept. 2006. View southeast from Church Street.

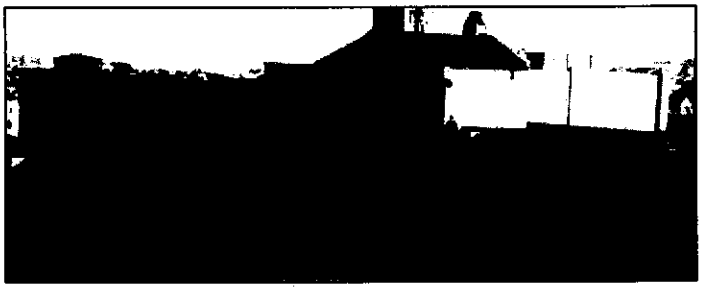
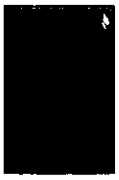


Image 21, above: The rear elevation, historic condition, date not known. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Image 22, right: The rear entrance bay, Sept. 2006. View southeast.

Image 23, below: The decorative scupper at the gable peak, Sept. 2006.



specific locations, including tall vertical windows at the top level of stairwells that provide additional light and ventilation, casements at the library plaza that can be adjusted to buffer winds, rounded and arched clerestories providing natural illumination in the gymnasiums, and small loopholes and oxeyes in other locations. (See Images 24-26).

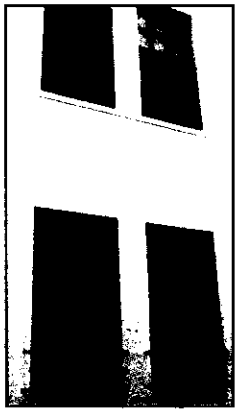
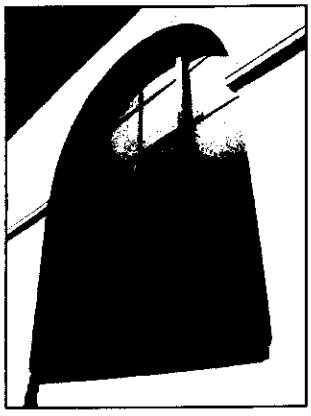


Image 24, left: Awning windows at the east wing library, rear elevation, Sept. 2006.

Image 25, right: Large arched window at the east gymnasium, 18th Street front elevation, Sept. 2006.



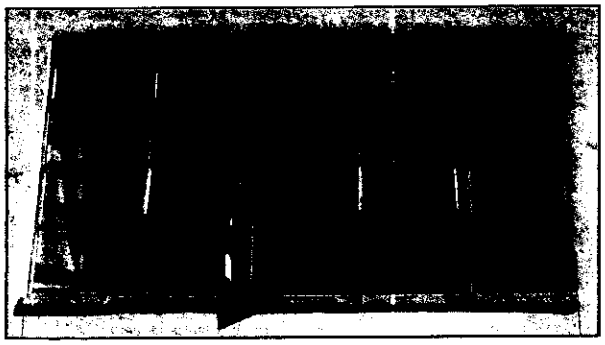
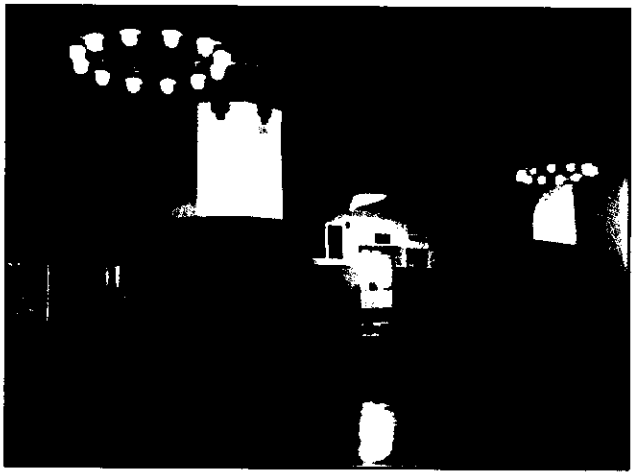


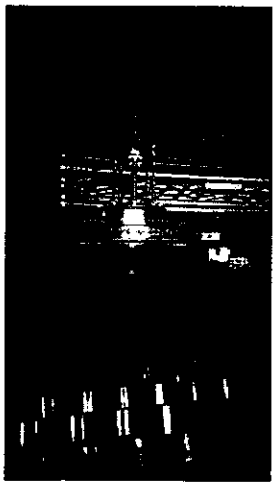
Image 26, above: Large industrial-style window at the west wing science and computer lab, Church Street side elevation, Sept. 2006.

Features of the school's interior are also notable. The main entrance lobby retains its ornate cast plaster ceiling, chandelier lamps, and wall tiles set in a floral diaper pattern. From the entrance lobby, hallways and arched passageways provide access to all corners of the complex, including the three-level central auditorium, capable of accommodating 1,700 spectators in molded wooden seats. The auditorium boasts a faux-gold leafed ceiling, chandeliers, brightly painted plasterwork, and a detailed cantilevered balcony and proscenium arch. Throughout the school complex continues a unifying vocabulary of arches, airy passageways, decorative lamps, and colored wall tile. (See Images 27-29 on Page 7)

Of special interest are two WPA era murals located in the space that is now used for counseling and administrative offices. The murals depict the historic founding of nearby Mission Dolores in 1776 by the Spanish, the first Europeans in the area, and their contact with the native Costonoans. The murals are of interest on their own merit, as well as contributing to the cultural character of Mission High School. (See Images 30-31 on Page 7)

***P3a. Description:** (Continued)





Images 30 & 31, left: WPA era murals, c. 1937. Source: MHSAM.

