

68.19

**NOTICE OF FINAL PASSAGE
FILE NO. 588-68 ORD. NO. 28-68
DESIGNATING COLONIAL DAMES
(McELROY) OCTAGON HOUSE AS A
LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTICLE
18 OF THE CITY PLANNING CODE.**

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was read for the second time and finally passed by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco at its meeting of Dec. 30, 1968.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
Approved: Jan. 3, 1969.
PETER TAMARAS, Acting Mayor
Jan. 7, 1969—It

**FILE NO 588-68 ORD. NO. —
DESIGNATING COLONIAL DAMES
(McELROY) OCTAGON HOUSE AS A
LANDMARK PURSUANT TO ARTI-
CLE 18 OF THE CITY PLANNING
CODE.**

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

Section 1. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that Colonial Dames (McElroy) Octagon House has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes of Article 18 of the City Planning Code and the standards set forth therein.

(a) Designation. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code, Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, Colonial Dames (McElroy) Octagon House is hereby designated as a Landmark, this designation having been duly approved by resolution of the City Planning Commission.

(b) Location and Boundaries. Pursuant to Section 1004 of the City Planning Code, Chapter II, Part II of the San Francisco Municipal Code, a Landmark site is hereby designated for the said Landmark, located and bounded as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the westerly line of Gough Street with the southerly line of Union Street; running thence 112.5 feet southerly along said line of Gough Street; thence at a right angle westerly 62.5 feet; thence at a right angle 112.5 feet northerly to the said line of Union Street; thence along said line of Union Street 62.5 feet to the point of beginning; being Lots 1 and 1C in Assessor's Block 544.

(c) Justification. The special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are as follows:

One of San Francisco's two remaining octagonal houses, built for William C. McElroy in 1861, on a "new and rational plan" for dwellings, according to a style made popular in the United States by Orson Squire Fowler. Gathering place of artists, writers, and others during the residence of Daniel O'Connell, well-known local poet. Saved from destruction by the Colonial Dames Resident in the State of California, it has been restored and serves as a museum for eighteenth century antiquities. Listed in the Historic American Building Survey of the National Park Service of the United States.

(d) Features. The said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof and as described and depicted in the photographs, case report and other material on file in the Department of City Planning in Docket No. LM68.19; the summary description being as follows:

Two story; walls of concrete construction covered with clapboards; eight-sided walls are capped by an eight-sided cupola; in the classical style of architecture, influenced by Italianate. Steep shingled roof has projecting eaves; there is a small porch with a recessed entrance; classical columns and pilasters; square, support a sloping roof, also shingled. Oblong wooden quoins, simulating stone, mark corners of walls.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was passed for second reading by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco at its meeting of Dec. 23, 1968.

ROBERT J. DOLAN, Clerk
Dec. 28, 1968—It

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 6300

WHEREAS, A proposal to designate Colonial Dames (McElroy) Octagon House as a Landmark pursuant to the provisions of Article 10 of the City Planning Code was initiated by Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board on October 9, 1968, and said Advisory Board, after due consideration, has recommended approval of this proposal;

WHEREAS, The City Planning Commission, after due notice given, held a public hearing on November 14, 1968, to consider the proposed designation and the report of said Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, The Commission believes that the proposed Landmark has a special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value; and that the proposed designation would be in furtherance of and in conformance with the purposes and standards of the said Article 10;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, First, That the proposal to designate Colonial Dames (McElroy) Octagon House as a Landmark pursuant to Article 10 of the City Planning Code is hereby APPROVED, the location and boundaries of the landmark site being as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the westerly line of Gough Street with the southerly line of Union Street; running thence 112.5 feet southerly along said line of Gough Street; thence at a right angle westerly 62.5 feet; thence at a right angle 112.5 feet northerly to the said line of Union Street; thence along said line of Union Street 62.5 feet to the point of beginning; being Lots 1 and 1C in Assessor's Block 544.

Second, That the special character and special historical, architectural and aesthetic interest and value of the said Landmark justifying its designation are as follows:

One of San Francisco's two remaining octagonal houses, built for William C. McElroy in 1861, on a "new and rational plan" for dwellings, according to a style made popular in the United States by Orson Squire Fowler. Gathering place of artists, writers, and others during the residence of Daniel O'Connell, well-known local poet. Saved from destruction by the Colonial Dames Resident in the State of California, it has been restored and serves as a museum for eighteenth century antiquities. Listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service of the United States.