Summary
Mission High School is a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style commonly known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque. This style is evidenced by the asymmetrical facades, the prominent entrances, the multi-level rooflines punctuated by robustly decorated towers, shaped parapets, and heavy cornices, the low-slung Mission-tile roofs, and the exotic decoration in terra cotta, cast stone, and polychromatic tile. The differentiated elevations provide articulation to a generally ordered building plan. The school retains the significant majority of its original materials and elements. Apparent alterations have been limited to removal and modification of some windows at secondary elevations, replacement of various windows, and seismic upgrade work that included installation of bracing beams at the interior, insertion of stabilizing bolts in facade ornamentation, and removal of some freestanding ornamentation. Mission High School displays a high level of craftsmanship, artistry, and architectural expression.

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Primary #_____
HRI#_____

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 8 of 15

*CHRSC Status Code 3CS
*Resource Name or # Mission High School

B1. Historic name: Mission High School
B2. Common name: None
B3. Original Use: Public high school **B4. Present use:** Public high school
***B5. Architectural Style:** Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque
***B6. Construction History:**
Western phase constructed 1923-25. Eastern phase constructed 1925-27. School occupied 1928.
Athletic field installed 1939.
Seismic retrofit implemented1972-78. School closed 1973-77 to accommodate seismic retrofit.

***B7. Moved?** ☒No ☐Yes ☐Unknown **Date:**_____ **Original Location:**_____
***B8. Related Features:**
Drew Athletic Field; WPA Murals by Edith Anne Hamlin.

B9a. Architect: John Reid, Jr. **b. Builder:** Mahony Bros., General Contractors; E. Hogberg, Mason.
***B10. Significance: Theme** Public education **Area** City and County of San Francisco; State of California
Period of Significance 1925-39 **Property Type** School **Applicable Criteria** CR Criteria 1/3, NR Criteria A/C

Statement of Significance

Mission High School meets two of the California Register of Historical Resources ("CR") criteria for significance, for architecture and for association with events that are important in the histories of California and San Francisco. Mission High School also meets two of the National Register of Historic Places ("NR") criteria for local significance in the same areas. Mission High School is a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival architectural style known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque, which came to prominence as an important regional and national style in the period immediately following the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. Mission High School is also closely associated with progressive changes in school design that occurred in California in the early 20th century, as well as San Francisco's "Golden Age" of school construction, 1920-1930. In addition, Mission High School contains murals that were commissioned under the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project, and are therefore associated with the New Deal Public Works Project.

(Continued on Pages 9-16)

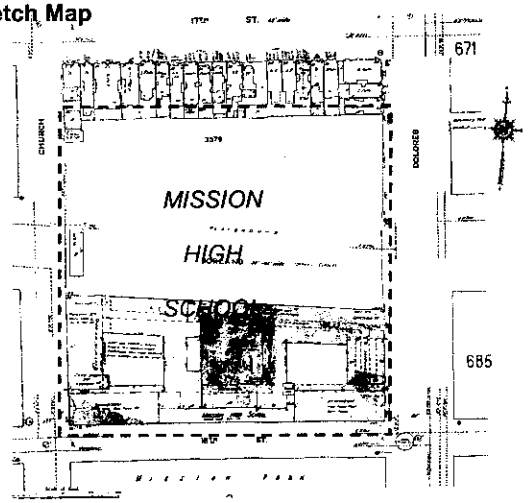
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (HP26) Mural, (HP35) New Deal Public Works Project
***B12. References:** (Continued on Page 17)

B13. Remarks:

***B14. Evaluator:** Matt Weintraub, Planning Department, City and County of San Francisco, 1660 Mission Street, Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94103

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Sketch Map



Source: *Insurance Maps of San Francisco, California (Volume 7)*, Sanborn Map Company, 1998.

***Date of Evaluation:** September 30, 2006

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

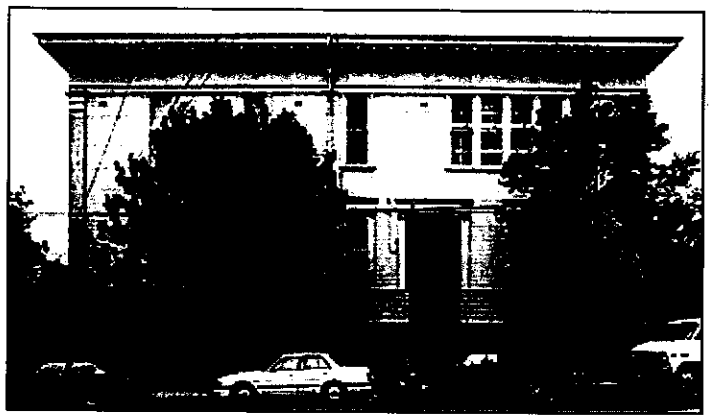


Image 32, above: The Irving M. Scott School, San Francisco Landmark No. 138, built c. 1895, located at 1060 Tennessee Street, July 1999. View west from Tennesee Street. Source: Planning Dept.

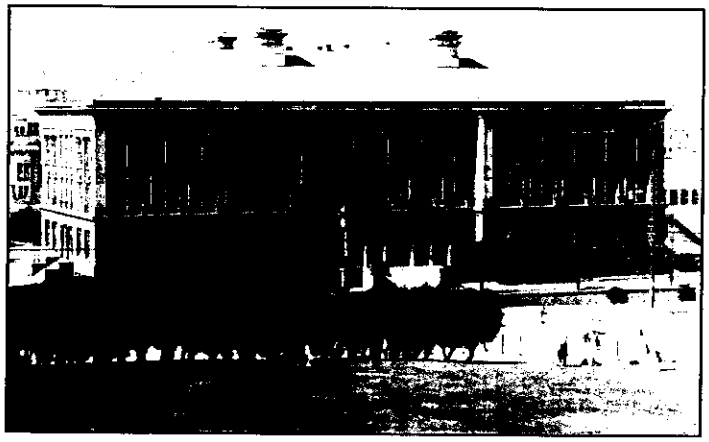


Image 33, above: The original Mission High School, built 1897-98, located at the site of the current school. View north from Mission Dolores Park, date not known. Source: MHSAM.

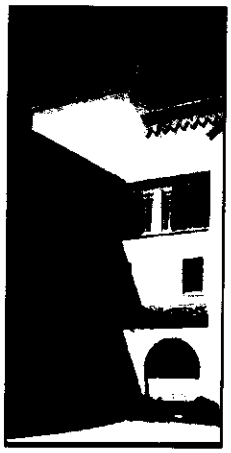


Image 34 & 35, above: Everett Middle School, built 1923-27, located at 450 Church Street, c. 1964. Views to the northwest and interior. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Historical Context

Schools in California, 1890–1940

After the turn of the 20th century, a shift occurred in the way California school buildings were planned and constructed. The changes resulted from progressive developments in the philosophy of education, as well as by the prevailing architectural styles, building standards, and technologies of the times.

School buildings constructed in California before 1900 had little regard for functional planning. Most schools followed a pattern of two-story wood construction, often in Italianate design, that developed for residential use, not academic. Schools were built without properly designed fenestration or classroom layout, resulting in inadequate lighting and ventilation. Pre-1900 schools were also inferior because there were no standards for sanitation and safety. An example of a late 19th century school in San Francisco is the Irving M. Scott School, built circa 1895. (See Image 32)

After the turn of the century, a transition occurred from smaller wood frame schools to larger, fireproof school buildings designed with safety and functionality in mind. The new schools featured larger window groups, in locations that corresponded to the layout of classrooms, providing students with more light and air. Fire safety was addressed by the use of brick, masonry, and cement, as well as by wider corridors and entrances at or close to grade.

A shift in the architectural treatment of schools also occurred after the turn of the century. This shift resulted from a growing civic pride in school buildings, which mandated that they be designed with attention not only to function, but also to aesthetics. To this end, neoclassical treatments became popular in new school designs of the early 1900s. Communities proclaimed the value of learning by providing school buildings that were dignified masonry monuments to education. The original Mission High School, which existed on the site before the current one from 1897-1922, is an example of an early 20th century school in San Francisco. (See Image 33)

School designs continued to develop in the early 1900s. By the 1920s, new school designs eschewed the large blocky buildings located on small lots that were built in earlier decades, in favor of plants that covered more land. Separation of functions within a larger compound and maximized use of outdoor space was emphasized. The expanded plants accompanied a further shift in architecture of the Western states, toward more indigenous styles:

> "Elevating the building and spreading its area over more ground brought forth many interesting developments in plan of single units and groups of units which of course

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

led to delightful exterior compositions of the modified Romanesque, Spanish, Italian, English, and modern Renaissance. Thus it is that the school architecture of California has found a permanent spot in the sun." (Donovan 1923, p. 14)

"A California vernacular style had begun to emerge, combining inspiration drawn from Spanish heritage with the use of modern materials. The style was well-suited for school design. Concrete, replacing brick as preferred fireproof construction, evoked the thick walls of Spanish architecture; the airy passageways and sunny plazas of Spanish Revival style admitted plenty of natural light; central courtyards worked well as an organizing principle, separating independent functions into separate buildings, but at the same time linking them around an open yard. 'Courtyard schools"...complemented the California surroundings." (Architectural Resources Group, p. 12-13)

New school complexes in the 1920s followed a generalized pattern. They were usually constructed of reinforced concrete or brick, multi-story, solid-looking with clearly defined bays of classroom windows. Most were rectangular and centralized in plan, with extensions or pavilions, and with classrooms arranged primarily along a central corridor. Windows were typically tall, stacked awnings, which provided ventilation by drawing air upward and outward, often set in wood sash. An example of a 1920s school in San Francisco is Everett Middle School, built 1923-27. (See Images 34& 35 on Page 9)

In addition to a safe and functional layout, schools built in the 1920s commonly featured a well-equipped and appointed auditorium. These auditoriums included complete stage and theater seating with balcony. By 1940, with a growing trend toward self-sufficient classrooms that de-emphasized large assembly, schools were not planned with auditoriums, resulting in later construction of detached multi-purpose assembly buildings.