Third, That the said Landmark should be preserved generally in all of its particular exterior features as existing on the date hereof and as described and depicted in the photographs, case report and other material on file in the Department of City Planning in Docket No. LM68.19; the summary description being as follows:

Two story; walls of concrete construction covered with clapboards; eight-sided walls are capped by an eight-sided cupola; in the classical style of architecture, influenced by Italianate. Steep shingled roof has projecting eaves; there is a small porch with a recessed entrance; classical columns and pilasters, square, support a sloping roof, also shingled. Oblong wooden quoins, simulating stone, mark corners of walls.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Commission hereby directs its Secretary to transmit the proposal for designation, with a copy of this Resolution, to the Board of Supervisors for appropriate action.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the City Planning Commission at its regular meeting of November 14, 1968.

R. Bruce Anderson
Acting Secretary

AYES: Commissioners Brinton, Elliott, Fleishhacker, Kearney, Newman, Wight

NOES: None

ABSENT: Commissioner Porter

PASSED: November 14, 1968

Preliminary Report for Hearing of August 28, 1968
 LANDMARKS PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

LM68.19
 COLONIAL DAMES
 OCTAGON HOUSE

OWNER NATIONAL SOCIETY OF COLONIAL DAMES RESIDENT IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARY OF SITE 2645 Gough Street, formerly at 2613 Gough Street; west line of Gough Street, 75 feet south of Union Street: two lots on site; 112.5 feet on Gough Street, 62.5 feet deep along Union Street; being Lots 1 and 1C in Assessor's Block 544.

NATURE AND HISTORY Built in 1861 by William C. McElroy and wife. McElroy, a miller, had arrived in San Francisco in 1851 and had been successful in his trade. His wife, Harriet, had bought the lot (on the east line of Gough Street) from Charles and Harry Gough, after whom the street was named. The McElroys lived in the house until his death in 1871; after that year, the widow lived there until 1891. For some three years Daniel O'Connell, a noted poet of the day lived in the house and during this period the house was the site of gatherings of the writers and artists of the city. Mrs. McElroy owned the property until 1894, when it was sold to Fiorenzo Cavagnaro, who owned a wholesale liquor business (the Pioneer Wine Vaults) on Montgomery Street, as well as retail liquor store near the City Hall.

Cavagnaro and his family, and later his widow, lived in the house until 1907. During the Earthquake of 1906 the building was severely damaged one wall being knocked down. The building was repaired and in 1907 came into possession of Augustine Riley, Clerk of the U. S. Customs Court here. He, and after his death, his daughters, the Misses Riley, long occupied the house. After their death the house became the property of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and was for some years vacant.

In 1952 the house was saved from demolition by the Colonial Dames, who bought it, removed it to the west side of the street (to a lot given by the Misses Allyne) and had it extensively restored. The restoration was under the direction of Warren Perry F.A.I.A., former chairman of the Department of Architecture at the University of California. The building is now used as a headquarters for the Colonial Dames in the State of California; and also serves as a museum or place of display of predominantly 18th century furniture, manuscripts, and historic memorials. The building is listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Octagon Houses throughout the United States owe their origin and vogue, during the 1850s and 1860s to the publication of a book by Orson Squire Fowler of New York, in 1848, "A Home for All". This book was intended to stimulate the building of houses by Americans on a new and rational plan: the octagonal plan, designed to provide eight rooms on each floor (of two), and advocated as the most healthful because it gave a maximum of sunlight to the rooms, each receiving light at some period of the day. Fowler also advocated the use of granite or concrete walls in the construction. At least five octagonal houses existed in San Francisco.

ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURE

Two-story structure (originally a dwelling): octagonal or eight-sided constructed of concrete (lime, cement and gravel). Exterior walls are covered with clapboards. Architectural style: classical, influenced by Italianate. There is a small wooden cupola, also octagonal, surmounting the building. The sloping shingled roof has eaves projecting beyond the walls. The fenestration is simple: each of the eight walls or sides of the building is pierced on each floor by paired double-hung windows (except for the front wall on the ground story, which contains the entrance). The entrance is deeply recessed within the wall and contains double door; it is sheltered by a simple porch, of classical style; two columns and two pilasters, all square, support a sloping roof also shingled. There are oblong wood (simulating) stone quoins at each corner of the building, reaching from ground to roof.

SURROUNDING LAND
USES AND ZONING

Zoning is C-2; surrounding land uses are dwellings, park, school and shops.

OTHER PUBLIC
RECOGNITION

The house has been included in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. The Octagon House is open to the public, afternoons, on the first Sunday, and 2nd and 4th Thursdays, of each month.