During the 1930s, many schools were improved or built as a result of increased state regulation and the establishment of the Public Works Administration (PWA). As the 1930s progressed, a trend occurred toward simplicity and economy of design in school construction. In California, with the awareness of earthquakes, lightweight frame construction with stucco became the choice for new schools. Leaving historic styles behind, many of the schools built during this time incorporated a more modernist approach into their design.

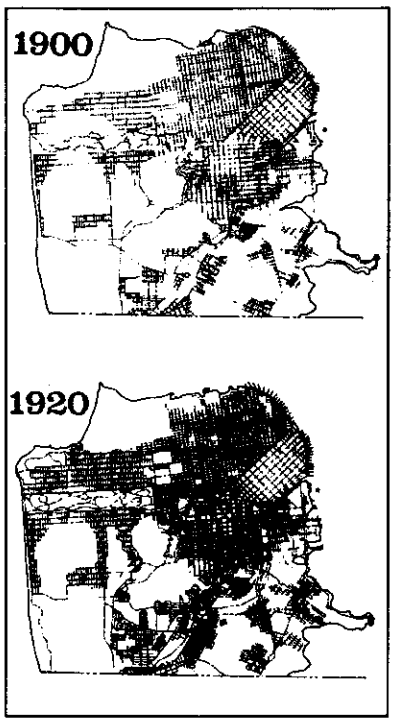


Image 36: Growth of San Francisco neighborhoods, 1900-20. Source: Planning Dept.

San Francisco's "Golden Age" of School Construction, 1920–30

During the early part of the 20th-century, San Francisco made programmatic changes to improve the quality of learning settings for its students, as occurred in communities throughout California. This programmatic shift emphasized physical activities, fresh air, and light-filled environments. It encouraged the separation of school functions within a large yet compact compound, the use of interior atriums and large windows for natural light and fresh air, and the incorporation of regional architectural styles using modern materials. These changes received widespread acceptance in San Francisco by the early 1920s.

The Board of Education was also transitioning the curricula of city high schools, based on recognition that a unified academic program did not address the strengths and interests of all students. Consequently, schools that were previously specialized in curriculum were re-organized to offer a more comprehensive curriculum, both academic and vocational.

This change in educational program was accompanied by a need to serve a greater population and a larger area of San Francisco. From 1910 to 1930 San Francisco grew in population from 416,912 to 634,394. From 1920 to 1930, school enrollment increased by 45 percent. The city also expanded to outlying areas to the south and west, partly due to an exodus of families from the central city area that was destroyed by fire in1906, and partly due to the extension of public streetcar lines to new, developing neighborhoods in outlying areas. (See Image 36)

The factors culminated in San Francisco's "Golden Age" of school construction, 1920-30. During this decade, the City of San Francisco built 49 new public schools, and approved plans for a fiftieth, to meet the needs of shifting educational programs, increasing population, and expanding geographic area. These new buildings more than doubled the city's previously existing school plant. The new schools became sources of pride to the neighborhoods of the city. San Francisco school buildings became

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

nationally known for their quality. As of 1988, the majority of these 50 Golden Age schools were still in use, and many had been seismically upgraded. Mission High School is one of the most notable of San Francisco's Golden Age schools.

San Francisco's Golden Age of school construction ended with the Great Depression. Although several new schools were built in San Francisco in the 1930s, they were relatively few in number. The 1930s schools, built primarily with PWA grants, displayed more modernistic designs and signaled a shift away from the historic styles of the Golden Age schools.

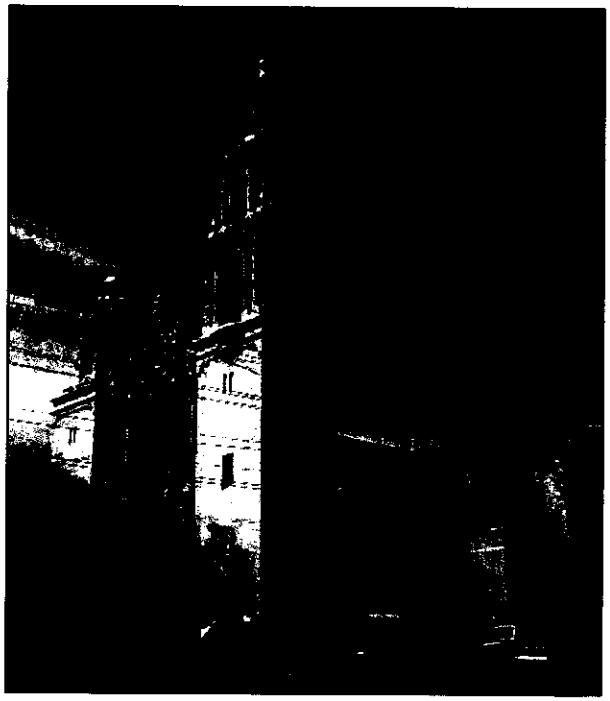


Image 37, above: Mission Dolores Basilica, built c. 1913, located at 310 Dolores Street, May 2006. View southwest from Dolores/16th Streets.

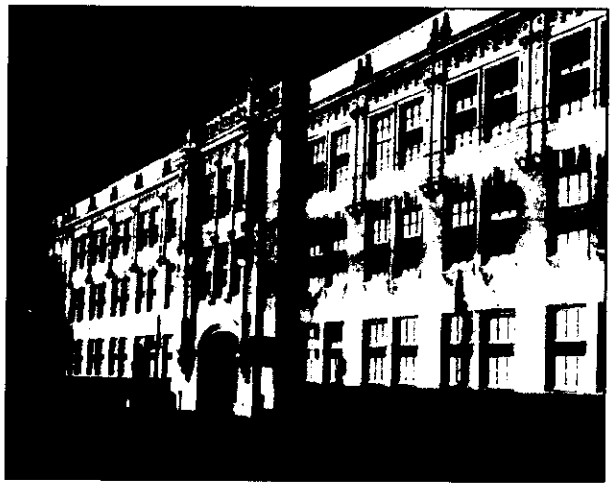


Image 38, above: High School of Commerce, built 1926, located at 135 Van Ness Avenue, date not known. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Architectural Context

The Mediterranean Revival Style of Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque

In the early part of the 20th century, Mediterranean Revival styles were popular in California and in the American southwest because their features and materials reflected the historic structures erected during the region's Spanish Colonial occupation, which were built in the prevailing styles of the mother county. Mediterranean Revival styles were also popular because they allowed for the use of joyful color in architecture, particularly with decorative tiles, which had not been seen for some time with the overwhelming popularity of the colder, monochromatic Classical Revival styles, especially in civic architecture. Typical features of Mediterranean Revival styles included shaped parapets and dormers, low-pitched multi-level roofs clad in red clay tiles, walls of stucco or cement painted to resemble adobe, and asymmetrical facades.

The Mediterranean Revival style known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque gained widespread popularity in the United States with Bertrand G. Goodhue's plan for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, held in San Diego, California. There, a picturesque ensemble of structures was designed and built, merging ornamentation from historic missions and churches of California and Mexico with palaces of Mexico, Spain, and Italy, and utilizing decorative details of Muslim origin. Typical features found in the Churrigueresque style included minaret-like towers, ornamented domes, elaborate low-lying cornices, broken pediments, spiral and inverted columns, enormous urns, arches, arcades, shells, cherubs, garlands, and bells.

As a result of the influence of the San Diego Exposition, fine examples of Churrigueresque construction are evident nationwide, with a greater concentration found in the southwest United States, where the style became part of the regional vocabulary. An example of a San Francisco structure designed in the Churrigueresque style is the Mission Dolores Basilica, which began construction in 1913, and is located one block north of Mission High School. Other examples of the style in San Francisco include the High School of Commerce (1926), Everett Middle School (1927), and the former El Capitan Theater (1928). (See Images 37 & 38)

Mission High School is a handsome example of the Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque style, displaying a high level of craftsmanship and architectural expression. This style is evidenced by the school's asymmetrical facades, multi-level roofs, ornamented towers, prominently appointed entrances, exotic decorative motifs, elaborate cornices, spiral and inverted pilasters, prolific arches, Mission-style shaped parapet, low-pitched roofs clad in Mission-style tile, and concrete walls painted to resemble adobe. The architecture of the Mission High School qualifies it as a

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

"Mission District landmark that competes in prominence with the Mission Dolores Basilica. The polychromatic tile domes and expert Spanish Baroque detailing make this the most sumptuous of the city's public schools" (Woodbridge, Woodbridge, & Byrne, 2005).

Architect John Reid, Jr.
San Francisco native John Reid, Jr. (1882-1967) attended the University of California, Berkeley before he was encouraged to apply to the prestigious Ecole National des Beaux Arts in Paris, France. After completing the five-year curriculum in 1909, he returned to the Bay Area and worked in the firm of D. H. Burnham & Company, and then as a designer for San Francisco architect Willis Polk. Under the administration of Mayor James Rolph, Reid was engaged from 1912 to 1917 with the Board of Consulting Architects to execute a comprehensive Civic Center plan with other prominent San Francisco architects including John Galen Howard and Frederick H. Meyer. (See Image 39)

In 1919 Reid began his tenure as City Architect and was responsible for designing about half of the public schools built during San Francisco's Golden Age of school construction, 1920-1930, including Mission High School. As City Architect, Reid's school designs were heavily influenced by the Mediterranean Revival styles. Two schools designed by Reid are designated San Francisco Landmarks, the above-mentioned High School of Commerce (1926), Landmark No. 140, and Balboa High School (1928), Landmark No. 205. Other schools designed by Reid included Commodore Sloat School (1920), Pacific Heights Elementary School (1924), Galileo High Schools (1927), John Muir Elementary School (1926), West Portal Elementary School (1927), Everett Middle School (1927), and Sherman Elementary School (1927). Some of Reid's other civic buildings included the Exposition Auditorium in the Civic Center, San Francisco General Hospital, Laguna Honda Hospital, the Hind Building, and Firehouse Engine Co. No. 8, Truck Co. No. 4, which is Landmark No. 188.

The City Architect position was not salaried, so as compensation Reid received six percent of the construction costs for each building he designed. As a result Reid was under constant scrutiny, and as Mayor Rolph's brother-in-law, allegations of nepotism clouded his reputation as a competent professional. In 1927, Reid resigned as City Architect and "active advisor" to the San Francisco Board of Education's school building program, but not before designing some of San Francisco's most important buildings. He died in 1967 at the age of 85.

Development History

Founded in 1890, Mission High School was housed in various locations in the Mission District until 1896. At that time, the Board of Education purchased from the Jewish Cemetery Association a parcel at 18th and Dolores Streets for construction of a permanent school building, and at the same time established Mission High School as the first comprehensive high school west of the Rocky Mountains. The original Mission High School building was completed in 1898, next to houses that were located to the west. The three-story brick school was designed in the Italian Renaissance Beaux-Arts style with its raised rusticated base, symmetrical façade, low-pitched hipped roof, and classical ornament. The school was representative of the large, neoclassic buildings that became typical of the early 1900s, replacing the smaller wood frame schools of the previous century.

Image 39: The original Mission High School during the 1906 disaster. View northeast from Mission Dolores Park. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

The building withstood the 1906 earthquake and firestorm, and was a designated city neighborhood shelter during the catastrophe, providing aid and assistance to the homeless stranded in Mission Dolores Park, which became a refugee camp, and to many others in need. Additional, smaller parcels on the block that were originally occupied by houses were purchased for the school in 1909 for planned expansions. However, in 1922, the original Mission High School was destroyed by fire, despite the use of brick and stone in its construction. The loss provided an opportunity for the San Francisco Board of Education to reshape Mission High School to reflect the programmatic changes in academics and school design that culminated in the 1920s. As a result of the opportunity to rebuild, the Board of Education integrated vocational facilities and Mediterranean Revival styles into the new Mission High School complex. (See Image 39)

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

Image 40, above: The west wing under construction, 1923. View northwest. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

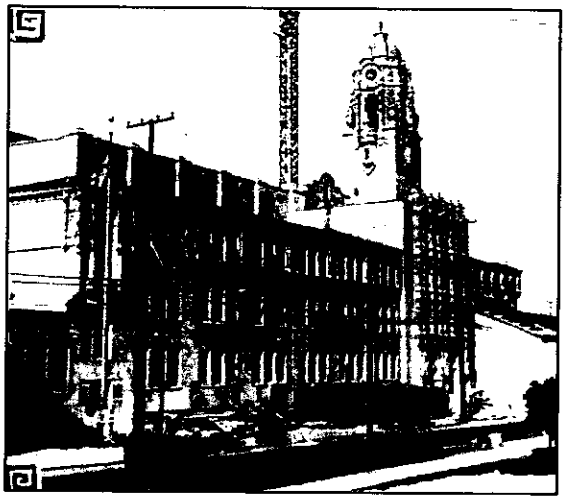


Image 41, above: The central building and east wing under construction, 1926. View northeast. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

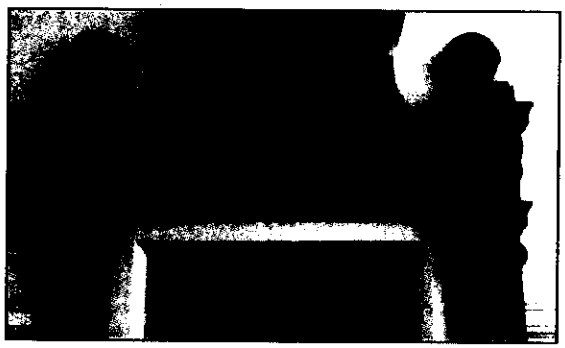


Image 42, above: Pediment over the Dolores Street east side entrance, with date marker of 1925, the year that construction of the east wing began; Sept. 2006.

Image 43, left: Front entrance date markers of 1926, the apparent date of dedication, and 1977, the date of re-dedication; Sept. 2006.

The present Mission High School complex was built from 1925 to 1927, at the height of the San Francisco's Golden Age of school construction. The first phase, consisting of the modest west wing, was erected from 1923 to 1925. The second phase, consisting of the more elaborate central buildings and east wing, was built from 1925 to 1927. During this time, Dorland Street ran at an angle between Dolores and Church Streets, directly north of the school, as it did when the original school occupied the site. New Mission High School, which was larger than the original school, was constructed to occupy the entire school property as it then existed, and consequently the north elevation of the school complex was set at an angle along the Dorland Street right-of-way.

The elaborate ornamentation that is found on the school's 18th Street and Dolores Street elevations, at the later eastern phase, is likely due in part to the visual proximity of these elevations to the Mission Dolores Basilica, which dates to 1913. The Basilica, located a block to the north on Dolores Street, features prominent towers, grand entrances, and elaborate ornamentation in a display of Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque architectural treatment that is shared by Mission High School's eastern phase. (See Images 40-43)

Mission High School saw enhancements in the late 1930s, during a period in which many schools were improved as a result of increased state regulation and funding. In 1936, three murals by California artist Edith Anne Hamlin were commissioned for the school under the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP). At the time Hamlin was a well-known San Francisco-based artist, whose subject matter consisted largely of western themes. Famous western artist Maynard Dixon advised Hamlin on the murals, and they married in 1937, the same year the murals were completed. The murals were dedicated in 1938. Two of Hamlin's murals, depicting the founding of Mission Dolores, remain in the space that was once occupied by the library, and is now counseling and administrative offices. A third mural that displayed an urban theme was located at the second-floor stair landing, and it included the figure of a man who appears to bear a resemblance toa younger Maynard Dixon. However, the figure's apparent resemblance to Dixon, Hamlin's husband at the time of mural dedication, would be difficult to verify, as the mural was lost during the seismic retrofit that was implemented in the 1970s. (See Images 44 & 45 on Page 14)

Also during the period of improvements of the late 1930s, Drew Athletic Field was installed beginning in 1937. The athletic field was placed behind the school building complex, on top of the abandoned Dorland Street right-of-way and on land north of Dorland that was previously occupied by houses. Dedication of the athletic field in 1939 marked the completion of the current campus configuration.

Mission High School was seismically retrofit between 1972 and 1978 in order to meet the earthquake safety requirements of 1967's Assembly Bill 450, commonly referred to as the Field Act. To accomplish the rehabilitation, the school was closed from 1973 to 1977. The seismic retrofit was executed sensitively by City architect Hugh W. Hiatt, consulting engineers Shapiro, Okino, and Hom Associates, and general contractor S.J. Amoroso, in order to minimize its impact on the significant architectural characteristics of the school. Structural work included installation of diagonal bracing beams within the building, partially visible through windows, and at the interior of the bell tower. In order to protect students and passers-by from falling hazards, the

*B10. Significance: (Continued)

Image 44, above: The mural artist Edith Anne Hamlin at work in the library, 1937. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Image 45, above: Portion of the missing Hamlin mural while being removed from a stairwell in 1973. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Image 46, left: Alcove with ornament removed, and façade stabilizing bolts. **Image 47, below:** Intact spherical ornament, c. 1960. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

façade ornamentation was secured by insertion of stabilizing bolts and bracing rods. Some freestanding ornaments were removed, including those that were found in the alcoves of the main entry bay, which now stand empty. An additional unintended consequence of the seismic retrofit was the loss of a WPA Hamlin mural. The missing mural was removed from the second-floor stair landing in order to accommodate the retrofit work, and it disappeared before it could be reinstalled. (See Images 46 & 47)

Mission High School's period of significance begins in 1923, the year that construction of the first phase began, and ends in 1939, the year that the athletic field was dedicated and that the current campus configuration was completed.

Significance Criteria

NR Criterion "A"/CR Criterion "1" – Events
Mission High School is culturally significant for its association with San Francisco's "Golden Age" of school design and construction, 1920-1930, which occurred concurrently with similar developments in school design and construction throughout California. During this decade, the city erected 49 new public schools, including Mission High School, and approved construction of a fiftieth. This boom in new school construction was partially the result of progressive changes in the design of learning settings that occurred after the turn of the century. These programmatic changes mandated school designs that were functional and safe, that accommodated a broader vocational curriculum, and that featured impressive historic styles to encourage and promote intellectual development. The Golden Age of school construction in San Francisco also resulted from the city's increasing population and rising school enrollment, and its expanding geography to outlying neighborhoods served by streetcars.

Mission High School is an excellent example of a San Francisco Golden Age school. The school is a compact, fireproof complex designed around and unified by open-air courtyards and plazas. The school displays several patterns of large windows that accommodate specifically the various academic and vocational classrooms at which they are located. In addition to its functional layout and fenestration, the school is also handsomely rendered in the regional vocabulary of Mediterranean Revival, which became important in California design.

In addition, murals found in the school were painted by Edith Anne Hamlin under the WPA/FAP program, and are therefore associated with the New Deal Public Works Project.

NR Criterion "C"/ CR Criterion "3" – Architecture
The Mission High School is a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival style known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque. Mediterranean Revival styles became popular in California and in the American southwest during the early part of the 20th century, because they utilized features and materials found in historic structures that were built during Spanish Colonial occupation of the region. The Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque Spanish Baroque style was made popular by Bertrand G. Goodhue's plan for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, held in San Diego, California, which featured a picturesque ensemble of structures that merged ornamentation from historical examples of North Africa, Spain, Southern California, and Mexico. Common motifs of the style includes broken pediments, elaborate cornices, spiral columns and

*B10. Significance: (Continued)

estipites, balustrades, stucco shells, cherubs, and garlands.

Mission High School is an excellent embodiment of the Mediterranean Revival style, Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque. This style is evidenced by the school's asymmetrical facades, multi-level roofs, elaborate cornices, spiral pilasters, prominent arches, heavily ornamented towers and entrances, Mission-style shaped parapet, low-pitched roofs clad in Mission-style tile, exotic decoration in glazed terra cotta and brightly colored tiles, and concrete walls painted to resemble adobe. Mission High School is also the work of a master architect, John Reid, Jr. The Beaux-Arts trained San Francisco native served as City Architect from 1919 until 1927. During Reid's tenure, he designed several public schools for the city during San Francisco's Golden Age of school construction, 1920-30.

Integrity

Mission High School retains a high level of integrity in all of the following aspects.

Location
The location of Mission High School has not changed. The existing school was constructed at its current site from 1923 to 1927. The existing Mission High School replaced an earlier school building that was built on the site in 1897-98, and was destroyed by fire in 1922.

Design
Mission High School is a fine example of the Mediterranean Revival style known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque, which is an important regional style. The school also is the work of noted City Architect John Reid, Jr. in addition, Mission High exemplifies the progressive changes in school design that occurred during the first part of the 20th century, which emphasized functionality, safety, and aesthetics, culminating in San Francisco's "Golden Age" of school construction, 1920-30.

Setting
Mission High School is a strong visual and cultural presence set in the midst of the Inner Mission District, the heart of San Francisco, a landscape that is both scenic and historic. The school's bell tower is iconic in its visual association with the skyline of San Francisco. Mission High School is also an integral element of the progenital and continuous historic fabric that is evident around it. On the hillside directly to the south is found Mission Dolores Park, which has provided the district with open recreational space since 1905, and which served as a refugee camp following the 1906 fire that destroyed much of the city. At the top of the park is the "Golden Fire Hydrant", located at 20th and Church Streets, which is credited with supplying the water that finally halted the three-day firestorm of 1906 at Dolores Street. Located a block north of Mission High School on Dolores Street is the historic chapel Mission Dolores, Landmark No. 1, the oldest intact building in San Francisco, dating to 1791, and the nucleus of the first non-native settlement in the Bay Area. Next to the chapel stands the Basilica, the Spanish Baroque monument that began construction in 1913. A block further north on Dolores Street, between 15th and 16th Streets, are located the Tanforan Cottages, Landmark Nos. 67 & 68, built in 1853 during the city's earliest stages of urbanization, and the oldest extant residential buildings in the city. On Church Street between 16th and 17th Streets stands Everett Middle School, another of John Reid, Jr.'s Spanish Baroque "courtyard schools", erected concurrently with Mission High School in 1927. Surrounding these notable properties is the layered historic fabric of the Inner Mission District. To the west of Dolores Street, the 1906 firebreak, are located many survivors from the late 1800s. To the east of Dolores Street lies the area that was furiously rebuilt in less than a decade after burning to the ground in the 1906 conflagration. Interspersed among the many late 19th and early 20th century properties are a variety of more contemporary buildings that add interest and variety.

Materials
The significant majority of Mission High School's original materials are retained in good condition. Some features and elements have undergone maintenance that involved material replacement in kind. A minority of materials and features have been altered, primarily limited to windows and freestanding exterior ornamentation. The structure has undergone a sensitively rendered seismic retrofit.

Workmanship
Mission High School displays a high level of workmanship. The school has withstood continuous heavy use by an active student and faculty body since it was first occupied, and it continues to display an outstanding level of architectural and structural integrity due to its solid construction, continued maintenance, and sensitively rendered seismic retrofit.

Feeling
The feeling that is derived today from viewing Mission High School is comparable to the feeling that it inspired when it was first constructed. The school complex is impressively rendered in historic style, with asymmetrical and differentiated elevations that

***B10. Significance:** (Continued)

create visual interest, and a high level of workmanship that inspires on-lookers. The school complex features a functional and aesthetically pleasing layout that is unified in its vocabulary.

Association
Mission High School retains important historical, visual, and cultural associations. Mission High School is associated with significant historical events, most notably San Francisco's Golden Age of school construction, 1920-30. The school is a prominent, well-regarded landmark that has provided a stable visual anchor on the dynamic San Francisco skyline that has taken shape behind it over the many years. The school, which is the second oldest high school in San Francisco, has developed strong cultural ties with the surrounding community. The school is an educational setting for both day and evening classes and a hub for community gatherings. The athletic field is used by the community at large during non-school hours. Mission High School has produced such notable alumni as musician Carlos Santana and California State Senator J. Eugene McAteer.

Significant Features
The following are character-defining features that convey the significance of Mission High School as an outstanding example of the Mediterranean Revival style known as Spanish Baroque-Churrigueresque:

a) All features and elements of exterior elevations visible from the public rights-of-way, including but not limited to: rooflines, cornices, parapets, towers, cupolas, fenestration, and ornamentation in glazed terra cotta, cast stone, and decorative clay tiles, which is focused heavily on the towers and the main entrances, but is found on other elevations;
b) The exterior finishes and architectural elements of the east and west open-air courtyards;
c) All fixtures and finishes of the entry foyer including but not limited to glazed tiles, cast plaster ceiling, and light fixtures; and
d) All fixtures and finishes of the school auditorium including but not limited to cast plasterwork, light fixtures, cantilevered balcony, wooden seats, proscenium arch and entrances.

The following are additional character-defining features that convey the significance of Mission High School as an outstanding example of San Francisco's Golden Era of school construction, 1920-30:

e) The functional compound design that integrates open-air courtyards, plazas, arcades, and breezeways in a unifying vocabulary;
f) The specialized spaces for various functions, including academic and vocational classrooms, auditorium, theatre, gymnasiums, and athletic field;
g) The various types of windows that are designed specifically for the specialized spaces; and
h) The surviving WPA murals by Edith Hamlin located in the former library (now administrative and counseling offices).

***B12. References:** (Continued)

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